



Solutions for seasonal labour shortages

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The Department of Labour knows that obtaining workers when they are needed is a major challenge for the horticulture and viticulture industries.

This brochure outlines the options for sourcing seasonal labour currently available to employers in the horticulture and viticulture industries.

There are a range of solutions available to help meet seasonal labour needs using holiday workers already in New Zealand or accessing workers from the Pacific Islands, and recent changes to policy now means it's easier for you to access the workers you need.

Whether you need 10 or 100 workers there is a solution that will work for you.

These options are available to employers in areas where there are insufficient New Zealand workers available to meet labour needs.

To discuss the options and whether they are right for you contact the Seasonal Labour Coordinator in your region – details are listed below.

Contact details for your seasonal labour coordinator

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Your Seasonal Labour Solutions

| Scheme | What is it? |
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| Working Holiday Scheme (WHS) | <p>People aged 18 to 30 from 22 countries can obtain a WHS visa before they leave their home country to be in New Zealand for up to 12 months (23 months for the UK), and work for up to three months for any one employer.</p> <p>Overseas visitors with a WHS permit who have already worked for 3 months in the horticulture/viticulture industry in New Zealand can extend their permit for a further 3 months.</p> |
| Variation of Conditions (VOC) | <p>Visitors already in New Zealand can apply for a 'variation of conditions' to take up seasonal work in the horticulture and viticulture industries for 6 weeks.</p> <p>Holders of VOCs may work for any employer in regions where a seasonal labour shortage has been declared by the Ministry of Social Development.</p> |
| Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) | <p>Employers can apply to recruit workers from the Pacific Region under the RSE policy if there are not enough New Zealand workers available.</p> <p>To recruit Pacific workers, an employer must apply for Recognised Seasonal Employer status through the Department of Labour.</p> <p>Once an employer has recognition, they can submit an Agreement to Recruit application outlining how many workers they need, where they plan to recruit from, and other details around the employment of overseas workers. There are a number of facilitative measures in place to make this process easier for employers including access to a 'work ready' pool of workers from selected Pacific nations.</p> <p>Minimum remuneration requirements</p> <p>The minimum remuneration requirement for employment agreements under RSE that are for a period of six weeks or longer, is the greater of the following amounts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • payment for 240 hours at the 'per hour' rate, regardless of the actual availability of work, or • payment, for an average of 30 hours per week, at the 'per hour' rate for the period worked. <p>There are other commitments an employer must make as an RSE including making a contribution towards air fares of workers.</p> <p>Workers must apply for RSE visas to enter New Zealand for the purpose of work.</p> |
| Transition to RSE Scheme (TRSE) | <p>The TRSE policy was put in place in November 2007 to assist employers in the horticulture and viticulture industries that were not yet ready to apply for full Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) status. To become an approved TRSE employers must first have taken steps to find suitable New Zealand workers through Work and Income.</p> <p>TRSE approved growers make a commitment to accessing RSE workers and can then employ people who are already in New Zealand on a TRSE work permit for up to four months.</p> <p>An employer who already has RSE status must still apply to be a TRSE approved grower. Workers may move to another TRSE approved employer within their four months.</p> <p>TRSE workers should go through the local seasonal labour coordinator to find work with TRSE employers.</p> <p>The employer does not need to guarantee 30 hours work per week in the employment agreement.</p> |

You can employ workers using one or several of these options either on your own or combined with other employers. **Don't be put off by perceived expense or effort, call your region's Seasonal Labour Coordinator and talk through what options might best suit your needs.**

There are employers throughout New Zealand right now who are completing their harvest on time thanks to sourcing appropriate overseas labour.

You don't have to sacrifice your crop, there are solutions at hand and people who are ready to help.