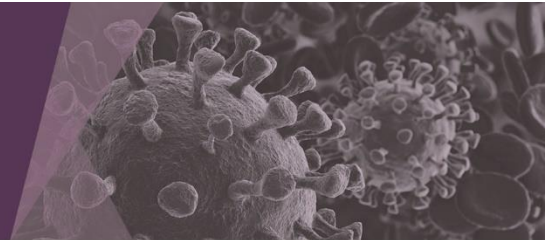


# Fact sheet Coronavirus (COVID-19)



## COVID-19 impact on Queensland agriculture workforce

COVID-19 may impact your ability to source harvesting and production workers. While there may still be numerous overseas workers available, significant disruption to seasonal worker numbers could occur in various regions.

- **Will my workforce be impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak?**
  - Yes, anticipate and plan for significant reductions across all levels of your workforce.
  - Worker availability issues may arise in:
    - working holidaymakers (i.e. backpackers)
    - overseas student workers
    - seasonal worker programme
    - pacific labour mobility scheme
    - local seasonal workers
    - core permanent ongoing staff
    - other business along the supply chain.
  
- **Where can I source workers from if my normal channels don't work?**
  - **Consider the options** - many businesses have relied on a regular pattern of seasonal workers and a stable, permanent workforce for many seasons. You may not have considered or be aware of alternate ways of recruiting.
  
  - Current options for recruiting workers include:
    - Use the Harvest Trail online facility at <https://jobsearch.gov.au/harvest>—this is a free service
    - Lodge vacancies directly onto [jobsearch.gov.au](https://jobsearch.gov.au), or you can register your business on the Jobactive website to post your positions for free <https://jobsearch.gov.au/employers/registration?workflowId=490f074b-e958-4cb9-82a0-cd50800bb2c1>
    - Contact your local jobactive providers - also at [jobsearch.gov.au](https://jobsearch.gov.au)
    - Use social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) and traditional local advertising (e.g. newspapers/community bulletin boards/roadside signs)
    - Contact a licensed Labour Hire service provider. A register of licenced providers at <https://www.labourhire.qld.gov.au/>
    - Encourage your industry representative body/organisation to promote the need for workers (e.g. 'Pick Local' campaign)
      - Consider the Seasonal Worker Programme (Subject to the lifting of current travel restrictions) <https://www.employment.gov.au/seasonal-worker-programme>
      - Consider the Pacific Labour Mobility Scheme (Subject to the lifting of current travel restrictions) <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/pacific/engagement/pacific-labour-mobility/Pages/default>.
  
- **How can I guarantee available workers are suitable for my business?**

For the latest information on coronavirus (COVID-19) please visit:

**health.qld.gov.au** – for health advice

**business.qld.gov.au** – for business and industry advice

- Ensure induction processes, role descriptions and work procedures are in place and current (including procedures to mitigate spreading of COVID-19)
- Ensure suppliers of labour (e.g. Labour Hire, Jobactives) understand your requirements and are selective in who they send to you – e.g. heavy lifting, intermittent work hours
- **What is the government doing?**
  - **Government and industry are working together** and meeting regularly to identify current and emerging issues resulting from actions to reduce the spread of COVID-19 throughout the community and developing strategies aimed at addressing these.
  - The Queensland Government already has several agriculture workforce officers in place across Queensland (Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network – QAWN).
    - These officers can provide advice on workforce services and initiatives to all Queensland agribusinesses, regardless of commodity or organisation membership - this is a free service
    - If you are an employer in agriculture in Queensland and need additional advice on these services, you can contact your local agriculture workforce officer here <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/agriculture/agribusiness/agriculture-workforce-advice>.

**Knowledge is key to your business** and coping with this unique situation. We will be working closely with other government agencies to ensure you have access to relevant and accurate information.

- **Get the facts - information about COVID -19** is best obtained from either the Australian Department of Health or Qld Department Health
  - <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19>
  - <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>
- **Keep it simple - use the resources available**
  - <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/find-the-facts/resources>
  - <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/coronavirus-covid-19-resources>
- **Understand your fair work obligations** - the Fair Work Ombudsman has advice at
  - <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/about-us/news-and-media-releases/website-news/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws>
- Be aware of **health and safety procedures** - Workplace Health and Safety and WorkCover Queensland Information
  - <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/claims-and-return-to-work/novel-coronavirus-covid-19-faqs/employer-faqs>
  - <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/news/2020/coronavirus-covid-19-workplace-risk-management>

If you have concerns about your health, contact 13 HEALTH (13 432 584). If you have symptoms of the virus and have travelled overseas in the past 14 days, or had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 coronavirus, see a doctor. Call ahead and mention your symptoms and travel (or contact) so they can prepare for your visit.

**Disclaimer - While every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of this information, The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) does not invite reliance upon it, nor accept responsibility for any loss or damage caused by actions based on it.**

Last updated as at PM 24 March 2020

