



Organic Industries

Voice of Australia's organic industries
www.organicindustries.com.au

PO Box 1862
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21 August 2020

Hon Peter Dutton MP
Parliament House Ministerial Office
Minister for Home Affairs
PO BOX 6022
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

Voluntary work on certified organic farms—Eligibility as ‘specified work’ for second-year or third-year visas

The organic industry seeks your special consideration for Working Holiday Maker visa holders (subclass 462 and 417) wishing to volunteer on Certified Organic and Biodynamic Farms to accrue those days towards their second- and third-year eligibility criteria.

Since 2015, when the eligibility criteria were changed relating to voluntary labour exchange programs counting towards the second-year visa, the industry has struggled to fill a void in labour from this source. Now, with the COVID19 pandemic, the labour situation is deemed critical in many sectors of our industry.

The COVID19 era is throwing many challenges towards society and the organic industry, like many others is standing ready to help rebuild the Nations socio-economic values so greatly disrupted by the virus. Our ‘handbrake’ is the collapse in labour support.

Our request to you is to receive ‘special needs’ consideration akin to the relaxing of the volunteer rules granted to help the bushfire recovery regions in their moment of crisis.

Organic farm systems and practices have relatively high labour demands due to the nature of their intensive ‘hands on’ production platforms. Our industry has also historically delivered many unique intercultural exchange experiences between travellers and farmers through programs like World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms.

We trust you can see the need for special consideration of the industry’s needs. Many in the Australian organic community, the value chain connections, and the market customers seeking quality reliable produce, would welcome your support and can add voice to our request.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dalene Wray". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Dalene Wray
Chair, Organic Industries of Australia Ltd

<https://www.woof.com.au/>

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2020-07-30/farm-labour-shortage-feared-due-to-coronavirus-controls/12504802>

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-02-17/backpacker-working-holiday-visa-changes-for-bushfire-volunteers/11971010>