

Friday 28 August 2009

PR/152/09

Horticulturists welcome Government action on Award Modernisation

The NSW Farmers' Association has welcomed the Government's decision to request the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) to re-examine conditions under the Horticulture Award.

NSW Farmers' Association Horticulture Committee Chair Peter Darley says this decision is an excellent result for horticulturists, and comes off the back of extensive lobbying by the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) and the Association.

"Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard has made changes to the Ministerial Request on this matter overnight, calling for the AIRC to reconsider the Hours of Work and Piecework clauses under the Horticulture Award," Mr Darley said.

"This is great news for horticulturists with the AIRC review ensuring our concerns, like increased costs for producers and a rise in unemployment in regional areas, will be addressed.

"We are particularly welcoming of the decision to review the Hours of Work and Piecework clauses, as these have the potential to particularly impact growers.

"Under the proposed changes, farmers faced rises in piecework loadings from 12.5 per cent to 15 per cent," Mr Darley said.

Under the proposed changes, genuine piecework arrangements would have been removed, preventing farmers from using important alternative labour sources such as lifestyle workers including grey nomads.

According to Mr Darley, the changes originally proposed by the AIRC under the Award Modernisation process may have had a significant negative impact on horticulturists.

"Wage costs may have increased by as much as 30 per cent under the new arrangements, with the wages paid to fruit pickers, for instance, more than doubling on Sundays and public holidays," Mr Darley said.

"This is a critical time for horticulturists, and we encourage all growers to become part of the Association that is fighting for their future today," Mr Darley concluded.

Contact: Ruth Redfern (Media Officer) 0429 990 218

If you no longer wish to be on our mailing list simply [click here](#) to unsubscribe. If you are having difficulty unsubscribing from this page please email us on media@nswfarmers.org.au and we will remove you from our lists.