



17 August 2016

Re: Backpacker Tax

To whom ever it may concern,

The Southern Forests Food Council Inc. (SFFC) was established in 2012 by local growers for local growers, to promote Southern Forests produce and producers. The SFFC is a member-based organisation with over 300 members, of which 200 are producer members spanning horticulture, agriculture, aquaculture, viticulture and agri-tourism.

The implementation of a tax rate of 32.5 per cent for non-resident 417 and 462 visa holders, known as the 'backpacker tax', will have a detrimental effect on SFFC members, the Southern Forests industries and the wider community.

The Southern Forests region is located 300km south of Perth in the beautiful south-west corner of Western Australia and includes the four main towns of Manjimup, Pemberton, Northcliffe and Walpole. Agriculture is one of the major industries in the Southern Forests with 25% of the population involved in agriculture, forestry and fishing.

The Southern Forests produces over 50 different types of fruits and vegetables, truffles and boutique produce, dairy, sheep and cattle farms, as well as award-winning wineries and exceptional culinary experiences. The Southern Forests represents 20% of total agricultural value in Western Australia's greater South West, which equates to a gross agricultural value of \$127M pa.

The region relies heavily on foreign workers across agricultural and tourism industries and the proposed tax rate will act as a deterrent for backpackers seeking to work in the Australia, and on a local scale, the Southern Forests. The proposed tax will ultimately effect Australia's international competitiveness for backpackers.

Backpackers are a vital element in the Southern Forests region and essential to both tourism and agricultural industries. Without Backpackers there isn't enough local labour to harvest produce in the timeframe required to ensure produce meets the required quality standards. The crop losses due to a labour shortage would have a disastrous effect on the local and state economy. The SFFC do not support a tax rate of 32.5 per cent for non-resident 417 and 462 visa holders and encourage the Australian Government to revise the tax rate, ensuring that rather than hinders, it grows the value of agriculture in regional communities, like the Southern Forests.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bevan Eatts'.

Bevan Eatts
Executive Chairman
Southern Forests Food Council Inc.

Southern Forests Food Council Inc.

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Manjimup | Pemberton | Northcliffe | Walpole



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