

AUST – SEASONAL WORKERS: RNZI  
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### **Questions over Australia’s seasonal workers scheme**

14 JULY 2010 SYDNEY (RNZI) --- There are doubts about the political commitment in a deal to send seasonal employees to pick fruit in Australia.

A Memorandum of Understanding on the Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme has been signed between the Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministers of PNG and Australia.

Details of the agreement are yet to be released but earlier in the year, PNG was allocated 650 visas for fruit picking in rural Australia as part of the scheme which was announced in 2008.

The Executive Director of the Australian Council for International Development, Mark Purcell said while the agreement was overdue, he was concerned about the political commitment in the initiative.

“Very few people have come so far from those countries that we already have existing agreements; namely Vanuatu and Tonga. We’ve only had just under sixty workers come in the past eighteen months to work in the horticultural industry. And if you think the aim is to have two and a half thousand, well then you can see the problem.”.....PNS (ENDS)

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