



TOM VENNING MP

Member for Grey



MEDIA RELEASE

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WITH ONLY DAYS UNTIL HARVEST, LABOR MAKES A MESS OF BACKPACKERS

Labor has fumbled the Working Holiday Maker visa at the worst time for regional farmers. Because of Labor's backtrack on its go-slow directive for worker visas, it has been revealed the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) will be forced to submit applications to fast-track backpackers during critical planting and harvesting seasons. Federal Member for Grey Tom Venning MP has been assisting concerned farmers across the electorate who are uncertain whether to tell their backpackers to cancel their flights or not.

"Farmers in Grey are telling me they are anxious and worried about the upcoming peak season," Mr Venning said.

"They are disappointed in the lack of consideration and consultation for those who made their visa applications between July-August due to securing harvest work.

"By purposefully delaying these applications, it has created stress and uncertainty at the worst time for farmers.

"Labor owes it to our farming community to explain exactly how it will fix this mess and prioritise the workers that farmers need."

Last week, Labor announced changes to the backpacker intake. Year two will cut the backpacker intake from 57,000 to 45,000 and year three will cut from 31,000 to 5,000.

"It is astounding that just one week after Immigration Minister Tony Burke's address at the National Press Club, his immigration plan is already in disarray," Mr Venning said.

"And now Minister Burke is shifting the accountability to a peak body who are not funded to be a migration agency."

Mr Venning said there was still no answer for other industries that depend on the same visas in regional South Australia.

"Businesses like the Pink Roadhouse in Oodnadatta rely on backpackers to keep running," he said.

"There has been no clarity or explanation about what will now be done to provide fixes for other sectors, including hospitality and tourism.

"Our regions are not here to be political pawns while Labor works out its own mistakes."

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