

From: Luciana Loverso [mailto:Luciana.Loverso@cub.com.au]

Sent: Thursday, 30 August 2018 11:27 AM

To: Chambers - Kovacic DP

Subject: OBJECTION NOTICE: Proposed Changes to the Horticulture Award - AM2014/196 and 2017/197 - Casual and Part-Time Employment – Horticulture

RE: AM2014/196 and 2017/197 - Casual and Part-Time Employment – Horticulture

WE OBJECT TO THE IMPOSED CHANGES TO THE HORTICULTURE AWARD.

To impose changes to the Horticulture Award is totally unsustainable forcing many growers and future generations to close their gates and walk off the land, or subsequently pull out their fruit trees and join the welfare system. The Government is completely and totally disconnected to the current dire circumstances of our primary industries and cannot impose such ridiculous changes.

More than half of the fruit growing businesses are just holding on by the skin of their teeth. Fruit Growing Industry in Victoria is suffering. We as growers, experience many disastrous situations, where we send our fruit to the wholesale markets nationally, and as a result of Agents cool stores being at full capacity, if fruit does not sell on the day, then it is donated to charities in large quantities. We're not talking simply about a couple of boxes, it could be as much as several pallet quantities at any time. The average price for fruit sold has been \$5-\$7 per 10 kilo box. What is not being considered here, is the overheads incurred in order to grow the fruit, to pay labour, cost of packaging, chemicals, irrigation, utilities, cold storage and transport, costing the grower at minimum \$10/10kgbox before it leaves the packing shed. Growers today have no financial assurance and security whatsoever. After giving our pears to a packing shed last year, it was 14 months before we received any payments at all. After virtually begging month after month for what was rightfully ours.

The fruit industry does not simply operate within office hours of Monday to Friday. We operate 7 days a week. The award is only going to encourage negative precedents at which casual or part time employees will not be able to secure sustainable work, due to Growers not being able to provide any overtime benefits, as they simply cannot afford them. Increasing labour costs which will directly flow on with fatal consequences for the horticultural industry, not to mention, resulting in a higher turnover of casual/part time employees, posing further burden to our growing unemployment statistics.

Is there any Government body out there, firstly, trying to help the plight of the growers anyway they possibly can? I really don't think so.. We clearly do not have a voice nor support in our Australian Government today. Therefore, we can conclude, that the imposition of these proposed changes to the Horticulture Award, is totally unsustainable and not acceptable.

WE OBJECT!

Regards,

S&RD Loverso Orchards
685 Central Avenue
Shepparton East, VIC, 3631
Ph: 03 58291099