

MEDIA RELEASE

Seasonal Workers Taxation Policy – Australian Country Party

Australian Country Party candidate for Indi, Dr Julian Fidge, is today announcing the 'Seasonal Workers Taxation Policy' as the first federal policy under the Australian Country Party (formally Country Alliance) banner.

Dr Fidge says "Seasonal workers who are paid by each item, such as fruit pickers and pruners are extremely difficult to recruit because of the nature and changing location of the work. This often leads to crops being left to rot and causes widespread inefficiencies in the horticultural industry, because the piece rate work is the rate limiting step of the agricultural process. This has led to the widespread employment of foreign nationals and illegal cash payment of employees to perform this work".

"Some recent reports have compared the employment of foreign nationals to slavery, and the recent deaths of two mango harvesters near Katherine from a roll over accident are particularly worrying, as the ute was carrying 11 seasonal workers."

Australian Country Party believes that the rate of taxation of seasonal workers should be reduced to a level which properly rewards this type of work in order to attract employees, providing labour for the industry and legitimate employment for Australians.

In order to establish the rate of taxation required to attract workers, Australian Country Party would increase the tax-free threshold for seasonal workers to \$60,000 immediately, providing an effective pay rise to seasonal workers of \$11,047 per annum.

The loss of income tax would be offset by increased efficiencies in the horticultural industry, resulting in an increase in tax income to the Commonwealth of between \$100 to \$200 million per annum.

For more information

Dr Julian Fidge - julian.fidge@countryparty.org.au

Robert Danieli
0419 992 077 - chairman@countryparty.org.au