

# Seasonal Harvest Sign-On Bonus Program Guidelines

## Program Summary

The \$10.5 million Seasonal Harvest Sign-On Bonus Program commenced on 17 February 2021 and aims to attract job seekers to work on Victorian horticulture farms harvest through a 'sign-on bonus' payment.

The sign-on bonus payment helps to address the seasonal labour shortage during this year's harvest by incentivising new workers to enter the industry. The total sign-on bonus payment is \$2,430 per worker for a minimum of 40 days of work, which will be provided in two instalments. Days of work must be undertaken on or after 1 November 2021.

The program will close for applications on 31 December 2021 or earlier if funds are exhausted. After undertaking 10 days of work, eligible workers can apply for the first instalment of \$810. To apply for the remainder \$1,620, eligible workers must undertake, and submit evidence of having undertaken, an additional 30 days of work within 90 days of the first instalment being approved.

## Your Eligibility

To be eligible for the program you must meet all of the following criteria:

- be 18 years or older with the right to work in Australia
- are new to working in Victorian agriculture. You must not have worked on-farm in Victoria's agriculture sectors (dairy, livestock, grains and horticulture) prior to the day you started the work that is the subject of your bonus application
- work in eligible Victorian horticulture industries<sup>1</sup> such as fruit, dried fruit, vegetables, olives, nuts, hops and wine grapes
- start work on a farm located in Victoria on or after 1 November 2021
- work on-farm in picking, packing and harvesting of seasonal produce. Duties may include operating harvest machinery
- not be employed through the Seasonal Worker Programme or Pacific Labour Scheme
- hold one of the following valid personal identification documents:
  - Medicare card
  - Driver's licence
  - Australian passport

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<sup>1</sup> Nurseries, turf, cut-flowers are not eligible industries.

- a foreign passport with a valid Australian Visa.

**To be eligible for the first \$810 instalment, you must:**

- Must have commenced work on or after 1 November 2021
- have undertaken at least 10 separate days of work and submitted your application within 30 days of commencing work

**To be eligible for the remainder \$1620 of the bonus you must:**

- be registered with the Program and have received the first instalment
- have undertaken a further 30 separate days of work and apply for the remainder of the bonus within 90 days of your first instalment being approved

**1 General Eligibility Conditions**

In addition to the eligibility criteria, the following also applies:

- Days of work must be undertaken on or after 1 November 2021
- Days of work do not have to be undertaken at a single Victorian horticultural farm location
- People holding a current Australian Visa with working rights, such as working holiday makers, may be eligible for the bonus
- An applicant can receive the Sign-on Bonus only once over the life of the program.

To receive the sign-on bonus payment you must apply for the Program via the online portal.

- If you are assessed as being eligible under the program, you will receive email notification that you are registered
- You may apply for a Sign-on Bonus payment after you have undertaken the qualifying number of 10 work days, and provided the required information and evidence.

**2 Sign-on Bonus Payments**

An applicant can receive two instalments totalling \$2,430.

Payment	Days of work required	Amount
<b>First instalment</b>	Commenced work on or after 1 November 2021.  Undertake 10 days of work on a farm located in Victoria  Submit your application within 30 days of your first day of work.	\$810

<b>Remainder</b>	Undertake a further 30 separate days of work and apply for the remainder of the bonus within 90 days of your first instalment being approved	\$1,620
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A **day of work** is made up of a shift completed on one calendar day, as determined by your employer. We understand that shift times vary, and that workers are sometimes sent home before the end of their allocated shift time due to safety, weather or changes in the labour needs on any given day.

### 3 Program Dates

- The Seasonal Harvest Sign-on Bonus commenced on 17 February 2021 and will conclude on 31 December 2021 or earlier if funds are exhausted.

### 4 Information and evidence required to apply for the Bonus

The following evidence is mandatory to apply for the bonus payments:

- Evidence which confirms your start date with the employer(s) named in your application. This may include;
  - Your contract of employment
  - A Letter of Offer from your employer which includes your start date
  - A letter or email from your employer which includes the terms and dates of your employment
- Payslips that show your employment for at least a ten-day period. Your first payslip from this employer must be included in the application

Payslips are required by law to list:

- Your full name
- The name and Australian Business Number (ABN) of the payer (e.g., your employer or labour hire service provider), and their contact details
- The period for which the relevant pay relates to, including dates and times
- Pay details – including gross and net pay, pay rate, and any loadings, allowances and other payments, rates or entitlements
- Any deductions from your pay
- Any contributions paid for your benefit (e.g. Superannuation)

You will also need to provide:

- Evidence which confirms the separate days you have worked. If your payslip does not show the days worked you may submit: employer approved timesheets, a letter from your employer including terms and dates of employment or a piece work agreement.

Records exported from the Fair Work Ombudsman’s [Record My Hours](#) app can be submitted.

- The addresses of the farm sites where you have worked and for which you are being paid.

Photographs of these items are acceptable if you don’t have an electronic copy.

## 5 How to apply for the Seasonal Harvest Sign-on Bonus

How to apply	Your actions
<p><b>Before you apply</b></p>	<p><b>Read these guidelines to confirm that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• you are eligible to apply, including that you are new to Victorian agriculture, have worked 10 days and are applying for the first instalment within 30 days of commencing work.</li> </ul> <p><b>and:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• you have valid proof of identification</li> <li>• you have evidence of your start date to confirm the terms and dates of your employment</li> <li>• you have your <u>first</u> payslip from this employer and you have payslips that cover a period of at least ten days to submit as part of the evidence of employment.</li> <li>• make sure you keep electronic versions of payslips and other evidence of the days you work and who you work for. Other evidence can include timesheets or records exported from the Fair Work Ombudsman’s <a href="#">Record My Hours</a> app.</li> </ul>
<p><b>To apply for the program and the first instalment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You must apply within 30 days of commencing your employment</li> <li>• Apply via the <a href="#">Agriculture Victoria website</a>.</li> <li>• You are required to submit your evidence electronically. Photographs are acceptable.</li> </ul> <p><b>You will need to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• submit evidence to confirm your identity</li> <li>• declare on your application that you meet the eligibility criteria</li> <li>• submit evidence of commencing work on or after 1 November 2021</li> </ul>

- have completed 10 days of work and submitted your application within 30 days of commencing work.

**You will need**

- Evidence which confirms your commencement date with the employer named in the application. This may include;
  - Your contract of employment
  - A Letter of Offer from your employer which includes your start date
  - A letter or email from your employer which includes the terms and dates of your employment
- Payslips, for evidence of employment
  - Your first payslip from your employer as part of this application
  - You must include payslips that cover a period of at least 10 days of work

Payslips are required by law to list:

- Your full name and the name of your employer
- The name and Australian Business Number (ABN) of the payer (e.g. your employer or labour hire service provider), and their contact details
- The period for which the relevant pay relates to, including dates and times
- Pay details – including gross and net pay, pay rate, and any loadings, allowances and other payments, rates or entitlements
- Any deductions from your pay
- Any contributions paid for your benefit (e.g. Superannuation)
- If your payslip does not show separate days worked you will require other evidence to support your application, e.g., employer approved timesheets, a written piece work agreement. Records exported from the Fair Work Ombudsman’s Record My Hours app can be submitted.

Address/es of the farm sites where you have worked

### To apply for the remainder

- Undertake a further 30 separate days of work and apply for the remainder of the bonus within 90 days of your first instalment being approved
- After you receive notification of your first instalment being approved, you will receive an email from the department with instructions on how to apply for the remainder of the bonus. It will include a **unique link** to your application form
- You must submit this form using **your unique link** within 90 days of your first instalment being approved

#### You will need

- Payslips, for evidence of employment which are required by law to list:
  - Your full name and the name of your employer
  - The name and Australian Business Number (ABN) of the payer (e.g., your employer or labour hire service provider), and their contact details
  - The period for which the relevant pay relates to, including dates and times
  - Pay details – including gross and net pay, pay rate, and any loadings, allowances and other payments, rates or entitlements
  - Any deductions from your pay
  - Any contributions paid for your benefit (e.g Superannuation)
- If your payslip does not show separate days worked you will require other evidence to support your application, e.g., employer approved timesheets, a letter of offer from your employer including terms of employment, a written piece work agreement. Records exported from Fair Work's Record My Hours app can be submitted.
- Provide address/es of the farm sites where you have worked.

## 6 Conditions of Applying

- The application is non-transferable.
- Applicants must declare on their application form that they meet the eligibility criteria and they have not supplied false or misleading information.

- All information and documents requested in support of an application must be submitted to the department's satisfaction for an application to be deemed eligible and approved.
- Applicants must understand that the particulars of their application will be checked as part of the eligibility assessment and application process and their application may not proceed based on these checks.
- Applicants must consent to the department providing necessary information to other government agencies (State and Federal) and to their relevant employer/s (and other payers as listed on their payslips and evidence) if needed to enable the assessment of their application.
- Applicants must provide the details of an Australian bank account in their own name if their application is successful.
- Bonus payments will be made within 10 working days, of receipt of an eligible application.
- The department may at any time, not approve an application, if in the department's opinion association with the applicant may bring the department, a Minister or the State of Victoria into disrepute.
- Successful applicants will be invited to undertake a voluntary survey of the Seasonal Harvest Sign-On Bonus program.

## **7 Audit and Compliance**

- Any information or documents provided by applicants may be subject to audit by the Victorian Government or its representatives and if requested, applicants may be required to produce further evidence.
- As part of assessment of an application and routine program checks, the department may contact your employers to validate the information in the application.
- If any information provided by an applicant is found to be incomplete, inaccurate, false or misleading, the application may not be approved, and any amounts paid to an applicant will be repayable on demand.

## **8 Other information about this program**

- The department reserves the right to amend these guidelines and application terms at any time as it deems appropriate.
- The department's decisions on all matters pertaining to the making of a payment under this Program is at the department's absolute discretion.
- It is the sole responsibility of an applicant to consider any implications of receiving a payment (under the program) on other government welfare assistance (such as JobKeeper, JobSeeker or other Centrelink payments) or tax implications.

## 9 Further information and assistance

- For further information on the Program or for general assistance to register or apply please contact the **Jobs Victoria** hotline on 1300 208 575.

## 10 Getting paid and finding work

- To find out more about harvest jobs and training please visit [agriculture.vic.gov.au/bigharvest](http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/bigharvest)
- Call the **Jobs Victoria** hotline on 1300 208 575 for assistance with this application, finding work, including how to sign-up to the jobs matching platform, Working for Victoria.
- Most seasonal horticulture workers are hired under the Australian Government's Horticulture Award. The award outlines minimum pay rates and other entitlements like leave and overtime.
- The award also covers workers hired through labour hire service providers. Workers can earn an hourly wage or a piecework rate.

### Hourly rate

The minimum hourly rate under the Horticulture Award is:

- \$20.33 for an adult full-time employee
- \$ 25.41 for an adult casual employee

Visit the Fair Work Ombudsman [pay calculator](#) for more information.

### Piece rates

- A piece rate is where a worker earns money based on the amount they have picked, packed, pruned or made.
- Instead of the hours worked, an employer pays the worker for the number of kilograms or bins of produce they pick.

Visit the Fair Work Ombudsman's [Horticulture Showcase](#) page for more information.

### Extra government assistance is available

- Relocation rebates of up to \$6000 for eligible workers (up to \$2000 for international jobseekers) who move to regional areas for at least six weeks.
- Greater access to Youth Allowance. Earn \$15,000 in agriculture between 30 November 2020 and 31 December 2021 to be considered independent.
- Free Victorian Government-funded training programs to get jobseekers ready for work.

## 11 Privacy

In order to assess your application for the sign-on bonus program, the department is collecting personal information from you to assess your eligibility, to administer the

reimbursement, and to contact you about your application and to review and evaluate the program. If personal information about a third party is included in your application, you are required to ensure that the third party is aware of the contents of this Privacy Statement. In the assessment of your application, it may be necessary to share your personal information with other government agencies (State and Federal). If you have previously provided personal information to the department, we may use this personal information to substantiate the personal information you have provided in this program. Any personal information collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred will be held in accordance with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic) and other applicable laws. The department is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information. Enquiries about access to personal information, or for other concerns regarding the privacy of personal information, can be emailed to the Department's Privacy Unit at [privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au). The Department's privacy policy is also available by emailing the Department's Privacy Unit.