

AUSTRALIAN OLIVE
ASSOCIATION^{LTD}

AOA COVID-19 Bulletin 2 for the Olive Industry

We trust everyone is coping OK with the new operating environment that COVID-19 (CV19) has created for us both personally and our businesses. If members need help with an olive-related issue that hasn't been covered in this or Bulletin 1, you can give us a ring and we will do what we can to help. If we don't know the answer, then we will find someone who does.

Much has happened since Bulletin 1 and the situation continues to evolve daily. Following is an update on the key issues that will impact on our industry, with lots of links to more detail. We acknowledge the information sharing from our colleagues at NFF and other horticulture organizations as we sift through it all to provide the most relevant information for the olive industry.

You can find general information relevant to farm businesses by following the links below to view those pages.

FarmHub COVID-19 Resources

[Key Information and FAQs](#)

[Border Control Information](#)

[Assistance and Support](#)

[NFF Workplace Guide \(New!\)](#)

During the past week, the best lessons we have learnt about preparing for our olive harvest is to do your homework early, and have a well communicated plan for harvest logistics and CV19-safe people management. Make sure you have all the movement permits required (particularly in WA and QLD) and all the social distancing support in place for a CV19-compliant workplace.

The ability for each grove and mill to continue operating as an essential business will be determined by how well we comply with CV19 restrictions. As OliveCare® Administrator Peter McFarlane points out, a key concern of the Federal Government is that the virus does not spread through the agricultural workforce and interrupt our food supply. It is therefore asking for clear assurances from the horticultural sector that we have effective measures in place.

Tips that may be useful for olive producers from other horticultural industries include:

- Educating your workers on proper hygiene procedures, and self-isolation information - promotional posters from the Commonwealth Government can be found [here](#).
- Ensuring all workers are separated by 1.5m.
- Implementing set teams of workers and keeping them apart at all times including during breaks, transportation and in living environments.
- If possible, providing separate toilet facilities or set times for using facilities followed by disinfection.
- Cancelling all face-to-face meetings and implementing a 'no visitor' policy.
- Providing individual pickers with their own equipment.
- If necessary, basing accommodation and housing around teams so that if an infected case is identified it is easier to isolate the impacts.
- [Click here](#) for a checklist designed to help growers in general.



NSW DPI advised yesterday that:

- In line with COVID-19 requirements, NSW Department of Primary Industries has suspended olive oil sensory panel analysis until 1 June 2020.
- NSW DPI Oil Testing Service will continue to offer laboratory chemistry testing services.
- NSW DPI remains committed to delivering high-standard testing services to their customers, through their nationally and internationally accredited laboratories.
- NSW DPI will keep customers informed of updates to the temporary suspension.
- If you require additional information, please contact NSW DPI Laboratory Services manager Belinda Taylor at wagga.labs@dpi.nsw.gov.au or 02 6938 1688.

Modern Olives has advised that they have made some operational changes in relation to CV19 restrictions but their laboratory and sensory panel will continue to operate. Contact Claudia Guillaume at c.guillaume@modernolives.com.au for more information.

AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL OLIVE AWARDS (AIOA)



As mentioned in Bulletin 1, the 2020 AIOA will be going ahead irrespective of CV19 restrictions in place at the time. The AIOA management team, led by Chief Steward Trudie Michels, has devised operational and judging protocols that will enable the competition to maintain its quality and integrity, while delivering the commercial benefits exhibitors require for their businesses.

The key dates are as follows:

- Wednesday, 1 July 2020: EVOO and Table Olive Entries open
- Friday, 4 September 2020: EVOO and Table Olive Entries close
- Monday, 5 October 2020: Results emailed to entrants with links to order decals online.

MINISTER LITTLEPROUD EXTENDS AG VISAS

Over the weekend, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture have announced the extension of visas for critical agricultural workers, following calls from industry.

Key details of this announcement are:

- Seasonal Worker Programme and Pacific Labour Scheme workers can extend their stay for up to 12 months to work for approved employers (ensuring pastoral care and accommodation needs of workers are met to minimise health risks to visa

- holders and the community).
- Approved employers under the Seasonal Worker Programme and Pacific Labour Scheme will need to continue engaging with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment on labour market testing to ensure recruitment of Australians first.
- Working Holiday Makers (WHMs) who work in agriculture or food processing will be exempt from the six month work limitation with the one employer and eligible for a further visa to keep working in these critical sectors if their current visa is due to expire in the next six months.
- Conditions will be placed upon visa holders to self-isolate for 14 days before taking up employment in a different region (including termination of visas where there is non-compliance).
- To support implementation of self-isolation arrangements for visa holders and avoid spread of COVID-19 the government is working with states and territories on enforcement and sanction mechanisms.
- Employers will need to commit to providing safe accommodation for agricultural workers that complies with social distancing requirements.

Arrangements will also need to be in place for a declaration between employers and employees that all protocols necessary to ensure human health and accommodation requirements have been met.

FAIR WORK COMMISSION PROPOSAL TO VARY AWARD

The Fair Work Commission has indicated it proposes to vary most of the Modern Awards, including the agricultural awards, to:

1. Include a right for employees to take two weeks of “unpaid pandemic leave”; and,
2. Allow employer and employee to agree for an employee to take twice their annual leave at half pay.

These variations are intended to allow employees to comply with government directives to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g. to self-isolate) particularly where other forms of leave (e.g. personal leave) are not available.

AUSTRALIAN UPDATE



Support for businesses impacted by Coronavirus

On 1 April, the Australian Government announced measures to help secure freight access for Australian agriculture and fisheries exporters.

The new \$110 million International Freight Assistance Mechanism will assist Australia’s agricultural and fisheries sector by helping them export their high-quality produce into key overseas markets, with return flights bringing back vital medical supplies, medicines and equipment.

Exporters wishing to access the mechanism can register their interest or call the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment on (02) 6272 2444.

On 1 April, the Government also announced increased funding for the Export Market Development Grant (EMDG). Funding for the scheme will increase by \$49.8 million in the 2019-20 financial year, allowing exporters and tourism businesses to get additional reimbursements for costs incurred in marketing their products and services around the world.

This supplements the additional \$60 million already committed by the Government, and brings EMDG funding to its highest level in more than 20 years at \$207.7 million for the 2019-20 financial year.

For details about the full range of programs the Australian Government has launched in support for Australian businesses go to business.gov.au.

Important Austrade Links

Austrade has developed a [COVID-19 information and insights page](#) which is updated daily.

Information about the recently announced International Air Freight Mechanism and extra funding for EMDG can be found [here](#).

WA AND QLD BORDER CLOSURES



Hard border closures are in effect in both QLD and WA this week. Here is a brief reminder of the provisions in place in those states:

Western Australia

- [Hard border closure](#) came into effect midnight 5 April 2020 – WA State Border now closed.
- Hard border closure will last at least a month.
- Exemptions are currently being finalised and will include people who perform functions in:
 - Healthcare
 - Emergency services
 - Transport freight and logistics
 - People with specialist skills not available in WA
 - National or state security and governance, and
 - Courts and judicial services
- Exemptions will also apply for fly-in, fly-out workers and their families, but strict 14-day self-isolation measures will need to be followed when they first enter the state.
- Additional restrictions in place for the [Kimberley region](#) as of midnight 3 April 2020. New boundaries are in place for four Local Government Areas within the Kimberley. Existing exemptions apply.

Queensland

- From midnight 3 April 2020, [entry into Queensland will be prohibited without a permit](#). Apply for an entry pass [here](#).
- Only 'exempt' persons will be allowed to enter Queensland.
- Interstate persons who provide critical services to Queensland, including construction, mining/energy/agribusinesses are 'exempt' provided their employer

has provided a compliant plan to manage preventing the transmission of COVID-19 among its employees and the community.

- From 4 April 2020, additional restrictions will be in place for interstate FIFO workers specific to the resources sector, where only [critical resource sector employees](#) will be allowed to enter Queensland from interstate to work.

NFF RELEASES COVID-19 WORKPLACE GUIDE



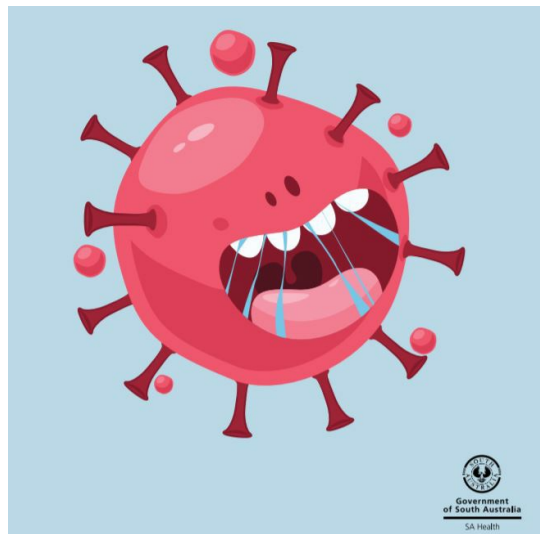
The National Farmers Federation has released the first edition of its COVID-19 Workplace Guide on the weekend, to coincide with the announcement of visa extensions by the Federal Government.

The Guide outlines best practice guidance regarding living and working arrangements for farm workers during the COVID-19 outbreak. A copy of the Guide can be found [here](#). It has also been referred by Government to Australia's Chief Medical Officer and the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee for their consideration and input.

HORT INNOVATION COVID-19 INFORMATION PAGE

Hort Innovation has established a COVID-19 information for horticulture participants on its website [here](#). The links to various resources are intended to help growers and others in the horticulture industry keep up to date with trusted information in these unusual times – particularly news and updates relating to continuing to operate. The page is being updated with further advice and links as they become available.

COVID-19 BOOKLET FOR CHILDREN



SA Health have produced a Coronavirus booklet for children to assist people in explaining the virus and current restrictions in a factual and reassuring manner. Click [here](#) to download a copy.

Greg Seymour
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Olive Association

Australian Olive Association | [Website](#)

