



# AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

## Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office



### Getting Ready to Welcome Seasonal Workers

#### Media Release

2 July 2012

The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office encourage local communities to welcome seasonal workers from the Pacific region into their parishes. Starting today, Australian farmers can now employ workers from the Pacific region and East Timor under the Seasonal Worker Program.

Up to 2000 places are available in 2012-13 for seasonal workers from nations such as East Timor, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

"We expect many of the workers coming over to participate in the program will also be looking to attend church services and participate in the life of the parish throughout their stay in Australia" said Fr Maurizio Pettenà, National Director of ACMRO, "Parishes and local community groups are encouraged to make these workers feel welcomed and included".

The Catholic Church, through ACMRO, has been part of the National Stakeholder Consultative Panel (NSCP) in order to assist with consultation and engagement in implementing the Seasonal Worker Program.

"The Seasonal Worker Program is an excellent opportunity to contribute to the economic development of Pacific Island countries" said Joe Moloney, ACMRO consultant to the NSCP. "The program also offers a reliable, returning workforce to Australian employers who are struggling to find local Australian workers, especially at harvest time."

Seasonal workers will be able to gain employment for up to 6 months in the horticultural industry helping Australian growers on crops such as citrus, cucumbers, grapes, almonds, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, stone fruit, apples and more.

"Employers who cannot find Australian jobseekers will need to guarantee seasonal workers a minimum amount of work and pay them in accordance with the relevant award or industrial instrument's, the same amount that Australian workers receive" he said.

For parishes interested in how they can be involved please contact Joe Moloney at ACMRO on (02) 6201 9848 or e-mail [info@acmro.catholic.org.au](mailto:info@acmro.catholic.org.au).

For organisations or employers looking to participate in the seasonal worker program please contact the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations on (02)6240 5234, visit their website: [www.deewr.gov.au/pswps](http://www.deewr.gov.au/pswps) or e-mail [seasonalworker@deewr.gov.au](mailto:seasonalworker@deewr.gov.au).