

Fair Farms Initiative to be rolled out nationally

Growcom is pleased to announce the new Fair Farms Initiative to be rolled out nationally in an effort to improve the reputation of the horticulture industry in relation to the treatment of workers.

Growcom Chief Advocate, Rachel Mackenzie, said we acknowledge that the majority of growers do treat their workers fairly and are compliant with workplace legislation, but sadly the actions of a few are getting significant media coverage and tarnishing the reputation of the industry as a whole.

“The focus of the Fair Farms Initiative is to ensure that growers not only have the tools and knowledge to treat their workers fairly but also can demonstrate that to their customers and the wider community,” she said.

“The Fair Farms Initiative is significantly funded through the Fair Work Ombudsman’s Community Engagement Grants Program and has an initial focus on vulnerable workers, however it is our goal that the program benefit all workers and growers in the longer term.”

The Fair Farms Initiative has five main components:

- A series of information articles on key workplace relations issues for publication in an array of industry magazines including Fruit and Vegetable News, Vegetables Australia and other regional and industry publications.
- The roll out of the Hort360 workplace relations best management practice (BMP) module nationally, over the next four years, to enable growers to do a confidential risk assessment of their current practice and identify areas for improvement.
- Targeted regional seminars throughout Australia focusing on key areas of non-compliance.
- The development, through Freshcare, of a voluntary thirdparty Audited Certification for growers to enable them to demonstrate compliance.
- Development of a pathway to qualifications in Human Resources for interested growers.

“These activities will be supported by a strong presence at the 2017 Hort Connections conference in May, where we will be holding a workplace relations symposium covering off on issues such as the Horticulture Award and the certification scheme,” Ms Mackenzie said.

For more information on the symposium please visit the Growcom website:

www.growcom.com.au/FairFarmsInitiative

Keep an eye out for the Fair Farms Initiative page in each edition of the magazine. For more information please contact Workplace Relations Advisor, Annabel Hutch on 07 3620 3844 or email wrtteam@growcom.com.au