

Australian Dairy Farmers Limited
Level 2, Swann House
22 William Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000

Phone +61 3 8621 4200
Fax +61 3 8621 4280

www.australiandairyfarmers.com.au

ABN 76 060 549 653

Wednesday April 3 2019

Permanent residency for skilled migrants to help fix dairy labour shortage

For Immediate Release

THE federal government has opened a gateway for skilled migrants working on dairy farms to move permanently to Australia in a bid to help solve the industry's labour shortage crisis.

Under changes to the Dairy Industry Labour Agreement (DILA), skilled overseas workers on Temporary Skill Shortage (TSS) visas and the defunct 457-visa can apply for permanent residency.

To be eligible, workers employed under a DILA must be on either visa for at least three years and be nominated for an Employer Nomination Scheme (ENS) visa by the same employer.

Peak dairy farmer group Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF) praised the outcome, after the organisation last year wrote to Immigration Minister David Coleman urging him to help the industry secure a permanent skilled workforce.

"This is a terrific outcome and we appreciate the Minister's efforts in listening to the industry and working constructively with us in addressing the shortage of skilled labour that is hurting dairy businesses," ADF President Terry Richardson said.

"The pathway to permanent residency is vital to ensuring Australian dairy farmers can attract skilled overseas workers who will avoid Australia if they can obtain permanent residency in other countries."

The change will bring the dairy industry's labour agreement into alignment with the meat and pork industries.

"Dairy farmers need reliable access to skilled overseas workers and it's pleasing to see the government amend our industry labour agreement to reflect the modern reality of the dairy industry," Mr Richardson said.

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For further information, contact:

Ashley Mackinnon
Media & Communications Manager, Australian Dairy Farmers
Tel: 0447 161 919
Email: media@australiandairyfarmers.com.au