

# Backpacker tax under review

A REVIEW of the backpacker tax was a “positive first step”, according to North Queensland senator Ian Macdonald.

The Federal Government will start a review and public consultation on the range of issues affecting the supply and remuneration conditions for work undertaken by Working Holiday Maker visa holders.

Senator Macdonald said the issue was raised with him many times and in many places during the recent election campaign.

“Agricultural producers from the Atherton Tablelands, the Cassowary Coast and the Burdekin Delta have all told me that their ability to source a seasonal workforce — in many cases the backbone of the labour force — has been reduced to almost nil,” he said.

Senator Macdonald said the tax-free threshold should be restored for this visa class or some other appropriate ar-

range made. He predicted the removal of the threshold in its present form would not pass the party room.

“I am pleased the government has convened this review in recognition that the more than 200,000 working holiday makers who come here each year are a vital source of labour across the nation,” he said.

The review will address the government’s terms of reference, focusing on four key themes: Australia’s international competitiveness for backpackers; seasonal and temporary jobs and projected growth in agriculture and tourism; support for small businesses around engaging seasonal labour; and protections for vulnerable workers.

Public submissions must be made by Friday, September 2, 2016. For more information or to make a submission, visit: [agriculture.gov.au/working-holidaymaker](http://agriculture.gov.au/working-holidaymaker)