

How Hard Can Agriculture Be?

‘There are heaps of backpackers, I’ll recruit all the backpackers I need’

‘I can’t afford to pick the crop’

‘Returning PALM workers are 40 per cent more productive’

‘I’ve got people, but I need productive people’

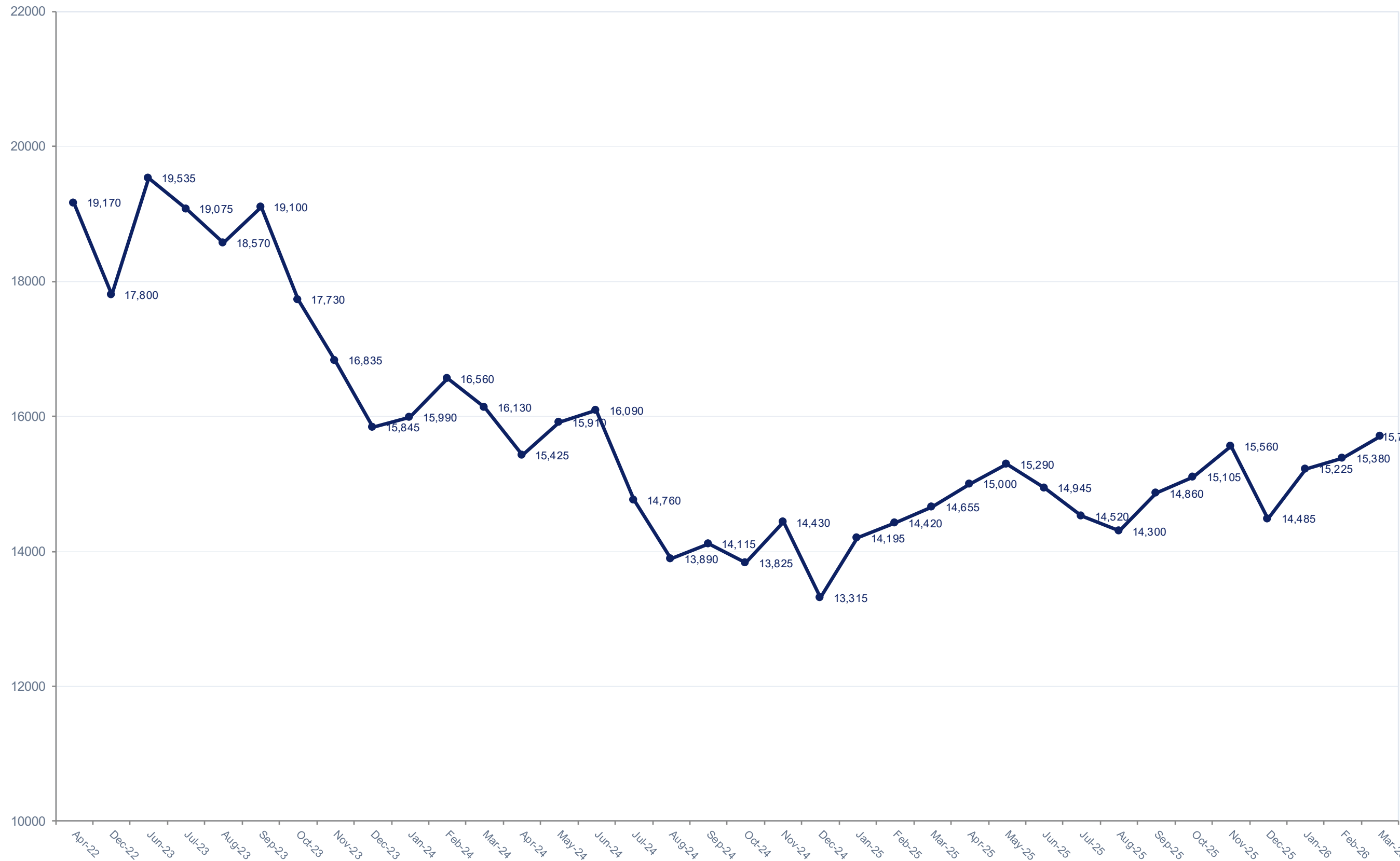
‘How do I train more supervisors and managers and keep them engaged?’

‘How do I get and keep skilled people?’

‘Margins are under pressure with inflation and retail price pressure’

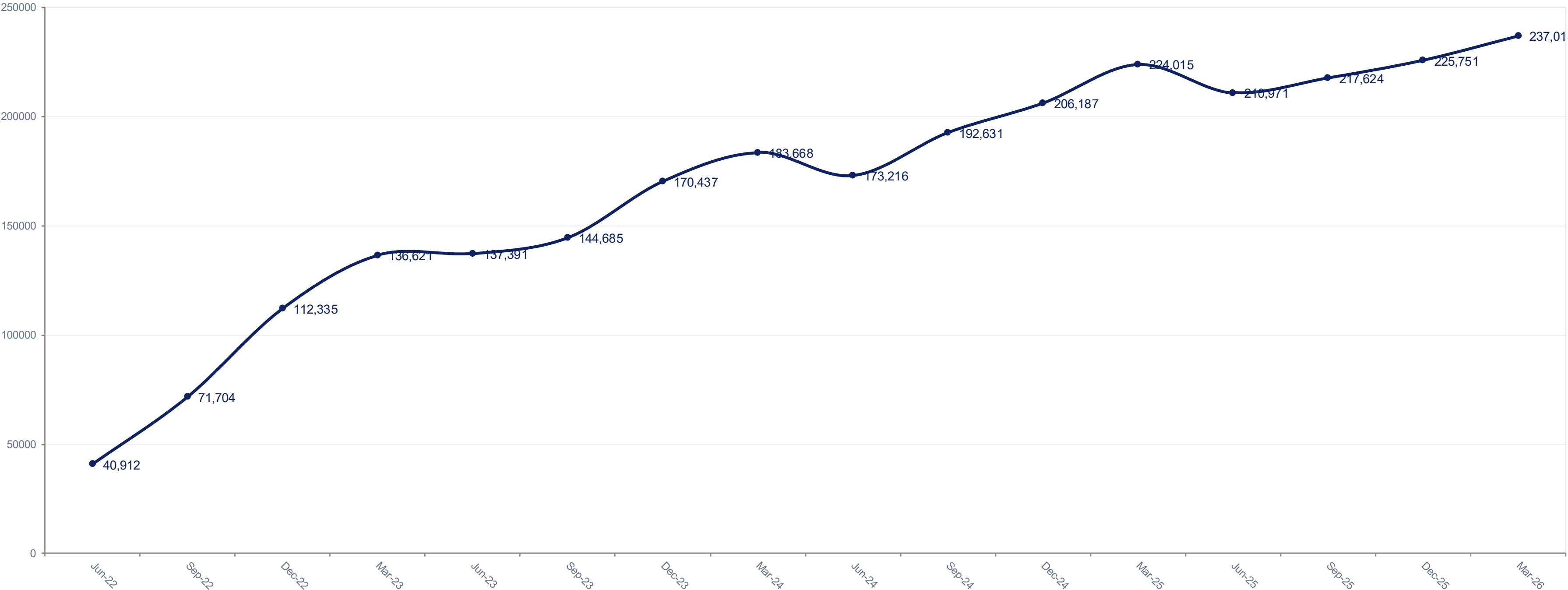
PALM Scheme Workers

Change in PALM Short Term Workers

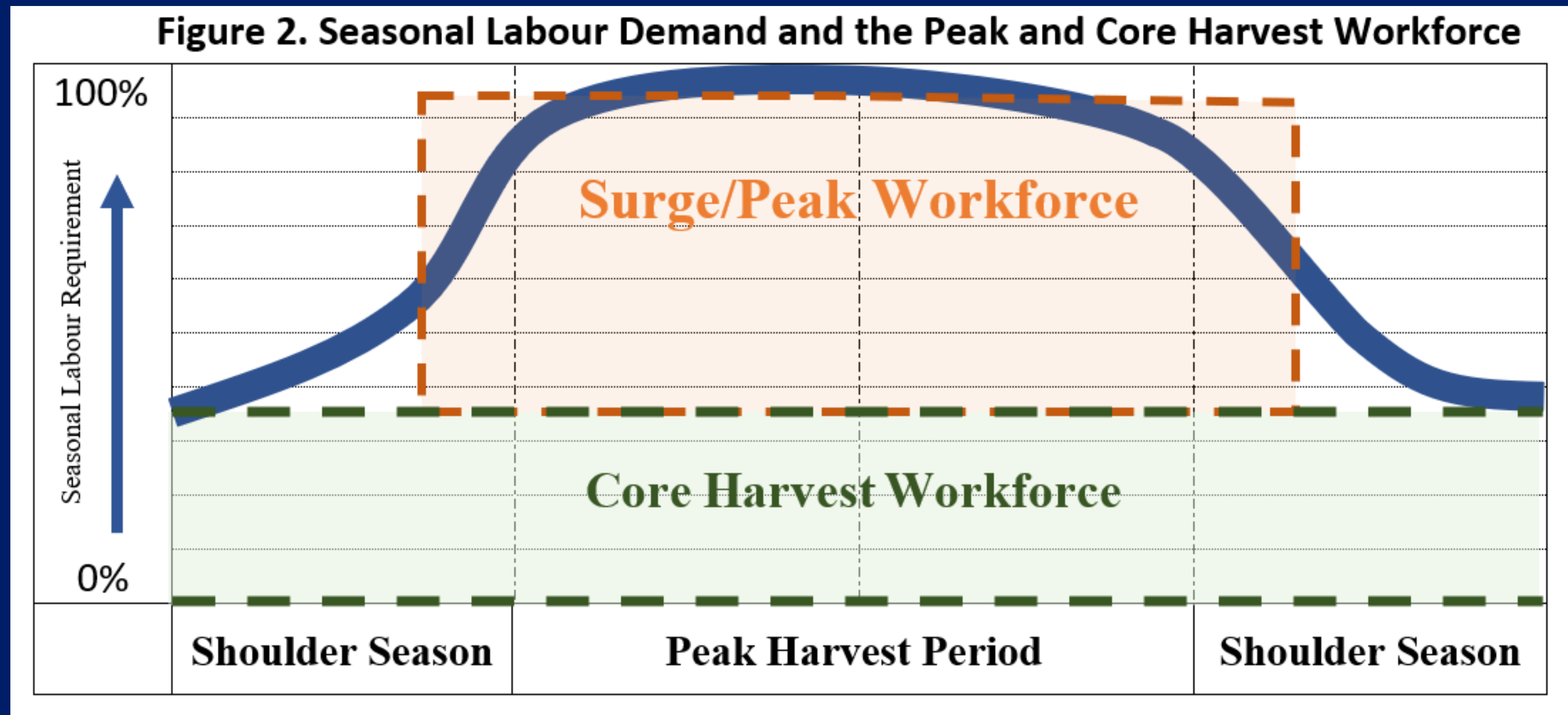


Increase in Backpackers in Australia

Backpackers (462 and 417)



Workforce Requirements



Source: Australian Fresh Produce Alliance

Role of Cohorts

BACKPACKERS

- Flexible, casual labour
- Not necessarily work focussed and there may be high turnover and lower productivity

PALM WORKERS

- Sponsored visa with significant improvement in productivity from returnning workers
- Significant costs for flights, accommodation, transport and welfare

AUSTRALIANS

- Often employed in key roles as supervisors, managers, technical roles for permanent work
- Hard to retain Australians with rapidly increasing wages in other sectors

SKILLED VISA HOLDERS

- Secure key skills from overseas to support existing skills in your business
- Not always transferable skills and not necessarily long term

Success Factors

Key Elements for Success

- **Know your numbers** – Understand workforce needs and business metrics.
- **Recruit the right people** – Hire based on skills, attitude, and long-term fit.
- **Train your people** – Invest in upskilling to improve performance.
- **Support your people** – Provide resources and a positive work environment.
- **Supervise your people** – Ensure clear expectations and accountability.
- **Give feedback** – Foster continuous improvement and engagement.
- **Pay people properly, pay people well** – Fair compensation drives retention and motivation.
- **Support returning workers** – PALM program shows a 40% productivity increase with returning workers.

We All Need

- **The right leaders**
- **The right people**
- **The right skills**