

**INQUIRY INTO MODERN SLAVERY RISKS FACED BY
TEMPORARY MIGRANT WORKERS IN RURAL AND
REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES**

Name: Kun Du
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Dear Committee,

I am a blueberry picker who has been working in Bowraville for nearly four months, often laboring for eight hours or more each day, yet I still haven't received enough payslips to apply for my second-year visa. I want to document the unreasonable conditions I've experienced over the past few months to support your efforts to address modern-day slavery.

When I first arrived in this small town, I was told that \$300 would cover both rent and a deposit, but upon moving in, the cost suddenly changed to \$300 for the deposit and an additional \$150 for rent. This unexpected price increase caught me off guard. It wasn't until after I moved in that I was informed that my wages for the first week wouldn't be paid until the third week of work. Before this, no one had mentioned that we wouldn't receive wages for the first two weeks. With only \$300, I had to use all of it to pay the deposit. Without any income, I had no money for living expenses. Our supervisor offered to lend us money for living costs, leading me to accumulate a debt of around \$800 to \$900 in rent. I worked hard to earn money to pay off the debt and had repaid \$400 before leaving. However, they required us to give two weeks' notice before leaving, or we would lose the \$300 deposit. I couldn't endure the living conditions any longer and left without receiving my deposit. After nearly four months of hard work, I left with a debt of almost \$1,000.

Due to extremely low wages, there were two weeks where, after paying rent (\$130–\$150 per week), buying essential items, and paying for daily transportation, I was left with only \$2 in my account to live on for an entire week. It was impossible to survive on this.

Our house was overcrowded with as many as 17 people, most of whom were backpackers like myself. The landlord, who was Indian, had converted the garage into a kitchen and installed five security cameras around the house, including one in the kitchen, allowing him to monitor us 24/7. When we protested, the landlord and supervisor threatened to fire us, telling us to find other jobs if we didn't like it. The supervisor claimed our lives weren't worth watching, but I disagree. No one's daily life should be constantly monitored by someone with more resources and power. If the landlord saw through the cameras that we opened the garage door to get some fresh air or sunlight, he would call the supervisor, who would then call us, yelling to close the door immediately. I don't understand why the landlord rented the house to us but insisted on controlling our behavior.

The landlord didn't allow us to cook upstairs, so he blocked the kitchen sink on the second floor, forcing us to cook in the garage. There were days when, after a long day of work, we came home to find no water or electricity, and we had to eat dry bread. The water pressure in the kitchen was kept extremely low, so the 17 of us had to wait in line to wash dishes, which was very inefficient. The cooking stoves were limited, and after long workdays, we had to wait in line to cook, making it difficult to eat promptly. The landlord even taped over the exhaust fan in the bathroom because he said we were leaving the switch on when we went out.

We received our wages for the first week of work only in the third week, and we didn't get payslips for the first week until then either. Many workers couldn't take it and left early, but they weren't given their final two weeks' payslips, meaning they had to work extra days on other farms to meet the 88-day requirement. Additionally, we were only issued payslips for weeks where we earned at least \$350. If we didn't meet that amount, no payslip was issued. Despite working for over 88 days, I still don't have 12 payslips to apply for my second-year visa. We worked long hours, often to the point of exhaustion, sometimes close to 10 hours a day. But because our wages were so low, we didn't earn \$350 weekly, and many left without the payslips they were owed. I believe that no matter how many hours we work, we have the right to receive our payslips. However, they told us that if we didn't reach \$350 per week, our visa application might be rejected, and we would be

causing trouble for other backpackers. They also discouraged me from asking questions, saying their boss was temperamental and had a gun, hinting that I should stay quiet and not be too curious about their operations.

We were also responsible for paying our own taxes, with the supervisor asking us to transfer tax money to them once we earned over \$350. However, we couldn't track our taxes, and our pension contributions are also untraceable, showing as zero. So where has our money gone?

We didn't have a car, so we had to rely on them to take us to the supermarket after work, usually once a week, though sometimes it would be nearly two weeks before we could go. Even when they agreed to take three of us from the same room, they would later say only one or two could go. One or two people had to buy groceries for three people for the entire week. We had to wait constantly for their permission.

One of the farms we worked on was called The farm owner paid us by the bucket, each one weighing 2.2 kg. However, he demanded that we pick about 2.4 kg per bucket, but the price remained the same, so our wages were even lower compared to being paid by the kilogram. Each bucket of blueberries weighs 2.4 kg, and we are paid \$4.50 per bucket. Every day, different people pick between 14 and 30 buckets, but the wages are very low. Each bucket of blueberries weighs 2.4 kg, and we are paid \$4.50 per bucket. Every day, different people pick between 14 and 30 buckets, but the wages are very low. Filling each bucket was difficult, and the Indian farm owner was never satisfied, saying things like, "Add more; fill the bucket like an ice cream cone." Every time we handed in our berries, he would say it wasn't enough, making the work feel hopeless. The low wages couldn't even cover basic living expenses, and the endless demands for more berries made me feel exhausted and miserable. Going to the farm each day felt like descending into a blueberry hell of prolonged suffering.

Misunderstandings with the supervisor led to threats that we wouldn't be allowed on the bus to go home. They seemed to create an environment where everyone had to obey them completely. If someone disagreed, they had the cars and resources to threaten us, but we didn't back down, fighting for our rights through arguments and resistance.

As long as it didn't rain, we were required to work. Our longest stretch of work without a break lasted 17 days, only stopping when it finally rained. October 7th was Labor Day in Australia, but we worked for 10 hours that day.

In conclusion, I've now left that place, but I am still working hard to get my payslips. I've worked from June 24th until now, exceeding the 88 days, but I have so few payslips that I am trying to calculate the work hours and meager wages to meet the requirements for my second-year visa.

I hope that by sharing my experience, future backpackers working on farms won't face the same mistreatment and exploitation. Thank you for your time.

I am from China, on a Working Holiday Visa, and my name is Kun Du. I love Australia and hope to have more time to experience its diverse culture and life, rather than spending so much time struggling with unreasonable farm conditions just to get the promised, but ever-elusive, payslips.

Please feel free to contact me if you need any further information. I would be more than happy to contribute to this cause.

Kind regards,

Kun Du

委员会，您好，

我是一个在小镇（Bowraville）采摘蓝莓快四个月并且每天辛勤工作八个小时甚至超过八个小时但还没有得到足够pays lips得以申请二签的蓝莓picker.我想把我过去三个月经历的不合理都写下来参与到你们改善当代奴隶制状况的努力中

当我第一次到达这个小镇的时候，原本说好的300块包含房租和押金，入住后变成300押金加上150块的房租，临时涨价让我措手不及，我们到住处才被告知我们的工资将在工作的第三个星期发第一个星期的薪水 在此之前，他们都没有告知我们前两个星期拿不到薪水，我只有300块全部交了押金，没有工资也没有生活费，于是我们的supervisor说没有生活费的话可以借给我们，以至于我最后欠款欠房租最高的时候达到八九百块，我通过努力摘蓝莓赚钱，还了400块，离开的时候又把所有钱还完但是因为他们要求如果你要离开必须提前两个星期告知，否则拿不到退还

的300块押金，我实在忍受不了那里的环境想要尽快离开，于是我也没有能够拿到我的押金 我辛勤工作快四个月，最后离开的时候倒贴了将近一千块钱

因为过于低的薪水，有两个星期我付完房租（130-150块一周），购买了生活所需，交完每天的接送车费，我卡里只有2块钱，2块钱支撑一个星期的生活，实在是难以为继

我们的房子有很多和我一样的背包客居住，最多的时候住了17个人 房主是印度人，他把车库改成厨房，在房子周围装了5个监控，在厨房里也装监控，24小时随意查看我们的日常生活 我们抗议，房主和supervisor就威胁我们会辞掉我们，让我们找别的工作 supervisor说我们的生活没有观看的价值，但我不同意，每个人的日常生活不应该被一个更有资源和权力的人没有任何理由就24小时查看和监管 房主通过监控看到我们开车库门晒太阳透气，就会打电话给supervisor，接着supervisor就打电话来骂我们，要我们马上关上车库门，我不明白，为什么他租房给我们，还要管控我们的行为

印度房主不让我们在二楼做饭，于是把水槽的水龙头堵死，我们只能去车库做饭 我们经历过辛苦工作一天之后回到住处想吃饭，但是没有水和电，只能吃干面包的时候 他把厨房水槽的水调到很小，于是我们17个人只能很慢地排队洗碗，效率很低 灶台也很有限，每天工作之后只能排队等待做饭，都不能很快吃上饭 房主还用大力胶把我们的厕所的换气扇粘上，因为他说我们出门不关开关

我们工作第三周才领薪水，我们的payslips也是在第三周领到第一周的payslips，很多人受不了提前离开，拿不到本该属于他们的两周的pays lips，他们只能到别的农场多做超过88天的更多工作 同时他们要求我们每周采蓝莓赚到350块才给我们发pays

lips，没有到350块就没有pays lips，所以我到现在实际工作已经超过88天，我的pays lips也不够12张可以用于申请二签 我们做了很久的工作，我们每天工作到眼睛睁不开，甚至有时候快10个小时，但是因为薪水太低，我们每周不够350块就拿不

到payslips,很多人因此离开，又拿不到本属于他们的两周的pays lips 我认为不管你每周工作多长时间，我们都有权利拿到我们的pays lips，但是他们会说我们pays lips 350

不够每周 块钱的话申请会不通过，会影响其他的背包客，让我们不要制造麻烦 也因为我常常有很多“为什么这么做？”，“这么做好像不合理”的疑问，他们不想让我问问题，暗示他们的老板脾气不好，而且有枪，只是为了让我安分点，不要太好奇他们的运作

每周的税是我们自己交，supervisor会让我们把超过350块之后需要的税钱转给他们，但是我们查不到我们的税 三个月的时间过去了，养老金我们也查不到，养老金是0，那么我们给他们的钱去哪里了？

我们没有车，所以区超市都是他们在我们工作后带我们去，一周去一次，甚至有时候快两周才去，我们每次想去超市都不会很爽快地成功，说好同房间的三个人可以去，最后就变成只能一个或者两个人去，一个人或两个人要买三个人一周的生活所需 我们得等待，不断地等待他们的允许

我们工作的其中一个农场叫 ，农场主要求按桶收钱，每一桶的重量是2.2kg，但是农场主要求我们每一桶采摘2.4kg左右才能交果，但是价格不变，于是我们相比用kg计算的工资更低，每一桶都采摘得艰难，还要面对印度农场主的永不满足：“再多点，你得把桶装成冰淇淋 ”每次交果的时候都被说不够，工作让人觉得非常绝望 很少的甚至不能负担生活的薪水，很多的需要交的果子，我感到很累很难受 每天到农场，我觉得像掉进了蓝莓地狱，漫长的煎熬

我们还会因为和工头有一些误解而被威胁不让坐车回家，因为他们想创造一个真空的所有人都必须服从他们的环境，如果有人不同意，他们有车有资源，可以随时威胁我们，但我们不会妥协，我们也和他们争吵争执争取我们的权利

只要不下雨，我们就要持续工作，我们工作最长的时间是17天没有休息直到下雨 10月7日是澳大利亚的劳动节，但那天我们工作了10个小时

总之，我现在已经离开了那个地方，而我还在为了我的payslips努力工作，我从6月24日到现在已经工作超过88天，但我只能用payslips少得可怜的工资换算时薪的工作时长以得到足够的pays lips申请我的二签

希望我的经历能够对未来从事农场工作的背包客一些益处，希望他们不要再被欺负 谢谢你们

我是中国人，我是working holiday visa,我的名字叫杜坤.我喜欢澳大利亚，我希望有更多时间体验澳大利亚不同的文化和生活，而不是把很多时间都耗费在本来不应该这么过分的农场采摘上只为了他们承诺但永远遥远的pays lips