

Cobram Calling

**Hard workers
welcome!**

Info for pickers and packers



Cobram is 250 k from Melbourne, right on the Murray River.

Cobram is a major fruit growing region. We grow a wide range of fruit including: cherries, apricots, nectarines, peaches, plums, apples, pears, citrus and lots more

Picking jobs start each season in late October or early November and workers can follow the crops right through to July or August.



Picker or Packer?

There are two main types of seasonal jobs in Cobram.

Pickers:

Pickers work outside picking the fruit and placing it into bins for transfer into the packing shed or other storage facility. This is a very physical job requiring lifting, bending, stretching, climbing, walking - all day.

Pickers usually work 5 - 6 days per week, starting early in the morning and finishing in the afternoon.

Packers:

Packers work inside putting the fruit into a range of packages for sale. Usually they pack into trays or boxes. Packers work on a grader line where the fruit travels to you for inspection and packing. The work is fast and requires good attention to detail. Packers need to be fit and strong.

What gear do you need?

Picking or packing requires sensible comfortable clothing. Pickers need protection from the sun and from the trees.

When you work outside you need a hat or head covering, many wear broad brim hats, others choose a scarf or hoodie.

Strong, closed in shoes or boots must be worn.



Meals and Breaks

As with other jobs you have an unpaid lunch break, usually of 30 minutes.

There is also a paid 10 minute morning tea break.

Pickers and packers usually work away from town so they need to bring their own food and drink.

Pickers eat in the orchard, packing sheds have lunch areas for workers.



You need to be fit for this work



You need to pick the high fruit



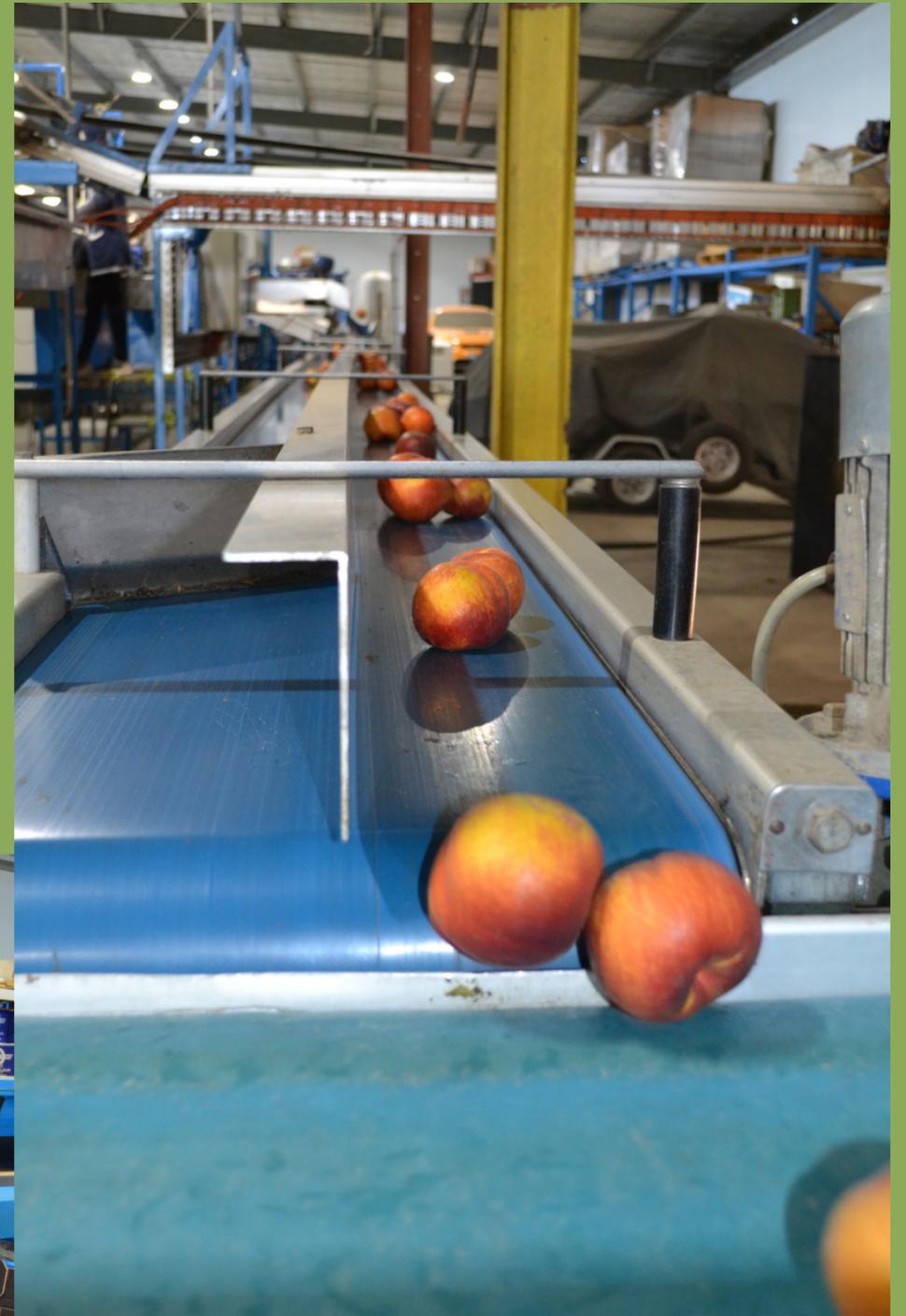
You need to pick the high fruit

Some orchards have mechanical lifters, others use ladders



In the packing Shed

You need to pay attention and keep up



In the packing Shed

You may have to lift boxes of fruit or other heavy items.

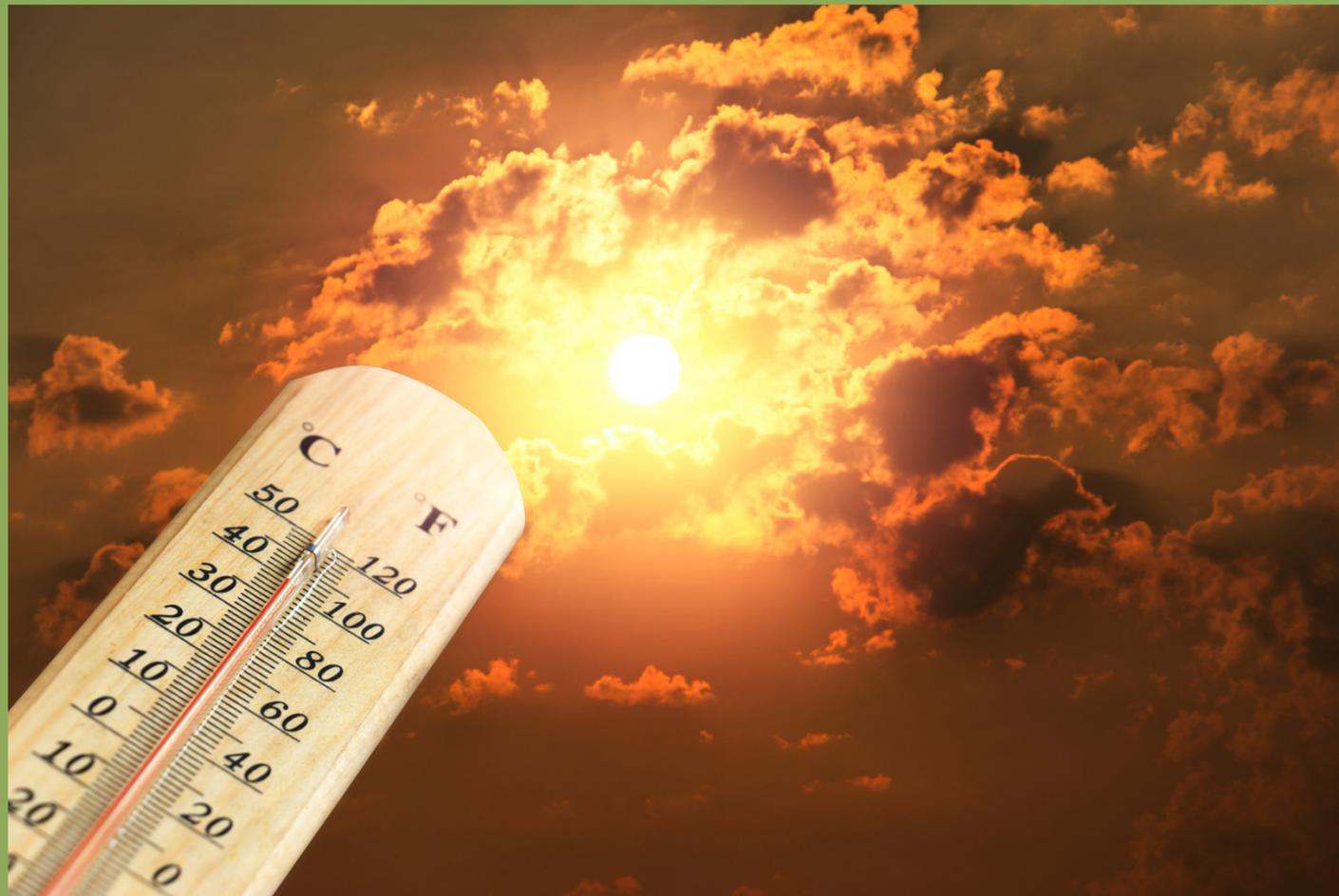


The weather

It is very hot for much of the picking season in Cobram. It is common to have temperatures in the mid to high 30's.

That is why pickers start work early - to beat the heat of the day.

Lots of cold water to drink is essential - not icy, just cold is best.



The pay - Pickers

Your work conditions will be from the Australian Horticultural Award.

Orchards pays pickers in one of two ways. They may be paid an hourly rate or a piece rate.

Being paid for the amount that is picked is called a piece rate or bin rate. The more you pick, the more money you make.

Bins rates change each year and for each fruit.



The Pay - Packers

Packers are paid an hourly rate for the work that they do.



Who employs you

You may be offered employment directly with a grower or you may be offered employment through a Licensed Labour Hire company, often called contractors.

When you get a job you will be asked for information including your residential status, Visa, Tax File Number, Super Annuation Fund, bank account and so on.

It is sensible to have this information ready.





Accommodation

Cobram and the surrounding towns have great accommodation options. Pickers and packers often choose to stay in Caravan Parks, many of which are close to orchards. Some are able to get on farm accommodation with their employer.





Keep going!

If you are not used to manual labour expect to be very sore at the the end of the day for the first week or so.

If you have not picked before you will be slow at your job until you get used to it.

Hang in there - it will get better.

Hard workers - Welcome in Cobram

So if you are strong and fit, like to work hard, can get along with other people and enjoy working outdoors picking may be just right for you.

If you prefer to work indoors then a packing job may suit you better.

If you have extra skills like tractor or fork lift driving or trade skills tell your employer. They may have other jobs available.





See you when you get here!