

Workers unsure of trade benefits

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MORE local workers think the new free trade agreement with the U.S. will harm Australian employment than help it, a new survey has found.

The quarterly Job Futures-Saulwick Employee Sentiment survey conducted recently found 26 per cent of workers thought the trade agreement would harm employment, while only 19 per cent thought it would help.

However, 39 per cent of workers think the agreement will be good for Australia, with 35 per cent giving the opposite view.

Interestingly, the survey found only 22 per cent of employees claimed to know “a great deal” or “quite a bit” about it.

Job Futures chief executive Mr Robert Tickner said even though the details of the trade agreement were made public during the survey period, there had been no subsequent rise in public awareness.

“Whatever the advantages or disadvantages there are for Australia in the U.S. trade agreement, it has clearly not yet been sold to the Australian people,” Mr Tickner said.

“The results of this poll show that there is a need for the public to have significantly more information about the deal with the U.S. to allow more informed judgments to be made.”

Meanwhile, a large number of employees said they believed refugees should be entitled to use government-funded employment services during their initial three-year period in Australia.

Temporary protection visa holders are allowed to work but are barred from accessing the full range of government-funded job services.