



Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Approved Employer Deed and Guidelines | Final Settings

The Australian Government is committed to strengthening the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme so that it delivers for employers, workers and their families and communities in the Pacific and Timor-Leste.

The new PALM scheme Approved Employer Deed and Guidelines will provide enhanced safeguards to workers that support regular income whilst ensuring Approved Employers continue to have access to a pool of reliable, productive workers, to help fill labour gaps in rural and regional Australia, as well as in the agriculture and food processing sectors nationally, when enough local workers can't be found.

The new Deed and Guidelines are the result of extensive consultation with stakeholders, including employer groups, industry representatives, unions, community groups, Approved Employers, Pacific and Timor-Leste governments, and the states and territories.

Key setting changes

Some of key settings included in the new PALM scheme Approved Employer Deed and Guidelines includes minimum hour requirements, ensuring pay parity with domestic workers and greater transparency around accommodation costs and other deductions.

See [Attachment A](#) for a summary of key setting changes.

Implementation

Changes will be implemented carefully to ensure the PALM scheme continues to deliver for both workers and Approved Employers.

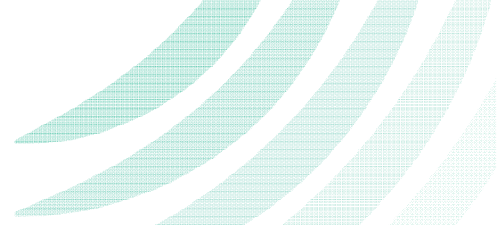
A gradual introduction of some new settings will ensure sufficient time for employers and participating countries adjust to the changes. The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) will monitor the impact of changes and continue to engage with all stakeholders to ensure the scheme delivers for everyone.

In preparation for the introduction of the single PALM scheme Deed in July 2023, DEWR issued Transition Advice No.1 on Friday, 2 June to Approved Employers with a Seasonal Worker Programme Deeds and/or a Pacific Labour Scheme Deeds.

Further information is available on [DEWR's PALM webpage](#).

Summary of key PALM scheme Approved Employer Deed and Guidelines settings

PALM Approved Employer Deed and Guidelines settings (effective from the date of PALM Deed execution unless advised below)	
Minimum hours for short-term workers (up to 9 month placements)	<p>Approved Employers must offer worker a minimum of 30 hours per week every week.</p> <p>Staged implementation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To end 2023 - no change (i.e. 30 hours averaged over time in country until end Dec 2023) Effective from 1 Jan 2024 to 30 June 2024: 30 hrs offered averaged over 4 weeks (for all existing and new recruitments) Effective from 1 July 2024: 30 hours offered every week for all existing and new recruitments. <p>The Guidelines will allow the department to consider exceptional circumstances (such as extreme weather events or disasters) that prevent employers in impacted regions meeting the minimum hours requirement.</p>
Minimum hours for long-term workers (1-4 years)	<p>Full time hours.</p> <p>Effective from 1 October 2023 (new and existing recruitments) or date of arrival of new recruits (whichever is earlier).</p>
Low hours Safety net	<p>If less than 20 hours offered a week, Approved Employers must pay accommodation and transport costs (debt cannot be accrued).</p> <p>Effective from 1 October 2023 (new and existing recruitments) or date of arrival of new recruits (whichever is earlier).</p>
Pay parity	<p>Approved Employers are required to pay PALM workers in line with other workers at the same workplace (i.e. with workers with the same skill level and experience doing the same job). Approved Employers are required to provide evidence of pay parity (via submitted Recruitment Plans and the Offer of Employment) and maintain pay parity for the duration of workers employment under PALM.</p>
Transparency of deductions	<p>Approved Employers must explain to Workers the deductions that will be made from their pay, including providing training on what information is included on their pay slip.</p> <p>Must ensure deductions are reasonable and at cost and must provide evidence on request from Workers and their advocates.</p>
Net pay after deductions	<p>Minimum net pay guarantee for all workers after tax and deductions of \$200 a week (debt repayment can be extended).</p> <p>Any outstanding debt cannot be carried over after the worker has completed their placement in Australia and returned to their home country (i.e., not extended to the worker's next placement in Australia).</p>
Accommodation & transport	<p>Approved Employers are required to arrange and provide accommodation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for short-term Workers for the full duration of their Placement and



PALM Approved Employer Deed and Guidelines settings (effective from the date of PALM Deed execution unless advised below)	
	<p>- for long-term Workers. For the first 12 months of their Placement</p> <p>Transport</p> <p>Approved Employers must arrange and provide transport for workers. A Transport Plan must include a breakdown of costs. Workers can arrange their own transport if they choose to.</p>
Grievance Management	<p>Approved Employers must provide easy to understand information and explain to Workers how they can raise any matter of concern or complaint with the Approved Employer.</p> <p>Employers must maintain a register of grievances raised by a worker (or worker representative) that includes actions taken in response to any grievances.</p>
Union attendance at arrival briefings	<p>Approved Employers must invite the Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) and a relevant union to worker arrival briefings, with a minimum one week notice to provide sufficient time to organise attendance.</p> <p>Existing recruitments: AEs to invite unions (and FWO) to address existing workers (where they have not), and advise the department of the details, by 1 October 2023 or date of arrival of any new recruitment (whichever is earlier).</p>
Welfare and wellbeing plan Welfare and wellbeing support person	<p>Requirement to have a Welfare and Wellbeing Plan outlining adequate Welfare and Wellbeing Arrangements are in place. (This is already a requirement for Employers of short-term/seasonal workers.)</p> <p>Approved Employers will need to have a Welfare and Wellbeing Support Person within 200km of worker placements or as otherwise agreed by department (based on the quality of the Welfare and Wellbeing plan, worker ratio and ability to meet specific needs of the cohort of workers and how it affects other workers (i.e., if proposing the same Welfare and Wellbeing Support Person). The Worker Welfare ratio is 1:120 - unless otherwise agreed or required by DEWR.</p> <p>New Plan needs to be submitted (or existing plan updated if required) to department by 1 October 2023 outlining approach to be fully compliant by end December 2023 (including appointment of the Welfare and Wellbeing support person).</p>
Cultural Competency	<p>Approved Employers (including their key personnel and managers, supervisors) must demonstrate cultural competency and undertake cultural awareness training related to the country/ies that they propose recruiting from.</p> <p>The Approved Employer's cultural competency must be demonstrated as part of the Recruitment Application process.</p> <p>The department will work with stakeholders to co-design resources and assessment criteria, for implementation from January 2024.</p>
Flight reimbursement	<p>Approved Employers can seek reimbursement of flight costs that they have paid on behalf of short-term seasonal Workers where they are unable to recoup the costs (minus \$300 employer contribution) through no fault of their own, and where all other conditions of the Deed and Guidelines have been met.</p>