Frequently asked questions

Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Information System

Last updated: 13 March 2024

Please note: The content in this document will continue to be refined to provide an accurate point of reference.

PALMIS background information

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

The Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Information System (PALMIS) is a coordinated and connected information management system that streamlines the workflow between PALM scheme employers (employers), labour sending units (LSUs) and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) for short-term and long-term recruitments.

The coordinated information management system minimises administrative requirements by enabling data exchanges between PALMIS and the in-country recruitment databases (IRDs) in participating Pacific island countries and Timor-Leste. Together, PALMIS and the IRDs provide a single, uniform workflow to cover short-term and long-term recruitments across all participating countries.

1.   What is PALMIS used for?
It is mandatory for all employers to submit and manage their new recruitments and reporting requirements through the PALMIS approved employer portal (AE portal).

2.   What training support is available?
Interactive training guides, step-by-step walkthroughs, webinar-based training and tutorial videos are available to help employers navigate systems and help ensure all paperwork can be submitted online.

Further support can also be accessed via the PALM scheme support service at (palm@dewr.gov.au) or by calling (1800 51 51 31). The support service is open from 8.30 am to 6.30 pm (AEDT), Monday to Friday, with after-hours support for critical incidents only. Software updates will be released for PALMIS periodically. Advanced notices will be provided to employers prior to their release.

3.   How can I access the AE portal?
The AE portal can be accessed at (portal.palmscheme.gov.au). Please contact the PALM scheme support service line on (1800 51 51 31) if you have received an invitation but still cannot access the AE portal.

FAQs on the application of PALMIS

AE portal	Employers with an executed PALM scheme Approved Employer Deed will be provided full access to the AE portal via an email invitation once their details are updated in the system.
Offer of employment (OOE)	OOEs are not automatically generated. Placement schedules are generated for each PALM scheme worker and contain summaries of an individual worker's assigned worksites, hosts, accommodation, pay details, deductions, roles, and employment terms to be referenced in each worker's OOE.
	Placement schedules are available in the AE portal once you allocate each worker to their placement group(s).
Individual worker record	A record is created for each worker that is used across multiple recruitment plans and employers for countries using the IRD.
	Employers can create a record for each worker where countries do not use the IRD.
	The integrated workflows between the IRD, PALMIS and the AE portal allow for LSUs and the employers to efficiently manage recruitment activities such as placement group allocation, OOE execution and feedback, visa lodgements and mobilisations.
	The IRD screens candidates for industry and employer matches.
	Workers are shortlisted, selected, and worker information then becomes available in the AE portal.
Visa agents	Employers are able to select their preferred official visa agent who can provide visa lodgement details, documents, and other data to the employer from their IRD to the AE portal.
Editing documents	Employers can edit the following documents in the AE portal before they are approved: • recruitment plan • accommodation plan • labour market tests. DEWR can leave questions and comments for you to address accordingly.

General

Question	Answer
Will access be restricted for employer users?	There are currently 2 tiers of AE portal access – admin and user. Only admins can create users. The deed contact is the initial admin. Other users can be added in the AE portal through the employer details entity and users tab.
Can I restrict a user's access within the AE portal?	The AE portal does not have the ability to restrict a user's access. Employers are required to ensure their personnel with access to the AE portal comply with its confidentiality, privacy and security obligations under the PALM scheme deed. Access differentiation for AE portal users is being considered in future PALMIS releases.
Can I remove a user from the AE portal?	The employer's primary contact is required to submit an enquiry through the AE portal to request to remove a user.
Can I remove records once uploaded?	Once records are submitted, they cannot be removed. In exceptional circumstances, an employer can request to have a record removed by submitting a request via the AE portal enquiries function. AE portal users can also deactivate records and documents made in error etc.

AE portal

Question	Answer
What if I put in the wrong ABN or business name?	DEWR verifies all information provided by employers. Entering the incorrect information may delay your account setup. Future updates will feature an automatic check to ensure ABNs and business names match.

Work sites

Question	Answer
Can I list multiple work sites?	Yes.

Recruitment plan

Question	Answer
Can a recruitment plan be copied?	No. This is a scheduled update for future release.
Can multiple agents be used in one recruitment?	No. There can only be one agent per recruitment plan.
Does the 8-week timeline include worker arrival in Australia?	Recruitment plan submission prior to worker arrival should be 8 weeks in most cases.

	Recruitment plans should be lodged no later than 8 weeks prior to the arrival date of workers to Australia. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
Do I need to contact my relationship manager when I submit my recruitment plan or part of it (accommodation, welfare, etc.)?	No. Recruitment plan related documents will automatically notify DEWR upon submission.
What if my recruitment plan is rejected?	Recruitment plan feedback/advice will be provided following the outcome of an assessment. If an LSU rejects your recruitment plan, you can change which country you recruit from.
Can I view my recruitment cap on the AE portal?	No, the recruitment plan assessor will review this. It is your responsibility to be aware of your recruitment cap and not exceed your approved number of workers when submitting a new recruitment plan.
Can I submit my recruitment plan before submitting my accommodation plan and labour market test?	No. These must be submitted before the recruitment plan.
Can I change my recruitment plan after it is approved?	Yes. Changes to recruitment plan (formerly known as variations) are supported by the AE portal. Depending on the proposed change this may need to be approved by the LSU and/or DEWR.
How is the employer notified when an LSU endorses a recruitment plan?	This notification occurs within the AE portal and via email.
When will my recruitment plan be approved?	The assessment of recruitment plans is prioritised based on when workers are expected to arrive. This maximises the chances of workers being available for recruitments.
How do I extend or vary a recruitment plan?	Use the help guides (the 'WalkMe' tool) located at the bottom right side of the AE portal. Click and search for 'recruitment plans' and the guides will step you through how to make changes to an approved recruitment plan. The process is summarised below: 1. Open an existing approved recruitment plan. 2. Click the actions box in the top right-hand corner of the AE portal. 3. In that box select 'make changes'. 4. Confirm you wish to make changes to that approved recruitment plan. 5. You can now make changes to your recruitment plan. 6. If the recruitment plan you are making changes to is a legacy plan, you will need to provide all the missing

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information to bring it up to the new format. This includes:

    a. creating placement groups

    b. adding deductions

    c. linking the accommodation plans.

7. Make sure you save your changes.

Question	Answer
Why can't I add multiple OOEs to a single recruitment?	If you are required to upload multiple draft OOEs to the one recruitment plan, you will need to create a zip file and upload this as a single document. If further assistance is required, please reach out to delivery support services or your current relationship Manager who will assist your team to create the zip file.
How do I submit a recruitment plan for workers who are currently in Australia?	Employers cannot currently initiate in-country recruitment plans through the AE portal. Plans are under way to introduce this so it aligns with the way workers are managed in the new system, particularly where the workers may be associated with another employer.
How do I extend/vary a recruitment plan or redeploy workers?	An extension or variation should be submitted by submitting a change to the recruitment plan on the AE portal. Where you are applying for an additional visa term for a long-term worker you will need to submit a new recruitment plan. A guide will be made available on the PALMIS resources page and within PALMIS. After a transitional period, we expect all changes will be managed through a single workflow in the AE portal.
How do I withdraw submitted recruitment plans, accommodation plans, or labour market tests?	Currently, there is no ability to withdraw submitted items. We are planning to update the AE portal to enable the ability to withdraw objects in appropriate circumstances. If you wish to withdraw a submitted item, please contact your relationship manager and they can deactivate it.

Placement groups

Question	Answer
What is a placement group?	Employers must specify the accommodation, host/site, role/labour market testing, pay and deduction information for each placement group. Workers must then be specifically assigned to the placement groups they will work in while in Australia. This provides clear data on where workers are living or working in Australia. Proposed future updates are intended to enhance accommodation features which will include multiple accommodation placement group.
What happens if changes to the placement group are needed after approval?	Changes can be made to a recruitment plan's placement group. The AE portal will re-generate placement schedules so they can also be provided to the worker.

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Do individual houses with no employment differences require separate placement groups?	Yes, we require different placement groups for workers in individual houses. This is consistent with the requirement that workers in each accommodation are from the same placement group.
What role must I specify for workers?	Every role must be consistent with the roles outlined in the *Fair Work Instrument* you will pay workers. You must specify a role that accurately represents the work and position title of the worker and matches labour market testing.
Can I add more than one worker support contact?	No, only one can be listed for each placement group.
Can I check if my worker support person is within 200km?	No, not at present.
Do I need to create a second placement group if I have workers arriving to the same host site, under the same recruitment plan, but with different arrival dates?	There are some start date variations that are accommodated by the PALM scheme deed and guidelines without reporting required. However, if the different arrival dates fall in a different period, then the deed and guidelines require it to be reported, and a new placement group or varying a placement group may be required.
Where do employers put transport information in the AE portal?	Employers enter the transport plans within each placement group of a recruitment plan.
What do I do if I submit a placement group and make an error?	You can edit existing placement groups. The department plans to update the AE portal to allow you to delete/withdraw submitted placement groups in appropriate circumstances.

Accommodation portal feature

Question	Answer
What if one of my workers wants their own accommodation?	You will need to create a new accommodation plan within your placement group.
What are accommodation spaces?	These appear in your accommodation plan and include things like bedrooms, kitchens, bathrooms etc. You are required to fill this out and upload images that comply with the PALM scheme deed and guidelines.
Can I use an existing accommodation plan rather than making a new one?	Yes. In the 'recruitment plan' section, there is an 'add existing accommodation plan' button beside the 'Create new accommodation plan' button.
Can I change an existing approved accommodation plan?	At present you will be unable to make changes to an approved accommodation plan. Variations can be made before submitting the new accommodation plan.

When I submit an accommodation plan, I need to then submit a supplementary accommodation form. Will I be able to complete this within the AE portal?	Yes. We are currently working to better align the AE portal accommodation information and the current requirements to avoid the need for a supplementary form.
	For now, please continue filling out the supplementary form and provide this to your relationship manager.
How do I search for an accommodation plan?	Yes. There is now a search feature at the top of the accommodation plan entity page for you to search by accommodation plan name.
What do the 3 colour statuses mean in the accommodation plan space?	The 3 colour statuses are based on an accommodation plans completion status.
	Grey means the plan is yet to be created.
	Yellow means the plan is missing information.
	Green means the plan is acceptable.
Can I remove an accommodation plan?	Accommodation plans that have been submitted can be withdrawn by navigating to the top right corner of the plan.
How do I view historical accommodation plans?	Historical accommodation plans for long-term workers are available in the AE portal.

Pay and deductions feature

Question	Answer
Can the estimated mobilisation costs be adjusted? Do I need to submit a change to recruitment plan each time a deduction is amended?	In relation to accommodation costs, you must provide a new OOE for approval as soon as possible.
	In relation to changes to any other costs, you must provide a change to a recruitment plan letter notifying the worker of the change and seek their written agreement to recoup the actual cost incurred. Additionally, a change to a recruitment plan can be made where you overestimate a cost.
Can the system create one recruitment with workers on piece rate and hourly?	Yes, when you place your workers into placement groups, you can set pay details such as piece rate or hourly pay rate.
Where do I upload my evidence of deductions?	The AE portal allows the uploading of accommodation and flight costs as evidence of deductions for each recruitment. These may be added to recruitment plans as documents.
	It is your responsibility to keep records of any other deductions and to ensure the worker has agreed in writing before deductions are made.

Cases and incidents

Question	Answer
How do I report an incident or an enquiry if I suspect an incident?	All incident cases are communicated through the AE portal.
	You have the option to select 'Select the support request' entity and select the incident type and label your query or incident.

	Provide as much detail as possible including all involved names, phone numbers, location and times and dates as required, as a follow up is often required.
Can I lodge incidents from a mobile device?	No.

Visa portal feature

Question	Answer
Can I add a completed Health Assessment Portal (HAP) ID before lodging a visa?	You can complete the (HAP) ID before lodging a worker's visa. A HAP ID can be created for a worker in the Department of Home Affairs' ImmiAccount system. If you add this HAP ID to the visa record for the worker, the AE portal will deliver the details to the LSU/worker through the IRD.
What if I have a returning seasonal working on a multi-year visa?	You can bypass the standard visa process and submit OOEs which will go to the relevant LSU.

Mobilisations feature

Question	Answer
How does the AE portal affect existing mobilisation processes?	Mobilisation processes have been amended in line with the PALM scheme deed and guidelines.
What if my worker does not arrive?	The AE portal allows you to mark workers as 'Withdrawn prior to mobilisation,' or 'Not arrived' if they failed to arrive.

In-country recruitment databases and LSUs

Question	Answer
When will LSUs receive training on the AE portal?	LSUs will not use the AE portal in the same way as employers as they will use the IRD. Some LSUs currently use and will continue to use the IRD while some participating countries are new to this in-country IT system.
At what stage does the LSU see a draft recruitment plan?	The LSU will see a high-level overview of the recruitment plan as it is created but will not see anything else until the recruitment plan has been submitted and approved by DEWR.
Can the LSU refuse to fill an approved recruitment plan?	Yes. The LSU always has the right to refuse a recruitment plan at any stage of the recruitment.
Does an agent in Vanuatu need to work with LSU for worker names?	No. Agents already have access to and training for the IRD. They will be able to provide the same information to you as the LSU.
What if manual data entry by LSUs is not trustworthy?	IRD side has introduced improved tools to detect when mistakes have been made, for example, preventing the same worker being included in multiple shortlists.

Employers will have access to documents such as passports to cross-check this information.

It is the employer's responsibility to ensure data provided to the Department of Home Affairs is accurate.

Offers of employment

Question	Answer
Does the manually developed OOE need to be uploaded to the AE portal?	Yes, the manually developed OOE must be uploaded in the AE portal so this can be sent to the LSU and signed. Employers can submit a generic/example version when they lodge the recruitment plan, and then must submit unique OOEs for each worker in the AE portal which are provided to the LSU and worker to sign and return.
Will there be templates added to the AE portal for assessments?	It depends on the template. Some templates are available in the AE portal and some are not, e.g. the OOE template.
Why is there not a template OOE?	The department has recently updated its OOE template and guide to assist employers understand the information that needs to be included in an OOE under the PALM scheme deed. Employers are reminded new elements are required in an OOE based on the PALM scheme deed and guidelines. These include, but are not limited to, specifying short-term or long-term stream, detail of the port of arrival and domestic transfer arrangements, information on who will meet workers on arrival in Australia, details about the education and communication that will be provided, information on minimum hours requirements, management structure, welfare and wellbeing support, location and contact details of the workplace, termination information, consequences of breach of policy and law, and information on what workers can expect in Australia including weather and social/religious activities. An example and explanation of a payslip and a privacy notice and consent form must also be submitted with the OOE. Please review clause 3.6 in the employer guidelines, and related clauses 4.1.3 and 9.5.9 (b) to ensure that all requirements are captured in your OOE to workers. To obtain a copy of the new OOE and guide please contact your relationship manager.

Messaging

Question	Answer
How do I send a message to my relationship manager?	You can either reply to correspondence in the action items, notices or inbox directly or send a new enquiry through the support request entity and this will be forwarded to the correct area.

How do I report an incident?	In the AE portal, select the 'report an incident' button.
	Select 'open a new case' and choose the incident topic. This will be submitted to the relevant team.
	Improvements are being made to the way incident reporting information appears for employers in the system, to make it clearer how to send a message or report an incident.

Deductions

Question	Answer
How do I add a global deduction for visas or transport?	Open your draft recruitment plan and click on the deductions tab.
Can I edit deductions once I have saved them?	You can edit your deductions using the 'edit' button alongside each entry.
Why do deductions use the term 'net pay before tax'?	The deductions section uses the term 'net pay before tax' to allow for simpler administration of PALM scheme requirements.
	It allows the risk profile of the estimated net pay figure to be assessed as compared to low pay thresholds and assesses the nature of proposed deductions.
	The system calculates 'net pay before tax' as follows:
	• gross pay (estimated hours per week x pay rate) minus total deductions (sum of all deductions).

Wellbeing and welfare contacts

Question	Answer
How do I provide the department the address for my welfare & wellbeing officer?	You can update your worker support contact in your placement group in the AE portal.

Labour market testing

Question	Answer
How do I search for labour market tests?	There is now a search feature in the labour market test entity using your labour market testing reference code.