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29 July 2024

The Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme is the Australian Government's integrated approach to Pacific labour mobility. As a stakeholder involved in the delivery of the PALM scheme, this email update is designed to keep you up to date with the latest information to help you participate in the program.

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Connecting Timorese communities through music: an opportunity for Timorese workers

In a heartwarming example of music bridging cultures, Australian musician Billy Barker recently facilitated a memorable performance by Timorese PALM scheme workers at the renowned Port Fairy folk festival. This collaboration, spotlighted in a recent [ABC article](#), showcased the incredible talent and spirit of these musicians.

Billy aims to support Timorese PALM scheme workers in other communities by linking them with local music opportunities and regional festivals.

Employers and PALM scheme stakeholders are encouraged to support Timorese workers to reach out to Billy Barker if they wish to explore local music opportunities, and to perform at other regional music festivals. Billy can be contacted via email (billybarkermusic@gmail.com).

PALM scheme data – first public release

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) is pleased to announce that for the first time, comprehensive PALM scheme data will be publicly available on the PALM scheme website on Wednesday 31 July 2024. After the initial release, the data will be updated each month.

This data release will support stakeholders to access timely and reliable data when they need it.

Introduction to the in-country recruitment database online training module

An introduction to the in-country recruitment database training module has recently been published on the PALM scheme learning platform. If you have ever wondered what the counterpart to the approved employer portal looks like, and how the different labour sending units (LSU) operate, then this course is for you.

This course has been designed to provide more information regarding the database system and the role it plays within the PALM scheme. It is not a compulsory course.

The module is now available within the PALM scheme learning platform for any interested employers who wish to learn more about the database.

If you are a PALM scheme employer and you require access to the PALM scheme learning platform, please register [here](#). Please disregard references to cultural competency toolkits if you have already completed this requirement.

Updated international airfares and domestic transportation matrix

Reminder that the updated PALM scheme international airfares and domestic transportation matrix (travel matrix) is in place from 1 August 2024. The updated matrix and frequently asked questions are available on the [PALM scheme website](#).

The updated travel matrix applies to all travel bookings made from 1 August 2024, including recruitment plans that were approved before 1 August 2024. This means if the recruitment plan was approved prior to 1 August 2024 but flights will be booked after 1 August 2024, the updated travel matrix applies.

If travel costs will change since the recruitment plan was approved, PALM scheme employers must communicate this change clearly to workers, providing advice in writing to workers, and ensuring they continue to deliver a net financial benefit for workers.

PALM scheme employers are reminded of their obligations under the [deed](#) and [guidelines](#) to:

- contribute \$300 to workers' travel costs. This \$300 cannot be recovered from workers and is mandatory for all employers who engage PALM scheme workers
- select the best value flight
- only pass on actual costs (less the \$300 contribution) or the matrix cap, whichever is less, to workers. In some cases the cap will be higher than the actual cost of travel and employers must only recoup actual costs.
- organise and pay for travel costs for each worker (unless the worker elects to pay for the cost themselves)
 - employers of short-term workers must purchase return flights and transfers
 - employers of long-term workers must purchase one-way international flights and transfers to Australia as well as departure flights 12 weeks before the expected departure.
- continue to comply with obligations under the deed and guidelines when any worker ceases their employment until they depart Australia to return home.
 - This means that the employer remains responsible for ensuring that the worker can return home in the event of the employment relationship ending due to the worker's employment being terminated, the worker resigning from their employment, or due to their placement expiring.

Changes to approved recruitments - offer of employment

variations

DEWR advises that updates to offers of employment (OOEs) to reflect deed and guidelines or legislative changes can be managed through a variation for existing PALM scheme workers and does not need to be re-approved by DEWR.

PALM scheme employers may need to update their already approved OOE to reflect changes from 1 July 2024, including:

- changes to minimum hours for short-term workers whereby employers must offer 120 hours over 4 weeks and make an additional payment if the hours are not offered (guidelines section 3.7.1 to 3.7.7)
- updated visa application fees to ensure deductions in the OOE are accurate
- updated national minimum wage requirements following the annual wage review
- updated travel matrix, which applies to all flights booked after 1 August 2024 even when the recruitment plan was approved before 1 August 2024.

PALM scheme employers should educate the workers on the changes they are intending to make to their OOE to help them understand what has changed, the reasoning behind the change and the impact it will have on them.

For this type of variation that is made to comply with deed and guidelines or legislative changes, DEWR does not need to approve the amended OOE, but employers must obtain the workers' written agreement and retain documentary evidence for provision to DEWR if requested.

Supporting workers to understand their accommodation rights and responsibilities

It is important for workers to understand their rights and responsibilities when entering a tenancy arrangement, whether the accommodation has been arranged by an employer or worker.

PALM scheme employers are reminded of their obligations set out in section 10.10 of the PALM scheme guidelines:

10.10. Supporting workers' understanding of accommodation rights and responsibilities

10.10.1. Where workers find their own accommodation, you must support them to understand:

- that their accommodation must comply with relevant state, territory and local government legislation, regulations, rules, and codes (such as fire safety)
- their tenancy agreements and obligations
- the processes for escalating maintenance and repair issues to property managers and landlords
- that they can seek alternative long-term or private rental accommodation, if they choose and
- that they can seek help from you with tenancy correspondence from property managers and landlords, if needed.

10.10.2. Each state and territory has consumer rights bodies and government-funded services that may be able to assist you and workers with information about accommodation rights and dispute

resolution services.

PALM scheme employers are encouraged to review the available state/territory resources to support workers with understanding their rights and responsibilities. Some of these resources include:

[ACT – condition report](#)

[NSW – new tenant checklist](#)

[NT – condition report at the start of a tenancy](#)

[QLD – new tenant checklist](#)

[SA - inspection sheet](#)

[TAS – condition reports for rental properties](#)

[VIC – condition report](#) [Condition reports - Tenants Victoria](#)

[WA – property condition report](#)

Employers may also access additional resources from their local government authority.

Closure of the seasonal worker email inbox

The (seasonalworker@dewr.gov.au) email inbox will be closed on **Friday 30 August 2024**. All emails intended for the PALM scheme should be directed to (palm@dewr.gov.au) after this date.

PALM scheme assurance activities

Chapter 14 of the [PALM scheme guidelines](#) provides details on the approach taken by DEWR in the PALM scheme assurance framework to facilitate a culture of compliance and best practice.

DEWR conducts regular assurance activities to determine whether employers are meeting their obligations under the deed and guidelines. Assurance activities help to prevent, detect, and deter non-compliance as well as providing an opportunity to educate and equip employers with information to assist in meeting their scheme obligations.

In line with its commitment to transparency, DEWR will publish regular articles through this update to support employer understanding of obligations under the deed and guidelines. This will include high level outcomes of assurance activities and compliance matters so employers can use the lessons learned to continuously improve and meet their obligations under the PALM scheme.

It is important to note, DEWR will look favourably on employers who have strong systems to proactively detect and rectify issues to improve compliance.

Employers should ensure they understand their obligations and are advised to regularly check this update, to keep up to date on lessons learned and to ensure they are aware of any changes to the [PALM scheme guidelines](#).

Employers should contact their DEWR relationship manager in the first instance if they have any questions regarding their compliance with deed and guideline obligations.

Target areas – July to December 2024

For the period between July to December 2024, DEWR will be focusing on a number of themes when conducting assurance activities. These will include:

- WHS obligations
- obligations to offer short-term workers minimum hours
- obligations to ensure appropriate worker entitlements
- cultural competency requirements, and
- obligations with regards to timely submission of arrival and departure reports.

Message from the Fair Work Ombudsman: our upcoming free webinars

The Fair Work Ombudsman provides free webinars to help employees and employers understand their rights and responsibilities under Australian workplace laws.

Visit our [webinars page](#) to register your interest in attending our upcoming webinars, which include:

- understanding the rules and obligations of fixed term contracts – 14 August 2024
- ending employment* – 27 August 2024
- frequently asked questions (FAQs) on leave under the National Employment Standards – 3 September 2024
- closing loopholes: FAQs on changes to workplace laws* – 12 September 2024
- working and employing during the holiday season? What you need to know, including FAQs* – 8 October 2024
- workplace essentials for small business* – 24 October 2024.

* A pre-recording of this webinar will be made available for 14 days to everyone who registers for the session.



Country updates

All countries

Before planning any international travel, employers must get in touch with the relevant LSU team and provide adequate time for preparations. Employers should also check the [Smartraveller](#) website for travel advice.

Fiji

How to commence recruitment	Employers are encouraged to reach out to the Manager for Foreign Employment Services, Ms Gaayetri Prasad, at the Fiji LSU: National Employment Centre (NEC) via email (gaayetri.prasad@mepir.gov.fj) or phone (+679 9239459).
Country liaison officer (CLO) details	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms Makereta Rokoduru: email (margierokoduru@gmail.com) or mobile (+614 7741 9048)• Mr Sairusi Tabualevu: email (ctabualevu@gmail.com) or mobile (+614 0103 6476)• Mr Diwan Shankar: email (diwanshankar@optusnet.com.au) or mobile (+614 0284 5658).
Message from LSU	<p>PALM scheme employers wishing to recruit workers from Fiji can do so through the Fiji NEC work-ready pool.</p> <p>The NEC requires a minimum of 6-8 weeks to mobilise workers once a recruitment plan is approved.</p>

Kiribati

How to commence recruitment	Please contact the senior labour officer, Ms Tekotaake Keariki, via email (slo.eu@employment.gov.ki).
CLO details	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms Rosa Muller Norman (based in Darwin, NT) (pacificway88@hotmail.com)• Mr Kaibwa Eritai (based in Griffith, NSW) (bwaika@gmail.com)• Ms Lolita Gosschalk (based in Brisbane, QLD) (lgosschalk@employment.gov.ki).
Message from LSU	The Kiribati LSU welcomes opportunities from PALM scheme employers to recruit workers from Kiribati in 2024. The LSU requires a minimum of 5-6 weeks to mobilise workers once a recruitment plan is approved.

Nauru

How to commence recruitment	<p>Please contact:</p> <p>Rebecca Amwano - Director Labour Mobility Email: (rebecca.amwano112@gmail.com)</p>
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	<p>Phone: (+674 556 1510)</p> <p>Lindsey Dabwido – Labour Mobility Coordinator Email: (lynsydab25@gmail.com) Phone: (+674 5573940)</p>
CLO details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Trent Dabwido (based in Brisbane QLD) phone: (+61 417 611 730) email: (trent.dabwido@brisbane.gov.nr).
Message from LSU	<p>Nauru is now live on the in-country recruitment database!</p> <p>Demand for Nauruan workers in Australia continues to steadily rise.</p> <p>In order to respond to increased demand, it is important PALM scheme employers continue to follow official communications channels via the Labour Mobility Division to ensure procedures are maintained.</p> <p>Incoming passengers from Australia are required to have a valid visa. Anyone wishing to travel in country is requested to please contact the LSU regarding visa arrangements.</p> <p>The Nauru LSU requires a minimum of 5-6 weeks to mobilise workers once a recruitment plan is approved.</p>

Papua New Guinea

How to commence recruitment	<p>The PNG Government is wanting to increase its PALM scheme worker numbers to 8,000 by 2025. PALM scheme employers wishing to recruit from a large work-ready pool with strong pre-departure processes are reminded to contact the Papua New Guinea (PNG) labour mobility unit (LMU) via email (swp@treasury.gov.pg) or call (+675 7285 7281) or (+675 7391 4173).</p>
CLO details	<p>Papua New Guinea has 2 CLOs to support PALM scheme workers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mrs Lynette Wessel, located in Brisbane, can be contacted via email (lynette_wessel@treasury.gov.pg) or mobile (+61 417 879 829) Margaret Devete, located in Townsville, can be contacted via email (Margaret_devete@treasury.gov.pg) or mobile (+61 438 944 124). <p>Both CLOs are available to support workers across Australia.</p>
Message from LMU	<p>We are planning an LMU roadshow for August 2024 to create stronger links between the LMU and employers. If employers are interested, they can contact the LMU Director: (hakaua_harry@treasury.gov.pg).</p> <p>PNG welcomes opportunities for PALM scheme employers to recruit from its strong and ever-growing work-ready pool in 2024.</p> <p>The PNG LMU is now linked to the in-country recruitment database, and requires 5 weeks to mobilise workers once a recruitment plan is approved.</p> <p>PNG welcomes employers wanting to conduct in country recruitment or be a part of the in country recruitment drive in September 2024 to contact PNG LMU</p>

	<p>Director via (swp@treasury.gov.au) and/or the Pacific Labour Facility, Olivia Kula via (olivia.kula@pacificlabourfacility.com.au)</p> <p>To current employers recruiting from PNG, <i>bikpela hamamus</i>.</p>
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Samoa

How to commence recruitment	<p>New first point of contact for labour and employment export division (LEEP) email address: (info@leep.gov.ws) ACEO Venus Tupai: (venus.tupai@leep.gov.ws) Phone number: (+68534333) or (+68534425).</p>
CLO details	<p>Please note new email addresses for CLOs as of 6 June 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Fulisailagitele (Aufa'i) Saleuesile – (+61 406 506 274) (fulisia.saleuesile@mfat.gov.ws) (based in Sydney, NSW) • Mr Tusitala Junior (Utaulu) Sua – (+61 448 769 205) (tusitala.sua@mfat.gov.ws) (based in Brisbane, QLD).
Message from LEEP	<p>The Government of Samoa has released a new Policy for Temporary Labour Migration under the Labour Mobility Schemes of Australia and New Zealand. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will consult with the Government of Samoa on the new policy from October 2024.</p> <p>Please allow 8 weeks minimum from approval of your recruitment plan to the mobilisation date when recruiting from Samoa.</p> <p>When communicating with the LSU, employers are reminded to please:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include the recruitment plan number in the email subject line and copy in the Assistant Chief Executive Officer and the Pacific Labour Facility program manager • call, rather than email, to follow up the progress of recruitment plans • provide feedback to the LSU on questions they raise via PALMIS • where possible travel to Samoa to undertake recruitment activities face-to-face • maintain polite and respectful communications when working with the LSU. <p>Cultural toolkits</p> <p>Samoa welcomes the launch of the cultural competency toolkit for employers and encourages all PALM scheme participants to fully immerse themselves in the interactive cultural journey.</p>

Solomon Islands

How to commence recruitment	<p>For any questions, PALM scheme employers should reach out to the labour mobility unit via email (lmu@mfaet.gov.sb).</p>
CLO details	<p>There are 2 CLOs to provide support in Australia. If you require CLO assistance, please email:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (lesliefaarodo@pasifikih.com) or

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (veracheffers@pasifikih.com).
Message from LMU	<p>Solomon Islands Director of Labour Mobility Christina Maoma invites PALM scheme employers in sectors such as aged care, hospitality, meat industry, labour hire and horticulture to visit Solomon Islands to gain a better understanding of the opportunities to recruit the 6,288 candidates currently in the work-ready pool. The Solomon Islands LMU continues to screen 400 new candidates each month, and successful candidates will be added to the work-ready pool.</p> <p>The LMU requires a minimum of 6 weeks from the approval of a recruitment plan to successfully mobilise workers to Australia.</p> <p>To our current employers, we extend a big <i>Tagio Tumas</i>.</p>

Timor-Leste

How to commence recruitment	<p>For information on recruiting workers from Timor-Leste for seasonal or short-term roles, please contact (swp.lsu.tl@gmail.com). For information on recruiting workers from Timor-Leste for longer-term roles, please contact (pls.lsu.tl@gmail.com).</p> <p>Please ensure 5-8 weeks minimum from approval of your recruitment plan to the mobilisation date when recruiting from Timor-Leste.</p>
Labour attaché and CLO details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour attaché Mr Iginio Feriera: email (alat@outlook.com) • CLO Mr Bernadino (Dino) da Costa Pereira: email (tls.wwso@gmail.com) or mobile (+61 475 166 160).
Message from LSU	<p>Passport update</p> <p>Timor-Leste's passport shortage is being addressed, and blank passport supplies have arrived in Dili. There may be a lag or bottleneck in processing applications, but new passports are now being issued, and workers who have expired passports are being encouraged to apply for new passports.</p> <p>Timorese citizens can apply in person (Dili only) for their new passports. The Timorese Government has set up an online system however may have delays in responses due to internet connection and other issues. The LSU has a special collaboration with the Ministry of Justice to issue passports and therefore workers who have an offer of employment will be sent through a recommendation letter to get their passport issued in person.</p> <p>Passport extension letters previously issued are no longer valid for workers travelling back to Timor-Leste. Please contact the labour attaché and head of mission in Australia for travel letters or to renew passports.</p> <p>Polymerase chain reaction tests for incoming passengers are no longer required. For further information on entry and exit requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that they have the needed documents such as full vaccination proof (digital or hard-copy certificate) • enclose a copy of a valid passport and travel itinerary

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> current visa policy is based on the pre-covid policies (which found in the immigration website (https://www.migracao.gov.tl/html/sub0301.php) unless you are a Europe union and community of Portuguese languages countries passport holder.
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Tonga

How to commence recruitment	Deputy CEO of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ms Akosita Tu'ihalamaka-Polota is available to provide guidance in the recruitment process and is reachable via email (aaltuihalamaka@gmail.com).
CLO details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sione Vaka: email (spvaka@yahoo.com) or mobile (+614 3417 9150) Viliami Fetuu Tupou: email (william_tupou@hotmail.com) or mobile (+614 3677 8925).
Message from LSU	<p>The Government of Tonga encourages PALM scheme employers to conduct face-to-face recruitment where possible.</p> <p>Please ensure 5-6 weeks minimum from approval of your recruitment plan to the mobilisation date when recruiting from Tonga.</p>

Tuvalu

How to commence recruitment	<p>The Tuvalu LSU welcomes opportunities from PALM scheme employers to recruit Tuvaluan workers and encourages contacting the following LSU staff for relevant queries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paul Elisala: email (pelisala@gov.tv).
CLO details	CLO Lise Kalavi is based in Melbourne, Victoria and is available to support Tuvaluan workers in Australia. PALM scheme employers can contact her via email (tuvaluclo@gmail.com) or mobile (+61 408 103 532).
Message from LSU	<p>The LSU in Tuvalu is pleased to announce that the in-country recruitment database is now officially live in Tuvalu! The data will now enable the LSU to support the end-to-end worker registration, worker recruitment, mobilisations, reintegration, pre-departure briefings, and welfare case management. PALM scheme employers recruiting from Tuvalu are encouraged to reach out to the LSU if you have any queries.</p> <p>Please ensure 5-6 weeks minimum from approval of your recruitment plan to the mobilisation date when recruiting from Tuvalu.</p>

Vanuatu

How to commence recruitment	<p>PALM scheme employers can recruit workers through the Department of Labour Employment Service Unit (ESU) work-ready pool, via direct recruitment or through a licenced recruitment agent.</p> <p>To find out more about recruitment options or to contact the ESU, phone (+678 33135) or email (gvuti@vanuatu.gov.vu).</p>
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	Please ensure 5 weeks minimum from approval of your recruitment plan to the mobilisation date when recruiting from Vanuatu.
Labour attaché and CLO details	<p>Labour attaché:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Patrice Kuautonga (+61 433 415 159) (pkuautonga@vanuatu.gov.vu) (based in Canberra, ACT). <p>CLO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Pita Foliaki (+61 484 089 577)(plokotui@vanuatu.gov.vu) (based in Mildura, VIC) Mr David Patunvanu (dpatunvanu@vanuatu.gov.vu) (based in Brisbane, QLD).
Message from ESU	<p>Passengers departing Australia and bound for Vanuatu must ensure their travel documents are valid. Ni-Vanuatu workers with expired passports should seek a Certificate of Identity through the Vanuatu High Commission in Canberra before travelling to Vanuatu. A letter issued by a PALM scheme employer to a worker is not a formal travel document and will not be accepted by the Government of Vanuatu. Employers and workers should ensure travel documents are in order before travel.</p> <p>Employers are encouraged to check what their workers' plans are and support them to return home and reconnect with their family and community before their visa expires. After the mandatory offshore period, employers can support these workers to apply for a Temporary Work (International Relations) visa – PALM stream (subclass 403) for workers to return to work in the PALM scheme.</p> <p>Vanuatu is processing a high number of recruitment plans. Patience and understanding is requested as they manage this demand.</p> <p>The departure of workers to Australia may be impacted by cyclone season, as this can impact inter-island schedules and international flights.</p>

Calling all PALM scheme employers – is your information up to date on the website?

DEWR is updating the details for all employers listed on the [PALM scheme current employers webpage](#) to ensure the correct information is available for stakeholders.

If you are a PALM scheme employer, please review your current organisation details listed on this webpage. If contact details aren't listed or if you would like to update your organisation details, please provide the updated information to DEWR via email (contactpalmscheme@dewr.gov.au).

PALMIS update

If you are a PALMIS user, keep up with news about new features and improvements through the monthly PALMIS update sent to all registered PALMIS users. The PALMIS update contains system information to help users navigate and use the new system most efficiently. Click [here](#) to subscribe.

Additional PALMIS resources can be found on the [PALMIS page](#) of the DEWR website. You can also email (palm@dewr.gov.au) or call the PALM scheme support service line on (1800 51 51 31) 8:30 am to 6:30 pm AEST, Monday to Friday for assistance.

Stay up to date with the PALM scheme

The PALM scheme maintains an active presence online and via Facebook and LinkedIn to provide helpful information for workers and employers.

PALM scheme employers are reminded to let their workers know about the [PALM scheme website](#), [Facebook page](#) and [LinkedIn page](#) so they can access information, updates and other helpful information and resources for living and working in Australia.

Are your colleagues having trouble receiving the PALM scheme update?

Have your colleagues subscribed to the fortnightly PALM scheme update but not receiving it? Please ask them to check their spam folder. If the PALM scheme update cannot be found in their spam folder, please email DEWR via (contactpalmscheme@dewr.gov.au) to investigate the issue further.

Questions?

Please call the PALM scheme support service line on **(1800 51 51 31)**
or email (palm@dewr.gov.au).



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