

PALM Scheme and the Pacific Labour Facility (PLF)

November 2022 - Labour Mobility for Sustainable Development and Climate Resilience in the Pacific: Project Launch

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Australian Government



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1. The PALM scheme





At a glance

The Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme is the primary temporary migration program to address unskilled, low-skilled, and semi-skilled workforce shortages in rural and regional Australia and is built on strong partnerships between Australia, Pacific island nations and Timor-Leste.

Pacific and Timor-Leste workers, their communities and countries benefit greatly from the skills, experience and wages earned while workers are in Australia, and the PALM scheme is strongly supported by both workers and Australian employers.

THE PALM SCHEME AT A GLANCE



CURRENT PALM EMPLOYERS
396

(at 30 September 2022)



40,108
PRE-SCREENED WORKERS

(at 30 June 2022, based on a half-yearly survey)

There are large numbers of pre-screened workers awaiting job offers from approved PALM scheme employers in 10 participating countries: Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

WORKPLACE RIGHTS



PALM scheme workers have the same rights and conditions as Australian workers

Workers are employed under the same legislation and are entitled to the same minimum rates of pay and conditions as Australian workers. Complaints are taken seriously and investigated promptly.

The Government is committed to improving conditions for PALM scheme workers and will implement the recommendations of the Migrant Workers' Taskforce.



29,075
WORKERS

(at 30 September 2022)

There are currently more Pacific and Timor-Leste PALM scheme workers in Australia than there have ever been before.

DISTRIBUTION OF WORKERS

(at 30 September 2022)



\$64.15 M¹ AUD sent to the Pacific and Timor-Leste in savings and remittances from long-term workers

Long-term PALM scheme workers have sent an estimated \$64.15m in savings and remittances to the Pacific and Timor-Leste and paid \$22m in income tax from July 2018 to December 2021. Short-term workers remit on average \$1,061 a month to their families, which has proved critical in supporting the livelihoods of worker households during the COVID-19 pandemic. On average, long-term workers save and remit \$1,310 per month, equating to 39% of their monthly Australian income.

1. PLF mid-year briefing January 2022.

Short and long-term employment

	Short-term employment (SWP)	Long-term employment (PLS)
Length of time	6 to 9 months	Up to 4 years (minimum 12 months)
Industries and location	All sectors in rural and regional Australia (was traditionally agriculture, horticulture, aquaculture, accommodation and other seasonal industries)	All sectors in rural and regional Australia
Skill level	Unskilled and low skilled (ANZSCO 4-5)	Low and semi-skilled (ANZSCO 3-5)
Labour market testing (Australians first policy)	Required (valid for 12 months)	Required (valid for 12 months)
Labour sending unit (LSUs)	Covers both short and long term employees (+NZ)	Covers both short and long term employees (+NZ)
Use of agents in-country	Yes (Vanuatu)	No
Visa lodgement	Employers (or hired migration agents etc.) lodge visas through employer Immi Accounts using an endorsement number generated for cohorts of workers by PLF	Employers (or hired migration agents etc.) lodge visas through employer Immi Accounts using an endorsement numbers generated for cohorts of workers by PLF
Awards and conditions	The same as Australian workers	The same as Australian workers
Employment status	Casual (minimum 30 hours per week and can be averaged over weeks as per applicable Awards)	Fixed term or permanent contract - full time employment
Age of Workers	21 years and over	21 years and over

Short-term and long-term employer requirements

DEED REQUIREMENT	Short-term cohort (also known as SWP)	Long-term cohort (also known as PLS)
Minimum Hours	Provide a minimum of 30 hours a week over the entire placement	Full-time or part-time (part-time workers must be given a minimum of 30 hrs per week)
AE flight contribution	\$300	Nil
Welfare and Wellbeing	<p>AE is responsible for worker welfare and wellbeing with DEWR and Pacific Labour Facility providing assistance for critical incidents. SWP employers must also provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An allocated welfare and wellbeing support person - A Welfare and Wellbeing Plan 	AE is responsible for worker welfare and wellbeing with DEWR and Pacific Labour Facility providing assistance for critical incidents
Accommodation	<p>Accommodation arranged and provided for the entire placement. Workers can choose to arrange their own accommodation</p>	<p>Accommodation provided for first 3 months of workers arriving in Australia. Workers can choose to arrange their own accommodation.</p>
Transport	Transport arranged and provided for workers to get to and from work including getting to recreational activities	Same as for short-term cohort
Labour Market Testing	Labour Market Testing must be undertaken to ensure Australian jobseekers are given first opportunity for work	Same as for short-term cohort

Key PALM scheme industries and roles



Hospitality

e.g., wait staff, management, baristas, kitchen staff



Aged care

e.g., personal carers, kitchen staff, cleaning



Tourism

e.g., front of house, reception, call centres



Maintenance and trades

e.g., builders, gardeners, forklift drivers



Fisheries and Aquaculture

e.g., boat captains, deck hands, farm attendants



Agriculture, horticulture, meat processing, forestry, wool

e.g., farm work, fruit picking and packing, processing



Participating countries

Our participating countries are key to the success of the PALM Scheme, and we have PLF staff based in all countries, except Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu.



Fiji



Kiribati



Nauru



Papua New Guinea



Samoa



Solomon Islands



Timor-Leste



Tonga



Tuvalu



Vanuatu

The PLF



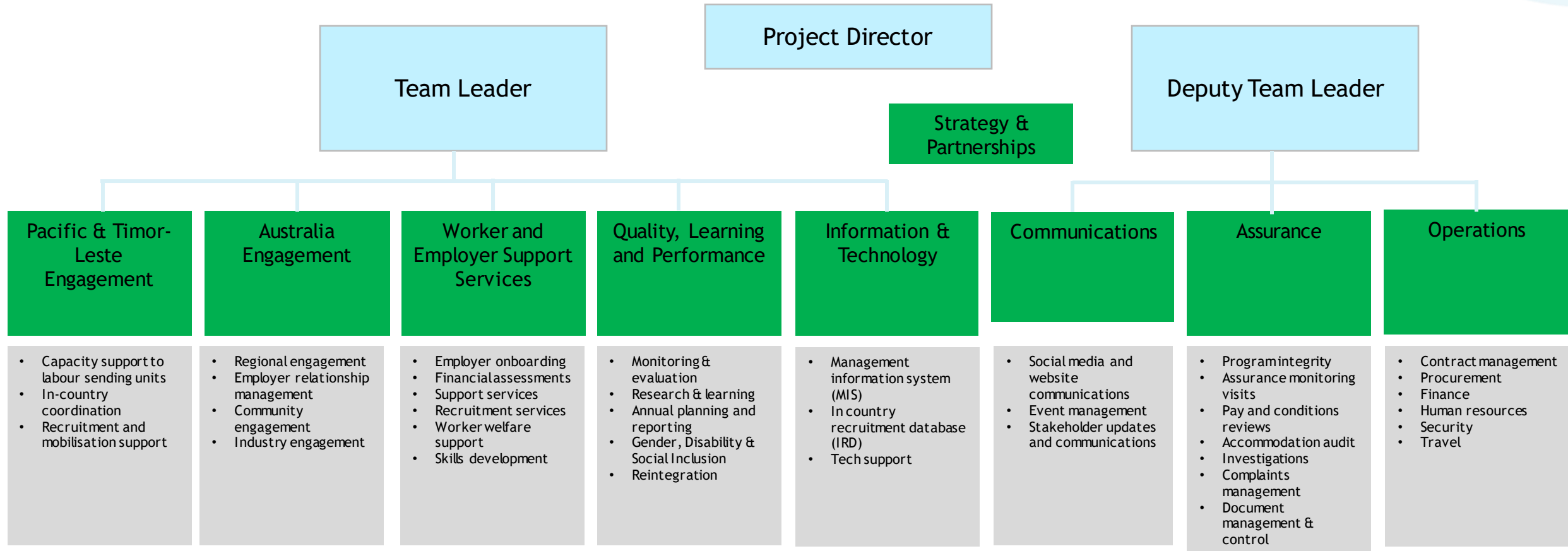
Pacific Labour Facility (PLF)

The PALM scheme is administered by the Pacific Labour Facility (PLF) in partnership with the Australian Government. The PLF's role includes:

- assisting Pacific governments with labour sending arrangements
- Welfare support and access to support, information and advice, as well as responding to critical incidents
- Assurance and compliance
- studying social and economic impacts of labour mobility and generating ideas for program improvement.



Pacific Labour Facility



PLF moves to a regional model (domestic)

As part of the broader change process surrounding the consolidated PALM scheme, the Pacific Labour Facility (PLF) is rolling out a new regional approach to labour mobility.

This will see regional relationship managers (RRMs) posted in 5 priority areas initially: Darwin, Cairns, Toowoomba, Tamworth and Perth.

Benefits of this regional approach include:

- improved communications between stakeholders
- increased support for issues resolution
- focus on a regional ‘community of care’ to improve capacity for employers to provide worker welfare support and help workers integrate into the community
- help the PLF to customise program promotion, promote ownership of the PALM scheme with local stakeholders, and improve relationships between sending country representatives and PALM scheme employers.

PLF Support to LSUs

We have PLF funded staff in-country

- LM Engagement Managers, Program Managers (Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu) and LM coordinators (Fiji and Timor Leste).
 - Our approach: Work in partnership with LSUs.
 - Provide technical support and capacity building initiatives
 - Assist with strategic planning and developing LM policy, process and guidelines.
 - Build and strengthen stakeholder engagement across LM stakeholders
 - Capacity Assessment, Country Plan and Budget.

PLF support to LSUs

Additional support for Sending Countries

- In line with the federal government commitment, DFAT, through the PLF is providing additional support to LSUs in 3 key areas:
 - ✓ recruit additional staff to support labour mobility operations and workload
 - ✓ purchase key infrastructure and equipment such as laptops, printers etc
 - ✓ fund costs for the work-ready pool and work-ready activities, such as recruitment, training and fitness tests.

Pacific & Timor Leste (P&TL) Team & Reporting Lines

Renee Archer
PTLE Lead

Dennis Meone
PTL Manager

Tim Rae
PTL Manager

David Ramosaea
LM Engagement Manager
Solomon Islands

TBC
LM Engagement Manager
Samoa

TBC
Program Manager
Kiribati

TBC
Program Manager
Tuvalu

TBC
Program Manager
Nauru

Maria Braz
LM Engagement Manager
Timor Leste

Georgia Noy
LM Engagement Manager
Vanuatu

Avalon Studt
LM Engagement Manager
PNG

Sascha Piggott
LM Engagement Manager
Fiji

Sharon Naesol
Program Manager
Sols Support

Glyn Milhench
Program Manager
Samoa

Maria Tavares
LM Coordinator
Timor Leste

Naylene Nicolosi
Program Manager
Vanuatu

Ammaarah Ahmad
Program Manager
Fiji

Carlo Tabuarua
LM Coordinator
Fiji

FIRST RESPONSE ESCALATION PROCESS

This document outlines the roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders involved in supporting the community of care for workers on the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme. It is essential that all stakeholders follow the process below when responding to issues and incidents to ensure they are dealt with effectively and in a timely manner.

**IN AN
EMERGENCY
CALL 000**

LOW RISK LEVEL 1 – GENERAL ISSUES Timeframes: 5 working days to act Level 1 includes minor issues resolved without the PLF or other party consultation or assistance.		MEDIUM RISK LEVEL 2 – REPORTABLE ISSUES Timeframes: 24 hours to act and notify Level 2 includes significant issues requiring PLF oversight. Consultation with CLO, LSU, FWO and Home Affairs may be required.		HIGH RISK LEVEL 3 – CRITICAL INCIDENTS Timeframes: must act and notify immediately (as soon as practicably possible). Urgent and serious issues. PLF intervention and additional oversight from PLF CLO, LSU and HOM partners may be required.	
Examples of Level 1 issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minor employer issues • payslips • minor conflict with a supervisor • money transfer queries • visa queries • health insurance queries • general welfare issues • minor medical concerns • minor issues with accommodation • minor conflict at accommodation sites. 		Examples of Level 2 issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unresolved level 1 issues • end of employment • repatriations • absconding • worker hospitalised • workplace dispute or serious allegation • workers tested for COVID-19 • worker exiting the PLS • visa non-compliance • police and/or emergency services involvement • workplace injury resulting in time off work or a work cover claim • medical issue resulting in prolonged period off work • worker redeployment or relocation • 30 hours per week not met • HR process pending. (performance, conduct). 		Examples of Level 3 issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unresolved level 2 issues • death of worker • critical injury or illness of a worker • worker arrested and or involved in a criminal offence (victim or perpetrator) • worker admitted to hospital in life threatening condition • domestic violence incident involving a worker, either as a victim or perpetrator. • major deed non-compliance event. 	
APPROVED EMPLOYER	ALL OTHER STAKEHOLDERS	APPROVED EMPLOYER	ALL OTHER STAKEHOLDERS	APPROVED EMPLOYER	ALL OTHER STAKEHOLDERS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyse the issue. 2. Find a remedy. 3. Resolution. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact the AE during business hours. 2. If unresolved, escalate via level 2. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notify the CLO and/or LSU – intervention/issue closed (AE/CLO/LSU advice provided to the PLF). 2. Escalate/consult with PLF. 3. PLF/other relevant stakeholder/s engagement. 4. Resolution. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report to AE (during business hours) and/or call the PLF 1800 hotline (1800 51 51 31). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report to the PLF. 2. Engage with PLF/other relevant stakeholders to identify actions to take. 3. Resolution. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report to AE and/or PLF 1800 hotline (1800 51 51 31) as soon as practicably possible, within 24 hours.

Current PLF priorities (selection of)

- Transition to Single Program
- Roll out of regional presence
- Reintegration
- Approved Employer capacity building (including cultural competencies)
- Inclusive employment (gender and disability)
- Worker skills development – including working with APTC and in Australia Skills Development Program
- Industry diversification