

Pacific Labour Mobility Consultation Summary

Introduction

Reason for the Review

COVID-19 has brought into sharp focus the value of our Pacific labour mobility initiatives, the Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP) and Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS), which provide direct and tangible economic benefits to both our Pacific family and Australian farmers and industries.

The SWP and PLS benefit both Australia and the Pacific, helping Australian businesses address critical workforce shortages in rural and regional communities, while providing opportunities for Pacific and Timorese workers to develop skills, earn income and send home remittances to support their families and the economic growth of their countries. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these programs have provided much needed remittance flows to Pacific economies, hit hard by border closures. At the same time, Pacific and Timorese workers have proven to be a reliable and productive source of labour, particularly for Australian farmers.

As we look ahead to life beyond the pandemic, with an altered Australian labour market and growing demand for Pacific and Timorese workers, it is the right time to consider how we can best position the programs for future growth. To ensure the programs are scalable, sustainable and efficient into the future, the Australian Government sought views from stakeholders on approaches to improve, streamline and align the two programs to maximise the benefits for employers, workers and participating countries.

Conduct of the Review

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, together with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment and the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, consulted stakeholders over a six-week period between 10 June to 18 July 2021. **45 written submissions** and **92 website submissions** were received from interested stakeholders. In addition, the government hosted **47 consultations**, the majority of which was held virtually due to the evolving COVID-19 situation. Feedback was received from industry, employers, workers, unions, community groups, states and territories, and Pacific and Timorese governments.

Next Steps

The feedback gathered during the consultation period will inform future arrangements and policy settings for Pacific labour mobility and support the continued growth of the programs.

Key themes

It was clear that there is **growing demand in rural and regional Australia** for Pacific and Timorese workers, and the programs are **highly valued**, delivering positive outcomes for Australia and the Pacific. Key themes which emerged during the consultations included a desire to see further streamlining of administrative processes, more flexibility to move workers to support productivity and maximise earnings, and a keen interest in retaining high value workers for longer periods. Accommodation standards and availability, and worker wellbeing were frequently raised.

Stakeholders expressed **strong support for maintaining high program standards, integrity and worker wellbeing**. Although some stakeholders indicated that the programs were relatively high cost, they provided a **high level of certainty for employers** with a **reliable, returning and productive workforce**. They also **benefitted workers** by providing an income stream that enables workers to support their families and communities. The horticulture and meat processing sectors noted that the programs had become a **critical part of their workforce**, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

'The SWP and PLS should be administered via a single program body with Government Agency support. One Deed and one set of Guidelines.' -Approved Employers of Australia

A key theme to emerge during the consultations was a desire for a **more aligned and simplified approach to Pacific labour mobility**, with a **single Australian government department administering the programs**. Stakeholders felt this would reduce red tape and create efficiencies, through a single Deed of Agreement, employer guidelines and accommodation approval process. A **greater program presence in the regions of Australia** was also suggested as a way of improving program delivery.

For Pacific and Timorese Governments and stakeholders, **worker welfare**, **training** opportunities, and increasing **financial benefits** for workers were priority concerns. These stakeholders also expressed views on worker portability, longer visa length and the challenges of family separation.

Industry feedback was largely focused on program administration, the availability of **suitable accommodation**, accommodation **approval processes**, worker training opportunities, visa length and other **program flexibilities such as worker portability** (i.e.: a system to more easily move workers around).

'Greater flexibility in moving workers between locations under the same approved employer or to a new location under a different approved employer to keep workers in adequate levels of work would be highly desirable.'

The Salvation Army Australia, The Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, the Pacific Islands Council of Queensland, Inc, and the Pacific Islands Council of South Australia

Some sectors, particularly horticulture, tourism and hospitality, are seeking **more flexibility to move workers between Approved Employers** (one form of portability), driven by the nature of the work, unpredictable seasons or the suitability of workers to particular roles. Other stakeholders advocated for workers to be given the opportunity to instigate moves between Approved Employers.

Several unions and community groups identified a number of benefits to increased portability, provided **standards, integrity and worker welfare protections** were maintained. They noted that increased worker portability would allow workers to be employed more productively and flexibly, supporting employers with short-term needs, while ensuring workers maximised their incomes and were not idle during quiet periods.

Visa arrangements also generated strong interest and considerable discussion during virtual roundtables. Agriculture stakeholders, particularly in horticulture, noted the **value of maintaining two visa streams**—a more seasonal, short-term stream (9 months in a 12 month period) and a longer-term stream (currently 1-3 years). There was also a strong desire from the meat processing and dairy sectors, and from Pacific and Timorese workers, for at least a **4-year visa to enable workers to complete formal skills qualifications while working**.

The horticulture sector also suggested there should be pathways for **high performing SWP workers to transfer to the longer PLS visa** onshore to take up less seasonal, semi-skilled roles. This would enable employers to retain high performing workers and provide career pathways for SWP workers. The meat processing, aged care and dairy sectors, and some Pacific and Timorese workers themselves advocated strongly for an **onshore pathway to other visa streams** (such as the Temporary Skills Shortage visa) for workers who complete formal skills qualifications, which may provide future pathways to permanent residency.

Under current visa and program arrangements, workers are not able to be accompanied by dependents. Various stakeholders raised the issue of family separation and suggested **consideration**

be given to allowing dependents to accompany workers for part of, or all of, their employment. They indicated that extended periods away from family and community negatively impacts the wellbeing and mental health of some Pacific and Timorese workers.

The preparation of workers prior to mobilisation was raised by a number of stakeholders throughout the consultation. These stakeholders advocated for **increased training opportunities for workers prior to coming to Australia**, for example in first aid, English language, money management and computer literacy, to better prepare workers for their new roles and for living in Australia.

Accommodation was consistently raised as a source of frustration by stakeholders. Employer stakeholders advocated strongly for a more **streamlined SWP accommodation** approval process. Another issue raised was the **shortage of suitable accommodation** in regional Australia, with some stakeholders proposing the government introduce **incentives for investment in accommodation for seasonal workers** (including but not only Pacific workers) by employers or other investors.

Another source of frustration was the impact of SWP and PLS **workers leaving their jobs in breach of their visa conditions** (often referred to as absconding) and a perceived lack of adequate compliance action to deter wrong doers and send a clear message to employers and workers about the risks. Stakeholders acknowledged there were many reasons why a worker may abscond, including being encouraged or deceived into leaving their employer, often on the promise of more pay and more attractive conditions. This undermines the objectives, integrity and value of the programs.

COVID-specific and other issues raised

Although the consultation focused on future arrangements for Pacific labour mobility and sought to look beyond the pandemic, COVID-specific arrangements were the subject of some discussion during the consultation period. The tourism, hospitality and aged care sectors in particular expressed frustration at their inability to recruit workers in most states and territories due to prioritisation of the horticulture and meat processing sectors for limited quarantine places. Aged care stakeholders were highly motivated to participate in the programs and would like to see pathways open up in the current COVID context.

Other related issues included:

- Clarifying worker repatriation guidelines during COVID-19;
- states and territories need to provide clear quarantine pathways, and better outline availability and costs;
- improved communication and information sharing between states/territories and Approved Employers so they can better plan recruitments;
- a request for greater data sharing from the Commonwealth with the states and territories;
- the length of time required to process recruitments; and
- a future agriculture visa, noting any new visa must complement Pacific labour mobility without eroding worker conditions or undermining benefits of Pacific labour mobility.

More detailed feedback is at Attachment A. Attachment B lists consultations undertaken, and Attachment C summarises from whom written submissions were received.

ATTACHMENT A: Pacific Labour Mobility Consultation - Key Feedback

The importance of partnerships

The key relationship in the Pacific labour mobility programs is that between the Approved Employer and the worker. That said, the Commonwealth, Pacific Governments, labour sending units and country liaison officers have an important role in delivering the programs. A large number of other stakeholders, including community and sporting groups, unions, diaspora, and state, territory and local governments, were identified as having an important role to play in delivering the programs, particularly in building program understanding and connecting workers to communities, to ensure good outcomes.

It was also noted that it is important to engage federal and state-based regulators, such as Fair Work Ombudsman, work health and safety regulators and labour hire authorities to ensure good outcomes.

More streamlined administrative arrangements

'Combine the two programs into one umbrella program. The two systems can be perceived as confusing and perhaps there would be efficiencies in aligning them.' -Education Milne Bay (organisation based in Papua New Guinea)

There was general **support for alignment of the Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP) and Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS)**, with a **single Australian government department administering the programs under a single Deed of Agreement and employer guidelines**. Many stakeholders felt this would reduce duplication and improve clarity for employers, workers and participating countries. Stakeholders also indicated support for a single **Approved Employer application process**, as well as **single recruitment and accommodation approval processes**. Approved Employers also advocated for **streamlined reporting requirements**, for example arrival and departure reports.

A number of industry stakeholders and Approved Employers indicated a preference for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade delivery model, which uses a contractor to support delivery of the program. They perceived this model to be better able to support continued program growth.

Program settings

Barriers to uptake by small employers

Upfront costs, out of pocket expenses, administration and regulatory burden were noted as **significant barriers** and/or deterrents to some small and medium employers participating in the programs. While a small number of stakeholders wanted to see the programs open to all employers, provided they had completed labour market testing, many acknowledged that Pacific labour mobility was not the solution to all workforce shortages for all types of employers.

Some stakeholders suggested that, although labour hire companies helped facilitate access to the programs for employers, they also came at an additional cost, which may be beyond the financial limits of small businesses. A deterrent to uptake by some employers was the perceived lack of opportunity for direct engagement with workers and participating countries in the recruitment process.

Labour market testing

Labour market testing requirements prior to recruitment of Pacific workers were described as **onerous and repetitive**. It was suggested that the period of validity of labour market testing should be **extended to 12 months** and consideration should be given to allowing **all Approved Employers in a regional or rural catchment area to use LMT already undertaken in that location**. This would

reduce duplication in the same labour market. Some stakeholders also proposed that the labour market testing requirement be waived where there was an unexpected need to move workers, particularly for a short period.

Postcode restrictions

Some stakeholders expressed **frustration** at the **current postcode restrictions**, particularly where their businesses were located in an eligible area for one program, but not the other. However, aged care stakeholders noted that although there were worker shortages in urban and peri-urban locations, they maintained support for a priority rural and regional focus to support care facilities operating in more geographically isolated areas to attract and retain Pacific workers.

Portability

'Greater flexibility to move workers between Approved Employers would enable highly seasonal crops (i.e. those with a short harvest window) to access workers and would also mitigate risk for visa holders where a season may fall short, or a weather event destroys a crop that results in those workers no longer having work.'

Australian Fresh Produce Alliance

A suggestion raised repeatedly, particularly from the horticulture, tourism and hospitality sectors, was the need for **greater flexibility to move workers between Approved Employers** (portability). This would help to meet shifting workforce needs in a timely manner and enable workers to maximise their incomes and minimise periods of inactivity or low hours during seasonal fluctuations. This flexibility would need to be balanced with worker interests and program integrity.

The consultation highlighted **two types of portability**:

- **within a region or catchment area**, particularly to cover short quiet periods, highly seasonal crops or as seasons fall short; and
- **across regions**.

Many stakeholders noted that the concept of the SWP Portability pilot¹ was good but it had been impacted by COVID and it had been challenging for Approved Employers to reach agreement on costs and timing of sharing workers.

During the pandemic, the Australian government, states and territories, and Approved Employers have worked together and demonstrated that it was possible to move workers between locations and employers efficiently and effectively while also upholding strong worker welfare protections. Some stakeholders suggested this experience had better equipped Approved Employers to work together which may encourage greater interest in worker portability going forward. For example, Tasmanian horticulture employers expressed strong interest in future collaborations that would see them sharing workers for complementary seasons.

There were a number of suggestions about how portability could be built into the program. These included **allowing workers movement between employers** based on current COVID redeployment flexibilities, allowing **multiple temporary activities sponsors for a single recruitment**, or a **secondment style arrangement that enabled workers to be shared with others** by an Approved Employer who retains responsibility for the workers under the Deed with the Commonwealth and Temporary Activity Sponsorship of the worker visa.

¹ In early 2020, the Department of Education, Skills and Employment introduced a portability pilot to allow Regional Pilot approved employers to share seasonal workers across the four pilot regions. Pilot approved employers must agree to timing and sharing of costs by entering into a Multi-Sponsor Agreement. To date, there has been no uptake of the portability pilot.

'The policy settings concerning the portability of visas issued to temporary migrant workers should be changed to allow more flexibility for workers... The workers are left in limbo when a labour hire provider cannot provide the workers with appropriate employment... The rigidity of the pre COVID-19 arrangements... should be replaced with a more flexible program...'

Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking of Humans (ACRATH)

A number of unions and community groups consulted also supported increased worker portability, provided **standards, integrity and worker welfare protections were maintained**. Increased worker portability would ensure workers were employed productively and flexibly, supporting employers' short-term labour needs, while ensuring workers maximised their incomes and minimised inactivity during quiet periods. Community stakeholders noted that greater flexibility for workers with reduced hours to move between employers may avert problems with workers being lured out of the programs by unapproved employers on the promise of higher incomes. Portability would enable workers to maximise their incomes and minimise inactivity.

Many stakeholders emphasised that **transparency and accountability in worker movement would be essential**.

Visa settings

Visa length

During the consultation, agriculture stakeholders, particularly horticulture, noted the **value of maintaining two visa streams—short-term (9 months) and longer-term visa (1-3 years)**—with continuation of a multi-year visa (up to 3 years) for seasonal work. This seasonal visa would allow shorter, intense workforce needs to be met, while supporting worker welfare and limiting worker fatigue.

'Visa length of 4 years rather than 3 so the workers can develop skills over the period and transition to a skilled visa following the required time.' -FIP Group

While the horticulture sector was largely satisfied with the current SWP visa length, there was a strong interest from some sectors, particularly meat processing and dairy, workers and community groups, for the **PLS visa to be extended to at least 4 years**. Alternatively, these stakeholders suggested workers be permitted to apply for a further 3-year visa onshore. This would **enable workers to develop skills and undertake formal skills qualifications**, such as a Certificate III in meat processing. It was noted that this would benefit both the employer and the worker.

Community groups highlighted the need to consider worker welfare in relation to visa length, and the impact on families and community dynamics, noting some workers may experience negative social consequences with longer visa lengths.

Pathways to other visas

The horticulture sector, and some regional councils and Pacific community groups, also suggested **high value SWP workers should be able to 'graduate' to a longer-term visa** to take up less seasonal, low and semi-skilled positions. This would enable employers to retain high performing workers and provide pathways for SWP workers to upskill and progress, without the need to return home and reapply.

The meat processing, aged care and dairy sectors, and some workers themselves, were also seeking an **onshore pathway to other visa streams**, such as the Temporary Skills Shortage visa, for workers

who have or obtain a formal skills qualifications. This may also provide future **pathways to permanent residency** for Pacific and Timorese workers, which is of great interest to the meat processing, aged care and dairy sectors, as well as workers and Pacific community groups.

'ACRATH strongly recommends that the families of workers be allowed to travel to Australia for the duration of their employment. This is particularly relevant for workers who travel to Australia for one-to-three-year periods. This would help alleviate mental health issues and promote better outcomes for workers and businesses.' -Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking of Humans (ACRATH)

Family separation

Various stakeholders, particularly Pacific community groups and workers, raised the **issue of family separation**, and advocated for the government to **consider allowing family members**, specifically dependents, to **accompany workers** for part of or the duration of their employment. For some workers, being away from their family and community causes social dislocation and negatively impacts workers' wellbeing and mental health.

Skills and training

Increased training opportunities for workers prior to mobilisation was raised by a number of stakeholders, who felt that enhanced training (e.g., first aid, English, money management and computer training skills) would better prepare workers for living and working in Australia.

Some sectors (e.g.: meat processing, dairy, horticulture, aged care). Pacific and Timorese workers and community groups advocated strongly for **opportunities for workers to undertake formal skills training whilst in Australia**. Pacific stakeholders, as well as state and territory governments, aged care and horticulture stakeholders, supported the idea of a **blended training model** whereby some components of study or training were delivered in the Pacific and Timor-Leste prior to departure and the remainder in Australia upon arrival. This would enable more workers to attain qualifications and boost the number of physically fit workers mobilised with prior experience and identified aptitude.

Accommodation

During consultations, many stakeholders raised the **critical shortage of suitable accommodation** as a significant challenge and noted the **lack of incentives for investment in new accommodation**. Suggested solutions included establishing '**accommodation camps**' or **tax incentives such as accelerated depreciation** for investment in developing or upgrading suitable accommodation.

Approved Employers, industry bodies and local councils also noted that there was a **misalignment between state and local government legislation**, particularly in Victoria, for those that have capacity to build or renovate properties.

Another key theme was the need to **streamline the accommodation approval process**. The current accommodation approval process for seasonal workers was seen as arduous, inconsistent and duplicative. A number of different **suggestions** were put forward to streamline the process, including: **ensuring Approved Employers and contract managers have the same level of information** on requirements; **use of online video platforms** as a way to gain single instance question/answer/evidence; and, a **central accommodation database** to remove the need for approval being required by each Approved Employer for the same accommodation facilities.

Pacific governments and unions also noted that the cost of accommodation was a major expense for workers and suggested there should be consideration of a standard pricing arrangement.

Program integrity, assurance and compliance

Government role

While a key theme to emerge during the consultation was the need to **ensure program standards and integrity were maintained through appropriate assurance and compliance** mechanisms, there were **mixed views** on the **level of government involvement**. Some, particularly unions, would like the government to have a larger role in assurance and compliance, while others would like to see government play a facilitator role with Approved Employers taking on greater responsibility.

Despite this, it was consistently mentioned that **clearer guidance and engagement** from the Australian government needed to be provided to Approved Employers and other stakeholders, particularly around escalation provisions and relevant timelines for critical issues and incidents, to ensure effective risk management.

Risk management

It was noted by some that there was **considerable scope and opportunity to consider an employer's history, policies and practices, and relevant certification schemes** when assessing an approved employer's risk profile, and therefore the flexibilities afforded to them. One suggestion was for program administrators to work more closely with state-based agencies on risk management, assurance and compliance activities, drawing on existing systems and processes.

'We do not believe there are currently any industry accreditation schemes that are of sufficient quality and scope to allow for a significant reduction of the vetting process undertaken by the PLM programs. However, where a labour hire business is licensed under a state government licensing scheme this should allow for them to have a more streamlined path to become an approved employer...

When an approved employer has a proven and demonstrated track record of compliance and looking after workers to a high standard, as verified by independent conversations with workers at the end of placements, it would be acceptable to allow those employers to be subject to a lower level of regulation.'

The Salvation Army Australia, The Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, the Pacific Islands Council of Queensland, Inc. and the Pacific Islands Council of South Australia.

Use of industry accreditation schemes to inform risk profiling was also raised, with industry and employers generally supportive, but unions and community groups less supportive of these approaches.

SWP Recruitment Caps

There were **divergent views** about **SWP recruitment caps** with suggestions ranging from removing them altogether to applying caps to both programs. However, there was a **consistent message** that the **cap review** process needed to be **streamlined and more flexible** depending on workforce circumstances.

Absconding

A key source of frustration for stakeholders was the impacts of workers leaving their jobs in breach of their visa conditions (commonly referred to as absconding) and a perceived lack of adequate compliance action to deter wrong doers—both employers and workers—and to send a clear message about the risks. Stakeholders acknowledged a range of reasons why workers may abscond, including being encouraged or deceived into leaving their employer, often on the promise of more pay or more attractive conditions. Many note that absconding undermines the objectives, integrity

and value of the programs. There is a clear desire for more transparent communication and compliance activities by government on this issue.

Employer support

'It is recommended that the Approved Employers of workers coming to Australia under the auspices of the Seasonal Worker Programme and the Pacific Labour Scheme, are provided with cross cultural training in order that they better understand and recognise the cultures, practices, and traditions of their workers.'

Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking of Humans (ACRATH)

'There is a clear lack of appropriate and effective cultural training for Pacific Islander employees coming to Australia. There is a clear lack of information with regards to the subculture, systems of government, local laws, etc.'

Communities Council Far North Queensland

Cultural competency

Many stakeholders noted that **improve cross-cultural understanding** would help avoid misunderstandings; resolve issues in a more timely manner; enhance worker and employer communication and relationships; and build trust. Strategies suggested to promote greater understanding included more training and guidance, promoting strong employer-worker relationships; cultural, sporting or community groups; or reciprocal exchanges. A few stakeholders suggested industry bodies or community groups could be the conduit for such exchanges. It was also noted that some Approved Employers had travelled to the Pacific and Timor-Leste, prior to COVID, and developed strong relationships with workers and their home communities.

Recognition of performance and sharing best practice

Despite mixed views on which employers the programs should ideally serve, it was emphasised by many stakeholders that **program standards should not be lowered to accommodate every employer** and the focus should be on capacity and capability building among employers to develop best practice to meet and exceed baseline program standards.

'Develop and implement a best practice standards/accreditation for AEs to be critiqued against. Promote as a badge of pride to be the "labour mobility employer of choice". After a set period of time, they require less rigorous monitoring and reporting as they have proven their integrity, ethics and value.' -Fiji Ministry of Employment

A large number of stakeholders acknowledged the **need to recognise performance to promote and encourage best practice** within the programs. To achieve this, many recognised the **importance of sharing knowledge and best practice** among Approved Employers and other relevant stakeholders, and the need to **foster a culture of continuous improvement**. Many noted that there was an opportunity to better capture and share employer and worker experiences and best practice through case studies, testimonials and videos. It was also suggested that groups such as the Approved Employers Association or other industry bodies could be used to host forums that encouraged employers to share their experiences.

Regional presence

Another strong theme to emerge in consultations was a desire to see a **greater program presence** in the **regions of Australia** to improve program delivery. This included **regional officers who knew the region**, could **promote the programs** and **connect employers with the right people and services**.

Worker support

Pre-departure training and preparation

Pre-departure screening and briefing also emerged as a key theme, with some sectors, particularly meat processing, reporting positive outcomes, while other sectors, and community and Pacific groups advocating for a **more comprehensive screening process** and **pre-departure briefing**. These stakeholders suggested pre-departure trainings should include more information on **health, hygiene and food safety** and more **comprehensive coverage** of **Australian laws, western culture and ways of living**.

It was noted by a number of stakeholders including employers, community organisations and Pacific community, that the pre-departure briefings rely too heavily on written material to prepare workers for their time in Australia. With many Pacific cultures heavily structured around oral traditions and often reduced literacy rates, it was suggested that workers were not absorbing enough of the information. To overcome these issues, there was support for materials to be provided **in-language** with **video and in-person briefings** also used to **increase workers' understanding** of their rights and entitlements, Australian laws and common customs, and expectations of their placements.

Approved Employers also noted that **pre-departure briefings and on-arrival briefings** needed to be **consistent and complementary** to ensure comprehensive and uniform information for workers.

Worker pay and conditions

The consultations revealed some level of misunderstanding of weekly work hour requirements of the programs and confusion about the horticulture award. Some stakeholders suggested the programs provide more **flexibility** in average **weekly work hour** and **pay conditions**. The horticulture sector indicated that the unpredictability of harvests resulted in workers being needed by employers for longer hours some weeks and less during others. Other stakeholders noted that workers wanted to maximise their financial benefit, and at times felt their hours were not enough and wanted to opportunity to increase the income. It was recognised that work hours would need to be regulated to ensure workers were not overworked.

Many community groups observed that the use of piece rates was problematic as it could result in workers being paid low wages making budgeting more difficult and increasing worker fatigue as they pushed themselves to earn more. These stakeholders suggested employment contracts, particularly wage and working hours, needed to be clearer and able to be more easily understood by workers.

Some stakeholders, including Pacific Country Liaison Officers and Heads of Mission and unions, noted that **superannuation** remained an **ongoing issue** with workers confused about when and how they can claim their accrued superannuation benefits.

Worker welfare when in Australia

It was widely acknowledged that **protecting worker welfare**, particularly worker integration in the community, was **pivotal to the ongoing success of the programs**. **Pacific governments, LSUs and country liaison officers** also have an **important role to play** in worker welfare. **Upfront engagement with diaspora and unions** was identified as beneficial in providing key support for workers and ensuring obligations were well understood. Diaspora were also identified as having a key role in connecting workers to the community and providing useful inter-cultural education (for workers and employers) and in-language support, often informally. **Community care organisations and sporting clubs** provided other opportunities for **workers to feel connected to their host community**. A range of stakeholders also noted the **importance** of ensuring **local councils, local health providers**, including mental health, hospitals, **police and emergency services** were aware of worker cohorts,

and vice versa, to maximise opportunities to support workers during their placements.

'Diaspora – Trusted community leaders in Australia to provide pastoral care as they understand the culture better and have been living in Australia and familiar on how things work in Australia. However, for the diaspora to fully support worker welfare needs, they need to be better informed, to understand the different aspects of the programs.

The Liaison Officer is a very important role for any country participating in the SWP and PLS program. The LO supports the delivering of good outcomes in relation worker welfare as the link between the workers, the LSU, the mission, diaspora, PLF and AEs. The LO is the person on the ground who monitors workers welfare and always advancing their well-being within the program requirements and legislative parameters. The LO also acts as an overseer holding AEs, workers, diaspora accountable for any actions taken that is not in the best interests of the program and stakeholders involved. The LO also has a role of working with the enforcement agencies in Australia.

Fiji Ministry of Employment

Some stakeholders observed that **workers** who had a **stronger relationship with employers** had **better welfare and wellbeing outcomes**. Parts of the horticulture sector indicated an interest in Approved Employers taking a greater role in managing worker welfare, subject to adequate support being provided to Approved Employers, and ensuring there were clear escalation policies and guidelines as well as support for time sensitive or serious welfare cases/issues.

Several stakeholder groups noted that there needed to be better collaboration across government, with labour sending units, country liaison officers, Approved Employers and health insurance providers, to assist in delivering holistic and effective worker welfare and health cover solutions.

Some state and territory governments and local councils also requested access to data on where workers were located to better understand where support or resources were needed.

In-country activities

Approved Employer and Labour Sending Unit engagement

A key point made by the Pacific Governments was the need to ensure that **labour sending countries were involved early**, particularly in the recruitment and worker mobilisation processes. Many Australian stakeholders also highlighted the need for **more support and involvement of LSUs**, and direct **collaboration** between the **LSUs and Approved Employers** to match workers with workforce needs.

Better matching supply and demand

Some stakeholders, including Pacific and Timor-Leste governments, noted that **increased availability of data** about **labour needs** and suggested **early forecasting of skill requirements**, alongside early engagement, would **better** enable the LSUs to **match workers with workforce needs**.

Pre-departure health checks

LSUs and community groups also noted that **pre-departure health screening** could be **improved** to ensure any **pre-existing medical conditions were identified** and worker eligibility could be determined prior to visa application.

Attachment B: virtual and face to face consultation

Table 1: New South Wales Consultations

Date and time	Stakeholders
Monday 21 June 2021	Leeton Council
Monday 21 June 2021	Citrus industry
Tuesday 22 June 2021	Teys; RWM; Pacific Labour Scheme workers

Table 2: Tasmania Consultations

Date and time	Stakeholders
Monday 28 June 2021	Fruit Growers Tasmania; DPIPWE
Monday 28 June 2021	Fruit Growers Tasmania; 3 fruit growers (host employers); DPIPWE
Tuesday 29 June 2021	Fruit Growers Tasmania; 4 berrygrowers; DPIPWE
Tuesday 29 June 2021	Northern Council; DPIPWE
Tuesday 29 June 2021	Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association; Dairy Tasmania; Harvest Moon (vegetable grower); DPIPWE
Thursday 1 July 2021	Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association; Enchanted Isle Farms (Tasmanian representative on NFF Horticulture Council); 40 South Dairies

Table 3: Victoria Consultations

Date and time	Stakeholders
Wednesday 30 June 2021	Mildura Regional City Council
Wednesday 30 June 2021	Citrus Australia; Fruit Master (Australian Table Grapes Association member); Approved Employers Association; Agriculture Victoria
Wednesday 30 June 2021	Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities; Top of the Crop; Select Harvest (almonds); Orchard Tech Connect Group; Australian Table Grapes Association; Agriculture Victoria
Wednesday 30 June 2021	Ourplace
Thursday 1 July 2021	MADEC; Steicke Farms; Cutri Fruit

Table 4: Northern Territory

Date and time	Stakeholders
Monday 5 July 2021	Northern Territory Farmers Association

Table 5: Western Australia

Date and time	Stakeholders
Friday 9 July 2021	Craig Mostyn Group; TourismWA; Delroy; FIP Group; Labour Solutions; DPIRD; Patane Produce; Newton Orchards; Ceresfarm; Karragullen; Vegetables WA; WA Farmers; Bamess Farms

Table 6: South Australia

Date and time	Stakeholders
Tuesday 13 July 2021	Migration Solutions; 4 Ways Fresh; Pickers and Pruners Labour Hire; Labour Solutions; PIRSA; Ceravolo Orchards; Costa; Pitchford Produce; Plant Grow Pick; Ausveg; Citrus Australia

Table 7: Queensland

Date and time	Stakeholders
Friday 9 July 2021	DAF Queensland
Wednesday 14 July 2021	Growcom; Growcom Approved Employer members
Wednesday 14 July 2021	Growcom; Growcom non-Approved Employer members; Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network; Queensland Horticulture Council

Table 2: stakeholder-based consultations (industry groups, unions, community groups, etc.)

Date and time	Stakeholders
Friday 18 June 2021	Australian Fresh Produce Alliance
Wednesday 23 June 2021	Pacific and Timor-Leste Heads of Mission
Thursday 24 June 2021	National Farmers Federation
Friday 25 June 2021	Ausveg
Friday 25 June 2021	Commonwealth and state and territory Pacific labour mobility restart working group
Friday 25 June 2021	Pacific labour mobility industry reference group
Monday 28 June 2021	Research Governance meeting
Wednesday 30 June 2021	RWM
Thursday 1 July 2021	Growcom
Friday 2 July 2021	Australian Workers Union
Friday 2 July 2021	<i>Community care</i> United Care; ACRATH; Vanuatu Prevention of Blindness; Randall Prior (individual who assists workers); Margaret Morris (individual who assists workers)
Friday 2 July 2021	FWO
Monday 5 July 2021	United Workers Union
Tuesday 6 July 2021	Approved Employers of Australia
Wednesday 7 July 2021	APTC
Thursday 8 July 2021	Meat processing
Thursday 8 July 2021	<i>Hospitality and Tourism</i> Cable Beach Club; Prendiville Group; Restaurant and Catering Industry Association; Pullman Bunker Bay Resort; Kimberley Accommodation; DPIRD; Tourism WA; Australian Hotels Association NSW; Office of Rick Wilson; Queensland Hotels Association; Australian Hotels Association WA
Friday 9 July 2021	Citrus Australia
Tuesday 13 July 2021	Salvation Army
Tuesday 13 July 2021	<i>Aged care</i> Uniting Care Queensland; Bushland Health; HealthX; Bolton Clarke; Community Services Industry Alliance
Wednesday 14 July 2021	PICSA and PICQ
Thursday 15 July 2021	Pacific and Timor Governments and Labour Sending Units
Thursday 15 July 2021	Country Liaison Officers
Thursday 15 July 2021	Commonwealth, States and Territories Roundtable on Aged Care
Friday 16 July 2021	Claire Field

Attachment C: website and written submissions

Stakeholder group	Website submissions	Written submissions
Academia	1	3
Community Groups	7	5
Employer	37	9
– agriculture	– 16	– 5
– meat processing	– 15	– 3
– care	– 2	– 0
– tourism/hospitality	– 0	– 0
– other	– 4	– 1
Government	3	5
– state/territory		– 3
– local/regional		– 2
Industry body	7	10
– agriculture	– 7	– 8
– meat processing	– 0	– 0
– care	– 0	– 1
– tourism/hospitality	– 0	– 0
– other	– 0	– 1
Pacific and Timorese groups	14	6
– Government	– 2	– 4
– CLOs	– 0	– 1
– LSU	– 0	– 1
– other	– 12	– 1
Worker/union	14	1
– workers		– 0
– unions		– 1
Other	9	3