

Pacific Labour Mobility – Discussion Paper

Context

The Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP) and the Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS) are highly valued by Australia and the Pacific and Timor-Leste. The programs **support Australian businesses by helping address critical workforce shortages in rural and regional communities**. This enables businesses to grow and thrive, creating stronger regional economies and supporting national economic growth.

The programs are also central to **Australia’s stepped-up engagement with our Pacific neighbours and Timor-Leste**, providing employment 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. Pacific labour mobility fosters links between people, businesses, and communities, creating deeper connections between Australia and our Pacific family.

The continued success of Pacific labour mobility will be dependent on **maintaining the breadth, quality and integrity of programs, ensuring safeguards remain in place** to protect the welfare and wellbeing of workers and **enabling demand-driven growth**.

The Australian Government is seeking views on ways to improve, streamline and align Australia’s Pacific labour mobility initiatives, the SWP and PLS, to maximise benefits for employers, workers and participating countries.



Seasonal Worker Programme

The SWP commenced on 1 July 2012, following a successful pilot. The SWP is uncapped and demand driven, offering employers in the agriculture sector and employers in the accommodation sector (in selected locations) access to a reliable, returning workforce when there is not enough local Australian labour to meet seasonal demand. Workers aged 21 or older can be recruited in unskilled and low skilled positions for up to 9 months in any twelve-month period, after employers approved to participate (approved employers) have undertaken labour market testing. Workers are employed under the same pay and conditions as Australian workers. [SWP Website](#)



Pacific Labour Scheme

The PLS commenced on 1 July 2018 and enables Pacific and Timorese workers aged 21 to 45 to take up low- and semi-skilled positions in rural and regional Australia for between one and three years. It is open to all industries, subject to approved employers demonstrating through labour market testing that no suitable Australians are available. The PLS is a circular labour mobility program with emphasis placed on identifying suitable industries where there is a corresponding need for these skills in participating countries. As with the SWP, PLS workers are employed under the same awards and Industry standards as Australians and pay tax, receive superannuation, and have access to the same complaint and dispute resolution bodies. [PLS Website](#)

Further detail on the similarities and differences between the SWP and PLS is at [Attachment A](#).

The SWP and PLS are a growing source of labour, filling unskilled, low, and semi-skilled positions in sectors struggling to find enough Australian workers. Since the SWP commenced in 2012 and the PLS commenced in 2018, workers from nine Pacific Island Countries¹ and Timor-Leste have filled positions in **agriculture, horticulture, meatworks, aged care, fisheries, tourism and hospitality**,

¹ Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu

forestry, and other sectors. Since 2012-13, and prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the **SWP had seen an average yearly growth of around 40 per cent**, with more than 12,000 visas granted in 2018-19. **The PLS** had also established its reputation with employers seeking to fill vacancies for periods of between one and three years, with numbers growing to more than 1,000 workers in the first 18 months of operation, and **almost doubling since recruitment resumed in August 2020.**

Australian employers see the value of Pacific and Timorese workers as a reliable, returning workforce. This has raised the profile of the programs and is driving increased demand from employers. **Interest from participating countries has also continued to grow**, with many participating countries suffering severe economic impacts during COVID (e.g. due to the loss of tourism) and increasingly looking to labour mobility to support their economic recovery.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused considerable disruption to Australian labour markets and to Pacific labour mobility. Despite higher Australian unemployment during the pandemic, **demand for Pacific labour continued to grow**, particularly in agriculture. This is due in part to the decrease in the number of Working Holiday Makers (WHMs) in Australia - from 143,042 in February 2020 to 40,616 in February 2021 many of whom spend some time working in regional and rural areas and take up jobs in agriculture. The Government has acted to encourage more Australian workers to take up harvest work by expanding Harvest Trail Services and implementing incentives, including changes to relocation assistance that is also available for WHMs and international students.

When international borders closed due to COVID-19 in March 2020, there were approximately 7,000 SWP and 1,000 PLS workers in Australia. Many SWP workers who have remained in the country have been redeployed, some multiple times, to more than 9,000 new positions. This followed temporary visa changes to allow Pacific and Timorese workers to remain in Australia for a further 12 months.

While some of the COVID-related disruption to labour markets is likely to be temporary, some longer-term structural changes may also become evident.

The recently released [National Agricultural Workforce Strategy](#) recognises the important part played by migrant and overseas workers, particularly Pacific and Timorese workers, in filling workforce gaps. It **recommended streamlining the SWP and PLS** to mobilise overseas workers more effectively and improve accessibility to the program.

Labour shortages are not confined to agriculture. Employers in the **meat processing sector** have struggled for many years to find enough local labour and have increasingly looked to the PLS as a solution to ongoing workforce shortages and low retention rates. The projected shortage of workers in **the aged care sector** is predicted to reach 180,000 by 2050², while the National Disability Insurance Scheme³ has estimated that up to 90,000 new full-time positions will need to be created and filled by 2024 in **the disability sector**. The Aged Care Royal Commission final report acknowledged that migrant workers, although small in numbers in overall terms, will likely be an important part of the toolkit to address workforce supply issues, where local workers cannot be engaged in sufficient numbers. Aged care also provides opportunities for Pacific workers to fill ancillary roles such as kitchen/hospitality and housekeeping positions.

Recognising the ongoing demand for Pacific and Timorese workers in critical sectors, National Cabinet agreed to re-commence SWP and PLS recruitments in August 2020. By 4 June 2021, almost

² Aged Care Royal Commissioner Final Report

³ *Growing the NDIS Market and Workforce 2019*

7,000 workers have arrived in Australia under the restart to support the agriculture and meat processing sectors, with strong demand for new arrivals continuing.

As we look ahead to life beyond the pandemic with an altered Australian labour market and growing demand for Pacific workers, now is the right time to consider **how to improve, streamline and align the two labour mobility programs**. This is not only important for the Australian economy, but also for our Pacific partners, as the flow of remittances back to Pacific communities makes an important contribution to their ability to withstand the economic impacts of COVID-19, and improves the economies of the region.

Stakeholder feedback in response to this discussion paper will be considered as part of the government's **planning for larger, sustainable and market-driven Pacific labour mobility in Australia in future years**.

Questions for stakeholders

These questions have been developed to help guide your feedback. You only need to respond to those questions that are of most interest to you.

1. How can we maximise the efficiency of Pacific labour mobility programs, and deliver good outcomes for employers and workers?
2. What range or types of employers should the schemes be seeking to serve?
3. What additional flexibility might be added to the programs? What are the potential risks associated with greater program flexibility?
4. Is there any specific streamlining of current arrangements you would like to suggest? Are there any associated risks to manage?
5. What stakeholders have an important role to play in delivering good outcomes, in particular in relation to worker welfare?
6. How can mutual benefits and people-to-people links between Australia and the Pacific island countries and Timor-Leste be further promoted?
7. Do you have any other comments?

Specific issues for consultation – Issues notes

Ensuring the right program policies, regulations and guidelines is critical to the success and sustainability of Pacific labour mobility. These policies and program settings ensure the programs have sufficient integrity measures to protect the reputation of the programs as well as the welfare of the workers and Australia's relationships with the Pacific.

This discussion paper includes below a series of Issues Notes on more detailed aspects of the current and potential future operations of the SWP and PLS. **Stakeholders are welcome to respond to questions on one or more (or none) of the following Issues Notes**, according to their interests and experience:

- 1. Supply of appropriate workers by Pacific countries and Timor-Leste**
- 2. Industries and locations**
- 3. Approved Employer program participation**
- 4. Employer Sponsorship arrangements**
- 5. Length of time in Australia**
- 6. Travel to and from Australia**
- 7. Accommodation**
- 8. Transport for workers within Australia – to work, shopping and for recreation**
- 9. Welfare of workers**
- 10. Worker skills and training**
- 11. Assurance and compliance**
- 12. Program administration and stakeholder engagement**
- 13. Reducing red tape**
- 14. Application process to become an Approved Employer**
- 15. Recognition of performance and sharing best practice.**

Issues Note 1: Supply of appropriate workers by Pacific countries and Timor-Leste

The Pacific Labour Facility (PLF), in partnership with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), works with participating countries' Labour Sending Units (LSUs) to support the mobilisation of workers under both the SWP and PLS. The PLF currently provides additional capacity support to LSUs and has appointed Engagement Managers who are based in participating countries and co-located with (most) LSUs to provide advisory support. This includes working with LSUs to streamline recruitment practices, supporting work readiness and pre-departure training, and database development to manage work ready pools.

Participating countries have been identifying and vetting workers who are fit and ready to participate in the programs, with more than 24,000 workers currently in the work-ready pool. LSUs work closely with approved employers, supporting the selection and mobilisation of workers, completing fitness testing and delivering pre-departure briefings to workers across both programs. The majority of LSUs directly manage the recruitment of workers, however, as the programs grow, there may be an increasing need for alternative models, delivered in partnership with the private sector and/or the non-government sector.

All non-citizens entering Australia must have a valid passport and meet the character and health requirements set out in the *Migration Act 1958*. Before being granted a visa, workers require a police clearance and the majority must complete an International Medical Examination. These requirements are dependent upon access to and the capacity of countries' systems to manage these requests (health system, police checks, passports).

Partner governments are strongly encouraged to appoint a Country Liaison Officer based in Australia to support workers, liaise with employers and promote the benefits of recruiting workers from their country. To date, a minority of countries have appointed a Liaison Officer.

Q: What works well about the existing in-country arrangements, and what changes, improvements or flexibilities would you like to see, particularly as labour mobility grows? Please provide details.

Q: What role do you see Country Liaison Officers playing as the number of workers increases?

Issues Note 2: Industries and locations

The SWP allows workers to be employed in seasonal jobs in the agriculture sector (horticulture, pastoral, aquaculture, cane and cotton) across all of Australia and the accommodation sector in Western Australia, the Northern Territory, Tropical North Queensland and Kangaroo Island.

The PLS connects workers to longer term jobs of up to three years in rural and regional Australia and is not limited to industry sectors. Eligible postcodes are published on the Pacific Labour Mobility website.

Q: Do you consider the current industry sectors and locations appropriate? What changes, improvements or flexibilities would you like to see and why? Please provide details.

Issues Note 3: Approved Employer program participation

Participation in Pacific Labour Mobility programs is not a 'low cost' labour option. To participate in the SWP employers must agree to undertake a range of additional responsibilities. For that reason, new approved employers to the SWP are limited in the number of workers they can have in Australia at any one time. This is to ensure they are able to meet their obligations and manage the workers, including providing for their welfare and wellbeing support. Approved employers can request an increase to their recruitment cap at the end of their first placement. Cap increases are informed by a number of factors such as performance and compliance, financial capacity and level of welfare and wellbeing support. Under the PLS, recruitment caps are only applied on a case-by-case basis to help manage risks identified when assessing a business's eligibility to join the scheme.

Q: What works well about the current arrangements and what changes, improvements or flexibilities would you like to be made to the current system? Please provide details.

Issues Note 4: Employer Sponsorship arrangements

Prior to being offered a Deed of Agreement, SWP and PLS approved employers must obtain a Temporary Activities Sponsorship (TAS) administered by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA). Pacific and Timorese workers can only work for their sponsor (approved employer) while in Australia and are in breach of their visa conditions if they leave to work with a different employer. Under specific circumstances a worker can be transferred to a new sponsor with the prior approval of the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE – for the SWP) or DFAT (for the PLS) and DHA.

In early 2020, DESE 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 Arrangement. To date, there has been no uptake under the portability pilot.

During COVID when workers have been unable to return home, they have been redeployed under both programs (with their agreement) and transferred to different approved employers to allow them to continue earning wages and to continue to fill critical gaps in workforce shortages.

Q: What works well about the current sponsorship arrangements and what changes, improvements or flexibilities would benefit the programs? Please provide details.

Issues Note 5: Length of time in Australia

Under the SWP, workers can apply for a visa of up to nine months. SWP workers can also apply for a multi entry visa for up to three years but are only able to stay and work in Australia for up to nine months of each year. Under multi entry visa arrangements, labour market testing must be undertaken by the employer each season. Given the generally physically demanding nature of work under the SWP, and the value of workers retaining strong connections with home, there is a three-month minimum period that workers must return home each year.

Under the PLS, participants can apply for a visa of up to three years. PLS workers are expected to return home, to utilise skills and experience, for a minimum period of 12 months after completion of their work assignment.

Q: What works well about the current visa arrangements, and what changes, improvements or flexibilities would benefit the programs? Please provide details.

Issues Note 6: Travel to and from Australia

SWP approved employers must arrange and pay upfront for the full cost of the return international airfare and domestic transport to and from the airport to the workers accommodation/work locations. They are obligated to contribute \$300 towards the cost of the airfare and can then recoup the rest from the workers when they commence work (the out-of-pocket cost was previously \$500, but this was reduced in November 2018). Deductions for transport costs must be agreed to in writing by the workers.

Under the PLS, where workers are employed for longer periods of up to three years, approved employers cover the cost of a one-way airfare to Australia and domestic transport to and from the airport to the workers accommodation/work locations, with deductions agreed in writing by the workers. The costs must be deducted over a minimum period of 12 weeks, to ensure workers have sufficient income to cover living expenses and remit money back home.

Q: What works well about the current international travel arrangements under either or both programs and what changes, improvements or flexibilities would benefit the programs? Please provide details.

Issues Note 7: Accommodation

SWP employers are required to provide an accommodation plan which sets out the accommodation arrangements they have in place for the workers. Approval for the accommodation plans lasts for the life of the Deed unless changes to the accommodation are made. Under the PLS, employers are required to secure accommodation for all workers for their first three months in Australia. All approved employer provided accommodation must meet minimum standards including compliance with relevant State/Territory or local government regulations. SWP workers can choose to find their own accommodation, but in practise they rarely do so. The [SWP approved employer Guidelines](#) provides more details. PLS workers may choose to remain in employer provided accommodation or move to suitable accommodation in the private rental market. Deductions for accommodation must comply with workplace laws and be agreed to in writing by SWP and PLS workers.

Accommodation is often in short supply in some rural and regional areas making this a challenging issue for employers. In response to these pressures, DFAT funded Accommodation Brokers in two regions – the Cassowary Coast and Sunraysia regions – to identify potential accommodation solutions and work with local stakeholders to better understand the issues impacting accommodation supply. DFAT also commissioned a review of accommodation costs and inclusions for PLS and SWP workers in 2020. The recommendations are available on the [DFAT website](#).

Q: What works well about the current accommodation arrangements under either or both programs, and what improvements or flexibilities would you like made to the current model(s)? Please provide details.

Issues Note 8: Transport for workers within Australia – to work, shopping and for recreation

SWP employers must also arrange transport for workers to travel to new work locations, between accommodation and work, and for shopping and recreation. Transport must be appropriate, affordable, safe and comfortable and must comply with any state and territory legislation and codes. Workers may also elect to arrange their own transportation. Deductions for transport costs must be agreed to in writing by the workers.

Under the PLS, approved employers are not required to provide workers with transport to and from their place of work. Where transport is provided, workers must agree in writing to any deductions from their wages.

Road accidents, some resulting in worker deaths, have been a concern for all stakeholders. New initiatives are currently being introduced to seek to improve road safety for Pacific workers.

Q: What works well about the current transport arrangements under either or both programs, and what changes, improvements or flexibilities would benefit the programs? Please provide details.

Q: What measures might help to improve road safety for Pacific workers?

Issues Note 9: Welfare of workers

The welfare and wellbeing of workers is a high priority for the Australian Government, and central to our approach to Pacific labour mobility. Workers who feel safe and supported, and enjoy their experience in Australia, have shown to be more productive employees and more likely to become ‘ambassadors’ for the programs and Australia going forward.

Monitoring and compliance activities are in place to safeguard workers and the reputation of the programs. This includes making resources and information available in relevant languages.

Welfare requirements and obligations under the PLS and SWP are set out in the respective Deeds of Agreement for employers. For the SWP, worker welfare is the responsibility of the approved employer. SWP approved employers must provide a ‘Welfare and Wellbeing Plan’ and appoint a support person to assist their SWP workers, located within 300kms of the workers’ location. SWP workers and employers also have access to the SWP information line during business hours and the PLF 24/7 Worker Welfare Hotline. Employers are also required to provide comprehensive arrival briefings and invite the Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) and relevant union to help workers understand their workplace rights and entitlements and settle into life in Australia.

Up to 19 Pacific Labour Mobility Officers are being deployed across Australia to provide additional support to SWP employers and workers. An SWP Community Connections provider was announced on 29 March 2021 to boost the connections between the workers and their local communities.

Under the PLS, worker welfare is the responsibility of the approved employer with additional support provided by PLF case managers. The PLF provides a 24/7 Worker Welfare Hotline for workers and/or employers to report concerns and issues, including critical incidents. The PLF Worker Welfare Team (WWT) assigns case managers to worker cohorts to track their progress and assist in welfare matters. The WWT undertakes site and risk assessment for all PLS workers and community sites, a key part of which is identifying in-community support networks for PLS workers. Similar to the SWP, employers are responsible for delivering the on-arrival briefing.

As the number of workers grow, the PLF and DFAT have been considering how to transition to a more sustainable approach to welfare. A planned new Worker Welfare Framework (the Framework)

will take a 'community of care' approach to worker welfare, with a range of stakeholders including approved employers, Country Liaison Officers, Labour Sending Units (LSUs), High Commissions and Embassies, contracted partners, and community-based organisations sharing responsibility for worker welfare. The Framework will set out the expected commitments of all PLS stakeholders and identify preventative and responsive activities that stakeholders will be responsible and accountable for delivering. The Framework will complement the PLS approved employers Deed of Agreement and be supplemented over time by more detailed operational procedures.

Q: What works well about the current welfare arrangements under each or both programs and changes, improvements would you like to see?

Q. How can approved employers be better supported and equipped with the skills to provide effective welfare support to workers?

Q. Other than the approved employers and PLF, which other stakeholders contribute to worker welfare and how can these stakeholders best be supported to help workers?

Q. The current welfare model delivered by the PLF for PLS workers is too intensive to take to scale. How can welfare support be maintained and improved as the PLF reduces its role in direct welfare case management?

Issues Note 10: Worker skills and training

The SWP focusses primarily on unskilled and low skilled work in the agriculture sector, while the PLS connects workers to low and semi-skilled jobs mainly in meat processing, aged care and social assistance, tourism and hospitality and non-seasonal agriculture (forestry and fishing). There may be scope in the future to use these programs to address labour shortages in other sectors, such as the broader care sector including disability support and childcare, subject to labour market testing. Currently, workers under both programs can only undertake on the job training to ensure they are able to perform their duties. Growth of the programs in other sectors may require significant investment in formal qualifications and training for incoming workers to ensure they meet Australian standards and assist with workforce needs. Consideration may need to be given to current training arrangements to ensure growth in demand for workers can be met.

Add-on skills training for Pacific workers was first initiated for seasonal workers in 2013. At present, the add-on skills training program provides basic training in First Aid, English and IT skills. The Australian Government funds this training and there is no cost to the worker or the Approved Employer. These skills can help Pacific workers during their employment in Australia and when they return to their home country. Recently, the add-on skills training program was reviewed, and a new skills development program is proposed. Industry was invited to provide feedback on the new program in early 2021. Further details can be found [here](#). The implementation of this model will be considered as part of this consultation process.

Q: What works well about the current arrangements for skills training, and what changes, improvements or flexibilities would you like to see? Please provide details.

Q: What role should worker training and skills development play in the programs? Are formal qualifications valuable? Would improved worker skills and qualifications impact wages?

Issues Note 11: Assurance and compliance

The SWP relies on a program assurance framework detailed in Guidelines that has three elements: prevention and deterrence, detection, and correction. Assurance activities includes monitoring the delivery of the program and the welfare and wellbeing of workers, and overall compliance with the Deed and Guidelines.

The PLS Assurance Framework will be set out in new approved employer Guidelines. Based on this framework, the PLF undertakes a range of assurance activities including education, monitoring and assessment to ensure approved employers comply with Australian legislation, the Deed and Guidelines. This includes proactive approved employer audit activities.

Both programs have remedial actions and consequences for non-compliance with the relevant Deeds and Guidelines, and refer any concerns regarding pay and/or workplace conditions to the Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO).

Industry based accreditation/certification measures have previously been considered by DESE and DFAT/PLF in developing program assurance functions, but at the time were not thought to be sufficiently mature and widespread to play a role.

Q: What works well about the current assurance and compliance arrangements, and what changes or flexibilities would you like to be made to the current model(s)? Please provide details.

Q: What, if any, additional measures are needed to support employers to understand and comply with workplace and other laws?

Q: What, if any, additional information could be provided to workers to ensure they understand their entitlements?

Q: Is there now potential to use industry-based assurance processes within the SWP and PLS?

Issues Note 12: Program administration and stakeholder engagement

The SWP is administered by DESE and the PLS is administered by the PLF on behalf of DFAT.

The Australian Government enters into Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with partner countries, supported by Implementation Arrangements. At the domestic level, both programs have a Deed of Agreement which set out the obligations of approved employers under each program.

DESE consults SWP stakeholders (industry, unions, community) on the directions of the program through the Seasonal Worker Advisory Group. The PLF engages PLS stakeholders regularly, but in a less structured form.

Combined messages are also being provided to approved employers on both programs and a single weekly communique will be implemented. Pacific labour mobility platforms, such as the PLM website and Facebook page are being used to convey important shared messages to the workers and communities.

DESE and DFAT have together, in the past 12 months, begun strengthening their processes for dialogue with the Heads of Mission of Pacific Island countries and Timor-Leste in Australia, and separately with Pacific island community groups and the Australian South Sea Islander community. These processes require better definition and deepening in coming months and years.

Q: What works well about the current arrangements for program administration and stakeholder engagement for the SWP and/or PLS, and what changes, improvements or flexibilities would benefit the programs?

Issues Note 13: Reducing red tape

On 5 November 2018, the work period in Australia for SWP workers was increased from six months to nine months for all countries. The validity of labour market testing was also increased from three to six months.

Work has already commenced on streamlining the two programs and aligning processes. DESE and DFAT have been working together to develop a single application process for new applicants to the programs. This will reduce red tape for applicants as they will only be required to provide their information once and in one form.

SWP Online commenced late in 2019 to provide a single channel for approved employers' transactions with DESE. The system reduces the administrative burden on approved employers and provides them with a single place to access information and resources.

Q. What further changes would you like to see to reduce red tape and/or streamline administration and add flexibility? Please provide details.

Issues Note 14: Application process to become an Approved Employer

A single application process is being developed for new applicants to the SWP and PLS programs, to reduce administration for applicants by requiring them to provide their information only once and in one form. We anticipate that this process will also enable new SWP employers to become approved under the PLS and vice versa.

Q: What do you think works well about the application process, and what changes, improvements or flexibilities would benefit the program?

Q. Are there existing industry accreditation schemes that could provide additional assurance or flexibility when employer eligibility is being assessed for the SWP or PLS? Please provide details.

Issues Note 15: Recognition of performance and sharing best practice

Some approved employers have been engaged in Pacific labour mobility for a number of years and some are quite new to either program. Approved employers participate in varying ways with some being heavily invested with participating countries, including recruitment processes and the reintegration of their returning workers.

Q: How do you think the knowledge of experienced approved employers and best practice could be captured and shared with newer employers? What is the role of industry in this process?

Q. Do you think that an approved employer rating system would be beneficial? How might it operate and are there any risks? Please provide details.

Q. Do you think there are any mechanisms for recognising good performance that could be incorporated in the processes for approval and monitoring of approved employers? How might it operate and are there any risks? Please provide details.

ATTACHMENT A: Comparison of Seasonal Worker Programme and Pacific Labour Scheme

PROGRAM ELEMENT	SEASONAL WORKER PROGRAMME	PACIFIC LABOUR SCHEME
RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	Department of Employment, Skills and Education	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
LENGTH OF TIME	Up to 9 Months	1 to 3 Years
INDUSTRIES	Agriculture, accommodation (in select locations)	All sectors in rural and regional Australia
LOCATIONS	Agriculture: Nationally. Accommodation: WA, NT, Tropical North QLD and Kangaroo Island	Rural and Regional Australia
SKILL LEVELS	Unskilled and low-skilled	Low-skilled and semi-skilled
LABOUR MARKET TESTING	Required	Required
AGE OF WORKERS	21 Years and Over	21-45 Years
PARTNER COUNTRIES	Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu	Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu
APPLICATION	12 weeks	12 weeks from application to approval determination
DEED OF AGREEMENT	Commenced on 1 Jan 2020, expires 31 March 2023	Valid for 5 years from the effective date (date of signature)
VISA	Attached to the approved sponsor for the length of stay. Can work 9 of every 12 months.	Attached to the approved sponsor (employer) for the length of stay. Must remain offshore for 12 months at the end of visa.
ACCOMMODATION	Accommodation provided by Approved Employer. Plans must be approved by the Dept (once per Deed unless changes made). Must be safe, secure and fit for occupation and comply with WHS legislation or state and territory Gov and local Gov legislation and codes. SWP workers may elect to find their own accommodation.	Accommodation arranged by the Approved Employer for the first 3 months of placement and must comply with the minimum standards as provided in the PLS Accommodation Form. Workers can seek accommodation on the open market if they choose.
WORKER WELFARE AND WELLBEING	Worker welfare is the responsibility of the Approved Employer. Welfare and Wellbeing Plan must be approved (once per Deed unless changes made). A welfare and	Worker welfare is led by approved employers and supported by the Pacific Labour Facility through a case

PROGRAM ELEMENT	SEASONAL WORKER PROGRAMME	PACIFIC LABOUR SCHEME
ASSURANCE	<p>wellbeing support must be located within a 300km location of workers and they must conduct fortnightly face to face meetings.</p> <p>Assurance activities in line with SWP Assurance Framework. Includes activities to monitor program delivery, welfare and wellbeing of workers and overall compliance to the Deed and Guidelines.</p>	<p>management approach to worker cohorts from their arrival in Australia to their departure home.</p> <p>PLF completes assurance activities such as education and assessment to ensure approved employers comply with Australian Legislation and the PLS Deed of Agreement, with remedial actions and consequences in instances of non-compliance including referral to the Fair Work Ombudsman.</p>