



# Pacific Engagement Visa Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

## What is the Pacific Engagement Visa?

The Pacific Engagement Visa is a new permanent resident visa for participating countries across the Pacific and Timor-Leste.

Up to 3,000 visas, inclusive of partners and dependent children, will be allocated annually to Pacific and Timor-Leste nationals through a ballot process.

The Pacific Engagement Visa will grow Australia's Pacific diaspora, build on our strong people-to-people links, and encourage greater cultural, business and educational exchange.

## Which countries will be involved?

Priority is being given to countries with limited permanent migration opportunities to Australia, or citizenship rights with New Zealand, France and the United States.

Eligible countries could include Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

The Australian Government continues to consult Pacific countries and Timor-Leste on their interest in participating in the program.

## How will country allocations be determined?

Visa allocations will be based on several factors including population size, diaspora in Australia, existing migration opportunities and expected demand.

Allocations will be a decision for the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for International Development and the Pacific.

The Government will be consulting further with Pacific partners on their inclusion and country allocations to ensure the program is delivering on shared needs and objectives.

## Who will be eligible for the Pacific Engagement Visa?

To be eligible for the Pacific Engagement Visa, primary applicants will need to:

- be aged between 18 to 45 to enter the ballot
- be selected through the ballot process
- secure a formal ongoing job offer in Australia (or their partner/spouse must have a job offer)
- meet English language, character and health checks
- hold a passport for a participating country



- have been born in or have a parent who was born in a participating country.

Applicants can include a partner and legally dependent children in their application.

Further program settings and details, including ballot and visa eligibility requirements will be made available closer to the commencement of the program.

### **What is the Pacific Engagement Visa ballot?**

The ballot is an electronic random selection process, with successful entrants and their immediate family members able to apply for a Pacific Engagement Visa.

The ballot aims to provide eligible individuals from Pacific Island countries and Timor-Leste fair and transparent access to the program by randomly selecting ballot participants. This includes providing access to the ballot for existing Pacific Australia Labour Mobility scheme (PALM) workers in Australia.

### **What is the cost to enter the Pacific Engagement Visa ballot?**

The charge for entering the ballot is expected to be \$25.

Registrations will be valid for a year. If the registered person is not selected in that time, a new registration will need to be submitted for participants to enter the next ballot.

Applicants selected through the ballot will be able to apply for the visa within a specified timeframe. This will require paying the associated visa application charge.

### **Will visa holders be able to live and work anywhere in Australia?**

Yes. This visa is a permanent resident visa and therefore applicants will be free to choose where they live, work and study in Australia. There are no restrictions on work location, industry/type of work or employer.

### **What settlement support will be available?**

The Pacific Engagement Visa program will include measures to support a positive settlement experience.

Planned supports include help to find work in Australia and access to a range of benefits to support the cost of raising a family and ease the financial burden of education and training.

This is in addition to the services and supports available to permanent residents upon arrival in Australia, including access to Australia's universal health care and public schools.

### **How will participants be supported to find employment and prepare for life in Australia?**

The Australian Government will establish a service in the Pacific to connect successful applicants with employers in Australia, providing access to a variety of roles at a range of skill levels.

The resource will also guide successful applicants through the visa application process, deliver culturally and language relevant program outreach, and inform applicants about life in Australia.



## **How is the Pacific Engagement Visa different to the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme?**

The Pacific Engagement Visa will offer a permanent resident visa to eligible citizens of Pacific island countries and Timor-Leste.

The PALM scheme is a temporary migration program that will continue to help meet workforce shortages in rural and regional Australia, support the economic development of Pacific countries, and build skills for when workers return home.

PALM scheme participants in Australia on valid temporary visas will be eligible to enter the Pacific Engagement Visa ballot when registrations open.

## **What legislative amendments need to be made?**

The legislation introduced into the Australian Parliament in February 2023 will enable a ballot process to be conducted which will allow registered participants to be randomly selected to apply for the Pacific Engagement Visa.

The legislation also allows for a small fee to be charged to enter the ballot.

Further legislative changes will be required to enable implementation of the visa and ensure appropriate supports are extended to Pacific Engagement Visa holders upon arrival in Australia.