

Fruit Growers Victoria Conference

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APPROVED
Employers of Australia

The Labour Crisis in Australia: Managing Options, Risks & Cost

- Labour Mobility Trends & Future Options
- Risk Mitigation Strategies
- The New PALM Deed & Guidelines
 - Phase 1: Application Process
 - Phase 2: Recruitment Process
- Ag Visa Update
- Q & A
- Other Business

Labour Mobility Trends & Future Options

- Reliable, Productive returning labour- availability vs supply
- Labour demand -low, semi & skilled workers
- Pre-Covid-WHM- 200,000 +; 30,000 during COVID
- Since borders opened:
 - Up to 23,500 PALM workers
 - 530,000 visas granted (50,000 WHM's-rest students/other)
 - 1.35m students still holding visas offshore-40,000 WHMs
 - 5000,000 arrivals-13,000 WHMs

Working Holiday Makers-Returning?

- Currently 40,000 WHM's in Australia
 - +9,000 since May 2022
 - 94% increase since Dec 2021
- 2,000-3,000 visas granted per week-mostly offshore
- As of 19 June 2022-52,000 WHMs who can travel to Australia
- Skilled visas-31/3/2022-2,190 temp. skilled visa holders –Ag, Forestry, Fishing sector
- Represents 4% of the 52,440 total skilled visa holders working on Australia

PALM SCHEME UPDATE

- Government commitment to the Pacific/election promises
- Expansion and improvement of PALM and
- Listen to the Pacific Countries
- Current status:
 - Approximately 24,000 PALM workers in Australia
 - 2/3rds (17,000 workers) in the horticulture industry; meat industry the second biggest
 - Expansion into Aged Care, Hospitality and other industry sectors- effect on horticulture!!
 - Alternative sources of labour- support the PALM Scheme



PALM SCHEME PRIORITIES

- Reduction of administration and regulation
- Improve industry & stakeholder relationships- more consultation expected
- PALM Scheme Management: DFAT vs. DEWR
 - Policy, Governance, Operational issues to be split between 3 Departments
- A single program is still the intent
- **The future of the Ag Visa?.**

PALM SCHEME WORKER DISTRIBUTION

May 2021-May 2022

State/territory	SWP	PLS	Total	%
QLD	5,535	3,126	8,661	37%
NSW	1,900	2,155	4,055	17%
VIC	2,765	1,196	3,961	17%
WA	1,717	606	2,323	10%
TAS	2,071	83	2,154	9%
SA	1,298	436	1,734	7%
NT/ACT	507	175	682	3%
Total	15,793	7,777	23,570	
%	67%	33%	100%	100%



Risk Mitigation Strategies

- **Labour options:**
 - Local Australians
 - PALM-SWP (short term casual- 9/11 months/PLS long term full time- 3-4 years)
 - Working Holiday makers/students-88 day ruling
 - Alternative visa stream
- **PALM workers:**
 - Financial risk/upfront costs
 - Pastoral care responsibilities
 - Cyclones/natural disasters in Pacific countries

Risk Mitigation Strategies

- **Combination:**
 - Australians
 - WHMs
 - Alternative Visa?
 - TSS sponsor
 - Pacific Engagement visa
 - other visa categories
- Collaboration & Portability of workers between sites?
- Forward planning

Key Visa Categories

- Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Scheme (PALM Scheme)-403
- Working Holiday Maker program- 417
- Employer Sponsored visa program-494
- Skilled Work Regional (provisional) visa-491
- Temporary Skill Shortage Visa – 482
- Employer Nominated Scheme -186
- Skilled nominated visa-190
- Temporary Work visa (Short Stay Specialist)-400

Phase 1: Application Process to become and Approved Employer

Application process to become an Approved Employer

Indicative
Timeframe

Application submitted to the department

Week 1

Upfront eligibility checks

- A business must be **incorporated** in Australia or a **formal partnership** with a valid Australian Business Number (ABN) and an '**organisation**' for the purposes of the *Migration Regulations 1994*;
- **Industry** must be SWP eligible: low and unskilled seasonal vacancies in **agriculture** and **accommodation** (in specified locations) – refer to industry and sector factsheets at <https://www.employment.gov.au/factsheets>;
- **A labour hire company** operating in Queensland, Victoria or South Australia, must have a current labour hire licence.
- Applicants must also meet initial eligibility tests.

Completeness check: All questions answered.

If NOT: the application is returned to the applicant for completion.

Acknowledgement of the application being assessed OR declined as ineligible

Weeks 2-10

Timing may be shorter or longer depending on the applicant's compliance and financial history

Integrity Checks

- **Immigration** compliance check by the Department of Home Affairs;
- **Workplace relations** compliance history - by Fair Work Ombudsman;
- Any **legal or regulatory matters** disclosed or on record; and
- **History** with the program, if applicable - for example, as a host organisation.

NOTE: Non-disclosure of compliance history or legal matters could result in rejection.

Assessment of Financial Viability

Business needs to be financially sound and able to cover the upfront costs of recruiting seasonal workers.

NOTE: Additional financial information may be requested as a part of this assessment.

Week 11-12

Analysis of the results of the integrity checks and financial viability assessment

Delegate's **decision** to approve or decline application

Advise the applicant of the decision

★ Once the successful applicant confirms that they are approved by the Department of Home Affairs as a **Temporary Activities Sponsor (TAS)**, they are offered an SWP Deed of Agreement that must be executed prior to recruiting seasonal workers.

Phase 2: Recruitment, Selection & Education Process

- Application & Recruitment Plan checklists-NB!!
- Forward planning/timelines
- Job Advert – LMT – Due diligence to Australian job seekers first
- Recruitment Plan > SWP / PLF-SWP Online or documents thru PLF:
 - Accommodation Plan
 - Welfare & Wellbeing Plan
 - Support Personnel
 - Recruitment, Selection, Education of Workers (Work Ready Pool/ Direct Recruitment)

Phase 2: Recruitment, Selection & Education Process

- Visa Applications (AE/LSU)
 - Visa payment
 - Medical Hap ID (Medicals can only be done once visa submitted and medical ID requested)
- Worker Mobilisation
 - Flight arrangements
 - On arrival briefings/inductions
 - Reporting
 - Welfare & Wellbeing

Key Challenges

- Cost & risk
- Administrative burden
- Accommodation & transport
- Trained resources-welfare & wellbeing
- Administrative burden & cost
- Recruitment, Selection & Education -Productivity
- Pacific countries to source labour from
- Timelines
- Cultural understanding/barriers
- External influences

Thank you-

Good Luck!!