

Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) Advisory Group (PALM Advisory Group) will provide strategic direction on arrangements and settings for Pacific labour mobility in Australia.

It is being established in response to consultations with stakeholders on improving, streamlining, and aligning the Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP) and the Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS). During consultations stakeholders raised the need for an ongoing mechanism for key stakeholders of Pacific labour mobility to:

- focus on strategic, policy and program settings that impact on Pacific labour initiatives
- identify and assist in the resolution of issues that impede positive outcomes for workers, employers, and Pacific countries
- share information and ideas about program improvements and best practice, including the future direction of labour mobility
- strengthen government, private sector and non-government partnerships in the delivery of Pacific labour mobility.

The PALM Advisory Group will work with representatives from industries, employers, Pacific diaspora, unions, community organisations and the Australian Government who engage with Pacific labour in Australia to align and improve program settings.

2. Roles and responsibilities

The PALM Advisory Group will be one of several consultative mechanisms for Pacific labour in Australia and will include representatives from employers, peak bodies, and Pacific Labour Sending Units. Sector-specific committees such as the PALM Agriculture Committee, the PALM Meat Processing Committee and the PALM Care Committee will engage at the operational level of Pacific labour mobility and report to the PALM Advisory Group. Other sector committees may be stood up as sectors increase uptake of the PALM scheme.

Alongside sector-specific committees, thematic working groups within the consultative structure will be set-up on a needs basis. The thematic working groups will also report to the PALM advisory groups on a regular basis to facilitate an overarching understanding of issues and opportunities in the broader Pacific labour agenda.

The PALM Advisory Group will be co-chaired by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) on an alternating basis.

The role of the co-Chairs is to approve the agenda and facilitate discussions at meetings of the PALM Advisory Group. Co-Chairs will be responsible for ensuring agreed actions are completed.

Members are expected to attend meetings, manage out-of-session consultation as agreed by the PALM Advisory Group and represent the views of their individual constituency.

All members are responsible for consultation with their relevant stakeholder group and to ensure that views brought forward at the PALM Advisory Group are representative of their entire membership.

Observers can attend at the agreed invitation of the PALM Advisory Group to provide topic expertise to support the objectives of Group.

3. Administrative arrangements

3.1 Agenda and papers

The agenda for the PALM Advisory Group meetings will be informed by member issues and priorities and be endorsed by them. Additional items can be added out-of-session and must be arranged in consultation with the co-Chairs.

Agenda items will be set for forthcoming meetings at each meeting. The Secretariat will circulate the final agenda one week prior to each meeting. If required, papers will be provided to members with the agenda.

Papers can be developed and submitted, using an approved template, by all members of the PALM Advisory Group. The Secretariat will review all papers prior to circulation to members.

3.2 Membership

Members will include representatives from:

- Approved Employer Association
- Approved Employers (PLS and SWP)
- the agriculture sector
- the meat processing sector
- the care sector
- the hospitality sector
- an independent skills advisor
- Australian union partners
- community care partner
- a research partner
- the Pacific diaspora
- Pacific/Timor-Leste Heads of Mission (HoMs) (rotating annual membership)
- Labour Sending Unit (senior representative to be nominated by LSUs rotating annually).

Observers will include representatives from:

- Pacific Labour Facility (PLF) (as required)
- Australian Pacific Training Coalition (APTC) (as required)
- Whole of Government departments
 - E.g. DHA, DAWE, FWO

Other individuals may attend by invitation.

A minimum of 75% of members is required for the quorum. Where a member cannot attend a meeting, either in person or by teleconference, an appropriate proxy may be nominated to attend on their behalf.

3.3 Proxy arrangements

In the event of a either Chair being temporarily unavailable to carry out their role as co-Chair, the PALM Advisory Group may appoint an Acting Chair. The Acting Chair will assume the role and responsibilities of the Chair, for the period of acting.

If a nominated Approved Employer member cannot attend, they may nominate another representative who is an Approved Employer to represent.

If an external industry, union, Pacific Islander diaspora, research partner, HoM, LSU or welfare and wellbeing representative is unable to attend they may nominate a representative from their organisation to represent.

If a DESE or DFAT member is unable to attend, they may nominate another departmental representative to attend.

If observers from the PLF, Whole of Government departments and APTC are unable to attend they may nominate a representative from their organisation to attend.

The PALM Advisory Group Secretariat must be notified of all proxy arrangements at the time of RSVP or within 10 business days of a scheduled meeting.

3.4 Frequency of meetings

The PALM Advisory Group will meet every 4 months (3 times per year), for approximately one to two hours, with provision for more frequent meetings if the committee identifies a need. Either Chair may call an out of session meeting to address urgent issues, or matters raised by members.

3.5 Consultations

The Co-Chairs will consult as needed with the Pacific Labour Mobility Interdepartmental Committee and the Pacific Labour Mobility Integrity Working Group.

3.6 Secretariat

The Seasonal Worker Programme Policy Branch in DESE and the Pacific Labour Mobility Branch in DFAT will provide secretariat support on an alternating basis aligned with the Chair.

3.7 Confidentiality of information

Where confidential information is provided to members, care must be taken to ensure that the information is kept secure. To ensure a robust conversation and diversity of discussion, members are required to respect the views and input of all participants.

3.8 Review

DESE and DFAT will annually review the PALM Advisory Group Terms of Reference and membership.

The term of PALM Advisory Group membership will be for 12 months and may be extended in consultation with the Joint Chairs.

DESE and DFAT members are excluded from this condition.

