



Family accompaniment and the Pacific Engagement Visa - information for workers

V1- 6 October 2022

What is family accompaniment?

The Australian Government has committed to allowing Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme workers on long-term placements of between one and 4 years to bring their families to Australia, with the agreement of their employer sponsor.

This policy aims to address the social impacts of long periods of family separation and build deeper connections with our Pacific and Timor-Leste family.

Who can apply?

Family accompaniment will be available for **long-term PALM workers** (one to 4-year visas) who have the **agreement of their employer** to bring their family to Australia.

- Partners (wife, husband, de facto) will be able to live, work and study in Australia.
- Children will be able to go to school.

There may be other eligibility criteria - this is still being developed.

Seasonal/short-term workers are unable to bring their families to Australia.

When will family accompaniment start?

Please don't book flights for your family yet.

Family accompaniment is expected to start some time in 2023. The Australian Government is currently working on the eligibility criteria and the arrangements that need to be in place to make sure you and your family have a positive experience in Australia.

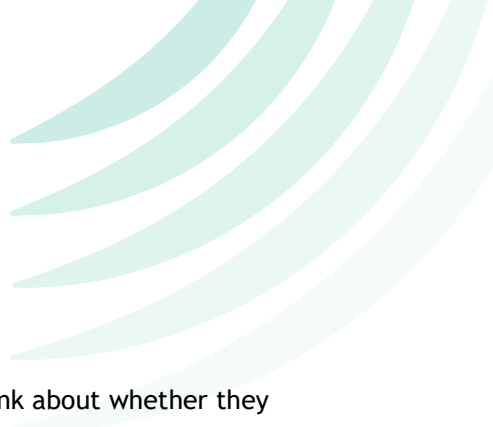
We also need to set up visa arrangements for partners and dependents before we can start welcoming families to Australia.

Once these details are settled, we will provide further information. In the meantime, we are listening to the views of Pacific and Timor-Leste governments, workers, employers and community organisations to help shape implementation of the policy to ensure we get the settings right.

What should PALM scheme workers and their families consider before applying for a family accompaniment visa?

Before you decide to apply to bring your family to Australia, there are some things you might like to consider.

- There will be costs associated with moving to Australia including passports, visas, travel expenses, health checks, family health insurance, setting up a home and sourcing stationery, laptops and uniforms for children attending school.

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- It is expensive to live in many parts of Australia, so families should think about whether they have enough income to support a family in Australia.
 - It can be difficult for families to find suitable and affordable accommodation in many parts of Australia right now, so this may limit opportunities for some families seeking to join PALM scheme workers.
 - Opportunities for partners and dependents to work in Australia will depend on job vacancy rates where you live, English language and skills requirements (where relevant). In some cases, PALM scheme approved employers may have work to offer a spouse or dependent, while in other locations, there may be few work opportunities.

Where can I find out more information?

Further information on family accompaniment, including when it will start, will be provided in the coming months on the PALM scheme website (<https://www.palmscheme.gov.au>).

What is the Pacific Engagement Visa?

The new Pacific Engagement Visa (PEV) will also start in July 2023 and allow holders of the visa to come to Australia with their family. The PEV is separate from the PALM visa. It is intended to create permanent migration pathways and to grow the Pacific diaspora in Australia. You do not need to be a PALM worker to apply for the PEV.

Up to 3,000 visas will be allocated annually by a ballot process across Pacific countries and Timor-Leste. Those selected from the ballot will be invited to apply for permanent residency once they have secured a written employment agreement in Australia and meet other migration requirements.

Details on the process are still being finalised, but PALM scheme participants in Australia on valid temporary visas will also be eligible to apply for the PEV ballot when applications open.

The PEV will take into consideration previous migration history of applicants. If you have breached Australian visa conditions in the past, your application may be rejected.

The visa is currently in the early stages of design and more information will be provided when it becomes available.