

Standdowns in the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility scheme

This factsheet provides information for Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme employers on the practical application of standdown settings in the PALM scheme deed and guidelines.

From February 2024, there have been interim arrangements in place for standdowns in the PALM scheme. The government has decided to align the management of standdowns to the applicable Fair Work Instrument, while maintaining minimum standards to safeguard workers.

Stakeholder engagement is well embedded in the PALM scheme. The Australian Government is committed to listening to stakeholders and strengthening the PALM scheme to deliver for employers, workers and their families and communities in the Pacific and Timor-Leste.

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) is committed to working with stakeholders in a way that aligns with the policy objectives of the PALM scheme.

The wellbeing of PALM scheme workers is of central importance to the Australian Government and the PALM scheme. It is important that workers have a reliable and consistent income to support themselves, their families, and their communities at home, and that employers have access to their reliable and productive PALM scheme workforce.

Minimum hours requirements

Section 3.7 of the guidelines requires employers to offer workers minimum hours of work each week. Workers in the long-term stream must be offered full-time hours of work.

Standdown requirements under the PALM scheme

Section 3.7.14 of the guidelines outlines the obligations for employers when they stand down a worker under the Fair Work Act or relevant Fair Work instrument. The employer must ensure compliance with the relevant Fair Work Act or instrument before standing down workers and they must also notify DEWR as per section 13.4 of the guidelines.

Section 3.7.15 of the guidelines details how these arrangements apply in practice:

1. If a standdown reduces the available hours of work to fewer than 20 hours in a week, employers must:
 - i. ensure a minimum net pay guarantee for workers after tax and deductions of \$200 per section 5.1.7; and
 - ii. cover the costs of worker's accommodation and transport for any week in which employers offer less than 20 hours per section 3.7.10.
2. If a standdown does not reduce available work hours to fewer than 20 in a week, no further action is required.

Employers should refer to the [FWO website](#) for further information on standdowns.