

Frequently asked questions: Vanuatu flight disruptions

23 July 2026

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (department) is monitoring the situation following disruptions to some flights to and from Vanuatu caused by volcanic ash from the Mount Ambae volcano.

What is the latest information about flights to and from Vanuatu?

Some flights between Australia and Port Vila International Airport have been impacted by the volcanic eruption and associated ash cloud.

PALM scheme employers are encouraged to check directly with airlines for the latest flight information and travel advice. Travel arrangements may change at short notice as conditions continue to be monitored by relevant authorities.

Are PALM scheme operations affected by this event?

At this stage, some flight cancellations and delays have been reported, however there are no confirmed widespread impacts to PALM scheme operations.

A small number of PALM scheme worker movements have been affected, and airlines are rebooking passengers where alternative travel arrangements are available.

If I am affected, how do I notify the department?

For critical and urgent issues, please call the PALM scheme support service line on (1800 51 51 31). For non-critical matters, employers can lodge an enquiry through the [PALM scheme Approved Employer portal](#) (AE portal).

How can employers support workers affected by flight disruptions?

PALM scheme employers must support affected workers in line with their obligations under the PALM scheme Deed and Guidelines until workers can return home.

This includes:

- notifying the department through the [AE portal](#) if workers are unable to return home as planned, including details of their circumstances and contingency arrangements
- supporting workers to confirm and manage changes to their travel arrangements with airlines
- ensuring workers do not depart their placement until return travel arrangements are confirmed

- maintaining appropriate accommodation, welfare and support arrangements until workers can travel
- staying in regular contact with affected workers and keeping their Relationship Manager informed of any impacts on worker arrivals, departures or return travel.

The department will work with employers to support placement extensions where required and where work is available. Travel disruptions may also affect workers whose journeys include connecting flights.

Will workers be able to stay in Australia if their flight is delayed?

Yes. Employers must continue to meet their obligations under the PALM scheme Deed and Guidelines until workers depart Australia and return home.

If a worker is unable to return home because of flight disruptions, employers must notify the department through the [AE portal](#) and continue to provide appropriate accommodation, welfare and support arrangements until the worker can travel. These obligations continue even where travel disruptions occur because of unforeseen events, including natural disasters. The department will work with employers to manage any impacts arising from extended travel delays.

What if a workers' visa is about to expire?

If a worker's visa is due to expire soon, employers should contact the Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs) as early as possible to discuss options and next steps.

If a worker's visa has expired or is likely to expire before they can return home, employers should contact Home Affairs immediately to discuss support options and visa arrangements.

If a worker's visa remains valid, they will continue to hold lawful status in Australia.

The department will work with employers and relevant agencies to manage issues arising from prolonged travel disruptions. For more information, please visit immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/visa-about-to-expire.

Can employers seek reimbursement for additional travel-related costs caused by flight disruptions?

In some circumstances, employers may be eligible to apply for reimbursement of certain travel-related costs for short-term PALM scheme workers. Employers should refer to the [Travel cost reimbursement for short-term PALM scheme workers factsheet](#) on the PALM scheme website for information on eligibility, reimbursement arrangements and how to apply.

Where flight disruptions result in additional costs or extended travel arrangements, employers should continue to meet their obligations under the PALM scheme Deed and Guidelines and notify the department of any significant impacts through the [AE portal](#).