

PALM and the ALM

Ms Anna McNicol, Director

Pacific Labour Policy and Engagement Branch
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Australian Government



Presentation Overview

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1. Evolution of Pacific Australia labour mobility before and after ALM signed

- **2008:** Seasonal Worker Program pilot commenced
- **2012:** Seasonal Worker Program established on permanent basis
- **2015:** Key changes to SWP including removal of cap and longer-term opportunities for microstates
- **2017:** Arrangement on Labour Mobility signed
- **2018:** Pacific Labour Scheme commenced with longer term opportunities extended to all countries [ALM 5\(2\)](#)
- **2020-21:** Covid entry exemptions for PALM scheme [ALM signatories](#)
- **2022:** PALM scheme introduced, new policies announced [ALM 3\(1b, f & g\)](#)
- **2023:** Increased funding and changes to Deed & Guidelines [ALM 3\(1b, f & g\)](#)

2. PALM scheme objectives:

- Recognise the mutual interest of all participants, in line with [ALM 5\(2\)](#)
- Support the economic growth of Australia's neighbouring countries by providing workers from Participating Countries with jobs, income and opportunities to increase their skills
- Address workforce shortages in Australia
- Support the wellbeing of workers participating in the Scheme, and uphold their workplace rights and protections



3. PALM scheme overview

The PALM scheme allows:

- eligible Australian businesses to hire workers from 9 Pacific islands and Timor-Leste when there are not enough local workers available
- eligible businesses to recruit workers for short-term jobs for up to 9 months or long-term roles for between one and 4 years in unskilled, low-skilled and semi-skilled positions
- allows Pacific and Timor-Leste workers to take up jobs in Australia, develop their skills and send income home



Fiji



Kiribati



Nauru



Papua New Guinea



Samoa



Solomon Islands



Timor-Leste



Tonga



Tuvalu



Vanuatu

3. PALM scheme overview (...cont)

Key statistics as at end June 2023





CURRENT EMPLOYERS
423

PALM workers by state

NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	NT	ACT	TOTAL
5,953	6,816	15,034	3,754	2,919	3,971	1,080	31	39,558

PALM workers by Industry (high level)

Industry	Short Term	Long Term
Agriculture	25,606	2,445
Meat Processing	9,451	
Accommodation	448	467
Residential Care	733	
Other	494	

Short Term 
Long Term 

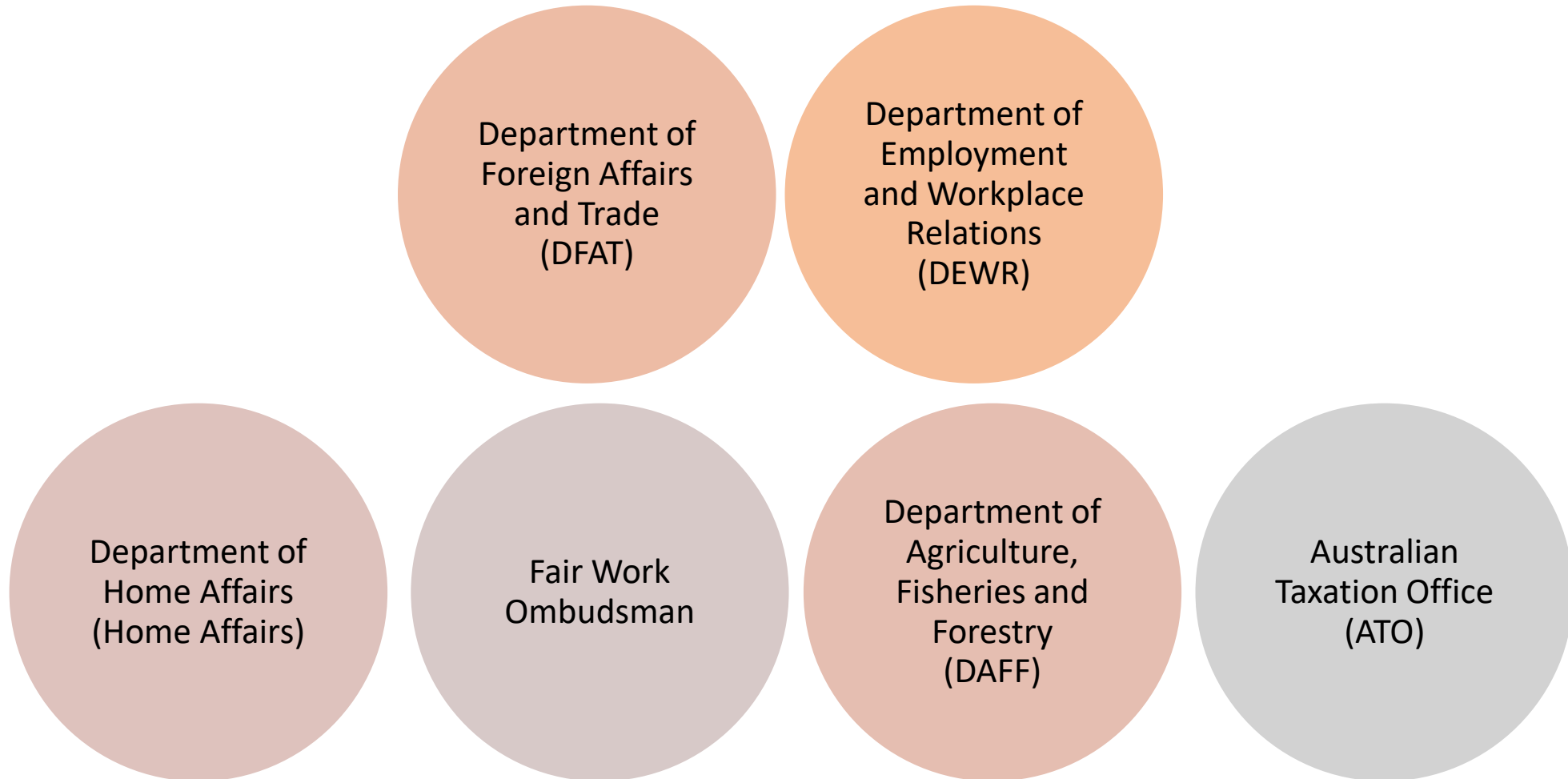


More than 33,000 workers are registered to participate in the PALM scheme

3. PALM scheme overview (...cont)

Whole of Government management

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), together with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), leads the Whole of Government management of the PALM scheme in partnership with several key agencies.



4. Australia's support for Pacific Labour Mobility

- Targeted support for participating countries through Australia's Pacific Labour Facility and through contributions from Australian High Commissions in participating countries
- Skills development opportunities for PALM scheme workers
- Funding for the PACER Plus Implementation Unit for a Labour Mobility Specialist, regional and bilateral activities under the PPIU work program and the Pacific Labour Mobility Annual Meeting
- Funding for World Bank and Australian National University to provide technical support and conduct research and analysis on labour mobility, in partnership with participating countries
- Co-funding for Send Money Pacific
- Enhanced opportunities for access to Temporary Skilled Shortages visa (subclass 482) and introduction of Pacific Engagement Visa
- Support for TVET and other tertiary education programs

ALM 3(1b, d, e, f, g), 4(1 & 6) 5(4a, b, c & d), 6(2a, b, c & d), 7(1) & 8 (1 & 2)

5. Recent PALM scheme enhancements and reforms

October 2022 and May 2023 budget announcements

- The Australian Government has committed nearly \$440 million across successive budgets to improve the PALM scheme.
- This includes funding to continue to work with participating countries to
 - strengthen labour sending operations
 - increase the number of Country Liaison Officers as worker numbers grow
 - embed formal skills development as an ongoing feature of the scheme, aligned with countries' skills development aspirations
 - support workers more easily access superannuation savings when they return home
 - through a pilot for 200 long term allow workers (with the support of their employer) to bring their families to Australia with access to Medicare, childcare subsidies and family tax benefit
 - address the social impacts of the PALM scheme by better preparing workers and their families for their mobilisations and supporting reintegration activities.

ALM 3(1b, d, e, f, g), 4(4a), 5(4a, b, c & d), 6(2 a, b & c) & 8 (1)

5. Recent PALM scheme enhancements and reforms (... cont)

New PALM Deed and Guidelines:

- Enhanced protections for workers by:
 - Strengthening minimum hours requirements
 - Improving transparency of deductions
 - Guaranteeing \$200 take home pay
- Provides more flexibility and increased worker portability provisions, and welfare and wellbeing support person and plan.

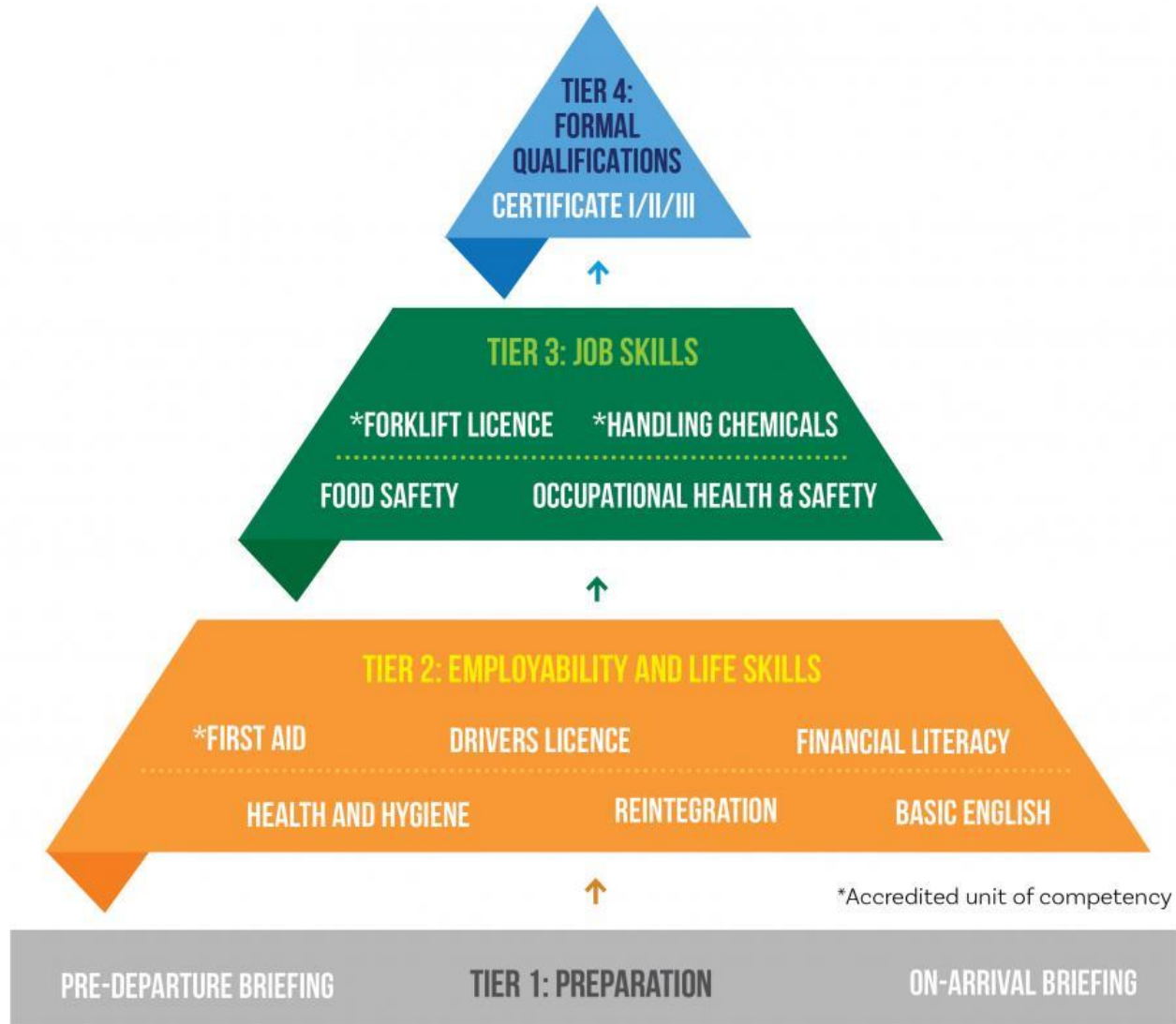
ALM 3(1b&d) 5(2) 6(2c)

Other changes :

- Expanding the PALM scheme to metropolitan locations for selected food manufacturing sectors (meat, seafood, fruit and vegetable)
- Enhancements to in-country recruitment databases
 - provide access to more data for countries about their workers including the location of workers in Australia
 - can support labour sending to all countries
 - help support countries' own monitoring and reporting requirements.

ALM 3(1b) 5(2) 6(2c)

6. Support for skills development



6. Support for skills development (...cont)

- Funding for 1,500 PALM scheme workers to obtain formal qualifications as part of their work placements
 - linked to priority sectors for growth in the Pacific, where there are demonstrated worker shortages in Australia
 - Includes Aged Care Expansion (ACE) program
- Partnership with the University of the South Pacific (USP) (\$86m from 2019-2025)
 - strengthens the USP as a regional public good delivering tertiary education services to over 30,000 students each year and improving the quality of teacher education in the Pacific.
- Since 2007, the Australia Pacific Training Centre (APTC) has supported more than 18,000 student to achieve full Australian qualifications
 - in 2022, 87% of male and 81% of female graduates were in employment and a majority have remained in the region.

ALM 3(1g) 5(4b, c & d) 8(1)

7. Design of the PALM Scheme support Program (2024 – 28)

- Currently negotiating an extension until end-2024 to allow the Pacific Labour Facility to continue to support sending countries (subject to Australian Government internal approval processes)
- Work on design for successor program – PALM scheme Support Program (PSSP) – has started and plan to conclude early 2024
- Country consultations in October, subject to countries' agreement
- Expect new design to focus on:
 - Ensuring the scheme is fit for purpose for countries
 - Building strong partnerships with all stakeholders
 - Worker preparation and reintegration
 - Supporting countries to increase worker numbers, including women and under-represented groups, in line with countries' ambitions
- Complete procurement for PSSP mid-2024

8. Key next steps

Committed to supporting countries to proactively shape their engagement in PALM to best meet their desired economic and social outcomes.

- Bilateral
 - Memoranda of Understanding and Implementation Arrangements
 - Country consultations on new PSSP design
 - Ensure harmonization with NZ and regional support
- Regional
 - PACER Plus – findings of review of ALM
 - PLMAM – inclusive regional meeting to take forward regional labour mobility priorities
 - PIFS – Regional Labour Mobility Strategy
 - International partners – ILO, IOM, World Bank
- Important to collaborate at all levels to reduce duplication of effort.

Questions and Comments

