



**2025 PACIFIC LABOUR MOBILITY ANNUAL MEETING
3-6 NOVEMBER 2025
AQUATIC CENTRE
HONIARA, SOLOMON ISLANDS**

OUTCOMES DOCUMENT

1. The 2025 Pacific Labour Mobility Annual Meeting (PLMAM) was convened on 3-6 November 2025 at the Aquatic Centre in Honiara, Solomon Islands. The programme for the four-day proceedings is provided in Annex 1.
2. The 2025 PLMAM was attended by government officials from Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Timor Leste, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. Participants also included labour mobility workers, RSE and PALM scheme employers, industry, trade union representatives, private sector, academia, and civil society representatives. The meeting was also attended by representatives from regional and international organisations including the World Bank, International Labour Organization (ILO), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The full list of participants is attached as Annex 2.
3. PLMAM 2025 was officially opened on Tuesday 4th November by the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, the Honourable Jeremiah Manele. In his opening statement, he asserted the importance of labour mobility not just an economic policy, but a lifeline of opportunity for thousands of Pacific peoples. Thousands of Solomon Islanders have found meaningful work abroad, have gained new skills, supported their families, and returned home with renewed hope and experience. He stated that remittances from seasonal workers contributed SBD475 million in 2024 for Solomon Islands, a significant contribution to the Solomon Islands economy.
4. The agenda for the four-day meeting adhered to the structure outlined in the Procedures for PLMAM, beginning with the Forum Island Countries (FIC) Caucus and the Employer Forum on Monday, 3 November, at the Heritage Park Hotel. These closed meetings, respectively for FIC Signatories to the ALM and for employers participating in the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme and the New Zealand Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme, provided dedicated spaces for labour-sending governments and employers to discuss shared priorities, particularly in relation to worker recruitment and sustainable reintegration. The Outcome Statements from the 2025 FIC Caucus and the 2025 Employer Forum are provided in Annexes 3 and 4.
5. The remaining proceedings for Days 2–4 of PLMAM 2025 were convened at the Aquatic Centre on 4–6 November. Day 2 featured the Labour Sending Unit (LSU) and Approved Employer Conference, which facilitated discussions on trends, challenges, and priorities in worker recruitment from the perspectives of returning workers, labour-sending governments, and employers participating in the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme and New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme. Day 3 was the Development Impact Workshop, focusing on the development impacts of labour mobility and emphasising sustainable reintegration as a process that links labour mobility participation to long-term development outcomes. The discussions were informed by presentations from regional organisations, academia, workers, employers, labour-sending and labour-receiving governments, trade unions, and a representative of the Philippines Department of Migrant Workers, who shared regional best practices for Pacific consideration. Notably, participants reviewed the draft Guidelines for Sustainable Circular Labour Mobility Reintegration and the General Guidance on Pacific Worker Recruitment.
6. The final day of PLMAM 2025 featured the Pacific Labour Mobility Dialogue, the closing plenary that consolidated and confirmed priorities arising from the four days of deliberations. This Outcomes Document

reflects the discussions and priorities confirmed during the Pacific Labour Mobility Dialogue on 6 November 2025.

Adoption of Agenda

5. The meeting adopted the agenda as the Day 4 agenda in the PLMAM 2025 Programme in Annex 1.

Agenda 1: Outcome of PLMAM 2024

6. The purpose of this agenda item was to update the meeting on progress towards the implementation of the 2024 PLMAM Outcomes.

7. The meeting noted the progress made on outcomes from PLMAM 2024 and reaffirmed the central role of the Arrangement on Labour Mobility (ALM) and PLMAM in advancing regional labour mobility cooperation. Members thanked the PACER Plus Implementation Unit (PPIU) for its continued efforts, while acknowledging the resourcing constraints stemming from the ALM's status as an annex to the PACER Plus Agreement and its exclusion from the original design of the PACER Plus Development and Economic Cooperation (DEC) Arrangement. The meeting also recognised the ALM's importance within the regional labour mobility architecture, particularly in operationalising the Pacific Regional Labour Mobility Principles (PRLMP) and underscored the critical role of the PPIU as the Labour Mobility Secretariat.

8. In response to the progress update, the Head of Delegation from the Solomon Islands, in their capacity as Chair of the FIC Caucus, reported the priorities of Pacific Islands Forum Country ALM Signatories, as agreed during the FIC Caucus. These are as follows:

- i. **Review of Bilateral MOUs:** Initiate a comprehensive review of existing bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) with Australia and Inter-Agency Understandings (IAUs) with New Zealand. Current MOUs are outdated and may no longer fully capture the evolving labour market dynamics, policy settings, regional labour mobility architecture, and individual country contexts/priorities, and could be strengthened to reflect a deeper and more balanced partnership.
 - ii. **Regional Leadership under PACER Plus:** Affirm PACER Plus as the key regional mechanism to support, coordinate, and guide labour mobility initiatives across the Pacific, ensuring alignment with the ALM and coherence with national and bilateral frameworks.
 - iii. **Dedicated Funding for the ALM Programme:** Secure funding to strengthen the PACER Plus Labour Mobility Secretariat, ensuring sustainability, technical support, and expanded capacity for implementation at regional and national levels.
 - iv. **Exclusive Access to ALM Benefits for PACER Plus Parties;** Safeguard that the primary benefits and resources of the ALM are directed to PACER Plus Parties, reinforcing the value of participation in the Agreement and incentivising full membership and compliance.
9. The meeting:
- i. **Emphasised** the need for a coordinated regional approach to labour mobility, supported by dedicated funding and a well-resourced Labour Mobility Secretariat.
 - ii. **Highlighted** the political mandate of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and called for stronger coordination between the ALM and PIFS mechanisms to ensure coherent implementation of the PRLMP and alignment across all Pacific Island countries. Participants raised concerns about the potential overlap and fragmentation across regional labour mobility mechanisms and called for clearer integration of the ALM into the broader regional architecture and stronger representation in related processes.
 - iii. **Noted** the ongoing redrafting of the ALM as the final stage of the review process and emphasised the need for practical, solution-focused implementation of thematic guidelines (i.e. recruitment and reintegration), better data management, stronger collaboration with regional partners, and alignment with other regional forums.
 - iv. **Supported** the exploration of ways to enhance the PLMAM format as part of the ALM redraft, including clearer objectives and potential adjustments to frequency/size, while maintaining its value as an important and the pre-eminent multi-stakeholder platform.

- v. **Underscored** the importance of inclusive labour mobility discussions, ensuring all stakeholders are represented and that language remains culturally appropriate and avoids treating workers as trade commodities.

Agenda 2: Update on labour mobility opportunities

2.1 Update on Intra-Pacific Labour Mobility: Niue – Solomon Islands Labour Mobility Pilot

10. Niue was recognised as a labour receiving country at PLMAM 2022 and has since worked with the PPIU to facilitate labour mobility from other Pacific Island countries to meet its labour shortages. This agenda item included an update from Niue on its labour mobility pilot with Solomon Islands in the health sector.

11. The update confirmed that the Niue-Solomon Islands Labour Mobility Pilot in aged care was completed in October 2025 and a final evaluation of the Pilot was jointly conducted by Niue and Solomon Islands in August. The findings from the final evaluation included the following:

- i. The pilot was recognised as effective in addressing workforce shortages in Niue, with stakeholder consultations confirming its value and identifying key areas for improvement.
- ii. Recommendations included: extending contract durations, expanding the program to other sectors, streamlining processes (quarterly meetings, dedicated support, medical compliance), and enhancing pre-departure and travel arrangements. Strengthening worker wellbeing processes was emphasised as a continued priority.
- iii. Going forward, Niue is committed to using the Pilot as a basis for developing a longer-term Labour Mobility Strategy to guide future labour mobility initiatives. Niue is considering expanding the current IAU into an MOU that includes private sector participation and supports standardised, worker-safe recruitment practices aligned with labour market demand. Accommodation shortages remain a significant constraint, and Niue is exploring investment options to address this barrier.

2.2 Update on the New Zealand Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) Scheme

13. New Zealand reaffirmed the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) Scheme as a central pillar of bilateral and regional cooperation, generating approximately NZD \$116 million worth of remittances by RSE workers each year. New Zealand outlined key priorities going forward, including the 2026 RSE policy review, ongoing work to establish a permanent approach to accommodation costs, possible review to the bilateral Inter-Agency Understandings (IAU), review of quality standards, implementation of the Cultural Awareness Framework, and a continued increased uptake of superannuation schemes by RSE workers. New Zealand emphasised the importance of maximising the development and economic benefits of labour mobility for Pacific countries, noting that approaches must be tailored to diverse national contexts and supported by strong Pacific leadership and targeted workstreams.

14. Updates were provided on the NOA Village of Learning RSE Worker Training Programme, with New Zealand committing to support up to 2,150 workers annually over the next five years and continuing to pilot initiatives that strengthen skills development and meaningful worker outcomes. New Zealand underscored the need to safeguard and evolve the RSE Scheme by continuing to deliver mutual benefit, reflecting Pacific aspirations, and balancing opportunity creation with long-term sustainability, including by mitigating risks such as brain drain. The meeting also noted New Zealand's call to strengthen regional integration, foster innovation through scalable intra-Pacific labour mobility initiatives such as the Niue–Solomon Islands pilot, and improve visa processes to support reintegration and create accessible pathways for Pacific workers.

2.3 Update on the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) Scheme

15. The meeting noted Australia's continued commitment to strengthening labour mobility opportunities across the Pacific and Timor-Leste through key initiatives, including the Pacific Engagement Visa (PEV), the Falepili Mobility Pathway for Tuvalu, and the ongoing strengthening of the PALM scheme. As of September 2025, there were 31,255 PALM scheme workers in Australia—14,860 short-term and 16,365 long-term. Members emphasised the flexibility afforded to participating countries in selecting industries, the piloting of new sectors, and Australia's investment in skills development, including funding for 1,500 workers to obtain Australian-recognised qualifications. Progress made under the 2024 PLMAM commitments was acknowledged, including improved access to superannuation, enhanced welfare and social support, greater income stability,

and reduced disengagement. The significant economic contribution of PALM scheme workers to the Australian economy was noted, alongside the importance of evidence-based research to better quantify these impacts. Priorities for the next 12 months include continuing to grow and expand the PALM scheme in partnership with Australian stakeholders and partner governments, including a strengthened focus on reintegration, skills development, worker preparation, implementing outcomes of the Deed and Guidelines review. Members also discussed the need for clear communication to address common misconceptions relating to healthcare access, pay parity, disengagement processes, and worker protection measures.

16. The meeting was further informed of strengthened protections, oversight, and information support within the PALM scheme since mid-2023, including proactive compliance and monitoring efforts and improved access to institutional mechanisms such as the Fair Work Ombudsman's dedicated reporting channels. Legislative grievance mechanisms have been established, with workers initiating the majority of actions, and employers are required to provide a minimum of 120 hours across four weeks to ensure consistent income. Where employers cannot provide at least 20 hours per week, they must guarantee a minimum AUD \$200 weekly income, cover accommodation and transport, and suspend deductions for that period. It was reiterated that healthcare remains accessible and competitively priced, disengagement rates are low, and workers receive pay parity with others in the same industry performing similar roles.

17. In response to the RSE and PALM Updates, the meeting:

- i. **Acknowledged** the progress in labour mobility, with remittances delivering economic benefits, improved structures such as the Country Liaison Officers (CLOs), programme assistance to Labour Sending Units (LSUs) in Pacific labour sending countries, and women-focused initiatives contributing positively to worker outcomes.
- ii. **Noted** the need for strengthened governance, clearer reintegration strategies for both long- and short-term workers, and mitigation of risks such as job insecurity, brain drain, and welfare gaps during legal proceedings. The meeting recognized the differentiated reintegration pathways for labour mobility workers and emphasized the importance of tailoring reintegration approaches to each country's context.
- iii. **Noted** concerns regarding access to superannuation, clarity on welfare responsibilities, and the adequacy of visa allocations relative to population size. Australia reaffirmed its commitment to advance ongoing initiatives that support improved superannuation access for PALM scheme workers, including through activities delivered via LSUs, better tax support, and access to clearer communication and more initiative digital infrastructure, including Government websites, the available National Tax Clinic program, and the virtual tax agent.
- iv. **Called** for stronger coordinated institutional arrangements including a review of existing bilateral labour mobility arrangements to reflect the changing labour mobility landscape in the Pacific and facilitate better alignment of labour mobility systems to meet growing demand. Australia highlighted its confidence in maintaining preferential industry access for Pacific workers and noted ongoing diversification of opportunities as industries evolve. New Zealand outlined ongoing work to evolve the RSE Scheme, while reaffirming the capped, circular, and employer-driven nature of its system.
- v. **Highlighted** the importance of robust systems to support future workforce growth, including improved worker protections, stronger compliance, and alignment with labour market demand. Australia and New Zealand both reaffirmed ongoing efforts to strengthen oversight, maintain stable worker numbers, and ensure programmes remain fit-for-purpose and responsive to both employer needs and Pacific development priorities.

Agenda 3: Employer Forum Outcomes

18. The meeting noted employers' strong recognition of the value of Pacific labour mobility schemes, highlighting that reliable access to labour is essential for business continuity and productivity. Employers emphasised that returning workers significantly improve efficiency and reduce training costs, reinforcing the importance of maintaining confidence in the schemes to sustain ongoing investment.

19. PALM scheme employers underscored the need for clearer and more consistent communication with LSUs, raising concerns about delays, unclear recruitment processes, and inconsistent data systems. Survey findings were referenced, indicating that 80% of employers experience high administrative burden and associated costs, with a proportion intending to reduce or scale down participation. Despite these challenges, PALM scheme employers reaffirmed their commitment to ethical and transparent recruitment and to ensuring mutually beneficial outcomes. Key priorities identified by PALM scheme employers included ensuring dependable access to returning workers, reducing administrative burden without lowering standards, strengthening direct country-specific engagement with LSUs, and improving robust and consistent data management. Employers stressed the importance of achieving balanced, sustainable labour mobility schemes.

20. RSE employers echoed similar challenges, noting the need for solution-driven engagement and ongoing, direct communication with LSUs to better understand employment issues. Employers reported investing their own resources to visit remote communities to gain insight into workers' social and cultural contexts, recognising this as essential for improving welfare, communication, and problem-solving during deployment.

21. Employers recommended digitising visa processes, strengthening the long-term sustainability of the schemes, and addressing challenges at the country level to support more tailored, country-specific solutions.

Agenda 4: Way forward

22. The meeting reaffirmed the shared commitment to ensuring Pacific labour mobility remains ethical, transparent, and development focused. Members noted that effective labour mobility requires strong coordination between labour-sending and receiving countries and highlighted the need to improve communication between employers and LSUs. The importance of institutionalizing regular dialogue to strengthen trust, transparency, and policy alignment across the region was emphasised.

23. Four priority themes were identified for continued collaboration:

- i. **Strengthening Partnerships and Information Sharing** – Need for structured, regular engagement between LSUs, employers, and receiving-country partners.
- ii. **Ethical, Transparent, and Sustainable Recruitment** – Importance of fair recruitment practices, clear communication, and strong ethical standards.
- iii. **Reintegration and Skills Development** – Recognition of reintegration as central to development outcomes, with emphasis on upskilling, skills recognition, and alignment with national priorities.
- iv. **Balancing Mutual Benefits and Sustainability** – Need for evidence-based policy settings to ensure equitable and sustainable outcomes for all parties.

24. The meeting proposed that the PPIU review and strengthen the PLMAM structure to institutionalise dialogue mechanisms. Members recommended including:

- Dedicated LSU–Employer dialogues to address country-specific operational issues
- A regional policy forum for labour-sending and receiving governments and employers;
- Retention of the government-to-government plenary session.

Agenda 6: Other Matters

25. The meeting was informed that the decision on the next PLMAM remains subject to the confirmation of the forthcoming PPIU contract and the finalisation of amendments to the ALM. It was noted that the ALM amendment process provides an opportunity to reflect on, strengthen and recalibrate the PLMAM structure moving forward. An evaluation survey has been circulated to support this process, and participants were encouraged to complete it by the end of the day.

26. The meeting thanked the Chair, the host country, and the PPIU for the successful convening of PLMAM 2025.

*PLMAM Secretariat
6 November 2025*

2025 PACER LABOUR MOBILITY ANNUAL MEETING

SUSTAINABLE REINTEGRATION BEGINS WITH FAIR AND EFFECTIVE RECRUITMENT PROGRAMME

3-6 November 2025
Aquatic Centre, Honiara, Solomon Islands

Day 1: PACER Plus Forum Island Country and Employer Forum

Closed meetings for PACER Plus Forum Island Countries and PALM & RSE Employers

PLMAM Employer Forum

Heritage Park Hotel, Honiara

Day 1: 3 Nov	Moderators: Dr. Charlotte Bedford, Research Fellow, Australian National University (ANU); Dr. Heather Nunns, Director, Analytic Matters
8:30 – 9:00am	Registrations
9:00 – 9:15am	PLMAM 2025 Employer Forum Objectives and Agenda Introductions; forum objectives, agenda, and ground rules
9:15 – 10:00am	Status update on PLMAM 2024 Employer Forum Outcomes Discussions to confirm written statements on progress towards implementation of focus areas and actions for 12months since PLMAM 2024
10:00 – 10:50am	Recruitment challenges and priorities of PALM and RSE Employers: Discussions on the primary challenges relating to worker recruitment and proposed priority solutions <i>Breakout session</i>
10:50 – 11:15pm	Morning Tea
11:15 – 12:30	Reintegration challenges and priorities of PALM and RSE Employers: Discussions on the primary challenges relating to reintegration and proposed priority solutions <i>Breakout session</i>
12:30 – 1:30pm	Lunch
1:30 – 2:00	Building an effective partnership between LSUs and Employers Discussions on challenges and proposed solutions for building the partnership between LSUs and Employers.
2:00 – 3:15	Improving the value of PLMAM and the Employer Forum Evaluation of PLMAM and the Employer Forum and how they can be made more effective. The session will also facilitate completion of an evaluation survey of the Employer Forum.
3:15 – 3:30	Finalization of Outcomes Statement and Closing
PACER Plus Forum Island Country Caucus Heritage Park Hotel, Honiara	
Day 1: 3 Nov	Chair: Ambassador Collin Beck, Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs & Trade, Solomon Islands
8:00 – 8:30am	Registrations
8:30 – 9:00am	Opening Prayer Opening Remarks by the Chair
9:00 – 10:00am	Agenda 1: General discussion on recruitment challenges and priorities of PACER Plus FICs PACER Plus countries to discuss primary challenges relating to worker recruitment and proposed priority solutions
10:00 – 10:30am	Morning Tea
10:30 – 11:30am	Agenda 2: General discussion on reintegration challenges and priorities of PACER Plus FICs PACER Plus countries to discuss primary challenges relating to reintegration and proposed priority solutions
11:30 – 12:30pm	Agenda 3: Discussions on building the partnership between LSUs and Employers PACER Plus countries to discuss primary challenges and solutions for building the partnership between LSUs and Employers
12:30 – 1:30pm	Lunch
1:30 – 2:30pm	Agenda 4: Outcomes of PLMAM 2024 and the ALM Discussion Paper PLMAM-25/1: Progress Update on PLMAM 2024 Outcomes and Update on ALM

	Dr Alisi Kautoke Holani, Labour Mobility Specialist, PPIU General discussions on outcomes from PLMAM 2024 and future of the ALM and Labour Mobility Secretariat
2:30 – 3:00	Afternoon Tea
3:00 – 3:30pm	Agenda 5: Way forward Confirmation of collective priorities from the 2025 FIC Caucus discussions
3:30 – 4:00pm	Other Matters Final Words from the Chair Closing Prayer
Day 2: Labour Sending Unit and Approved Employer Conference A forum to discuss issues relating to worker recruitment, selection, education, mobilization, and welfare and to determine regional solutions to address these issues.	
Day 2: 4 Nov	Moderator: Ambassador Collin Beck, Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs & Trade, Solomon Islands
8:30 – 9:00am	Registrations
9:00 – 9:45am	PLMAM 2025 Opening Ceremony
9:45 – 10:15am	Morning Tea
10:15 – 10:20am	Introduction of Moderator and opening remarks
10:20 – 11:20	Session 1: Setting the Scene i. Significance of fair and effective recruitment to the success of Pacific labour mobility – Mr. Nilim Baruah, Senior Migration Specialist, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, ILO ii. Recruitment trends in Pacific labour mobility in the last decade – Emeritus Professor Richard Bedford
11:20 – 12:30am	Session 2: Challenges and Priorities of Pacific Labour Sending Units (LSUs) i. Worker Perspectives on recruitment – Returning Solomon Island worker representatives ii. FIC Caucus Outcomes – LSU representative
12:30 – 1:30pm	Lunch
1:30 – 2:15pm	Session 3: Challenges and Priorities of PALM and RSE Employers Presentations by PALM and RSE employers on challenges and priorities - PALM and RSE employer representatives
2:15 – 2:45pm	Afternoon Tea
2:45 – 3:15pm	Way Forward on Recruitment Challenges and Building LSU and Employer Partnership General Discussion on agreed priorities
3:15 – 3:30pm	Final Words from the Moderator Closing Prayer
7:00 – 9:00pm	Welcome Reception Hosted by the Government of Solomon Islands
Day 3: Development Impact Workshop A forum to discuss measures to enhance the positive development impacts of labour mobility in Pacific Island Countries	
Day 3: 5 Nov	Moderator: Ambassador Collin Beck, Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs & Trade, Solomon Islands
8:00 – 8:30am	Registrations
8:30 – 8:45am	Opening Prayer Introduction of the Moderator and opening remarks
8:45 – 9:45am	Session 1: Development Impacts of Labour Mobility in Pacific Countries i. Development Impacts of Pacific Labour Mobility – Dr Thomas Walker, Lead Economist, Social Protection & Labor Global Practice, East Asia & Pacific Region, World Bank ii. Sustainable Reintegration and its role in enhancing development benefits – Dr. Rasika Jayasuriya, Senior Policy and Partnerships Coordinator, IOM Australia; and Mr. Sachindra Singh, National Project Office, IOM Fiji. iii. Q&A
9:45 – 10:30am	Session 2: International reintegration good practices i. Learnings from the Philippines, Mr. Francis Ron C. De Guzman, Assistant Secretary, Philippines Department of Migrant Workers ii. Q&A

10:30 – 11:00am	Morning Tea
11:00 – 12:30am	Session 3: Regional Guidelines on Reintegration and Recruitment i. Draft Pacific Guidelines on Sustainable Circular Labour Mobility Reintegration, Dr Heather Nunns, Director, Analytic Matters; and Dr Charlotte Bedford, Research Fellow, Australian National University (ANU) ii. Draft General Guidance on Pacific Labour Mobility Worker Recruitment, Ms Nicky Thatcher and Dr Asenati Chan Tung, Sustineo iii. General Discussion
12:30 – 1:30pm	Lunch
1:30– 2:30pm	Session 4: Regional reintegration good practices Labour sending country perspectives a. Solomon Islands – Ms. Christina Maoma, Director for Labour Mobility, MFAET; Diana Yates, Cathliro, Ms. Elsie Wickham, Consultant. b. Vanuatu – Ms Murielle Meltenoven, Commissioner for Labour, Department of Labour & Employment Services c. Fiji – Mr. Lui Mario, Director, Ministry of Employment, Productivity & Workplace Relations
2:30 – 3:00pm	Afternoon Tea
3:00 – 4:45pm	Session 5: Stakeholder Perspectives i. Worker Perspectives, Solomon Island Returning Workers ii. Employer perspectives, RSE & PALM Employers iii. Labour receiving country perspectives a. Australia – Ms. Rachel Jolly, Assistant Secretary, Labour Mobility and Engagement Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade (DFAT); Felicity Rowe, Assistant Secretary, PALM Performance Branch, Department of Employment & Workplace Relations (DEWR) b. New Zealand – Ms. Emma Sherwood, Senior Adviser, Labour Mobility, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT); Ms. Faamata Laumalili, National Manager Pacific, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) iv. Trade union perspectives – Ms. Seveaoga Saina Tomi Setu – Fetalaiga, PICTU
4:45 – 5:00pm	Final Words from the Moderator Closing Prayer
Day 4: Pacific Labour Mobility Dialogue The final plenary is an official meeting of all labour sending and receiving countries to discuss and agree on strategic priorities required under the PACER Plus Arrangement on Labour Mobility. All PLMAM 2025 participants are invited to attend.	
Day 4: 6 Nov	Chair: Ambassador Collin Beck, Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs & Trade, Solomon Islands
8:00 – 8:30am	Registrations
8:30 – 9:00am	Opening Prayer Opening Remarks by the Chair Adoption of the agenda
9:00 – 9:30am	Agenda 1: Outcomes of PLMAM 2024 and the ALM Discussion Paper PLMAM-25/1: Progress Update on PLMAM 2024 Outcomes and the ALM Dr. Alisi Kautoke Holani, Labour Mobility Specialist, PPIU
9:30 – 10:00am	Agenda 2: Update on labour mobility opportunities 2.1 Update on Intra-Pacific Labour Mobility – Niue & Solomon Islands Labour Mobility Pilot, Ms. Gaylene Tasmania, Deputy Secretary to Government, Niue
10:00– 10:30am	Morning Tea
10:30 – 12:00	Agenda 3: Update on labour mobility opportunities 2.2 Update on the RSE scheme – Mr. Tharron Mclvor, Manager of the Pacific Strategy and Regionalism, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) 2.3 Update on the PALM scheme – Ms. Jan Hutton, First Assistant Secretary, Pacific Integration Division, DFAT ; Mr. Jason Stott, First Assistant Secretary, Pacific Labour Operations Division, DEWR
12:00 – 1:00pm	Lunch
1:00– 1:45pm	Agenda 4: FIC Caucus Outcomes Outcomes from FIC Caucus
1:45 – 2:30pm	Agenda 5: Employer Forum Outcomes Outcomes from the Employer Forum

2:30 – 3:00pm	Afternoon Tea
3:00 – 3:30	Agenda 6: Other Matters
3:30 – 4:00pm	Final Words from the Chair Closing Prayer
7-9pm	Closing Reception Hosted by the PPIU

PLMAM 2025 Participants (In-Person)

	Title	Name	Last Name	Country	Agency/Organisation	Designation	Stakeholder Group
1	Mr.	Abel	Lobo	Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands Support Service - (SISS)	Program Officer	Private Sector
2	Mr	Abel	Smith	New Zealand	New Zealand Nurses Organisation	Leader	Civil Society
3	Mr.	Adolphe	Bani	Vanuatu	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and External Trade	Head - Regional and Bilateral Trade Division	Government Official
4	Mr.	Afzal	Ali	New Zealand	Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment	Pacific Labour Mobility Programme Manager (TVOM)	Government Official
5	Ms.	Ai Siang	Tan	Australia	Agri Labour Australia	PALM Compliance Manager	Employer
6	Mrs.	Akosita	Polota	Tonga	Ministry of Internal Affairs	Deputy Chief Executive Officer	Government Official
7	Mr.	Alimoni	Taumoepeau	Australia	Uniting Church Synod NSWACT, Australia	Team Leader Intercultural Ministry and Climate Action	Others
8	Dr.	Alisi	Holani	Samoa	PPIU	Adviser	Regional/International Organisation
9	Mr	Alistair	Moloo	Samoa	PACER Plus	Program Accountant	International Organisation
10	Mr.	Alister	Kabui	Solomon Islands	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade	Research Officer	Government Official
11	Mr.	Alphie Allen	Lelekele	Vanuatu	Department of Labour & Employment Services Unit Ministry of Internal Affairs Vanuatu Government	Senior Labour Mobility Officer - Reintegration	Government Official
12	Ms.	Alvina	Erekali	Solomon Islands	UN Women Solomon Islands	UN Women Solomon Islands	Others
13	Mr.	Amos	Pakoa	Vanuatu	Department of External Trade	Labour Mobility Officer	Government Official
15	Ms.	Ancy	Raetora	Solomon Islands	NA	Labour mobility worker	Others
18	Ms.	Angela	Soai	Solomon Islands	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade	Administration Officer	Government Official
19	Ms.	Angoango	Fakaua	Kiribati	Ministry of Tourism, Commerce, Industry and Cooperatives	Senior Trade Officer	Government Official

21	Ms.	Arti	Prasad	Australia	RWM	Sourcing, Migration and Case Manager	Employer
22	Dr.	Asenati	Chan Tung	Australia	Sustineo Pty Ltd	Senior Research Consultant - Development Consultancy	Private Sector
24	Ms.	Atkerria	Painap	Papua New Guinea	GoPNG Department of Treasury	Assistant Secretary - Financial Management Division	Government Official
27	Dr.	Benedict	Imbun	Papua New Guinea	PNG Labour Mobility Program	Social Risk Welfare and Labour Specialist	Others
28	Ms.	Beverly	Bule	Vanuatu	Vanuatu Association of Public Service Employees	VAPSE Organiser / Administration / Dispute Officer	Union representative
29	Mr.	Bob	Pollard	Solomon Islands	Pasifiki HR	Managing Director	Others, Private Sector
30	Mr.	Bob Jones	Ribauw	Nauru	DFAT	Director	Government Official
31	Mr.	Brad	Seagrott	Australia	RWM	CEO	Employer
32	Mr.	Brian	Lezutuni	Solomon Islands	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade	Chief Information Officer	Government Official
36	Dr.	Charlotte	Bedford	New Zealand	Australian National University	Research Fellow	Academic
38	Ms.	Christina	Palusi	Solomon Islands	Telekom Digital Company Limited	Manager Key Accounts	Private Sector
39	Dr.	Christina	Laalaai-Tausa,	Fiji	The Palladium Group / PLMSP	Pacific and Timor-Leste Regional Manager	Regional/International Organisation
40	Ms.	Christina	Marau	Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands Labour Mobility Unit	Director	Government Official
42	Dr.	Cliff	Bird	Australia	Synod of NSWACT, UCA	Mission Catalyst PALMS	Others
43	Mr	Collin	Beck	Solomon Islands	Ministry of Foreign Affairs & External Trade	Permanent Secretary	Government Official
44	Mr.	Darren	Lynch	Australia	Palm One Pty Ltd	Managing Director	Employer, Private Sector, Others
45	Mr.	David	Knight	Australia	IOM	Chief of Mission Australia	Regional/International Organisation
46	Mr	Dean	Wickham	Solomon Islands	Pacific Labour Mobility Support Program (PLMSP)	Engagement Manager	Regional/International Organisation
47	Mr.	Dennis	Meone	Australia	Pacific Labour Mobility Support Program (PLMSP)	Regional Manager	Regional/International Organisation

50	Mr.	Dino	Boratto	Australia	Boratto Farms Pty Ltd	Owner	Employer
52	Ms.	Donna	McMahon	Australia	Qualify	Chief Executive Officer	Academic, Employer
53	Mr.	Duane	Leo	New Zealand	New Zealand Public Service Association	National Secretary	Union representative
54	Mr.	Elika	Pepeuga	Tuvalu	Tuvalu Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Labour & Trade	Deputy Secretary - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Labour & Trade	Government Official
56	Ms.	Elsie	Wickham	Solomon Islands	Consultancy	Consultant	Private Sector
57	Ms.	Emalus Aoga	Tapugao	Tuvalu	Department of Labour	Assistant Labour Officer	Government Official
59	Ms.	Emma	Sherwood	New Zealand	New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade	Senior Adviser	Government Official
60	Ms.	Erima	Maefonea	Solomon Islands	Labour Mobility Unit	Administration Officer	Government Official
63	Mr.	Evance	Neusia	Solomon Islands	Central Bank of Solomon Islands	Senior Analyst (Ag)	Government Official
64	Ms.	Ezinma	Kausua	Solomon Islands	Labour Mobility Unit	Administration Officer	Government Official
65	Mrs.	Faamata	Laumalili	New Zealand	Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment (MBIE) NZ	National Manager Pacific	Government Official
66	Mr.	Falute	Vaai	New Zealand	Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment	Pacific Engagement Manager (TVOM)	Government Official
67	Ms.	Felicity	Rowe	Australia	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations	Assistant Secretary, PALM Performance Branch	Government Official
68	Ms.	Fesaitu	Solomone	New Zealand	Centre for Pacific Languages	CEO of Centre for Pacific Languages	Academic, Others
69	Mrs.	Filomena	Baleikanacea Talawadua	Fiji	Fiji Nursing Association	General Secretary	Regional/International Organisation
70	Dr.	Fiona	Macdonald	Australia	Centre for Future Work at the Australia Institute	Acting Director	Academic, Union representative
71	Prof.	Francis	Collins	Aotearoa New Zealand	University of Auckland	Professor of Sociology	Academic
72	Mr.	Francis Ron	De Guzman	Philippines	Department of Migrant Workers	Assistant Secretary	Government Official
73	Mr	Fulisailagitale	Saleuesile	Samoa	Samoa Government	Country Liaison Officer - PALM	Government Official
74	Mr.	Gary	Jones	New Zealand	Mr Apple Ltd	Regulatory Affairs	Employer

75	Mrs.	Gaylene	Tasmania	Niue	Government of Niue	Deputy Secretary of Government	Government Official
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78	Mr.	George	Tuti	Solomon Island	Consulate General Of Solomon Islands	Consul General	Government Official
79	Mr.	George	DIUDI	Solomon Islands	Royal Solomon Islands Police Force,	2IC Forensic Services, RSI PF.	Government Official
80	Ms.	Georgyanne	Tasso	Vanuatu	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade		Government Official
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95	H.E	Ishmael Mali	Avui	Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands High Commission in New Zealand	High Commissioner	Government Official
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110	Mr.	John	Laufilu	Solomon Islands	Macos Recruitment Agency		Others
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113	Mr.	Jordan	Duffy	Australia	Pacific Labour Mobility Support Program	Technology Lead	Private Sector
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138	Ms	Kylie Tovosia	Aluta	Solomon Islands	Office of the Prime Minister & Cabinet	Policy Secretary - Productive Sector	Academic
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164	Mr.	Michael	Rogers	Australia	Agri Labour Australia	Agri Labour Australia	Employer
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179	Mr.	Nikhil	Singh	Australia	Australian Council of Trade Unions	International Officer - Pacific	Union representative
180	Mr.	Nilim	Baruah	Thailand	ILO	Senior Migration Specialist	International Organisation
181	Mr.	Nixon	Asugeni	Solomon Islands	AMA RECRUITING AGENT	RSE AGENT	Others
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202	Mrs	Rebecca	Worner	Australia	The Palladium Group	Director, Pacific Regional	Private Sector
203	Prof.	Richard	Bedford	New Zealand	University of Waikato	Emeritus Professor	Academic
204	Mr.	Robert	Au Nama	Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands Public Employees Union(SIPEU)	General Secretary	Union representative
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206	Mrs.	Robyn	Bryant	Australia	Mackays Group	Pacific Workforce CoOrdinator	Employer
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212	Dr.	Rose	Namoori-Sinclair	Kiribati	Kiribati Country Liaison Officer,NZ	Kiribati Country Liaison Officer, NZ	Government Official
213	Mrs.	Roselyn	Tagini	Solomon Islands	Islander Recruiting Agency	RSE Agent	Private Sector
214	Mr	Roy	Lagolago	Samoa	PACER Plus	Head	International Organisation
215	Mr.	Roy	Fugui	Solomon Islands	Office of the Commissioner of Labour	Chief Secretariate Advisory - Labour Advisory Board	Government Official
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218	Mr.	Ryan	Cody	Australia	Mackays Group	Pacific Workforce Manager	Employer
219	Dr.	Ryan	Edwards	Australia	ANU Development Policy Centre	Deputy Director	Academic
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221	Mr.	Saimoni Qalobula	Kere	Solomon Islands	MFAET/LMU	Marketing officer	Government Official
222	Mrs.	Saina	Tomi Setu Fetalaiga	Samoa	SAMOA FIRST UNION	UNION ORGANISER	Union representative
223	Ms	Sandy	Scarrow	New Zealand	Fruition Horticulture	Managing Director	Private Sector
224	Ms.	Sascha	Piggott	Australia	PLMSP	Lead - Pacific & Timor-Leste Engagement	Regional/International Organisation
225	Ms.	Sasha	Carter	Australia	The Palladium Group / PLMSP	Deputy Team Leader - Chief of Operations	Regional/International Organisation
227	Mr	Simon	Bebe	Vanuatu			
229	Rev	Sione Palu	Vaka	Tonga	Tonga Government	Country Liaison Officer - PALM	Government Official
230	Ms.	Sivi	Kara	Vanuatu	L.S.R CONSULTING AGENCY	AGENT	Academic
231	Mr.	Solomon	Kantha	Fiji	IOM	Chief of Mission	Regional/International Organisation
232	Ms.	Sophy	Nelson	Samoa	PACER Plus	Finance & Administration Officer	International Organisation
233	Mr.	Stephen	Burdette	Australia	Approved Employers of Australia Ltd	Executive Officer	Employer
234	Ms.	Sue Ellen	O'Farrell	Australia	Pacific Labour Mobility Support Program - PLMSP	Deputy Team Leader - Strategy and Programs	Private Sector
235	Ms.	Suefane	Touna	Niue	Secretariat NPSC	Director	Government Official
236	Mrs.	Susan	Williams	Australia	Murrakei Farms	Seasonal Worker Administrator	Employer
237	Mrs.	Tanginitopa Momota	Tuifua	Tonga	Ministry of Trade and Economic Development	Senior Labour Officer	Government Official
238	Mrs.	Tekotaake	Keariki	Kiribati	Ministry of Employment and Human Resource	Senior Labour Officer	Government Official
239	Ms.	Teremoana	Fukofuka	Cook Islands	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration	Foreign Service Officer	Government Official
240	Mr.	Tharron	Mclvor	New Zealand	New Zealand Ministry Of Foreign Affairs And Trade	Manager	Government Official

241	Dr.	Thomas	Walker	Australia	World Bank	Lead Economist	Regional/International Organisation
242	Ms.	Tiali	Goodchild	Australia	The Department of Home Affairs	First Assistant Secretary, Skilled and Temporary Visa and Capability Division	Government Official
243	Mr.	Tim	Rae	Australia	Pacific Labour Mobility Support Program	Regional Labour Mobility Manager	Government Official
244	Mr.	Tom	Reddington	Australia	Public Services International	Oceania Sub-Regional Secretary	Union representative
245	Mr.	Tomasi	Peni	Samoa	Labour Employment Export Program, Samoa	Samoa Country Liaison Officer, NZ	Government Official
246	Mrs.	Tracy	King	Australia	HealthX	Chief Executive Officer	Employer
247	Mr.	Trent	Dabwido	Nauru	Consulate General of the Republic of Nauru in Brisbane	Country Liaison Office	Others
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249	Mrs.	Tulia	Wanemut	Vanuatu	Vanuatu National Workers Union	VNWU President	Union representative
252	Mr.	Ugwalubu	Mowana	Papua New Guinea	PNG Public Employees Association	National General Secretary	Union representative
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262	Mr.	Youen	Lawi	Vanuatu	Ministry of Trade and Commerce, Vanuatu aid for Trade Management Unit	Principal trade analyst and programme coordinator Public private working group	Government Official

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265	Mrs.	Zema	Joseph	Solomon Islands	DFAT	Senior Program Manager	Others
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270	Mr	Hickson	George	Solomon Islands	Ministry of Foreign Affairs & External Trade	Deputy Secretary of Government	Government Official
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272	Mr	Lucio	Bere Dos-Santos	Timor-Leste	SEFOPE	LSU Staff	Government Official
273	Mr	Domingas	Babo	Timor-Leste	SEFOPE	LSU Staff	Government Official
274	Mr	Anton	Sekum	Papua New Guinea	PICTU	Delegate	Union representative
276	Ms	Amy	Barnard	Australia	PLMSP	Media	Private Sector
277	Mr	Kebai Frederick	Meregum	Papua New Guinea	PNG Nurses Association	President	Civil Society
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282	Mr	Gareth	MacGrath				
283	Ms	Rachel	Menvi	Solomon Islands	SICTU/SINTA		
284	Ms	Jolina	Tausinga Sanga	Solomon Islands	Minstry of Foreign Affairs - Pacific Branch	Assistant Secretary	Government Official
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286	Mr	Bruno Joel	Lee	Solomon Islands	Leeman Agent		

287	Mr	Tony	Kagovai	Solomon Islands	SICPU/WUSI		
288	Mr	Carlos	Bohorquez		UNICEF		
289	Mr	Craig	Nodder	New Zealand	APELLO SERVICES		
290	Mr	Jamie	Reid	New Zealand	APELLO SERVICES		
291	Mr	Frank	Robolite'e	Solomon Islands	SINTA/SICTU		
292	Mr	Brown	Pwai	Solomon Islands			
293	Mr	Adrian	Tuhanuku	Solomon Islands	SICTU		
294	Ms	Tracey	Wickham	Solomon Islands	Consultant/Pacer Plus		Private Sector
295	Ms	Vaburi	Riu	Solomon Islands	PNG High Commission in SI	Acting PNG High Commissioner	Government Official



FORUM ISLAND COUNTRY (FIC) CAUCUS OUTCOMES STATEMENT

2025 PACIFIC LABOUR MOBILITY MEETING

3 NOVEMBER 2025

HERITAGE PARK HOTEL HONIARA, SOLOMON ISLANDS

1. The 2025 Pacific Labour Mobility Meeting (PLMAM) Forum Island Country (FIC) Caucus was convened on 3 November 2025 at the Heritage Park Hotel in Honiara, Solomon Islands.
2. The FIC Caucus was held as part of the 2025 Pacific Labour Mobility Annual Meeting (PLMAM) and chaired by the Permanent Secretary for the Solomon Islands Ministry of Foreign Affairs & External Trade, His Excellency Ambassador Collin Beck.
3. The meeting was closed for Pacific Island PACER Plus Parties and Participants of the PACER Plus Arrangement on Labour Mobility. It was attended by the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. Representatives of the Pacific included the Pacific High Commissioners and senior labour and trade officials. The full list of participants is at Annex 1.
4. The Opening remarks were delivered by the Chair where he highlighted the objective of the Caucus as an unique opportunity for Pacific Participants of the PACER Plus Arrangement on Labour Mobility (ALM) to Talanoa on our priorities, share challenges, and identify practical solutions to advance together through PLMAM and PACER Plus. The Chair recognized that reintegration links labour mobility to development outcomes for our countries, and that process begins with recruitment, underscoring the PLMAM 2025 theme of "Sustainable Reintegration Begins with Fair and Effective Recruitment". He further underscored that sustainable reintegration and effective recruitment is made possible through a strong conducive partnership between labour sending countries, employers and labour receiving countries. In doing so, the Chair also underscored the importance of evolving the terminology from Labour Sending Units (LSUs) to Labour Sending States, noting that the latter reflects the sovereign role, accountability, and national responsibility of Pacific governments in driving labour mobility policy and governance. He therefore called on the meeting to commit to unity and open dialogue in order to find shared solutions for the enhancement of the benefits of labour mobility for the region.

Adoption of Agenda

5. The Forum Island Country Caucus adopted the agenda, provided as Annex 2 to this Statement.

Agenda Item 1: General Discussion on recruitment challenges and Priorities of PACER Plus FICs.

6. The meeting discussed the key challenges relating to worker recruitment in the context of the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) and the New Zealand Recognized Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme, and potential solutions to address them. The detailed list of priorities are provided in Annex 3 but are summarised as follows:
 - i. **Policy and Governance:** Participants called for stronger policy and governance frameworks to enhance coordination and participation. Priorities included expanding eligible sectors, updating bilateral MOUs to align with ALM amendments, and holding regular policy dialogues with Australia and New Zealand. Strengthening employer compliance and reviewing institutional capacity were also emphasised.
 - ii. **Recruitment Process and Fairness:** Countries supported fair, transparent, and inclusive recruitment

systems. Key actions included reviewing recruitment timelines, empowering LSUs to reject non-compliant employers, translating contracts into Pacific languages, and promoting gender inclusion and couple recruitment. Strengthening LSU engagement and worker-selection systems was also prioritised.

iii. Worker Welfare and Protection: Worker welfare remained central to sustainable labour mobility. Countries committed to reducing recruitment costs, conducting medical checks, and using health assessments to support wellbeing. Participants endorsed a 30-hour work minimum, rest days for injured workers, legal support access, a Talanoa Pathway for grievances, and assistance for families of deceased workers.

iv. Operational and Logistical Improvements: Improving operational coordination was identified as a priority. Countries recommended booking flights only after visa approvals, requiring employer consultation with LSUs, and reporting welfare incidents promptly. Strengthening LSU understanding of production-chain safety and introducing mandatory offshore periods were also supported.

v. Coordination and Capacity Strengthening: Participants reaffirmed the need for stronger coordination among LSUs, employers, and receiving-country authorities. Strengthening LSU capacity and creating regional mechanisms for feedback and learning were endorsed, alongside enhanced collaboration under the PLMAM and ALM frameworks and regular dialogues between labour-sending states and employers.

Agenda Item 2: General discussion on reintegration challenges and priorities of PACER Plus FICs

7. Members provided updates on national reintegration priorities and discussed approaches to strengthen systems that support the economic and social reintegration of returning workers. The session recognised that reintegration is a critical phase in the labour mobility cycle requiring coordinated and adequately resourced policy responses. The detailed list of priorities is provided in Annex 3 but are summarised as follows:
 - i. **Policy and Governance:** Countries agreed that reintegration planning should begin at pre-departure and integrate financial literacy to better prepare workers for return. Strengthening the ALM framework and addressing recruitment challenges were identified as critical to ensuring effective and sustainable reintegration outcomes.
 - ii. **Financing:** Participants highlighted the urgent need for sustainable and predictable funding to support the implementation of their reintegration strategies. Countries proposed consideration of dedicated financing mechanisms through coordinated donor support and PACER Plus funding. Other financing options such as building worker agency to fund their reintegration goals was also proposed. Participants also called for regulatory amendments to reduce or repurpose superannuation tax to fund reintegration initiatives, ensuring long-term and self-sustaining reintegration financing beyond deployment.
 - iii. **Institutional Strengthening and Coordination:** Stronger institutional capacity and coordination were recognised as essential for effective reintegration. Countries called for targeted financial and technical support to strengthen implementing agencies, streamline LSU processes, and improve communication with employers on worker return. Developing worker profiles and reintegration assessments, supported by a regional M&E framework with robust data systems, was also encouraged.
 - iv. **Reintegration Support:** Countries reaffirmed the need for comprehensive reintegration support that promotes both economic and social wellbeing. Priorities included facilitating access to finance for returning workers, supporting business and entrepreneurship opportunities, and providing counselling for workers and their families. Community-based reintegration approaches were encouraged, alongside stronger support for workers' transition into local labour markets and private-sector employment. Participants also recommended establishing Returning Worker Centres to provide ongoing counselling, coaching, and advisory services to support reintegration.
 - v. **Skills Development and Recognition:** Countries supported accredited skills-recognition programmes and mutual qualification frameworks to ensure fair pay and career mobility. Training in Australia and New Zealand were recommended to be aligned with Pacific industries' labour needs, while reintegration programmes should help workers re-enter domestic labour markets, drawing on

models like the NOA trades training in New Zealand.

Agenda 3: Discussions on building the partnership between LSUs and Employers

8. Strengthening collaboration between employers and labour-sending countries was identified as vital to improving recruitment, welfare, and reintegration outcomes. The detailed list of priorities is provided in Annex 3 but are summarised as follows:
 - i. **Policy and Governance:** Countries proposed establishing a Labour Sending Country and Employer Forum, with quarterly dialogues from 2026 to address operational and welfare issues. Employers were urged to align recruitment with national priorities, balance worker volumes, and comply with onshore/offshore requirements. For offshore requirements, countries proposed for the PALM scheme requirements to be reviewed for flexibility. Participants called for greater flexibility in visa conditions to enable full employment and stability. The PALM scheme was encouraged to consider the Joint ATR in the RSE model, aligning employer workforce planning with Pacific development and reintegration priorities. An independent assessment of Pacific workers' economic contribution to Australian and New Zealand economies was also recommended.
 - ii. **Operational Coordination and Information Sharing:** Enhanced coordination and data sharing were prioritised. Recommendations included strengthening direct employer engagement, timely sharing of welfare and visa information, and developing secure data-sharing protocols. Regular LSU–employer communication and measures to close data gaps were also encouraged.
 - iii. **Worker Welfare and Wellbeing:** Employers are encouraged to establish on-site medical support, use preferred insurance and superannuation providers, and undertake cultural sensitivity training. Closer collaboration with LSUs on welfare case management was recommended to ensure timely and culturally appropriate support. Countries acknowledged the growing role of CLOs as an operational bridge between sending and receiving countries and recommended exploring a formal CLO coordination mechanism under the PLMAM Secretariat.
 - iv. **Reintegration and Skills Development:** Employers were urged to support reintegration initiatives by sharing skills data and participating in upskilling programmes linking overseas experience to domestic employment opportunities.

Agenda 4: Outcomes of PLMAM 2024 and the ALM

9. The meeting noted the progress update on the implementation of outcomes from PLMAM 2024 and agreed on the following:
 - i. **Review of Bilateral MOUs:** Initiate a comprehensive review of existing bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) with Australia and New Zealand. Current MOUs are outdated and may no longer fully capture the evolving labour market dynamics, policy settings, and regional labour mobility architecture, and could be strengthened to reflect a deeper and more balanced partnership.
 - ii. **Regional Leadership under PACER Plus:** Affirm PACER Plus the key regional mechanism to support, coordinate, and guide labour mobility initiatives across the Pacific, ensuring alignment with the ALM and coherence with national and bilateral frameworks.
 - iii. **Dedicated Funding for the ALM Programme:** Secure additional standalone funding to strengthen the PACER Plus Labour Mobility Secretariat, ensuring sustainability, technical support, and expanded capacity for implementation at regional and national levels.
 - iv. **Exclusive Access to ALM Benefits for PACER Plus Parties;** Safeguard that the primary benefits and resources of the ALM are directed to PACER Plus Parties, reinforcing the value of participation in the Agreement and incentivising full membership and compliance.

The Chair thanked the meeting for a productive and fruitful meeting and called the meeting to a close with a word of prayer.

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PLMAM 2025 FIC Caucus Participants

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1	Ambassador	Collin	Beck	Solomon Islands	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade	Permanent Secretary
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2025 FIC CAUCUS

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PACER Plus Forum Island Country Caucus Heritage Park Hotel, Honiara	
Chair: Ambassador Collin Beck, Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs & Trade, Solomon Islands	
Registrations	
Opening Prayer Opening Remarks by the Chair	
Agenda 1: General discussion on recruitment challenges and priorities of PACER Plus FICs PACER Plus countries to discuss primary challenges relating to worker recruitment and proposed priority solutions	
Morning Tea	
Agenda 2: General discussion on reintegration challenges and priorities of PACER Plus FICs PACER Plus countries to discuss primary challenges relating to reintegration and proposed priority solutions	
Agenda 3: Discussions on building the partnership between LSUs and Employers PACER Plus countries to discuss primary challenges and solutions for building the partnership between LSUs and Employers	
Lunch	
Agenda 4: Outcomes of PLMAM 2024 and the ALM Discussion Paper PLMAM-25/1: Progress Update on PLMAM 2024 Outcomes and Update on ALM Dr Alisi Kautoke Holani, Labour Mobility Specialist, PPIU General discussions on outcomes from PLMAM 2024 and future of the ALM and Labour Mobility Secretariat	
Afternoon Tea	
Agenda 5: Way forward Confirmation of collective priorities from the 2025 FIC Caucus discussions	
Other Matters Final Words from the Chair Closing Prayer	

Annex 3 – Detailed List of FIC Caucus Priorities

Reintegration priorities	
Policy, Governance, and Financing	• Reintegration planning to start at pre-departure, not just on return. • Embed reintegration and financial literacy in pre-departure training. • Develop sustainable and dedicated funding for reintegration, including coordinated donor support, PACER Plus financing, worker savings/buy-in, and investment-linked reintegration goals. • Strengthen ALM and dedicated funding for labour mobility • Consider regulatory amendments to reduce or repurpose superannuation tax to fund reintegration initiatives. • Address recruitment challenges as a foundation for successful reintegration.
Institutional Strengthening and Coordination	• Strengthen and build the capacity of agencies implementing reintegration initiatives. • Financial support for institutional strengthening • Institutional capacity development and streamlining of LSU processes. • Improve communication between employers and LSUs on worker return. • Develop worker profiles and reintegration needs assessments to guide programming. • Establish an effective M&E strategy for reintegration with robust data management systems.
Skills Development and Recognition	• Implement skills recognition programmes through accredited training providers. • Develop mutual recognition of qualifications between sending and receiving countries. • Recognise skills of Pacific workers in Australia and New Zealand to ensure fair remuneration. • Subsidise worker training in Australia and NZ for ANZ-accredited qualifications. • Align overseas skills training with Pacific industry skills needs. • Support reintegration to address loss of skills and promote labour market reintegration at home. • Replicate successful models such as Vakameasina/NOA trades training in new worker training support.
Reintegration Support	• Facilitate access to finance for returning workers interested in business or entrepreneurship. • Provide counselling support to workers' families and adopt a community-based approach. • Develop community-led reintegration initiatives that promote social stability and wellbeing. • Support workers to integrate into the local private sector and labour market. • Consider setting up Returning Worker Centers for coaching, advisory, and counselling support.

Priorities for Strengthening the LSU-Employer Partnership

Worker Welfare and Wellbeing	• Encourage employers to establish on-site medical clinics to support worker health. • Encourage use of preferred insurance providers and superannuation companies • Promote cultural sensitivity training for employers and supervisors. • Strengthen employer engagement in worker welfare case management with LSUs.
Reintegration and Skills Development	• Employers to actively support reintegration initiatives of labour-sending countries. • Share worker data on skills and qualifications to inform reintegration strategies. • Encourage employer participation in upskilling and reintegration programmes linking employment to post-return opportunities.
Policy Innovation and Flexibility	• Promote flexibility in worker visa conditions to ensure full employment through contract duration. • PALM to consider a Joint ATR approach under the RSE to improve visa utilisation and worker stability. • Align employer workforce needs with Pacific development and reintegration priorities.

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Annex 3 – Detailed List of FIC Caucus Priorities

Priority Area	FIC Caucus Priorities	Proposed Activities
Policy, Governance & Sustainable Financing	• Start reintegration planning at pre-departure. • Embed reintegration & financial literacy into PDO. • Establish sustainable reintegration financing. • Strengthen ALM and funding. • Address recruitment challenges.	• Regional Code of Practice for Ethical Recruitment. • Translate employment contracts. • PDO Guidelines. • Case Management Protocols. • Regional Economic Impact Assessment. • Sustainable Financing Facility
Institutional Strengthening & Coordination	• Strengthen LSUs and reintegration agencies. • Institutional financial support. • Streamline LSU processes. • Improve employer–LSU communication. • Reintegration needs assessments. • M&E and data systems	• Regional LSU–Employer Dialogue. • Regional LSU Capacity Assessment. • CLO Coordination Mechanism. • Support review/update of bilateral MOUs.
Ethical, Transparent & Effective Recruitment	• Promote ethical recruitment. • Address unfair fees and misleading info. • Cultural sensitivity training. • Improve welfare case coordination.	• Regional Code of Practice. • Contract translation. • Standardised PDO. • Case Management Protocols.
Reintegration, Skills Development & Recognition	• Skills recognition programmes. • MRAs with ANZ. • Recognise offshore skills. • Subsidised ANZ training. • Align skills training to Pacific needs. • Finance & entrepreneurship support. • Counselling & community reintegration. • Private-sector integration.	• Finalise Reintegration Guidelines. • National Reintegration Action Plans. • Regional Skills Recognition Framework. • Returning Worker Centres.
Worker Welfare, Wellbeing & Employer Engagement	• Employer medical clinics. • Preferred insurance & superannuation. • Strengthen employer welfare engagement. • Employers support reintegration & share skills data. • Employer role in upskilling.	• CLO Council. • Employer participation in upskilling & data sharing. • Better alignment of employer needs with Pacific development priorities.

PLMAM Employer Forum Outcome Statement

PLMAM 3-6 November | Honiara, Solomon Islands

1. The third PLMAM Employer Forum took place on day one of the 2025 PLMAM meeting, 3-6 November, with the theme “Sustainable reintegration begins with fair and effective recruitment”. The employer-only forum included 40 PALM and RSE employers and industry representatives who attended in person, and a small number of employers and industry representatives who attended online.
2. The forum began with a brief background to the origins of the one-day event and its purpose. Acknowledging employers’ central role in the success of the PALM and RSE schemes, the PACER Plus Implementation Unit (PPIU) seeks to continually enhance employer engagement in the annual PLMAM meetings and provide employers with the opportunity to participate in the strategic discussions and decision-making that occur during the four-day meeting.
3. The objectives of the workshop, as set out by the PPIU for PALM and RSE employers, were to:
 - i. Provide a status update on the 2024 Employer Forum outcomes.
 - ii. Discuss 1) worker recruitment and 2) reintegration challenges, priorities and proposed solutions.
 - iii. Consider how to strengthen employer-LSU partnerships.
 - iv. Discuss how the future value of PLMAM can be enhanced for employers.
 - v. Identify employers’ strategic priority actions for 2025-26.

Status update on progress towards 2024 employer commitments

4. PALM and RSE employers remain deeply committed to ongoing collaboration with sending country partners - including understanding their aspirations and challenges - to support the sustainable development of the PALM and RSE schemes and harness opportunities that improve the livelihoods of workers, their families and communities.
5. Representatives from Australia and New Zealand presented on their respective progress towards the 2024 employer commitments. Statements are attached in Appendices 1 and 2.
6. Commitments made by employers in this 2025 Outcome Statement are in addition to those made from the 2023 and 2024 Employer Forums. These include: a strong focus on supporting the health and wellbeing of PALM and RSE workers, fostering skills development, facilitating remittance transfers and access to superannuation, working in partnership with sending countries and employer-led initiatives (in receiving and/or sending countries) that align with sending countries’ development priorities.

Employer responses to worker recruitment challenges, priorities and proposed solutions

7. RSE employers
 - i. Reiterated that the employer-worker relationship is at the heart of the RSE scheme’s success and the centrality of this relationship needs to be continually reinforced.

- ii. Supported the Fair Recruitment for Pacific Labour Mobility principle no.3: “Fair, ethical and transparent recruitment” in the *General Guidance on Pacific Labour Mobility Worker Recruitment Processes*.
- iii. RSE employers noted the following **challenges** associated with worker recruitment:
 - Challenges around communication between LSUs and employers.
 - Issues around data sharing and data integrity.
 - Some LSUs lack consistent recruitment processes.
 - Recruitment processes need to be simplified.
 - RSE visa processing remains a major challenge as it is still paper-based. There is an urgent need for online visa processing to facilitate more efficient worker recruitment and mobilisation.
- iv. RSE employers **proposed** the *General Guidance on Pacific Labour Mobility Worker Recruitment Processes* should include stakeholder responsibilities and clear directions on implementation.
- v. RSE employers requested that the *General Guidance on Pacific Labour Mobility Worker Recruitment Processes* formally acknowledge the “triple win” nature of the RSE scheme among sending countries, receiving countries and employers, and recognise that shared recruitment costs may be permitted in limited and agreed circumstances under this framework.

8. PALM Approved Employers:

- i. Expressed broad support for the 13 draft Fair Recruitment Principles for Pacific Labour Mobility and requested more detailed guidance on how to implement them.
- ii. Highlighted that any recruitment of PALM workers must align with domestic visa policy settings, including the Department of Home Affairs’ criteria for Temporary Activities Sponsorship Agreement (TAS). This includes freedom of movement of PALM workers.
- iii. Requested tighter criteria for worker redeployments between PALM Approved Employers.
- iv. PALM AEs noted the following **challenges** associated with worker recruitment:
 - Employers need to have confidence in the transparency and fairness of the worker selection process.
 - Pre-departure briefings (PDBs) need to be revised and simplified. Those designing the training materials should involve employers in the creation of content e.g. on workplace conditions and job requirements. Return workers should also be drawn upon during PDBs to share their knowledge and experience with new recruits.
 - Ongoing issues with pre-existing medical conditions, medical screening and lack of consistency across countries in screening processes.
 - Persistent problems with mobilisation timeframes and delays, and the lack of clear guidance on LSU recruitment processes.
 - Reported that some LSUs now require Approved Employers to select new recruits from the work-ready pool and will not allow employers to re-recruit skilled, experienced workers.
 - Requested access to reliable, productive return workers and team leaders given Approved Employers’ investment in their on-the-job training and skill development.
 - Highlighted issues with data integrity and integration between the In-country Recruitment Databases (IRD) and PALMIS in Australia. Examples included: inconsistent

recording of data on individual workers, problems with document uploads and transfer from the IRD to PALMIS, and limited Approved Employer access to information contained in PALMIS.

- v. AEs **proposed** the following solutions:
 - That individual sending countries maintain clear, internally consistent and replicable processes for recruitment and mobilisation, and regularly update employers should any changes to these processes occur.
 - Better resourcing and training of LSU staff, including on the IRD and ensuring consistency of the data recorded in the system and shared with PALMIS.

Employer responses to reintegration challenges, priorities, proposed solutions

9. RSE employers:

- i. Noted RSE is a short-term, circular, seasonal scheme and endorsed Key Guideline no.4 in the draft *Guidelines on Pacific Sustainable Reintegration for Circular Labour Mobility*: “Reintegration is an integral part of the worker and family journey”, which includes consideration of a labour mobility exit strategy.
- ii. RSE employers noted the following **challenges** associated with reintegration:
 - There is no “one size fits all” approach for reintegration. Reintegration efforts need to balance sending countries’ strategic development priorities with workers’ needs and aspirations.
 - Reintegration is time and resource intensive. With limited funds available for reintegration efforts, activities should be targeted (“not all workers want to be entrepreneurs”).
 - There is a lack of clear and consistent LSU processes for worker recruitment and reintegration. For instance, some countries involve family members in PDBs and worker-family goal-setting activities while other countries do not.
- iii. RSE employers **proposed** the following solutions:
 - Conversations with workers about reintegration start at the pre-decision and recruitment stage.
 - Families and workers should set short- and longer-term goals for labour mobility participation and planning for their eventual return home.
 - Workers, with their RSE employer, should revisit their goals over successive seasons to help ensure that once immediate goals (e.g. building a house and/or paying for children’s education) have been met, they can plan for future goals.
 - Community engagement in reintegration is crucial to help empower local communities to achieve their development aspirations.

10. PALM Approved Employers:

- i. Welcomed the draft *Guidelines on Pacific Sustainable Reintegration for Circular Labour Mobility* and noted they provide a high-level regional framework, rather than a set of guidelines.
- ii. Acknowledged the importance of different worker return pathways, with short-term PALM workers on circular, seasonal contracts, and long-term PALM workers absent for several years. These different return pathways influence the types of reintegration support required.

- iii. Committed to surveying members of the Approved Employers of Australia (AEA) to find out what training is already provided to PALM workers and what skills are needed now, and in the future, especially in the context of technological advancements and automation in horticulture and other sectors.
- iv. Re-emphasised the need to be better informed of sending countries' priorities and expectations around skills development and reintegration.
- v. PALM Approved Employers raised the following **challenges** associated with reintegration:
 - PALM workers are employed, and gaining skills and experience, in sectors in Australia that do not exist in the workers' home country.
 - Barriers for skills training such as limitations for short-term PALM employers to provide leave and/or paid time off for worker training without impacting on business operations, and tensions between PALM policy and visa settings (i.e. low skilled occupations) and sending countries' desire to upskill.

Strengthening LSU-employer partnerships

11. PALM and RSE employers acknowledged:

- i. The importance of their role in the employer-LSU relationship and the need for employers to uphold their obligations. This includes ensuring recruitment is fair, ethical and transparent, employers communicate regularly and openly with LSUs, recruitment plans and associated processes are completed in a timely manner, PALM and RSE worker welfare remains paramount, and employers continue to uphold all PALM/RSE requirements as detailed in the PALM Deed and Guidelines and Immigration New Zealand Operations Manual.
- ii. The need for both schemes to be balanced, sustainable and mutually beneficial for sending and receiving countries. This requires ongoing commitment to fostering trusted relationships between key labour mobility stakeholders including employers and LSUs.
- iii. The need for clear, direct and timely communication between LSUs and employers on recruitment processes (including work-ready pool selection) and timeframes, changes to labour mobility policy settings in sending countries, country expectations, and unexpected events including natural disasters.

12. PALM and RSE employers **proposed** the establishment of direct forums between employers and individual sending countries to discuss processes, challenges and improvements to labour mobility administration. Employers suggested these forums could be held annually, bringing together employers who recruit from a specific sending country, to meet with the sending country labour mobility officials and other key stakeholders. These forums would be designed to promote open, honest dialogue, enable all parties to better understand each other's needs and constraints, and foster collaborative approaches to resolving issues and improving labour mobility outcomes for sending and receiving countries.

Enhancing the value of PLMAM for employers

13. Employers stated their strong interest in being informed of future funding arrangements from Australia and New Zealand for the Pacer Plus Implementation Unit and PLMAM.

14. RSE employers noted there are strategic issues to be considered during future PLMAMs. In particular, with increased adoption of technology and automation, some seasonal labour roles in New Zealand's horticulture sector will diminish in the next 10+ years. Different skills will be required to work in the highly mechanised environments of the future. The New Zealand government, RSE employers, industry groups, training providers and sending country officials should give careful consideration to what skills will be needed in future, and how the RSE scheme can be re-positioned from a low-skilled labour scheme, to a labour mobility program that can meet these skill needs.
15. PALM and RSE employers made the following suggestions on how to enhance the value of PLMAM:
- i. The majority of employers in the room felt biennial PLMAMs would be more beneficial. If PLMAM was held every second year, it would allow employers to a) have more time to meet the commitments made during the Employer Forum; and b) re-allocate financial resources spent on attending PLMAM to more direct engagement with individual sending countries.
 - ii. Employers noted that if employer-individual country forums were held in the intervening years, between PLMAM, the outcomes from those discussions could feed directly into the biennial PLMAMs.
 - iii. Employers noted government decision-makers need to be in the room at PLMAM to ensure employers can connect with those who can influence policy settings and processes.
 - iv. Employers emphasised the importance of continually strengthening RSE worker and employer voices at PLMAM, and fostering open, honest dialogue between key PALM and RSE stakeholders (i.e. workers, employers, sending and receiving country governments).
 - v. Country Liaison Officers play a major role in the PALM and RSE schemes and are key labour mobility stakeholders. They should all be included in PLMAM, and be invited to any domestic forums (online or in person) to connect with employers.
 - vi. LSUs should give short presentations at each PLMAM providing an update on country priorities, recent LSU experiences and providing information on any changes to sending country policy settings and/or processes.
 - vii. Employers made two suggestions regarding Day 4 of PLMAM: 1) the Employer Forum could be hosted on Day 4 to enable employers to respond to the content and discussions of the main meeting; and 2) an LSU-employer workshop could be held on Day 4, enabling employers to strengthen dialogue with their key labour mobility partners.

Priority actions for 2025-26

16. PALM and RSE employers' **joint priorities** for 2025-26 are to:
- i. Continue to ensure worker recruitment is ethical, sustainable and transparent.
 - ii. Commit to strong, collaborative partnerships with LSUs to better understand their needs and how best to work in partnership to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.
 - iii. Commit to regularly meeting with sending countries in employer-LSU forums for face-to-face dialogue and to foster trusted relationships.
 - iv. Support the ongoing collection of robust data to enable informed evidence-based decisions to be made by employers, sending and receiving countries.

Appendix One

2025 PLMAM Employer Forum Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme Update on 2023/24 PLMAM Employer Commitments

The 2024 PLMAM Employer Forum brought over 100 Recognised Seasonal Employer and Pacific Annual Labour Mobility employers for a closed-door session to deliberate on two key areas: (1) Guiding Principles on Pacific Labour Mobility Worker Wellbeing, and (2) Pacific Skills Mobility Partnership.

During the Forum, RSE employers aligned on strategic priorities to strengthen collaboration and policy dialogue. Employers acknowledged the PPIU Worker Wellbeing Guiding Principles through initiatives like Ola Manuia, while calling for clearer roles, impactful partnerships with Pacific sending countries, and greater reintegration support. On skills mobility, they stressed the importance of training that reflects national goals and worker aspirations, and better recognition systems and preparation for evolving labour market demands.

Strategic Priorities for 2025

RSE employers continue to engage and improve their relationships and collaboration with Pacific sending nations and government agencies promoting impactful collaboration. The following provide some work that have been undertaken in support of employer 2024 commitments.

1. Working collaboratively with labour mobility stakeholders and agencies to facilitate positive worker and employer wellbeing outcomes and skills development opportunities.

Wellbeing Initiatives

Many RSE employers continue to carry out initiatives that align with the Ola Manuia Framework as part of their day-to-day operations.

- The satellite RSE health clinic, a partnership between T&G, Hastings Health Centre, and Orbit-Protect, completed its second season to deliver accessible and effective RSE health and wellbeing services for RSE workers. Following 666 consultations in its first year, company utilisation of the clinic increased significantly in its second season with a total of 1,900 workers from 29 different employers accessing services. A reflection of strong sector-wide engagement and recognition of the clinic's value supporting work health and wellbeing.
- Following 666 consultations in its first year, the clinic expanded its hours and opened earlier to better align with worker arrivals and harvest timelines.
- Multiple employers across New Zealand have already opened onsite medical clinics and more are scheduled to open in the next 12 months across the regions.
- Collaboration between employers and health services - Measels, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccinations were administered to approximately 2,400 RSE workers from Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The MMR vaccination initiative for RSE workers from 2024 to April 2025 was led by Health New Zealand, Te Whatu Ora, with the support from Pacific Health.
- Regional Labour Governance Group continue to engage with health professionals.
- Industry Pastoral Care Forum – The Pastoral Care Forum was created in 2023 and set up to provide a safe, collaborative space for RSE employers to share valuable pastoral care information, address challenges, and develop practical, evolving solutions that support worker wellbeing and ensure the ongoing success of the RSE programme.

- The Puataunofo under Work Safe New Zealand initiated the ‘Come Home Safely’ programme as a culturally responsive initiative to improve health and safety awareness among RSE workers. They developed resources such as videos, interactive presentations and posters to inform workers and businesses on safer ways to undertake everyday work, from wearing PPE, to health and safety hygiene, and checking for risks. The posters are available in 13 languages. Employers engage with Puataunofo team to provide trainings for workers.

RSE Worker Skills Development

- *The RSE Worker Training Programme* provider – NOA Village of Learning has delivered 23 courses to over 500 Pacific RSE workers since April 2025.
- *RSE Skills Recognition* - employers have collaborated with Muka Tangata (the Workforce Development Council for Primary Industries) to align onshore training with NZQA standards, helping workers gain formal recognition for skills acquired during their RSE placements. Pilot project with Vanuatu, Samoa and Tuvalu.
- In partnership with training providers and sending country representatives, some employers have piloted region-specific training modules that reflect both national development goals and individual worker aspirations. The Regional Agricultural Training centres that are part of the Hortus/ Solomon Islands reintegration program is another example of this.
- Sending countries are demonstrating commitment to providing resources and expertise to upskill their people – a common development goal in sending nations at present is to utilise their land and retrain agricultural skills – which are being lost between generations of farmers due to labour mobility, i.e. they mobilise, then stay in sending port – never to go back to original provinces to learn grower skills and knowledge is being lost between generations. Farms are moving from commercial to subsistence over time because of lack of manpower and knowledge. Govt’s want to change back to commercial farming. The Hortus/ Vanuatu reintegration program is a prime example of this

2. Support the collection of robust data to enable informed decisions to be made by employers as well as sending and receiving countries. This recognises the need for timely data to enable relevant parties to manage internal and external risks to the scheme.

The main challenge with data access for RSE employers is the lack of a centralized, timely, and transparent data-sharing system across sending and receiving countries.

Employers face ongoing challenges accessing timely and consistent data from sending countries and government agencies, which limits informed decision-making and increases operational risk.

In the absence of a coordinated system, multiple agencies often conduct their own surveys on the RSE programme, with little alignment or data sharing between stakeholders. This fragmented approach results in inconsistent insights, duplicated efforts, and decisions based more on discretion than on robust, shared evidence. A collaborative and regular data collection framework is urgently needed to support informed, aligned decision-making across key stakeholders.

3. Actively engage in forums for sending and receiving countries to share challenges and priorities to enable solution-based reciprocal outcomes. For example, MFAT and MBIE to organise regular sending country-specific forums with RSE employers

The 2025 Annual RSE Conference brought together over 120 employers and 60 labour sending country representatives to discuss shared challenges and strengthen collaboration for a sustainable and effective RSE scheme. Key themes included worker wellbeing, recruitment delays, and communication

gaps. Practical, feasible solutions including increased collaboration between LSUs and employers, improving data sharing, understanding expectations, mental health etc.

- Whānau Moana Nui is industry led two-year pilot, groups including four Pacific countries and eight employers co-design and develop an assurance programme that demonstrates ethical and sustainable practices and fit for purpose. Now in phase 2, refining standards to align with a point system and continue to engage with employers and Pacific on the implementation and assessment.
- Country Liaison Officers and Pacific representatives participate at Regional Labour Governance meetings. These efforts aim to support CLOs understand operational issues relating to RSE processes, strengthen communication and responsiveness between employers and sending countries.
- Employers working closely with local 'hapu' and 'iwi' and Pacific communities hold powhiri to welcome their Pacific workers.
- Development of resources i.e., RSE country information booklets for seven of the Pacific sending countries.

4. Encourage Government to continue to support an employer-led scheme.

- MBIE accommodation working group – tripartite approach with government, employers and Pacific representatives to deliberate on what is best practice for employers and workers.
- Development of the Cultural Awareness Framework – MBIE led initiative. Centre of Pacific Languages commissioned to develop the framework which included engagement with Pacific sending representatives, employers, workers and wider RSE community.

Challenges

1. Policy and Implementation Delays

The delayed review of the RSE policy creates uncertainty and hinders the ability of employers to plan its workforce and making it difficult for employers to better support workers' pre and post arrival.

2. Lack of Clear Reintegration Direction

Equal access to direction and/or guidance from Pacific governments on reintegration priorities, making it difficult to support workers' transition back home in a meaningful and coordinated way.

3. Limited Communication and Transparency

Inconsistent or unclear communication around visa settings and procedural changes from Pacific partners has disrupted operational planning and strained efforts to align with evolving expectations.

Conclusion

To overcome current challenges and foster impactful relationships across Pacific sending nations and RSE employers, there needs to be a call for timely policy reviews (both sending and receiving countries), clearer reintegration priorities from sending countries and pathways to support worker and Labour Sending Units (LSU) expectations, and improved coordination around worker wellness and training initiatives.

Strengthening communication and transparency between LSUs and employers, particularly around visa settings and procedural changes. This is essential for effective planning and cost efficiency.

RSE employers also emphasize the importance of better collaboration with Pacific partners to better understand their priorities. This includes clearer recruitment and selection processes, reintegration strategies, training goals, and consistent and coordinated communication on policy and visa matters.

By fostering a coordinated regional platform, key stakeholders can more effectively navigate challenges, support worker aspirations, and build a resilient, future-focused RSE scheme for New Zealand, Pacific sending countries, and Timor-Leste. This approach respects and preserves the unique nature of the RSE scheme for New Zealand employers.

Appendix Two

Approved Employers of Australia, PLMAM Background Discussion Document 2025

PLMAM Conference 11-14 November 2024

The 2023 PLMAM forum was the first event bringing Australian and New Zealand employers together to discuss priority issues and measures to address them which is in itself a very important milestone. Under the theme of “Harnessing the development benefits of labour mobility” a joint Australian and New Zealand employer-only forum was held, with in-person and online participation. This initiative by Pacer Plus acknowledged the central role that employers play in the success of the PALM and RSE schemes, and provide employers with the opportunity to participate more fully in the strategic discussions and decision-making that occurs at the annual meeting. At this forum, PALM and RSE employers committed to the following in 2023:

Reiteration of PALM employers’ commitments to sending countries

- Employers recognise the commitment and sacrifice that workers, their families and communities make when workers move temporarily to Australia and New Zealand for employment which not only supports the prosperity of individual employers’ enterprises, but also contributes to wider industry, community, and regional growth and to the establishment of vibrant local communities in receiving countries.
- Employers acknowledge that it is a privilege to be involved in the PALM and RSE schemes.
- Employers highlight that employer-employee relationships are at the heart of the PALM and RSE schemes and fostering these relationships is integral to the success of both schemes.
- Employers commit to strengthening direct relationships with sending countries by nurturing greater trust and transparency.
- Employers commit to addressing short-term and longer-term priorities of sending countries as agreed by the parties.
- Employers commit to ensuring that Pacific countries and Timor-Leste remain countries of choice for labour mobility in Australia and New Zealand.

The fact that the RSE Scheme has increased its cap to 20,750, and the PALM Scheme has 30,805 workers in Australia, suggests that both schemes are operating successfully. However, both schemes are experiencing common challenges which need to be addressed in a collaborative, constructive manner to ensure the long-term viability of both schemes are maintained.

Employer focus and actions for the next 12 months (November 2023-November 2024)

Employers committed to demonstrating progress towards the below commitments at PLMAM 2024:

- Working to develop broad-based recruitment strategies that meet the goals of sending countries and communities.
- Supporting the development of appropriate skills for workers that meet the needs of employers while also being of direct benefit to workers, their families, and communities, and that are of value to sending countries.
- Addressing the barriers to sending of remittances and access to superannuation to maximise income to workers’ families and communities.
- Supporting and working in partnership with the PPIU, wider Pacific and Timor-Leste family and international agencies to develop and implement the reintegration framework proposed at PLMAM 2023, with employers playing an active role in this process.

- Employers commit to social and cultural support of workers while in Australia and New Zealand. This includes pastoral care, worker health, and wellbeing, while acknowledging any support should meet the needs and expectations of the workers themselves.
- Employers reaffirm recommendation 36(ii) from the 2022 PLMAM Outcome Statement as a priority activity for FY 2023/24: “Development of a cultural framework to assist employers to increase their understanding of cultural differences and support collaborative and respectful relationships and professional behaviours between employers and workers.”

In reflecting on progress of the employer focus and actions over the past 12 months, it is important to acknowledge a range of external (to the Scheme) factors and challenges that impact on employers engaged in Pacific mobility, some of these factors include:

- The geopolitical importance of the Pacific.
- Labour costs to produce manufactured products, particularly within the agriculture sector have risen significantly in Australia. This has placed increasing pressure on employer sustainability.
- Climate change is the biggest priority in the Pacific. Unfortunately, this is not an issue that the RSE or PALM Schemes can fix.
- Employers operate in a very complex regulatory framework making compliance challenging. This exposes employers to financial and operational risk when participating in the PALM Scheme.

Employers remain committed to the Scheme and acknowledge that to protect the long-term integrity of PALM (and the RSE scheme), it is important to ensure we have productive, reliable, returning workforces. This should be achieved by strengthening our relationships with the Pacific and Timor Leste by ensuring the Scheme is balanced, mutually beneficial and based on trust.

PLMAM Conference 11-14 November 2024

This is the second year that PALM & RSE AEs can have their say on some of the challenges that employers face, including with policy settings, and that require further consideration.

Key focus areas:

1. Employer focus and actions for the past 12 months:

(i) Recruitment Plans: The PALM Scheme has a lot more detail in the Recruitment Plan and Offer of Employment. The challenge is that workers still lack a good understanding of the requirements prior to arrival in the host country. The Pacific is not transactional but based on relationships and simplified messaging. We need to consider more practical ways to communicate with Pacific families and villages earlier in the recruitment process to ensure better preparedness and understanding of employment arrangements.

(ii) Skills development: Employers acknowledge the importance of developing formal and informal skills among Pacific and Timor Leste workers. To ensure that employers are supporting targeted skills development, it is important that there is clear communication of skill development priorities from the Pacific; skills must meet the expectations of the Pacific and support worker reintegration in their home countries. Challenges that will need to be addressed in skills development will likely include tensions around visa requirements (skill levels), availability, and ability to access suitable training relevant to reintegration based on current industries within the program and importantly understanding worker voice in terms of what training would be of use to them. A one-size fits all

approach will not be suitable for skills development, and understanding opportunities and challenges from all stakeholders will be key to improving skills development outcomes.

(iii) Remittance and Superannuation barriers: The issue of remittances needs to be addressed early in the recruitment process. Expectations from family and friends to send remittances home can be very onerous and stressful for workers. With regards to Superannuation, a lot has been discussed on numerous occasions, but limited changes made as it is a legislative issue with the Australian Government. The AEA has lobbied extensively on this issue and submitted a joint report with the AWU to government outlining changes and reforms required.

How to increase value of the Employer Forum – feedback from the 2024 Forum participants

- Need to further strengthen the employer voice at PLMAM, especially as employers are integral to the success of the PALM and RSE schemes.
- Request greater two-way dialogue between employers and sending countries to discuss priority issues. Need for better two-way engagement, rather than only employers stating their commitments.
- Suggested splitting the Forum into operational and strategic sessions to enable more targeted discussions.
- Employers support the idea of hosting country-specific forums to enable direct dialogue between employers and sending country governments (e.g. could address country-specific welfare issues, or skills development priorities).
- PALM Approved Employers suggested DEWR and DFAT officials be invited to an Employer Forum to hear employers' views.
- Employers expressed concerns about trying to tackle the “hard” issues with the Pacific as individual employers. Welcome further efforts to create a collective employer voice.
- Questioned when best to host the Employer Forum during PLMAM (e.g. could consider “bookending” PLMAM with a half-day session for employers on day one and a half-day session at the conclusion of PLMAM. That would allow employers to respond to the discussions held during the main PLMAM sessions).

PLMAM Conference 3-6 November 2025

The benefits of the PALM Scheme since the start of the pilot in 2012 are well documented, viz. the scheme was developed to meet Australia's seasonal workforce needs and migration objectives. Access to a reliable, productive, returning workforce positively influences Australian employer participation in the PALM Scheme. The PALM scheme has also benefitted the Pacific countries and Timor Leste economically (contribution to GDP is significant in many countries) and assisted families and communities in building houses, churches, educating their children and improving soft and hard skills. We are striving to build on our commitment to support our Pacific and Timor Leste neighbours. We therefore need to work harmoniously and collaboratively to ensure the PALM Scheme which is the corner stone of many key sectors in Australia, is balanced, mutually beneficial and sustainable in the long-term.

The AEA conducted a survey of over 40 employers recently, representing over 12,000 workers. It is important to emphasise some of the key employer findings when dealing with the PALM Scheme as a basis for the discussion:

Question	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Access to workers when required	26%	14%	60%
Administrative burden of the PALM Scheme	80%	14%	6%
Cost effectiveness of the PALM Scheme for business	57%	23%	20%
PALM supports workforce planning	20%	17%	63%
Securing returning workers when requested	14%	9%	77%
Benefits of PALM outweigh effort	20%	34%	46%
Positive effect of PALM scheme on business	9%	23%	69%
LSUs communicate clearly through the recruitment process	36%	21%	42%
Workers are well prepared on arrival	31%	47%	22%
Responsiveness of LSUs when issues arise	24%	33%	42%
CLOs help resolve PALM issues	42%	39%	19%
CLOs provide meaningful support to employers & workers	41%	41%	19%

Question	Highly suitable	Generally suitable	Not suitable
Suitability of face-to-face meetings every 2 weeks	7%	52%	41%
Suitability of mandated cultural competency training	3%	27%	70%
	Highly effective	Somewhat effective	Not effective
Effectiveness of face-to face meetings resolving issues	17%	34%	48%
Effectiveness of cultural competency training (helping engage with workers)	3%	37%	60%

A total of 17% of the employers said they would expand the PALM scheme, 53% maintain, 27% reduce and 3% exist the scheme. The key challenges for future participation in PALM include:

Question	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
Future of the PALM Scheme	Administrative workload (77%)	Cost of the program versus benefit (40%); Uncertainty about requirements for the future (40%); Unrecoverable costs (40%)	Difficulty meeting compliance and audit requirements (27%)
Factors positively influencing future participation	Strong worker performance (50%)	Reduction in the schemes cost (47%)	Reliable access to workers (43%)

(i) Recruitment challenges and priorities of PALM and RSE Employers:

In preparation for the employer presentation on Day 2 Session 2, employers are to discuss the primary challenges relating to worker recruitment and proposed priority solutions.

The AEA would like to explore best practice recruitment strategies to ensure we select the right people for the position and ensure that they are better prepared on arrival in Australia. This together with good family and village support remains a priority. The reasons for this can be attributed to the following challenges:

- Different recruitment models need to be followed in the various sending countries, viz. Work Ready pools, provincial work ready pool (PNG), agents, direct, or a combination of models.
- Workers are not properly prepared for their arrival in Australia. The OOE is very detailed, complex, and difficult to understand due to English being their second language. We need to simplify the pre-departure briefing and start the process with workers, families, and communities, earlier.
- We need to select workers that are suitable for the position.
- Employers, LMUs, families and village communities need to play a much greater role. Employers need to place more emphasis on the assessment and recruitment of workers in collaboration with key stakeholders. This should minimise social issues and address issues when they go wrong.
- Families and villages need to endorse workers participating in the PALM Scheme. A database of family names and contact details will be very useful.
- Pre-existing medical or serious injuries need to be identified prior to departure.
- Each countries policies and processes need to be clear so employers can manage expectations.
- Absconding workers and poor behaviour impact on the reputation of the country, PALM Scheme, and employers' business. We need to jointly address these issues.
- It is important for the sending countries to have sufficient resources that are trained, have the right equipment and internet connectivity.
- We would like to discuss and share ideas of how we can jointly provide better support before, during and after employment to ensure the welfare of workers is optimal and in a culturally sensitive way. The big challenge is when things go wrong, e.g. serious medical issues or criminal offenses. We need to discuss ideas of how to escalate these issues quickly and in a culturally appropriate manner.

(ii) Reintegration challenges and priorities of PALM Employers:

In preparation for the employer presentation on Day 3 Session 5, employers are to discuss the primary challenges relating to reintegration and proposed priority solutions

This is a high priority for countries participating in the PALM Scheme. It is important to discuss training that employers already provide employees, so we can explore how best these skills can be utilised in their home country. We also need to identify gaps and training options for the reintegration of workers to ensure a skills dividend or better economic outcome for the home country (person works for a commercial company, start their own business, employ locals, etc.). We also need to ensure to ask the worker what they would like to do and not just what the country wants. AEs can provide mentorship to workers they identify as suitable candidates (productive with the right attitude) and prepare them for reintegration in horticultural production.

Opportunities to support small scale livestock production and butchering in countries also require further investigation. Similarly, there may be opportunity to support the expansion of chicken and egg production, sugar production, and fruit and vegetable production - appropriate to the individual country requirements, agronomy, and markets.

(iii) Building effective partnership between LSUs and Employers

In preparation for the employer presentation on Day 2 Session 3, employers are to discuss challenges and proposed solutions for building the partnership between LSUs and Employers. This discussion aims to address the need for shared responsibility and cooperation to achieve the mutual benefits of labour mobility.

It is important to build an effective partnership between the sending countries and employers as we are grateful for the opportunity to provide work opportunities for their citizens and meet our workforce needs. Sending countries want their citizens to maximise the work opportunities and their welfare and wellbeing looked after. Employers want productive, reliable, returning workers.

An effective partnership needs to be built on trust and transparency. This can be achieved by:

- Employers recruiting workers in country and building relationships with the workers, families, sending country, and government agencies.
- Recruiting in accordance with the LSU/LMU process (not outside the system).
- Sending countries need to clearly identify their policies and procedures so employers can commit to these requirements.
- We need evidence of issues to ensure effective problem solving.
- Regularly communicate with employers and workers to ensure the recruitment, mobilisation and reintegration process goes according to plan.
- Jointly put escalation processes in place to deal with issues in a culturally sensitive way, when things go wrong, such as death of a worker/family member, serious medical, or criminal issues, etc.
- Set up a database on what training workers have received and how these skills can be utilised. Identify gaps and training options for the reintegration of workers.
- Sending country and employer to review what worked well and what did not after each mobilisation to ensure continuous improvement.

Evaluation of PLMAM and the Employer Forum and how they can be made more effective.

The 2023 PLMAM forum was the first event bringing Australian and New Zealand employers together to discuss priority issues and measures to address them which is in itself a very important milestone that needs to be built on. To make PLMAM more effective it is important to consider the following:

- Employers need to be well represented to assist with resolving issues and making improvements to PALM that are practical and implementable.
- The PALM scheme needs to be balanced, mutually beneficial and sustainable in the long-term.
- The strategic direction of the PALM sending countries needs to be clearly outlined and incorporated in the discussion.
- Call for agenda items from the key stakeholders and identify any topics for discussion that will add value, e.g. research, surveys, etc.
- Ensure we get the right players in the room to identify and discuss priority issues affecting the PALM Scheme (avoid a grievance session) so we can move the program forward.
- CLOs play a very important role in the PALM Scheme and should be included in the discussion.
- We need space for implementing priorities and reporting back on its success or areas of improvement. After each meeting, summarise the priorities and outcomes agreed to.
- The Sending countries and employer discussions need to be strengthened.
- Due to the number of challenges, we are currently faced with in the PALM Scheme, hold individual LSU meetings annually and hold PLMAM every few years.