

Pacific Labour Facility (PLF) Reflections 2018-2023

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Australian Government



What is the Pacific Labour Facility?

- The Pacific Labour Facility (PLF) is an Australian Government initiative, managed by Palladium since 2018.
- The PLF was designed to support the Pacific Labour Scheme (now the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme - Long).
- PLF was explicitly designed with a strong emphasis on development outcomes including GEDSI.
- The PLS, now PALM scheme, allows eligible Australian Approved Employers (AEs) to hire workers from 9 Pacific islands and Timor-Leste when there is not enough labour available in rural and regional parts of Australia.
- The PLF is due for completion in December 2023.
- Its implementation has been defined by extraordinary growth, evolution, disruption and change.



Fiji



Kiribati



Nauru



Papua New Guinea



Samoa



Solomon Islands



Timor-Leste



Tonga



Tuvalu



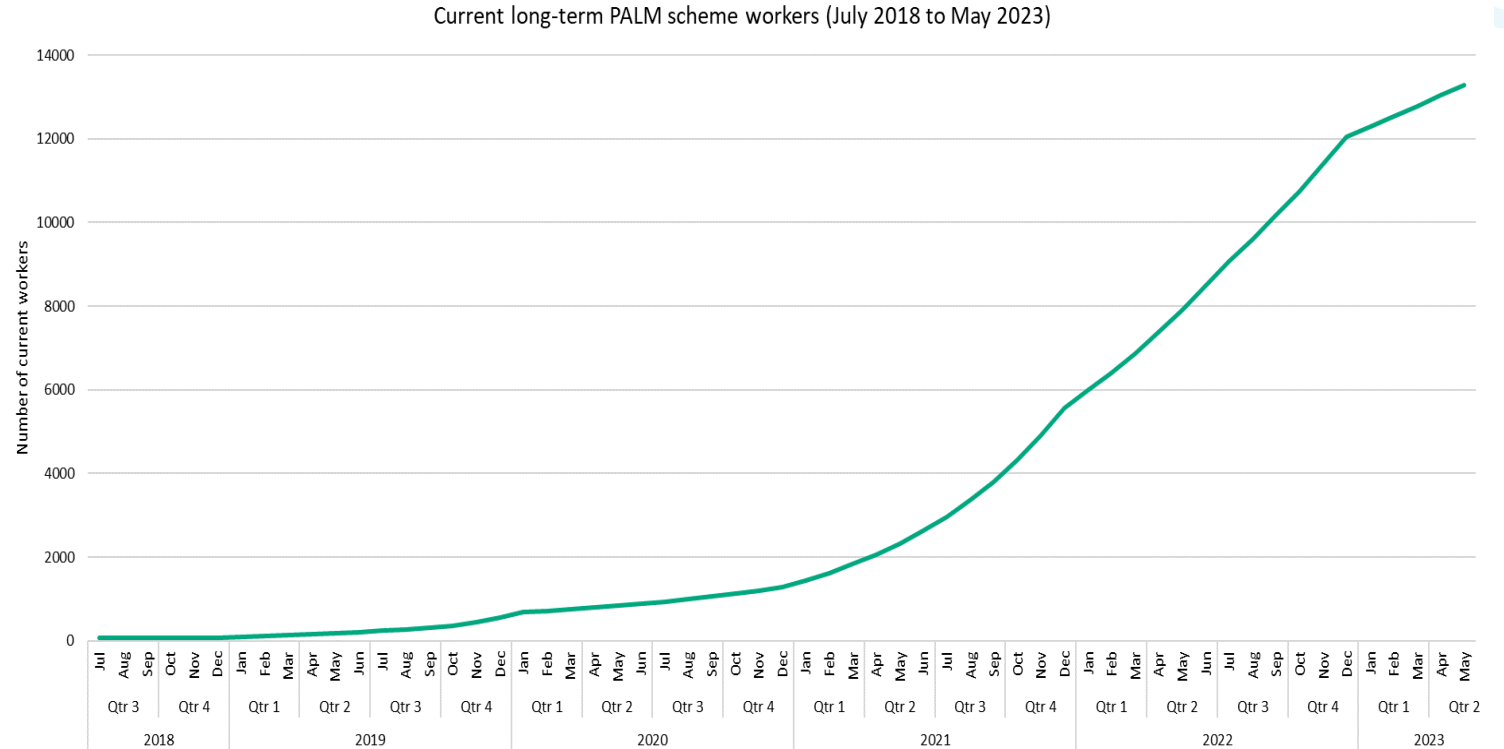
Vanuatu

What does the Pacific Labour Facility do?

Pacific & Timor Leste Engagement	Worker & Employer Support Services (WESS)	Australia Engagement	Quality Learning and Performance	IT	Communications	Assurance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSU Capacity Development • Fiji • Kiribati • Nauru • Papua New Guinea • Samoa • Solomon Islands • Timor-Leste • Tonga • Tuvalu • Vanuatu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pacific Australia Labour Mobility scheme (PALM) support service • Employer application assessment and onboarding • Recruitment assessment and approval • Mobilisation and redeployment • Accommodation review • Worker support and critical incident management • Skills development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer relationship management • Community engagement • Country liaison officer coordination • Stakeholder engagement • Community of care networks • Media engagement • Cultural competency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social research & research coordination • Economic and quantitative analysis • Gender and social inclusion • Disability inclusion • Reintegration and returning worker coordination • Monitoring and evaluation • Program learning & knowledge sharing • Annual planning and reporting • Indigenous engagement coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology strategy • Management information system (MIS) development • MIS implementation • PALM transition • PALMIS (Pacific Australia Labour Mobility information system) portals • In-country recruitment database (IRD) • IT operations support • Product licencing • Service mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media monitoring • Content gathering • Product development • Knowledge and learning • Website management • Stakeholder engagement • Pacific communications • Internal communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer investigations • Compliance monitoring and reporting • Grievance management and issue resolution • Complex case management • Pay and conditions reviews • Cap reviews • Employer risk assessment • Monitoring activities (visits, accommodation audits, thematic audits)

Unexpected growth is complex to manage

- When the PLF started, the program placed significant emphasis on stimulating demand for the PLS.
- COVID-19, Australian border closures and rapid industry adoption of the scheme in 21/22, saw a huge, unexpected increase in worker numbers.
- PLF adjusted its support model to reflect this scaling, shifting from service delivery to a market intermediary model.
- In practice this included moving from a worker case management model to working increasingly through AEs and the broader community of care.
- Growth is a testament of the value that AEs place in PALM scheme workers and the successful commitment of all involved in the scheme.
- Growth also stretched the capabilities of all parties involved and the full impacts of this growth are still emerging and complex.



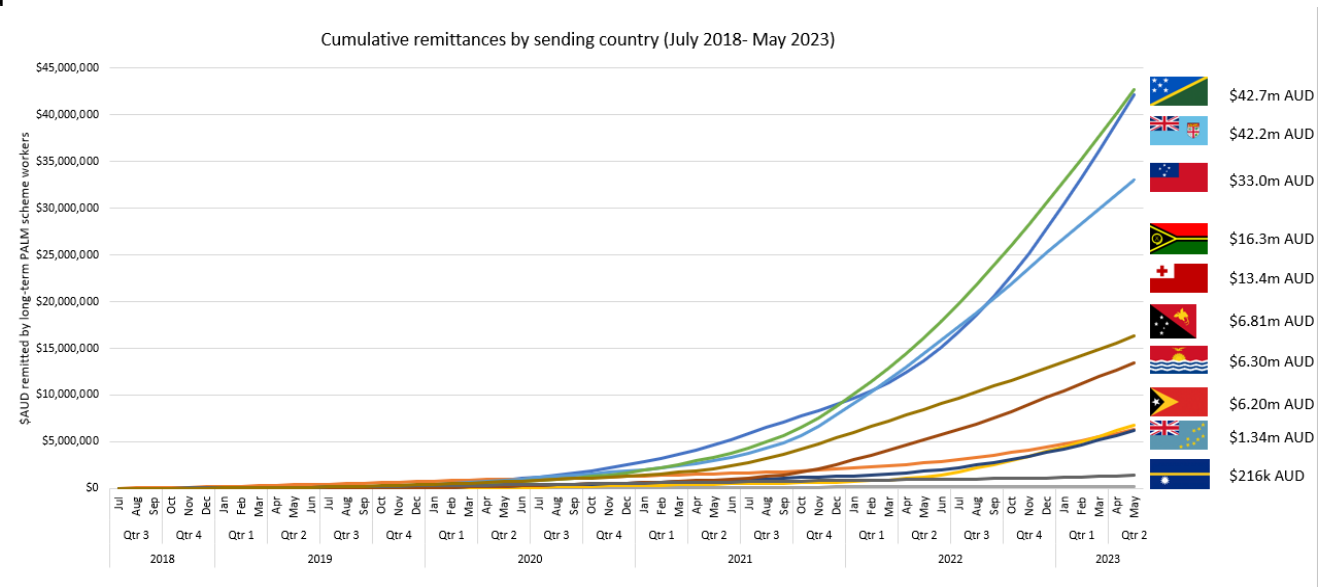
Labour market and industry analysis can only take you so far

- The emergence of Meat and Meat Product Manufacturing as the largest industry under the PALM scheme – Long was not expected at the outset of the PLF.
- PLF undertook extensive labour market analysis designed to better understand scheme growth and alignment with Pacific government and labour market interest.
- Meat processing emerged independent of this, with huge growth facilitated by a small number of Labour Hire Companies who identified the scheme as the labour force solution for the industry.
- Other industries with large opportunities for growth looking to engage with the PALM scheme have, and will, require more tailored engagement.
- For example, Aged Care growth has been constrained by formal skills requirements and tight margins.
- The Aged Care Expansion (ACE) project is working with AEs to test new mechanisms to train PALM workers.



An evolving understanding of scheme sustainability

- Sustainability has been core to the PLFs approach since program inception.
- Sustainability originally thought of in terms of driving alignment between the costs (of involvement in the scheme) and the benefits, based on achieving a level playing field for participants (i.e. workers and approved employers).
- Since then the benefits to key stakeholders have been significant; remittances, employer profits and Australian income tax revenue have all increased.
- Some functions have transitioned from PLF direct delivery to other stakeholders in line with this thinking.
- However in the case of Pacific Government involvement in the scheme, the idea of alignment between who pays/ who benefits is far less clear cut than we originally thought.
- More importantly, sustainability is now about the long-term success of the scheme and how we balance the positive and negative impacts, including how we mitigate the negative social and economic consequences
- What has been required and continues to be required is a collective effort to manage worker disengagement, family separation, violence, substance abuse and exploitation.



Technology is an essential tool, when supported by effective engagement and relationships

- The creation of an end-to-end technology platform, has been a cornerstone of PLF's work.
- The PALMIS and In country Recruitment Database (IRD) form the backbone of PLF, and increasingly LSU, and soon AE business processes.
- They provide integrity, efficiency and connectivity, to the scheme but also support scalability.
- The IRD supports worker self registration, centralised management of worker data as well as allowing LSUs to get updates on workers once they are mobilised.
- The IRD is implemented in 6 countries (+ Kiribati and PNG), there are over 150,000 registered candidates and over 400 users (LSU staff and agents), covering not only the PALM scheme but also other LM programs.
- Uptake and buy-in of technology platforms has only been possible due to the partnerships that PLF has created with sending countries.
- PLF has focused time and energy on communicating the principles, user benefits and Pacific ownership of the IRD.

