

# Recognised Seasonal Employer: reflecting on the first two seasons

Making Pacific migration work: Australian and New Zealand  
experiences

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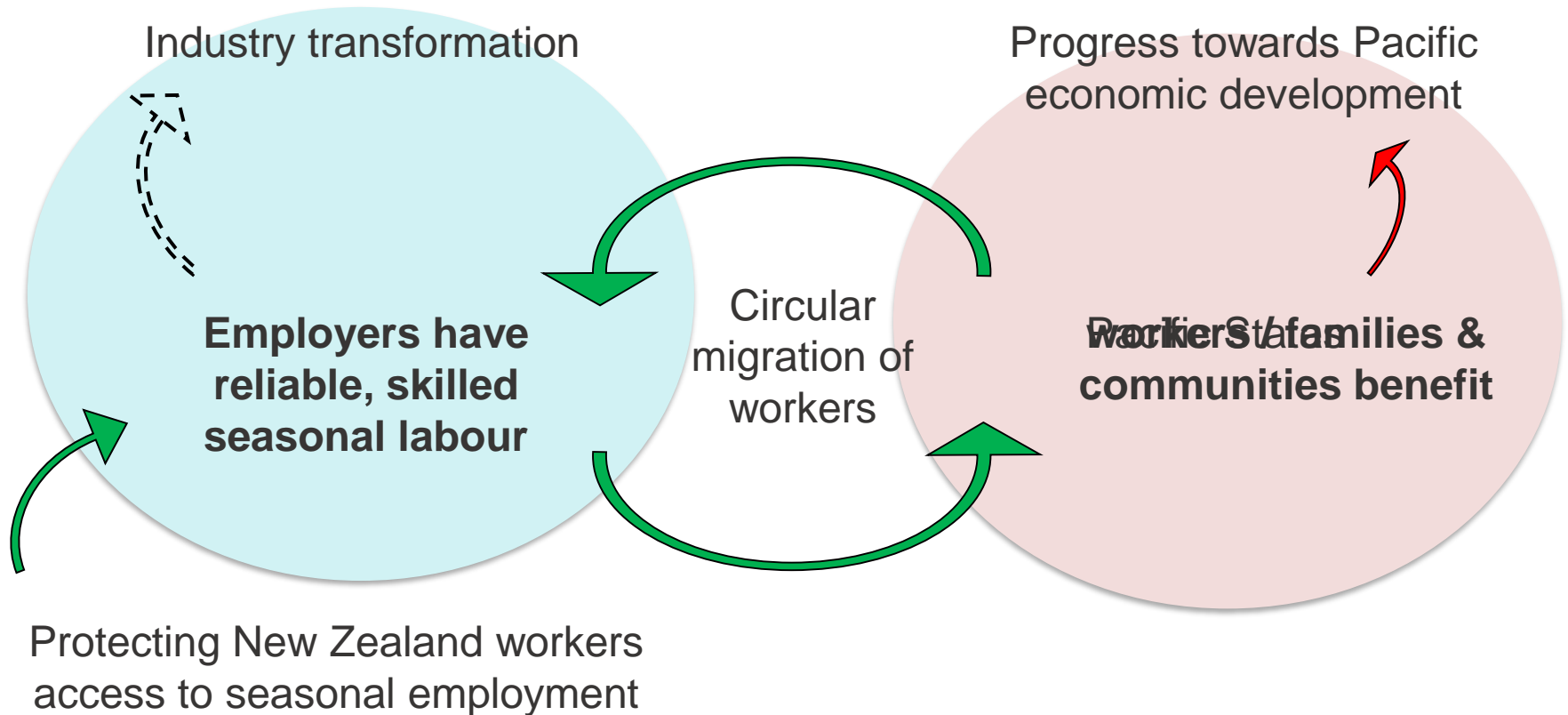
# Context for implementing the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) policy

- Labour supply shortfall identified as a risk to development of horticulture and viticulture industries in NZ
- Pressure from Pacific governments to allow Pacific citizens greater access to NZ and Australian labour markets

# Key aspects of RSE policy

- Inter-agency understandings between Pacific governments and NZ Department of Labour
- Employer recognition
- New Zealanders' first principle
- Employer-driven
- Short-term, circular migration
- Pastoral care

# RSE policy aims



# RSE evaluation – some of the team



Interviews with  
workers, employers,  
NZ & Pacific officials,  
others

Online survey of  
employers

Analysis of DoL  
administrative data

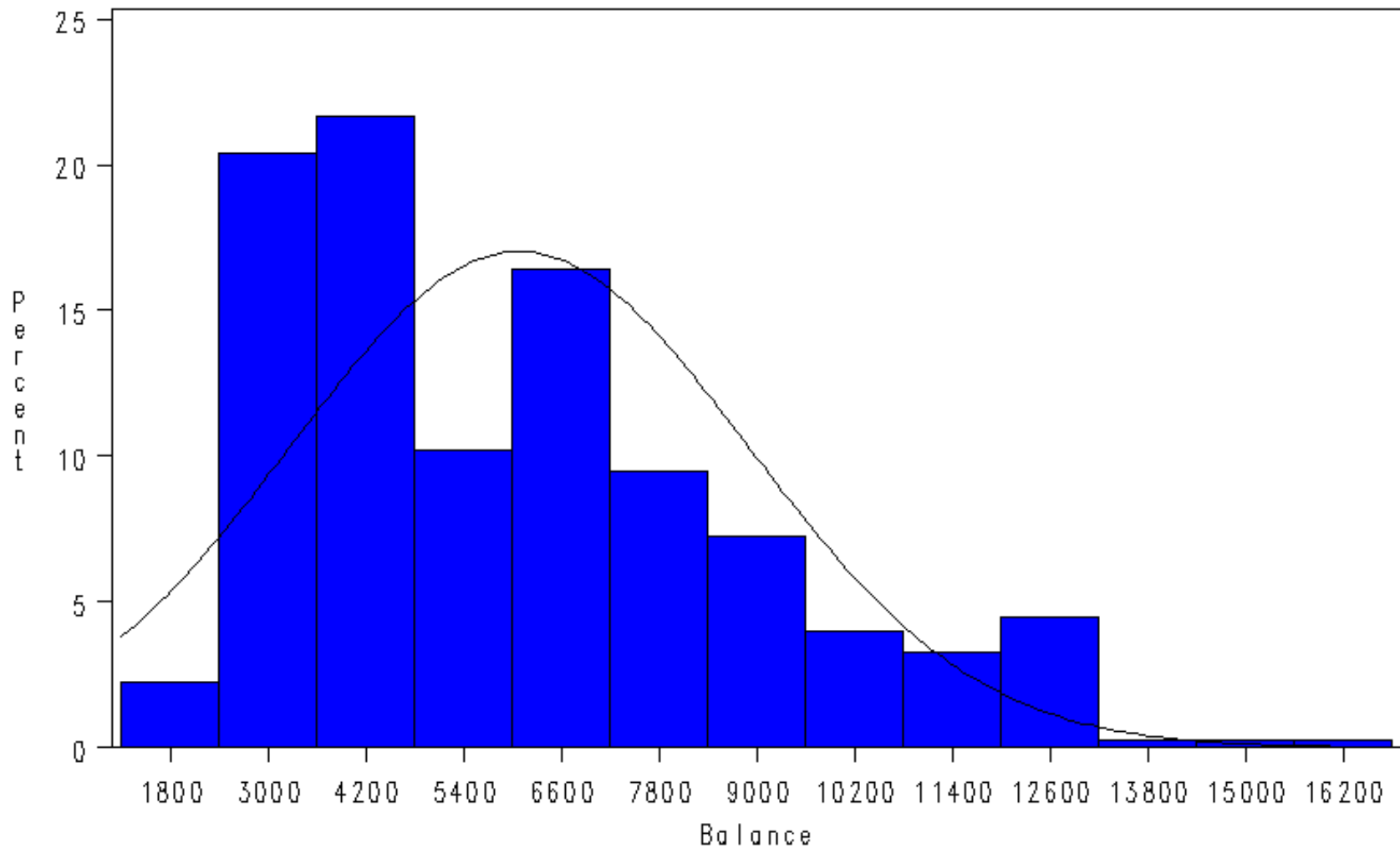
Review of policy  
documents

# Results for employers

*For the first time the fruit was picked on time and at the right time across all the industries.... (Industry leader)*

- Better quality produce
- 85% of RSE employers said they had better and more productive workers during the 2<sup>nd</sup> season

# Results for workers



Mean	6079.063	Maximum	16413.23	Minimum	1703.548
Number of Obs	402	Lower Quartile	3707.16	Median	5624.871
Upper Quartile	7778.899	— Normal			



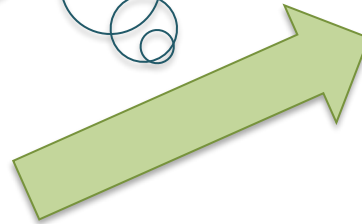
## **New skills**

including time management, improved work ethic and increased competency in English language

What are the mechanisms of change?

Results

Activities /  
processes



# Mechanisms to minimise workers overstaying

<b><i>Regulatory</i></b>	Limited purpose visa of 7 months in any 11 month period so workers retain links to their home country.
<b><i>Re-employment incentive</i></b>	Workers able to return if they meet certain criteria.  Guaranteed 240 hours work
<b><i>Financial incentive</i></b>	Travel costs shared with employer
<b><i>Facilitative approach</i></b>	Immigration officers aim to address problems through early intervention
<b><i>Punitive mechanism</i></b>	ATR requires employers to pay the repatriation costs if workers become illegal and are deported

# Management of workers (pastoral care)

## *Emergent social control mechanisms*

Workers recruited from the same community

Workers accommodated onsite

Pastoral care provided by NZ Pacific-based church / Pacific pastoral care workers

Workers encouraged to uphold their home country's reputation as a reliable source of seasonal workers

'No drinking' policy enforced

# Summary

- Overall, RSE achieved what it set out to do – employers in the horticulture and viticulture sectors got access to a reliable and stable seasonal workforce

‘Complicated’ policy features		Implications for the evaluation
Policy objectives		Multiple and potentially conflicting policy objectives.
Multiple participants	Two industries	<p>Differences between industries in respect of age, histories, relationship to labour, timing of labour demand, industry cohesion.</p> <p>Difference in regionality – location, temporal demands for labour, community composition and reactions, historical experiences.</p> <p>Numerous sectors within the horticulture industry.</p>
	Different types of RSE employers	Growers and contractors (different sizes, varying levels of experience with managing seasonal labour) plus one grower-cooperative.
	Multiple Pacific countries	<p>Each Pacific government had its own priorities and objectives for participating in RSE, plus varying cultural and political contexts.</p> <p>NZ Govt has separate relationships with each Pacific country, articulated in an inter-agency understanding (IAU) document.</p> <p>Workers from each country have distinctive cultures.</p>
	Cut across NZ govt agencies	The policy cut across a number of agencies’ areas of responsibility. These included separate departments responsible for immigration and employment; NZ labour market; foreign policy and development assistance.

<b>'Complicated' policy features</b>	<b>Implications</b>
<p>Implemented across different regions &amp; communities in New Zealand</p>	<p>Differences in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ predominant industry in region (horticulture or viticulture)</li> <li>▪ community response to newcomers</li> <li>▪ existing NZ Pacific communities in region</li> <li>▪ availability of short term accommodation for workers</li> <li>▪ availability of NZ labour</li> </ul>
<p>Focus on immediate results, in addition to long term change</p>	<p>Immediate demand for workers for the 2007/08 season to address labour shortages. Policy was implemented in a short time frame.</p> <p>The policy aims to support the Horticulture and Viticulture Seasonal Labour Strategy's long-term objective to transform the industries' business model from low cost to one based on quality, productivity and high value.</p> <p>Also a need for short term results (i.e. trained return labour to meet immediate labour needs). The desired long term change will not happen if the short term results are not achieved.</p>