

The Pacific Engagement Visa in PNG: a how-to guide

by Natasha Turia

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PNG workers at Binderee Beef in Inverell, NSW. You can apply for the PEV from Australia.

Photo Credit: [Facebook/PNGLMU](#)

From 3 June to 1 August 2024, citizens from selected countries in the Pacific and Timor Leste will be able to register in an **open ballot**, hoping to be one of the lucky 3,000 people who will be invited to obtain permanent residency in Australia under the **Pacific Engagement Visa** (visa subclass 192) scheme.

To take advantage of the full **PEV quota** of 1,350 visas for Papua New Guinea, active forward planning is required by individuals to enter the ballot and then to secure a visa if successful in the ballot.

The ballot

First, you must be between 18 and 45 years of age at the time of completing the online registration. You must be a PNG citizen and be born in or have one parent born in PNG or Australia, NZ or another Pacific country. You **don't** have to be in PNG to make your application. Those in Australia on another visa, such as students (500 subclass visa holders) and PALM workers (403 and 482 visa holders) are eligible to apply for the PEV.

Second, if you do not already have one, you'll need to secure a **national identity card or birth certificate** and then a passport. You can include your family (partner and legally dependent children) in your application and if you are successful your family will also get permanent residency. However, only the primary applicant needs a passport. Long processing times and black-market fees make this hurdle formidable.

Third, you must be able to afford data to access the internet to complete the online ballot registration and have a valid email address to monitor the progress of your registration. PNG has only three mobile network operators (Digicel, Vodafone and Telikom) and **around 22%** of its population is connected to the internet. Limited competition drives **high internet costs**. Smarter data usage at high-speed times during the day on combo plans will help ensure that costs remain low and connectivity good.

Fourth, you'll need a credit card or access to something like PayPal to pay the A\$25 (K65) registration fee, which is the same whether the application is for a single person or for a family. Alternatively, you need to find and pay an intermediary to make the application and payment on your behalf.

After your ballot application is complete, you'll be waiting anxiously to receive an invitation to progress to the next steps of the PEV. You don't need a job offer to enter the ballot, you just need to meet the eligibility criteria. However, the waiting period should be used to access popular Australian job seek portals to get a sense of labour market needs and prepare job applications so you are ready to apply if an invitation email arrives.

After the ballot

If your name is randomly selected from the ballot, you will start the visa process by confirming your participation online. There are several associated post-ballot hurdles to obtaining the visa. Costs will depend on how many dependants were included in your ballot registration and their ages.

The first hurdle is to get a job offer. The Australian government will help you do this through the [Pacific Engagement Visa Support Service](#) it has established in each of its participating countries that will run outreach campaigns to explain the visa requirements.

The second hurdle is a medical health assessment with a registered [panel physician](#). These assessments are only available in Port Moresby, Lae, Goroka, Mt Hagen and Enga.

Third, you'll need to meet the PEV English language requirements. This is automatically taken care of if you can show you are a secondary school graduate or if you have worked or studied at the secondary level in Australia for a year, or lived overseas in the UK, US, Canada or New Zealand for a year. If not, you'll need to do an English language test and meet the prescribed standard, or undertake to improve your English via study in Australia.

Fourth, a police clearance must be obtained from the PNG authorities.

Fifth, you'll need passports for other family members on the application if they don't already have one.

Sixth, applicants will have to show they can support themselves for the first 12 months in Australia. However, whether this requires more than a job offer remains to be seen.

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Applicants will have only four months (120 days) to meet these requirements. Once you do so, you can then apply for a visa (A\$325 for the main applicant and A\$80 per family member).

The costs involved to enter the ballot and post-ballot costs are illustrated below in Figure 1. As per this example (which assumes no dependants and work in Brisbane), the cost to enter the ballot is only K185 and the cost of applying for the visa is about K2,405.

However, the cost of actually moving to Australia is closer to K10,000 because you'll also need to purchase an airfare to Australia and require some settling-in funds. You might need to buy kitchen goods, bedding and furniture for your accommodation. Landlords also usually require an accommodation bond payment in addition to rent.

This [cost of living calculator](#) is a useful tool to figure out how much it would cost to live in different parts of Australia. For example, in Brisbane the estimated cost of living for one month based on living in a one-bedroom apartment and using bus transport is A\$2,400. I have included this amount in Table 1 as indicative of settling-in costs, which will vary according to individual circumstances and location.

Table 1: Pacific Engagement Visa costs (single adult, Brisbane)

| Ballot costs (assuming no passport) | |
|--|--------------|
| PNG birth certificate | 20 |
| PNG passport | 100 |
| Ballot registration non-refundable fee (A\$25) | 65 |
| Total | 185 |
| Post-ballot costs | |
| Health examination | 1,500 |
| Police clearance | 65 |
| Visa fee (from A\$325) | 840 |
| One-way airfare (to Brisbane) | 1,000 |
| Monthly cost of living in Brisbane (around A\$2,400) | 6,300 |
| Total | 9,705 |
| Grand total (PNG Kina) | 9,890 |

Created with Datawrapper

While the costs are substantial, the PEV is a great opportunity. It will be attractive to the many PNG citizens who cannot wait for the PNG Government’s promise of **one million jobs** to be created by 2030. Like permanent residents, PEV holders will have immediate access to Medicare, Family Tax Benefit B and the Child Care Subsidy. They will also receive additional benefits including access to Family Tax Benefit A, the Higher Education Loan Program, Vocational Education and Training Student Loans and other study and training support.

New Zealand offers a visa similar to the PEV to several Pacific countries (not PNG) and it receives **many more applicants** than visas available. If PNG’s PEV **participation rate is low**, similar to that seen in the **Pacific Australia Labour Mobility** scheme, it would be another missed opportunity for Australia and PNG.

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The Pacific Engagement Visa Support Service has now launched a website at pev.gov.au. Follow the [Pacific Engagement Visa Facebook page](#) for updates to this website.

The Australian Department of Home Affairs website contains full details on the [PEV visa](#) and the [PEV ballot](#).

Go to this page on 3 June 2024 to get the link for your ballot application:

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/pacific-engagement/ballot-registration/ballot-country-status>

See also our [previous PEV blogs](#).

The Development Policy Centre will post up-to-date information on the PEV visa and ballot on our [2024 PEV application factsheet](#).

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Link: <https://devpolicy.org/the-pacific-engagement-visa-in-png-a-how-to-guide/>