**Seasonal Workers Program (SWP) and Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS)**

The Australian Government’s SWP and PLS targets workers from Pacific Islands, who are primarily recruited from currently COVID-free Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa.

Workers employed under the SWP are generally unskilled, can work up to nine months and must average 30 hours per week. Workers can return year after year to almost anywhere across the State.

The PLS brings semi-skilled workers from Pacific Islands that can stay for up to three years and must work 30 hours per week in regional/rural Australia. Employers must provide accommodation for the first 12 weeks. After this period, workers can explore their own accommodation options in consultation with the Worker Welfare Team and Approved Employer.

To access either the SWP or PLS programs, businesses must be a registered Approved Employer (AE). The process of becoming an AE usually takes 5-6 months. Alternatively, businesses can access the programs through third-party recruitment agencies who are already registered AEs. A list of registered AEs for the SWP is available [here](https://www.dese.gov.au/seasonal-worker-programme/listing-current-approved-employers). A list of AEs under the PLF is attached.

**Costs associated with bringing workers into Australia under the SWP / PLS:**

The most economical means of getting Pacific Islander workers into WA is via a chartered flight (Air Vanuatu currently the most competitive). The fee for the plane is a flat rate, irrespective of the number of seats filled. Therefore, filling the plane to capacity (162 passengers) is preferable. Costs vary depending on the country of origin, for example a chartered flight from Tonga costs approximately $1,400 per person, one way. The attached flight matrix outlines the maximum cost that may be recuperated from workers, once they commence work.

Other costs, such as the provision of a mobile phone and cash up-front to enable the purchase of personal products, must be paid for by the Approved Employer upfront and may be recuperated from workers, once they commence work.

The costs of hotel quarantine must be covered by the Approved Employer and cannot be recovered from the worker. The cost of hotel quarantine is $2,500 per person, per fortnight. Please note, the *actual* cost of hotel quarantine is approximately $8,000 per person, per fortnight, and is borne by the WA Government.

**Role of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD):**

DPIRD facilitates the SWP/PLS program on behalf of the WA Government and priority is currently placed on bringing workers into WA to fill critical labour shortages in the primary industries sector (e.g. horticulture, agriculture, viticulture).

The Novotel Langley Hotel Perth is being engaged by the Department of Health in a commercial contract, to become a designated seasonal worker quarantine hotel. Deputy Chief Health Officer Conditional Approval has been granted for three flights across June and July 2021. Once final Approved Employer Recruitment Plans are provided for these flights, DPIRD will seek final WA Chief Health Officer Approval.

Flights into August and beyond still have capacity and where adequate demand is demonstrated (via the submission of a Restart Recruitment Proposal), DPIRD will progress approvals for additional flights.

DPIRD has funded a Labour Facilitation Role, which sits in VegetablesWA. This role is provides coordination of flights, worker quarantine, arrival declarations, and supports AEs in compiling paperwork for submission to federal agencies. Despite sitting within VegetablesWA, the Labour Facilitator works with all WA industries wishing to access the SWP/PLS programs.

**Key Differences between the SWP and PLS:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **SWP** | **PLS** |
| **Federal administration** | Dept of Education, Skills and Employment | Dept Foreign Affairs and Trade |
| **State administration** | DPIRD / VegetablesWA | DPIRD / VegetablesWA |
| **Period permitted in Australia** | Up to nine months  Average 30 hours per week minimum | 12 months minimum and up to three years  30 hours per week minimum |
| **Skill Level** | Low skilled. | Low skilled and semi-skilled. High level of English proficiency |
| **Location in WA** | 6200 to 6799  Most of regional WA | 6041 to 6044 - Guilderton  6083 to 6084 - Gidgeganup  6121 to 6126 - Serpentine  6200 to 6799 - Most of regional WA |