

APPROVED EMPLOYER

Information sheet

Quick facts

- Apply online to become an Approved Employer (AE) to access seasonal workers (currently from nine participating Pacific Island countries and Timor-Leste, soon to be extended to further Asian countries)
- Workers can be employed up to nine months, with a minimum of 30 hours a week
- Become part of the Seasonal Worker Programme Regional Pilot and you can then move your seasonal workers during their visa period without prior approval by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE), which allows you the flexibility to use seasonal workers for short harvest seasons and unpredictable picking periods, see dese.gov.au/seasonal-worker-programme/resources/swp-regional-pilot-fact-sheet
- Alternatively, you can apply for the Worker Portability Pilot (until 30 June 2022), where AEs can share workers across four regions: dese.gov.au/seasonal-worker-programme/resources/swp-worker-portability-pilot-information-sheet
- Being an AE allows you to have a stable workforce and still supplement through other channels
- Implement work bubbles to manage COVID-19 impact to harvest

Alternatives to being an approved employer

- Use labour hire companies (LHC) or contractor: palmscheme.gov.au/current-employers lists some of these
- Utilise the Australian Government's free Harvest Trail website to advertise jobs and employ workers with current working rights in Australia, predominantly Australian citizens and backpackers, jobsearch.gov.au/harvest
- Advertise on local noticeboards, in newspapers, on social media (Facebook, LinkedIn), recruit school-leavers, travelling retirees, university students, etc.

Responsibilities of an approved employer

- Conduct labour market tests domestically first and try to recruit local workers before seeking seasonal workers
- Seasonal workers can be recruited from a work-ready pool, via appointed or licensed agents or direct recruitment by the employer
- Sponsor seasonal workers' visas from participating countries: <https://www.dese.gov.au/seasonal-worker-programme/information-seasonal-worker-employers/participating-countries-and-contact-points>
- Brief your seasonal workers pre-departure and before leaving Australia; see dese.gov.au/seasonal-worker-programme/resources/swp-working-and-living-australia and palmscheme.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-09/210916%20repat%20fact%20sheet%20v2.pdf
- Pay the upfront full cost of return international airfares for each seasonal worker (the first \$300 must be paid by the AE, costs over the initial \$300 can be recouped by authorised deductions from the seasonal worker's wages)
- Employ workers for up to nine months, with a minimum of 30 hours a week
- Demonstrate that workers will benefit financially from working in Australia and provide pay rate and employment arrangements in a letter of offer.
- Provide at least one welfare & wellbeing support person within 300 km of each placement
- Help your workers get health insurance
- Hold minimum fortnightly face-to-face discussions and maintain records
- Provide access to doctors, dentist, supermarkets
- Provide 24hr, 7-day phone contact to AE
- Provide opportunities for involvement in community – religious, social & cultural
- Organise and provide access to council-approved accommodation and transport to and from work for each seasonal worker (at the seasonal worker's expense)
- Ensure accommodation is reviewed and meets Australian Government standards dese.gov.au/seasonal-worker-programme/resources/accommodation-requirements-checklist-seasonal-worker-programme

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Take into account

- Apply to become an AE online with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) **and** Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) – sponsorship through the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) – to sponsor seasonal workers
- The average processing time for an AE application used to be at least 12–16 weeks
- Once your deed to be an AE is granted/executed and sponsorship obtained, allow a minimum of six weeks for processing recruitment requests and for DHA to process seasonal workers' visas
- Check how your state government handles quarantine, what costs are involved, and what their timelines are
- Bear in mind there is a recruitment cap for the first placement of seasonal workers, but a review of the cap is possible, with any increase usually applied gradually
- Each placement must have a minimum of two seasonal workers
- View the checklist here: dese.gov.au/seasonal-worker-programme/resources/checklist-seasonal-worker-program-application

Apply or find out more

- 1.**
Visit the PALM scheme website:
palmscheme.gov.au/
- 2.**
Check your eligibility here:
palmscheme.gov.au/eligibility
- 3.**
If eligible, use the PALM scheme checklist below and complete the reference application form to prepare for your online application:
palmscheme.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-09/Single%20application%20form%20reference%20only%20version%20210916.pdf
- 4.**
Apply to DFAT at the same time:
immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/temporary-work-403/pacific-labour-scheme

PALM Approved Employer Checklist

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Certificate of Incorporation or Registration | <input type="checkbox"/> external support – council rates notice, valuation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Certificate of Registration of Business name | <input type="checkbox"/> Details of financial supporter's financial position for a trustee applicant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of original executed Trust Deed along with any amendments to the deed Certify with a statement that: "All changes to this Trust Deed, subsequently to its commencement, have been provided to the Department with this copy of the trust deed" | <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of availability of additional and contingent funding – i.e. bank statements, evidence of ownership, third party assets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Plan, Cash Flow Protection and details of funding sources for new or restructured entities | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional information – Commonwealth overdue debts or acquittals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of Off-Balance Sheet Assets of | <input type="checkbox"/> List of additional relevant persons |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Financial and Credentials Information forms from tendering or Applying Group members (relates to Section 17) |