

Frequently asked questions

Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Information System

Last updated: 7 November 2024

Please note: The content in this document will continue to be refined to provide an accurate point of reference.

PALMIS background information

The Australian Government is committed to strengthening the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme so that it continues to deliver for employers, workers and their families and communities in the Pacific and Timor-Leste.

The Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Information System (PALMIS) is a coordinated and connected information management system that streamlines the workflow between PALM scheme employers (employers), labour sending units (LSUs) and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) for short-term and long-term recruitments.

The coordinated information management system minimises administrative requirements by enabling data exchanges between PALMIS and the in-country recruitment databases (IRDs) in participating Pacific island countries and Timor-Leste. Together, PALMIS and the IRDs provide a single, uniform workflow to cover short-term and long-term recruitments across all participating countries.

1. What is PALMIS used for?

It is mandatory for all employers to submit and manage their new recruitments and reporting requirements through the PALMIS approved employer portal (AE portal).

2. What training support is available?

Interactive training guides, step-by-step walkthroughs, webinar-based training and tutorial videos are available to help employers navigate systems and help ensure all paperwork can be submitted online. These can be accessed in the portal by selecting the 'portal help guides' pop up on the right side of your browser.

If you are an employer, you can submit an enquiry with questions about the PALM scheme, or to receive general program support, via the support service drop down in the portal. Further support can also be accessed via the PALM scheme support service line at (palm@dewr.gov.au) or by calling (1800 51 51 31). The support service is open from 8:30 am to 6:30 pm (AEDT), Monday to Friday, with after-hours support for critical incidents only. Software updates will be released for PALMIS periodically. Advanced notices will be provided to employers prior to their release.

3. How can I access the AE portal?

The AE portal can be accessed at (portal.palmscheme.gov.au). Please contact the PALM scheme support service line on (1800 51 51 31) if you have received an invitation but still cannot access the AE portal.



Frequently asked questions on the application of PALMIS

AE portal	Employers with an executed PALM scheme Approved Employer Deed will be provided full access to the AE portal via an email invitation once their details are updated in the system.
Offer of employment (OOE)	OOEs are not automatically generated. Placement schedules are generated for each PALM scheme worker and contain summaries of an individual worker’s assigned worksites, hosts, accommodation, pay details, deductions, roles, and employment terms to be referenced in each worker’s OOE. Placement schedules are available in the AE portal once you allocate each worker to their placement group(s).
Individual worker record	<p>A record is created for each worker that is used across multiple recruitment plans and employers for countries using the in-country recruitment database (IRD).</p> <p>Employers can create a record for each worker where countries do not use the IRD.</p> <p>The integrated workflows between the IRD, PALMIS and the AE portal allow for LSUs and the employers to efficiently manage recruitment activities such as placement group allocation, OOE execution and feedback, visa lodgements and mobilisations.</p> <p>The IRD screens candidates for industry and employer matches.</p> <p>Workers are shortlisted, selected, and worker information then becomes available in the AE portal.</p>
Visa agents	Employers are able to select their preferred official visa agent who can provide visa lodgement details, documents, and other data to the employer from their IRD to the AE portal. This is applicable to Vanuatu recruitments only .
Editing documents	<p>Employers can edit the following documents in the AE portal before they are approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recruitment plan • accommodation plan • labour market tests. <p>DEWR can leave questions and comments for you to address accordingly.</p>



General

Question	Answer
Will access be restricted for employer users?	There are currently 2 tiers of AE portal access - employer admin and employer user. Only employer admin can create users, deactivate and edit User permissions. The deed contact is the initial employer admin.
Can I restrict a user's access within the AE portal?	The AE portal does not have the ability to restrict a user's access. Employers are required to ensure their personnel with access to the AE portal comply with its confidentiality, privacy and security obligations under the PALM scheme deed. Access differentiation for AE portal users is being considered in future PALMIS releases.
Can I remove a user from the AE portal?	An employer admin user can now deactivate other user access in the AE portal.
Can I remove records once uploaded?	Once records are submitted, they cannot be removed. In exceptional circumstances, an employer can request to have a record removed by submitting a request via the AE portal System support request function. AE portal users can also deactivate records and documents made in error etc.

AE portal

Question	Answer
What if I put in the wrong ABN or business name?	Please send an enquiry to your DEWR relationship manager urgently if you have changed your ABN or any business details.

Work sites

Question	Answer
Can I list multiple work sites?	Yes.

Recruitment plan

Question	Answer
Can a recruitment plan be copied?	No. This is a scheduled update for future release.
Can multiple agents be used in one recruitment? (Vanuatu only)	No. There can only be one agent per recruitment plan.
Does the 8-week timeline include worker arrival in Australia?	Recruitment plans should be lodged no later than 8 weeks prior to the arrival date of workers to Australia. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
Do I need to contact my relationship manager when I submit my recruitment plan or	No. Recruitment plan related documents will automatically notify DEWR upon submission.



part of it (accommodation, welfare, etc.)?	
What if my recruitment plan is rejected?	Recruitment plan feedback/advice will be provided following the outcome of an assessment. If an LSU rejects your recruitment plan, you can change which country you recruit from.
Can I view my recruitment cap on the AE portal?	No. An employer admin user can review their short and long-term cap, as well as request a cap review from the employer details section in the AE portal.
Can I submit my recruitment plan before submitting my accommodation plan and labour market test?	No. These must be submitted before the recruitment plan.
Can I change my recruitment plan after it is approved?	Yes. Changes to recruitment plan (formerly known as variations) are supported by the AE portal. To submit a change to a recruitment, open the recruitment plan and select the actions drop down, then select make changes. Depending on the proposed change this may need to be approved by the LSU and/or DEWR.
How is the employer notified when an LSU endorses a recruitment plan?	This notification occurs within the AE portal and via email.
When will my recruitment plan be approved?	The assessment of recruitment plans is prioritised based on when workers are expected to arrive. This maximises the chances of workers being available for recruitments.
Why can't I add multiple OOE's to a single recruitment?	If you are required to upload multiple draft OOE's to the one recruitment plan, you will need to create a zip file and upload this as a single document. If further assistance is required, please reach out to delivery support services or your current relationship manager who will assist your team to create the zip file.
How do I submit a recruitment plan for workers who are currently in Australia?	In country recruitment must be either an extension of the workers current contract, or a redeployment from another employer. Due to visa restrictions short term workers cannot exceed 9 months in Australia and long-term workers cannot exceed 4 years. Once you commence a new recruitment plan, under 'recruitment plan type', you can select redeployment or extension. LSU endorsement is required for in country recruitments, so it's best practice to consult with your relationship manager prior to submitting a plan with either of these types.
How do I extend/vary a recruitment plan or redeploy workers?	Extension and redeployment recruitments must be submitted as a new recruitment plan.



LSU endorsement is required for in country recruitments. It's best practice to consult with your relationship manager prior to submitting a redeployment or extension recruitment plan.

How do I withdraw submitted recruitment plans, accommodation plans, or labour market tests?

Yes. Select your submitted recruitment plan. You are then able to withdraw your plan by selecting the 'action' button in the top right corner to select 'withdraw'.

Placement groups

Question

Answer

What is a placement group?

Employers must specify the accommodation, host/site, role/labour market testing, pay and deduction information for each placement group.

Workers must then be specifically assigned to the placement groups they will work in while in Australia.

This provides clear data on where workers are living or working in Australia.

What happens if changes to the placement group are needed after approval?

Changes can be made to a recruitment plan's placement group. The AE portal will re-generate placement schedules so they can also be provided to the worker.

To submit a change to a placement group, open the recruitment plan and select the Actions drop down, then select make changes. Navigate to the placement group and make the required changes. Please see chapter 4 of the guidelines that outline your obligations when making changes to recruitments.

Do individual houses with no employment differences require separate placement groups?

Yes, we require different placement groups for workers in individual houses.

This is consistent with the requirement that workers in each accommodation are from the same placement group.

What role must I specify for workers?

Every role must be consistent with the roles outlined in the *Fair Work Instrument* you will pay workers.

You must specify a role that accurately represents the work and position title of the worker and matches labour market testing.

Can I add more than one worker support contact?

No, only one can be listed for each placement group.

Can I check if my worker support person is within 200km?

No, not at present. Yes. Once you have saved your placement group the distance your welfare and worker support person will be calculated and appear in that placement group portal page.

Do I need to create a second placement group if I have workers arriving to the same host site, under the same recruitment plan, but with different arrival dates?

There are some start date variations that are accommodated by the PALM scheme deed and guidelines without reporting required.

However, if the different arrival dates fall in a different period, then the deed and guidelines require it to be reported, and a



	new placement group or varying a placement group may be required.
Where do employers put transport information in the AE portal?	Employers enter the transport plans within each placement group of a recruitment plan.

Accommodation portal feature

Question	Answer
What if one of my workers wants their own accommodation?	You will need to create a new accommodation plan within your placement group. If the recruitment is already approved you will need to submit a change request and update the placement group with the approved accommodation plan.
What are accommodation spaces?	These appear in your accommodation plan and include things like bedrooms, kitchens, bathrooms etc. You are required to fill this out and upload images that comply with the PALM scheme deed and guidelines.
Can I use an existing accommodation plan rather than making a new one?	Yes. In the 'recruitment plan' section, there is an 'add existing accommodation plan' button beside the 'Create new accommodation plan' button.
Can I change an existing approved accommodation plan?	To make changes to an approved accommodation plan employers must initiate the process by submitting an enquiry through the portal. See the following article for more information: Making changes to an approved accommodation plan.
When I submit an accommodation plan, I need to then submit a supplementary accommodation form. Will I be able to complete this within the AE portal?	As part of the early September 2024 system release, the questions contained in the accommodation plan supplementary form were incorporated into the AE portal. The supplementary form is no longer required.
How do I search for an accommodation plan?	There is now a search feature at the top of the accommodation plan entity page for you to search by accommodation plan name.
What do the 2 colour statuses mean in the accommodation plan space?	Accommodation plan spaces show 2 colours. Grey is for when you have not added details to the 'draft' accommodation space and green is for when you have attached photos and information for that accommodation space.
Can I remove an accommodation plan?	Accommodation plans that have been submitted can be withdrawn by navigating to the top right corner of the plan, selecting action and Y.
How do I view historical accommodation plans?	Historical accommodation plans for long-term workers are available in the AE portal. All historical accommodation plans for short-term workers had to be resubmitted before April 2024.

Pay and deductions feature



Question	Answer
Can the estimated mobilisation costs be adjusted? Do I need to submit a change to recruitment plan each time a deduction is amended?	For accommodation costs, you must provide a new OOE for approval as soon as possible. In relation to changes to any other costs, you must provide a change to a recruitment plan letter notifying the worker of the change and seek their written agreement to recoup the actual cost incurred. Additionally, a change to a recruitment plan can be made where you overestimate a cost. Chapter 4 of the guidelines outlines employer's obligations.
Can the system create one recruitment with workers on piece rate and hourly?	Yes, when you place your workers into placement groups, you can set pay details such as piece rate or hourly pay rate.
Where do I upload my evidence of deductions?	There is no requirement to upload evidence of deductions, however, we may request evidence of wage deductions for monitoring requirements and to ensure that deductions are being made in accordance with the deed, including these guidelines and relevant workplace laws. It is your responsibility to keep records of any other deductions and to ensure the worker has agreed in writing before deductions are made.

Cases and incidents

Question	Answer
How do I report an incident or an enquiry if I suspect an incident?	All incident cases are communicated through the AE portal. You have the option to select 'Support service' entity and select 'create incident report'. Select the incident type and label your query or incident. Provide as much detail as possible including all involved names, phone numbers, location and times and dates as required, as a follow up is often required.
Can I lodge incidents from a mobile device?	No.

Visa portal feature

Question	Answer
Can I add a completed Health Assessment Portal (HAP) ID before lodging a visa?	If the information has not come through, you should contact the LSU for accurate information.
What if I have a returning PALM worker on a multi-year visa?	You can bypass the standard visa process and submit a new recruitment plan and OOE in the portal, which will go to the relevant LSU.



Mobilisations feature

Question	Answer
How does the AE portal affect existing mobilisation processes?	Mobilisation processes have been amended in line with the PALM scheme deed and guidelines.
What if my worker does not arrive?	The AE portal allows you to mark workers as ‘withdrawn prior to mobilisation,’ or ‘not arrived’ if they failed to arrive.

In-country recruitment databases and LSUs

Question	Answer
When will LSUs receive training on the AE portal?	LSUs will not use the AE portal in the same way as employers as they will use the IRD. Some LSUs currently use and will continue to use the IRD while some participating countries are new to this in-country IT system.
At what stage does the LSU see a draft recruitment plan?	The LSU will see a high-level overview of the recruitment plan as it is created but will not see anything else until the recruitment plan has been submitted and approved by DEWR.
Can the LSU refuse to fill an approved recruitment plan?	Yes. The LSU always has the right to refuse a recruitment plan at any stage of the recruitment.
Does an agent in Vanuatu need to work with LSU for worker names?	No. Agents already have access to and training for the IRD. They will be able to provide the same information to you as the LSU.
What if manual data entry by LSUs is not trustworthy?	IRD side has introduced improved tools to detect when mistakes have been made, for example, preventing the same worker being included in multiple shortlists. Employers will have access to documents such as passports to cross-check this information. It is the employer’s responsibility to ensure data provided to the Department of Home Affairs is accurate.

Offers of employment

Question	Answer
Does the manually developed OOE need to be uploaded to the AE portal?	Yes, the manually developed OOE must be uploaded in the AE portal so this can be sent to the LSU and signed by the workers in their home country. Employers can submit a generic/example version when they lodge the recruitment plan, and then must submit unique OOE’s for each worker in the AE portal which are provided to the LSU and worker to sign and return.
Will there be templates added to the AE portal for assessments?	It depends on the template. Some templates are available in the AE portal and some are not, e.g. the OOE template is not available.



Why is there not a template OOE?

DEWR has recently updated its OOE template and guide to assist employers understand the information that needs to be included in an OOE under the PALM scheme deed.

Employers are reminded new elements are required in an OOE based on the PALM scheme deed and guidelines.

These include, but are not limited to, specifying short-term or long-term stream, detail of the port of arrival and domestic transfer arrangements, information on who will meet workers on arrival in Australia, details about the education and communication that will be provided, information on minimum hours requirements, management structure, welfare and wellbeing support, location and contact details of the workplace, termination information, consequences of breach of policy and law, and information on what workers can expect in Australia including weather and social/religious activities.

An example and explanation of a payslip and a privacy notice and consent form must also be submitted with the OOE.

Please review clause 3.6 in the employer guidelines, and related clauses 4.1.3 and 9.5.9 (b) to ensure that all requirements are captured in your OOE to workers.

To obtain a copy of the new OOE and guide please contact your relationship manager.

Messaging

Question	Answer
How do I send a message to my relationship manager?	You can either reply to specific correspondence in the action items, notices or create an enquiry through the support services entity and this will be forwarded to the correct area.

Deductions

Question	Answer
How do I add a global deduction for visas or transport?	Once you have completed your placement group section, select on the deductions tab you will see the 'add global deductions' button on the left hand centre side of the portal page. You can add the details and select recurring or fixed term.
Can I edit deductions once I have saved them?	You can edit your deductions using the 'edit' button alongside each entry.
Why do deductions use the term 'net pay before tax'?	<p>The deductions section uses the term 'net pay before tax' to allow for simpler administration of PALM scheme requirements.</p> <p>It allows the risk profile of the estimated net pay figure to be assessed as compared to low pay thresholds and assesses the nature of proposed deductions.</p> <p>The system calculates 'net pay before tax' as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> gross pay (estimated hours per week x pay rate) minus total deductions (sum of all deductions).



Wellbeing and welfare contacts

Question	Answer
How do I provide the department the address for my welfare & wellbeing officer?	You can update your worker support contact in your placement group in the AE portal.

Labour market testing

Question	Answer
How do I search for labour market tests?	In the AE portal, under the recruitment section, select labour market tests. You can search by reference, region and/or role.