

Alongside PACER Plus, the Parties concluded an Arrangement that provides a new platform for enhancing regional cooperation on labour mobility.

## Labour Mobility

### Pacific Labour Mobility Annual Meeting

The Arrangement establishes a new, annual meeting as the primary mechanism through which regional cooperation will be advanced. The annual meeting is intended to address, in particular, key elements of cooperation set out in the Arrangement including:

- Enhancing existing labour mobility schemes and exploring opportunities for new labour mobility;
- Building institutional capacity of agencies that manage labour mobility;
- Promoting and improving current visa categories to facilitate greater circulation of temporary workers;
- Tertiary vocational education and training; and
- Recognition of qualifications and registration of occupations.

Australia and New Zealand have committed to fund the annual meetings and signatories to the Arrangement will take turns hosting the meetings. The inaugural meeting was in November 2017. The next meeting will be hosted by the Solomon Islands in late 2018.

### New Zealand's labour mobility schemes

New Zealand has committed to enhancing the operation of the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme and exploring opportunities for other temporary labour mobility opportunities in new occupational areas where New Zealand faces labour and skills shortages. The achievements of RSE demonstrate the potential of the new Labour Mobility Arrangement:

- Pacific seasonal workers in New Zealand remit up to NZD41 million in remittances a year. Remittances provide an important contribution to Pacific Island GDP and could assist with revenue adjustments related to tariff liberalisation under PACER Plus.

New Zealand has committed to providing assistance to Pacific Participants to improve operational aspects of the RSE, including to:

- improve worker selection and recruitment processes
- enhance pre-departure and re-integration programmes,
- improve training opportunities while in New Zealand and
- explore the possibility of enabling workers to contribute to their countries' pension schemes and improve health insurance arrangements.

New Zealand has also undertaken to share information on areas of current and projected skill shortages in our labour market, including at the annual regional meeting.

### Pacific Trades Partnership

The Pacific Trades Partnership will expand on the success of the Canterbury Reconstruction Programme by offering trained Pacific carpenters the opportunity to work in New Zealand's construction industry - an industry with persistent skills shortages and increasing demand.

The scheme is facilitated by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) with funding from the New Zealand Aid Programme. It aims to attract skilled and experienced Pacific carpenters who can add value to New Zealand's construction industry while also enhancing their own career prospects. Workers will have the opportunity to gain new skills, learn health and safety practices, and complete on-the-job training programmes.

New Zealand Government assistance includes identifying labour supply from the Pacific, practical skills-based testing to demonstrate workers meet New Zealand requirements, facilitating recruitment, pre-departure and on-arrival training, and pastoral care once in New Zealand.



### Exploring opportunities in other sectors

In exploring new labour mobility opportunities, New Zealand's focus is to provide Pacific workers with employment opportunities in skilled and semi-skilled occupations where they have already completed training.

The New Zealand fishing industry offers an excellent opportunity for graduates of Pacific marine training centres to enhance their skills and gain work experience outside of the Pacific. A fisheries pilot has commenced in 2018 with the recruitment of trained and experienced fishers from Kiribati and Tuvalu.

New Zealand will also explore opportunities for Pacific labour mobility in the tourism industry, with a feasibility study to be undertaken in 2018.

All of New Zealand's labour mobility schemes will continue to be employer-driven and based on the Government's principle of ensuring New Zealand's have access to jobs first.

### Support for institutions that manage labour mobility

Under the Arrangement, New Zealand has undertaken to assist Pacific Participants to:

- build institutional capacity of agencies and labour-sending units that manage labour mobility;
- develop coherent national policies on labour mobility, visa and immigration procedures where requested;
- strengthen the collection and harmonisation of labour market statistics; and
- optimise the roles of private institutions, including the reduction of bank transfer costs and speeding up transfer processes.

### Recognition of qualifications and registration of occupations

New Zealand and the participants will enhance cooperation, including through:

- capacity building for Pacific participants to assess qualifications and facilitate the development, accreditation and registration of qualifications and recognition of those qualifications;
- make publically available the regulations and processes to achieve licensing or registration by the accredited boards; and
- encouraging qualification and occupation assessment and accreditation bodies to explore options for recognition of qualifications.



## Labour Mobility

### Want to find out more?

Visit the Trade section of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade website [www.mfat.govt.nz/en/trade](http://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/trade) to find out more about PACER Plus and the benefits it is designed to deliver. This website includes:

- The full text of PACER Plus
- Factsheets on key areas for New Zealand; and
- The National Interest Analysis.

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**Submissions or requests for information can be sent to: [PACREG@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:PACREG@mfat.govt.nz)**

## THE PACIFIC AGREEMENT ON CLOSER ECONOMIC RELATIONS PLUS

The Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations Plus is a landmark trade and development agreement that will raise living standards, create jobs, increase exports in Pacific Island countries and provide greater certainty for New Zealand businesses trading in the Pacific.