

Pacific Labour Scheme and Seasonal Worker Programme

The Queensland Government is supporting a range of initiatives to minimise the impacts of labour shortages in agribusiness because of COVID-19. This includes the Australian Government's Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS) and Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP).

Requirements to participate in PLS and SWP

There are three key requirements to participate in the PLS and SWP in Queensland:

1. Employers must be an *approved employer* and receive **Australian** Government approval for their recruitment plan.
2. Employers must have an International Quarantine Plan¹ (IQP) endorsed by the **Queensland** Chief Health Officer.
3. Approved employers must coordinate with each other to ensure their proposals will fit within the cap on the total number of sites where workers are quarantined at any one time.

For approved employers who have an endorsed IQP, you will need to allow **at least 10 weeks** between lodging a recruitment proposal and the arrival of workers in Queensland—this is due to the high demand for workers across Australia and New Zealand, and the additional recruitment approvals due to COVID-19.

Australian Government requirements on-farm

The PLS and SWP are managed by the Australian Government through two agencies: the Pacific Labour Facility (PLF) on behalf of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) respectively.

You can apply to become a PLS or SWP approved employer by contacting [PLF](#) or [DESE](#).

If you are **not** an approved employer—you may be able to access Pacific workers through a licensed labour hire company in Queensland, that is already an approved employer for the SWP or PLS.

You can view lists of approved employers for the SWP on the [Australian Government's SWP site](#) and check which of those are a licensed labour hire company in Queensland on the [Queensland's Office of Industrial Relations](#) site.

¹ Sometimes, there is capacity for small numbers of workers in hotel quarantine for which endorsement of a separate International Quarantine Plan is not required. There is high demand for these places. Call DAF's Customer Service Centre on 13 25 23 for more information.

An approved employer must meet a range of Australian Government criteria including:

- robust labour market testing, ensuring Australian workers are considered first
- net financial benefit to the workers
- appropriate approved accommodation arrangements for the workers.

Queensland's quarantine requirements on-farm

If you are an approved employer for the PLS or SWP, you will need Queensland Government approval for the quarantine of workers when they arrive from overseas.

Some of the key requirements of an on-farm International Quarantine Plan include:

- Workers must be recruited from Pacific nations where the risk of COVID-19 is low.
- The quarantine accommodation must be isolated from populated areas.
- Between 30 and 80 workers must quarantine together as a group.
- Approved employers must arrange supervisors to quarantine with the workers and the supervisors must ensure there is no contact with other employees and the broader community.
- Approved employers are responsible for enforcing the International Quarantine Plan and meeting all associated costs including transport, accommodation, meals, COVID-19 tests and other worker needs.

If you think you can meet the above requirements, the next step is to read the [on-farm quarantine guidelines](#) and use the Queensland Government [on-farm quarantine application form](#). The application form will guide you through what is needed in an International Quarantine Plan.

Once you have developed a draft International Quarantine Plan for on-farm quarantine it is highly recommended you call DAF's Customer Service Centre on 13 25 23 to arrange a meeting with an assessment team member, who will help identify any areas that need to be improved before you apply.

Employer coordination

Approved Employers proposing to quarantine workers should contact the [Approved Employers Association](#) who are working with grower representative organisations to co-ordinate proposals for quarantine of SWP and PLS workers. Proposals need to be prioritised within the cap set by the Queensland Government on the total number of sites where workers are quarantined at any time. The cap is necessary to keep the community safe by ensuring there is sufficient Queensland Government oversight and support.

The Approved Employers Association may be able to suggest service providers that can help you.

More information

For more information about the PLS and SWP call the DAF call centre on 13 25 23, who will put you in contact with your local DAF Agriculture Coordination Officer.

Other Queensland initiatives that support the agricultural workforce

Enabling the PLS/SWP is one of the many ways the Queensland Government is addressing the agricultural labour shortage due to COVID-19. As on-farm quarantine of PLS/SWP workers is not suitable for all situations, you can find more information about other initiatives [here](#).

Queensland's workforce focus



Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

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