



The Hon Tony Burke MP
Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations
Minister for the Arts
Leader of the House

Reference: MC23-003391

Mr Leon Collins
Chair
Australian Banana Growers' Council
Leon@abgc.org.au

Dear Mr Collins

Thank you for your correspondence of 12 September 2023, regarding the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme. I welcome your support on this important scheme.

The Government is committed to ensuring PALM provides a reliable and productive source of labour in industries with local labour shortages. We are also committed to the policy changes to PALM, which were developed following consultation with stakeholders. The settings are being implemented gradually to help to minimise administrative burden. The Government has established industry-focussed working groups to provide key stakeholders with the opportunity to raise issues. I encourage you to continue to work through this process.

There have been some issues with the PALM IT system, PALMIS. The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations is working through these issues and continuing to consult with employers on system design. We will take your feedback on board.

There have been some delays to recruitment activity. I am advised that recruitments are being prioritised based on the proposed mobilisation dates to sequence workers arrival with workforce needs and progress is being made.

The minimum hours of work requirement in the PALM Deed and Guidelines accept that there may be exceptional circumstances when approved employers may be unable to offer short-term workers a minimum of 30 hours per week. Under these circumstances – which may include natural disasters – employers should notify the department to discuss their options. Recruitment plans must outline a contingency plan which includes the names and locations of alternative placements for PALM workers if there is insufficient work.

The department has discussed in country police checks with the Department of Home Affairs. The PALM Guidelines require employers to pay for costs associated with a worker's visa application, which could include police checks. The Guidelines do not place any additional or new responsibilities on employers with regard to police checks for PALM workers.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Tony Burke'.

TONY BURKE

4/10 2023