

2 September 2022

To Whom it May Concern,

Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Scheme: PeopleIN Proposal

I am writing to express our support for the Government's Aged Care PALM initiative and our proposal that will accelerate the delivery of the scheme to address critical workforce shortages in Australia's care sectors.

PeopleIN is Australia's largest ASX-listed talent solutions company and the largest provider of nurses on the east coast of Australia, and provider of carers into the NDIS and aged care sectors. PeopleIN knows firsthand the impact of the current workforce shortage in the care sector with over 12,000 hours of unfilled work per week being experienced on behalf of our clients. Today, PeopleIN is also one of the largest existing suppliers of staffing solutions under the PALM Scheme with 5,000+ workers working within the food and logistics sectors in Australia. We see the opportunity to leverage our experience and accelerate the delivery of the government's PALM expansion into the care services sector to address critical staffing shortages.

Proposal Summary:

- PeopleIN is committed developing partnerships to onshore, employ and train workers from the Pacific Nations, including establishing a training hub in-country within the next six months and the onshoring and employment of +200 workers over the next 12 months. Workers will be provided with access to a Skills Development and Leadership Program during their time in Australia, which will see them return home with industry certified credentials, including the opportunity to upskill to Registered Nurses.
- Similar to industry-led models adopted in other countries, we believe that the administration of the PALM scheme could be streamlined by allowing large and proven approved employers (AE) to directly administer the program by setting up their own offices in-country under an approved government framework with clear guidelines. Government could be assured of compliance through a potential AE rating system based on welfare, in-country support, and upskilling metrics.
- We believe that working together, the Australian Government can assist by helping with the identification and priority processing of visas, and removing metro post code exemptions where there is an opportunity to provide women with employment, or AE has secured client work in metropolitan areas associated with the key security sectors such as food and health.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter with you further and support the Government to deliver a sustainable solution.

Yours sincerely,



Ross Thompson
CEO, PeopleIN

Executive Summary:

- PeopleiN believes that we are well positioned to support the Australian economy in addressing some of the critical staffing challenges across the care industries. PeopleiN is committed to onshoring, employing and training workers. This will see PeopleiN investing in the people of Pacific Nations through training, key skills development, and capability building. PeopleiN commits to developing partnerships to establish a training hub in-country within the next six months and the onshoring and employment of +200 workers over the next 12 months. Workers will be provided with access to a Skills Development and Leadership Program during their time in Australia, which will see them return home with industry certified credentials, including the opportunity to upskill to Registered Nurses. As part of solution, we have confirmed client interest and support from national care providers.
- Similar to industry-led models adopted in other countries, we believe that the administration of the PALM scheme could be streamlined by allowing large and proven approved employers (AE) to directly administer the program by setting up their own offices in-country under an approved government framework with clear guidelines. Government could be assured of compliance through a potential AE rating system based on welfare, in-country support, and upskilling metrics.
- We believe that working together, the Australian Government can assist by helping with the identification and priority processing of visas, and removing metro post code exemptions where there is an opportunity to provide women with employment, or AE has secured client work in metropolitan areas associated with the key security sectors such as food and health.

Background

PeopleiN is Australia's largest ASX-listed talent solutions company. We service +4,000 businesses across three verticals – Health & Community, Professional Services, and Industrial & Specialist Services. Through our nationwide footprint of 40 locations and 26 brands, we employ over 33,500 workers every year.

We are committed to meeting the needs of Australian businesses who require talent solutions to meet surges in demand and the use of a specialised workforce. We believe that we are well positioned to support the Australian economy in addressing some of the critical staffing challenges across the care industries. Our listed status, combined within our experience in managing diverse migrant workforces makes us a unique business. We have a demonstrated ability to take a longer-term commercial view on skilled migrant initiatives.

PALM HealthCare Proposal

PeopleiN is the largest supplier of nurses on the east coast of Australia and provides carers into the NDIS and aged care sectors. PeopleiN knows firsthand the impact of the current workforce shortage in the care sector with over 12,000 hours of unfilled work per week being experienced on behalf of our clients. Today, PeopleiN is also one of the largest existing suppliers of staffing solutions under the PALM Scheme with 5,000+ workers working within the food and logistics sectors in Australia. We see the opportunity to leverage our experience and accelerate the delivery of the government's PALM expansion into the care services sector to address critical staffing shortages.

PeopleiN is committed to onshoring, employing and training workers. This will see PeopleiN investing in the people of Pacific Nations through training, key skills development, and capability building. PeopleiN commits to developing partnerships to establish a training hub in-country within the next six months and the onshoring and employment of +200 workers over the next 12 months. Workers will be provided with access to a Skills Development and Leadership Program during their time in Australia, which will see them return home with industry certified credentials, including the opportunity to upskill to Registered Nurses. As part of solution, we have confirmed client interest and support from national care providers.

We believe that working together, the Australian Government can assist by helping with the identification and priority processing of visas, and by removing metro post code exemptions where an AE has secured client work in metropolitan areas associated with the key security sectors such as food and health.

Working together with our Pacific neighbours we can do our part in addressing some of these critical staff shortages. We can do this by providing a fair paying job, income for the workers and their communities back home, while giving workers the training and skills to add productivity to our economy, while also boosting the economies of our Pacific family. While this is only a relatively small part of solving the skills shortage, we believe it's important for Australia and the people in aged care, childcare and healthcare who rely on them.

Our proposal aligns and support government's key policy areas as outlined below.

Maintaining full employment and growing productivity

- While ensuring protections and fair wages for workers, it's important to allow business flexibility in the current environment while we fill some of our skills gaps with migration and rebuild a domestic skills and training system.
- The PALM scheme can deliver protections for workers whilst addressing the significant challenge of skills gaps and labour market shortages, particular in the care sector.
- Similar to industry-led models adopted in other countries, we believe that the administration of the PALM scheme could be streamlined by allowing large and proven approved employers (AE) to directly administer the program by setting up their own offices in-country under an approved government framework with clear guidelines. Government could be assured of compliance through a potential AE rating system based on welfare, in-country support, and upskilling metrics.
- A stronger focus on the AE to comply and self-audit, as is the case with other visa schemes, would put the onus on the AE rather than government. Where an audit is performed by a recognised third party (i.e. Fair Work), this acknowledgement of assurance should be accepted as sufficient and negate further self-audit activity to be performed.
- Increasing the migrant worker intake provides significant local and national economic benefits both here and in the Pacific region.

Boosting job security and wages

- Amending the system of lawful deductions to encourage employers to support up-front investment in employees. Sponsoring traineeships, training and tooling costs and similar funding arrangements for implementing onshore programs requires the carrying of large, funded liabilities which employers could better risk manage under an amended system.
- We support the Government's focus on Skills and Training. For those workers that are on the long-stay program, workers should be able to participate in training with the same funding that is available to others. This allows workers to return home with industry certified credentials.

Lifting participation and reducing barriers to employment

- Women are disproportionately represented in the care economy and lifting both pay and training will incentivise women to enter and stay in the industry. More can be done to provide economic independence to women in our neighbourhood, particularly in the Pacific who are interested in taking on roles in the aged care, childcare and health sectors.
- A learning and development framework that supports the attraction and retention of care workers with in-country training and an onshore Skills Development and Leadership Program to support ongoing upskilling during the term of a workers stay in Australia.

Delivering a high-quality labour force through skills, training and migration

- PeopleiN believes that we can both encourage Australian workers while also improving the lives and skills of migrants, particularly those in our own backyard – the Pacific region. This will have a direct impact on the people receiving skills as well as their countries of origin. At the core of our solution is an investment in the people of Pacific Nations through training, key skills development, and capability building.
- We support a funding model which would upskill migrants in-country to leverage Australian standards and qualifications. PeopleiN commits to developing partnerships to establish a training hub in-country within the next six months.
- PeopleiN commits to onshoring, employing and training +200 workers over the next 12 months. Workers will be provided access to a Skills Development and Leadership Program during their time in Australia, which will see them return home with industry certified credentials, including the opportunity to upskill to Registered Nurses. As part of our solution, we have confirmed client interest and support from national providers of health and community care.
- We believe that working together, the Australian Government can assist by helping with the identification and priority processing of visas, and removing metro post code exemptions where there is an opportunity to provide women with employment, or AE has secured client work in metropolitan areas associated with the key security sectors such as food and health.
- We believe strongly that workers coming to Australia are provided with the necessary skills and career development opportunities, fair pay, affordable housing, aware of their rights and access to their relevant union.

Maximising opportunities in the industries of the future

- The care industry is strategically placed to build rewarding careers where innovation is constant, and upskilling is encouraged. Demand for care workers is continuing to grow and has rapidly overtaken supply, creating many opportunities for new participants. The pandemic effect combined with diminishing numbers of new industry entrants has caused a staffing crisis.
- Businesses and unions need to ensure that the care industry has the flexibility to meet the higher thresholds of care that will be required, while acknowledging the already severe under-staffing and opportunities to build our permanent and migrant workforce.
- The challenge to deliver higher standards of care and to support new Government policy is compounded by these conditions. A skilled migrant workforce solution can assist in delivering the care standards of the future.
- PeopleiN will provide opportunities for care workers through the PALM scheme access industry certified credentials, including the opportunity to upskill to Registered Nurses.
- PeopleiN's Australian HealthCare Academy (RTO) through its training services supports care workers across a range of speciality areas to progress their careers and deliver the best possible care outcomes. Research demonstrates that care industry turnover is often driven by an absence of development and career opportunities.
- We also recognise that most care workers are women and empowering them and their communities is important to their personal success and our broader economic prosperity.