



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



NSW COUNCIL FOR
Pacific Communities

Submission to the 'Building a Stronger Pacific Family: reforming the PALM scheme. Discussion Paper.'

Joint Submission to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

The Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania; the Pacific Islands Council of Queensland Inc; the Pacific Islands Council of South Australia and NSW Council for Pacific Communities

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Statement of Recognition

The Uniting Church of Australia Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, the Pacific Islands Council of Queensland, the Pacific Islands Council of South Australia and the NSW Council for Pacific Communities acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we live and work.

We pay our respect to Elders and acknowledge their continuing relationship to this land and the on-going living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia. We also acknowledge the future aspirations of all First Nations peoples.

Through respectful relationships, we will work for the mutual flourishing of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

We commit ourselves in prayer and practice to this land of Australia and its people, seeking reconciliation, unity and equity.

Introduction

The Uniting Church of Australia Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, the Pacific Islands Council of Queensland, the Pacific Islands Council of South Australia, and the NSW Council for Pacific Communities welcome the opportunity to make a joint submission to the 'Building a Stronger Pacific Family: reforming the PALM scheme. Discussion Paper.'

Each of our organisations has had extensive involvement in the Seasonal Worker Program (SWP) and Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS). Our local congregations, church members, community groups and community service agencies have contact with workers across Australia, providing them with social, spiritual, material and financial support when needed.

The Uniting Church in Australia was involved in establishing the pilot for the Seasonal Worker Program and sat on the SWP Advisory Group, along with the Pacific Islands Council of Queensland.

We strongly support the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme because it has had a positive financial benefit for the majority of workers that have been able to come to Australia, their families, communities and the economies of the countries they have come from. At the same time, we also recognise negative social impacts on some families and communities in the countries of origin. A minority of workers have had negative experiences of being exploited and mistreated in Australia. Sometimes these cases of exploitation and mistreatment have been from employers and the employers' agents; in other cases, workers have suffered negative impacts outside the employment relationship due to excessive gambling or alcohol consumption in Australia. An aligned PALM scheme should account for the diverse experiences of workers whilst in Australia and include a welfare model that is adaptable and responsive to those experiences.

Expanding and improving the PALM scheme

1. What aspects of the PALM scheme result in 'red tape' for stakeholders (for employers, workers and participating countries)?

The critical concern of the submitting bodies is the problem of workers on the PALM scheme being brought to Australia and not being provided with enough work. Sometimes the factors that lead to the lack of work hours are outside the Approved Employer's control. In other cases, it seems that poor management of work placements and the number of workers results in too little work for the workers. Too often, there are long delays in rectifying the lack of work. Workers become frustrated. They cannot save money, and in some cases, their debts to the Approved Employer increase as accommodation, transport and health insurance costs are deferred. Other grievances with the Approved Employer, such as the standard of accommodation, become magnified. There is an increased likelihood that the workers will disengage from the PALM scheme the longer the period of little work drags on. There is a need for the Department to examine if any administrative requirements are contributing to the problem of not moving workers on to new workplaces with adequate work.

We recognise there will be trade-offs. The quicker the approval for a transfer of workers is granted, the greater the risk that some aspect of the arrangement may not be consistent with the Deed or Guidelines. The accommodation arrangement is an area of higher risk. However, the lack of workflow currently appears to be the more significant problem. A solution may be to allow fast-track transfers for AEs with a proven record of compliance with the Deed and Guidelines.

The other area of 'red tape' we encounter is trying to obtain documentation demonstrating that a worker has consented to deductions from their pay. It is often time-consuming to get the information from AEs, where the worker has requested an advocate act on their behalf. The workers seeking

clarification of their deductions have usually already tried to obtain that information themselves. We realise that when the AE actively assists a worker in understanding their deductions and reminds them of deductions they have consented to, we will not hear about it as the matter has been dealt with efficiently. The Department should examine if a better process could be put in place to ensure workers can easily access the documentation of the deductions they have agreed to.

The same problem exists for many workers trying to track the repayment of the initial debts they owe the employer. Even with the contracts and payslips, those assisting workers often need to establish a spreadsheet to calculate the amount of debt that needs to be repaid at a given point of time. Again, the Department should examine how the 'red tape' around workers tracking their debt repayments could be made easier. It would make sense to have a requirement that the AE must provide an update on the debt owed on each payslip. We understand that some AEs already provide tracking of the reduction in debt on payslips.

We would support a streamlined application process for employers who have already been on the program, and the workers will be returning to the same location, in the same accommodation, with the same transport arrangements and doing the same work as previously approved. We see little value in requiring employers providing 'repeat' placements to undertake the whole application process every time. However, the accommodation and pastoral care arrangements for such repeat placements should be checked at least every three years to ensure appropriate standards are maintained and contacts are correct and current.

Efforts should be made to reduce the red tape involved with workers accessing their superannuation at the end of their placement. There is a great need to streamline the ability of workers to reclaim their superannuation. We have spoken to workers who have done four placements on the SWP and never reclaimed their superannuation. Community members in Australia and the unions have assisted workers in reclaiming their superannuation. Back in the Pacific Islands, businesses are now dedicated to helping workers reclaim their superannuation. However, we have had reports of businesses taking payment from the workers and then not delivering on the recovery of superannuation.

There is also a need to address the red tape that married couples experience when both partners come on the PALM scheme and they are sent to separate work placements. In our experience it can take months for them to be reunited where they desire to be together at the same worksite. In some of the cases we are aware of or have advocated for, AEs appear to make no effort to reunite married couples. The separation of married couples can result in both workers disengaging from the scheme.

2. Is the 'red tape reduction working group' the appropriate avenue to take forward the red-tape reduction agenda?

The red tape reduction working group is an appropriate place to identify red tape in the PALM scheme that may be addressed. However, any proposed reforms from the working group should be subject to consultation with other stakeholders. There will be issues of trade-off, where reducing administrative requirements on AEs may reduce the safeguards for workers to ensure they have conditions and rights as outlined in the Deed and Guidelines.

3. How could the existing structures for consultation (for example, PLAM Advisory Group, sector committees, HOM roundtables and regular online LSU updates) be adjusted to improve consultation? Are additional consultation fora needed?

The submitting bodies acknowledge that many stakeholders exist in the PALM scheme for its size. Accordingly, the Departments and the Pacific Labour Facility have extensively consulted with stakeholders on many issues impacting the scheme.

The consultation could be improved by involving more workers directly, allowing some workers, or former workers, to be members of consultation groups. Some former workers are now permanent residents in Australia and may have more ability to participate.

4. In your opinion, are there other aspects of the scheme that need to change to improve the scheme? If so, what are they, and what changes would you suggest?

Pre-departure and on-arrival briefing processes could be improved. Workers who have been to Australia multiple times are unlikely to need the same pre-departure and on-arrival briefing as those coming for the first time. In contrast, many workers report feeling overwhelmed with the amount of information provided to them in a short space of time on arrival. Mixed groups of workers who have already been to Australia on several placements, with workers coming for the first time, is also a way to assist the workers arriving for the first time to be mentored into living in Australia. Creating more meaningful opportunities for workers to meet with community representatives and union officials would enable workers to decide if they wish to build relationships with such bodies. An extensive informal network of community support people across Australia already provide their time voluntarily to assist workers in settling into Australia and understanding how things function in Australia.

Another improvement to the PALM scheme would be adapting and providing information to workers in more culturally-appropriate formats that recognise most workers are coming from an oral, rather than written, culture. Where possible, information should be provided by people of the same cultural background as the workers so that faces and language are familiar. The booklet provided to workers in their language is high quality and comprehensive. However, we regularly encounter workers who have lost or not read it. Increasing broader community engagement in the scheme would be one way to assist workers in better integrating into Australia. For example, providing video or podcast materials on social media would be a better way to get information to workers than written materials. There is also an opportunity to utilise community radio broadcasts in languages workers understand. There is also a need to repeat messages about things the workers will be unfamiliar with, which are essential for them to know.

In addition, developing an App for workers is likely to be an effective way to allow them to readily access helpful information about the PALM scheme and living in Australia.

The Government should develop and publish a Mediation and Conflict Resolution Policy and Procedure. This protocol should provide independent, professional and culturally-relevant mediation for disputes between AEs and workers where existing dispute resolution processes have failed. Workers will be more likely to seek assistance if they understand the process and are not afraid they will be penalised for raising legitimate concerns. In turn, employers will be able to respond to concerns raised and be a part of the solution. We recognise that such mediation would need to take place promptly, as it would be inappropriate to leave workers without income for a prolonged period of mediation or leave them in a situation where they may be subject to retaliatory action by the employer. At the moment, when a dispute cannot be resolved by discussion between the AE and the workers, the workers are more likely to disengage from the PALM scheme.

While compliance with accommodation obligations appears to have significantly improved across AEs, we occasionally encounter inappropriate accommodation arrangements that have been approved or where the AE has varied the accommodation arrangement without notifying the PLF or the Department. Thus, we believe an on-going program of auditing accommodation arrangements should continue to ensure AEs take their accommodation obligations seriously.

It would be desirable for workers to be provided with a simple accommodation checklist in their language, provided by the Department or PLF, on arrival to check that the accommodation they are going into meets the required standards of the Deed and Guidelines.

Many situations arise where workers require emergency support and lack the funds to pay for what is needed. The current emergency fund administered through the Community Connections Program has been invaluable in addressing those needs where no other source of support can be accessed. The submitting bodies believe that fund should be expanded or, alternatively, a completely separate stand-alone fund created to be available for such emergencies. Such a fund could be administered by the Commonwealth Government, the PLF or community organisations, depending on what arrangement the Government believes would deliver the best outcomes for workers in need.

There is a need to ensure that staff working for Labour Sending Units are properly trained to support workers and understand relevant Australian laws. Workers are still not being correctly briefed before departure in some cases.

We also believe that social and community service organisations in the sending countries should be funded to be involved in pre-departure preparation for workers and post-placement reintegration. The Uniting Church has had direct experience of having sent its own members on overseas work placements with partner churches and having those people suffer significant social harm as a result of not being provided with adequate support after the placement on return to Australia.

Family accompaniment

1. In what circumstances would you support families accompanying workers and are there any circumstances under which you would not support this initiative?

The increasing length of PALM scheme placements, including for low-skilled work such as harvesting, increases the risks of social harm to workers and their families due to prolonged separation. We have had increasing reports of these negative social impacts during the COVID-19 pandemic while workers spent an extended time in Australia. We believe the risk of these harms would be reduced if workers were permitted to bring their families with them on the placement.

Circumstances where it would not be possible to have families accompany workers would be:

- Where the work does not generate sufficient income for the family to be supported; and,
- Where it is not possible to secure suitable accommodation for the family.

It is questionable about the suitability of having a family living on a farm in a remote location where there are no social supports for the family.

Where family accompaniment would not be financially or socially viable, it would be desirable that workers on the PALM scheme are supported by their employers to go home and visit their families multiple times during any placement of two years or more. Visits home are crucial for PALM workers who are being placed on the minimum wage and who are unlikely to be able to afford visits home. Ultimately, families should not be separated for lengthy periods. Workers often do not understand the cost of travel back from Australia to their home, and the cost should be emphasised before the worker joins the PALM scheme. They must understand the risks of prolonged separation from their family if they go on the scheme.

2. How would you suggest we overcome any identified challenges for workers who bring their families to Australia?

There will be a need to provide families with community and social connections to assist them with resettlement. It would be helpful if multiple families could settle in the same area to provide mutual support to each other.

3. Are there additional implementation challenges or risks the Government should be considering?

The Government needs to ensure it has developed a policy and supports for situations where family violence may occur. There needs to be a consistent response to incidents of family violence. Our preference would be that where the spouse, partner or children are the survivors of the family violence, they have the option to remain in Australia for the length of the placement where it is financially viable for them to do so. The working perpetrator should be required to make payments to support the family where separation occurs due to family violence. The spouse, partner and children of working age should be permitted to work in Australia.

There will need to be education for the spouse or partner about domestic and family violence and what support is available if it occurs.

Access to education for children should be free.

4. How would you like to be involved in the staged implementation of Family Accompaniment? Are there locations, sectors or employers who would be well placed to support the initial cohort of families?

The submitting bodies would like to be actively involved in the co-design of Family Accompaniment. In addition, we would like to be involved in efforts to connect families with the local community and social support.

5. What criteria, if any, should workers and families be required to meet in order to participate?

There is a need to ensure that arrangements that will be made for the family will be sufficient for their situation to be financially viable.

Making seasonal/short-term deployments more attractive for employers

1. What are the biggest obstacles to more employers joining the scheme?

In the view of the submitting bodies, growth in the number of employers entering the scheme should not be at the expense of ensuring that the employers in question are suitable. Unsuitable employers joining the PALM scheme can generate a large amount of work for the Commonwealth Government, the PLF, community groups that need to support workers and unions, as demonstrated by the situation that occurred with NQ Powerpac.

The current vetting of employers entering the PALM scheme works well to ensure that the employers are likely to treat the workers fairly and in compliance with the law and the requirements of the scheme. With examples of highly inappropriate employers having been able to enter the Seasonal Worker Program in the past, we would be reluctant to see the probity standards for the PALM scheme lowered to make it easier for employers to enter the scheme. We would support making it easier for

employers to join the scheme if the changes to make it easier did not lower the integrity standards to ensure the employer is suitable to join the scheme.

It is desirable that employers on the scheme and looking to join it be encouraged to understand Pacific Island or Timor-Leste culture (as relevant) to help them interact with workers appropriately and reduce the likelihood of cultural misunderstandings.

In our view, it is not the types of employers that are important, but rather that the employers are suitable to work with people from the Pacific Islands and Timor-Leste. We have seen significant problems where the employer or their supervisors have a limited understanding of Pacific Islands or Timor-Leste cultures. Where employers have a limited desire to learn about the culture of the workers, it is much harder for them to build trust with the workers and relate well with them.

2. Are there other ways to make the scheme more attractive to employers of seasonal workers?

A key challenge the PALM scheme faces is competition with other types of workers. Employers of seasonal workers can have the option of employing working holiday makers or people willing to work illegally in breach of their visas. Employers are not required to provide the same support for these alternative workforces. Thus, making the scheme more attractive would be served by more significant efforts to end the exploitation of working holiday makers and people working illegally. Currently, addressing the exploitation of working holiday makers and people working illegally results in very few cases compared to the scale of the problem. Our direct experience of people working illegally is that they have no trouble finding Australian employers willing to employ them, suggesting such employers assess the possibility of prosecution as low risk.

Workers on the PALM scheme largely enjoy improved working and living conditions. Usually, the scheme has led to better overall economic benefits for employers. In addition, compared to other programs, such as the working holiday scheme, the PALM scheme is likely to provide employers with a more secure and trained workforce, particularly where workers are returning over multiple seasons.

4. How do you think this policy can be administered effectively (invoicing, systems changes, communications)?

Regarding the Commonwealth Government's commitment to take on the flight cost reimbursement from workers, the submitting bodies acknowledge that it will mean employers will have less upfront risk in bringing workers in. It would be our strong preference that the Commonwealth Government collects the repayment from the worker through the Departing Australia Superannuation Payment (DASP). Using the DASP will reduce the early deductions that workers experience, which can create hardship in the early weeks of a placement. The other advantage of taking the payment from the DASP would be that it means the Commonwealth will locate the superannuation and could also set the system up to assist the worker in recovering the rest of the superannuation.

There will be risks with the policy. AEs will be less invested in retaining workers, as the debt repayment has meant the employer has a financial incentive to build a relationship with the workers to retain them. The lack of debt may increase AEs that do not make efforts to keep workers. It may also increase the prevalence of AEs that bring over too many workers, leaving workers with inadequate levels of work. The Commonwealth Government needs to consider further measures to deter AEs from bringing too many workers to Australia for which there is insufficient work.

Effectively, the Commonwealth Government will be taking on the risk of ending up with unpaid debts where work placements are terminated early. The Commonwealth Government needs to structure in measures to ensure employers do not terminate placements earlier due to the lower financial cost of

doing so, with the Commonwealth Government having taken on the collection of the debt for the flight costs.

One way to counter the problem would be for the Commonwealth Government and PLF to streamline the transfer of workers to other AEs where an existing AE fails to provide adequate levels of work for the workers.

Relocating the Australian Agriculture Visa within the PALM scheme

1. Do the employer-initiated options for portability already negotiated in the context of the AAV and the PALM scheme remain appropriate? These include:

- Transfer agreed between approved employers (AEs) offshore (prior to mobilisation);
- Transfer agreed onshore between AEs (unplanned or details of an agreed offshore transfer not finalised); and
- Secondments (unplanned to host employers who may not be PALM AEs).

The submitting bodies support the above portability arrangements, provided sufficient safeguards remain to manage the risks of inappropriate work placements or accommodation arrangements. However, the greater need experienced at the moment is ensuring that workers maintain adequate levels of work. Thus, we accept the need to take some risks about work and accommodation arrangements if it will improve workers' workflow to keep them fully employed.

2. Under proposed arrangements, the cost of travel between employers would be incurred by employers. Which employer should bear these costs? Similarly, how would the transfer of other administrative responsibilities best operate?

The submitting bodies strongly support that the cost of the travel for the transfer falls to the employers.

It would make sense that the worker's well-being obligations under the Deed and Guidelines fall on the new employer where that employer is an AE. For secondments, the worker well-being obligations should remain with the AE, especially where the new employer is not a PALM scheme AE. For secondments, there would then be an obligation on the sending AE to ensure that the new employer is suitable and committed to complying with the requirements of the Deed and Guidelines.

4. What are the risks for workers associated with a marketplace model, and how would you propose managing these?

Risks to workers should be minimised by ensuring there is always an AE responsible for the worker well-being requirements of the Deed and Guidelines. Also, there will need to be oversight by the Commonwealth Government to ensure the number of workers being brought in does not exceed the available work. As workers have no entitlement to social security payments in Australia, they must be provided full-time work whenever possible.

5. How should worker movements be tracked and monitored, and who should be responsible?

The submitting bodies strongly believe that worker movements should be tracked and monitored, given that workers have no access to social security. If they lose their employment, they can end up with no legal means to obtain an income. If they lose access to employer-organised accommodation, they can end up homeless and often will not have access to government-funded housing services as they are foreign citizens on temporary visas.

We suggest that the employers be required to report taking on workers to the PLF, and the PLF undertake the monitoring and recording of where workers are placed, given they already have systems in place.

6. What role do you see industry accreditation schemes playing in the PALM scheme?

We do not believe there are currently any industry accreditation schemes of sufficient quality and scope to allow for a significant reduction of the vetting process undertaken by the PALM scheme. However, where a labour-hire business is licensed under a state government licensing scheme, this should allow for them to have a more streamlined path to becoming an approved employer. Such streamlining could be facilitated by the Department accepting proof of registration or the same paperwork provided to the relevant licensing authority. That said, there will still be a need to ensure appropriate accommodation is in place and that the employer can work effectively with people from the Pacific Islands or Timor-Leste. Such a streamlined process may become even easier if the Commonwealth Government implements a national labour-hire licensing scheme.

We have had over a decade of experience with industry accreditation schemes and third-party audits across various industries in Australia and overseas. From that experience, an effective accreditation scheme would need to interview workers in situations where they trust the interviewer and feel safe to disclose their treatment and conditions without fear of targeted or collective retaliation. Unfortunately, we are unaware of any existing industry accreditation schemes covering industries that PALM scheme workers are placed in that include such a measure as part of the accreditation process.

The Fair Farms and RCSA StaffSure certification lacks sufficient scope and oversight, particularly for welfare and accommodation issues.

8. Should a 'trusted trader' concept be introduced where employers may benefit under the scheme based on a track record of compliance and program performance? What benefits would be considered the most valuable by employers? Fast-tracked access to workers? Reduced reporting requirements? Other?

Where an AE has a proven and demonstrated track record of compliance and looking after workers to a high standard for at least three years on the scheme, as verified by independent conversations with workers at the end of placements, it would be acceptable to allow those employers to be subject to a lower level of regulation. Such a change would likely benefit smaller AEs, whom we know are disproportionately affected by the current amount of regulation on the PALM scheme. However, there would be some risk that with lower scrutiny over time, such employers may seek to cut corners, especially if the business environment becomes more difficult. For example, we have had experience with an approved employer initially providing excellent support to their workers. Yet we had a subsequent report that during a period that the business was not doing well, the employer had been verbally abusive to the workers and sought to impose unreasonable expectations.

9. Do you envisage risks to worker welfare associated with accreditation options?

There will be risks with a 'trusted trader' scheme, but on balance, we believe the benefits will outweigh the risks. On the positive side, it is likely to reduce the burden on AEs committed to treating workers well and free up regulatory oversight and effort for AEs that are breaching the Deed and Guidelines from time to time.

On the risk side, there could be very unscrupulous employers that plan to perform well for the specified period and then engage in exploitation when they know they will not be under scrutiny. Such planned exploitation would seem to be a low but genuine risk.

11. Would broadening geographic coverage to include urban areas pose a risk to workers?

The submitting bodies note that workers have already had placements on the fringes of Melbourne, including in Bacchus Marsh and Dandenong. However, there is a need for more significant social support in urban areas as the culture in such locations is even further from what most workers will have experienced back in their home countries.

About Us

The Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania

The Synod of Victoria and Tasmania is part of the Uniting Church in Australia, the country's third largest Christian denomination. The Uniting Church in Australia was formed in 1977, when three congregations – the Methodist Church of Australasia, the Presbyterian Church of Australia and the Congregational Union of Australia – came together.

We are one of six Synods comprising 600 congregations and more than 60,000 members. We also have 12 schools. We worship every week in more than 40 languages. Through worship, sharing the story of Jesus, and service in the community, we witness to the belief that life is most fully found in God.

Through UnitingCare, the Uniting Church in Australia is the largest non-government provider of community services in Australia, employing more than 70,000 Australians. We have formal partnerships with 32 churches in Asia and the Pacific and have also been instrumental in pioneering interfaith relationships, including other Christian denominations.

We have a strong sense of social justice and actively campaign on various issues, including the environment, modern slavery, asylum seekers, fair work and gambling. For example, we have campaigned against modern slavery in seafood production and processing from Thailand, garment production in India, cotton production out of Uzbekistan, palm oil production from Malaysia and on Australian farms.

The Uniting Church in Australia has also affirmed the importance of just and fair conditions in Australian workplaces.

Pacific Islands Council of Queensland

Pacific Islands Council of Qld Inc. (PICQ), formerly known as Pacific Islands Reference Group Inc., was formed under the auspice of Brisbane City Council as a result of the Vaka Pacifika community leader's forum in 2008. This forum identified the need for a Reference Group to highlight the disadvantages experienced by many members within the Pacific Islands communities.

PICQ represents the voice and views of Queensland-based Pacific Island national organisations, and in close consultation with them, at all levels of government and other agencies, on matters that affect their communities and individual well-being; and continue to work at enhancing the capacity of her members to participate fully in all aspects of Queensland society. PICQ is a non-profit community-incorporated association managed by volunteer representatives of member community groups and individuals who believe in the collective voice for the benefit of all Pacific Islanders.

As a voice, PICQ provides connections between governments (local, state and federal) and service organisations with community committees; provides submissions to governments when required; is the secretariat for Pacific Islands Qld networks for church leaders, climate change, youth, seniors and support for PI & their families in the Justice System), support for communities in providing public liability insurance for events, assistance in grant applications, collaborate with governments, universities and service organisations on initiatives and projects relevant to communities, manage Te Pasifika Haus (Pacific community hub).

Pacific Islands Council of South Australia

PICSA is a not-for-profit incorporated association managed by volunteers, who are representatives of member community groups and individuals, with a focus on equipping and empowering the Pacific Islands community of South Australia to become prosperous and successful communities that fully participate as Australians.

Our Work

Voice of South Australian Pacific Islanders to State and Federal government

Fostering cohesive community initiatives

Community capacity building

Developing collaborative relationships with communities (NGOs) outside of Pacific Islands Communities

Partnership with NGO, Corporate, Federal and State Governments.

Advocacy Role

Social Enterprise

Our Key Focus Areas

STRONG FAMILIES

Providing workshops and initiatives to support family cohesion, building capacity in parents and children to strengthen family unity. Partnering with the Department of Child Protection and local NGOs to identify and equip parents to participate in the child fostering program.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

PICSA partners with the APICC ministry (Aboriginal & Pacific Islands Christian Community) and the local churches to create a platform for connection and development where Pacific Islanders and the Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander community to explore, share and develop their Christian faith.

YOUTH

Providing an avenue for youth capacity building and development, physically, Mentally, Spiritually

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

PICSA contributes by partnering with a local training provider to engage communities in furthering their studies or accessing employment training. Partnering with employment agencies to engage Pacific Islanders in specified roles. Supporting International students from the Pacific Islands who are furthering their studies in South Australia.

ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

PICSA continues to explore business opportunities and creative financial pathways to encourage the Pacific Islands Community to contribute positively to the broader Australian economy.

LANGUAGE & CULTURAL HERITAGE

PICSA provides a platform for all Pacific Islands communities, including Timor Leste, to showcase their culture and language. PICSA is also establishing the first Pacific Islands School of Language and Culture, where communities will provide language and cultural classes.

HEALTH and WELL BEING

PICSA provides avenues to provide positive Health awareness workshops, preventative approaches and well-being. PICSA provides these avenues in partnership with local agencies and NGOs. For instance, 'life be in it' Cancer Foundation, Public Health Network (PHN). Organising sports day in partnerships with local governments (councils)

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

PICSA engages in initiatives that promote the Pacific Islands Culture through different platforms of Art, i.e. Musical, Theatre, contemporary music, dance

SPORT AND RECREATION

PICSA engages in sports and recreation initiatives through partnerships with local sporting bodies to provide an opportunity for the local Pacific Islands community. This includes the South Australian Rugby Union, Life be in it, and South Australian Rugby League. We are providing activities for senior citizens.

NSW Council for Pacific Communities

Our VISION is to create opportunities for our Pacific Communities.

Our MISSION is to empower, advocate, partner and share information across Pacific communities in NSW, Australia.

Who are we?

NSW Council for Pacific Communities (NSWCPC) is a registered, not-for-profit organisation established in 2003 as a peak body for collaborative work with government and Pacific communities across NSW.

The NSWCPC's focus has been to strengthen core values within our communities. It was formed as a result of the NSW Government's Pacific Youth Partnership. This body was then established with the advice of Pacific community leaders and representatives by the Community Relations Commission (now Multicultural NSW), which continues to provide valuable and sound advice to the members of the NSWCPC throughout its leadership since its inception.

History

The NSW Council for Pacific Communities was established to cover eight Regional Advisory Councils;

- Manly & Dee Why
- Mt Druitt, Blacktown, Parramatta & Penrith
- St George, Sutherland, Eastern Suburbs & Sydney
- Canterbury, Bankstown, Auburn & Ashfield
- Campbelltown, Liverpool & Fairfield
- Newcastle, Hunter Region
- Griffith, Riverian Region
- Wollongong, Illawarra Region

In 2014 restructure of the NSW Council for Pacific Communities has seen the 8 Regional Advisory Councils replaced using the model of the Ethnic Communities Council of NSW (ECC) with an invitation to an individual OR organisational memberships from government, NGOs, churches and groups that engage with Pacific communities to align with the NSW Council for Pacific Communities. This restructure will reflect our on-going commitment to providing collaborative work in New South Wales.

What We Do

The NSW Council for Pacific Communities represents:

- The interests of Pacific communities to government
- Helps to develop projects to benefit Pacific communities
- Aims are to enhance trust, understanding

- Encourages community capacity
- Build and develop collaborative relationships
- Enabling communication and partnership across the community, private and government sectors
- Advocacy and Networking
- Support Pacific organisations and groups in NSW

Key Focus Areas

Culture and Heritage

Pacific communities are recognised for their diversity across NSW through the promotion of their culture, traditions and heritage, ultimately contributing to the vibrancy of growing and emerging multicultural communities across NSW.

Strong Families

Pacific families are strong families with foundations built on our proud culture and heritage that enable us to live and develop in NSW's current social, cultural, economic, and spiritual contexts.

Education and Employment

Pacific communities of NSW become versatile in their enhanced knowledge about options to pathways in education, training and employment, ultimately creating sustainable communities for future generations.

Sustainable Entrepreneurship

Pacific communities continue to strive and become robust in exploring business opportunities and are aware of creative financial pathways in contributing positively to the broader Australian economy.

Youth

NSW Pacific Youth contributes to their sustainable development in all areas through exploring their options and contributing proactively and positively to the broader NSW community.

Health

Pacific communities are healthy and proactive in preventing health challenges, which ultimately affect individuals and their own communities.

Art

Pacific communities are recognised for their diverse and substantial contribution through the rich culture and contemporary flavours to Arts in NSW.

Public Relations

Pacific communities are recognised for their effective communications strategy in promoting their richness and diversity throughout the growing multiculturalism in NSW.

Sport

Pacific communities continue to strive in sports and develop in all areas contributing in many ways to the community.



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



NSW COUNCIL FOR
Pacific Communities