

Submission by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation

PALM Arrival and Departure Briefings Stakeholder Survey

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Nursing &
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Federation**



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Introduction

1. The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) is Australia's largest national union and professional nursing and midwifery organisation. In collaboration with the ANMF's eight state and territory branches, we represent the professional, industrial and political interests of more than 345,000 nurses, midwives and care-workers across the country.
2. Our members work in the public and private health, aged care and disability sectors across a wide variety of urban, rural and remote locations. We work with them to improve their ability to deliver safe and best practice care in each and every one of these settings, fulfil their professional goals and achieve a healthy work/life balance.
3. Our strong and growing membership and integrated role as both a trade union and professional organisation provides us with a complete understanding of all aspects of the nursing and midwifery professions and see us uniquely placed to defend and advance our professions.
4. Through our work with members, we aim to strengthen the contribution of nursing and midwifery to improving Australia's health and aged care systems, and the health of our national and global communities.
5. The ANMF welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) Scheme arrival and departure briefings stakeholder survey. We reiterate the necessity of these briefings, and we welcome the opportunity to give feedback that will improve this important feature of the PALM scheme.



PALM Arrival and Departure Briefings Stakeholder Survey

1. Is the 7-calendar day timeframe for conducting arrival briefings sufficient?

Currently, an arrival briefing must occur within seven (7) days after workers arrive. Is the 7-calendar day timeframe for conducting arrival briefings sufficient? Please select your preferred option:

- Retain the current requirement to complete the arrival briefing within 7 calendar days, in line with Section 8.3.1 of the Guidelines
- **Begin the arrival briefing within 7 calendar days of worker arrival and complete it progressively over the following weeks.**
- Other (please specify)

6. The ANMF acknowledges the value of timely briefings. However, a seven-day timeframe may not be sufficient time to schedule a briefing, which we would prefer the opportunity to attend in person. We would suggest that this be extended to a 14-day period from the date an invitation is received.

2. How often are you invited to attend an arrival briefing?

7. The guidelines require that Unions are invited to arrival briefings, however, the ANMF has had limited to no invitations to attend. Our feedback would therefore be that the employer be required to invite all unions for which union coverage applies, this would allow for the worker to have the option to select the most appropriate union for them and empower that choice. We would also suggest that if Employers are unable to complete this, then the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) has accountability to ensure that Unions have been invited to the arrival briefings and that there be a clear process developed to ensure this occurs.



3. Is the timeframe for conducting departure briefings sufficient?

Currently, a departure briefing must occur no earlier than 14 days and no later than 7 calendar days before workers depart from Australia. Please select the option that best describes your view:

- I'm not sure / I don't have a strong opinion
- Departure briefings should commence earlier
- I think this timing works well
- Departure briefings should conclude later
- Other (please specify)

8. We have limited invitation to attend departure briefings and therefore unable to comment sufficiently. However, we would request that there is a requirement for unions to participate in departure briefings. We would suggest that this should occur ideally one calendar month before departure to ensure unresolved matters raised by the worker during a departure meeting can be actioned.

4. When you have a question about the PALM scheme, how easy is it to find the answer online?

Please rate from 1 to 10.

9. The ANMF believes that the useability of the PALM scheme website is dependent on the entity or person looking for the information.

5. Do you know where to look online when you have a question about the PALM scheme?

- Yes
- No



6. Would you support the idea of a mobile application for the PALM scheme?

The app could include things like articles, factsheets, and resources for workers – all easy to access on a phone

10. The ANMF would like to state that although creating greater accessibility for PALM workers to gain information that will assist them, it cannot be assume that they will have access to a smartphone device that will enable this. Although this could be effective for some, it will not be for a large portion of the group. It is necessary that alternative resources need to be made available for this to be an effective endeavour.

7. Do you think that PALM scheme information is delivered in a good way and at the right time?

- Yes
- No

11. The ANMF is unable to comment on this as we have had limited invitations to the arrival or departure briefings, and it is difficult for us to know what information is delivered.

8. Would it be useful for new workers to arrive in Australia with a basic level of English literacy?

This could help ensure that workers understand and retain briefing information and sustain worker welfare, health and safety.

- Yes

- No

9. Do you have any suggestions to improve the PALM arrival and departure briefings?

12. Currently Union involvement is required at the arrival briefings as stated in the PALM Scheme Deed and Guidelines, however, the ANMF has not always been informed of new arrivals. We would request that a designated process for who is required to inform the relevant ANMF branch of new PALM arrivals be developed.



10. What topics should the Welfare Support Person explain instead? Please list the topics you believe are best suited to be delivered by the Welfare Support Person.

13. The ANMF strongly supports a discussion regarding healthcare with the PALM workers, the lack of accessibility to suitable healthcare is a concern that the ANMF would like to highlight.
14. It would also be beneficial for the Welfare support person to discuss the realities of the income earned under the PALM scheme, such as income tax and the various debts that are accrued under this scheme. It would also be beneficial to discuss how to access superannuation entitlements on departure from Australia.

11. Which parts of the arrival briefing would be better delivered by the Labour Sending Unit? Please list the topics you believe are best suited to be delivered by the Labour Sending Unit.

15. It is difficult for the ANMF to comment on this sufficiently as we have had limited invitations to participate in arrival briefings and are not fully aware of the information that is provided in these sessions. We would reiterate that there needs to be an improved process to include relevant unions in these briefings.

12. How urgent is it that each type of information is understood? Please rank the following types of information from most urgent to least urgent for PALM workers to understand during their time in Australia. Consider when each topic is most helpful for workers to know.

Financial (for example, deductions)
Employment (for example, hours of work)
Wellbeing and health
Accommodation and transport
Public service (for example, FWO resources)
Regional (for example, the location of shops)



Please explain your top priority and why you think it should be understood first.

1. Financial
 2. Wellbeing and Health
 3. Accommodation and transport
 4. Employment (for example, work hours)
 5. Public service (for example, FWO resources)
 6. Regional (for example, the location of shops)
16. The ANMF would like to note that we do not consider these topics ranked lower to be any less important and that we believe that all these factors are important to the overall success of the program.
17. ANMF has ranked “Financial” as the top priority as our members report on the main reasons for partaking in the scheme is to send money back to their families. They are often disillusioned by the scheme after finding out expenses are much higher than they anticipated, and they can send little to no money to their families. It is reported that they were not told about many of the expenses / tax or it was not made clear how this would reduce their income – i.e. bills, rent, furniture, healthcare and tax.
18. Although we listed “Financial” as first, we would like to reiterate the importance of equitable access to healthcare. We are concerned about the lack of access to affordable and adequate healthcare. The ANMF recognises that PALM workers are required to have private health insurance, however, this is not appropriate for this group. With substantial out of pocket fees and waiting times for the use of benefits, this is not suitable for vulnerable workers.

Conclusion

19. The ANMF welcomes the opportunity to give feedback on the arrival and departure briefings for the PALM scheme. We believe that this process needs to be reformed to ensure that Unions are involved in these briefings. We believe that to have a clear tripartite approach, there needs to be an efficient process in place to ensure that Unions are involved in these briefings. We would welcome changes that ensure this.