

Question on Notice
No. 116
Asked on 25 February 2021

Ms A Leahy asked Premier and Minister for Trade (Hon. A Palaszczuk)—

QUESTION:

With reference to National Cabinet's decision on 11 December 2020 for bilateral arrangements for the Pacific Labor Scheme and Season Worker Program—

Will the Premier advise (reported separately by scheme and program) how many (a) workers have come to Queensland, (b) people have been approved by the State Government and (c) applications are awaiting approval?

ANSWER:

The Pacific Labour Scheme and Seasonal Worker Programme are Federal Government initiatives. Queensland has only become directly involved due to the need to quarantine workers on arrival.

Approval of recruitments under the Pacific Labour Scheme and Seasonal Worker Programme is a multi-step process involving both the State and Federal Governments:

- the Queensland Government provides conditional approval for a recruitment proposal, and for on-farm quarantine, the international quarantine plan
- Federal agencies assess the applicant's recruitment plan, including their labour market testing and proposed employment arrangements
- the Queensland Government provides final approval, including endorsement of the international quarantine plan by the Queensland Chief Health Officer's delegate where required
- the Federal Government finalises arrangements for the recruitment.

It currently takes Federal Government agencies four to six weeks from Queensland Government final approval to finalise the arrangements for arrival of the workers. This includes medical examinations, issuing of visas, and pre-departure briefings.

I am advised by the Director-General of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet that as of 26 February 2021, the status of proposals for seasonal workers under the Pacific Labour Scheme and Seasonal Worker Programme arriving in Queensland was as follows:

- a total of 931 workers in total had come to Queensland – 176 under the Pacific Labour Scheme and 755 under the Seasonal Worker Programme
- the Queensland Government had given final approval for a further 42 workers to arrive in Queensland – 20 under the Pacific Labour Scheme and 22 under the Seasonal Worker Programme
- the Queensland Government had given conditional approval for a further 302 workers to arrive in Queensland – 74 under the Pacific Labour Scheme and 228 under the Seasonal Worker Programme pending federal agency assessment.
- there were 39 proposals for quarantine of workers awaiting final approval, including 14 with conditional approval – five under the Pacific Labour Scheme, including two with conditional approval, and 34 under the Seasonal Worker Programme, including 12 with conditional approval.