



FROM THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S DESK

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Solomon Islands - Australia Partnership

New opportunities for Solomon Islanders to live, work and study in Australia



As Australia's High Commissioner to the Solomon Islands, I've been struck by the strong people-to-people links that exist between our two countries.

Over many years, the flow of people between Australia and Solomon Islands has grown, in terms of tourists, students, investors, workers and many others. In that regard, Australia is proud to:

- be the number one source of tourists and all international visitors to Solomon Islands
- support over 6,900 Solomon Islanders to date to work in Australia through the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme, and
- provide over 290 Solomon Islanders with scholarships since 2014 to study at universities in Australia.



Pacific Engagement Visa information session with APTC students

I have, however, heard from many Solomon Islanders they would like to see further opportunities to connect with Australia.

We have listened, and Australia announced recently the creation

of a new visa for our Pacific Island neighbours, which will provide Solomon Islanders with a new pathway to live, work, and obtain permanent residency in Australia.

The Pacific Engagement Visa (PEV) is a landmark initiative that will enhance Australia and Solomon Islands' relationship, strengthen people-to-people links and encourage greater cultural, business and education exchange.



Pacific Engagement Visa information session at the Solomon Islands National University, SINU.

In the first year of the program, up to 150 eligible Solomon Islands nationals can apply for Australian permanent residence. Pacific Engagement Visa holders, with their families, will have unprecedented access to live, work and study in Australia.

The Pacific Engagement Visa makes use of a random selection ballot to provide equal access for applicants regardless of skill level or gender. The ballot was

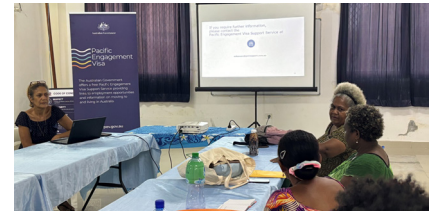
opened for registrations on 3 June, and will close on 1 August 2024.

Those drawn from the ballot will have the opportunity to apply for a Pacific Engagement Visa, for themselves, a partner, and legally dependent children. The process of applying for the Pacific Engagement Visa is simple and fair. All you need to do is register online on pev.gov.au. To be eligible for PEV, you need to be:

- a Solomon Islands citizen and have a valid Solomon Islands passport;
- between the ages of 18 and 45 (inclusive);
- born in, or have a parent born in, Solomon Islands, Australia, or New Zealand; and
- able to afford the SBD150 registration fee as well as the visa, moving and settlement costs involved in migrating to Australia.

The Australian Government has established the Pacific Engagement Visa Support Service to share information about the program in public seminars, help those drawn from the ballot connect with Australian employers, and prepare PEV holders for life in Australia.

To find out about upcoming information seminars in Honiara, go to <https://www.pev.gov.au/participating-countries/solomon-islands>. The seminars aim to share information about the program, including an opportunity to ask questions and understand the next steps for the PEV applicants.



A public PEV information session with Freda Wickham, In-country Program Lead

For information about how to register for the ballot, scan the QR code or visit <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/pacific-engagement/ballot-registration>

I strongly believe the PEV is a special opportunity for our friends and neighbours in Solomon Islands and will improve and uplift the standard of living for many people across all the provinces.

Lukim iu neks taem!

