

APRIL 2013



STRENGTHENING PACIFIC PARTNERSHIPS UPDATE



Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment



WORD FROM RSE NATIONAL MANAGER



Talofa lava, Malo e lelei, Kam na mauri, Talofa, Gud de tru olgeta, Kia ora tatou.

This is my first newsletter as RSE National Manager in the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment.

work for us, for our Pacific states and of course in many regions. We started the year by hosting a Ministerial visit from the Solomon Islands led by Honourable Clay Forau, Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Relations and his officials in February. The visit provided Minister Forau and his delegation the opportunity to meet with Solomon Islands RSE workers and New Zealand employers in the Nelson, Wairarapa and Hawkes Bay regions. I was also fortunate to get around the regions to both Hawkes Bay and Nelson where I spoke with some RSE employers, workers and government officials.

In this April/May issue of the RSE: SPP newsletter, we look at the arrangements to facilitate negotiation for an Inter-Agency Understanding (IAU) with the Ministry and Papua New Guinea to be part of the RSE. You will also read about a further update from Ken Mitchell of Brandheart, a New Zealand firm who provides tailor-made programmes to RSE Pacific officials under the RSE: SPP and a further update on Vakameasina programme. We also profile Pick Hawke's Bay Incorporated

It is a privilege for me to lead the New Zealand Government's strategic management of the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) policy, and the implementation of our Strengthening Pacific Partnerships initiative. Although there is a lot to learn and both programmes move fast, I am really enjoying the role and count myself lucky to have such a great team to work with.

It's certainly been a busy start for the year for RSE: Strengthening Pacific Partnership

(PHB), an RSE employer who had first received RSE accreditation in February 2009 and has been part of the RSE programme since then. And our profile country for this edition is Papua New Guinea.

There is plenty of challenging and exciting work in front of us and I look forward to working with you as part of the RSE: Strengthening Pacific Partnership initiative. I would also like to acknowledge and thank you for your efforts so far in contributing to SPP work.

Matt Hoskin
National Manager Recognised Seasonal Employment

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The Department of Labour was integrated into the new Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment on 1 July 2012. All references to "Department of Labour" now refer to the Labour Group, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

MATT HOSKIN'S PROFILE

Matt Hoskin is currently the Acting National Manager, Recognised Seasonal Employment (RSE) in the Immigration Group, New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

Matt manages a team of five in the RSE Strategic Management Unit – two regional Relationship Managers based across New Zealand, an RSE Relationship Manager: SPP, a Senior Adviser: SPP and a Business Advisor. Matt also manages the Attraction Unit which consists of 5 employer Relationship Managers across New Zealand (2 for the Pacific and 3 for employers of highly skilled migrants) and 2 client managers based in London covering the United Kingdom and Europe. The role of the Attraction Unit is to support New Zealand employers to find, recruit and retain the workers that they need.

Matt has worked for the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (formerly the New Zealand Department of Labour) for 7 years and came to New Zealand as a migrant from the United Kingdom in 1998.



SOLOMON ISLANDS MINISTER HON CLAY FORAU MINISTERIAL VISIT TO NEW ZEALAND

The Foreign Minister of the Solomon Islands, Hon Clay Forau, and his delegation recently visited New Zealand as a guest of the New Zealand Government to observe the RSE scheme in action, including meetings with Solomon Islands RSE workers and New Zealand employers in Nelson, Wairarapa and Hawkes Bay. The visit provided an opportunity to boost the already successful participation of the Solomon Islands in the RSE scheme.

Minister Forau started his tour in Queenstown including a site visit to Darling Orchards in Ettrick. The Minister was given a tour of the orchards where he met and talked in length with some of his compatriots. The discussion centred on the type of work they do, their core responsibilities, and the working and living environment. The workers spoke highly of the opportunity afforded them to be able to earn money for their families back in their homeland. They don't find the work difficult and while they are happy with what they do, they do miss their families back home.

The workers were very complementary of their employers, Sally and Stephen Darling. "The Darlings are excellent hosts and they treat us very well. They have provided this opportunity for us and we see them as our second family", said one of the workers.

Upon meeting with Minister Forau, the Darlings conveyed their appreciation for the contribution the Solomon Islands workers are making to their business. "We can't speak highly enough of our workers from the Solomon Islands. They are very productive and are always happy and a pleasure to work

with. They've proven to us that our decision to recruit from the Solomon Islands is the correct one", said Sally.

The Darlings mentioned that they had visited the Solomon Islands and met with families of some of the workers. When asked by the Minister about their views of the Solomon Islands and whether they see opportunities for other collaboration, the Darlings identified the horticulture and agriculture industries as having great potential, and offered their assistance to work with the Solomon Islands Government to implement initiatives in this area. The Minister acknowledged the Darlings for hosting his visit and will have further discussions with members of the Solomon Islands Government relating to other opportunities when he returns home.

Minister Forau also visited RSE employers in Nelson, Wairarapa and the Hawkes Bay. These visits provided Minister Forau with a comprehensive understanding of how the RSE programme works from the perspective of both workers and employers. During his visits the Minister met with Solomon Islands workers, employers and regional stakeholders.

At the conclusion of his visit to the Hawkes Bay region, Minister Forau was hosted at Pick Hawkes Bay by around 200 Solomon Islands workers from Pick Hawkes Bay, Bostocks and Apollo Apples. Minister Forau and his delegation were treated to a night of dancing, celebration and festivity from his people. Catherine Sheardown, Pick Hawke's Bay RSE Liaison Officer, was responsible for organising the event was thrilled with the response from the workers.

Anthony Rarere, Pick Hawkes Bay General Manager expressed his views about his workers from the Solomon Islands. "I'm very proud to be part of RSE, and I'm especially proud to be the largest employer of Solomon Island workers in New Zealand. I find their work ethic and enthusiasm to be unmatched by any other Pacific Island country we recruit from. I sincerely hope we can increase our numbers out of the Solomons next season."

Minister Forau was very impressed with the evening. "This was an unbelievable night, it's like I'm back in my country. Thank you to the workers and particularly to Anthony Rarere and Pick Hawkes Bay for hosting this event and to all employers for your empathy towards us as Solomon Islanders and our culture".

Minister Forau also had some words for his people – "You must continue to work hard and raise your level of performance.

Remain faithful and loyal to your work and maintain good working relationships with your employers and the communities you live in while in New Zealand. This way you will earn the trust and confidence of your employers, which could lead to more opportunities for your brothers and sisters back in the Solomon Islands"



MINISTER FORAU WITH MEMBERS OF THE PACIFIC BUSINESS COUNCIL IN AUCKLAND.



MINISTER FORAU WITH SOME OF THE ATTENDEES OF THE 'FISH HOOK SUMMIT' IN NAPIER.





MINISTER FORAU WITH OWNER STEPHEN DARLING AND SOME OF THE SOLOMON ISLANDS WORKERS AT DARLINGS ORCHARDS.

New Zealand and Hon Murray McCully, New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade to discuss labour mobility issues, a range of key bilateral issues, and a deeper cooperation with the Solomon Islands on a range of Pacific Islands-related matters.

Minister Forau conveyed his appreciation to the New Zealand Government for the establishment and the inclusion of the Solomon Islands in the RSE programme. The programme has benefited his people and has enhanced their social and economic status. He hopes to see more of his people participating in the RSE programme in the future.

Minister Forau also used the visit as an opportunity to promote trade and investment opportunities in Solomon Islands. Hon Forau was a key note speaker at the Ngati Kahungunu fisheries summit in Napier, where he was welcomed by the Chairman of the Ngati Kahungunu Iwi – Ngahiwi Tumoana and executives. He was also hosted by the Pacific Business Council in Auckland and met with the Chief Executive and senior management of the Pacific Trade and Investment's Auckland office.

“There are many opportunities in the Solomon Islands and I would like to encourage New Zealand businesses to visit our shores and see for yourselves how you can take advantage of those opportunities”.

Minister Forau expressed his greatest appreciation to the MBIE and the New Zealand Government for hosting his visit.

Minister Forau paid tribute to the RSE employers for the opportunity for his people to be employed in the industry and their contribution to the Solomon Islands economy through the money that the workers take back home. He has seen first-hand the positive impact it has had on the workers, their families and the communities they live in.

The Minister also acknowledged that the programme is more than just about the money and savings his people take back home; the scheme also provides opportunities for his country and people to build a long term relationship and friendship with their employers and communities in New Zealand.

Outside of RSE, Hon Forau also met with various Ministers including Hon Michael Woodhouse, Minister of Immigration

PAPUA NEW GUINEA NEGOTIATING AN INTER-AGENCY UNDERSTANDING FOR RSE

The Government of Papua New Guinea (PNG) is currently negotiating an Inter-Agency Understanding (IAU) with the Ministry to become involved in the RSE programme.

The IAU will set out the arrangements for PNG to facilitate access for their nationals to seasonal work in the horticulture and viticulture industries under the RSE policy.

In February this year the Relationship Manager, RSE SPP undertook an IAU scoping visit to PNG to hold initial discussions with the PNG Government on the content of an RSE IAU. The scoping visit also provided the opportunity to:

- view first-hand how the RSE programme is operating and managed in PNG;
- review the PNG Government's RSE pre-departure programme;
- learn about and understand Australia's Seasonal Work Programme initiative and any synergies with the RSE programme;
- get a snap-shot of existing support and explore other support required by PNG; and
- discuss and update the PNG RSE: SPP 'Action Plan'.

Various meetings were held with key agencies including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Immigration, and the Department of Labour and Industrial Relations who is the lead agency for the operation and management of both the RSE and Australia's Seasonal Work Programme.

Meetings were also held with the New Zealand High Commission, the Australian High Commission and the Taskforce Group, a PNG Government mandated body consisting of representatives from over 20 agencies which include representatives from Foreign Affairs and Immigration, Labour and Industrial Relations, Agriculture and Primary Industries, Rural Development, amongst others, and has the job of ensuring a whole of government approach to labour mobility schemes, including the RSE programme.

Information collated from the scoping visit contributed to the formulation of the first draft of PNG's RSE IAU which is now being circulated for comments. PNG's IAU negotiations are expected to be completed and signed-off before the start of the new financial year, so PNG can then officially become part of the RSE Pacific family.



BRANDHEART - RSE OFFICIALS GOING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH



As the RSE:SPP heads towards its third year in operation, it's a good time to reflect on just how much progress has been made by

the many officials and administrators of the RSE Scheme across the participating Island States, and the first impression is "wow" says Ken Mitchell of Brandheart.

One of the key focus areas of the RSE:SPP has been to build the capability of the RSE states to manage the complexities of the Scheme more effectively, building on their experience and expertise to create a more customer-focused approach to the 'business' of supplying seasonal labour to the New Zealand market. This has involved a range of initiatives here in New Zealand, such as the excellent Vakameasina Training, and the range of training initiatives targeting the government officials and agents whose job it is to 'get the right workers, to the right place, at the right time'.

This is where Brandheart's Ken Mitchell has been developing and delivering a range of training programmes for the many RSE officials whose responsibility it is to ensure the Scheme is working smoothly and

seamlessly for the workers and for their New Zealand employers. He says he has observed some fantastic progress among his participating RSE officials in response to the training.

"It's been quite an inspiring experience to see how much personal growth has been occurring among the officials who have been participating in the Brandheart SPP training programmes. When I started we were all pretty new to this whole RSE thing, and we were pretty new to each other too! After we had sussed each other out and our relationships have developed, so has the trust and respect for each other. I have huge admiration for the ability of the people I've been working with over the last two years to listen, learn, adapt and challenge themselves in the areas they want to develop in through our training together."

"One of the key areas of growth I have observed is the level of confidence they are now demonstrating - not just in their RSE roles but also in a personal sense. Many of our Brandheart SPP programmes have required the participants to demonstrate very high levels of personal self-awareness, in order to become more effective in their roles and also in managing their RSE relationships. What we are seeing emerge now is a group of experienced, RSE experts right across the Pacific who are responsible for managing the Scheme in their country. They are communicating better and managing issues

more confidently and assertively, and as a result, becoming more effective in their RSE roles. And it's not just the Scheme that benefits from this, because they are becoming increasingly aware that they are role models for the future leaders of the RSE and other labour mobility schemes in their countries."

"The countries I have visited recently are excellent examples of this: I've just got back from Vanuatu where Tarisu Kailles of the Employment Services Unit and his team (Christine, Julie and Patrice) are demonstrating excellent leadership for their country in the RSE. In the Solomon Islands, Ezekial Parairae and Jack O'oi of the Labour Mobility Unit are doing the same. In Kiribati, Einakoamakin Tonganibeia in the Overseas Employment Unit has developed into one of the most impressive leaders I have ever observed (including here in New Zealand), and in Tuvalu, Trinny Uluao in the Department of Labour is going from strength to strength. I'm looking forward to returning to Tonga and Samoa this year to see how things are progressing there too!"

"We are also seeing an emerging understanding that, even though most of the officials are employed by their governments to administer the RSE Scheme, they are, in reality, running a vast, complex business. That business is the business of supplying seasonal labour to overseas markets. On the surface it does sound very simple, doesn't it? The reality is that it is a highly complex,

time-dependent process involving vast distances, huge numbers of people, legislative and regulatory compliance responsibilities, worker training and people management, and documentation and transport issues. So in order for the Scheme to be effective the officials administering the Scheme require the time, space and ability to step back and work 'on' the Scheme, as well as 'in' it. The training programmes provide the breathing space to do just that, and explore and examine ways to streamline and improve the 'system' to ensure that it is working 'for' them, and not 'against' them".

"My role is really only one piece in the RSE:SPP jigsaw, yet it has been an inspiring experience to work with such talented and dedicated people who totally understand 'why' they are doing what they do. Right across the Pacific, our RSE partner officials do not see their roles as just a 'job'. They are vitally aware of the significance of the Scheme in their countries self-determination and economic viability, and of the difference they are making to the lives and livelihoods of so many of their people. If the RSE officials are anything to go by, the Scheme is in good hands."



VAKAMEASINA - A YEAR IN REVIEW

Previous articles have talked about the New Zealand Aid Programme funded Vakameasina literacy, numeracy and financial literacy courses. With a full year of delivery now complete, it is timely to review what we have done and look to the future.

Just under 560 RSE workers from throughout the Pacific have completed a Vakameasina course during the past year. Students of the programme came from throughout the Pacific. Figure 1 shows a breakdown of the country of origin of the students enrolling in Vakameasina. It shows that nearly ½ of the students came from Vanuatu, around 20% from the Solomon Islands and decreasing numbers from other Pacific nations.

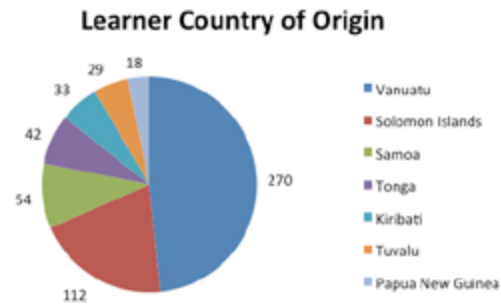


Figure 1 Learner Country of Origin

Of the students 231 (41%) were female. This exceeds the programme's 30% target of female RSE workers coming into New Zealand. The target for the participants being female was set based on long standing research that suggests education of women has a greater impact on the students' families and communities.

The training occurred in the five key fruit and wine producing areas where most of the seasonal workers come to. Figure 2 shows the location of the students enrolling in Vakameasina.

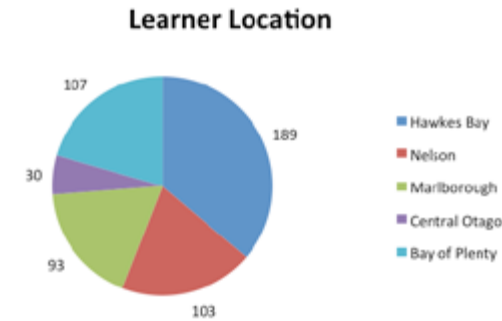


Figure 2 Location of Learners

As a part of the initial interview with students, we assessed their current level of English and maths skills. While some of our students have spent considerable time in school, a small proportion had never attended school at all. For them our training was the first time they had ever spent in the classroom. These students were typically women from poor rural communities, whose families could not afford the fees required to send them to school. Most students had some knowledge of English and for many it was confidence, rather than knowledge that was holding them back from speaking.

The topics covered during training ranged significantly. While the modules delivered during the Vakameasina pilot were still used, we expanded on the range of topics to meet the needs of both the employer and the learners. Literacy and numeracy were embedded into whatever topic was taught.

Topics taught ranged from budgeting and sending money home through to positive parenting, sexual health, maintenance of small engines and solar panels, leadership and small business management.

Feedback from the students and their employers has been extremely positive. Craig Howard of Seasonal Solutions in Alexandra commented "I'm hearing nothing but good things." Feedback from one class in Nelson was effusive about the programme with the following comments being made:

- "Please give us another chance to do another course."
- "A special thank you to the NZ government for having us on this course."
- "Please help to get more people from Tonga to work and do the Vakameasina course."
- "We would like to let you know we learnt a lot in this 10 week course and it has helped us a lot."
- "Thanks for making this course free!"

When approached about the delivery of Vakameasina to his teams of workers, Craig Howard of Seasonal Solutions first wanted to focus on building the leadership skills of his group leaders. He saw that improving their English, maths and leadership skills would bring benefits to all of their workers. The workers who attended the course have commented that they have applied the skills learnt already and are more focused on working as a team and applying the problem solving techniques learnt.

While some workers were initially hesitant to engage in the positive parenting discussion, the feedback from the learners showed they had learnt techniques that they will use at home. One student, commented that "I have learned good techniques for parenting that I will try, especially being patient and not smacking my children."

Approaches to teaching varied depending on the skills of the tutors. One tutor in Blenheim, who is himself a talented musician, used music to build English language and maths skills. This [YouTube clip](#) shows this group performing at their class graduation.

Co-operation from RSE employers for use of their facilities for training venues has meant we have saved significantly on room hire during our first year. All these savings are being ploughed into more training so this calendar year we expect to substantially exceed our contracted number of 500 participants.

Resources developed by Vakameasina tutors are progressively being loaded up onto a website www.vakameasina.co.nz so that RSE workers, their employers and pastoral care providers can access the material from anywhere as long as they have Internet access.

For further information on Vakameasina, contact Sandy Scarrow through the Fruition Horticulture website www.fruition.net.nz.



EMPLOYER PROFILE – PICK HAWKES BAY

Pick Hawke's Bay Incorporated (PHB) is a co-operative of businesses involved in the horticulture and viticulture industries. The businesses or members that make up PHB range from stonefruit, pipfruit, and citrus orchards, to viticulture contractors, to vegetable and berry farms.

Here is a brief interview with Anthony Rarere, General Manager of Pick Hawke's Bay Incorporated.

1. HOW LONG HAS YOUR COMPANY BEEN PART OF THE RSE PROGRAMME?

PHB first received RSE accreditation in February 2009, so we have been part of the RSE programme for just over four years.

2. WHAT WAS YOUR MOTIVATION BEHIND THE DECISION TO BE INVOLVED?

Initially, PHB was set up to assist small-to-medium-sized orchards in the Hawke's Bay region with accessing RSE labour. When RSE was introduced, it was not feasible for many businesses to become RSE accredited due to costs relating to recruitment, employment, and compliance. PHB was formed so that the cost of recruiting and employing RSE workers could be spread amongst several members over the course of a season, thus making it more financially viable for members to access RSE labour.

3. HOW HAS YOUR COMPANY BENEFITED FROM THE RSE PROGRAMME?

RSE has proved hugely beneficial for PHB and its members. RSE has allowed many of the

PHB members to access a consistent and reliable labour source, which enables better seasonal planning and ultimately leads to increased profits and streamlined costs.

4. WHERE DO YOU RECRUIT MOST OF YOUR WORKERS FROM AND WHY?

PHB recruits the majority of our workers from the Solomon Islands. We have found using workers from the Solomon Islands over the last 2-3 seasons that they have a superior work ethic to workers from other countries we have recruited from in the past. The quality of work carried out by Solomon workers is also much higher (and more consistent) than other countries. We also find that these workers are easier to care for outside of work hours.

5. WHO ARE SOME OF YOUR LONGEST SERVING WORKERS – HOW MANY AND WHEN DID THEY START?

We are now into our fifth season recruiting RSE workers. We do not have any seasonal workers who have been with us for more than three seasons.

6. HOW MANY WORKERS HAVE YOU RECRUITED SINCE YOUR FIRST INVOLVEMENT IN RSE?

PHB have recruited close to seven hundred workers over the last five seasons.

7. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE POLICY?

I think the RSE policy is a good tool to help employers in the hort-vit industries supplement their New Zealand labour force. I don't believe RSE was developed to solve all the labour supply issues in these industries. But I do believe it has been effective in doing

what it was created to do - fill the gaps where there is a shortage of local labour.

8. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SUCCESS STORIES FROM YOUR EMPLOYEES?

Mefolyn Buania has worked for PHB for three seasons. Two years ago, using the funds she earned from her time in New Zealand under RSE, she started a 'community garden' enterprise in her village in the Solomon Islands. She now supplies several secondary schools in her area with vegetables, from which the profits from sales go towards her local community. She is hoping to secure contracts with local hotels and restaurants.

Regina Hoe has worked for PHB for two seasons. She has purchased five acres of land in the Solomon Islands and cultivated an oil palm plantation. This year she will undergo

her first harvest of that plantation. The oil that is collected from the fruit will be sold to a local British company who will use it in the production of soap, shampoo, and cooking oil (amongst other things).

9. WOULD YOUR COMPANY SURVIVE WITHOUT RSE?

PHB as an entity would not survive without RSE as our primary reason for existence is to facilitate the recruitment of RSE workers for our members. Would the members survive without RSE? I would say that most would survive, but life would become much more difficult. Above all else, RSE provides our members with continuity of labour and a reliable workforce that will come to work every day - something that is very difficult to achieve relying on working holiday schemers, locals, and backpackers.



SMILES FROM PICK HAWKES BAY PAPUA NEW GUINEA WORKERS



RSE COUNTRY PROFILE – PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Papua New Guinea (PNG) was not part of the initial intake of Pacific states for the RSE policy in 2007. To date PNG is currently in negotiations with the Ministry with regards to having an Inter-Agency Understanding to formalise their participation in the RSE programme.

PNG's desire to be part of the RSE scheme was realised when they attended the RSE Pacific states workshop held in Wellington in December 2011. At the conclusion of the workshop, the PNG delegation led by Michael Gene and John Yamin had the opportunity to visit some of New Zealand employers in the North Island to talk about the RSE operation from the environment of the workers and employers in New Zealand. The following year, six workers were recruited into the Hawkes Bay region. The current season has seen a significant increase in the number of PNG workers with over thirty five workers employing under the RSE scheme.

Late in 2012, the Ministry hosted the PNG Government officials as part of the NZAID-funded RSE: SPP secondment programme which is a vital part of investment into building the capacity of Pacific States officials to ensure the effective operation and management of the RSE policy in Pacific countries.

The secondment programme enhanced PNG officials understanding of the working operations of RSE from a New Zealand (Government and Private Sector) perspective, and builds their knowledge in a range of areas from employment agreements to compliance issues and successful communication with New Zealand stakeholders including

employers and industry. Officials also had a chance to view RSE workplaces and accommodations, and discuss pastoral care issues with employers and officials.

The RSE programme is currently being managed by the PNG Department of Labour and Industrial Relations (DLIR) responsible for the day-to-day operation and management of the RSE programme, under the leadership of Kennewton Kennedy, Manager, National Employment Division.

The DLIR is also responsible for the Seasonal Workers Programme (SWP) introduced as a pilot by the Australian Government in 2008 and became a permanent programme in 2012.

PNG is known for its very comprehensive 'Pre-departure briefing' that runs for 3 weeks, which is by far the longest of any RSE sending state.

PNG recruits RSE workers from only the Work Ready Pool (WRP) that is managed by the Seasonal Work Coordination Office of the National Employment Division within the DLIR.

The WRP currently contains potential workers selected from all 22 of PNG's Provinces. All those on the WRP come from rural communities – PNG is determined to use the RSE to support rural development in areas where there are very few opportunities for wage employment. Those in the WRP are selected for registration in the WRP via a rigorous process driven by an Expression of Interest.

The only workers that can be selected for work in the RSE and SWP are those in the WRP. There are no accredited recruiting

agents in PNG for the two seasonal schemes, and there is no direct recruitment by accredited SWP labour hire companies or RSE employers of workers from particular villages or provinces. The DLIR is determined to keep very strict control over both the numbers in the WRP (to manage expectations) and the selection and training of those who go to Australia or NZ to ensure effective quality control.

The IAU negotiations is going well and is expected to be completed before June 2013 at which time PNG will officially become a member of the RSE programme.



OFFICIAL NAME: Independent State of Papua New Guinea

POPULATION: 7.014 million (2001 census)

CAPITAL CITY: Port Moresby, National Capital District (NCD).

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES: English, Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu

OFFICIAL CURRENCY: Papua New Guinean Kina and Toea

REGIONS: Papua New Guinea is divided into four regions; New Guinea Island (NGI), Southern, Momase or Northern and Highlands.

MID-TERM RSE: SPP INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES EVALUATION

A mid-term evaluation of the Strengthening Pacific Partnerships (SPP) programme is underway since January 2013, as part of the SPP funding arrangements with the RSE Pacific states.

The evaluation is conducted by Analytic Matters, an independent evaluation company based in New Zealand.

Members of the evaluation team include Heather Nunn, Dr Richard Bedford and Charlotte Bedford.

The evaluation team has been visiting the participating RSE states to assess how SPP activities are progressing, and assessing any changes for the betterment of the SPP programme. The evaluation is predicted to have a learning and improvement focus.

The evaluation is expected to be ended by May 2013.

Findings will be made available as soon as the report is completed.



VINTAGE YEAR FOR GROWERS IN NZ

Despite the most severe drought in 70 years, 2012 & 2013 season has been a very successful year for the horticulture industry in New Zealand with Pipfruit growers reporting vintage crops. This is a result from exceptional pre-harvest climatic conditions that the industry experienced during winter and spring seasons last year. This success has reflected in the number of RSE workers recruited, exceeding 7,300 since the RSE programme start-up in 2007. The Solomon Islands appears to be the main beneficiary of this increase with over 430 workers employed.

There is also an increase in grape production in Marlborough and other regions as compared to three years ago. Because of



the aging of the vines and the additional plantings, the industry is likely to have increased labour need in the coming season.

While the number of workers from the RSE Pacific states is growing so as the number of New Zealand workers taking up jobs in the industry. This is something that industry is keen to see continue whilst still highly valuing the significant contribution that RSE workers make.

On the flipside of RSE, there have been a number of major and minor incidents related to health. These included the unfortunate sudden deaths of two RSE workers in the North Island due to undiagnosed health issues. Some workers were sent home early as a result of pre-existing medical conditions. This highlights the need for RSE to continuing its focus on healthy workers.

A number of criminal incidents also took place, including driving offences, shoplifting, as well as more serious offences such as sexual assault. The RSE: SPP Unit will continue to work with Pacific states officials, New Zealand employers and key stakeholders to find ways to address and improve workers behaviour while working in New Zealand. For example a series of posters reminding workers of the consequences of law breaking in New Zealand were created by RSE: SPP team in conjunction with the New Zealand Police.

The RSE: SPP teams will continue to work with Pacific states, employers and other relevant agencies such as the Police to address these issues.

RSE: SPP CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The following table provides a summary of the key events for the RSE: SPP Team for the next 3 months. Please note that these may change depending on the availability of key contacts both in New Zealand and in Pacific states.

RSE: SPP EVENT	LOCATION	DATE (2013)
Brandheart Training	Tuvalu	29 April
Tongan Ministerial Visit	New Zealand	28 April – 6 May
Brandheart Training (TBC)	Kiribati	May
Brandheart Training (TBC)	Tonga	May
SPP Evaluation completes	New Zealand	May
RSE Employers Conference	Wellington	27-28 June
Liaison Officers Workshop (TBC)	New Zealand	July

To keep track on RSE: SPP movements as they happen, make sure you visit the [web page](#)

We trust that you will find our latest e-newsletter helpful and welcome any feedback or comments that you may have.

If you have any questions, feedback or suggestions for improving this newsletter or news and events to include in future editions please contact Lafaele Lupo, Relationship Manager on Lafaele.Lupo@mbie.govt.nz or + 64 4 915 4736.

