



THE SENATE

LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Migration Amendment (Australia’s Engagement in the Pacific and Other Measures) Bill 2023, and the Migration (Visa Pre-application Process) Charge Bill 2023

Answers to question on notice by Professor Stephen Howes.

Senator SCARR: Can I ask you to take on notice to give us some additional information with respect to the reaction of different countries in terms of the extension of the multi-year visa? I'm not sure that was covered in your submission, but you just referred to Samoa's reaction to the multi-year visa. I'd find it interesting to have the benefit of that information. Could you take that on notice?

In November 2021, as a part of [“Streamlining and strengthening Pacific labour for a new era,”](#) the maximum stay for the long-term PALM scheme (formerly Pacific Labour Scheme) was extended from three years to four years. The [“period of overseas employment”](#) was one of the main issues addressed in a recent review of seasonal work, and has been stated by the Samoan Government to be a “key area and major concern”. Moreover, I have been informed by reliable sources that, in response to this change, the Samoan government has elected to impose a maximum three-year contract limit for Samoan workers. Approved Employers in Australia are not able to offer longer contracts to Samoan workers, as they would then not be able to access Samoan workers. While no other Pacific country has restricted the length of stay in Australia through imposing maximum lengths, other sending countries have previously considered [term limits on returning workers](#), and [disallowing further contract extensions](#) post-COVID. In general, Pacific countries send workers to Australia and New Zealand on a temporary basis on the mutual understanding that those workers will return home and reintegrate into their communities.