



**MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,  
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT**  
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

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# Recognised Seasonal Employer Policy Review – Options for Consultation

Discussion of potential options for a more  
sustainable system

Immigration (International and Humanitarian) Policy,  
Labour Science and Enterprise Group



# Guiding principles


## The RSE scheme should:

- Enable equitable sharing of benefits across employers, workers and communities
- Incorporate the views of Pacific Island countries and the impacts on Pacific labour markets
- Contribute to our short, medium and long-term development outcomes we seek in the Pacific region
- Be accessible to prospective workers and employers
- Have settings that are flexible, enabling the system to respond to labour market changes over time
- Ensure compliance frameworks are robust, fit-for-purpose and adequately resourced

## Our Updated Objectives:

- 1) Sustainable long-term administrative settings that work effectively for the government and employers,
- 2) A scheme that respects RSE workers, and upholds their rights and dignity through an improved set of policies and guidelines, backed by consistent and ethical employment practice.

# Timelines

Timings	Stage
Early March 2023	Minister briefed on broad policy options for consultation
Mid-March 2023 – Mid-April 2023	Consultation round 2  We are here
April 2023	Analysis of submissions
May	Feedback collated and recommendations provided to Minister
June	Cabinet
From June 2023 - through 2024	Implementation of agreed changes (including the possibility of staged implementation based on cyclone impacts)



# Consultation Approach

**These are options, not proposals.**

This is not Government policy and is subject to change. We encourage and appreciate feedback.

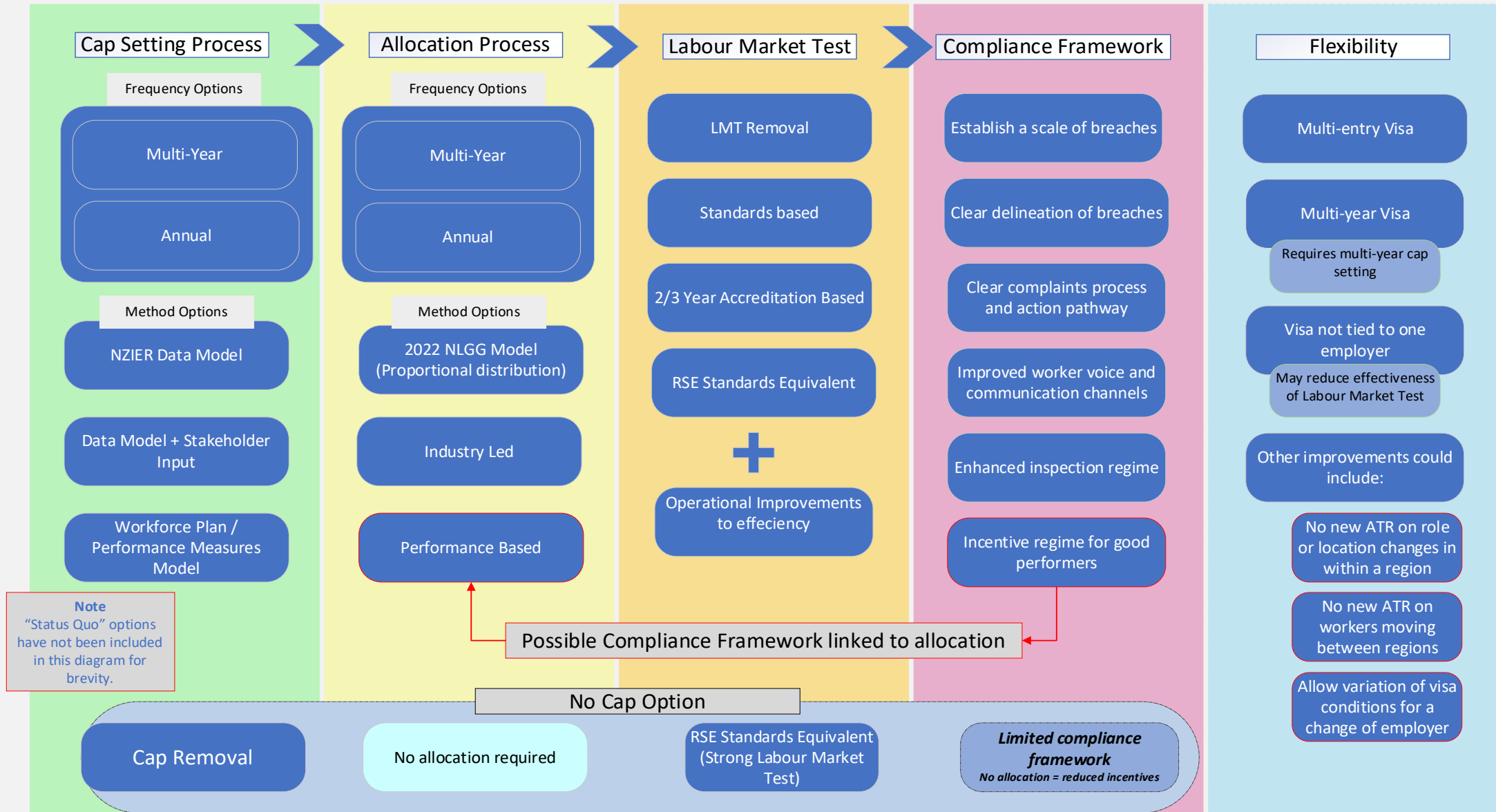
**We aim to balance increased costs and higher standards.**

Decisions to improve standards and provide better conditions for RSE workers will need to be balanced with the resulting costs to employers and government.

**Cyclone Gabrielle and Pacific Government labour force concerns has influenced the review.**

A new Pacific outcomes workstream has been included to address Pacific concerns. The Cyclone response will be factored into the implementation of the various workstreams

# System Administration



# System Administration

## Cap setting

- If a cap is maintained, what are your views on the option of a multi-year cap, and how long should it be?
- What do you think about a data driven approach using a labour supply/demand model?

## Allocation

- What are your views on a performance based approach with incentives and sanctions for minor breaches?

## Flexibility

- What are your views RSE being tied through their visa to specified employers?
- In the light of extreme weather events, what options would be particularly helpful to assist employers?

## Labour Market Test

- Do you have any views on the labour market test and how it is working?
- Are there alternative ways to ensure New Zealanders are considered for opportunities to undertake seasonal work?

## Compliance

- Do you have any views on how issues or problems within the RSE scheme are managed or resolved?
- What role should there be for industry, Pacific states, unions and workers in resolving problems?
- What incentives would work best to create good performance?
- What other things should be considered as indicators of good performance? (e.g. sustainability)

# Worker Wellbeing

## Accommodation

Update RSE accommodation Standards:

Clarify the wording of existing standards

OR

More prescriptive, e.g. max number of workers per room

Require affordable or free Wifi access

Require photos and accommodation details

Introduce methodology to assess cost increases

Data collection on accommodation to monitor supply

Facilitate transition away from temporary/holiday accommodation

Resource to help the building of purpose built accommodation

## Health

Enable access to publicly funded healthcare

Improvements to health insurance:

Define acceptable insurance

Mass procurement of insurance

Employers to provide cover for part or all of insurance

Provide predeparture based information on insurance

Remove blanket ban on HIV+ applicants

## Pastoral Care

Lifting and clarifying the standards

Require Pastoral Care plans

Require Pastoral Care workers

Dedicated advice and support mechanisms for employers

## Deductions

Standard template deduction form

Restricted set of allowable deductions

Specified time period for deductions to be recovered

Limit deductions to a maximum % of wages

Clarify cost sharing arrangements between employers / workers

Further prescription for particular areas e.g. flight flexibility

Status Quo but increased operational guidance for Labour Inspectorate

## Rights and Exploitation

Clarify employer role in relation to Pacific Govt expectations

Streamlined transfer processes for workers between employers

Facilitate increase of worker voice

Clear support package for RSE workers e.g. predeparture information

## Benefits

Requiring increase in payrate over time, e.g. shifting to median wage

Develop training for RSE workers:

Facilitative – reward good behaviours

OR

Mandatory – require training

Facilitate access to Pacific superannuation

Employers to contribute more to upfront costs of RSE workers e.g. insurance

# Worker Wellbeing – possible approaches

	Tighten and Clarify	Discrete Changes	Fundamental Shift		
Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarification of existing standards</li> <li>Wi-Fi requirement</li> <li>Recent photos and details requirement</li> <li>Improved data collection on accommodation</li> <li>Methodology to assess accommodation costs</li> </ul>	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phased transition towards higher standards</li> <li>Regular review of accommodation standards</li> <li>Incentives to encourage more purpose-built accommodation</li> </ul>	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant changes to standards</li> </ul> <p>e.g. max no. of workers per bedroom, require transition away from holiday accommodation</p>
Deductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employers pay for NZ domestic leg of travel, workers pays for Pacific domestic leg of travel</li> <li>Clarify cost-sharing arrangements in deductions</li> </ul>	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mandate flexi-options for flights</li> <li>Mandate time flights must be booked in advance</li> </ul>	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cap deductions at certain threshold e.g. 30 per cent of salary</li> </ul>
Pastoral Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update pastoral care rules and guidance to clarify existing expectations</li> </ul>	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pastoral care plans</li> <li>Pastoral care workers</li> </ul>	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dedicated support mechanism for employers to deliver pastoral care</li> </ul>
Additional Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep RSE workers 10 per cent above minimum wage</li> </ul>	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase to median wage over time</li> <li>Facilitation of training</li> <li>Facilitation of Pacific superannuation schemes</li> </ul>	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employers to contribute more to upfront costs of workers e.g. paying flight costs, subsidise accommodation and/or food costs</li> <li>Mandatory training and skills development requirements</li> </ul>
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable access to publicly funded healthcare</li> <li>Define acceptable medical insurance, potentially to a higher standard</li> <li>Remove blanket ban on HIV+ applicants</li> <li>Approach to screening and immunisations more broadly</li> <li>Facilitate health days and better health education for workers predeparture and during induction</li> </ul>				
Rights and Exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarify Pacific countries expectations and obligation on employer</li> <li>Better transfer processes</li> <li>Support package for RSE workers including predeparture information, induction, clear information on support available in their own language and how to raise issues</li> </ul>				



# Worker Wellbeing

## Accommodation

- What changes to the accommodation standards would be difficult/easy to adapt to?
- What kind of measures would help with constructing more purpose-built accommodation (where it makes sense to use this type of accommodation)?

## Health

- How could health outcomes be improved for RSE workers?
- Do you think RSE workers should qualify for publicly funded healthcare?

## Pastoral Care

- In what areas do you consider current pastoral care lacking? Where could further improvements be made?
- What areas are reasonable for employers to take responsibility for?

## Deductions

- What is the best way to ensure a 'fair return' for both RSE workers and employers in respect to deductions?
- What should the employer be responsible for covering, and what should the worker be responsible for covering?

## Worker rights and exploitation

- Do you have any concerns about the treatment of RSE workers in New Zealand?
- What is your understanding of Pacific countries' codes of conduct for RSE workers, and employers' role in these? Would guidance to employers in this area be useful?

## Benefits

- Do you think options being consulted on in the other workstreams are sufficient to ensure the benefits shared between employers and workers are balanced appropriately?
- What do you think a reasonable set of benefits would look like?

# Next steps

Feedback on these options can be provided to the following email address:

[rsepolicyreview@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:rsepolicyreview@mbie.govt.nz)

Feedback should be submitted by 12pm, 24 April.