



## COVERSHEET

<b>Minister</b>	Hon Erica Stanford	<b>Portfolio</b>	Immigration
<b>Title of Cabinet paper</b>	Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme – Increase to Worker Cap and Short-term Amendments	<b>Date to be published</b>	6 September 2024

<b>List of documents that have been proactively released</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>
July 2024	Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme – Increase to Worker Cap and Short-term Amendments	Office of the Minister of Immigration
5 August 2024	CAB-24-MIN-0290.02 Minute	Cabinet Office

### **Information redacted**

**YES / NO** (please select)

Any information redacted in this document is redacted in accordance with MBIE's policy on Proactive Release and is labelled with the reason for redaction. This may include information that would be redacted if this information was requested under Official Information Act 1982. Where this is the case, the reasons for withholding information are listed below. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Some information has been withheld for the reasons of international relations and confidential advice to Government.



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

---

*This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.*

---

### Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme: Increase to Worker Cap and Short-term Amendments

Portfolio                      Immigration

On 5 August 2024, following reference from the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee, Cabinet:

- 1        **noted** that:
  - 1.1      a policy review of the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme was completed in 2023 [CAB-23-MIN-0442];
  - 1.2      the National-ACT coalition agreement includes a commitment to increase the cap on the number of workers under the RSE scheme to increase the flexibility of the quota allocation system;
- 2        **agreed** that the cap on the number of RSE workers should increase by 1,250 in 2024/25, bringing the total cap to 20,750;
- 3        **agreed** that the requirement for RSE workers to be paid for a minimum of 30 hours each week, at the 'per hour rate' specified in their employment agreement, will be averaged over a four-week period to take into account fluctuations in the availability of work due, for example, to weather conditions;
- 4        **noted** that since 1 October 2023, all RSE workers must be paid at least 10 percent above the minimum wage;
- 5        **agreed** that in future, the requirement to pay RSE workers at least 10 percent above the minimum wage should be restricted to experienced workers returning for their third or subsequent seasons;
- 6        **agreed** that RSE limited visas should allow for multiple entry to enable RSE workers to leave and re-enter New Zealand for short periods within a season;
- 7        **agreed** that the requirement for HIV screening of RSE workers from high HIV prevalence countries should be removed to align with other temporary visas where the length of stay is less than twelve months;
- 8        **agreed** that Timor-Leste be added to the list of Pacific countries eligible to participate in the RSE scheme, with workers able to work in New Zealand for up to seven months in an eleven-month period;

- 9 **Confidential advice to Government**
- 10 **noted** that the Minister of Immigration intends to remove the accommodation cost freeze that has been in place since November 2022 and enable RSE employers to increase accommodation costs by the lesser of 15 percent or \$15, for a period of twelve months while a robust methodology for assessing these costs is developed;
- 11 **noted** that the Minister of Immigration intends to clarify in immigration instructions that RSE workers may undertake training not directly relevant to their role provided they meet the requirements of their employment agreement, and that training opportunities should not be limited to industry training organisations;
- 12 **noted** that the Minister of Immigration has instructed Immigration New Zealand to increase the length of the grace period on either side of the ‘worker move date’, specified in an Agreement to Recruit (ATR) RSE workers, from 14 days to 21 days to increase flexibility in the movement of workers between employers and regions;
- 13 **noted** that the Minister of Immigration will clarify that the above grace period may also apply to a single employer seeking to move workers between regions, in addition to ‘joint ATR’ arrangements between employers;
- 14 **noted** that the Minister of Immigration intends to consider further amendments to the RSE scheme on a longer timeframe, with decisions to be sought in 2025.

Rachel Hayward  
Secretary of the Cabinet

*Secretary's Note: This minute replaces ECO-24-MIN-0143. Cabinet agreed to add paragraph 9.*

---