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Are True Pacific Partnerships potentially at risk with a new agriculture visa?

“The Alternative Government of Papua New Guinea has some concerns about the proposed introduction of a new agriculture visa by the Australian Government. Any such scheme should ensure it does not undermine Australia’s people to people linkages with Pacific Island Countries (PIC’s), including Papua New Guinea “ said Ian Ling-Stuckey, PNG’s Shadow Minister for Treasury and Finance.

“Whilst Papua New Guinea appreciates the ongoing difficulties with a reliable pool of workers being available to the Australian horticultural and wider agriculture sector and the Australian government’s desire to introduce new initiatives to address labour shortages, recent debates in the PNG Parliament demonstrated both sides of politics clearly wanted to “step-up” the number of workers under the seasonal workers program (SWP). Whilst Papua New Guinea appreciates and supports Australia’s 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper, which talks about a “step-up” in its relationship with the Pacific, introducing a new unlimited agriculture visa kind of looks like a “step-down”, which we hope will not be the case, in relation to labour mobility. The Alternative Government hopes Australia’s new agriculture visa does not have the unintended effect of doors closing on better people-to-people links, just as all sides of PNG politics now wanted to open them” said the Shadow Treasurer.

“PNG understands the mutual gains from dramatically increasing PNG’s involvement in the Seasonal Workers Program (SWP) and Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS). PNG needs to diversify its economy and such labour mobility schemes were a clear way forward. If Vanuatu and Tonga could send thousands of workers to Australia, PNG could eventually send tens of thousands! However, this would take a few years to ensure the scheme didn’t grow too quickly. We’d want to build

on the success of smaller teams of people going across, building on positive experiences, learning lessons along the way and most importantly, developing a trusting, productive and cooperative relationships, with employing Australian farming businesses. An open-slab agriculture visa open to visitors from Asia may potentially, undermine this concrete example of Australia better engaging with the Pacific region” said Mr Ling-Stuckey.

“The Alternative Government have been a strong supporter of building win-win relationships between Australia and Papua New Guinea by supporting Australia's agriculture sector to employ more of our very willing PNG workers. On the PNG side, we acknowledge that we have been slow to tap into the scheme's potential. However, the recent bipartisan approach in Parliament and the assurance of the Member for Namatanai, Walter Schnaubelt and I on behalf of the PNG Opposition, that we are willing to support and work closely with the O'Niell-Abel Government and especially, Minister for Labour, Mehrra Kipefa and his department, clearly indicated we wanted to greatly lift PNG's engagement with this Australian program.

I have also, been monitoring and personally involved with the labour mobility scheme since 6 July 2004, nearly 15 years ago, which then was still a concept, when the PNG national parliament endorsed myself as Chairman of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Pacific Economic Community, whose six terms of reference included enquiries into free movement of workers between Australia, New Zealand and other PIC's.

If the schemes had been introduced back then, we would already have much stronger linkages which could have covered all the Australian agriculture labour needs and there probably wouldn't have been a demand for a new agriculture visa. Who knows? The people of my electorate would also have been winners, with significant incomes brought back into the villages to help build better houses and start small businesses. From Australia's perspective, these types of linkages are a powerful counter, if need be, to the growing influence of major powers in the region” said PNG's Shadow Treasurer.

“Only last week, I had some very encouraging discussions with agriculture employers in Queensland on how workers from PNG and indeed, my Kavieng district in New Ireland could come and work for them in a clear win-win situation (see picture below). From the view of all sides of politics in PNG, as well as from the people in my electorate, it would be a shame if these possibilities were undermined by a new

agriculture visa before they were given the chance to expand." said Mr Ling-Stuckey.

Hon.Ian Ling-Stuckey,CMG.MP
Shadow Minister for Treasury & Finance

17 September 2018



PNG Shadow Treasurer Ian Ling-Stuckey visiting West Farms Beetroot Warehouse at Kalbar Township outside Ipswich on 12 September 2018.

L TO R: NARELLE WEST (NEE PEGG), DAVID LOKO FMR PNG HUNTERS PLAYER AND IAN LING-STUCKEY.



PNG Shadow Treasurer Ian Ling-Stuckey visiting West Farms Beetroot Warehouse at Kalbar Township outside Ipswich on 12 September 2018.

L TO R: BOAS RURU FROM KIMBE, IAN LING-STUCKEY, NARELLE WEST (NEE PEGG).



PNG Shadow Treasurer Ian Ling-Stuckey visiting West Farms Beetroot Warehouse at Kalbar Township outside Ipswich on 12 September 2018.

L TO R: BOAS RURU FROM WNB PROVINCE, IAN LING-STUCKEY, KEN WEST & JUNIOR YAMBE FROM ENGA PROVINCE.

FIFTH DAY

Tuesday 06 July 2004

DRAFT HANSARD

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Leave granted to continue debate at a subsequent sitting.

Mr IAN LING-STUCKEY - Mr Speaker, in line with the recommendations from the Provincial Governors Conference held in Kavieng in October last year, I would like to move a motion to establish a Parliamentary Select Committee on the Pacific Economic Community.

MOTION BY LEAVE

Mr IAN LING-STUCKEY (New Ireland) - Mr Speaker, I seek leave of Parliament to move a motion without notice.

Leave granted

ESTABLISHMENT AND APPOINTMENT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY SELECT COMMITTEE ON PACIFIC ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

Mr IAN LING-STUCKEY (New Ireland) – I move that –

(1) This Parliament establishes a Parliamentary Select Committee, to report on matters related to partnerships among the nations of the South Pacific.

(2) The nominees or members of this committee shall be; Member for New Ireland Province, Member for Western Province, Member for Eastern Highlands Province, Member for Enga Province, Chairman of the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and Member for Angoram.

The Chairman of the Committee and the Deputy Chairman shall be Member for New Ireland and Member for Western Province respectively.

(3) The terms of reference for the committee shall be to report to National Parliament in a single report or reports dealing with separate terms of reference to recommend on:

(a) Formation of a Pacific Economic Community involving Papua New Guinea, Pacific Island countries, Australia and New Zealand involving free movement of merchandise, trade services and the freer movement of workers between those nations.

(b) Adoption of a currency to be shared with other south pacific nations.

(c) Variation of National policy and legislation on matters concerned with work permits, visas and resident status for citizens of overseas countries to work in Papua New Guinea.

(d) Negotiations with South Pacific nations in order to obtain freer access for our citizens to employment in their countries.

(e) Amendment of the of the *Constitution* and other legislation in order to enable Papua New Guinean citizens to possess other citizenship.

(f) And any other references it considers necessary to compliment its tasks.



Michael Johnson MP
Federal Member for Ryan

CONFIRMED SCHEDULE

**PNG Parliamentary Select Committee On
Pacific Economic Community**

The Hon Ian Ling-Stuckey MP Governor of New Ireland (Chairman)
Mr Mal Smith MP
The Hon Arthur Somare MP
Mr Lawrence Daveona (Secretary of Committee)
Sir Barry Holloway – Adviser, Dept of Prime Minister
Tuesday, 14th September 2004

- 10:00 am** Arrive Brisbane QF 350
Check into Hilton Hotel
- 11.30 am - 12.15pm** Appointment with Stephanie Daly
State Director DFAT Ph: 3405 4771
Level 4, 295 Ann St, Brisbane
- 12.30 – 1.15 pm** Cameron MacMillan
State Manager Austrade Ph: 3364 7768
Level 4, 295 Ann St, Brisbane
- 1.15pm-2.15pm** Lunch for 10 & meeting with Ian Nielson (m ob: 0417 754 277)
Rugby Club, Eagle St Pier, 1 Eagle St (ph: 3221 4500)
Transportation to Port of Brisbane required for delegation
- 3.00- 4.30pm** Appointment with Wendy McMillan (Port of Brisbane)
Marketing Manager Port of Brisbane Ph: 3258 4712
1 Sandpiper Ave, Fisherman Island
- 4:30-5:30pm** Appointment with the Hon Peter Slipper
Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for Finance Ph: 5443 7270
(Commonwealth Parliamentary Office, Level 36, Waterfront
Place, 1 Eagle St)
- 5:30- 7:00pm** Drinks hosted by Gaddens Lawyers
Level 25/240 Queen St (Contact) Therese Gordon Ph: 3231
1521



PAPUA NEW GUINEA NATIONAL PARLIAMENT

THE PARLIAMENTARY SELECT COMMITTEE

ON

PACIFIC ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

AUSTRALIAN VISIT

14th –17th September 2004

INTERIM REPORT

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