



Minister for Home Affairs and Immigration

Hon. Pio Tikoduadua

PARLIAMENTARY - WRITTEN QUESTION NO. 123/2023 Wednesday, 13 September, 2023

QUESTION

Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua to ask the Minister for Home Affairs and Immigration – Can the Minister inform Parliament of the following –

- (i) The number of overseas labour recruitment firms registered and operating in Fiji in respect of recruiting seasonal or long-term labour for Fiji or overseas

RESPONSE

The Immigration Department deals with recruitment firms or agencies for permit applications and other Immigration services such as Citizenship, Search and uplift of Prohibitant Immigrants status. Engaging recruitment firms and agencies has become very popular with companies, businesses and organisations to not only recruit foreign workers to also act as ‘agents’ or ‘liaisons’ between the Immigration Department and the client.

Overseas labour recruitment firms operating in Fiji are required to register with the Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relation (MEPIR) as mandated under the Employment Relation Act. The Ministry issue license to recruitment firms or agents, to operate in accordance with the criteria and condition set out in the labour law. To date, only 5 overseas employment agency is registered with the Ministry.

- (ii) The number of seasonal or long-term labourers who went away from Fiji to work overseas in the last 12 months and their respective country destinations;**

RESPONSE

In the last 12 months, approximately 7,757 Fiji nationals left for employment purposes overseas, according to departure records from the Fiji Bureau of Statistics. Australia and New Zealand continue to be the top destinations for employment overseas followed by the United States.

- (iii) The number of seasonal or long-term labourers who came to work in Fiji in the last 12 months and their nationalities; and**

RESPONSE:

According to the Immigration records, approx. 5,398 work permit holders entered to work in Fiji in the last 12 months. These are a number of work permits granted to non-citizens (i.e. foreign nationals) prior to entering the country. This figure does not include work permits granted to non-citizens already in the country. A summary of a number of permits issued with nationalities is attached.

- (iv) The number of work permits declined for seasonal or long-term labour in Fiji.**

RESPONSE

Work permit applications are processed with due diligence ensuring that the application meets documentary requirements and compliance with the legislation. In circumstances where applications are non-compliant or found to be misleading, applications are declined. In the last 12 months, 39 applications were declined due to non-compliance with the process and Immigration legislation.

The Department acknowledge the labour shortage currently experienced across all sectors and will continue to assist businesses with the facilitation of importing skilled foreign nationals to address the labour shortage. In the same regard, the Department needs to protect our borders from illicit activities such as

smuggling, human trafficking and illegal trading which is vital to our homeland security, as well as economic prosperity.