International labour mobility in Australia and New Zealand: The Pacific case

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Main papers that this presentation draws upon

- Callister and Didham (2008) Some emerging demographic and socio-economic features of the Pacific population in New Zealand
Population change, 1800-2050
(Source: Dick Bedford)
'the most contentious demographic issue confronting Australia and New Zealand in the Pacific during the next half century will be how to cope with pressure for an emigration outlet from Melanesia.'

(Bedford 2007)
Some background to migration policy in New Zealand and Australia

Similarities and differences
Historically New Zealand differs from Australia in relation to Pacific migration

- A Treaty of Friendship was signed with the Samoan government in 1962, and the Western Samoan Quota scheme was established to facilitate migration from Samoa.
- From 1974 people from the Cook Islands, Tokelau and Niue were allowed free entry into New Zealand.
- Fijian temporary rural workers scheme (terminated in 1987)
- The Pacific Access Category allows small numbers of citizens of Tonga, Tuvalu, Kiribati and Fiji to be granted residence in New Zealand each year.
- The new Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme

- These relationships have been primarily with Polynesia not Melanesia – but the RSE scheme begins an exploration of flows from other countries including potentially PNG
The Pacific in New Zealand – Long term migration

- Large number of migrants from the Pacific Islands during the late 1950s to 1970s
- In 2006, the Pacific population was 265,974, or 7% of the New Zealand population
- There is much movement to and from New Zealand by Pacific people who are NZ citizens (where is “home”?)
- Pacific people who migrate to New Zealand and become citizens can potentially migrate to Australia.
- So can Pacific people born in New Zealand.
- But little evidence of Pacific back-door migration.
- The largest “Polynesian’ flow to Australia is probably by Maori.
- Ethnicity is complex in New Zealand due to high rates of ethnic intermarriage.
Trans-Tasman PLT migration, NZ citizens only, YE 2008 (source Bedford)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>TT PLT arrivals</th>
<th>TT PLT departure</th>
<th>TT PLT net (loss to NZ)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>6,982</td>
<td>31,331</td>
<td>-24,349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>-41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islands</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>1,078</td>
<td>-839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe (incl UK)</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>1,485</td>
<td>-1,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>2,436</td>
<td>-2,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,419</strong></td>
<td><strong>38,738</strong></td>
<td><strong>-30,319</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Number of Pacific people resident in New Zealand, 1996 and 2006
Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme (RSE) began April 2007

- Seasonal labour scheme for the horticulture and viticulture industries
- Preference for island members of the Pacific Islands Forum
- Particular rules and processes to enhance benefits, mitigate risks
- Up to 5,000 workers per season
Complex objectives for RSE

- Allow horticulture and viticulture industries to supplement their NZ workforce when necessary
- Promote best practice for growth and productivity of horticulture and viticulture industries
- Encourage economic development, regional integration and good governance in the Pacific
- Ensure Pacific workers are adequately paid and benefit financially
- Promote the reputation of New Zealand immigration and employment relations systems
Detailed rules and processes

- Establishing labour shortages
- Registering as an RSE
- Securing an Agreement to Recruit
- Selection and recruitment
- How long workers can stay and how often they can return to NZ (7 months during any 11 month period, or 9 months in an 11 month period for workers from Tuvalu and Kiribati)
Enhancing wider labour mobility between the Pacific and New Zealand

- From a NZ perspective, there seems to be little reason not to free up access for all types of labour from Samoa and Tonga and other small Pacific nations.
- But ideally labour needs to be free to flow freely both ways.
- BUT, the really big issue is making the best use of low skill labour in/from Melanesia
- Melanesia, especially PNG, is an question of quite a different scale to the rest of the Pacific
- New Zealand and Australia need work together to formulate migration policies with regards to Melanesia and the wider Pacific – in terms of both short term and long term migration