



COVERSHEET

Minister	Hon Erica Stanford	Portfolio	Immigration
Title of Cabinet paper	Outcomes of the 2026 Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme Policy Review	Date to be published	5 August 2026

List of documents that have been proactively released

Date	Title	Author
July 2026	Outcomes of the 2026 Recognised Seasonal Employers Scheme Policy Review	Office of the Minister of Immigration
1 July 2026	Outcomes of the 2026 Recognised Seasonal Employers Scheme Policy Review ECO-26-MIN-0120 Minute	Cabinet Office
5 March 2026	2026 RSE Policy Review - Proposed scope and consultation	MBIE
11 March 2026	Industry recommendation for consultation - Accommodation settings industry proposal March 2026 FINAL	Industry, provided to MBIE
14 May 2026	Recommendations following the 2026 Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme Policy Review	MBIE

Information redacted

YES

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 and that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Some information has been withheld for the reasons of confidential advice to government, international relations, legal professional privilege, privacy of natural persons, and free and frank opinions.



Cabinet Economic Policy Committee

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.

Outcomes of the 2026 Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme Review

Portfolio **Immigration**

On 1 July 2026, the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee:

Background

- 1 **noted** that the objectives of the review of the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme were to ensure the RSE scheme continues to meet its core objective of delivering a ‘triple win’ for industry, workers and the Pacific;

Rebalancing the system to reduce burden on employers by better targeting risk

- 2 **agreed** to introduce a graduated RSE accreditation model with duration based on the employer’s risk;
- 3 **agreed** to introduce a graduated compliance model to address minor, moderate and severe compliance breaches;
- 4 **agreed** to update the Agreement to Recruit (ATR) process by clarifying the single-season ATR requirements, including adding a Ministry of Social Development endorsement model, and removing most non-labour market related checks from the ATR;

Increasing mobility to protect against exploitation

- 5 **agreed** to replace RSE limited visa status with a RSE work visa that only enables holders to apply for Migrant Exploitation Protection Visas or limited visas while onshore;
- 6 **agreed** to allow Variations of Conditions for RSE visa holders;

Improving clarity and transparency of key system requirements

- 7 **agreed** to formalise a list of allowable costs employers may recover from RSE workers;
- 8 **agreed** to introduce and require use of a Cost Recovery Agreement template;
- 9 **noted** that the Minister of Immigration (the Minister) has instructed officials to establish further guidance on transport cost calculations;
- 10 **agreed** to add ‘provide access to the internet’ to the list of prescribed pastoral care standards;

- 11 **noted** that the Minister has instructed officials to support industry to establish a best practice model for pastoral care;
- 12 **agreed** to enable workers to complete incidental tasks, including the use of machinery, that supplement their primary roles of planting, maintaining, harvesting and packing;
- 13 **noted** that the Minister intends to change RSE worker sick leave provisions to align with the Employment Leave Bill once that Bill comes into effect;
- 14 **noted** that the Minister has instructed officials to formalise the existing complaints process;
- 15 **noted** that accommodation settings are of key-interest to all stakeholders, with significant divergence in views;
- 16 **noted** that the Minister has instructed officials to develop proposals for new Minimum Accommodation Standards at pace with input from stakeholders;
- 17 **noted** that the Minister will make decisions on Minimum Accommodation Standards before the end of September 2026, in consultation with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister for Building and Construction.

Rachel Clarke
Committee Secretary

Present:

Hon David Seymour
Rt Hon Winston Peters
Hon Nicola Willis (Chair)
Hon Chris Bishop
Hon Shane Jones
Hon Erica Stanford
Hon Louise Upston
Hon Simon Watts
Hon Chris Penk
Hon Andrew Hoggard
Hon Mark Patterson
Hon Scott Simpson
Hon Cameron Brewer
Simon Court MP

Officials present from:

Officials Committee for ECO