Since the 1980s, Australian academics and official reports have called for Pacific Islanders to be given better access to the Australian labour market. The Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme was introduced in August 2008. The scheme allows Pacific Islanders to engage in farm work in Australia for up to seven months a year. The Government has just announced that the scheme will be made permanent. But, while numbers are increasing, participation in the scheme has been disappointingly low.

In contrast to Australia, New Zealand has always offered preferential migration treatment to its Pacific neighbours. New Zealand also introduced a seasonal workers scheme one year before Australia, in 2007. The Recognised Seasonal Employer program has proven popular, with some 8,000 Pacific Islanders working in New Zealand under the scheme in 2009. The RSE program has also been extensively evaluated, from both a domestic and international perspective. The findings of the evaluations have been overwhelmingly positive.

This conference will draw on the latest research on both the NZ and Australian schemes, from a domestic and an international perspective. Key questions to be explored are:

> What are the lessons of the NZ experience?
> Why has take-up for the Australian Seasonal Workers Scheme not been higher, and what are the prospects for the Scheme?
> What policy reforms are required for Australia to provide win-win outcomes: beneficial for the Pacific, and beneficial for our economy?

The conference will hear from prominent academics that have studied the Australian and New Zealand seasonal worker migration programs, as well as government and industry stakeholders involved in Australia’s Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme.
Agenda

9.00-9.30am  REGISTRATION

9.30-9.40am  WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION
Tom Kompas, Crawford School of Economics and Government, ANU
Stephen Howes, Development Policy Centre, Crawford School of Economics and Government, ANU

9.40-11.10am  PACIFIC MIGRATION: SURVEY, PROSPECTS AND IMPACTS
Population movement in the Pacific: a perspective on future prospects
Graeme Hugo, University of Adelaide and Richard Bedford, University of Waikato
The development impact of pacific migration to Australia and New Zealand
John Gibson, University of Waikato

11.10-11.30am  BREAK

11.30am-1.00pm  AUSTRALIA’S PACIFIC SEASONAL WORKER PILOT SCHEME
Danielle Hay and Stephen Howes, Development Policy Centre, Crawford School of Economics and Government, ANU
Discussants:
Mark Roddam, Australian Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
Judith Damiani, Citrus Australia
Alf Fangaloka, Tree Minders Pty Ltd
Lionel Kaluat, Vanuatu Labour Commission

1.00-2.00pm  LUNCH

2.00-3.50pm  AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND PACIFIC MIGRATION: POLICIES AND EXPERIENCES
New Zealand’s Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) Program: an evaluation
Mathea Roorda, Evalue Research
Experience of NZ growers with the RSE
Richard Bedford, University of Waikato
“Pacific windows” in NZ’s permanent migration regime
Sankar Ramasamy, Labour and Immigration Research Centre, New Zealand Department of Labour
An analysis of recent survey data on Pacific island migrants in rural and urban Australia
Richard Brown, University of Queensland
Ni-Vanuatu at home and abroad
Kirstie Petrou and John Connell, University of Sydney

3.50-4.10pm  BREAK

4.10-5.00pm  CLOSING DISCUSSION: WHAT (MORE) NEEDS TO BE DONE?
Graeme Dobell, Lowy Institute

5.00pm  CONFERENCE CLOSE AND RECEPTION
Presenter Biographies

Richard Bedford
Richard is Pro Vice-Chancellor Research, Auckland University of Technology and Professor of Population Geography, National Institute of Demographic and Economic Analysis (NIDEA), University of Waikato. He is a specialist in migration research and since the mid-1960s has been researching processes of population movement in the Asia-Pacific region. He is a member of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Official Statistics (ACOS), and an adviser to the Department of Labour on the Recognised Seasonal Employment (RSE) work policy.

Richard Brown
Richard is Associate Professor, School of Economics, University of Queensland. He has substantial experience as an applied development economist in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the South Pacific. His recent research has been on the design and implementation of household surveys to study income transfers of migrant labour and how these impact on the recipient communities’ welfare. His current ARC-funded project focuses on Pacific island migrants in rural and urban New South Wales.

Judith Damiani
Judith is the Chief Executive Officer at Citrus Australia Limited. She previously held this position for Australian Citrus Growers Incorporated since their relocation from Adelaide to Mildura in 2001.

Graeme Dobell
Graeme has been reporting on Australian and international politics, foreign affairs and defence, and the Asia Pacific since 1975. He writes The Canberra Column for Lowy Institute’s blog, The Interpreter. Graeme was the ABC’s South East Asia radio correspondent in Singapore and did several stints as the Canberra-based Foreign Affairs and Defence Correspondent for Radio Australia. In 2008 he became Radio Australia’s Associate Editor for the Asia Pacific.

Alf Fangaloka
Alf is a Director of Tree Minders Pty Ltd, which provides seasonal labourers to the almond industry. In 2009, Tree Minders was the first Australian company to recruit workers from the Pacific under the Pacific Seasonal Workers Pilot Scheme. Alf's experiences with the scheme have been positive, as it enables his company to guarantee staff numbers and is a source of reliable trained staff that are available during the peak season.

John Gibson
John is Professor, Department of Economics, University of Waikato and Senior Research Associate, Motu Economic and Public Policy Research. He taught previously at the University of Canterbury and in the Economics Department and Center for Development Economics at Williams College. He has worked throughout Asia and the Pacific and is widely published, including recently in the *Review of Economics and Statistics*, the *Journal of the European Economic Association*, and the *Journal of Development Economics*.

Danielle Hay
Danielle is a Research Associate with Sapere Research Group. Prior to this she worked as a research assistant for the Development Policy Centre at the Crawford School of Economics and Government, ANU, where she co-authored a report on the Pacific Seasonal Workers Pilot Scheme. Danielle has a Master degree in International and Development Economics from the Australian National University.

Stephen Howes
Stephen is the Director of the Development Policy Centre at the Crawford School of Economics and Government, ANU, and Director of the International Development Economics teaching program, Crawford School. He serves as a Board Member for the Pacific Institute of Public Policy, and sits on the Advisory Board of the Asian Development Bank Institute. Prior to joining the Crawford School, Stephen was Chief Economist at the Australian Agency for International Development and he worked at the World Bank, in Washington and Delhi, where he was Lead Economist for India.

Graeme Hugo
Graeme is an ARC Australian Professorial Fellow, Professor of Geography and Director, Australian Population and Migration Research Centre, University of Adelaide. He is the author of over three hundred books, articles and chapters, as well as a large number of conference papers and reports. He is currently Chair of the Advisory Committee on Demography and Liveability of the Commonwealth Department of Sustainable Environment, Water, Population and Communities.
Lionel Kalaut
Lionel is Labour Commissioner for Vanuatu’s Department of Labour and Employment Services, Ministry of Internal Affairs. Lionel specialised in industrial relations from 1981 until he took up the post of Labour Commissioner in 2005. He was instrumental in the inception of the RSE scheme and has continued to lead it to its current success in obtaining a fair share of the New Zealand RSE market. Lionel is optimistic about extending this success into the PSWPS.

Tom Kompas
Tom is the Director of the Crawford School of Economics and Government and Professor of Economics at The Australian National University. He is also the Foundation Director of the Australian Centre for Biosecurity and Environmental Economics, and has dedicated much of his recent time to public policy in Australia. Until recently, he was a part-time Senior Economist at the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics, a Commonwealth Environment Research Facilities project leader on biosecurity and Editor-in-Chief of the Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics.

Kirstie Petrou
Kirstie is a PhD candidate at the University of Sydney. Her thesis is on rural-urban migration in Vanuatu, with particular reference to Paama. This is a longitudinal study, and will provide insights into how internal mobility has changed in Vanuatu since independence in 1980. She has previously undertaken research on access to primary health care in Vanuatu and the rise of medical tourism.

Sankar Ramasamy
Sankar is Manager, Migration Research, Labour and Immigration Research Centre, Department of Labour, New Zealand. He is involved in a range of immigration and settlement research and evaluation including labour market, economic and social impacts of migration. Sankar has been an evaluation practitioner for the past decade and managed the Department’s evaluation of the RSE policy. He previously managed research and evaluation in employment assistance and welfare at the Ministry of Social Development.

Mark Roddam
Mark is Branch Manager for Migration, CoAG and Evidence Branch, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. Mark has worked in the Department for over a decade. His role includes responsibility for migration policy as it relates to the labour market; the Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme and its successor, the Seasonal Worker Program; and the Department’s research and CoAG agendas.

Mathea Roorda
Mathea works for Evalue Research, an evaluation consultancy based in Wellington. She led a two year evaluation of the first two seasons of New Zealand’s Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) policy (2007 – 2009). The evaluation examined how the policy was implemented, identified short-term outcomes and assessed how potential risks were managed. Fieldwork was conducted in New Zealand and five Pacific states. The evaluation was awarded the Australasian Evaluation Society’s ‘Best Evaluation Study’ in 2010.