

# Environment & Migration: Leveraging Existing Migration Policies and Practices

Emily Fabling  
National Manager, RSE



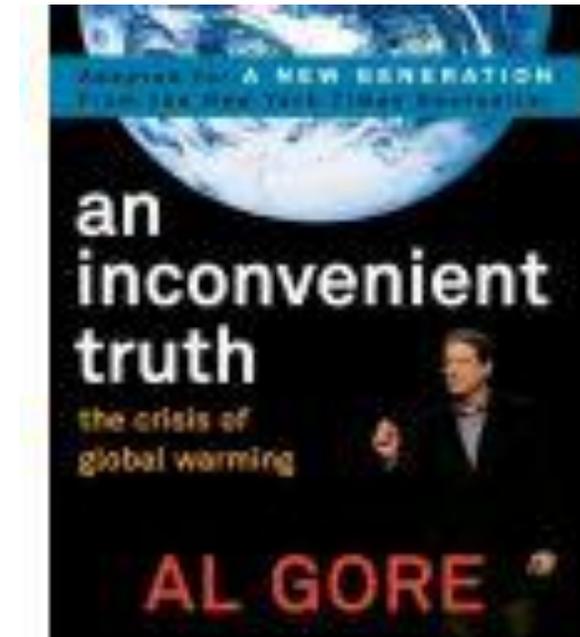
Ministry of Business,  
Innovation & Employment



# Environment



- **'Environmental migration' raised in:**
  - Pacific Islands Forum
  - 2008 Niue Declaration on Climate Change
  - UN General Assembly
  - UN Security Council
  - UN High Commissioner for Refugees
  - UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
- **Infamous untruth reported in Al Gore's "Inconvenient Truth":**
  - that New Zealand has agreed to take all so-called 'climate migrants' from Tuvalu





# Environment

- **New Zealand Government's primary focus is mitigation and adaptation**
  - migration *may* eventually lie at one extreme of the adaptation response continuum
  - climate change adaptation is linked to sustainable development
  - migration / remittances / skills transfer / development
  - policies supporting active relocation/ migration may act as a disincentive to adaptation
  - existing immigration policies are flexible
- **2008 Niue Declaration**
  - recognises that climate change may exacerbate existing challenges in the region
  - references the importance of retaining the Pacific's social/cultural identity, and desire of Pacific peoples to continue to live in their own countries, where possible...

# Environment



- **Oxford University IMI scenarios**
- **Environmental degradation > mass migration?**
  - migration may be *one among a range of responses*
  - migration can be seen as an effective adapting mechanism
  - environment's interaction with other migration drivers (eg. economic, social structures)
  - consider timescales
    - sudden events
    - gradual change



Sprint tides flood the borrow pits, Funafuti, TUVALU

# Environment



- **'Immigration: passport to a fresh development frontier?'**
  - **Post-Haiti earthquake**
  - **US H-2A/H-2B work visas extended to Haitians (short-term agricultural work)**
  - **Remittances to Haiti already valued at almost US\$2bn a year – twice what the US pledged in aid for post-earthquake reconstruction**
  - **If an additional 2,000 Haitians work in US each year, they could add up to US\$400m in additional income and earthquake recovery for Haitian families over 10 years**

# NZ-Pacific immigration policies



- **Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau**
  - NZ citizens, move freely between NZ and their home countries
- **Residence policies**
  - Skilled Migrant Category
  - Family policies
  - Samoan Quota
  - Pacific Access Category (Tonga, Kiribati, Tuvalu)
- **Temporary entry policies**
  - Work visas
  - Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) policy
  - Student policies (eg. NZODA Scholarships)

# Pacific migrants to NZ



- **Pacific migrants tend to move as a family unit**
  - 43%, cf. 33% non-Pacific migrants
- **A significant number have a tertiary certificate or qualification**
- **Main reasons for migrating**
  - **Social and economic opportunities**
    - eg. ability to get a good job, to enter a good education system, and to be with family
  - **cf. non-Pacific migrants:**
    - to be with family
    - the relaxed pace of life
    - the environment/landscape
    - *Environment a pull factor – not push*

# RSE

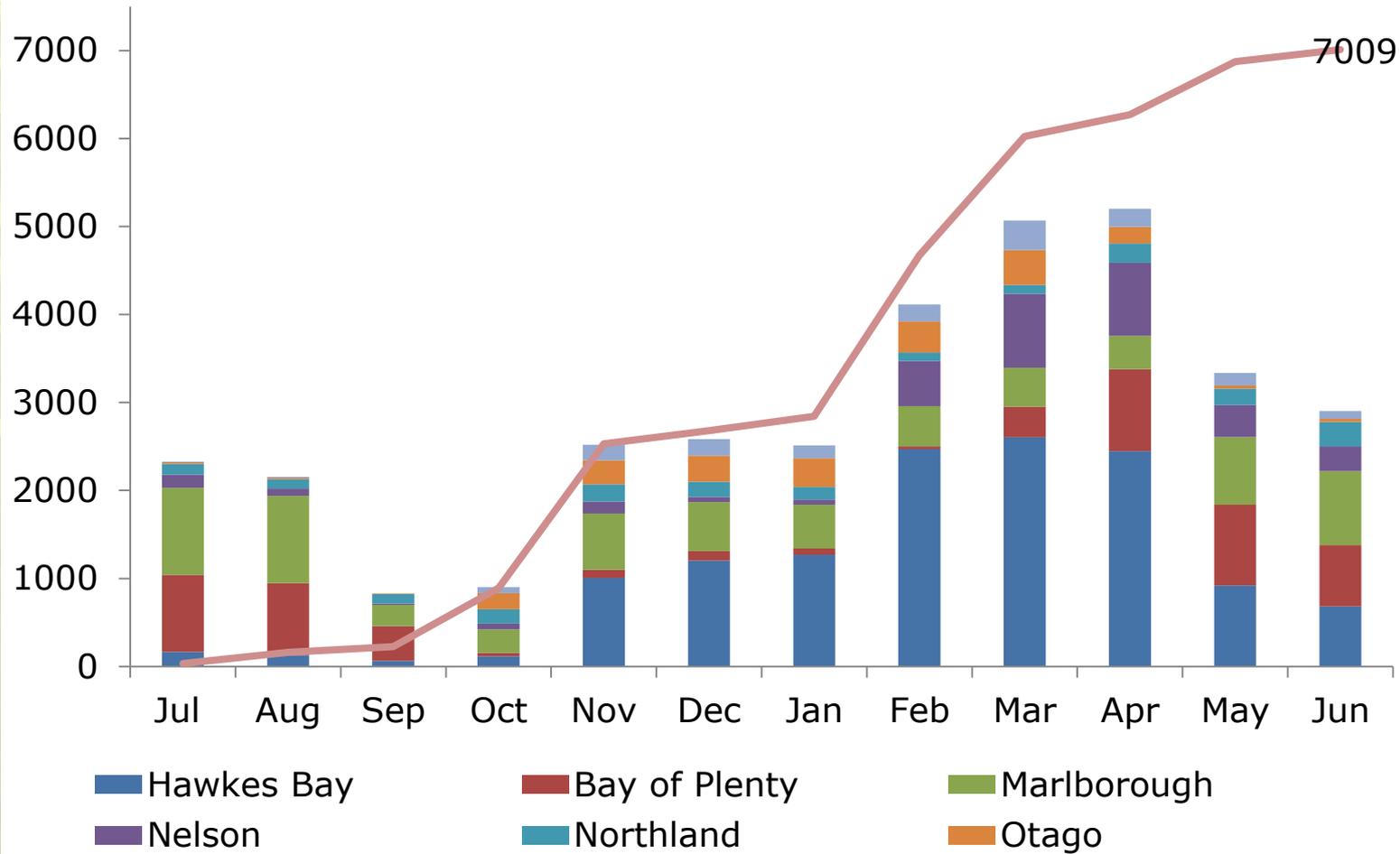


- **Introduced in 2007, announced at Pacific Islands Forum by Rt Hon Helen Clark in October 2006**
  - Economic driver: severe labour shortages in NZ horticulture/viticulture industries
  - Development driver: Pacific preference (aim for 50% Pacific workers) and circular migration
- **Key components**
  - NZ employers hold 'recognised' status
  - NZ employers choose to recruit according to labour needs & NZ labour market
  - Pacific workers selected, may stay for maximum of 7 months (9 months in case of Tuvalu and Kiribati)
  - Up to 8,000 workers in any one season
  - Pastoral care obligations on NZ employers

Nationality	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Brazil	3	-	-	-
India	77	25	40	15
Indonesia	271	271	304	299
Kiribati	38	48	149	142
Malaysia	374	406	375	317
Papua New Guinea	-	-	6	6
Philippines	76	75	74	74
Samoa	1228	1021	1219	1162
Solomon Islands	311	256	252	407
Taiwan	12	54	31	31
Thailand	684	727	827	658
Tonga	1355	1142	1411	1398
Tuvalu	49	54	51	88
Vanuatu	2342	2137	2352	2412
Vietnam	1	-	-	-
Grand Total	6821	6216	7091	7009



## RSE Workers in New Zealand 2011/12





# RSE Strengths

- **Triple-win**
  - Results for employers (productivity, quality of produce, expansion)
  - Workers benefit financially and gain skills
  - Results for NZ and Pacific Governments
- **Return rates and earnings**
  - Over 24,600 seasonal workers in 4 seasons (around 13,900 people = return workers)
  - 54% have returned at least once
  - 90% return to the same employer
  - Most in New Zealand 3-7 months
- **Mean gross seasonal earnings are approximately \$12,700 per RSE worker**
  - Range: \$9,680 Tuvalu to \$15,860 Kiribati
  - One RSE employer reported 2011/12 earning by 1 worker >\$35,000

# RSE Strengths (cont.)



- **Continuous improvement**
  - flexible/agile
  - eg. 'joint ATRs': extends worker's stay in NZ
- **Pacific regional focus**
  - **World Bank evaluation:**
    - Possibly the best development intervention we have evidence for to date
  - **ILO Good Practice database**
    - The comprehensive approach of the RSE scheme towards filling labour shortages in the horticulture and viticulture industries in New Zealand and the system of checks to ensure that the migration process is orderly, fair, and circular could service as a model for other destination countries

# RSE Strengths (cont.)



- Pacific states' economic development assisted by labour mobility initiatives and in-country horticulture enterprises
- Sustained participation by Pacific states in RSE
- New business opportunities in Pacific Islands created by workers from new skills and/or income





# RSE:SPP

- **\$4.25 million over 5 years**
- **NZ Aid Programme funding**
  - Pacific states' economic development assisted by labour mobility initiatives and in-country horticulture enterprises
  - Sustained participation by Pacific states in RSE (administrative capacity)
  - New business opportunities in Pacific Islands created by workers from new skills and/or income
- **Other NZ Aid**
  - NZHITO pilot horticulture training in Samoa (through RSE:SPP)
  - Vakameasina (training in NZ for RSE workers)

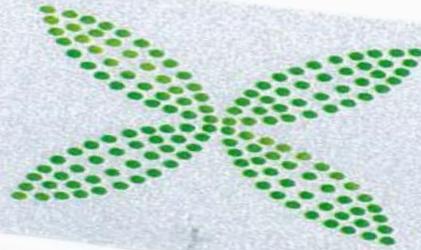




# RSE Impacts

- **Dwelling improvements**
  - More robust houses (to cope with sudden events: eg. cyclones)
  - Solar panels (sustainable energy)
  - Water tanks
- **Asset accumulation**
  - eg. no more kerosene ovens
  - telecommunications
  - boats, other transport (eg. motorbikes)
- **Education / community impacts**
  - Increase in schooling for RSE workers' children and extended family
  - Community facilities (eg. halls)
  - Water supply improvements

# Impressions



## focus on the Pacific

### Why support the sending communities

Gary Jones of PipfruitNZ has written an excellent article for the Orchardist magazine which explains very clearly the benefits to the Pacific but also what it means for industries in New Zealand. The following quote from the article captures why this scheme is an integrated scheme.

*"The outcomes from the RSE scheme are consistent with the objectives of the fair trade movement. Fair trade is a global movement tackling poverty and empowering producers in developing countries through trade. The difference is that with the RSE scheme workers trade their labour and they take their money directly back to their families and communities. Their labour is used to produce fruit and wine in New Zealand that is then exported to retailers all around the world who are strong and vocal supporters of the fair trade movement".*  
(Gary Jones)

The way industry is seen from around the world by consumers is not just around the physical attributes of our products and inputs like energy and water. Consumers are increasingly focusing on the social aspect of producing these crops. Hence employers are even more driven to support the sending RSE communities.

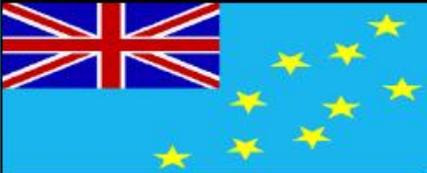
# RSE Challenges



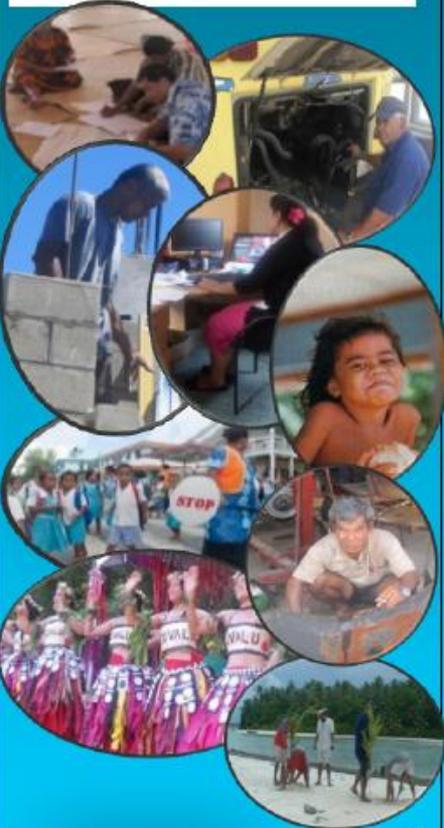
- **Success brings a reduced sense of risk**
- **To retain risk awareness**
  - **Recruitment practices (incl non-Pacific states)**
  - **Minimum remuneration requirements**
  - **Hours of work (long hours, night work)**
  - **Pastoral duties of employers (incl induction)**
  - **Employment conditions and agreements (eg. dismissal and 'sending home')**
  - **Dispute resolution / worker advocacy**
  - **Not a pathway to residence/permanent migration**
  
  - **Not the solution to environmental degradation: a pathway to adaptation?**



**TUVALU**  
WE SHARE, WE CARE



**Tuvalu Labour  
Information**



DEPARTMENT  
OF LABOUR  
GOVERNMENT  
OF TUVALU

# Tuvalu RSE



**“Daddy has gone to work to  
save our future”**



**Kia ora tatou**

**[emily.fabbling@dol.govt.nz](mailto:emily.fabbling@dol.govt.nz)**

