



Palms Australia



# Information for applicants

# Introduction

Welcome!

I'm so pleased to welcome you to the first step of this life-changing journey. A Palms assignment abroad can be one of the most effective and sustainable methods for reducing poverty in disadvantaged communities. You will help to build the capacity of a local community to advance a sustainable future. Your own growth will be even greater.

At Palms Australia we pride ourselves on placing participants responsibly. Our Program and Placements Coordinator meticulously evaluates requests from communities to ensure they are sustainable. S(he) also takes care to recruit, assess and support participants to ensure they are placed in assignments that are mutually beneficial.

Before you progress to the next stage of your application, it's important that you read through this information and let us know if you have any questions. It might seem like a lot to get through, but living and working cross-culturally can involve more than one might at first imagine. Thorough preparation is vital in order to make an effective contribution overseas.

This is the first of three Information Booklets. Each is intended to answer questions you may have as you progress through each stage of the application and preparation process.

If you have any questions regarding the information in this booklet, or about Palms Australia more generally, please don't hesitate to contact us at [palsms@palms.org.au](mailto:palsms@palms.org.au) or on 02 9560 5333.

I wish you all the best on your journey, and hope to meet with you soon,



Roger O'Halloran  
Executive Director

# About Palms Australia

## Who we are

Palms Australia contributes to global justice and peace by engaging with communities seeking sustainable solutions to poverty. We recruit qualified and experienced Australians who assist the growth of vital grass roots organisations by fostering the strengths of their people. We thoroughly prepare and support participants and partner organisations for authentic relationships based in mutual development.

Palms Australia is a member-based; not-for-profit and Non-government Company (ABN 33001882337) registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

The skilled Australians we recruit undertake mentoring assignments in regional and remote communities around the world where opportunities are limited. We prioritise projects that give the people who need it most the opportunity to gain skills that help them live independently and sustainably.

**Our History, Vision, Mission and Values are on our Website ([Click here](#))**

## Who can undertake this mission?

- **People prepared to share their skills** while working in their field. After a time finding your feet, learning language, networking and identifying community and organisational strengths, you will be equipped to achieve Palms' mission of assisting to build individual, organisational and community capacity.
- **People wanting to advance the awareness, enthusiasm and involvement of Australian and international communities in shared action to achieve just, sustainable, and peaceful development.** You can make a simple beginning by linking friends to Palms' [Assignments Abroad](#).
- **People who believe in mutual relationship.** People who are authoritative in their work, without being authoritarian, officious or paternalistic. Patience and a sense of humour go a long way.
- One must be **medically fit** and receive a **police clearance and working with children check**. If going overseas a **work permit** and **visa** will also be required.

## Where are participants placed?

Requests come from communities in Africa, Asia and Pacific Island countries. We thoroughly scope requests, prioritising communities who have had least opportunity. Such requests most often come from regional and remote areas; however we also respond to requests in urban areas where skill development will assist to achieve a sustainable impact.

Palms Australia will not place Australians where local people are available to do the job; nor do we fly in, do a job, and fly out again. Responsible relationships are paramount.

## What will you achieve?

After one or two years on assignment many are sure that they learn more than they impart. We believe this is something to celebrate. Palms Development Philosophy starts with the words:

**"Development is an economic, social, cultural, spiritual and ecological process ..."**

A good assignment will assist aspects of such development in the community and in the participant.

As importantly, your placement will give us the opportunity to share the story of your host community. We will ask for an update from time-to-time. This can assist Australians to rediscover some forgotten components in our own development. Sharing your experience can help to bring those at home to a better appreciation of shared global challenges. It provides a counterbalance to the one-dimensional understanding and irrational fear of the ‘other’, so often offered in social and mass media.

Developing people’s interest in what you are actually doing, how you are going, what it’s like living in a developing country, and what your host community is like, is a great starting point for sharing [Palms Vision and Values](#). It assists us to maintain community support while you are away.

## What we provide

### Pre-departure support includes:

1. Providing a clear **Position Description** and **Conditions of Service** for each placement.
2. Facilitation of all arrangements leading up to the placement, including liaison with host community, government agencies, sending community and support groups.
3. Risk management prior to and during the placement.
4. Providing placement preparation materials from the point of application to departure.
5. Assistance with visa and work permit arrangements and documentation.
6. A thorough (eight-day) residential **Orientation Course**.

### Additional support for those who commit to a placement for at least 12 months includes:

1. All costs are covered for 1 - 6 above. (Apart from an applicant donation of at least \$300 in the 12 months prior to their Orientation Course. It supports venue deposit and other registration costs.)
2. Accommodation and a living allowance to cover in-country expenses.
3. In-country pastoral and program support.
4. Head Office support from Palms Participant Support Officer involving regular contact (email, text, phone, Skype and field visits) for assistance with:
  - o Briefings and debriefings to assist transitions at the beginning and end of the assignment
  - o Advice on any administrative requirements of partner government
  - o Program implementation, monitoring and evaluation
  - o Personal issues that may emerge including liaison with host organisation
5. A \$2,500 gratuity payment on completion of each full year in placement and
6. A re-entry program to assist integration of the placement experience with life and work at home.

### Additional support for those who commit to a placement for at least 24 months includes:

1. A subsidy paid towards your insurance costs (\$700 per year).
2. Forward and return airfares.

## A Farewell or Send-off

It's important that your community (immediate family and relatives, friends, work colleagues, or those you know from religious, sporting, hobby or mutual interest groups) have an opportunity for a farewell. You will be too busy and may be a little shy about organising your own farewell so we will ask you to identify three people in your community who can be a support for you and point of contact with Palms.

We will liaise with them and provide them with any resources they need for your send-off such as invitations; arrange a Palms Australia returnee to share information about our mission, your destination

location, its culture and your role. You won't have to speak publically, or to organise a thing. Unless you want to, there will be no more to do than to turn up.

## What if I have dependents?

Palms Australia recognises that the whole family can enjoy extraordinary growth from sharing the experience of a cross-cultural placement. However, donor funds are provided to assist achieve assignment outcomes, so we have to ask families to cover the costs of all dependents including their preparation, insurance, airfares and living expenses. If you have any questions about undertaking assignments with dependents, please contact us.

## How do I start my application?

Simply complete and return the ***Application Form*** to us either online, via email, or via post. You are asked for two referees (Professional and Character). Referees will receive a letter from Palms Australia inviting them to provide a reference unless you mention that you want to keep your inquiry discreet until later in the process. At some point before Step 4 we will also speak with either or both referees.

When that is sent, answering questions in the ***Reflective Questionnaire*** should assist your further discernment.

## The next steps

### Step 2: Assignment possibilities

You will get some immediate feedback about current suitable assignment options within a week of receiving your completed ***Application Form***.

### Step 3: Interview

Returning your ***Reflective Questionnaire*** will invite an interview (in-person or online) with our Participant Support Officer.

Interviewing provides us with a chance to develop our understanding of people and their personal attributes. It also provides you with the opportunity to get to know our staff and have any questions answered in detail.

An important aspect of the interview will be discussing all of your qualifications and experience. This will allow further discernment together of the assignment requests for which you would like to be considered. After the interview our Programs Officer will forward your application and CV to appropriate requesting organisations for their consideration.

### Step 4: Placement Offer

Any placement proposal will be provisional until the requesting organisation has confirmed acceptance of your candidature and you have completed the ***Connecting Communities Webinar***. When your placement is confirmed your preparation will be assisted by linking you to the partner organisation and those who have returned from similar assignments.

### Step 5: Position Description and Conditions of Service

You will be forwarded a Position Description and Conditions of Service. These documents outline the role and responsibilities of the position as well as the living conditions of the placement. Palms Australia, the

requesting organisation (employer) and the participant must all agree to the details outlined before the placement can proceed.

## **Step 6: Visas, Medical, Police Clearance & Working with Children Check**

For some countries, visa processing is completed prior to your departure, for others the process is completed in-country. Depending on the country of placement, you will be advised on the work permit and visa application process.

You will be provided with medical information relevant to the country you are going to and be advised to discuss any necessary vaccinations or medical issues with your medical practitioner or travel doctor.

A link for receiving a Police Clearance & Working with Children Check will be provided.

## **Step 7: Orientation**

Attend Palms Australia's eight-day residential Orientation Course. During the course you will attend a pre-departure interview and sign a general placement agreement with the Participant Support Officer.

## **Step 8: Farewell or Send-off**

More information about a farewell will be provided in Information Booklet 2 and when you get closer to the point of departure. These are small events that help engage your community in your assignment.

## **Step 9: Placement**

Your overseas placement begins. Palms Australia and your host organisation will provide ongoing support throughout the duration of your placement.

## **Step 10: Return**

On return to Australia, Palms Australia will arrange a de-brief meeting and a comprehensive re-entry program to help you integrate your experience at home.

Ready to apply?

See our [current opportunities](#) and submit an [enquiry form](#). We look forward to meeting you and working together to discover how your skills can serve a community abroad. For more information contact Palms Australia on 02 9560 5333 or [palms@palms.org.au](mailto:palms@palms.org.au).



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