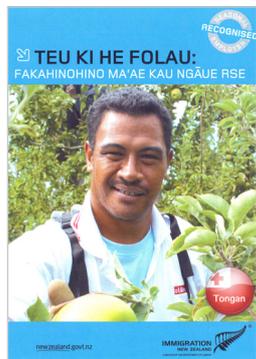


Talking business with Anthony Haas

Labour option for Greytown



Seasonal workers

Do Greytown's leaders want to attract labour to help build its economy? If the political will is indeed present, there are a number of refugee and migrant needs – and options.

The outgoing president of the Pacific Islands of Kiribati, Anate Tong made it clear at the February Victoria University of Wellington Climate Change conference some of his people are interested in reskilling and relocating, and applying horticultural skills. Some Pacific Islands cannot grow

Tongan RSE

necessary crops on land which salty water has contaminated. Some Islanders need employment opportunities – and relief from cyclones. Kiribati, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and now again Tonga and Fiji are challenged. Greytown's planners could find common cause.

Experience

The local apple industry, using the government supported Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme has experience in employing



Pacific horticultural workers. The NZ wine industry, particularly in the Marlborough region, employs Islanders, including Tongan villagers. Aged care services find employment for new settlers. Island governments, NZ employers, officials, policy planners, academics, social service agencies and others could bring their experience and goodwill together to plan the settlement of people affected by climate change and underemployment. Relevant experience in housing and education could also be applied in Islands and New Zealand.

Government

Central government agencies, such as the New Zealand Immigration service, can play constructive roles in planning temporary or long term settlement. The aid agencies can help build sustainable economic activities. Such agencies have shown interest in using Wellington based services, which gives the Wairarapa an advantage in planning. The Greater Wellington Regional Council and territorial local authorities in the Wairarapa could work with local communities – such as churches and schools - to make things happen.

President Tong made it clear during his Wellington trip he was going to explore New Zealand government circles to see what might be possible. Greytown interests could follow up – and thus help build local horticultural business, and employment for some migrants and refugees. Tongans and Fijians, again suffering from cyclones, could also use their experience more in Wairarapa horticulture niches such as vineyards. Other regions of New Zealand could also offer such options – why not Greytown and its neighbourhood?

ahaas@decisionmaker.co.nz