

PALM SCHEME HOUSING STANDARDS — WHAT APPLIES, AND WHO REALLY NEEDS TO FOLLOW THEM.

PALM scheme housing standards — explained simply. Understand who must comply, what qualifies, and where most get it wrong. Practical guidance for approved employers.

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Let's clear this up: if you're using seasonal workers under the PALM scheme, you've got to house them properly.

But what does "properly" mean — and who actually has to meet these rules?

This blog breaks down the PALM scheme housing standards without the red tape. No waffle. Just what you need to know to stay compliant, protect your team, and get on with the job.

Smart farm managers who know good housing keeps good people are already across this. Here's how to get it sorted.

What is the PALM scheme?

The [PALM scheme](#) (Pacific Australia Labour Mobility) allows approved employers to bring in workers from the Pacific Islands and Timor-Leste for seasonal or long-term jobs — mainly in ag, food processing, and remote essential services.



If you're an approved employer under this scheme, you have legal obligations — including providing safe, decent, and fair accommodation.

What do the PALM scheme housing standards actually require?

Here's what counts as acceptable under the PALM scheme:

- **Clean, safe, and legal housing** — power, hot water, smoke alarms, and working locks.
- **No overcrowding** — one bed per person, no mattresses on floors, and no triple bunks.
- **Shared facilities that work** — including kitchen, laundry, bathrooms, with the right ratio (at least 1 toilet and shower per 10 people).
- **Gender privacy** — separate sleeping and bathroom facilities for men and women if mixed occupancy.
- **Fit for the climate** — heating or cooling depending on location.
- **Accessible and secure** — 24-hour access, not in an unsafe or remote spot without transport options.
- **Transparent costs** — rent and utilities must be fair and clearly explained in writing. No price gouging.

These are the basics. Get them right, and you're on safe ground.

Who does this apply to?

These standards apply only to PALM scheme workers, and only if you're providing their accommodation.

If the worker sorts their own housing (by choice), or

you're hiring local casuals or backpackers, these rules don't directly apply — but they're a good benchmark.

Three real examples — two that pass, one that fails

✔ Example 1 – Fruit grower, QLD

This grower brings in 20 workers from Tonga for harvest season. They lease four nearby houses, each with beds, working kitchens, laundry facilities and proper bathrooms. The rent is fair and split equally. Women are housed separately with their own bathroom. Spot checks pass with no issues.

✔ Example 2 – Dairy farm, VIC

A regional dairy employs 10 PALM workers year-round. The accommodation is an older house on the property, but it's been cleaned up: new mattresses, working fire alarms, and separate male/female bathrooms. The house is insulated and has heating. Workers walk 5 minutes to the jobsite. Fully compliant.

✘ Example 3 – Veg packhouse, WA

Ten workers are placed in an old shed on the

property. Mattresses are laid on the concrete floor. There's one toilet, no hot water, and a microwave on a bench. No cooling in summer. Men and women are mixed in one open room. Rent is deducted from pay with no clear breakdown.

Result: Fails PALM standards. Likely to be flagged in an audit — and puts the employer at risk of losing their approval.

Why it matters — and where Aruva fits in

Providing PALM-compliant housing isn't about red tape. It's about risk management, workforce stability, and being able to expand without cutting corners.

Aruva builds modular housing that meets PALM scheme housing standards from the start. That means:

- **Fast deployment** to rural and regional sites
- **Durable builds** that hold up under repeat use
- **Layouts designed** with the right ratios, access, and privacy
- **No guesswork** — just housing that performs

Investors who are backing housing that actually delivers a return are choosing Aruva because it's a system that works.

REAL LIVING. DELIVERED. ACCOMMODATION DELIVERED FAST AND BUILT TO LAST.

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