

# **Joint media release ‘Working Holiday Visa expansion has benefits at home and abroad’**

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An expansion of the Working Holiday Maker (WHM) visa program which takes effect today will have benefits for farmers and regional communities, while fostering closer ties with dozens of countries.

More places are now available to young people from more countries, and we are giving travellers an option to stay for a third year if they work in the regional areas that need it most.

Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs David Coleman said the changes will further address regional labour shortages.

“The WHM program has been running successfully since 1975, and sees thousands of travellers visit, work in and support regional and remote economies each year,” Mr Coleman said.

“The program also boosts people-to-people links between young adults from Australia and the 44 countries now involved.”

New Work and Holiday arrangements with Greece and Ecuador also commence today, adding 500 and 100 places respectively. Annual caps for Spain, Israel, Peru and Chile have been increased recently, and those for Argentina, Malaysia, Singapore and Portugal, will also increase from today.

In addition, the maximum eligible age for French applicants has been raised to 35 years.

Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment Simon Birmingham said working holiday makers were vital to Australia's tourism industry,

“We know working holiday makers who travel to Australia, stay longer, spend more and travel further into regional areas than most other international visitors,” Minister Birmingham said.

“They also spend every dollar they earn while in Australia, in addition to the savings they bring here, creating more jobs for Australians in our tourism and hospitality industry.”

Summary of changes to Working Holiday Maker visas:

- Working Holiday Makers who have completed at least six months specified regional employment in their second year may be eligible for a third year visa. The 6 months of work must all be carried out on or after 1 July 2019, with applications able to be lodged from January 2020.
- Extension of the period a WHM (subclass 417 and 462) may work with the same agricultural employer, from six to 12 months.
- Increase in the number of places available for travellers from, Spain (1,500 up to 3,400), Israel (500 up to 2,500), Peru (100 up to 1,500), Chile (2,000 up to 3,400), Argentina (from 1,500 up to 2,450), Malaysia (100 up to 1,100), Singapore (from 500 up to 2,500) and Portugal (200 up to 500).
- Greece (500 places) and Ecuador (100 new places) added to WHM visa program, taking the total number of eligible countries to 44.
- The maximum eligible age for French applicants has been raised to 35 years.

For more information visit the Department of Home Affairs website.

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