



Tourism & Transport Forum

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Friday 24 July 2020

Committee Secretary

Joint Standing Committee on Migration

PO Box 6021, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

via email to migration@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Chair,

Re: Inquiry into the Working Holiday Maker program:

I write on behalf of the Tourism & Transport Forum which represents members from across the tourism, transport and aviation industries including tourism operators, youth accommodation providers, airlines and airports and the like.

I write regarding working holiday makers and specifically the WHM reciprocal cultural exchange program. Working holiday makers or backpackers are a high yield market for Australia. Pre COVID-19, working holiday makers spent more, stayed longer and dispersed more widely throughout Australia than most other travellers.

Working holiday makers also spend around 30 per cent more than they earn while in Australia and are an invaluable source of labour particularly for regional tourism operators who in normal times face chronic labour and skills shortages which were projected to be over 120,000 jobs in recent years.

Therefore, once borders again reopen these visitors will again be critical to Australia's long-term economic recovery as they create jobs for Australians as well as themselves and provide a valuable, mobile seasonal labour force in the years ahead.

In the meantime, there are still currently around 80,000 working holiday makers in Australia, many of whom are eager to extend their stays by working in critical sectors such as agriculture or bushfire recovery volunteering. These motivated young people contribute greatly to the tourism sector and to society at large whilst they here.

Eligibility for the program has been extended to age 35 for citizens of Ireland, France and Canada, and there is now opportunity to do so for the remaining 41 countries involved in the program, particularly for those who are currently here and at the age threshold. Further, consideration should be given to waiving the costs of renewed visas for those who applied to come to Australia in recent months but were not able and will now have to reapply.

This Inquiry is an important opportunity for the Committee and Parliament at large to consider the importance of working holiday makers to Australia, both those that will arrive in the future as well as those currently here, and to allow them to continue contributing to Australian tourism and the economy at large.

I thank you for your consideration of this submission and TTF Manager Policy and Government Relations [REDACTED] will be in touch in due course to arrange my availability to discuss this in more detail with the Committee in the coming weeks and months.

Kind regards,



Margy Osmond

Chief Executive Officer

Tourism & Transport Forum (TTF) Australia