

To The committee on Migration

Re Backpackers Visa`s

Dear Committee

I wish it to be known that we are not a primary industry but the lack of backpackers coming to our motel business in Meekatharra, approx. 800 kms north of Perth WA, due to the CV restrictions on International travel, would leave us without reliable and motivated staff.

We have used predominantly French backpacker couples, 1 of whom needs to be a chef, for the last 3 or so years. We don't have enough hours to employ a fulltime chef and therefore the two staff clean rooms to boost their hours. They don't qualify for the 2nd year visa extension by coming to work for us (88 days primary industry) which we also find baffling.

When we took over this business, we tried Australian chefs but found they didn't really want to be here so far from the city, were unmotivated, and were unreliable. We also tried to be patriotic and employ local cleaning staff, but this left us highly stressed as they were just as unreliable and would not show up for work. We found that when they reached their required 15 hours a week (to qualify for the "dole"), we wouldn't see them until the next week. This left us with no option than to change our business model to save our business and sanity.

We would love to employ Australians first, but feel we would be going backwards fast as we have found the backpackers to be keen, motivated and want to feel a remote country atmosphere.

I understand that the unemployment rate is rising fast and we all need to try to help, but we have tried before and do not wish to be forced into a no-win situation where we and our business suffer.

In the past, before FIFO became the norm, there would have been at least 350 more families in this town and therefore a pool from which to draw staff, but that has now evaporated.

I also remember past government programs where unemployed were encouraged to move to where the jobs were with financial incentives but the uptake was minimal, so an abject failure.

There are plenty of rural and remote businesses all over this fine country of ours that would feel the same way as I have described. So please consider this submission from me as a plea for more backpackers or maybe grant an extension to those who are here as a lot were unable to leave and therefore have not had the full use of the visa they were granted. When international travel is safe and resumes then this could be reviewed.

I can nominate 3 hotels, a caravan park, a supermarket, and 2 service station as well as us, in this town, that heavily rely on backpackers to come here to keep their businesses afloat.

There are dozens of outback towns in rural WA, that I can nominate that absolutely rely on backpackers to survive, not our local product. I feel it's a noble gesture but it doesn't work!

Please give careful consideration to this submission and feel free to contact me should you wish to discuss any of the issues I raised.

Regards,

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Auski Inland Motel

Meekatharra.

