



THE HON ALEX HAWKE MP
MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP, MIGRANT SERVICES AND
MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

MEDIA RELEASE

22 June 2021

**WORKING HOLIDAY MAKER VISA CHANGES HELPING COVID-19
RECOVERY**

Upcoming changes to the Working Holiday Maker (WHM) program will provide more support to the tourism and hospitality sectors still recovering from the disruptions of COVID-19.

WHM visa holders working in the tourism and hospitality sectors in Northern, remote and very remote areas of Australia will be able to count this as specified work, making them eligible for a second or third WHM visa. This option will be available to WHMs who lodge their applications from March 2022 and will take into account work undertaken in the tourism and hospitality sectors in these areas from today.

As announced in October 2020, WHMs offshore who were unable to come to Australia or had to leave early because of COVID-19 will be able to apply for a replacement visa with nil Visa Application Charge (VAC) from 1 July 2021.

Eligible current and former WHMs in Australia will also be able to apply for a replacement WHM visa with nil Visa Application Charge (VAC) from March 2022, providing another opportunity to meet the specified work requirements for a subsequent WHM visa.

Former WHM visa holders who have transitioned to another visa, such as the COVID-19 Pandemic Event visa, may also be eligible to apply for a nil VAC replacement WHM visa.

As announced on 8 May 2021, tourism and hospitality has been added to the list of COVID-19 critical sectors. This allows all WHMs employed in the tourism and hospitality sector to work longer than six months for one employer without requesting permission and gives more flexibility to tourism and hospitality employers to meet their workforce needs.

Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs, Alex Hawke said these changes build on those introduced from April last year to support WHM visa holders impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We recognise the important contribution Working Holiday Makers have made to critical sectors of the Australian economy throughout the pandemic,” he said.

“COVID-19 travel restrictions and economic shocks disrupted the plans of many visa holders. These additional measures provide the opportunity for a reset — helping Working Holiday Makers to stay and work in Australia,” he said.

“We will continue to monitor and adjust temporary visa conditions to ensure we have the right settings in place as Australia emerges from the pandemic,” Minister Hawke said.

More information on the changes to the WHM program will be available on the Department of Home Affairs website as the new arrangements for tourism and hospitality, specified work and nil VAC WHM visas are put in place at www.homeaffairs.gov.au

ENDS

Media Contact:

Wade Laube – 0409 193 057