

10 March 2022

The Hon. Alex Hawke MP
Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs
Parliament House
Canberra, ACT 2600

Via email: alex.hawke.mp@aph.gov.au

Ref: Recommendation for the extension of the VISA fee waiver initiative

Dear Minister,

I write to you on behalf of the Backpacker and Youth Tourism Advisory Panel (BYTAP) regarding the announcement that the Australian government would refund the costs of the Working Holiday Maker Visa from 19 January 2022 and 19 April 2022.

This announcement has been warmly welcomed by our sector, and our global partners who promote the Working Holiday Maker (WHM) scheme.

BYTAP has received feedback that some young travellers have accelerated their plans to come to Australia prior to the cut-off date, in addition to others considering Australia for the first time as a gap year destination. These results are welcomed by our sector.

However, feedback from agencies in Australia and from WHM source markets has been mixed; agents have voiced challenges of effectively being able to promote the initiative with such a short duration. Agencies have referenced the ramp-up time needed to market the initiative in addition to challenges to secure flights. Unfortunately this has meant a number of agencies deciding against promoting the campaign.

To encourage WHMs to return to Australia and assist the tourism and hospitality sector to fill critical labour shortages, BYTAP would like to recommend that the campaign is extended until December 31, 2022. We appreciate that this extension would come at a cost however BYTAP strongly believes that the costs would be offset by funds these Working Holiday Makers will inject back into our economy and the labour shortages they would help fill.

I welcome your feedback, and the opportunity to answer any questions you may have about the WHM sector and this recommendation.

Yours sincerely,



WENDI AYLWARD
BYTAP