



# Youth Working Holiday Program

A framework enabling the resumption of the Working Holiday Maker Program.

September 2020

v.6

Endorsed by:



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# COVID-Safe Youth Working Holiday Program

## OVERVIEW

The Working Holiday Maker (WHM) Program makes an important contribution to the Australian economy and community. Australia was the global pioneer of this innovative program, which has since been copied by other destinations, in recognition of the benefits it brings to destinations. The positive employment outcomes and as well as the broader benefits to our tourism and visitor economy across regions and urban centres have been well-documented.

With our international border closed and as WHM visas expire, the numbers of backpackers within Australia is in steady decline and is placing further downward pressure on the tourism and agricultural industries. This is particularly the case with hostels and specialist backpacker accommodation, bus and transport, through to tourism centres and regional areas that benefit from this high-yield sector both in terms of tourism spend, and as seasonal agricultural labour.

The Backpacker Youth Tourism Advisory Panel (BYTAP), National Farmers Federation (NFF) and various tourism industry bodies support a COVIDSafe plan to enable youth work and travel opportunities across regional Australia. This framework proposes the relaunch of the WHM Program, an important cultural exchange program, enabling international visitors to experience life in Australia. Similarly, it may provide a framework to entice young Australians to broaden their experiences domestically.

It proposes a three-step plan to inject valuable tourism spend into regional Australia by resuming international WHM arrivals, who provide a vital source of labour for the agricultural sector, generate over \$3.2bn per year in tourism revenue, and are a critical source of income for regional businesses.

A core recommendation to prove the safety of this framework is to start with a pilot program, focusing on two critical sectors, agriculture and childcare (au pairs). This program would follow a COVIDSafe Corridor model established in consultation with the Commonwealth, state and territory governments, and the tourism and agriculture sectors.

## GOALS

1. Restart youth travel safely and responsibly, in 2 critical sectors: agriculture and childcare (au pairs).
2. Develop a framework for phased COVIDsafe intrastate, interstate and international inbound travel as borders open to enable dispersal across regions.

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3. Support Australian tourism, the agricultural industry and working families, dependent on seasonal workers and Working Holiday Makers.
  4. Support the health, safety and wellbeing of the Australian public, tourism and agricultural industries, and travellers who participate in this program.

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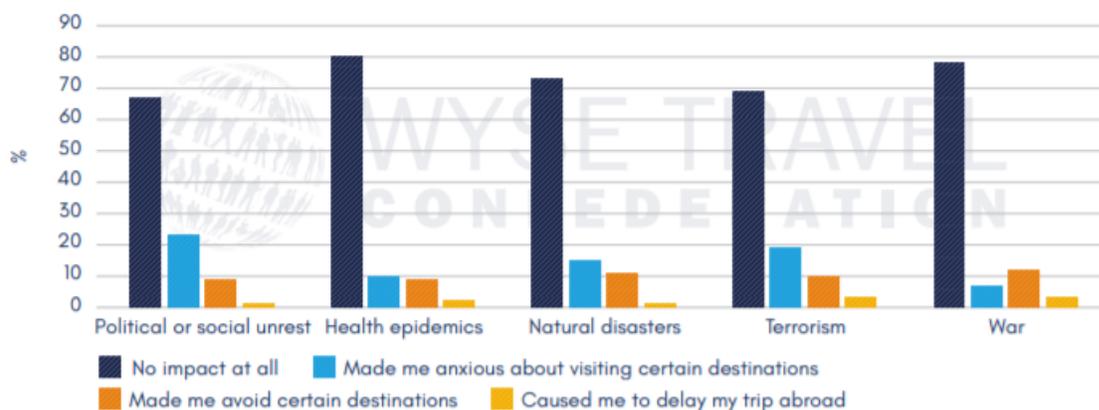
## SUPPORTING AUSTRALIAN TOURISM

According to the World Youth Student & Educational (WYSE) Travel Confederation, the main driver for Working Holiday Makers (WHMs) is the desire for cultural experiences abroad. Young people travel as a means of personal and professional development - to explore the world, meet new people, learn new skills, to experience everyday life in another country and build their CVs. Thus, much of youth travel is 'purposeful travel' and not (just) a holiday.<sup>1</sup>

### Resilient youth market

The youth market (15-29 years) is a resilient group of travellers. In a 2018 study by WYSE Travel Confederation, nearly 80% of respondents considered that a health epidemic had no influence on their travel plans, and less than 5% of participants indicated that they had delayed their travel as a result of such factors.<sup>2</sup> More recent research conducted by the British Education Travel Association (BETA) in March 2020 indicated that UK youth are looking to travel to countries which are better developed and that have handled the COVID-19 crisis well.<sup>3</sup>

### Impact of adverse events on travel plans



Source: WYSE Travel Confederation

The youth market is expected to be the first to return to Australia when given the opportunity. According to an April 2020 Hostelworld survey, 2,600 of those surveyed ranked Australia as the 5th most popular destination with 48% planning to travel in the first 60 days after restrictions ease.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> WYSE Travel Confederation 'New Horizons IV: A global study of the youth and student traveller.' July 2018

<sup>2</sup> WYSE Travel Confederation, [New Horizons IV: Work Experience Travel](#), December 2018

<sup>3</sup> [BETA What Really Matters](#). Tracking the motivators towards travel among young people throughout the COVID-19 crisis. March 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Hostelworld Hostelworld customer survey of 2,600 customers, conducted April 2020 via [WYSE Travel Confederation](#)

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WHMs are also historically willing to travel even when the economy is weak. As soon as borders open and accessibility to cost effective flights resume, young people historically take advantage of savings or redundancy money to explore the world and gain work experience until job prospects improve in their home country. Importantly WHMs are mobile and can undertake temporary work, which funds their travels.

### **\$3.2b inbound tourism receipts**

WHM arrivals represent an important sector for Australia's visitor economy worth \$3.2 billion, delivering more than 200,000 young international travellers to Australia each year.<sup>5</sup>

WHMs spend more, stay longer and disperse more widely throughout Australia than most other travellers. Each WHM brings \$5,000 with them as a visa requirement, and spends \$10,300 during their stay, compared to \$687 per trip that Australians spend domestically and \$474 spent by Australian youth domestically.<sup>6</sup>

According to the International Visitor Survey for YE March 2020 WHMs are of particular importance to regional Australia with 62% of all WHMs visiting regional areas and those who visited regional areas, spent 7% (\$11,390) more on their average trip. WHMs disperse further and longer into regional Australia than other international visitors, with 36% of nights spent in regional areas (compared to 19% of all international travellers), bringing 416,000 visitors and \$946M into regional economies for the year ending December 2019.<sup>7</sup>

WHMs are Australia's 9th largest visitor market for YE Dec 2019.<sup>8</sup> They are an important segment and influencer of the youth market (travellers aged 15-29 years), which contributes 27% of all visitor arrivals to Australia and 45% of all visitor spend, bringing \$19.5 billion for the year ending December 2018 to the visitor economy injecting money into the tourism, retail, transport, arts/cultural, education and hospitality sectors.

### **Youth mobility**

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<sup>5</sup> Tourism Research Australia [International Visitors Survey \(IVS\) YE March 2020](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Tourism Australia Working Holiday Fact Sheet](#); [Tourism Research Australia National Visitor Survey December 2019](#); Tourism Research Australia [International Visitors Survey \(IVS\) YE March 2020](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Tourism Research Australia: International Visitors Survey December 2019](#).

<sup>8</sup> Tourism Research Australia [International Visitors Survey \(IVS\) YE March 2020](#)

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WHMs have long-demonstrated their propensity to travel extensively throughout Australia, integrate well and take up hard-to-fill roles across key regional industries namely in agriculture and horticulture, hospitality, retail and, of course, tourism.

Comparatively, young Australians spend less money on domestic tourism (\$474 per trip; \$13 billion for the year ending December 2019) and time travelling in Australia than international youth (61% of trips were only 1 to 2 nights, mostly weekends). They are more likely to be self-sufficient travellers (20% fly or 72% drive) and not participate in the full breadth of tourism experiences, preferring to visit friends and family, going to the beach, bushwalking, eating out and shopping.<sup>9</sup> Almost three-quarters of trips (72%) included an intrastate destination, with COVID-19 related border restrictions likely hampering mobility despite pent up demand to travel domestically.<sup>10</sup>

## **2020 COVID-19 Impact**

WHMs are essential to the economic recovery of the youth and adventure tourism industry. They spend more than domestic travellers and participate in the full spectrum of tourism products, in particular tours, experiences, rental vehicles and backpacker/budget accommodation.

COVID-19 travel restrictions in February/March 2020 forced many WHMs in Australia to return home early, thereby forfeiting their visa. Their opportunity to return to Australia before their visa expires and/or find work in eligible roles to enable an extension is limited while inbound and intrastate travel restrictions remain. For the estimated 80,000 WHMs who remained in Australia as of June 2020, it's estimated only 20% of those will remain for the peak seasonal harvest over Summer 2020/21<sup>11</sup>.

For those who stayed in Australia, citing their belief that Australia remains a safer option as a place to stay compared to their home country's current COVID-19 risk, and to continue their travels.

However, for those [visa holders unable to enter Australia](#) due to COVID-19, their prospects and dreams to start their working holiday are uncertain.<sup>12</sup> Similarly those who are close to the age limit face frustrating losses of their WHM visa investment and opportunity.

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<sup>9</sup> Tourism Research Australia, "survey May/June 2020 ... 53% planned to take a domestic trip within the next 3 months and 80% within the next 12 months" [National Visitor Survey \(NVS\) YE March 2020; Domestic Youth Travellers aged 15-29, 2019](#)

<sup>10</sup> Tourism Research Australia, [Domestic Youth Travellers aged 15-29, 2019](#)

<sup>11</sup> Source: BYTAP estimate July 2020.

<sup>12</sup> [BYTAP WHM insights June 2020](#)



Flexible WHM visa extensions will provide much-needed support for granted visa holders.

For WHMs a mandatory 14 day quarantine is little deterrent to a 12 month intended stay. However, the significant cost of current quarantine measures will deter those unless more affordable options for secure, COVID-safe hostel or budget accommodation is endorsed by State governments and health authorities.

### Tourism hit hard

The tourism industry is facing a protracted recovery (with average losses in total tourism receipts from all inbound markets of \$2b per month and up to \$5.3b impact of lost wages to the broader economy and up to \$1.59b lost PAYG tax contributions) and is in need of continued government support for the 302,000 tourism businesses at risk, to protect jobs for Australians.<sup>13</sup>

Tourism Research Australia also cites “measures imposed in Australia in the month of March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic also had a significant impact on domestic tourism in the March quarter, with overnight trips falling 39% and spend down 41% or \$2.6 billion for the month of March.”<sup>14</sup>

The Tourism & Transport Forum (TTF) expects challenges will exist to fill the estimated 20% of tourism jobs lost as workers migrate into more stable employment outside of the tourism industry.

<sup>13</sup> [Tourism Transport Forum Estimated Impact of Coronavirus on the Australian Visitor Economy; Tourism Research Australia - Tourism Businesses in Australia, June 2018.](#)

<sup>14</sup> TRA [Domestic Tourism Results NATIONAL VISITOR SURVEY \(NVS\) RESULTS Year Ending March 2020](#)

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The closing of international and domestic borders to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic is having drastic consequences for a number of Australia's key industries. International tourism, which Tourism Australia predicted would be a \$15bn industry in 2020, has been brought to its knees with a 99.6% fall in visitor arrivals in July 2020 relative to the same period of the previous year.<sup>15</sup>

Earlier in the year Federally-announced and applied extensions for the WHM Program against the current arrangements due to COVID have been most welcome.

To that end extend and grant existing WHMs still living in Australia an extra year (and possibly a greater period of extension) to address 'regional' workforce shortage issues. Extensions should apply to WHMs who are au pairs and those within tourism and hospitality, including those who are currently under a WHM extension.

Further research is required to forecast the expected economic impact specifically attributed to the loss of WHMs.

## **ADDRESSING CRITICAL LABOUR SHORTAGES**

The WHM Program was created, and operates, with tourism and cultural exchange as the primary objectives, with any temporary work seen as secondary, to enable WHMs to travel and experience life in Australia, spending their hard-earned income in local communities.

A number of industries are reliant on international visitors - in particular Working Holiday (visa subclass 417) and Work & Holiday (visa subclass 462) makers - to supplement their unskilled-workforces. The WHM program addresses critical labour shortages of skilled and unskilled workers for agricultural and other jobs unable to be filled by Australians, even with incentives.<sup>16</sup>

WHMs are attracted to short term, seasonal, flexible work and as a transient, mobile population, they are able to quickly move to areas where seasonal demand is greatest. Industry research indicates that upwards of 80% of workers in the horticultural sector are backpackers during peak labour periods such as harvest, pruning and seeding, and they also make a crucial contribution to the cotton, grains and dairy sectors making up between 5% and 20% of the workforce depending on location and time of year.<sup>17</sup> According to data published by the Department of Home Affairs, roughly 43,000 backpackers earned a second-year visa working on farms and in other forms of "approved employment" in 2019.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Tourism Australia [International Market Performance July 2020](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Seasonal Workers Incentives Trial 2019](#)

<sup>17</sup> Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment [Demand for Farm Workers](#), p16-17

<sup>18</sup> Department of Home Affairs Working Holiday Visa reports to [June 2019](#) and [Dec 2019](#)

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## Creating jobs for Australians

WHMs create employment through their spending, particularly in regional areas and in the hospitality, tourism, retail, consumer goods and education sectors. Flinders University research has found that the WHM Program is a net creator of employment of Australians, with five Full-Time equivalent jobs created by every 100 WHMs.<sup>19</sup>

Modelling commissioned by the Australian Fresh Produce Alliance indicates that each permanent role (typically filled by an Australian) is supported by 4 casual (typically migrant) workers, and without access to WHMs, the fresh fruit and vegetable industry would suffer a \$6.3 billion reduction in value, 127,900 jobs would be lost, and the cost of fresh produce would increase by up to 60 per cent.<sup>20</sup>

These shortages cannot easily be supplemented solely by Australians. In principle, there is no reason why a recently displaced Australian worker — redundant waiters or baggage handlers, not to mention chefs or airline pilots — should not take up work picking mangoes, driving harvesters, or cleaning shearing sheds. However, the experience of producers who have attempted to engage the *long term* unemployed has not been promising.<sup>21</sup>

The impact of COVID-19 has seen some skilled Australians pivot into manual work, yet historically Australians are more likely to seek out opportunities aligned to long term career prospects. Many displaced Australian workers will be reluctant to leave their homes and support networks in the cities and suburbs, which means relocating to rural and regional Australia to perform physically demanding work from early in the morning to late in the evening, perhaps to spend their nights sleeping in caravan parks or tents. Research recently conducted by the Australian Fresh Produce Alliance indicates that a mere 5% of the applicants for harvest jobs were Australians, displaced or otherwise. And while farm wages are as good as any other sector — ABS data indicates as much as \$1,000 a week can be earned in entry-level positions — displaced workers with established careers in other fields may find entry level salaries unattractive.

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<sup>19</sup> Tan, Y., & Lester, L. (2012). [Labour Market and Economic Impacts of International Working Holiday Temporary Migrants to Australia](#). *Population, Space and Place*, 18(3), 359-383.

<sup>20</sup> Australian Fresh Produce Alliance [submission to WHM inquiry](#), July 2020

<sup>21</sup> As illustrated by the failure of the Seasonal Worker Incentive Trial. See also the Senate Standing Committees on Education And Employment, *Perspectives on the future of the harvest labour force*, October 2006.

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## 3-PHASE PLAN FOR COVID-SAFE YOUTH TRAVEL

### 1. COVIDSafe Youth Working Holiday Maker program framework

To facilitate a safe and controlled resumption of the WHM program to support economic growth and manage community expectations, NFF/BYTAP proposes a three-phased approach.

#### Phase 1 - Fully arranged dispersal under a pilot program

NFF/BYTAP endorses a trial period of fully arranged programs supported through selected COVIDSafe sponsor agencies who specialise in youth travel. This pilot will be limited in numbers to evaluate the viability of fully restarting the Working Holiday Maker Program under COVIDSafe protocols.

These trials will be highly controlled, characterised by pre-arranged travel itineraries planned by select COVIDSafe sponsor agencies. Currently BYTAP is in evolving discussions with [goPassport](#), a real-time COVID-19 alert system for inbound international travellers. GoPassport provides pre-travel journey risk assessment and screening procedures, in-country quarantine management, and ongoing symptom checking and escalation, Validated Covid-19 viral testing, Traveller Medi-stay and Tele-health assistance, real-time non-compliant response and escalation, Integration of service provider compliance status updates, and real-time data connectivity for border and health agencies.

Participants will be sourced from pre-approved WHM countries with very low or non-existent rates of infection. Currently NFF/BYTAP is seeking consideration for phase 1 to commence with WHMs from Germany, South Korea and Japan which have demonstrated low rates of new infections and comprehensive testing.

Pre-arrival testing and post-arrival quarantine; guaranteed work placements, and agreed limitations for regional dispersal will be implemented to minimise impact and reduce risk. In agreement with the State Health Authorities, the sponsor agencies will coordinate all aspects of the recruitment, support and administration of each participant. Support will include access to phone and web-based video contact.

Work would be in one of two select areas:

1. Agricultural work (e.g seasonal, horticultural and pastoral), endorsed by the National Farmers Federation (*3 - 6 month placements*)
2. Au pairs (*6 month placements*) endorsed by the Cultural Au Pair Association of Australia "CAPAA".

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All families who will host au pairs will do so in the spirit of cultural exchange and will demonstrate they have COVIDSafe protocols in place. In phase 1, families will be located in regional Australia, and/ or will be essential worker families.

All agricultural employment will be subject to labour market testing. Employers under all phases will demonstrate that they have implemented COVIDSafe work plans and protocols and preferably, as part of Phase 1, that their workplace, payroll, and human resource practices have been independently accredited. Placements in Phase 1 will be through experienced, licensed (where possible), and highly regarded labour hire organisations.

If the sponsored employment is terminated for any reason, the participant will be given the option to contact the supporting agency to seek alternate agricultural work.

The trial will initially be limited by intrastate dispersal within one state (NSW), with other states to follow where the program is judged a success. Intra-national border issues will be dealt with case-by-case, but as the participant will be working with one employer, even if borders were to remain closed, it would not present an unmanageable difficulty.

### **Phase 2 – Carefully staggered ramp up**

Phase 2 would be a ‘loosening’ of the rigidity of Phase 1, extending the program into other participating states as interstate border restrictions ease and/or as COVIDSafe international corridors are expanded. If mobility risks arise, the program in this phase can be scaled geographically by both source location and/or destination where COVIDSafe intra-state and intra-national movement is appropriate.

While the pre and post-arrival safety measures such as testing and quarantining would remain in place and the participant would initially work for one employer in the approved industries — and employment would also be arranged prior to arrival — the itinerary would only be partially planned and government could offer partial assistance (such as tax credits) for quarantine.

Phase 2 would remain in effect until the Federal government determines to lift international border closures, with participants arriving in larger groups, and arrivals being coordinated and staged to minimise numbers in quarantine at any one time.

### **Phase 3 – Independent travel**

Phase 3 would still feature safety precautions in the nature of testing and arrival quarantine, but participants would have fully independent travel (subject to any domestic restrictions) with employment arranged on arrival.

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**Commencement date:** NFF/BYTAP recommends that where Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) advice permits, the Phase 1 pilot program be considered for a late 2020 start date. Phase 2 would commence in early 2021, and Phase 3 from mid 2021 onwards (refer to Appendix 1 for a table containing all three phases and timing.)

The timing and location of placements would be aligned with demand for seasonal work, particularly in relation to seasonal agricultural roles required in regional Australia, subject to State border restrictions at the time (refer to Appendix 2 - infographic courtesy of Australian Fresh Food Alliance).

## 2. Safety protocols

The health and safety of Australians and visitors is paramount. NFF/BYTAP endorses an extension of national health and safety protocols and a COVIDSafe corridor to include:

- Sponsor agencies will require pre-trip medical screening (including mandatory COVID-19 testing) and safety protocols, with cost covered by the traveller.
- Germany, South Korea and Japan and other source countries who already have close existing trade relations with Australia, safe borders, and very low levels of new COVID-19 infections at the time of travel.
- A mandatory quarantine at port of arrival in COVID-safe accommodation, including hostel or budget accommodation options vetted by State Health Authorities with health screening checkpoints and verifications.
- Specified itinerary from arrival to departure using established inbound tourism networks including sponsor agencies and employers to control flow and dispersal of arrivals.
- All program participant companies including employers, will hold COVID-Safe plans.
- Use of the COVIDSafe App by participants and consideration of goPassport or other real time monitoring applications.
- Mandatory travel insurance for international participants for the duration of the visa, with minimum agreed limits, to cover emergency medical treatment, hospitalisation and repatriation for medical emergencies.

Participants in each Phase would be subject to these safety protocols.

## 3. Guiding Principles for Tourism Operators

NFF/BYTAP, all members of the Backpacker Operators Association of New South Wales (BOA), Adventure Queensland (AQ), Adventure Tourism Victoria (ATV), the Cultural Au Pair Association of Australia (CAPAA) and state farming and bushfire recovery volunteer work bodies endorse the following principles for the resumption of international youth travel through a COVIDSafe Corridor

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and recommend their inclusion in national protocols for tourism operators (see Appendix 3 for letters of endorsement):

### **Health and Safety**

- The health and safety of all Australians and our visitors is paramount and participating organisations and their staff will comply with AHPPC advice in all their operations as well as relevant state health advisories.

### **Working Holiday (417, 462) Visas**

- The issuing of visas provides travellers with certainty of entry and clarity of entry conditions.
- NFF/BYTAP recommends subsidising COVID-19 testing within the visa fee to mandate health and safety protocols.
- NFF/BYTAP recommends that consideration be given to requiring the use of the COVID-Safe App.
- NFF/BYTAP supports more investment in simplified information about WHM visa conditions and the establishment of consolidated job boards.
- NFF/BYTAP recommends that travellers be advised that if they leave Australia during the course of their visa they will be subject to a subsequent period of quarantine upon re-entry to Australia.

### **Job retention and accessibility**

- NFF/BYTAP acknowledges the importance of retaining jobs for Australians and supports any ongoing extension of the JobKeeper program, particularly for employers within the tourism sector and in specific regions that face a significant fall in turnover.
- NFF/BYTAP supports jobs being made accessible to Australian residents as a priority. The Approved Employers under Phase 1 and Phase 2 will need to demonstrate the following:
  - Labour market testing
  - Provision of appropriate accommodation plans
  - The ability to maintain appropriate Workplace Health and Safety procedures.
- In Phase 1 approved sponsor agencies will arrange and manage job placements pre-arrival in coordination with the relevant state agricultural peak body. Job placement is only available after any mandatory quarantine is completed.
- In Phase 2 participants may seek jobs on arrival, but may not disperse until they have completed any mandatory quarantine and until a job is confirmed.
- During Phase 3, participants will be permitted to independently travel and seek their own work after completion of any mandatory quarantine.
- It should be noted that it is expected all participating under Phases 1 -3 will complete domestic travel whilst in Australia, supporting the tourism sector and regional economies.

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- WHMs will also be encouraged to participate in volunteer work for bushfire recovery efforts in disaster areas coordinated via organisations such as BlazeAid (see letter of support at Appendix 3).

### Quarantining

- Onshore quarantining for the period recommended by the AHPPC is essential for all international arrivals.
- NFF/BYTAP endorses participants to be tested prior to departing their home country/state.
- The sponsor agencies will coordinate the arrangement of the mandatory quarantine with the relevant State Health authorities.
- NFF/BYTAP proposes the identification of affordable quarantining facilities for those participating in all three phases of the program. As the costs of air travel to Australia and travel insurance is expected to increase significantly, NFF/BYTAP believes consideration should be given to initiatives to offset the costs of quarantine for participants. These costs include accommodation, meals and transfers, and the health and security services as directed by the relevant State Health authorities. This could include a fully or partially subsidised quarantine by the federal government with the costs being deducted from the WHM's superannuation when the WHM departs the country.
- Alternately quarantine costs could be offset by the 15% 'backpacker tax', in addition to the 65% that the government claims from superannuation when the WHM departs the country. For example, based on a WHM earning approximately \$12,000 gross over 3 months (i.e. \$1,000 per week) more than 80% of the \$3,000 two-week quarantine fee would be covered under this model:

**\$2,541 (made up of \$1,800, being 15% tax on \$12,000 earnings + \$741 being 65% tax on \$1,140 superannuation earned over 12 weeks)**

- Sponsor agencies are to be provided with access to any government funded programs to assist with offsetting quarantining costs.
- NFF/BYTAP proposes that COVID testing of Working Holiday Makers in quarantine and the management of any positive cases be provided by State Public Health Units.

### International Travel

- NFF/BYTAP proposes that participants will meet the cost of flights. However, the ability for youth to access affordable flights creates significant challenges and requires the leadership of government to continue to support local and international airline agreements to build airline capacity at a reasonable cost.
- During Phase 1 & 2, sponsor agencies or government health/security agencies (as determined) can provide domestic travel arrangements for participants arriving in Australia

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including meeting at airports and transferring them to their employment. Dispersal across State borders will be dependent on domestic quarantine or travel restrictions. In Phase 3, participants will make their own arrangements.

### **Other important considerations**

- BYTAP supports the extension of government financial support packages to ensure tourism and other small businesses remain operational, including interest free loans to support their immediate cash flow and meet fixed costs, State land rent waivers and other fees and charges. This is particularly critical for the youth tourism sector which already operates on slim margins, and in highly seasonal businesses.
- BYTAP recommends establishing a pro-rata credit system for existing 417 and 462 visa holders or those who were unable to enter Australia or returned home prematurely due to COVID travel bans.
- BYTAP supports continued investment to support Tourism Australia in promoting the benefits of the reciprocal Working Holiday Maker cultural exchange scheme to:
  - participants already onshore (who may wish to extend their current stay); and
  - potential participants offshore (once a re-entry plan under a 'secure corridor' model is further developed) - including those who had already been granted a visa but were unable to take it up due to COVID-19<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> [BYTAP website - video of COVID-19 WHMs \(June 2020\)](#)

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## ABOUT BYTAP

In 2001, The Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) established the Backpacker Tourism Advisory Panel “BTAP”, later becoming BYTAP with the inclusion of ‘youth’. The panel is the peak national representative body for the Australian inbound backpacker and youth adventure tourism industry with representation from industry in addition to state backpacker associations, such as Adventure Queensland, Adventure Tourism Victoria (ATV) and the Backpacker Operators’ Association of NSW (BOA). BYTAP works closely with Tourism Australia and various national, state and regional tourism peak bodies to elevate the profile of youth tourism.

The role of BYTAP is to:

- Act as the critical link between the backpacker and youth adventure industry, the states and territories and federal government in the interpretation of segment-specific issues;
- Represent the interests of the backpacker segment to other industry organisations, government and the community on a national level;
- Facilitate an active and effective policy forum where key industry stakeholders present issues for development and action;
- Raise the profile of the backpacker and youth adventure tourism sector;
- Lead the way in the on-going development of growth strategies to maximise the contribution of the backpacker and youth adventure market to Australia.

## Contacts

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## **ABOUT THE NATIONAL FARMERS FEDERATION**

The National Farmers' Federation (NFF) is the voice of Australian farmers.

The NFF was established in 1979 as the national peak body representing farmers and more broadly, agriculture across Australia. The NFF's membership comprises all of Australia's major agricultural commodities across the breadth and the length of the supply chain. Operating under a federated structure, individual farmers join their respective state farm organisation and/or national commodity council. These organisations form the NFF.

The NFF represents Australian agriculture on national and foreign policy issues including workplace relations, trade and natural resource management. Our members complement this work through the delivery of direct 'grass roots' member services as well as state-based policy and commodity-specific interests.

### **Contact**

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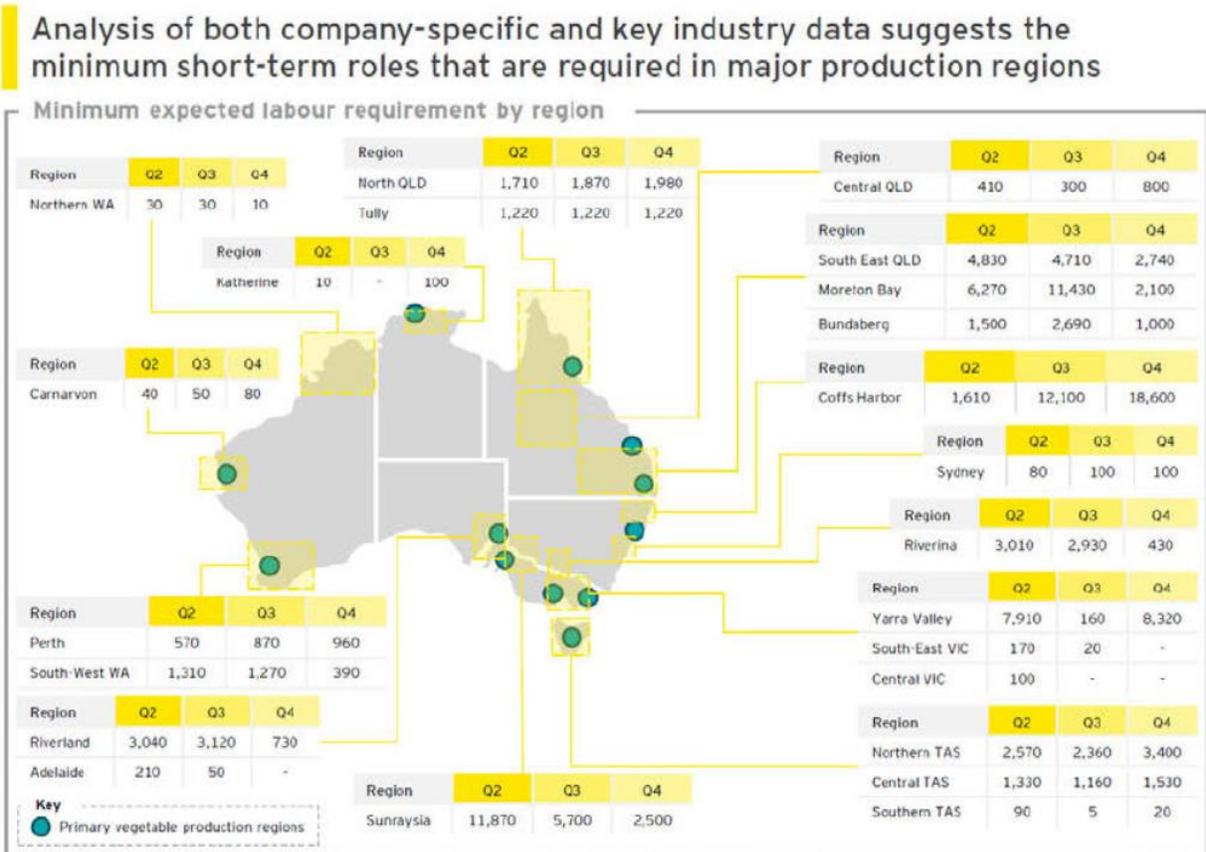
[www.nff.org.au](http://www.nff.org.au)

## APPENDIX 1 - PHASING THE RETURN OF INBOUND YOUTH TOURISM

Phase	Cohorts	Logistics	Accommodation	Employment	Health & Safety	Timing
Phase 1 - Pilot program (to nominated city/state i.e. NSW) - 300 to 500 - in consultation with Chief Medical/ Health Officers	462 and 417 visa holders granted to arrive during travel bans from government approved countries.	Prearranged itinerary and transport package within arrival state (with Sydney as the proposed gateway for this pilot). No dispersal to other states depending on domestic borders	14 day mandatory quarantine upon arrival port as mandated by State Health Authorities (Gateway: Sydney)	Arranged prior to arrival where possible	2 COVID tests as presently stipulated by Chief Health Officer in state of arrival	Late 2020
Phase 2 - Staggered ramp up (to three arrival destinations i.e. NSW, QLD and SA)  1,000 arrivals	Existing 462 and 417 visa holders and visa holders from COVIDSafe source countries with low daily transmission rates.	Partially arranged itinerary where travel restrictions allow.	14 day mandatory quarantine in arrival port as mandated by State Health Authorities	Arranged on arrival. May not depart arrival port until job is confirmed.	2 COVID tests as presently stipulated by Chief Health Officer in state of arrival.	Mid Dec 2020 to Early 2021
Phase 3 - Independent Travel (all states and Territories that have international arrivals)  2000 + arrivals	New and existing 462 and 417 visa applications.	Fully independent travel where travel restrictions allow.	14 day quarantine in arrival port as mandated by State Health Authorities & Federal Government	Arranged on arrival.	2 COVID tests as presently stipulated by Chief Health Officer in state of arrival.	6 - 8 weeks after Phase 2

## APPENDIX 2 - MAP OF AGRICULTURAL ROLES REQUIRED Q2-4, 2020

(Courtesy of Australian Fresh Produce Alliance - source: submission to WHM inquiry, July 2020)



Copy Figure 2: Location, timing and number of short-term roles in fresh produce in 2020

## APPENDIX 3 - INDUSTRY ENDORSEMENTS



Dear Brendan,

Adventure Queensland (AQ) is writing to endorse the Backpacker and Youth Tourism Advisory Panel's (BYTAP) submission to the Working Holiday Maker Program Inquiry.

AQ is a member based incorporated association in Queensland that focusses on the youth, adventure & backpackers travel sector for almost 30 years.

The Working Holiday Maker (WHM) program, specifically the 417 & 462 visa's are job creators & with substantial benefits provided to the Australian economy. The positively return to many sectors of the Australian economy from a primary & secondary aspect.

These WHM's are high value tourism export that is based on a cultural exchange. They are second only in value to Students from a tourism export. WHM's stay longer, disperse further & spend more. They leave our shores are Australian Tourism promoters driving ongoing benefits to the Australian economy for many years after they return home.

Specifically, for Queensland, the international youth & adventure market provides in excess of \$849m in revenues to the economy of which 65% is spent in regional centres. While only providing 16% of international visitors to Queensland, the sector provides 35% of visitor nights & 20% of International expenditure in Queensland for the year ending March 2020.

AQ fully endorses the recommendation BYTAP's submission that will help rebuild the Australian economy and strengthen it into the future:

1. Support WHMs still in Australia to extend their visa at no charge so they may stay, travel and work in critical jobs, which cannot be filled by Australians.
2. Enable granted WHM visa holders who were unable to enter Australia or who left early due to COVID-19 the ability to reactivate their visa without charge from the time borders reopen with their home country.
3. Support the restart of the WHM Program with critical visa reform to rejuvenate regional communities and tourism spend from this high yield cohort, including:
  - a. restarting WHM visa processing;
  - b. freezing visa costs for 5 years;
  - c. increasing the eligible age to 35 for all WHM source countries;
  - d. tripling visa caps;
  - e. simplifying visa conditions on eligible work days towards gaining a second or third year visa;
  - f. extending eligible work options towards a second or third year visa on an ongoing basis across regional Australia, including volunteer work in disaster/crisis zones; and
  - g. providing additional funding for 3 years to Tourism Australia for marketing campaigns to target WHMs in key source countries and support the restart of the WHM Program.
4. Establish a COVID Safe Corridor for WHM entry utilising BYTAP's 3 step framework.
5. Future proof the WHM Program with less restrictive, more open policies.

Norman Jenkins

President

QUEENSLAND BACKPACKERS AND INDEPENDENT TRAVELLERS INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
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[www.capaa.com.au](http://www.capaa.com.au)

Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2020

Dear Silke,

CAPAA would like to endorse our support of your organisation in relation to an ongoing need for live in au pairs ('Working Holiday Makers'). CAPAA Au Pair Agency members help families and communities who depend on flexible childcare in order for them to be able to work and in particular, families who work in essential services and those living in rural areas who cannot access traditional childcare.

The key points for this endorsement are:

1. Live in Au Pairs play an essential part in allowing families to participate in the workforce.
2. Au Pairs provide flexible, live in support for working families all over Australia. Au Pairs allow both parents to work, including Australian mothers returning to the workforce which is an important, driving factor in our economy.
3. We are finding it hard to get Australians to work as Au Pairs as they are not willing/available to live in with families and therefore cannot offer the flexibility required by these families.
4. We support BYTAP in trying to have Working Holiday Makers return under a COVID-safe plan (including quarantine for 2 weeks on arrival) - and CAPAA Agencies will place these young people in host families carefully following a COVID-safe Plan.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jackie Rylance". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jackie Rylance  
CAPAA President

Cultural Au Pair Association of Australia (CAPAA) Bringing Together Quality Au Pair Agencies in Australia



BlazeAid inc  
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7 July 2020

Backpacker Youth Tourism Advisory Panel  
Silke Kerwick  
Level 3/9 Castlereagh Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Silke,

BlazeAid would like to endorse our support of your organisation in relation to an ongoing need for backpackers ('Working Holiday Makers') at BlazeAid in helping us help those families and communities who were badly affected by the recent bushfires throughout December and into the New Year.

The key points for this endorsement are:

1. 'Backpackers an essential part' of our operation.
2. Backpackers are 'essential workers' in places where they are assisting with bushfire recovery work in natural disaster areas – e.g. all camps of Blazeaid and our Cobargo camp as featured on ABC's 4 Corners last night and our Wingham Camp on Better Homes and Gardens.
3. Backpackers can volunteer with our organisation on bushfire recovery efforts and it will count towards their '88 days' of specified work in regional areas – see the Department of Immigration's information here <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/work-holiday-417/specified-work>
4. We are finding it hard to get Australians coming through to help Blazeaid in enough numbers – whether "grey nomads" or unemployed Australians.
5. We support BYTAP in trying to have Working Holiday Makers return under a COVID-safe plan (including quarantine for 2 weeks on arrival in Sydney) - and we would work together to place these young people in camps organised by Blazeaid.

Yours sincerely

Debbie Buttler  
Administrator  
BlazeAid

*Helping Communities Rebuild After Natural Disasters Since 2009*

**FIRE - FLOOD - DROUGHT - CYCLONE**

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24<sup>th</sup> July, 2020

**RE: Endorsement of submission from the Backpacker and Youth Tourism Advisory Panel**

Dear BYTAP,

Adventure Tourism Victoria (ATV) is writing to endorse the Backpacker and Youth Tourism Advisory Panel's (BYTAP) submission to the Working Holiday Maker Program Inquiry.

ATV was established in 2018 to better give representation to the youth market in Victoria. We operate as a not-for-profit association that advocates for businesses operating in youth tourism. Our members include accommodation providers, tour operators, F&B operators, travel agents, world class attractions and many others from across the state.

ATV endorses the Key points of BYTAP's submission:

1. Immediate priorities:
  - a. Look after 417 & 462 visa holders who are currently in the country. Allow them to be able to make an application for an extension of current visa or a new visa at no cost.
  - b. Offer a visa extension or a new visa to those who had valid visas but were unable to enter the country due to COVID. This would be at no cost.
  - c. Offer a new visa to those who had to leave Australia before the visa expired due to COVID. This would be at no cost.
  - d. Bring WHM's back into the country quickly and safely to fill labour shortages and kick-start the youth tourism industry
2. Future proofing:
  - a. Continue targeting new countries to incorporate into the WHM program that will deliver value
  - b. Increase the low caps on 462 visa WHM countries where demand outweighs supply
  - c. Enable WHM's to extend on a tourist visa without leaving the country.
  - d. Reduce or freeze WHM visa fees for the next 5 years.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisanna Weston', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Lisanna Weston

President ATV