

**Title:**

Changes to Australian Working Holiday Visa programme

**Word Count:**

411

**Summary:**

Significant changes to the Australian Working Holiday Maker programme are now in effect, making working holidays in Australia more attractive to younger travellers.

**Keywords:**

australian working holiday maker programme, visa bureau

**Article Body:**

Significant changes to Australia's popular Working Holiday Maker Visa came into effect on 1 July 2006. The changes give holiday makers the opportunity to work and study for longer in Australia and the chance to extend their visa for another year by offering an increased selection of seasonal jobs in regional areas.

Working Holiday Maker (WHM) Visa applications are now subject to the following changes:

- increased work rights; the ability to work for any one employer for 6 months, rather than the 3 previously allowed
- increased study rights; the ability to study for 4 months, rather than the 3 previously allowed
- increased selection of seasonal jobs in regional areas; leading to a second working holiday visa of an additional 12 months

'Although the primary group of applicants for this visa are young gap year students, university students and backpackers, in the last 12 months or so we've seen a significant increase in the number of young professionals taking career breaks,' said Oonagh Baerveldt, spokesperson Australian Visa Bureau.

'They are frustrated or feeling burnt out and want to take a year out. The WHM visa is a good solution because you don't need to dip into your savings to travel - you work to travel.'

'The ability to work in the same job for 6 months means travellers can choose to

be transient or settled whereas before they were looking for a new job every 3 months,' said Baerveldt. 'This 'new and improved visa' is ideal for travellers who are looking for a careers change and want to spend some time studying and some time gaining practical experience.'

'We're expecting a considerable spike in the number of WHM visa applications we receive over the next two weeks. Since these changes were announced it's been relatively quiet and we've even held back applications on request that they only be lodged on or after 1 July,' said Baerveldt.

'Anyone interested in taking a year or two out in Australia under the Working Holiday Maker visa program should visit our website and complete the WHM Online Assessment to make sure they meet all of the requirements,' said Baerveldt.

Australian Working Holiday Maker Visas are available to passport holders from 11 different countries, including the United Kingdom and Ireland. Visa applicants must be between the ages of 18-30 (inclusive), have no dependent children and must be able to support themselves financially for the duration of their trip to Australia.

The Australian Government issued 93, 760 working holiday visas in 2003/4; of those 47, 321 were to UK and Irish nationals.