



**Media alert**  
**For immediate release**

**Changes to Australian Working Holiday Visas take effect 1 July 2006**

**26 June 2006/London** – Significant changes to Australia’s popular Working Holiday Maker Visa come into effect 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 lodged on or after 1 July 2006 will be 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 <http://www.visabureau.com/australia/assessment/workingholiday/default.aspx> and complete the WHM Online Assessment to make sure they meet all of the requirements,’ said Baerveldt.

**MORE**

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.

**ENDS**

For further information, please visit:

<http://www.visabureau.com>

**About Australian Visa Bureau**

Australian Visa Bureau is a division of Visa Bureau Ltd., an independent immigration advisory service specialising in visas and immigration for British and Irish nationals looking to live and work in Australia. Based in central London, the company offers a range of services and free online assessments for individuals and families considering a new life abroad. Visit <http://www.visabureau.com/australia> for up to date news, information and free online visa assessments.

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