

A checklist for British working holiday makers in Australia

What to know before you go



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

Australia's 88 day regional work requirements – an overview

A period of rural work, as specified by the Australian Government, is required to gain a second year visa under Australia's Working Holiday Maker (WHM) program. Further information about the eligibility requirements and application process is available at www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/visa-1/417-.

If you are considering undertaking rural work for the second year visa extension, it is advisable to plan early, allowing plenty of time to complete rural work.

If you are seeking rural work, it is important to get any offer of work in writing (such as email) from a prospective employer. Be sure to do your research and know your workplace rights and minimum pay rates, which are set by Australian law. These apply to all employees including those on a working holiday visa. Laws also protect against bullying, harassment and discrimination. Authorities take any breaches of these standards very seriously.

Australia is a vast country and if you are working in a rural area you may find yourself working and living on remote properties, or in towns with limited transport, internet and mobile phone services. Word of mouth and online forums can give you feedback on a particular employer, but it is important to do your due diligence before going to stay with a stranger in a remote area. Do let friends and family know in advance exactly where you are going to be and for how long, remembering that wifi and mobile signals may not be available in some remote parts of Australia.

A list of postcodes for areas that qualify as rural work and the type of work can be found online at <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/forms/documents/1263.pdf>. Many of these postcodes are close to cities and major regional centres so not all rural work has to be remote.

Before you go

Thousands of British working holiday makers travel to Australia each year with the vast majority enjoying their working holiday without any issues. Working conditions, accommodation and medical facilities are generally of a good standard. However, as with any country in the world, occasionally issues can arise.

Did you know:

- All workers are entitled to Australia's minimum pay and entitlements, including workers on a visa. This applies even if you have breached your visa.
- Your employer cannot cancel your visa, even if you do not comply with your visa conditions. Only the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs can grant, refuse or cancel visas.
- The Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) is Australia's independent statutory office which provides free services to workers and employers in Australia. For pay guides and more information see www.fairwork.gov.au.
- The UK government, including the UK law enforcement organisation the National Crime Agency (NCA) is working with the Australian government and law enforcement agencies to help identify and address any illegal employer behaviour affecting British nationals.
- It is important to ensure you have enough money to sustain yourself, especially when going to a remote part of Australia.

- For up-to-date travel advice, check www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/australia and subscribe to email alerts.

Visa requirements

For clarification about working visas and requirements, contact Australia's Department of Home Affairs on **131 881** or visit www.homeaffairs.gov.au.

If you have difficulty completing your rural work due to issues with an employer, the department's website advises that a visa will not generally be cancelled if you have sought advice from the FWO and are assisting them with their enquiries. We would also encourage you to contact the UK's NCA to advise them of any issues so the UK government can support you as needed.

Medical information

The UK and Australia have a reciprocal healthcare agreement, where British citizens resident in the UK and travelling on a British passport have access to limited subsidised services through Australia's public healthcare system Medicare. However, the agreement will not cover all healthcare needs, which is why travel insurance is important.

While you should always arrange comprehensive travel and medical insurance before you go abroad, you may be able to purchase or top-up cover once you've started your trip. Be sure to check your policy covers all the activities you plan to undertake. For more advice see www.gov.uk/guidance/foreign-travel-insurance.

While there are similarities between the Australian and British public healthcare systems, there are differences – for instance unlike the NHS, Medicare does not subsidise dental treatment or pre-existing conditions. For more information visit www.gov.uk/foreign-traveladvice/australia/health.

If you are injured at work your employer has a duty of care to ensure you receive proper medical attention. If this does not happen, contact the FWO and nearest British Consulate or High Commission.

What happens if:

There is no work when you arrive:

Having your offer of work in writing can assist in demonstrating to Home Affairs that you have attempted to comply with the terms of your visa. You can also contact the FWO and UK's NCA to report the issue.

You are getting underpaid or not paid at all:

This is illegal in Australia and should be reported to the FWO as well as the UK's NCA. All workers are entitled to Australia's minimum pay and entitlements.

Your employer, agent or accommodation provider is holding your personal items:

It is illegal to take someone's property including passport. Do not hand over your passport to others. Instead supply copies of your passport photo page as proof of identity if required.

Your employer makes inappropriate demands in exchange for signing visa paperwork

Employer demands outside what is in your terms of employment and/or job description are potentially illegal and should be reported to the police and NCA.

Your employer threatens to cancel your visa

An employer cannot do this. Contact the FWO and NCA.

You run out of money

Our consular staff can advise about charities in the area that may be able to assist you. We can also help make contact with family and friends.

You feel intimidated or afraid of someone

If you feel unable to remove yourself from the situation, or get your passport, contact the police and UK's NCA.

Important contact information

In an emergency

If you are in danger or require urgent medical assistance call local emergency services on: **000**

If you are in Australia and need British Government consular assistance call: **(02) 6270 6666**

If you are in the UK and are calling about someone in Australia call: **020 7008 1500** (24 hours)

Reporting unlawful or unfair treatment

If you feel you are being treated unfairly or unlawfully by an employer, agent or accommodation provider contact the Australian Fair Work Ombudsman on:

131 394 or fairwork.gov.au.

We also encourage British working holiday makers to email the UK's National Crime Agency (NCA) at the British High Commission at **Australia.WHVReferrals@fcdo.gov.uk**. They will ensure your concerns are received by the relevant local authority as well as provide you with the contact details of British consular officers who can offer support.

Where you can find us in Australia

British High Commission 130 Commonwealth Ave Canberra ACT 2600	UK National Crime Agency (NCA) 130 Commonwealth Ave Canberra ACT 2600
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British Consulate-General Sydney Level 16 Gateway Building 1 Macquarie Place Sydney NSW 2000	British Consulate General Melbourne 17 th Floor 90 Collins St Melbourne VIC 3000
British Consulate Brisbane Level 9 100 Eagle St Brisbane QLD 4000	British Consulate Perth Level 12 251 Adelaide Street Perth WA 6000