

## **Backpackers (BP's) in Regional West Australia**

In Regional Australia backpackers do not qualify for visa extensions (as in the 88 days for a second visa) in the hospitality industry.

We are always seeking short- term employees over weekends and evenings in our accommodation / restaurant business. Locals out here just don't want to work weekends.

With only 200 local people in town and backpackers passing through all the time, we cannot secure them for part time, let alone 3 months due to the requirement for an extended visa.

We hear many horror stories of BP's being ripped off in the horticulture industry (not all) and yet we cannot give them genuine work unless they are really desperate. Even then as soon as they find a job that qualifies them for their visa extension they are gone, some even without picking up their pay. This so called 32% tax will only make it worse.

We see many females doing manual labour in horticulture, some are just not built for that type of work. They come home from work in tears from the pain but need their 88 days.

How often do we see BP's sleeping in a car or in a tent in winter or 20 jammed in a three-bedroom house? Well I have seen it and feel absolutely disgusted to think this happens here in WA.

Sure a lot comes down on the employer and the system, but at the moment it's there to be rorted and some are doing it.

As an accommodation business we can house all workers correctly and give them genuine work.

We can set a better standard and eventually lead to the rorters shaping up or missing out. We can attract honest working travellers and set a decent example because we already have the facilities in place and built to health and building code standards.

Cities might be different but out here we really struggle for employees to clean toilets, make beds, kitchen hands, waitresses / waiters even gardening and lawns.

I am sure the road houses and caravan parks have the same issue.

The hospitality industry can benefit from working holiday travellers because they solve our employment issue. They in turn can use hospitality for employment to comply with visa regulations. it's a win win.

**Possible Solution:** please allow BP's to qualify for their visa extensions by working in the regional hospitality industry.

**Secondly** if BP's work in regional Australia they should earn the same wage and pay tax as an Australian person, but without the threshold and a ceiling of 15%.

- BP's don't earn a fortune,
- they spend what they earn,
- they do need a reliable car,
- they do need to be able to pay fair accommodation rates and be housed like a human being.

I am not speaking on behalf of the hotel industry, as soon as alcohol and or gaming is involved I see that as a whole different ball game.

Am open to further discussion on this matter, for and against.

Evan Bradshaw

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