

Backpacker Job Board helps bushfire hit communities find much-needed workers

--- Press Release: for immediate release ---

Backpacker Job Board, Australia's leading employment marketplace for backpackers, has announced a new service designed to help bushfire hit communities find the help they need to rebuild.

On 17 February 2020, the Federal Government announced that it will allow backpackers to undertake both paid and volunteer disaster recovery work in bushfire affected areas, and that this work will count towards the 'specified work' needed to extend the 417 and 462 working holiday visas for a second or third year.

On the back of this news, Backpacker Job Board will offer a free service that will connect willing backpackers with bushfire-affected communities. Visitors will find this under a new Disaster Relief category at Backpacker Job Board.

Matt Heyes, the founder of Backpacker Job Board, announced the service today:

"We've heard from so many individuals and organisations, both foreign and local, who've been wondering how they might be able to help with the recovery effort. In launching this new service we hope to introduce skilled, able and willing workers to these devastated areas.

"Backpackers are the perfect human resource for such a situation. They're willing and able, they're spread across the country, and many feel a deep and genuine desire to help out. We welcome the Government's news, which means that backpackers will be rewarded with the opportunity to extend their stay.

"As part of this new service, we'll be offering employers from bushfire hit areas free use of Backpacker Job Board, and we'll be upgrading every one of them to our premium service."

Farmers and residents of bushfire hit areas can post an ad on Backpacker Job Board advertising a vacancy and detailing the job requirements. Advertising is free for victims of the bushfires, who will receive applications from willing candidates, and will be able to pick those who best suit the task at hand.

The Government has also announced changes to the maximum length of employment, with Alan Tudge, Acting Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs, stating:

"These hard-working Australians have been hit by the recent bushfires, but from today they can employ backpackers for six months longer, helping them at a critical time in the recovery effort.

"It means working holiday makers can help rebuild homes, fences and farms, they can get onto properties and help with demolition, land clearing, and repairing dams, roads and railways."

Approximately 300,000 working holiday-makers travel to Australia every year, contributing \$3.4bn to the economy.

About Backpacker Job Board

Launched in 2010, Backpacker Job Board (<https://www.backpackerjobboard.com.au>) is Australia's leading employment marketplace for working holidaymakers. The site is free to use for backpackers, who can register an account, upload their resume and apply for job vacancies throughout Australia. Employers - be they large businesses, small farms or Australian families - can post adverts detailing open roles. Backpacker Job Board boasts a huge database of willing workers, with over 7,000 new backpackers registering each month.

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For publishers:

If you require further information, or comments, branding assets, images, etc., contact Matthew Heyes via matthew@backpackerjobboard.com.au

Key points from the Government Announcement are:

The time a backpacker can work with the same employer has been extended from six months to 12 months for those assisting with bushfire recovery efforts through a change in policy.

The definition of “specified work” will be revised for the Work and Holiday Maker (subclass 462) visa, to ensure construction work in a disaster declared area is captured. This is consistent with existing arrangements for Working Holiday (subclass 417) visa holders.

Paid and volunteer disaster recovery work in declared areas impacted in the recent bushfires will count towards the “specified work” needed to apply for a second or third year 417 or 462 visa.

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