

# Relocation assistance to take up a job

## Consider taking a paid-for working holiday in regional Australia

From 1 November, both Australian residents and temporary migrants - including backpackers who hold a subclass 417 or 462 visa – are entitled to access **relocation assistance payments** to cover the cost of taking up temporary work in regional areas

## Relocation Assistance Payments?

You may have heard that regional businesses, including hundreds of farms across Australia, are crying out for workers due to the disruption brought about by COVID-19.

With so many people across the country out of work, it has been suggested that now might be the perfect time for those dwelling in the cities and suburbs to push out into the regions and try their hands at something different.

The problem is that without a job, lack of access to a vehicle, and rent and bills to be paid, it's hard to justify the expense and effort of getting out to the bush.

*But what if all your travel and accommodation expenses were covered?*

## Wait... All of them?

Potentially, yep.

Under the Relocation Assistance to Take Up a Job scheme, approved applicants will receive reimbursement for relocation and travel costs for agricultural work performed outside a capital city and more than 90 minutes travel time from their home.

The scheme is administered by **Harvest Trail Service Providers (HTSPs)** who are specifically engaged by Government to assist with placements in agricultural jobs in regional areas.

## How much can I claim?

Australian residents can claim up to \$6000.

Non-residents can claim up to \$2000.

## What is covered?

The reimbursement can cover travel (by any mode, including car rental, airfare, etc), accommodation (up to 2 months' rent) and may also cover some employment related expenses (such as PPE and tools) in some instances.

## Who is eligible?

The scheme is open to both Australian residents and temporary migrants with work rights in Australia.

**In order to be eligible, an individual must perform 120 hours and 6 weeks work in an agricultural job at a location which is outside a "capital city" (as defined by ABS) and more than 90 minutes (by usual mode of transport) from their home.**

Before commencing travel for or commencing work:

- The individual must have accepted a formal (documented) offer of employment with a farm business; note that they can reach out to an HTSP if they are looking for work.
- The individual must have made contact with and entered into a relocation agreement with the relevant HTSP.
- The HTSP can also assist with finding employment (e.g. if the job which the individual arranged for themselves does not run for the full 6 weeks), accommodation, and potentially means of travel, etc,

In other words, the HSTP should be your first point of contact and will be on-hand to assist you through the entire working period.

# Relocation assistance to take up a job

## What kind of work is available?

Most Australian farms are small, family-run enterprises on the recovery from years of drought, fires and dwindling rural populations. They occupy some of the most remote, picturesque, and rarely seen corners of the country covering spectacular coastlines, lush hinterlands and rugged outback ranges.

Most of the opportunities that are available require minimal training and little-to-no experience in farm work of any kind. Check out **Harvest Trail** to see what's available now!

Fruit and vegetable pickers are in high demand through the Spring and Summer as the season peaks for citrus and stone fruits, mangoes and passionfruit. These are highly variable roles depending on the produce in question, but always involve a lot of soil, sunshine and fresh air! You may also be required to work with simple tools and equipment and it's reasonably likely that you'll be working alongside others in a group.

You won't necessarily be limited to picking fruit and veg. Many roles exist in other commodities, and you could find yourself harvesting grains, cotton or sugarcane, mustering cattle or shearing sheep. Almost every farm will also need to ensure it has ample farmhands to maintain the property, operate vehicles and machinery, perform checks and repairs on gates, fences and boundary lines, conduct landscaping work, and care for animals and livestock.

## Anything else I should know?

There may be gaps in employment and you may end up working for multiple employers.

*E.g. If a person in Sydney travels to Orange and works for 4 weeks - then has a 1 week gap - then starts working with another employer, then the first 4 weeks of work counts, the next week does not, and then they will be eligible 2 weeks into their second job.*

If you seek work with a second employer in another region then you would be able to claim the cost of moving between regions.

*E.g. A person can seek reimbursement for the cost of moving from Sydney to Orange, Orange to Young, and Young to Sydney (although they should line up the job before moving between regions and notify the relevant HTSP).*

The guidelines for the scheme are now available on the Department website **here**.

Finally, if you are in a work-related situation in which you are made to feel unsafe or threatened, contact the FWO.

**Always dial 000 in an emergency.**

