



Using immigration to build the South Australia tourism workforce

Utilising the local workforce is the preferred option, however the experience of regional South Australian tourism organisations suggests that other options are also required to fill vacancies. One option for employers is to utilise immigration to supplement their labour force.

There are different visa categories by which foreign nationals are permitted to live and work in Australia and each visa category is subject to conditions. Before businesses should utilise immigration to supplement their workforce, it is important they understand Australian work laws.

Immigration Employment by Type

Working holiday maker (417 & 462) visa

Travellers can supplement their holiday budget through short-term employment appointments.

The Working Holiday Maker program encourages cultural exchange and closer ties between arrangement countries by allowing young people, between the age of 18 to 30 years, to have an extended holiday supplemented by short term employment.

Visa holders are able to work in Australia for up to 6 months with each employer. There are two visa options - Working Holiday (Subclass 417) and Work and Holiday (Subclass 462), each with different eligibility terms and conditions.

Further information is available on the website 'Employing working holiday makers' Australian Government Factsheet: <http://bit.ly/1bWkK1N>

Special category (444) visa (New Zealand)

This visa is automatically granted to New Zealand citizens who arrive in Australia, but do not hold a permanent visa. They can live and work in Australia for up to 5 years.

Regional sponsored migration scheme (187) visa

This visa is for skilled workers from outside Australia or skilled temporary residents who live and work in regional Australia, who are under 50 years and have the support of an employer. It has 3 streams:

1. Workers with a 457 visa, who have worked for 2 years and their employer wants to offer them a permanent position;
2. People who have never, or only briefly, worked in the Australian labour market; and
3. For those sponsored by an employer through a labour or regional migration agreement.

Utilising 457 visas at Hanson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary

Workforce Challenge: Filling positions when there is no availability within the local Labour Pool
Hanson Bay Sanctuary provides a range of services including accommodation, a visitor information centre, cafe and an animal sanctuary.

Budgets are tight and resourcing the Sanctuary's conservation work remains an ongoing priority. However, balancing the business's work needs with the appropriate allocation of tasks between the different categories of employees is challenging.

Utilising a relatively cost effective labour force which also has a high turnover, creates difficulties in managing quality of delivery and work performance. An example of the types of employment challenges being faced included the need to utilise a 457 visa employee to fill a full time position, which in a city or country town could be filled by an Australian resident.

The use of a 457 visa has been highly effective, including the example of where a visitor who had previously stayed at the property, met the owners and specifically sought to return to work.

Hanson Bay Sanctuary's experience highlights the importance of understanding the motivations of visitors. Another important consideration is Australia's work laws and ensuring fair working conditions and pay.



Occupational trainee (402) visa

This visa is for people outside Australia to undertake occupational training and professional development with a business or government agency. Programs should be for at least 30 hours a week and at least 70 per cent workplace-based.

Seasonal Worker Program (416) visa

Allows an Approved Employer to sponsor people from the Pacific and East Timor to work as seasonal workers in the accommodation industry.

Seasonal workers can:

- work in Australia for up to 6 months over a 12 month period
- work in unskilled and low skilled occupations
- work only with the sponsor.

Sponsors must:

- arrange suitable accommodation
- pay workers in accordance with award
- pay return airfares upfront and recoup a proportion of cost from workers
- must maintain private health insurance
- assist with initial living expenses.

International student visas

Students on an international student visa can work up to 40 hours a fortnight while their course is in session and they can work unlimited hours during scheduled course breaks.

Temporary work - skilled (457) visa

A business can sponsor a skilled worker for up to 4 years, if a person with those skills cannot be found in Australia. The process can be complex.

The employee:

- can bring their family and travel in and out of Australia as often as needed
- must have skills, qualifications and experience to match the position
- must demonstrate English language ability
- must be eligible for any required licences or registrations
- must have health insurance.

Labour Agreements

Under this agreement the employer must fill positions in accordance with the terms and conditions specified in the Labour Agreement signed with DIAC.

The nominee must meet the qualifications and skills (including English language skills) specified in the Labour Agreement and be under 50 years of age.

Labour Agreements are intended for occupations that are not on the list of approved occupations for other sponsored visas or occupations not covered under ANZSCO.

A template Labour Agreement has been proposed for the tourism and hospitality industry to improve industry access to semi and highly skilled overseas workers in occupations identified as being in critical shortage.

Utilising immigration in your Workforce

To utilise immigration in your workplace or business, it is important that you understand Australian work laws, fair pay rates and working conditions. This information is available on the Department of Immigration and Border Protection website:

www.immi.gov.au

Alternatively, you can contact the South Australian Regional Outreach Officer: outreach.sa@immi.gov.au

To discuss use of immigration in tourism workforces on Kangaroo Island, including asking questions about seasonal workers and working holiday makers, join the discussion about harnessing the *Labour Pool* on the Kangaroo Island Tourism Employment (KITE) Network on LinkedIn.

To join the discussion follow the link:

<http://linkd.in/1d8MCTs>

