



Australian Government



Seasonal
Worker
Program

Seasonal Worker Program – accommodation sector case-study

The Seasonal Worker Program

If you're an accommodation provider in the Northern Territory, Kangaroo Island, Tropical North Queensland, Western Australia or the Whitsundays and experience difficulties retaining a productive workforce, the Seasonal Worker Program might be the solution you have been waiting for. The Seasonal Worker Program offers accommodation providers with access to a reliable, returning workforce from eight Pacific island countries and Timor Leste, when they are unable to find enough suitable local workers.

To access the Program, you need to become an Approved Employer, or contact or utilise a labour hire company already approved by the Australian Government, known as an 'Approved Employer'. Seasonal workers can work in selected regions for 14 weeks, or as long as six months. They offer accommodation providers who are unable to find enough local workers, with a reliable workforce, who can return in following seasons.

Cable Beach Club Resort and Spa and Eco Beach, two accommodation providers in Broome, WA have both recruited seasonal workers from Timor-Leste. Both organisations have expressed their intention to employ the same seasonal workers in the future, and increase their intake of workers should they continue to experience difficulty finding labour.

Like all new employees, employers must invest in on-the-job training for seasonal workers. Although they are paid the same as Australian workers, seasonal workers may be more expensive than other labour options, as the Approved Employer contributes to the workers' airfare. However, accommodation providers who have accessed the Program already report that, seasonal workers reliability, productivity and work ethic, as well as their ability to 'hit the

ground running', has resulted in productivity gains that negate this extra cost.

"A few of our permanent employees who assist as mentors and trainers to the seasonal workers asked if the seasonal workers would be returning the following season, after appreciating their high standard of work and invaluable contribution" says Nicole Taylor, HR Manager, Cable Beach Club Resort and Spa (an Approved Employer since January 2012).

Seasonal workers can be employed under the Program as bar attendants, baristas, food and beverage attendants, café workers, garden labourers, housekeepers, kitchen hands, and public area cleaners. Seasonal workers receive a pre-departure briefing on living and working in Australia from their country's Government, and another briefing upon arrival in Australia from their Approved Employer. The Approved Employer will also help workers to familiarise themselves with their new workplace and settle into the community.

Edwina Kelsch HR Manager, Eco Beach, an Approved Employer since January 2012 was pleased with their decision to become an Approved Employer and commented on the positive effect workers had on the workplace.

"Seasonal workers always had a happy positive manner within the workplace, and this had a positive influence on others" said Ms Kelsch."

Workers can earn far more money than they could otherwise earn back in their home countries, and are able to send this money back to their families to assist with basic day to day living costs, like housing, school and food. It is the unique perspective, and the ability to realise what a fantastic opportunity employment in Australia presents that drives seasonal workers to work hard, display a commitment to their

employer, and a high degree of resilience in any type of environment. This is what helps separate seasonal workers from other forms of itinerant labour.

The climate both in and around Broome can be extreme, and Edwina Lee Kelsch understands the value of resilient workers who are able to quickly adapt to their environment.

“Backpackers usually start their season in March and depending on the climate may leave prior to the end of the peak season. The climate is often what drives any type of worker away. Seasonal workers are committed to the entire season regardless of the weather conditions.” says Ms Kelsch.

“They definitely led by example. Both of our seasonal workers were promoted to supervisory

roles at Eco Beach during their employment” says Ms Kelsch.

Interested in finding out more?

Visit www.employment.gov.au/seasonalworker

Call the **Seasonal Worker Program information line** on (02) 6240 5234;

or email seasonalworker@employment.gov.au

