

For Immediate Release
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**CHANGES TO THE CANADA-AUSTRALIA WORKING HOLIDAY PROGRAM
WILL HELP BC'S TOURISM INDUSTRY COMBAT THE LABOUR SHORTAGE**

Vancouver – go2, BC's tourism industry human resource association was pleased to hear the following announcement released regarding the Canadian and Australian Working Holiday Program (WHP).

Effective on January 1, 2008, the program changes are expected to help ease the labour pressure particularly for resort areas in our province like Whistler where many Australian young people come to work and play every year.

“go2 supports the changes to this program,” said John Leschyson, Director, Industry Human Resource Development. “However, operators need to be aware that foreign workers are just one strategy of many that they need to look at in order to meet labour shortages. Becoming better employers, retaining existing employees, and expanding their recruitment efforts to include under-represented labour groups such as new immigrants, aboriginals, persons with disabilities and mature workers will also be key to their success.”

The announcement was made earlier this month when Canada and Australia signed a new bilateral Youth Mobility Arrangement (Working Holiday Program). Details for qualification on this new 3 year pilot program are as follows:

- be aged 18-30 years inclusive at the time of the application
- have sufficient funds (approximately CAD \$3,500 for Australians) and must have a departure ticket or sufficient funds to purchase one
- must meet each country's applicable immigration legislation
- not be accompanied by dependants
- be Australian or Canadian nationals and hold a valid Canadian or Australian passport
- pay the appropriate fee (Australians pay CAD \$165 Working Holiday Visa fee)

Duration and Re-application:

- Effective January 1, 2008 there will not be any participation limit (under the old program there was a 10,000 limit placed on the number of WHP visas issued annually).
- Effective January 1, 2008, as a pilot provision, Australian participants may stay in Canada for *up to 24 months and may repeat their experience under any authorized categories* (the current arrangement is a 'once-in-a-lifetime' opportunity). *Authorized categories include the Working Holiday program, the Student Work Abroad program, young worker/professional and international co-op programs.*
- Australians who are currently in Canada on a 12 month WHP visa will be able to apply under the new program from within Canada but when activating their work permit, they need to physically exit and re-enter Canada. They may do so through a supervised land border but need to check with a US consulate or embassy if they require a US visa.

Work Restrictions:

While both Australian and Canadian participants must meet relevant Canadian and Australian occupation-specific registration or licensing requirements, Canadian and Australian citizens have no restrictions on the type of work that may be done in Canada or Australia. Australian participants can work for any one employer for up to 24 months during the pilot program.

Studies:

Australian citizens can study up to six months under the new arrangement without the need to secure a student permit.

Multiple Entry

Canadian and Australian participants can depart and re-enter the host country as many times as they like within the duration of the program.

Dependants

Canadian nor Australian participants may not be accompanied by dependants under the new arrangement, although they can apply for separate permit categories such as a visitor's and others.

Further information about this new program can be obtained from the following websites:

International Youth Program: www.canada123go.ca

The Canadian High Commission in Australia: www.australia.gc.ca

The Canadian Consulate General: www.international.gc.ca/australia

Working Holiday Program Canada: www.whpcanada.org.au

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