



13 Nov 2020

Primary Industries Workers Regional Travel and Accommodation Support Scheme

The Primary Industries Workers Regional Travel and Accommodation Support Scheme will provide targeted assistance to farming, fisheries and food processing businesses in regional areas experiencing labour shortages as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The scheme will provide new opportunities for WA job seekers, encourage regional work and travel, and help people access jobs in the regions.

Application Guidelines

Who can apply for funding

A person living in Australia who:

- has the right to work in Australia;
- has relocated more than 100 kilometres from their current residence to take up an employment opportunity in regional WA.
- has taken up employment in an eligible agriculture, fisheries and food processing job for a primary producer, a labour hire or contracting business since the 9 September 2020.
- has worked for at least 2 consecutive weeks for the same employer in regional WA;
- has met all other criteria outlined in these guidelines.

Activities that can be funded

An accommodation allowance of \$40 per night can be claimed from 21 September 2020 and a Travel allowance can be claimed from 9 September 2020 to eligible and approved applicants.

Working Holiday Maker visa holders, and Approved Employers of Seasonal Worker Program or Pacific Labour Scheme participants relocating within Australia, may only apply for a travel allowance.

Funding amounts

An applicant, who has the right to work in Australia; but is not in Australia as a Working Holiday Maker, Seasonal Worker Program or Pacific Labour Scheme participant; can apply for:

- An accommodation allowance of \$40 per night (\$280 week) for each night living away from home to take up eligible employment in regional area, up to a maximum of 12 weeks AND
- A one-off travel allowance with the payment amount based on the region in which they have taken up employment being:
 - an allowance of \$150 to eligible applicants taking up employment in the Peel, South West, Great Southern, Wheatbelt, Mid-West and Goldfields-Esperance regions.
 - an allowance of \$350 to eligible applicants taking up employment in the Gascoyne or Pilbara regions.
 - an allowance of \$500 to eligible applicants taking up employment in the Kimberley region.

Working Holiday Maker, Approved Employers of Seasonal Worker Program or Pacific Labour Scheme participants who are relocating within Australia can apply for:

- A one-off travel allowance with the payment amount based on the region in which they have taken up employment being:
 - an allowance of \$150 to eligible applicants taking up employment in the Peel, South West, Great Southern, Wheatbelt, Mid-West and Goldfields-Esperance regions.
 - an allowance of \$350 to eligible applicants taking up employment in the Gascoyne or Pilbara regions.
 - an allowance of \$500 to eligible applicants taking up employment in the Kimberley region.

Eligibility Requirements

Application eligibility

To be considered for funding through this program an applicant must meet **ALL** of the following eligibility criteria. You must:

1. have taken up employment in a primary production business, or a labour hire or contracting business with a current Australian Business Number (ABN);
2. be working in an eligible WA region in one of the following job roles:
 - a. On-farm planting, maintenance, harvest, grading or packing of crops.
 - b. Off-farm grading or packing of horticultural fresh produce. Please note that harvested grain does not qualify.
 - c. On-farm breeding and caring of livestock (including shearing and aquaculture activities).

- d. Time-critical primary food processing of fresh, perishable produce.
 - e. Commercial fishing on vessel, or onshore time-critical processing and packing of seafood;
3. be in paid employment under the relevant Award and cannot be working as a volunteer;
 4. be a citizen or permanent resident of Australia, or hold a valid work visa
 5. have an account with an Australian commercial bank or credit union;
 6. be able to provide all requested details of the business employing you including the ABN, a valid email address and contact telephone number of your employer, and the physical addresses where the work was undertaken;
 7. be able to provide evidence that you have relocated more than 100 kilometres from your usual place of residence; being the address where you lived as an owner, tenant, border or guest, or where you reside with your family;
 8. be able to provide the address, name and contact details of the owner or manager of the accommodation where you are living whilst working in regional WA;
 9. have taken up employment in the South West, Peel, Great Southern, Wheatbelt, Goldfields-Esperance; Mid-West; Gascoyne; Pilbara; or Kimberley region as defined in the *Regional Development Act 1993*;
 10. have worked for more than 2 consecutive weeks for the same employer, since 9 September 2020.
 11. have worked full-time in the weeks that you claim the allowance, being the same number of normal work days or shifts as a full-time employee in that role and industry would normally work.

Note:

This is a limited pool of funds and the program will cease when funds are fully committed. Applications will be assessed in the order they are received. The submission of an application does not guarantee the applicant will receive support.

Application

Applications can be submitted online at <https://www.dpird.wa.gov.au/regional-workers-scheme> from 5 October 2020 and applicants must answer all questions and have uploaded the required evidence/verification documents to progress to assessment.

Eligible applicants are able to submit an application at any time after completing more than 2 consecutive weeks of full time work for the same employer.

As there is a limited pool of funds applicants are encouraged to submit applications fortnightly – noting that a maximum of 12 weeks accommodation allowance can be claimed, and a travel allowance will only be paid once.

What you will need to provide

Applicants (except Approved Employers of Seasonal Worker Program or Pacific Labour Scheme participants) will need to provide:

1. Evidence of their usual place of residence; being the address where the applicant lived BEFORE they relocated. Acceptable evidence includes:
 - Copy of current Australian Drivers Licence or WA Photo Card; or
 - Copy of recent Bank Statement showing name and address; or
 - Copy of rental agreement; or
 - Copy of Local Government rates notice; or
 - Receipt from a commercial accommodation provider.

Applicants unable to provide any of the above should contact the Program Manager by email at workforce@dpird.wa.gov.au before submitting an application for consideration of other acceptable evidence of usual place of residence before their relocation to regional WA.

2. The address of where they are living whilst working in regional WA, together with the name and contact details of the owner (or business name) of the accommodation provider.
3. evidence that they have the right to work in Australia and meet the eligibility criteria for this program being:
 - for Australians, a copy of Australian Passport; Birth Certificate (or extract); Citizenship Certificate; or Certificate of evidence of resident status;
 - or
 - copy of a current, valid Passport
4. details of the type of work performed, the dates worked, the employers name, Australian Business Number, email address and the physical addresses where work was undertaken.

Travel Allowance Applications for Seasonal Worker Program or Pacific Labour Scheme participants are only able to be made by and paid to the Approved Employer. Approved Employers will only be required to upload the Commonwealth Approved Recruitment Plan detailing the re-deployment workers from one Australian work placement to another. Workers coming to Australia for their first work placement are NOT eligible.

Assessment and Payment

Applications will be assessed in the order they are submitted until all allocated funds have been exhausted.

A travel allowance can be claimed by a person who relocated on or after 9 September 2020 being the date this scheme was announced.

A travel allowance is only payable once; and applicants who change employers cannot claim another travel allowance payment.

A travel allowance claim for a Seasonal Worker Program or Pacific Labour Scheme participants can only be made by an Approved Employer, and only for travel to a new Commonwealth Approved work placement in regional Western Australia.

An accommodation allowance can be claimed by a person on or after 21 September 2020 being the announced opening date of the scheme; but not for a person who is in Australia as a Working Holiday Maker, Seasonal Worker Program or Pacific Labour Scheme participant.

Incomplete applications, or applications where required documents have not been uploaded will not be assessed and applicants will be notified.

Assessors must be able to contact employers to verify work claims and applicants must provide correct contact details and a valid ABN for their employer.

Employment can be at different physical locations or farms in regional WA, but must be for the same employer for a minimum of 2 consecutive weeks.

Applicants can change employers after the 2-week minimum, and claim an accommodation allowance if they continue to meet all eligibility criteria including completing a minimum of 2 consecutive weeks for the new employer.

The accommodation allowance is paid for a maximum of 12 weeks, which can be consecutive or non-consecutive, providing 2 -week minimum criteria is met with each employer.

Applicants should allow up to 4 weeks for assessment and processing of claims.

Payments are made on a weekly basis as soon as possible after assessment and approval of claim. Payments are made electronically to nominated bank account.

DPIRD reserves the right to review and amend the list of eligible jobs, industries, regions or visa holders if required to address critical labour shortages in regions or industries.

No advocacy or lobbying will be accepted on behalf of individuals, industries or regions.

Tax information

Rebate payments under this scheme are outside the scope of GST, and applicants are encouraged to seek tax advice on the potential implications of obtaining this rebate.

Personal Information and disclosure of information

Applicants are informed that DPIRD is subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1992 (WA)*, which provides a general right of access to records held by the State Government agencies and local governments.