

**IEP – SYDNEY**  
Locked Bag 5065  
Sydney South NSW  
1235

**IEP - MELBOURNE**  
PO Box 13278  
Law Courts Post Office  
Melbourne VIC 8010

Ph +61 2 9299 0444  
Fax +61 2 9299 0399

Ph +61 3 9329 3866  
Fax +61 3 9329 1592



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## **Press Release**

*For Immediate Release*

### **Brothers Take Advantage of Tight Aussie Job Market and Head to USA**

When Joshua and Andrew Johnson finished up university late last year, they were getting ready to take on their first real jobs in the finance industry. But when the industry hit hard times, it changed their 2009 plans dramatically. Both brothers were offered positions in finance but were asked to defer their start date, leaving them with a year open to possibilities.

Rather than taking the deferment as a career setback, Joshua and Andrew decided to spend the year gaining international work, life and travel experience in the USA on the pilot J-1 visa program through non-profit organisation International Exchange Programs (IEP).

The *Work USA* program allows the brothers to work in the US for up to 12 months with IEP as their registered visa sponsor. They can work in practically any field, and base themselves in any location within the USA.

Eldest brother Joshua explained his initial reaction to the news that he wasn't going to be starting his job as early as planned.

*"I was a bit shocked when first told about the deferment, but this quickly turned to excitement as I realised I had the perfect opportunity to travel abroad before delving into a full time career. Although I do feel some concern about the state of the job market, especially in the finance sector, I'm still currently scheduled to begin work later in the year which gives some peace of mind."*

Brother Andrew experienced similar feelings of shock when he heard the news but quickly realised what doors had been opened for him.

*"Travelling again was something I was always going to do anyway. However I was always concerned with how hard it was going to be to do the kind of travel I wanted without totally quitting a job and starting over when returning to Australia. This way I get to travel, then come back to the job I want to work in. When I start work I'll be doing so for the rest of my life, and won't have extended travel plans so much in mind for the future."* Andrew explained.

As university students throughout Australia return to full time study and recent graduates start looking at tackling a more competitive job market, the idea of taking a gap year for travel and work is becoming a popular option. Despite the recession hitting hard around the world, young Australians are still gaining valuable international work experience while seeing the world on a working holiday.

IEP's Marketing Manager, Tennille Balaz explained that the current 12-month J-1 visa is due to experience significant changes later in 2009, which could result in restrictions being placed on the work opportunities available to participants on the program.

*"The Work USA program has been incredibly popular for full time tertiary students and recent graduates wanting to take advantage of this fantastic opportunity."* Ms Balaz said, *"Although the changes to the 12 month J1 visa have not been confirmed by the US consulate, IEP expects the employment requirements of the visa to become more restrictive. The current visa is a great opportunity for young Australian's to live and work in the USA, and we would encourage anyone who is eligible to take up this program while it is still so flexible."*

Despite their qualifications in finance, both Joshua and Andrew are being realistic when it comes to the sort of work they intend to find over in the US.

*"I majored in finance, banking and economics at university, but I think given the current economic climate, especially in the US, it is unrealistic to expect to find work in that industry," Andrew said, "I have worked behind bars and in hospitality for the past five years, so I think I will pursue that when we get there and see how I fare, friends have also told me that they earned a decent amount given tipping is customary."*

The Johnson brothers embark on their American working holiday in mid March and are keen to travel widely in the States before settling in New York to begin their job search.

For other Australians affected by the slowing job market, IEP's *Work USA* program is a great opportunity to take a year off and gain valuable international experience!

To be eligible, applicants must be a full time university or TAFE student who has completed at least one year of their course, or be a recent graduate who has finished their studies in the last 12 months. Australians interested in the visa can contact IEP on 1300 300 912 or visit [www.iep.org.au](http://www.iep.org.au)

For the Johnson brothers, their departure date is fast approaching and they are thrilled to be making the most of what many Australians their age are deeming a difficult time to be looking for work. When Joshua and Andrew return to commence their Australian careers they will have valuable life and travel experience under their belt, making them better equipped to face their careers back home.

Andrew offers advice to those who find themselves in a similar situation, *"If recent graduates are finding it difficult to find work in their field as a result of the economic downturn then maybe this year is the time to travel."*

**\*\*\*ENDS\*\*\***

*For more information on the Work USA program or interviews with any of the mentioned people please contact Naomi Joyce on the details below.*

### **Media Contact**

Naomi Joyce  
IEP's Marketing/PR Coordinator  
[Naomi.joyce@iep.org.au](mailto:Naomi.joyce@iep.org.au)  
P: (02) 9299 0444  
F: (02) 9299 0399  
[www.iep.org.au](http://www.iep.org.au)