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Press Release

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New UK Visa Rules for Australian Working Holiday Makers

A new visa scheme to replace the current UK Working Holiday visa will come into play on 27 November 2008. The Youth Mobility Scheme (YMS) is a part of the major re-working of Britain's immigration system but for many Australians, the changes will be warmly welcomed.

The new scheme will now allow Australians aged 18-30 to work in the UK, in practically any field, for the entire two years of the visa. As the working holiday visa stands, Australians are only permitted to work for 50% of their time in the UK, using the rest of the time for holiday and travel, this has proven to restrict some people in the sort of work they could do over there as, if they only planned to stay in the UK for one year, they were only able to work for 6 months, for some employers this was not enough of a commitment. With the new visa allowing Australians to work the full two years, they can now more easily gain career experience overseas or choose to work simply to fund their travels.

23 year old Amanda Hough will be applying for her visa through non-profit work and travel organisation International Exchange Programs (IEP) and plans to depart Australia next April which means she will be directly affected by the changes. She explained her reaction to the news.

"The first thing I heard was that we could work for the full length of the visa, not restricted to the 50% cap of the current visa which means two years of working and earning UK pounds, which to me is really exciting news," Amanda said.

Amanda is approaching her working holiday with plenty of flexibility and is keen to mix work with travel. *"I'm open to various roles in different locations,"* she said, *"I'm looking forward to furthering my work experience over there."*

Another exciting change that will be introduced with the YMS is the cost of the visa will be more than half the current price, under the new visa scheme Aussies will only need to pay the equivalent of £99. Applicants will also be required to demonstrate that they have held £1,600 in savings at their time of application.

At the current rate, IEP explains that up to 30% of UK visa applications are rejected by the British High Commission and with the changes taking place, more rejections are likely. Having the support of IEP allows Australians to correctly fill in their applications decreasing the chances of being denied a visa.

Along with visa assistance, IEP also assists with details like travel plans, bank accounts, National Insurance Numbers, employment and accommodation assistance, for Amanda, the help from IEP together with the new visa provides her with plenty of reasons to be optimistic about her upcoming working holiday.

"I think it (YMS) will improve the likelihood of Aussies being able to further their careers overseas allowing them to gain international experience."

ENDS

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