



MEDIA RELEASE
February 8th, 2022

BYATA – Working Holiday Visa work finally pays off!

The Backpacker Youth and Adventure Travel Association (BYATA) is excited to see that the hard work and lobbying the association has put in with senior officials is finally paying off with the recent announcements surrounding easing of border restrictions, particularly those travelling on working holiday and international student visas.

Step 1 of the 5-point plan begins on February 27th allowing for fully vaccinated New Zealanders to return home and self-isolate, skipping MIQ.

Step 2, beginning at 11.59am on March 13th allows for the restart of our popular Working Holiday Visa (WHV) scheme, which will see much needed fully vaccinated young people from across the world being able to experience Aotearoa without the requirements of MIQ. New Zealand has long been popular with young people to live, work and play and the restart of our WHVs will not only be a much-needed boost to our tourism sector, but also provide much needed labour to our local businesses, particularly in the resort towns of Queenstown and Rotorua, where they have struggled over COVID to attract kiwis to work. A successful WHV scheme is critical to the survival of our sector and the tourism industry. BYATA thanks the support it has received from industry partners Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) and Tourism Export Council New Zealand (TECNZ) in advocating for the speedy return of this fantastic scheme.

We thank the government for recognising the importance of the Working Holiday Visa and by acting now to open up visa processing from 14 March 2022. With Australia announcing its plan to open in February we are very much in a battle for youth market share and need to work hard with our partners to be competitive in the youth travel space.

We didn't expect Australia to be open so quickly for double vaccinated travellers with limited self-isolation requirements which presents a problem for us as NZ is seen as a dual travel destination with Australia.

We will continue to fight hard for an equal footing with Australia around our own self isolation requirements which is prohibitive to international visitors travelling to NZ, especially when compared with our neighbours over the ditch.

BYATA is also pleased to see the government announce that from April – up to 5,000 international students will be enabled to experience learning programmes in our unique New Zealand environment. BYATA supports the position of Education NZ that this is a good start towards recovery, however BYATA is happy that this process is beginning again, and we will no doubt see these numbers increase over time.

These recent border announcements are a testament to the hard work that the BYATA advocacy team has put in over the past two years. The Prime Minister in her comments to the media reflected the many benefits that youth travellers bring to NZ, echoing the messaging that BYATA has been putting forward over many months of lobbying.



BYATA is supportive of the calls from the wider tourism industry to end the requirements for self-isolation and MIQ completely, at the same time we also support a phased approach, to ensure that the health and wellbeing of the wider New Zealand public and that a sudden rush of visitors doesn't overwhelm our health system. The border announcements are welcome news in what has been a grim few years for tourism. BYATA and its members look forward to when we are able to extend our world famous manaakitanga once again to our global youth travel visitors.

[END]

Backpacker Youth and Adventure Tourism Association - BYATA media enquiries:

Chris Sperring – Chair of BYATA Board

Phone: +64 21 141 3757

Email: info@byata.org.nz

About Backpacker Youth and Adventure Tourism Association - BYATA

BYATA is a not-for-profit association acting as the independent voice of the backpacker and adventure tourism sector of New Zealand. With a growing member base of 130+ members nationwide, BYATA advocates on behalf of our members with relevant stakeholders including Tourism New Zealand, Immigration, Hospitality New Zealand, and more. BYATA empowers our members to make informed business decisions by sharing specific industry related data with our members. New Zealand Hostel Association (NZHA) is a sub-group of BYATA and specialises in offering support and advocating on behalf of New Zealand hostels. Visit BYATA's [website](#) for more information and follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).