



Newsletter 77 Spring 2009

WWOOF Australia

Greetings from WWOOF HQ

Update of Visa Extensions

WWOOF has seen a record number of willing workers joining due to a lack of paid work being offered to people who enter Australia on a Working Holiday Visa. The government offers the Working Holiday Visa extension program but currently it appears that there is not enough paid work to go around. These disappointed visitors join WWOOF in order to extend their visas. Can we blame them? No. They are only taking up the offer as laid out by the Department of Immigration. How were they to know that paid work in Australia is on a downturn? We feel an obligation to work with both the Department and these overseas visitors to help them achieve their goals in a foreign land.

Hosts have reported receiving the most enquiries ever, most probably due to the increasing numbers joining WWOOF. Some hosts couldn't be happier about it and others are totally overwhelmed by the number of callers and therefore choose not to answer them. The old adage "You can't please all the people all the time" comes into play here. But imagine the conundrum of these WWOOFers! No wonder there is an inquiry 'frenzy' when hosts are not replying to WWOOFer inquiries. This leads to panic and panic leads to inconsiderate behavior from both WWOOFers and hosts. If you are one of the disgruntled hosts, please let us know so that we can notate in your host entry that you do NOT wish to receive any inquiries from WWOOFers who are seeking to extend their visas or perhaps put up your own notice on the Bulletin Board to this effect. It will eliminate unwanted calls and make it clearer which hosts these WWOOFers should or should not contact. All entries marked with a **PP** indicate the hosts are in the correct postcode, and are **willing** to accommodate those WWOOFers who want to extend their visas. Previously before the Department changed the rules, the PP was inserted in these entries as a Primary Producer in an eligible postcode area. But since the Department has scrapped the Primary Producer with an ABN rule, we keep the PP's included to show the hosts are keen to sign the relevant forms, etc.

Facts About the WHV Extension Program You Should Know:

- DIAC deems 4-6 hours per day counts as 1 full days work for WWOOFers
- Hosts no longer need an ABN
- Hosts do not need to be a Primary Producer
- Host property must be in an eligible postcode offering "specified work"
- WWOOFers need to perform "Specified work" as per DIAC website
- See www.immi.gov.au for details, or e-mail us for more information

WWOOF

Membership

\$60 single or

\$70 for two people
travelling together

****Hosts receive \$10
for every member they
sign up!****

Host Membership

New Host \$50

Annual Renewal \$45

Concession \$30

***Host Application and
Renewal are free on
receipt of a copy of
your current
certificate from an
AQIS Certifying Body***

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Email us

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Or check out our website
(You might be on it!)

www.wwoof.com.au

News, Notices and Interesting Bits

Ponder this:

What WWOOFers dislike:

Hosts who make me weed for hours alone
Hosts who don't treat me like one of the family
Hosts who don't answer my inquiry
Hosts who supply insufficient food
Hosts who supply dirty, smelly, bug ridden bedding
Hosts who expect more than 6 hours labour daily

What WWOOFers love:

Hosts who treat me like family
Hosts who reply to my inquiry
Hosts who show me their special lives
Hosts who give me healthy food, no junk
Hosts who give me a variety of interesting jobs
Hosts who teach me new things
Hosts who accept me as I am and respect me

What hosts dislike:

WWOOFers who don't follow instructions
WWOOFers who book and then don't show up
WWOOFers who don't answer my email to them
WWOOFers who sleep late / can't be bothered
WWOOFers who overeat and raid the pantry
WWOOFers who take without asking first

What hosts love:

WWOOFers giving 4+ days notice of arrival
WWOOFers who listen and follow instructions
WWOOFers who like my kids and show it
WWOOFers with a good attitude
WWOOFers who are enthusiastic to learn
WWOOFers who have good manners & are tidy
WWOOFers who are respectful & honest

~FEEDBACK~

"WWOOFing is one of the most amazing things! My kids and I have enjoyed visits from so many wonderful people. Andrew & Natalie have learned so much about the big world out there". Hosts should consider putting photos on the Bulletin Board to help potential WWOOFers with planning their adventures and also give them a clear idea of what to expect on your property. **NW039**

We've been hosts for 8 years and enjoy working with enthusiastic helpers. It is sometimes a good thing to see the challenges we face through the eyes of others. To see the excitement of a young WWOOFer who just caught their very first fish!- its just the most rewarding feeling. It also helps fill in the empty nest syndrome when the kids leave home. We now have friends all over the world" **NT054**

Incidentally, we are being deluged with WWOOFers. Because of the drought we have less work and the farm is in 'mothballs'. But we battle on. I am writing this because I believe WWOOFers come in all shapes & sizes. Our current French girl is a huge size 22. Our farming neighbours said she was hopeless, far too large to cope with picking zucchini, etc. How wrong they were! The girl was a delight and one of the best workers we had. **VA010**

We have had nothing but good experiences, everyone of them had been unique, from Canada, Spain, USA, Holland, France, NZ, Taiwan & Australia- each person contributed to the best of their capabilities. We make sure we work side by side with our guests and give them a job that suits each individual. The cultural exchange has been fascinating and each of our guests

has been treated **as a family member**, and they in response, have been considerate & respectful. We've had many laughs together over language & cultural differences and opportunities to help those with poor English skills- even to the point of having a good conversation after 3 weeks when they first arrived only knowing the word 'hello'. Grateful comments in our Visitors Book gives the feeling that there are a lot of honest, reliable, helpful, responsible & healthy young people out there, giving to society instead of becoming only consumers. **NM141**

We have met the most amazing friends through sharing our life with WWOOFers. Being a single Mum, I would find it really hard to provide so much of our family's food without my WWOOFers. They aren't all perfect, but every one of them has given me the great gift of learning about their culture, graciousness & generosity. Many thanks to you all. **TH152**

I have had so many terrific WWOOFers this year. One woman who is travelling the world with her son, we will be friends for many years, we had such an instant connection. Another from Germany who came for a week and stayed almost 2 months at Christmas. I still miss her friendship & laughter. All WWOOFers do some good work- some a bit of a disaster, but it is up to us to teach and work with them. This program is so rewarding for my kids to meet & talk with other kids from around the globe. **NF088**

I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to share with other cultures and give my kids these experiences as well. We could never afford to travel with 4 of them to all the places we have been 'exposed' to. **It gives**

Feedback

my kids great confidence to share & communicate with our visitors. We have made some special friends over the years.

QT121

Hi! I am from South Korea. And I did do a WWOOF 1 month in Dunsborough. Its very good experience for me. I met Tiwan, German and eland WWOOFer in here. Thank you WWOOF Australia, I learn new english.

I08/34484

"Some WWOOFers say that only 15% of hosts reply to them. I am noticing that WWOOFers are ringing at the last minute. I tend to back away from such hasty calls, but the WWOOFers who give me 2 weeks notice I will bend over backwards for. I haven't had a bad WWOOFer yet and have had at least 250 so far. I work with my WWOOFers and spend a little time with each one, finding the results are amazing. I say this for a comment to all hosts. I believe the WWOOF office should send a questionnaire to WWOOFers to comment on bad hosts as I have heard stories they worked 8 hours a day and the experience was truly horrible, with the host threatening the WWOOFer if they told anyone about it. Hosts like these should be banned. All I can say is that they are amazing kids and keep us old fellas young. I am in the bush and the cuisine is multi-national, better than any restaurant in Perth and its every week! What more could you ask for.

WP094

It has come too our attention that some hosts refuse to take (or even answer) WWOOFers of certain nationalities because: (a) language is a problem, (b) many are from cities and are scared of animals, insects, getting dirty, or problems with water usage. One of my WWOOFers told me she had emailed & phoned every host in the Sydney/Blue Mountain region, getting not one reply. My reason for writing is that even if many WWOOFers of a certain nationality have perhaps spoiled it for the rest, there is no excuse for hosts to not respond to WWOOFer inquiries, even if it is a negative one. At least then, WWOOFers receive a reply and can concentrate their efforts elsewhere. I find it rude that hosts cannot even write a few words in reply.

NF087

WWOOFing has been an awesome way to experience your country and has given me the opportunity to meet with 'real' Australians and learn about their daily lives, as well as Aboriginal culture, gardening, animal care, pioneering, growing organically, vegetarian cooking, painting.....the list goes on and on.

I'm so happy I signed up in October!! **Amanda I08/31226**

I went to a wilderness farm for 2 weeks with hosts John & Caroline NT002 near Katherine and it was the highlight of my trip. It was a real, huge working farm. We ate a lot of their produce supplemented with meat & fish caught on the property. There were many travelers passing through and a few long term WWOOFers staying to learn. The kitchen & the river were great. Half a days hard work and a half days freedom and Caroline brought everyone together around the evening meal. Thanks for prompting me to give feedback!

Alanna I08/21657

I had some great experiences as a WWOOFer. I am at this moment in my WWOOF number 10 in the NT and I have to say thank you to this organization. It is a really good way to discover a country and its people.

Laura

I09/6029

After having heard so many stories about unreliable WWOOFers, I cannot resist giving you an example of unreliable hosts. I had booked via several detailed emails for a stay at a Bega host and I phoned them 2 days before to arrange the meeting. They became 'cold' when I told them I would be hitch hiking. The following day they called me at 9pm to tell me that both were ill so they couldn't have me anymore. What a lame excuse! I am an experienced hitch hiker, I have been to many remote places, and think that hitch hiking is an excellent means. My hosts don't have to collect me as I usually find a lift to their gates. **PLEASE, do not reject hitch hikers.** The good part of this story is that I found very nice hosts who rescued me at short notice so I don't complain. Thank you NBO20!

Frederic I09/41313

Of all the WWOOF experiences I've had to date, the happiest and most helpful race of people (generally speaking) would have to be Korean girls/women and their age does not appear to be a factor, and I think they're happy working inside or outside and stay for a fortnight or more. All have been courteous and willing to work for longer hours than I had asked them to. All the Asian WWOOFers and Koreans especially have the best work ethic by a long way.

Over a period of 6+ years, I've reached these conclusions and I wouldn't have known these facts if it wasn't for the WWOOF program, for I've yet to journey overseas to make a direct comparison.

QN093

Wwoofers Questionnaire

Several hosts have sent us examples of questionnaires they give the Wwoofers to complete before accepting them on their property. Some of the questions asked are:

- *What is your Wwoof membership number/country of origin?
- *Why did you choose our place to visit?
- *Are you interested in organic gardening, or other reasons for coming?
- *Can you work independently?
- *Are you experienced with children?
- *Are you happy to help with meal preparation & clean up?

At the top of each page on the www.wwoof.com.au web site there is a link to a Wwoofers Application Wwoofers can copy and paste into an e-mail to Hosts. Have a look at this form and if it covers all of the things you want to know, ask Wwoofers to fill it in and send it to you, then add any extra questions you have to your reply. If you think there is something we should add to the form, let us know & we will add it in.

Another suggestion was to supply Wwoofers with 'Settling-In Upon Arrival': an introduction of the Wwoofer to the property & house rules which could contain things like:

*Be tidy, clean up bathroom, dirty dishes, etc. *Food issues, such as don't raid pantry without asking. *Don't misuse water (explain why) & electricity; *time restrictions on internet or phone use; *ask questions if you don't understand, any special or strict routines to follow. If a mistake is made, be open and honest and tell us about it so it can be fixed (we won't yell at you, we promise!), *include anything that gives the Wwoofer a general idea of how things work on your property and what they should do if a problem arises. *Have signs posted in appropriate places about important things to remember to do. Try and keep your language simple so Wwoofers with limited English can understand what you have said.

Some hosts email these questions to Wwoofers first before accepting to host them. Others get the Wwoofer to agree after they arrive. If Wwoofers know your needs or attitudes to things in advance, it makes for better communication and better host/Wwoofer relationships.

Wwoof has added a 'Wwoofer Application form-to be sent to hosts' on our website. It appears at the very top of the homepage for selection. Ask the Wwoofers to complete this form and submit it to you.

CONGRATULATIONS to Wwoof Hosts Wwo063 of Oranje Tractor Wines, Albany's only Organic Winery, who achieved a 5 star winery rating in the "2010 James Halliday Australian Wine Companion". Oranje Tractor was awarded the best winery in the Albany Region, making it into the "10 Dark Horses" selection, with most of their wines scoring 92 and above out of 100. Their 2004 Riesling with 95/100 was in the top 20 in Australia, 2003 & 2004 vintages scored 94/100. oranjetractor.com

English Wwoofer, Adam Greenwood, has just published an A-Z pocket guide called "The Practical Guide to Wwoofing" Adam has Wwoofed in England, Scotland, France, Spain, Portugal and Hungary and has put this guide together for Wwoofers independently of any Wwoof group. Your Wwoofers may be interested, it is available from www.wwoofing.uk as a paperback or e-book.

If undeliverable, please return to:

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