

REAP

Regional Employer Alliance Project (REAP) Central Highlands, Queensland

A Project to Develop Alliances with Employers within the Agriculture, Infrastructure, Local Government and Resource Industry Sectors

Seasonal Workforce Attraction: Matching local skill needs to the skill sets of a travelling population

A SEASONAL SKILLED WORKFORCE: CONSIDERING CENTRAL HIGHLANDS TRAVELLERS

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DRAFT
NOT FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

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- Rubyvale Gem Gallery
- Emerald Cabin & Caravan Village
- Nogoia Caravan Park

DISCLAIMER

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Executive Summary

Findings from *A Seasonal Skilled Workforce: Considering Central Highlands Travellers* indicate there are a significant proportion of visitors to the region for whom combining work and travel is an appealing proposition.

There are three major groups who appear from survey results:

- International and particularly Asian visitors aged between 18 and 34 who are undertaking fruit picking and pruning duties while studying or holidaying
- Domestic visitors from regional Queensland, NSW and Victoria aged between 45 and 64 who are employed or self funded retirees holidaying in the region with a caravan or motorhome
- Domestic visitors who are employed or itinerant aged between 35 and 54 who are working in the Central Highlands with their own vehicle often with a caravan
- Nearly all domestic visitors travel with a partner or a group of adult friends or relatives

Of all respondents who indicated they would return to the Central Highlands, 43% stated they would be interested in undertaking paid work.

Domestic visitors were skilled in a diverse range of occupations. The strongest areas of formally recognised skills were in the fields of truck driving and plant and machinery operations. More than one third of domestic visitors interested in work held Light Rigid or heavier class licenses. Other skill areas commonly listed were education, health and care, and welding, fitting and turning. 96% of all qualifications listed were current.

Preferred means of communication included internet and email, printed press, the Visitor Information Centre and word of mouth. Visitors nominated a number of aspects critical to their decision to undertake work:

- Prompt, regular payment of wages
- A fair wage provided which reflects the hours and skills of work undertaken
- Availability of a caravan or campsite
- Low or moderate cost accommodation (International only)
- Clean and secure accommodation (International only)
- Access to medical facilities (Domestic only)
- A clear understanding of the level of fitness required for work (Domestic only)

For couples, work for their spouses or partners was also considered very important.

Paid work would influence nearly all visitors' travel plans with a third travelling to new or different places, 40% travelling more often and half for longer periods of time. International visitors indicated a preference for a period of work of average 6.9 months, and domestic visitors 4.3 months. 68% of domestic visitors stated they would prefer contracts of 3 months or more.

Limited caravan park capacity is currently available in the Central Highlands to house 'long-stay' visitors, however significant expansion of a number of facilities will be completed by 2009. Additional capacity may be available from on-farm sites, if local regulations allow, and via the potential use of Council camp sites.

While the 'drive' market state-wide appears to be declining, tourism figures for the Central Highlands are strong and have grown consistently since 2002.

Background to the Report

The Local Government Managers Association (National) commissioned A Seasonal Skilled Workforce: Considering Central Highlands Travellers (the Report) in February 2008 to provide information to Central Highlands resource and infrastructure industry sectors regarding a potential match of skills sets to local employer needs.

The Report is a companion to analyses of labour and skill requirements in the agricultural, mining, civil contracting and local government sectors of the Central Highlands being undertaken concurrently. The Key Evaluation Question for all research completed as part of this project is:

Can local skills shortages in agriculture, civil construction, local government & mining be met & matched to the skill sets of the travelling population?

All full report will be presented when data collection and analysis is completed across the four industry sectors in November 2008.

Objectives of the Report are to:

- Determine level of interest in paid work
- Ascertain potential supply of skill sets of Central Highlands travellers
- Identify social and personal preferences of travellers including facilities, accommodation and local services
- Measure motivations to remain in the area including incentives that would attract work engagement
- Ascertain the training required to top-up and brush-up skills to meet regulatory, Occupational Health and Safety or skill recognition requirements
- Identify barriers to skill matching with local employers

This information provides the context, direction and justification that the REAP Steering Committee and Regional Project Manager can use to develop strategies to attract a Seasonal Workforce to match local skill needs.

REAP (Central Highlands) Steering Committee

A Steering Committee provided overview and guided the progress of the REAP project from its instigation in November 2007. The Steering Committee contributes from their experiences, representative across agricultural, mining, civil contracting and local government sectors of the Central Highlands, and provides a conduit for report information through their networks. The Committee provided guidance and feedback on the design and conduct of survey activities.

- Craig Pressler, Proprietor, 2PH Farms
- Ian Burnett, AgForce Queensland
- Dr Jim Sands, Australian Agricultural College (Emerald Campus)
- Mike McCosker, Central Highlands Cotton Growers & Irrigators Association
- Bryan Ottone, Councillors and staff, Central Highlands Regional Council
- Peter Dowling, Central Highlands Regional Development Corporation
- Chris Vine, C&J Excavator Hire
- Michael Gavin, BMA Gregory Crinum Mine

- Graham Morris, Ensham Mine
- Nicola Williams, Rio Tinto Coal Australia Kestrel Mine
- Shayne Shepherd, Shepherd Diesel

Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference are modified from the REAP (Central Highlands) Project Contract and informed the specific engagement of the Central Highlands travellers by the Regional Project Manager;

1. Establish a pool of workers with the potential to engage in a range of work activities that requires minimal employer investment in training and skill development;
2. Develop and conduct survey of employers, to gather data including the type of work in demand, skill level required, issues to consider such as accreditation, and potential employment arrangements;
3. Analyse the employer and potential employee surveys to determine skill match and training and incentives requirements;
4. Broker comprehensive buy-in to the pilot project from regional employers across the REAP sectors;
5. Garner commitments to the Project and participation in the REAP Regional Employers Alliance from representatives within and across the REAP sectors and across the designated REAP region.

Methodology

A positivist paradigm underlies the research undertaken in the Report. For the purpose of measuring the potential interest, motivation and skills of Central Highlands travellers, simple quantitative surveying was used. Positivist research may lose complexity in collection and analysis, but the approach supports the research aims to measure a sample of travellers in order to predict and attract a potential seasonal workforce.

Methods Used

This research was undertaken between 1 May and 31 October 2008; six months of data collection correlating with the peak visitor season in the Central Highlands (CHDC 2008). This was supported by ten days of analysis and reporting. The following data collection methods were used to compile information for the Report:

- A literature review was undertaken from printed, electronic and other media sources for relevant reports and research.
- An in-depth unstructured interview was conducted with Lynne Banford, Regional Director (Bundaberg, Gladstone & Capricorn Regions) and Jayne Jennings, Manager Industry Development, Destination Queensland, Tourism Queensland, with LGMA representatives, 1 April 2008

- An in-depth semi-structured interview was conducted with Pauline Farlow, then coordinator Central Highlands Visitor Information Centre, 17 April 2008.
- An in-depth semi-structured interview was conducted with Denis Kiely, Chair, Central Highlands Tourism Inc. and Owner, Emerald Cabin & Caravan Village, 30 April 2008.
- A formal structured questionnaire, collection and extension plan was developed by Regional Project Manager, Liz Alexander and circulated via email for comment and amendment to REAP Steering Committee (21 April 2008) and regional tourism and industry stakeholders (24 April 2008).
- Six Central Highlands accommodation providers and tourism businesses were approached and/or offered to distribute, promote and collect surveys from their clients. This included all caravan parks in and close to Emerald, and businesses run by the Chair and Deputy Chair of Central Highlands Tourism Inc.
 - Emerald Visitor Information Centre
 - Lake Maraboon Holiday Village
 - 2PH Farms
 - Rubyvale Gem Gallery
 - Emerald Cabin & Caravan Village
 - Nogoia Caravan Park
- An incentive of a \$70 fuel voucher was offered each month of the survey to encourage and reward travellers for participating at supporting businesses, branded "Win a Tank of Fuel".
- The Central Highlands Traveller Survey (Appendix 1) was initiated 1 May and ran until 31 October 2008. Promotional posters in A4 and A3 size (Appendix 2) and extension material (Appendix 3) were provided to support and 'train' staff in each business.
- Posters, information and traveller surveys were also displayed on 2PH Stand at the Emerald Show, 3-5 June 2008
- A presentation to provide background on the traveller survey for Central Highlands Visitor Centre volunteers and morning tea was provided by the Regional Project Manager 12 June 2008
- Supporting press articles were published in the Central Queensland News, 4 July 2008 (Appendix 4).
- Interim results were presented to the REAP Steering Committee on 23 June and 29 October 2008.
- Data on caravan and motorhome capacity in the Central Highlands was collected via a structured telephone survey on 23 October 2008.
- Data was entered on a spreadsheet, checked and analysed directly from the spreadsheet by the Regional Project Manager.

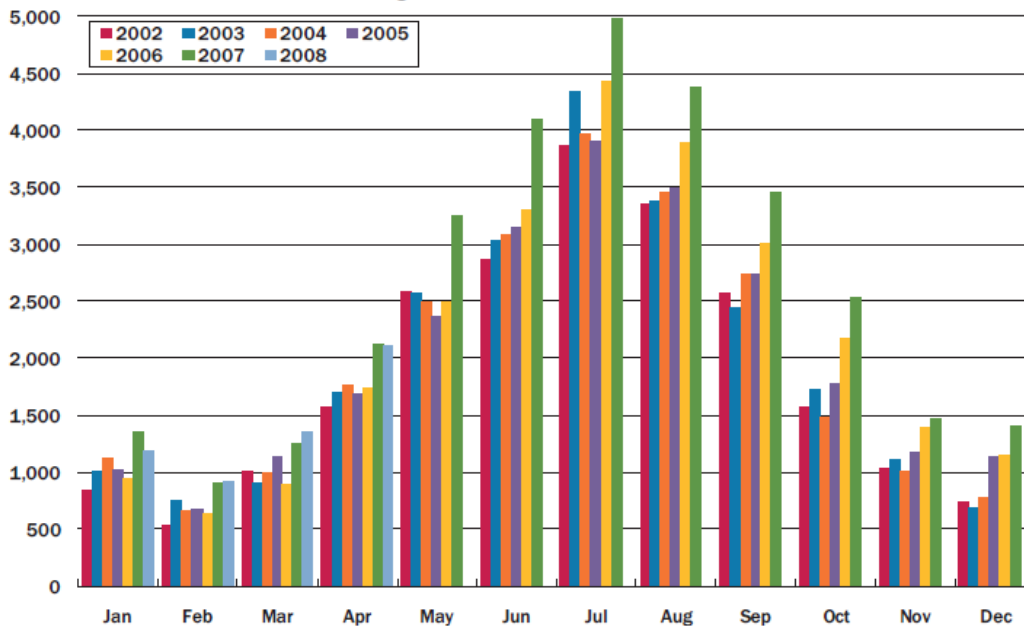


Research Background

Visitor Numbers

The total number of visitors to the Central Highlands region are estimated at 125,000 annually. Visitor numbers to the Central Highlands Visitor Information Centre (VIC) totalled 31,158 in the year to April 2008. The majority of visitors travel through the region during the cooler months of April to October, peaking in July. (CHDC 2008) as shown in Diagram 1: Visitor Numbers Central Highlands Visitor Information Centres.

Diagram 1: Visitor Numbers Central Highlands Visitor Information Centres (CHDC 2008)



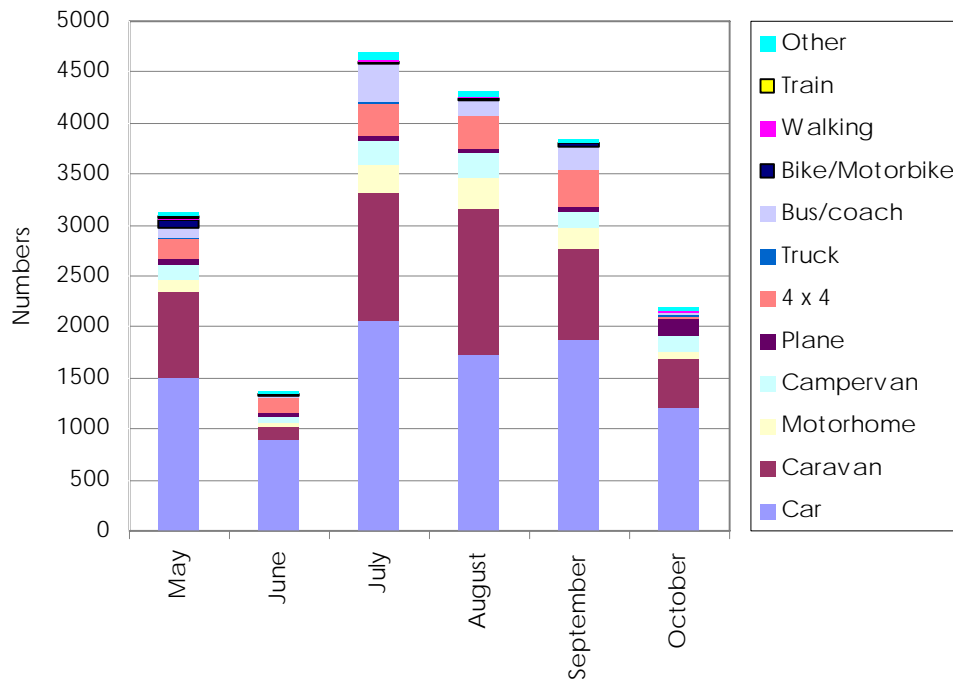
The number of visitors to the Information Centre increased by 13.4% between April 2007 to 2008 compared to previous 12 months. Comparing the survey period (May to October 2008) with the same period in 2007, numbers have dropped by 1.25% or 248 visitors. (Central Highlands Tourism Inc. 2008)

Modes of Transport

For the period surveyed (May to October 2008), visitors to the VIC travelled to the Central Highlands via three predominant modes of transport:

- Cars (41%)
- Caravans, motorhomes and campervans or trailers (33%)
- 4 Wheel Drives (7%)
- Other modes (8%)

Diagram 2: Number of Travellers & Mode of Transport (Visitor Information Centre) 2008 (Central Highlands Tourism Inc. 2008)



State-wide Trends

Tourism Queensland defines three types of drive holidays in Queensland; short breaks (1 - 3 nights), point to point trips, and touring drive holidays. 'Touring' holidays describes domestic visitors making trips of greater than 4 nights and making two or more stop-overs. The touring market is comprised predominantly of:

- Ages 45-64 years (39%)
- Adult couples (42%)
- NSW origin (35%)
- Travelling mid-to late year (September quarter 29%)

The touring market corresponds most closely with the majority of visitors recorded by the Central Highlands Visitor Information Centre. Tourism Queensland (2007) observes a state-based trend towards short breaks of 1 to 3 nights, with a corresponding average decline of 8.2% between 2003 and 2006 in the touring market.

The rise in visitors to the Central Highlands defies state-wide trends. Tourism Queensland reported for the year ended 2006, that the total Australian 'Drive' market declined at an average rate of 1.3% between 2003 and 2006. Queensland experienced an equal largest decline with Victoria of 2%, which represents 588,000 travellers within Queensland (Tourism Qld 2007).

Touring visitors using a caravan, motorhome or tent for their accommodation made up 16% of the total drive market in Queensland in 2006. Central Queensland is a preferred destination for this group attracting 19% of visitors from December 2003 to December 2006. Tourism Queensland (2007) also indicates a decline in this market over the same period of an average rate of 9.1% each year.

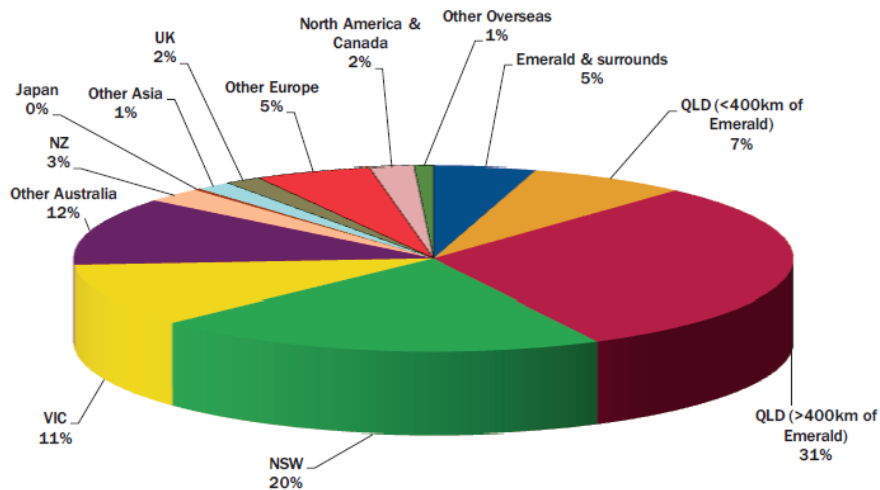
Domestic visitors staying in caravan parks or commercial camping grounds made up 9% of the total visitor nights in Queensland in 2006. Tourism Queensland (2007) records a positive trend for domestic visitors staying at these facilities, increasing by 8.3% between 2005 and 2006.

During the peak of fuel prices at above \$1.60/l for unleaded and \$1.80 for diesel in mid July (<http://www.exploroz.com/OntheRoad/FuelPrices/QLD> viewed 10/11/08), the Visitor Information Centre observed a 6% drop of visitors (295) from July 2007, but numbers averaged across the consecutive months remained comparative to 2007 figures. (Central Highlands Tourism Inc. 2008)

Visitor Origin

Central Highlands Development Corporation (2008) reported that the majority of visitors (31%) come from Queensland (greater than 400km radius from Emerald). 20.4% of visitors travel from NSW and 11% from Victoria. 14.2% of visitors are international guests.

Diagram 3: Visitor Origin, Central Highlands (CH Tourism 2008)



Caravan Park Capacity in Central Highlands

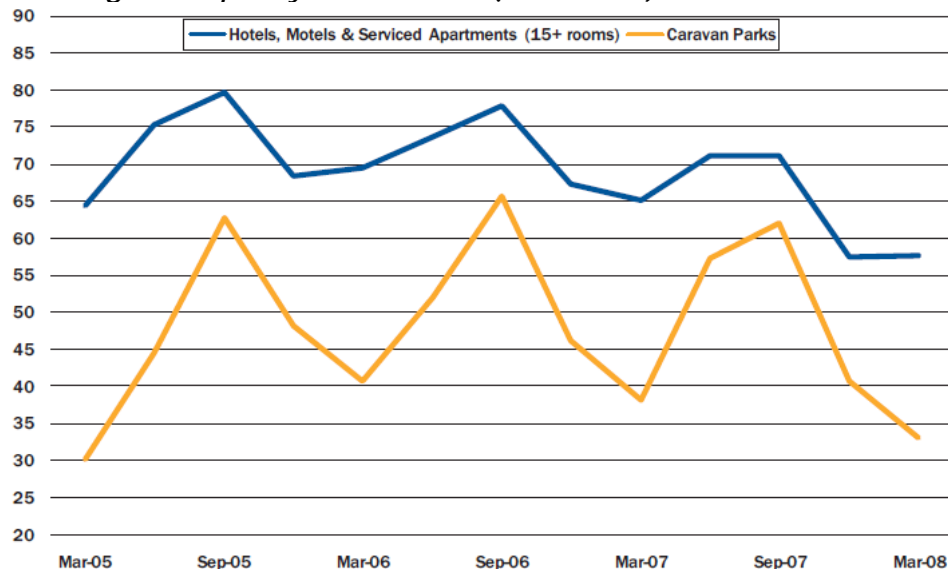
Table 1 shows the current capacity in the Central Highlands at 23 October 2008, surveyed by telephone. Two small caravan businesses are not included as they were closed during the off-season; Gemini Caravan Park and Sapphire Caravan Park, Sapphire. There are 11 parks and 673 caravan sites currently leased within the region.

Figures for long stay availability are problematic, as those numbers listed represent what owners/managers estimate may stay during a year. Across all businesses, long stay is provided on a 'first-in, best-dressed' basis, so there is no actual provision specifically for this group of travellers.

Table 1: Caravan Park Capacity in Central Highlands 2008

Name	Town	Caravan Sites (Large)	Caravan Sites (Normal)	Cabins / Dongas	No. Housed in Cabins	Powered Camping Spots	Total Capacity	Long Stay Availability (Peak Season)
Anakie Gemfields Caravan Park	Anakie	0	52	5	14	0*	66	0
Bedford Gardens Caravan Park	Rubyvale	0	0	8	36	24	60	0
Blackwater Caravan Park	Blackwater	2	38	9	18	0*	58	0
Blue Gem Caravan and Tourist Park	Sapphire	3	49	1	5	0*	57	0
Bottletree Caravan Park And Motel	Blackwater	0	32	22	48	0*	80	0
Capella Van Park	Capella	27	0	9	30	0*	57	0
Comet Accommodation Park	Comet	0	3	2	8	2	13	0
Duaringa Motel and Caravan Park	Duaringa	0	0	0	0	0*	0	0
Emerald Cabin & Caravan Village	Emerald	15	147	37	169	0*	331	0
Gem-Air Village Caravan Park, Camping & Cabins	Gemfields	30	0	3	12	0*	42	0
Lake Maraboon Holiday Village	Emerald	48	72	27	134	0*	254	0
Nogoa Caravan Park	Emerald	2	53	20	41	0*	96	30
Rolleston Caravan Park	Rolleston	4	7	15	25	5	41	0
Rubyvale Caravan Park	Rubyvale	10	24	4	16	3	53	14
Springsure Roadhouse & Caravan Park	Springsure	0	15	6	22	0*	37	10
Willows Gemfields Caravan Park	Gemfields	3	37	5	14	0*	54	14
TOTAL		144	529	173	592	34	1299	68

Diagram 4: Percentage Occupancy Rate Emerald (CHDC 2008)



In figures drawn from ABS Survey of Tourist Accommodation, CHDC reports occupancy rates ranging from a low of 30% to a peak of 65% in 2005, 2006 and 2007 (Diagram 4: Percentage Occupancy Rate Emerald). This does not reflect information supplied by Central Highlands Van Parks who describe little to no available sites during peak season.

Capacity is projected to increase from a total of 1299 to 1942 individual places during the next two years. 2PH Farms Selma Park Village, located on Talafa Rd has received Council and EPA approval to construct a commercial accommodation site which will add 180 caravan sites, 40 cabins, and 22 camping sites to those currently offered in the Central Highlands. (Pers. comm. Craig Pressler 2PH Farms 23/10/08). The facility is expected to be completed by the end of 2009. Lake Maraboon Holiday Village is increasing its capacity by another 50 caravan sites and Nogoia Caravan Park plans to add 30 cabins, 15 van sites and 30 staff quarters by 2010. Duaringa Motel and Caravan Park is also building another 2 cabins. (Pers. comm. 23/10/08).

Alternate Capacity through Roadside Camping, Private Property and Other Sites

Despite temporary basing of caravans on private property being a relatively common practice, this is not allowed under Central Highlands Regional Council regulations (Email Cameron Fraser CHRC 21/10/08). All single temporary accommodation units such as caravans and motorhomes currently require approval to operate as a commercial caravan park.

Council has indicated that it would consider under their local laws, setting up a streamlined approval process with minimum licence conditions to allow the accommodation of a maximum of one temporary accommodation unit on a single business or block of land. Licence conditions would require access of water, toilet, shower, suitable effluent disposal and solid waste disposal. (Email Cameron Fraser CHRC 21/10/08)

Roadside camping is also employed by a number of travellers, but not suitable for those considering a long stay. Central Highlands Regional Council regulations allow for a maximum stay of 24 hours at any one site. (Pers. comm. Bryan Ottone CEO CHRC 23/6/08)

Vans are sometimes stationed at the Emerald Showgrounds. There is provision attached to the tenure of the land by DNR&M to allow temporary or 'overflow' accommodation for showground purposes. It is not considered by Council to offer facilities meeting best practice for commercial caravan parks, and intended to compete with local accommodation providers. (Pers. Comm. George Frangos, Deputy CEO CHRC 29/10/08).

Central Highlands Regional Council also holds a number of maintenance camps across the Central Highlands in varying states of condition. Whilst these camps are generally powered and fully self-contained, they are not available to the public. When considering the scope of REAP, Council acknowledges the potential to utilise these resources within the scope of attraction and retention of staff for a specific period of engagement. Considerations will include such factors as policy, security, safety, practicalities. Some camps have not been regularly used and require maintenance. (Email George Frangos, Deputy CEO CHRC 21/11/08)

No camps are currently established in the Emerald area (former Emerald Shire Council area). Two camps (2) are being considered, one (1) in Lochington area and one (1) in Echo Hills area. Capella area (former Peak Downs Shire Council area) do not use camps.

Table 2: Central Highlands Regional Council Camps 2008

Camp Name	Number of Persons Accommodated	Location
Springsure area (former Bauhinia Shire Council area)		
Tandeera Camp	2	Glentana Road (Buckland Valley)
Semper Idem	8	Tambo Road (Near property "Beauchamp")
Austral Park	10	Arcadia Valley Road (Injune end of Arcadia Valley)
Ingelara Camp	6	Carnarvon Gorge Road (Carnarvon Gorge)
Coates Camp	2	Arcadia Valley Road (Northern end near Moura Road)
Rolleston Camp	10	In Rolleston Township
Washpool Camp	8	Rolleston Blackwater Road (North Comet River Road)
Togara Camp	8	Comet River Road (approximate 40k west Rolleston Blackwater Road)
Blackwater area (former Duaringa Shire Council area)		
Bauhinia Downs area	8	
Dingo	8	
Duaringa	6	
New camp to be established		Yamba near Willeys Creek

(Email George Frangos, Deputy CEO CHRC 21/11/08)

Traveling Direction and Promotion

There are a number of 'Ways' or drive holidays promoted throughout eastern Australia. Rolleston, Springsure, Emerald and Capella lie on the drive marketed as the Great Inland Way, which runs from Sydney in the south 2691km to Cairns in the north. Carnarvon Gorge and the Sapphire Gemfields are listed as one the 'top ten' things to do along the way (Tourism Queensland 2008). A map of the Great Inland Way is included in Appendix 5.

Emerald also features as destination on the National Harvest Trail. An initiative of the Australian Government, the Harvest Trail provides information on harvest jobs across Australia for job seekers looking to work and travel. (<http://jobsearch.gov.au/HarvestTrail> viewed 10/11/08) A 'National Harvest Guide' lists information on work opportunities, working conditions, transport and accommodation for each town. While it is promoted as being updated monthly, the information on work opportunities in Emerald is dated and does not mention the citrus industry.

Grey Nomads Interest in Work: A Regional and State Picture

The most relevant and recent research undertaken with a similar target group in Queensland was published by Tony Charters and Associates in April 2007 for the Queensland Department of Employment and Training. 2204 Queensland members of the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) participated in a surveyed investigating the potential for 'Grey Nomads' undertake paid and voluntary work to fill regional labour and skill shortages.

Key findings included:

- 56.7% were interested in undertaking paid work while travelling
- Interested respondents were primarily aged between 61 and 65 years, travel with a companion and lived in non rural areas (approximately 2/3)
- Work interests listed included retail and office, rural / fruit picking, building trades/labour, health and cleaning; 53% listed no preference for the type of work
- 75% of the skills base was reported current
- Approximately 22% were willing to work longer than a month (and on average 4 months)
- Winter is the preferred travel season for approximately 48%
- 58.5% preferred to undertake work at a single destination
- 86% would modify their travel plans if there was access to work; this was most likely to affect the destination selected.
- 26.9% indicated they would travel to any destination for paid or voluntary work; 7% indicated a preference for the Capricorn Region.

(Tony Charteris & Associates 2007)

Leonard, Onyx and Maher (2007) through a joint University of Western Sydney, University of Technology Sydney and Volunteering Australia project have also probed the potential for volunteer work programs in rural locations. Barcaldine was one of six country towns evaluated as a possible destination in the context of matching 'grey nomads' skills and interests. 314 people aged over 50 years responded.

Key motivation to volunteer included:

- Getting to know the locals (77%)
- Learning something new (72%)
- Using skills (69%)
- Helping the local towns and its surrounds (67%).

The researchers indicate that 'grey nomads' had "specific interests", "value their freedom" and are "not easily coerced"; recommending that a matching process would need to have equal focus on the supply side of the potential workforce, and not rely solely on demand as per normal labour-market practice (Leonard et al 2007).

General Findings

Respondents

194 traveling parties participated in the Central Highlands Traveler Survey between 1 May and 30 October 2008. An additional 6 surveys were not included as they were returned by residents of the Central Highlands. Visitors sampled represent only 2.53% of the 19,540 visitors recorded at the Central Highlands Visitor Information Centre during the same period.

The majority of responses were received in May and June, partially accounted for by assistance of 2PH staff who displayed and collected surveys from their Show stand on the 3 and 4 June 2008.

Diagram 5: Numbers of Survey Responses Collected by Month

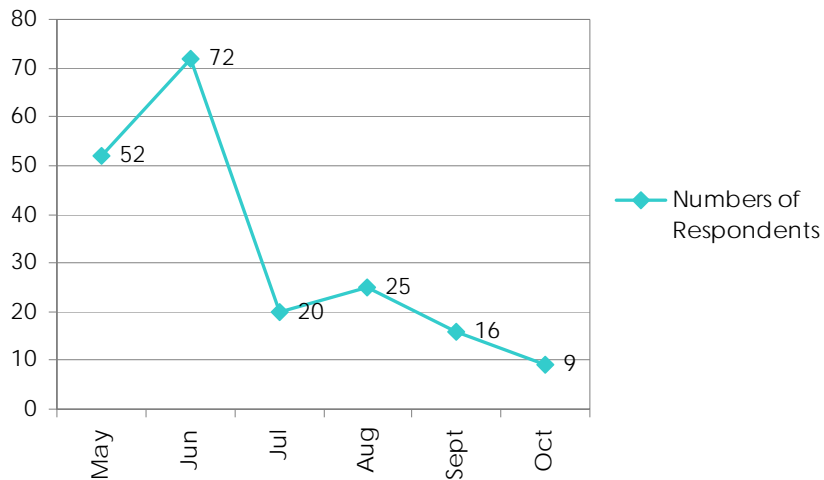
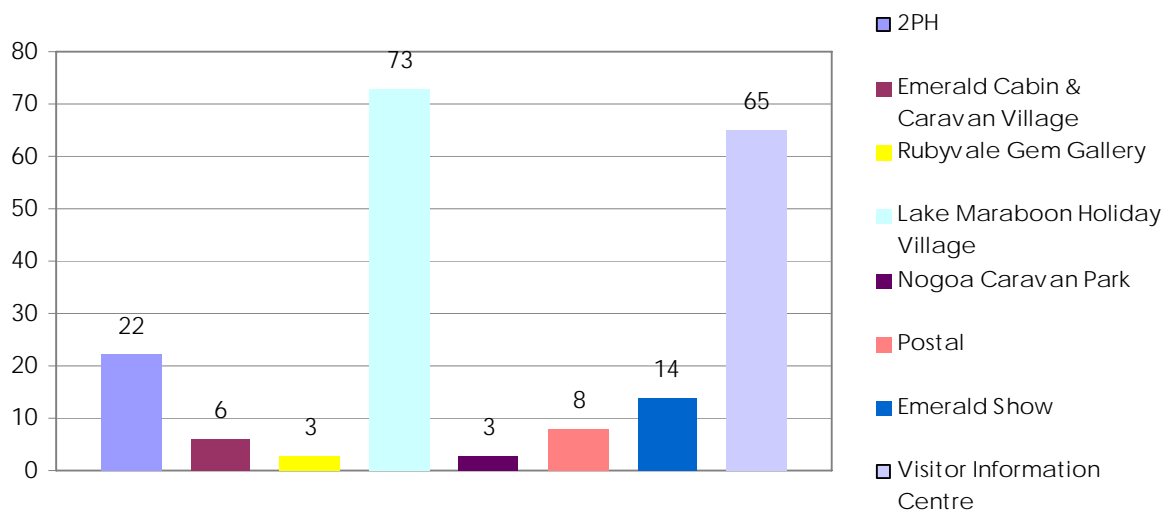


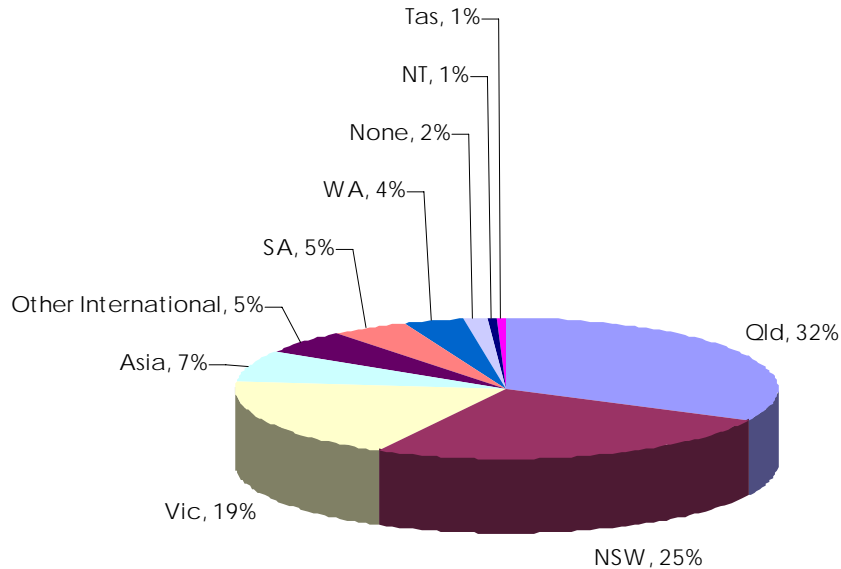
Diagram 6: Number of Survey Responses Collected by Cooperators



Visitor Origin

The largest proportion of visitors sampled had traveled from Queensland (outside the Central Highlands Council region). NSW and Victorian visitors also comprised a significant percentage. The largest share of the domestic travel originated from non-metropolitan areas: 62% of Queensland visitors, 84% of NSW visitors and 76% of Victorian visitors.

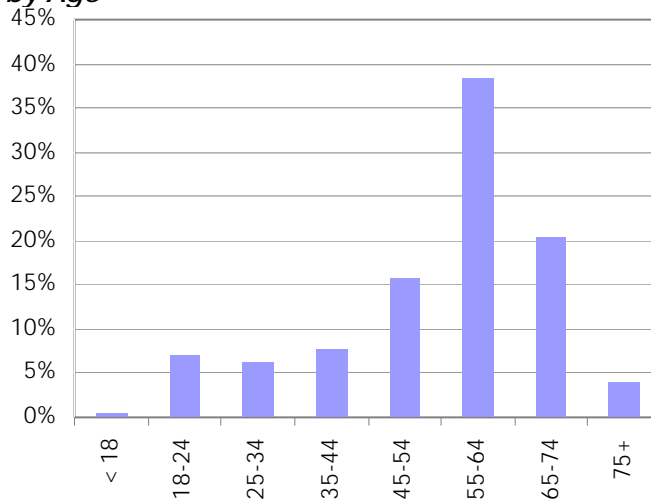
Diagram 7: All Visitors Sampled by Origin



Gender and Age

Just over half (55%) of respondents were female; 45% were male. There were 7 single respondents; nearly all other respondents listed both theirs and their partner's information. As shown in Diagram 8, the majority of respondents were aged between 55 and 64.

Diagram 8: All Visitors by Age



Intention to Return to the Central Highlands

93% of respondents intend to visit the Central Highlands again. 7% do not plan to return.

Interest in Work: Specific Findings

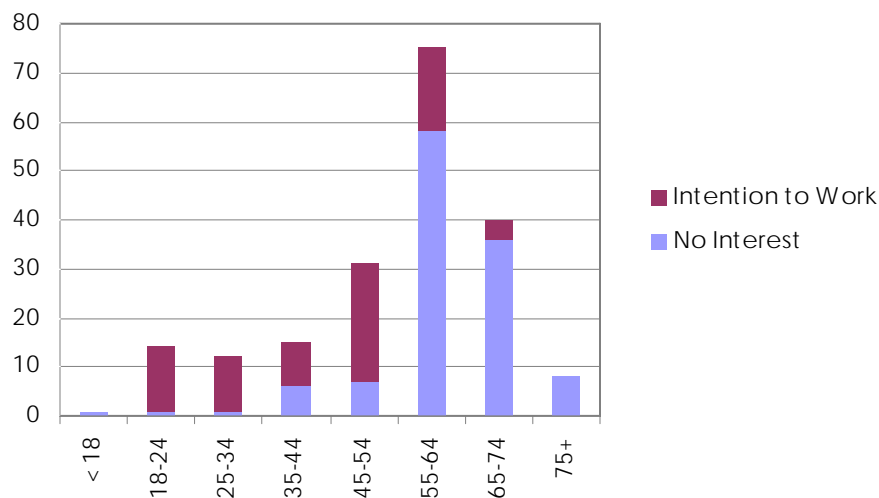
Interest in Work

40% of all respondents (78) stated the opportunity to undertake paid work would encourage them to return to the Central Highlands. This represented 43% of all respondents who indicated they would return to the region.

Age Demographic

Travelers aged 65 years and above showed very little to no interest in paid work while holidaying. Key groups interested in work are displayed in Diagram 9.

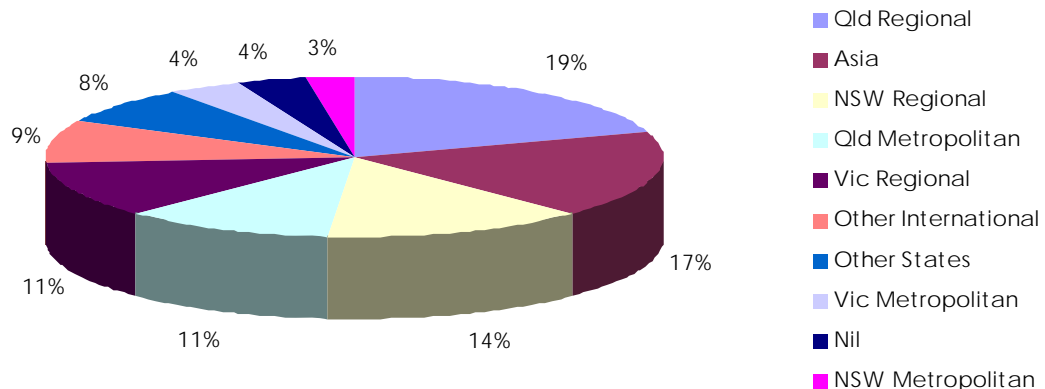
Diagram 9: Numbers of Respondents Interested in Work by Age



Visitor Origin

Of those respondents indicating they would like to work, the greatest percentage called regional Queensland home, followed by Asian visitors and visitors from regional NSW. Queensland metropolitan visitors and Victorian regional visitors also showed strong interest comprising 11% each.

Diagram 10: Intention to Work – Visitor Origin



Description of Current Employment Status

The majority of travelers interested in combining holiday and travel were itinerant workers, comprising 38% of the total number interested in work. This sector is nearly totally represented by international visitors. Currently employed travelers made up the next largest interested group (28%), followed by self-funded retirees (10%).

Diagram 11: Current Employment Status Showing Numbers of Respondents Interested in Work

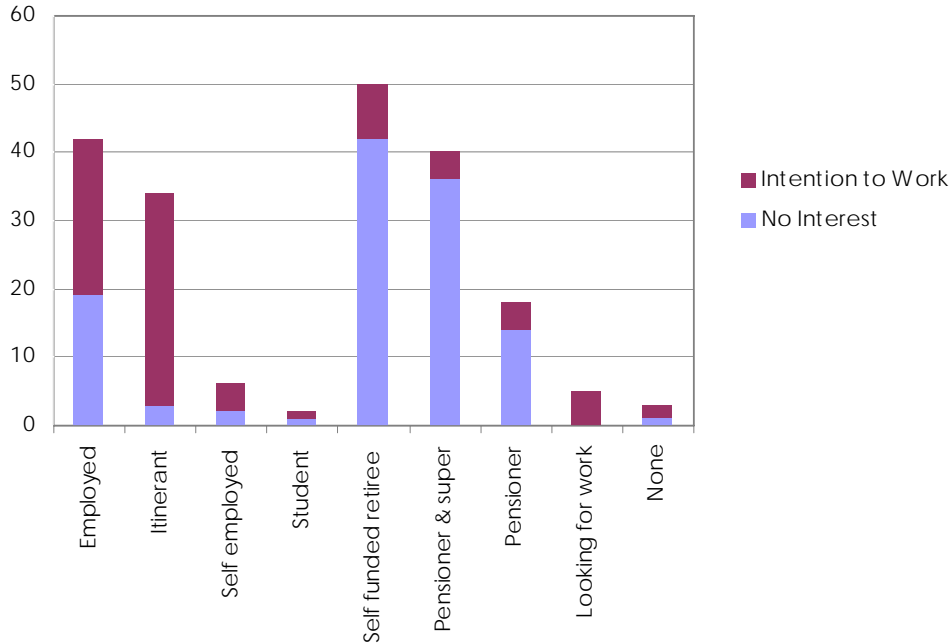
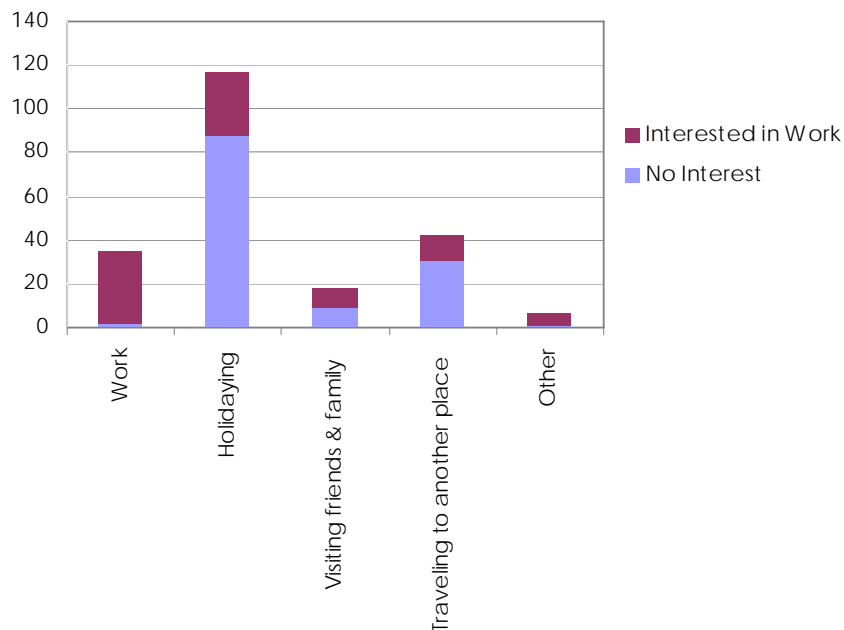


Diagram 12: Purpose of Visit Showing Interest in Work



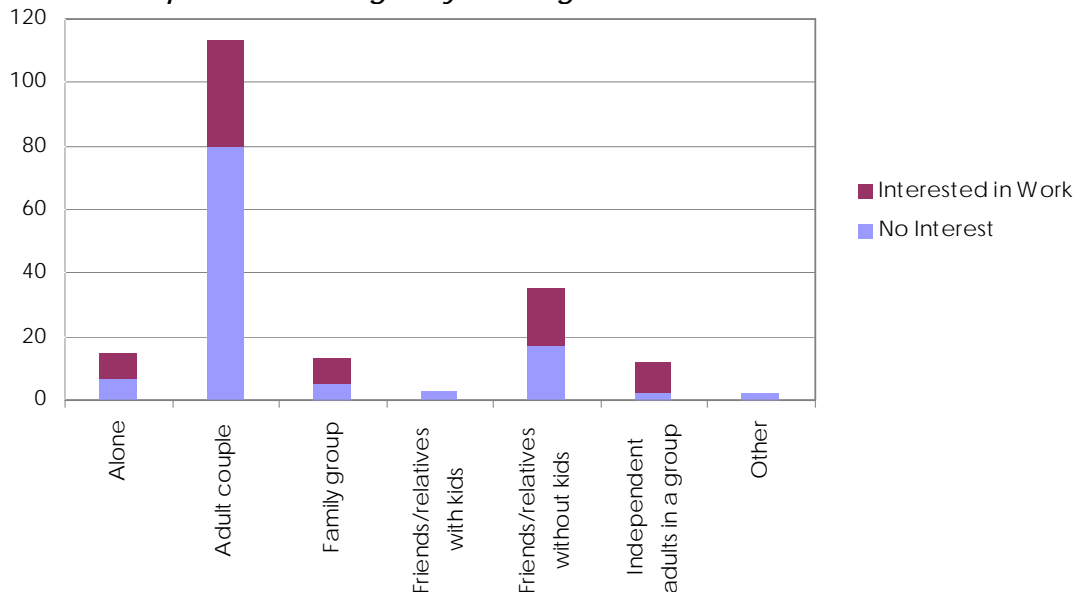
Purpose of Visit

Nearly all respondents who listed their reason for traveling to the Central Highlands as work were interested in returning for further work opportunities (94%). This group also made up the greatest portion of all visitors interested in work (38%). Exactly a quarter of visitors holidaying indicated they would take up work opportunities, comprising 33% of the total number of visitors interested in work. Half of those visiting friends and family, and just over a quarter traveling through to another destination would consider working in the Central Highlands, as displayed in Diagram 12.

Description of Traveling Party

Survey results show that only 9% of visitors to the Central Highlands travel with children. The majority of respondents were adult couples (59%), followed by friends and relatives traveling in a group without children (18%). These two groups were also the most likely to be interested in work, comprising 43% and 23% respectively of the total potential workforce. Nearly all respondents (90%) who classified themselves as Independent adults traveling in a group were of international origin and working itinerantly at 2PH in contracting groups.

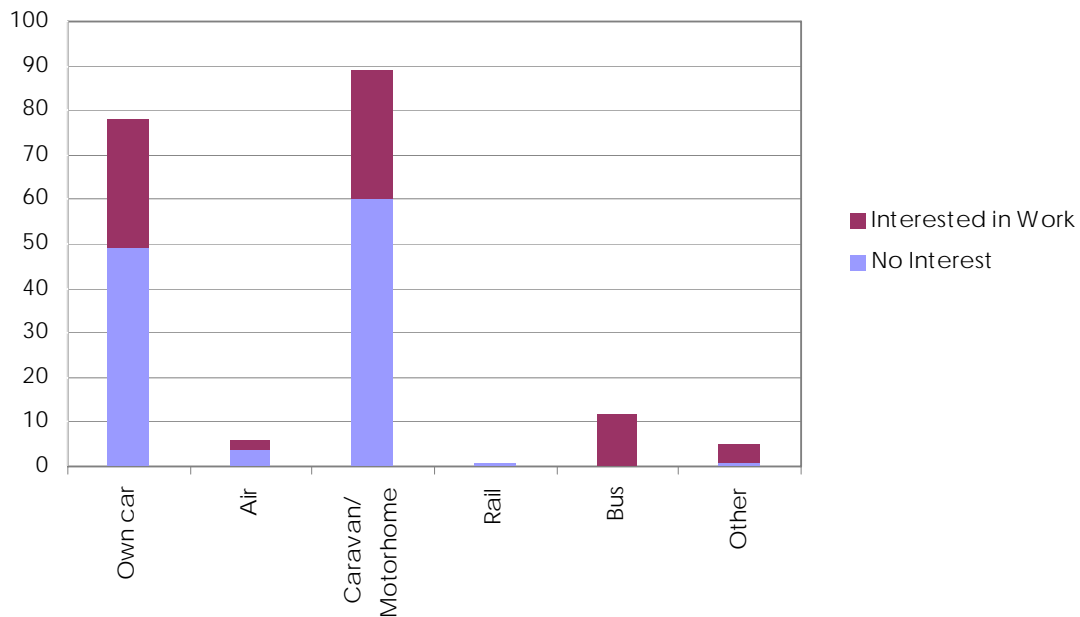
Diagram 13: Description of Traveling Party Showing Interest in Work



Means of Travel to Central Highlands

The Central Highlands is clearly accessed predominantly via either car or four-wheel drive and caravans or motorhomes by respondents. 2 participants listed no means of travel. Of the potential workforce, equal numbers traveled via their own car or by caravan / motorhome, making up just less than 80% of all interested visitors. Those traveling via bus or other were comprised predominantly of international visitors (90% of total). No respondents listed hire car as their means of travel. Results are shown in Diagram 14.

Diagram 14: Means of Travel Showing Interest in Work

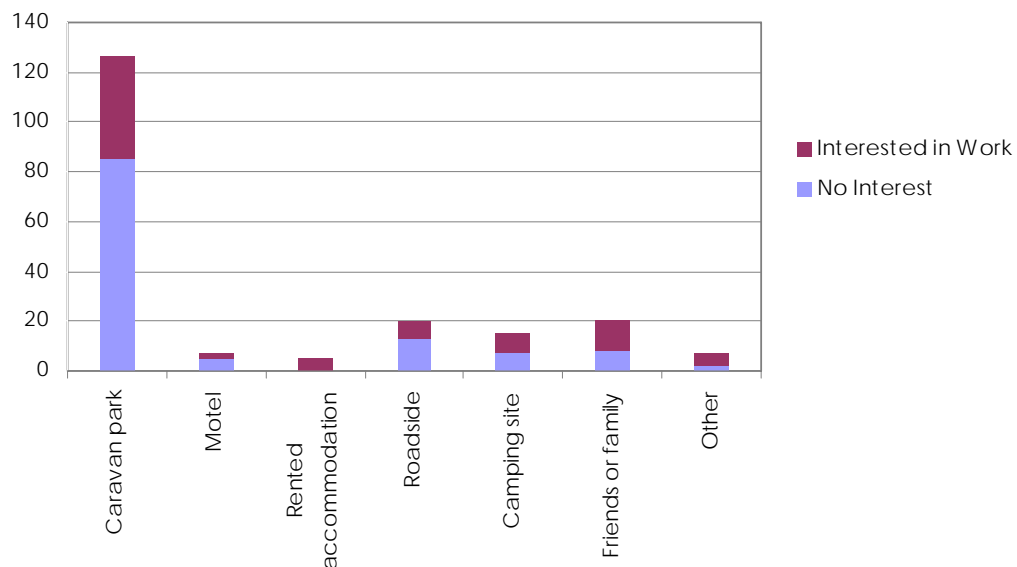


Type of Accommodation within Central Highlands

63% of all respondents stated they were staying in caravan parks while in the Central Highlands; this included non-commercial parks such as Selma Village which is made available to 2PH workers. 7 respondents listed both caravan parks and a combination of roadside camping or camping. 2 provided no response.

Just over half of visitors who indicated their interest in work stayed in caravan parks for the duration of their stay; this reflects that 54% of surveys were collected by caravan park operators.

Diagram 15: Type of Accommodation Showing Interest in Work

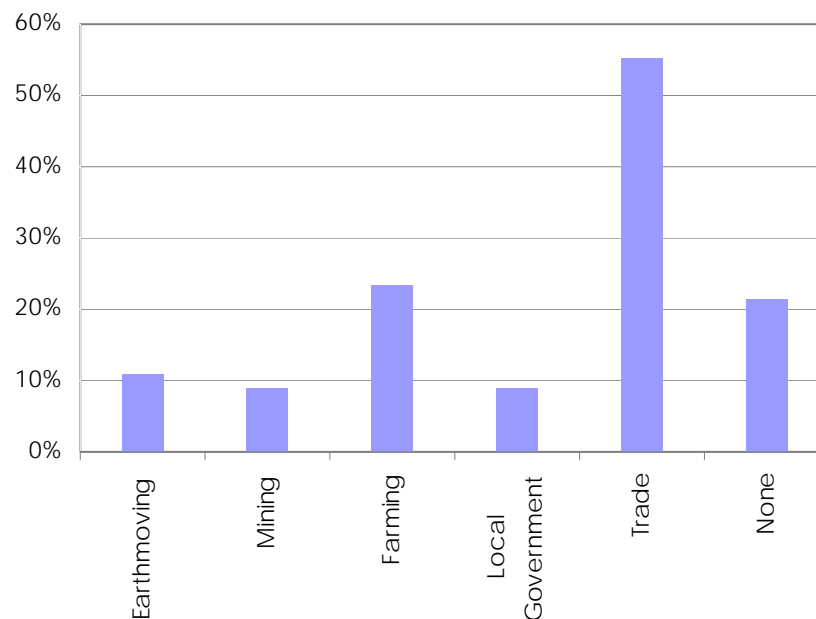


Experience in Regional Employer Alliance Industry Sectors

90% of international visitors indicating their interest in work listed agricultural experience. A single New Zealand visitor listed trade, and there were two non-responses.

21% of domestic respondents interested in work did not mark any industry sector. The largest group 55% (31) listed experience in trade related occupations. This was followed by farming 23% (13). 10 respondents listed two or more areas of experience across earthmoving, mining, farming, local government and trade.

Diagram 16: Domestic Visitor Experience in Industry Sectors (Interested in Work)



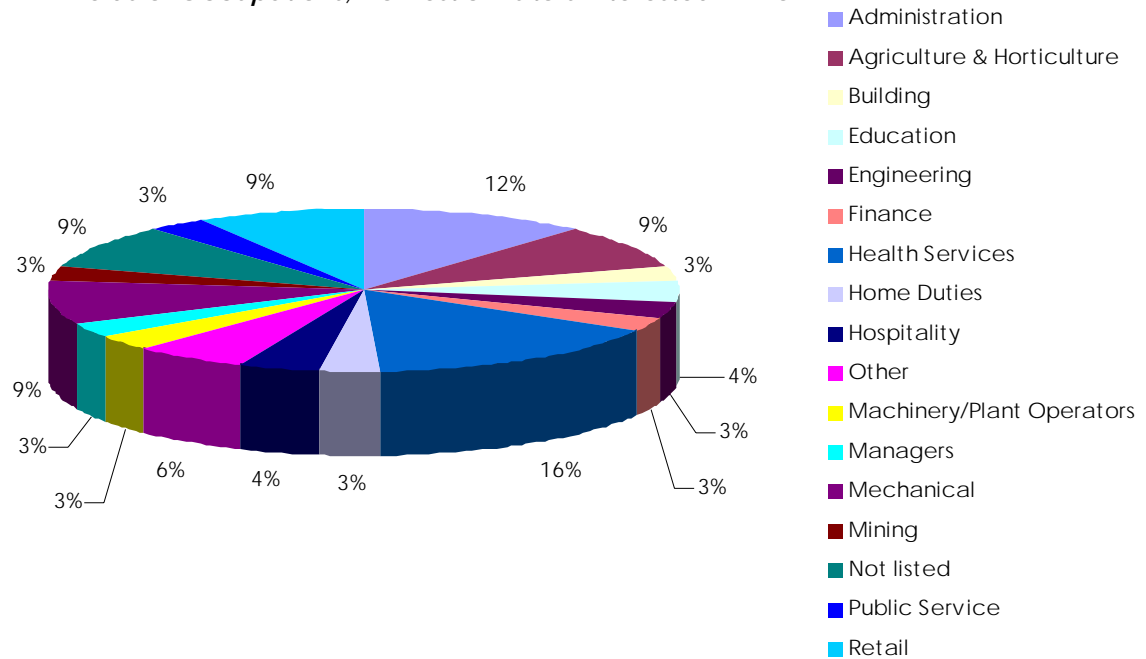
Visitors Occupation

76% of international visitors listed their occupation as farm work or fruit picking and pruning. These visitors were predominantly of Asian origin, but also included two individuals from France and Italy. Other occupations listed by international visitors from the United Kingdom and New Zealand included Counseling, Real Estate Rentals, Hospitality and Bicycle mechanic.

13 domestic visitors listed both their own and their partner's occupation in their response to this question, providing 69 responses in total. 6 visitors (9%) gave no answer. The most commonly listed occupations were in the fields of Health Services (16%), followed by Administration (12%) and Mechanical and Agricultural Occupations (9% each).

Occupations included under 'Other' were 'Information Technology', 'Motor Industry', Truck Driver and Security Guard, of which only one response was received for each. All fields of occupations listed by domestic visitors interested in work opportunities are displayed in Diagram 17. A comprehensive list of all occupations provided is attached in Appendix 6.

Diagram 17: Fields of Occupations; Domestic Visitors Interested in Work

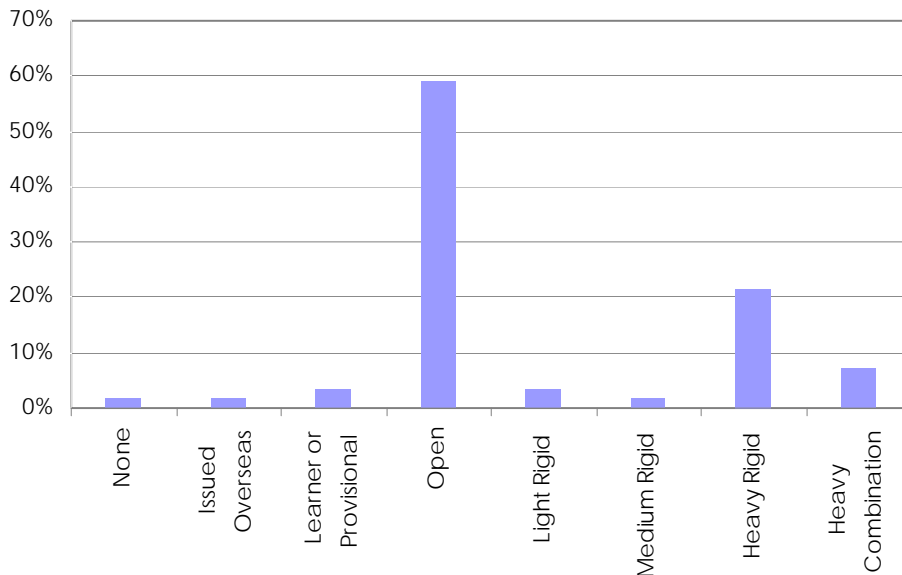


Vehicle Licenses Held by Visitors Interested in Work

48% of international visitors held no drivers license; these travelers were all of Asian origin. 40% identified that they held licenses issued in their country of origin. Two visitors from New Zealand held Australian drivers licenses; Heavy Rigid and Heavy Combination classes.

The highest class of vehicle license held by most domestic participants was an Open license (59%). However, a significant proportion (34%) held licenses for body trucks and heavier vehicles; the second most commonly held license was of Heavy Rigid class (21%).

Diagram 18: Highest Vehicle Class Held on Drivers License of Domestic Visitors Interested in Work



Formal Qualifications Held

Only three international visitors supplied qualifications in their responses; these included a Masters in Psychology, two University Degrees (unspecified) and a Responsible Service of Alcohol certificate from Australia. All were listed as current.

Formal qualifications were not listed by 19 domestic respondents. Of the remaining participants who indicated their interest in work, a total of 98 qualifications, certificates and/or licenses were provided. 96% of all qualifications were listed as current. Appendix 6 contains a comprehensive list of qualifications listed by domestic visitors interested in work.

Areas of particular depth of formal recognition of skills included heavy vehicles and truck licenses (see Diagram 18) and machinery and plant operator tickets. These are shown in Table 3. Qualifications listed as lapsed included two Senior First Aid certificates, a Restricted Electrical license and a Real Estate Management qualification.

Table 3: Formal Qualifications Held by Domestic Visitors Interested in Work

Skills & Knowledge	Total	Lapsed	Current
No Qualification Listed	19		
Administration	2	0	2
Agriculture & Horticulture	5	0	5
Blue Card	2	0	2
Building & Electrical	3	1	2
Education	9	0	9
Engineering	2	0	2
Fitting & Turning / Welding	6	0	6
Health & Carers	6	0	6
Heavy Vehicles & Trucks	21	0	21
Hospitality	5	0	5
Information Technology	4	0	4
Machinery / Plant Operators	17	0	17
Mechanical	4	0	4
Senior First Aid	3	2	1
Other	9	1	8
Total	117	4	94

Number of Nights Stayed (At Present) by Visitors Interested in Work

International visitors averaged 1.2 months length of stay. Just under half were staying for 4 months, 19% for 3 months, and 1 month equally.

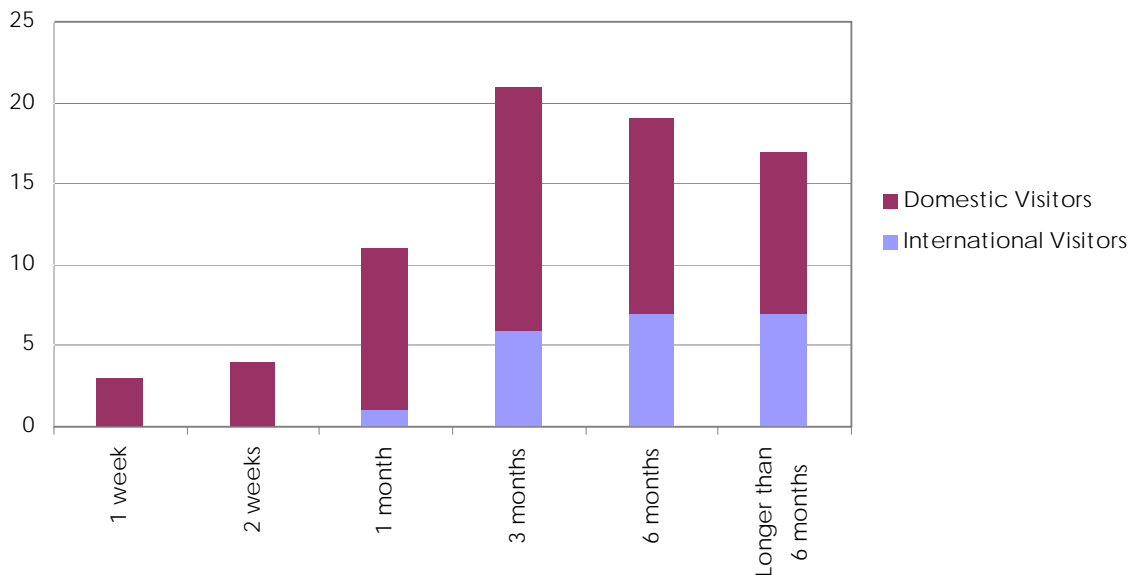
Domestic visitors interested in working, averaged a stay in the Central Highlands of 2.7 months. 87% of respondents were staying for 1 month or less, with the most common length reported of 2 nights only (13%). 10% listed 6,7 or 8 nights as the next most popular length of stay.

Maximum Period of Time Visitors Are Prepared to Work

All international visitors indicated a preference for a 1 month contract or greater for work. Nearly a third equally indicated they would stay for 3 months, 6 month or a longer period of time. Averaged across all international visitors, work preference is for a period of 6.9 months. This represents an additional 5.7 months to their current length of stay.

Domestic visitor preferences were more diverse. Only 13% sought work of 1 – 2 weeks in length. 19% listed a preference for 1 month. The majority of respondents sought work of 3 months or longer, with 28% identifying 3 months as a suitable timeframe. Of the 19% who indicated they would like to work for longer than 6 months, 4 respondents indicated they would move to the Central Highlands permanently, and the remainder listed a period of one year or more. On average, domestic visitors work preference totaled 4.3 months. This is an increase of 1.6 months compared to their current travel patterns.

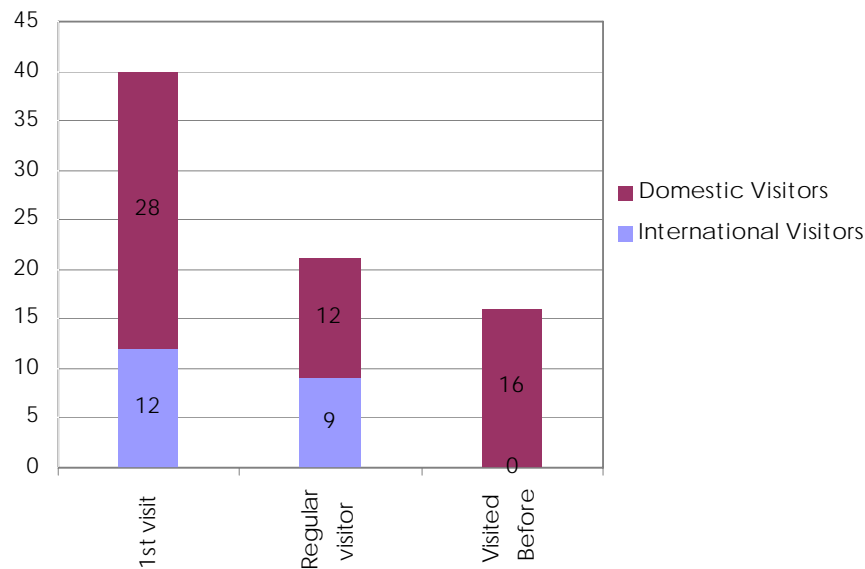
Diagram 19: Period Prepared to Work (Domestic and International Visitors)



Last Time of Visit to Central Highlands

Domestic visitors interested in local work opportunities were equally likely to have visited the area before, or to be visiting for the first time. 21% classify themselves as regular visitors. (One domestic visitor did not respond to this question.) International guests also showed a high level of return visit, with nearly half (43%) considering themselves regular visitors.

Diagram 20: History of Visiting Central Highlands



Preferred Communication about Work Opportunities: Visitors Interested in Work

The majority of international visitors find out about work from word-of-mouth. No specific source was listed. 33% rely on the printed press, internet and the Visitor Information Centre to provide them with information regarding work opportunities. Internet sites listed included Gumtrees (2) and a non-specific reference to a backpacker site.

Gumtrees (www.gumtrees.com) is a job gateway which advertises diverse roles in Australia and nationally. Significant negative feedback was received from the travelers who had used this site to find work with a corporate farm near Emerald; upon arriving their start and finish times, and their wage was not as advertised on the site.

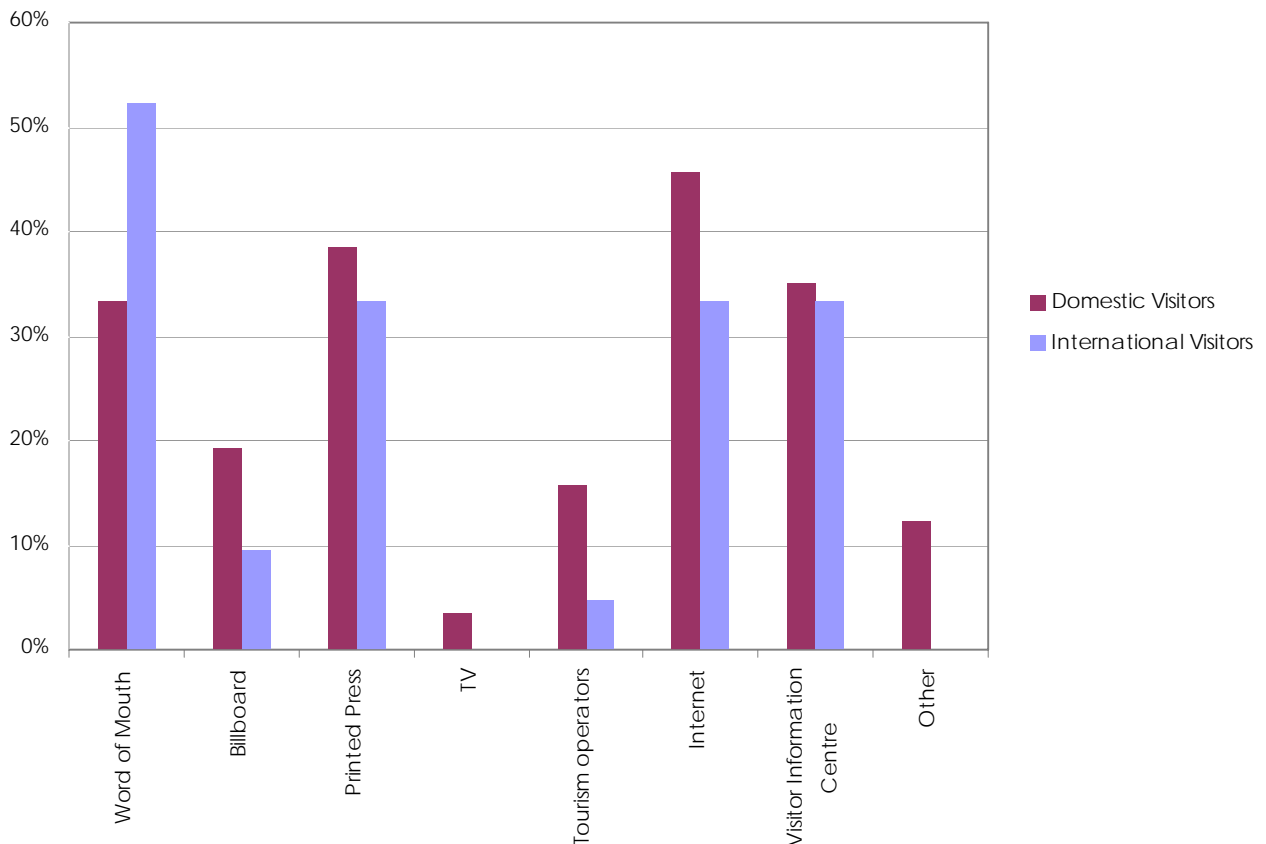
The strong role work-of-mouth plays within the traveling population was evident by the extension of these travelers experience. 3 surveys received at different dates during May and June from domestic visitors commented on the poor work practices of this particular employer.

46% of domestic visitors listed internet as their preferred means of communication, however 4 of these respondents listed their email address directly, so may have combined internet and email as a category. Sites listed included:

- Workabout Australia (www.workaboutaustralia.com.au): a holiday and travel site
- Seek (www.seek.com.au): a general Australian job site
- Jobsearch (www.jobsearch.com.au): general Australian job site
- Jseeker (jseeker.com.au): general Australian job site which, like Seek and Jseeker, advertises itself as Australia's no.1 site
- Harvest Trail (www.jobsearch.gov.au/harvesttrail)

Diagram 21 shows the next most clearly preferred methods were the printed press (39%) and the Visitor Information Centre (35%). Word-of-mouth also rated strongly with 33% of respondents selecting that category. Where specified, visitors the following: friends, work colleagues, employment agencies, local contacts and other employees.

Diagram 21: Preferred Communication about Work Opportunities



Incentives and Barriers to Working in the Region

Respondents were given a list of 15 considerations and asked what was important to them when considering a period of work in the Central Highlands. Ranking was via the following likert scale:

- NOT at all - 1
- Little importance - 2
- Would consider - 3
- Important - 4
- VERY Important - 5

When averaged across all the international visitors, the following considerations were ranked 4 (Important) or greater:

- Low/moderate cost accommodation (Average score of 4.6)
- Prompt, regular and accurate payment of wages (4.5)
- Access and proximity of potential worksite to accommodation (4.4)
- Clean, secure accommodation (4.4)
- Wage provided reflects hours and skill level of work undertaken (4.1)
- Availability of caravan/campsite (4.0)

Of least importance was Access to Public recreational facilities (2.8) and Tourism Attractions (2.9). All results are displayed in Diagram 22.

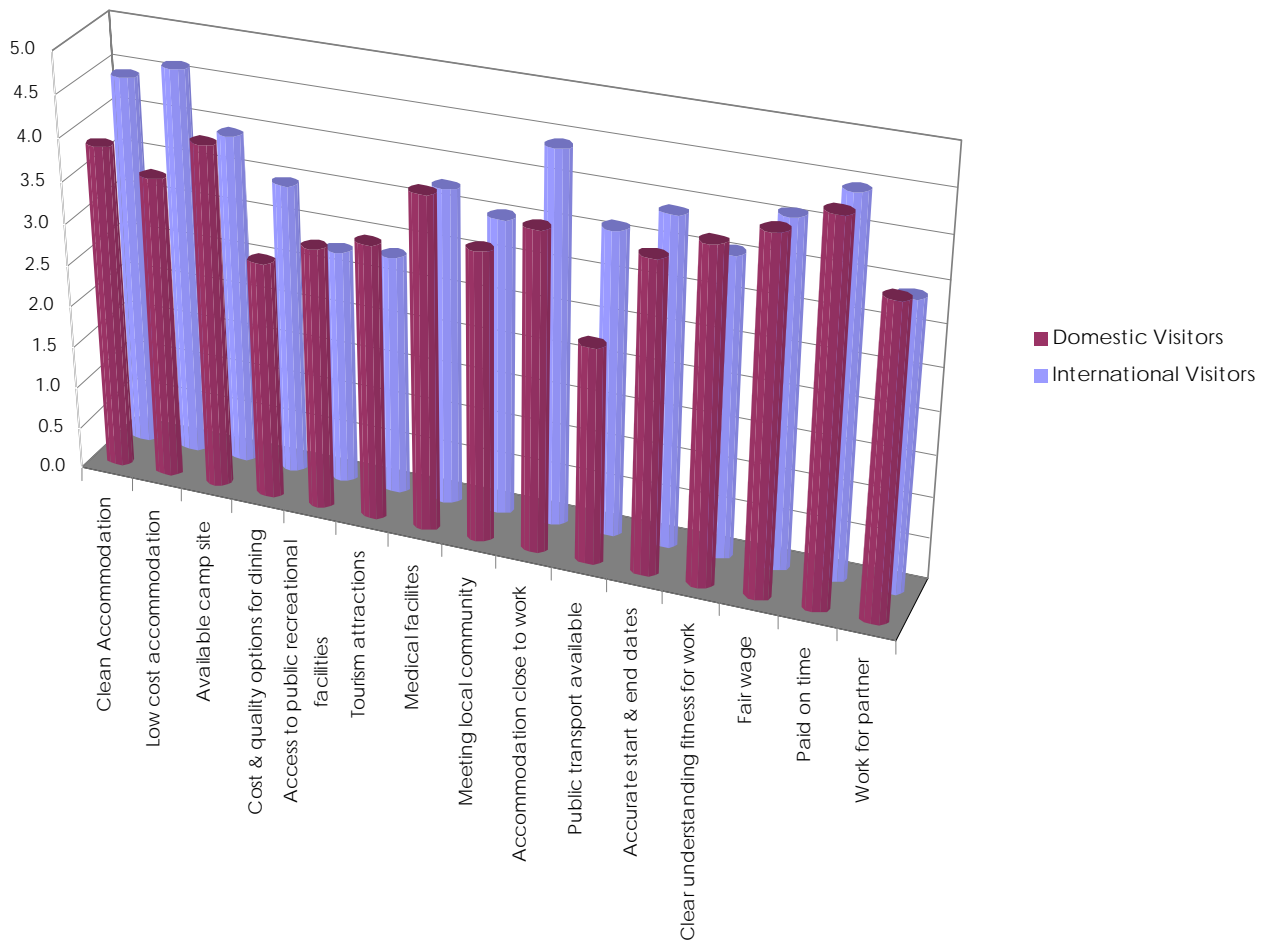
Domestic visitors considered the following to rank 4 (Important) or greater:

- Prompt, regular and accurate payment of wages (4.5)
- Wage provided reflects hours and skill level of work undertaken (4.2)
- Availability of caravan/campsite (4.1)
- Access to medical facilities (4.0)
- Clear understanding of the level of fitness required for work (4.0)

Availability of Work for Partner or Spouse did not rank highly, until the average ranking was calculated for domestic visitors interested in work removing the three single travelers. Availability for Work for Partner then ranked the second most important consideration (4.3).

Least important for domestic visitors was the availability of public transport (2.6) and variety of cost and quality options for dining out (2.8).

Diagram 22: Considerations for Work by Domestic and International Visitors

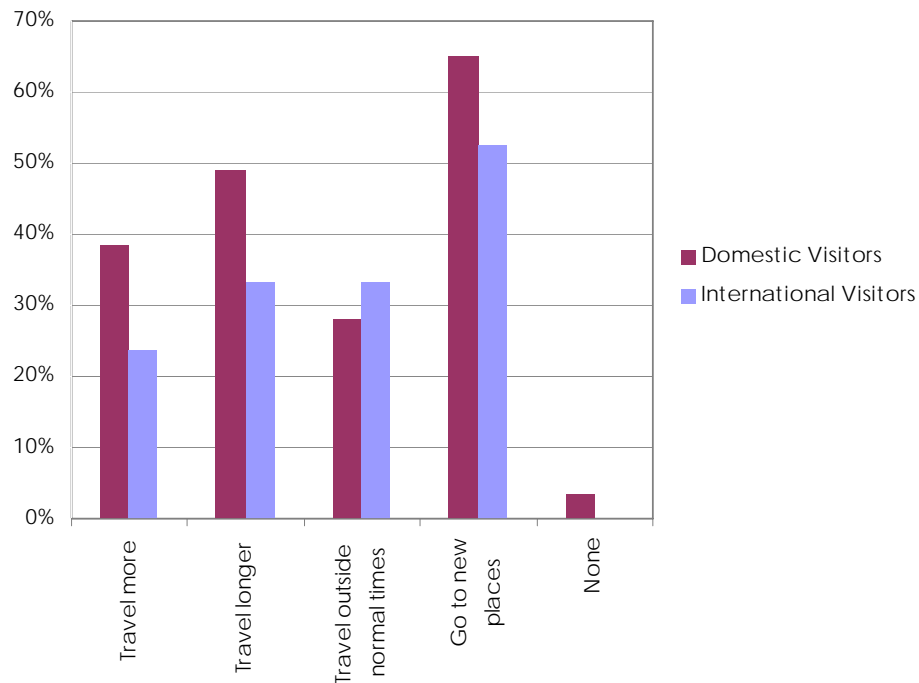


How Access to Paid Work Affects Travel Planning

Respondents were able to choose as many options that described how the opportunity for paid work would change their travel plans. The most significant change in travel behaviour for both international and domestic visitors listed was that they would travel to new places; 65% and 52% respectively. Nearly half of all domestic visitors were likely to travel for longer periods of time, and 39% stated that they would travel more often.

A third of international travellers stated they would travel to new places and/or travel for longer periods of time.

Diagram 23: Potential Change in Travel Plans



Summary

Limitations

There are limitations to the data collected. As Visitor Information Centre numbers record all visitors and not just the individual filling in their records, the number of visitors (495) is extrapolated from information provided in the 194 surveys regarding the size of the travelling party. The sample size is equivalent to only 2.93% of the total visitor population recorded by the Visitor Information Centre for the corresponding period. However, significant sample testings and analysis is based on the raw numbers not the proportions of the relevant population. Analysis of attitudes and behaviour are based on sample sizes of 200 upwards. Hence the sample of 495 visitors is of a size significant enough to develop indicative conclusions.

Equal numbers of surveys were not received throughout the sampling period; the majority of surveys were collected in May and June. The researcher considers that this has had a negligible effect on findings.

Findings

194 travelling parties representing 2.93% of visitors recorded by the Central Highlands Visitor Information Centre participated in the Central Highlands Traveller Survey between 1 May and 30 October 2008.

40% of all visitors stated that the opportunity to undertake paid work would encourage them to return to the Central Highlands. Not all respondents intend to return to the region; this figure represents 43% of those who do. Visitors aged between 18 and 74 registered their interest to work; the majority aged 45 – 54. Paid work had no appeal for most visitors aged 65 and over.

Domestic visitors who found the concept of combining holidays and paid work attractive were predominantly from regional areas; 19% from regional Queensland, 17% from regional Victoria, 14% from regional NSW and 11% from metropolitan Queensland. The majority of international visitors interested in work were from Asian countries.

38% of interested respondents were itinerant workers comprised largely from international visitors. Those currently employed (28%) and self funded retirees (10%) were the next likely to consider combining working and holidaying. The group was split nearly evenly between people who were visiting the Central Highlands for work and those holidaying, visiting friends and family or travelling elsewhere.

Only 9% of interested respondents travel with children; work largely had appeal for adult couples (59%) or friends and relatives travelling together in a group (18%). Only 3 domestic travellers were holidaying alone.

The mode of transport recorded by respondents fits the regional profile provided by Visitor Information Centre; the 'Drive' or 'Touring' market represents the majority of the visitors recorded by the Centre each year. Of all visitors, those travelling with a caravan, motorhome or campervan comprise a significant proportion (33%). More respondents (60%)

listed a caravan, campervan or motorhome as their mode of transport than car (50%). Their choice of accommodation reflects these figures; just over half of interested travellers were staying in Caravan Parks while in the Central Highlands.

Nearly all international visitors described themselves as having farming experience in the fields of fruit picking and pruning. Only half held overseas drivers licenses, and the remainder were unlicensed. Two New Zealand visitors provided a clear exception as they held post-graduate qualifications and a Heavy Combination driver's license.

Of those domestic visitors interested in work, nearly all were highly skilled, held a number of qualifications of which 96% were current. 19 domestic respondents did not list their qualifications. The greatest store of experience was listed as Trade and Professional, and about 10% had experience in the REAP sectors.

Heavy vehicle operation and machinery/plant operation were clearly the areas where visitors listed the greatest numbers of formal qualifications. While the majority (59%) of domestic visitors held Open licenses, just over one third held Light Rigid or heavier licenses (21 respondents). 17 respondents held machinery and plant tickets. Significant other areas where formally recognised skills were provided was in the areas of education, health and caring roles, and fitting, turning and welding.

Paid work will affect visitors travel intentions. A third would travel to new or different places, 40% would travel more often, and half would travel for longer periods of time. This is reflected in the length of time visitors are currently staying and the period they would be interested in working for. Averaged across all respondents, international visitors indicated a preference for 6.9 months for work and domestic visitors 4.3 months. This is an additional 5.7 and 1.6 months respectively, in addition to their current travel behaviour. In addition, 68% of all interested domestic visitors stated that they would prefer a term of 3 months or more.

Domestic visitors interested in work were equally likely to be visiting for the first time or have visited the region before.

Listed as the most preferred means of communication for all visitors was internet and email, and followed by the Visitor Information Centre and printed press. Also evident was the integral role of word-of-mouth in communicating available work opportunities and conditions to other travellers. This supports findings by Leonard et al (2007) that grey nomads any matching process would need to have equal focus on the supply side of the potential workforce, and not rely on demand. Nearly all respondents listed mobile phone contact details.

All visitors listed prompt regular payment of wages and a fair wage provided which reflects the hours and skills of work undertaken to be of key importance when considering paid work. International visitors also required low or moderate cost accommodation, clean and secure accommodation and the availability of a caravan or campsite as of highest priority for them, reflecting the largely itinerant student make up of this group. Domestic visitors listed the availability of a caravan or camping site, access to medical facilities and a clear understanding of the level of fitness required for work. These priorities display the concerns of the older aged group who are largely staying in temporary mobile units such as caravans. For couples, work for their spouses or partners was also considered very important.

While state-wide trends show a decline in the 'drive' and caravanning sectors of that market, between 2003 and 2006, Central Highlands visitor numbers have grown steadily during that period, and increased by a further 13.4% between April 2007 to 2008. There is limited caravan park capacity in the Central Highlands in 2008, however significant expansion is planned for completion by 2009. Council staff camp sites and private on-farm facilities provide potential additional capacity which can be further explored once Council regulations and appropriate facilities are established.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Central Highlands Traveller Survey May 2008

The Central Highlands Development Corporation thanks you for assisting us with this survey about travelling and working in the Central Highlands.

There are 21 questions in total. Your individual responses will remain anonymous and confidential.

To recognise your participation, submit your survey in the box provided, and you will go into the draw to win a fuel voucher for \$70, drawn every month until October 2008.

- Q1. Today's Date: / / 2008
- Q2. What is your main home postcode? (or country if an overseas visitor):.....
- Q3. Please tick your gender:
- Female Male
- Q4. Please tick your age range:
- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 | <input type="checkbox"/> 35 - 44 | <input type="checkbox"/> 65 - 74 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18 - 24 | <input type="checkbox"/> 45 - 54 | <input type="checkbox"/> 75+ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25 - 34 | <input type="checkbox"/> 55 - 64 | |
- Q5. Please tick how you would best describe yourself:
- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employed | <input type="checkbox"/> Pensioner & superannuant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Itinerant (travelling) worker | <input type="checkbox"/> Pensioner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed | <input type="checkbox"/> Looking for work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-funded retiree | |
- Q6. Please tick the purpose of your visit:
- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Travelling through to another destination |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday/leisure | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visiting friends/family | |
- Q7. Please tick how you would best describe your travelling party:
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travelling alone | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends/relatives travelling without children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adult couple | <input type="checkbox"/> Independent adults travelling in a group (eg. Contractors, touring group) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family group | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends/relatives travelling with children | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

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Q8. How did you travel to the Central Highlands? **(Please tick one)**

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Own car | <input type="checkbox"/> Rail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hire car | <input type="checkbox"/> Bus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air transport | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Motor home/ campervan/ towing a caravan | |

Q9. Please tick the type of accommodation you are staying in while visiting Emerald/ Central Highlands?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caravan Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary roadside parking (Campervans & caravans) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Motel | <input type="checkbox"/> Camping Site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hotel | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends or family home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bed & Breakfast | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rented Accommodation | |

Q10. What is/was your main occupation / work experience?

.....

Q11. Do you have work experience / qualifications in any of these industries? **(Please tick all that apply)**

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Earthmoving & civil contracting | <input type="checkbox"/> Local Government heavy plant & equipment operation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mining operations | <input type="checkbox"/> Trade/professional |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Farming / grazing / horticulture | |

Q12. Please tick the highest licence code/vehicle class that you are allowed to drive, as displayed on your Driver's Licence:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No Drivers Licence/ I do not drive | <input type="checkbox"/> HR - Heavy Rigid |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Driver's Licence issued overseas | <input type="checkbox"/> HC - Heavy Combination |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learner or Provisional (P1 or P2) | <input type="checkbox"/> MC - Multi-combination |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open Car (Automatic or Manual) | <input type="checkbox"/> UD - Undefined /specially constructed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LR - Light Rigid | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MR - Medium Rigid | |

Q13. Please list any formal qualifications, trade certificates, tickets or licences you may have, and circle whether they are current or not:

- | | | |
|---------|---------|--------|
| 1 | current | lapsed |
| 2 | current | lapsed |
| 3 | current | lapsed |
| 4 | current | lapsed |
| 5 | current | lapsed |

Q14. For how many nights or months do you intend to stay in Emerald / Central Highlands?

..... nights OR months

Q15. When was the last time you stayed in the Central Highlands region?

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> This is my first visit | (number of) Weeks Ago |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regular visitor | OR |
| | (number of) Months Ago |
| | (number of) Years Ago |

Q16. Do you intend to visit Emerald / Central Highlands again?

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

Q17. Would the opportunity to undertake paid work encourage you to come back?

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

Q18. If you ticked Yes, please tick the maximum number of days out of an average trip you would be prepared to work?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 week or less | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 months or less |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 weeks or less | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 6 months - How |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 month or less | long?..... |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 months or less | |

Q19. If you were interested in working, how would you like to find out about work opportunities / job matching? (Please tick all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth (please specify)
..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Internet site (please specify)
..... |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Billboard | <input type="checkbox"/> Tourist Information Centre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Press advertising (newspaper) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)..... |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Television | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism Operators | |

Q20. What would be important for you when considering a period of work in our region?
 (Please rate each item on a scale of 1 to 5, circling one response for each answer)

	NOT at All	Little Importance	Would Consider	Important	VERY important
Clean, secure accommodation	1	2	3	4	5
Low/moderate cost accommodation	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of caravan/camp site	1	2	3	4	5
Variety of cost and quality options available for dining out	1	2	3	4	5
Access to public recreational facilities (pools, gyms, parks)	1	2	3	4	5
Tourism attractions (eg. Gemfields, National Parks)	1	2	3	4	5
Access to medical facilities / support	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to join in & experience local community	1	2	3	4	5
Access & proximity of potential worksite to accommodation	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of public transport (taxis, buses)	1	2	3	4	5
Accurate start and end dates provided for the work	1	2	3	4	5
Clear understanding of the level of fitness required for the work	1	2	3	4	5
Wage provided reflects hours & skill level of work undertaken	1	2	3	4	5
Prompt, regular & accurate payment of wages	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of work for my partner/spouse at the same time	1	2	3	4	5
Other (please specify)	1	2	3	4	5

Q21. If access to paid work was available, would you: (Please tick all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel more often | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel to places you would not normally have visited |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel for longer periods | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel outside your normally preferred travel times of the year | |

TO WIN A \$70 FUEL VOUCHER:

Please list your name, a phone number and an email or postal address so that CHDC may notify you in the event that you are successful: (Reminder: your survey responses are anonymous)

Name:.....

Contact Phone Number:.....

Email or Postal Address:.....

If you would like further information about the survey, please contact the researcher at Blue Dog Agribusiness bluedogaa@bigpond.com

THIS SHEET WILL BE DETACHED FROM YOUR ANSWERS BY THE RESEARCHER

Appendix 2: Promotional Posters (A3 & A4)

Visiting Central Highlands?

**WIN
A TANK
OF FUEL!**



Take a couple of minutes to fill out our survey
and you could fill your fuel tank.


**\$70 fuel voucher
drawn every month
until October 2008.**

The Central Highlands Development Corporation wants to find out who is visiting our area, what skills you have and whether you would be interested in paid work while travelling. All individual information you provide is confidential. So give us a hand!



One survey per visitor. Central Highlands residents not eligible.

Appendix 3: Extension Information Provided to Participating Businesses



**WIN
A TANK
OF FUEL!**

**Regional Employers Alliance Project (REAP):
Central Highlands Pilot Project**

**Seasonal Workforce Attraction: Matching local
skill needs to skill sets of the travelling population**

This survey aims to collect information from visitors to the Central Highlands to find out:

- Who they are?
- What skills do they have?
- Would they consider working in the Central Highlands while travelling?
- How they prefer to communicate about work and travel?

The surveys will be distributed and collected from May 1 to October 31, aligned with our peak visitor season.

It is the second stage of a pilot project which aims to match skills of travellers with Central Highlands employers facing workforce shortages, particularly in the mining, farming, civil contracting and local government sectors.

Who's Involved?
It's a local idea. The Project was initiated and is directed by a steering group of local employers from all of the REAP industries.

Central Highlands Development Corporation (CHDC) leads the Project in Central Highlands, Queensland. Liz Alexander from Blue Dog Agribusiness is contracted by the CHDC as the Regional Project Manager, and is undertaking the research and implementation.

Local Government Managers Australia (LGMA) National has been contracted by the Department of Employment, Education & Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to manage the implementation of the regional workforce development pilot projects at the national level. The National Farmers' Federation (NFF) supports the Project as one of the national partners.


How Long Does the Project Run?
The Project started back in November last year when local employers got together to discuss ideas and their experiences for Phase 1. Phase 2, research and development, ends in December this year.

Who Funds the Project?
The Project is a Commonwealth-State Skills Shortage Initiative funded through the Strategic National Initiatives component of the 2005-08 Commonwealth-State Agreement for Skilling Australia's Workforce.


What Else is Planned in the REAP Project?
From May to August, interviews and surveys will be undertaken with the REAP local employers: Mines, Council, Civil Contractors and the Farming sector to find out what work opportunities are available and when. In October to December, we'll develop strategies to help match traveller skill sets with local skill needs.

Thank you for your part in helping us with this valuable research.
If you would like further information on the Project please contact:

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LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
MANAGERS
AUSTRALIA



Central
Highlands
QUEENSLAND

more than you expect!



CHDC

Helping out region's skills shortage

A PILOT project being undertaken on the Central Highlands could provide positive solutions to the existing labour shortage in the region. Each year from March to October, caravan parks and camping grounds on the Highlands fill with grey nomads, people over 50 travelling around Australia, who bring with them a range of professional skills and qualifications.

The Local Government Managers Australia is implementing regional workforce development pilot projects with the aim of matching the skills of this experienced travelling population with work opportunities in areas with skill and labour shortages.

Liz Alexander, from Blue Dog Agribusiness Emerald, has been contracted by the Central Highlands Development Corporation to carry out the project.

"The REAP (Regional Employers' Alliance Project) was established in 2007 after engagement with the resource, infrastructure, agricultural and local government sectors," she said.

"The project partners identified regions in Australia which had skills shortages due to the impact of mining and the resources boom, and three were approved for further funding and implementation in 2008.

"Regional projects have been initiated this year in the Upper Hunter, New South Wales; Northern Tasmania, and the Central



■ **NEW PROJECT:** Andy Forsyth and Geoff Batchelor, managers at Lake Maraboon Holiday Village, hand over their first batch of collected surveys to Liz Alexander.

cont

Highlands here in Queensland."

Liz said specific tasks for the Central Highlands project included the development of surveys for employers and the grey nomads to identify work opportunities, levels of skills and knowledge, incentives to work and remain in the area, and how to communicate and implement a work registration plan. These surveys were distributed to several local tourism businesses in May.

Andy Forsyth, from the Lake Maraboon Holiday Village, has been handing out the surveys to his guests.

"We get people from all over Australia, especially those from the southern states who are looking to escape their winter," he said.

"A lot of these people are either semi-retired, who will come planning to stay for three or four nights, and can extend their time if they like the area, or those who

book in for one to two months.

"There is an interest in short-term work. If I can offer a job for a husband and wife team, we will generally keep them in the area, and they might end up staying for a whole season."

Liz said visitor surveys would continue to be distributed until October.

"Initial results are promising, with nearly half of all those surveyed indicating they would keen to work locally," she said.

"While tourism operators report that the increasing price of fuel is having an impact, people are still finding the money to travel."

Liz said information from the completed surveys would be used to determine skill match and training and incentives to attract and retain people in the region.

"The success of the project is dependent upon effective collaboration between regional stakeholders, which means our local employers will be the primary decision makers, and drive the implementation of the project," she said.

Farmers and graziers can help out at Ag-Grow by answering a short survey being filled in by staff volunteers from 2PH Farms and the Australian Agricultural College Corporation Emerald Campus. More information about the project will be part of BMA Gregory Crinum, AgForce and Australian Agricultural College displays at Ag-Grow.

Appendix 5: The Great Inland Way



Appendix 6: Comprehensive List of Occupations Listed by Domestic Visitors Interested in Work

- Retail
- Baker, Retail, Cleaning
- Retail, clerk, farmer
- Hospitality
- Hospitality
- Landscape Gardener, Groundsman 30yrs
- Nursing
- Counselling
- Harvesting contractor
- Plant operator
- Aircraft engineer
- Teacher
- Maintenance Fitter & Turner
- Administration, 7 years in jewellery company
- Farmwork
- Real Estate Rentals
- Bicycle mechanic
- Child care & aged care
- Horticulture
- Beauty Therapist
- Miner
- Secretary/admin
- Housewife
- Wife, mother, grandmother
- Personal assistant
- Building industry
- Postman 33 years
- Customer service
- Paramedic couple
- Engineer & Nurse
- Truck driver / cook
- Hairdresser
- Machinist
- Mechanical fitter
- Offshore oilrig operator /mechanic
- Fruit picking
- Home duties
- Underground miner
- Security guard
- Service manager
- Shop worker
- Computer operator / artist / clerical
- Motor Industry
- Clerical
- Public servant
- Secretarial/bookkeeper & hospitality
- Administration officer / plant operator
- Health & Safety Consultant
- teacher & registrar
- clerical
- welfare worker, cleaner, elderly carer
- teacher/carer counsellor
- building, carpentry, retail , motel mgt
- full time carer

Appendix 7: Comprehensive List of Qualifications Listed by Domestic Visitors Interested in Work

	Total	% Current	License / Ticket	Cert	Adv Cert	Dip	BA	Other	Not Specified
No Qualification Listed	19	n/a							
Aged Care	2	100		2					
Aircraft Engineer	1	100							1
Applied Science	1	100				1			
Backhoe	2	100	2						
Baker	1	100	1						
Blue Card	2	100						2	
Bobcat	2	100	2						
Brick Laying	1	100							1
Bus	1	100	1						
Business Administration	1	100							1
Career Guidance	1	100				1			
Chemical User	1	100		1					
Confined Area	1	100		1					
Conservation & Land Management	1	100		1					
Counselling	1	100							1
Course Provider AgSafe	1	100							1
Dogman	1	100							1
Dozer	2	100	2						
Education	6	100				1	5		
Elevated Work Platform	1	100	1						
Fitting and Turning	4	100		1	3				
Forestry	1	100		1					
Forklift	5	100	5						
Frontend & backend loader	2	100	2						
Gem Cutting	1	100		1					
Grader	2	100	2						
Hairdressing	1	100							1
Hardware and Operations	1	100		1					
Heavy Vehicle Pilot Licence	1	100	1						
Hospitality	1	100		1					
Information Technology	3	100		3					
Mechanic Trade	4	100		4					
Mechanical Engineer (Rail) Trade	1	100		1					
Ministry / Theology	1	100					1		
Mobile Crane	1	100	1						
Nursing	1	100				1			
Outdoor Education	1	100				1			
Panel Beater	1	100							1

Paramedic	2	100							2
Pest Control Lecturer	1	100							1
Real Estate Management	1	0						1	
Responsible Conduct of Gambling	1	100						1	
Responsible Service of Alcohol	1	100						1	
Restricted Electrical	1	0	1						
Science (NRM)	1	100					1		
Security Guard	1	100							1
Senior First Aid	3	33						3	
Small Business Administration	1	100		1					
Training & Assessment	1	100		1					
Travel and Tourism	1	100		1					
Welding	1	100		1					