

Information Paper for Legislative Council Panel on Manpower

Hong Kong/New Zealand Working Holiday Scheme

Introduction

The paper informs Members about the bilateral Working Holiday Scheme which has been set up with New Zealand.

The Scheme

2. According to the immigration rules of Hong Kong and New Zealand, visitors may enter each other's territory and stay for up to three months without needing to first obtain a visa. During their stay as visitors they are not allowed to take up any employment without first gaining the permission of the relevant immigration authorities to do so.

3. A new bilateral Working Holiday Scheme has been set up between Hong Kong and New Zealand with effect from 2 April 2001 to allow young people of the two places to apply for a Working Holiday Visa, which would entitle them to stay for a maximum of 12 months in the other side's territory.

4. Participants must be between 18 and 30 and would be responsible for their own expenses during their stay. They would be allowed to take up short-term employment or study any one educational course which lasts no more than three months. Applications will be processed on a first-come-first-served basis. There is no educational requirement for the Scheme.

5. Employment assistance will be given by both governments to participants who would like to look for short-term employment. Hong Kong participants may find out about work opportunities by visiting the New Zealand Department of Work and Income (DWI) services centres which are present in every Region of the country or by accessing the DWI website. New Zealand participants may visit the Hong Kong Labour

Department's Job Centres or access their employment website to find out short-term employment opportunities.

6. It has been agreed between Hong Kong and New Zealand that the quota for the Scheme should be set at 200 per year initially. We will review the Scheme and the quota in the light of its utilisation and popularity.

Benefits of the Scheme

7. Both the business and the tertiary sectors have advocated more student exchanges. The Working Holiday Scheme between Hong Kong and New Zealand is the first Working Holiday Scheme for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It provides a valuable opportunity for our young people to gain exposure to a different culture and first-hand working experiences in an English-speaking environment. The Scheme will also strengthen the bilateral relationship between Hong Kong and New Zealand and promote tourism both ways.

Application Situation

8. As at end April 2001, HKSAR has received a total of 5 applications, of which 3 have been approved. The New Zealand counterpart has received 74 applications from Hong Kong young people, of which 57 have been approved.

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Education and Manpower Bureau