

Working and Staying in the Bundaberg & Wide Bay Region

The Bundaberg and Wide Bay region is known for its great growing conditions and producing a significant proportion of Australia's fruit and vegetables. The region has seasonal harvest work 12 months of the year and is a great place to consider if you are looking for work in horticulture.

In addition to being a great place to get your farm work completed, Bundaberg is a well serviced area with restaurants and bars, cinemas, easy access to shopping and facilities and some great tourist activities including Mon Repos turtle sanctuary, trips to the great barrier reef and surrounding Islands and beautiful beaches only a short drive from the centre of Bundaberg. www.bundabergregion.org

Working in the Bundaberg and Wide Bay Region

Farm work is available 12 months of the year although things to consider are the peak seasons for different crops and the weather if you are not used to working in warmer climates.

Work placements can be either part-time, casual or contract (piece-rate) pay rates. It is important you understand the work you have accepted and the rate of pay and entitlements you should get. Fair Work Australia is a great place to find this information. You should also look at the Australian Horticulture Award to understand your employment before accepting a work placement.

Working hostels will endeavour to offer you a suitable work placement. Once you have secured a job, it is your responsibility to attend work each day and follow the work and safety instructions of the employer. Working hostels reserve the right to offer no further work placements to anyone who fails to adhere to the expectations of employees under Australian Workplace legislation.

1

Have your Australian bank account, superannuation account and tax file number ready to provide to your employer at the time you commence employment. Ensure you get payslips which include the business name and ABN.

2

Make sure you understand the pay and entitlements in the employment agreement you have been given. If you do not understand your pay and entitlements, ask your employer for more information.

3

Complete all safety inductions and ask questions if you are unsure about how to stay safe at work. Safety at work is everyone's responsibility. Do not do tasks or operate machinery where you have had no training.

4

Take a hat, sun protective clothing, sun block and at least 4 litres of water to work with you. Heat stress in the warmer months is a major safety concern. Always let your supervisor know if you are not feeling well at work.

5

Let someone know if you are concerned about your workplace. You can talk to your supervisor or the farm manager/owner or let your hostel or the Bundaberg Hostels Association know if you need some assistance.

*Note: your employment in Australia is governed by Australian Workplace Legislation. This includes being paid at a rate covered by an award or workplace agreement and providing a workplace that is safe and free from any harassment or bullying. Employees have an obligation to adhere to workplace legislation as it applies to their employment.

Staying in the Bundaberg and Wide Bay Region

There are a lot of choices of accommodation in the region. Look for council approved accommodation. If in doubt, ask the accommodation provider to show you their council approval. It should be on display in the reception area of the accommodation.

Most growers in the region work with one or more accommodation providers to support their staffing requirements each day. Before you check in make sure that you understand work availability, pay rates for the work being offered, and when you might start work. It is a good idea to call a few days before your arrival to check that nothing has changed. Many factors can affect harvest and staffing requirements. If the work has changed then you may decide to delay your arrival to the region or cancel your booking. Hostel staff should provide you with honest and accurate work forecasts to allow you make an informed decision about staying and working in the region.

Things to think about when confirming your accommodation:

1

How much bond will be required, and have you been provided with clear information on about what may result in losing your bond and do you agree with the bond conditions? Never give your passport or other identity documents to hold as bond or for any other reason. You will be asked for a copy of your passport at check in to confirm identity and to check visa rights to work in Australia.

2

How much rent do you need to pay at check in? Most hostels in the region charge 1 – 2 weeks in advance at check in. Rent is generally paid 1 week in advance after that. Most hostels will ask for 1 weeks notice if you are leaving. Check the bond and rent conditions when you arrive. Will you get your bond and rent paid in advance back if you need to leave earlier than planned?

3

Have you got enough money saved in case work is cancelled or delayed for any reason? Remember, even if you start work the day after you arrive, you won't get paid until the following week or later if the employer pays fortnightly.

4

Do you agree with the rent charge and are you happy with the room, services, hostel rules and work availability of the accommodation provider? You don't have to check in if you are not happy.

5

What sort of work do you think is most suited to your skills or preferences? Do you want to try working on piece rate or will you only accept an hourly paid role? It is your employment so take the time to ask questions of the accommodation provider about work placements available.

Staying safe in the Bundaberg & Wide Bay Region:

It is important that you consider your safety while travelling anywhere in the world. Always lock your valuables up, lock your hostel room door and look after your key, do not walk around late at night by yourself – take a friend and stay in the well-lit areas of the “Safe Night Precinct”.

Being a part of the Bundaberg & Wide Bay Community:

While you are staying in the region, consider your behaviour and respect the laws.

* This information has been produced by Bundaberg Hostels Association as a general guide to working and staying in the region.

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