



---

# BUNDABERG HOSTELS ASSOCIATION

---



Our Charter



## 1 Mission Statement

The Bundaberg Hostels Association, hereafter referred to as the BHA, will act as a united group representing council-approved accommodation providers housing the region's seasonal workforce. It results from the increasing need within the industry for a central point of contact linking seasonal worker needs to the complex infrastructure of our Horticulture Industry. We are committed to working to improve the reputation of the region as a preferred area for seasonal workers to find work in horticulture and provide reputable, safe, reliable accommodation solutions. To that end the BHA aims to work with stakeholders across the region and be this point of contact and information hub to assist seasonal workers coming to the region seeking work and accommodation. The region is inclusive of Bundaberg, Childers and the larger Wide Bay/Burnett region.

The BHA will engage with stakeholders regularly to ensure that we are aligned in terms of:

- Government regulations and policy.
- Setting acceptable standards for accommodation providers.
- Effectively distributing relevant and verified information to the seasonal workforce.
- Facilitating worker and institutional enquiries into all aspects of performing work in the Horticulture Industry in the region.

Stakeholders in this context may include but not be limited to:

- Accommodation providers.
- Government and associated regulatory bodies.
- Licensing and monitoring bodies.
- Farm owners and contractors.
- Industry representatives.
- Law enforcement.
- Local businesses and the general public.

Members agree to comply with the contents contained within this charter, and as updated from time to time, plus any periodic information statements distributed via the BHA email [myBHA@outlook.com](mailto:myBHA@outlook.com) or on our website at <https://workingtogether.com.au>.

## 2 Guiding Principles

To be successful the BHA relies on effective communication between stakeholders and adherence to a code of conduct among its members. There are two types of stakeholders that have expressed interest in being members of the BHA. They are categorised as being *accommodation providers* and 'everyone else'. The latter have a vested interest in the horticulture industry and are otherwise known as *affiliates*. The first type requires approval to become a member. The second type does not require approval but simply acknowledgement of their expression of interest and establishing an appropriate forum and periodicity to interact. For this second type, this may be as simple as phone or email interaction and may result in a link from our website if requested.

## 2.1 Stakeholders

### 2.1.1 Accommodation Providers

These include any council-approved hostel or boarding house that routinely house our seasonal workforce. Due to geographically diverse locations of the members, meetings are necessarily carried out via phone conference. Meetings may be requested at any time by contacting a BHA committee member or via the BHA email. Applications and BHA structure are detailed later in this document.

### 2.1.2 Affiliates

There are *direct affiliates* and *periodic affiliates* depending on how frequently BHA will interact with the affiliate. Further, all affiliates have either expressed an interest in *direct* involvement with BHA, or are those affiliates which BHA have engaged *periodically* to promote change and solicit support for BHA ideals.

Direct affiliate members are those which BHA interact with on a regular basis. Typically, this will happen at the affiliate's offices as needed or after the periodic Queensland Police Service (QPS) Bundaberg 'Working Tourist Safety Forum' that is run at 6-weekly intervals.

The QPS meeting invitees normally include representatives from Bundaberg, Childers & Wallaville hostels, Border Force, Bundaberg Regional Council, Workplace Health & Safety (WHS) Qld, some farm WHS representatives, Queensland Lifesavers, and Labour Hire Licencing Qld. Typically affiliate member meetings will occur after the conclusion of the police meeting however, this does not negate other meetings being conducted outside of this forum.

From a BHA perspective the primary purpose of this meeting is to:

- Support our local police to address issues related to seasonal staff, including providing information about staying safe in the region and respecting local laws and minimising crime.
- Collaborating with Bundaberg Regional Council, Immigration (Border Force), Labour Hire Licencing Compliance Unit Qld, and Workplace Health and Safety Qld to address concerns and minimise unlawful activity in the region.

Periodic affiliates are those which BHA interact with on an as-required basis and include:

- Facilitating engagement with the Fair Work Ombudsman to resolve employment issues.
- Collaborating with Bundaberg North Burnett Tourism and the Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association (BFVG) to promote working and holidaying in the region.
- Collaborating with Federal and State MPs and Bundaberg Regional Council to uphold standards and facilitate positive change in regulatory areas relating to accommodation for the horticultural workforce.
- Farms and farm contractors requiring information on member accommodation providers.

## 2.2 Code of Conduct

Hostels and Accommodation Providers Must:

- Be fully licensed through the Queensland Government and local councils.
- Provide a safe and secure environment to all guests and patrons.

- Provide reasonable bond conditions.
- Provide honest and open communication, mutual respect and transparency regarding work.
- Comply with relevant government laws, regulations and legislation.

## **2.2.1 Be fully licensed through the Queensland Government and local councils**

All member accommodation providers must hold current council approval and be able to supply such on request. Member hostels must advise the BHA of any changes to approvals or if approvals are withdrawn. Withdrawal of council approvals would result in cancellation of membership.

## **2.2.2 Provide a safe and secure environment to all guests and patrons**

It is the responsibility of all members to ensure the accommodation provided is safe and secure to approved standards and regulatory requirements. This includes but is not limited to adherence with all fire safety equipment regulations and appropriate security procedures and equipment.

## **2.2.3 Provide reasonable bond conditions**

All accommodation providers should have a transparent bond policy which is provided to guests on inquiry and again at check-in. Bond conditions are the prerogative of the accommodation provider.

In this region BHA has determined that bond should typically not exceed 1 or 2 weeks rent, although acknowledging that legislation of medium-term rental accommodation has an upper limit of 4 weeks.

It is reasonable to ask for 1 or 2 weeks' notice due to the time it takes for work placements and continuity of productivity. This is well within typical national company norms of 2 to 4 weeks. Return of bond should not be withheld if someone gives more than the agreed notice of their departure.

## **2.2.4 Provide honest and open communication, mutual respect and transparency regarding work**

Members will endeavour to the best of their ability to provide honest work forecasts and provide information about pay rates and the nature of work available including hours of work and days of work available. When work forecasts change due to harvest conditions or market forces, accommodation providers will provide updated information to guests or future guests within reason.

Members reserve the right to deny further work to any guest based on previous work performance or attitude in the best interest of the client farms where staff obtain work. Accommodation providers also reserve the right to decide about suitability for the work being offered within the limits of Australian workplace laws as it applies to any form of discrimination.

Harassment of any kind should not be tolerated by accommodation providers as it relates to work placements.

## 2.2.5 Comply with relevant government laws, regulations and legislation

Accommodation providers will at all times comply with relevant national, state and local laws including council regulations.

These laws legislation related to the running of an accommodation facility, safe transport, workplace health and safety, harassment or discrimination in the workplace.

## 3 Association Structure

The BHA is an unincorporated self-regulating association of likeminded individuals with a common goal. It comprises a committee and members. The committee roles include a chairperson, secretary and treasurer. Initially the committee is made up of the foundation members of the BHA, that being East Bundy Backpackers, Dingo Blue Backpackers and North Bundaberg Backpackers. Subsequently more committee members may be added or changed as proposed by BHA members and the committee. The names occupying each of the committee roles are as published on the BHA website. Members of BHA will all be listed on the BHA website with hyperlinks to their respective websites.

The principal instruments for engaging with BHA by seasonal workers and others is via the BHA email address and website. On some occasions a phone call from a member hostel will be required.

## 4 Meeting Schedule

At least one committee member must attend for a meeting to be recognised. Meetings must be minuted and provided via 'cc' to [myBHA@outlook.com.au](mailto:myBHA@outlook.com.au) so actions and decisions are recorded and tracked. A quorum requires a minimum of three committee members to conduct business.

Any issues, concerns or enquiries made to BHA relating to one or more member hostels will be discussed among the BHA members privately and require substantiation and favourable outcome for each affected party.

BHA has no leverage with non-member hostels. Concerns about non-member hostels will be referred to the relevant institution for action.

## 5 Founding Members

The founding member hostels are East Bundaberg Backpackers, North Bundaberg Backpackers and DingoBlue Backpackers. These hostels while ever under current ownership reserve the right to remain on the board in some capacity with one of the founding members acting as Chairperson at all times unless voted on by the 3 founding member hostels to transition to a new Chairperson. Founding member hostels carry only 1 vote each at any vote carried out by the members. Founding members reserve the right to update and change the information provided by the BHA at any time if there is a vote and it is agreed by all 3 founding members.

## 6 Membership Criteria and Application Process

Applicants can apply via email once they have read and understood this document. Applicants must provide their ASIC legal business name and trading name if any, accommodation address, council approval number, contact phone number, preferred email address, business owners name(s) and nickname, if any. Only the owner of the business may apply. There may be a period required for the applicant to be verified. The BHA will respond with an approval certificate. It is implicit that by submitting the application email and accepting the approval certificate that the applicant will adhere to the BHA Charter and advise BHA of any change in council accommodation approval conditions.

The BHA will not reasonably refuse membership to applicants. Although not mandatory to attend all meetings, minutes will be distributed to all members via email.

Membership applications must be voted on and agreed to by all 3 founding members and the expanded group of member hostels. A successful vote comprises a unanimous vote of the committee or a majority vote of members, whichever is the greater.

Members will be provided with logos and materials as a BHA member for their own websites and materials. Members will have their logos and links to website and or facebook page on the BHA website and materials.

## 7 Membership Cancellation Process

Members may request removal from the association at any time via email. Alternatively, repeated breaches of the code of conduct may result in expulsion via a vote by the committee. A severe breach will result in immediate cancellation of membership until remedied to the satisfaction of the BHA.

Any accommodation provider found to not operate in accordance with relevant laws and regulations may have their membership cancelled.

If a member hostel continues to breach the “reasonableness” aspect of bond conditions, the BHA members may vote to suspend or cancel membership until the breach is remedied.

The BHA is obliged to investigate if complaints about bonds and bond retention are made. Member hostels will be asked to remedy or provide some evidence to support why a bond was taken outside of bond conditions.