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Government steps up action to plug skills gaps

- Additional workers able to enter country for sectors affected by international labour shortages
- Aged care, construction and infrastructure, meat processing, seafood, seasonal snow and adventure tourism sector agreements put in place
- Doubling of Working Holiday Scheme cap for 2022/23 will see an extra 12,000 working holiday makers able to enter New Zealand
- Onshore working holiday makers visas expiring between 26 August 2022 and 31 May 2023 will be extended for 6 months to keep workers that are already in country, and those offshore given more time to travel.

The Government is taking steps through the revitalised and streamlined immigration system to help relieve workforce shortages facing New Zealand businesses in a suite of measures [announced today](#) by Immigration Minister Michael Wood.

The measures include providing median wage exemptions to crucial sectors through sector agreements, temporarily doubling numbers under the Working Holiday Scheme, and extending visas to retain labour already in country.

Sector agreements allow for time limited exceptions to the new median wage requirements for businesses hiring skilled migrant workers, keeping wage requirements more in line with those under the old immigration settings as they transition and we build the skills needed for these industries right here in New Zealand.

“Each agreement also includes expectations for improvement, including the implementation of Workforce Transition Plans and Industry Transformation Plans. Performance against these will be monitored and feed into reviews and decisions about future access to migrants below the median wage,” Michael Wood said.

The Government has also announced today changes to help ease casual workforce shortages by temporarily increasing access to working holiday makers by extending visas of those in country and making an additional 12,000 spaces available.

Summary of final settings for the sector agreements

(For full details see <https://immigration.govt.nz/documents/employer-resources/sector-agreements-factsheet>)

Construction and infrastructure: Access to below median wage roles without a cap for specified occupations with a \$25 wage threshold, with a review in two years' time. The wage threshold would be updated each year to reflect changes in the median wage to maintain its relative value. (ie 90 percent of the median wage).

A \$25 wage threshold is already in place for a number of construction and infrastructure roles and this will continue until the sector agreements come into force from 31 October.

Summary of Working Holiday Scheme changes:

- Extend visas for onshore working holiday makers that are expiring between 26 August 2022 and 31 May 2023 by six months from date of expiry.
- Additional opportunity for those who previously held a working holiday visa but didn't travel due to Covid-19 to come to New Zealand for the summer. New visas will be issued to people from October 2022 allowing them to enter New Zealand by 31 January 2023. This visa will allow them to be in New Zealand for 12 months.

Double the Working Holiday Scheme caps with a one-off increase to recognise the spots that were unused last year due to the border closure. This will mean around 12,000 more working holiday makers can come to New Zealand over the next six months or so.

Burnout freshly reviewed

What are the symptoms of burnout? [A fresh page](#) (24 August 2022) on one of the business.govt.nz websites lists these, and some very practical advice on approaching the matter. It is a highly recommended read.

Some symptoms of burn-out are:

- exhaustion and fatigue, even after sleep
- foggy brain
- little interest in your work and doubt about what you contribute
- lack of personal achievement – you feel you're not doing your job well and then it becomes real as you're unable to do your job properly
- irritability.

What can you do to promote wellbeing at your workplace?

Experts recommend a routine for starting and ending work that includes taking time-out to allow the brain to take a break from thinking about work. This is because many small business owners and operators spend all day thinking about work, so getting into a habit of re-setting helps to minimise stress after a long day.

So, start by considering what kind of end-of-day routine would work for you and your team.

What you can do to prevent burnout

- Set clear, achievable tasks and goals.
- Make sure your employees have the skills to do their jobs properly.
- Help to manage workload and the pace at which work needs to be delivered.
- Discuss work challenges and brainstorm ideas with your team.
- Involve employees in issues that might affect their health and safety.
- Identify signs of stress among workers.
- Have agreed policies and procedures to deal with unacceptable behaviour.
- Involve employees in changes to your business as soon as you can.

Source: [Business.govt.nz](https://www.business.govt.nz)

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