

BREAKING NEWS

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Changes seasonal primary sector

The Government has just introduced some key visa changes to address pressing issues facing New Zealand's seasonal primary sector.

RSE workers

Stranded former Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) workers who are still in New Zealand on flexible limited visas enabling to work part time and do non-RSE work, will be able to 're-enter' the RSE Scheme and work for RSE employers in the horticulture and viticulture industries with 30 hours per week average pay guaranteed. (<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/seasonal-work-visa-available-more-people>)

Working holiday

Working Holiday Scheme visa holders who are in New Zealand with visas expiring between 1 October 2020 and March 2021, will be automatically granted Supplementary Seasonal Employment (SSE) visas.

This will allow them to work until 30 June 2021 in horticulture and viticulture seasonal roles where there are not enough New Zealanders available to do the work.

New border closure exceptions

In addition, the Minister has announced new border closure exceptions for a limited number of veterinarians, deepsea fishing crew and agricultural and horticultural machinery operators. (<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/more-border-exceptions-critical-roles>)

Snapshot of the key RSE/SSE changes

- Around 11,000 Working Holiday Scheme visa holders in New Zealand will be automatically granted SSE visas, allowing them the opportunity to work until 30 June 2021 in horticulture and viticulture seasonal roles.
- The expectation is that RSE workers will be prioritised for horticulture and viticulture roles; where an RSE worker has not been able fill a role, they will be able to be temporarily filled by an SSE visa holder. RSE employers will

need to prioritise their RSE workforce before seeking to recruit an SSE visa holder.

- SSE visa holders will only be able to work in certain roles, for certain employers, in certain regions for certain periods of time.
- Those who do not wish to have an SSE visa automatically granted will need to lodge an application for a different appropriate visa, or leave New Zealand before their current visa expires. SSE Visas will not be automatically granted if there is already an application for another visa.
- Visitors, students and other work visa holders can apply for an SSE visa and will have the same work rights as those being granted by special direction.

Snapshot of the key exceptions changes

- The Government has agreed to class exceptions for:
 - Up to 30 veterinarians who are needed for large animal and livestock roles
 - 570 people for up to 6 months as deepwater fishing crew
 - Up to 210 experienced agricultural and horticulture machinery operators

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