



Pilot Au Pair Visa Program Proposal

Addressing Australia's child care crisis while improving care quality and boosting the economy

Submission to the Department of Immigration & Border Protection

August 2017

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1.0 ABOUT THE CULTURAL AU PAIR IN AUSTRALIA ASSOCIATION (CAPAA)

The Cultural Au Pair in Australia Association (CAPAA) was established in 2012 as a peak Au Pair agency industry body. We are the voice of the industry and our aim is to develop and support it in Australia.

CAPAA member agencies are located across Australia and provide Au Pairs to nearly 5,000 families every year. Australia accepts Au Pairs from nearly 20 countries.

Our objectives are to:

- Represent the industry in promoting the benefits of Au Pair cultural exchange programs.
- Work with Government, the broader child care sector and the community to establish agreed standards for Australian Au Pair programs.
- Support and assist our members in the delivery of excellent quality Au Pair cultural exchange programs.

CAPAA is an active member of the International Au Pair Association (IAPA) and our president, Wendi Aylward, regularly presents at international industry conferences.

As the only Au Pair industry association in Australia, CAPAA lobbies for the introduction of industry standards to ensure the Au Pair experience is a safe and rewarding one for both host families and Au Pairs.

For more information about CAPAA, please visit our website: <http://capaa.com.au>

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Increasing need for alternative child care

During the last 10 years, an increasing number of Australian families have sought alternatives to traditional child care. According to the **ABS**¹ in 2014 55,000 children were turned away from child care due to shortages. The need for flexibility and the rising costs of child care have also contributed to this shift. Au Pairs provide an alternative solution.

Au Pair programs are not new. Western Europe and the United States have had formal Au Pair visa programs for the past 30 years and the New Zealand Government has built an international Au Pair model into their options for families. These visa programs have been successful in offering an alternative child care solution while ensuring the arrangement is a safe and rewarding experience for families and Au Pairs.

With the increased need for child care, there is an unprecedented interest from Australian families in hosting international Au Pairs. However due to the finite number of countries under the Working Holiday (subclass 417) and Work and Holiday (subclass 462) visa schemes, there is limited opportunity to grow international Au Pair programs. During peak months (the beginning and end of the year), CAPAA agencies are unable to supply sufficient number Au Pairs to meet the demand.

CAPAA's position

CAPAA believes the introduction of an Au Pair visa would help alleviate this situation and we have been campaigning for it since our inception.

In 2014, we responded to the Issues paper released by the Productivity Commission as part of the public inquiry into the Future of Child Care and Early Childhood Learning. CAPAA made two submissions and at the Canberra hearing, our president called for the introduction of a dedicated Au Pair visa and the extension of the existing Working Holiday visa (WHV) for Au Pairs.

In its final report, the Commission adopted the recommendation for a WHV extension and this was implemented the following year. However, the idea of a dedicated Au Pair Visa has not so far been adopted by the Australian Government.

Since 2014, CAPAA has continued to meet with senior and ministerial level representatives from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) the Department of Fair Work (DFW) and the Department of Education and Training (DET) to discuss it.

Lack of guidelines and oversight

As well as being concerned about the national shortage of Au Pairs, CAPAA is disappointed that the Australian Government has not implemented guidelines for the recruitment and screening of host families and Au Pairs.

¹ <http://www.sbs.com.au/topics/life/family/article/2016/05/02/alternative-child-care-rise>

The absence of these guidelines has led to the emergence of new agencies that conduct little or no screening of Au Pairs or host families. Many of these agencies are based offshore, so if incidents do occur, there is no legal recourse for either party.

CAPAA believes without the introduction of an Au Pair visa tied to strict guidelines, the likelihood of serious incidents occurring will grow.

Need to address systemic weaknesses

CAPAA has identified 4 weaknesses in the current child care model.

- a. Ongoing child care shortages in regional areas and some urban locations.
- b. Traditional child care solutions are unable to meet families' increasing need for flexibility.
- c. No regulation of Au Pair agencies or recruitment platforms.
- d. Limitations of the current Working Holiday and Work and Holiday visas.

Opportunities to increase economic and cultural exchange benefits

Research by CAPAA and other organisations shows that not only do Au Pairs spend more per head than other Working Holiday visa visitors, the economic uplift is increased by the likelihood they will be visited by family and friends.

In addition, international Au Pairs enable women to return to work, or to increase the number of hours they work, with resulting benefits for the Australian economy.

From our research, the cultural exchange benefits are also considerable and flow both ways. While this benefit is not quantifiable, its impact on international relations cannot be underestimated.

This submission responds to these opportunities and challenges by offering an alternative model: the Pilot Au Pair Visa (PAPV) program.

The PAPV program is designed to address current and future Au Pair shortages and improve oversight of the process. The benefits include:

- Increasing the number of Au Pairs available to assist Australian families with their child care challenges.
- Increasing child care options in areas of low supply.
- Providing Australian families with access to the flexible child care services they need to support their work and family challenges.
- Improving quality and reducing risk by linking visa sponsorship to an agency that is responsible for the recruitment screening, monitoring and reporting of Au Pairs and host families.
- Supporting more reporting and transparency in the Au Pair recruitment and placement process.
- Flow-on benefits for the Australian economy and cross-border cultural understanding.

CAPAA calls on the Minister and Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection to consider our Proposal and further explore the idea of introducing the PAPV program.

3.0 WHAT IS AN AU PAIR?

An international Au Pair is defined as a person from another country whose primary role is to assist their allocated family with child care and light domestic duties. The Au Pair receives board and pocket money and participates in a cultural exchange that broadens their life experience and that of their host families.

Au Pairs visit Australia through Working Holiday and Work and Holiday visas and must meet these visa requirements.

The visa applies to applicants up to 30 years old but most Au Pairs are aged 18-22 years.

They come to Australia primarily for three reasons: cultural exchange, the opportunity to gain international experience caring for children, and to improve their English.

Au Pairs generally care for a family's children for 20-40 hours per week. The Working Holiday and Work and Holiday visas allow for an initial placement of six months, with the option for the family and the Au Pair to extend the arrangement for up to a further six months. CAPAA Au Pairs are placed with families in every state and territory of Australia.

Au Pair placements can be arranged informally or through an agency. Ideally, an agent screens the Au Pair and the family prior to offering a placement, which is what CAPAA recommends for our members.

However, agencies range greatly in their screening processes and level of support during the placement. Under the current model, it is possible for an Au Pair and family to be matched without any screening or follow-up support.

This situation is exacerbated by Australia's chronic child care crisis, which has led to a rapid increase in the number of agencies in Australia and overseas, with the consequent risk of lower standards due to lack of regulation.

4.0 AU PAIRS AND THEIR ROLE IN THE BROADER CHILD CARE SECTOR

Au Pairs will play an important role in Australia’s child care future and are already an accepted option for many families. A 2015 report produced by the Productivity Commission’s Inquiry into Child Care and Early Childhood Learning — to which CAPAA contributed — noted that:

“40 per cent of children aged 12 years or under use some type of informal non-parental care on a regular basis.”²

Unfortunately, due to the information-collection limitations of current visas, the percentage of Au Pairs in the informal care segment is unknown.

It is important to note that in our experience, most Au Pairs provide high-quality child-care. Some representatives from the child care sector argue that children who are cared for by an Au Pair — and who therefore fall outside formal early childhood education and care (ECEC) services — will not develop at the same rate as children within the formal ECEC system.

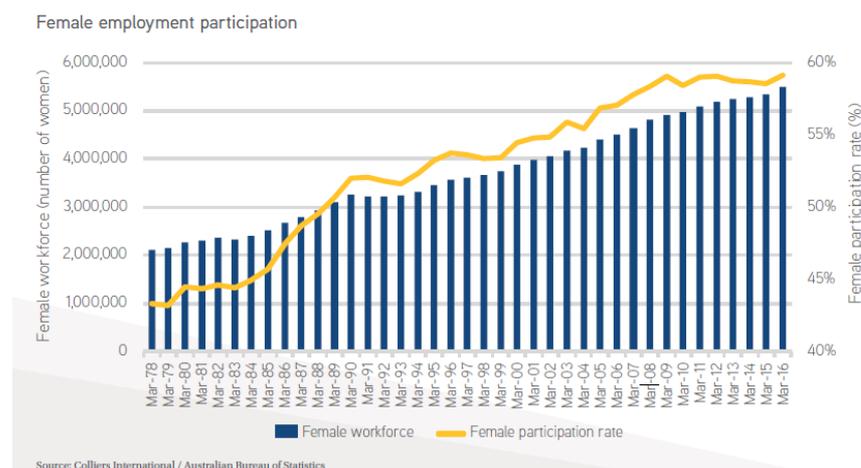
However, the Productivity Commission’s Inquiry report stated that:

“Research suggests that, except where the home environment offers very poor development opportunities or places the child at risk, these children continue to rapidly learn and develop in the home environment without participation in formal ECEC services, at least until about 2 to 3 years of age.”³

The introduction of the PAPV program would help to allay the fears of the wider child care sector by providing more oversight and standardising the Au Pair selection criteria.

4.1 AU PAIRS AND FEMALE EMPLOYMENT PARTICIPATION

Child Care White paper 2016



The past few decades have seen a significant rise in female participation in the workforce, from 44% in 1979 to 59% in 2016, according to a recent white paper citing ABS statistics⁴.

² <http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/child-care/report/child-care-overview.pdf>

³ <http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/child-care/report/child-care-overview.pdf>

⁴ Colliers International, *Child Care in Australia, an Industry Review*, May 2016

The paper notes an opportunity for further growth with greater access to child care.

There is ample research to show that the availability of child care is closely linked to the ability of mothers to return to work.

The ABS paper, *Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation*, includes these results from a survey of women wishing to return to the workforce:

- 59.0% responded that access to child care places was very important.
- 21.7% responded that a disincentive was child care costs being too expensive. ⁵

In her Dean's Lecture at the University of Melbourne, "*Child Care and Workforce Participation*", the former minister, Sussan Ley, also referenced the ABS statistics. She noted that more than 100,000 Australian women are available for work but are limited in looking for work or extending their working hours by the need to care for their children.⁶

Another report, this time from the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS), stated that access to suitable child care provision was essential for parents' ability to manage work and care for their children.⁷

Economic implications

Improving access to flexible child care goes beyond the needs of individuals and families. There are implications for Australia too.

A recent OECD study concluded that Australian mothers returning to the workforce is an important driving factor in our economy.

"One of the areas of greatest untapped potential in the Australian labour force is inactive and/or part-time working women, especially those with children. There are potentially large losses to the economy when women stay at home or work short part-time hours."⁸

Compared to other countries, Australia has a higher gap (almost 9%) in the percentage of employed women who have children and those who don't.

In addition, Australian working mothers work more part-time hours than those in other countries, and we have a lower employment rates for single mothers.

By contrast, countries such as Belgium, Iceland, France, Sweden and Denmark enable part-time working mothers to work longer by providing better child care services.

Clearly, formal child care does not work for all families due to inflexible hours and costs. Building a structured Au Pair model will address this need and increase the opportunity for women to return to employment, with subsequent economic benefits.

⁵<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/6239.0Main%20Features3July%202014%20to%20June%202015?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=6239.0&issue=July%202014%20to%20June%202015&num=&view=>

⁶<https://ministers.education.gov.au/ley/deans-lecture-child-care-and-workforce-participation-university-melbourne>

⁷<https://aifs.gov.au/publications/parents-working-out-work>

⁸www.oecd.org/australia/connecting-people-with-jobs-key-issues-for-raising-labour-market-participation-in-australia-9789264269637-en.htm

4.2 RESPONDING TO THE CHILD CARE SHORTAGES

Nationally, it is estimated that the number of children accessing subsidised care will grow by almost 300,000 over the next three years — two million by 2019-20, from 1.7 million this financial year.⁹

As the number of families seeking child care increases, wait lists at traditional child cares in some inner city and regional areas are growing.

In regional areas, families are faced with a shortage or complete absence of traditional child care. In areas that host traditional formal long day care centres, the shortages mean families are having to enroll their children without having access to the child care rebate.¹⁰

Some regional child care centres report that families are leaving their area because of child care shortages.

“They suddenly get a job and they need care right away and at the moment we can't offer them anything.”

"We have parents on the phone crying because they've just had this great opportunity to go out to work but there is not a child care place in the whole of Mackay."¹¹

The Australian Government's attempt to increase child care in regional areas through the Nanny Pilot Program has not worked. The Nanny Pilot program was launched in January 2016 to provide care for around 10,000 children whose families cannot easily access mainstream child care services. By May 2016, only 60 families had signed up for it, even though 3,000 families had applied.¹² By December 2016, uptake was so low that the government halved the program's budget.¹³ Applications for the program have now closed.

The Nanny Pilot Program model was flawed, with the costs for a family often higher than had been promised. However, the program did demonstrate that there is significant interest in the market for solutions outside traditional child care.

4.3 THREE REASONS FOR CHOOSING AU PAIRS

Financial viability

The current child care system does not provide a financially viable option for many women wanting to return to work.

According to a 2016 Child Care White Paper, long day care can cost families \$170 to \$200 per day in some capital cities.¹⁴ Despite access to the Child Care Rebate (CCR), families are increasingly struggling to cover the cost, particularly those with more than one child.

⁹ <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/opinion/foreign-aupairs-can-help-parents-child-care-needs-and-the-budget/news-story/1489e10e6d570290b5618b56e9e0c1f2>

¹⁰ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-01-13/government-regulations-hinder-affordable-child-care-rural-areas/8181076>

¹¹ <http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2011/11/29/3379231.htm>

¹² <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-12-20/nanny-pilot-programme-slashed-in-mid-year-budget-update/8134104>

¹³ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-12-20/nanny-pilot-programme-slashed-in-mid-year-budget-update/8134104>

¹⁴ Colliers International, Child Care in Australia, an Industry Review, May 2016

An Australian National University (ANU) study, commissioned by a leading child care provider, found a working mother could lose up to two-thirds of her gross earnings in tax and child care fees.¹⁵

The average cost of an Au Pair's weekly stipend, agency fees and boarding costs is far less than formal child care when they have two or more children in care.

More flexibility

Mothers returning to full-time and part-time work need access to flexible child care options that accommodate their working hours.

These are not always standard. This is especially true for those who work shifts or long hours. In rural areas in particular, the usual day care operation hours are not sufficient.

Au Pairs can help to fill this need for access to more flexible care. They are also ideally suited for before- and after-school care.

In addition, Live-in Au Pairs can provide support for mothers wishing to remain in part-time work. Given the increase in part-time working mothers, the need for flexible child care has increased exponentially. Many day care options are not affordable or flexible enough.

Added value

Live-in Au Pairs provide flexibility around their responsibilities that go beyond child care. Families not only have the benefit of affordable, tailored child care, they have assistance with managing the home.

An added benefit is that the children are cared for in the familiar surroundings of their own home, where the live in Au Pair can assist with homework, meal preparation and provide additional family support. This is especially important for families without any nearby family support.

¹⁵ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-05-18/some-mothers-losing-money-by-turning-up-to-work-study/7426416>

5.0 FLAWS IN THE CURRENT AU PAIR MODEL

Over the last ten years, the Au Pair sector has grown significantly. As with all sectors experiencing rapid growth, some flaws have emerged. These are mainly in the areas of regulation, visas and individual exploitation.

5.1 ABSENCE OF A REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE INDUSTRY

CAPAA is concerned by the lack of regulations directing the recruitment and screening of Au Pairs and host families. We believe that the absence of a regulatory framework potentially endangers the welfare of Au Pairs and the children they care for.

University of Technology Sydney senior lecturer, Laurie Berg, has done considerable research on the sector and is calling for a more transparent and accountable method of regulation.¹⁶

Berg states that standardised, explicit rules would benefit Au Pairs who currently have to navigate offers that differ according to the family or agency.

“Au Pairs have very little recourse if seriously injured in the host family’s home or refused promised payments by families. Equally, if an Au Pair leaves without notice, a family can be left in the lurch without adequate child care.”

As well as standardising employment conditions (such as the amount that is deducted for board and lodging), a CAPAA-regulated Au Pair scheme would give Au Pairs and families greater security by ensuring background checks.

CAPAA already has best practice processes in place to protect Au Pairs and families. The screening and education of prospective host families and Au Pairs is an integral part of our member agencies’ service, including background checks, references and program guidelines and training.

We would like to see this become mandatory for the whole industry through the PAPV program.

5.2 LIMITATIONS OF EXISTING VISAS

The increased demand for Au Pairs is not being helped by the current visa situation. Unlike the 457 visa, the Working Holiday and Work & Holiday visas currently do not require a mandatory criminal check. This limitation poses a risk for families who use agencies or online search engines that forego this step.

Au Pairs are predominantly from Western Europe, the United Kingdom or the United States of America and come to Australia under either the Working Holiday (subclass 417) or Work and Holiday (subclass 462) visas. This arrangement limits Au Pairs to certain countries.

¹⁶ <https://thewest.com.au/news/wa/push-to-regulate-au-pairs-ng-b88403341z>

Unfortunately, the decline in visa numbers in recent years from many of these countries has impacted market growth.

Total number of Working Holiday (subclass 417) visas granted by citizenship country

Citizenship Country	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
United Kingdom	46,131	45,208	44,730	39,227
Germany	26,184	26,819	26,327	23,467
France	24,788	25,734	23,375	20,086

Total number of Work and Holiday (subclass 462) visas granted by citizenship country*

Citizenship Country	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
United States of America	6,878	7,499	8,347	5,753

**Contains data for the United States of America only. Other subclass 462 visa countries have an annual cap of between 100-1000 visas. These caps have prevented agencies in these countries from marketing Australia as a destination.*

In addition to fewer visas being granted, market growth from some of these regions is limited by the number of prospective Au Pairs who can both competently communicate in English and have the necessary level of child care experience.

Another limitation is that most European Au Pairs arrive in the second half of the year and often do not stay the full term, preventing many families from having continuity of care.

Countries such as Brazil and Mexico, which are currently large Au Pair source countries for the USA, could potentially fulfill this seasonal gap.

5.3 POTENTIAL FOR EXPLOITATION

CAPAA members often hear horror stories from Au Pairs and families. Most stem from placements found through online search engines, offshore agencies or non-CAPAA agencies.

Increasingly, stories about Au Pairs having to work excessive hours or not being paid are appearing in the media.

Researcher Laurie Berg warns about the potential for exploitation on both sides.

“We clearly need regulation that better safeguards the interests of both Au Pairs and families.”¹⁷

A regulated visa program would eliminate many problems occurring under the unregulated model. It would require mandatory insurance cover for the Au Pair, mandate a consistent

¹⁷ <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/au-pairs-lack-of-regulation-leaves-young-foreigners-working-in-child-care-vulnerable/news-story/d900a8d9a57b22673ba990488022aa1e>

level of screening and support, and make the sponsor agency ultimately responsible for ensuring the visa regulations were adhered to during the placement.

6.0 THE AU PAIR VISA PILOT PROGRAM MODEL

The following model is CAPAA's proposed framework for an Au Pair Visa.

It would protect Au Pairs, host families and children by improving Au Pair quality, addressing current pain points and reducing risk by standardising the recruitment, placement and support processes.

6.1 RECOMMENDATION 1: SPONSOR DESIGNATION

CPAA recommends that an agency is given a two-year Sponsor Agency designation upon satisfying the following criteria:

- Australian-registered business with an ABN.
- Is a current financial member of CAPAA and has been fully vetted by CAPAA.
- Ensures the Au Pair stays in Australia no longer than 24 months.
- Limits the number of hours an Au Pair is obliged to provide child care to not more than 10 hours per day or 40 hours per week, with at least 1.5 days off per week.
- Ensures all employees and overseas agents acting on behalf of the Au Pair are adequately trained and supervised.
- Maintains a record of all contact with each Au Pair and host family.
- Contacts Au Pairs and host families regularly throughout their placement.
- Offers similar opportunities to young Australians to participate in outbound programs.

6.2 RECOMMENDATION 2: AU PAIR ELIGIBILITY, RECRUITMENT SCREENING AND SELECTION

CAPAA recommends that the Sponsor Agency is required to only recruit Au Pairs who meet the following criteria:

- Aged 18 years and over.
- Secondary school graduate or equivalent.
- Proficient in spoken English.
- Satisfactory completion of a medical check.
- Evidence of the necessary immunisations.
- Has been interviewed in English by a representative of the Sponsor Agency in their home country, with a report of the interview provided to the host family.
- Successfully passed a background investigation that includes child protection and safeguarding, verification of school, two non-family personal and employment references and a criminal background check.
- Can provide proof of police clearance for any country they have lived in for 12 months or more (cumulatively) in the previous 10 years.

- Has completed a First Aid certificate or will complete a first aid course upon arrival in Australia before commencing their placement.
- Possesses a minimum of A\$3,000 to support their stay in Australia.
- Possesses medical and liability insurance for the full duration of the program.

6.3 RECOMMENDATION 3: HOST FAMILY SELECTION

CAPAA recommends that Sponsor Agencies adequately screen all potential host families against standardised criteria. At a minimum, they should require that host parents:

- Are Australian citizens or legal permanent residents.
- Are fluent in spoken English.
- Are interviewed by the Agency Sponsor's representative.
- Along with any other adults living full-time in the household, pass a background investigation, including criminal background check and verified personal character references.
- Complete an application that references in detail the family, living conditions and proposed Au Pair schedule.

6.4 RECOMMENDATION 4: PLACEMENT PROCESS

CAPAA recommends that Sponsor Agencies follow a defined placement process. Before the prospective Au Pair leaves their home country, the Sponsor Agency should:

- Secure their placement with a suitable family.
- Provide the host family with a detailed written summary of the cultural exchange program and the general parameters of their and the Au Pair's duties, participation, and obligations.
- Provide the host family with the prospective Au Pair's complete application, including all references.
- Complete interviews with the Au Pair and the host family.
- Provide the Au Pair and the host family with a written agreement that details the obligations on both sides, to be signed by both parties.
- Ensure the Au Pair is provided with a suitable private bedroom.

6.5 RECOMMENDATION 5: PREPARING THE AU PAIR AND THE FAMILY

CAPAA recommend that once the placement is agreed, the Sponsor Agency should provide the Au Pair and host family with the following information before the Au Pair leaves their country:

- A copy of all operating procedures, rules, and regulations, including a grievance process, which govern the Au Pair's participation in the cultural exchange program.
- A detailed profile of the host family and their community.
- Ensure that each Au Pair has passed an online early education training module that reinforces care givers role, laws and regulations that guide the care and education of children in Australia.
- A detailed summary of travel arrangements.

6.6 RECOMMENDATION 6: ARRIVAL SERVICES

CAPAA recommends that the Sponsor Agency should deliver an orientation kit that contains:

- Details about the Au Pair's placement.
- Child protection and safeguarding information.
- An outline of the Sponsor Agency's support during the placement, with full contact details.
- A summary of relevant Australian laws and customs.
- A summary of issues that may arise during the placement, with proposed remedial action.
- Personal safety instructions.

6.7 RECOMMENDATION 7: COMPENSATION AND HOURS

CAPAA recommends that Sponsor Agencies follow the CAPAA model for compensation and hours so that Au Pairs:

- Receive weekly pocket money that is calculated by deducting the average costs of room and board under the international student homestay model from the average hourly rate for a Child Care Worker.
- Are compensated at a weekly rate based on 25-40 hours of child care services per week.
- Do not provide more than 10 hours of child care per day, or more than 40 hours of child care in any one week.
- Receive a minimum of 1.5 days off per week and one complete weekend off each month.
- Receive two weeks' paid leave (for a 12-month placement).

We further recommend that these arrangements form part of the Au Pair visa rules.

6.8 RECOMMENDATION 8: MONITORING AND SUPPORT

CAPAA recommends that Sponsor Agencies fully monitor the placement of every Au Pair. At a minimum, they should:

- Make monthly contact by email or telephone.
- Require every Au Pair to complete an end of program evaluation.
- Inform Au Pairs how to obtain medical help.
- Provide a 24-hour emergency number.
- Ensure that the cultural provisions of the visa are met.

6.9 RECOMMENDATION 9: REPORTING

CAPAA recommends that Sponsor Agencies complete an annual report for the Department of Immigration and Border Protection. The report will:

- Summarise the results of an annual survey of all participating host families and Au Pairs regarding satisfaction with the program, its strengths and weaknesses.
- Summarise all complaints, specifying the nature of the complaint, its resolution, and whether any unresolved complaints are outstanding.
- Summarise all situations that resulted in the placement of Au Pair with more than one host family.
- Detail the name of the Au Pair, their host family and the placement location.

7.0 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Under the current visa arrangements, little is known about some of the broader benefits that Au Pairs provide for Australia. Under the PAPV, a number of these benefits would be more effectively measured.

7.1 ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Tourism revenue under the Working Holiday visa is substantial and Au Pairs spend a greater than average amount per person.

A 2012 Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) position paper showed that the average Working Holiday visa tourist stays for 8 months and spends A\$13,000. In 2011, this sector boosted Australia's GDP to A\$320 million and expenditure on goods and services to A\$630 million.¹⁸

CAPAA recently surveyed Au Pairs about their spending habits and our results support the ATEC report. Our research also indicates that Au Pairs attract additional tourism income through visiting family and friends.

- **72% said they spent most of or all their money in Australia.**
- **73% said they would spend more than A\$5,000 on travel while in Australia (on top of money spent during their placement).**
- **54% said friends or family would visit them during or after the placement.**¹⁹

7.2 CULTURAL EXCHANGE

A report on international Au Pairs in North America under the J-1 Visa Exchange Visitor Program proved the lasting impact of cultural exchange. Of the 6,200 Au Pairs surveyed:

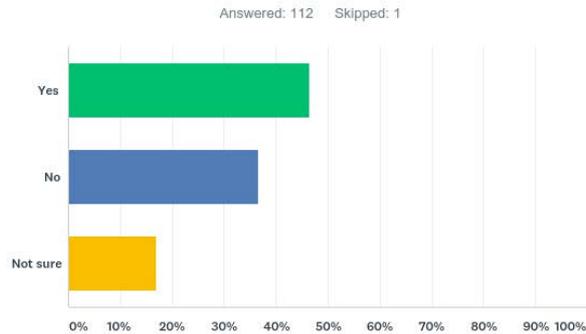
- 80% stated their attitude towards the United States and its people had become more positive as a result of their Au Pair experience.
- 70% said that living with an American family contributed to their general understanding of American culture.

While such a detailed study is yet to be completed in Australia, a recent CAPAA survey indicates that most Au Pairs have a positive perception of Australia and Australians and are likely to recommend it to friends and family.

¹⁸ ATEC Position Paper 'The Importance of the Working Holiday Visa', February 2012

¹⁹ CAPAA Au Pair Survey, August 2017

Q12 Has your opinion about Australia and Australian people changed as a result of your visit?



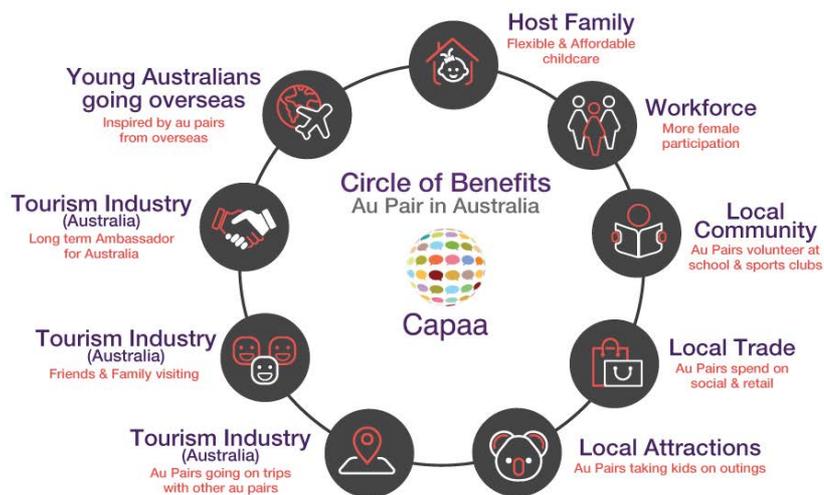
7.3 SPECIALISED CARE

Au pairs who have therapeutic backgrounds and experience working with children with special needs are fulfilling a shortage in this specialised area. Currently CAPAA members are unable to meet the demand for Au Pairs with these skills.

7.4 RECIPROCITY

CAPAA agencies currently send Australian Au Pairs and other young people overseas on cultural exchange programs, many of which have been established for over 50 years.

Most established programs are tightly regulated to ensure the safety and wellbeing of participants. It is only reasonable to offer the same security to young people from overseas who visit Australia on similar programs.



8.0 CONCLUSION

As the representative body for the Au Pair sector, CAPAA believes there is a need for the Australian Government to seriously consider the recommendations in this Proposal.

The sector is undergoing significant growth that is likely to continue, presenting the opportunity for Australia to grow inbound youth tourism whilst addressing our chronic child care shortage.

We do not believe the inherent opportunities and challenges of this situation can be addressed without the support of the Australian Government. It is time to formalise what has so far been an informal, unregulated industry.

With the backing of the Australian Government, CAPAA's proposed Pilot Au Pair Visa Program would provide an avenue to both trial our recommendations and collect robust data.

We are confident in the capacity and capability of CAPAA member agencies to administer and support host families and Au Pairs under a new Au Pair Visa program. We would welcome the opportunity to become part of the solution and to participate in the associated dialogue at this critical stage in planning the future of Australia's child care.

CAPAA requests that the Minister and Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection give serious consideration to our proposed model and approach.

9.0 CONTACTING THE CULTURAL AU PAIR IN AUSTRALIA ASSOCIATION

CAPAA welcomes the opportunity to participate in discussion with the Department of Immigration and Border Protection in relation to this submission.

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