

## AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT POLICY IN FACING THE POST-COVID WORKFORCE CRISIS 2020-2022

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### Abstract

COVID-19 has had an enormous impact on global markets and affected labor markets as there has been a drastic reduction in income and employment worldwide. The pandemic continues to pose pressing new legal issues for the Australian government, employers and workers. Governments are missing opportunities to address the gender pay gap. With the development of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Australian government is engaging in a wide range of activities and actions by Australian public service departments and agencies. The economic instability experienced by Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic has given impetus to the government's vision of economic recovery. Using qualitative methods, this research explains how the implementation of Australian government policies can work well. The conceptual framework used as a foundation is foreign policy according to K.J. Holsti and Rosenau. The results of the study will illustrate that the government policies implemented by Australia in dealing with the post-covid labor crisis in 2020-2022 can realize a significant reduction in unemployment.

**Keywords:** Covid-19; Gender Gap; Unemployment; Australian Government Policy; Labor Market

### Abstrak

COVID-19 telah memberikan dampak yang sangat besar terhadap pasar global serta mempengaruhi pasar tenaga kerja karena terdapat penurunan angka pendapatan dan pekerja secara drastis di seluruh dunia. Pandemi terus menimbulkan berbagai masalah hukum baru yang mendesak bagi pemerintah Australia, para pengusaha serta pekerja. Pemerintah kehilangan kesempatan untuk mengatasi kesenjangan upah berdasarkan gender. Dengan perkembangan pandemi COVID-19, pemerintah Australia melibatkan berbagai macam kegiatan dan tindakan yang dilakukan oleh departemen dan lembaga layanan publik Australia. Ketidakstabilan ekonomi yang dialami oleh Australia saat pandemi COVID-19 lalu telah memberikan dorongan terhadap visi pemerintah dalam melakukan pemulihan ekonomi. Dengan memakai metode kualitatif, penelitian ini menjelaskan bagaimana implementasi kebijakan pemerintah Australia dapat berjalan dengan baik. Kerangka konseptual yang digunakan sebagai landasan adalah kebijakan luar negeri menurut K.J. Holsti dan Rosenau. Hasil penelitian akan memberi gambaran bahwa kebijakan pemerintah yang diterapkan oleh Australia dalam menghadapi krisis tenaga kerja pasca-covid tahun 2020-2022 dapat merealisasikan penurunan angka pengangguran secara signifikan.

**Kata Kunci:** Covid-19; Kesenjangan Gender; Pengangguran; Kebijakan Pemerintahan Australia; Pasar Tenaga Kerja

## INTRODUCTION

The Corona virus outbreak or commonly called the COVID-19 pandemic has become a problem that has made the whole world focus on resolving the outbreak. All countries have finally made regulations for their respective countries by implementing unprecedented policies, such as social restrictions. In addition to forcing people to stay at home without activity, of course, globally they also face new challenges in maintaining and running their economic activities. COVID-19 hit the global market hard, which also affected the labor market because there was a significant decline in income and workers all over the world. Many companies eventually went bankrupt or were forced to reduce the number of workers by having Layoffs (PHK) due to reduced working hours which then affected the number of workers. Reporting from data in 2020, in the Asia and Pacific region, there was a decrease in the number of workers by 3.2% from the previous year, or around 61.8 million workers (Kemenkeu.go.id, 2021). The impact of layoffs is an increase in unemployment. Data shows that in 2020 the unemployment rate in Asia and the Pacific experienced a very large increase of 18% compared to 2019 or around 101.1 million unemployed (Kemenkeu.go.id, 2021).

In the case of Australia itself, the first case of Covid-19 was confirmed on January 25, 2020, where on January 20, WHO declared the global outbreak as a public health emergency of international concern. The corona virus outbreak then developed very rapidly until on March 1, 2020, the Australian Government announced the first death caused by COVID-19. As the COVID-19 Pandemic continues to evolve, the Australian Government is engaging in a wide range of activities and actions undertaken by a range of Australian Public Service departments and agencies. (Parliament of Australia, 2020). Then, in response to the development of this coronavirus, the Australian Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments took steps to reduce the transmission of COVID-19, including through the implementation of 'lockdowns', social distancing requirements, and restrictions on lo-

cal and international travel. (Department of Health Australia, 2021).

This lockdown policy certainly has many significant impacts, not only for Australia, but also for all countries globally. Various aspects from all sides are affected by the existence of distance restrictions both on a national and international scale. One aspect affected by this lockdown is the reduction in the workforce in Australia. As reported by ABC News, the Chief Economist of the Regional Australia Institute said the government needed to ensure that they had enough overseas migrant population to flow into non-metropolitan areas. The federal government's population statement in 2022 projected less than 17 percent of overseas migration would flow into regional Australia in the coming year, and the Regional Australia Institute believes the government should set the ideal number at 40 percent (ABC News, 2023). From what was mentioned earlier, it can be seen that Australia needs skilled workers from overseas to be channeled to areas around Australia and the COVID-19 pandemic has shown the negative impact of the lack of skilled workers.

Of the many impacts faced by Australia which had to implement restrictions, Australia's unemployment rate also appears to have increased with this pandemic. According to data published by the Australian Parliament, those most affected by the pandemic's social restrictions are young workers and women, in addition, freelancers also have a worse impact than permanent employees in terms of work and hours lost during the pandemic, this is due to them being unable to qualify for Job Keeper payments. From the impact faced by these workers, the unemployment rate of the population aged 15 years and over has increased significantly from 5.3% in March 2020 just before the pandemic to 7.4% in June and July 2020 as a form of impact of the lockdown imposed by the government for the spread of COVID-19 (Parliament of Australia, n.d).

This issue is in line with research conducted by Churchill (2020) which shows that many young people are affected by job losses because it is common for them to do part-time jobs. The industries most affected by the pandemic

are retail, food and beverage, arts, and recreation. As a result, many young people not only lose their jobs, but also do not qualify for high wage subsidies. Churchill's research shows that, compared to parents, young people's labor force participation is lower and results in a significant increase in unemployment. This study also discusses the gender perspective dimension. Young women may be more likely to work in the most affected industries, in contrast to young men who are concentrated in construction, manufacturing, and retail. Therefore, the need for government participation to invest in related industries.

Research by Guven et al (2020) also showed a decrease in Labor Force Participation of 2.1% and an increase in unemployment of 1.1%, a decrease in full-time employment of 4% and a decrease in weekly working hours of 1 hour. It was also shown that Australians have been less employed since the beginning of Covid-19 and after the lockdown due to insufficient employment opportunities or because those who have left or lost their jobs. On the other hand, migrant workers who cannot work from home and have short working periods are more likely to become unemployed due to the lockdown.

Research by Symington (2021) shows that migrant workers are affected. The Australian government has made efforts for temporary migrant workers who work in sectors such as health, aged and disability care, agriculture and food processing to remain employed and can receive financial support. However, for migrant workers who rely on savings or superannuation funds - in the case of new arrivals or students - they may not receive much support, so if it is not enough they will be forced to be laid off again. This study avoids the conclusion that the lack of federal support for migrant workers is part of a broader regulation and governance that creates a sharp gap between citizens and non-citizens.

The pandemic will continue to raise new and pressing legal issues for the Australian government, as well as for employers and workers. While pressing legal challenges will continue to require reactive policy responses, this is also an opportune time to review the structural barriers to fair and equal employment in

the Australian labour market (Orifinci, 2021). Therefore, the author would like to analyze more deeply the Australian government's policy on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the workforce in Australia through questions "What policies has the Australian government implemented to address the workforce crisis and rising unemployment in Australia post-Covid?"

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### Foreign Policy

According to K.J. Holsti, foreign policy is an action or view made to solve problems or create change in the international world (Holsti, 1983). Each country has different foreign policy goals, but in fact the goal of the country is to set policies to meet and achieve its personal and collective interests. K.J. Holsti groups foreign policy goals into three main criteria, including values that state the goals of the country as the main factor when encouraging policy makers based on the resources they have in order to achieve goals, time elements related to the time period in achieving goals, and finally the type of goal demands that involve the burden of the target country from the country making foreign policy (Holsti, 1983). In general, a country implements foreign policy in order to influence other countries, maintain national security, have a position, and provide benefits for its country.

According to Rosenau, foreign policy is actually a goal that is the result of a country's goal-setting process that is influenced by the past and aspirations for the future (Rosenau, 1969). In the context of foreign policy, there is usually a desire to expand a country's own power over other countries. The struggle to gain this power is depicted in the form of development at the expense of other countries and protection of what has been previously obtained from the plunder of other countries. The UN General Assembly has long emphasized the principle that if enough members are affected by a country's actions against its own citizens, then the action is no longer domestic, because many types of domestic actions that have external impacts are not foreign policy

(Rosenau, 1969).

The author uses Rosenau's Adaptive Foreign Policy Behavior model analysis to find answers to the Australian government's ongoing actions in dealing with the labor crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic. Life and death, freedom and slavery, prosperity and poverty, that is what is part of the focus of foreign policy (Rosenau, 1970). Foreign policy has to do with many important things, so that the perspective that treats it only as a phenomenon that must be explained. The existence of state participation in a relevant issue has a motive behind it which is seen as a manifestation of the salient environment or means that a country's efforts are seen to adapt and follow every change that has an impact on what its country needs (Rosenau, 1970). Therefore, the changes that occur in this international structure will follow a process of selecting the best so that the country can have a plan and strategy for that change. With this Adaptive Behavior concept, a foreign policy can be influenced by Internal Change, External Change, and leadership roles.

## DISCUSSION

### Overview of Australia's COVID-19 Workforce Crisis

The development of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in significant disruption to the Australian labour market, with an earlier decline in economic activity due to restrictions imposed to mitigate the impact of the virus. During the pandemic, many people lost their jobs or had their hours reduced. There has also been a significant decline in job mobility, indicating a reluctance to change jobs or a reduced likelihood of changing jobs (Black & Chow, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020 and has had a significant impact on Australia's employment sector. Since the start of the pandemic, it is projected that the country has lost around 800,000 jobs. During the critical period between March and April 2020, the unemployment rate increased from 5.4% to 11.7%, indicating a direct impact of the lockdown policies adopted to contain the spread of the virus. In April 2020, the Australian Bu-

reau of Statistics announced that the unemployment rate had increased to 6.2% from 5.2% with 594,300 jobs lost as a result of the lockdown policies.

Australia's industrial relations in 2020 was marked by the impact of COVID-19 on the labour market and the responses of key industry stakeholders. Australia's already serious labour market gaps have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Clibborn, 2021). Clibborn also added that COVID-19 has directly exacerbated existing labour market inequalities. These issues include the gender pay gap between male and female workers, stagnant wage growth, and employer non-compliance with minimum wage laws. In response to job losses and business closures in early 2020, the Australian government announced the \$130 billion JobKeeper program, which will provide around 6 million workers with a wage subsidy of \$1,500 every two weeks to cover essential expenses during lockdown and unemployment. The program is available to full-time, part-time, tradespeople and casual workers who have been with their employer for 12 months or more.

In addition, the JobSeeker payment has been introduced for short-term casual workers, who are paid \$550 every two weeks. An estimated 1 million casual workers in Australia have been with their current employer for less than a year. More than 26% are young people aged 15 to 24, four times the number of workers aged 25 and over. While JobKeeper provides benefits to many part-time workers, around 950,000 casual workers are excluded from the scheme. These workers are predominantly employed in the housing, food service, retail, health care and social support sectors, with women making up the majority of casual workers (Cassells & Ducan, 2020). As a result, young people who are employed are unemployed and ineligible for wage support. The vast majority of these young people are women (Munawar et al., 2021).

The majority of COVID-19 projects have focused on infrastructure development, with a focus on men. This has widened the gender gap in Australia's highly gender-segregated labour market, and the employment gap be-



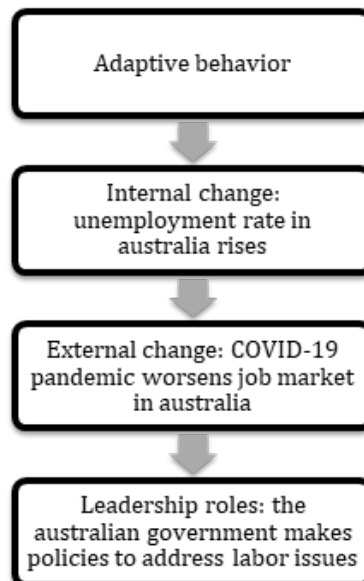
tween men and women remains significant. Women's employment fell by 7.6% from March to May during the first wave of the pandemic, while men's employment fell by 5.9%. Women's hours worked fell by 10.8%, compared with 7.4% for men. Women's labour force participation fell during the pandemic to 3.7%, compared with 2.8% for men. This decline was largely due to the significant concentration of women in part-time employment in service-oriented industries that were impacted by the pandemic, particularly retail, hospitality and food services. (Foley & Williamson, 2021).

The author uses an adaptive behavior approach to analyze Australian government policies to address post-COVID-19 employment issues between 2020 and 2022. The policies implemented by the Australian government during this period demonstrate a flexible response to changes in labor market conditions caused by the pandemic. The idea of adaptive behavior emphasizes the need for countries to adapt to international political dynamics, especially on topics that are fundamentally relevant and affect their domestic structures. Rosenau uses the comparison that the state is a national society, while the international framework is an environment. The motivation of state interests or participation in relevant issues is known as a manifestation of the salient environment.

In facing and responding to the COVID-19

pandemic, the Australian government must provide an adaptive response so that the effects of the pandemic are not prolonged. According to data from the Australia Update by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2020), explained by Katherine Tuck, a Senior Representative of the Australian Treasury Department in Southeast Asia, that during the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a drastic decline in sectors such as trade in services and tourism which gave a drastic decline of up to 8.5% for unemployment. In addition to reducing the effects of the pandemic, the Australian government must determine strategic efforts to reduce unemployment by opening up jobs that are expected to be present in 2021-2022 through economic recovery policies. In implementing the economic recovery strategy, there are 2 phases that will be implemented, namely the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan which will continue to carry out economic recovery until at least the unemployment rate reaches below 6% and the medium-term fiscal strategy which will focus on economic growth to achieve stable status by reducing debt, such as accumulating a budget of \$ 111 billion in 2020-2021. In addition, the government also implemented policies such as the Job Keeper Policy, Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements (BAC), Completing Apprenticeship Commencements (CAC), and Working Holiday Visa (WHV) to overcome employment problems.

Figure 1.



## Job Keeper Policy

The economic instability experienced by Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic has given impetus to the government's vision of a business-centric economic recovery. In this regard, the Australian government positions evolution as essential to ensuring businesses can operate efficiently, productively and flexibly, thereby helping to drive economic performance. In response to the impact of COVID-19, in March 2020 the Australian government included a substantial stimulus package in the form of JobKeeper and JobSeeker payments with subsidies of AUD 189 billion. This program builds community development in the business sector as the core of economic recovery (O'Keeffe & Papadopoulos, 2021). This policy runs for a year until March 2021 which is divided into two phases. With a total budget of AUD 189 billion, this program is one of the largest efforts by the Australian government to deal with the economic crisis, especially in the workforce sector.

In the midst of the Covid 19 pandemic that has forced people to maintain distance and implement social restrictions, this program focuses on maintaining workforce stability and preventing mass layoffs by providing weekly subsidies for workers. This program includes 2 main components, namely wage subsidies and short-term working hours. Instead of carrying out massive layoffs, this program regulates short working hours so that all workers in a company can continue to work. With this rule, workers are still employed according to the contract even though their working hours must be reduced. To overcome reduced income due to reduced working hours, this program provides wage subsidies as compensation when workers are not working (Walkowiak, 2021).

JobKeeper as an Australian government program was introduced in response to rising unemployment due to business closures or substantial reductions in operations during the pandemic. The JobKeeper program provides employers with payments of AUD 1,500 per fortnight for all eligible workers (O'Keeffe & Papadopoulos, 2021). Workers who have been unemployed will receive a JobSeeker pay-

ment of AUD 500 per fortnight which was initially budgeted at AUD 130 billion then revised down to AUD 100 billion. Of course this is the most expensive Australian government spending in history. JobKeeper increased the total cost of the government's economic pandemic response to AUD 320 billion or 16.4% of GDP (Mark, 2021). The JobKeeper program runs for one year which is divided into two phases: the first phase (March - September 2020) and the second phase (October 2020 - March 2021). In the first phase, the program provided a wage subsidy of AUD 750 per week for each affected worker, which was then reduced in the second phase by adjusting working hours.

The program successfully increased around 700,000 jobs during the first phase and increased to 812,000 by the end of the second phase within a year (Borland & Hunt, 2023). In addition to reducing unemployment, this program also plays an important role in people's purchasing power and consumer confidence which ultimately helps the overall recovery of the Australian economy. In addition, the government also expanded JobKeeper eligibility for permanent or part-time workers, long-term casual workers, Australian citizens, permanent residents, and residents for tax purposes (O'Keeffe & Papadopoulos, 2021).

Despite having a broad payment system, JobKeeper has loopholes that can be criticized. There are several important exceptions for contract workers, most temporary immigrants, workers in the entertainment and arts sector, and workers at public universities (Clibborn, 2021). The existence of these loopholes makes Australia have quite serious challenges in implementing this JobKeeper program. The government has missed an opportunity to address the gender wage gap. As previously known, women have been negatively impacted by the pandemic in the labor market with a gap in income received by women. In addition, JobKeeper also faces a great risk of exploitation with the loss of opportunity for the 2021 IR Bill to address non-compliance and confusion of employers over their freelance workers. The criminal sanctions set are likely to be ineffective in preventing employers from violating minimum wage laws (Clibborn, 2021).

Table 1

Description	First Phase (March-September 2020)	Second Phase (October – March 2021)
Amount of Assistance for Workers	AUD 1500 per fortnight	AUD 1200 per fortnight for employees working more than 20 hours a week and AUD 750 for those working less than 2 weeks
Total Number of Jobs	700.000	812.000

Source:

A comparison of the first and second phases of the Jobkeeper program is as follows: (See Table 1)

### **Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements (BAC) dan Completing Apprenticeship Commencements (CAC)**

Another effort implemented by the Australian Government in order to recover from the impact of COVID-19 is the launch of the Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements (BAC) and Completing Apprenticeship Commencements (CAC) programs. Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements (BAC) is a subsidy program that supports businesses and training organizations in recruiting new apprentices and trainees, in order to build a skilled workforce that supports sustainable economic recovery. Through the BAC wage subsidy, any business or training organization that employs Australian apprentices between 5 October 2020 and 30 June 2022 can receive a wage subsidy of 50 percent of the wages paid to new apprentices or trainees for a period of 12 months from the start date, with a maximum of \$7,000 per quarter (Master Builders Association New South Wales, 2021).

Any business receiving the BAC wage subsidy will also be eligible for additional support through the Completing Apprenticeship Commencements (CAC) wage subsidy. Eligible employers supporting apprentices or trainees through the BAC will be transferred to the CAC wage subsidy for the second and third years of their apprenticeship. Through the CAC, eligible employers will receive a wage

subsidy of 10 per cent in the second year of the apprenticeship, up to \$1,500 per quarter - per apprentice or trainee (CAC1), and a wage subsidy of 5 per cent in the third year, up to \$750 per quarter - per apprentice (CAC2). The implementation deadline for the BAC and CAC programs is 30 June 2022. (Master Builders Association New South Wales, 2021).

### **Working Holiday Visa (WHV)**

The Working Holiday program scheme was introduced in Australia in 1975, where the Working Holiday program is a reciprocal agreement between Australia and certain countries in providing opportunities for young people to live and work in Australia at a specified time. There are two subclasses that cover this program, namely the Working Holiday Visa in subclass 417 and the Work and Holiday Visa in subclass 462 (Robertson, 2014). Thus, it can be seen that the WHV program is one of the Australian government's policies aimed at helping to meet the workforce and strengthen Australia's international relations with other countries.

The time period and age limit set for WHV applicants in both subclasses are no different, where in both subclasses 417 and 462 the age limit is 18-30 years with a period of 12 months, except in subclass 417 the maximum age limit is 35 years allowed for certain countries such as France, Canada, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, and the United Kingdom (Fodor, 2024).

Meanwhile, the difference between subclasses 417 and 462 lies in the countries that

Table 2

Condition	Subclass 417	Subclass 462
States	Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Taiwan, United Kingdom	Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Chile, China, Czech Republic, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Israel, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Poland, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, United States, Uruguay, Vietnam
Education	There is no minimum education requirement	Have a minimum requirement of vocational education or diploma
English Language Skills	No proof of English proficiency required	Proof of English proficiency test required
Recommendation Letter	No	Yes

Source: Processed by the author via the Visafirst (2024) and Narasi.tv (2024) pages

meet the requirements in each class, the countries that meet the requirements are as follows: (See Table 2)

With a high degree of control over the manner, circumstances and duration of migrant workers' participation in its labour market, Australia is able to create incentives for migrant workers to take low-paid, low-skilled jobs for short periods of time. On the other hand, the Australian government has the capacity to remove these incentives through migration and employment law reform (Reilly et al, 2018).

Following the decline in the number of WHV workers in Australia due to the COVID-19 pandemic, from January 2022 to June 2023, regulations were implemented where visa holders working in any sector in Australia were allowed to work for the same employer or organization for more than six months without requesting permission from the department. In addition, since 2022, the Australian government has also provided many opportunities and made agreements with subclass countries 417 and 462 to support economic strength after the COVID-19 pandemic (Department of Home Affairs Australia, 2023).

However, there are many loopholes that can criticize the implementation of this WHV

policy. A study identified that employment providers or Working Holiday Makers (WHM) are vulnerable to various types of exploitation and losses in Australia. Some of these include wage theft, exploitation of secondary service providers, workplace injuries, racism, sexism, gender discrimination, and sexual harassment (James, 2022). Clear regulations and strict sanctions are needed by the government or authorities against acts of exploitation or losses suffered by these WHV migrant workers, considering the reciprocal relationship between service providers and employment providers. With the losses given, it not only discredits Australia as a service provider country, but also has the potential to lose trust given by countries that cooperate with Australia in the future.

There was a decrease in WHV registrants during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the implementation of the lockdown policy which prevented many people from entering Australia for holidays and work. However, post-COVID-19, in order to recover the shortage of workers and the Australian economy, the government opened a larger WHV quota compared to the years before COVID-19. As a result, many young people, especially generation Z, have made WHV an alternative job choice amidst the employment crisis, especially in Indonesia (Tirto.id, 2024).



Figure 2.



Sumber: GoodStats, 2024

Quoted from the Tirto.id page, in the second semester of 2022, there were around 1,754 Indonesians applying for WHV for the first time, this number increased by 93,5 percent by the end of 2023 to reach 3,394 applicants. In this period, Indonesia became the country with the most WHV recipients for the subclass category 462, beating the US, Thailand, Spain, and Argentina (Tirto.id, 2024). The total number of WHV recipients from Indonesia was 2,984 in the period and 4,285 in the 2023-2024 period after the lowest decrease at 262 in the 2021-2022 period. This is a form of good relations between Australia and Indonesia in various fields of economy, politics, and social (GoodStats, 2024) (See Figure 2).

The surge in interest in WHV in recent periods shows the enthusiasm of various groups in exploring the outside world while building their dream career. Reported from the Work In Australia page (2023) after the COVID-19 pandemic in 2023, the United Kingdom became the first largest contributor of WHV workers, France became the second largest contributor of WHV workers with 16,792 in March 2023, followed by Ireland with 14,989 workers aged 18--35 years, then Italy with 9,865, and the top five were held by South Korea with 8,890 young people working in the first quarter of 2023.

Although the total as of 31 March 2023 of 136,621 is still relatively low compared to the peak of 141,142 on 31 December 2019, there is

still an expectation of increasing WHV workers coming to Australia, especially in subclass 417, so that if totaled until the end of the quarter or even the end of the year, this number should far exceed pre-COVID-19 levels (Paff, 2023).

This is proven by the opportunities through agreements that Australia has made with other countries through its trade agreements, the Australian government has succeeded in increasing the number of WHV workers from both subclasses 417 and 462. With subclass 417 countries for example. Australia's trade agreement with the United Kingdom which will take effect at the end of 2023, on which occasion there will be relaxation of trade and visa regulations between the two countries. In addition, this free trade agreement will also change the regulations that applicants can apply for a visa up to the age of 35 and stay for three years after previously only years with a maximum age of 30 years (Lowrey, 2023).

Quoted from the CNN Indonesia page (2020), the increase in Indonesian WHV recipients is also a form of policy implemented by the Australian government through cooperation with subclass 462 countries through the IA-CEPA (Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement) cooperation by adding the number of WHV quotas. The Indonesian government has designed a quota that will be increased fivefold over six

years once the IA-CEPA cooperation is implemented, the increase in the quota which was initially only 1,000 will increase to 4,100 to 5,000 in the next six years.

The success of the Australian government in increasing the workforce through temporary migrant workers through WHV can be seen from the increase in the number of WHV recipients until June 2024. The cooperation and agreements made by the Australian government in the economic sector and

reviving the labor crisis that occurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic are a form of policy adaptation that the author has previously mentioned. Where the Australian government must be able to adapt to the conditions and issues that have and are happening such as the last pandemic, so the government must be able to make policies that are in accordance with conditions and circumstances - not only the country, but also globally. (See Figure 3 & Figure 4).

Figure 3.

4.03 Working Holiday Maker visa holders in Australia at 31 December 2023 by visa type and visa subclass - comparison with previous four periods

Visa Subclass	31/12/21	30/06/22	31/12/22	30/06/23	31/12/23
<b>417 Working Holiday</b>					
First visa	1,675	21,960	71,428	83,184	105,107
Second visa	6,541	1,030	4,624	12,391	22,055
Third visa	6,794	4,256	1,098	1,349	2,058
Onshore nil VAC visa	0	3,439	12,395	10,431	5,424
Offshore nil VAC visa	86	2,034	3,919	2,852	1,858
<b>All 417 Working Holiday</b>	<b>15,096</b>	<b>32,719</b>	<b>93,464</b>	<b>110,207</b>	<b>136,502</b>
<b>462 Work and Holiday</b>					
First visa	257	4,447	12,314	18,280	22,657
Second visa	1,539	299	2,00	4,967	7,926
Third visa	2,344	1,402	38	805	1,661
Onshore nil VAC visa	0	739	2,82	2,365	1,206
Offshore nil VAC visa	88	1,306	1,348	767	485
<b>All 462 Work and Holiday</b>	<b>4,228</b>	<b>8,193</b>	<b>18,871</b>	<b>27,184</b>	<b>33,935</b>

Source: Working Holiday Maker Visa Programme Report - December 2023

Figure 4.

4.03 Working Holiday Maker visa holders in Australia at 30 June 2024 by visa type and visa subclass - comparison with previous four periods

Visa Subclass	30/06/22	31/12/22	30/06/23	31/12/23	30/06/24
<b>417 Working Holiday</b>					
First visa	21,960	71,428	83,184	105,107	97,223
Second visa	1,030	4,624	12,391	22,055	30,432
Third visa	4,256	1,098	1,349	2,058	4,342
Onshore nil VAC visa	3,439	12,395	10,431	5,424	2,670
Offshore nil VAC visa	2,034	3,919	2,852	1,858	731
<b>All 417 Working Holiday</b>	<b>32,719</b>	<b>93,464</b>	<b>110,207</b>	<b>136,502</b>	<b>135,398</b>
<b>462 Work and Holiday</b>					
First visa	4,447	12,314	18,280	22,657	21,539
Second visa	299	2,003	4,967	7,926	12,480
Third visa	1,402	383	805	1,661	3,120
Onshore nil VAC visa	739	2,823	2,365	1,206	488
Offshore nil VAC visa	1,306	1,348	767	485	191
<b>All 462 Work and Holiday</b>	<b>8,193</b>	<b>18,871</b>	<b>27,184</b>	<b>33,935</b>	<b>37,818</b>
<b>All Working Holiday Maker</b>	<b>40,912</b>	<b>112,335</b>	<b>137,391</b>	<b>170,437</b>	<b>173,216</b>

Source: Working Holiday Maker Visa Programme Report - June 2024

## CONCLUSION

The Australian labour market has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, exposing the fragility of existing market structures. Since 2020, around 800,000 jobs have been lost. The unemployment rate jumped from 5.4% to 11.7% in just one month (March–April 2020). Gender gaps have hit women harder than men, with greater declines in employment, hours worked and participation in employment. Most casual workers, particularly women, are ineligible for key support programs such as JobKeeper, further marginalising them. The pandemic has exacerbated stagnant wage growth and employer non-compliance with the minimum wage, which were already problems before the crisis.

The Australian government's efforts to provide wage subsidies to affected workers have helped to maintain the employment relationship between employers and employees, prevent mass layoffs and maintain people's purchasing power. Subsidies to support the recruitment and training of new apprentices are creating a skilled workforce foundation for long-term economic recovery.

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