



*Office of Public Affairs
U.S. Embassy, Wellington*

September 10, 2007

U.S. WORK/HOLIDAY OPPORTUNITY FOR N.Z. TERTIARY STUDENTS

The rules that allow young New Zealanders to travel and work in the United States have been relaxed to allow stays of up to twelve months.

“This program will provide young New Zealand adventurers with a way to support themselves while they explore American culture,” said U.S. Ambassador Bill McCormick.

“From today an unlimited number of Kiwi tertiary students and recent graduates will be able to apply to work and travel in the United States for up to a year.”

The pilot program, which will run for a two-year trial period, was signed at the US-NZ Partnership Forum this morning by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill and the Chief Executive of New Zealand’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Murdoch.

Ambassador McCormick says that he knows how beneficial such experiences can be because his wife spent her O.E. in New Zealand.

“My wife Gail spent a ‘gap-year’ on a sheep farm in Winton near Invercargill in the early seventies. She made life-long friendships and learnt so much from listening to, and living among, New Zealanders. I know how much Gail valued that experience and today’s announcement will allow tomorrow’s leaders to develop their own treasured memories.”

The pilot program announced today is based on the U.S. State Department’s existing summer work travel program, which enables students to work in the United States for up to four months.

“We hope that this development encourages more young New Zealanders to spend some time living and working in the United States,” said Ambassador McCormick.

Americans have been able to work and travel in New Zealand for a year since 2004 when New Zealand implemented a unilateral Working Holiday Scheme for United States citizens. The New Zealand Working Holiday Scheme allows United States citizens aged between 18 and 30 to holiday in New Zealand for a year, and undertake incidental work while doing so. They may also study at a New Zealand institution.

“The pilot program announced today is intended to reciprocate the welcome extended by New Zealand to American students and recent graduates,” the Ambassador added.