

WHV Australia and Policy Implications for Indonesian Participants

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ABSTRACT

The Australian Working Holiday Visa (WHV) is a temporary migration policy that has become one of the most favored international migration schemes among Indonesia's young generation. This is in line with the increase in the WHV participant quota, which will reach 5,500 people by 2025. Although introduced as a "work and holiday" program, most WHV participants work in agriculture, hospitality, and several other high-risk sectors. This study aims to analyze the vulnerability of Indonesian WHV participants in Australia by conducting a case study over the period 2023-2025. This study employs qualitative methods by analyzing academic literature, official reports, and documented cases related to the vulnerabilities experienced by Indonesian WHV participants. The results show that the vulnerability of WHV participants stems from several structural weaknesses in the governance of the WHV policy. Throughout 2023-2025, there were seven published traffic accidents resulting in 10 fatalities and 5 injuries, two published cases of work accidents, and one published fraud/scam that harmed Indonesian WHV participants. Analysis using Neoliberal Institutionalism theory indicates asymmetric gains where Australia benefits more than Indonesia. Meanwhile, from a Temporary Migrant Labour perspective, it is known that WHV participants are in a state of unfree labor due to the threat of exploitation in the work environment, unfavorable immigration policies, and economic conditions that drive them to repeat migration. This research encourages improvements in Australia's WHV cooperation with Indonesia, such as providing pre-departure outreach, participant monitoring, legal protection, and effective reporting mechanisms to minimize risks for WHV participants and enhance cooperation between Indonesia and Australia.

INTRODUCTION

The development of international migration issues and studies has grown rapidly in recent decades due to the supply and demand for labor in a global context. Economic growth in several developing countries, coupled with the rise of industrialization, and labor shortages in developed countries, have created opportunities for migrant workers. Various factors contribute to labor shortages in receiving countries, including slowing population growth and the shift of domestic workers to higher-paying jobs, resulting in job vacancies in lower-middle-income sectors. Conversely, economic pressures and limited job opportunities in their countries of origin encourage migrant workers to seek employment outside their home countries. These two conditions have led to the rapid growth of global migration policy frameworks as governments seek to manage cross-border labor mobility.

The growth of international migration presents not only opportunities but also challenges for receiving countries. While migrant workers are needed, their long-term presence can raise economic, political, and social concerns for both local workers and the governments of receiving countries. Therefore, some countries have introduced temporary migration policies for foreign workers as a policy response to mitigate the risks of long-term migration. Furthermore, this scheme is considered a win-win solution for both receiving countries seeking labor and sending countries benefiting from remittances. This migration scheme is gaining popularity and is being implemented in various countries, including Europe, the United States, Australia, several East Asian countries, Malaysia, and Singapore (Piper, 2010).

In Indonesia, one of the most popular temporary migration programs is the Australian Working Holiday Visa (WHV). This program allows participants to vacation and work in Australia for a specified period, generally one year, with the option of extending for a second or third year. There are two types of WHV visas: the Working Holiday Visa (subclass 417) and the Work and Holiday Visa (subclass 462). Indonesian WHV participants from Australia fall under subclass 462 (Tourism Australia, 2025). To obtain this visa, Indonesian citizens must meet several requirements, including being 18-30 years old, having completed at least four semesters of undergraduate education, possessing English language proficiency proven by an official certificate, not bringing family members to Australia, having sufficient financial resources of approximately \$5,000 AUD, and undergoing a medical examination at a designated hospital. Furthermore, participants must obtain a Letter of Support for Working Holiday Visa (SDUWHV) from the Directorate General of Immigration of the Republic of Indonesia (Australian Embassy Indonesia, 2025).

Although introduced as a "holiday and work" program, the Working Holiday Visa (WHV) plays a broader role in filling Australia's labor needs. In his article, "Low-Cost Labor: The Legal Construction of Working Holiday Makers in Australia," Reilly points out that most WHV participants work in sectors requiring temporary labor, such as agriculture, hospitality, and several other low-skilled jobs. The temporary and highly mobile nature of the WHV visa provides flexibility for industries that tend to have high labor demand and are seasonal. According to him, WHV workers have also become a solution

to the lack of interest in domestic workers in the agricultural sector, etc. Therefore, the WHV program can be factually described as a mechanism that helps meet labor needs and boost the Australian economy, demonstrating a gap between policy design and labor market outcomes (Reilly, 2015).

Another study examining Indonesia's role in Australia's Working Holiday Visa (WHV) was conducted by Dewi and Setiawati, entitled "A Critique Towards Australian Work and Holiday Visa Subclass 462: Where Does It Leave Indonesian Citizens?". Dewi and Setiawati analyzed the WHV cooperation between Australia and Indonesia within the framework of bilateral legal and policy analysis of both countries. The study stated that WHV participants find themselves in a "legal grey zone" that undermines their access to employment protections, occupational safety standards, and effective oversight mechanisms. They also emphasized that both receiving and sending countries lack adequate governance instruments to ensure equal protection for Indonesian citizens (Dewi & Setiawati, 2020). This situation reflects a structural weakness in the governance of the WHV policy.

Research conducted by Reilly (2015) has explained that the WHV program serves as a vital labor source for the agricultural and hospitality sectors in Australia. Meanwhile, research by Dewi and Setiawati (2020) focuses more on the legal regulations and cooperation mechanisms between Indonesia and Australia regarding the Working Holiday Visa (WHV). However, there remains a lack of policy-oriented empirical analysis that evaluates how the governance of the WHV scheme affects the vulnerability of Indonesian participants. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by discussing the vulnerabilities of Indonesian-born Australian WHV participants more comprehensively, examining them through the lens of Neoliberal Institutionalism theory to explain why WHV participants are so vulnerable to the prevailing employment system.

Building on this policy gap, this study examines how the governance of the Australian–Indonesian Working Holiday Visa (WHV) scheme shapes the vulnerability of Indonesian participants. Rather than focusing solely on migration dynamics, the study analyzes WHV as a temporary migration policy and assesses its institutional design, implementation, and protection mechanisms. Using a Neoliberal Institutionalism perspective, this study seeks to explain how patterns of cooperation and asymmetric gains influence policy outcomes for Indonesian WHV participants. Accordingly, the main research question addressed is: "How does the governance of the Australian–Indonesian WHV scheme affect the vulnerability of Indonesian participants?"

Institutional Neoliberalism provides a useful analytical framework for understanding international cooperation in migration governance. This perspective argues that cooperation between states can be sustained through international institutions, even in an anarchic international system, as states remain rational and interest-oriented while recognizing the long-term benefits of coordination. International institutions help reduce uncertainty, facilitate information exchange, and stabilize interactions by establishing agreed-upon rules and expectations. However, Institutional Neoliberalism also acknowledges the problem of asymmetric gains within cooperative arrangements, where some states benefit more than others despite formal cooperation mechanisms (Keohane, 1984). This concept is particularly relevant for analyzing bilateral migration schemes, such as the Australian–Indonesian Working Holiday Visa (WHV), where institutional arrangements may generate unequal outcomes between receiving and sending countries.

To further understand the implications of temporary migration policies at the worker level, this study also draws on the Temporary Migrant Labour perspective developed by Piper (2010). Piper argues that temporary migration schemes are often designed as short-term solutions to labor shortages in receiving countries, prioritizing economic efficiency while limiting migrants' rights, social integration, and family reunification. As a result, temporary migrant workers are positioned as replaceable labor with limited legal protection, creating systemic vulnerability. Although originally examined in the Asian context, Piper emphasizes that this model has become a global labor architecture, including in developed countries such as Australia (Piper, 2010). Together, Institutional Neoliberalism and the Temporary Migrant Labour perspective provide an analytical lens to examine the Working Holiday Visa as a temporary migration policy. These perspectives help explain how institutional design, asymmetric benefits, and limited protection mechanisms contribute to the vulnerability experienced by Indonesian WHV participants within the Australia–Indonesia cooperation framework.

METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach to examine a social phenomenon by analyzing and interpreting data within its specific context (Creswell, 2014). The primary focus of this research is the Working Holiday Visa (WHV) program in Australia and the challenges faced by Indonesian WHV participants, particularly in relation to the impact of Indonesian and Australian policies on the WHV experience. To conduct the research, the author engaged in participatory observation over six months (from December 2024 to May 2025) as a WHV participant in Bunbury, Western Australia. This hands-on experience allowed the author to gain valuable insights through direct observation and informal conversations with fellow WHV participants. It also provided a deeper understanding of the administrative processes involved and allowed the author to personally experience the position of a temporary migrant worker. However, it is important to note that formal interviews were not conducted, and therefore, interviews are not included as part of the methodology in this research, nor are any citations from interviews provided.

In addition to primary data, the author gathered secondary information through literature research, consulting academic texts, theoretical books, journal articles, and relevant official documents. The data was purposively selected to focus on sources that directly related to the research topic and contributed to understanding the WHV as part of the broader international migration framework. The collected data was then analyzed using the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which involves the steps of data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification.

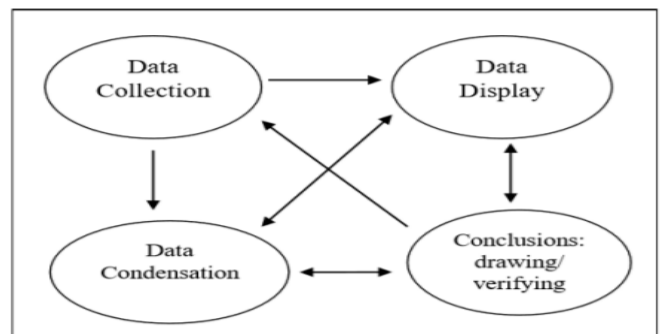


Figure 1. Interactive Model Data Analysis (Miles, et al., 2014)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

History and Dynamics of the Australia-Indonesia WHV Partnership

Australia's Working Holiday Visa (WHV) program began in 1975 as a migration program to address the country's labor shortage. Initially, the program was only intended for citizens of the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Canada, and today, it has expanded to 44 partner countries. Australia has two types of WHV visas: the Working Holiday Visa (subclass 417) and the Work and Holiday Visa (subclass 462). Generally, participants aged 18-30 are eligible for this program, or 18-35 for Canada, France, and Ireland. WHV participants can stay in Australia for 12 months, provided they work for a maximum of six months with a single employer. WHV participants can obtain visa extensions for the second and third years, provided they work for a specified period in the agribusiness, tourism, and hospitality sectors (Dewi & Setiawati, 2020). From Institutional Neoliberalism perspective, the WHV partnership reflects a form of sustained cooperation between Australia and Indonesia through agreed rules and procedures (Keohane, 1984).

Cooperation between Australia and Indonesia in implementing the Working Holiday Visa (WHV) began with a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the Indonesian Minister of Law and Human Rights, Andi Mattalatta, and the Australian Minister of Immigration and Population, Chris Evans, in Jakarta on March 3, 2009. Several requirements that must be met by prospective Indonesian WHV participants from Australia include: being 18-30 years old; not bringing family members (spouse, children) while living in Australia; meeting financial, health, and character requirements; possessing functional English language skills; having completed two years of undergraduate education; and possessing a Letter of Support for WHV (SDUWHV) from the Indonesian Ministry of Law and Human Rights. At the beginning of the program, the quota for Indonesian WHV participants was 100 people per year (Australian Embassy Indonesia, 2009). The MoU formalized the WHV framework and provided predictable rules that facilitated the continuity of cooperation between Australia and Indonesia.

Since the agreement in 2009, the quota for Indonesian WHV participants from Australia has increased annually. In 2025, the WHV quota for Indonesia will be 5,500 participants (Salsabila & Kasih, 2025). The increase in the WHV quota is in line with the increasing interest of prospective WHV participants in Indonesia due to the increasing openness of information about WHV on social media. Throughout the 2023-2024 period, the Australian Government approved 4,578 first-year WHVs, 3,516 second-year WHVs, and 922 third-year WHVs. In total, the number reached 9,016 people, amounting to 22.2% of the total WHV visas issued by the Australian Government to all countries in the same period. During that period, 55% of the total WHV obtained was granted in the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sector. Around 35.5% was granted in the accommodation and food services sector, while 2.9% was in the construction sector (Indonesian Embassy in Canberra, 2025). This increase demonstrates the urgency for the Indonesian and Australian governments to provide protection for WHV participants. The continuous expansion of the WHV quota suggests that the program delivers tangible benefits, particularly in addressing labor shortages in key sectors.

The author used Google Trends to assess the popularity of an issue based on online searches. The researcher used the

keyword "WHV Australia" for the period 2020 to 2025. Google Trends data shows a sharp increase in public interest in the Australian WHV program between 2020 and 2025, with the most significant growth occurring after 2022 (Google Trends, 2025). This upward trend illustrates that public interest in Australian WHVs has grown rapidly since 2022, indicating an increasingly strong public response to Australian WHV visa information (Google Trends, 2025). This growing public interest also reflects the formation of long-term expectations surrounding the WHV scheme.

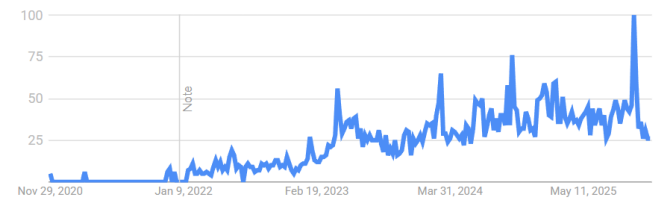


Figure 2. Google Trends Data Graph for the Keyword “WHV Australia” (Google Trends, 2025)

The growing interest of Indonesian participants in the Australian WHV Program, as reflected in data on WHV visa recipients and increasing search trends based on Google Trends, indicates that this program is a highly sought-after international mobility program. This growth also presents an opportunity for young Indonesians to gain international work experience and earn higher incomes than those employed domestically. However, this does not guarantee that the WHV program will be completely smooth. Discussions regarding the safety of WHV participants, from departure preparation to the implementation of their WHV in Australia, have not yet been a focus for both countries. WHV jobs, often in the agriculture and hospitality sectors, place them at high risk of occupational vulnerability. Therefore, the author will discuss the vulnerability of Indonesian Australian WHV participants in the next section. However, this institutional expansion has not been matched by adequate protection mechanisms for WHV participants, an issue commonly observed in temporary migration schemes (Keohane, 1984; Piper, 2010).

Vulnerabilities of Indonesian Australian Working Holiday Visa (WHV) Participants

Working Holiday Visa (WHV) participants in Australia receive legal protection through several regulations, such as: the Migration Act 1958, which serves as Australia's immigration regulatory framework; migration regulations governing each visa category, including the rights and conditions attached to each visa; and the Fair Work Act 2009, which regulates employment and the relationship between employers and employees. Furthermore, each state and territory also has regulations governing employment and migrants, for example, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Discrimination Act, the Fair Work Act, the Sexual Discrimination Act 1984, and the Racial Discrimination Act. Despite these various legal regulations, WHV participants appear not to be fully protected (Dewi & Setiawati, 2020). Despite these various legal regulations, WHV participants appear not to be fully protected, indicating weaknesses in monitoring and enforcement mechanisms (Keohane, 1984).

In 2015, the University of New South Wales (UNSW) Human Rights Clinic reported on the mistreatment of migrant workers, including: unpaid wages or wages below the minimum wage requirement; excessive working hours; working conditions; physical and sexual harassment; discrimination

and unfair dismissal; housing, living conditions, and cost of living; access to state-provided services; forced labor and human trafficking. Several other cases have also been reported, including workers receiving lower wages for tax evasion; employers failing to provide pay slips required for visa extensions; wage disparities between migrant and local workers; cases of prostitution and human trafficking; and the issue of workers without official visa documents (Dewi & Setiawati, 2020). These patterns reflect the structural vulnerabilities commonly found in temporary migration schemes that prioritize labor efficiency over worker protection (Piper, 2010).

Another issue contributing to the vulnerability of migrant workers is the language requirement, which only covers functional English, which tends to be sufficient for basic daily living needs. Accessing support services, complaint mechanisms, or reporting exploitation requires more advanced language skills. Furthermore, the involvement of WHV participants in work in rural areas far from urban centers makes it difficult for them to obtain protection, including limited public transportation and minimal infrastructure such as internet access. The absence of a specific institution regulating the protection of WHV participants, especially at the remote regional level, makes participants even more vulnerable to potential exploitation (Dewi & Setiawati, 2020). Limited language proficiency and geographic isolation in rural and regional areas further increase dependency on employers and reduce access to protection mechanisms.

From a legal perspective, Indonesia has Law No. 39 of 2004 and Law No. 18 of 2017 concerning the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers. Both laws stipulate that Indonesian workers can only seek employment abroad if the country in question has signed an agreement with Indonesia regarding worker placement. Although Indonesia and Australia have a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on WHV cooperation, the agreement stipulates that the primary purpose of the activity is "Work and Vacation," thus providing no legal protection for Indonesian WHV participants. Therefore, the issuance of the WHV Support Letter (SDUWHV) remains the responsibility of the Directorate General of Immigration at the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, not the ministry responsible for migrant workers. This is despite the fact that most WHV participants participate in the program to work in Australia. Ultimately, all WHV participants are left to rely solely on the Australian employment system (Dewi & Setiawati, 2020). This regulatory gap reflects weak coordination between sending and receiving states, leaving WHV participants outside comprehensive labor protection frameworks.

Dewi & Setiawati's concerns about the dangers posed by the vulnerability of the WHV system for Indonesian participants have now come true. With the total number of Indonesian WHV participants reaching 9,000 annually between 2023 and 2024, from the first to the third year, the potential for exploitation of WHV participants is highly likely. The requirement for WHV participants to work in the agriculture, tourism, and hospitality sectors in rural/regional areas to obtain visa extensions further erodes their protection. Researchers generally categorize WHV participants' vulnerabilities into several categories: workplace accidents, labor exploitation, traffic accidents, and fraud (scams). These categories reflect structural constraints that limit WHV participants' ability to exit unsafe or exploitative conditions.

Most WHV participants work in industries experiencing labor shortages and often carry a high risk of injury. These

industries include agriculture and plantations, meat processing plants, mining, and construction. One Indonesian WHV participant who suffered a workplace accident was Jaya Daud Munthe. Jaya was struck by a cardboard box containing hundreds of kilograms of meat at the Southern Meats factory in Goulburn, New South Wales. In the accident, Jaya suffered a broken leg after also suffering a fractured left hand. Another workplace accident occurred when Aini Rodianto worked at a meat factory in Victoria, where her leg was scalded with hot water. Aini was hospitalized for a week and underwent surgery on her ankle and heel to replace the burnt skin. Although her medical expenses were covered by her employment agency, Aini has to live with permanent burn scars (Salim & Renaldi, 2025). These cases illustrate the heightened occupational risks faced by WHV participants working in labor-intensive sectors.

Serious injuries, illnesses, or deaths that occur at work should be reported to the local state's occupational health and safety authority. In Jaya's case, this meant reporting to SafeWork NSW. However, the company did not report Jaya's accident to SafeWork NSW and declined to comment when interviewed by the Australian ABC. The ABC also contacted WorkSafe Victoria to follow up on Aini's case, but a spokesperson said they could not comment on individual cases. This incident is quite ironic because, according to regulations, companies can be fined up to A\$50,000 (approximately Rp 545 million) if they fail to notify SafeWork of incidents involving serious injury, illness, or death (Salim & Renaldi, 2025).

Cases of vulnerability among WHV participants in the workplace are not only related to workplace accidents that directly impact workers; exploitation of workers can also be categorized as vulnerability for workers. One WHV participant from Indonesia who worked in a meat factory in Melbourne recounted being forced to work at very high speeds. However, during inspections, management would reduce the machine speed to normal to avoid being caught violating regulations. He also said that the machines were outdated and rusty. Workers were also not properly trained on how to use knives (Salim & Renaldi, 2025).

Another case of vulnerability concerns traffic accidents experienced by WHV participants, both on their way to work and during their daily commute. The vastly different driving conditions and environments often leave WHV participants unprepared for driving in Australia. The problem is that most rural and regional areas where WHV participants work lack adequate public transportation for work. Therefore, participants rely heavily on private vehicles or car-sharing among migrant workers. Factors such as fatigue from long working hours, high speed limits on some rural and regional roads, the possibility of hitting wild animals crossing the road suddenly, and extreme weather conditions such as fog and rain can increase the risk of accidents for WHV participants.

Between 2023 and 2025, researchers found at least several publications regarding traffic accidents experienced by WHV participants through online news. In 2023, there were three accidents involving Indonesian WHV participants: the accident that killed Armitha Seha Safitri in Adelaide, South Australia (SA) in July 2023 (Salim, 2023a); an accident in October 2023 that resulted in one death and three injuries in a single-vehicle accident in Elizabeth, South Australia (Salim, 2023b); and a single-vehicle accident that resulted in three deaths and two injuries after their car crashed into trees in rainy conditions on its way to work at a livestock company in

Gunnedah, outback New South Wales (Salim, Murphy & Ibrahim, 2023).

In 2024, there were two accidents involving Indonesian WHV participants. The first accident occurred in February 2024, involving WHV participants Sophie Florence and David Lim, along with a 41-year-old driver and their infant. Sophie, David, and the 41-year-old driver were pronounced dead. The two-year-old infant, who was in the back seat of the car, was taken to hospital with minor injuries. The incident occurred in New South Wales (Salim & Souisa, 2024). The second accident resulted in the deaths of WHV participants Rosanti and Fina. The two were involved in a traffic accident on Indian Ocean Drive, a highway in Western Australia. Rosanti and Fina had been in Australia for two years and had most recently worked in carrot packaging (Renaldi, 2024).

In 2025, there were two accidents involving WHV participants from Indonesia. The first accident involved Hafizin, a WHV participant from West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), on his way home from his job at a cotton plantation in Hay, New South Wales. According to police, Hafizin was on his way home with a co-worker when the pickup truck he was driving overturned. (ABC News, 2025). The second accident involved 24-year-old Siti Salma Laila Hasna from Sukabumi, West Java. Salma was involved in an accident at the intersection of King Road and Penfield Road in Virginia, South Australia. Her vehicle was hit by a truck driven by a 32-year-old man. Surprisingly, Salma was in relatively good condition, suffering only minor injuries to her face and hands and undergoing knee surgery at Lyell McEwin Elizabeth Hospital (Salim, 2025). These traffic-related incidents demonstrate that vulnerability extends beyond the workplace into daily mobility and commuting conditions. From both a Temporary Migrant Labour and Institutional Neoliberalism perspective, such risks fall outside the effective reach of existing institutional protections, revealing blind spots in policy design and inter-agency coordination (Keohane, 1984; Piper, 2010).

Another vulnerability experienced by Indonesian WHV participants is fraud. The lack of outreach and official information regarding job opportunities after WHV participants receive visa approval makes them vulnerable to misinformation from scammers. One of the victims of this scam was Dimas and Bella. Armed with information from Facebook about a fruit-picking job offer, they contacted the agent and were promised jobs in Darwin, Northern Territory (NT). Upon arriving at the airport and being picked up by the agent, they found the journey to their workplace unusually long. Upon arrival, they were placed in a house with two other workers, also from Indonesia. They were then informed that there was no information available about the fruit picking job; instead, they would have to do the more difficult work of renovating a long-abandoned orchard. The harsh working conditions led to frequent verbal abuse for perceived slow work. Furthermore, their accommodation was unsuitable, and the agency deducted their wages. Dimas and Bella managed to leave the area on foot and received a signal to seek help from the Indonesian WHV Community in the Northern Territory. This case is currently under investigation by the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia in Darwin (Kristanto, 2024). This case reflects significant information asymmetry within the WHV governance structure, highlighting weak outreach and monitoring mechanisms. The vulnerability experienced by WHV participants needs to be a shared concern to prevent similar incidents from occurring.

Table 1. Vulnerability of Australian WHV Participants from Indonesia, 2023-2025

Name	Incident Type	Location, Date	Number of Victims
Armitha Seha Safitri	Traffic Accident	SA, 11 July 2023	1 Death
Muhammad Ary Utomo Panjaitan, Ari hasan Asyari, Naufal Hisyam, dan Abdul Malik Fajar.	Traffic Accident	SA, Oct 2023	1 Death, 3 Injuries
Gunnedah incident	Traffic Accident	NSW, Dec 2023	3 Deaths, 2 Injuries
Sophie Florence, David Lim	Traffic Accident	NSW, Feb 2024	2 Deaths
Aini Rodianto	Work Accident	VIC, Apr 2024	1 Injury
Rosanti Dwi Septiyani, Fina Febriyanti	Traffic Accident	WA, Oct 2024	2 Deaths
Dimas, Bella	Scam	NT, Oct 2024	2 Victims
Khusnul Hafizin	Traffic Accident	NSW, Feb 2025	1 Death
Jaya Daud Munthe	Work Accident	NSW, Oct 2024	1 Injury
Siti Salma Laila Hasna	Traffic Accident	SA, May 2024	1 Injury

Overall, there were 10 published reports of vulnerabilities experienced by WHV participants between 2023 and 2025. Traffic accidents were the most common incident among Indonesian WHV participants, with 7 cases resulting in 10 fatalities and 5 injuries. Meanwhile, there were 2 published reports of workplace accidents involving Indonesian WHV participants, resulting in 2 injuries in New South Wales. Finally, there was 1 published report of fraud/scamming in North Australia (NA), which resulted in losses to 2 Indonesian WHV participants. This data demonstrates the vulnerability of WHV participants in both the workplace, traffic, and fraud/scamming. The author fully acknowledges that the actual number of vulnerabilities is much greater, but has not received public attention.

WHV Vulnerability Analysis and Policy Implications

The various vulnerabilities experienced by Indonesian Australian Working Holiday Visa (WHV) participants demonstrate that this migration scheme is not simply a "work and holiday" program, but also poses risks that threaten their safety while in Australia. The increasing number of people interested in and participating in the Working Holiday Visa (WHV) program, reflected in recent years, makes this issue increasingly urgent and requires critical examination. The absence of a legal structure in Indonesia that protects WHV participants from an employment perspective, coupled with the Australian government's limited ability to monitor and protect the safety of WHV participants spread across remote rural and regional areas, makes this issue a priority for the safety of Indonesian WHV participants. This condition reflects the structural characteristics of temporary migration schemes that prioritize labor mobility without corresponding protection mechanisms, thereby exposing migrant workers to systemic vulnerability (Piper, 2010).

Through the theory of institutional neoliberalism, the Working Holiday Visa (WHV) program can be understood as an international regime formed to support the interests of the

parties involved. Keohane explains that institutions function to provide information, reduce uncertainty, lower transaction costs, and build expectations about future patterns of interaction that enable countries to make credible commitments. Australia's WHV program benefits Indonesia by providing opportunities for young people to access jobs and global experience, increasing remittances, and strengthening bilateral relations. Australia, on the other hand, benefits by attracting migrant workers to address labor shortages within its own country. Within the framework of Neoliberal Institutionalism, the WHV program can be understood as an institution that facilitates stable cooperation through mutually agreed-upon rule structures and recurring patterns of interaction that strengthen trust between countries (Keohane, 1984).

On the other hand, Keohane explains that cooperation through international regimes does not always result in an equitable distribution of benefits. According to Keohane, Institutional Neoliberalism always has the potential for asymmetric gains, where one country derives greater benefits than another. With the Working Holiday Visa (WHV), Australia gains significant economic benefits through the availability of low-cost labor for sectors with high labor shortages, such as agriculture, food processing, and hospitality. Meanwhile, Indonesia's benefits tend to be limited to remittances and employment opportunities for young people. This reflects structural inequality in benefit distribution, as states may tolerate asymmetric gains within international regimes as long as overall cooperation remains advantageous (Keohane, 1984).

Nicola Piper's study of Temporary Migrant Labour provides a useful framework to understand how the WHV functions in practice as a temporary labor migration scheme. As discussed in Dewi & Setiawati's discussion, WHV program participants fall into a "legal gray area" regarding employment because it is not yet recognized as a labor migration program. However, findings indicate that most WHV participants who experience vulnerabilities are in situations within the work environment, or in the work-to-work environment. From a Temporary Migrant Labour perspective, the gap between the formal classification of WHV and its practical use as a labor program places participants in a structurally vulnerable position, where protection mechanisms lag behind the realities of work-based migration (Piper, 2010).

According to Piper, temporary migrant workers are often forced to work in 3D jobs (dirty, dangerous, difficult), a situation similar to that experienced by Australian WHV participants. The WHV program policy, which requires participants to work in agriculture, hospitality, and several other fields to obtain visa extensions, is generally implemented in rural and regional areas with a higher potential for vulnerability. Therefore, WHV participants face vulnerabilities such as work-related accidents, labor exploitation, traffic accidents, and fraud (scams), which can endanger the lives and well-being of WHV participants.

CONCLUSION

The Work and Holiday Visa (WHV) program has gained significant popularity among young Indonesians, with increasing applications and online searches. However, many participants feel disillusioned as their experience does not match the idealized portrayals promoted by influencers. These participants face several vulnerabilities, such as legal issues, inadequate protection, safety concerns, workplace challenges, uncertainty, and mental health struggles. Despite these challenges, the WHV program has continued for over 16 years.

Neoliberal institutionalism theory explains the program's longevity, emphasizing mutual benefits for both Indonesia and Australia. WHV helps Indonesia reduce unemployment while Australia addresses labor shortages. However, this relationship is asymmetric, with Australia benefiting more, while Indonesia's gains are diminished due to the vulnerabilities faced by participants. Although the WHV institution has successfully reduced transaction costs and set expectations for future interactions, it has failed to provide adequate information and reduce uncertainty, leaving participants exposed to risks.

These gaps, particularly in information provision and reducing uncertainty, reflect conditions of unfree labor for Indonesian WHV participants, who often perform dirty, dangerous, or difficult jobs. Social costs, such as separation from families, contribute to loneliness and mental health issues. To address these vulnerabilities, both the Indonesian and Australian governments should collaborate to offer balanced and comprehensive information about the program, including legal and cultural aspects. Providing clearer guidelines on legal protection and consular registration will help reduce uncertainty and enhance safety. Additionally, local governments in Indonesia can collaborate with Australian regions to better protect WHV participants, particularly those living in rural areas.

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