

The role

Working as a ranger is as varied as the environments they manage. Many of their responsibilities fall into two categories: managing natural values (making sure that the natural environment and cultural sites are protected) and visitor services (helping visitors to enjoy and understand parks). To get an idea of the many responsibilities of a ranger, let's look at some examples.

Natural values

- Protect, enhance and manage natural, recreational and cultural assets.
- Identify weeds and pest animals and eradicate or control those that hold the most threat to native plants and animals.
- Identify and protect populations of threatened or endangered animals.
- Assisting with fire suppression (firefighting)
- Promote and maintain historic assets
- Develop co-operative relationships with local indigenous groups.
- Work with volunteers on projects such as weed control, maintaining tracks and other infrastructure.
- Grant permits and oversee researchers studying within the park.
- Monitor and grant permits to businesses operating within parks, such as hydroelectricity, cafés and beekeeping.

Visitor services

- Maintain and develop visitor facilities such as toilets, picnic and camping areas, and trails for various users.
- Maintain and improve regulatory, interpretive and educational signage.
- Respond to emergency situations such as 'Search and Rescue'.
- Delivery of information, events and services to customers, schools and other stakeholders.

A diversity of roles

On a broader level, the role of a ranger involves extensive planning, researching, strategic thinking and people management to effectively balance conservation and recreational values of each asset.

In addition to rangers, Parks Victoria employs people from a diverse range of professions. These include: conservation and environmental specialists, cultural and heritage managers, engineers, marketing, media and tourism professionals, education and interpretation staff, strategic planners, accountants, and customer service and administrative officers.

What qualifications are required?

Parks Victoria highly recommends people interested in pursuing a career as a park ranger complete an appropriate tertiary qualification in Natural Resources/Park Management or related discipline. A commercial coxswain's certificate and open water diver's certificate would also be advantageous for those interested working in the marine environment.

Competition for positions at park management agencies throughout Australia is strong, with many University graduates travelling interstate to gain experience before being selected. Popular areas for paid experience include tour guiding, gardening and landscaping, zoo keeping, seasonal firefighting and tourist information centre work.



Volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to get experience in park management and to make a valuable contribution to the parks system.

Friends groups make a huge contribution to Victoria's parks and are a great way to get involved and develop contacts within the parks system. Refer to Parks Victoria's website to find a friends group near you, or contact your local park office.

Parks Victoria's Campground Host volunteer program is another great way to get experience in parks. Operating over the summer and Easter holidays, Campground Hosts are based in parks throughout Victoria to help rangers look after campgrounds and to help visitors enjoy their stay.

Indigenous employment

Parks Victoria offers a number of opportunities for Indigenous employment, including cadetships and traineeships. Opportunities for Indigenous employment are advertised in the Koori Mail, major newspapers and on the Parks Victoria website.

Where are job vacancies advertised?

Positions are advertised in major newspapers and on the Parks Victoria website. It may also be worthwhile investigating vacancies with other park management agencies throughout Australia.

Temporary, seasonal staff and work experience

Parks Victoria employs temporary staff to fill specialist project roles or to support key work periods. The popular Summer Ranger Program provides a number of opportunities for fixed term employment in Ranger/Field Service Officer roles.

