

# Forest and Fire Operations Officer and Project Fire Fighter

What you need to know about working for  
Forest Fire Management Victoria

## About DELWP

We manage Victoria's state forests, coasts, and other public land, and deliver integrated, accessible and high-quality programs, projects and services across all DELWP portfolio areas, working collaboratively with local communities and other partners. We provide high quality advice to government on forest, fire, and emergency management, and have a lead role in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from fire and other emergencies, to reduce impacts on people, property, and the environment.

As DELWP's main connection to local communities across the state, we also provide valuable intelligence on how policy and programs can be designed and delivered to better meet the needs of Victorians.

We employ a workforce of diverse, talented, and dedicated people from a broad range of professions and with specialised skills.

We are a diverse and inclusive workplace, with programs for Aboriginal inclusion, gender equality, domestic and family violence support, women in fire and emergency leadership, and male champions of change.

Our staff are critical in maintaining our collaborative, innovative and high performing culture - and creating liveable, inclusive and sustainable communities for the Victorian community.

We value work-life balance, and so we offer flexible working arrangements, access to study leave and non-discriminatory leave, along with opportunities for professional development and career growth.

### **Christine Ferguson**

Deputy Secretary, Forest, Fire and Regions

The Forest and Fire Operations Division is Victoria's public land and fire management team committed to safe and sustainable management of forest values important to the community through effective and efficient service delivery on public land.

Our intent is to take a landscape approach to managing public land for community safety, environmental conservation, economic return and recreational pursuits; whilst maintain a focus on small community facing risks.

We will lead new and innovative approaches to fire on public land, in terms of suppression, prevention, preparedness and recovery. We will be world leaders in bushfire risk reduction and bushfire suppression. We will continue to offer exceptional experiences on the public land estate by understanding the community's needs.

Forest and Fire Operation Division's people are its greatest asset, and we acknowledge their expertise, commitment and can-do attitude. We encourage a high performing culture with strong and inclusive leadership, collaborative and productive relationships, a focus on developing and empowering our people, a diverse and agile workforce, and access to flexible work arrangements. We are proactive in creating a safe environment and look out for each other, actively addressing issues that affect our wellbeing.

### **Chris Hardman**

Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director Forest and Fire Operations Division, Forest, Fire and Regions

## What DELWP can offer



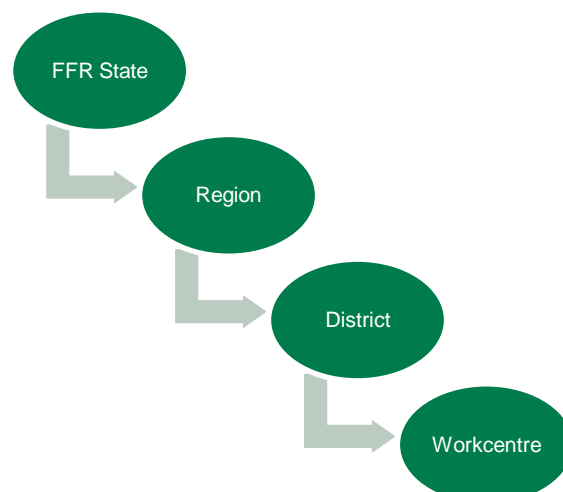
### Who our teams are

You will be joining a crew of motivated individuals that enjoy working outdoors in a team environment. Our team members have a safety focus, continuously improving processes to look out for each other. Crews can further their knowledge and skills by having a willingness to learn and mentor. Everyone comes from diverse backgrounds of all experience and skill levels, each with something unique to contribute.

Together, our DELWP crews work with other agencies such as Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water and Vic Forests to make up Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic). We lead FFMVic's command and control arrangements for fire and emergency response and planned burning operations and work in partnership to protect Victorian communities and Victoria's national parks and state forests.

### Workcentre structure

Project Firefighters and Forest and Fire Operations Officers work together at the workcentre within a district. DELWP FFR Field crews make up part of Forest Fire management Victoria (FFMVic).



# The roles

## What is a Forest and Fire Operations Officer (FFOO)?

Forest and Fire Operations Officers (FFOO) are fulltime fixed term or ongoing positions that deliver forest management activities in Victoria's state forests and undertake fire management and firefighting activities in Victoria's national parks, state forests and protected public land. Team members operate within workcentres and are responsible for implementing a wide range of land management related operational tasks.

A FFOO is a team focused, field-based role. The tasks can be diverse and change often. Different areas have different projects and different landscapes bring different response types, from fires, floods, and storm events to whale stranding, forest management, or border security work.

Outside of fire and response crews have daily works that range from looking after recreation reserves and campgrounds, to maintenance of roads and Strategic Fuel Breaks (SFB), walking trails, tools and equipment, and working with machinery, building new facilities or conducting planned burns.

Spring, Summer and Autumn are the busiest time for response to fire and planned burning operations.

Winter brings a varied focus: drainage works, servicing our equipment, continuing our recreation maintenance and depot tasks such as carpentry, building and welding.

Safety is always a priority with any task, all staff learn about safety procedures, and train often to keep skills and knowledge current.

We employ several types and levels of FFOO positions:

- FFOO (base level) deliver forest management activities and support bushfire response in a broad range of operational tasks and fire prevention activities.
- FFOO Plant Operations work with and operate trucks and heavy plant such as tracked dozers, graders, wheeled tractors and skid steers to support operational forest management tasks and fire response and prevention activities.
- FFOO Field Team Leads are involved in the planning, directing and delivery of a broad range of operational forest management tasks and fire response and prevention activities.
- Field Operations Supervisors are responsible for managing, planning, coordinating and implementing operational works programs including contributing to staff performance and development planning.
- Other specialist FFOOs work on specific projects and priorities.

## What is a Project Firefighter (PFF)?

We employ several hundred project firefighters on a full-time basis (seasonal) for a fixed term each year, at more than 80 locations around Victoria. PFFs are engaged for 34, 26 and 22 week contracts, generally starting in October, November and December. Crews work Monday to Friday with 8-hour standard days and are rostered on standby at home outside normal hours. In the case of an incident or readiness, crew will be required to work extended hours which will also include weekends and public holidays.

PFFs enhance our workforce of full time Forest and Fire Operations Officers (FFOO) during the fire danger period to help suppress bushfires and assist in prevention works, including planned burning. Outside of fire response and prevention works, PFFs assist FFOOs with the delivery of forest management activities. Field based PFFs receive comprehensive training and must become accredited general firefighters to remain employed. PFFs are required to maintain a level of fitness based on the requirements of their job. All PFFs must have a manual driver's licence. When PFFs aren't responding to emergencies

We employ three categories of PFFs each year:

- Firefighters
- Rappel crews (limited positions/ limited locations)
- Fire Support Officers (office based)

Rappel crews are specialised firefighters that abseil or rappel down ropes from a hovering helicopter to the ground. Crews are required to undergo rigorous specialised training. Rappel crews are transported by air to areas that are remote, mountainous, and inaccessible allowing crews to access remote fires quickly. Crews work with specialised firefighting equipment to suppress the fire; due to some locations they may be required to remain overnight or for extended hours on the fire line.

Rappel crew members are a state firefighting resource and may be required to move around Victoria at short notice.

The Fire Support Officer assists the district staff with daily preparedness in the fire district, providing administrative support and assisting in the coordination of fire preparedness, prevention and response activities. This position is predominately office based but may be needed to be available as a firefighter depending on the requirement of the district.

*“Recent events have shown us just how critical these roles are in protecting Victorian communities and our precious Victorian wildlife - no two days in these rewarding roles are ever the same and I urge interested Victorians to apply.”*

FFMVic Chief Fire Officer, Chris Hardman

## What you can expect

Fire and emergency management and land and forest management works can be broken into these key activities.



### **Deployments for emergency response or planned burning:**

Crews are deployed all over the state and on occasions, interstate. Deployments are normally 7 days with long hours and the weather can be extreme.

Taskforces are usually made up of 20 crew, including an experienced Taskforce leader. Crews all travel in convoy in Departmental vehicles to the location. Accommodation and meals are provided during the deployments, which is often in a base camp. Tents, shower blocks and kitchens with cooks are set up to completely facilitate all the crew's needs.

During response/ planned burning staff are paid penalty rates after working the minimum hours, with additional allowances paid for work on the fire line or in the Incident Management Team.

### **What is provided:**

Uniforms and gear are provided to all our crews, with a full personal fire kit. This includes day to day uniform (shirts, pants and jumper), safety boots, hardhat, sunhat, esky lunch box, thermos, first aid kit. Fire kits provided include, Day bag, away bag, fire overalls, smoke masks, gloves, hearing protection, smoke goggles, water canisters, sunscreen, head torch and other incidentals.

### **Training:**

Successful candidates are trained in the below training. With the exception of mandatory requirements, crews will be trained in the necessary technical training required for the position. There are also some specialist technical skills that are used across the state including core operational firefighting skills. These are accreditations and certificates that training is provided for, dependent on the specific workcentre requirements.

- Safety and Wellbeing induction
- General Firefighter accreditation
- Safe Driving in DELWP
- 4 wheel drive and G wagon accreditation
- Governance and Integrity training
- Appropriate workplace behaviours
- First Aid
- Safe handling and transport of dangerous goods
- Noise and hearing awareness
- First Attack Dozer (FAD) Operation – large or small.
- Chainsaw operation – faller intermediate or advanced
- Plant operation
- Tanker driving/Unimog operation
- Incident Management Team roles
- Crew Leader/Operations Officer Level 1
- Prescribed Burn Officer in Charge

### **Standby:**

DELWP staff must be prepared to be available for standby for an immediate return for work. A maximum 20-minute response time is preferred.

Staff are provided a copy of the standby roster for the fire danger period in which they are rostered. Standby is completed at home or an agreed location within the maximum response time. Standby is usually from 10am to 6pm every second weekend and includes public holidays, these hours can be extended, depending on the resource requirement due to extreme weather or current incidents.

Staff are paid a standby hourly rate for the hours completed.

### **Where to next**

No two days are the same. Every day presents a different challenge than the day before, working with a great crew in a team environment.

These field staff positions are a great place to start for proactive, good thinkers who like problem solving and working in a team. With a willingness and ability to learn, our PFFs and FFOOs get involved in training and developing skills to progress and specialise in their field.

There are opportunities to get involved in specialised projects, temporarily act in higher level positions, and be seconded to other areas of FFR and DELWP.

These positions provide a unique opportunity to start a career journey in an exciting field in forests and fire that can lead to a long path of a variety of jobs at DELWP.

For information and available opportunities, please see the FFMVic Firefighting and Employment webpage at <https://www.ffm.vic.gov.au/who-we-are/firefighting-and-employment>.