

Volunteer Role Description: Park Walk Leader

Parks Victoria protects and enhances over four million hectares of diverse parks, about 17 per cent of Victoria. Parks Victoria's vision is to be a world-class park service ensuring healthy parks for healthy people. The Healthy Parks Healthy People approach to park management underpins the Park Walks program by promoting an opportunity to encourage more people to walk for their physical, social and mental health and wellbeing.

The Park Walks program designs and promotes a range of weekly walks including short, introductory level walks in picturesque parks, medium length walks which are more challenging. Research shows that exercising in nature has greater benefits than exercising indoors (*Healthy Parks Healthy People: State of the Evidence 2015*) thus Parks Victoria is running programs such as this to welcome, encourage and achieve those benefits.

Park Walks Volunteers are required to:

- Lead a 45-90 min walk once per week/ fortnight / month (depending on location)
- Provide friendly social interaction with the park visitors
- Provide park information to the park visitors
- Alert park rangers to any trail hazards discovered on walking trails
- Collect data on numbers of participants and participant feedback

Park Walks Volunteers will not:

- Enforce any Park Regulations
- Be required to transport park visitors in their vehicles
- Enter hazardous situations
- Be the care provider to the park visitors

Key skills/abilities

Park Walks Volunteers must:

- Have a positive, friendly attitude and willingness to engage with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, people with disabilities and their carers
- Have a passion for walking and be reasonably fit
- Have an interest in parks, conservation and/or nature
- Have excellent communication and interpersonal skills

Benefits

Park Walks Volunteers will:

- Enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits walking on a regular basis
- Receive training to ensure that they have the knowledge, skills and confidence to work as Walk Leaders in a professional manner
- Have an opportunity to increase their understanding of the natural environment and the significance of the cultural landscape of the park
- Have an opportunity to meet people from a broad range of backgrounds
- Receive satisfaction in assisting others to access and experience the many walking trails in Victoria's beautiful parks

Training

All Park Walks volunteers are required to attend a training and induction program provided by Parks Victoria prior to placement. This ensures that volunteers have the knowledge and skills to provide information and assistance to visitors in a professional manner while leading the walks. Information on key features of the parks, main animals, locations of toilets and emergency assistance.

Supervision

Park Walk Volunteers will meet relevant Parks Victoria staff before they start in their role and will be provided with contact details in case of any emergencies. It is strongly recommended that you have a fully charged mobile phone on hand when volunteering.

All Volunteer Park Walk Leaders work in pairs in line with Parks Victoria volunteer procedures.

Location

The Volunteer Park Walk Leaders Program is located in a number of parks across the state and Parks Victoria will be expanding the program further between 2020-2024.

Uniform

Parks Victoria will supply a green volunteer shirt and hat that must be worn while undertaking the role. This can be worn over the top of your everyday clothing. Sunscreen and hats must also be applied even on days when it is cloudy to avoid sunburn.

Health

You will be required to be physically active with an appropriate level of fitness and health expected to comfortably complete the walk.

Working with Children Check

All volunteers must obtain a Volunteer Working with Children Check. This check is free of cost through The Department of Justice.

Regulations

No domestic animals such as dogs, cats, birds etc can accompany you into any parks detailed in the National Parks Act 1975, S.R. No. 115/2013. Assistance Dogs such as Guide Dogs are allowed into parks, please discuss this with the program supervisor if this is applicable to you.

Transport

You must provide your own transport to and from locations. Note that public transport is not easily accessible at most locations.