

# FISHERIES OFFICER

## Information package 2020

### Is this the career for me?

Being a Fisheries Officer can be a rewarding and challenging career, especially if you enjoy working in the outdoors and you have a passion for ensuring healthy, sustainable fisheries for all Victorians.

If you can answer YES to the following questions and you feel that you could take on the challenges associated with the role, then you might like to apply for a Fisheries officer position during our next recruitment round.

### Self-assessment questionnaire

1. Are you an enthusiastic, hard working person who loves working in the outdoors?
2. Do you have a passion for the protection of natural resources?
3. Are you willing to potentially move to and work in a Victorian Regional location?
4. Are you willing to do shift work that involves weekends, school holidays, public holidays, nights and early mornings?
5. Are you capable of working over a variety of different terrains, at sea or on inland waterways for extended periods of time in all weather conditions?
6. Are you prepared to carry handcuffs, a baton and Capsicum spray (after receiving comprehensive training) and are you willing and use them if required to protect yourself, your colleague or a member of the public?
7. Do you have the self-confidence to be assertive when dealing with an aggressive or abusive person?
8. Are you an honest person who respects the law and do you have a high level of ethical standards?
9. Do you feel comfortable interacting with the public and do you have great communication and interpersonal skills?
10. Does this sound like the career for you?

If you answered YES to these questions, then keep reading!



### What do Fisheries Officers do?

Fisheries Officers are trained to carry out a wide range of duties – on land, at sea and on our inland waterways. On any given day they could be conducting inspections of recreational fishers on a local pier, participating in an education session at a local fishing club or school, undertaking surveillance work or boarding a commercial vessel at sea.

#### What duties do Fisheries Officers perform?

- Patrolling of Victoria's marine and inland waters by foot, vessel or vehicle
- Operating four-wheel drive vehicles and a range of different vessels including Jet skis, kayaks and small punts through to large sea going vessels
- Inspecting commercial and recreational fishers to ensure compliance with legislation
- Inspecting wholesale and retail fish premises to ensure that fish are legally sourced
- Preparing briefs of evidence and prosecuting matters in court
- Undertaking surveys to collect, analyse and prepare reports related to fisheries management issues
- Responding to fishing offence reports received via the 13FISH offence reporting telephone line
- Promoting marine management programs and policies
- Ensuring compliance within marine protected areas and reserves

- Undertaking surveillance work and investigations
- Assisting in the execution of major operations which target illegal activities and conducting search warrants of premises, factories and restaurants
- Assisting with the delivery of education programs to angling clubs, schools, multicultural groups, boat and fishing shows etc.
- Educating, advising and providing information to the community on a wide range of topics relating to fish and their protection, responsible fishing and fishing rules and regulations.

Fisheries Officers also work with other natural resource management, maritime safety and emergency management agencies to protect our valuable aquatic environments and keep people safe on the water.

As a Fisheries Officer you will be part of a professional team of people who share a passion for our fisheries resources. The wide variety of tasks involved with being a Fisheries Officer can provide for a challenging and satisfying career.

#### Diversity in fisheries officer careers

It is important to the VFA to improve confidence and trust with our diverse communities. To do this, the VFA is committed to increasing the diversity of its workforce. We value the diversity of age, gender identity, culture, linguistic diversity, religion, disability, first nations people and sexual orientation of our employees.

The VFA's diversity program helps it successfully attract, recruit, retain and develop a diverse workforce; fostering greater innovation, greater customer connection and increasing staff wellbeing and satisfaction.

We recognise that all of our employees bring different varied knowledge, skills and experience with them to the fisheries officer role and this is why diversity is so important in our team.

#### Female fisheries officers

Research shows that females in enforcement roles can benefit organisations in a number of ways:

- Improvement in the performance of the organisation, and an increase in motivation to succeed
- Reduced reliance on use of force
- Stronger focus on communication skills
- Improved ethical orientation and transparency
- Creativity in thinking and problem solving
- Improved relationships with stakeholders and the community

The VFA values females in enforcement roles and provides a range of benefits to females who join us as fisheries officers:

- Stable employment with the Victorian public service with generous income incentives
- Opportunities for flexible working hours, including shift work and weekends
- Opportunities for a work/life balance to enable families to manage commitments.
- Generous maternity leave provisions and opportunities for part-time arrangements subject to a Fisheries station's operational requirements.



If you have any specific questions relating to a career as a female fisheries officer, please email:

[fisheries.recruitment@vfa.vic.gov.au](mailto:fisheries.recruitment@vfa.vic.gov.au)

### Where do Fisheries Officers work?

Fisheries Officers work across Victoria in both Metropolitan Melbourne and through Regional Victoria. They could be required to work on remote rivers in the northwest of the state to isolated areas of coastline in the east. Officers may be required to operate vessels in inland lakes, rivers, bays and inlets or offshore along Victoria's vast coastline.

Fisheries officers are stationed at one of 18 work locations throughout Victoria – Altona, Apollo Bay, Ballarat, Bendigo, Cowes, Horsham, Lakes Entrance, Mallacoota, Mornington, Portland, Queenscliff, Snobs Creek, Swan Hill, Tatura, Traralgon, Warrnambool, Wodonga or Yarram.



During our recruitment process for fisheries officer positions we cannot guarantee that successful applicants will end up in their preferred location. If you are interested in applying for a fisheries officer position you must be prepared to accept a position at any of these 18 stations. Generally, the location of the vacancies will be known at the commencement of the recruitment process.

The VFA provides opportunities for fisheries officers to move between stations when vacancies arise or to undertake short term secondments at other stations.

During their first few years as a fisheries officer, new recruits may be required to complete temporary

transfers to other stations around Victoria – particularly to our busy stations in Metropolitan Melbourne.

Throughout their career, fisheries officers develop a unique skill set which also gives them flexibility to move within the various divisions of the VFA in areas such as education, fisheries policy, fisheries management, offence management, licensing, intelligence management and investigations.



### What hours do Fisheries Officers work?

As most fishing activity occurs outside of normal business hours, fisheries officers are shift workers and are required to work a monthly roster with a large proportion of early morning and afternoon shifts, weekends, school holidays and public holidays.

Officers can be subjected to long working hours at odd times. They may be recalled to duty at any time of the day or night and on weekends and public holidays to respond to reports of illegal fishing or to manage aquatic emergencies. Officers will be required to work a minimum number of shifts, weekends and public holidays in a year. There are also peak fishing seasons, particularly over the summer period and Easter where leave may be restricted to ensure the VFA can meet its operational requirements.



The VFA work with staff to promote a positive work/life balance:

- Officers can request part-time hours to suit family needs. Approval is subject to operational requirements and staffing levels at the station.
- Rostered shifts cover days, morning, afternoons and nights across weekdays and weekends. Rosters are generally prepared a month in advance.
- As a shift worker, working at least 10 Sundays, you will earn an additional week of annual leave (5 weeks total).
- For those with carer responsibilities, rosters are developed in advance to ensure you have time to plan for any assistance needed.
- You will be able to request specific days off in advance from your supervisor and may be able to swap shifts with your co-workers
- There are general maternity and paternity leave provisions for staff.

Fisheries officers may also be required to camp overnight in remote locations for several days. Travel and overnight accommodation may be required when working at different locations throughout the state or when assisting with major fisheries operations. Fisheries officers are eligible for additional allowances for working shift work, duties at sea, camping allowance or for working in remote areas.

### Physical requirements of the job

Fisheries Officers must be physically fit to carry out the demanding nature of the job which may include physical activities such as:

- Hiking long distances into remote areas with backpacks
- Launching and retrieving vessels from boat ramps and from the shore
- Lifting heavy equipment such as patrol gear or commercial fishing equipment.
- Snorkelling
- Paddling kayaks or canoes
- Operating vessels in adverse weather conditions and at night
- Four-wheel driving over rough terrain
- Sitting or lying in a static position for a number of hours during surveillance operations.
- Climbing eg. steep riverbanks, coastal cliffs

All successful applicants for fisheries officer positions are required to pass a physical and medical assessment prior to appointment to ensure that they are able to meet the requirements of the job.



The pre-appointment medical assessment includes the following components:

- Completion of a health questionnaire
- Functional capacity assessment

- Height, weight and blood pressure assessment
- Vision screening – near, distant and colour vision testing. Colour vision testing is required to ensure that potential employees meet marine safety qualification requirements for operation of vessels.
- Audio screening
- Doctors examination and consultation

If you would like further information about our medical assessment please email

[Fisheries.recruitment@vfa.vic.gov.au](mailto:Fisheries.recruitment@vfa.vic.gov.au) and request a copy of our medical assessment information sheet.

### **Physical capability assessment (swim test)**

As a large proportion of a Fisheries officer's working day may be based on or next to the water, swimming ability is a key requirement of this position. The swimming ability assessment includes completion of a 100 metre (un-aided) swim in less than 4 minutes and completion of a number of water safety and survival exercises in a swimming pool.

### **Physical capability assessment (field hike test)**

This assessment involves completing a hike of 3.22km carrying an 11.3kg pack in no more than 30:00 minutes.



**Are there any qualifications or skills that I need to become a fisheries officer?**



### **Education:**

You must have an appropriate level of literacy and numeracy to function in an Authorised officer position as a fisheries Officer. The minimum requirement would be completion to the standard of at least Year 11 English or equivalent.

It is also desirable (though not mandatory) to have some form of post-secondary or tertiary qualification in any of the following areas:

- Natural resource management
- Fisheries management/ fisheries compliance
- Criminal justice or criminology
- Law
- Science/ environmental science
- Outdoor education
- Any other relevant area
- Government compliance

### **Skills and experience:**

Fisheries officers need to have a broad range of skills and knowledge to perform their role. Most of the skills and knowledge required are attained through on-the-job training and mentoring and throughout your career

should you be successful in gaining a position as a fisheries officer.

There are a range of skills and experiences that you could bring to the role of a fisheries officer, though none of these are mandatory as we'll provide you with the training you need!

- Boating experience
- Snorkelling, diving experience
- 4WD experience
- Just about any form of outdoor experience
- Education, communication experience

If you have an affinity for the outdoors, and you don't mind getting wet and sometimes dirty then this could be the job for you.



#### **Mandatory requirements:**

- You must be an Australian Citizen or have permanent residency in Australia
- Demonstrated ability to swim 100metres unaided
- A current driver's licence (conditions I and V are not acceptable for employment)

Before appointment to a Fisheries Officer role the following requirements would also need to be met:

- Completion of security screening, including a National Police Records Check and VicRoads licence history check

- Completion of the Victorian Public Service declaration of private interest's form
- Completion of an appropriate first aid course (Apply First Aid) or equivalent
- Must hold a valid Working with Children card
- Must not be a prohibited person within the meaning of the *Firearms Act 1997*.

#### **Fisheries Officer training program**

If you are successful at gaining a position as a Fisheries Officer with the VFA you will commence with a 12-month on-the-job training program.

During this initial 12 months, trainees are regularly assessed to ensure that they are meeting the standards and competencies required to be successful as a fisheries officer.

Employment commences with a live-in 10-week training program conducted at our Queenscliff and Snobs Creek training facilities.

The 10-week training program provides a mixture of theory and practical exercises and provides the trainees with the necessary skills and knowledge required for their role as a Fisheries officer. The training course exposes trainees to aspects of the job including fisheries legislation, education and effective communication, fish identification and measuring, compliance and law enforcement, small boat handling, camouflage and concealment techniques, 4-wheel driving and more.

The ability to manage potential confronting situations through negotiation and resolution is an important skill required of fisheries officers and specific training is provided to develop these important communication skills. Officers are issued with and are required to carry a baton, handcuffs and Oleoresin capsicum spray and are fully trained in the safe use of these items, with ongoing training provided every 6 months throughout an officer's career.

Following the initial 10-week training course, officers are appointed as an Authorised officer and will be able to

exercise law enforcement powers under the guidance of a more experienced officer.

During their first 12 months, trainee fisheries officers complete further formal and on-the-job training and assessments to ensure their continued development.



### Fisheries Officer recruitment process

The VFA run a recruitment process for fisheries officer positions when there are a number of vacancies identified. In the past this has been every 2-3 years.

Fisheries officer positions are always advertised through [www.careers.vic.gov.au](http://www.careers.vic.gov.au)

Entry into this occupation is very competitive, this is because it is a specialised and unique role and there are a limited number of positions across the state.

The recruitment process involves several stages, including (but not limited to):

- abilities testing (numeracy, literacy, comprehension)
- psychometric testing (this type of testing aims to assess whether an applicant's personal characteristics are a suitable match to the requirements of a fisheries officer role)
- First round interviews (telephone or video interviews)
- Face to face interviews
- Assessment Centre – candidates who have progressed to this stage will attend a half-day

assessment centre where they will be given opportunities to work in groups or individually to solve specific scenarios. The primary focus of the assessment centre is to assess candidates on their communication and teamwork skills, which are of high importance for fisheries officers.

- Completion of the fisheries officer medical and task-based assessment
- Completion of a suitability and security questionnaire
- Completion of a National Police Records Check and VicRoads licence history check

### Suitability standards

#### Conflict of interest/associations

During one of the stages of recruitment, applicants will be asked to declare any associations. It is important that the VFA is aware of any association or potential conflicts of interest which may compromise you or reflect adversely on the organisation. In some cases, a management plan may be put in place; in others the association should be terminated.

Failure to disclose any information in the recruitment process may result in your application not proceeding or may result in termination of employment.

A potential conflict of interest may arise in a number of different situations, including, but not limited to:

- Any conflict between the personal interest of a public officer and the officer's duty to act in the public interest
- The personal interests of a public officer include those of family members, friends, associates, organisations which the officer belongs, and other similar interests
- Financial interests including receipt or possession of money and goods in a range of circumstances including outside employment and private business activities
- Non-financial interests including influences, loyalties, subjective or ideological biases, personal beliefs and predispositions, membership of civic organisations

and associations, partisan affiliations and attachments, predispositions and prejudices, moral beliefs and aesthetic judgments, and enmity towards individuals or groups

- Financial interest in a company which whom the employer is conducting commercial business
- Access to information or knowledge of commercial interests to other parties
- A personal relationship (eg. if the employees are involved in a selection panel)
- Buying or selling of shares in a company at a time when the employees possess information that could affect the value of those shares



For Fisheries Officers the following three categories specifically apply:

- Recreational participation in fishing activities is acceptable provided you do not engage in any advocacy activities aimed at changing the fishing or game rules or influencing the way that public funds are invested in the sector
- Any participation in a commercial entity involved in the regulated activity (including commercial fishing, aquaculture, seafood processing, recreational charter fishing or guiding or fishing tackle trade) is unacceptable and you must immediately divest any such interest
- If you are a position holder in a body involved in fishing (eg. a fishing club) you must immediately resign from any such role.

### **Prior History**

To be eligible for appointment as a Fisheries Officer you must have a high level of ethical standards. A history of offending or irresponsible behaviour may disqualify you from consideration. The VFA conducts extensive background checks on Fisheries officer applicants during the selection process.

A copy of the prior offence history guidelines can be obtained if required (these are the Victoria Police prior history guidelines).

### **Code of conduct**

As Public Service employees of the Victorian State Government, Fisheries officers are bound by a code of conduct. The attributes or values from this Code of Conduct that that we expect from Fisheries Officers include (but are not limited to):

- Responsiveness
- Integrity
- Impartiality
- Accountability
- Respect
- Leadership
- Respect of human rights



### **What's next?**

If you have any further questions about a career as a fisheries officer or you would like to be added to our mailing list to be notified of our next recruitment round, please email [fisheries.recruitment@vfa.vic.gov.au](mailto:fisheries.recruitment@vfa.vic.gov.au)