

Seasonal Forest and Fire Operations Officer (formerly Project Firefighter)

Information for International Applicants

The process of applying and onboarding as a Seasonal Forest and Fire Operations Officer (formerly Project Firefighter) can be confusing and daunting for international applicants. This document lists relevant information for those people interested in applying from outside of Australia.

Application process

1 Application

Completed online at jobs.careers.vic.gov.au/pff

You will need to select at least one location you would like to work in; you can select up to three. If you are prepared to work at any location, you must tick that box on the application form (which will only appear if you select 3 location preferences). We recommend doing thorough research to find locations which will suit you. The locations are shown in the map linked on the application website, there are generally more opportunities at locations with low applications. There is a separate application required for rappel positions. Rappel crews are firefighters who are trained to helicopter into remote areas as first attack. These crews are based at two depots only: Heyfield and Ovens and applicants are required to have experience as a general or wildland firefighter to be eligible to apply.

2 Application review

Your application will initially be reviewed by the recruiter for your first preference location.

3 Interview

Usually done in person but can be conducted online on Microsoft Teams. You will be interviewed by a three-person panel. Interviews usually take around 45 minutes.

4 Reference checks

You will need to provide two references in your application, which will be checked in the weeks following interviews for recommended or highly competitive applicants.

5 Police check

Should you be recommended for a position you will receive an email with a link for you to undertake a police check. This police check is in addition to background checks undertaken through your visa application process. Your offer of employment is subject to the result of this check and the meeting of medical and Tasked Based Assessment requirements.

Seasonal Forest and Fire Operations Officer (formerly Project Firefighter)

6 Medical assessment

Once you have arrived in Australia you will undertake a medical assessment. Our medical provider will test your hearing, vision, lung function and range of movement, as well as general health. You should view the video on how to complete the spirometry test located on the Forest Fire Management Website (<https://www.ffm.vic.gov.au/who-we-are/firefighting-and-employment>).

7 Request for further information

The doctor may require further information regarding your medical assessment which will involve you seeing a specialist. We call this process a Request for Further Information (RFFI). Common examples of RFFIs are spirometry, childhood and previous asthma, allergies, and chronic health conditions.

For more information see: www.ffm.vic.gov.au/who-we-are/firefighting-and-employment#toc_id_9_medical
www.ffm.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0022/532444/PFF-Medical-Assessment-Guide.pdf

8 Task Based Assessment

Completed at your work-centre once you have passed the medical, the Task Based Assessment (TBA) is a suite of physical fitness tests for screening personal with a fire or emergency management role.

9 Start as a Seasonal Forest and Fire Operations Officer (SFFOO)!

Upon successful completion of your application and various tests listed above you will begin as a SFFOO. In your first weeks as a SFFOO you will undertake a lot of training, including mandatory corporate, safety and wellbeing training, 4WD, and chainsaw training. You must also attend the General Firefighter Camp, where you will learn skills and knowledge of firefighting in Australia. If unavailable, you will not be able to continue as a SFFOO.

Additional Information

- **Location**

Different factors may affect your choice of potential workcentre, including remoteness, environment, accommodation options, rappel crew option. Please research thoroughly to find a location suitable for you. Staff turnover and position availability will also affect your success in gaining a SFFOO position at your chosen location, e.g., your 1st preference workcentre may not have any vacancies, whereas your second and third preferences may have vacancies. For more information about specific locations, contact regional contacts listed below who will put you in touch with the location recruiters.

Map of workcentres: <https://jobs.careers.vic.gov.au/pff>

- **Accommodation**

Successful international applicants will need to find their own accommodation for the duration of their employment. Accommodation must generally be within 20 minutes of your workcentre. Staff at your workcentre *may* be able to

Seasonal Forest and Fire Operations Officer (formerly Project Firefighter)

assist in finding accommodation; please contact local staff to discuss. You will need to provide an Australian residential address on commencement.

- **Banking**

Successful applicants will need an Australian bank account. There are several banks to choose from, the big banks being: Commonwealth, ANZ, Westpac, National Australia Bank, and Bendigo Bank. It may be helpful to select a bank which has a branch in your soon-to-be home (Google). You can begin setting up your Australian account from overseas, however you will need to visit a branch in person to start using your account. You will need to provide the details of your Australian bank account on commencement.

- **Superannuation**

You will accrue superannuation while working in Australia. Thus, you will need to designate a superannuation provider, or go with the department's provider (Super Choice). A Super Choice form will be provided on commencement. When you have finished work in Australia and are leaving/have returned home, you can apply for a Departing Australia Superannuation Payment (DASP) to be paid out your super. This needs to be done within 6 months of your visa finishing or of departing Australia.

<https://www.ato.gov.au/individuals/super/in-detail/temporary-residents-and-super/super-information-for-temporary-residents-departing-australia/>

- **Taxes**

You require a Tax File Number (TFN) for Australian tax purposes. To apply for a TFN please visit: <https://www.ato.gov.au/Individuals/Tax-file-number/Apply-for-a-TFN/>

You will need to complete a tax return for each year that you work in Australia, or when you have ceased work and are leaving Australia. To do so, please visit: <https://www.ato.gov.au/Individuals/Your-tax-return/How-to-lodge-your-tax-return/>. A Tax Declaration is required on commencement even if you are still waiting to receive your Tax File Number.

- **Visa**

Please visit <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/> to find the correct visa for your situation or seek advice from a certified migration agent.

- **Driver's licence**

Victoria allows visiting drivers to drive on their overseas licence if it is current. If you plan on staying in Victoria for longer than 6 months, you will need to convert your overseas licence to a Victorian one: www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/licences/new-to-victoria/convert-your-overseas-licence

If your licence is not in English, you will need a translation document.

You must be able to drive a manual (stick shift) vehicle for employment.

Seasonal Forest and Fire Operations Officer (formerly Project Firefighter)

- **Obtaining a vehicle**

It is likely that you will need a vehicle, particularly if you will be living in a rural location. If you have accommodation close to your workcentre then you may not need a vehicle, however if you want to sightsee while in Australia it is likely that you will need a personal vehicle. There are some public transport options (depending on location in state), please research what is available in your soon-to-be home if you are not planning on buying a vehicle.

Once you have found a vehicle to purchase, you will need a roadworthy (usually done by the seller) from an accredited mechanic. The roadworthy will then need to be submitted to VicRoads for registration. Roadworthy certificates are renewed each year. For more information on roadworthiness and registration please visit www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/registration.

You will also need 3rd Party car insurance, and you may wish to add comprehensive car insurance - there are several providers to choose from, please research what agency and type of cover you require.

- **Phones**

Depending on your phone, you may or may not be able to use an Australian sim card. Check your phone/plan to see whether you can swap the sim for an Australian one. You can obtain an Australian sim from various retailers including the major supermarkets, Telstra or Optus stores, or online. As you will be staying in country for a short time, the easiest and most affordable option is likely a pre-paid sim.

- **Uniform**

FFMV will issue uniform and equipment when you begin at your workcentre. You will not need any fire clothing or equipment from your own country (unless it is something specific that you require).

- **Personal clothing**

Victoria has a Mediterranean climate with warm to hot summers and cool to cold winters. However, the weather can vary significantly with location, season, day of the week and time of day.

- **Training**

All training will be organised and provided. You are not required to provide training numbers and certificates from your home country.

- **Timing**

Generally, SFFOOs are employed from October/November through to April each year. Often SFFOO contracts are extended beyond this time. This extension is optional; many international SFFOOs leave in April to return to the fire season in their own country. In some cases, this extension has interrupted SFFOO travel plans, therefore please be aware that this may be a possibility. Contracts will only be extended in line with the approved VISA.

- **Regional contacts**

If you would like further information about specific regions and workcentres please contact one of these regional personnel:

Seasonal Forest and Fire Operations Officer (formerly Project Firefighter)

Region	Name	Contact email
Hume	John Towt	John.Towt@deeca.vic.gov.au
Grampians	Jack Shields	Jack.Shields@deeca.vic.gov.au
Loddon Mallee	Sam Poynton	Sam.Poynton@deeca.vic.gov.au
Gippsland	Sarah Goldie	Sarah.Goldie@deeca.vic.gov.au
Barwon South West	Allis Deppeler	Allis.Deppeler@deeca.vic.gov.au
Port Phillip	Nicole Stocks	Nicole.Stocks@deeca.vic.gov.au
General Statewide Enquiries	Gabby Vening	Gabby.Vening@deeca.vic.gov.au
	Nicole Armstrong	Nicole.Armstrong@deeca.vic.gov.au



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Seasonal Forest and Fire Operations Officer (formerly Project Firefighter)