



GETTING A FOOT IN THE DOOR AND NEVER LOOKING BACK

Finding environmental jobs is often much harder than just scanning the employment section of the newspaper. Many environmental jobs are not advertised. Instead they are circulated within networks. If you are outside these networks then you will never even know about these jobs.

Probably the best way to tap into networks is to attend events, such as conferences, seminars, Annual General Meetings, fairs and lectures, among others (Connell *et al.* 1998). This is a great way to interact with professionals, make contacts, and stay up-to-date with environmental issues (Doyle *et al.* 1999). Never underestimate how important it is to meet people working for environmental organisations because it is often not what you know but who you know when applying for jobs.

Another important part of job searching is getting hold of relevant and valuable information. You can do this by reading widely and talking to a variety of people. A successful job search is the interplay between these activities (Doyle *et al.* 1999). Some places to start reading include newspapers, pamphlets, magazines, newsletters, and annual reports.

Remember that people are your best resource (Doyle *et al.* 1999). They could be neighbours, professionals, classmates, relatives, friends, experts and many others. Some of the best people and organisations to contact include university staff, students and alumni; professional associations; recruitment agencies; and interest groups.

Sign Up To Employment Bulletins

There are a number of weekly email bulletins that you should sign up to immediately. These are the main advertisers for environmental jobs. However, remember that these are only a small proportion of the jobs available. Many more are simply not advertised widely or at all.

NRMjobs

<http://www.nrmjobs.com.au/>

NRMjobs is a weekly email that advertises job vacancies, consultancies, tenders, scholarships, grants and awards in the environment, land and water field in Australia. It has been operating for a number of years and has over 10,000 subscribers.

EnviroJobs

<http://www.envirojobs.com.au/>

EnviroJobs is a weekly email service, which lists employment positions available in the fields of environmental management, natural resource, environmental engineering, environmental health, and environmental science.

COEEads

<http://www.projectnatureed.com.au/>

COEEads provides a weekly email list of jobs, grants and scholarships in the fields of conservation, outdoor education, recreation, environmental education and eco-tourism in Australia.

Do Some Volunteer Work

Many people complain about the difficult situation where you cannot get a job without experience and you cannot get experience without a job. This is where volunteer work is so important. It can give you the experience you need to get a job (Basta 1991). Volunteer work is a great way to meet people with environmental concerns who can share their experiences of the job market, pass on hints, and tell you about jobs that you may not have heard of otherwise.

Volunteer work is a great way to simply help out an organisation on an important issue. Many local environmental groups would not be able to operate without volunteers. If you want to do some volunteer work you should check with your local council to find out about environmental activities in your area. You should also remember that any experience and skills from volunteer work should go on your resume.

Conservation Volunteers Australia

<http://www.conservationvolunteers.com.au/>

Conservation Volunteers Australia involves the community in conservation projects in urban, regional and remote Australia ranging from tree planting; seed collection; endangered species protection; weed control; flora and fauna surveys; walking trail construction; and environmental monitoring.

Volunteer Green

<http://www.volunteergreen.org/>

Volunteer Green links volunteers with the environment. Volunteers are the backbone of hundreds of environmental groups. You can become part of this huge network and help protect our greatest asset – the natural environment.

Check Out Vacation Jobs

Vacation work gives you a perspective as to how the theory you learn at university is actually applied in the real world. You learn about the struggles and challenges in the work place, such as politics and accountability, and these are things that you generally do not come up against in the standard university degree. Furthermore, vacation work looks brilliant on your resume and shows employers you have commitment and a strong work ethic (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Green Corps

A large number of places are available for keen and willing 17 to 20 year olds to participate in innovative projects around Australia. The majority of Green Corps projects are in rural or regional locations. All involve 6 months of solid, hands on training and participants graduate with accredited training in *Conservation and Land Management* along with skills in *First Aid* and *Occupational Health and Safety*.

This is an opportunity for young people to get involved and make their mark on cultural and environmental heritage. Not only do you learn skills related to the environment, but you also embark on a community venture which can include anything from website development, media relations, fundraising, desktop publishing, community education and event management.

Visit <http://www.greencorps.com.au/> for more information.

Apply For Graduate Programs

Graduate programs are run primarily by the larger organisations in the environmental industry. They vary in format between organisations but generally consist of 1 or 2 years of a

structured training program. Each graduate has a particular job for which they must complete the duties. In addition to these daily duties they receive further training in many different parts of the organisation. This additional training can prove invaluable in improving your skills base and building a wide reaching network. As part of many of the programs there are opportunities to move around the organisation within the period of the program. This may include a stint in regional Australia, which can be a great experience.

Overall graduate programs provide extensive opportunities and training and are an excellent way to enter an organisation. Most programs do their assessments on set dates and it is always good to get in early. Even if you are not sure, take the time to apply (generally between 2 to 4 hours per application) because you never know what you will want down the track.

Environment Australia

<http://www.ea.gov.au/>

Environment Australia offers you the chance to undertake a year of professional development through a comprehensive program of work rotations combined with a structured training program. You will participate in diverse workplace rotations, exposing you to the wide spectrum of activities at Environment Australia. Each rotation is specially tailored to provide you with the opportunity to gain and develop new skills, and to contribute in a very real way to policy and corporate aims.

BHP Billiton

<http://www.bhpbilliton.com/>

BHP Billiton may seem an unlikely place to find an environmental job but they do hire environmental scientists. Entering BHP Billiton through the graduate program provides a good opportunity to learn about the whole company and find where you wish to focus your work.

Support Interest Groups

There can be many diverse benefits from supporting environmental organisations. They will usually produce a newsletter, which allows you to keep up to date with the latest news. You will also be invited to events run by the organisation, which can be great networking opportunities. Memberships can also be listed on your resume to show that you have a long-term career interest in the area.

Australian Conservation Foundation

<http://www.acfonline.org.au/>

The Australian Conservation Foundation is a non-profit, membership-based environment group. They take a solution-oriented approach to environmental issues, and seek to form partnerships with community groups, governments and business to achieve ecologically sustainable outcomes.

Friends of the Earth

<http://www.foe.org.au/>

Friends of the Earth is a federation of local groups operating under an agreed set of principles. It functions both through local groups, and on the national level through appointed spokespeople and national campaigns.

Greenpeace Australia Pacific

<http://www.greenpeace.org.au/>

Greenpeace exists because this fragile earth deserves a voice. It needs solutions. It needs change. It needs action. Greenpeace is an independent organisation campaigning to ensure a just, peaceful, sustainable environment for future generations.

Stay In Touch With The Issues

It is vitally important that you keep yourself up-to-date with environmental issues. There is so much going on that it is not possible to know everything, but you can be aware of new government policies and strategies, as well as business initiatives. There are several news services dedicated to environmental and sustainability issues.

Environment Portal

<http://www.environment.gov.au/>

The Environment Portal provides access to online services and information provided by Federal, State, and Local Governments. Information is organised under 7 broad environmental themes – Atmosphere, Biodiversity, Coasts and Oceans, Environment Protection, Heritage, Inland Waters, and Land.

Greenleap

<http://www.green-innovations.asn.au/>

Greenleap provides a daily email for people interested in leap-frogging to an ecologically sustainable economy. There is a very impressive network of people that contribute to greenleap. The emails contain information about environmental issues, jobs, and events in Australia. Greenleap is produced by an organisation called Green Innovations.

ENS Australia

<http://www.ensaustralia.info/>

ENS Australia summarises environment and conservation related online media. It covers mainstream news services, key environmental organizations, government bodies, and political parties.

Join Professional Associations

Everyone working with environmental issues should join the relevant professional associations. These organisations represent you and others, and can play a significant role in influencing government policy. Put simply, the size of these organisations is directly related to their power. Furthermore, you will be invited to attend events and receive newsletters.

Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand

<http://www.eianz.org/>

The Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand is a professional body established with the primary purpose to facilitate interaction among environmental professionals; promote environmental knowledge and awareness; and advance ethical and competent environmental practice.

Australian Association for Environmental Education

<http://olt.qut.edu.au/udf/aaee/>

The Australian Association for Environmental Education seeks to promote environmental education; develop projects for broad application within the field of environmental education; promote the cooperation of relevant groups and individuals; hold conferences, meetings, seminars, and gatherings to promote environmental education; and publish a journal of environmental education.

Register With Recruitment Agencies

There are not so many recruitment agencies that specialise in environmental jobs. However, several have appeared in the last few years. It is their business to match job seekers with employment positions. So visit them and give your details. Even if they have no jobs now, they will in the future.

ES Link

<http://www.eslink.com.au/>

ES Link is a specialised environmental recruitment agency. They provide a personal and professional service, committed to ethical recruitment practices.

Principal Consulting Group

<http://principalconsulting.com.au/>

Principal Consulting Group is a specialist supplier of recruitment services for organisations seeking professionals in environmental and natural resource management, planning, health and safety, and risk management.

References

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The **Environmental Jobs Network** (EJN) is a not for profit incorporated association with the mission to help job seekers and employers share and find valuable information on environmental jobs and careers in Australia.

GETTING A FOOT IN THE DOOR AND NEVER LOOKING BACK by Kes McCormick is part of a series of papers on environmental jobs. The aim is to develop several papers and with the help of sponsorship to combine the papers in the publication of a comprehensive guide. Please contact EJN for more information about the project.

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