



AUSTRALIA



NEW ZEALAND

HANDBOOK
ECO EXPERIMENT in AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND



Learn and discover the world !



ECO EXPERIMENT

AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND

Our local Partner (Conservation Volunteers) is a non profit organisation, offering exciting conservation programs, which enable volunteers to protect, preserve and restore the environment.

The projects take place in urban, regional and remote locations. Activities include : tree planting, seed collection, endangered species protection, weed control, fencing, walking trail construction, flora and fauna surveys, heritage restoration & environmental monitoring.

Volunteers are usually placed in teams of between 6 and 10 people. A Team Leader manages each team. The Leader provides all training required on-site, explains the conservation aims of the project to the volunteers, and is responsible for the safe conduct and management of each project.



Start time & Finish Time

The project starts every Friday from any of CV's offices.

Projects normally run for 5 days per week, with one or two days free per week for relaxing or sightseeing. Project hours are from 8am – 4pm daily, although this varies on some projects when required by seasonal conditions or project activities.

You travel to a different project location every week or two. This means that in a 6-week Eco Experience, you will generally visit at least 3 different project locations, and will usually undertake 2 or 3 different types of project activities.

Our partner incorporate as much variety into this program as possible.



Volunteer Profile

You enjoy outdoor activities, and want to be actively involved in volunteer activities. The Conservation Experience is budget in nature and designed for active, independent travellers.

Our programs are open to volunteers aged from 18 to 70.

Volunteers should be prepared to live and work as a member of a team, including sharing accommodation and helping with domestic chores. Although good health and a positive attitude are essential, volunteers do not need any prior skills or experience, as we will provide all training required.

Requirements

> Fitness and Health

A reasonable level of fitness is required as this is an active program. You need to be comfortable participating on active programs (such as planting trees or collecting seeds) for 7 or 8/hours per day. It is essential that volunteers are prepared to participate to the best of their ability.

> Language Requirements :

An Intermediate level of English is required. Volunteers come from a wide range of nationalities, and English is used as the common social language. Safety and project instructions are given in English as well.

Arrival Details

Volunteers need to arrive by 11am on a Friday in one of the CV offices. All volunteers receive an orientation lasting around one hour when they arrive to join the program.

Volunteers are also required to complete a Volunteer Registration Form at this point. Following this, volunteers will either be moved to the local volunteer accommodation, or to regional placements by train, bus or vehicle (All travel arrangements are organised for the volunteers). The first weekend is usually free time for the volunteers, though some travel may be required on Sunday if you are going to a remote project location.

Accommodation and Meals

All accommodation and meals are included during the program, on weekends (free time) as well as during the project days.

This starts from the Friday when you arrive to begin your program. The first meal is dinner on Friday evening, and accommodation is also included from Friday night onwards.



> **Accommodation:** This varies according to project and location. Typical accommodation can include caravans, hostels, shearers' quarters, bunkhouses, and camping (we supply tents). We ask you to bring a sleeping mat as well as a sleeping bag, and to be prepared to share.

> **Meals:** For breakfast there will be cereals, bread or toast, tea and coffee. Lunch is normally a self-made sandwich and fruit; in the evening you will enjoy a meal prepared by the group, typically something like pasta, roast or a vegetarian option. Volunteers help with the preparation of meals and cleaning up of dishes, plus some domestic duties as required. We rely on every volunteer to participate fully in the program, and the evening meal is a popular part of the day.

Luggage Allowances

As space is limited, we ask that volunteers keep their luggage to a maximum of 15kgs in a backpack or soft-sided bag. We suggest that volunteers bring a small daypack to carry lunch, sunscreen, water bottle etc. Please see "What to Bring".

Finishing the Program

You will finish the program at around 4pm on a Friday. However, since you may be returning from projects some distance away from the office, we recommend that you book any onward travel connections from Saturday onwards.

This also means that you will need to book your own accommodation for the Friday night. The CV offices can help and advise **on request** at the end of your Conservation Experience program.

Volunteer Certificates

All volunteers are presented with a Certificate of Appreciation at the end of their program.



What to Bring

Travel as lightly as possible – see 'Luggage Allowances'.
However, the following items are **essential for all projects**:

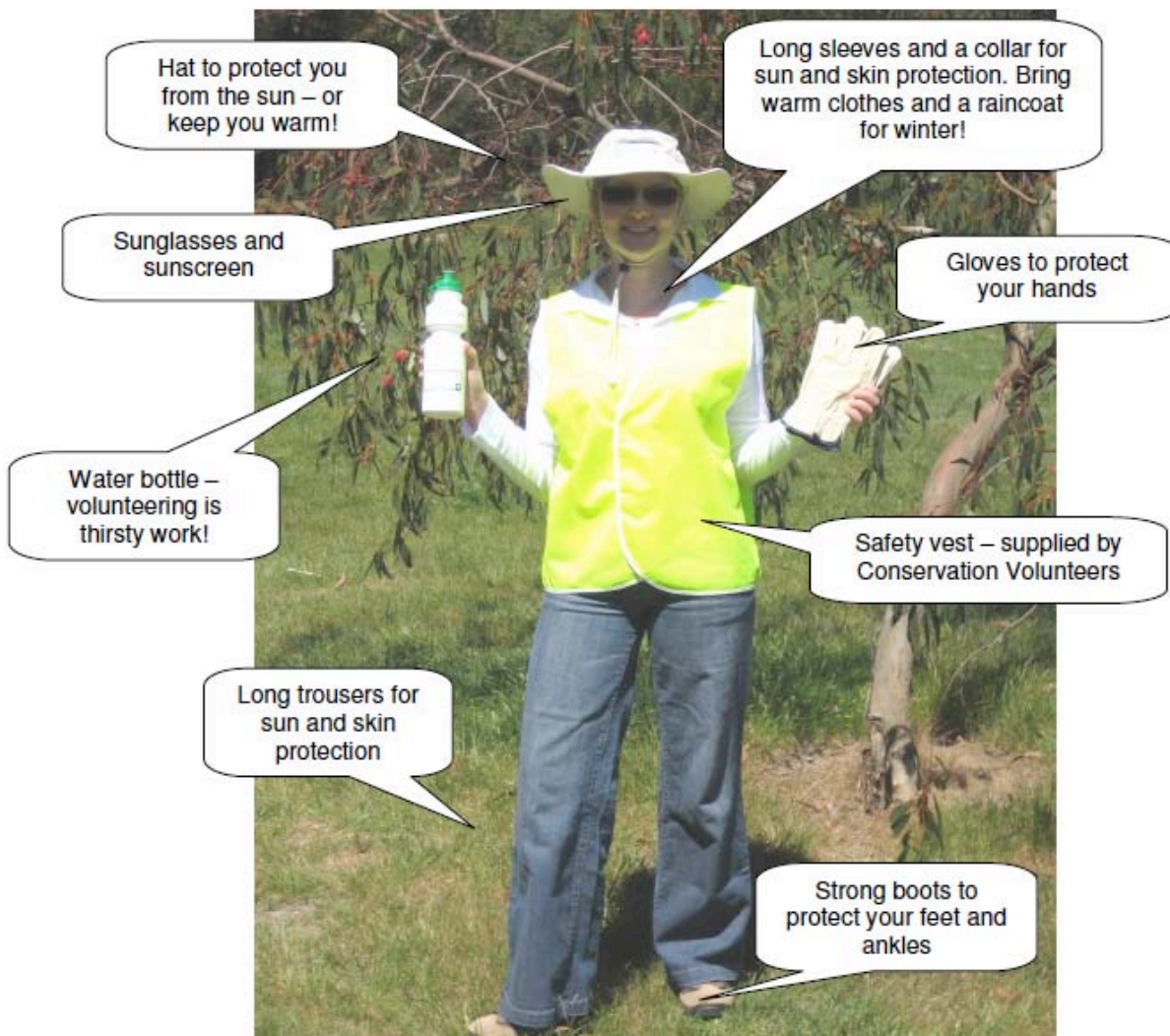
Sleeping bag and mat	Long trousers	Strong boots *
Wet weather clothing	Long sleeved shirts	Backpack
Wide brimmed sun hat	Personal drink bottle	Insect repellent
Work / gardening gloves	Sunscreen and sunglasses **	Mosquito net ***

* Conservation Volunteers strongly recommends safety work boots with protective toe caps

** Choose sunscreen with the highest sun protection factor – this is an outdoor program

*** Mosquito nets are not essential but are recommended

Note that you can purchase drink bottles, sun hats, work gloves and mosquito nets from Conservation Volunteers if required.



FAQ's

• ***Is there an induction or orientation? What happens when I start the program?***

Yes. This takes place on Friday, when you start your program : you will get essential safety information, and get introduced to the staff and fellow volunteers. After that, you'll have some free time to relax and get to know the other volunteers, before starting your first project on Monday.

• ***Will I do the same activities every day?***

This varies. On some weeks, you make complete a major project, such as being part of a team planting a thousand trees or building a walking track. On other weeks, you may do a variety of activities every day. Each week or two, your projects will change to a new location. We include as much variety in the program as possible.

• ***Can I choose which conservation activities I'd like to do?***

No. Our program varies, depending on the time of year, weather and priorities. We'll put together a program of conservation activities for you.

• ***When will I know what activities I'll be doing during my Eco Experience?***

As most of our programs are dependent on seasonal conditions as well as conservation priority, we usually assign resources and volunteers around 4 -6 weeks before each project starts. We'll let you know what activities you'll be doing at your induction on arrival.

• ***How much time will I spend on Eco projects? How much free time will I have?***

The programs usually run from Monday to Friday, with weekends free. This may change from time to time on remote projects, where volunteers spend 10 days in a remote location, followed by a longer break, or when travel to a project site is required on weekends.

Project hours are normally from 8am – 4pm.

• ***What happens on weekends?***

Unless you're on a remote project (see above), weekends are your free time to relax and enjoy some local sightseeing. Meals and accommodation are provided. Ask our staff for suggestions if you need some sightseeing ideas!

• ***Will I be able to see and touch wildlife?***

Our programs rarely involve direct contact with wildlife. However you will have plenty of opportunities to spot wildlife on project sites, and we'll give you a wildlife guidebook on arrival to help. Your Team Leader will point out wildlife to you, and can help identify species for you.

• ***What are the meals like?***

We provide wholesome food. Meals are a group activity with people assisting with the cooking and cleaning. Meal examples include cereals, toast, tea and coffee for breakfast; sandwiches and fruit for lunch; and meals like pasta, BBQ, curries or stirfries for dinner.



- ***Will I share a bedroom or bathroom with other people?***

Yes, all accommodation on this program is shared.

- ***Will I be picked up from the airport when I arrive?***

No, you will need to make your own way to the office which is your starting point. All offices are in reasonably central locations.

- ***Can I bring a laptop with me?***

This is a personal choice – you will need to take full responsibility for looking after it.

- ***Is internet access available?***

You will usually be able to find an internet café or library with internet access on weekends. Internet access is not provided at volunteer accommodation – even if you have your own laptop, wireless broadband is not often readily available outside major cities.

- ***What mobile phone coverage can I expect?***

Mobile coverage can be limited outside major cities.

- ***Who are the other volunteers on the program?***

You'll be part of a team of up to 10 volunteers. The other volunteers on your team might be travellers, students, locals who have lived in the area for years or a combination. We can never guarantee in advance who the other volunteers will be – you might find yourself with people from your home country, or you may be the only volunteer from there! Because our program runs every week of the year, it's likely that your team will change each week, with new people joining the program and other people finishing.

- ***How much spending money should I bring?***

Every volunteer is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some volunteers spend more on going out at weekends, tourist activities, souvenirs etc, so consider your own spending habits and budgeting abilities when it comes to deciding how much money to bring. The amount of spending money you bring is entirely up to you - it varies from volunteer to volunteer.

While you are with Eco Volunteers, you only need enough spending money for social activities and sightseeing on weekends. All food, accommodation and travel is included while you are volunteering and on weekends. You need to budget some money for laundry costs (laundromats are commonly available with coin-operated washers and dryers).

- ***What if English is not my first language?***

We will explain any technical words or instructions you are unlikely to know, but our staff are not necessarily fluent in any other language. Participants come from a range of nationalities, and English is used as the common language.

