

Parks and gardens keeper Job Description

A free job description template for the Local government industry

Company Name: _____

Location: _____

Employment Type: _____

Reports To: _____

Date: _____

DISCLAIMER

This parks and gardens keeper job description template is designed to reflect Australian workplace standards and local government practices at the time of publication. Confirm the applicable modern award or enterprise agreement for your council and ensure compliance with all relevant employment laws and safety obligations.

1. Position overview

A council parks and gardens keeper maintains the public open spaces that communities rely on — mowing and edging lawns, tending garden beds, pruning trees and shrubs, preparing sportsfields, and keeping parks, reserves and streetscapes clean, safe and presentable. The role is hands-on outdoor work that combines horticultural skill with the safe operation of turf and plant equipment.

In Australia, parks and gardens keepers are typically classified under the Local Government Industry Award 2020 (MA000112) as outdoor or operational employees on the shared Level 1–11 scale, usually around Level 1 to Level 3 depending on experience, tickets held and the range of duties performed. Many councils pay under an enterprise agreement instead of the award.

This template provides a foundation for creating clear, compliant job descriptions that attract reliable outdoor staff. Once hired, manage your works crews efficiently with rostering software.

2. Key responsibilities

Turf and lawn maintenance

Mowing, edging, aerating and fertilising lawns, sportsfields and reserves to keep them safe and presentable throughout the season.

Garden bed care

Planting, weeding, mulching, watering and pruning garden beds, shrubs and small trees across parks and streetscapes.

Equipment operation

Safely operating ride-on and push mowers, brushcutters, blowers, small plant and hand tools, and carrying out routine pre-start checks and cleaning.

Park presentation and cleanliness

Emptying bins, removing litter and graffiti, cleaning amenities and keeping paths, playgrounds and picnic areas clean and tidy.

Safety and inspections

Inspecting parks, playgrounds and assets for hazards, reporting faults and damage, and setting up signage and barriers to keep the public safe.

Team and works support

Working as part of a depot crew to complete scheduled works and seasonal programs, and assisting with events, storm cleanup and other outdoor tasks.

3. Skills and attributes

- Horticultural knowledge: Practical knowledge of turf, plants, pruning and seasonal maintenance across public open spaces.
- Equipment competence: Safe, confident operation of mowers, brushcutters, blowers and small plant, plus basic maintenance and pre-start checks.
- Safety awareness: Consistent use of PPE, safe work methods and hazard reporting when working near the public, traffic and machinery.
- Physical fitness: Capacity for sustained physical, outdoor work in all weather, including lifting, bending and repetitive tasks.
- Reliability: Punctual, dependable and able to work independently or in a crew to complete scheduled works on time.
- Teamwork: Cooperative approach to depot work, plus courteous interaction with members of the public in parks and reserves.

4. Qualifications and requirements

The qualifications for parks and gardens keeper positions depend on the crew and equipment used. Some are mandatory, while others are preferred or desirable.

- Driver's licence (required) — A current, valid driver's licence is required for travelling between sites and operating council vehicles
- Working rights (required) — Eligibility to work in Australia
- Physical fitness (required) — Ability to perform sustained outdoor physical work in all weather conditions
- Horticulture qualification — A Certificate II/III in Horticulture or turf management is advantageous but not always essential
- Plant and equipment tickets — Chemical/spraying (AQF3), chainsaw or ride-on/plant tickets are desirable depending on the role
- First aid certificate — Current first aid certification is desirable for outdoor and crew-based work

5. Working conditions

- Outdoor work in all weather conditions throughout the year
- Physically demanding tasks including mowing, lifting, bending and pruning
- Regular operation of turf equipment, small plant and hand tools
- Early starts and seasonal peaks such as growing season and storm cleanup
- Work near the public, traffic and other crews requiring safety awareness
- Compliance with council policies, PPE and workplace health and safety requirements

6. Award information

Local Government Industry Award 2020

Most council parks and gardens keeper positions in Australia are covered by the Local Government Industry Award 2020 (MA000112). This modern award sets minimum pay rates, penalty rates, allowances and conditions for council outdoor and operational employees. View current Local Government Award pay rates.

The award uses a shared Level 1–11 classification ladder. A parks and gardens keeper is typically classified around Level 1 to Level 3 as an outdoor employee, progressing with experience and tickets held — for FY2026/27, Level 1 is \$27.11/hr and Level 5 is \$31.30/hr (full-time/part-time). Casual employees receive a 25% loading. Many councils pay above the award under an enterprise agreement — always check. Use award interpretation software to calculate pay accurately.

Penalty rates and allowances

Under MA000112, weekend and public-holiday penalties apply: for full-time and part-time staff, Saturday is paid at 150%, Sunday at 175% and public holidays at 250%. Casual rates are higher again because the 25% loading is added to the penalty. Overtime applies for hours worked beyond ordinary hours.

Outdoor crews may also attract allowances such as adverse working conditions (from about \$1.03/hr up to \$14.73/hr for the worst conditions), first aid (about \$0.54/hr) and, for remote work, camping (about \$33.87/night). Confirm the current rates and allowances that apply to your council, and check whether an enterprise agreement applies in place of the award.

7. Frequently asked questions

About the role

Q: What does a council parks and gardens keeper do?

A council parks and gardens keeper maintains public open spaces — mowing and edging lawns, tending garden beds, pruning trees and shrubs, preparing sportsfields, and keeping parks, playgrounds and streetscapes clean, safe and presentable. They operate turf and horticultural equipment, inspect assets for hazards and report faults. It is hands-on outdoor work carried out as part of a depot crew.

Q: What award covers parks and gardens keepers in Australia?

Most council parks and gardens keeper positions are covered by the Local Government Industry Award 2020 (MA000112), which sets minimum pay, penalty rates and conditions across a shared Level 1–11 scale. Many councils instead pay under an enterprise agreement. Always confirm which instrument applies to your council.

Q: What classification level should I use for a parks and gardens keeper?

Under the Local Government Award, parks and gardens keepers are typically classified around Level 1 to Level 3 as outdoor employees, progressing with experience and tickets held. For FY2026/27, Level 1 is \$27.11/hr and Level 5 is \$31.30/hr (full-time/part-time). See our Local Government Award pay guide for current rates, and check any enterprise agreement.

Q: Do I need to include pay rates in a job description?

It's not legally required, but including indicative pay rates can attract more applicants and set clear expectations. You can reference the applicable award or enterprise-agreement rate, or use phrases like 'Award rates plus penalties' or 'Competitive hourly rate based on experience.' Check the current Local Government Award rates for guidance.

Qualifications

Q: Do parks and gardens keepers need a qualification?

Not always. Many roles are open to candidates with practical outdoor experience, and a Certificate II/III in Horticulture or turf management is advantageous rather than essential. A driver's licence is typically required, and plant or chemical tickets may be needed depending on the equipment used. Focus the essential requirements on what the specific crew actually needs.

Q: What tickets do parks and gardens keepers need?

It depends on the duties. Common tickets include chemical/spraying (AQF3) for weed control, chainsaw tickets for tree work, and ride-on or plant operation competencies. Verify all tickets before a worker starts and keep records — HR software helps track expiries and prevents rostering staff with lapsed credentials.

Q: What qualifications should I require vs prefer for a parks and gardens keeper?

Mandatory requirements usually include a valid driver's licence, working rights in Australia and physical fitness for outdoor work. Preferred qualifications include a horticulture certificate, relevant plant or chemical tickets and a current first aid certificate. Avoid over-qualifying entry-level positions, as it narrows your candidate pool unnecessarily.

Q: Can I hire parks and gardens keepers without experience?

Yes. Many councils hire and train staff without prior parks experience, particularly for entry-level Level 1–2 roles. Focus on reliability, physical fitness, a clean driving record and a safety-first attitude. Clear job descriptions help candidates understand the physical, outdoor nature of the work and self-select appropriately.

Employment

Q: Should I hire casual or permanent parks and gardens keepers?

This depends on your workload. Casual keepers offer flexibility for seasonal peaks and event support but attract a 25% casual loading under the Local Government Award. Permanent part-time or full-time staff provide crew continuity and stronger retention. Many councils use a mix — permanent staff for core crews and casuals for growing season and storm cleanup.

Q: What penalty rates apply to parks and gardens keepers?

Under the Local Government Award (MA000112), for full-time and part-time staff Saturday is paid at 150%, Sunday at 175% and public holidays at 250%. Casual rates are higher again because the 25% loading is added to the penalty. Overtime applies for extra hours, and outdoor allowances may apply. Use award interpretation software to calculate rates accurately.

Q: What allowances apply to outdoor council crews?

Under the Local Government Award, outdoor crews may be entitled to adverse-working-conditions allowances (from about \$1.03/hr up to \$14.73/hr for the worst conditions such as sewer/septic work), first aid (about \$0.54/hr, max \$20.62/week) and camping (about \$33.87/night) for remote work. Confirm the current allowances and any enterprise-agreement terms that apply to your council.

Q: What should I include in a parks and gardens keeper employment contract?

Key elements include: position title and classification level, employment type (casual, part-time or full-time), hourly rate, applicable award or enterprise agreement, reporting structure, main duties, depot location and required licences or tickets. For casuals, include the 25% casual loading. Use our digital employment contracts to simplify this process.

Rostering

Q: How far in advance should I provide rosters to parks crews?

Award and agreement roosting rules vary, so confirm the notice period that applies to your council. As a general practice, providing rosters at least 7 days in advance gives crews visibility of their work and sites. Using roosting software helps ensure compliance and reduces last-minute changes.

Q: How do I roster parks and gardens crews across multiple sites?

Assign crews based on scheduled works, seasonal programs and each worker's tickets and availability, balancing site coverage with realistic travel time. Use roosting tools to manage on-call storm response and adjust allocations when staff are absent. This keeps maintenance schedules on track without overloading individual crews.

Q: What breaks are parks and gardens keepers entitled to?

Break entitlements are set by the applicable award or enterprise agreement and generally include a meal break for shifts beyond a set length. Because crews work off-site, set clear break policies and ensure staff record their time accurately. Use time and attendance tools with GPS clock-in to support compliance.

Q: How do I manage parks crew availability for roosting?

Collect availability preferences during onboarding and update them regularly. Use HR software and roosting tools to track when each worker can work and any ticket or licence constraints. Set clear policies about minimum availability and how to request changes, which simplifies crew planning and on-call cover.