

# How to Find an Ethical job

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Are you one of the growing numbers of people who want to do work that's more than a paycheck and a car-park? Are you looking for work that's meaningful and contributes to making the world a better place?

If so, here's a few tips to help get you started!

### **Ethical Jobs in the Non-Profit Sector**

Working for a charity or not-for-profit organisation is probably what comes to mind first when thinking about a job that has a positive impact on the world. While there may only be a few high profile jobs working with charities, there are a huge variety of „behind-the-scenes“ roles that are essential to keeping any non-profit organisation running.

Most medium or large charities employ people to do everything from fundraising and copywriting to human resources, research or accounting – there are heaps of roles in the non-profit sector to suit almost any career path.

There are also lots of non-profit organisations that aren't necessarily charities but that still do really important work. From credit unions providing non-profit banking & financial services, to trade unions working to ensure decent wages and working conditions, there are hundreds of thousands of big and small organisations around Australia focused on working for a better world.

## Ethical Jobs in the Private Sector

Don't forget that businesses can be powerful agents for social change too – from building wind farms and solar panels or recycling waste to providing care for the young, elderly and everyone in between, or supplying emergency and long-term aid to communities in the developing world.

For example, research suggests that almost 1 million new „green jobs“ will be created in Australia by 2030 – and almost all in the private sector. These will be jobs in areas like renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable water industries, biomaterials, green buildings and waste recycling.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is another area of fast employment growth as more companies realise that being in business is about more than just making a profit.

## Ethical Jobs in the Public Sector

There are also a variety of jobs in the local, state or federal government levels which are making a positive impact every day. From providing Meals on Wheels to people at risk, to health care child care or aged care, local councils are integral to healthy communities. All local councils now also have environment departments working hard to make the places we live and work greener and more sustainable.

And at state and federal government levels, literally hundreds of different agencies provide a huge variety of services from community development to consumer rights to environmental protection.

## What Sort of Employer Do You Want?

Have a think about what sort of organisation or company you'd like to work for. As a starting point, consider these four general areas through which an employer can make a difference and think about where you'd like to have a positive impact, and which employers you'd want to avoid:

- The Environmental Impact – this is the impact, direct or indirect, that an organisation's operations, products or services (including those of its suppliers) have on the environment. You might want to avoid some employers because of their environmental impacts, but there are also millions of jobs making a positive impact on the environment, from architecture to zoos.
- The Community / Social Impact – this is the impact of an organisation's projects, products, services or investments on the community at a local or global level. How does your potential employer contribute to the community they work in?
- The Impact on Workplace Practices – this refers to the impact of an organisation in terms of the respectful treatment of its own or another organisation's employees. Find out if your potential employer has a good record with wages and conditions for their employees, and what sort of benefits you'd get working there.
- The Impact on Marketplace & Business Conduct – this means the activities that organisations undertake ensuring responsible behaviour when developing, purchasing, selling and marketing products and services. For example, does your prospective employer use sweatshop free and environmentally or fair trade certified products?

## Improving Your Employment Prospects

There are many things you can do to improve your chances of getting a job in the area you most want to make a difference in:

### ► Networking & Making Contacts

“It’s not what you know but who you know!” – This is obviously not always true, but networking is always extremely useful for improving your employment prospects. Research in the USA has shown that as many as 70-85 percent of jobs are not advertised! Developing a network of people with similar interests and concerns can give you an opportunity to meet people who might end up employing you or letting you know about job opportunities that come up. Doing work experience in your chosen area (see below) and attending related events are great ways to make contact with people in the field you’re interested in.

### ► Building Your Organisational Knowledge

If you can find a particular organisation that appeals to you as a potential employer, research the organisation in as much detail as possible. The more you know about an organisation the better your chances of convincing them that you’re enthusiastic about the prospect of working for them and convincing them that you’re the right candidate for the job. Find out about exactly what they do and why, find out what other similar organisations do and how your prospective employer is different, and read through all public materials (i.e. website, brochures, promo materials, etc.). This will give you the confidence to approach a potential job interview with a good set of questions and prepare you for answering questions about why you want to work for them. “All this homework” will also make you consider carefully whether the organisation is actually the right one for you.

### ► Volunteering Experience

Employers value volunteer experience very highly. Research in the UK has shown that as many as two-thirds of graduates working in charities had been volunteers before getting a job with the charity! If you have volunteer experience relevant or transferable to a job you’re applying for, your chances of getting the job are significantly higher. An organisation you volunteer for will see your commitment and dedication to the work they are doing and at the very least you will gain valuable skills and knowledge about your area of interest. Some organisations advertise for volunteer or work experience positions but it’s probably better to take a proactive approach and get in touch with organisations you are interested in volunteering with.

### ► Further Education

Many job ads specify qualifications, such as a particular degrees, certifications or proficiencies which are either required or important for the position. Qualifications alone usually will not get you a job but they can put you ahead of the competition in many cases. Any qualification, even a single short course on a subject, if relevant to the job you’re applying for can enhance your employment prospects. Most qualifications can be done part time, so you don’t necessarily have to stop work to study. So if you’re not having luck getting your dream job, have a look at what qualifications you could be working towards to enhance your profile even further.

## ► General Skills

Obviously different skills are required for different jobs but there are certain skills which employers across all sectors and jobs value:

- Oral and written communication skills
- Ability to use common basic office software
- Being able to work well within a team
- Attention to detail
- Ability to prioritise and work to deadlines
- A good work ethic

You might only be able to comfortably claim you have a few of these attributes and even if you feel you have them all, there's always room for improvement. So think about how you could improve on the ones you don't feel as confident about. And whether you have all of them or only a few, in a job interview the important thing is to highlight the ones you have and have concrete examples ready to mention that show that you have them.

## Looking for more information?

Search for jobs at [EthicalJobs.com.au](http://EthicalJobs.com.au) or check out the resources page at [EthicalJobs.com.au/resources](http://EthicalJobs.com.au/resources) for more resources on getting an ethical job. ●