

I am a Geographer ...

Christian Lynch

Strategic Planner at the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA)

As part of my current position at the VPA, I am responsible for facilitating the preparation of Precinct Structure Plans (PSPs) for the greenfield growth areas of Melbourne. PSPs are detailed planning documents that guide the future develop of new suburbs and create a strategic vision for an area. This includes the provision of elements such as roads, residential housing, schools and open space, as well as retail and industrial centres.

I studied Geography at VCE (Years 11 and 12) and then completed a Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning (Hons) at RMIT University, Melbourne. I use policy analysis and interpretation skills on a daily basis as part of my work as a planner. This skill was introduced to me in my Year 11 and 12 Geography studies, where I was asked to critically analyse policies such as the Murray Darling Basin Plan and One Child Policy. I also analyse all sorts of geographic data including population figures, flood levels and topographic maps through the PSP planning process.

I'd be lying if I didn't say that a small part of my passion to study Geography came from my mum, who is a secondary school Geography teacher. She introduced me to the world of Geography and its wide range of fascinating subjects including land use changes and natural hazards and disasters. My own personal inspiration to study Geography was fuelled by my interest in understanding how people understand the environment we live in and how our actions affect it. I was then inspired to study Urban and Regional Planning at university where I learnt about the policy-based processes that geographers interact with every day. The planning and implementation of policy is vitally important as it guides how we use, develop and safeguard the environments we live in into the future.

I work with many individuals in Geography-related positions including GIS mapping specialists, arboriculturalists, heritage advisers and biodiversity experts.

The prospects of geographers in my field of work are endless. Even though I have studied Urban and Regional Planning, this does not limit the type of position you may find yourself in, later down the track. Geographers can become Urban Planners like myself or an Environmental, Community, Infrastructure or Transport planner – it really depends on



what specific area of planning has caught your interest throughout your studies.

You are also not limited to the types of organisations that you could work for, including local councils, state government agencies, consultancies and not-for-profit organisations. These could be located in your city, nationally or even internationally. Yes, a career in planning can take you around the world!