

2026 Alpine Ecology Summer Research Experience Award (2 positions)



Research Centre for
Applied Alpine Ecology



LA TROBE
UNIVERSITY



Overview The Research Centre for Applied Alpine Ecology (RCAAE) comprises a group of professional scientists, post-graduate students and academics who study all aspects of the ecology of alpine and sub-alpine landscapes. Our scientific research includes ecological processes, effects of fire, exotic plants and animals, endangered species management, human activities, and the management of these ecosystems in response to climate change.

Further information can be found at: <http://rcaae.org/>

Role Overview

Monitoring of vegetation in the Victorian alps commenced in the 1940s due to concerns about erosion of water catchments and the effects of livestock grazing. This ecological research has been beneficial to land managers and has provided an understanding of the long-term dynamics of alpine vegetation and how it responds to disturbance.

While livestock grazing has ceased in the Alpine National Park, ecologists continue to monitor vegetation dynamics and research the ecology of alpine flora. These monitoring and research programs investigate the legacy of past disturbances and how current threats such as invasive species and climate change are impacting alpine flora and ecosystems.

During the coming summer, you will have the opportunity to work on a variety of projects in the Victorian alps, including:

- Assessment of habitat values provided by old-growth Snow Gum stands (this builds on work conducted by 2025 cadets who located and mapped old-growth stands across the Bogong High Plains)
- Frost tolerance trait analyses of selected species found in cold-air drainage climate refugia
- Vegetation surveys to assess effects of repeated fire on high mountain forests (with an Hons student, in the Cobberas)
- Feral animal impact studies (also in the Cobberas)

You will also contribute to collecting data for the the global 'NutNet' experiment (<https://nutnet.org/>) at Falls Creek Alpine Resort.

Students will be trained in field ecology techniques. Skills to be learnt include plant identification, quantitative measurements of plant populations and environmental attributes, experimental design, trait ecology, database entry and data manipulation.

During the Award, students will be required to live at Falls Creek Alpine Resort and other locations in the Victorian alps and undertake field work in a variety of conditions. Lots of walking is involved, as is working/camping in remote areas. Please think carefully about this before applying.

By obtaining a Summer Research Experience Award, you can contribute to long-term research and monitoring which is contributing to conservation and better management of these beautiful but restricted natural areas.

Role Requirements

The Summer Research Experience Award will suit students currently studying BOT2PDE and who potentially wish to proceed to Honours. If you have an interest in field-based research, botany, plant ecology, climate change, and vegetation monitoring and conservation, you will be particularly suited to this Award.

Location

Victorian Alps, and Department of Ecological, Plant and Animal Science, La Trobe University Bundoora

Duration

Approx. 5 weeks from early-January until mid-February 2026 (final dates to be finalised)

Research Award

The Award total is \$2550

Accommodation

Accommodation will be provided in ski lodges at Falls Creek resort, a short distance from major field sites. There will be some camping trips when visiting more remote sites. All accommodation costs will be covered by the RCAAE.

How to Apply

To apply for the 2026 Summer Research Experience Award with the RCAAE, please email a resume and a cover letter to John Morgan (J.Morgan@latrobe.edu.au). Applications close **5pm, Friday 17th October 2025**. A short-list of candidates will be developed and interviews held in early November. All applicants will receive feedback on their application.

The cover letter should outline why you would like to complete the 2026 Summer Research Experience Award with the Research Centre for Applied Alpine Ecology. Please include information such as your experience, your career goals, and how the position would help further your career ambitions. We are always happy to hear about the skills you might bring to the position. You must have a current driver's licence.

Enquires or Further Information can be obtained by contacting Assoc Prof John Morgan (J.Morgan@latrobe.edu.au)