

Applying for Positions at Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council

Thank you considering working for Council. This guide has been developed to support you in preparing your application.

QPRC deliver a diverse range of services and programs. Some of these services consist of road construction and maintenance, water and sewer, gardening and horticulture, aquatic centres, planning and development, libraries and museums and customer service centres. We also offer career opportunities in human resources, finance and information technology.

MERIT BASED SELECTION

Being a local government organisation, QPRC are required to appoint by merit, where applicants are selected for appointment based on their ability to perform the duties of the position, having regard to the functional capabilities (selection criteria) of the position and a fair selection process.

Council receive many applications for advertised positions, so it is important that you demonstrate how you meet the functional capabilities of the role.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Our recruitment approach ensures a fair and meritorious selection process. Briefly our process includes:

- Advertising vacancies
- Review and shortlist applications
- Interview eligible candidates, prepare recommendation for appointment
- Prepare job offer for preferred candidate, inform this candidate of the outcome

HOW TO APPLY

Your application is your first opportunity to introduce yourself and demonstrate to the selection panel that you are suitable for the position. To apply, you'll need to:

- Download the **Job Attachments** listed in the advertisement.
- Download the **position description** and review the **functional capabilities/selection criteria** of the role
- Call the job contact for more information (if required)
- Prepare your application
 - Response to the Functional Capabilities (featured in position description)
 - Cover letter
 - Resume - including current referee contact details
- Submit your application

Allow yourself time to complete your application before it is due, then proofread prior to submitting.

COVER LETTER

Your cover letter should include:

- Advertised job title and address to the hiring manager
- A brief overview of your claim for the position
- Your contact details with a daytime phone number

Your cover letter may briefly address how you suit the position.

- Keep it brief – typically no more than one page
- Explain your motivation for applying for the job
- Relate the content to the job you are applying for
- Highlight your skills and key achievements relative to the position

RESUME

Your resume should verify the information you've provided in addressing the **Functional Capabilities/Selection Criteria** and provide additional information for the selection panel.

Your resume may include:

- Education and Employment History: including the position you held, period of employment, and organisation name.
- Referees: at least two recent, work-related referees, preferably from different firms, listing their names, position titles and daytime contact telephone numbers. Ensure your referees are aware of the position you are applying for, so they are prepared to speak on your behalf. Referees may be contacted if you are shortlisted.

There are numerous resume templates available online and along with recruitment agencies that can provide support in preparing your application.

CADETS AND TRAINEES

An important part of our workforce is engaging, supporting and growing our workforce capability through Cadet and Traineeship programs. These roles allow applicants to join QPRC in entry level positions often with little to no prior experience to kickstart their career in a field of their interest.

Cadet and Trainee roles have the following features:

- Combination of industry work experience and supporting study
- Council pay for training and accreditation costs
- Fixed term – between 2 - 6 years, dependant on the position

Cadet and Trainee positions are quite popular and often attract numerous applications. It is important to remember this and highlight to the Selection Panel the skills, knowledge, experience and personality attributes which would make you are great addition to our team.

CLOSING DATE

Each position is advertised with a closing date. Council must receive your application by the advertised closing time on the specified date for it to be considered. Late applications will only be considered at the approval of the hiring manager.

How to Address the Functional Capabilities/Selection Criteria

Our team are currently in the process of reviewing our position descriptions. The section you will need to address in your application may appear as either Functional Capabilities or Selection Criteria on the position description.

Overview

Candidate responses to the Functional Capabilities/Selection Criteria is one of Council's main assessment criteria for a candidate's eligibility for an interview. To review the Functional Capabilities/Selection Criteria for the role you wish to apply for, access the **Position Description** available in the **Supporting Documents** section of the Job Attachments (Appendix A).

Using the STAR Method

Hiring managers often look for evidence-based responses to the Functional Capabilities as an indicator of candidate's ability to perform the role. To achieve this, you may wish to structure your answers using the STAR Method:

Situation: professional and/or educational experience

Task: responsibilities and projects undertaken

Action: process and approach you took to complete the task

Result: of your actions and how you can apply to this role

The following pages include examples of responses to the functional capabilities for a Foreman – Roads and Administrative Assistant as a guide.

If you have any questions or require further assistance in responding to the functional capabilities, please email our team on: careers@qprc.nsw.gov.au or please call (02) 6285 6085.

Examples of Responses to the Functional Capabilities/Selection Criteria

Example 1: Response to functional capabilities/selection criteria for a Foreman – Roads position

Demonstrated experience in a similar role of construction

My professional experience predominantly lies in transport construction of which I have undertaken for around 12 years with three different regional councils all with varying and unique landscapes that affect transport construction projects. My experience in transport construction ranges from constructing grading, signs and delineation and intermittent works.

During my time at Upper Alban Shire Council, my operational and leadership capabilities were recognised by my superiors and I was eventually able to secure a role as Roads Foreman and I have been in similar roles within local government ever since. Upon reviewing the position description, I believe the skills and capabilities I have developed are directly transferrable to the requirements of the Foreman – Roads role with QPRC through my capability to evaluate transport maintenance requirements, identify WH&S hazards and risk and effectively lead teams of all sizes.

Capacity to motivate and supervise staff for delivery of allocated activities

Through my leadership experience in transport construction, I have had the opportunity to guide, motivate, enrich and support teams both large and small. My passion to integrate team-based skills and support team members to achieve their best has allowed me, with the support of my teams, to achieve performance outcomes.

I would describe my leadership style as democratic, meaning I allow team involvement in decision-making to allow my team to feel they can contribute to performance improvement and achieving goals. An example of this approach was when my team at Glebe Harmon Regional Council were faced with a complex issue regarding limited available resources despite a large backlog of community requests. Although I had a foundational idea of how this could be approached, I held a meeting with my team and encouraged the team to share their ideas, foster confidence in contribution and reward creative solutions. Since leaving Glebe Harmon Regional Council, my team described my leadership style as approachable and diplomatic where they felt confident raising issues with me.

Capacity to communicate effectively in both oral and written form

Clear and effective communication is a critical component of any transport construction role for the purpose of achieving team-based goals and work site health and safety. Therefore, in my previous roles in this field, I have made a conscious effort to enhance my communication skills which consist of active listening, non-verbal communication, emotional intelligence, provision of constructive feedback and respectful conduct. These are the skills I also utilise in a leadership context when communicating objectives and tasks throughout the workday.

An example of when I was required to utilise effective communication was when there was a car accident on a major highway. In conjunction with emergency services, my crew was among the first to arrive on the scene. In this situation, the team required clear and immediate instruction to position signage, initiate safe traffic control, allow access for first responders and coordinate bystanders. My communicative approach to this was to ensure my team was calm, delegate individual responsibility clearly, ensure the team understood

their instruction and monitor conditions. Following this, my team was effectively able to handle this confronting scenario in a calm and safe manner with no further issues.

Ability to plan, organise, set priorities and manage time to ensure objectives are achieved within an agreed timeline

In transport construction, effective time management is critical to ensure projects are completed within an appropriate timeframe whilst still allowing time for spontaneous requests. Among my core time management skills include task prioritisation, setting key milestones to track progress and task delegation. To assist my team to participate in effective time management, I also utilise Microsoft Teams to specify project deadlines and assign individual workers.

An example of where I had to utilise effective time management was during a time where there was regular and consistent rain which of course caused significant pothole damage to the roads. This unfortunately occurred during a time where my team had significant construction projects ongoing with pressure to complete. I was therefore tasked with ensuring progressive completion of the construction projects whilst also attending to major pothole hazards. To resolve this, I delegated required staff according to individual talents and skills, communicated key objectives and set milestones to track progress. Through my guidance, it was clear that my team was able to address both key issues and complete them within the specified timeframe to a high standard.

Possesses and maintains a General Construction Induction NSW and Class MR driver's licence.

I can confirm that I possess and maintain a current NSW White Card and a MR driver's licence, both of which have been attached to my application.

Example 2: Response to functional capabilities/selection criteria for an Administrative Assistant position

Demonstrated experience in a similar role of office administration

My previous professional experience has predominantly been involved with fast-paced, customer facing environments. During this time, I have been able to develop a high competency in numerous administrative skills and functions including record keeping, bookkeeping, customer service engagement, teamwork, time management, computer software and programs.

I have also recently acquired a bachelor's degree in Business Administration. The coursework involved in this degree has also provided me with a well-rounded skill base which will be directly applicable to the functional requirements of this role. Examples of coursework undertaken includes accounting, research methods, business management, business communication and workplace law.

For example, during my time with Big SuperClinic, I was responsible for managing patient records and appointments all whilst overseeing the front counter and providing exceptional customer service. Given that the position description for this position stipulates duties in record keeping, customer service and scheduling, I would consider the skills developed from my previous role, directly applicable to the past-paced, high-performance function of the Administrative Assistant position.

Demonstrated ability to provide a high level of customer service and advice

High quality and engaged customer service is integral to supporting the good reputation and image of an organisation through ensuring customers have a pleasant and timely experience with business services. This is a perspective of customer service that I have applied to all my previous roles for a diverse range of customers.

My approach to customer service includes active listening and understanding a customer's problem, reassuring the customer they have been heard, seeking additional information where necessary, creative problem solving and providing a definitive solution or an alternative where necessary.

An example of when I have provided exceptional customer service involves my time at Legality Law Firm. I received an email from a customer who was struggling to understand our procedure in personal injury claims. Upon calling the customer and applying my active listening ability, I identified she was having difficulty in understanding the legal terminology of which she was unfamiliar. For this reason, I scheduled a phone consultation with her to run her through our procedure in detail and provide clarity on the legal 'language' for the purpose of ensuring she understood and had confidence that her situation was being looked after appropriately. Following her experience with our firm, she submitted a customer feedback form thanking me for customer service experience and she later became a returning customer who requested my services specifically.

Demonstrated ability to effectively use Microsoft suite programs

In my professional and educational experience, I have developed a strong competency in using Microsoft programs and similar programs.

This refined competency with Microsoft and similar programs has given me the confidence to learn new systems quickly and then train others where necessary. My capability in navigating Microsoft programs was noticed by one of my newly hired colleagues who requested my assistance. My approach to this was consistent guidance through demonstration but also allowing him to try for himself to gain confidence. In doing so, I quickly became a point of contact not just for this officer but for others within the office who needed guidance in navigating Microsoft and similar programs.

Ability to constructively contribute to organisational and team outcomes

Through my participation in teams, I have come to appreciate the potential high-performing and collaborative teams have to contributing to sustained performance outcomes. For this reason, my approach to teams is understanding and communicating team goals, encouraging equal participation and offering assistance to my team members where necessary.

An example of my participation in achieving team-based outcomes was my involvement in a team responsible for evaluating and selecting a vendor for our office supplies within a tight timeframe. We approached this task by having an initial meeting to identify team goals, delegate roles, plan approaches and set deadlines. During this phase, I ensured that every team member had a voice and contributed to ideas. Since completing this task before the deadline, we have received positive feedback from customers of our current vendor which suits the need of our employees and the organisation.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

If applying for a Cadet or Trainee position, do I need to address the Functional Capabilities?

Yes. This is often the first information the Selection Panel review to determine who will progress to interview. If you do not meet the criteria completely, state in your application what skills, attributes or experience you do have which may be transferable.

What if I've never worked?

Especially in the case of Cadet or Trainee positions, consider how your life experience may relate. Consider if you've volunteered or been part of a sporting or fundraising team and highlight the tasks, skills or achievements developed from these.

If I am appointed to a fixed term, will I be made permanent?

No. Fixed term positions, including Cadets and Trainees are for a temporary term only. You will be required to reapply for the advertised vacancy (maybe towards the end of your contract). Generally, fixed term employees gain valuable skills, knowledge and experience giving them the opportunity to be a very competitive applicant in similar roles.

Do I need a Driver's Licence for the position?

Yes, most positions at Council require a Driver's Licence. This allows our staff to drive council vehicles to travel across the numerous offices and locations in our Council area.

Research the position – check out the information on Council's web page, understand Council's values, download the attachments, call the contact person – this can help you prepare a great application.

Appendix

Appendix A: Finding the Position Description in the Job Attachments.

The screenshot shows a web interface for an 'Assistant Workforce Officer' position. At the top, there are 'Apply' and 'Close' buttons. Below the title, there are tabs for 'Advertisement' and 'Job Attachments', with 'Job Attachments' selected. The main heading is 'Job Attachments'. A message reads: 'Please access the following documentation for guidance in providing a resume, cover letter, your address of the functional capabilities and a digital copy of your driver's licence.' Below this, there are sections for 'Advertisement' and 'Supporting Document'. The 'Supporting Document' section contains a list of files: 'Advertisement - Assistant Workforce Officer.pdf', 'Position Description - Assistant Workforce Officer.pdf' (highlighted with a red box), 'Model Job Demands Checklist - Assistant Workforce Officer.pdf', 'How to Address the Functional Capabilities.pdf', and 'Applying for Positions at QPRC.pdf'. Each file has a download icon to its right.