



## Writing a Winning Resume for the Australian Public Service Sector

For many people working within the Australian public service sector conjures up images of grey-haired suits stuck in mind-numbingly boring jobs for years on end. However, this could not be further from the truth.

A job in the public service sector offers job-seekers many prospects including stability, promotional opportunity, recruitment based on merit, access to a range of career opportunities, great working conditions, personal and professional development opportunities, and a chance to work on issues that affect the Australian community.

### About the Australian Public Service

The public sector includes federal, state, territory, and local government departments/agencies.

**The Australia Commonwealth or Federal government** is concerned with national issues such as communication, defence, environment, education and training, immigration, customs and border protection, statutory issues, treasury, human services, health and ageing, foreign affairs and trade, and taxation.

**State/Territory governments** are usually focussed on health, security, community services, transport and main roads, education and training, and infrastructure and planning.

**Local governments** offer community services in relation to environmental protection, recycling and garbage collection, libraries, building development approvals, local roads and footpaths, parks and gardens, traffic and parking control, water and sewerage, sports facilities, community centres, and offer plans for growth and development.

Job-seekers interested in working within the Australian Public Service Sector will always need to submit a resume/CV and statement of claims addressing selection criteria. This also applies to roles within Aviation, Community Services, Defence, Hospitals, Schools, TAFE Colleges and Universities. There are even some private sector organisations that require applicants to address selection criteria as part of their application.

### Pathways to employment within the APS

As with all positions, there are a number of entry routes to employment within the APS.

- Seeking employment through renowned **recruitment agencies** that specialise in employing staff within the APS. Sometimes, it may be worth undertaking temporary/contract roles within agencies as this will give you first-hand knowledge and experience of working within the department, as well as ensuring that this is somewhere that you are interested in working on a permanent basis. This is often a great way to “get your foot in the door” and gain valuable experience within your sector.
- Applying for a **permanent/temporary role** that has been advertised in the *Public Service Gazette* or online <http://www.apsjobs.gov.au/>
- Making application as part of a **graduate or school-leaver program or as a traineeship and cadetship**. These are specific programs targeted at school-leavers, TAFE graduates, university graduates, and individuals who have already started working. Either option provide great access to learning and development opportunities, often offering the chance to gain further qualifications, and offer individuals the option to begin developing professional skills through hands-on, practical work

placements. These programs are open to mature-aged individuals however they are highly competitive and therefore you need to be able to demonstrate your skills, experience, and capacity to perform the role, regardless of your background, age, or experience.

***If you are applying for a role in the APS then you will need to submit your resume and statement of claims against the selection criteria (that apply to all roles). If this is the case, there are a few things that you will need to consider.***

### **Do your homework!**

This includes obtaining a copy of the position description and information pack related to the role. Once you have this information you will be able to assess your suitability against the role requirements and decide whether this is a role that you are eligible and suitable for.

Public service applications can be time-consuming and frustrating – no point in wasting your time applying for a role that you are not suited to! If you are not sure touch base with the contact officer and find out more information about the department, the role requirements and what they are looking for.

Although a contact officer should never dissuade you from applying for a role, they should be able to give you some specific information related to their requirements, which you can then use, to help you to make a decision about your application.

### **Identify your skills and achievements**

In order to write a winning resume focused on the public service sector, it is essential that you uncover your skills and accomplishments as they relate to the role.

Your earlier successes will support your job application and provide evidence of your capacity to perform the role. They may relate to your ability to save money, implement new ways of doing things, increase sales, develop effective relationships, and overcome practical issues such as lack of resources etc. Once you have uncovered your achievements you can match these to the position requirements.

### **Use a CAR/PAR/STAR framework when showcasing your successes**

Common frameworks include *STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result)*, *CAR (Challenge, Action, Result)*, *SAO (Situation, Action, Outcome)*, and *PAR (Problem, Action, Result)*. Using a challenge/problem model will strengthen your application, ensure that you incorporate all elements of your experience and improve readability.

### **Introduce action verbs to boost your resume**

Introducing action verbs will improve the quality of your resume, enhance readability, and set you apart from other job-seekers. Examples of action verbs include: *Accomplished, addressed, boosted, circulated, coordinated, drove, energised, enabled, finalised, gathered, honed, increased, justified, led, maximised, overcame, prevented, recognised, represented, simulated, trained, undertook, validated, won*

### **Write in the Active Voice**

Well-written, easy to read resumes are written in plain English and use an active style and strong verbs. It's direct and brief and involves an emphasis on the subject of the verb versus passive voice.

### **Proofread your document!**

This is an essential part of the application process. Without it, you are literally sabotaging your chances of success. If you are able to, I would recommend getting someone else to proofread your application. This ensures that someone with "fresh" eyes is able to give you some honest feedback and pick up any errors. Very often, if you have been looking at a document for any length of time you fail to see simple mistakes and errors that someone else will quite easily pick up!

Good luck!