

## How to Address Key Selection Criteria

**You've seen a job opportunity with us that you're interested in and want to apply, but you're thinking, "Where do I start with this KSC?"**

A key requirement for applying for a job at Maranoa Regional Council (any government job for that matter) is to respond to the Key Selection Criteria (KSC). From our experience, people who do some basic research about the job before answering the KSC and submitting their applications achieve the best results.

The first thing to do before you apply is think about the job requirements and gather some information. This will help you to focus your application better. Here we have given some basic pointers to help you apply for the job you are interested in.

### **Find out about Maranoa Regional Council**

Maranoa Regional Council is one of the largest employers in the region. Each Council department has different objectives, functions and programs and delivers services to the community we serve in a variety of ways. It's important that you find out what Council and each of its departments do - its' objectives and functions and how the job you are applying for fits in. A good starting point is to look at our website or visit a Council Administration Centre to find out about our annual reports, business and corporate plans.

There could be a question asked at the job interview to explore your understanding of Council's role. If you've done your homework, you will be able to impress by describing what you understand Council and the department that the job is in, does.

### ***Organisation Structure***

Maranoa Regional Council's organisation chart sets out the reporting arrangements and may tell you where the advertised job fits in. Usually the organisational context will be stated in the Position Description.

### **Decide whether you are qualified to do the job**

Look at the Position Description and ask yourself these questions:

- Do I meet all or most of the Knowledge, Experience, Skills and Qualifications of the job?
- Could I do the job with some training - formal or on-the-job?
- Do I have skills gained in other fields of work that may be transferable?

Look at the Position Description and read the Key Responsibilities and ask yourself these questions:

- Have I done this before?
- Am I doing this now?
- Can I do this?

If so, then you are ready to apply. But before you start your application, make a few notes on all the information you have gathered:

- Summarise the background and skills you can offer
- Highlight your strengths and relevant experiences, achievements and capabilities.

- Highlight relevant achievements from past jobs.
- Address any obvious weaknesses and what training you are willing to do to address these.

### **Qualifications**

In some cases qualifications are either not required or are an added advantage. However, some roles need formal or mandatory qualifications, such as a University Degree.

You must be able to produce documentary evidence of any qualifications to be appointed to the job.

### **Understand the Key Selection Criteria**

If you don't fully understand the job requirements you may have difficulty demonstrating that you are the best person for the job. Study the Position Description, including KSC, along with any other relevant information you have collected. If you are unsure about any aspects of the job, call the Recruitment Officer (the name and telephone number will be in the job details) during normal business hours. They'll be happy to answer your questions.

### **Key Selection Criteria**

The Key Selection Criteria outlines the qualities, knowledge and skills needed to do the job. You will need to write short statements that sell your specific capabilities for each of the KSC. It is important to include specific examples or situations where you have demonstrated the behaviour, knowledge, skills and personal qualities asked for in the KSC.

Writing a good KSC response statement is invaluable in preparing you for the interview stage of the selection process. Now that you have specific examples you will be better prepared to answer questions about your ability to do the job. Make sure you check your KSC statement for spelling and grammatical errors.

By law, we must assess all candidates for our jobs fairly and consistently – that is, to select on merit based criteria.

We do this by using the KSC given to all candidates to assess their ability to do a job. When you go for a job, KSC are clearly described in the Position Description - so you know what's required. Describing how you meet KSC helps us to ensure we capture all information about your suitability for a job.

KSC vary among jobs but all KSC are statements combining skills, knowledge, experience and personal qualities, for example;

- Ability to safely operate and maintain road construction plant.
- Ability to work under pressure, prioritise tasks, meet deadlines and remain tolerant.
- Ability to communicate effectively and remain in control and calm under difficult circumstances.
- Ability to maintain strict confidentiality and ensure the privacy of information.

KSC are based on key capabilities, for example;

- **Resilience**

Perseveres to achieve goals, even in the face of obstacles. Copes with setbacks. Stays calm under pressure. Accepts constructive criticism without becoming defensive.'

- **Problem Solving**

Seeks all relevant facts. Liaises with stakeholders. Analyses issues from different perspectives and draws sound inferences from available data. Identifies and proposes workable solutions.

No matter how KSC appear, you respond to them the same way:

1. Read and re-read the advertisement, KSC and Position Description.
2. Print or save the Job Details, Position Description, so you can easily refer to it later.
3. Highlight key words in the first KSC and think about what we are asking for.
4. List examples of how you meet the KSC. Describe relevant skills, experience, incidents, training, personal qualities, expertise and things you couldn't have done without all these.
5. Review your list and summarise, in 50-120 words, how you demonstrated the KSC.
6. Repeat Steps 3 to 5 for the remaining KSC.

The SAO approach to answering KSC can help:

- **Situation** - Where and when did you do it?
- **Action** - What did you do and how did you do it?
- **Outcome** - What was the result of your actions?

#### ***A word of encouragement***

Answering KSC may seem unfamiliar and a bit awkward to begin with, but around 60% of all government jobs are filled by people not currently working in government. And doing it this way ensures you're considered fairly along with all other candidates.

#### **How do I demonstrate I meet the KSC?**

**Problem Solving** - Seeks all relevant facts. Liaises with stakeholders. Analyses issues from different perspectives and draws sound inferences from available data. Identifies and proposes workable solutions.

*"Problem solving has been a critical part of my roles over the past five years. While working as the Housing Coordinator at Maranoa Regional Council, I dealt with a variety of problems. While many could be resolved easily, 2-3 per week were more complex and required a detailed process to resolve. I had to investigate what had happened from the staff and customer's points of view, clarify the facts and work out what had gone wrong and why. I then had to propose suitable solutions and negotiate a mutually satisfactory outcome. I was often commended by my manager for my sensitive handling and speedy resolution of these problems. Less than 1% of complaints had to be escalated."*

**Computer Skills** - Uses a wide range of software features for word processing, spreadsheets, etc. Helps others solve problems with software.

*"As an Administration Assistant to the Manager at Maranoa Regional Council, about half my time was spent preparing letters and reports using Word. I used detailed information in Excel spreadsheets to prepare graphs and tables to demonstrate the results of our budget analysis and to analyse Departmental performance. I often prepared major PowerPoint presentations for my Manager and maintained a database of her contacts. I also managed many daily emails and searched for information on the Internet to answer questions."*

**Communication Skills** – Sound communication including interpersonal and negotiating skills, along with well-developed written and oral skills.

*"In my 5 years as a Foreman for Maranoa Regional Council, strong communication, negotiation and interpersonal skills have been essential. I have dealt with a wide range of people, including workers, colleagues, the public and Contractors. I was involved in a community project where I had to build new pedestrian road crossings. As part of this project, I successfully negotiated with the three local schools in the area who agreed to use additional staff to ensure kids could cross the roads safely. This agreement required me to update my written JSA clearly outlining the safety measures to be used."*

**Plant Competency** – Demonstrated ability to safely operate and maintain road construction plant.

*"In my 7 years as a Plant Operator I have operated backhoes, loaders and bobcats. I have recognised certificates of competencies for each of these plants. I have never had an accident whilst operating plant. Whilst I was working at Maranoa Regional Council I was used as an official tester to assess applicants' knowledge of plant maintenance and their competency to operate loaders and bobcats."*

#### **Some final points before submit your Application**

- Complete the Job Application Cover Sheet (this helps us keep track of your application).
- Write a brief Cover Letter (no more than 1 page)
- Prepare or update your resume.
- Ensure you address each Key Selection Criterion for the job.
- Do not send any original qualifications - photocopy your qualifications and send as an attachment with your application.
- Talk to your referees about the job you are applying for and what they will say about you to a Council Officer.

**We wish you well and look forward to receiving your application.**