

## Child Safety Officer applicant information guide

Thank you for your interest in applying for a position as a Child Safety Officer with the Department of Child Safety. The following information is provided to help you understand our selection process and to assist you in the preparation of your application.

### New selection process

In response to labour market challenges and the complexities of the Child Safety Officer role, the Department of Child Safety is taking a new approach to the selection of Child Safety Officers. This new approach involves a departure from the traditional expectation that applicants will provide a written statement to address position requirements.

Instead, applicants will be involved in a process of screening and assessment designed to give applicants a realistic view of the role and work conditions to encourage self selection and establish basic suitability. Applicants who meet basic suitability at the screening stage will be guided through an assessment process that provides several opportunities for candidates to demonstrate competencies linked to the position requirements.

Selection panels, coordinated by the Human Resources Branch, are responsible for conducting the selection process from initial screening to final assessment. Selection panels can choose between a number of selection techniques to facilitate the process, including but are not limited to interviews, reference checks, work samples and role plays.

The current job description and position requirements documents remain foundational to the assessment of the applicant's competencies. However, **at no stage in this new process is the applicant required to provide a formal written statement addressing the position requirements.** Alternatively, it is the process that will provide the opportunities for applicants to demonstrate whether they have the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to do the job.

### Overview

#### Stage one – Your application

When applying for the position of Child Safety Officer you need to provide a **completed** *Child Safety Officer (CSO) Application Form* and attach, in accordance with instructions outlined on the application form:

- a resumé or curriculum vitae outlining your employment history, relevant skills and experience, qualifications and the names of two referees
- a written response (maximum two A4 sheets of paper) to the questions asked in the section of the application form titled *The Child Safety Officer Role and You*;
- copies of relevant certificates, qualifications, references, evidence of residency or citizenship, driver's licence. Please **do not send originals** with your application as we cannot return them.

You must submit your written application as a hard copy including an original plus **three** copies of all material contained in your application.

A selection panel will review your application and make a decision on your suitability to progress to the next stage. This assessment is based on:

- **Whether you meet the mandatory qualification requirements and have supplied all necessary documents.** Applications will not be considered if they are incomplete or if the mandatory qualification requirement is not met.
- **The quality and relevance of the information outlined in your resume.** Essential components of the Child Safety Officer role are the ability to follow directions and good written communication skills. In reviewing your resume we will be assessing the extent to which the document is professionally presented and the information provided is relevant;
- **The quality and relevance of your response to the questions about the Child Safety Officer role and you.** We ask that you respond to both questions within a maximum of two A4 pages. We want to know that you have a relevant understanding of the Child Safety Officer role, that you have thought about why you are applying for the job and the strengths you will bring to the role. You are encouraged to read the Realistic Job Preview and to seek information from other sources in preparing your responses. However, your responses must be in your own words.

Applicants must meet all of the stage one screening criteria before they are offered the opportunity to proceed to stage two screening. Feedback regarding unsuccessful applications will be provided to applicants if requested.

### **Stage two – Structured discussion**

If your application meets initial screening criteria a selection panel member will contact you by telephone and engage you in a structured discussion around the role and job conditions, motivation and some basic competencies linked to the position requirements. The discussion will centre on the skills, experience and knowledge you currently possess that might be relevant and transferable to the role of CSO. The competencies that will be discussed at a basic level may include:

- Case management, casework, assessment and decision making focus
- Self management, professional learning and development
- Client focus, conflict resolution and negotiation
- Cultural appropriateness
- Work values and ethics.

It will assist your preparation if you can think of some examples from your previous and current roles that relate to these competency areas.

This discussion is also an opportunity for you to learn more about the role and ensure it is consistent with your expectations before you continue with the assessment process.

Note: Good communication is essential to the Child Safety Officer role which includes a great deal of telephone contact with clients and colleagues. CSOs must be able to adapt their communication skills to this medium in order to create effective communications. Accordingly, your verbal communication skills will be assessed during the course of discussions with members of the selection panel.

**Applicants must meet all of the stage two screening criteria before they are offered the opportunity to proceed to the assessment stage. Feedback regarding unsuccessful applications will be provided to applicants if requested.**

### Stage three – Assessment

All applicants who are short listed to this stage will undertake the same assessment process. This may include, but will not be limited to, providing a work sample, completed as an in-tray exercise, participating in a role play, and/or participating in an interview. All methods of assessment are designed to assess specific competencies linked to the position requirements. Your participation in these processes will involve you drawing on your skills, knowledge and experience to frame your responses.

During the course of an interview or discussion you may be asked two types of questions:

- Behavioural questions asking for examples of how you have handled things in the past.
- Situational questions asking how you would handle a particular situation.

Interviews will be interactive which means that the panel may ask additional questions to explore and expand upon issues raised by your responses.

## General Information

### Preparation

The application kit and the departmental website include a range of information that may help you with preparing your application and preparing for the selection process such as the role description, realistic job preview, the annual report and the strategic plan.

You are encouraged to find out as much as possible about the organisation and the role in order to prepare for the selection process. You are expected to prepare the application and associated documents in your own words – by doing so you will be giving yourself a sound foundation for the rest of the selection process and ultimately for the job.

### Role description

The **role description** provides information about the job such as the purpose, the reporting relationships, the organisational environment, the duties, and the position requirements.

### Position requirements

In discussions with the panel you will have opportunities to give **specific examples** that demonstrate how you meet competencies linked to the position requirements. You may wish to consider the STAR framework (below) as a tool for framing your responses in discussion forums.

The wording of position requirements will indicate the required level of knowledge, skill or ability required for the position, that is:

- **Demonstrated or proven ability** means that you should have successfully performed the activity or used the skill in the past rather than the potential to complete the task or duty.
- **General ability or ability to rapidly acquire** implies that you have the potential to acquire the skill or knowledge. If you have not had direct exposure with these aspects of work, you could demonstrate your ability by comparing it to similar or equivalent responsibilities, tasks or relevant studies that you have undertaken.
- **Thorough or sound** gives an indication that advanced skill or knowledge is required.

Note: There is no requirement to submit a written document addressing the position requirements.

### **STAR framework**

The STAR framework is provided to assist you to articulate the skills and experience you have that are relevant to any given role.

- S Situation** - What was the situation of the example?
- T Task** - What tasks were involved?
- A Activities** - What activities did you do?
- R Results** - What happened as a result – was your work approved, implemented, successful?

### **The assessment process**

Your application for the position and your involvement in the selection process will be assessed in regard to competencies that are linked to the position requirements, for example, your competency in regard to written communication will be assessed at various points of the process including on presentation of your application and resume – this competency is linked to position requirements number four being, ‘Well developed interpersonal, oral and written communication skills’.

### **The selection panel**

A selection panel consisting of a minimum of two people will be convened for the selection process. The selection panel will usually include experienced child safety service delivery staff and will assess applicants for suitability to the position.

### **Referee Checks**

Referees provided by you may be contacted following the interview to verify information gathered. Referee checks will be carried out for all applicants being considered as suitable. Referees will be asked to provide comment in relation to each selection criterion. In most cases, the most appropriate referees are your present supervisor or your immediate past supervisor. The selection panel will not contact any referee or reference source without your consent. If any adverse comments are made you will be given the opportunity to respond. Comments made by referees will be documented by the selection panel. It is in your interests to discuss your application with prospective referees and ensure they have a clear understanding of the role so that they can make an informed contribution to the selection process.

### **Late applications**

Applications must be received by 5:00pm on the closing date shown and should be forwarded to the address provided on the Child Safety Officer Application Form. Selection process acceptance and consideration of any late applications is at the discretion of the selection panel. If your application is late, you **cannot** appeal against another person appointed to the position you have applied for.

### **Special needs**

If you need any special requirements to be able to attend an interview, such as building access or communication assistance, please notify the selection panel prior to your interview, so that suitable arrangements can be made.

### **Notification of suitability**

Applicants who are deemed to meet key competencies linked to the position requirements will be deemed suitable for appointment. Suitable applicants will be matched with a permanent or temporary vacancy in accordance with their location preferences. At the conclusion of the selection process all suitable and not suitable applicants will be notified.

### **Criminal history checks**

Criminal history checks are mandatory and will be undertaken by the department on the preferred applicant being considered for suitability. You are required to disclose criminal history (including convictions, which are not recorded) and charges prior to your engagement with the department. A criminal conviction or charge will not automatically exclude you from being considered for employment.

### **Post selection feedback**

Post selection feedback is available to all applicants upon request to the selection panel. Feedback will be based upon an assessment of the applicant's suitability in relation to the competency areas linked to each of the selection criterion.

### **Promotion appeals**

The promotion appeal system exists to promote good selection practices. If you are a permanent Queensland Public Sector Employee, you may appeal against the appointment if you consider yourself more meritorious than the appointee, or if you consider the selection procedures unfair or inappropriate. As a general rule, you may appeal if:

- the advertised position is not a Senior Executive service position or marked by a (b) in the Queensland Government Gazette
- the successful applicant is promoted into the position and is not an applicant who is external to the Queensland Public Service
- you applied for the vacancy by 5:00pm on the closing date shown on the advertisement
- you are a permanent public service employee of a Department or public sector agency.

An appeal against a promotion appointment must be lodged with the Public Service Commissioner by 5:00pm, 21 calendar days after notification of the appointment in the Queensland Government Gazette. Prior to submitting an appeal, appellants **must** obtain post selection feedback.

### **Pay rates**

Appointment will normally be at the minimum pay point of the relevant classification level. However, if you are an external applicant the selection panel will make a determination of relevant pay point based on the skills and knowledge you present throughout the selection process. This is your opportunity to present your case to the selection panel regarding pay point, however all panel decisions must be based on evidence of qualifications, previous experience and competencies. Please note that the selection process provides opportunity for applicants to be assessed against competencies at both the PO2 and PO3 levels for the role of Child Safety Officer.

### **Recognition of previous service**

New appointees to the Queensland Public Sector may be given recognition of their previous service, upon request, for sick and long service leave purposes where they have not had a break in service that exceeds 12 months. This applies to service within the following:

- Commonwealth and other State Public services
- Statutory authorities
- Health service districts
- Local authorities
- Tertiary educational institutions.

### **Citizenship requirements**

Section 75(1) of the *Public Service Act 1996* states that a person is eligible to be an officer only if the person is either:

- an Australian citizen
- a person who resides in Australia and has permission or a right to be granted permission, under Commonwealth law, to remain in Australia indefinitely
- a New Zealand citizen who has a special category visa or a right to be granted a special category visa under the *Migration Act 1958 (Commonwealth)*.

If you do not meet these requirements you cannot be appointed in a permanent capacity with a Queensland Government department.

### **Checklist for your application**

- Have you read the job description carefully?
- Are you applying for the job for the right reasons?
- Do you have the relevant knowledge, skills and abilities required to do the job?
- Have you submitted an original and three copies of your application?
- Have you completed and attached the *Child Safety Officer Application Form*?
- Have you attached your resumé or curriculum vitae?
- Have you included the names, positions and telephone numbers of two referees?
- Have you kept a copy of your application for your records?

If you require further information regarding the role of Child Safety Officer, please call **1800 089 515**.