

## Preparing an Application

When preparing an application for South Burnett Regional Council you will need to apply electronically for any current vacancies advertised, this document will provide some useful tips and information for you to consider.

To ensure applicants are given a fair and equal opportunity Council utilises a merit based recruitment and selection process. Each application is reviewed by a selection panel and given a merit score against the position criteria/requirements. A shortlist of applicants will be invited to an interview for the position.

All of the following are important features of your application:

- Neatness, layout and overall appearance
- Clear, easy to read and understand
- Correct spelling, punctuation and grammar

Before beginning your application, ensure that you have read and understand the requirements for the position you wish to apply for. In order to provide enough information to show that you are a good 'fit' for the position, **your application should include:**

- A cover letter addressing the key selection criteria
- Current resume
- Copies of your mandatory qualifications that are required for the position

## Cover Letter

A cover letter is a 1 or 2 page specific letter that accompanies your resume to introduce yourself and highlight your key skills, experience and achievements. You should ensure that your cover letter and resume provide sufficient detail to demonstrate that you understand the job requirements and explain how you meet the selection criteria.

If you are invited to an interview, you may be requested to provide actual, specific examples of your experience and achievements, as they relate to the requirements of the position you are applying for.

**A cover letter should include:**

- Name of recipient, their title, address and the organisation that you are submitting the application to
- Date, your name and contact details (this is so it can be reunited with your resume, if separated at any stage)
- Opening paragraph should state the position you are applying for, and details of your suitability for the job
- Second paragraph should state your skills and experience that are relevant to the position you are applying for
- Third paragraph can include highlighting your career achievements
- Remaining letter should include any of the key selection criteria's that you have not yet addressed
- Bring the letter to a polite close that demonstrates your eagerness to hear back for a possible interview
- Include a formal ending e.g. "Yours sincerely" or "Yours faithfully", followed by your name and signature

## Addressing the Key Selection Criteria

Key selection criteria are listed on all Position Descriptions in Council and assist the selection panel to shortlist applications by giving them an insight into your suitability for the position. The selection criteria is also to provide you with the relevant information that will enable you to consider the qualities, skills and knowledge you will need to have for the position.

**Tips for providing responses to selection criteria**

- Provide enough information on each selection criteria to show your understanding and/or experience
- Ensure the experience and examples you provide are relevant to the position and match the criteria
- Be clear, factual and to the point, not skipping any of the criterion

- Give yourself enough time to think carefully about how you might respond
- A more formal response to addressing the criterion would be to separate the responses, not group them
- Where possible use actual, specific examples of what you have done, how well you did it, what you achieved and how it relates to the requirements of the job (such as the STAR model below)

## STAR Model

The STAR model is one way of presenting information against selection criteria. For each criterion think about the following and use these points to form sentences:

**Situation:** Set context by describing the example where you used the skills or qualities and gained the experience

**Task** What was your role?

**Actions** What did you do and how did you do it?

**Results** What did you achieve? What was the end result and how does it relate to the job you are applying for?

## Resume

A resume is a summary of skills, education and work experience. A good resume demonstrates how your skills and abilities match the requirements of the job. Resumes give you the opportunity to sell yourself to us. A resume is not an exhaustive list but rather 2 to 5 pages, depending on the level of the position.

Other ways to demonstrate that you are the right person for the job can include:

- Personal attributes
- Strengths
- Experience – volunteering or outside activities and
- Key responsibilities and achievements – awards or recognition

### A resume should include:

- **Personal/ contact details**

Full name and contact details including address, telephone number(s) and email address. (Where possible only use professional-sounding email addresses.) TIP – Using the header/footer function to record your name and phone/email contacts, will ensure that they appear on each page. Page number assists if pages are separated

- **Career objective (optional)**

Tell us what type of job you want to end up with or goals you are working towards; this shows that you have given thought to your future career aspirations

- **Education and training**

A summary of your education and training history, starting with your most recent studies, making sure you include all training that is relevant to the job you are applying for. Education and training can cover university, TAFE training, industry courses, in-house courses and any other professional training

- **Employment history**

Start with your most recent work history and work backwards chronologically, listing the name of the employer, your job title, the dates you worked there and your responsibilities, tasks and achievements. Make sure you include everything that is relevant to the job. TIP – Provide an employer description or re-name the position title if they are not recognised in other industries. If you have been out of the workforce it is better to try and explain the gap in your resume instead of leaving it blank

- **Skills and abilities**

A list of things you're good at. These can be general skills or skills specific to a particular job. You may choose to list them under broad headings such as "Communication" and "Teamwork"

- **Interests (optional)**

A list of your hobbies and interest; this gives us more information about you and also shows other areas of your life where you have gained experiences such as teamwork and commitment

- **Referees**

These are listed at the end of your resume. Make sure you get permission from your referees before including them on your resume. List their name, company name, occupation, email address and a 'business hours' contact number

If you have written references, you should consider including one of two with your application, but only if they relate specifically to the skills or experience required for the job you are applying for