

Government interview practice feedback

Significant development required

This practice report summarises the panel-style feedback, readiness breakdown and next practice actions.

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Overall readiness score

46%

Significant development required

Score out of 100

Target role

Executive Assistant to Retired Chief Justice

Classification or role level

Level 6

Agency or department

Attorney-General's Department

Readiness scale

Scores are coaching indicators, not selection outcomes. Use the band to choose the next practice focus.

86-100% Highly interview-ready

Keep examples concise, specific and aligned to the role.

58-71% Developing

Make STAR structure and individual contribution clearer.

1-41% Not yet interview-ready

Replace general claims with specific role-aligned evidence.

72-85% On track

Sharpen the result, evidence and work-level link.

42-57% Significant development required

Use stronger examples with clearer actions and outcomes.

0% Insufficient evidence provided

Answer with enough detail for a meaningful readiness view.

Next-practice focus

Use these points first when you practice again.

- 1** Research the role before the next attempt: read the Position Description, review the Attorney-General's Department website and prepare one sentence about why this legal support context is distinctive.
- 2** Select three specific examples before practicing again: one senior executive support example, one sensitive information example and one changed-priority example.
- 3** Use STAR deliberately: situation, task, action and result should each be clear enough for the panel to hear without probing.

Questions to ask the panel

Prepare two or three questions before the real interview.

Use questions that show you understand the role, the organisation and the work. Avoid asking for information already covered in the Position Description.

- 1 Clarify what success looks like**
Ask what success in the first 3 to 6 months would look like for someone in the Executive Assistant to Retired Chief Justice role.
- 2 Understand the team and stakeholders**
Ask how the Executive Assistant to Retired Chief Justice role works with teams, stakeholders, delivery partners or policy areas across Attorney-General's Department.
- 3 Show preparation for the work**
Ask about current priorities, service outcomes or delivery challenges the successful candidate should be ready to contribute to.

Score snapshot

Top feedback scores from this report.

42%

STAR structure - Situation

40%

STAR structure - Task

48%

STAR structure - Action

Panel-style narrative summary

This first report identifies useful public service and executive support experience, but the evidence is too general for a Level 6 panel to score confidently. The candidate references long experience, diary support and helping senior people, yet the answers do not explain the specific context, the judgement exercised or the impact achieved. The warm-up answer sounds interested in government work but does not show preparation for the retired Chief Justice role or the Attorney-General's Department environment. Substantive examples stay at task level - managing calendars, sending documents and following process - rather than showing discretion, risk assessment, stakeholder trust or autonomous prioritisation. Readiness is assessed as Significant development required (46%) because the raw experience is relevant, but the candidate needs clearer STAR structure, stronger role research and more specific results before the next attempt. The report should not be read as a lack of experience; it is a lack of interview evidence. The candidate appears to have useful background, but the panel would be forced to infer too much about judgement, discretion, stakeholder management and outcomes. The highest-payoff next step is to prepare exact examples before practising again. A real panel would likely need to probe heavily after most answers, which is inefficient for the candidate and risky in a competitive process because stronger candidates will make their evidence visible without prompting.

Strengths

- Relevant base experience in public service and executive support.
- Recognises familiar administrative themes such as diary pressure, document handling and confidentiality.
- Uses a calm and direct delivery style, even though the content needs more specificity.
- The candidate has enough relevant background to build stronger answers once specific examples are selected.
- The answer set identifies the right capability areas, including confidentiality, priority shifts and executive support, even though the evidence is not yet developed.
- The same themes can support a realistic progression path because the current weaknesses are fixable through example selection, not by inventing a new career history.

Gaps

- Insufficient role research: the answers do not yet show understanding of the retired Chief Justice context, the Attorney-General's Department or part-time autonomous support.
- Examples are too general for Level 6 scoring and do not show independent judgement, trade-offs or risk assessment.

- Results are mostly described as task completion rather than impact on the executive, stakeholders or organisation.
- No answer yet explains the operating pressure behind the work, such as legal sensitivity, senior stakeholder visibility, time-critical dispatch or reputational risk.
- The candidate does not yet show how they decide what to handle independently, what to escalate and what to communicate to others.
- The examples do not yet demonstrate continuity of support in a part-time or high-profile office where anticipation and preparation would matter.
- The candidate has not yet separated examples by capability theme, so the same broad executive support experience is trying to cover motivation, prioritisation, confidentiality, risk and changed priorities.
- The current answer set would make it difficult for a panel to compare the candidate fairly against applicants who provide structured evidence in their first response.

Improvement suggestions

- Research the role before the next attempt: read the Position Description, review the Attorney-General's Department website and prepare one sentence about why this legal support context is distinctive.
- Select three specific examples before practicing again: one senior executive support example, one sensitive information example and one changed-priority example.
- Use STAR deliberately: situation, task, action and result should each be clear enough for the panel to hear without probing.
- Create an evidence bank with four full examples before the next attempt. For each example, write the context, personal responsibility, key judgement call and result in one sentence each.
- Practise answering with named pressure points rather than duty lists. A panel should hear what made the situation difficult and why the candidate's action mattered.
- Prepare one role-specific bridge for every example, connecting the evidence back to supporting a retired Chief Justice with discretion, calm coordination and judgement.
- After each practice answer, ask whether the panel heard the exact example, the candidate's personal action and the result. If any of those are missing, rewrite the answer before practising delivery.
- Do a separate preparation pass for confidentiality language. The candidate should be able to explain sensitive work without naming private individuals, internal documents or unnecessary personal details.
- Practise a short recovery phrase for moments where an answer starts too broadly, such as 'A specific example of that was...' and then move directly into the chosen scenario.

Metric scores

Scores are shown out of 100. Lower scores indicate the highest-payoff areas for the next practice attempt.

STAR structure - Situation

42%

The candidate usually names a broad executive-support setting but rarely gives the panel a concrete situation. The answer needs a defined office, time pressure, stakeholder group and reason the matter was sensitive so the panel can understand the operating environment.

STAR structure - Task

40%

Tasks are described as general duties rather than personal accountability. At Level 6, the candidate should state what they owned, what decision point sat with them and why their judgement mattered without waiting for detailed direction.

STAR structure - Action

48%

Actions are still expressed as routine administration: moving meetings, sending documents and following up. The report needs to hear the specific steps, prioritisation criteria, escalation choices and discretion used in a real example.

STAR structure - Result

36%

Results are mostly phrased as 'the executive had what they needed' or 'things were followed up'. That is too vague for scoring because it does not show what risk was avoided, what quality was protected or what stakeholder impact improved.

Clarity and concision

45%

The delivery is calm and easy to follow, but the content is so general that the panel has to infer capability. Clarity would improve if each answer opened with one exact example and then moved through situation, task, action and result.

Role-level alignment

44%

The raw experience is relevant, but the answers sit below Level 6 because they do not yet show independent judgement, limited-direction decision-making or ownership of competing executive priorities.

Role-specific capability alignment
38%

The candidate mentions executive support, confidentiality and documents, but does not connect those duties to supporting a retired Chief Justice in a high-profile legal and public-sector context.

Evidence strength
41%

Evidence strength is limited because the answers rely on categories of work rather than observable moments. Stronger evidence would include the kind of senior leader supported, the pressure point, the action taken and the result.

Ownership clarity
46%

Ownership is unclear because the candidate says they 'helped' or 'made sure' without naming the specific judgement or decision they personally made. The panel cannot separate personal contribution from normal team process.

Ownership demonstration
44%

The answers show willingness to support busy offices, but not yet proactive ownership. The candidate should show where they anticipated an issue, coordinated others, escalated appropriately or improved a process.

Judgement and discretion
39%

Confidentiality is acknowledged as important, but discretion is not demonstrated. The candidate needs to explain need-to-know decisions, reputational sensitivity and how trust was protected in a specific matter.

Stakeholder management
42%

Stakeholder management is implied through diary and document work, but no relationship dynamics are described. The candidate should show how they kept confidence with senior offices, EAs, HR, legal or external stakeholders.

Measurable results
35%

The report cannot yet see measurable or observable results. The candidate needs to close examples with a protected deadline, avoided breach, maintained relationship, reduced risk or improved executive focus.

Professional delivery tone**43%**

Tone is steady but underprepared. The candidate sounds credible as an experienced administrator, but not yet like a Level 6 applicant prepared to discuss discretion, judgement and senior stakeholder impact.

Question-by-question feedback

Question 1 · Warm-up

As a warm-up, what interests you most about this Executive Assistant to Retired Chief Justice role, and what relevant experience would you like the panel to know about?

Strengths

- Names public service tenure and executive support experience.
- Shows interest in continuing senior support work.
- The candidate is honest about needing to understand the office better, which can be converted into a stronger preparation statement.

Gaps

- No evidence of research into the retired Chief Justice, the agency or the part-time support context.
- The motivation could apply to almost any executive assistant role.
- The answer does not explain why Level 6 judgement or discretion is relevant.
- The answer does not yet show curiosity about the legal, community or public-sector stakeholder network attached to the office.
- The panel would not hear why this role is more suitable than a general executive assistant vacancy.

Improvement suggestions

- Open with a prepared sentence about why this role is distinctive: high-profile legal support, discretion and part-time autonomy.
- Name one specific executive-support strength before moving to general experience.
- Close with what you would contribute to the retired Chief Justice's office.
- Replace the generic interest statement with a prepared motivation: 'I am interested because this role combines discreet senior support with work connected to Australia's legal system.'
- Add one sentence about how part-time support requires forward planning, autonomous prioritisation and clear communication.

Question-by-question feedback continued

Question 2

Tell me about a time when you've provided executive support to a senior leader with a particularly demanding or high-profile role. Walk me through a specific situation where you had to manage competing demands on their time or attention. What was the context, what approach did you take to prioritise, and what was the outcome?

Strengths

- Uses a relevant executive support theme.
- Shows awareness of diary pressure and preparation of papers.
- There is a practical service mindset and awareness that executive support depends on visibility of work.

Gaps

- The situation is too broad; the panel cannot see the scale, seniority or stakes.
- No specific prioritisation decision or trade-off is explained.
- The result is functional and vague rather than evidence of Level 6 impact.
- The answer does not distinguish between urgent, important and movable work, which is the core prioritisation issue.
- No stakeholder communication method is described, so the panel cannot see how expectations were managed.

Improvement suggestions

- Choose one specific period or event, such as Senate estimates preparation or multiple SES deadlines.
- Explain the competing demands and how you decided what moved, what stayed and who needed to be told.
- Close with an outcome that shows impact on the executive or team, not only task completion.
- Use one real week or event and name the competing demands, such as estimates papers, recruitment approvals or external meeting briefs.
- Explain the prioritisation framework in plain language: what had a fixed deadline, what could move, what needed executive attention and what you resolved yourself.

Question-by-question feedback continued

Question 3

Describe an instance where you've had to handle sensitive or confidential information in your support role, and where managing relationships with multiple stakeholders required careful judgement. What was the situation, how did you navigate the competing interests or sensitivities, and how did you maintain trust and professionalism?

Strengths

- Recognises that confidentiality is important.
- Mentions limiting access to sensitive material.
- The candidate understands that access control matters and does not treat sensitive material casually.

Gaps

- The answer states a principle but does not give a concrete example.
- No relationship-management or trust-building element is described.
- The panel cannot see what judgement was required or what risk was avoided.
- The answer does not show the sensitivity type, such as HR, salary, legal correspondence or senior office material.
- There is no result or consequence, so the panel cannot tell whether the candidate's discretion preserved trust.

Improvement suggestions

- Use a real example involving sensitive correspondence, HR information or senior sign-off material.
- Explain how you decided who needed access and how you reinforced confidentiality expectations.
- Add the outcome, such as no breach, timely sign-off or senior stakeholder confidence.
- Choose a concrete matter where broad access would have created risk, then explain how need-to-know was assessed.
- Frame the result as trust protected, accurate sign-off achieved or no unnecessary exposure, not just 'documents were secure'.

Question-by-question feedback continued

Question 4

Give me an example of when you've anticipated a potential issue or risk in supporting an executive, and taken practical steps to prevent or mitigate it before it became a problem. What did you identify, what action did you take, and what was the result?

Strengths

- Shows a general awareness of early follow-up.
- Recognises that communication can prevent issues.
- The answer shows an instinct to raise concerns before they become bigger problems.

Gaps

- No specific risk, stakeholder group or executive consequence is named.
- The answer sounds like routine follow-up rather than proactive Level 6 judgement.
- The result is missing.
- The risk category is missing; the panel needs to know whether the issue was legal, people, reputational, operational or timing-related.
- The candidate does not explain how they checked facts before raising the concern.

Improvement suggestions

- Name the risk you identified, why it mattered and what would have happened if it escalated.
- Explain who you consulted before advising the executive or delegate.
- Finish with what changed because you intervened.
- Build the answer around a real trigger: what you noticed, why it concerned you and what evidence you checked before escalating.
- End with the decision or prevention result, such as a better-informed delegate, avoided premature action or a revised process.

Question-by-question feedback continued

Question 5

Tell me about a time when your executive's priorities shifted significantly or unexpectedly - perhaps due to an urgent commitment, a changed schedule, or an emerging issue. How did you respond, what trade-offs did you have to make, and how did you ensure continuity and quality despite the disruption?

Strengths

- Identifies the need to communicate when priorities change.
- Shows willingness to protect important work.
- The candidate recognises that protecting the executive's focus can be part of good support.

Gaps

- The example is not specific enough to show judgement.
- No trade-off is articulated.
- No continuity or quality-control measure is described.
- The answer does not explain how the urgency was assessed or what made interruption inappropriate.
- Continuity planning is absent; there is no mention of keeping affected stakeholders informed or checking later follow-through.

Improvement suggestions

- Use one concrete changed-priority example and describe what moved, what did not move and why.
- Explain the stakeholder impact and how you managed expectations.
- Close with the quality or continuity result.
- Use a specific example with a named constraint, such as an urgent meeting, same-day dispatch or a confidential brief.
- Explain who was told, what was staged, what could wait and how quality was checked after the priority shifted.