

Government interview practice feedback

Developing

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

Generated 30 June 2026

Overall readiness score

58%

Developing

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** For each example, add one sentence beginning with 'I decided this because...' so the judgement is explicit.
- 2** Reframe confidentiality examples around need-to-know, trust and risk, not only document handling.
- 3** Prepare result statements that show what was protected: timeline, trust, accuracy, executive focus or reputational standing.

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.

56%

STAR structure - Situation

54%

STAR structure - Task

60%

STAR structure - Action

Panel-style narrative summary

The second report shows a useful move from generic executive support claims into recognisable examples. The candidate now references supporting multiple SES leaders, Senate estimates preparation, recruitment timing and confidential salary material. This gives the panel more to work with. However, the answers still describe coordination activity more than independent judgement. The candidate explains that tracking tools, controlled access and stakeholder follow-up were used, but the reasoning behind decisions is not yet clear. For this Level 6 role, the panel would need to hear how competing priorities were assessed, how confidentiality decisions were made and how trust was preserved with senior stakeholders. Readiness is assessed as Developing (58%) because the evidence is now relevant and credible, but it needs stronger judgement, discretion and result framing. This attempt now sounds like a real practice interview because the candidate has selected plausible examples. The issue is that the examples are still reported from the outside: the panel can see activity, but not enough of the candidate's judgement. The next attempt should make the reasoning visible without turning each answer into a long chronology. The candidate should also start treating stakeholder confidence as a result in itself, because a senior support role is often judged by whether the executive and connected offices remain informed, calm and able to make decisions. The examples are worth retaining because they create a coherent interview story, but each one needs a clearer trigger, decision and protected outcome.

Strengths

- Examples are now recognisable and relevant to executive support.
- The candidate starts to show systems thinking through trackers, document control and stakeholder follow-up.
- The sensitive-information example is suitable for the role if expanded.
- The candidate has moved from generic claims into examples with recognisable public-sector pressures and senior-office relevance.
- The same example universe is now forming across attempts, which is useful because future practice can refine rather than replace the evidence.
- The candidate is beginning to show the habits of a senior support officer: tracking commitments, controlling access and thinking about downstream timing.

Gaps

- Judgement is still mostly implicit. The panel needs to hear why particular choices were made.
- Discretion is described as process control rather than trust, risk and relationship management.

- Results need to move beyond completion and show executive, stakeholder or organisational value.
- The answers still blur action and rationale; the candidate says what they did but rarely why that was the right course.
- Stakeholder confidence is not yet described, even when the examples involve senior offices, EAs, working groups and sensitive material.
- The candidate has not yet made the part-time nature of the role useful as a preparation point, despite its relevance to anticipation and handover quality.
- The examples still need clearer authority boundaries: what the candidate resolved independently, what they escalated and what information they prepared for decision-makers.
- The result sections do not yet carry enough weight. The panel would hear that the work progressed, but not consistently why the progression mattered.

Improvement suggestions

- For each example, add one sentence beginning with 'I decided this because...' so the judgement is explicit.
- Reframe confidentiality examples around need-to-know, trust and risk, not only document handling.
- Prepare result statements that show what was protected: timeline, trust, accuracy, executive focus or reputational standing.
- For the next attempt, keep the same examples and add one judgement sentence after the context in every answer.
- Prepare result statements in advance: one each for executive focus, trust, risk mitigation, stakeholder confidence and process continuity.
- Use role language deliberately but sparingly. The strongest references will be discretion, high-profile legal support, part-time autonomy and need-to-know handling.
- Before the next attempt, write a one-line 'panel score reason' for each answer. This will help the candidate keep only the detail that proves the capability being assessed.
- Add one sentence in each answer that names the stakeholder who benefited from the action, such as the SES leader, secretary's office, working group, requesting team or delegate.
- Prepare a tighter close for each example. A good close should combine outcome and capability, such as 'This protected the deadline while keeping the executive focused on decisions only they could make.'

Metric scores

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

STAR structure - Situation

56%

The situation is now more recognisable because the candidate names SES support, Senate estimates, recruitment offers and salary material. More context is still needed on scale, pressure, timing and why those matters required careful handling.

STAR structure - Task

54%

The candidate begins to explain responsibilities, but the task is still mixed with the action. A stronger answer would separate what they were accountable for from the tools they used to manage the work.

STAR structure - Action

60%

Actions are practical and relevant, including trackers, SharePoint, controlled access and stakeholder follow-up. The missing element is decision logic: why each action was chosen, what alternatives were considered and how escalation was judged.

STAR structure - Result

52%

Results are present but still functional. The panel hears that work was completed, but not enough about protected executive time, prevented information exposure, reduced stakeholder uncertainty or improved decision quality.

Clarity and concision

57%

The answers are clearer than the baseline, but process detail still crowds out judgement. The candidate should signpost the example and use shorter action sentences so the result is not lost.

Role-level alignment

58%

This attempt is closer to Level 6 because the examples involve senior offices and sensitive material. It remains Developing because independent judgement and risk balancing are described indirectly rather than explicitly.

Role-specific capability alignment
55%


The evidence now maps to diary complexity, confidential material and senior sign-off. The candidate still needs to bridge each example back to the retired Chief Justice support environment and the part-time autonomy of the role.

Evidence strength
56%


The examples have useful anchors, especially Senate estimates, recruitment timing and the large salary recommendation process. Evidence strength will increase when the candidate adds the trigger, constraint, decision and impact for each example.

Ownership clarity
60%


Ownership is more visible through the shared tracker and document-control steps, but team-based phrasing still hides the candidate's personal judgement. The panel needs more first-person decision statements.

Ownership demonstration
58%


The candidate demonstrates practical follow-through and coordination. To lift the score, they should show how they anticipated needs, prevented escalation and kept senior stakeholders focused on decisions only they could make.

Judgement and discretion
54%


The confidentiality example is credible but still mechanical. It needs to show discretion as a professional judgement capability: deciding who needed to know, how expectations were set and how trust was preserved.

Stakeholder management
56%


Stakeholder management is emerging through contact with EAs, SES offices and working groups. The next step is to show how the candidate managed competing interests or reassured stakeholders during pressure.

Measurable results
51%


Outcomes are easier to identify than in attempt one, but still lack evidence of value. Stronger answers would name avoided delays, maintained confidence, no information leakage or decisions made with better advice.

Professional delivery tone**55%**

The tone is credible and more prepared, but still sounds like a process explanation in places. A more formal opening and clearer result sentence would make the candidate sound more panel-ready.

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

- References the agency and the senior legal support context.
- Connects long public service experience to confidentiality and diary management.
- The answer now points towards discretion and planning, which are central to the role.

Gaps

- The answer still does not explain what specifically appeals about supporting a retired Chief Justice.
- Preparation sounds factual rather than considered.
- The closing statement does not yet say what the candidate would contribute.
- The candidate still does not mention what they know about the retired Chief Justice's office or likely stakeholder environment.
- The answer relies on length of service as proof, but the panel needs one short example of relevant judgement.

Improvement suggestions

- Name the role's distinctive demands: discretion, high-profile engagements and autonomous part-time support.
- Use one example to prove the experience instead of listing several duties.
- End with a contribution statement focused on calm, reliable senior support.
- Add a single evidence sentence after the experience claim, such as supporting SES leaders through competing deadlines and sensitive correspondence.
- Close by linking the part-time support model to forward planning and reliable handover, rather than simply saying the role is interesting.

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

- Names a more specific senior support context.
- Shows practical systems thinking through a shared tracker and SharePoint.
- Connects the work to multiple SES leaders and competing deadlines.
- The example includes enough context to become a strong executive-support answer with refinement.

Gaps

- The answer does not yet explain which priority came first and why.
- Stakeholder relationship management is implied but not described.
- The outcome is not concrete enough to show executive impact.
- The candidate does not say which deadline was fixed, which work could move or how they protected the SES leaders from unnecessary escalation.
- The answer describes a tracker as the solution, but not the judgement the tracker enabled.

Improvement suggestions

- Explain the prioritisation criteria you used, such as statutory timing, executive availability and downstream recruitment impact.
- Add one moment where you made a judgement call without waiting for direction.
- State the outcome in terms of deadlines protected and executive focus preserved.
- Name the prioritisation criteria explicitly: statutory deadline, executive availability, stakeholder impact and downstream recruitment consequence.
- Add one sentence about what you escalated and what you resolved at support level so ownership is visible.

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

- Uses a relevant sensitive-information example.
- Mentions controlled access and senior sign-off.
- Shows awareness that broad circulation would create risk.
- The candidate begins to identify the risk behind controlled access, not only the mechanics.

Gaps

- Need-to-know judgement is not explained.
- Relationship management with the small team and senior office is missing.
- The outcome is mechanical rather than trust or risk focused.
- The answer does not explain how the small team was chosen or how expectations were reinforced.
- The senior sign-off result is useful, but the trust and reputational value are still understated.

Improvement suggestions

- Explain how you decided who needed access and how you communicated confidentiality expectations.
- Describe how you maintained trust with the secretary's office and the working team.
- Close with the quality result, such as accurate sign-off, no information leakage and timely implementation.
- Explain the need-to-know test you applied: direct role in the process, senior sign-off requirement or operational dependency.
- State the result as 'the recommendations were signed off without unnecessary exposure or delay' to connect delivery and discretion.

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

- Moves towards a specific risk example.
- Shows willingness to raise concerns before escalation.
- The answer shows an emerging ethical and procedural fairness instinct.

Gaps

- The legal, people or reputational risk is not clear enough.
- The consultation process is too vague.
- The result does not yet show what was prevented.
- The candidate does not explain whether the risk related to fairness, legal exposure, staff wellbeing or reputation.
- The consultation pathway is too compressed for the panel to assess quality of judgement.

Improvement suggestions

- Explain what triggered your concern and why the proposed action carried risk.
- Name the type of stakeholders consulted, such as HR, legal or senior management.
- Describe the decision the delegate was able to make because of your advice.
- Specify the risk categories and the stakeholder groups consulted, while keeping names and private details out of the answer.
- Describe the advice outcome: what the delegate understood after your intervention and how the next step changed.

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

- Uses a specific changed-priority scenario.
- Shows practical action and stakeholder contact.
- The example now has a concrete constraint, action and result that can be improved.

Gaps

- The example still reads as routine administration.
- The trade-off is not stated.
- The candidate does not explain why same-day dispatch mattered.
- The answer does not yet explain why a later sign-off was acceptable or who needed to be reassured.
- It lacks a learning or prevention point, which makes the example feel like a one-off workaround.

Improvement suggestions

- Explain why the letter mattered and what would have happened if it slipped.
- State the trade-off between immediate sign-off and certainty of completion.
- Add a continuity measure for future sign-offs, such as buffer time or earlier staging.
- Add the judgement sentence: 'I decided not to interrupt because the secretary meeting was the higher-risk priority and the dispatch window was still manageable.'
- Finish with the continuity measure introduced afterwards, such as earlier buffer checks for urgent sign-off material.