

Government interview practice feedback

Developing

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

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Overall readiness score

70%

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** Research the role thoroughly before the next practice session: read the Position Description multiple times, review the Attorney-General's Department website and current legal policy priorities, and understand the scope of a part-time support role.
- 2** Rewrite the warm-up answer with deliberate structure: open with why you are drawn to executive support in high-profile legal environments, name one relevant experience, reference the retired Chief Justice role and close with what you hope to contribute.
- 3** Reframe substantive examples to emphasise judgement and discretion: for each example, add the alternatives considered, risks assessed, trade-offs made and stakeholder value achieved.

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.

70%

STAR structure - Situation

65%

STAR structure - Task

74%

STAR structure - Action

Panel-style narrative summary

This candidate brings 20 years of public service experience in executive assistant and office management roles, demonstrating solid foundational capability in supporting multiple senior leaders in complex operational environments. Across five practice answers, evidence emerges of pragmatic delegation, stakeholder coordination and proactive problem-solving appropriate to Level 6 mid-seniority context. However, the responses consistently lack depth in the dimensions most central to this specific role: independent judgement in discretionary and sensitive matters, relationship management with high-profile stakeholders, and anticipatory risk management. The warm-up answer reveals insufficient preparation and research into the role itself, the retired Chief Justice context and the Attorney-General's Department. Substantive answers tend towards process and delivery narrative rather than demonstrating the judgement, discretion and stakeholder acumen required for autonomous support to a distinguished legal figure. Overall readiness is assessed at Developing (70%), with clear capacity to strengthen through targeted preparation and reframing of examples towards role-specific capability demonstration.

Strengths

- Demonstrated tenure and institutional knowledge: 20 years in public service establishes credibility and understanding of government operation.
- Practical delivery capability: shows systems thinking through SharePoint, spreadsheets and coordination of competing priorities across multiple senior leaders.
- Clear ownership and agency: across substantive answers, the candidate takes responsibility for outcomes and shows proactive problem-solving rather than waiting for direction.
- Appropriate tone and pace in main answers: delivery is measured and confident without excessive filler or rushed speech.

Gaps

- Insufficient preparation and research: the warm-up answer provides no evidence of having read the Position Description, researched the retired Chief Justice context or understood the unique demands of this role.
- Limited understanding of role specificity: answers focus on generic executive assistant capability rather than the distinct demands of supporting a retired Chief Justice across legal, government and community networks.
- Discretion and relationship management are underexplored: confidentiality protocol is mentioned, but trust-building and relational acumen are not shown strongly enough.
- Independent judgement is not clearly articulated: examples tend towards process execution rather than assessment of competing priorities, risk balancing or strategic thinking expected at Level 6.
- Delivery calibration still needs work: the candidate has substantial material, but the panel would benefit from cleaner signposting, fewer process details and more deliberate result statements at the end of each answer.

Improvement suggestions

- Research the role thoroughly before the next practice session: read the Position Description multiple times, review the Attorney-General's Department website and current legal policy priorities, and understand the scope of a part-time support role.
- Rewrite the warm-up answer with deliberate structure: open with why you are drawn to executive support in high-profile legal environments, name one relevant experience, reference the retired Chief Justice role and close with what you hope to contribute.
- Reframe substantive examples to emphasise judgement and discretion: for each example, add the alternatives considered, risks assessed, trade-offs made and stakeholder value achieved.
- Develop at least one new example that demonstrates handling sensitive, high-profile or genuinely complex matters, such as confidential correspondence, sensitive engagements or reputational risk.
- Strengthen results articulation: explain the impact on the principal, the team or the organisation instead of stating only that a task was completed.

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- Build a short evidence bank before the next attempt: one example for senior executive support under pressure, one for confidential or sensitive material, one for proactive risk advice, and one for changed priorities. For each example, write a one-line judgement statement and a one-line result statement before practicing.
 - Practise delivery as well as content. Record the answers once, listen for filler or casual openings, then rehearse again with a more formal first sentence and a deliberate pause before the result.

Metric scores

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

STAR structure - Situation

70%

The situation is identifiable and role-adjacent, especially in the SES support and sensitive salary recommendation examples. It would score higher if the candidate explained scale, stakeholder visibility and the specific operating pressure earlier in each answer.

STAR structure - Task

65%

The task is present but sometimes implied. The candidate needs to state the responsibility they personally held, the decision point they owned and why the matter required Level 6 judgement rather than routine executive assistant follow-up.

STAR structure - Action

74%

The actions are practical and credible: shared tracking, controlled access, hand delivery, stakeholder consultation and staged sign-off. The next lift is to explain why those actions were chosen and what alternatives were rejected.

STAR structure - Result

65%

Results are usually present but often functional. The panel hears that papers moved, letters were signed and processes completed, but needs a clearer statement of impact on executive focus, trust, risk mitigation and stakeholder confidence.

Clarity and concision

67%

Delivery is measured and generally easy to follow, but some answers include filler, casual phrasing or process steps that dilute the capability signal. Stronger signposting would help the panel identify situation, task, action and result quickly.

Role-level alignment

73%

The evidence sits around Level 6 because the candidate works with senior leaders, sensitive information and competing priorities. It needs more explicit independent judgement, risk balancing and limited-direction decision-making to become on-track.

Role-specific capability alignment
68%

The examples are relevant to executive support, confidentiality and diary pressure. The gap is that they still sound generic in places and need a clearer bridge to supporting a retired Chief Justice across legal, government and community networks.

Evidence strength
68%

The evidence has concrete details, including Senate estimates, recruitment offers, around 180 recommendations, secretary sign-off and a changed-priority letter. Stronger context and result framing would make those details more persuasive.

Ownership clarity
72%

The candidate often owns the coordination and follow-up, but occasionally uses team-based phrasing that hides personal accountability. The answer would be stronger with more first-person decision language.

Ownership demonstration
72%

There is clear proactive behaviour in setting up trackers, limiting access, consulting stakeholders and staging sign-off material. The demonstration would improve by naming the judgement calls made before those actions.

Judgement and discretion
69%

Confidentiality is handled practically, but discretion needs to be framed as trust, relationship management and reputational protection, not only secure document movement. This is central to the retired Chief Justice role.

Stakeholder management
70%

The candidate engages senior offices, EAs, working groups and stakeholders, but relationship dynamics are underdeveloped. Stronger answers would show how confidence was built and maintained across competing interests.

Measurable results
65%

The answer gives outcomes such as sign-off, implementation and delayed-but-completed dispatch. The missing piece is measurable or observable value: reduced risk, protected executive focus, no information leakage or improved process confidence.

Professional delivery tone**63%**

The main answers are calm and credible, but casual openings or filler can weaken executive presence. A more formal first sentence and deliberate pauses would better suit a senior legal support interview.

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

- Acknowledges 20 years public service experience, which is relevant tenure for role-level expectations.
- Identifies executive assistant background and prior executive officer roles as relevant experience.
- Recognises the role is within the Attorney-General's Department, showing basic awareness of the agency.

Gaps

- No evidence of research into the specific role: no mention of the retired Chief Justice, the nature of the position or its unique stakeholder context.
- Motivation is generic and disconnected from the role requirements. Legal interest is not articulated as it relates to executive support provision.
- Missing any reference to key role dimensions: diary management complexity, high-profile stakeholder engagement, travel coordination or documentation at judicial level.
- No acknowledgement that the role is part-time, which makes prioritisation, autonomy and anticipation especially important.
- The answer does not yet distinguish between previous executive officer work and the discretion required when supporting a distinguished legal figure.

Improvement suggestions

- Before the interview, research the role thoroughly: read the Position Description, understand the retired Chief Justice context, review recent public engagements and identify why this role is a meaningful next step.
- Develop a clear two-part warm-up narrative: why you are interested in executive support to senior leaders in high-profile environments, and why this part-time legal support role appeals.
- Connect your public service experience to the specific competencies required: stakeholder discretion, managing complex diaries, preparing high-quality documentation and adapting to dynamic priorities.
- Reference concrete preparation: 'I have read the Position Description and considered how the part-time support model would require careful forward planning.'
- Include a forward-looking conclusion, such as: 'This role aligns with the kind of calm, discreet and anticipatory support I want to provide.'
- Practise the opening aloud twice and remove unnecessary lead-in phrases so the answer lands within 60 to 90 seconds.

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

- Clear results-focused narrative with tangible outcomes: Senate estimates delivered on time and recruitment offers made to schedule.
- Demonstrates pragmatic delegation and team coordination skills appropriate to supporting multiple senior leaders.
- Shows initiative in establishing systems such as SharePoint and spreadsheets to manage competing priorities and team visibility.
- Measured delivery pace and confident tone without excessive filler.

Gaps

- Situation context is sparse: no detail on the scale of complexity, the stakes or why this environment was challenging.
- Missing the discretion and stakeholder relationship dimension that is central to executive assistant work with high-profile figures.
- No evidence of independent judgement, problem-solving or risk management beyond describing process.
- Does not explain trade-offs made, competing priorities balanced or how issues were anticipated.
- The answer does not explain how the candidate protected the executives from avoidable noise while still keeping the team aligned.
- The example would be stronger if it showed a specific stakeholder tension or pressure point, rather than only internal workflow management.

Improvement suggestions

- Reframe the situation to emphasise the complexity and seniority of the environment, such as multiple SES leaders with competing demands, high-profile events or sensitive timing.
- Add a specific moment where you exercised independent judgement or discretion: what issue did you see coming and how did you handle it?
- Explain how you tailored support to each executive's working style or preferences, not just the operational process.

- State the impact on the executives themselves, such as freeing them to focus on core work or preserving stakeholder confidence.
- Include detail on how you managed confidentiality or sensitivity when papers, recruitment decisions or estimates material moved through the team.
- Connect the example explicitly to the retired Chief Justice context: complex diary management, high-quality briefs and sensitive engagements across senior networks.

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

- Clearly identifies a sensitive information context relevant to the discretion requirement.
- Demonstrates a practical approach to confidentiality through controlled access and hand-delivery protocol.
- Shows ownership of process management across a large-scale sensitive matter.
- Connects actions to a clear stakeholder outcome: senior sign-off and implementation of salary-related recommendations.

Gaps

- Insufficient detail on the judgement exercised in determining which team members needed access.
- Limited explanation of how this experience translates to supporting a retired Chief Justice.
- Missing articulation of stakeholder relationship-building elements; the focus is transactional rather than relational.
- Weak result articulation: the answer does not explain impact beyond completion of the process.
- The answer could say more about how expectations were reinforced with the small team without creating unnecessary anxiety or mistrust.
- No explicit distinction is made between confidentiality as a rule and discretion as a professional relationship capability.

Improvement suggestions

- Expand the Action section to include specific judgement calls, such as how you assessed who truly needed to know and how you communicated sensitivity expectations.
- Bridge the experience explicitly to the role: explain how managing sensitive salary material prepared you to handle confidential correspondence, engagements or personal matters for a retired Chief Justice.
- Reframe the answer to emphasise relationship management alongside discretion: discuss trust-building with the senior office or executive team, not just mechanics of information control.
- Add a result that speaks to quality, risk mitigation or continuous improvement, such as no information leakage, positive feedback on professionalism or a process refinement implemented.
- Use a closing statement that names the capability being tested: 'This taught me that discretion is not just limiting access; it is earning and maintaining trust.'
- Briefly acknowledge the high-profile nature of the target role and how the same need-to-know discipline would apply to correspondence, engagements and personal office matters.

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

- Clear ownership and independent judgement demonstrated; the candidate took action based on a personal assessment of ethical, legal and people risk.
- Proactive risk identification and mitigation strategy shown; recognised people and reputational risk and acted to prevent escalation.
- Stakeholder engagement approach evident; undertook research and consulted multiple stakeholders before advising the delegate.
- Practical outcome achieved; intervention prevented premature performance management action.

Gaps

- Incomplete STAR structure: context and task are underspecified, and it is unclear what triggered the risk identification.
- Vague on research and stakeholder engagement mechanics; no specific detail on who was consulted, what evidence was gathered or how advice was structured.
- Some casual phrasing and hesitation undermines executive credibility and clarity.
- No articulation of trade-offs considered or alternative approaches evaluated.

- The answer does not yet show how the candidate balanced compassion, procedural fairness, legal risk and the executive's need for timely advice.
- The result is positive but too compressed; the panel needs to hear what risk was avoided and how the delegate's decision improved.

Improvement suggestions

- Reframe the opening to set serious, professional context: 'When I was supporting the SES unit, I identified a risk that required careful judgement and stakeholder consultation.'
- Add specific context: what was the original performance management trigger and why did you assess it as problematic?
- Specify action detail: name the stakeholder groups consulted, describe the evidence gathered and outline the key points in your advice.
- Reframe the outcome as public-sector risk mitigation: the delegate was equipped to make an informed decision that protected people, reputation and process fairness.
- Name the trade-offs you considered, including fairness to the employee, organisational risk, legal exposure and the executive's obligation to act promptly.
- Pause before answering this question in the interview so the tone matches the seriousness of a sensitive employment matter.

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

- Clear problem-solving approach: engaged the general manager's EA when direct access was unavailable.
- Demonstrates adaptability by shifting from the ideal outcome to a workable alternative.
- Independent judgement shown: made a practical decision to print and stage the letter without waiting passively.
- Appropriate tone and length: concise delivery at conversational pace.

Gaps

- Limited evidence of handling genuinely sensitive or high-profile matters; the example is still a routine administrative task.

- No explicit discussion of discretion, confidentiality or risk management, which are key to supporting a retired Chief Justice.
- Trade-offs are not articulated: why the later sign-off was acceptable, what stakeholder expectations were and whether there was downstream impact.
- Weak articulation of business value: the result is functional but framed as an acceptable delay rather than a strategic resolution.
- The answer does not explain whether the requesting team, recipient or executive office had expectations that needed active management.
- No continuous-improvement point is included, so the example ends as a one-off workaround rather than a stronger Level 6 learning moment.

Improvement suggestions

- Reframe the result to emphasise the stakeholder need satisfied despite the constraint.
- Add an explicit judgement statement: 'I made a calculated decision to trade off timing for certainty because the urgent meeting was the higher priority.'
- Consider a more senior-level or sensitive example for this theme, such as managing confidential briefs or dignitary coordination.
- Demonstrate forward thinking by explaining what you changed for future sign-offs, such as building buffer time into urgent correspondence workflows.
- Explain who you kept informed during the delay and how you prevented uncertainty from becoming pressure on the executive.
- If you keep this example, make the final result stronger: the letter went out, the urgent meeting stayed protected and future sign-off planning improved.