

VACANT POSITION INFORMATION PACKAGE

Communities NSW

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in applying for a recently advertised position with the Communities NSW. To complete your application it is important to refer to:

- job advertisement
- position description
- this information package.

What's in this information package?

In this position information package you will find information about:

- How to apply for a position
- Proof of identity requirements
- Criminal records checks
- Child-related employment (NSW Sport and Recreation and Centennial Parklands only) and
- An applicant checklist.

The position description and an *Application for NSW Government Jobs* form are also provided with this package.

How to apply for a position

The NSW Government offers a wide range of challenging jobs – e.g. teachers, nurses, rangers, gardeners, clerks, police, lawyers, scientists and librarians. The NSW Public Sector strives to be representative to better serve our diverse population.

As part of the NSW Government's equal employment opportunity policy, employees are selected on merit. This means the person whose skills, knowledge and experience best match the job requirements will be selected. For permanent jobs, you need to be an Australian citizen or permanent resident. For most temporary jobs, you just need a visa which lets you work in Australia.

Choosing a job

NSW Government jobs are advertised on the internet on the commercial websites listed below:

- www.seek.com.au
- www.mycareer.com.au
- www.careerone.com.au

The current employment vacancies can also be viewed from the department's website at www.communities.nsw.gov.au.

Read the job advertisement carefully

All NSW Government job advertisements list 'selection criteria'. The selection criteria describe the skills, knowledge and experience needed to do the job. Advertisements also have a brief description of the job, the name of the inquiries person, an address and a closing date for applications.

Read the advertisement and make a note of anything you don't understand so you can ask questions. Keep a copy of the advertisement for future use.

Get the information package

Ring the number given for the information package. The package will include a detailed description of the duties of the job, plus other documents which will help you with your application.

Phone the inquiries person

You can get more information about the job by phoning the inquiries person named in the advertisement. Speak to them after you read the information package so your questions will be more relevant. Speaking to the inquiries person will help you decide whether to apply for the job, and what to emphasise in your application.

Other information

Get as much extra information as you can to write a good application. You might meet with the inquiries person at the workplace. If possible, search the internet or talk to people who work in similar areas. This will give you a better idea of the workplace.

Writing your application

It is important to prepare a good application as it will be used to decide whether you get an interview. A good application shows why you are the best person for the job and how your skills, knowledge and experience match the selection criteria. Your application should contain:

- your 'claim for the position' (statements meeting the advertised selection criteria)
- your resume
- a completed job application form
- any other required information (such as licences) as stated in the advertisement.

Your claim for the position/addressing the selection criteria

You must include a claim for the position in your application. If not, you are unlikely to get an interview. These are statements meeting the advertised selection criteria.

You write a claim for the position to show the selection panel that you have the right mix of skills, knowledge and experience to do the job. You need to write a specific claim for each job you apply for in the NSW Public Sector.

Make a separate heading for each selection criterion. For each one, describe your skills, knowledge and experience and show how they could be used in the job. Emphasise your major achievements. Use positive language, for example: 'In my current role I take responsibility for ...' is better than 'I have limited experience in...'. When large numbers of applicants meet all the criteria, the selection panel will compare all the applications and choose those that best meet the criteria for interview.

Some key words in selection criteria

Demonstrated knowledge: You need to give examples that prove you have this area of knowledge.

Ability to: You do not need to have done this kind of work before, but you need to describe how your skills, knowledge and experience show that you are capable of doing this part of the job.

Experience in: You have to show you have done this work before. Give examples.

Effective, Proven, Highly developed, Superior: You need to show your level of skill. Use examples of your achievements to show your level of skill, knowledge and experience.

Good communication skills: This is not about whether you speak English with an accent. This is about showing you have the communication skills needed to do the job. You could include: experience in dealing with people, details of things you have written, and examples of problems you have solved using your communication skills.

Your resume

Prepare a resume (that is, curriculum vitae) which is clear, concise, up-to-date and includes:

- personal details
- education and training
- employment history (name of organisation, period of employment, job title, major duties and responsibilities, main achievements)
- skills/experience gained outside of paid work
- the names and contact details for two referees, including complete phone and fax numbers and whether an interpreter is needed. At least one referee should be a recent work supervisor, if possible.

The application form

An *Application for NSW Government Jobs* is provided with this information package. Complete this form and enclose it with your application.

Communities NSW will collect and store the information you voluntarily provide to enable processing and assessment of your application for employment. The information will be accessed by the Corporate Human Resources staff, selection panels and those authorised to approve recommendations for employment. The information will only be used for the purpose for which it was collected.

Sending in your application

All applications are to be forwarded and marked 'Confidential' to:

Senior Employee Relations Officer (Recruitment)
Corporate Human Resources Group
Corporate Strategy and Services
Communities NSW
GPO Box 7060,
SYDNEY NSW 2001

You can also submit your application through the recruitment email: recruitment@communities.nsw.gov.au. Applications can also be faxed to (02) 9995 0668.

It is important that your application reaches us no later than the close of business on the closing date. If you are uncertain of the closing date, phone the contact person.

Please do not send in your original qualifications or certificates. You should bring your original documents if you are

called for an interview.

The selection committee

Selection is usually done by a committee of at least two people (this will include one man and one woman). One person will be an 'independent' – a person from outside the area where the position is located.

Short listing

The selection committee assesses all applications against the selection criteria. Applicants who best meet the selection criteria will be called for further assessment, usually an interview.

Interview preparation

If you are chosen for an interview, you should prepare carefully. You would normally be advised by phone at least three days before the interview. This would usually happen within ten days of the closing date.

If you are called for an interview and have any special requirements, advise the contact officer for the position prior to the interview so we can help you.

You should enquire at the time you are contacted, about the structure of the interview and if further documentation (including the signed Background Check consent forms and/or Prohibited Employment consent forms and the certified Proof of Identification documents) is required.

Interview questions are based on the selection criteria. Read the criteria and think of likely questions. Practice your answers out loud or with a friend. Interviews are like public speaking – prepare and rehearse as much as you can.

Consider the challenges of the job and how your skills, knowledge and experience will help you meet them. Read your application and decide which points you want to emphasise.

At the interview

Your task during the interview is to convince the selection panel that you are the best applicant for the position. The selection committee may use a number of methods to assess your ability to do the job including: work samples, tests, referee and criminal records checks. You should be advised of what to expect at the time you are contacted about your interview time.

When answering interview questions remember:

- it is OK to take your time – think before you answer
- if the question is unclear, ask for it to be explained
- you will usually need to restate details which are in your application
- give examples from your experience with each answer
- give complete answers – don't assume that you can omit details
- interviewers may be more comfortable if you maintain eye contact.

At the end of the interview, you will be given the chance to add other information not previously covered in the interview, and ask any questions of your own. Restate your major strengths, adding anything that has been left out.

Referees

The selection panel may need to contact your referees to find out more about your work behaviour and performance and may be asked to verify or comment on claims made by you. It is important to let your referees know that you are applying for a job. They should also have an idea of the selection criteria so they are prepared to answer questions in relation to your suitability for the position. Your referees will be contacted if you are one of the best applicants for the job.

After the interview

The selection panel compares all the applicants and makes their recommendation to the Department Head or delegate. Once the recommendation is approved, the successful applicant will be contacted by phone. This may take several days after the interviews. If you are verbally offered the position and accept, a letter will be sent out to confirm that you have the job. All other candidates that were interviewed will be advised that they were unsuccessful.

If we do not offer you the position, but believe you are suitable, you may be placed on an eligibility list. Applicants are placed on this list in order of merit, and may be contacted regarding employment if the position, or a similar position, becomes vacant within the life of the eligibility list (generally 12 months).

If your application is unsuccessful, you will receive a letter. Remember that being unsuccessful is no reflection on you personally – it only means that you were not, at the time, considered to be the best person for that particular position.

You should take the opportunity to learn where you may be able to improve by contacting the convenor of the interview panel, who will be able to help you understand the decision and improve your performance in future interviews. This person's contact details will be provided to you in your letter.

People with a disability

If you are contacted for an interview please advise us if you need anything to assist you at the interview, e.g.:

- wheelchair access into or around the building
- an Auslan interpreter
- to bring a guide dog.

If your disability could impact your ability to do the full range of duties of the position, you may also discuss with the panel at interview equipment which will allow you to perform the job with greater efficiency or altering the physical layout of the work area. These matters cannot be finalised at the interview. They will be negotiated in detail with you if you are the successful applicant.

Health assessments

Many Government employees undergo a pre-employment health assessment, however there are some instances where new staff are asked to complete a Health Declaration rather than attend a health assessment. This is to ensure you are fit to do the duties of the job. It is not concerned with disabilities which do not affect your work. In many cases, all you will need to do is complete a form confirming your fitness to undertake the full requirements of the job. In others a medical examination may also be required.

Overseas qualifications

Some job advertisements say that you need to be registered, licensed, hold a trade certificate, or be a member of a professional association. You may need to get formal recognition of your qualifications before applying for these jobs. For help with this, phone the Overseas Skills Advisory Service on (02) 9707 2500 or (02) 9269 3500.

For other jobs, the selection panel will assess your qualifications. It may be useful to give them a statement which shows the Australian equivalent of your qualification. This may be obtained from:

- Overseas Skills Advisory Service, phone (02) 9707 2500 or (02) 9269 3500
- National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR), phone 1800 020 086.

Sometimes, it may be enough if you photocopy the page from the Country Education Profile Booklet which shows your qualification. For a copy of this booklet, phone AusInfo on 13 24 47.

If you are not sure what documents or evidence you may need, ask the inquiries person for the job. If you don't have proof of qualifications and it is not possible to get proof, please provide a statutory declaration with details of your qualifications.

Further advice and assistance can be obtained by contacting the above mentioned number or by visiting www.dest.gov.au/noosr/

Migrant skills and qualifications

- Overseas Skills Advisory Service, Department of Education and Training, phone (02) 9707 2500 or (02) 9269 3500
- Adult Migrant English Service, phone 1800 114 707
- Community Relations Commission, phone (02) 9716 2232
- National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition phone 1800 020 086.

Proof of identity

What is appropriate documentation for proof of identity by the applicant?

Preferred applicants must provide documentation that supports their true identity. All staff employed by the Department of Communities are required to provide certified copies or produce the originals of the following documents either prior to their commencement date or as soon as practicable thereafter:

- Birth certificate; or
- Passport or certificate of naturalisation (if applicable); and
- Proof of change of name (if applicable)

All documents sighted should be originals. Certified photocopies are also acceptable.

What is a certified copy?

A photocopy of the original witnessed by a qualified witness. The original and photocopy must be presented to the witness who notarises the photocopy with "I certify that this is a true copy of the original which I have sighted").

Qualified witnesses include:

- Justice of the Peace
- Barrister/Solicitor
- Commissioner for Affidavits
- Public Notary
- Officers at the NSW Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages

We must receive the photocopy with the original signature of the witness. Alternatively, the selection committee or other departmental officers may sight the original document, take a copy and sign the copy certifying that it is a true copy.

Child-related Employment

Preferred applicants for positions deemed to be child-related in accordance with guidelines issued by the Commission for Children and Young People will be required to complete a Prohibited Employment Declaration and a Working with Children Check Consent as well as provide 100 points of identification prior to any offer of employment being made.

Criminal Records Checks

Criminal records checks are conducted on applicants recommended for employment in many positions across the Department. If a criminal record check is to be done you will be asked to provide your full name, details of any previous names and your date and place of birth.

No criminal record check will be made on:

- any recommended applicant to whom it is not proposed to offer immediate employment; or
- those applicants who are immediate school leavers, unless they are working in child related employment, when checks must be carried out.

A criminal record does not necessarily disqualify an applicant from selection. A final decision about an applicant's suitability for employment will not be made until the person has been given adequate opportunity to verify that the record relates to them and to discuss any extenuating circumstances.

Child-related employment within NSW Sport and Recreation and Centennial Parklands

NSW Sport and Recreation and Centennial Parklands are firmly committed to the safety, welfare and well being of children and young people and our legislative obligations prescribed by the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998*.

The child protection employment legislation prohibits persons convicted of certain serious offences from working with children and requires a comprehensive background checking process to be undertaken on all recommended applicants for child-related employment opportunities.

Do I need a Working with Children Background check?

When undertaking recruitment for child-related employment opportunities, the Selection Committee will:

- Obtain written consent from the recommended applicant/s to the background checking process
- Conduct background checking, including the Working with Children Check, on recommended applicants
- Obtain a signed Prohibited Employment Declaration from job applicants for child-related vacancies which states that the applicant is **not** a prohibited person under the legislation.
- Sight 100 points of identification as the recommended applicant/s proof of identity prior to lodging the working with children check.

Who is a prohibited person?

Under the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1988* a person who has been found guilty of certain offences against children will be known as a prohibited person. A prohibited person also includes a registrable person under the *Child Protection (Offenders Registration) Act 2000*.

A prohibited person is a person who is guilty of the following offences in NSW or elsewhere:

- serious sex offence
- child-related personal violence offence
- murder of a child
- indecency offences punishable by imprisonment of 12 months or more
- kidnapping (unless the offender is or has been the child's parent or carer)
- offences connected with child prostitution
- possession, distribution or publication of child pornography; or
- attempt, conspiracy or incitement to commit the above offences

It is an offence for a prohibited person to apply for, undertake or remain in child-related employment. A person found guilty of any of these offences may be imprisoned for two years and/or fined.

Anyone who has been convicted of a serious sex offence or a registrable offence should seek their own legal advice about whether their offence makes them a prohibited person.

What does background checking involve?

A Working with Children Check is conducted on all prospective employees in order to determine suitability to work with children. The check will incorporate the following:

- A national criminal record check which will report sexual offences including child pornography and prostitution, and sexual assault charges which are proven but have not led to a conviction, have been dismissed, withdrawn or discharged by a court. Also recorded will be any charges relating to sexual assault or child abuse carrying a minimum penalty of 12 months or more imprisonment that may have not been heard or finalised by the court.
- A check on all apprehended violence orders which have been made on application of a police officer or other public official for the protection of a child.
- A check on disciplinary proceedings initiated by an employer that include matters involving child abuse, sexual misconduct or acts of violence committed by the employee in the course of employment where these acts involve children, are directed at children or take place in the presence of children.

In addition to the Working with Children Check, prospective employees will also be the subject of a broader criminal record check for non child-related offences.

Applicants will also be asked to provide the names of two current referees who can comment on the applicant's work performance and good character. One referee should be a current supervisor, unless there is an acceptable reason for not nominating that person.

What documents can I produce to satisfy the 100 Point Check to support my identity?

Before a background check can be conducted, you must provide documentation to support your identity. This must include original or certified documents adding up to a minimum of 100 points as required by the 100 Point Check under the *Financial Transaction Reports Act 1988*. (Refer to the Chart below.)

You must provide identification from Category A and sufficient items from Category B to equal 100 points.

Category A (70 points)

One document from this list:

- Birth Certificate
- Birth Card issued by the NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages
- Citizenship Certificate
- Current Australian passport
- Expired Australian passport which has not been cancelled and was current within the preceding 2 years
- Current passport from another country or diplomatic documents.

For a preferred applicant under 18 years, one document from the above list, or the following, is sufficient:

- Identity of the applicant verified by an educational institution, either on a student card or a letter signed by the principal, deputy principal, head teacher, deputy head teacher or enrolment officer, confirming that the applicant currently attends the institution.

Category B

40 points

Name and photograph/signature of preferred applicant verified from one of the following (more than one document can be counted):

- Current driver photo licence issued by an Australian state or territory
- Identification card issued to a public employee
- Identification card issued by the Australian or any state government as evidence of a person's entitlement to a financial benefit
- Identification card issued to a student at a tertiary education institution.

35 points

Name and address of preferred applicant verified from any of the following (more than one document can be counted):

- Document held by a cash dealer giving security over property
- A mortgage or other instrument of security held by a financial body
- Council rates notice
- Document from current employer or previous employer within the last two years
- Land Titles Office record
- Document from the Credit Reference Association of Australia.

25 points

Name of preferred applicant verified from any of the following (more than one document can be counted):

- Current credit card or account card from a bank, building society or credit union
- Current telephone, water, gas or electricity bill
- Foreign driver's licence
- Medicare Card
- Electoral roll compiled by the Australian Electoral Commission
- Lease/rent agreement

Further Information

Please contact NSW Sport and Recreation's Manager of Employment Screening on (02) 9006 3773 if you have any questions regarding the Prohibited Employment Declaration or the Working with Children Check process.

Application checklist

Have I:

- Read the job advertisement and position description thoroughly
- Prepared statements addressing **ALL** the selection criteria listed in the advertisement
- Completed the application for ***Application for NSW Government Jobs*** form
- Included a current resume
- Provided the names and contact details of two referees
- Completed Background Check Consent form
- Provided certified Proof of Identification to the value of 100 points

For child-related employment with NSW Sport and Recreation and Centennial Parklands only

- Completed Prohibited Employment Declaration