

State-by-state map and a worked NSW targeted question

What each Australian state and territory usually asks applicants to submit, plus a five-step method and a fictional worked answer for an NSW targeted question.

Before you read

The example below is fictional. Use it to see structure and level; do not copy it. Your application must describe your own real experience.

The job ad and role description always come first. This sample summarises official public guidance checked on 19 October 2026.

What each jurisdiction usually asks for

State	What you usually submit	Assessed against
NSW	Resume; optional cover letter (1 to 2 pages); answers to up to two targeted questions, often in the online form	Focus capabilities from the NSW Public Sector Capability Framework
VIC	Resume; cover letter (usually one page); key selection criteria responses	Key selection criteria; often the public sector values
QLD	Resume; short statement or cover letter, commonly up to 2 pages	'How you will be assessed' key capabilities
SA	Resume (separate file); cover letter; selection criteria responses where asked	Selection criteria, essential and desirable
WA	CV; a cover letter covering some criteria, or a statement covering all	Selection criteria in the job description form
TAS	Resume; selection criteria responses, often a separate document	Selection criteria in the Statement of Duties
ACT	CV; selection criteria, a pitch or a statement (the ad says which)	Capabilities in the position description
NT	One-page summary with examples; detailed resume; tertiary qualifications	Selection criteria in the job description

Answering an NSW targeted question in five steps

- **1. Decode.** Write down the capability, the level and every part of the question.
- **2. Choose.** Pick one example that shows the capability at the level of the role.
- **3. Map.** List three or four behavioural indicators (use the free official Capability Application Tool) and show at least two in your actions.
- **4. Draft long, then cut.** Write in STAR order, then cut background before actions or results.
- **5. Check.** Confirm the word or character count the online form will see.

Worked example (fictional)

Role: Customer Experience Officer, Clerk Grade 5/6 (fictional role)

Capability tested: Commit to Customer Service, Adept

Question: Describe a time you used feedback or data to change the way a service was delivered. What did you do, and what changed as a result?

Limit: 300 words. **This response:** 228 words.

In 2025 I was a customer support officer in a regional council's planning team, handling about 40 enquiries a week about development applications. Our post-call survey showed that one in three callers rated us poorly, and most comments mentioned being "bounced around" between officers.

I asked my team leader if I could look into it. I sorted three months of survey comments and phone logs into themes and found that 60% of repeat calls were about one thing: applicants did not know which documents to lodge for small extensions.

I drafted a one-page checklist in plain English, tested it with five applicants at the front counter, and changed it twice based on what confused them. I then worked with the assessment officers to agree that front-line staff could answer document questions without transferring the call, and wrote a short script so that answers were consistent. I added the checklist to our web page and to the confirmation email applicants receive.

Within four months, repeat calls on that topic fell by about half and the share of poor survey ratings dropped from 33% to 18%. Assessment officers told me they were receiving fewer incomplete applications, and the checklist approach has since been used for two other application types. The main thing I learned was to test a fix with the people who use the service before rolling it out.

Why this works

- It answers all three parts of the question (what the data showed, what I did, what changed).
- The actions match Adept-level behaviours: using data to improve service, designing from the customer's point of view and working with internal stakeholders.
- "I" is used for personal actions; the team is mentioned only for context.
- Results are specific but modest and checkable, and it finishes with a short reflection.

Want the full kit?

The State Government Application Kit adds a 15-page guide covering NSW, Victoria and Queensland in depth plus SA, WA, Tasmania, the ACT and the NT, worked fictional examples for VIC key selection criteria, a values criterion and a QLD short statement, templates, and a spreadsheet workbook with an evidence bank tagged to each state's framework, a question planner with live word and character counts, and a pre-submission check sheet.

A\$17, instant download: <https://whop.com/mint-de8e/state-gov-application-kit/>

Independent resource. Not affiliated with or endorsed by any Australian, state or territory government. A writing aid only; it cannot guarantee any recruitment outcome. You are welcome to share this free sample unchanged.