



Yarra Ranges Council

Interview Guide for Applicants



Interview Tips for Applicants at Yarra Ranges Council

We receive many applications for each role, and while we can't speak with everyone, we carefully review each one.

Whether or not you get an interview this time (or in the future), these tips can help you feel more prepared and confident when the opportunity comes.

1. Preparing for the Interview

To do well in your interview, it's important to prepare. Here's how you can get ready:

1. Learn About the Council

Visit our Yarra Ranges Council website to explore and learn more about what we do but as a quick summary:

Yarra Ranges is home to over 150,000 people and covers approximately 2,500km², making it one of the largest Councils by land size in Victoria.

We employ over 850 staff across over 60 different teams. Everything from Engineers, to Nurses, Town Planners, to Mowing crews, Finance, People & Culture and everything in between.



2. Understand the Job

Read through the job ad carefully to understand what skills are needed to be successful. Also download a copy of the Position Description to further understand all aspects of the role.

3. Show How Your Skills and Experience Fit

Think of examples from your life or work that show you have the right skills. Even if you haven't done the exact job before, you might have useful experience, like:

- Leading a school group as a parent (shows leadership)
- Working in a shop or café (shows customer service)
- Planning a long trip (shows organisation and project skills)
- Using more than one computer system (shows you can learn new systems)

4. Know What to Expect in the Interview

- We use both 'Open' and 'Traditional' interviewing styles. You will be interviewed by a panel and they will typically ask you behavioural-based questions which ask you about how you have handled things in the past.
- You can read more about our interview styles on the next page.

5. Practice Your Answers

- Prepare for common interview questions. Think of real examples from your past work or life to help explain your answers.
- It's fine to bring notes to your interview as they can help you stay on track. Just try not to read all your answers word-for-word from the page.



2. What to Expect in the Interview

We use two main types of interviews. The one you get will depend on the job and the person hiring. Here's a quick guide to both:

1. Open Interviewing

In this style of interviewing, you'll get some or all of the interview questions before the interview. This gives you time to think about your answers and prepare examples.

The hiring manager will let you know if this is the style they'll use when they book your interview.

2. Traditional Interviewing

In this style, you'll be asked the questions during the interview. These questions usually include:

- **About You** – To learn about your background and experience
- **Our Values** – To see how well your values match ours
- **Skills & Behaviour** – You'll be asked to share real examples of how you've used your skills in the past
- **Motivation** – We'll ask why you want to work with us

3. Other Helpful Information About Your Interview

Interview Panel

You'll usually be interviewed by a group of 2 or 3 people. This often includes the manager for the job and someone from outside the team.

How Long It Takes

Most interviews go for about 30 to 60 minutes.

Online Interviews

Sometimes, we run interviews online using Microsoft Teams. If this happens, you'll need a computer or phone with a working camera and microphone so we can see and hear you.

4. Using the STAR Model

Yarra Ranges Council recommends using the STAR method to help you clearly explain your past experiences during interviews. This method helps you structure your answers in a way that shows what you did and what you achieved.

Here's what that means:

S = Situation: Start by describing the background or setting. What was happening? Where were you working?

T = Task: Explain what you needed to do. What was your role or responsibility?

A = Action: Talk about what you actually did. What steps did you take to handle the situation?

R = Result: Finish by sharing what happened in the end. What did you achieve or learn?

Example:

Q: Can you tell us about a time you handled a difficult customer well?

S – Situation: I was working at the front desk of a local library when a customer became upset because they had overdue fines on their account.

T – Task: My job was to calm the situation and help the customer, while still following the library's rules.

A – Action: I stayed calm, listened carefully to their concerns, and let them know I understood why they were frustrated. I then explained how the fine system works and offered them a payment plan to make it easier.

R – Result: The customer agreed to the plan, thanked me for being respectful, and kept using the library without any further issues.

5. Final Tips

- **Dress for the Job:** Wear clothes that suit the type of job you're applying for. If it's an office job, neat and professional clothes like a shirt and pants are a good choice. If it's an outdoor or hands-on job, just make sure you look neat and tidy.
- **Be Early:** If your interview is in person, try to arrive 10 minutes early. If it's online, log in about 5-10 minutes before it starts so you can check your camera and sound.
- **Be Yourself:** Let your personality show! Council values people who are genuine, work well with others, and care about the community.
- **Ask Questions:** Think of a few questions to ask at the end of the interview —like what the team is like, what the work environment is, or what the job involves. This helps you see if the role is a good fit for you too.

Good luck with your application!

If you're invited to an interview, we hope you feel confident and ready to show your best to Yarra Ranges Council.

