

Interview With Confidence

The Complete In-Person and Video Interview Guide for Australian Job Seekers

A Shortlist Resumes Guide

Getting to the interview is half the battle. Winning the interview is the other half, and it is the half most people spend the least time preparing for.

Australian hiring processes have changed significantly. Interviews are longer, more rigorous, and more competitive than they were five years ago. Video and virtual interviews are now standard at every level. AI fluency is increasingly tested. Panel interviews, structured behavioural assessments, and multi-round processes are the norm rather than the exception.

This guide gives you the complete toolkit: how to prepare, how to present, how to handle the hard questions, and how to follow up in a way that keeps you front of mind. Whether your next interview is in a boardroom in Sydney or on a Zoom call from your spare bedroom, the principles are the same. Preparation and delivery win.

The Australian Interview Landscape in 2026

The interview process in Australia has become considerably more demanding, and this is not a temporary shift. Hiring managers have more candidates to choose from, more tools to screen them with, and more pressure to get the decision right. That combination means the bar for interview performance has risen sharply.

What Has Changed

- **Hiring cycles are longer.** Companies are taking more time at the senior level, running more rounds, and involving more stakeholders. A process that took three weeks in 2019 might take eight to twelve weeks now. Patience and persistence are non-negotiable.
- **AI literacy is expected, not optional.** At every level above entry, employers in 2026 are actively assessing whether candidates understand and use AI tools. This is not about being a developer. It is about demonstrating that you understand how AI is changing your industry and that you are already working with it. Candidates who cannot speak to this are being screened out early.
- **Networks matter more than ever.** A strong resume gets you to the shortlist. But in competitive markets, the candidate who has a genuine connection inside the organisation, or whose name is known to the hiring manager before the first call, has a real advantage. Build your network before you need it.
- **Video interviews are standard.** Most Australian employers now use video at some point in the hiring process, either a live video interview replacing an early in-person round, or an asynchronous one-way video screening before a human ever reviews your resume. If you are not prepared for video, you are not prepared for the process.
- **Small mistakes are more costly.** When employers have ten strong candidates for one role, a weak answer to a standard question, a shaky technical setup on a video call, or a generic cover letter can eliminate you from a process you were otherwise winning. Margin for error is thin.

The candidates who succeed in 2026 are not necessarily the most qualified. They are the most prepared. Preparation is the one variable entirely within your control.

PREPARED CANDIDATE MINDSET

In 2026,
The Winners
Are Not The Most
Qualified...

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SKILLS

KNOWLEDGE

GOALS

DISCIPLINE

Chapter 1

Preparation

The interview is won or lost before you walk in the room.

Most candidates spend two or three hours preparing for an interview. The candidates who get offers typically spend two or three days. The difference is not effort for its own sake. It is depth: knowing the company well enough to have a strategic conversation, knowing your own stories well enough to tell them under pressure, and knowing what questions to ask that signal genuine intelligence about the role.

Research the Company

- 1. Go beyond the About page.** Read their annual report if they are publicly listed. Search their name in Google News for the past six months. Read recent ASX announcements or press releases. Know their revenue growth or decline, their key competitors, and any significant leadership changes. Most candidates do not do this. The ones who do are immediately obvious to the interviewer.
- 2. Read their Glassdoor reviews.** [glassdoor.com.au](https://www.glassdoor.com.au) gives you a window into culture, management style, and common interview questions from people who have been through the process at that specific company. Read reviews from the last 12 months and look for patterns, not outliers.
- 3. Understand the problems they are trying to solve.** Why does this role exist? What are they struggling with that they need to hire for? An interview where you demonstrate understanding of their actual challenges is a very different conversation from one where you just talk about your experience.
- 4. Research your interviewers on LinkedIn.** Look at their career history, what they post, what they engage with. Find one or two genuine points of connection or shared professional interest. Do not pretend you have researched them if you have not, but if you have, it can make the conversation feel like a meeting between peers rather than a formal assessment.

Know Your Own Story

- 5. Prepare 8 to 10 STAR stories.** STAR stands for Situation, Task, Action, Result. Each story should describe a specific professional situation, what you were responsible for, what actions you took, and what measurable outcome resulted. These stories are the answer to virtually every behavioural interview question you will face. Prepare more than you think you will need.
- 6. Know your resume cold.** You will be asked about anything on it. Do not put something on your resume that you cannot speak to confidently and in detail. If it is there, you need to be ready to expand on it.
- 7. Prepare your two-minute career summary.** Almost every interview opens with 'Tell me about yourself' or 'Walk me through your background.' This is not an invitation to recite your CV from the beginning. It is an opportunity to deliver a tight, compelling narrative that leads the interviewer to the conclusion that you are the right person for this role. Prepare it, practise it, and deliver it like you have said it a hundred times.
- 8. Prepare your AI story.** In 2026, expect to be asked how you use AI in your work. Whether your answer involves automating a workflow, using generative tools for content or analysis, or integrating AI into a team process, have a specific, real example ready. 'I have been exploring it' is not sufficient. 'Here is how I used it to reduce our monthly reporting time by 30%' is.
- 9. Know your salary range before the first call.** You may be asked in the very first conversation. Know your floor, know your target, and know how to deflect the question back to them if it comes too early.

Prepare to Ask Strong Questions

10. Prepare at least five questions to ask. The questions you ask in an interview are as revealing as the answers you give. Weak questions signal a weak candidate. Strong, specific, strategically intelligent questions signal someone who thinks at a high level and takes this seriously.

11. Practise out loud, not just in your head. Most people practise their answers silently. Silent rehearsal does not prepare you for the actual experience of speaking under pressure. Say your answers out loud, ideally to another person, or record yourself on your phone and watch it back. The gap between how you sound in your head and how you sound on camera is almost always uncomfortable and always useful.

Chapter 2

Mastering the In-Person Interview

Physical presence, preparation, and genuine confidence.

In-person interviews are back in force for mid-level and senior roles in Australia. After years of pandemic-era remote hiring, most employers want to meet candidates face to face before making a significant hiring decision. The fundamentals of a great in-person interview have not changed, but the standard has risen.

Arrival and First Impressions

- 1. Arrive 10 minutes early, not 30.** Arriving excessively early puts pressure on the reception team and can signal anxiety. Arriving 10 minutes before your scheduled time is professional and composed. If you arrive much earlier, wait in a nearby cafe.
- 2. Treat everyone you meet as part of the interview.** How you interact with the receptionist, the person who walks you to the meeting room, and anyone you encounter in the lobby is observed and sometimes reported back to the hiring manager. Be genuinely warm and professional with everyone.
- 3. Dress one level above the company's day-to-day standard.** Research the company's culture beforehand. If they are a smart-casual environment, interview in business casual. If they are business casual, interview in business formal. When in doubt, err on the side of more polished.

During the Interview

- 4. Open with energy.** The first 30 seconds of a face-to-face interaction set the tone for everything that follows. Make eye contact, offer a firm handshake, and bring genuine warmth and confidence into the room. Interviewers make rapid assessments of candidates and you want that first impression working for you.
- 5. Listen more than you talk, then answer completely.** The most common mistake candidates make is not listening carefully to the full question before they start answering. Pause, process the question, then respond. A thoughtful pause signals confidence, not uncertainty.
- 6. Use the STAR method for behavioural questions.** When asked for an example, use the Situation, Task, Action, Result framework. Be specific. Avoid generalisations. Name real projects, real numbers, real outcomes. Vague answers are forgettable. Specific, detailed answers are convincing.
- 7. For panel interviews, address your answer to the person who asked, then include others.** When answering a panel question, direct your initial eye contact and response to the person who asked, then bring the rest of the panel in as you develop your answer. Do not ignore members of the panel who have not asked questions.
- 8. Take brief notes.** Bringing a notepad and jotting down a few things during the interview signals that you are engaged and organised. It also gives you reference points when it comes time to ask your questions. Ask permission to take notes at the start if it feels appropriate.
- 9. Do not volunteer your weaknesses unprompted.** If you are asked about weaknesses or failures, choose something real that you have genuinely reflected on and improved. Do not choose a cliché dressed as a weakness ('I work too hard'). And do not go beyond what was asked.
- 10. Ask your questions at the end, not throughout.** Save your prepared questions for when the interviewer invites them. Jumping in with questions during their assessment can disrupt the flow and come across as impatient.

Managing Interview Anxiety

- 11. Prepare enough that confidence replaces anxiety.** The most reliable cure for interview anxiety is deep preparation. When you know your material thoroughly, the anxiety is replaced by something closer to performance readiness. Shallow preparation leaves too much room for uncertainty.
- 12. Breathe before you enter.** A few slow, deliberate breaths before you walk in genuinely reduces cortisol and heart rate. It takes 30 seconds and it works. Do it in the lift or before you leave your car.
- 13. Reframe the dynamic.** An interview is not an interrogation. It is a two-way assessment. You are also evaluating whether this company, this role, and this manager are right for you. Holding that frame makes you a more confident and more authentic candidate.

Chapter 3

Mastering Video and Virtual Interviews

Technology is not an excuse. It is a preparation item.

Video interviews are now a standard part of almost every Australian hiring process. Whether it is a 20-minute screening call on Zoom, a full interview on Microsoft Teams, or a one-way asynchronous video assessment via a platform like HireVue or Criteria, video is part of your toolkit now. The candidates who take their video setup seriously get taken more seriously.

Your technical setup is a proxy for your professionalism and attention to detail. A shaky camera, poor lighting, or audio that cuts out is not bad luck. It is a signal to the interviewer that you did not prepare properly.

Your Technical Setup

- 1. Camera at eye level, not angled up.** A camera pointing up at your chin is unflattering and makes you look disengaged. Position your laptop or camera so that the lens is level with your eyes. A stack of books under your laptop is a perfectly acceptable solution.
- 2. Light your face from the front, not from behind.** Sitting in front of a window with the light behind you turns you into a silhouette. Face the window or put a lamp behind your screen facing you. Even a cheap ring light makes a significant difference. Good lighting is one of the most underinvested areas of video interview preparation.
- 3. Use a wired internet connection if at all possible.** Wi-Fi drops at the worst moments. A wired ethernet connection is significantly more stable. If you must use Wi-Fi, sit as close to the router as possible and ask everyone else in the house to avoid heavy internet usage during your interview.
- 4. Use a headset or external microphone.** Your laptop's built-in microphone picks up keyboard noise, background sounds, and echoes. A basic headset, even an older iPhone headphone set, delivers significantly cleaner audio. Test it before the interview.
- 5. Test everything 30 minutes before, not 30 seconds before.** Open the video platform, check your camera, audio, and background. Run a test call with a friend or family member the day before. Discovering that your camera is not working when the interviewer is waiting for you to join is not a situation you want to be in.
- 6. Choose your background deliberately.** A clean, uncluttered space behind you is always safe. A neutral wall, a tidy bookshelf, or a simple office setting works well. Avoid virtual backgrounds unless they look genuinely professional, many do not. If you are using a virtual background, check that it does not bleed around the edges of your head and arms.

Presenting Well on Camera

7. Look at the camera, not at your own face. This is the single most common mistake in video interviews. When you look at the other person's face on your screen, your eyes appear to be looking down or to the side. Looking directly at the camera lens creates the impression of direct eye contact. Minimise your self-view window or move it as close to the camera as possible.

8. Bring more energy than you think you need. Video compresses energy. The level of enthusiasm and engagement that feels appropriate in person reads as flat and low-energy on camera. You need to deliberately increase your expressiveness, vocal variety, and engagement level to land with the same impact through a screen.

9. Eliminate all notifications. Close every application you are not using. Turn off phone notifications. Put your phone face down away from the desk. A notification sound or a message appearing on your screen during an interview is distracting and unprofessional.

10. Dress professionally from the waist up. You may be sitting down for the whole interview, but dress as you would for an in-person interview from at least the waist up. Avoid white or heavily patterned shirts, which can look strange on camera. Solid colours work best.

11. Have a glass of water nearby. Dry mouth is common when you are nervous and talking for an extended period. Having water within reach is practical and sensible. Just mute before you drink.

When Things Go Wrong

12. Have a backup plan ready. If the platform fails, have a phone number ready to call the interviewer directly. If your internet drops, have your phone data ready as a hotspot. If the camera freezes, know how to restart the call quickly. Communicate calmly if something goes wrong. How you handle a technical failure under pressure tells the interviewer something useful about how you handle problems at work.

13. Do not apologise excessively for minor technical issues. A brief acknowledgement is appropriate. Repeated apologies are not. Address it, fix it, and continue. Candidates who manage disruption with composure make a good impression.

One-Way Video Interviews

Asynchronous or one-way video interviews are increasingly used in Australia as an early screening tool. Platforms like HireVue, Spark Hire, and Criteria present you with a question on screen and give you a limited time to record your answer. There is no live interviewer. Your response is reviewed later by a recruiter or hiring manager.

14. Read each question fully before you start your response. Most platforms give you a brief preparation window before your response time begins. Use every second of it. Understand exactly what is being asked before you start speaking.

15. Speak to the camera as if speaking to a person. One-way video interviews feel strange. There is no visual feedback, no nods, no reactions. Maintain your energy level and direct eye contact with the camera regardless. Candidates who treat it like a conversation are more compelling than those who look like they are reading a script.

16. Practise with your phone before the real thing. Record yourself answering common interview questions on your phone and watch the playback. It is uncomfortable the first few times, which is exactly why it is valuable. You will notice things about your delivery that you would never notice from inside your own head.

17. Do not over-rehearse to the point of sounding scripted. One-way video interviews reward candidates who sound genuine and fluent, not candidates who sound like they memorised a paragraph. Know your key points, not your exact words.

Chapter 4

Navigating Tough Questions

The hard questions are predictable. Prepare for every one of them.

Most candidates dread certain interview questions. The honest answer is that almost every 'hard' question in an interview is entirely predictable. They come up in almost every process, they have well-understood structures for answering them effectively, and the only reason they catch people out is that those people did not prepare for them specifically.

There are no trick questions in a well-run interview. There are only questions the candidate prepared for and questions they did not.

Q: "Tell me about yourself."

This is your two-minute career summary. Do not start from childhood or from your first job. Start from where you are now, or from the role most relevant to what they are hiring for, and work backward selectively. Close with why you are here and what you are looking for. Keep it under two minutes. End it, do not trail off.

Q: "Why are you looking to leave your current role?"

Be honest without being negative. Frame your answer around what you are moving toward, not what you are escaping from. 'I have achieved what I set out to do in this role and I am ready for a broader challenge' is better than any version of 'my manager is difficult.' If you were made redundant, say so plainly. Redundancy carries no stigma in 2026.

Q: "What is your biggest weakness?"

Choose something real that you have already taken meaningful steps to address. The answer structure is: here is the weakness, here is how I recognised it, here is what I have done about it, here is where I am now. Avoid cliches. An interviewer who has heard 'I am a perfectionist' as a weakness for the thousandth time is not impressed.

Q: "Tell me about a time you failed."

This question is asking about self-awareness, resilience, and your relationship with accountability. Choose a genuine failure, not a minor inconvenience dressed up as one. Describe what happened, what you learned, and how you applied that learning. The best answers to this question are ones where the candidate clearly emerged better for the experience.

Q: "Why do you want to work here?"

If you have done your research, this question is easy. If you have not, it is impossible to answer convincingly. Reference specific and real things about the company: their direction, a recent initiative, something the CEO has said publicly, the culture signals you have picked up. 'I have always wanted to work for a respected brand' is not an answer.

Q: "Where do you see yourself in five years?"

Employers are asking whether you are likely to stay, grow within the organisation, and contribute in a meaningful and sustained way. Be honest about your ambitions and connect them to what this role and company can offer. You do not need to have a perfect five-year plan. You do need to demonstrate genuine thought about your professional trajectory.

Q: "How do you use AI in your work?"

This is one of the most important questions in 2026 and candidates at every level are being caught unprepared. Have a specific, real example ready. What tool did you use? What problem were you trying to solve? What was the outcome? Also be ready to discuss your broader view on how AI is changing your field. 'I have been experimenting with it' is not enough at this point.

Q: "What are your salary expectations?"

Do your market research before any interview conversation. When asked early in the process, provide a range based on your research and qualify it by noting that your final expectation depends on the full scope of the role and total compensation. When asked after an offer is made, that is the time to negotiate specifically. See our Salary Negotiation guide for a full strategy.

Chapter 5

Questions to Ask the Interviewer

The questions you ask reveal as much as the answers you give.

Most candidates treat the 'Do you have any questions for us?' moment as a formality. The strongest candidates treat it as one of the most important parts of the interview. The questions you ask demonstrate the depth of your thinking, the seriousness of your interest, and your understanding of what it actually takes to succeed in this role.

Never ask about salary, leave entitlements, or flexible working in a first interview. These questions are appropriate in later rounds or at the offer stage, not when you are still trying to establish that you are the right person for the role.

Questions About the Role

- What does success look like in this role in the first 90 days? And at the 12-month mark?
- What is the biggest challenge the person stepping into this role will need to address first?
- What does a typical week look like in this position?
- What are the most important skills or qualities you are looking for beyond what is in the job description?

Questions About the Team and Culture

- How would you describe the team's current dynamic?
- How does leadership typically support professional development here?
- What do you enjoy most about working at this organisation? (Ask the interviewer directly, not about the organisation in the abstract)
- How has the team navigated significant change or challenge recently?

Questions About the Organisation

- What is the organisation's biggest strategic priority over the next 12 to 18 months?
- How is the organisation approaching AI and automation in its operations or products?
- What does growth typically look like for someone who performs well in this role?

Questions About Next Steps

- What does the rest of the process look like from here?
- Is there anything from our conversation today that you would like me to expand on or clarify?

1. Customise your questions to the conversation. Your best questions are often not the ones you prepared in advance. They are the ones that arise naturally from something the interviewer said during the conversation. Listen for these and act on them. They signal genuine engagement and curiosity.

Chapter 6

The Follow-Up

Most candidates skip this. That is your advantage.

The interview ends when you walk out the door or close the Zoom window. What happens in the next 24 hours can meaningfully influence the outcome. Most candidates send nothing. Some send a generic thank-you. A small number send something specific, warm, and professional that reinforces exactly why they are the right choice. Be in that last group.

The Thank-You Email

- 1. Send it within 24 hours.** Not immediately after the interview, which can feel excessive. Within 24 hours is the right window. Send it to each person who interviewed you individually, not one email to all of them.
- 2. Make it specific.** Reference something real from the conversation. A question they asked that you found particularly interesting. A challenge they described that connects directly to your experience. A comment they made about the team or the direction of the company. Generic thank-you emails are deleted. Specific ones are forwarded.
- 3. Keep it short.** Three short paragraphs. Thank them for their time, reinforce one specific point about your fit for the role, and confirm your enthusiasm and next steps. It is not a second cover letter.
- 4. Connect on LinkedIn after the thank-you email.** Send a connection request on LinkedIn with a brief personalised note referencing the interview. This keeps you visible and starts building the professional relationship regardless of the outcome of this specific process.

Managing the Waiting Period

- 5. Ask about the timeline before you leave.** At the end of every interview, confirm: 'What does the rest of the process look like, and when might I expect to hear from you?' This gives you a reference point so you are not guessing about when to follow up.
- 6. Follow up once if you have not heard by their stated timeline.** A brief, polite email asking for an update is appropriate if you have not heard back within the timeframe they gave you. One follow-up is professional. Multiple follow-ups become pressure.
- 7. Keep your search active.** Do not put your search on hold while you wait on one outcome. Continue applying, networking, and interviewing. The best position to be in when receiving an offer is one where you have other options in play.

If You Do Not Get the Role

- 8. Ask for feedback.** Not every recruiter or employer will provide it, but asking is always worthwhile. Genuine feedback after an unsuccessful interview is one of the most valuable development tools available to a job seeker. Ask specifically what you could have done differently or what the successful candidate brought that you did not.
- 9. Stay in contact.** The person who interviewed you knows your capabilities and thought well enough of you to bring you into a final round. They are a valuable professional contact. Follow up a few months later with a brief update on your situation. The next role they fill may be the one you are right for.

Video Interview Checklist

Run through this checklist the day before and again 30 minutes before every video interview.

Technology

- Camera tested and working
- Camera positioned at eye level
- Audio tested, headset or external microphone connected
- Internet connection stable, wired if possible
- Video platform installed, updated, and tested
- Backup phone number for the interviewer saved and ready
- All unnecessary applications closed
- Phone on silent or Do Not Disturb and face down
- All desktop notifications turned off

Environment

- Background clean, uncluttered, and professional
- Face-forward lighting in place, no backlight or shadows
- Room is quiet, others in the household informed
- Pets secured away from the interview space
- Glass of water nearby

Appearance

- Professional attire from the waist up
- Solid colours preferred, busy patterns avoided
- Hair and presentation as you would for an in-person interview

Preparation

- Notes and key points visible but not in the camera frame
- Resume and job description printed or on a second screen
- List of questions to ask prepared
- STAR stories reviewed and mentally rehearsed
- Interviewer names and titles confirmed

Pre-Interview Preparation Checklist

Complete this checklist before every interview, in-person or virtual.

Research

- Company website reviewed, especially About, News, and Products/Services
- Recent news and press coverage searched on Google News
- Glassdoor reviews read for culture and interview insights
- LinkedIn company page and key people researched
- Interviewers researched on LinkedIn
- Job description read multiple times and key requirements underlined

Your Story

- Two-minute career summary prepared and practised out loud
- 8 to 10 STAR stories prepared and reviewed
- AI use story prepared with specific example and outcome
- Answer to 'Why do you want to work here?' prepared with specific references
- Weakness answer prepared, genuine and with follow-through
- Salary range researched and a response to early salary questions prepared

Logistics

- Interview location confirmed and travel time calculated
- Interviewer name, title, and contact number saved
- Professional attire prepared
- Copies of resume printed if in person
- Notepad and pen packed
- Five questions to ask the interviewer prepared

The interview gets you the offer. The resume gets you the interview.

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