

Emerging Leader

Application and Interview Tips

The Application

The application is about you and what you want to achieve for the Indigenous community in Victoria. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions, so take your time and answer each question in a way that makes you feel comfortable.

The following is a brief outline on how to complete the Application Form and some tips for applying:

1. APPLICATION FORM

The application form consists of your personal and referee details, as well as six questions which relate to your vision, an outline of your leadership plan and how it will benefit your community, your track record and who else would be involved.

In each question box on page two the space is unlimited, but if you are more comfortable providing the information on a separate document be sure to make note in the relevant spaces.

2. REFEREES

Referees are a valuable resource and need to be treated as such. Before including the referees in your application, you should outline what you are applying for and ask for their permission, and their most appropriate contact details.

By being a referee, they should be willing to answer a phone call, or an email to provide information about your application.

3. COVER LETTER

A cover letter is a document sent with your application in which you introduce yourself and state why you feel you are the most appropriate candidate. It also provides additional information, such as the reason for your interest in the Fellowship for Indigenous Leadership and in leadership.

The cover letter should be brief and contain information that is relevant to the application.

4. APPLICATION FORM CHECKLIST

- Print the form and cover letter (if possible) and check your work before sending it
- Ask someone to read through it as you might not be able to see your own mistakes
- Carefully check your spelling and grammar
- Use short sentences/paragraphs which are easy to follow
- Be concise
- Do not repeat yourself
- Keep a copy of your Application Form and cover letter to prepare for your interview

THE SELECTION PANEL REVIEW

All applications will be reviewed by the independent Selection Panel, which consists of Indigenous and non-Indigenous members.

Once all applications have been received (after the application closing date), the Selection Panel will individually make a preliminary assessment before meeting to evaluate and establish a shortlist of applicants to be interviewed.

The prepared shortlist will be forwarded to the Fellowship for Indigenous Leadership Office who will promptly contact the applicants to arrange a mutually convenient interview date and time with the Selection Panel. These appointments will be confirmed via email.

The Interview Process

If you've been contacted for an interview, congratulations! This means that you've performed well in your written application and have been shortlisted for an interview with the Selection Panel.

Interviews can be daunting, so here are some tips to help you prepare for the interview:

1. CONFIRMATION OF INTERVIEW APPOINTMENT

Once you have received confirmation of an interview, please ensure that you have provided the Fellowship for Indigenous Leadership Office with all the necessary information that will enable you to attend and present. This information may include any IT requirements, building access or interpreters for the hearing impaired.

2. WHAT TO TAKE WITH YOU

Review your application and make sure you take a copy along with the cover letter to the interview. It is also worthwhile taking the interview confirmation and any documents that relate to past, present and future plans.

3. RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

This is not compulsory but some candidates feel that a PowerPoint presentation, which can include photos and/or art/music on a DVD presents their idea in a different light.

It should be noted that these presentations do not reflect on your overall application. It is just a different format for providing information.

4. INTERVIEW APPOINTMENT

Find out how to get to the interview the day before. Leave yourself at least a 30-minute buffer. We suggest that you take an early train or bus in case there are delays or cancellations and to allow plenty of time to find the building and/or parking (if necessary).

Also, we suggest that you decide what you want to wear in advance and try it on at least a day before your interview to make sure you feel comfortable and confident in what you have chosen.

Prepare the material you want to bring with you the day before as well.

5. AVOID MOBILE INTERRUPTION

Make sure you turn your mobile phone off before entering the interview location. You should not be on the phone or texting when called in for the interview nor interrupted by phone calls during the interview.

6. TAKE YOUR TIME

Take your time in the interview. Remember to take a breath between statements and to relax, and if you lose track of what you are saying don't be afraid to ask for the question again.

Listen to the questions carefully and answer them as best you can using any relevant examples to support your answers.

The panel members have all been interviewed themselves at some stage in their careers, so they understand how you are feeling.

7. NOTE YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS

All candidates will compile a list of their abilities and responsibilities, but some will fail to make mention of their achievements. This can be put down to a lack of experience in writing an effective application, or it can be a smokescreen for poor performance. A list of responsibilities without achievements means little.

Don't assume that the Selection Panel knows anything or everything about your abilities and achievements, even if you have previously applied for the award, or worked with them in the past.

8. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

It is important to provide your strengths and weaknesses to the Selection Panel as it shows that you are self-aware. The weaknesses may also show the panel where the Fellowship Program may be able to assist you during your leadership journey.

9. QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

The Selection Panel will most likely ask if you have any questions, so it's a good idea to prepare some in advance. These may include what the next steps may be, or when to expect an outcome.

10. REMEMBER TO SAY THANK YOU

Thanking your interviewers for their time as you leave is not only courteous but important. It is always a good idea to follow-up via email. A follow-up email can mean a lot if the competition for a position is tight.

Just after you've completed the interview, please take note of anything specific you discussed and make a point of referencing it in your email.

It may seem like a small detail, but the experts will tell you that this tried-and-true tactic really does make an impact.

11. FOCUS ON YOUR ABILITIES

Of course, there's no substitute for being a quality candidate with skills that match the position, but avoiding the interview mistakes can help your best qualities shine through.

Be yourself and focus on your talents and abilities. That way, you're sure to impress rather than charm.