

# AEO Quick-Start Checklist for Australian businesses 2026

Work through these in order. Steps 1–4 are technical — do them first, they have the fastest payoff. Steps 5–8 are ongoing practice. **Already doing good SEO?** You're roughly 80% there — the items below are the AEO-specific layer on top.

## TECHNICAL FOUNDATION — DO FIRST, FASTEST ROI

### 1 Add FAQPage schema to every post and service page

JSON-LD format, minimum 4 Q&A pairs per page. Schema must match visible HTML exactly. Pages with FAQPage schema earn AI citations at 2.7x the rate of those without it. Note: works for AI even though Google has restricted rich results display.

### 2 Add Article schema with author + dates

Include `author`, `datePublished`, and `dateModified` on every post. Update `dateModified` each time you refresh content — AI systems use freshness as a trust signal.

### 3 Audit Core Web Vitals and load speed

Target sub-2.5s Largest Contentful Paint. AI crawlers require fast, cleanly structured HTML. Use Google PageSpeed Insights. A hand-coded static site has a structural advantage over WordPress + page builders.

### 4 Check entity consistency across all platforms

Business name, address, phone, and service descriptions must match exactly on your website, Google Business Profile, LinkedIn, and key directories. AI systems build entity graphs — inconsistent data reduces citation confidence.

## CONTENT STRUCTURE — REVISIT YOUR TOP 10 PAGES

### 5 Rewrite headings as questions people actually ask

“Our Services” → “What SEO services do you offer in Perth?” Every H2/H3 should mirror the natural language question it answers. Improves People Also Ask visibility and AI citation rates at the same time.

### 6 Add a direct answer in the first 40–60 words of every section

AI systems extract answer blocks. The structure that works: question as heading → direct answer in 40–60 words → then expand. If the answer is buried three paragraphs deep, it often won't be extracted.

## AUTHORITY BUILDING — ONGOING PRACTICE

### 7 Cite credible external sources in every piece of content

Princeton/Georgia Tech research: citing external sources improved AI citation rates by up to 115% for lower-ranked content — the single largest lever in the study. Link to ABS data, industry research, government sources, published studies.

### 8 Build a proper author page with real credentials

150+ word bio, professional photo, verifiable qualifications, links to LinkedIn and published work. Pages demonstrating real professional experience are cited 3.2x more often by AI systems than anonymous content.

**39%**

of AU Google searches show AI Overviews — triple the global average

**83%**

zero-click rate when an AI Overview is present

**2.7x**

higher AI citation rate with FAQPage schema vs without

**38%**

of AI Overview citations come from traditional top-10 results