



UPPER HUNTER 2032
Responsible Governance



Workforce Management Strategy

2022 - 2025



Acknowledgment of Country

**Ngayan marrungku paran
wiyen Wanaruah, mirumalikan
para ani parraykupa, ngatan
ngayan marrung wiyen
Ngarrakay paranpa yurakaykal
ngatan pangaykal.**

**We acknowledge the Wanaruah
people, traditional keepers
of this land, and we pay our
respects to their Elders, past
and present.**

Translation by
Aunty Sharon Edgar-Jones

Access, Equity and Inclusion Statement

The Upper Hunter Shire community and Upper Hunter Shire Council are committed to welcoming all people who choose to live, work or visit our region.

We welcome and celebrate diversity and believe it fosters growth. Community connections are integral to everything we do.

We commit to build a sense of place and belonging in our community. We will work collaboratively with the whole of the community to achieve the collective vision for the future.

We will acknowledge and address inequity, work to reduce and remove barriers and champion belonging in our community.

We understand inclusion and participation are key to building a strong community. Access and inclusion make communities liveable for everyone.

We are committed to preserving the dignity of all people and to ensure services, facilities and public spaces are openly inviting and fully accessible.

Sustainability Statement

The Upper Hunter Shire community and Upper Hunter Shire Council are committed to improving sustainability outcomes in our region.

We will work with and alongside the community towards implementing the best practices around sustainability and celebrating the outcomes.

We value open spaces and creating opportunities for community to connect and enjoy the very best of the Upper Hunter Shire.

As well as setting targets to reduce emissions, we are acting to achieve our environmental goals and ensure the Shire remains a wonderful place to live, work and play.

Contents

General Manager Message	1
Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework	2
Resourcing Strategy	3
Workforce Management Strategy	4
Workforce Management Strategy Planning Process	5
Corporate Values and Structure	6
Culture Statement	7
Understanding our Council and Shire	8
Challenges	10
How has this strategy been developed?	13
Action Plan	14

General Manager Message



People are our most important resource. The Upper Hunter Shire Council recognises the importance of getting the right people with the right skills at the right time. This Workforce Management Strategy places the onus on Council to evolve into an agile and progressive organisation while still providing an effective and quality service across the Shire.

The Strategy is a tool to assist Council in the future, anticipate change and help to manage its workforce. There are some unique challenges ahead and strategically building capacity in our workforce is a key component for the future.

By taking into account corporate and business objectives such as financial targets, service delivery objectives, and community benefits, Council can work to ensure it remains an employer of choice for those in the region.

It is essential that Council continue to provide career opportunities and continue to recognise the significant contribution our staff make to the community. The Council's workforce management strategy will rely on strategies to develop our most important asset, our people, and to reach the following objectives.

Objective 1 – Supporting and protecting our people – We aim to ensure the safety of our people and community is paramount in everything that we do. We will support the workforce through our commitment to a holistic approach to maintain their health and well-being.

Objective 2 – Developing our people – We aim to ensure that our Council has the right mix of skilled and capable employees to ensure excellent service delivery. A tailored and considered development of individuals both within their roles and for career pathways/progression is essential to the creation of a robust and future-ready workforce.

Objective 3 - Respecting, valuing and rewarding our people – We aim to ensure a positive, inclusive and productive workplace culture that rewards our valued staff while embracing and celebrating our diversity.

Objective 4 - Attracting our people – We aim to ensure ongoing organisational capacity and capability by understanding and analysing our current and future workforce needs. Effective recruitment and selection strategies will be implemented to ensure we attract and retain the best people for our organisation.

Objective 5- Developing our current and emerging people leaders – We aim to ensure our current and developing leaders demonstrate the organisational values, reinforce our desired culture and focus on the achievement of our organisational objectives. We understand that maintaining and developing strong leaders is critical to ensuring a high-performing and sustainable organisation.

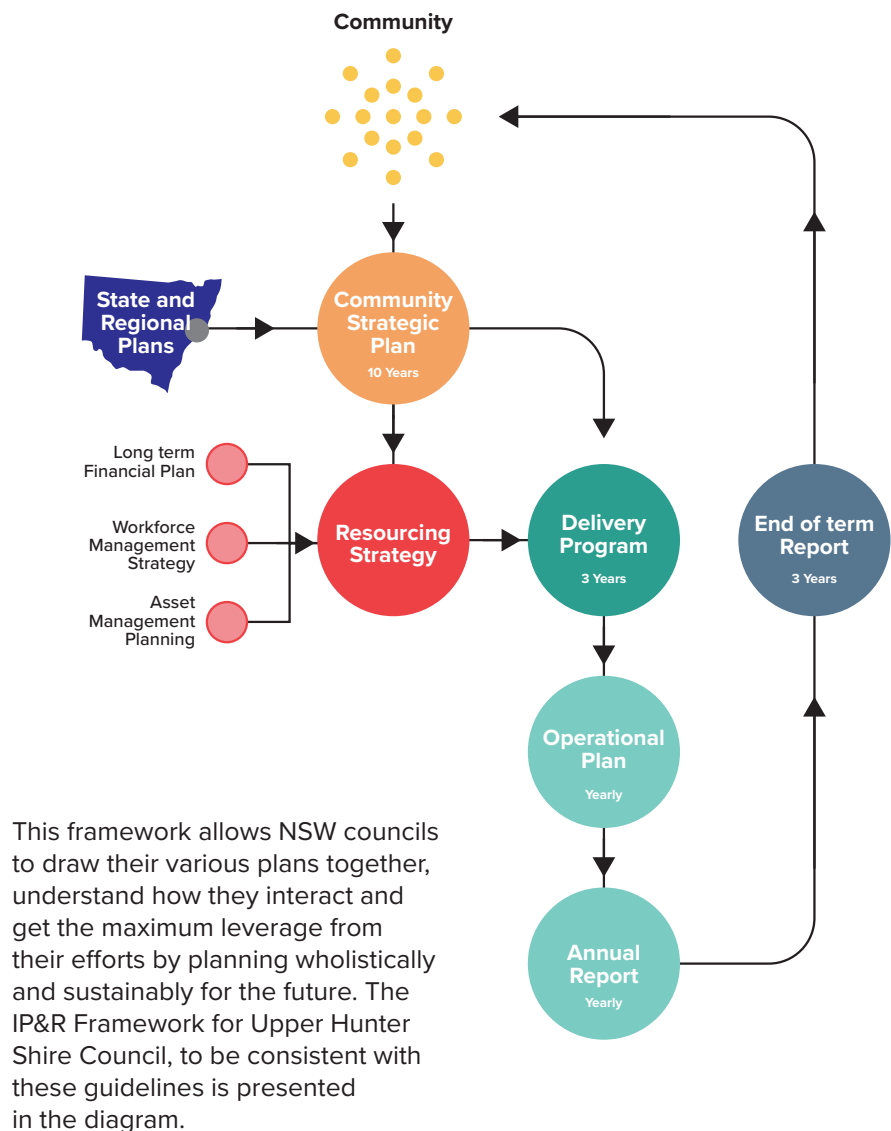
This strategy has been prepared as part of our cyclical planning process and considers Council's goals, our workforce snapshot, our opportunities and challenges and the strategies and actions that will enable us to maintain a high-performing workforce to deliver Council's services to the Upper Hunter Shire community.

Greg McDonald
General Manager

Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

Local Governments in NSW are required to undertake their planning and reporting activities in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993 and the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005. In 2009, the Local Government Act was amended to create an Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) requirement. A greater emphasis is placed on longer term planning with key elements including a Community Strategic Plan setting out the strategic directions (minimum of 10 years), Delivery Program outlining how Council will deliver on these directions (4-year period) and an annual Operational Plan. As at June 30, 2012, NSW councils are required to be working within the IP&R Framework.

The Office of Local Government provides guidelines and information to assist councils in meeting their requirements. The IP&R framework recognises that most communities share similar aspirations: a safe, healthy and pleasant place to live, a sustainable environment, opportunities for social interaction, opportunities for education and employment, and reliable infrastructure. The difference lies in how each Community responds to these needs. It also recognises that council plans and policies should not exist in isolation – that they are interconnected.



This framework allows NSW councils to draw their various plans together, understand how they interact and get the maximum leverage from their efforts by planning wholistically and sustainably for the future. The IP&R Framework for Upper Hunter Shire Council, to be consistent with these guidelines is presented in the diagram.

Resourcing Strategy

The Community Strategic Plan provides a vehicle for expressing long-term community aspirations. However, these will not be achieved without sufficient resources – time, money, assets and people – to actually carry them out.

The Resourcing Strategy consists of three components:

- **Long-Term Financial Planning**
- **Workforce Management Planning**
- **Asset Management Planning.**

The relevant strategies contained in the Workforce Management Strategy must be reflected in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan and the costs associated with delivering the Workforce Management Strategy must be reflected in the Long-term Financial Plan.

For example, an action to extend library operating hours would require additional staffing costs, which in turn would need to be reflected in the Workforce Management Strategy and identified for funding in the Long-Term Financial Plan.

The Resourcing Strategy is the point where our Council outlines how it intends to perform all of its functions, including implementing the strategies set out in the Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

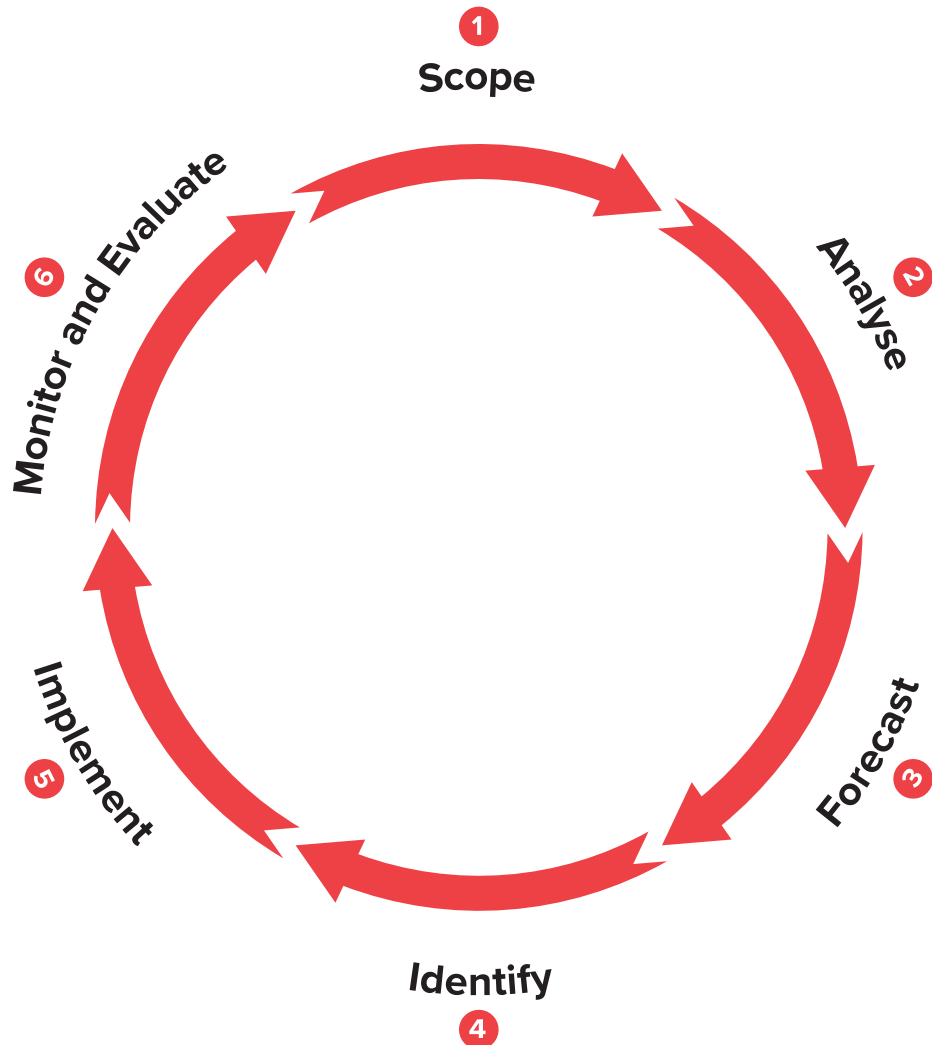
Workforce Management Strategy

The Workforce Management Strategy is a proactive, three year document that shapes the capacity and capability of the workforce to achieve Council's strategic goals and objectives. To address the human resourcing requirements of a Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

It clearly identifies how future staffing and skills requirements will be met, such as through recruitment, staff progression and development, internal redeployment, and succession planning.



Workforce Management Planning Process



This is a six stage process and framework for developing our Council's Workforce Management Strategy. The process involves gathering the data and presenting Council's current and future workforce capability needs, which is then used to inform and set out actions.

1. Scope the Workforce Management Strategy - the first stage in developing a strategy is defining the scope.

2. Analyse the current workforce - the next stage is understanding our Council's current workforce context through analysis of available data.

3. Forecast the workforce needs - this stage will use the data to inform forecasting the future needs of Council's workforce.

4. Identify workforce gaps against future needs - this stage will identify







workforce requirements, gaps and future needs.

5. Implement actions to address shortages, surpluses or skills mismatches - this stage involves implementing an effective workforce strategy that addresses key issues and assigns clear responsibilities.

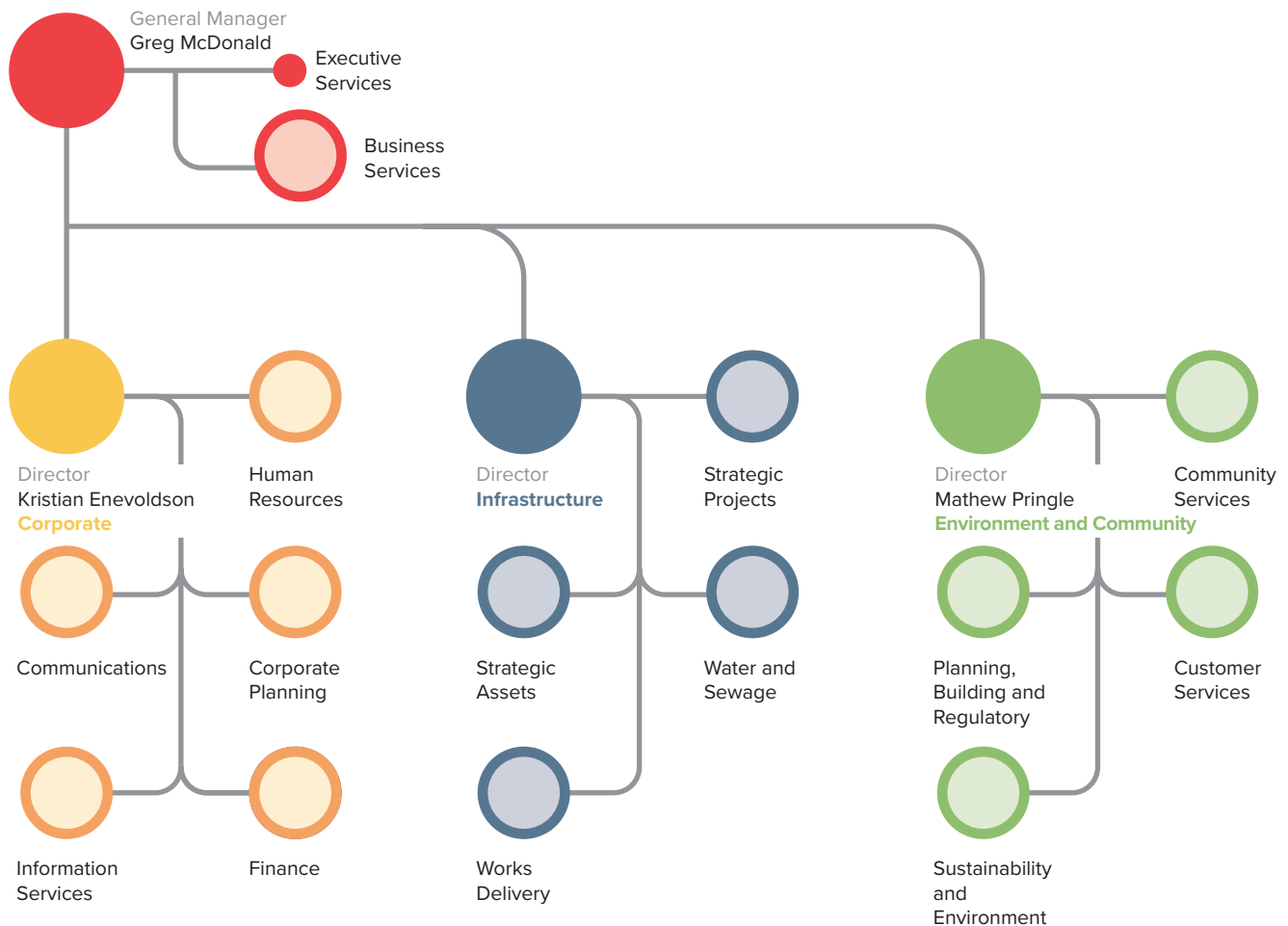
6. Monitor And Evaluate - the final stage involves monitoring and evaluating the workforce management strategy to measure success and identify areas for improvement.

Corporate Values and Structure

Values

-  **Mutual respect for people and cultures**
-  **Honest, open and accountable**
-  **Ensure staff and community safety**
-  **Deliver on our commitments**
-  **Efficient, effective and reliable service**
-  **Improved Environmental Responsibility**

Structure



Culture Statement

Together we create environments and a community where people are first. Our values are how we work together to achieve our vision and make the Upper Hunter a great place to live, work and play.

We embrace diversity and are committed to making our workplace accessible and inclusive to all. Everyone has a role to play in creating an inclusive culture.

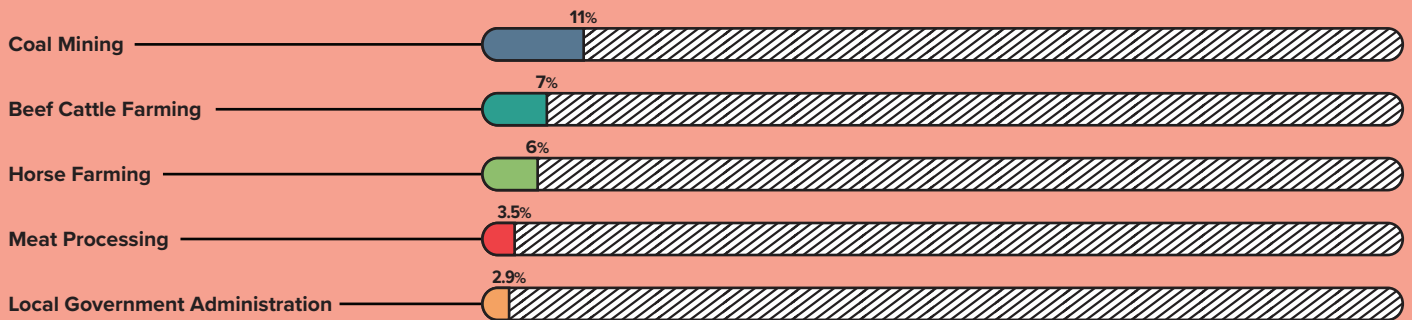
We are respectful, collaborative, kind, flexible, accessible and fair. We want to make a positive difference for our residents by ensuring our work considers the views of the community.

We enjoy thinking of creative solutions that align with our strong values of respect and pride. Our staff are proud to serve the Upper Hunter Shire community.



Understanding our Council and Shire

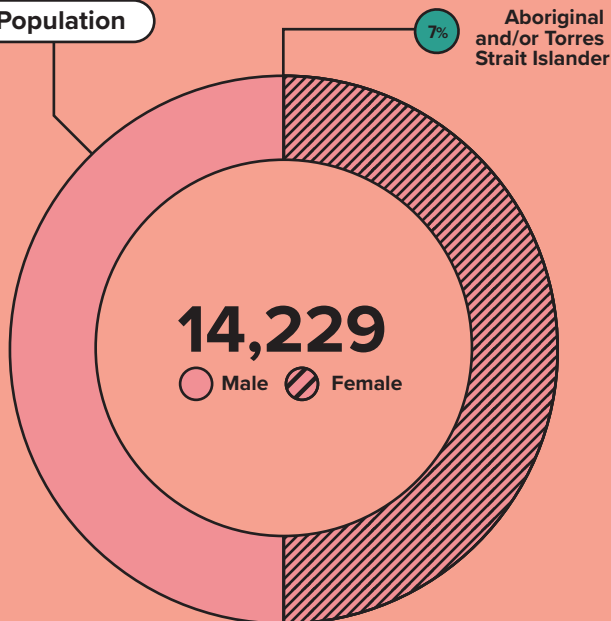
Top Industries



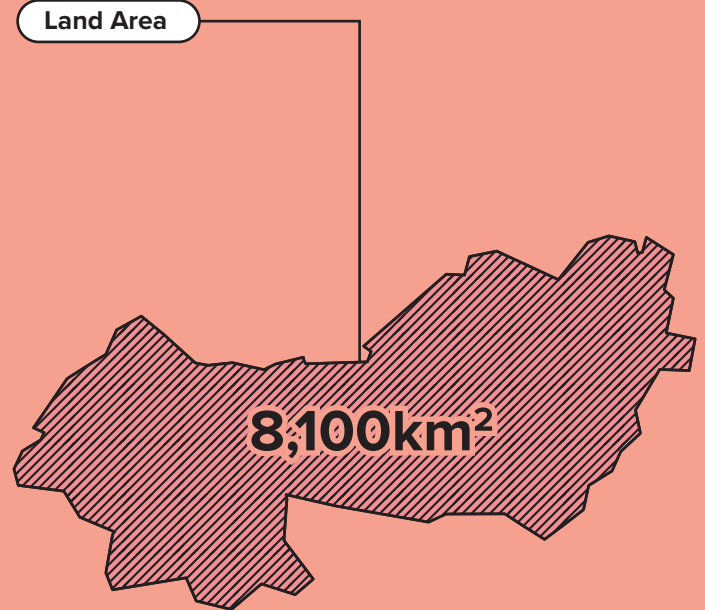
Labour Force

○ Full Time 60% ◐ Part Time 29.8% ◑ Away from Work 5.4% ○ Unemployed 4.8%

Population



Land Area



Council Services Provided



1 Airport



1 Livestock selling centre



1 Equine facility



1 Major tourism attraction



23 Playgrounds



119 hectares of sports ground



3 Public swimming pools



3 Animal facilities



8 Community halls



5 Public library branches



2 Children and child care services



3 Youth centres



1 Aged care hostel



3 Visitor information centres



5 Resource recovery facilities

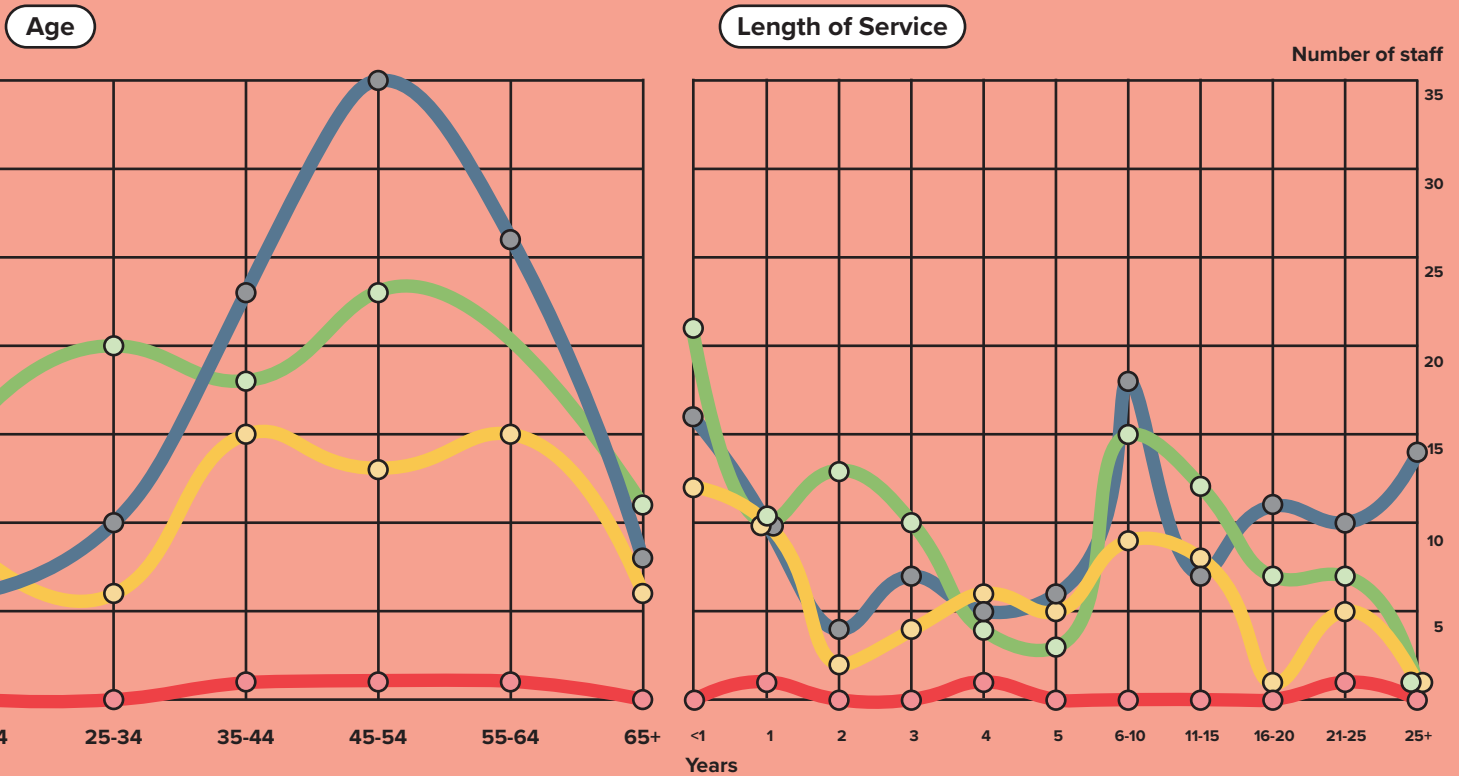
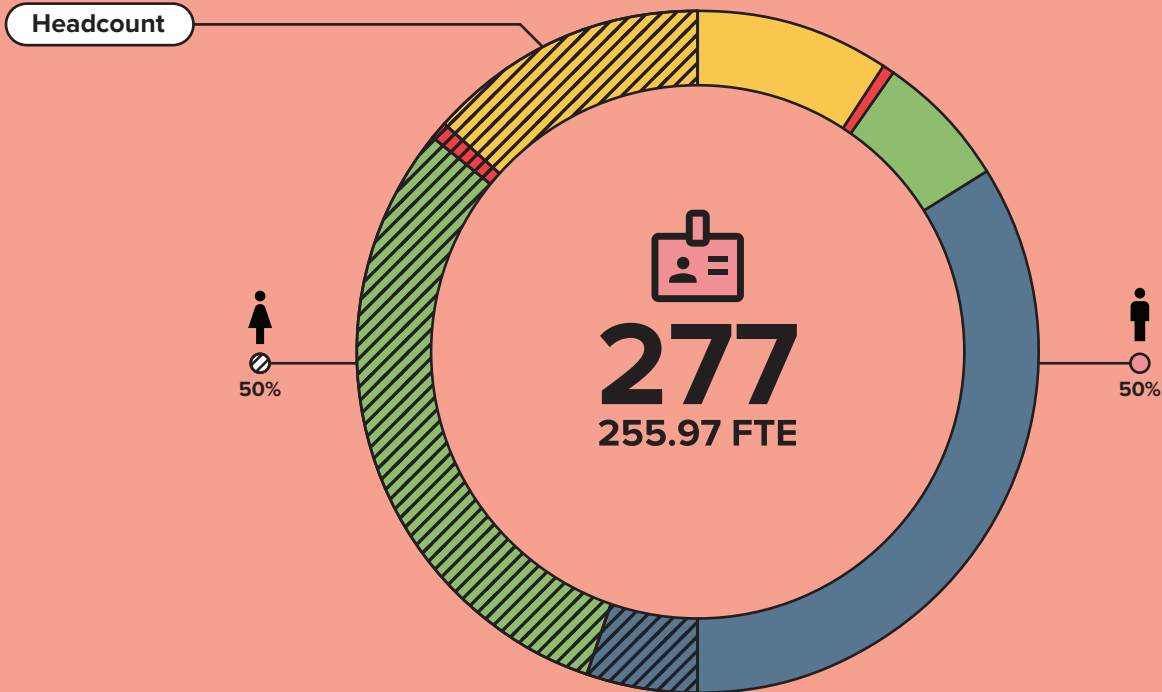


17 Independent living units



2 Low income units

Council Workforce



Current and Future Challenges

General Challenges

Ensuring that Council's remuneration structure remains competitive and is complemented by Council's Employee Value Proposition.

Retaining highly skilled, capable, motivated and engaged staff.

Ageing population and management of an ageing workforce.

Limited cultural diversity within the population and workforce.

Lack of gender and generational diversity in some sections of Council workforce.

Loss of skills and operational knowledge loss as staff retire, limited transfer mechanisms.

Limited technology readiness for a number of areas within Council e.g. operational staff.

Need for identification of critical roles and limited proactive succession planning for key staff.

Change resistant in some areas - silos/mindset.

Them and us cultural issues in relation to work groups and work locations.

Potential for local government sector reforms to impact industry in the future.

Impacts of pandemic on current and future workforce e.g. sick and additional leave cost, great resignation, burnout.

Increasing voluntary turnover rates over last three years,

Increased turnover rates in first year and after five years.

Resistance to allowing extended flexible work practices in all areas of Council.

Increase in reliance on use of contractors due to shortages in skilled labour supply and skills required to manage this alternate workforce.

Ever increasing Community service level expectations.

Need for increased digitisation of our functions, through the enhanced use of emerging technology.

Ensuring the ongoing health and well-being of Council's workforce in a challenging environment.

Effective management of and engagement with a multigenerational workforce.

Recognition of the importance and necessity of providing a psychologically safe workplace for all staff.

Current and Future Challenges

Current and Future Labour Markets

A number of key roles within our Council have been identified in the National Skills Commission 2021 Skills Priority List. This will result in increased competition for suitably experienced and qualified staff e.g. engineers, planners etc.

Young people in the Shire increasingly leave the area to pursue educational and employment opportunities that can't be accessed from the area reducing the potential labour supply particularly in entry level or casual roles.

Proximity and competition with other industries in ours and neighboring shires for labour resources, makes it difficult for Council to compete in attracting labour.

NSW council's employ 13.8% of people under 30 years compared to 25.2% in all industries, therefore, we are not adequately competing in this labour market currently.

Reasonably high level of temporary roles in our structure, which are difficult to attract quality applicants from current labour market

High level of casual and part-time work in particular work groups of Council, limits the labour market that we are able to draw from.

Low national and regional unemployment levels currently reducing the labour market.

Shire has a stable population however it is not growing and therefore not increasing labour supply.

With limited external labour market need to develop internal labour market – ready, capable and willing.

Statistics Source: ABS

Current and Future Challenges

Financial Challenges/Considerations

Increased requirements for Information Services equipment and technology. Plus increasing need from staff to be provided with the latest equipment and devices.

Labour and skills shortages resulting in difficulty in recruitment compounded with increased salary expectations and costs for key positions. This can make Council uncompetitive as an employer.

Shortage of labour supply leading to staff vacancies which results in additional hours and overtime worked by current staff or some critical service areas as well as the impost of the use of contractors.

In some areas there is a lack of proactive management of which leads to increasing leave liability.

Heavy reliance on and uncertainty of ongoing grant funding which is needed to fund staff in some areas of Council.

Increasing costs related to construction and maintenance activities e.g. fuel, materials shortages and delays etc.

Increasing Governance and compliance requirements on council's which leads to increase in costs.

Continued cost-shifting by state government to local government, which places additional pressure on the recurrent budget.

Cost of running and maintaining Council's plant fleet increasing. Access to affordable and timely replacement plant also limited.

Large land mass and requirement for infrastructure, however smaller population and rates base to provide income.

The compound effect of rate pegging resulting in costs rising at a greater rate than rate revenue.

Increase in Workers Compensation insurance premiums.

Annual salary increases and increases to superannuation increases.

Ongoing increased actual costs of recruitment due to increased turnover plus additional strain on internal resources to undertake the recruitment function.

How has this strategy been developed?

Key objectives have been developed by analysing and understanding the current and future workforce needs by utilising the following mechanisms and information sources.

Consultation mechanisms

- Workshops with Directors, Managers, Co-ordinators and Supervisors – feedback collated
- Senior Management review and endorsement
- Consultation with relevant staff Committees e.g. Consultative Committee
- Draft released for review by all staff for feedback.

External Documents and information sources

- National Skills Commission – Skills priority list
- Australian Local Government Association – Government skills shortage report
- Australian Local Government Association - Local Government workforce and future skills report
- Australian Bureau of Statistics data

Internal Documents and information sources

- Employee Engagement Survey – Full version
- Employee Engagement Survey - Pulse
- SMG Action plan from engagement surveys
- UHSC - Community Strategic Plan
- UHSC - Delivery Program and Operational Plan
- UHSC – Workforce Management Plan – 2027
- UHSC – Asset Management Plan
- UHSC – Long Term Financial Plan

Monitoring and Review of Strategy and Actions

Council will undertake the following activities to implement and monitor the Workforce Management Plan:

- Preliminary review of action plan every 12 months
- Review of full strategy every four years and report to Council

Action Plan

Objective 1

Supporting and protecting our people

We aim to ensure the safety of our people and community is paramount in everything that we do. We will support the workforce by our commitment to taking a holistic approach to maintaining their health and well-being.

Action	Timeframe	How progress will be measured
Leaders address poor performance, inappropriate behaviour and conduct promptly and appropriately.	Ongoing	Reduction in number of staff grievances
Development of health and well-being program.	1 - 2 years	Number of staff involved in and utilising the program.
Continued review and enhancement of Council's safety management system to ensure that staff are easily able to meet their WHS responsibilities through intuitive and accessible systems.	2 - 3 years	Increased and improved utilisation of Council's online system. Improved feedback provided via staff surveys
Continue to improve return to work outcomes for injured staff by ensuring they recover at work wherever possible.	Ongoing	Long-term reduction in workers compensation premiums Reduction in time lost for each claim/injury.
Further implementation and promotion of Employee Assistance Program, Manager support services, information distribution and utilisation of guidance materials.	Ongoing	Utilisation statistics and feedback from staff.
Ensure a pleasant and productive working environment – welcoming and fit for purpose in a physical sense as well as a friendly, safe environment.	2 - 3 years	Improvements in physical work places and spaces. Reduction in lost time injuries. Improved feedback provided via staff surveys.

Action Plan

Objective 2

Developing our people

We aim to ensure our Council has the right mix of skilled and capable employees to ensure excellent service delivery. Tailored and considered development of individuals both within their roles and for career pathways/ progression is essential to the creation of a robust and future-ready workforce.

Action	Timeframe	How progress will be measured
Promote a workplace learning culture that encourages and supports self-directed learning and continuing professional development.	Next 12 months	Increase in number of staff engaged in self-directed learning and professional development.
Council is a workplace that recognises and harnesses the full potential of its people.	1 - 2 years	Improvement in engagement of individual development plans by staff and people leaders
Further utilise traineeships and apprenticeships as an opportunity to 'grow our own' staff. Look for funding opportunities to assist in enabling this to occur	1 - 2 years	Number of entry level roles in the organisational structure Maximisation of funding for traineeships and apprenticeships, including existing workers
Para-professional role development to support professional skills shortage areas, encourage existing staff to up-skill into these roles.	2 - 3 years	Creation of clear development pathways for key roles that involve 'stepping stones' into professional roles by the obtainment of para-professional skills Increase in number of staff engaged in professional development opportunities
Introduce mentoring programs across Council to ensure knowledge transfer.	1 - 2 years	Number of new staff actively engaged in mentoring program.
Succession plan development for key roles and high potential employees identified.	1 - 2 years	Succession planning process implemented
Career development is supported and encouraged where suitable by providing a range of developmental support such as formal and on the job training opportunities, study leave, secondment roles, coaching and mentoring etc.	2 - 3 years	Increase in number of staff engaged in professional development opportunities Increase in availability of secondment roles

Action Plan

Objective 3

Respecting, valuing and rewarding our people

We aim to ensure a positive, inclusive and productive workplace culture that rewards our valued staff while embracing and celebrating our diversity.

Action	Timeframe	How progress will be measured
Increase the diversity of the workforce through initiatives to support minority groups such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-English speaking background, people with a disability etc.	2 - 3 years	% of employees engaged in the workplace from minority groups % of employees engaged in the workplace who identify as having a disability
Review, update and ensure the effective implementation of Council's EEO Management Plan.	2 - 3 years	EEO Management Plan fully implemented.
Improve our engagement, consultation mechanisms and communication channels with staff.	1 - 2 years	Improved feedback on consultation and communication sections of the employee survey.
Implement cultural diversity and awareness training for all staff.	Next 12 months	% participation of cultural awareness training.
Review Council's values by undertaking extensive consultation with the workforce, embed these into everything we do.	1 - 2 years	Values reviewed with appropriate consultation with workforce. Increased knowledge and awareness of Council's values
Continue to develop and foster a culture focused on continuous improvement of processes that contribute to the provision of effective and efficient services.	1 - 2 years	Monitoring of achievement of KPIs.
Improve communication by ensuring regular teams meetings are implemented by managers for each work group.	Next 12months	Team meetings conducted at a minimum on a bi-monthly basis.
Implement transparent service review process to ensure appropriate distribution of workload, appropriate staffing levels and focus on key services provision.	2 - 3 years	Service reviews completed and appropriate amendments to work group, tasks, structure, skill sets etc are implemented.
Implement internal micro surveys 2-3 per annum to dive deeper into issues/low score areas identified from staff surveys.	Ongoing	Survey completion rates. 2-3 micro surveys completed annually.
Improve data collection in relation to diversity in the workplace	Next 12months	Data collected and accurately recorded for all new and existing staff.
Actively drive and promote Council's Reward program to achieve its intended goals.	Ongoing	Increased nominations for rewards and public acknowledgement of recipients.

Action Plan

Objective 4

Attracting our people

We aim to ensure ongoing organisational capacity and capability by understanding and analysing our current and future workforce needs. Effective recruitment and selection strategies are to be implemented to ensure we attract and retain the best people for our organisation.

Action	Timeframe	How progress will be measured
Build and promote employee pathways to encourage applicants into the organisation and encourage and provide incentives for them to stay e.g. career progression, reward and recognition, salary progression etc.	1 - 2 years	% voluntary turnover trends for all employees % successful recruitment outcomes Recruitment KPI % of positions requiring re-advertising Completed review of recruitment and selection procedures
Review and strengthen the onboarding and induction process for new employees to focus on ensuring employees are welcomed into the organisation and provided with the relevant information/support to commence their roles.	Next 12 months	% recruits leaving with the first year Feedback from exit interviews Feedback from staff surveys
Formalise and enhance our current Employee Value Proposition to support the attraction and retention of quality staff whose values are aligned with the Council's.	1 - 2 years	% voluntary turnover trends for all employees % successful recruitment outcomes % of positions requiring re-advertising Agreed and consistently implemented EVP
Improve access to and accommodation of work experience and work placement opportunities across Council.	2 - 3 years	Increase in number of work experience and work placement opportunities provided annually. Increase in number of applicants for roles within Council from previous work experience or work placement students.
Improve employee branding and promotion of career opportunities within Council via updating and reviewing of Council's website information in this area.	Next 12 months	Increase in number of suitable applicants for roles Increase in number of successful recruitment campaigns for hard-to-fill positions or those in skills shortages areas
Create clear pathways to ensure that staff are multi-skilled and able to be utilised in other areas of Council as required, to ensure maintenance of service when critical gaps occur.	1 - 2 years	Service levels maintained across Council.

Action Plan

Objective 5

Developing our current and emerging leaders

We aim to ensure that our current and developing leaders demonstrate the organisational value, reinforce our desired culture and focus on the achievement of our organisational objectives. Maintaining and developing strong leaders is critical to ensuring a high performing and sustainable organisation.

Action	Timeframe	How progress will be measured
Implement a Leadership Development Program to enhance the skills of current people leaders and prepare future leaders.	2 - 3 years	Effective implementation of program and identification and involvement of emerging leaders.
Implement 360 degree reviews for manager roles and above to identify strengths and areas for development.	Next 12 months	Reviews system implemented bi-annually.
Coaching and communication skills development for people leaders	1 - 2 years	Development completed and reinforced ongoing.
Develop and implement a resource toolkit that supports our people leaders to effectively lead and manage their staff. To cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performance management - Communication and difficult conversation - Reward and recognition - WHS and well-being responsibilities - General project management and time management skills - Budgeting and reporting 	1 - 2 years	Resource toolkit developed and implemented.
Develop tailored induction and on-boarding program for people leaders that combines the provisions of essential information and introduction to toolkit with coaching activities, structured learning and skills development.	Next 12 months	Tailored induction and onboarding program implemented for all people leaders.

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