WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

2022 -2026

SNOWY MONARO
REGIONAL COUNCIL

Acknowledgement of Country

Snowy Monaro Regional Council acknowledges the Traditional custodians of the region's land and water, the Ngarigo, Walgalu, Southern Ngunnawal and Bidawal Peoples.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

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Contents

1. Introduction

The purpose of this Workforce Management Strategy (WMS) is to provide a platform to identify, consider and respond to any workforce significant issues and risks facing the organisation now and into the future. The implementation of this WMS will deliver a safe, skilled and engaged workforce that provides valuable service to the Snowy Monaro Regional Council (SMRC) community in alignment with our Community and Council vision. The strategy will also support the implementation of the Towards Excellence Program that is being developed following the service reviews of key business areas.

The past four years have been difficult for our workforce, enduring periods of social challenge and significant change. The commencement of the Snowy Hydro 2.0 project and subsequent housing impacts, drought, bushfires, COVID-19 and a growing local social media focus on council activities. These have all had significant impacts on the wellbeing of our organisation in a variety of ways.

Our Council is at a crossroads in terms of its workforce size, with considerations in progress to grow the workforce and deliver enhanced productivity. This strategic plan is written in the context where Council must consider the strategic initiatives required if our workforce was to expand over the next four years. It is critical that the supporting leadership, culture, and performance initiatives in this plan are implemented to ensure improvements in service delivery and asset management productivity and performance are realised as our workforce grows.

SMRC employs over 400 people across a wide range of disciplines. We recognise that our employees are more than just the service providers to our community – they are a valued and essential part of our community. This strategy aims to provide a roadmap to meet the current and future workforce needs and requirements for Council, so that we may continue to serve our community to the best of our ability.

The principles and strategies set out in this document are intended to support and contribute to an engaged and productive workforce as we strive towards achieving our community vision:

'The Snowy Monaro Region is a welcoming diverse and inclusive community where everyone can belong, participate and work together. Our natural environment and heritage are preserved and enhanced for future generations.

The region offers a fulfilling quality lifestyle and is a place of opportunity, with education, training and economic opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds.'

2. Where Does This Strategy Fit?

This Workforce Management Strategy (WMS) is part of Snowy Monaro Regional Council's broader Integrated Planning and Reporting framework and is directly linked to the Delivery Program and Operational Plan. It is a critical pillar to the future development of our service delivery capability and ongoing commitment to developing skills and work capabilities.
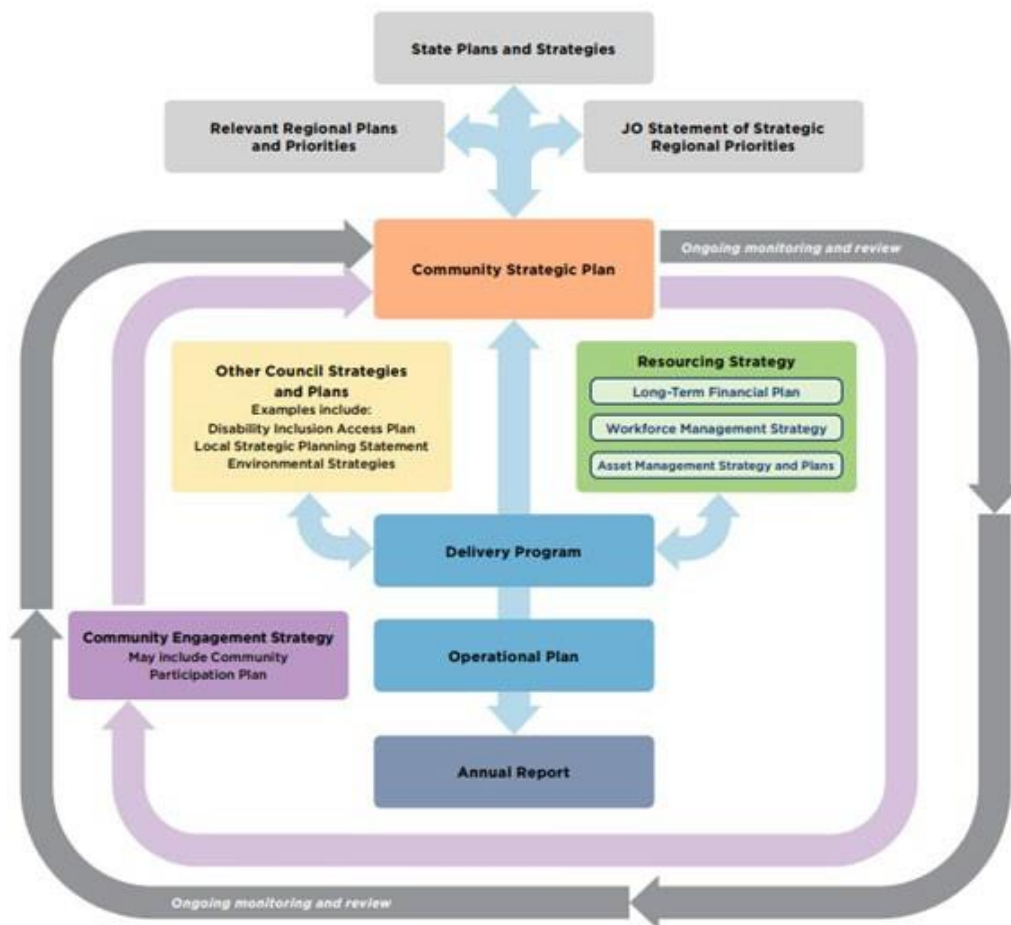
We aim to measure the success and implementation of this WMS through regular data collection, review, analysis and, where required, adjustment of approach. This WMS intends to be agile and flexible so that we may adapt and modify our approach to meet the changing needs and circumstances of our workforce and the community we serve.

Alignment to the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

The formation of this plan has considered the following components recommended by the NSW Office of Local Government (OLG), whereby this plan will reflect the following eight issues[1]:

1. an ageing workforce
2. succession planning
3. how to provide opportunities to create and retain positions for local young people
4. incentives and other programs that will support the council to be an employer of choice
5. learning and development
6. performance management
7. recruitment strategies to fill skills gaps
8. workforce diversity

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[1] https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/councils/integrated-planning-and-reporting/support-for-implementation-of-ipr-framework/workforce-planning/

3. Our Vision

Community Vision

'The Snowy Monaro Region is a welcoming diverse and inclusive community where everyone can belong, participate and work together. Our natural environment and heritage are preserved and enhanced for future generations.

The region offers a fulfilling quality lifestyle and is a place of opportunity, with education, training and economic opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds.'

Understanding the Community Vision

Welcoming - We are committed to a region where everyone can belong and participate in social, cultural, economic and civic life.

Natural environment - Considers both the local natural and atmospheric environment and the broader global environment, considering issues such as resource use and climate change.

Place of opportunity - Envisions a community with education, training, professional and economic opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds.

Council Vision

'A trusted community partner'

Council continually strives to uphold its vision of being "*a trusted community partner*" through providing a transparent, honest and hard-working organisation. Council fosters important links with the community to establish itself as a trusted partner.

4. Our Workforce – A Snapshot

Snowy Monaro Regional Council covers 15,162km^2 with ten primary townships, surrounded by rolling plains country and mountain ranges. Council employs more than 400 staff, incorporating full time, part time and casual positions.
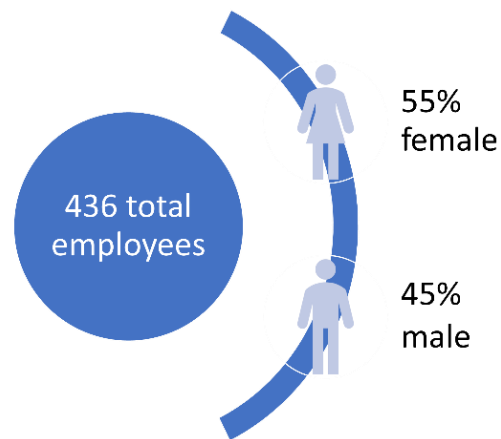

436 total employees

55% female

45% male

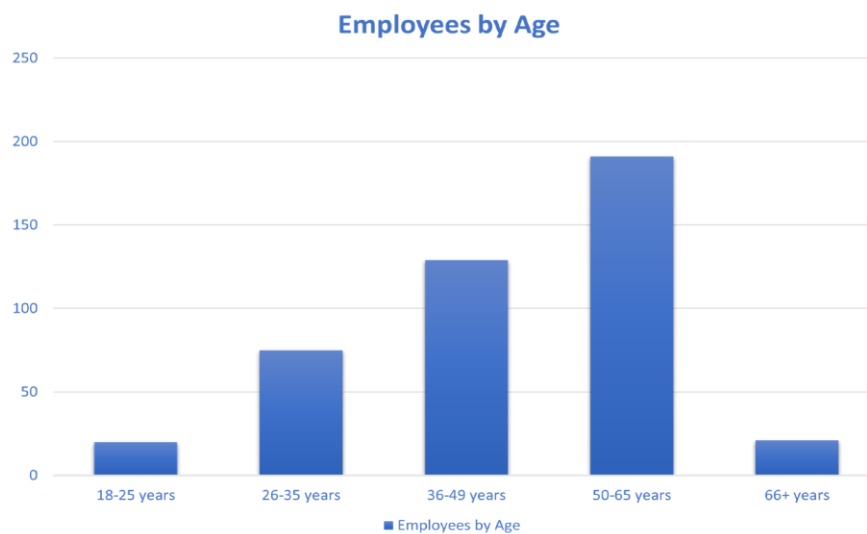*Figure 1: Total Employees by Gender as of October 2022*

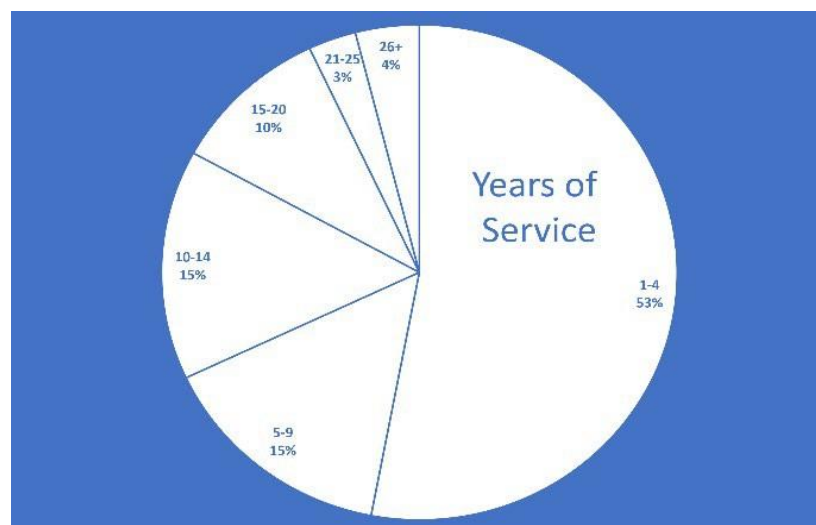**Figure 2: Employees by Age as of October 2022**

Figure 3: Employees by Years of Service as of October 2022

Council's head office is located in Cooma, with an additional three locations in Berridale, Bombala and Jindabyne serving as hubs to provide services to our community.

Figure 4: Snowy Monaro Regional Council Area

Workforce Overview

Following a review of key workforce data and consultation with key stakeholders, the following insights demonstrate the challenges and opportunities that inform the proposed strategic workforce initiatives within this plan.

- Snowy Monaro Regional Council has a mature and ageing workforce with the majority of employees aged between 50 – 65 years (41.8%) followed by 36 – 49 years (30%). This presents a need for a planned approach to transferring key skills and succession for critical roles.

- The majority of employees have been employed by the Council for 1 – 4 years (58%). In a number of service areas the average length of service is four years or less. This presents a challenge for Council to ensure new employees are onboarded and trained to effectively deliver in their roles as quickly as possible. It also provides an opportunity to draw on fresh perspectives for efficiencies and improvements to benefit the Council in its delivery.

- In 2021 the attrition rate of the Council was just over 20% and is trending towards 30% for the 2022 calendar year. In a competitive market targeted strategies to promote SMRC as an employer of choice and to retain and attract employees is critical.

- The majority of SMRC's managers have been in their Council management position for less than two years (41%), followed by 35% with 2 – 5 years tenure in their management position. The introduction of a Leadership Development Program across all levels of leadership (including frontline leaders and emerging leaders) will leverage existing skills and experience the managers bring, and ensure they are equipped to lead for high performance and productivity improvements required by SMRC.

- When compared with other Regional Town/ City Group 4 Councils for the FY21 year, Snowy Monaro has the lowest FTE to population spread across the largest council area. This creates a need for robust establishment management processes to efficiently focus recruitment and retention activities in order to attract, retain and maintain candidates and minimise vacant positions.

- Council's workforce operates out of four locations across a large region, making it crucial that effective and consistent communication on the strategic direction and performance progress is provided regularly to all employees across all functional areas. This is reflected in employee feedback as an opportunity for enhancement.

5. Workforce Challenges

Our Council is at a crossroads in terms of its workforce size, with considerations in progress to grow the workforce and deliver enhanced productivity. This strategic plan is written in the context where Council must consider the strategic initiatives required if our workforce was to expand over the next four years.

Importantly, it is critical that the supporting leadership, culture, and performance initiatives in this plan are implemented to ensure improvements in service delivery and asset management productivity and performance are realised as our workforce grows. The support for leaders to implement change is also critical as the implementation of Towards Excellence Program (service review outcomes) progresses during 23/24.

Recognising and acknowledging challenges currently faced by our Council and anticipating what may lie ahead by drawing on information available and lessons learnt allows us to be targeted in our strategic initiatives to ensure we are best placed to deliver for the community. These challenges require us to employ lateral thinking to address and formulate solutions.

Some of the other challenges we currently face as a community and a Council include:

Snowy Monaro Community

- Limited affordable and available housing opportunities for new/potential staff who currently reside outside of the Local Government Area (LGA) impacts our ability to meaningfully attract new staff and retain current staff
- Shifting trends in home/house rentals from long term to short term occupancy impacts staff who currently reside in rental properties within the LGA
- Relatively low population change over the past five years compared to other Regional Town/ City Group 4 councils and estimated population growth of 1% per annum limits the available pool of local resources within the council area
- Impact of the "Great Resignation/Migration" contributing to above average turnover and forcing SMRC to compete for staff with other major organisations/ businesses within the area
- Knowledge, experience and industry skills shortage due to staff turnover and limited tenure/retention

Snowy Monaro Regional Council

- Mature and ageing workforce challenged by availability of potential resources to secure a pipeline for succession planning of key skills and roles
- Operating within geographically dispersed teams across a large council area
- Impact of the current Council financial situation on resourcing, recruitment and reputation
- Ill-informed social media commentary regarding the effectiveness of Council impacts on our morale and recruitment
- Employee and community perception of Snowy Monaro Regional Council as an employer
- Award rates for local government do not compete with projects such as Snowy Hydro 2.0 or with other levels of government.
- Our buildings and workplaces are ageing and offer far from industry standard employment conditions.
- Change agenda outlined for 23/24 is significant and will touch all jobs in council.

Challenges faced by our Council have been identified through feedback and input from our workforce (including a recent employee survey with a response rate of 29%). We acknowledge the need to improve the way we hear and respond to the voice of our workforce to make improvements to support them in delivering for our Council.

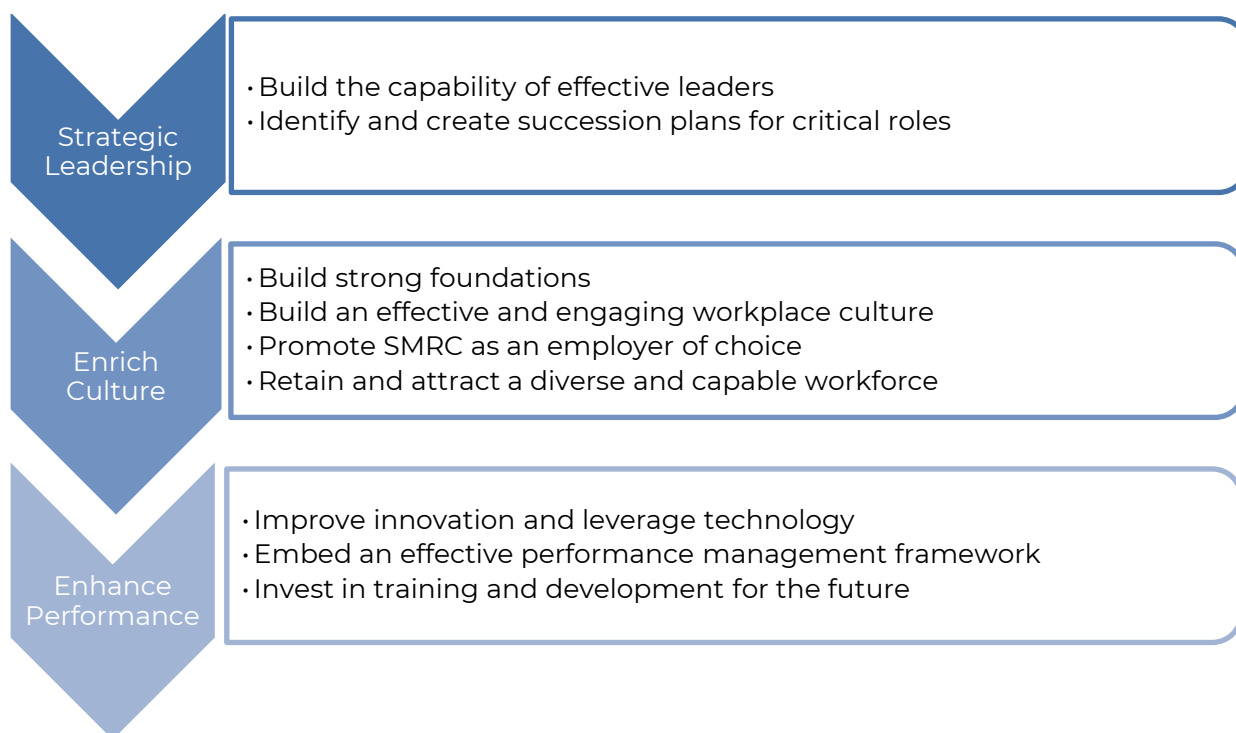We must focus on becoming an employer of choice that provides a motivating and engaging environment, and an enjoyable workplace where people are proud to work for Snowy Monaro Regional Council. By keeping an open-mind and taking a progressive and solutions-based approach to addressing these challenges, we can work together to achieve our workforce strategic objectives and support SMRC's Delivery Plan to better service our community.

6. Workforce Leadership, Culture and Performance

Over the life of this plan our goal is to focus Council's efforts to achieve better performance through its people now and into the future. We will do this by

- building the **capability of our leaders** who are key to driving change and improvements for our workforce;

- enriching the **culture** of our Council through strong foundations and an effective and engaged workforce; and

- enhancing **performance** so we are all accountable for our work and the way in which it is delivered to the benefit of our community.

This forms the basis of the three core pillars for our Workforce Management Strategy. A clear set of measures aligned to strategic initiatives under these pillars will provide success points over its four-year duration to support and enable leaders to make progress in line with this plan.

Strategic Leadership
- Build the capability of effective leaders
- Identify and create succession plans for critical roles

Enrich Culture
- Build strong foundations
- Build an effective and engaging workplace culture
- Promote SMRC as an employer of choice
- Retain and attract a diverse and capable workforce

Enhance Performance
- Improve innovation and leverage technology
- Embed an effective performance management framework
- Invest in training and development for the future

7. Changes to Workforce within the Long-Term Financial Plan

Included in the three scenarios presented in the Long-Term Financial Plan are the following changes to the projected workforce:

- Scenario One – Additional funding for training and development as well as four additional positions: GIS Officer, Engineer (Asset Management), Buildings and Facilities Coordinator and a Training and Development Officer.

- Scenario Two – Additional funding for training and development as well as four additional positions: GIS Officer, Engineer (Asset Management), Buildings and Facilities Coordinator and a Training and Development Officer.

- Scenario Three – No change to workforce

8. Workforce Strategic Objectives

To realise and achieve the aims of this plan and contribute meaningfully to the success of the SMRC Delivery Program for our community, there are nine key initiatives aligned under the three core pillars of Strategic Leadership, Enrich Culture and Enhance Performance.

Pillar	Strategic Initiatives	Deliverables	Target Year				Measurement/ KPI
			22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	
Strategic Leadership	**Build the capability of effective leaders**	1.1. Articulate performance and leadership expectations and accountabilities across all leadership roles and levels • Review and update role descriptions to include leadership capabilities and accountabilities • Set and hold leaders accountable to these performance expectations • Measure outcomes	x				• Role descriptions for all leaders include consistent capabilities, behaviours and accountabilities for each level • Outcomes measured in formal performance reviews
		1.2. Design, deliver and embed a suite of leadership development programs tailored to Council for all levels of leadership to specifically address: • Base level functional skills required of all leaders including effective asset management, workforce planning, financial and procurement management, human resources, governance and risk, IT systems, and health and safety. • Transition into leadership from technical and operational roles for frontline leaders. • Leadership for mid-level leaders who lead other leaders and multiple teams • Senior strategic leadership for leaders who lead functions	x	x x x			• Leadership programs implemented; refreshed annually and delivered to capture current and new leaders transitioning from delivery/ technical positions • Participation in program by all leaders • Employee engagement survey results improve in questions measuring leadership effectiveness
		1.3. Embed leadership capability expectations into core people routines and documents • Review and update core processes and documents to reflect leadership accountabilities, including: ➢ Recruitment and selection processes ➢ Performance management framework ➢ Reward and recognition framework ➢ Training and Development planning			x		• Leader responsibilities articulated in core people routines and documents • Outcomes measured in formal performance reviews • Employee engagement survey results improve in questions measuring leadership effectiveness

Pillar	Strategic Initiatives	Deliverables	Target Year				Measurement/ KPI
			22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	
	Identify and create succession plans for critical roles	1.4. Audit and identify critical roles and skills, implement strategies to minimise the impact of loss in critical roles, and upskill leaders to proactively facilitate development and succession conversations • Conduct an audit to identify critical roles and skills in Council, quantify skills and knowledge held (or required) by incumbents in these roles • Estimate the remaining time of tenure for incumbents in critical roles due to anticipated ageing/ retirement or turnover • Understand the current and future impact of loss of critical skills and knowledge • Upskill mangers to have effective development and succession conversations • Document a plan for each critical role to outlined targeted knowledge transfer, upskilling, mentoring and recruitment strategies		x			• Skills audited conducted and critical roles identified • Audit is reviewed and revised annually • Successors for critical roles are identified and have a current training and development plan underway • Documented plan for each critical role, reviewed annually • Active conversations with incumbents on the plan held at least annually with clear expectation on actions captured and measured in performance objectives. • Leaders are trained and provided templates and tools to undertake effective development and succession conversations
Enrich Culture	**Build strong foundations**	2.1. Identify and develop key strategic people policy and process frameworks that set the standard for the desired culture, for example: ➢ Code of Conduct ➢ Employee Wellbeing including mental health, psychosocial safety and flexible work policies ➢ Bullying, Harassment and Respectful behaviour ➢ Positive performance management ➢ Diversity and Inclusion • Audit existing policies and process frameworks to determine gaps and order of priority for development. • Deliver targeted wholistic training for all employees to educate and embed behavioural standards and expectations under key people policies.	x	x x			• Mandatory training delivered annually and completed by all employees • Employee engagement survey results demonstrate expected behaviour standards are consistently reflected in practice in the workplace
		2.2. Develop a culture of continuous review and improvement to ensure optimal effectiveness and efficiency to support the delivery of Council. • Service review program is to be completed outlining which service reviews are to be undertaken within the next four years*	x x				• Service review program developed* • Asset service review undertaken by 31 December 2022* • Process Management Framework is developed and implemented*

Pillar	Strategic Initiatives	Deliverables	Target Year 22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	Measurement/ KPI
		• Assets service review undertaken and outcomes are report to Council* • Process Management Framework developed and implemented for effectively capturing, mapping, analysing and improving business processes*	x				
Build an effective and engaging workplace culture		2.3. Identify improvements to physical work environments across Councils workplaces to provide a safe, engaging and inviting workspace. • Undertake Workplace Health & Safety inspections in all Council workplaces to identify risks or hazards for immediate rectification. • Consult employees and leaders for feedback on workplace areas for improvement and improvement suggestions to be considered, prioritised and budgeted.	x	x			• 75% of targeted workplace safety inspections undertaken* • Workplace health and safety risks or hazards rectified • 100% of new employees completed WHS induction* • <5% of employees reporting WHS incidents* • Prioritised improvements actioned and reflected by improvement in employee engagement survey results on work environment.
		2.4. Utilise a robust employee engagement survey to hear the voice of the workforce to inform areas of focus and to allow measurement of the impact of strategic people initiatives. • Review existing survey provider and questions for effectiveness to provide relevant feedback • Ensure that access to the survey enables participation across the Council workforce	x	x	x	x	• Employee engagement survey conducted (at least six monthly) • Representative response rate received from indoor and outdoor workers • Organisational and team improvement action plans forms within three months of receiving results with progress monitored and tracked
		2.5. Introduce a regular cadence of communication delivered by the Executive Leadership Team on the strategic direction and updates from across Council. • Develop an outline of key strategic messages and updates to be communicated and regularity of updates • Prepare a schedule for executives and senior leaders to provide updates to increase leadership visibility • Identify effective methods of communication to communicate across the Council workforce	x	x			• Regular and varied communication forums are held (at least quarterly) to disseminate strategic priorities and progress to all employees • Employee engagement survey results reflect improvement in questions that measure understanding of strategic direction and Executive Leadership Team communication
	Promote SMRC as an employer of choice	2.6. Implement a community facing positive marketing campaign to support and promote the work of SMRC and the Council as an employer including showcasing a "Day in the Life" of key roles. This campaign will: • Address reputational challenges for the Council that is impacting morale of existing employees and		x			• Marketing campaign designed and launched • Packs developed for prospective candidates to promote the region (eg. information on schools, local services) and SMRC as an employer.

Pillar	Strategic Initiatives	Deliverables	Target Year				Measurement/ KPI
			22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	
		attraction of new candidates. This can be done by promoting council initiatives and successes.					
		• Increase awareness of Council employment opportunities amongst prospective candidates. This can be done by showcasing the career pathways and journeys of existing employees.			x		
		• Engage potential candidates who are considering a move to the region and connect them to local information and employment opportunities.				x	
		2.7. Develop an employee value proposition that promotes Council internally and externally as an employer of choice acting as a tool of attraction, retention and engagement for existing and prospective employees.		x			• Collateral produced to communicate and promote Council employee value proposition
		• Develop a strategy to promote the employee value proposition internally and externally			x		• Council employee value proposition promoted at appropriate council and region facilities and community events
		2.8. Develop a strategy to build a culture of diversity and inclusion where equitable principles and practices are applied across all areas of employment.					• Measures tracked, monitored and reported to ensure continual progress in line with objectives
		• Determine and agree key objectives and outcomes to form the basis of the strategy with measures to review progress.		x			• Engagement survey results show diversity and inclusion is valued and supported.
		• Provide education and guidance to support leaders and employees in achieving diversity and inclusion objectives		x			
		• Review Council policies, procedures and practices to remove bias			x		
	Retain and attract a diverse and capable workforce	2.9. Communicate Salary System procedure to enable access to this opportunity for employee progression under the Award classification framework*	x				• 85% of self-surveyed responses indicates an improved salary system*
		2.10. Create a reward and recognition framework (monetary and non-monetary) aligned to organisational values and performance achievements		x			• Launch and embed reward and recognition framework
					x		• Employee engagement survey results indicate employees feel recognised for their contributions
		2.11. Create a culture of employee development and learning					• Development and learning plans documented and reviewed regularly for progress
		• Development and learning goals discussed and documented during goal setting phase of annual performance management cycle		x			• Active utilisation of training budget allocation

Pillar	Strategic Initiatives	Deliverables	Target Year				Measurement/ KPI
			22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	
		• Align the acquisition and demonstration of new skills and capabilities to pay and career opportunities			x		
		2.12. Build partnerships with key providers to develop and expand on alternate candidate pathways such as school-based traineeship and apprenticeships, TAFE and other relevant employment programs.		x			• Key providers identified and partnerships formed with regular connection • Relevant vacancies advertised with key providers
		• Identify functions and roles where candidates through these pathways align to determine skills and disciplines to target			x		
Enhance Performance	Improve innovation and leverage technology	3.1. Implement an effective data collection system to track and monitor key workforce metrics • Establish a template for reporting key workforce metrics that enables analysis and identification of trends • Refine establishment management processes, implement a regular cadence of consultation and review to ensure that recruitment activity is efficiently focused, and staffing levels are managed within Council budgets.	x	x			• Key workforce metrics reported at least quarterly • Vacancy list reviewed and unneeded FTE/ budget is removed or redirected • 75% of positions are recruited within two months* • Less than 20% vacancy rate across all SMRC positions*
	Implement an effective performance management framework	3.2. Embed the Performance Management framework	x				• 100% of employees have document goals and performance measures • 95% completion of performance reviews annually*
		3.3. Upskill leaders and employees to participate in effective performance conversations that focus on both performance and development of future skills	x	x			• Leaders are trained and provided templates and tools to undertake effective performance and development conversations
	Invest in training and development for the future	3.4. Identify and target the development of skills and/or upskilling for key specialist areas • Consult with leaders to identify skill gaps in key specialist areas impacting the effective delivery of SMRC's Delivery Plan.		x	x		• Training plans completed and training budget allocated • Uplift in the capability demonstrated through improved delivery and financial outcomes
		3.5. Ensure ongoing education and implementation of programs and processes in line with Australian Business Excellence Framework (ABEF)*	x				• % of change from the 2020 results in the ABEF self-assessment* • Achieve a business score of >350*

Pillar	Strategic Initiatives	Deliverables	Target Year 22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	Measurement/ KPI
		3.6. Identify and access government programs and funding for training and development		x			• Applications submitted for all applicable government funding sources or grants
		3.7. Build and leverage relationships with training organisations to deliver fit for purpose programs		x	x		• Regular meetings with training organisations, at least bi-annually, to deliver training solutions

*Key activities and measures outlined in SMRC's Operational Plan - https://www.snowymonaro.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/council/ipr/operational-plan-22-23-adopted-updated-20221103-v1.5.pdf

Further Information

The Snowy Monaro 2042 Community Strategic Plan, 2022-26 Delivery Program, Operational Plan and Annual Reports can be viewed on Council's website.

For further information visit:

🌐 www.snowymonaro.nsw.gov.au

📘 Snowy Monaro Regional Council

📷 @snowymonaroregionalcouncil

in Snowy Monaro Regional Council

Your Feedback

A copy of this Plan can be obtained from Council's website: www.snowymonaro.nsw.gov.au

We are interested to know your thoughts about this Plan. Your comments and suggestions are valuable because they highlight opportunities for us to improve the quality of our services, plans and reports. If you would like to comment or require additional information regarding this report please contact us.

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