



Workforce

Management Plan **2012/13 – 2016/17**



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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview of Council

Council's mission is to:

- enhance the quality of life of all Shire residents by the provision of appropriate services and facilities through effective and efficient management of resources
- serve the community through equality of opportunity and involvement
- build a prosperous environmentally sustainable future
- foster sustainable, economic and social growth

Council's core business has always been and remains the provision and maintenance of its sealed and unsealed roads system throughout the shire as well as the provision of water, sewer and waste services for its residents. It also includes the provision of planning, building and regulatory services. In addition Council has provided for the development and maintenance of recreation, sporting and cultural facilities, libraries, saleyards and airport.

Council has also taken on additional areas of responsibility in relation to the provision of Child Care and Aged Care services in response to community needs. Council has made considered choices in respect of what functions and activities it is able to undertake and administer whilst taking into account the needs of its community. Council's current focus is to ensure the long term sustainability of assets and service provision.

1.2 Workforce Planning Purpose

As a result of extensive stakeholder consultation Council has developed a 10 year Community Strategic Plan which outlines a vision for the Upper Hunter Shire and Council. In order for Council to achieve the goals outlined in the Community Strategic Plan, Council has developed its 4 year Delivery Program and Operational Plan. The workforce planning process has taken into consideration the organisations goals and objectives as outlined in the above documents. Consultation has also been undertaken with management and staff responsible for implementing these organisational plan's to ensure that the workforce plan is firmly linked with our other planning processes.

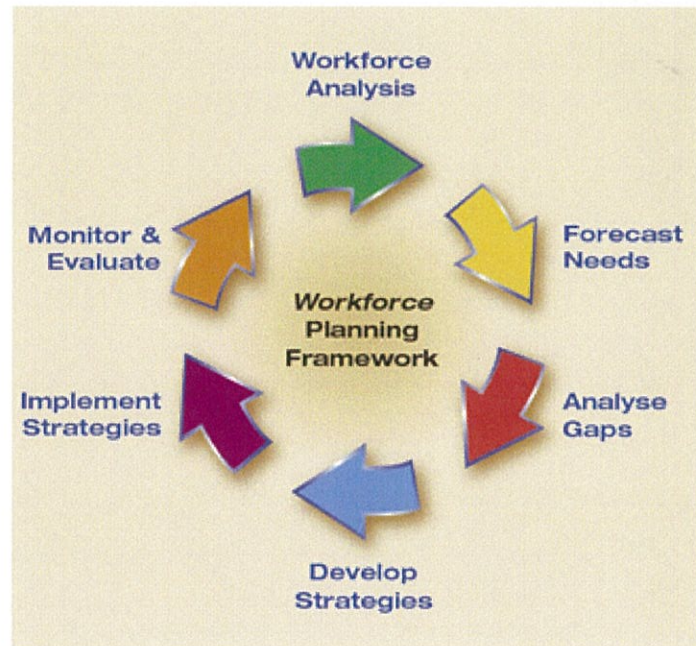
Council recognises that our employees are our greatest asset in relation to achieving the goals of the organisation. Council's Workforce Management Plan involves the development of workplace strategies to ensure that Council has the right number of people with the right skills in the right jobs at the right time. It also aims to provide Council with the people best able to inform its strategic direction, develop innovative approaches to complex issues and deliver appropriate services consistently, effectively and efficiently.

Workforce planning is needed to ensure that the workforce resources are in place and well managed to deliver the Delivery Program and Operational Plan and the Community Strategic Plan, together with long term financial planning and asset management planning. The development of a Workforce Management plan involves identification and analysis of our current workforce needs and forecasting future needs.

The Workforce Management Plan will define a set of strategies to ensure that Council has a workforce which is able to provide adequate numbers of skilled and experienced technical, professional, administrative and operational staff to enable agreed outcomes to be delivered.

2. Workforce Planning Framework

Our Workforce Management Plan is underpinned by the Workforce Planning Framework established by the Department of Local Government. This framework outlines that workforce planning needs to incorporate a whole-of-council strategy of at least four years duration and aim to provide the workforce needed to deliver Council's Delivery Program and Community Strategic Plan. The framework incorporates the following steps in relation to the development of a workforce strategy.



1. **Workforce Analysis:** This involves establishing the profile/demographics of our existing workforce as well as looking at the external environment which impacts our workforce.
2. **Forecast Future Needs:** Establishing the future profile of our workforce based on the organisations direction over the mid to long term. This involves identifying changes to the service delivery requirements of Council and tying this in closely with our Delivery and Operational Plan and Community Strategic Plan.
3. **Gap Analysis:** This involves understanding the gap between our existing workforce and the anticipated future profile of our workforce. This step uses the results of workforce analysis (step 1) and forecasting (step 2) to identify current and future gaps between the demand for services and the supply of labour to meet those demands.
4. **Develop Strategies:** establishing strategies to develop the skills internally to match the future needs and where applicable source the skills externally to overcome any constraints. This involves the planning and design of specific programs and projects that will enable us to develop and maintain a workforce capable of delivering our Operational and Delivery Plan.
5. **Implement Strategies:** This involves the delivery of specific programs and projects required to develop and maintain the capability and capacity of our workforce. The implementation of these strategies is integrated into the broader organisational planning and operational management activities of our organisation.
6. **Monitor and Review:** This step is conducted to determine the effectiveness, efficiency and appropriateness of the workforce planning strategies and activities.

3. Workforce Analysis

3.1 Internal Environment

Upper Hunter Shire Council was formed via an amalgamation of the former Scone, Merriwa and Murrurundi Shire Councils in 2004. The Shire covers an 8,100km squared area and maintains depots and offices in the towns of Scone, Merriwa and Murrurundi. The size of the Shire and the distance between depots and offices provides many operational challenges that Council continues to address.

We are a medium rural Council which provides a broad range of services to the community which include child care, aged care, youth services, libraries, tourism, economic development and swimming pools as well as the better known services such as roads, bridges, footpaths, parks and gardens, ovals, plus water, sewer and waste services.

To ensure that Council is able to deliver quality services to the community it is essential for Council to have an effective and efficient workforce. This workforce must have a diverse range of skills and qualifications and be flexible enough to meet the ever changing service requirements.

3.1.1 Service Levels

Council's current service level requirements are outlined in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan and reported on in Council's Annual Report. Council is currently meeting the majority of its service level requirements however Council has difficulty in meeting its agreed service levels in the areas of capital works delivery and the maintenance and replacement of Council assets particularly in the area of roads and bridges.

Therefore Council has resolved to apply for a special rate variation of 2.5% per annum over 5 years with the specific purpose of completing the required \$5.2 billion dollars worth of required Capital Works and Asset Replacement. This will involve an increase in the utilisation of skilled contractors to undertake this required work and a renewed focus by Council's current day labour force to complete the required capital works projects.

Council also has a major focus on meeting its service level requirements in relation to maintenance of Council's current infrastructure. Detailed analysis of the activities being undertaken, how these activities are undertaken and by whom is being completed. Strategies are being developed and implemented to improve efficiencies and productivities and re-allocate resources to ensure that they are being utilised to their maximum potential. These strategies include improvements to processes and procedures, better utilisation of plant and equipment, reallocation of staff e.g. the development of specialised capital works crews.

Council has also made improvements in relation to meeting its service level requirements in the area of Development Application processing. The introduction of improved processes and reallocation of tasks has led to a significant improvement in processing times.

3.1.2 Current Workforce Structure

General Manager		
Corporate Services	Environmental Services	Technical Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance • Revenue • Procurement • Records • Economic Development • Tourism • Community Services • Finance/Administration • Human Resources • Information Technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Services • Environmental Health • Landuse Planning • Compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineering Operations • Civil Assets • Technical Support • Water • Sewer • Waste • Plant Services • Project Management • Risk Management

Council's current structure as briefly outlined above has been developed to ensure that our human resources are allocated correctly to ensure the achievement of the goals and objectives of the organisation. Some changes have recently been adopted and implemented to address succession planning issues such as the re-structure of the Water and Sewer area to plan for the retirement of the current supervisor and to ensure appropriate knowledge transfer before his retirement.

Council has had a long term commitment to its trainee and apprenticeship program and in the last 5 years has broadened the program to include professional trainee positions and traineeships in non traditional areas such as our Aged Care facility.

Due to the fact that Council is an amalgamated Council we have put in a great deal of effort to ensure the integration of the three former shires workforces and undertaken analysis in regards to the workforce needs and logistical considerations in each area of our shire. This has led to better outcomes and efficiencies in relation to utilising specialised skills of employees throughout the shire and adopting more flexible work practices to allow for improved efficiencies. The current structure has been developed to support these initiatives.

Council will shortly undertake a review of this structure as per the requirement under the Local Government Act, to ensure that our human resources are being utilised effectively and to ensure that our staff numbers are appropriate in each area. During this process we will be identifying areas where further efficiencies can be made, service delivery improved and investigate opportunities to respond to our community's changing needs. This will ensure that the workforce and the allocation of human resources is driven by the Community Strategic Plan and the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

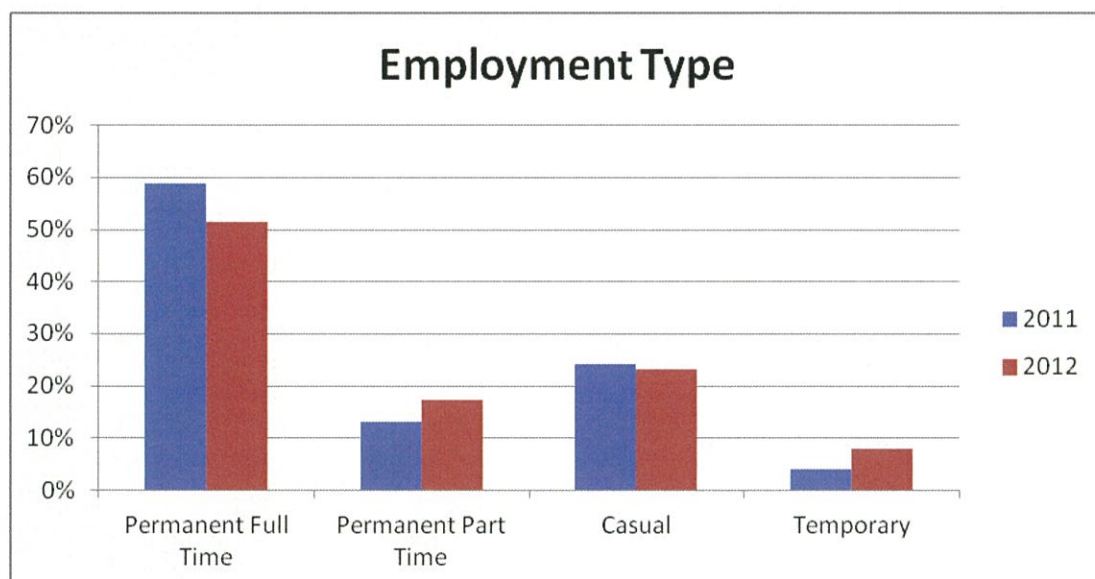
The review of Councils structure will include the following:

- engaging stakeholders
- analysis of job descriptions and evaluations
- review of organisational systems in place and their effectiveness
- change management
- negotiation of job re-design and enrichments.

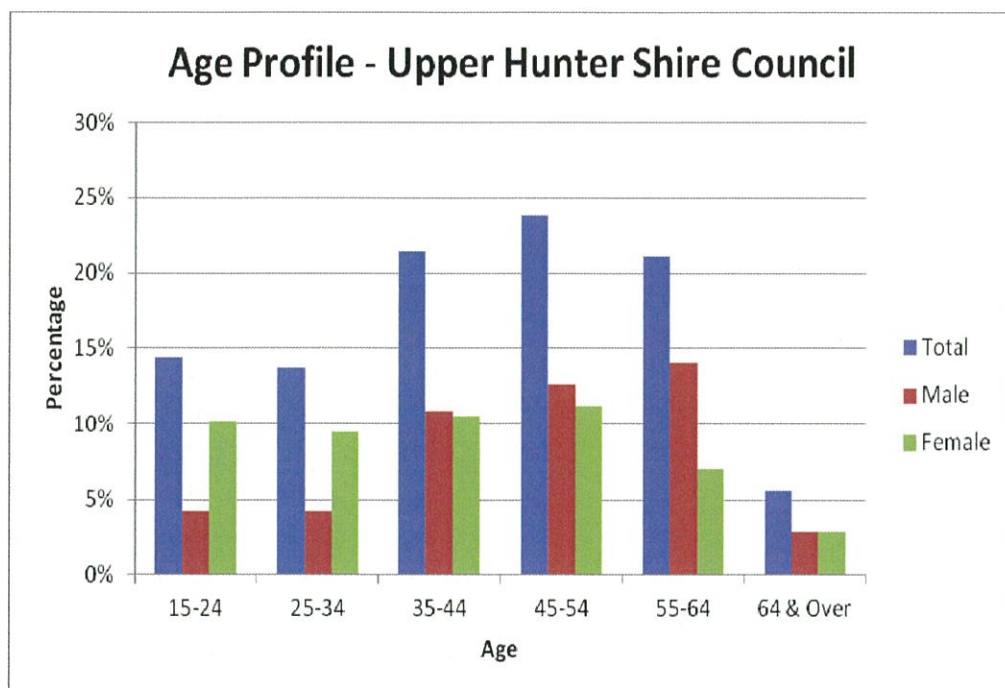
3.1.3 Workforce Demographics

Employment Type

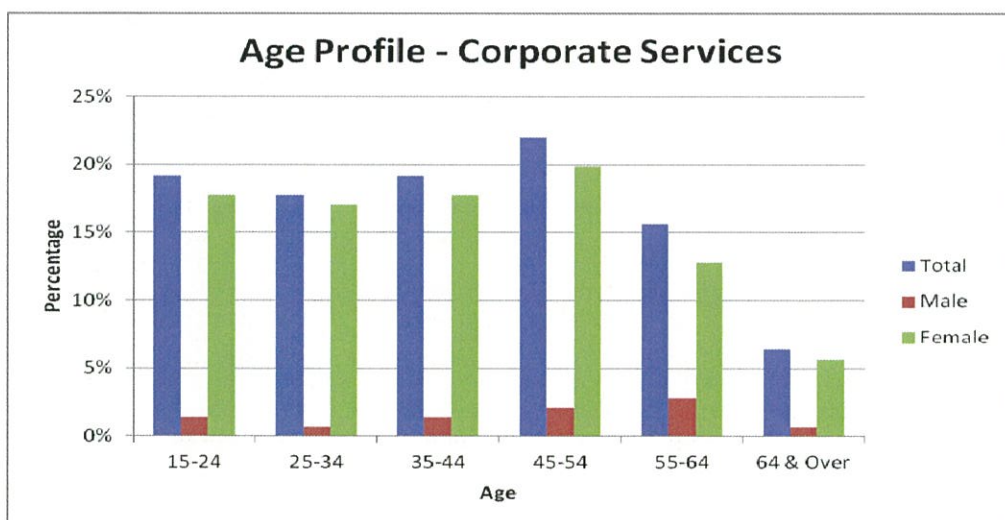
- Council has 285 staff (including temporary, casual and seasonal workers) and a full time equivalent of 191 (not including casuals and temporary workers).
- Council's workforce is made up of 51.58% permanent full time, 17.19% permanent part time, 23.16% casual and 8.07% temporary including trainees and apprentices.



As can be seen from the above graph, Council has seen an increase in the percentage of part-time workers from 13.14% to 17.19% in the last 2 years. This can be attributed to Councils strategy of offering flexible work arrangements to ensure that employees are able to obtain a good work life balance. This is a strategy to assist in the attraction and retention of employees.

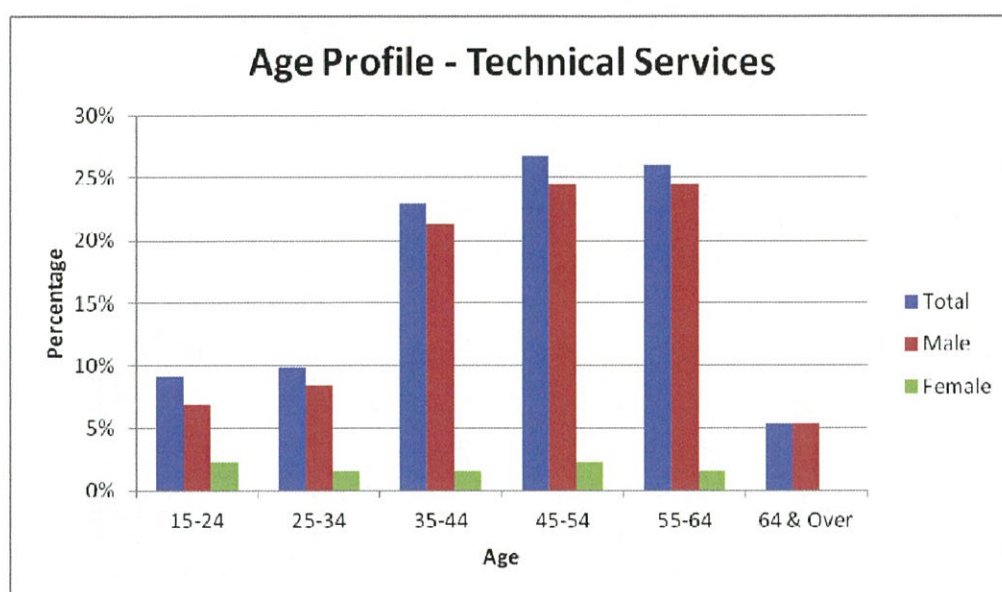


- 45% of Council's workforce is aged between 35-54 years old and 21% are 55-64 years old and 6% are 65+ years old.
- The current qualifying age to receive a pension is 65.5 years old. This is to increase by 6 months every 2 years until July 2023, it will then be 67. Council currently has 16 employees who continue to work /past the normal retirement age.
- In the next 10 years 27% of Council's workforce will reach the normal retirement age.
- Whilst the overall Council age profile is reasonably balanced. A further analysis of Departments and work groups has uncovered specific areas where the ageing workforce needs to be addressed. As per below.

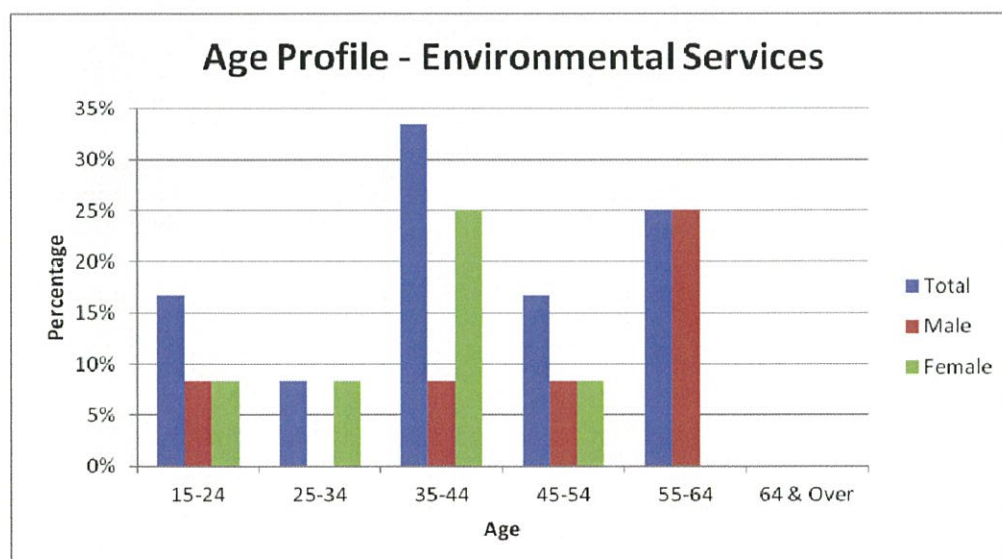


- The overall age distribution for Corporate Services is good however some specific work groups have been identified as having an ageing workforce with high percentages of staff reaching normal retirement age in the next 10 years.
- The greatest areas of impact in relation to retiring staff will be felt in the Aged Care area where 50% of the staff in this area are 55 or over and Libraries where 73% of staff are 55 or over.
- Council has developed a draft business succession plan and critical positions in these areas have been identified. Retention plans developed where appropriate also plans for knowledge transfer prior to retirement of key staff.

- Council must also develop strategies in relation to attraction and retention for these specific work groups to ensure that appropriate staff can be recruited and levels of service can be maintained.



- As can be seen above 31% of Council's Technical Services Department (primarily made up of outdoor staff) are over 55 years old.
- Of particular concern are the work groups of Civil Operations- Merriwa where 45% of the staff in this area are 55 or over and Civil Operations – Rural Works – Scone where 41% of the staff in this area are 55 or over.
- There are also some key engineering based and tradesperson positions which will need to be filled in the next 5 years due to retirement.
- Council has developed a draft business succession plan and critical positions in these areas have been identified. Retention plans developed where appropriate also plans for knowledge transfer prior to retirement of key staff.
- Council must also develop strategies in relation to attraction and retention for these specific work groups to ensure that appropriate staff can be recruited and levels of service can be maintained.

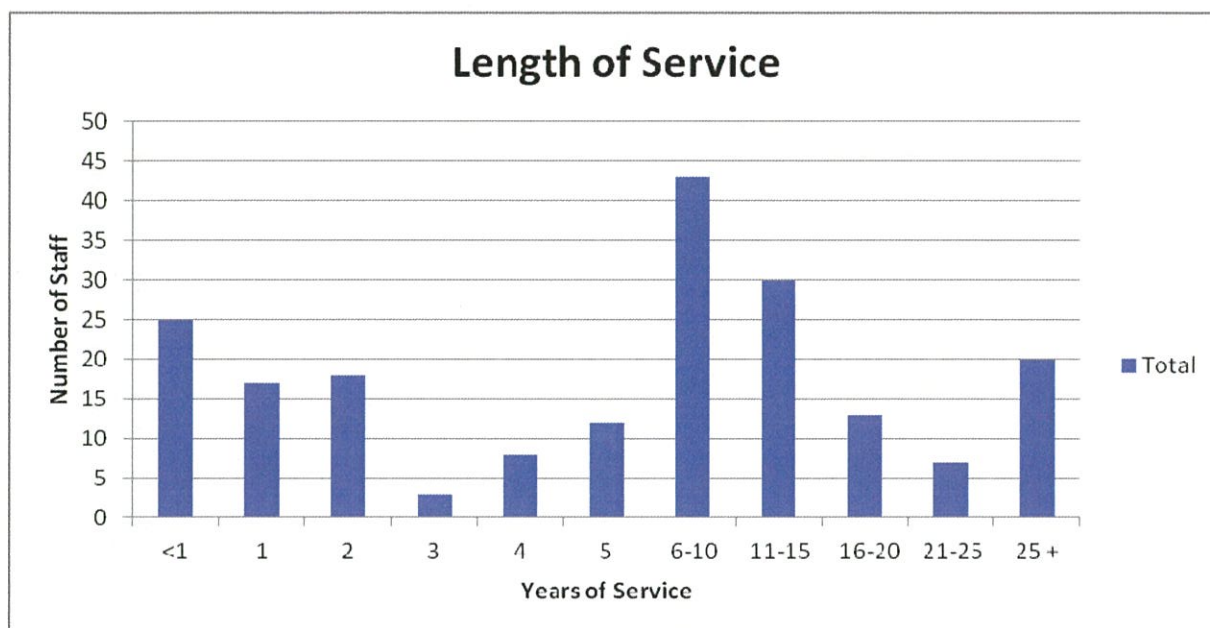


- As can be seen in the above graph Council's Environmental Services department has a good overall age distribution.

3.1.4 Labour Retention

Length of Service

Our organisations average length of service is 9.7 years, casual and temporary staff are excluded. Also we have 125 staff with over 5 years service. These figures show a level of dedication and commitment to our organisation by our staff.



Employee Turnover

As is shown in the table below Council's current voluntary separation rate is 11.90% this is slightly higher than the previous year's turnover rates.

	2011	2012
Voluntary Separations	11.65%	11.90%
Retirement	0.97%	0.90%

Analysis of the information collated from exit survey's for 2012 indicates that the primary reason for staff leaving the organisation is to obtain a higher paying job which is often in the mining industry or organisations which support the mining industry. Council is geographically located close to areas which have large mining industries and the remuneration available in this industry cannot be replicated by Council. Council will be focusing on its attraction and retention strategies to ensure that we are able to compete effectively for talented staff in the tight labour market in which we operate in. We will also continue to develop alternate strategies to retain our best staff.

Employee Engagement and Workplace culture

An employee survey was undertaken in 2011 and provided us with the following information:
Things that employees believe that we are doing well:

- The majority of staff understood how their work directly contributes to the overall success of Council.
- Staff felt that they are respected and treated fairly by their manager/supervisor and also the people that they work with.
- Staff indicated that they felt that their manager/supervisor was approachable and easy to talk to.
- The majority of staff felt that their workplace was a safe one.
- Staff also believed that their co-workers were committed to doing quality work.

- Flexible working arrangements are highly valued and appreciated in our organization.

Area's identified by employee's that require improvement:-

- communication across all levels of the organisation;
- feedback on performance and being recognised/rewarded for good work;
- remuneration;
- morale across the organisation.

Council currently has a number of strategies such as flexible work arrangements, salary packaging options, above award employment conditions (where possible) and learning and development opportunities to assist in the retention of Council's current labour force. Council must also take into consideration our current turnover rates, exit interview data and employee survey feedback to develop strategies aimed at improving voluntary turnover rates and employee engagement and continue to improve our workplace culture.

3.1.5 Workforce Equity and Diversity

Council's workforce is generally reflective of the local community and Council remains committed to ensuring diversity of the workforce in line with its Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Management Plan. In the 2011 Census, 88% of persons usually resident in our shire stated they were born in Australia. Other common responses were England 1.7%, New Zealand 1.5%, Ireland 0.3%, USA 0.2% and Philippines 0.2%.

93.9% of the community stated that English was the only language spoken at home. The most common languages other than English spoken at home were: Mandarin 0.2%, Portuguese 0.2%, Cantonese 0.1%, Arabic 0.1% and Tagalog 0.1%.

84.1% of the community had both parents born in Australia. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up 3.9% of the population.

As can be seen by the above figures the vast majority of the community in our shire were born in Australia and speak only English. The limited diversity of the community is reflected in the diversity statistics for our Council as per below.

Council has been pleased to see an increase in the percentage of our workforce in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander which has risen from 0 to 3 staff in the past 3 years.

No of Employees:	% of Total Workforce	% of FTE
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	1.05%	1.5%
Not born in Australia	1.05%	1.5%

The Upper Hunter Shire areas population in the 2011 Census was recorded as 13754. Of this total population 6,865 were males and 6,889 were females. The below table shows a comparison of Council's gender statistics in relation to the community gender statistics.

	Male	Female
% Upper Hunter population	49.9%	50.1%
% Council Workforce	48.77%	51.23%

It can be seen from the above table that as a whole Council's workforce is reflective of the community profile in relation to gender. However whilst females and males are proportionately well represented across the organisation including middle management, gender within certain departments and at Senior Management level is not balanced. Council plans to continue introducing targeted strategies to encourage and promote further participation from females and males in non traditional roles.

Council's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Management plan has been reviewed in conjunction with the development of this workforce plan and additional strategies have been included to ensure that it is integrated with the Workforce Plan, Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Council currently has the following strategies in place in relation to the encouragement of workplace equity and diversity:

- Recruitment strategies that encourage increased participation of women in non-traditional roles.
- Contact with specialist indigenous employment agencies to ensure that they are able to pass on vacancy information to their clients.
- Well defined policies that support potential employees with a disability to ensure that they have equal opportunity in Councils recruitment process.
- Comprehensive traineeship and apprenticeship program to assist in skilling young people from the local community and addressing skills shortages.
- Provision of flexible work options to encourage mature aged skilled workers and professionals to remain in the workplace and make valuable contributions to the organisation.
- Work experience opportunities.

3.1.6 Skills Analysis

Council annually undertakes a comprehensive competency assessment and performance review for all staff. This process assesses each staff member against the skills required for the position. It also involves reviewing the job description and competency requirements to ensure that they are still current and making any necessary amendments.

When skills gaps are identified the supervisor must note how these gaps are going to be addressed. This may be through external training and development, on the job training, mentoring or one-on-one guidance from the supervisor. An annual training plan is developed from this process and added to throughout the year as skill requirements change.

This process aims to ensure that all employees are equipped to undertake their role effectively to assist in the achievement of the organisations objectives. It also is an opportunity for supervisors and managers to reflect on the skills that they will require their staff to have in the future and also helps to identify high performers.

3.1.7 Skills Shortages

The local government sector as a whole experiences skills shortages primarily in the following professions:

- Engineers
- Planners
- Tradespersons
- Health and Building Professionals
- Finance Professionals
- IT Professionals
- Child Care Professionals
- Aged Care

Council has in the past experienced particular difficulty in recruiting for engineers, child care professionals and tradespersons.

The main contributors to skills shortages in the local government sector are:

- wages/conditions not seen as competitive
- sector requiring specialised skill needs
- lack of appropriate local education facilities
- applicants with limited skills and experience
- work not been viewed as desirable in some professions.

Council has implemented the following strategies to address skills shortages and to improve Council's ability to recruit key staff:

- improving options for providing competitive remuneration e.g. market components
- improved attraction strategies e.g. selling the lifestyle and area.
- salary packaging options
- removal and rental subsidy options

- promotion of learning and development opportunities
- work experience and vacation work placement opportunities for university students

Council needs to ensure that it implements strategies to “sell” to prospective employees, Local Government as an attractive and exciting employer with unique benefits and conditions.

3.1.8 Resource Sharing

Council has been a long time supporter and advocate for resource sharing through Hunter Councils. A total of 11 Councils which are primarily based in the Hunter Region make up Hunter Councils.

This Regional Organisation of Councils (ROC) has enabled Council to participate in staff training and sharing of procurement and other intellectual property. For over 50 years the Councils of the Hunter have worked together to ensure their communities benefit from positive cooperation and collaboration.

Hunter Councils supports local government efficiency and effectiveness through the operation of a number of business units whose activities are guided by the General Managers of member councils.

Council also has in the past and currently has resources sharing initiatives with other Councils in the Hunter Region and the Hunter Councils group. For example Council currently shares a Trade Waste Officer position with Singleton Shire Council. These initiatives have proved to be successful when managed well and has provided good outcomes for all stakeholders involved.

Many Council staff participate in a range of networks, groups, advisory panels and working parties with other Councils in the Hunter Region.

Council's will continue to source and investigate resource sharing options with other Councils, Hunter Councils and potentially other organisations to ensure effective and efficient delivery of services to our community.

3.1.9 Business Succession Planning

In conjunction with the development of Council's Workforce Plan a draft Business Succession Plan has been developed taking into consideration the current and future organisational capacity and staffing needs of the organisation. Strategies have been developed on how the staffing needs are going to be met. The process has involved identification of critical roles, specifically the skills that make the role critical and the development of plans to ensure that Council has the capacity for these positions to be potentially filled by appropriately skilled employees. This plan will be firmly linked with the implementation of staff development strategies. Council now needs to ensure the effective implementation of the Business Succession Plan.

3.1.10 Employee Support and Development

Performance management and Rewards

Council recognises that effective staff management is essential to ensuring that Council meets its goals and objectives for the organisation. Councils has a comprehensive Development and Performance Management system which encompasses a range of procedures including effective communication, goal and standard setting, ongoing review, regular feedback, access to training and processes to evaluate and address substandard performance.

Council's Salary System contains a performance component which is aims to encourage and reward excellent performance. Council believes that performance management is an ongoing process, and issues, be they positive or not, should be discussed with employees as they arise. The annual performance review process also plays an important role in the management of staff performance.

Due to identified problems and issues with Council's previous process, Council has recently updated its formal performance review process to a computer based program which has the following objectives:

- to automate the process as much as possible so that reviews can be completed efficiently and easily;
- to improve the accuracy and level of reporting;
- to allow for better tracking of completed reviews;
- to provide significant improvements to the process and ensure that review are completed in a timely manner.

The implementation of the updated system is a strategy that Council is using to improve performance management across the organisation.

Council has also commenced implementation of a "Great Ideas" program that has been developed to recognise and reward employees who have or have had a "Great Idea" to make an improvement to their area of work. All employees are encouraged to take a good look at their work sites and work practices and come up with ideas that will bring a benefit to Council. The staff member who comes up with the best idea for improvement will receive an award and be recognised for their great idea.

Learning and development

Council currently has a process for identifying development needs for individuals and the organisation. This process involves identification of learning and development needs throughout the annual review process to address skills gaps or to plan for future development. This information is then collated into the organisations training plan to be reviewed by Managers, Directors and the General Manager.

Council also has a process that allows staff to apply to undertake learning and development activities. Approval for training is based on priority and different levels of support are provided for.

Council has a strong philosophy of investing in its staff and encourages staff to pursue appropriate learning and development activities.

Strategies utilised in the area of training and development has been:

- All staff (including operational staff) strongly encouraged to complete Cert III level qualifications in their relevant field.
- Cert IV level training provided to operational supervisors and aspiring supervisors.
- Middle level management coaching and development
- Behaviour management training provided to supervisors
- Support for middle level managers to obtain graduate qualifications
- Support for numerous development activities such as conferences, workshops etc.

Flexible work arrangements

Council has developed and implemented a system for flexible working hours that provides a working environment that is sufficiently flexible to meet the operational requirements of Council while accommodating the needs of employees. This system has been well utilised by staff and feedback has been extremely positive.

Employee Assistance Program

Council has a well developed and diverse Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that is utilised regularly by staff. Council has recently undertaken promotion activities to ensure that all staff are aware of the services offered. New employees are provided with information on the EAP at their induction.

3.1.11 Workplace Governance

Council has clear, well documented and transparent processes and procedures which are easily accessible staff. Council has a defined process for the regular review of these processes and procedures.

Recruitment processes

Council has a merit based selection system which aims to ensure that Council is staffed with the best available and appropriately qualified employees to fulfil its functions. The recruitment and selection process incorporate the principles of equal employment opportunity (EEO), promote selection on the basis of merit, and are consistent with Award provisions.

Council has recently implemented some strategies to improve our current recruitment process, these include:

- interview skills training for Managers/Supervisors
- development of an online recruitment system to be fully implemented 2013.

- development of an interview question bank and other resources to assist managers in this process.

Industrial relations

The majority of Councils staff are covered by the Local Government (State) Award and our associated Council agreement. Our Council agreement was updated in 2012. We also have a small number of staff who work in our Hostel who are covered by the Charitable, Aged and Disability care Services (State) Award.

Council is diligent in ensuring that we meet all our industrial relations requirements and ensuring that we provide the correct employment conditions to all our staff. Council has an open and transparent approach to decision making and have a consultative approach which is inclusive of staff and their relevant unions.

Grievance management

Council has a policy which outlines how grievances should be dealt with in the workplace. It ensures that grievances are resolved through discussion, consultation, cooperation and mediation.

Council is committed to handling and dealing with grievances in the following manner:

- all grievances will be handled with utmost confidentiality. Only those directly involved will have access to information about the complaint
- all procedures will be impartial. No assumptions will be made and no action will be taken until all relevant information has been collected, investigated and considered
- Council is committed to ensuring that no repercussions or victimization will occur against anyone who makes a complaint
- complaints will be dealt with in a timely manner
- seeking redress of a trivial or vexatious issue through a grievance procedure will not be tolerated.

Council strongly encourages staff, supervisors and managers to resolve any grievances that arise immediately and at direct supervisor level, this has resulted in only a small number of formal grievances lodged with Human Resources each year.

Work Health and Safety

Council has in place a comprehensive work, health and safety management system. Council is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment for all workers, and other persons. This is achieved by the involvement of all persons working together actively participating in work health and safety activities and documentation which are regularly communicated and reviewed to ensure best practice within Council.

4. External Environment

4.1 Upper Hunter Local Government Area Work Profile (based on 2011 Census data)

The median age of persons residing in the Upper Hunter was 39 years. Unemployment rates in the area were 3.6% compared to the Australian average of 5.6% and of those employed 63.6% were employed full-time, 26.5% were employed part-time.

The most common occupations for Upper Hunter Shire residents were technicians and trades workers 17.1%, managers 16.6%, labourers 15.9%, machinery operators and drivers 13.3% and professionals 11.5%. Also the most common industry of employment were sheep, beef cattle and grain farming 10.2%, coal mining 9.2%, other livestock farming 5.9%, school education 4.6% and meat and meat product manufacturing 3.3%.

4.2 National Workforce Trends

National Workforce Trends indicate that the Australian population is ageing, consequently our workforce will begin to shrink over time. These demographic changes that present significant long-term implications for the Australian economy and will also have an impact on our organisation.

Some of the major external trends or issues that may have an effect on our organisation are:

- Ageing population/workforce – shrinking labour market coupled with a potential loss of skills, as a higher percentage of the population reach retirement age. Also the public sector workforce age demographic is, on average older, when compared with the NSW workforce demographic.
- Generational change – impacts on the profile of the workforce. There are more generations interacting with each other, whether in the workplace, at home, or via the internet. Also there is now four different generations in the workforce working at various levels in organisations, with different views on commitment to employers, career progression and attitude to work/life balance and working efficiently but not necessarily more hours.
- Employee's expectations in relation to their employment are changing. The increased level of Generation X and Y in the workplace has led to an increasing expectation for benefits such as mobility and flexibility. They have also been found to be less committed to a long term working relationship with one employer. Due to Local Governments historical reputation of "job for life", this will have an impact on our workforce in the future. Strategies developed to retain and attract staff need to take into consideration the needs and wants of these different generations.
- Change in patterns of work – there is a trend in Australia away from full-time work to part-time work. The demand for part-time and flexible work arrangements has significantly increased. Local Government as an industry has seen the number of part-time employees grown significantly. This has the potential to affect the organisation's ability to maintain their service levels, if not correctly managed.
- Skills shortages – it has become difficult to fill some key positions within Councils across the whole of Australia. It has been identified that Local Government is and will continue to experience difficulty in attracting and retaining such professionals such as Engineers, Planners and Health and Building Surveyors, Child Care professionals as well as tradesman such as Plumbers, Carpenters and Mechanics. This may mean having to recruit on a state, national or even global level to fill some positions. Councils may also need increase the use of external contractors to fill these skills gaps.
- Economy – Whilst there has been a recovery from the impact of the Global Financial Crisis, its impact on superannuation has resulted in significant consequences for those employees with plans to retire in the near future. In many instances, these employees will need to continue working beyond their original intended retirement date. Whilst this may be beneficial in areas of skills shortage, it may also present issues for staff who are employed in labour intensive roles and may pose a work health and safety risk.
- The stability of Council's internal workforce is expected to be sustained in the immediate future as employees seek secure employment in a supportive workforce environment to sustain their personal goals and desired lifestyles.

4.3 Government and Legal

Local Government

- A new Model Code of Conduct has been developed by the Department of Local Government for implementation in March 2013. The Model Code of Conduct sets the minimum requirements of conduct for council officials in carrying out their functions.
- Destination 2036 is an initiative by the NSW Government which provides a process and a forum for local government to explore these identified issues and to consider and develop structures and approaches to local government in NSW that will allow the sector to meet the needs and expectations of our communities of the future.
- Independent Review Panel - Following the approach from the Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW, the NSW Minister for Local Government has agreed to appoint a three member panel to develop options to improve the strength and effectiveness of local government in NSW. The review will drive key strategic directions identified in the Destination 2036 initiative and support the broader objectives of the State as outlined in NSW 2021: A Plan to Make NSW Number One (the State Plan).
- Review of Local Government Act 1993 - The Minister for Local Government, the Hon Don Page MP, has appointed a four member Local Government Acts Taskforce to develop new, modern

legislation that meets the current and future needs of the community, local government and the local government sector.

The above proposed and actual legislative changes, reviews and initiatives being conducted and introduced (as per above) will impact Council in the future and thus must be considered in all planning activities.

Other

Changes in Child care Regulations - The introduction of a new National Framework including Regulations for Child Care has direct implications for our Children's Services workforce. The new regulations are being phased in over time and set a higher requirement for more trained staff at a certificate and diploma levels as well as reduced child to adult ratios for children under 3 years of age. Council is actively encouraging and assisting new and existing staff to gain the appropriate qualifications in readiness for these changes.

4.4 Technological changes

The role of local councils is continuously changing in order to meet the needs of the community. New technologies, new methods of work and new management systems are being looked at to ensure that we can continuously meet those demands. We need to make sure that changes are communicated clearly and at an early stage and that staff are appropriately consulted and trained.

5. Forecast Future Trends and Requirements

In consultation with all relevant stakeholders the following information has been collated in relation to the future of Council. The issues identified below pose a risk to Council in relation to maintenance of current services levels.

<p>What major changes or major projects are going to occur in the short or long term that will affect resourcing requirements?</p> <p>(as outlined in Council's Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program and Operational Plan)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake \$5.2 million dollars worth of capital work required to be undertaken, mainly in bridge replacement. • Challenge of adequately maintaining Council ageing assets particularly in the area of roads and bridges. • Increased running costs of plant and equipment. • ELC – Changes to staff ratio's to be introduced in 2014. • Increased community expectations in relation to service delivery. • Changes to Youth Services funding, increased emphasis on case work. Current staff are not highly skilled in this area. • Review of current waste tips, consideration of utilisation of transfer stations, may have staff implications. • Increased emphasis required on Risk Management processes, documentation and system improvement • Need for improved financial management in technical services area. • IT- Major infrastructure upgrade – Cloud based with improved storage capabilities • IT- Internet upgrade which will vastly improve capabilities and functionality of remote sites. • Management of an ageing workforce. • Increased emphasis on resource sharing and investigating shared services options. • Comprehensive review and updating of Council's LEP. • Review of current working hours of operational staff. Investigate options for change in hours of work e.g. roster systems, to improve plant utilisation and improve efficiencies.
<p>Are there going to be any major changes in the way we do things? E.g. technological improvements, changing customer needs etc</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in time spent by operational staff meeting WH&S and environmental requirements, leaves less time to undertake the actual work. • IT- Investigation required into managed service options to improve systems management and disaster recovery. Also has potential staffing implications in relation to reduced in-house service requirements. • Proposed introduction of a road maintenance management system to allow for better service provision. Include a review of current grader crews operations. • Strategies required to address changing customer needs. • Utilisation of technology to improve all human resources processes to ensure that they are more efficient and less time consuming.

Are there any external influences that will have an effect on the organisation or a particular sector of the organisation? e.g. skills shortages, unemployment rates, changes in DLG requirements, changes in legislation etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes of Destination 2036 and Independent Review Panel. • Changes to Local Government Act. • Skills Shortages. • Predicted boost in the economy. • Health of mining industry in the Upper Hunter. Has a significant impact on our ability to recruit and retain staff. • Increase in demand for flexible and part-time work.
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6. Emerging Issues (identified from the gap analysis) and Key Strategies

6.1 Service Levels

As previously outlined, Council has difficulty in meeting its agreed service levels in the area's of capital works delivery and the maintenance and replacement of Council assets particularly in the area of roads and bridges.

KEY AREA	GOAL	STRATEGIES	Responsibility
Service Levels	Achievement of agreed service levels	Apply for a special rate variation of 2.5% per annum over 5 years with the specific purpose of completing capital works.	Senior Management
		Continue the implementation continuous improvement strategies and identification of areas where efficiencies can be made and processes improved.	Senior Management Division Managers
		Develop of a Maintenance Management System for Council assets. Improve human resource allocation and utilisation.	Division Managers

6.2 Workforce Structure

Council must undertake a comprehensive review of its current structure to ensure that are staff numbers are appropriate in each area of our workforce and the human resources allocation ensures the delivery of Councils Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

KEY AREA	GOAL	STRATEGIES	Responsibility
Structure Review	Implement an effective workforce structure	Undertake a comprehensive review of Council's current structure including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging stakeholders • Analysis of job description and design • Review organisational systems • Undertake negotiation of job re-design • Facilitate change management • Implement improved structure. 	Senior Management Human Resources
		Continue to review all activities undertaken to ensure that Council's Human Resources are allocated correctly.	Division Managers
		Take into consideration imminent changes (2014) to staffing requirements at Council's Child Care Centre to ensure appropriate staffing levels.	Senior Management Human Resources

KEY AREA	GOAL	STRATEGIES	Responsibility
		Take into consideration potential staff implications pending the outcome of the review of Council's waste tips.	Senior Management Human Resources
		Take into consideration the increased focus required on Risk Management and improve allocation of roles and responsibilities in the organisation	Senior Management Human Resources
		Take into consideration the identified need for improved financial management in the technical services area. Potentially may require additional resources.	Senior Management Human Resources
	Improve human resource utilisation	Undertake a review of roles in current structure which could be performed by external contractors to ensure that are getting the best value for money from our resources.	Division Managers Human Resources Senior Management
		Review of current working hours of operational staff. Investigate options for change in hours of work e.g. roster systems, to improve plant utilisation.	Division Managers Human Resources Senior Managements

6.3 Workforce Demographics

In some parts of our organisation large number of workers will be approaching retirement age over the next 5-10 years, Council needs to address this issue. If this issue is not addressed Council may have an issue in terms of ensuring continual availability and accessibility of critical job skills and knowledge in all departments. In order to minimise associated risks and to ensure immediate and future service and community needs are met we need to maintain a healthy balance, retaining existing employees and attracting new staff.

Council must also ensure that it continues to strive to provide flexible working option's for new and existing staff and cater for the needs of the different generations in the workforce.

KEY AREA	GOAL	STRATEGIES	Responsibility
Ageing Workforce	Retain older workers	Annual review process implemented to identify workers who are nearing retirement age or considering retirement. Including surveying older workers.	Human Resources Division Managers
		Provide appropriate support to and communicate with older workers to ensure that they are aware of their options.	Division Managers Human Resources
		Ensure current policies and procedures allow for the required flexibility to allow older workers to remain in the workplace.	Human Resources Senior Management

KEY AREA	GOAL	STRATEGIES	Responsibility
	Introduce options for phased retirement	Finalise and implement the draft phased retirement policy that allows for various options such as transfer to part-time work.	Senior Management Human Resources
		Provide information/workshops to employees on superannuation and retirement options.	Human Resources
Employment type		Improve utilisation of contractors and employment agencies to provide resources when a specialised skill set is required. For example bridge construction and Early Childhood Teacher qualifications	Senior Management Division Managers Human Resources
Generational change	Manage all generations in the workforce effectively	Review Council policies and procedures as well as employment conditions to ensure that they cater for all generations and encourage participation by all.	Human Resources Senior Management

6.4 Labour Retention

To ensure the highest quality of service provision Council must be innovative and adaptive to attract, develop and retain talented employees with the right with the right capabilities, skills and attitudes, in the right jobs.

Council will continue to develop itself as a “preferred employer” offering job security, flexible working arrangements and education and career development and promoting itself as a role model and active participant of corporate responsibility, excellence and continuous improvement.

Council must ensure that key workers with critical skills and experience are retained and be mindful that its skilled and experienced workforce is very attractive to other employers. Encouraging young people to take up careers in local government, attracting and retaining mature age workers with valuable experience and skills and engaging with under-utilised sections of the labour market such as, women with young children, carers, people with disabilities, Indigenous peoples and people from culturally diverse backgrounds plus overseas applicants, will assist to strengthen the organisation’s ability to meet its future workforce needs.

Council must also review data from employee surveys and exit interviews to improve employee engagement and the culture of the organisation. A key issue previously identified by staff is communication throughout the whole of Council.

KEY AREA	GOAL	STRATEGIES	Responsibility
Labour Retention	Retain existing high quality employees	Maintain and improve current conditions of employment including flexible working conditions, well being programs etc.	Human Resources Senior Management
		Continue to provide flexible working conditions such as part-time work and job-sharing arrangements where possible.	Human Resources Senior Management
		Ensure all employee entitlements and benefits are communicated to staff and distributed equitably.	Human Resources Senior Management
		Ensure the use and effective implementation of a positive performance management system that provides valuable feedback and rewards high quality staff.	Division Managers Human Resources Senior Management

KEY AREA	GOAL	STRATEGIES	Responsibility
Employee Engagement and Workplace Culture	Improve communication throughout Council	Develop improved communication mechanisms throughout Council.	Human Resources Senior Management

Workplace Equity and Diversity

Whilst Council has an encouraging ratio of 49% females and 51% males who make up its total workforce, there are some areas where historically there have been little or no women employed in these roles. This is due primarily to a general lack of applications by females in these areas. Council would like to see this change and need to actively encourage females to apply for any position within Council.

Council's workforce is reflective of the relative lack of ethnic diversity in relation the community as a whole. Council must continue to encourage and promote the benefits of diversity in the workplace and encourage applicants from all sectors of the community.

Council's EEO Management Plan needs to be updated to ensure that it is integrated with the Workforce Plan, Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

KEY AREA	GOAL	STRATEGIES	Responsibility
Workplace Equity and Diversity	Workforce that draws on the diversity of the people in the Upper Hunter community	Annual analysis of Councils workforce against the community profile.	Human Resources
	Review and update Council's EEO Management Plan	<p>Some of the key strategies to be outlined in the updated plan are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further implementing the principles of multiculturalism. • Ensuring that social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights are incorporated into all Council planning processes. • Improved data collection methods by amending employment forms and developing a system for effective data collection and reporting. • Ensuring that HR practices are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are free from discrimination and equitable for all employees. • Development programs for Middle Level Managers to ensure that both Male and Female managers are equipped to progress into senior roles. • Targeted recruitment strategies to encourage females and males into non traditional roles such as increase female participation in our outdoor workforce and increase male participation in areas such as child care, libraries and aged care. • Review current recruitment and selection (including attraction strategies) processes to ensure they are inclusive and encouraging in relation to applicants with a disability. 	Human Resources Senior Management

Skills Analysis

Council needs to put in processes to ensure that its current workforce has the required skill set to meet current and future service levels and achieve the goals and objectives of the organisation.

KEY AREA	GOAL	STRATEGIES	Responsibility
Skills Analysis	Appropriately skilled workforce	Undertake a review of Council's competencies for all positions to ensure that required skills are relevant and take into account skills required for the future.	Supervisors Division Managers Human Resources Senior Management

Skills Shortages

To address the ongoing issue of skills shortages Council needs to improve its attraction and retention strategies and continue to develop and grow it's own staff in these areas. Also Council must improve and broaden its recruitment processes.

KEY AREA	GOAL	STRATEGIES	Responsibility
Attraction	Promote Council as a preferred employer	Review Council's conditions of employment to ensure they are meeting market expectations.	Division Managers Human Resources
		Implement new recruitment website which includes promotional materials that "sell" the benefits of working for Council.	Human Resources
Recruitment	Improve recruitment processes	Develop and implement recruitment processes that are more user friendly for both Council staff and potential employees. Including on-line applications.	Human Resources
		Improve vacancy processing times. Ensure there are no long delays in arranging interviews and/or notifying applicants of outcomes.	Human Resources
		Ensure recruitment process allows for and provides guidance on the use of non-traditional labour markets e.g. overseas applicants.	Human Resources
Trainees and Apprentices	Develop skilled staff	Investigate the expansion of current trainees and apprentices program and focus on skill shortage areas.	Human Resources Senior Management

Resource Sharing

Although Council currently utilises resource sharing opportunities we must become more pro-active in seeking out resource sharing opportunities across the organisation.

KEY AREA	GOAL	STRATEGIES	Responsibility
Resource Sharing	Improve utilisation of resource sharing opportunities	Pro-actively seek out resource sharing opportunities.	Division Managers Senior Management

Business Succession Planning

Council has developed a draft business succession plan. This plan must now be finalised, implemented and regularly reviewed.

KEY AREA	GOAL	STRATEGIES	Responsibility
Business Succession Plan	Implement effective business succession plan	Implement Councils draft business succession plan.	Division Managers Human Resources Senior Management
		Develop our staff to ensure retention and transfer of these skills and knowledge as well as coverage of these skills and knowledge during absence or in case of retirement.	Division Managers Human Resources

Employee Support and Development

Council needs to continue to invest in the training and development of its existing staff. This is to ensure that our staff have the required skills and knowledge to maintain the required level of service. We should also look at the development of staff into areas which there are skills shortages or where there will be future skills gaps due to the retirement of long term staff.

Council must also ensure that it is recognising and rewarding its staff in an appropriate way to improve employee engagement and commitment to the organisation.

KEY AREA	GOAL	STRATEGIES	Responsibility
Learning and Development	Develop existing staff	Review current training and development policies to ensure equity and flexibility.	Human Resources Senior Management
		Develop further and formalise existing mentoring opportunities.	Human Resources Senior Management
		Further encourage and utilise opportunities to allow staff to undertake different roles within Council on a temporary basis.	Division Managers Human Resources Senior Management
	Effective Trainee and Apprentice program	Ensure that the value of entry level development positions is recognised in all areas of Council.	Supervisors Division Managers Human Resources Senior Management
		Continue to monitor Councils workforce to look for opportunities to introduce further positions, especially in skill shortage areas such as Aged Care; Child Care, Engineering, Health and Building etc.	Division Managers Human Resources Senior Management

KEY AREA	GOAL	STRATEGIES	Responsibility
		Investigate options for further professional traineeships	Division Managers Human Resources Senior Management
	Up skill Youth Services staff in line with funding changes and changed expectations of role	Provide all Youth Workers with additional training in case work to ensure compliance with funding requirements.	Community Services Human Resources
Recognition and Reward	Improve processes to recognise and reward staff	Review current processes for recognition and reward to improve there effectiveness and utilisation.	Human Resources

Workplace Governance

Council must ensure compliance with the new WHS legislation whilst ensuring that processes and procedures do not become to onerous on staff.

KEY AREA	GOAL	STRATEGIES	Responsibility
WHS Legislative Requirements	Ensure compliance	Improve WHS processes to insure that they are compliant but not unnecessarily time consuming.	Division Managers Human Resources Senior Management
		Utilise emerging and current technologies to improve access to WHS documents and information.	Human Resources Information Technology

Government and Legal

Council must ensure compliance with changes in legislation and relevant regulations.

KEY AREA	GOAL	STRATEGIES	Responsibility
Changes in Child Care Regulations	Monitor staffing requirements of Early Learning Centre to ensure compliance and sustainability	Maintain appropriate staffing levels to ensure compliance and sustainability of the centre.	Division Managers Human Resources Senior Management
Changes to Local Government Act	Ensure Compliance	Review all relevant processes, procedures, policies and documentation to ensure compliance.	Human Resources Senior Management

Technology

Council must take into consideration and plan for technological changes that may impact the organisation.

KEY AREA	GOAL	STRATEGIES	Responsibility
Technological Changes	Workforce readiness for technological changes	Ensure training and development programs are in place to cater for any changes in technology e.g. basic computer skills training for operational staff.	Division Managers Human Resources
	Monitor technological changes to look for efficiency improvements	Ensure key staff are aware of technological improvements that may be beneficial to Council.	Division Managers Human Resources Senior Management
	Improve level of service and provide more efficient resource utilisation	Investigate options for managed service agreements to reduce the service requirements of IT staff. This may potentially reduce human resource requirements in the IT section.	IT Senior Management
	Development of more efficient HR processes	Utilisation of technology to improve all human resources processes to ensure that they are more efficient and less time consuming.	Human Resources Senior Management
	Decrease plant costs	Ensure that improvements in technology in relation to plant and equipment are utilised to minimise costs.	Plant Supervisor Senior Management

7. Implementation

Council will undertake an implementation process that involves communicating to all staff involved in the implementation of the above strategies the following:

- the rationale behind the strategies
- responsibilities for implementations
- timelines for implementations
- effects of strategies on them and the workforce

The co-ordination of the strategy implementation will be the responsibility of the Human Resources Manager and overseen by the Senior Management group.

8. Monitor and Review

This will be conducted as part of the annual review process to link with the development of the Delivery and Operational Plan and Community Strategic planning processes.