



**Blayney Shire Council
Workforce Management
Plan
2022/23 – 2025/26**



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Blayney Shire Council Workforce Management Plan 2022/23 – 2025/26

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Introduction

This Workforce Management Plan (WMP) has been developed in accordance with the New South Wales Government's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework requirements.

This Workforce Management Plan forms part of the Resourcing Strategy required under section 403 of the Local Government Act 1993. The aim of this plan is to assist Council to meet the priorities identified in the Blayney Shire Council Community Strategic Plan and achieve the objectives and actions identified in the 4-year delivery program.

This is the third Workforce Management Plan that has been developed by Council under the IP&R framework and many of the ideas, strategies and themes contained in previous WMP's are repeated in this plan as they remain relevant and current for this WMP.

This Workforce Management Plan has been informed by Council's own corporate sources, staff workshops held in December 2021, and the Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) / Local Government Professionals Australian LG Performance Excellence Program (Council Comparative Analysis Tool FY21).

Although the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) conducted a census in 2021 the information from that Census will not be available until June 2022. So, using the 2016 census data, the Blayney Shire Local Government area (LGA) had a population of 7,259 residents and a land area of 1,524 square kilometres.

Whilst Council already has several initiatives in place to promote Council as a desirable place to work and to promote a healthy work / life balance, this Workforce Management Plan aims to build further strategies and initiatives that will enhance these strategies.

Like many employers, Council was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in relation to staff and government mandates about how staff were able to work during the pandemic. Council was fortunate in that it already had in place initiatives like working from home opportunities and was able to ramp up these arrangements on a broader scale to ensure Council services could continue to be delivered to the community.

Council regards its employees as its greatest assets and acknowledge that it is them who lead the on-ground delivery of services and facilities to the community in an efficient and effective manner. We will use our best endeavours to develop our staff to continue to provide effective and efficient services to the community.

The aim of this Workforce Management Plan are to continue to:

- strategically define Council's Human Resource requirements to maintain and develop the future success of our Council
- identify current and anticipated gaps in Council's workforce to allow it to deliver its services to the community
- deal with succession planning issues
- explore our current working arrangements and identify any areas that require adjustment to meet the demands on an ever-changing employment environment.
- ensure we are a responsible employer of choice with a strong long-term capability and capacity to attract, engage, develop, and retain the right workforce
- provide modern, safe, well-maintained, and supportive human resource systems, strategies, and processes, with a high commitment to risk management
- support and strengthen workforce capability and development
- support Council's ability to deliver future programs and services
- support and strengthen workforce capability and development
- develop and promote cohesive best practice people strategies

This Workforce Management Plan is for the period 2022/23 to 2025/26.

Blayney Shire Community Strategic Plan (CSP)

The community engagement and consultation process that led to the development of the CSP has established 5 future directions for Council to focus on:

1. Maintain and Improve Public Infrastructure and Services
2. Build the Capacity and Capability of Local Governance and Finance
3. Diversify and Grow the Blayney Shire Local and Visitor Economy
4. Enhance recreational facilities and networks that support health and wellbeing of the community, sport, heritage and cultural interests
5. Protect our Natural Environment

This Workforce Management Plan aligns the community expectations with Council's ongoing activities to better allow for Council to meet the community expectation in its functions.

Consultation

To assist in informing this plan, Council held a series of workshops with staff in December 2021. The purpose of this workshop was to engage with staff to reflect on what is working well and what requires improvement. Staff were asked to identify what they perceived to be our strengths and weaknesses and how we can leverage what they are.

The workshops identified various themes, and these are summarised in the table below. It is noted that many of these themes are similar to those that were identified in the previous workforce management plan for 2018-22.

Strengths	Context
Workplace conditions	Staff liked that workplace conditions allowed for flexibility to allow for a good work / life balance.
Modern equipment	Council, in the main has a modern and up to date fleet, equipment and technology.
Their work teams and mateship they can develop	Many friendships made in the workplace which extends beyond the work environment and into personal and family lives
Job satisfaction and the variety of work available.	Our relatively small size allows flexibility so as not to limit scope of job design so that a variety of tasks are able to be learned and performed leading to multi-skilled employees.
Helping the community in the provision of facilities	Employees like that in many instances they live and work in the same community and that the work they perform benefits the community including themselves
The training and professional development opportunities available	Council offers extensive training through its salary system progression and encourages staff to undertake relevant training so they can reach the top step of their grade in accordance with Council's salary system.
The overall modern equipment Council provides.	Council maintains and renews its fleet of plant and equipment to keep it current and up to date.

Amongst the issues identified were:

Issue	Context
Communication – could Council communicate better with its workforce?	Staff would like to be better informed about what they will be doing on a day-to-day basis and about upcoming projects
Council's salary system and wage structure – in many respects local government rates of pay rates are less than those that could be earned in private enterprise	Council's salary system does not allow for employees to progress beyond the top step for their grade, therefore creating a barrier to additional pay
The scheduling and quantity of work	The scheduling and completion of work can be influenced by our regional climate. Also, the volume of work and Government grant requirements are challenging Local Government in general
Equipment – as the main users of equipment, could they be more included in the procurement process for better fit for purpose equipment.	Staff would like to be more involved in the appraisal and selection and procurement process for equipment as it is they who are the end users

Council has an employee Consultative Committee established under the provisions of the Local Government State Award. The Consultative Committee provides a forum for Council and its employees to discuss matters affecting workplace relations openly and freely.

The functions of the consultative committee include:

- award implementation
- training
- consultation with regard to organisation restructure
- job redesign
- salary systems
- communication and education mechanisms
- performance management systems
- changes to variable working hours arrangements for new or vacant positions
- local government reform
- proposed variations to leaseback vehicle arrangements
- health and wellbeing programs

In developing this plan, Council has and will continue to consult with its employees to determine the best possible personal and organisational outcomes.

Objectives

The overarching objectives of Council's Workforce Plan are to:

- Link the Workforce Management Plan to the Strategic Objectives of the Delivery Program so that the workforce is capable, motivated, and available, now and into the future, to meet the needs of the community it serves.
- To integrate the Workforce Management Plan into the Resourcing Strategy so that works, projects, programs and services are funded, resourced, and delivered in accordance with the priorities of the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.
- To link the Workforce Management Plan to the Council's strategic, operational, and organisational objectives and future directions.
- Develop strategies so that Council is viewed as an employer of choice and that current and future vacancies in Council's workforce can be filled quickly and efficiently to ensure minimum disruption to the delivery of services to the community.

Australasian Local Government Performance Excellence Program

Since 2016, Council has participated in the Australasian Local Government Performance Excellence Program conducted by PwC.

During the program, PwC collects data from participating councils and then transforms this data into key metrics, identifying trends and observations that focus on operational and management excellence.

The full report can be made available by contacting Council. Some of the data used in this plan has been derived from this program.



Blayney Shire Council Workforce

To allow us to plan for the future we need to examine where we are now. As at 31 March 2022 Blayney Shire Council had a current staff headcount staff establishment of *98 employees (92.14 full time equivalent (FTE), engaged across a diverse range of occupations and employment types.

The table below shows the current employment by category of Council staff:

Employment Category	Number of Employees - including trainees – (FTE)	% of total staff employed
Full time	85 (85)	86.7%
Part time	13 (7.14)	13.3%
Total*	*98 (92.14)	100%

* Please note that at the time of preparing this WMP there were 4 vacant positions, and the data below is therefore based on a head count of 94 employees.

Workforce Strategies – Opportunities and Challenges

This plan identifies a number of strategies to manage the opportunities and challenges Council faces in developing, attracting, and retaining its workforce. In many respects, the strategies to deal with these opportunities and challenges can overlap and complement each other. Observations and responses to each of the above opportunities and challenges are detailed in the strategies below.

A Multigenerational Workforce and Succession Planning

Objectives:

- To ensure Council's workforce works together cohesively and shares their varied experiences to maximise service delivery to the community.
- To provide an environment where corporate knowledge can be shared and passed on amongst Council staff.
- Ensure that vacancies in Council workforce can be filled quickly to minimise disruption to service delivery to the community.

The table below shows Council's generational workforce mix.

Age Statistics - Permanent Employees (including trainees)

Age bracket	No. (%) permanent employees
<30	10 (10.64%)
31-40	17 (18.09%)
41-50	18 (19.15%)
51-60	35 (37.23%)
61-70	13 (13.83%)
>70	1 (1.06%)
Total	94 (100%)
Average age of Council's workforce as at 31 March 2022	48.81 years of age

As demonstrated in the table above, the average age of Council employees as at 31 March 2022 is 48.81.

The data also shows that Council has its largest proportion of employees in the 51 years plus age brackets. Of these, 14 people are 61 years or older and whilst there is no longer a defined retirement age, it can reasonably be expected that they may retire within the next ten years. Of this cohort, 5 people are over 65 years of age and whilst no formal indications have been forthcoming, may retire in a much shorter period. The challenge for Council is to ensure not only that it has the capacity to replace these positions with people equally skilled and experienced to fill these gaps, but also to keep all employees well engaged in the roles they perform.

It is conceivable that an employee in their late teens could be working alongside an employee in their late sixties or even seventies. It is also conceivable that this disparity will mean that they have very different life and work experience skills. For example, younger employees are more likely to be technological savvy than older employees and can share these skills with older employees. Conversely, older employees will have a greater exposure to work experiences and corporate operational knowledge and can share these with younger employees.

Council currently has provision for 2 civil construction trainees, 1 Trainee Building Surveyor, and 1 Engineering Cadetship (in partnership with Charles Sturt University). It is anticipated that these trainees will have a positive workplace experience and will, more broadly, promote Council as an employer of choice within the wider community and potentially create an opportunity for them to apply for a position within Council



should the opportunity arise.

Council seeks to ensure its commitment to the local community by providing opportunities to develop its youth to meet the future objectives of the Shire whilst still meeting its obligations to appoint people on merit. Similarly positions that are hard to fill with qualified people, may be more able to be filled by someone with the right cultural fit, mindset and work ethic who has most of the essential skills, and is provided a pathway to attain those necessary qualifications on the job.

Strategies:

1. Share the offering of 'Acting or Higher Duties' work to allow employees to gain experience in higher more senior roles covering leave periods for incumbents.
2. In consultation with relevant supervisors, develop training and secondment opportunities for critical positions recognising talented staff with potential to make the progression.
3. More broadly, and where practical and cost effective, provide training and development opportunities for existing staff to allow them to develop the skills that may require replacing, so as to allow them to effectively compete for vacant positions as they arise, and thereby creating a path for promotion within Council.
4. Advertise vacant roles as soon as possible after pending separations are known, to allow transfer of corporate knowledge and to ensure minimal disruption to workflow.
5. Maintain the Trainees and Engineering Cadetship programs with Skillset, Charles Sturt University and other training providers.
6. Where positions are hard to fill or there are no applicants with necessary qualifications, investigate the opportunity for an apprenticeship or traineeship to be created.

Labour Market Competition

Objective:

- To position Council as an employer of choice by providing positive and sustainable work life balance opportunities to staff.

Like any organisation that employs labour, Council must compete in the labour market to secure employees with the necessary skills and qualification to perform the work of Council.

In order to accommodate the many changes to the labour market and more importantly skill shortages in key areas, there are a number of strategies that can be further explored and potentially implemented into the Blayney Shire Council workforce.

In the past the mining industry, in particular, has been a significant drain on Council's labour force. Council cannot effectively compete with the wage levels available to employees in the mining industry, but it can provide attractive working conditions, recognising that money is not the only driver of what gets people to work for organisations. Commencement of construction of the Flyers Creek wind farm and the proposed McPhillamys Gold Project (a new greenfield mine only 8km from Blayney) will likely add to the competition for labour in the Blayney LGA more generally.

In addition, Blayney's proximity to the major urban centres of Orange and Bathurst has seen employees leave to explore employment opportunities in these centres. In saying this however, Council has several employees who reside in these centres and commute to Blayney to work.

Council provides its employees with various opportunities for flexible and family friendly work practices. These include:

- flexible work arrangements,

- part-time work,
- job share arrangements,
- variations to ordinary hours and rosters,
- the taking of annual leave at half pay,
- the taking of long service leave at half pay,
- purchased additional annual leave arrangements,
- deferred salary scheme,
- appreciation days,
- working from home arrangements

Council will continue to provide these opportunities to its staff, as well as proactively consider and explore other flexible arrangements to ensure that its current and future employees can maintain a healthy work / life balance, whilst at the same time ensuring our service to our community is not compromised.

Council will continue to promote these arrangements as part of its employee attraction and retention strategy.

Strategies:

1. Monitor salaries and wages to remain competitive, especially in the context of specialised local government positions.
2. Provide a supportive environment for flexible work practices and work / life balance.
3. Develop pathways for critical positions as needed by providing apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities where possible.
4. Increased focus on Graduate, Trainee and Apprenticeship recruitment.
5. Maximising job satisfaction and opportunities for skills development.
6. Create a positive work environment and culture based on innovation, continuous improvement, and engagement.
7. Continue to provide flexible employment arrangements and promote these in its recruitment processes.
8. Promote the employee benefits that are particular to Blayney Shire Council.
9. Engage staff and Council to develop attraction and retention strategies with a view to developing a formal staff attraction and retention strategy.

Work Health and Safety

Objective:

- To provide the healthiest and safest workplace possible and minimise the risk of injury to all stakeholders.

The table below provides workers compensation claims lost time injury claims data for the 2018-2021 financial years. Whilst the data shows Council has had a year-on-year increase in lost time injuries since 2018, there has generally been a decrease in the total amount of lost time from the injuries. This recognises that some injuries are more severe than others and Council will continue to investigate and monitor the nature of any injuries that occur in the workplace.

Workers Compensation Claims – Lost time injuries FY 2018-21	
Financial year	No. lost time injuries
2018	1
2019	3
2020	4
2021	7

Council actively promotes a safe and healthy workplace and Council has in place a proactive Health and Safety Committee (H&S Committee).



Injuries and incidents that occur in the workplace are investigated by the WHS and Risk Coordinator and reported to the H&S Committee with a view to collaboratively find ways in an environment where health and safety issues can be discussed openly and freely with the view of implementing measures to prevent similar events in the future.

Council consults extensively with its employees in the preparation of Safe Work Method Statements, changes to work methods, workplace design, purchasing of new equipment and Risk Assessments.

In addition, Council's WHS and Risk Coordinator reviews, in consultation with employees, conducts safe work method statements, site risk assessments, and regular work site observations/ inspections on work practices to ensure processes are in line with site specific risk assessments, safe work method statements and to ensure safe systems of work are followed and hazards are being identified and monitored with any recommendations included in toolbox talks.

Initiatives to assist Council implement a healthy and safe workplace are supported financially by an annual rebate from Council's Workers Compensation insurer StateCover. This rebate amount depends on past claims and strategies implemented to promote a safe workplace.

Workers' compensation premiums are a significant budgetary item for Council's and eliminating or limiting the number of lost time injuries can significantly affect the premiums paid for Council's workers compensation insurance.

Lost time injuries can have a significant effect on workers compensation premium calculations and hence the total workers compensation premium payable. By minimising lost time injuries Council saves considerable money from its budget that could otherwise be used for delivery of Health and Wellbeing services to Councils employees and the community. Council StateCover Workers Compensation insurance base tariff premium for FY 2021 is \$142,250.

A permanent WHS and Risk Coordinator provides guidance and support for Employees, Health and Safety Committee, Managers and MANEX team and ensures the implementation of Health and Safety programs, including an Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy, Wellbeing Health Fair and an Incident Debrief Consultation Process.

Strategies:

1. Continue to investigate alternative methods of performing physical tasks to reduce physical stresses and strains.
2. Continue to build on its health and safety systems to ensure workplace incidents and injuries are minimised.
3. Continue to support the Health and Safety Committee and engage staff in initiatives that will receive StateCover Rebate funding.
4. Continue to investigate alternative methods of performing physical tasks to reduce physical stresses and strains.
5. Continue to build on its health and safety systems to ensure workplace incidents and injuries are minimised.
6. Continue to support the Health and Safety Committee and engage staff in initiatives that will receive StateCover Rebate funding.

Workforce Gender Diversity

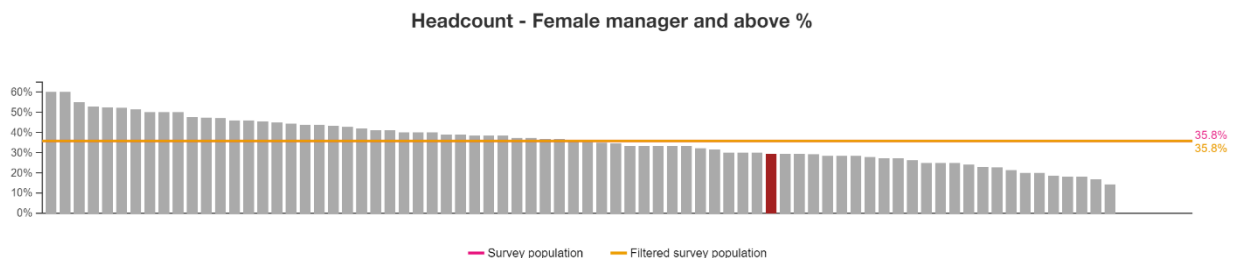
Objective:

- Increase gender diversity in its workforce, thereby creating a greater potential labour pool.

The tables below provide data on Council's workforce gender diversity:

Employment by Gender		
Employment Category	Female	Male
Full time	14 (16.09%)	64 (73.56%)
Part time	9 (10.35%)	0 (0%)
Total*	23 (26.44%)	64 (73.56%)

Management Gender Diversity



Source: Local Government Performance Excellence Program via the Data Kit Platform. Downloaded by Martin Boyd on 27-Apr-2022 14:33:46. Please note that PwC does not provide assurance on the data provided.

At management level, as the graph above shows, Council has 29.4% of management roles are occupied by females including the General Manager. This compares with the PwC survey average of 35.8% for NSW Councils.

Council is an advocate for, and is committed to, being an equal opportunity employer in all its employment practices.

Council has areas of its workforce that continue to be traditionally male dominated. Typically, this occurs in the operational areas, such as roads construction and maintenance, water and sewer and waste services and other trade and labouring areas.

Council will target segments of the workforce that have traditionally been under-represented, such as females in outdoor operations roles, and Council will continue to develop strategies to increase the participation of women in its workforce as a whole.

Strategy:

1. Encourage greater female participation in all aspects of Council's work by reinforcing its equal employment opportunities.

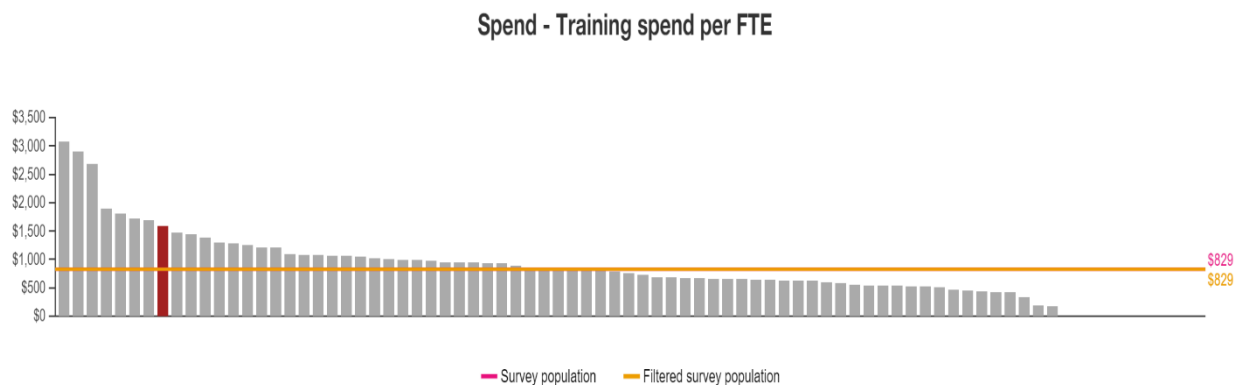
Staff Development and Training

Objectives:

- Ensure staff are adequately trained and their skills are current in their field of work and industry specialisation.
- Provide opportunities for staff to develop their potential to advance their careers within Council and within Local Government.

Consistent with the objectives, Council will continue to develop its staff through the provision of relevant staff development and training.

The graph below provides a comparison between the training spend of other Council's compared to Blayney.



Source: Local Government Performance Excellence Program via the Data Kit Platform. Downloaded by Martin Boyd on 27-Apr-2022 14:33:46. Please note that PwC does not provide assurance on the data provided.

Overall, the graph shows that Blayney Shire's average training spend per FTE for FY21 was \$1,594.00 as opposed to the survey average of \$829.00. This demonstrates Council's commitment to the ongoing development of its workforce, so they are continually renewing and obtaining more skills to assist in the delivery of services to the community.

There are peaks and troughs in its training spend, as some of the skills and qualifications that Council staff hold have an expiration date and require renewal on a set basis, e.g., 5 years for chemical application accreditations. Priority in Council's annual training budgets is given to training where the standard of training to be met is determined by other organisations e.g., SafeWork NSW, and to training required to ensure that Council can meet its statutory and regulatory functions.

Council also looks to proactively encourage staff to achieve qualifications and complete courses that will aid their personal development and assist Council in its delivery of services to the community.

Council staff have and will continue to attend, and where required, present at conferences, seminars, forums, networking, mentoring opportunities, and training events so staff can keep abreast of industry and employment trends. Council staff also participate in simulation events such as the Local Government Professionals Rural Management Challenge where potential scenarios are presented, and staff are required

to provide solutions to these. The Rural Management Challenge is an engaging development opportunity for newer and aspiring leaders.

Teams from Council work through real life local government scenarios in a safe learning environment, challenging their leadership communication, time management skills and experience. These events assist in staff developing an understanding of the issues faced by Councils in actual situations. Blayney Shire Council encourages a mixed team to be entered each year in the Central NSW region event.

In accordance with the provisions of the Award, Council has established a competency based salary system that determines the grade and classification of positions within Council.

Council's salary system has 4 steps within each grade being, Entry level, Step 1, Step 2 and Step 3. Steps 1, 2 and 3 are paid at 5%, 10% and 15% respectively above the entry level rate of pay for the grade that has been determined for positions within Council.

By completing relevant training and attaining qualifications, employees have the opportunity to progress through the salary system to the top step of their pay grade. Council actively encourages and provides the opportunity for all staff to complete the relevant training so they can progress through the salary system.

In addition, Council has an Employee Development and Appraisal Review Process, where staff and their supervisors meet to discuss their performance, as well as take the opportunity to identify other training requests an employee may have to assist them in the performance of their work and progression of their career with Council.

Strategies:

1. Support employees to complete all required training for progression through Council's salary system.
2. Provide employees with access to training in addition to that required for step progression to facilitate opportunities for career progression.
3. Seek external funding to add value to training needs.
4. Support a Blayney Shire Council team in the Australasian Rural Management Challenge.

Organisational Structure

Consistent with strategies identified in the 2018-22 Workforce Management Plan, Council undertook an organisation review in 2021 that led to some changes to Council's organisational structure. The objectives of the review were:

- To undertake a review of the Organisational Structure which ensures that Council has adequate Human Resources that provides flexibility for the organisation to deliver major capital works grant funded projects in addition to maintaining agreed levels of service for ongoing operations.
- To encourage and support management practices that empowers decision making within roles and responsibility of staff to facilitate an efficient and effective workforce.

Extensive employee consultation was undertaken during the course of the review and the end result was that a number of positions were adjusted to reflect the current requirement of various roles within Council.

Going forward Council will continue to review roles to ensure they are current in relation to what the role is required to deliver for Council.



Central West NSW Joint Organisation (CNSWJO)

Council is a member of the Central West NSW Joint Organisation group of Councils. The principal functions of the JO include:

- Establish strategic regional priorities and strategies and plans for their delivery,
- Regional Leadership to advocate for strategic regional priorities, and
- Identify and take up opportunities for intergovernmental co-operation.

Other functions as directed by the Board and determined by member councils will improve operational efficiencies for its members across areas such as compliance and cost savings associated with regional procurement opportunities. Regional networks provide support and collaboration in Work Health and Safety, Risk Management and Human Resource Management functions on an as needs basis.

From the Human Resources perspective, being a member of CNSWJO provides Council with a number of efficiencies and cost benefits by allowing training costs to be shared amongst Councils, particularly where the training required is only required by a small cohort of people across a number of Councils.

Blayney Shire Council will continue to value add and participate in regional programs and activities of the CNSWJO HR Group and leverage the benefits of being a member when is of benefit and it provides scale and capacity outcomes.



Summary

Blayney Shire Council's main workforce issues to be addressed over the 4 year delivery plan include its ability to deliver service expectations of the community with finite resources and its capacity to maintain a skilled, flexible and motivated workforce.

This workforce plan has been developed to guide Council's workforce development to allow Council the best opportunity to meet the objectives identified in the CSP and to support Council's ability to deliver future programs and services.

Strategies

1. Share the offering of 'Acting or Higher Duties' work to allow employees to gain experience in higher more senior roles covering leave periods for incumbents.
2. In consultation with relevant supervisors, develop training and secondment opportunities for critical positions recognising talented staff with potential to make the progression.
3. More broadly, and where practical and cost effective, provide training and development opportunities for existing staff to allow them to develop the skills that may require replacing, so as to allow them to effectively compete for vacant positions as they arise, and thereby creating a path for promotion within Council.
4. Advertise vacant roles as soon as possible after pending separations are known, to allow transfer of corporate knowledge and to ensure minimal disruption to work flow.
5. Maintain the Trainees and Engineering Cadetship programs with Skillset, Charles Sturt University and other training providers.
6. Maintain the Trainees and Engineering Cadetship programs with Skillset and Charles Sturt University.
7. Where positions are hard to fill or there are no applicants with necessary qualifications, investigate the opportunity for an apprenticeship or traineeship to be created.
8. Monitor salaries and wages to remain competitive, especially in the context of specialised local government positions.
9. Provide a supportive environment for flexible work practices and work / life balance.
10. Develop pathways for critical positions as needed by providing apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities.
11. Increased focus on Graduate, Trainee and Apprenticeship recruitment.
12. Maximising job satisfaction and opportunities for skills development.
13. Create a positive work environment and culture based on innovation, continuous improvement and engagement.
14. Continue to provide flexible employment arrangements and promote these in its recruitment processes.

15. Promote the employee benefits that are particular to Blayney Shire Council.
16. Engage staff and Council to develop attraction and retention strategies with a view to developing a formal staff attraction and retention strategy.
17. Continue to investigate alternative methods of performing physical tasks to reduce physical stresses and strains.
18. Continue to build on its health and safety systems to ensure workplace incidents and injuries are minimised.
19. Continue to support the Health and Safety Committee and engage staff in initiatives that will receive StateCover Rebate funding.
20. Encourage greater female participation in all aspects of Council's work by reinforcing its equal employment opportunities.
21. Support employees to complete all required training for progression through Council's salary system.
22. Provide employees with access to training in addition to that required for step progression to facilitate opportunities for career progression.
23. Seek external funding to value add to training needs.
24. Support a Blayney Shire Council team in the Australasian Rural Management Challenge.