



Workforce Management Plan

Part of the Resourcing Strategy



2013-2017

**‘Having the right
people in the
right places with
the rights skills
doing the right
jobs at the right
time’**

Adopted by Council
24 June 2013

Minute No.
380



**muswellbrook
shire council**

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MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR AND GENERAL MANAGER

Muswellbrook Shire Council is pleased to present its Workforce Management Plan as part of the Resourcing Strategy for the coming term of the elected Council. The Workforce Management Plan will guide the direction for Council's workforce to be able to deliver the expectations of the Shire's communities.

With the development of this Strategy, a number of current and emerging issues have been considered, including:

- Attracting and retaining certain skills;
- Reducing higher than desirable turnover rates;
- Managing our Ageing Workforce;
- Fostering strong leadership skills;
- Balancing the Work/Life needs of our Workforce;
- Improving our Safety culture;
- Achieving Gender balance in Senior roles;
- Improving our Learning & Development framework;
- Improving operational efficiency and corporate governance.

These issues will be discussed throughout the Strategy document.

Overall, Council strives to become an Employer of Choice, through providing attractive benefits to the current and future Workforce, in order to provide the level of service expected by our Communities today, and in the future. We are looking forward to implementing this Strategy over the next four (4) year term.



Cr Martin Rush
Mayor



Steve McDonald
General Manager

COUNCIL'S WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Under the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) Framework, Councils are required to develop a Workforce Management Plan, which forms part of the Resourcing Strategy. The Workforce Management Plan helps to meet the community's priorities and aspirations by aligning the workforce with the Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Operational Plan.



Image; Integrated Planning and Reporting Manual 2013, Page 9.

The Workforce Management Plan has been formed to identify the strengths and limitations of our workforce, identify threats and risks posed by internal or external factors, and establish future workforce requirements that ultimately aim to enhance and develop the collective capacity and capability of the workforce to deliver services to the communities within the Muswellbrook Shire.

The Strategy contributes to the attraction, retention and development of a highly skilled workforce who are capable and adaptive in responding to Council's future service delivery requirements. Changes in programs and community expectations mean that Council staff must be flexible in their approach to service delivery and job design.

Council is planning to have *"the right people in the right places with the right skills doing the right jobs at the right time"* by implementing five (5) key strategic workforce directions:

1. Present Council as an Employer of Choice;
2. Promote Council's commitment to equity and diversity in the workplace;
3. Establish a Corporate Training & Development Framework;
4. Improve operational efficiency through the Human Resources Information System (HRIS) and Governance;
5. Develop and implement a Work Health & Safety System.

OUR ORGANISATION

This section provides an overview of our organisation and communities through our mission, values, organisation structure and through providing a snapshot of our geographic and demographic profile:

Muswellbrook Shire in Profile

Muswellbrook Shire is centrally located in the Upper Hunter Valley, approximately 130km north-west of Newcastle. Muswellbrook by road is approximately 3-hours from Sydney, 2-hours from Tamworth and 90-minutes from Newcastle. Lake Liddell delineates the Muswellbrook Shire boundary to the east, Wollemi National Park to the west, Aberdeen to the north and Coricudgy State Forest to the south.

Key Facts:

- Muswellbrook Shire local government area covers 3,402km², of which 1,455km² (43%) is national parks.
- Muswellbrook Shire consists of two larger towns, Muswellbrook and Denman, as well as a number of outlying rural communities including Sandy Hollow.
- Muswellbrook Shire does draw people from across the state, nationally and internationally looking for employment and business opportunities.
- The estimated population for Muswellbrook Shire for the year ending 30 June 2011 was 16,322.1. In between the Census period 2006 to 2011 the Muswellbrook township had an average annual population growth of 2.2%.
- The unemployment rate in the Upper Hunter as of September 2012 was 2.8%, while the unemployment rate for the Hunter Region and in NSW for the September Quarter 2012 was 5.2%.
- Muswellbrook Shire is becoming an increasingly younger community, with children aged 0–14 now making up 22.4% of Muswellbrook Shire's population compared to the national percentage of 19.3%. Reflective of this young demographic is that the median age in Muswellbrook Shire is 34, while nationally it is 37.2.
- The 2011 Census reported that Muswellbrook Shire's median personal weekly income is \$646 above the national average of \$619 and further that the median weekly total family income is \$1,697, dwarfing the national average of \$1,234.3

¹ (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012)

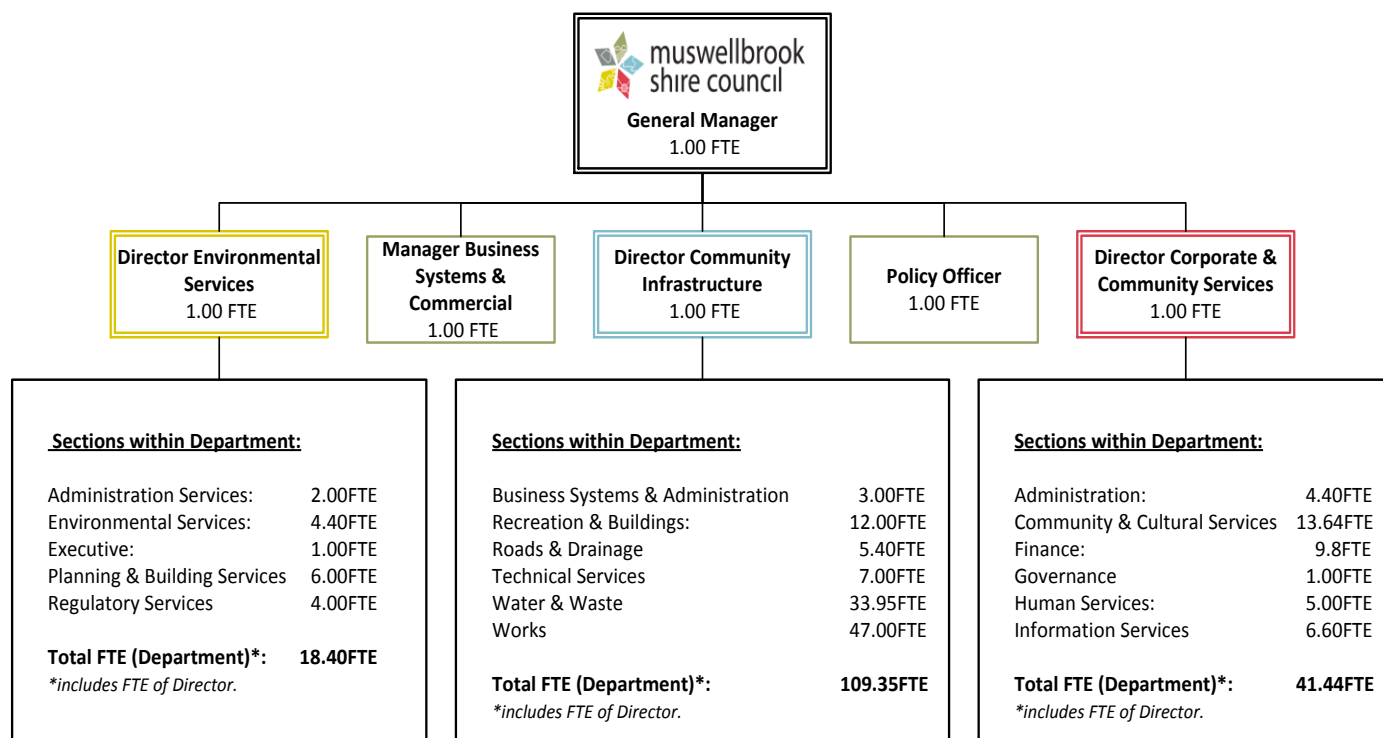
² (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012)

³ (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012)

Our Mission:

“To do what is best for our community through leadership, excellent service and encouragement of sustainable development.”

Our Organisational Chart and Workforce Profile:



Council's current budgeted position establishment, as indicated in the organisational chart above, comprises of 172.19 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions across three (3) Departments; Community Infrastructure, Corporate & Community Services, and Environmental Services. Further to the establishment above, casual positions are engaged to work as required, p-primarily in the following areas:

- Aquatic Centre – Recreation & Buildings Section
- Libraries – Community & Cultural Services Section
- Administration – Various Departments Section
- Animal Shelter – Regulatory Services Section

CURRENT WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

The data analysed within this section provides comparison data between the previous four (4) year term (as at December, 2008), and our current workforce (as at December, 2012).

Position Establishment Profile:

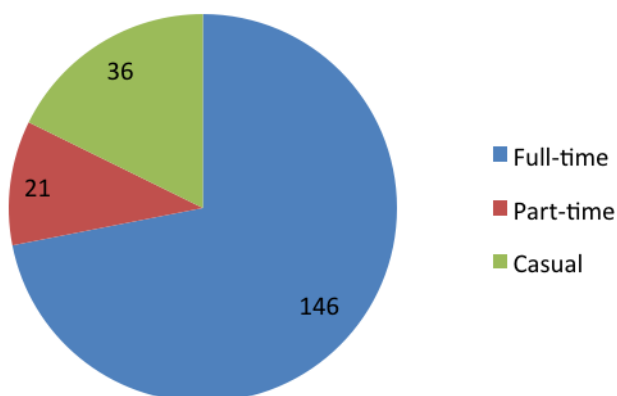
As outlined under “Our Organisation”, Council’s budgeted position establishment is 172.19 FTE.

Council’s current position tenure includes:

Status	Number of Positions
Full time	159
Part time	21

Employment Profile:

Council currently employs 203 staff comprising of 146 Full Time, 21 Part Time, and 36 Casual employees. Full time employees represent 71.92% of the Total Workforce; Part Time employees 10.34%, and Casual Employees 17.73%.



Wages and Salaries:

Wages and salaries expenditure for the 2011-2012 financial year was \$10,595,000 from the total operating budget of \$39,247,000. This equates to approximately 27% of Council’s total operating expenditure.

Length of Service:

As at December 2012, 65% of employees had less than five (5) years' service with Council, which, in part, has occurred due to growth, but is reflective of the extremely competitive external job market that Council competes in. This is an increase of 11.5% from December, 2008, where 53.5% of employees were within the less than five (5) year tenure bracket.

Length of Service	Employees	Percentage of Total Staff (%)
Less than 1 year	30	15
2 – 5 years	105	50
6 – 10 years	28	14
11 – 15 years	14	7
16 – 20 years	15	7
21 – 25 years	8	4
26 – 30 years	4	2
Over 30 years	2	1

Influxes of new starters brings new people with different skills and experiences, and thus adds to Council's capacity to change and renew; however, reinforces that more resources are needed to be allocated for staff training to both develop the knowledge and skills of new staff, and increase leadership skills to mentor and lead new staff within our organisation.

Employee Age Profile:

The table below indicates that 23% of employees are aged within the bracket '55 years and over'. Council's ageing workforce presents two challenges: the loss of knowledge as people retire, and a higher risk of workplace injury and ill health due to the effects of ageing.

Age	Number of Staff	Percentage of Total Staff (%)
Under 25 years	32	15
25 – 34 years	31	14
35 – 44 years	51	25
45 – 54 years	47	23
55 – 64 years	37	18
65 years and over	5	5

Gender Profile:

Status	Male	Female
Full Time	96 (66%)	50 (34%)
Part Time	3 (14%)	18 (86%)
Casual	10 (28%)	26 (72%)

Currently, 54% of the workforce is male, and 46% female. This presents no change from data over the past four (4) year term. Overall, the total number of male to female employees is fairly balanced.

Status	Male	Female
Elected Representatives	8 (67%)	4 (33%)
Executive Team (MANEX)	4 (100%)	0 (0%)
Senior Management Team (Section Leaders)	10 (83%)	2 (17%)

Although overall organisation gender balance has been achieved, significant gender imbalance is evident in our Executive Team (MANEX) and Senior Management Team.

Currently, there are four (4) positions within Council's Executive Team (MANEX) comprising of 100% male representation. Of the twelve (12) positions within our Senior Management Team (Section Leaders), ten (10) are male, and two (2) are female. In 2011, Council recruited our first female Director to form part of the Executive Team; however, the position became vacant again after a short period due to personal reasons.

Further, there are almost double the number of males in Full Time positions than Females, and six (6) times the number of females in Part Time positions than males.

Turnover:

In the 2011/12 financial year, a total of 38 employees separated from their employment with Council representing a turnover rate of 18.72%. Within the financial year, there was one (1) involuntary termination. This presents a substantial increase in turnover rates from the 2008/09 financial year where the turnover rate was 9.1%.

A desirable turnover rate may be considered by be approximately 10% to 12% per annum. Council's higher than desired turnover rate reinforces that adopting and maintaining competitive retention strategies are required to retain employees, such as market competitive remuneration, flexible work practices, and learning and development opportunities.

WORKFORCE FORECAST & IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

The following five (5) key workforce improvement strategies have been developed to work towards ensuring that Council has *“the right people in the right places with the right skills doing the right jobs at the right time”*:

Strategic Direction 1.10.1: Present Council as an Employer of Choice

Incremental growth in the aggregate number of employees is expected during the fourth-coming term. Whilst the number of employees is unlikely to fluctuate greatly, Council's turnover rate is higher than desired, and 65% of employees have had less than five (5) years service. Council needs to consider attraction and retention strategies to ensure resources are in place to deliver the expectations of our communities.

a. Attraction:

Council's current recruitment budget is \$50,000. Human Services have moved away from relying on traditional methods of advertising (e.g. newspaper advertising) where possible, which has been found to be less effective and at a higher cost than other advertising avenues. However, as the labour market increases, and current high turnover levels continue, Council may need to consider increasing the recruitment budget to attract suitable applicants.

In order to attract the best possible applicants, Human Services will develop an advertising 'Brand' to promote Muswellbrook Shire Council as an 'Employer of Choice'. As part of this process, alternative methods of attracting staff will continued to be explored, particularly online options.

b. Remuneration & Other Non-Cash Benefits

Competition between both competing Local Government Authorities and other industries (e.g. mining) places upward pressure from the market on wages. The disparity between the increasing cost of labour due to market pressure and other expenses and the constraints of rate pegging needs to be considered by the Council and managed effectively in order for Council to offer competitive market remuneration.

Further, there are almost double the numbers of males in Full Time positions than Females, and six (6) times the number of females in Part Time positions than males. The comparison data between the number of males and females in both Full Time and Part Time positions is thought to be reflective of female participants in the workforce taking on the role of primary carer.

To support this section of our organisation, and the work/life balance of all staff members, Council needs to develop formalised procedures that support flexible working arrangements, and promote the benefit to both current and future staff.

In addition, given that a number of key, experienced staff members (as identified through Job Feedback and Succession Plans) are considering retirement during the next four (4) year term, Council needs to consider a strategies to managing our ageing workforce. As part of this, Council will work toward formalising a program of phased retirement to assist our ageing workforce.

c. Staff Engagement and Culture:

Council will be facilitating a 'Staff Engagement Survey' in 2013 to analyse the issues that are impacting on our Organisational Culture. Following the survey, focus groups will be held to discuss strategies to resolve the issues to enhance our Organisational Culture over the next four (4) year term.

d. Retention

Council's higher than desired turnover rate reinforces that adopting and maintaining competitive retention strategies are required to retain employees such as market competitive remuneration, flexible work practices, and learning and development opportunities.

In order for specific strategies to be developed and implemented, data on reasons for separation of employment need to be collected and analysed by the Human Services Team.

Strategic Direction 1.10.2: Promote Council's commitment to equity and diversity in the workplace

Section 345 of the Local Government Act details the requirements for Councils Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Management Plan. Council is currently reviewing our EEO Management Plan for the next period.

As indicated in the key facts on the profile of our community, Muswellbrook is becoming an increasingly younger community, with children aged 0 – 14 now making up 22.4% of the population. To increase our commitment to the community and youth, Council will continue to provide opportunities to youth through work experience, tertiary and vocational education programs.

Further, although overall organisation gender balance has been achieved, significant gender imbalance is evident in our Executive Team (MANEX) and Senior Management Team. An item of focus will include developing programs to encourage participation of women in Local Government, by reducing any identified barriers and encouraging female employees to develop their careers and move into senior positions.

Strategic Direction 1.10.3: Establish a Corporate Training & Development Framework

a. Training & Development

Investing in Training & Development results in higher productivity and efficiency of staff, and increased staff engagement. Further, a robust Learning & Development System is both an attraction and retention strategy.

Feedback from some staff and managers indicates that Council's current Learning & Development framework is unstructured and requires improvement. In order to deliver a high level of service to our communities, Council will establish a Council-wide Learning & Development Framework, linked to the current Job Feedback System, containing a Corporate Training Plan, revised Education Assistance Program, Vocational Education Training Programs, Student Placements and revised Undergraduate Program.

In order to effectively budget for employee development, the Management Team will continue to be encouraged to complete the annual Job Feedback process in order to develop individual training plans for all staff members.

As part of the Learning & Development improvement strategy, Management will also be encouraged to fully utilise Council's Corporate Induction Program, including the Probationary Period, to provide effective induction and orientation to new staff and foster high performance.

In addition, a formalised Succession Planning process was undertaken in 2012/13. To further support Succession Planning, Council plans to encourage multi-skilling and secondments/transfers of the existing workers to engage staff and limit the effects of skills-shortages in the workplace. Further, establishment of a 'mentor' program of retiring workers will be worked towards as a strategy to reduce the impact of loss of corporate knowledge and support succession planning initiatives.

b. Leadership Development Program

Council's leaders need to be equipped to manage staff to lead and mentor staff development, ensure employees are engaged and productive, increase staff morale present a professional image to the community, and foster an environment that is open to change. A leadership development program will be developed including topics such as:

- Internal Policy and Procedures to ensure corporate consistency and governance;
- Risk Management;
- Communication strategies to engage staff;
- Mentoring staff;
- Strategic Planning;
- Time Management.

- Delegation Skills;
- Giving and Receiving Feedback;
- Retaining and Motivating Staff.

The program will include planned 'successors' and staff who have the potential to move into management roles, as indicated in Council's Succession Planning Register.

Strategic Direction 1.10.4: Improve Operational Efficiency through the Human Resources Information System (HRIS) and Governance:

a. Human Resources Information System (HRIS):

In order for the Human Services Team to undertake an analysis of Workforce requirements, easy access to data is required. The Human Services Team will continue to implement the purchased Human Resources Information System (HRIS) Subscribe-HR over the coming term to provide this service. The scope of this project will then be expanded to benchmark Council's performance to other local government authorities and measure efficiencies achieved through the introduction of improved transactional processing.

b. Governance:

It is important for Council to have a clearly documented and transparent process when dealing with policies or procedures. This is to ensure a fair and consistent approach is delivered for all staff across Council. Further, documentation within Human Services must be protected for the purposes of confidentiality, however, must also be easily accessible in accordance with various legislative requirements. The Human Services Team will continue to review and improve policies and procedures over the next four (4) year term, as required, and will continue to build multiple information portals specifically for staff within Council's Electronic Data Management System.

Strategic Direction 1.11.1: Develop and Implement a Work Health & Safety System

Council aims to ensure the Health, Safety & Wellbeing of all staff in order to:

- Improve productivity;
- Decrease absenteeism;
- Reduce turnover;
- Ensure safe work practices;
- Reduce injuries.

Council's current Work Health & Safety System requires improvement. Focus areas over the next term will include:

- Fostering a strong Work Health & Safety Culture, including Management Commitment
- Consultation with staff
- Documented Corporate Policies and Procedures to move away from the 'silo' mentality and ensure a corporate approach
- Safe Work Procedures
- Training and Supervision
- Effective Reporting
- Management of Injured Employees
- Emergency Procedures and Drills
- Workplace Inspections
- Health & Wellbeing Initiatives
- Review and Improvement Commitment (auditing)
- Documented WHS objectives and targets

WORKFORCE IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY – ACTION PLAN

I.10 MAINTAIN QUALITY HUMAN SERVICES TO COUNCIL

I.10.1 Present Council as an Employer of Choice

Objectives to be achieved over a four (4) year period	
A.	Review Council's advertising 'brand' and utilise a broad range of channels to promote career opportunities at Council.
B.	Analyse and improve issues impacting on staff morale and staff engagement through facilitation of a 'Staff Engagement/Feedback Survey', focus improvement groups and resultant strategies.
C.	Actively promote flexible work arrangements, lateral movement and flexible leave arrangements to maintain the engagement of workers who are seeking increased work/life balance.
D.	Ensure fairness and transparency on industrial relations and employee matters.
E.	Provide competitive and flexible remuneration and benefits strategies in-line with performance-based outcomes and market data to attract and retain staff.
F.	Assist the ageing / retiring workforce to a program of phased retirement with reduced working hours.
G.	Analyse Employee Exit Interviews to determine reasons for separation of employment to introduce strategies to reduce turnover levels.

I.10.2 Promote Council's commitment to equity and diversity in the workplace

Objectives to be achieved over a four (4) year period	
H.	Demonstrate Council's commitment to diversity through implementing Council's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Management Plan.
I.	Develop programs to reduce identified barriers and improve the career development of Women in Local Government.
J.	Increase our commitment to employing youth through tertiary and vocational programs, such as apprenticeships, traineeships and undergraduates, to meet projected workforce demands.
K.	Strengthen relationships with local High Schools to encourage work experience opportunities for local youth.

I.10.3 Establish a Corporate Training & Development Framework

Objectives to be achieved over a four (4) year period	
A.	Establish a corporate training and development framework to provide training and development opportunities to all staff.
B.	Design a corporate-wide leadership development program, taking into consideration Council's Succession Plans, to ensure our leaders are able to respond to emerging challenges.
C.	Review the Job Feedback System and its links to the Training and Development framework.
D.	Encourage utilisation of Council's Induction Program, including probationary period, to provide effective induction and orientation to new staff.
E.	Establish a 'mentor' program of retiring workers to reduce loss of corporate knowledge and support succession planning initiatives.
F.	Encourage multi-skilling and secondments/transfers of existing workforce to engage staff and limit effects of skills-shortages in the workplace.

I.10.4 Improve Operational Efficiency through the Human Resources Information System (HRIS) and Governance

Objectives to be achieved over a four (4) year period	
A.	Implement the HRIS to increase operational efficiency and reporting.
B.	Conduct HRM benchmarking to monitor the cost and efficiency of the workforce; identify areas for improvement to achieve industry best practice; and measure the outcomes, impact and efficiency of the HR function.
C.	Collaborate with HR functions at other Councils in the Hunter region to identify opportunities to jointly participate in initiatives to deliver mutually beneficial outcomes for each participating Council.
D.	Review and implement Policies and Procedures to govern Human Resources processes at Council to ensure a fair and consistent approach.

I.II DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN STRONG WORK, HEALTH AND SAFETY SYSTEMS

I.II.I Develop and Implement a Work Health & Safety System

Objectives to be achieved over a four (4) year period	
A.	Conduct a gap analysis of Council's Work Health & Safety System and implement corrective actions.
B.	Continue to implement a Health & Wellbeing Program to support and education staff on healthy lifestyle choices.
C.	Ensure all workers contribute to the improvement and maintenance of a workplace culture that values working safely, lead by the Senior Management Team, by identifying Work Health & Safety Key Performance Indicators.
D.	Actively rehabilitate injured workers to return to their pre-injury employment as quickly as possible.
E.	Utilise the Work Health & Safety Committee as a means of corporate consultation, and encourage Committee Members to take a pro-active approach in identifying and addressing risks.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Council will periodically monitor and evaluate implementation of the four (4) year Workforce Management Plan.

Performance will be monitored by Council's Senior Management Team and Executive Team via reports from the Human Services Team to MUSHMAG and MANEX Committee's.