



KYOGLE COUNCIL WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2017-2021



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Introduction

The Kyogle Council Workforce Management Plan 2017-2021 sets the direction for a range of initiatives and projects to address the workforce challenges facing Council over the next four years. The Plan adopts six strategic themes and identifies a series of actions to be undertaken in response to the key workforce development issues facing Council, in meeting its Community Strategic Plan (CSP) and Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) priorities, and in the implementation of its Operational Plan and Delivery Program.

The actions listed in the Plan have been developed with consideration to our community's needs, our unique physical landscape and our budget.

The Strategy in Context

Three key drivers underpin the Workforce Management Plan:

1. The development of a national workforce strategy, Future-Proofing Local Government: National Workforce Strategy 2013-2020.
2. Recommendations emerging from the local government reform process, particularly actions from Destination 2036 and recommendations of the Independent Local Government Review Panel and the NSW Government.
3. Aligning workforce planning with Council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP), Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP), Operational Plan and Delivery Program under the NSW Office of Local Governments Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework.

Future-Proofing Local Government: National Workforce Strategy 2013-2020

The Kyogle Council Workforce Strategy adopts the same broad vision of the National Strategy, namely to ensure Council has:

- The workforce capability it requires for a productive, sustainable and inclusive future
- The capacity to develop and use the skills of its workforce to meet the needs and aspirations of its communities

The National Strategy includes Strategic themes of relevance to Kyogle Council which have been adopted in this strategy as follows;

1. Promoting Kyogle Council as a local employer of choice
2. Retaining and attracting a diverse workforce
3. Creating a contemporary workplace
4. Investing in skills
5. Improving productivity and leveraging technology
6. Maximising management and leadership

NSW Local Government Reform

The Destination 2036 Action Plan proposed a number of workforce-related actions to “establish local government as an employer of choice” and to “encourage and facilitate innovation”.

The NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel acknowledged the importance of attraction, retention and talent management of staff and the need for the sector to have quality leadership and management programs.

The NSW Government, in response to the Panel's report, stated “*Addressing skills shortages, such as financial management in rural communities and engineers to deliver critical infrastructure, is essential to the future success of local communities. So too is attracting and retaining high quality council staff.*”

Challenges

Local Government NSW undertook a research project gathering feedback between March and June 2016, from 130 council employees who participated in focus group discussions (14) and telephone interviews (2) or provided written comments (2). They represented 71 (55%) of the 129 councils in metropolitan, regional and rural areas, as of June 2016. Most of the staff contributing to consultations were Human Resource Managers, Workforce Planners, Learning & Development Officers, and a small number of internal IP&R consultants and General Managers.

Since 1992 the parties to the series of Local Government State Awards have committed themselves to build a workforce which provides skill-related career paths, no impediments to multi-skilling, broadening the range of tasks a worker may be required to perform, achieve greater flexibility and workplace practices and eliminate discrimination.

The unions also raised a number of other issues that they believed were critical to the attraction, development and retention of key professional employees, including ensuring that pay and other employment benefits such as training and development, are sufficiently attractive.

In research undertaken with NSW councils in November 2015, the greatest challenges facing councils in developing their workforce for the future were (in descending order):

1. Ageing workforce
2. Uncertainty due to possible future local government reforms
3. Skills shortages in professional areas
4. Limitations in leadership capability
5. Gender imbalance in senior roles
6. Lack of skills and experience in workforce planning
7. Lack of workforce trend data
8. Difficulty in recruiting staff
9. Resistance to more flexible work practices
10. Lack of cultural diversity

All of these challenges are applicable to Kyogle Council, and this workforce management strategy, and the ongoing management of Councils workforce, is focussed on addressing these challenges.

The key focus for the NSW Government through its Fit For The Future (FFTF) local government reform process is the long term financial sustainability of councils. Kyogle Council responded to the FFTF reform process by reviewing its Financial Management Policy and preparing a 20 year LTFP to ensure that it could meet the financial sustainability targets set out as part of the FFTF process. The LTFP has a level of infrastructure renewal and upgrade expenditure significantly higher than ever before experienced by Kyogle Council.

Kyogle Council subsequently revised its organisational structure in 2016, to provide the framework for a workforce that was able to meet the goals and objectives of the LTFP. Council has in place formal mechanisms and procedures for consultation and collaboration with its workforce including an employee Consultative Committee, a Work Health Safety Committee, and the Managers and Executive Committee (MANEX). The input from employees in the effectiveness and efficiency of Councils operations is highly valued by the organisation, and there is an ongoing commitment to consultation between all levels within the workforce.

The following table represents the organisational structure adopted by Council;

General Manager		
Office of the General Manager	Director Assets and Infrastructure Services	Director Planning and Environmental Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Support Mayor & Councillors · Personal Assistant · Media · Human Resources · WHS & Training · Finance · Rates & Charges · Procurement · Governance · Policy · Audit (internal & External) · Customer Service · Crown Reserve Administration · Land Management (Including Leasing) · Information Technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Emergency Services · Roads and Bridges · RMS Contract Works · Quarries · Project Design & Management · GIS & Technical Services · Water Supply · Sewerage Services · Asset Management · Stormwater and Flood Management · Parks Gardens and Cemeteries · Facilities Maintenance · Plant, Fleet and Depots (including stores) · Aquatic Centre Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Planning Services · Environmental Services · Building Control · Compliance · Regulatory Services · Waste Management · Plumbing and Trade Waste Inspections · Tourism and Event Planning · Economic Development · Community and Cultural Services

The implementation of this new structure resulted in two executive level positions becoming redundant and the creation of two Directors roles. Since the adoption of the structure there have been further changes made to the workforce, in close consultation with the Consultative Committee, in order to deliver the service levels and objectives of the LTFP and associated Operational Plan and Delivery Program.

In doing so, a balance had to be found between expanding Councils workforce to deliver the requirements internally, and relying on external contractors. There will be an ongoing reliance on external contractors and service providers in the delivery of Councils services, and in accordance with Councils Procurement Policy, there will be a focus on the use of locally based contractors and suppliers.

The initial changes made to the workforce have focused on ensuring Council has the capacity and structure to manage both its own internal work crews and its external contractors. There will be a focus on managing the risks around the efficient and effective delivery of capital works and in improving forward planning and project development. This is critical if Council is to achieve levels of external grant funding required under the LTFP. Council must sufficiently develop projects well enough in advance to compile robust applications for external funding and meet the needs and expectations of its external funding partners.

Council is also focused on building the capacity and capability of its local contractors and suppliers. When local businesses are aware of, and able to meet, Councils expectations in the delivery of goods and services, there is an ongoing benefit to the local economy and local employment levels as well as allowing Council to effectively deliver services to the community.

Workforce Strategies and Actions

Strategy 1: Promoting Kyogle Council as a local Employer of Choice

With workforce participation projected to fall and competing industries able to offer higher wages and salaries, Kyogle Council will need to do more to position itself as an attractive career option for prospective and existing employees. Effective employer branding can be used to demonstrate the unique attributes of the Council and the benefits an employee can expect.

Kyogle Council also performs a broader role in the community beyond providing employment to our own workforce. Council is an important catalyst in attracting and developing new business to and within our community and working collaboratively with existing local businesses to innovate and grow.

Councils across NSW report that more can be done to unify the sector without reducing the capacity of individual councils to present their own Employee Value Proposition as they compete with private and public sector employers (including other councils) for staff.

In developing core messages, taglines or promotional materials, it is important to explore the successes and failures of similar initiatives in other industries and jurisdictions and to commence with an informed understanding of current perceptions of, and values and benefits associated with, working in local government.

Kyogle Council offers a diverse range of careers and these opportunities need to be better understood to attract and retain employees.

Objectives of Strategy 1

1. To increase community awareness of the diversity of functions and jobs within Kyogle Council
2. To attract and retain high quality employees
3. Promote the local area and all it has to offer as a place to live, work and play

Actions for Strategy 1
Explore regional and industry wide opportunities to promote local government as an industry of choice to potential workforce.
Clearly describe the characteristics and appeal of working for Kyogle Council that can be integrated with Council's promotional activities
Promote Councils achievements and maintain a positive image of the organisation.
Review the employee benefits that can be made available within Councils resources and provide information about these benefits with job packages during recruitment processes.
Encourage involvement in awards and other means to provide both internal and external recognition of Councils actions and its people.
Be seen as a responsible local employer, recognising that Council is one of the largest employers in the local government area.

Strategy 2: Retaining and Attracting a Diverse Workforce

Workplace diversity and inclusion refers to the diverse skill and perspectives that people may bring to the workplace because of their diverse backgrounds and status. Workplace diversity is about removing barriers to ensure all employees can perform to their highest ability. It also involves recognising the value of individual differences and managing them in the workplace.

Kyogle Council's priorities and initiatives in relation to diversity need to be tailored to our unique circumstances and be sustainable in order to make a real impact on the workforce and the community.

There are challenges associated with this, such as:

- Retaining mature talent – faced with an ageing workforce, Kyogle Council is concerned about:
 - transitioning older workers into meaningful jobs that are appropriate for their health and wellbeing
 - finding or creating sufficient numbers of jobs within council into which older workers can transition
 - changing attitudes of older workers towards embracing new roles
 - transfer of knowledge to new and younger employees

There are also implications for succession planning, knowledge management and health and safety of employees.

Senior managers need to be cognisant of the benefits of a diverse workforce, and avoid recruitment decisions that can perpetuate existing workforce profiles. Recruitment processes must;

- Align with Equal Employment Opportunity guidelines
- Focus on achieving a diverse workforce that reflects the local demographic
- Encourage people living with a disability, Aboriginal People, and women to apply for positions.

Objectives of Strategy 2

1. Increase understanding amongst councillors, managers and staff, of the community and business benefits of a diverse workforce
2. Attract and retain a diverse workforce that reflects our community
3. Adhere to NSW Disability Inclusion Planning and Equal Employment Opportunity guidelines
4. Maximise the potential recruitment pool available to Council
5. Retain mature talent whilst attracting younger workers

Actions for Strategy 2
Promote the benefits of a diverse workforce to the organisation as a whole
Reduce procedural barriers to recruiting people from diverse backgrounds, without compromising any existing qualification, professional registration or Australian Standards requirements.
Succession plan and transition older employees to suitable roles where their knowledge and experience can be transferred to other employees
Initiate procedures that assist employment opportunities for people with disability, Aboriginal People and for women to enter non-traditional roles, such as; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Including an explicit diversity commitment in job advertisements• Requesting that shortlists for roles include a diverse pool of applicants where possible

Strategy 3: Creating a Contemporary Workplace

The essence of a contemporary workplace is one that is responsive to individual employee and organisational needs, delivering flexibilities that attract and retain a workforce with the skills and knowledge required by the business.

To create a contemporary workplace, consideration must be given to the work arrangements sought by different segments of the workforce, to accommodate work/life balance requirements of employees, maximise staff engagement, address workplace stress and inappropriate behaviours, review and respond to changes in demand for skills and job roles, and retain critical knowledge.

Councils across NSW report their greatest challenges in implementing the above practices are:

- Lack of support from managers and leaders who may not support, or understand, the scope of flexibilities that can be adopted, nor the range of benefits to the organisation and individual
- Lack of knowledge of how the industrial Award can be best utilised to achieve the workplace flexibilities required
- Lack of awareness of models or examples of innovative practice that could be adopted by councils more widely

Presenting Kyogle Council as a contemporary workplace is essential if we are to attract and retain the next generation of leaders. It is important to understand that Council is competing with private and public sector employers. It is also important for Council to understand that there is a need for utilisation of external contractors, suppliers and service providers to allow Council to meet its goals and objectives. In this regard, the workplace and the workforce need to be structured so as to accommodate these external partners. This means developing processes to manage associated risks, and to work on building the capacity of local businesses to ensure that there is a strong base of external service providers in the future. The added benefits to the local economy and for increasing local employment and skills should also be recognised.

Objectives of Strategy 3

1. Increase Kyogle Council's capacity to provide workplace flexibility that meets organisational and employee needs
2. Enable and facilitate Kyogle Council's ability to identify, gain and retain the skills and knowledge required for a sustainable workforce
3. Create a positive working environment that allows Council and local contractors and suppliers to partner in the delivery of efficient services to the communities

Actions for Strategy 3

Provide professional development to managers on how to review and redesign job roles to meet the needs of a more contemporary workplace, whilst maintaining existing qualification or professional registration requirements and Australian standards where relevant.

Provide guidance to management on how to identify, gain and retain critical skills in demand through mechanisms such as skills audits, knowledge management and succession planning

Ensure the implementation of the Award maximises opportunities for workplace flexibility and contemporary HR practices

Structure the workforce to allow the utilisation and supervision of local contractors and suppliers to both build their capacity and deliver services that meet Council's needs.

Strategy 4: Investing in Skills

Education and training improve the employment prospects of individuals, the productivity of workplaces and the capacity of people and organisations to adapt to changes in demand for products and services. Investment in skills development occurs in a number of forms: organisational and individual investment in tertiary education, vocational education and training (VET) or other forms of structured courses and programs, learning and development through others from coaching, mentoring or networking and most commonly, through on-the-job informal learning.

Full and part qualifications in the VET system are also the focus of most Commonwealth and State Government policies linked to education and training funding, because they are a measure of achievement of competency. However workplace-based application and development of knowledge and skills remains a critical part of an organisation's investment in skills, and as such, is acknowledged and encouraged in this strategy.

Kyogle Council must establish itself as a supporter of entry level training programs such as apprenticeships, traineeships and cadetships. We must look to increase opportunities to attract new and younger employees to address issues related to succession planning. Kyogle Council has commenced and will continue to provide apprenticeships and traineeships, with a focus on local youth.

Council must also continue to develop the skills of its existing workforce and ensure retention of a diverse range of skills and promote multi-skilling of staff in key areas. Staff retention and career progression are key areas of focus when looking at the investment in skills. Council needs to be focused on processes internally that allow for the progression and retention of skilled staff when opportunities for internal promotion arise. This in turn creates an opportunity for the resulting internal vacancy of the lower skilled position to be filled by younger workers or for the creation of additional apprentice and trainee positions.

Objectives of Strategy 4

1. Council to invest in entry level skills development programs to build its workforce for the future
2. Increase awareness and access to funding to support workforce skills development
3. Develop core capabilities of employees and encourage multi-skilling in key areas
4. Retain highly skilled employees within the organisation

Actions for Strategy 4
Ensure the workforce structure provides for succession planning in professional and critical roles to address potential skills shortages.
Increase investment in skills and capability development through a range of learning opportunities
Continue to facilitate the appointment of apprentices and trainees
Encourage and foster internal promotion and retention of skilled workers
Important performance based rewards that acknowledge the use and acquisition of skills
Implement and resource an organisational wide training plan

Strategy 5: Improving Productivity and Leveraging Technology

According to the NSW Intergenerational Report 2016, the three drivers of growth in the NSW economy over the next 40 years will be population, participation and productivity, with productivity described as “economic output per hour worked”. Whilst skills development is a major contributor to innovation and productivity, the utilisation of technology has, and will continue to become, increasingly important in improving efficiency of service and infrastructure delivery.

Technology and data will also be big factors for Kyogle Council in delivering more effective, customer-centric services and facilitating more flexible work practices. Some technologies may also open up opportunities for broader regional collaboration or service delivery models.

One of the issues facing Kyogle Council is the fast pace at which technology changes. Awareness of the latest capabilities and applications of technology is an ongoing challenge. The impact of technology on workforce skills requirements is also considerable, with many employees’ roles now requiring some interface with technologies.

Kyogle Council has always tried to keep up with technological changes, and to identify opportunities where technological advances could provide for improved delivery of services. The current requirements for the collection of information around work health safety, environmental compliance, asset management, and protections against civil liability claims, presents both an issue and an opportunity for Council at present. There is a need to change the processes we currently use so that there is less reliance on hard copy paper based records, as well as an improvement in the storage and accessibility of data across the organisation.

Objectives of Strategy 5

1. Increase knowledge about innovative systems and technologies designed to improve productivity
2. Improve the effectiveness of investment in technology
3. Implement technology to improve operational efficiency and effectiveness and customer service

Actions for Strategy 5
Research innovative technologies and shared services models that increase productivity
Implement integrated business systems to consolidate data and improve accessibility and knowledge across the organisation
Support training in the technical skills required to adapt to new technologies in the workplace
Improve access to on-line services for the community and customers
Transition away from paper based record collection and storage across the whole organisation

Strategy 6: Maximising Management and Leadership

Managers and leaders have a significant impact on individual and organisational performance.

Findings from a recent Study of Australian Leadership showed significant gaps and weaknesses in leadership and management such as:

- Poor mastery of basic management fundamentals such as performance monitoring, target setting and appropriate use of incentives
- Inability to encourage and drive innovation
- Lack of formal training of leaders
- Under-investment in leadership training across organisations, especially at the frontline where improved performance can be achieved through better employee engagement and outcomes
- Limited external sourcing of advice and information from associations, consultants, experts or other senior leaders in their industry or elsewhere.

A focus on building effective leadership teams (not only individuals) is a key for the future success of Kyogle Council.

Objectives of Strategy 6

1. Enhance leadership and management capability within Kyogle Council
2. Improve Performance Management Practices

Actions for Strategy 6
Develop and promote leadership and management training programs
Facilitate the involvement of senior managers and leaders in formal mentoring programs
Lobby for expanded support for induction and professional development for elected members to support and promote better governance and leadership
Develop a range of initiatives to enhance good governance in Council, including risk management, continuous improvement and fair and ethical behaviour
Implement an integrated performance management and reporting system through all levels of the organisation
Establish performance targets for senior staff and managers that align with Councils strategic direction and operational requirements