



KYOGLE COUNCIL WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

2022-2026



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Introduction

The Kyogle Council Workforce Management Plan 2022-2026 sets the direction for 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

A five-stage process underpins Council's Workforce Management Strategy (WMS).

1. Scope

- a clear purpose for the process and the Plan
- all executives, managers and supervisors
- an agreed remit for the Plan including strategic and operational considerations
- engagement with each Program Delivery Manager to determine the future workforce needed to succeed on the delivery program and the objectives of the Community Strategic Plan
- key stakeholders such as Council's consultative committees, employee representatives and management

2. Analysis

- current workforce profile
- Council's strengths and weaknesses
- the workforce profile - considers age, gender, diversity, skills and known gaps
- an external scan of impacts and influences - such as political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal

3. Forecast and Identify

- skills gaps
- demographics
- what issues impact on employee performance?
- what is critical for success in developing our workforce to better respond to community needs?

4. Implement

- decisions will be made and implemented, at both strategic and operational levels
- clear responsibility for delivery and reporting of the strategy
- clear benefits of the strategy and how feedback is provided.

5. Monitor and Evaluate

- measures of success and performance indicators
- feedback from stakeholders through the monitoring and evaluation process
- opportunities for shared learning

Challenges

Hard-to-fill positions

A 2018 study found that 69% of councils across Australia were experiencing skills shortages in;

- Engineers,
- Planners,
- Building Surveyors,
- Environmental Health Officer
- Project Managers

(Source: <https://alga.asn.au/local-government-workforce-and-future-skills-report-australia>).

Some of the roles – like engineers for example – are shortages also felt in other sectors – not just local government.

Council actively engages with tertiary institutions to target undergraduate work experience, to incentivise people with skills in high demand to work with us.

We support skills development through training and ongoing skills development opportunities, and engage the experienced staff to help coach and mentor staff to ensure constant learning.

Since 2017, five staff have completed phased retirement plans, with an additional six currently in their phased retirement.

For the first time since pre-2017, all positions in the organisational structure are filled in September 2022.

Entry level development

Recruiting and retaining critical council roles can be more challenging in rural and remote councils.

Council has deliberately set about developing career pathways from entry level job roles and exposing young people to a range of career opportunities through the salary system.

Traineeships and Graduate programs are being used across our departments.

Exposing young people to roles in councils creates interest and showcases a range of careers and we actively engage with our local schools.

Since implementing a significant program of hosting apprentices and trainees in 2018, Council has had a retention rate of 70% of these staff upon completion of their trades.

Addressing an ageing workforce and employment of young people

NSW Councils employ 13.8% of people under 30 years compared to 25.2% in all industries.

Often referred to as ‘pre-vocational training’ – developing a cohort of young people skilled in ways that increase their employability – can be a valuable contribution by council.

Councils can also sponsor skills development of their community (and supplement council employee numbers) when undertaking training and also through offering work placements.

Recruiting entry level roles like apprentices and trainees help offset an ageing workforce. It can also support transition to retirement for older workers through a staged mentoring and coaching program – valuing the knowledge of older workers and skilling younger workers at the same time.

Since the 2017-2021 Strategy was adopted, Council has been successful in shifting the demographic of our workforce from a predominantly ageing workforce to a younger workforce fit for the future. The average age has been reduced for the first time from 52 in 2017 to 47 in 2022, with an additional 13 hosted apprentices and trainees not included in these figures.

Increasing diversity

There are around 394 occupations recorded as working within local government in NSW.

The operational outdoor workforce in NSW is older (55% over 45 years) compared to professional/admin (50% over 45 years).

From 2006-2016 there were slight declines in the participation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in NSW Local Government.

1 in 5 Australians are estimated to have a disability but are twice as likely to be unemployed.

Council's recruitment processes focus on diversifying our workforce to encourage greater participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, people with disability and women in non-traditional roles.

Council now has twelve employees living with a disability, up from four in 2013, and six Indigenous employees, up from one in 2013. Council has increased its ratio of female to male staff 19% in 2013 to 24% in 2022, with female staff in several non-traditional roles such as building inspector, engineering, bridge construction and plant operations.

Future leaders, succession planning and identifying and assisting people managers

Council is taking steps to ensure that our critical leaders have a succession plan and are actively engaged in developing at least one team member for their role.

Council openly promotes development opportunities to ensure future leaders are both 'willing' and 'able'.

Opportunities such as conferences, training and special projects are available to staff.

We are investing and developing our people managers to ensure they have the right self-awareness, skills and capabilities to manage and develop employees.

Council regularly reviews our remuneration rates to ensure we are comparative.

We are working with managers to build trust, draw on diversity, encourage problem-solving and foster innovations.

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 Community Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Mayor & Councillor Support Services · Human Resources and WHS · Customer Service · Media and Communications · Finance · Governance and Policy · Internal and External Audit · Information Technology · Land Management (Including Leasing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Emergency Services · Plant, Fleet, Depots and Stores · Project Design & Management · Asset Management · GIS & Technical Services · Roads and Bridges · Transport for NSW Contract Works · Quarries · Water Supply and Sewerage Services · Stormwater and Flood Management · Parks Gardens and Cemeteries · Facilities Maintenance · Aquatic Centre Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Strategic Planning · Community and Cultural Services · Planning Services · Environmental Services · Building Control · Regulatory Services · Waste Management · Tourism and Event Planning · Economic Development

Workforce Management Strategy 2022-2026

This Workforce Management Strategy (WMS) is a four-year document that shapes the capacity and capability of the workforce to achieve council's strategic goals and objectives.

It clearly identifies how future staffing and skills requirements will be met through recruitment, staff progression and development, internal redeployment, and succession planning.

The challenges facing Council in developing its workforce have not changed significantly from when the current WMS was developed in 2017. The main difference is the significantly scaled up delivery program facing Council in the next few years, which is being addressed through a staged review of our resourcing strategy.

The Workforce Strategies identified in the current WMS have been reviewed by staff and found to still be appropriate and relevant to the current challenges facing Council. A review of the Actions under each strategy has also been undertaken, with most of these still being appropriate, and the following additional strategy/actions have been identified based on recent discussions around resourcing and delivery of the latest Community Strategic Plan;

- **Strategy 1: Promoting Kyogle Council as a local Employer of Choice**
 - Review existing vehicle policy to provide for reduced commuter use charges to encourage staff to take vehicles home and start on the job and reduce the need for parking and storage at depots, and to include provisions that will allow for an increase in the take up of electric and hybrid vehicles.
- **Strategy 2: Retaining and Attracting a Diverse Workforce**
 - Review employee benefits policy to provide for more flexibility in assisting with relocation and accommodation expenses to help attract and retain staff to key positions.
- **Strategy 3: Creating a Contemporary Workforce**
 - Provide additional staffing levels in community development to allow for increased community engagement and implementation of the latest Community Strategic Plan priorities.
- **Strategy 4: Investing in Skills**
 - Implement processes that allow for the preferential recruitment and retention of trainees and apprentices within Council on a permanent basis.
 - Provide additional staffing levels in financial services, initially targeting a graduate or undergraduate accounting role.
- **Strategy 5: Improving Productivity and Leveraging Technology**
 - No change.
- **Strategy 6: Maximising Management and Leadership;**
 - Provide for additional staffing levels in Human Resources to allow for a full-time Work Health Safety role and a full-time Human Resources advisory role.

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 Council's achievements and maintain a positive image of the organisation.
Review the employee benefits that can be made available within Council's 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 Council's 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.
Review existing vehicle policy to provide for reduced commuter use charges to encourage staff to take vehicles home, start on the job and reduce the need for parking and storage at depots. Include provisions that will allow for an increase in the take up of electric and hybrid vehicles.

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.
Review employee benefits policy to provide for more flexibility in assisting with relocation and accommodation expenses to help attract and retain staff to key positions.

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.
Provide additional staffing levels in community development to allow for increased community engagement and implementation of the latest Community Strategic Plan priorities.

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.
Encourage and foster internal promotion and retention of skilled workers.
Important performance-based rewards that acknowledge the use and acquisition of skills.
Continue to implement and resource an organisational-wide training plan.
Implement processes that allow for the preferential recruitment and retention of trainees and apprentices within Council on a permanent basis.
Provide additional staffing levels in financial services, initially targeting a graduate or undergraduate accounting role.

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 Council's strategic direction and operational requirements.
Provide for additional staffing levels in Human Resources to allow for a full-time Work Health Safety role and a full-time Human Resources advisory role.