



Workforce Management Plan 2017 – 2021



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Message from the General Manager



The requirement to develop an Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework by the State Government on Local Government that includes a Resourcing Strategy involving the preparation of a Workforce Management Plan has enabled Council to identify barriers within the workforce that may impede the implementation of the Community Strategic Plan and the associated delivery programs and develop strategies to overcome these challenges.

A committed, diverse, well trained and motivated workforce with strong and qualified leadership is critical to the success of the Council and the expectations of the community being realised.

Getting the right people in the right jobs is paramount to success and requires a commitment to attract, develop, retain and recognise talented and motivated employees who are aligned to Council's Corporate Values and Behaviours.

Council have taken a proactive approach with a "grow your own" philosophy, creating traineeships and apprenticeships and training staff to fill the current and impending gaps identified with those due to retire in the near future or where there are skills needs that cannot be filled. As well, Council has provided the resources to create new positions to improve its service delivery levels, to catch up on projects and to meet additional statutory requirements continually imposed on local councils.

Through our Workforce Plan, we are focused on attracting and retaining quality people, including trainees, and in investing in developing our leaders.

This workforce plan incorporates strategic objectives which aim to support Narromine Shire Council in achieving the skilled, motivated, flexible and diverse workforce it needs to deliver value for money services that make a difference to our local communities, while at the same time, maintaining our position as an employer of choice.



Jane Redden
General Manager

An Effective Workforce Management Plan

The development of an effective Workforce Plan enables Council to focus on the medium and the long term and provides a framework for dealing with immediate human resource challenges in a consistent way. An essential element of the Council's workforce plan is that it must address the human resource requirements of the delivery program.

Council is a labour intensive organisation requiring a diverse range of professional qualifications and operational skills to undertake the vast number of functions required by Council. The Workforce Plan has developed strategies that are required to attract and manage employees and our resources ahead of anticipated business challenges. It is needed to guide the actions of management in their human resources responsibilities and Council in its resource allocation role and strategic policy decisions.

Narromine Shire Council's Workforce Management Plan is our commitment to ensuring it has a workforce capable of delivering positive outcomes for the organisation and the community.

To allow this to happen, Council must recruit, develop and train staff, as well as recognise talented and motivated employees who share our vision, aspirations and values and guiding principles.

Council envisages a relatively stable workforce in respect to the numbers of staff employed. Variables such as statutory requirements or changes to grant funding may impact on staffing level requirements, but in the foreseeable future, Council considers workforce numbers to remain fairly static.



Workforce Strategy Objectives

Workforce planning is a critical strategic activity that is intended to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of appropriately trained employees to carry out the activities of Council. In brief, the correct people are in the correct place at the correct time to build a strong, connected and sustainable organisation now and for the future.

It provides managers with a framework for making staffing decisions based on the Council's capacity, values, management plan, budget and other available resources.

The Narromine Shire Council Workforce Plan is a strategic approach to address current and potential future shortages in the Australian labour market that have the potential to affect our organisation. Within Local Government, there are a diverse range of services delivered with many specialised roles. The potential shortages to the market could have a significant effect on our industry and our ability to respond to community needs and interests. Council aims to be an employer of choice for existing and potential candidates across the generational ranges.

Council's workforce plan is a continuous process designed to shape our workforce and to ensure that it has the capacity to deliver our objectives into the future. The strategy includes consideration of the following national and local employment trends and issues:

- ❖ Shrinking future workforce
- ❖ Ageing workforce
- ❖ Generational diversity
- ❖ Skills Shortage
- ❖ Workforce recruitment
- ❖ Workforce retention
- ❖ Regulation/legislation

The strategy extends current human resource procedures and should be read in conjunction with these and other conditions outlined in the Local Government (State) Award and various council agreements.

Our Labour Market

The retention of highly skilled / motivated employees is becoming more difficult for Council as it cannot afford to compete with salary packages and employment conditions being offered by other employers in nearby Dubbo. Constant legislation and government policy changes continue to impact on Council's ability to meet the cost shifting obligations and new requirements, e.g. growth in governance and regulations, dealing with town planning and animal control and so on.

Due to the Shire being in rural New South Wales, and close to the regional centre of Dubbo, it is often difficult to attract a suitable pool of applicants when advertising for specialist or executive staff, unless Council has incentives to satisfy their needs. Several employees live outside of the Shire and commute to work as a result of this; this trend will continue.



Current Organisation Structure

The following structural changes commenced April 2020 in response to some resignations in the Regulatory services department and to continue meet the needs of the community in the ever growing economic development space.

The structure will comprise of five distinct departments that work in close collaboration with each other to ensure that the needs of the community are met.

These departments are:

General Manager's Office

This department's roles and responsibilities will include the following functions:

- ❖ Mayor and Council Secretariat
- ❖ Payroll, Industrial Relations, WHS & Risk Management, Human Resources, Workforce Planning, Workers' Compensation

Governance

This department's roles and responsibilities will include the following functions:

- ❖ Biosecurity Weeds, Environment, Health Administration & Inspection, Animal Control, Waste – Licensing / Compliance, Landcare
- ❖ Governance, Records Management, Property Services, Executive Services, Legal, Insurance and Risk

Community & Economic Development

This department's roles and responsibilities will include the following functions:

- ❖ Strategic Planning, Development Assessment & Compliance
- ❖ Community Services
- ❖ Library Services
- ❖ Cultural Development
- ❖ Showground Management
- ❖ Tourism / Events
- ❖ Program Management
- ❖ Economic Development, Major Events, Business Attraction and Retention

Finance & Corporate Strategy

This department's roles and responsibilities include the following functions:

- ❖ Financial Management
- ❖ Business Analysis
- ❖ Information Technology
- ❖ Integrated Planning & Reporting
- ❖ Long Term Financial Plans
- ❖ Customer Service
- ❖ Cemetery Records
- ❖ Rating & Valuations
- ❖ Water & Sewerage Charges
- ❖ Creditors
- ❖ Debtors
- ❖ Investments
- ❖ Debt Recovery

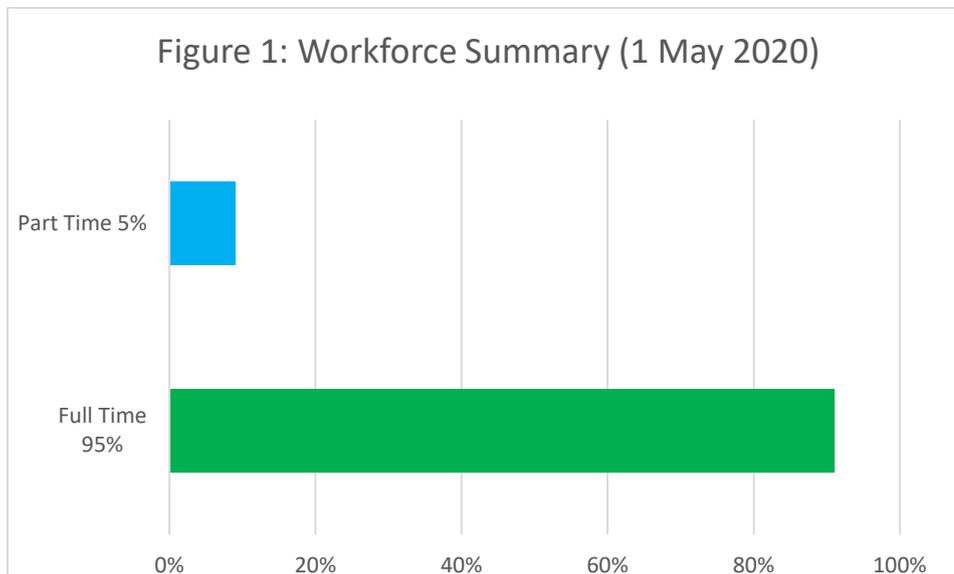
Infrastructure & Engineering Services

This department's roles and responsibilities include the following functions:

- ❖ Public Cemeteries
- ❖ Infrastructure & Buildings
- ❖ Fire Protection & Emergency Services
- ❖ Public Order & Safety
- ❖ Construction & Maintenance (including roads)
- ❖ Stormwater Management
- ❖ Aerodrome
- ❖ Water & Sewerage Services
- ❖ Recreational Buildings & Infrastructure, Parks, Playing Fields & Reserves, Swimming Pools
- ❖ Saleyards
- ❖ Public Conveniences
- ❖ Community Halls
- ❖ Asset Management
- ❖ Operational Support – Depot & Plant
- ❖ Waste Management – Domestic & Commercial

Our Workforce

As of 1 May 2020 Narromine Shire Council had 76 full-time and 7 part-time (less than full 35 hours per week employment) positions in its structure. This equates to 83 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions.

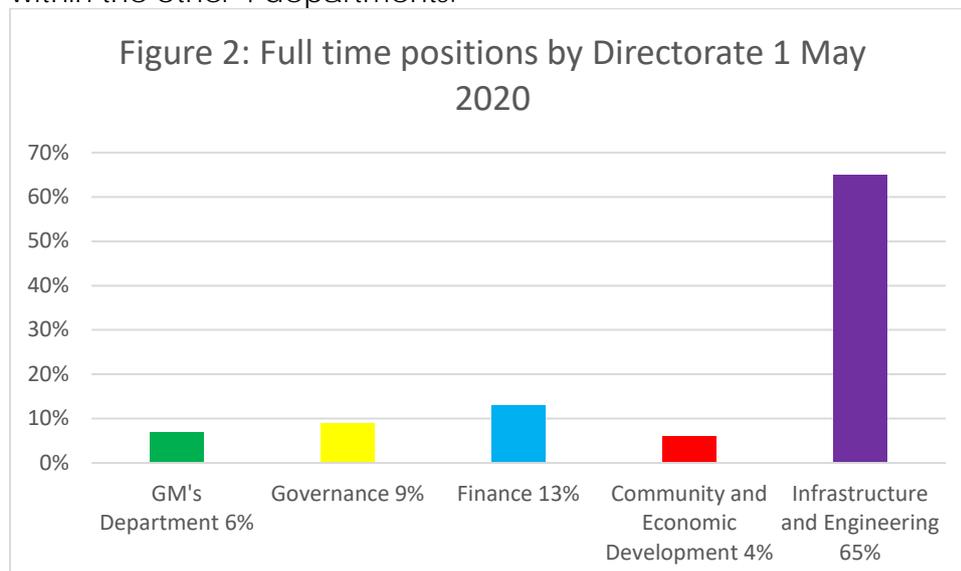


Casual employees also make up part of Narromine Shire Council's workforce and engagement is driven by the need to meet seasonal requirements and to back fill to cover staff leave. They have not been included in this plan.

Of our workforce 44% of the positions are considered Indoor positions and 56% outdoor.

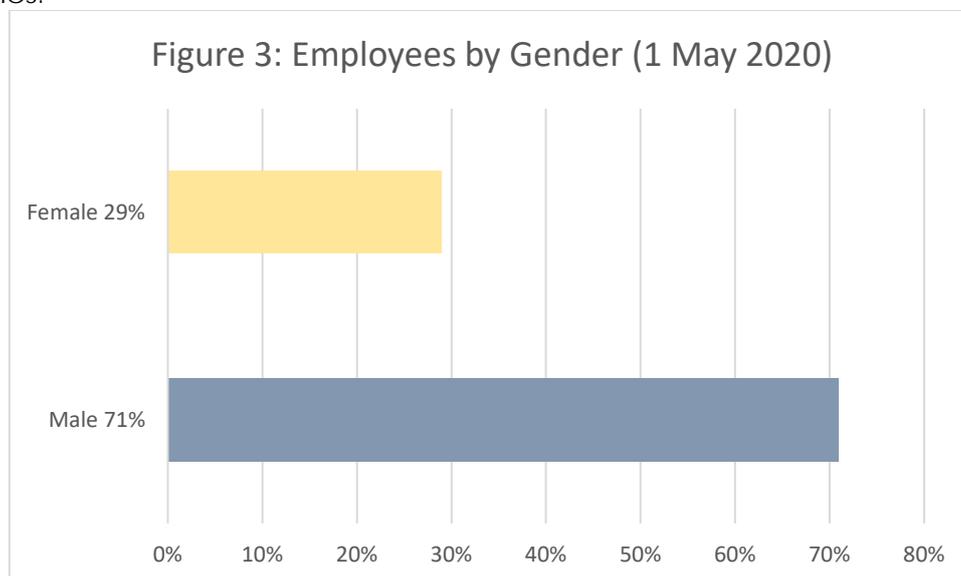
Council staff have an average of just over 9 years' service with the organisation and overall a staggering 763 years' service is held within our workforce.

Of the now 5 departments, the bulk of the operational staff are within the Infrastructure and Engineering Services Department with mostly indoor staff contained within the other 4 departments.



Gender

Narromine Shire Council's permanent workforce is made up of 71% of males and 29% of females.



Within certain areas of Narromine Shire Council the gender mix is quite dominant towards one specific gender.

For example, Infrastructure & Engineering Services (IES) has a very high proportion of males at 89%, whilst in the Finance Department, females are the dominant gender having 64% of female team members.

These imbalances are generally driven by society's expectations formed from history as well as the duties associated with department functions.

Council's senior management consists of a female General Manager and of the 3 Directors 100% (3) are male. Of the mid-level Managers 42% are female and 58% Male.

Diversity

Narromine Shire has a low level of cultural diversity with less than 4% of residents born overseas.

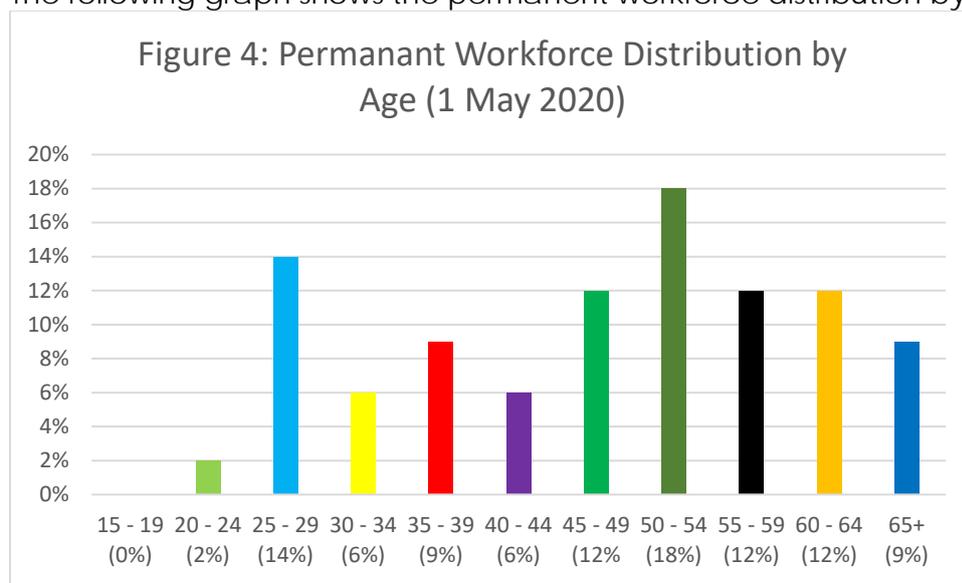
Australia has an indigenous population rate of 2.3% while NSW as a whole is 2%. Narromine Shire has an indigenous population of approximately 19%. Of the Narromine Shire Council staff 17% identify as Indigenous.

Narromine Shire has 4.2% of our population living with a disability. Of them, people of working age made up only 1.3% of our population. Of the Narromine Shire Council staff 2% identify as having a disability.

Age

At 1 May 2020 the average age of the permanent workforce at Narromine Shire Council was 47. The youngest employee was 20 and the oldest 70. The overall age profile for Narromine Shire Council employees is aging with 60% of employees considered “mature aged workers” being 45 years of age or older.

The following graph shows the permanent workforce distribution by age:



It is anticipated within the next 5 years 21% of staff will retire and in the following 5 years a further 12% of staff will retire for a total loss of 33% of our current staff in the next 10 years to retirement.

These are important factors in the development of our overall workforce Management Strategy and succession planning will be a key criteria to identify and develop plans to transfer the knowledge of these staff members prior to retirement.

Council has noted that over the past few years a number of employees have made the choice to continue employment beyond the traditional retirement age of 66 years for males and 65 for females.

Employee Leave Entitlements (ELE)

The increased number of employees reaching potential retirement age, and the bulk of them being long serving employees with large leave entitlements, means that additional pressure will be placed on ELE reserves. The Office of Local Government recommends that 20% of long service leave liability should be held in reserves but the employee age profile indicates that this reserve may need to be increased to provide for the actual liability.

As at 1 July 2019 the ELE reserve was \$545,230 and this represents approximately 35% of Council's current Long Service Leave Liability.

Future budgets will draw on the estimated retirements outlined in this workforce plan to ensure adequate funds are available in the ELE reserve.

Office and Depot Workplace Accommodation

Accommodating Council's workforce comfortably with access to fast reliable technology in the workplace is a constant challenge. Whilst the office has seen improvements with the purchase of the Credit Union building and will again see further space available in that building in the near future, the accommodation at the depot is at a premium. It is expected that there will be some adjustments to supervisory positions that need to be based at the depot to ensure adequate supervision of staff and further suitable accommodation will have to be constructed at the depot.



Gap Analysis

Critical Specialist Key Positions

Part of the workforce planning process is to identify positions which are critical specialist key positions, that is, positions that contain specialist skills needed to run the business, are difficult to fill when vacant due to overall workforce shortages and are harder to fill with consultants.

Steps must be taken to ensure that Council has processes in place to ensure succession planning, giving existing employees the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge within the organisation, as well as allowing Council to retain highly skilled employees. The Workforce Plan addresses this.

Positions identified within the Narromine Shire Council as critical key specialist positions include:

- ❖ Manager Health Building and Environmental Services
- ❖ Manager Planning
- ❖ Team Leader Road Maintenance and Construction (Grader Drivers)
- ❖ Ranger
- ❖ Information Technology roles
- ❖ High level Engineering Positions (Director, Managers Roads and Utilities)

These positions have been identified for several reasons such as a nationwide skills shortage in some areas, considerable experience being needed to complete some roles to a high standard (Grader drivers), and the difficulty of recruiting some professionals to our rural location.

Strategies currently being undertaken by Council for the previously identified positions are:

- ❖ **Manager Health Building and Environmental Services and Manager Planning**
Whilst the critical functions of these positions can be outsourced to consultants it is preferable to Council to have a permanent staff member in these roles. Council can use the attraction and retention procedures to attract and retain these highly skilled staff.
- ❖ **Team Leader Road Construction and Maintenance**
Council currently has employed through promotion, previous team members up to Team leaders (grader drivers) who now have good experience. Extensive worksite training will continue to up-skill these employees. Currently younger inexperienced plant operators are spending time with the experienced operators, using them as mentors. This allows them to pass on their many years of knowledge and experience and the engagement of specialist Grader Operator Trainers will support the upskilling of our current staff.

❖ **Ranger**

Finding suitably qualified Rangers has proven to be quite difficult although Council has now been successful in employing a qualified full time Ranger to fulfil the requirements of this position. Potential trainees in this area will address workforce gaps.

❖ **IT Roles**

Whilst the critical functions of this role can also be outsourced, Council currently services all our IT needs in house. NSC currently employs an IT trainee and will continue to upskill young members of the community to carry out this role.

❖ **High Level Engineering Positions**

Attracting and retaining civil qualified Engineers has proved difficult in the past for Narromine Shire Council. We are in a period of assisting current staff with essential local knowledge to gain qualifications. We will continue to provide Engineering cadetships to “grow our own” engineering professionals alongside creating attractive remuneration packages to attract qualified staff.

Steps that have been considered to ensure these critical key specialist positions and other positions are not left vacant include:

- ❖ Succession planning to “grow our own”
- ❖ Apprenticeships, Traineeships and Cadetships
- ❖ Professional Development Programs, to allow access to relevant training
- ❖ Regular reporting to Council to keep them informed of the risks
- ❖ Regular reviews of the organisation structure to identify gaps and then fill them

Delivery Program workforce gaps

The four year delivery program is calling for increased resources within the sporting and recreation areas of Council including provision of resources and services to the community. The General Manager has addressed this need in the 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 financial years with dedicated positions created and filled in this area with great work being carried out by the incumbents.

We have improved skills in the Project Management and program management areas to address identified needs related to grant funding of projects and the subsequent successful delivery of these projects.

Our Workforce Challenges

Change creates challenges for any employer and in meeting those challenges Council aims to be an employer of choice within our local community. Council has some ability to attract and retain a diverse workforce through a range of flexible employment options. The workforce plan links with the commitments outlined in the Community Strategic Plan and the delivery and operational plans and programs.

Over the next four years, Council will aim to deliver effective and efficient services through the use of innovative approaches to achieve its strategic direction.

Through consultation four key challenges to our workforce have been identified and a plan created to respond to these challenges will be integrated into the Human Resources strategy planning processes:

- ❖ Ageing Workforce
- ❖ Staff Development
- ❖ Technology impacts
- ❖ Succession planning

Ageing Workforce

Ageing workforce is a major consideration across our council with the average age of our workers being 47. A vast number of our employees are reaching retirement age, with a predicted 21% of staff expected to retire in the next 10 years.

Some of these workers are out in the field and could pose WHS/Insurance risks given the nature of manual tasks undertaken and their working environment. In order to minimise risk whilst ensuring the needs and expectations of our community are still met, Council has to develop a strategy to address these issues. An example of a strategy could be the consideration of phased retirement and/or changing the organisation structure to retain key staff part-time as they transition to retirement and train others.

With Council's ageing workforce Council needs to begin training the next generation to take over from long term serving staff. Where an intention for a long serving employee to retire is forthcoming, every effort will be undertaken to consider if a trainee / apprentice role is an additional appropriate option.

Staff Development

Staff Development is important for Narromine Shire Council to ensure that current staff have the skills to meet the changing needs of the community and the constant legislative changes faced within Local Government.

Council creates individual training plans annually for all staff and ensure that staff are developed to do their own jobs and in some cases as a back up to other staff in other positions.

Technology Changes

The role of Council is constantly changing in order to meet the needs and expectations of our community and government policy changes. New technology, new works methods and management systems are being looked at to ensure Council continues to meet these needs and expectations. Staff need to be continuously undertaking training to ensure their skills are kept current and relevant. The upgrading of the Information Technology (IT) function to a management position, the performance of the selected person, development of IT Strategic Plans and Steering Groups have enabled the opportunities offered by IT to be further explored.

Succession Planning

As identified in the Gap Analysis, Council needs to have succession planning strategies in place to ensure that critical specialist key positions are not left vacant. Due to the difficulty Council experiences in attracting and retaining skilled workers Council has created a process of identifying existing staff with capabilities and ambitions to progress through the organisation. Council will now populate the succession plan for current staff in all departments.

Council maintains a strong view on the benefits of giving existing staff the opportunities of being mentored by and learning from long term existing staff, on the grounds of keeping local people in the community and continuity of staff.



Organisation structure

Council will continue to make minor changes to its organisational structure to meet the objectives identified within the Community Strategic Plan and the Delivery Program.

Council will address the strong themes within the CSP for advances to be made in the areas of open space and sporting facilities by focusing on the resources within that area to address the community's requirements.

The Community and Economic Development Department has grown with another dedicated position to assist with grants and the delivery of projects. The Planning function has been re-located to this department to take advantage of the symbioses between economic development and planning.

The Biosecurity Weeds, Environment, Health Administration & Inspection, Animal Control, Waste – Licensing / Compliance, Landcare have been moved to a new Governance department that retains the Governance, Records Management, Property Services, Executive Services, Legal and Insurance functions.

The Director Governance will report to the General Manager to highlight the importance of Internal Audit and Risk Management and meet the Office of Local Government (OLG) new legislation. There have been no new staff members added and this is simply a structural change.

The roads management of the Infrastructure and Engineering Services department has taken priority and is now a single management area to highlight the importance of road maintenance within our Shire and this will continue to be a priority area.



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