



Shire of

Bruce Rock

*Where friends become **family***



Workforce Plan 2023/24 – 2026/27

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1 INTRODUCTION

As with all Local Governments, the Shire of Bruce Rock (Shire) requires a diverse workforce with a broad range of skills to ensure it can deliver on its functions, including (but not limited to):

- Establishing and effectively managing infrastructure and resources.
- Providing services required by the community.
- Promoting the Shire and its economic wellbeing.
- Providing an operational framework for environmental and community health.

The purpose of this Workforce Plan is to identify the Shire's workforce requirements, and to determine a set of actions to enhance workforce capacity, capability and resources (where required), with the ultimate purpose of ensuring sustainable service delivery now and into the future. In particular, workforce planning will:

Ensure appropriate numbers of staff are being recruited or developed to meet future needs.

Identify potential problems, manage risk and minimise crisis management cycles.

Contain human resources costs, including the cost of turnover, absenteeism, structural changes and staff movement.

Develop workforce skills that take time to grow.

Identify staff development needs.

Make staffing decisions to provide services in regional and rural areas.

Optimise the use of human, financial and other resources.

Integrate human resource management issues into business planning.

Improve employee productivity through better job design.

Improve employee relations.

Increase employees' job satisfaction.

The Workforce Plan takes into account corporate and business objectives, such as financial targets, service delivery objectives and community benefits. It also examines potential external influences over workforce supply and demand.

2 INTEGRATED PLANNING

Local Governments in Western Australia are required to undertake Integrated Planning and Reporting as the guiding process for the planning and monitoring of services and activities. The Workforce Plan is a core informing strategy under the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework, as it identifies workforce requirements and strategies to meet current and future operations.

Strategic Community Plan 2022-2032

At a strategic level, this Workforce Plan contributes to achieving the Shire's **vision**, as outlined in the Strategic Community Plan 2022-2032.

"The Shire of Bruce Rock Leads the Way"

We will achieve our vision by maintaining and enhancing the Bruce Rock lifestyle, increase business and employment opportunities and achieve population growth in an environmentally sustainable way.

It also considers the Shire’s priorities in the areas of community, economy, environment and governance, as identified in the Integrated Strategic Plan 2022-32:

COMMUNITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Our community is engaged and has a healthy lifestyle 1.2 Inclusive community activities, events, and initiatives 1.3 Shire facilities are maintained in a strategic manner to meet community need 1.4 Support and emergency services planning, response, and recovery
ECONOMY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Assist the local economy to grow 2.2 Roads are a key economic driver across the Shire 2.3 Workers and their families can work and reside in the Shire 2.4 Tourism helps diversify our local economy
ENVIRONMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Maintain a high standard of environmental health and waste services 3.2 Conservation of our natural environment and resources
GOVERNANCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 Our organisation is well positioned and has capacity for the future 4.2 Shire communication is regular, clear and transparent 4.3 Proactive and well governed Shire

To ensure it can deliver on these priorities, the Shire will need staff that have:

- Strong project management skills.
- Strong communication skills.
- Specialised skills.
- The ability to learn and develop.
- The ability to be proactive and engaged with the community and other stakeholders.

Customer Service Charter

The Shire’s Customer Service Charter plays an important role in guiding the Workforce Plan by setting clear expectations and standards for customer service. The Customer Service Charter outlines the organisation's commitment to delivering high-quality service, defines the level of service customers can expect, and establishes the responsibilities of the workforce in achieving those service standards.

In 2022, the Shire conducted a community satisfaction survey. Key results relevant to this Workforce Plan included the following:

70% of respondents rated the Shire as good to excellent to do business with.	Staff were rated as very responsive to enquiries.	76% of respondents rated Shire staff as friendly and with a high standard of service.
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AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT IDENTIFIED:

- Accuracy and clarity of information provided to customers.
- Regularly updating and informing the community.
- Openness and transparency with Council decisions.

Budget

All staff costs are reflected in the Shire's budget, including wages, worker's compensation, superannuation and training costs. The budget reflects the workforce expenses required to achieve the objectives set out in the Shire's Corporate Business Plan.

3 SHIRE OF BRUCE ROCK COMMUNITY

The characteristics of the Shire's community are an important factor in determining the Shire's workforce capacity and capability requirements. Key features of the Bruce Rock community are as follows:

- Population: 979 people (up from 930 in the 2016 Census).
- Median age: 48 years (up from 47 in the 2016 Census).
- Number of families: 229
- Unemployment: 3.7%
- Median weekly household income: \$1,284 (down from \$1,653 in the 2016 Census).

4 EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Other external factors, such as the status of the Western Australian economy and the Local Government environment, also have an impact on the Shire's workforce.

The Western Australian Economy

The Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation publishes a monthly economic profile for Western Australia. The following is an overview of data from the economic profile for June 2023 that is relevant to this Workforce Plan¹:

- The average **Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose to 7.3% in 2022**, up from 3.5% in 2021.
- The annual average CPI (excluding electricity) rose to 5.1% in 2021-22. The Western Australian Government's State Budget 2023-24 forecasts Perth's annual average CPI (excluding electricity) will rise to **3.5% in 2023-24** and 2.75% in 2024-25.
- Western Australia's **employment fell 0.2%** (2,690) to 1.54 million in May 2023.
- Western Australia's **total hours worked in all jobs fell 3.3%** to 213.7 million hours in May 2023, following a rise of 2.4% in April 2023.
- Western Australia's **unemployment rate rose to 3.7%** in May 2023, from 3.6% in April 2023.

¹ [Western Australia's economy and international trade \(www.wa.gov.au\)](http://www.wa.gov.au)

The Western Australian Department of Treasury’s Economic and Revenue Forecasting May 2022² provides the following employment and wage projections for Western Australia:

Percentage Annual Growth %				
	2022-23 Forward Estimate	2023-24 Forward Estimate	2024-25 Forward Estimate	2025-26 Forward Estimate
Unemployment	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75
Employment	2	1.25	1.25	1.25
Wage Price Index	2.75	3	3	3

These figures foreshadow the following potential effects on the Shire’s workforce:

- Wage increases to stay in line with average CPI.
- Levels of productivity falling.
- Increase in requests for workplace flexibility.
- Increase in competition for labour.

Local Government Environment

According to the Local Government National Industry Insights Report³, there were 190,800 employees in Local Government in Australia at the end of June 2021. The report identified that:

- 55% of the 537 Local Governments in Australia are in regional or remote areas.
- 68% of the workforce is full-time, 16% is part-time and 16% is employed on a casual basis.
- Approximately 45% of employees have a diploma or high-level qualification.
- Employment levels in the Local Government sector increased between 2001 and 2021, and are projected to continue to increase over the coming five years.
- Apprentice and trainee commencements and completions fell overall between 2011 and 2020 (there were just 47 commencements in 2020, compared to 250 in 2012).
- The most common intended occupation for apprentices and trainees was Earthmoving Plant Operators.

The Local Government Industry Reference Committee’s (LGIRC) 2019 Skills Forecast⁴ indicates that over half (45%) of the Local Government workforce was aged over 45 in 2016. The implications of this for the Local Government sector, according to LGIRC, include:

- The need for career transition and succession planning management.
- New methods to source and attract staff from further afield are needed.
- People are staying in positions longer, which limits capacity to bring on young trainees.
- Key employees retire without other employees being trained to backfill the role.
- Loss of key corporate knowledge or no knowledge exchange.
- High turnover and loss of skill, leading to skills gaps and shortages.

² [2022-23 WA Budget – Economic Forecasts \(www.wa.gov.au\)](http://www.wa.gov.au)

³ [Australian Industry and Skills Committee, January 2022](#)

⁴ [Local Government Industry Reference Committee 2019 Skills Forecast](#)

Considering these implications, the LGIRC suggests that efforts to retain the ageing workforce will be important to balance the lack of new entrants to the sector, and to establish valuable mentoring and training opportunities for new employees from older and experienced workers.

Local Government Professionals Australia⁵ suggested that the key challenges facing Local Government, particularly in the face of prolonged skills shortages, include that the workforce is:

- Considerably older than the Australian all-industry workforce.
- Struggling to attract and retain workers under 30 years of age.
- Experiencing challenges in recruiting and retaining apprentices.
- Facing major skills shortages in key professional and technical occupations, including Town Planners, Environmental Health Officers, Building Surveyors, Engineers and Plant Operators.
- Not well-positioned regarding new and emerging soft skills.

This analysis suggests the following challenges for the Shire’s workforce:

- Difficulty in competing with the private sector on remuneration.
- Lack of career progression or opportunity in small Local Governments.
- Lack of housing availability.
- Skill shortages in technical occupations.

5 OUR WORKFORCE

Workforce Structure

The Shire’s Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the overall operation of the organisation and the delivery of Council’s strategic goals. The Chief Executive Officer has several powers delegated by Council.

Reporting to the Chief Executive Officer, the Shire’s workforce is functionally structured under five business units, as shown in the table below.

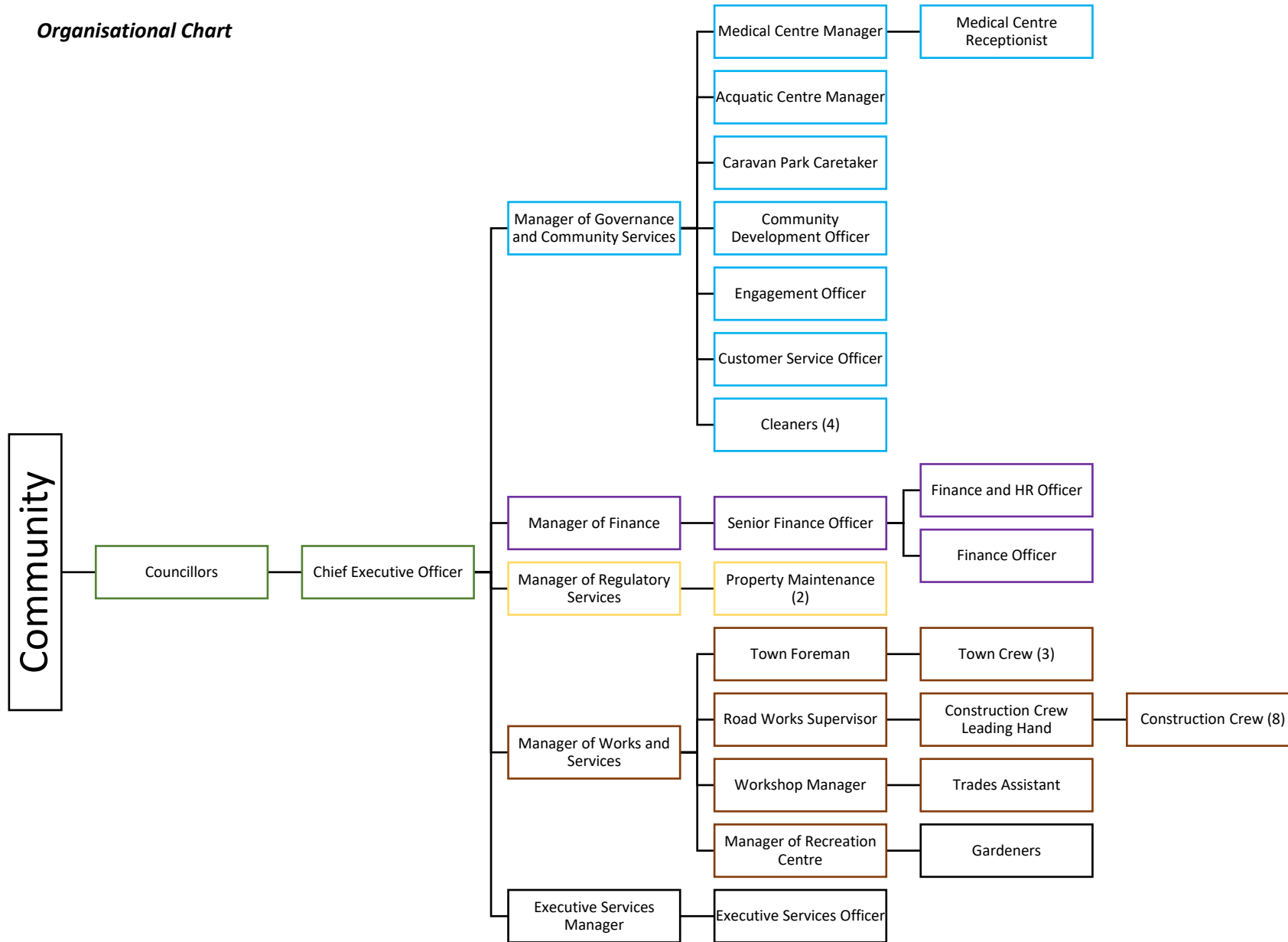
Business Unit	Responsibilities	Positions
Governance and Community Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance and compliance reporting • Administration • Assurance • Risk management • Insurance cover and claims • Grant applications • Procurement • Information technology • Human resources • Records management • Emergency management • Department of Transport licensing • Licensing of dogs and cats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager of Governance and Community Services • Community Development Officer • Engagement Officer • Customer Service Officer • Aquatic Centre Manager • Medical Centre Manager • Medical Centre Receptionist • Caravan Park Caretaker • Cleaners

⁵ [Local Government Professionals Australia - 2021-22 Pre-Budget Submissions \(treasury.gov.au\)](https://www.treasury.gov.au/~/media/2021/02/16/Local-Government-Professionals-Australia-2021-22-Pre-Budget-Submissions)

Business Unit	Responsibilities	Positions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ranger services • Medical Centre • Library • Recreation Centre • Caravan Park • Cemetery • Customer service • Community engagement • Communications • Cleaners 	
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial management • Budgets • Monthly and annual financial statements • Asset management • Compliance • Long-term financial planning • Payroll 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager of Finance • Senior Finance Officer • Finance and Human Resources Officer • Finance Officer
Regulatory Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Building approvals • Food and Health Act compliance • Property maintenance • Refuse site • Environmental health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager of Regulatory Services • Property Maintenance Crew
Works and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road works and maintenance • Building maintenance • Plant and equipment • Gardens and recreation grounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager of Works and Services • Town Foreman and Crew • Road Works Supervisor and Crew • Workshop Manager and Trades Assistant • Recreation Centre Manager and Gardeners
Executive Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive support • Council meetings and functions • Elections • Strategic projects • Freedom of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Services Manager • Executive Services Officer







An organisational chart is provided on the following page.

Organisational Chart



Workforce Profile

The following table provides a snapshot of key aspects of the Shire's workforce profile, including a comparison of data collected in 2018 and 2023.

Profile Aspect		2018	2023
Type of Engagement		35 full-time 11 part-time/casual	29 full-time 8 part-time 7 casual
Average Age		42 years	48 years
Age Distribution (# employees)		25 years and under: 8 45 years and under: 17 60 years and under: 19 61 years and over: 2	25 years and under: 1 45 years and under: 14 60 years and under: 21 61 years and over: 8
Gender Distribution		Females: 19 Males: 27	Females: 23 Males: 28
Years of Service		20 years plus: 2 10 – 20 years: 10 5 – 10 years: 16 Under 5 years: 18	20 years plus service: 2 10 – 20 years: 7 5 – 10 years: 10 1 – 5 years: 13 Less than 12 months: 12
Salary budget		\$2,575,340	\$2,815,398

Consistent with trends observed in the Local Government sector across Australia, the changes in the Shire's workforce profile between 2018 and 2023 show the following:

- The Shire has an aging workforce, with:
 - the average age having increased by six years (from 42 to 48, or 14%); and
 - the percentage of employees over 45 years having substantially increased from about 46% to about 66%.
- The Shire is struggling to attract and retain young employees, with the number of employees under 25 years drastically reducing from eight to one between 2018 and 2023. This is in spite of the Shire providing the following attraction and retention incentives.
 - Payment above award wages.
 - Superannuation additional contribution options.
 - Housing at reduced rental rates, where available.
 - Provision of uniforms.
 - Contemporary equipment.
 - Professional development opportunities
- There has been a high turnover of staff, with the percentage of staff with five or less years of tenure with the Shire increasing from about 39% to about 57%. Reasons for staff turnover include alternative employment, relocation, retirement and termination. Employee exist data for 2022 and 2023 (up to June) is shown in the table below.

Year	Number of Exits	Reasons
2022	9	Alternative employment (3) Relocation (3) Retired (1) Terminated (2)
2023 (as at June)	5	Terminated (3) Retired (1) Health reasons (1)

As at July 2023, the majority of staff intended to remain at the Shire for the next 12 months (65%), with two indicating they intended to leave to pursue another job and two for 'other reasons'.

While the percentage of full-time employees in the Shire in 2023 (66%) is in line with Local Governments across Australia, this figure has seen a considerable reduction since 2018, when the percentage of full-time employees was 76%. This could be an indicator of employees increasingly valuing and seeking flexible working arrangements, a trend observed since the pandemic.

The Shire's salary budget has seen an increase of approximately 9% since 2018. The Shire's Long-Term Financial Plan 2023-2033 forecasts the following employee costs, with an annual increase of 3.5%. This is consistent with the expectation that wage increases will stay in line with average CPI.

Expense	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Employee Costs	\$2,711,393	\$2,806,292	\$2,904,504	\$3,006,157

Values

Values are important in increasing staff morale and in guiding employee performance, behaviour and interactions with others. They also play a role in employee attraction and retention.

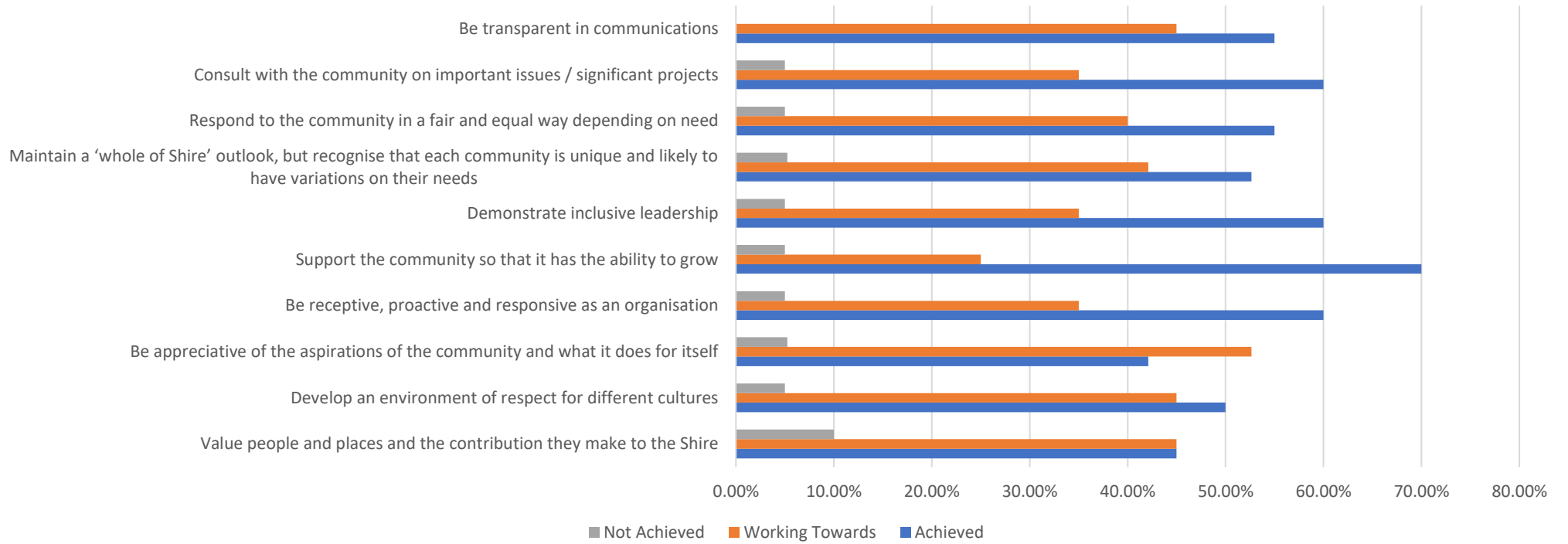
The Shire's values are:

- Respect**
- Inclusiveness**
- Fairness and equity**
- Communication**

At the staff survey undertaken in July 2023, employee feedback was sought on the Shire's values and whether they are demonstrated by fellow colleagues and Councillors. To assist in providing feedback, employees were provided with a list of ten behavioural examples that align with the Shire's four values.

As shown in the chart below, based on the responses provided, most staff feel that the Shire's values are demonstrated by Shire staff and Councillors, with only a small percentage (less than 10%) disagreeing.

Behaviours Aligned to the Shire's Values



As part of the survey, staff also indicated what they most value about working at the Shire, which included the following:

- ✓ Friendships and positive working relationships with colleagues.
- ✓ Challenging nature of work.
- ✓ Job security.
- ✓ Living and working in a country town.
- ✓ Learning opportunities offered.
- ✓ Work variety.
- ✓ Ability to help the community and satisfaction in serving others.

Equal Employment Opportunity

The Shire recognises its legal obligations under the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 and actively promotes equal employment opportunities. Staff selection is based on merit and is not influenced by gender, marital status, pregnancy, race, disability, or religious or political convictions.

The following table shows the distribution of equity groups as at 31 March 2023.

Equity Group	Number of Staff
Women	23
Women - Indoor	15
Women - Outdoor	8
Women in management (Tier 2)	2
People from culturally diverse backgrounds	2
Culturally diverse backgrounds - Indoor	2
Culturally diverse backgrounds - Outdoor	0
Aboriginal Australians	2
People with disability	1
People with disability - Indoor	0
People with disability - Outdoor	1

Improvement Areas

In the last Workforce Plan, staff identified several areas of improvement for the workplace. As part of the employee survey undertaken in July 2023 to inform this Workforce Plan, staff were asked to assess whether such opportunities for improvement had been addressed over the past five years. The following table provides an overview of staff responses.

Requested Area of Improvement	July 2023 Survey Response
More social interaction and less separation of administration and works crew units.	81% indicated this is still unmet.
Communication between Managers and staff to encourage more collaboration and sharing of knowledge about roles.	63% indicated this has been met.
Improvement of records management across all levels.	52% indicated this is still unmet (28% N/A).
Feedback on Performance Appraisals, issues and ideas raised, including training requirements and concerns.	70% indicated this has been met.

Achievements noted since the last Workforce Plan 2018-2022 include the following:

- ✓ The Shire brand has been revitalised and is consistent across recruitment practices.
- ✓ Line Manager reporting relationships reviewed and team/unit reviews and strategies implemented.
- ✓ Workplace culture that values working safely is a high priority by all staff.
- ✓ Training and development plans implemented for all staff and will continually be improved.
- ✓ Working towards improved records management policies, processes and systems.
- ✓ High work satisfaction.

Workforce Risks

A workforce risk assessment has been undertaken to inform the actions to be implemented as part of the Shire's Workforce Plan for the period 2023-24 to 2026-27. The risk assessment is outlined in the table below.

Challenge	Risk Assessment				
	Catastrophic	Major	Moderate	Minor	Insignificant
Number of senior staff with less than 12 months tenure.			x		
Technology can improve operational efficiencies, but requires time for research, training and application.		x			
Specialist skill sets required in the organisation (project management, finance etc).		x			
Increasing governance and compliance across majority of roles.			x		
Ageing workforce.		x			
Providing social opportunities for integration of multicultural members of staff.			x		
Human resources are becoming a specialist skill set and requires time. Internal capacity is limited.			x		
Continuing to maintain a high standard of workplace safety.		x			
High turnover of staff at the Aquatic Centre.			x		

Challenge	Risk Assessment				
	Catastrophic	Major	Moderate	Minor	Insignificant
Average hours a fortnight worked is significantly higher than contracted.		X			
Difficulty in attracting suitably qualified staff.		X			
Retaining the group of employees who have completed less than three years of employment at the Shire.			X		
Opportunities for internal promotion.			X		
Lack of whole of staff social activities that are well attended and add value to work.		X			

6 ANTICIPATED ADDITIONAL WORKFORCE REQUIREMENTS

The following staffing (Full Time Employee – FTE) adjustments are anticipated to be required to be made in the coming years:

Business Unit	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Governance and Community Services	-	-	-
Finance	-0.6 FTE	-	-
Regulatory Services	-	-	-
Executive Services	+0.6 FTE	-	-
Works and Services	+1 FTE	-	-

Outside of these staffing level adjustments, additional contractors that will be required in the future may include:

- Aquatic Centre management and relief staff.
- Road construction and maintenance.
- Light vehicle inspections.
- Specialist governance consultants (in areas such as recordkeeping and auditing).

7 WORKFORCE PLAN

Based on the above analysis of workforce data, the Shire considers that it will be required to implement actions to:

- Attract and retain employees.
- Ensure succession planning.
- Provide training and development aligned with staff needs.
- Further develop organisational culture.
- Implement systems, processes and policies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Shire's operations.

1. Skills Attraction and Retention, and Succession Planning

Action	Responsible Manager/s	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27
a) Attraction: Develop and implement an attraction strategy that identifies specific approaches to attract people to the Shire workforce and to live in the communities.	MGCS		✓		
b) Attraction: Analyse positions when there is a vacancy to ensure that suitable working days / times are available to attract suitable staff.	MGCS	✓	✓	✓	✓
c) Attraction: Investigate apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities.	MGCS MOF	✓	✓		
d) Retention: Update induction information and processes, OSH and maintain register of completion.	MGCS MOWS	✓	✓	✓	✓
e) Retention: Investigate alternative structures prior to the completion of Shire apprentices and trainees for retention.	MOWS MGCS			✓	✓
f) Retention: Clear roles and responsibilities, including delegations shared amongst teams.	Management Team	✓	✓	✓	✓
g) Retention: Review employee wages, rewards and incentives to ensure that they remain competitive, attractive and fair, in the context of the Local Government sector.	Management Team	✓	✓	✓	✓
h) Retention: Continued investment in maintenance and expansion of Shire housing stock.	CEO ESM	✓	✓	✓	✓
i) Succession: Develop and implement succession processes for all business-critical roles.	CEO MGCS	✓	✓	✓	✓
j) Succession: Internal promotion opportunities are advertised and invited - positive opportunity for existing staff to be retained locally.	Management Team	✓	✓	✓	✓

1. Skills Attraction and Retention, and Succession Planning

Action	Responsible Manager/s	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27
k) Succession: Design and implement a mentoring program.	MGCS	✓	✓	✓	✓

2. Training and Development

Action	Responsible Manager/s	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27
a) Training and Development: Ensure all employees have a training and development plan, including career goal setting, which is completed as part of their annual performance review.	Management Team	✓	✓	✓	✓
b) Training and Development: Ensure timely and comprehensive provision of feedback on performance reviews.	MGCS	✓	✓	✓	✓
c) Training: Training and education of the works crew to use records, purchasing and payroll software.	MOF/MOWS	✓	✓		
d) Training: Relevant staff and Councillors are trained in the new Local Government Act.	ESM		✓		
e) Training: Provide Horticulture training to gardeners.	MOWS	✓			
f) Training: Offer first aid training across the staff.	MOF (FHRO)				✓
g) Training: Provide Cultural Awareness training to staff and Councillors.	MGCS (EO)		✓		
h) Training: Compliance in financial management requirements.	MOF	ONGOING			
i) Training: Training and Compliance in records management policies and processes.	MGCS	ONGOING			
j) Development: Provide opportunities for staff to act in other roles to facilitate knowledge transfer as part of	Management Team	ONGOING			

2. Training and Development

Action	Responsible Manager/s	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27
a broader plan for succession and to reduce downtime when staff are away					
k) Development: Offer staff personal development opportunities e.g. people management, leadership, time management	Management Team	ONGOING			

3. Organisational Culture

Action	Responsible Officer	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27
a) Meet Equal Opportunity compliance as an employer.	MGCS		✓		
b) Regular whole of staff meetings. Ensure that all employees receive consistent and regular updates on Shire activities and decisions.	CEO	ONGOING			
c) Regular team meetings e.g. administration, works, cleaners	All Management	ONGOING			
d) Encourage participation in whole of organisation social activities for inclusion and integration across teams and individuals.	ESM CEO MOWS	ONGOING			
e) Undertake a bi-annual employee engagement survey to identify concerns, challenges and barriers to achieving the desired workplace culture.	MGCS	ONGOING			
f) Improve accountability across the leadership group for effective people management by developing appropriate key performance indicators that are consistently reported and monitored.	CEO		✓	✓	✓
g) Adoption of a Reconciliation Action Plan.	CEO MGCS (EO)		✓		

4. Systems, Processes and Policies

Action	Responsible Officer	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27
a) Annual review of operations and infrastructure at the Aquatic Centre.	MOF MRS	✓	✓	✓	✓
b) Industrial relations: Plan and execute seamless transition to Federal State award system.	MOF MGCS	✓			
c) Systems: New payroll and procurement software.	CEO MGCS	✓	✓		
d) Policies and Procedures: Review and update the Shire's human resources policies and procedures.	MGCS (FHRO)		✓		
e) Policies and Procedures: Ensure that the Shire's core values are reflected in all Shire policies and procedures.	CEO	ONGOING			