Snowy Valleys Council

# 2018 - 2028 WORKFORCE PLAN

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# Executive Summary

The 2018 – 2022 Workforce Management Plan supports the delivery of our Community Strategic Plan and sets out strategies to ensure that Snowy Valleys Council has a workforce that is capable of responding to current and future emerging community needs. Although this plan focuses on the next 4 years, it is recognised that workforce planning is a continuous process.

The plan provides an analysis and forecast of human resource implications, operational and strategic activities. Internal and external factors that may impact Council's capacity to meet its current and future workforce needs were considered in developing this plan.

Key challenges identified in relation to Council's workforce include:

- an ageing workforce;
- skills shortages;
- difficulties attracting staff;
- leadership capacity and capability; and
- organisational culture and change management.

Other workforce challenges include:

- Lack of or minimal process documentation;
- Managing a multigenerational workforce;
- Increased demands for provision of quality services in an efficient manner at no extra cost;
- Limited capacity makes it difficult to free up current employees for up-skilling and re-skilling;
- Limited ability to train locally (TAFE offers limited courses, no university);
- Increased financial liability due to an increase in the value of untaken employee leave entitlements.

Key strategies identified in this plan to address these challenges are:

1. **Aligning human resources systems with contemporary practice**

   *Ensuring alignment of human resource systems and practices to contemporary practice to support achievement of Council's vision.*

2. **Investing in our employees**

   *Developing the capabilities needed of our people to ensure they can contribute to the achievement of Council's objectives at a high level of performance.*

3. **Attracting the best people**

   *Attracting people with the right skills, knowledge and behaviours to ensure delivery of Council's operational and strategic plans*

4. **Retaining the right people**

   *Retaining people with the right skills, knowledge and behaviours to ensure delivery of Council's operational and strategic plans*

5. **Developing our culture**

   *Creating a work environment that fosters a constructive, safe, high performing culture and bring to life our organisational values and behaviours*

# Introduction

The Snowy Valleys Council was established on 12 May 2016 following the amalgamation of the Tumbarumba Shire Council and the Tumut Shire Council. The merged Council, located in the western foothills of the Snowy Mountains and bordered by the Kosciuszko National Park and Murray River, covers 8,960 square kilometres. The population is 14, 395 people (2016 census est.).

Our priority is to ensure continued delivery of quality services to the community whilst continuously looking for ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of services. The resilience, commitment, skills, talent and experience of our employees provides us with a strong foundation for building a thriving and dynamic organisation which serves the current and future needs of the people of Snowy Valleys Local Government Area.

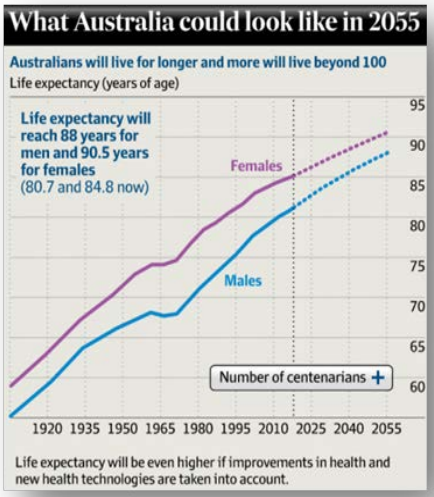
# Strategic Workforce Challenges

Like other local government authorities, Snowy Valleys Council is diverse in terms of its geography, functions and resident population. The following 5 key challenges have been identified in relation to Council's workforce:

**Ageing Workforce**

Snowy Valleys has an older workforce, located within an ageing community. Council has little choice but to adapt, not just because older people are staying on at work, but also because their skills and experience are needed.

The median age of the Snowy Valleys' Council workforce is 47, which is higher than the Snowy Valleys Local Government area median age of 45. The Snowy Valleys' Council workforce median age is also significantly higher than the New South Wales and Australian median age of 38. Further, the population pyramid for the Snowy Valleys local government area shows that there are more residents aged over 65 than there are children aged 14 and under and that there is a lower relative percentage of the population in the key working age bracket of 15-59 years of age as compared with rest of the nation. This relatively low working age population combined with a low unemployment rate means there is a smaller pool from which to recruit employees locally. Therefore retention of older employees is a key challenge.




About 34% of Council's permanent employees are eligible to retire in this year (2018) with another 9% eligible to retire within the next 4 years. This has potential to impact on service delivery to the community. Council faces challenges in managing possible loss of staff and corporate knowledge when employees choose to retire.

Council has implemented flexible work arrangement initiatives such as phased retirement options to retain older employees. Embracing flexible work initiatives such as this is critical in order to facilitate knowledge transfer and mentoring of other employees.

**Skills Shortage and Difficulty Attracting Staff**

Over the last few years, Council has had difficulty attracting skilled staff particularly in technical areas such as Engineering, Building Surveying, Planning and Environmental Health. It should be noted that Council is not alone in this challenge as these occupations are high in demand. The shortage of skills can be attributed to demand exceeding supply in most areas. For example, In 2016 Engineers Australia estimated that every year, about 18,000 engineering positions are advertised nationally. Currently the supply of engineering graduates from Australian universities can only satisfy one third of domestic demand with the remainder being filled through migration.

Factors that impact on Council's ability to attract staff include prospective candidates' perceived limited opportunity for career progression, regional location, salary structure and a potential lack of employment opportunities for accompanying family members. Further, the Snowy Valleys Local Government area has a smaller relative working age population between 15 to 59 years and relatively low unemployment therefore a limited pool from which to recruit.

**Leadership Capacity and Capability**

The increased community expectations means that our workforce need to be more professional, versatile and highly skilled. These skills not only relate to job-specific skills, but extend to communication skills, customer service and importantly, managerial and leadership skills.

Succession planning, leadership development programs and innovative attraction and retention strategies need to be developed and implemented to minimise risk to business continuity and performance.

**Organisational Culture and Change Management**

Although Snowy Valleys Council was formed almost two years ago, the uncertainty in leadership positions (i.e. three Interim General Managers in a year and a half prior to the appointment of a permanent General Manager) during the transition period made change management difficult. The tension that existed between former Councils during amalgamation will take time to dissipate. An understanding of this will assist in building a respectful and positive organisational culture and management of change into the future.

Council has invested in culture and change management programs which have been, and will continue to be offered to staff.

**Other workforce challenges**

Other workforce challenges which have been identified include:

- Lack of or minimal process documentation;
- Managing a multigenerational workforce - 32% of Councils workforce are Millennial (born between 1981 – 1999) and Generation Z (born in or after 2000), 32% are Generation X (born between 1965 – 1980), Baby Boomers (born between 1946 – 1964) make up 35% of the workforce and Traditionalists (born in or before 1945) constitute 1%;
- Increase in demands for provision of quality services in an efficient manner at no extra cost;
- Limited capacity makes it difficult to free up current employees for up-skilling and re-skilling;
- Limited ability to train locally (TAFE offers limited courses, no university).

- Increased financial liability due to an increase in the value of untaken employee leave entitlements.

These challenges faced by Council are similar to those faced by other local government authorities in NSW. In order to position Council to achieve its vision, these challenges will be addressed during the life of this plan.

# Environmental Scan

A scan of environmental factors (internal and external) that may impact on Council and its ability to deliver on organisational objectives reveals the following challenges and opportunities:

**EXTERNAL**

- Snowy Hydro 2.0 is likely to attract skilled Council employees;
- Expansion of Visy Mill which is currently undergoing environmental approvals is expected to create new jobs. This would increase competition for skills and bring more people to the Snowy Valleys Region;
- Skills Shortages in key occupational areas e.g. Engineering, Technical and Trades roles;
- Legislative changes imposing more obligations and/or costs e.g. environmental;
- Local industry stability e.g. timber mill industry;
- Limited local training and education opportunities;
- The Snowy Valleys Region's relaxed, community oriented lifestyle presents an opportunity to attract employees to the area, particularly young families;
- NBN offers opprtunities for local businesses and tree changers etc;
- Located within driving distance to the state's fastest growing inland city (Wagga Wagga).

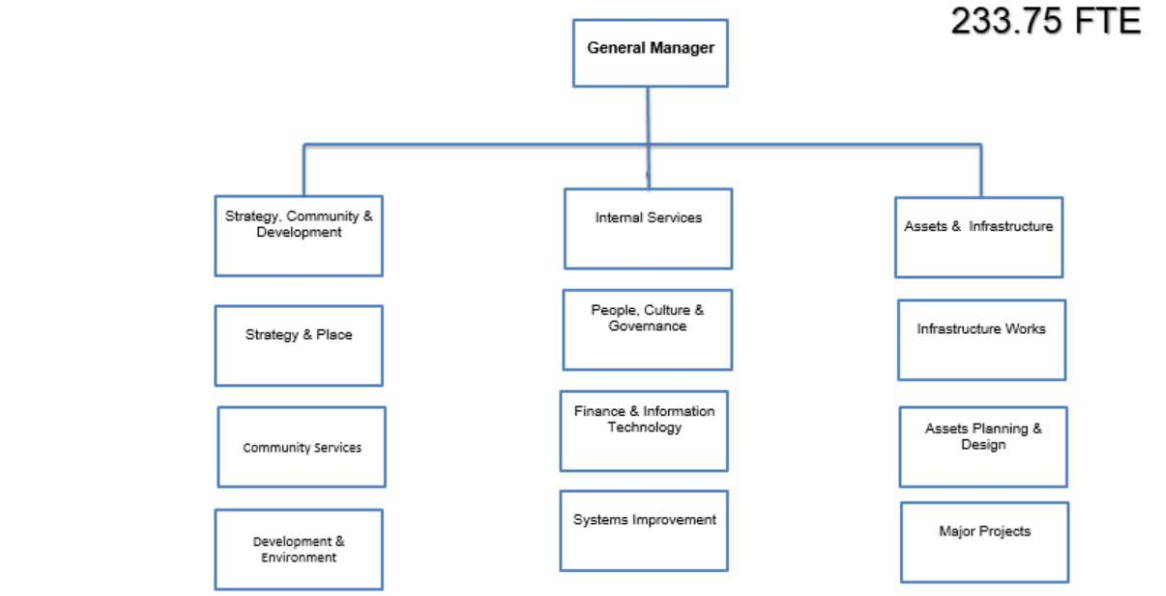
**INTERNAL**

- Potential retirements and resulting loss of corporate knowledge and skills;
- Loss of key/critical staff particularly in light of the Snowy Hydro 2.0 project;
- Efficiencies gained from process improvements and introduction of TechnologyOne system across Council;
- Increasing budget constraints;
- Potential for increased infrastructure and regional projects by Council undertaken on behalf of the New South Wales state government resulting from the sale of Snowy Hydro to the Commonwealth;
- Infrastructure Works Division securing external contracts to supplement Council's works requirements and increase returns.

# Employee Costs

All rates of pay will increase by 2.5% from the first full pay period on or after 1 July 2018 for 2018 - 2019 financial year. Employee costs includes superannuation, accrued leave and workers compensation and represents 45% of Council's overall budget. Council has implemented guidelines aimed at actively managing accrual of leave and encouraging staff to utilise their accrued leave. This is expected to reduce Council's leave liability over the coming years.

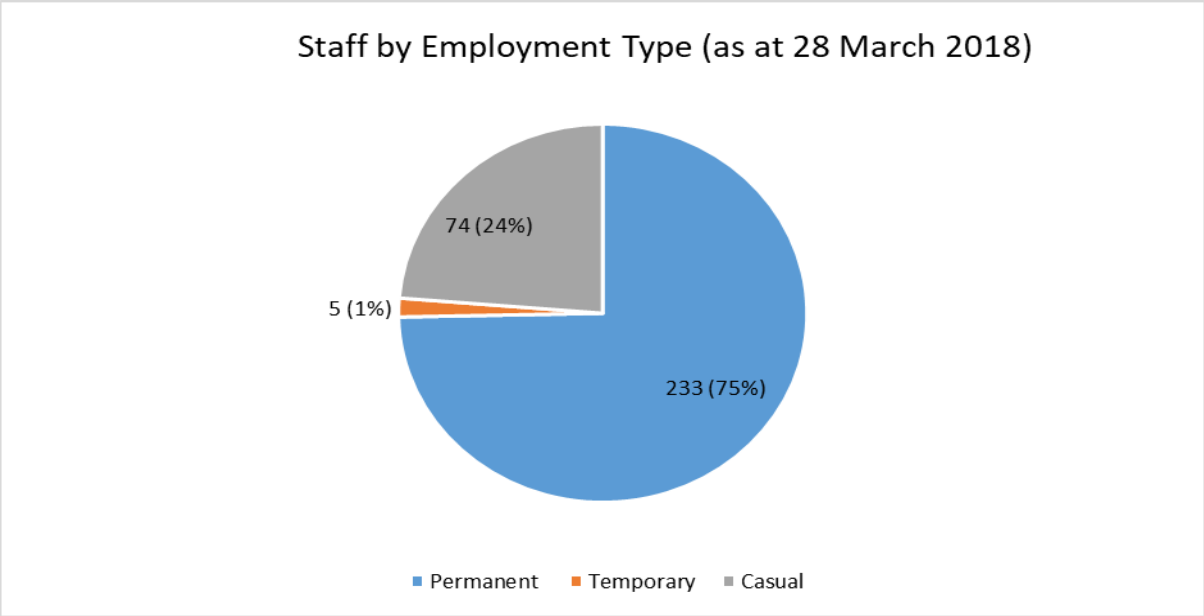
# Organisational Chart




Snowy Valleys Council Organisational Chart (as at March 2018)

# Council Workforce Data and Information

### Categories of employment

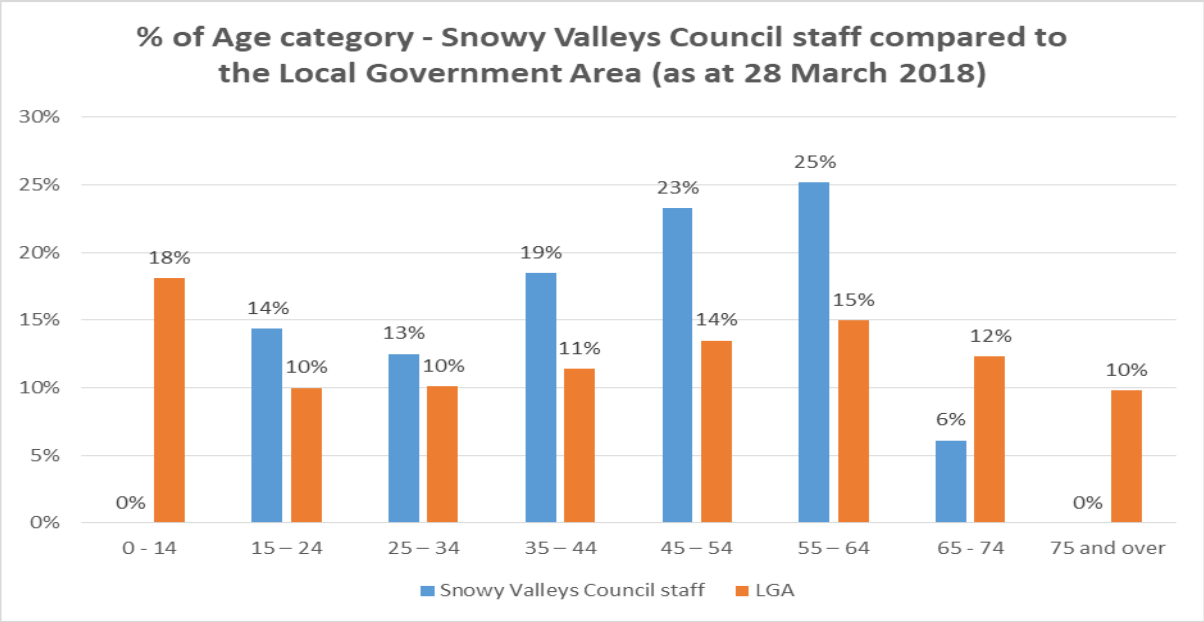



Presently, employees engaged on a permanent basis represent 75% of the total workforce, whilst casual and temporary employees account for 24% and 1% respectively. 81% of permanent staff are engaged on a full time basis with 19% working part time.

Although 80% of Snowy Valleys Council employees engaged on a permanent or temporary basis work full-time, there is a significant difference across the genders, with only 34% of women working full time compared to 87% of men. This trend is reflected in the local government sector across Australia.

Council engages employees on a casual basis as a short term solution in specific circumstances such managing seasonal business needs (e.g. swimming pools, child care, parks and recreation etc). Further, casuals may be utilised to assist in managing workloads during periods of absences by permanent employees.

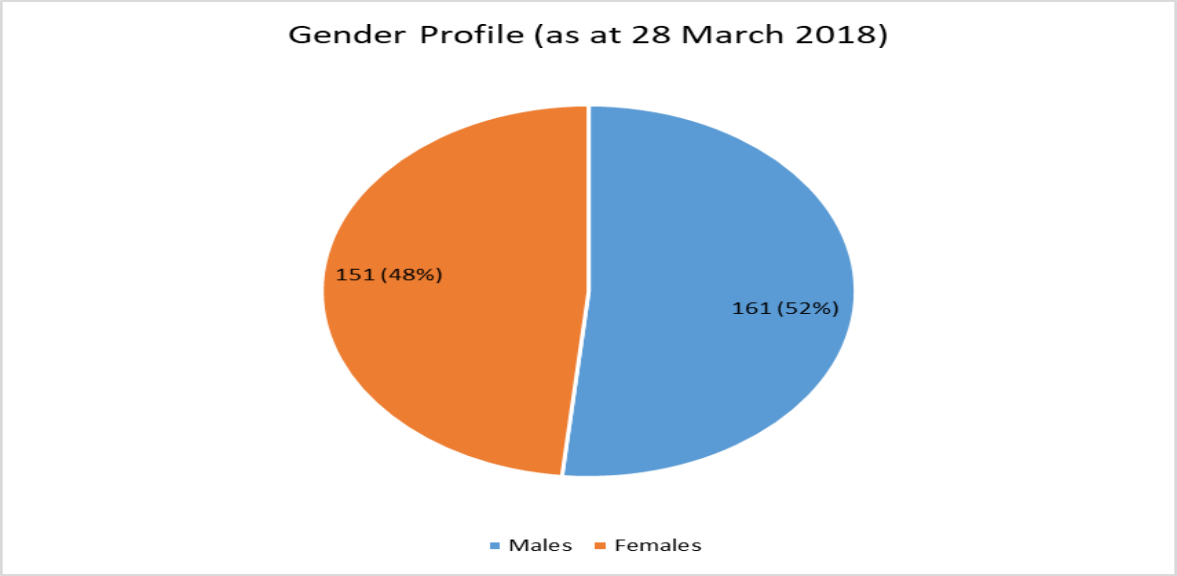
**Staff Age Profile**




Across Council's 312 employees (including current casual staff), there is a reasonable spread of ages ranging from 16 to 75 years. The median age of Snowy Valleys Council's workforce is 47 which is higher than the New South Wales and Australian population median age of 38. The median age for Council employees engaged on a permanent and temporary basis is 49 years.

44% of Snowy Valleys Council employees are aged 50 years or over, compared to the national local government workforce and Australian labour force average of 37% and 29% respectively. Male employees are, on average, older than female employees, with 55% of the men in Snowy Valleys Council workforce aged 50 years or more compared to just 31% of women.

**Gender Profile Comparison**



Males and females are represented fairly equally in Snowy Valleys Council (i.e. 52% males, 48% females). The local government workforce nationally has a larger proportion of men (54%). Within the Snowy Valleys Local Government area, men make up 51% of the population and women 49% compared to 49% men and 51% women in NSW and nationally (refer table 1 below).

| | **Snowy Valleys Council** | **LGA** | **NSW** | **Australia** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Males** | 52% | 51% | 49% | 49% |
| **Females** | 48% | 49% | 51% | 51% |

***Table 1*** *– Gender composition of Snowy Valleys Council permanent employees compared to the Snowy Valleys Local Government Area, NSW and Australia.*

**Years of Services**

The average years of service for Snowy Valleys Council permanent employees is 10 years. This is comparable to the local government sector in NSW.

**Turnover Rate**

The average staff turnover rate since the formation of Snowy Valleys Council is approximately 9%, which is lower than the NSW local government workforce median of 11.3% and NSW rural Councils of 11.2% (PriceWaterHouse Coopers Report, September 2016). There is limited data captured regarding reasons for separation.

Council has reviewed the manner in which separation data is captured and implemented a system that will improve the quality and reliability of data captured.

**Diversity and Inclusion**

Council is committed to developing a workplace culture that promotes diversity, is respectful, inclusive and embraces the unique skills and qualities of the workforce. Further, Council recognises that it is important that its workforce is representative of the community it serves.

# Workforce Management Strategy Action

### Aligning Human Resources Systems with Contemporary Practice

Council will ensure alignment of human resource systems and practices are contemporary and supports its vision.

| Objective | Actions | Measure of success | Timeframe | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Develop contemporary human resource structures and systems which will assist Council to achieve its objectives | Performance appraisals commenced based on achievement of competencies and performance objectives | All staff have an annual performance appraisal completed based on achievement of competencies and performance objectives | Bi-annually from June / July 2018 and ongoing | All Managers and Supervisors |
| | Develop and implement HR policies and procedure in accordance with Council's Policy and Procedure Framework | All HR policies and procedures are developed and implemented in accordance with Council's Policy and Procedure Framework | 30 September 2018 | • Division Manager People, Culture and Governance<br>• Coordinator Human Resources & Safety |
| | Review workforce data with the view to improve its integrity | • Staff Establishment is 100% accurate and a transparent, accountable process regarding making amendments to the Staff Establishment implemented<br>• Demographic information including location where employees are based is 100% accurate | December 2018 | • Division Manager People, Culture and Governance<br>• Coordinator Human Resources & Safety |
| | Develop and implement an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Management Plan and strategies to improve representation of identified target | EEO Management Plan and strategies to improve representation of identified target developed and implemented | April 2019 | • Division Manager People, Culture and Governance<br>• Coordinator Human Resources & Safety |
| | Undertake an organisational training needs analysis | An organisational training needs analysis | September 2019 | • Coordinator Human Resources & Safety |
| | Ensure that employees' leave entitlements are maintained within established thresholds as outlined in Council's Leave Policy | Less than 2% of staff have "excess leave" entitlements as per the Leave Policy | December 2018 and ongoing | • All Supervisors<br>• Coordinator Human Resources & Safety |

**Investing in our Employees**

In order to meet the challenges we face and the changing work environment, investing in our employees is important. We will develop learning and development programs which meets employees' professional and personal goals, aligned to objectives and vision of the organisation and assist us grow our current and future leaders

| Objective | Actions | Measure of success | Timeframe | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Develop and implement learning and development systems which will give employees skills they require to effectively undertake duties of their position | Develop & implement a Project Management Framework across Council | • The Project Management Framework is developed and implement in accordance with Council's Policy and Procedure Framework<br>• Projects are managed in line with the Project Management Framework resulting in increased rigour, accountability and communication in project management | September 2018 and ongoing | All Managers and Supervisors |
| | Audit of employee qualifications data to improve integrity of system data | • All employee qualifications data is audited and updated accordingly.<br>• A system to remind employees of expired qualifications established | December 2019 | Coordinator Human Resources & Safety |
| | Develop and implement learning and development program aimed at developing staff at all levels | • Leadership development program developed and offered to managers and supervisors periodically<br>• Succession planning and mentoring program established<br>• Introduction of training workshops focusing on team building, organisational values and behaviours, managing employee performance | June 2019 and ongoing | • Division Manager People, Culture & Governance<br>• Coordinator Human Resources & Safety |
| | Establish a talent management framework | A structure talent management approach established | February 2020 | Coordinator Human Resources & Safety |

**Attracting the Best People**

Council will continuously review and improve its strategies and policies to ensure it attracts the right people and rewards its workforce by providing a fulfilling and safe work environment.

| Objective | Actions | Measure of success | Timeframe | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| To ensure that Council has the right people with the right skills in the right jobs at the right time | Develop and implement a contemporary recruitment and selection policy and procedure to ensure | • Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure developed and implemented | September 2018 | • Coordinator Human Resources & Safety |
| | Promote Snowy Valleys Region as great place to live and work as well as enhancing Council brand and image | • Attend at least two career fairs per annum<br>• Partner with regional organisations in hosting career and employment events | April 2018 and ongoing | • Coordinator Human Resources & Safety |
| | Partner with TAFE, high schools and some universities to develop a program of work experience, career observation, and vocational skill development | Council has in place a program of work placement to meet its obligations as a significant employer in the Snowy Valleys region | • School based program implemented from March 2019<br>• Implementation of University/ TAFE program from June 2019 | • Coordinator Human Resources & Safety<br>• Human Resource Officers |
| | Review and analyse information collected from exit interviews | The information collected from exit interviews is reviewed and actions identified are developed and deployed | Ongoing from January 2019 | • Coordinator Human Resources & Safety<br>• Human Resource Officers |
| | Establish a “general applications pool” of people interested in working for Snowy Valleys Council. | A “general applications pool” established and utilised particularly in customer service roles | September 2018 | • Coordinator Human Resources & Safety<br>• Human Resource Officers |
| | Establish an Entry Level Program consisting of structured traineeships, apprenticeships, Graduate and Vacation Work programs developed and centrally managed in the Human Resources Section | A centrally managed Entry Level Program is implemented across Council | Ongoing from November 2018 | • Coordinator Human Resources & Safety<br>• Human Resource Officers |

**Retaining the Right People**

Retention through creating and managing expectations, promoting more intangible but valued employment arrangements and rewarding performance.

| Objective | Actions | Measure of success | Timeframe | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| To retain the right people in the organisation | Embrace flexible work arrangement and create systems to accommodate these arrangements in order to achieve organisational outcomes | Procedures implementing flexible work arrangements such as phased retirement, job share, purchased additional annual leave, working from home etc in place. | October 2019 | • Division Manager People, Culture and Governance<br>• Coordinator Human Resources & Safety |
| | Develop and implement a reward and recognition system linked to performance | A reward and recognition system linked to performance implemented | August 2018 and ongoing | • Division Manager People, Culture and Governance<br>• Coordinator Human Resources & Safety |
| | Manage employees expectations | All Council policies and procedures written in plain English and available and accessible to staff | November 2018 | • Division Manager People, Culture and Governance<br>• Coordinator Human Resources & Safety |

**Develop our Culture**

To create a work environment where open, honest, respectful communication, trust, integrity and a strong sense of accountability shape our culture.

| Objective | Actions | Measure of success | Timeframe | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Embrace a respectful, positive and healthy workplace where diversity and inclusiveness are valued and encouraged. | Implementation of workforce strategies that<br>• ensure all employees are aware of their obligations and responsibilities (Induction Program for new staff, mandatory training on code of conduct, workplace bullying and harassment, workplace health and safety every two years)<br>• build cultural competence, foster diversity of thinking and promote the benefits of an inclusive and socially responsible workplace<br>• foster productivity and respect | • Induction Program for new staff, mandatory training on code of conduct, workplace bullying and harassment, workplace health and safety every two years<br>• Staff model the our values and uphold the highest standards of ethical behaviour | September 2018 and ongoing | • Division Manager People, Culture and Governance<br>• Coordinator Human Resources & Safety |
| | Continued implementation of the Culture Program | • Actions in the Culture Program are implemented in accordance with the "Organisational Culture Change" document<br>• Culture champions have endorsed terms of reference and meet least quarterly | August 2018 and ongoing | • Division Manager People, Culture and Governance<br>• Coordinator Human Resources & Safety |
| | Develop and implement a safety management system | • Safety management system is implemented across Council | October 2018 | • Workplace Health & Safety Strategy and Injury Management Officer |
| | Develop and implement a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy | Diversity and Inclusion Strategy approved and in place | April 2019 | • Division Manager People, Culture and Governance |

# References


1. Australian Bureau of Statistic, 2016
2. Engineers Australia, 2016, The Supply of Engineers in Australia – A Decade of Skilled Migration.
3. PriceWaterHouseCoopers Report, 2016, FY Local Government Operational and Management Effectiveness Report for Snowy Valleys Council

Snowy Valleys Council

# WORKFORCE PLAN