



# SHIRE of MT MARSHALL



2013-2017

Workforce Plan

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## Executive Summary

Local governments face increasing and diverse challenges in providing local services and facilities for their communities. To meet these challenges, local governments will need to have staff with appropriate knowledge, skills and expertise. Skills shortages in the local government sector and other sectors in this State and across Australia have highlighted the need for a concerted Workforce Planning effort.

The Shire of Mt Marshall's Workforce Plan (2013 – 2017) has been developed to align with the community aspirations identified in the Mt Marshall's Strategic Community Plan 2013 and the Shire's Corporate Business Plan, wherever possible. It also enables the Shire of Mt Marshall (the Shire) to address the regulatory requirements contained in the *Integrated Planning and Reporting Advisory Standard*.

Mt Marshall comprises an area of 10,189 km<sup>2</sup> and is located within the north eastern Wheatbelt area of Western Australia.

It is approximately 273 kilometres north east of Perth and has borders with the Shires of Trayning, Koorda, Mukinbudin, Yalgoo, Dalwallinu, Westonia, Yilgarn, Wyalkatchem, Sandstone and Menzies. The area is primarily a wheat, coarse grain, cattle and sheep farming district. There are many points of interest all serviced by the two main centres, Bencubbin and Beacon.

In the 2011 Census, the total labour force in Mt Marshall totalled 248. Of this total 62% were male (154) and 94 or 38% were women.

The Shire currently operates through eight (8) main work areas.

Comparatively speaking, the Shire is a small industry employer representing approximately 14% of the Mt Marshall's total labour force. Of the 34 employees, 56% are male. This is largely due to the number of males in the engineering area. Approximately 65% of the staff are in the external workforce. The majority of the staff are employed on a full time basis.

The largest percentage of staff (44%) is in the age group 30 years to 49 years with 38% being 50 years of age and over. However, it is important to note that approximately 62% of staff in engineering services are aged over 50 years. The workforce age ranges from 22 years to 67 years. It is a relatively new workforce with, 68% of employees having been with the Shire for five years or less.

The Shire is well placed in light of the lifestyle opportunities it presents and its relative proximity to Perth. It also has a number of workforce strategies currently in place. These include, but are not limited to:

- Broadening of skills through opportunities to undertake work in a number of different roles;
- Provision of financial support, on request, to undertake further training;
- Subsidised rental or housing support;
- Telephone allowance;

- Flexible hours and/or job sharing;
- Transferable long service leave within other local government positions;
- Above award payments;
- Vehicle allowance; and
- \$100 voucher for taking care of machinery.

However, the Shire is facing a number of challenges related to:

- Succession planning;
- Cost of employment;
- Retention;
- Ageing workforce;
- Provision of training;
- Job variation;
- Changing workplace expectations from employees;
- Changes in the National Employment Standards (NES) and Awards;
- Changing community expectations; and
- Possible amalgamations of Shires.

The model utilised for the future strategies to address the workforce needs of the Shire include the following components that were identified and validated during the consultation phase of this project and is provided below. It is worth noting that many are inter-related and overlapping and hence the strategies take an integrated approach wherever possible.



The Mt Marshall Strategic Community Plan (the Community Plan) outlines the community's long term vision, values, aspirations and priorities, with reference to other shire plans, information and resourcing capabilities.

The following areas were assessed as being the strategic priority areas that best meet the vision and strategic goals of the Council:

- Social;
- Economic;
- Natural environment; and
- Civic leadership.

The outcomes of the interviews and consultations indicated that there were a number of gaps and a need to reshape the future workforce to deliver the core business and associated services expected by the Shire.

The twenty-one (21) strategies identified below have been developed to align with the Community Plan through interviews undertaken with the CEO, senior management and a consultation workshop with a cross-section of staff across the Departments and key service areas.

CODE	STRATEGY
<b>AR1</b>	Investigate the feasibility of including financial assistance as part of the remuneration package to assist with attracting and retaining employees with children attending secondary schools.
<b>AR2</b>	Recruit and maintain at least one trades apprentice and one office trainee as a strategy designed to address the Shire's aging workforce and to contribute to the Shire workforce's future skill base.
<b>AR3</b>	Negotiate flexible working arrangements, wherever appropriate, with those employees who wish to transition to retirement including consideration of a reduced working week.
<b>AR4</b>	Undertake a review of the remuneration packages and recruitment strategies for those positions considered to be at 'high risk' <sup>1</sup> .
<b>AR5</b>	Consideration be given to providing job opportunities to partners, either with the Shire or another local employer, as a way of attracting high calibre applicants for those positions which are expected to be difficult to fill.
<b>AR6</b>	Investigate the feasibility of providing child care support for existing employees or potential employees who would otherwise be restricted in their available work times or unable to undertake or remain in employment with the Shire.
<b>AR7</b>	Review the existing remuneration package applying to the CEO position which would include undertaking a benchmarking exercise with other comparative local government authorities.
<b>RR1</b>	Complement the current use of the local newspaper by establishing a bi monthly e-newsletter which, amongst other things, will inform the local community of the Shire workforce's contribution to the social and economic development and well-being of the region.

<sup>1</sup> High risk positions are those which are critical to the organisation, would cause significant dysfunction if left unfilled or vacant for any period of time and require specialised skills or qualifications which may be in short supply.

<b>RR2</b>	Establish a Shire workforce recognition program which provides regular opportunities for the Council and CEO to celebrate staff contributions and achievements.
<b>CD&amp;PM1</b>	Extend the Shire's existing performance review system to a fully developed careers and performance management system which would include annual career development and performance agreements for all staff which, in turn, would take into account the key directions contained in the Shire's Strategic Community Plan and the business objectives of the annual Corporate Business Plan.
<b>CD&amp;PM2</b>	Establish an annual workforce training and professional development plan for Council approval, which identifies up-skilling and re-skilling requirements and opportunities for Shire's existing workforce.
<b>CD&amp;PM3</b>	Give a high priority to increasing investment in the Shire's training and professional development plan by 10% for the next three (3) years.
<b>CD&amp;PM4</b>	Once approved by Council, the training and professional development plan be administered by the CEO with regular progress reports provided to the Council.
<b>ALS1</b>	Establish a pool of local casual or sessional staff who would be trained in various job categories and be available when permanent staff are absent or when short term vacancies occur.
<b>ALS2</b>	Investigate the possibility of forming regional partnerships with other local government authorities to enable shared positions to be created with expertise which may include but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human resource management;</li> <li>• Procurement;</li> <li>• Economic development;</li> <li>• Ranger services;</li> <li>• Health services;</li> <li>• Regional tourism and marketing; and</li> <li>• Natural resource management.</li> </ul>
<b>OD1</b>	Investigate the feasibility of establishing two (2) manager positions which would: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocate responsibility for the Shire's "external service" to one senior manager and responsibility for the "internal" services to the other;</li> <li>• Create the external services manager position by re-classifying the existing Works Supervisor's position;</li> <li>• Create a new Deputy CEO position which would also incorporate some or all of the functions of one or more of the existing internal services positions; and</li> <li>• Require both senior managers to report directly to the CEO<sup>2</sup>.</li> </ul>
<b>OD2</b>	Establish an executive leadership team comprising the CEO and the two senior managers.
<b>OD3</b>	Each senior manager conduct regular team meetings to discuss work plans and be briefed on Council policies, plans and decisions.
<b>OD4</b>	The Shire to invest in software to enable data to be stored, reports to be generated and workforce performance and productivity to be monitored.
<b>OD5</b>	A staff satisfaction survey be administered annually or bi-annually to assist with the regular review of the Shire's Workforce Plan.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1 for a proposed new organisational structure.

<b>OD6</b>	The CEO to report annually to the Council on the progress with the Shire's Workforce Plan and recommend any revisions to the Community Plan.
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The monitoring and evaluation of progress against this Workforce Plan is a critical component of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework for Local Government. The toolkit developed for Western Australian local governments (*Workforce Planning – the Essentials*, 2012) recognises that many local governments do not have readily available workforce data and that there will be some resourcing requirements as information will need to be collected and entered into a data collection system. In particular, this will relate to:

- Appropriate information systems & monitoring tools and processes;
- On-going consideration of workforce implications;
- Progress against monitoring and evaluation timelines; and
- Regular review of Workforce Plan strategies.

# 1. Workforce Planning for the Future

## 1.1 Introduction

Comparatively speaking, the Mt Marshall Shire (the Shire) is a small industry employer representing approximately 14% of the Mt Marshall's total labour force. Of the 34 employees, 56% are male. This is largely due to the number of males in the engineering area. Approximately 65% of the staff are in the external workforce. The majority of the staff are employed on a full time basis.

The largest percentage of staff (44%) is in the age group 30 years to 49 years with 38% being 50 years of age and over. However, it is important to note that approximately 62% of staff in engineering services are aged over 50 years. The workforce age ranges from 22 years to 67 years. It is a relatively new workforce with 68% of employees having been with the Shire for five years or less.

## 1.2 Background

Local governments face increasing and diverse challenges in providing local services and facilities for their communities. To meet these challenges, local governments will need to have staff with appropriate knowledge, skills and expertise. Skills shortages in the local government sector and other sectors in this State and across Australia have highlighted the need for a concerted Workforce Planning effort.

The *Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework* which was introduced for Western Australian local governments during 2011 and underpinned by regulatory amendments is a key to this. Workforce planning is an important lynchpin in building capacity to support the framework. It is aimed at improving the ability of individual local governments to undertake long-term strategic planning as well as the future sustainability of local government service delivery.

### What is workforce planning?

*"A continuous process of shaping the workforce to ensure that it is capable of delivering organisational objectives now and in the future"* [Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), 2004].

The toolkit developed for Western Australian local governments (*Workforce Planning – the Essentials*, 2012) uses the above definition to highlight the key elements of Workforce Planning.

Workforce Planning:

- is continuous, not a one-off activity
- is a process, not a static action or set of actions
- is about shaping the workforce with a clearly identified purpose and to bring about particular changes
- has its purpose linked with organisational objectives, and
- applies not just to the current workforce but anticipates future workforce requirements.

The Shire's Workforce Plan has been developed to align with the community aspirations identified in the Strategic Community Plan and the Corporate Business Plan, wherever possible. It also enables the Shire to address the regulatory requirements contained in the *Integrated Planning and Reporting Advisory Standard*.

The linkages of this Workforce Plan, the Strategic Community Plan and Corporate Business Plan are shown in Figure 1.

## Elements of the Integrated Planning Framework

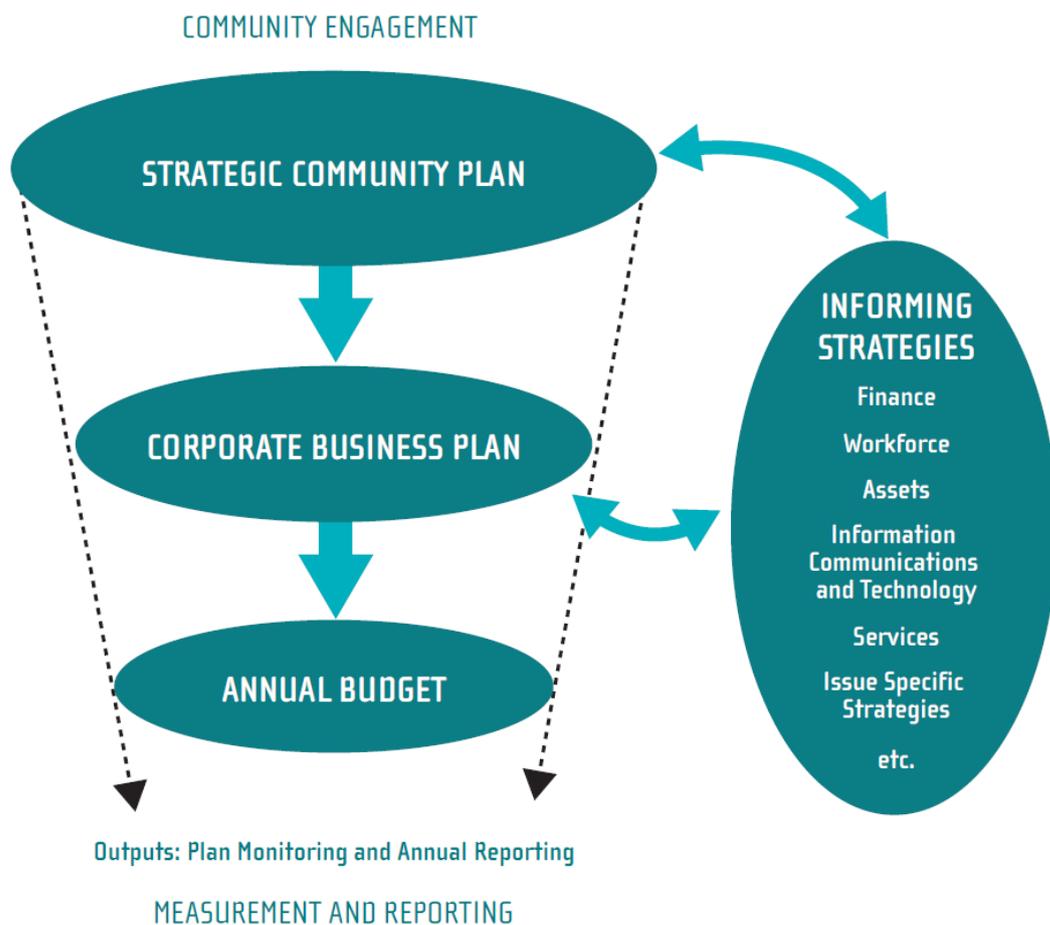


Figure 1: Elements of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

Mt Marshall comprises an area of 10,189 km<sup>2</sup> and is located within the north eastern Wheatbelt area of Western Australia.

It is approximately 273 kilometres north east of Perth and has borders with the Shires of Trayning, Koorda, Mukinbudin, Yalgoo, Dalwallinu, Westonia, Yilgam, Wyalkatchem, Sandstone and Menzies. The area is primarily a wheat, coarse grain, cattle and sheep farming district. There are many points of interest all serviced by the two main centres, Bencubbin and Beacon.

## 1.3 Workforce Profile – 2013

This section addresses the workforce profile of the Shire. It is based on data gathered in May 2013. It is considered in the context of the local government area of Mt Marshall.<sup>3</sup>

When reflecting on the profile of a local government's workforce, it is helpful to consider the environment in which it operates and the issues and challenges which may influence the recruitment and retention of staff. Therefore, in developing this profile judicious use has been made of population and labour force statistics for the Mt Marshall Local Government Area (LGA) available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2011 Census.

### 1.3.1 Population

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Census, there were 486 people living in Mt Marshall. The median age was 39 years. More than half the population (294) lived in and around Bencubbin.<sup>4</sup>

Across Mt Marshall as a whole, the population aged 15 years and over is relatively stable. Approximately 69% population at the 2011 Census were at the same address on census night in 2006. While this indicates stability, it could suggest that the Shire does not have a changing or diverse pool of potential employees from which to draw.

### 1.3.2 Labour Force

In the 2011 Census, the total labour force in Mt Marshall totalled 248. Of this total, 62% were male (154) and 94 or 38% were women.

Table 1 presents the three industries in the Shire which were recorded as having the largest labour force. The Shire's workforce is included in category of Public Administration and Safety, in the subcategory of Public Administration.

**Table 1: Top Three Industries by Labour Force, Shire of Mt Marshall, 2011**

Industry	Labour Force
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	157
Education and training	23
Public administration and safety	19
• Public administration	16*
Accommodation and food services	6

Source: ABS 2011 Census Working Population Profile, Mt Marshall Local Government Area, 2012

\*Please note that the difference between the Census figures and the Shire Council employee numbers may be due to Shire Council employees recording their occupation rather than their industry sector.

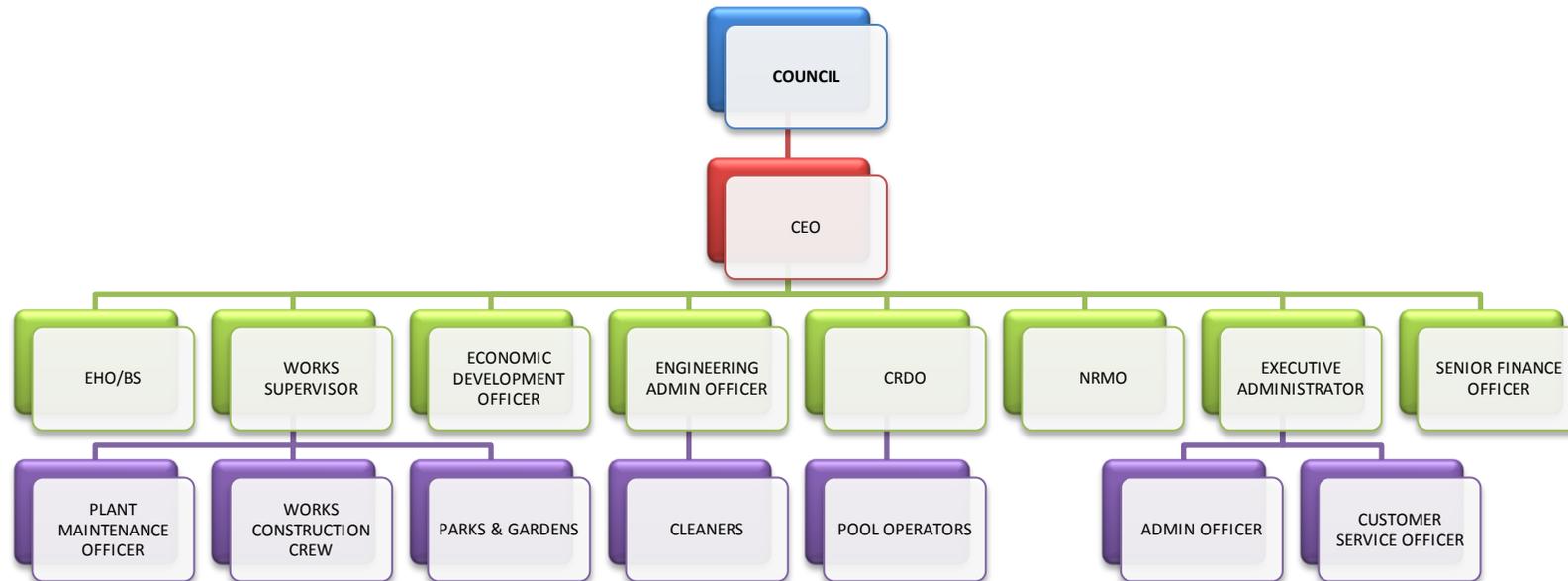
<sup>3</sup> Throughout this paper, reference to the *Shire* refers to the local government area and reference to the *Shire Council* refers to the staff employed by the local government authority.

<sup>4</sup> The statistics are based on the usual place of residence.

### 1.3.3 Organisational Structure

The Shire currently operates through eight (8) main work areas.

#### SHIRE OF MT MARSHALL ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



The officers of the 8 main work areas report directly to the Chief Executive Officer. Other employees are directly responsible to these officers as shown in the organisational structure above.

The Shire's workforce of 34<sup>5</sup> represents approximately 14% of the Mt Marshall's total labour force.

### 1.3.4 Workforce Patterns

Mt Marshall Shire offers, full time, part time and casual employment. It also provides flexible working arrangements. All engineering, parks & gardens and cleaning staff work a nine day fortnight (76 hours). Administration staff work a five day week with 1 rostered day off every four weeks.

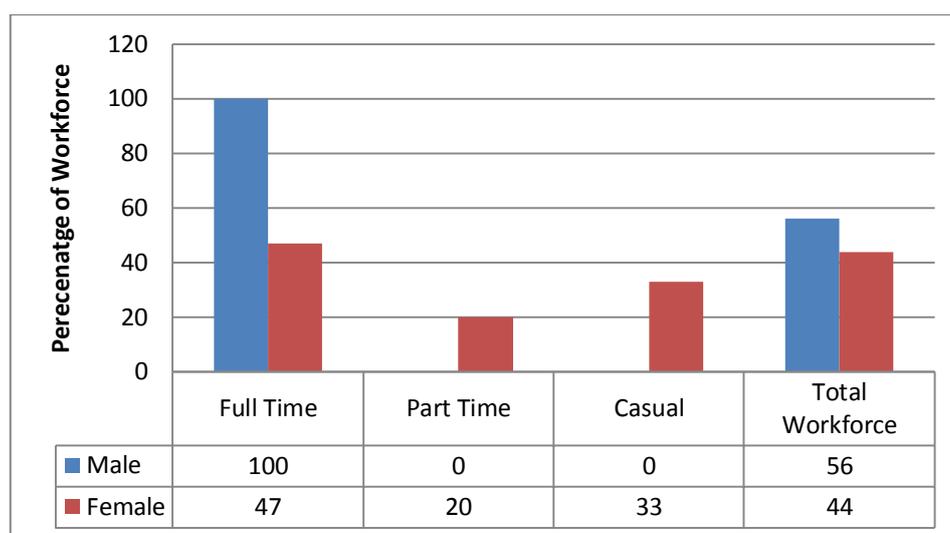
Of the 34 employees, 85% are considered to be in the permanent workforce. The majority of the workforce are employed on a fulltime basis (76%), 9% are employed part time and 15% are employed as casual employees. The four casual employees share the position of pool attendant. They are only employed during the summer season.

### 1.3.5 Gender

The Shire's workforce is a majority of male employees. Fifty six per cent of the workforce is male and 44% is female. This is largely due to the high number of males employed as external staff (44% of the total workforce) of which 57% are employed in engineering services. The proportion of females who are employed as internal staff (53% or 8 staff) is almost equal to the number who are employed as external staff (47% or 7 staff). All the part time and casual employees are women.

Figure 2 provides a breakdown of the workforce according to gender and workforce pattern. Males who work full time represent the largest employee group.

**Figure 2: Workforce Pattern by Gender**



Source: Mt Marshall Shire Council, 2013

<sup>5</sup> This includes 2 staff on maternity leave and a contract position expiring in March 2014.

### 1.3.6 Age Structure

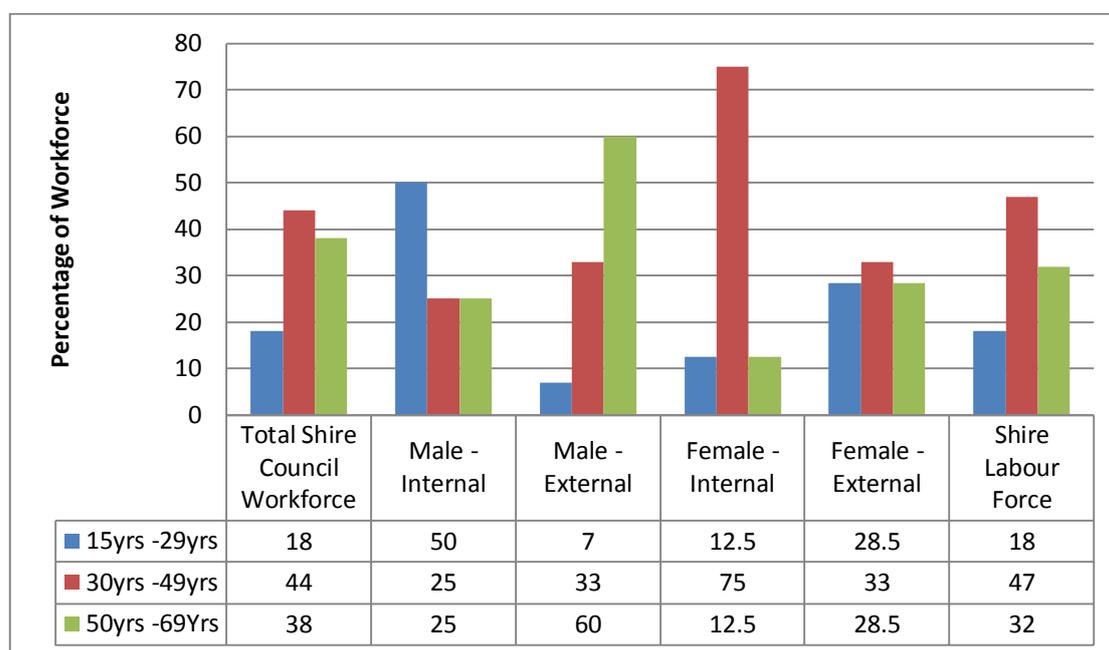
Approximately 38% of the workforce is over 50 years of age. Furthermore, 50% of the external workforce is 50 years of age and over. It is important to note that approximately 62% of staff in engineering services are aged over 50 years. Also noteworthy is that 44% of the workforce is aged between 30 years - 49 years. Fifty eight per cent of the internal employees fall into this category and 36% of the external staff.

The majority of the female workforce is aged 15 years - 49 years (60%). The internal male workforce of four is spread relatively equally across the age ranges. Two are under 30 years of age, one is aged under 50 years of age and the other under 60 years of age.

In general, the age structure of the Shire's workforce reflects that of the overall Mt Marshall LGA. Approximately 18% of the working population of the Shire is aged between 15 years and 29 years. This age group represents the potential future local workforce pool for the Shire. Forty seven per cent of the Shire's labour force is aged 30 years - 49 years.

Figure 3 compares the age structure of the Shire's workforce with that of the wider Shire<sup>6</sup>.

**Figure 3: Workforce by Age and Gender - Shire of Mt Marshall LGA and Mt Marshall Shire Council**



Source: Mt Marshall Shire Council, 2013 and ABS 2011 Census Working Population Profile, Shire of Mt Marshall Local Government Area, 2012

### 1.3.7 Length of Service

With regard to length of service, the workforce is relatively new. For example, 68% of employees have been with the Shire for five years or less. Sixty per cent of these staff have been working with the Shire for two years or less. This equates to 41% of the

<sup>6</sup> Please note that figures used in this paper may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

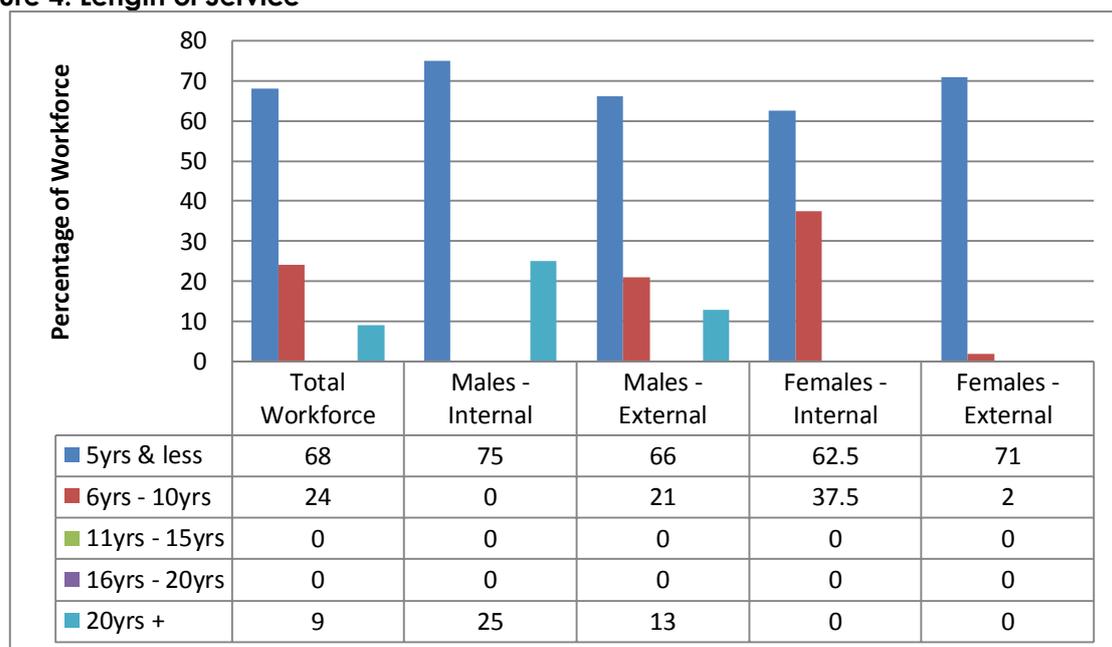
overall workforce. On the other hand, 9% have been in the Shire's workforce for more than 20 years. Interestingly there are no staff with a length of service between 10 to 15 years. The longest serving employee is an internal staff member who has been with council for 31 years. Two external staff have been with the Shire for more than 20 years.

The number of new employees may indicate the potential for developing a new younger staff. Conversely, it could indicate a high turnover rate and the need to address recruitment and retention policies and practices.

Approximately 91% of the internal and external workforces have been with the Shire for between 5 years to 10 years. It is also noteworthy that approximately 91% of the workforce has spent as many years working with the Shire as they have in working in local government.

Figure 4 maps the length of service with the age range of the workforce currently with the Shire.

**Figure 4: Length of Service**



Source: Mt Marshall Shire Council, 2013

## 2. Workforce Implications for the Future

### 2.1 Supporting the Mt Marshall Strategic Community Plan 2013

The Mt Marshall Strategic Community Plan (the Community Plan) highlights the following vision and mission for the Shire:

## **Vision Statement**

*The Shire of Mt Marshall is an active, safe and vibrant community that works together with honesty and is respectful of the values of all. We are committed to a progressive, diverse and profitable community that supports healthy lifestyles sustained by positive social values and engaged youth. Our natural assets are valued, protected and enhanced for future generations.*

## **Mission Statement**

*To excel at providing fair, efficient and effective services and facilities which enhance the quality of life for all residents.*

The Community Plan outlines the community's long term vision, values, aspirations and priorities, with reference to other Shire plans, information and resourcing capabilities.

The following areas were assessed as being the strategic priority areas that best meet the vision and strategic goals of the Council:

- Social;
- Economic;
- Natural environment; and
- Civic leadership.

The table below identifies the objectives and strategies contained in the Community Plan that are considered to influence the Shire of Mt Marshall's Workforce Plan (2013 – 2017), both directly and indirectly.

<b>FOCUS</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE/STRATEGY</b>
<b>SOCIAL</b>	S 1.3 Advocate and strengthen Bencubbin as an administrative centre for local government services for the district (short term); S 2.1 Advocate and lobby for appropriate and accessible health services throughout the Shire (ongoing); S 2.3 Provide an environment that enhances the growth, development and retention of youth (medium term); S 2.6 Provide to the community quality regulatory services (ongoing); S 3.1 Support provision of emergency services such as bush fire brigades, ambulance and LEMC (ongoing); S 4.1 Develop a broad recreation master plan for the Shire (short term); and S 4.2 Develop, maintain and support appropriate recreation facilities throughout the Shire (ongoing).

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ECONOMIC</b></p>	<p>E 1.1 Develop a local economic development strategy (ongoing);  E 1.4 Support processes that will enhance local business access to professional services and advice(short term);  E 1.5 Facilitate and create sustainable business and community partnerships (medium term);  E 1.7 Build the capacity to develop and implement communication and marketing initiatives (medium term);  E 2.1 Advocate, promote and market the Shire as a place to live, work and visit (ongoing);  E 2.2 Assist with the provision of relevant tourist information and marketing services (short term);  E 2.3 Support a coordinated approach for regional tourism promotion and management (medium term);  E 2.4 Facilitate the development of local tourism activities associated with the Shire's diverse natural, social and built heritage (ongoing);  E 2.5 Develop partnerships to actively support visitor growth (ongoing); and  E 3.2 Maintain an efficient, safe and quality local road network (ongoing).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NATURAL ENVIRONMENT</b></p>	<p>N 1.1 Identify vulnerable environments or areas in need of protection (short term);  N 1.2 Perform sustainable resource use and land management practices (ongoing); and  N 1.4 Encourage and support community awareness and participation in environmental projects (medium term).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CIVIC LEADERSHIP</b></p>	<p>C 1.1 Enhance open and interactive communication between Council and the community (ongoing);  C 2.1 Increase capacity through the application of the integrated strategic planning processes (short term);  C 2.2 Promote a culture of continuous improvement processes (ongoing);  C 2.3 Facilitate resource sharing on a regional basis (medium term);  C 2.4 Use resources efficiently and effectively (ongoing);  C 2.5 Operate in a financially sustainable manner (long term);  C 3.1 Provide responsive high level customer service (ongoing);  C 3.2 Enhance the capacity and effectiveness of administrative processes (short term);  C 3.3 Provide reporting processes in a transparent, accountable and timely manner (short term);  C 3.4 Recruit, retain and develop suitably qualified, experienced and skilled staff (ongoing); and  C 3.5 Provide flexible and attractive work conditions in a supportive work environment (ongoing).</p>

## 2.2 Workforce Gaps, Issues and Risks

This sub-section provides a commentary on the methodology utilised in the development of the Shire's Workforce Plan. It includes the internal and external risks

identified as part of the various interviews and consultations undertaken with Shire staff.

### **2.2.1 Methodology**

The twenty-one (21) strategies identified within this inaugural Workforce Plan (2013 – 2017) have been developed in light of:

- The Mt Marshall Strategic Community Plan 2013;
- The development of the Shire's Corporate Business Plan;
- Interviews undertaken with the:
  - CEO
  - Supervisors/managers;
- A consultation workshop with a cross-section of staff across the key service areas to undertake a SWOT analysis, identify knowledge of existing workforce strategies and brainstorm potential future strategies for inclusion in the Workforce Plan to support the Mt Marshall Community Plan 2013;
- An analysis of internal and external risks based on an environmental scan; and
- An analysis of May 2013 Shire's workforce data and ABS 2011 Census LGA data for Mt Marshall.

### **2.2.2 Existing Workforce Strategies**

The Shire is well placed in light of the lifestyle opportunities it presents and its relative proximity to Perth. It also has a number of workforce strategies currently in place. These include, but are not limited to:

- Broadening of skills through opportunities to undertake work in a number of different roles;
- Provision of financial support, on request, to undertake further training;
- Subsidised rental or housing support;
- Telephone allowance;
- Flexible hours and/or job sharing;
- Transferable long service leave within other local government positions;
- Above award payments;
- Vehicle allowance; and
- \$100 voucher for taking care of machinery.

### **2.2.3 Internal Risks**

#### **Succession Planning**

It is important that a succession plan is in place for high risk positions. These are roles that are critical to the organisation, would cause significant dysfunction if left unfilled or vacant for any period of time and require specialised skills or qualifications which may be in short supply.

#### **Cost of Employment**

The cost of employee wages is a significant cost in any Shire's budget. This cost increases every year due to inflation and promotions. Higher wages are sometimes required in order to retain and attract skilled employees.

## **Retention**

Regional Local Governments need to develop comprehensive strategies for the retention of employees. A high staff turn-over has financial implications due to termination payments and also the cost of readvertising and retraining, but it can also create a negative image for the Local Government as an employer.

## **Ageing Workforce**

Baby boomers are beginning to reach retirement age and are at an age where they are no longer willing or possibly unable to work in labour intensive roles. Without younger skilled employees Local Governments will be unable to fill these positions and the reliance on contractors will increase.

## **Provision of Training**

The need for on the job training is increasing as roles within Local Governments are becoming more varied. Employees are also recognising the attractiveness of being tertiary qualified and some are undertaking external studies in order to attain these qualifications.

## **Job Variation**

Due to the skill shortages, employees often need to undertake the functions of two or more positions in the Local Government pending successful recruitment to any vacancy. Without adequate support from senior management and an attractive remuneration package these employees may opt to move away from Local Government and into a more specialised area in business.

## **Changing workplace expectations from employees**

Employees are now beginning to expect more from their employers, including Local Government. This includes more flexible work hours, longer holiday breaks, increase in personal and sick leave and ability to bring children into the workplace.

### **2.2.4 External Risks**

#### **Changes in the National Employment Standards (NES)**

The National Employment Standards are guidelines that all employers have to adhere to and as time goes by these are becoming more stringent. As they constantly change employers need to be aware of their employee's rights and must always ensure that they are compliant.

#### **Changes in the Award**

As well as the NES, Local Governments are covered by awards and these are changing all the time. Local Governments need to be aware of any changes in relation to definitions, guidelines or pay scales and must ensure that any changes are communicated to the relevant department within their office.

### **Changing community expectations**

Communities are now expecting more from the Local Government in which they live, especially if they are rate payers. Individuals in rural areas still want high quality facilities, similar to those in metropolitan areas, as well as the support of the Local Government for businesses in the region. Local Governments are now being held more accountable within the community and individuals expect to see a higher standard of development.

### **Possible amalgamations of Shires**

Over the past few years there has been increasing talk of forced shire amalgamations and as a result some have amalgamated voluntarily. The pursuit of regional partnerships for the provision of some services allows for workforce efficiencies to be achieved ahead of any amalgamations that may occur in the future.

## **3. Strategies to Meet Future Workforce Needs**

### **3.1 Conceptual Framework for the Workforce Plan**

The model utilised for the future strategies to address the workforce needs of the Shire include the following components that were identified and validated during the consultation phase of this project. It is worth noting that many are inter-related and overlapping and hence the strategies take an integrated approach wherever possible.

In keeping with this philosophy and approach, the diagram below provides a visual model of the concept used and the possible interrelationships between key workforce development demand and supply issues contextualised for the Shire. This is in keeping with the toolkit developed for Western Australian local governments (*Workforce Planning – the Essentials*, 2012) as well as the *Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework* introduced in 2011.



### **3.2 Future Workforce Strategies – focus areas**

The outcomes of the interviews and consultations indicated that there were a number of gaps and a need to reshape the future workforce to deliver the core business and associated services expected by the Shire. The following sub-sections highlight the issues that need to be addressed and include strategies that need to be focussed on in the period 2013 – 2017.

#### **3.2.1 Attraction and retention (AR)**

It is important that the Shire develop and refresh attraction and retention strategies. This is necessary in order to differentiate the organisation from others in a competitive market.

Consultation with staff indicated that access to childcare support and secondary education opportunities were issues, while opportunities existed to highlight the ability of attracting partners to work in the Shire.

Although the Shire is often constrained by a salary system it is possible to develop and market a suite of excellent working conditions and family friendly policies that benefit staff. It therefore needs to undertake a range of different activities to attract and retain skilled professionals and ensure that high risk positions in particular are able to be filled. This in turn will increase efficiency and improve performance in servicing its community.

In addition, it would be worthwhile considering recruiting an apprentice and/or trainee wherever possible. This may also assist in addressing the aging workforce issue for the Shire.

Future workforce strategies for this focus area include:

CODE	STRATEGY	Performance indicator
AR1	Investigate the feasibility of including financial assistance as part of the remuneration package to assist with attracting and retaining employees with children attending secondary schools.	Feasibility Study provided to Council
AR2	Recruit and maintain at least one trades apprentice and one office trainee as a strategy designed to address the Shire's aging workforce and to contribute to the Shire workforce's future skill base.	Number of apprentices and trainees
AR3	Negotiate flexible working arrangements, wherever appropriate, with those employees who wish to transition to retirement including consideration of a reduced working week.	Transition to retirement options are in place
AR4	Undertake a review of the remuneration packages and recruitment strategies for those positions considered to be at 'high risk' <sup>7</sup> .	Review Report provided to Council
AR5	Consideration be given to providing job opportunities to partners, either with the Shire or another local employer, as a way of attracting high calibre applicants for those positions which are expected to be difficult to fill.	Option considered by Council
AR6	Investigate the feasibility of providing child care support for existing employees or potential employees who would otherwise be restricted in their available work times or unable to undertake or remain in employment with the Shire.	Feasibility Report provided to Council
AR7	Review the existing remuneration package applying to the CEO position which would include undertaking a benchmarking exercise with other comparative local government authorities.	Review Report provided to Council

### 3.2.2 Reward and recognition (RR)

This focus area deals with the importance of staff being recognised for their ideas, creativity, customer focus and hard work. The recognition sought is not just through financial means but other initiatives as well. Many people like to be acknowledged for a job well done, however, for most employees, it is not ALL about the money. A

<sup>7</sup> High risk positions are those which are critical to the organisation, would cause significant dysfunction if left unfilled or vacant for any period of time and require specialised skills or qualifications which may be in short supply.

simple, yet genuine “thank you” is often well received. Not all organisations have the capacity to pay bonuses when targets are exceeded but other options include<sup>8</sup>:

- Additional training or mentoring;
- Social activities or events; and
- Family Friendly Work Options – more and more employers are seeing the value in providing family friendly options, designed to provide a supportive work environment, fostering work/life balance. Workers with family or carer's obligations may be attracted by:
  - Compressed work weeks, whereby employees work their fulltime hours but over 4 days
  - Flexi time which allows employees to bank extra hours they have worked for when required
  - Part time or job sharing roles
  - Allowing employees to work from home
  - Career breaks where employees can retain their employment but take time off without pay
  - Child care centre within the workplace.

Future workforce strategies for this focus area include:

CODE	STRATEGY	Performance Indicator
<b>RR1</b>	Complement the current use of the local newspaper by establishing a bi monthly e-newsletter which, amongst other things, will inform the local community of the Shire workforce's contribution to the social and economic development and well-being of the region.	Number of bi-monthly e-newsletters published
<b>RR2</b>	Establish a Shire workforce recognition program which provides regular opportunities for the Council and CEO to celebrate staff contributions and achievements.	Workforce recognition program is implemented

### 3.2.3 Career planning and performance management (CP&PM)

Effective annual performance reviews result in improved communication between employers and employees, better understanding of expectations by all parties and improved productivity, performance and profitability for the organisation.

Reviewing and managing performance is an investment upfront so that employees can do their jobs. Done properly, it can save time and effort, and maximise the performance of each employee.

Getting the optimal performance from employees is an ongoing but worthwhile process and the performance review is an important component - to increase, maintain, or address performance of employees, as well as preventing and solving problems. Research has shown that regular, constructive feedback on work that has

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.davidsoninstitute.edu.au/learning-centre/business/articles/developing-a-staff-retention-strategy>

been well done and areas requiring improvement is motivating to employees who are performing well - it is also fair to employees who are performing poorly.<sup>9</sup>

Future workforce strategies for this focus area include:

CODE	STRATEGY	Performance Indicator
<b>CD&amp;PM1</b>	Extend the Shire's existing performance review system to a fully developed careers and performance management system which would include annual career development and performance agreements for all staff which, in turn, would take into account the key directions contained in the Shire's Strategic Community Plan and the business objectives of the annual Corporate Business Plan.	Performance review system is included in the Shire's policy manual
<b>CD&amp;PM2</b>	Establish an annual workforce training and professional development plan for Council approval, which identifies up-skilling and re-skilling requirements and opportunities for Shire's existing workforce.	Number of staff involved in performance review on an annual basis
<b>CD&amp;PM3</b>	Give a high priority to increasing investment in the Shire's training and professional development plan by 10% for the next three (3) years.	Percentage increase in training and professional development budget
<b>CD&amp;PM4</b>	Once approved by Council, the training and professional development plan be administered by the CEO with regular progress reports provided to the Council.	Number of progress reports provided to Council

### 3.2.4 Alternative labour sources (ALS)

There are opportunities available to the Shire to investigate non-traditional sources of labour as a means of addressing skills shortages. Scope exists to establish a local pool of expertise or utilise a more cost effective outsourcing option through forming regional partnerships.

Future workforce strategies for this focus area include:

CODE	STRATEGY	Performance Indicator
<b>ALS1</b>	Establish a pool of local casual or sessional staff who would be trained in various job categories and be available when permanent staff are absent or when short term vacancies occur.	Number of local casual and sessional staff
<b>ALS2</b>	Investigate the possibility of forming regional partnerships with other local government authorities to enable shared positions to be created with expertise which may include but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human resource management;</li> <li>• Procurement;</li> </ul>	Feasibility Study provided to Council

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.davidsoninstitute.edu.au/learning-centre/business/articles/making-the-most-out-of-your-investment-in-your-staff>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic development;</li> <li>• Ranger services;</li> <li>• Health services;</li> <li>• Regional tourism and marketing; and</li> <li>• Natural resource management.</li> </ul>	
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### 3.2.5 Organisational development (OD)

Continuous improvement requires that relevant processes are put into place to support organisational development and/or change as required. The existing challenges and changing needs of the community and financial pressures require a continual review of seeking efficiencies in work practices to support organisational development. In particular, the Shire needs to ensure that succession planning processes are in place.

Future workforce strategies for this focus area include:

CODE	STRATEGY	Performance Indicator
OD1	Investigate the feasibility of establishing two (2) manager positions which would: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocate responsibility for the Shire's "external service" to one senior manager and responsibility for the "internal" services to the other;</li> <li>• Create the external services manager position by re-classifying the existing Works Supervisor's position;</li> <li>• Create a new Deputy CEO position which would also incorporate some or all of the functions of one or more of the existing internal services positions; and</li> <li>• Require both senior managers to report directly to the CEO<sup>10</sup>.</li> </ul>	Feasibility Study provided to Council
OD2	Establish an executive leadership team comprising the CEO and the two senior managers.	Established executive leadership team
OD3	Each senior manager conduct regular team meetings to discuss work plans and be briefed on Council policies, plans and decisions.	Number of team meetings conducted annually
OD4	The Shire to invest in software to enable data to be stored, reports to be generated and workforce performance and productivity to be monitored.	Use of workforce software is implemented
OD5	A staff satisfaction survey be administered annually or bi-annually to assist with the regular review of the Shire's Workforce Plan.	Staff satisfaction survey is conducted
OD6	The CEO to report annually to the Council on the progress with the Shire's Workforce Plan and recommend any revisions to the Community Plan.	Annual progress report is provided to Council

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix 1 for a proposed new organisational structure.

### 3.3 Implementing Future Workforce Strategies

#### 3.3.1 Cost of implementation

The cost of the individual workforce strategies will vary. In many cases there will be no direct cost as the majority of the strategies simply constitute continuous improvement to sound management practice. For the minority of strategies where there is either a one-off cost or a recurrent cost it is anticipated that these costs will be able to be met within the existing budget parameters including the reprioritisation of existing expenditure if considered necessary. In addition, some of the strategies could be designed to work within the available funding or re-scheduled as a last resort.

Given these assumptions and taking into account the proposed implementation timeline it is estimated that Year 1 will require an additional expenditure of \$75K, Year 2 of \$85K and \$100K from Year 3 onwards (non-cumulative).

#### 3.3.2 Indicative Implementation Timeline

In light of the vision, goals and priority strategies identified in the Community Plan 2013, an indicative implementation timeline is provided.

Workforce Plan Code	Indicative Implementation Timeline				
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
AR1					
AR2					
AR3					
AR4					
AR5					
AR6					
AR7					
RR1					
RR2					
CD&PM1					
CD&PM2					
CD&PM3					
CD&PM4					
ALS1					
ALS2					
OD1					
OD2					
OD3					
OD4					
OD5					
OD6					

## 4. Monitoring and Evaluation of the Workforce Plan

The monitoring and evaluation of progress against this Workforce Plan is a critical component of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework for Local Governments. The toolkit developed for Western Australian local governments (*Workforce Planning – the Essentials*, 2012) recognises that many local governments do not have readily available workforce data and that there will be some resourcing requirements as information will need to be collected and entered into a data collection system to enable future analysis.

### 4.1 Appropriate information systems & monitoring tools/processes

There is currently insufficient workforce data which limits the ability of the Shire to plan fully and effectively in undertaking a detailed analysis of the Shire's workforce, particularly in time series data related to the following key components:

- Separation rates;
- Mobility within the organisation;
- Turnover rates;
- Retention rates;
- Vacancy patterns;
- Retirement patterns;
- Promotion patterns;
- Workload patterns;
- Leave patterns – sick leave, long service leave, family and parental leave;
- Time taken to recruit;
- Skills shortage and oversupply;
- Achievement of EEO targets;
- Turnover costs;
- Exit interviews;
- Employee perception survey; and
- Customer service surveys.

#### **Key Performance Measure 1: (2013-14)**

The Shire has an information system in place with monitoring tools and processes to collect and analyse data related to the above components of their workforce profile in future years.

### 4.2 On-going consideration of workforce implications

In order to ensure that workforce implications are included in all future Shire and Council decisions related to core business and service provision it will be critical that any workforce implications and/or options are included in their decision-making.

#### **Key Performance Measure 2: (2013)**

Evidence that workforce considerations are integrated into all tools and templates for Shire and Council decision-making.

### 4.3 Progress against timelines

The monitoring and review process enables local government to assess what is working and what is not, make adjustments to plans and strategies and address in a timely way new workforce and organisational issues which might have arisen. It will be important to re-visit workforce targets, changes and other desired outcomes identified as part of strategic community planning and corporate business planning processes and use these as the basis for monitoring and evaluating progress.

#### **Key Performance Measure 3: (2013)**

Evidence that progress is being monitored against the timelines associated with the strategies included in the Workforce Plan.

### 4.4 Regular review of Workforce Plan strategies

The Shire will be impacted on by changing internal and external developments. The new requirements for Integrated Planning by local governments recognise the importance and value of planning and regular review. Local governments are to review their Strategic Community Plan at least once every four years and the Corporate Business Plan for their Shire each year.

*“Successful workforce planning is an active, ongoing and dynamic process that must be monitored and adjusted. Strategies and action plans need to be continually monitored to account for any internal or external developments that occur. This will position the organisation to be ready to address and make essential changes when the environment demands change.”<sup>11</sup>*

#### **Key Performance Measure 4: (2016 -2017)**

The Shire has undertaken a formal review of this Workforce Plan to incorporate changes required as a result of on-going environmental scans of internal and external developments.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.ssa.vic.gov.au/products/view-products/workforce-planning-resource-kit.html>

**PROPOSED NEW SHIRE OF MT MARSHALL ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE**

