



Contents

Executive Summary	4
Integrated Workforce Planning	6
Aims, Objectives and Methodology	7
Shire of Dowerin Workforce	8
Organisational Capacity	10
Workforce Turnover & Tenure Summary	12
Services and Functions	14
Home Care	16
Community Resource Centre	17
Organisational Structure	18
Workforce Planning - Staff Survey Summary	20
Future Workforce Risks	22
Key Risks Moving Forward	24
Systems, Policies and Procedures	26
Workforce Plan Strategy Summary	27
Proposed 4-Year Structure	28
Key Focus Areas and Actions	30
Monitoring and Evaluation of Outcomes	36



Executive Summary

The Shire of Dowerin Workforce Plan outlines the essential staffing profile, levels, and strategies for recruitment, retention, training, and resourcing over the next five years. This plan is pivotal in our commitment to delivering high-quality projects and services to the community and will focus on covering the 6 core drivers below.

Workforce Importance

A well-trained, safe, respected, and relevant workforce is crucial for the efficient execution of our local government's responsibilities. Our Community and Corporate Strategies serve as the foundation for the Workforce Plan, identifying the community's current and future needs and aspirations.

Strategic Alignment

Through comprehensive community consultation and engagement with the Council and Executive, we ensure a clear understanding of the functions and roles necessary to meet these needs and aspirations. The Workforce Plan details the required roles and positions, recruitment needs, management and training requirements, and addresses emerging workforce issues.

Internal and External Factors

The plan considers various internal and external factors, including budget constraints, legislative changes, heightened community expectations, continuous improvement, and compliance. Balancing these factors in small regional communities is challenging, and some changes are inevitable.

Agility and Capacity

The Workforce Plan ensures that we remain agile and flexible while maintaining the capability and capacity to achieve our strategic priorities. We are dedicated to recognising and valuing the achievements of our staff, continually developing their skills and capabilities to align with our values and ensure the delivery of efficient and relevant services.

Monitoring and Review

The Shire is committed to annual reviews throughout the life of the Plan to ensure that Workforce Plan actions are implemented, monitored, and reported effectively.

Implementation of Policies and Procedures

Introduce the CEO Administrative Policy (CAP) with a CAP-2025-01: Workforce Operational Guidelines, for "Internal Use Only Authorised by CEO" and accessible for all relevant staff through the organisation's intranet and document management system.

Diversity and Inclusion

The Shire of Dowerin currently has a culturally rich and diverse team and remains committed to embracing and supporting diversity and inclusion in all aspects of workforce planning.



Integrated Workforce Planning

Local Governments in Western Australia are mandated to implement Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) as the primary process for planning and monitoring services and activities. The Workforce Plan is a fundamental component of the IPR framework, outlining workforce requirements and strategies to support current and future operations.

The Workforce Plan has been formulated to comply with the Local Government Act 1995, Section 5.56, which was gazetted in August 2011. Full compliance with these requirements was mandated by 30 June 2013.

Under Section 5.56(2) of the Local Government Act 1995, the following regulations have been established to guide the development of a "plan for the future":

- Local Governments must develop a Strategic Community Plan that aligns community aspirations with the Council's long-term strategy.
- Local Governments are required to have a Corporate Business Plan that integrates long-term financial planning, asset management, workforce planning, and specific Council plans (Informing Strategies) within the Strategic Plan.

Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

The Shire's Integrated Planning Framework comprises the following plans/programs:

Strategic Community Plan (SCP)

The SCP identifies the community's main aspirations and priorities for the future and outlines strategies for achieving these goals.

Corporate Business Plan (CBP)

Our CBP describes the activities we will undertake over the next four years to achieve the agreed short-term goals and outcomes and underpin long-term aspirations.

Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP)

Details the financial resources needed to enact the CP in the first four years and potential revenues and expenses for the next six years of the plan. It serves to inform and resource all aspects of the integrated planning activities as appropriate.

Asset Management Plan (AMP)

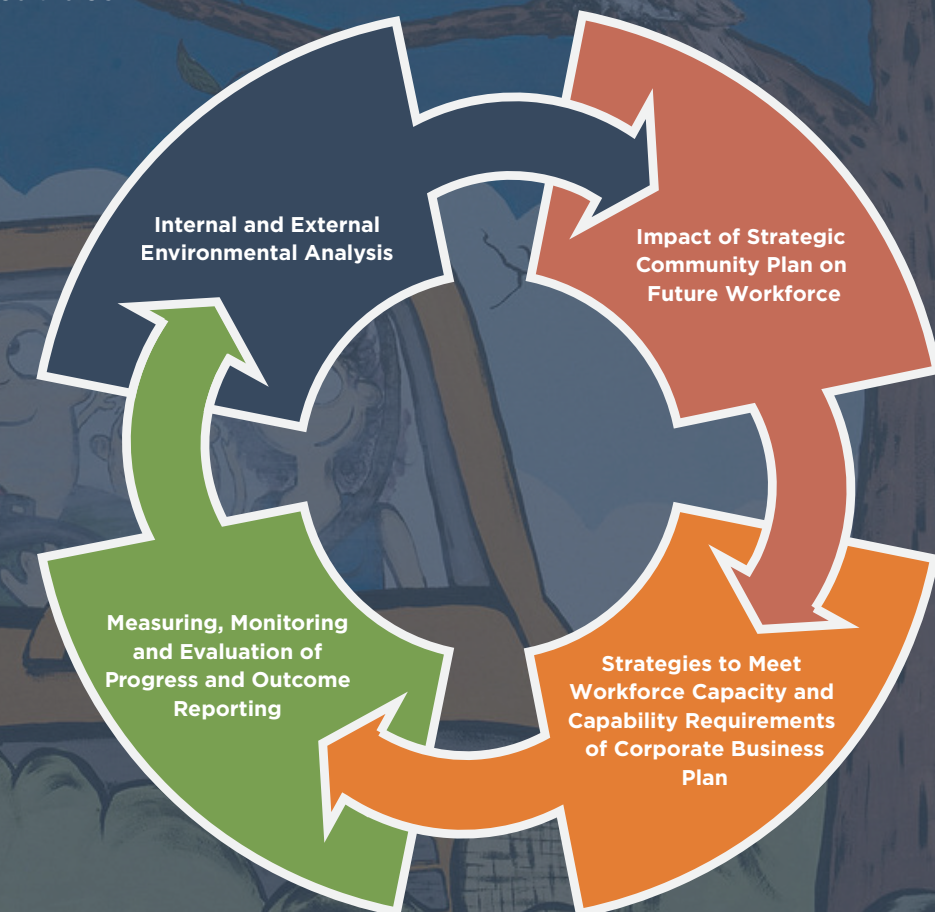
This plan identifies and records the asset register, service level, activities and strategies, to ensure physical assets and infrastructure are managed and maintained over their lifecycle; and appropriately disposed of at the end of their useful life.

Integrated Workforce Plan (IWP)

The IWP identifies and reports on the internal capacity to meet current and future needs of the goals and objectives of the Shire and the community, both in capacity and capability.

Aims, Objectives and Methodology

This workforce plan aims to address the workforce needs of the Shire that arise from core function services and operations, projects, strategic initiatives and priorities. It also aims to build capacity and resilience to allow the Shire to respond to the changing environment and issues arising from external pressures and legislative compliance issues. The Workforce Plan provides a structured approach to staff training and development to ensure the Shire's workforce has the right skills, at the right time and in the right quantities to ensure sustainable service delivery in the future. It will address gaps between current and future workforce capability, identify areas of skills or capacity shortage, and outline strategies to address them. This information will inform the LTFP and the AMP to ensure the financial and physical resources of the Workforce Plan are included in plans and planning activities.



The methodology used follows the practices and principles of the WA Department of Local Government's Workforce Planning Guidelines Toolkit: <https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/local-government/strengthening-local-government/integrated-planning-and-reporting>.

The stages outlined in the diagram were carried out in a consultative and capacity-building manner to ensure ownership and sustainability. This plan will be used to guide recruitment, retention and workforce growth, and will develop and change over the term of its life.

A comprehensive staff consultation has been implemented across all departments to finalise the Workforce Plan, ensuring staff input is reflected in the final strategy

Shire of Dowerin Workforce

The characteristics of the Shire’s community are a crucial factor in determining the Shire’s workforce capacity and capability requirements. Key features of the Dowerin community are as follows:

- Population: 715 people
- Median age: 45 years
- Number of families: 178
- Median weekly household income: \$1,197

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 from the economic profile for June 2025 that is relevant to this Workforce Plan:

- The average Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose to 2.8% in March 2025.
- The Western Australia Government’s State Budget (excluding electricity) forecast predicts annual average CPI growth of 2.75% for both 2024-25 and 2025-26.
- Western Australia’s employment rose by 3.4% to 1.64 million in May 2025
- Western Australia’s average total monthly hours worked in all jobs rose by 3.8% to 231.1 million hours in May 2025.
- Western Australia’s unemployment rate dropped to 3.9% in May 2025 (down from 4.1% in April 2025).

Internal Operating Environment

Governance and Executive Management

The Council of the Shire of Dowerin comprises seven elected members. The Ward system for the Shire was dissolved in 2017, leading to a more unified governance structure.

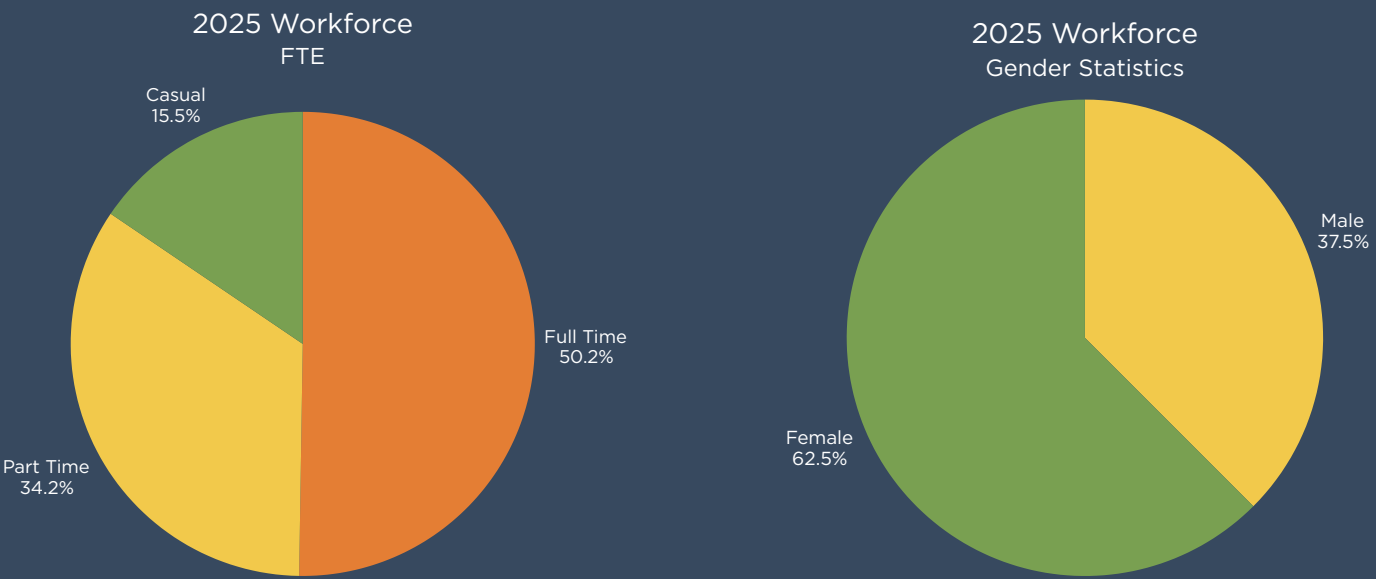
In recent years, the Shire of Dowerin has prioritised governance, compliance, and transparency and has reviewed the Shire’s values. The last workforce plan expired in 2022. The 2025/26 period marked a significant transition for the Shire, emphasising these critical areas.

The Shire has experienced considerable changes in its Executive Management team over the past few years. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) position has had high turnover since the last Workforce Plan was developed, with a new permanent CEO appointment in August 2024.

Staff Capacity and Capability

Current Financial Trend analysis - Rates, Employee Costs and Capital Projects:

The 2025/26 budget shows Rates revenue of \$1.624M, with Employee Costs at 138% of rates revenue and Capital Projects at 320% of rates revenue.



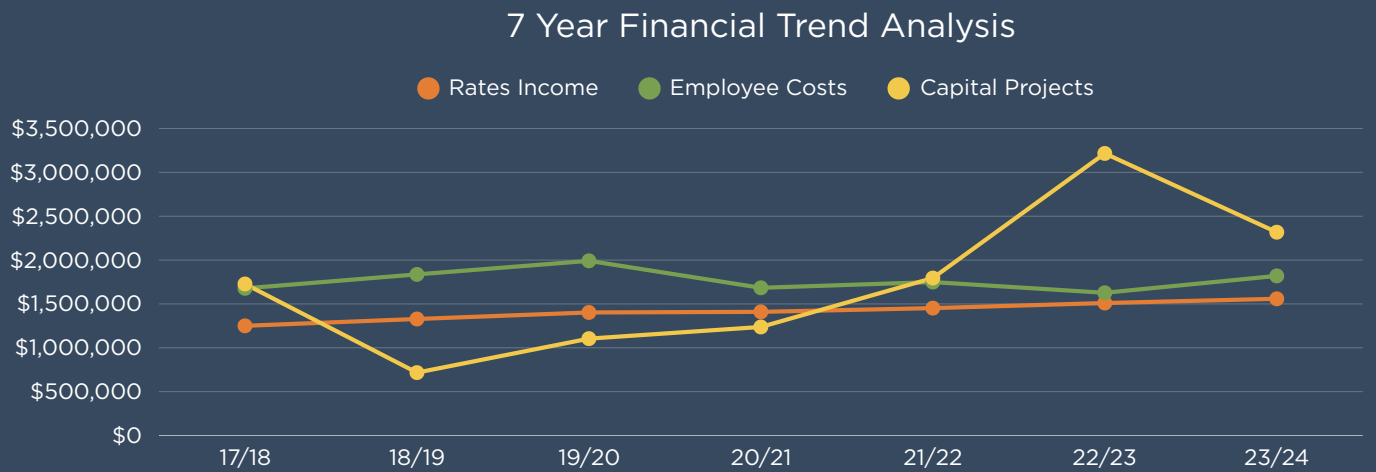
Analytical insight into the past seven years:

In the 2025/2026 financial year, the Shire’s budgeted operating expenses total \$7,926,281, with \$2,225,906 allocated to employee costs (28.08%). This represents a reduction compared to the previous workforce plan outlined during the 2017/2018 financial year, when 41.25% of the Shire’s total expenditure was allocated to workforce-related activities and contributions. In the 2024/2025 financial year, rates income totalled \$1,624,545, with employee costs equating to 138% of total rates revenue.

This low-rate base does not allow for workforce growth in a manner that may be expected by the community or the staff to deliver quality services to the community, while ensuring legislative compliance and working on the organisation’s strategic planning, governance and management.

The Council and Executive Management currently manage this in the best manner possible by exploring regional resource sharing and short-term contracts from highly skilled resources and exploring opportunities for grants to increase their capacity.

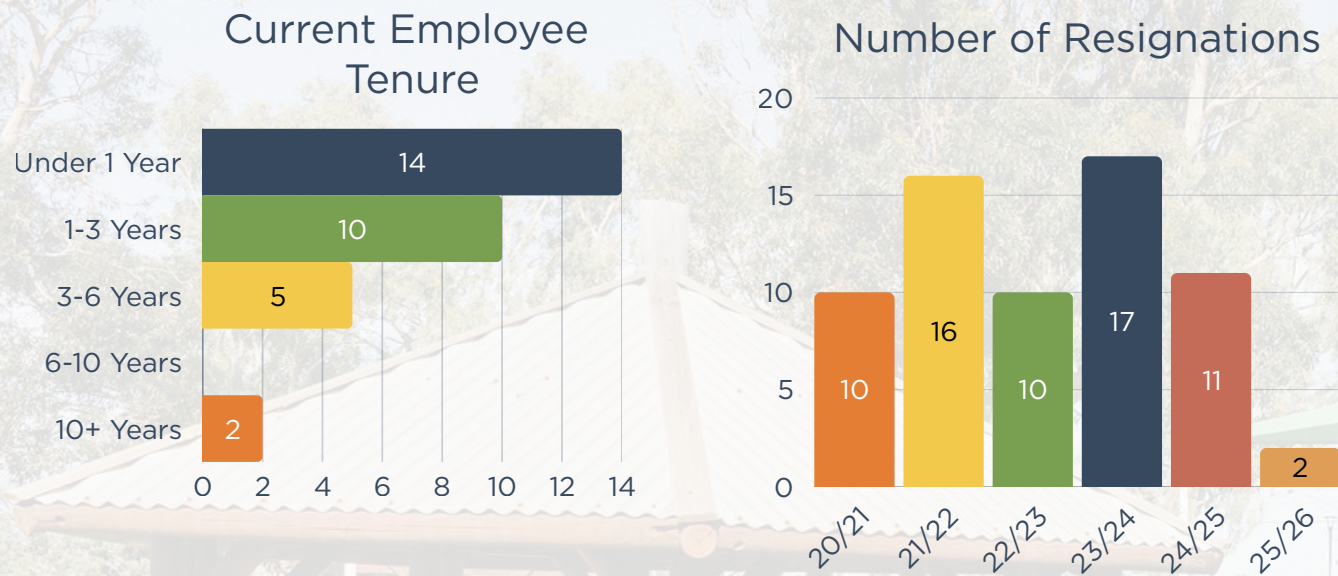
Through staff turnover over recent times, the length of service in the workforce has reduced, with 14 staff (43.75%) being employed for less than one year, and only 2 (6.25%) being employed for longer than 10 years. The age of the Shire workforce ranges from 18 years old to 70 years old, with an average age of 46.55 years.



Organisational Capacity

The management team’s perception-based assessment was used to rate the Shire’s management systems and organisational resources, with the rating system ranging from “1” (unable to demonstrate) to “5” (can demonstrate) against statements for each area. These factors may impact the ability to achieve organisational goals and objectives, and to recruit and retain a vibrant and effective workforce. The aim is to aspire to a minimal optimum standard of 60%. The Shire’s overall rating of 81 out of 136 points is 56% of the optimal level of Capacity, Capability and Culture. Individual category results and comments are outlined on page 11, along with suggested strategies for improvement.

**The Shire will further review these key focus areas and develop strategies, action plans and resources to address them wherever possible during the life of this inaugural workforce plan.*



Type of Employment

The Shire of Dowerin employs a total of 32 employees, of which 50% (16 employees) are full-time, 34.36% (11 employees) are part-time, and 15.63% (5 employees) are casual.

There is notable flexibility in the employment types among Administration staff, whereas Works staff tend to adhere to a more traditional model of full-time or casual employment. This trend appears to be influenced by the nature and type of work, as well as the available workforce, rather than by any specific organisational policy or strategy.

To address skills gaps and meet intermittent needs, the Shire utilises outsourced and temporary personnel. These roles do not warrant permanent employment due to the low level or sporadic nature of the activities involved.

Employees by Work Area

The work area profile of the Shire predominantly reflects its core business activities, which include road construction and management, as well as townsite maintenance. The current level of administrative staff aligns with a more traditional workforce model; however, this may need to evolve in the future to address the increasing governance and management requirements of local government. Community services provided by the Shire include Dowerin Home Care, management of the Dowerin Community Resource Centre, and Community Development.

In addition, the Shire’s workforce reflects a range of cultural backgrounds and diverse experiences, with staff originating from different countries and professional contexts. This diversity strengthens organisational capability by bringing varied perspectives to problem-solving, service delivery, and community engagement. The Shire of Dowerin is committed to upholding its values of equity, inclusion, and respect, and recognises that maintaining a workforce that embraces diversity is essential to delivering fair and responsive services. Supporting and retaining employees from diverse backgrounds will remain a key focus to ensure the organisation continues to meet the evolving needs of both its staff and the wider community.

Retention, Tenure and Employee History

Staff turnover has increased considerably over the past two years, with 28 employees exiting the organisation. This presents an elevated operational risk, including the loss of organisational knowledge and skills, reduced continuity across services, and higher employment-related costs associated with recruitment, onboarding, and training. The increased turnover has also impacted overall productivity and efficiency, as new employees require time to become fully competent in their roles and adapt to organisational processes.

Across the 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 financial years, the organisation has incurred approximately \$53,600 in recruitment-related expenses. This includes \$38,000 for two Chief Executive Officer recruitment processes, averaging \$19,000 each, and approximately \$15,600 for the recruitment of 26 officer-level positions, including one senior role.

Between January 2021 and June 2025, a total of 65 employees exited the organisation. Turnover trends have varied significantly during this period, with peaks recorded in 2021/2022 (16 exits) and 2023/2024 (17 exits). These high-turnover years placed considerable pressure on recruitment resources, increased onboarding workloads, and caused operational disruptions. In comparison, the organisation experienced greater workforce stability in 2020/2021 (10 exits), 2022/2023 (11 exits), and the partial 2024/2025 year (11 exits to date). On average, turnover across the five years equates to approximately 13 exits per year. *data displayed in graph 2 "Number of Resignations" covers the period of Jan 21 - July 25.

By analysing commencement and termination dates for all departing employees, the average employment tenure was calculated at approximately 2.34 years. This relatively short service cycle suggests that employees are not remaining long enough to fully develop, embed, and transfer critical skills and institutional knowledge. Shorter tenures contribute to repeated recruitment cycles, higher onboarding demands and reduced organisational efficiency. Improving workforce tenure should therefore be a key strategic objective, as extending the average service period would directly reduce annual turnover, lower recruitment expenditure, and improve organisational capability.

Recruitment costs, excluding executive appointments, have been significant. At an average of \$600 per officer-level recruitment, historical recruitment expenses are estimated to have exceeded \$39,000 since 2021. The highest expenses were incurred during the peak turnover years, with 2021/2022 estimated at \$9,600 and 2023/2024 estimated at \$10,200. These figures exclude the \$38,000 spent on two Chief Executive Officer recruitment processes, which are not factored into future forecasts, as a potential CEO recruitment process is not anticipated until after 2029.

Using the calculated average tenure of 2.34 years, projected turnover is expected to stabilise over the next five financial years, with an estimated three exits per year on average. Based on these projections, recruitment costs are expected to average \$1,800 per year, equating to approximately \$9,000 in expenditure between 2025/2026 and 2029/2030. This represents a reduction of around 77% when compared to historical trends, provided there are no significant structural or environmental changes affecting the workforce.

While forecasts indicate a potential improvement in workforce stability, ongoing turnover still presents several risks. Frequent employee exits can limit organisational knowledge retention, create service delivery disruptions, and increase the financial burden on operational budgets. Short employment cycles also make workforce planning more challenging, as repeated onboarding periods reduce efficiency and continuity. Without strategic intervention, these risks are likely to persist.

To address these challenges, it is recommended that the organisation implement a workforce retention strategy that focuses on improving tenure and strengthening employee engagement. This may include introducing structured retention programs targeted at roles with historically high turnover, providing flexible working arrangements and professional development pathways, and enhancing onboarding processes to improve early integration of new employees. Additionally, monitoring workforce metrics such as tenure trends, recruitment costs, and staff satisfaction will support informed decision-making and allow strategies to be refined as organisational needs evolve.



Works & Assets recorded 37 total departures, representing around 57% of all exits. Despite this, the average tenure of 2.61 years reflects comparatively stronger retention than other operational areas. Roles in this directorate include gardeners, cleaners, plant operators, graders, and tip attendants, where physical demands and seasonal work cycles naturally influence staff turnover. A key factor driving volatility in this area is the Prisoner Employment Program (PEP). The program allows minimum-security prisoners to undertake paid employment during the latter stages of their sentence, supporting rehabilitation, reintegration into the workforce, and the development of practical skills.

While highly valuable from a community and social responsibility perspective, PEP placements are generally short-term in nature and are tied to the conditions of participants' custodial release. This means that once a sentence concludes or a program finishes, participants often exit the organisation.

Although some participants transition successfully into ongoing permanent roles with the Shire, the majority do not continue, resulting in higher turnover compared with other areas. This creates a workforce environment that is more fluid and unpredictable, requiring regular recruitment, onboarding, and training to maintain operational capacity. At the same time, PEP provides a pathway for participants to gain industry experience and offers the Shire a potential talent pool for future staffing needs, particularly in operational roles where skill shortages can occur.

Executive & Governance recorded 7 departures during this period, including CEOs, DCEOs, and governance-related officers. While fewer roles exist in this area, the departure of senior leaders carries significant operational and strategic impacts due to their decision-making responsibilities and institutional knowledge.

Overall, the data highlights the need to focus retention strategies on the Works & Assets and Community & Support areas to reduce recruitment pressures and improve workforce stability. Improving onboarding processes, providing clearer career development pathways, and addressing the drivers of high turnover in casual roles will help strengthen organisational capability, retain knowledge, and reduce recruitment-related costs over time.

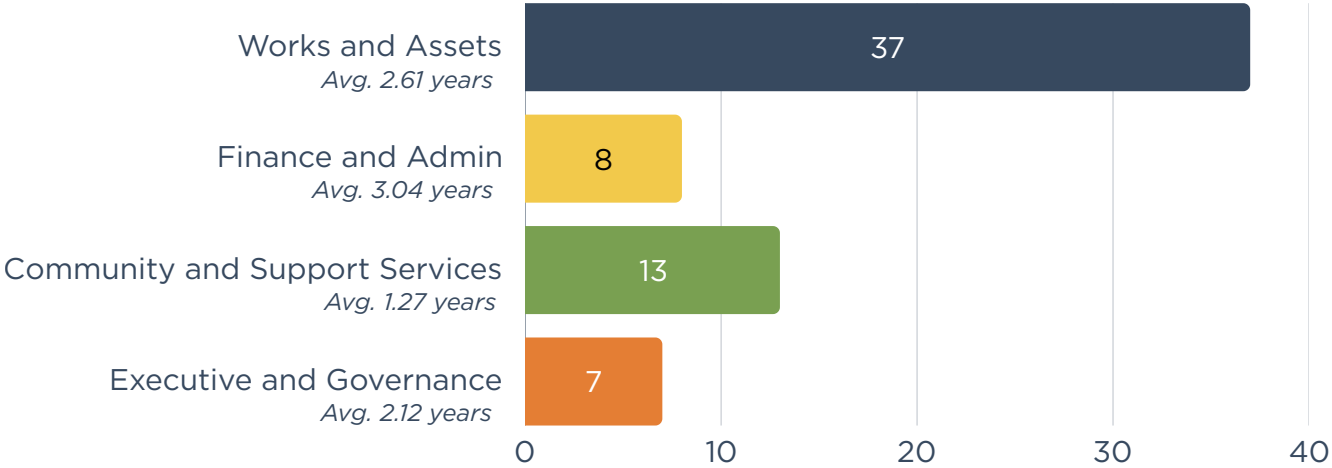
Workforce Turnover & Tenure Summary

The analysis of employee departures between January 2021 and June 2025 shows that the organisation has experienced 65 total staff exits, comprising 54 voluntary resignations and 11 other separations (including retirements, redundancies, medical exits, and dismissals). Turnover has been concentrated in particular areas, with Works & Assets recording the highest number of departures, followed by Community & Support Services.

Community & Support Services had 13 departures with the shortest average tenure of 1.27 years. This reflects the casual and part-time nature of many roles within this area, including home care, CRC, and community development positions. High turnover in this area impacts service continuity and increases onboarding and training requirements.

Finance & Administration recorded 8 departures over the same period, achieving the longest average tenure of 3.04 years. These positions, such as finance officers, rates, payroll, and administration roles, provide greater organisational stability and longer retention of institutional knowledge.

Workforce Turnover
January 2021 - June 2025



Services and Functions

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

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

Infrastructure & Assets <i>(Previously Asset & Works)</i>	
Asset & Infrastructure Management	Roads, Bridges & Drainage
Footpaths & Kerbing	Street Lighting, Vegetation, Landcare & Environment
Plant & Equipment	Parks, Gardens, Recreation Facilities & Grounds
Halls, Civic Centres, Offices & Housing	Water, Waste Management, Refuse Site & Sewerage
Public Works Design & Admin	Cemeteries (Maintenance)

Office of the CEO	
Strategic Planning	Workforce and Staff Management
Community Services	Lobbying & Advocacy
Executive Support	Economic Development

Governance & Community Services	
Governance, Compliance & Assurance	Risk Management
Emergency Services	Building and Planning
Environmental Health	Communications
Regional Development & Cooperation	Indigenous Affairs
Economic Development	Tenders and Contracts

Home Care Services	
Care Planning	Meal Preparation
Transport	Gardening
Wound Care	Medication Assistance

Corporate Services	
Financial Management	Administration
Department of Transport	Caravan & RV
Cemeteries (Administration)	Ranger Services

Community Resource Centre	
Tourism	Library & Information Services
Visitor Centre	Grant Management
Events	DPIRD Service Level Outcomes

Homecare

The Shire of Dowerin provides high-quality Home Care services to support older residents and people with additional care needs, helping them live independently in their own homes. Services are delivered under both the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) and Home Care Packages (HCP), offering a flexible range of supports to meet varying levels of need.

Levels of Care:

Low-level Care (CHSP)

Designed for clients who require limited support to maintain independence. Services may include domestic assistance, social support, transport, and light personal care. These services help clients remain active, connected, and safe in their homes and community.

High-level Care (HCP)

Tailored for clients with more complex or ongoing care needs. Services may include comprehensive personal care, nursing support, allied health coordination, meal preparation, and care management. HCP enables clients to receive a holistic, coordinated care plan that adapts as their needs evolve.

Key Service Areas:

- Personal care and daily living support
- Domestic assistance (cleaning, laundry, meal preparation)
- Social and community engagement programs
- Nursing and allied health support (HCP)
- Transport for medical appointments and community participation
- Care Plan Preparation and Updating
- Meal Prep
- Transport – medical appointments, local shopping and metro where needed
- Gardening
- Wound Care
- Medication assistance
- Assistance with booking respite care
- Provision of some mobility aids
- Gentle Gym (exercise program for seniors)

Our Homecare team is committed to delivering compassionate, client-centred care. Staff are trained, experienced, and supported to provide safe, professional, and responsive services. The program is regularly reviewed to ensure services are aligned with client needs, best practice standards, and emerging community demands. Through both low-level and high-level care, the Shire's Homecare Services contribute to the well-being, independence, and quality of life of residents, reinforcing our commitment to a caring and connected community.

Community Resource Centre

The Shire of Dowerin's Community Resource Centre (CRC) is a vital hub for the community, providing a wide range of programs and services that support learning, engagement, access to essential services, and local business and community development.

The CRC team is managed by the Community Development Coordinator, a Shire staff member included under the Shire's Workforce Plan, ensuring alignment with organisational goals and workforce management. While the CRC is primarily staffed by the Shire, partial funding for the CRC is provided through the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD). A key role of the DPIRD CRC program is to provide growth in all aspects of the community, ensuring long-term sustainability, connectedness, and opportunity across regional towns.

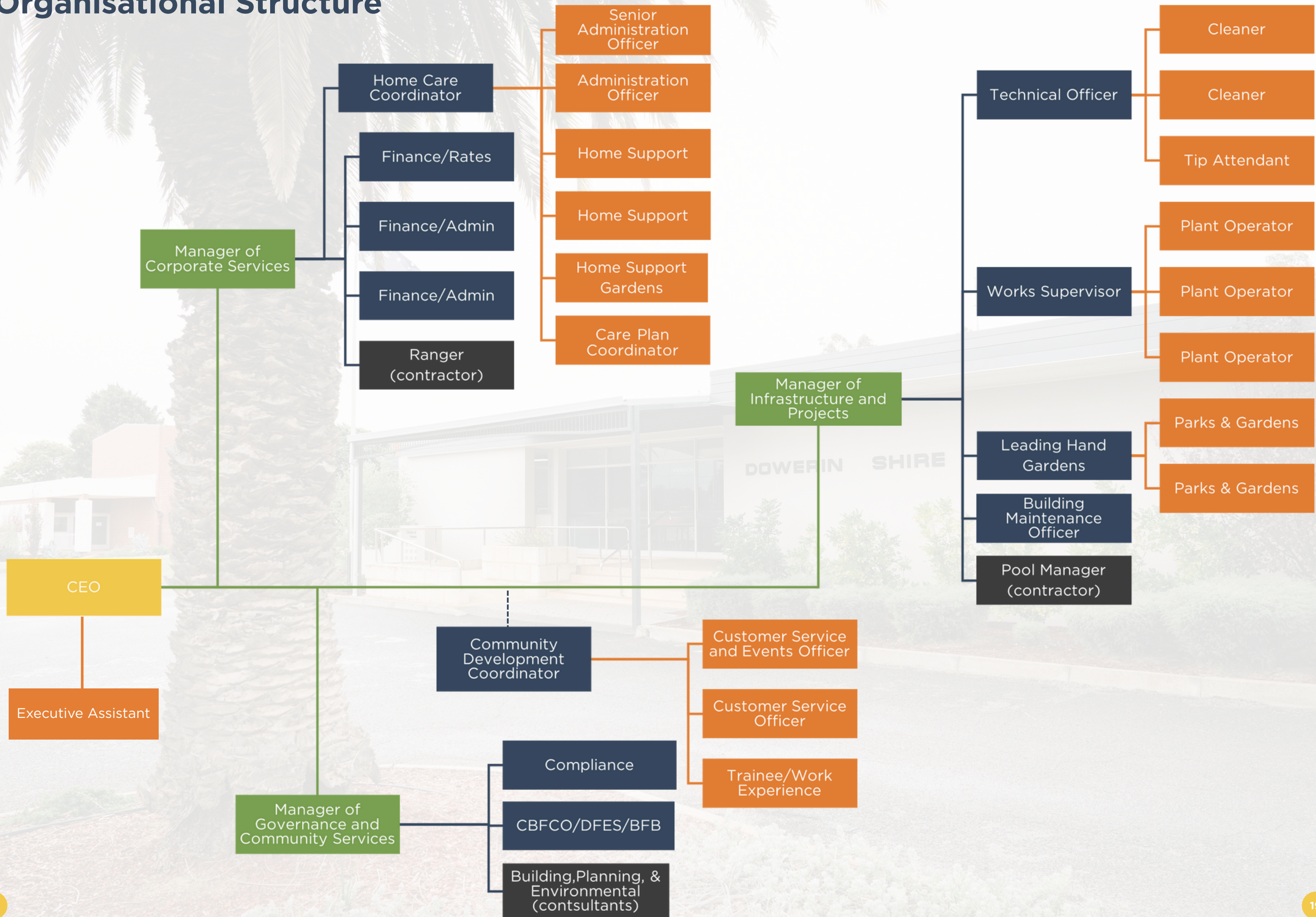
Key Services and Programs

- Computer and technology classes/one-on-one sessions for all age groups, including access to free computers for community use, Wi-Fi, and printing services.
- Everyday access to printing, scanning, emailing, laminating, and other office services for the community.
- Programs and activities designed to promote social engagement, learning, and well-being for older residents.
- Assistance with accessing Medicare, Centrelink, and other essential government services.
- Kodak photo services for the community.
- Delivery of a variety of community events, providing guidance, coordination, and access to resources to ensure successful outcomes.
- Workshops, assistance with marketing activities, guidance on grants, and connecting local businesses with resources to help them grow and thrive.
- Local jobs such as document formatting, catalogue printing, and fixture design/printing to support individuals and organisations.
- Publishing the Despatch newspaper, social media updates, and community information sharing.
- Assisting community organisations and individuals with identifying opportunities, preparing applications, and acquittals.
- Integrated Shire Services

While the CRC runs these programs, tourism promotion and library services (including literacy initiatives such as Better Beginnings) operate under the Shire's broader organisational umbrella, ensuring integrated community support and development.

The CRC remains a welcoming, accessible hub that encourages participation, supports lifelong learning, strengthens connections across the Dowerin community, and fosters a thriving local business environment.

Organisational Structure



Workforce Planning

Staff Survey Summary

The Shire of Dowerin conducted two staff surveys to better understand employee perspectives, with a focus on workplace culture, communication, morale, and engagement. Of the 26 staff members invited to participate, 12 completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of approximately 46%.

Overall, the survey results reflect a generally positive workplace culture, with staff expressing satisfaction with their roles, strong commitment to the community, and appreciation for ongoing organisational progress. Key strengths identified include supportive relationships between colleagues, care from supervisors, and a shared sense of purpose.

However, the survey also highlighted several recurring challenges and opportunities for growth. Communication remains an area of concern, with feedback indicating the need for more consistent, transparent, and timely information sharing. Staff also raised issues regarding recognition, equity between different teams, workload management, and the need for clearer expectations and role clarity.

Despite these challenges, there is a strong sense of optimism among employees, with many recognising the Shire's efforts to improve the workplace and expressing a desire to contribute to the organisation's future success. This report summarises these insights and provides actionable recommendations to address concerns, build on current strengths, and continue fostering a positive organisational culture.

Current Workforce Risk Profile

The staff survey that was conducted in 2024 and early 2025 highlighted several areas of concern raised by employees, reflecting opportunities for improvement within the organisation. While many respondents expressed overall satisfaction with their roles and a positive outlook on the workplace, the following key issues were identified:

Communications

The importance of communication was highlighted across multiple responses. Staff noted ongoing issues with internal communication between teams and departments, inconsistency in the flow of information, and a general need for clearer, more transparent dialogue. Suggestions included fostering more open conversations, ensuring that information is shared in a timely and consistent manner, and addressing communication gaps that may impact teamwork and morale.

Workplace Culture and Staff Dynamics

Several employees highlighted concerns about workplace relationships, including the need to build stronger, more positive connections between staff, particularly between Shire staff and the CRC.

Recognition and Inclusion

A lack of recognition for certain roles and contributions was raised, with some staff feeling that their work, particularly outside the main Shire office, is not always acknowledged or valued. Employees expressed a desire for more consistent and equitable recognition across all departments and roles, including small gestures such as inclusion in social events and celebrations.

Training, Development and Utilisation of Skills

Some staff identified gaps in training and the underutilisation of existing skills within teams. There was a call for better recognition of internal capabilities, more opportunities for professional development, and a focus on building roles around existing staff skills to reduce costs and improve job satisfaction.

Workplace Standards and Presentation

A small number of responses commented on workplace standards, including suggestions for a more professional dress code for office staff and improved presentation of the town's public spaces, such as streets and gardens.

Equity and Fairness in Role Variation

One detailed response highlighted an ongoing concern about disparities in how different roles are valued within the organisation. The employee noted inconsistencies in recognition, resource allocation, and development opportunities, which may contribute to low morale, limited cross-department collaboration, and increased staff turnover in undervalued positions.

Future Workforce Risks

The Shire of Dowerin’s workforce data highlights several emerging challenges that require proactive management to ensure ongoing operational stability and service delivery. Based on the current workforce profile and turnover analysis, the following key risks have been identified.

High Workforce Turnover (Critical Risk)

Over the last 24 months, the Shire recorded 28 staff departures — a turnover rate exceeding 120%. This high turnover has disrupted service delivery, increased recruitment costs, and created ongoing pressure on remaining staff.

Area	Departures <i>(over 24 mths)</i>	Turnover	Key Challenges
Works & Assets	14	~150%	High demand for operators, strong competition from private sector.
Community & Support	6	~130%	Difficulty retaining CRC and part time community service roles
Executive & Governance	4	~80%	Instability in leadership roles has impacted continuity
Finance & Admin	4	~70%	Recruiting qualified finance officers remains challenging
TOTAL	28	~120%	

Workforce Age Profile and Retirement Risk

The median workforce age is 47 years, consistent with the broader Dowerin population (ABS 2021).
Of the current workforce (32 employees):
3 employees (13%) are aged 60+ and likely to approach retirement within the next 2-5 years.
4 employees (17%) are aged 55-59, meaning 30% of the workforce could potentially exit within the medium term.
These figures highlight the importance of succession planning and structured knowledge transfer to ensure continuity.

Skills Gaps and Capability Pressures

7 employees (30%) are in roles where they require structured development plans to reach full capability.
Skills gaps exist in several key areas, including:

- Regulatory compliance & governance.
- Financial management & reporting.
- Specialised technical roles in Works & Assets.

Without focused investment in training and development, these gaps will worsen if experienced staff continue to exit.

Recruitment and Attraction Challenges

The Shire faces ongoing challenges attracting and retaining qualified candidates, particularly for:

- Technical works roles (plant operators, infrastructure maintenance).
- Governance & compliance functions.
- Finance positions requiring accounting qualifications.

The limited local candidate pool, combined with regional competition and housing availability issues, makes sustained recruitment success difficult.

Increased Governance and Compliance Demands

Changes to local government legislation and reporting obligations have increased workload pressures across senior management, governance, and administrative teams. These pressures are amplified by workforce turnover, creating a higher risk of non-compliance without improved resourcing and systems.

Strategies to Mitigate Workforce Risks

To respond to these challenges, the Shire’s Workforce Plan 2025-2029 will prioritise the following strategies:

- Strengthen succession planning by identifying critical roles early and developing internal successors through structured pathways.
- Build workforce capability through targeted training and professional development in compliance, governance, and technical operations.
- Improve recruitment and retention by enhancing attraction strategies, offering competitive benefits, and increasing local workforce engagement.
- Adopt flexible workforce models by cross-skilling staff, redesigning roles where needed, and ensuring operational coverage during vacancies.
- Support staff wellbeing through initiatives that reduce burnout, improve retention, and expand flexible working arrangements.
- Capture organisational knowledge by developing mentoring programs and transferring expertise from long-serving employees to newer staff.

Key Risks Moving Forward

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Risk Level	Mitigation Strategies
High turnover (>120%)	Service disruption, increased recruitment costs	Likely	Extreme	Recruitment strategy and retention incentives
Upcoming retirements (30% of workforce)	Loss of corporate knowledge and capability	Almost Certain	High	Succession planning and mentoring
Skills shortages	Lower service quality and increased reliance on contractors	Likely	High	Training, cross-skilling, and development programs
Recruitment challenges	Longer vacancy periods, operational delays	Likely	High	Competitive attraction packages and regional partnerships
Governance and compliance load	Risk of non-compliance and reputational damage	Possible	Medium	Resource realignment and improved systems

Systems, Policies and Procedures

Effectively managing workforce risks for the Shire of Dowerin requires the right mix of systems, processes, and policies. These tools will improve workforce planning, strengthen recruitment and retention, and support long-term organisational sustainability.

Systems

- Human resources information systems (HRIS) provide a central platform to manage employee data, track training, and support succession planning.
- A performance management system ensures regular assessment of employee achievements, alignment with goals, and consistent feedback.
- Recruitment management systems simplify the hiring process and assist in building a pool of candidates for current and future vacancies.

Processes

- Regular employee engagement initiatives, including staff surveys, help identify workforce needs and improve workplace culture.
- Structured succession planning processes ensure continuity by preparing employees to step into critical roles as vacancies arise.
- Ongoing training and professional development programs strengthen capability, technical skills, and leadership across the organisation.
- Performance reviews provide an opportunity to track progress, highlight development areas, and support career growth.
- A standardised recruitment and onboarding process creates consistency and ensures new employees are supported from appointment to integration.

Policies

- An attraction and retention policy sets a framework for securing and keeping skilled employees, including recognition, incentives, and career pathways.
- A workforce planning policy defines the Shire's long-term approach to managing skills, succession, and future workforce needs.
- A training and development policy supports ongoing capability-building across all roles.
- A performance management policy sets clear expectations for reviews and feedback.
- A recruitment policy establishes transparent and consistent hiring practices.
- A health and well-being policy promotes initiatives that improve staff wellness, flexibility, and overall job satisfaction.

Integrating these systems, processes, and policies positions the Shire of Dowerin to build a resilient, capable, and future-ready workforce. The approach strengthens succession planning, supports retention, improves service delivery, and ensures the organisation can meet evolving community and operational needs.

Workforce Plan Strategy Summary

Workforce Costs and Budget Implications

The workforce planning process has resulted in a shift to a two-level management structure, streamlining reporting lines and improving operational efficiency. The new structure consists of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) supported by three managers:

- Manager of Governance and Community Services
- Manager of Infrastructure and Projects
- Manager of Corporate Services

This structure, combined with targeted realignment of duties and recent workforce changes, has created opportunities to increase capacity and capability across the organisation while maintaining an approach that is financially sustainable.

While the implementation of workforce strategies may introduce some short-term costs, these are primarily linked to system improvements, process enhancements, and professional development initiatives. These costs will be managed within the Shire's financial planning framework and accounted for through the annual Budget and Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP).

The restructure supports a more efficient decision-making process, strengthens leadership capacity, and positions the organisation to better meet future community and operational needs without placing unnecessary pressure on ongoing expenditure.

Implementation Plan

The successful delivery of the Shire of Dowerin Workforce Plan 2025–2030 will be guided by a structured Implementation Plan designed to translate strategic workforce objectives into practical actions.

This plan outlines key focus areas, including succession planning, recruitment and retention, staff development, governance and compliance, and systems improvement. Each action is aligned with clear responsibilities, timeframes, and resource considerations to ensure accountability and progress.

The Implementation Plan will be integrated into the Shire's existing planning and reporting processes, with progress monitored annually and reviewed biannually to ensure alignment with organisational priorities and the evolving needs of the community. By adopting a phased and flexible approach, the Shire aims to build workforce resilience, improve capacity and capability, and sustainably support the delivery of services and strategic objectives.

Proposed 4-Year Structure

Office of the CEO

Role	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
Chief Executive Officer	1	1	1	1
Executive Assistant	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
Regulatory Advisor	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
TOTAL	1.85	1.85	1.85	1.85

Infrastructure and Projects

Role	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
Manager	1	1	1	1
Technical Officer	1	1	1	1
Works Supervisor	1	1	1	1
Leading Hand P&G	1	1	1	1
Building Maintenance	1	1	1	1
Plant Operators (3)	3	3.2	3.2	3.2
P&G Team (2)	2	2	2	2
Tip Attendant	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22
Cleaners (2)	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58
TOTAL	11.8	12	12	12

Home Care

Role	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
Coordinator	1	1	1	1
Senior Administrator	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
Care Plan Coordinator	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Administration Officer	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85
Home Support (2)	1	1.35	1.35	1.35
Home Support - Gardens	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
TOTAL	4.15	4.5	4.5	4.5

Governance and Community Services

Role	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
Manager	1	1	1	1
Compliance Officer	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	2	2	2	2

Corporate Services

Role	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
Manager	1	1	1	1
Finance, Customer Service (3)	2.6	3	3	3
TOTAL	3.6	4	4	4

Community Resource Centre

Role	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
Coordinator	1	1	1	1
Customer Service (2)	1.5	1.25	1.25	1.25
Trainee (0.5 paid)	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	3.5	3.25	3.25	3.25

TOTALS

Area	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
Office of the CEO	1.85	1.85	1.85	1.85
Infrastructure and Projects	11.8	12	12	12
Home Care	4.15	4.5	4.5	4.5
Governance and Community	2	2	2	2
Corporate Services	3.6	4	4	4
Community Resource Centre	3.5	3.25	3.25	3.25
TOTAL	26.9	27.6	27.6	27.6

Key Focus Areas and Actions

Succession Planning

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Implications
Develop and implement a formal succession plan for key roles Develop an acting CEO policy that provides equal opportunity to all mangers	CEO/HR	Q4 2025	Internal resourcing, potential workshop facilitation costs.
Identify and develop high-potential staff for leadership roles	CEO/Managers	Q1 2026	Training and mentoring budget

Recruitment and Retention

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Implications
Develop an Attraction and Retention administrative policy, including incentives and housing strategies	CEO/HR	Q1 2026	Minor initial development cost, potential LTFP implications
Conduct annual salary benchmarking and remuneration review separately to performance review	CEO/Finance	Annually	Salary adjustments as required, included in LTFP
Annual staff recognition	CEO/HR/Managers	Annually	The President’s award presented at the annual Christmas Party to the employee best demonstrating the Shire’s values
Annual staff recognition (new program)	CEO/Managers	Annually	Annual awards: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individual Excellence• Commitment to Service• Team of the Year Process <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Managers submit quarterly notes on staff.• Community feedback considered.• CEO reviews and recommends recipients to Council (no motion). Recognition <ul style="list-style-type: none">Presented by the Shire President at the Christmas function with a certificate.

Key Focus Areas and Actions

Staff Training and Development

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Implications
Implement individual Training and Development Plans linked to annual performance reviews.	Managers/HR	Q2 2026	Training programs, external facilitation costs.
Introduce apprenticeship, traineeship, and mentorship programs.	CEO/Managers	Q3 2026	Potentially grant-funded or internally resourced.

Governance and Compliance

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Implications
Review and adjust the organisation structure to meet governance demands.	CEO/Council	Q3 2026	Potential staff/resource costs; LTFP alignment.
Implement initiatives focused on psychosocial safety in the workplace. Ensure policies and procedures are developed, reviewed and implemented that support psychological safety in our workplace, such as codes of conduct, and deal with matters such as bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment.	Managers/WHS	Feasibility: Q3 2026	Increase employee satisfaction, motivation and productivity. Minimise workers' compensation claims. Reduce absence levels.
Implement a Mental Health Training and Professional Development Program. Identify and facilitate delivery of a program of training for the Executive, leaders and employees that supports a psychologically safe workplace. Equip leaders to notice and respond to mental health concerns through the provision of training and professional development.	Managers/WHS	2026/27 FY	Equip staff to respond to mental health concerns. Demonstrate a caring, inclusive environment.

Performance and Culture

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Implications
Implement a consistent Performance Management System.	HR/Managers	Q2 2026	May require software or external consultancy.
Implement a clear, separate, standalone process for performance review and a salary adjustment review separately.	CEO/HR	Q3 2026	
Conduct biennial Staff Satisfaction Surveys and respond to feedback.	CEO/HR	Q4 2026 (first survey)	Survey tools or external facilitation cost.

Key Focus Areas and Actions

Systems and Processes

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Implications
Implement or upgrade the Human Resources Information System (HRIS).	CEO/IT/HR	Feasibility: Q3 2026	Software and training costs.
Standardise recruitment, onboarding, and induction processes.	HR	Q1 2026	Internal resource review; minimal additional expense.
Creation of proper internal documentation and integration of important policies and procedures within the Workforce Plan.	CEO	Q2 2026	Nil expense, developed internally
Introduction of CEO Administrative Policy (CAP) Workplace Operational Guidelines (Internal Use Only)	CEO	Q2 2026	Nil costs, developed internally

Community Engagement

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Implications
Allocate resources to enhance community engagement and communication.	CEO/Managers	Q2 2026	Possible role adjustment or creation.

Sustainability and Workforce Planning

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Implications
Develop a formal Workforce Planning Policy and align with LTFP and Asset Management Plan	CEO/HR/Finance	Q1 2026 / Ongoing	Incorporated into the regular planning cycle.



Monitoring and Evaluation of Outcomes

Measure	Frequency	Responsible
Workforce Plan progress reported to Council	Annual	CEO
Staff satisfaction surveys	Biannual	HR
Performance reviews completed	Annual	Management
Budget impacts are monitored and reflected in LTFP	Annual	CEO/Finance
Review and update of Workforce Plan	Biennial	CEO/HR

Sustainability Considerations in Workforce Planning

The Shire of Dowerin is committed to building a sustainable workforce by strengthening internal capability and reducing long-term reliance on external contractors. Workforce size, structure, and costs will be regularly reviewed to ensure alignment with community needs, service expectations, and financial capacity. By embedding continuous improvement practices, the organisation will enhance its resilience, adaptability, and ability to respond to emerging challenges. Proactive planning, including succession management and skills development, will ensure the Shire is well-positioned to maintain service delivery and meet future workforce demands.

Future Considerations

Following the next four-year cycle, or sooner if appropriate, the Shire will undertake a review of service delivery and alignment to ensure services continue to meet community needs and support organisational priorities in the following key areas. As part of this review, consideration may be given to restructuring services if required, but the primary focus is on assessing and confirming the most effective arrangements.

- Ranger and Animal Control services are currently delivered under the Corporate Services division.
- Homecare services are delivered under the Corporate Services division.
- Planning, Building and EHO services are currently delivered under Governance and Community Services.
- Community Development and CRC are currently under the Office of the CEO.