




Gympie Regional Council Workforce Strategy 2023-2025



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Acknowledgement of Country

Gympie Regional Council (GRC) operates on the lands of the Gubbi Gubbi People, the Wakka Wakka People and the Butchulla People. We also acknowledge that some of our staff live outside of these lands.

We pay our respects and thank all traditional custodians for your ongoing care and custodianship of the lands and the sea. We are grateful for the wisdom and guidance of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues, as we work together to ensure Gympie Regional Council is a physically and culturally safe and welcoming place for all.





Vision

Gympie Regional Council has a vision for embracing opportunities, promoting wellbeing and celebrating strong communities.



Mission

To leave a positive legacy for future generations by embracing progress through good planning and efficient service delivery.



Workforce Mission

To be a leading regional and rural council delivering quality, value focused, safe and innovative outcomes for our community through a talented, diverse workforce.



CEO's Message

I am pleased to endorse our 2023-2025 Workforce Strategy.

This is one of many plans and strategies that will shape our future as an attractive region to work in and define Gympie Regional Council as an employer of choice.





Values

Our values are the principles upon which our council serves the community.

Accountability:

We are open, transparent and take responsibility for our actions.

Communication:

We consult with the community, actively listen to and respond to the input of residents, and keep people informed.

Customer Service Focused:

We meet the needs of our community in an efficient and effective manner.

We strive to continually improve, show empathy and are environmentally aware in our service delivery.

Integrity:

We act with honesty and respect in all we do and respect all residents, colleagues and visitors.

Teamwork and Collaboration:

We recognise and support everyone's contributions.



We are inclusive and contribute respectfully working as a team.

We will care for ourselves and others.

Our Proud History

Our organisation had its foundations in 1879 when the Widgee and Gympie Divisions (which included Kilkivan and Noosa) were proclaimed. Our first Mayor was elected in June 1880. 1890 saw the completion of the first Gympie Town Hall which is still standing proudly and housing our CEO, Mayor and customer service teams and hosting all formal Council meetings.



In 1905, Gympie was proclaimed a city by the Governor of Queensland. More changes occurred in 1993 when the City of Gympie merged with the Shire of Widgee to become Cooloola Shire Council. This was the case until 2008 when along with several other Queensland Council amalgamations the former Cooloola Shire merged with the Kilkivan Shire and part of the Tiaro Shire Council to become Gympie Regional Council. Since that period, a Council consisting of eight Councillors and a Mayor have been elected every four years.

Our People

Our workforce is comprised of many staff who have lived and worked in the region for long periods of time coupled with new arrivals.

Our average tenure is around seven years. Eleven employees have been with council for 30 years or more and 128 or 25 per cent have joined in the past 12 months. On average, around 80 new employees join council each year as a result of retirements, resignations and the creation of new positions. This new knowledge combined with our long serving team members' knowledge builds a strong organisational capability for servicing our region.

In our workforce, most staff are aged between 35 and 55 years. We have 30 employees in the 16–24-year age group which demonstrates the opportunities for entry level roles for people in our region.

Council is focused on the future capability of the workforce and as such we will be investing in learning, vocational pathways and career development.



Our Workforce Strategy Goals

This strategy aims to bring to life the actions that will be taken to attract, retain, develop and value our diverse council workforce. It also demonstrates our commitment to career development, leadership capability, employee engagement and safety with a goal of creating a rewarding and supportive place for our people to work. The themes of the strategy reflect issues raised in employee forums, issues identified in independent reviews of council operations and feedback from the Employee Engagement Survey conducted in 2022.

- Attraction and Retention – providing for flexibility in ways of working, celebrating our employees' achievements, creating career pathways, recruiting on merit for the best skills, knowledge and abilities.
- Culture and Engagement – providing regular opportunities for employee input, biennial (2 yearly) employee engagement surveys, sharing of information and updates from senior leaders with all employees, and transparency in decision making.
- Leadership and Development – an investment in our people through leadership programs for current and emerging leaders, compliance training and development programs, inclusion and diversity strategies aligned to the GRC vision and mission.
- Safety and Wellbeing – creating a safe workplace through the GRC Safety strategy and its motto of Work safe go Home safely, recognising safety leadership through safety sponsored events, developing an annual safety award for the GRC end of year awards, encouraging safety shares and incident debriefs in meetings, tool box talks and other forums.

Within the objectives our organisational goals are to develop a workplace where employees:

- are provided opportunities to develop contemporary and highly regarded learning and development experiences through all stages of their career;
- gain transferable skills to take advantage of new and emerging opportunities;
- are proud of their achievements and recognised for their contributions to the workplace and our community;
- feel included and respected and where diversity of thought is valued and rewarded;
- demonstrate positive and constructive behaviours towards people, problems and change;
- act respectfully and with integrity towards each other and to our customers;
- prioritise health, wellbeing and safety, with a focus on resilience and prevention of domestic and family violence;
- operate with honesty and openness, where conversations about performance and development are transparent and expectations and performance outcomes are clear;
- connect and collaborate, seek feedback and share information and experiences;
- make a positive difference for our residents by delivering essential services and giving back to the community through opportunities for volunteering and donations to charities; and
- seek out new information, consider broader perspectives and draw upon relevant expertise from internal and external sources.

These goals are spread over three years. The strategy is effective from its date of endorsement by the Executive Leadership team until it is renewed. Many of the initiatives will be ongoing as good practice in local government. The majority of initiatives are designed to be delivered in Years 1 and 2 (2023 and 2024) and these achievements will align with the longer-term strategy. There is scope for addition of new ideas and priorities as they are identified through the Corporate or Operational Planning processes or because of unforeseen events.





520
employees



309
male employees



211
female employees



45 years
average age



47 years
median age



128
new employees in the last year



11
employees with 30+ years of service



7 years
average tenure



3 years
median tenure



112
employees under 35 years of age



279
employees with less than
5 years of service


273

employees between 35-54 years of age

135

employees 55 years of age and over





*In my 22 years at council,
I have seen the organisation grow and evolve,
while I earned a degree, developed my professional
capability, and raised a family.*

*I enjoy the passionate and diversely talented team,
the opportunity to share goals and challenges, and all
the laughs along the way. I recommend it to anyone
for a fulfilling and rewarding career.*

Amy (ICT)

*I joined Council 5 years ago
in the Construction team. I have progressed
to a Leading Hand role and had the opportunity
to become proficient in many items of plant and
machinery. It's a great crew to be part of
and a rewarding role.*

Team Member (Construction)

*I started with Gympie Regional
Council as a school-based trainee over
10 years ago (2012). It has been rewarding and
enjoyable to establish my career in my home town
with great people and colleagues.*

*I have had the opportunity to progress my career,
study, work on projects, and have fun. I recommend
council as a great place to work.*

Shannan (Administration)





Objective 1

Attract and Retain - providing for flexibility in ways of working, celebrating our employees achievements, creating career pathways, recruiting on merit for the best skills, knowledge and abilities.

Number	Objectives	Actions	Accountabilities	Timeline
1.1	Create a welcoming and professional environment for potential and new employees.	Review and design new onboarding and induction processes aligned to new systems and processes.	People and Culture	November 2023
1.2	Develop progressive strategies intended to develop and build our workforce capability.	Promote corporate volunteering across all teams. Encourage corporate giving via donations to charitable organisations and casual dress Fridays.	People and Culture ELT	March 2024
1.3	Promote flexibility in the workforce.	Provide a flexible workforce procedure with guidelines for employees and managers. Look to support requests for flexibility in the first instance, particularly for family reasons, study and health and wellbeing.	ELT People and Culture All Managers	Ongoing
1.4	Promote the GRC meeting etiquette principles across the workforce.	Encourage an open and transparent approach to diary and time management. Limit formal meetings on Fridays and prior to public holidays. Aim to ensure meetings commence no earlier than 9.00am and no later than 4.00pm where possible. Provide a safe and supportive environment for employees who are presenting to council and other forums.	ELT People and Culture All Managers	August 2023



Number	Objectives	Actions	Accountabilities	Timeline
1.5	Review the Gympie Regional Council job advertising methods and create refreshed templates and messaging.	<p>Ensure recruitment advertisements showcase the opportunities for the organisation and the region.</p> <p>Review web pages and career pages to improve attraction for potential candidates.</p> <p>Promote opportunities across a wide variety of employment portals.</p> <p>Support managers in reviewing applicants in a timely manner to arrange interviews and appointments within a maximum of 45 days from vacancy to new hire.</p>	<p>People and Culture</p> <p>HR Operations/ Recruitment team</p>	September 2023
1.6	Develop Career Pathways Program.	<p>Identify future GRC employees by participating in vocational programs which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Experience and Vocational Placements • Traineeships and Apprenticeships • Cadetships. 	Coordinator Organisational Development	March 2024
1.7	Provide a forum for feedback for employees who are departing council.	<p>Offer all employees the opportunity to attend exit interviews with their Manager/ Supervisor or a People and Culture team member.</p> <p>Collate the exit interview data and identify issues/trends and opportunities.</p>	Coordinator HR Operations	October 2023
1.8	Collect feedback from new employees after three months with council.	<p>Provide a formalised opportunity for feedback from new employees three months after they join council.</p> <p>Collate key themes and provide in ELT monthly updates from People and Culture.</p>	People and Culture	October 2023



Culture and Engagement - providing regular opportunities for employee input, biennial (2 yearly) employee engagement surveys, sharing of information and updates from senior leaders with all employees, transparency in decision making.

Number	Objectives	Actions	Accountabilities	Timeline
2.1	Strive for transparency, good governance and continuous improvement for guiding policies, procedures and processes.	<p>Update and continuously improve key procedures and processes.</p> <p>Ensure integration between key people systems.</p> <p>Make the best use of the Tech One product to achieve improved people services outcomes.</p>	People and Culture	Ongoing
2.2	Reward our employees for their service and efforts.	<p>Coordinate an annual Excellence in Service Awards event celebrating achievements of our workforce.</p> <p>Recognise significant years of service at local events and the Service Excellence Awards event and review current procedure.</p> <p>Create a values based recognition program for ad-hoc recognition of team members.</p>	People and Culture/ Office of the CEO/ Communications, Business and Engagement	<p>August 2023</p> <p>October 2023</p> <p>January 2024</p>
2.3	Actively increase our efforts towards inclusion to best serve the community, embody its diversity.	<p>Deliver a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.</p> <p>Implement initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion.</p>	<p>People and Culture</p> <p>Office of the CEO Communications and Marketing team</p>	July 2024



Number	Objectives	Actions	Accountabilities	Timeline
2.4	Conduct an all council employee survey every two years	<p>Promote maximum completion rates for the GRC Employee Engagement survey.</p> <p>Design and deliver action plans to address employee feedback and facilitate change.</p>	<p>People and Culture</p> <p>Office of the CEO</p> <p>Communications and Marketing team</p>	Sept 2023
2.5	Actively seek input from all GRC employees regarding workplace culture.	<p>Promote the GRC values and align these to key programs.</p> <p>Provide feedback forums at Directorate, branch and team level.</p> <p>Conduct exit interviews for all departing GRC employees and act on any matters requiring follow up.</p> <p>Promote forums such as Joint Consultative Committees, Workplace Health and Safety Committees and future diversity and inclusion committees to all employees.</p>	<p>Manager People and Culture</p> <p>People and Culture Business Partners</p>	Ongoing
2.6	Encourage regular communication between leaders and employees through quality conversations.	<p>Promote 1-1 meetings in person or via phone or TEAMS being held on a minimum of a monthly basis between employees and their supervisors.</p> <p>Team meetings to be held monthly using in person or virtual events.</p> <p>Pre-start and on site meetings to be a feature of all construction and maintenance teams.</p>	All managers	
2.7	Provide content for CEO and ELT information sessions with employees.	Provide relevant and timely updates for consideration by the CEO in monthly videos and emails.	<p>Manager People and Culture</p> <p>Coordinator Organisational Development</p>	Ongoing





Leadership and Development - invest in our people through leadership programs for current and emerging leaders, mandatory learning and development programs, inclusion and diversity strategies aligned to the GRC vision and mission.

Number	Objectives	Actions	Accountabilities	Timeline
3.1	Develop a contemporary Learning and Development framework to develop capability and equip us to meet current and future challenges.	Align learning with Performance Appraisal feedback. Provide adequate resources and budget to facilitate internal and external learning using the 70/20/10 model of learning through doing, learning through others and learning through courses.	People and Culture	November 2023
3.2	Develop and deliver a tailored Leadership Development Program.	Management development program. Coordinators development program. Support for conference attendance.	People and Culture OD Team in partnership with other providers	February 2024
3.3	Encourage participation in local government development programs.	Provide nominations to LGMA programs such as Ignite and Propeller Program. Encourage teams for the LGMA challenge.	People and Culture Directors	November 2023
3.4	Develop an Emerging Leaders program to build capability of our future employees.	A program is available for up to 10 identified employees who are interested in becoming future leaders in local government.	People and Culture	February 2024



Number	Objectives	Actions	Accountabilities	Timeline
3.5	Deliver mandatory and desirable fit for purpose learning outcomes.	Code of Conduct refreshers held three times per year to cover all employees. Partnerships established with accredited providers of competency based training. Periodic training from Crime and Corruption Commission, Office of the Independent Assessor and other statutory bodies as required.	Coordinator Organisational Development	February 2024 and ongoing
3.6	Maximise the partnership with University of the Sunshine Coast.	Develop programs in partnership with the corporate training sections of the university in key requirement areas.	Manager People and Culture Coordinator Organisational Development	January 2024
3.7	Incorporate unconscious bias awareness training into recruitment and selection training.	Deliver an annual program to ensure we are selecting the best applicants free from bias or judgement.	Coordinator Organisational Development	October 2024





Objective 4

Safety and Wellbeing - create a safe workplace through the GRC Workplace Safety and Wellbeing Strategy and its motto of Work Safe Go Home safely, recognising safety leadership through safety sponsored events, developing an annual safety award for the GRC end of year awards, encouraging safety shares and incident debriefs in meetings, tool box talks and other forums.

Number	Objectives	Actions	Accountabilities	Timeline
4.1	Deliver the outcomes of the Gympie Regional Council Workplace Safety and Wellbeing strategy.	Strategy endorsed and actions reported on to ELT and Audit and Risk Committee.	Coordinator Safety and Wellbeing Manager People and Culture	Ongoing
4.2	Acknowledge key events in the safety and wellbeing calendar.	Team to have a presence for key days such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RUOK day • Safety Week • Mens Health Week • Diabetes and healthy heart week. 	Coordinator Safety and Wellbeing EAP Partners Branch Managers OD team	Commencing August 2023 ongoing
4.3	Complete the Local Government Workcare audit and reach required compliance targets.	Corporate and Operational plan targets achieved.	Coordinator Safety and Wellbeing Manager People and Culture	November 2023
4.4	Identify and implement a fit for purpose safety and incident management system.	Coordinator Safety to review suitable products through Tech One or other providers.	Coordinator Safety and Wellbeing Manager People and Culture	July 2024



Number	Objectives	Actions	Accountabilities	Timeline
4.5	Facilitate regular meetings of a dedicated WH&S Committee with wide representation.	Four meetings to be held each year. HSR election process is understood and encouraged. Key involvements of WH&S Committee members in delivery of the WH&S strategy at the workplace level.	Coordinator Safety and Wellbeing Safety and Wellbeing Partners	Ongoing
4.6	Manage the Employee Assistance Program contract.	ELT is updated regarding the usage levels. Regular connection is established with the provider and services are promoted. On site trauma and debriefing for any critical incidents. Employees are supported through difficult periods.	Coordinator Safety and Wellbeing Safety and Wellbeing Partners Manager People and Culture	Ongoing
4.7	Prioritise the mental health and wellbeing of the workforce.	Deliver on programs and activities that support better health outcomes and the wellbeing of our employees. Embed Mental Health and Wellbeing considerations into all we do. Strengthen rehabilitation and return to work processes.	Coordinator Safety and Wellbeing Safety and Wellbeing Partners Manager People and Culture ELT	November 2024
4.8	Facilitate return to work programs for employees injured at work or elsewhere.	Develop practical suitable duties programs with managers and employees. Identify local or other providers for support in functional assessments, ergonomic assessments and return to work programs.		Ongoing



Summary

Gympie Regional Council aims to be a leading regional and rural employer. This is an aspiration for many organisations and it will require continued effort from all levels of council if it is to be achieved. The challenges of labour supply, identifying skills and knowledge in critical areas and meeting the requirements of our growing communities whilst maintaining costs and wages will be a constant for this strategy and future strategies.

The investment in new systems and processes that is being undertaken in 2023 – 2024 will position our organisation well for the future. It will be a feature of our Employee Value Proposition and it will allow some efficiencies in processing areas to be moved to community delivery and other services. The investment in vocational employment programs, cadetships, traineeships and apprenticeships will allow local people to join council at an entry level in rewarding careers. Career development in a positive workplace is a shared goal for our organisation.

Senior and technical roles will also be available for new and existing staff at council. With a supportive organisation and welcoming community offering affordable homes, limited traffic, access to beaches and rural areas it will be attractive to many professionals. Workplace flexibility provisions will also allow some non-resident knowledge to contribute to our organisation through remote work and project opportunities.

Stability in leadership and a commitment to trust and transparency will be important for this strategy to be successful. Employees current and future will need to be encouraged and rewarded for their efforts and supported if they make mistakes, to improve for the future. A level of shared accountability is critical for success. All levels of the organisation must be committed to the road map for the future.

The 2023- 2025 Workforce Strategy is the first one to be delivered for council. Commitment to the objectives, completion of the goals and celebrations of success will be a major step towards demonstrating that Gympie Regional Council is a great place to work, live and play.

