



murchisonshire

Ancient land under brilliant skies

Organisational Rationale Recruitment Strategy

Incorporating Workforce Plan

Part of Council's Planning for the Future

Latest Update

22 May 2025

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Preamble

Under the *Local Government Act 1995*, amongst other things this it is the role of the Chief Executive Officer manage the day-to-day operations of the local government, including all employment and contractor related engagements, whilst it is the Council that is responsible through advice from the CEO for a range of legislated plans for the future.

This includes Council's community strategic plan, and corporate business plan with the workforce planning component is significantly influenced not just by changes that have occurred over time including significant changes the past five years, but by the very nature and function of the Shire which in local government terms is unique. If this "uniqueness" is not captured within the overall strategy, then the ultimate delivery of the community's vision and the personnel associated with its delivery will be compromised

This Strategy report addresses these elements and also provides guidance of some of the levers that may be applied as part of a strategic approach to recruitment and retention for Council staff and other actions more broadly.

1 Shire Evolution

The evolution of the development of the Shire since its inception and through recent times will have a significant impact on staff and contractor needs and their recruitment and retention in general. Several elements are outlined as follows.

1.1 Murchison Development

The Shire of Murchison lies within the Mid-West region of Western Australia. It is very large with as a land area of some 49,500 sq km with some 1,848km of roads, 1,808km unsealed and sparsely populated with the most recent population of 101 with 75 electors. Nationally it is classified as a Rural Remote Extra Small Local Government, one of five within Western Australia.

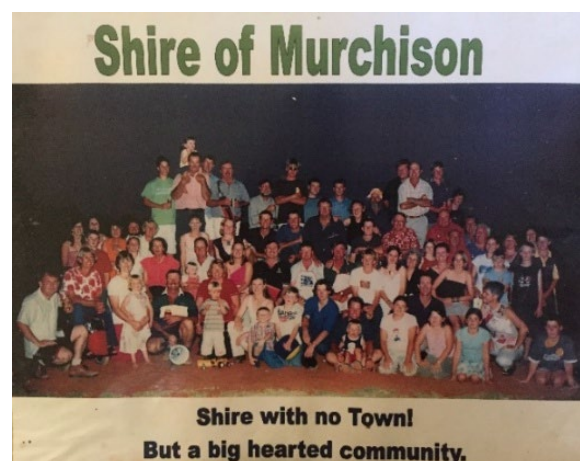
The Shire was established in 1961 following on from its origins as the Murchison Districts Road Board, which was established in 1875, and then combined with the Upper Murchison Roads Board in 1907. In 2004 a portion of the then Mullewa Shire was transferred to the Murchison Shire.

The Shire Office is located in the Murchison Settlement on land excised from the Wooleen pastoral lease and vested in the Council. It is located some 669km from Perth, 300 kilometres north east of Geraldton and 200 km north of Mullewa on the Carnarvon Mullewa Road. Until 1963 the Shire was administered from one or other of the stations, and in that year 400 hectares were excised from the Wooleen pastoral lease and vested in the Shire with the Murchison Settlement proclaimed on in 1988.

A house, which contained the office, was built, as was a workshop and airstrip. These were followed by sporting facilities and, in 1986, a new office. Subsequent developments included staff housing,

community centre, museum, roadhouse, community centre staff houses as the Settlement grew incrementally.

The Settlement is the engine room for the entire operation of the Shire with all the people that reside in the Settlement either Shire employees or related to Shire employees.



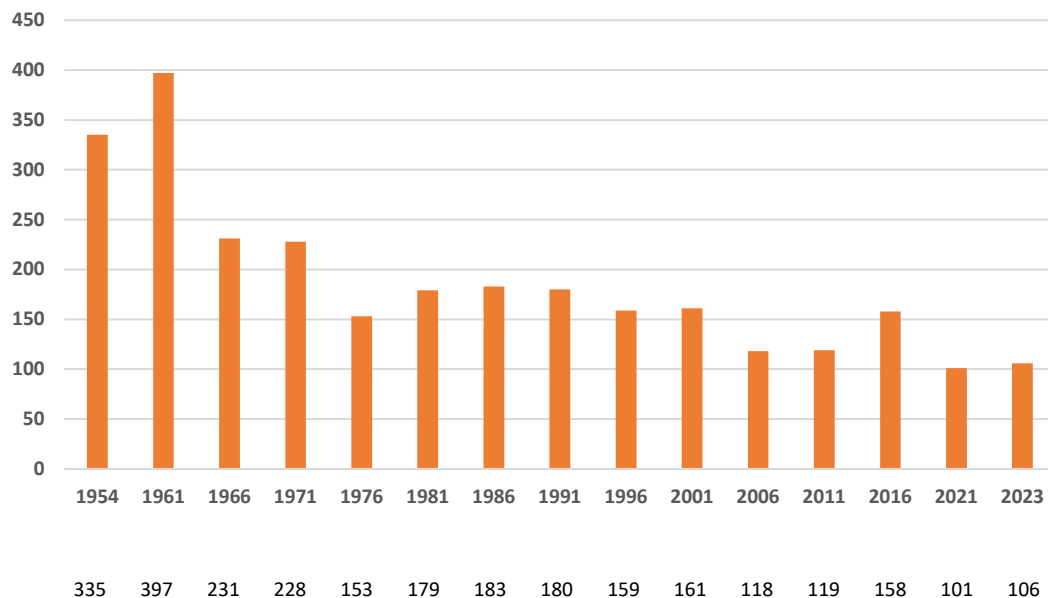
Historically some of the physical works by way of new projects would have had a significant active and on occasions a physical contribution from local pastoral residents. Most community economic development actions were undertaken by community working groups, many of those in

our pastoral sector with shire staff more or less recruited to run the Shires' operation.

The Murchison Monologue, vegetation plantings, cemetery planning layouts and rangelands walking trail are typical examples where the building works were assisted directly by local residents. Social life between stations was also prominent with the Settlement becoming an increasing focal point.

Due to a range of factors including general societal changes, a decline in sheep production in favour of beef production, the need to have off farm income through divergence of use and some stations not operating for pastoral purposes the population has shrunk by some 75% since the establishment of the Shire in 1961.

Murchison Shire Population



The make up of the Shire has also significantly altered

Shire Occupation	1961	2025
No of Owner / Occupied Stations Primarily for pastoral use	26	10
No of Owner / Occupied Stations Pastoral and other significant uses		4
No of Stations Externally owned with Local Managers		8
No of CSIRO / SKA occupied Stations		2
No of Stations Crown Land Managed Stations		2
Shire Settlement		1
PIA Wajarri Settlement		1
Total Occupation	26	28

These net shifts in demographics has seen the Shire operate with less people those remaining with strong ties to the local community. This has led to an increasing and acute need for Shire Staff to underpin several operations through their employment or as volunteers for works and activities that were formerly undertaken by local pastoralists and residents. Maximising this "staff buy in" is critical to maintaining and developing the overall Shire and represents a significant point of difference compared to all other Shires..

1.2 Community Plan

Council's Vision of "Working together to preserve the unique character of the Shire, supporting diverse and sustainable lifestyle and economic priorities" delivered through the following four well-being priorities, will be significantly impacted by this recruitment and retention strategy.



Economic

To develop the region's economic potential to encourage families and businesses to stay in the area



Environmental

To improve the sustainability of land use and improve the condition of the environment



Social

To develop, co-ordinate, provide and support services and facilities which enhance the quality of life in the Shire



Civic Leadership

To provide good governance to the Murchison Shire

1.3 Broader Identity Raison D'être

There are two significant overarching policy statements that articulate the reason why the Murchison Shire Settlement exists, how it needs to function which impact on staff recruitment and retention

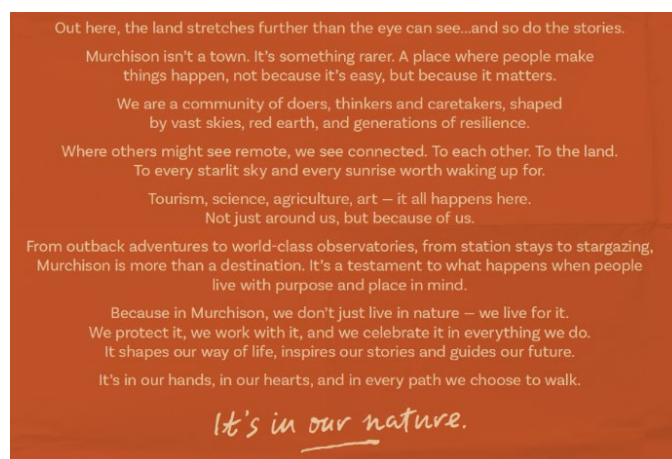
Community Strategic Plan Vision

"Working together to preserve the unique character of the Shire, supporting diverse and sustainable lifestyle and economic priorities."

Murchison Settlement Masterplan Report Vision

"To ensure that Murchison Settlement is an attractive focal point that enables the Shire to function successfully and deliver a range of services that will underpin community, cultural and economic development within the Settlement and broader Shire"

This above is encapsulated in the following overarching rationale

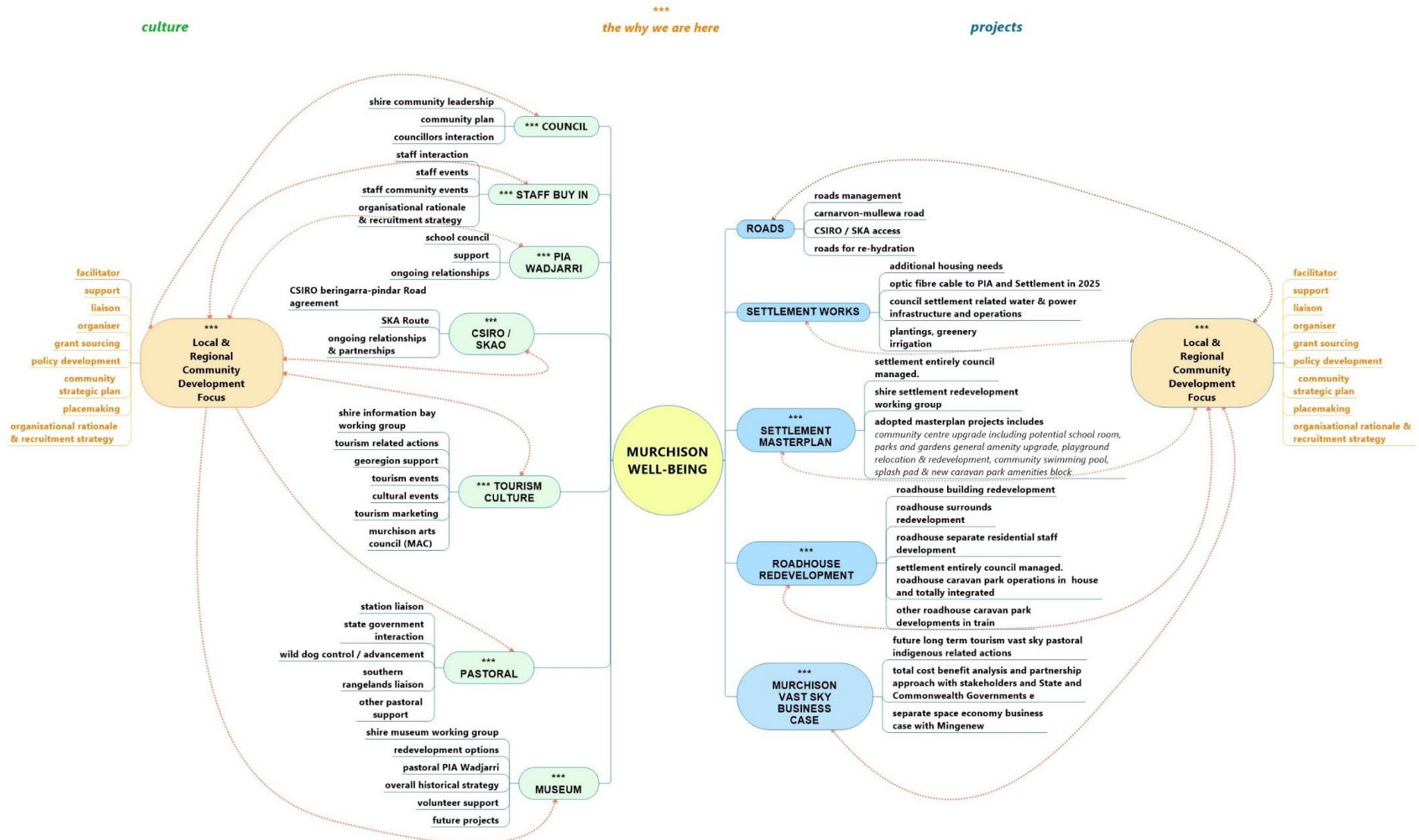


As indicated the decline in the pastoral population case has meant that in order to achieve these visions it is essential that shire staff understand the rationale of why we are here and that this thinking to be nailed, especially at management level as it will shape recruitment and retention. Other future Council actions and decisions more broadly may also impact. The structure of the makeup of staff will follow strategies developed with these visions in mind and as policies are developed which will shape operations.

The overall positive inclusive culture within the Settlement will be pivotal for any workforce planning to be effective as shown in the following overview.

1.4 Organisational Rationale Overview

murchisonshire *raison d'etre*
a local & regional community development focus delivered
within a positive operating culture



1.5 Recent Developments

Since establishment of the Shire there has been a steady increase in planning building and infrastructure works which has both a direct and indirect bearing on situation now and into the future. Examples include the following.

Developments	Community & Recruitment Impacts
<p>a Murchison Settlement Masterplan Report</p> <p>Adopted in August 2021 and provides a series of design principles and layout of the Murchison Settlement is to be developed to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ create an attractive activity hub for the community and visitors to Murchison that maintains the existing character, cultural and built qualities of the Settlement. ~ provide functional pedestrian connectivity, improved access, and sight lines throughout the precinct. ~ design a unified landscape character that maximises shade. ~ create a consolidated sequence of spaces and activities for locals and tourists. ~ allow space in design for Geo/Astro tourism and convey the idea of 'The Oasis'. <p>A range of projects identified (in no priority order) included Community Swimming Pool / Splash Pad, New -Caravan Park Ablution Block, New -Caravan Park 2 Ensuite Units, General Settlement Amenity Improvements, Playground Upgrade and an upgrade to the Community Centre including provision for a School Classroom. An Interpretive Centre was also identified but required further scoping and development.</p>	<p>The more attractive the Settlement is the greater the selling point for potential new members of staff and the more pleasant the settlement is to live in.</p> <p>Community facilities such as pool and splashpad and potentially into the future schooling support via a School Classroom will add to the desirability of the settlement for existing but particularly future employees.</p> <p>Additional employment opportunities created by increased need to maintain facilities arise as do those that increase revenue.</p> <p>Conversely a lack of progress, will likely have a negative longtime effect especially compared with other areas that have a more progressive outlook and better facilities.</p>
<p>b Murchison Settlement Roadhouse Precinct</p> <p>In 2020/21 it was realised that Roadhouse and Caravan Park layout needed a supplementary review to further develop desired expansion that would dovetail into the wider Settlement Masterplan. Work was undertaken to also review the overall operation of the roadhouse, with Council assuming operational control in March 2021. This included considering the need to provide suitable long-term accommodation for the Roadhouse Management, to improve the functionally of the roadhouse business and to explore opportunities for a potential Interpretive Centre.</p> <p>In 2025 new workforce accommodation will be rolled out followed by an expanded roadhouse in 2026.</p>	<p>Roadhouse Business upgrade should increase revenue with little impact on staff numbers.</p> <p>Separate accommodation for roadhouse managers will provide a defined separation between business and residence.</p> <p>Improved residential accommodation for existing backpackers should mean that more permanent positions can be provided with reduced reliance on backpackers.</p>
<p>c Murchison Roadhouse Operations</p> <p>In March 2021 Council took over management control of the control of the Roadhouse and Carvan Park. We are now on our fourth set of Managers with changes and improvements along the way.</p>	<p>In house management of the roadhouse has significant pluses in recruitment as couples or families can be recruited with other Shire operations such as the office or works area in mind. There is also no need to have roadhouse operators necessarily undertake parks and gardens type work as this can be undertaken by other shire staff nor have separate cleaners employed for other shire operations.</p>

Developments	Community & Recruitment Impacts
	The customer service focus of roadhouse staff also adds to the vibrancy within the settlement.
<p>d Murchison Vast Sky Experience Business Case</p> <p>Adopted in February 2023 this Business Case evaluated opportunities from the emerging Mid-West space economy, with particular focus on the SKA and Mingenew Space Precinct. In many ways the development with potential transformative effect. It ticks an abundance of boxes such as strategically linking Vast Sky tourism, showcasing SKA / CSIRO, providing an accessible outback feel without camping out, increased GeoTourism and broader tourism within a regional context, purveying local history and pastoral influence, inclusion of local Wadjarri aboriginal development opportunities, improved discovery walking trails as well as enhancing recruitment and retention opportunities for the Shire in an improved visually attractive environment.</p> <p>The entire business case should be seen as being complimentary to the Murchison Settlement Masterplan and Roadhouse Development Plans. Stage 1 spend is around \$10.4m with further stages foreshadowed totalling \$11.5m over around a 10-year period.</p> <p>Significant levels of external funding will be required with any delivery will likely be very long term without significant external investment.</p>	<p>Business Case shows a profitable operation after 2 years with increased employment opportunities generated.</p> <p>Projected overnight accommodation is predicted to rise from 4,988 to 22,654 over 10 years.</p> <p>Increased worker accommodation will be required.</p>
<p>e Murchison Settlement Infrastructure Upgrades</p> <p>Major upgrade of water supply with provision of new bores, plumbing station and ring main unit have been completed. New Chlorinator to be in place and potable water provided in 2025.</p> <p>Upgrade of the power supply with powerhouse moved further south from the settlement into an airconditioned and sound-controlled environment. These actions will improve reliability and reduce noise.</p>	<p>Improved amenity and safe drinking water will aid in recruitment.</p> <p>Increased numbers of tourists are expected along with an increased numbers of nights stayed.</p>
<p>f Workforce Accommodation</p> <p>Provision of workforce accommodation for staff and contractors has always been a significant issue and constraint, given the costs involved, other amenity and infrastructure impacts and lead time.</p> <p>A condition of receiving funding towards the Murchison Settlement Infrastructure has meant that 5 new accommodation units need to be built in 2025 and 2026.</p> <p>These works and other accommodation requirements have been notionally included in the Council's Long Term Asset Management and Long-Term Financial Plans.</p>	<p>A flexible approach is required as there are various cohorts involved including staff, contractors, consultants, volunteers and short-term residencies.</p> <p>Overall quality of and amenity surrounding each unit is important.</p>

1.6 Significant Funding Considerations

A raft of funding programs associated with roads and other community infrastructure can have an impact on recruitment and retention. Several are outlined as follows

Significant Funding Considerations	Community & Recruitment Impacts
<p>a Commonwealth Funding Programs</p> <p>Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program is available in 2023/24 and in 2024/25 has been applicable to roads as well as Settlement Community related projects. Growing Regions Program may also be applicable to community business upgrades in and around the settlement.</p>	<p>Aside from the need to engage human resources to assist in securing funds, successful outcomes will, depending on the project, have a positive impact on recruitment and retention.</p>
<p>b Carnarvon-Mullewa Road Strategic Upgrade</p> <p>In February 2020 Council reviewed its strategic approach in the construction and sealing of the Carnarvon-Mullewa Road and varying from a 4.0m seal to a 7.2m seal, a situation that has led to the sealing to a 7.2m width 35.42km since 2021.</p> <p>Construction and sealing of the remaining 27.6km within the City of Geraldton is still to be done an element that Council is encouraging the City to do supported by a positive business case.</p> <p>This has been aided by increases in Commonwealth Road Funding from the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program.</p>	<p>Increased safety and reduced travel times will be a positive influence on staff and contractors accessing the settlement, especially compared with the road that existed back in 1961.</p>
<p>c Main Roads WA Regional Road Funds</p> <p>The Carnarvon- Mullewa Road is the only road within the Shire classified of such strategic importance to potentially attract funds Main Roads Regional Road Group Funds on a 2 for 1 basis for more than one road funding project per annum. Changes in scoring criteria provide increased scope to construct and or rehabilitate sections moving forward.</p>	<p>Positive impact on staff and contractor needs moving forward as the level of works has significantly increased over the past five years; a situation that at appear to remain.</p>
<p>d SKA Route Works</p> <p>The Shire has been assigned the responsibility to undertake works on the SKA Road Route to assist in the establishment of the SKA Project on Boolardy Station for a five-year period commencing 2022/23. Almost all of the roads affected are the responsibility of Council meaning that external funds are being provided on roads that would have otherwise had to be funded from Councils own revenue sources.</p>	<p>Positive impact on staff and contractor needs moving forward for the next few years at least.</p>
<p>e MRWA Future Resource Roads.</p> <p>In 2024 The State Government and WALGA agreed to an updated State Roads Funds to Local Government Agreement which, amongst other things, identified the need for an approach and funding for Future Resources Roads.</p> <p>A Multi-Criteria Assessment Model for Roads Project Funding is being developed with consideration of Traffic, Road Safety, Economics, Environment, Sustainability. Social and Condition Assessments will be taken into account for Preservation and Improvement Projects on the various selected roads.</p> <p>Along with the Shire of Upper Gascoyne and Meekatharra we have submitted our views on the assessment criteria with emphasis on Economic and Social considerations which are the main drivers of increased activity which will grow each Shires road use along the proposed Resources Road being the Carnarvon-Mullewa Road and Dalgety Downs - Meekatharra Route.</p>	<p>If successful impacts on the community will be significant with greater interaction north of the Settlement and increased opportunities for growth in the tourist accommodation sector. This will impact on staff and contractor needs.</p>

2 Murchison Uniqueness

The Murchison Shire is the second least populated Local Government in Australia and is thought to be the only Shire in Australia without a gazetted town site. As shown by the following brief snapshot comparison, this has a significant impact on the recruitment and retention of staff compared with other local governments which needs to be recognised and captured as part of the overall strategy.

Traditional Local Government	Murchison Shire
<p>a Land Tenure</p> <p>Freehold title with farming, pastoral, residential, industrial and or commercial uses that can be bought and sold and used for a variety of purposes.</p>	<p>Crown Land Pastoral lease that can be resumed by the crown if circumstances dictate.</p>
<p>b Growth and Development</p> <p>Farming, pastoral, residential, industrial and or commercial properties that can develop and expand leading to potential economic growth and either population increase or a relative slight decline compared to Murchison.</p>	<p>Generally pastoral use which is regulated with minimal opportunities for additional economic growth with any diversification use permits predicated on the pastoral operation continuing.</p>
<p>c Local Staff Availability</p> <p>Most staff would reside in their own residence, and either be solely employed by the local government or reside with other family members who have separate employment and may or may not be long term residents of the local government area.</p> <p>This means that there is more often than not a replacement is available for an established position and more likely that some will stay long term.</p> <p>External recruitment beyond the local government boundary will usually only apply to senior roles with most others residing from within the local government area</p>	<p>Apart from one current member of staff who operates a local pastoral station some 50km from the Murchison Settlement there is no other resident on surrounding station that works with the Shire. From a practical perspective any distance over 75km makes the commute on a daily basis problematical with the sparse nature of the shire limiting any potential recruitment locally.</p> <p>External recruitment beyond the local government boundary is required for virtually all staff, not just those in senior positions. This means that all staff have to be attracted to the Shire not just some, and that set roles will need to vary to accommodate individual attributes, needs and to meet organisational requirements.</p>
<p>d Local Contractor Availability</p> <p>The larger the local government population wise the more likely contractors may can be sourced locally, or that accommodation can be provided from external sources.</p>	<p>All Settlement based works require the Shire to provided accommodation which needs to be factored into consideration.</p>
<p>e Volunteer Support</p> <p>Volunteering within Local Government is usually supported through various policy provisions as well as the local government covering registered volunteers through its insurance cover. Generally volunteers live in the area and there are no housing implications.</p>	<p>The Shire currently has volunteers operating the Murchison Museum, mostly during the during the winter ' spring cooler months. A Museum Cottage is provided for such a purpose.</p> <p>It would be expected that needs for volunteers would likely expand over time as the Shire grows its tourism support and moves into other activities such as engaging and artist in residence or service other needs. Accommodation needs will need to be addressed given remoteness.</p>
<p>f Local Community Development</p> <p>Most local governments have a broad mix made up of a number of community organisations, businesses,</p>	<p>Murchison has officially only one incorporated association with many staff being effectively needed</p>

Traditional Local Government	Murchison Shire
<p>schools recreation groups etc, each which do their own thing. Local Government's role is more likely to be either non-existent, as a supporter or a facilitator along with others or as a landlord for use of community buildings. Each staff member may or may not be an active participant.</p>	<p>to participate or the organisation could face dissolution and lead to further reduction in lifestyle opportunities.</p> <p>Council's support and participation and that of staff is essential, but there is a certain amount of self-interest for staff to participate as each individual also directly benefits.</p>
<p>g Lifestyle</p> <p>Lifestyle attractions are often available in number and in variety and are usually the responsibility of others</p>	<p>Lifestyle attractions are few in number with self-drive local support more often than not required.</p>
<p>h Working Environment</p> <p>A positive working environment can have an impact on the staff recruitment and retention.</p> <p>This can be impacted by the size of the organisation, with small organisations potentially more affected as the impacts of a specific staff member's behaviour can have a greater effect.</p> <p>Communities with their own divergent views can invariably create pressures on staff to deal with conflicts.</p> <p>Leadership can have a significant bearing as can the attitude and behaviour of elected members. It can however also be tempered by what other lifestyle and employment opportunities are available locally such that an adverse working environment may be tolerable.</p>	<p>A positive working environment is essential for staff recruitment and retention within the Shire.</p> <p>Positive conversations of existing staff members with external groups and service providers will support the reputation of the Shire being a sought-after employment provider.</p> <p>Cohesion between staff members is of the upmost importance. Due to living and working together with restricted access to lifestyle opportunities.</p> <p>Acceptance and understanding is essential for all staff members. .</p> <p>The smallness of the community is a positive as there are significant fewer community pressures.</p> <p>Leadership will have significant bearing.</p>
<p>i Workforce Profile</p> <p>Issues such as gender , age structure, length of service and staff structures provide a potential platform for a strategic approach. The larger the local government the more likely a talent pool will be available locally so these issues can be mote accurately planned and will shape the process</p>	<p>Issues such as gender, age structure, length of service and staff structures are in reality of little importance compared with all of the other operating constraints that apply.</p>
<p>j Overall Influence & Responsibility</p> <p>In almost every local government the role and influence of the Council as decision makers within the district will vary.</p> <p>In larger local governments, especially in urban areas, its decisions and behaviour and attitude of elected members and senior staff may have limited influence on the broader community with likely no impact on recruitment and retention.</p> <p>In smaller rural areas this impact becomes more profound, especially in areas of population decline leading in some cases to the Local Government taking more of a hands-on role in areas and perhaps businesses that would normally be traditionally undertaken by others. This will be reflected in recruitment and retention.</p> <p>However, even in these situations, whilst the local government's role and influence may be is greater, it is still shared with many other players.</p>	<p>In our case the interdependence of the Shire and the community is far more real, relevant and driving force. The behaviour of and attitude of elected members to support staff is a huge positive.</p> <p>As a result, far more than perhaps in any other place the role of the Council is more pivotal in influence which will likely impact on who the Shire employees and why.</p>

Whilst these differences are not new, it essential that they be recognised and that polices and affirmative actions be taken to maximise recruitment and retention opportunities and ultimately grow the Shire's population.

3 Existing Staff and Contractor Engagements

The operation of the Shire has evolved over the years to meet a variety of factors including the scope of work to be delivered, changes brought about by legislation, increase compliance regimes, and changes in the source of labour.

3.1 Staff Makeup

The following outline shows the makeup and changes within the Shire's staffing operations over the past 5 years noting that this was in place at the time not what was ideally desired. Also shown is a more realistic minimalist level change to be aimed for in the next two years

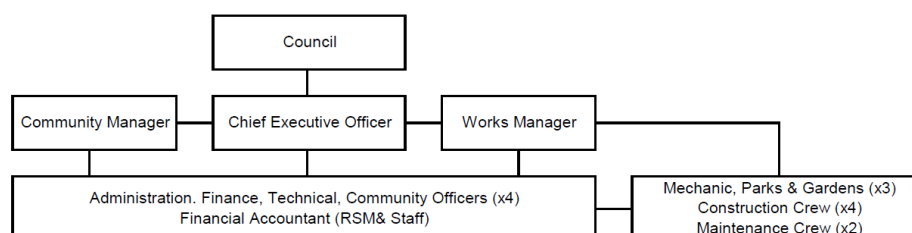
Position	2020	2024	2025-2026
Chief Executive Officer	1.0	1.0	1.0
Finance Manager DCEO	1.0		
Finance Manager (Contractor)	0.2	1.0	1.0
Works Manager	1.0	1.0	1.0
Depot Officer	1.0		0.5
Executive Manager DCEO		1.0	
Works Project Support			0.5
Community Officer		1.0	1.0
Finance & Administration Staff	2.0	1.0	3.0
Settlement Parks & Gardens Staff	1.0	2.0	3.0
Mechanic	1.0	1.0	1.0
Works Staff Construction *	4.0	4.0	4.0
Works Staff Maintenance *	2.0	2.0	4.0
Roadhouse Staff		4.0	4.0
Roadhouse Previous External Outsource (<i>Estimate for comparative purposes</i>)	3.5		
Total	17.7	19.0	24.0

Operating & Capital Expenses	\$12.69m	\$16.58m
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* Note as outlined under challenges and opportunities in Section 5 continuous review is required

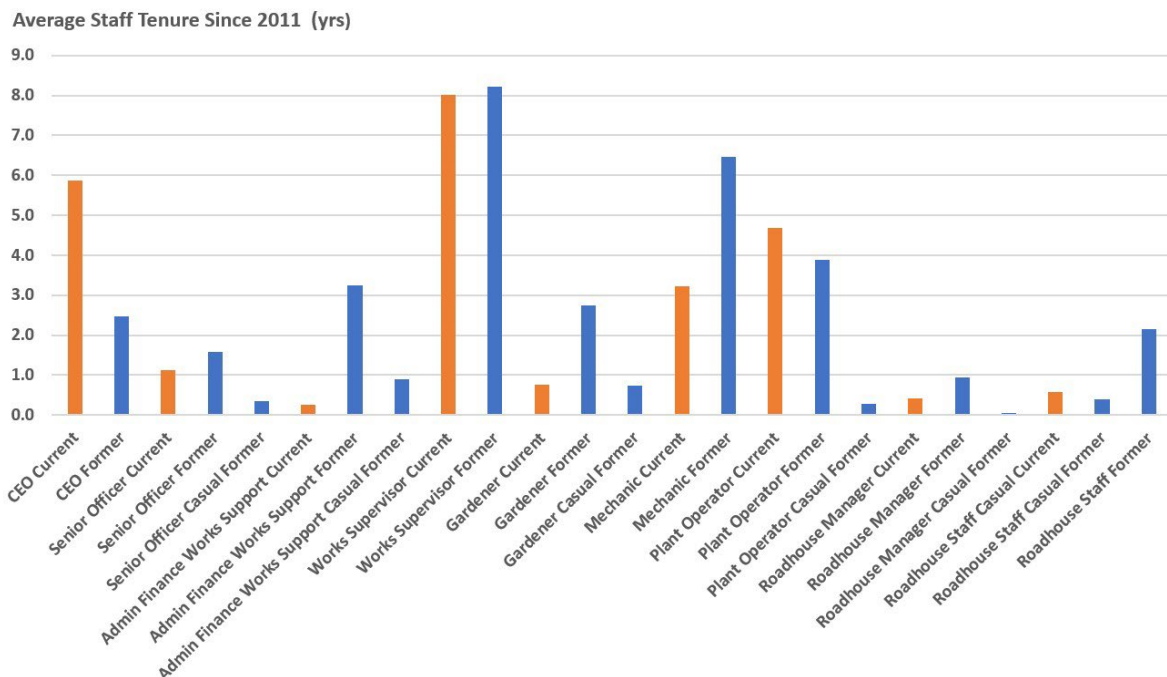
In a very small organisation such as Murchison Shire there is a significant amount crossover with tasks shared outside of what could be termed a "traditional" organisational structure.

An outline Summary of immediate needs is shown diagrammatically as follows



3.2 Staff Tenure

A snapshot of the historical nature of staff tenure is show as follows.



A few points to note

- ~ The above has evolved over time and more or less in a reactive manner and the result of circumstances of the day, not from any real strategic approach
- ~ Tenures of some positions such as Works Supervisor and one former Senior Officers are distorted as in both instances positions have evolved through promotion
- ~ Any increase in tenure for each position will have a significant and positive impact

3.3 Staff Focus

All organisations have their challenges with respect to undertaking day to day and planning for the future. Those with enough resources and mind set can do this well and this assists in making sound long term decisions; a situation that is more difficult with small less resourced organisations who invariably focus on the here and now.

This situation is encapsulated under "Eisenhower Principle" articulated by former U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower

What is urgent is not important. What is important is seldom urgent

From an operational perspective more often than not the Shire is unfortunately in the "urgent" space with not enough time available to put things in place get out of it. Whilst we have made inroads through previous adopted Planning for the Future Plans, including this document, some aspects will need to be addressed in the short to medium term resource wise to improve the day-to-day delivery of projects and allow time for those in senior positions to plan ahead effectively.

Also to be considered is that the Shire has historically operated in a bit of an iceberg scenario with a range of matters not seen nor able to be completed or completed to the right standard through lack of the availability of suitable staff. Whilst the extent of issues to be addressed are not large in number it's a factor that needs to be considered moving forward.

4 Financial Considerations

The ability to deliver outcomes under this strategy will be obviously affected by finances that are available through future budget allocations. These are considered annually but now also alongside a four-year indicative budget plus the Shire's Long Term Financial Plan. As such the scope and pace of implementation and change is manageable .

The following broad considerations in future decision making are also relevant to any expected financial impacts associated with workforce planning.

- a Local Government is a level of government. It's not a business. As such its "not for profit." and doesn't pay tax. Operation is on a revenue neutral basis over the long term.
- b Any changes to staff numbers will have a minimal impact to the overall costs of managing staff. Whilst direct payroll associated costs incurred do, overall management costs don't. Even other operational costs such as housing will have an impact on the overhead calculation effects, but only to a minor extent.
- c All costs including labour are eventually recovered direct to works related jobs or indirectly through reallocation to areas within the budget through an activity base costing (ABC) revenue. Where the costs of works are undertaken against jobs funded by grants, the labour cost component is effectively funded externally.
- d From a financial viewpoint particularly with respect to roadworks, savings in labour costs over use of external contractors are not insignificant.
- e The adopted long-term asset management program for works within the Settlement been foreshadowed to be acerated over the next 5 -7 years. A number of community and staff related facility projects will directly and positively influence recruitment and retention. However, once completed the need for new projects similar in nature won't likely be required. The financial impacts will then significantly reduce.
- f The overall costs of employment will invariably increase over the years and need to be accommodated in future budgets.

5 Recruitment Challenges Opportunities & Actions

Despite best endeavours historically there is difficulty in attracting suitable staff. Whilst traditional advertising mechanisms such as newspapers, emails, website and using Seek online can have on occasions delivered positive results, in reality whilst we have lots of interest from Seek, we have very few expressions of quality or who are keen to come. Sometimes the appointment is opportunistic or based on "luck" which whilst it requires an openness to be proactive and from time to time will be successful it's not the basis for a long-term strategy.

All organisations have their challenges in recruiting and retaining suitable staff but there are also opportunities available. Actions relating to Murchison are detailed as follows.

Challenges	Opportunities	Actions
5.1 Structural		
5.1.1 Settlement Tenure As a Shire Settlement all those who reside in the Murchison Settlement are either employed by the Shire or a family member for someone that is. Without a job there is no opportunity to live permanently in the settlement	The nature of this arrangement means a very small population and quiet lifestyle which is a potential attraction. Scope to vary arrangements for selected persons that can make a contribution to the community can be explored.	a Continue to promote the nature Murchison Settlement's very small population and quite lifestyle which is a potential attraction. b Where applicable vary arrangements for selected persons that can make a contribution to the community can be explored. c Explore opportunities to work with the current DAMA program to attract migrant families. d Encourage the Visitation of Family and Friends of existing staff.
5.1.2 Surrounding Residential Locations Unlike other Shires, there are very limited opportunities for those residing on properties to live remote from the Settlement to commute to work. Two stations are located some 50km away from the settlement with two others within 35km. Beyond 75-100km commuting distances and travel costs become problematical.	Likely to be based on adhoc opportunities that may arise but should be on the horizon. Currently one senior employee lives on a nearby Station	a Explore potential opportunities to utilise portions of surrounding land or stations to increase staff employment. b Provide volunteering or intern opportunities to neighbouring council residents c Advertise job opportunities in the Roadhouse
5.1.3 Settlement Infrastructure Costs for the provision, maintenance and replacement of power and water infrastructure are significant. Recent Infrastructure Development Fund Grant was welcomed with	Provided headworks are designed with growth in mind then additional ongoing infrastructure costs for new building are not significant.	a Continue to maintain and enhance infrastructure and amenity of the Settlement

Challenges	Opportunities	Actions
preconditions to deliver 5 key worker accommodation units post infrastructure construction. Grants Commission have recognised the Shires disadvantage with some uplift in the annual financial assistance grant.	An increase infrastructure will increase the maintenance program but all also offer cost savings by minimisation of travel costs for contractors and the ability of provide full work schedules on a more regular basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b Ensure headworks are designed with growth in mind c Program repair work to minimise travel costs
5.1.4 Settlement Housing Capital & Maintenance Costs and impacts on workforce in managing new for the provision of new housing are significant. Number required needs to also be flexible in design and configuration to cater for staff, contractors and consultants.	Minimising housing needs through employment of more than one person is a significant cost reduction. Operationally costs are recovered by works allocations to specific jobs and can be amortised over the long term. In works areas this maybe an overall positive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Continue to minimise housing needs through employment of more than one person within a residence is a significant cost reduction. b As operationally costs are recovered by works allocations to specific jobs and can be amortised over the long term explore overall cost benefits c Construction of new accommodation to aid retention of Roadhouse Managers. d Review furniture and equipment needs for each residence and where applicable purchase selected items so that over the medium term there a reduction in relocation costs and reduced barriers for potential applicants.
5.1.5 Settlement Housing Currently Housing and utilities are provided on a rent-free basis. The Shire has historically been constrained through the limited supply of housing. This situation can also be affected where there is a change in the employment mix where couples are employed that share a dwelling. Any changes to the couple / housing mix will affect the situation. Needs of contractors and volunteers is also a consideration	The provision of rent-free housing, utilities represents a significant financial attraction. For some it's an opportunity to save for a more permanent residence elsewhere. For others it's an opportunity to rent out a property for investment purposes or provide support to family members. Review of the level of current support costs provides an incentive to attraction without significantly adding to the overall cost base. Having a proactive approach with respect to the provision of housing is essential.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Continue to provide rent-free housing, utilities and for staff and promote same through recruitment processes b Review other policy support mechanisms that assist and support staff. c Review Housing Stocks annually and renovate where necessary to maintain modern residences d Set aside funds to increase 1 bed housing stock to 2 bed to support visitation and couples. e Explore a communications strategy to reach niche likeminded communities for recruitment f Continue to promote activities available in nearby towns

Challenges	Opportunities	Actions
<p>5.1.6 Settlement Offerings</p> <p>The biggest negative recruitment issue is that Murchison is tiny and remote and cannot provide a range of services and offerings such as schooling, health, sport, entertainment and other lifestyle opportunities normally available in larger centres.</p> <p>This will inevitably require potential staff to balance up these issues with the advantages such as quietness and reduced work stresses.</p>	<p>Development of the community / staff interaction space will assist as will articulation of an improved package of recruitment materials</p> <p>The overall reputation of the Shire and Settlement as positive destination will assist as will the development and improvement of various policies that can enhance this aspect.</p> <p>Life in Murchison Settlement fits well with niche communities that are likeminded such as home-schooling, homesteaders and as such can be tapped into for potential employees.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Continue to develop community / staff interaction spaces b Promote and articulate a package of recruitment materials to portray the benefits of living and working in Murchison. c Explore a communications strategy to reach niche like-minded communities for recruitment d Continue to promote activities available in nearby towns
<p>5.2 Policy Considerations</p>		
<p>5.2.1 Shire Wide Related Growth</p> <p>Historically there has been a significant reduction in population within the Shire which cannot be addressed purely by growth within the Settlement.</p>	<p>The Shire contributes to a range of tourism actions to boost the district. This includes contributing the Australia's Golden Outback (AGO) and Gascoyne Murchison Outback Pathways (GMOP) and Murchison Geo Region (MGR).</p> <p>These actions are a direct result of trying to expand the local economies and increase population in direct alignment with the State Governments Strategic Priorities to grow the State, a situation addressed in the Shires Future Road Resources Submission.</p> <p>Various other actions that Council can take may be possible from a policy perspective and should be actively explored.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Continue to support a range of tourism actions to boost the district. This includes contributing the Australia's Golden Outback (AGO) and Gascoyne Murchison Outback Pathways (GMOP) and Murchison Geo Region (MGR). b Various other actions that Council can take may be possible from a policy perspective and should be actively explored.
<p>5.2.2 Policy Support</p> <p>The Shire currently subsidises some communication costs. Weekly freight delivery from Geraldton is largely free.</p>	<p>The provision of freight subsidy for staff represents an additional financial attraction.</p> <p>Review of the level of current support costs provides an incentive to attraction without significantly adding to the overall cost base.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Continue to provide freight subsidy arrangements for staff and promote same through recruitment processes b Review other policy support mechanisms that assist and support staff.

Challenges	Opportunities	Actions
5.3 General Operations		
5.3.1 Staff Retention Staff turnover has some financial implications and difficulties in retraining but can also create a negative image for the Local Government as an employer.	Having a positive working environment with strong community linkages is essential with an aim that the Shire is an employer of choice for those who are attracted to remote work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Maintain and enhance a positive working environment with strong community linkages is essential with an aim that the Shire is an employer of choice for those who are attractive to remote work b The Shires approach to TOIL is supported and flexibility provided ensure accessibility to additional lifestyle and community participation opportunities, c Regular performance reviews to be maintained. d Provide support for Professional Development either with budget support or time of or both.
5.3.2 Succession Planning Succession planning 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.	Planning for succession is notoriously difficult in any environment and with respect to Murchison, which is tiny even more so. Having a small lean senior management structure, engagement of specialised consultants in the finance and engineering levels and devolving duties with appropriate procedures to several staff significantly mitigates this issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Maintain a small lean senior management structure supplemented by specialised consultants in the finance and engineering space. b Devolving duties with appropriate procedures to several staff significantly mitigates this issue. c Encourage staff to leave a legacy they are proud of d Adopt a staff motto that supports continuous improvement? i.e 1% better – each contribution we make big or small is turning the dial toward a greater future.
5.3.3 Employment Costs 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.	Continual review of existing employment engagements to tweak provisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Continually review of existing employment engagements to tweak provisions
5.3.4 Industrial Relations Award Provisions 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,	Over the past few years a redefinition of award coverage has occurred. Following legal advice the Shire has	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Continually review of existing employment engagements to tweak provisions to ensure that all

Challenges	Opportunities	Actions
<p>employers need to be aware of their employee's rights and must always ensure they are compliant.</p> <p>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 addressed.</p>	<p>addressed these and moved to individual employment agreements with above award provisions.</p>	<p>staff have their remuneration above minimum award entitlements</p>
<p>5.3.5 Training</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Having a willingness to take on people with broad based skills that can be adapted and supported is essential as is assistance with training and professional development for those that seek this as a part of a career advancement, especially if on a local government focus.</p>	<p>a Maintain and open mind and willingness to take on people with broad based skills that can be adapted</p> <p>b Provide assistance with training and professional development for those that seek this as a part of a career advancement, especially if on a local government focus.</p>
<p>5.3.6 General Recruitment</p> <p>It is recognised that there is no one set of criteria that will apply in recruiting staff as each person will have their own reasons and circumstances for applying.</p> <p>A general comment, attributes required by staff will; vary according to the individual's skills, knowledge, experience and personality traits with availability, willingness to come to Murchison and in some cases as a partner to other staff are important factors. As a result historically roles are varied to suit best fit.</p>	<p>Continuation and enhancement of current practices and approaches with flexibility essential.</p> <p>Utilising personality trait aspects in recruitment and with existing staff will assist.</p>	<p>a Continuation and enhancement of current practices and approaches with flexibility essential.</p> <p>b Utilise personality trait aspects in recruitment and other similar tools for development of the organisation.</p>
<p>5.4 Specific Positions</p>		
<p>5.4.1 Chief Executive Officer</p> <p>Statutory and main governance position which is the only one directly appointed by Council. Apart for the past 5 years, over the past 20 years terms of tenure have generally been between 2-3 years.</p> <p>Historically recruitment has been undertaken with the assistance of an employment consultant. Advertising and package content has been fairly standard with 3-year fixed term offered. Position description has been fairly generic for</p>	<p>The role and development within the Shire make the role far more appealing than 5 years ago. The advertising and package content can be improved.</p> <p>This document articulates an expanded focus, particularly associated with implementing improved staff / community interactions where good leadership skills are essential. As such this the main means a</p>	<p>a Include specific interpersonal and relationship attributes including personality trait aspects as part of the selection criteria when recruiting.</p> <p>b Review term of engagement and other incentives that contribute to potentially as longer engagement.</p> <p>c Explore head hunting as a potential part of the recruitment process</p>

Challenges	Opportunities	Actions
<p>the role and as a result CEO expectations and guidance of what is really important are left silent. Responses have been historically acceptable for operations at the time.</p> <p>During the past 5 years a large array of updated statutory planning for the future documents have been completed. Improved budget processes, Asset Management and Long-Term Financial Plans and better management structure are now in place</p>	<p>Council can attempt to ensure that its overarching directions given prominence.</p> <p>This requires a more personality rather than statutory / finance focus. Interpersonal and relationship attributes should be given more prominence and be part of the evaluation as this will higher level of confidence that outcomes achieved will be expanded upon and not dismantled.</p> <p>The 3-year term is also potentially restrictive and effectively encourages a shorter-term employment with resultant reduced productivity and potential disruption.</p>	
5.4.2 Senior Management Team		
<p>a Works Manager</p> <p>Current in-house appointment with extensive local knowledge, excellent work ethic, good management skills supplemented by high end engineering consultant has been a success. Strategic works plans are in place.</p> <p>Some support persons are in place and are critical in reducing workload.</p>	<p>This position is notoriously difficult to fill. The role and development within the Shire make the role far more appealing than 5 years ago. Support persons are in place but probably at not at the opportune level and mix and are critical in reducing workload and need to be adapted depending on the person eventually recruited.</p>	<p>a Define the position in terms of must haves and be prepared to be flexible to vary the scope of duties to reflect the attributes of the person.</p> <p>b Ensure appropriate support persons are in place to assist the Works Manager.</p>
<p>b Executive Manager DCEO</p> <p>Recent Executive Manager DCEO role supporting Finance Manager and Works Manager has worked well. This followed an initial engagement at a lower-level Depot Officer with changes and tweaks that have evolved over time. At the time, other than the Works Manager there was no other Senior Officer on staff</p>	<p>Historically the DCEO role has been based on a traditional model, in part that the DCEO title aids in career advancement. Whilst this may be the case from experience the need to have a dedicated DCEO is questionable so long as there are two senior persons (Works Manager and one other person who can form the role of an Executive Manager) on staff. In any event the appointment of a DCEO is up to Council and usually only required where there is extended absences of the CEO.</p> <p>Any future engagements will very much depend on the skills attributes of the person recruited. Flexibility will be required</p>	<p>a Treat this position not as a specific DCEO role with duties undertaken by Community Manager and Administration, Finance, Technical and Community Staff</p> <p><i>Note should the position of Community Manager not be considered senior enough that subject to the required skill sets being available that this role could be elevated to be included as part of the Senior Management Team.</i></p>

Challenges	Opportunities	Actions
<p>c Community Manager</p> <p>Recent appointment that is pivotal to bring about a large number of changes in the communications, community economic development areas.</p>	<p>Position pivotal moving forward. Future engagements will very much depend on the skills attributes of the person recruited. Flexibility will be required</p>	<p>a Position pivotal moving forward. Future engagements will very much depend on the skills attributes of the person recruited. Flexibility will be required</p> <p>b Community Manager could also be a Senior Manager</p>
5.4.3 Support Staff		
<p>a Administration, Finance, & Community Staff</p> <p>Appointments vary according to the individual's skills, knowledge, experience and personality traits with availability and willingness to come to Murchison important factors. As a result historically roles are varied to suit best fit.</p>	<p>Continuation and enhancement of current practices and approaches with flexibility essential.</p>	<p>a Continuation and enhancement of current practices and approaches with flexibility essential.</p>
<p>b Works Project Support</p> <p>Historically this was a separated Officer based at the Depot. Recent Executive Manager DCEO also performed this role</p>	<p>Future engagements will very much depend on the skills attributes of the person recruited. Flexibility will be required</p>	<p>a Future engagements will very much depend on the skills attributes of the person recruited. Flexibility will be required with role not necessarily a dedicated one with more than one person sharing various tasks.</p>
<p>c Finance Manager</p> <p>Experience over the past 5 years indicates that it is unlikely to obtain and sustain a high-end appointment, with current external contractor engagement with lower-level financial support being successful. This has the added benefit in that the traditional CEO / Chief Financial Role that traditionally applies in smaller local governments is not required meaning that the options for CEO's with basic financial experiences skills here skills in recruitment are increased.</p>	<p>Retain current contractor working model.</p>	<p>a Retain current working by outsourcing the senior finance role with a suitable contractor</p>

Challenges	Opportunities	Actions
5.4.4 Works Staff		
a Mechanic Historically one staff member supplemented by additional contactor support. Notoriously difficult to recruit for as experienced persons in are in high demand and attract higher salaries	Continuation and enhancement of current practices and approaches with flexibility essential.	Continuation and enhancement of current practices and approaches with flexibility essential.
b Settlement Parks and Gardens Staff Uplift in number and competency driven by increase standards required within Settlement.	Continuation and enhancement of current practices and approaches with flexibility essential.	a Continuation and enhancement of current practices and approaches with flexibility essential.
c Works Staff Construction Historically a minimum 4-person construction gang with an occasional additional person or supplementary contractors used. Works roster on a 10-day fortnight with TOIL operations allowing for at least two longer periods. Camping out facilities are provided. Nature of the make-up means that presence in settlement restricted with a number travelling home elsewhere on breaks. Notoriously difficult to recruit for as experienced persons in the construction industry are in high demand and attract higher salaries, albeit offset by work in more remote locations, higher works pressures and lack of secure tenure. Essential that personnel fit in well with other members of the construction works crew	Providing secure employment and good working conditions is essential and a potential point of difference compared with other contractor roles. Investment in improved camping out facilities will assist. Sustainable growth in works needs to be addressed moving forward	a Continue tom provided secure employment and good working conditions. b Strategically invest in improved camping out facilities. c Explore sustainable growth opportunities in the construction works area
d Works Staff Maintenance Historically a minimum 2-person maintenance gang . Works roster on a 10-day fortnight with TOIL operations allowing for at least two longer periods. Camping out facilities are provided. Nature of the make-up means that presence in settlement restricted with a number travelling home elsewhere on breaks.	Providing secure employment and good working conditions is essential and a potential point of difference compared with other contractor roles. Investment in improved camping out facilities will assist. Review of current works practices for best results needs to undertaken	a Continue tom provided secure employment and good working conditions. b Strategically invest in improved camping out facilities. c Explore sustainable growth opportunities in the maintenance works area

Challenges	Opportunities	Actions
Notoriously difficult to recruit for as experienced persons in the construction industry are in high demand and attract higher salaries, albeit offset by work in more remote locations, higher works pressures and lack of secure tenure. Essential that personnel fit in well with other members of the maintenance crew		
5.4.5 Roadhouse Staff		
<p>We are now on our fourth set of Managers with changes and improvements along the way.</p> <p>Sustainable operating model has evolved over time comprising two managers with two backpackers for the years supplemented by additional backpackers / other staff during peak season.</p> <p>The nature of the work and industry means work means that long term tenures may not be likely but ability to recruit into Murchison is greater than in other areas of the Shire's operation</p> <p>Historically from time-to-time other staff have had to fill in the breach.</p>	<p>Separate accommodation for roadhouse managers will provide a defined separation between business and residence.</p> <p>Improved residential accommodation for existing backpackers should mean that more permanent positions can be provide with reduced reliance on backpackers.</p> <p>Roadhouse Business upgrade should increase revenue with little impact on staff numbers.</p> <p>Long operating hours including weekend openings and catering for peak and off-peak seasons needs to be considered when rostering</p>	<p>a Consolidate operating model with additional adhoc support</p> <p>b Review work life balance considerations in operations generally and when rostering staff</p>
5.4.6 Other		
A significant number of tasks such as HR Management, Governance and ever-increasing compliance are undertaken largely at perhaps less that desirable levels within the above roles.	Continuation and enhancement of current practices and approaches. Flexibility essential. Slight increase in Office Administration Staff will assist.	a Continuation and enhancement of current practices and approaches with flexibility essential.

6 Previous

28 March 2019



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