Workforce Plan 2025 - 2029

SHIRE of CAPEL

Acknowledgement to Country

We wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land we are meeting on, the Wadandi people. We wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and community.

We pay our respects to all members of the Aboriginal communities and their culture; and to Elders past and present, their descendants who are with us today, and those who will follow in their footsteps.

Contents

Executive Summary

The Shire of Capel's *Workforce Plan 2025–2029* outlines a strategic roadmap for aligning the organisation's people capability with its evolving community needs and growth trajectory. As a foundational component of the Shire's integrated planning framework, workforce planning enables the organisation to align its human resources with business goals, proactively address skill gaps, and optimise staff development, engagement and retention.

Workforce planning is a strategic process that ensures an organisation has the right people, with the right skills, in the right roles, at the right time. It involves analysing workforce trends and gaps, planning for future workforce needs, and implementing strategies that enable agility, sustainability and enhanced service delivery.

Key Drivers and Challenges

- The Shire has experienced rapid population growth (36.8% since 2009) and increasingly complex community needs, yet workforce growth has not kept pace.
- An independent Organisational Best Practice Review revealed significant under-resourcing, outdated systems and a lack of scalable infrastructure, all of which impact service delivery and staff wellbeing.
- Recruitment and retention challenges are exacerbated by the Shire's Band 3 classification, limiting salary competitiveness compared to neighbouring Band 1 councils.
- Despite these constraints, the Shire has halved its turnover rate from 47% to 25% through strategic HR interventions.

Workforce Profile and Gaps

- The Shire's workforce is predominantly female (63%), with a slightly older age profile than the local government average.
- A large proportion (50%) of staff have joined in the past two years, bringing renewed energy and skills but highlighting the need for continuity and knowledge retention.
- Diversity representation (Indigenous, CALD, disability) is modest, and targeted strategies are being explored to improve inclusivity.
- A workforce gap of 40.4 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions has been identified to meet current service needs. Future growth and capital projects will require further capacity.

Strategic Workforce Growth

The Plan introduces a staged four-year Growth Strategy that proposes:

- 36.5 new FTE positions between 2025–2029, with 13.5 FTEs forecast for 2025/26.
- Focus on balancing immediate operational demands and longer-term planning for projects like the Dalyellup Multipurpose Centre and ERP system implementation.
- Integration of flexible work, cross-functional roles and leadership development to foster resilience and adaptability.

Culture, Leadership and Retention

- Continued investment in leadership development, psychological safety, and the Culture Optimisation Group (COG) to strengthen internal cohesion and alignment with the Shire's values.
- Flexible work arrangements and structured onboarding/offboarding processes are improving engagement and retention.
- A Traineeship Program, with a 100% completion rate, provides accessible career pathways for young and mature-aged entrants.

Recommendations and Forward Strategy

- **Implement the Growth Strategy** with annual reviews to ensure alignment with evolving community and service needs.
- **Continue to strengthen organisational culture** through inclusive programs, leadership capability building, and transparent performance systems.
- **Finalise and embed the Occupancy Strategy** to accommodate workforce growth.
- **Leverage strategic partnerships and non-monetary benefits** to remain competitive in a tight labour market.
- **Advance initiatives like the Integrated Growth Framework Project, Local Planning Strategy and ERP implementation** to support long-term organisational sustainability.

Conclusion

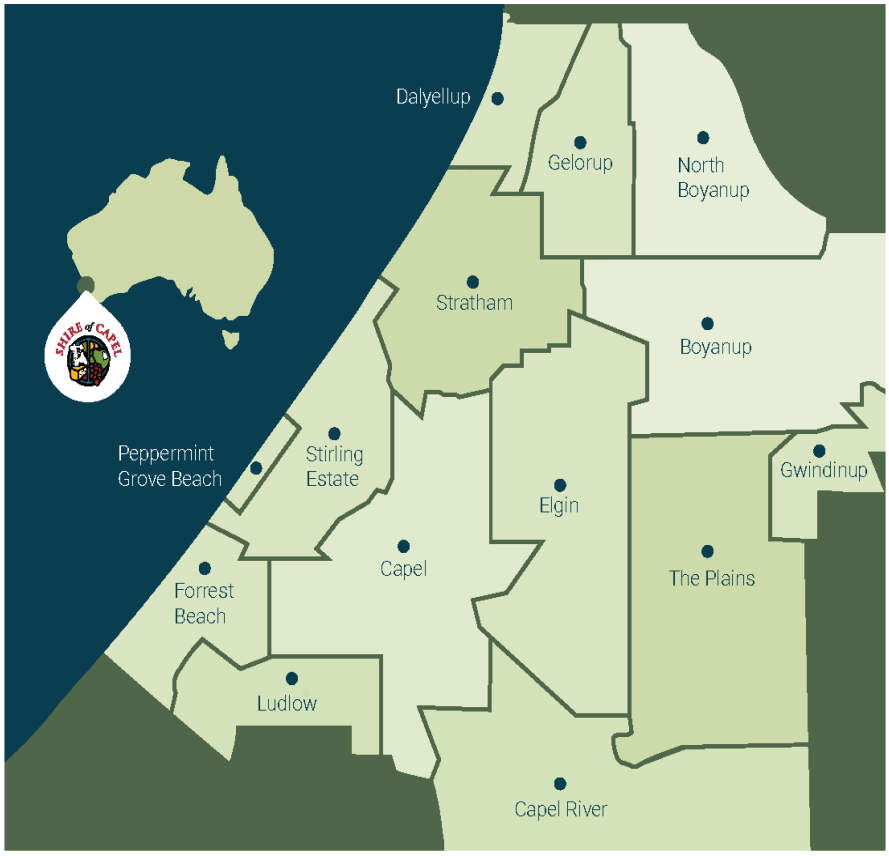
This Plan represents a bold and evidence-based approach to shaping a future-ready workforce. It acknowledges past constraints while setting a clear direction for resourcing, culture and capability to meet the challenges of a growing, diverse and dynamic community. The Shire's commitment to annual review and adaptive implementation ensures this Plan remains responsive and aligned with its strategic vision.

Capel at a Glance

Our Shire is comprised of a range of communities, each having a distinctive character and spirit; from rural villages to more urbanised neighbourhoods.

The Shire of Capel region spans 558km², is home to over 19,000 people and includes vast stretches of pristine coastland, high quality urban and leafy rural areas, historic country towns and natural forests.

The Capel region is part of the Southwest and is recognised as one of the most bio-diverse areas globally, and home to one of the world's last remaining Tuart Forest. One thing that connects us all is the appreciation of the lifestyle that our environment and cohesive community provides.



Just over 2% (around 400) of the Shire's population identify as Indigenous, and our strong Aboriginal culture and heritage is reflected in the Wadandi place names throughout our Shire such as Boyanup, Gelorup, Dalyellup and Gwindinup. We also have a strong colonial heritage, which is demonstrated by our historic agricultural and settlement links.

Our communities continue to change, diversify and become more complex as many new residents and businesses seek a unique coastal or rural lifestyle, close to the amenities and employment opportunities of a growing shire and nearby cities.

This change brings challenges in maintaining quality service delivery for residents; preserving what makes us unique, embracing the opportunities the future holds and growing the local economy and regional connections to enable a sustainable and prosperous community that lives here.

Vision and Values

The Shire values Honesty, Empathy, Accountability, Respect and Teamwork which underpins the way we work with our elected members, the community and each other.

Our Vision

A lifestyle of choice; connecting community, culture and country.

Our Values

Purpose

Why is workforce planning important.

The purpose of this Plan is to shape, develop and contribute to organisational synergies framing the needs, expectations, and aspirations of the current and future Shire of Capel community.

The *Local Government Act 1995* requires all local governments to plan for the future by adopting an integrated framework for corporate planning and reporting. This framework provides local governments with the mechanism for capturing the aspirations and priorities of the community and translating them into operational objectives and actions, and for tracking progress on delivery.

The principal foundation documents are the Plan for the Future, incorporating the Strategic Community Plan and Corporate Business Plan.

The Strategic Community Plan (SCP) spans a 10-year period and sets the strategic direction for the Shire that reflects the aspirations, goals, and priorities of the community. The Shire undertakes a minor review of the Strategic Community Plan every two years and a major review every four years. The SCP is currently undergoing a four-year major review with recommendations to be presented to Council in August following collation of information gleaned from community workshops.

The Corporate Business Plan (CBP) is a four-year operational document, reviewed annually, that outlines the strategic initiatives, major projects, and the resources (financial, assets and workforce) required to deliver the SCP and meet the community's aspirations. The CBP also guides, and is guided by, the development of various informing strategies and strategic enablers.

Informing plans and strategic enablers cover asset management, workforce planning and long-term financial planning, as well as specific areas of need that the local community is focused on. Combined, these inform Annual Operational Service Area Plans, Core Business Activities and Budgets.

Measurement, assessment, and reporting are also logically part of the planning process and are critical components of the continuous improvement cycle. Progress towards the Shire's strategic goals and objectives is reported quarterly to Council and in the published Annual Report. This 2025 update of the previous 2024 – 2028 Workforce Plan is an essential informing tool, reviewed annually to complement the Strategic Community Plan and assist in the development of the Corporate Business Plan by identifying current and future resourcing and structuring requirements to achieve key objectives.

The Workforce Plan addresses diversity, gender composition, risks and workforce-related opportunities focusing on areas such as enhancing culture, development of our people, inspired leadership, resilience, retention of talent, and service to the community.

"A continuous process of shaping the workforce to ensure that it is capable of delivering organisational objectives now and in the future."

(Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) 2004)

Graph 1. Integrated Planning Framework

Developing the Plan

What we need to consider.

To best realise the Workforce Plan objectives, the Shire is committed to providing strategic, innovative, and flexible policies, practices, programs, and services that will allow us to:

- Attract, develop, reward, and retain a diverse and talented workforce.
- Foster a productive work environment where people feel valued.
- Respond to the changing nature of work and the workplace environment and embrace a culture of continuous improvement.
- Ensure that our services are delivered in a timely, responsive, flexible and solution focused way.
- Ensure that equity, fairness, and transparency shape and inform our policies, practises, and processes.
- Create an environment that fosters creativity and innovation in our ideas, initiatives, and the solutions we offer, and
- Act in a way that is responsible, accountable, transparent, and ethical.

How this is achieved.

Graph 2. Workforce Planning

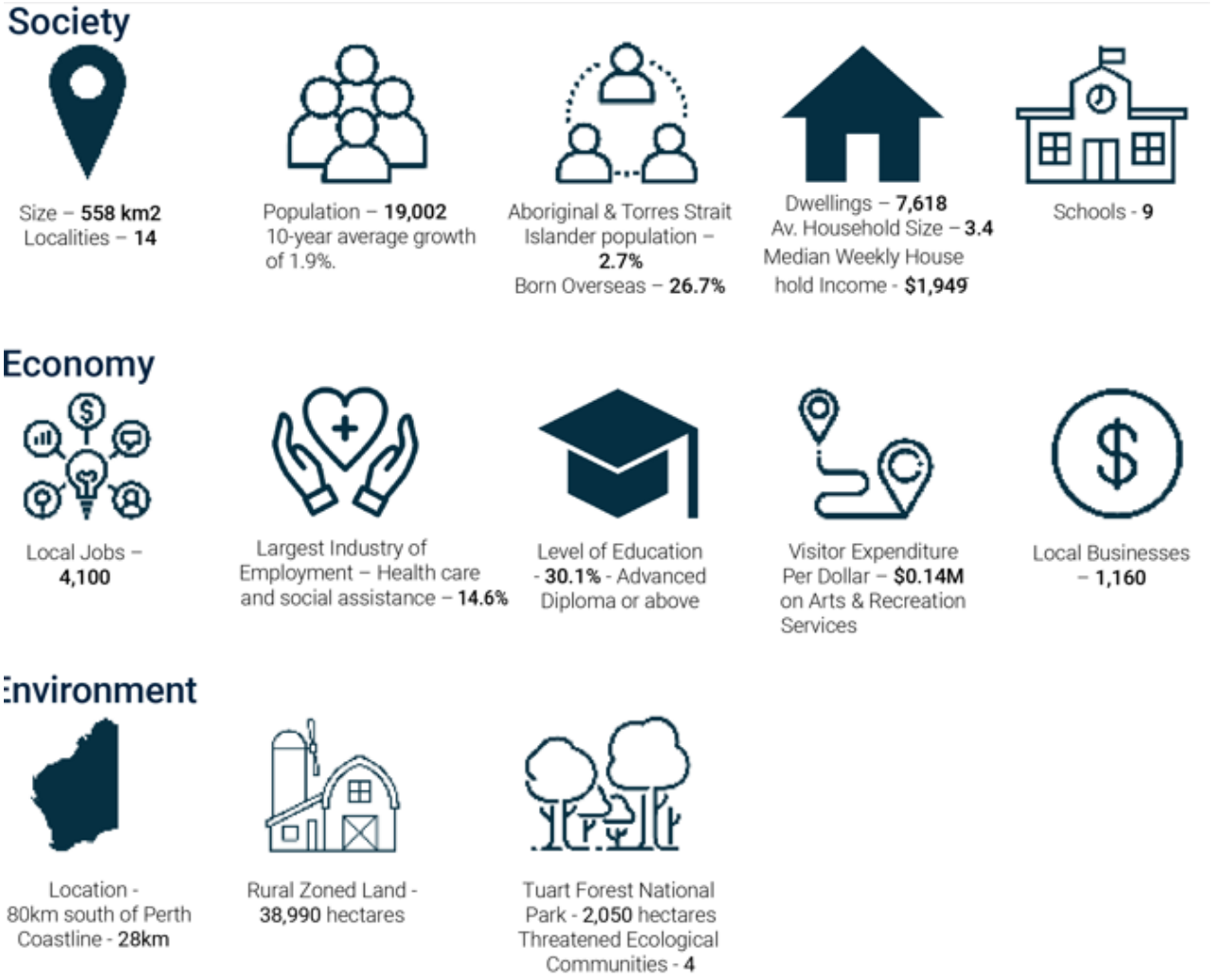
1. Reviewing the Strategic Community and Corporate Business Plans.
2. Engaging with our workforce to determine operational and development motivations and needs.
3. Reviewing and analysing our environment and our team.
4. Review and analysis of challenges and opportunities.
5. Developing an action plan.
6. Measuring success and reflecting on past performance.

The Shire Community

What we know.

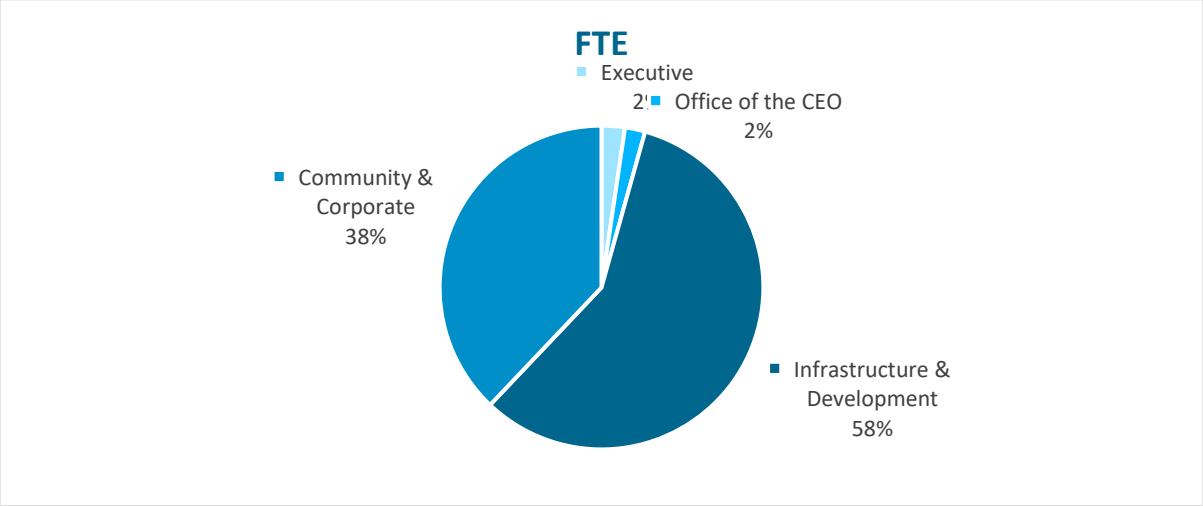
The Capel region has experienced significant growth over the past decade. The population has grown by 36.80% since 2009, with slowing growth over the past five years.

The graphic below, shows a snapshot of population and additional relevant data about our region with information sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021.



Current workforce profile

Graph 3. Current FTE



Current organisational structure

The Shire of Capel Executive Team (supported by eternally facilitated workshops) continues to conduct organisational reviews and map projected structural change informed by analysis of data from sources including:

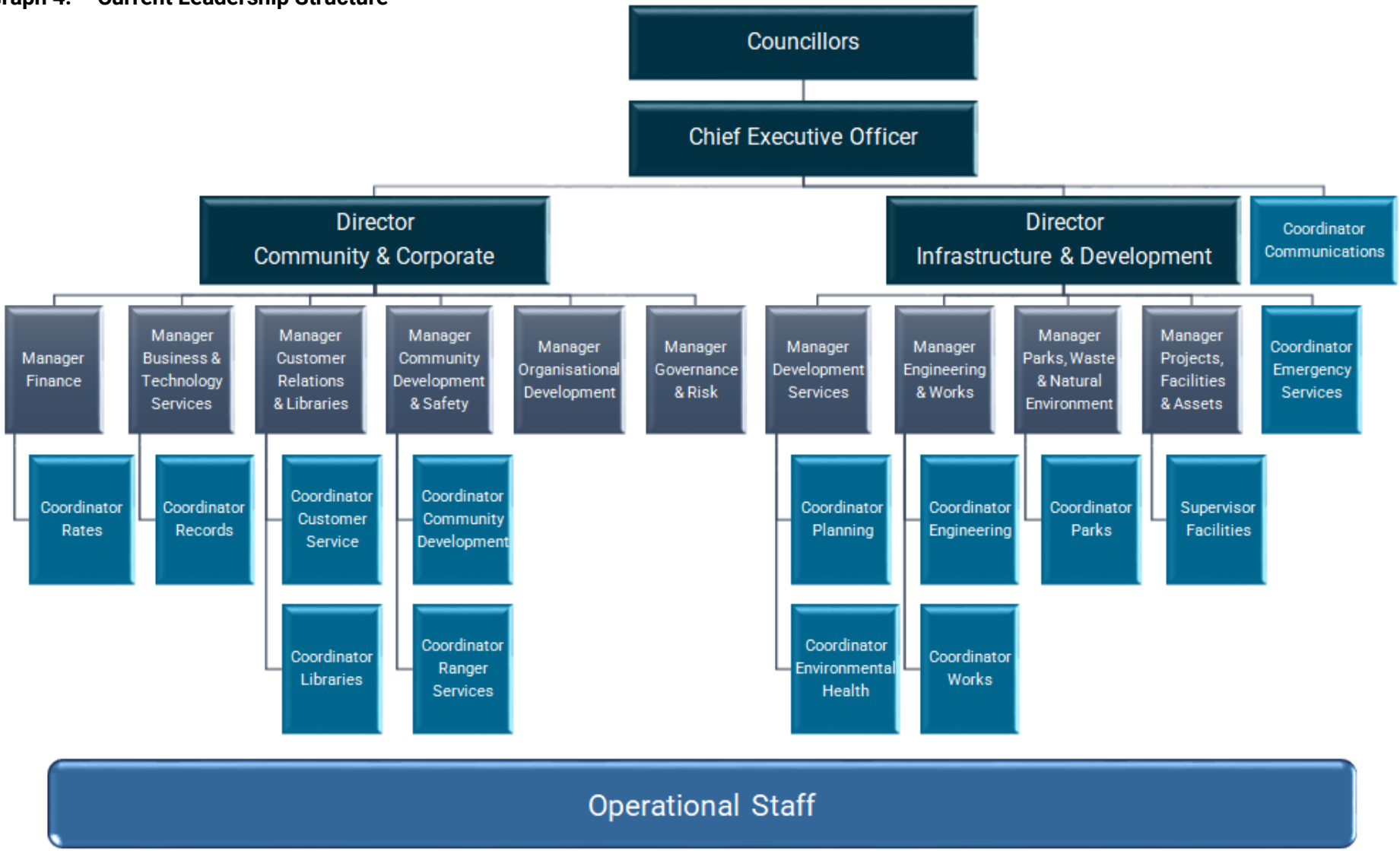
- Community Perceptions Survey (CPS November 2024).
- Infrastructure and Development Directorate recruitment and retention experiences.
- Direct interviews with current staff and exit interviews from departing staff.
- Data from the FieldForce4 external service review.
- Current status / progress of expected 2024/25 Capital Works completion.

Regular review allows for adjustments to be considered and actioned expediently following consultation, where resource inadequacies and service delivery capability are identified as not fulfilling the needs and aspirations of the local community.

Regular organisational reviews allow for the subsequent successful implementation of the current and projected Workforce Plan, as an integral strategy to ensure the sustainable delivery of the Strategic Community Plan directions and Corporate Business Plan objectives, by ensuring that the Shire has the appropriate resourcing, financial and workforce capacity and capability.

The organisational structure below represents the Shire's current composition and functional areas. This organisational structure primarily details leadership and management levels, noting that operational staff report to these positions.

Graph 4. – Current Leadership Structure



Age and Gender Profile

The table below compares the percentage in each age group with the Australia-wide local government workforce (industry average from Salary and Workforce Survey 2025, WALGA).

This shows that the Shire's workforce is a slightly older demographic with a sizable cohort in the pre-retirement decade.

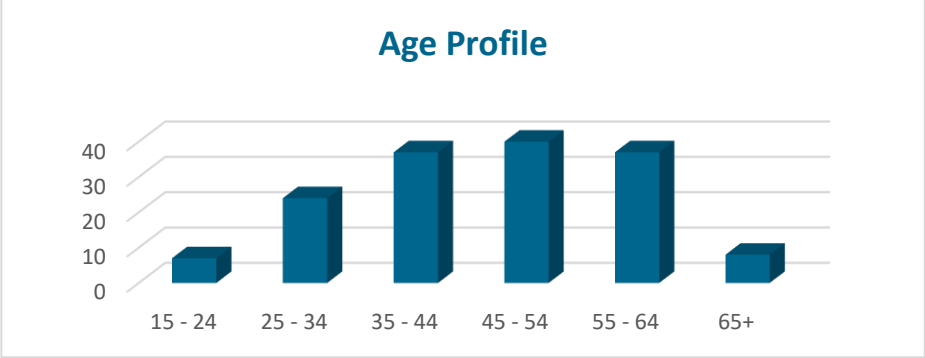
*These figures are based on headcount or all forms of employment across the Shire including Casual and temporary staff at the time of publishing.

Table 1. Age Profile

Age Group	Capel	% of Workforce	Industry Average	Difference
15 - 24	7	5%	15%	-10%
25 - 34	24	16%	17%	-2%
35 - 44	37	24%	22%	2%
45 - 54	40	26%	22%	4%
55 - 64	37	24%	19%	5%
65+	8	5%	5%	0%

** Industry Average from Salary and Workforce Survey 2025, WALGA*

Graph 5. Age Profile

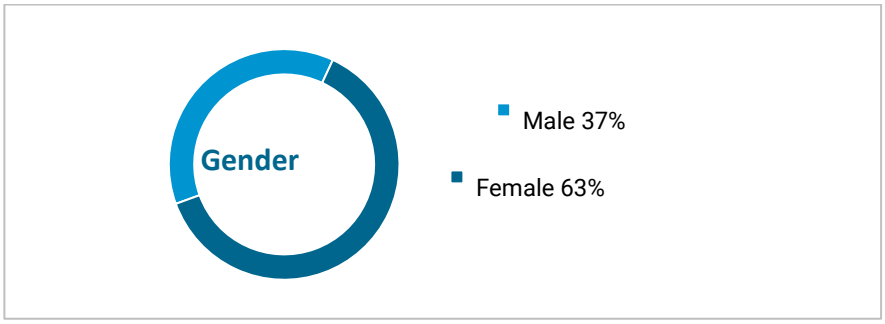


The Shire's workforce predominantly female, with women comprising **63%** of employees and men representing **37%**. This gender distribution suggests strong female participation, which while common in local government sectors such as community services, administration, and library services, we are increasingly seeing female representation across all business areas.

This data also reflects broader rural employment trends, where local government is a significant employer of women.

While the overall gender balance leans toward female representation, ongoing efforts to encourage gender diversity across all levels and departments—including leadership and traditionally male-dominated roles—can support a more balanced and inclusive workplace.

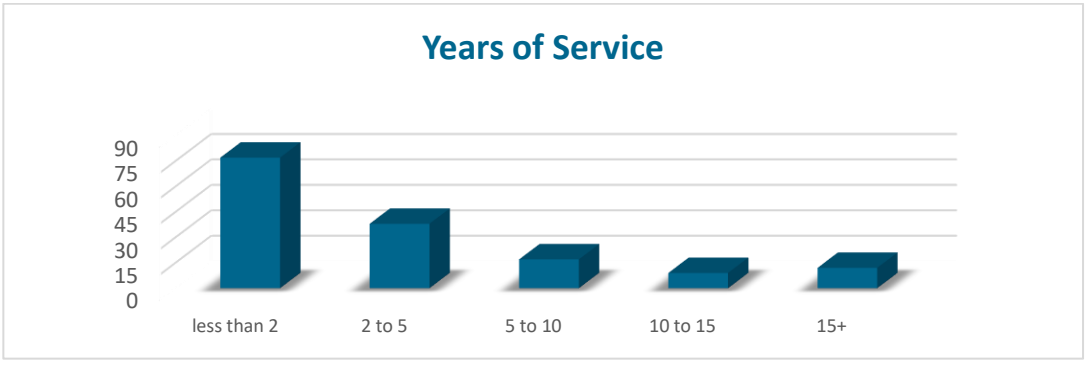
Graph 6. Gender Profile



Length of Service

The majority of employees at the Shire have been employed for less than four years, of which 50% have commenced with the Shire in the last two years. This represents a significant refreshment of the workforce who bring innovative ideas, diverse skills and experience in addition to increased FTE in response to identified service delivery constraints.

Graph 7. Years of Service



Workforce Turnover: Stabilising Trends and Key Insights

Over the past 12 months, the Shire has achieved a significant reduction in employee turnover, improving from 47% in 2024 to 25% in 2025. This positive shift brings the organisation back in alignment with industry averages and reflects targeted efforts to improve employee retention across the business.

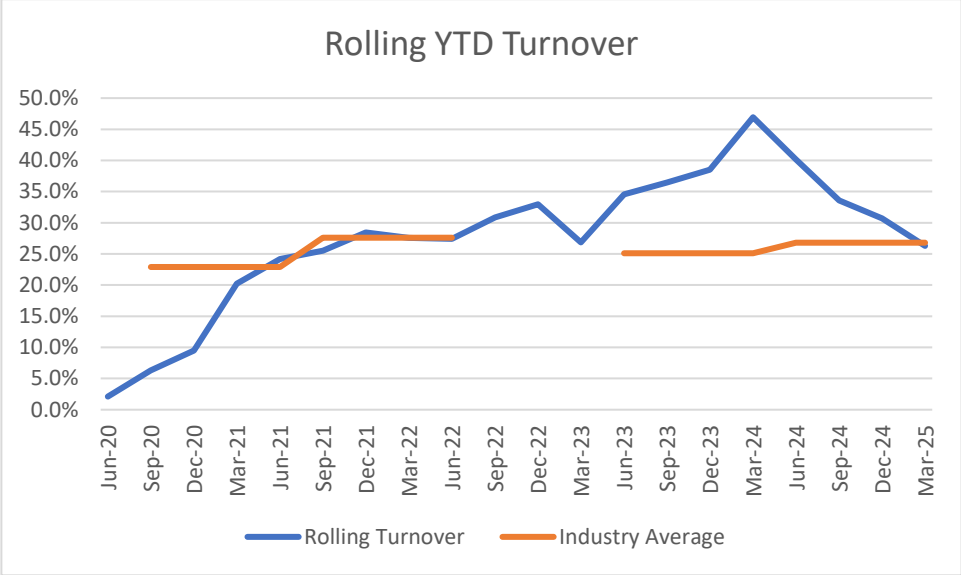
Historically, elevated turnover posed challenges to service delivery, particularly for a local government with finite resources. High turnover rates impacted productivity, increased recruitment costs, and placed pressure on remaining staff—especially within the Infrastructure and Development Directorate, which experienced the highest attrition.

Analysis of exit interview data continues to highlight the top three reasons for employees leaving the Shire as:

1. Remuneration – with higher salaries offered in other sectors or regions.
2. Career progression and succession opportunities – particularly for those seeking professional development and leadership pathways.
3. Workload pressures – often linked to under-resourcing and increasing service demands.

While the return to average turnover levels is a welcome development, these insights will continue to inform workforce planning strategies, including targeted retention initiatives, improved resourcing models, and the development of clear career pathways to sustain a capable and resilient workforce.

Graph 8. Rolling YTD Turnover



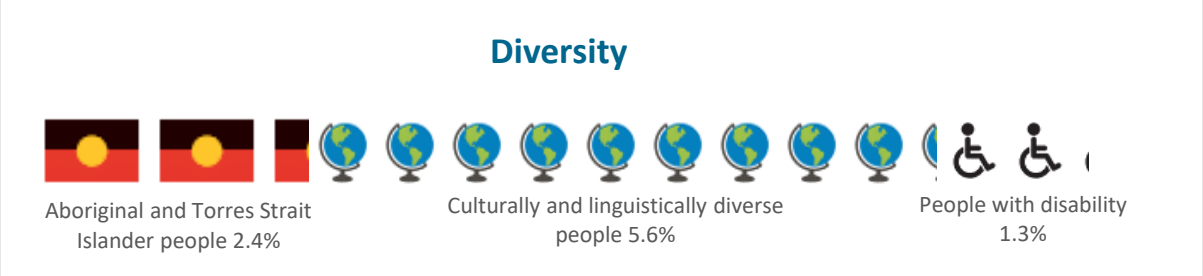
Building a Diverse and Equitable Shire Workforce

The Shire of Capel is committed to providing accessible and inclusive services, facilities and events, and to promoting social inclusion.

The Shire currently demonstrates modest representation across key diversity groups in its workforce. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comprise 2.4% of total employees, reflecting some alignment with efforts to support Indigenous employment, particularly in regional areas. Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) employees make up 5.6%, indicating limited multicultural representation, which may correspond with lower population diversity in rural settings. People with a disability represent 1.3% of the workforce, highlighting an area where greater inclusion and support initiatives continue to be implemented across the business.

While we demonstrate an ongoing commitment to inclusive employment, opportunity exists to strengthen strategies and programs that promote equitable representation, especially for underrepresented groups.

Graph 9. Diversity Profile



Labour Market Profile

As of March 2025, the Shire of Capel exhibits a labour market that mirrors broader Western Australian trends, characterised by low unemployment and high workforce participation. The unemployment rate remains consistent at 3.6%, and a participation rate of 68.9% indicates robust engagement of the working-age population.

Despite the positive indicators, the Shire faces several labour market challenges:

- **Youth Employment**: Attracting and retaining younger workers remains a challenge, particularly in rural areas where job opportunities may be perceived as limited.
- **Skill Mismatch**: There may be a gap between the skills possessed by the local workforce and those required by the Shire, potentially leading to underemployment or unfilled vacancies.
- **Geographic Location**: The Shire's location, while offering a tranquil lifestyle, may limit access to broader employment markets, competitive remuneration, and specialised services, posing challenges for both employers and job seekers.
- **Housing Availability**: The Shire of Capel, whilst located ideally between two large regional cities has also been impacted by the housing rental crisis which has impeded efforts to attract skilled staff who are unable to relocate. Whilst the Shire is responding to this in development of the Integrated Growth Framework and Plan, this concern is reflective of broader trends across Western Australia.

Identified Risks

Considerations in achieving our goals.

Corporate Risk

The Shire's Risk Framework requires quarterly reporting to occur on the corporate risks across the organisation. One of the identified risks, Risk 2 - Failure to recruit and retain the organisational workforce has been reduced throughout the year from an extreme risk to a medium risk.

Staff recruitment and retention was a significant issue the organisation was facing in past years, however this past year has seen improvement the quality and quantity of candidates applying for roles. Additional resources within the Organisational Development Team has also provided opportunity for greater focus on staff retention.

The industry average for turnover is 25%, the Shire of Capel has been consistent with the industry average throughout the last financial year.

However, there are still challenges with reducing the risk further due to the Local Government industry being unable to provide a competitive market, based on the Local Government Award and Salary restrictions. The Shire of Capel being a Band 3 Local Government, inhibits the Shire's opportunity to compete with larger surrounding LGs in relation to remuneration and attraction packages.

Salaries and Retention

During ongoing periods of low unemployment, and as a Band 3 Local Government we face intensified challenges in maintaining competitive remuneration compared to neighbouring Band 1 local governments. Key issues in this area include:

- **Competition for Talent**: With increased employment opportunities available, workers are more likely to seek better-paying positions, often favouring Band 1 Councils that offer higher salaries and broader benefits.
- **Wage Pressure**: Low unemployment drives up salary expectations across all sectors, putting additional pressure on the limited financial resources of a Band 3 Council.
- **Difficulty Filling Critical Roles**: Experience operators for specialised and leadership positions become even harder to recruit for, as candidates have greater bargaining power and are drawn to organisations offering stronger financial packages.
- **Retention Risks**: Existing staff are often approached by neighbouring councils or private sector employers offering more attractive remuneration, increasing the risk of turnover.
- **Resource Constraints**: Unlike Band 1 Councils, Band 3 Local Governments typically have smaller rate bases and funding streams, limiting their ability to compete solely on pay during a competitive labour market.
- **Workload**: Potential vacancies resulting from key points above lead to increased and often unsustainable workload pressures.

To remain relevant and attractive to employees, we continue to strategically leverage non-monetary advantages such as community engagement, career development, flexible working conditions, and a supportive workplace culture.

Strategic Workforce Transition and Knowledge Retention

The Shire continues to face workforce challenges as a significant portion of employees approach retirement age. This demographic shift presents potential risks, including the loss of critical organisational knowledge and a decline in overall workforce capacity if not proactively managed. There is also the possibility of reduced adaptability or physical capacity among this cohort, impacting their ability to meet evolving workplace demands.

Addressing this issue requires a thoughtful and respectful transition strategy—one that recognises the value of long-serving employees, honours their contributions, and supports them in planning for retirement. By fostering a culture of respect and inclusion, the Shire can ensure knowledge is retained through mentoring, succession planning, and structured handovers, while also reinforcing the continued value of experienced staff during this critical period of change.

From Experience to Innovation: Embracing Generational Strengths

Generational diversity introduces both opportunities and complexities in how organisations manage, engage, and retain staff. Each generation brings unique perspectives, work styles, values, and expectations shaped by differing life experiences and social contexts.

While broad generalisations based on age can be misleading, it is reasonable to anticipate variation in communication preferences, comfort with technology, and approaches to work. These differences can either create friction or drive innovation, depending on how they are managed.

At the Shire, a proactive and inclusive approach underpins our workforce strategy. Through initiatives such as the Psychological Safety Framework including Cultural Optimisation Group (COG) activities, we foster an environment where all employees—regardless of age or background—are encouraged to contribute, voice concerns, and navigate differences constructively. This commitment helps bridge generational gaps, supports knowledge sharing, and cultivates mutual respect, ultimately enhancing team cohesion and organisational resilience.

Capacity for Growth – Occupancy Strategy

To support the organisation's desired growth trajectory identified through the Organisational Best Practice Service Review, the Shire has engaged specialist consultants to develop an Occupancy Strategy. This strategy will provide a roadmap to align the Shire's physical workspace with its future workforce and service delivery needs.

The strategy will assess current office utilisation and identify opportunities to optimise space across existing and potential sites. Key areas of focus include:

- Reconfiguring floor plans to improve space efficiency.
- Integrating flexible work models (e.g. hot desking, hybrid arrangements).
- Addressing maintenance, asset utilisation and WHS needs.
- Planning for long-term expansion aligned to the Growth Strategy.

Initiatives under the 2024–2028 Corporate Business Plan include redesigning desk configurations at the main Administration Building, movement of key staff to the Depot, exploring regular use of the Dalyellup Multipurpose Centre, and assessing future service delivery points via commercial leases.

It is expected that proposed and agreed changes will be implemented in a phased approach, aligned with forecast FTE growth and budget availability, ensuring sustainable investment in infrastructure while enhancing employee productivity, satisfaction, and community service outcomes.

An amount of $25,000 has been included in the FY2025/26 Facilities Program of Works to fund associated works related to activating phase one of the Occupancy Strategy. Other related costs will be in the form of furniture purchases and professional design fees to firm the plans for the customer service's area remodel.

Industrial Relations Landscape

The *Shire of Capel (Operations) Industrial Agreement 2024* was formally registered in February 2025, providing certainty for both the Shire and our outdoor workforce across the Works, Parks, Facilities, and Waste teams through to June 2027.

Inside staff are currently covered by the *Local Government Industry Award 2020 Industrial Agreement*. While this Agreement formally expired in December 2024, it remains in operation until replaced. This presents a timely opportunity to explore the development of a tailored Industrial Agreement for our inside workforce. Doing so could help secure favourable employment conditions that align with our attraction and retention strategies.

Economy Movements

As of March 2025, the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) has cut the cash rate to 4.10%, marking the first reduction since 2020. This decision reflects the RBA's response to easing inflation, slower economic growth, and reduced wage pressures, indicating that the economy is stabilising after a period of elevated interest rates.

The RBA had previously increased the cash rate aggressively from 0.10% in 2022 to 4.35% by late 2023 to combat inflation, but with price pressures now moderating, the central bank has shifted to a more accommodative stance.

Despite the February 2025 interest rate cut, the RBA remains cautious, ensuring that inflation continues its trajectory toward the 2–3% target range before implementing additional reductions.

The stabilisation of the interest rate will allow the Shire to financially forecast with more certainty likened to pre-covid times.

An easing in cost-of-living pressures is welcomed from a workforce perspective as the growth over the last three to four years has greatly contributed to the Shire's high turnover rates due to the competitive labour market and attractive salary rates offered from outside industries making the employment

Child Safeguarding – Requirements, initiatives, and Local Implementation

Western Australian local governments have an emerging responsibility to contribute to child safeguarding as part of their role in creating safe, inclusive, and supportive communities. This includes compliance with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, and alignment with state frameworks and recommendations, such as those arising from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Implementing child safeguarding involves both policy development and cultural change. Key requirements include:

- Establishing clear child-safe policies and codes of conduct
- Implementing risk assessment procedures for child-related programs and facilities
- Providing staff and volunteer training on child safety and reporting obligations
- Appointing or identifying Child Safety Champions or Officers within the organisation
- Ensuring mechanisms for child-friendly complaints and feedback

The Shire has commenced integration of child safeguarding principles through policy review, awareness training, and aligning event and facility planning with child-safe standards. These steps mark a commitment to fostering safe environments for children and young people across the community.

Priority Gaps

What we need.

The Shire is committed to delivering the outcomes as documented in our Plan for the Future. Analysis of resourcing requirements continues and will be regularly revised over the term of the Workforce Plan.

Gaps in physical resourcing are subject to rigorous scrutiny and assessed according to cultural and strategic fit, benefits, risks, and costs. Increases in functional capacity will be addressed through FTE growth, system support and reviewed alignment of service delivery areas.

Comparative analysis completed for the 2023-2027 Workforce Plan identified the Shire's FTE being approximately 4.50 FTE per 1,000 people, which on average was 3.50 FTE less per 1,000 than our neighbouring local governments.

This finding, in addition to other key informing factors led to actioning an Organisational Best Practice Service Review, commencing in December 2023 to March 2024.

In essence, the review calculated the resourcing requirements (work hours per day, week and month) to deliver core business services to the Capel Shire community, then compared these requirements with existing organisational resourcing and capability.

The review identified the organisation is very lean in physical resourcing compared to 'like' local governments of similar population and demographics, and the impact of this is felt daily across the organisation, and impacts the Shire's recruitment and retention issues, influencing the overall staff turnover rate, which was at 47% (March 2024), as well as service delivery capability and consistency.

The former adopted Workforce Plans (from 2021 onwards) do address this issue to a degree, identifying the historical lack of organisational growth, as well as rudimentary benchmarking of resource shortages compared to neighbouring local government (of between 30 and 40 FTEs), whilst proposing a tentative growth strategy of 3% FTE increase each year for the term of the (then) plan (4 years).

However, with the independent researched data received through the review process, the Shire now has granular, individual team level data that validates the challenges the Shire is currently experiencing, and forecasts in FTE what a Local Government of this size and demographic needs (in FTE) to function effectively and efficiently to competently service the community.

The total staffing deficiency across the organisation equated to 40.40 FTE (as at FY2023/24). This total was based on the effectiveness of the Shire's current processes, practices, data, and systems, and reflected current service delivery levels, not accounting for population growth projections and additional resourcing requirements for capital projects such as the proposed Dalyellup Multipurpose Community and Youth Centre (DMCYC), or the procurement and implementation of the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP).

However, there is an understanding that the successful delivery of Shire services is not just reliant on pure staffing increases alone. A combined blend of sufficient people, contemporary processes, reliable systems, and updated data will improve outcomes across the organisation to better serve the community and the needs of the organisation.

A main recommendation from the review identified the need to embed a Growth Strategy within the Workforce Plan, prioritising the introduction of new positions to the organisation to service the blend of additional FTE required to manage current levels of service where deficiencies in staffing exist, and other new positions required to support growth in Shire operations as the Capel Shire population increases.

The table below summarises the Shire's Growth Strategy for the term of this plan. It forecasts resourcing requirements to maintain current service levels during the immediate years, seeing the outer years build capacity in the workforce to account for population and capital infrastructure growth:

Table 2. Shire's Growth Strategy (forecasting 2 -3% growth factor from 2026/27)

Year	Directorate				New FTE	Total FTE	Profiled Cost	Total Cost
	CC	ID	O/CEO	DMCYC				
2025/26	3.5	4	2	4	13.5	**138.68**	**$850,943.72**	**$1,382,236.58**
2026/27	0	0	1	3	4	**142.68**	**TBC**	**$310,535.68**
2027/28	1	2	0	0	3	**145.68**	**TBC**	**$242,050.00**
2028/29	2	1	0	0	3	**148.68**	**TBC**	**$249,311.50**
Total Projection	**6.5**	**7**	**3**	**7**	**23.5**	**148.68**		**$2,184,133.76**

These new positions are a blend of additional FTE required to manage current levels of service where deficiencies in staffing exist (as per the figure of 31.18FTE extracted from the Organisation Best Practice Service Review Report) and future positions required to support growth as the Capel Shire population increases.

Of the 13.5FTE identified for FY2025/26, the recruitment schedule / appointment timing of these positions are profiled in the Annual Budget as follows:

Table 3. 2025/26 Recruitment Schedule (linked to Profiled Cost in Table 2.)

YR – 2025/26 MONTH	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
FTE (13.5)	2.5	3	2			2		3	1		

During FY2025/26, in addition to the new FTE appointments costed above, the Shire will transition 4 fixed term staff to permanent contracts which are already costed in the salaries budget given their inclusion in previous salaries budgets and are included in the forecast total employee count of 153 (inclusive of part time, full time, casual, fixed term and permanent positions). This will make the total FTE count for FY2025/26 at 138.68FTE.

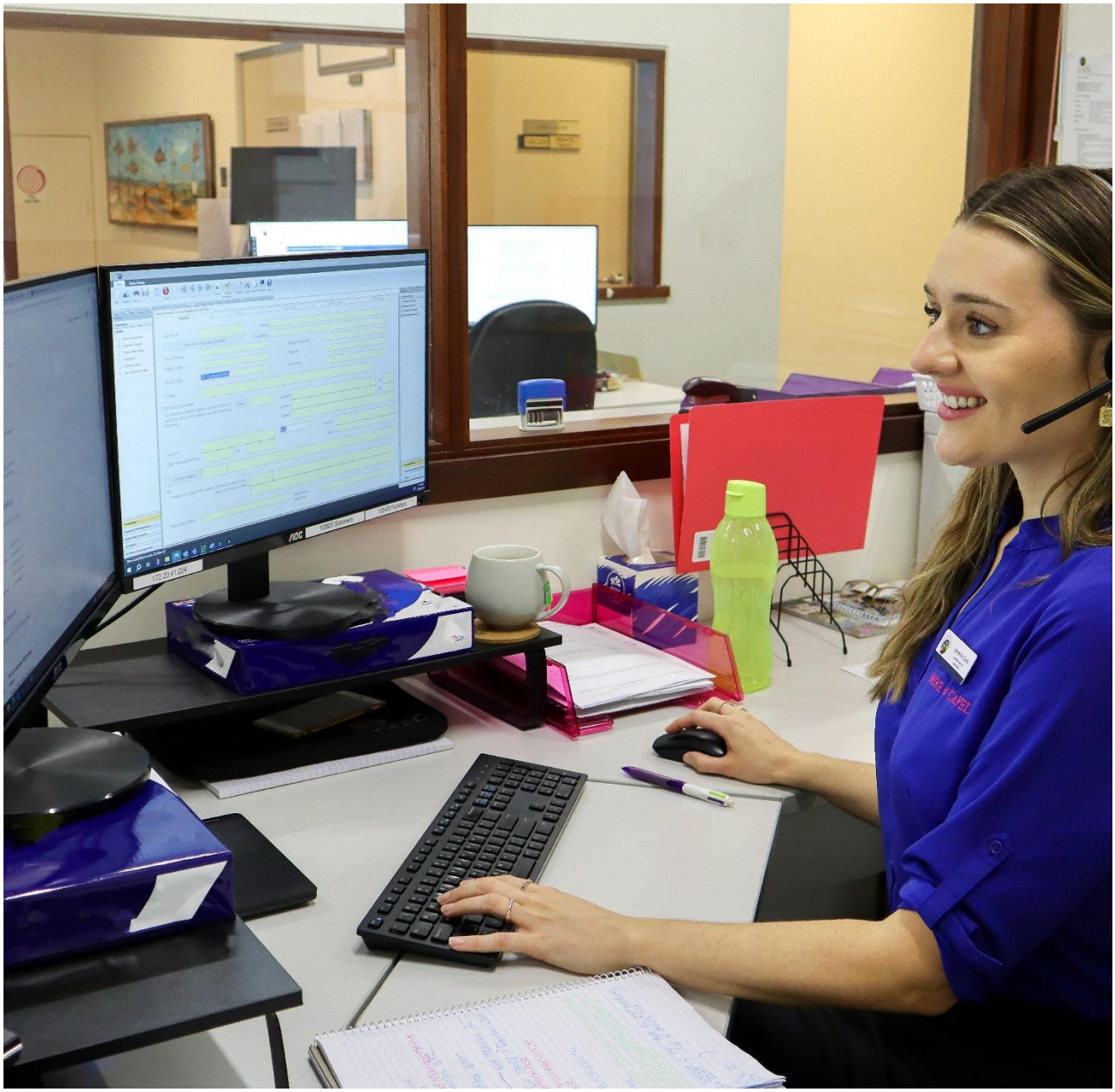
Referring to the Organisational Performance Review works; during 2025, a second phase of work is continuing across the organisation as a continuation of the Organisational Best Practice Service Review. This work will see the development of standardised work area / operational plans, calculating and realising true unit estimates for scheduled tasks and operations which will ensure future work schedules and programs of work are achievable from both a physical and financial resource perspective.

As detailed earlier in the plan, the need for an Occupancy Strategy is critical to support the onboarding of new positions into the organisation and both strategies will be reviewed in conjunction on an annual basis once finalised.

This work commenced in February 2025 and will be finalised in the near future. Please refer to this section in the Workforce Plan for further details on the outcomes of the study.

Reviews of the Shire's Workforce Plan will continue annually, which may influence variances to the above table prior to the plan being presented to Council for review and endorsement.

The forecast financial commitment to fund new positions over the term of the plan will be incorporated into the Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP) which will be annually reviewed to reflect the recruitment needs of the organisation.



Identified Opportunities

Where to from here.

Workforce Attraction, Development and Recruitment

The Shire remains committed to building a skilled, sustainable, and resilient workforce by embracing contemporary recruitment practices and targeted development strategies—particularly important given the challenges of attracting talent in a competitive market and regional setting.

Recognising its limited capacity to compete on salary alone, the Shire continues to strengthen its overall employment value proposition by focusing on non-financial benefits

such as flexible working arrangements, leadership development, succession planning, and cross-functional exposure. Employees benefit from the Shire's scale and structure, which enable hands-on experience across a diverse range of local government operations—offering a compelling development pathway not always available in larger organisations.

To address recruitment challenges, particularly in specialist and technical roles, the Shire has adopted a more agile and candidate-centred approach to hiring. The Organisational Development Team collaborates with hiring managers to tailor recruitment strategies to individual team needs—broadening advertising reach, improving timing, and placing greater emphasis on cultural fit and transferable skills rather than rigid qualifications. These flexible approaches have already delivered strong results, with high-performing candidates filling key roles across the organisation.

In parallel, the Shire continues to leverage the Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) to access international talent in hard-to-fill disciplines such as engineering, planning, environmental health, building, and civil operations.

By combining innovative recruitment methods with local workforce development, the Shire is positioning itself as an employer of choice—one that supports its people, responds proactively to market constraints, and is well-placed to meet future service delivery demands.

Role Diversity and Workforce Capability

The Shire's scale and resource structure provides employees with unique opportunities to engage in diverse, meaningful, and often cross-functional work. Unlike larger, more siloed organisations where roles are typically confined to narrow areas of expertise, the Shire's operating environment encourages a broader scope of responsibilities aligned with individual skills, interests, and capabilities.

This diversity of experience enhances professional development and builds well-rounded, adaptable officers who are equipped to contribute to quality service delivery and strengthen business continuity. As a result, Shire staff are positioned as competitive and capable professionals within the local government sector.

Location and Workforce Attraction

The Shire of Capel offers a unique lifestyle advantage, situated within a diverse natural setting of forests, beaches, farmland, and wineries—making it an attractive location for those seeking a balanced work-life experience. This regional appeal supports workforce attraction, drawing talent from both the Greater Bunbury and Greater Busselton areas.

While the Shire faces challenges in competing with larger neighbouring local governments on remuneration, its location remains a key drawcard. However, the availability of suitable housing for new employees relocating to the region continues to present barriers. To address this, the Shire supports flexible working arrangements, enabling a smoother transition for staff until long-term accommodation can be secured.

Flexible Work Options: Enabling a Modern and Inclusive Workforce

Flexible work practices continue to emerge as a core component of the Shire's approach to workforce attraction, engagement, and retention. By offering adaptable work arrangements—such as remote work, flexible hours, and role-specific customisations—the Shire is enabling

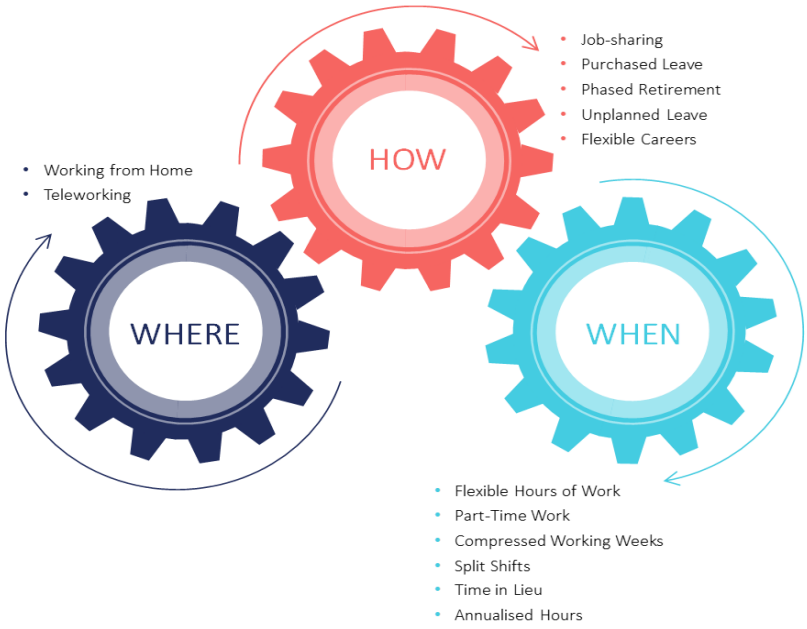
broader participation in the workforce, particularly for cohorts who may face traditional employment barriers.

The Organisational Development team consistently capture staff commentary on flexible work. This feedback informs a variety of flexible models aligned to both employee needs and operational requirements.

Initial pilot arrangements trialled across several teams in 2024/25, has supported the Shire to apply additional arrangements enhancing work-life balance, reduce turnover, and increase overall job satisfaction. These practices also contribute to higher productivity and a more resilient workforce, capable of responding to the evolving needs of the organisation and the community.

Flexible work is not only a strategy for current workforce wellbeing—it is also a cornerstone of the Shire's future growth planning. When integrated with infrastructure and workforce strategies, flexible work can reduce physical office demand, lower overheads, and support the Shire's broader goal of becoming a more agile and inclusive employer.

Graph 10. Flexible Work Options



Remuneration Framework: Transparency, Equity and Development

The Shire continues to test and develop a structured Remuneration and Classification Framework, designed to enhance transparency, fairness, and consistency in how employee remuneration is determined.

This internal framework clearly outlines salary bands aligned with position classifications, taking into account the skills, experience, and responsibilities associated with each role. It also serves as a valuable planning tool for both employees and managers—supporting informed career development conversations, goal setting, and succession planning.

In addition to supporting retention and engagement, the framework establishes a baseline commitment for scheduled salary and wage increases, aligned with the Shire's Long Term Financial Plan. By embedding this structured approach, the Shire strengthens its commitment to equity and accountability, while empowering staff to understand their growth potential within the organisation.

Traineeship Programs: Supporting Local Talent and Building Workforce Resilience

In response to financial constraints and strategic workforce planning needs, the Shire continues to explore and leverage funding opportunities to support the delivery of targeted Traineeships. These programs provide valuable entry-level pathways for both youth and mature-aged community members, offering meaningful work experience within local government and promoting the Shire as an employer of choice.

Traineeships play a critical role in fostering local employment, particularly for young people aged 15–19—a significant demographic in the Shire's community. By creating structured opportunities for on-the-job learning, these placements not only contribute to regional workforce development but also support the Shire's succession planning efforts, especially in technical service areas such as Infrastructure and Development.

The Shire's current four-year staffing projection includes applications for Traineeship positions in 2025/26 across key focus areas: Work Health & Safety, Civil Construction, and Youth Development. These roles are strategically selected to address operational needs while building future workforce capacity.

Importantly, the Shire's Traineeship model is inclusive, with equal consideration given to mature-aged candidates, recognising the value of life experience, transferable skills, and diverse perspectives. In future years, Traineeship opportunities will continue to be reviewed annually, aligned with budget availability and external funding options. This may also include internal upskilling pathways for current employees to obtain formal qualifications and increase retention.

The program's track record is strong, with a 100% completion rate over the past four years and the majority of Trainees securing permanent employment within the organisation. This approach continues to support long-term workforce stability, community engagement, and local economic development.

Volunteer and Placement Programs: Strengthening Community Engagement and Workforce Development

The Shire continues to recognise the strategic value of volunteerism and student placements in fostering deeper community connections and supporting long-term workforce sustainability. Expanding the Shire's volunteer base not only strengthens civic engagement but also enhances its profile as an employer of choice—particularly among emerging professionals and local youth.

Ongoing participation in structured work placement programs with high schools and tertiary institutions offers students hands-on exposure to local government operations. These programs serve as a vital recruitment pipeline for hard-to-fill technical and professional roles by building early awareness of career pathways within the Shire.

As part of a broader commitment to diversity and inclusion, the Shire also partners with local and regional service providers to improve access to placement opportunities for individuals from varied backgrounds and abilities. This inclusive approach supports a more representative and dynamic workforce, while aligning with the Shire's values of equity and community responsiveness.

Although operational capacity to host volunteers and placements remains a challenge, particularly across smaller teams, the Shire manages this proactively by offering rotational placements across multiple departments. This model ensures participants receive a rich, multi-disciplinary experience while minimising the impact on day-to-day service delivery.

Through these initiatives, the Shire is not only investing in its future workforce, but also reinforcing its role as a trusted and community-oriented organisation.

Leadership, Culture and Wellbeing

The Shire of Capel is committed to creating a workplace culture that supports its vision of a future-focused and resilient community that benefits from good governance, responsive services, and appropriate facilities to deliver positive social, environmental, and economic outcomes for everyone.

Onboarding and Offboarding: Strengthening Workforce Integration and Retention

The Shire of Capel recognises that a well-structured onboarding and offboarding process is essential to building a high-performing and resilient workforce. As part of its commitment to continuous improvement, the Organisational Development team regularly reviews and refines these processes to ensure alignment with strategic workforce goals.

A comprehensive onboarding approach accelerates employee integration, enabling new staff to become productive and effective in their roles sooner. This is particularly important where rapid engagement is critical to maintaining service continuity and achieving operational outcomes.

In support of this, the Shire encourages buddy and mentor support, as well as scheduled check-ins with a Human Resources representative. These interactions ensure new employees feel welcomed, supported, and equipped to contribute meaningfully to their

teams and the broader organisation. This proactive engagement also supports us to strengthen retention and improve employee satisfaction.

Offboarding processes are equally valued, with exit interviews providing key insights that inform future improvements to employee experience and organisational culture. By leveraging this feedback, the Shire continues to evolve its people practices in a way that reinforces staff engagement and operational effectiveness.

These efforts contribute to a positive workplace culture and support the Shire's overarching vision of a future-focused and responsive local government that delivers strong social, environmental, and economic outcomes for its community.

Leadership Development: Building Capability Through Values-Aligned Programs

The Shire continues to invest in leadership capability through a tailored, values-driven development program designed for its Executive Management Group, Managers, and Coordinators. Initially launched in 2022, the Leadership Program remains a core initiative to strengthen strategic alignment, decision-making capability, and people leadership across the organisation.

Anchored in the Shire's core values—Honesty, Empathy, Accountability, Respect, and Teamwork—the program incorporates 360-degree reviews and a structured focus on behavioural growth. It aims to empower leaders with the confidence and tools needed to guide their teams effectively while supporting organisational goals and navigating local government responsibilities.

In addition to strategic alignment, the program equips leaders with practical skills in coaching, staff development, and cultural leadership—creating a flow-on effect that enhances engagement and performance across the wider workforce.

The program's success has led to its continuation and evolution, with the Executive Team collaborating with professional facilitators to ensure it remains responsive to emerging organisational needs while preserving its focus on values and leadership excellence.

This investment reflects the Shire's long-term commitment to building strong internal leadership and a culture of continuous growth, accountability, and staff empowerment.

2025/26 - Leadership Development Program....

Leadership and culture development will broaden in 2025/26 and will be team focussed rather than individual growth based.

This will allow the Executive / Managers to purely focus on building resilience, accountability and professional development across each of their team members utilising the skills and personal / professional growth opportunities they have been afforded leading up to this challenge.

Horizontal team alignments such as the Executive, Management, and Coordinators teams will continue to be mentored through this program to ensure professional relationships and collaboration remains healthy and active.

Later in the year, and as part of the awarded contract, the consultants will support the Executive in conducting a review of the Shire's organisational structure with a view to expanding to a three directorate structure from quarter 2, 2025/26 onwards.

The Shire reduced from a three to a two directorate structure in 2020, during a time of population growth, in a bid to make efficiencies across the organisation. Albeit these efficiencies were never realised given the growth in population increased the demand for services, hence the increase in high workforce turnover peaked at 47% in 2024 due to staff burnout.

On a positive note, since the Council supported the last two years of FTE increases, workforce turnover has reduced to 25% during 2025. However, the continued burden on two Directors to manage this growth in FTE and associated additional considerations / complexities is becoming increasingly challenging, hence the decision to restructure during the later quarter of 2025/26.

Psychological Safety Framework

Implementing a psychological risk framework offers significant benefits for a rural WA local government, including:

- **Improved Employee Wellbeing**: A structured approach to identifying and managing psychological risks helps create a healthier, more supportive workplace, reducing stress, burnout, and mental health issues.
- **Increased Staff Retention**: A focus on mental wellbeing enhances job satisfaction and loyalty, helping the council retain skilled workers, which is particularly important given the recruitment challenges in rural areas.
- **Enhanced Organisational Performance**: A psychologically safe environment promotes higher engagement, productivity, and collaboration, leading to better service delivery for the community.
- **Compliance and Risk Reduction**: Meeting Work Health and Safety (WHS) obligations regarding psychosocial hazards protects the local government from legal and financial risks.
- **Positive Workplace Culture**: Proactive management of psychological risks builds trust, respect, and resilience within teams, supporting a strong and positive organisational culture.
- **Reputation as an Employer of Choice**: Demonstrating a commitment to psychological safety strengthens the council's reputation, making it more attractive to potential employees and community members.

The Shire commenced implementation of the Psychological Safety and Inclusivity (PSI) Indicator Program in November 2022, a market-leading diagnostic that provides real-time insights to foster a more inclusive and diverse workforce by identifying gaps and opportunities within the psychological safety profile of the organisation.

Following significant work driven by Executive and Managers with their respective teams, retesting has been conducted at regular intervals resulting in significant improvements.

Key drivers for this process have included improved teamwork, engagement, and feeling support to voice opinions and make mistakes.

Psychosocial Risk Register

Alongside the Psychological Safety Framework, our Work Health and Safety team is currently in the process of rolling out a newly developed Psychological Risk Register.

The introduction of this register provides a structured and proactive approach to identifying, assessing, and managing psychosocial hazards in the workplace. Key benefits of this initiative include:

- **Targeted Risk Management**: Enables the council to systematically track psychological risks such as workload stress, bullying, or isolation, and respond with tailored mitigation strategies.
- **Improved Compliance**: Supports compliance with Work Health and Safety (WHS) regulations, including recent legislative requirements for managing psychosocial risks.
- **Informed Decision-Making**: Offers data-driven insights that assist leaders in prioritising resources and interventions where they are most needed.
- **Enhanced Transparency and Accountability**: Clearly documents identified risks and actions taken, demonstrating a visible commitment to employee wellbeing.
- **Better Workforce Outcomes**: Helps reduce absenteeism, turnover, and mental health-related incidents by proactively addressing workplace stressors.
- **Supports a Culture of Safety**: Encourages open dialogue and continuous improvement around psychological health and safety, contributing to a more resilient and engaged workforce.

Culture Optimisation Group (COG): Strengthening Organisational Culture Through Connection and Collaboration

The Shire's Culture Optimisation Group (COG) initiative continues to evolve as a central driver of positive cultural change across the organisation. Formed in 2023, the cross-functional COG team was established to lead efforts in shifting the organisational culture from its current state toward a more connected, inclusive, and values-driven environment. This grassroots initiative empowers employees from diverse teams and levels to co-design activities that reflect staff feedback and align with the Shire's Vision – A lifestyle of Choice: Connecting Community, Culture, and Country.

COG1 played a foundational role in launching this program, contributing significantly to the creation of the Shire's new Vision Statement and leading initiatives such as a staff bus tour to iconic community sites. These activities deepened employees' connection to the places and people they serve and laid the groundwork for embedding cultural transformation.

COG2 built on this momentum with a project that reflected the Shire's vision in action—designing and constructing garden beds that were donated to the local community garden. This initiative not only strengthened community relationships but also reinforced the organisation's commitment to culture, sustainability, and giving back to the country.

COG3 turned its focus inward, hosting a creative and engaging employee event that invited staff to share and brainstorm ways to reconcile small, everyday workplace gripes. This light-hearted but meaningful session opened channels of communication and collaboration, helping to foster a culture of transparency, empathy, and continuous improvement.

Looking ahead, the newly formed **COG4** is energised to take the reins and continue this legacy of innovation and cultural stewardship. With each iteration, the COG initiative has grown in maturity and impact—embedding the Shire's values across teams, creating shared experiences, and enhancing the employee experience through bottom-up leadership.

The Shire remains committed to supporting this program as a key enabler of workforce engagement, retention, and alignment with its strategic vision.

Tailored Performance Reviews

The Shire continues to enhance employee understanding of how individual roles contribute to strategic objectives. Since piloting the integration of CBP actions into performance plans in 2021, this approach has become central to aligning individual development with organisational goals.

The performance framework includes values-based behavioural measures, KPI driven individual goal setting, and structured support mechanisms such as training, succession planning, and development pathways. Managed by the Organisational Development team, the framework is supported by training including role clarity, diversity and inclusion which strengthens transparency and team cohesion.

Employee feedback is used to continuously refine plans and address training needs which drives management of our Training and Development programs and identification of tertiary study under the Study Assistance Program to further invest in staff capability and growth.

Further Opportunities

Linked to Corporate Business Plan Initiatives

Separate from the delivery of core business services, activities and facilities, the Shire is currently progressing a diverse range of strategic projects. These strategic projects are crucial to the sustainable development of the future communities across the district, while maintaining the unique character that exists. They align with the strategic outcomes detailed in the 'Plan for the Future' (Strategic Community Plan and Corporate Business Plan).

Progression of these strategic projects summarised, and others not detailed, also call on the Shire's resources and funding. Achievement will require effective planning and resourcing, while ensuring the delivery of core business outcomes to the community.

Place Plan 2023 to 2027 – linked to the Integrated Growth Framework Project (IGFP).

Community consultation processes conducted throughout 2021 and 2022, as well as the Shire of Capel's completed Community Perception Survey (October 2022) highlighted that while the lifestyle that our environment provides connects us all, the people that live in the district and in each of the localities are unique, with quite different priorities, needs and future aspirations.

Additionally, each locality and area within the Shire has evolved with different origins, histories and events that has shaped their present-day character, look, and feel.

With these circumstances in mind, the Shire sought to better understand:

- What is good and valued about the place (the district overall and each within).
- The local community's common values, needs and future aspirations.
- The unique differences between the localities and community areas; and
- How the shared and unique elements can be best nurtured to recognise our potential.

Using the above information gathered, the Shire will better understand the issues, interconnections and relationships throughout our place and be able to take a place-based approach to coordinate action and investment to improve the quality of life over time for our community.

The Place Plan and associated Place Strategy Matrix will be used to expand and detail future Place Development and Management initiatives and support the Shire's future decision making, costing and programming process; clearly identifying where investment and actions can have the most impact across the district and departments, supporting a collaborative, place-based approach to planning for the Shire of Capel.

Importantly, place planning / development / making is not doing something extra to what the Shire currently does. The Place process means that we do what we do: better informed, with a greater understanding and more deliberately, designed to enhance the unique character of Capel and its unique localities.

The Shire will use this information in the future to inform future residential / commercial development, development design guidelines, community events, public open space designs and fit outs, street tree planting etc.

The Integrated Growth Framework Project, which is currently underway, is a continuation of work required in further developing the outcomes from The Place Plan project.

Local Planning Strategy

The Shire of Capel's Local Planning Strategy (LPS) provides the vision and a framework for long-term planning and development in the shire of the next 15 years. The LPS is directly based on community needs and aspirations as expressed in the Shire's Strategic Community Plan and was advertised for public comment between March 2021 and June 2021.

The LPS comprises two parts:

1. The Strategy sets out the Shire's vision and future directions for land use and developments, with details of 42 individual strategies and actions that are required to

achieve the vision over the next 15 years. The Strategic Plan depicts land use, development, environmental assets and other key issues in a visual form.

2. Local Profile includes the detailed information and maps, along with the identification of key issues which help to support high-level strategies, action and plans.

The Strategy forms the interface between regional and local planning and provides a strategic basis and rationale for the land use and development controls in Local Planning Scheme No. 8 (Scheme 8).

The LPS will be used as a guide to assist the Council and the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) in planning decision making in relation to Scheme 8 and any proposed amendments, structure plans, subdivision application and development proposals in the Shire in a sustainable manner that considers economic, environmental, and social benefits of growth and development.

Agribusiness Precinct

The Shire of Capel is preparing and implementing a plan to realise the development of an Agribusiness Precinct (precinct) within the Capel district. The precinct will act as a drawcard for investment in the South West's agricultural industry, as well as house a replacement of the existing cattle sale yards in Boyanup. The Shire has identified current and future demands and opportunities that exist in the agriculture, logistics and transport sectors in the region, with this information used to inform site selection and focus industries of the agribusiness precinct.

Hosting a new agribusiness precinct would create significant benefits to Capel. As well as new opportunities for economic diversification, job creation, value-add and export products, there is potential to attract new workforce, promote best practice, utilise circular economies and develop new industries such as waste-to-energy businesses. An agribusiness precinct has the potential to create a range of significant economic benefits for the Capel and the State including gains in productivity, competitiveness, and food security.

Key findings to date are:

1. Capel is strategically located to host an agribusiness precinct of State significance.
2. Clear demand exists for new best practice sale yards.
3. A variety of agricultural business types could anchor an agribusiness precinct in Capel.
4. The agribusiness precinct can host a wide variety of supporting businesses and facilities.
5. The agribusiness precinct can showcase leading technology and circular economy approaches.

High level master planning and order of magnitude costing on an identified and preferred site location was completed by mid-2024. Detailed planning, approvals, governance, funding prospects and design will be undertaken throughout 2025/26 with the aim of development and operation by 2032.

This strategically significant project for the Shire and the Southwest region will continue to be a focus of funding and resourcing.

Enterprise Resourcing Planning (ERP) Project

In 2021, the Shire recognised a critical need to upgrade the outdated operating system (Enterprise Resource Planning – ERP) through the Corporate Business Plan. The ERP is the base system the Shire's Administration operates on and undertakes most main-core business functions (naming and address registers, rating, property, finance, customer relationships and the like). The objective of the replacement ERP project is to modernise operations, enhancing efficiency to align with evolving business demands.

The Shire's current ERP solution (SynergySoft) originated on a base system installed in the late-1980s, and while some functionality and integration has been upgraded since, the core capability is now over 30 years old and is no longer able to meet the organisation or community's needs, let alone accommodating the future development of the Shire.

The forthcoming ERP system will facilitate flexible work arrangements by enabling remote access and mobile applications. This advancement aims to bolster work-life balance and elevate job satisfaction, thereby fostering increased employee retention.

Over the past twelve to eighteen months, the project team have mapped out scenarios and conducted comprehensive process mapping throughout the organisation. This process aimed to identify system gaps, potential efficiencies, and insights into record-keeping practices and data sharing.

Most recent developments in this project include releasing the tender to the market for solutions and pricing, scoring, and evaluating proposals, and have now selected a vendor for implementation.

Testing and implementation of the new ERP solution will place additional demands on existing staff, requiring backfilling in certain areas to maintain operational commitments.

The 2025 – 2029 Workforce Plan includes an FTE allowance to support this additional demand on staff.

Overall, the adoption of a modern ERP system is anticipated to alleviate administrative burdens, enhance user experience, and foster greater employee engagement, benefiting both the organisation and the community.

Dalyellup Multipurpose Community and Youth Centre (DMCYC)

The proposed multi-purpose community and youth centre in Dalyellup provides an opportunity for the Shire to decentralise our forward-facing services and increase touch points and engagement with the community.

The Dalyellup Multipurpose Community and Youth Centre would enhance our core service delivery and diversify our current workforce by:

- Providing a contemporary home for our Dalyellup Library Service, with a flexible learning space to offer creative community activities and programs.
- Creation of a community hub focussed on youth incorporating state-of-the-art technological and digital hub and learning centre.
- Collaborating with community youth and health providers to utilise the centre's flexible service areas.
- Serving as a community events venue.
- Providing employment opportunities through staffing for improved current and new services, start-ups and innovative creative ventures, and
- Developing an accessible heritage, culture, art, and recreation space, including a commercial catering space.

The broadening of these central services will require and offer employment opportunities for our current and projected workforce, through the need to upskill or diversify to meet the needs of the surrounding community.

Future workforce resourcing requirements are detailed in the Operational and Management Plan which is complete and was presented to the Council in May 2024. Post Council's approval of this document, saw the Request for Tender process commence in October 2024, with a contractor appointed in November 2024, taking site possession in January 2025.

The construction period will continue through 2025 to early 2026, with the aim to complete the build and open its doors to the community by May 2026.

Through 2025 and in conjunction with the construction phase, Officers will design an activation schedule, seeing the start of recruiting critical positions prior to the opening of the facility. Activating key positions early will allow for all main operations / programs / functions to be scheduled and tested prior to the doors opening, and this will be complimented by a unique marketing campaign showcasing the facility's capabilities and opportunities for the community.

Land, Housing and Accommodation Study and Plan

The Shire of Capel and the broader region are experiencing a significant and growing need for housing. This need is occurring against a backdrop of major investment underway and planned.

The existing land supply is constrained to accommodate housing, with active land supply in the Bunbury Significant Urban Area expected to decline 43% between 2021 and 2028.

The demand for housing is a flow on impact from economic growth in the region and strong population growth. There is a substantial investment pipeline of more than $3.5 billion across industries in the Southwest creating close to 10,000 new jobs and land and housing development is critical to support these major investments and facilitate bringing new or expanded workforces to the region.

While the need for new land and housing are strongly linked to the opportunities for economic growth and prosperity in the region, current markets are constrained to meet the need in the broader region.

This will increase pressure on planned urban areas that are currently constrained, such as land in Capel (North) and Boyanup East. These localities are home to existing communities and within close proximity to the Bunbury and Busselton city centres, other employment nodes and within serviceability distance to future major infrastructure projects and job growth centres.

The high cost of infrastructure and the current land prices limit the feasibility of land development despite the high demand.

Across thirteen sites in Capel (North) and Boyanup, there is identified potential for over 3,400 residential lots. The sites are, however, subject to significant constraints; particularly, power and sewer infrastructure that would need to be resolved for urban development to occur.

The Shire is seeking infrastructure deconstraining funding from both the State and Federal Governments to realise this growth potential and accommodate future communities and employment workforces.

While stand-alone project team resources are being sought within proposed funding, the successful deconstraining residential land will accelerate population growth and the need for Shire facilities, services and activities.

Shire of Capel Growth Plan - Integrated Growth Framework Project

In addition to historic country towns, high-quality urban areas and rural areas, the Shire is also a place of pristine natural environments and is internationally recognised for its high degree of endemism that is also under threat (Southwest Biodiversity Hotspot). There is an important need to accommodate future growth in a coordinated way that delivers good outcomes with sustainable development benefits. The development of a place-based plan (or precinct of places) is an important shift to ensure that opportunities are realised in a sustainable way.

Past growth in the Shire over decades has resulted in disconnected developments with varying infrastructure and assets and missed opportunities for a cohesive approach to community infrastructure, public open space, signage, dwelling types, affordable housing and sustainability. Growth to date has also been uneven across the Shire, with the high growth in Dalyellup not evident in townsites such as Boyanup and Capel, due to barriers including infrastructure servicing constraints and regional building cost constraints where economies of scale cannot be achieved.

With active land supply in the Bunbury Significant Urban Area expected to decline 43% between 2021 and 2028 (see Figure 2 and Land and Housing Study), Capel's proximity will increase pressure on planned urban areas that are currently constrained, such as land in Capel (North) and Boyanup East.

This project (the Capel Integrated Growth Framework Project) seeks to address three key objectives:

1. Identify, describe and manage the social and environmental values that make each 'place' in the Shire unique, including areas where no further growth is anticipated.
2. Develop and implement a framework for areas of identified growth and outline the actions required to realise this growth in a sustainable and cohesive way.
3. Develop a cohesive framework that considers, protects and enhances how each 'place' functions as a whole precinct, integrating land use planning and regional development.

Intended outcomes of this project are:

- The social and environmental values that make each 'place' in the Shire unique are protected, enhanced, with a high level of community ownership.
- The Shire is 'growth ready' in Dalyellup, Boyanup and Capel, with a sustainable approach that protects the natural environment and ensures sustainable future communities, while attracting and guiding investment.
- Detailed identity defined for each 'place' or settlement with facilities that meet the needs of the community, now and into the future.
- Townsite strategies that informs and enables the Shire's future planning, development and infrastructure expenditure and investments.
- Details a holistic approach to development in growth areas of the Shire, while demonstrating a planned delivery framework that increase the likelihood of securing funding and investment from external sources.
- Cohesive approach to how each 'place' works together as a whole precinct.

This project will be finalised by June 2025, following an extensive community, agency and Officer consultation process.

The Council will be briefed on the findings with a subsequent report being presented at a Council meeting in the near future.

Band 2 Council Review Project

The Shire of Capel as a local government, is subject to the Salaries and Allowances Act 1975 which requires the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal (the Tribunal) to inquire into and determine the amount of remuneration, or the minimum and maximum amounts of remuneration, to be paid or provided to Chief Executive Officers of Local Governments.

There are four bands allocated within the Tribunal's current model based on Local Government functions, roles, and scope of the organisation.

The Shire of Capel and neighbouring Local Government bandings are as follows:

Local Government	Band
Capel	3
Dardanup	3
Busselton	1
Bunbury	1
Donnybrook-Balingup	3
Harvey	2
Augusta-Margaret River	2

Bandings set the maximum remuneration a CEO can be paid, this provides a top-down parameter for how Shire employees should be remunerated, as well as an indicator of comparable local governments for the purposes of benchmarking.

The difficulty for the Shire is that it is positioned between two band one local governments, which offer a higher level of remuneration and benefits for similar roles. This will continue to provide challenges in attracting and retaining talent to the Shire, creating delays in recruitment and impacting service levels.

An opportunity exists in commencing a review of the current banding classification over the next year due to the continued growth by investigating increases in functions, roles, and scope.

Fairness and equity in pay and conditions will be the main driver for this review and will complement the current work we are doing with all teams across the organisation in role clarity and the reviewing of position descriptions.

This body of work will commence once the Shire's growth strategy forecasts a secure picture of the future housing development opportunities within the townsites of Capel and Boyanup, indicating the impact this will have on population growth in the short, medium and long term.

Performance Measures

How do we know

Staff Engagement Survey

Ongoing investment in staff engagement and recognition is essential to building a productive, resilient workforce and fostering a positive workplace culture that supports the delivery of high-quality services to the community—both now and into the future.

A satisfied and engaged workforce contributes directly to increased performance and overall organisational effectiveness. The Shire remains committed to ensuring employees have a voice and access to mechanisms for providing open, constructive feedback about their workplace experience.

Employee engagement surveys were conducted in 2019, 2022, with an abridged version conducted in April 2024. These surveys have played a critical role in capturing employee sentiment and informing initiatives that shape the Shire's cultural and leadership development priorities. Procurement is currently underway to engage a consultant to deliver the 2025 survey.

Insights from the 2022 and 2024 surveys identified key improvement areas, including communication from leadership, access to equipment and resources, and Net Promoter Scores. In response, the Shire has launched targeted initiatives such as the Cultural Optimisation Group (COG) program, implementation of the Psychological Safety Framework, and integration of the Shire's Vision and Values into strategic projects across the business.

Furthermore, efforts have been made to increase the visibility of executive leadership across all Shire locations, promoting greater connection between management and operational teams.

Findings from the upcoming 2025 survey will serve as a benchmark for evaluating the impact of these initiatives and guiding further improvements in workforce engagement and organisational culture.

Important Partners

Work with us

Shire Councillors

Staff and the Executive see the importance of forging a healthy and productive relationship with Councillors.

The Shire's vision, values and desire for a positive culture requires support from all stakeholders with the Council being at the forefront in leading this partnership.

Shire staff are committed to supporting our Council carry out their duties and recognise the valuable role our Councillors play in supporting the strategic direction of the Shire.

Forging a positive and productive relationship with Council will nurture the trust and respect that is required to support Officers and Councillors perform their duties successfully.

Officers welcome and embrace the opportunity to work closely with the Council on various projects and are always looking for new ways to collaborate where staff and Council can continue fostering a positive working relationship and team culture.

Capel Community

The Shire encourages constructive collaboration, and partnership with our Community to work successfully to achieve positive outcomes for residents.

Working collaboratively in this manner, we consistently strive for holistic big picture initiatives and solutions to support the growth and expectations of our Community.

Together we work towards a better future!

Closing Summary

We’re on the right track

Workforce planning is a continuous process of shaping the workforce to ensure that it can deliver organisational objectives now and in the future.

The Workforce Plan highlights several challenges the Shire is facing in the immediate and long term. Some of which can be addressed through conventional and contemporary HR practices as detailed in the plan.

The findings from the Organisational Best Practice Service Review Phase 1 and 2 have given the Executive a clearer understanding of what the Shire’s Growth Strategy needs to deliver over the next four years.

The reporting of an additional 43.00FTE in new positions is significant in the Shire’s history as an employer and is an honest reflection of what needs to occur to ensure the organisation performs to the standard that is expected by the community, whilst coping with a growing population base.

The work Organisational Development has undertaken in recent years to remain a competitive employer in the Local Government sector, has given us a greater understanding of the needs of the organisation and forced us to think differently about how we recruit and retain our staff.

Being a medium sized organisation on the precipice of steep growth is an exciting time for the Shire. The past two years have seen an introduction of new projects and initiatives that will drive Shire processes and practices into a modern era, ultimately improving the performance of the organisation and driving quality into service level delivery.

The Enterprise Resourcing Planning project is just one of these initiatives that will drive this improvement and was heavily referenced as a driver for change in the Organisational Best Practice Service Review report findings, seeing advancement to Shire systems and processes a key component of increased quality work output.

The information detailed in this Workforce Plan is extensive in scope and does identify challenges the Shire is currently facing, where several obstacles relate to issues which are legacy or historic in nature and have not been addressed previously in the organisation.

The Executive are confident that the desired way forward will result in sufficiently resourcing the organisation to a standard that will create an environment for employees to thrive and be successful in, with a desire to foster better service outcomes for the community.

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