

WENTWORTH SHIRE COUNCIL
ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW 2006

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1. REVIEW APPROACH

The central purpose of the Organisational Review has been seen to identify those areas in which the Council can move forward, to act on necessary improvements to be made and to establish a workplace in which pride, dedication and enthusiasm are key elements.

In the circumstances of a former Director and former General Manager choosing to leave the organisation either prior to or during the process of the Review, no point is to be served on concentrating on any negativities which may have been evident or reported during the Review process. Certainly the input provided could have been interpreted as giving reason to be critical of many elements of administration as a reinforcement of a corporate view that Wentworth Shire Council can do many things better than it has done in the past.

To that extent, it has been determined that there would be no real value in highlighting individual perceptions or observations that may have been directed at systems, procedures, activities or personnel at all levels of the organisation.

The opportunity is now available for the team comprising elected members, management and staff of Council to work hard at forming a partnership which is best expressed in the standards of services provided to the Shire community and which reflects the efficiencies that stakeholders are entitled to expect.

In recognising the comprehensive inputs received to the Review, it is not professional to target senior officers who may have been considered to be associated with failings or limitations within Council operations in recent years. Apart from the immunity to which senior departed staff are entitled, it is more significant that a fresh assessment by new management be the key priority.

It is, however, relevant to comment on the appropriateness, practicalities or even limitations of the formal Brief for the Organisational Review and for that purpose, an initial commentary on the Brief is offered hereunder subsequent to the Review.

2. THE BRIEF IN RETROSPECT

1. **Optimise the Alignment of Staff** – the Review was intended to “**optimise the alignment of staff** with their strategic priorities and investigate opportunities for succession planning and alternative methods of delivery down to professional level”.

Comment:

*In the absence of a meaningful or realistic Strategic Plan, the “**strategic priorities**” of staff were unable to be identified by interview, a factor reinforced through the limited emphasis on planning generally.*

*The ability to “**investigate opportunities for succession planning**” would normally be incorporated in a Human Resources Plan and again, the type of base planning and maintenance of human resources across the Council was not seen to allow assessment of this feature of an HR function.*

*Any examination of “**alternative methods of delivery**” was seen to have been applied spasmodically in Infrastructure and Assets without formal policy assessment and until the setting of measurement of work standards are operative, the proposition of outsourcing services is one that invites deferral in the short term pending the views of new management.*

In the Brief, it was indicated the structure needed to have “**the flexibility to outsource or recruit skilled staff**”, particularly in the engineering field, and address the Council’s concerns about their ability to attract, recruit and retain qualified staff across the organisation.

Comment:

The flexibility to “recruit skilled staff, particularly in the engineering field”, and to “attract, recruit and retain qualified staff across the organisation” is not unique to Wentworth Shire Council and is an issue that confronts many rural local authorities in particular. Circumstances, individual career pursuits and genuine personal reasons have been associated with recent decisions of management and staff to seek other opportunities, but it will always be a factor that good staff will consider Wentworth Shire Council as only one of the professional options available.

In that respect, external aspirants to any position at Wentworth Shire will continue to make their own judgement about the record and performance of the Council and to compare that with other employment opportunities. Any organisational structure should be inclusive of flexibility to attract good people in any area of its operations provided that systems, procedures and culture are seen to be appropriate.

It was indicated that there was a strong need for a strategic basis for allocating resources across the greater area of Gol Gol and Buronga and the more established parts of the Shire. This was to include descriptions of functions, responsibilities and key outcomes, position descriptions for senior and middle management positions in the new structure and indicative salary packaging parameters.

Comment:

“A strategic basis for allocating resources across the greater area of Gol Gol and Buronga” was addressed at a strategic planning workshop without conversion to a Strategic Plan giving force to the ideas and concepts by

actions linked to available resources. It is this plan that should link to other plans to “include descriptions of functions, responsibilities, key outcomes and position descriptions”. These can only be achieved through a combination of a formal human resources function and Workforce Plan linked in part to a genuine style of Strategic Plan.

Without the additional formal input of Council, a management directed consultation process and additional working of the workshop inputs, an effective assessment of this part of the Brief has not been possible and did not fall within Review obligations.

2. **Communication Consultation** – the Brief also made reference to a communication consultation plan for the change process as well as an implementation plan including timeframe and a change effort required. The approach nominated including meeting with Councillors, each Director, as well as the Project Sub-Committee. In connection with the interviewing and information gathering phase of the project, it was envisaged that this would involve the identification and review of the following:

- **The key tasks and functions undertaken by Wentworth Shire Council, focusing on the managerial and professional areas (Development and Environment, Infrastructure and Assets, and Corporate Services)**
- **The role of information systems in supporting business processes**
- **Opportunities for continuous improvement**
- **Efficiency and effectiveness of current service delivery compared to similar size Councils**
- **Management of assets and facilities**
- **The current culture**

Comment:

While “**consultation processes**” for the Review were undertaken at an appropriate level, any change process coming out of the Review should initially be charged to the General Manager. It is always an option that external assistance be invited into that process but the central effort in any consultation phase of change is quite outside the parameters of the Review since the status of operations corporately invites attention to basic activities.

While “**information systems**” within Council have given the impression of being corporately acceptable, the process of driving and articulating agreed corporate needs must remain a matter for senior management, since there is no point in promoting the theory of any benefits. There must be a climate where all users, separate user groups, specialists and management can liaise effectively to determine the timing of all initiatives designed to support or simplify change processes.

The nature of “**continuous improvement**” within Council is a challenge for theories to be converted to practice and there is a strong commendation for the Australian Business Excellence framework which has won wide appeal in local government authorities throughout Victoria. In particular, the work of Campaspe Shire Council in pursuing a continuous improvement model through business excellence can be cited as an example for Council to follow.

Apart from statistical evidence available through comparative indicators collated by the Department of Local Government, the range of performance indicators and measurement tools necessary to determine current “**efficiencies**” has not been available as part of the Review. The deployment of industry models for measuring efficiency is not common to local

government and it is commended that a newly formed management hierarchy give concentration to accessing a selection of Councils to determine if meaningful comparisons are available.

Certain properties and criteria that attach to Wentworth Shire Council cannot be easily be equated with other local authorities and it is an initial requirement that Council attempt to measure the appropriateness of its own services prior to any formal comparison with others.

At the present time, no worthwhile basis has been identified internally for measuring “**the effectiveness of services**” provided and a fair appraisal initially can be the basis for comparison. For this purpose, an exchange of information with a select number of Councils is seen as a more realistic starting point.

Any analysis of Council’s approach to “**managing assets**” has been severely hampered by the absence of any formal asset management strategy and while this deficiency has begun to be addressed, the lack of internal programs or detail has not been appropriate for any external basis of assessment. On the surface, it would seem that the “**facilities managed**” and provided by Council satisfy broad expectations of operational principles, but an insufficiency of information has been a limiting factor in assessing effectiveness.

“**Organisational culture**” is a quality that derives from a number of corporate practices or assertions and it is improper to attribute any negative feedback to any individual or group dynamics that may be in place.

Certainly corporate culture has a dependency on a total awareness among management and staff of how functions and responsibilities interrelate and

evidence would suggest that the silo mentality that has prevailed has not allowed a strong and positive culture to be created.

Organisational culture can be defined as the shared values, norms and expectations that govern the way that people approach their work and interact with each other.

With any change or improvement program that is introduced, there could well be a small level of non-acceptance, a similar level of ready acceptance and a majority of staff who may prefer to “sit on the fence” and observe the effect of any change.

Any development of organisational culture will be a factor of internal communication, an acknowledgement of group and individual roles and the creation of a corporate partnership to which every member of staff contributes. It will be a key responsibility of management to direct any change program in a manner where benefits can be noted and endorsed across the organisation.

In short, the culture can improve markedly from a level seen commonly as poor to one identified by management as desirable following this Review.

3. Organisational Options – the third step of the brief was set down as being the design, development and testing of organisational options to incorporate such elements as:

- **Appropriate process ownership**
- **Insourcing or outsourcing of activities**
- **Capability gaps or needs, e.g. knowledge management capability**

- **Commercial imperatives**
- **Business unit budgets or costs**
- **The desired risk profile**
- **Best practice, continuous improvement and training**

Comment:

“Ownership of any change processes” organised in the discretion of the General Manager, the management team and/or Council will only be achieved over a period and no design mechanisms nominated will be as important as the communication and cultural developments that occur during implementation.

Implementation of any change processes from the Review will need to have regard for reasons that some people within the Council may not accept change. Some of those reasons are inertia, bad experiences, change overload, non-involvement or perceived negative consequences.

*It is frankly not prudent as part of the Review to “**design, develop and test**” any model related to the “**insourcing or outsourcing of activities**”.*

Certainly for a period, the existing staff at Wentworth Shire Council need the opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities in providing the bulk of services currently available. The option of outsourcing activities that may be part of the Infrastructure & Assets program is a matter that should be examined by a new Director in the first instance, discussed by the Management Executive and debate by Council.

*The theoretical reference to “**capability gaps or needs**” is again, in terms of senior positions to be filled, a matter best addressed by the management*

team as a corporate initiative, although appropriate reference is made within this document to some gaps in the organisation that were expressed by interview.

*It is not considered that “**commercial imperatives**” are a priority for assessment and the prospect of any such influences can be examined as needs arise.*

*It would appear that “**business unit budgets or costs**” were not applied or necessarily understood within the technical areas where they would have most relevance and it is the management team itself that should be looking to introduce any desirable variations in budget management. All management and staff need to comply with corporate guidelines that should be created, monitored and applied with accountability.*

*It follows that “**desired risk profile**” should not be externally imposed self-determined by management. As a requirement in terms of any actions, reforms or changes initiated and the further development of Council’s risk management program.*

*An earlier section of the Brief made reference to “**continuous improvement**” and the limitations of the Review do not invite an example of best practice in local government at this stage pending attention to the style of basic change programs to be developed. A Best Practice Toolkit is readily available by subscribing to the product being developed by the NSW Division of Local Government Managers Australia.*

*Since adequate funds for “**training**” are said to exist, it is an internal obligation that a complete training program should be established,*

communicated and applied by management. The addition of a Human Resources Manager to the organisation will be able to work closely with management in the implementation of any program.

It is management that should consider all options and determine all organisational training needs and allocate funding from the limited resources available and priorities need to be assessed by the management team.

4. The Appropriate Organisation – the fourth phase of the Review is described as “the evaluation and refinement of the most appropriate organisation”, to include:

- **Impact on processes and resource arrangements**
- **Key skill sets required to support the new structure**
- **Risks associated with various options**
- **Change management components necessary**
- **Areas of improvement**
- **Impact on information systems**
- **Identification of next steps to action the recommendations**

Comment:

*The initial “**impact on processes and resource arrangements**” will be significant for the organisation. With few, if any, exceptions, the nature of impacts could be expected to be positive and there would be an expectation that staff would be looking to respond and contribute to the implementation of those processes. The most significant effect on resources will be through*

the appointment of a Human Resources Manager and the resulting capacity to coordinate many HR functions not currently managed through a central resource.

Reference to “key skill sets required to support the new structure” will require patience on the part of both management and staff, a planned communication program and a commonsense awareness that should always be associated with any change program.

As to “risks associated with various options” the Review only sets down specific actions, processes and resources rather than options for further consideration. As such, a planned implementation program should not be seen to be accompanied by any “risks” if the style, manner and communication of the change is implemented with the proper skills required.

- 5. Organisational Structure** – the brief further provided that the final organisational structure for Wentworth Shire Council should be documented in a report format and formalised with recommendations for the implementation phase. Financial impacts of the recommendations were also to be documented.

Comments:

The current organisational structure has been reproduced in the report with an indication of those positions currently vacant and proposed new positions. Effectively it has been decided that there should be no change to the current departmental structure, that being:

- *Infrastructure and Assets*
- *Development and Environment*
- *Corporate Services*

*In terms of implementation, action to recruit each of the positions has a degree of urgency with emphasis on the position of Human Resources Manager. The Brief did require an assessment of financial impacts of the recommendations associated with structure and allowing for factors of no replacement for certain positions over a period, anticipated productivity gains, additional grant income and general efficiencies, **financial impacts of the changes are considered to be negligible in terms of organisational benefit.***

6. Key deliverables – key deliverables for the Organisational Review were defined as being:

- **Provide structural options to test for appropriateness, sustainability and alignment with strategic objectives identified during the investigation phase**
- **Benchmarking of existing staffing and resource allocation against similar size Councils to determine efficiency and effectiveness of the current resource allocation and service delivery**
- **Listing of operational improvements to increase efficiencies and effectiveness that have been identified as part of the Review for ongoing process, system and people development**
- **The full development of a preferred “best fit” option to the manager level**

Comment:

*There has certainly been a question of providing “**structural options**” for the Review and the Council is not really in a position to consider the choices. The theoretical assertions of testing those options “**for appropriateness, sustainability and alignment with strategic objectives**” has little relevance to the practical initiatives and actions which now need to flow beginning at the very basic concepts of team, culture, communication and consultation.*

*The “**benchmarking of existing staffing and resource allocation against similar sized Councils**” has been found to be a non-productive exercise in that there are subjective elements and very different criteria attaching to local government units. Perhaps the more difficult issue is that of “**determining efficiency and effectiveness**”. From the messages, it will probably be understood that Wentworth Shire Council needs to concern itself with more of the basic issues before attempting to align its performance to other authorities.*

*The “**efficiencies and effectiveness that have been identified as part of the Review**” have been few given the absence of formal indicators to measure performance. Actual improvements in systems or procedures will be of minimal benefit without the major advances required in culture, teamwork, communication and consultation.*

Just as a “best fit” version of the Review has been presented to replace an earlier product, a complete reappraisal of resources, services and systems should be the expectation of a new General Manager and that view has generally formed the basis of the content of this Report.

3. METHODOLOGY

So as to maximise the input of Councillors, management and staff of Council, the opportunity was available for every elected representative or employee of Council to give input to the review process. In particular, internal staff members gave an excellent response to the invitation to speak about the organisation in a frank and honest manner. That approach was designed to have management and staff feeling comfortable about the project in the knowledge that comments and observations would not be attributed to any individual in the report, but would assist in drawing together a full analysis of organisational opinion.

[Note: For reasons explained earlier, inputs implicating any failures or shortcomings on the part of senior management do not form part of this report. The sole objective is to identify future action or strategy that will benefit Council and any comment seen as criticism is directed at the corporate body and not any individual.]

Where necessary, inputs were verified by follow-up discussion to establish to the extent possible the accuracy of observations and comment offered in the process. The inputs have been converted to form a picture to be acted upon over a period. In due course, the range of all services provided to stakeholders should represent best value to the Wentworth Shire community and to the staff charged with the planning and delivery of those services.

Given the nature of initial interviews, it became very clear early in the Review that some of the aims and objectives to be delivered as outputs were frankly beyond the Council's capacity at this stage. The content of the Brief suggested that the organisation was at an advanced point in

managerial and strategic terms, when the real position was revealed to be in contrast. That observation has been detailed in the comments offered about the Brief in the previous section of the Report.

In the circumstances and consistent with the Brief, discussions with external staff were limited to supervisory levels, given that the likelihood of having discussions with staff working at remote parts of the Shire was not really practical.

An emphasis was required to be given to internal staff and the pending appointment of a new Director of Infrastructure and Assets presents the opportunity for that person to place a personal style on managing those functions for which the major part of Council's financial resources are allocated. Further, a new General Manager can be expected to influence any variations in the conduct of all operations.

While some of the practices and procedures or lack of facts or omissions in management practice were identified in the Review, it was difficult on occasions to regard perceptions as reality. A balance has endeavoured to be achieved with the input of staff to the Review being both critical and constructive. The emphasis was, however, on those aspects seen to be lacking or not effective in the organisation.

Quite obviously, any negative assessments perceived by Council staff must relate to management as should be the expectation associated with any fair appraisal of a work environment. However, these should be seen as defining an approach for the future rather than highlighting negative practices from the past.

4. OVERVIEW

The most common assessment revealed through interviews is that there is an unsatisfactory focus and direction for the organisation, resulting in staff being unaware of how they fit into the organisation with little knowledge of the functions of others. The existing structure virtually operates as three distinct silos with no central coordination.

The absence of a formal program of meetings for management, groups and teams has been a key factor in information, advice and learning processes not being available to staff and there is no evidence of forward planning or long-term initiatives that would act as a corporate motivator and overall guide to activity. These observations aside, it is clear that Council staff, for the most part, are dedicated to their individual tasks with an enthusiasm that can form the basis for corporate reforms and change actions to work to advantage.

The complexities and obligations attaching to local government have developed considerably in recent years with emphasis on issues of policy, transparency, decision-making and accountability. There are notable weaknesses in the capacity of the Council to deal with these requirements. Internal communication systems are not adequate, there is inconsistency in procedures and the **human resources function** to administer elements applying to all staff is non-existent.

Controls and education in regard to budgeting, information technology and risk management have not been set and enforced, while the important area of Asset Management has not been addressed at all. With few exceptions, the frequently stated claim of insufficient resources cannot win total support without a clear understanding of the worth of individual functions to the organisations, the

productivity associated with those functions and the fact that some staff may not be performing responsibilities that best suit themselves and the organisation.

The prospect of an implementation strategy needs to be based on the acceptance and recognition of the fact that many of the desirable outputs from the Review cannot succeed unless some very basic qualities such as culture, motivation, communication, consultation and strategy are addressed as a priority.

In New South Wales, the Local Government Act 1993 and associated legislation provided the basis for Councils to administer an assigned local government area through effective authority, purpose and strategy. The initial responsibility is that a basis for effective teamwork across the organisation be set and that the climate for teamwork exists. The organisation needs to act in accordance with best practice principles and to apply a continuous improvement philosophy to all activities.

The level of teamwork across Wentworth Shire Council is seen to have had the effect of limiting organisational effectiveness. An inability of staff at Council to know and understand their common purpose has prevented groups in the existing structure from developing into teams in which each member should play a role using his or her talents to the best of their ability.

It has been a common expression of staff through their own functions, experience or observations that the following needs or circumstances exist:

- **Staff not working together**
- **A need for better communication between staff**
- **More corporate direction to staff**

- **Little or no programming and communication about training or professional development budgets**
- **No knowledge or participation in long term program development**
- **No formal awareness of strategic planning initiatives**
- **No accountability measures developed**
- **Lack of consultation or advice about decisions**
- **No policy creation program**
- **No management, group or team meetings**
- **Some delegation without authority or accountability**

The above perceptions suggest that management may not have applied the style necessary for giving vigour and direction to Council staff and to the best utilisation of available human, physical and financial resources. There is no question that a conscious effort to bring about a personal change ethic from current perceptions would yield substantial improvement in team outputs and productivity with the result that team performance would be measured as providing a much stronger corporate benefit to the organisation and to the community it serves.

Out of this Review, it is essential that the General Manager set down a personal program designed to create a climate for motivation, to involve the team itself in setting goals and standards and to encourage a work ethos that helps to identify the Council as being comparable with the best performing Councils of similar size across Australia. The type of input invited for this Review could be repeated in relation to setting team goals, policy review, budget setting and monitoring and innovation in service delivery.

A likely effect of management committing effort to the reforms required could be guaranteed to have the following results for the organisation working as a corporate team with strong leadership:

- **Employees would commit to support each other to make the organisation more successful**
- **Team members would understand each other's priorities and assist when difficulties arise**
- **Communication would be open and the expression of new ideas, improved work methods, articulation of problems and concerns would be encouraged**
- **Problem solving would be more effective through the better use of team expertise**
- **Performance feedback would be more meaningful since team members would understand what is expected and could monitor their own performance against the General Manager's expectations**
- **Balance would be maintained between the productivity and teams and the satisfaction of the personal needs of team members**
- **The team would be recognised for outstanding results as well as individuals for their personal contributions**
- **The encouragement of team members would become infectious and stimulate individuals to become stronger performers**
- **Team members would recognise the importance of discipline in work habits and convert their behaviour to meet team standards**

For the most part, the organisation does present itself as a workplace for people who genuinely enjoy their individual roles despite the elements of disorganisation identified by staff themselves. An overall assessment of the culture in place could be seen as a comfort zone for some and disorganised chaos for others. More than one comment was offered regarding the need for a professional team-building exercise and forums in which there can be shared learning experiences of what responsibilities others in the organisations have.

One of the more common observations that staff can make of others is the **“that’s not our job”** statement which is very much a factor of silo mentality. In general terms, there is no willingness to be of help to others outside one’s domain and the tug-of-war approach reported does nothing for the productivity of the organisation.

Many actions are necessary before a strong spirit can be created and maintained across the organisation and the satisfaction of shared decision making is not really a property that exists.

There are a variety of events, exchanges, social occasions, multi-discipline task forces and other corporate initiatives which can contribute to culture in the workplace and the instigation should generally derive from management.

5. HUMAN RESOURCES

Inconsistent policy and systems applying to the administration and management of staff policies is reflected in the fact that no individual is charged with corporate responsibility for coordinating the complex administration of obligations affecting staff. The outcome of this deficiency is that different policy attaches to various staff resulting in levels of dissatisfaction across the organisation.

For example, the beginning of an employee's working life with Wentworth Shire Council is an important time for Council and the employee in promoting the rules, guidelines and policies of the organisation. It is also an opportunity to promote successes, explain conventions and define the best operating features of Council. It has been disappointing to learn that the Council does not have a proper induction process for new employees, the initial training processes being the responsibility of each of the departments with no attention to the corporate aspects of employment.

The silo mentality has gained strength from this lack of formal process and can only serve to promote doubt and uncertainty in the mind of a new employee.

While it is difficult to measure the loss of productivity in dollar terms through the absence of a central human resources function, the need for a Human Resources Manager is one of the strongest findings out of the Review and the opportunity is taken to demonstrate that fact through the following observations:

- **There is no clear policy in regard to training programs for staff**
- **The performance appraisal system is seen as unclear and inappropriate**
- **Performance reviews are not conducted with any regular frequency**

- **Some staff are uncertain as to the actual content of their job**
- **Employees have commenced work without a fixed rate of pay**
- **Pay rates are not regulated**
- **There is no central monitoring of Position Descriptions**
- **Qualifications of employees are not checked**
- **Some employees are not aware of their Position Description**
- **Induction processes are not formalised**

The above examples are indicative of the difficulty that exists in the management of employees and unless checked and reviewed signals a potential breakdown within the organisation. The starting point for any successful local government authority is the policy related to the employment, monitoring, reward, performance management and training of staff so that performance can be maximised for the benefit of the individual and the Council.

A failure to centrally manage the employment function and all its complexities has incurred a cost for Council, one that is not easily measured given the involvement of so many people in aspects that should be controlled from one point. Some people have written their own position descriptions and together with those written by management, it has been difficult to achieve consistency. Some parts of the organisation have received no responses to basic requests dealing with human resources. People have been declared to go back to work on light duties only to be informed that there are no light duties available.

There is no formal approach to the selection of staff and numerous examples have been offered of apparent anomalies in pay rates which need to be assessed and endorsed or varied through expert advice. The suggestion that incentive

schemes should be introduced for staff has merit as does initiatives in recognising staff by simple acknowledgement or reward systems.

It may in fact be appropriate that certain staff have not had a pay review in four years, but at least some form of communication and awareness of any system is a basic requirement. This most basic of functions in running an organisation has not been addressed as a policy priority.

Without a human resources function, there is no opportunity within Council to address the important areas of succession planning, mentoring and coaching, and any opportunity for career development really occurs on an accidental basis.

For Wentworth Shire Council, many of the shortcomings identified in the Review will be rectified automatically through the appointment of a Human Resources Manager as a matter of priority.

The work that has been done within Council in regard to OH&S and Risk Management has been useful and well regarded by staff, but has not been yet developed to the level required. Much work remains to be achieved and the systems are still being developed. The obligations for Council are extensive in these areas and form yet another part of a coordinated HR function for Council. It needs to be a priority of the HR Manager and General Manager to assess the quality of corporate safety and risk functions over a six month period. The existing OH&S and Risk function should report to and be monitored by the Human Resources Manager for such a period as may be determined.

One of the areas to attract persistent criticism from staff was both the formal and informal processes for giving feedback to staff about their performance. Different criticism was reserved for the style of documentation employed in appraising performance and the irregular timing of performance reviews. To

many, the system of performance appraisal lacks clarity and in some instances feedback has not been given for appraisals undertaken in early 2005.

There should be no actual separation between a performance rating and a skills rating which has given difficulty in interpretation to both supervisor and staff and there are claims that some performance appraisals have not been conducted for up to three years. Without an HR function, it can be understood that this priority has not received the attention that is required.

Associated with the new position, the Review of existing documentation timetabled for the implementation of a new performance management system is but one of the issues to be addressed.

6. FINANCE AND BUDGETING

There are very few protocols in place in the organisation regarding procedures for the setting and monitoring of expenditure leading to a lack of accountability and indiscreet actions and policies related to the management of Council's financial resources. Further, the observation of the Director of Corporate Services is that there have been examples of money being wasted, purchasing policies not being observed and processes ignored.

These claims are typical of the issues and non-observance of policies that need to be checked and monitored by the senior management team provided that a formal and regular meeting structure exists for that purpose. **It is not possible to drive reform and improvement processes unless management itself sets an example through which corporate obligations and requirements are passed down through the organisation.**

There does not appear to be in place any instruction regarding policy that should apply in respect of budget variations or at least advice as to procedures which should be followed. It should be the case that when expenditure that has not been budgeted for is planned to be incurred, the responsible officer should contact Finance to advise of the possible need for a budget variation. This requirement should also apply for any grants or funding from external sources that has not been taken into account previously.

Standard documentation could be provided requiring the responsible officer seeking any variation to complete details indicating the account for which a variation may be sought, the amount and the reason. At the present time, officers responsible for expenditure, currently not accountable to the extent necessary, should also have more input into quarterly variations since their

regular monitoring should give an indication of how much an item is to be overspent or underspent.

Any budget variations must be put to Council before the end of the financial year and not after 30th June as was the position at a Council meeting this year. With the knowledge that the cost of an item may come under budget, it is feasible for unspent monies to be transferred to another account that may be running over budget or more than is indicated in the year to date analysis.

There would appear to have been more than one occasion when any project or works going to tender have not involved communication with Finance or indeed adherence to proper procedures set down in the purchasing policy. That policy does not appear to have been communicated adequately throughout the organisation and needs managerial and Council endorsement.

It would seem that there may have been a lack of respect for those corporate protocols that do exist, a failure to communicate with Finance and generally poor organisation of the department spending the vast majority of Council's budget.

While this Review can in no way cast imputations on standards of management connected with the previous incumbent, it is entirely reasonable to set down the fact that a number of staff were not satisfied with the direction, the organisation or their own individual roles within Departments, inclusive of budgeting protocols or the communication of policy.

Again, the tendency to have minimal interaction with others, particularly in regard to finance matters, has not acted in the best interests of Council and there

would appear to have been insufficient education processes in regard to budgeting and associated financial aspects of Council's operations.

It is not really acceptable in an environment where local government needs to secure as much funding as it can, that there has been no monitoring of applications for grants, with many of these in fact filed away without any attention all.

There were indications provided of the working of excessive overtime, the non-advertising of contracts awarded or other apparent irregularities. It is sufficient to emphasise that there is little or no corporate policy in relation to budget formulation, monitoring and reporting and an unsatisfactory level of consultation with individual managers as reported during the Review.

In more than one instance, individual managers indicate having been instructed to cut budget allocations without consultation, meeting processes or policy direction. Formal procedures will need to be developed, practiced and understood as a matter of priority for the balance of the 2006/2007 year and beyond.

7. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

The Manager of Information Technology for Council is a key individual for lifting productivity and enabling users to take full advantage of the Practical system now in place. The Manager has to be an agent, an educator, a facilitator of improvements and must give advice to the users at every opportunity. The Information Technology Plan completed in late 2005 requires updating and an introductory program should be a matter for inclusion in any induction programs which are determined.

As is normal in any organisation, the Council has not been immune from the frustrations which do develop in adapting to changing technology and while on the one hand there needs to be a preparedness to consult with users, it is the responsibility of users to be patient in terms of any priority programming that is put in place. In this regard, there needs to be both verbal and written communication to all users about the status of IT programs and initiatives that are being undertaken for the organisation. A copy of the Strategic Plan for IT needs to be an essential tool for all employees required to have use of technology.

In general terms, there is a high degree of satisfaction about the Practical system and it is a corporate obligation of all employees, especially the Manager, to ensure that technology is a productive tool for Council. It is the role of management to ensure that the organisation continues to be informed about programs of installation and timetables for change and improvement need to be promulgated at regular intervals.

Council has a fully electronic records system called TRIM and this has valuable potential for all staff, provided that the education program is accepted and

delivered to staff. In spite of electronic systems, there will always be a high volume of hard copy information through single purpose records associated with subjects, properties and plans.

As highlighted during the Review, one area in particular in the main office area is a discredit to the organisation and needs to be organised as a matter of urgency with additional filing cabinets or alternative systems as required. In the Council of the future, it will be no longer desirable that work areas give the appearance of personal disorganisation, whether that be factual or not.

Old information files are gradually being culled, but some corporate education about dealing with files within timeframes would be appropriate. So as to undertake some necessary cleaning up of legal documents, to allow continuing education processes and to pursue other initiatives such as the creation of a corporate library, it would be of value for casual assistance on one day each week to be available.

The issue of information transfer is a legitimate problem for many in the organisation and generally reforms need to consider this question in conjunction with communication initiatives. While the paperless office is a goal to which many organisations have aspired in public management, it will not really ever be achieved. The maximised use of technology, personal organisation and general tidiness are preferred tools of choice in office management.

A successful local government authority requires both formal and informal information trails that are frequent, simple and understood. One of the failures of poor internal communication can be the already established fact that there may be no clear information about a job, specific information about a project or

event may be hazy or inadequate and communication channels do not work to corporate advantage.

The views of staff at the Council range from there being no communication at all to some if only poor communication. There is common agreement that there is no communication between departments and a common assessment that **“no one knows what’s going on”**. With Council being one organisation, breakdowns in communication act against productivity when simple processes could demonstrate the value of staff working together.

At the base level, earlier reference to there being no pattern of departmental, branch or team staff meetings has acted to discourage communication processes. Staff do have a need to know about the outcomes of matters before Council, policies that may be under discussion by management, corporate ideas being pursued within Departments or even the good things being done by other local authorities. The mechanism of an internal newsletter could be a good tool, but the style of communication is really something that should flow through management initiative.

8. MANAGEMENT AND TRAINING

It can be easy for any deemed failures in the organisation to be attributed to management, although as shown in the Review, many of the basic deficiencies within Council can be targeted as a corporate responsibility with all staff having a part to play.

Some managers in the organisation do feel isolated in terms of consultation, decision-making, policy setting and the ad hoc culture that has developed. Praise for the management hierarchy is not common and staff have been disappointed that policy issues have not been driven at management level. As a result staff feel that their abilities are often not used to best advantage.

The perception that corporate decision making is not planned or coordinated has been reflected in staff having an awareness that they have not been working in a corporate organisation. There is a belief the Council does not have a good image externally and the absence of a planned approach has led to there being no accountability across the organisation.

The management skills of supervisors need improvement with an expressed willingness that they be in a position to learn more about management. It is said that there has been no urgency to get jobs done, no entrepreneurial spirit, little or no policy creation and delegations have been practised without appropriate authority, leading to a casual approach to the key area of time management.

Flowing from the fact that there is no Human Resources function within the Council is the virtual non-attention to formal professional development, internal education processes and encouragement of staff to develop their skills. In particular, supervisory staff would welcome the opportunity for more training

and there is a valid perception that management has not encouraged any training in a formal matter despite funds being allocated.

The absence of a training program includes the elected Council where new Councillors have been offered no formal training or documentation that would assist them in their role. In tackling a reform and improvement program, the creation of a training policy in conjunction with a new HR function should become a key function of management.

9. SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES

Input to the Review indicated evidence of poor internal systems, duplication of effort and a complete absence of standard operating procedures. Processes have not been place for such functions as road opening permits, there have been no documented procedures for engineering input into development applications and there is no general awareness of how some functions relate to others. It has been uncommon for any thought to be given as to how the work of one section can be organised so as to help the responsibilities of another section.

As a simple example, it would be of assistance to the Store to know what works are in progress by receiving work schedules and more education to staff about the use of job numbers would assist operations. There are occasions when projects to be done are advised to supervisors with no plans, no job number and an unsatisfactory style of plan. Quite often, plans do not have enough information, have not been researched sufficiently and it is reported that job numbers can be incorrect.

The general absence of meetings within departments has not allowed the systems or lack of systems to be formally addressed. There have been instances where tendering processes have not been followed or where simple requirements of one department have not been observed by another.

A system for the key local government function of managing assets has not been developed and there is inconsistency throughout the organisation in the application of procedures and policy, if in fact any policy exists for a matter being considered.

The key outcome of coordinating the extensive range of services provided by Council is that they be planned and delivered to the community in a responsive manner, be that through direct or indirect contact. There is available evidence of replies not issuing for correspondence and it was reported that people applying for jobs have on occasions not even received letters of acknowledgement or advice as to the final outcome.

There needs to be maximum effort internally to recognise the importance of dealing with customers in other sections of the Council and more than one input to the Review suggests that there is not a customer service ethic in the organisation. Again, the significance of customer service should emanate as policy from the management level and ideally, a permanent placement at the front counter area could involve extensive training on all of the services provided by Council, together with technical advice to a certain level.

Where there has been an appropriate level of resources, effective delegation has not always been achieved in the organisation either through a misunderstanding of accountabilities attaching to the recipient or a failure to follow up required actions. There are a number of rules which should be set down to ensure that delegations act effectively. These include:

- **Only delegate if you are prepared to take some risks which can be minimised through effective monitoring;**
- **Only delegate when you are prepared to put in sufficient time and effort to make delegation work successfully;**
- **Delegate in those areas where you are conducting activities which do not use your greatest competencies and capabilities;**
- **Delegate only when you have confidence in your direct reports to assume delegated responsibilities and accomplish required activities;**

- **Provide sufficient authority to the direct reports to whom you are delegating and define the parameters of this authority;**
- **Establish priorities and deadlines for completion of tasks and for progress reports;**
- **Relinquish sufficient control for your direct reports to have ownership of the delegation with freedom to act.**

10. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

In terms of dealing with development, the planning function within Council is seen to be functional, although it is of concern that the Council do not adhere to principles included in its own LEP. The Department does have an awareness about the Council being one organisation and the need to establish the formal interaction for engineering aspects of planning is seen as a continuing weakness. Departmental staff report strongly about lack of communication, no awareness of what is happening corporately and the lack of formal direction which has a natural effect on the quality of planning. Council's own strategic planner was not involved in either the strategic planning workshop or the document that evolved from that process.

The organisation of planning, its execution and the compatibility of all planning documents is probably the one area of Council that will define corporate effectiveness and imprint future strategies directed towards the benefit of the Wentworth Shire community. At the present time, the document identified as a Strategic Plan has no resemblance to a document that should detail select strategies for the Shire and it is not really compatible with the Management Plan, Social Plan or Environmental Strategies that have been developed.

The documentation collated at the Planning Workshop does represent valuable input, but cannot be seen as worthwhile long-term planning documents without supporting strategies, timed actions, performance indicators and predictions as to the style and timing of all relevant factors.

It cannot be reconciled that Council's Strategic Planner has not been involved with further development of the workshop outputs or in any initiatives that might normally be associated with strategic planning. The prospects for a focused Strategic Plan take appropriate form when all of the disciplines are able

to work together towards common goals with a strong corporate appreciate of all current and likely agendas.

There is value in incorporating in the Review some of the base material recast as Council's Strategic Plan so that the next stage of the process can invite a more meaningful level of input on a wider base and a formal path for developing a futures document.

PLANNING WORKSHOP OUTPUTS

“1. OUR COMMUNITY VISION

- We aim for a caring Community with a friendly safe country lifestyle with opportunities for growth and development.

2. COUNCIL MISSION

- To represent and assist the community and stakeholders of the Wentworth Shire in meeting their needs at an affordable cost.

3. KEY AREAS OF IMPORTANCE

- Growth and Development
- Natural Assets
- Heritage
- Community Development
- Services and Facilities
- Business Development

4. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS FOR COUNCIL AND THE SHIRE

1. Provide the community with vision and leadership
2. Provide good governance – law abiding, ethical, fair, honest, and open governance
3. Promote sustainable economic outcomes and growth
4. Foster and deliver growth and development – building employment opportunities
5. Foster services across the age spectrum, eliminate the gaps and don't duplicate
6. Deliver core local government in an efficient and cost effective manner
7. Promote core values to the community
8. Achieve a balance between being proactive and reactive
9. Balance expectations to meet reasonable community expectations
10. Promote a functional, satisfied community which chooses to live in the municipality
11. Provide effective communication and consultation with community/residents and ratepayers
12. Develop a community that is involved, feels safe and cared for.

5. BACKGROUND PREDICTIONS FOR THE MUNICIPALITY

- Increasing population; could double current levels
- Increasing settlement, particularly in the Buronga/Gol Gol area
- Ageing population; with increasing retirees
- A stronger desire to protect our lifestyle benefits; safe, friendly, tranquil country life
- Continuing growth and diversity of business;

- Larger businesses
- Continuing cyclic outcomes for horticulture and agriculture
- Rationalisation of primary industry
- More diverse crops
- New industries; mining, power generation
- Increased importance of eco-tourism
- Greater emphasis on value adding
- Increasing demand for services
- Increasing challenge to contain costs and balance the budget
- Greater community involvement including the support of environmentally friendly practices
- Greater value placed on heritage
- Increasing challenge to have an integrated functioning aboriginal community”

The principles identified in a SWOT analysis can certainly be taken into account together with the detail identified in these broad strategies:

- **Replace and Remove Critical Infrastructure**
- **Explore the Ways and Means of Improving Specific Infrastructure and Services**
- **Create Safe a Environment**
- **Promote Economic Growth and Development**

There will need to be actions determined to complement the goals and objectives identified at the workshop in relation to the community action plans proposed for Buronga, Gol Gol, Wentworth, Curlwaa, Pomona, Dareton, Coomealla, Namatjirra and Pooncarie.

11. GOVERNANCE

The Australia Local Governance Declaration of the Role of Local Government 1997 reads as follows:

“The expectations of local governments elected to represent their communities are:

- **To be a responsible and accountable sphere of democratic governance**
- **To be a focus for community identity and civic spirit**
- **To provide appropriate services to meet community needs in an efficient and effective manner**
- **To facilitate and coordinate the local efforts and resources in pursuit of community goals”**

Recent years have seen an increasing concentration of governance issues affecting local government and apart from basic requirements, it is essential for Council to keep a check on all of those matters that it is required to be doing. Various publications, best practice tool kits and frequent alerts to government or agency requirements should be monitored and it would be appropriate for Council that a management forum conduct a progressive internal audit for that purpose.

The next section of the Review highlights an assessment of those matters listed in 2005 as obligations for Councils and an early priority for the management team should be to assess the correctness of the information provided during the Review and to arrange for appropriate action.

Increasingly, there is a legal and ethical basis to good governance with the obligation that decisions be taken in the interest of stakeholders and that the organisation itself performs and behaves as a good corporate citizen. In the broadest terms, governance can be defined as the **process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented or not implemented.** For Wentworth Shire, this means the operations of the Council as a decision making body, the relationship with its owners, the actions of administration in advising the Council about its decisions, the engagement of the Wentworth Shire Community and the implementation of decisions.

Matters resolved for action need to be communicated through the organisation and matters referred for action and actions required should be followed up through an effective resubmit system.

Observations were offered during the Review that the management team, apart from irregular meetings, was not accustomed to being in a policy making mode or making decision other than those that might be considered short term judgements. If the lack of a policy making framework at management has in fact existed, that is typical of any local authority which has no clear corporate vision and where traditional habit and practice becomes normal process.

The Review did reveal some observations regarding a lack of clarity in the separation of the roles of management and the elected Council. The functions of the elected Council as the policy making arm, decision makers for major agenda items and planners of the future need to be clearly distinguished from those of management.

The elected Council has the obligation to assign the responsibility for the interpretation and implementation of Council policies to those who can be held

accountable for policy compliance. The Council is entitled to be confident that it has the assurance from management of organisational performance and that it has clearly set down governing policies that can be delivered with skill and integrity.

The new General Manager for Council could be expected to examine all current processes for decision making and to develop a mechanism that requires all management and staff to be accountable for their actions. In that respect, it could be expected that a new General Manager will make a completely new assessment of people and their respective functions.

At this stage of the Council's development and while the process of attracting a General Manager and Director is current, there is limited value in canvassing all of the opinions put forward by Council members, whether they be positive or negative. However, there is some certainty about the following:

- **An education program is required in relation to budget processes**
- **The General Manager should ensure that there is a continuing level of communication with Council**
- **The number and style of Council committees (47) needs review in terms of their effectiveness or any preferred alternative decision making structures**
- **An improved awareness of meeting procedure processes is desirable**
- **Some questions without notice could be referred to management for action without the need to wait for a Council meeting**
- **The need for a true partnership with management needs to be progressed through the General Manager**

- **The question of sharing resources with Mildura Rural City Council and other alliances should be formally pursued**
- **Non-observance of the LEP and potential outcomes from not endorsing staff recommendations in relation to residential development should be carefully re-assessed**

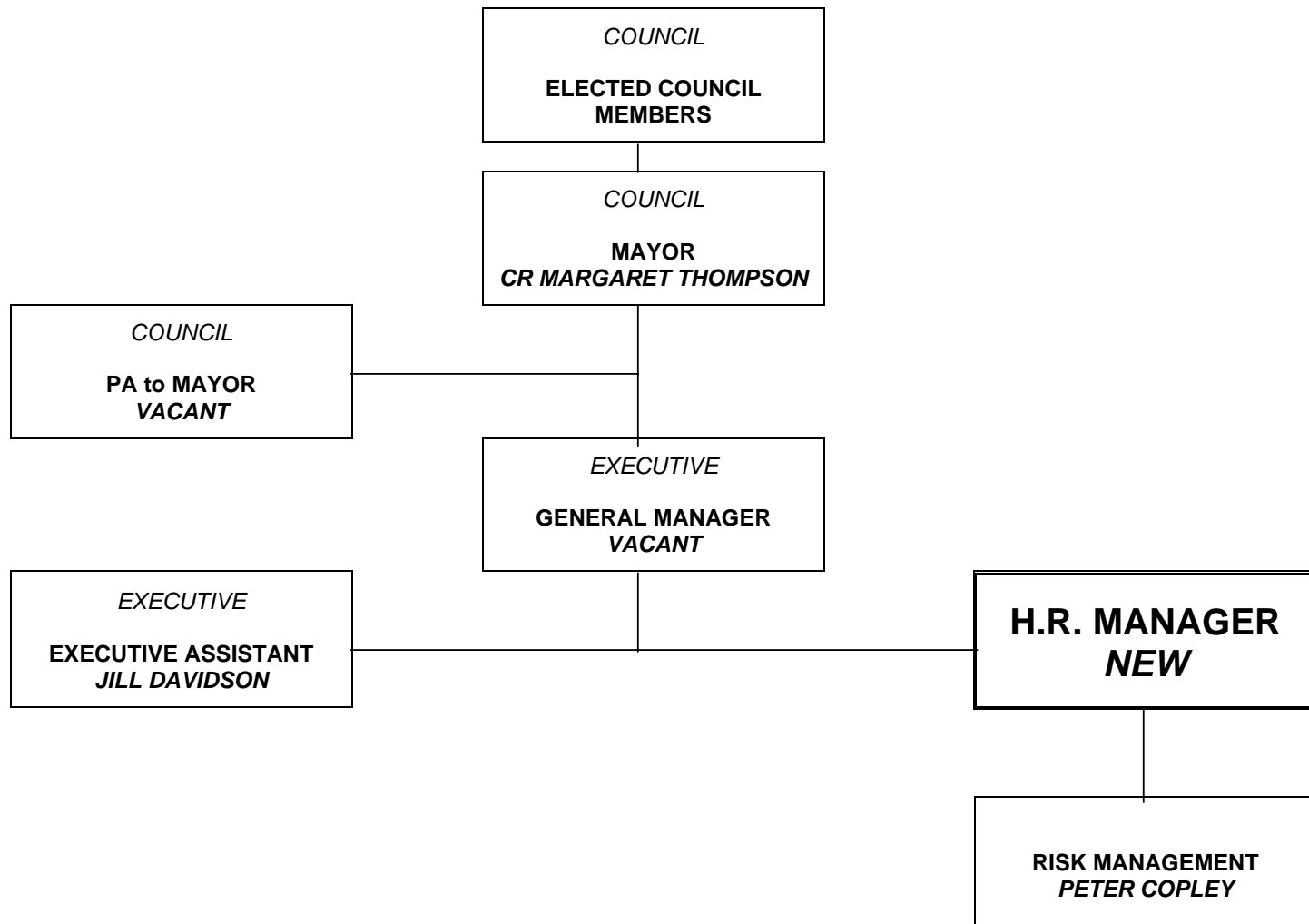
12. STRUCTURES

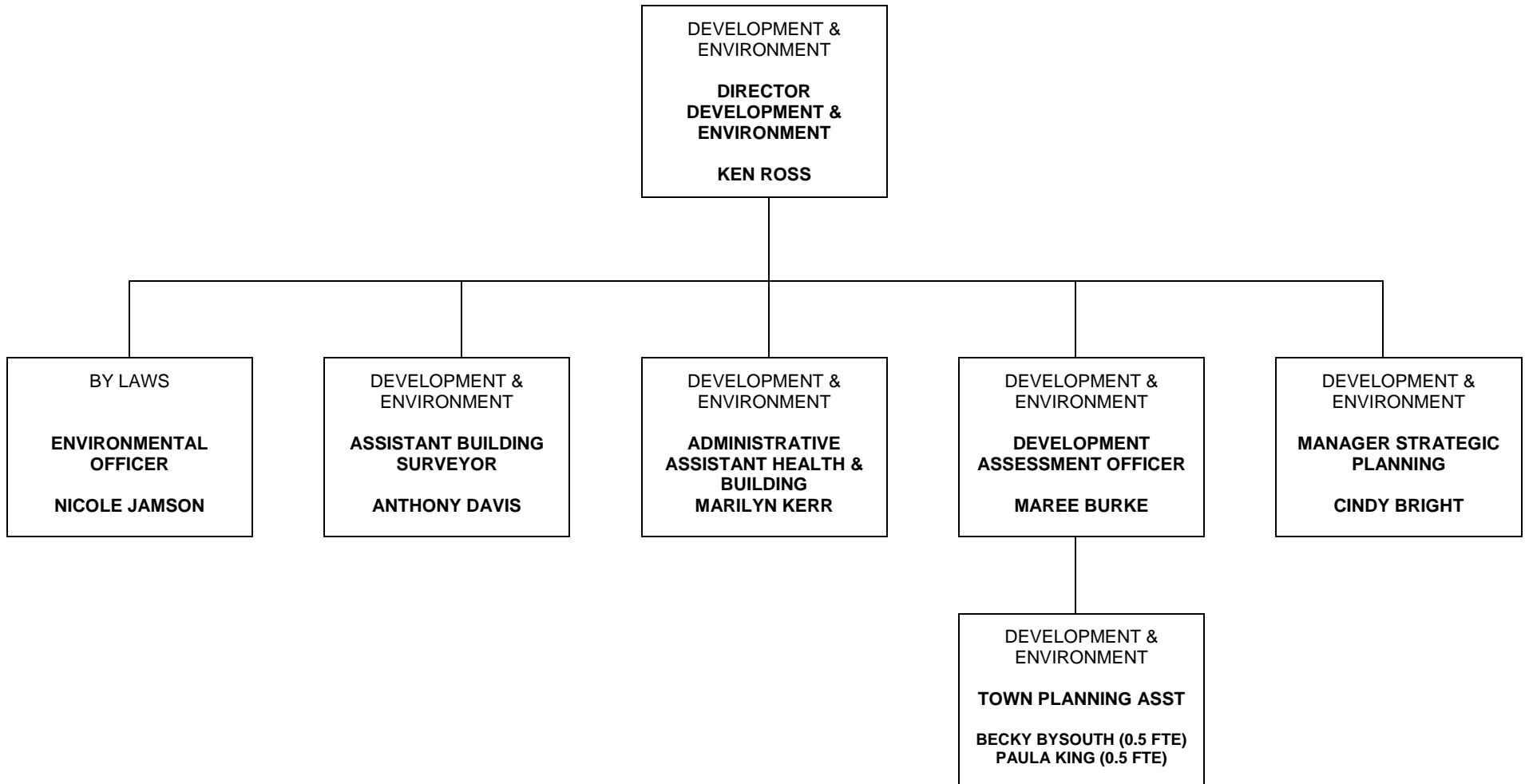
It is emphasised that a new General Manager should have an expectation of giving input to any revision of the organisational structure. The current structure is provided as part of the Review and the following comments are offered:

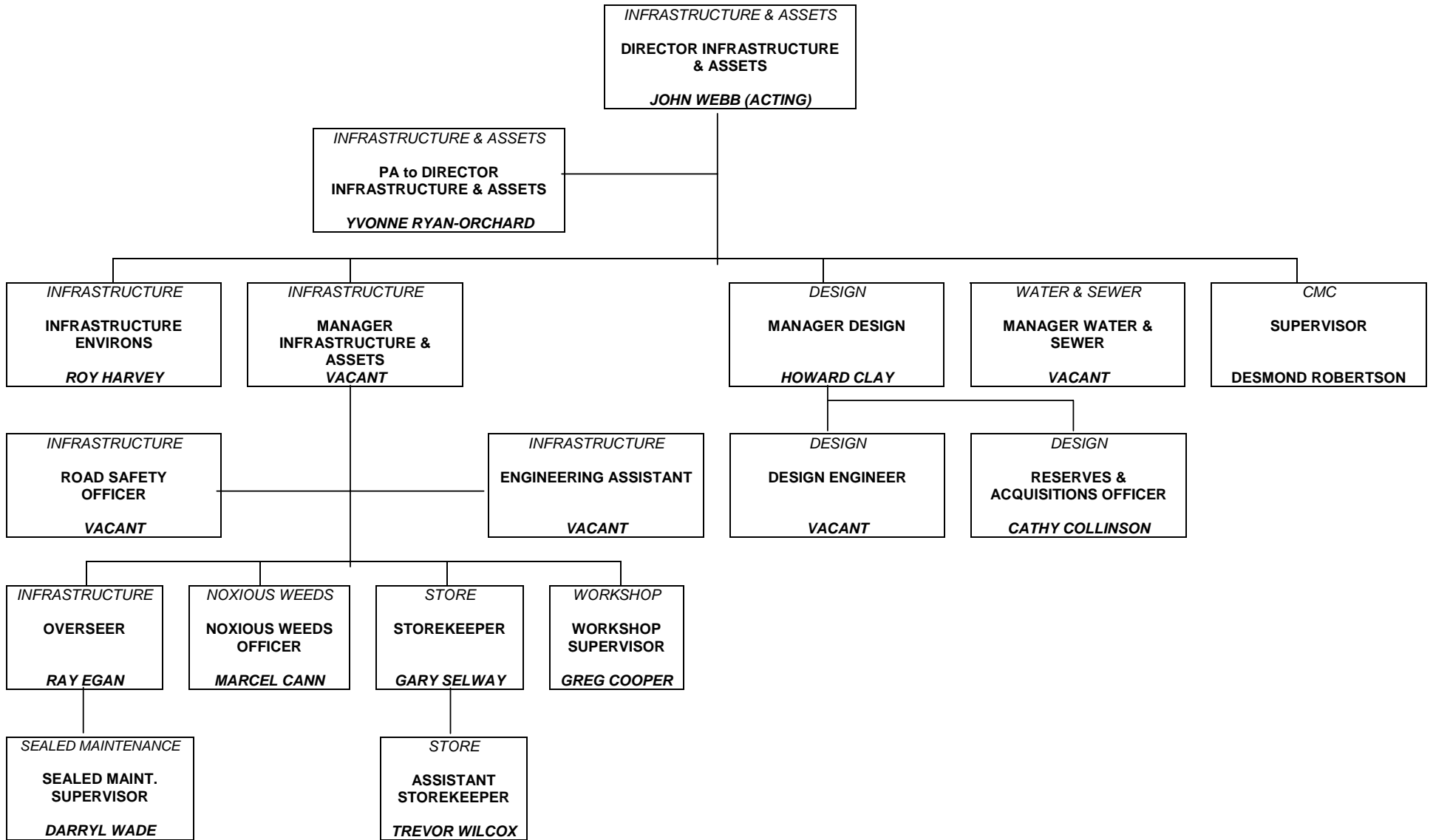
- **The position of PA to the Mayor is vacant and should not be replaced at this time, being incorporated in the position of Executive Assistant, but kept under review**
- **The position of General Manager is vacant and recruitment processes are current**
- **A new position of Human Resources Manager should be recruited immediately, that position reporting to the General Manager**
- **Casual assistance should be available to relieve the Executive Assistant to the General Manager as required (minutes and agendas when the Executive Assistant is on leave)**
- **A replacement for Grant Maynard should be the new position of Community/Economic Development Officer**
- **A new position of Customer Services Officer should be created reporting to the Office Manager**
- **Any replacements for vacancies in Infrastructure and Assets should be held in abeyance pending an assessment by the new Director**
- **A new position of Grants Officer should be created, reporting to the Director Corporate Services**

WENTWORTH SHIRE COUNCIL

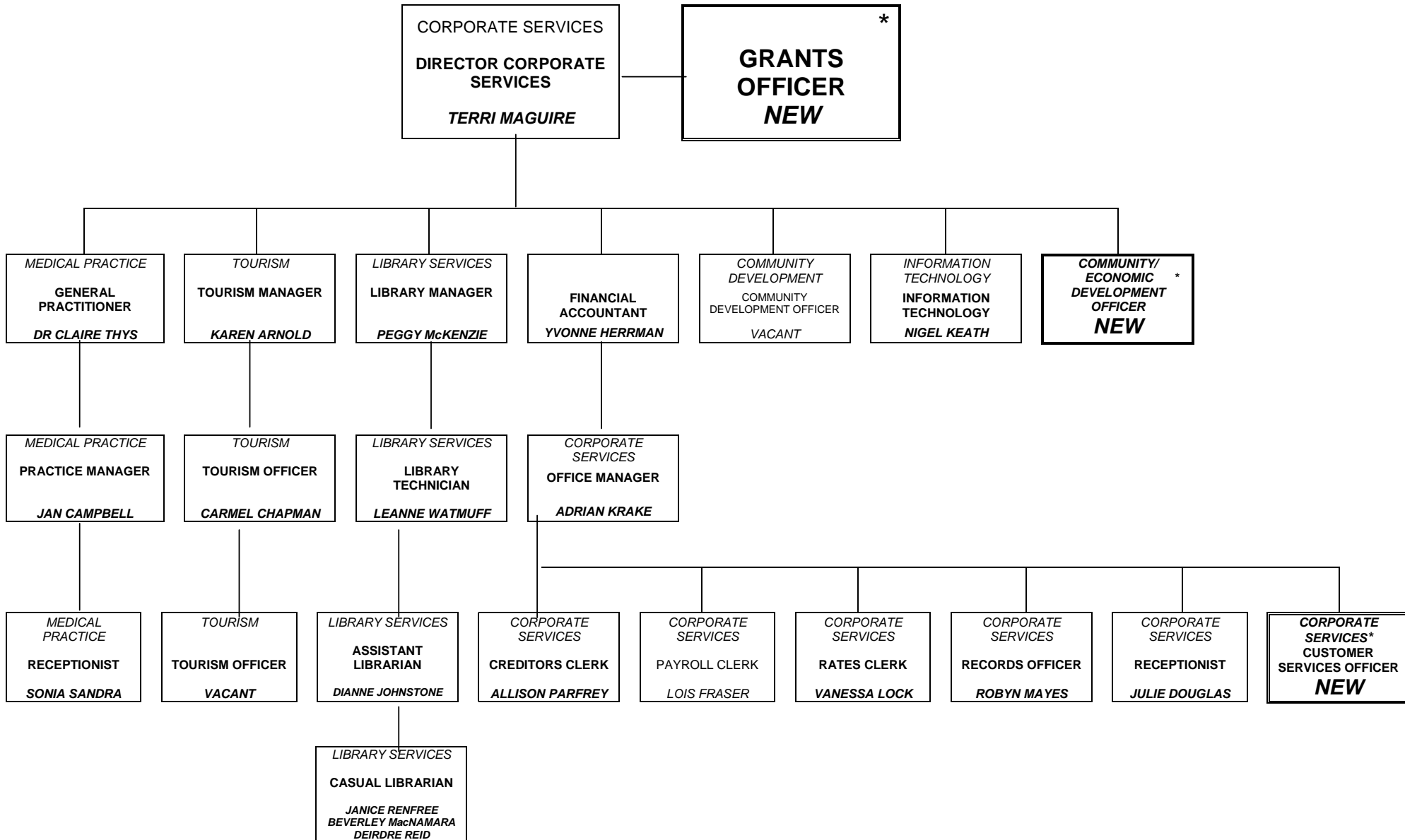
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE (PROPOSED)







* Three New Positions



13. PROMOTING BETTER PRACTICE

The Department of Local Government has been committed to promoting better practice in Councils and has invited Councils to participate through a self-assessment checklist. The Department makes references to “**policies**”, “**plans**”, “**strategies**”, “**review**”, “**processes**”, “**procedures**” or “**guidelines**” and Council’s level of compliance is in the order of **75%** of the matters raised in the Better Practice documentation.

In some instances, there was no provision to indicate the progress or relevance of some questions, but for the purpose of the Review, it is important to highlight those questions which have either **not** been addressed or are **incomplete** as advised by management during the Review. It is an important aspect of the Review that the requirements set down by the Government be examined for relevance and be programmed for attention as a part of any reform processes.

PROMOTING BETTER PRACTICE PROGRAM – SELF ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Module 1 – Governance

Ethics and Values

This section deals with the extent to which Council’s operations are characterised and guided by an overarching commitment to explicit values and to ethical conduct.

- Q 1.1** Has Council developed an explicit set of values?
- Q 1.5** Does Council provide a copy of the code of conduct to all new staff and councillors on commencement?
- Q 1.10** Does the Council have a statement of business ethics to guide external parties (such as suppliers and contractors) on the standards that are required when dealing with Council or acting on Council’s behalf?

Risk Management and Internal Control

This section focuses on how Council identifies and manages risks (both insurable and non-insurable) that may impact on its ability to meet its charter. Insurance issues are specifically dealt with in Module 3.

- Q 1.15** Does Council have an internal reporting system under the Protected Disclosures Act 1994?
- Q 1.20** Does Council have a fraud control policy and/or strategy?
- Q 1.22** Does Council have a gifts and benefits policy and procedure?
- Q 1.26** Has Council conducted a risk analysis of its procurement and disposal practices in the past two years?
- Q 1.27** In the last twelve months, has Council relied on section 55(3) of the Act (the “extenuating circumstances” or “emergency” provisions) to justify not calling for tenders?
- Q 1.28** Does Council have a local preference policy for tenders?
- Q 1.30** Has Council formally adopted a privacy management plan?
- Q 1.32** Has Council appointed a privacy contact officer?
- Q 1.33** Have staff and Councillors received training in the requirements of the privacy legislation?
- Q 1.35** Does Council have a:
 - c. Records disaster recovery plan or similar?

Decision making

- Q 1.42** Prior to adopting the current management plan, did Council:
 - c. Conduct public meetings?
- Q 1.45** Does Council have a formal structure for senior management meetings?

Meetings

- Q 1.54** Are Council’s section 355 committees provided with a:
 - b. Code of conduct
 - c. Documented procedures/operations manuals
- Q 1.56** Does Council have a structured induction program for elected members?
- Q 1.57** Does Council have an ongoing program of training for elected members?

Module 2 – Planning and Other Regulatory Functions

Strategic Planning Instruments

- Q 2.2** Is there a Council approval program for the review and updating of:
- a. LEPs?
 - b. Development Control Plans (DCPs)?
 - c. Other planning policies?

Development Application Process

- Q 2.9** Does Council have an independent assessment panel for development applications (consisting of an expert panel to hear from applicants and objectors and to provide advice and/or recommendations to Council)?
- Q 2.18** Does Council provide for:
- a. Electronic lodgement of DAs?
 - b. On-line tracking of DA assessment?
- Q 2.22** Does Council provide a review process for applications for development consent and for approval under section 82A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and section 100 of the Local Government Act?

Enforcement

- Q 2.37** Does Council have an enforcement and prosecutions policy?
- Q 2.38** Does Council have a local orders policy under section 159 of the Local Government Act?
- Q 2.39** Does Council have a separate system for reporting and investigating reports of non-compliance or unauthorised development?
- Q 2.40** Does Council provide information to the public on how to report suspected non-compliance and unauthorised development?
- Q 2.46** Does Council have a compliance program for monitoring activities regulated under Chapter 7 Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1993?

Environmental Management

- Q 2.49** Does Council have an on site sewage management plan?
- Q 2.52** Does Council have a waste management strategy?

Companion Animals

- Q 2.53** Is there a companion animals management plan in place?
- Q 2.54** Does Council run community education programs on companion animals?
- Q 2.55** Does Council have in place strategies to reduce euthanasia rates of unwanted animals?

Module 3 – Asset and Financial Management

Asset Management

- Q 3.1** Has Council got an asset maintenance program?
- Q 3.4** Are Council's (long term) asset management plans linked to long term financial modelling?
- Q 3.6** When considering capital expenditure on long term assets, are the following factors taken into account:
- c. Resource sharing with other Councils?

Land Assets

- Q 3.10** Does Council have plans of management for all of its community land?

Financial Management

- Q 3.19** Has Council developed integrated long term financial modelling? (5-10 years)
- Q 3.35** Other than through the management planning process does Council consult with the community in formulating its annual capital works programs?
- Q 3.37** Has Council identified any new/additional review streams for current or future funding of works?
- Q 3.38** Does Council have a policy in respect of the use of external contractors for major services?
- Q 3.41** Does Council have any current public/private partnerships?
- Q 3.42** Is Council planning to enter into public/private partnerships as a vehicle for carrying out current/future infrastructure works?
- Q 3.43** Does Council have any resources sharing with any other Council?

Module 4 – Community and Consultation

Social and Community Planning

- Q 4.3** Does Council have a recreational facilities plan for its area?
- Q 4.6** Does Council have specific programs or services for social justice groups?
- Q 4.12** Does Council have a set of specific customer service standards?

Ethnic Affairs

- Q 4.16** Does Council have a local ethnic affairs priority statement?
- Q 4.17** Are Council publications available in languages other than English?
- Q 4.18** Does Council provide, or facilitate access to, community language translation services for visitors to Council?
- Q 4.19** Does Council provide, or facilitate access to, community language translation services for telephone callers?

Module 5: Workforce Relations

Staff profile/workforce planning

- Q 5.1** Does Council have a human resource strategy/plan?
- Q 5.2** Does Council have a human resources policy/procedure manual resource containing all its human resources policies and procedures?
- Q 5.3** Has Council succession plans for key positions/personnel?

Recruitment and Selection

- Q 5.11** Does Council have a documented selection policy/procedure that applies to all recruitment?
- Q 5.14** Does Council have a formal policy concerning the use and composition of selection committees?
- Q 5.15** Does Council have an internal appeal process?

Job description and evaluation

- Q 5.16** Do all positions have written job descriptions?
- Q 5.17** Have all employees been provided with a copy of their job description?

Q 5.18 Does Council have a formal policy and practice for the review of job descriptions?

Employee remuneration

Q 5.20 Does Council have a formal job evaluation program to assess and measure work value?

Enterprise bargaining

Q 5.26 Does Council have any registered enterprise agreements?

Q 5.27 Does Council have any current Council agreements?

Equal employment opportunity

Q 5.28 Does Council prepare an annual Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan?

Grievance Management

Q 5.33 Does Council have a grievance handling policy and procedure?

Q 5.34 Has Council been involved in any staffing dispute or litigation, before any court or tribunal in the last five years?

Q 5.35 Has Council conducted a employee attitude survey?

Q 5.36 Does Council monitor and/or report on the number and resolution of employee grievances?

Exit of staff

Q 5.45 When staff offer their resignation, is an exit interview conducted?

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the following actions, changes, reviews or initiatives be implemented by the General Manager in conjunction with Management, Staff, Council or its agents:

- 1. The implementation of a revised Organisational Structure through the General Manager as indicated in the Report.**
- 2. The immediate appointment of a Human Resources Manager and the development of a Human Resources Program to introduce, develop or review all existing systems and procedures in relation to position descriptions, pay structures, performance appraisal systems, occupational health and safety programs, risk management programs, professional training and development for staff, induction programs and such other human resources functions that are identified and prioritised over a three year period, the position to report to the General Manager.**
- 3. The appointment of a Customer Services Officer appropriately trained to provide information about all Council services, the position to report to the Director of Corporate Services.**
- 4. The appointment of a Grants Officer, the position to report to the Director of Corporate Services.**
- 5. The appointment of a Community and Economic Development Officer, the position to report to the Director of Corporate Services.**
- 6. The formal establishment of MANEX, group and team meetings as appropriate and in the discretion of the General Manager.**

- 7. The introduction of formal and informal communication processes to staff throughout the organisation by written, verbal and/or social initiatives.**
- 8. The creation of a priority policy review framework designed to monitor the effectiveness of current policies or to consider new policy.**
- 9. The phased introduction of continuous improvement mechanisms throughout the organisation.**
- 10. The interim non-replacement of the former PA position for the Mayor with the incorporation into one position for both the Mayor and General Manager.**
- 11. A review by the General Manager of all internal systems for the handling of correspondence and complaints.**
- 12. An overhaul of all existing internal and external communications policies.**
- 13. The monitoring of formal training programs for the TRIM and PRACTICAL systems.**
- 14. The establishment of a corporate library across the organisation.**
- 15. A review of private usage policies attaching to motor vehicles.**

- 16. A monitoring process for current strategic planning initiatives inclusive of actions in conjunction with the Strategic Planner with the preparation of a formal Strategic Plan.**
- 17. The enrolment of staff in sustainability health checks and appropriate courses conducted through the LGMA or by a private consultant.**
- 18. Priority to incomplete obligations identified in the Review under the Promoting Better Practice Program issued by the Department of Local Government and subscription to the LGMA Best Practice Toolkit.**
- 19. The availability of casual staff to assist with archiving functions, the preparation of business papers, action sheets and minutes from Council meetings.**
- 20. The investigation of resource sharing opportunities with Mildura Rural City Council and other suitable alliances.**
- 21. The availability of works schedules for the store at the depot.**
- 22. The retention of appropriate systems for the recording of all contracts.**
- 23. The preparation of a manual of induction procedures in conjunction with HR processes.**

- 24. The creation of a new organisational culture by the General Manager incorporating shared values and beliefs across the organisation with clarity about all areas of responsibility and accountability.**
- 25. A clear separation of function and roles between Council and management.**
- 26. The review and promotion of codes related to ethics and conduct in the organisation.**
- 27. The establishment of long-term financial strategies.**
- 28. The undertaking of training and education processes for Council, management and staff regarding the link between the Strategic Plan, Management Plan, Financial Plan, Environmental and Social Plan.**
- 29. The formal creation of corporate budget processes and timetables satisfying statutory requirements.**
- 30. The establishment of a long-term Financial Plan with the provision for inputs by Council, management, staff and stakeholders as required.**
- 31. The establishment of financial reporting programs that relate to key performance indicators and the achievement of Council's goals.**
- 32. A review of all delegations across the organisation and the maintenance of a register of delegations for annual review and approval by the Council.**

- 33. The introduction of performance management principles providing accountability for Council in monitoring the performance of its strategic direction, goals and financial outcomes.**
- 34. The identification of systems for ensuring compliance with principles of good governance for both management and Council.**
- 35. The establishment of policies incorporating Council's commitment to consultation inclusive of the methodology to be used for that purpose.**
- 36. The establishment of principles through policies, manuals and other documentation setting a framework for shared organisational culture, vision, working relationships, decision-making, strategic planning, financial planning and performance management across Council operations.**
- 37. The establishment of customer service principles for both the internal and external dealings of Council.**
- 38. The utilization of appropriate correspondence tracking systems.**
- 39. The nomination of other suitable Councils for purposes of comparison programs and commencement of those processes.**
- 40. A review of the number, role and function of all Council Committees.**
- 41. Changes to systems, operations, structures and policies in Infrastructure & Assets in the discretion of the Director, Council and management team.**

- 42. The planning and implementation of such other programs or actions canvassed in the Organisational Review or considered appropriate for Council.**