

Workforce Development Strategy 2022-2026



1.	Workforce Strategy Overview & Objectives	2
	Contexts of Workforce Strategy	2
2.	Yarra’s Organisational Structure	4
3.	Local Government Context	5
4.	Workforce Planning Key Stakeholders & Roles	7
5.	Strategic Drivers	8
	Broader Contextual Overview	8
	Growth and Change in Local Government Occupations	9
	Key Issues for Yarra’s Workforce	10
6.	Workforce Demographics	11
	Staff Tenure	11
	Gender and Pay Equity	12
	Establishment EFT	13
	Staff by Age Bracket	14
	Recruitment Data Summary	15
7.	2022-2026 Workforce Development Action Areas & Objectives at Yarra	16
	Strategic Workforce Development Focus Areas	17
	ACTION AREA 1 Safe & Well at Work	18
	ACTION AREA 2 Flexible, adaptive people	20
	ACTION AREA 3 Employer of Choice	23
	ACTION AREA 4 Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive	24
	ACTION AREA 5 Right People, Right Place, Right Time	27
8.	Summary & Conclusion	30

1. Workforce Strategy Overview & Objectives

Workforce planning is not about predicting the future, but it should be future-focused and based on identifying and exploring a range of alternative future scenarios. Working through the process enables Council to analyse the potential impact of these scenarios, including

- What is the workforce we will need? (demand)
- How does the future demand compare with the workforce we have? (supply) and
- How well do these align with the strategic direction of Council?

Workforce planning enables the identification of current, transitional and future workforce supply and demand, clarifying the human resource requirements at Council within the context of its sector.

While workforce planning and workforce development are commonly linked, they are not the same.

Workforce **planning** is the driver of workforce development.

Workforce **development** can be one outcome of workforce planning.

Workforce development refers to the various activities undertaken to address any gaps and mitigate risks identified through workforce planning e.g. succession planning, knowledge management and/or job redesign.

Workforce planning and workforce development are interdependent. Planning is pointless without execution and execution is less effective without planning.

Yarra's Workforce Plan provides workforce supply and demand analysis and projection, including gap identification and succession and talent management approaches designed to ensure the organisation has the right people equipped with the appropriate capability and supports to enact its vision and deliver on its strategic objectives.

Contexts of Workforce Strategy

Workforce planning is part of Yarra's business and financial planning processes and is informed by business plans and strategies, both organisation-wide and within its divisions.

Yarra's People and Culture, Organisational Development (OD) and Human Resources (HR) strategies are informed by workforce planning to ensure the organisation responds effectively to challenge and change.

As indicated in Figures 1 and 2, below, the Workforce Plan is informed by Council Plans and Strategies. In its turn, the Workforce Plan links to budget and business planning, as well as providing the road map for actions relating to the workforce across the entire employee lifecycle.

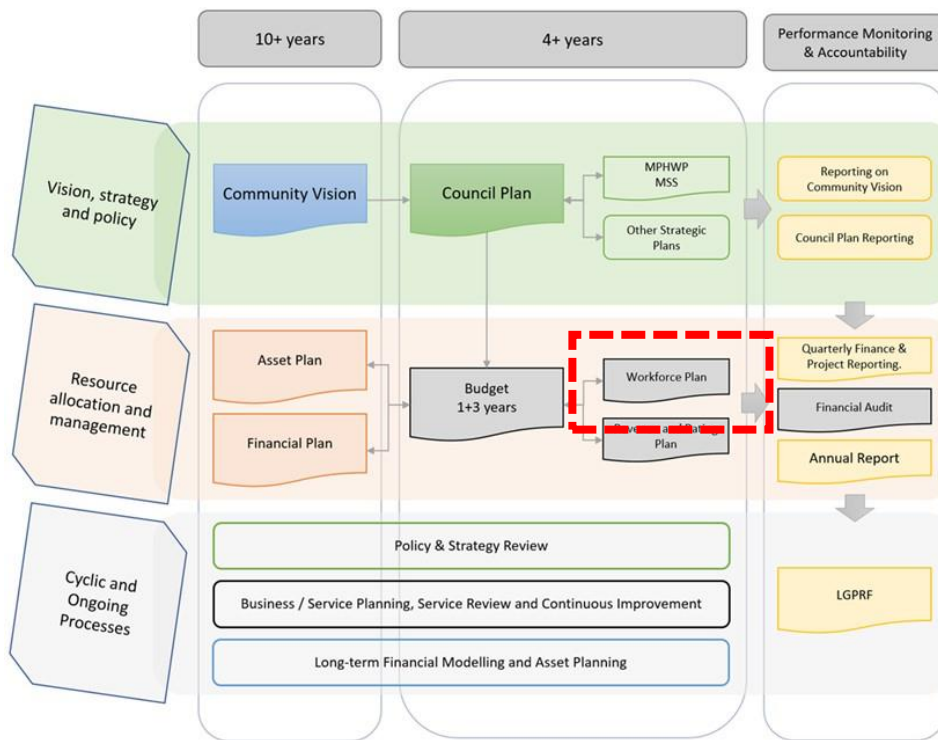
This program of activity led by the People and Culture Division is largely focused on developing our people and our organisation with a remit across the complete end-to-end employee experience.

Data gathered through employee surveys and from Yarra's HRIS (CHRIS21) together with other sources, is fed back into the workforce planning process which informs and supports the next program of work relating to people and organisational development.

Figure 1 Broader Context Yarra’s Workforce Strategy

Drivers	Workforce Planning	Action Areas
<p>Internal Context Council Plan – and other strategies, plans & programs Community Vision Council Budgets Business Planning</p> <p>External Context Local Government Context Political, Social & Economic Factors Global, National & Local Employment Market Trends</p>	<p>Process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supply Analysis 2. Demand Analysis 3. Equity, Diversity & Inclusion 4. Gap Analysis 5. Solution Formulation 6. Monitoring Progress <p>Informed by Workforce Metrics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – HRIS – People Matters Survey – Employee Data Audits 	<p>People & Culture Program of Work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Employee Experience – Recruitment – Learning & Development – Engagement & Retention – Succession / Talent Pipeline – Organisational Development – Diversity & Inclusion – Wellbeing & Safety

Figure 2 Local Government Planning Context



2. Yarra's Organisational Structure

Yarra City Council is made up of 9 democratically elected Councillors, one of whom is elected each year to hold the office of Mayor.

Collectively, the Council is responsible for the governance of the organisation, including setting the strategic direction, developing council policies and allocating resources.

Mayor

The Mayor's legal role is to preside over council meetings and ensure they are conducted in accordance with local laws, and established conventions and protocols, as well as to act as the principal spokesperson for the Council and supporting good working relations between Councillors.

The Mayor also serves as the Council's social, cultural, political and business ambassador by presiding over key civic functions, maintaining a presence within the municipality, and ensuring that the Council is appropriately represented at relevant and important occasions.

Councillors

As individuals, each Councillor is responsible for participating in the decision-making of the Council and representing the local community in that decision-making. Councillors engage closely with the community in the wards they represent and bring local knowledge and views to the broader Council discussion.

Councillors contribute to the strategic direction of the Council through the development and review of key strategic documents of the Council, including the Council Plan.

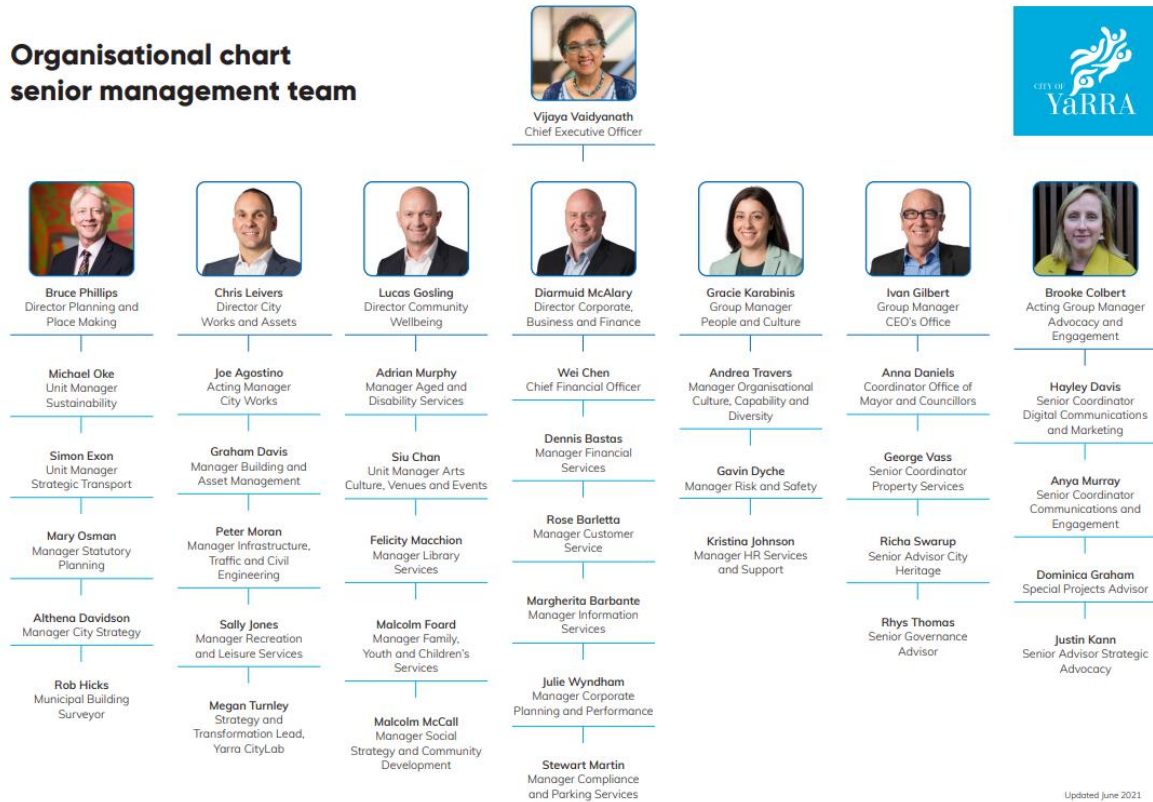
Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer is appointed by the Council and has sole responsibility for the day to day management of the Council's operations.

The Chief Executive Officer leads an Executive Management Team and an organisation of 876 Full Time Equivalent who deliver programs and services across the community.

In addition to the CEO's office, the CEO oversees Yarra's functional divisions which are listed in the following Organisational Chart.

Figure 3 Organisational Chart



3. Local Government Context

An inner metropolitan municipality, Yarra is home to a diverse community of approximately 103,000 people.

Covering 19.5 square kilometres, Yarra includes the suburbs of:

- Abbotsford
- Alphington
- Burnley
- Carlton North
- Clifton Hill
- Collingwood
- Cremorne
- Fairfield Fitzroy
- Fitzroy North
- Princes Hill
- Richmond

Figure 4 Map of the City of Yarra



The City of Yarra is known for promoting social justice, acting on climate change, being custodians of our unique culture and heritage, and advocating for our vibrant creative industries.

Council celebrates its connection to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the traditional owners and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra. Fitzroy and Collingwood are areas of special significance to Aboriginal people. These areas were a major hub of social and political activity for the Aboriginal community in the past and today remain a critical centre for Aboriginal services and organisations.

Council embraces its cultural diversity. Successive waves of refugees and migrants have made Yarra home, beginning in the post-war era with our Greek and Italian communities, our Vietnamese community in the 1970s, followed by Chinese and East Timorese communities and in the last 15 years, our east African community.

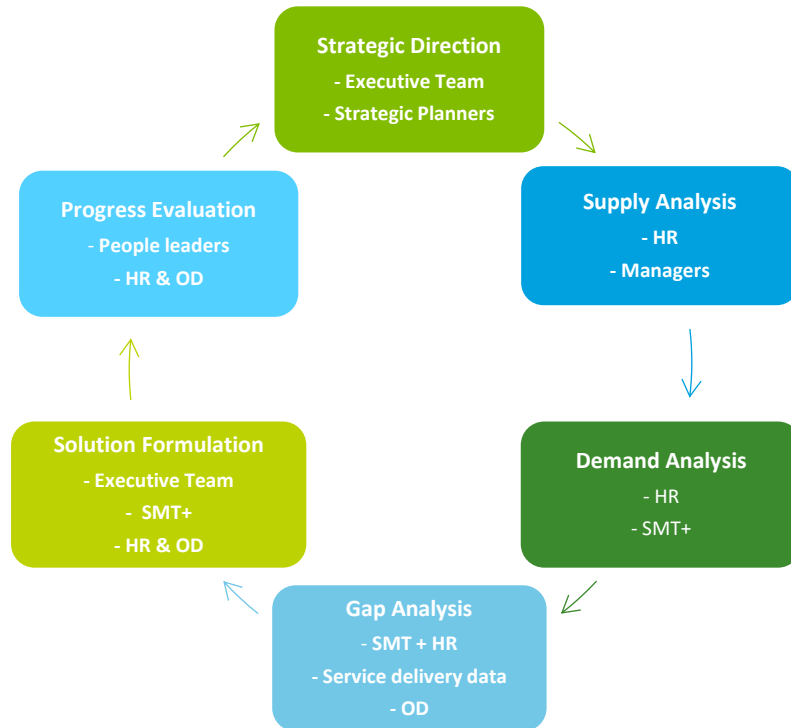
Yarra has a range of social and demographic considerations and is host to a spectrum of socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. Council operates under a social justice charter that protects the whole community's human rights, especially those of our more vulnerable residents, and those more likely to be at risk of discrimination. This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, LGBTIQ+ people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and people experiencing homelessness.

Yarra is an economically diverse municipality, accommodating a range of mixed employment precincts, activity centres, industrial and health precincts.

4. Workforce Planning Key Stakeholders & Roles

While the Yarra community is the key external stakeholder for the Council as a whole, the Workforce Strategy is focussed internally on our staff. Therefore, the internal stakeholders (staff) are the people responsible for leading, overseeing, shaping and delivering on the actions of the Workforce Development Plan, with overall leadership responsibility resting with the Executive Team and Senior Management Team (SMT/SMT+).

Figure 5 Workforce Planning Internal Stakeholders & Roles



Strategic Direction: Executive Team & Strategic Planners

- align organisational activities with the needs of our community
- set the overall vision and direction of the organisation
- oversee the development and delivery of plans and strategies
- ensure good governance and sound business management

Supply Analysis: HR & Managers

- ensure recruitment and talent pipelines are effective
- maintain systems that provide the people we need across all business units
- facilitate the human resources required for all program delivery

Demand Analysis: HR & SMT+

- map and plan current and future workforce needs
- anticipate where and when additional people will be required

Gap Analysis: SMT+, HR & OD

- assess where current supply and demand are not aligned
- identify skills match and professional experience shortfalls
- anticipate and address gaps in a timely manner to maintain business continuity and high-quality program delivery

Solution Formulation: Exec, SMT+, HR & OD

- consider how current employees can be upskilled or new people recruited
- assess roles and responsibilities to ensure work is right-sized and well-defined
- apply agility and creativity to continuously evolve our workforce
- draw from current best practice and innovative approaches to deliver smart, flexible solutions
- partner with leaders to design or redesign roles and recruit for both aptitude and behaviours

Progress Evaluation: HR & OD

- review and refine continuously to adjust solutions without interrupting process
- report regularly to Managers and Executive on results and recommendations for future actions

5. Strategic Drivers

Broader Contextual Overview

The world of work is changing. This has never been so apparent as when we reflect on the lessons delivered by the COVID-19 global pandemic.

One consequence for workforces globally has been a sudden shift of many staff from workplaces to an off-site (home-based) arrangement. This was the catalyst for a fast-track shift that links directly to two of several predicted global mega-trends – technological advances and global connectivity.

In addition to the recent well-documented technological change brought about by the ongoing global Pandemic, the following examples of current research offer insights and summaries of major anticipated workforce changes that are likely to or have already had a felt impact on Yarra.

In early 2020 the CSIRO predicted that the world of work in the next two decades will be shaped by Five Key Megatrends that are driving the speed of change. Beside each of these, a brief example of current or anticipated effect on Yarra's workplace and workforce:

1. **Technological Advances** - *seen at Yarra in our rapid shift to a Hybrid workforce, teleconferencing & cloud-based systems*
2. **Digital Connectivity** – *always on, hand-held / portable devices offering 24/7 connection across many roles at Yarra*
3. **Globalisation** – *wide-ranging workforce impacts including employees seeking more flexible arrangements through to global talent market opening new options for recruitment*
4. **Ageing Population** – *while Yarra's population is on average younger than many other local government areas, there will continue to be an increasing need for services while also offering a range of opportunities to attract and retain older workers who bring many benefits through their skills and experience*

5. **Changing Economic Landscape** – *presenting both pressures and possibilities as we look towards emerging from the global pandemic*

The Local Government Workforce Development Group conducted research which included the *Local Government Skills Shortage Survey*, the resulting Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) *Current and Future Skills Needs Report* (2018), sits alongside global reports by Deloitte and other workforce trends analysts. Combined, these reports reflect growing and **urgent** need for the development of the following transferable, adaptive and interpersonal skills:

1. Creativity and entrepreneurial skills
2. Cross-cultural awareness
3. Social intelligence
4. Novel and adaptive thinking
5. New media literacy (e.g. social networking)
6. Ability to understand concepts across multiple disciplines
7. Critical thinking, analysis, and problem solving
8. Design mindset
9. Ability to discriminate and filter information for importance
10. Ability to work productively, drive engagement and
11. Demonstrate presence as a member of a virtual team

Between 40-60% of councils said they needed to improve their position in 8 out of the 11 ‘soft’ skill areas listed above with the top three skill areas in which councils were least well-positioned being:

1. **Virtual Team Skills** - ability to work productively, drive engagement and demonstrate presence on-line in a dispersed work environment
2. **Novel and Adaptive Thinking** - being able to think with flexibility and agility
3. **Digital Skills** – working effectively with an extensive and growing digital toolkit

References

[CSIRO 6 Workplace Megatrends](#), Hajkowski et al (2016)
CEDA (2015: 24) Australia’s Future Workforce, Melbourne
Deloitte Access Economics, *Soft skills for business success*, (2017), Deloitte Australia
MAV Local Government Workforce and Future Skills Report (2018) Victoria

It is interesting to note that, while there are skills shortage in certain specialised areas, these skills and attributes listed above are universally needed and applicable to all roles. We will focus on these later in the report, particularly in the section regarding capabilities and Yarra’s Capability Framework.

Growth and Change in Local Government Occupations

Population growth is translating into greater demand for services, impacting council staffing levels and staff profiles while increasing need in certain occupations such as engineers and town planners.

Changes to legislative arrangements and the need for increasing levels of compliance have resulted in the need for more specialist managers, governance and risk management personnel.

Age profile of the population also places pressure on council services leading to expansion of council services, increased health, welfare and support staff, and carers and aides. Growth is anticipated to remain the same or increase according to recent MAV data.

Key Issues for Yarra's Workforce

According to the MAV data presented in its 2018 report, the sector faces some key issues:

- Ageing workforce with 56% of staff aged over 45 years, compared to 41% for all Australian industries. 65% of the outdoor workforce is aged over 45 years and the combination of a significantly ageing outdoor workforce and physical work demands will have implications for councils.
 - While this is an industry wide experience, at Yarra this is not a current issue but it will need to be monitored.

Like over 60% of councils, it is probable that Yarra will face skill gaps in the following areas:

- Managers/ Supervisors – Leadership, change management, people management
- IT – Database management, software and product knowledge
- Engineering – Project management skills
- Project managers – Contract management and experience in major development and planning

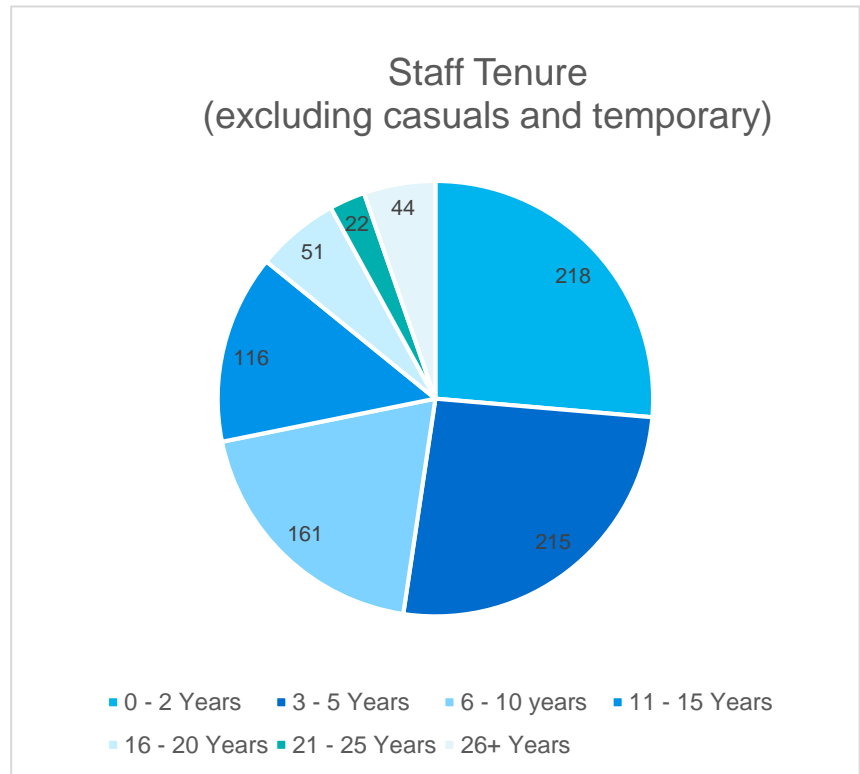
On current trends, along with 74% of Councils, Yarra will face worsening shortages in the following areas:

- Key shortages in professional occupations at risk include Specialist Engineers, Specialist Planners, Building Surveyors, Computing ICT technicians, Project Managers, Community Development and Engagement Officers and Environmental Health Officers.
- Minor shortages in technical and trade occupations in areas involving: Care Persons, Accounts/ Payroll Clerks, Customer Service Workers, Supervisor/ Team Leader functions, IT/ ICT technicians and trades – (Horticulture, Automotive, Plumbing).

6. Workforce Demographics

Staff Tenure

Length of Service	Jun-21
0 - 2 Years	218
3 - 5 Years	215
6 - 10 years	161
11 - 15 Years	116
16 - 20 Years	51
21 - 25 Years	22
26+ Years	44
Total	827



Commentary

Review of our tenure data demonstrates that a significant portion of Yarra staff have been employed for five years or less (52%). Whilst this is not unusual from a benchmarking perspective it does demonstrate that need to ensure that we are appropriately onboarding and developing our staff so that they can be effective in their role as soon as possible and that we are creating measuring the employee experience to do as most as practicable to retain staff.

Gender and Pay Equity

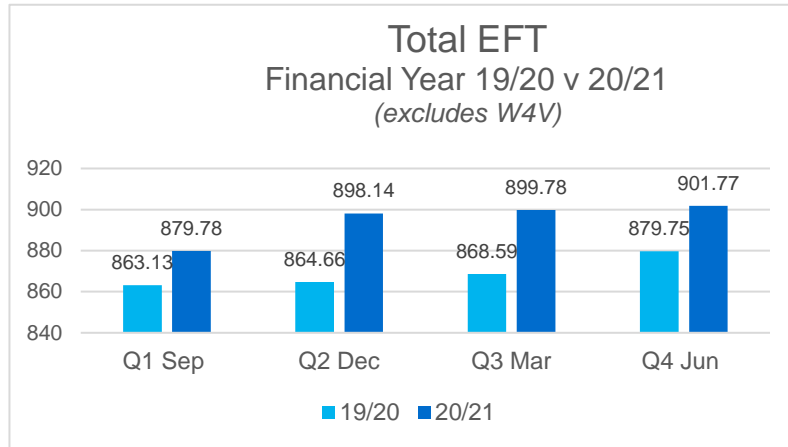
Band	2020		2021	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Band 1	8	8	7	8
Band 2	3	3	4	4
Band 3	73	72	70	69
Band 4	89	30	87	30
Band 5	96	52	104	56
Band 6	69	63	78	59
Band 7	48	51	53	55
Band 8	38	36	33	33
Management Contract	12	18	14	16
Other (Parking, Teacher etc)	33	16	32	15
Total	469	349	482	345

*excludes temporary and casual

Commentary

Bands 4-6 have consistently higher numbers of females. Over the last year there has been a small, but consistent increase in the number of females at the Band 7 level, and we now see a total decrease of Band 8 staff, with an equal split of genders in this range. The percentage of females across the organisation is consistent with last year, sitting at 58%.

Establishment EFT



	Q4 (Jun 21)
Permanent	810.76
Temporary	26.52
W4V	60.7
Casual	64.49
Total	962.47

Commentary

As per the above graph, we can see that there has been a slight increase in Equivalent Full-time (EFT) staffing numbers over the past three quarters of the 2020/21 financial year and a reasonable increase of EFT since this time last year. It should be noted that some of these positions are externally funded and other role(s) are temporary in nature. Moving forward, further scrutiny and maintenance of our robust approvals process is required to ensure that our budget is maintained.

Staff by Age Bracket

Age Bracket	Number of Staff
Under 20 years	0
20 – 29 years	74
30 – 39 years	246
40 – 49 years	208
50 – 59 years	192
60 – 65 years	76
Over 65 years	31

Commentary

Analysis of this data demonstrates that we have a reasonable number of staff who are in the 60+ age bracket (107 staff or 13%). This indicates that further analysis of this data should be undertaken to determine if these staff are in key positions and, if so, what succession planning is in place to ensure Council is not left under-resourced with significant loss of key knowledge and skills should these staff retire soon.

Our largest age bracket for staff at Yarra is within the 30-39 age bracket (246 staff or 30%). This may be indicative of Yarra's competitive and family friendly conditions of employment. Moving forward further analysis of these age brackets is required to determine trends, opportunities for enhancing our employee experience and business units/roles where we may need to provide further development and succession planning.

Whilst measures such as a robust approvals process are in place to slow this increase and keep it to a minimum, we are seeing continued high levels of expenditure for overtime, time of in lieu (TOIL), additional hours and agency usage across the organisation. The P&C team will be partnering across all areas of the organisation to engage in thorough workforce planning processes to ensure capability and coverage meets requirements.

As part of these reviews, people leaders across the organisation will review Position Descriptions, team performance, synergies amongst teams and internal processes to understand and manage workloads more effectively and to utilise existing resources more efficiently. Where there is a genuine need for increased and ongoing resources, permanent FTE will be explored as an alternate solution based on solid business cases.

Data on absenteeism, particularly throughout the pandemic over the last 18 months, shows that when employees were initially required to work from home, we saw a drop in absenteeism. It is possible that

this occurred as employees were less exposed to infections at the office and more likely to “push through” the day at home even if not feeling well.

However, as the pandemic has continued, we have seen a gradual growth in absenteeism rates as well as a trend in which employees are tending to take more than a couple of days off in a row (rather than the odd day here or there).

This reduction in the taking of leave, particularly Annual Leave, may be attributable to an inability for employees to travel and the general lack of interest in taking leave during the pandemic.

Widespread increases in workload throughout the Pandemic across a broad range of workforces globally, have also been reported at Yarra. This may have been another factor in the reduced taking of leave as the real or perceived need to keep on delivering or to manage additional load has been a barrier to leave-taking.

Being mindful of the potential mental and physical health consequences associated with not taking leave, we will continue to encourage their staff to take their Annual Leave, to maintain health and wellness, maintain leave liabilities, reduce absenteeism and avoid burnout. Ongoing, Yarra remains committed to ensuring regular and complete rest from work as a key factor in the wellbeing of our people.

Recruitment Data Summary

Recruitment data from the last financial year tells us that we have advertised the most positions in the Recreation and Leisure and Children’s Services branches. This finding is consistent with commentary above outlining skill shortages, centre closures and high vacancy rates in these areas of council.

In some areas of the organisation, such as Building Services, recruitment data tells us jobs were open for advertisement or negotiation for a long time before acceptance of offer. This is consistent with what we know of skill shortages, a competitive market and high demand for talent in this field.

Broadly speaking, Yarra’s recruitment data reflects the findings of the MAV data referred to in this Strategy, with similar shortages being seen in key areas.

In recognition of the pressing need to ensure employee capability in the so-called ‘soft skills’ arena, together with a broader need to attract talent in a competitive market by providing a positive, inclusive culture with significant opportunities for ongoing development, we have developed the following Action Areas to deliver to this set of goals.

7. 2022-2026 Workforce Development Action Areas & Objectives at Yarra

In addition to and complementing the above factors, the MAV *Current and Future Skills Needs* Report 2018 indicated ongoing changes in composition and reprioritisation of skill sets including new skill sets for emerging roles.

By 2030, 'soft skill' intensive occupations will make up almost two-thirds of the workforce.

Yarra has already made significant inroads to developing these skills across its workforce and will continue to maintain this as a strategic workforce development focus in this area for the foreseeable future.

We also note that recently released reports by firms such as Deloitte, KPMG and PwC all convey strikingly similar themes regarding the local government sector.

In summary, their key points reflect our experience.

Following almost two years of extraordinary change and challenge, local government has taken a fast-track towards technological change. However, the sector will continue to face increasing and ongoing challenges across its technological functionality and its financial capacity.

Fortunately, the organisation already has a major commitment to investment across its digital capabilities in the immediate future.

However, technology cannot be effective without also evolving our ways of working – calling for us to deliver streamlined processes and simplified organisational structures that will enable Yarra to embrace change and respond flexibly to challenge.

At the same time, social, political and environmental factors will place growing pressure on customer / community expectations for quality of service while major programs of work are needed to meet new legislative obligations such as the Gender Equality Act (2020) and the Local Government Act (2020).

In order to deliver to its strategic objectives, Yarra needs to attract and retain good people who must be resourced to be adaptive in the face of change. Our focus in this Workforce Development Strategy therefore focuses on ensuring a well-resourced workforce that can deliver to its strategic goals.

In the following sections we outline the key areas of Action to support these important areas of development in our workforce across 2022-2026.

Strategic Workforce Development Focus Areas

This Strategy is the overarching concept for workforce development planning at Yarra over the next 4 years.

The development of our workforce is integral to the delivery of outcomes for the community.

Yarra's Workforce Strategy aims for the following outcomes:

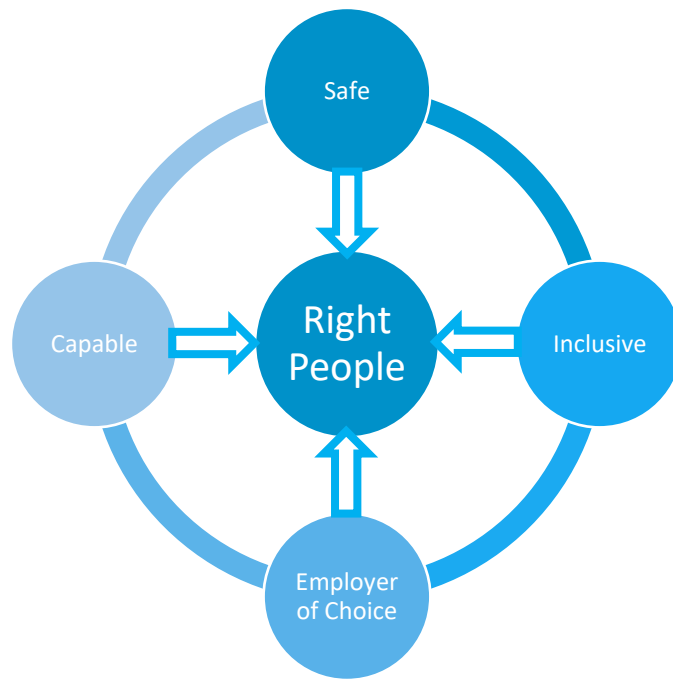
Safe and Well at Work Prioritising mental health and wellbeing

Capable Flexible People Building a robust future-ready workforce

Employer of Choice Attracting talented people in a competitive market

Inclusive, Equitable and Diverse Promoting inclusion, valuing difference and building belonging

Right People, Right Place, Right Time Positioning people to evolve with change and challenge



ACTION AREA 1 Safe & Well at Work

Promoting Wellbeing – Prioritising Mental Health

Employee data from Yarra’s HRIS (CHRIS21) tells us:

- Leave is not being taken to the degree that would be most beneficial for staff wellbeing
- TOIL and Overtime are increasing

Results from our Pulse, People Matter, EDIS and Future of Work surveys indicate:

- Staff welcome the move towards increased flexibility, wanting this applied more broadly and consistently
- A focus on mental health and wellbeing is necessary and appreciated by staff
- Improvement is needed in areas such as cultural safety and sexual harassment

Our surveys indicate that employees have indicated a positive experience of Yarra throughout the Pandemic in terms of mental well-being support and we will need to maintain our focus on this as a top priority. Broader research indicates that the multiple complex impacts of the Pandemic will be felt for some time to come which further underlines our responsibility as an employer.

We recognise the multiple, complex impacts that the Pandemic has had - and will continue to have - on people’s mental health. It has never been more important and urgent that we ensure people feel supported, connected and engaged. Mental health is central to the sustainability of our people and the success of all our planned strategies.

We will prioritise and invest in employee psychological safety and mental wellness by mapping our work across the following five interconnected domains:

1. **Psychological safety:** Maximise staff health by preventing, assessing, and treating potential risks and encouraging healthy behaviours.

Actions:

- Use a business partnering approach to work with people leaders so they can effectively apply practical strategies such as reviewing, defining and right-sizing roles and design workloads more effectively
 - Equip people leaders to notice and respond to mental health concerns through workshops and evidence-based information
 - Update, promote and enforce policies and procedures that support psychological safety in our workplaces such as bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, codes of conduct
2. **Mental Health & Wellbeing:** Promote mental health activities across all staff via intranet, newsletters, access to in-house training and events, equip people leaders to notice and respond to mental health concerns, and ensure psychological safety in our workplaces through the following.

Actions:

- Extend and support a well-trained Mental Health First Aid Officer cohort that covers all teams and locations
- Promote and encourage conversations to destigmatise mental health concerns (supported by research indicating this is the most effective strategy for workplace mental health)
- Ensure WHS Officers are skilled to respond to both physical and psychological risks

3. **Employee involvement:** Empower staff by involving them in decision-making and providing autonomy.

Actions:

- Offer more open forum conversations and feedback channels on psychological safety and mental wellbeing topics
- Ensure timely reporting on progress towards employee feedback that has been provided in various surveys
- Build effective two-way cascading messaging (up and down) via people leaders to teams

4. **Work-life integration:** Provide flexibility around when, where, and how staff work.

Actions:

- Promote ongoing flexible work in all its forms for all staff wherever possible while maintaining team connection and customer service levels
- Empower people to decide where and when they work across Yarra sites and off-site wherever work roles can cater for this
- Equip people leaders to manage by outcomes wherever their team may be located

5. **Employee growth and development:**

Actions:

- Support and articulate career development pathways and succession opportunities
- Continue to expand employees' knowledge and skills
- Support all staff to build transferable skills that will develop their careers at Yarra and beyond
- Build on our existing extensive people development and comprehensive leadership programs, all of which contain mental health approaches

6. **Employee recognition:** Rewarding employee contributions.

Actions:

- Continue to promote and expand our macro recognition actions such as Applause Awards
- Actively coach people leaders and peers to make micro recognition habits a part of their everyday working life

ACTION AREA 2 Flexible, adaptive people

A robust and future-ready organisation

Our employee skills analysis together with community feedback and MAV/LG data indicate ongoing need to:

- Develop and upskill the people we already have in order to retain and engage them
- Prioritise interpersonal skills development including the full suite of 'soft skills' / emotional intelligence
- Continue to meet or exceed increasing customer and community expectations
- Deliver to employee expectations around development opportunities and career pathways
- Build a flexible, adaptive workforce that can respond to ongoing, continuous change and challenge

We will achieve the above desired outcomes through the following programs of work.

Yarra's Competency Framework: Future Proofing our People

Yarra's Competency Framework provides our foundation for the consistent development of key skills, knowledge and attributes needed for our workforce. It also maps the competencies at various levels throughout the organisation.

The intentions of the Competency Framework are to:

- ✓ Inform the recruitment and selection of employees with a strong fit to the role, as well as the organisation
- ✓ Set performance expectations and evaluate employee contributions effectively, fairly and objectively
- ✓ Support employees to enhance their performance and increase their level of work satisfaction
- ✓ Map career paths, professional development and further career moves – all of which support succession planning
- ✓ Assess 'competency gaps' in individuals and teams and provide effective solutions for through learning and development resources

Yarra has applied two critical principles when designing this Competency Framework:

1. Involving the people who do the work - to understand roles fully we have gone directly to the source and involved the people already doing the work.
2. Creating general and specific competency sets - through connecting with people leaders about what makes someone successful in *all* our roles and in *each* role. For example: all roles require empathy skills, but only certain roles require case management skills.

The underlying objectives of Yarra's Competency Framework are to:

- Invest in our people and build our workforce capability
- Define relevant competencies and provide an agreed 'Competency Map'
- Build a talent pipeline by identifying individuals with high potential and offering growth and advancement opportunities

- Design effective, timely responses to identified developmental needs
- Determine a list of competencies for each level, team and division across the organisation
- Consistently and continuously assess competence based on performance criteria established under each element of competency
- Design developmental programs, strategies and modules for bridging the gaps between current knowledge and skills and the desired levels of competencies of each individual employee

Achieving our Strategic Goals

This framework consists of competencies that align with Yarra’s Values and plans.

Our current and immediate focus will be to align competency sets with Position Descriptions and engage our workforce in an ongoing learning journey tailored to their role and to their individual needs and aspirations as well as being clearly linked to organisational goals, especially the Council Plan.

Enhancing Recruitment & Selection, Training and Performance Management

Yarra’s Competency Framework facilitates better recruitment and selection of employees by defining the required competency set for each role. In this application, the Competency Framework becomes the blueprint for the entire recruitment process, focusing our resources on the people who possess the right skills and attributes for the work.

Leadership Development

Yarra offers comprehensive leadership programs for people leaders at various levels. This includes our Thought Leaders i.e. those without direct responsibility for a team but with a remit to influence others and deliver programs, reports, strategies or services.

These programs have been designed to align with our Competency Framework and are based on thorough investigation into a broad range of research together with workforce trends globally, nationally and, of course, within local government.

Based on our approach as a Learning Organisation, we do not look to provide a ‘set and forget’ style of workshop in leadership or any other programs where people skills are being developed. Instead we look to ensure learning occurs in an applied and practical way using adult learning principles and the 70:20:10 approach.

CX Customer Experience & Colleague Experience at Yarra

A program of transformation

Yarra’s Customer and Colleague Experience review and consultation revealed the potential for a dramatic increase in workplace efficiency which could be gained through improvements in systems and processes – focusing on technology and digital solutions.

The Pandemic fast-tracked an unplanned but high impact major change process which included improved digital systems and a move to more flexible, agile ways of working that will be continued and built on through the CX program.

With a vision of “working together to build a better experience for all” the CX Program provides a set of actions that will transform our workforce. The CX Program aims to enhance systems and people capability to significantly improve the Yarra service experience for our internal and external customers.

Throughout 2022-2026, CX will be a key program for business simplification.

The CX program will:

- Connect people to a shared purpose and vision
- Continue investing in human potential, building leadership ability and change capability
- Reduce barriers caused by inefficient systems and processes to create a more agile workforce
- Enable flexible ways of thinking and working – causing a major shift towards growth mindset

A layered Action-learning approach underpins this program - consisting of mentoring, coaching, competency-based workshops, peer support and various other widely recognised evidence-based strategies.

The CX program creates opportunity for teams to be challenged by taking on tangible project experiments based on systems and processes improvements while also having their projects showcased which celebrates the change and engages others in creating more change.

Change Readiness & Project Management

Change is no longer an occasional event. Our lives are now in a constant state of change, and we know the success of our staff and our organisation relies on being able to work with and through change.

Yarra’s Organisational Development team have developed a tailored Change Management Program based on the widely recognised and respected ADKAR (ProSci) Model. This program will be rolled out to all Yarra staff from early 2022 onwards – beginning with our people leaders.

It is essential that our entire workforce be equipped with change-readiness tools, an understanding of change models and the support to effectively evolve, respond and adapt to change in ways that build greater flexibility and resilience.

Change-readiness is not only a leadership capability; it is a requirement across our whole staff team.

ACTION AREA 3 Employer of Choice

Attracting and retaining high quality people in a competitive market

Yarra's People Matter, Employee Diversity and Inclusion and Gender Equality data call on us to:

- Focus on enhancing and promoting learning and development, leadership, flexibility and diversity as part of a positive employee experience
- Ensure recognition and reward are part of all people leaders' toolkits to achieve consistency of staff experience in being valued
- Build greater connection and belonging by growing our offering of employee engagement activities
- Streamline systems and processes to remove barriers and increase the ability for everyone at Yarra to deliver their best work

Being an employer of choice relies on a positive culture and an employee value proposition that does not compete on remuneration alone, but also targets and draws on a sophisticated understanding of the demographics, attitudes and opinions of people we want to attract and retain.

To ensure that we attract, engage, develop and retain our staff, we will focus on these following action areas throughout 2022-2026.

Actions:

- Better utilise our existing workforce by reviewing and right-sizing roles and responsibilities in order to strengthen organisational capability and operational performance
- Seek to understand each staff member's value and aspirations so that People Leaders continually consider this to create a positive employee experience
- Invest in an exciting program of interactive, practical learning for existing staff including mentoring, on-the-job learning and development
- Ensure Yarra maintains its current competitive remuneration and conditions
- Work with partners to build traineeships, internships and apprenticeships
- Provide multiple career paths and opportunities for advancement within the organisation by developing our talent pipeline and succession planning to better understand, anticipate and act where skills need to be developed internally
- Invest in leadership and other frontline programs that support good management practices, empowering and equipping people to do their best work
- Recognise that leadership does not only exist in people leader roles – meaning a shift to viewing leadership at all levels and facilitating lateral moves by leaders who do not want to move up but still want to be developed
- Act on complaints and promote positive behaviours through current policies and procedures that are upheld in practice and evidenced through datasets such as Gender Equality Act outcomes
- Take a systemic approach to identifying themes and finding best-practice retention approaches using exit interviews and engagement surveys
- Widely promote and support flexible work policy and practice

ACTION AREA 4 Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive

Offering inclusion and attracting diversity

Yarra's Employee Diversity and Inclusion, People Matter and GE surveys pointed to the need for Yarra to:

- Embark on a range of strategies that remove structural barriers to increase equality and access for women and gender diverse people
- Increase participation in our workforce by people living with a disability (including invisible disability)
- Place a greater focus on older workers to actively engage in new ways
- Continue to build on and promote the positive outcomes achieved for LGBTIQ+ workers
- Deliver to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment objectives outlined in the Yana Ngargna Plan, especially in terms of organisational Cultural Safety and Awareness
- Provide more consistent and equal access to flexible work across all areas
- Encourage men and women to take up parental, family and other forms of leave

Yarra City Council is committed to being a child safe organisation and supports flexible and accessible working arrangements for all. We draw pride and strength from our diversity, remain open to new approaches and actively foster an inclusive workplace that celebrates the contribution made by all our people.

This includes Wurundjeri Woi Wurung, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, culturally, religiously and linguistically diverse people, young people, older people, women, people with a disability, and people who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer.

Diversity & Inclusion

Yarra has been a leader in the area of diversity and inclusion for many years. Our work in key areas includes:

- LGBTIQ+
- Gender Equality
- Social Justice Charter
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people
- Disability
- Culturally, Religiously and Linguistically Diverse communities
- Positive Ageing Workforce approaches
- Flexible Work as an Equity measure

Through 2022-2026, areas of action and focus to develop on our inclusive and diverse workforce include:

Older Workers:

Actions:

- Harness new opportunities and challenges arising from greater workplace diversity including retaining older workers by delivering a specific value proposition to them.

- Participate in over 55's recruitment programs
- Expand and support flexible work and phased retirement
- Communicate and demonstrate the value of older workers through forums, recruitment practices and employment conditions

Gender Equality:

In line with our obligations under the Gender Equality Act (2020), we will continue to build on the achievements of our work in the area of gender equality through Yarra's Gender Equality Action Plan.

Gender Equality Action areas include:

- Continue to build on the work of Yarra's previous Gender Equity Strategy and deliver to the goals of Yarra's Gender Equality Action Plan (commencing March 2022)
- Implement Recruitment Review recommendations to address gender-based barriers to accessing employment at Yarra
- Train key staff in the application of Gender Impact Assessments and ensure these are undertaken for all new services, programs and policies with a significant impact on community
- Keep building Yarra's new *Gender in Leadership* program, which seeks to identify and remove barriers to equal participation, and act on its findings
- Act swiftly and effectively on the recommendations of the VAGO Sexual Harassment Report in a comprehensive, clear and committed way to address unwelcome and negative behaviours
- Seek greater inclusion for people of all genders experiencing additional layers of exclusion due to intersectional factors through the engagement of our Diversity and Inclusion team in employment practices, policies and procedures
- Identify and implement a program of work that increases equitable outcomes for women in our workforce over the age of 35 including access to higher duties and other targeted development opportunities
- Encourage greater participation in paid parental leave for people of all genders

Disability:

Actions:

- Streamline recruitment processes for greater accessibility
- Partner with specialist employment providers to prioritise access into meaningful roles and effectively support recruits of all abilities
- Maintain and continue to build on the partnership with AND (Australian Network on Disability) to attract and retain more people living with disability
- Acknowledge that much disability is hidden and ensure awareness across the organisation around inclusive behaviour whether a disability is known or hidden
- Provide people leaders with the information, resources and support they need to confidently make reasonable adjustments for staff as needed

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Employee Opportunity

Actions:

- Deliver on creating greater cultural safety as recommended by the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Report (2021)* by Indigenous Employment Australia commissioned by Yarra
- Roll out Cultural Safety and Awareness training to all staff and repeat every two years together with an ongoing program of cultural engagement promoted by people leaders in teams
- Support employment access at Yarra for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates

LGBTIQA+

Actions:

- Promote employment opportunities at Yarra across a broad range of networks including Yarra's community Rainbow Advisory Group
- Position Yarra as an inclusive employer by continuing to celebrate our diverse workforce and to promote significant events and days of recognition
- Deliver inclusion and Unconscious Bias training which will be led by Inclusive Leader training for all people leaders
- Further activate employee groups such as Q&A and promote visibility of these groups across the whole organisation

Culturally, Religiously and Linguistically Diverse communities ("CRALD")

Actions:

- Promote Yarra's Cultural and Ceremonial Leave offering to all staff and assist people leaders in responding inclusively to requests from staff
- Streamline recruitment processes at Yarra to ensure accessibility for all cultures
- Promote roles across CRALD networks and partner with CRALD employment providers to prioritise access to meaningful roles and effectively support recruits

ACTION AREA 5 Right People, Right Place, Right Time

Effectively evolving our workforce

Human Resource and Organisational Development data indicate the opportunity to:

- Work with all Divisions on tailored approaches to assess supply and demand and address identified gaps especially in areas where skills shortages are evident and challenging
- Commence position description reviews in order to right-size job roles and responsibilities
- Provide greater choice for growth and development that includes horizontal moves and acting up opportunities (particularly for women as this is an area of identified inequity)
- Provide reskilling opportunities for redeployment across our workforce

Strategically mapping, designing and defining our workforce needs.

Commencing 2022, in consultation with business unit leaders across our whole workforce, we will design and deliver a set of resources and practical toolkits that assist our people leaders to engage in robust processes of workforce review and planning.

This will evolve Yarra from a Foundational Workforce Planning level to a Strategic Workforce Planning standard within the lifetime of this current 2022-2026 plan.

Define workforce planning process & Pilot in 2-3 business units, evaluate and refine.

In early 2022, we will create a set of practical toolkits and resources to support Business Units in conducting their own workforce planning program tailored to the specific needs of their business unit. Yarra's workforce is extremely diverse (like many Councils) and we need a bespoke approach that still needs to be grounded in a consistent planning process.

This program of work will be supported by fully operationalising HR Business Partnering to ensure people leaders are effectively supported in workforce planning and development activities.

This combination of practical skills, clear planning tools and skilled support from our HR team will equip Business Units with the skills to anticipate and prepare for workforce development needs.

Rollout and support Workforce Planning in all areas

Across Yarra's seven divisions, a phased program of work will be mapped out and identified for all business units. This will be supported by our Change Management Framework and Project Planning Toolkit (roll out to be completed early 2022).

Actions:

This program of workforce planning will be centred around three key steps.

1. analysis of the current workforce
2. conceptualisation of the future
3. analysis of the workforce in the future

Workforce planning by each of Yarra's business units will consist of the following:

1. Analysis of the current formation of the workforce

Yarra's 2022-26 workforce planning will start with the current employee formation to define the people and skills we already have.

In partnership with our business units we will use a set of simple but effective shared resources and tools to gauge two key areas: **quality** of the workforce and **quantity** of the workforce.

1.1 Quality of the workforce

The quality of the workforce is about current performance and future potential. Ensuring a clear understanding of these two measures and identifying any gaps between them will place us in the position to be able to plan workforce development across the medium to longer term.

Assessment of current quality will also lay the groundwork for effective talent management so that we are positioned to capitalise on the full potential of our people, recruit effectively and provide people with meaningful development pathways.

There are three parts to this process:

- **Part 1** and the first step is the analysis of the current workforce formation and its capability. The quality of the workforce will be assessed, providing clear ratings on current performance and future potential through the 9-Box Grid tool.
- **Part 2** identifies critical roles in the organisation, the attributes that deem these critical and the corresponding leadership, human and technical skills necessary to be effective in these roles. The outcome of this will inform the recruitment and selection of people into these roles as well as the development programs for existing staff.
- **Part 3** will utilise a Learning Agility Assessment tool as a measurable and consistent means to identify potential talent and develop high performers in the organisation. This identification and development opportunity will provide Yarra with a robust and properly articulated succession plan for the critical roles previously identified.

This will ensure that Yarra can effectively map performance and potential into the future.

1.2 Quantity of the workforce

The next step will be to assess the quantity of the workforce using a Flow Matrix. This matrix includes data across key indicators such as new hires, employee turnover, and internal promotions divided into categories and job families (roles with similar profiles).

Yarra's workforce planning Flow Matrix will clearly illustrate changes in the workforce such as internal and external mobility, while providing an overview of the biggest changes, shifts and trends in the organisation. The Matrix will also illuminate opportunities for workforce development as well as the areas of risk or exposure so that we can effectively plan the needs of our workforce into the future by using a reliable form of forecasting.

2. Anticipate the future: Leveraging scenario analysis to plot potential futures

While it is impossible to predict the future, we need to engage in processes that open our minds to what could be coming and develop capabilities for adapting to change whether anticipated or unexpected.

In this phase of the planning program we will create scenarios of possible future outcomes, from which people leaders can build well-informed action plans. Inbuilt collaboration processes will be part of the scenarios program, calling on all areas to work together in new and different ways.

Scenarios will provide a powerful method of engaging and opening the minds of decision-makers so that they pay attention to novel, less comfortable, and weaker signals of change and prepare for discontinuity and surprise.

This will build the capacity of people leaders to respond strategically and flexibly to change and challenge while also exercising the Change Framework and Project Management skills in order to take other people with them on the change journey.

3. Analysis of the future formation of the workforce

The final step in the process will be to analyse the future formation of our workforce. There is a difference between the expected formation and the desired formation, through the lenses provided by scenario planning and change adaptability.

3.1 Future expected formation

The *expected* formation of our workforce in 3-5 years is the result we will see if we keep doing what it is currently being done.

The key question we need to answer is whether the future expected formation is in line with the *desired* formation. Our immediate priority throughout this program of workforce development is to take an intentional approach to ensuring that the workforce we have in 3-5 years is the workforce that we need to have for the plans and goals we seek to achieve.

The Flow Matrix outlined earlier will enable us to forecast these numbers over a longer period and make informed, timely adjustments that will positively affect future formation of our workforce in anticipation of needs.

3.2 Future desired formation: Integrate workforce planning into BAU and annual, ongoing reviews

Armed with the insights from measurable workforce development activities, a nuanced and fit for purpose workforce design can be achieved through responsive and adaptive planning.

Knowing what is coming and being prepared to respond effectively through smart workforce planning will prepare Yarra to better anticipate difficulties and take appropriate action at the appropriate time, in advance of and in preparation for these events.

This could include areas where there is predicted shortfall of surplus of certain professional categories, for example. In this scenario, we would anticipate and act on the need to skill people up in their existing profession, retrain for new work requirements, or redeploy people to areas of growth. It will also equip us with greater agility to respond to unanticipated or sudden events.

In this phase we will also refer to Yarra's other plans and strategies to align with and inform those programs of work. A period of pilot testing and evaluation will form the focus of our work in 2022 before development of a detailed roadmap roll out to all Divisions.

8. Summary & Conclusion

This strategy has been developed by paying close attention to insights from surveys across our entire staff over the past few years.

It responds to the needs and concerns that staff themselves have identified. It is also supported by our own organisational data on employee experiences at Yarra combined with numerous conversations conducted across the organisation. Your voices have also been captured in multiple other ways including through the CX program of work in 2019 and the Future of Work project in 2020-21.

The proposed actions also reflect our observations through lived experience in Yarra as an evolving organisation moving through complex change, particularly over the past two years. As a result, Yarra's Strategic Workforce Development Plan prioritises people, their psychological safety, wellbeing and future-readiness. These factors must be in place first for the program of *right people, right place at the right time* to be successful.

This Workforce Development Plan seeks to ensure the City of Yarra can successfully meet the community needs and strategic organisational planning frameworks into the future. This Plan provides the roadmap for building greater safety and belonging while also ensuring we deliver quality outcomes through high levels of capability supported by streamlined processes and systems.