



Castlereagh Macquarie County Council

**Workforce Strategy
2017 -2021**

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Prepared in accordance with the provisions contained in the Local Government Act 1993

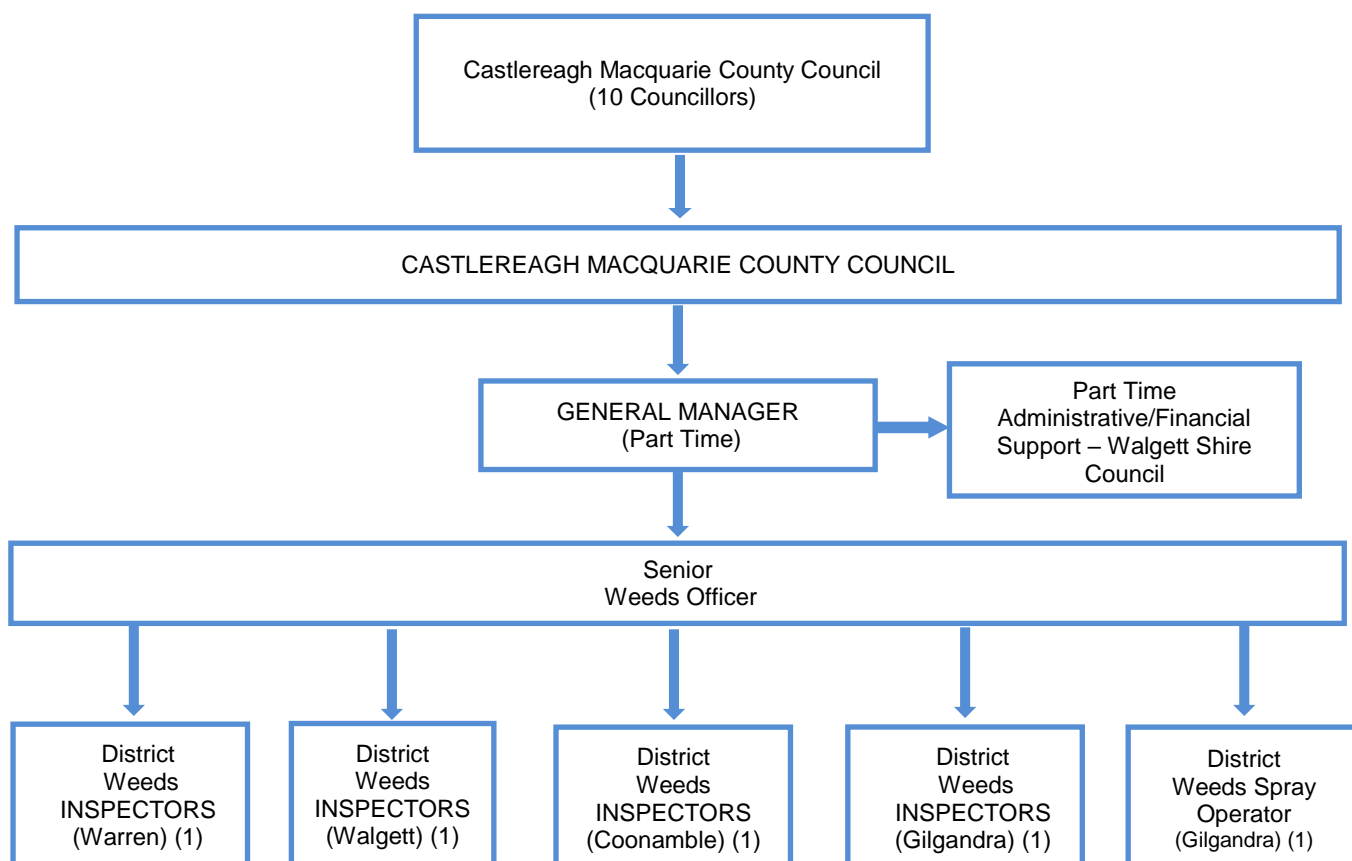
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1. Staffing and Organisational Structure

The current staff structure of the Council consists of a part time General Manager/Accountant, a Senior Weeds Officer, 4 District Weeds Inspectors, 1 District Spray Operator, with part-time administrative/financial support being provided by Walgett Shire Council on a contractual basis from 1 July, 2016. The Council's current structure is outlined in the following table. The Council resolved to reduce staff by five in 2013/2014 through natural attrition/voluntary redundancies and by closing the Coonamble Freight Depot.

Current Organisational Structure



2. Operational Staff Duties and Responsibilities

General Manager

This position is part-time and currently held by the General Manager, Walgett Shire Council. The General Manager is responsible for the management of the Castlereagh Macquarie County Council in accordance with LG Act 1993.

Senior Weeds Officer

This position is a full time position with the Senior Weeds Officer responsible for the day-to-day administration of Castlereagh Macquarie County Council and supervision of District Weed Inspectors.

District Weeds Inspectors

These positions are full time/casual/contract and duties include property inspections for the presence of Noxious Plants on private lands, control of Noxious Plants on council controlled lands and public awareness programs in their designated districts. In addition a district spray operator is based at Gilgandra.

3. Employee Age and Service Profile

Council's current operational workforce age ranges from 43 to 70 years of age with two (2) employees having twenty (20) years or more in the Local Government noxious plant control. It is expected that the employee age range for the next four (4) years will be similar, between 45-70 years of age, with any new employees recruited expected to be between the ages of 40 to 50 years.

The use of retractable spray equipment and other technology has reduced the physical load of operational activities on employees which is a major consideration with the age of the current workforce. The conduct of control activities on Noxious Plants during the cooler morning hours, during the summer months also reduces heat load and fatigue on employees. Afternoons are then available for property and roadside inspections.

4. Training

Staff receive specialised training through the NSW DPI training program for weed officers. Council's training program is formulated by qualifications needed by employees to achieve a Certificate IV in Conservation and Land Management (Weeds). This and other training required are in line with the Council's Register of Qualifications, Delegations, Competencies and Training for Council staff involved in noxious plant activities.

5. Staff Remuneration

Staff are currently remunerated as part of the Council's pay system. This system uses statistical information from NSW Local Government Councils to place employee positions within the system. This pay system has two components with the first of half of the pay level based on staff achieving levels of competency for increases in remuneration. Once staff have completed all of their position competencies, increases in remuneration can be achieved through performance.

6. Staff Performance Management

Performance Management Reviews are conducted bi-annually with the progressive results of these reviews to constitute the District Weeds Inspector's/Spray Operator's Annual Performance Management Review.

Aims of Performance Management Review

1. To outline Council's expectations of the scope and conduct of the District Weeds Inspector's/Spray Operator's duties.
2. To enable Council to achieve the objectives within its Delivery/Operational Plans.
3. To provide staff with a guide for the planning of activities to achieve their position's key responsibilities and duties.
4. Provide feedback to staff regarding their performance.
5. To provide staff with a fair and equitable Performance Management Review.

Areas of Performance Management Review

1. Inspection of Private Properties.
2. Control of Noxious Plants on Public Lands Controlled by Constituent Councils.
3. Community Awareness of Noxious Plants.
4. Legislation and Policy and Procedure Compliance.
5. Workplace Health & Safety.
6. Work Practices, Professional Development and Communication.

7. Staff Recruitment and Retention Challenges

The Castlereagh Macquarie County Council's location in the Western NSW has placed, and is expected to do so in the future, pressure on recruitment and retention through competition from the region's major industries including Agriculture and Mining. The strong presence of these industries in region is the main factor contributing to the region recording an unemployment rate of 6.2% compared with the NSW State return of 6.3%. This competitive employment environment, with the associated high cost and lack of availability of accommodation in most centres in the region, places further pressure on Council's ability to recruit and retain staff.

Historically, Castlereagh Macquarie County Council's staff turnover has been low, with only minimal resignations and associated recruitments, in the past 10 years. During the period 2017-2021, Council is expecting the retirement of at least two staff members, whose positions, at this point in time, will be need to be filled.

The main challenges that Council faces in retaining and recruiting staff is:

- Reduction in levels of grants available through NSW Department of Primary Industries. Reduction in these grant levels in recent years have reached the stage where Council decided to proceed with the down-sizing of its operations and placing a greater reliance on casual and/or contract staff.
- Continual upward pressure on wages to retain existing staff and recruit prospective staff due to the wage structure of the mining and associated industries. With employee costs currently representing approximately 70% of Council's total operating budget and the annual increase Council's traditional revenue sources being restricted, any large increase in wages with the current staffing structure would drastically affect Council's solvency. If this occurred, major organisational restructure would need to be initiated, include a review of staffing levels and core business activities.
- The high cost of accommodation affects Council's ability to recruit staff from outside the region. This compounded by the Council's logistical need to have staff reside in their principle district of operation. This may restrict the pool of prospective employees to those already residing in the district of operation.
- Due to the specialised qualifications and experience, mainly in regards to the enforcement of the Biosecurity Act 2015, it is unlikely that candidates for positions with the Council will have the full skill set required.
- Limited career advancement unless senior staff vacates their positions.

8. Local Government Reform

The outcome of current local government reform could see major changes in the structural way the provision of specialised services such as noxious weeds control are delivered and see either the strengthening of existing structures or their completed abolition. In particular, this will be impacted by the introduction of the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015 and new provisions in relation to the creation of Joint Organisations that have yet to be determined and passed into legislation.

9. Recruitment Strategy

Through the recruitment process, Council will be targeting prospective employees who have a rural or horticultural background who already reside in the prospective district area of operation or have sufficient resources to relocate to the area. One of the attributes of the operational positions with Council is that all of the positions have a high degree of self-management with employees responsible for the day-to-day operations in their designated operational districts. This positional attribute can be used by Council in the recruitment process.

Due to the increasing use of technology by Council, prospective employees will need to be familiar with information technology. This particularly applies to BIS reporting requirements being introduced in the second half of 2017.

Sources for prospective employees include Local Land Services staff, Local Government staff, nursery staff and rural workers.