

Strategic workforce planning maturity model

Shifting a workforce plan from tactical to transformational

About

This Maturity Model is designed to assist organisations consider where they wish to position their strategic workforce planning efforts and illustrates how existing plans can be built upon. It seeks to answer the question ‘to what extent is the strategic workforce plan laying the foundations for a high performing sustainable workforce, aligned to the future needs of customers, stakeholders and the organisation?’

Why

In today’s rapidly changing landscape, traditional models of strategic workforce planning are increasingly inadequate. Preparing the workforce for the future demands a more dynamic approach. This change requires us to think differently about our workforce. Workplaces will almost certainly change, driven by improvements in both technology and design. These changes will shape the way we deliver services and undoubtedly demand new skills, knowledge and attributes of our workforce, and possibly new designs of our workplaces. To ensure our sector is ready we need to be more flexible and agile in everything we do and build the skills of a 21st century professional public sector administration.

The opportunity

Business models and services are transforming rapidly, and our vision of a future workforce must reflect this. Better data will accelerate insights into various workforce segments, workforce blends, and work design and allow us to design future workforce capability that is fit for purpose. Working collaboratively to tackle shared workforce issues will enable a greater focus on innovative solutions and build sector capability.

When

The index is of most value at the beginning of the process but can be used at all stages to assist in deciding what to examine, and to determine gaps in future focus areas. All workforce plans will be at different levels of maturity, and there may be specific reasons why focus areas are currently as they are. The important issue is that there is purposeful, mindful consideration of future opportunities.

Who and how

Human resource (HR) practitioners and leaders across the service can use this index as a self-assessment tool, noting this is a guide only as there are many different ways prepare for the future of work.

The evolution of strategic workforce planning

Traditionally, workforce planning has been a once a year, linear process that estimates future workforce requirements by projecting existing patterns of workforce design and distribution into the future. The difficulty with this approach is that it can perpetuate inaccurate assumptions, limit creativity, and restrict agile responses.

Issues include:

- Using current roles and professions to analyse the workforce does not provide the full picture of what will be needed in the future.
- Using current workforce numbers as a baseline from which to forecast future needs may miss opportunities to address unmet needs, inefficiencies, and automation impacts.
- Assuming the future can be accurately predicted, and that available information alone is enough to support SWP, can limit opportunities to foresee disruptions in technology or service delivery models.
- Siloed organisational workforce planning loses the ability to understand the complexities and opportunities of linking with the entire workforce ecosystem.

New horizons

- Embedding Strategic Workforce Planning (SWP) in sector operations and transitioning to more sophisticated workforce analysis, will allow better understanding of workforce impact and shifting needs as increased disruptions occur.
- Using SWP and integrated data analysis to support longer-term, plausible future workforce scenarios, and support evidence-based workforce decision-making.
- Shifting service delivery models to ensure they are strategically designed around essential services driven by place and customers, and understanding factors that drive improved service outcomes.
- Understanding critical roles should be continually assessed to ensure alignment to business outcomes.

- Considering workforce ecosystems – including current workforce, stakeholders, service delivery partners, contingent labour, and artificial intelligence – to better plan for and position our workforce.

Strategic workforce problems worth solving

- How can we better harness the data we have?
- What professions and roles are needed in the future? Which critical skills and capabilities? What mindsets?
- Where are the gaps and unmet needs? How can work be redesigned?
- What plausible scenarios for the future can help us better predict what workforce blend we need?
- What’s the best blend of skills, roles, and professions?
- How can we plan for a workforce when it operates in an ecosystem also affected by volatility?
- What can we do together to achieve more efficiencies?
- How do we accommodate the different needs and rhythms of change across various organisations?
- How can we support human resource capability building?

Contemporary strategic workforce plans are more than workforce modelling (about the numbers). They are about deeply understanding the various segments, capacities, and productivities of the workforce, and how effectively the workforce is currently being utilised and what it needs to look like.

Tactical or operational workforce planning	Strategic or transformational workforce planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning exercises tend to focus primarily on the capacity and capability of the organisation’s existing workforce without fully considering the diverse range of external providers and contingent workforce that is relied upon to deliver services. • Needs are assessed using past utilisation trends and existing paradigms rather than a combination of examining the past in conjunction with future service design and community needs. • Data is not always used intelligently, strategically or translated into useful knowledge to ground workforce decisions. • Service delivery models tend to be centred on the worker rather than exploring new and innovative methods to deliver services to customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All stakeholders who share responsibility in system design are engaged – workforce is everyone’s responsibility. • Considers short term as well as longer term needs that challenge traditional paradigms and tackle wicked problems. • Sourcing and developing new types of workers with greater workforce agility and adaptability. • Shifting service delivery models to community needs that strategically designs services around the customer by understanding of the factors that drive client outcomes. • Greater focus on innovative solutions, collaboration, productivity, efficiency, and excellence. • Systems based approach that integrates and synthesizes all components of the organisation and supports whole of sector activities.

Assessing your organisation's approach to strategic workforce planning

The following table has been developed for organisations to self-assess their approaches to strategic workforce planning.

	1. Tactical	2. Collaborative	3. Transformational
Overall	<p>There is some understanding as to what workforce planning is in pockets of the organisation. However, there is not always a consistent understanding of what it means or how it affects the organisation. Often little or no dedicated resource. There is limited understanding and commitment to system wide issues. Typically, a siloed approach to looking at the organisation in segments.</p>	<p>There is an integrated approach and understanding in driving workforce strategies that embeds proactive people management at the heart of the organisational strategy. There are clear links to strategic plans and a clear vision of the workforce of the future to drive and deliver services to customers and stakeholders. An assessment of future needs is clearly articulated, and strategies are driven by robust evidence-based research. There is a deliberate emphasis on improved productivity, organisational culture, and 'One Government'. Leaders are engaged in outcomes and nurture fertile ground for workforce activities.</p>	<p>Used as a strategic business tool that is fully integrated into strategic and business planning processes and there is direct line of sight to all other strategic documents. Sophisticated scenario-based demand forecasting or strategic foresight of future business and service design is undertaken regularly. Plans contain breakthrough ideas and are agile enough to quickly respond to the changing environment. Considers the organisation as a part of an entire enterprise that transcends traditional boundaries and understands how changes in that organisation affect other parts of the system. Sector-wide issues are shared in a systematic joined up approach. There is a strong capability and know-how in how to lead and shape strategic workforce planning activities that are future focused, and a commitment to outcomes through agreed metrics. Opportunities for cross-organisation activities to build, buy and borrow capability and capacity are identified. Reporting is strategic and meaningful, and all levels of the organisation have ownership.</p>

	1. Tactical	2. Collaborative	3. Transformational
Organisational Design	There is an ad hoc approach to service delivery. There are minor shifts in the business and service delivery models with minimal disruption to current workforce designs and practices. The organisation looks like it did 10 years ago	Major shifts in the way business is delivered to the community requiring a fundamental rethink of existing structures, systems and models. Typically, this would have significant job redesign and considerable efforts in reviewing service delivery. Multidisciplinary teams organised around a common vision. There is no stranded capital	Major paradigm shift in the way the needs of the workplace and community are matched to the workforce. Place-based and human-centred design are commonplace. These unleash potential and often involve pilots and trials co-designed with stakeholders and high-level engagement with government. Decision making is rapid and delegated. Workforce strategies 'break the mould' of traditional structures, classifications, design, management, capability, and capacity. Organisations have reinvented themselves to operate as agile networks of teams able to scale up/down and mobilise to meet demand. These are responsive and innovative workforce designs and practices
Scenario planning and strategic foresight	Planning looks at where the organisation needs to be in one to two years' time and typically assumes a single future as its goal. Typically, organisations with minor workforce agendas can fall into this area.	Organisations regularly use predictive analytics, scenarios, and strategic foresight to forecast workforce needs for the next five years and typically undertake extensive scenario planning exercises to provide clarity of vision. Leaders are insightful, bold and courageous in their thinking about options and opportunities for more effective business models.	Planning not only considers the short term needs of the organisation but takes a longer-term view and extends well beyond five years with future forecasting and blue sky thinking and includes a clear vision of how to get there. Balances diverse information and analytical models to gather a collection of tactics for different futures and are confident with complexity and uncertainty. Often global push/pull factors are considered in clarifying the future.

	1. Tactical	2. Collaborative	3. Transformational
Data inputs	An assessment of demographic trends and analysis is undertaken including manipulating data sets and lines of enquiry. Staff survey results inform workforce activities. No benchmarking is done.	Inputs from all data sources including MOHRI, ABS, data warehouses, staff surveys, state of the service reports and economic modelling of skills supply and demand. This data is translated into information and insights. There are common definitions across the enterprise. The organisation uses benchmarking to other public sector entities and relevant industry standards to analyse performance.	Local analysis and improvements feed into sector wide data enhancements. Projections and trend analysis is integrated into strategies. Machine learning and automation impacts are known, understood, and planned for. There is complete understanding of lead and lag indicators across the organisation and coupled with other data and predictive modelling, they are used as a solid evidence base to inform workforce strategies. Leverages analysis in business decisions and process improvement. Benchmarks are not only with other public sector entities, but also like industries around the world. Staff are experts or informed by experts on data analysis.
Engagement	Workforce plans are developed internally by a few key people with top-down input in the development of workforce strategies	People are empowered to provide input from across the organisation. Feedback is sought on draft plans and there is an iterative approach to design and implementation. Stakeholder engagement strategies are in place to glean input from several strategic sources.	Initiatives are grounded in human-centred design and built with the end user in mind. Deep engagement and input from not only across the organisation, but all key stakeholders including Ministers, private sector, NGOs, volunteers, and other stakeholders external and internal to the organisation. There are meaningful feedback loops in place. Diagnostic tools are used effectively to extract relevant information from engagement results to inform workforce activities.

	1. Tactical	2. Collaborative	3. Transformational
Contingent workforce	Primary focus is on the paid workforce, however there is an appreciation of what working with external providers means for the organisation.	There is a deliberate focus on how to improve service delivery and business outcomes by working more effectively with the contingent workforce. The intrinsic public value of the organisation is clearly articulated. There is a complete understanding of the capabilities, capacities, attributes, and positioning of other sectors.	There is a holistic capability building model that partners to lift capability across industry with mutually beneficial outcomes. The organisation maximises efficiencies with the contingent workforce by co-designing and coproducing outcomes through mutually beneficial approaches. This includes, but not limited to, proactive engagement with volunteers, contractors, NGO's, private sector, and educational institutions. There is a strategic approach leveraging these skills to deliver government services that includes feeding into sector-wide strategies
Governance and reporting	Ownership of the planning, development and implementation of workforce strategies sit with the HR Unit. Reporting is done on an ad hoc basis. Governance frameworks are in place that illustrate the connections amongst all elements of the system. There is an understanding of who makes decisions and by what process. Regular reports are prepared but are not always used in a strategic way to inform workforce practices.	The authorising environment is clearly understood and articulated. There is a focus on outcomes, rather than outputs and inputs, particularly outcomes with greatest impact. Managers have ownership of workforce strategies and their implementation. Regular progress reports using both quantitative and qualitative measures are tabled and discussed. Reporting is used in a strategic way to inform workforce practices	The whole organisation knows and understands the vision for the workforce and their role in contributing to those outcomes. There is a clear line of sight to all strategic inputs and how that translates to impactful outcomes. Decision making is devolved to the appropriate level and effective governance systems are in place to guarantee accountability. Leaders own the workforce strategies and implementation. They understand their role in driving the workforce agenda and can respond to changing needs. Reporting is aligned with other strategic reporting cycles and budget papers and is examined in light of useful and meaningful output and outcome data.

	1. Tactical	2. Collaborative	3. Transformational
Risk assessment	Workforce risks have been articulated in the plan though there is varying levels of engagement in mitigating those risks.	The organisation has a complete understanding of workforce risks, the costs, likelihood, and impacts. Leadership teams have responsibility for primary oversight. There is a clear understanding of protocols for escalation and appropriate responses.	The organisation balances the need to take risks outside the normal paradigms shifting away from a risk averse culture. A compliance culture is balanced with innovation and challenging the status quo. There is confidence in the ability to rapidly react to unanticipated futures. Assessments are realistic, evidence based and purposefully considered. Where appropriate, strategic risks feed into sector wide risk management strategies.