Making Workforce Planning Work in the NT Public Sector

It’s a complex issue so keep it simple!
Acknowledgements
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Introduction

Workforce planning is a way of establishing the precise evidence required to ensure agencies are able to deliver their services to the community through having the right people in place at the right time.

This guide allows workforce planning to be done by agencies through a structured framework which also allows for the diverse range of roles not only between agencies but within agencies.

Workforce planning in the Northern Territory Public Sector can be achieved through 13 identified steps:

1. The snapshot environmental scan
2. Linking corporate, business and workforce planning
3. Identifying mission critical job groups, critical job groups (skill shortages) and hard to fill job groups
4. Identifying and addressing data gaps for mission critical job groups
5. Undertaking supply and demand gap calculations for mission critical job groups
6. Assessing the supply source to meet the supply gap for mission critical job groups
7. Identifying risk assessment of mission critical job groups
8. Using the evidence to verify agency mission critical job groups by timeframe
9. Identifying workforce development strategies
10. Implementing succession planning for mission critical jobs
11. Workforce planning reports
12. Monitoring workforce planning outcomes

Workforce planning will not be successful in agencies unless the process is being led by an executive team. Like any process that involves people, leadership is a key success factor.
Why is workforce planning important in the Northern Territory Public Sector?

One of the greatest challenges facing the Northern Territory Government is to attract and retain skilled and experienced workers to counter the impact of an ageing workforce, demographic change, current and projected service demands and the economic environment.

Northern Territory Public Sector agencies consider workforce planning skills, techniques and competencies as essential to steer the agencies through these difficulties. Those agencies who apply workforce planning strategies are more likely to retain ‘mission critical’ employees and manage workforce exits, making them better equipped to respond to their short, medium and longer term business demands than those agencies who do not.

The Northern Territory Government aims to establish and support a sustainable, innovative and responsive workforce to meet current and future demands from the community. To achieve this, agencies should integrate strategic and operational workforce planning into their normal business planning cycle.

The workforce planning processes need to be supported by:
- a consistency in understanding the meaning/definition of workforce planning and workforce development
- strong leadership and governance
- clarity around roles and responsibility for strategic and operational workforce planning
- sector wide capability building in strategic and operational workforce planning skills
- a systematic approach to supply and demand gap calculation
- consistency in risk assessment (of workforce supply) methodologies
- consistency in succession planning methodologies

Tips:
- Governance and leadership in workforce planning are essential to success.
- A systematic approach strengthens workforce information analysis and workforce development outcomes.
- Workforce planning is a new discipline – develop the skills and capabilities in your agency and across the NTPS.
- Integration of workforce planning into the business planning cycle is essential at agency level and public sector wide.
• consistency in reporting format
• coordinated workforce development strategies
• agency and sector-wide monitoring of outcomes
• a commitment to strengthen regional workforce development initiatives.

The Northern Territory Government Framework for Workforce Planning is a generic document which is consistent with the Standards Australia 2008 Workforce Planning Guidelines.

The framework enables:

a) sector wide evidence based workforce planning

b) agency autonomy.

This assists agencies in the identification of and accountability for workforce development strategies. The process and methods outlined in this framework are transferrable to any agency environment.

All agencies need to position themselves to retain and attract the talent they require now and in the future. This can be achieved through evidence based workforce planning, which is regarded as an essential element of good business practice in any economic environment.

Skill shortages will continue for many job groups for some years. The Northern Territory Government is committed to continuous skill development and believes this can be strengthened by targeted workforce development strategies based on quality workforce planning.
What is workforce planning?

Workforce planning is a process used to align the needs of an agency with its workforce. It is about producing the evidence to enable agencies to target workforce development strategies.

Instigation and accountability for workforce planning rests with senior decision-makers. In addition to strategic responsibility, human resource or corporate planning staff may also carry responsibility for the operational workforce planning. This responsibility may include the development of workforce planning methods and processes, the design and implementation of data systems, agency wide reporting on aggregated data, training and support for managers, communication and staff engagement strategies, and the implementation, monitoring and measurement of workforce development strategies. Managers have a role and responsibility for operational workforce planning through input into workforce planning data collection and monitoring.

Everyone, regardless of their employment arrangements, have a role to play in workforce planning, whether it is strategic, operational or through the completion of workforce profile data. The roles and responsibilities of all employees in workforce planning need to be clear and accountable.
What is workforce development?

Workforce development is a strategy you apply to retain and attract the workforce you need to deliver your services.

Retention, recruitment, attraction, branding, learning and development, job redesign, performance and talent management are all workforce development strategies; they are likely to have better outcomes if they are based on workforce planning evidence – show me the numbers!

Workforce planning is the driver of the workforce development strategies!
Concepts you need to be clear about before you start planning

Regard workforce planning as an opportunity!

The double ‘crunch’ time – the combined impact of difficult economic times and population ageing – is a once in a generational opportunity to assess the match between jobs and available supply. Some jobs will need to be redesigned to match available supply, others will need targeted workforce development strategies to retain and attract the required workforce.

Governance, leadership and integrity

Governance, leadership and integrity for workforce planning rest with the most senior decision makers in the agency. The executive have a clear role and responsibility for strategic workforce planning and the delegation of operational workforce planning at the appropriate level within the agency.

Those delegated with responsibility for workforce planning have a fundamental role in business and workforce development and they should be present at the ‘main table’ for workforce decision making.

Demonstrate the link between business, strategic, financial and workforce planning

Workforce planning is not a marginal task. It is integral to business, strategic and financial planning and should form part of the agency business planning cycle. Workforce planning will enable measurement of the impact of implementing and not implementing workforce development strategies on productivity, on the workforce and on the business.
A systematic approach to workforce planning is essential

The methods, tools and techniques used to gather, analyse and report on workforce planning are stronger if they reflect a systematic approach. Agencies can utilise existing sector wide data gathering methods and systems, such as the Personnel Integrated Payroll System (PIPS) and Business Objects XI (BOXI), to meet some workforce planning information requirements. The Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (OCPE) will work with the Department of Business and Employment (as the central service provider) and agencies to develop a service-wide approach to the collection, analysis and reporting of workforce data. This reporting will enable agency, sector and regional comparative analysis – in particular, for those job groups identified as mission critical (i.e. job groups that are essential for the agency and the Government) – to meet its legislative and regulatory requirements.

Workforce engagement is an essential element in workforce planning

Communicating with and engaging the workforce in workforce planning initiatives will strengthen an organisation’s workforce development strategies. The current workforce has a good understanding about why people are interested in working in the agency and why people walk away from the agency. This information should be documented to inform the design of retention and recruitment strategies.
A few important things to remember!

Establish a team of ‘champions’

Establish a team of ‘champions’ to lead the workforce planning initiative. The team, which should include those with executive responsibility for strategic planning, can be from the corporate, policy and planning, human resource or financial planning sections of your agency. These people will be expected to provide the high level strategic overview of the process. People with operational-level responsibility for workforce planning, such as human resource and or key line managers, should also be included.

It is important that responsibility for workforce planning lies with a team representative from your agency and that it is not just allocated to the human resource section. There is a significant role for line managers in gathering and reporting on data because as agencies progress with workforce planning they will need to build workforce planning capabilities at all levels of the agency to ensure consistency, accountability and succession for workforce planning skills. The operational managers are essential as they should turn the business strategy into the workforce/equipment required to deliver the strategy.

Identify and engage with relevant organisations

It is very important to engage with organisations that influence workforce planning, such as unions, researchers, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, relevant labour market monitoring sources, peak bodies and professional associations. Collaborate with them as they will assist in identifying labour market supply (current and projected), graduate projections, increasing and declining industry demand, supply source identification, and relevant industry trends.

Workforce planning informs workforce development strategies

Many agencies and businesses consider they are ‘doing’ workforce planning if they are offering strategies around retention and recruitment; This is not
workforce planning. These are workforce development strategies and are often not based on workforce demand and supply gap analysis or evidence-based workforce planning.

Workforce development strategies are outcomes of workforce planning. Workforce planning informs workforce development and workforce development strategies that can then be targeted and customised to work/job groups.

**Do not ignore key workforce segments**

It is important to consider the full workforce in agency workforce planning. Count the workforce that is delivering the agency services. This may include the non-permanent workforce, such as temporary casual and even permanent employees on higher duties. Some agencies may also need to include any retained or volunteer workforce. These people are the agency’s supply source. The more you understand the profile

_Tip:_

- Remember the blockage is often at the top when it comes to job redesign. Engage the exiting employees (e.g. pre-retirees) and new entry workers in creative discussion around ways to improve job design especially if you need to better match available workforce supply to the job.
of this complete workforce the stronger your workforce development strategies will be. Workforce planning can be undertaken as separate cohorts; however, analysis is stronger if it incorporates the workforce as a whole.

**Job redesign should be an option**

Where workforce supply is difficult to manage, where government policy requires a better match between available supply and jobs, and/or where quality control is vulnerable, job redesign is an option. Talk to potential employees and exiting employees about the job redesign and encourage open and creative thinking about the potential for this. Remember the blockage is often at the top when it comes to job redesign as some decision makers can have a closed mind to the way a job should/could be delivered. Instead, regard it as an opportunity to really think about the way you deliver services and the capacity to change so that workforce supply is better matched with service delivery.

**Those exiting the workforce today may be the same people who re-enter the workforce tomorrow**

After managing through the current difficult economic period, agencies need to be prepared for when the economy strengthens, which is likely to coincide with the impact of the ageing labour market in Australia. Workforce planning will be a crucial factor in managing this double challenge.

The projected exits from the labour market may have slowed due to current economic conditions, but when the tide turns again many ‘baby boomers’ will be looking to exit the labour market or continue working but under different transitional working arrangements. Agencies need to plan for these exits and retain for as long as possible those people from the critical job groups who would be considered regrettable turnover if they left the agency.
How do you do workforce planning – getting started

If the agency executive has clearly demonstrated strategic leadership and governance in workforce planning and you are a part of the team of ‘champions’ identified to implement workforce planning, you can be confident to proceed.

If, however, you have been delegated responsibility for workforce planning without the support of the team of ‘champions’, you may need to first build the business case for workforce planning and submit this to executive for sign-off. This is best kept concise with an emphasis on providing a snapshot environmental scan and risk assessment for your agency. That is, the risk assessment of not undertaking workforce planning.

Step 1:
The snapshot environmental scan

This should be as brief and concise as possible and include the following quantitative data:

- the current agency workforce profile by cohorts
- the broader relevant industry workforce
- the Northern Territory labour market indicators relevant to your agency
- trends in key job groups, divisions and/or locations
- projected increase and/or decline in industry demands
- available supply and associated implications for the agency’s capacity to meet projected service demands
- a cost benefit analysis of projected costs of recruitment (including marketing) of employees to mission critical job groups in comparison to costs associated with retention of existing employees in these job groups
- projected risk assessment of the agency’s capacity to meet legislative and regulatory service demands.

Step 2:
Linking corporate, business and workforce planning

Look at what the agency has nominated as its strategic and corporate directions, and at the new projects/services it is anticipating and the projects/services being reduced or completed (i.e. emerging or declining business.

Tip:
- You need to start with what you have now – then build on the data over time as you refine the process and build workforce planning capabilities in your agency.
demands). This information will assist you to identify the current and projected workforce by skill requirements, by location and by timeframe.

Some agencies (such as Police, Fire and Emergency Services, Education and Training and Health and Families) have established methods of identifying and projecting demand which is based on demographic trends – workforce and community, new service demands and government policies. If you do not have an agreed approach to demand projections, these agencies may be able to assist you to develop a process which suits your agency.

Step 3:
Identifying mission critical job groups, critical job groups (skills shortages) and hard to fill job groups

During difficult economic environments it is recommended you undertake workforce planning in the first instance around those jobs that are considered mission critical to your agency.

Agencies can establish their own definition. One way is to ask the following question: “What are the job groups that you must have to meet legislative, regulatory and service delivery requirements?” Remember, this may include some job groups which are not ‘obviously’ critical such as those sometimes regarded as ‘back-end support’ jobs (in other words, they are fundamental to the delivery but not regarded as the obvious critical job group). Examples may include: administrative, public relations, policy and planning job groups. You can also verify these job groups by ensuring you have incorporated projects and other service demands which are nominated in your strategic and corporate plans. This linking will also help with identifying mission critical jobs by associated timeframes.

Once the mission critical job groups have been nominated, you can then indicate if these job groups also are regarded as critical job groups (i.e. real skill shortage – territory, national and/or global) or hard to fill job groups (skills available but not enough people interested in undertaking the work).

It is important to consider all employees in these job groups regardless of their working arrangements. Be consistent with your terminology regarding employment status (e.g. on-going NTPS, temporary NTPS, casual NTPS – please note, all these groups are ordinarily captured in PIPS reporting). There may also be contractors, graduates, employees on special funded programs, and outsourced workers.
Ideally, if you have volunteers associated with the mission critical job groups you should also develop a workforce profile of these people to strengthen your supply source identification.

**Step 4: Identifying and addressing data gaps for mission critical job groups**

Refer to the detail for workforce profiling outlined in Step 3. Consider the quality of the workforce profiling information you have regarding employees in these job groups. Some information can be accessed through other surveys you have undertaken or through one-on-one conversations with employees. However, sometimes it is easier to start with ‘fresh’ workforce planning specific data. It is important to establish a data base which enables comparative analysis between questions (e.g. employee division x location x working life intentions x career intentions x work demands). Often this can be easily achieved if the initial workforce profile has a system which supports this analysis.
Step 5:
Undertaking supply and demand gap calculations for mission critical job groups

A supply and demand gap calculator enables agencies to quickly identify their workforce supply gaps. It enables workforce planning capability building and increases the responsibility and accountability for operational workforce planning at the middle manager level and above. It maximises strategic workforce planning and provides evidence based workforce planning data at the branch, division, location, agency and public sector wide level. There are numerous supply and demand gap tools available and vary in their sophistication. A simple method is to create an excel spreadsheet. These can be linked where possible to existing agency workforce management systems.

Supply variables can include factors such as the replenishment of the workforce through VET and tertiary institutions, national and international migration patterns, labour force participation, retirement patterns and lifestyle choices.

Demand variables can include factors such as current and forecast population needs, population distribution projections and the influence of technological advances.

When determining demand projections it is best to consider criteria suitable to your agency. Some good examples in the Northern Territory are available through Police, Fire and Emergency Services, the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Health and Families. These may be referred to as ‘Resource Allocation Models’. Some industries recommend national demand projection modelling so ensure you are aware of any national demand modelling associated with the industries with which your agency is associated.
Step 6: Assessing the supply source to meet the supply gap for mission critical job groups

After the supply gap calculation is completed, managers are asked to nominate how they will address the gap, whether it is a positive or negative gap (e.g. over supply or under supply). The gap calculation tool seeks manager input into the core strategy to address the supply gap, such as:

- retention
- recruitment – internal
- recruitment – external
- grow own workforce
- job redesign
- technology
- employer initiated exit
- employee initiated exit
- accessing underemployed
- targeted agency policy (such as the Working Future initiative).

This data should then be considered against available supply ideally using the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) data (formerly known as ASCO). The template on page 19 provides an example for supply analysis that could be used to identify available supply.

Using the supply gap calculation, agencies can identify how many people they need for a particular job group and then using the ANZSCO data identify how many people with the required qualifications are in the labour market and potentially available – in the organisation, in the region, in the Northern Territory, nationally and globally. The workforce development retention and recruitment strategies can then be targeted (e.g. if you need three people with these skills and the data tells you there are 30 in the Territory, and 300 in Australia, you know where and how to target your recruitment strategy). Equally, if the data shows there are no people with these skills (real skill shortage), you know you have to consider other strategies such as global recruitment, growing own workforce, job redesign and/or strategies to attract the underemployed in to the labour market.

As you become more familiar and comfortable with the ANZSCO codes you can extend your supply source assessments out to more complex coding which includes ANZSCO SUB-MAJOR GROUPS, MINOR GROUPS, UNIT GROUPS, OCCUPATIONS.

If you choose to use the sample template overleaf just work with the ANZSCO Major Groups that are relevant to your workforce. You only need to include those relevant to your agency on your supply source template.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Category by ANZSCO MAJOR GROUPS</th>
<th>Existing permanent employee</th>
<th>Existing non-permanent employee</th>
<th>Supply Gap (from supply gap calculation)</th>
<th>Number. People avail in region (ABS)</th>
<th>No. avail in NT (ABS)</th>
<th>No. avail Aust (ABS)</th>
<th>No. avail Global (Industry Peak Body data)</th>
<th>No. Alternative supply</th>
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<td>Managers and Administrators</td>
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<td>Computer Systems Officers</td>
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<td>12 (contract)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>54,000</td>
<td>34 people in NT identified as having these skills but not currently using them or seeking employment in this job group.</td>
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<td>Associate Professionals</td>
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Step 7: Identifying risk assessment of mission critical job groups

The gap calculation tool assists the assessment of the risks of not addressing the supply gap. The risk assessment criteria will need to be set by the workforce planning team and/or the executive. When the data is aggregated in the calculation tool summary report, the full agency risk assessment can be identified by mission critical job groups providing strong information for the workforce development strategies.

Step 8: Using the evidence to verify agency mission critical job groups by timeframe

Once the supply gap calculation, workforce development strategy and risk assessment are complete another assessment of mission critical job group by timeframe should be undertaken to verify the job groups by timeframes (see table below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mission critical job group</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012+</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategic workforce planners</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>Project managers</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>Technical skills</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</table>

A list of mission critical job groups for the Northern Territory Public Sector by timeframe would be a significant and useful public sector wide planning document. This document could form the basis of a Territory-wide mission critical job list by timeframes and include public, private and not for profit sectors. This could be used to strengthen regional workforce planning and development.
Step 9: Identifying workforce development strategies

Your workforce development strategies should effectively ‘write themselves’ if your workforce planning method:

- has been actively supported by the executive
- is inclusive of employee input (especially those in the mission critical job groups)
- is based on evidence obtained through the supply gap calculation
- includes a risk assessment and supply source identification.

Agencies should be able to establish targeted workforce development strategies which are consistent with risk assessment time frames and which are aligned with their business corporate and strategic planning objectives.

Workforce development strategies can be grouped as follows to maximise your workforce planning outcomes:

**Building a sustainable workforce** – stating your agency’s commitment to the following:

- Evidence-based workforce planning – ‘Better Data + Better Decisions’
- Identify, report on and monitor the agency mission critical job groups by timeframes
- Identify, report on and monitor all other job groups
- Build on outcomes of workforce planning through further research into trends and indicators which emerge from the workforce plans
- Strengthen workforce planning and workforce development capabilities within your agency through manager training and system refinement
- Understand your competitors (local, regional, national and global)
- Strengthen networks between relevant industry peak bodies and associations to ensure you are aware of the labour market demand and supply projections

**Tip:**

- A list of mission critical job groups for the Northern Territory Public Sector by timeframe would be a significant and useful public sector wide planning document. This document could form the basis of a Territory-wide mission critical job list by timeframes, including public, private and not for profit sectors. It could be used to strengthen regional workforce planning and development.
• Define the role and responsibility for strategic and operational workforce planning in your agency

• Resource the agency strategic and operational workforce planning initiatives.

**Attracting and retaining talent**

• Regard your workforce as a ‘whole’ and not by employee characteristics

• Enhance cross-cultural and community knowledge

• Better match available supply/available skills and service delivery

• Influence workforce expectations around work-life balance, mobility, learning and development, and leadership capability

• Influence community expectations around service delivery

• Embrace job redesign and consider new ways of working and service delivery

• Identify and embrace technology to manage service demands

• Commit to growing your own workforce

• Link career development to succession and workforce plans

• Identify career paths for all job groups

• Offer opportunities at all career stages

• Inform and engage the workforce in workforce planning and workforce development

• Target recruitment, in particular, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed in your agency

• Target retention of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed in your agency

**Tip:**

• Count all the people who deliver your agency services as your workforce regardless of their working and employment arrangements. If you have volunteers working for your agency, develop a separate workforce plan for these people as they may be your future supply source.
• Monitor your agency workforce cohort trends (new entry workers, early, mid and end career employees) and address retention through targeted workforce development strategies

• Position your agency to compete for talent and available labour supply (local, regional, national and global).

**Strengthening a capable workforce**

• Link corporate, business and workforce planning

• Build agency capabilities in workforce planning and workforce development

• Establish a systematic approach to workforce planning methods

• Create the right workforce mix to lead, support and provide high-quality services

• Drive industry training and learning in core service requirements
Strengthening a capable workforce (continued)

- Collaborate with industry competitors to retain, recruit and build the required workforce
- Link workforce planning, succession planning and career development
- Create a supportive and engaging workplace and culture
- Monitor and measure the impact of workforce development strategies against other agencies and against your industry trends.

Step 10: Implementing succession planning for mission critical job groups

Succession planning is a workforce development strategy. Having verified the mission critical job groups, you can now use this information to develop your succession plans by branch, division, location or agency. Agencies should be alert to duplication in succession planning (i.e. where the same person or position is nominated for a variety of mission critical positions).

Ideally, succession planning for all NT Government mission critical job groups should be undertaken and made available as a career development reference to current and future employees. There is a sample succession planning template on page 25.

Tips:
- Do not forget your current workforce will know exactly why people are attracted to and walk away from your agency – ask them, especially those with the WOW factor (the wise older worker who has been observing for a long time).
- The ‘Useful references’ section has further information on agencies and organisations with relevant documents on workforce development strategies.
### Succession Planning Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Group</th>
<th>Current incumbent</th>
<th>Classification/ Stream</th>
<th>Highest qualification</th>
<th>Skills /attributes</th>
<th>Working life intentions with agency*</th>
<th>Additional comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Director Corporate and Policy</td>
<td>Ms J Bloggs</td>
<td>Executive team/ Professional</td>
<td>Masters in Management</td>
<td>Executive Leadership and policy experience</td>
<td>2- 3 years</td>
<td>Has indicated may need to return to South Australia to care for aging parents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Bench ready 1: (immediate replacement)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Group</th>
<th>Classification/Stream</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Skills/attributes</th>
<th>Additional comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director Strategic HR</td>
<td>Branch Manager, Professional</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Leadership/ operational workforce planning</td>
<td>Currently undertaking additional studies in strategic workforce planning. Due to complete studies in June 2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Bench ready 2: (3 - 6 months until replacement ready)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Group</th>
<th>Classification/Stream</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Skills/attributes</th>
<th>Additional comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director Policy and Planning</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Understanding of workforce demographics</td>
<td>Indicated interest in workforce planning in performance management interview.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Bench ready 3: (12+ months until replacement ready)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Group</th>
<th>Classification/Stream</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Skills/attributes</th>
<th>Additional comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manager People and Planning Branch</td>
<td>Administration 7</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>Knowledge of HR management information systems and requirements.</td>
<td>Interested in strategic HR as a career path.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BRANCH SUMMARY: Succession Plan for mission critical job groups 2009 - 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Group</th>
<th>Bench Ready 1 (position)</th>
<th>Bench ready 2 (position)</th>
<th>Bench ready 3 (position)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>J. Bloggs Executive Director Corporate and Policy</td>
<td>Director Strategic HR</td>
<td>Director Policy and Planning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 11: Workforce planning reports

Workforce planning reporting should be integrated into the normal agency and public sector business planning cycle. Reporting to executive should include the following elements:

**Environment scan** – labour market impact on agency corporate and strategic objectives.

**Workforce profile (‘the data story’), including:**
- current and projected mission critical job groups
- supply gap analysis
- supply source assessment
- risk assessment (of supply)
- a comparative analysis statement demonstrating any public sector wide benchmark data.

**Workforce development strategy** – recommendations, objectives and measurement methods.

Step 12: Monitoring workforce planning outcomes

Agencies integrating workforce planning into normal business practice need to monitor trends and evaluate workforce planning initiatives, including:
- refining of methods, tools and techniques
- capability building in strategic and operational workforce planning
- evaluation of outcomes of the workforce development strategies
- recommendations for progressing workforce planning and workforce development within the agency.

Step 13: Mapping and evolving agency workforce planning

When the workforce planning process is established in the agency and is integrated into the normal business planning cycle, agencies and the Northern Territory Government could consider establishing interactive mapping which enables current and future employees to click on the relevant industry icon by location and easily identify the workforce supply and demand gaps, the associated workforce development strategies to retain and attract the required workforce, and the relevant contact details if they wish to access more information.
## A sample checklist for workforce planning in your agency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workforce Planning project</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Ready to proceed</th>
<th>Not ready to proceed</th>
<th>Associated task</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Person or position with responsibility for implementing task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Building business case for workforce planning – an environmental scan</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Need to establish workforce planning 'team' to implement workforce planning strategy and operations including employee communication strategy around workforce planning framework</td>
<td>May 2009</td>
<td>Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Linking corporate, business and workforce planning</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Need to demonstrate link between business and workforce planning</td>
<td>June 2009</td>
<td>Workforce Planning Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Identifying mission critical job groups, critical job groups (skills shortage) and hard to fill job groups</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Need to build workforce planning capabilities at manager level and have the managers identify mission critical job groups</td>
<td>June 2009</td>
<td>Coordinated by Workforce Planning Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td>Identifying and addressing data gaps for mission critical job groups</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Need to check compatibility of existing workforce information systems</td>
<td>June 2009</td>
<td>Director Corporate Planning, Director Human Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
<td>Undertaking supply and demand gap calculations for mission critical job groups</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Need to develop systematic approach to workforce data gathering and analysis</td>
<td>August 2009</td>
<td>Workforce Planning Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 6</td>
<td>Assessing supply source to meet supply gap for mission critical job groups</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Managers to complete supply gap calculations and submit risk assessment and workforce development strategy recommendations to Workforce Planning Team</td>
<td>September 2009</td>
<td>Coordinated by Workforce Planning Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 7</td>
<td>Identifying risk assessment of mission critical job groups</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Need to aggregate risk assessment data from managers and match with business and corporate planning timeframes</td>
<td>September 2009</td>
<td>Workforce Planning Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 8</td>
<td>Using the evidence to verifying agency mission critical job groups by timeframe</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Submit aggregated data including mission critical job groups x risk assessment x timeframe to executive for verification</td>
<td>October 2009</td>
<td>Workforce Planning Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 9</td>
<td>Identifying workforce development strategies</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assess manager workforce development strategies and recommendations and identify trends and requests. Recommend agency wide response to these strategies</td>
<td>November 2009</td>
<td>Workforce Planning Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 10</td>
<td>Implementing succession planning for mission critical job groups</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Review manager recommendations for succession planning – initially across mission critical job groups and then proceed to address all job groups</td>
<td>November 2009</td>
<td>Workforce Planning Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 11</td>
<td>Workforce Planning Reports</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prepare agency-wide workforce plan for timeframes consistent with corporate plan</td>
<td>December 2009</td>
<td>Workforce Planning Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 12</td>
<td>Monitoring workforce planning outcomes</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop measurement methods to monitor impact of workforce planning against outcomes of workforce development strategies</td>
<td>December 2009</td>
<td>Workforce Planning Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 13</td>
<td>Mapping and evolving agency workforce planning</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Integrate workforce planning into normal business planning cycle</td>
<td>February 2010</td>
<td>Executive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Identify Mission Critical Job group, Workforce planning capabilities developed in agency

Identify data gaps for mission critical job groups
Compatibility of existing workforce information systems, assessed gaps identified

Undertake supply and demand gap calculations for mission critical job groups
Systematic approach established

Assess supply source to meet supply gap
Supply gap calculations, risk assessment & workforce development strategy recommendations to Workforce Planning Team

Identify risk assessment of mission critical job groups
Aggregate risk assessment data and match with business and corporate planning timeframes

Prepare succession plans for mission critical job groups
Review manager recommendations for succession planning

Prepare agency wide workforce development strategies
Recommend agency wide response to workforce development strategies

Use the evidence to verifying agency mission critical job groups by timeframe
Executive to verify agency mission critical job groups x risk assessment x timeframe

Map and evolve agency workforce planning
Integrate workforce planning into normal business planning cycle.

A workforce planning chart
Remember if you do not build on a solid foundation (evidence-based workforce planning) your workforce development strategies will not be sustainable!
The language of workforce planning

**Workforce planning** – getting the numbers right or as close as you can! Aligning the business needs with those of the workforce.

**Workforce development** – the strategies you apply to retain and attract the workforce you need to deliver your services.

**Workforce cohorts – agency**

Workforce characteristics, such as age, gender, cultural background and other identifiers, are important but not critical in workforce planning. They are more directly relevant to workforce development strategies.

It is best if the workforce is defined through its cohorts as these are more reliable information sources for monitoring retention and recruitment trends.

The workforce planning cohorts are generally identified as follows:

- new entry: < 2 years working in the agency
- early career: >2 and <5 years working in the agency
- mid career 1: >5 and < 10 years working in the agency
- mid career 2: >10 and <15 years working in the agency
- mid career 3: >15 and <20 years working in the agency
- transition workforce: 20+ years working in the agency.

**Tips:**

- Workforce mobility trends are key informants to workforce planning
- Don’t get distracted by lots of data - workforce planning requires only core data about the current and future workforce requirements
- Regard your workforce as a whole - the worker characteristics, such as age and other diversity are more relevant to the workforce development strategies than the workforce planning.
Other cohorts that should be monitored are:

- employees who entered the agency through graduate programs
- employees who entered the agency through targeted programs such as the Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy and Willing and Able.

**Workforce cohorts – industry**

Information about the ‘industry’ experience of employees allows workforce planning to more clearly target the training and learning needs of employees. It is often the case that a person may be a ‘new entry’ worker to an agency but bring to the agency mid career or more work experience, knowledge and skill. This employee may need a different induction, career development and management training and support than a new entry or new industry employee.

This information is less easy to access through sector wide systems, but can be easily accessed if workforce planning is undertaken at the branch level and includes the engagement of the workforce in the process.

Some agencies may already gather this information and some may need to undertake specific workforce profiling (survey or conversation) to gather the information directly from employees. The NTPS biennial staff survey will gather data on this at an agency level and if this is all the information available initially it will be useful. However, in time, as workforce planning is refined, questions about industry background should be included in agency performance management discussions, staff satisfaction and/or other similar surveys so that comparative analysis can occur between industry experience, agency experience and job group, division and/or location.

**Mobility**

Monitoring of employee mobility is more important in some agencies than others and is allowed for in the NTPS mobility strategy *Broadening Our Horizons – Avenues for Career Mobility*. This is a positive development option for NTPS employees and agencies: However, for some agencies, ‘internal churn’ causes significant planning pressures and needs to be monitored. For others, intra-agency movement may be more of an issue. In workforce planning, mobility trends form an important part of the data story.
The data story

The data story incorporates the core workforce planning data. Many agencies get lost in copious amounts of data. In workforce planning the core data involves:

- **Job group(s)** (in particular mission critical, global and national skill shortage jobs and job groups and hard to fill job groups)

- **Funded positions/FTEs** (or whatever workforce number reporting system is used by the agency)

- **Current vacancies**

- **Previous mobility** (last financial year) exits minus entries by job group/family

- **Projected mobility** (future nominated timeframe) exits minus entries by job group/family

- **Projected workforce demand** (increase, decrease, no change)

- **Potential available supply for nominated timeframe**

- **Supply gap for nominated timeframe**

- **Risk assessment of attracting/reducing required workforce**

- **Workforce development strategy:**
  - retention
  - recruitment internal
  - recruitment external
  - recruitment targeted (e.g. Indigenous employment and career development Strategy and Willing and Able)
  - job re-design
  - technology
  - succession planning
  - employee initiated exits (e.g. voluntary separation packages (VSPs))
  - agency initiated exits (e.g. retrenchment and or targeted separation packages (TSPs))
  - other (agency specific strategies).
Every employee and/or volunteer, regardless of their working arrangements, should be aware of and engaged in the workforce planning process. Inform them that you are embarking on workforce planning so that you can offer workforce development strategies that are directly relevant to them and that will assist them to manage their current and projected workload. Ask your employees what their working life intentions are – within your agency, in the NT Public Sector, and in the broader labour market. Ask them what attracted them to work in your agency and what would make them leave. Ask them why they think others come and go? Engagement of the workforce in a real rather than tokenistic way will strengthen your workforce development strategies.

Employees in mission critical job groups are very important to your workforce planning. It may be that you need to undertake a workforce profile of these workers to strengthen your workforce planning data.

Workforce profile

Workforce profiling involves the use of a survey to gather quantitative (numbers) and qualitative (comment) workforce data. The profile should be de-identified (i.e. you do not need to know the name of the employee, just the data relevant to their job group). Generally, the workforce profile gathers some general information such as that listed on page 34. Some of this data may already be gathered through staff satisfaction and staff climate surveys.
However, when planning for mission critical job groups a specific workforce profile may need to be undertaken. This planning involves collecting the following information:

**Information about the respondent job group, including:**
- where they work – division, section, location, region
- the job group they belong to (e.g. management team, outdoor worker, administrative officer, technical or professional worker).

**Information about the respondent characteristics, including:**
- age
- gender
- cultural background and language skills.

**Information about the respondent current and projected working arrangements and intentions, including:**
- working arrangements
- length of time working with your agency
- length of time working in NT Government
- length of time they intend to remain working with your agency
- length of time they intend to remain working in NT Government
- length of time they intend to remain in the paid workforce.

**Information about respondent level of interest in up-skilling, including:**
- highest level qualification
- level of interest in securing further qualifications by type of qualification
- their view of skills and attributes required for their job/job group
- their views on career development opportunities and ways your agency can assist them to achieve these.

**Information about respondent view on agency workforce development initiatives, including:**
- their level of interest in current agency policy (e.g. transition to retirement, work life balance, modified working arrangements).
- challenges for them by remaining with your agency
- challenges for them by remaining in the NT Government
- if relevant, questions about level of work demands
- if relevant, questions about bullying and harassment
- their view and ideas for employee retention and attraction strategies
- if relevant, questions about staff satisfaction/climate
- general comments employees wish to make directly to the executive (optional).
Mission critical job groups

These are the job groups your executive has identified as critical to the agency capacity to deliver on its legislative and/or regulatory requirements. These should also be matched to corporate and strategic plans.

Critical job groups

These are the job groups that are in actual skill shortage either nationally and/or globally. You can look at the ‘Northern Territory Occupation Shortage List’ provided by the Northern Territory Department of Business and Employment or by the Australian Government’s Department of Immigration. Alternatively, university departments that monitor labour market trends may be able to assist you.

Remember – if you have critical job groups on your mission critical job group list you need to think differently about your retention and recruitment strategies based on the information you have about the current and projected supply of people with these skills.

Tip:

• Although all job groups are important, it is essential you start with mission critical job groups and work systematically across all job groups.
Hard to fill job groups

Hard to fill job groups are those that have enough people in NT or Australia to fill the jobs but generally people do not want to do these jobs for a range of reasons – such as, the nature of the work, the salary levels, the location, the career opportunities and so on. If you have hard to fill job groups on your mission critical job group list then you need to consider retention and recruitment strategies that address redesign, working arrangements, growing your own workforce, attracting the underemployed and the underutilised labour market (that is, people who have the skill sets you are looking for but who do not wish to work full time and are seeking alternative working arrangements).

Risk assessment

Agencies can determine their own risk assessment methods for workforce planning. These can be aligned to other business risk assessment methods, as simple as high, medium or low risk, or more sophisticated such as:

- **minor short-term** – can be managed within workplace
- **sustained** – cannot fill critical job group and therefore will have a sustained impact on the capacity to deliver service (the agency will need to consider alternative service provisions).
- **major** – service will need to close.

The question you need to ask is: What is the risk to this agency of not attracting or retaining the number of employees required for this job group?

Supply source analysis

Identifying supply source can be one of the more difficult workforce planning tasks. If your agency has aligned your job groups/job families to ANZSCO codes (Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations), you can simply look up the code and then search the ABS data to determine

Tips:
- Do not forget your supply source is right in front of you – the current employees will tell you why people are attracted to your agency and why they go.
- When having difficulty attracting supply, remember to recruit for match and attitude first.
how many people in the region, the Territory or Australia have these skills and then develop an appropriate marketing strategy to attract the number you require using targeted recruitment strategies.

If your agency does not align job groups or job group families to the ANZSCO codes, it is worth considering doing so as this is one method of providing evidence-based workforce planning data. It can be a complex and overwhelming task for all job groups, so it is best to start with your mission critical jobs and then systematically progress through each of your job groups/job families.

Supply source can also be identified by accessing regional information about the underutilised labour market. They may come from recruitment agencies, career reference centres, industry peak bodies and associations who may have access to data on people who have the skill sets you are seeking but who do not wish to work full-time or are seeking alternative working arrangements.

Supply source identification can also be strengthened if you include all workforce segments in your workforce planning such as: contractors, temporary staff and volunteers. Often the people with the skills and attributes you require are already working for you in some way and just need to be asked about their working life intentions with your agency and in the labour market generally.

Supply source can also be ‘grown’ - particularly for regional and remote locations. The opportunity to grow the skills required can be strengthened if included in your longer term workforce development strategies.

**Succession planning**

The public sector generally in Australia has not undertaken succession planning well, in part because of the on-going commitment to selection by merit. However, if incorporated as a part of the workforce planning process, and supported by transparent selection and appointment criteria, it can be a powerful workforce planning tool.

Succession planning is most effective if only the current incumbent in a job is identified by name and the succession positions are identified only by role and classification.

**Tips:**

- The ANZSCO codes are very useful and easily understood, but keep your systems as simple as possible so it does not become unmanageable.
- Ideally, every employee should be able to describe the career path options associated with their job and the link these options have to the agency succession plan for mission critical job groups and then into the ANZSCO codes.
Mapping
Advanced workforce planning should include mapping of workforce requirements. The mapping should be interactive and provide key data about the industry, the job group(s) required, the timeframe for required workforce and the key contact details.

Reporting
Workforce planning reporting should be concise and be based on evidence. Reports should focus on the ‘data story’ of the current, the incoming and the exiting workforce and demonstrate the alignment of agency business needs with those of its employees. Once integrated into normal business practice and incorporating technology for supply gap calculations, workforce planning report should be available 24/7 for executive assessment.

Evaluating and monitoring
Workforce planning and development outcomes should be monitored and evaluated at regular intervals to enable process refinement and evolution and monitoring of workforce planning capabilities within the agency.

Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) codes
If you are delegated responsibility for workforce planning (strategic or operational), it is important to have an understanding of the ANZSCO system and codes. These can be complex but it is best to keep your referencing simple.

The ABS offer clear definitions and explanations for the codes which cover the following:

- **the ‘job’** – a set of tasks designed to be performed by one individual in return for wage or salary

- **the ‘occupation’** – a set of jobs with similar sets of tasks

- **the ‘skill level’** – the range and complexity of the set of skills required for the job.

Some agencies may have established their own job group/job family codes to plan their workforce. While this is useful, in the current and projected economic climate it is suggested that agencies consider aligning their job groups to ANZSCO codes.

**Tip:**
- Remember, no matter how well you plan, your workforce always has an open door to exit your agency. The aim is to engage them in workforce planning and workforce development so that they choose to stay.
Where codes cannot be aligned, the agency can continue with their own codes for these job groups and seek to have these occupations included in future classifications.

To maximise the Northern Territory Workforce Planning Framework, agencies could consider planning towards a **Capability and Career Framework** which captures the following:

- job group(s)
- agency risk assessment(s)
- ANZSCO code(s)
- agency job family(s)
- career stream/job group(s)
- classification level(s)
- job role(s)/task(s)
- core capability(s)
- support capability(s)
- technical capability(s).
Useful references

- **Strategic Workforce Planning and Development**, Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment, Northern Territory Government swpd.ocpe@nt.gov.au


- **NT Government Occupation Shortage List**, Department of Business and Employment, Employment Branch, Northern Territory Government

- **A Working Future** www.workingfuture.nt.gov.au


- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategic Workforce Plan 2008-2011**, Department of Health and Families, Northern Territory Government

- **Workforce Plan 2009-2013**, Department of Education and Training, Northern Territory Government

- **Workforce Planning Report 2009**, Department of Planning and Infrastructure, Northern Territory Government


- **About the Northern Territory Public Sector. What employees should know**, Employment in the Northern Territory Public Sector Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment, Northern Territory Government

- **Job Evaluation System (JES) Northern Territory Government information booklet**, Northern Territory Government

- **Northern Territory: Community Sector ‘Workforce Toolkit’** Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS) www.ntcoss.org.au. *This tool kit is user friendly and has various tips relating to workforce development strategies.*

Tip:
- Some of these references will become fixed items on your desk. Familiarise yourself with what they offer and make contact with those responsible for writing them as they may be able to direct you to specific information about your workforce.
• Australian Bureau of Statistics – Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) – First Edition

• Australian Government DEEWR Jobs Outlook


• Standards Australia 2008 Guidelines on Workforce Planning HB 299 – 2008 sales@sai-global.com

• Workforce Planning Australia www.workforceplanning.com.au

• An Introduction to Workforce Planning – are you ready for crunch time? by Julie Sloan, Director, Workforce Planning Australia www.workforceplanning.com.au

• The Workforce Planning Imperative – 2009, by Julie Sloan, Director, Workforce Planning Australia www.workforceplanning.com.au