

Getting ready for the workforce development planning process



**A guide for state
sporting and recreation
organisations**



Government of Western Australia
Department of Sport and Recreation

**COMMUNITY
VOLUNTEER
PROJECT**

SPORT⁴ALL

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1. Introduction

Welcome to this guide to workforce development planning for state sporting and recreation organisations.

In this guide you will find information specific to the workforce development needs of paid staff and unpaid volunteers at state sporting and recreation organisations.

The guide includes self-assessment checklists that will allow you to identify your readiness for workforce development planning or will identify areas of your organisation that may need some further work before you commence activities on the establishment of a formal workforce development plan.

When you have worked through the guide, addressed the preparatory activities and re-assessed your organisation's readiness you will be able to apply for the professional support available from the Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR) for the development of your plan.

2. What is workforce development?

Workforce development is the integrated process applied across an industry or within an organisation to attract and retain workers and to provide learning, development and skilling opportunities for these workers.

The term applies to both paid employees and to the large number of volunteer workers engaged in sport and recreation.

Understanding and profiting from formal workforce development processes involves a major shift in organisational thinking. Workforce development is often used to describe professional development and training activities, but the reality is that the description is far broader and requires much more organisational effort.

There is a need to broaden thinking from just training to include factors such as organisational development, change management, knowledge transfer and skill development.

Workforce development is a multi-level approach to supporting and sustaining effective work practice. It includes strategies at the level of the individual worker, the team, the organisation and the broader system within which the organisation operates. It can address individual factors such as attitudes, motivation and confidence in performing work roles, as well as knowledge and skills. It can include factors related to the working environment, such as support from co-workers and supervisors, staff feedback mechanisms, professional development opportunities and reward and remuneration.

Workforce development should also involve strategies to support best practice and remove or reduce barriers to effective work practice. The ultimate goal of workforce development is to provide a more effective working environment, which translates into more motivated staff and a greater likelihood that the organisation will meet its objectives and prosper.

Workforce development planning is often described as: "getting the right people with the right skills and competencies in the right job at the right time for the right cost".

There are six components in the workforce development process and these are shown in the diagram that follows. The information in this guide will lead state sporting and recreation organisations through the six components and provide them with the knowledge required to commence the work associated with the development, implementation and review of a workforce development plan.



Volunteers are workers too!

Do not assume that workforce development strategies are only for large organisations or for those with paid staff. No matter how big or small your organisation or whether it has paid workers, volunteer workers or a mix of both it can still benefit from using workforce development strategies.

3. The key workforce development focus areas

Effective people management and development is fundamental to achieving improvement. Unless an organisation can attract, retain, develop, manage and motivate skilled people (both paid employees and key volunteer workers) it will find it difficult to keep pace with the increasing demands for high performance, improvement, modernisation and efficiency.

The following focus areas have been identified as being an appropriate platform for organisations to consider in the development of a robust workforce development strategy;

- Leadership and professionalism;
- Provision of an interesting and stimulating work environment;
- Formal workforce planning;
- Formal volunteer management;
- Promotion of targeted professional learning and development; and
- Identification and action on skill gaps.

How you deal with these focus areas will determine how successful your workforce development processes are. The table on page four lists the key components of the six focus areas.

In preparing your organisation for the workforce development planning process it is important that some planning, development or early implementation activity is occurring in relation to the components across the six areas.

There is no requirement for all the components to be addressed before the workforce development planning process commences, but there is a need for the organisation to commit to the initiation of activity across the six areas.

Focus areas	Key components
Leadership and Professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A public strategic direction • Effective governance and committed management • Strong and supportive leadership • Focus on organisational sustainability and growth • Formal organisational policies and procedures • Structured processes for staff and volunteer recruitment, retention and development
Provision of an interesting and stimulating work environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A focus on efficient and effective work practices • Consideration of job rotations, project activity and task-related work • Detailed recruitment processes • Formal orientation and induction programs • Range of employee engagement practices – full time, part time, casual, job sharing • Range of volunteer engagement practices - regular, task-based, on-demand • Alignment of paid and volunteer worker skills with organisational need
Formal workforce planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of current paid and volunteer workforce needs • Consideration of future workforce needs • Succession planning • Skills and career pathways • Workforce talent identification processes • Understanding of external environment and impact on the workforce • Use of labour market information and data to plan for future workforce need
Formal volunteer management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal process for managing the volunteer workforce • Allocation of resources for volunteer management • Processes for the learning and development of volunteers • Links to broader volunteering and community engagement models • Clear communication processes • Involvement of key volunteers in organisational activity • Process for ensuring key volunteer knowledge, skills and attributes
Promotion of targeted professional development and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of paid worker and volunteer skill needs • Alignment of professional learning and development with identified skill needs • Alignment of professional learning and development with broader organisational requirements • Identification of appropriate professional learning and development programs • Focus on quality and effectiveness of programs • Formal evaluation process • Allocation of adequate resources for professional learning and development • Identification of funding sources to support professional learning and development
Identification and action on skill gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes to determine current workforce skill needs • Allocation of paid workers and volunteers based on skills • Processes to identify and quantify skill gaps • Plans to fill skill gaps • Understanding of the skills available in the workforce for future operation • Plans to develop and/or secure future workforce skills

4. Workforce development - where is your organisation now?

There are ten items in the first checklist that assess the capacity and capability of an organisation in relation to leadership and planning.

These ten items can be categorised in three areas as shown in the following diagram.



The effective implementation of a workforce development plan relies on the commitment and support of the Board members and the drive and enthusiasm of the management of the organisation.

If this is an area that requires further work you will need to convince Board members about the benefits of workforce development planning before you start the process.

Workforce development planning requires a focus on common business policies and procedures and your organisation should have in place things such as organisational charts, position descriptions (for paid employees and key volunteer workers) and a process for reviewing and revising these things before you start the planning process.

One of the initial activities in the workforce development planning process is to identify current skills and to identify gaps in the organisation's skills base. This process requires the organisation to collect and analyse paid employee and key volunteer worker information. If your organisation does not currently collect this information or the information you have is out of date, you will need to address this area before you start the planning process.

The following checklist and the others throughout this guide will allow you to determine whether your organisation is in the **GREEN ZONE** and ready to commence the workforce development planning process or in the **RED ZONE** and requiring some further preparatory work before commencing the planning process.

If there are more than across the four checklists you are ready for the planning process.

More than means that you will need to do some preparatory work.

Checklist 1 - Where is the organisation now?

This checklist asks you to consider the current capacity and capability in your organisation in relation to strategy, leadership and planning.

The Organisation has:		
• a strong and supportive Board	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• effective leadership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• motivation to improve or enhance its current position	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• an organisational chart for paid employees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• an organisational chart for key volunteer roles on the Board, councils, committees and divisions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• job or position descriptions for paid employees and for key volunteers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• a record of paid employee and key volunteer skills and qualifications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• formal policies, procedures and practices to support the operation of the organisation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• a formal process to regularly review organisational processes and systems	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• internal support and enthusiasm for the development and implementation of a workforce development plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there more <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or more <input type="checkbox"/> ? Is your organisation in the GREEN ZONE or the RED ZONE ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Placing the workforce in a strategic context

To understand and benefit from the workforce development planning process there is a need to consider the entire environment and system in which your organisation operates.

The term 'capacity building' is sometimes used interchangeably with workforce development to describe the importance to an organisation of efficient and effective systems, processes, people and practices.

Capacity building looks beyond the workforce needs to broader considerations and as such, workforce development should be regarded as a component of organisational capacity building.

For any organisation to be able to build the capacity it needs it must first be able to identify what it is that it requires. This may seem like an obvious statement, but the ability to identify what the broad workforce requirements are and to distil these to an individual worker level can be difficult to achieve.

Workforce development planning should be integrated into an organisation's strategic, business or corporate planning processes. The starting point for a workforce development plan should be an organisation's strategic plan.

Where is the organisation headed and what are the skills required to take it there?

What skills will be required to support the effective and sustainable operation of the organisation once its current strategic goals and objectives are achieved?

Building organisational capacity is only possible if clear links are made between the organisation's corporate strategy and how it manages its workforce. A workforce development plan should cover the same period as the organisation's overall strategic plans (three to five years) and extend beyond the details of the traditional short-term learning and development or human resource plans used in many organisations.

At the strategic, organisation, team and individual level the organisation needs to be clear on its key priorities over the shorter term as well as having a longer term perspective. This will allow the organisation to determine what jobs, roles, responsibilities, objectives and tasks will be required and the skills, knowledge and behaviours required.

In addition to standard measures of skills and knowledge, other factors such as willingness to learn, attitudes to change, flexibility and adaptability are also key elements in successful capacity building within an organisation.

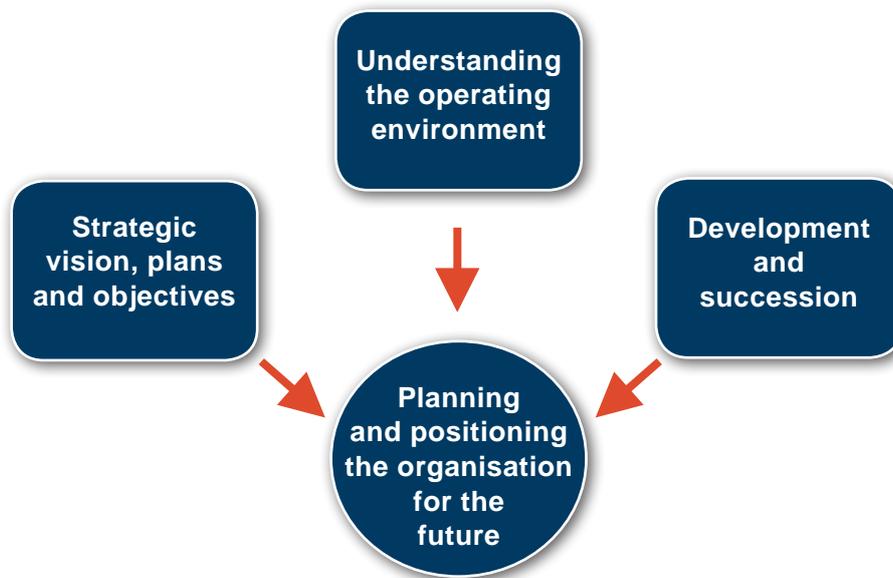
Workforce development may be described as a 'four level' approach as shown in the following diagram.



6. Workforce development - where is your organisation going?

There are ten items in the second checklist that assess the situation of an organisation in relation to planning and positioning for the future.

These ten items can be categorised in three areas as shown in the following diagram.



The starting point for the establishment of an effective workforce development plan is the organisation's strategic direction and plan.

If your organisation has a strategic plan in place you need to align your workforce requirements to the strategic direction. If you do not have a strategic plan you need to commence the strategic planning process before you start to think about the organisation's workforce development needs.

Strategic planning requires an understanding of the organisation's operating environment. What are the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats? What are the political, economic, social and technological trends?

It is important that an organisation understands and uses techniques such as ¹SWOT and ²PEST to establish a picture of the current and future operating environment. Only with this knowledge is an organisation in a position to make informed decisions about workforce development.

Workforce development processes, including succession planning arrangements, can be considered and established once the planning process gets underway, but it is important that these processes are understood and the implications discussed at the Board level within the organisation before the planning process starts.

1. SWOT – Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

2. PEST – Political, economic, social and technological – macro environment

Checklist 2 - Where is the organisation going?

This checklist allows you to assess the situation of your organisation in relation to planning and positioning for the future.

The Organisation has:		
• a current strategic plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• a vision for where it wants to be in 3 to 5 years time	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• operational plans or objectives to support the strategic direction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• a strong understanding of its operating environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• operations informed by formal analytical processes such as SWOT and PEST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• a process for managing risk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• plans for future revenue growth or diversification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• a process for paid employee and volunteer training and development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• annual reviews of planning processes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• succession planning processes for paid employees and key volunteers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there more <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or more <input type="checkbox"/> ? Is your organisation in the GREEN ZONE or the RED ZONE ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Development and implementation of a workforce development plan

An efficient and productive organisation employs skilled and motivated people doing effective and meaningful work.

The people in your organisation, whether they are paid employees or volunteer workers, constitute your workforce and these are the people you need to recruit, retain, develop, motivate and manage for your organisation to function properly and to achieve its goals and objectives.

If you understand your workforce needs and the number of people and skills required for the various paid and unpaid volunteer roles in your organisation, then you are better placed to achieve your strategic intention.

Effective workforce development planning ensures that you have;

- the right people;
- in the right roles;
- at the right time;
- with the right skills; and
- at the right cost.

When an organisation has determined its strategic direction and identified the objectives and goals it wants to achieve there is an obvious need to implement actions that will lead to the required achievement.

Many organisations expend effort on the development of plans but fall short with implementation activities.

Taking the time to consider key implementation issues and defining the work and resources required to support effective implementation is a key requirement of the planning process.

The key development and implementation issues are identified under three areas in the diagram that follows. These are;

- The current workforce characteristics;
- Defining the characteristics of the future workforce; and
- Identifying and filling the workforce gaps.



The current workforce characteristics

Mapping skills, competencies, experience and aptitudes will support you to fill 'empty boxes' or develop skilling initiatives across the organisation. You may also use the process to record other characteristics such as:

- Age and gender
- Duration of employment with organisation (and other employers, if they have the data)
- Trigger points for leaving (end of a contract or approaching retirement)
- Other skills, qualifications, competencies or education (not used in their current work)
- Work/life balance needs and intentions.

Defining the characteristics of the future workforce

Analysing the workforce profile you have developed will help identify:

- The skills and competencies you are likely to lose because of employee characteristics (such as age, or family commitments)
- The skills and competencies you are likely to lose because you will need to move other workers into those vacated positions
- What the general turnover rate is; how many people you are likely to lose through 'natural attrition'?
- If turnover is generally higher in some work areas – why?
- Skills and competencies you discovered in your workforce profile that you didn't know you had
- Areas of the organisation that readily attract new recruits and areas that may be difficult to fill?

Identifying and filling the workforce gaps

'Identifying the gaps' by comparing what you predict you will need in the future against your current workforce. The type of workforce gaps you'll identify may include:

- Numbers
- Capabilities and competencies
- Skills
- Expertise.

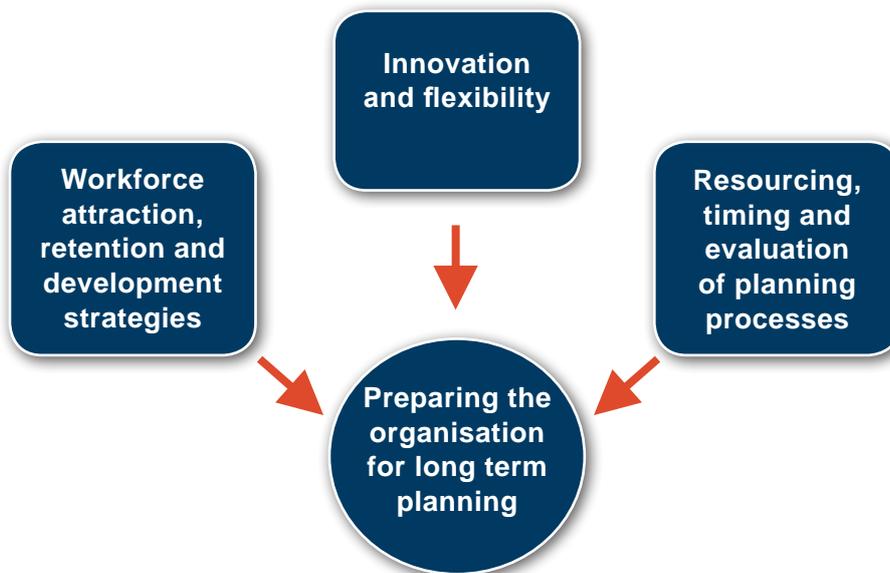
This process will allow you to consider options to address the gaps that might include:

- Skill development
- Creating generational balance (age management) as an overall strategy
- Recruitment
- Retention
- Professional development
- Succession planning (time to develop expertise in key positions).

8. Workforce development – how will the organisation get there?

There are ten items in the third checklist that assess the preparedness of an organisation to achieve its longer term workforce development plans.

These ten items can be categorised in three areas as shown in the following diagram.



The workforce development planning process requires an organisation to consider how it currently recruits and trains its paid employees and volunteer workers and how well it retains this workforce.

This information is required to allow a comparison between current practices and the achievements that are expected from the organisation's workforce development plan.

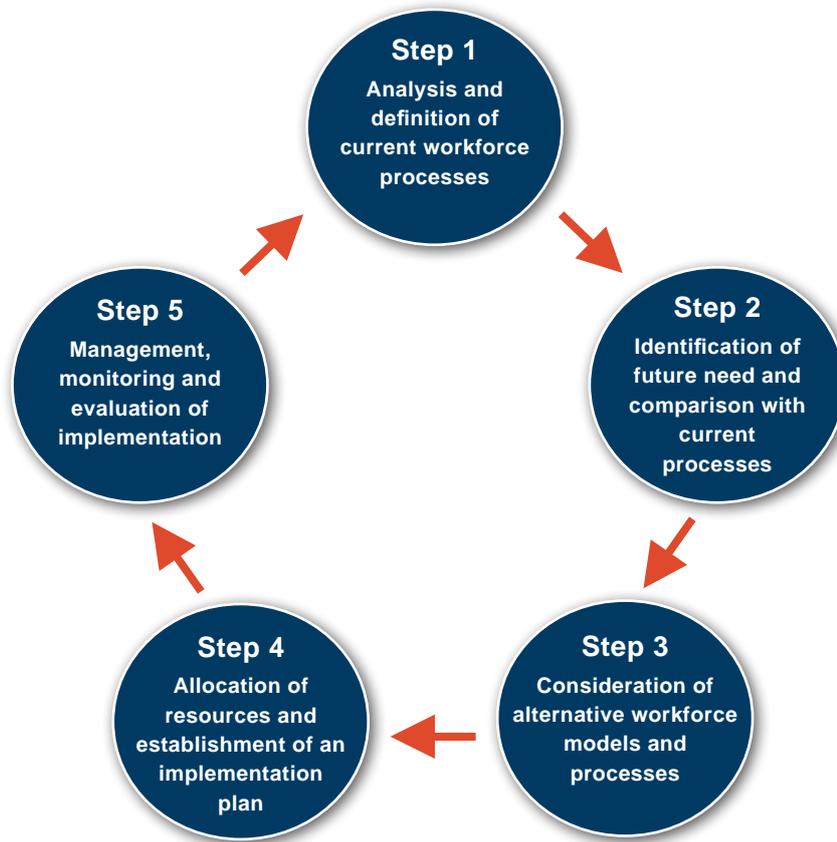
To be ready for the workforce development planning process it is important that organisation's have started to collect information and data on paid employees and volunteer workers turnover, reasons for leaving, time taken to fill vacancies and the current processes used to train and develop the workforce.

Organisations that can respond quickly to changing needs and apply flexible workforce solutions will be better placed to implement an effective workforce development planning process.

The use of alternative models for full-time, part-time, casual and job sharing employment for paid employees and volunteer workers need to be considered as part of a workforce development plan. Consideration of these alternative arrangements is required before the workforce development planning process starts.

Effective workforce development planning requires an organisation to identify the effort, time and resources needed for the development and implementation phases and for ongoing monitoring and management of the plan.

The diagram that follows shows the steps and items required in relation to resourcing, timing and evaluation. If your organisation has yet to consider how it intends to resource and support the workforce development planning activity it needs to do this before the planning process starts.



Checklist 3 - How will the organisation get there?

This checklist asks you to consider the preparedness of your organisation in relation to the achievement of its strategic and longer term plans.

The Organisation has:		
• a formal process to regularly assess progress against its plans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• a strategy to attract, retain and develop employees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• a strategy to recruit, retain and reward key volunteers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• identified new and innovative ways of achieving its goals and targets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• flexible work policies and practices	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• considered alternative volunteering models	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• identified a ready source/pool of potential paid and volunteer workers in the market place	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• reflected the organisation's vision and strategic direction in its management practices	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• identified and budgeted the resources required to achieve its strategic intention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• set a realistic timeline for the achievement of its strategies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there more <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or more <input type="checkbox"/> ? Is your organisation in the GREEN ZONE or the RED ZONE ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Workforce skill gaps

The content of this guide is focused on the readiness of an organisation to start the planning framework process and to reach a position where it has the capacity and capability to prepare a workforce development plan with the provision of some external professional assistance.

When an organisation has determined its strategic direction, aligned its workforce requirements to its strategic direction, assessed current workforce processes, practices and capability and assessed current workforce details against future workforce need, it is in a position to complete a workforce gap analysis.

A gap analysis allows an organisation to identify the skills it currently needs in its workforce but does not currently have and the skills it will need at some defined point in the future.

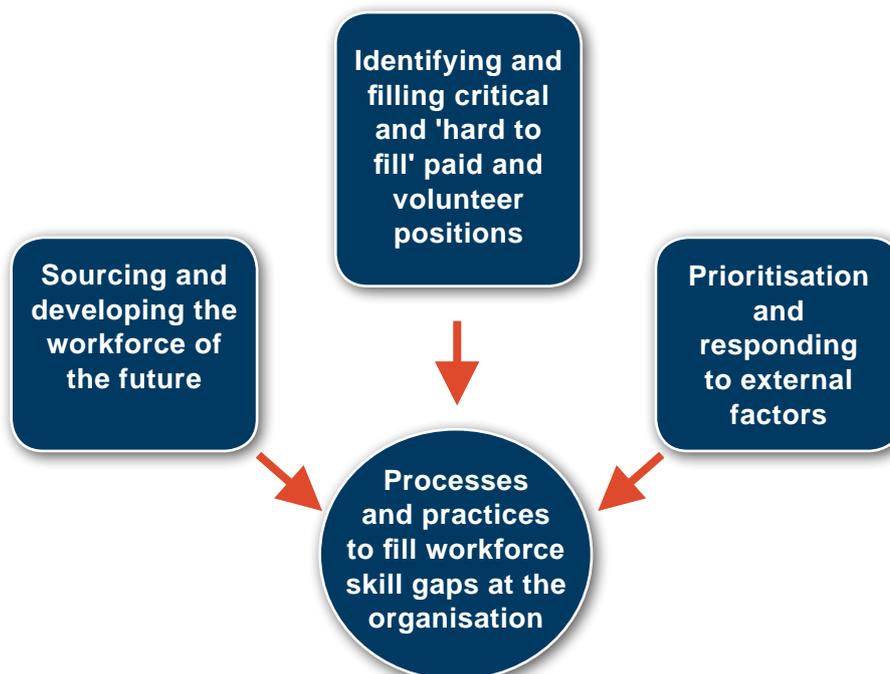
The skills required to undertake a workforce skills gap analysis are similar to those required for the establishment of strategic direction and plans. The key personnel in an organisation need to apply predictive thinking and to assess all the available information and evidence before committing the organisation to a particular course of action.

A well executed skills gap analysis will clearly show an organisation where its current skill gaps are and where it will need to focus short term recruitment and training efforts to fill these gaps. The analysis should also provide an organisation with the information it needs, based on the best available evidence, to develop strategies for longer term recruitment and training.

10. Workforce development – what are the organisational gaps?

There are ten items in the fourth and final checklist that allow an organisation to consider the processes and practices required to fill workforce skill gaps.

These ten items can be categorised in three areas as shown in the following diagram.



The skills gap analysis will provide an organisation with the detailed information it requires on which to base its workforce development planning strategies.

Without the analysis an organisation may apply resources for professional development and workforce training and will make recruitment decisions in response to immediate operational needs, but it is unlikely to take strategic decisions in relation to workforce development planning.

To start the workforce development planning process organisations need to be aware of current and future workforce skill needs for both paid employees and volunteer workers.

In every organisation there are critical jobs and roles that are central to efficient operation. The skills gap analysis should clearly define these critical roles. There are also many jobs within an organisation, particularly those that require access to key volunteer workers, that are hard to fill and often rely on the efforts of just a few people. The skills gap analysis should also identify and quantify these 'hard to fill' roles.

Component 4 of the workforce development planning process establishes strategies on how to deal with these critical and 'hard to fill' roles. To progress with the workforce development process the key personnel in an organisation need to think about these key workforce roles.

The final activity before the organisation is ready to start the workforce development planning process is to prioritise work and to think about what is reasonable and realistic.

Many strategic plans fail because the organisation sets unachievable goals and targets. This is not to suggest that an organisation should set its sights low, but that it sets its sights on those key objectives that will make a difference to the sustainability and growth of the organisation.

The reasoning that applies to the overall strategic planning process is also the reasoning that should be applied to workforce development.

What are the key workforce development issues, aligned to the organisation's strategic direction, that should be the focus of the workforce development plan?

The organisation should also think about external requirements related to national affiliations and government initiatives that will impact on its future workforce requirements.

When an organisation has taken the time to consider prioritisation matters and external pressures and determined how they may impact on workforce issues, it is ready to start the planning process.



Checklist 4 – What are the organisational gaps?

This checklist asks you to consider the skills and operational gaps that will need to be filled to ensure you achieve the organisation's goals.

The Organisation has:		
• considered current and future workforce needs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• a strategy to source or develop the future workforce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• a strategy to deal with paid and volunteer worker diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• a strategy to deal with ageing paid and volunteer workers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• identified skill areas that are difficult to fill	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• a strategy to fill critical and difficult skill areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• identified broader issues that may impact on the achievement of the organisation's goals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• prioritized issues and established a plan to deal with these	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• a process in place to deal with the impact of national sport requirements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• a process in place to deal with the impact of government initiatives and requirements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there more <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or more <input type="checkbox"/> ? Is your organisation in the GREEN ZONE or the RED ZONE ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. What next?

If you have worked through the details of this guide and completed the four checklists you should now know if you are in the GREEN ZONE and in a position to start the workforce development planning process or in the RED ZONE and will need to address some issues before commencing the planning process.

If your organisation is now ready to commence the formal workforce development planning process you should contact your DSR Consultant or the DSR People Development Team for further advice.

DSR can assist you with the development and implementation of your plan and will provide access to skilled consultants and facilitators who have already worked with other organisations.

If your organisation needs to address some issues before starting the workforce development planning process, please contact your DSR Consultant or the DSR People Development Team to find out what support is available, and/or assist you with the next step in the process.



