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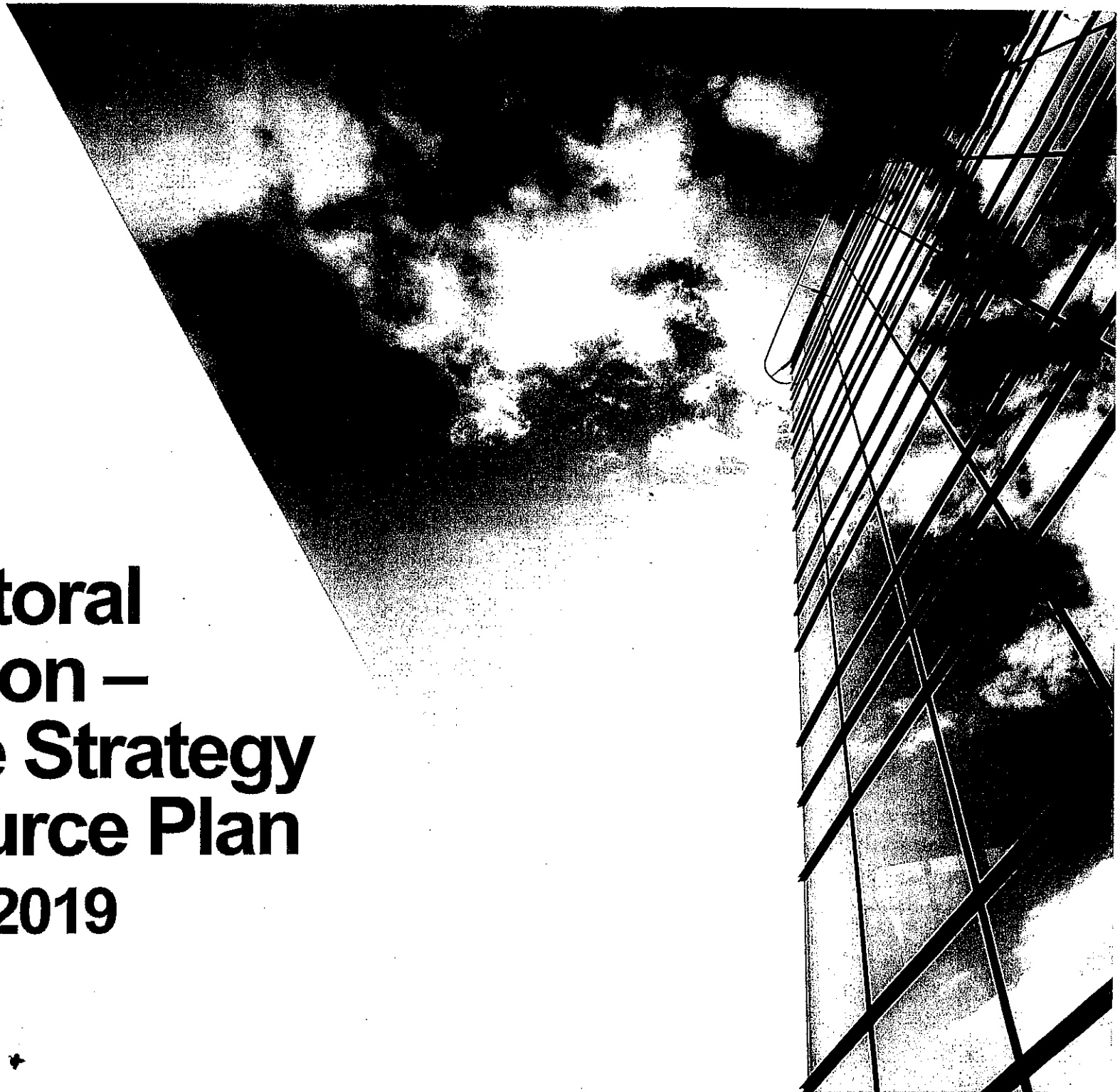
STEWART SMITH

Date: 5 / 9 / 2019

Resolved to publish Yes / No

NSW Electoral Commission – Workforce Strategy and Resource Plan

18 February 2019



Executive Summary

The Workforce Strategy takes a broad view of the work required to develop a more sustainable employment context for the NSW Electoral Commission (NSWEC). It looks beyond the staffing mix and resourcing plan to questions of structural efficiency and effectiveness, the need for a bespoke capability framework to underpin future talent management strategies and the requirement for investment in a compelling employee value proposition.

The role of NSWEC has changed considerably in recent years – no longer can it be characterised as a “boom and bust” organisation that experiences long periods of dormancy punctuated every two years by the frenetic activity that is associated with a State Government Election or a suite of Local Government Elections. Its remit has been progressively expanded with the incorporation of FDC; the requirement to administer an increasing number of Legislative Acts; and with the increasing emphasis on developing a range of digitised and innovative voter related systems and applications to encourage voter participation and to further enhance the integrity and efficiency of the electoral system.

Whilst NSWEC's remit has increased and broadened, however, the Labour Expense Cap (LEC) funding for the “ongoing” staff complement has not kept pace. The funding model which is event driven assumes that staffing needs are tightly correlated with election events, but this is not the case. In essence, the staffing implication of the increased remit is not reflected in NSWEC's recurrent funding base and its LEC.

NSWEC operates with a complex funding model and strict constraints on the use of different funding buckets for staffing purposes; this has resulted in an increasing proportion of staff being employed to do the core work of the organisation on non-ongoing employment terms.

As a consequence of its current funding model, NSWEC has a high-cost employment model and a highly transient workforce. Relatively few staff are employed on an ongoing basis and the organisation relies heavily on a contractor pool who cost significantly more per head. Indeed,

- Across the four divisions, roles with ongoing status make up less than half (48%) of the NSW payroll profile (ongoing, temporary or casual status). The balance of staff have term based contracts with no guarantee of funding continuance.
- There is an over reliance on overtime in areas like the Elections Division and IS, reflecting the imbalance between workload and available staff capacity and posing a possible Work Health and Safety risk for both the individual staff members and the NSWEC
- 46% of staff employed as a Director (Band 1), are engaged on a temporary arrangement. This is at a key leadership level both in terms of people and thought leadership in the organisation

Further, funding constraints prevented NSWEC from fully implementing the recommendations that emanated from the organisation reviews conducted in 2015 and 2018 and have meant that there are recognised capability gaps in the core staffing profile of the organisation. In addition, the inadequacy of baseline funding has resulted in an underinvestment in the training and professional development of staff – leading to a further erosion in organisational capabilities against evolving need.

The staffing profile is characterised by fragility – fragility that drives inefficiencies: in Salaries and Wages spend, in work and initiative discontinuities, in hiring and engagement processes and in the lack of investment in training and upskilling. This fragility presents a risk management issue for the NSWEC and calls into question the sustainability of the organisation over the long term.

Executive Summary, continued

A critical degree of urgency to address this fragility exists, given the high proportion of staff on Temporary and Contractor arrangements with contracts ending on or before 30 June 2019. Indeed, 60% of the roles identified as critical to NSWEC's operational continuity cannot be assured unless there is a commensurate increase in LEC 01 funding. Further, in some of these cases, there is no potential for contract renewal under the provisions of the Government Sector Employment (GSE) Act 2013 after 30 June 2019, meaning an irretrievable loss of skills to the organisation.

To better assure the long term sustainability of NSWEC there is a need to recalibrate the funding model to reflect the current reality of the operating model. All Directors are seeking the flexibility to increase the proportion of "ongoing staff" over the next four years - increasing organisational flexibility and reversing the current level knowledge attrition that flows from the preponderance of short term employment arrangements.

Specifically, the 4 Year Resourcing Plan summarised proposes:

Proposed FTE change	FTE impact over the four year forecast period
FTE to transition from temporary and casual status to ongoing	50
FTE to transition from contractor to ongoing	10
New FTE roles to be established	13

The 23 new roles to the payroll establishment (10 converted from roles filled by contractors and 13 new roles) are considered the minimum critical to ensure that NSWEC to meet the anticipated growth in and evolution of remit.

The Workforce Strategy and 4 Year Resourcing Plan cannot be implemented without a significant uplift in the baseline funding available to NSWEC for staffing purposes. In effect it is contingent on the successful prosecution of a business case for an enlarged LEC01 funding bucket (either an increase in the budget or greater flexibility in the application of NSWEC's overall funding budget).

Over and above the proposals relating to staff numbers and their employment basis, the review identified the need for the organisation to develop a Capability Framework for the ongoing training and development of staff in NSWEC. A focus on development is seen across the organisation as an essential component of a contemporary employee value proposition.

It was also recognised that the implementation of the workforce profile changes proposed in the Workforce Strategy provides an opportunity to further evolve the NSWEC organizational structure. In addition to the current intention to implement a number of the outstanding recommendations from the organizational reviews conducted in 2015 and 2018, there is an opportunity for the NSWEC to take this opportunity to create job clusters – a key underpinning of the Capability Framework - and to adjust managerial spans of control – a key dependency in effective managerial leadership.

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