



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Local Government**

## Structural Reform in Western Australian Local Governments

# Human Resource Change Management Plan

A resource for the progression of your workforce  
through the structural reform process



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# BACKGROUND

The purpose of this document is to support the planning, transition and implementation stages of an amalgamation, and to ensure the risks associated with managing the human resources of the organisation are identified and managed, and the local government complies with all relevant legislation and standards. Individual local governments may have different stakeholders in relation to representation and industrial relations. Stakeholders will need to be identified early in the process.

## **In relation to the workforce, the following objectives are addressed:**

- To ensure staff are retained through the structural reform process
- To alleviate stress and anxiety and build resilience and acceptance of change
- To foster participation and growth in the workforce and the wider community
- To build the reputation of local governments as an employer of choice
- To ensure the principles of equal employment opportunity are followed in roles, responsibilities and remuneration, and
- To fairly remunerate those losing positions in amalgamation or structural change.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document was compiled by the Human Resources and Change Management Working Group of the Western Australian Department of Local Government. It has been based on the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) and Local Government Managers Australia, Queensland (LGMA QLD) Management of Change Toolkits, and adapted to address the Western Australian structural reform environment and objectives. Particular recognition is given to the work undertaken by Gary Stevenson on behalf of the LGAQ and LGMA QLD.

# HUMAN RESOURCE CHANGE MANAGEMENT – STAGE ONE – PLANNING

This Stage provides the opportunity for organisations to review their human resources, plan the communication process and put systems and processes in place that ensure continuity of information flow. Early intervention in issues arising provides better opportunity to achieve reduction of stress and staff turnover. This will also allow for better time management by reducing time spent on staff issue resolution, conflict, recruitment and induction as all parties are better informed and able to address staff uncertainties and community concerns. A Project Team/s with Terms of Reference may be established at this stage.

ELEMENT	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	STAGE (S)
<b>Internal Staff Communication</b>	Effective dissemination of information to staff and volunteers and contractors throughout reform Stage along with meaningful processes for satisfying questions, complaints and suggestions. Consistency of website information across all amalgamating local governments assists as a HR tool, especially for contractors and volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and implement internal communication plan.</li> <li>• Establish roles and responsibilities in communication.</li> <li>• Establish one communication protocol for amalgamating local governments.</li> <li>• Conduct baseline staff awareness, concerns and issues survey.</li> <li>• Establish communication channels.</li> <li>• Maintain and update appropriate intranet (if available) or internet services to keep staff informed.</li> </ul>	Stage 1
<b>Interaction and Team Building</b>	Early engagement of staff from participating local governments provides an opportunity to meet and discuss common issues. It also assists in team building.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and arrange opportunities for engagement.</li> </ul>	Stage 1
<b>Elected Members Communication</b>	It is the role of the Mayor or President to speak on behalf of the local government and one point of contact for all media enquiries should be clearly identified by the local government. Elected members are informed of this and are able to make appropriate responses to community and media questions, complaints and suggestions and provide feedback and support to the CEO and other key stakeholders throughout the process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine and implement appropriate briefing and information channels.</li> <li>• Provide media and communication training as appropriate to elected members to ensure constructive and cohesive communication throughout the process.</li> <li>• Ensure roles and responsibilities in the change process are defined and communicated.</li> <li>• Plan and implement formal feedback and communication forums.</li> </ul>	Stage 1

ELEMENT	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	STAGE (S)
<b>Community Consultation and Communication</b>	Effective consultation and dissemination of information with appropriate avenue for questions and complaints to minimise adverse effect on staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare communication plan for community consultation, engagement and information sharing.</li> <li>• Develop an information pack with structural reform rationale, communication channels and contact details.</li> <li>• Provide outline of anticipated process and timelines.</li> </ul>	Stage 1
<b>Industrial Agreements</b>	A well managed and effective transition to a new industrial agreement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collate and review existing industrial agreements.</li> <li>• Assess the findings against industry-wide industrial Award(s) and national employment standards.</li> <li>• Review what constraints and opportunities there may be in developing future agreements.</li> <li>• Design strategy for future agreement development.</li> </ul>	Stage 1 & 2
<b>Identification of Entitlements and Benefits</b>	Current employee entitlements and benefits are identified and validated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify entitlements and benefits requiring harmonisation.</li> </ul>	Stage 1
<b>Job Security</b>	Relevant information and support is provided to ensure an understanding by employees of what they may expect in job role, location and entitlements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate with employees regarding job security entitlements as per <i>Local Government Act 1995</i> or contractual agreements.</li> <li>• Hold information and communication forums to answer questions, provide information and set consistent expectations.</li> <li>• Develop and implement a questions and feedback loop for staff and promote the use of it.</li> </ul>	Stage 1 & 2

ELEMENT	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	STAGE (S)
<b>Employment Contracts</b>	<p>Employment contracts will be subject to particular contractual obligations and entitlements that need to be considered in conjunction with industrial agreements.</p> <p>Some contracts may be deficient to address reform issues such as redundancy. In such instances, reference will need to be made to the National Employment Standards, relevant awards and enterprise agreements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collate and review terms of all individual employment contracts.</li> <li>• Identify deficiencies and negotiate individual contract amendments where necessary.</li> <li>• Identify contracts approaching end of term and negotiate extension where necessary.</li> </ul>	Stage 1 & 2
<b>Job Roles and Responsibilities</b>	<p>All current roles, responsibilities, skills, knowledge and capacity in the organisation are identified.</p> <p>Natural justice principles and procedural fairness are applied in the transfer of employees to new roles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the organisational chart.</li> <li>• Identify all roles and responsibilities and collate all available position descriptions.</li> <li>• Conduct an organisational capacity audit and establish a skills and knowledge register.</li> <li>• Ensure organisational Equal Employment Opportunity policies and procedures and industrial relations best practices are followed for redeployment and recruitment.</li> </ul>	Stage 1
<b>Employee Support</b>	All employees are provided with a support framework to address potential stress, staff turnover, head hunting and misinformation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish and train a peer support network with senior management access and support.</li> <li>• Establish and communicate professional employee counselling services.</li> <li>• Provide and communicate an employee question and answer forum and updates.</li> </ul>	Stage 1
<b>Human Resource Policy and Procedures</b>	There is a unified approach to policy and procedure by establishing a best practice manual and developing the communication and implementation plan for dissemination to all staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review existing policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Develop a new policies and procedures manual for new entity.</li> <li>• Develop a communication and implementation plan.</li> </ul>	Stage 1 & 2

# HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT – STAGE TWO – INTERIM MANAGEMENT

Once the integration planning process commences, the effective management of activities during this Stage is critical to the success of the transition process. Local government employees will need to demonstrate strong leadership while working in what will often be a difficult environment. The ability of local government employees to work together cooperatively during this time will largely determine the success of the transition. Should a Project Team/s be established, there may be confusion over respective roles of CEOs and Councillors in existing local governments as against those working directly toward the new local government. There may also be confusion for staff in relation to reporting requirements. These matters will need to be clarified early in the period to ensure clear understanding by all parties.

ELEMENT	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	STAGE (S)	RESPONSIBILITIES
<b>Communication</b>	Implementation of communication plans to ensure effective dissemination of information throughout the reform process. Review of the success of these plans and processes must be incorporated to ensure questions, complaints and suggestions are satisfactorily addressed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct further staff survey to review against baseline survey data to check for signs and symptoms of stress, issues or concerns and effectiveness of communication programs.</li> <li>Maintain and update appropriate intranet (if available) or internet services to inform staff.</li> <li>Conduct random focus groups to determine effectiveness and issues.</li> </ul>	Stage 2 & 3	CEO/HRM/Project Officer (as appropriate)
<b>Social Interaction and Team Building</b>	Build and nurture a new team culture and dynamics. Opportunities to meet and discuss common issues continue. This also assists in team building. The contribution and future plans of staff who are moving to new arrangements are recognised and celebrated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement an organisational cultural development strategy.</li> <li>Develop a team building process.</li> <li>Commence integration of future teams as soon as practicable.</li> <li>Maintain social engagement occasions and team building activities.</li> <li>Use tender process if external consultants are to be employed to support culture development.</li> </ul>	Stage 2 & 3	CEO/HRM/Project Officer (as appropriate)
<b>Industrial Relations</b>	Open and constructive communication with relevant employee and employer representative and stakeholder groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare and implement Transition Stage Industrial Relations communication plan with relevant employee and employer representative groups and stakeholders, including union representatives.</li> </ul>	Stage 2 & 3	CEO/HRM/Project Officer (as appropriate)

ELEMENT	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	STAGE (S)	RESPONSIBILITIES
<b>Industrial Agreements</b>	Smooth and effective transition to a new industrial agreement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collate and review existing industrial agreements.</li> <li>• Assess implications of industry-wide industrial agreements (if any).</li> <li>• Develop strategy for agreement.</li> <li>• Establish employment sub-committee.</li> </ul>	Stage 2	CEO/HRM/Project Officer (as appropriate)
<b>Job Security</b>	Clear understanding by employees of their entitlements. Inclusive and transparent approach restructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate with employees regarding job security entitlements, expectations and transition progress.</li> </ul>	Stage 2	CEO/HRM/Project Officer (as appropriate)
<b>Employment Contracts</b>	Employment contracts will be subject to contractual obligations and entitlements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collate and review terms of all individual employment contracts.</li> <li>• Identify deficiencies and negotiate individual contract amendments where necessary.</li> <li>• Identify contracts approaching end of term and negotiate extension where necessary.</li> <li>• Review impact of <i>Local Government Act 1995</i> restriction on ending employment contracts.</li> </ul>	Stage 2	CEO/HRM/Project Officer (as appropriate)
<b>Negotiation of Entitlements and Benefits</b>	There may be a need to negotiate some entitlements and benefits (e.g. use of local government vehicles or housing) to ensure equity and fairness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collate and review the application of entitlements and benefits.</li> <li>• Establish policy and process for the negotiation of entitlements and benefits.</li> <li>• Identify entitlements and benefits requiring negotiation and the affected employees.</li> <li>• Document and articulate clear processes and timeframes for affected employees (post amalgamation).</li> </ul>	Stage 2	CEO/HRM/Project Officer (as appropriate)

ELEMENT	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	STAGE (S)	RESPONSIBILITIES
<b>Redefinition of Workplaces</b>	Situations involving transition for changes to roles or locations are identified and managed (e.g. It may be necessary to require some employees to attend different workplaces or commute to an alternate starting point.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish policy and process for rationalising workplaces.</li> <li>Determine whether any transitional allowance arrangements are to be available and, if so, what they may be.</li> </ul>	Stage 2	CEO/HRM/Project Officer (as appropriate)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document and articulate clear processes and planned timeframes for changing workplaces for affected employees.</li> </ul>	Stage 2 & 3	CEO/HRM/Project Officer (as appropriate)
<b>Placement and Redeployment Policy and Processes</b>	A clear and consistent approach to placement and redeployment policy and process will minimise confusion and false expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare the Transition Stage 3 Local Placement and Redeployment Policy and Processes.</li> </ul>	Stage 2	CEO/HRM/Project Officer (as appropriate)
<b>Organisational Structure</b>	An interim organisational structure will be required during the transition stage and for the commencement of the new local government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish transitional organisational structure including clear reporting responsibilities for implementation on change over day.</li> <li>Provide each employee with a letter outlining the arrangements to apply specifically to them on change over day.</li> </ul>	Stage 2	CEO/HRM/Project Officer (as appropriate)
<b>Creation of Positions</b>	Specification of all positions will need to be done.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare Position Descriptions and employment contracts for any new transitional positions.</li> </ul>	Stage 2	CEO/HRM/Project Officer (as appropriate)
<b>Placement and Redeployment</b>	All positions will need to be filled by direct transition, internal recruitment, deployment, or external recruitment depending as per requirements of Policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement Transition Stage 3 secondments in accordance with regulated or adopted policy and processes.</li> </ul>	Stage 2	CEO/HRM/Project Officer (as appropriate)



ELEMENT	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	STAGE (S)	RESPONSIBILITIES
<b>Casual and Temporary Employees</b>	A clear and consistent approach to dealing with casual and temporary employees to minimise confusion and false expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify all casual and temporary employees and the term of their contracts.</li> <li>Establish Transition Stage 3 Local Placement and Redeployment Policy and Processes.</li> <li>Negotiate new working arrangements.</li> </ul>	Stage 2	CEO/HRM/Project Officer (as appropriate)
<b>Volunteers</b>	A clear and consistent approach to dealing with volunteers will minimise confusion and false expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish volunteer retention and deployment policy and methodology.</li> <li>Document and articulate clear processes and planned timeframes to all volunteers.</li> <li>Liaise with external volunteer organisations.</li> </ul>	Stage 2	CEO/HRM/Project Officer (as appropriate)
<b>Employee Support</b>	Counselling services are available to support all employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish counselling services and ensure staff are made aware of availability of services.</li> </ul>	Stage 2 & 3	CEO/HRM/Project Officer (as appropriate)
<b>Training and Professional Development</b>	Corporate systems training and organisational orientation will be required for all employees. Retraining may be required for employees redeployed to different positions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct corporate systems training for relevant employees.</li> <li>Conduct organisational orientation sessions for all employees.</li> <li>Identify re-training options and requirements as necessary for employees.</li> </ul>	Stage 2 & 3	CEO/HRM/Project Officer (as appropriate)
<b>Project Teams</b>	Establishment and development of project teams for areas such as IT, accounting, planning, rating etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set terms of reference for project team(s).</li> <li>Establish timelines and KPIs.</li> <li>Identify new team structures and potential project team members.</li> <li>Establish project teams.</li> </ul>	Stage 2 & 3	CEO/HRM/Project Officer (as appropriate)
<b>Creation of Positions</b>	Specification of all positions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare position descriptions for all positions in final structure.</li> </ul>	Stage 2 & 3	CEO/HRM/Project Officer (as appropriate)

# HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT – STAGE THREE – TRANSITION MANAGEMENT

During this Stage, all the detailed work for the new local government will be undertaken. All arrangements for its future operation including the permanent staffing structure, systems and facilities must be completed during this Stage. Responsibilities will be outlined in the new roles and job descriptions.

ELEMENT	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS
<b>Communication</b>	Plans and processes are reevaluated, adjusted as required and applied with diligence to ensure that questions, complaints and suggestions are satisfactorily addressed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct further staff surveys and focus groups.</li> <li>• Review, adjust and continue internal and external communication plans.</li> </ul>
<b>Industrial Relations</b>	Continuation of constructive communication with relevant employee and employer representative groups and stakeholders. (See Appendix Two)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and implement communication plan with unions and relevant employee /employer representative groups.</li> </ul>
<b>Industrial Agreements</b>	Effective transition to a new industrial agreement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiate final industrial agreement (if required).</li> </ul>
<b>Job Security</b>	Continuation of provision of information and support, to ensure a clear understanding by employees of their entitlements, opportunities and responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and adopt local job security policies.</li> </ul>
<b>Negotiation of Entitlements and Benefits</b>	Address identified need for negotiation of entitlements and benefits to ensure that equity and fairness is addressed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify employee entitlements and benefits requiring harmonisation and renegotiation.</li> <li>• Document and articulate clear processes and planned timeframes for withdrawal of entitlements and benefits for affected employees.</li> </ul>
<b>Redefining of Workplaces</b>	Fair and equitable approach to transfer requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document and articulate clear processes and planned timeframes for changing workplaces for affected employees.</li> </ul>
<b>Placement and Redeployment Policy and Processes</b>	A clear and consistent approach to placement and redeployment policy and process to minimise confusion and false expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish local placement and redeployment policy and methodology in accordance with Code of Practice.</li> <li>• Document and articulate clear processes and planned timeframes to all employees.</li> </ul>
<b>Organisational Structure</b>	Organisational structure developed, communicated and filled.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review strategic plan, operational plan, service delivery system and resource distribution to identify human resources, skills and knowledge requirements and gaps.</li> <li>• Establish and fill organisational structure.</li> <li>• Retrain or recruit to fill identified gaps.</li> </ul>

ELEMENT	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS
<b>Review of Positions</b>	Review of specifications of all positions following recruitment and / or allocation of positions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review position descriptions for all positions in final structure following allocation or recruitment process complete.</li> </ul>
<b>Voluntary Separations</b>	Establishment of a process for facilitating voluntary separations as necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify likely need for encouragement of voluntary separations.</li> <li>Establish policy, process and timeframes for inviting and determining acceptable candidates for voluntary separations.</li> <li>Implement process for inviting and determining voluntary separations.</li> </ul>
<b>Redundant Positions</b>	Redundant positions identified and incumbents transferred, redeployed or offered redundancy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify redeployment options.</li> <li>Implement redundancy separation or redeployment.</li> </ul>
<b>Placement and Redeployment</b>	All positions filled by internal recruitment, deployment, or external recruitment as per Code of Practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement Transition Stage placements and redeployments in accordance with the Code of Practice.</li> </ul>
<b>Casual and Temporary Employees</b>	A clear and consistent approach to dealing with casual and temporary employees to minimise confusion and false expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish local placement and redeployment policy and methodology.</li> <li>Document and articulate clear processes and planned timeframes to all.</li> </ul>
<b>Employee Support</b>	Counselling services to continue to be available to support all employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain employee access to counselling services and establish additional employment counselling and financial planning advice for an employee who is to be made redundant.</li> </ul>
<b>Training and Professional Development</b>	Corporate systems training and organisational orientation is provided for all employees and retraining as required for employees redeployed to different positions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct corporate systems training for relevant employees.</li> <li>Conduct organisational orientation sessions for all employees.</li> <li>Conduct retraining as necessary for employees redeployed.</li> <li>Provide assistance with resume preparation and interview training for those needing to re-apply for their positions or apply for new roles.</li> </ul>
<b>Team Building</b>	Nurturing and development of the new and integrating teams at all levels. Recognise and celebrate the contribution and future plans of staff who are moving to new arrangements; also contributions which staff are bringing forward to the new entity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement Organisational and Cultural Development Strategy.</li> <li>Maximise opportunities for social interaction, team building and bonding.</li> </ul>

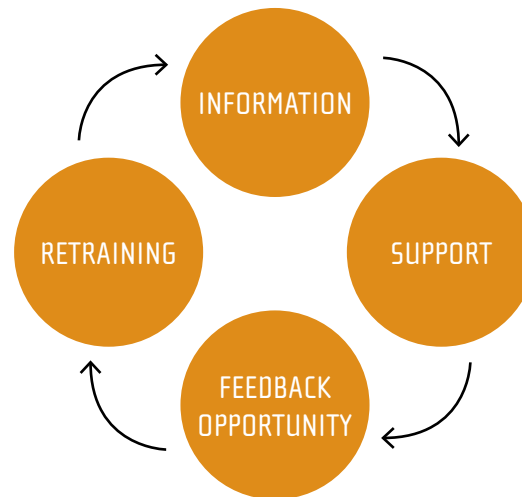
# APPENDIX ONE – FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES IN STRUCTURAL REFORM

## OBJECTIVES

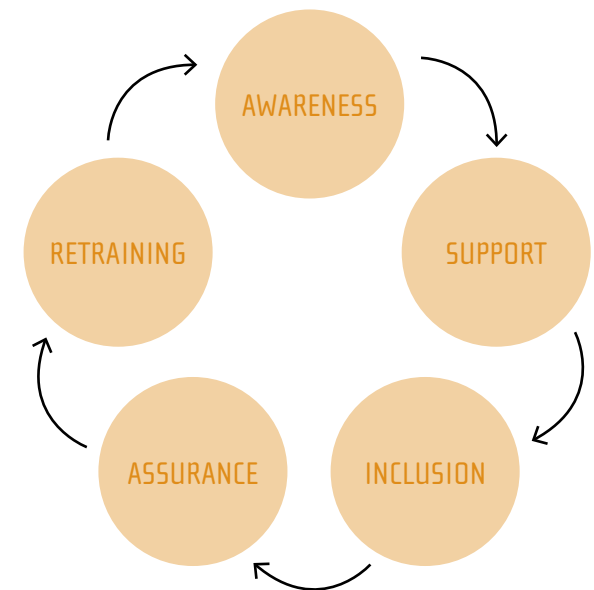
- To ensure staff are retained through the structural reform process.
- To alleviate stress and anxiety.
- To build resilience and acceptance of change.
- To foster participation and growth in the workforce and the wider community.
- To build the reputation of local government as an employer of choice.
- To fairly remunerate those losing positions in amalgamation or structural change.

## STRATEGIES FOR STAFF AND OTHER RELEVANT PEOPLE AFFECTED BY STRUCTURAL REFORM

Continuous and effective information and two way communication throughout the whole process.



Support for staff who are changing locations, joining new teams or having new tasks or roles assigned.

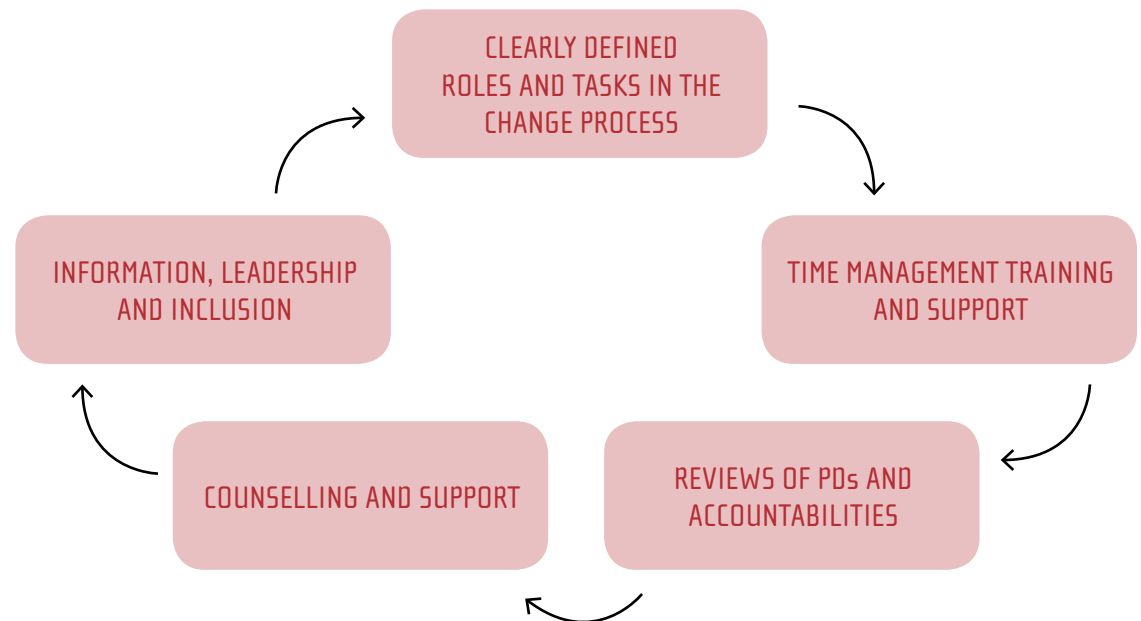


## STRATEGIES FOR STAFF AND OTHER RELEVANT PEOPLE AFFECTED BY STRUCTURAL REFORM (CONTINUED)

Staff who are required to apply for their jobs or compete for a job in a new structure need to be prepared.

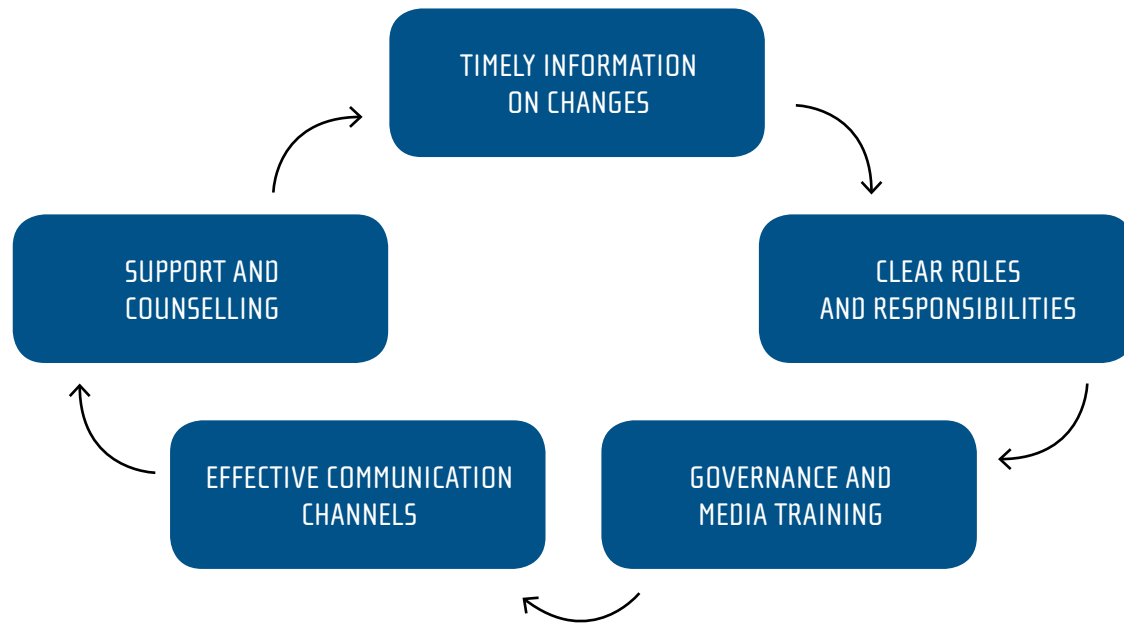


Executives and managers need to be supported in managing their own issues before they can support staff at the front line, volunteers, contractors and community members.



## ELECTED MEMBERS ARE THE VOICE IN THE COMMUNITY AS WELL AS THE DECISION MAKERS IN THE STRUCTURAL REFORM PROCESS:

As the 'governors' of the change process they need correct information, media training, regular updates and feedback loops.



## ORGANISATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCE NEEDS TO SUPPORT AND SUSTAIN THE DESIRED CHANGE

The following points can be considered in the process to assist in recruitment, resilience and retention.

### ORGANISATIONAL NEEDS

- Structure
- Management Systems
- Policies
- Procedures
- Protocols
- Software
- Assets
- Resources

### COMMUNICATION PLAN

- Briefings
- Website
- Blog Site
- Meetings
- Newsletters
- Communication Peer Support Team
- Community Bulletins
- Local Newspaper Column
- Staff integration meetings and workshops

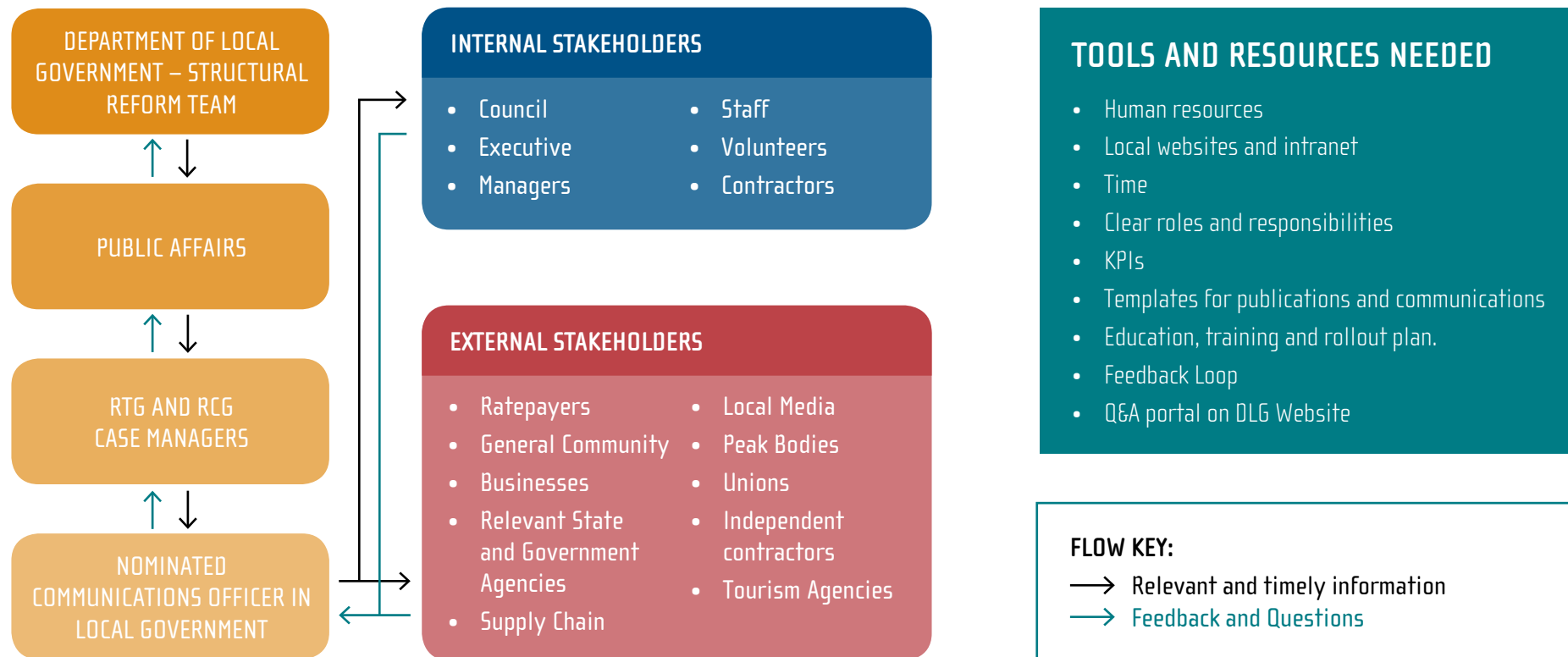
### WORKFORCE PLANNING

- Capacity Audit
- Clearly identified roles and responsibilities
- Position Descriptions
- Skills and Knowledge Register of current staff
- Register of required skills and knowledge
- Plans for addition or reduction of staff
- Recruitment and retention strategies
- Salaries, wages, and benefits benchmarks and review processes

### Local Government Reputation

To build the reputation of local government as an employer of choice, a strong and positive media campaign should be considered both at a State and local level to build pride and security in the workforce and encourage people to enter this workforce. A key factor is to face the world with effective leadership and support from the Department of Local Government and peak bodies and a consistency of message.

# APPENDIX TWO – STRUCTURAL REFORM COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK AND RESOURCES





## KEY OBJECTIVE

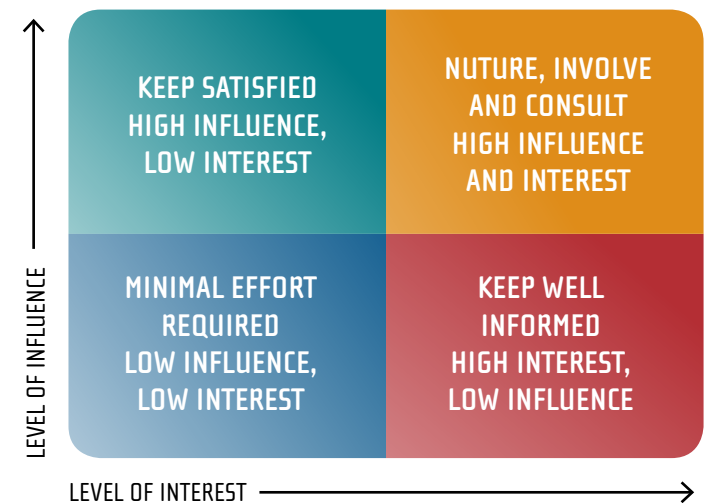
To ensure that the right information from the Department and participating local governments reaches the right people at the right time to achieve retention of staff, reduction of stress, positive recruitment and increased community confidence in the process and the key players.

## CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- Commitment at all levels.
- Clear roles and responsibilities documented as part of a committee, job or role description, and underpinned by key performance indicators.
- Appropriate resourcing, engagement and training.
- Clear timelines and reporting structures.
- Information required or desired determined in focus groups or other forms of communication with key stakeholders.
- Appropriate funding and budget processes to enable the strategies.
- Identification of and engagement with stakeholders relevant to categories as per the diagram.

## RISK FACTORS

- Low buy in.
- Misinformation.
- Negative media influences.
- Lack of time, skill and resources in the local governments.
- Timeliness of information.
- Penetration of information within the local government' workforces.
- Ensuring relevance and tailoring to RTG, RCG and amalgamating Council groups and their local environment.
- Sustainability through staff turnover.
- Omitting to identify and engage with appropriate stakeholders.





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