



ACT
Government
City and Environment

CED Executive Leadership Group Meeting Paper

Agenda item	4
Meeting date	Meeting #4 of 2026, 20 March 2026
From	Jaime Elton, Executive Branch Manager People, Safety and Culture
Subject	Strategic Workforce Management Options
Related papers	N/A

Purpose/recommended action

1. That the Executive Leadership Group (ELG):
 - i. consider the information provided on strategic workforce management options;
 - ii. note the work underway on a HR Data Hub dashboard for workforce management;
 - iii. note the work on a mobility register tool and piloting this for unattached/excess officers and employees on workers compensation (where appropriate); and
 - iv. provide feedback on the draft critical role identification framework, which could support strategic workforce management and effective use of a mobility register tool (open for 4-week consultation, noting PS&C Branch can meet with Executives to discuss).

Background

2. The City and Environment Directorate (CED) is facing a material reduction in funding that cannot be managed through incremental efficiency alone. Workforce costs potentially represent the largest lever available. This paper outlines a set of workforce management options that, when applied together and guided by a Critical Role Framework, could support CED to protect essential services while reducing overall expenditure.
3. Current budget for the 2025-2026 financial year is \$841,647,000. The expected budget for 2026-2027 is \$778,821,000, a difference of \$62,826,000.
4. Considering **annual staffing salaries are ≈ \$452,261,335*** (based on Salaries, Overtime, Higher Duties, Allowances and Penalties – excluding super, compensation, parental leave and other oncosts), our **average staffing salary is ≈ \$107,783**.
5. To meet the difference would require a **reduction of ≈ 583 staff members** (a 14% reduction in the total workforce size). *Full employee costs are estimated at ≈ \$129,162 per employee each year.
6. Each fortnight, the directorate spends ≈ \$15,676,295 on salaries, \$933,030 on overtime, \$186,038 on penalties, \$272,109 on higher duties and \$327,192 on allowances, totalling \$17,394,666.

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7. CED's natural attrition rate of permanent staff is currently 159; annualised, that is expected to be around 272 people (approximately 7%). Including attrition rates of all staff (permanent, temporary and casual) our current attrition is 312 staff members annually (or approximately 7.4%).
8. CED currently has 473 temporary/casual staff members (11.3% of workforce). As at 28 January 2026, 517 people were performing higher duties (12.4%); 495 of those people held permanent positions.
9. Current spend YTD on contractor central is ≈ \$8,293,897. Estimated around \$12,440,845 annually.
10. The People, Safety and Culture Branch is currently finalising a workforce HR Data Hub dashboard for Executives, which will provide real-time access to a range of workforce information. The HR Data Hub will include information on workforce demographics, diversity profiles, excess leave, position occupancy, performance management participation, higher duties, overtime and penalty summaries. Future renditions will include Core Training rates, turnover and leave usage.

Issues

11. There are a number of workforce management options that can be deployed either in isolation, or in conjunction with other options, to reduce FTE expenditure. These will all have varying degrees of impact and will need to be appropriately managed.
12. Central to all of these options is understanding which roles are critical roles within CED and providing Executives with accurate data and information to inform workforce decisions and workforce planning.
13. The People, Safety and Culture Branch will soon be providing workforce data dashboards to all Executives (expected week beginning 23 March 2026). The next Executive Leadership Team meeting with all CED Executives will be focused on People, Culture and Safety, with a presentation on service offerings from the Branch, but also on the workforce dashboards and how they can support workforce planning and informed decision making.
14. Workforce management options have been outlined at a high level below.

Natural attrition	- Planned reliance on voluntary departures (resignations, retirements, expiry of non-ongoing contracts). - Vacancies created through departure are deliberately left unfilled and work requirements remodelled where able. - Only identified critical roles are filled. <i>Annually around 272 permanent staff (312 in total) – noting attrition rates can change</i>
Hiring / recruitment controls	- Formal restrictions on all recruitment. - Executive-level approval before advertising or filling positions. - Only identified critical roles are filled.
Higher duties management	- Reduce use of higher duty arrangements for all roles. - Apply temporary recruitment protocols for any vacancy less than 6 months, unless identified critical role. - Temporary re-assignment of additional responsibilities to existing staff during staffing constraints.

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	<i>Approx. 12% of the CED workforce performing HDA (517 FTE) at a cost of over \$500k a month</i>
Internal mobility first	- Reassignment, transfer or temporary movement of existing employees to priority areas/critical roles with no backfill of vacated positions. - Utilise an online platform, already developed internally. - Maintains capability in critical roles without increasing total headcount. - Neutral overall FTE impact while supporting redistribution. - Leveraging the ACTPS Mobility Guideline.
Unattachment	Prioritise unattached staff for backfilling of vacant roles. <i>CED currently has 31 unattached staff members.</i>
Workforce Planning frameworks	- Structured methodologies aligning workforce capability with future service needs. - Focus on identifying critical roles and capability gaps. - Identify non-critical roles suitable for attrition or redesign.
Excess employee redeployment	- Formal process triggered when roles are no longer required. - Prioritises redeployment over redundancy. - Allows elimination of roles while retaining individuals in alternative positions.
Voluntary Redundancy (VR)	- Financial separation package offered where attrition and redeployment are insufficient. - There is a process that must be followed – this takes time (including a minimum one-month consideration period). <i>An average VR could cost around \$100k per person</i>
Overtime, allowance and penalty review	Review all overtime, allowance and penalty provisions. <i>Nearly \$2m a month spent on overtime, and \$1m on penalties and allowances</i>
Workers Compensation	CED has approximately 200 workers on workers compensation. This also affects the cost of insurance premiums. <i>There are 6 workers currently fit for duty but unable to work in their nominal location</i>
Reduction on the use of contractors	Review the use of contractors and decrease the use for all non-essential work. <i>Approximately \$12.4m spent per year on contractors</i>
Reduction on the use of temporary/casual staff	Review use of temporary/casual staff <i>CED currently has 473 temporary/casual staff members (11.3% of workforce)</i>

15. Below is a hypothetical example demonstrating a range of options being employed:

Vacancy suppression / attrition: ~250 FTE (80% of separations not backfilled) ≈ \$26.9 m
Fixed-term / casual reduction: ~120 FTE equivalent (25% reduction on temp) ≈ \$12.9 m
Overtime reduction: ~25% reduction of overtime usage ≈ \$6 m
Reduction of Higher Duties: ~50% reduction of higher duties arrangements ≈ \$3.5m
Reduction of Contractors: ~30% reduction on the use of contractors ≈ \$3.7m

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Total estimated savings: **\$53,214,000**

**Figures are indicative and assume protection for Tier 1-2 roles.*

CED Mobility Register – mobility first

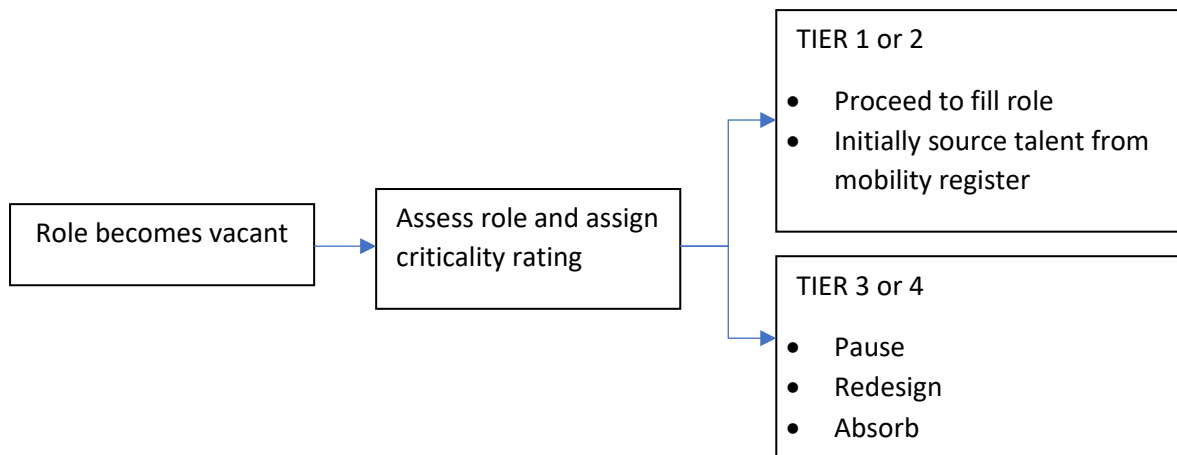
16. The ACTPS released its Mobility Policy in October 2025 with supporting guidelines released in February 2026.
17. Essentially, the policy provides a whole of government approach to workforce mobility that supports efficient service delivery, responsible FTE management, and retention of skills and capability across the service. It allows a directorate to **move existing employees at level**, temporarily or permanently across the directorate **without a prescribed selection process**.
18. The policy allows the directorate to redeploy staff from lower-priority, non-critical roles to higher-priority functions, reducing the reliance on external recruitment, and better alignment of workforce capabilities with evolving business needs.
19. To support the policy, People Safety and Culture Branch has developed a form to collect specific data from staff members who wish to be considered for mobility. All unattached staff members and staff members with workers comp claims who are fit for duty will be incorporated into the mobility register. This can then be opened up voluntarily.
20. A mobility dashboard has been developed, which allows the hiring area to search workforce and skill criteria to identify a potential match.
21. The People Safety and Culture Branch are currently developing a CED Mobility Framework, which will be tabled with ELG in the coming weeks.
22. Ideally, when business areas have a vacancy that is permitted to be filled/backfilled, prior to external recruitment, talent should be sourced initially from the CED Mobility Register.

Critical role identification

23. A key aspect of any Workforce Planning is critical role identification. The options outlined in this paper include the reduction of backfilling vacant roles, reducing higher duties and contractors, and review of overtime activities.
24. A draft Critical Role Framework has been developed at [Attachment A](#) for consultation (over the next four weeks). The People, Safety and Culture Branch will reach out to Executives to discuss this concept and seek feedback on the draft Framework and whether it would work within your teams, and be practical and effective.
25. The draft Critical Role Framework proposes that all recruitment actions are based on whether a role is identified as 'critical'. This provides an opportunity to realise cost savings and take a strategic approach to workforce management.
26. Essentially the Critical Role Framework provides a risk-based filter that determines whether a vacant role should be filled, can be delayed, or should be redesigned. The Critical Role Framework provides a structured, evidence-based method for evaluating the importance of specific positions within the Directorate. To ensure objective results, the requirements of the role would be assessed rather than the performance of the person currently holding it.
27. Each position would be scored across four key domains:
 - operational and safety impact
 - skill scarcity and replicability
 - strategic alignment and time-criticality
 - reputational risk.

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28. These ratings determine a tier status, which dictates whether a vacancy should be immediately filled, consolidated or deprioritised based on its impact on essential services and statutory obligations. The framework also incorporates volume triggers to manage recruitment effectively during seasonal surges or fiscal constraints. Ultimately, this tool could be used to ensure that resources are directed toward the most vital functions to maintain public safety and prioritised service delivery. It would need to work in partnership with prioritisation activities associated with service delivery.
29. The Framework also proposes that when a Tier 1 or Tier 2 rating is provided, that the immediate recruitment/backfill option is sought initially from the CED Mobility Register.

**Consultation and people-first alignment**

30. The Workforce Management section within the People, Safety and Culture Branch could support the Executive by providing the assessment and moderation function for consistency and continuity.
31. The tier rating will determine the appropriate recruitment action.
32. As noted above, feedback is welcomed on this draft Framework and the People, Safety and Culture Branch will reach out to discuss this with you and your teams over the coming weeks.

Attachment 1: CED Critical Role Framework

Attachment 2: CED Critical Role Placemat