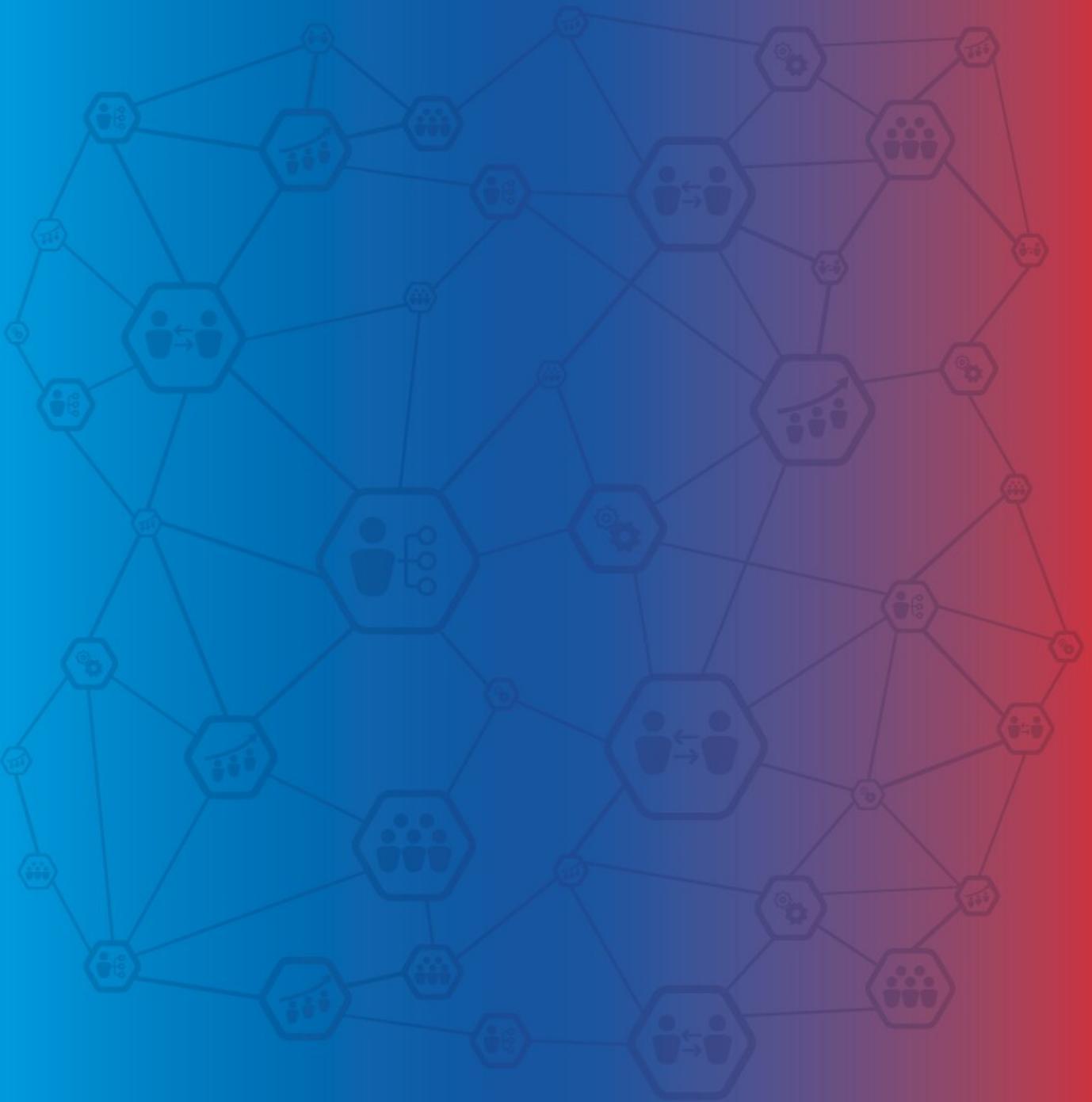


# LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK

## RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION GUIDE

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# PART 1 – OVERVIEW OF THE FRAMEWORK

## Part 1

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### Introduction

This guide was produced by Local Government NSW (LGNSW) to assist councils understand how capabilities can be incorporated in their recruitment and selection process. It is not intended to be a comprehensive guide to establishing a new recruitment and selection process. Instead, the guide focuses on how the Local Government Capability Framework can be incorporated into existing recruitment and selection processes. The guide consists of two parts: Part 1 is a general introduction to the Local Government Capability Framework and Part 2 specifically addresses incorporation of capabilities in council recruitment and selection processes.

### Overview and background

- The Local Government Capability Framework (the capability framework) provides a set of core capabilities, expressed as behaviours, which set out clear expectations about performance in local government: “how we do things around here”. It builds on organisational values and creates a common sense of purpose for elected members and all levels of the workforce.
- LGNSW proposed the development of a local government capability framework in response to changes in legislative and community expectations of councils, including the performance and behaviours of its people in delivering a professional service to the community. The proposal received strong support when put to councils across the state in the second half of 2016. It was developed in close consultation with elected and council representatives and approved by the LGNSW Board in August 2017.
- The capability framework does not displace or override the *Local Government (State) Award 2017* (the Award) or any relevant industrial instrument and is not linked to the Award. The Award is the enforceable industrial instrument setting the minimum terms and conditions for the majority of local government employees in NSW. The framework does not alter councils’ obligations to:
  - Evaluate positions in their structure in accordance with the Award's skill descriptors; and
  - Ensure progression through councils’ salary systems based on the acquisition and use of skills, or employee performance, provided that progression beyond the entry level based on the acquisition and use of skills is also available.
- Councils implementing the capability framework should, where appropriate, have regard to provisions of the following Award clauses:
  - cl 2. Statement of Intent
  - cl 5. Skill Descriptors
  - cl 7. Salary System
  - cl 8. Use of Skills
  - cl 9. Performance Evaluation and Reward
  - cl 31. Training and Development

- cl 39. Workplace Change
- cl 40. Termination of Employment and Redeployment due to Redundancy

### **Capability framework aims**

The capability framework was developed for use by local government to:

- create a common view of “what good looks like” when working in local government
- align elected members and the workforce in delivering community outcomes
- improve performance and capacity
- attract and retain highly capable people
- enhance mobility both within the sector and between sectors
- provide a shared basis for workforce planning
- provide broader career options and develop the next generation of local government leaders in NSW; and
- provide a common foundation for the professional development required of elected members by legislation.

### **Capability framework structure**

The capability framework describes 16 core capabilities across four groups: Personal Attributes; Relationships; Results and Resources. These capabilities apply to all elected members and local government employees though expressed in different ways to reflect the different roles.

In addition, there are four capabilities in the Workforce Leadership group for employees who manage people and another four capabilities in the Civic Leadership group for elected members.

The capabilities work together to provide an understanding of the common knowledge, skills and abilities required of elected members and local government employees.

The capability framework complements the specific technical and professional skills required by certain positions.

### **Capability framework uses**

- For council employees, the framework may be used as a foundation for all aspects of people management, from workforce planning through creating structures and roles, to recruitment, performance management, professional development and career planning. The framework may also inform the performance agreements that underpin the performance review of general managers and senior staff employed under the standard contract.
- For elected members, the framework may be used as a basis for community and prospective candidate information, councillor induction and professional development.

## Capability framework benefits – organisational

Sector-wide implementation of the capability framework has the potential to result in measurable improvements in:

- outcomes for the community through better alignment of workforce and elected member capabilities with strategic and operational needs
- budget performance through time saved and better match to needs when using capability-based recruitment and selection; training; performance management and career and succession planning
- community perceptions of local government; and
- support for NSW local government as an employer of choice.

## Capability framework benefits – individual

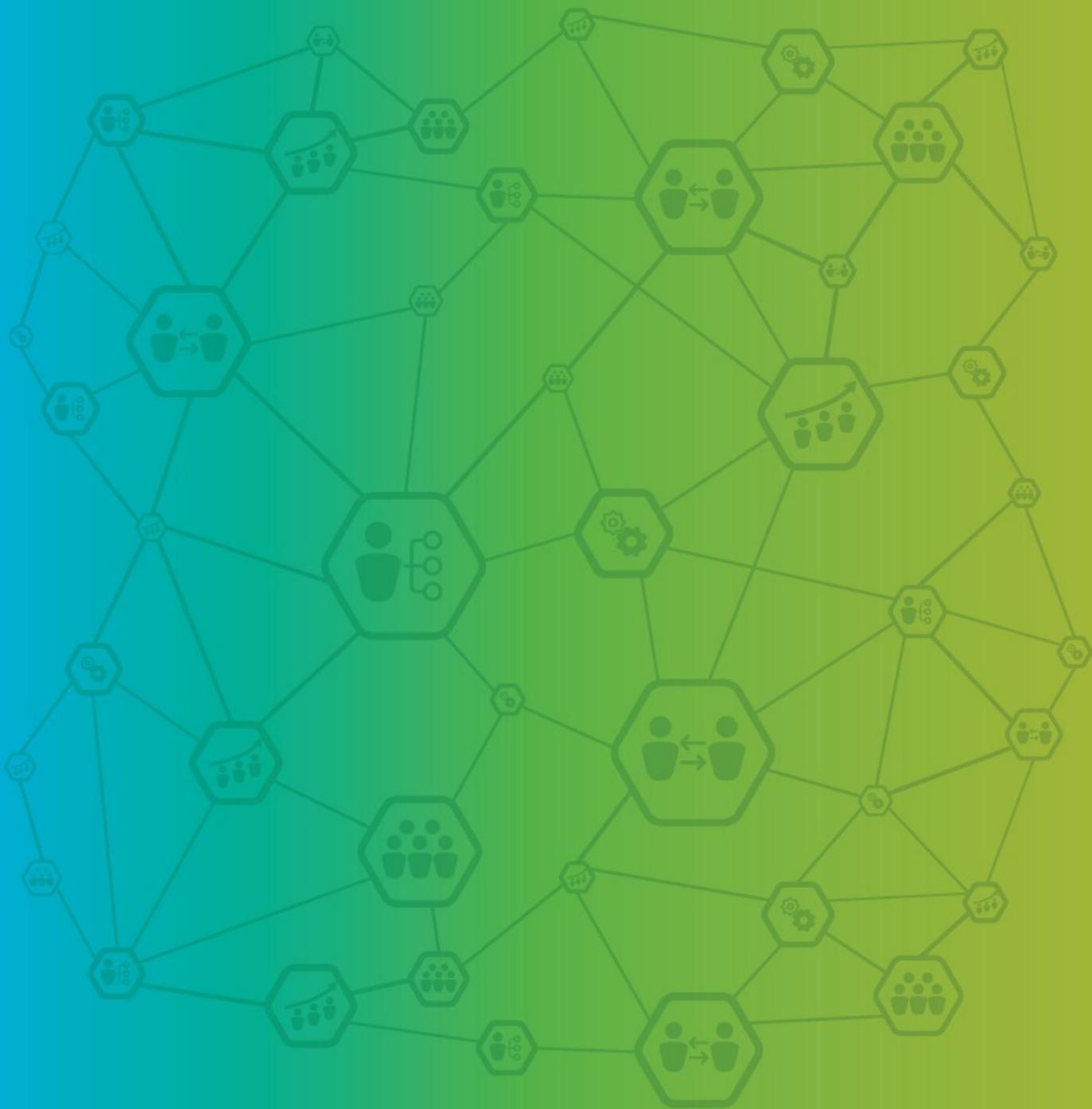
- for managers:
  - provides a common language to describe expectations
  - enhances mobility where links can be established between different roles that share similar capabilities (e.g. administration, planning and customer service)
  - builds on award variations to broadband positions by making them more contemporary and further removing barriers between professions, positions and occupations across the council's organisation structure
  - helps target scarce training and development resources and encourage individuals to take more responsibility for their own development
- for employees:
  - helps understand the capabilities required to work at their current level (or in a different position), in particular the behaviours expected of them in performing their roles
  - provides a basis to conduct a self-assessment as an input to professional development and career planning
  - helps identify well-targeted opportunities for development in their performance management discussion
- for elected members:
  - provides a clear picture of core expectations in the role
  - provides a common foundation for assessing and planning personal professional development

### Supporting material and tools provided by LGNSW

A suite of supporting materials and tools has been developed to assist councils in implementing the framework. These include:

- a guide on how to use capabilities in [workforce planning](#)
- a [Position Description Builder tool](#) – an online interactive position description template that can be used by councils to develop position descriptions that include the capabilities required for the positions
- a guide on how to use capabilities in recruitment and selection (this guide)
- a guide on how to use capabilities in [performance management and development](#)
- a guide on [implementation and change management](#)
- an online tool to guide the professional development of councillors and mayors known as Professional Development in a Box ([PD in a Box](#))

For further information on the capability framework and support available from LGNSW refer to [www.lgnsw.org.au/capability](http://www.lgnsw.org.au/capability) or contact LGNSW at [member.services@lgnsw.org.au](mailto:member.services@lgnsw.org.au) or by telephone: (02) 9242 4142.



## PART 2 – USING CAPABILITIES IN RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

## Part 2

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### Introduction

The recruitment and selection process is one of the most important ways to shape the workforce in line with strategic and operational needs. Other important ways to do so are staff development (including leadership development) and creating an aligned and supportive culture.

Strong workforce capabilities in areas such as self-management, relationships with others, planning and prioritising and responsible use of resources are essential to the success of any organisation. Clear, positive and inclusive workforce leadership is also vital. The capabilities represent the type and level of behaviours that are expected on the job. They have a strong basis in organisational values and are the 'glue' that binds the organisation together around a common purpose and joint understanding of 'what good looks like'.

The key benefit of incorporating capabilities in the recruitment and selection process is to give due weight to the characteristics that will determine 'how' the candidate would carry out the task and 'how' they would contribute to council's desired workplace culture, in addition to the knowledge and technical ability they will bring to the role. Clear articulation of the capabilities required provides a sound basis for choosing assessment tools and methods that are appropriate for the position.

The following sections provide brief guidance on how to incorporate capabilities at key points in council recruitment and selection processes.

### Deciding to fill a position

A decision to fill a position should be made in the context of workforce planning. The Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) system established under sections 402-406 of the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)* includes a requirement to produce a Resourcing Strategy that includes 'workforce management planning' to be carried out in accordance with guidelines mandated under section 406.

Recently merged Councils need to consider the employment protection provisions in Part 6 of Chapter 11 of the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*, which affect the treatment of vacant positions and employee transfers. Council Equal Employment Opportunity policies may also influence the chosen approach to filling positions.

In simple terms, workforce planning is the process of translating the council's strategic and operational objectives and priorities into workforce requirements, including capabilities, then developing a range of Human Resources (HR) strategies to ensure the workforce composition matches those requirements.

The HR strategies could include changes in structures and/ or position descriptions to reflect changes in services, products or systems; changes in the mix of employee categories; introduction of new workforce management arrangements to improve attraction and/or retention; staff training and development priorities; recruitment and selection priorities; etc.

Even if council does not have a comprehensive workforce plan covering the elements described above, each position vacancy offers the opportunity to confirm its purpose and description in the context of current and future organisation and work unit needs. It is also an opportunity to include or review the capabilities required for successful performance in the role. Considerations when creating or reviewing a position might include:

- council objectives and priorities
- expected future changes in service or program mix
- expected future system changes
- budget
- current workloads
- current team's technical skill and capability mix
- labour market availability for specific technical or professional skills
- council talent management strategy, etc.

The characteristics of the position might also be changed in response to feedback from a previous occupant or the supervising manager.

If a decision is made to change the position description, its grade may need to be re-evaluated, depending on the nature and extent of change.

The *Local Government (State) Award 2017* places no limitations on multi-skilling, the establishment of skills based career paths or broadening the range of tasks that an employee may perform. However, councils should be aware that Clause 32 of the Award includes consultation on job redesign in the functions of council consultative committees.

### **Position description development**

A capability-based position description is needed to provide the basis for a capability-based recruitment and selection process.

Position description builder

LGNSW has developed an online [Position Description Builder](#) and guidance on its use to assist councils through the process of developing capability-based position descriptions.

An important principle in creating a position description is to ensure that it only contains requirements genuinely needed to perform successfully in the role. It is also an opportunity to make sure the capability and other requirements are consistent with those applying to similar council roles and logically relate to those in the role's career path stream(s).

The "focus" capabilities

The Position Description Builder requires that "focus" capabilities be selected from the capability groups, with a minimum of one per group. The "focus" capabilities are those judged to be most important at the time of recruiting to the position, i.e. the ones that must be met at least at satisfactory level for a candidate to be suitable for appointment. Please see the alignment of capabilities to position guide for information on the number of "focus" capabilities

suggested for each level of position ([Attachment 1](#)). Ideally, all capabilities will be met at satisfactory level by the successful candidate, however it is possible that some development is assessed as required in 2 or 3 of the 16 core capabilities (20 for Workforce Leaders). If so, a development plan focused on those capabilities may be put in place as part of the initial performance agreement.

The “focus” capabilities for each role may change over time, depending on factors such as current council priorities, current team mix, etc. The focus of the capability-based selection process will change in line with this.

### **Choosing how to fill a position**

When filling position vacancies, councils must have regard to the following provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993*:

- Section 336 (1) which regulates the filling of a vacancy in the position of general manager;
- Sections 348, 349, 350, 351 and 354 which regulate advertising of staff positions; appointment on merit; temporary appointment; and restriction on the appointment of a former mayor or councillor; and
- Sections 354G and 354H which regulate the lateral transfer of non-senior staff members and external advertising for council staff affected by the constitution, amalgamation or alteration of council areas.

Position vacancies can be filled in a number of ways and the candidate pool may consist of existing employees and/or external candidates, depending on the chosen recruitment method. For example:

- eligibility list
- lateral movement of an employee who has any technical or professional skills deemed essential to the performance of the role and has demonstrated the appropriate level of capabilities in another role
- internal call for expressions of interest
- external advertising.

Selection processes will vary depending on whether the vacancy is permanent or temporary. They will also vary according to the type of position and its requirements. The following section provides guidance on how to incorporate capabilities into a standard recruitment process involving external advertising and assessment of a pool of candidates.

## Capability-based recruitment process

### Advertising the position

The advertisement should:

- advise candidates that they will be assessed on the relevant capabilities from the Local Government Framework, as well as other selection criteria, such as relevant experience, knowledge and technical or professional skills.
- draw attention to the “focus” capabilities for the position
- provide a link to the Position Description showing the “focus” and other capabilities and their description (as generated from the LGNSW PD Builder or with similar information).

The advertisement should not include selection criteria that are not essential to performance in the role as this may unnecessarily restrict the field of potential applicants. It may also unintentionally exclude applicants with diverse but relevant background experience.

An effective job advertisement is one that accurately represents the job opportunity. It should be clear and concise and written in plain English using inclusive and non-discriminatory language.

There is a clear distinction between the position description and the job advert. The position description has important information about position requirements and the outcomes to be achieved. The job advert is about attracting suitably qualified candidates to apply for the role. The job advert needs to emphasise:

- The key features of the role
- The organisational context
- The required capabilities of the position and any essential requirements.
- The benefits of employment

### Application requirements

Council workforces encompass a very wide range of occupation groups and positions, ranging from outdoors parks and garden workers, through trades-based roles, community support workers, service centre enquiries workers, environmental building and building certification professionals, planners, engineers, finance and human resources workers. The application requirements and shortlisting method will vary depending on the type of role to be filled.

However, the common aim, regardless of role type, is to obtain sufficient relevant information as a basis for good and fair decisions. The basic requirements are usually an application form, a CV and evidence of formal qualifications or certificates, where necessary for performance in the role.

### Shortlisting

In general, although some evidence of meeting required capabilities can be obtained from application documents (for example, evidence of experience in roles that typically draw on certain capabilities), conclusive assessment of candidate capabilities can only be made using assessment methods such as the ones described in the next section. Shortlisting is therefore commonly based on evidence of relevant knowledge, skills and capabilities as demonstrated through previous experience (i.e. experience that appears to have required the demonstration of the relevant knowledge, skills and capabilities, not necessarily in the same occupation group) and claims made by the applicant in their application form and/or covering letter. Formal qualifications and certificates are also a factor in shortlisting, if essential to performance in the role.

For some categories of positions, particularly those that require good written communication skills, the information available from the candidate application can be enhanced by requiring candidates to provide a brief written description of their experience in demonstrating two selected “focus” capabilities, in addition to their application form and/or covering letter and CV. This preliminary evidence of key capabilities is a useful source of additional evidence for the shortlisting decision.

A shortlisting template is at [Template 1](#).

### Assessing the shortlisted candidates – general

Assessment methods will vary significantly depending on the type and level of the role. The depth of assessment may also vary depending on whether the panel is selecting for a permanent role, a short-term temporary role, or a casual role.

No single assessment method is best and it is important for panel members to be aware that the traditional interview does not have high predictive validity when compared with other methods, such as practical exercises and assessment centres.

Some key principles are recommended:

- Select assessment methods that are relevant to the position (assessment methods that are a good fit for a finance role will not necessarily be a good fit for a planning role or a childcare worker role)
- Only assess for knowledge, skills and capabilities that are essential for the performance in the position
- Use several assessment methods of different kinds to collect objective evidence about the candidates’ capabilities, skills, experience, knowledge and other essential requirements relevant to the position (the predictive validity of the overall assessment increases with the number of assessment methods used) – a minimum of three different assessment methods, including the interview, is recommended
- Assess for all groups of capabilities – the Personal Attributes and Relationships capabilities are traditionally regarded as ‘soft’ and possibly less important, however they are key to good teamwork, professional conduct, effective stakeholder engagement and contributing to a positive workplace and organisational culture

- Use selection methods that either test candidates' skills and capabilities directly or require candidates to describe past experiences that demonstrated those skills and capabilities (this is called 'behavioural interviewing', based on the well-established finding that past performance is the best predictor of future performance)
- The choice of assessment methods should consider challenges in language, literacy and numeracy that may be faced by some suitable applicants
- Give due weight to each of the assessment methods (for example, the referee checks should be treated as an opportunity for the panel to gain further information about the candidates rather than a simple confirmation of a view already reached at interview stage).

### Assessing shortlisted candidates – methods

The selection panel should assess applicants against all capabilities because they will be required when working in the role but primary emphasis should be given to the “focus” capabilities.

The range of available assessment methods for capabilities includes:

- Behavioural based interviews, which consist of asking candidates to “*tell about a time when...*” – this method is a much better predictor of performance in the role than questions based on hypothetical scenarios, it also is more likely to put the candidate at ease, talking about familiar experiences (examples of behavioural interview questions are provided at [Template 2](#))
- Work sample exercises conducted in supervised conditions prior to interview – these can be complemented by a presentation and/or discussion of the exercise at interview
- Role plays – conducted as a separate exercise prior to the interview (these will normally involve one or more panel members as assessors)
- Group exercises – for roles where team work and/or leadership is important (the participants are usually other candidates)
- Presentations on a topic which has been given to candidates one or two days in advance - this is useful for testing research, thinking and presentation capabilities
- Situational judgment tests and integrity tests – these measure values-based judgement skills by presenting individuals with short scenarios and a number of possible responses: candidates are asked to choose the best response for the scenario or rank the responses in order of most appropriate to least appropriate (these can be useful for roles with accountability for managing resources or advising others on complex issues)
- Psychometric assessments – these can be useful for roles requiring specific skills (e.g. numerical cognitive test for finance roles or verbal skills for policy roles) or personal attributes (e.g. personality questionnaire for a service centre role)
- Referee checks – these are part of the assessment process and should be used as a general check on past performance but also to explore aspects identified by the panel

for follow up (the panel should not make a decision until these referee checks have been conducted).

It is not necessary to have a separate and specific assessment for each capability. Most of the assessment methods listed above can be designed to cover a range of capabilities. For example, a work sample exercise followed by presentation and discussion at interview can be designed to elicit information about capabilities in the Resources, Results and Relationships groups. The assessments can also provide evidence of knowledge considered to be an essential requirement.

### **Assessing shortlisted candidates – the report**

The panel's selection report needs to cover the full range of selection criteria for the role, including the capabilities.

For shortlisted candidates, it is suggested that the capabilities assessment be presented as follows:

For each group of capabilities, information on the assessment method(s) used to assess that group, an overall assessment statement against the capability group (referencing specific assessment methods where relevant) and a more specific assessment statement against each of the “focus” capability(ies) for that group. The statements should, as far as possible, be validated by reference to candidate responses to behavioural questions; sample work provided or observed behaviour. The suggested approach is shown in [Template 3](#).

### **Onboarding and induction**

The successful candidate's introduction to the council workplace provides an important opportunity to reinforce the importance of the Local Government capabilities, the values they embody and the expectation that the employee will demonstrate the capabilities in the way in which they do their work, contributing to building a strong, positive and productive council workplace culture.

### **Further Information**

For a more detailed explanation of the capability framework refer to [www.lgnsw.org.au/capability](http://www.lgnsw.org.au/capability).

Councils can also find more detailed support and advice on recruitment and selection and compliance with the Act, the Award in [LGNSW HR Advance](#) or by contacting LGNSW at [member.services@lgnsw.org.au](mailto:member.services@lgnsw.org.au).

## Attachment 1 – Alignment of Capability Level to Position Guide

ALIGNMENT OF CAPABILITY LEVEL TO POSITION GUIDE						
Position level	Foundational	Intermediate	Adept	Advanced	Highly Advanced	Focus Capabilities
<b>GM</b>				3	17	6
<b>Director</b>			1-5	8-15	2-6	6
<b>Manager</b>	0-1	0-2	6-12	1-10	0-4	5
<b>Senior Professional/ Coordinator</b>	0-1	0-2	6-12	1-7		5
<b>Professional/ Executive Administration</b>	2-6	8-15	2-8			4 or 5*
<b>Team Leader/ Supervisor</b>	5-13	8-14	0-2			5
<b>Administration Officer/Trades</b>	5-13	8-14	0-2			4 or 5*
<b>Operational (Ranger/ Childcare)</b>	6-14	5-11				4
<b>Operational (Labourer)</b>	14-16	0-2				4
<b>Trainee/ Apprentice</b>	0-16					

\*The “focus” capabilities are those judged to be most important at the time of recruiting to the position, i.e. the ones that must be met at least at satisfactory level for a candidate to be suitable for appointment. The mix of “focus” capabilities can change over time, reflecting changing work priorities and current team strengths.

Positions without supervisory responsibilities should have a minimum of 4 focus capabilities, one from each of the core groups. Positions with supervisory responsibilities should have an additional 5th focus capability, from the Workforce Leadership group.



# PART 3 – TEMPLATES

## Part 3

### TEMPLATE 1 – Candidate Shortlisting Assessment

Use this template to record assessments of all applicants for a role based on their applications and CVs.

Candidates selected for shortlisting and further assessment only include those with applications that demonstrate all of the focus capabilities and all essential skill and qualification required for the position.

Position							
Focus Capabilities and Level					Essential Requirements		
insert at least one per capability group, as per position description (e.g. Deliver Results – Adept)							
Personal Attributes	Relationships	Results	Resources	Workforce Leadership (if applicable)	Skills and Knowledge	Qualifications	
1. 2.	1. 2.	1. 2.	1. 2.	1. 2.			
Candidate Name							Shortlist Yes/No
1. 1.							

## CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK – RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION GUIDE

Use the rating scale below to record strength against the focus capabilities. Add brief comment if necessary.

Enter Yes/No for each Essential Requirement.

Rating Scale	Descriptions
A	Evidence of Capability above required level
B	Evidence of Capability at required level
C	Evidence of Capability below required level
D	Insufficient evidence of Capability to assess

## TEMPLATE 2 – Behavioural Based Interview Sample Questions

### **PROBLEM SOLVING**

Tell me about a time when you had to analyse information and make a recommendation. What kind of thought process did you go through? Was the recommendation accepted? If not, why?

Tell me about a situation where you had to solve a difficult problem. What did you do? What was the outcome? What do you wish you had done differently?

### **COMMUNICATION**

Tell me about a recent successful experience in making a speech or presentation.

When have you had to present to a group of people with little or no preparation? What obstacles did you face? How did you handle them?

Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).

### **INTEGRITY**

Discuss a time when your integrity was challenged. How did you handle it?

Tell me about a time when you experienced a loss for doing what is right. How did you react?

Tell me about a business situation when you felt honesty was inappropriate. Why? What did you do?

### **DISPLAY RESILIENCE**

Tell me about a particular work-related setback you have faced. How did you deal with it?

When have you ever found yourself in a competitive situation professionally? How did you handle it?

### TEMPLATE 3 – Individual selection report for shortlisted candidates

Position Title:		Candidate's Name:		
Essential knowledge, technical / professional skill or qualification: 1. ... 2. ...	Assessment method for each requirement: 1. ... 2.	Rating and comment: 2. 3.	Reference check comments on essential knowledge, technical / professional skill or qualification essential requirements:  1. 2.	
Capabilities	Assessment methods (e.g. info from CV, work sample test, presentation, interview)	Overall Assessment for capability group (see suggested key below)	Specific assessment of "Focus" capability(ies) (comment)	Reference Check comments on capabilities
Personal Attributes Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage Self – Adept</li> <li>• Display Resilience and Adaptability – Adept</li> <li>• Act with Integrity – Adept (Focus)</li> <li>• Demonstrate Accountability – Adept</li> </ul>				

## CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK – RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION GUIDE

Position Title:	Candidate's Name:			
<p>Relationships</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate &amp; Engage – Adept (Focus)</li> <li>• Community and Customer focused – Adept</li> <li>• Work Collaboratively – Adept (Focus)</li> <li>• Influence and Negotiate – Intermediate</li> </ul>				
<p>Results</p> <p>As per examples above, list each capability in the group with its level and indicate one or more as Focus</p>				

CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK – RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION GUIDE

Position Title:		Candidate's Name:		
<p>Resources</p> <p>As per example above, list each capability in the group with its level and indicate one or more as Focus</p>				
<p>Workforce Leadership (if applicable to the role)</p> <p>As per example above, list each capability in the group with its level and indicate one or more as Focus</p>				

## CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK – RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION GUIDE

Position Title:	Candidate's Name:
Overall candidate assessment: Taking account of knowledge, experience, technical or professional skills and capabilities.	Suitable/ Not suitable:
Overall ranking relative to other candidates:	Comment on key reasons for relative ranking:

## CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK – RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION GUIDE

### Rating scale for capability groups

<b>5</b>	Very likely to be a strength Candidate demonstrated competence at or above the level required for <u>all</u> capabilities in this group, in one or more assessment methods.
<b>4</b>	Likely to be strength Candidate demonstrated competence at or above the level required for the “Focus” capability(ies) and for most of the other capabilities in this group, in one or more assessment methods.
<b>3</b>	Meets requirements Candidate demonstrated competence at the level required for the “Focus” capabilities and for some of the other capabilities in this group, in one or more assessment methods. Candidate is suitable for appointment but may require some development in the capability areas indicated.
<b>2</b>	Does not meet requirements Candidate did not demonstrate competence at the level required for one or more of the “Focus” capabilities in this group though did demonstrate behaviours at the level required for some others. Candidate is not suitable for appointment.
<b>1</b>	Well below requirements Candidate did not demonstrate competence at the level required for the “Focus” capabilities and any / only some of the other capabilities in this group. Candidate is not at the level required for this position and is not suitable for appointment.



**For further information:**

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