



Innovative Approaches to Resourcing Local Government Planners

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Shire of Capel



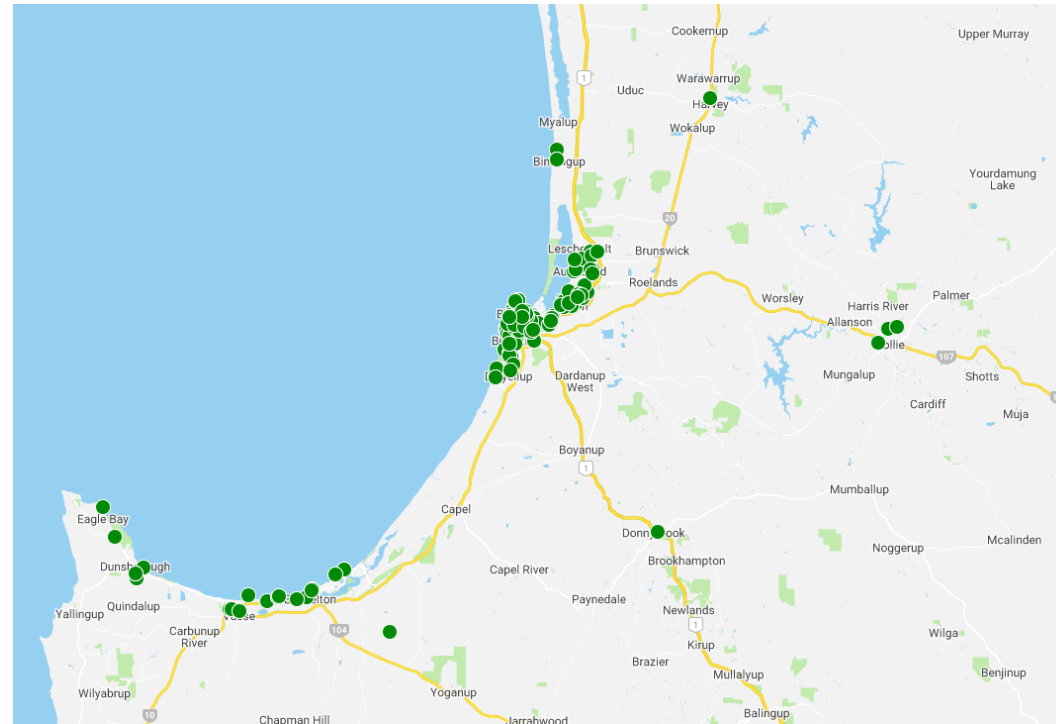
Acknowledgement to Country

We wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, the Wadandi people. We wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and community.

We pay our respects to all members of the Aboriginal communities and their culture; and to Elders past and present, their descendants who are with us today, and those who will follow in their footsteps.

Recognising the Pressure Points

- Housing availability within the Southwest – 137 available rentals at present (Just 26 at time of September 2023)
- Demand from other sectors within the Southwest due to significant regional projects
- Uneven playing field – Tiers within the Local Government system



Focusing on Strengths and Opportunities – The Other Half of the SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Remote working capabilities
- Variety of work
- Progressive Council

Opportunities


- Appeal to talent through convenience
- Break down the geographical barrier
- Embrace difference
- Ask the market what flexibility looks like to them

The Approach

- The Shire advertised a Senior Planning Officer position with full flexibility and asked applicants to come to us outlining what flexibility would look like to them.
- Position was renegotiated under the Workforce Plan to shift to contract, rather than permanency.
- Shire then canvassed applications and assessed the parameters of what was put forward.
- Shire Officers met with applicants to understand their expectations and outlined the general work that was identified as potentially suitable.




The Outcome

- In December 2023, the Shire was able to secure a Senior Planning Officer on a flexible contract.
 - Arrangement accounted for international travel, as well as working from a permanent base in Perth.
 - Weekly Teams meetings would set the agenda and expectations.
 - Prior to each overseas trip, the Senior Planning Officer would send the Manager a schedule of availability for each week whilst away, ranging from low (less than 8 hours for the week) through to high (more than 20 hours for the week). We were able to plan workloads and tasking through this foresight.
 - The team member has since returned and works full time from Perth but drives down to the Shire Office one day a fortnight.
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Lessons

- Trust, trust, trust – relinquish tight levels of control.
 - Tailor the workload and tasks specific to the situation – identify tasks that were less hands-on and did not entail a high level of customer/community engagement.
 - Establish working relationships and collaborative approaches within internal stakeholders – HR is often seen as the bad guys but can also provide some innovative solutions to issues.
 - Don't be afraid of failure – doing things unconventionally to help your team out is showing that you care.
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