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chapter 5

performance culture

Our people are our most important asset – without them achievement of our business goals would not be possible.

This year we turned our attention to better understanding our corporate culture and we are now in the midst of a culture change program which aims to develop a high performance business culture. Our people are motivated, achievement focused and work cooperatively and collaboratively as 'One Team' and their ongoing development and safety is a key focus for us.

Some fantastic work has been done so far in raising the awareness of the culture we aspire to, measuring it and introducing a common language. Areas for us to continue to focus on are as follows:

- Mission & Philosophy
- Structures
- HR Systems & Technology
- Skills & Qualities

This year we will also see greater integration of our strategic business objectives into staff Achievement Plans. This will assist our staff in being able to identify how their functions and projects fit in with the overall strategic objectives of the organisation and how their individual efforts contribute to meeting organisational goals.

Further work will be done to incorporate core behaviours into Achievement Plans also. The four key behaviours; Customer Service, Team Work, Reliability & Accountability and Adaptability are the behaviours the Corporation has identified as supporting our preferred culture. All employees will have these four behaviours included in their Achievement Plans and will be measured on how well they demonstrate the desired behaviours.

A framework is being developed to provide more detail regarding expected demonstrated behaviours at all levels in the organisation. This will help support staff and managers discuss and agree on behaviours that drive and measure performance.

To support our staff and to help Hunter Water Corporation to grow into a high performance culture, a refreshed corporate development program will also be rolled out.

At the centre of this program are our competencies - the knowledge, skills and attitudes we each need to perform well in our roles.

Competencies will allow Hunter Water to create a shared language to discuss high performance. They

will also allow employees to better understand what is required in their role, as well as providing a tool for managers to develop their people and promote our desired culture.

Over time these competencies will be integrated throughout all of our people processes, from recruitment, through to identifying development needs, managing performance, and succession planning. Competencies will be developed in three key areas for all people within our organisation in the following areas:

- Leadership
- Management
- Technical

Our leaders will play a key role in creating our high performance culture and the five critical success factors for our leaders include:

- Shapes strategic thinking
- Achieves results
- Cultivates productive working relationships
- Exemplifies personal drive and integrity
- Communicates with Influence

A culture re-test in 2010 will enable us to measure the success of our many initiatives in moving toward the high performance culture.

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ONE TEAM, ONE STYLE

During the year it was recognised that there was no identifiable style being used for external corporate documents. Also there was no basic information identifying the owner of the publication or date. Following the preparation of our corporate commitment statements and establishment of our 'four pillars', it was an important step to review our style guide, existing templates and applications to ensure we promote a uniform, consistent image across all of our publications including internal and external collateral. In 2009/10 we will roll out a new style guide to support consistent and professional image, giving it a fresh, modern look.

sustainable workforce

In today's demographic climate we are constantly facing issues of retaining the right people and capturing knowledge in the organisation so that we will have the right people with the right skills to do the work required in the future.

In order to meet this challenge we are committed to developing the skills of our current staff as well as recruiting talented new staff and young professionals.

Over the last year we continued to demonstrate our commitment to our staff. We pride ourselves on achieving a good work/life balance through flexible working arrangements and rewarding our staff for going above and beyond their call of duty.

Having happy and motivated staff is only one part of the equation. The other half is ensuring that they receive adequate training to be able to perform the tasks required in their job. During 2008/2009 we provided considerable staff development activities for our 450 employees. In June 2009, Human Resources in conjunction with TAFE NSW developed a Management workshop

for supervisors in our System Operations group. The program aimed to provide them with tools and techniques to effectively manage their teams. Feedback from the program was extremely positive and we will be offering this opportunity to other groups throughout the business next year.

December 2008 saw 51 Customers & Commercial Development team members complete a Certificate IV in Customer Contact or Frontline Management. This program not only allowed staff to develop their skills it also recognised their existing customer service experience and they now have a nationally recognised accreditation to add to their list of qualifications.

An ageing workforce is an issue that is affecting not only Hunter Water but various other organisations. To ensure we will have enough employees to continue to provide the level of service of which we are proud, we continue to support and recruit young professionals and tradespeople.

In the last year we recruited apprentices in Electrical and

Mechanical Services, developed trainees in civil maintenance and continued the recruitment of undergraduate, UNISS scholars and cadets. We have also introduced a young professionals group, whereby our young professionals can get together for networking and sharing of experiences.

With our record capital works program looming it is very important that we attract new talent to join our team. Throughout the year we strengthened our attraction and retention of talented people by improving our branding and market presence through the use of a variety of recruitment channels. We have also broadened our horizons and looked at our alliances with other water utilities across the world.

We have participated in various exchange programs with Seattle Public Utilities (USA) and Metro Water (NZ) and helped foster knowledge sharing forums such as the Innovation Community of Practice with South East Water (Vic) and other national utilities and telecommunications groups.



L-R: JACKIE POWER, LINDSEY DEVINE, FIONA RENES

one team focus



With a target to deliver a record capital works program of \$1 billion over the next four years it is essential a one team approach is applied to be able to complete the task ahead.

In order to focus this one team approach and deliver on our strategic business objectives, we have made changes to our organisational structure. In the last year the divisions have been expanded from five to seven, The new divisions are; Business Strategy & Communications, System Operations, Customers & Commercial Development, People & Change, System Strategy & Sustainability, Business Services and Infrastructure Delivery.

The change in structure provides a more strategic approach to servicing our customers and allows us to strengthen our relationships with each other and become “one team”.

During the last year we also refined our Strategic Business Plan with a renewed focus on our strategic objectives of customer, environment, operational excellence and performance culture. This refinement was then distilled down to our corporate performance reporting and individuals’ achievement plans which ensures that our products, services and processes are aligned across the entire business.

Changes such as these are necessary to remain successful and continually meet our strategic objectives.

We encourage our staff to have a continuous improvement mindset by which they can challenge the way we do things. With the assistance of our continuous improvement team we have completed six projects in the past year using the Continuous Improvement methodology of Lean Six Sigma. These projects involved over 40 people and five different divisions resulting in savings of \$160,000 in addition to improved productivity and customer service.

This one team approach to solving issues is a philosophy we will continue to adopt over the coming years as it is imperative we all work together to meet our customers needs.

Over the coming year we will continue this line of work with the next step being to refocus our corporate reporting to ensure that we are concentrating on the operations in the business that will deliver against our strategic objectives. This ensures that we can track our performance as a team as we work towards achieving our goals.

HR2GO

Over the coming few years, the People & Change group are planning to upgrade employee and management access to the Human Resource information system – Ellipse. A range of initiatives will be implemented as part of the HR business plan and overall corporate strategic business plan to build and drive knowledge management, system and process efficiency and a continuous improvement mindset.

The first ‘cab off the rank’ was HR2GO. HR2GO went live to all Hunter Water employees in April

2009. HR2GO is an employee self service online application that allows employees the freedom of receiving payslips and payment summaries, viewing and changing payroll banking details, changing personal contact information and applying and approving leave applications whenever they need to via our corporate intranet.

Over the coming year we plan to extend HR2GO by looking at an interactive online training calendar and nominations, online learning capabilities, online performance management and tracking of achievement plans and the introduction of an e-recruitment system.



corporate communications at its best

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is an essential element to any organisation, however many organisations undervalue the benefits of engaging positive and proactive communication with staff, instead focusing their resources on external communication. At Hunter Water, we understand the tremendous importance effective internal communication plays in the workplace. With this in mind, the internal communication strategy was reviewed during September 2008.

The review looked to explore the existing internal communications strategy and its associated tools. Staff workshops were held to explain current communication methods and systems applied by the Corporate Communications Department while looking for suggestions for improvements and new ideas. This was supplemented with a staff survey for those who were unable to attend the focus group workshops. Feedback was used to refine the strategy and develop new communication tools for the future.

This is a great example of proactive engagement to ensure a more sustainable workplace for employees. It is a well-known adage that one of the advantages of effective internal communication is the ability to empower staff to make the right decisions, while ensuring they have the information they need at their finger tips. Some of the methods of communication employed are;

- **What's On**
A weekly staff eNewsletter that facilitates timely information dissemination
- **Toolbox Meetings and Field Talk newsletter**
A two-way communication method to reiterate and reinforce company messages for field staff.
- **Breakroom Posters**
Posters are regularly displayed in breakrooms to strengthen key corporate messages visually
- **Intranet**
The internal Intranet is the homepage for all staff when they log on to the internet and continues to provide not only timely news, but also forms, policies and publications. The Intranet is currently undergoing a redevelopment (see page 44)
- **Pipeline Magazine**
This is an internal hard copy staff magazine distributed bimonthly containing more in-depth information ranging from corporate and Managing Director updates, to safety information, project updates and divisional profiles
- **Pipeline Presentations**
These presentations are held once per month and feature both internal and external speakers on a range of topics

- **Comms Contact Program**
A new program was developed where Communications staff members develop a speciality area with key divisions by attending staff meetings and working closely with their 'host' divisions and become the 'Comms Contact' as a way to gain more knowledge and expertise in that area as well as build relationships.
- **Photo Gallery**
A photo gallery accessible for all staff will be created in the new intranet.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

During the last year the Corporate Communications Department undertook a redevelopment of the Hunter Water style. Effective branding can convey your mission, vision and values to the public and it can be the difference between positive and negative public perception. We understand that our brand is a valuable asset and as such must be carefully preserved and implemented consistently.

The Hunter Water logo itself underwent a slight modification in order to modernise and revamp it.

Our colour palette was also reorganised in order to parallel with our strategic undertakings. The new colour palette can be seen below.

Corporate Navy

This is our core colour and is used in the logo

Corporate Silver

This is our font colour and supports the industrial nature and rich value of the work we do

Performance Culture

Blue represents our commitment to growing a vibrant workplace, achieving exceptional business outcomes, and personal satisfaction

Operational Excellence

Purple represents our commitment to increasing competitiveness and value delivered to community and enhancing value

Customers

Orange represents our commitment to providing superior customer service and producing safe, highly reliable water service

Environment

Green represents our commitment to protecting people's health as well as the environment

A GOOD FLUSH BEATS A FULL HOUSE EVERY TIME!

Keeping customers satisfied is an important mission for Hunter Water and when it was discovered that there was increasing customer dissatisfaction in one area we immediately began working to turn dissatisfaction into satisfaction. Domestic Plumbing Services concept was created in order to deliver consistent superior customer service.

Sometimes when we are contacted about a plumbing issue or problem, the service technician finds that it is not the responsibility of Hunter Water. In the future, when this happens, we hope to provide our

customers with reliable and timely plumbing assistance for all their private plumbing jobs through a direct and seamless referral system with a trusted plumbing company.

The next steps to get the Domestic Plumbing Service up and running is as follows:

- development of a Marketing and Communication Plan,
- an open public Expressions of Interest to select the best plumbing company to partner with; and
- a detailed technical feasibility study to ascertain technical options and system development.



our 'safety climate'

We engaged SafetyWorks Group during 2009 to conduct a safety culture assessment to determine if the current OHS systems and tools were serving the needs of the organisation.

The assessment aimed to provide insight into whether the desired active health and safety commitment is being provided and demonstrated at the most senior management levels and if this is being cascaded in a consistent and aligned way through the organisation.

As opposed to a traditional safety audit, an anonymous 'safety climate' survey was completed by a third of Hunter Water staff. Staff were required to rate 46 general statements about safety in the workplace against set criteria. The questions are aggregated to nine key elements being:

- Employee wellbeing
- Workforce involvement
- Positive reinforcement
- Work practices and standards
- Safety vs production
- Safety leadership
- Behaviour and accidents
- Safety education
- Safety maintenance

Some of the issues and areas for improvement identified were:

- a gap in positive reinforcement and rewarding good safety behaviours,
- more 'near miss' incident reporting was needed to provide real and valuable information for use in tool-box talks, safety communications, training programs and risk assessments,

- moderate stress; and
- more opportunities for training.

Recommendations from the assessment have also been included in the OHS Management Plan for 2009/2010. The aim is to move to a place where employees are empowered to make decisions and not afraid to comment on the unsafe behaviours of peers.

This can be achieved through more consultation, involving OHS committees and having people informed. Keeping staff safe and happy is an important facet that we employ to ensure a sustainable workforce now and into the future.

eaps & eeo statements

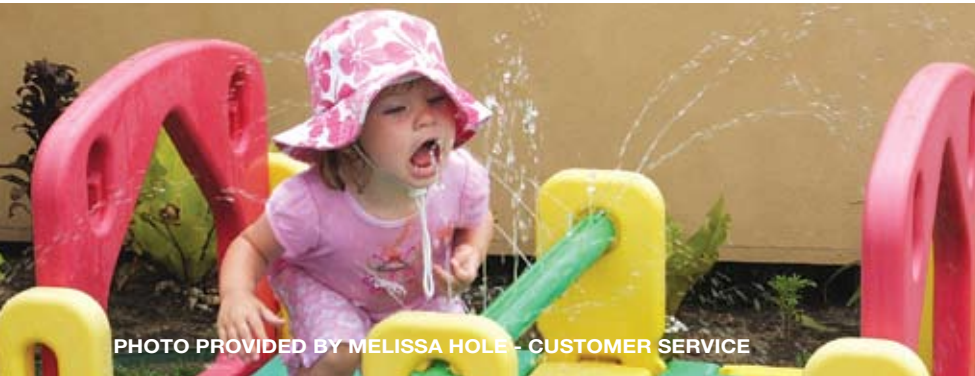


PHOTO PROVIDED BY MELISSA HOLE - CUSTOMER SERVICE

EAPS STATEMENT

In line with our commitment to a Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement (EAPS), our policies and procedures are implemented on a merit based philosophy. All employees, customers and stakeholders have access to all services where required. In the areas of recruitment, selection, promotion, transfer, training and development and conditions of service, all persons are afforded opportunities on the basis of merit and efficiency. We continue to try to seek ongoing applications from people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

EAPS Progress 2008/2009

Funding was provided to the Ethnic Communities Council of Australia. The old Waratah Bowling Club site will be used as a multicultural lighthouse water and energy project. The sponsorship funds will also be used to purchase and install two large water tanks, pumps, associated plumbing and the installation of leaf-proof guttering.

The group will also promote sustainable and environmentally friendly practices and provide an example of the benefits of water and energy conservation to the local community and focus on supporting small/emergent culturally and linguistic diverse communities.

On an internal basis, we will continue to offer all recruitment, selection, promotion, transfer, training and development and conditions of service on a merit basis.

EAPS Plan 2009/2010

Over the course of the next year we will provide funding to the Southlake Community Services. Through cofunding from both Hunter Water and the Department of Community Services, the Wollotuka Community Garden at Morisset will allow the local indigenous and low-socio economic community to grow indigenous food plants appropriate to the local geographical conditions as well as demonstrate water saving techniques. The project promotes water conservation as approximately 72000 litres of water will be saved by implementing an integrated rainwater harvesting system.

We will also fund the Tomaree Education Centre, who will create a Worimi food forest and sensory garden at the entrance to the education facility. The native plants will also be sign posted to use as an educational tool as well as an example of sustainable gardening.

In addition we will continue to provide our customers with a fully functional interpreter service. The details are listed on the back of community publications.

EEO STATEMENT

Hunter Water is committed to equal employment opportunity (EEO) and affirmative action. In doing so, we aim to eliminate and ensure the absence of discrimination in employment on the grounds of race, sex, marital status, physical impairment, intellectual impairment, sexual preference, age and carers

responsibilities; and aim to promote equal employment opportunity for all employees, including members of minority and disadvantaged groups.

EEO Progress 2008/2009

We accepted all requests for work experience from attendees at our Girls Choices Summer School five day residential program (see next page).

We continue to foster a merit-based recruitment and training and development process and continued to offer part time working arrangements for those employees who are returning to the workforce after parental leave.

We also ran discrimination, bullying and harassment refresher training across the Corporation.

Over the year there has been a reduction in formal grievances lodged.

EEO Plan for 2009/2010

Over the course of 2009/2010 we will endeavour to increase parental leave entitlements for all employees.

We will also provide funding to the Endeavour Industries, which is a not-for-profit organisation in Cessnock providing employment, training, accommodation and care for people with disabilities. Funding will help the organisation install a 22,500 litre tank to harvest rain water for their laundry. The group is practising water conservation and helping ensure there is enough water for our community today and in the future.

We will continue to monitor our EEO, Fair Treatment and Bullying and Harassment prevention policies, Parental leave and working from home policies and ensure they comply with any legislation changes.

And finally, we will continue to build relationships with recruitment companies who have indigenous job seekers as a focus of their business.

EEO & EAPS STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Women

Although HWC does not meet the benchmark in the number of women employed, the distribution index shows we have steadily increased our figures over the last five years with an increase of 2% over the past year. The general low number of women in the our workforce can partly be explained by the industry we are in and the nature of work we perform ie 25% of our workforce are out in the field and are engaged in physically intensive labour. Statistics indicate that this area of work is not a popular choice for women looking to enter the workforce.

Aboriginal People & Torres Strait Islanders

We will continue to foster a merit based recruitment and selection process where by people of a Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background are encouraged to apply and receive support in their application.

People whose first language was not English

This figure has remained stable for the past five years. Hunter Water will continue to foster a merit based recruitment & selection process where by people whose first language was not English are encouraged to apply and receive support in their application.

People with a disability

The distribution index shows we have remained favourable.

People with a disability requiring work-related adjustment

An unfavourable trend in this area can be identified. We will continue to adopt our selection based on merit strategy and policy.

women and water

In early December 2008, Hunter Water and Hunter Water Australia played host to 180 girls from rural and regional areas, non-English speaking or low socio-economic backgrounds at a 'Women and Water' session.

Held as part of the University of Newcastle's Year 9 Girls Summer School Program, the Women and Water session at the Grahamstown Water Treatment Plant included a guided tour through the treatment plant.

Here students learnt about each step of the water treatment process; undertook a hands-on jar test to assess the best method of treating water and heard an inspirational talk from women working in the water industry.

The Summer School provided a unique opportunity to open up the world of scientific and creative

thinking to young women. It allows younger generations to participate in unique hands-on activities, critical thinking challenges and interactive presentations that promote the benefits and enjoyment of working in an engineering environment.

Held from December 8 to 12, the University of Newcastle Summer School revolves around science, maths and engineering themes and exposes the pathways to careers for girls in the innovative technical professions. The five days were well planned, highly informative and very busy.

The objectives were to:

- recruit female students primarily from DEEWR defined Student Equity Groups who have demonstrated a capability in these subject areas but are

perceived by their teachers as possibly lacking confidence to continue in years 11 and 12,

- positively enhance the perception of mathematics, science and technology subjects,
- increase confidence in their ability to successfully complete these subjects,
- encourage female students to select these subjects for Years 11 and 12, thereby keeping their options open to continue into tertiary or vocational study or training in areas considered non-traditional for women; and
- promote Newcastle as a destination for tertiary study, especially faculties and schools with programs where women are under-represented.