

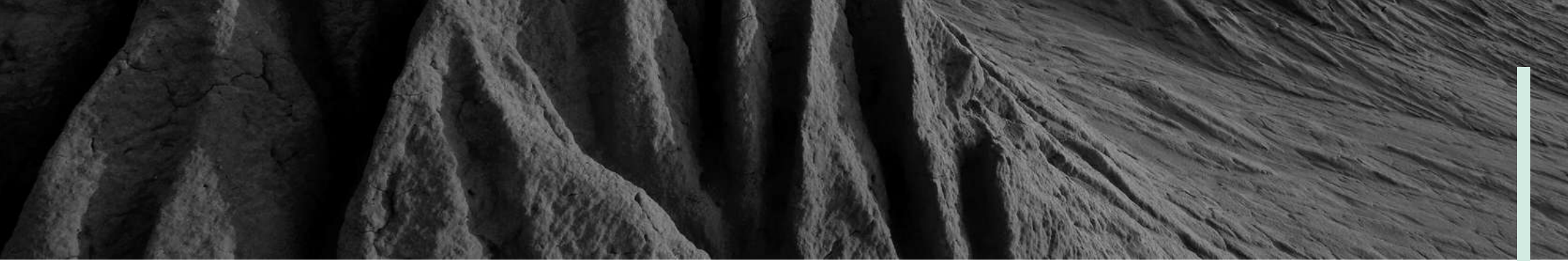
DATTNER GROUP'S

The Exceptional Workforce:
Attract & engage the right people
to make your local council thrive.

22 AUGUST 2023



Dattner Group
Little by Little



Thank you for joining

The Exceptional Workforce: Attract & Engage the right people to make your local council thrive.

WATCH RECORDING



Fabian Dattner
CEO
Dattner Group

During COVID lockdowns, organisations by necessity moved to a remote/hybrid workforce model; post-pandemic, ‘work from anywhere’ is establishing as the new normal. This has opened the door for people to move from urban environments out into the regions in pursuit of a lifestyle more suited to their needs.

Over the next decade, then, there is a huge need – and greater opportunity – for regional councils to leverage this shift and to evolve the way they lead and work, to attract the right talent, in order to serve these growing and more diverse communities.

Over the course of 1.5 hours today, you had the opportunity to a) hear from four of your peers about the key strategies they have employed to address this challenge, and b) discuss the impacts with some of those on the frontline.

The following pages outline the key takeaways from the presentations of the City of Greater Bendigo, Armidale Regional Council, Broken Hill City Council and South Gippsland Shire Council.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The Armidale Regional Council (NSW) Playbook

When James Roncon joined ARC 2.5 years ago, he walked into an organisation suffering from several years of significant systemic, structural, financial, leadership and workforce challenges. The Council had lost the trust of its community and the engagement of its staff and leaders, and was seriously lacking women in leadership roles. James arrived with open ears and eyes, knowing there were stories needing to be heard in order to heal, and ideas to be explored in order to transform this organisation.

WATCH RECORDING



ARMIDALE
Regional Council

James Roncon
General Manager
Armidale Regional Council

- A ‘culture audit’, as an opportunity to really hear and understand the current state of play in an organisation, can be a powerful way to engage the whole workforce in the process of transformation. It marks the start of a journey and becomes the baseline for monitoring progress over time.
- Information derived from such an audit can meaningfully inform the development of a ‘strategy map’ – the blueprint for transformation – and a clear set of values and behaviours, to engage and guide staff and leaders towards a purposeful future.
- Forming a dedicated group committed to organisational success, representing all functions and levels, can be a crucial champion for change; bridging, highlighting, consolidating perspectives and ideas to move the organisation forward in a collaborative way that instils a sense of ownership.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The Armidale Regional Council (NSW) Playbook

WATCH RECORDING

"My goal as GM was to create an environment that people wanted to be in; where you can have a laugh and joke but also be focused on delivering – a balance that works."

- 'World Café process enables the investigation of key organisational issues and goals, and utilises the experience, expertise and creativity of all staff and leaders together to generate ideas and make plans to address them in a holistic way.
- It's important to employ people with good cultural fit and who have the potential to become constructive leaders, with training and development, and not just technical ability.
- The result for ARC: Significant improvement in the quality and number of candidates to fulfil roles – "we're now beating people away with a stick!"

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM BREAKOUT ROOMS

The Armidale Regional Council (NSW) Playbook

WATCH RECORDING

"The last time I put a job out 4-5 years ago, I got three applicants; six months ago I put the same job out and got 27!"

Josh Fern, ARC Employee

BREAKOUT ROOM DISCUSSION

Key Impact Noted by Staff on the Receiving End of Change

- GM James met workforce skepticism from years of broken promises with real listening and follow through, setting a genuine tone of 'we're all in this together', building trust and confidence in leadership.
- Staff given ownership in developing organisational values, so they're meaningful – "we now know how we roll and what we want to be, so recruiting new people and managing staff has just become much, much easier".
- Focus and commitment to development of women in leadership: "I'm a beneficiary of that and just feel more empowered and capable as a leader".
- Big investment into development of staff, a pivotal contributor to adoption of culture change.
- Improved pride and reputation are attracting job applicants.
- Improvements in Council lead to improvements in the region, making it more attractive for people to live and work here.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The Broken Hill City Council (NSW) Playbook

When Jay became GM at BHCC two years ago, he embarked on a journey to continue the transformation of an organisation previously in dysfunction and distress, to one that could deliver shared successes on behalf of its community. This meant elevating Council leadership, fostering organisational alignment, and creating the sort of culture that made BHCC a place where people wanted to come to work.

[WATCH RECORDING](#)



BROKEN HILL
CITY COUNCIL

Jay Nankivell
General Manager
Broken Hill City Council

- Foundational to cultural change is a focus on meaningful values, developed from the bottom up. These – along with identified behaviours to ensure expectations are clear – become the anchor for organisational alignment for new and existing employees.
- Leaders consistently demonstrating these values in their behaviour and supporting their people to do the same, if need be calling out and performance managing those who don't, creates a climate of trust that is so critical to job satisfaction and performance.
- Encouraging and expecting responsibility, accountability and transparency at the top builds trust in leadership among employees and within the community.
- Women are looking to work with organisations significantly investing in, and committed to supporting, the professional and leadership development and opportunities for women to excel.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The Broken Hill City Council (NSW) Playbook

WATCH RECORDING

"Engagement with staff is most important, and leaders mustn't remove themselves from that journey."

- Listening to what the workforce needs and wants, and following through on this, is critical to engagement and retention.
- For a thriving organisation, it's important to employ leaders not only for their technical expertise, but for leadership capability/potential to role-model and uphold core values, to build future leaders.
- Opportunities to build connections with colleagues and also their families, focussing on productivity rather than fixed hours/times of work, enabling leaders to role model work-life balance as an enduring goal for the organisation, conducting regular culture surveys to monitor progress and address lags in consultation with staff; this creates a workplace people want to belong to.
- The result for BHCC: Community trust and Council's reputation has elevated, staff morale and pride has improved, attracting new staff is easier.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM BREAKOUT ROOMS

The Broken Hill City Council (NSW) Playbook

WATCH RECORDING

"Being offered leadership opportunities after returning from maternity leave - it was so refreshing to be welcomed into an organisation that actually cared for its people.."

Emmy Williams, BHCC Employee

BREAKOUT ROOM DISCUSSION

Key Impact Noted by Staff on the Receiving End of Change

- Personal journey: Limited technical experience, returning from maternity leave, reluctant to work full-time. Worked with P&C team to 'find the perfect combination of a work-life balance.' Have flexible work hours. Just a few months into the role, offered a place on Compass women in leadership program, so career progression for working mothers is a normal opportunity here; many have done the program, so a huge internal support network as well.
- Developing organisational values from the bottom up has created great buy-in, and we feel confident to call out unsupportive behaviours and have constructive conversations.
- Focus on working more collaboratively across the organisation has meant we can all work better, with good information, different perspectives to consider, and ideas to share and grow.
- The cultural change has promoted BHCC in the community as a progressive, caring employer, setting us apart from other organisations and making us an attractive option to candidates.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The City of Greater Bendigo (Vic) Playbook

There is much about this region that is attractive to people – it is large and growing, well-serviced, has a vibrant art and foodie culture – and Council is also seen as a leader in local government. It has achieved, and reaps the benefits of, this reputation through clear strategic focus and focusing on what matters the most to people in their work. Council employs 1100 people, is significantly committed to learning and development, and to women in leadership.

WATCH RECORDING



Toni Lyon

Coordinator Organisation Development
City of Greater Bendigo

- It's important to embed capability in the organisation with a clear values framework; dedicated investment in change management; a focus on training and development, equity and inclusion; workforce/succession planning.
- All this taps into employee purpose, which is to make a difference in the community. The value proposition is really important to people, particularly the younger generation.
- Developing leadership, including women, requires a deliberate commitment of resources – financial, to fund training and development programs; human, to provide the ongoing support and accountability that leverages this learning.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The City of Greater Bendigo (Vic) Playbook

WATCH RECORDING

"You provide a great environment, get great people and the best out of them, they become your best advocates; attraction and retention becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy."

- Leadership programs should be open to people at any level, and having leaders to champion team members is beneficial in this process. Participants given the opportunity to speak to the Executive about what they've learnt and how they can apply it, reinforces the value of such learning and development to the organisation, encouraging further investment.
- Attraction and retention of staff is enhanced by promoting – through newsletters and inductions – all the ways in which the organisation is committed to people's learning, development and job satisfaction; the leave entitlements and flexibility, the support and opportunities people can access.
- Retention strategy includes having a broader perspective about what people want from their work – not just promotion, but also lateral movement and different learning/growth opportunities.
- The result for Bendigo Council: Our people have become the best advocates for our workplace.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM BREAKOUT ROOMS

The City of Greater Bendigo (Vic) Playbook

WATCH RECORDING

"I live, work and play the City of Greater Bendigo. There is so much flexibility and access to leadership development opportunities which is why I have been around for 15 years with no plans to move."

Kim Ross, CoGB Employee

BREAKOUT ROOM DISCUSSION

Key Impact Noted by Staff on the Receiving End of Change

- Numerous internal secondment opportunities over the years have enabled development of relationships, skills and experiences across the organisation. Internal secondment is now recruitment and selection policy, and there are also opportunities to go externally for up to 12 months, to support career development and bring that experience back to the organisation.
- Women in the organisation enjoy flexibility, a fantastic culture that staff all get to develop, access to leadership development and post-program support.
- Commitment to staff health and wellbeing can be demonstrated in our approach to 'emergency relief' secondments, i.e. through COVID, recent bushfire and floods; rosters and breaks actively monitored, no expectations of doing BAU while in this role, team members kept informed and connected.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The South Gippsland Shire (Vic) Playbook

Just as COVID struck in 2020 Kerryn Ellis was appointed the new CEO of South Gippsland Shire Council. The year prior the council was dismissed and had gone into the hands of administrators. Based in the belief that role modelling from the top is critical, much of her focus has been on developing the leadership team, which has been the key to success.

WATCH RECORDING



Kerryn Ellis
CEO

South Gippsland Shire Council

- When people in an organisation have endured years of instability, poor leadership behaviour and operational practices; when employees become the target of community ire, and their pride and self-confidence in the job plummets, this can be traumatising.
- The way to healing is through storytelling – people need to be listened to, heard and subsequently cared for.
- As much as acknowledging the past is important, shifting from a culture of blame to one of support and of working together, is key to rebuilding trust and confidence, and fostering a culture that people want to work within.
- Every leader must fulfil their role in alignment with clear organisational values, and it is incumbent upon them to have confidence in, trust and grow their people.
- The result for SGSC: Consistently, good people have stepped up to do great things with and for community; community satisfaction has seen a significant turnaround, and every interaction continues to build that trust and confidence.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM BREAKOUT ROOMS

The South Gippsland Shire (Vic) Playbook

WATCH RECORDING

"I can proudly wear my council badge in public, knowing that if someone approaches me now, it will be to ask a question, not berate me."

Sophie Dixon, SGSC Employee

BREAKOUT ROOM DISCUSSION

Key Impact Noted by Staff on the Receiving End of Change

- Four things I've noticed since Kerryn initiated cultural change: I can confidently bring new ideas to leadership, knowing they'll be considered.
- I am no longer anxious going to community meetings with councillors present, knowing I can have comfortable discussions.
- I can proudly wear my council badge in public, knowing that if someone approaches me now, it will be to ask a question, not berate me.
- I can fearlessly take accountability for mistakes I make.

COMMON THREADS FROM TODAY'S SESSION

In meeting the challenge for attracting and retaining talent, the best advocate for an organisation is a happy employee.

Fostering a workplace culture in which people can thrive is key.

This requires leaders to:

- Listen and follow through with action
- Role-model values
- Provide diverse opportunities to develop and support people, especially women
- Engage the entire workforce in shaping the organisation
- Consider potential, not just technical competence
- Build trust, connection and confidence
- Ensure all people in the organisation are a cultural fit - new hires and existing staff

[WATCH RECORDING](#)

Courage

Accountability


Collaboration

Curiosity

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