

# Chief Executive Officer Recruitment and Onboarding Policy

*Local Government Act 2009*



# Contents

1. Policy Statement .....	3
2. Principles .....	3
3. Scope .....	3
4. Responsibility .....	3
5. Definitions .....	4
6. Policy .....	4
6.1. Recruitment and Appointment Process Overview .....	5
6.2. Statutory Provisions for Appointment of the CEO .....	5
6.3. The Committee.....	6
6.3.1 Membership .....	6
6.3.2 Roles and Responsibilities .....	6
6.3.3 External Assistance and Facilitation.....	6
6.3.4 Possible Draft Resolutions in the Recruitment and Appointment Process .....	7
6.4. Workshop to Agree on Key Attributes, Priorities and Other Matters .....	7
6.5. Selection Criteria .....	8
6.6. Preparation of the Information Package to Send to Interested Applicants .....	9
6.7. Shortlisting of Preferred Candidates .....	9
6.7.1 Shortlisting Report .....	9
6.7.2 Selection of Applicants for Interview by the Committee .....	10
6.7.3 Referee Checks and Leadership Profiling Prior to Shortlist Interview .....	10
6.7.4 Interview Structure .....	10
6.7.5 Preparation for Interview.....	11
6.8. Formal Interview by Council and Consideration of Appointment .....	11
6.9. Making the Offer of Employment.....	12
6.10. Onboarding of the New CEO.....	12
7. Legal Parameters .....	13
8. Associated Documents .....	13

# 1. Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to establish an equitable and transparent approach to the recruitment and appointment of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and complies with a Council Resolution made by Townsville City Council (Council) on 28 August 2024.

Under section 194 of the *Local Government Act 2009* (the Act), appointing a CEO, it is the responsibility of Councillors to appoint and to set the conditions of employment for Council's CEO.

A person appointed as Council's CEO must be qualified to be the CEO, having regard to the ability, experience, knowledge and skills that Councillors consider appropriate given the role.

It establishes a Recruitment Committee (the Committee) and an equitable approach to the recruitment process.

Where there is a vacancy in the role of CEO, a suitably qualified candidate may also be appointed as an acting CEO.

Council is committed to promoting efficient and effective leadership within the organisation.

# 2. Principles

Recruitment decisions are to be a collaborative and constructive process that contributes to securing an outstanding CEO.

# 3. Scope

This policy applies to all Councillors and the CEO.

This policy applies to the appointment and onboarding of the CEO.

# 4. Responsibility

Under section 194 of the Act, it is the responsibility of Councillors to appoint and to set the conditions of employment for Council's CEO.

Under section 195 of the Act, it is the responsibility of Councillors to appoint an acting CEO where there is a vacancy in the CEO position.

Councillors appointing a CEO must ensure the CEO is qualified to be the CEO, having regard to the ability, experience, knowledge and skills that Councillors consider appropriate given the role. Councillors are also responsible for setting the standards by which the (permanent) CEO's performance will be measured pursuant to section 194 of the Act.

The Mayor and any Councillors appointed to the Committee are to:

- engage a qualified and experienced independent external facilitator to assist the Committee;
- ensure quality and reliable evidence is gathered to inform the Committee's appraisal of the candidates; and,
- with support of the Committee, prepare and submit a confidential report to Council (where not all Councillors are on the Committee), including matters associated with

contracts, with the report discussed and the result resolved at an Ordinary Council meeting.

## 5. Definitions

**Candidates** - means candidates for the CEO role.

**CEO** - means the Chief Executive Officer of the Townsville City Council (whether acting or permanent).

**Councillor** - means all elected representatives including the Mayor.

**Recruitment Committee** - means a Committee appointed by Council for the purpose of overseeing an equitable approach to the CEO recruitment process.

## 6. Policy

Efficient and effective local government requires efficient and effective local government leadership. Leadership is the most critical success factor in business today, and local government is no exception.

The CEO of a Council provides leadership to the Council organisation and its workers and in support of the Mayor and Councillors.

A high performing CEO will:

- articulate a vision and sense of purpose for the workers of the Council based on the Council's Corporate and Strategic Plans;
- motivate and inspire the workers of the Council to achieve the aims and objectives contained within the Corporate and Strategic Plans;
- demonstrate excellence in leadership and management to ensure the efficient and effective operations of the Council organisation are aimed at providing high level value for money service delivery and continuing to build a higher performing organisation;
- work respectfully with, provide high quality advice and be accountable to Council to assist in its decision making and to efficiently and effectively implement Council decisions; and,
- provide an important link between Council, the community, other key stakeholders and Council workers.

This policy details a system for the recruitment and appointment of Council's CEO.

The policy makes provision for Council to establish the Committee to undertake and oversee the recruitment process and to make a recommendation to Council on the appointment of a CEO.

All members of the Committee must receive information in the CEO recruitment and appointment processes, as well as the key principles of recruitment including equity, fairness, confidentiality and merit.

The policy also outlines the processes associated with onboarding of the new CEO.

At the outset, it is important to note that in undertaking the recruitment process, the members of the Committee, all Councillors and any administrative workers supporting the process understand and appreciate the need for confidentiality.

Many applicants will be currently employed in another role, and they have the right to have their interest in this role kept confidential. Breaches of this confidentiality requirement should be regarded as breaches of the Codes of Conduct respective to Councillors and workers, as appropriate.

## 6.1. Recruitment and Appointment Process Overview

Council will appoint the Committee to undertake the recruitment and recommendation process as outlined in this policy.

The Committee will make a recommendation to Council for the formal interview by the Council of one or more candidates selected by the Committee after the Committee has concluded its recruitment process. This process will include a comprehensive assessment of candidates and interview by the Committee of a short list of candidates considered to meet the criteria established for appointment to the position.

Council will undertake a formal interview with the recommended applicant/applicants, following which Council will resolve an appointment to the position (or otherwise, if Council does not believe any of the applicants are suitable).

**The key steps involved in the recruitment process are summarised below:**

- (a) Vacancy occurs in CEO position;
- (b) Council appoints an Acting CEO;
- (c) Council appoints an independent external facilitator experienced in executive local government recruitment to assist in the recruitment process;
- (d) Council resolves to appoint the Committee, including an external independent member, to undertake and oversee the recruitment and recommendation process;
- (e) Committee workshop conducted, with all Councillors invited, to identify key attributes desired of the new CEO, and the challenges and priorities facing the CEO and the organisation;
- (f) Committee undertakes the recruitment process, selects and interviews a short list of candidates for the role (and more than one interview may be desirable) and determines the candidate or candidates to be formally and finally interviewed by the whole Council;
- (g) Council undertakes the formal interview with the selected candidate or candidates and makes a determination - for appointment of a preferred candidate or for a continuation of the process;
- (h) Negotiations with the preferred CEO and contract signed;
- (i) Onboarding process for the new CEO; and,
- (j) A workshop with Council and the new CEO within three months after commencement to identify priorities in the role in that first year of appointment to be incorporated into the Performance Agreement.

Further details of each of these components of the process are outlined below.

## 6.2. Statutory Provisions for Appointment of the CEO

Sections 194 and 195 of the Act make provision for the appointment of a CEO:

## 194 Appointing a Chief Executive Officer

- (1) A local government must appoint a qualified person to be its Chief Executive Officer.
- (2) A person is qualified to be the Chief Executive Officer if the person has the ability, experience, knowledge and skills that the local government considers appropriate, having regard to the responsibilities of a Chief Executive Officer.
- (3) A person who is appointed as the Chief Executive Officer must enter into a written contract of employment with the local government.
- (4) The contract of employment must provide for—
  - (a) the Chief Executive Officer to meet performance standards set by the local government; and
  - (b) the Chief Executive Officer's conditions of employment (including remuneration).

## 195 Appointing an Acting Chief Executive Officer

A local government may appoint a qualified person to act as the Chief Executive Officer during—

- (a) any vacancy, or all vacancies, in the position; or
- (b) any period, or all periods, when the Chief Executive Officer is absent from duty or cannot, for another reason, perform the Chief Executive Officer's responsibilities.

## 6.3. The Committee

### 6.3.1 Membership

The Committee will comprise the Councillors nominated by the Council decided by Council resolution and must include the Mayor.

As a matter of best practice, the Committee should also contain an independent external person selected by Council and experienced in recruitment of senior executives and/or the role of a local government CEO in a Council such as Townsville. The external facilitator, the LGAQ, the LGMA or the Public Service Commissioner may identify potentially suitable external independents for Councils consideration.

### 6.3.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The Committee will undertake and oversee the recruitment process.

### 6.3.3 External Assistance and Facilitation

Council will, after implementing an agreed process, appoint an external recruitment firm or person experienced in the recruitment of executive positions in local government (the external facilitator) to assist the Committee and Council in the recruitment and appointment processes (which may be tailored by Council based on advice from the recruiter and/or Recruitment Committee).

The external facilitator will be able to have confidential discussions with potential candidates and ensure that their potential interest in the CEO role can be discussed privately.

The external facilitator will not be a voting member of the Committee but will organise, facilitate and conduct meetings of the Committee and help the Mayor and Councillors to ensure the recruitment process is run in accordance with this policy and based on the principles of equity, fairness, confidentiality and merit.

The external facilitator should recommend an advertising strategy to Council to ensure the vacancy is well promoted to attract the very best interest and applications.

## 6.3.4 Possible Draft Resolutions in the Recruitment and Appointment Process

### First Set of Recommendations

1. That Council note the vacancy in the position of CEO.
2. That Council appoint... as Acting CEO (if necessary).
3. That the Mayor and Deputy Mayor be delegated authority to engage an external facilitator experienced in local government executive recruitment to assist in the recruitment and appointment process in accordance with the guidelines adopted by Council.

### Second Set of Recommendations

1. That a Recruitment Committee comprising [the Mayor and Councillors agreed by resolution] and an external member to be subsequently agreed by the Committee be appointed to undertake and oversee the recruitment and recommendation process for the vacant CEO position.
2. That the Committee report to Council on the preferred applicant or applicants for formal interview by the Council and appointment of the new CEO by Council.

### Final Set of Recommendations

1. That the identified candidate be offered the position of CEO with Council and the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, in consultation with the facilitator, be authorised to negotiate and finalise the appointment based on the approved terms and conditions.
2. That a public announcement of the name of the successful candidate be made to workers and the media when the Mayor has obtained written acceptance of the offer from the preferred candidate.

## 6.4. Workshop to Agree on Key Attributes, Priorities and Other Matters

At the commencement of the recruitment process the facilitator will arrange a workshop with the Committee, with all Councillors invited to attend.

The objectives of this workshop would be:

- (a) to receive guidance in the requirements of this policy as well as detailing important recruitment principles such as equity, fairness, confidentiality and merit - if such has not already been provided;

- (b) to discuss and agree the key attributes required in the new CEO and agree key challenges and opportunities;
- (c) to agree an appropriate remuneration range; and,
- (d) to confirm the process and timelines.

A key purpose of the workshop is to agree the key attributes required for a successful CEO and the significant challenges and opportunities facing the organisation and the position so as to excite potential candidates about the role.

In considering the key attributes, workshop participants should be mindful of the position description for the CEO role which outlines the roles, responsibilities and competencies required in the position.

It is important that workshop participants recognise the fundamentally important role of the CEO in leading a high performing Council organisation. Appointments made to CEO positions based around a particular priority of Council should be acknowledged but should not predominate the attributes. Such priorities should be resourced in the organisation by Council, rather than being seen as a key attribute of the CEO per se.

Similarly, Local Government is a unique working environment and a good understanding of this unique environment is desirable.

The workshop should also identify the key challenges, opportunities and priorities for the CEO. These will give an insight into what the focus will be for the successful applicant, and they should be framed to motivate and excite the right person for the role.

The Council should also confirm the remuneration range envisaged for the successful applicant. The Council should obtain external and independent expertise in valuing the remuneration range for the position based on the prevailing market. Finally, at this workshop the Council should confirm the process and timelines to be implemented - commencement of advertising, closing of advertising, shortlisting date, interview date with the Committee and the date of interviews with the Council. It is important these dates are agreed and documented upfront so they can be placed in the diaries of the Committee members and Councillors (for the final interview) and for aspiring candidates to set interview dates aside in their diary.

## 6.5. Selection Criteria

Agreeing selection criteria is one of the most important steps in the recruitment process.

The selection criteria should relate to the key attributes identified at the Committee workshop (aligned to the CEO position description) and outstanding leadership skills should be listed as the key attribute. In framing the selection criteria consideration should be given to the importance of the CEO being able to:

- (a) articulate a vision and sense of purpose for the workers of the Council based on the Council's Corporate and Strategic Plans;
- (b) motivate and inspire the workers of the Council to achieve the aims and objectives contained within the Corporate and Strategic Plans;
- (c) demonstrate excellence in leadership and management to ensure the efficient and effective operations of the Council organisation are aimed at providing high levels of value for money service delivery and continuing to build a higher performing organisation;



- (d) work respectfully with, provide high quality advice and be accountable to the Council to assist in its decision making and to efficiently and effectively implement Council decisions; and,
- (e) provide an important link between the Council, the community, other key stakeholders and the Council workers.

In determining key selection criteria, Council should also consider the responsibility areas and competencies including:

- (a) safety focus;
- (b) strategic focus and alignment;
- (c) commitment to excellence;
- (d) leadership and culture;
- (e) commitment to high performing teams;
- (f) working in the local government context;
- (g) financial management; and,
- (h) personal management.

All applicants should be required to address the selection criteria in their application and be asked to clearly identify their motivation and interest in the role and the location.

## 6.6. Preparation of the Information Package to Send to Interested Applicants

A quality information package should be seen by Council as a key step in this process. The information package is an ideal vehicle to not only promote the role and the key challenges facing the organisation but also the lifestyle and family benefits that will be of interest to the candidate's partner and family.

This package should contain, as a minimum, details about the Townsville area, the Council and its operations, the Council organisation, specific details about the key attributes required in a successful CEO and a listing of challenges, opportunities and initial priorities for the CEO position.

The package should also clearly outline the recruitment process, including key dates.

## 6.7. Shortlisting of Preferred Candidates

The primary role of the Committee is the evaluation of all applications and the shortlisting of preferred applicant/applicants for interview(s) by the Committee and to then make a recommendation to Council of a preferred candidate or candidates for formal Council interview (where the Committee does not comprise all Councillors). The process should include the following:

### 6.7.1 Shortlisting Report

The facilitator will prepare a detailed assessment report on all applications received as the basis of the Committee reviewing all applications and agreeing a shortlist of candidates to be interviewed by the Committee. That report should contain a summary of each applicant, their

qualifications and experience, desirably with a head-shot photo (which should be presented with their application), and comments from the facilitator relating to both the suitability of the candidate based on the key attributes identified at the Committee workshop, and included in the information package, and the personal discussions and interview the facilitator had conducted with the candidate.

There is an expectation that the facilitator will have spoken personally with all applicants prior to preparing the shortlisting report.

The shortlisting report should contain the facilitators recommendations - in 3 parts - those who meet the attributes desired and who should be interviewed by the Committee; those who the facilitator will discuss with the Committee to clarify their suitability as they may be on the edge of being recommended; and those candidates who are not recommended for interview based on their non-compliance with the attributes sought or knowledge of the candidate's inter-personal skills which may not align with the culture of the Council.

As part of preparing the shortlist report the facilitator should undertake a global social media search and check of applicants recommended for shortlist interview to confirm there is nothing in social media or on the web that might be relevant to consideration of the candidate by the Committee.

### 6.7.2 Selection of Applicants for Interview by the Committee

The Committee should carefully review all application details as summarised in the shortlisting report, together with assessing their resumes, application, and recommendation by the facilitator.

Applicants who meet the required level of competency and experience as detailed in the selection criteria should be identified by the Committee and a decision then reached on how many candidates should be interviewed.

### 6.7.3 Referee Checks and Leadership Profiling Prior to Shortlist Interview

Prior to interview with the Committee, it is highly desirable that initial referee checking be conducted so any issues raised by referees can be considered and explored at interview.

It is also highly desirable that each short-listed candidate undertake a leadership and personality profile to provide an important insight into their leadership style and personality traits. Other psychometric testing may also be undertaken.

The personality profiling provides a valuable insight to each short-listed candidate and also enables any specific behavioural or leadership issues to be explored at interview.

The results of the referee checks and leadership profiling are then made available to the Committee members in advance of the interviews. This ensures a range of perspectives on the candidate can be assessed and used at interview to explore with candidates any particular features which emerged from the checks and profile.

### 6.7.4 Interview Structure

The way the interview is structured is very important to a successful outcome.

The Committee will decide on not only how many candidates are to be interviewed but also how the interviews are to be conducted.

It may be that the Committee conducts a two-stage process with candidates before the final interview with the Council. This should be agreed at the commencement of the recruitment process with advice from the facilitator on what might constitute a best practice approach. The facilitator should discuss with the Committee the most appropriate interview venue.

Questions to be asked at the interview should be agreed by the Committee in advance of the interview and relate directly to the selection criteria. Committee members should look for applicants to provide details in support of any claims made at the interview - desirably the applicant should be able to provide a good answer to the question, and then support that with examples detailing their actual experience and achievements.

### 6.7.5 Preparation for Interview

The Committee should convene at least 30 minutes before the first interview to receive a briefing by the facilitator on the interview process so every member of the Committee is clear on expectations. Committee members need to be aware they are being interviewed too by the candidate - and the conduct of Committee members will be under review by each candidate.

It is the facilitator's responsibility for interviews to start and finish on time. Judgement is needed here on what time might be needed to draw out of a candidate the information needed.

#### Recommendations from the Committee to Council

The Committee, through the facilitator, will prepare a report on the recruitment process and outcomes for the Council, clearly detailing the process followed, and the outcome of interviews, with an overview of the candidate or candidates selected for final interview.

Prior to formalising this report, the facilitator should undertake the first stage of a further probity check of the candidates referred for final interview.

An important additional due diligence process is the undertaking of some final referee checks. If one or two candidates are being recommended to the Council for final interview and selection for appointment the facilitator should personally speak with the candidate's referees, and if possible, the Mayor of the Council where the candidate is coming from, or the chair of the board if a private sector candidate or a CEO supervisor if coming from a level below CEO.

This will enable the facilitator, on behalf of the Council, to enquire of any issues that may have been unearthed at earlier interview, or to confirm earlier impressions or otherwise regarding the candidate's leadership style or key attributes.

## 6.8. Formal Interview by Council and Consideration of Appointment

Council will meet and undertake a formal final interview with the applicant/applicants recommended by the Committee.

An opportunity should be given to individual Councillors to ask any specific questions they may have, but these must relate directly to the CEO role.

Following formal interview, the Council should determine if it has a preferred applicant to negotiate with. If so, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor (and additional Committee members if decided

by the Committee), with advice from the facilitator, should be delegated authority to conclude the negotiations and finalise the appointment in accordance with Council’s decision.

The draft contract will have been agreed by the Council at an earlier meeting, and the range of remuneration that might be applicable to each preferred candidate will have been discussed by the Committee. Any benefits, such as the private use of the Council motor vehicle, the use of a mobile phone and laptop computer will have been included in the contract. Reimbursement of relocation expenses may apply to a candidate travelling inter-state or of a distance and this should be agreed by the Council.

If after this comprehensive process the Council is unable to select one preferred candidate then the Council will need to agree the next steps, which could involve follow up interviews, clarification of any concerns regarding the preferred candidate(s), selecting another applicant or applicants to interview from the shortlisting report, or re-advertising the position.

## 6.9. Making the Offer of Employment

Prior to making an offer to the preferred candidate, appropriate probity and integrity checks must be conducted to the satisfaction of the Committee.

The Mayor should be delegated the role of finalising the appointment process with the preferred applicant, and this may also include the Deputy Mayor in an advisory capacity, and with assistance from the facilitator.

The offer should be made in writing through a letter of offer setting out the key terms of the offer (period, remuneration, etc.) with two copies of the contract of employment attached - one for Council and one for the CEO.

The applicant should be asked to confirm acceptance in writing and return the signed and witnessed copies of the contract to Council. The Mayor should then sign the contract and return a copy to the successful applicant.

Once the offer has been formally accepted there needs to be agreement with the successful applicant when the formal announcement of appointment can be made simultaneously at the Council and at the successful applicant’s workplace. This will be by way of a media release and advice to all workers containing comments from both the Mayor and new CEO.

## 6.10. Onboarding of the New CEO

The Mayor should arrange for background information to be sent to new CEO, to include copies of relevant plans and strategies, Corporate Plan, current Operational Plan, recent studies or reviews of the Council organisation, recent Council meeting business papers, and other relevant documentation or reports.

Each Director should also be asked by the Mayor to provide a briefing paper for the new CEO containing details of any “hot issues” for the Council, Council’s Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and their Department. It should also give an overview of the status of their department and any recent performance reviews or internal audits conducted. These should be sent to the new CEO in advance of commencement.

If possible, the new CEO might visit the Council and the region prior to commencement for the purpose of “breaking the ice” in meeting the executive and some other key workers such as in the

CEO's office, and to provide an opportunity to explore residential accommodation options. The Acting CEO and workers in the CEO's office may assist the Mayor with those arrangements.

Prior to commencement, the new CEO may arrange with their Executive Officer to schedule a range of appointments in the first two weeks, including:

- (a) meeting with CEO office workers;
- (b) meeting with ELT members together and ELT team members individually;
- (c) meeting with the Management Team members together and managers individually;
- (d) meeting with each individual Councillor, desirably through a tour together around their division;
- (e) touring the Council area and facilities, in particular, priority to visiting the Council depots and meeting with outdoor workers (perhaps at a barbecue breakfast);
- (f) meetings with key external people - local members of parliament, key community representatives, chair of the chamber of commerce, etc.; and/or,
- (g) meeting with workers by way of visits to work areas and work sites.

## 7. Legal Parameters

*Human Rights Act 2019*

*Information Privacy Act 2009*

*Local Government Act 2009*

*Local Government Regulation 2012*

*Work Health and Safety Act 2011*

## 8. Associated Documents

Chief Executive Officer Employment Performance Policy

Code of Conduct for Councillors in Queensland

Code of Conduct for Staff

Confidentiality Policy

Council Resolution made by Council on 28 August 2024