



Review of development services function for an urban water business

the challenge

Our client is an urban water business operating in a geographical area of high growth. A number of challenges were believed to exist within their development services function: highly manual, ill-defined and time-consuming processes, a lack of performance measurement and monitoring, and sub-optimal technologies.

The environment in which our client operates is evolving rapidly and there exists some fundamental drivers for change, including:

- The ongoing requirement, not only for efficient and effective work practices, but also for an agile work place which can adapt to the rapidly changing environment of development services, and
- The emergence of online self-service as a viable and effective customer service channel for development services.

Marchment Hill Consulting (MHC) was engaged to conduct a review to:

- Confirm the current strengths and challenges of the function
- Identify the improvement opportunities and their associated priority, and
- Develop a scope of work to address key challenges and achieve improvement.

what

Marchment Hill Consulting did

The key dimensions of the MHC Organisational Operating Model were used as the basis of the review (refer Figure 1).



Figure 1: MHC Organisational Operating Model

The review highlighted a number of key strengths in relation to each key dimension of the operating model, including strong management and leadership, high levels of staff professionalism and resilience, and a strong supportive culture.

MHC also identified a number of key challenges requiring improvement, including resource balancing across different customer channels, duplication of some audit and compliance activities with few implications for non-compliance, lack of productivity or cost to serve metrics, limited mentoring and career development, over-servicing of customers, uncertainty around policies and guidelines, highly manual processes, and outdated and unsupported systems.

A series of perceptions collected through interviews with the executive management team further validated the findings emanating from MHC's Organisational Operating Model.

To address the identified challenges requiring improvement, MHC developed a High Level Implementation Plan, with the highest priority afforded to the clarification of processes and interfaces as follows:

- Conducting detailed "As Is" and "To Be" process mapping for all key activities and using this exercise to inform the setting of appropriate resourcing levels, KPIs and business requirements for IT systems
- Reviewing audit requirements for design and build processes and eventually transitioning to audit targets by risk type, including the provision of greater feedback for non-compliance from audits, and
- Consistent with recent industry trends, using process and system improvements to increase the focus on driving customers to online channels, and away from service counter and phone calls.

the benefit

Our client gained a clear, concise view of the:

1. Strengths of their development services function
2. Underlying challenges and performance improvement opportunity
3. Degrees of freedom for change
4. Management and staff willingness to change the development services function, and
5. Necessary prioritised activities to realise performance improvement for the function.