



Candidate Information

Cook Shire Council

Financial Accountant

January 2022

Cook Shire



Cook Shire Overview



Cook Shire enjoys a mild tropical climate with the wet season typically running from January to March, which is also the hottest part of the year. April to December brings a drier period and cooler weather, with temperatures averaging 27 degrees.

The number of people visiting Cook Shire and moving to this beautiful region is growing steadily, as access and facilities improve across the communities. There are airports and airstrips in most areas of the Shire, with the largest in Cooktown and Coen, and scheduled or charter flights available to those destinations and there is a regular bus service between Cairns and Cooktown.

Cook Shire is the largest land area shire in Queensland. From the Bloomfield River in the south to just north of the Jardine River, it covers more than 100,000km² and occupies 80 per cent of Cape York Peninsula.

Cook Shire is a vibrant area, from the main township of Cooktown to smaller outlying communities rich in Indigenous history, agriculture, tourism and arts. About half of the Shire's 4400-strong population live in Cooktown, on the banks of the Endeavour River, with the remainder spread between the smaller population centers of Marton, Laura, Lakeland, Coen, Ayton, Rossville, Portland Roads and offshore islands including Lizard Island.

Cook Shire is enriched by the unique contributions of its smaller communities, with Lakeland a national leader in agriculture and Laura world famous for its rock art.

Facilities and Attractions

Supermarkets

Bakery

RSL and Bowling Clubs

Pubs and Bottle Shops

Pharmacy

Medical Centre

Hospital

Schools

Restaurants and Coffee Shops

PCYC Events Centre

Newsagent

Public Swimming Pool

Visitor Information Centre

Museum

Newsagent

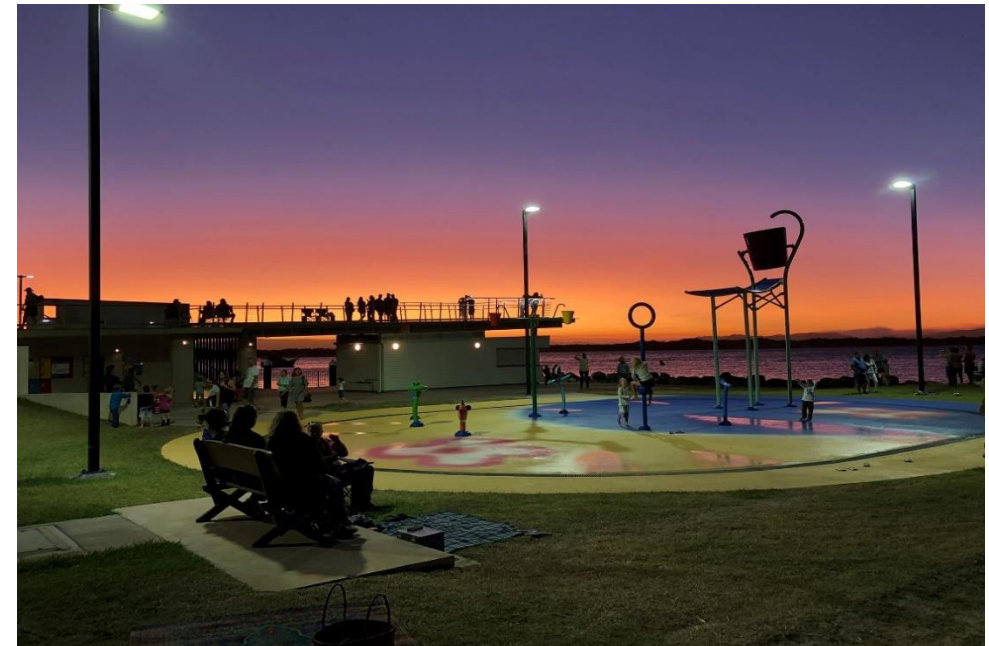
Golf Club

Arts and Culture

Cooktown and the surrounding region offer a wealth of arts and cultural facilities and activities, with a particular focus on Indigenous culture. Cultural activities include the annual Cooktown Discovery Festival; community markets in Cooktown, Rossville and Bloomfield; the Cooktown Creative Arts Association located in the old Cooktown Railway Station; the Cooktown PCYC Events Centre and the Cooktown History Centre.

The James Cook Museum, in the restored sisters of Mercy Convent School building, is one of Queensland's best museums, with a range of rich and varied exhibits.

The Cooktown Botanic Gardens are one of the oldest in Queensland and offers an art gallery, visitor information centre and café. The broader Cape York Peninsula offers a wonderful range of cultural and outdoor experiences, including tours to rock art sites. Wujal Wujal, Laura and Hope Vale offer cultural activities and artwork for exhibition and sale.



Cook Shire Council

Council has developed an organisational structure that maximises the effectiveness of service delivery to the community. The Council comprises the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Leadership Team along with three departments:

- Organisational Business Services.
- Community, Economy and Innovation.
- Infrastructure Services.

The Mayor, Chief Executive Officer and Directors form the Executive Leadership Team. The role of this team is to provide consultation on issues regarding the Council's strategic direction and long-term planning.

As one of the largest employers in Cape York, Cook Shire Council supports this growing region and a diverse community of over 4,400 people. It is ranked in the top 10 per cent of local governments across Australia so there couldn't be a better time to experience everything the region has to offer and work for a Council that is focused on continual improvement in everything it does for the communities it serves.

Construction was completed on the Gateway to Cape York project in 2021. This \$1.2 million project at Lakeland on Mulligan Highway features an iconic “gateway” which includes a purpose-built traveler information centre, a rest stop area and an interactive sculpture park that showcases communities from Cape York.



Corporate Values

Corporate Values and Principles

Cook Shire Council promotes, encourages, rewards and actively believes in:

- providing a safe workplace;
- adopting honest and progressive systems of accountability and reporting;
- working with our communities and stakeholders to plan define, achieve and celebrate common short and long-term goals;
- actively sharing responsibility for improving sustainable, service provision for all customers;
- ensuring equal opportunity for all employees, potential employees, employees pursuing promotion and cross-skilling, and persons and organisations seeking to work with Council through the provision of services, works and consultancy; and
- encouraging and rewarding innovation demonstrated in operational and strategic service provision.



Council Information

[Cook Shire Corporate Plan 2017 - 2022](#)

[Cook Shire Operational Plan 2020 – 2021](#)

For further information please visit www.cook.qld.gov.au



Financial Accountant

Division:	Organisational Business Services
Location:	Council Office – 10 Furneaux Street, Cooktown
Reports to:	Lucy Deemal – CFO and provides direct supervision to Council's direct supervision to Council's Accounts Receivable and Rates Officers. Liaises with all officers of Council, Government departments, consultants, contractors and the general public.
Employment Status:	Queensland Local Government Industry (Stream A: Division 2, Section 1) Award – State 2017 – Level 7



POSITION OBJECTIVES

The Financial Accountant is responsible for:

- Accurate and timely financial reporting within Council, ensuring statutory obligations are met and effective controls are in place.
- Development and implementation of strong month end processes, including reconciliations, journals, monthly financial reporting and cash flow forecasting.
- Oversight of the Rates function.
- Providing support to staff in the use of Council's financial management system Authority.

Duties and Responsibilities

Financial Accounting

- Assist the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to develop, implement and monitor internal financial management controls.
- Development and ongoing implementation of month end processes including reconciliations, journals, monthly financial reporting and cash flow forecasting.
- Prepare statutory and regulatory returns, including but not limited to FBT, Payroll Tax, Consolidated data return, BAS/PAYG, CHAFR and grant milestone financial reports.
- Prepare and/or provide financial advice for grant and subsidy submissions/acquittals.
- Prepare reports and liaise with auditors regarding interim and final end of year audits, including ensuring all audit deficiencies are resolved.
- Support the CFO in preparing annual financial statements and the annual report
- Support the CFO in developing the annual and revised budgets
- Participate in budget meetings to effectively contribute within area of control, as stated above.
- Respond to internal financial enquiries.
- In conjunction with Council's Management Accountant (or designated officer) maintain chart of accounts and job costing regime.
- Review and process journal requests in line with Australian Accounting standards.

Financial Modelling

- Revenue and cost modelling, including setting of Council fees and charges, on-cost and overhead rates, private works and contract rates.
- Rates modelling (in conjunction with Council's Rates Officer).
- Provide advice regarding financial modelling of capital projects, whole of life costs, financing and cost management to relevant staff.

Duties and Responsibilities (Cont.)

Financial Systems (Authority)

- Ensure relevant finance systems are operated in accordance with appropriate standards, policies and procedures.
- In partnership with ICT and line managers, support the ongoing process improvement, data migration and financial system maintenance and upgrades.
- Internal Controls
- Review, develop, recommend, establish and implement robust, fit for purpose internal controls.
- Monitor effectiveness of internal controls.

Records Management

- Ensures that records relating to the functions of the business unit are maintained and comply with relevant legislation and Council standards.
- Continuous Improvement
- Keep the Chief Financial Officer appropriately and adequately informed on updates and changes to Accounting Standards and Legislation and highlight in advance any points likely to influence Council operations or relations with ratepayers and/or the public.
- Involvement with Council's business improvement initiatives from a financial perspective.

Leadership & Management

- Develop and implement an annual work schedule/work plan for all statutory external and internal reporting requirements.
- Ensure the department's processes are regularly monitored to ensure economical, efficient, timely and relevant reporting is provided.
- Lead by example and foster a team culture that promotes Council's values, teamwork, accountability and ethical behaviour.
- Line management of the Rates and Receivables function within the Finance Department.
- Conduct annual goal setting and performance reviews for direct reports, in line with Council's 'Performance Review Framework' procedure.
- Foster and support an ongoing continuous improvement and innovative approach to service delivery.

Position Requirements

Qualifications, Experience and Knowledge

- Recognised tertiary qualifications in Accounting or Commerce.
- Minimum 3+ years' experience in a similar role desirable.
- Demonstrate a sound understanding of Accounting practices and principles including compliance with AASB, the Local Government Act 2009 and Local Government Regulation 2012.
- Ability to interpret and apply legislation relevant to the role.
- Demonstrated experience developing annual financial statements in line with AASB.
- Demonstrated experience in managing competing priorities to deliver work to a high standard.
- Ability to use initiative to recommend alternative solutions and strategies.

Position Requirements (cont.)

Interpersonal Skills

- Developed verbal and written communication skills with a high level of attention to detail and accuracy.
- Ability to maintain a high level of customer service satisfaction and quality of service to internal and external customers.
- Ability to work autonomously and within a team.

Training

- Training will be provided as required.
- The incumbent may be required as part of this position to attend professional development opportunities.

The successful candidate will be required to maintain currency of relevant qualifications, licences and tickets.



Selection Criteria

Essential

- Recognised tertiary qualifications in Accounting or Commerce.
- Demonstrated experience working in an Accounting role.
- Well-developed reporting and analytical skills.
- Demonstrated sound understanding of Accounting practices and principles including compliance with AASB, the Local Government Act 2009 and Local Government Regulation 2012.
- Demonstrated experience in the use of financial management software and Microsoft Office products with a high level of competency in Excel.

Highly regarded

- A member of Chartered Accountants Australian & New Zealand or CPA Australia (or progress towards obtaining).
- Experience with Authority financial management software.



Key Performance Indicators

Key Duties

- Develop and implement a work plan outlining all statutory and Council obligations relevant to the role, identifying key due dates to be met.
- Financial and statistical reports comply with accounting standards, and are completed accurately, within required time frames.
- End of month reconciliations performed and reviewed within 5 business days of end of month
- Financial and External reporting is accurate and meets required timeframes
- Queries addressed, recorded and completed in an appropriate timeframe.
- Council records management requirements are complied with, utilising CM9 software.

Interpersonal and Communication

- Active participation and involvement in team meetings.
- Professional and effective communication skills.
- Consistent behaviours that show a commitment to an understanding of ethical, professional and legal standards that reflect CSC core values and Code of Conduct.
- Evidence of effective communication with both external and internal customers.
- Stakeholders' expectations are met.
- Maintain confidentiality of information at all times and comply with the Privacy Act 1988 and the Australian Privacy Principles.

Additional Information

- Bringing fresh energy and eyes to the role you will share the values of good Financial Accounting Practice and operate with transparency and consistency
- As 2IC to the CFO you have a level of competency that allows you to truly support her and also provide support to the rates officer and account receivable officer as required. Both the latter are fairly autonomous and once the new rates officer has settled in you will be able to focus on supporting the CFO across a variety of financial and budgeting decisions.
- The position requires an individual who is proactive in building relationships and who is a self starter capable of 'running the show' and who actively drives to get things done to meet deadlines for deliverables.
- Being involved in and across rates modelling will also be a focus.
- The CFO is described as approachable, collaborative and as someone who works as part of the team so supporting her will be a positive experience both personally and professionally.
- Council are also encouraging candidates who are in the early stages of their accounting career to apply providing they can demonstrate a level of motivation and competence to take the reigns of this important position. Experience working with or for State or Local Government would be highly regarded.



Why this Role

- Reporting to the Chief Financial Officer, you will be able to make the role your own and actively take the reigns of something that will continue to underpin the way Council strives to deliver against their values.
- If you are looking to move away from the constraints of working in a large city or simply looking to leverage your current experience - then this is a great role and opportunity to have a 'sea change' and join a progressive Council where you can truly make your mark and continue developing your Accounting career. Council will provide you with assistance to locate suitable accommodation if needed.
- You will have the chance to work closely with the CFO and be involved in a variety of decision making that can only deepen your experience. Given the size of Council you will have the opportunity to be involved in a range of matters that in bigger environments wouldn't necessarily be possible. Learning, growing and fast tracking your career is a reality that can be realised. Deepening your understanding of Rates and the crucial role it plays in any Council will also add to your skill base.



Other Information

- Cook Shire Council is ranked in the top 10 per cent of local governments across Australia, so there couldn't be a better time to experience the diversity the region has to offer and work for a Council that is focused on continual improvement in everything it does for the communities it serves.
- Cook Shire Council is an equal opportunity employer and operates under a Certified Agreement.
- The tasks for the role will be subject to change from time to time as Cook Shire Council's organisational direction is refined and developed to meet ongoing needs. Any such re-organisation of duties shall be the subject of discussion with the position incumbent.



Recruitment Process

Application Period:	Tuesday 18 th January – Wednesday 2 nd February
Closing date for Applications:	10pm, Wednesday 2 nd February 2022 or sooner if a suitable applicant is secured
Initial Assessment and Agency Interviews:	Wednesday 2 nd February – Friday 4 th February 2022
Council Interviews:	Week commencing 7 th February 2022

Assessing Applications

Peak Services will review all applications and provide an initial 'long list' of suitable candidates to Council.

Working with Peak Services, Council will determine a shortlist of suitable candidates, and will arrange interviews with the Council panel. The Council may require the candidate to undergo psychometric testing to assist in understanding the candidate's working preferences and attributes as well as fit for the organisation. There will be a requirement to provide references and possibly the need of a criminal history check based on Council's discretion.

Privacy Information: Peak Services is collecting your personal information in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act* for the purpose of assessing your skills and experience against the position requirements. The information that you provide in your application will only be used by employees of Peak Services. Your information will be provided to authorised Council Officers, including Human Resources, interview panels and hiring managers.

Council Benefits

- A salary of between \$84,895-\$88,973 + Super will be negotiated subject to qualifications, experience and knowledge.
- SPA Salary Packaging – A summary of the benefits are listed below and further details will be provided to the successful applicant.

Salary Packaging is a tax effective way to receive your salary as a combination of income & benefits that allows you to deduct some of your pre-tax income & use it to pay for a variety of benefits.

By reducing your pre-tax income you can reduce the amount of income tax you pay & in turn increase the amount you take home each pay day.

Employees based in an Australian Tax Office (ATO) designated remote area are eligible for additional benefits. These fringe benefit tax (FBT) exempt items are offered by the Federal Government to assist rural & remote organisations to attract & retain employees.

Employees renting a residence in a remote area can salary package 50% of rental payment as an FBT exempt benefit. Employees renting an Employer owned residence can claim 100% of rental payment as an FBT exempt benefit.

100% mortgage interest payments must be packaged to realise 50% exemption and also include FBT liability for the remaining 50%.

Remote area fuel packages also need the correct FBT liability and this is packaged in the same format as the remote area mortgage interest.

- Annual locality allowance single \$2367, with dependents \$4734.
- Other benefits include up to 12% superannuation, 5 weeks annual leave, 15 days personal leave and relocation assistance.
- In the last staff survey completed and benchmarked against 90-plus other councils, Cook Shire Council was in the top quartile in terms of overall staff happiness, engagement and performance, making it a great place to work!



Principal Consultant Recruitment – Rona Horsfall

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