



# **WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2025-2029**

**Draft – April 2025**

## Contents

Introduction .....	3
Workforce planning and development .....	3
Organisational context .....	4
The external environment .....	4
The Internal Environment.....	7
Influences .....	19
Key challenges.....	20
Our future workforce .....	22
Monitoring and review .....	28

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## Introduction

Ku-ring-gai Council's Workforce Management Strategy outlines our commitment to ensuring Council has both the capacity and capability within its workforce to deliver positive outcomes for the organisation and ultimately the community.

The Workforce Management Strategy together with the Asset Management Strategy and Long Term Financial Plan, provide the resources necessary to achieve Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan to support our Community Strategic Plan. It aligns with and supports our key planning and strategy documents to ensure that we have a capable, skilled, engaged and sustainable workforce to deliver on our commitments.

This strategy meets the Office of Local Government's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) requirements where assets, finances and the workforce are planned in an integrated framework. It identifies high level outcomes and strategies and provides a strategic framework to guide our people management strategies over the next four years.

It is anticipated that the local government industry and our workforce will experience moderate changes during the period and as such the Workforce Management Strategy will be reviewed in line with the annual IP&R annual cycle.

### Workforce planning and development

Standards Australia defines workforce planning as a management technique which is used to effectively manage workforce demand and supply.

It is the process used to align the needs of a business with those of its workforce by identifying current and future staffing needs.

Workforce planning focuses on retaining existing staff, as well as attracting new staff, to ensure an organisation has the right number of people, with the right skills in the right jobs at the right time (see diagram 1).

The Workforce Management Strategy details Council's strategic approach to workforce development, whilst the outcomes of our workforce planning are detailed in the Long Term Financial Plan.



Diagram 1: Workforce capability and planning cycle

## Organisational context

### The external environment

#### NSW labour market and economy

In November 2024, the unemployment rate for Australia was 4%, with NSW also at 4%. As of April 2024, the Sydney North and West region have an unemployment rate of 3.3%. Employment participation in the Sydney North and West region was sitting at 67.4% compared to the state at 66.7%.

#### Ku-ring-gai local government area

The latest population estimate for the Ku-ring-gai Council area as of 30 June 2024 is 128,362 (ERP)<sup>1</sup>. Since the previous year, the population has grown by 1.07%. Population growth in Greater Sydney was 1.97%.

Ku-ring-gai has a vibrant and increasingly diverse population spanning all generations. It is a popular area for families with school aged children attracted to the area for its open spaces, range of sporting facilities, access to schools and health services and close proximity to major employment areas.

Our residents are generally employed in the professional, scientific and technical sectors as well as health care and social services, and financial and insurance services<sup>1</sup>.

More than 40 per cent of residents were born overseas, mainly in China, United Kingdom, South Africa, Hong Kong and India. Aside from English, the most commonly spoken languages at home are Mandarin, Cantonese and Korean<sup>1</sup>.

We face many challenges in catering for our population growth and meeting the ever changing needs of our diverse community.

#### Australian local government sector

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) commissioned the *2022 Local Government Workforce Skills and Capability Survey* to gain further insight into the national workforce profile of Australia's local government sector and to determine current and future workforce needs and priorities.

The survey captures rich insights into the Australian local government workforce, its skilling needs, and priorities at a time when Australian communities are undergoing rapid change.

Key findings include:

- Local government is a major national employer with over 190,800 workers in almost 400 occupations. It plays an important role as an anchor organisation and in increasing productivity through utilising endogenous talent and innovation.
- Local governments continue to experience skills shortages in multiple occupations, exacerbated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the impacts of climate change and the accelerated take-up of technology and digitisation of services.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population Growth, Australia (3218.0). Compiled and presented by [.id](#)

- Local governments are grappling with significant challenges in relation to recruitment and retention of skilled staff and accessing training opportunities to enhance workforce skills and capability. Employee attrition and an ageing workforce are ongoing and an escalating difficulty.
- Local governments are having difficulties in securing the right quantum and mix of skills to support local service provision which is affecting not only local government's productivity, but also the productivity of host localities and regions.
- Barriers to effective workforce planning and management include a shortage of resources within local government, a lack of skilled workers and the loss of corporate knowledge as employees retire or resign.

Some of these findings are not unique to the local government sector and affect other sectors of the economy, especially in regional areas away from major capital cities.

### **NSW local government sector**

An overview of key insights gathered from NSW Local Councils that participated in the *2022 Local Government Workforce Skills and Capability Survey* is provided below.

As at 30 June 2020, the NSW local government sector employed 48,828 FTE (full time equivalent) staff. The sector is dominated by mid-size local governments of between 100-500 FTEs, which account for 59% of all local governments.

NSW councils are diverse in geographical size, population and cultural mix, rates of growth and functions performed. Many are significant local employers, offering jobs in a wide range of occupations. Yet most councils face similar workforce challenges as they compete for labour drawn from within and outside their local areas.

Within the local government industry there continues to be strong competition for key professional appointments.

Since 2018, engineers, urban and town planners, building surveyors and project managers have remained the top four professional skill shortage occupations. Accountants have emerged as the fifth most common professional skill shortage. Labourers, supervisors and team leaders, and tradespersons are the most common shortages among trade occupations. Waste, water and sewerage operators is an emerging skills shortage area. Several occupational skill shortages are becoming critical, including computing and ICT professionals, engineers, urban and town planners, building surveyors, and mechanical tradespersons.

The current key drivers of skills shortages included inability to compete with market remuneration particularly in the mining industry, a lack of suitably qualified applicants, regional or rural location, construction boom in the Sydney metropolitan area, real estate shortages, housing affordability, local governments brand identity and demand for flexible working arrangements.

The hardest to fill occupations included engineers, followed by building surveyors and town planning. In 2021-22, local governments also experienced recruitment challenges for nurses, plumbers, water network operators, road safety officers, mechanics, asset managers, ICT staff for data management and technology project managers, accountants, and human resources professionals.

Skills gaps were identified across several occupations ranging from engineers to arborists, librarians, civil designers, professional, corporate and finance areas. NSW local governments identified the following new or additional skills that were required to mitigate these critical skills gaps: a combination of skilling initiatives, tertiary or trade qualifications, and on the job experience. Some

local governments also specified the need for soft skills, such as emotional intelligence, people management, ideation (design thinking), reasoning and problem solving.

Key drivers of critical skills gaps by occupational area included a range of factors, for example, complex market competitiveness and remuneration, limited talent pools, legislative changes and/or requirements, insurance costs, challenges in recruiting for regulatory roles, and a lack of regional housing availability and/or affordability. Many of these factors are beyond local government's influence or control.

Many participating NSW councils indicated that vacancies, skills shortages, skills gaps, or training needs have impacted or delayed project delivery.

Local governments typically used a variety of strategies to address skills gaps and shortages, including providing opportunities to act up and/or across other roles, providing informal on the job training, targeted training, coaching/mentoring, secondments or exchanges with other workplaces, and service/resource sharing with other councils.

The most successful methods for filling vacancies included advertising, social media, word of mouth and personal networks of staff, taking on more trainees or apprentices, trialling people through work experience or practicum placements, resource sharing across the council, and redesigning job roles. Contingent workers and graduate employment pipelines were less successful methods for filling skills shortages.

Factors impacting future skilling needs included: ageing workforce, major council or external infrastructure projects, increasing levels of governance and compliance, technological change, changes in government funding levels, growth in the local government area and climate change.

In terms of the future workforce, NSW councils identified flexible and targeted training and development as the most common approaches to meeting future skills needs. They also identified a range of resources and/or assistance that would help them to meet future skills needs including:

- Funding for a range of supports including fee-free and onsite training, to support employment growth in environmental and digital roles, and to support local governments in offering more competitive remuneration
- Workforce planning, such as more detailed forecasting and developing an employee retention program
- Greater access to trainers, particularly in regional areas, which would reduce training costs
- Facilitating pathways for international students and skilled migrants
- Incentivising skilled retirees to re-enter the workforce, and
- Supporting more local decision making between local governments and training providers.



# The Internal Environment

## Organisational structure

At Ku-ring-gai Council services are delivered to the community via five departments together with the General Managers unit (Civic) and Major Projects.

Each discrete service is provided by one of the twenty business units that operate across these departments.

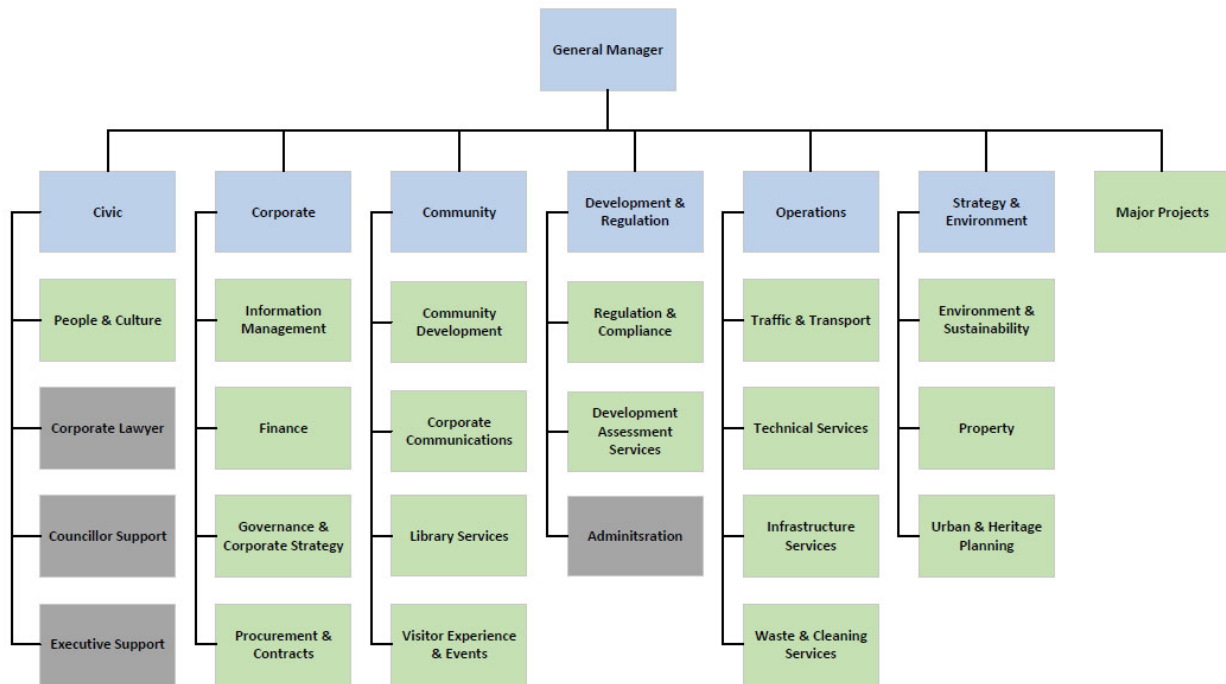


Diagram 2: Ku-ring-gai Council organisational chart

## Corporate values

At Ku-ring-gai Council we recognise the importance of having a set of shared common values that everyone has helped establish to leverage a stronger culture for our organisation and help lead us to a more positive outlook on our environment, the people we work with, and the work we produce.

Our values are Do What Is Right, Show Respect, Own Our Actions and Strive for Excellence.

	We Will...	We Won't...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We act with integrity in everything that we do and say</li> <li>We make transparent, ethical and consistent decisions that support the vision of Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Act with honesty and transparency</li> <li>Be fair and unbiased</li> <li>Be trustworthy and sincere</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be dishonest, corrupt and/or deceptive</li> <li>Take the soft option and avoid hard conversations</li> <li>Serve individual interests above those of Council</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are considerate towards others ensuring fairness, dignity and equality</li> <li>We practice and encourage transparent communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be open and have honest interactions</li> <li>Treat people fairly and equally</li> <li>Be open to all points of view</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disregard the views of others</li> <li>Disrespect others through gossip and innuendo</li> <li>Bully, harass and/or discriminate</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are accountable for our decisions</li> <li>We take responsibility for the outcomes of our choices, behaviours and actions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be responsive, available and inclusive</li> <li>Be receptive to constructive feedback</li> <li>Hold ourselves and others accountable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hide mistakes and shift blame</li> <li>Fail to meet our commitments</li> <li>Be white-anting and /or undermine colleagues or decisions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We work together as a team to achieve our full potential</li> <li>We have the insight and passion to lead Council into the future</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have a 'can do' attitude</li> <li>Make courageous decisions</li> <li>Encourage new ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be closed-off to new ideas</li> <li>Be complacent, lazy and/or negative</li> <li>Settle for the status quo</li> </ul>

These values are critical in driving our organisation forward in the right direction, building our culture and energising our people.

We continue to leverage our strong commitment to demonstrating these values across various organisational wide strategies and initiatives. In 2022, Council introduced the staff Excellence Awards, a pivotal platform identified in our Rewards and Recognition Program. One of the award categories is Behavioural Excellence which promotes, encourages, and recognises outstanding demonstration of our corporate values by staff.

## **Culture**

### *Employee engagement*

Over the last few years, we have continued to demonstrate our resilience, tenacity, and adaptability. Our combined efforts have undoubtedly helped drive the achievement of many key milestones and the continued delivery of high quality services to our community.

As we continue to adjust to changing environments, there are more opportunities for us to work towards building a better and more robust workplace cultivated by strong performance and high staff engagement.

In July 2023, Council adopted the Gender Equality Strategy 2023-2027 with the primary objective to advance gender equality within Council's workforce. The overarching goal of the strategy is to foster a workplace that is diverse, inclusive, and welcoming to all employees, ensuring equal treatment irrespective of gender.

The strategy establishes a comprehensive framework to promote gender equality, encompassing five key objectives:

1. Increasing representation of women in leadership positions.
2. Promoting gender equality by eliminating gender-based discrimination and promoting equal access to employment, training, and career development opportunities, regardless of gender.
3. Enhancing employee well-being by promoting work-life balance and support for women's career advancement through flexible work arrangements, parental leave, higher duties and equal pay for work of equal value.
4. Improving data collection and analysis to identify gender inequalities and monitor progress towards gender equality.
5. Improving organisational performance by ensuring that all employees have an equal opportunity to contribute their skills, knowledge and expertise.

In addition, in early 2024 Council implemented the 2024-2027 Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Plan which proceeds the previous 2020-2023 plan and continues to address the legislative framework established to ensure Council takes appropriate action to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunity for persons in designated groups in relation to employment matters.

The 2024-2027 plan includes four key strategies:

1. Building awareness of EEO Management Principles
2. Policies, procedures, plans and programs align with EEO management principles
3. Collect, review and report on EEO data, and
4. Promote gender diversity in leadership.



The 2024-2027 plan aims to provide a focus on a range of contemporary EEO and diversity initiatives, including matters related to gender equality, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and the LGBTQ+ community.

In mid-2024, Council rolled out an Employee Opinion Survey with an 85% participation rate among staff. The objective of the survey was to evaluate employee engagement, the component of our culture that determines our collective commitment to the organisation, and to measure how successful we have been in making improvements and responding to key focus areas such as performance, engagement, ageing workforce, diversity and inclusion, reward and recognition, innovation and psychosocial hazards. The insights gathered will form a crucial pillar in further solidifying and enhancing our position in these areas.

To progress our work in this space, a comprehensive organisation wide action plan which focuses on improving employee engagement and organisation performance has been developed and will be communicated to staff in the first half of 2025. The plan will deliver a range of initiatives associated with several priority areas that aim to enhance organisation performance and engagement.

Council will also continue circulating key organisation wide topics via the monthly 360 View platform which has demonstrably improved communication and engagement with staff from the top down and encouraged them to share their thoughts with the leadership team.

#### *Early careers program*

The Early Careers Program has been designed to empower both Council and talented individuals just starting or completing their qualifications. The program will address labour shortages, offer new career pathways, and strengthen succession planning across our organisation.

Council has developed a comprehensive Early Careers Program Policy and Procedure to act as a framework for creating and managing entry-level positions that will support our future workforce.

The program is made up of four main streams:

1. Apprentices: Apprentices will be engaged in a trade-based training program for a period of up to 4 years (five years for relevant electrical apprenticeships) full-time relevant to the training contract duration.
2. Trainees: Trainees are engaged in a training program for a period of up to three years full-time relevant to the training contract duration.
3. Undergraduates: Undergraduates will be engaged in their penultimate or final year of an undergraduate degree for a period of up to four years, depending on the duration of the course.
4. Graduates: Participants must have completed an undergraduate degree within the last 12 months and will be engaged for a period of up to 24 months.

We are currently exploring state funding opportunities which will support some of the costs associated with these positions and enable a higher uptake across the various service areas.

#### *Work/life balance*

Council recognises the need to create and support a healthy work/life balance for our employees.

Initiatives such as the Transition to Retirement Scheme and Self-funded Leave Program together with our flexible working arrangements are key in fostering this approach and continue to remain a popular choice among staff.

In 2024 we introduced the Novated Leasing Policy as well as the Fitness Passport Program which builds upon the options for flexibility available to staff and improves Council's overall Employee Value Proposition (EVP). The Novated Leasing Policy offers staff the ability to reduce their taxable income by entering into an agreement to lease a vehicle for personal use as part of a salary sacrificing arrangement. The Fitness Passport Program offers staff and their family unparalleled access to more than 890 gyms and pools all over NSW, for as little as \$16.50 per week for an individual membership.

### *Equal employment opportunity (EEO)*

The purpose of Ku-ring-gai Council's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Management Plan is to promote diversity and respect. It contains a statement of objectives, actions and target dates that have been established to ensure achievement of Council's overall strategy for equal employment in the workplace.

Council is committed to ensuring all people are treated equally and are not disadvantaged by prejudices or bias.

A 2024-2027 plan and set of objectives has been developed to ensure Council continues to advance in proactively eliminating discrimination and promoting equal opportunity. Key strategies include:

- Building awareness of EEO Management Principles
- Ensure ongoing alignment of policies, procedures, plans and programs with EEO Management Principles
- Improved collection, review and reporting of EEO data, and
- Promoting gender diversity in leadership.

The new plan also supports the Gender Diversity Strategy 2023-2030 with key actions including publishing news stories highlighting women in non-traditional and leaderships roles, reviewing the current development opportunities and programs aimed at supporting the succession of women into leadership roles, and expanding the benefits available to staff to foster additional inclusive employment conditions through Council's Total Reward and Recognition Program.

### *Safe working environment*

Council is committed to continually improve its work, health, and safety performance, ensuring a safe and healthy environment for all staff. To uphold best practices, Council conducts an annual Work Health and Safety (WHS) Self-Audit to assess performance and identify areas for ongoing improvement.

In addition, Council regularly reviews its work, health, and safety management system to ensure compliance with the Work Health and Safety Act/Regulations, Australian Standards, codes of practice, and best practice guidelines, as outlined in its WHS Strategic Plan. This process is supported by customised WHS indicators and dashboards. In 2024, Council advanced a variety of initiatives, including:

- Monitoring and improving on tailored WHS reporting indicators and dashboards for continuous evaluation of WHS performance
- Ongoing prioritisation of employee health and wellbeing through regular assessments, including flu vaccinations, skin cancer screenings, and audiometric tests, along with support programs like the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), fitness/wellbeing activity reimbursements, the Fitness Passport, transition to retirement schemes, and flexible work arrangements

- Commencing indoor air quality testing project to ensure a safer, healthier work environment, enhancing workplace safety and employee satisfaction
- Reviewing and developing WHS policies and procedures
- Reviewing the Emergency Control Organisation and updating site-based Emergency Management Plans
- Developing a Working with Volunteers Procedure defining the key requirements for volunteer engagement, supervision, training, and communication to foster a safe supportive and rewarding experience while they undertake roles on behalf of the Council
- Delivering a range of training programs, awareness workshops, and e-newsletters to foster employee engagement and promote a healthy work health and safety culture
- Conducting specialised 'Due Diligence & Psychosocial Awareness' training workshops for General Managers, Directors, and Business Unit Managers designed to enhance their understanding of their WHS obligations, particularly considering new legislation and penalties
- Providing senior staff Enterprise Risk Leader training in conjunction with StateCover to educate and raise awareness of their obligations under the WHS Act and Regulations
- Drafting a WHS Risk Matrix based on the Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) Framework for consultations with workgroups via Health and Safety Committees
- Conducting an optional Self Audit 2024 as an ongoing commitment to self-assessment and improvement which has led to a more robust safety framework and a continuous reduction in workplace incidents
- Providing ongoing support to business units in maintaining first aid arrangements including designated First Aid Officers for work sites ensuring industrial arrangements are in place reflective of the business needs
- Finalising the ERM Framework to foster a positive risk culture where staff actively participate in identifying and reporting hazards. This framework aims to proactively manage risks, enhancing staff safety and wellbeing.
- Delivering tailored organisation wide risk awareness training program, to further strengthen risk knowledge and management capabilities
- Continually reviewing and updating our Business Continuity Plan by prioritising staff safety during emergencies, minimising harm and enabling a swift response
- Conducting a business continuity exercise for the Crisis Management Team (CMT), Incident Management Team (IMT) and alternate staff, to test our crisis response and implementation procedures and assess our ability to respond to rapidly escalating disasters.

In 2025, we plan to deliver a range of WHS initiatives and strategies including:

- Continuing the delivery of committed initiatives within the WHS program and the overarching Enterprise Risk Management Framework
- Continuing to focus on proactive hazard management and risk mitigation to create a safe workplace by extending ERM Risk Leaders training to supervisors, coordinators, and team leaders in conjunction with StateCover to improve their WHS awareness and abilities to comply with WHS obligations for their roles and responsibilities
- Drafting a psychological risk management program/procedure to meet new legislative requirements
- Continuing to promote work/life balance and wellbeing through initiatives such as flu vaccinations, skin cancer screenings, and audiometric tests, alongside support programs like the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), fitness reimbursements, the Fitness Passport, transition to retirement schemes, and flexible work arrangements
- Reviewing indoor air quality testing results to ensure a safer, healthier work environment, contributing to improved wellbeing and productivity

- Reviewing the chemical storage and handling management system with relevant departmental representatives
- Continuing to promote the WHS Committee consultation arrangements in line with the Health and Safety Committee Charter to ensure Council meets its ongoing WHS obligations and complies with relevant WHS legislation
- Reviewing and updating the WHS Strategic Plan to define the future strategic direction of WHS activities
- Striving to develop an integrated WHS system that automates the reporting of WHS events and interacts with related functions such as enterprise risk management, workers' compensation, and public liability, ensuring greater transparency in incident management and full integration with Council's overall safety and risk management philosophy
- Finalising the WHS Risk Matrix based on the ERM Framework (Risk Appetite Statement) through consultations with departmental and strategic Health and Safety Committees
- Continuing efforts to enhance mental health awareness and support through regular staff communications, continuous support for managers and team leaders, and strategies to improve staff engagement and the management of difficult situations and mental health concerns
- Conducting a risk maturity assessment to evaluate the progress of our ERM Framework implementation and further strengthen the ERM and WHS culture
- Enhancing our business continuity readiness for extended work groups by conducting a second Business Continuity Plan exercise, specifically targeting alternate employees
- Developing Business Continuity Sub Plans for critical areas to foster a workplace that prioritises employee wellbeing
- Conducting the 2025 WHS Self Audit and continuing to work towards earning the StateCover safety and wellbeing incentives
- Continuing to strengthen collaboration with external partners like StateWide Mutual, JLT and StateCover to enhance the effectiveness of Council's insurance program, resulting in better loss mitigation and risk management outcomes
- Continuing to review and update the COVID-19 WHS Standards, Protocols, and Safety Plans to ensure alignment with current restrictions, Public Health Orders, WHS legislation and government guidance.

## Workforce demographics

Council employees work across several locations within the Ku-ring-gai area and in a diverse range of occupations. Most staff (79.2%) commute from outside of the local government area (LGA) with only 20.8% of staff living locally.

The following workforce demographics are provided as at 30 June 2024.

### Employment type

Council employed full and part time employees across 432 permanent and temporary full and part time positions with a total of 70% of these positions being full time (see diagram 3) and providing significant ongoing employment opportunities for local residents. In addition to this, Council utilised 101 casual positions representing 19% of the total workforce headcount (when including casuals) of 533.

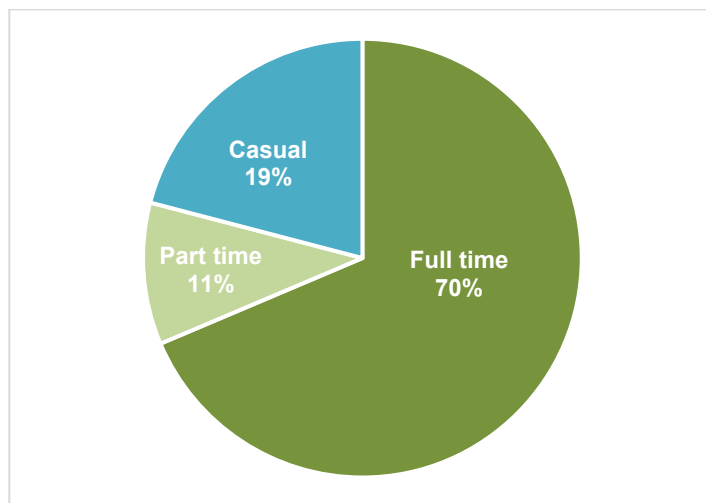


Diagram 3: Workforce total headcount by employment type

Departments meet their service delivery requirements by employing a mixture of labour to support operational imperatives and fluctuating resource requirements (see diagram 4).

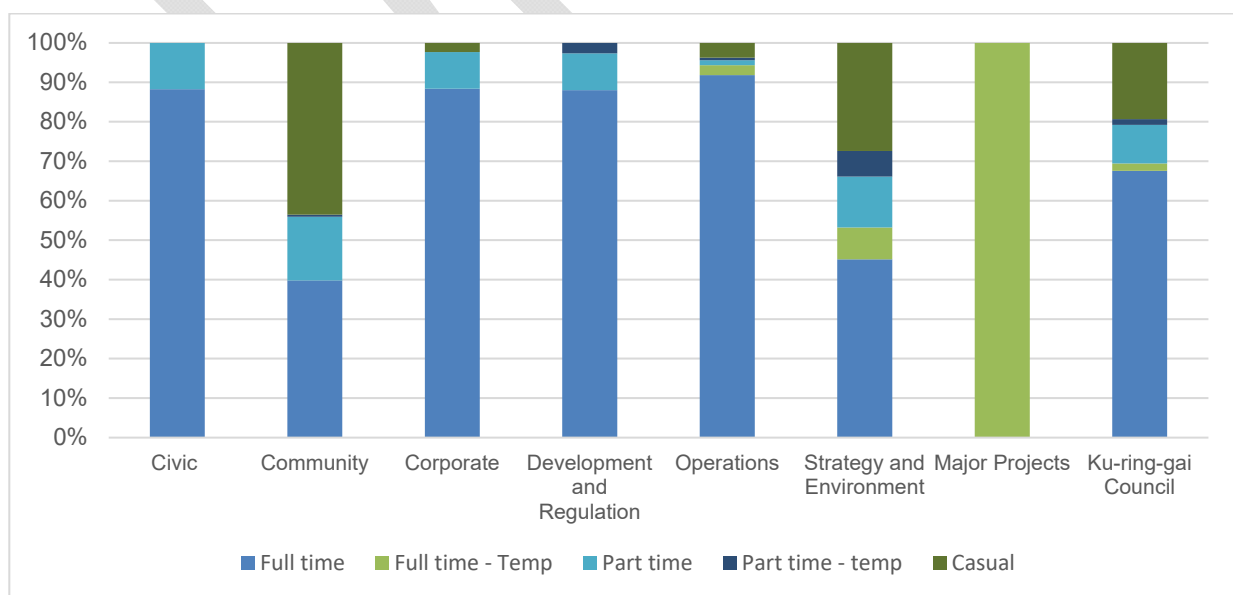


Diagram 4: Percentage workforce by employment type and department

Council also engages non-permanent staff, including casuals and labour hire staff in a range of seasonal and vacation care roles.

### Gender

Council is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to ensuring gender equality in employment.

Employee profile snapshot	
Number employees (FT and PT)	432
Median age range (years)	43 – 52 years
Turnover rate	18%
Percentage of women (FT and PT)	47%
Percentage of men (FT and PT)	53%
% women in Band 6 and above	45%
% men in Band 6 and above	55%

Diagram 5: Employee profile snapshot

The current full time and part time workforce gender balance is split approximately 47:53 women to men (see diagram 5), with the disparity appearing to result from the high percentage of outdoor operational roles (20% of the workforce) which are traditionally undertaken by men. When including the casual workforce, the gender balance becomes 53:47 women to men (see diagram 6).

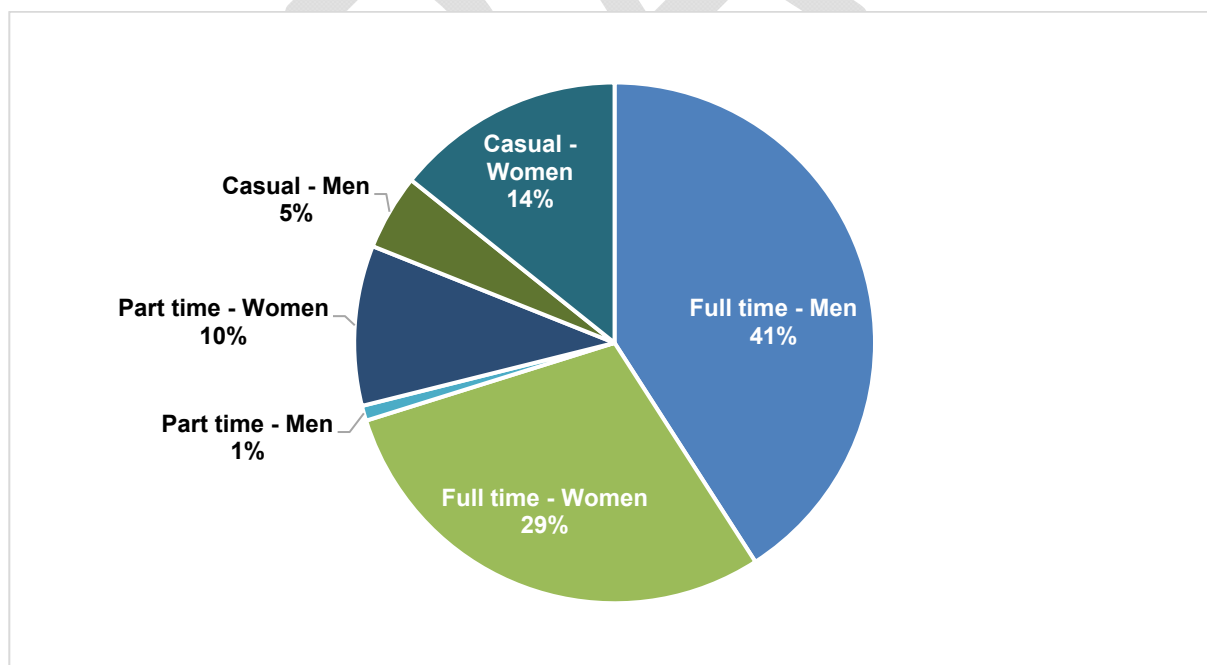
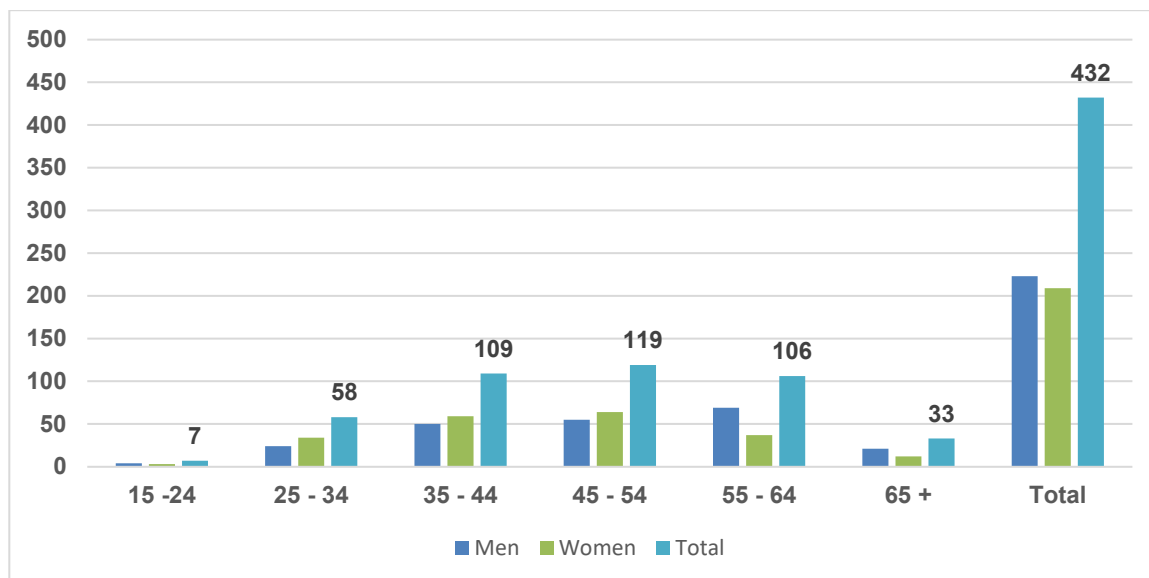


Diagram 6: Workforce by employment type and gender

Men and women are proportionally represented in all age demographics (see diagram 7).

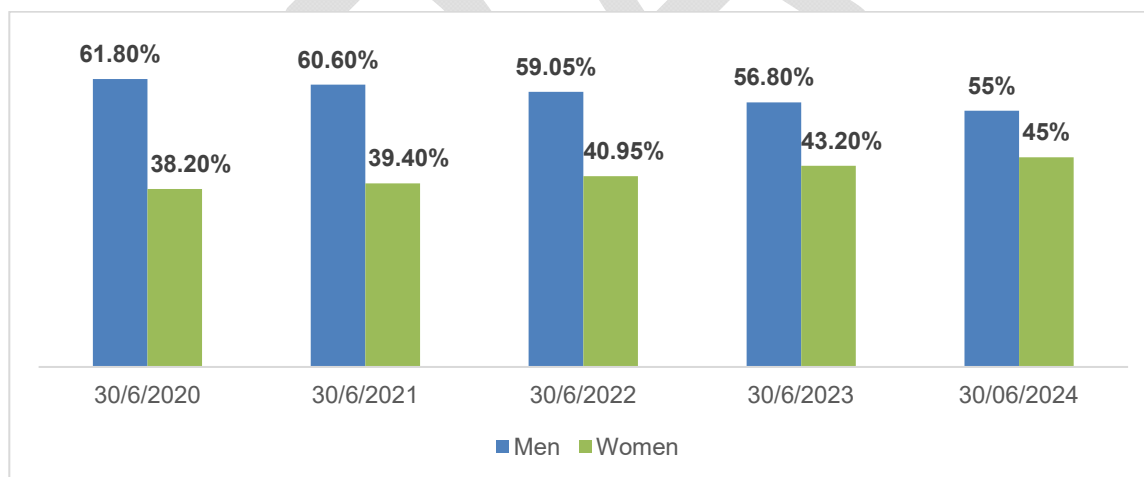




*Diagram 7: Workforce by age and gender (excluding casuals)*

Whilst women continue to be under-represented in higher level and senior roles (categorised as roles sized at band 6 or higher) there are various initiatives in place to address this deficiency.

More recently, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of men in senior roles (Technical Band 6 and above) at 55% (down from 56.8% in 2023/24) and a slight increase in the percentage of women in senior roles at 45% (up from 43.2% in 2023/24) (see diagram 8).



*Diagram 8: Percentage of employees in senior roles (Band 6 and above) by gender (excluding casuals)*

## Age

Overall, 59% of Council's non casual workforce is aged 45 years or over with an average and median age of 47. There are 15% of employees aged under 35 and 32% of employees aged over 55 (see diagram 9).

When the casual workforce is included in this analysis there are 54% of the total workforce aged 45 years and over and both the average and median age decrease to 46 which is primarily influenced by employees in our Community Department where the majority of casuals are employed. There are 21% of employees aged under 35 and 30% of employees aged over 55 (see diagram 10).

Both sets of figures vary across each department which may be a result of several variables, most notably the nature of the work performed (see diagram 11).

In comparison, the median age of NSW public sector non-casual employees has stayed at 43 years (since 2022), after remaining at 44 years since 2018. This was mainly due to efforts to diversify the workforce and effective retention strategies. Consistent with all years since 2016, the median age of women in the sector was one year less than for men (43 for men and 42 for women). The median age of the NSW public sector non-casual workforce remained higher than the median age of the NSW working population.

In the NSW public sector workforce, 66.9% of employees were in the 35 to 64 age group in 2023, compared to 56% of the NSW working population. In addition, fewer NSW public sector employees were aged under 35 or over 65. Those aged under 35 accounted for 28.5% of public sector employees, compared to 37% of the entire NSW workforce. Those aged 65 and over accounted for 6.3% of public sector employees compared to 8.2% in Council.

While Council was broadly comparable in employment percentages across the 35-to-54-year age brackets, Council employs significantly more people in the 55-to-64-year age group than both the NSW Public Sector and the wider NSW employed persons group.

Council's age profile provides an indication of the number of employees likely to retire in the next five to ten years, which will inform the development of strategies for attracting younger workers, (e.g. graduate recruitment and career path development) and retaining older workers (e.g. flexible work options, reducing physical demands). Job redesign and technological innovation will also assist in ensuring the ongoing delivery of services to the community within the constraints of an ageing workforce.

Council continues to monitor and devise strategies to meet the challenges of an ageing workforce. Initial indications are that we remain an employer of choice for many staff and Council continues to offer opportunities for continued employment for all age groups.

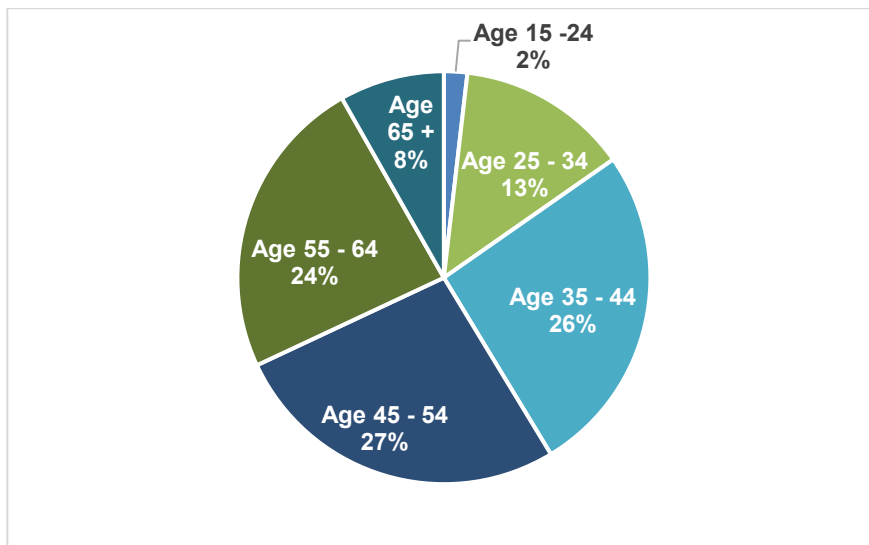


Diagram 9: Percentage of workforce by age (excluding casuals)

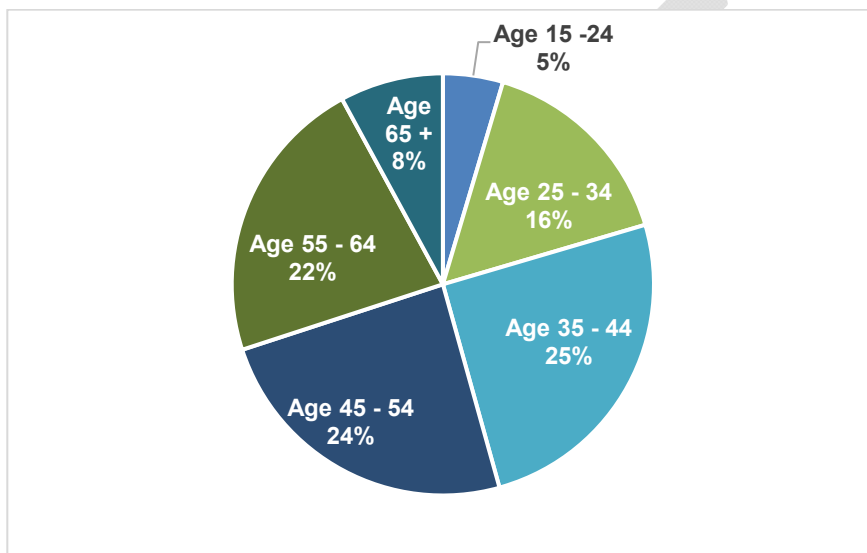


Diagram 10: Percentage of workforce by age gender (including casuals)

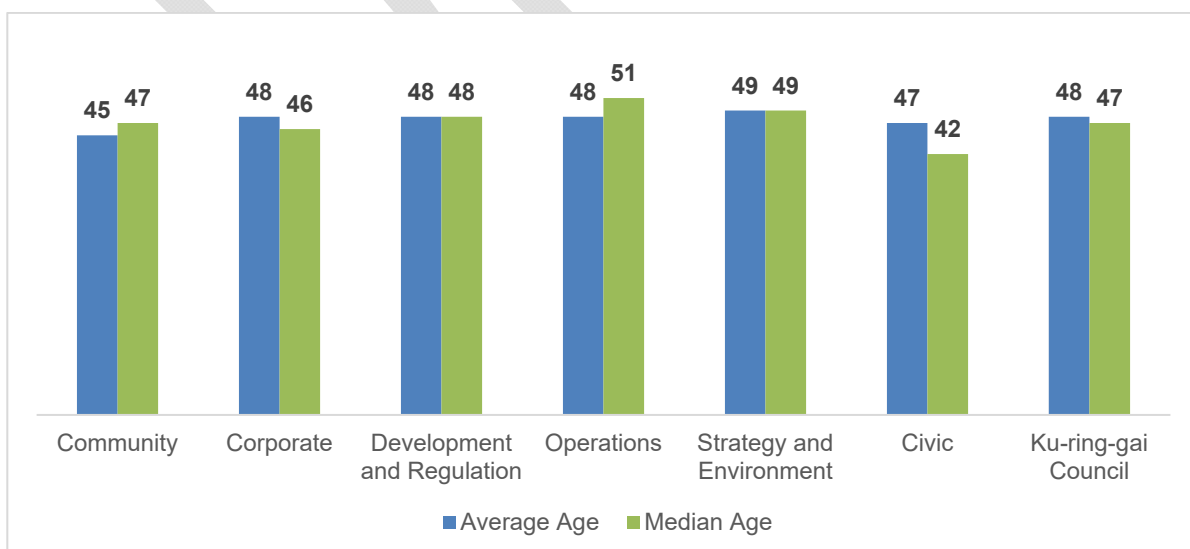


Diagram 11: Average and median age by department (excluding casuals)

### Length of service

Council's turnover rate is 18% per annum. 52.97% of staff have tenure of between one and five years with 40.18% having from six to twenty-five years of service. Council is typically a stable employer and length of tenure can reflect the constant and ongoing requirement for employment in a particular area (see diagrams 12 and 13).

Turnover rates across the last five-year period are within Council's targets and reflect the ability of Council to renew and refresh its corporate skills and knowledge while retaining its historic skills and knowledge base.

A higher turnover rate in 2020/21 reflected the continued impact of the pandemic. The continued higher turnover rate in 2022/23 reflected a correction and normalising of the turnover rate across the two-year period of the pandemic. With the uncertainty in the marketplace, resignations significantly increased in the financial year 2023 as the marketplace adapted and economic volatility increased but has since shown decline with employees now seeking employment security and organisations focused more on managing costs and optimising their existing workforce rather than aggressively pursuing new hires.

The workforce reflects a mix of new and old knowledge and the smooth transition of ideas and practices as Council continues with ongoing organisational renewal.

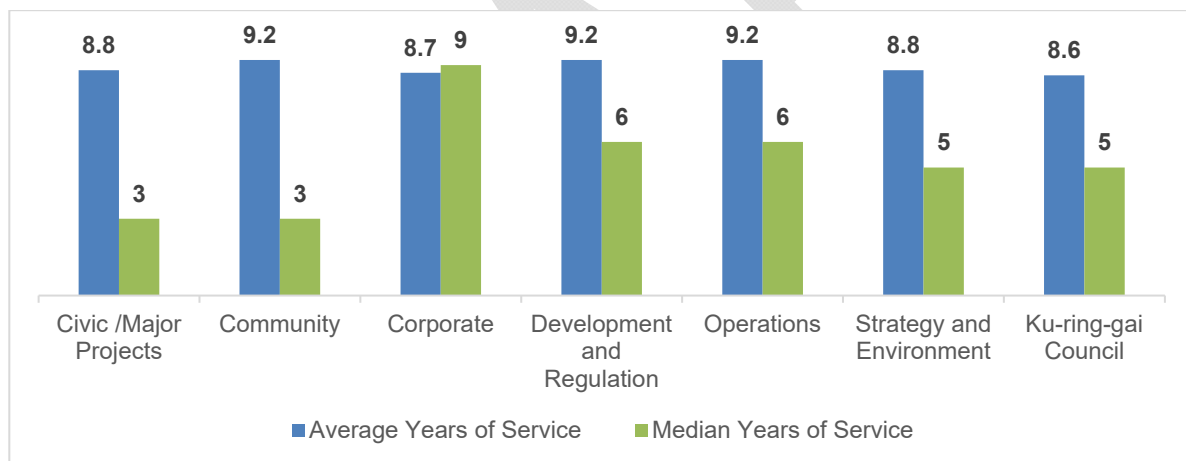


Diagram 12: Average and median years of service by department (excluding casuals)

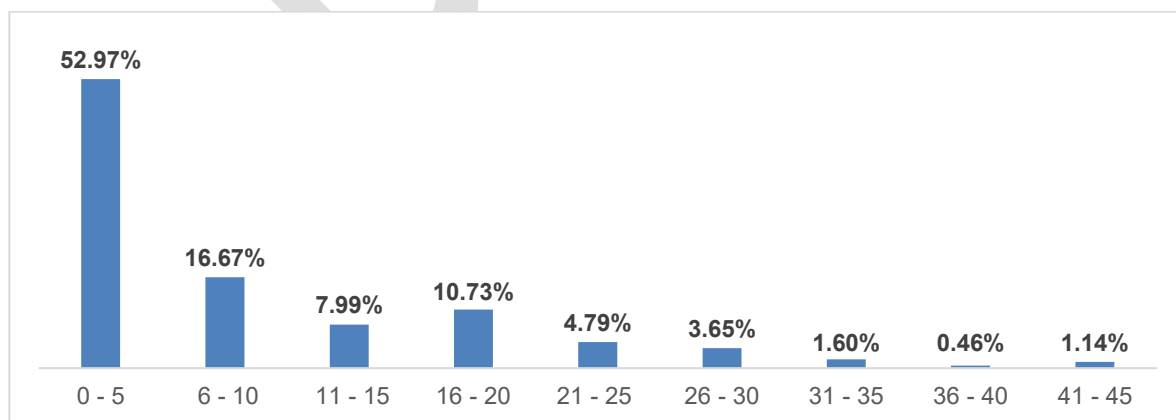


Diagram 13: Percentage of employees by years of service (excluding casuals)

## Influences

In developing an effective Workforce Management Strategy, it is crucial to identify and understand current and future internal and external factors that may have an impact on the workforce.

The 'influences' identified below will be monitored as part of the annual review of this strategy to ensure our response to workforce planning remains effective.

### External

- Local Government (State) Award
- Current and future labour market
- Current and future economic environment
- Operational and strategic workings of the Local Government environment
- Local Government reform
- The demographics within the Local Government Area
- Legislation and regulatory requirements
- 2022 Local Government Workforce Skills and Capability Survey
- Technological developments e.g. Artificial Intelligence, cyber security
- Office of Local Government Guidelines – Internal Audit & Risk Management
- Community expectations
- Special Rate Variation (SRV)
- NSW Housing Policy
- Federal and state funded grants
- Artificial Intelligence (AI)

### Internal

- Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program & Operational Plans
- Resourcing Strategy
- Budget
- Major Projects portfolio
- Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan
- Ageing Workforce Strategy
- Gender Equality Strategy
- Succession Planning Strategy
- WHS Management System
- Enterprise Risk Management System
- Internal Audit Plan
- Corporate Sustainability Action Plan
- Employee Opinion Surveys
- Staff accommodation arrangements
- Workforce metrics
- Leave liability
- Service Improvement Program
- General strategy, policy and process development
- Workplace change
- Executive turnover

## Key challenges

Ku-ring-gai Council is facing several challenges, both now and into the future. These are predominantly related to the nature of Local Government, the diversity of our organisation and expectations of the community.

Many of these challenges will have an impact on this Strategy with the current key issues identified below:

**1. Ageing workforce** – As identified by an analysis of Council's current workforce approximately one half of our staff are aged 45 years with more than 40% indicating their intention to leave Council within the next 5-year period. The biggest risk to Council with this ageing workforce is associated with the underutilisation or loss of knowledge critical to organisational performance. Knowledge loss impairs performance and results, and achievement of plans and objectives. It is important that we are vigilant in addressing issues associated with our ageing workforce to minimise the impact on our business and operational imperatives.

**2. Leadership** – A previous Employee Opinion Survey identified, among other areas, leadership as an opportunity for improvement particularly regarding communication, consistency in decision making and accountability. Whether it be a matter of perception or reality, to achieve and maintain an engaged workforce it is imperative that appropriate strategies are implemented to further develop our leaders and alleviate these concerns.

**3. Skill shortages** – The ageing workforce continues to expand, especially in areas that are already significantly impacted. Existing areas of skills shortages and tight labour supply in jobs such as engineering, urban and town planners, building surveyors, project managers, labourers, supervisors and team leaders, and tradesperson are likely to become even more constricted. In addition, the international border closures and tightening of immigration has seen significant skill shortages and slowing of labour growth across various industries. Talent has become increasingly challenging to attract and retain as its demand continues to stretch, and the opportunities available in the current market remain high.

**4. Multigenerational workforce** – Council's workforce is currently made up of five distinct and unique generations requiring a thorough understanding of intergenerational differences to ensure effective staff attraction, retention and management whilst being mindful that generational workgroup cohorts create the culture of an organisation.

**5. Workforce sustainability** – A highly skilled, sustainable and diverse workforce is critical to the delivery of Council services. The current and future limitations on Council's financial resources together with issues surrounding ageing assets and infrastructure create a significant challenge with the development and maintenance of our workforce to ensure that the needs of the community continue to be met. As recruitment and retention becomes more competitive in areas vital to our business, Council needs to ensure it is primarily positioned in the employment market. This requires innovating in key areas to bring the right people into the business and keep critical talent. As the labour market tightens, we need a greater focus on how we value, lead and develop the workforce.

**6. Continuous improvement** – Increasing community expectations and the complexity of community needs result in an added emphasis on strategy and management of resources. Council's workforce faces increasing demands to deliver results and the need to make sound decisions based on guiding priorities.



**7. Career development** – Council needs to be considered as a career partner to attract a younger cohort of the marketplace who are looking to develop their career skills across a wider range of employers to develop their career skills portfolio across a wider range of organisations.

**8. Location** – While a large number of positions can work from home the majority of staff continue to attend the workplace on a daily basis. With Council's major workplaces close to both public and private transport hubs and therefore being highly accessible to many potential employees, the locations themselves often offer only adequate but basic amenities.

**9. Employer of choice** – In order to remain market competitive in aspects related to employment practices and benefits, Council must continue to monitor through research and leveraging existing business relations to raise awareness and ensure improvement in our position as an Employer of Choice.

**10. NSW Housing Strategy** – Whilst the scale of impact associated with the NSW Housing Strategy is yet to be fully understood with respect to Council's workforce, it is anticipated that additional resources, skills, and capability will be required to meet the needs required to effectively deliver required outcomes. Council will continue to closely monitor this situation over the coming months.

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## Our future workforce

The Ku-ring-gai local government area has a growing residential population which provides Council with the opportunity to offer employment to a greater number of locally based residents together with job seekers in the broader Sydney metropolitan area.

Council seeks to provide employment that offers flexibility and values work/life balance in exchange for retention and development of high potential employees to support its service delivery to the community.

Our long term objective is be recognised as an employer of choice and to a focus on developing Council's ability to foster and maintain a productive, flexible and adaptable workforce. Ongoing and effective management will ensure that Council remains capable of maintaining a sustainable workforce.

In support of this objective the four key focus areas reflected in this strategy are: Workforce planning, attraction and retention, learning and development and organisational development.

STRATEGY	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME
<b>OBJECTIVE 1: INCREASE OUR WORKFORCE PLANNING CAPABILITY</b>		
<b>Maximise workforce sustainability through effective workforce planning</b>	Review and monitor criteria developed to identify critical positions based on current and future needs	Ongoing
	Monitor and update the register of critical positions, skills and qualifications	Ongoing
	Monitor turnover of critical positions and create customised retention and attraction strategies as required	Ongoing
	Monitor turnover of critical positions to identify and address current/emerging skill gaps	Ongoing
	Work with departments and business units to realign staffing requirements with the outcomes of business/service reviews	Ongoing
<b>Enable effective identification of key resourcing issues using workforce metrics</b>	Continue to monitor, analyse and report workforce demographics to the executive team on a quarterly basis	Ongoing
	Continue to review existing business processes to improve the capture and reporting of workforce metrics	Ongoing
	Continue to develop strategies to address workforce sustainability issues as required	Ongoing

STRATEGY	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME
<b>OBJECTIVE 2: ATTRACT AND RETAIN THE RIGHT PEOPLE</b>		
<b>Appropriately respond to the impacts of an ageing workforce</b>	Engage with the leadership team and staff to review Councils' Ageing Workforce Strategy	Ongoing
	Continue to implement the Ageing Workforce Strategy action plan in accordance with planned timeframes	Ongoing
	Monitor and report progress on a quarterly basis	Ongoing
<b>Address staff attraction issues</b>	Identify 'hard to fill' positions based on occupational groups and job families	Ongoing
	Develop, implement, and monitor targeted staff attraction programs to address significant workforce issues (where required)	Ongoing
	Undertake a periodic industry-based review of remuneration and benefits and recommend adjustments where required	Ongoing
	Continue to subscribe to at least two Local Government Remuneration surveys	Ongoing
	Further improve our Employee Value Proposition	Ongoing
	Review and refine materials/content related to the promotion of Ku-ring-gai Council as a workplace	2025
	Participate in career related events with higher education institutions to build relationships and promote Council as an employer of choice	Ongoing
	Continually review and streamline recruitment processes	Ongoing
	Review and identify enhancements to the recruitment platform	2025 and ongoing
	Continue to provide options for flexible work arrangements that enable mutually beneficial arrangements that meet business, team, employee and community service needs	Ongoing
	Promote local government careers	2025
<b>Address staff retention issues</b>	Continue to identify and monitor areas of high turnover	Ongoing
	Develop, implement and monitor targeted staff retention programs to address significant workforce issues (where required)	Ongoing
	Continue to implement and monitor the Rewards & Recognition program	Ongoing
	Develop, implement, and monitor a Talent Management Strategy	2025
	Monitor the Succession Planning Strategy	Ongoing
	Continue to engage with staff in undertaking the annual review of the Performance Appraisal System	Ongoing

Develop, implement, and monitor an Employee Engagement Strategy	2026
Continually review and evaluate-workplace policies to ensure Council is a fair workplace whose policies are modern, reasonable, and easy to understand	Ongoing
Continue to provide flexible work arrangements that enable mutually beneficial arrangements that meet business, team, employee and community service needs	Ongoing

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STRATEGY	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME
<b>OBJECTIVE 3: LEVERAGE THE CAPABILITY OF OUR WORKFORCE</b>		
<b>Quantify employee capabilities</b>	Review the NSW Local Government Capability Framework and articulate a 'best fit' framework that aligns with Council's requirements	2026
	Integrate the capability framework with Councils Job Evaluation and Salary Systems	2026
	Undertake a gap analysis of staff capabilities against position requirements and develop individual training plans	2026
	Integrate capabilities into Councils recruitment and selection process	2027
	Integrate capabilities into Councils Performance Appraisal process	2027
<b>Maximise leadership capabilities at all levels of the organisation</b>	Continue to roll out the planned suite of leadership programs at all levels across the organisation	Ongoing
	Maintain internal accreditation to support ongoing delivery of the leadership development program to new staff, and refresher sessions for existing staff	Ongoing
	Identify and implement new mechanisms for measuring leadership effectiveness	2025
	Develop, implement, and monitor targeted leadership programs to support and promote women in leadership and aspiring leaders	2024 and ongoing
	Promote participation in and leadership of cross functional projects by emerging and developing leaders	Ongoing
<b>Optimise the on-boarding of new starters</b>	Continue to undertake an annual review of the current employee induction program and implement required changes	Ongoing
	Continue to undertake an annual review of the online induction program and implement required changes	Ongoing
	Continually review and develop on-boarding processes and programs	Ongoing
<b>Promote consistent and effective staff supervision</b>	Provide training for managers and supervisors in performance management and coaching	2025
	Provide training for managers and supervisors on intergenerational staff management	2025
	Engage with managers and supervisors to identify other areas of upskilling required and develop relevant training programs	Ongoing
<b>Expand our capacity for e-learning</b>	Continue to review and develop e-learning resources	Ongoing
	Continue to engage with managers in relation to their e-learning requirements and develop programs as required	Ongoing

STRATEGY	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME
<b>OBJECTIVE 3: LEVERAGE THE CAPABILITY OF OUR WORKFORCE</b> (continued)		
<b>Expand our capacity for e-learning</b> (continued)	Continue to regularly communicate with staff regarding e-learning resources and opportunities	Ongoing
<b>Improve accessibility to and awareness of learning and development opportunities</b>	Review the training application process and implement required changes	Ongoing
	Regularly communicate with staff regarding learning and development opportunities	Ongoing
<b>Create succession pathways</b>	Investigate opportunities to offer traineeships, apprenticeships, and graduate programs	2025
	Partner with local educational institutions to develop formal work experience programs	2025
	Monitor the Succession Planning Strategy	Ongoing
	Continue to investigate opportunities for resource sharing across departments to enhance career pathways for staff	Ongoing
	Investigate the viability of implementing job rotation programs in targeted workplaces	2025
	Investigate the development of a formal mentoring program to assist in the transfer of knowledge skills and behaviours across the organisation	2027
	Review the higher duties policy to account for situations where additional duties are performed within the same salary band	2025
<b>Enhance our knowledge management capabilities</b>	Create a process for identifying subject matter experts	2027
	Investigate the development of a formal mentoring program to assist in the transfer of knowledge skills and behaviours across the organisation	2027
<b>Improve staff awareness and capability to enhance organisational risk maturity and resilience</b>	Continue to develop best practice risk management foundations and methodologies that reflect business priorities and allow for ongoing development	Ongoing
	Continue to improve Council's resilience by increasing risk awareness via ongoing training and capability activities under a well-established risk management framework	Ongoing
	Develop an integrated risk management system so staff are equipped and empowered to manage business risks in line with organisational and departmental objectives	2023 - 2025



STRATEGY	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME
<b>OBJECTIVE 4: CONTINUE OUR FOCUS ON ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>		
<b>Continually enhance our organisational culture</b>	Undertake an Employee Opinion Survey on a biennial basis	Next survey due in 2026
	Communicate the results of each survey to staff	2026 - 2027
	Engage with the leadership team to develop Organisational Action Plans to address the feedback received in each Employee Opinion Survey	2026 – 2027
	Engage with directors, managers, and staff to develop Departmental Action Plans to address the feedback received in each Employee Opinion Survey	2026 – 2027
	Engage with managers and staff to develop Business Unit Action Plans to address the feedback received in each Employee Opinion Survey	2026 – 2027
	Continue to integrate Councils' Vision and Values into the recruitment and selection process	Ongoing
	Continue to design, develop, and implement programs that reinforce Council's values	Ongoing
<b>Celebrate and support the growth of diversity within our workforce</b>	Continue to implement Council's Gender Equality Strategy	Ongoing
	Continue to implement Councils EEO Management Plan	Ongoing
	Continue to design, develop and implement programs and initiatives that promote diversity and inclusiveness	Ongoing
	Communicate with staff in relation to the generational differences	Ongoing
<b>Promote staff wellbeing</b>	Continually review the Wellbeing Program and implement changes as required	Ongoing
	Continually review flexible working arrangements policies and practices and implement changes as required	Ongoing
	Continually review the Employee Assistance Provider arrangements and implement changes as required	Ongoing
	Design and implement a Mental Health First Aid Program	2026
	Continue to investigate cost effective options to provide additional services to staff that enhance their overall wellbeing	Ongoing
	Continue to review and improve the Work Health Safety Management System and injury management processes	Ongoing

<b>Embrace appropriate technology to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity</b>	Continue to utilise recruitment, onboarding, e-learning, and performance modules within our talent management systems	Ongoing
	Transition our payroll system from Ci to CiA and facilitate implementation of Employee Self Service	2024 - 2025
	Develop a customised training plan to address gaps in staff knowledge and skills with respect to the use of technology	2025
<b>Improve workplace facilities</b>	Review staff accommodation arrangements and implement improvements as required	Ongoing
<b>Continually improve health and safety performance in line with our commitment to providing a safe and healthy workplace</b>	Continue to develop and maintain a WHS Strategic Plan	Ongoing
	Develop an integrated risk management system to automate reporting of WHS events that interact with Council's enterprise risk management framework, worker's compensation, and public liability portfolios	2023 - 2025
	Review and refine Council's WHS Committee structure and WHS consultation arrangements	2025
<b>Continue to promote employee benefits and enhance the Total Rewards &amp; Recognition Program</b>	Continue to communicate and consult with key stakeholders on existing benefits	2025 and ongoing
	Benchmark and investigate other benefits	2025
	Publicise, promote, and implement new benefits	2026

### Monitoring and review

The completion of action items contained in Workforce Management Strategy will be closely monitored and progress reports will be provided to the Executive Leadership Team via the quarterly Integrated Planning & Reporting reporting process.

The Workforce Management Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis.