CESSNOCK
CITY COUNCIL

Planning for our people,
our place, our future

DRAFT

CESSNOCK

WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2022-2026

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Welcome

Acknowledgement of Country

Cessnock City Council acknowledges that within its local government area boundaries are the Traditional Lands of the Wonnarua people, the Awabakal people, and the Darkinjung people.

We acknowledge these Aboriginal peoples as the traditional custodians of the land on which our offices and operations are located, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We also acknowledge all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now live within the Cessnock Local Government Area.

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1. Foreward

Cessnock City Council's Workforce Management Strategy 2022-26 outlines our plan to develop and grow a workforce with capacity to inform and deliver the Council's strategic direction. This is a strategy that values fresh and innovative approaches to ensure effective and efficient service delivery that aligns with Council's values of integrity, respect, teamwork, accountability and excellence.

Cessnock City Council is proud of the resilience and adaptability of its workforce. This strategy will further strengthen our commitment to supporting staff through delivering wellbeing initiatives, which include Healthy at Work, Wellbeing Contact Officers, an Employee Assistance Program, the Safety and Wellbeing Program, and it highlights our continued attention to Work, Health and Safety.

This strategy outlines Council's commitment to delivering an all-inclusive and diverse workforce while taking a strong stance on preventing discrimination and harassment.

It also brings into focus the importance of creating opportunities for learning and the professional development of our staff through the Leadership Development Capability Framework. The importance of developing skills for the future and providing employment opportunities for young people in our Community is another area of focus through the Apprentice, Trainee and Graduate Framework.

The Workforce Management Strategy 2022-26 is a progressive plan that will guide and steer our workforce in the coming years as Council delivers the priorities of the community it serves.

2. Introduction

Council's Workforce Planning process is a continual process designed to ensure that the community's strategic goals, as set out in the Community Strategic Plan, can be met now and in the future. The Workforce Management Strategy (WMS) aims to assist Council in developing a workforce with the best capabilities to inform its strategic direction, develop new and innovative approaches to Council issues and deliver Council services effectively and efficiently.

The 2022-2026 WMS aims to build on the previous three Workforce Plans for Council. A number of the strategies contained within the previous workforce plans have been implemented, further developed and expanded upon in this strategy. The new WMS will integrate with and complement the overall Resourcing Strategy that supports the Delivery Program and annual Operational plans.

A crucial element of the Workforce Management Strategy is the evaluation of Workforce Planning from operational to a strategic level by informing the employee costs contained with the Long Term Financial Plan and our Asset Management Strategy with respect to the skills of employees required to ensure the sustainable renewal of Council assets. Further it aims to support an engaged, professional and committed workforce reflective of the Cessnock Community by providing services to the community.

Purpose of the WMS and its place in the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

The WMS has been designed to meet Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) requirements where assets, finances and the workforce are planned in an integrated manner.

An effective WMS enables Council to predict and plan its future workforce needs, identifies high level themes and provides a strategic direction and framework to guide and inform workforce management strategies over the next four years. It requires an understanding of the make-up and status of the current workforce, an investigation into future needs and analysis of the type and size of workforce required to meet them. Consideration also must be given to industry related matters, labour market supply and demand issues, skill shortages, aging workforce, attracting and retaining a diverse workforce, improving productivity and creating a contemporary workplace. The WMS has been developed to include appropriate strategies and actions taking into consideration the matters raised above.

However, one of the most significant challenges is for Council to minimise its employment costs whilst still ensuring it has the appropriate current and future resources to meet the community's desired needs and operational objectives.

Review cycle

The WMS will be reviewed at a minimum each four years as part of Delivery Plan cycle. In addition, where required actions from the strategic action plan will be updated and adjusted to align the changing workforce and any internal and external influences. Actions and any additional or amended strategic actions will form part of Council's Operational Plan.

3. Context

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide excellent local government services to our community that contribute towards the achievement of the community's vision for the area.

Cessnock will be a cohesive and welcoming community living in an attractive and sustainable rural environment with a diversity of business and employment opportunities supported by accessible infrastructure and services which effectively meet community needs.

Cessnock: *thriving, attractive, welcoming*

Our Values

Our core values shape our corporate culture and guide us on how we interact with each other and provide the best outcomes for our community. Our Values underpin various organisational frameworks and are incorporated into our recruitment and selection processes, including our job adverts, selection criteria and interviews.

Integrity
We are open, honest and transparent. We build trust.

Respect
We treat people fairly and consistently. We respect others' views, ideas and opinions.

Teamwork
We work as one to get the job done. We work together with our community.

Accountability
We are committed to safety in all we do. We take ownership of our decisions and actions. We are accountable to our community.

Excellence
We strive to do it once and do it right. We take pride in our work and strive for efficiency and innovation.

Our People and our Workplace Culture

At Cessnock City Council, our success is built by our people and our core values. Our values reflect who we are as individuals and as an organisation, and we are committed to retaining, supporting existing employees and recruiting new employees who embody our values.

We offer direct connection to the community providing opportunities for growth and sustainability in our diverse region.

At Council our desired workplace culture is one in which our employees feel valued within a supportive environment that allow our staff to develop and grow with a focus on achievement and delivery.

We are committed to supporting the expansion of opportunities to employ Apprentice, Graduate and Trainees at Council and particularly in new work areas. We are focused on supporting and creating secure local employment opportunities in our LGA to allow Council to deliver on its commitments to the Community.

We strive to have diversity in our workforce and an inclusive and flexible work environment where our employees' differences are celebrated and valued.

Council continues to work towards zero harm within its operations by implementing and maintaining a work health and safety management system consisting of procedures and processes that address the WHS requirements from Council initiatives and the legislation.

Our Organisational Structure

Directorate functions

General Managers Unit

- Mayor and Councillors
- General Manager
- Executive Support (GM and Mayor)
- Economic Development
- Visitor Information Centre
- Human Resources
- Enterprise Risk Management
- Workplace Health and Safety
- Media and Communication
- Internal Audit

Works and Infrastructure

- Waste and Environmental Management
- Roads, Bridges, Drainage, Footpaths, Cycleways
- Design
- Asset Maintenance
- Strategic Asset Management
- Parks and Open Space
- Sport and Recreation
- Recreation Planning
- Swimming Pools
- Cemeteries
- Building Maintenance
- Fleet, Plant, Workshop
- Airport Operations
- Depot Management
- Noxious Weeds
- Emergency Management

Planning and Environment

- Strategic Landuse Planning
- Developer Contributions
- Planning Proposals
- Environmental Planning
- Development Assessment
- Development Engineering
- Building Assessment and Certification Services
- Business Support
- Customer Services
- Environmental Health
- Rangers

Corporate and Community Services

- Financial Management and Reporting
- Governance
- Corporate Planning
- Procurement/Contracts
- Corporate Administration
- Property (Leases and Licensing)
- Strategic Property and Land Development (Council Land)
- Information Technology
- Records
- Libraries
- Performing Arts Culture Cessnock (PACC)
- Youth Services
- Community Services
- Arts and Culture
- Social Planning

Workforce profile

Geographically, Cessnock City Council is situated within 30-60 kms travelling distance from six neighbouring councils including Lake Macquarie City Council and Newcastle City Council which are two of the largest local government employers in NSW. With infrastructure improvements in recent years, such as the Hunter Expressway, attracting staff from other Local Government Areas (LGA) is achievable and desirable.

Council employees work across a number of locations within the Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA) such as the Council Administration Building, the Works Depot, Waste Management Facility, Libraries, Pools, the PACC, Visitor Information Centre and Youth Centre. As at May 2022, approximately 54% of Council's workforce live in the Cessnock LGA. Those that live outside the LGA are predominately travelling from the Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Maitland LGAs. The number of Council staff that live in the LGA has reduced by approximately 9% since the data contained in the 2017-21 Workforce Plan was analysed, demonstrating a shift in the makeup of our workforce and an expansion of where our staff reside and travel to work from.

Employment profile as at May 2022

Employment profile

Employment Type	Head Count	% of Workforce
Permanent Full Time	296	72.5%
Permanent Part Time	54	13.2%
Temporary Full Time	8	1.5%
Temporary Part Time	7	2.2%
Casual	24	6.4%
Apprentice/Trainee	19	4.2%
Total Employees	**408**	**100%**

FTE

Location	Number of Employees
Indoor	246.57
Outdoor	173.58
Total	**420.15**

Gender profile

Gender	Number of Employees	% of Workforce
Male	217	53.2%
Female	191	46.8%

Employment Type	Male		Female	
Permanent	195	47.8%	155	37.99%
Temporary	4	0.98%	13	3.19%
Casual	8	1.96%	16	3.92%
Apprentice/ Trainee	10	2.45%	7	1.7%
Total	**217**	**53.2%**	**191**	**46.8%**

Age profile

Age	Female	Male	Total	% of Workforce
<25	14	19	33	8.1%
25-34	42	25	67	16%
35-44	49	36	85	21%
45-54	48	58	106	25.9%
55-64	28	65	93	23%
65 +	10	14	24	6%
Total	**191**	**217**	**408**	**100%**

Length of service

Years of Service	Number of Employees	% of Workforce
<12 months	61	15.0%
1-2 years	78	19.1%
3-5 years	83	20.3%
6-10 years	63	15.4%
11-15 years	48	11.8%
16-20years	29	7.1%
21-29 years	18	4.4%
30 years +	28	6.9%
Total	**408**	**100.0%**

Location of staff

LGA	Number of Employees	% of Workforce
Cessnock	221	54.2%
Other	187	45.8%

Diversity

EEO Measure	Number of Employees (Dec 2021)	% of Workforce (Dec 2021)
Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander	11	2.68%
Disability	0	0.00%
Non-English Speaking Background	22	5.35%
Ethnic Minority	12	2.92%

Turnover

Year	Number of Employees	% of Workforce
FY 20/21	64	15.7%
FY 19/20	65	16.1%
FY 18/19	59	15.0%
FY 17/18	58	14.9%

Workforce strengths

Knowledge, skills and resilience of workforce

The Council Management team was consulted in the development of this strategy, and they were asked to identify the strengths of their current workforce. Overwhelmingly, the responses referred to the depth of knowledge and experience of our workforce, noting that they were highly skilled, experienced and with a strong customer service focus. There was also a strong theme of the resilience of the workforce particularly during the challenges of the last two years.

Workplace flexibility

Council is committed to and understands the importance of assisting all of its employees to achieve a work life balance. Council has in place protocols and initiatives that provide options to create a work/life balance for our employees whilst still meeting the operational requirements of the Council and ensuring community expectations are met.

Following the changing work environment associated with COVID-19, Council has embraced working from home and embedded options for ongoing work from home in our Flexible Work Arrangements Protocol. We continue to offer more traditional flexibility initiatives such as career breaks, phased retirement, flexible working hours arrangements, and purchased annual leave. These options continue to provide our employees with a supportive environment to enable them to manage the demands of their work and personal life and balance their effectiveness at work.

Apprentice, Trainees and Graduate Framework

Council is committed to providing employment and training opportunities to Apprentices, Trainees and Graduates across various functions of Council. We aim to offer our apprentices, trainees and graduates a dynamic work environment, ongoing professional development, and a supportive on-the-job learning environment.

In 2020 Council adopted the Apprentice, Trainee and Graduate Framework to support the management of these employees to ensure that the experience is of value to both Council and the employee. Each year Council will review its workforce needs to determine the requirements for Apprentices, Trainees and Graduates within the organisation. Positions identified for this program may vary from year to year depending on operational requirements, workforce shortages and critical roles.

Since the adoption of the framework, Council has consistently increased the number of Apprentices, Trainees and Graduates employed by a minimum of two additional FTE each year. In addition, we have commenced Apprentices, Trainees and Graduates in several new work areas since the 2017-21 workforce plan such as Human Resources and Safety, Strategic Planning, Engineering, Finance, Information Technology, Visitor Information Centre, Business Support, and Civil Construction.

We are committed to providing these employment programs to people within the community to assist them in gaining a formal qualification in their area of interest and develop their career path, whilst also building our workforce capabilities. At Council, we strive to ensure that the entire life cycle of employment is meaningful, fulfilling and enjoyable for the employee which ensures they gain a solid foundation for their future career.

Learning and development opportunities

Council is strongly committed to providing ongoing opportunities for learning and development for our employees. This commitment has been enhanced in recent years with the development of our Leadership Development and Capability Framework (Framework) which sets the foundation of leadership across Council and provides a consistent and methodical approach to the way we lead. The framework identifies the expected and desired skills, knowledge, behaviours, and attributes of our leaders and is aligned to Council's EEO Management Plan and our Succession and Talent Management framework.

As part of developing the Framework the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) developed a vision for Council's leadership now and in the future:

- Leaders need to build trust and respect by holding themselves and others accountable
- Leaders are motivated with passion and drive to better themselves, their teams and the Community
- Leaders need to set clear and achievable expectation whilst allowing room for individuals to achieve these in their own way
- Leaders need to develop themselves and their staff to be the best they can be for now and in the future

On 10 March 2022, following delays associated with COVID-19, Council held its inaugural leadership development day for the ELT and Management team. The day consisted of experience activities, social activities and formal learning programs delivered by both internal and external presenters.

Feedback from the day indicated Council's leaders thoroughly enjoyed the day and got particular benefit from the opportunity to connect, network and interact with their colleagues after the challenges and isolation of the past two years due to COVID-19. Both the internal and external presenters were also well received. Based on feedback 100% of the participants rated the day as either 'very good or excellent'. Overall, this is a fantastic result and with taking on board improvement suggestions we anticipate the next Development Day will exceed the expectations of the ELT and Management team.

Learning and development opportunities (cont.)

The second leadership day will be held in September 2022, and will be expanded to involve other leaders within the organisation including subject matters experts and aspiring leaders and will build on the learnings and content from the March 2022 leadership day.

The framework compliments Council's existing compliance training, targeted skills and development training and study assistance programs.

The priorities for our formal training and development programs over the next 1-3 years include the following:

- Achieving Customer Excellence (ACE) – Organisation Wide
- Code of Conduct Training – Organisation Wide
- Safety System Procedure Training
- Cultural Awareness Training including integrating into induction and onboarding
- Business Continuity Planning
- Diversity and Inclusion Training
- Leadership Development
- EEO Contact Officer Training

Wellbeing

There are a number of staff wellbeing initiatives and programs offered at Council. It includes the following:

- **Healthy at Work –** Including Council's Health and Wellbeing Protocol, Corporate Fitness Program (Fitness Passport), Smoke Free Workplace support, Flu Vaccination scheme, and a range of links to resources relating to health and wellbeing.
- **Wellbeing Contact Officers –** Council's Wellbeing Contact Officers are trained employees who have volunteered to assist in wellbeing in the workplace. Wellbeing Contact Officers have been trained in specialised areas like Domestic and Family Violence, Mental Health First Aid and Bullying and Harassment. They offer support to Council staff and links to information and support material for Mental Health, Domestic and Family Violence, and Bullying and Harassment. The Wellbeing Officers meet quarterly to discuss mental health and wellbeing initiatives for Council.
- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP) -** The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a free, confidential, completely independent counselling service provided to employees and their families who may be experiencing personal difficulties.
- **Safety and Wellbeing Annual Calendar –** Council's Safety and Risk team have recently developed an Annual Safety and Wellbeing Calendar which schedules monthly safety and wellbeing topics and provides information posters relating to the relevant topics. Each month, information is distributed on the respective safety and wellbeing topic, including posters and talking points, and then discussed in the safety communications section of each team tool box and team meeting. The calendar topics compliment those covered in the Annual Safety Day.
- **Work Health and Safety –** Council has an established Work Health and Safety Management System (WHSMS) and in recent years has dedicated significant time and resources to safety across the organisation. Council has recognised Work Health and Safety as one of its high level corporate risks and has a Strategic WHS Committee with members from of the Executive Team, Health and Safety Committee Chair and WHS Council officers.

EEO and workplace diversity

Council is committed to providing a safe and productive work environment that is free from harassment and bullying and promotes the principles of managing diversity. Any form of harassment and bullying is unacceptable and is not tolerated under any circumstances. Council supports human rights in the wider community and will not tolerate discriminating or harassing behaviours. Council expects all workers to behave in a professional manner, and to treat each other with dignity and respect. It is the responsibility of all workers to take all possible care to ensure a working environment that is free from discrimination and harassment and that at no time is Council's stance on discrimination and harassment compromised.

Council has an established EEO Management Plan adopted by Council in June 2020. The Plan sets out a range of strategies and actions to ensure Council's commitment to promote and deliver an all-inclusive and diverse workforce.

Council keeps abreast of legislative and industry changes in the area of EEO and Diversity and undertakes regular reviews of Human Resource policies, practices and processes to ensure that EEO principles are applied accordingly and that our policies are relevant and legislatively compliant.

Council has a number of staff trained in the management of bullying and harassment complaint handling who also play a role in setting and educating on acceptable behaviors in the workplace and encourage staff to speak up if they have a perceived issue or are being bullied in the workplace. There is a priority over the next 12 months to select and train EEO Contact Officers to assist in this initiative.

Workforce metrics

Council's ability to understand and analyse our workforce remains a high priority. Reports are generated on a monthly basis with respect to Workplace Health and Safety and Risk statistics which are reported to the staff Health and Safety Committee, the ELT and on a six monthly basis to the Council. Further, each 6 months a report is prepared and presented to the ELT and the Council on a range of HR Metrics including turnover, workforce demographics, headcount, recruitment, and the gender and age profile of employees of Council. This regular reporting greatly assists the ELT and the Council to understand workforce issues as they emerge and manage staff matters in general.

Strategic workforce risks

Succession planning and ageing workforce

As demonstrated in the workforce statistics shown earlier in this report, Council has an ageing workforce and will need to continue to manage this issue strategically into the future. Council's ageing workforce has been identified by the executive team as a high level corporate risk and a Succession Planning and Talent Management Framework has been developed with strategies and an action plan to address the issues. Many of the actions are in the process of being implemented but ongoing action is required.

Whilst having an older workforce can actually have a significant number of benefits such as lower turnover rates, recruitment costs, training and induction expenses, higher corporate knowledge and skills, in the longer term it creates challenges for Council particularly in physically demanding positions and in loss of knowledge and skills. Filling these skill and employment gaps remains a challenge as our older staff leave the workforce. Such skills gaps may be able to be filled internally, in some cases by the acquisition of relevant tertiary qualifications and on-the-job training, mentoring and experience.

In order to continue to manage this issue further work needs to take place across the organisation to consider targeted retention strategies in particular work function areas and positions, a knowledge management process, and better management of ageing related health issues.

Turnover, attraction and retention

Council has had challenges in the last two years with turnover and attraction and retention of skilled and qualified staff within particular areas. For example, in our Infrastructure team, specifically project management and engineering, and also in planning and environment. Council also has niche, specialised roles and skills. For example, integrated planning and reporting, where we have advertised on a number of occasions and have not been able to attract suitably qualified candidates.

Cessnock has limitations on the salaries that can be offered due to financial constraints and, in some areas of Council, less opportunity for career progression due to the size of our organisation. This means at times we are unable to compete with the salaries and career progression opportunities of our larger neighboring councils and State Government departments. This can impact our candidate pool and the ability to attract and retain generally.

Council has also been impacted by the tight recruitment market experienced over the last 1-2 years.

Council will continue to review our attraction and retention strategies and ensure best practice recruitment and attraction strategies within our financial means.

Critical position shortages

Council has a number of positions that are considered critical either due to the role being difficult to fill or due to the position being critical to the ongoing function of Council's operations. Positions considered critical to the organisation are at all levels of the organisation, not just at management and senior level. Positions may be considered critical for various reasons, for example, community/customer demand, the specialist nature of a position, and the particular skills and knowledge requirements of the position incumbent.

Council's critical positions include the following:

- Principal Strategic Planner
- Senior Strategic Planner
- Strategic Planner
- Senior Infrastructure Contributions Planner
- Building Surveyors
- Development Engineers
- Senior Development Engineer
- Development Compliance Officer
- Project Managers
- Traffic Engineers
- Design Engineers
- Project Engineers
- Asset Engineers
- Principal Engineer – Road Infrastructure
- Principal Engineer – Environmental Infrastructure
- Principal Engineer – Traffic and Transport
- Safety and Risk Coordinator
- Human Resource Operations Coordinator
- Senior GIS Officer
- Help Desk Support Officer
- Information Systems Administrator
- Environmental Health Officer

Council is not unique in having difficulty in attracting and retaining Building Surveyors and Engineers with this being recognised as a national and local government industry issue.

The 2018 Local Government Workforce and Future Skills Report listed the top 10 professional skill shortages which reflects Councils critical position list.

Rank	Professional Occupations
1	Engineers
2	Urban & Town Planners
3	Building Surveyors
4	Environmental Health Officer
5	Project Managers
6	Asset & Facilities Managers
7	Computing ICT Professionals
8	Community Engagement Development Officers
9	Engineering Technicians
10	Accountants

Young people

Whilst Council has made significant improvements in the number of young people it employs, those younger than 25 years of age in our workforce, with an increase from approximately 4% of the workforce in 2013 to 6% in 2017 to now 8.1%, there are still further improvements to be made.

Workforce future needs and opportunities

In consulting with the Management and Executive Leadership team a number of changes, future needs and opportunities were suggested that have the potential to impact Council's future workforce needs. Some of the more pertinent matters are listed below:

- Increasing impact of grant funding works
- Impact of Cultural hub at PACC
- Increased focus on cyber security
- Increased focus on privacy
- Legislative changes
- Desire to improve project and assets management practices,
- Increase in open space, community facilities and infrastructure and the associated maintenance
- Consider use of multi-skilled positions e.g. customer service (across PACC, library, VIC, customer service)

Staff survey data

In October 2020 and April 2022, Council conducted a Staff Engagement Survey. The Staff Engagement Survey invited all employees of Council to provide feedback about Council's current culture and areas for improvement, promote open communication, and identify actionable changes. In 2020, there was a 49.87% response rate, and in 2022 there was an increased response to 58.3%.

Overall approximately 65% of respondents indicates that they feel satisfied working for Council, and approximately 81% feel satisfied with their current job at Council.

The key themes identified in the most recent survey were as follows.

Areas where Council is performing well:

- Council has a good range of flexible work options available for employees to access
- Council has managed the COVID-19 pandemic well
- Council has a good range of wellbeing initiative available for employees to access and does well at supporting employees
- Council provides good community engagement
- Council is committed to work health and safety

Areas where Council can improve:

- Communication and collaboration between staff and departments
- Council's performance development process

Technology improvements to increase productivity

Council has an opportunity to significantly improve the efficiency and productivity of its workforce by further developing its utilisation of technology in a range of areas within the organisation. Council has already taken steps to improve the use of mobile device technology in the works and infrastructure team which has allowed employees to better communicate with each other, be more productive, not be tied to a single location and make better use of company resources. Council is also working on various system improvements and enhanced functionality of Council's Vault online Safety system. Further there is also the opportunity to move more Council systems to cloud based platforms, undertake process and procedure reviews, better use internal systems.

Service reviews

During the life of this WMS Council will undertake a number of Service Review projects in line with legislated requirements under the IPR framework. These projects offer the opportunity for Council to improve a range of areas for example processes, systems, work methods and financial improvements. The recommended actions that arise as a result of the project may have an impact on Council's workforce needs.

Organisational restructure

Under the Local Government Act 1993, within the first 12 months following a Council election, Council is required to undertake a review of its organisational structure. This review will provide an opportunity to improve the structure to provide better services to our community, and ensure our structure satisfies the outcomes of the Community Strategic Plan and considers Council's financial stability.

Initial review of the structure has already identified the need for more resources in the following areas of Council within the duration of this WMS. Some resources will be required immediately to ensure the delivery of existing commitments, with these having been factored into the 2022/23 Operational Plan and others are future needs.

- Project Management (Infrastructure)
- Strategic Planning
- Development Planning
- Building Surveyors
- Development Engineering
- Cessnock Performing Art Centre
- Asset Accounting
- Rates
- Recruitment
- Legal Services
- IT Services
- GIS
- Maintenance and Construction

4. Engagement

This strategy was developed with involvement and input from Council's Managers and Executive Leadership team. Each Manager was asked to provide responses as they relate to their respective teams, with questions centred on the strengths of their teams, workforce challenges and anticipated changes in their teams. The responses were used to assist to develop the themes, objectives, strategies and actions contained in the WMS.

Consultation took place with the Directors, with a focus on critical positions, workforce challenges over the next 1-4 years and whether there were any strategies, actions or objectives the Directors wanted to be considered for inclusion in the WMS.

The draft WMS was provided to Managers, Directors, the General Manager and Council's Staff Consultative Committee for review and feedback on the document and the action plan.

Councillors were provided with a briefing session on the draft WMS including a discussion on the strategic action plan.

5. Strategic Action Plan

In order to address the challenges and opportunities faced by Council in resourcing the Community Strategic Plan, this WMS identifies four key objectives and a number of associated strategies and actions that will be implemented to ensure Council is resourced appropriately and in a sustainable manner.

Objective 1. Attracting and retaining highly skilled and qualified staff

Delivery Program 2022-26 Objectives

2.2.4 Provide and promote graduates, apprenticeships and traineeships within Council
5.1.3 Our Council is committed to implementing our Community's vision
5.3.5 Continue to embed a culture of Enterprise Risk Management throughout the Council
5.3.10 Implement the Workforce Management Strategy

Strategy	Action
1.1 Attract and retain young workers	a. Continue to implement the actions from the Apprentice, Trainee and Graduate Framework across Council, including increasing our Apprentice, Trainee and Graduates positions by a minimum of two FTE per annum. b. Develop a dedicated Engineering Graduate Program to address skills shortages and address future skills requirements. The program to be developed for use in the 23/24 graduate recruitment period. c. Continue to explore new opportunities to employ and engage young people in entry level training programs, such as apprenticeships and traineeships. d. Explore the availability of funding opportunities for scholarships and to support workforce skills development for young people. e. Continue with work experience placements which promote the career opportunities and pathways available at Cessnock City Council. f. Continue to actively participate in external opportunities to represent Council at careers expos, University and TAFE open days and school visits to promote career opportunities and pathways available at Council.
1.2 Retention of mature aged workers	a. Further develop Council's options relating to phased retirement, including offering a range of flexible work options to staff approaching retirement and establish a structured process for individual phased retirement plans. b. Develop strategies to manage employee fitness for work and proactively address issues associated with an aging workforce.
1.3 Review attraction and retention methods	a. Research best practice and innovative hybrid workplace models. b. Market the benefits of working for Council by development of promotional material such a promotional video and collateral to hand out to job candidates, school advisors, tertiary institutions etc. c. Consider matching recruitment and attraction strategies to the aspirations of different generations. d. Investigate alternative mediums for advertising vacant positions to generate a greater candidate pool.
1.4 Succession planning	a. Undertake any outstanding actions from Council's Talent Management and Succession Planning Framework. b. Consider targeted retention strategies in particular work function areas and positions, including a knowledge management process. c. Create a pool of experienced people who have retired or are planning or transitioning to retirement but are willing to work during peak periods or on specific projects or for leave coverage. d. Consider the health-related issues of an ageing workforce and include strategies in Council's Wellbeing Plan and associated programs to address these issues.
1.5 Skills and competency	a. Review the competency assessment process with a view to simplify and improve the process and align to annual performance development process.

Objective 2. Creating a culture of learning and continuous improvement

Delivery Program 2022-26 Objectives

2.2.4 Provide and promote graduates, apprenticeships and traineeships within Council
5.1.3 Our Council is committed to implementing our Community's vision
5.3.6 Undertake Service Delivery Reviews and implement recommendations to improve productivity throughout the Council
5.3.10 Implement the Workforce Management Strategy

Strategy	Action
2.1 Undertake a skills audit and gap analysis	a. Implement training strategies to identify and address current and anticipated skill gaps within Council's workforce.
2.2 Provide internal development opportunities	a. Encourage and provide opportunities for existing staff to undertake higher grade opportunities by regularly advertising internal promotional opportunities and other short-term vacancies. b. Support career development opportunities within Council and facilitate secondments between Councils.
2.3 HR metrics reporting	a. Continue to capture and analyse data and reporting protocols to ensure appropriate and timely staffing information is available to management and supervisors.
2.4 Leadership development and professional capability	a. Implement outstanding actions from the Leadership Development and Capability Framework. b. Increase the utilisation of study assistance in non-traditional roles at Council. c. Develop and implement a coaching and mentoring program across the organisation by June 2023.
2.5 Performance Development Plans (PDP)	a. Review Council's PDP process with a view to improving the process. b. Review the link of PDP outcomes to the Performance Bonus.
2.6 Service review projects	a. Respond to service review projects as required and implement agreed HR related actions resulting from the projects.
2.7 Organisational restructure	a. Implement any changes to the organisational structure as adopted by the Council or the Executive in accordance with the Local Government Act and Local Government (State) Award and any relevant legislation or organisational protocol.

Objective 3. Creating a diverse workforce

Delivery Program 2022-26 Objectives

2.2.4 Provide and promote graduates, apprenticeships and traineeships within Council
5.1.3 Our Council is committed to implementing our Community's vision
5.3.10 Implement the Workforce Management Strategy

Strategy	Action
3.1 Workforce Diversity Strategy	a. Develop a Workforce Diversity Strategy to strengthen the representation, at all levels of the organisation, of identifiable groups within the community, including people with disability, youth, women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from non-English speaking backgrounds. In developing the Strategy, consider the statistics of the organisation currently as compared to the demographics of the Cessnock Local Government Area more broadly, and consider trying to better reflect our community. b. Ensure existing policies and strategies to address discrimination, harassment and bullying in the workplace are effective and reinforce a culture of acceptance and tolerance for all staff. c. Include within the Plan strategies that provide for consideration to be given of whether positions, as they become vacant are suitable for redesign for part time or job share employment or other flexible work arrangements – to suit women, mature workforce, ATSI positions or people with a disability.
3.2 Disability Inclusion Action Plan	a. Ensure the strategies and actions contained within the Disability Inclusion Action Plan are delivered.
3.3 Reconciliation Action Plan	a. Ensure the strategies and actions contained within the Reconciliation Action Plan are delivered.
3.4 EEO Management Plan	a. Review and update Council's EEO Management Plan

Objective 4. Creating a contemporary and safe workforce

Delivery Program 2022-26 Objectives

2.2.4 Provide and promote graduates, apprenticeships and traineeships within Council
5.1.3 Our Council is committed to implementing our Community's vision
5.3.5 Continue to embed a culture of Enterprise Risk Management throughout the Council
5.3.10 Implement the Workforce Management Strategy

Strategy	Action
4.1 Work practices	a. Regularly monitor and review the appropriateness of existing Council policies, protocols and guidelines relating to HR and Safety and Risk matters. b. Continue to benchmark Council salaries against the market to ensure market competitiveness. c. Regularly conduct research of 'best practice' in a range of employment areas such as diversity, professional and personal development, work/life balance, reward and recognition, flexible work arrangements and practices etc.
4.2 Safety, health and wellbeing Initiatives	a. Develop a Wellbeing Plan for Council. Ensure the Plan includes ongoing implementation of the existing wellbeing and mental health initiatives across Council and includes an action relating to the assessment and management of Council's psychosocial risk factors. b. Conduct an external audit against the criteria of ISO 45001 every 2 years to provide assurance on how Council is performing with respect to workplace health and safety. If required, develop an Action Plan to address any gaps in Council's compliance with the standard. c. Prevent illness, disease and injury through regular health monitoring, including 2 yearly hearing tests, skin cancer checks and 5 yearly Dust Disease Board health checks. Give consideration to other health monitoring checks as appropriate, such as heart checks and liver function checks. d. Continue to hold annual Safe Work Day/Month initiatives and include a Health and Wellbeing Workshop as part of the day. e. Continue to improve consultation and communication with respect to workplace safety, including developing an appropriate KPI for communication and consultation, review of relevant System Procedure, and undertake a survey and audit of the Health and Safety Committee. f. Increase the use of Council's electronic safety and risk systems, including electronic collection of more data such as Toolbox meetings. g. Conduct an external audit of Councils Return to Work Program every 2 years to ensure legislative compliance and best practice. h. Ensure WHS considerations are integrated into all areas of Council through the review of WHS performance data and KPIs.

Other

Key legislation relevant to workforce management includes:

- Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986
- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012
- Privacy and Personal Information Act 1998
- Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011
- New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- Local Government (State) Award 2020
- New South Wales Industrial Relations Act 1996
- New South Wales State Records Act 1998
- Local Government Act 1993
- Cessnock City Council Enterprise Agreement 2021

CESSNOCK
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