

Workforce Management Strategy



2025 – 2029

Lismore
City Council



Acknowledgement of Country

Lismore City Council acknowledges the
Widjabul/Wia-bal people of the Bundjalung nation,
traditional owners of the land on which
we work, live and play.

We acknowledge their continuing
connection to the land, sea and community.

We pay our respects to the Widjabul/Wia-bal
people, their culture, their elders
and community leaders past,
present and emerging.

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Executive summary

Lismore City Council's Workforce Management Strategy sets a clear direction for building a resilient, inclusive, and future-ready workforce capable of delivering on the community's long-term aspirations. Developed in alignment with the Re-Imagine Lismore Community Strategic Plan 2025-2035 and the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework, this strategy responds to both the immediate needs and evolving expectations of the organisation and the broader community.

Strategic Context

The Workforce Management Strategy (WMS) is a legislated component of Council's Resourcing Strategy. It ensures Council is equipped with the right people, capabilities, systems, and culture to meet service delivery obligations and support community recovery and growth following significant disruption, including the 2022 flood events.

Key Workforce Insights

Drawing from extensive consultation, workforce data analysis, and organisational input, the WMS identifies both challenges and opportunities:

- **Challenges:** Leadership inconsistency, communication silos, outdated systems, and skills shortages in technical, digital, and frontline areas.
- **Opportunities:** Values-led leadership, regional talent attraction, career development pathways, improved engagement, and digital transformation.

Strategic Workforce Pillars

Seven strategic pillars detailed below form the foundation of this Strategy, each linked to targeted initiatives that support Council's long-term goals:

1. Purpose-Driven Culture & EVP: Foster a shared identity and pride in public service through a strong Employee Value Proposition.
2. Capability Building & Career Development: Equip employees with pathways and support to thrive and progress.
3. Leadership Continuity & Empowerment: Embed consistent, values-based leadership at all levels.
4. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion: Create a workplace where everyone belongs, thrives, and contributes.
5. Communication, Engagement & Recognition: Strengthen trust through transparent communication and meaningful recognition.
6. Retention, Succession & Knowledge Transfer: Safeguard institutional knowledge and support workforce continuity.
7. Systems, Technology & Workforce Planning: Integrated systems to enable agility, data-informed decisions, and integrated planning.

Implementation and Evaluation

This Strategy will be implemented in alignment with Council's Delivery Program and reviewed annually to ensure relevance, sustainability, and effectiveness. Key performance indicators, including turnover rates, diversity metrics, and engagement data, will be tracked as part of Council's ongoing evaluation cycle.

Conclusion

The Lismore City Council Workforce Management Strategy (WMS) positions the organisation to not only meet the demands of today but to anticipate and prepare for tomorrow. It reflects the voices of Council's people, the resilience of its teams, and a deep commitment to community service and regeneration.

Introduction and purpose

Lismore City Council acknowledges that its workforce is the cornerstone of achieving a sustainable, inclusive, and community-focused future. This WMS provides the foundation for developing and sustaining a workforce that meets the current and future needs of the Lismore community. The WMS outlines Council's priorities for attraction, retention, performance, leadership development, diversity, equity and inclusion, and system integration and optimisation.

This Strategy is informed by significant staff consultation, operational data, and external labour market analysis. It complements the broader resourcing strategy under the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (IP&R) and aligns with Lismore City Council's Community Strategic Plan 2025 - 2035 and key operational plans.

Under the NSW Local Government Act 1993 and IP&R Guidelines, councils are required to develop a four-year WMS that:

- Forecasts workforce demand and supply
- Identifies skills and capacity gaps
- Ensures strategies support CSP delivery
- Integrates with the Delivery Program and Operational Plan

Strategic and legislative framework

Strategic Alignment

Workforce Management Strategy	Community Strategic Plan Link
Inclusion & Wellbeing	3.1.1 Promote respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, all cultures and their heritage. 3.1.2 Facilitate access to essential services in our city and villages for all ages, cultures and abilities.
Leadership & Capability	5.1.4 Provide responsible, transparent and accountable leadership with sustainable management of Council's finances, assets, risks and human resources.
Systems & Planning	5.1.5 Provide responsible, transparent and accountable leadership with sustainable management of Council finances, assets, risk and human resources.
Diversity & Equity	3.1.1 and 3.1.4 Promote respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, all cultures and their heritage. 3.2.2 Facilitate access to essential services in our city and villages for all ages, cultures and abilities.
Talent Retention & Development	5.1.4 Provide responsible, transparent and accountable leadership with sustainable management of Council finances, assets, risk and human resources.

Integrating with the Community Strategic Plan

Understanding the Community Strategic Plan

The Re-imagine Lismore Community Strategic Plan (CSP) 2025–2035 articulates the long-term aspirations, needs, and priorities of the Lismore community. It reflects broad consultation with residents, stakeholders, and partners, capturing both enduring values and emergent needs particularly those arising from recent adverse weather events.

The CSP identifies five key strategic themes that shape the future of the Lismore Local Government Area.

1. **Place**
2. **Environment**
3. **Community**
4. **Prosperity**
5. **Leadership**

These themes are underpinned by the principles of equity, access, participation, and rights, aligning with NSW Government social justice values.

Why the Community Strategic Plan Matters to Workforce Planning

The Workforce Management Strategy is a foundational element of the Resourcing Strategy under the NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. Its purpose is to ensure Lismore City Council has the right people, systems, and capabilities to effectively deliver the aspirations laid out in the CSP.

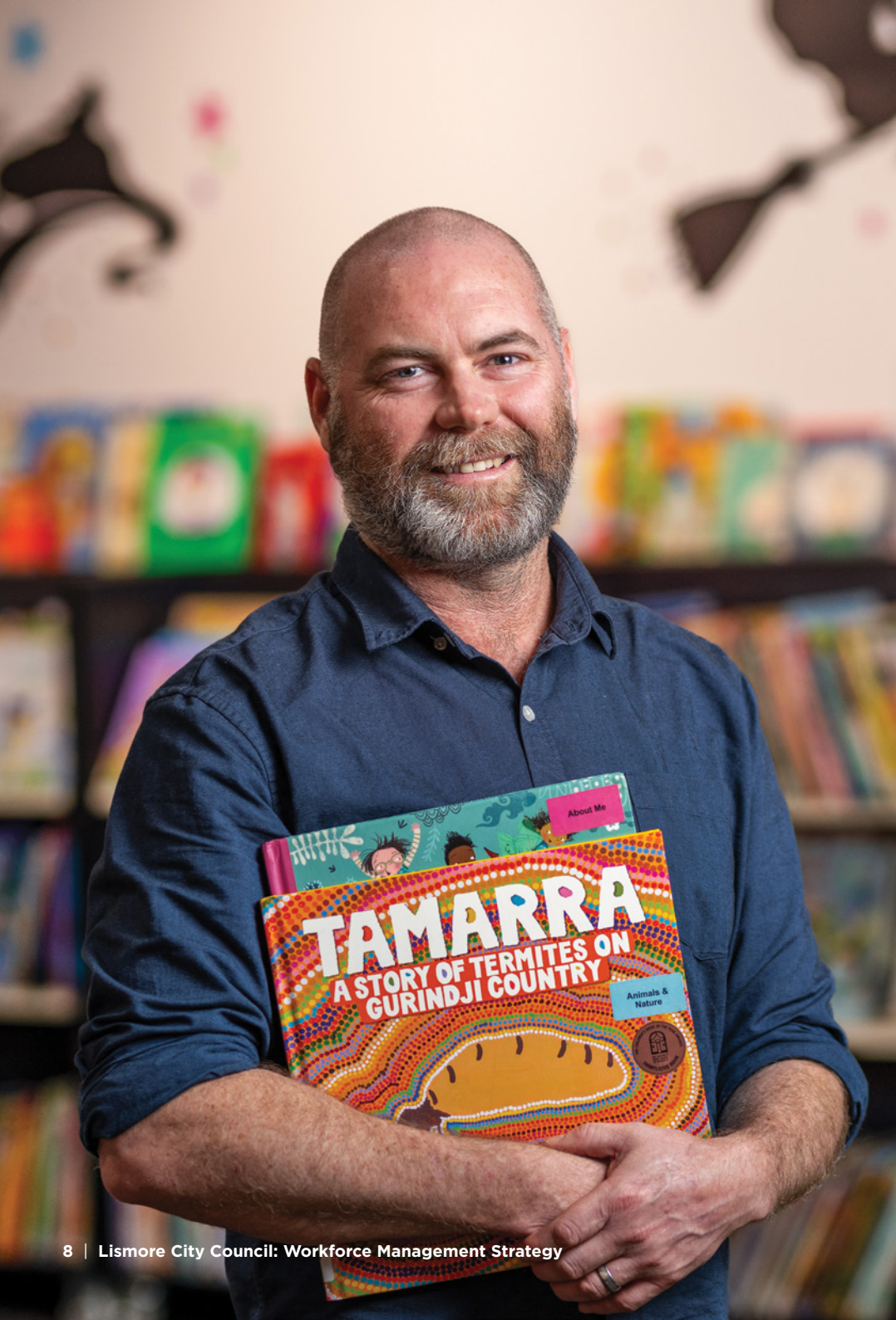
Without a capable, motivated, and inclusive workforce, Council cannot realise the goals outlined in the CSP.

Aligning Workforce Management Strategy with Community Strategic Plan Delivery

The Workforce Management Strategy ensures that:

- **HR practices** (recruitment, onboarding, learning and development) are tailored to support CSP goals.
- **Workforce planning and data analytics** inform service-level strategies aligned with community expectations.
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion** commitments directly support CSP themes around cultural recognition, access, and belonging (especially 3.1 and 3.2).
- **Leadership development and talent pipelines** empower staff to deliver complex objectives across all CSP themes.

By grounding the Workforce Management Strategy in the Community Strategic Plan, Lismore City Council positions its workforce as a central enabler of planned growth, environmental resilience, safe, healthy and inclusive communities, economic prosperity and effective leadership.



Integrated Planning and Reporting framework alignment

About the Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework

The NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework is a legislated system under the Local Government Act 1993 that ensures councils plan strategically, transparently, and in partnership with their communities. Its goal is to integrate council operations with the aspirations of the community while responsibly managing resources and measuring performance.

The key components of the IP&R framework include:

- Community Strategic Plan – 10-year community vision
- Delivery Program – 4-year Council commitment
- Operational Plan – 1-year budget and action plan
- Resourcing Strategy – Includes:
 - Long-Term Financial Plan
 - Asset Management Strategy and Plans
 - Workforce Management Strategy

Lismore’s approach to Integrated Planning & Reporting integration

Lismore City Council has embedded the Integrated Planning & Reporting requirements into the development and execution of this Workforce Management Strategy (WMS). This integration includes:

IP&R Requirement	Lismore’s Integration
Strategic Alignment	The WMS has been mapped directly against the CSP, ensuring that key initiatives and associated workforce actions contribute to realising long-term community priorities.
Evidence-Based Planning	The WMS is informed by workforce data, engagement feedback, service forecasts, and demographic trends consistent with Delivery and Operational Plan requirements.
Capacity Building	Initiatives within the WMS (e.g. leadership development, DEI integration, digital capability uplift) ensure that Council has the internal capacity to meet growing and changing demands on service delivery.
Sustainability and Adaptability	The WMS links to the Long-Term Financial Plan to ensure workforce growth and renewal are financially sustainable. Succession and retention strategies are embedded to reduce operational risk.
Performance Monitoring	Workforce indicators (e.g. retention rates, diversity representation, leadership capability) are tracked as part of Council’s broader IP&R evaluation and tied to annual reviews of the Delivery Program.

Review and Compliance Cycle

Lismore City Council will review and update this WMS in accordance with the IP&R legislative schedule and internal strategic planning cycles:

- Annual reviews alongside the CSP.
- Four-year update aligned with the CSP refresh.

By aligning the WMS with the IP&R framework, Lismore City Council ensures that human resource strategy is not siloed, but rather embedded in the broader governance and planning context, driving integrated, effective public value delivery.

Recovery and resilience in the workforce

Lismore's community and council workforce were uniquely impacted by the 2022 floods. Acknowledging this in a dedicated section gives contextual depth and highlights resilience.

Recovery and Resilience in the Workforce

The 2022 floods profoundly affected Lismore, challenging the community and Council's workforce. In response, Council staff demonstrated exceptional adaptability, stepping into emergency roles, supporting recovery efforts, and maintaining essential services under duress. This experience has underscored the importance of resilience, flexibility, and cross-functional capabilities within our workforce.

Moving forward, the Workforce Management Strategy incorporates lessons learned from the flood recovery, emphasising:

- Emergency preparedness training for all staff.
- Flexible role design to enable rapid response to unforeseen events.
- Mental health and wellbeing support to aid staff during and after crises.
- Knowledge management systems to preserve institutional knowledge during disruptions.

By embedding these elements, Lismore City Council aims to build a workforce capable of withstanding and adapting to future challenges, ensuring continuity of service and support for our community.



Vision, values, and community aspirations

Community vision

“We envision a vibrant community where everyone has the opportunity to succeed, supported by strong economic foundations for meaningful employment, growth and wealth creation in a thriving economy – all while celebrating our culture, fostering the arts, promoting sports and protecting our local environment.”

Strive



We strive to do our best and work safe

- We encourage participation and inclusion.
- We are transparent, fair and accountable.
- We are trained to do our jobs well.
- We communicate respectfully.

Respect



We show mutual respect

- We encourage participation and inclusion.
- We are transparent, fair and accountable.
- We are trained to do our jobs well.
- We communicate respectfully.

Passionate



We love doing what we do

- We are passionate about the work we do.
- We improve and look for better ways to do things.
- We are about each other and our community.
- We recognise and reward hard work.
- It's ok to have fun.

Communicate



We connect, listen and learn

- We ensure everyone belongs.
- We are honest and build trust between each other.
- We consider our actions and our reactions to others.
- We are understanding, caring and respectful of differences.
- We are accountable for all that we do.
- We support others in their responsibilities.

Employee Value Proposition:

Lismore City Council's Employee Value Proposition defines the unique experience of working with Council. It reflects the voices of staff, the values of the organisation, and the shared purpose of rebuilding and serving the Lismore community.

The Employee Value Proposition (EVP) is not a marketing slogan, it is a lived framework that guides recruitment, engagement, development, and culture. It has been developed in close consultation with employees across roles and locations and brought to life through the unifying message.

**“Shape your future.
Serve your community.
Belong to something
bigger.”**

Council's EVP is structured around seven distinct value domains:

1. Purpose & impact: Make a difference where it matters most

- Employees are part of a once-in-a-generation renewal journey.
- Council roles directly improve safety, wellbeing, and community outcomes.
- There is pride in the legacy staff are helping to create for the Northern Rivers region.

2. Lifestyle & location: Live well while doing meaningful work

- Balance is supported through 9-day fortnights, hybrid roles, and family-first flexibility.
- The Lismore region offers a naturally beautiful environment, short commutes, and a strong sense of place.

3. Culture & camaraderie: Be part of a connected, down-to-earth team

- Whether indoor or outdoor, new team members are welcomed and supported.
- A spirit of humour, mutual respect, and teamwork runs across Council.

4. Growth & development: grow with us – from first steps to leadership

- Council offers structured onboarding, mentoring, secondments, and career pathways.
- Internal promotions and cross-team mobility are supported and encouraged.

5. Security & stability: Solid foundations for a lasting career

- Staff benefit from long-term job security and the ability to transition across roles.
- Council is backed by community trust, a clear strategic direction, and government partnerships.

6. Leadership & voice: Your ideas matter – help shape our community

- Employees can influence Council's direction through forums, team strategy sessions, committees and innovation pilots.
- Leadership is responsive, approachable, and committed to authentic engagement.

7. Pride in work: See the results of what you do

- The impact of Council work is visible and lasting, from infrastructure to community recovery.
- Staff feel proud of their contribution and the difference they make every day.



Bringing the Employee Value Proposition to Life

The Employee Value Proposition is embedded through:

- Purpose-driven recruitment and onboarding.
- Storytelling campaigns sharing real staff experiences.
- Inclusive work practices and flexible work arrangements.
- Leadership development aligned with Council's values.
- Wellbeing and safety as core commitments.
- Recognition that aligns with outcomes and behaviours.

Evaluating Our Employee Value Proposition

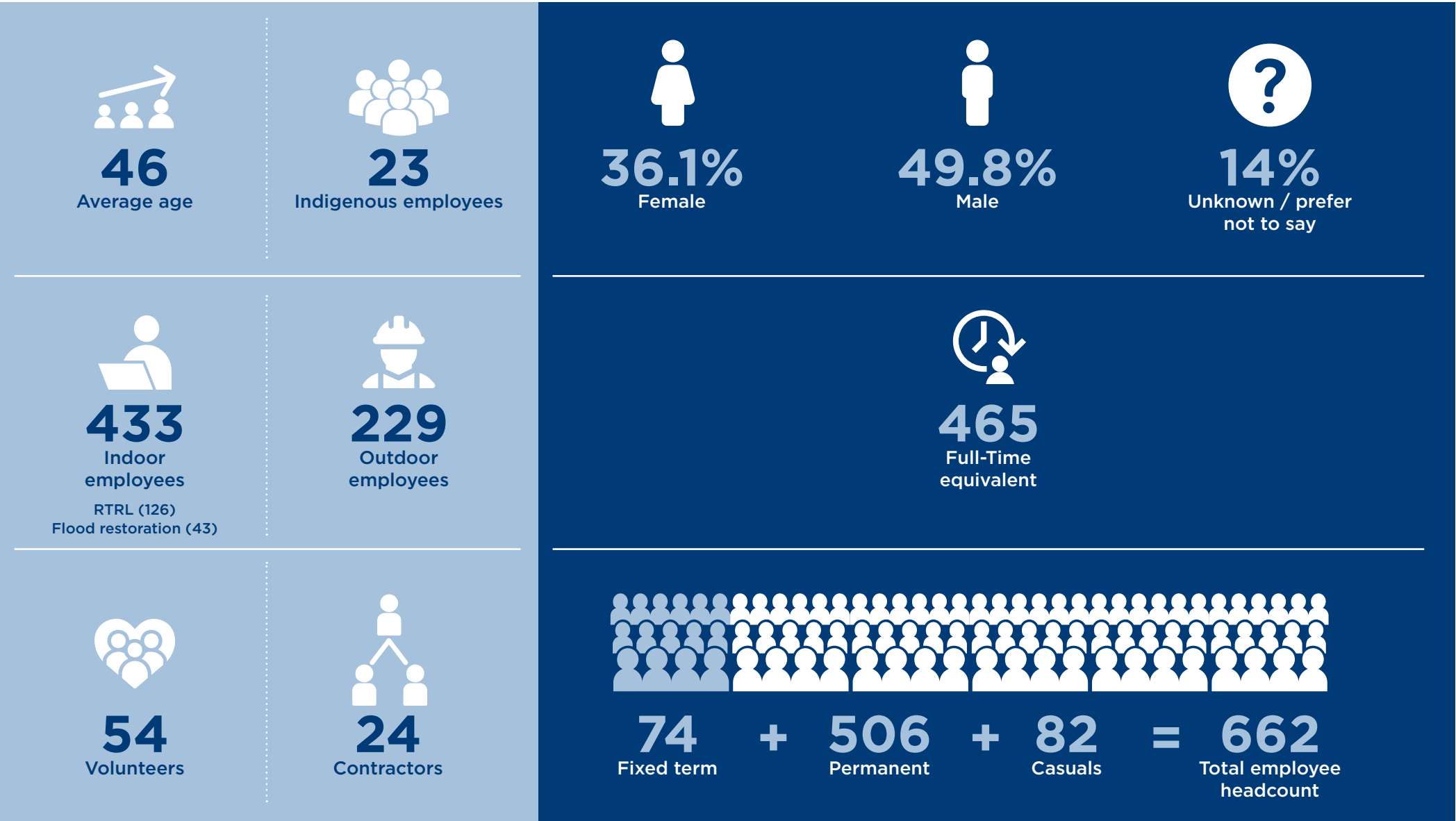
Council will assess the strength and impact of its EVP using:

- Staff engagement scores.
- Turnover and internal promotion metrics.
- Diversity representation improvements.
- Entry and Exit surveys.

Integration with the Workforce Management Strategy

Each Strategic Workforce Pillar within this Strategy supports delivery of the EVP, from capability development to inclusion, systems modernisation, and succession planning. Together, they ensure that Council's employment offering is not only compelling, but credible, consistent, and experienced by all.

Current Workforce Profile



Categorisation of Employees delivering under each CSP Pillar

Employees by pillar, as at 21 May 2025



31%

Community



12%

Environment



27%

Place



9%

Prosperity



21%

Leadership

¹This infographic depicts the percentage of employees delivering services under the CSP Strategic Pillars. Please note that the 21% (137) employees under the Leadership pillar comprise Council's management as well as teams delivering People and Culture, Technology and Innovation, Finance, Procurement, Communications and Marketing, Call Centre, Fleet Services, Asset Management, Property Maintenance, Work Health & Safety and Governance and Risk services.

Strategic workforce pillars and key initiatives

The following strategic workforce pillars, key initiatives and actions have been developed to inform Lismore City Council's Workforce Management Strategy. Grounded in extensive consultation, organisational data, and alignment with the Community Strategic Plan, Reconciliation Action Plan, Disability and Inclusion Action Plan, Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan, these pillars represent the priority areas critical to building a resilient, inclusive and future-ready workforce.

Each pillar outlines focused strategies to:

- Strengthen leadership and culture.
- Drive capability, succession and retention.
- Modernise systems and workforce planning.
- Embed diversity, inclusion and engagement.

Together, these initiatives will support Council to attract and retain talent, deliver on community outcomes, and foster a proud, purpose-driven workforce equipped for both recovery and growth.

Strategic workforce pillars



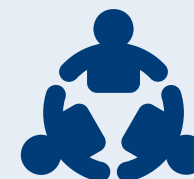
Purpose driven culture and EVP



Capability building and career development



Leadership, continuity and empowerment



Diversity, equity and inclusion



Communication, engagement and recognition





Retention, succession and knowledge transfer



Systems, technology and workforce planning


Strategic workforce pillars key initiatives, actions, measures and targets



CSP Link	Pillar	Key Initiative	Actions	Measures	Target
5.1.4	Purpose Driven Culture & EVP 	Develop and implement a workplace culture program to foster a sense of belonging and pride in the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed a clear, purpose-led EVP focused on lifestyle, impact, and flexibility. • Share real staff stories that reflect commitment, growth, and pride in service. • Celebrate local identity and team spirit, especially in outdoor and frontline teams. • Highlight the community impact and legacy of Council's work. • Align EVP messaging across recruitment, onboarding, and internal comms. • Use storytelling and symbols to connect daily work to Council's vision. 	Employee culture survey. Onboarding survey. Exit surveys.	Establish a baseline engagement score. 75% or greater engagement score by 2029.

CSP Link	Pillar	Key Initiative	Actions	Measures	Target
5.1.4	Capability Building and Career Development 	Collaborate with Heads/Managers to develop and implement workforce management plans for all departments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch structured onboarding programs that include mentoring, clear milestones, and early career support for workers, contractors and volunteers. • Develop early career pathways including school-based traineeships, cadetships, graduate programs, and youth partnerships. • Offer secondment and cross-functional opportunities to support skills growth and mobility. • Map transparent career pathways across business units to reduce perceived stagnation and encourage internal progression. 	<p>% development plans completed for fulltime/part time staff.</p> <p>Employee engagement survey question on learning & development and career development.</p>	<p>Establish baseline then improve year on year.</p> <p>75% or greater engagement score by 2029.</p>
		Review and implement our Learning and Development program to deliver training initiatives, foster career pathways, improve capability and encourage cross functional opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce tailored training initiatives across technical, leadership, digital, and mental health domains. 	Delivery of L&D program.	Annually.

CSP Link	Pillar	Key Initiative	Actions	Measures	Target
5.1.4	Leadership Continuity and Empowerment 	Develop a suite of leadership development programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalise development pathways for new, acting, and emerging leaders. Promote “Heads” as cultural anchors and role models for alignment and trust. Clarify delegations and decision-making to build confidence and accountability. Build a leadership culture grounded in values, resilience, and service. Encourage peer learning and mentoring across leadership levels. 	Engagement survey score for leadership. Participation rates for leadership programs.	Establish baseline and then improvement year on year. 90% of leaders have participated in the leadership development programs.
		Implementation of the performance management framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support leaders in managing performance and coaching their teams. 	Engagement survey score for Performance Management and reviews.	Establish baseline and then improvement year on year.

CSP Link	Pillar	Key Initiative	Actions	Measures	Target
3.1 & 3.2	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion 	Implementing the RAP 2025-2029.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate Indigenous culture and ensure cultural safety across all teams. • Provide cultural capability training for all workers. • Establish targeted employment and development pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers. 	Plan delivered .	RAP delivered by 2029.
		Review and implement EEO Management Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed inclusive practices in recruitment, onboarding, uniforms, facilities, and benefits. 	Equity groups as a percentage of headcount. EEO Management Plan delivered.	Establish baseline for equity groups and improve year on year. EEO Management Plan delivered by 2029.
		Implementation of a toolkit to promote flexible ways of working to achieve work life balance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support inclusion through flexible work arrangements. 	Tool kit delivered. Uptake of flexible work arrangements as a percentage of headcount.	Tool kit delivered by 2026. Establish baseline and improve year on year.
		Implementing the annual salary review & benchmarking process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmark salaries for equity across roles and peer councils. 	Review completed.	Review completed by 2026 and annual process implemented.

CSP Link	Pillar	Key Initiative	Actions	Measures	Target
5.1.4	Communication, Engagement and Recognition 	Introduction of regular P&C communications, and engagement forums.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share regular updates linking staff contributions to community outcomes. • Utilise an internal storytelling platform to celebrate wins, stories, and innovation. • Address public misconceptions (e.g., staff on phones are not working) through community education. • Reinforce positive behaviours through consistent messaging and storytelling. • Encourage two-way feedback to strengthen trust, respect and engagement. 	Weekly P&C communications. Establish engagement forums.	September 2025. By 2026.
		Review current recognition procedure/ processes and deliver a recognition program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate long and dedicated service. • Implement meaningful recognition beyond “shout-outs” performance-linked incentives and personal acknowledgement. 	Engagement survey question on recognition. Awareness and participation in the recognition programs.	Establish baseline and improvement year on year. Establish baseline and then improvement year on year.

CSP Link	Pillar	Key Initiative	Actions	Measures	Target
5.4.1	Retention, Succession and Knowledge Transfer 	Develop a retention and succession planning framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify critical roles at risk due to turnover, burnout, or retirement. Implement mentoring, job-sharing, and phased retirement to retain knowledge. Celebrate long service and enable internal career changes across roles. Use exit interviews and stay conversations to uncover improvement areas. Build succession plans for key positions with clear development pathways. Develop a structured approach to knowledge transfer. 	Employee turnover.	Establish turnover tolerances and decrease year on year.
5.4.2	Systems, Technology and Workforce Planning 	Implement an integrated HRIS system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimise IT infrastructure and integrate key systems. Design flexible plans to support both recovery efforts and “BAU” operations. 	Deliver HRIS project. Data integrity.	Project delivered by June 2029. Improvement in data integrity and confidence in the data.
		Establish data custodians and quality assurance measures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use workforce analytics to forecast needs and optimise resourcing. Strengthen data quality to enable informed, evidence-based planning. 	Data custodians, business rules and Process documents.	December 2026.
		Identify IT and systems training needs as part of the L&D program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide training on digital tools with shared support and peer learning. 	Uptake of systems training.	90% of all training course places are filled.

Appendix 1 – Current Workforce Metrics Table

Employment Type

Category	Count
Permanent Employees	506
Fixed Term Employees	74
Casual Employees	82
Total Headcount	662

Gender Distribution

Gender	Count
Female	239
Male	330
Unknown/Prefer not to say	93
Total	662

Work Type

Type	Count
Indoor RTRL 126, Flood Restoration 43	433
Outdoor	229
Total	662

Indigenous Employment

Category	Count
Indigenous Workers	23

Alignment with CSP Pillars

CSP Pillar	Employee Count	Percentage of Workforce
Community	205	31%
Environment	81	12%
Leadership	137	21%
Place	182	27%
Prosperity	57	9%
Total	662	100%

Appendix 1 – Current Workforce Metrics Table (continued)

Acknowledgment of volunteers and contractors

While the Workforce Management Strategy primarily focuses on Council’s employed workforce, it is important to recognise the critical role that both volunteers and contractors play in supporting service delivery and community engagement.

Currently Lismore City Council has 54 volunteers who contribute meaningfully across a range of areas, from environmental stewardship and event support to cultural programs and disaster response. Their involvement reflects the values of local pride, resilience, and community participation.

Council will continue to:

- Acknowledge volunteers as a valued extension of our workforce.
- Ensure access to appropriate onboarding, training, and safety protocols; and
- Include volunteers in recognition initiatives that reflect their impact.

Currently Lismore City Council engages 24 contractors who also represent a vital part of Council’s operational model, particularly in specialist, project-based, or surge capacity roles. Their engagement must strike a balance between flexibility and strategic workforce planning. These contractors include skills and labour hire persons who occupy an established position within the organisation hierarchy, however submit invoices and are paid by Finance through creditors and not paid through payroll.

Council will:

- Monitor contractor usage to ensure sustainable internal capability development.
- Promote consistent expectations regarding safety, conduct, and alignment to Council values.
- Extend elements of the EVP, such as inclusive culture and communication, where appropriate, to contractors embedded in Council teams.

Together, volunteers and contractors enrich Council’s capacity to deliver on its commitments under the Community Strategic Plan. Including them in planning and cultural initiatives ensures alignment, safety, and a unified workforce experience.

It is also important to recognise that, as at 31 May 2025, there were an additional 29 labour hire workers engaged across the organisation to support short-term projects, surge workloads, worker absences and other operational needs.

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Lismore
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