

# WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY







*Journey Through Time*, created by local school students and artist Steven Campbell.

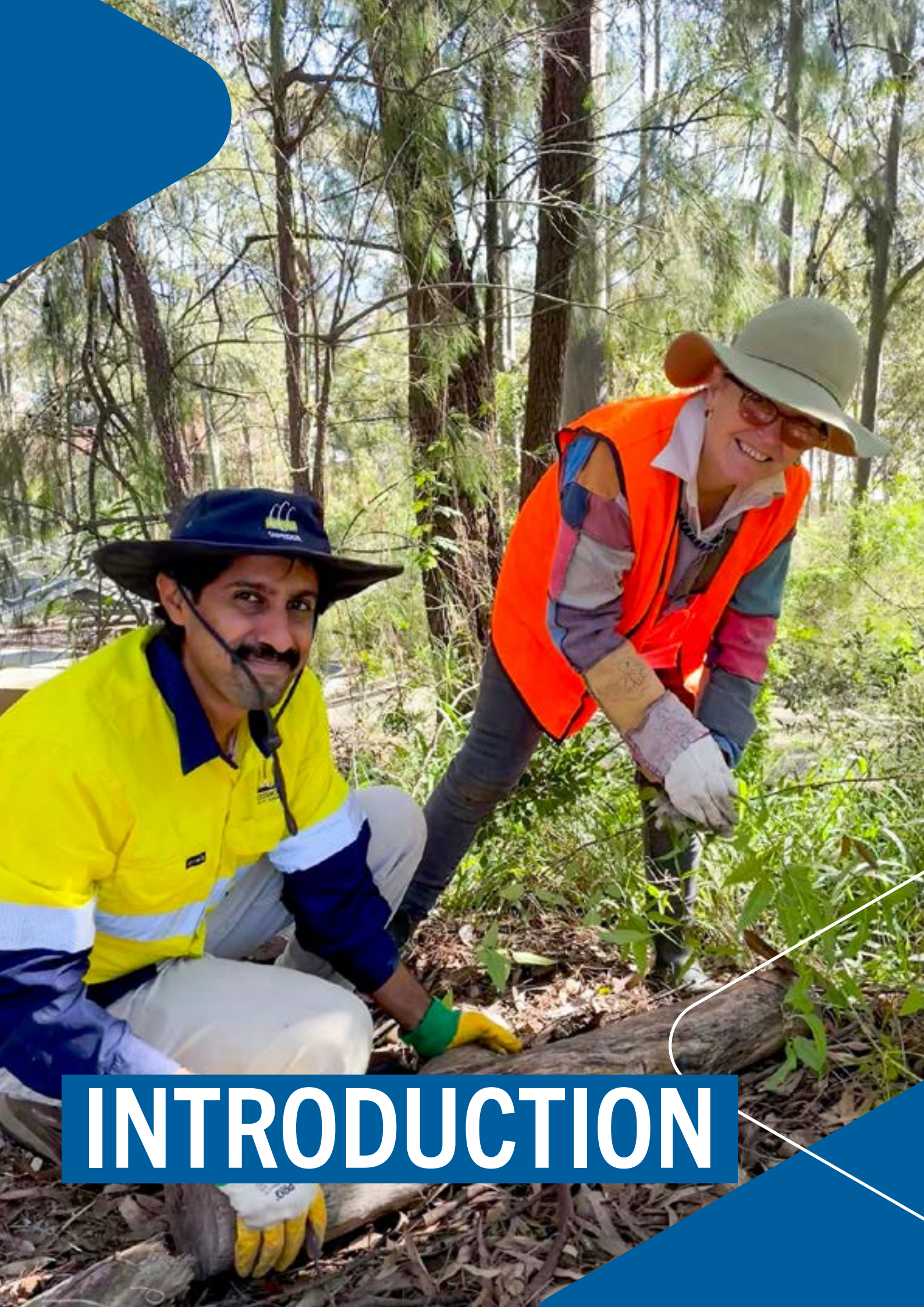
### Acknowledgement of Country

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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# INTRODUCTION

## Introduction

Cessnock City Council's Workforce Management Strategy (WMS) 2025-29 outlines our plan to develop and strengthen a workforce with the capacity and capability to support and achieve the objectives of our [Community Strategic Plan; Together Cessnock 2035](#).

The strategy includes four key people-focused objectives which will further strengthen our commitment to work health and safety and wellbeing initiatives, diversity and inclusion in our workplace, learning and development of our employees, employment opportunities for young people in our community through the LAUNCH program (Apprentice, Trainee and Graduate Framework) and the recruitment, attraction and retention of a high performing workforce.

We already have fantastic people within our organisation; we will continue to build a workplace culture that is informed and driven by our staff and corporate values of integrity, respect, teamwork, accountability and excellence.

This plan supports our vision to be a great organisation that is capable, efficient and responsible, and one that is well respected and trusted by our staff and community.







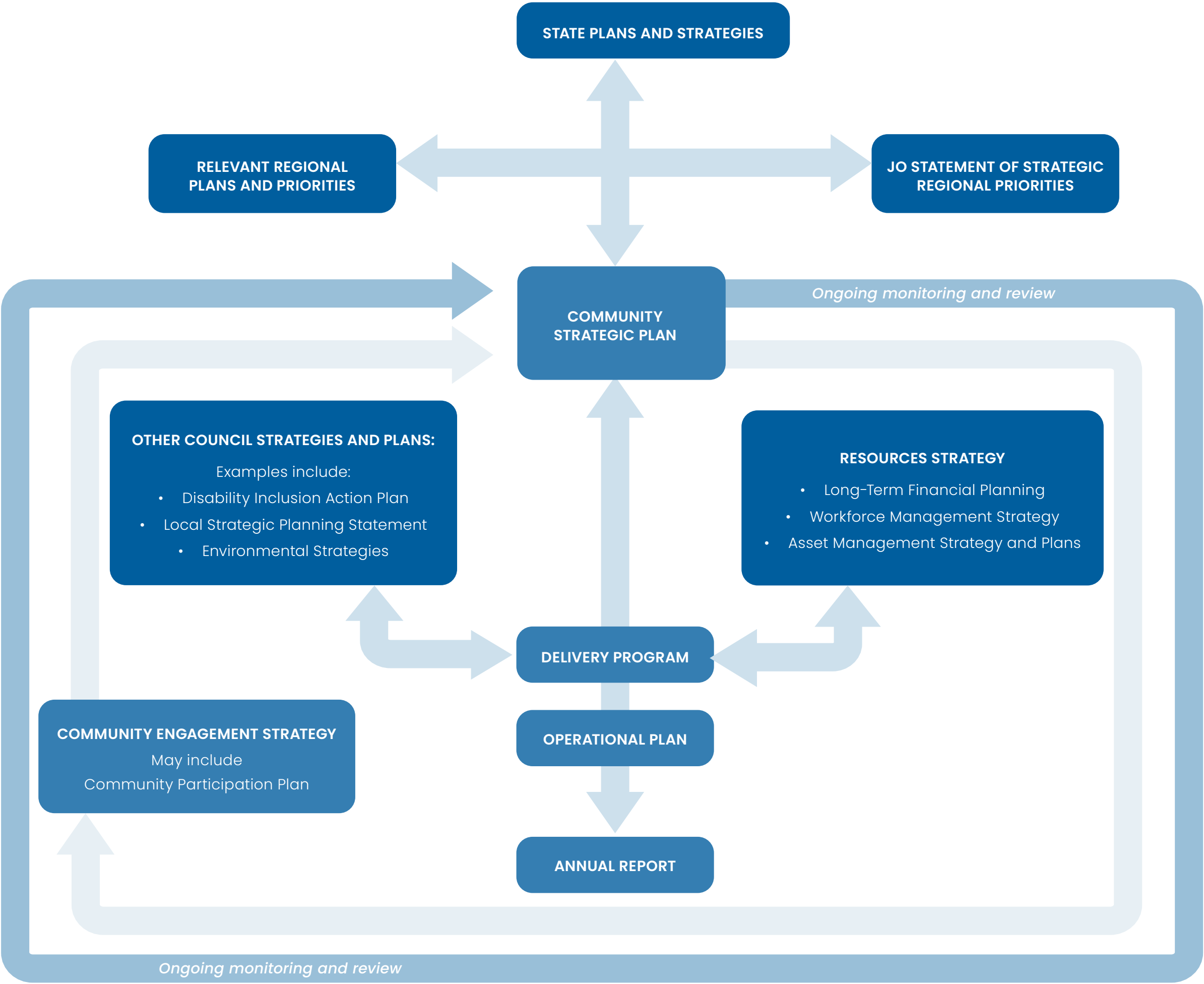
# LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK



# Legislative Framework

Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) is the planning and reporting framework Council uses to work towards achieving our community’s vision. Under NSW Government legislation, Council must prepare a number of plans that provide details on how we intend to deliver works and services in the short and long term. This is based on the community’s priorities which have been identified through consultation and engagement, as well as the resources available to Council in delivering these items. The framework ensures Council demonstrates our various plans together, to understand how they interact in planning for the future.

The Workforce Management Strategy is a mandatory requirement under the IP&R framework and is directly linked to the overall Resourcing Strategy that supports our four year delivery program and annual operational plans.





# OUR MISSION AND VALUES

## Our Mission and Values

### 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: thriving, attractive and welcoming.**

### Our Values



Integrity



Accountability



Respect



Excellence



Teamwork





# OUR ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

## Our Organisational Structure

GENERAL MANAGERS UNIT	WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE	PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT	CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
Mayor and Councillors	Asset Planning	Business Support and Customer Relations	Communications and Engagement
General Manager	Emergency Management and Resilience	Development Services	Community and Cultural Development
Executive Support – General Manager and Mayor	Environment and Waste Services	Economic Development	Financial Management and Reporting
Internal Audit	Infrastructure	Regulatory Services	Information Technology
People and Culture	Open Space and Community Facilities	Strategic Planning	
	Works and Operations		





**OUR PEOPLE**



# Our People

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

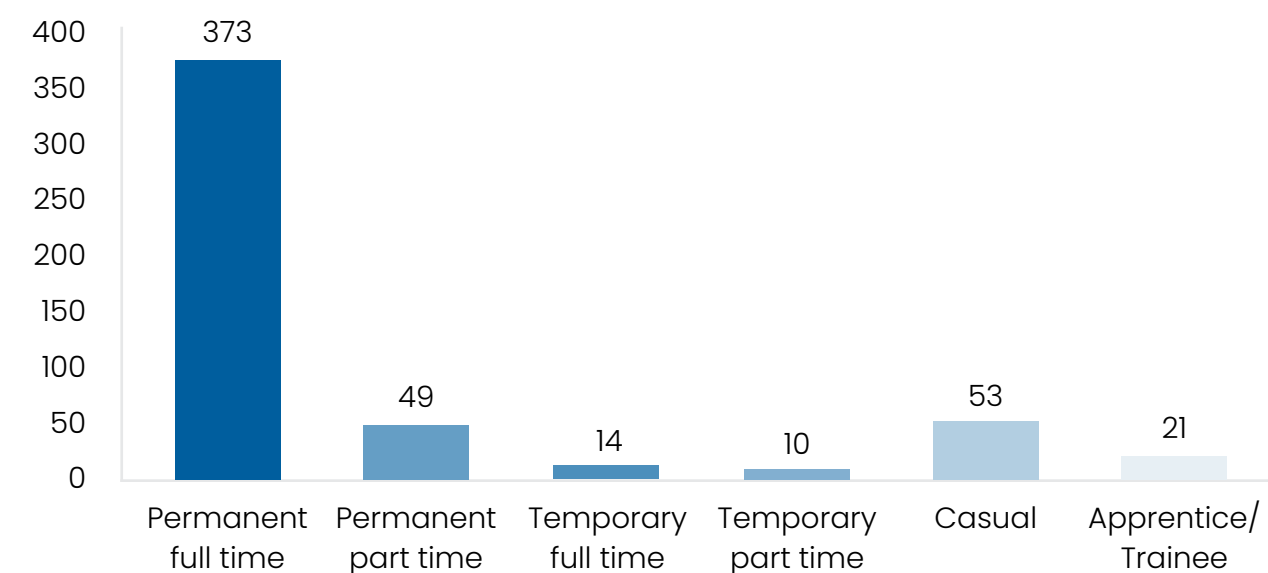
Our employees work across a number of locations within the Cessnock LGA including Council's Administration Building, Works Depot, Waste Management Facility, Libraries,

Pools, the Performing Arts Cultural Centre, Visitor Information Centre and Youth Centre. As at December 2024 approximately 58% of our employees live in the Cessnock LGA. Those that live outside the LGA are predominately travelling from the Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Central Coast and Maitland areas. The number of Council staff that live in our area has now reduced by approximately 3% since the data contained in the 2022 workforce plan was analysed. This demonstrates a shift in the makeup of our workforce and an expansion of where our staff reside and travel to work from.

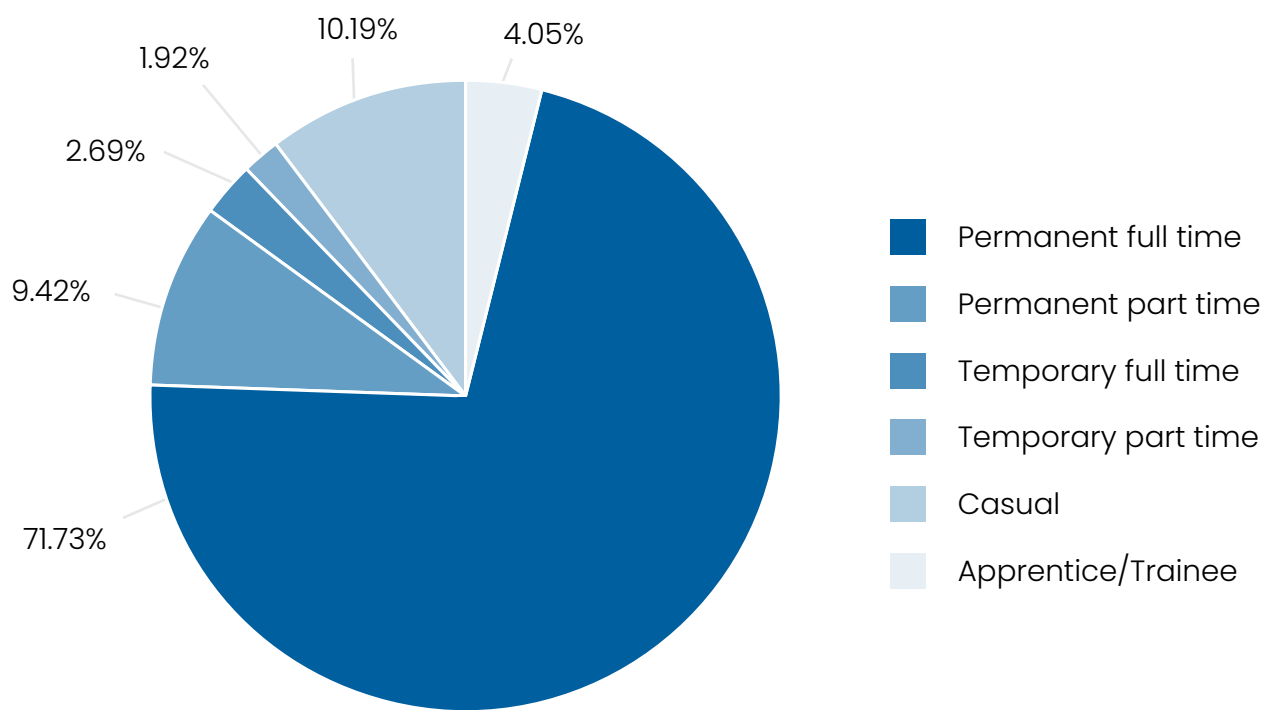


## Employee Demographics

Head count total

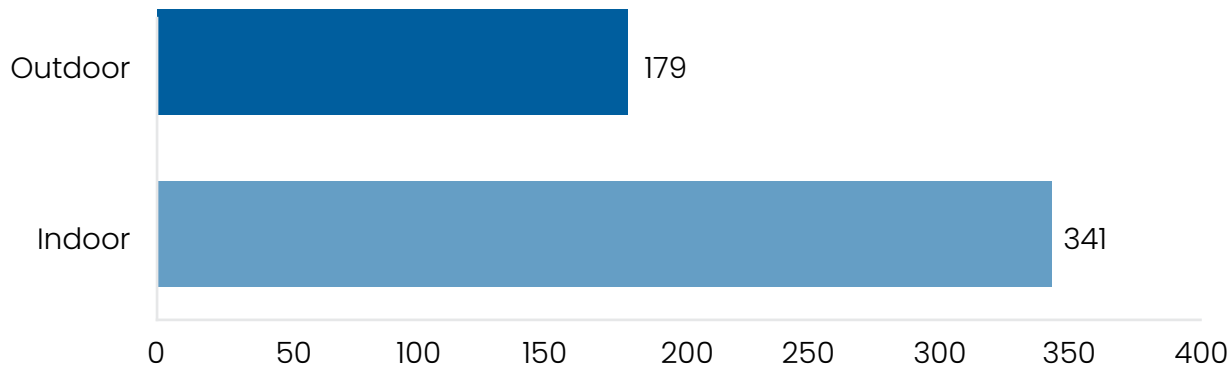


Head count %

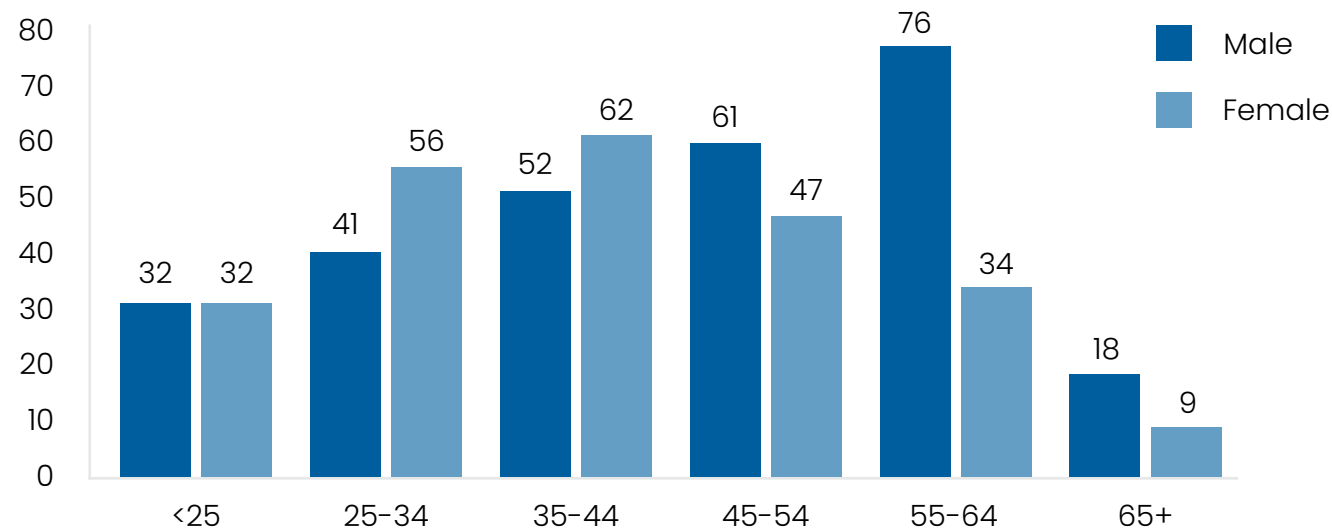




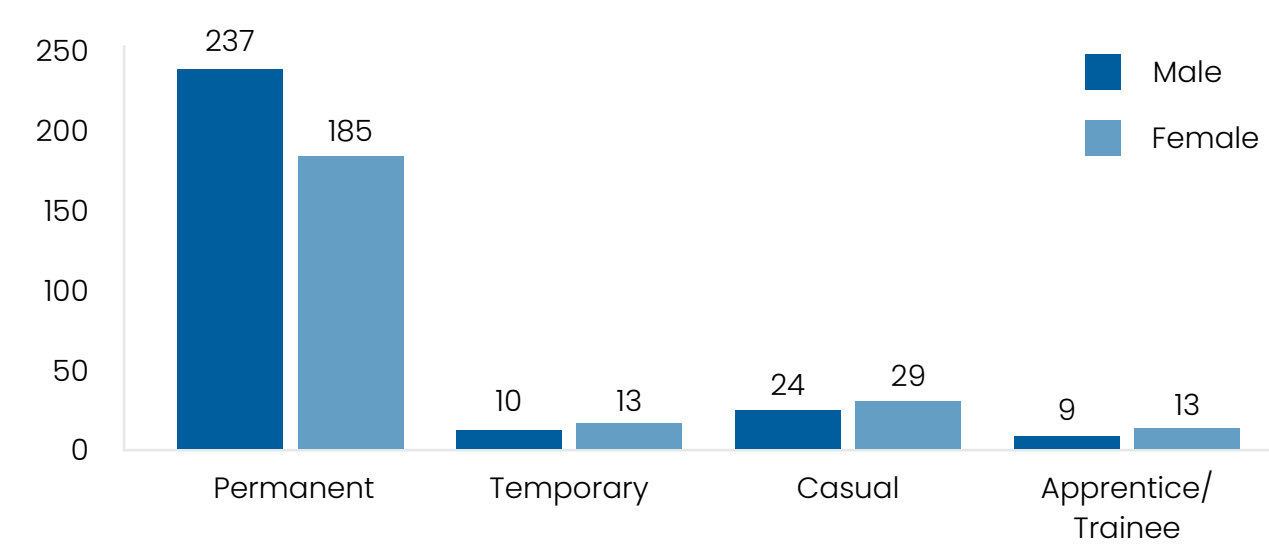
Number of employees (indoor and outdoor)



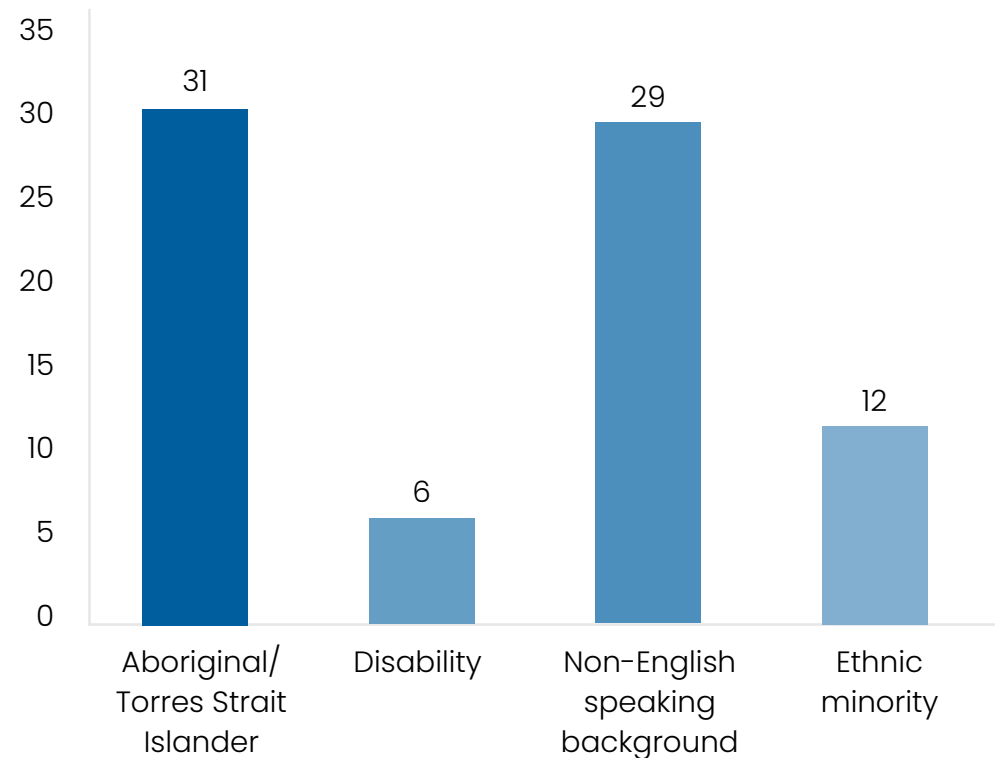
Employee age range profile



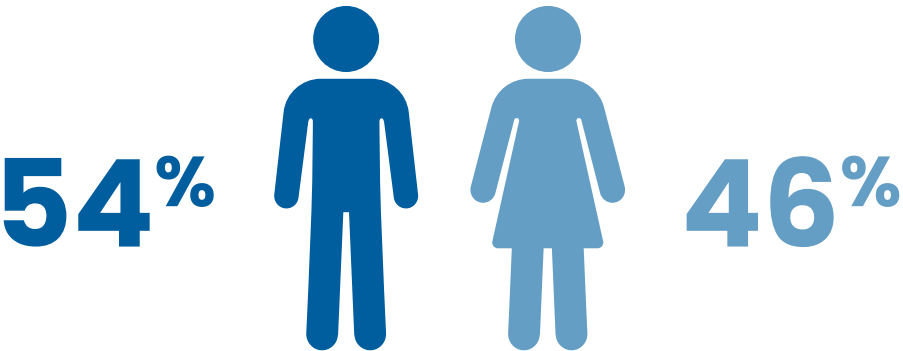
Workforce gender profile



EEO measure

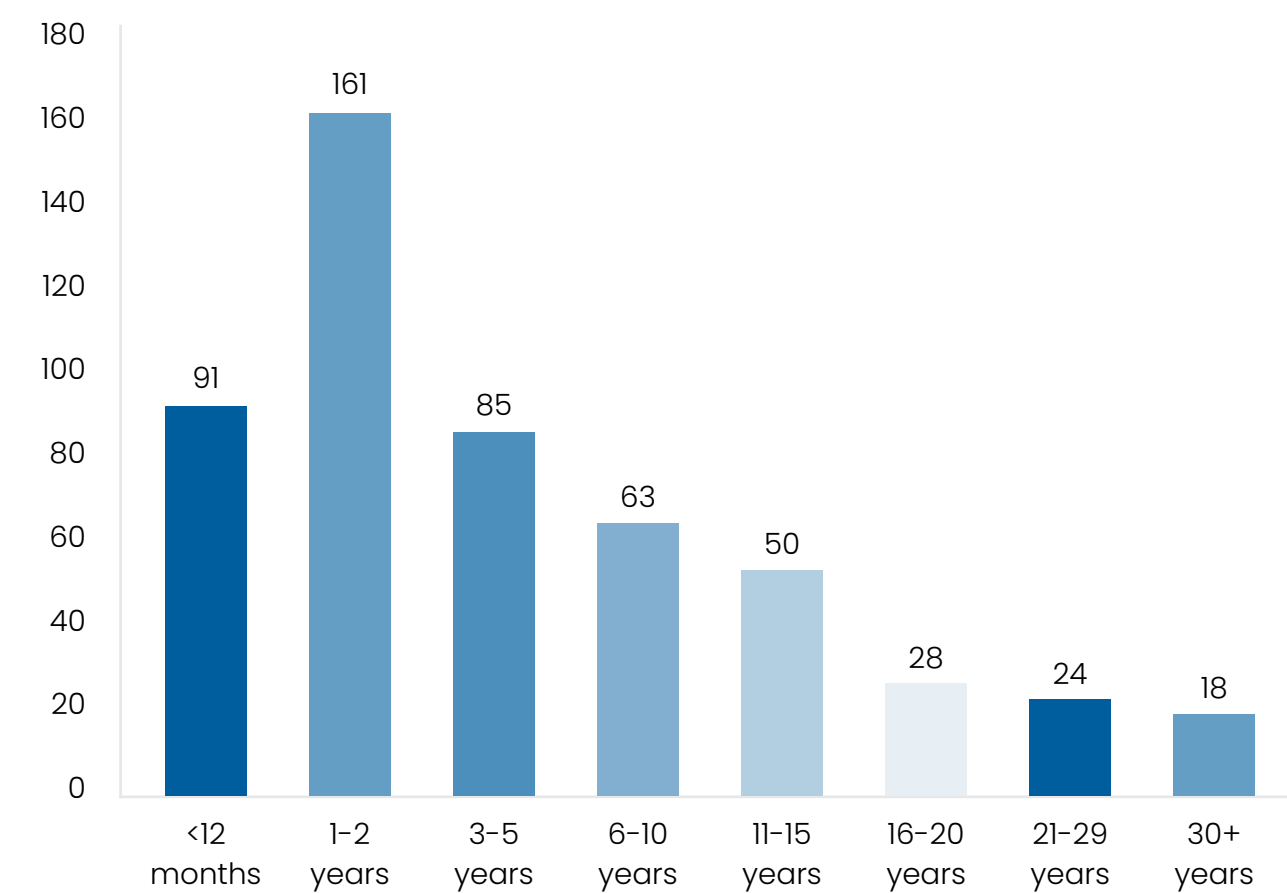


Workforce gender profile

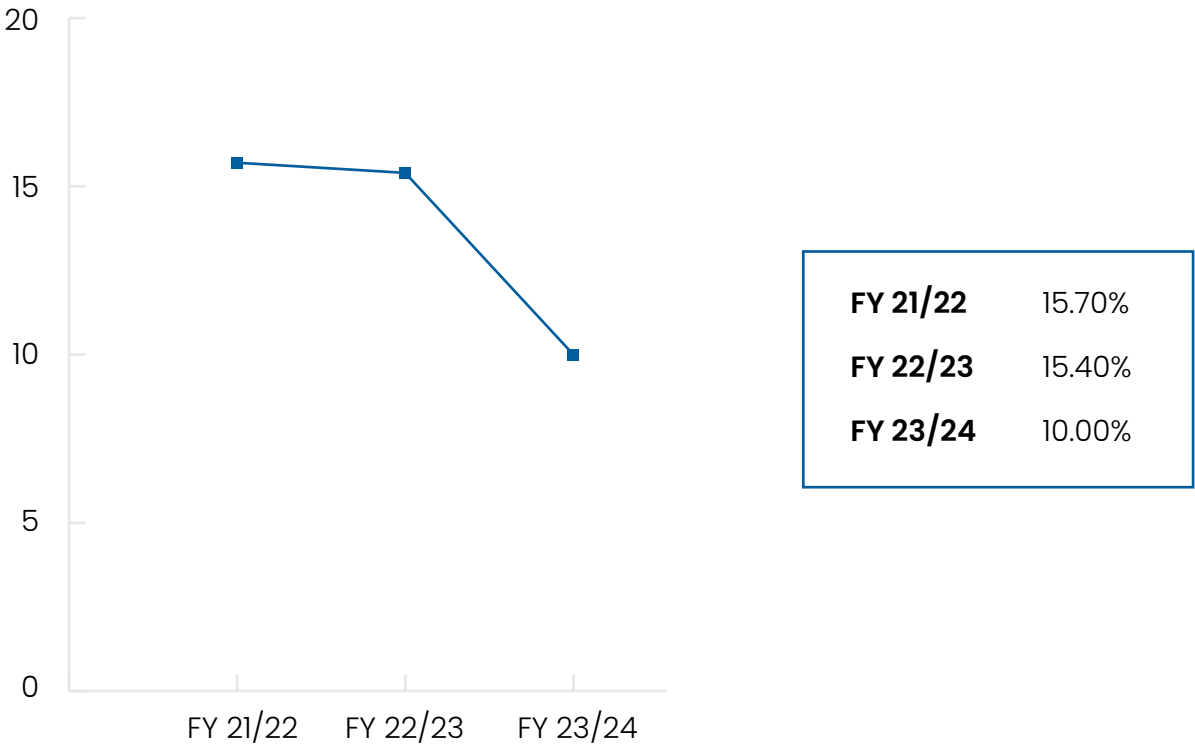




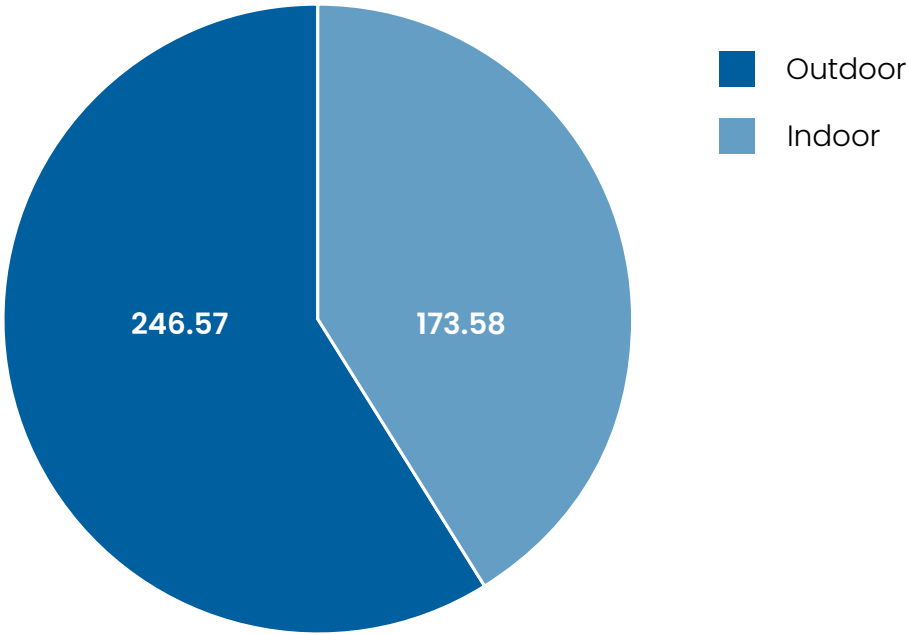
Years of service for employees



Employee turnover (last 3 years)



Budgeted full time equivalent







# OUR TOP 3 ACHIEVEMENTS

## Our Top 3 Achievements

*Workforce Management Strategy (implemented 2022)*

### Implementation of our LAUNCH program (Apprentice, Trainee and Graduate framework).

Employment and training opportunities are provided to Apprentices, Trainees and Graduates across various functions of our 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. Positions identified for this program may vary from year to year depending on operational requirements, workforce shortages and critical roles.

The existing Apprentice, Trainee and Graduate framework was extensively reviewed to accommodate the increasing number of youth targeted positions and to incorporate a thorough learning program for participants and staff managing these positions. The framework was renamed to the LAUNCH program. Additionally, external funding was received, targeted supervisor training has been undertaken, and comprehensive induction programs implemented.

We have consistently increased the number of Apprentices, Trainees and Graduates employed by a minimum of two additional full time equivalent (FTE) each year. In addition, we have commenced Apprentices, Trainees and Graduates in several new work areas such as People and Culture, Strategic Planning, Engineering, Finance, Information Technology, Business Support, Civil Construction and the Visitor Information Centre. Having a wide range of opportunities ensures our LAUNCH program encompasses the entire life cycle of employment, making it meaningful, fulfilling and enjoyable while gaining a solid foundation for future career opportunities.

In 2024, our LAUNCH program was publicly acknowledged by the Minister of Local Government, Mr Ron Hoenig, the General Secretary of the United Services Union, Mr Graeme Kelly, and NBN featured a news story showcasing our program.



# Additional employee health, safety and wellbeing initiatives

In addition to our broad range of existing initiatives, numerous new initiatives have been developed and implemented, including:

- A new Enterprise Risk Management framework that has created a consistent, effective and structured approach to managing risk across our organisation
- Increased flexibility given to our staff on the use of health and wellbeing days
- Introduction of weekly Pilates classes for our employees
- Enhancement of our Safety and Wellbeing Annual Calendar to include monthly safety and wellbeing topics and events that provides employees with helpful suggestions to improve both their physical and mental health and wellbeing. These calendar topics compliment those covered in our bi-annual Safety Day.

The above initiatives have been wel received from staff with positive feedback given.

## Completion of key workforce projects

Four significant workforce related projects were completed;

- Development of Enterprise Risk Management Framework
- Development of a Child Safe Policy
- Review of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Plan and development of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access and Leadership Plan (IDEAL)
- Implementation of Leadership Development and Capability Framework (LEAD) and Succession Planning and Talent Management Framework.





A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a bright yellow high-visibility work shirt, is painting a dark wooden beam. She is looking up at her work. The background shows a wooden structure, possibly part of a building or a bridge.

# OUR TOP 3 WORKFORCE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

## Our Top 3 Workforce Challenges and Opportunities

### Workforce sustainability

Workforce sustainability is a challenge as it involves balancing our rapidly growing area and related organisational growth with the long-term wellbeing of our employees and community. Shifting workforce demographics, technological advancements, changing skill demands and the need for equity create significant challenges. Our Council needs to navigate issues such as talent retention, fostering diversity and inclusion, equitable work practices and supporting employee health and wellbeing.

With 26% of our staff being over the age of 55, our aging workforce has been identified as a high-level corporate risk. Our Succession Planning and Talent Management Framework has strategies and actions to address the issues associated; including 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

Cessnock has challenges with turnover, attraction and retention of skilled and qualified staff within particular areas of Council. Our infrastructure, project management, engineering, and planning and environment teams have been impacted by external opportunities in both private, and other government organisations. With Cessnock being located in close proximity to the mines, it is very difficult for our Council to compete with the salaries on offer for trade positions. We will continue to review and improve our attraction and retention strategies, our recruitment and selection processes and the health and stability of our workplace culture, and implement best practice methods within our financial means.

### Technology

Emerging technologies will significantly influence the skills and capabilities needed in the digital age. Our challenge is the need for increased digital literacy and keeping up to date with rapid advancements while also optimising our existing technology and systems.





# OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

## Our Strategic Objectives

Our Workforce Management Strategy outlines four key objectives and corresponding actions to address the challenges and opportunities in resourcing the Community Strategic Plan, ensuring that we are appropriately and sustainably resourced.

### Objective 1

Retain and attract a diverse and capable workforce

### Objective 3

Provide a safe work workplace that supports the health and wellbeing of our people

### Objective 2

Enhance workplace performance and culture

### Objective 4

Foster a diverse and inclusive workforce culture







# OUR ACTION PLAN



# Our Action Plan

## Objective 1 – Attract and retain a diverse and capable workforce

ACTION	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
Create an Employee Value Proposition (EVP) that promotes the key benefits of working with Council.		✓		
Continue to implement the actions from the Apprentice, Trainee and Graduate Framework.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Develop a dedicated engineering graduate program to address skill shortages and future skills requirements. Program to be developed for use in the 25/26 graduate recruitment period.	✓			
Participate in a minimum of two (2) external opportunities per year to represent Council at careers expos, University and TAFE open days and school visits to promote career opportunities and pathways available at Council.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Provide four (4) work experience placements per calendar year.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Investigate alternative strategies for advertising vacant positions to increase the candidate pool.	✓			
Implement leadership capabilities and succession planning tool to identify high potential staff within the organisation.	✓			
Review induction and onboarding program.	✓			

## Objective 2 – Enhance workplace performance and culture

ACTION	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
Continue to implement the actions from the Leadership, Excellence and Development (LEAD) program, including a minimum of two (2) leadership development days per calendar year.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Identify and create succession plans for critical roles.	✓			
Further develop the LEAD program in alignment with findings from Leadership Capabilities and Succession Planning assessment, introducing tailored training sessions to leaders.	✓			
Create and/or obtain e-learning modules to meet compliance based and other identified learning needs.	✓	✓		
Review Council’s competency framework and develop core capabilities across all levels of the organisation.	✓			
Identify and implement a mentoring and coaching solution.	✓	✓		
Workforce metrics are provided to the Executive Leadership Team on a six-monthly basis and data is analysed to identify trends and opportunities.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strengthen digital literacy for our employees via targeted training.		✓		
Design and distribute employee engagement survey. Analyse and communicate survey results to all staff, and develop an action plan based on employee feedback.	✓			



### Objective 3 – Provide a safe work workplace that supports the health and wellbeing of our people

ACTION	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
Develop a wellbeing strategy with a focus on psychosocial health.	✓			
Undertake a review of Employee Assistance Program and complete tender process for selection of a service provider.	✓			
Improve the provision and distribution of information and resources to employees on wellbeing and psychological health and safety.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Undertake mandatory compliance-based health monitoring for relevant employees.				
Complete actions within the Enterprise Risk Management Framework.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Conduct an external audit against the criteria of ISO 45001 to assess Council's performance in relation to workplace health and safety.	✓	✓		
Conduct an external audit of Council's Return to Work and Workers Compensation program to ensure legislative compliance and application of best practices that support a safe and timely return of employees to pre-injury duties.	✓		✓	
Enhance the utilisation of Council's electronic safety and risk management system to improve reporting timeframes, accessibility, and the timely sharing of information.	✓			
All employees to complete bullying and harassment awareness training.	✓			
Keep abreast of Work, Health and Safety legislation and complete mandatory actions where required.	✓	✓	✓	✓

### Objective 4 – Foster a diverse and inclusive workforce

ACTION	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
Implement the actions from the 2025 -2029 Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access and Leadership (IDEAL) Plan to strengthen the representation of identifiable groups within the community including people with disability, youth, women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and people from non-english speaking backgrounds.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Complete actions within the Disability Inclusion Action Plan.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Complete actions within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Action Plan.	✓	✓	✓	✓







# 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
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017
- New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- New South Wales Industrial Relations Act 1996
- New South Wales State Records Act 1998
- Local Government Act 1993
- Local Government (State) Award 2023
- Cessnock City Council Enterprise Agreement 2025

OTHER





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