

BLAYNEY SHIRE COUNCIL

# Workforce Management Plan

2025/26 – 2028/29



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## Executive Summary

Built on the foundation established by Council's previous Workforce Management Plan, this Workforce Management Strategy aligns with the Community Strategic Plan and should be read in conjunction with this document.

The Strategy is designed to support Council's long-term workforce and human resource planning, which is expected to remain relatively stable over the next four years.

The core objective remains ensuring Blayney Shire Council has the right people, with the right skills, in the right roles, at the right time. Achieving this goal requires effective systems to attract, develop, and support employees.

Council faces several workforce-related challenges over the coming years, including:

- Aligning organisational culture with strategic objectives
- Managing an ageing workforce
- Supporting staff as they adapt to the future of work and the evolving workplace
- Attracting skilled professionals in an increasingly competitive labour market by becoming an employer of choice
- Addressing critical skills shortages
- Cost of Living Crisis
- Enhancing productivity and improving organisational systems to ensure value for the community

Strategic workforce planning allows Council to respond to these challenges proactively and effectively.

This strategy reaffirms our ongoing commitment to key priorities, including fostering a positive workplace culture, enhancing staff satisfaction, and attracting and retaining skilled employees. We are dedicated to supporting staff development, effectively managing workforce transitions, and recognising the valuable contributions of our employees. Additionally, we aim to prioritise and promote the health and safety of our staff, ensuring a supportive and thriving work environment.

While many initiatives will be led by the Human Resources team, successful implementation depends on the active involvement of all employees.

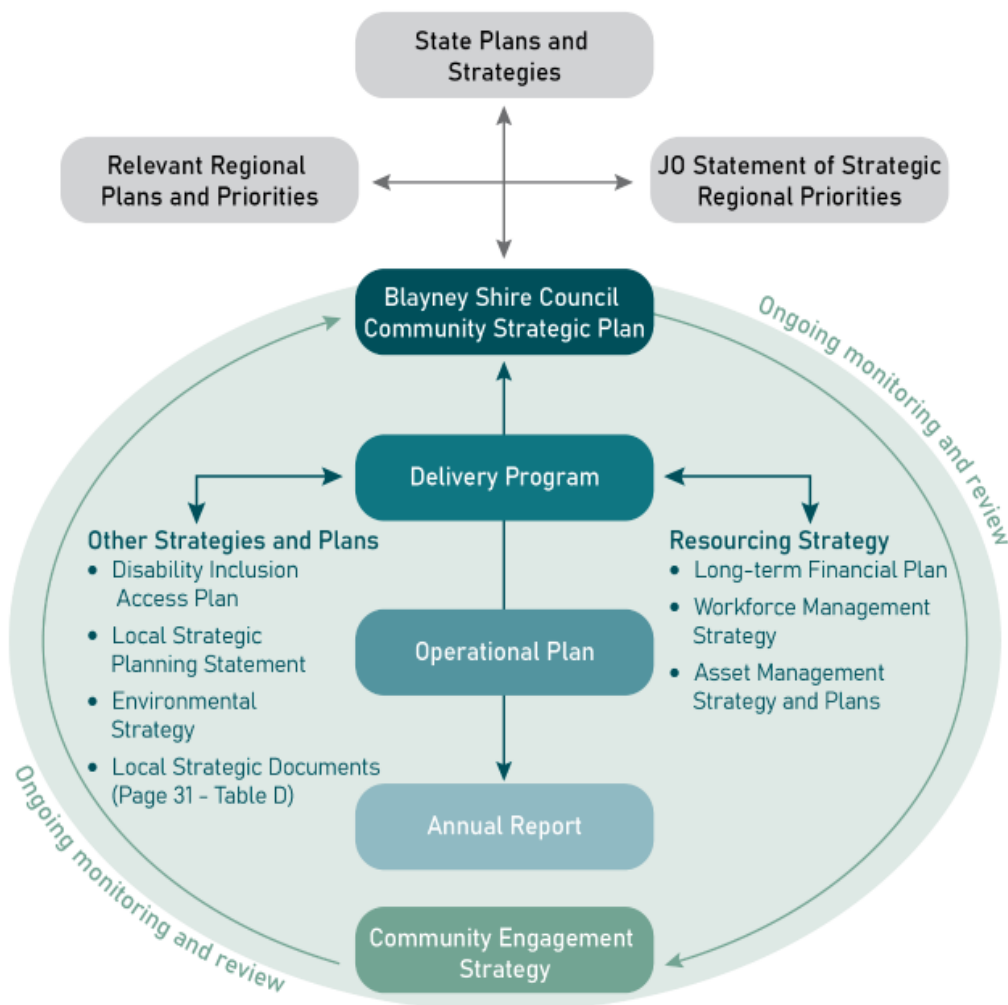
All staff are encouraged to read this Workforce Management Strategy and actively engage in its implementation to help shape a strong, capable, and future-ready organisation.

## Introduction

All NSW councils must develop a set of documents that meet the requirements of the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework.

This Integrated Planning and Reporting framework encourages councils to better integrate their various plans to ensure a practical and wholistic approach is adopted for the future.

As shown in the diagram below, the Workforce Management Plan is part of the Delivery Program which contains specific timeframes, and responsibilities.



These goals and priorities are identified in Blayney Shire Council Community Strategic Plan and achieve the objectives and actions identified in the delivery program.

Community priorities are grouped under the themes of:

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|   | <b>Leadership</b>                      | Prioritise transparency, financial sustainability and strong partnerships with and for our community |
|   | <b>Community</b>                       | A connected, healthy and inclusive community   |
|   | <b>Infrastructure</b>                  | Infrastructure is resilient, fit for purpose and maintained to support our community                 |
|   | <b>Economy</b>                         | A diverse, vibrant and sustainable economy   |
|  | <b>Natural &amp; Built Environment</b> | Protecting our assets for future generations   |

Addressing four key questions for the community



This Workforce Management Plan is an important component as it depicts an approach to plan for and supply a workforce that can ensure the goals of the community are able to be met.

This Workforce Management Plan covers the financial years' 2025/26 to 2028/29.



## Workforce Planning

Workforce planning is a continuous and integrated process that ensures the Council has the right people, with the right skills, to meet current and future goals.

It follows a cyclical approach, helping build capacity to deliver on both strategic and operational priorities. This process also enhances understanding of the workforce profile, supports proactive responses to both expected and unexpected changes, and guides clear strategies for staff development and career progression.

The initiatives outlined in a Workforce Management Plan can boost employee engagement & wellbeing, reduce operational costs, and drive greater efficiency across the organisation.

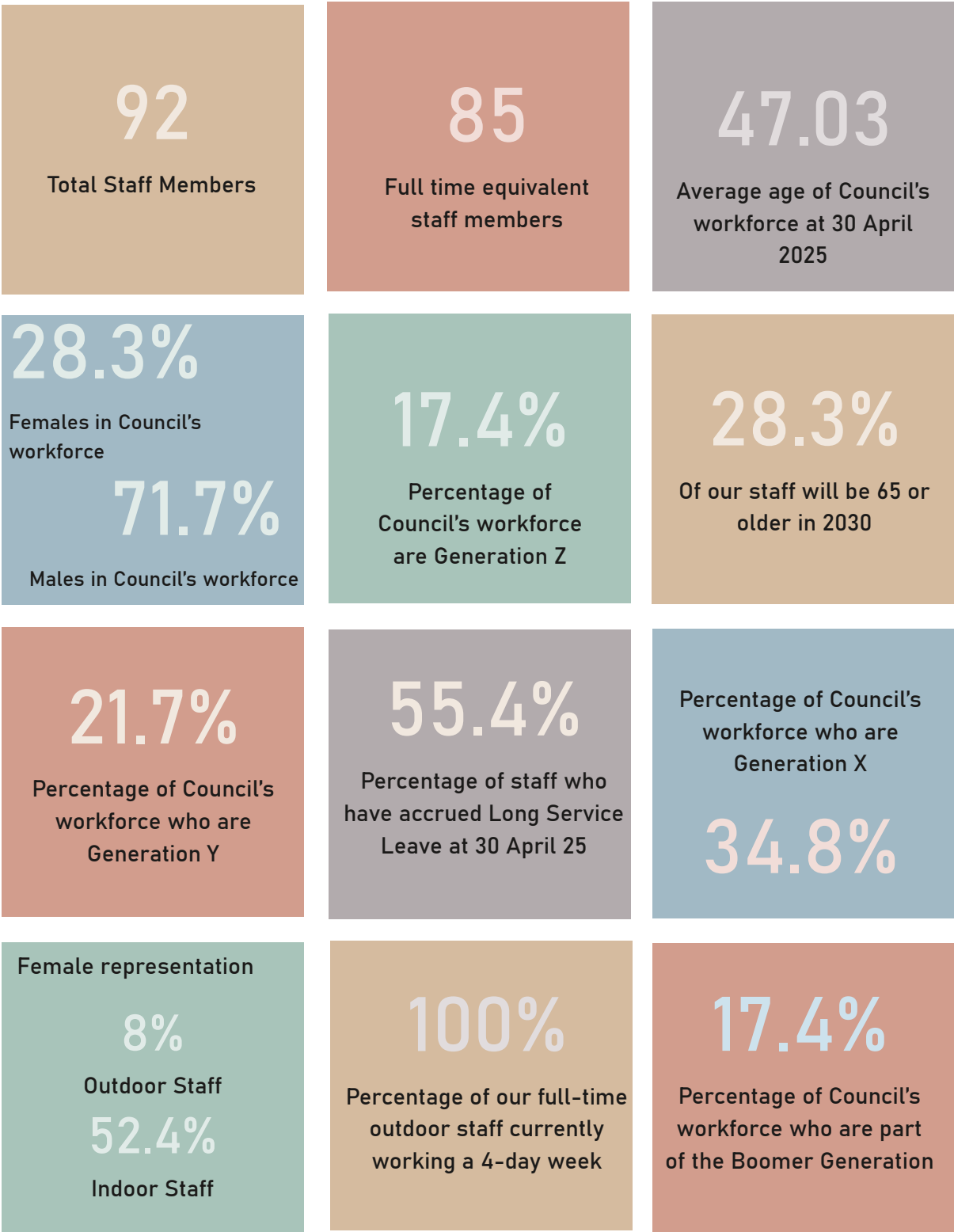
## Objectives

The objectives of Councils Workforce Management Plan are to:

- Link the Workforce Management Plan to the Strategic Objectives of the Delivery Program so that the workforce is capable, motivated, and available, now and into the future, to meet the needs of the community it serves.
- To integrate the Workforce Management Plan into the Resourcing Strategy so that works, projects, programs and services are funded, resourced, and delivered in accordance with the priorities of the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.
- To link the Workforce Management Plan to the Council's strategic, operational, and organisational objectives and future directions.
- Develop strategies so that Council is viewed as an employer of choice and that current and future vacancies in Council's workforce can be filled quickly and efficiently to ensure minimum disruption to the delivery of services to the community.
- Implement those strategies and regularly monitor their progress to ensure we stay on track with achieving our goals in accordance with the recommended implementation year as per the Action Plan



Workforce Analysis\*



\* all statistics are current as at 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025



## Current Workplace Challenges

According to the \*2025 HR Industry Benchmark Report, several key factors are shaping the current HR landscape. These include the growing adoption of AI in HR processes, the increasing complexity of a multigenerational workforce, and the impacts of an ageing population moving into retirement.

The report identifies upskilling, cross-skilling, and reskilling employees as the top workforce challenge, with increasing productivity listed as the highest priority. It also highlights that a major barrier to improvement is a lack of clear goals and performance expectations.

Previous Workforce Management Plans have highlighted ongoing challenges, including:

- Communication
- Council's salary system and wage structure
- Scheduling and quality of work
- Employees being included in the procurement process to ensure equipment is fit for purpose

The strategies detailed in this plan are a response to the challenges that Council has faced, and currently facing. These include several recurring issues across the themes of:

- Attraction & Recruitment
- Learning & Development
- Employee Engagement & Retention
- Succession Planning & Talent Management
- Reporting & Workforce Systems
- Performance & Accountability
- Legislative Compliance & Risk

Accompanied by a Summary Action Plan, this Workforce Management Plan aims to not only identify areas for improvement but also implement targeted strategies to support workforce capability, adaptability, and long-term organisational success.

\* 2025 HR Industry Benchmark Report provided by ELMO



## Workforce Planning & Gap Analysis

Workforce planning and gap analysis are critical components of Council's Workforce Management Plan, ensuring our organisation has the right people, with the right skills, in the right roles to meet current and future service demands.

Workforce planning involves analysing the existing workforce profile, forecasting future staffing needs based on strategic priorities and community expectations, and developing strategies to attract, retain, and develop staff.

Gap analysis supports workforce planning by identifying differences between current workforce capabilities and those that may be needed in the future:

- Identifying and highlighting skill shortages,
- Possible leadership gaps,
- Continuity risks in key roles,
- Opportunities for redeployment or upskilling.

Together, these processes enable Council to make informed, proactive decisions to build a sustainable, capable, and responsive workforce.

## Strategies

Strategies aim to build a sustainable, skilled, and flexible workforce. These include targeted recruitment to fill skill gaps, succession planning to manage transitioning into retirement, and training programs to upskill staff.

In addition to this, flexible work options, digital tools, and leadership development initiatives also boost efficiency, staff wellbeing, and retention. Promoting diversity, inclusion, and a positive workplace culture further supports long-term workforce stability.

## Attraction & Recruitment

Council has faced several challenges in its attraction and recruitment strategies due to a combination of geographic, economic, and sector-specific factors including:

- Attracting skilled professionals to Blayney Shire, particularly in specialised fields.
- Competition with the private sector for talent, especially when Council has limited salary flexibility under the local government award structure.
- Our ageing workforce and Council's limited succession pipelines can put pressure on recruitment efforts.

These challenges require other innovative approaches, such as improving employer branding, continuing to offer flexible work arrangements, building partnerships with educational institutions, and investing in internal talent development.

## Learning & Development

In learning and development, Council faces several challenges, particularly in ensuring training is aligned with organisational goals while remaining accessible and cost-effective. These include:

- Budgetary restraints
- Time constraints, as operational demands often make it difficult for staff to attend development activities
- Small workforce and ability to provide mentoring and supervision
- Tailoring training to diverse roles across the different departments
- Keeping pace with evolving technology and utilising learning platforms to full capacity
- Regulatory changes that require ongoing updates to training content or introduce mandatory training, strain internal resources

To overcome these challenges, Council will endeavour to utilise digital learning platforms, identify optimum training opportunities, strengthen partnerships with external training providers, and partner with other regional councils offering similar training.

## Employee Engagement & Retention

Council's strategies will continue to build on the fundamentals of engagement and retention. This includes areas such as work/life balance, various leave options, communication, culture, developing pathways for critical positions, and training.

Currently, Council faces several challenges including:

- Limited career progression opportunities
- Attracting and retaining younger workers
- Salary constraints under the NSW Local Government Awards also limits competitiveness compared to the private sector.
- Additionally, Council is dealing with an ageing workforce. This makes succession planning and knowledge transfer critical, especially in a small organisation
- Maintaining staff morale during organisational change and high workloads; and
- Ensuring ongoing engagement in the face of high workloads.

Addressing these challenges requires focused strategies such as continuing to offer flexible work options, further investing in staff development, employee wellbeing, and fostering a positive, communicative and inclusive workplace culture.

## Succession Planning and Talent Management

Council faces several key challenges in succession planning and talent management including these recurring themes:

- Ageing workforce, with a number of experienced staff approaching retirement, creating risks around the loss of critical skills and organisational knowledge.
- Limited internal career pathways
- Insufficient data or workforce analytics to identify talent gaps early or track employee potential effectively.
- Budget constraints

Addressing these issues requires proactive planning, implementing appraisal systems, mentoring programs, targeted development opportunities, and a stronger alignment between workforce data and strategic goals.

## Reporting & Workforce Systems

Reporting and workforce system strategies aim to improve decision-making through accurate, timely, and integrated HR data. In Council, there are several challenges that limit effectiveness including:

- Outdated and fragmented systems that make data collection and analysis inefficient or inconsistent.
- Limited integration between HR, payroll, and operational systems can result in poor visibility of workforce trends, hindering strategic planning.
- Challenges around staff capability in using workforce analytics tools and interpreting data for planning purposes.
- Budget constraints may delay system upgrades or limit access to modern HR technologies like cloud-based platforms or automation.
- Data accuracy, security, and compliance with privacy regulations is also an ongoing concern.

To address these challenges, councils need to invest in system modernisation, staff training, and the development of clear policies, data governance and reporting frameworks.

## Performance & Accountability

Performance and accountability strategies in Council includes aligning staff performance with organisational goals, improving service delivery, and ensuring transparency. The challenges at Council include:

- Establishing clear, measurable performance indicators that reflect both individual contributions and broader community outcomes.
- Inconsistent application of performance review processes including limited training for managers on the review process
- Lack of timely feedback can weaken accountability and staff engagement.
- Cultural resistance to performance management, especially where expectations and consequences are not clearly communicated.

Linking performance data to strategic planning and decision-making is often hampered by inadequate systems or data gaps.



Overcoming these challenges requires strong leadership, consistent performance frameworks, manager capability-building, and integration of performance metrics into broader planning and reporting structures.

## Legislative Compliance & Risk

In Council, legislative compliance and risk strategies ensure lawful operations, protection of public resources, and maintaining community trust.

However, Council has found challenges which include:

- Complexity and volume of regulatory requirements, which can change frequently across state and federal levels.
- Limited internal expertise or resources may hinder timely compliance, particularly in specialised areas.
- Managing risk across diverse services and departments with fewer dedicated compliance staff.
- Inconsistent policies, documentation, and training leads to gaps in awareness and application of compliance responsibilities.

Effective strategies require clear governance frameworks, regular staff training, internal audits, and the integration of compliance and risk management into everyday operations and strategic planning.



## Summary Action Plan

This plan supports the ongoing implementation of workforce strategies identified in this workforce management plan including the *recommended year* the action is likely to occur

| Identified risk or gap                                    | Action  | Responsibility                              | FY 26 | FY 27 | FY 28 | FY 29 |
|---|---|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Attraction and Recruitment -                              | Establish a recruitment procedure which identifies timeframes and modernises recruitment strategies incl social media   | Human Resources & Corporate Services        | X     | X     | X     | X     |
| Learning & Development - Learning Management System (LMS) | SALT (Online learning platform) to be implemented prior to FY 2026 and all staff familiar with the program upon implementation. Further utilisation of the platform will assist onboarding and compliance | Human Resources, Corporate Services and WHS | X     | X     |       |       |
| Policies - Monitor, evaluate and update                   | Identify policies needing updating as priority followed by gaps in policy and processes [Continuous Improvement]  | Human Resources, WHS & Corporate Services   | X     | X     | X     | X     |
| Development and Growth Review Framework                   | With Managers and Supervisor input, identify a process for implementation of a robust cyclic Development and Growth system <i>(Previously known as a Performance Management framework)</i>                | Human Resources                             |       | X     |       |       |
| Learning and Development - Mentoring program              | More experienced staff, and staff transitioning into retirement to provide mentoring to new and/or inexperienced staff  | Human Resources                             |       |       | X     | X     |
| Employee Engagement & Retention - Creating Values         | <b>Creation of values</b> as a foundation of how we work and who we are as a Council  | Human Resources                             | X     | X     |       |       |
| Employee Engagement & Retention - Living the Values       | <b>Creating a culture</b> where every team member behaves in accordance with the values.  | Human Resources                             |       |       | X     | X     |



| Identified risk or gap   | Action   | Responsibility               | FY 26 | FY 27 | FY 28 | FY 29 |
|--|--|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Graduate, Trainee and Apprentices                                | <p>Identify opportunities within the organisation.</p> <p>Aligning this focus with funding opportunities.</p> <p>Create a collaborative working relationship with Blayney High School.</p>   | Human Resources & Executive  | X     | X     | X     | X     |
| WHS Committee collaboration for initiatives                      | <p>Continuous improvement in the WHS environment including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> <li>• Employee wellbeing</li> <li>• Mental health awareness</li> <li>• Engaging staff in initiatives that will receive rebate funding</li> </ul>  | WHS & Human Resources        | X     | X     | X     | X     |
| Encouraging and reinforcing equal employment opportunities       | Target segments of the workforce that have traditionally been under-represented e.g. Females in outdoor operations roles.  | Human Resources              | X     | X     | X     | X     |
| Develop training and secondment opportunities for critical roles | <p>Identify gaps where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Acting or Higher Duties” may apply</li> <li>• Formal training or secondment opportunities may exist for employees transitioning into other roles or retirement</li> <li>• Opportunity to collaborate with other organisations</li> </ul> <p>This is an ongoing process</p> | Human Resources & Operations | X     | X     | X     | X     |

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