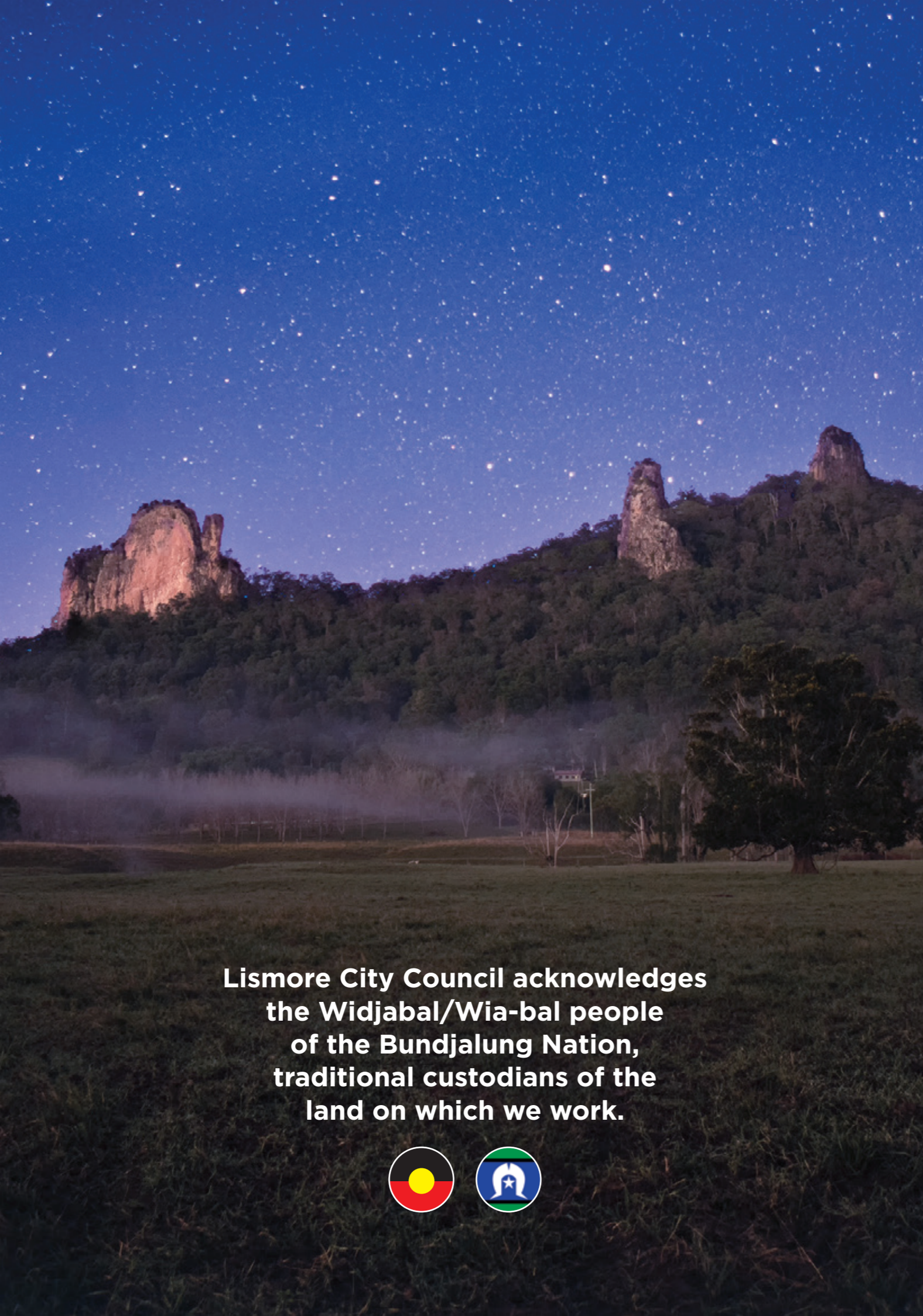




Re-Imagine Lismore
**Workforce
Management Plan
2023 - 2026**



**Lismore City Council acknowledges
the Widjabal/Wia-bal people
of the Bundjalung Nation,
traditional custodians of the
land on which we work.**



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About our Workforce Management Plan

Lismore City Council's Workforce Management Plan (WMP) aims to attract, retain and develop the best talent for all roles within Council. A great culture will deliver exceptional services for a recovering community, now and into the future. The aim of this WMP is to not only have enough people and skill sets to deliver services but to ensure the organisation is digital, adaptable for the future and resilient to change in unpredictable times.

Over the last few years our organisation has been tested like never before with bushfires, COVID-19, the February 2022 natural disaster, changes in leadership and skills shortages, all of which require high levels of adaptability. We are in a volatile employment environment that requires agility and re-imagining what it means to be an Employer of Choice in a very competitive and contemporary market.



The key priorities of our Workforce Management Plan are:

1. Our people have the right skills and capability through investment in training and development, ultimately retaining and recruiting to mitigate the skills shortage
2. We are an agile organisation that embraces change and innovative ways of working
3. We are friendly, safe and inclusive, and support both employees and leaders to thrive, resulting in win-win outcomes.

These principles underpin the Workplace Management Plan and everything we do at Council. We are committed to delivering programs, facilities and services that ensure access and equity for all.

Re-imagine working life

To secure the best talent and retain our current staff, Council has re-imagined how we approach our culture, our people and our way of operating.

"Our overall strategy is to turn challenges into opportunities."

The traditional notion of employment, with the employer holding the power, has been flipped on its head. COVID-19 is a worldwide phenomenon in terms of how it has greatly changed the employment sector across all industries.

Globally, people - including our own staff - swiftly adapted to new ways of working. As a result, employee expectations have changed: employees expect more and are looking for the same flexibility they demonstrated during the pandemic. It is a workers' market and organisations like Council need to adapt to new ways of working.

When we re-imagine our workplace, we see a future where we are a modern, people-focussed workplace grounded in innovation, safety, wellbeing and development.

All initiatives are derived from best-practice and extensive research through analysis of the employment sector globally, nationally and locally.

Our people have been surveyed, our data analysed and evaluated, and the most modern research has been embedded throughout, and we have analysed our gap. Our overall strategy is to turn challenges into opportunities.

Council aims to be a modern and innovative organisation, underpinned by a people-centred culture of wellbeing alongside investing in the development, diversity, and leadership of our people.

Integrated Planning and Reporting

The Workforce Management Plan is a holistic document, a resourcing a component of Local Government IP&R alongside the Asset Management Plan and the Long-Term Financial Plan.

The Workforce Management Plan incorporates:

- Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032
- Capacity, Capability & Recovery Roadmap 2022-2025
- Reconciliation Action Plan 2022 - 2024
- Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan 2023

Analysis of the employment sector includes analysis of international, national and local employment trends alongside internal metrics, data and staff surveys.

In the design of this strategy the following sources were reviewed:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- 2021 & 2022 White Papers by PWC, McKinsey, Forbes, Deloitte and Harvard.
- National Skills Commission of Australia and 2022 Jobs Summit
- Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT)
- People & Culture data and metrics
- Staff qualitative data
- FY21 PWC Local Government Performance Excellence Program
- Lismore City Council Reconciliation Action Plan
- Respect@Work
- 2021 Set the Standard report
- NSW Government: Women NSW
- Australian Human Resources Institute
- Australian Press
- Common law as it relates to Work, Health & Safety

Asking the right questions

When developing our WMP a variety of integrated complexities are considered before forming solutions.

What are our national and regional challenges?

What does the employment sector currently look like?

How do we improve?

What are our former HR benchmarks in relation to our people?

What do we need to change to set us up for future success?

What do our people think about our organisation?

How do we adapt to constant change?

How do we turn challenges into opportunities?

What do industry experts say about the changing face of employment in 2023 and beyond?

What are we going to do and when are we going to do it?

How do we measure that we have achieved our goals?

Our region

WUCA

is the new normal

Volatile

Changes to work and our surrounding environment are occurring more often.

Uncertain

We cannot predict that things will stay the same.

Complex

Many differing factors can influence decisions, plans and capability.

Ambiguity

The volatility and uncertainty we are facing in the current employment sector requires plans and strategies that are flexible but are also comprehensive enough to deal with complexity and ambiguity.

Our region has suffered several, unprecedented natural and global disasters in recent years.

This has greatly affected people through losing homes, services, health care and other fundamental changes to everyday life.

- 2018-2022: Housing crisis
- 2019: Severe drought
- 2019: Bushfires
- 2020: Minor to Moderate flood
- 2020 - 2022: COVID-19
- 2022: Worst flooding disaster in Australian history

These events have had a major impact on the wellbeing of people across the Northern Rivers, including our staff.

Yet these are not the only challenges for Council.

External factors influencing the workforce



COVID-19 Pandemic

Working life has greatly changed since the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic. The change in business and operations happened swiftly. Organisations and their people rapidly became a remote workforce, requiring remote leadership and remote collaboration. Employees adapted quickly yet came out of the pandemic with stronger expectations from their employers.

Employees showed great flexibility and adaptability as they continued to deliver services, creating home offices and using online meeting tools, with many inviting their peers and leaders into their houses. Personal and professional life suddenly had very little boundaries or delineation.

During the pandemic, an estimated 500,000 workers left Australia to return to their home countries. After the global lockdowns, many young (and older) Australian's left the country to seek experiences overseas that they had been denied to them for two years.

National Skills Shortage

With the mass exodus of workers as a result of COVID-19, Australia has found itself with a national skills shortage.

Workers now have greater ability to pick and choose where they work. The demand for workers at all levels, in all organisations has increased rapidly over the past two years. The power dynamic has changed.

Council has not been immune to this shortage. Forty eight essential roles within the organisation are identified as having strong shortages. Skills shortages are identified in professional, trades and plant operation capacities.

The Great Resignation

The Great Resignation was predicated in America early 2021, in Australia it began in January 2022.

There is more demand for workers than supply in the jobs market, giving Australian workers more options, better working conditions and higher wages.

Due to the large amount of people leaving the country, many job opportunities have arisen, providing employees a large 'choice' of where they want to work.

The number of jobs advertised in Australia reached 309,900 in August 2022, a 42% increase from the same time in 2021. That is double the amount of role vacancies in one year. This has never been seen in the Australian employment sector.

Impacts of the Clean Up

Unique to Lismore is the influx of State Government agencies in the area to work on all the facets that our region requires to rebuild.

Many of these newly formed state government agencies have a much larger salary budget than local governments.

Council simply cannot compete. A role that may be \$80,000 within in the Local Government sector is \$120,000 in the State Government sector. Council simply cannot compete with the wages and funding that is afforded to public servants within State Government.

Externally our challenges are:

- Employees expect more and Local Government does not have the incentives it did 30 years ago. Organisations require a point-of-difference over and above competitors, this includes private business.
- Skills at all levels are in demand and we have a finite amount of people in the region.
- Tempting people to move to the region is challenging as housing is expensive and in huge demand. Local people, our staff, who lost their houses are still uncertain as to what their future looks like.
- Inability to hire plant of good condition affecting our service delivery to the community.

Housing Shortage

The Northern Rivers had a housing crisis prior to the natural disaster in February 2022. From 2020, if a person from another region applied for a role, the likelihood of finding housing was low, with the most affected people on lower incomes. Our biggest flood in history which took all of us by surprise, decimated the homes of people who had lived here for generations and those on lower incomes. Not only is this socially and demographically a catastrophic result, it has further hindered the ability to employ people. In September 2021, the average asking price for a property was \$642,776, compared with \$818,316 in September 2022.

In September 2021 the average rent was \$565, in September 2022 the rent was \$581.¹



Let's look inside Council.

Who are we?



563

people work at Council in either full-time, part-time, casual or on a fixed term basis

362

people work full-time

115

people work part-time

Indoor Gender Data

367

staff fill indoor roles

- 214 are held by those who identify as women
- 35 people have not self-identified
- 118 are held by those who identify as men

Outdoor Gender Data

196

staff fill outdoor roles

- 11 are held by those who identify as women
- 13 people have not self-identified
- 172 are held by those who identify as men

Graduates, Cadets, Trainees and Apprentices



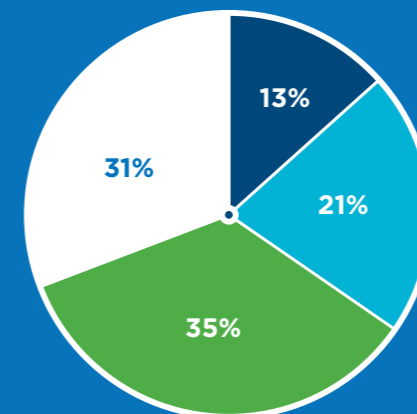
- 15 people fill these entry level roles
- 53% are identify as women
- 27% identify as men
- 20% have not self-identified

Senior Leaders



- At the beginning of July 2022, 100% of filled roles within the Senior Leadership Team were held by men
- Of the four new Senior Leaders hired post July 2022, three are women

Overall Generation



- **Gen Z:** Entering the employment market
- **Gen Y:** Career building
- **Gen X:** Peak of their careers
- **Baby Boomers:** Height of knowledge

Internal metrics

Benchmarks by PWC for FY 2020 and FY 2021,
Staff 2022 Engagement Survey.



Focus: WOMEN

Both qualitative and quantitative data clearly indicate women have been subject to conscious and unconscious bias, inclusive of micro and macro aggression for some years.

1. A third (33.55) of women employed left within their first year, men left at about half that rate.

High turnover rates in the first year of employment indicates a failing in the recruitment and onboarding process alongside not having the tools required to do the job. Culture is also significant with first-year turnover results. When women are leaving at twice the rate of men, a red flag is drawn, indicating that our culture requires focus on gender and inclusion.

2. No women were internally promoted to leadership roles in either 2020 or 2021

Both of these benchmarks are extremely concerning. Ultimately it can be concluded that our culture is not women friendly and women in the workplace must be a conscious consideration both culturally and within career progression.

What feedback are women giving?



Focus: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Council has spent only 50% of development budgets in FY21, average spend on individual, team and cohorts was below other councils.

What feedback are staff giving us about development?

Staff

- 50% were satisfied with development
- 30% wanted more development

Leaders

- 46% have not accessed training
- 80% of leaders want development



Training, development and succession planning is not only essential to mitigate the external challenges Council is faced with but increases employee engagement. A major focus on training and developing our own is required to mitigate the skills and housing shortage.

Communication and connecting

- 80% of respondents believe communication from senior leaders is lacking.
- 85% of people felt trust is not evident between senior leaders and staff.

Council's Senior Leadership team has been unstable for several years, including a high turnover of General Managers and leaders coming and going at a fast rate. Instability in leadership has impacts on staff and culture.

- Often the default answer when proposing exciting new projects and ideas is 'No'. I understand budget constraints and maintenance issues but the 'No' culture is stifling.
- Break down the barriers of 'us' and 'them'. It feels a bit of a 'silo' culture between some departments and programs/applications change without warning and training.
- The culture that resists change and new more advanced systems.
- Not being able to attract great staff as our reputation has taken a beating and we are not currently considered an employer of choice.

There is a fear culture within the organisation which has been forming for some years. Staff have become paralysed in making decisions and thinking outside of the box on how to improve and think differently. This hinders the growth of people and ultimately the organisation.

Psychosocial wellbeing

- It is heartening to see an emphasis, finally, on staff mental health. I would like to see this continue and to be followed through.
- The people need to be heard and supported

Staff at council are subject to a very negative narratives on social media and unsavoury behaviour by the public in the course of carrying out their jobs. Staff require support and respect.

Yet our people are committed and genuinely have passion for what they do.

- "I genuinely try to give value to the community, our customer and our employer."
- "I lead a team of extraordinarily capable and dedicated professionals."
- "We are locals doing the best contribution that we can. We are part of the community."

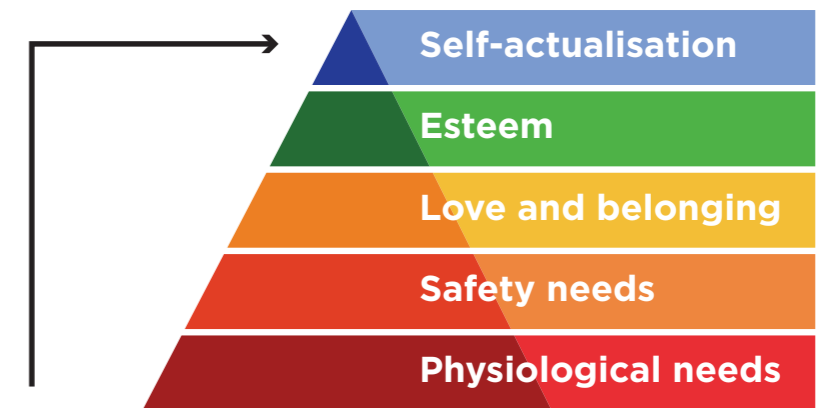


Forbes predicts that business will focus on seeing people as humans rather than resources and will assist in facilitating growth personally and professionally with a focus on physical, mental, emotional and financial health.²

The Human Experience over the Employee Experience is also endorsed by the NSW Government³ and Safe Work as industry prepares to focus on psychosocial influences to culture and injury.

McKinsey and Forbes predict that mental health diagnosis will be less stigmatised and there will be an openness, acceptance, and compassion towards those with ADHD, OCD, ASD and Bipolar.

Implementing initiatives aligned with Maslow's **Hierarchy of Needs** (psychosocial) as a culture will keep staff. Business should address NEEDS to be a step ahead.



Additionally, analysis into the employment sector highlights the following:

- ✓ Employees overwhelmingly expect flexible options
- ✓ Employees want to re-imagine how productivity is measured
- ✓ Employees want to work in a diverse team

Leaders are advised to:

- ✓ Recruit with a broader lens
- ✓ Prioritise learning and development
- ✓ Monitor output not hours worked
- ✓ Have a culture of inclusivity

Challenges into opportunities



Challenges

There is a skills shortage that must be mitigated

Business must educate and skill workforce

Employees will expect to have flexibility

Consistent skilling and reskilling into digital changes for all the workforce

Business will facilitate personal / professional growth; psychosocial will be the norm

Employee monitoring will be replaced by performance monitoring

Mental health and seeking help will no longer carry stigma

Personal wellbeing will be a main factor on Employee Value Proposition

Inclusivity and diversity continue to be a key focus for not only business but for employees

What are we going to do?

Strategies for a sustainable and engaged workforce

Psychosocial Support

Stable Leadership

Positive Culture

Professional Development

Diversity & Inclusion

What are we going to do?



- Shake things up, focus on our EVP, culture and holistic safety and wellbeing of our people.
- Modernise local government, go over and above our competitors, show we value our people.
- Look within to spot unrealised talent, promote within, give people opportunities and freedoms to exercise their ideas and make the organisation what they want. Allow people to realise their potential.
- Invest in mental health and professional development.
- Focus on perspectives, behaviours, engagement and communication through sharing stories, taking people on the journey and training.
- Set clear expectation on what it means to be part of the Lismore City Council team.

What is an Employee Value Proposition?



The unique set of benefits that an employee receives in return for the skills, capabilities, and experience they bring to a company.

It encompasses the central reasons that people are proud and motivated to work there, such as the inspiring vision or distinctive culture.

When integrated into all aspects of a business, a strong EVP will help retain top performers and attract the best external talent.⁴



Vision for Lismore City Council

**We are a modern,
people-focussed
workplace grounded
in innovation,
safety, well-being,
and development!**

PRIORITY ONE:

Our people have the right skills and capability through investment in training and development, ultimately retaining and recruiting to mitigate the skills shortage.

PRIORITY TWO:

We are an agile organisation that embraces change and innovative ways of working.

PRIORITY THREE:

We are friendly, safe, inclusive, and support both employees and leaders to thrive resulting in win-win outcomes.

PRIORITY ONE:

Our people have the right skills and capability through investment in training and development, ultimately retaining and recruiting to mitigate the skills shortage.

Organisations will need to prioritise reskilling and upskilling to attract and retain the talent they need to make their businesses grow. Those that do will not only boost the motivation of their existing workers but will gain the attention of the brightest new recruits and position themselves to emerge from the pandemic not just where they were, but in a stronger, better position to move forward.⁵

GOAL 1.1: New starters are set up for success

GOAL 1.2: We have clear pathways for people to develop and learn

GOAL 1.3: Our leaders have the skills to spot strengths, be supportive and empower

GOAL 1.1: New starters are set up for success.

What does organisational culture truly mean?

It refers to “the practice or method by which things get done” in a social environment. It encompasses the values, practices and procedures based on policies of the organisation. In sum, it is individuals as a team agreeing upon the common values that bind them.⁶

Strategies

- Review and improve recruitment including branding, spread and voice
- Simplify communication including contracts and formal communications
- Implement digital onboarding and probation programs
- Implement Day One Induction and quarterly corporate induction
- Develop an Employment Acceleration Pathway with a focus on local schools
- Redesign position descriptions where soft skills and behaviours are part of the job

Measures

- Cloud-based software implemented for onboarding, probation
- PDs, advertisements and communications are modern and friendly
- Decrease in attrition in the first year
- Training conducted on soft skills including bias, communication and emotional intelligence
- Website redesigned, LinkedIn active

GOAL 1.2: We have clear pathways for people to develop and learn.

To support individuals, organisations need to be communicating the skills that will be important in the future and give employees both the tools and the responsibilities to acquire these.⁷

Strategies

- Performance Management Program implemented with a focus on development and two-way feedback
- Implement a Learning Management System (LMS)
- Development pathways are designed indicating skillsets and expectations for differing roles
- Maximise opportunity through Smart & Skilled and government grants
- Develop a leadership framework and behaviours

Measures

- Recruitment and onboarding program implemented with digital technology
- Development Pathways designed in the LMS
- Annual reviews with development aspirations
- Positive qualitative feedback from staff
- Increase in internal promotion, field staff to the office environment
- Decrease in attrition in the first year

GOAL 1.3: Our leaders have the skills to spot strengths, be supportive and empower

Leadership is the accomplishment of a goal through the direction of human assistants - a human and social achievement that stems from the leader's understanding of his or her fellow workers and the relationship of their individual goals to the group's aim.⁸

Strategies

- Develop a leadership framework with a focus on soft skills to empower and engage
- Facilitate high-calibre leadership training to push the organisation through change
- Leadership behaviours: what they do and do not do
- Spot talent and develop an emerging leaders online program
- Develop strong measures for accountability and development
- Facilitate the down-up communications for improvement and new ideas

Measures

- Capability framework implemented
- New behaviours implemented targeting leadership
- Leaders report on team achievements and personal goals through reviews
- Reduction in claims, both physical and psychological
- New ideas and suggestions program implemented

PRIORITY TWO:

We are an agile organisation that embraces change and innovative ways of working.

An adaptation business strategy is about recognising the need to change and then making changes to how you do business. This could mean changing your customer service, or even your company culture.⁹

GOAL 2.1: We think outside of the box and are adaptable for current and future success

GOAL 2.2: Our people are skilled in digital technology and efficiencies

GOAL 2.1: We think outside of the box and are adaptable for current and future success

Strategies

- Embracing change is our norm, we are out with the old and in with the new
- We invite people to challenge the norm and we are receptive to their ideas
- We encourage respectful debate on new ways of working
- We are idea focussed not process focussed, efficiency is our number one driver
- We take measured risks; we have permission to fail with a consequence of improving for success

Measures

- Staff engagement survey improves in all counts
- Reduction in sick days
- Reduction in service times
- New systems (software, workflow, structure, process) are in place and reported on

GOAL 2.2: Our people are skilled in digital technology and efficiencies

To support individuals, organisations need to be communicating the skills that will be important in the future and give employees both the tools and the responsibilities to acquire these.¹⁰

Strategies

- Training is our first consideration when change is upon us
- Field staff are skilled in digital technology and time is spent to teach and coach
- Process and ways of working are consistently reviewed for more efficiencies
- Legacy processes are dismantled increasing efficiencies

Measures

- Easily accessible and cloud-based systems are implemented, and time is taken for training
- Staff have access to computers at the depots
- Reporting from systems improves
- Reporting from staff improves including safety and accountability

PRIORITY THREE:

We are friendly, safe, we embrace diversity and inclusion, and support both employees and leaders to thrive resulting in win-win outcomes.

To position themselves to win in the future, companies will need to meet employees where they are.¹¹

GOAL 3.1: Our holistic culture of wellbeing encompasses the well-being and safety of our people

GOAL 3.2: Women hold senior leadership roles and non-traditional roles in the field

GOAL 3.3: We are welcoming, friendly, modern and innovative

GOAL 3.4: We are a physically and psychologically safe place to work

GOAL 3.1: Our holistic culture of wellbeing encompasses the wellbeing and safety of our people

PWC and Beyond Blue's research: Mental Wealth¹² suggests Australian companies can reap \$2.30 for every \$1 spent on workplace mental health strategies.

Our insurer provides a yearly rebate to directly invest back into the well-being our people making our culture of wellbeing fully funded!

Strategies: Health & Wellbeing

- We facilitate a safe environment for people to talk about their mental health and we accommodate neurodiverse people with compassion and understanding without judgement
- We consider the individual needs of staff and develop plans to minimise physical injury by focussing on psychosocial issues through two-way conversation
- We look out for each other and raise the alarm if we have serious concerns

How do we measure success?

- Improvement in staff survey feedback
- We connect with each other through staff development days and consistent communication to staff by leaders. Mental Health training and initiatives implemented
- We are open to people's ideas, as we believe engagement and collaboration are the cornerstones of a successful culture
- We have clear internal procedures as to how things are done at Council

GOAL 3.2: Women hold senior leadership roles and non-traditional roles in the field through equitable solutions

Women are more likely than men to have their competence questioned and their authority undermined, and women of colour are especially likely to face disrespectful behaviour.¹³

Strategies

- We adhere to our Equal Employment and Opportunity Management Plan, Reconciliation Action Plan and are guided by Respect@Work and the Diversity Council
- We create programs centred around equity and opportunity
- We consciously talent spot women and identify opportunities for development and promotion
- We respect women for their expertise and ability before making assumptions

Measures

- Increase in women in non-traditional, leadership and senior leadership roles
- Comprehensive training in sexual harassment, domestic violence and casual sexism
- Reduction in women's attrition in the first year (FY2019/2020 & FY2020/21)
- Increase in internal promotions (FY2019/2020 & FY2020/21)
- Improve qualitative data regarding women at Council
- Completion of the Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan and the Reconciliation Action Plan

GOAL 3.3: We are welcoming, friendly, modern and innovative

Strategies: Employee Value Proposition

- Facilitate both professional and personal growth through internal initiatives
- We have fun and we are flexible
- Modernise the workplace environment and staff facilities
- We engage, empower and develop our people and bring them together
- Implement a gold-star Employee Value Proposition that is inclusive and person-centred
- Our people are heard as we listen to their ideas and work towards collective leadership

Measures

- Internal initiatives to boost morale are implemented
- Team gatherings are planned, and feedback is requested for continuous improvement
- Our environment is inviting and has all the facilities to get the job done
- We are rewarded for our efforts

GOAL 3.4: We are a physically and psychologically safe place

Staff notice what you do. When you show a commitment to safety and make positive changes they know you are genuine.¹⁴

Strategies: Safety is part of the job, not something extra!

- Develop new behaviours and procedures in the workplace
- Our people are pro-active about safety as it is part of the job, not something extra
- We have an education-based safety culture and engage with staff regularly
- We have honest conversations, even if they are difficult, without fear of retribution
- All staff are regularly trained face-to-face on safety, both physical and psychological

Measures

- Reductions in lost time injuries
- Reduction in psychological claims, physical injuries both minor and major
- Reduce our premiums alongside reduction in sick days
- Staff are fully trained in the use of our safety and technology
- Staff proactively report in VAULT with increases in reporting





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<https://sqmresearch.com.au/weekly-rents.php?region=nsw-North+Coast+NSW&type=r&t=1>

We Set the Tone: Eliminating Everyday Sexism

<https://championsofchangecoalition.org/We-Set-the-Tone/>

What Your Future Employees Want Most

<https://hbr.org/2021/05/what-your-future-employees-want-most>

Women in the Workplace 2022

<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/women-in-the-workplace>

The workforce of the future

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