

# 4. Our People

*This section is Council's Workforce Plan, prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Amendment (Planning and Reporting) Act 2009 and the associated Guidelines and Manual.*

## Part One – Context and Framework

Council's workforce comprises around 1261 people including 971 permanent (full-time and part-time), 147 temporary and 143 casual staff.

Changing workforce demographics will have a significant effect on our organisation, particularly over the next ten or so years. One of the most significant factors is the ageing of the workforce – as large numbers of 'baby boomers' retire, they will take with them years of experience, knowledge and expertise. Over the next ten years, 37% of Council's permanent workforce is eligible to retire, and there will be more staff taking long service leave breaks. There is also expected to be fewer people working over the next five to ten years, which means that there will be strong competition to attract and keep staff.

There are current, and continuing, skills shortages in professions such as planning, early childhood teaching and engineering. These factors contribute to a higher turnover in Council's workforce which will continue to create significant impacts, particularly in the technical, professional and managerial areas. Major impacts on the organisation will include loss of corporate knowledge (knowledge of the organisation, the local area, and of local government); lost productivity; the loss of continuity with applications, services or projects; and an increase in the costs required to recruit and train new staff.

Whilst some councils find it difficult to attract new employees to work in outer metropolitan locations, we have an extensive local workforce, with 91% of our staff living in the City itself, or in adjacent suburbs and council areas. To build on this advantage and ensure that Council's future employment needs can be met, we need to ensure that the professional and technical training is available and accessible for the region's residents. Council's trainee program contributes to this outcome.

The Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG) has developed a Blueprint for a Local Government Workforce, which recommends actions relating to:

- National Local Government workforce data set
- New ways of working
- Employer of choice
- Training and education
- Workforce participation and social inclusion
- Capacity and capability
- Communication, coordination and collaboration.

Council, as a leader in this area, has already established a range of proactive approaches and policies that respond to the changes we expect to see in our current and future workforces. Collaboration with other leading councils, and partners such as the ACELG, provide opportunities to share information and manage the future of our workforce wisely.

In 2010, the State Government reinforced its earlier recognition of Penrith as a Regional City in its 25 year planning framework (now called the Metropolitan Plan 2036). Penrith City will need to accommodate 25,000 new dwellings and 40,000 new jobs within the next 25 years to meet the needs of its growing communities. Council's priority is to ensure this growth is accompanied by investment in infrastructure to ensure all the attributes that attract people to Penrith are protected or enhanced, and future growth is supported by good public transport and community facilities.

Council needs to continue positioning its workforce to respond to the changes in the City and its communities. A diverse workforce that better reflects the City's demographic profile will assist in building positive relationships with our local communities.

### 4.1 Purpose of the Workforce Plan

Council needs a well skilled and cohesive community of employees, in addition to a sound financial base. Building staff capacity, and encouraging their active involvement in contributing to the future of the organisation, is critical to Council's future. As with the City's residents, Council's employees will have different needs and priorities at different points in their life cycle.

The purpose of the Workforce Plan is to ensure that the Council's workforce is structured appropriately to respond to the long-term goals and community objectives in the *Community Strategic Plan* and *Delivery Program* – the right people in the right places with the right skills doing the right jobs. It provides Council with a platform to identify and consider issues the organisation is facing now, and may experience in the future (eg skills shortages, succession planning, meeting legislative requirements, retaining and attracting quality staff). It requires Council to develop strategies to support its staff, particularly in terms of learning and development, and strengthening workplace equity and diversity and governance.

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## 4.2 Integrated planning

Council's draft Workforce Development Strategy and Action Plan was recently reviewed as part of implementing the new Integrated Planning and Reporting legislation, and accompanying Guidelines and Manual.

The Workforce Plan is a key element of the *Resource Strategy*, together with the Asset Management Strategy and Long Term Financial Plan. The *Resource Strategy* determines Council's capacity to manage its finances, workforce and assets in delivering the programs and priorities in the *Community Strategic Plan* and *Delivery Program 2009-2013*.

## 4.3 Implementing, measuring and monitoring the Workforce Plan

The *Resource Strategy* has a timeframe of ten years, which extends beyond Council's adopted four year *Delivery Program 2009-2013*. This overall *Resource Strategy* will be reviewed every four years, to ensure that it continues to appropriately respond to Council's commitments in each successive *Delivery Program*, including the appropriate alignment of the workforce to deliver Council's priorities.

The Workforce Plan actions in this chapter have been integrated with the relevant service activities in Council's *Delivery Program* (Corporate Workforce program). Progress on specific Workforce Plan actions will be reported every six months, as part of the regular *Delivery Program* review. The Workforce Plan will be reviewed each year, to ensure it remains contemporary and responsive to the organisation's workforce challenges.

## Part Two – Our Workforce and Workplace

### 4.4 Workforce Structure

#### Workplace organisation

Penrith Council has a workforce of 1261 employees which comprises 791 full time permanent employees, 180 part time employees, 147 temporary employees, and 143 casual staff.

Around one third of Council's workforce is involved in constructing and maintaining the City's assets and infrastructure, and one third provides childcare services. Council is one of the largest local government providers of children's services in NSW, with a large proportion of the casual and temporary employees working in this field, primarily due to the 'year to year' funding arrangements. The remaining third carry out a range of professional and administrative activities. Council also supports three entities – Ripples St Marys, Penrith Performing & Visual Arts, and Penrith Whitewater. The workforce data provided in this chapter excludes Council's entities.

Council's workplace and workforce needs to be responsive to the changing needs of our communities. Over the past ten years, the organisation has been required to absorb the transfer of state and federal functions without additional resources, and substantially increased levels of measuring, monitoring and reporting on Council activities. Council also responds to the specific needs of our communities where they have not been delivered by the private sector, such as introducing additional places for younger children (0-2 years old) in Council's childcare centres. The workplace and the workforce need to be flexible enough to expand and contract to meet these various needs without a 'boom and bust' environment being introduced.

Two years ago a major restructure of senior management created a new Executive Management Team, able to position Council for the future. The largest restructure in two decades involved the creation of eight 'Group Manager' positions to focus on the day to day operations. The General Manager is now supported by two Directors who focus on longer term planning and lead Penrith as we continue our transformation from a big centre to a major regional city. The organisation's new structure is shown on the next page.

Attracting, retaining and developing our staff is extremely important to Council and could not be achieved without a stable workforce that is not facing threats to job security and ad-hoc contractions in total employment numbers. To meet the changing needs of our communities, Council needs a flexible workforce that is motivated and empowered to be able to respond to those needs. Council is committed to building the capabilities of our workforce by providing development opportunities which enables staff to use their additional skills and knowledge in innovative ways that further enhances the delivery of Council's services.

Council has implemented a range of communication mechanisms, from the formal structures across the organisation such as Consultative Committees, to the more function specific forums such as team talks. These communication opportunities build staff understanding of the 'bigger picture' for the organisation in implementing the *Community Strategic Plan* and Council's *Delivery Program*. Council's annual Workforce Forums also provide staff with opportunities to discuss and identify initiatives to improve our effectiveness, productivity and communications.

The Employee Performance and Planning Review system links the achievement of *Delivery Program* objectives and service activities to most employee position descriptions, performance plans and remuneration levels. Council's learning and development opportunities are also linked to individual performance plans and broader Council strategic and operational objectives.

**General Manager - Alan Stoneham**

**Directors - Craig Butler & Barry Husking**

**Group Managers**

Group	Program	Service	Department and Manager
<b>CITY INFRASTRUCTURE Wayne Mitchell</b>			
	Major Infrastructure Projects and Design	Design & Project Management	Major Projects <i>Craig Ross</i>
	Roads, Footpaths and Buildings	Building Maintenance & Construction Civil Construction & Maintenance Fleet & Plant Maintenance	City Works <i>Hans Meijer</i>
	Traffic, Parking and Drainage	Development Engineering Floodplain & Drainage Engineering Traffic Management, Parking & Road Safety	Engineering Services <i>Adam Wilkinson</i>
<b>CITY PRESENTATION David Burns</b>			
	Community Facilities	Cemeteries Neighbourhood Facilities Management	Public Domain Amenity & Safety <i>Yvonne Perkins</i>
	Public Spaces and Community Safety	Community Safety Public Domain Maintenance	
	Parks	Bushland Management City Parks	Parks <i>John Gordon</i>
	Sport and Recreation	Recreation & Leisure Facilities Management	Recreation <i>Andrew Robinson</i>
	Waste Management and Community Protection	Emergency Services Management Regulatory Control Waste Management	Waste & Community Protection <i>Tracy Chalk</i>
<b>FINANCE Vicki O'Kelly</b>			
	Corporate Finance	Financial Services Purchasing & Supply Operational Planning Risk Management & Insurance Property Development & Management	Financial Services <i>Andrew Moore</i> <i>Ken Lim</i> <i>Ken Muir</i> Property Development <i>Brian Griffiths</i>
<b>INFORMATION &amp; CUSTOMER RELATIONS Brian Steffen</b>			
	Community Information and Events	City Partnerships Marketing Customer Service  Communications	City Marketing <i>Vacant</i> Information Management & Technology <i>Chris Gardner</i> <i>Carl Spears</i>
	Corporate Support	Information Technology Mapping Information / GIS Records Management	Information Management & Technology <i>Chris Gardner</i>
	Libraries	Libraries	Library <i>Colin Stevenson</i>
<b>LEADERSHIP Ruth Goldsmith</b>			
	Planning and Advocacy	City Planning Regional Planning & Advocacy	Sustainability & Planning <i>Paul Grimson</i>
	Strategic Planning	Strategic Planning	
	Sustainability	Sustainability Planning	
<b>LEGAL &amp; GOVERNANCE Stephen Britten</b>			
	Corporate Governance	Corporate Governance Council & Executive Support Legal Services	Legal & Governance <i>Glenn Schuil</i> <i>Matthew Bullivant</i>
<b>PEOPLE and PLACES Roger Nethercote</b>			
	Children's Services	Children's Services	Children's Services <i>Janet Keegan</i>
	Community Wellbeing	Community & Cultural Development Lemongrove Retirement Village Neighbourhood Renewal	Community & Cultural Development <i>Erich Weller</i>
	Development Applications	Building Approvals & Certificates Development Applications	Development Services <i>Paul Lemm</i>
	Environmental and Health Management	Environmental Health	Environmental Health <i>Graham Liehr</i>
<b>WORKFORCE &amp; WORKPLACE Linden Barnett</b>			
	Corporate Workforce	Workforce & Workplace	Workforce & Workplace <i>Danielle Welsh</i>

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**Responses for the Future – *technology, resource sharing, strategic planning***

Council regularly reviews its processes and systems for all services to enable 'more to be delivered with less', as part of our commitment to continuous improvement. Over several years, this has enabled Council to improve service delivery and maintain community satisfaction levels without significantly increasing staff resources.

Council is pro-active in establishing and supporting initiatives to share resources, and avail itself of new opportunities in local government or outside the industry. Staff are encouraged to establish and develop professional and work based networks to further their own personal professional development, and to use that knowledge to encourage organisational change. Council has also forged strong partnerships with regional education institutions, including TAFE NSW – Western Sydney Institute and the University of Western Sydney. This partnership allows Council to offer both vocational and professional training to staff.

Council's Learning and Development Program addresses and enhances the capabilities for Managers and other supervisory staff in leading, managing and developing people. The organisation implements the Program through specific courses and sharing knowledge through mentoring and coaching initiatives. The Employee Performance Planning and Review (EPPR) system allows staff to express their strengths, areas for development and career ambitions. This information and the input of Coordinators and Managers allows Council the opportunity to assist employees in relation to their career aspirations and development. Where qualifications or technical requirements change, or professional certification is introduced, interim organisational solutions may be introduced while necessary training is completed.

The opportunities that new technologies bring to the organisation, of increased productivity and flexibility, reinforces Council's aspirations to be an attractive employer with a highly skilled, motivated and capable workforce that is equipped to deal with current and future challenges. Improved access to quality information that supports Council's decision making, management, teams and individuals is an important part of building future workforce capacity. Not only does the capture and use of improved data facilitate better decision making, it also enables staff to be more productive. Workplace change in the organisation is managed to minimise adverse effects on staff, and reflect the opportunities that such changes bring.

**Workforce Engagement in Change and Innovation**

Council has conducted a number of Workforce Forums (2008, 2009 and 2010) to engage staff in how the organisation can continue to improve and address the challenges of a diverse workforce. The first two Workforce Forums focussed on general workforce and workplace issues. The third, which was held in December 2010, addressed the more specific issue of gender equity.

These Forums have been complemented by employee surveys on leadership, development and recognition, workload, workplace culture, job satisfaction, gender equity, organisational values, and systems and processes. Information from the staff Forums and surveys has been used to inform and enhance a number of programs. Aside from large scale organisational change and improvement programs, Council has conducted many more specific reviews of service activities, sections and teams. In each instance, Council consulted with staff that may be impacted by the change to ensure that all options, ideas or possibilities are explored, new methods are assessed, the right option is chosen and all staff have been consulted. Annual risk management reviews ensure that the organisation regularly considers the potential for issues to emerge and change.

Council as an organisation is continually seeking new ways to engage with staff and improve the work environment, business processes and systems.



## Workforce Analysis and Planning

In 2008, the future of Council's workforce was analysed through a well-researched study, the *Workforce Development Discussion Paper*. The Discussion Paper informed the development of the draft Workforce Development Strategy and Action Plan, which provided policy directions in the management and development of the organisation's workforce. The broad areas and more specific issues addressed in the study examined our capacity to deliver a Strategic Workforce Development Plan, and also included:

- ageing workforce and the retention of corporate knowledge
- attraction and retention of staff
- development of leadership, management and professional capability
- skills shortages (planning, early childhood teaching and engineering)
- sustainability of Council's workforce
- work / life balance
- organisational culture.

Council aspires to be a leading employer with a highly skilled, motivated and capable staff, equipped to deal with current and future challenges. Attracting, developing and retaining our people is extremely important to Council and will be an increasing challenge in the future. Other key challenges for Council in ensuring our *Delivery Program* can be resourced and implemented, including in areas of skills shortages (such as planning, engineering and early childhood teaching) and with an ageing workforce.

Council values and invests in its staff through a strong occupational health and safety culture, employee planning and performance reviews, skills training and development and a variety of flexible leave provisions and working conditions to help balance work and lifestyle needs.

The *Workforce Development Strategy Discussion Paper* recommended that for Council to maintain a contemporary sustainable workforce capable of delivering the *Community Strategic Plan* and four year *Delivery Program*, the key policies that Council should strengthen are ones that respond to the following issues:

- work/life balance
- skills shortages
- workforce sustainability
- organisational culture.

<b>Strategic workforce planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attraction and retention of staff</li> <li>• Development of leadership, management and professional capability</li> <li>• Skill shortages</li> <li>• Sustainability of council's workforce</li> <li>• Work/life balance</li> </ul>
<b>Operational workforce and workplace issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occupational health and safety</li> <li>• Injury management</li> <li>• Employee and industrial relations</li> <li>• Performance management</li> <li>• Recruitment and selection</li> <li>• Learning and development</li> </ul>
<b>Organisation culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workplace equity and diversity</li> <li>• High performance culture</li> <li>• Safety culture</li> </ul>
<b>Workforce structures, systems, policies and procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equal employment opportunity</li> <li>• Grievance handling</li> </ul>

#### 4.5 Workforce Demographics

Council's workforce is a significant part of our City and our communities. Of our 1261 employees, nearly 61% live in Penrith. Another 30% live in the region, primarily the surrounding council areas of Blue Mountains (16%), Blacktown (8%), Hawkesbury (5%) and the Hills (1%). The remaining employees (just under 10%) live in other parts of Sydney, or further afield.

Just as the City's populations are aging, our workforce is also getting older. Our gender mix is also reflective of our communities, with 52.7% of our staff being female compared to 50.5% of our communities.

Whilst our communities across the City include people from many culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, that diversity is not well reflected in Council's current workforce. The strategic actions at the end of this chapter respond to the changes we anticipate in our workforce over the next decade.

Council has established a Diversity Reference Group to promote leading practice in the implementation of access and equity in Council's service delivery for residents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. As an organisation, our experiences with staff from different cultures and those who speak different languages has helped to inform Council's processes of engagement with residents through the Reference Group.

Council will continue to monitor and report on how well our workforce reflects our local communities' demographics. Recruitment, selection, 'onboarding' (inductions) and developmental policies and procedures are reviewed to ensure that Council attracts a wide field of applicants for available positions.

Through its policies Council also encourages mature age staff to remain at Council, and engages up to 100 trainees in a variety of different occupations. The traineeship numbers have grown from 6 in the year 2000, and these traineeships provide entry level opportunities in the areas of Childcare, Business Administration, Sport and Recreation, Information Technology, Horticulture, Construction and Hospitality.

Since 2000 Council has employed 374 trainees and many are still employed working across a wide range of Council service areas. Many of those employees who have remained, and a large number of the trainees who left, have gone onto further educational studies. Council is proud of its efforts in responding to our communities' aspirations for more jobs, training and education for the young adults in the region, as well as our endeavour to address the issues of an ageing workforce.

Council's *Community Strategic Plan* includes aspirations for neighbourhoods to be connected, with people caring for each other, and a sense of belonging. Council operates a large number of services that provide opportunities for residents to contribute to our communities by volunteering by assisting in local organisations, and working with cultural and recreational groups. Volunteers operate in a number of Council services, particularly bushcare, libraries, child care and events such as Australia Day. These services could not operate as effectively without the commitment of individuals in our communities and the support that Council provides for their activities.

Our demographics generally demonstrate our success in reflecting the demographics of our local communities, and also show where we can improve. Being as diverse as our communities enables the organisation to better understand the needs and aspirations of our residents, and the challenges they face in future years. Many of our workforce, as they retire, will continue to live here as part of our communities.

Council has established programs to work towards eliminating discrimination and harassment in the workplace. This has included the identification and elimination of any barriers to Equal Employment Opportunity for women, members of racial minorities, persons with disability, and any other group that has statutory protection from discriminatory action in employment. Beyond legislative compliance, Council seeks to be an inclusive and fair employer.

Table 5: Age of Council staff compared with the City's population

Ages of full-time, part-time and temporary employees (2009-2010)	Council staff		Penrith City (2006 census)	
	number	% workforce	number	% community
18-24 years	124	11.7%	18,614	10.5%
25-34 years	244	23.0%	25,646	14.5%
35-49 years	366	34.6%	37,396	21.1%
50-59 years	257	24.2%	21,654	12.2%
60-69 years	69	6.5%	10,949	6.2%

**Table 6 – Age of Employees by Gender**

	female	male	total
18-24 years	79	45	124
25-30 years	93	47	140
31-35 years	65	39	104
36-40 years	75	31	106
41-45 years	69	45	114
46-50 years	76	70	146
51-55 years	67	70	137
56-60 years	57	63	120
> 61 years	28	41	69
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>1060</b>

There is a reasonably good spread of age groups across Council's workforce. There are a greater number of female employees in each age group below 50 years.

### Workforce diversity

Penrith Council EEO Survey results and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2006 figures show the following:

**Table 7 – Workforce diversity**

	% workforce	% community
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)	9.7	20.5
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island (ATSI)	1.2	2.4
People with disability (PWD)	4.7	3.5
Women	52.7	50.5

The percentage of females in our City is 50.5%. Council's gender balance is positive with 52.7% of staff being female (primarily due to the number of women employed in our children's services area). There is, however, an underrepresentation of women in Council's senior and middle management teams.

The need to recognise, value and promote women in senior management and leadership roles within local government is as great as ever. With more and more baby boomers set to retire over the next decade, the participation of women in local government will become increasingly critical.

Without women in the workforce, the local government sector simply does not have the depth of talent, experience and skills to take over from those who will retire.

The Australian Local Government Women's Association has launched a national program in conjunction with the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government. The program, 50:50 Vision – Councils for Gender Equity, is available to all councils that choose to apply for accreditation. In September 2010 Council endorsed a statement of commitment towards gender equity, and increasing the representation of women in local government, both as elected members and senior managers and professionals.

Penrith Council was presented with a Bronze Award, under the national 50:50 Vision – Councils for Gender Equity accreditation program, on 26 November 2010, at the National Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA) Conference. In December 2010 Council held a Workforce Forum for around 100 staff on how the organisation could achieve gender equity.

Council has also actively worked to provide increased opportunities for persons with disability and persons of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, particularly through Council's traineeship programs. The success of this program is demonstrated with some of the trainees going on to secure permanent employment with Council following conclusion of the traineeship.

Council has a number of policies in place to help make us a more attractive employer, including flexible hours, working from home, training programs, and the opportunity to act in higher roles or different areas of Council's operations. Council also offers paid parental leave for both men and women, and actively encourages women to return to the organisation after having children.

An approach that introduces more flexible work practices (such as reduced working hours, job share, part-time work, short term contracts and working from home arrangements) can also address the interests of many current or potential employees, including:

- encouraging older workers to stay longer, by 'phasing in' retirement
- retaining staff in the age group 25 - 35 whose life stages may be changing (this is currently the age group with the highest level of staff turnover)
- encouraging women to return from maternity leave, and stay
- attracting or keeping younger generations, who expect greater flexibility that gives them the freedom to pursue lifestyle choices.

Council has had an Employee Assistance Program in place since 2005. It provides staff and their immediate family with access to free, professional counselling services. Council believes that less stress, regardless of whether the issues arise from inside or outside work, creates a happier and more productive workforce. As an organisation, our experience is that the overwhelming majority of issues raised by staff through the program are of a personal non-work related nature, and believes that this is indicative of the good employee/employer relationships that exist at Council.

All activities within the Workforce Plan are based on the principle of equal opportunity and access. Council has worked with diverse groups in our communities to ensure that Council's facilities and our workforce opportunities are available to all.

Strategic actions to support and enhance workforce diversity are:

- promote increased representation of women in Council, particularly at management level, and remove barriers to participation
- advance equity and diversity
- promote opportunities for persons with disability
- promote opportunities for persons of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background.

**Workforce Stability**

Around 64% of our employees have worked with Council 0 to 10 years, and 36% of staff have worked for more than 10 years at Council. The gender balance is relatively even, except where there have been more female staff that have worked between 0-5 years with Council. This is likely to reflect the large number of female trainees and staff working in Council's child care centres. The significant number of employees who have been working with Council for a long time brings a stability and cohesiveness to the workforce which is particularly strong as many of these staff also live locally.

**Table 8 – Length of service by Gender**

Length of service	female	male	total
0-5 years	298	177	475
6-10 years	126	80	206
11-15 years	81	58	139
16-20 years	48	49	97
> 20 years	56	87	143
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>1060</b>

Council's permanent workforce (full-time and part-time) has remained relatively stable in terms of turnover for the past four years. This has enabled Council to maintain corporate knowledge, and save expenditure on recruitment processes.

Over the past ten years Council's permanent workforce has grown by 11.3%. The more recent increase in permanent positions is mainly due to the introduction of additional children's services. Other positions have been established to ensure that Council meets its commitments to our communities in achieving the agreed Community Outcomes and Delivery Program priorities.



**Table 9 – Permanent positions, including vacancies**

	June 2007	June 2008	June 2009	June 2010
Full-time	764	770	778	791
Part-time	187	188	178	180
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>951</b>	<b>958</b>	<b>956</b>	<b>971</b>

The permanent positions by Occupational Categories have largely remained stable in the last financial year. Band 1 has almost half of all positions (43.05%) in the organisation, and the Professional Specialist is the Band with the most permanent positions (25.3% overall).

Although Council's workforce has remained fairly stable, and turnover has continued to decline, more than 30% of our current employees will be eligible to retire within the next 10 years which may add significantly to our turnover figures. A low staff turnover has helped Council cope with its expanding workload in recent years, as resources have not been needed to fill vacant positions, and corporate knowledge has been retained. One of the reasons for the low turnover has been the expansion of flexible work practices which has encouraged staff to remain with Council.

Council's total turnover rate for permanent staff during 2009-2010 was 7.36%. This is lowest turnover rate Council has experienced in the last 6 years. The Children's Services Department, whose turnover is traditionally higher than the organisation average due to the fluctuating needs of its operations, has seen its turnover rate stabilise over the last 2 years, with this year's turnover rate being 10.48%.

The turnover rates are placed comfortably below Council's targets of 10% for the overall employee turnover and 12% (children's services) and well below the Local Government average of 19.2%.

There are many reasons that an employee leaves an organisation and it is important to recognise that turnover within healthy limits can add value to an organisation. The recruitment of new staff enables the broadening of organisational capability as new recruits can contribute fresh ideas, expertise and different experiences from which to draw on.

However, if the trend of lower turnover rates as seen over the last couple of years continues in the short term, this will assist Council in continuing to consolidate its corporate knowledge by implementing strategies that retain skilled staff whilst continuing to attract valuable new recruits.

Programs and key actions in this Workforce Plan to attract and retain staff are:

- promote the benefits of working for Council and the City
- implement programs that provide training, and opportunities for skills development and career progression
- staff recognition, reward and team work programs
- continue the Leadership and Management Development Program
- promote opportunities for staff to re-train in areas of skills shortage
- continue to review and implement flexible employment policies that support career, family and life aspirations (eg phased-in retirement policy and flexible working hours)
- encourage empowerment, creativity and innovation
- encourage a culture where staff are supported to perform to the best of their ability.

**Table 10 – Permanent positions by Occupational Category, including vacancies**

Band	Occupational Category	Sub-total	Band Total	Band %
PSTR	Professional Specialist Trainee	2	2	0.21%
1	Field Operator	218	418	43.05%
	Customer Relations Officer	122		
	Clerk	78		
2	Trades Officer	55	274	28.22%
	Para Professional	155		
	Administration Officer	64		
3	Professional Specialist	246	246	25.33%
Managers & Senior Officers	Director, Group Manager, Manager	31	31	3.19%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>971</b>		



**4.6 Workplace Culture**

Attracting, developing and retaining our people is extremely important to Council as an organisation. The workforce is changing and people have different career goals. A key aspiration of Council is to ensure that it is an employer of choice with a workforce that is highly skilled, valued, motivated and equipped to deal with contemporary and future challenges.

**Workforce governance**

Council is committed to the principles of good governance, including leadership, stewardship, integrity, accountability and transparency. Council has developed and continues to review its policies and procedures that encourage these principles, and associated values and behaviours, across the organisation. To embed our agreed values and behaviours as ‘the way we operate’ the organisation pursues a range of activities, including strategic planning, decision making and workplace development. Successful, values-driven organisations focus on key stages:

1. get the values right by ensuring they genuinely reflect the principles underlying decisions, as well as the processes that help change occur
2. embed the chosen values through communication and process alignment to ensure day to day activities reflect those values.

**Workforce processes**

Council ensures that all selection committees are trained in merit selection and EEO, and any other associated requirements that will facilitate fair selection processes.

Through our Leadership and Management Development Program, one project reviewed and implemented improvements to the initial stages of Council’s recruitment processes to ensure that they were efficient and effective. These improvements have achieved a smoother recruitment process and implementation of an online recruitment system, with a further project concerning ‘onboarding’ (inductions) to commence shortly.

It continues to be Council’s aim to be recognised within the industry for our superior industrial relations and grievance management performance. Key to our success are an improved organisation culture, better employee/employer relationships, and improved industrial relations planning and management at organisational and department levels.

Council has worked to integrate industrial relations best practice with day to day work and management practices. On this basis, with the aim of resolving grievances as expeditiously as possible, Council has developed policies, procedures and communication mechanisms with staff and unions to achieve this.

#### 4.7 Employee support and development

The organisation currently aligns Council's Strategic Responses and *Delivery Program* commitments with individual performance plans for most Manager and Coordinator positions. A current review process is examining the desirability of expanding these links, between strategic outcomes and performance, to a broader range of teams and individual positions.

Council aspires to be a leading employer with highly skilled, motivated and capable staff. This is assisted by promoting a policy of continuous learning, which encourages employees to continually learn new skills, to be innovative, and to try new processes and work methods to achieve Council's strategic objectives. A continuous learning organisation is one where employees are encouraged to gain new knowledge, try new approaches to solving problems, obtain feedback and learn new behaviours as a result.

Enhancing Council's focus on being a learning organisation will also assist in attracting and retaining talented staff. Council is examining the various ways to facilitate the effective transfer of knowledge throughout the organisation, and implement processes that will support all learning and development activities. Council's current learning and development program responds to the adopted four year *Delivery Program*. There are a number of actions and programs for staff which provide:

- training
- opportunities for staff to learn and build on their skills and knowledge
- career progression, particularly in terms of leadership
- courses to meet statutory licensing and certification requirements.

Information on staff attendance at training courses has identified that 'workload issues' figure prominently as the major reason why employees cannot attend learning and development opportunities. This is clearly an issue that needs to be addressed through the strategic actions, but must also be recognised in considering staffing numbers and resource capacity to deliver Council's services.

There is an opportunity for Council to place a much stronger emphasis on longer term education and development strategies, including initiatives such as scholarship programs, undergraduate traineeships, apprenticeships and work experience placements. Incentives could be offered to staff who are interested in retraining into areas of skill shortage. With increasing costs and greater demands on Council resources, Council may need to explore opportunities for partnerships with other councils and local businesses, to train and develop staff, such as apprentices, technical specialists or professionals.

As part of Council's learning and development program, and the Employee Performance Planning and Review process, employees are encouraged to build on their existing capabilities with a view of potential progression in the organisation. Council is currently reviewing its approach to succession planning to ensure the organisation is well placed to respond to changing future workplace and workforce environments.



Table 11 – Learning and development costs

Delivery Program 2009-2013	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	thereafter
Learning and development costs	\$534,166	\$535,000	\$535,000	\$535,000

### Part Three – Strategic ‘Workforce’ Actions

The Workforce Plan contributes to Strategic Objectives and Community Outcomes as outlined in Chapter Two. The Workforce Plan, including specific strategic actions, is implemented through the Corporate Workforce program in Council’s four year *Delivery Program*. The Corporate Workforce program includes a number of relevant service activities which all contribute to ensuring the sustainability and wellbeing of our workforce now and in the future. This Workforce Plan, implemented through the Corporate Workforce program also contributes to the appropriate resourcing and effective implementation of Council’s *Delivery Program*.

The Workforce Plan strategic actions and objectives will guide the changing nature of Council’s workforce:

- Sustainability (S1 – S12) – planning responsibly to ensure a sustainable workforce
- Wellbeing (W1 – W8) – supporting the health and wellbeing of our workforce
- Governance (G1 – G7) – ensuring our workforce and workplace policies, practices and procedures are transparent, efficient and effective.

### Strategic Planning for Our Workforce

Council has in place agreed service levels for every service, and our workforce capacity is reviewed annually in preparing the *Operational Plan*. Council’s resource capacity has informed the adopted *Delivery Program*, and is now being guided by its commitments. The organisation’s capacity to implement the priorities adopted in Council’s *Delivery Program* is examined in greater detail in Chapter Two of this *Resource Strategy*.

Council is investigating both the short and long term issues related to workforce planning and the need to support the strategic delivery of services with relevant workforce data and metrics. The capture, analysis and progressive application of integrated business and workforce information is critical to identify and address short term issues, such as workforce structure, resourcing capability and critical gaps in alignment; and longer term issues, such as future workforce growth, demographics, attrition and long term resourcing.

#### 4.8 Alignment with Council’s Delivery Program and Corporate Support Program

The Corporate Workforce Program and Corporate Support Program includes ten service activities which are outlined below. The table also demonstrates how the Workforce Plan’s strategic actions (sustainability, wellbeing, governance) will be delivered through these service activities.

Delivery Program 2009-2013	
Corporate Workforce - service activities	
Respond to contemporary and emerging workforce and workplace issues through strategy and policy development <b>S1, S4, S6, S9, W4, W7, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6</b>	2011 – 2021 ongoing service activity
Ensure the organisation meets statutory requirements for employee relations, EEO, OH&S and injury management <b>W6, G1, G3</b>	2011 – 2021 ongoing service activity
Provide human resources management services that encourage staff <b>S11, S12, W1, W2, G7</b>	2011 – 2021 ongoing service activity
Provide staff with learning and development opportunities <b>S2, S3, S5, S7, S8, S10, W5</b>	2011 – 2021 ongoing service activity
Position the organisation towards a workers’ compensation model that provides best practice outcomes for Council <b>G4</b>	2011 – 2021 ongoing service activity
Provide technology and support to improve the organisation’s effectiveness and efficiency <b>W8</b>	2011 – 2021 ongoing service activity
Manage Council’s mapping and geographical information to support the organisation’s effectiveness, and to comply with legislation <b>W8</b>	2011 – 2021 ongoing service activity
Manage Council’s records and documents to support the organisation’s effectiveness, and to comply with legislation <b>W8</b>	2011 – 2021 ongoing service activity
Comply with State Records Act <b>W8</b>	2011 – 2021 ongoing service activity
Enhance Council’s transparency and accountability by providing access to Council’s information <b>W8</b>	2011 – 2021 ongoing service activity

## 4.9 Workforce Plan – strategic actions

### Sustainability

Council's most significant asset is its stable and skilled workforce. Economic and demographic conditions in the future will mean that maintaining our workforce will become more challenging. Without our staff we cannot achieve the communities' priorities and aspirations for the future.

Council supports training, education and development programs that foster the skills and strengths of our workforce. We will develop programs that provide incentives to attract and retain talented staff of all ages, particularly in identified areas of skills shortage.

Council is recognised as an employer that offers a range of development opportunities and provides flexible work practices. These programs will help Council enhance the diversity of our workforce, to better reflect that of our communities. There will be a focus on increasing the representation of women in senior management roles.

Council understands the important role it plays in supporting the health, safety and wellbeing of all staff. It will continue to work in partnership with other stakeholders to conserve and share resources and support one another with the workforce challenges ahead.

Sustainability	
Workforce Plan objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Respond to community expectations</li> <li>★ Attract and retain talented staff</li> <li>★ Facilitate skills development through a variety of training programs</li> <li>★ Promote flexible workforce and workplace practices</li> <li>★ Address skills shortages</li> <li>★ Retain corporate knowledge</li> </ul>
Actions	Timeframes
S1. Promote the benefits of working for Council and the City	Ongoing
S2. Implement programs that provide training, and opportunities for skills development and career progression	Ongoing
S3. Promote opportunities for staff to re-train in areas of skills shortage	Ongoing (annual program)
S4. Implement and monitor the Phased-In Retirement Policy	Annually
S5. Develop and implement a Mentoring Program	Develop 2010-11 implementation ongoing
S6. Promote increased representation of women in Council, particularly at management level, and remove barriers to participation	Ongoing
S7. Encourage participation in the 'Springboard' mentoring program for women	Ongoing (bi-annual program)
S8. Continue the Leadership and Management Development Program	Annual program
S9. Review and implement flexible employment policies that support career, family and life aspirations	2010-11 implementation ongoing
S10. Enhance programs for traineeships, apprenticeships and work experience placements	Ongoing
S11. Develop and Implement 'broad-banding' concepts within the salary system structure in support of skills and knowledge development	2011-12
S12. Investigate position redesign to support multi-skilling and cross functional activities	2011- 12

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## Wellbeing

Council is committed to providing a safe, supportive and appropriately equipped workplace environment. Council seeks to enhance its reputation as an employer with a strong commitment to occupational health and safety and injury management so a major priority is to continue to enhance, develop and implement a robust occupational health and safety system.

In addition, our organisation's wellbeing is characterised by a strong and positive workplace culture, and practices that value cooperation, equity and diversity. Council supports a workplace that is adaptable, flexible and encourages high levels of innovation, empowerment, motivation and productivity. Council is striving to achieve a workplace culture known for its dedication to customers, commitment to service, and professionalism.

Wellbeing	
Workforce Plan objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Maximise workforce and workplace safety, health and wellbeing</li> <li>★ Advance equity and diversity</li> <li>★ Recognise and value staff</li> <li>★ Encourage empowerment, creativity and innovation</li> <li>★ Encourage a culture where staff are supported to perform to the best of their ability</li> </ul>
Actions	Timeframes
W1. Develop and implement staff recognition and reward, and teamwork programs	2012-13
W2. Celebrate staff contributions to the organisation and the City	Ongoing (annual program)
W3. Continue to promote a positive and inclusive culture, and remove barriers to participation (EEO Management Plan)	Ongoing
W4. Engage staff in developing strategic directions for the future of the City and of the Council as an organisation	Ongoing
W5. Continue to foster targeted training to meet organisational and personal development needs of staff	Ongoing
W6. Implement targeted training on safe work practices	Ongoing
W7. Continue programs that encourage staff health	Ongoing
W8. Ensure we have an effective and efficient workplace with the right business and technology tools to do the job	Ongoing

## Governance

Council aims to be recognised for its superior industrial relations management. Council is committed to the principles of good governance: leadership, stewardship, integrity, accountability and transparency. These five key values ensure Council operates effectively, efficiently and impartially. Good governance is vital in making sure the community feels confident in the decisions Council makes, that their rates are being spent intelligently, and that Council carries out its duties well.

Governance	
Workforce Plan objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Manage industrial relations</li> <li>★ Ensure consistent strategic and operational workforce decisions</li> <li>★ Enhance policy, practices and systems</li> </ul>
Actions	Timeframes
G1. Manage industrial relations (IR) issues and risks	Ongoing
G2. Monitor the emerging industrial climate as it may impact on the development of IR instruments such as workplace agreements and awards	Ongoing
G3. Implement and review Council's programs for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access and Equity</li> <li>• Advocacy</li> <li>• Disability</li> <li>• Employee Assistance</li> <li>• Equal Employment Opportunity</li> <li>• Sustainability</li> <li>• Grievance Handling</li> <li>• Injury Management</li> <li>• Occupational Health and Safety</li> <li>• Preventing Bullying and Harassment</li> <li>• Staff Induction</li> </ul>	Ongoing
G4. Implement effective workforce policies, procedures and systems	Ongoing
G5. Provide information and analysis on overall workforce sustainability, wellbeing and effectiveness	Monthly
G6. Support and encourage an organisational culture that demonstrates good governance (Code of Conduct)	Ongoing
G7. Manage performance through the Employee Performance Planning and Review (EPPR) program, audit and benchmarking process	Ongoing