



**CITY OF
PARRAMATTA**

Draft

Workforce Management Strategy 2025-2029

Draft for public exhibition, April 2025

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Recognition and Commitment to the Dharug People

*Wadyiman Barramada gulbanga naadyi Barramadagal Dharug
Ngurrayin, badu, burra barramadagal dharug yurayin.*

City of Parramatta recognises the Dharug People as First Australians, peoples of the oldest continuous living culture in the world.

For more than 60,000 years, Parramatta has been home to the Baramadagal and other Dharug peoples, the Traditional Owners of the land we call the City of Parramatta today. The Baramadagal and other Dharug Peoples have cared for and nurtured the habitat, land, and waters for thousands of generations, and maintain an ongoing connection to Parramatta and its surrounding areas.

As a community, we can learn from the resilience and community spirit of First Nations People to best ensure a sustainable city for all. Parramatta has always been an important meeting place for the First Nations People, particularly the Parramatta River, which has provided life and vitality since the beginning of time (The Dreaming).

The name Parramatta is derived from the word Baramada/Burramatta or 'place where the eels lie down' (breeding location for eels within the Parramatta River). City of Parramatta recognises the significance of this area for all First Nations People as a site of early contact between the First Australians and European colonists, and Parramatta remains an important meeting place for the First Nations community.

First Nations People continue to play a vital role in the ecological, economic, social and cultural life of Parramatta, while maintaining a distinct culture built on the principles of Caring for Country, the primacy of family, and the dignity and governance of Elders.

At City of Parramatta, we aspire to a future where the cultures, histories and rights of all First Nations People are understood, recognised, and respected by all Australians. City of Parramatta is committed to playing an active role in making this future a reality. City of Parramatta is proud to acknowledge the ongoing stewardship of Country by Dharug and other First Nations People and to celebrate their enduring wisdom, strength, and resilience.

Always Was, Always Will Be, Aboriginal Land.

Photo credit: Ken Leanfore



1.0

Introduction

Council's Workforce Management Strategy is a key element of a suite of documents known as the Resourcing Strategy – a statutory requirement for all NSW councils.

Council's Resourcing Strategy consists of medium to long-term strategies in three inter-related elements:

- Financial planning (Long-term Financial Plan);
- Asset management (Asset Management Strategy Plans); and Workforce management planning (Workforce Management Strategy).

Together these strategies provide a framework for delivering on the goals of our City's draft Community Strategic Plan 2025-2050, and aligning decisions about Council's ongoing financial sustainability, service and project delivery, and our people.



1.1

Purpose of the Workforce Management Strategy (WMS)

The Workforce Management Strategy sets out our organisational needs, forward planning and resourcing requirements. Key trends and emerging issues considered in the development of our Workforce Management Strategy include:

- an increase in resident population;
- difficulty attracting and retaining niche and/or in-demand skills;
- identifying future skill requirements not yet known;
- knowledge loss when employees resign or retire;
- increasing workloads;
- balancing the work-life needs of the workforce; and
- improving Council's capacity for change.

The Workforce Management Strategy provides an overview of our current workforce and details priorities and actions to be implemented during the next four years to ensure we have a workforce capable of delivering all outcomes identified in the draft Community Strategic Plan 2025-2050.

The Workforce Management Strategy is a key contributor to the following objectives in the Community Strategic Plan and as such, Council is committed to:

Strategic Pillars in the Draft Community Strategic Plan 2025-2050	Draft CSP Strategic Actions to support delivery of the Pillars
We all belong – <i>A diverse, creative, inclusive and inspiring city.</i>	1.1.1 Recognise our diversity as our strength, and ensure people of all abilities, genders, family types, backgrounds and generations can feel that they belong.
We put people first – <i>An equitable and socially connected city.</i>	2.4.1 Plan and deliver an accessible City and services with universal design principles, so they can be enjoyed by all.
We are an economic powerhouse – <i>A prosperous, productive and ambitious city.</i>	3.1.1 Plan and advocate for jobs growth across our City and for the preservation of employment lands and centres to grow our economy and provide opportunities close to where people live.
We are future-focused – <i>A leading and forward-looking city.</i>	5.2.2 Leverage opportunities for continuous improvement, data, technology and innovative solutions for how we plan and manage our City. 5.3.1 Deliver ethical city leadership and responsible financial management that reflects community needs and aspirations.

The Workforce Management Strategy has been developed to address the challenges of providing appropriately qualified and experienced staff for today and in the future by establishing strategic objectives. These were determined in line with the services, projects and targets outlined in Council's overarching Delivery Program (2022-26) and the long-term community goals of the City's Community Strategic Plan.

Strategic Objective 1	Build leadership capabilities across all levels of the organisation including emerging leaders
Strategic Objective 2	Attract and support an ever-changing and diverse employee group, ensuring frameworks are established to retain staff in the job market
Strategic Objective 3	Invest in our talent and ensure clear pathways are available for succession
Strategic Objective 4	Consistently increase organisation-wide engagement to achieve high performing teams
Strategic Objective 5	Create a proactive safety and risk culture which is at the forefront of all day-to-day activities
Strategic Objective 6	Create a sustainable workplace that meets the needs of our people and is progressive in its outlook

The guiding principles of the Workforce Management Strategy are the Council values:

Integrity: We deliver on promises, act ethically, take responsibility for our actions and speak up respectfully. Integrity is the foundation on which everything is based.

Teamwork: We support the role of leadership, collaborate within and across teams, and build effective partnerships with colleagues and our community to achieve our goals.

Customer Focus: We communicate openly with our customers, are responsive to their needs and create new relationships as our City grows.

Innovation: We build on our strengths, champion creative solutions, and seek new and sustainable opportunities.

1.2

Recognition of progress and achievements

Before outlining the WMS for 2025-2029 it is important to highlight recent achievements and initiatives that Council has been recognised for in relation to managing our workforce, and to provide context and background.

In 2023 Council won the category of Best Workplace Diversity & Inclusion Program in the HRD Australia awards and was also a finalist as the Most Inclusive Workplace in the Australian Human Resources Institute awards.

In 2024 Council achieved even more recognition, with the People Connect HR Systems Transformation Project winning a NSW Local Government Excellence Award in the People, Workplace, Wellbeing category, and winning the HRD Australia award for Best Use of Technology, in addition to being named a finalist in the Best Use of Technology category in the Australian Human Resources Institute awards. Also in 2024 Council won a HRD Australia award for Best Health & Wellbeing Program and Council's health and wellbeing action plan was a finalist for a NSW Local Government Excellence Award in the category of Health & Wellbeing Strategy.

As we move into 2025 Council is also very proud to have been named as a 5 Star Employer by HRD Australia. Our commitment to Mental Health First Aider support networks has resulted in us being recognised as a skilled workplace by MHFA Australia.

To receive recognition at a national level in several categories is testament to the capability and expertise of Council's workforce. Winning these awards showcases City of Parramatta to the industry as well as job seekers and the community, and enhances Council's Employee Value Proposition as an employer of choice. Retaining and attracting talent is crucial for building a workforce that is not only capable but also committed to Council's objectives.

These achievements and recognition, coupled with high profile Council events and infrastructure (such as PHIVE and Parramatta Aquatic Centre) have translated into interest in working at City of Parramatta growing strongly year-on-year – in 2024 Council received 18,640 job applications, which is a 30% increase on the previous year (14,377) and almost double the number received in 2022.

2.0

Context

1,496 Employees	Over 400 Volunteers	18,640 Job applicants last year
1207 Full-time and Part-time		30% increase over the previous year
289 Casuals		
1148 Full-time equivalent (FTE)		
53% of our workforce is female, non-binary or non-specific		
50% of our Executive Team are female		
Average tenure 7 years	Average Age 43	Staff Turnover
Median tenure 3 years	Median Age 42	13% Public sector average is 18%

Data provided as at 31 December 2024 (or relevant to the period from 01/01/2024-31/12/2024)

2.1

Local Government Profile

The City of Parramatta is one of the fastest growing local government areas in New South Wales, and this growth is expected to continue over the next decade and beyond.

The key economic centres of Westmead, Epping, the Parramatta CBD and Sydney Olympic Park under the one council banner has created an economic powerhouse that will drive the future growth of Global Sydney. By 2041 an additional 189,292 residents are estimated to be located within the Local Government Area (LGA), versus the 2021 census population.

2.2

Staff Profile as at 31 December 2024

Council had 1,496 employees including permanent, casual and term contracts.

2.3

Tenure

Tenure	Headcount	% of Workforce
0-1 Years	236	16%
1-3 Years	531	35%
3-5 Years	98	7%
5-10 Years	287	19%
10-15 years	137	9%
15-20 years	90	6%
>20 Years+	117	8%
	1496	

2.4

Age

Age	Headcount	% of Workforce
16 - 20 Years	50	3%
21 - 30 Years	225	15%
31 - 40 Years	393	26%
41 - 50 Years	364	24%
51 - 60 Years	306	20%
61 - 70 Years	137	9%
> 71 Years	21	1%
	1496	

2.5

Gender Identity

Currently, our workforce is made up of 52.2% females, 47.2% males, 0.4% non-specific and 0.2% non-binary.

We have a 50:50 ratio of females to males in our Executive Team.

3.0

Strategic Issues and Risks

In addition to supporting LGA growth via high quality ongoing service delivery, Council is preparing our workforce for major developments such as:

- Redevelopment of the Epping Aquatic Centre;
- Redevelopment of Riverside Theatres; and
- A strong program of additional capital works projects funded via the NSW Government's Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants Program (formerly WestInvest).

City of Parramatta is also initiating major internal changes to prepare for future workforce needs. This includes:

- Continuing to optimise hybrid working which focuses on an individual's version of work;
- Agile organisation structures;
- Process efficiencies via innovative technology;
- Continuous improvement through diversity and collaboration; and
- A focus on safety and wellbeing.

The extraordinary growth in our LGA will be both rewarding and challenging. To meet the challenges and capitalise on opportunities, we must have the right workforce in place with the required skills and capabilities. This will ensure that we continue to effectively and proficiently provide for our community.

As a result of the forecast growth, the community will likely require more Council-provided services and infrastructure. In response, Council is continuing to recruit and develop a skilled and adaptable workforce to deliver accordingly. We recognise, however, that changing demographics may lead to spikes in demand for services and infrastructure in the future, which will mean further changes to the composition of our workforce. This is why our workforce strategy and planning must remain flexible and responsive. Our workforce is expected to grow to service a community that is expanding in size and complexity.

3.1

Skill Shortages

According to Jobs and Skills Australia, there are several occupational groups in New South Wales that are experiencing skills shortages and are relevant to local government. These areas include ICT, engineering, financial services, town planning, project management, building surveying, childcare, community services and trades such as horticulture and arboriculture.

This poses significant challenges to Council as a large portion of our operations and service delivery for the community centre around these areas. Specifically, in relation to our delivery of Children's and Community Services, maintenance of open spaces, provision of engineering services and advice to residents of our LGA.

Further to this, priority projects including the redevelopment of Epping Aquatic Centre and Riverside Theatre will require increased resourcing by way of staff specialising in ICT, production and community services. Therefore, Council must establish methods of effectively attracting talent in the market in conjunction with upskilling, extending, and retaining current resources to facilitate the transition and growth Council is experiencing. This includes investing in early career pathways such as student project officers, trainees and apprentices to address these needs.

3.2

An Older Workforce

Of Council's workforce, 30% are 50 years and over (as at 31 December 2024). Having all five generations working for Council brings many benefits including a wide range of experiences, perspectives and backgrounds. To future proof Council it is important to ensure employees in the latter years of their career continue to be valued for their contributions, and their knowledge is retained when they decide transition to retirement so that -

- knowledge and skills are maintained and transferred;
- older workers feel valued; and
- flexible work options are available to ease the transition into retirement.

3.3

Attracting, Recruiting and Retaining Staff

Council is focused on attracting, retaining and developing the right employees for each role. Council inevitably faces competition with the private sector when it comes to sourcing suitable candidates for employment. Building our employee brand and value proposition is key to attraction of high-quality candidates. We will continue to focus on:

- high quality roles;
- salary sacrifice opportunities;
- flexible and family-friendly work practices;
- employee benefits;
- learning and development opportunities; and
- the opportunity to work in the public sector and make a difference in our LGA and to the community members we serve.

Now more than ever employees are seeking personal value and purpose at work and employers need teams that can work with ambiguity and have the capacity for continuous upskilling to meet the future capabilities needed.

3.4

The Emerging Influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the Workforce

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is poised to revolutionise various sectors, and local government is no exception. The introduction of AI technologies is expected to bring both opportunities and challenges to Council's workforce over the next four years.

AI has the potential to significantly enhance efficiency and productivity in administrative functions by automating routine tasks such as data entry, scheduling, minute taking, and customer service queries. This will not only streamline operations but also free up staff to focus on more strategic value-adding work and deal with more complex issues that require empathy and critical thinking.

For Council services and operations that use vehicles and plant, AI will be able to optimise routes and schedules, reducing fuel consumption and improving service efficiency. Predictive maintenance, powered by AI, can foresee equipment failures and schedule timely repairs, thus minimising downtime and extending the lifespan of assets. These advancements will likely lead to a more efficient and cost-effective urban infrastructure, benefiting both Council and the community. AI-powered tools can analyse vast amounts of data to identify trends and patterns, enabling better decision-making and policy formulation. Furthermore, AI-driven applications can enhance community engagement by providing more accessible and responsive services. For instance, virtual assistants and chatbots can handle basic enquiries and help residents find information about services, pay bills, or report issues more efficiently. This can lead to a more connected and engaged community, fostering greater trust and satisfaction with Council.

AI will create new job opportunities in fields such as data analysis and cybersecurity. Additionally, roles that require human creativity, emotional intelligence, and complex problem-solving are less likely to be automated and may even see increased demand as they complement AI technologies.

The deployment of AI also brings ethical considerations and challenges that Council will need to address. Issues related to data privacy, algorithmic bias, and transparency need to be carefully managed to ensure that AI technologies are used responsibly and equitably. Council will need to establish robust governance frameworks to oversee the implementation of AI, ensuring that it aligns with the values and needs of the community.

By investing in the necessary skills and infrastructure, Council will be able to harness the potential of AI to support the projected growth of the LGA's population, enhance career development opportunities for staff, and improve the effectiveness of services provided to the community.

3.5

Alignment of Core Business Functions

We review our organisational structure regularly, making changes where necessary to ensure it is flexible, resilient, and that it promotes high performance and excellence in service delivery and

customer experience. Council aims to have the right people, in the right places, with the right skills, doing the right jobs, at the right time.

The structural review process focuses on:

- building on strengths where Council is recognised in areas of excellence by the community;
- core service delivery at levels agreed by the community;
- supporting individual and team achievement and recognition;
- collaborating and strengthening relationships and effective delivery across Council; and
- employee professional development and improvement.

3.6

A Culture of Leadership, Performance and Accountability

Our leaders have significant responsibility in leading a complex workforce, who are serving one of the most rapidly growing and evolving cities in the country. We are making a significant investment in building our leadership capabilities. The long-term goal is to develop effective and capable leaders at all levels and to have internal talent identified for progression. We are in the process of rolling out an elevated leadership development program across all leadership and management levels. This focus on continuous learning will equip our leaders with the right skills, behaviours and, knowledge to drive a high-performance culture.

4.0

Strategic Direction

4.1

Corporate Values

City of Parramatta will be refreshing core values in 2025 to ensure they are aligned to our vision and desired culture which help us achieve our purpose.

Our values will be embedded in our People and Culture programs and our ways of working.

4.2

People First. Community First.

Our rich organisational history makes us unique. We are the connector between the Traditional Custodians of the land, Sydney's original settlement, and Greater Sydney's future. Our passion and dedication for caring, connecting, and serving our community is part of our DNA, and has got us to where we are today.

We are committed to holding onto these strengths to promote a healthy workplace where everyone can be their best. This means we are putting our team members and the community at the front and centre of our decisions by applying a People First. Community First. lens to everything we do.

4.3

Apprenticeship/Trainee programs

To future-proof our organisation with a multi-generational workforce, we have introduced apprenticeship and trainee programs as part of our Early Careers Framework. This framework includes school students exploring career options through school-based work experience programs, recent school graduates, university and vocational students, and graduates. We aim to further expand and diversify our Early Career offerings by identifying opportunities to increase our placements of apprentices, trainees, and cadets within our organisation.

4.4

Women's Leadership/Mentoring program

City of Parramatta is committed to supporting women progress their careers. We support high potential talent in the early stages of their career and professional life through a mentoring program. This program connects participants to an Executive Team member to share insights and guidance on their careers, goals, ambitions, and performance. Where appropriate we partner with supporting organisations to deliver the mentoring program.

4.5

Child Safety in the Workforce and the Community

City of Parramatta is implementing an enhanced Child Safe Framework to maintain our reputation as a Child Safe organisation externally. We have improved recruitment processes to ensure that we are hiring the best people to provide care and support for some of our most vulnerable community members. Additionally, we will continue to develop the capabilities of staff and associated child-related providers to integrate child safety knowledge and awareness into their practices. Comprehensive, site-specific Child Safe Risk Management Plans are being created and applied across all Council services and environments. Furthermore, we will ensure that complaints handling processes continue to be child-focused, easily understood, and provide appropriate support for families and children.

We have developed a comprehensive Child Safe Organisation Framework with policies, procedures, and tools. This has included a review of policies, introducing mandatory training for all employees, an accessible web page for the community, and a Child Safe Community Code of Conduct. One of the outcomes of community consultation was the creation of a 'child's voice' version of the Code.

4.6

Employee Resource Groups (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Strategy)

WOMEN @ COP

Women @CoP are an ERG that actively promotes and fosters a gender-inclusive culture, encouraging leadership, participation, and contributions from a diverse workforce to drive business success. The ERG supports initiatives aimed at achieving greater gender balance in mid-senior leadership roles and advocates for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

PRIDE @ COP

The ERG's goal is to cultivate a workplace culture that supports LGBTIQA+ inclusion. The ERG focuses on developing and retaining LGBTIQA+ employees by providing clear career progression opportunities. It ensures they have the necessary support to build their skills and confidence, empowering them to pursue senior roles and enhance diversity within teams.

EARLY CAREERS NETWORK

The Early Careers Network aims to support the growth of students, graduates, trainees, apprentices, and work experience by facilitating professional development and networking opportunities using both internal and external resources.

DISABILITY ERG

Our Disability ERG aims to support our people with disability, as well as those who are carers for a person with disability. We aim to raise awareness that disabilities are not always visible (physical) but can also be hidden (e.g. mental health, anxiety). Our goal is to make the process of applying for a role at Council simpler and more welcoming for people with disabilities. We collaborate with organisations to help Council become a more inclusive and accessible workplace.

VETERANS ERG

Our Veterans ERG aims to encourage Veterans to seek employment with City of Parramatta Council. We identify as a Veteran Friendly Employer, and create a welcoming environment for Veteran new hires, and to connect with and provide a support network to Veterans who currently work at Council.

FIRST NATIONS ERG

An ERG focused on promoting First Nations awareness, inclusion, and engagement. We integrate First Nations knowledge into our culture, support staff through a strong network, advocate for inclusion, and drive initiatives to improve employment opportunities and best practices for consultation with First Nations communities.

CULTURAL & HERITAGE ERG (PENDING)

We aim to create a Culture and Heritage ERG that will provide a platform for our culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) employees to showcase cultural diversity days of significance (i.e. Harmony Day, Diwali, Easter, Chinese New Year, Ramadan etc.)

4.7

Commitment to Career and Leadership Development

We manage a corporate training budget to deliver a comprehensive Leadership Development program for all levels of management. The delivery of the program includes a combination of in-house and partner delivered programs.

We allocate budget to support staff with their individual learning needs to promote career development opportunities.

4.8

All Staff Briefings/Leadership Forums (for Leadership Development)

We deliver Leadership Team Forums, and where appropriate we partner with supporting organisations, to deliver relevant material and guidance for our leaders. These offerings include an annual conference where all employees participate in development activities and provide feedback on strategic initiatives.

4.9

Employee Engagement

Council continues to recognise the significant benefits associated with promoting and enriching a workplace culture of consultation and engagement in the workplace. Council continues to measure engagement through regular employee surveys.

5.0

Strategic Objectives

By proactively managing our workforce through workforce planning, Council will have the capability to deliver on our strategic and operational objectives.

Council always aims to deliver services within the limits of its resources (i.e. workforce, assets and financial). By supporting decision-making with evidence-based practice, Council also seeks to minimise the costs involved in sudden or unsustainable additions to the workforce.

5.1

Methodology

Council has conducted an analysis of the priorities highlighted in the Community Strategic Plan and the current and future needs of the LGA and workforce to develop our strategic objectives.

These strategic objectives were established through facilitated workshops to ensure alignment with the organisations strategic direction.

5.2

Aspired Outcomes

Strategic Objective 1: Build leadership capabilities across all levels of the organisation including emerging leaders

Outcome

- Internal progression into leadership positions
- A high-performing engaged leadership team

Strategic Objective 2: Attract and support an ever-changing and diverse employee group, ensuring frameworks are established to retain staff in the job market

Outcome

- A reduction in staff turnover and the retention of talent
- More females securing executive and leadership positions
- A workforce of employees from all diverse groups

Strategic Objective 3: Invest in our talent and ensure clear pathways are available for succession

Outcome

- Continual internal progression
- Successful partnerships with tertiary institutions

Strategic Objective 4: Consistently increase organisation-wide engagement to achieve high performing teams

Outcome

- Being an employer of choice
- Being an innovative, collaborative and actively engaged workforce

Strategic Objective 5: Create a proactive safety and risk culture which is at the forefront of all day-to-day activities

Outcome

- A caring and supporting health and wellbeing culture.
- An engaged and productive workforce.

Strategic Objective 6: Create a sustainable workplace that is progressive in its outlook

Outcome

- An agile and engaged workforce.
- Robust supportive early career pathways.
- A workforce focused on value creation as opposed to risk aversion

6.0

Workforce Management Plan Evaluation

Council will monitor internal and external changes to update the plan as needed. Workforce priorities will be reviewed for success and relevance to community needs and expectations, as well as our changing environment and labour market. Actions related to workforce priorities will follow Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan. Success measures will be regularly reported. Achievements from the current plan will inform the preparation of the next Workforce Management Plan.

Council will report against the Workforce Management Strategy on a quarterly basis in an adopted template.