

People Strategy 2022-26



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Executive Summary

To 2030 and beyond

The City's Community Strategic Plan – Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030 – 2050 sets out the plan to build on the work undertaken thus far to realise Sustainable Sydney 2030. The new community strategic plan has 10 revised strategic directions and 6 guiding principles. The achievement of the aspirations and projects set out in that plan will be possible largely due to the committed efforts of our people – our employees and managers.

Our people are in a strong position to contribute to a resilient Sydney by embracing the challenges and opportunities articulated in the community strategic plan and the delivery plan.

However, in the last 3 years, since our People Strategy (2019 – 21) was developed, we have experienced some of the most unpredictable, challenging times in recent memory due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This period saw our organisation and people adapt to deliver unprecedented responses, leaving us with significant learnings to draw on as we move forward.

We also know that the future will continue to see considerable disruption, which means that we must develop and implement proactive strategies now to shape the future of our workforce, in service of the City of Sydney community.

People Strategy 2022 – 2026 outlines the key issues impacting the City's workforce and will guide people related decision making, priorities and investment to support the outcomes in the community strategic plan.

The People Strategy forms an important part of our integrated resource planning, ensuring that we can deliver on our business goals and are future-ready. The People Strategy recognises evolving community needs and the skills our people require to address the social, economic, and environmental sustainability challenges ahead.

It builds on the solid foundations established in the prior people strategy. Though the Covid-19 pandemic impacted the implementation of the 2019 – 21 People Strategy, progress was made in key areas such as flexible working, innovation, employee wellbeing, and workforce agility.

The People Strategy 2022 – 26 has 3 core objectives:

1. Energising our people and our workplaces by fostering a 'people first' culture¹. If we do this well, we will support our employees to be their best selves, acting in the best interests of the community that we serve

Building on this foundation, we will ensure that our organisation, practices, and capability keep pace and embrace the new world of work. This includes:

2. Adapting our ways of working¹ for the future
3. Strengthening our value proposition¹ and recruitment experience to attract and retain diverse, skilled people.

¹ Definitions included in the Glossary on page 32

Introduction

Insights informing development of the People Strategy

The People Strategy 2022 – 26 forms an important part of our resource planning, ensuring that we can deliver on our business goals and are future-ready. The strategy recognises evolving community needs and the skills our people require to address the social, economic and environmental sustainability challenges ahead.

Analysis of internal and external data sources generated insights that informed the development of our 2022 – 26 People Strategy. Specifically:

- Staff surveys
- Stakeholder and leadership interviews
- Staff focus groups
- Workforce data
- External employee experience insights (LinkedIn, Seek, Glassdoor)
- External talent trends in the context of local government and relevant sectors
- Executive workshops.



Figure 1. City of Sydney staff at Gunyama Park Aquatic and Recreation Centre, Zetland – Photo by Chris Southwood/ City of Sydney

Feedback helped us understand where we are now, and where we want to be in the future

Consistently, staff told us that the City of Sydney has many strengths as an employer. People feel safe at work, connected to their teams, and supported with the information, tools and resources to perform their roles.

The Covid experience for employees has been varied. With limited opportunities for social interaction, this period has weakened ties between many colleagues at work and eroded informal organisational connections.

We heard that there are opportunities to better attract, engage and grow current and future employees. This includes strengthening the connection between individual and organisational purpose, providing an attractive, clear and holistic value proposition, and evolving our ways of working to support better collaboration and inclusive flexibility.

We are operating in a changing environment

To remain a progressive force and leader within a dynamic external environment, we have to foresee what is coming and shape our direction in anticipation.

Mercer's Global Talent Trends 2022 and other significant future of work research publications (e.g. Microsoft Work Trends Index 2021) points to the need for organisations to support employees to reclaim a sense of energy, joy and autonomy as they reshape their lives post-pandemic. Amplifying energy in the workforce will require an ongoing focus on managing wellbeing and mental health. It will also require a focus on enhancing employee experience by understanding differences in what motivates and inspires purpose in individuals.

Additionally, in the context of the acceleration toward virtual and digitised ways of working, there is now a need to build upon the strong bonds within teams to drive greater cross-team connections.

Finally, there are number of global trends that will have considerable influence on the future of the City of Sydney. These include (but are not limited to) the climate emergency, rapid urbanisation, disease and health impacts, and exponential technology advancement. To lead change in this context, we will be required to effectively harness the concerns, ideas, and aspirations of our communities as we develop local solutions. It will also require us to be an effective partner with other local government, private sector and civil society organisations. With this in mind, our organisation needs to be equipped with the right culture, skills and experiences to remain responsive and ensure the future success of our City.



Figure 2. City of Sydney Ranger – Photo by Abril Felman/ City of Sydney

The 2022 – 26 People Strategy sets the scene for our deliberate evolution

In the context of Covid recovery, analysis of internal and external insights helped us frame 3 critical questions that informed development of our people strategy. These were:

1. How can we re-boot our organisation, workplace culture¹ and employee experience to build back stronger, amplify our collective and individual energy and strengthen inclusion and belonging?
2. How can we embed and adopt new ways of working and foster the capabilities required for the new world of work?
3. How can we advance our value proposition and recruitment experience to address skill shortages in a competitive market?

These questions guided us as we reflected upon the fundamental ways in which expectations of work and workplaces have dramatically changed.

The People Strategy 2022 – 26 recognises that we have the opportunity to be deliberate in what we do next – for and with our people. We know that this will not be an easy task as changes will require sustained attention over the next 4 years, and beyond. However, as an organisation, we are committed to leading this evolution, and resourcing it appropriately to ensure committed, deliberate focus on driving action and implementation to see it brought to life.

Alignment to our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

Equal Employment Opportunity, and Diversity and Inclusion¹ principles inform all that we do.

The 2022 – 26 People Strategy is built upon a commitment to a diverse and inclusive workplace that is free of discrimination. We understand that having a diverse and inclusive workforce improves organisational performance, innovation and service quality.

Our EEO, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2022 – 26 is a supplementary document to this People Strategy. It recognises that promoting workplace equity, diversity and inclusion is more than a legislative requirement – it is essential to our success as a local government organisation that caters to the diverse communities who live, work in and visit the City of Sydney.

We want the City of Sydney to be an organisation where everyone has an equal chance to work with us and the opportunity to realise their potential and progress their careers.

People Strategy 2022-26

Our People Strategy 2022 – 26 has 3 key objectives, which together recognise that change is the 'new normal', and that we need to continuously evolve and adapt to keep pace with the changing environment and the 'new world of work'.



Figure 3. Diagram of People Strategy objectives



Figure 4. Volunteers packing Hampers of Hope – Photo by Chris Southwood/ City of Sydney

Objective 1: Foster a People First Culture

The vision for a Sustainable Sydney 2030 has driven a strong sense of purpose and progress over the last 10 years. This powerful vision was a strong attractor for new employees and a motivating force for existing employees.

While a compelling vision remains important, the world of work as we know it, has changed significantly since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Community and employee expectations have changed. We know that the community need us to be even more responsive, future focused and representative of the diverse people we serve. At the same time, we know that employees increasingly expect work to provide experiences that are empathetic, efficient and enriching.

In this context, we recognise a need to reenergise our people and our workplaces and to strengthen a sense of purpose and engagement in our employees and managers. The next phase of our journey toward 2050, Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision, provides us with an opportunity to foster this, as we also adapt, innovate and transform to meet new expectations.

At the core of our strategy, objective one paves the way for a strengthened connection between our internal people experience and the experience of the community we serve. Put simply, the people we serve will reap the benefits of a highly energised workforce, made up of employees who find sources of joy and inspiration through their connection to the purpose of the organisation and the communities we serve.

Our workplace culture and practices need to both enhance our collective drive and ‘meet people and their individual needs where they are’. To do this, we will focus on reconnecting employees with the organisation’s vision and values and build capability in our leaders to lead with empathy, and role model collaboration, inclusion and individual accountability in the new world of work. If we create a ‘People first’ culture, we will support our people be their best selves, acting in the best interest of our communities.

Priority actions

- Strengthen employee's connection to our purpose and vision to drive energy and engagement
- Strengthen connections between our community and employees to amplify a strong sense of purpose
- Rebuild social connections in the workplace to connect people across teams and business areas
- Support individuals to strengthen their own wellbeing and reinvigorate energy
- Implement the City's mentally healthy workplace plan to support workplace wellbeing.
- Build and strengthen leadership capabilities for the new world of work, including:
 - Managing teams in the context of digitisation and new ways of working
 - Stakeholder engagement and collaboration
 - Building a diverse workforce and inclusive ways of working.



Figure 5. Alexandria Canal depot staff at work

Objective 2: Adapt our ways of working

With a strong workplace culture and experience at the core, we will focus our attention on keeping pace and embracing the new world of work.

Community expectations are changing. Our local businesses, residents and visitors are changing how they use online services and interact socially – they expect information and services to be easy to access and use, and always available. To develop seamless, community-centric solutions and services, collaboration across the organisation is critical.

The expectations of employees are also changing as the pandemic has rapidly accelerated shifts in hybrid and flexible ways of working. Many Australian employees expect that work tasks can be performed digitally at any time and from anywhere.

To remain a leading employer and a role model in government, we will reshape our ways of working. To do this, we will redefine and enable ways of working that align to our desired culture and unlock collaboration and cooperation at all levels in the organisation. This includes articulating a new vision for ways of working, elevating cross functional success stories, and resetting inclusive flexible and hybrid working¹ to ensure that practices support different segments of our workforce.



Figure 6. Online staff networking zoom event, during lockdown – Photo by Harleen Oberoi/ City of Sydney

We also recognise that resetting for the future includes fostering the development of strong, cutting edge skillsets required to drive progress and remain responsive to an increasingly digital world. We will do this by developing digital and data literacy¹, and technical skills across the workforce, as well as embedding a human centric mindset¹ in all employees to ensure we design services with the user at the forefront.

We will also support our leaders to be adaptive, empathic, and skilled in navigating change and complexity.

If we deliver on this, we will ensure enriching, connected and skilled ways of working for our people that will ultimately deliver better outcomes for our community.

Priority actions

- Equip managers to lead in the new environment of hybrid and flexible ways of working
- Optimise City's hybrid working practices to drive stronger collaboration and strengthen social capital across the workforce
- Foster the development of strong skillsets required to drive progress and remain responsive to an increasingly digital world
- Embed a human centric mindset¹ in all employees to ensure we design services with the user at the forefront
- Support our leaders to be adaptive, empathic, and skilled in navigating change and complexity.

Objective 3: Strengthen our value proposition and recruitment experience

To succeed in having the desired impact in our community, the City of Sydney needs the right people, with a diverse set of skills and experiences. We know that within the broader employment market, there are wide-spread resource shortages making access to people from the external market very competitive and challenging.

Additionally, talented people will always have career choices, so as an employer we need a compelling Value Proposition (which means the rewards, benefits, and experiences that we can offer to our employees). We recognise that to stay competitive, the recruitment experience has to present the best of what a career at City of Sydney can offer to attract talented people to the organisation.

We also know that we must equip our leaders and managers with the right insights and resources to make strategic hiring decisions that ensure we have the right people, in the right roles at the right time.



Figure 7. City staff with our first electric truck – Photo by Jennifer Leahy / Silversalt

This means optimising our internal processes to enhance candidate and hiring manager experience, redefining our value proposition and partnering with other organisations to attract diverse, skilled people to careers in the local government sector. It also means building capability in managers and leaders to make evidence-based recruitment decisions.

We understand that to retain our existing employees we need to deliver on our value proposition, by enabling people to actively shape their growth and development in the workplace. We will do this by unlocking experience-based development as well as offering externally competitive formal learning opportunities.

If we are successful in this, City of Sydney will be an employer of choice for the best candidates irrespective of age, background, and abilities. Managers will also be enabled and have confidence that our processes are responsive to the emerging employment landscape.

Priority actions

- Optimise our recruitment processes to drive speed and enhance the candidate and hiring manager experience
- Redefine our Value Proposition to attract and retain diverse, skilled people to work at the City of Sydney
- Review graduate and cadet programs to attract and retain diverse early career workers.
- Invest in skills that are of strategic priority for the future, such as:
 - Human experience design and service
 - Data analytics and insights
 - Digital literacy
 - Innovation and continuous improvement.
- Partner with other organisations to promote the Value Proposition for the local government sector and attract diverse, skilled people to careers in the local government sector.



Figure 8. Rosanna Barbero, Addison Road Community Organisation (left) and City of Sydney CEO Monica Barone (right) – Photo by Chris Southwood/ City of Sydney

Supporting Documents



Figure 9. City of Sydney staff at Alexandra Canal depot

Our Workforce Profile 2021

Workforce at a glance²

- At 30 June 2021, we had 1,821 employees (excluding casuals and agency staff)
- 57.7% of employees were male, compared to 42.3% female
- 2.5% of employees identified as being a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent
- 1.6% of employees reported that they had one or more limitations or restrictions associated with a disability
- 19.7% of employees reported that they were from a culturally and linguistically diverse background
- 3.9% of employees identified as LGBTIQ+³.

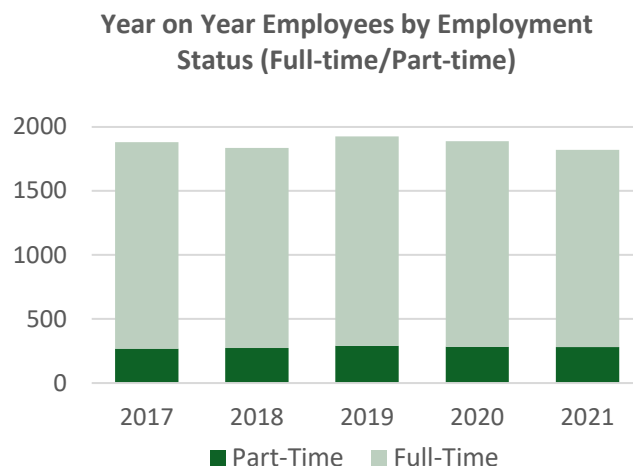
Workforce Composition

The City's workforce consists of people employed on a continuing, fixed term and casual basis, supplemented from time to time with agency staff.

Contingent staff (casual employees and labour hire/agency staff) meet fluctuating demand for seasonal work or major events such as New Year's Eve.

At 30 June 2021, there were 1,821 non-casual employees, of which 90.4% were employed on a permanent basis and 9.6% were employed on fixed terms. In addition, there were 155 casual employees and 367 agency contractors.

84.6% of employees are employed full-time as shown in the graph below.



² Sourced from the City's workforce profile data as at 30 June 2021. Non casual employees include – permanent, term contracts, apprentices

³ The City is reviewing its terminology to recognise the additional diverse and evolving identities and preferences of our people and communities

Separations

The voluntary separation rate (also known as the employee-initiated separation rate) for non-casual employees at the City during 2020 – 21 was 8.5%. This rate, which excludes completion of fixed-term appointments, has remained below 10% over the past 5 years.

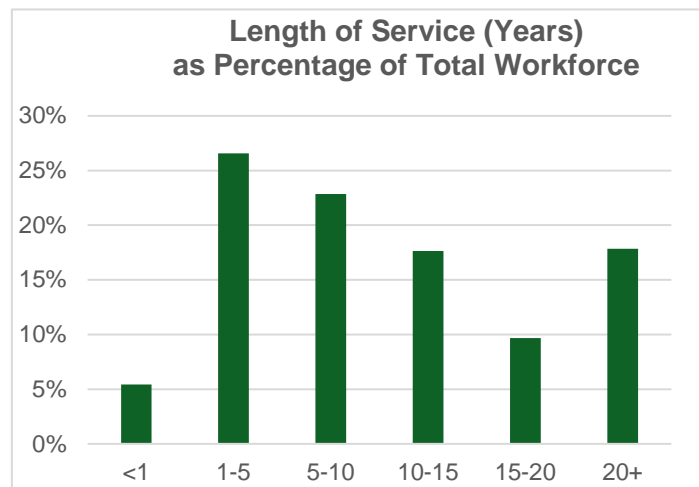
The separation rate for new employees, i.e. those that commenced during 2020 – 21, excluding the completion of term appointments (also known as the new starter turnover rate) was 6.7%.

Length of service

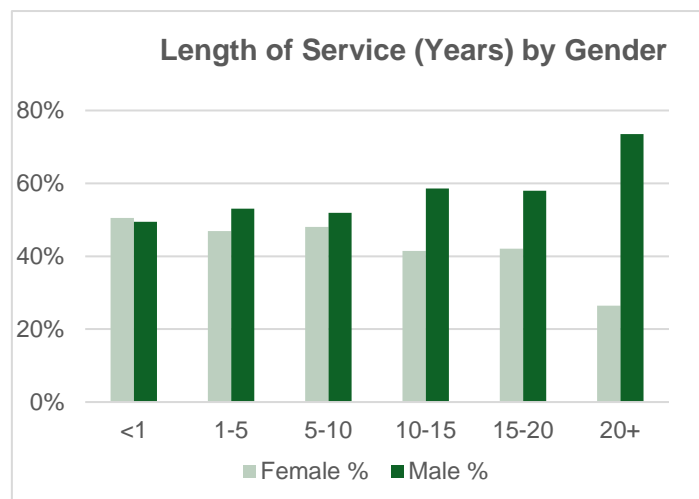
The median length of service of non-casual employees at the City on 30 June 2021 was 7.7 years, compared to the median length of service of 8.1 years in NSW public sector agencies⁴.

Overall, 25.2% of employees had less than 3 years of service and 38.9% had less than 5 years of service.

The graph below shows length of service in years.



Further analysis shows fewer women as service tenure increases. In contrast, men have longer lengths of service at the City, particularly at 20+ years of service.



⁴ NSW Public Service Commission Workforce Profile Report 2021

Age

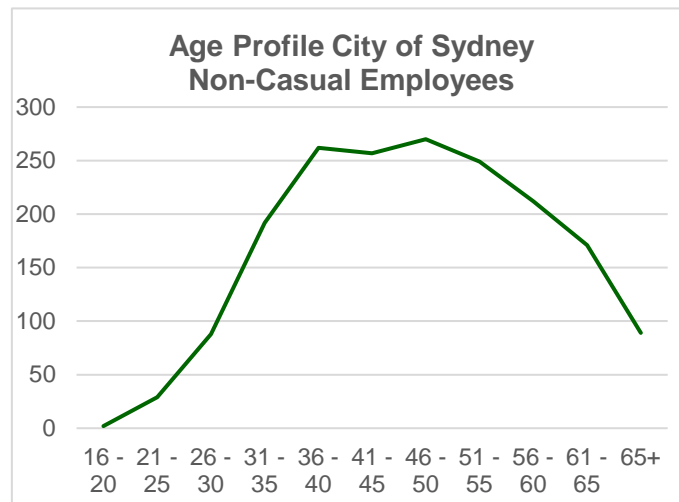
At 30 June 2021 the average age of non-casual employees was 47.2 years. This compares to the average age of 44 years in NSW public sector agencies.

The majority of the City's employees are aged between 36 to 55 years old, representing 57% of the City's workforce.

17.1% of employees were aged under 35 years.

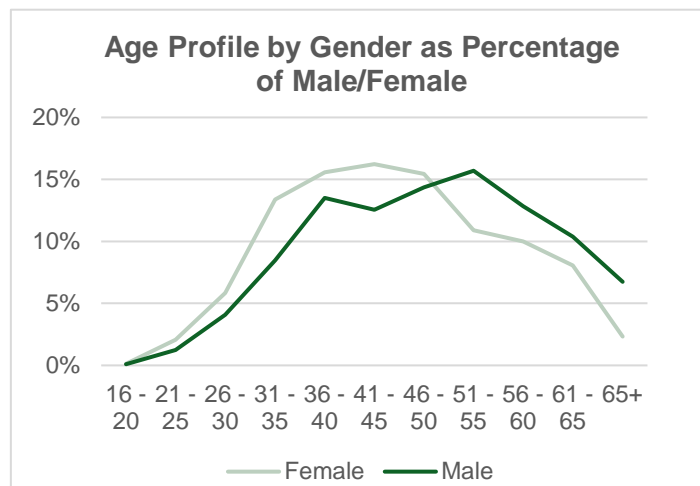
Overall, 25.9% of City of Sydney employees were aged over 55 years. In comparison, 23.7% of employees in NSW public sector agencies were aged 55 years and over at 30 June 2021⁵.

The graph below shows the number of employees in each of the age groups.



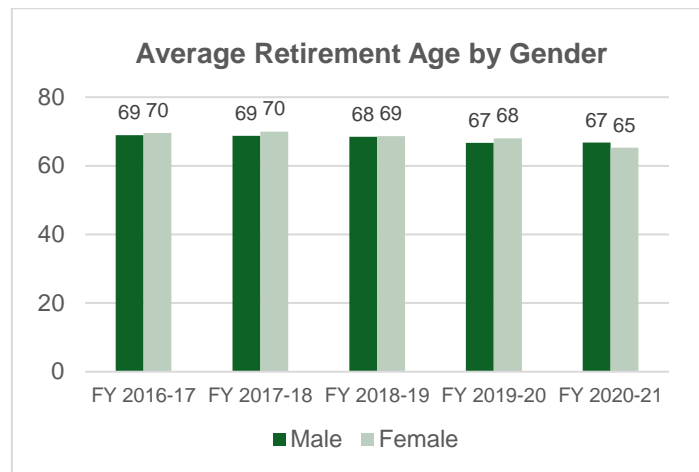
The age profile for male employees is older than for female employees. 64.9% of non-casual females are aged under 50 years compared to 51.6% of males.

The graph below shows the age profile of employees by gender.



Over the past 5 years the average retirement age for employees has declined for both men and women. In 2020 – 21 the average retirement age for women declined by 3 years, which may be related to the gendered impacts of Covid-19 experiences.

⁵ NSW Public Service Commission Workforce Profile Report 2021

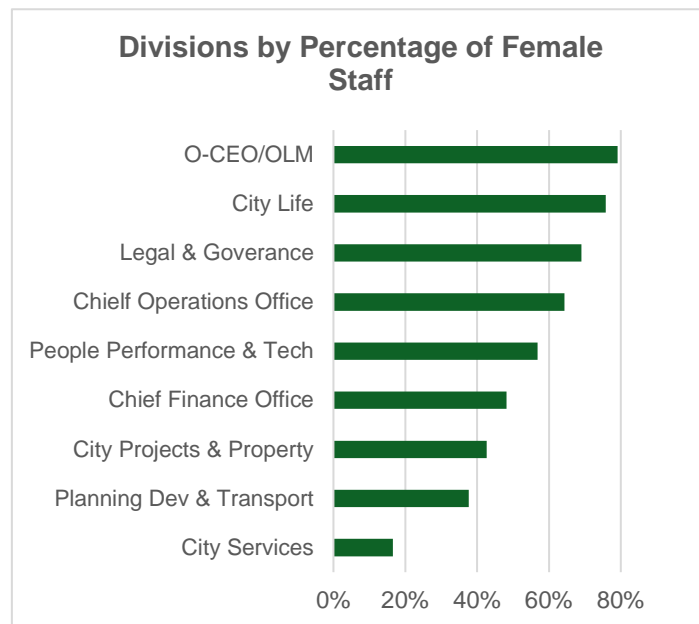


Gender

At 30 June 2021, 57.7% of non-casual employees were male, compared to 42.3% female.

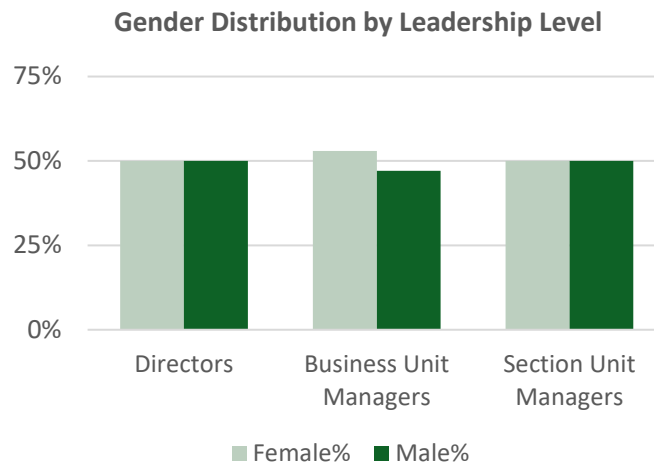
Female employment has increased over the past 8 years, from 39.2% in 2012, rising above 40% for the first time in 2018, to the current level of 42.3%.

The percentage of female employees varies across the City. Amongst the larger divisions, the City Life division has the highest percentage of female non-casual employees (75.8%), followed by the Legal and Governance division (69%).



At 30 June 2021, the overall proportion of female employees performing managerial and supervisory roles at the City of Sydney was 53.3% as compared to 41.8% in 2014. This is higher than the overall percentage of female employees at the City (42.3%).

The City now has gender-balanced leadership. The next graph shows that in 2021, the proportion of women at director level was 50%, at the business unit manager level was 52.9% and at section manager level was 50%.



In 2020 – 2021, there were 32 internal employee promotions, of which 17 were achieved by female employees⁶. This indicates 1.9% of female employees received a promotion compared to 1.6% of male employees.

Pay Equity

In 2021 the City undertook its sixth gender pay equity review guided by the Workforce Gender Equality Agency framework for private sector workplaces.

The City calculated its gender pay gap (the gap between the average total remuneration of women and men across the City) on 2 measures of pay – ‘total remuneration’ (base pay plus variable pay including overtime) and ‘base salary’.

The City’s total remuneration gender pay gap was 3.4 per cent in favour of women compared to WGEA total remuneration national pay gap of 20.1 per cent in favour of men.

The base salary gender pay gap was 9% in favour of women (an increase from 2019/20). This compares with the national gender pay gap of 14.2% in favour of men and the public sector pay gap of 10.8%⁷ in favour of men.

Diversity and Inclusion

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees

At 30 June 2021, 2.5% of the City's non-casual employees identified as being a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent. This compares to 3.7% reported in the NSW Public Sector Workforce Profile, 2021⁸.

The City is working towards its Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan employment target of 3% by 2023.

The City Services division has the highest percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff (4.9%).

⁶ Payroll data 2020-2021. A promotion is when an employee advances to a more senior level and band in the organisation

⁷ Workplace Gender Equality Agency, Australia's Gender Pay Gap Statistics, https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/Gender_pay_gap_factsheet_august2021.pdf

⁸ NSW Public Service Commission Workforce Profile Report 2021

Employees with Disability

At 30 June 2021, 1.6% of the City's non-casual employees had identified with one or more limitations or restrictions associated with a disability. This compares to 2.5% of employees reported in the NSW Public Sector Workforce Profile, 2021⁹.

In 2020 – 21 due to known challenges with under-reporting, the City offered employees an anonymous option to identify as living with a disability. In this survey, 3.4% of respondents said they had a disability.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) employees

As at 30 June 2021, 19.7% of employees identified as a part of culturally or linguistically diverse (CALD) group.

Additionally, 8.1% of all employees reported that they spoke a language other than English at home in comparison to 18.5% of the NSW Public Sector workforce.

LGBTIQA+ employees

In 2017, the City of Sydney became one of the first councils to collect information for employees who identify as being LGBTIQA+ employees. Currently 3.9% of City employees identify as being LGBTIQA+.

The table below shows changes over the last 4 years.

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees	2.1%	2.5%	2.3%	2.5%
Employees with a disability	1.4%	1.9%	1.6%	1.6%
Culturally and linguistically diverse employees	18.2%	19.0%	18.8%	19.7%
LGBTIQA+ employees	2.8%	3.4%	3.5%	3.9%

The City acknowledges there are many factors influencing whether employees self-report diversity data, and that this contributes to under-reporting. The City continues to encourage employees to self-identify as being a part of a diversity group, to build a more accurate picture of the workforce and to provide more support to employees.

⁹ NSW Public Service Commission Workforce Profile Report 2021.

Where do the City of Sydney's employees live?

At 30 June 2021, an estimated 12% of non-casual employees lived within the City of Sydney Local Government Area as compared to 14% in 2018.

41% of our employees live within the 5 km radius and a further 15% live in the 5-10 km radius. The remaining 44% of employees live further than 10 km from the City LGA.

The heat map below shows the residential locations for our employees.



EEO, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan



Figure 10. Creative hoardings covering the Woolworths Building during its renovation, April 2022 - Photo by Abril Felman/ City of Sydney

Our commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

At City of Sydney, we recognise that promoting workplace equity, diversity and inclusion is more than a legislative requirement – it is essential to our success as a local government organisation that caters to the diverse communities who live, work in and visit the City of Sydney. We also understand that having a diverse and inclusive workforce improves organisational performance, innovation, engagement and service quality.

Diversity and inclusion make good business sense because they deliver a range of positive organisational, team and individual outcomes. (Diversity Council of Australia, 2021)

We understand that a broad range of perspectives, approaches and ideas make us better in delivering business outcomes as well as working collaboratively with Sydney's multicultural society with its varied cultures, abilities, gender identities, languages, traditions, religious and spiritual practices.

We demonstrate our commitment to diversity and inclusion by respecting our employees, and, treating employees fairly and equitably. We strive to eliminate discrimination, to actively remove barriers to inclusive employment and to promote workplace relationships that are based on understanding and respect. We want to foster a safe environment where people feel valued for who they are.

We want the City of Sydney to be an inclusive organisation – one in which employees trust they will be treated fairly, feel diversity is valued and respected, and report that top leaders demonstrate a genuine, visible commitment to diversity and inclusion.



Figure 11. City of Sydney staff participating in Mardi Gras parade, March 2022 – Photo by Abril Felman/ City of Sydney

Our commitment to these diversity and inclusion is reflected in the following plans and programs:

- Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (2020 – 2023)
- Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan (2021 – 2025)
- Participation in the Human Rights Commission’s IncludeAbility program
- Disability Confident Employer status (from the Australian Network on Disability Network)
- Our annual Gender Pay Gap reporting.

The commitments in these plans and programs will not be repeated in this document.

This Action Plan demonstrates our ongoing commitment to action. It outlines our high-level and aspirational goals for 2022–26 and the ways we will monitor and review our progress.

Background

The City of Sydney (the City) aims to provide a work environment that supports equity, diversity, and inclusion, and is free from discrimination, harassment, and vilification as determined by legislation. The City believes that a diverse workforce that reflects the community it serves and represents, is better equipped to understand and meet their needs.

The City is committed to meeting the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) obligations outlined in Section 344 of the Local Government Act 1993:

- a. Eliminate and ensure the absence of discrimination in employment on the grounds of race, sex, marital or domestic status and disability in councils, and
- b. Promote equal employment opportunity for women, members of racial minorities and persons with disabilities in councils.

State Alignment

In addition to the Local Government Act (NSW) 1993, this plan also considers other state-level policy and legislation, including:

- *Anti-Discrimination Act (NSW) 1977*
- *Multicultural Act (NSW) 2000*
- *Disability Inclusion Act (NSW) 2014*
- *Carer Recognition Act (NSW) 2010*

National Alignment

The preparation of this plan also considers national policy and legislation, including:

- *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Age Discrimination Act 2004*

City Alignment

This EEO, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan is informed by the City’s community strategic plan. It supports the vision for Sydney to be a highly connected city – that is, a city that is diverse, welcoming and inclusive; one that will be resilient with the capacity to adapt to change and withstand adversity.

This plan also aligns with other City initiatives, including:

- Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (2020 – 2023)
- Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan (2021 – 2025)
- Human Rights Commission's IncludeAbility program
- Disability Confident Employer status
- Annual Gender Pay Gap reporting.

Moreover, the plan supports Sydney becoming a city for people – a socially supportive community that is safe, and inclusive. Feeling safe is associated with being free from discrimination based on gender, ethnicity or origin, culture, language, relationship status, pregnancy, sexuality, race, medical conditions or disability, age and political or religious belief.

Key Deliverables

This Action Plan sets out the key deliverables that address the City's commitment to EEO principles and which together provide a roadmap for a diverse and inclusive workplace. These include actions to:

- Deliver the workforce commitments within the City's Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2020 – 23
- Implement the workforce actions within the Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2021 – 25
- Report on gender equity as part of an annual workforce reporting process and implement initiatives to improve gender equity
- Embed the principles of diversity and inclusion in the City's core people management processes (recruitment, learning, development, performance) and leadership and employee capabilities and related programs
- Develop initiatives to further support workplace diversity and inclusion including among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, women, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people (including refugees and asylum seekers), LGBTIQ+ people, young workers, mature age workers, and carers.



Figure 12. Yabun Festival celebration in Victoria Park, Camperdown – Photo by Joseph Mayers / Joseph Mayers Photography

Our achievements

We recognise we still have much work to do.

However, we are building upon a strong foundation and have a lot to celebrate, including:

- Achieving accreditation from the Australian Network on Disability to become a 'Disability Confident Recruiter'
- Becoming a member of the Australian Human Rights Commission's IncludeAbility employers' network
- Increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees from 1.6% of our workforce in 2016 to 2.7% in 2022
- Achieving the Gender Equality target of 50% female representation in leadership roles
- Being one of very few organisations to have a positive pay gap in favour of women, reflecting a high number of women in management roles
- Becoming one of the few organisations to collect data and report on the workforce participation of LGBTIQ+ staff
- Sponsoring the 'Counting Culture' Research – an Australian first approach for defining, measuring, and reporting on workforce cultural diversity in a respectful, accurate and inclusive way by Diversity Council Australia (DCA) and the University of Sydney Business School
- Establishing Executive level sponsors to promote workplace diversity and inclusion
- Maintaining active employee reference groups – City Women, City Pride, DiverCity and the Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander staff network
- Establishing targeted mental health awareness and mental health first aid training for staff and management.



Figure 13. Beginners tai chi class focusing on physical and mental wellbeing – Photo by Katherine Griffiths/ City of Sydney

Our work has also been recognised by others:

- 2020 Ministers' Award for Women in Local Government – Employment Diversity – Metropolitan
- 2019 Australian HR Award for 'Best Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Program'
- 2019 Australian Human Resource Institute (AHRI) Finalist 'Diversity and Inclusion Champion'
- 2018 Local Government NSW Award for 'Best Diversity and Inclusion Program'
- 2018 and 2019 Ministers' Award for Women in Local Government – 'Women in non-traditional roles'
- 2018 Australian LGBTIQ+ Awards – Finalist 'Best New Employee Network'.

Developing the Action Plan

Planning

The City undertakes diversity and inclusion action planning through annual and longer-term management plans linked to the business planning cycle. This integrated approach ensures diversity actions are incorporated in workforce planning and major business change initiatives.

Responsibility

A commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion at the City starts with the Chief Executive Officer and the Executive. Overall corporate responsibility for monitoring workforce diversity and inclusion lies with the Director People, Performance and Technology. Managers and staff throughout the City are responsible for implementing EEO principles and supporting a diverse and inclusive workplace.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of equity, diversity and inclusion performance is a regular part of the annual business planning and reporting cycle. The City is required to periodically report progress against equity, diversity and statistics to the Council and other government bodies in addition to ad hoc requests from other government agencies.

Informing

The EEO, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2022 – 26 includes actions to ensure staff are kept informed of the initiatives and of their EEO rights and responsibilities in the workplace. Information is shared through:

- Online communication including intranet, email and online resources
- Specific Diversity and EEO related training programs and inclusion of Diversity and EEO topics in a wide range of general training programs
- Leadership and staff briefings/information forums
- Induction training
- Diversity network meetings.

Review of Policies and Practices

The City's policies and practices are monitored to ensure they are consistent with equity, diversity and inclusion objectives and EEO legislation and are informed by best practice research and resources. Equity, diversity and inclusion principles are considered in major projects, when developing new or changed work practices and when creating and reviewing relevant policies.

The EEO Policy applies to all City staff, agency staff, consultants, job applicants, contractors, volunteers, trainees and work experience participants. The City, being the responsible employer, is legally accountable for discrimination in employment matters. The City's programs are informed by

the EEO (Commonwealth Authorities) Act 1987 [the Act]. The Act requires organisations to have programs that:

- Promote the employment of designated disadvantaged groups (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with disability, people from non-English speaking backgrounds and women)
- Facilitate the elimination of all forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment in the workplace.

The Act also requires annual reporting on progress against program objectives, which the City does each year in its Annual Report.

Focussing our efforts on 3 strategic goals



1. Build a more diverse workforce

Build on our strengths and learn from others to recruit and retain a diverse workforce and invest in leadership diversity.

Diversity refers to the mix of people in an organisation – that is, the differences between people in how they identify in relation to their Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background, age, caring responsibilities, cultural background, disability status, gender, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status, and socio-economic background¹⁰

¹⁰ Diversity Council Australia, <https://www.dca.org.au/di-planning/getting-started-di/diversity-inclusion-explained>

These identities may shape the way people view and perceive their world and workplace – as well as how others view and treat them.

We understand that a broad range of perspectives, approaches and ideas make us better in delivering business outcomes as well as working collaboratively with Sydney's multicultural society with its varied cultures, abilities, gender identities, languages, religious and spiritual practices.

At the City we see diversity and inclusion as critical business enablers. Helping us attract and retain high potential employees, to futureproof our relevance and capacity to solve complex real-world problems, to be leaders in the local government space, change agents, to develop our capability to lead on matters of national and global importance and to connect respectfully with our citizens and places.

We also accept that we have a social responsibility to advance the employment of people who are unfairly excluded or disadvantaged in the workforce.

We strive to embrace diversity and inclusion at all stages of the employment cycle, from attraction, recruitment, and selection to access to training, promotional and development opportunities. Not only do we want to attract new talent from different backgrounds, we want to support our existing employees to develop their skills and careers at the City and achieve their best.

We will achieve this by:

- Promoting the City of Sydney as an inclusive employer of choice, that values and supports diversity in its workforce
- Partnering with specialist employment agencies to attract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates and candidates with disability to work for the City of Sydney
- Reviewing our entry-level programs to help create a diverse talent pool for the future – this involves ensuring our programs include strategies to create pathways to permanent positions
- Streamlining our recruitment and selection processes to support the objectives of this plan, remove barriers and reduce the risk of unconscious bias
- Improving diversity in our selection and interview panels
- Analysing retention trends of employees from under-represented groups to identify and mitigate issues, if any
- Broadening our pool of diverse leaders across the organisation.

2. Foster inclusion and belonging

Maintain a workplace that is safe, collaborative, and accountable – one in which employees trust they will be treated fairly, see that diversity is valued and feel as if they belong.

Inclusion refers to getting the diverse mix of people in an organisation to work together to improve performance and wellbeing. Inclusion in a workplace is achieved when people from diverse backgrounds feel that they are:

- Respected for who they are and able to be themselves
- Connected to their colleagues and feel they belong
- Contributing their perspectives and talents to the workplace and
- Progressing in their career at work¹¹.

An inclusive organisation contributes to greater psychological safety and wellbeing, and a stronger sense of belonging. People are more likely to feel their contributions are valued and are more comfortable raising their ideas and concerns.

The City aspires to be a place where all people are valued and respected, have equal access to opportunities and are encouraged to fulfil their talents and potential. We understand that in order to

¹¹ Diversity Council Australia, <https://www.dca.org.au/di-planning/getting-started-di/diversity-inclusion-explained>

reap the benefits of a diverse workforce we must create and cultivate a workplace that enables diverse perspectives to be heard and empowers all employees to participate and contribute. To become a recognised leader in diversity and inclusion, we must foster a culture of respect, transparency and accountability and demonstrate this through measured and reported actions.

It has never been more important for the City to prioritise inclusion and belonging. The Covid-19 pandemic has affected our city and community in many ways, with significant impacts on parents and carers, access for people with disabilities, new mental health challenges, and financial hardship. Building a culture of belonging in this context is critical to our reset and rebound to the future.

We also acknowledge that in order to succeed, this plan must be driven from the top. Without visible leadership engagement and accountability there's a risk that diversity and inclusion will be considered a secondary "nice to have" rather than the strategic priority that we believe, it is. We have established leadership commitment and processes to ensure accountability for diversity and inclusion outcomes.

We will achieve this by:

- Engaging and empowering our diverse employees through our employee network groups.
- Implementing the City's mentally healthy workplace plan to support workplace belonging and wellbeing.
- Addressing factors contributing to psychological safety for diverse employees and action mitigation strategies to address any systemic barriers.
- Ensuring our internal policies support an inclusive working environment.
- Strengthening leadership and manager capabilities to build a diverse workforce and manage inclusive ways of working.
- Strengthening our leadership engagement and accountability for diversity and inclusion outcomes.
- Developing and implementing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy to support the recruitment, retention, support, and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.
- Implementing a Cultural Inclusion Strategy.
- Learning from and sharing good practices, experiences and lessons learned across business areas and with our external partners.

3. Create awareness and build effective measures

Build awareness and skills in diversity and inclusion. Strengthen workforce data and evidence to inform effective decision making and programs.

"Diversity and Inclusion is everyone's responsibility" – and that's why it is the actions and behaviours of employees and managers at all levels of our organisation that will determine how successful we are in creating an inclusive culture. We believe that all our employees are responsible for creating an inclusive and supporting environment within their sphere of influence.

As a large and complex organisation, communication and engagement can sometimes be challenging. Strategic communications and stakeholder engagement will encourage buy-in to our goals through consistent, clear, and honest messaging. We will support awareness raising through appropriate workplace education and training.

We will regularly monitor our progress and evaluate the effectiveness of our strategies and initiatives. Progress measures will include the collection of workforce diversity data, employee engagement, evaluation of learning activities, and diversity performance compared to benchmarks.

Overall progress against the goals and targets in this plan will be reported bi-annually to the City's leadership team throughout the duration of the plan.

We will achieve this by:

- Increasing our employees' awareness and appreciation of diversity and inclusion through targeted engagement and learning activities.
- Continuing to monitor the diversity of our job candidates and employees in order to understand the make-up of our workforce and to identify barriers which may be affecting the recruitment, progression or experience of diverse candidates and employees.
- Developing and delivering diversity and inclusion training aimed at addressing unconscious bias in the workplace and promoting inclusive leadership and management practices.
- Educating hiring managers and key decision makers on embracing diversity in recruitment and selection.
- Regularly reporting on the diversity dashboards and other workforce planning analytics metrics.
- Promoting voluntary equal employment opportunity identification (including questions from Counting Culture research) to measure and better understand the diversity of our workforce. This will be supported by an internal communication explaining the importance of collecting this information.
- Monitoring the workplace experiences of diverse segments of our workforce.
- Deploying effective communication channels to promote understanding of lived experiences of diverse employees.

Glossary

Belonging: the individual sense of being accepted in the workplace.

Capabilities: the skills, knowledge areas, behaviours and mindsets needed at an individual level to adapt and to succeed in the context of continuously emerging changes at work.

Collaboration: a working practice whereby individuals work together for a common purpose to achieve an outcome.

Data analytics: use of data-informed methods to improve planning, decision making and management.

Digital literacy: having the capabilities to learn and work in an environment where communication and access to information is increasingly through digital technologies, which includes internet platforms, social media, and mobile devices.

Employee experience: the intersection of an employee's expectations (including needs, wants and values), their environment (including culture, people and leaders, work, programs and processes and workplace / tech) and the events (including life, career and organisation) that shape their journey within an organisation.

Human centric mindset: a mental disposition / attitude that cultivates deep empathy for the core needs of individuals. In the context of solving problems, a human centric mindset means balancing the needs of the organisation with the needs of users, customers and the community.

Hybrid working: a flexible working model where employees work partly between the physical workplace, and partly remotely – at home or from another workspace.

Inclusion: the achievement of a work environment where all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully and provided of equal access to opportunities and resources to ensure they can contribute fully.

Organisational culture: a “pattern of shared basic assumptions” (Schein, 1992) that guide how work gets done within an organisation. It includes the organisation's vision, norms, systems, symbols, language, assumptions, environment, location, beliefs and habits.

‘People first’ culture: a culture that actively considers and fulfils the needs of all people, including the community and employees. Within the organisation, a ‘people first’ culture ensures that people of all backgrounds, ages and abilities belong and are given the opportunity to thrive.

Skills: the ability to perform a certain task / activity or to manage a certain tool, technology or process.

Value Proposition: the collection of rewards and benefits that a company can offer its employees, in return for the capabilities and experiences that they bring to the company.

Ways of working: the set of principles, practices and processes that determine how a team / organisation collaborates to deliver outcomes.

Workforce planning: the process through which an organisation analyses and plans for the workforce and capabilities it needs in the future to ensure it has the right people, in the right place, at the right time.

