



City of Cockburn

Workforce Plan

2026-2030



Cockburn, the best place to be

www.cockburn.wa.gov.au



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Acknowledgement of Country

Cockburn Nyungar moort Beeliar boodja-k kaadadjiny. Koora, yeyi, benang baalap nidja boodja-k kaaradjiny. Ngalak kaditj boodjar kep wer kaadidjiny kalyakool yoodaniny, wer koora wer yeyi ngalak Birdiya koota-djinanginy.

The City of Cockburn acknowledges the Nyungar people of Beeliar Boodjar. Long ago, now and in the future they care for Country. We acknowledge a continuing connection to Land, Waters and Culture and pay our respects to Elders, past and present.

Introduction

The City's workforce is fundamental to the delivery of services to our community. The skills, capability and commitment of our people directly influence the quality of outcomes we achieve, the trust we build with the community, and our ability to respond to change.

The Workforce Plan 2026-2030 recognises that effective service delivery is not only about having the right number of people; it is about building the capabilities, behaviours and culture to meet current and future needs. It sets a clear direction for how the City will attract, develop and support its people so they can do their best work and continue to make a meaningful difference for the Cockburn community.

Overview

The City of Cockburn Workforce Plan 2026-2030 (plan) has been developed in line with the Australian Business Excellence Framework (ABEF) and the principles of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (IPRF). It supports long-term workforce sustainability by fully integrating workforce planning with the City's strategic, operational and financial planning. It does this by:

- Aligning workforce capability and resourcing with the Strategic Community Plan and Corporate Business Plan
- Monitoring changes in community expectations, regulatory and technology to inform workforce requirements
- Forecasting medium and long-term workforce needs, including skills, diversity and succession
- Ensuring workforce resourcing decisions are informed by service demand, risk and long-term financial sustainability
- Strengthening leadership capability and organisational resilience across all service areas
- Preparing the City for key workforce trends such as digital transformation, flexible employment models and demographic change
- Regularly reviewing and updating action plans to respond to emerging gaps and opportunities.

The plan enables the City to deliver quality services now while building a resilient and adaptable workforce for the Cockburn community's future needs.

Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

The City of Cockburn operates within the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (IPRF), as required under the *Local Government Act 1995 (WA)*. This framework provides a structured and transparent approach to planning and decision making and ensures workforce planning is fully integrated with the City's broader strategic, operational and financial planning. Workforce planning aligns with the following core plans and the requirements of the [City of Cockburn Industrial Agreement 2025](#).

- [Strategic Community Plan 2025-2035](#) – Outlines the long-term vision, aspirations and priorities for Cockburn’s community
- [Corporate Business Plan](#) – Outlines the key projects, corporate projects, plans and services
- [Long Term Financial Plan](#) – Represents a 10-year financial forecast for the City’s budget
- [Asset Management Strategy/Plans](#) – Overview of the objectives, resourcing and budget requirements of key City infrastructure
- [Workforce Plan](#) – Principles and forecast of workforce growth
- [Service Plans](#) – Articulates the roles and responsibilities of each service unit
- [Reconciliation Action Plan](#) – Provides measurable actions that support the goal of closing the gap between all Australians
- [Diversity and Inclusion Plan](#) – Commitment to creating and sustaining a diverse and inclusive culture.

The following diagram illustrates the City’s Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and specifies positions of the strategies and plans within the Framework.



Integrating these plans ensures workforce strategies are developed cohesively rather than in isolation, keeping them responsive to changing community needs, financial realities, and

asset management priorities. Regular reviews and community engagement maintain alignment and flexibility across all plans.

The City of Cockburn Strategic Community Plan 2025-2035 is the City's shared vision and long-term road map for the future, clearly communicating our strategic objectives.

Approach to Strategic Workforce Planning

Within the City of Cockburn's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (IPRF), strategic workforce planning provides the critical link between strategic intent and service delivery. It ensures the organisation has the capability and capacity to deliver agreed community outcomes in a sustainable, financially responsible manner.

The process examines the City's internal and external environment, includes consultation across the organisation to identify capability gaps, and carefully assesses the organisation's strategic requirements of the organisation to meet community expectations.

By operating as a continuous, cyclical Measure, Plan, Deliver and Review process, the City's workforce planning approach supports:

- Alignment between strategy, services and workforce capability
- Informed, evidence-based decision-making by Council and the Executive
- Responsiveness to changing community needs and labour market conditions
- Long term organisational sustainability.



The circular model highlights workforce planning as a continuous, integrated and auditable process, with each stage informing and strengthening the next.

Measure – Strategic Direction

The Measure stage establishes a clear understanding of the current and future workforce within the context of the organisation's strategic direction and service obligations.

Key inputs:

- Strategic Community Plan 2025–2035 – to identify long term community outcomes, strategic priorities and capability requirements
- Workforce profile data (size, demographics, diversity, employment type)
- Employee capability, capacity assessments and gap analysis
- Workforce risks – including critical roles, skill shortages and succession risks
- Internal consultation with employees and leaders, including employee engagement survey results
- External environmental factors such as labour market conditions, regulatory change and technology trends.

Key outputs:

- Robust workforce evidence base that identifies current and emerging gaps between workforce supply and organisational demand.

Plan – Workforce Strategy

The plan stage translates workforce insights into targeted, practical strategies that support delivery of the Corporate Business Plan and long-term organisational sustainability.

Key inputs:

- Corporate Business Plan 2025–2029 and previous Workforce Plan 2022–2026 – to identify service delivery priorities, workforce strategies, capability and succession
- Reviewing the success of previous and current workforce initiatives to address gaps and risks
- Outputs from Measure stage.

Key outputs:

- Workforce Plan that clearly articulates workforce priorities, actions, accountabilities and timeframes.

Deliver – Implementation

The Deliver stage focuses on implementing workforce initiatives through business-as-usual (BAU) operations and planned improvement activities.

Key inputs:

- Annual, Operational and Service Unit Plans – to identify workforce initiatives delivered through BAU and projects
- Recruitment and talent management initiatives

- Learning and development plans, training needs and gap analysis, capability frameworks and leadership programs
- Workforce redesign and flexible work arrangements
- Policy, system and process improvements
- Change management and engagement with leaders and employees.

Key outputs:

- Initiatives and actions identified within the plan are embedded within operational plans and overseen through established governance and reporting mechanisms.

Review – Assurance and Improvement

The Review stage aligns with the IPRF's annual and cyclical review requirements, ensuring workforce actions remain relevant and effective.

Key inputs:

- Annual Reviews and Reporting – to understand and evaluate performance, identify continuous improvement
- Monitoring workforce performance measures and indicators
- Assessing progress against plan actions
- Evaluating workforce outcomes as part of annual reporting processes
- Identifying emerging risks, trends or changes in service demand through internal reviews and external environmental scans.

Key outputs:

- Insights from the review process inform updates to workforce data and assumptions, feeding directly back into the Measure stage.

Sustainability (supporting the full cycle)

Key inputs:

- The Long Term Financial Plan, Asset Management Strategy and Plans, Capital Works Model and Service Plans, informing workforce affordability, sustainability and asset related capability requirements.

City of Cockburn – Organisational Overview

The City of Cockburn is a Band 1 local government in Western Australia (WA), reflecting its size, revenue and operational complexity. It delivers a wide range of services through a workforce of more than 1,100 people across five directorates, supporting a community of over 125,000 residents and more than 9,200 businesses across 24 suburbs.

Our Strategy

This page presents our vision, purpose and values along with our strategic objectives.

Our Vision: Cockburn, the best place to be.

Our Purpose: Support our communities to thrive by providing inclusive and sustainable services which reflect their aspirations.

Our Values

1. We care deeply about our people, community, and environment
2. We are empowered to be our whole selves and flourish
3. We foster innovation by being informed and collaborative.

Our Outcomes

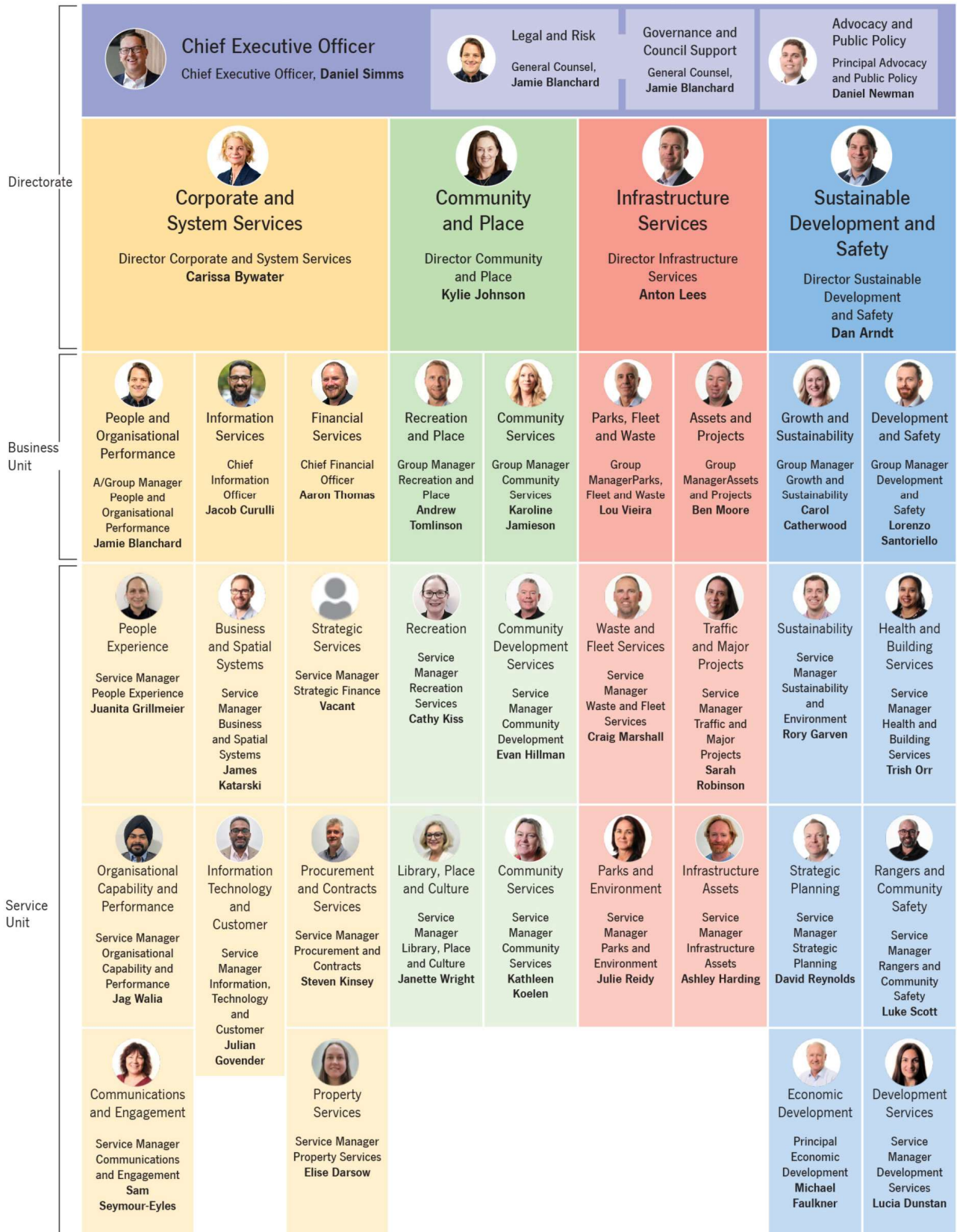


Our Strategic Objectives

1A. Empower and support local businesses	2A. Protect and enhance our natural areas and streetscapes	3A. Strengthen and facilitate a safe and secure Cockburn	4A. Plan for growth and sustainable development	5A. Facilitate transparent and accountable governance for today and tomorrow
1B. Facilitate economic growth and employment opportunities	2B. Facilitate sustainable waste management and resource conservation	3B. Promote and support active, healthy lifestyles through recreation and wellness	4B. Strengthen unique, liveable and adaptive places	5B. Strengthen engagement, communication and enhance customer experience
1C. Attract investment to the city by promoting innovation and economic opportunity	2C. Enhance climate resilience and champion environmental initiatives to mitigate impacts	3C. Celebrate and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and diverse cultures	4C. Enhance connectivity and mobility through integrated transport networks	5C. Champion strategic partnerships and stakeholder collaboration
1D. Facilitate vibrant, connected commercial hubs and visitor experiences		3D. Foster connected, accessible communities and services		5D. Strive for financial sustainability and operational excellence

Organisational structure

The City of Cockburn’s organisational structure is designed to deliver on our vision of creating a vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive city – the best place to live, work, and play.



People and Capability – Workforce Profile

The City’s workforce profile provides a comprehensive overview of workforce composition, demographics and employment characteristics. This information supports evidence-based workforce planning, enabling the City to identify emerging risks, capability gaps and opportunities relating to attraction, retention, engagement and succession planning.

This section draws on quantitative workforce data complemented by qualitative insights, including employee survey results and feedback gathered through internal consultation with leaders. Comparative analysis is provided throughout using the WALGA Salary and Workforce Survey 2026 (WALGA 2026), offering a benchmark against broader WA local government trends.

All workforce figures reflect the City’s actual workforce on 13 April 2026 and exclude vacant positions unless expressly stated. External contractors and volunteers are not included.

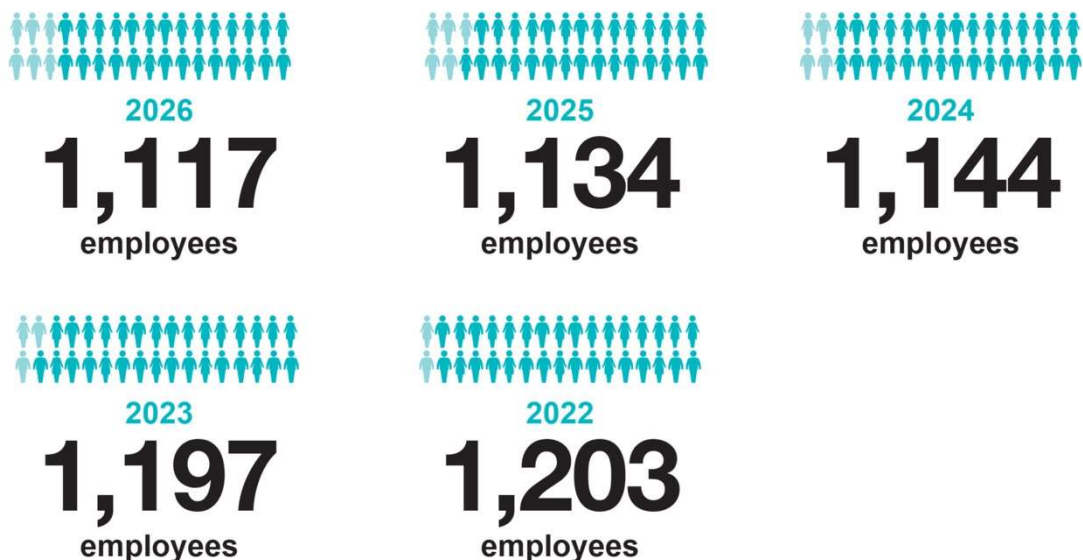
Workforce Metrics and Employment Profile

The City engages employees across a range of employment types, including permanent full-time, permanent part-time, fixed-term and casual engagements. This flexible workforce model supports operational delivery across diverse services, seasonal demand and community facilities, while also enabling workforce responsiveness to changing priorities.

Total Workforce Overview

As of 13 April 2026, the City’s total workforce comprises 1,117 employees, represented across both indoor and outdoor functions.

Over the past five years, the City’s total workforce numbers have declined year on year, as represented in the table below.



Workforce breakdown

The City's workforce (excluding external contractors) is represented across the graphics below.



Casual Workforce Profile – Comparative Context

Approximately 42 per cent of the City's workforce is engaged on a casual basis, which is notably higher than the WALGA 2026 sector average of 27.3 per cent. This variance is largely attributable to the operational requirements of Cockburn ARC, where casual engagement supports extended operating hours, peak demand periods and service continuity.

While this engagement model provides operational flexibility and supports community access to high-volume leisure services, it also introduces workforce risks, including:

- Increased exposure to service disruption due to same day termination rights
- Higher employee cost per hour due to the 25 per cent casual loading
- Ongoing recruitment and onboarding demand.

Whilst the City's Industrial Agreement provides options for conversion of casual engagement to permanent employment arrangements at the employee's discretion, these factors reinforce the importance of targeted workforce planning strategies for high casualised service areas, including talent pooling, capability building and conversion pathways where appropriate.

Workforce Composition and Diversity

Age Profile

The City's workforce has an average age of 40 years, broadly aligned with the WALGA 2026 sector profile, which continues to show concentration in mid-career cohorts.

Key trends at the City include:

- Strong representation in the 35-44 and 45-54 year age groups, consistent with sector wide patterns and consistent within the City over the previous five years

- Growth in younger cohorts within the total workforce, driven primarily by casual employment
- An ageing permanent workforce, particularly in outdoor and trade-based roles, presenting medium to long term succession and workforce sustainability risks.

Gender Profile

- Total workforce: 56 per cent female, 44 per cent male
- Permanent workforce: near equal female and male representation

Leadership Group	Female	Male
CEO, Directors and Group Managers	36%	64%
CEO, Directors, Group Managers, Service Managers	44%	56%
CEO, Directors, Group Managers, Service Managers, Service Leads	51%	49%

These figures align with broader WALGA trends, where women now form the majority of the local government workforce (especially in part time and casual roles). The City continues to pursue initiatives to close any remaining gender gaps, particularly in leadership positions.

Workforce Diversity

The City remains committed to workforce diversity and inclusion, with employees represented in key diversity cohorts (self-identified):

- First Nations employees: 11
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) employees: 65
- Employees with disability: 29.

While these numbers are modest in absolute terms, they align proportionally with broader WALGA reports. They also underscore opportunities to further strengthen inclusive employment pathways and targeted recruitment initiatives.

Local Employment

The City has over 40 per cent of employees residing within the City of Cockburn local government area (post codes 6163, 6164, 6149, 6166). This supports the City’s ‘live local, work local’ campaign and promotes greater workforce stability.

Tenure and Workforce Stability

In 2025, the City implemented a significant restructure of the entire workforce. The restructure better focussed the City on service delivery and constituted a significant

change to the leadership levels, alignment and reporting lines. The turnover trends, annual engagement survey and exit survey data must be interpreted in the context of this restructure.

Annual Engagement Survey Results

The City surveys the workforce annually around mid-year to measure engagement at a point in time. The table below summarises the top five areas of positive engagement for 2023, 2024, and 2025.

Question	2023	2024	2025
I like the kind of work I do	87%	88%	86%
My co-workers give me help and support	82%	84%	86%
I have confidence in the ability of my co-workers	77%	81%	81%
Keeping high levels of health and safety is a priority of this organisation	75%	81%	80%
Customers are satisfied with our products and/or services	79%	75%	78%

These results show employees feel a strong connection with the nature of the work and their colleagues, citing relationships and feeling supported, as key areas of favourability. Career opportunities, development and planning along with clarity on process ownership and efficiencies remain areas for future improvement.

The Annual Engagement Survey asks respondents if they see themselves working at the City in two years' time. This measure provides valuable insight to workforce intentions and in turn, likely workforce stability and tenure.

Question	2023	2024	2025
I would like to still be working in this organisation in two years	64%	61%	67%

Tenure

The current average tenure of the City's workforce is 5.24 years. The tenure profile of the permanent workforce is shown.

Length of Service	Employees	%
0–2 years	245	37.1
3–5 years	119	18.0
6–10 years	123	18.6
11–15 years	80	12.1

15+ years	93	14.1
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The City’s tenure profile demonstrates:

- A higher concentration of short-tenure employees, influenced by casual employment patterns
- A strong core of long tenured permanent employees, supporting organisational knowledge retention and operational continuity
- A gradual decline in long tenure representation aligns with sector wide trends and reinforces the need for proactive succession and knowledge transfer planning.

Turnover

Turnover is measured as the number of permanent employees leaving (voluntary and involuntary) during a period, expressed as a percentage of the average permanent workforce for that period. As at 13 April 2026, the City’s rolling 12-month turnover rate was 20.05 per cent, comprising mostly voluntary departures (resignations and retirements). This rate is below the WALGA 2026 sector median of 27.3 per cent, and similar to the 19.7 per cent average among comparable Band 1 local governments in the Perth region. (WALGA’s 2026 survey also noted that sector has been steadily increasing over the past eight years). The City recorded a rolling 12-month turnover rate of 19.6 per cent in 2025.

Exit Survey Results

To gain insights into why employees leave, the City uses an independent exit survey process. This survey gathers feedback on reasons for leaving, suggestions for improvement and an ‘advocacy score’ (how likely each departing employee is to recommend the City as an employer). As of February 2026, the City’s advocacy score was 58 per cent, remaining steady over the past six months. Cumulative exit survey data (since November 2022) highlight leadership and employee wellbeing as key areas for improvement. Conversely, Reward and Recognition (61 per cent positive feedback) and Health and Safety (71 per cent positive) are viewed as organisational strengths to maintain and build on.

The table below summarises the top five reasons employees gave for leaving the City in exit survey results for 2023, 2024, and 2025.

Question	2023	2024	2025
Unhappy with Senior Leadership*	27%	16%	34%
Lack of support from my people leader	27%	14%	29%
Better career opportunity at another organisation within the same industry/sector	24%	21%	24%

Lack of recognition and appreciation for my work	27%	21%	19%
Other (all other reasons not captured specifically)	18%	16%	17%

*Senior Leadership is defined as leaders across Group Manager, Director and CEO levels.

Exit survey feedback for the calendar year to date has shown significant improvement from 34 per cent of leavers reporting they were ‘unhappy with senior leadership’ in 2025 down to 11 per cent in May 2026. Additionally, those exiting have reported leaving to take on a ‘better career opportunity at another organisation within a different industry/sector’ at 33 per cent, up from 12 per cent in 2025 while leaving for a ‘better career opportunity at another organisation within the same industry/sector’ has decreased to 11 per cent from 24 per cent in 2025.

The City will continue its efforts to address these issues while building on identified strengths to improve retention and employee satisfaction.

Recruitment Rate

During the reporting period, the City’s recruitment rate was 19.20 per cent, reflecting a moderate level of recruitment activity within the permanent workforce. This indicates a meaningful level of workforce renewal, with a notable proportion of new employees joining the organisation. This level of turnover and replacement has implications for onboarding, knowledge transfer and short-term productivity as new employees transition into their roles.

Net Recruitment Rate

For the 12 months to March 2026, the City recorded a net recruitment rate of 1.05, meaning that for each permanent employee who exited, slightly more than one new permanent employee was recruited. This result indicates that the City has broadly maintained its permanent workforce capacity over that period, while managing turnover and workforce renewal, noting the City had experienced a decline in total workforce numbers over the preceding years.

Onboarding Survey Feedback

Since 2024, the City has invited new employees to complete an onboarding engagement survey at the end of the first month of employment. This survey provides valuable insight into the City’s onboarding process and initial engagement – a crucial period for long-term employee retention. The City new starters report high favourability in key areas: Engagement (92 per cent) Adjustment (97 per cent), favourability and Wellbeing (95 per cent).

The survey findings also identify opportunities for improvement, including increasing early career planning discussions between new-hires and their managers, shortening recruitment timeframes, and encouraging new starters to seek feedback. Recognising the importance of a positive onboarding experience, the City is redesigning its processes to address these insights.

Key Workforce Profile Insights

- The City’s workforce composition broadly reflects sector norms, with distinct characteristics influenced by the City’s service mix (particularly its leisure and recreation operations).
- Casual employment at the City is significantly higher than the WALGA sector average. This provides operational flexibility but also increases costs and retention risks.
- Turnover remains below sector median levels, indicating relative stable employment overall.
- Ageing workforce: A growing proportion of the permanent workforce is nearing retirement, underscoring the need for proactive workforce planning, including apprenticeships, traineeships and leadership succession initiatives.
- Diversity: The City’s workforce diversity is broadly in line with sector benchmarks, though further improvements can be pursued through targeted employment initiatives.

Learning and Development

The City is committed to supporting employees build rewarding careers through professional development, skills and capability training, access to study assistance, secondments and providing early career pathways. Additionally, learning and development allows the City to provide opportunities to build strong succession planning and talent pipelines, along with equipping employees to meet current and future needs.

Employees access a wide range of internal and external training opportunities offered through face to face, online and practical, on-the-job options.

For the period 1 January 2025 to 31 March 2026, over 2,708 training instances were completed by employees across 172 courses, with over 65 per cent of courses being facilitated through external providers. The top five courses undertaken were:

Top 5 – online training courses	Completed
Be Safe – Stage One	432
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Refresher	129
Be Safe – Stage One (People Leader)	120

Aboriginal Cultural Awareness	106
Manual Handling	103

For the same period, the top five online training courses were predominantly induction based, giving employees the base skills needed to safely perform work:

Top 5 – online training courses	Completed
Corporate Induction	216
Cyber Security – Introduction to Information Security	137
Driver Awareness Training	124
Induction to Local Government	117
Information Governance Framework	95

The City supports early-career pathways through the employment of one mechanical fitting apprentice in its workshop and typically usually up to four trainees across a range of business areas, including People Experience (Human Resources, Payroll, and Work Health and Safety), Bushland Maintenance, Finance and Information Technology.

The City also works closely with local universities by hosting students undertaking professional practice placements and promotes local employment pathways through its Youth Centre and partnerships with local high schools. In specialist areas such as Environmental Health and Building Surveying, the City provides students completing relevant qualifications with opportunities to gain practical, industry-based experience, strengthening workplace capability and graduate readiness.

These initiatives enable the City to engage early with emerging talent and establish pathways into critical, high demand roles that are challenging to recruit through external labour markets.

Internal Consultation

Consultation is a core component of workforce planning. Engagement with City employees and leadership groups was used to inform the Workforce Plan. Engagement involved:

1. Face to face consultation workshops with Group Managers, Service Managers and Service Lead levels throughout the service planning process
2. A survey in the service planning sessions to determine existing gaps

3. Consultation with senior leadership team to identify and rank the four main challenges for each service area
4. Consultation with key stakeholders, such as the Culture, Organisational Development, Finance, Work, Health and Safety, Business Planning and People Experience teams.

Outcomes of engagement

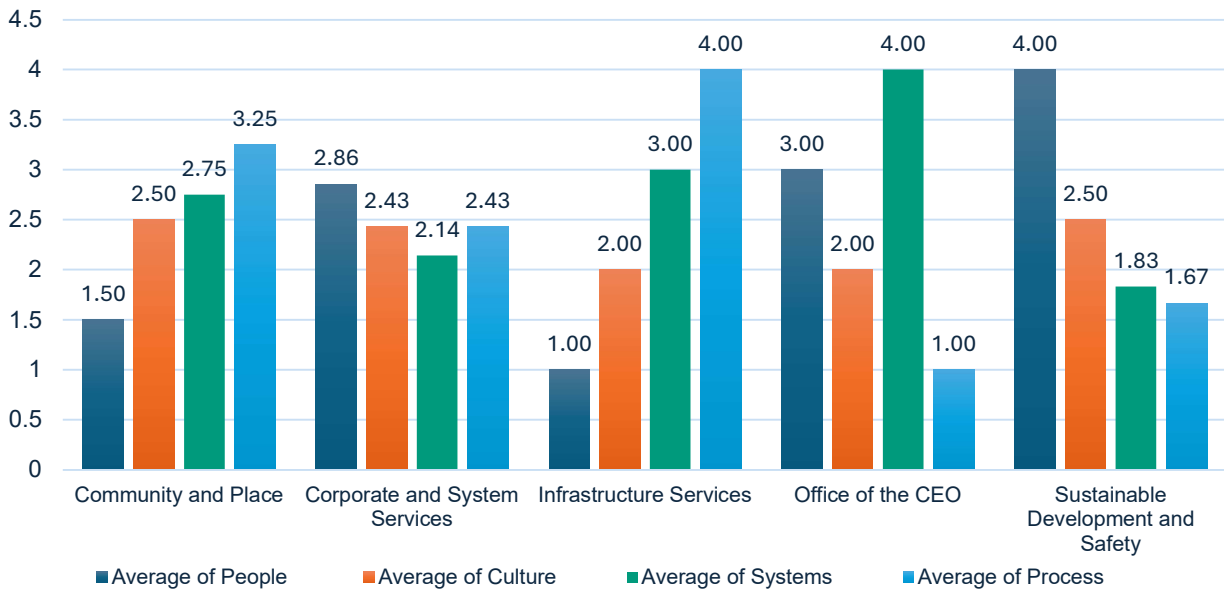
Engagement with employees identified several key drivers of change that will impact the City's workforce in the near term.

1. **People** – Talent availability, career development, leadership, safety, diversity, flexible work arrangements, aging workforce
2. **Culture** – Rewards and recognition, attraction and retention, training and development, work management
3. **Systems** – Upgrade of Technology One to CiAnywhere, Australian Business Excellence Framework, Project Management Governance, Organisational Review, other IT systems
4. **Process** – Service reviews, process mapping, information management, governance
5. **Technology** - Introduction of artificial intelligence, cyber threats, data governance, system upgrades
6. **Legislative changes** – Including local government reform, Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing legislation, the requirement for an integrated framework or strategy, climate and sustainability reporting, waste management
7. **Financial and economic pressures** – Global economic uncertainty, increased supply chain costs, inflation and dampened real wage growth.

A leadership perspective

The outcomes of the various internal consultation initiatives were consolidated and provided to the City's senior leaders. These leaders then ranked the four main challenges across People, Culture, Systems, and Process for each service area at the City.

While results by Directorate showed different challenges, the consolidated outcome across the organisation showed leaders recognised their greatest challenges were with People and Processes.



City of Cockburn – Community Overview

The City of Cockburn is a rapidly growing local government area (LGA).

Demographic Snapshot



Population: Approximately

136,388

residents in 2025 with a projected population of 189,683 by 2025 (120,000 residents in 2021 Consensus)

Median age

35 years (younger than WA average of 38 years)



Nearly

40%

of residents born overseas; strong cultural and language diversity

Labour force participation:

Approximately

65%

(aligned with WA)



Education

28%

hold a bachelor's degree or higher, TAFE and vocational qualifications common



Largest groups:

0-14 years (19%)
25-44 years (30%)
65+ years (13%)



Key sectors:

Healthcare,
Construction, Retail,
Manufacturing,
Education



Workforce Diversity: Increasing representation of women, younger workers and culturally diverse backgrounds.



Commuting patterns: High rates of residents travel to work outside the LGA, especially to Perth CBD and industrial areas.

Comparison with Western Australian Workforce Trends

The City of Cockburn's participation and unemployment rates are broadly in line with state averages, though Cockburn's workforce is slightly younger and more culturally diverse. Western Australia has the lowest unemployment rate in the country at 4.1 per cent, sitting slightly below the national average of 4.3 per cent (as of March 2026). This rate has been trending higher over the past financial year, up from 3.4 per cent in December 2025.

Western Australia is experiencing increased demand for workers in healthcare, construction and education – mirrored in Cockburn's top employment sectors.

Key Community Insights

- The City of Cockburn's workforce is vibrant, diverse and reflective of wider state trends
- There is strong demand for healthcare, construction and education roles, both locally and statewide
- Workforce engagement is high, with ongoing opportunities for upskilling and flexible work arrangements
- Diversity is a distinguishing feature, with a significant proportion of residents born overseas and speaking languages other than English at home.

Flexible work arrangements, digital skills and workforce diversity are also growing trends across WA and Cockburn is seeing similar patterns, with more women and younger people entering the workforce and a continued emphasis on vocational and tertiary education.

Continued focus on workforce development, inclusive employment practices and service planning that responds to population growth, diversity and skills demand are strategic implications for the City.

Workforce trends

The City's workforce planning approach is informed by contemporary workforce research and emerging public-sector practice. The following trends are expected to shape workforce planning over the next three to five years.

1. Competition for critical skills

Low unemployment and sustained sector growth are driving continued competition for specialist roles, including engineers, building surveyors, environmental health officers, information and Communications technology, emergency management professionals, project managers and skilled trades. The pressure is amplified locally by defence-related industry growth and competition from neighbouring local governments. Attracting and retaining scarce skills will require deliberate workforce planning, targeted development and a strong employee value proposition.

Both City and sector data show a high concentration of employees with less than two years' service, reflecting ongoing recruitment pressures across local government and strong labour market competition.

2. Ageing workforce and knowledge continuity

An ageing workforce presents both risk and opportunity. As experienced employees approach retirement, there is an increased risk of capability gaps and loss of corporate knowledge. At the same time, multigenerational teams can strengthen performance when supported effectively. Succession planning, mentoring, early career pathways, internal capability development and flexible transition options will be critical to maintaining continuity and building future capability.

3. Shift to skills-based workforce planning

Workforce design is increasingly focused on skills and capabilities rather than fixed roles. Identifying critical roles and mapping critical capabilities, particularly digital literacy, project management, regulatory expertise and customer engagement, supports greater organisational agility. Strengthening internal mobility and development pathways will reduce reliance on external recruitment and improve retention, while greater flexibility in how roles and approved headcount are utilised will be essential.

4. Workforce Capability and Leadership Development

WALGA trends continue to highlight leadership development, workforce planning and organisational culture as top sector priorities. Increasing demands to effectively manage employee wellbeing and psychosocial risk will require more skills leaders to ensure a confident, capable leadership cohort and a workforce equipped to adapt to changing service and community expectations.

Ensuring training needs are identified, succession planning is mapped and targeted capability development programs aligned to supervisory, leadership and specialist skill requirements are in place are necessary.

5. Digital and AI adoption

Digital and AI technologies are moving from pilot initiatives to embedded operational tools. These technologies present opportunities across workforce planning, analytics, recruitment, learning and customer service. Responsible adoption requires strong governance, meaningful consultation and targeted capability development to ensure ethical, transparent and accountable use aligned with public sector standards and community expectations.

Increasing governance requirements with the introduction of the new *Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing Act 2024 (WA)*, legislation designed to protect personal information held by the public sector and enable responsible data sharing, will impact resourcing, training and skills requirements. Procedural changes will be necessary across the sector.

6. Wellbeing and psychosocial risk management

Under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020 (WA)*, the City has a duty to proactively manage psychosocial risks such as excessive workload, role ambiguity, exposure to aggression and change fatigue. Proactive job design, adequate resourcing, capable leadership and early consultation during change are essential to sustaining a safe, healthy and productive workforce. A constructive organisational culture, grounded in trust, accountability and psychological safety, is a critical enabler of performance, resilience and retention.

Sector-wide workforce pressures, increasing turnover and rising employment costs highlight the importance of employee wellbeing and engagement in retention strategies.

7. Industrial and remuneration environment

Operating within the state industrial relations system presents ongoing challenges in balancing fiscal responsibility with market competitiveness. While industrial agreements provide consistency and equity, they can limit flexibility in responding to labour-market pressures for specialist roles. Cost pressures and the industrial environment are driving sharper focus on productivity, role design and sustainable workforce mix. Managing these risks will require a focus on non-financial retention strategies, clear progression pathways and ongoing sector benchmarking to inform remuneration positioning.

8. Evolving workforce expectations

Employee expectations continue to shift toward flexibility, wellbeing, inclusion, greater social responsibility and meaningful work. Hybrid work, flexibility and employee value proposition (EVP) expectations are becoming baseline for attraction and retention where operationally feasible. The City will continue to balance flexibility with service delivery and community obligations, ensuring decisions are transparent, consistent and aligned with operational requirements.

9. Service demand growth

Local growth in infrastructure and service demand (population growth and urban development) naturally sees increasing capability and capacity requirements for the City. This necessitates data-driven workforce planning, critical role and skill mapping along with flexibility of budget allocation to meet changing or growing needs.

10. Declining employee engagement

Recent social research shows declining levels of employee engagement within Australia and New Zealand, with 66 per cent of employees reporting they are not engaged and 13 per cent actively disengaged. Rising levels of stress, loneliness and sadness are being experienced along with lowering confidence in the job climate, meaning many workers feel they are not thriving. As a general trend impacting workplaces, the City's engagement and retention efforts are critical.

A Sustainable Plan

The City's Workforce Plan 2022–2026 recognised that our organisational strength is grounded in the capability, commitment and dedication of our people. It focused on building organisational capability, prioritising health, safety and wellbeing, fostering continuous learning and strengthening a shared culture through the outcomes of the Organisational Review.

The Workforce Plan 2026–2030 builds on this foundation while deliberately preparing the City to respond to emerging risks, workforce trends and changing service demands. It reflects a shift toward long-term sustainability – ensuring the City has the capacity, capability and organisational knowledge to continue delivering for the community in a responsible and resilient way.

This plan provides a clear roadmap to support workforce sustainability over the next four years with considered responses to address key risks, trends and opportunities identified through internal workforce analysis and comparison with the WALGA Salary and Workforce Survey 2026. Collectively, these responses and the associated initiatives, are designed to strengthen workforce capability, improve sustainability, reduce risk and support the delivery of high-quality services to the Cockburn community.

The City commits to resourcing the initiatives identified for the first year of the plan, with anticipated future initiatives mapped across years two to four. This staged approach ensures alignment with strategic priorities, financial capacity and evolving organisational needs, while maintaining focus on building a capable, adaptable and values-aligned workforce.

Workforce Initiatives




















This plan identified four priority workforce challenge areas that must be addressed to support sustainable delivery and organisational adaptability: People, Culture, Systems and Process.































Priority Workforce Challenge Areas










People	e.g. Talent availability, career development, leadership capability, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, First Nations employment framework through our Reconciliation Action Plan, flexible work, ageing workforce, wellbeing and burnout pressures
Culture	e.g. Rewards and recognition, attraction and retention, learning and development, role clarity, workload management and constructive behaviours

Systems	e.g. TechnologyOne CiA, ABEF maturity, project management capability, organisational review outcomes, digital and ICT systems
Process	e.g. Service reviews, process mapping, information and knowledge management, governance and decision-making frameworks

The table below outlines the City's strategic responses to address current and emerging workforce challenges while maintaining flexibility to meet service and community needs. Implementation will support workforce sustainability, reduce risk and build organisational capability and resilience over the life of the plan. Future planned initiatives are represented in the column labelled 2027-2030.

Project/Activity	Milestones for FY27				2027-2030
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
1. Recruitment system upgrade and enhancement, including external website refresh, employer brand and employee value proposition (EVP) alignment and streamlined hiring processes to improve candidate experience and timeliness while maintaining due diligence.					
2. Expand early career program (apprenticeships, traineeships and graduate pathways), aligned to forecast workforce demand and future capability needs.					
3. Maintain, promote and enhance flexible work arrangements and transition to retirement, including review and update of working-from-home processes and inspection requirements to support wellbeing and performance.					
4. Enhanced employee benefits, including deferred salary scheme and benefits platform, to strengthen the employee value proposition and support retention.					
5. Maintain constructive industrial relationships through direct employee engagements, unions and employer/industry bodies, supporting trust, transparency and organisational stability.					

6. Intranet refresh and content uplift to improve access to information, clarity of expectations and organisational connection.					
7. Promote and support job rotations, internal development opportunities, secondments, mentoring and collaboration with industry, universities and other providers to build learning agility, internal mobility and support talent.					
8. Embed knowledge transfer and retention strategies, including mentoring, job shadowing and documented work practices to support continuity, reduce key-person risk and improve efficiency.					
9. Electronic safety system implementation and ongoing WHS awareness training to strengthen safety, wellbeing and shared accountability.					
10. Hearts and Minds: Teambuilding program to support organisational engagement.					
11. Monitor employee feedback on the workplace and their wellbeing through regular surveying.					
12. Targeted recruitment campaigns, establishment of proactive talent pooling for higher turnover and critical roles, promotion of Live local, Work local.					
13. Improve employment outcomes by increasing First Nations recruitment, retention and professional development.					
14. Conduct stay interviews and monitor early tenure turnover trends to identify role types or service areas requiring targeted intervention and to better understand positive engagement and employee value proposition views.					
15. Implement a consistent City onboarding program which provides structured inductions (face-to-face,					

e-learning and work area orientations), provides clear role expectations, buddy support and early capability development to support employee integration, engagement and productivity.					
16. Complete talent mapping and succession planning for leadership roles and identified critical roles.					
17. Complete a review of the remuneration framework for roles not covered by the Industrial Agreement to ensure remuneration remains market competitive.					
18. Explore options to develop closed org AI chat bot assistance (e.g. HR/Payroll/entitlements/training/IT) for employees to support rapid information sourcing, query resolution and more efficient service.					
19. Complete a City-wide Training Needs Analysis revision to identify skills and knowledge needs to meet workplace gaps and succession planning requirements.					
20. Update and digitise employee handbook, incorporating links to intranet and in-time AI chat bot.					
21. Undertake critical roles assessment to better understand labour requirements to support succession planning, proactive talent acquisition and addressing skills gaps.					
22. Establish mentoring program for new leaders.					
23. Review current casual and labour hire resourcing model and usage to ensure it matches the City's ongoing needs.					

Monitoring and Review

Ongoing monitoring and review are critical to ensuring the plan remains relevant, effective and aligned with the City's evolving needs.

As part of the annual planning cycle, the City will review progress against prior-year actions, confirm priorities and initiatives for the following 12 month's work, and reassess planned initiatives across the life of the plan. The plan may also be reviewed more frequently where emerging risks, workforce trends or changes in service demand are identified through internal reviews and external environmental scanning.

Updates to projects and planned initiatives will be made where required to ensure the plan continues to support organisational capability, resilience and sustainable service delivery.

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City of Cockburn

Whadjuk Boodjar
9 Coleville Crescent, Spearwood WA 6163
PO Box 1215, Bibra Lake DC WA 6965
Telephone: 08 9411 3444

Email: customer@cockburn.wa.gov.au

City of Cockburn website: www.cockburn.wa.gov.au



City of Cockburn Facebook: www.facebook.com/CityofCockburn



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