

Workforce Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan

2025 - 2028



Central Darling Shire Council

Acknowledgement of Country



Photo courtesy of Martin Bass

Council respectfully acknowledges the traditional owners, the Barkindji people, as the custodians of this land. We pay respect to all Aboriginal community Elders, past and present, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the history of the region.

We acknowledge the ongoing connection that Aboriginal people have to this Country, especially water and recognise Aboriginal people as the original custodians of this land. We thank them for their generosity in sharing their aspirations for the future and hope that this plan will affect change for communities of the shire.

Contents

Acknowledgement of Country.....	2
Our Workforce Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan	4
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – Our Perspective.....	5
Snapshot of Central Darling Shire Council.....	5
Our values.....	6
Our Workforce Profile	6
Our Current State of Maturity	7
Objectives	7
Focus Area 1 – Recruitment, Selection and Retention.....	7
Focus Area 2 – Learning and Development Opportunities	8
Focus Area 3 – Workplace Culture and Environment	9
Focus Area 4 – Workplace Diversity Equity and Inclusion.....	10
Monitoring and Evaluation	10
Document History.....	10

Our Workforce Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan

The Central Darling Shire Council Workforce Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan (the “Plan”) outlines the steps we need to take over the next three years to remove barriers to equity, diversity and inclusion of everyone in the workplace.

Our Plan is Council’s EEO Management Plan which is required under Section 345 of the *Local Government Act*. The development and delivery of the Plan is also an action within our Workforce Management Plan 2023 to 2027. It also links to our:

- Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032
- Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022

Our Plan also supports both our Respectful Workplace Behaviours Policy and Workplace Diversity Policy.

We acknowledge that this Plan is internal focussed and is designed to bring about a positive culture change within the workplace.

We believe that our internal efforts will help to create positive outcomes for the community through more inclusive, equitable and accessible service delivery and behaviour of staff.

Our Plan is aligned with requirements of the following State and Federal legislation:

- *Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)*
- *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- *Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (NSW)*
- *Equal Employment Opportunity Act 1987 (Cth)*
- *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Cth)*
- *Industrial Relations Act 1996 (NSW)*
- *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*
- *Local Government (State) Award 2023 (NSW)*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)*

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – Our Perspective

Inclusion is what makes diversity work. It is what happens when people feel that their uniqueness is valued and respected, that they have fair access to opportunities and resources, and that they are safe to speak up and contribute their ideas and talents to the success of the organisation. Inclusion is the key to leveraging employee diversity in the workplace.

Inclusion is also about acknowledging and addressing the challenges and barriers that exist in the workplace for people.

Diversity is the combination of differences and unique attributes that make us who we are. It includes our backgrounds, personality, life experiences, perspectives, and beliefs, along with other factors like communication style, career path, educational or socio-economic background, geographic location, family circumstances.

Diversity is made up of both visible and invisible aspects of our identities that shape our view of the world and our approach.

Diversity is also about respecting differences based on protected attributes under anti-discrimination law, such as gender identity, age, ethnicity or cultural background, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or caring responsibilities, and recognising the additional challenges some people face in the workplace.

Equity implies giving everyone what they need to be successful, taking their circumstances and requirements into consideration. Equity is therefore aiming for equal outcomes rather than equal treatment.

We are committed to ensuring that everyone in our organisation has access to the same opportunities to be the best they can be and to be successful. We will actively strive to address barriers and create an inclusive and accessible work environment, systems, and processes.

Psychological safety is about enabling honest and courageous conversations. A psychologically safe organisation is one where all employees believe that they can speak up, challenge the status quo, and share their diverse ideas as well as questions, concerns, and even mistakes, without fear of negative consequences.

Psychological safety supports people to thrive at work and is a vital ingredient that leverages the benefits of diversity because it helps make inclusion a reality. It is a key enabler for innovation and performance.

Snapshot of Central Darling Shire Council

Central Darling Shire is the largest Shire in NSW, and yet has the smallest population. It covers an area about the size of the main island of Tasmania and yet has a population of less than 2,000 people. The Shire is extremely diverse with four main communities – Wilcannia, Menindee, Ivanhoe and White Cliffs. Each of these communities are different in their commerce, geography and Indigenous and European cultures.

The administration centre of the Shire is based in Wilcannia, which is situated on the Barrier Highway, approximately 198 kms east of Broken Hill, 470 kms north of Mildura and 260 kms west of Cobar.



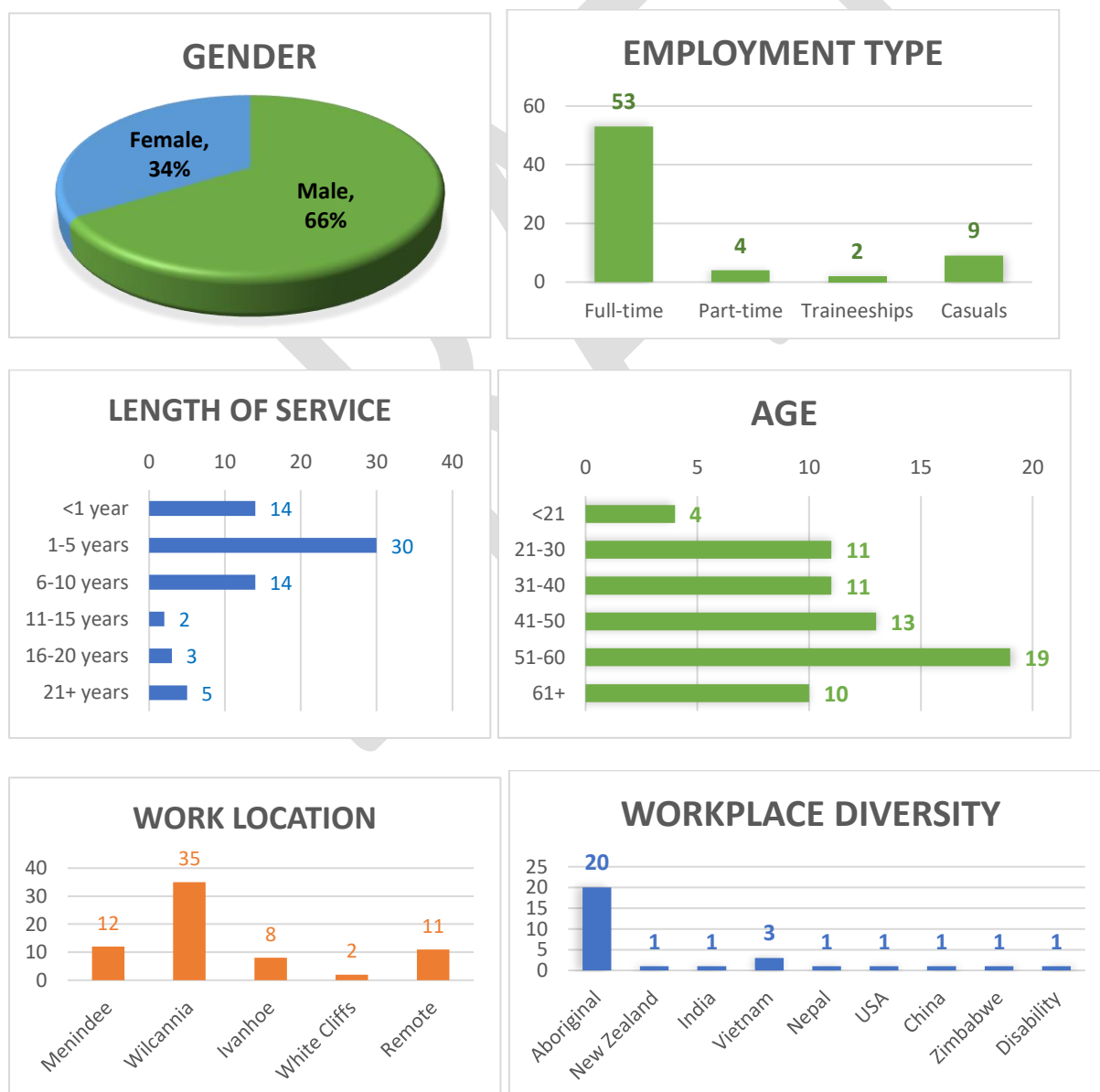
Our values

Through a collaborative approach and strong commitment, the values that will support our mission and guide us in achieving our vision are:

- Energising leadership
- Customer service and contribution to community
- Innovation and continuous improvement
- Equal opportunity and caring for individuals
- Political harmony
- Teamwork
- Ethical behaviour

Our Workforce Profile

Our workforce profile as at 30 June 2024 is as follows:



Our Current State of Maturity

Using the Australian Human Resource Institute (AHRI) Diversity and Inclusion Maturity Model (below) our organisation's current state of maturity sits at Level 1.

Level One

The way we comply

Level one organisations comply with Government-mandated policy such as fair work acts and anti-discrimination laws. A level one organisation has yet to implement Diversity and Inclusion initiatives beyond the minimum required, however have good groundwork to launch them from. It will take effort and constant improvement to avoid sliding back down, however the benefits are worth it.

Level Two

Way we change mindsets and behaviours

A level two organisation has moved beyond a tick-in-the-box approach, and gained leadership buy in to drive greater diversity management. They have established Diversity and Inclusion programs, unconscious bias training and actively promote diverse events. They have yet to unlock the full business benefits that level three organisations enjoy, however they are well on their way and, given enough time, their culture will shift and evolve.

Level Three

Way we do business

A level three organisation has ingrained diversity and inclusion into the very DNA of their organisation. Diversity and Inclusion is employee-led, supported by all and is a critical part of their wider operational strategy. Level three organisations become leaders and change-makers, ultimately giving back to the community.

As our organisation evolves, and our workplace environment and culture changes, we will progress towards Level 2 "The way we change mindsets and behaviours".

Objectives

Detailed below are focus areas and identified actions/initiatives to address the challenges and opportunities outlined in this Plan.



Focus Area 1 – Recruitment, Selection and Retention

Strategy – *Our recruitment, selection and retention practices, systems and processes meet legislative requirements.*

Current Status:

- Council follows a transparent, merit-based recruitment process.
- Recruitment and Selection procedure developed and communicated to all staff.
- Respectful Workplace Behaviours Policy developed and implemented.
- Workforce Diversity Policy developed.
- Diversity Equity and Inclusion principles are embedded in all steps of the recruitment process: position descriptions, advertisements; decisions on where to advertise; establishment of the interview panel; selection tests; shortlisting; interviews; medical examinations; job offer; and induction.
- Position Descriptions are reviewed prior to jobs being advertised to ensure that essential and desirable criteria are not discriminatory - particularly for positions requiring specific

knowledge and skills on issues relating to women, ethnicity, Aboriginality and disability and minimum years of experience.

- All new staff receive a copy of the Employee Handbook which provides them with information to support their employment.
- All leadership positions are required to ensure that all new staff to their work area have undertaken a comprehensive onboarding process.
- Selection panels are required to submit shortlisting matrix and selection reports as part of the recruitment process.

Actions / Initiatives:

1. Training is provided for all staff who participate on recruitment panels, with topics covering Diversity Equity and Inclusion principles and their application in the recruitment and selection process.
2. All new employees receive a copy of the Respectful Workplace Behaviours Policy in packs for new employees.
3. The Respectful Workplace Behaviours Policy is included in Contractor induction.
4. When advertising externally, promote vacancies through various external mediums to reach a range of diverse candidates.
5. Identify and implement programs to increase the participation from the community in applying for roles within the Council
6. Remove inappropriate formal qualifications and requirements contained in position descriptions which create an artificial barrier to promotion and selection.
7. Identify position that require special skills under the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion guidelines and provisions.
8. Review all position descriptions to ensure that there is no bias in the naming of positions (eg Storeman).



Focus Area 2 – Learning and Development Opportunities

Strategy – *All staff have equal access to learning and development opportunities that will support their success in their role.*

Current status:

- Annual staff assessments are open and accessible to all staff with links to salary progression.
- The Job Evaluation system used to establish the relevant remuneration for a position is open, transparent and based on position requirements.
- Leadership development program is currently underway for all levels of leadership during 2024/25.
- Learning and Development Policy and Procedure have been developed that encompasses both compulsory and elective opportunities for development.
- A training register has been established to capture all training that has been undertaken.

Actions / Initiatives:

1. Develop a Leadership Competency Framework in consultation with all levels of leadership for embedding into relevant position descriptions, interview guides and performance reviews.
2. Council provides leadership development opportunities for high performing employees through a merit based selection process.
3. Capture all compulsory training required for each position in the training register.
4. Capture all position competencies for each position in the training register.
5. Undertake a Training Needs Analysis to identify training gaps and develop a training plan.



Focus Area 3 – Workplace Culture and Environment

Strategy – *A positive workplace culture where staff are the integral drivers of our success.*

Current status:

- Leadership team is participating in the review of the organisation's values and vision during 2024/25.
- Council is committed to creating a culture of diversity and inclusion and ensuring a work environment that is free from harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination.
- Council policies are reviewed at regular intervals and consulted on across the organisation.
- Leadership is supported to address employee performance and conduct effectively and appropriately.
- Exit interview Procedure is in place, with exit interviews being conducted.
- Fortnightly staff newsletter provided to all staff.

Actions / Initiatives:

1. Aboriginal cultural awareness sessions session for all staff is undertaken
2. Include Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) principles in manager's annual performance reviews.
3. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training for all employees that covers off on EEO, sexual harassment and discrimination, Council's policies and commitment, grievance procedures, and acceptable workplace behaviour.
4. Diversity and inclusion awareness component into customer service training session for all staff
5. Develop a system where employees feel safe to report incidents of workplace sexual harassment, discrimination and bullying.
6. Develop regular reporting to Management Executive Group that identifies trends and recommendations to ensure the workplace is safe from workplace sexual harassment, discrimination and bullying.
7. The DEI climate is monitored via Human Resource statistics, Employee Assistance Program reporting, a grievance register and exit interviews.



Focus Area 4 – Workplace Diversity Equity and Inclusion

Strategy – *A workplace that displays positive practices and behaviours, with improvement in accessing and participating in employment within our organisation.*

Current status:

- Our payroll system contains details of the diversity of our employees.
- Regular monitoring to the Management Executive Group of the diversity of the workforce.
- The use of pre-placement medical assessments in selection processes are used to assess the physical fitness of the candidate for the position and identify any risks to the candidate in performing the job tasks. Where appropriate, this information is used identifying reasonable adjustments and ensuring we are not placing candidates at risk of harm or injury.
- Flexible Workplace Arrangements Policy developed and in place.

Actions / Initiatives:

1. Explore with the workforce to identify the challenges and barriers to diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
2. Look at our documentation and signage to ensure that the information is easy to read and understand.
3. Source grant funding to develop the literacy, numeracy and digital skills within the organisation.
4. A Job Demands Analysis be created for each position to be used for pre-placement assessments.
5. Build strong partnerships with our community and external organisations to maximise the employment outcomes.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring, evaluating and reviewing process is an ongoing and important process in ensuring the progress of this plan. It will enable the organisation to assess what is working and what is not, making any necessary adjustments to plans and/or strategies and then address in a timely manner new workforce or organisational issues which might have arisen.

We will monitor our progress through regular updates provided through the Management Executive Group and Council.

Document History

Date	Summary of Amendments	Council Adopted
November 2024	Document created	