



WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

2025 - 2029

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A Workforce Management Plan (WFMP) ensures an organisation has the right people, skills, and capabilities to achieve its mission, vision, and strategic goals. An effective WFMP analyses current and future workforce needs, considering both internal factors—such as succession planning, skills development, and workforce capability—and external influences, including labour market trends, technological advancements, and demographic shifts.

For Rous, the WFMP ensures we maximise our most valuable asset—our people—to deliver high-quality services in bulk water supply, weed biosecurity, and flood mitigation across the Northern Rivers region.

Mission

By leveraging our assets, specialist experience, and collaborative approach, we aim to take care of what matters in everything that we do

Vision

To be the best guide and partner to our region for its water, biosecurity, and rural flood mitigation needs

Values

- Safety first
- Accountability
- Together, as one
- Respect Always

OUR PREFERRED CULTURE

As Rous navigates significant internal changes—including relocation to a new purpose-built workplace, digital transformation, and evolving ways of working—we are committed to fostering a culture characterised by:

- **Collaboration and Inclusivity** – We work together, valuing diverse perspectives to drive better decisions and deliver high-quality services
- **Innovation and Agility** – We embrace new technologies, adapt to change, and stay flexible to meet evolving challenges
- **Professionalism and Excellence** – We take pride in what we do, maintain high standards, and focus on efficiency and continuous improvement
- **Playing to Our Strengths** – We harness our collective skills, capabilities, and expertise to work smarter and deliver impact
- **Employee Wellbeing and Engagement** – We prioritise a safe, healthy, and supportive workplace where people feel valued and motivated

STRATEGIC RISKS FACING OUR WORKFORCE

As a regional county council servicing multiple constituent councils, several strategic workforce challenges and risks impact our staff:

- **Workforce Retention & Attraction:** While the job market has softened, attracting and retaining talent remains a challenge in specialised roles or niche skill areas. We have made significant progress in building relationships with specialised recruiters to address critical skill gaps that may not be easily filled through in-house recruitment channels.
- **Workforce Development & Succession Planning:** While our workforce is well-balanced, we remain proactive in strengthening our talent pipeline. To support long-term workforce sustainability, we have implemented an apprenticeship and traineeship program to attract and develop young talent, ensuring a strong future workforce presence.
- **Skills Gaps & Workforce Capability:** As technology, regulations, and service delivery models evolve, ongoing investment in training, upskilling, and talent development is essential to ensure our workforce remains equipped to meet future demands.
- **Employee Health, Safety & Wellbeing:** The diverse and remote nature of our workforce presents challenges such as extensive travel, isolated work environments, and maintaining team connection. We continue to prioritise workplace safety, wellbeing initiatives, and mental health support to ensure a safe and supportive work environment.
- **Cost of Living & Housing Crisis:** Rising living costs, housing shortages, and the ongoing impacts of the 2022 floods have displaced many residents, including staff, creating financial and emotional strain.
- **Change & Organisational Adaptability:** The evolving nature of local government services, legislative changes, and environmental factors require a workforce that is adaptable, resilient, and engaged in continuous improvement.

OUR ORGANISATION

Rous is structured to effectively deliver our core functions and services, ensuring we meet the needs of our communities and stakeholders. Our organisational design supports the efficient delivery of bulk water supply, weed biosecurity, and flood mitigation, aligning people, skills, and resources to our strategic priorities. While our current structure is designed to best serve the delivery of our business objectives, we continuously evolve to remain agile, adaptable, and responsive to changing internal and external demands.



SNAPSHOT OF OUR WORKFORCE

Employment by Type

- 91 Full-time Employees
- 04 Part-time Employees
- 24 Full-time Fixed-term Employees
- 07 Part-time Fixed-term Employees
- 03 Casual or Labour-hire Staff
- 129 Total Employees

*Total headcount has grown by 38 employees since the 2021 WFMP, a change primarily driven by the need to strengthen our capabilities in support of digital transformation, other strategic initiatives, and successful grant-funded positions.

Demographics – Age

- 04 Number of employees aged 15 – 25
- 23 Number of employees aged 26 – 35
- 38 Number of employees aged 36 – 45
- 37 Number of employees aged 46 – 55
- 21 Number of employees aged 56 – 65
- 06 Number of employees aged 65+

* The average age of a Rous employee is 46 years, which represents an increase of 1 year compared to the 2001 WFMP data

Demographics – Gender

- 42 Number of female employees
 - 87 Number of male employees
 - 00 Number of employees – gender unspecified
- 33% of the workforce identify as female
67% of the workforce identify as male

*The gap between male and female has widened since 2001 WFMP data. M = 58%, F = 42%

Demographics – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employees

- 03 Number of aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees

* An increase of 1 employee who identifies as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander since the 2001 WFMP, reflecting a more conscious investment in identifying roles, refining recruitment processes, and supporting our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

Demographics – Tenure

- 81 Number of employees 0 – 5 years*
- 20 Number of employees with 6 – 10 years
- 08 Number of employees with 11 - 15 years
- 09 Number of employees with 21 - 25 years
- 07 Number of employees with 21 – 25 years
- 04 Number of employees with 26+ years

Turnover rate 23%***

*63% of our 2025 workforce have been with Rous for 5 or less years
**Average Tenure is 7 years, reduced from 8.5 in 2021
*** Turnover rates for the 2024 period.

Number of employees who also live within the local government area

- 96% of employees reside within the constituent council areas
- 4% of employees reside outside of the constituent council areas

*As a county council, we serve diverse constituent councils across the Northern Rivers region, including Ballina Shire, Byron Shire, Lismore City, and Richmond Valley. Majority of our workforce resides within these areas, building strong community connections and a deep understanding of local needs.

FOCUS AREAS AND ACTIONS

Our Workforce Management Plan has been created to focus our efforts on aligning with Rous' key strategic areas for the next few years. As we navigate significant changes, such as relocating to a new purpose-built workplace, embracing digital transformation, and evolving our ways of working, this plan will help drive our desired culture. By fostering collaboration, innovation, professionalism, and employee wellbeing, we are committed to delivering on the initiatives that will support our long-term success and community impact.



FOCUS AREA 1 Be prepared and resilient

ACTIONS

- Establish and implement Change Management Methodology and capability
- Develop and implement Health & Wellbeing Strategy to support workplace wellbeing



FOCUS AREA 2: Transform the way we work

ACTIONS:

- Optimise people and culture processes
- Operating model review
- Review of salary system and implement enhancements
- Develop and implement capability and competency framework
- Embed a positive, values-driven culture



FOCUS AREA 3: Future focussed trusted business

ACTIONS:

- Introduce and enhance HR metrics, data, and data-driven insights
- Workforce management review and strategy

FOCUS AREA 1

Be prepared and resilient

Action	Description	Benefits	Measures	2025 – 2026	2026 – 2027	2027 – 2028	2028 - 2029
1.1.0 Establish Change Management Methodology	To establish a consistent, effective, and scalable Change Management methodology that ensures successful adoption and integration of change initiatives across the organisation, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and resilience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent approach – Standardises change management for better outcomes. Stronger adoption – Ensures smoother integration of change initiatives. Increased resilience – Builds an adaptable workforce ready for future challenges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Framework adoption rate – Percentage of projects applying the Change Management methodology 	●			
1.1.1 Implement Change Management Methodology	Roll out the framework through training, change champions, and support tools to embed change capability across the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger engagement – Empowers Change Champions to drive adoption and support their teams. Faster implementation – Streamlined rollout with dedicated champions guiding the process. Sustainable change – Embeds change capability within the organisation for long-term success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership engagement – Percentage of leaders actively involved in Change Management initiatives. Champion participation – Number of Change Champions trained and actively supporting initiatives. 	●	●	●	●
1.2.0 Develop Health & Wellbeing Strategy	Create a strategy that supports employee health (physical, mental, and emotional) and wellbeing—while fostering a positive, productive workplace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthier workforce – Enhances employee wellbeing, engagement, and overall job satisfaction. Positive culture – Promotes work-life balance, resilience, and a supportive workplace environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved employee wellbeing – Measured through employee engagement surveys and wellbeing self-assessments. 	●		●	
1.2.1 Implement Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Implement the Health and Wellbeing Strategy through training, resources, and practical tools that support employees in maintaining their physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted training and resources – Equips employees with knowledge and tools to prioritise their health and wellbeing. Practical wellbeing initiatives – Encourages participation in programs that support mental, physical, and emotional health. Sustainable workplace practices – Embeds long-term strategies to foster a culture of wellbeing and continuous improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee participation – Percentage of employees engaging in health and wellbeing programs. Reduced absenteeism – Decrease in sick leave or misused sick leave due to health-related issues. Lower excess leave balances – Fewer employees with high leave balances, indicating better work-life balance. 	●	●	●	●

FOCUS AREA 2

Transform the way we work

Action	Description	Benefits	Measures	2025 – 2026	2026 – 2027	2027 – 2028	2028 - 2029
2.1.0 Optimise People & Culture Processes	Enhance end-to-end P&C processes, tools, AI, and technology to improve efficiency, employee experience, and alignment with organisational goals—ensuring that it aligns with the broader business process framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamlined operations – Reduces complexity and enhances efficiency. Better employee experience – Simplifies processes for employees and managers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process efficiency improvements – Reduction in processing times for key P&C activities. Employee satisfaction – Positive feedback on P&C processes. 	●	●	●	●
2.2.0 Operating Model Review	Assess and refine the operating model to ensure it is fit for purpose, adaptable, and aligned with strategic goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Right skills & capabilities – Ensures the organisation has the right people in the right role with the required skills and capabilities. Greater agility – Improves adaptability to changing needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills & capability alignment – % of key roles filled with required skills and capabilities for current and future needs. Performance improvement – Measurable uplift in organisational performance linked to strategic goals. Structural agility – Speed and effectiveness of adapting to changing demands or priorities. 	●			●
2.3.0 Review Salary System	Assess and refine salary, compensation and benefit structures to ensure fairness, competitiveness, and alignment with Rous goals, Award obligations and market standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equitable & competitive pay – Ensures salaries attract, retain, and motivate talent. Improved transparency – Enhances trust and clarity in remuneration practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market alignment – % of roles benchmarked against industry standards. 	●			
2.3.1 Implement Salary System Recommendations and Enhancements	Roll out refined salary structures, innovative benefits and supporting tools and framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger talent attraction & retention – Competitive and fair remuneration supports workforce stability. Enhanced flexibility & engagement – Innovative benefits cater to diverse employee needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee satisfaction – Improvement in feedback on remuneration, benefits, and accessibility of salary-related tools. Adoption of innovative benefits – % uptake of new salary structures or benefits. 	●	●	●	●

FOCUS AREA 2

Transform the way we work

Action	Description	Benefits	Measures	2025 – 2026	2026 – 2027	2027 – 2028	2028 - 2029
2.4.0 Develop Capability & Competency Framework	Develop a structured competency model that defines the skills, behaviours, and capabilities required for organisational success, providing a foundation for workforce development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear role expectations – Establishes standardised competencies for all roles. Strategic workforce planning – Aligns skills development with future business needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Framework completion – % of roles mapped to defined competencies. Leadership engagement – Participation rate in framework development and validation. 	●			
2.4.1 Implement Capability & Competency Development	Roll out training, tools, and initiatives to develop workforce capabilities in line with the framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger workforce – Builds skills to meet future demands. Improved career pathways – Supports employee growth and retention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training participation – % of employees engaging in capability development programs. Competency progression – Increase in employees advancing in key skills. 	●	●	●	●
2.5.0 Embed a Positive, Values-Driven Culture	Foster a strong organisational culture that aligns with strategic goals and values, promotes collaboration, and enhances employee engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger alignment – Reinforces behaviours that support organisational objectives. Higher engagement – Creates a more connected and motivated workforce. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee engagement – Improvement in engagement survey scores. Values adoption – % of employees demonstrating key cultural behaviours. 		●	●	●

FOCUS AREA 3

Future focussed, trusted business

Action	Description	Benefits	Measures	2025 – 2026	2026 – 2027	2027 – 2028	2028 - 2029
3.1.0 Introduce HR Metrics & Data-Driven Insights	Establish a structured approach to HR metrics, enabling data-driven decision making to improve workforce planning, performance, and strategic alignment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informed decision making – Supports strategic workforce planning with real data. Improved accountability – Provides measurable insights into HR effectiveness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR metric adoption – Number of key HR metrics tracked and reported. Data-driven decisions – % of workforce initiatives informed by HR data. 	●			
3.1.1 Enhance HR Data & Insights	Build on foundational HR metrics by deepening data analysis, identifying trends, and using insights to drive workforce strategies and decision making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better workforce planning – Leverages data to predict and address workforce needs. Stronger strategic alignment – Ensures HR initiatives are data-informed and impactful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced analytics adoption – % of HR decisions supported by data insights. Trend identification – Number of key workforce trends analysed and acted upon. 		●	●	●
3.2.0 Workforce Management Review [Service in a Box]	Program designed to help councils evaluate and enhance their services, with a focus on workforce management to improve efficiency and future workforce planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimised Workforce Efficiency: Identifies skills gaps, streamlines workforce planning, and ensures resources are allocated effectively. Stronger Workforce Capability: Enhances talent retention, succession planning, and professional development to build a future-ready workforce. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce insights utilisation – % of strategic workforce decisions informed by data. Talent gap reduction – Decrease in critical skills gaps across key roles. 		●		
3.2.1 Develop a Data-Driven Workforce Management Strategy	Establish a strategic, data-informed approach to workforce planning that ensures the right people, skills, and capabilities are in place to meet current and future organisational needs—proactively identifying critical roles, strengthening talent pipelines, mitigating workforce risks, and supporting leadership development for long-term agility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimised workforce planning – Aligns staffing, skills, and resources with business priorities. Proactive decision making – Uses data to anticipate and address workforce challenges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce Metrics: Improved workforce capability alignment, reduced turnover, and enhanced succession planning outcomes. Operational Impact: Increased workforce productivity, reduced vacancy fill times, and more effective resource utilisation. 				●