

ITEM 19 NOTICE OF MOTION - COUNCILLOR TANIA BROWN - APPRENTICES AND TRAINEES

Councillor Tania Brown has submitted the following Notice of Motion –

“I formally move that -

- 1 Council make an expression of interest to the State Government to secure some of the 1,300 apprentices and trainees that the Premier announced on 28 July as being funded for local government.
- 2 The General Manager be delegated authority to negotiate with the State Government on the number and specialties of the new additional apprentices and trainees to be engaged at Wollongong City Council.
- 3 The General Manager report to Councillors via an information note or briefing on the progress of the employment scheme.”

Background provided by Councillor Tania Brown:

On 28 July the State Government announced a \$252.2 million fund to employ an additional 1,300 apprentices and trainees in the local government sector.

The investment will hire new roles created by councils above their current workforce numbers with the new roles to focus on in-demand trades including electricians, plumbers, engineers, civil construction workers, mechanics and planning.

Guidelines are being developed for councils with the first batch of apprentices and trainees to start their new careers early next year.

The NSW local government sector generally is facing a skills shortage, in particular specialties, that is expected to worsen in the medium term.

A report to the ISJO in June by Warren Sharpe Strategic Services shows there is a significant pending shortfall of engineers, in particular for the local government sector, among general staff recruitment and retention challenges.

The report noted –

- Engineers are the highest skills shortage in local government in Australia (source ALGA).
- NSW Councils report losing skilled engineers and operators – a whole sector approach is needed.
- Positive recruitment, recognition and existing worker training strategies are key to success.
- Workforce plans must be operationalised at a department, section, team and individual level.
- Cadetships and apprenticeships target >15% minimum.
- Councils must work to address comparative salaries, conditions, staff development and flexibility.
- Adaptive work arrangements can improve productivity, service to the community and staff wages – e.g. four day weeks with plant operating five days per week, start/finish on the job.

Wollongong Council maintains a strong apprentice and trainee program and the State Government funding can help train up new staff to ensure council has a skilled workforce to service our community.