

Media Release

Fresh Start for 500 new council apprentices, trainees and cadets

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[Images and b-roll available here](#)

The Minns Labor Government's Fresh Start program has reached a major milestone with 500 apprentices, trainees and cadets now on the tools working in NSW councils.

A landmark \$252.2 million investment by Labor is helping councils employ an additional 1,300 apprentices, trainees, and cadets over the next six years in almost every corner of the state.

Since the program was announced last year councils have jumped at the chance to hire more young people in their communities.

Over 1,000 positions have been approved to start this year and 500 positions now officially filled, with the 500th recruit starting work at Dubbo Regional Council.

In a big win for our regions, more than 60 per cent of Fresh Start roles are in regional and rural councils, providing jobs in country towns so people don't have to leave their communities to find work.

The government is fully funding the wages of these recruits who are tending to our parks and public spaces, tinkering with garbage trucks, and helping plan our future towns and cities.

Recruits employed under the Fresh Start program are studying and learning on the job, while gaining a nationally accredited qualification.

Not only is the program providing a major boost to the delivery of essential local government services, it's training up the next generation of council workers.

This is helping reverse the trend of councils outsourcing jobs to external contractors, giving young people reliable career pathways and ensuring more services are delivered in-house.

Councils have been recruiting for the jobs they need most in their communities, or where they have a skills shortage.

Among the 500 apprentices, trainees and cadets now working in councils includes:

- 44 Civil construction workers
- 39 Project/program administrators
- 23 Civil engineers
- 21 Wastewater/Water plant operators
- 18 Sports Turf Trade Workers
- 39 Gardeners
- 27 Early childhood educators
- 23 Automotive mechanics
- 19 WHS/Human Resources Professionals
- 17 Urban and Regional Planners

Of the new recruits, 70 per cent are aged under 25, 12 per cent are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, 5 per cent identify as having a disability, 39 per cent are female and 60 per cent are male.

An additional 292 apprentices will join the ranks next year, with these positions approved in 73 councils under a third round of funding.

Minister for Local Government Ron Hoenig said:

“I’m proud to part of a government that is investing in the future of local government and the future of NSW.

“Travelling around the state meeting with councils, I’ve seen firsthand how beneficial this program is for communities, especially in our regions.

“Reaching this milestone means 500 more people working in councils in their local communities.

“This landmark investment by the Minns Labor Government will help ensure the long-term sustainability of this vital workforce which provides the services and builds the infrastructure we rely on every day.”

Breakdown of recruits by region:

Region	Number of recruits
Sydney and Blue Mountains	197
Central Coast	4
Hunter	40
New England	32
Mid-North Coast	27
Northern Rivers	43
South Coast and Illawarra	31
Southern Tablelands	8
Riverina	31
Orana	27
Central NSW	39
The Murray	17
Far West NSW	5

Council case studies:

Blaze Curtis-Green, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Catchment and Land Management Trainee at Tweed Shire Council:

“I’ve always had a passion and interest in land management and caring for my country, so I thought this would be a good opportunity to start exploring land management and ecosystem conservation jobs. It’s a good pathway to start my journey.

“As soon as I’ve done this qualification, it opens up a lot of different pathways, lots of different jobs.

“I think it’s great. It’s very diverse. Learning about different plants, weeds, what’s native. That’s my favourite part.

“I love working on country, I love being in the bush. I just love it.”

Mark Norris, Cadet Surveyor at Lake Macquarie City Council:

“Joining Lake Macquarie City Council has given me the opportunity to work alongside qualified surveyors, learn from their work, and use what I learn on projects of my own.

“Every day I am learning not only how individual surveyors go about their work, but how the industry works as a whole.

“I enjoy being part of the surveying team, who are all keen to show me how things work. I enjoy surveying, and having a stable job in the industry where I can already start to progress in my abilities and career is a great thing.

“I chose surveying because it is a great balance of working indoors and outdoors. I also enjoy the exploration aspect of the job, travelling to different jobs every week.”

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