

WAGGA WAGGA CITY COUNCIL

INDUSTRY: Government

EMPLOYEES: 700

SOLUTIONS: Payroll, Timekeeper and Award Interpreter

CUSTOMER SINCE: 1999

The Wagga Wagga City Council began their payroll partnership with Aurion more than 20 years ago in 1999. Over that time, the council have implemented a suite of upgrades to their Aurion payroll solution, reflecting the shift to web-based services accessible from mobile and seismic legislative changes like Single Touch Payroll.

“From a payroll point-of-view I find Aurion to be strong and robust, we haven’t missed a pay yet. By increasing the transparency of employees’ payroll information, with features like real-time leave data and online payslips, we actually removed the need for many of the enquiries we were receiving.”

Stuart Matheson
Payroll & Systems Coordinator



City of
Wagga Wagga



Managing public service complexity

The Wagga Wagga City Council employs staff under the local government state award, which applies to council workers in public libraries, galleries, theatres, sale yards, swimming pools, airports, waste management centres, street sweeping facilities, cemeteries, road works, and even a zoo, as well as their office-based operational and administrative staff. The award defines all these areas of labour, although some employees have defined operational hours to fill before they receive penalty rates.

Recently, the team have been pushing forward with payroll, and working on timekeeper, award interpreter and forms, as well as a few business process automations (BPAs).

Kirby Schultz has been the council's Senior Payroll Officer for nearly four years. ***"When it comes to the pay run, we have a minimal amount of checking to do, but Aurion is really good with the reporting side of things,"*** she says. The checks include exception reporting, where they look for spikes in different areas.

"The Aurion award interpreter captures all those different areas we employ people, with start and finish times and penalty rates," Kirby says. ***"Once the base is set up, Aurion handles the rest."***

The council's Aurion solution handles the pay run for over 700 employees per fortnight in two pay cycles: a 38-hour week and a 35-hour week. They have rostered staff who might have seven days on and seven days off, and operational staff who work a nine-day fortnight.

The long-term local government payroll solution

Stuart has been managing the council's payroll since 1999, when he was on the council's working group that recommended Aurion for their new payroll solution. Stuart comments, ***"From a payroll point-of-view I find Aurion to be strong and robust, we haven't missed a pay yet."***

Before partnering with Aurion, the council had been using the Local Government Information System (LGIS) and employed time clocks to manage the workers' flex time. But when they went looking for another payroll provider, it was the timekeeper and award interpreter features that helped secure the contract for Aurion.

Kirby and Stuart say that using Aurion has improved the way council staff manage their time, and they can access their payroll details online using their dedicated portal and Aurion App. This service is particularly useful for high-turnover staff like the university students employed casually at the council swimming pools and theatres.



“By increasing the transparency of employees’ payroll information, with features like real-time leave data and online payslips,” explains Stuart, “we actually removed the need for many of the enquiries we were receiving.”

Payroll as change agent

Kirby says that there’s been a big service improvement in council payroll under Stuart’s direction, he’s moved staff off the paper forms and onto Aurion and made sure that everyone is paid on time.

“Anything for which we used a manual form, we put it into Aurion,” said Stuart. “That could be changing your name, paying your land rates deductions through council, secondary employment, joining the gym or swimming pool. Because you can direct the form to anywhere in the organisation, you just set it up and it’ll come back to you when it’s done.”

Another aspect of the Aurion forms that Stuart appreciates is the audit trail and timeline of interaction with the form, including who it’s sitting with and who’s yet to action it.

Stuart says, ***“The workflow engine is very good because you can follow where someone is and what’s their position. Anyone can design a form, but if you don’t have workflow engine in place the form will fail.”***

The council use TechnologyOne for their financials, which is integrated with Aurion, so when the team finish the pay run at lunchtime it’s imported and checked within a few hours.

The Aurion database is used by the council’s IT department to control many sources of information across the organisation, including where people are working and their current role. They also use the structured database positions for their delegations register and displaying contact information on the intranet.

Payroll during pandemic

“When COVID first hit it had an impact because no one really knew what to expect,” Kirby explained, “but now we understand what needs to be done day-to-day, we’ve got a handle on it.”

Kirby is adamant that now more staff are working remotely, it’s more important than ever to get rid of any paper-based forms.

The payroll team had to implement a splinter award the NSW Government released for local government workers, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic with its lockdowns and travel restrictions. The temporary award considers ***“...important provisions such as suitable alternate duties, operational flexibility, job retention allowance, paid COVID-19 special leave and leave without pay.”***



If council staff couldn't perform their duties, they can be granted two weeks leave and top it up with their leave balance to receive their normal salary amount.

About a month before COVID hit in 2020, Kirby and Stuart joined the Victorian Aurion user group, which includes the nearby councils in Wodonga, Shepparton and Wangaratta. They visited their peers in the Wodonga council, who reviewed the Wagga Wagga council's learning and development system and how they operate online forms.

Access payroll expertise and support

Kirby appreciated the support they received during the upgrade from Aurion version 10 to version 11, and the new design and functionality for Aurion self-service and recruitment sites, which was a major task to familiarise with the myriad of end users.

She says, ***"We worked on that major upgrade with our Aurion Engagement Manager, she was fantastic. We'd have a meeting and talk about what we had to do, and within the next hour or so everything was set up and away we went."***

The payroll team's main contact for guidance is their Aurion Consultant based in Canberra, who started with Aurion in 1999, the same year Stuart took on the council's payroll and onboarded Aurion. When required, consultant would visit Wagga Wagga

usually for a few days, focussing on award interpreter and time-keeper projects.

"The support desk is excellent" says Stuart. "Those guys are fantastic. You log a ticket and they're back in no time or its escalated. The tickets are also a record you can look back on."

If Kirby and Stuart need technical help, they can book a minimum two-hour session rather than an entire day.

"Back in June 2021 Stuart was on leave and I was doing the pay run," said Kirby. "I had an STP issue, and the support team were excellent, they were back straight away and helped me resolve the issue."

Key factors for success:

- + Handles government payroll complexity
- + Increases staff payroll transparency
- + Enables process and form automation
- + High level of support + skilled consultants

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