



University of
South Australia

Business



CERM PI

Local Government Organisational Values Alignment Study

2025

Organisational Values Alignment Study for Local Government

– Project Overview

INTRODUCTION

As an extension of CERM PI's successful research into organisational culture, this project offers councils the opportunity to explore how well their organisational values are understood, enacted, and experienced by staff. While many councils articulate values in strategic plans, this research explores whether organisational values are clearly understood and consistently expressed across the workforce and aligned with employee expectations.

This study supports councils in strengthening cultural cohesion, leadership credibility, and staff engagement by identifying value alignment strengths and gaps. Findings may be used to inform planning, refine people systems, and build a more authentic, values-driven workplace.

WHY VALUES MATTER

Organisational values serve as the invisible threads of culture—subtle but powerful forces that shape decision-making, leadership, staff behaviour, and public trust. In complex and decentralised environments like local government, shared values provide cohesion and clarity across diverse roles, teams, and locations.

When values are consistently modelled and meaningfully aligned with staff experiences, research shows improvements in:

- Organisational commitment and staff retention
- Employee engagement, satisfaction, and wellbeing
- Leadership credibility and workplace trust
- Cultural resilience and readiness for change
- Enhanced organisational performance, including improved decision-making, productivity, and service quality
- Lower staff turnover and reduced recruitment and training costs
- Stronger reputation with stakeholders, improving trust and community confidence

Gaps between stated and experienced values can lead to confusion, disengagement, or reduced trust—but they also represent valuable opportunities for leadership and cultural renewal.

AIMS

- Assess the degree of *value congruence* between espoused organisational values and those perceived, experienced, and enacted by staff
- Identify alignment strengths and gaps across workforce segments
- Provide evidence-based insights to strengthen leadership, engagement, and cultural cohesion
- Offer tailored recommendations for embedding values into people systems and day-to-day practice

KEY BENEFITS FOR COUNCILS

- Clearer insight into how values influence leadership, service delivery, and staff engagement
- Strengthened credibility and trust—internally and externally

- Support for aligning values with people systems and operational practice
- Valuable staff voice to guide future planning and transformation
- Improved workforce stability and reduced costs through lower turnover
- Stronger alignment between organisational goals and day-to-day behaviours, leading to more effective and consistent service delivery
- Enhanced public trust and reputational strength through values that are seen to be authentically enacted

KEY BENEFITS FOR STAFF

- A genuine opportunity to be heard and influence workplace direction
- Greater satisfaction and motivation—people enjoy work more when their values align with the organisation
- A stronger sense of connection, purpose, and team cohesion
- Increased trust, psychological safety, and willingness to contribute

OUTCOME EXAMPLES

- **Staff-Informed Value Maps** – Visual summaries showing how different sectors of Council interpret council values
- **Values in Action Frameworks** – Practical behavioural guides that help leaders and staff translate abstract values into everyday practice
- **Embedding Values Recommendations** – Strategies for integrating values into recruitment, onboarding, performance, and recognition
- **Engagement & Co-Design Options** – Opportunities for staff to contribute to the future of values in their workplace

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Survey tools assessing value alignment across staff groups
- Open-ended feedback to capture how staff experience and interpret organisational values
- Optional focus groups or co-design workshops to support staff voice and engagement
- Customised reporting including Staff-Informed Value Maps and Values in Action behaviour guides
- Recommendations for integrating values into key people processes (e.g., recruitment, performance reviews)

OPTIONS FOR COUNCILS

The Values Alignment Study may be undertaken as:

- A standalone, once-off Values Alignment Study
- An optional extension of the Organisational Culture Study
- A strategic starting point for councils exploring culture or planning a values refresh

CONTACT

For further information or to register your Council please contact:

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