State of the NSW Public Sector Report 2023

NSW GOVERNMENT

Public Service Commission

Publication and contact details

State of the NSW Public Sector Report 2023

We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country across NSW. We acknowledge the spiritual connections and relationships that Traditional Custodians have continued to maintain and strengthen since time began, which will continue well into the future. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise their cultural knowledge and wisdom has been passed down through generations and will remain present through stories and song lines for generations to come.

We extend this respect, acknowledgement and appreciation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members who helped develop this report and who contribute across the public sector. We recognise their skills and experiences as foundational assets to support the people of NSW.

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About this report

The State of the NSW Public Sector Report is the Public Service Commissioner's independent assessment of the performance of the NSW public sector. It discusses the sector's achievements and priorities, as well as the challenges it faces in delivering positive and enduring outcomes for the people of NSW.

How to read the data discussed in this report

This report draws on evidence from a range of sources, including the NSW Public Service Commission's (PSC's) *People Matter Employee Survey* (People Matter survey) and the *Workforce Profile*. The following points will help you to better understand the information in this report.

- The abbreviation 'pp' stands for 'percentage points'.

- 'Full-time equivalent (FTE) workforce' describes the total number of full-time employees required to account for all ordinary paid hours worked.

- All diversity statistics are based on self-disclosed information.

- Representation of cultural background, non-binary representation, LGBTIQ+ representation, and representation of people who provide care for someone outside work are based on results from the People Matter survey.

- CALD stands for 'culturally and linguistically diverse' and is used to refer to People Matter survey respondents who nominated at least one non-English speaking cultural background.

People Matter Employee Survey

The People Matter survey asks NSW public sector employees about their experiences at work; with their teams, managers and leaders; and in their organisations more broadly. The 2023 survey was open from 21 August to 15 September 2023. Around 230,000 employees across the sector responded to this year's People Matter survey, representing a 53% response rate. This was the highest response rate since the survey was first conducted in 2012.

Most of the survey results are presented as 'per cent favourable', which combines the number of 'agree' and 'strongly agree' responses to a question or set of questions. In this report, some questions have been grouped for theoretical or practical reasons. Responses that are considered 'favourable overall' are reported as a percentage for these questions. These scores provide an overview of workplace practices that affect employee experience, and they are each assessed through multiple survey questions.

Workforce Profile

The *Workforce Profile* is an annual and comprehensive report of the demographic characteristics and employment arrangements of all NSW public sector employees. The PSC and all public sector agencies jointly collect and contribute to this report. The census date is the last payday of the financial year, and the census period comprises the two weeks leading up to and including the census date. The data in this report are for the census date, unless otherwise specified. The census date was 22 June 2023.

Geography

Throughout this report, 'metropolitan' refers to the Greater Sydney metropolitan area and the Newcastle and Wollongong local government areas (LGAs). 'Regional' refers to the remainder of NSW.

The maps showing the geographic distribution of NSW public sector employees use the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS') Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Statistical Area Level 4 (SA4) classification. SA4s are the largest sub-state regions in the Main Structure of the ASGS and are designed for the output of a variety of regional data. They represent labour markets. Those that make up the Greater Sydney metropolitan area have been grouped into Sydney East and Sydney West sub-classifications for ease of reporting.

Areas of government covered in this report

This report discusses the performance of the Public Service, government sector and public sector, each of which has a specific definition.

- The Public Service of New South Wales means those employed under Part 4 of the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013* (NSW) (GSE Act) by the Government of New South Wales in the service of the Crown.

- The government sector, as defined in the GSE Act, comprises the Public Service, the Teaching Service, the NSW Health Service, the Transport Service of NSW, the NSW Police Force, and any other service of the Crown (including services of any NSW Government agency). It also covers services of certain persons or bodies constituted by or under an Act or exercising public functions that are prescribed by the regulations.

- The public sector incorporates the government sector and other government agencies, including the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Audit Office of New South Wales, the staff of the Parliament of NSW, the Judicial Commission of New South Wales, judicial officers of NSW, and State owned corporations such as water and energy companies.

The data in this report relate to the public sector, unless otherwise specified.

The 2023 *State of the Customer* report was unavailable for reference in this year's report.

Acknowledgements

The Public Service Commissioner would like to acknowledge the assistance of:

- the PSC staff members who contributed to the preparation of this report and the lead authors: Sally Davies, Raveena Harrison, Donna Fox and Emilie Priday

- the PSC Advisory Board: Sandra McPhee AM (Chair), Jordan O'Reilly, Geoff Stalley, Simon Draper PSM and Michael Coutts-Trotter

- NSW public sector agencies, for supporting the People Matter survey and *Workforce Profile* collections, and for sharing their stories as case studies.

Foreword

I am pleased to share the *2023 State of the NSW Public Sector Report* with you. This is my fourth independent assessment of the performance of the NSW public sector as Public Service Commissioner.

The past year has seen machinery of government and other changes following the election of a new government in March 2023. The stewardship, continuity and stability that the Public Service provides during changes in government is an important feature of our democracy.

The importance of integrity

Recent events, including high-profile inquiries, have highlighted the need for the Public Service in NSW and other jurisdictions to maintain an unwavering focus on integrity and ethical conduct. A gap between stated integrity values and real-life practice has been a recurring issue in both the public and private sectors.[1]

As public servants, the work we do makes a difference to the lives of millions of people across NSW. This immense privilege comes with an obligation to uphold the principles of the Westminster system of government and to act in accordance with the public sector's core values of integrity, trust, service and accountability. At times, this may mean having the courage to tell ministers what they need to hear rather than what they want to hear.

The public rightly expects the Public Service to be apolitical and public servants to act professionally, ethically and impartially. The public's trust in the Public Service as an institution depends on us meeting these expectations. And if we fall short, we need to reflect, implement the learnings and be accountable.

Building a pro-integrity culture across the sector

Agencies must aim for institutional integrity, such that the whole agency can be described as having integrity. That is, integrity is embedded in culture, systems and practices, and goes beyond employees' compliance with a set of rules. Institutional integrity is achieved when employees assume leadership and responsibility to ensure that the combined effect of their actions helps build an agency the public sees as consistent, coherent, legitimate and trustworthy.[2]

Ethical leadership is crucial for embedding a culture and practice of integrity. In this year's People Matter survey, 54.5% of respondents felt that senior managers model the values of their organisation.[3] While this represents an increase of 1pp from 2022, there is significant room for improvement. The People Matter survey also shows that positive perceptions of an organisation's ethical culture are associated with higher levels of employee engagement.

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[1] Demmke and Moilanen (2012), as cited in Kirby and Webbe (2019)
[2] Kirby and Webbe (2019)
[3] The results for 'Senior managers model the values of my organisation' were 54.5% favourable, 26.7% neutral and 18.8% unfavourable.

Recent reforms that support integrity

Recent legislative reforms strengthen the frameworks that support integrity.

The GSE Act was amended in November 2022 to articulate the roles and responsibilities of a secretary of a department, and to state that a secretary is not subject to the direction or control of a minister when exercising their employer functions.

The 2022 amendments also require government sector senior executives employed in the most senior bands, and other heads of Public Service agencies, to first seek my guidance before accepting an offer of employment in the private sector that directly relates to their role or responsibilities held during the previous 2 years.

The new *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2022* strengthens the framework that facilitates public interest reporting of wrongdoing, and details how to report serious wrongdoing.

Last year, I issued a sector-wide code of ethics and conduct, which is adopted as a mandatory code under the amended GSE Act. The Code of Ethics and Conduct for NSW Government Sector Employees sets out the mandatory requirements and best practice conduct for all government sector employees. It promotes the Ethical Framework in the GSE Act and provides clarity on the roles and responsibilities of employees.

Living our public sector values includes how we interact with our colleagues in the workplace. Earlier this year, I issued a statutory direction that supports respectful conduct in public sector workplaces. The direction requires government sector agencies to implement a sexual harassment policy that meets certain minimum standards, by March 2024. The PSC has developed a model policy reflecting best practice in preventing and responding to sexual harassment, which agencies can adopt and tailor to their own context.

Looking ahead

To support the sector in living our public sector values – particularly integrity – in 2024 the PSC will:

- issue a new sector-wide code of conduct and ethics, following a comprehensive review and consultation process, to ensure we have a code that remains fit for purpose

- support the embedding of the new code of conduct and ethics by rolling out mandatory online training, launching an ethics hub on our website, and establishing a community of practice focused on ethics

- deliver an applied ethics course for our most senior leaders through the Australia and New Zealand School of Government

- ensure that the refreshed suite of NSW Leadership Academy programs continues to put public sector values front and centre.

I take this opportunity to thank the many public servants across the sector who bring our Public Service values to life every day, and who serve the people of NSW with the highest level of dedication and professionalism.

Kathrina Lo
NSW Public Service Commissioner
December 2023

Our structure

Over 450,000 employees work in the NSW public sector to deliver a wide range of services to the people of NSW. Departments and agencies in the public sector are arranged into 11 groups or portfolios. Each portfolio coordinates related day-to-day public services and is led by a secretary. The term 'portfolio' is commonly used for administrative purposes; however, portfolios are not established by legislation.

Due to machinery of government changes, there have been some changes in the way government functions and responsibilities are allocated and structured across government agencies.

Headcount and full-time equivalent employees

453,210
ongoing, temporary and casual employees

Source: Workforce Profile (2023)
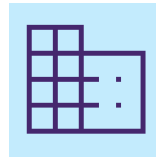
equating to
381,272
full-time equivalent employees

Source: Workforce Profile (2023), census period

The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees in the sector increased by 17,265 (or 4.7%) from 2022 to 2023. This is the largest recorded growth in the workforce since the *Workforce Profile* commenced in 1999. Key occupations with notable increases in FTE were Clerical and Administrative Workers (+3,274 or 6.7%), School Support Staff (+2,324 or 8.9%), Nurses (+1,538 or 3.0%), School Teachers (+611 or 0.9%), Prison Officers (+553 or 13.9%), Ambulance Officers (+538 or 10.4%) and Medical Practitioners (+339 or 2.5%).

Full-time equivalent employees over time, 2014–23
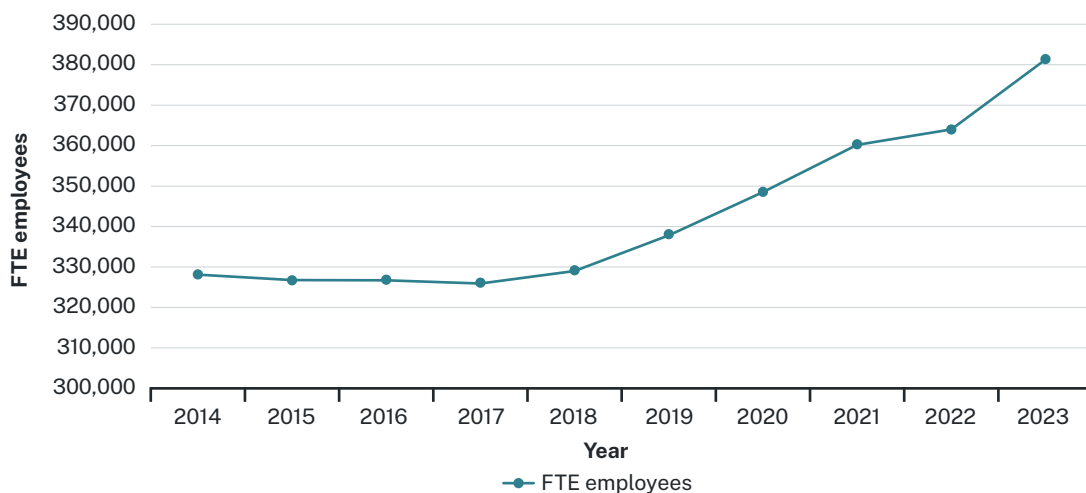
Source: Workforce Profile (2014–23), census period

The number of people (headcount) employed in the sector increased by 4.0% in 2023, outpacing the growth in the number of people employed in NSW overall, at 3.3%.

Number of people employed in the public sector and in NSW overall, 2019–23
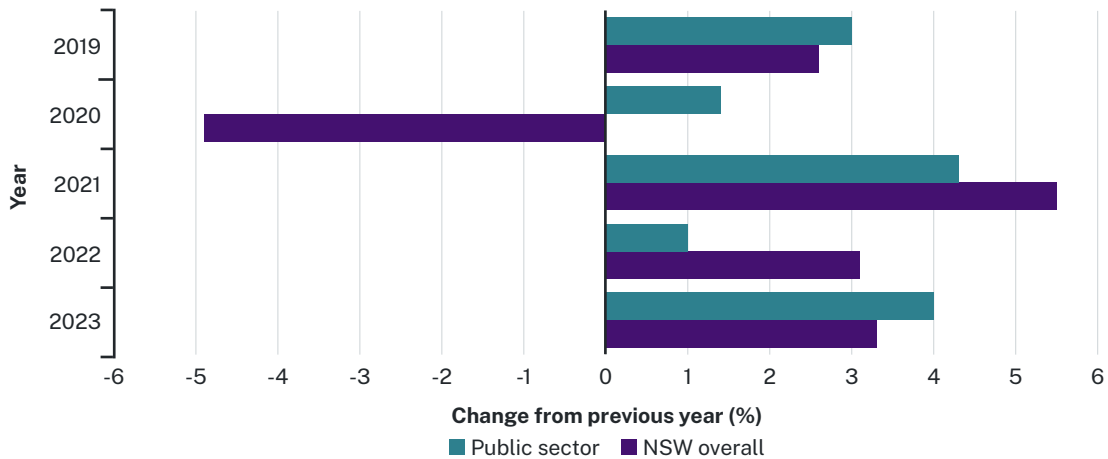
Sources: Workforce Profile (2019–23); ABS (2023a)

Structure of the NSW public sector

The GSE Act establishes 2 main employment groups: the government sector and the Public Service within it. Most government employees are in the government sector.

The government sector is structured into 11 portfolios that coordinate related day-to-day public services, each led by a secretary.

Examples of other Crown services include the TAFE Commission, School Administrative and Support Staff, and Sydney Trains.

* Under the GSE Act, State owned corporations are included in the government sector for certain specified purposes. However, in this report, they are treated as part of the public sector, not as part of the government sector.

** The PSC does not collect data on these employees.

Note: Under the GSE Act, NSW universities are part of the government sector for certain specified purposes. The PSC does not collect data on the employees of NSW universities. They are not considered part of the public sector or government sector in this report.

Full-time equivalent employees by portfolio

134,864
35.4%
Health

12,118
3.2%
Customer Service

3,463
0.9%
Enterprise, Investment and Trade

5,519
1.4%
Regional NSW

53,799
14.1%
Communities and Justice

118,475
31.1%
Education

28,588
7.5%
Transport

15,532
4.1%
Environment and Planning

1,876
0.5%
Premier and Cabinet

6,662
1.7%
Treasury
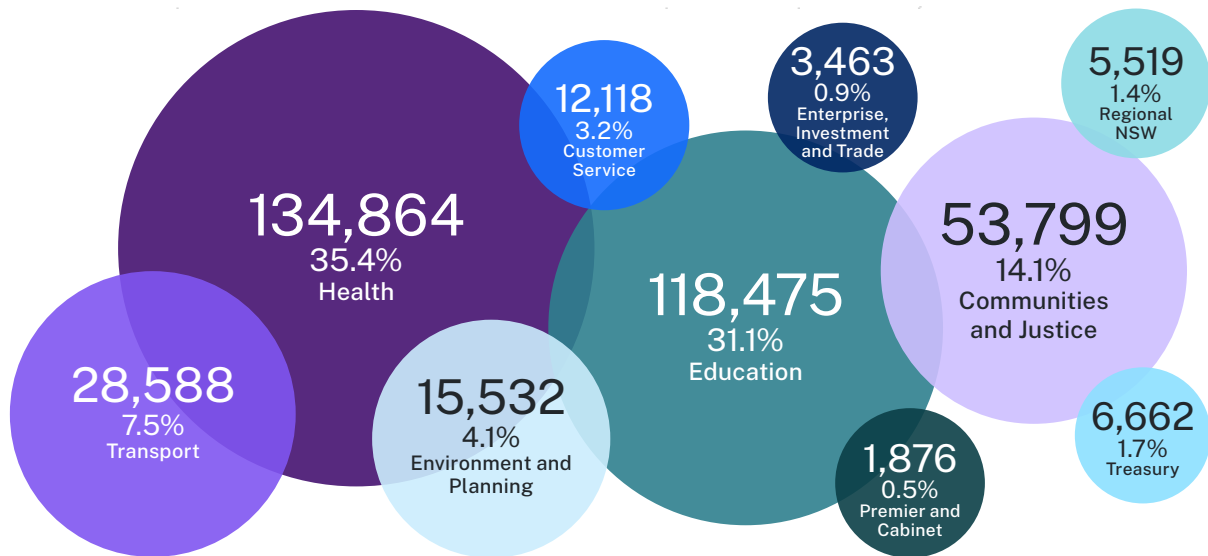
Source: Workforce Profile (2023), census period

Note: Percentages indicate the contribution of the portfolio's FTE to the public sector's total FTE.

The FTE breakdown is based on the structure that was in place before 1 July 2023. Since then, the Department of Premier and Cabinet has been separated into 2 separate agencies: the Cabinet Office and the Premier's Department.

From 1 January 2024, the Department of Planning and Environment will be split into 2 new departments: the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water; and the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure.

Headcount and contribution to overall employment by NSW region

The NSW Government is a significant employer in every part of the state. A high proportion of public sector employees work in Sydney (59.3%). However, the sector contributes more to overall employment in regional areas of NSW than it does to employment in Sydney.

In 2023, 65.9% of public sector employees worked in a metropolitan area (Sydney, Newcastle or Wollongong), while 34.0% worked in regional NSW. Of the NSW Estimated Resident Population, 62.7% worked in a metropolitan area, while 37.3% worked in regional NSW. The NSW Government is a significant contributor to regional employment. In recent years, the government has succeeded in increasing the number of regionally based public sector employees, including at the senior executive level.

10.7% Richmond–Tweed

11.3% New England and North West

14.1% Coffs Harbour–Grafton

18.8% Far West and Orana

13.4% Mid-North Coast

7.8% Hunter Valley excl. Newcastle

14.9% Central West

Sydney and surrounding regions

8.9% Murray

12.5% Riverina

9.8% Capital Region
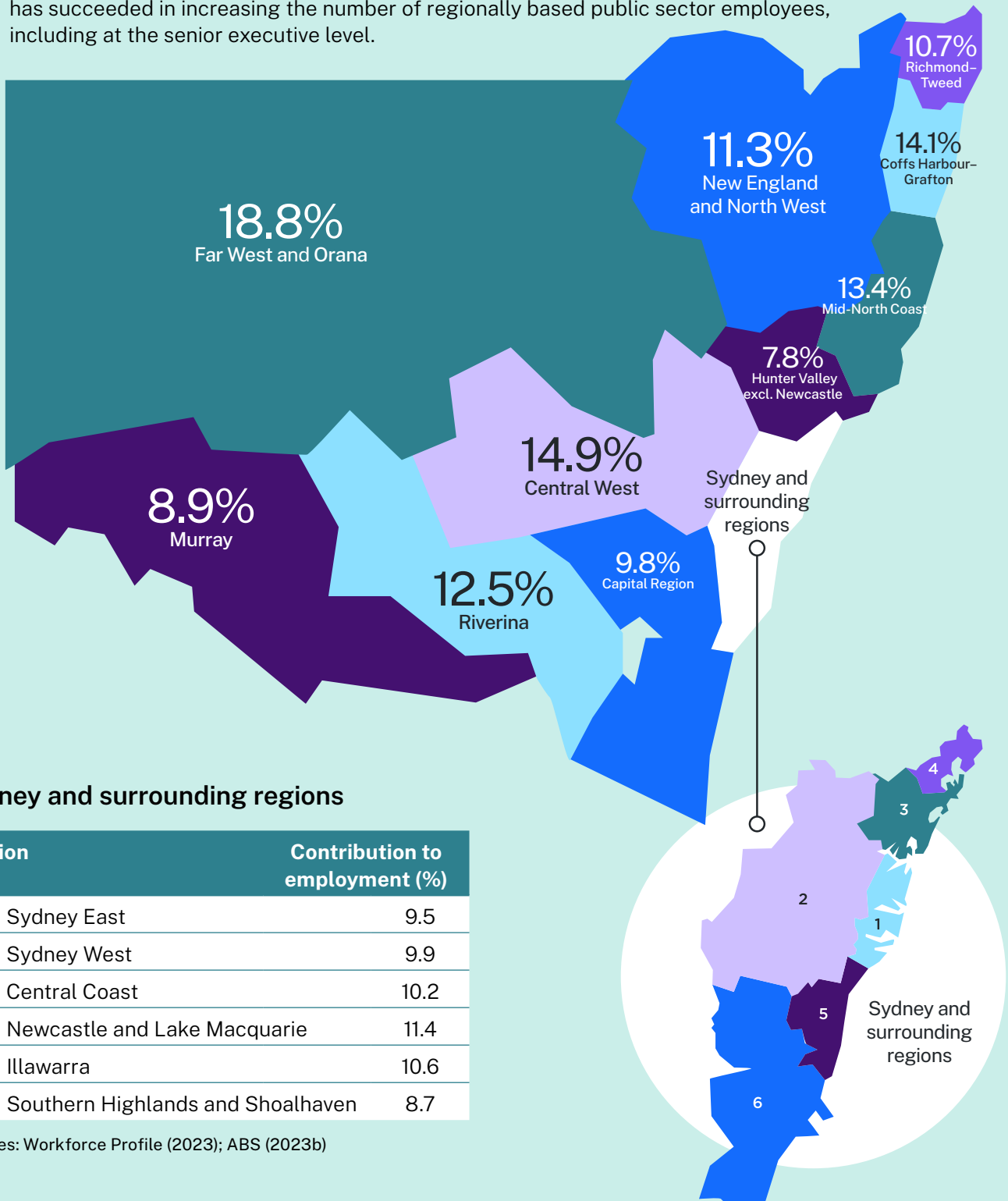
Sydney and surrounding regions

Region		Contribution to employment (%)
1	Sydney East	9.5
2	Sydney West	9.9
3	Central Coast	10.2
4	Newcastle and Lake Macquarie	11.4
5	Illawarra	10.6
6	Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven	8.7

Sources: Workforce Profile (2023); ABS (2023b)

Occupations

The NSW public sector employs people in a wide range of occupations.

Full-time equivalent employees in key occupations, 2023 vs 2022

School Teachers
70,442
69,830 in 2022 ↑

Nurses
53,417
51,880 in 2022 ↑

Clerical and Administrative Workers
52,188
48,914 in 2022 ↑

School Support Staff
28,585
26,261 in 2022 ↑

Police Officers
16,286
17,033 in 2022 ↓

Medical Practitioners
14,013
13,674 in 2022 ↑

Social and Welfare Professionals
7,923
7,834 in 2022 ↑

Cleaners and Laundry Workers
5,253
5,151 in 2022 ↑

Ambulance Officers
5,702
5,164 in 2022 ↑

Prison Officers
4,520
3,967 in 2022 ↑

Labourers
4,314
4,246 in 2022 ↑

Firefighters
4,208
4,252 in 2022 ↓

Train Drivers
2,168
2,217 in 2022 ↓

Food Preparation Assistants
2,069
1,983 in 2022 ↑

Source: Workforce Profile (2022, 2023), census period

Employment types

The type of employment that the NSW public sector offers varies to ensure the sector can flexibly deliver services; however, most employees are employed on an ongoing basis. The numbers of all employment types have stabilised over the past 2 years. The wide variety of roles within the NSW public sector means that our people are employed across a wide remuneration range.

Full-time equivalent employees by employment type, 2014–23
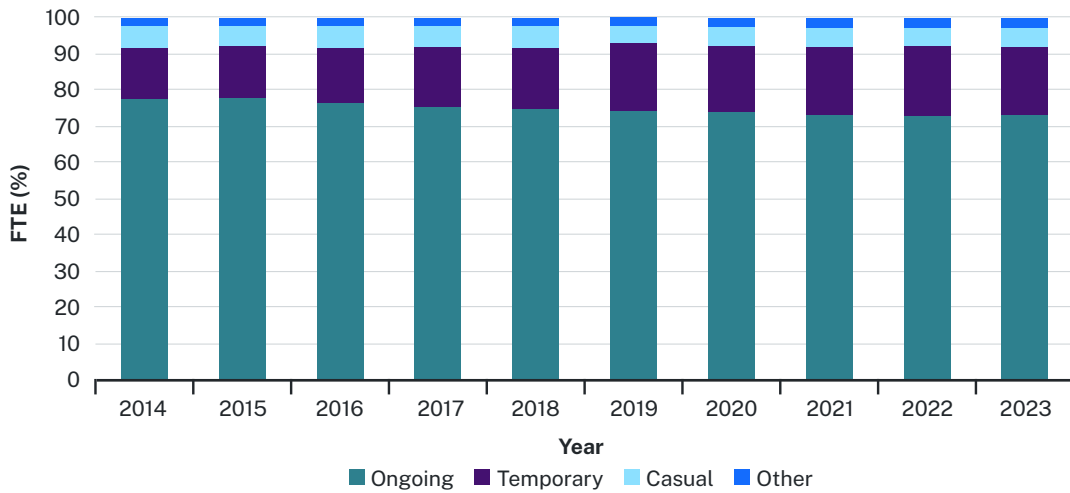
Source: Workforce Profile (2014–23), census period

Note: 'Other' includes employees whose employment category is Contract Executive, Contract Non-Executive, Statutory Appointee, Transport Senior Manager or anything not classed as Ongoing, Temporary or Casual.

Full-time equivalent employees by grade, 2023 vs 2019 and 2014
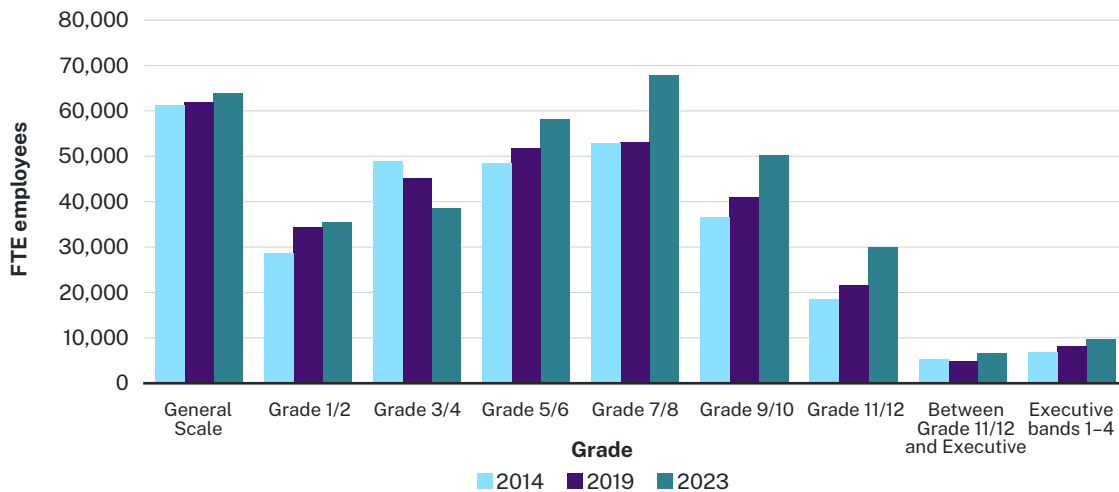
Source: Workforce Profile (2014, 2019, 2023), census period, non-casual only

Note: To provide a whole-of-sector perspective, remuneration has been aligned with the non-executive grades defined in the Crown Employees (Administrative and Clerical Officers – Salaries) Award 2023. The GSE Act allows the relevant minister to determine the bands under which senior executives are employed. Currently, there are 4 bands.

Our people

This section examines the many aspects of employment that are important to our people, including employee engagement, inclusion and diversity, learning and development, tenure, intention to stay, and remuneration.

Employee engagement

Employee engagement refers to an employee's connection to their organisation. It is a global measure of employee experience and in this report is expressed as an index score out of 100. Employee engagement has a strong connection to productivity, making it a key indicator of the sector's overall performance.

Many factors influence engagement, including leadership, a positive and inclusive work culture, wellbeing, manager support, accountability and flexible working arrangements. This year, employee engagement improved slightly, from 64.2 to 64.5. This result reflects our collective efforts to support the long-term sustainability of our workforce.

The public sector still has more to do to lift engagement to its previous high of 67.2 in 2021, but it is encouraging to see that our efforts have started to pay off. Further increasing engagement will require a multi-pronged approach that is tailored to our workforce's needs. Key areas agencies can focus on include workplace wellbeing initiatives, professional development opportunities and increased support for employees through changes that affect their work.

Employee engagement, 2019–23
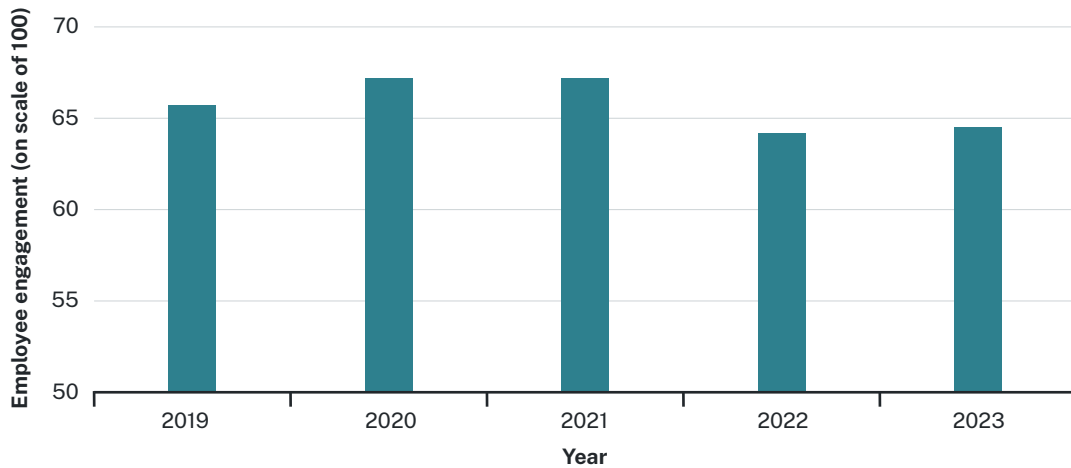
Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2019–23)

Distribution of employee engagement scores, 2023 vs 2022

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Employee engagement score by employee group, 2023 vs 2022
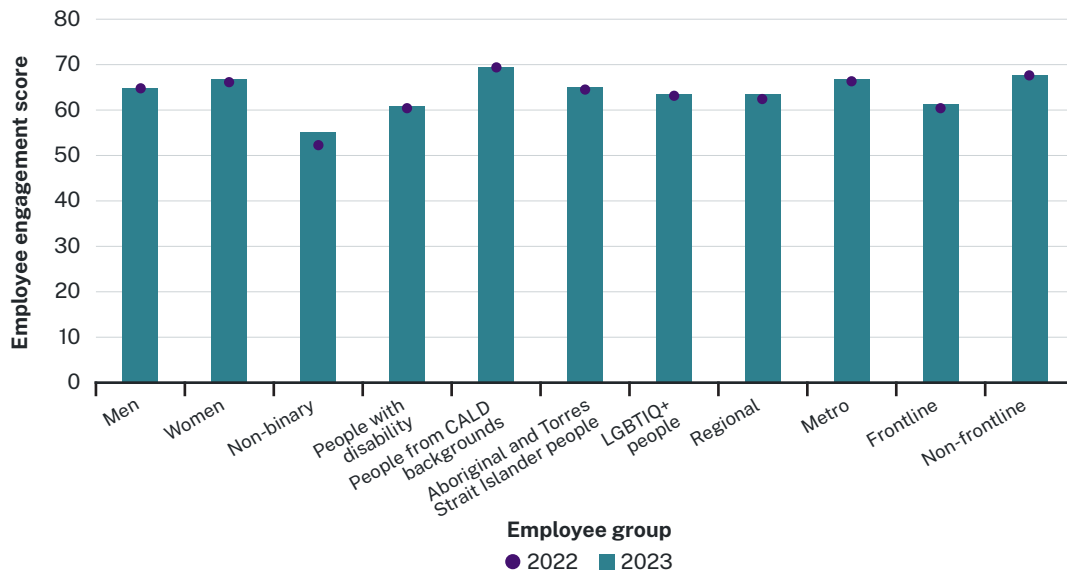
Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

People Matter survey participation, 2019–23
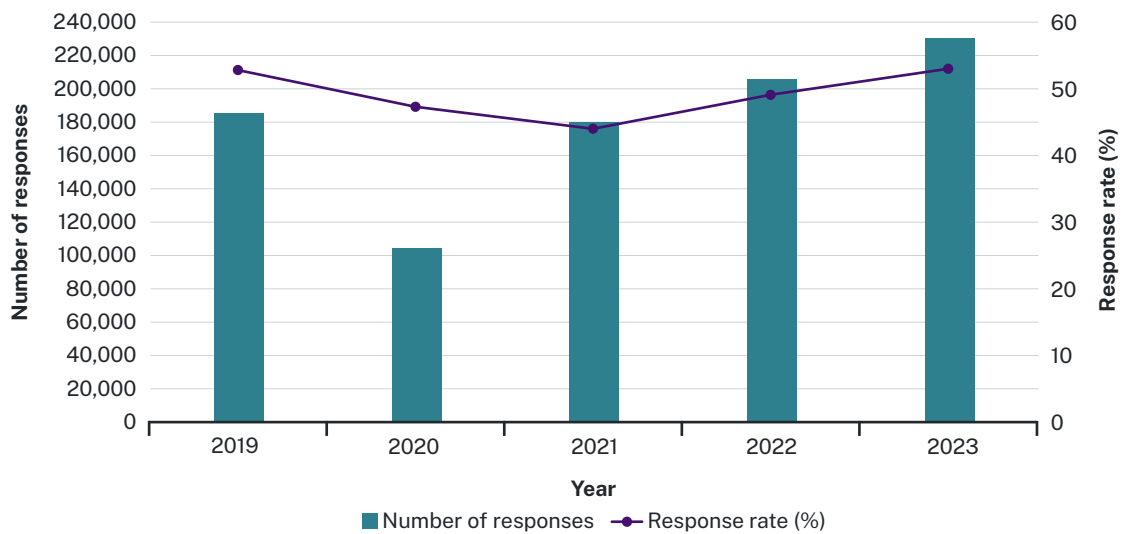
Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2019–23)

Note: Most of the Health portfolio did not participate in the 2020 survey due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Job satisfaction, 2023 vs 2022

68.5%
68.3% in 2022

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Learning and development

Access to learning and development helps employees achieve their performance and career goals. Learning and development also helps agencies develop the most effective employee capabilities for delivering business outcomes.

Commitment to professional development is consistently a top driver of employee engagement in the NSW public sector. In the current constrained budgetary environment, we need to be careful not to pull back sharply on investment in people, as this can be a false economy. Agencies need to target learning and development initiatives carefully, so employees have the critical skills and capabilities they need to be successful in their roles now and in the future.

Since 2022, there has been a slight increase in employees' favourable perceptions of learning and development, which is consistent with the increase in employee engagement.

Employee perceptions of learning and development, 2023 vs 2022

55.9%
favourable overall
54.9% in 2022
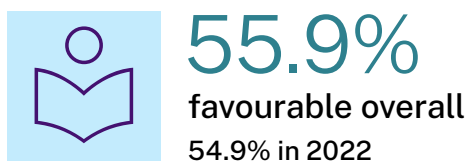
50.1% favourable	I am satisfied with the opportunities available for career development in my organisation +0.8pp from 2022
53.0% favourable	My organisation is committed to developing its employees +0.8pp from 2022
64.5% favourable	I have received the training and development I need to do my job well +1.5pp from 2022

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Inclusion and diversity

Building an inclusive and diverse workforce is critical to providing high-quality services for the people of NSW. We know unequivocally that when we create a more inclusive workplace in which people feel they belong, we foster a positive culture and enhance our productivity. Belonging and inclusion are key to ensuring our workforce reflects the diversity of the people we serve.

- Inclusion enables genuine participation and contribution, so that everyone feels a sense of belonging at work regardless of their background, identity or circumstances.

- Diversity refers to the seen and unseen characteristics that make each individual different. For the public sector, a diverse workforce reflects the breadth of differences within the communities we serve.

A diverse workforce alone does not equate to a successful workforce. To realise the benefits of diversity, workplaces must also be inclusive. In an inclusive workplace, culture, leadership, systems and work practices combine to help employees feel comfortable bringing their whole self to work. It also encourages them to be open and share their lived experiences to uplift workplace inclusion for everyone. Inclusion enables genuine participation and contribution, regardless of seen or unseen individual differences. Inclusion helps drive improvements in organisational performance, effectiveness, innovation and customer service.[4]

Work to improve the diversity of the public sector workforce is ongoing, with varying levels of progress in different areas. As the public sector grows in maturity and capability, it is time to apply an intersectional approach to increasing belonging and inclusion. The PSC's newly established Inclusion Council will incorporate advice from a broad and overlapping range of demographic groups to put lived experience at the centre of policy and services, and to embody equity, inclusion, diversity and cultural capability in practice.

Increasing diversity in the senior executive cohort in the sector is also an ongoing challenge. While we have seen progress in the representation of women and an increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander senior leaders, our work with CALD employees is still evolving and we look forward to working with the sector to accelerate our progress. Central to these opportunities is a willingness to challenge outdated stereotypes and embrace the mindset that there is no one way to be a leader. Our ongoing strengths as a cohesive and effective public sector must come from our diversity, reflecting the people we serve.

Central to the Closing the Gap Priority Reform on the transformation of government, the sector must continue to improve how we work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues and communities. The *Everyone's Business* training package, developed by the PSC for the sector, provides opportunities to improve the cultural capability of our workforce. However, there is more to do across the sector to ensure that we embed a partnership approach with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities.

There is also significant work to be done to enhance the belonging and inclusion of people with disability in the workforce. Boosting the employment of people with disability in the public sector is an ongoing focus that is discussed in more detail later in this report.

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[4] Diversity Council Australia, 2017

Employee perceptions of inclusion and diversity, 2023 vs 2022

68.5%
favourable overall
in 2023
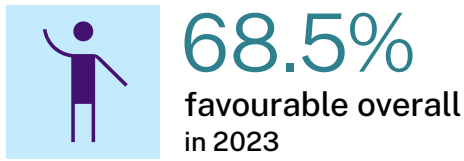
79.8% favourable	**People in my workgroup treat each other with respect** −0.4pp from 2022
78.5% favourable	**Personal background is not a barrier to participation in my organisation** +0.3pp from 2022
68.3% favourable	**I am comfortable sharing a different view to others in my organisation**
70.7% favourable	**I feel that I belong in my organisation** +0.7pp from 2022
44.7% favourable	**Senior managers support the career advancement of all employees** +1.0pp from 2022

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Note: A comparison to the 2022 overall score was not possible because one of the questions that contributed to the 2023 overall score has changed.

Employee voice, 2023

Employee voice is about ensuring that employees feel like they can speak up and be heard. It helps to support an effective and dynamic employee–employer relationship.
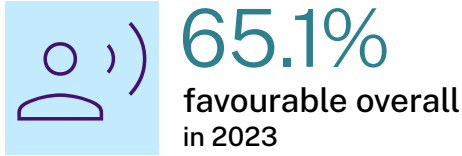
65.1%
favourable overall
in 2023

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Note: A comparison to the 2022 overall score was not possible because a new question was added that contributed to the 2023 overall score.

Employees with a diagnosed mental health issue, 2023 vs 2022

10.8%
10.1% in 2022
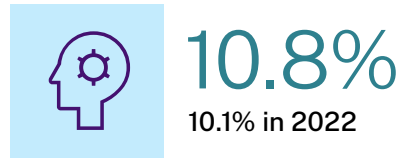
Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Representation of median age, 2023 vs 2022

Public sector		43
Government sector		43
NSW population		39
NSW working population		39

Years — 0 10 20 30 40 50

■ Public sector ■ Government sector
■ NSW population ■ NSW working population ● 2022
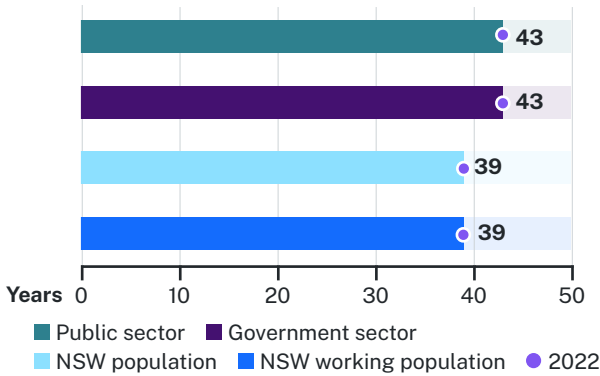
Sources: Workforce Profile (2022, 2023); ABS (2021a, 2021b)

People who report speaking English as a second language, 2023 vs 2022

Public sector		19.4
Government sector		19.4
NSW population		24.9
NSW working population		26.9

% — 0 10 20 30 40 50

■ Public sector ■ Government sector
■ NSW population ■ NSW working population ● 2022

Sources: Workforce Profile (2022, 2023); ABS (2021c, 2021d)

Age of public sector employees, 2014–23

Representation (%) vs Year

● 15–24 ● 25–34 ● 35–44 ● 45–54 ● 55–64 ● 65+
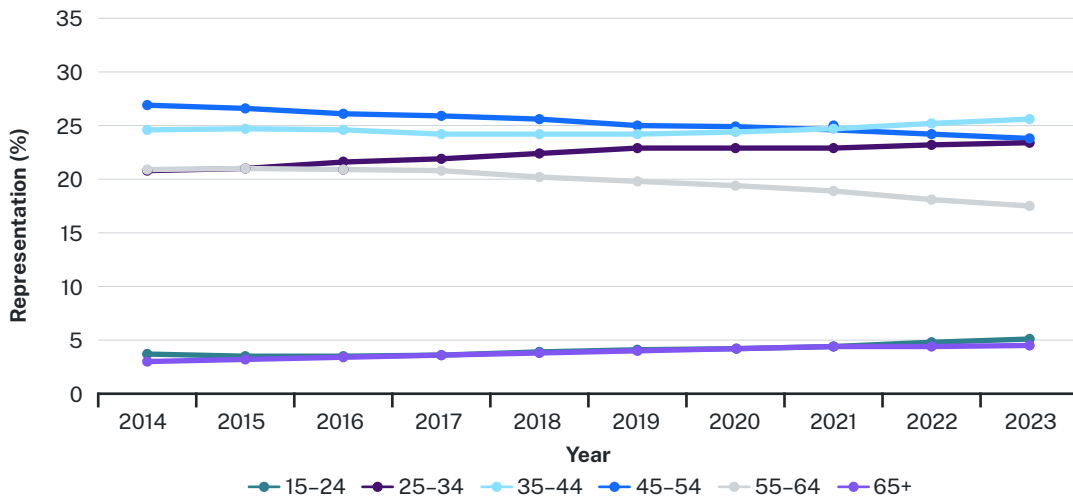
Source: Workforce Profile (2014–23)

People who identify as LGBTIQ+, 2023 vs 2022

6.0 (Public sector)
6.0 (Government sector)

% 0   10   20   30   40   50

■ Public sector   ■ Government sector   ● 2022
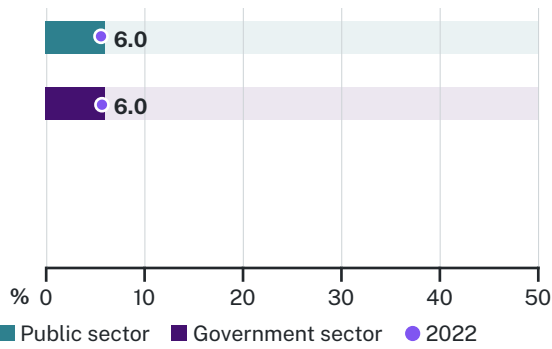
Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

People who identify as non-binary, 2023 vs 2022

0.6 (Public sector)
0.6 (Government sector)

% 0   10   20   30   40   50

■ Public sector   ■ Government sector   ● 2022
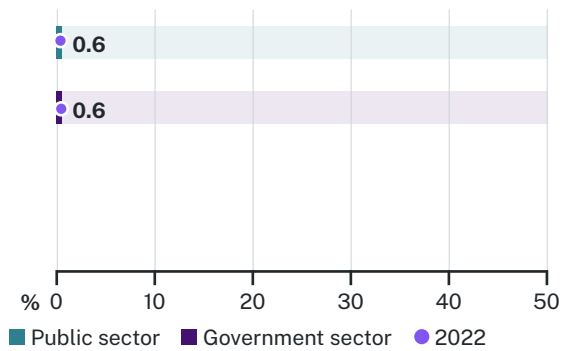
Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Cultural background of public sector employees, 2023
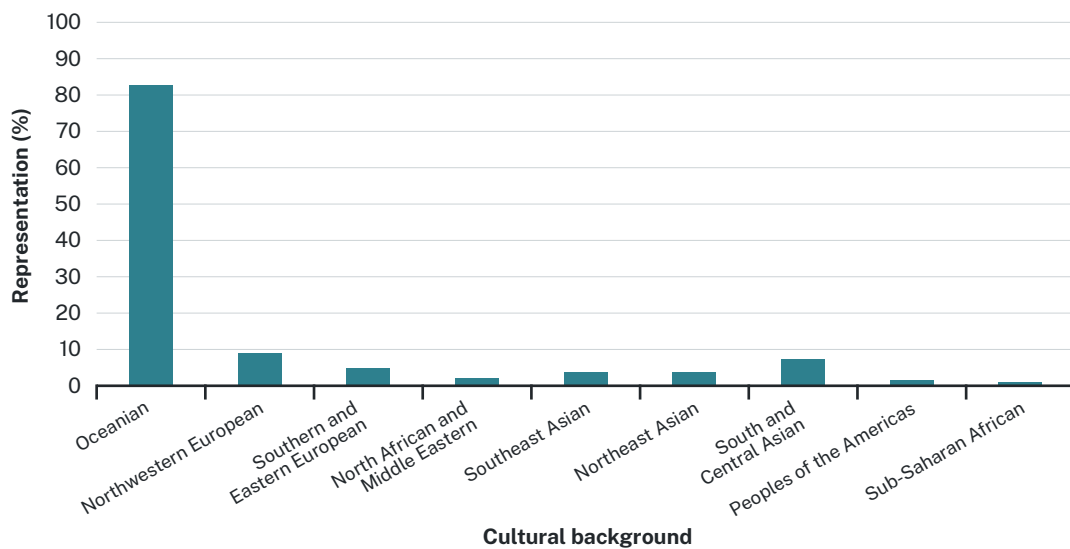
People Matter Employee Survey (2023)

Note: As the 2023 People Matter survey included design changes to a question on cultural background, the 2022 comparison scores for employees from CALD backgrounds are not available.

Estimated representation of senior executives from a racial, ethnic or ethno-religious minority group, who first spoke a language other than English, and who live with a disability, 2019–2023
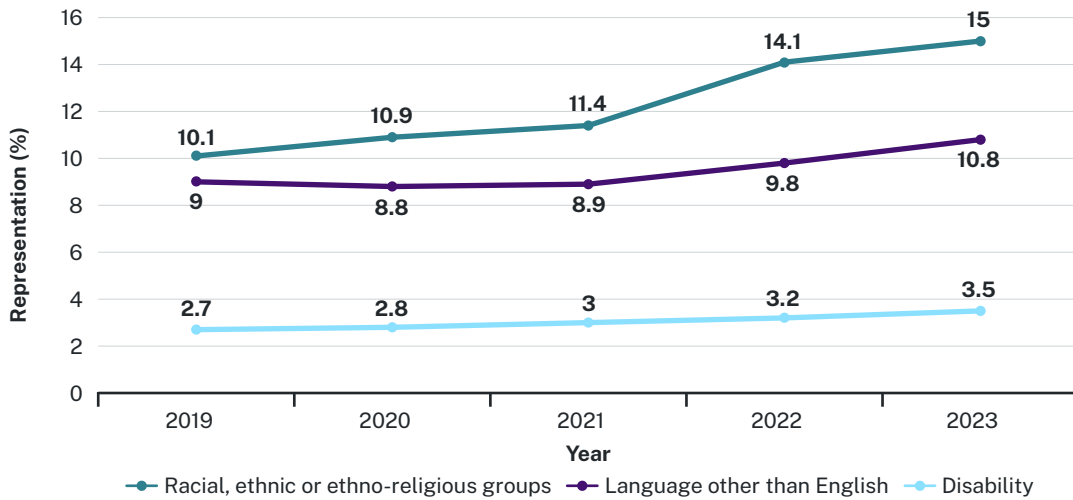
Source: Workforce Profile (2019–23)

People who provide care for a child outside work, 2023 vs 2022
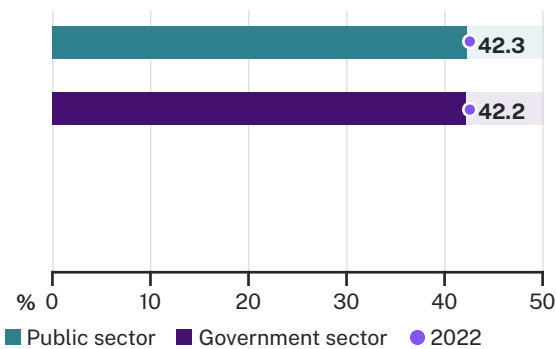
Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

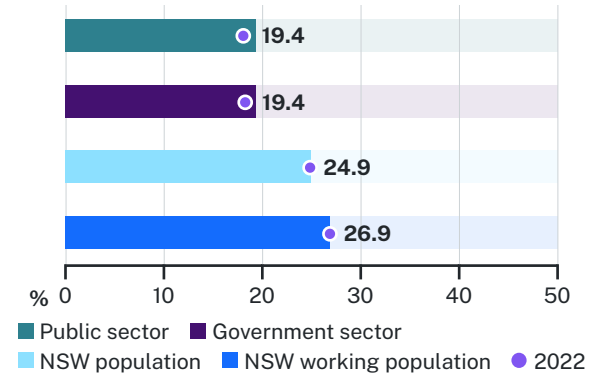## People who provide care for a child or adult who needs support outside work, 2023 vs 2022
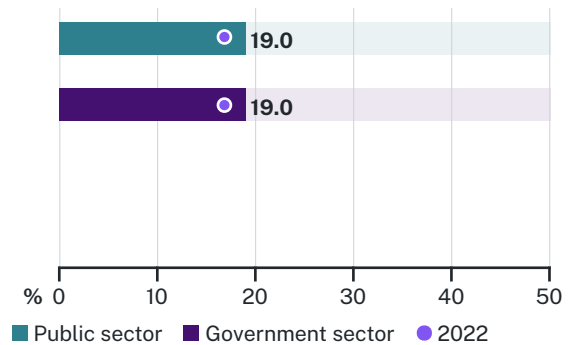
Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Representation of women, 2023 vs 2022
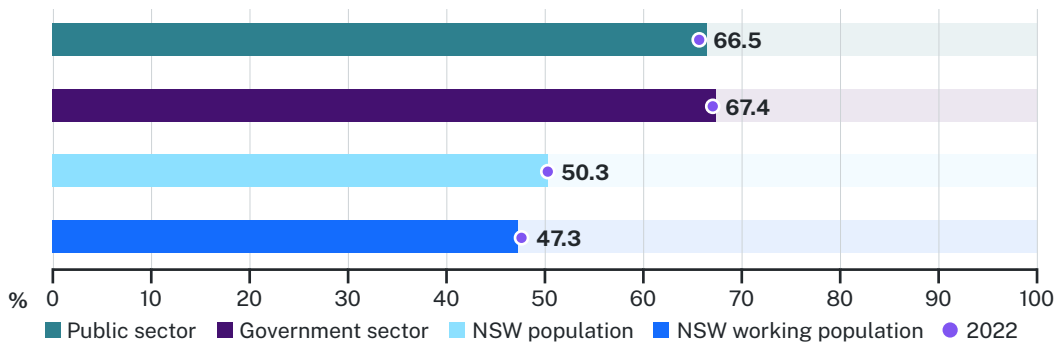
Sources: Workforce Profile (2022, 2023); ABS (2023c, 2023d)

Gender representation by grade in the government sector, 2023 vs 2019
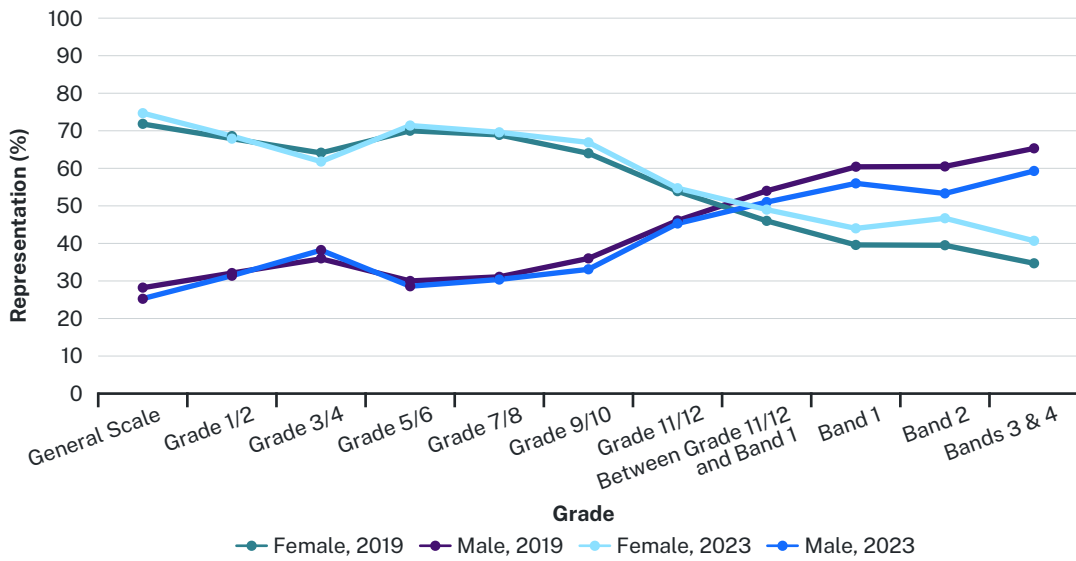
Source: Workforce Profile (2019–23)

Women in senior leadership, 2014–23
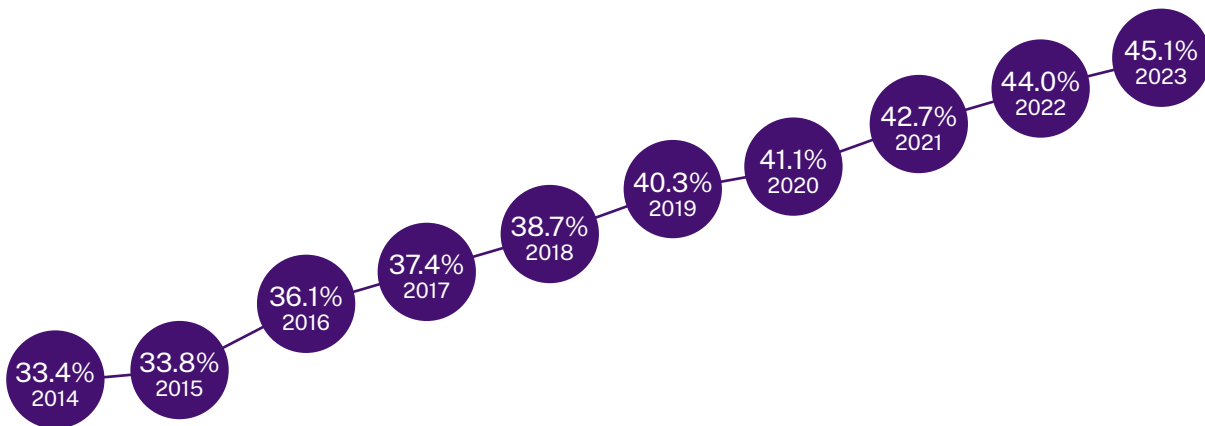
Source: Workforce Profile (2014–23)

Representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, 2023 vs 2022

Legend: Public sector · Government sector · NSW population · NSW working population · ● 2022

Values shown:
- Public sector: 3.9
- Government sector: 3.9
- NSW population: 3.4
- NSW working population: 3.4
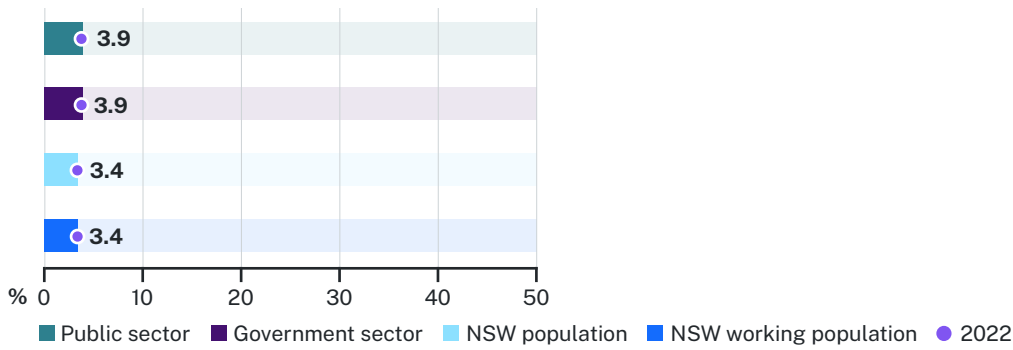
Sources: Workforce Profile (2022, 2023); ABS Census (2022e), ABS (2021e)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in government sectors by non-executive grade, 2023 vs 2019

The PSC's refreshed Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2019–2025 maintains a commitment to 3% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation at all non-executive salary levels by 2025.

Legend: ■ 2019 ■ 2023 ── 2025 target
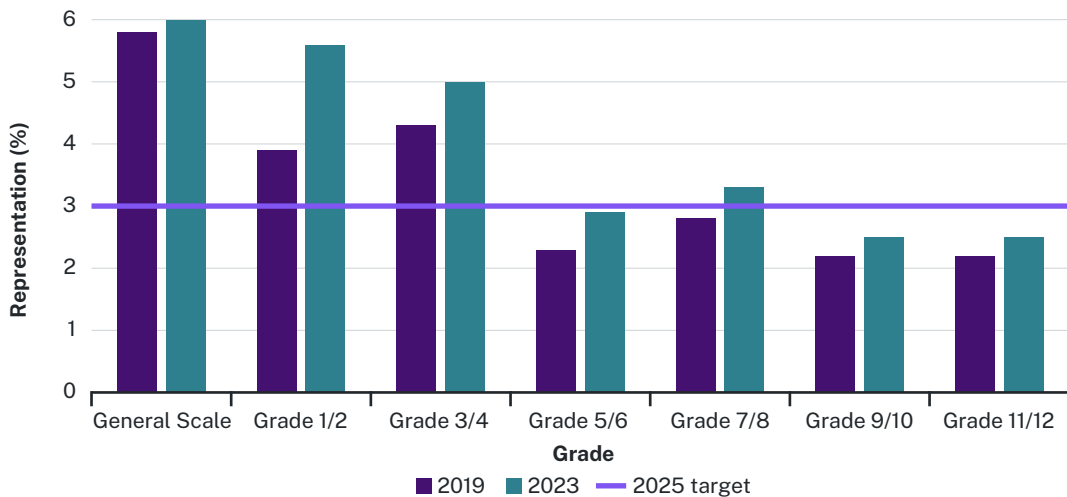
Source: Workforce Profile (2019–23)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in senior leadership, 2014–23

- 57 (2014)
- 55 (2015)
- 63 (2016)
- 71 (2017)
- 87 (2018)
- 98 (2019)
- 105 (2020)
- 130 (2021)
- 154 (2022)
- 170 (2023)
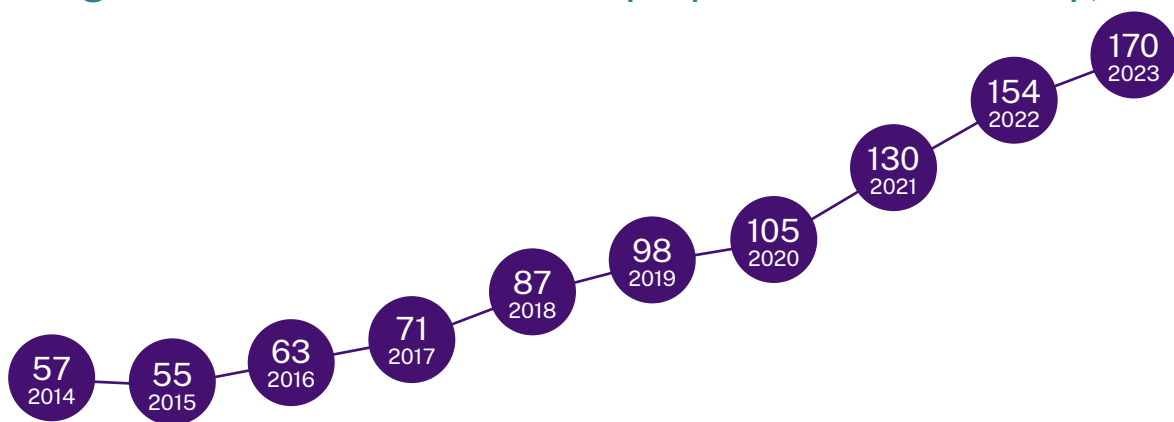
Source: Workforce Profile (2014–23)

Note: Senior leaders are non-casual government sector employees with a salary equal to or higher than $173,930 at 1 July 2022, excluding Health roles of a specialist or technical nature with no leadership or managerial responsibilities, and Justice roles with a statutory or institutional character (such as judge, magistrate or barrister).

Representation of people with disability, 2023 vs 2022

	2022
Public sector	2.6
Government sector	2.6
NSW population	16.9
NSW working population	7.2

Legend: ■ Public sector ■ Government sector ■ NSW population ■ NSW working population ● 2022
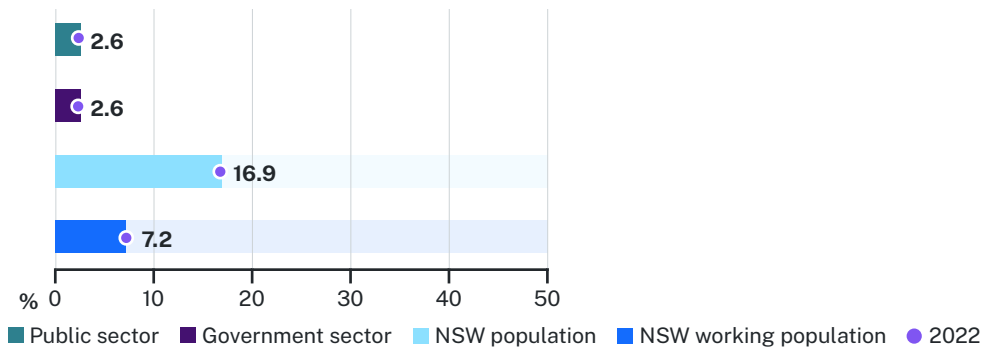
Sources: Workforce Profile (2022, 2023); ABS (2018a, 2018b)

People with disability, 2014–23 and the 2025 target

The government has committed to a target of 5.6% of the total workforce comprising people with disability by 2025. In 2023, 2.6% of our workforce reported that they have a disability, an increase of 0.1pp from last year but still below the **5.6%** target.

2025 Target 5.6%

3.0% 2014 · 2.9% 2015 · 2.8% 2016 · 2.7% 2017 · 2.5% 2018 · 2.5% 2019 · 2.4% 2020 · 2.5% 2021 · 2.5% 2022 · 2.6% 2023
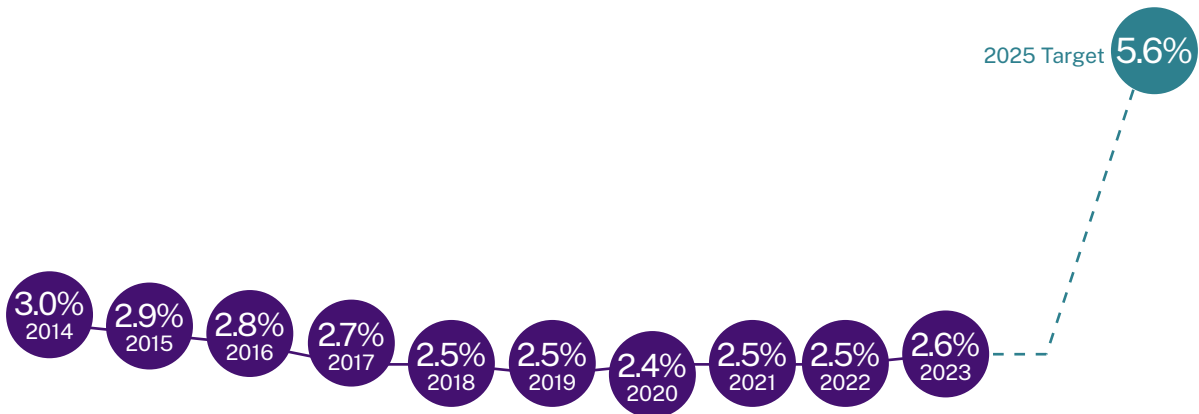
Source: Workforce Profile (2014–23)

People with disability, variance in People Matter survey vs Workforce Profile 2017–23

People Matter survey (%): 3.1 (2017), 3.7 (2018), 2.9 (2019), 4.3 (2020), 4.6 (2021), 5.5 (2022), 6.7 (2023)

Workforce Profile (%): 2.7 (2017), 2.5 (2018), 2.5 (2019), 2.4 (2020), 2.5 (2021), 2.5 (2022), 2.6 (2023)

Legend: —●— People Matter survey (%) —●— Workforce Profile (%)
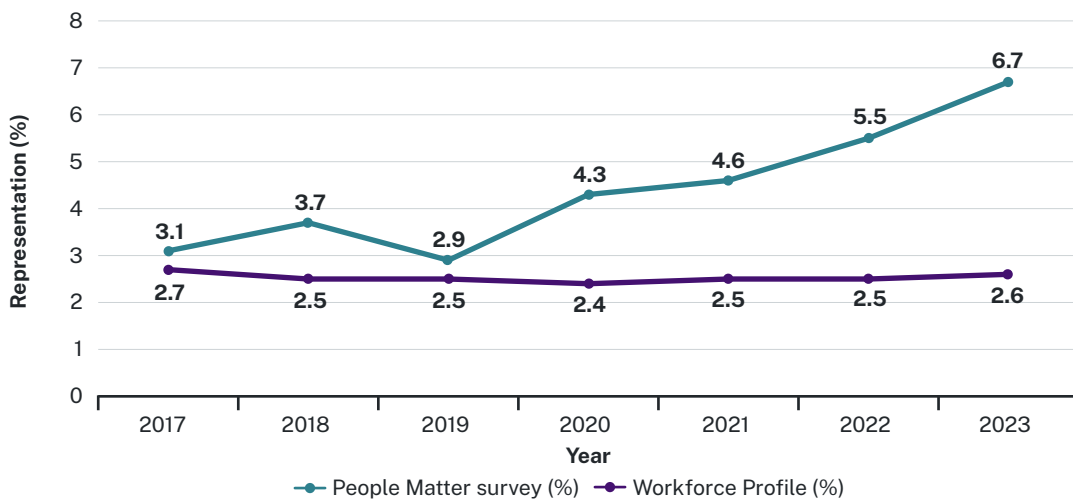
Sources: Workforce Profile (2017–23); People Matter Employee Survey (2017–2023)

In the People Matter survey, 6.7% of respondents identified as living with a disability, which is 1.2pp higher than in 2022. There are a range of issues for the disparity between reported disability in the *Workforce Profile* and the percentage of respondents identifying as having a disability in the People Matter survey. The People Matter survey uses the social model definition of disability, respondents have fewer privacy concerns as it is anonymous, and the data are likely to be more up to date. The *Workforce Profile* collects from HR systems where updating disability data is optional and can therefore be incomplete. Both datasets are important, and the PSC will continue to work with the sector to improve measurement.

It is noted the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability made recommendations in its *Final Report* around establishing specific and disaggregated targets for disability employment at entry, graduate and executive levels across the public sector. This includes employees with cognitive disability.

The PSC continues to drive the implementation of recommendations from a 2022 sector-wide review of disability employment. Some of the key areas of work from the review are the rollout of a disability e-learning course for managers and the development of a proof of concept for a sector-wide digital workplace adjustment passport. The e-learning course will increase knowledge and understanding of disability, help managers identify and remove barriers in the workplace, and foster an inclusive and positive working environment for all staff. The PSC is working with agencies individually to implement the training package, based on their employee learning and development systems.

The 2022 review noted that the 5.6% disability employment target cannot be reached without significant progress from the portfolios with the largest workforces in the sector. Health, Education, and Communities and Justice all feature large frontline workforces that are subject to external qualification requirements and regulations, and therefore face unique challenges in attracting and retaining employees with disability. For this reason, these portfolios will take a bespoke implementation approach to the recommendations.

CASE STUDY

Boosting the employment of people with disability in the public sector

In 2022, the NSW Government commissioned a sector-wide review to understand efforts that were underway to increase the proportion of people with disability employed in the public sector. The review identified key areas of opportunity and proposed 8 recommendations, each assigned to a lead agency to put into action.

1. Use a consistent definition of disability across the sector, based on the social model.

2. Create a sector-wide workplace adjustment passport to improve employee experience.

3. Develop authentic communication and leadership skills to build an inclusive culture.

4. Create practical recruitment guidance and tools to deliver a more inclusive recruitment process.

5. Provide training and support to upskill people managers and embed inclusive practices.

6. Improve information sharing and reporting.

7. Improve procurement practices to create more accessible environments.

8. Tailor actions for the larger portfolios of Health, Education and Stronger Communities to deliver the greatest contributions to disability workforce targets.

Cross-agency collaboration

Agencies made significant progress in implementing the recommendations in 2023. Following are some key achievements.

- The Premier's Department is leading the adoption of a consistent definition of disability across the sector, based on the social model, and is providing guidance to embed the new definition across the sector.

- The PSC is releasing an e-learning course to support people managers across the sector and embed a culture of disability inclusion.

- The Department of Customer Service and the PSC is developing a proof of concept for a workplace adjustment 'passport' that records approved workplace adjustments, which employees can present for consideration when they move between roles in the NSW public sector. A draft Public Service Commissioner's Direction and model workplace adjustment policy has been developed for release in early 2024, after formal consultation.

- The Department of Customer Service is researching the workplace adjustment process to find out more about the people requesting adjustments and creating an 'empathy map' of their thoughts and experiences to inform future improvements.

- The PSC is conducting regular inclusion forums to connect sector diversity and inclusion practitioners, with a focus on disability employment.

- The Department of Customer Service is publishing guidance on how to buy accessible digital products and services everyone can use, including people living with disability.

This whole-of-government work program required significant cross-agency collaboration. A three-tiered governance structure was put in place to promote sector-wide visibility, while respecting portfolio-level responsibility for implementation. It was also designed to empower people with disability by consulting them in the design and implementation of recommendations, and to strengthen senior executive accountability as workstreams moved into the implementation phase.

The initiative's Steering Committee provides strategic direction and oversight. Co-chaired by the Public Service Commissioner and the Secretary of Education, it includes a Band 2 or Band 3 senior executive and senior employees with disability from each department.

The Cross-portfolio Delivery Group helps to develop recommendation responses and ensures solutions are informed by employees with disability and fit for purpose for the whole sector. It includes representatives from each department leading the design of recommendation responses, and 2 Disability Employee Network chairs.

Input from people with disability

The Expert Reference Group is a key feedback mechanism to assist teams during implementation, ensuring lived experience is incorporated into the development of solutions. It represents a diverse range of employees with disability, work experience and grades, with at least one person with disability from each portfolio.

The PSC is continuing to provide coordination support to enable the implementation of the disability review recommendations, with the aim of attracting and retaining employees with disability. Agencies will continue to use the governance framework to ensure the program remains leader-driven, agile and focused on providing practical solutions.

Tenure and intention to stay

'Tenure' refers to the time that an employee has worked for an organisation. 'Intention to stay' refers to an employee's desire and willingness to remain with their current organisation. Intention to stay can be influenced by many aspects of the employee experience, including engagement.

Intention to stay is a leading indicator of turnover. However, an intention does not always translate into an action. A certain amount of turnover in any organisation is healthy. The wide-ranging nature of the functions performed by NSW public sector agencies makes it difficult to determine whether the sector's overall level of turnover is healthy or unhealthy. It is important for agencies to combine intention to stay and turnover data with other People Matter survey data and with information obtained from staff exit surveys. This will help agencies to understand what is driving employee turnover within the context of their specific workplaces.

Median agency tenure, 2023 vs 2022

7.0 years
7.4 years in 2022

Source: Workforce Profile (2022, 2023)

Intention to stay in current organisation, 2023 vs 2022
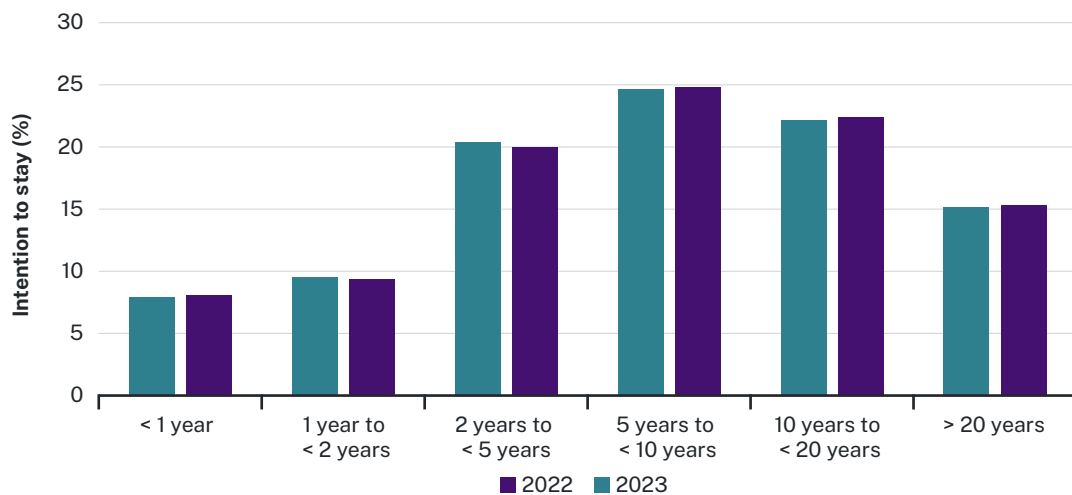
People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Remuneration

Remuneration or pay for NSW public sector employees is determined by several Acts, regulations and rules managed by various NSW government sector agencies. Employees' remuneration and conditions differ depending on the legislative and industrial instruments that apply to their job type and employing agency.

Employee perceptions of being paid fairly for the work they do, 2023 vs 2022

45.6%
47.6% in 2022
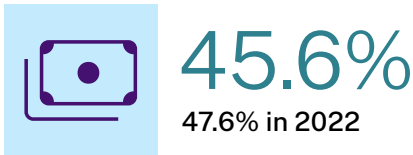
Source: Workforce Profile (2022, 2023)

Satisfaction with pay decreased by 2pp in 2023, although median remuneration for non-casual employees increased by 4.1% from 2022. The NSW Government wages policy provided for annual increases of up to 2.53%, effective 1 July 2022.[5] This was below the increase in Sydney's Consumer Price Index (6.6%)[6] and was lower than the growth in average full-time weekly earnings in Australia (3.9%).[7] Employee dissatisfaction with pay differed between the two major role types, with 47% of frontline employees dissatisfied with their pay compared to 25% of non-frontline employees.

Median salary for NSW public sector employees, 2023 vs 2022

$95,984
A $3,748 or 4.1% increase from $92,236 in 2022
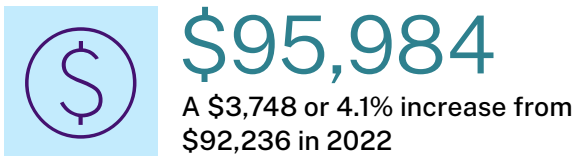
Source: Workforce Profile (2022, 2023)

Changes in median salary, 2014–23
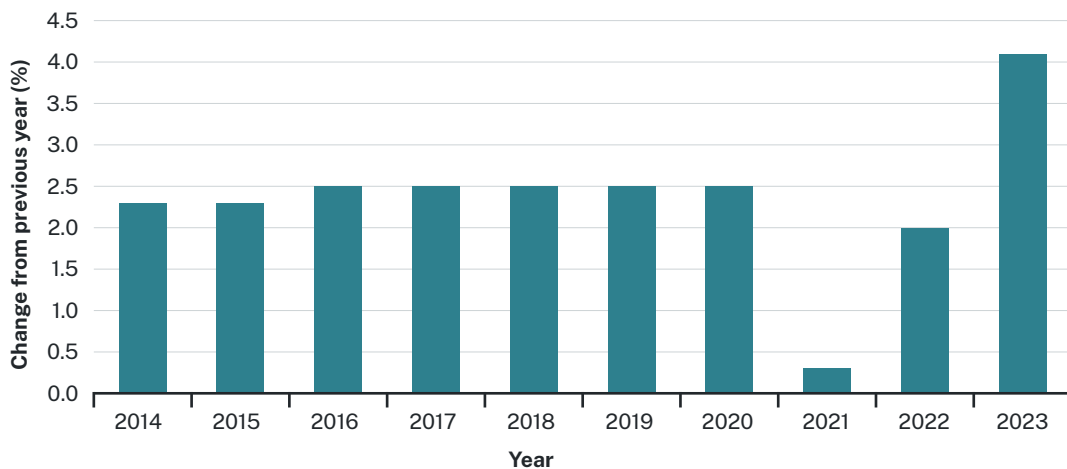
Source: Workforce Profile (2014–23)

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[5] Department of Premier and Cabinet (2022)

[6] Australian Bureau of Statistics (June 2023)

[7] Based on full-time adult average weekly ordinary time earnings in Australia; Australian Bureau of Statistics (May 2023)

Median salary for women and men, 2023 vs 2022
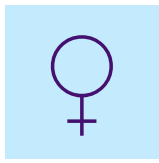
$94,568
for women
$92,236 in 2022
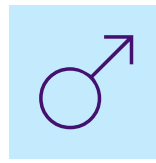
$100,773
for men
$96,540 in 2022

Source: Workforce Profile (2022, 2023)

Gender pay gap, 2023 vs 2022

$6,205 or 6.2%
$4,304 or 4.5% in 2022

Source: Workforce Profile (2022, 2023)

Note: Employee salary is the full-time base remuneration for a role, regardless of whether the employee is working part or full time. The PSC used a method of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to calculate the gender pay gap, which measures the difference between the full-time median remuneration of men and women relative to the median remuneration of men. The OECD method is not comparable to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency methods and published national figures.

Public service and aligned services senior executive gender pay gap by band, 2023 vs 2022
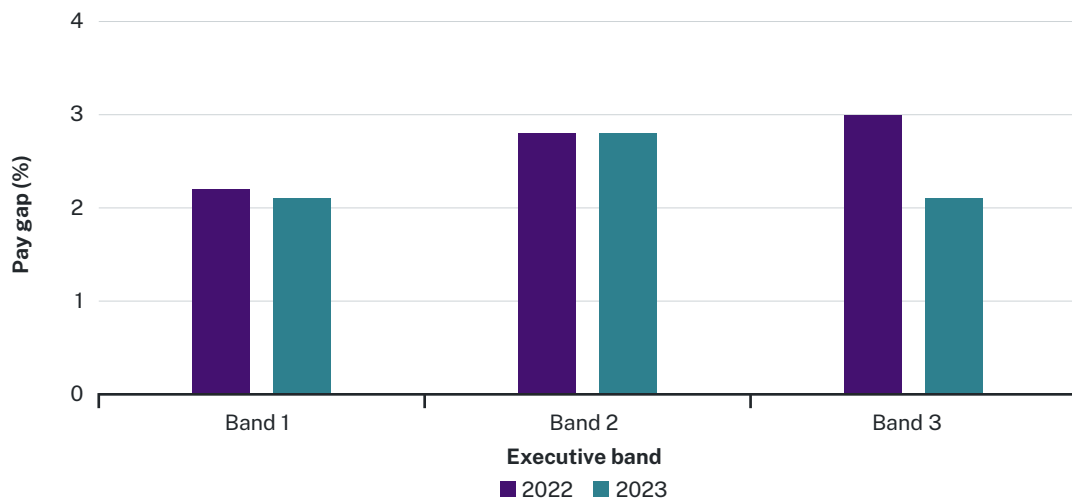
Source: Workforce Profile (2022, 2023)

Note: The data include senior executives in bands 1–3 in the NSW government sector, specifically Public Service senior executives and aligned executive services (Health Service, Transport Service and NSW Police Force).

In 2023, the gap in median remuneration between men and women in the NSW public sector was 6.2% ($6,205), compared to 4.5% ($4,304) in 2022. For the third year in a row, this represents the highest gender pay gap in the past decade.

The gender pay gap in 2023 for senior executive bands 1–3 was notably lower than that of the broader workforce. Across the bands, the largest change in gender pay gap was in Band 3, which decreased 0.9pp in 2023. Bands 1 and 3 had the lowest pay gap at 2.1%.

Several collaborative initiatives have been implemented across the sector to improve gender equality. The NSW Government is committed to advancing gender equality for the people of NSW and the NSW public sector workforce by improving outcomes for women.

Women NSW is guiding the development and implementation of Gender Equality Action Plans (GEAPs). NSW Treasury, Transport for NSW and the NSW Department of Education have developed and implemented GEAPs as part of a pilot phase. Any departments that have not yet completed a GEAP in the pilot phase will develop a 3-year GEAP by 1 January 2025. This year, the NSW Treasurer released the Gender Equality Budget Statement alongside the NSW Budget to analyse the effect of the budget on the delivery of gender equality outcomes.

As part of this work, the PSC is leading the initiative to report the sector's workforce data to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA). This will help to expand the scope of the WGEA's reporting and promote a culture of transparency in both the public and private sectors. The PSC is currently investigating reporting options.

CASE STUDY

Creating legal career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Enhancing education and employment is fundamental to closing the gap in health and life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. A collaboration between Legal Aid NSW, TAFE NSW and Macquarie University is working to achieve this objective through the Legal Career Pathways Program.

The program is the first of its kind in the NSW legal sector. It focuses on supporting the self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities through education and employment pathways to legal careers. All participants are guaranteed a job at Legal Aid NSW for the duration of their studies.

Over the 4-year agreement, the Legal Career Pathways Program will:

- employ 200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at Legal Aid NSW

- support employees to complete a qualification(s) in legal services

- create cohorts of scholars employed by Legal Aid NSW who support each other to achieve their vocational education and career goals

- build an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal services workforce with the skills and capacity to deliver culturally appropriate services to clients and communities across NSW.

Wraparound support

Designed using a 7-step model of vocational education developed by the Djurali team (formerly the Poche Centre), the program centres Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' perspectives and cultures. It provides wraparound support (including a community of practice to support participant managers) and, importantly, uses culturally safe practices, including recognising cultural and kinship obligations.

The program has so far facilitated employment for 32 participants in roles such as legal support, client services and grants administration. The educational qualifications of the participants continue to increase, as all participants are enrolled in or undertaking legal studies.

With a substantial boost to Legal Aid NSW's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce (from 6% to 8% since launching in 2022) and increased workplace diversity that reflects its client base, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are working across more locations in NSW to provide culturally appropriate services to communities.

The program seeks to engage in real and meaningful action that supports TAFE NSW's Reconciliation Action Plan, Macquarie University's Reconciliation Statement and Legal Aid NSW's Closing the Gap commitments.

Our workplaces
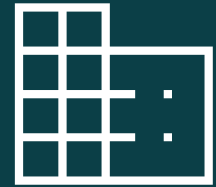
Our people should thrive in our workplaces. The public sector will continue to evolve our workplaces to exemplify our values and create safe, healthy and flexible environments in which all employees can bring their best selves to work and serve the people of NSW. Bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment and racism will not be tolerated. The harmful consequences of negative workplace behaviours at the individual and organisational levels are well known and undermine efforts to create positive and productive workplaces.

Wellbeing

'Wellbeing' means feeling good, functioning well and experiencing satisfaction and fulfilment in work and life. There is a strong connection between wellbeing and employee engagement, such that wellbeing influences how employees perceive their work and their level of commitment. In recent years, there has been a growing focus on wellbeing across the sector to increase employee engagement.

For the first time in the People Matter survey, we asked public sector employees if they were satisfied with current workplace practices to help them manage their wellbeing. This question ranked as the third highest driver of employee engagement, demonstrating the importance of effective workplace wellbeing programs and initiatives in sustaining higher engagement levels. The most effective workplace wellbeing strategies are multi-dimensional and tailored to the workforce.

The wellbeing score is an aggregate of responses to 5 People Matter survey questions in 2023, which included, 'I feel burned out by my work'.

Employee perceptions of wellbeing, 2023

53.5%
favourable overall

54.5% favourable	**The amount of stress in my job is manageable**
57.8% favourable	**In general, my sense of wellbeing is...*** –0.6pp from 2022
58.7% favourable	**I am satisfied with current workplace practices to help me manage my wellbeing**
63.8% favourable	**There are effective resources in my organisation to support employee wellbeing** –0.4pp from 2022
39.2% unfavourable^	**I feel burned out by my work** +1.4pp from 2022

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

* Respondents were asked to rate the statement, 'In general, my sense of wellbeing is ...', on a scale of 0 to 10. The results were grouped into % favourable (7–10), % neutral (4–6) and % unfavourable (0–3).

^ The unfavourable score for burnout represents respondents that felt burnt out by their work.

Note: A comparison to the 2022 overall score was not possible because some of the questions that contributed to the 2023 overall score changed.

Employee wellbeing by employee group, 2023

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2023)

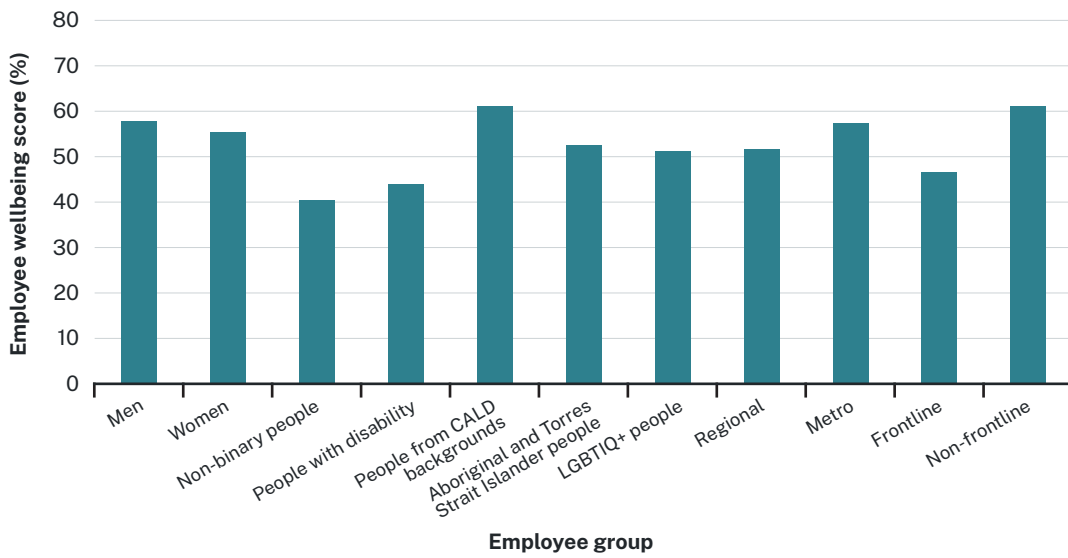## Distribution of employees' general sense of wellbeing, 2023 vs 2022
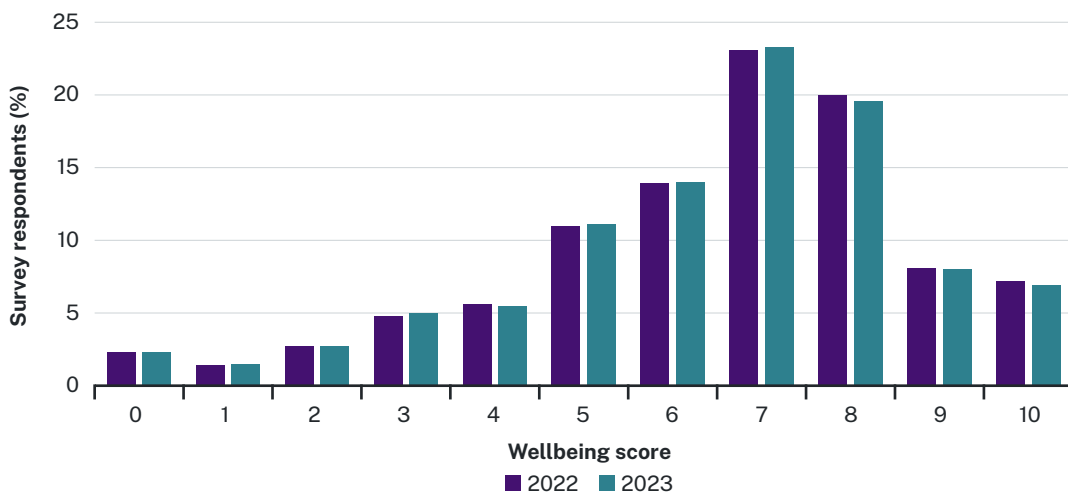
Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Note: Respondents were asked to rate the statement, 'In general, my sense of wellbeing is …', on a scale of 0 to 10.

Employees who felt burnt out, 2023 vs 2022

39.2%

**of employees feel
burnt out by their work**

37.8% in 2022

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Burnout is a specific type of work-related stress that results from chronic exposure to stressful work conditions. It is characterised by feelings of exhaustion, cynicism and reduced professional efficacy.

Taking a proactive approach to preventing and responding to burnout benefits both employees and agencies and is crucial to cultivating healthier and more sustainable workplaces. In this year's People Matter survey, 39.2% of respondents reported feeling burnt out by their work, an increase of 1.4pp from 2022. The rate of burnout in the NSW public sector is comparable to those in other jurisdictions. The Australian Public Service Commission reported a burnout rate of 33% in 2023, noting it has a significantly lower percentage of frontline workers than NSW.[8]

The PSC has designed a program to understand the key drivers of workplace burnout in the NSW public sector, and how to respond and prevent or reduce the likelihood of burnout. By analysing the 2022 People Matter survey results, the research found three universal key drivers of burnout: time to do my job well, support to do my job well, and access to effective wellbeing resources. The PSC has developed resources to support agencies in addressing burnout, including the *Understanding burnout in the NSW public sector* report and an *Organisational risk factors for burnout* guide.

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[8] Australian Public Service Commission, 2023

Hours of paid unscheduled absence per full-time equivalent employee, 2014–23

63.7 2014
65.1 2015
67.1 2016
64.1 2017
65.2 2018
64.1 2019
63.5 2020
65.1 2021
70.8 2022
73.1 2023
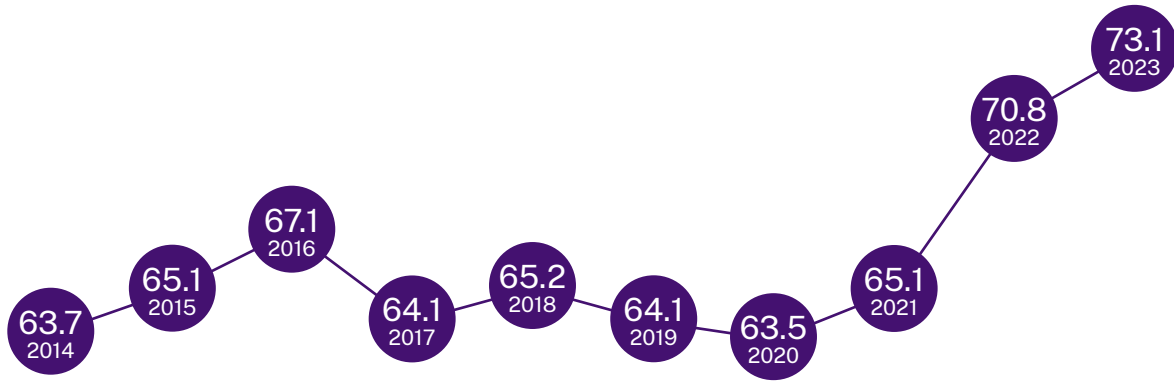
Source: Workforce Profile (2014–23)

Hours of paid unscheduled absences have increased over time, which may be linked to burnout. Research has consistently shown that burnout is associated with higher rates of absenteeism, with one study revealing that 60% of work absenteeism can be attributed to psychological stress and burnout.[9] This presents a significant risk to the sector's workforce, particularly in the context of projected workforce shortages. It highlights the need to implement effective strategies to mitigate burnout and enhance employee wellbeing.

In 2023, 23.3% of employees had recreation leave balances of 30 days or more, a decrease of 2.4pp from 2022 (25.7%). Encouraging the use of excess leave can improve work–life balance and help reduce the risk of burnout.

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9 LaMontagne, Shaw and Louie (2006)

Workplace health and safety

Managing work health and safety (WHS) involves mitigating risks to the health and safety of everyone in a workplace. 'Health' refers to physical and psychological health. The NSW public sector is committed to providing a physically and mentally healthy workplace for all employees.

It is important for employers to address psychosocial hazards by promoting a healthy work environment and implementing strategies to manage and reduce workplace stress. Several recent amendments to the Work Health and Safety Amendment Regulation (2022) give effect to the national model WHS Regulations. Employers now have a more explicit duty to manage psychosocial hazards at work.

SafeWork NSW has developed a Code of Practice for managing psychosocial hazards at work. It is an approved Code of Practice under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth). The code provides the sector with practical guidance on how to comply with the new standards.

Employee perceptions of health and safety, 2023 vs 2022

66.3%
favourable overall
69.3% in 2022

68.8% favourable
I am confident WHS issues I raise will be addressed promptly
74.4% in 2022

63.8% favourable
There are effective resources in my organisation to support employee wellbeing
64.2% in 2022
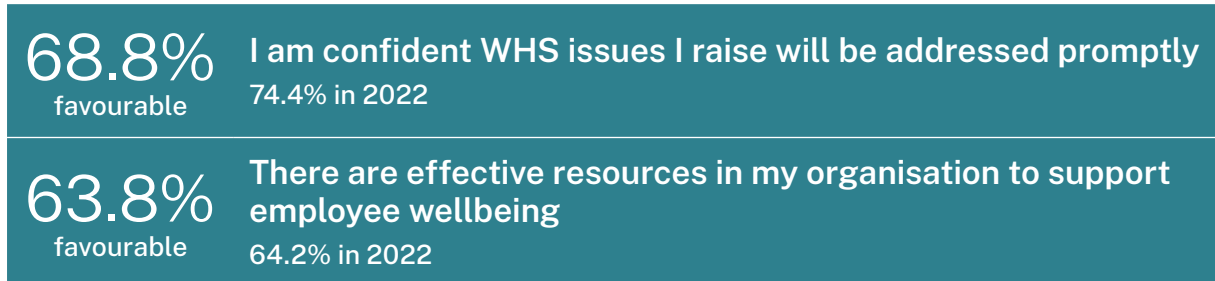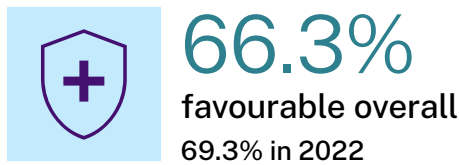
Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

There has been a 3pp decrease in employees' favourable perceptions of WHS compared to last year. This may reflect an increased awareness of WHS, as agencies are implementing strategies to improve WHS. Confidence that WHS issues raised will be addressed promptly decreased by 6pp from 2022 to 2023. This result presents an opportunity for agencies to understand why and find ways to improve employee confidence during People Matter survey results action planning.

Flexible working arrangements

The NSW public sector aims to be a world class employer that offers employees flexible working opportunities. Since 2016, the sector has had a policy of providing flexible working arrangements on an 'if not, why not?' basis, implemented in a way that maintains or improves service delivery.

The top 3 flexible working arrangements in 2023 are:

- flexible start and finish times
- working from home
- working from different locations.

Employees' use of flexible working arrangements decreased by 2pp from 2022 to 2023. This reflected a 6% decrease in working from home as employees continued to return to the office.

Satisfaction with flexible working arrangements remained steady this year. Offering flexible working arrangements can boost the productivity and retention of key staff. There is a strong link between satisfaction with flexible working arrangements and engagement. Employees using flexible working arrangements reported an overall engagement score of 67.3, while those not offered such arrangements scored only 57.5.

It is important for agencies to consider flexibility broadly and recognise that a flexible working arrangement may go beyond where work is done, as demonstrated by the examples in the following table.

Being flexible about ...	Consideration
When work is done	How work is spread over days, weeks or even years
Continuity of work	Providing opportunities for career breaks, carer's leave and other types of leave
Work location	Enabling working from home, in the office, or a hybrid arrangement
Job types	The mix of job types, including full time, part time and casual
Balancing interests and benefits	Offering flexible working arrangements that are mutually beneficial to employer and employee

Frontline employees were less able to access flexible work. Only 45% of frontline employees who responded to the survey were satisfied with their ability to access and use flexible working arrangements, compared to 75% of non-frontline employees. A concerted focus on uplifting frontline workforces' satisfaction with flexible working arrangements may contribute to gender equality, particularly for employees with caring responsibilities.[10]

Employees' use and perceptions of flexible working arrangements, 2023 vs 2022

Use

71.4%

73.5% in 2022
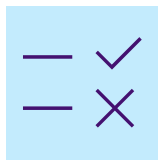
Satisfaction with access

60.4%

60.4% in 2022
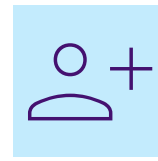
Perception of manager support

65.4%

65.2% in 2022

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Employees' use and perceptions of flexible working arrangements, frontline vs non-frontline, 2023
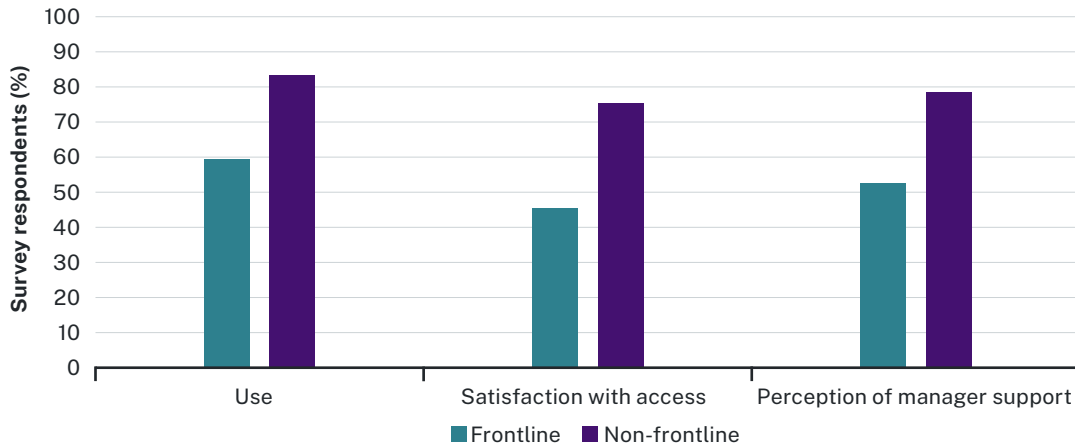
Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2023)

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[10] Cooper and Hill (2021)

Transport for NSW leads the way in hybrid working

Transport for NSW (Transport) is giving employees more flexibility and choice in where and when they work. Transport's hybrid working campaign, *The way we work at Transport,* empowers employees to work in a way that supports them personally and professionally – whether that's in the office, onsite, at home or on the go – while continuing to deliver for NSW.

The program builds on the significant improvement in digital capability achieved during the pandemic, when the number of Transport employees working remotely grew rapidly from 700 to more than 10,000. It aims to maintain a high level of satisfaction among non-frontline employees working flexibly (91% in 2022 and 2023), while balancing the ongoing need for in-person collaboration and connection.

Employee input drives transformation

Transport employees were instrumental in shaping the approach to hybrid working, through the New Ways of Working Pilot program. With over 900 participants, the program delved into changes that might be needed to leadership, digital technology and physical workplaces. Focus groups and surveys uncovered team and individual preferences on how offices and technology are used, as well as the role leaders play in enabling this new way of working. These insights, coupled with thorough peer research, influenced Transport's Hybrid Working Strategy.

Highlights of the hybrid approach

Transport has supported leaders to establish an outcomes-based culture, focusing on the work achieved rather than where it is done.

1. Redefining how the organisation, teams and leaders work

Almost half of pilot participants identified collaboration as the main purpose of in-office work. Offices now serve as hubs for collaboration and connection, which is important for employee wellbeing. Employees value the opportunity to choose suitable spaces to complete tasks, whether in person or virtually.

Every employee has access to their usual office location ('team hub') and other office locations that can be reserved via an app.

Leaders play a critical role in enabling hybrid working and are supported by multiple resources, including monthly workshops to navigate emerging challenges.

2. Flexible approach to office days

Transport does not mandate office days, instead encouraging leaders and teams to discuss the most effective ways of working and set clear expectations within their teams.

Satisfaction for non-frontline employees reached 91% in 2022, up from 77% pre-pandemic. The 2022 People Matter survey results showed that those who were satisfied with flexible working were more engaged, exceeded work requirements, and reported increased productivity and better wellbeing.

3. Recognition and certification

- Transport is a hybrid working leader in Australia, being named a 5-Star Employer of Choice in 2023 by *Human Resources Director* magazine and winning Best Remote Work Strategy at the Australian HR Awards 2022.
- Transport holds FlexReady Certification for managing the change to flexible ways of working, ranking among the top Australian organisations.
- Transport is certified as a Family Inclusive Workplace, supporting employees to meet their work, family and wellbeing needs.

Transport is continuing to refine its hybrid working approach to maintain flexibility and responsiveness. For example, its Hybrid+ initiative is supporting regional employment and mobility, and its Connected Workplaces program is creating more consistent workplace experiences across the department.

Frontline flexibility

Transport has a large frontline workforce and recognises the gap in satisfaction with flexible working between frontline and non-frontline employees. Research conducted to understand what flexibility means to the frontline workforce found that it's about choice in relation to when and how work is done, rather than where. For frontline workers, flexibility is connected to scheduling and rostering – and is enabled by having a predictable roster, a choice of annual leave and the ability to swap shifts seamlessly. Transport is working to improve its frontline workforce's experiences and will continue to work towards supporting everyone to access more flexible working options.

Misconduct

Misconduct refers to behaviour that is unethical or illegal, or that constitutes a serious offence or a breach of an agency's code of conduct. The government sector core values provide a clear framework to help employees understand what 'misconduct' is and what it means in practice in their day-to-day work.

The People Matter survey asks employees about their experience of misconduct at work. While the overall level of misconduct encountered in 2023 was low and the reporting robust, there were several reasons why people did not report misconduct. The top three reasons were:

- I thought there would be negative consequences for me (48.7%)
- I didn't think it would make a difference (44.9%)
- I didn't think it would be confidential (40.0%).

Employees who experienced pressure to engage in misconduct, 2023 vs 2022

2.7%
2.8% in 2022
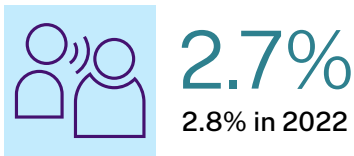
Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Proportion of employees who were aware of misconduct, who reported it and who had their report satisfactorily resolved, 2023 vs 2022

Aware of misconduct
14.3%
15.2% in 2022

Misconduct reported
53.6%
57.7% in 2022

Complaint resolved to satisfaction
39.2%
34.7% in 2022

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Bullying

Reducing negative behaviours such as bullying will help build positive workplace environments and boost inclusion. Bullying in the sector has reduced over time; however, it remains a problem that requires continued attention.

In the People Matter survey, bullying is defined as 'repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or group of workers'. Examples of bullying include shouting, spreading rumours and deliberately excluding someone from work activities. Reasonable feedback on work performance, delivered in an appropriate manner, is not bullying.

People Matter survey results remained stable in 2023, with 21% of respondents witnessing bullying and 13% experiencing bullying. Almost one in 2 respondents reported their experience of bullying, of which 25% indicated their complaint was resolved to their satisfaction.

Employees who witnessed or experienced bullying, who reported it and who had their report satisfactorily resolved, 2023 vs 2022

Bullying witnessed
20.6%
20.9% in 2022

Bullying experienced
13.2%
13.6% in 2022

Bullying reported
49.2%

Complaint resolved to satisfaction
25.5%
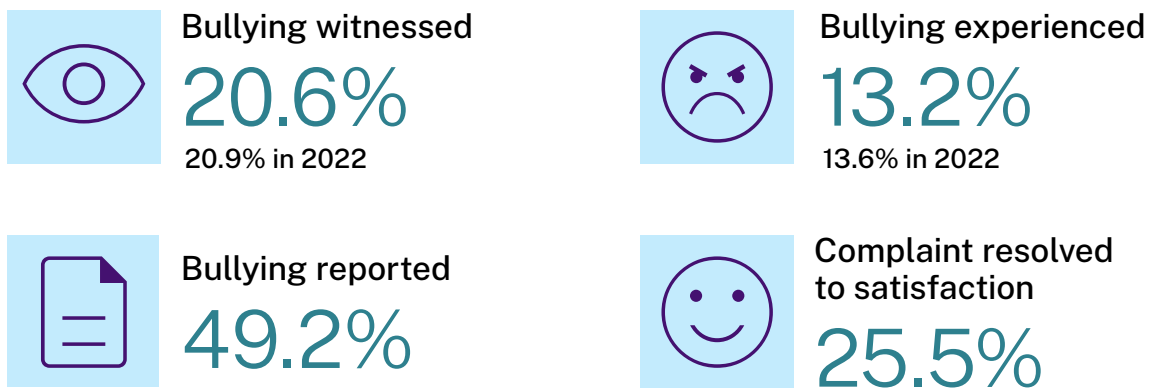
Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Note: Employees who experienced bullying were subsequently asked whether they reported any bullying they had experienced.

Rates of self-reported experienced and witnessed bullying, 2019–23
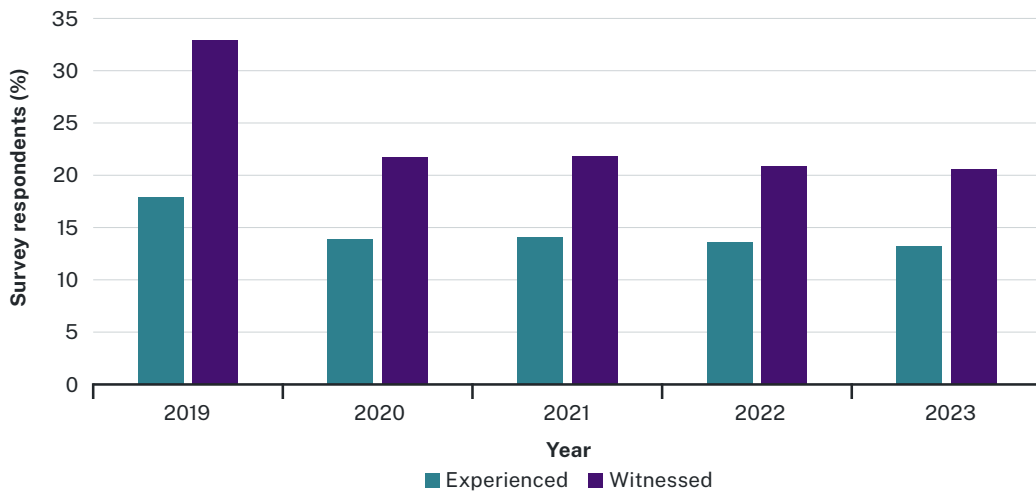
Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2019–23)

Sources of self-reported bullying incidents, 2023

38.6%	A fellow worker at your level
29.1%	Your immediate manager or supervisor
25.5%	A senior manager
13.8%	Another manager
10.7%	A subordinate
9.1%	A customer
4.4%	A member of the public other than a customer
5.0%	Other
10.9%	Prefer not to say
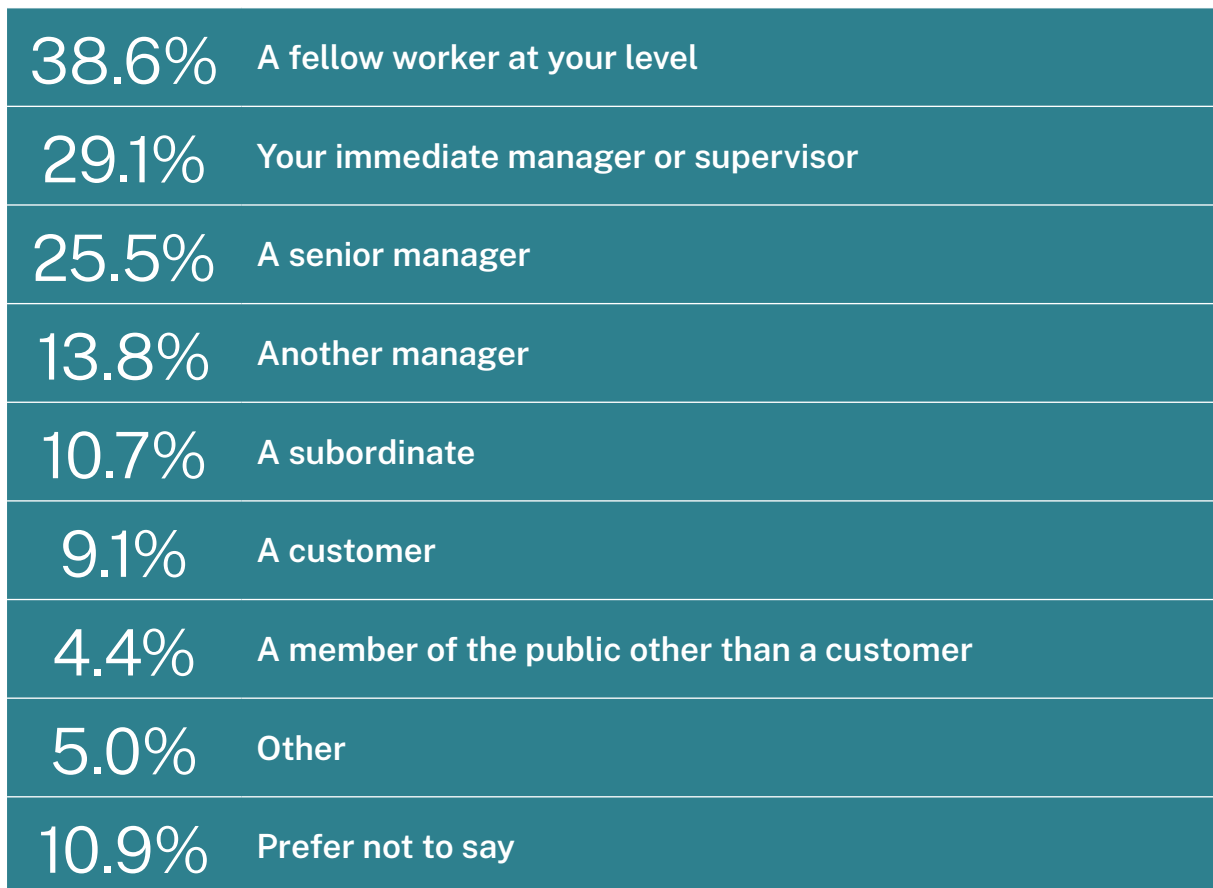
Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2023)

Note: Respondents were able to select multiple responses, so the sum of percentages may be greater than 100%.

Rates of self-reported experienced bullying, by different employee groups, 2023 vs 2022
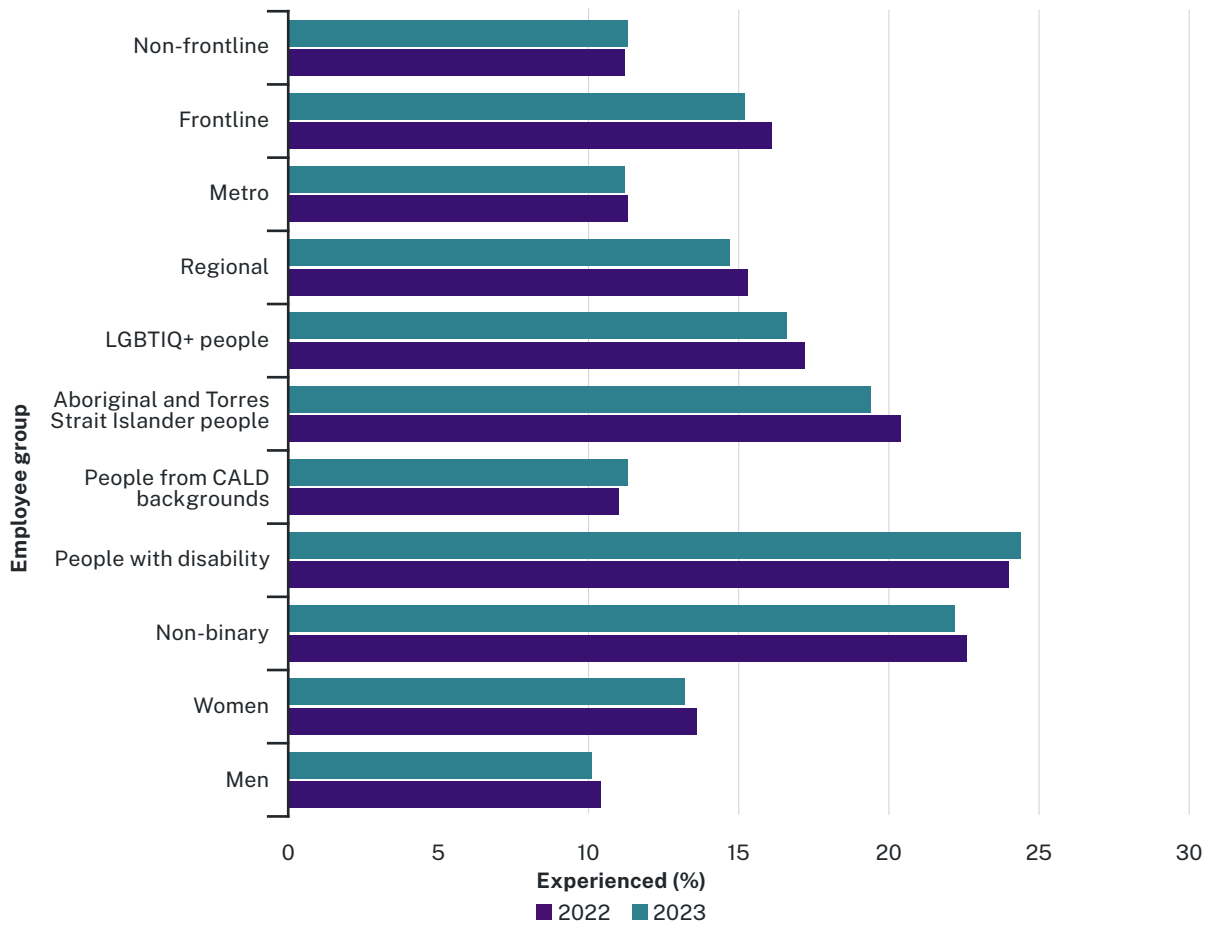
Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Frontline employees generally experience higher rates of bullying than non-frontline employees, though the gap between their results narrowed this year. In this year's People Matter survey, 15.2% of frontline employees reported that they experienced bullying, a decrease of 0.9pp from last year. Non-frontline employees' experiences of bullying remained stable.

As shown in the graph above, bullying disproportionately affects individuals with certain demographic characteristics. People with disability report a high rate of bullying, with 24.4% of respondents reporting they experienced bullying in 2023. The rates of bullying reported by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees decreased by 1pp in 2023, though it is still too high at 19.4%.

Zero tolerance of bullying is more likely to be achieved where a proactive, systemic approach is taken to a range of workforce management and workplace culture factors. Bullying can cause both psychological and physical harm, making it a risk to employee health and safety.[11] The recent changes to the Work Health and Safety Amendment Regulation (2022) means employers now have a more explicit duty to manage psychosocial hazards, including bullying and other harmful behaviours, at work.

The PSC's Respectful Workplace Foundations pilot project in 2022 provided a structured opportunity for employees in 4 public sector agencies to plan and implement changes to work design and practices. The pilot evaluation identified key features for building a more supportive workplace to reduce bullying and promote positive workplace behaviours. The PSC published a case study in its Belonging and Inclusion Library outlining the key features that are associated with positive outcomes, to enable other NSW public sector agencies to minimise psychosocial risks.

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[11] Bullying | Safe Work Australia

Discrimination and racism

The People Matter survey asked employees about their experiences of discrimination and racism.

Discrimination is when a person or group of people is treated less favourably than another person or group because of their background or certain personal characteristics. Racism is prejudice, discrimination or hatred directed at someone because of their colour, ethnicity or national origin.

Racism and unlawful discrimination are never acceptable. It is important to understand employee experiences in this area to reduce the incidence of these harmful workplace behaviours.

In this year's People Matter survey, 10.1% of employees reported experiencing discrimination, of which race-based discrimination is the most common type, at 27.8%. Discrimination disproportionately affects individuals based on employee attributes, with 20.3% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees reporting that they experienced discrimination based on one or more attributes, compared to 10.1% of the overall public sector.

Experiences of racism were also disproportionally high for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, at 17.0%, compared to 5.0% for the sector.

Achieving zero tolerance towards racism is a high priority in the sector and is linked to Closing the Gap Priority Reform 3 (PR3): *Transforming government organisations* and the Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2019–2025. The PSC is developing anti-racism guidelines and resources for the sector in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD employees.

Employees who experienced discrimination, who reported it and who had their report satisfactorily resolved, 2023 vs 2022

Discrimination experienced

10.1%

10.1% in 2022

Discrimination reported

25.4%

25.8% in 2022

Complaint resolved to satisfaction

20.5%

18.4% in 2022

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Employees who experienced racism, who reported it and who had their report satisfactorily resolved, 2023 vs 2022

Racism experienced

5.0%

4.7% in 2022

Racism reported

27.2%

26.9% in 2022

Complaint resolved to satisfaction

38%

34.7% in 2022

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Employee attributes that discrimination was based on, 2023 vs 2022

27.8%	**Race** 27.1% in 2022
23.5%	**Age** 22.8% in 2022
18.6%	**Employment activity*** 18.8% in 2022
17.0%	**Gender identity**
9.1%	**Parent or carer status** 8.9% in 2022
7.7%	**Religious belief or activity** 7.2% in 2022
7.6%	**Physical features** 7.3% in 2022
7.1%	**Disability** 6.7% in 2022
6.3%	**Industrial and/or political activity** 6.9% in 2022
6.0%	**Gender expression**
5.8%	**Personal association with someone who has any of the above attributes** 7.4% in 2022
5.2%	**Sexual orientation**
4.0%	**Marital status** 4.4% in 2022
0.8%	**Transgender status**
0.4%	**Intersex status**
24.9%	**Other** 26.1% in 2022

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

* Such as making a reasonable request for information about employment entitlements or communicating concerns about the provision of these entitlements.

Note: Respondents were able to select multiple responses, so the sum of percentages may be greater than 100%. Some attributes do not have a 2022 comparison due to changes in the response options in 2023.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature that makes a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. This kind of behaviour is unacceptable and cannot be tolerated in any form. Examples of sexual harassment include unwelcome touching, sexually suggestive comments and inappropriate staring that may make someone feel intimidated. Unfortunately, this year the number of employees experiencing sexual harassment increased slightly.

The PSC developed an Equity and Respect Framework that supports the sector to prevent and respond to sexual harassment. A key element of the framework is the implementation of a sexual harassment prevention policy that meets minimum standards by 1 March 2024. The PSC is developing sexual harassment prevention training, and launched a digital information assistant that provides individuals with support and education on sexual harassment in the workplace. To facilitate ongoing consultation and engagement to assist agencies in meeting these requirements, the PSC established a sector-wide Equity and Respect Working Group, with representatives from Women NSW, Anti-Discrimination NSW, SafeWork NSW and selected portfolios.

Employees who experienced sexual harassment, who reported it and who had their report satisfactorily resolved, 2023 vs 2022

Sexual harassment experienced

5.1%

4.8% in 2022
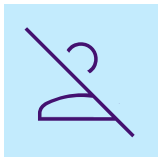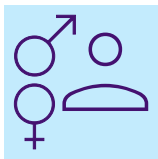
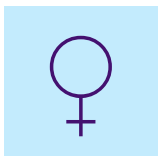**Sexual harassment reported**

22.8%

22.7% in 2022

Complaint resolved to satisfaction

45.9%

43.1% in 2022

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)
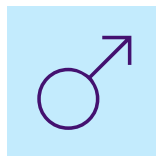
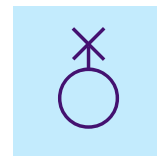## Employees who experienced sexual harassment, by gender, 2023 vs 2022

Women

5.6%

5.5% in 2022

Men

3.3%

3.0% in 2022

Non-binary people

12.2%

13.7% in 2022

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Rebuilding relationships and deepening understanding between central office and schools

The Department of Education launched the School Experience Program in Term 3, 2023. As part of the program, all new central office employees are required to spend a week in a local primary or high school at the start of their employment. The department's senior executives also spend a week in schools during Education Week.

The program was initiated by the department's Secretary, Murat Dizdar, to strengthen relationships and deepen understanding between the central office and schools. The program offers participants a valuable opportunity to experience the day-to-day operation of a school, gain a better understanding of the practical impact of policies on school-based colleagues, and learn how best to support them.

Program participants watch lesson planning and delivery in action, assist in classrooms, and take part in administrative tasks and staff meetings. They also observe day-to-day activities such as playground duty and excursions.

Donna's experience

Donna Wilcox, Executive Director, Employee Relations was one of the first executives to participate in the program. She spent a week immersed in activities at Orange Public School. She said:

"The main purpose of the program is so office support staff can actually understand how important our teachers are. It's a perspective that I really, really needed for my job. You always know what teachers do, but what I hadn't fully appreciated was how hard they work and how many different things they do on top of their classroom duties. It's given me a good context and perspective, so when I'm back in my office, I'll be making decisions with an eye to the time I spent at the school."

One hundred and thirty-two central office employees had participated in the program as at November 2023. Feedback from post-visit surveys shows that all participating schools strongly agree that the program helped the employee who visited their school to gain an understanding of the complexity of school operations.

The School Experience Program is being expanded to all executive directors for Term 4, 2023 and then all existing central office staff in 2024.

App transforms interactions with people experiencing homelessness

The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) runs the Assertive Outreach (AO) program, through which its employees actively look for and engage with people who are experiencing street homelessness.

The DCJ wanted to create an efficient digital solution for AO staff as the day-to-day administration of the program was manual and resource-intensive. The solution was the Journey on Home (JoH) app, created in partnership with Telstra and Concentrix Catalyst.

The JoH app is the first of its kind in social housing across Australia. It enables consistent reporting and provides users with all necessary client and support information to effectively assist engagement. AO staff members collaborated on its design and user-tested its features.

How the app works

JoH is a standalone, secure iPad app that uses mapping functionality to plan and schedule street patrols. It is a single source of information that captures client information and related data in one place, facilitating referrals to support providers. It improves staff members' ability to connect people with specialised support services that meet their needs, such as temporary accommodation, health services, and financial and wellbeing support.

Over 3,989 engagements have been recorded as at September 2023. AO staff now have improved reporting capabilities and access to better quality data, spending 50% less time on administrative tasks.

Building client trust

Staff feedback has validated the success of the app, with one staff member saying: "You can clearly tell this app was developed by current or former frontline housing staff. It is very user friendly, and everything is relevant and current to what we do".

By simplifying and standardising engagement reporting, the JoH app has enabled frontline workers to shift their focus to building trust with clients and helping them find the right supports. It has improved clients' service experiences, as they no longer need to retell their story multiple times.

Our leaders

The impact that leaders can have on the performance of organisations cannot be underestimated. Leadership is critical in setting direction, executing strategies, shaping culture and employee experience, improving capabilities, inspiring purpose and delivering results for customers.

Executive numbers

Government sector senior executives (GSSEs) have formal executive roles in the Public Service and aligned government services, providing leadership, direction and accountability. A subgroup of these executives – known as Public Service senior executives – work for Public Service agencies and are represented across all portfolios.

The largest increases in the number of GSSEs in 2023 occurred in the Public Service (8.2%) and the Transport Service (14%). The number of senior executives increased across most portfolios in the Public Service. The government has made a commitment to reduce senior executive numbers by 15%.

Government sector senior executives, 2023 vs 2022 (census FTE)
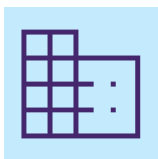
4,265

3,900 in 2022

Source: Workforce Profile (2022, 2023)

Senior executives in the Public Service, 2019–23 (FTE)
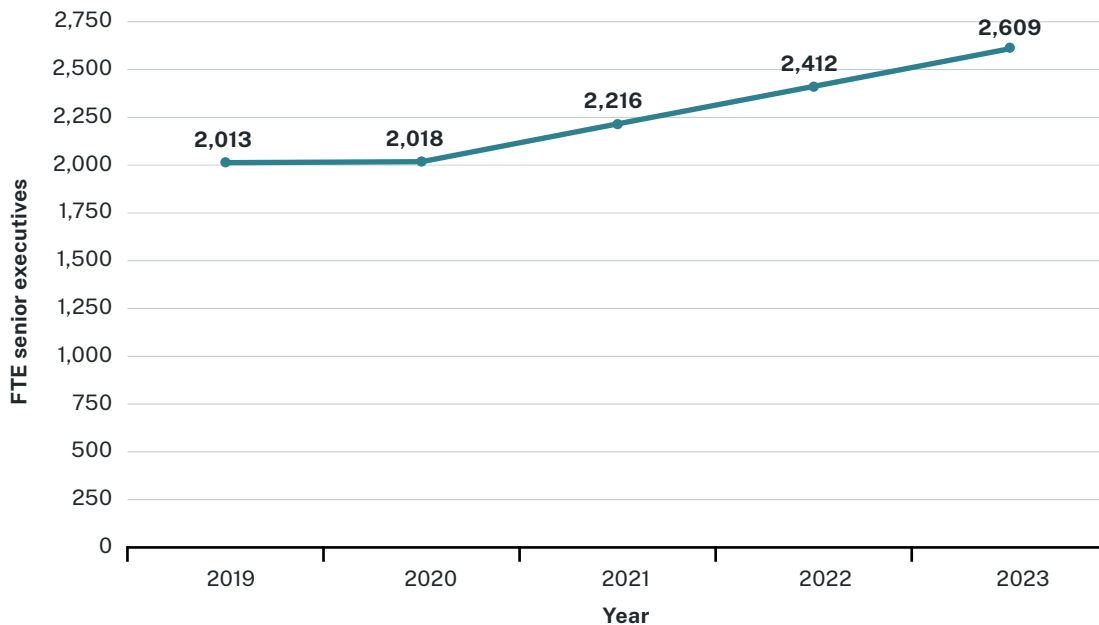
Source: Workforce Profile (2019–23)

Senior executive full-time equivalent by public sector service, 2023 vs 2022

Service	Senior executives in the public sector	
	2023	Change from 2022 (%)
Public Service	2,609	8.2
NSW Health Service	209	7.1
NSW Police Force	65	0
Teaching Service	0	0
Transport Service	1,150	14.0
Other Crown services	232	6.0
Total government sector	**4,265**	**9.4**
State owned corporations	63	–84.3
External to government sector	52	–14.2
Total public sector	**4,379**	**0.5**

Source: Workforce Profile (2022, 2023)

Note: Senior executives in the Education portfolio are employed under the GSE Act and are counted as part of the Public Service in this table.

Note: The decrease in State owned corporations is due to a review of the definition of 'senior executives' for reporting purposes, most notably in Essential Energy, which changed from 275 in 2022 to 8 in 2023 (–267 or 97%).

Employee perceptions of senior leaders

The People Matter survey asks employees about their perceptions of the senior managers who lead their organisations. Senior managers need to manage change well, set a clear direction and work with people managers to lead the workforce and deliver high-quality services to customers. By embodying the sector's values, they can guide the evolution of their organisation's culture to ensure employees experience a positive working environment.

Employee perceptions of senior leaders, 2023 vs 2022
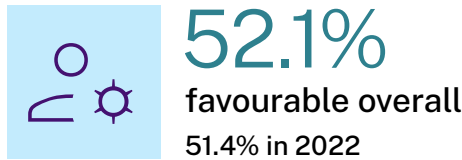
52.1%
favourable overall
51.4% in 2022

49.6% favourable	**Senior managers provide clear direction for the future of the organisation** −0.3pp from 2022
54.5% favourable	**Senior managers model the values of my organisation** +1.0pp from 2022
52.7% favourable	**Senior managers promote collaboration between my organisation and other organisations we work with** +0.7pp from 2022
65.2% favourable	**Senior managers communicate the importance of customers in our work** +0.6pp from 2022
45.7% favourable	**Senior managers listen to employees** +1.0pp from 2022
44.7% favourable	**Senior managers support the career advancement of all employees** +1.0pp from 2022

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Employee confidence that their organisation will act on People Matter survey results, 2023 vs 2022

43.7%
43.6% in 2022
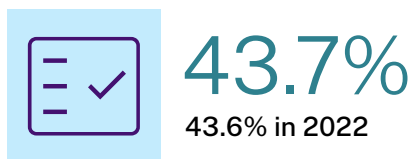
Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Improving climate risk management across the NSW public sector

In a first for state and territory jurisdictions in Australia, the NSW Government developed a whole-of-government approach to managing climate risk and adapting to climate change. The Climate Risk Ready NSW program aims to build capability and improve government responses by providing consistent, integrated guidance across all agencies.

The program was developed by the Office of Energy and Climate Change (OECC) and the Strategic Balance Sheet Management Division in NSW Treasury, in partnership with agencies across the sector. A cross-portfolio Executive Climate Risk Steering Group was established to guide the delivery of the program, strengthen accountability and build a strong authorising environment.

Building leaders' capabilities

The program includes an Executive Climate Risk Masterclass for senior executives, to build leadership awareness of climate risk management obligations.

There's also an accredited Climate Risk Ready course for climate risk managers, co-designed by 16 agencies and delivered in partnership with Western Sydney University. The course has attracted participants from across Australia, including from local government.

A Climate Risk Ready NSW Guide supports both Climate Risk Ready course participants and other government employees in managing climate risk.

Strengthening collaboration

Following are some of the program's key achievements:

- The Executive Climate Risk Steering Group now oversees strategic climate risk responses across the government, reporting annually to the NSW Secretaries Board. In 2023, it remains the only group of its kind in an Australian jurisdiction.

- Fifty-five senior executives across the NSW Government and other jurisdictions completed the first Executive Climate Risk Masterclass series. A further 120 executives are registered for the second series.

- There is now stronger collaboration in relation to climate risk between Treasury and the OECC, recognising that climate risk affects all aspects of government and government expenditure.

- Almost 70% of agencies had commenced a climate change risk assessment by August 2023, compared to just 33% in 2015.

- The number of agencies with an internal executive climate risk governance body is up from 12% in 2015 to 84% as at August 2023.

- The Climate Risk Ready course is being scaled to NSW local councils and will be adapted for use by icare's Risk Education eXpress service.

The Climate Risk Ready NSW program has contributed to more agencies embedding climate change in their risk management decisions. Other Australian jurisdictions have followed NSW's lead in setting up their own whole-of-government climate risk management programs.

By continuing to strengthen executive capability in climate risk management and fostering collaborative leadership, the program will provide long-term benefits to service delivery for the residents of NSW.

Leadership capability

The PSC provides executive leadership programs to ensure sector leaders have the mindsets, behaviours and capabilities needed to lead in high-performing, outcomes-focused workplaces. Refreshed 2024 leadership programs will be launched, following an evaluation of the programs in 2023. The programs will have an increased focus on ethical, inclusive and sustainable leadership.

Communication and change management

Effective communication is proactive, timely and focused on what employees need to know and how changes within their organisation will affect them. Good change management is vital for every organisation across the sector. Well-managed change minimises day-to-day disruptions to employees' everyday work and lives.

Machinery of government changes are a major driver of organisational change in the NSW government sector. Making these changes in ways that minimise transitional risks and associated costs is an important challenge for senior executives.

Employee perceptions of communication and change management, 2023 vs 2022

56.3%
favourable overall

|	
74.9% favourable	**My manager communicates effectively with me** +0.3pp from 2022
38.9% favourable	**Change is managed well in my organisation** +0.1pp from 2022
49.6% favourable	**Senior managers provide clear direction for the future of the organisation** −0.3pp from 2022
58.3% favourable	**I am supported through changes that affect my work**
59.2% favourable	**I have the opportunity to provide feedback on change processes that directly affect me**

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Note: As the 2023 People Matter survey included two new questions about communication and change management, the 2022 comparison score is not available.
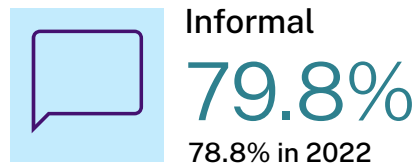
People management

Effective people managers are essential to high-performing organisations. They are vital for achieving positive workforce outcomes and delivering a world class Public Service to the people of NSW. A high-performance culture is underpinned by an effective system for managing individual, team and organisational performance.

Employees with a performance and development plan in place, 2023 vs 2022

74.1%
71.3% in 2022
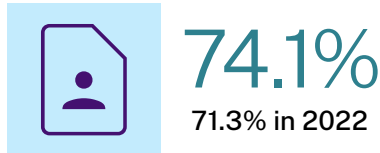
Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Employees who have had formal or informal feedback conversations with their manager, 2023 vs 2022

Formal
65.3%
63.1% in 2022

Informal
79.8%
78.8% in 2022
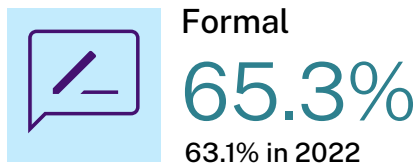
Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Employee perceptions of feedback and performance management, 2023 vs 2022
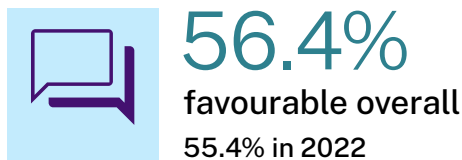
56.4%
favourable overall
55.4% in 2022

64.6% favourable	**In the last 12 months, I have received feedback to help me improve my work** +1.6pp from 2022
55.3% favourable	**My performance is assessed against clear criteria** +0.8pp from 2022
49.2% favourable	**My manager appropriately deals with employees who perform poorly** +0.8pp from 2022

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Employee perceptions of workplace recognition, 2023 vs 2022

71.0% favourable — **My manager provides recognition for the work I do**
+0.6pp from 2022

53.3% favourable — **I receive adequate recognition for my contributions from my organisation**
+3.8pp from 2022

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

CASE STUDY

Increasing cultural diversity in public sector leadership

The PSC has created a new sponsorship program – Elevate & Advocate – as part of a wider strategy to increase cultural diversity in public sector senior leadership. The program is designed to meet the sector's commitment to workforce inclusion and to ensure sector leadership reflects NSW's diversity.

Elevate & Advocate was developed in response to data that showed significant underrepresentation of people from CALD backgrounds in senior leadership roles and following consultations with employees who shared profound challenges and experiences of bias. Its aim is to remove barriers and improve pathways into senior leadership for CALD employees, and to support senior executives to become allies and advocates, and engage in anti-bias capability uplift.

Elevate & Advocate is part of a holistic strategy for CALD employee inclusion, addressing barriers and biases that employees have articulated they experience as they work towards their career goals. The program has garnered support at all levels, including from the Secretaries Board, underscoring its significance in addressing this persistent challenge.

Creating a culture of inclusion

Unlike traditional mentoring programs, Elevate & Advocate sponsors have a stake in the career development of the person they are paired with. Potential sponsors and those seeking mentoring must demonstrate their commitment and capability by completing an expression of interest. A dedicated panel then undertakes a meticulous assessment and matching process to ensure the right partnerships are created. Investing the time and effort in building strong relationships sets Elevate & Advocate participants up for success and drives accountability. Participants meet regularly to foster a sense of community and collaboration across the entire cohort of sponsors and participants. The program also helps to drive a culture of inclusion across the sector.

In 2023, there were more than 500 expressions of interest for the first round of the program, including 70 from potential senior executive sponsors. In this round, 32 CALD employees were paired with senior executives, including secretaries and deputy secretaries. This level of interest raises the profile of CALD leadership issues and builds momentum for systemic change across the public sector.

Promoting lasting success

The program's impact is already evident, with several early success stories. Four sponsored employees have successfully obtained roles at higher levels due to the support of and coaching from their sponsors. Others report that their sponsors are helping them plan career trajectories and overcome barriers. Sponsors call the program "groundbreaking" and "a game changer", saying they have a better understanding of the barriers faced by CALD staff and what they can do as allies and advocates to promote inclusion.

Participants are measured throughout the program using evidence-based criteria, with the aim of promoting lasting success. Elevate & Advocate is designed for mutual learning. Participants report that their conversations are improving service delivery for NSW customers, due to insights and perspectives being shared between sponsors and sponsored employees.

Our organisations
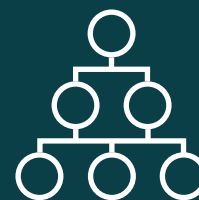
Our organisations strive to deliver high-quality services to the people of NSW. To do this, they need to attract and recruit top talent and ensure that organisational structures are designed to achieve stated strategies and missions.

As part of our role to identify the future skills required in the sector, the PSC is committed to developing a sector-wide strategic workforce plan in 2024. Strategic workforce planning is critical to enabling agencies to deliver their work and execute their strategies. Future workforce challenges can often be averted through effective workforce planning.

As the sector prepares for a period of change and transformation, it is more important than ever to take this strategic approach. The PSC continues to support the sector in strategic workforce planning by providing practical and user-friendly resources that consider future workforce requirements.

Embedding ethics in our organisations

Positive perceptions of an organisation's ethical culture are associated with higher levels of engagement. Senior leaders' commitment to ethics is particularly important to enhancing perceptions of ethical culture. Among this year's People Matter survey respondents, 54.5% felt that senior managers model the values of their organisation.

All NSW government sector employees are required and expected to act ethically, lawfully and in the public interest. This is achieved by embracing the government sector core values of integrity, trust, accountability and service. These core values are underpinned by 18 principles that guide their implementation. Our core values and principles are collectively prescribed by the GSE Act as the Ethical Framework for the government sector and are each of equal importance.

The Code of Ethics and Conduct for NSW Government Sector Employees sets out the mandatory requirements and expected standards of behaviour for all government sector employees. The PSC is developing a new updated code in consultation with the sector and unions, which will be issued in 2024.

A new ethics hub will be launched on the PSC's website to support the code. This resource will contain the foundational content that all government sector employees need to understand how the NSW Government works and how to make decisions that align with the Ethical Framework. Under the GSE Act, Public Service agency heads need to ensure that the ethical conduct and management of their agencies is in accordance with the government sector core values.

Integrity

- Consider people equally without prejudice or favour
- Act professionally with honesty, consistency and impartiality
- Take responsibility for situations, showing leadership and courage
- Place the public interest over personal interest

Trust

- Appreciate difference and welcome learning from others
- Build relationships based on mutual respect
- Uphold the law, institutions of government and democratic principles
- Communicate intentions clearly and invite teamwork and collaboration
- Provide apolitical and non-partisan advice

Service

- Provide services fairly with a focus on customer needs
- Be flexible, innovative and reliable in service delivery
- Engage with the not-for-profit and business sectors to develop and implement service solutions
- Focus on quality while maximising service delivery

Accountability

- Recruit and promote employees on merit
- Take responsibility for decisions and actions
- Provide transparency to enable public scrutiny
- Observe standards for safety
- Be fiscally responsible and focus on efficient, effective and prudent use of resources

A new framework for public interest disclosures

A strong 'speak up' culture that encourages public officials to report wrongdoing is important to ensure the integrity of the public sector.[12] *The Public Interest Disclosure Act 2022* (PID Act 2022), which commenced in October 2023, strengthens the framework that facilitates public interest reporting of wrongdoing.

The PID Act 2022 provides a framework for public officials to report serious wrongdoing in the public sector, and to be protected when they do so, repealing the earlier PID Act 1994. The PID Act 2022 applies to all NSW public sector agencies. It expands the permissible recipients of PIDs to include a person's manager; protects public interest disclosures (PIDs) even if they are made to the wrong agency ('no wrong door approach'); provides more comprehensive protections for disclosers, witnesses and those investigating PIDs; and increases the penalties for detrimental action offences.

The PID Act 2022 requires agencies to have a PID policy and provide PID training to staff. Agencies are required to provide an annual return reporting to the NSW Ombudsman about the voluntary PIDs they received, actions taken to deal with voluntary PIDs, and measures taken during the return period to promote a culture in which PIDs are encouraged.

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[12] NSW Ombudsman (2023)

Ethics and values score, 2023

78.8%
favourable overall

Employee perceptions of ethics and values, 2023 vs 2022

73.4% favourable	**My organisation shows a commitment to ethical behaviours** 70.0% in 2022
87.5% favourable	**I support my organisation's values** 84.5% in 2022
54.5% favourable	**Senior managers model the values of my organisation** 53.5% in 2022
93.2% favourable	**I understand what ethical behaviour means within my workplace**
86.4% favourable	**I would know how to report unethical behaviour if I became aware of it**

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2023)

Note: As the 2023 People Matter survey included two new questions that contributed to the 2023 overall score, a comparison to the 2022 overall score was not possible.

For the first time in the People Matter survey, we asked public sector employees if they understand what 'ethical behaviour' means in their workplace and if they know how to report such behaviour. Employees' perceptions of their organisation's commitment to ethical behaviours and their support for their organisation's values both increased by 3pp in 2023.

CASE STUDY

A single location for all NSW Government grants

To ensure public trust in the integrity of NSW Government grants administration, processes must be fair, transparent and accountable.

The Department of Customer Service partnered with agencies across the sector to develop the first central database of grants and funding opportunities in NSW. The Grants and Funding Finder is a search portal that stores information about more than 500 grants across 46 agencies in one location. It enables customers to understand, compare and apply for grants more easily.

The Finder uses comprehensive filter options to ensure information is clear, consistent, accessible, tailored to customer needs and compliant with the Grants Administration Guide. Announcements about the awarding of grants are published on the portal to a consistent timeframe, making it easier for the public to check decisions for grants they have applied for.

Embedding transparency

The Finder has clocked up more than 1.2 million unique page views as at November 2023. Through these interactions it has:

- helped support the people of NSW with natural disaster recovery and cost-of-living relief, for example through the Family Energy Rebate
- embedded transparency, accountability, integrity and probity in every part of grant delivery
- built grants capability across the sector, with more than 108 trained users across 20 agencies
- greatly enhanced customer experience through the user-friendly portal and advanced search functionality.

In March 2023, the Finder was integrated with Service NSW to allow more than 515,000 businesses with a Service NSW Business Profile to discover pre-filtered grants personalised to their industry.

By housing all NSW grants in one place, the Finder continues to increase transparency and promote public confidence in the NSW Government grants administration process.

Mission, vision and strategy

Employees in the public sector should understand how their role fits into their organisation's overall mission, vision and strategy. Understanding their role in the context of the wider organisation will enable each employee to know how their individual contribution adds value to the overall mission of delivering high-quality services. This, in turn, will increase employee engagement.

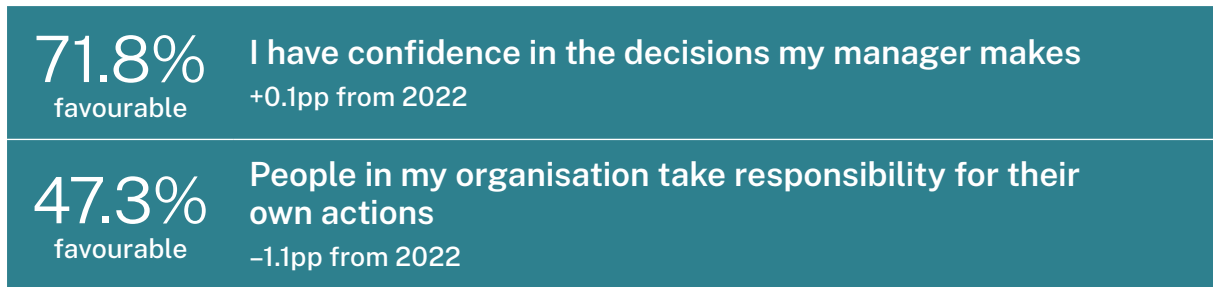## My manager communicates how my role contributes to my organisation's purpose, 2023 vs 2022

68.8%

68.3% in 2022
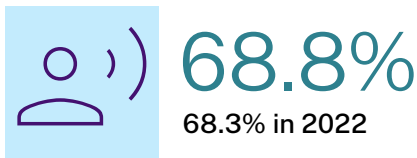
Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Governance, risk and innovation

To ensure we deliver the highest quality services, our approach to governance, risk and innovation is critical.

- Governance encompasses the rules, processes and systems by which an organisation is controlled and operates. Broadly, it includes decision making, responsibility, upholding the law and being accountable as an organisation and as individuals. Trust, integrity and accountability are each core NSW government sector values.

- Risk implies the potential for uncertainty or deviation from expected outcomes. Risk is often seen as a negative; however, if considered strategically, it provides opportunities for an organisation.

- Innovation in the public sector context means creating new and better products, processes, services and technologies to improve outcomes for the people of NSW. A healthy appetite for risk can help promote innovation, as do work practices that promote diversity and inclusion.

Employee perceptions of decision making and accountability, 2023 vs 2022

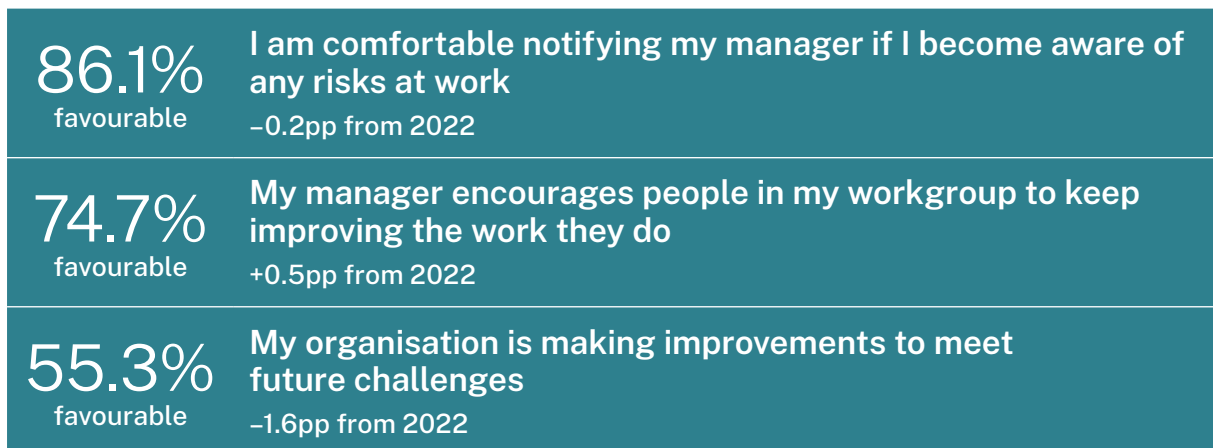| **71.8%** favourable | **I have confidence in the decisions my manager makes** +0.1pp from 2022 |
| **47.3%** favourable | **People in my organisation take responsibility for their own actions** –1.1pp from 2022 |

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Employee comfort in raising a grievance in their organisation, 2023

| **64.4%** favourable | **If I experienced a grievance at work, I would be comfortable in raising it with my organisation** |
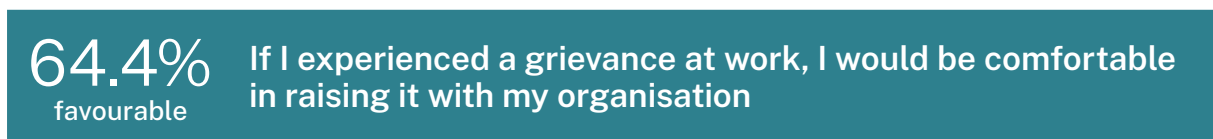
Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2023)

Employee perceptions of risk and innovation, 2023 vs 2022

72.3%
favourable overall
72.7% in 2022

86.1% favourable	**I am comfortable notifying my manager if I become aware of any risks at work** –0.2pp from 2022
74.7% favourable	**My manager encourages people in my workgroup to keep improving the work they do** +0.5pp from 2022
55.3% favourable	**My organisation is making improvements to meet future challenges** –1.6pp from 2022
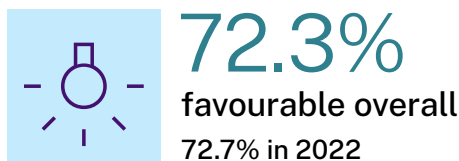
Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Organisational and role design

Organisational and role design involves defining organisational structures, employee roles and workforce plans to support the business in delivering results. This information ensures an agency has the structure and workforce capabilities to effectively deliver services to customers.

Employee perceptions of job purpose and enrichment, 2023 vs 2022

71.2%
favourable overall
70.5% in 2022

64.6% favourable	**In the last 12 months, I have received feedback to help me improve my work** +1.6pp from 2022
79.6% favourable	**My job gives me opportunities to use a variety of skills** +0.3pp from 2022
71.7% favourable	**I have a choice in deciding how I carry out day-to-day work tasks** +0.4pp from 2022
68.8% favourable	**My manager communicates how my role contributes to my organisation's purpose** +0.5pp from 2022

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Employee perceptions of role clarity and support, 2023 vs 2022

64.7%
favourable overall
64.1% in 2022
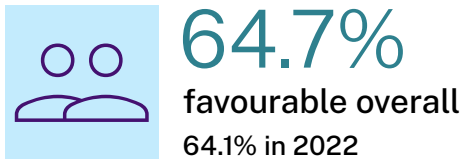
83.9% favourable	**I understand what is expected of me to do well in my job** −0.4pp from 2022
63.5% favourable	**I get the support I need to do my job well** +0.7pp from 2022
68.1% favourable	**I have the tools and technology to do my job well** +0.2pp from 2022
52.6% favourable	**I have the time to do my job well** +0.5pp from 2022
55.3% favourable	**My performance is assessed against clear criteria** +0.8pp from 2022
64.5% favourable	**I have received the training and development I need to do my job well** +1.5pp from 2022

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

There is a strong correlation between burnout and role clarity and support. This means as employees' perceptions of having enough support and time to do their job well increase, their risk of burnout decreases.

Recruitment

Recruitment is the process of attracting, screening and onboarding people. It is a high-volume activity for the sector, given the sector is the largest employer in Australia. In 2023, over 47,000 roles were advertised across the sector, an increase of 13% from 2022.

When done well, attracting and recruiting a diverse range of people to the NSW public sector leads to the selection of the person best suited to the role and agencies' needs. Recruitment decisions are some of the most important decisions people managers have to make. Having consistent and equitable recruitment processes supports managers in making informed decisions. The time to hire has decreased each year since 2017 and is now at a record low of 33.2 days.
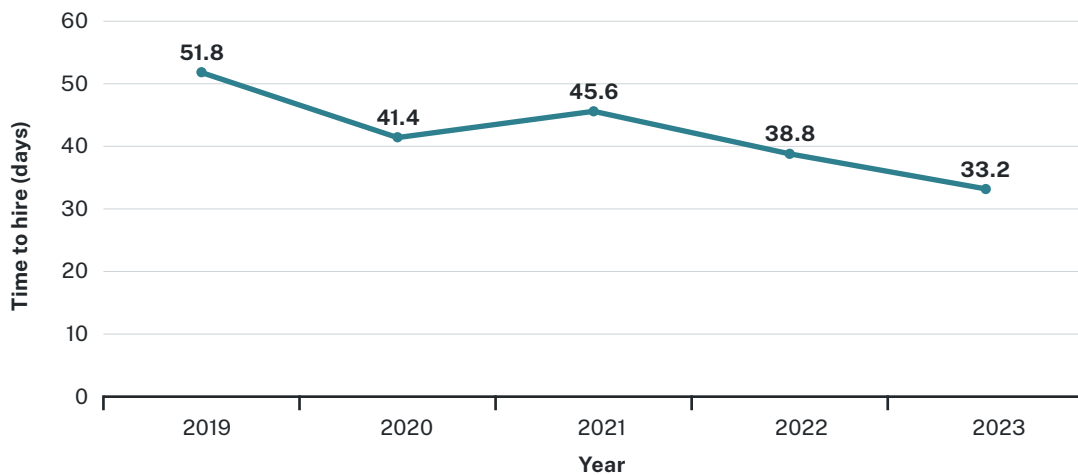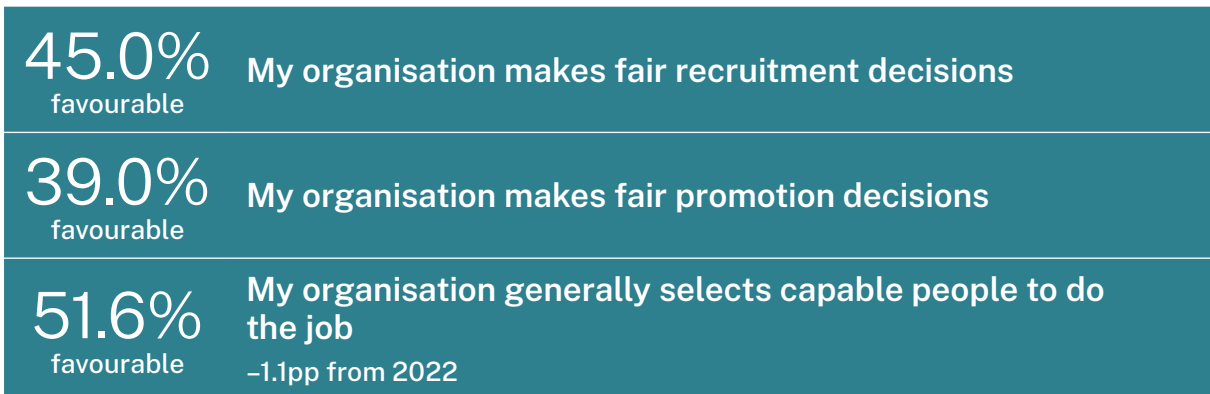
Number of roles advertised, 2023

47,729

Source: Recruitment data collection (2023)

Average time to hire for roles with single openings, 2019–23

Source: Recruitment data collection (2019–23)

Employee perceptions of recruitment, 2023 vs 2022

45.0% favourable — My organisation makes fair recruitment decisions

39.0% favourable — My organisation makes fair promotion decisions

51.6% favourable — My organisation generally selects capable people to do the job
–1.1pp from 2022
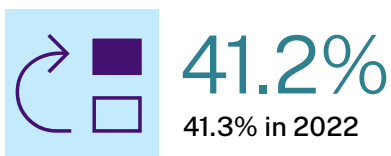
Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Mobility

Exploring new employment opportunities is an exciting part of the *I Work for NSW* brand, which is an online portal where NSW jobs are advertised. Having a mobile workforce makes it easier to redeploy resources to match priorities and respond effectively to change and emerging trends. It is an effective way to get the right person into the right job quickly, and to infuse innovative ideas and practices into a workplace.

Employee mobility is also widely regarded as one of the best ways to develop leadership capability, provide enriching careers, and build and retain capability and know-how. In the 2023 People Matter survey, the number of employees considering another role within the sector remained stable at 41.2%; however, only 2.4% of employees actually moved to other agencies.[13] There is scope to increase mobility across the sector as the mobility provisions in the GSE Act have not yet been used to their full potential.

Employees considering another role within the sector, 2023 vs 2022

 41.2%
41.3% in 2022

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

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[13] *Workforce Profile* 2023

Employee perceptions of the barriers to moving to another role, 2023 vs 2022

27.4%	**Lack of visible opportunities** 27.0% in 2022
27.1%	**Lack of promotion opportunities** 26.9% in 2022
11.1%	**Lack of support from my manager or supervisor** 11.5% in 2022
24.1%	**Geographic location considerations** 24.1% in 2022
30.7%	**Personal or family considerations** 30.5% in 2022
14.0%	**Insufficient training and development** 14.7% in 2022
11.7%	**Lack of required capabilities or experience** 11.9% in 2022
13.8%	**Lack of support for temporary assignments or secondments** 14.3% in 2022
21.9%	**The application or recruitment process is too cumbersome or time-consuming** 22.5% in 2022
9.9%	**Other** 9.8% in 2022
28.1%	**There are no major barriers to my career progression** 28.2% in 2022

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Digital and customer service

A key measure of the performance of the NSW public sector is customer satisfaction. Sector agencies share a common goal – delivering services that make NSW a great place to live, work, visit and invest in. We want our services to be easy to use, high quality and accessible to all.

Increasing digital capability across the NSW public sector is an ongoing priority, including in the understanding and use of artificial intelligence.[14]

Employee perceptions of customer service, 2023 vs 2022

69.4%
favourable overall
69.8% in 2022

68.1% favourable	**I am empowered to make the decisions needed to help customers and/or communities** –0.5pp in 2022
81.1% favourable	**People in my workgroup can explain how our work impacts customers** –0.2pp in 2022
65.2% favourable	**Senior managers communicate the importance of customers in our work** +0.6pp in 2022
55.8% favourable	**The processes in my organisation are designed to support the best experience for customers** –0.9pp in 2022
82.5% favourable	**My workgroup considers customer needs when planning our work** +0.1pp in 2022
62.7% favourable	**My organisation meets the needs of the communities, people and businesses of NSW** –1.0pp in 2022

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

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[14] Digital NSW (2023)

Collaboration

Delivering high-quality services for the people of NSW requires agencies to work together and share knowledge internally and with other sectors. Well-executed collaboration also enables agencies to share ideas, resources, skills, networks and assets, leading to better outcomes for our customers. Across the sector, overall employee perceptions of teamwork and collaboration within and across organisations remained stable in 2023.

Supporting models of collaboration across agencies brings diverse and up-to-date insights to address complex problems that have proved resistant to conventional approaches. Collaborative processes need to be formally supported and authorised at the executive level of partner organisations. The PSC's leadership programs have a strong focus on fostering networks to support this authorising environment.

A collaborative focus is also evident in many cross-agency partnerships that are now driving reforms and that were accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, in 2023 several changes were made to the way key service delivery and emergency services agencies work together during emergency natural disaster events.[15] These changes reflect learnings from the significant cross-agency effort and consultation from the 2022 flood response.

Employee perceptions of teamwork and collaboration, 2023 vs 2022

62.0%
favourable overall
62.0% in 2022

78.8% favourable	My workgroup works collaboratively to achieve its goals −0.1pp in 2022
53.9% favourable	There is good cooperation between teams across my organisation −0.3pp in 2022
52.7% favourable	Senior managers promote collaboration between my organisation and other organisations we work with +0.7pp in 2022

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

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15 Natural disasters audit, 1 June 2023

CASE STUDY

Virtual medical service makes life easier for those in aged care

Before April 2022, around 360 older persons living in residential aged care facilities (RACFs) were transported by ambulance to a Western Sydney hospital emergency department (ED) each month to receive medical care. This placed significant strain on EDs and NSW Ambulance resources, in some circumstances affecting patients' care experiences and increasing risks to their wellbeing.

To address this challenge, the Western Sydney Local Health District (WSLHD) partnered with NSW Ambulance, general practitioners (GPs) and 65 RACFs across NSW to create the inTouch Residential Aged Care Facility Pathway. It includes the inTouch Urgent Care Service, which gives patients with non-life-threatening health conditions access to a comprehensive health assessment via video calls and direct support from GPs and aged care staff.

This collaborative, patient-focused service enables people to remain in their homes while receiving responsive, high-quality medical care. Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, the service enabled WSLHD to avoid sending 981 patients to EDs. This an overall avoidance rate of 31%.

How the program works

- inTouch is a single point of contact for RACF staff and GPs with residents who have acute health care concerns and needs that exceed the capability of the GP and RACF to manage independently.

- Clinical advice is provided via telephone or video by inTouch nurses and doctors, with direct access to specialist advice as needed.

- Following assessment, patients can be referred to a wide range of providers in different care settings, such as Hospital in Home, community response teams, and other community-based treatment and escalation services.

- RACFs have mobile diagnostics capability for rapid assessment and treatment.

- A shared care plan is developed in partnership with patients/carers and providers. The pathway supports urgent care by finding real-time alternative care pathways and connecting GPs to the extended care team.

- The inTouch team monitors NSW Ambulance cases and coordinates with RACFs to identify alternative care options for low-acuity patients.

Increasing care options

The inTouch Residential Aged Care Pathway has expanded at-risk residents' care options in an efficient and accessible way. About 3,131 referrals for residents living in 71 RACFs within WSLHD were made to 31 March 2023.

Through collaboration, the service has fundamentally changed the way WSLHD cares for one of its most vulnerable communities. This model of care is scalable across NSW Health and has been granted 2 years' funding as part of the Urgent Care Services in NSW initiative, which commenced in July 2023.

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