

Regional profile of the Public Service

Chapter 12

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Notes

The Public Service is a key part of the public sector, with 61,991 non-casual full-time equivalent (FTE) workers in the 2019 census period, accounting for around one-fifth of public sector employees. It is also a key employer in regional areas. The balance of the location of employees between metropolitan and regional areas has changed over time, with policies supporting the movement of agencies out of office space in Sydney's central business district and focusing on regional employment.

The Workforce Profile collection includes the postcode and work suburb of employees and any analysis is subject to the accuracy of this data. Figures exclude records where location cannot be determined due to missing suburb and postcode data.

In the Far West and Orana region, 4.1% of employed persons were Public Service employees, the highest representation of all regions.

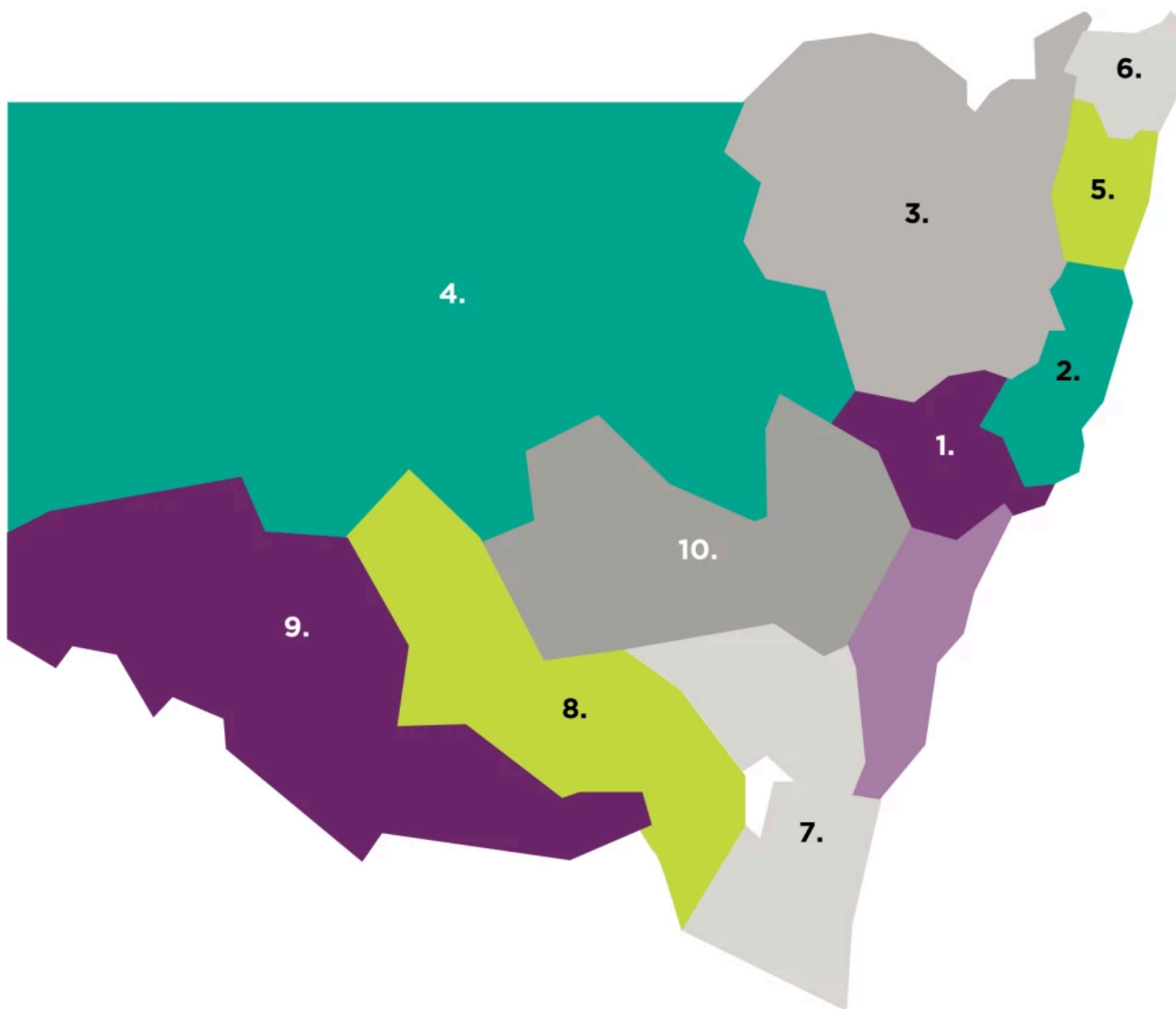
The percentage of Public Service employees of the total NSW workforce was 1.7% for regional and 1.6% for metropolitan areas.

Change over time

Figure 12.2 Proportional change in Public Service FTE distribution by region, 2011 to 2019^{1,2}

NSW regions

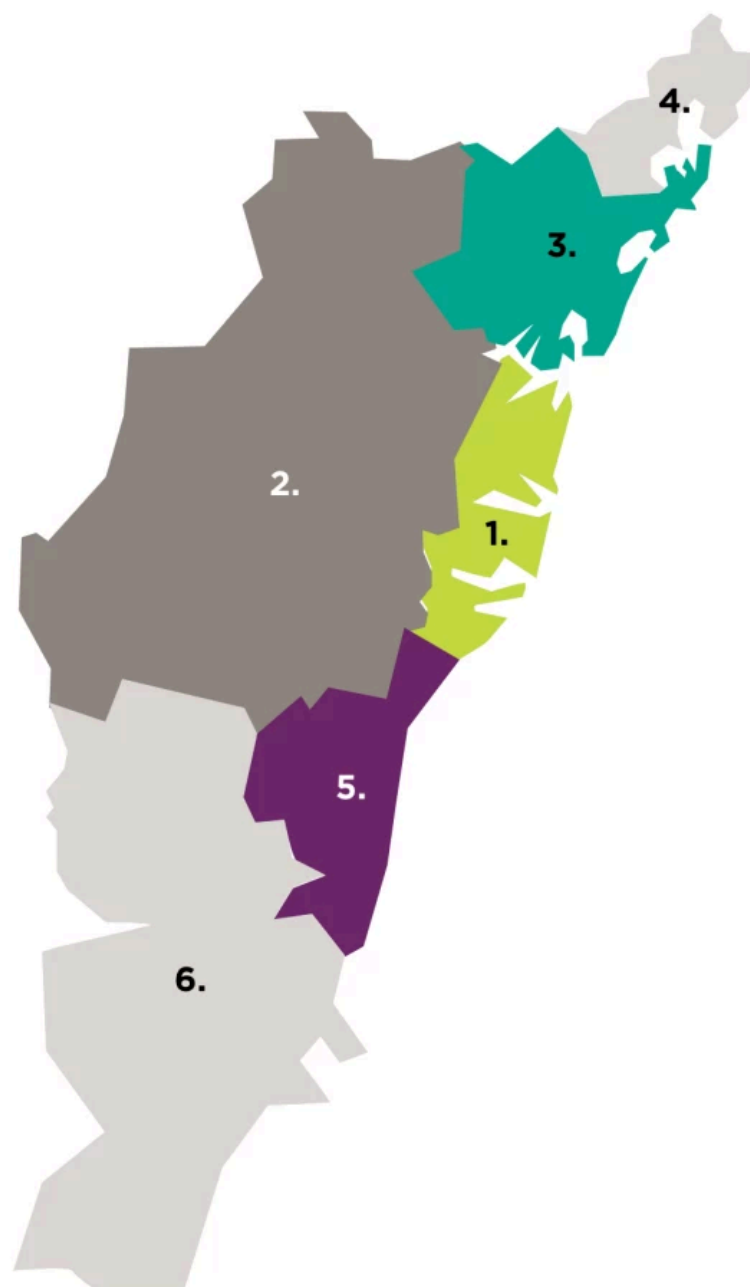
Region	Share of FTE 2011(%)	Share of FTE 2019(%)	Change in share (pp)
Hunter Valley excl. Newcastle	2.8	3.6	0.8
Mid North Coast	1.8	1.7	-0.2
New England & North West	2.7	2.3	-0.4
Far West & Orana	2.8	3.1	0.3
Coffs Harbour – Grafton	2.0	1.8	-0.1
Richmond – Tweed	2.0	1.6	-0.4
Capital Region	3.0	2.5	-0.4
Riverina	2.5	2.1	-0.4
Murray	1.3	0.9	-0.3
Central West	4.8	4.7	-0.1



Sydney regions

Region	Share of FTE 2011(%)	Share of FTE 2019(%)	Change in share (pp)
Sydney East	39.5	38.7	-0.5
Sydney West	23.0	24.9	1.9
Central Coast	3.3	3.3	0.0

Region	Share of FTE 2011(%)	Share of FTE 2019(%)	Change in share (pp)
Newcastle and Lake Macquarie	4.3	4.9	0.6
Illawarra	2.6	2.4	-0.2
Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven	1.4	1.5	0.1



Between 2011 and 2019, Sydney West³ experienced the largest growth in the proportion of employees working in the Public Service. This is an increase of 1.9 percentage points (pp). Within Sydney West, there was an increase in full-time equivalent (FTE) share in the Parramatta and South West regions. All other regions showed a minor fall, the largest being in the Outer West and Blue Mountains region, at 0.4pp. The largest fall in FTE share was in Sydney East, at 0.8pp. The region within Sydney East that recorded the largest share of the decrease was Sydney City and Inner South, changing from 26.3% in 2011 to 25.9% in 2019.

The total share in FTE for regional areas decreased 1.1pp, from 37.4% in 2011 to 36.3% in 2019. Over the same period, the FTE share for metropolitan areas increased from 62.6% to 63.4%.

The Planning, Industry and Environment cluster had the highest proportion of FTE workers in regional areas, at 50.5% (see Figure 12.3). Employees were spread across all regions, with the highest proportion located in the Central West (16.7%). More than a third of the workforce of the Customer Service, Education and Stronger Communities clusters was in regional areas. Premier and Cabinet had a low regional presence, at 2.1% of its workforce, while there were no Health, Treasury or Transport Public Service employees in regional areas. It should be noted that Health and Transport maintain a large regional presence in the Health Service and Transport Service within the broader public sector.

Cluster	Customer Service	Customer Service	Education	Education	Planning, Industry & Environment	Planning, Industry & Environment	Premier & Cabinet	Premier & Cabinet	Stronger Communities	Stronger Communities
Region	2019 FTE	Change from 2018	2019 FTE	Change from 2018	2019 FTE	Change from 2018	2019 FTE	Change from 2018	2019 FTE	Change from 2018
Capital Region	100	2	126	52	502	49	11	1	840	41
Central Coast	780	127	122	21	128	17	*	*	1,009	2
Central West	597	-5	287	96	1,020	62	6	-7	986	21
Coffs Harbour – Grafton	79	-1	82	32	429	55	11	5	524	-6
Far West & Orana	53	8	144	38	576	27	25	6	1,135	45

Cluster	Customer Service	Customer Service	Education	Education	Planning, Industry & Environment	Planning, Industry & Environment	Premier & Cabinet	Premier & Cabinet	Stronger Communities	Stronger Communities
Region	2019 FTE	Change from 2018	2019 FTE	Change from 2018	2019 FTE	Change from 2018	2019 FTE	Change from 2018	2019 FTE	Change from 2018
Hunter Valley excl. Newcastle	309	-58	145	40	646	246	*	*	1,144	87
Illawarra	112	6	286	111	198	34	*	*	858	-43
Mid North Coast	53	4	116	29	240	30	*	*	612	31
Murray	45	4	69	21	262	27	*	*	180	-5
New England & North West	63	2	213	38	566	59	*	*	577	-10
Newcastle & Lake Macquarie	475	94	301	154	563	103	5	-4	1,651	10
Richmond – Tweed	79	6	143	56	256	41	*	*	492	-2
Riverina	57	-1	169	51	474	28	*	*	556	36
Southern Highlands & Shoalhaven	43	-3	48	7	235	19	*	*	601	55
Total regional areas	2,845	186	2,249	746	6,095	796	*	*	11,167	263

Table 12.1: Public Service in regional areas by cluster, non casual census period FTE, 2019 (and estimated change from 2018)^{4,5}

* Numbers less than five are considered to be a data quality issue and have been suppressed

Table 12.1 shows that across all regional areas, the Stronger Communities cluster had the highest number of Public Service FTE workers (29,803), with 37.5% located in regional areas. Newcastle and Lake Macquarie had the highest number, at 1,651, followed by the Hunter Valley excluding Newcastle, at 1,144.

All regional areas and all clusters except Premier and Cabinet had an increase in FTE in 2019. For clusters, the increases are spread across regions. The Education cluster had the highest increase in FTE in regional areas, but this is likely impacted by 26.4% of their records missing location data in 2018. The Newcastle and Lake Macquarie region had the highest proportional increase, followed by the Illawarra and Central West regions. These three regions shared 48.3% of the increase, and the remaining increases were evenly spread across all other regions. The second highest increase in regional representation was in the Planning, Industry and Environment cluster.

Cluster	Missing data 2018 (%)	Missing data 2019 (%)
Customer Service	0.5	0.2
Education	26.4	0.1
Planning, Industry & Environment	3.9	0.5
Premier & Cabinet	4.0	3.7
Stronger Communities	0.0	0.0

Table 12.2: Proportion of Public Service employee records with missing postcode or suburb names, 2018–19⁶

Regional profile of Public Service senior executives

Regionally based Senior Executive roles provide a career path for employees working in regional areas, who have the benefit of understanding the local context when it comes to policy and program development and implementation. In 2019, 13.8% of Public Service senior executives were based in regional areas. This was around one-third of the number of Public Service employees based in regional areas (36.9%).

Executives in regional areas

13.8% in 2019 (11.2% in 2018)

The proportion of senior executives in regional areas increased 2.6pp from 2018 (11.2%). The Central West had the largest proportion (23.9%) of senior executives of all regional areas, with the majority (78.5%) of the executives in this region working in the Planning, Industry and Environment cluster.

Around 2.5% of records for senior executives were missing the postcode, down from around 10% in 2018. Premier and Cabinet had the largest amount of missing location data in Senior Executive records, limiting the ability to analyse their movements.

Cluster	2018 (%)	2019 (%)
Customer Service	1.7	0.4
Education	44.2	0.3
Planning, Industry & Environment	4.5	2.2
Premier & Cabinet	14.2	14.2

Table 12.3: Proportion of Public Service senior executive records with missing postcode or suburb names, 2018-19⁷

At a cluster level, 53.3% of senior executives based in regional areas were in the Planning, Industry and Environment cluster. The next highest number was in Education, which had 25.4% of regionally based senior executives.

Region	2018	2019	Change
Capital Region	11	18	7
Central Coast	9	21	12
Central West	50	65	15
Coffs Harbour – Grafton	5	10	5
Far West & Orana	13	18	5

Region	2018	2019	Change
Hunter Valley excl. Newcastle	11	28	17
Illawarra	17	24	7
Mid North Coast	4	5	1
Murray	6	7	1
New England & North West	18	15	-3
Newcastle & Lake Macquarie	19	30	11
Richmond – Tweed	7	11	4
Riverina	15	13	-2
Southern Highlands & Shoalhaven	6	7	1
Total regional areas	191	272	81

Table 12.4: Number of senior executives by region, census headcount, 2018–19^{8,9}

There were 81 more senior executives in regional areas in 2019 compared to 2018. The number increased in all clusters except Stronger Communities and Premier and Cabinet, which both had decreases of two senior executives in 2019. The largest increase across regions was in Education, where an increase of 46 senior executives was distributed across all regions in the cluster. Much of this increase is likely due to improvements in Education’s location data, which increased the number of valid records.

The Hunter Valley region, excluding Newcastle, showed the largest increase in the number of senior executives (17) followed by Central West (15). The main contributor to the increase in the Hunter Valley excluding Newcastle was the Planning, Industry and Environment cluster, which increased from 7 senior executives in 2018 to 20 in 2019.¹⁰ In the Central West, the increase was distributed across different agencies. Education was the largest contributor in this region, increasing from one to six.

	SE Band 1	SE Band 2	SE Bands 3–4
Regional	240	27	5
Metropolitan	1,310	317	79

Table 12.5: Number of senior executives in regional areas by executive Bands 1–4, census headcount, 2019

Analysis of the number of senior executives by band reveals a lower proportion of higher-band roles in regional areas. Regional areas accounted for 15.5% of Public Service Band 1 senior executives, while the proportion of Band 2 and Band 3 senior executives in regional areas was around half this level.

Only three regional areas had Band 3 senior executives – Central West, Newcastle and Lake Macquarie, and Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven – and these were all in the Planning, Industry and Environment cluster. Band 2 senior executives were spread across regions, with most in the Central West region (25% of overall Band 2 executives in the regional areas). Mid North Coast and Murray were the only two regions with no Band 2 senior executives. There were Band 1 senior executives in all regional areas. The highest number was in the Central West, with 56 (23%). The majority of these (43) were in the Planning, Industry and Environment cluster.

Notes

¹ The FTE figures are indicative only as in 2011 the only location data item collected was postcodes. This data did not align with SA4 boundaries as one postcode can overlap boundaries. FTE is apportioned across relevant SA4s using weightings as per Australian Bureau of Statistics population concordance tables. For the purposes of this table, 2019 FTE is reported using this same methodology to allow for a more accurate comparison.

² Around 0.4% of data collected in 2019 have missing postcodes, compared to just 0.02% missing postcodes in 2011.

³ Sydney West comprises the SA4 areas of Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury; Blacktown; Outer South West; Outer West and Blue Mountains; Parramatta; and South West.

⁴ Around 0.4% of 2019 records were missing postcode and suburb data compared with 4.2% for 2018; this change could impact reported change in regional representation.

⁵ Data are presented in the 1 July 2019 cluster structure, and change from 2018 should be considered indicative only. Some parts of departments and agencies that moved under machinery of government changes effective 1 July 2019 are not able to be identified in 2018 data, so changes from 2018 are estimates.

⁶ All public servants in Health, Transport and Treasury were in Sydney.

⁷ All public servants in the Health cluster were in Sydney.

⁸ Numbers have been suppressed where FTE is less than five.

⁹ Of 81 senior executives in the change, 46 belong to the Education cluster. A key contributor to this increase could be that there was less missing location data relating to Education (44.2% in 2018 vs 0.3% in 2019).

¹⁰ The 2018 figure for Planning, Industry and Environment is an estimate based on the new cluster structure after the Machinery of Government changes