

Size and composition

Chapter 2

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NSW employed persons

9.8% of all NSW employed persons are NSW public sector employees

NSW public sector census headcount

up by 11,756 or 3.0%

Growth in NSW employed persons

3.1%

Growth in NSW public sector

3.0%

Size of the NSW public sector workforce

The NSW public sector is the largest employer in Australia, and now employs more people than at any time since 1999. Figure 2.1 and Table 2.1 show that in 2019 the number of census period full-time equivalent (FTE) employees increased by 2.7% compared to 2018 (+8,782 FTE), and the census headcount increased by 3.0% (+11,756).

Year	Census headcount	Change from previous year (%)	Census period FTE	Change from previous year (%)
2010	386,185	0.8	322,452	1.1
2011	394,789	2.2	330,400	2.5
2012	401,703	1.8	332,555	0.7
2013	399,243	-0.6	329,336	-1.0
2014	396,036	-0.8	328,111	-0.4
2015	394,194	-0.5	326,765	-0.4
2016	393,442	-0.2	326,706	0.0
2017	393,333	0.0	325,917	-0.2
2018	396,243	0.7	329,005	0.9
2019	407,999	3.0	337,787	2.7

Table 2.1: Public sector census headcount and census period FTE, 2010–2019

The increase in the size of the NSW public sector was consistent with the increase in the broader NSW workforce over the same period. This is in contrast with the trend of recent years where the sector either decreased or grew at a slower rate than the broader workforce. Figure 2.2 highlights that the broader workforce increased by 3.1% in 2019 while the NSW public sector increased by 3.0% over the same period.

The proportion of NSW employed persons who worked for the NSW public sector stayed at 9.8% in 2019 (see Figure 2.3). This follows six years of decreases from the highest level of representation of 11.4% in 2012.

Composition of the NSW public sector

The size of the workforce is often measured in terms of headcount. However, with approximately a quarter of the sector working part time, census period FTE provides a better indication of the resource level of the public sector workforce at June each year.

Service	2018	2019	Change	Change (%)
Public Service	61,358	64,834	3,476	5.7
NSW Health Service	116,967	119,886	2,919	2.5
NSW Police Force	19,859	20,267	408	2.1
Teaching Service	67,181	67,616	434	0.6
Transport Service	13,651	13,062	-588	-4.3
Other Crown services	41,385	43,234	1,849	4.5
Total government sector	320,402	328,900	8,498	2.7
State owned corporations	7,605	7,879	274	3.6
External to government sector	998	1,008	10	1.0
Total public sector	329,005	337,787	8,782	2.7

Table 2.2: Composition of the public sector by service, census period FTE, 2018–19

Table 2.2 and Figure 2.4 show that almost all services experienced increases in FTE from 2018 to 2019. The largest proportional increases occurred in the Public Service, other Crown services and the NSW Health Service, with rises of 5.7%, 4.5% and 2.5% respectively compared to 2018.

The number of people employed in key frontline roles of Police Officers, Nurses and Teachers increased compared to 2018. In 2019, there were an additional 365 FTE Police Officers (a 2.3% increase), 947 FTE Nurses (a 2.0% increase) and 235 FTE Teachers (a 0.4% increase).

The largest increase was in the Public Service, which grew by 5.7% with notable increases in Corrective Services (+819 or 10.3%), Service NSW (+443 or 21.7%), NSW Education Standards Authority (+104 or 28.2%) and Legal Aid (+80 or 7.2%). The increases in the other services (NSW Health Service, NSW Police Service and the Teaching Service) were consistent with previous years. Transport was the only service which decreased in size, with a 4.3% decrease in FTE. This decrease was primarily due to the franchising of Region 6 of the State Transit Authority, which caused a large decrease in the number of Bus Drivers (27.5% decrease).

Machinery of government changes

Following the 2019 state election, extensive machinery of government (MOG) changes were introduced that reduced the number of clusters from 10 to eight, effective from 1 July 2019². The Customer Service cluster absorbed many of the functions of the former Finance, Services and Innovation cluster. The Industry cluster was merged with Planning and Environment to create the Planning, Industry and Environment cluster, and the Family and Community Services (FACS) and Justice clusters merged to create the Stronger Communities cluster. Table 2.3 shows the distribution of FTE by new clusters.

Cluster	2019
Customer Service	7,562
Education	105,744
Health	120,973
Planning, Industry & Environment	20,082
Premier & Cabinet	3,943
Stronger Communities	51,804
Transport	25,403
Treasury	2,022
Total public sector	337,787

Table 2.3: New cluster composition of the public sector, census period FTE, 2019³

Figure 2.5 displays the extent of the restructure of the public sector, with only the Health and Transport clusters unaffected⁴. The tertiary education functions of the former Industry cluster moved to Education. The regulatory functions of various clusters (such as Liquor, Gaming and Racing and the Information and Privacy Commission) moved to the Customer Service cluster, and the finance aspects of the former Finance, Services and Innovation cluster moved to Treasury. Additionally, the housing and property functions of the FACS and Finance clusters respectively moved to the Planning, Industry and Environment cluster, while the sport functions of the former Industry cluster moved to the Stronger Communities cluster. Finally, Aboriginal Affairs, Arts, Heritage, and Industrial Relations functions moved from various clusters to the Premier and Cabinet cluster.

Notes

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019, Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, 'Table 16. Labour force status by Labour market region (ASGS) and Sex', cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, viewed 10 October 2019,

<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6291.0.55.001Jun%202019?open=1&clval=6291.0.55.001Jun%202019>

² Census date for data in the Workforce Profile is 27 June 2019. All figures were cast forward into the new post-MOG structure, but do not incorporate changes to the size of the workforce after 1 July.

³ Parliament is excluded from the cluster totals.

⁴ Transport's agencies did not change however the Roads and Maritime Services agency was absorbed by Transport for NSW.