

Foreword from the Commissioner

Workforce Profile Report 2021

The *Workforce Profile* was launched in 1999, making this the 23rd annual *Workforce Profile Report*. This companion report to the *State of the NSW Public Sector Report* provides details about characteristics and trends in the NSW public sector workforce, the largest workforce in Australia.

The 2021 Workforce Profile report includes the following highlights:

- The NSW public sector recorded its largest increase in size since the Workforce Profile collection was started in 1999. The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees rose by 3.4% in 2021. Headcount grew by 4.3%, compared to 2020; however, the increase in the broader NSW workforce was greater, at 5.4%.
- The public sector remains an important **regional employer**, accounting for between 8.6% and 20% of employed persons across the regions.
- The number of **key frontline roles** continued to grow, and the number of FTE nurses, teachers and police increased by 2.3% in 2021. Just over half of this growth was in nurses.
- The number of **senior executives** in the public sector increased by 10.4% in 2021, with much of this rise relating to transport infrastructure projects and the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the economic and social recovery plan.
- The results in relation to achieving **diversity** in the NSW public sector workforce and meeting **Premier's Priority targets** were mixed.
- **Disability** representation slightly increased, by 0.1 percentage points (pp) to 2.5%, and remains well below the Premier's Priority target of 5.6% by 2025.
- The public sector has exceeded the Premier's Priority target of doubling the number of **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander senior leaders** by 2025, with 130 senior leaders in 2021.
- **Female senior leader** representation increased to 42.7% in 2021. Projections show it will fall short of the 2025 target of 50%, which will only be met if six in 10 senior leader appointments are women.
- The gender gap in the number of applications for higher paid roles decreased in 2021, with a higher proportion of female applicants compared to previous years.
- The NSW public sector **gender pay gap** widened to 4.1%. The gap for senior executives was lower than that of the broader workforce (2.5% in 2021 for Public Service and aligned services' Bands 1–3).

- 2021 is the first year the most common **retirement age** was 66, surpassing 60 as the most common age of retirement.

The NSW Public Service Commission would like to thank the departments and agencies across the NSW Government for their continued contribution and commitment to the Workforce Profile collection. Sector-wide analysis and reports would not be possible without this support.

Kathrina Lo

NSW Public Service Commissioner

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Chapter 1

Executive summary

