

Foreword from the Commissioner

Workforce Profile Report 2023

This is the 25th annual Workforce Profile Report. This companion report to the *State of the NSW Public Sector Report 2023* provides details about the characteristics of the NSW public sector workforce, the largest workforce in Australia.

The *Workforce Profile Report 2023* includes the following highlights:

- The NSW public sector **full-time equivalent (FTE) workforce** increased by 4.7% in 2023. This is the largest recorded growth in the workforce since the workforce profile commenced in 1999.
- Growth in the public sector workforce was greater than growth in the broader NSW workforce, with the census headcount increasing by 4.0% compared to 3.3% in the broader NSW workforce.
- There was also growth in the number of **senior executives** in the government sector, with an additional 365 FTE in 2023. It should be noted that the government has introduced a target to reduce senior executive numbers by 15%.
- The balance between **ongoing, temporary and casual** employees shifted in 2023. Ongoing employee FTE increased by 0.2pp to 75% while both temporary and casual employee FTE decreased 0.2pp to 17.2% and 4.6% respectively. This change largely related to a change in the balance of employment arrangements of nurses and school teachers.
- The use of **contingent workers** in the government sector decreased in 2023, with the NSW Government's vendor management system recording a 7% decrease in the average number of contingent workers active in the NSW government sector at any time.
- After the largest drop in 2022, median **tenure** has continued to trend down in 2023, with a further decrease of 0.4 years to 7 years. This reflects the continuing higher rates of commencements and separations relative to earlier years.
- The **diversity** of employees increased in 2023.
 - **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples** increased slightly to 3.9%, with increased representation across all salary ranges. The number of **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander senior leaders** continued to grow, with 170 senior leaders in 2023, up from 154 in 2022.
 - People whose **first language spoken as a child was not English** increased 1.3pp in 2023 to an estimated 19.4% and people from **racial, or ethnic, ethno-religious minority groups** increased 1pp to an estimated 14.8%.

- 10.8% of **senior executives** first **spoke a language other than English as a child** (+1.0pp from 2022) and 15.0% of senior executives identify as being from a **racial, ethnic or ethno-religious minority group** (+0.9pp).
- The representation of **people with disability** increased slightly to 2.6%. While this remains well below the target of 5.6% by 2025, the results differed in the *People Matter Employee Survey* where 6.7% of respondents identified as having a disability.
- **Female senior leader** representation increased by 1.1pp to 45.1% in 2023.
- The **gender pay gap** – the difference between the median remuneration of men and women in the NSW public sector –widened to 6.2% (+1.7pp) in 2023. The pay gap for senior executives in the government sector was 2.6%, notably lower than that of the broader workforce. Across the senior executive bands, the largest decrease in the gap was in Band 3, which decreased by 0.9pp in 2023.
- Patterns of **leave** continue to differ to the levels generally experienced before the COVID-19 pandemic, although the use of recreation leave has returned to a level more consistent with earlier years.

The NSW Public Service Commission would like to thank the departments and agencies across the NSW public sector for their continued contribution and commitment to the Workforce Profile collection. Analysis of sector-wide workforce trends would not be possible without this support.

Kathrina Lo

NSW Public Service Commissioner

December 2023

Chapter 1

Executive summary

