

Strategic Workforce Plan 2022–2025

NSW Public Service Commission



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Commissioner's message

Our strategic workforce plan is a key foundation in helping us achieve our ambition of a contemporary, diverse, inclusive, and highly capable public sector that delivers the best outcomes for the people of NSW.

This plan is a complementary document to our [PSC Strategic Plan 2022-2025](#). The strategic plan describes 'what' we want to achieve, and our workforce plan sets out how we will build the 'workforce' needed to get there.

The uncertain and challenging times we have experienced over recent years have brought into sharp focus the need to build a resilient, diverse, and future-focused workforce – the process of strategic workforce planning helps us do this in a sustainable way.

Focused planning is also essential in helping us leverage our unique strengths, resolve challenges, respond to changes that may impact our work, and affect meaningful change across the NSW public sector.

This plan sets out our workforce priorities over the next 3 years. It is a living, dynamic document which will continue evolving as we monitor, evaluate and revise initiatives and priorities.

I encourage you to work with our leaders to support these initiatives and contribute to maintaining our wonderfully engaged, capable and high-performing workforce.

Others in the sector may also use this plan to develop their own, as it showcases the [NSW Government's Strategic Workforce Planning Framework](#) in action.

Yours sincerely

Kathrina Lo

Public Service Commissioner

Date: 1 November 2022

Executive summary

The Public Service Commission (PSC) Strategic Workforce Plan lays out the workforce initiatives required to deliver on [the PSC Strategic Plan 2022–2025](#) (see section 5 for more details on the plan and how it aligns to our strategy).

Over the next 3 years, we will supplement this high-level plan with a more detailed implementation plan, which will help us to have the right people in the right place at the right time.

Workforce strategy

This section outlines our workforce strategy and what we need to have in place to support it. We have divided the strategy into 3 focus areas, 4 themes and 5 initiatives that will help us realise our strategic goals.

The 5 initiatives we recommend, in order of implementation, are:

- 1 rebrand the PSC's employee value proposition and improve recruitment templates and practices
- 2 build key future capabilities
- 3 enable internal consultancy by setting up a skills and capability register that uses talent profiles or a skills marketplace
- 4 continue to take part in the virtual reality/augmented reality pilot
- 5 pursue a 'Family Inclusive Workplace' certification.

Analysis

This section covers 3 topics: trends, capability, and current state.

The workforce trends section describes trends within the PSC and across the sector, such as why people stay at the PSC or how remote work will be an ongoing expectation. It then explains the implications and risks these trends pose for the PSC.

The workforce capability section highlights our current and future capability gaps. This gap analysis is crucial to ensuring that we have the capabilities – such as strategic planning and digital dexterity – we need to deliver our strategic objectives.

The workforce profile part of this report provides an overview of the people who make up our workforce. It details employee retention, attraction and recruitment.

Context

This plan is a critical part of the PSC's strategic planning process, as it aligns our longer-term workforce needs with our strategic objectives. The planning process helps us to identify actions that can address the challenges, risks and opportunities related to achieving these goals.

The plan will help the PSC to:

- understand and prepare for future workforce changes and needs
- mitigate risks from future capability gaps, especially in critical, hard-to-fill roles
- use resources more efficiently, improve employee mobility and job security.

This section gives more detail on our organisation, and why and how we developed this plan. It also summarises some key references and lists our sources.

Workforce strategy



1. Strategic Workforce Plan

At a glance

This section outlines our key focus areas and the workforce strategies we need in place to support them.

Through data analysis, current state interviews and workshops with subject matter experts, we have divided the strategy into 3 focus areas, 4 themes and 5 initiatives that will help us realise our strategic goals. The initiatives are tangible steps we can take to address the challenges our organisation will face as we pursue these goals.

Focus area 1: Scale and flex



Themes	Initiatives
Focus on making the most of what we have	1. Enable internal consultancy with a skills and capability register using talent profiles
Use technology more effectively to better collaborate and enable automation	2. Participate in the virtual reality/augmented reality pilot

Focus area 2: Career development, progression and stability



Theme	Initiatives
Maximise development opportunities and maintain our cultural advantage	3. Build key future capabilities

Focus area 3: The war for talent



Theme	Initiatives
Have a strong, differentiated employee value proposition (EVP)	4. Rebrand the PSC EVP and improve recruitment templates and practices 5. Pursue a family inclusive workplace certification

1.1 Focus area 1: Scale and flex

We need to build or buy skills rather than borrow them

Initiative 1: Enable internal consultancy with a skills and capability register using talent profiles or skills marketplace

As the PSC is often required to scale and flex quickly to meet the sector's demands, changes in the political environment and other changes in our landscape, we regularly engage external consultants. However, it would make economic and strategic sense to build or recruit internal capability rather than borrow it from contingent workers.

Actions to implement

To leverage our internal capabilities, we must first understand what they are. We can take steps to do this by:

- identifying an employee's skills range through performance development plans and conversations
- developing a skills and capability register with talent profiles
- developing a secondment policy or guide and reviewing it regularly
- continuing to use our networks – formally and informally – to leverage sector subject matter experts for projects and programs.

Actions for further investigation

In the long term we could investigate how to make employees more mobile within the organisation by:

- using a skills and capability marketplace to identify transferrable skills
- making movement opportunities more visible, such as through project-based work
- forming temporary cross-agency teams to work on projects and programs
- identifying crossover between teams and assessing their capability to move
- assigning work based on capability development goals
- developing project management capabilities
- creating advisors or centres of excellence
- borrowing capabilities on a project basis through short-term secondments in the sector
- being strategic in how we use external providers and assessing if we can fill a gap internally before looking outside the organisation.

We need to rethink how we work together in a hybrid environment

Initiative 2: Participate in the virtual reality/augmented reality pilot

As we will discuss in section 3.1, technology is our biggest current capability gap. But it is crucial to our strategy that we use technology effectively and choose technology that helps us collaborate in a hybrid environment. The right technology used effectively can reduce our administrative burden and give employees more time for value-adding activities that only humans can do.

Actions to implement

We can start by participating in the virtual reality/augmented reality pilot. This pilot will ensure that the PSC can lead the NSW public sector as it becomes a world-class public service. We will do this while being mindful that cyber security will continue to be a critical issue for us.

The pilot involves researching virtual reality/augmented reality opportunities and trialling the metaverse for our workforce. Current opportunities exist for events, meetings, learning, data representation and information management.

We will evaluate and report on the virtual reality/augmented reality technologies and implications for sector-wide use, including:

- efficiency
- engagement
- ability to complete core tasks
- connectedness
- ease of use
- overall participant experience.

Actions for further investigation

In the long term we could also investigate developing and implementing secure online tools to support collaborating and hybrid work within the PSC and externally.

1.2 Focus area 2: Career development and stability

We need to upskill employees and make them feel valued

Initiative 3: Build key future capabilities

Results of the 2021 People Matter Employee Survey show that employees come to and stay at the PSC because they feel connected to the work and like that their work is valuable.¹

Actions to implement

To deliver on our strategic objectives – we need to build capability in these 5 areas (see details in section 3):

- strategic planning and resource management
- consistent sector and branch partnerships
- virtual and dispersed team leadership
- data use
- digital dexterity.

We will implement learning and development strategies – such as mentor and shadow programs, rotations, stretch projects and opportunities to work across the PSC – to support growth in the areas above.

We will also work with the NSW Department of Customer Service to help upskill our employees. This includes making Department of Customer Service digital and customer capability programs such as the Learning Collective platform available for employees across the PSC.

We will develop hybrid work induction policies and procedures, to intentionally embed new starters into our culture.

Other supporting initiatives already in place include our:

- performance management and development planning conversations
- Learning and Development Strategy.

Actions for further investigation

In the long term we could also investigate:

- new micro-learning opportunities to improve capability, like Tech Tuesday or Hot Tips, which PSC ICT and IT-savvy staff will support.

The PSC's culture needs to support this strategy

Our workplace culture needs to support the entire organisation in delivering this strategy.

However, our 2020 organisational redesign negatively affected our culture, with employee engagement falling to 61%. This was 12% lower than in 2019 and 6% lower than the sector average.

People Matter Employee Survey results from 2021 show that our focus on rebuilding the culture worked, boosting employee engagement to 75%.² This result is 8% above the sector average and has continued improving to a record high of 80% in 2022 People Matter Employee Survey results.³

Actions to implement

We need to harness this positive shift and:

- fully embed a 'safe to fail and learn fast' culture that focuses on development opportunities for employees
- have a structure, ways of working and the right tools to collaborate and network across teams and branches.

For example, a client record management system would help us engage with the sector more strategically, and a skills register could help us better access internal capabilities.

Other supporting initiatives already in place include:

- maintaining the Leadership Charter
- developing the PSC's Belonging, Inclusion and Wellbeing Strategy
- implementing and reviewing People Matter Employee Survey Action Plans

Actions for further investigation

We must further prioritise psychological safety by:

- helping employees maintain a healthy work-life balance
- embedding wellbeing and attention to mental and digital health in our workplace culture.

1.3 Focus area 3: The war for talent

We need to rebrand the PSC's employee value proposition

Initiative 4: Rebrand the PSC EVP and improve recruitment templates and practices

Actions to implement

To attract and retain talent, we need to rebrand our employee value proposition (EVP) to make the most of our unique position. The rebranded EVP should:

- align with the sector-wide 'I work for NSW' employee value proposition
- emphasise the PSC's work and positive culture

- highlight what it means to work at the PSC and that it is a place where employees truly make a difference.

While hybrid work is no longer a differentiator for our employee value proposition, we should continue to embed hybrid and flexible ways of working in our culture.

Within our employee value proposition, we also need to:

- create tailored and engaging job ad templates that assess core capabilities
- improve our recruitment practices
- develop new attraction strategies.

The success of these changes relies on the PSC maintaining its strong reputation and widening its market penetration. We must see all external-facing work as an opportunity to build our brand and make connections that attract employees.

A supporting initiative, already in progress, is the development of a Stakeholder Engagement Program, led by Strategic Communication.

We need to pursue a family inclusive workplace certification

Initiative 5: Pursue a family inclusive workplace certification

Actions to implement

The PSC has led the way in the sector around flexible working arrangements. We are committed to supporting a diverse and inclusive workplace that empowers employees to balance their work and family needs.

In alignment with our values, we will be pursuing a 'Family Inclusive Workplace' certification endorsed by UNICEF Australia and Parents at Work. Current policies and practices will be benchmarked, and a report will be provided with recommendations and best practice to inform the PSC's action plan.

The Family Inclusive Workplace certification will allow the PSC to be:

- recognised
- inclusive
- benchmarked
- an employer of choice
- a thriving workplace.⁴

1.4 Other ideas to consider

We may consider further changes to embed this strategy

In the future the PSC may also investigate the below ideas:

Element	Details
An agile project management model and ways of working	We may revise our waterfall project model and develop templates that support the agile method.
Technical guidance and communication protocols	We may create guides for how to use existing collaboration tools to ensure consistency, improve outputs and boost productivity.
A 4-day work week	This would allow for seasonal work and pathways for retirees.
A psychologically safe workplace	We may create opportunities for idea hackathons and cross-team brainstorming to enhance safety when sharing, learning and problem-solving.
A safe to fail and learn fast culture	We may redefine acceptable risk to foster an environment where employees are safe to fail.
Permanent talent pools	We may have an active talent pool for all grades.
A customer record management system	We may consider automating the Stakeholder Engagement Program.

1.5 Monitoring our progress

Detailed implementation plans will support each initiative

The PSC will need to develop a detailed implementation plan to supplement this report. This will include more details on timelines, costs, resourcing, and other project management elements. To monitor the impact of implementation, the PSC can measure and benchmark metrics such as:

- attraction
- attrition
- capability development
- external resourcing strategies
- time to hire.

PSC Management Board will receive a biannual progress update

A governance structure will support implementation including a bi-annual progress update to the PSC's Management Board.

This will allow leadership to monitor, evaluate and revise initiatives as needed and ensure initiatives are contributing to strategic workforce objectives and priorities.

Analysis



2. Workforce trends

At a glance

This section describes trends within and outside the PSC, and explains their implications and risks for us. We researched these trends and facilitated workshops with subject matter experts who looked at plausible scenarios.

2.1 Trends in the PSC

People stay here because of their connection to the work and each other

We conducted current state interviews between 12 August and 6 September 2021. Twenty-two leaders analysed the PSC's current state and contributed to the strategic workforce planning process. We asked leaders to reflect on the current challenges and opportunities facing the PSC, and posed the following questions:

- What attracts people to the PSC?
- What keeps people at the PSC?
- Why do people leave the PSC?
- What are the challenges we face in replacing them?
- What challenges do we face in delivering on our strategy?

Our current state analysis identified several reasons why people stay at the PSC:

- strong connection to the work, the team and the leaders
- supportive culture
- dynamic and interesting environment
- chance to develop skills that apply across the public and private sectors
- good work-life balance and flexibility.

Overall, employees who feel passionate about their work and its value are empowered to make a difference, more accountable for their results and more likely to stay in a role.

A quote from a current state interview shows how people view the PSC:

'The wow factor. Our work is acknowledged across the sector, and it's easy to see our work reflected in NSW government priorities. Also, people at the PSC really care about each other.'

For data about retention, please see section 4.2.

People view the PSC as a place to drive sector-wide change

The PSC has a good reputation and is well-respected across the sector. Leaders see it as an innovative organisation that is prepared to try new things.

Potential and current employees see our work as:

- complex
- important and valuable
- innovative
- intellectually challenging.

They view working here as a unique opportunity to:

- deliver value to the public
- drive change
- influence the conversation
- make a difference and have sector-wide impact.

A quote from a current state interview shows how people view the PSC:

'The work we do is important and valuable to the people of NSW. We are the heartbeat of the sector and the work we do is instrumental to a workforce of 400,000 across the NSW public sector.'

We cannot always offer career advancement opportunities

When people do leave their roles at the PSC, more than 77% report in exit interviews that it is to advance their careers. This may mean pursuing further development, a promotion, an ongoing opportunity or progression.

Although we offer a supportive workplace culture, the following factors impede our ability to offer such opportunities for advancement:

- the size of our organisation
- an organisational structure that limits progression past Clerk Grade 11/12
- a high number of secondments
- a limited ability to provide temporary employees with ongoing opportunities
- a recruitment policy where we advertise vacancies internally and fill them based on merit, in line with the [Government Sector Employment Act 2013](#).

We hope that a secondment policy or guide will improve our ability to retain employees. Seconded roles are hard to fill since backfilled positions are temporary. And our ability to eventually offer ongoing roles to temporary employees is limited due to a high number of secondments.

As a result, people recruited to temporary positions are more likely to leave for ongoing roles at other agencies or departments. This results in further rounds of recruitment.

Factors beyond career advancement may also affect turnover at the PSC, including when staff:

- lose their connection to the work or its outcomes, such as when they move to new roles, or their work is not implemented
- experience relationship breakdowns with teams or managers
- feel pressure due to high work volumes or limited resources, such as budget
- feel unhappy or undervalued
- see us as a transient organisation.

We will likely struggle to fill talent gaps

Organisations across Australia are struggling to fill their talent gaps. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics:

- 1 in 5 employers reported difficulty finding skilled or qualified staff in 2020⁵
- 15% of employers felt they did not have enough staff to keep up with operations⁶
- the underemployment rate was 6%.⁷

Labour market research shows that talent supply will affect the whole public sector and most roles in it. This means that the PSC will likely have trouble:

- getting the right mix of skills for HR, policy and data roles in a competitive market
- filling these competitive roles due to budget limits and public service award structures, as we cannot offer a higher income
- attracting candidates who are not already familiar with or involved in our work.

We have not recently updated our employee value proposition and the way we communicate it. As a result, it does not reflect changing employee expectations or differentiate the PSC in the marketplace. While it does offer hybrid and flexible work arrangements, this is now a hygiene factor rather than a differentiator since the pandemic.

Some recruiters also believe that generic role descriptions do not communicate the exact skillsets we need.

2.2 External trends

Budget pressures will drive the need for further strategic prioritisation

Due to the pandemic and natural disasters such as bushfires and floods, the NSW Government has a budget deficit. To rebuild the economy and return to a surplus, the government will likely:

- target its spending, such as toward making housing more affordable, improving education and increasing employment
- issue agencies efficiency dividends or savings targets
- ask agencies to supply offsets when submitting budget bids, which means agencies will need to find savings to pay for the above initiatives and programs going forward.

Given these pressures, the PSC's role will be more important than ever. According to our Chief Financial Officer, we need to continue working closely with the rest of the sector to deliver fit-for-purpose programs that contribute to the sector's workforce goals. A customer-centric mindset will be key, and will help us partner with agencies on, advise on and deliver impactful programs.

Flexible work will be an ongoing expectation

In the past, the PSC led the way with flexible work policies. But due to changes in attitudes and norms around flexible work during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is now an expectation rather than a differentiator for our employee value proposition. According to 2021 data from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency, nearly 4 in 5 private sector organisations now have a formal flexible work policy or strategy.⁸

Workplaces fast-tracked adopting remote and hybrid working models. In Australia, the number of people working from home full- or part-time increased by 400%, from around 8% in 2019 to about 40% in 2020. Even when the government eased

stay-at-home orders in early 2021, the percentage of employees working from home (38%) stayed consistent.⁹

The NSW public sector's 2021 People Matter Employment Survey results show that nearly 64% of employees are satisfied with their access to flexible working arrangements. The results also showed that within the PSC, people who work flexibly are 9.5 times more engaged than their counterparts without flexible arrangements.¹⁰

The NSW Productivity Commission reports that 'NSW should get used to the idea of hybrid work and find ways to seize the opportunities.'¹¹ Research suggests that nationally, 56% of employees want prospective employers to offer remote or flexible work.¹² The NSW Department of Customer Service surveyed young professionals about returning to the office, and a staggering 81% of respondents said they would consider resigning if their employer didn't offer flexible work.¹³

To address this new standard of working, we need to reinvent our workspaces and practices.¹⁴ For example, when Salesforce surveyed staff, 80% wanted to use the office for in-person connection and innovation, the company redesigned its offices and replaced rows of desks with breakout hubs.¹⁵

Our workforce will likely move from cities to regional areas

According to the Regional Australia Institute's 2021 Regional Movers Index, the country recently experienced the highest outflow from metropolitan to regional areas since early 2018. Aside from a decline in June 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions, moves to the regions increased by 7% from March 2020 to March 2021.¹⁶

Remote and hybrid work accelerated this, and we predict that the number of PSC employees living and working in regional areas will increase given our flexible work arrangements. Sydney was the only Australian capital city with a net outflow of millennials, who moved due to lifestyle, perceived career opportunities and affordable housing.¹⁷

But regional employees do face particular challenges, such as a city-centric workplace, unequal career opportunities and reduced digital connectivity.¹⁸ The PSC must consider these risks if we want to maintain and attract a regional workforce.

In 2021, we released a measurable strategy to help agencies address regionalisation of their workforce. It includes the following steps:

- protect the number of jobs in vulnerable regional economies
- maintain or grow the number of regional employees
- advertise location-agnostic roles as 'regional location encouraged'
- proportionally increase each cluster's roles at Clerk Grade 11/12 (or equivalent) and higher by 2023.¹⁹

To manage our growing regional workforce and avoid losing talent due to regional relocations, our initiatives need to:

- promote a 'work from anywhere' mindset
- equip employees with reliable technology
- help managers support dispersed teams.

We need to manage the multigenerational workforce

For the first time, the workforce consists of 5 generations. This presents challenges and opportunities around employee expectations, communication and ways of

working.²⁰ The Australian Human Rights Commission reports that by 2050, around one-quarter of Australians will be age 65 and over.²¹

Research shows that the employee value proposition changes with age as people's priorities and values change. For example, while millennials prefer to work remotely, generation X and baby boomers prefer to work in person with their colleagues.²²

As a result, our workforce faces risks such as:

- ageism and discrimination
- intergenerational stereotypes or tensions
- loss of knowledge
- skill becoming obsolete as technology advances.²³

To manage these, our strategies will need to:

- promote diversity and inclusion, and reinforce training in these areas
- nurture a culture of continuous learning
- create a multifaceted employee value proposition
- explore options to attract and keep employees, such as part-time or seasonal roles, 4-day work weeks or multigenerational dual mentoring through a 'something to learn, something to teach' model.

Automation may affect where employees can add value

Initial predictions of mass job loss to automation and augmentation have shifted to positive news about job creation.

NSW Treasury noted this trend in its 2021 to 2022 Intergenerational Report²⁴:

'As tech continues to reshape tasks and occupations, "lifelong learning" and continual reskilling will be needed to ensure people have the skills to take advantage of new processes, jobs and occupations driven by technological change.'

Faethm is an artificial intelligence platform that use market data and insights to predict the future workforce and skill requirements of an organisation. Faethm ran a cluster-wide report covering 2019 to 2025, which confirmed employees will need greater cognitive skills to do non-routine tasks that are hard to automate.²⁵ This aligns to the Australian Industry and Skills Committee prioritisation of skills such as adaptability, collaboration and analysis before digital ones.²⁶

Technological acceleration exposes the workforce to some risks, including:

- digital skills shortage
- roles and responsibilities that continuously change
- a decreased ability to meet customer expectations, such as reduced response times.²⁷

To manage these risks, our strategies will need to:

- review role design, including how suitable and likely automation and augmentation are for a given role
- identify future-ready skills to develop or enhance
- develop a talent strategy that promotes reskilling and adapting to constant changes, as well as a targeted recruitment strategy for digital skills roles
- use technology effectively to consult and connect within the organisation and across the sector.

Faethm identified the PSC will require the following new skills due to technological changes:

- a human-centric service and experience design
- agile project methods and customer research
- virtual collaboration and community engagement
- ability to live through constant change.²⁸

Gartner suggests that 'The single greatest factor that will drive organizational success through the decade will be the ability to pair continuing technological advances with talent strategies.'²⁹

3. Workforce capability

At a glance

This section outlines the PSC’s current and future capability gaps. This gap analysis is crucial to ensuring that we have the capabilities we need to deliver our strategic objectives.

3.1 Capability analysis

Technology is our current biggest capability gap

Employees at the PSC completed performance and development plans (PDPs) in October 2021. The People and Engagement branch analysed these plans against the [NSW Capability Framework](#) to determine our current capability gaps and training needs.

Their analysis helped us prioritise 4 areas for development:

Priority	Details
Business enabler: Technology	This area appeared in 43 performance and development plans. It includes needing to better understand and use data to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• support decision-making• enhance storytelling.
People management: Manage and develop people	This area appeared in 31 performance and development plans. It is a consistent and persistent gap, and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• training employees how to be mentors• providing mentors for our managers.
Relationships: Work collaboratively	This area appeared in 20 performance and development plans. It includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• building relationships• learning across teams• learning more about how to work with stakeholders.
Personal attributes: Manage self	This area also appeared in 20 performance and development plans. It includes people: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• pursuing their development pathway• completing a course or degree.

The 4 other capability areas that appeared in multiple performance and development plans were:

1. People management: Inspire direction and purpose (18 PDPs)
2. Business enabler: Project management (17 PDPs)
3. Relationships: Commit to customer service (12 PDPs)
4. Relationships: communicate effectively (12 PDPs).

Addressing 5 future capability gaps will help us meet strategic goals

Addressing our current capability gaps will help us move the business forward over the next 3 years. We also need to develop the following capabilities to deliver on our strategic objectives (see section 3.1 for more details):

Capability	Description
Strategic planning and resource management	This means: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• prioritising sector needs• identifying how the PSC can help while aligning our response with available resources and capabilities.
Partnering with the sector	This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• collaborating• co-designing• listening• having empathy• influencing to effect change• facilitating conversations that identify and meet sector needs.
Leading virtual and dispersed teams	This involves: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• changing old approaches and testing new ones to suit the hybrid environment, such as by shifting from visibility-based to outcome-based management approaches³⁰• developing new ways of working while maintaining employee wellbeing.
Using data and insights	This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• identifying the data needed to support evidence-based decision-making• using visual and conceptual communication to tell a compelling story.
Digital dexterity	This is a set of attitudes and behaviours that enable employees to quickly achieve valuable outcomes from digital initiatives ³¹ It involves: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• building tech-savviness• being open to constantly learn and unlearn• understanding data needs and how to use emerging technologies to meet those needs.

We identified these needs using current state research, scenario planning and analysis of workforce trends.

Digital dexterity is a key capability to cope with technological change

According to Gartner, employees with high levels of digital dexterity are 3.3 times more likely to launch and complete digital initiatives quickly and deliver value from them than those with moderate digital dexterity.³²

This capability aligns with the Australian Industry and Skills Committee's analysis in which identified a demand for a mix of human and digital skills.³³ Employees need to:

- adapt to changes in technology and ways of working
- use tools to collaborate, work and manage relationships effectively

- interpret and apply data they've gathered using emerging technology, such as the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence and machine learning
- have agile and expandable technical skills in existing and emerging technologies, such as cyber-coding and programming, automation, the Internet of Things and cloud computing.

The NSW public sector has further development priorities

Faethm's cluster wide report identified key development priorities for the NSW public sector through to 2025. As a leader in the sector, we must also ensure that we:

- are customer-centric, putting people ahead of processes and outcomes
- identify and prioritise technology that will help us deliver better customer outcomes
- collaborate intentionally and fluidly to create opportunities for stakeholder feedback, realign with outcomes and correct course quickly
- deliver fast results with little waste, drawing from 'lean' entrepreneurial operating models
- use big data to optimise service delivery, target operations, find efficiencies, and maintain security, privacy and ethics
- are digital leaders, finding new ways to use technology.³⁴

3.2 Capability profile

The PSC's capability profile includes 4 types

In this capability profile, we outline the 4 types of capabilities within the PSC:

Type	Capabilities	Mindset	Workforce strategy
Accelerator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using data and insights to tell a story • Data visualisation and conceptual communications • Partnering with the sector • Influencing to affect change • Strategic planning and resource management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agile • Curious • Safe to fail and learn fast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build • Bind
Core	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital mastery • Research and analysis • Written and verbal communication • Self, people and project management • Procurement, financial and tender management • Human resources policy and data subject matter experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth • Customer or citizen focus • Collaborative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy • Build • Bind • Boost

Type	Capabilities	Mindset	Workforce strategy
Requisite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysing trends and synthesising data to provide insight in new or emerging areas Designing and implementing IT systems and processes Coaching and mentoring Identifying problems, analysing causes and making recommendations Advanced project management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcomes-focused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Borrow
Non-core	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

We need high performers in outward-focused roles

Accelerator roles within an organisation speed up strategy execution and usually involve capabilities that are non-technical and missing from role descriptions.

PSC subject matter experts identified that the PSC does not have any specific accelerator roles. Rather, any role that is outward-facing, innovative, collaborative, strategic and frequently speaks to the sector plays a critical part in executing our strategy.

PSC subject matter experts suggest that 'accelerator roles could be at any role or any level, underpinned by having a human-centred design mindset.' However, there is an observable difference between high and low performance. High performers in these roles have an exponential impact on organisational performance and are often hard to find and easy to lose.

Core capabilities contribute to strategy and ensure delivery

Core capabilities apply to all grades above 1/2 depending on role requirements. These capabilities:

- contribute to strategy
- are essential for outcome delivery
- are often unique to PSC roles
- usually have a small variance between high and low performance
- can be recruited or developed, or mobilised within the business
- need engagement to be applied.

To deliver on our strategy, the PSC needs to focus on attracting and retaining core capabilities.

Requisite capabilities can be short term or project-based

These capabilities:

- are required by the business at a particular time
- could be bought or borrowed over a short period
- have limited impact on long-term business performance
- do not require developing long-term relationships with stakeholders or customers
- apply to research-based roles attached to short term projects.

Non-core capabilities are no longer required

These capabilities:

- are no longer required either due to a shift in strategy or changes in the environment, role or digital transformation
- may represent a retraining opportunity.

No non-core capabilities apply to roles within the PSC.

4. Workforce profile and current state

At a glance

This section uses PSC workforce data to summarise our workforce's headcount, absenteeism and leave hours, and employment types and classifications. It also describes and analyses the current state of the PSC using the results of interviews and the People Matter Employee Survey.

4.1 Our workforce

Most of our workforce is ongoing, mid-level advisors

In 2021, the PSC had 131 employees. The following table shows the percentage across each employment type:

Employment type	Percentage of workforce	Number of employees
Ongoing	75%	98
Temporary	15%	20
Other (graduates, contract and statutory appointees/tipstaves)	10%	13
Total	100%	131

Over the past 4 years, employees at Clerk Grade 7/8 and 9/10 have made up more than half of all roles:

Salary band	2018	2019	2020	2021
Clerk Grade 1/2	1	1	1	1
Clerk Grade 3/4	17	16	15	12
Clerk Grade 5/6	18	19	17	13
Clerk Grade 7/8	30	34	34	32
Clerk Grade 9/10	38	49	52	41
Clerk Grade 11/12	22	31	34	24
Senior Executive Band 1 to Band 4	7	11	10	8
Total roles	133	161	163	131

Overall headcounts have decreased along with planned leave time

Our 131 employees last year were almost 20% less than the year before. This was mostly due to our organisational redesign from June to December 2020.

Of these employees, 71% identify as female and 29% identify as male.

In 2021, each full-time employee (FTE) averaged:

- 138 hours of planned leave (recreation leave, extended leave, and parental full- and half-pay leave)
- 51.2 hours of unplanned leave (sick leave, sick leave as carer's leave, special leave, and family and community service leave).

Planned leave hours marked a decrease from past years, likely due to travel and health restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our workforce is getting older

Between 2018 and 2021, the average age of PSC employees increased:

Year	Average age
2018	42
2019	41
2020	43
2021	44

4.2 Retention

Employees see the PSC as a positive workplace

Employee engagement refers to an employee's rating of these statements:

- I would recommend my organisation as a great place to work.
- I am proud to tell others I work for my organisation.
- My organisation motivates me to help it achieve its goals.
- My organisation inspires me to do the best in my job.

Between 2020 and 2021, employee engagement has jumped by nearly a quarter, with 75% of employees responding positively to these statements. This result is better than at any time in the last 4 years and has continued improving reaching a record high of 80% in 2022.

Year	Employee engagement
2018	69%
2019	72%
2020	61%
2021	75%
2022	80%

Average tenure at the PSC is slowly increasing

In 2021, the average tenure for ongoing staff members was 3.9 years – a full year more than in 2018, and an 11.5% increase from 2020.

Year	Average tenure (years)
2018	2.9
2019	2.8
2020	3.5
2021	3.9

This relates to a trend we discuss in section 2.1 about why people stay at the PSC. Our employees report that they see the culture as respectful, collegiate and supportive of their wellbeing.

Since 2020, feedback from employees about the culture has improved dramatically. From 2020 to 2021, People Matter Employee Survey data shows that employee engagement has increased by 22.9%.

Now, 62% of employees say they are satisfied with the PSC's career development opportunities. People Matter Employee Survey data from 2022 reported an increase to 67%.

Nearly 25% of our workforce transferred or was seconded

Despite an increase in tenure, we lost almost one-quarter of our workforce to transfers and secondments in 2021.

This contributed to an increase in separation rate (34.5%) across the PSC. Many employees who left were in temporary roles and left for ongoing roles at other agencies or departments. This was after the 2020 organisational redesign brought a similar spike in separation rate (32.5%).

The following table shows the PSC's separation rates between 2018 and 2021:

Year	Separated employees	Separation rate
2018	38	29.5%
2019	42	23.6%
2020	53	32.5%
2021	45	34.5%

The separation rate across Australia is trending toward 30% in 2022.

The PSC's separation rate was 34.5% in 2021, nearly double the national average of 18%. Given the average rate is trending up, we also expect our rate to increase.

The following workforce data details reasons for separation in 2021, with transfers the main reason, followed by voluntary redundancy then resignation:

Variable	Transfer	Voluntary redundancy	Resignation	Secondment	Retirement	Temporary contract ended
Male	4	1	3	1	0	0
Female	22	9	4	3	1	1
Age 15 to 34	11	1	0	1	0	0
Age 34 to 54	15	4	6	3	0	0
Age 55 +	0	5	1	0	1	1
Grade 3/4 and 5/6	6	0	2	1	1	0
Grade 7/8 and 9/10	16	6	5	1	0	1
Grade 11/12	4	4	0	2	0	0
PSSE Bands	0	0	0	0	0	0

Across Australia, job mobility was at 7.5% – its lowest since 1972 – from February 2020 to February 2021.³⁵ Two years before that, the percentage of the Australian workforce that changed jobs was slightly higher, at 8.5%.³⁶ But according to Qualtrics, almost 40% of public sector employees plan to quit their jobs in 2022.³⁷

Such a high turnover rate means an increase in time spent on recruitment.

4.3 Recruitment

Recruitment time halved in 2021

In 2021, we recruited for 48 ongoing, temporary and secondment opportunities. The average recruitment time was 46.5 days from advertisement to offer acceptance. In 2020, 23 new employees started with the PSC, a commencement rate of 14.2%. This increased to 36.5% in 2021, when 48 new employees started with us.

Despite this, we improved our recruitment support and processes in 2021 and halved our average recruitment time. The following table shows our activities for 2021.

2021 period	Avg recruitment days	Recruitments
Jan to Mar	60	16
Apr to Jun	50	13
Jul to Sep	46	12
Oct to Dec	30	7

However, a 30-day process is still a significant amount of time, and it translates to heavy recruiting workloads and lost productivity for hiring managers, as well as more offer rejections. The tight labour market may also increase recruitment timeframes going forward.

On a national scale, Gartner found:

- a 56% increase in job openings
- a 16% increase in turnover from November 2020 to November 2021
- an 18% increase in the time it takes to fill a role since before the pandemic.³⁸

Even though we have halved our hiring time over the past year, it still stands at 30 days, and 38% of the public servants we surveyed said ‘the public sector recruitment process was below their expectations’.³⁹

We are hiring more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Although the overall workforce shrunk, it became more diverse.

In 2018, 1.5% of the PSC’s workforce was made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This increased to 2.5% in 2019 and 2020, and 3.3% in 2021. As of 30 June 2022, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up 3.9% of the PSC’s workforce – a 32% increase from 2020 due to our work identifying and targeting roles.

We strive to maintain these employment levels, which are above the target of 3.3% Aboriginal employment at each public sector grade by 2025 (NSW Public Sector [Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2019–2025](#)).⁴⁰

We are hiring more people with a disability

Over the last 4 years, representation of people with a disability within the PSC has tripled. It now far exceeds the Premier’s Priority target of 5.6%.

Year	Percentage of workforce with a disability
2018	3%
2019	5%
2020	8%
2021	9.2%

We could hire more culturally and linguistically diverse people

People whose first language is not English made up 14.5% of our 2021 workforce.

Although this is a significant increase from past years, we could better reflect Australia’s diverse population by hiring more employees from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. 2021 census data shows that 48.2% of Australians have a parent born overseas.⁴¹

Year	Percentage of workforce whose first language is not English
2018	10.5%
2019	8.1%
2020	9.2%
2021	14.5%



5. Our organisation and plan

At a glance

This section explains the PSC's role, how and why we developed this plan, and how it aligns with our broader strategic objectives and framework.

5.1 About the PSC

Our organisation enables a world-class public service

Role

The NSW PSC is a NSW government agency within the Premier and Cabinet cluster. The Public Service Commissioner is an independent statutory office holder. The Public Service Commission is a Public Service agency that exists to support the Commissioner in the execution of their statutory functions.

At the PSC, we partner with and advise agencies on strategic workforce strategy, helping to ensure the sector is up to date with contemporary best practice, has the data and insights for sound decision making and supports inclusive, ethical and values-driven workplaces. Together, we create better outcomes for the people of NSW.

Purpose and ambition

Our purpose is to be the NSW public sector's trusted partner and advisor, shaping a world-class workforce.

Our ambition is a contemporary, diverse, inclusive and highly capable public sector that delivers the best outcomes for the people of NSW.

Values

Values	Details
Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appreciate difference and welcome learning from others• Build relationships based on mutual respect• Uphold the law, government institutions and democratic principles• Communicate intentions clearly and invite teamwork and collaboration• Provide apolitical and non-partisan advice

Values	Details
Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit and promote staff on merit • Take responsibility for decisions and actions • Provide transparency to enable public scrutiny • Observe safety standards • Be fiscally responsible and focus on efficient, effective and prudent use of resources

Responsibilities

Our responsibilities mean that we work across a range of offices, divisions and branches. The following table outlines these parts of the PSC and their roles.

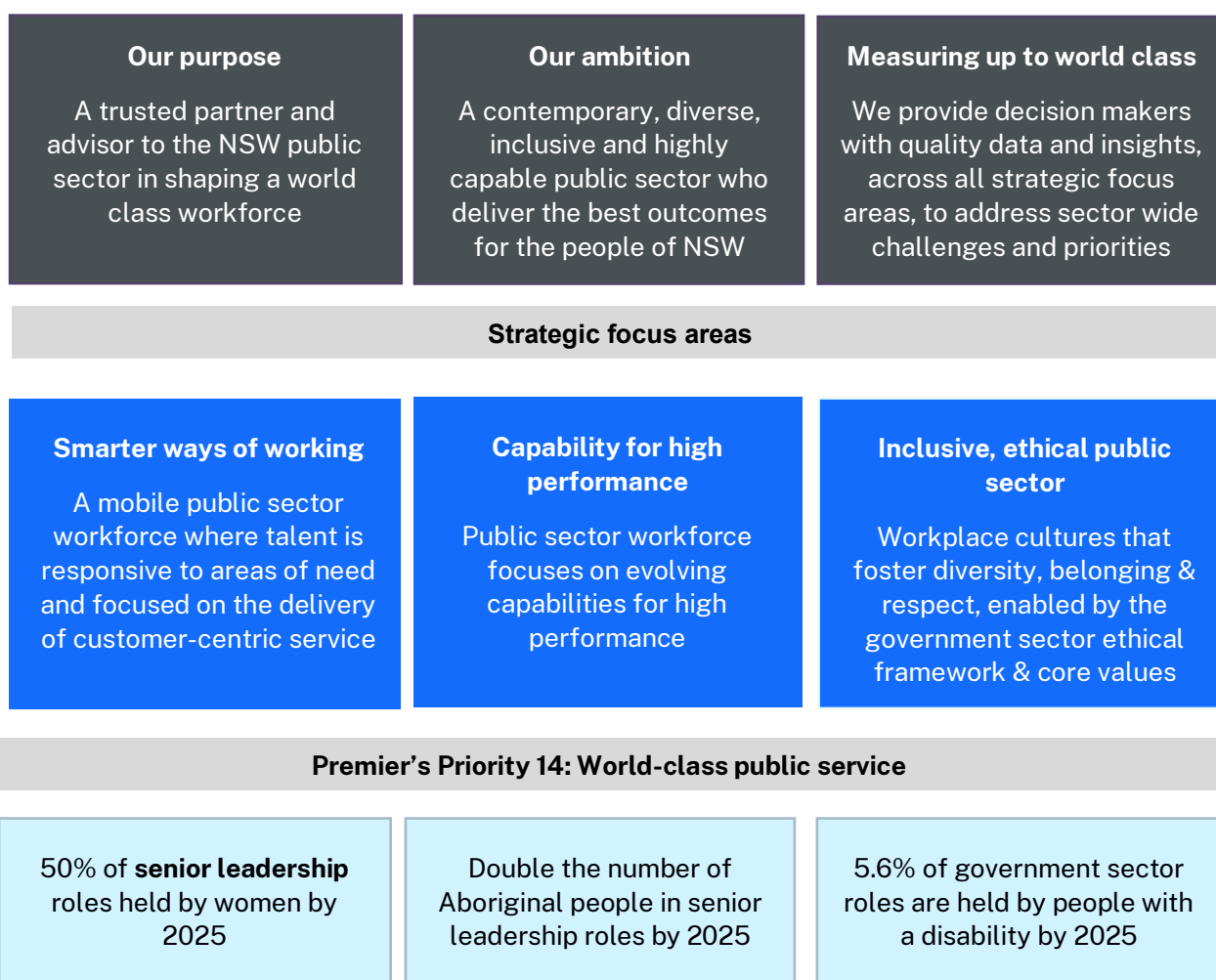
Part of the PSC	What it does
Commissioner's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looks after the day-to-day administration of the Commissioner's function • Liaises with our senior leadership team, the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Premier's Office
Deputy Commissioner's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works alongside our Capability and Culture teams to meet the strategic and operational objectives of the Commission • Partners with the Commissioner's Office and Corporate Services to enable effective collaboration and synergies within the PSC
Corporate Services division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a trusted partner and strategic advisor as the PSC delivers on its outcomes with the Capability and Culture teams • Enhances the PSC's impact by investing in its people, processes and technologies to meet future challenges • Reports to the Commissioner
Workforce Inclusion and Experience branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops and leads a holistic belonging and inclusion strategy to support sector-wide progress towards inclusive, safe and ethical workplace cultures • Connects and collaborates with the sector towards the achievement of key diversity targets set out in the Premier's Priority 14: a world-class public service that reflects the community we serve
Workforce Strategy and Capability branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plays a critical role in developing and implementing a broad range of customer-focused, contemporary, sector-wide workforce strategies to build an agile, outcomes-focused public sector workforce • Ensures the legislative system architecture in the <i>Government Sector Employment Act 2013</i> and its supporting instruments are fit for purpose • Provides guidance and employment policy advice to the sector
Leadership and Talent branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plays a lead role in designing and implementing leadership, recruitment, mobility and talent strategies that support the NSW public sector workforce to be agile and optimised to deliver outcomes for NSW citizens

Part of the PSC	What it does
Performance and Insights branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generates evidence and insights to ensure decisions about productivity and performance of the public sector provide maximum benefit for NSW citizens Uses quality, timely, strategic workforce data and insights of value and impact to make decisions for a world-class public service

5.2 About our strategic workforce plan

This plan is in line with our Strategic Plan and Premier’s Priority 14

We developed the plan following the launch of the [PSC Strategic Plan 2022–2025](#) in June 2021. By designing a workforce plan that aligns with our strategic goals, we will better leverage our unique strengths, resolve challenges and respond to change.



Several factors informed its development. First, people are at the centre of everything we do. An engaged, capable and high-performing workforce allows us to effect meaningful change across the NSW public sector and meet our strategic goals.

Next, work is changing, and our plan responds to this. It considers the evolution in how we work, what work means to people and an increasingly challenging talent marketplace.

The plan aims to create:

A workforce that is:	A culture that is:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• high performing• digitally savvy• agile and adaptable• diverse and inclusive• mobile and collaborative• capable and insightful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• tolerates risk and learns fast• enables innovation• uses a collaborative co-design approach with stakeholders.

Finally, the plan supports Premier’s Priority 14 to ensure that by 2025 the PSC workforce will uphold a world-class public service by having:

- women in 50% of senior leadership roles
- double the number of Aboriginal people in senior leadership roles
- people with a disability holding 5.6% of available roles.⁴²

The plan was built through our framework

The approach to the development of the plan was guided by the [NSW Government’s Strategic Workforce Planning Framework](#).

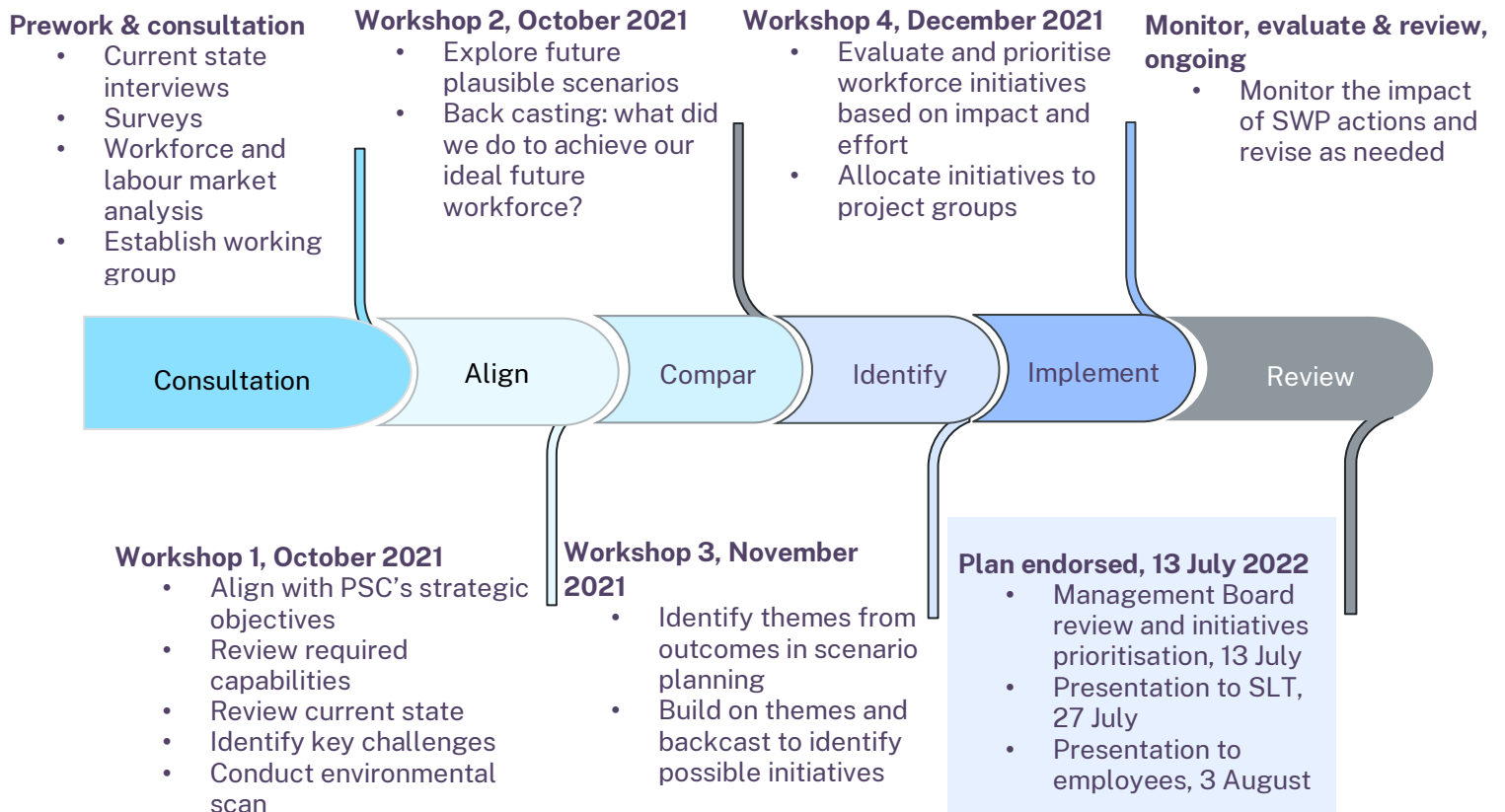
The plan is dynamic and will continue evolving. Initiatives will be monitored, evaluated and revised as needed to address changing internal and external environments.

The approach involved gathering qualitative data by conducting over 20 hours of stakeholder current state interviews and subject matter expert focus groups to understand current workforce strengths and challenges.

The approach and timeline are outlined in the following diagrams.



Developing the plan



The plan was also informed by quantitative data including:

- internal data on workforce profile and mobility
- external data on trends, and labour market supply and demand.

The plan draws on multiple sets of data

Internal quantitative data has been sourced from the PSC Performance and Insights team using NSW PSC Workforce Profile 2018–2021 and People Matter Employee Survey 2018–2021 data, specifically the PMES Employment Engagement index.

The data was initially provided on 13 July 2021 and a second set was provided on 11 March 2022 to capture 2021 data in the same areas of non-casual census headcount, and average tenure by ongoing and temporary staff.

Data includes staff, turnover rates, unplanned and planned leave, average age, gender representation, headcounts by salary, employment type and salary band, people who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with a disability and people whose first language is not English.

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