

Our leaders

Who they are and how we view them.

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The impact that leaders have on the performance of their organisations cannot be underestimated. Leadership is critical in setting direction, executing strategy, shaping culture and employee experience, lifting capability, inspiring purpose and delivering results for our customers. This year, there has been an overall improvement in People Matter survey results for senior managers' communication skills, and their change and people management, which shows that our leaders continue to improve.

Executive numbers

Government sector senior executives (GSSEs) perform formal executive roles within the Public Service and aligned government services, providing leadership, direction and accountability. A subgroup of these executives – known as Public Service senior executives (PSSEs) – work within the Public Service and are represented across all clusters.

In the larger GSSE cohort, the increase is caused by a growing portfolio of major transport infrastructure projects in NSW requiring specialised executive support.

The increase in numbers within the smaller cohort of senior executives in the Public Service is related to NSW Government investments in projects and programs to drive economic and social recovery. This includes the creation of a new specialist agency, Investment NSW, to increase investment in the NSW economy.



3,680 government sector senior executives in 2021

up from 3,333 in 2020

Source: Workforce Profile (WFP) (2017–2021)

Senior executive headcount, 2021 vs 2020

Cluster	Senior executives in the Public Service	Change from 2020	Government sector senior executives	Change from 2020
Customer Service	258	4	258	4
Education	416	44	444	21
Health	114	-2	314	10
Planning, Industry and Environment	489	57	489	57
Premier and Cabinet	315	28	315	28
Regional NSW	166	23	166	23
Stronger Communities	409	21	483	11
Transport	1	0	1,041	182
Treasury	112	7	170	11
Total	2,280	182	3,680	347

Source: WFP (2020, 2021)

Note: The cluster data in this table has mapped the 2020 public sector structure to the 2021 structure to account for machinery of government changes.

Employee perceptions of senior leaders

The People Matter survey asks employees about their perceptions of the senior managers that lead their organisations. Senior managers need to manage change well, set clear direction and work with people managers to lead the workforce and deliver for customers. By embodying the sector's values, their guidance on their organisation's culture ensures that their people experience a positive working environment.



58.8% favourable overall

up from 58.1% in 2020

Questions	2021 (% favourable)	Change from 2020 (pp)
Senior managers provide clear direction for the future of the organisation	54.9	1.8
Senior managers model the values of my organisation	58.9	1.0
Senior managers promote collaboration between my organisation and other organisations we work with	56.5	0.5
Senior managers communicate the importance of customers in our work	70.2	-0.1
Senior managers keep employees informed about what's going on	59.0	2.5
Senior managers listen to employees	49.4	0.9
Senior managers support the career advancement of women	63.0	-1.4

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (PMES) (2020, 2021)

Source: PMES (2020, 2021)

Communication and change management

Effective communication is proactive, timely and focuses on what employees need to know and how they will be impacted. Change management is vital for every organisation across the sector. Well-managed change minimises day-to-day disruptions to everyday work and lives. All managers must lead through change.



Employee perceptions of communication and change management

58.2% favourable overall

up from 56.4% in 2020

Question	2021 (% favourable)	Change from 2020 (pp)
My manager communicates effectively with me	75.2	0.6
Change is managed well in my organisation	42.9	2.3
Senior managers provide clear direction for the future of the organisation	54.9	1.8
Senior managers keep employees informed about what's going on	59.0	2.5

Source: PMES (2020, 2021)

People management

Effective people managers are essential to high-performing organisations. They're vital for achieving positive workforce outcomes and delivering a world class public service to the people of NSW. Underpinning a high-performance culture is an effective system for managing individual, team and organisational performance.



73.4% of employees had a performance and development plan in place in 2021

up from 72.3% in 2020



65.0% of employees had formal feedback conversations

up from 63.3% in 2020



80.2% of employees had informal feedback conversations

up from 79.2% in 2020

Source: PMES (2020, 2021)

Employee perceptions of feedback and performance management



61.1% favourable overall in 2021

up from 60.3% in 2020

Question	2021 (% positive)	Change from 2020 (pp)
In the last 12 months, I have received feedback to help me improve my work	64.8	0.2
My performance is assessed against clear criteria	57.3	2.0
My manager encourages me to learn from my mistakes	72.7	0.4
My manager appropriately deals with employees who perform poorly	49.4	0.5

Source: PMES (2020, 2021)

Employee perceptions of workplace recognition

Question	2021 (% positive)	Change from 2020 (pp)
My manager provides recognition for the work I do	72.6	0.8
I receive adequate recognition for my contributions from my organisation	54.2	-

Source: PMES (2020, 2021)

Next section: our organisations

How we experience our organisations' practices.

