

# Our workplaces

The behaviours we experience in our workplaces.

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Our workplaces should be where our people thrive. The public sector will continue to evolve our workplaces to exemplify our values and create safe, healthy and flexible places where all employees can bring their best to work and serve the people of NSW. Bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment and racism should not be tolerated. The harmful consequences of negative workplace behaviours at the individual and organisational levels are well established and undermine efforts to create positive and productive workplaces.

## NSW public sector values

The NSW public sector is committed to upholding its core values of integrity, trust, service and accountability. The sector aims to:

- consider people equally without prejudice or favour
- build relationships based on mutual respect
- be flexible and innovative
- deliver services reliably
- take responsibility for decisions and actions.

A positive workplace culture built on sound values and principles helps to increase employee engagement and wellbeing and reduces negative workplace behaviours.

### Case study: Government agencies seek community input on best ways to reuse Brewarrina Correctional Centre

The plan for the reuse of the Brewarrina Correctional Centre shows what can be achieved when government agencies listen to and focus on the needs of the community. Find out how Property Development NSW and Corrective Services NSW worked with key stakeholders to turn the site into a women's drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre.

[Read more](#) →

## Flexible work

The NSW public sector aims to be a world class employer that offers employees flexible working options. Since 2016, the sector has had a policy of providing flexible working arrangements on an 'if not, why not?' basis, in a way that maintains or improves service delivery.

The top three flexible working arrangements in 2021 are:

- working from home
- flexible start and finish times
- working from different locations.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the shift towards flexible working. As Sydney and other parts of the state emerge from lockdown and offices re-open, it is anticipated that many teams will work in a hybrid way. This is consistent with national and global trends.

Employees' use and perceptions of flexible working arrangements	2020 (%)	2021 (%)
Use	78.4	78.5
Satisfaction with access	65.5	64.5
Perception of manager support	68.0	68.3

Source: PMES (2020, 2021)

Source: PMES (2021)

### Case study: Creating a more inclusive paid parental leave scheme for all NSW public sector employees

The groundwork for an enhanced paid parental leave scheme introduced on 1 July 2021 was laid by the NSW Public Service Commission's review of parental leave arrangements in the public sector. Find out more about how the scheme was developed and introduced.

[Read more](#) →

## Misconduct

Misconduct is behaviour that is unethical or illegal, or that breaches an agency's code of conduct. The public sector values provide a clear framework for employee understanding of misconduct and what it means for everyday work. The public sector has zero tolerance for misconduct.

The People Matter survey asks employees about their experience of misconduct at work. While the overall level of misconduct encountered was low and the reporting robust, there were several reasons why people didn't report misconduct. The top three reasons were:

- I thought there would be negative consequences for me (46.7%)
- I didn't think it would make a difference (42.9%)
- I didn't think it would be confidential (36.0%).



### Pressure to engage in misconduct

2.4% in 2021

2.2% in 2020

Source: PMES (2020,2021)

## Proportion of employees aware of and reporting misconduct, and proportion

## whose reports were resolved satisfactorily, 2021 vs 2020

Yes (%)	2021 (%)	2020 (%)
Aware	15.4	16.4
Reported	57.8	57.8
Resolved to satisfaction	35.9	NA

Source: PMES (2020, 2021)

## Bullying

Reducing negative behaviours such as bullying will help build positive workplace environments and boost inclusion. While bullying in the sector has reduced over time, it remains a problem that needs to continue to be addressed.

In the People Matter survey, bullying is defined as ‘repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or group of workers’. Examples of bullying include shouting, spreading rumours and deliberately excluding someone from work activities. Feedback on work performance, delivered in a respectful way, is not bullying.

This year, to better understand the overall employee experience of bullying, employees were asked about any bullying they had experienced in the preceding 12 months, not just the most serious incident (as in previous People Matter surveys). This means that the data on reported bullying and whether reports were resolved to employees’ satisfaction are not comparable to previous years.

## Employees who witnessed or experienced bullying, who reported it and who had their report satisfactorily resolved, 2021



**Bullying witnessed: 21.8%**

21.7% in 2020



**Bullying experienced: 14.1%**

13.9% in 2020



**Bullying reported: 41.5%**



**Complaint resolved to satisfaction:  
41.3%**

Source: PMES (2021)

## Sources of self-reported bullying incidents, 2021

Group	Incidents (%)
A fellow worker at your level	36.8
Your immediate manager/supervisor	31.2
A senior manager	25.7
Another manager	13.6
A subordinate	11.2
A customer	7.9
A member of the public other than a customer	3.8
Other	5.4
Prefer not to say	11.2

Source: PMES (2021)

Source: PMES (2021)

## Discrimination and racism

For the first time, this year the People Matter survey asked employees about their experience of discrimination and racism.

- Discrimination is when a person or a group of people is treated less favourably than another person or group because of their background or certain personal characteristics.

- Racism is prejudice, discrimination or hatred directed at someone because of their colour, ethnicity or national origin.

No unlawful discrimination or racism is ever acceptable, so it is important to understand employee experiences in this area to reduce the incidence of these harmful workplace behaviours to zero.

## Employees who experienced discrimination, who reported it and who had their report satisfactorily resolved, 2021



**Discrimination experienced**

10.1%



**Discrimination reported**

25.3%



**Complaint resolved to satisfaction**

17.0%

Source: PMES (2021)

*\*Such as making a reasonable request for information about a person's employment entitlements, or communicating concerns about the provision of these entitlements.*

## Employees who experienced racism, who reported it and who had their report satisfactorily resolved, 2021



**Racism experienced**

4.2%



**Racism reported**

27.3%

**Complaint resolved to satisfaction**

33.9%

Source: PMES (2021)

## Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature that may make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. The 2020 People Matter survey was the first time the survey included separate questions about sexual harassment. These questions were asked again in 2021. Although the rate of sexual harassment was lower than those of other negative behaviours, any number above zero is unacceptable. Unfortunately, this year the rate increased slightly.

### Employees who experienced sexual harassment, who reported it and who had their report satisfactorily resolved, 2021

**Sexual harassment experienced**

4.5%

**Sexual harassment reported**

24.5%

**Complaint resolved to satisfaction**

44.0%

Source: PMES (2021)

## Employees who experienced sexual harassment, by gender



**Women: 5%**

4.6% in 2020



**Men: 2.7%**

2.3% in 2020



**Non-binary: 15.8%**

13.6% in 2020

Source: PMES (2021)

## Workplace health and safety

Workplace health and safety (WHS) involves managing risks to the health and safety of everyone in a workplace. Health refers to physical and psychological health. The NSW public sector is committed to providing a physically and mentally healthy workplace for all employees.



**Perceptions of health and safety**

**73.2% favourable overall**

Source: PMES (2021)



## Employee perceptions of health and safety

2021 (%)

I am confident work health and safety issues I raise will be addressed promptly	76.4
There are effective resources in my organisation to support employee wellbeing	70.0

Source: PMES (2021)

### **Next section: our leaders**

Who they are and how we view them.

