

# Diversity

## Chapter 5, Workforce Profile Report 2021

### On this page

[Diversity response rates](#)

[People with disability](#)

[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people](#)

[People who first spoke a language other than English, and racial, ethnic and ethno-religious minority groups](#)

[Notes](#)



### Diversity response rate

78.1% in 2021 (-1.7pp vs 2020)



### Employees reporting disability – estimate

2.5% in 2021 (+0.1pp vs 2020)



### Employees reporting disability requiring adjustment – estimate

0.6% in 2021 (same as 2020)



### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – estimate

3.7% in 2021 (+0.8pp vs 2014)



**People whose language first spoken as a child was not English – estimate**

18.5% in 2021 (+0.4pp vs 2020)



**People from racial, ethnic and ethno-religious minority groups – estimate**

13.1% in 2021 (+0.5pp vs 2020)

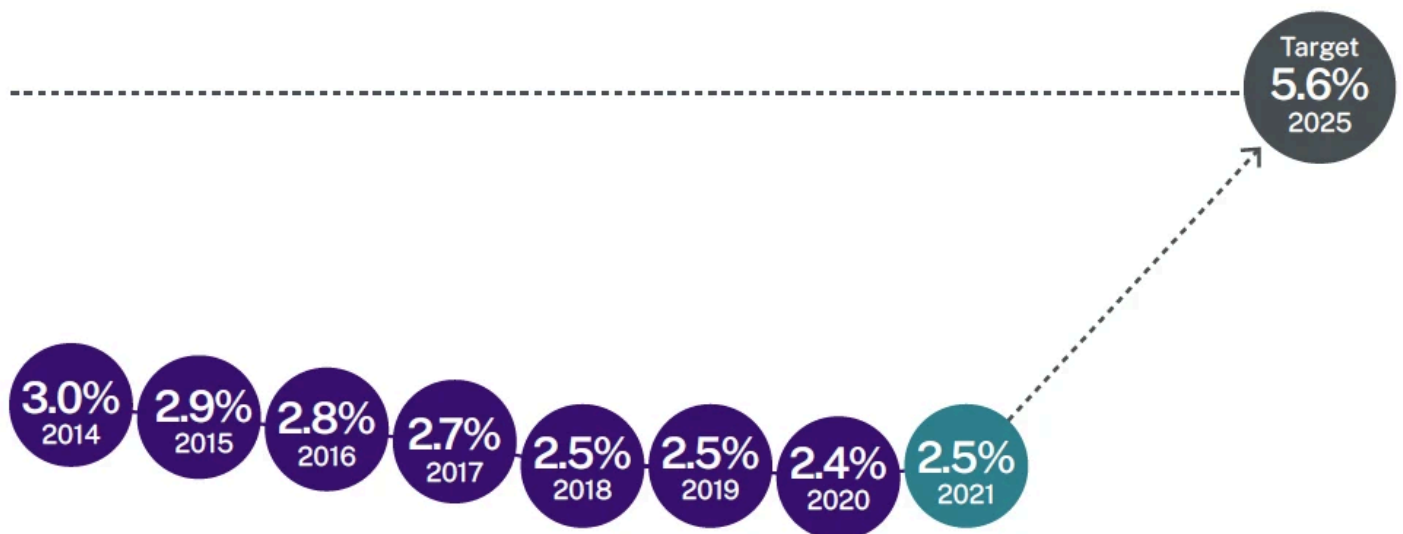
## Diversity response rates

Diversity data in the Workforce Profile is subject to several factors, including public sector employees self-identifying their diversity characteristics when their agency collects this data. This is facilitated by a culture of inclusion within agencies and employees being encouraged to update their data.

Higher response rates increase the accuracy of the diversity data. The public sector’s diversity response rate was 78.1% in 2021, a 1.7pp decrease from 79.8% in 2020. This overall change is largely due to a correction in the Education cluster’s diversity response rate (see Figure 5.1).

## People with disability

### Premier’s Priority – percentage of people with disability (estimate)<sup>1</sup>



[View text version of above diagram](#)



| 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 3.0% | 2.9% | 2.8% | 2.7% | 2.5% | 2.5% | 2.4% | 2.5% |

Target: 5.6% by 2025.

Increasing the proportion of employees with disability in the NSW public sector is a target in the Premier’s Priority for a world class public service.<sup>2</sup> The priority aims to increase the representation of people with disability in the NSW public sector to 5.6% by 2025. Despite the decreased diversity response rate this year, the proportion of employees with disability was 2.5% in 2021, an increase of 0.1pp from the 2.4% reported in 2020.

Figure 5.2 shows that while there was a small increase in 2021, this followed a longer-term trend of decreasing representation of people with disability in the NSW public sector workforce.

The Australian Public Service reported the same percentage point increase as the NSW public sector in 2021 (+0.1pp), with the number of people with disability increasing to 4.1%.<sup>3</sup>

There was little change in representation across NSW government sector services in 2021 compared to 2020 (see Table 5.1). The Public Service continued to have the highest proportion of people with disability, at an estimated 4.0%, noting a small increase compared to 2020.

**Table 5.1: Representation of people with disability by service (estimate), 2020–21<sup>1</sup>**

| Service                        | 2020 (%)   | 2021 (%)   |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Public Service                 | 3.9        | 4.0        |
| NSW Health Service             | 1.8        | 1.8        |
| NSW Police Force               | 0.8        | 0.8        |
| Teaching Service               | 2.4        | 2.7        |
| Transport Service              | 2.4        | 2.7        |
| Other Crown services           | 3.1        | 3.2        |
| <b>Total government sector</b> | <b>2.4</b> | <b>2.5</b> |

| Service                       | 2020 (%)   | 2021 (%)   |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------|
| State owned corporations      | 3.1        | 3.1        |
| External to government sector | 2.3        | 1.9        |
| <b>Total public sector</b>    | <b>2.4</b> | <b>2.5</b> |

There is a notable difference in the pattern of commencements and separations of employees with disability compared to the total sector. While the level of commencements in agencies is similar to the level of separations for the public sector workforce, separations outweigh commencements for employees with disability and the rate of exit from the public sector is higher (see Table 5.2).

**Table 5.2: Commencements, exits and moves, people with disability vs the public sector, 2021**

|                        | Commencement rate (%) | Separation rate (%) | Exit rate (%) | Movement rate within the public sector (%) |
|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------|--|
| People with disability | 8.4                   | 12.4                | 10.9          | 1.5  |
| Total public sector    | 8.8                   | 8.7                 | 6.9           | 1.8  |

The rate of people with disability commencing in public sector agencies was 4.0pp lower than their rate of separation, and slightly lower than the public sector average (-0.4pp). The separation rate of employees with disability was much higher than the sector average (+3.7pp). Compared to the broader public sector workforce, there is a higher rate of exit from the sector for employees with disability (+4.0pp) and a lower level of movement to other public sector agencies (-0.3pp).

In 2021, the gap between the commencement and separation rates for public sector employees with and without disability remained similar to the 2020 gap (see Figure 5.3). The separation rate for people with disability increased by 2.0pp, while there was little change in the rate of separation for employees without disability (-0.1pp). The commencement rates for people with and without disability increased in 2021; however, there was a larger increase for those with disability (1.9pp compared to 0.2pp for people without disability). While the staff turnover rate for people without disability has been at the replacement level for the past two years, for people with disability, separations continue to outstrip commencements. For every 100 employees with disability who commence, 104 separate; however, commencements for people without disability are 0.1pp higher than the rate of separations.

When age groups are compared between the populations with and without disability, the representation of people with disability in the sector markedly increases with age (see Figure 5.4). In the first three age bands, there is a higher representation of employees without disability. In the 25 to 34 age range, the

representation of people without disability is 8.8pp higher than those with disability. In contrast, the representation of people with disability is higher in the three older age bands. Most notably, 37.6% of all employees with disability are aged 55 and above, compared to only 23.0% of those without disability in the same age range. The age profile of the sector's employees with disability means they will continue to exit the sector at higher rates than employees without disability. This will further hamper progress towards achieving the Premier's Priority target by 2025. In the public sector, the median tenure for those without disability was 8 years, and for those with disability it was 11.4 years. Tenure was longer for those with disability requiring an adjustment at work, with a median tenure of 15.8 years compared to 9.9 years for those not requiring an adjustment.

Looking into the reasons for separation for people with and without disability, it is apparent that the comparatively older cohort of employees with disability retired (+7.1pp), resigned (+2.2pp) or accepted voluntary redundancy (+4.1pp) at higher rates than employees without disability in the past year. In contrast, the rate of employees transferring to another public sector agency was 8.2pp higher for people without disability than for employees with disability. This may be due to the younger cohort, and possibly the ease of transferring compared to employees with disability, who may have to consider workplace adjustments or commuting restrictions.<sup>4</sup>

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

The representation of employees who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people has progressively increased over the past decade. In 2021, the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people increased by 0.2pp to an estimated 3.7% of non-casual employees in the NSW public sector. In the Australian Public Service, representation has been static, remaining at 3.5% since 2019.<sup>3</sup>

From 2014 to 2021, the estimated proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees increased by 0.4pp or more in all salary bands below the level of Senior Executive (see Figure 5.7). The highest increase was in the Grade 1/2 range, which has seen a total increase of 1.6pp since 2014. In 2021, the number of Grade 7/8 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees exceeded the 3.0% target for the first time. The largest increases were in the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (+1.3pp), the Teaching Service (+0.6pp) and the NSW Police Force (+0.4pp).

In 2021, the Premier's Priority of doubling the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in senior leadership roles from 57 in 2014 to 114 by 2025 was achieved, with 130 senior leaders in the NSW government sector. This marked a 23.8% increase from 2020 (+25). Since 2014, the largest increases occurred in the Public Service (+28) and the Teaching Service (+24), accounting for 71% of the total increase.

## People who first spoke a language other than English, and

## racial, ethnic and ethno-religious minority groups

The proportion of employees in the sector in the language other than English (LOTE) diversity group increased from an estimated 18.1% of the total non-casual workforce in 2020 to 18.5% in 2021. This was the highest estimate in the past decade (see Figure 5.8). The biggest contributors to the increase were the NSW Health Service (+737) and the Public Service (+708). Nearly half (43.2%) of all employees in this diversity group also identified as being from a racial, ethnic or ethno-religious minority group.

In 2021, there was a 0.5pp increase in the proportion of employees in the sector who identified as being from a racial, ethnic or ethno-religious minority group. Reaching an estimated 13.1%, representation has returned to the levels seen in 2015 to 2017 (see Figure 5.8). Most services experienced an increase in representation of employees from this group in 2021, with the largest growth in the Transport Service, up 0.9pp to 18.6%. The only services to experience a decrease were the External to government sector and NSW Police Force, down by 0.9pp and 0.5pp, respectively.

The proportion of employees in the LOTE diversity group compared to the non-LOTE group is shown across salary grades in Figure 5.9. Employees in the LOTE diversity group were in higher percentages in the salary grades for General Scale (+2.7pp), Grade 5/6 (+5.3pp), above Grade 11/12 and below Senior Executive (+0.2pp). The largest disparity was in Grade 7/8, with a -3.3pp difference in favour of non-LOTE employees. The median age of employees in this diversity group was 42, compared to 44 for the overall sector. The median tenure was 7.3 years, compared to sector median of 8.1.

In 2021, 53.1% of employees in the sector who identified as being from a racial, ethnic or ethno-religious minority group were in Grade 5/6, Grade 7/8 or Grade 9/10, a 1.4pp increase from 51.7% in 2020 (see Figure 5.10). In comparison, 48.2% of employees who did not identify as being from a minority group were in these grades in 2021 (4.9% fewer). There was a higher representation of employees who identify as being from a minority group in salary Grade 5/6 (+1.1pp), Grade 7/8 (+1.6pp), Grade 9/10 (+2.2pp), Grade 11/12 (+1.2pp) and in the senior executive pay range (+0.2pp) compared to employees who did not.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See the [Glossary](#) for the diversity estimation method used.

<sup>2</sup> NSW Government, Premier's Priorities, [World class public service](#).

<sup>3</sup> Australian Public Service Commission (2021) *APS Employment Data 30 June 2021*, Australian Public Service Commission, viewed 19 October 2021, <http://www.apsc.gov.au/employment-data/aps-employment-data-30-june-2021>.

<sup>4</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission, [The rights of people with disabilities: Areas of need for increased protection, 'Chapter 2: Employment'](#), accessed 18 October 2021; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, [People with disability in Australia, employment participation needs and challenges](#), accessed 19 October

2021.

<sup>5</sup> Where the difference between people with and without disability was greater than 1.0pp and the group size was greater than 10.

---

**Next chapter**

Gender

