

Size and composition

Chapter 2

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Employed persons



NSW employed persons

10.1% of all people employed in NSW are NSW public sector employees

-0.3pp vs 2021



Increase in NSW public sector

+0.6% census headcount

up by 2,540 from 2021



Increase in NSW employed persons

2.8%

Note: 'pp' stands for percentage points.

Size of the NSW public sector workforce

The NSW public sector is the largest employer in Australia. Figure 2.1 and Table 2.1 show that in 2022 the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees in the census period increased by 1.0% (+3,427) compared to 2021, and the census headcount increased by 0.6% (+2,540). This rate of growth is notably lower compared to the prior 3 years.

Table 2.1: Public sector census headcount and census period FTE, 2013 to 2022

Year	Census headcount	Change from previous year (%)	Census period FTE	Change from previous year (%)
2013	399,243	-0.6	329,336	-1.0
2014	396,036	-0.8	328,111	-0.4
2015	394,194	-0.5	326,765	-0.4
2016	393,442	-0.2	326,706	0.0
2017	393,333	0.0	325,917	-0.2
2018	396,243	0.7	329,005	0.9
2019	407,999	3.0	337,787	2.7
2020	413,567	1.4	348,508	3.2
2021	431,350	4.3	360,190	3.4
2022	433,890	0.6	363,617	1.0

Figure 2.2 shows there was notably lower growth in the NSW public sector workforce, at 0.6%, than in the broader NSW workforce in 2022, at 2.8%. The proportion of NSW employed persons who worked for the NSW public sector decreased 0.3pp from 2021 to 10.1% in 2022 (see Figure 2.3).

Composition of the NSW public sector

The number of FTE employees provides a better measure of the level of resources than headcount.

In 2022, the census period FTE increased by 3,427 and the census headcount rose by 2,540. The key contributors to the increase in FTE were the Public Service (+3,200 FTE) and the NSW Health Service (+1,912 FTE).

Table 2.2: Composition of the public sector by service, census period FTE, 2021 to 2022²

Service	2021	2022	Change	Change (%)
Public Service	69,484	72,684	3,200	4.6%
NSW Health Service	127,521	129,434	1,912	1.5%
NSW Police Force	21,041	20,736	-305	-1.5%
Teaching Service	71,415	70,968	-447	-0.6%
Transport Service	14,562	13,328	-1,235	-8.5%
Other Crown services	46,737	46,886	149	0.3%
Total government sector	350,759	354,034	3,275	0.9%
State owned corporations	8,321	8,461	140	1.7%
External to government sector	1,110	1,122	12	1.1%
Total public sector	360,190	363,617	3,427	1.0%

Table 2.2 shows that while there was an overall increase in census period FTE from 2021 to 2022, decreases occurred in some services. The Public Service and NSW Health Service both experienced growth, while FTE decreased in the NSW Police Force, Teaching Service and Transport Service.

The Public Service grew by 3,200 FTE (+4.6%) in 2022. The increase was primarily in the Customer Service cluster, which grew by 1,758 FTE (+19.7%). Service NSW (+899 FTE or +24.7%) and the Department of Customer Service (+840 FTE or +16.6%) were key contributors to this increase. These increases largely relate to the need for additional resources to help respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and the floods. The Department of Education was another key contributor to the increase, with an additional 617 FTE (+7.2%) in 2022.

The increase in the NSW Health Service of 1,912 (+1.5%) FTE reflects the key role they played in the pandemic response. There were an additional 467 (+3.5%) FTE Medical Practitioners, 438 (+0.9%) FTE Nurses and 419 (+8.8%) FTE Ambulance Officers.

The decrease in Transport Service employees (-1,235 FTE, -8.5%) was due to the privatisation of the State Transit Authority (-3,106 FTE). This was partly offset by an increase in Transport for NSW (+1,632 FTE, 15.3%) reflecting the large transport infrastructure projects. The largest growth was in Sydney Metro (+240 FTE, +33.0%).

The NSW Police Force decreased by 305 FTE (-1.5%) due to a higher number of separations, including medical retirements, and a lower number of commencements. While there were fewer commencements in 2022 than 2021, the number was higher than in previous years.

The Teaching Service decreased 447 FTE (-0.6%) compared to last year. Teacher staffing allocations are predominantly driven by student enrolments. In 2022, student enrolments in NSW Public Schools decreased, resulting in a corresponding decrease in teaching FTE. Student-to-staff ratios remain steady.

Machinery of government changes

Machinery of government (MOG) changes were introduced over the 2022 financial year. The creation of the new Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade led to an increase in the total number of clusters, from 9 to 10. Table 2.3 shows the distribution of FTE by new clusters.

Table 2.3: Cluster composition of the public sector, census period FTE, 2021 to 2022³

Cluster	2021	2022	Change	Change (%)
Customer Service	9,216	10,665	1,450	15.7
Education	112,929	113,372	444	0.4
Enterprise, Investment and Trade	-	3,714	-	-
Health	128,738	130,676	1,938	1.5

Cluster	2021	2022	Change	Change (%)
Planning and Environment	17,222	13,923	-3,299	-19.2
Premier and Cabinet	4,420	1,597	-2,823	-63.9
Regional NSW	4,646	4,432	-215	-4.6
Stronger Communities	52,782	52,102	-680	-1.3
Transport	27,616	27,024	-592	-2.1
Treasury	2,312	5,771	3,459	149.6
Total	360,190	363,617	3,427	1.0

One of the largest movements across the NSW Public Sector related to the formation of the new cluster, with 2,509 FTE moving from Premier and Cabinet, 585 FTE from Stronger Communities and 307.9 FTE from Customer Service to Enterprise, Investment and Trade. The new cluster comprises agencies delivering services in investment and tourism, including cultural institutions. The 3 largest agencies that moved to the new cluster were the Sydney Opera House (+500 FTE, 14.7%), Investment NSW (+399 FTE, 11.7%) and the Office of Sport (+383 FTE, 11.3%).

Other agency moves under MOG changes were to the Planning and Environment, Stronger Communities, Treasury, and Transport clusters. Energy and climate change agencies moved from Planning and Environment (3,404.8 FTE) to Treasury, while the Small Business Commission (53.9 FTE) moved from Treasury to the Customer Service cluster. The Transport cluster absorbed infrastructure-based agencies and public parks trusts (541 FTE), with 67.3% from Planning and Environment and the rest from the Premier and Cabinet cluster. The largest agency moves to the Transport cluster were from the Royal Botanic Gardens (225 FTE) and Infrastructure NSW (141 FTE). Resilience NSW moved from the Premier and Cabinet cluster to Stronger Communities (95.5 FTE).

Notes

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (August 2022), 'Table 1: RM1 - Labour force status by age, labour market region (ASGS) and sex', October 1998 onwards, [time series spreadsheet], Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, accessed 29 September 2022.

² Refer to the Glossary in Chapter 12 for the definitions of components of the public sector.

³ Some public sector entities do not align to a cluster, so the public sector total differs from the total of the clusters.

Chapter 3

Leaders

