

Leaders

Chapter 3

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4,265

senior executives in the government sector

census period FTE, **+9.4pp** vs 2022

Note: 'pp' stands for percentage points.

Senior executives

A key objective of the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013* was to create a simpler executive structure that gives this cohort greater mobility across the sector. The *Government Sector Employment Legislation Amendment Act 2016* supported this by aligning the senior executive employment arrangements of the NSW Health Service, Transport Service and NSW Police Force with those of the Public Service.

Table 3.1: Senior executives in the public sector, census period FTE, 2022 to

2023

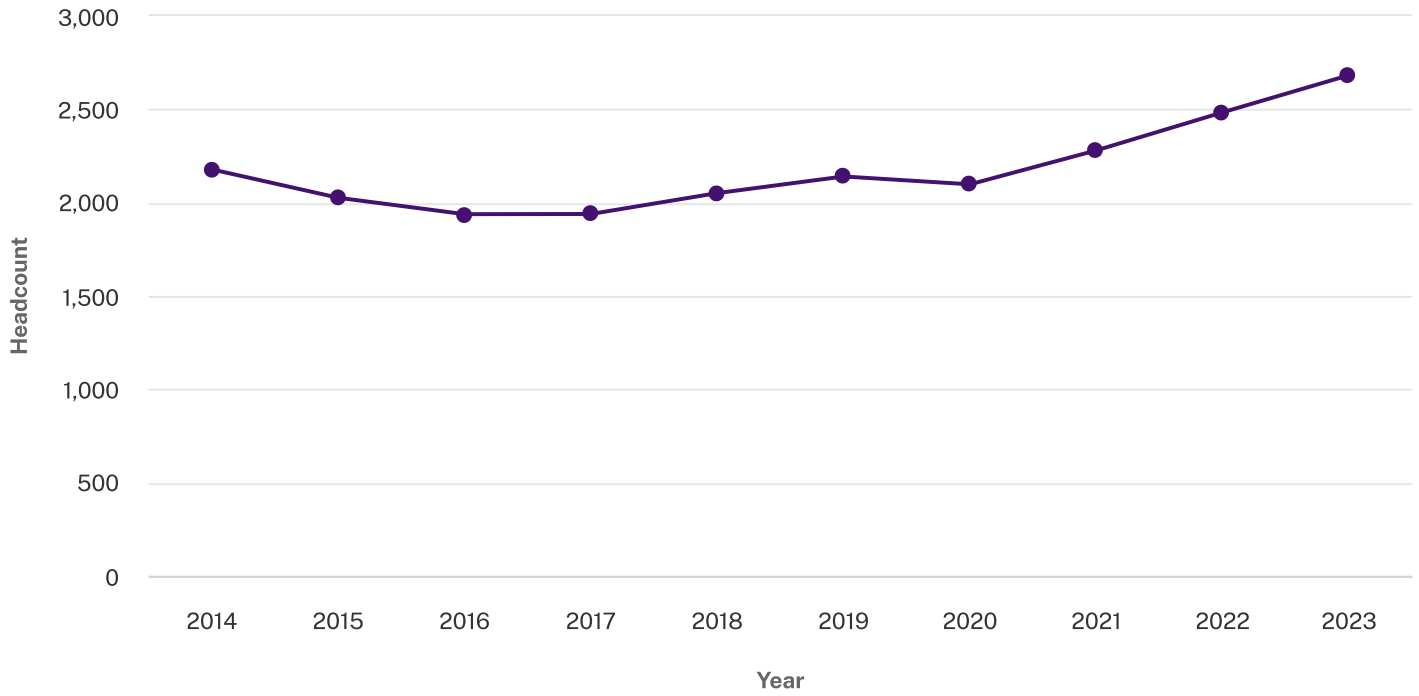
Service	2022	2023	Change (FTE)	Change (%)
Public Service	2,412	2,609	197	8.2
NSW Health Service	195	209	14	7.1
NSW Police Force	65	65	0	0
Transport Service	1,009	1,150	141	14
Other Crown services	219	232	13	6
Total government sector	3,900	4,265	365	9.4
State owned corporations	397	63	-334	-84.3
External to government sector	61	52	-9	-14.2
Total public sector	4,357	4,379	22	0.5

At June 2023, there were 4,379 FTE senior executives in the public sector. Of these, 4,265 were in the government sector, which represented an increase of 9.4% compared to the previous year.

The largest increases in the government sector occurred in the Public Service (+197 FTE or 8.2%) and the Transport Service (+141 FTE or 14.0%). In the Public Service, the Department of Education (+45 FTE) and Department of Regional NSW (+28 FTE) combined accounted for a third of the increase, with the remainder spread across a number of agencies. For the Transport Service, Sydney Metro (+75 FTE) and Transport for NSW (+72 FTE) accounted for the increase.

A notable decrease in State owned corporations (-334 or 84.1%) is due to a review of the definition of 'senior executives' for reporting purposes, most notably in Essential Energy, which changed from 275 FTE in 2022 to 8 FTE in 2023 (-267 FTE or 97.1%).

Figure 3.1: Senior executives in the Public Service, census headcount, 2014 to 2023



Year	Headcount
2014	2178
2015	2026
2016	1938
2017	1939
2018	2051
2019	2140
2020	2098
2021	2280
2022	2484
2023	2683

Figure 3.1: Senior executives in the Public Service, census headcount, 2014 to 2023

Table 3.2: Senior executives in the Public Service by portfolio, census headcount, 2022 to 2023

Portfolio	2022	2023	Change
Communities and Justice	419	428	9
Customer Service	294	309	15
Education	445	514	69
Enterprise, Investment and Trade	229	180	-49
Environment and Planning	466	559	93
Health	119	130	11
Premier and Cabinet	109	133	24
Regional NSW	176	208	32
Transport	94	28	-66
Treasury	133	194	61
Total Public Service	2,484	2,683	199

The number of senior executives increased across most portfolios in the Public Service, as shown in Table 3.2. The largest increase occurred in the Environment and Planning portfolio (+93), largely due to a number of machinery of government changes including the establishment of the NSW Reconstruction Authority, the transfer of Western Parkland City Authority from Enterprise, Investment and Trade, and the transfer of the Greater Cities Commission from Transport. The largest proportional increase was in Treasury, largely due to the transfer of Infrastructure NSW from Transport.

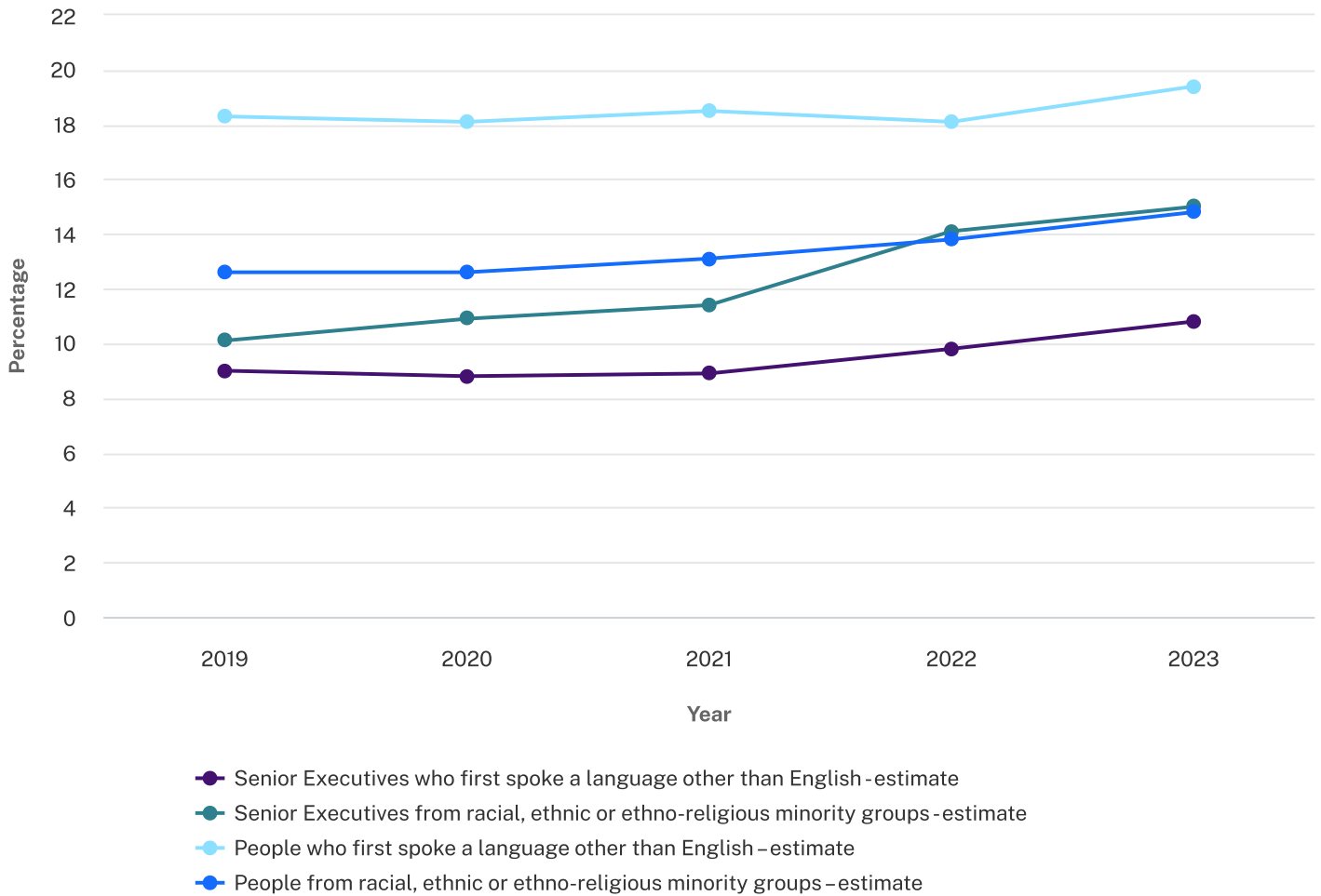
Cultural diversity in senior executives

It is important that government sector senior leadership reflects the cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity of the NSW population. The Public Service Commission's *Increasing cultural diversity in the NSW government sector senior executive cohort report*¹ outlines its strategy and holistic programs to increase senior executive diversity in the NSW government sector.

Current data suggests that language may be a greater barrier to employment in senior executive roles than identifying as belonging to a minority group. Figure 3.2 shows that 15.0% of senior executives identified as being from a minority group in 2023, slightly higher than the representation for all employees (14.8%). In comparison, the proportion of senior executives identifying their first language spoken as a child was not English is roughly half that of all employees (10.8% of senior executives compared to 19.4% of all employees).

There was a 4.9pp increase in senior executives identifying as being from a minority group from 2019 to 2023, however, over the same period there was only a 1.9pp increase in senior executives identifying their first language spoken as a child was not English.

Figure 3.2: Representation of senior executives compared to all employees, racial, ethnic or ethno-religious minority group (estimate) and first spoke a language other than English (estimate), government sector, 2019 to 2023²



Year	Senior Executives who first spoke a language other than English - estimate	Senior Executives from racial, ethnic or ethno-religious minority groups - estimate	People who first spoke a language other than English - estimate	People from racial, ethnic or ethno-religious minority groups - estimate
2019	9	10.1	18.3	12.6
2020	8.8	10.9	18.1	12.6
2021	8.9	11.4	18.5	13.1
2022	9.8	14.1	18.1	13.8

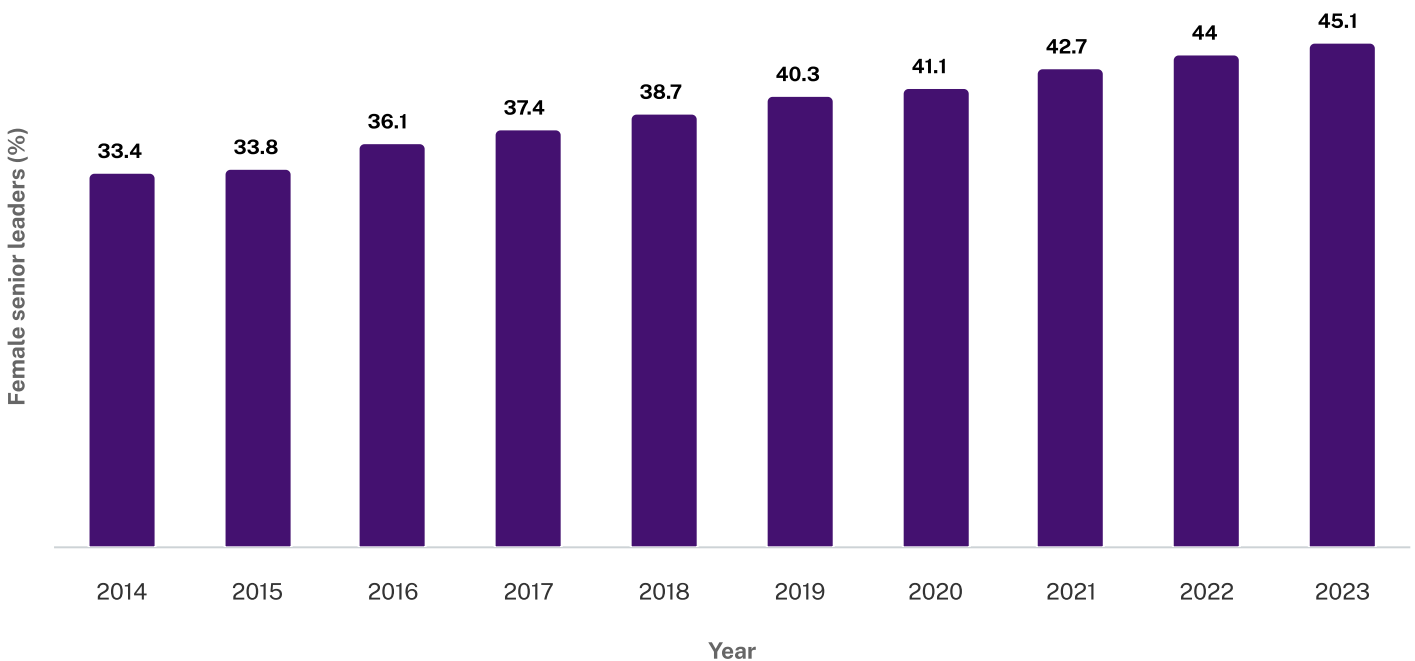
Year	Senior Executives who first spoke a language other than English - estimate	Senior Executives from racial, ethnic or ethno-religious minority groups - estimate	People who first spoke a language other than English – estimate	People from racial, ethnic or ethno-religious minority groups – estimate
2023	10.8	15	19.4	14.8

Figure 3.2: Representation of senior executives compared to all employees, racial, ethnic or ethno-religious minority group (estimate) and first spoke a language other than English (estimate), government sector, 2019 to 2023

Senior leaders

Senior leaders³ is a broader group than senior executives and includes people in other senior leadership roles such as school principals. Increasing the representation of women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in senior leader roles has been an area of focus for the government sector.

Figure 3.3: Percentage of senior leaders who are female, census headcount, 2014 to 2023

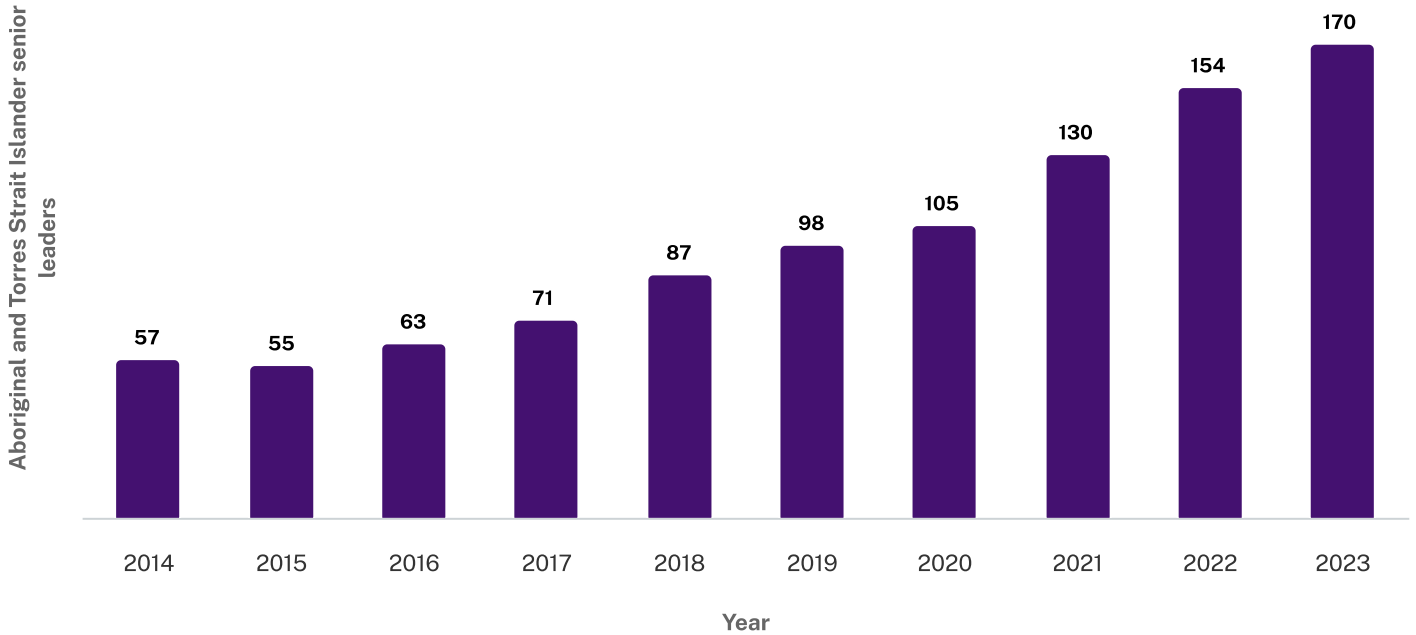


Year	Female senior leaders
2014	33.4
2015	33.8
2016	36.1
2017	37.4
2018	38.7
2019	40.3
2020	41.1
2021	42.7
2022	44
2023	45.1

Figure 3.3: Percentage of senior leaders who are female, census headcount, 2014 to 2023

The proportion of female senior leaders continued to grow in 2023, increasing by 1.1pp to 45.1%. Over the past 10 years, female representation has increased 11.7 percentage points and representation has increased in all equivalent senior executive bands. Representation of women in equivalent Band 3–4 roles has nearly doubled in 10 years, from 22.2% in 2014 to 40.5% in 2023.

Figure 3.4: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander senior leaders, census headcount, 2014 to 2023



Year	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander senior leaders
2014	57
2015	55
2016	63
2017	71
2018	87
2019	98
2020	105
2021	130
2022	154
2023	170

Figure 3.4: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander senior leaders, census headcount, 2014 to 2023

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander senior leaders increased from 154 to 170 in 2023, mostly due to increases in the Transport (+6) and Health (+4) portfolios. The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander senior leaders has tripled in the past 10 years, with nearly 60% of this growth occurring in the last 3 years. There has also been significant growth in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in roles equivalent to senior executive bands 2–3, with four times the number in 2023 compared to 10 years ago (20 vs 5).

Notes

¹ See [*Increasing cultural diversity in the NSW government sector senior executive cohort*](#)

² Ibid,1.

³ Refer to the [Glossary in Chapter 12](#) for senior leader definition

Chapter 4

Types of work

