Response

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Droughts, floods, bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic have led to unprecedented changes to the way Australians live and work. These extraordinary events have meant that NSW citizens and businesses have had to adapt, substantially and swiftly. The NSW public sector has, in many ways, led the pace of change, demonstrating how workplaces can continue to deliver great outcomes.

More than any other year, 2020 demonstrated the NSW public sector's strengths in collaborating, adapting and responding. This is exemplified by the role of the State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC) after the Black Summer bushfires in coordinating emergency responses across the state.

When COVID-19 emerged as a major threat, SEOC pivoted to tackle a new set of challenges. For many months, leaders from across the sector (and even from other jurisdictions) came together at SEOC, either in person or remotely, to champion and manage a whole-of-sector response. Gone were the siloes of old, replaced by helping minds and hands.

Many NSW public sector agencies also worked together behind the scenes, sharing real-time data and coordinating decision making, to adapt and respond to challenges from the bushfires and then the pandemic.

In April 2020, the NSW Government announced the formation of two new agencies to help the sector respond, rebuild and recover:

Source: https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/reports-and-data/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector-report-2020/response
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- **Resilience NSW** oversees disaster management in NSW. It is responsible for all aspects of disaster recovery and building community resilience against future disasters. SEOC forms part of the agency.
- The **Department of Regional NSW** is the central agency for dealing with regional issues and improving the coordination of support for communities, businesses and farmers who have endured drought, bushfires, floods and the impacts of the pandemic.

Across the sector, employees had to abandon or evolve long-established ways of working to continue providing public services from home or with social distancing in place. They worked to keep employees and the public safe while also ensuring that customers continued to receive the services they needed.

Source: https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/reports-and-data/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector-report-2020/response
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Going remote in NSW schools: The transition to online learning

The COVID-19 pandemic presented a significant challenge to the delivery of education for more than 800,000 school students across 2,200 NSW public schools. By 30 March 2020, more than 90% of NSW public school students were staying home. Teaching methods needed to adapt rapidly to accommodate remote students and those in physically distanced classrooms.

The solution was a digital hub that would be viewed more than 3.74 million times by 951,000 unique users who downloaded more than 510,000 resources. Although it was designed for our own public schools, the hub reached educators across the United States, the United Kingdom and India. NSW Catholic and Independent schools also accessed the shared resources.

The NSW Department of Education needed to provide an agile, responsive solution that was reliable, accessible and user-friendly. Teachers needed centralised, authoritative support and resources, while students needed access to their teachers and to learning and wellbeing support services. Principals needed technology that would allow them to address their communities and continue to lead their teams remotely.

The department formed a taskforce to ensure access to learning, information and support services during this period. This taskforce included experts in curricula, online learning, user experience design, IT, video production, wellbeing and disability, as well as business and system support. It quickly identified the need for a centralised and official repository of educational resources, tools and up-to-date information on the main website, education.nsw.gov.au, to best meet the needs of students and teachers.

Using the award-winning Education NSW platform, the team was able to quickly build and scale a responsive user-focused hub. [1]

A key feature was the introduction of on-demand professional learning for teaching staff, covering key areas such as curriculum modules, student assessment and wellbeing, and using digital technology to teach. The taskforce team rapidly sourced or developed more than 5,000 high-quality resources and made them available online. The department established 25 virtual staffrooms, enabling teachers across the state to collaborate and share information and resources. Thirty thousand teachers from across the state participated in the virtual staffrooms, and between 16 March and 30 April 2020, Department of Education corporate staff members delivered 60 state-wide live professional learning webinars on a variety of topics. Over 19,000 educators participated in these webinars in the first 20 days of the COVID lockdown period.

The successful launch included four weeks of live training and Q&A sessions, which were recorded and made available on the website. This training contributed to teacher identified professional development hours.

Communications for the Learning from Home hub focused on internal channels for staff and external channels for parents and key stakeholder groups, so there was consistent messaging and coordinated implementation, alongside customised calls to action.

Source: https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/reports-and-data/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector-report-2020/response
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The hub enabled school communities across the state to have the same access to information and resources, improving education opportunities for many. To improve equity of learning, the department also provided tens of thousands of computers to those in need. And students were able to access virtual counselling to support their wellbeing in this challenging time.

While the pandemic has been a significant disrupter to the delivery of education, it has also been the catalyst for improvements in several areas. Virtual counselling for students – which was not available before COVID-19 – will continue to be offered.

The one-stop shop of resources and virtual staffrooms provided educators with the most contemporary knowledge, and access will continue via the hub as it is continually updated. Teachers from smaller, remote and regional schools will continue to have a greater sense of connection to their colleagues in other parts of the state, providing support and sharing the lessons they have learnt.

Leadership and change management

Our leaders had to step up to the challenge of steering the sector through the year, and their impact on organisational performance cannot be underestimated. Leadership is key in setting direction, executing strategy, shaping culture and capability, inspiring purpose and delivering results.

The sharpening of our leaders' focus and performance is reflected in global improvements in People Matter survey results for questions about senior managers (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Employee perceptions of the performance of senior managers, 2020 vs 2019

Question	2020 (% positive)	Change from 2019 (pp)
Senior managers communicate the importance of customers in our work	70.3	9.0
Senior managers support the career advancement of women	64.4	3.3
Senior managers model the values of my organisation	57.9	5.8
Senior managers keep employees informed about what's going on	56.5	8.1

Source: https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/reports-and-data/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector-report-2020/response
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Question	2020 (% positive)	Change from 2019 (pp)
Senior managers promote collaboration between my organisation and other organisations we work with	56.0	3.2
Senior managers provide clear direction for the future of the organisation	53.1	2.5
Senior managers listen to employees	48.5	4.4

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2019, 2020)

Note: 'pp' stands for percentage points.

Employees were also satisfied with their agency's response to and communication during crises (see Table 2.2). However, perceptions of change management more generally did not improve, suggesting that agencies reacted well to events but did not improve their coordination when managing change more generally.

Table 2.2 Employee perceptions of communication and change management

Question	2020 (% positive)
My organisation quickly adapts and responds during major events that impact our work	82.6
My manager communicates effectively with me	74.6
Senior managers keep employees informed about what's going on	56.5
Senior managers provide clear direction for the future of the organisation	53.1
Change is managed well in my organisation	40.6

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2020)

Effective change management will become more important as the sector figures out a hybrid work model and pivots in response to opportunities and challenges.

Source: https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/reports-and-data/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector-report-2020/response
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Employee wellbeing

The pandemic also sharpened the focus on employee wellbeing. It affected most employees in some way, including through social distancing, reduced interactions with family and friends, cancelled recreation time, and the need to home school children and work remotely.

Some frontline employees could only deliver services digitally, while others had to contend with far stricter hygiene protocols to limit the spread of the virus. Many non-frontline employees had to adapt to working from home in an environment that was not always as practical as an office space.

Agencies have many ways of monitoring and boosting employee wellbeing, whether through manager check-ins, employee assistance programs or supplying ergonomic equipment. The People Matter survey, however, provides a consistent method for measuring wellbeing across the sector.

The 2019 survey marked the first time respondents were asked about their subjective wellbeing. The 2020 survey featured the same question. While there was some drop-off at the highest points of the scale in 2020 compared to 2019, most employees (65.3%) still scored 7 out of 10 or higher (see Figure 2.1) – a very reassuring outcome.

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2019, 2020)

Typically, the People Matter survey is conducted in May–June, but in 2020 it was pushed back to October–November, due to the pandemic. Many agencies developed short, sharp surveys to assess and act quickly on employee needs. These surveys seemed to help agencies maintain engagement with dispersed workforces.

Source: https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/reports-and-data/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector-report-2020/response
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Assessing employee experience at the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment during COVID-19

When the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) transitioned its more than 10,000 employees to remote working in early 2020, it wanted to make sure they remained connected and engaged.

The department's Crisis Management team (CMT) provided access to equipment so employees could create ergonomic workspaces at home. The team also worked with DPIE leaders to communicate new measures designed to keep employees safe, engaged and informed. These included virtual channels featuring pre-recorded videos and live discussions. In addition, CMT provided guidance and resources to help leaders support employee wellbeing while working remotely.

The department also ran pulse surveys during the pandemic to better understand how employees were coping. The surveys, which were designed with input from DPIE staff, were short and engaging, while also giving employees the opportunity to share and be heard. The surveys included targeted questions about health and wellbeing, experiences of working from home, and access to flexible working and leave options.

The first survey ran in May 2020 and had a participation rate of 59%. Employees were keen to share their experiences, including their frustrations, what they thought was working well and how they were feeling. The survey results showed positive scores for communication and leadership engagement, with respondents saying they had a strong sense of trust in their leaders. As part of the department's communications strategy, leaders regularly presented live, made themselves visible to staff, and provided updates on DPIE and COVID-19.

The second survey, which ran in August 2020, had a participation rate of 46%. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they felt like they were 'thriving', 'gliding', 'surviving', 'fluctuating', 'struggling' or 'sinking'. They also had the option to identify specific concerns and request a call from the Health and Wellbeing team. Almost 80 people asked for a follow-up call and received additional support.

DPIE employees overwhelmingly felt that remote working had been a success and said they would welcome the opportunity to continue to work from home for at least part of their time once it was possible to return to the office. The department used the survey responses on working arrangements to continue its proactive workplace planning.

The pulse surveys showed that the department listened to its people and implemented measures to support their health and wellbeing during the pandemic. This was also reflected in the 2020 People Matter Employee Survey, where 86.6% of DPIE respondents (compared with 82.6% for the sector) agreed with the statement "My organisation adapts and responds to major events that impact our work".

Source: https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/reports-and-data/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector-report-2020/response
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Recruitment

Recruitment was a vital component of the sector's pandemic response. The PSC worked with the sector to change the Government Sector Employment (General) Rules 2014 for temporary and term employment. The rule changes allowed agencies to accelerate recruitment for COVID-19-related roles and extend temporary or term employment beyond 12 months. These changes helped the sector quickly respond to the varying demands on our workforce.

Overall, recruitment remains an important, high-volume activity for the sector. In 2020, around 470,000 completed applications were submitted through the *I work for NSW* recruitment system, similar to the previous year. [2]

Despite the volume, the results of the 2020 People Matter survey show that employee perceptions of recruitment are still poor and have worsened since 2019. Only 38.2% of survey respondents said they have confidence in their organisation's recruitment decisions.

More positively, time to hire, a measure of the efficiency of recruitment processes, has decreased consistently since 2016 (see Figure 2.2). This is encouraging in the context of the pandemic because research shows that the longer the time to hire, the more likely candidate dropout becomes, especially among high-quality applicants. [3] Ensuring the recruitment process is a positive experience for candidates will help the sector attract the best and brightest people.

Source: Recruitment data collection (2016–20)

In 2020, an increased proportion of applicants were external to the sector compared to 2019 (see Figure 2.3). This may reflect the broader impacts of the pandemic, with job losses in other sectors. However, despite the increase in applications from candidates outside the sector, the hiring ratio favoured internal applicants slightly more in 2020 than in 2019. Clearly, the current recruitment practices still present some challenges. The sector needs to undertake further work to understand candidates' views of the recruitment process and whether current recruitment practices prevent new talent from entering the sector.

Source: Recruitment data collection (2019–20)

Mobility

Embedding mobility and capability-based assessments has been a focus of the PSC's work since the introduction of the GSE Act in 2013. The *NSW Public Sector Capability Framework* was designed to be applied to all roles in the public service, shifting the basis for role design from subject matter expertise to 16 core capabilities.

The foundations for mobilising skilled people quickly enabled hundreds to take up contact tracing roles as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded. With NSW Health needing support and the whole sector pivoting to meet the state's emerging needs, an expression of interest for contact tracers was circulated and within a month,

Source: https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/reports-and-data/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector-report-2020/response
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the contact tracing unit grew from four people to 400.

Source: https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/reports-and-data/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector-report-2020/response
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Mobilising the workforce for COVID-19 contact tracing

Responding to COVID-19 required cross-sector mobility in key areas of demand, on a scale never seen before. The NSW public sector's response has required rapid mobility of staff across agencies, and a quick intake of people from other sectors. The NSW Health COVID-19 Contact Tracing team is an example of this collaboration.

Contact tracing was already part of the NSW Public Health system: many Local Health Districts, though their public health units, had been tracing infectious diseases for 30 years. But when COVID-19 hit, the system needed a more centralised capacity to cope with the new challenges.

Although contact tracing now seems to happen instantaneously, it is hard to believe that the COVID-19 Contact Tracing team began as four employees on 13 March 2020 and expanded to 200 employees by the end of that month. Today, there are more than 400 contact tracers in the NSW Health central team alone.

NSW Health Contact Tracing Unit Director Carolyn Murray said that after a late-night phone call from her Director requesting the urgent establishment of a COVID-19 Contact Tracing team, she gathered three nurses together and the four of them began calling people who may have been in close contact with COVID-19.

As the workload increased rapidly, NSW Health reached out across the public sector for staff from other agencies to join the Contact Tracing team. They received an overwhelming response from all areas of the sector, including those not involved in healthcare. This spirit of service and willingness to collaborate were critical to the success of the Contact Tracing team.

Once NSW Health had established a process for moving staff across agencies and assessing core capabilities, employees from NSW public sector agencies were able to move across to the Contact Tracing team quickly at a time of critical need. Many are still temporarily based at the contact tracing headquarters and will remain there as needed.

As the number of infections grew, so did the number of contact tracers, and a range of staff joined the team – from the Australian Defence Force, the PSC, the Cancer Institute, Taronga Zoo and the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care. The NSW Health COVID-19 Contact Tracing team now includes employees from a variety of other sectors, including airlines.

A big challenge for the team was scaling up training to induct new contract tracers quickly, as numbers increased and updates changed daily. NSW Health collaborated with the Health Education and Training Institute to rapidly set up an online training system and standard operating procedures for staff making those important contact tracing calls. The Contact Tracing team also worked with Service NSW to support the design and implementation of the QR code system for venues to help identify attendees who may have come in close contact with the virus.

Although the contact tracing system was designed to make outbound calls and advise people of what they needed to do, it evolved to also receive inbound calls from those requiring additional support or struggling with self-isolation. The success of the service saw it grow far beyond its initial scope and

Source: https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/reports-and-data/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector-report-2020/response
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> take on an even greater role in fighting COVID-19.
>
> "One of the things I've learnt during this time is that people respond to a crisis differently," Ms Murray said. "Working to engage staff around their strengths and contribute to the response is important. NSW has strong leadership and that flows through to the successes of our contact tracing."

Having a mobile workforce makes it easier to redeploy resources to match priorities and respond effectively to change and to emerging trends. Employee mobility provides a way of getting the right person into the right job, and infusing innovative ideas and practices into a workplace. It is also widely regarded as one of the best ways to develop leadership capability, provide enriching careers, and build and retain capability in an agency and the sector more broadly.

NSW public sector employees experience mobility in many ways, from formally moving to a new agency in the sector to being promoted internally or transferred to another role at the same level. Mobility between agencies does, however, appear to be limited, with only 1.6% of employees formally moving to a new agency in 2020. As such, mobility is more common within agencies and more likely to be reactive than proactive.

To support the sector in developing more purposeful mobility pathways, the PSC has created a new team to work with the sector to design more effective and consistent mobility, talent management and recruitment solutions.

Collaboration

Many NSW public sector agencies combined their efforts and knowledge to respond to the bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic. These events tested the ability of the sector to work on common goals, across agencies and with other sectors. In the early days of public health orders and lockdowns in NSW, the public sector worked with other sectors to keep the people of NSW safe.

Across the sector, perceptions of teamwork and collaboration within organisations has improved slightly since 2019. Just under 80% of People Matter survey respondents in 2020 believed their workgroup collaborates to achieve objectives, similar to 2019. Furthermore, 54.4% of respondents felt there was good cooperation between teams across their agency, an increase of 4.9 percentage points since 2019. These results are especially encouraging considering that many people have been physically separated due to arrangements such as working from home and staggered rostering.

Employee perceptions of between-organisation collaboration also increased between 2019 and 2020, by 3.2 percentage points. This is a positive sign given that collaboration will become increasingly important in navigating our complex world and delivering world class services to the people and businesses of NSW.

Source: https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/reports-and-data/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector-report-2020/response
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Partnering with the community to be COVID-safe in Toomelah

The challenges of 2020 saw the NSW public sector work in new ways with communities to protect the health of those most at risk.

Several parts of the sector worked with the small Aboriginal community of Toomelah, in remote North West NSW, to implement the first COVID-19 Community Action Plan. This approach has since been replicated in other Aboriginal communities across NSW, acting as a model for effective community collaboration.

Toomelah's overcrowded housing and disproportionally greater health concerns meant the community would have been particularly vulnerable had a COVID-19 outbreak occurred.

In March 2020, as many were still working to understand the threat posed by COVID-19, Aboriginal Affairs NSW (part of the Department of Premier and Cabinet) contacted the Toomelah Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) to begin work on a Community Action Plan.

The community led the development of the plan, taking responsibility for its design and enforcement. By April, all parties had agreed on the plan – the shortest time the community had taken to move from inception to implementation of a government initiative.

The Community Action Plan outlined agreed actions for the community, the NSW Government, non-government organisations and the Commonwealth Government should COVID-19 enter the community. It was structured around three levels of threat: preparation, containment and elimination.

Crowded housing posed problems for isolation. In response, vacant Teacher Housing Authority properties were made available and new temporary accommodation was built. A barrier was put in place in Toomelah to prevent any non-essential services from entering the town. This barrier successfully protected Toomelah from acquiring any COVID-19 cases, so the second and third components of the plan – containment and elimination – did not need to be enacted.

However, with schools across the state shutting down in April and limited home internet access in Toomelah, the community faced a new challenge: how to deliver online schooling. The Department of Education, Department of Regional NSW and Toomelah LALC again worked together to develop a solution. In the end, the school's wi-fi signal was extended to allow much of the community to access the school's wi-fi network from home. The agencies involved are now investigating whether this access can be extended beyond the school system to also allow free access to the Service NSW website.

Toomelah's location on the NSW–Queensland border presented additional challenges as new restrictions required community members to provide identification to cross the border – necessary for Toomelah residents to access the closest hospital, supermarket and other essential services. Many residents of Aboriginal communities have no photo identification. To resolve this issue, the LALC invited Service NSW to the community to process legal photo identification applications for willing residents.

Source: https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/reports-and-data/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector-report-2020/response
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> Support from the NSW public sector during the pandemic, and the willingness of all involved to collaborate respectfully and effectively for the benefit of the community, has built strong bonds of trust. It has also served as a blueprint for genuine government–community collaboration that will hopefully inform the sector's broader work in serving customer needs.

Employee engagement and productivity

Around 16% of the public sector workforce responded to the first People Matter survey, which was launched in 2012. Promoting the value of the survey to employees and agencies, and showing employees that their views are taken seriously, has improved the response rate over time (see Figure 2.4). In 2020, 104,598 out of 221,149 employees had their say – a response rate of 47.3%.

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2016–20)

Though most of the Health cluster did not participate in the 2020 survey, the results are still indicative of the performance of the sector during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing months.

Employee engagement is an important measure for the sector because it can be used as a proxy for productivity and, therefore, the overall performance of the sector. In sum, employee engagement is an individual's connection and commitment to their organisation.[4] The People Matter survey measures employee engagement using five questions that assess feelings of pride, attachment, motivation and inspiration, and an employee's willingness to recommend their organisation as a great place to work.

Many factors influence employee engagement, including leadership, positive work culture, organisational support, and the ability to work flexibly.[5] Engaged employees are more innovative and higher performing, and they experience better wellbeing.[6] Employee engagement has also been linked to higher levels of customer satisfaction and other organisational variables, including lower rates of employee turnover.[7] This is why it's so important to track engagement – it shows where we are on our journey to providing a world class employee experience.

Despite the many challenges of 2020, the sector continued its upward trajectory for employee engagement (see Figure 2.5). The scores for most other topics measured in the survey also improved, some by a large amount, which is a tremendous achievement for the sector.

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2016–20)

Customer satisfaction

Another measure of the performance of the sector is customer satisfaction. The many parts of the NSW public sector share a common goal: delivering services that make NSW a great place to live, work, visit and invest in. When our customers are satisfied, it means the sector is achieving this goal and performing well – that our services are easy to use, high quality and accessible to all.

Source: https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/reports-and-data/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector-report-2020/response
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The Customer Experience Unit in the Department of Customer Service developed the CSMS in 2013. A key survey output is the Customer Satisfaction Index. The index assesses how satisfied customers are with a government service, how close their experience is to their expectations of that service, and how close their experience is to an ideal service. It is scored out of 100. A higher score means that customers are more satisfied overall. Scores can be averaged across services to produce a score for the whole sector.

Despite a challenging year, the Customer Satisfaction Index reached an all-time high in 2020 for consumers and businesses (see Figure 2.6). But more can be done to improve interactions between government and consumers and businesses.

Source: Customer Satisfaction Measurement Survey (2016-20)

Source: https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/reports-and-data/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector-report-2020/response
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The NSW public sector response to the Black Summer bushfires

As we continue to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, it can be easy to forget the impact of the 2019–20 bushfires on the state, the country and even the world.

Over the 2019–20 fire season, 11,774 fires across NSW burnt more than 5.5 million hectares of land – about 7.0% of the state's total land area. They destroyed 2,476 houses, three schools, 284 facilities and 5,559 outbuildings, and damaged 800 kilometres of road.[1] The Government declared a State of Emergency three times.

Images of NSW employees from the Rural Fire Service – supported by Fire and Rescue NSW, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, and the NSW Forestry Corporation, all working to keep communities safe – were beamed around the world.

Agencies worked together, supporting each other and sharing years of knowledge to minimise the devastating impacts on the NSW community.

Taken from the NSW Premier's Award 2020 nominations, the following are just some of the ways the NSW public sector served customers and the community during and after the fires.

The **Department of Communities and Justice** established the Bushfire Housing Assistance Service and the Bushfire Housing Assistance Response Team to support people displaced due to the fires. More than 8,000 people received more than 19,000 nights of accommodation.

The **Department of Customer Service**'s Spatial Services' Emergency Information Coordination Unit became a hub for emergency data sharing across NSW Government. The unit delivered timely spatial data and imagery for emergency services at the height of the bushfires. It continues to support recovery efforts and collaborate with Infrastructure NSW on infrastructure and asset management for better planning, forecasting and responses for future bushfire and emergency events.

The **Department of Education** worked to ensure schools were safe and able to open on day one of Term 1, 2020. This helped provide a sense of normality and security for young people who had experienced the trauma of the fires. The department conducted safety checks for over 400 schools in three weeks, and rebuilt two schools in less than three months.

Local Land Services used existing expertise to establish a triage call centre, taking pressure off emergency services. The agency provided landholders and animal owners with veterinary advice, fodder, water and other support for injured and displaced animals. The agency also assisted the community with the daunting task of stock destruction and burial.

The **NSW Telco Authority** provided 24-hour emergency coordination of telecommunications to support emergency services. The authority maintains the Public Safety Network (PSN), providing reliable radio communications for emergency services. The PSN provided more than 99% coverage throughout the crisis, helping crews and local communities remain safe.

Source: https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/reports-and-data/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector-report-2020/response
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The **Department of Planning, Industry and Environment** began emergency air monitoring and quickly deployed nine temporary monitoring stations, at Batemans Bay, Coffs Harbour, Cooma, Grafton, Lismore, Merimbula, Port Macquarie, Taree and Ulladulla. These stations provided vital information on air quality in impacted communities. Five of the monitoring stations are now permanent.

Public Works Advisory, within the **Regional NSW** cluster, worked with contractors to clear debris from fire-damaged properties and make communities safe as quickly as possible. It cleared close to 3,600 properties and directly injected more than $150 million into local communities, assisting with economic recovery.

Service NSW extended hours and worked tirelessly to connect those impacted by the fires to different government services.

TAFE NSW offered fee-free short courses to affected communities, providing the skills needed to help rebuild devastated communities. More than 1,500 people enrolled for free training.

Transport for NSW employees worked around the clock – often surrounded by infrastructure that was still smouldering – to reopen affected road and rail infrastructure, which at times provided vital connections to regional communities.

The unprecedented speed with which these essential services were repaired, reopened or reimagined is testament to the unswerving commitment of the NSW public sector to NSW communities.

Despite the challenges posed by 2020, the NSW public sector didn't just maintain productivity – it increased it. Improvements to employee engagement and customer satisfaction scores is compelling evidence of this.

The sector continued to pursue the Premier's Priority of achieving a world class public service by focusing on outcomes. This is reflected in NSW Treasury's move from program budgeting to outcomes-based budgeting, shifting the emphasis of the budgeting process from activities and initiatives to putting citizen outcomes at the centre. The PSC is also working with clusters to help them measure and report on their major program outcomes, to develop a fuller picture of the sector's productivity.

Improved sector productivity also took the form of making the most of our people. Embracing flexible working has meant employees are managed based on outcomes rather than simply time spent at their desk. Mobilising employees to respond to bushfires and the pandemic also helped boost productivity by increasing development opportunities, reinvigorating engagement and ensuring our people were best placed to meet customer needs.

Notes

[1]Education NSW's Digital Connect Network won the Most Outstanding Government Platform at the Digital Transformation Agency's Australian Government Digital Awards 2020.

Source: https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/reports-and-data/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector-report-2020/response
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[2]This underestimates recruitment activity in the sector because not all parts of the sector use the full I work for NSW platform, most notably the Health cluster. This cluster was responsible for just under a third of the growth in FTE across the public sector in 2020, suggesting a reasonable amount of recruitment activity within Health.

[3]Rynes, Bretz and Gerhart (1991)

[4]Scottish Executive Social Research (2007)

[5]Attridge (2009); Pitt-Catsouphes and Matz-Costa (2008)

[6]Alfes, Truss, Soane, Rees and Gatenby (2010)

[7]Harter, Schmidt and Hayes (2002)

[8]Owens and O'Kane (2020)

Source: https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/reports-and-data/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector/state-of-the-nsw-public-sector-report-2020/response
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