

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 so they exemplify our values and create safe, healthy and flexible places where all employees can bring their best selves to work and serve the people of NSW. Bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment and racism cannot be tolerated. The harmful consequences of negative workplace behaviours at the individual and organisational levels are well known 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 shared core values and principles helps to increase employee engagement and wellbeing, and reduces negative workplace behaviours.

Ethics and values

For the first time this year, the People Matter survey asked employees about ethical behaviours and values in their organisation.

When a person behaves ethically, it means they act in ways that are principled and lawful, and that build trust and demonstrate the sector’s core values. Values are beliefs that guide and motivate attitudes and actions. An organisation’s values are a set of guiding beliefs upon which the organisation is based.

Workplaces with strong ethics and values work together to shape the way employees operate to help achieve outcomes.



69.2% favourable overall

Ethics and values score

Question	2022 (% favourable)
My organisation shows a commitment to ethical behaviours	70.0%
I support my organisation’s values	84.5%
Senior managers model the values of my organisation	53.5%

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022)

Case study: A workplace approach to addressing domestic and family violence

The NSW Government provides support for employees experiencing domestic and family violence (DFV), such as by offering 20 days of paid leave each calendar year and providing flexible working arrangements. However, the former Housing and Property Group at the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) found there had been minimal uptake of paid DFV leave. Find out how they increased awareness and access to support and awareness in their workplace.

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Flexible work

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

The top three flexible working arrangements in 2022 are:

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

Hybrid working has become more commonplace for sections of the public sector workforce. This shift to greater flexibility can support both employee wellbeing and service delivery needs at the individual, team and organisational levels.

Employees’ use and perceptions of flexible working arrangements, 2022 vs 2021

	2022 (%)	2021 (%)
Use	73.5	78.5
Satisfaction with access	60.4	64.5
Perception of manager support	65.2	68.3

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2021, 2022)

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022)

Case study: Women’s Economic Opportunity Review

The COVID-19 Economic Recovery Strategy committed to identify and review barriers to women’s economic participation and reform opportunities such as enabling greater workplace flexibility, reducing gender segregation within industries and occupations, and improving the accessibility and affordability of early childhood services. Find out more about how several government agencies collaborated to conduct the Women’s Economic Opportunity Review.

[Read more](#) →

Misconduct

Misconduct is behaviour that is unethical or illegal, or that breaches an agency’s code of conduct. The public sector’s values provide a clear framework to help employees to understand what is meant by ‘misconduct’ and what it means for everyday work.

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 (48.1%)
- I didn’t think it would make a difference (45.1%)
- I didn’t think it would be confidential (38.4%).



Employees who experienced pressure to engage in misconduct

2.8% in 2022

2.4% in 2021

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2021, 2022)

Proportion of employees aware of misconduct, who reported it and who had their report satisfactorily resolved, 2022 vs 2021

**Aware of misconduct: 15.2%**

15.4 in 2021

**Misconduct reported: 57.7%**

57.8 in 2021

**Complaint resolved to satisfaction: 34.7%**

35.9% in 2021

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2021, 2022)

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 requires continued work.

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 reasonable manner, is not bullying.

Employees who witnessed or experienced bullying, who reported it and who had their report satisfactorily resolved, 2022 vs 2021

**Bullying witnessed: 20.9%**

21.8% in 2021

**Bullying experienced: 13.6%**

14.1% in 2021



Bullying reported: 39.6%

41.5% in 2021



Complaint resolved to satisfaction: 39.4%

41.3% in 2021

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2021, 2022)

Note: Employees who experienced bullying were subsequently asked whether they reported any bullying they had witnessed or experienced.

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2018–22)

Sources of self-reported bullying incidents, 2022

Group	Incidents (%)
A fellow worker at your level	38.2
Your immediate manager or supervisor	30.4
A senior manager	25.6
Another manager	13.7
A subordinate	10.3
A customer	9.5
A member of the public other than a customer	4.6
Other	5.3
Prefer not to say	10.7

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022)

Note: Respondents were able to select multiple responses, so the sum of percentages in this table may be greater than 100%.

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2021, 2022)

Note: The 2022 People Matter survey included a new question about cultural background. Therefore, 2021 comparison scores for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are not available.

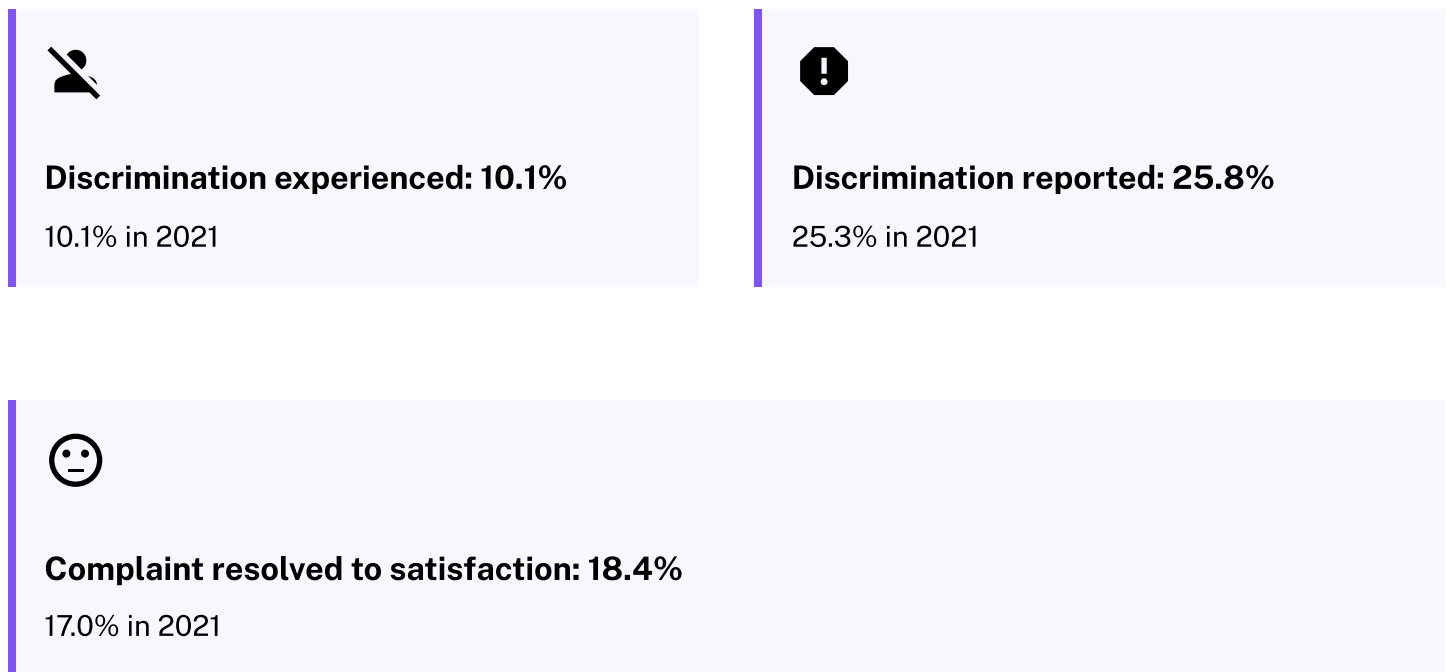
Discrimination and racism

The People Matter survey asked employees about their experiences of discrimination and racism.

Discrimination is when a person or 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. It is important to understand employee experiences in this area to reduce the incidence of these harmful workplace behaviours.

Employees who experienced discrimination, who reported it and who had their report satisfactorily resolved, 2022 vs 2021



Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2021, 2022)

Employee attributes that discrimination was based on, 2022 vs 2021

Attribute	2022 (%)	2021 (%)
Race	27.1	23.1

Attribute	2022 (%)	2021 (%)
Age	22.8	23.9
Employment activity*	18.8	18.7
Sex	14.8	15.4
Gender identity, sexual orientation, or lawful sexual activity	10.3	9.4
Parent or carer status	8.9	8.6
Industrial and/or political activity	6.9	7.3
Physical features	7.3	6.7
Religious belief or activity	7.2	6.4
Disability	6.7	6.1
Marital status	4.4	3.9
Personal association with someone who has any of the above attributes	7.4	7.3
Other	26.1	28.3

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2021, 2022)

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

Note: Respondents were able to select multiple responses, so the sum of percentages in this table may be greater than 100%

Employees who experienced racism, who reported it and who had their report satisfactorily resolved, 2022 vs 2021

**Racism experienced: 4.7%**

4.2% in 2021

**Racism reported: 26.9%**

27.3% in 2021

**Complaint resolved to satisfaction: 34.7%**

33.9% in 2021

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2021, 2022)

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature that may make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. This kind of behaviour is unacceptable and cannot be tolerated in any form. Examples of sexual harassment include unwelcome touching, sexually suggestive comments, and inappropriate staring that may make someone feel intimidated. Unfortunately, this year the rate of experiencing sexual harassment increased slightly.

Employees who experienced sexual harassment, who reported it and who had their report satisfactorily resolved, 2022 vs 2021

**Sexual harassment experienced: 4.8%**

4.5% in 2021

**Sexual harassment reported: 22.7%**

24.5% in 2021



Complaint resolved to satisfaction: 43.1%

44.0% in 2021

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2021, 2022)

Employees who experienced sexual harassment, by gender, 2022 vs 2021



Women: 5.5%

5.0 % in 2021



Men: 3.0%

2.7% in 2021



Non-binary: 13.7%

15.8% in 2021

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2021, 2022)

Workplace health and safety

Managing 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.

Employee perceptions of health and safety, 2022 vs 2021



Favourable overall: 69.3%

73.2% in 2021

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2021, 2022)

Employee perceptions of health and safety, 2022 vs 2021

	2022 (%)	2021 (%)
I am confident WHS issues will be addressed promptly	74.4	76.4
There are effective resources in my organisation to support employee wellbeing	64.2	70.0

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2021, 2022)

Next section: our leaders

Who they are and how we view them.

