

Our leaders

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The impact that leaders can have on the performance of organisations cannot be underestimated. Leadership is critical in setting direction, executing strategies, shaping culture and employee experience, improving capabilities, inspiring purpose and delivering results for customers.

Executive numbers

Government sector senior executives (GSSEs) have formal executive roles in the Public Service and aligned government services, providing leadership, direction and accountability. A subgroup of these executives – known as Public Service senior executives – work for Public Service agencies and are represented across all portfolios.

The largest increases in the number of GSSEs in 2023 occurred in the Public Service (8.2%) and the Transport Service (14%). The number of senior executives increased across most portfolios in the Public Service. The government has made a commitment to reduce senior executive numbers by 15%.

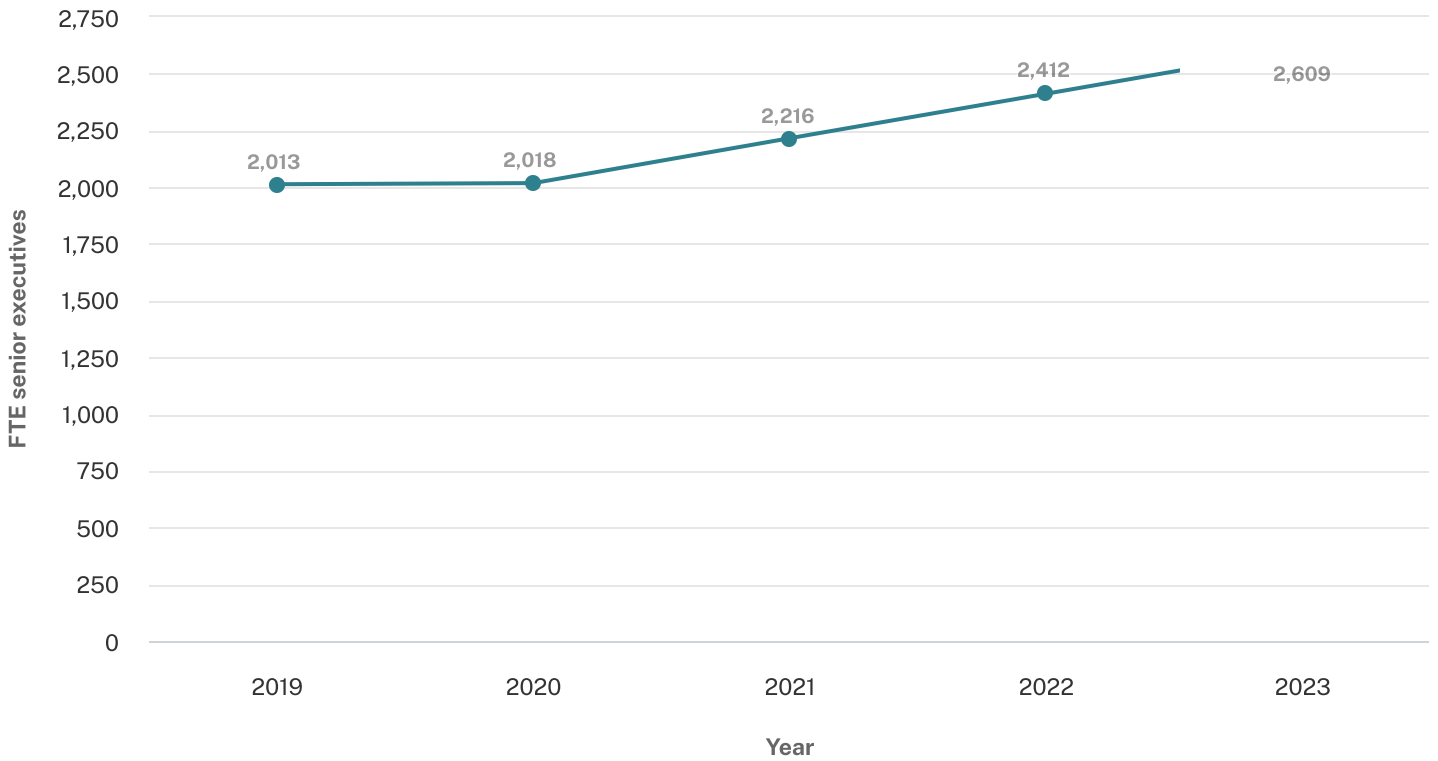


Government sector senior executives, 2023 vs 2022 (census FTE)

4,265, up from **3,900** in 2022

Source: Workforce Profile (2022, 2023)

Senior executives in the Public Service, 2019–23 (FTE)



Year	FTE
2019	2013
2020	2018
2021	2216

Year	FTE
2022	2412
2023	2609

Senior executives in the Public Service, 2019–23 (FTE)

Source: Workforce Profile (2019–23)

Senior executive full-time equivalent by public sector service, 2023 vs 2022

Senior executives in the public sector

Service	2023	Change from 2022 (%)
Public Service	2,609	8.2
NSW Health Service	209	7.1
NSW Police Force	65	0
Teaching Service	0	0
Transport Service	1,150	14.0
Other Crown service	232	6.0
Total government sector	4,265	9.4
State owned corporations	63	-84.3
External to government sector	52	-14.2
Total public sector	4,375	0.5

Source: Workforce Profile (2022, 2023)

Note: Senior executives in the Education portfolio are employed under the GSE Act and are counted as part of the Public Service in this table.

Note: The decrease in State owned corporations is due to a review of the definition of ‘senior executives’ for reporting purposes, most notably in Essential Energy, which changed from 275 in 2022 to 8 in 2023 (-267 or 97%).

Employee perceptions of senior leaders

The People Matter survey asks employees about their perceptions of the senior managers who lead their organisations. Senior managers need to manage change well, set a clear direction and work with people managers to lead the workforce and deliver high-quality services to customers. By embodying the sector’s values, they can guide the evolution of their organisation’s culture to ensure employees experience a positive working environment.

Employees perceptions of senior leaders, 2023 vs 2022



52.1% favourable overall

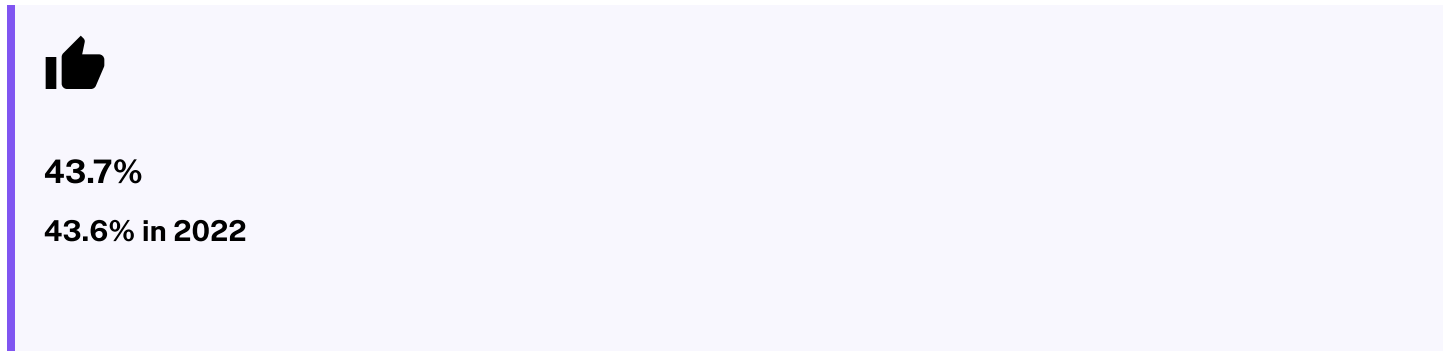
up from **51.4%**

	2023 (%) favourable)	Change from 2022 (pp)
Senior managers provide clear direction for the future of the organisation	49.6	-0.3
Senior managers model the values of my organisation	54.5	1.0
Senior managers promote collaboration between my organisation and other organisations we work with	52.7	0.7
Senior managers communicate the importance of customers in our work	65.2	0.6
Senior managers listen to employees	45.7	1.0

	2023 (% favourable)	Change from 2022 (pp)
Senior managers support the career advancement of all employees	44.7	1.0

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Employee confidence that their organisation will act on People Matter survey results, 2023 vs 2022



Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Leadership capability

The PSC provides executive leadership programs to ensure sector leaders have the mindsets, behaviours and capabilities needed to lead in high-performing, outcomes-focused workplaces. Refreshed 2024 leadership programs will be launched, following an evaluation of the programs in 2023. The programs will have an increased focus on ethical, inclusive and sustainable leadership.

Communication and change management

Effective communication is proactive, timely and focused on what employees need to know and how changes within their organisation will affect them. Good change management is vital for every organisation across the sector. Well-managed change minimises day-to-day disruptions to employees' everyday work and lives.

Machinery of government changes are a major driver of organisational change in the NSW government sector. Making these changes in ways that minimise transitional risks and associated costs is an important challenge for senior executives.

Employee perceptions of communication and change management, 2023 vs 2022



56.3% favourable overall

	2023 (% favourable)	Change from 2022 (pp)
My manager communicates effectively with me	74.9	+0.3
Change is managed well in my organisation	38.9	+0.1
Senior managers provide clear direction for the future of the organisation	49.6	-0.3
I am supported through changes that affect my work	58.3	n/a
I have the opportunity to provide feedback on change processes that directly affect me	59.2	n/a

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Note: As the 2023 People Matter survey included two new questions about communication and change management, the 2022 comparison score is not available.

People management

Effective people managers are essential to high-performing organisations. They are vital for achieving positive workforce outcomes and delivering a world class Public Service to the people of NSW. A high-performance culture is underpinned by an effective system for managing individual, team and

organisational performance.



Employees with a performance and development plan in place, 2023 vs 2022

74.1%, up from 71.3% in 2022

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)



65.3% of employees had formal feedback conversations with their manager

up from 63.1% in 2022



79.8% of employees had informal feedback conversations with their manager

up from 78.8% in 2022

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Employee perceptions of feedback and performance management, 2023 vs 2022



56.4% favourable overall

up from 55.4% in 2022

2023 (% positive) Change from 2022 (pp)

In the last 12 months, I have received feedback to help me improve my work	64.6	+1.6
My performance is assessed against clear criteria	55.3	+0.8
My manager appropriately deals with employees who perform poorly	49.2	+0.8

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Employee perceptions of workplace recognition, 2023 vs 2022

	2023 (% positive)	Change from 2022 (pp)
My manager provides recognition for the work I do	71.0	+0.6
I receive adequate recognition for my contributions from my organisation	53.3	+3.8

Source: People Matter Employee Survey (2022, 2023)

Case study: Improving climate risk management across the NSW public sector

In a first for state and territory jurisdictions in Australia, the NSW Government developed a whole-of-government approach to managing climate risk and adapting to climate change. The Climate Risk Ready NSW program aims to build capability and improve government responses by providing consistent, integrated guidance across all agencies.

[Read more](#) →

Case study: Increasing cultural diversity in public sector leadership

The Public Sector Commission (PSC) has created a new sponsorship program – Elevate & Advocate – as part of a wider strategy to increase cultural diversity in public sector senior leadership. The program is designed to meet the sector’s commitment to workforce inclusion and to ensure sector leadership reflects NSW’s diversity.

Read more →

Next section: our organisations

How we experience our organisations’ practices.

