

Our structure

The sector's size and distribution across our state.

On this page

Headcount and full-time equivalent employees

Structure of the NSW public sector

Headcount and contribution to overall employment by NSW region

Occupations

Employment types

Over 450,000 employees work in the NSW public sector to deliver a wide range of services to the people of NSW. Departments and agencies in the public sector are arranged into 11 groups or portfolios. Each portfolio coordinates related day-to-day public services and is led by a secretary. The term 'portfolio' is commonly used for administrative purposes; however, portfolios are not established by legislation.

Due to machinery of government changes, there have been some changes in the way government functions and responsibilities are allocated and structured across government agencies.

Headcount and full-time equivalent employees



453,210

ongoing, temporary and casual employees



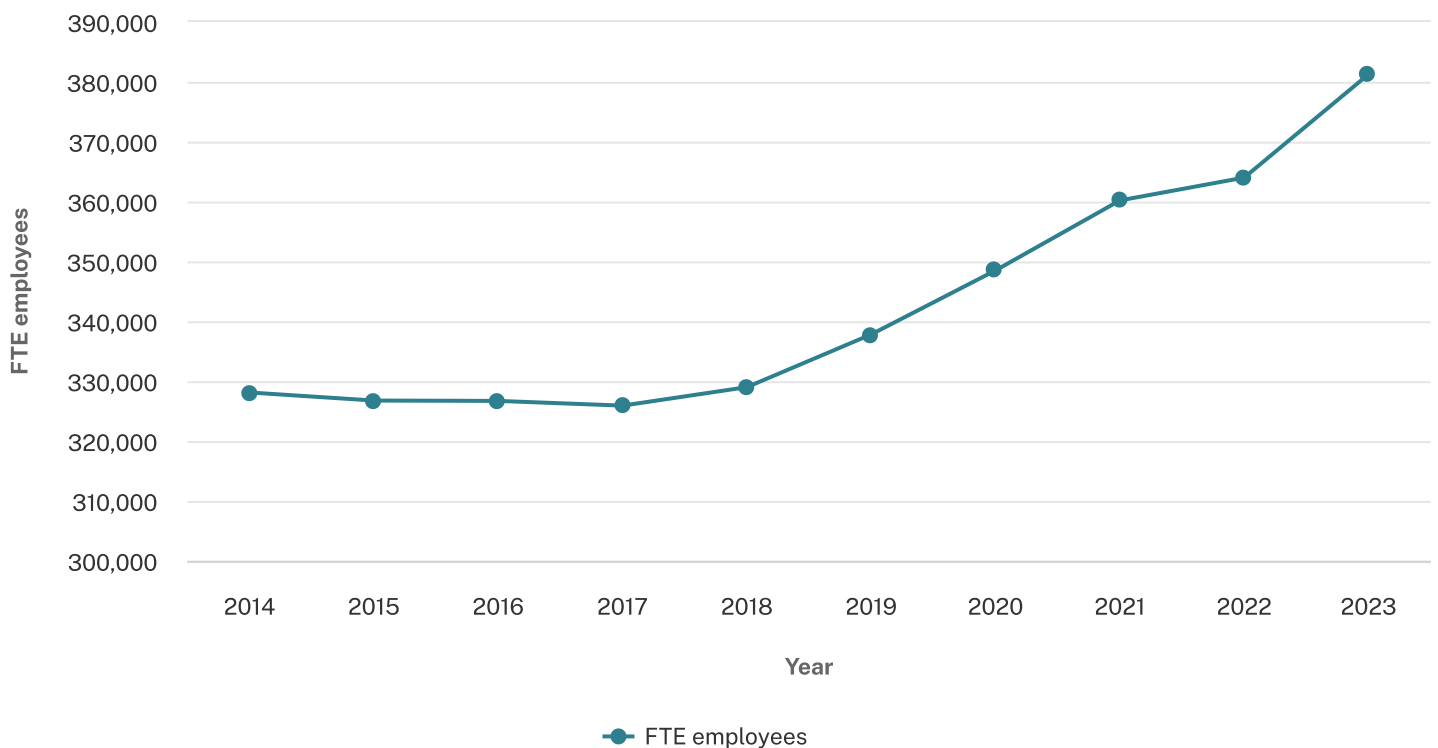
equating to 381,272

full-time equivalent employees

Source: *Workforce Profile (2023), census period*

The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees in the sector increased by 17,265 (or 4.7%) from 2022 to 2023. This is the largest recorded growth in the workforce since the *Workforce Profile* commenced in 1999. Key occupations with notable increases in FTE were Clerical and Administrative Workers (+3,274 or 6.7%), School Support Staff (+2,324 or 8.9%), Nurses (+1,538 or 3.0%), School Teachers (+611 or 0.9%), Prison Officers (+553 or 13.9%), Ambulance Officers (+538 or 10.4%) and Medical Practitioners (+339 or 2.5%).

Full-time equivalent employees over time, 2014–23



Year	FTE employees
2014	328111
2015	326765
2016	326706
2017	325917
2018	329005
2019	337817

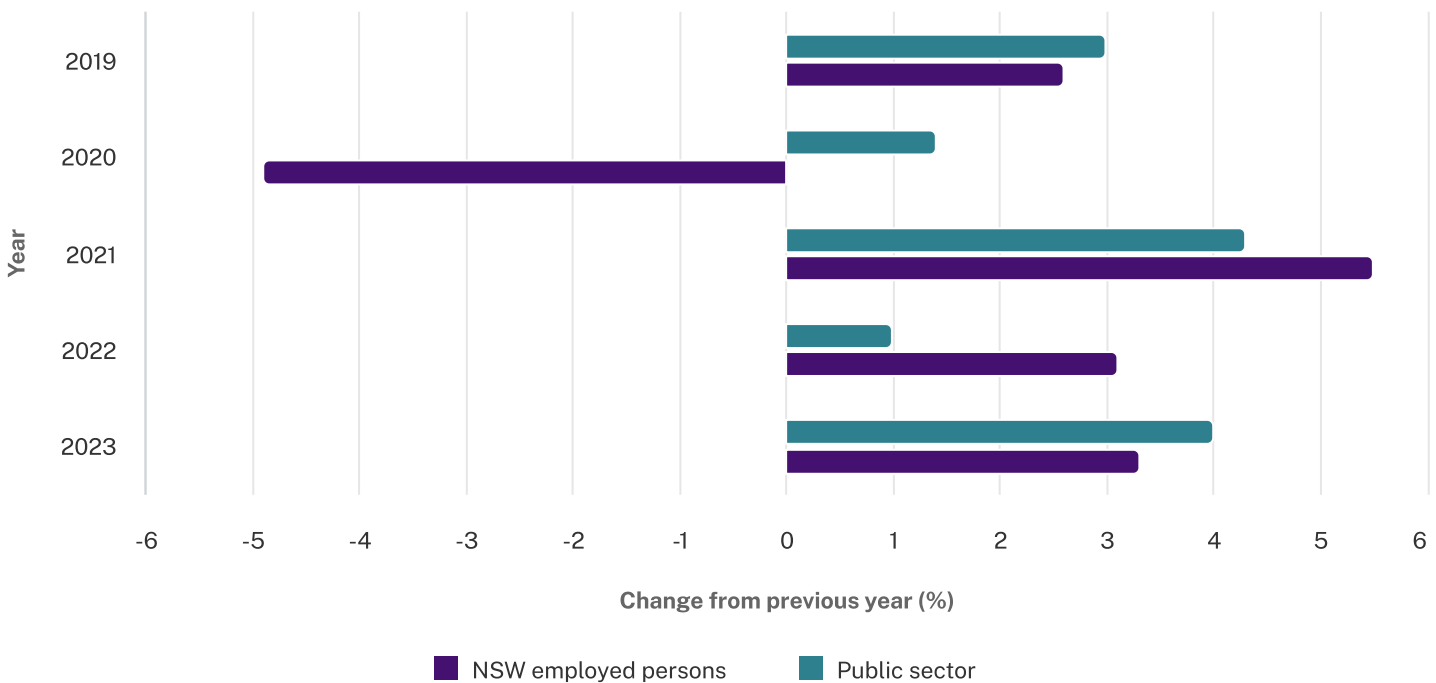
Year	FTE employees
2020	348508
2021	360190
2022	364006
2023	381272

Full-time equivalent employees over time, 2014–23

Source: Workforce Profile (2014–23), census period

The number of people (headcount) employed in the sector increased by 4.0% in 2023, outpacing the growth in the number of people employed in NSW overall, at 3.3%.

Number of people employed in the public sector and in NSW overall, 2019–23



Year	NSW employed persons	Public sector
2023	3.3	4
2022	3.1	1
2021	5.5	4.3
2020	-4.9	1.4
2019	2.6	3

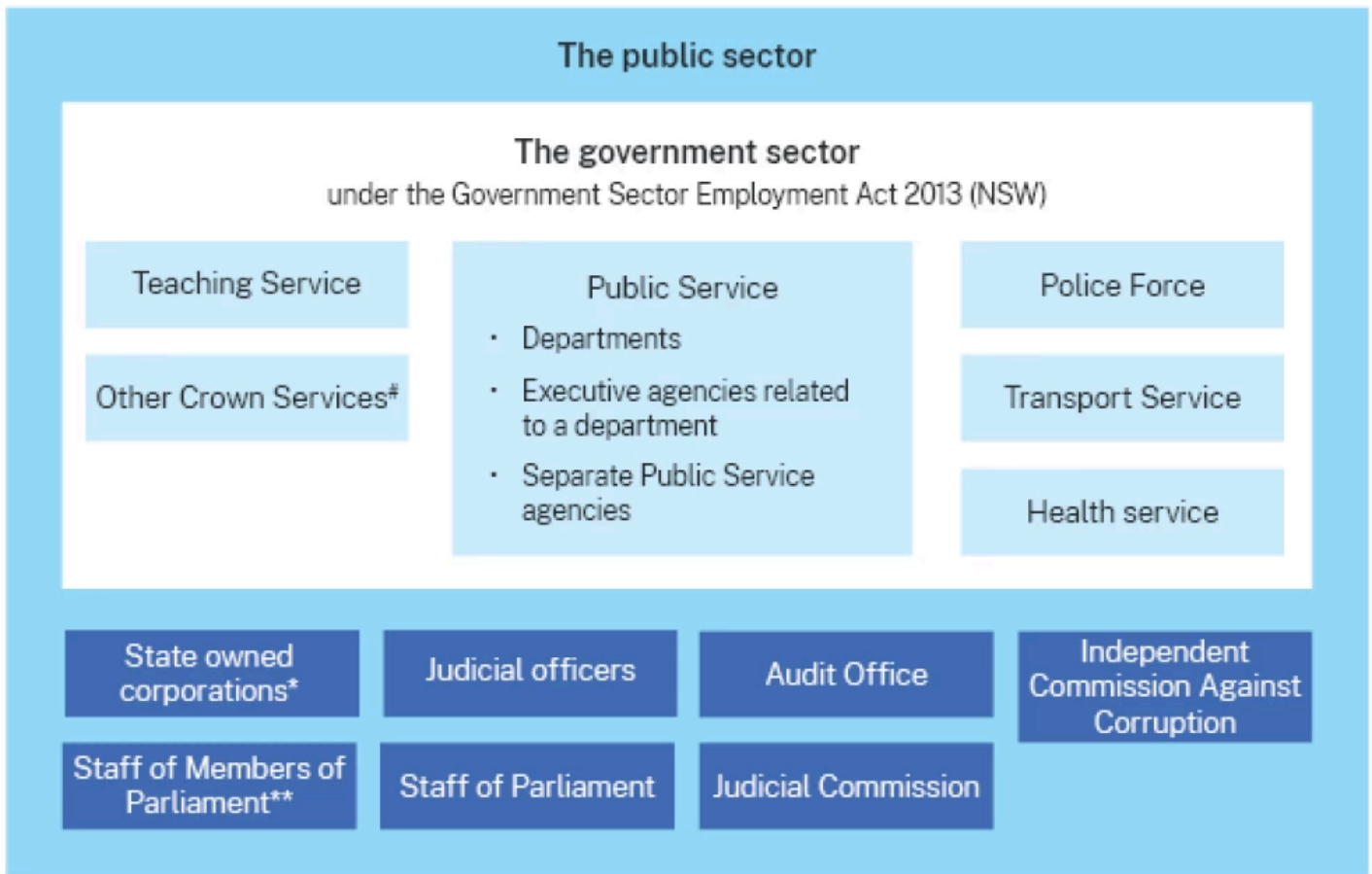
Number of people employed in the public sector and in NSW overall, 2019–23

Source: *Workforce Profile (2019–23), ABS (2023a)*

Structure of the NSW public sector

The GSE Act establishes 2 main employment groups: the government sector and the Public Service within it. Most government employees are in the government sector.

The government sector is structured into 11 portfolios that coordinate related day-to-day public services, each led by a secretary.



Structure of the NSW public sector: text version of diagram



The public sector covers the government sector (under the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013 (NSW)* (GSE Act), which includes six areas: the Teaching Service, Other Crown services[#], the Public Service (including departments, executive agencies related to departments and separate Public Service agencies), the Police Force, the Transport Service and the Health Service.

Also under the umbrella of the public sector, but outside the government sector, are seven areas: State owned corporations*, Staff of Members of Parliament**, Judicial officers, Staff of the Parliament, the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Judicial Commission and the Audit Office.

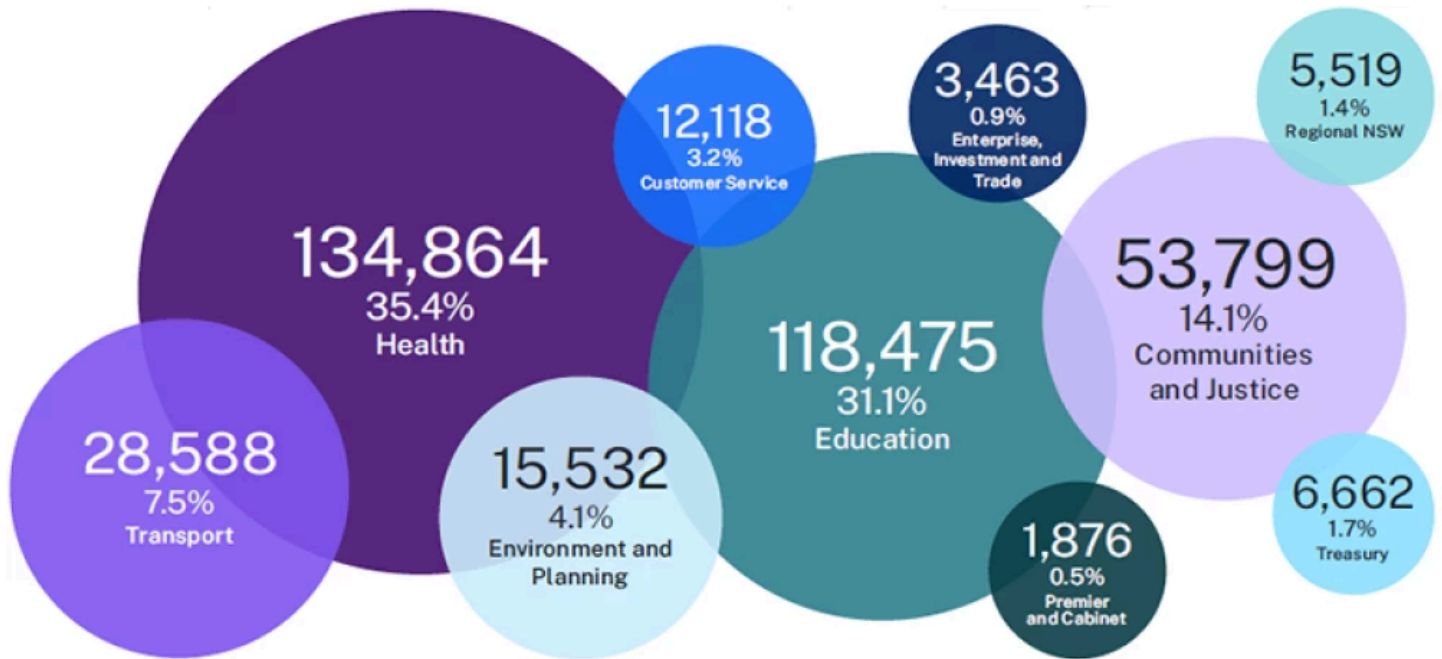
[#] Examples of other Crown services include the TAFE Commission, School Administrative and Support Staff, and Sydney Trains.

* Under the GSE Act, State owned corporations are included in the government sector for certain specified purposes. However, in this report, they are treated as part of the public sector, not as part of the government sector.

** The PSC does not collect data on these employees.

Note: Under the GSE Act, NSW universities are part of the government sector for certain specified purposes. The PSC does not collect data on the employees of NSW universities. They are not considered part of the public sector or government sector in this report.

Full-time equivalent employees by portfolio



Full-time equivalent employees by portfolio: text version of diagram



Cluster	FTE	%
Health	134,864	35.4
Education	118,475	31.1
Communities and Justice	53,799	14.1
Transport	28,588	7.5
Environment and Planning	15,532	4.1

Cluster	FTE	%
Customer Service	12,118	3.2
Regional NSW	5,519	1.4
Enterprise, Investment and Trade	3,463	0.9
Premier and Cabinet	1,876	0.5
Treasury	6,662	1.7

Source: Workforce Profile (2023), census period

Note: Percentages indicate the contribution of the portfolio's FTE to the public sector's total FTE.

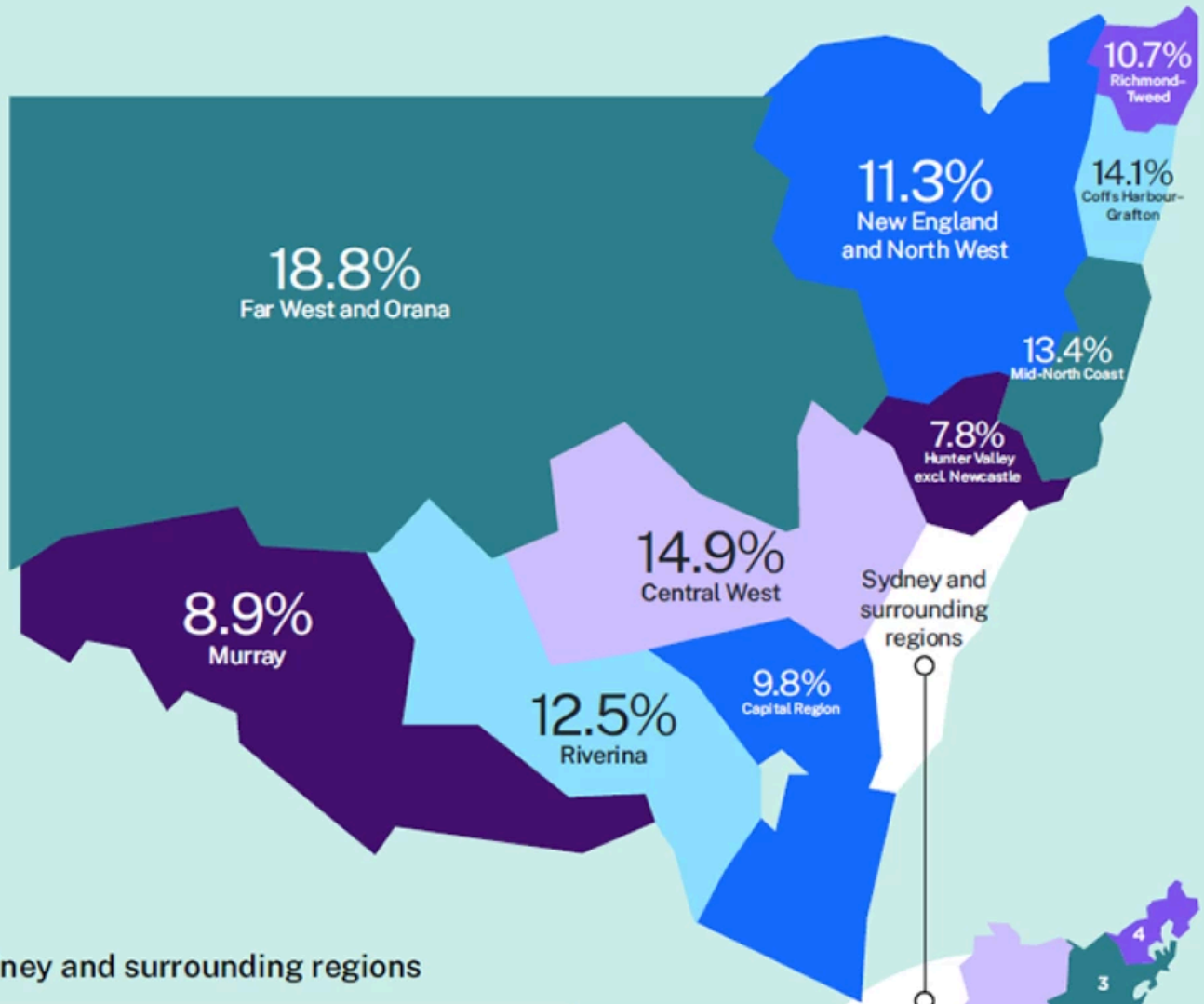
The FTE breakdown is based on the structure that was in place before 1 July 2023. Since then, the Department of Premier and Cabinet has been separated into 2 separate agencies: the Cabinet Office and the Premier's Department.

From 1 January 2024, the Department of Planning and Environment will be split into 2 new departments: the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water; and the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure.

Headcount and contribution to overall employment by NSW region

The NSW Government is a significant employer in every part of the state. A high proportion of public sector employees work in Sydney (59.3%). However, the sector contributes more to overall employment in regional areas of NSW than it does to employment in Sydney.

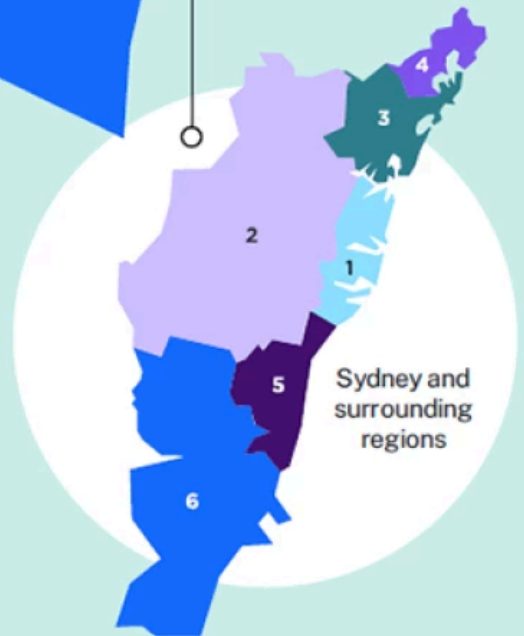
In 2023, 65.9% of public sector employees worked in a metropolitan area (Sydney, Newcastle or Wollongong), while 34.0% worked in regional NSW. Of the NSW Estimated Resident Population, 62.7% worked in a metropolitan area, while 37.3% worked in regional NSW. The NSW Government is a significant contributor to regional employment. In recent years, the government has succeeded in increasing the number of regionally based public sector employees, including at the senior executive level.



Sydney and surrounding regions

Region	Contribution to employment (%)
1 Sydney East	9.5
2 Sydney West	9.9
3 Central Coast	10.2
4 Newcastle and Lake Macquarie	11.4
5 Illawarra	10.6
6 Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven	8.7

Sources: Workforce Profile (2023); ABS (2023b)



Headcount and contribution to overall employment: text version of diagram



Greater NSW

Region	Contribution to employment (%)
Hunter Valley excl. Newcastle	7.8
Mid-North Coast	13.4
New England and North West	11.3
Far West and Orana	18.8
Coffs Harbour – Grafton	14.1
Richmond – Tweed	10.7
Capital Region	9.8
Riverina	12.5
Murray	8.9
Central West	14.9

Sydney region

Region	Contribution to employment (%)
Sydney East	9.5
Sydney West	9.9
Central Coast	10.2
Newcastle and Lake Macquarie	11.4
Illawarra	10.6
Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven	8.7

Sources: Workforce Profile (2023); ABS (2023b)

Occupations

The NSW public sector employs people in a wide range of occupations.



70,442 School Teachers

up from 69,830 in 2022



53,417 Nurses

up from 51,880 in 2022



16,286 Police Officers

down from 17,033 in 2022



52,188 Clerical and Administrative Workers

up from 48,914 in 2022



28,585 School Support Staff

up from 26,261 in 2022



14,013 Medical Practitioners

up from 13,674 in 2022



7,923 Social and Welfare Professionals

up from 7,834 in 2022



5,253 Cleaners and Laundry Workers

up from 5,151 in 2022

**5,702 Ambulance Officers**

up from 5,164 in 2022

**4,314 Labourers**

up from 4,246 in 2022

**4,520 Prison Officers**

up from 3,967 in 2022

**4,208 Firefighters**

down from 4,252 in 2022

**2,168 Train Drivers**

down from 2,217 in 2022

**2,069 Food Preparation Assistants**

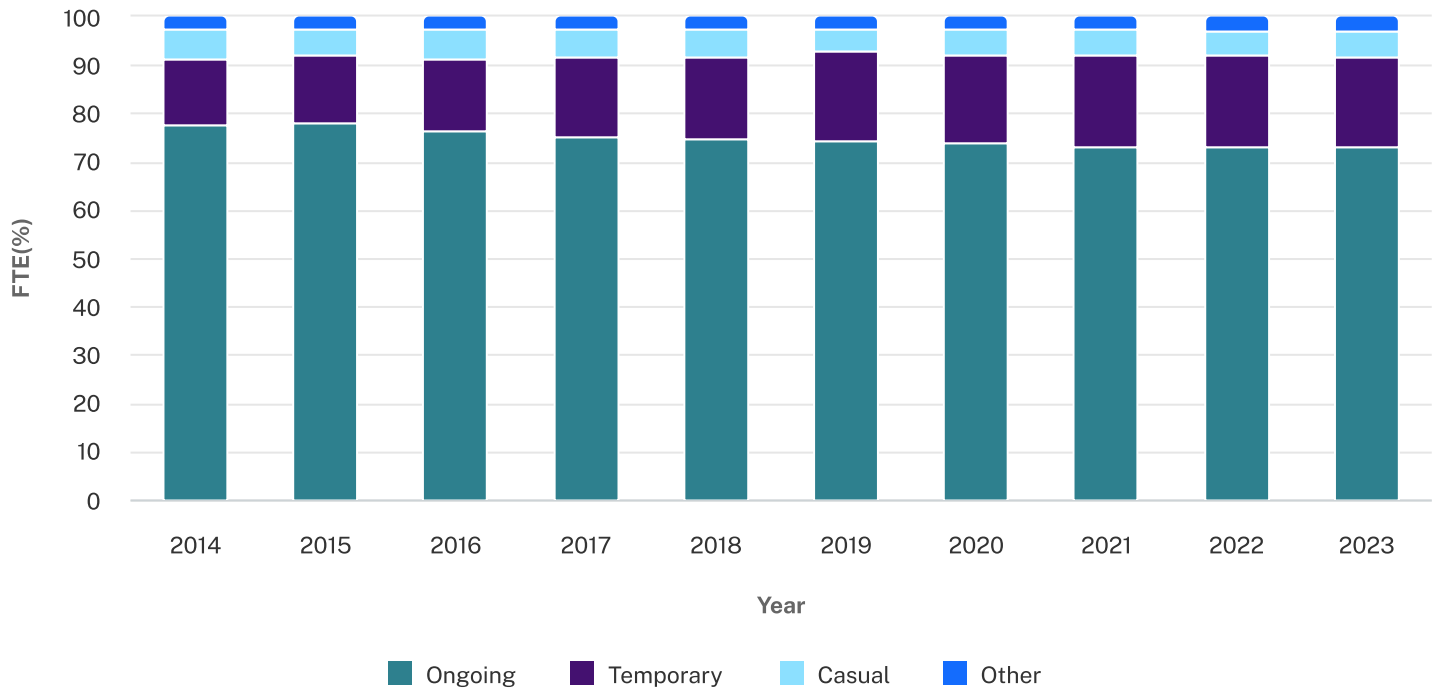
up from 1,983 in 2022

Source: Workforce Profile (2022, 2023), census period

Employment types

The type of employment that the NSW public sector offers varies to ensure the sector can flexibly deliver services; however, most employees are employed on an ongoing basis. The numbers of all employment types have stabilised over the past 2 years. The wide variety of roles within the NSW public sector means that our people are employed across a wide remuneration range.

Full-time equivalent employees by employment type, 2014–23



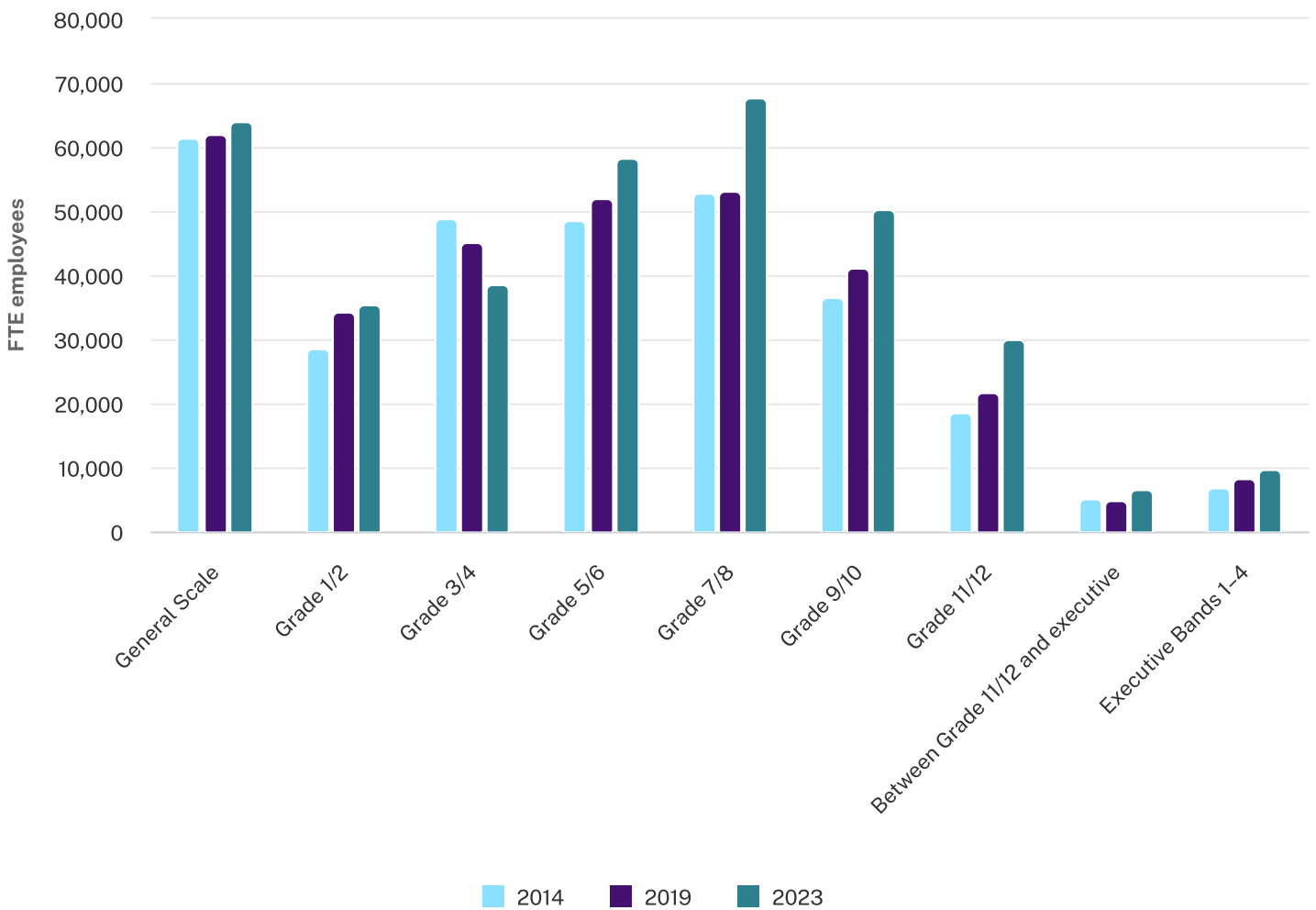
Year	Ongoing	Temporary	Casual	Other
2014	77.6	13.9	6.1	2.4
2015	78	14.1	5.6	2.3
2016	76.5	15	6.2	2.3
2017	75.4	16.4	5.9	2.3
2018	74.7	17.1	5.8	2.4
2019	74.3	18.8	4.5	2.5
2020	73.9	18.4	5.1	2.6
2021	73.1	19	5.2	2.6
2022	73	19.2	5	2.8
2023	73.2	18.7	5.2	2.9

Full-time equivalent employees by employment type, 2014–23

Source: Workforce Profile (2014–23), census period

Note: ‘Other’ includes employees whose employment category is Contract Executive, Contract Non-Executive, Statutory Appointee, Transport Senior Manager or anything not classed as Ongoing, Temporary or Casual.

Full-time equivalent employees by grade, 2023 vs 2019 and 2014



Grade	2014	2019	2023
General Scale	61352	61946	63871

Grade	2014	2019	2023
Grade 1/2	28534	34324	35381
Grade 3/4	48953	45097	38543
Grade 5/6	48576	51874	58174
Grade 7/8	52908	53155	67813
Grade 9/10	36481	41004	50299
Grade 11/12	18567	21597	30018
Between Grade 11/12 and executive	5277	4958	6590
Executive Bands 1–4	6737	8162	9601

Full-time equivalent employees by grade, 2023 vs 2019 and 2014

Source: Workforce Profile (2014, 2019, 2023), census period, non-casual only

Note: To provide a whole-of-sector perspective, remuneration has been aligned with the non-executive grades defined in the Crown Employees (Administrative and Clerical Officers – Salaries) Award 2023. The GSE Act allows the relevant minister to determine the bands under which senior executives are employed. Currently, there are 4 bands.

Next section: Our people

Who we are and how we feel at work.

