

Gender

Chapter 6

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Women

65.5% in 2020 (+0.1 pp vs 2019)

Representation overview

The proportion of women in the NSW public sector has been increasing for more than a decade. Workforce Profile data shows that 65.5% of employees in 2020 were female, compared to 60.8% in 2011.

The NSW public sector continues to employ a higher proportion of women than the broader NSW labour market.¹ Women made up 45.5% of the total NSW working population in 2011 and 46.8% in 2020. Two of the biggest contributors to female employment in the NSW public sector are the two largest clusters, Education (76.2%) and Health (74.6%). Together they represent 52.5% of total headcount in the sector. The lowest female representation in 2020 was in the Transport cluster (see Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: Public sector representation of women by cluster at census date, 2020

Cluster	Headcount	Representation (%)
Customer Service	5,740	63.6
Education	103,935	76.2
Health	113,159	74.6
Planning, Industry and Environment	7,113	41.8
Premier and Cabinet	2,648	61.2
Regional NSW	2,158	45.2
Stronger Communities	26,617	45.3
Transport	7,917	27.6
Treasury	1,468	61.1
Total public sector²	270,918	65.5

In 2020, the occupations with the highest proportion of female employees were Nurses (86.6%), School Teachers (76.7%) and Clerical and Administrative Workers (73.1%). Together, these occupations accounted for more than half of female employees in the sector (53.5%).

Despite the high level of representation across the sector, women remained under-represented at higher salary levels.

Figure 6.2 shows a consistent trend towards a higher proportion of women in lower paid roles and a lower proportion in higher paid roles, although the gap between males and females is slowly narrowing. In 2014, women held less than a third of all roles paid at the Senior Executive level (30.6%). In 2020, close to 40% of these roles were held by women (39.8%), an increase of 9.2pp.

Recruitment

Analysis of the gender balance in recruitment data can provide insights into the ability to shift the gender imbalance in higher paid roles.

Figure 6.3 highlights that there were fewer women applying for the higher paid roles in 2020, consistent with the trend in 2019. More women applied for roles with salaries of less than \$97,152, while more men applied for roles above this salary level. There were close to two applications from women for every application from a man for roles in the \$64,779 to \$72,418 salary range. In the higher salary ranges, this trend is reversed, and the gap between the number of applications from men and women widened as remuneration increased. The widest gap was for Senior Executive roles for Band 2 and above, with 2.6 applications from men for every application from a woman. This was a further widening of the gap compared to 2019.

Although fewer women than men applied for roles with higher salaries, their success rate was higher. Figure 6.4 shows that women had a higher success rate on average than men across higher paid roles; however, the difference narrowed to 0.4pp for roles in the \$192,600 – <\$274,701 salary range (the success rate for women was 1.7% compared to 1.3% for men). In 2020, women's success rate increased relative to men's for roles paid above \$274,701. This has resulted in a higher proportion of women being successfully appointed to these roles (see Figure 6.5).

In 2020, women were appointed to 71.4% of recruited roles with a salary higher than \$274,701. A higher proportion of men than women were appointed to roles in the salary range between \$165,750 and \$274,701, while female appointments were higher across all other salary ranges. Continuation of this trend will help to address the gender imbalance in the higher salary ranges in the sector.

Senior leader gender equity

The proportion of women in senior leadership roles varies across services and has been increasing since the introduction of the gender parity target (see Figure 6.6).

As noted above, improving the application rates of women for senior roles is a key factor in addressing the imbalance. An average of two-thirds of applicants for senior leadership roles were men. To reach gender equity in this group by 2025, modelling confirms that six female appointments are required for every 10 roles (see the [Leaders chapter](#) for more details).

Gender pay gap



Median remuneration, male

\$92,176

+2.5% vs 2019



Median remuneration, female

\$90,123

+2.5% vs 2019

Gender pay gap

2.2%

In 2020, the gap between the median remuneration of men and women in the NSW public sector was unchanged from 2019, at 2.2% (\$2,053 in 2020 and \$2,002 in 2019). This remains the highest gender pay disparity in 10 years (see Figure 6.7).

While the number of women increased more than the number of men in the higher salary ranges, the level of change was not sufficient to affect the overall pay gap (see Figure 6.8). It should be noted that the shift in women between the two lowest salary ranges is mainly due to the 11% pay increase awarded to School Administrative and Support Workers, which commenced on 1 July 2019. This has not affected the pay gap as it has not impacted the median remuneration.

The demographics and types of roles within each service can lead to differences in the pay gap between services. Within the government sector, other Crown services had the largest pay gap in 2020. This mainly related to School Support Staff, who made up 50.2% of other Crown services. These employees had a lower median remuneration of \$55,283, and 89.7% were female.

In contrast, the median remuneration of women in the Transport Service was 28.2% higher than that of men in the same service. This was due to the high proportion of male Bus Drivers (2,714 headcount) with a lower median remuneration of \$59,749.

The Public Service was the only other service where the median remuneration of women was higher than that of men. Overall, 54% of employees and 50% of senior executives in the Public Service were women.

The gender pay gap in 2020 for Senior Executive Bands 1–3 was 2.4%, higher than the gender pay gap of the entire public sector. Across the three bands, the largest increase in the pay gap in 2020 was in Band 2 (0.7pp), while Band 3 had a marginal increase (0.1pp). The only band to experience a small decrease was Band 1 (-0.2pp).

Only 40.9% of senior executives paid above the median salary were women across the three bands. Band 2 had the lowest representation of women paid above the median salary for the band (35.1%), accounting for the wide pay gap in this band. The level of representation of women paid above the median salary in Bands 1 and 3 is 41.9% and 46.4%, respectively.

Employment arrangements

Employment arrangements varied between genders, with a higher proportion of women working part time than men (see Table 6.2). In 2020, 34.9% of non-casual female employees in the NSW public sector worked part time compared to 10.6% of male non-casual employees.

However, between 2019 and 2020, the proportion of men working part time increased slightly (0.1%) and the proportion of women working part time decreased (-0.1%).

Table 6.2: Employment arrangement by gender, non-casual census headcount, 2020

	Total male	Male (%)	Total female	Female (%)
Full time	115,506	41.9	160,086	58.1
Part time	13,716	13.8	85,737	86.2

Of the 98 public sector departments and agencies that employed people on a part-time basis in 2020, 85 agencies had at least 75% female part-time employee representation.

Figure 6.11 shows the proportion of part-time employees by gender for each service. In 2020, the NSW Health Service continued to have the highest proportion of men in part-time employment (18.9%) and the second-highest proportion of women working part time (42.3%).

Notes

¹ ABS, 2020, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed*, 'Table 16. Labour force status by Labour market region (ASGS) and Sex', cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, viewed 29 January 2021,

<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/la...>

² 'Other' has been excluded from the clusters list but included in the public sector totals.

³ Senior Executive Bands 1–3 in the NSW government sector, specifically the Public Service and aligned services senior executives (Health, Transport and Police), as reported by departments and agencies in the Workforce Profile collection.

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Age

