Public Sector Commission

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

We're working for Western Australia.

State of the WA Government Sector Workforce

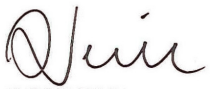
2019–20

Letter of transmittal

SPEAKER
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

PRESIDENT
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

I hereby submit to the Parliament of Western Australia the State of the Western Australian Government Sector Workforce 2019–20 in accordance with section 22D of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*, section 22 of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003* and section 45ZD of the *Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003*.



SHARYN O'NEILL
PUBLIC SECTOR COMMISSIONER

11 November 2020

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From the Commissioner

It is my pleasure to present the State of the Western Australian Government Sector Workforce for 2019–20.

Along with observations and statistics on the composition of the government sector and its people, the report highlights the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the government sector, including changes to operations and directions.

The government sector was – and still is – at the forefront of responding to Western Australia's state of emergency and public health emergency. During the year, I was appointed by the Government to two additional roles to support response and recovery – Public Sector Coordinator and State Recovery Controller. As controller, I had responsibility for developing the WA Recovery Plan and WA Impact Statement which were released in the 2020–21 year, and I remain responsible for coordinating and overseeing implementation going forward. These roles gave me a unique opportunity to see how the government sector responded to an extraordinary set of circumstances to ensure continued service to the State.

The Public Sector Leadership Council, a working group of the heads of 19 public sector agencies and the WA Police Force, continued this year to provide an effective mechanism for sharing information to inform decisions and communicating consistent messages. This was particularly pertinent during the height of the pandemic. It also played a key part in the planning for recovery, a part that is continuing into implementing recovery initiatives. To ensure broader reach, I implemented a similar approach for working with chief executives of other government entities, including government trading enterprises.

The government sector demonstrated its ability to adapt rapidly to keep services available and staff operating in a COVID-safe way. At the same time, it identified and responded to the need for new ways of operating; and developed and implemented legislative, regulatory and policy changes to support business, industry and the community.

It also began preparing to get Western Australia back to a proper level of functioning following the pandemic and this will be a focus in 2020–21 onwards. Continued capability to move quickly, work together effectively and implement decisive change for the benefit of the community are set to shape the government sector for the future.

While a number of activities to drive reform necessarily slowed during the year to prioritise response to the pandemic, many key initiatives progressed.

Across the public sector, job security increased with continued conversion of casual and fixed term contractors to permanency. Since August 2018, more than 13,000 individuals have benefited. In addition, the public sector continued to reduce spending on temporary personnel.

Representation of women in leadership increased across the government sector, with the pace of change particularly accelerated in the public sector. Last year I commented that it would take until 2035 to reach parity between men and women in the Senior Executive Service; this now looks achievable in the next few years. Work continued during the year on positioning the public sector to be a leader in both diversity and inclusion.

A commitment to improve integrity across the government sector was supported by a new integrity strategy developed by the Commission that I released in December 2019. Improved integrity requires sustained effort by the government sector and I made clear my expectation for all chief executives to take action. Tools and resources to support the strategy will be rolled out regularly.

Through my interactions across the government sector over the year, I saw increased momentum for a shared approach to strategy, discussion, problem solving, transparency and delivery to provide even better services and support to Western Australians. This solid base is vital as the government sector is charged with leading implementation of the State's recovery and delivering reform.

I thank everyone in the government sector for your work over the year, particularly for the flexibility and resilience you displayed in responding and adapting to the many changes brought about by the pandemic. This report – the outcomes as well as the challenges – reflects the work each of us do every day for the people we serve.

SHARYN O'NEILL
PUBLIC SECTOR COMMISSIONER

About this report

This report is the Public Sector Commissioner's independent assessment of the performance, notable achievements, challenges and priorities of the WA government sector workforce.

It draws on data from a range of sources. Information on the data collected by the Public Sector Commission is in the Data quality statement.

In 2019–20, the Public Sector Commission started reviewing how it acquires, manages, stores, uses and shares data. This included streamlining its 2019–20 annual collections and examining how to gain the most value from the data collected.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, annual collections in 2019–20 were reduced in scope and complexity, and primarily focused on information to fulfil statutory requirements while minimising the impost on respondents.

The other significant change to this year's report is the use of annual average data to illustrate workforce trends in the public sector. Previously, most workforce trends were identified based on March or June point-in-time snapshots. While comparing the state of the government sector's workforce at the conclusion of each financial year provides a reasonable guide to workforce trends, the change to annual average figures has been made to:

- better take into account seasonal and short term fluctuations that occur throughout the year
- maximise the value of each quarterly data submission from public sector agencies.

Where annual average data is provided, historical figures have been calculated using the same methodology to allow comparison. Additional explanatory notes are in this report.

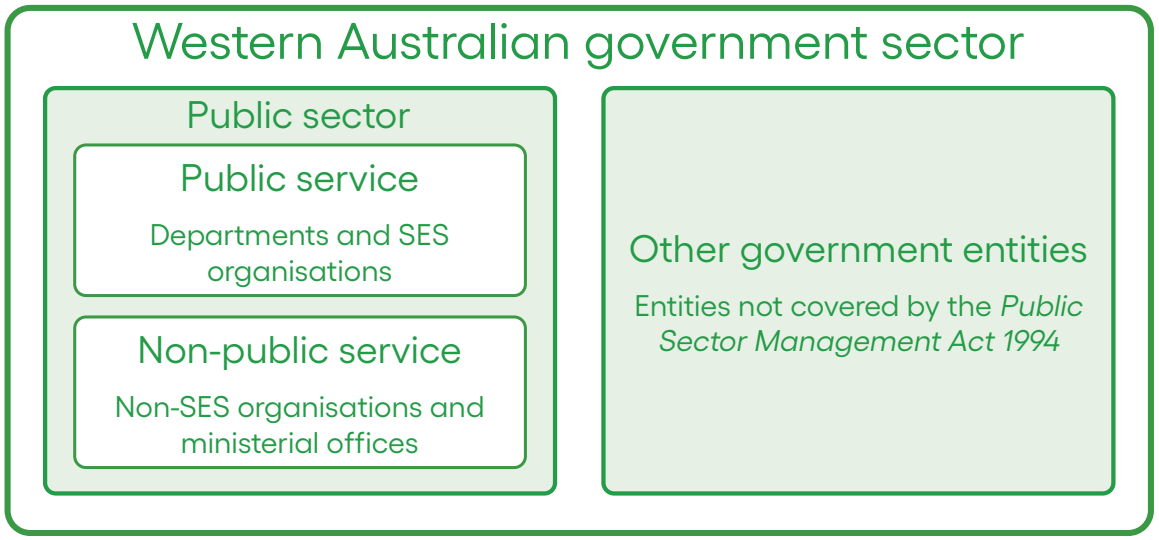
SECTION 1

Structure

The Western Australian government sector comprises a range of departments, organisations, offices and entities.

Figure 1 is a visual representation of the government sector from the perspective of the Public Sector Commission.

Figure 1: WA government sector 2019-20



The **public sector**, which includes the public service and non-public service, is governed by the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* (PSM Act) and has a high level of interaction with, and direction from, the government of the day.

The public sector includes:

- departments (such as Department of Education and Department of Transport)
- Senior Executive Service (SES) organisations (such as Lotterywest)
- non-Senior Executive Service (non-SES) organisations (such as health service providers and Office of the Information Commissioner)
- ministerial offices.

These are referred to in this report as 'public sector agencies'.

Outside the public sector are **other government entities** which operate with a large degree of independence from the government of the day. They are part of the government sector but are not governed by the PSM Act. They are bound by some of the same rules as the public sector including equal employment, misconduct and dealing with disclosures of wrongdoing.

Other government entities include:

- local governments (including regional councils)
- public universities
- government trading enterprises
- other entities that are listed in Schedule 1 of the PSM Act
- government boards and committees.

The Commission's remit and responsibilities differ across the government sector. For the public sector, the information in this report extends across the PSM Act, *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* (EO Act), *Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003* (CCM Act) and *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003* (PID Act). For other government entities, the information only relates to the EO Act, CCM Act and PID Act.

The workforce information in this report (Sections 1–4) is based on data about public sector agencies and other government entities, excluding government boards and committees. Integrity information in this report (Section 5) refers to 'government sector entities' (public sector agencies and other government entities including some government boards and committees).

Composition of the government sector

At June 2020, the WA government sector comprised:

- 25 departments
- 44 SES organisations
- 50 non-SES organisations
- 17 ministerial offices
- 145 local governments (including 8 regional local governments or regional councils)
- 4 public universities
- 19 other entities (including government trading enterprises, parliamentary electorate offices and sworn officers of the WA Police Force)
- 299 boards and committees (note: non-SES organisations and boards and committees are not mutually exclusive).

Not all employ staff. Some government sector entities receive administrative support from other government sector entities.

This year, DevelopmentWA was created through an administrative merger of LandCorp and the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority which continue to exist. Infrastructure WA, an SES organisation, began operating on 1 July 2019.

COMMISSIONER'S OBSERVATIONS

State of the structure

The government sector is made up of a range of departments, organisations, offices and entities governed by legislation that is complex, interlocking and, in some cases, overlapping.

This year, facing a global pandemic which generated significant local challenges, it was called on to work closely together regardless of these underlying complexities. I found its response to the pandemic was overwhelmingly positive.

To enhance pandemic response and recovery, I set up and chaired weekly meetings with the Public Sector Leadership Council, using these meetings to provide critical and timely information to support their endeavours and to plan for the State-led recovery process. I also set up and chaired similar meetings for other entities, with 83 chief executive officers including those of government trading enterprises.

As signalled last year, I focused attention this year on data and information. The Public Sector Commission began drafting a strategy to coordinate and plan how it acquires, stores, manages, shares and uses workforce data for strategic and planning purposes across the government sector. I anticipate this strategy will be finalised in 2020–21.

The importance of this work was heightened as the government sector responded to the pandemic and supported recovery efforts. Timely and accurate information informs good decision-making, and access to relevant data was highlighted repeatedly as a key challenge.

In parallel with the strategy, changes to Commission processes resulted in increasing data quality, timeliness and relevance. I can report significant achievements including a 13-week reduction in publication time for quarterly public sector workforce reporting; collection of unit level data from other government entities to allow a more comprehensive overview of workforce information in this report; better use of existing data sources to support the public sector's response to the pandemic; and development and implementation of data visualisations to convey key insights at a glance. These improvements laid the groundwork for better use and sharing of information with stakeholders in the years to come.

I am pursuing further improvements to data timeliness and quality in 2020–21. I want the information the Commission collects to provide meaningful, contemporary insights and assist the government sector and individual entities in making decisions about workforce needs and priorities.

SECTION 2

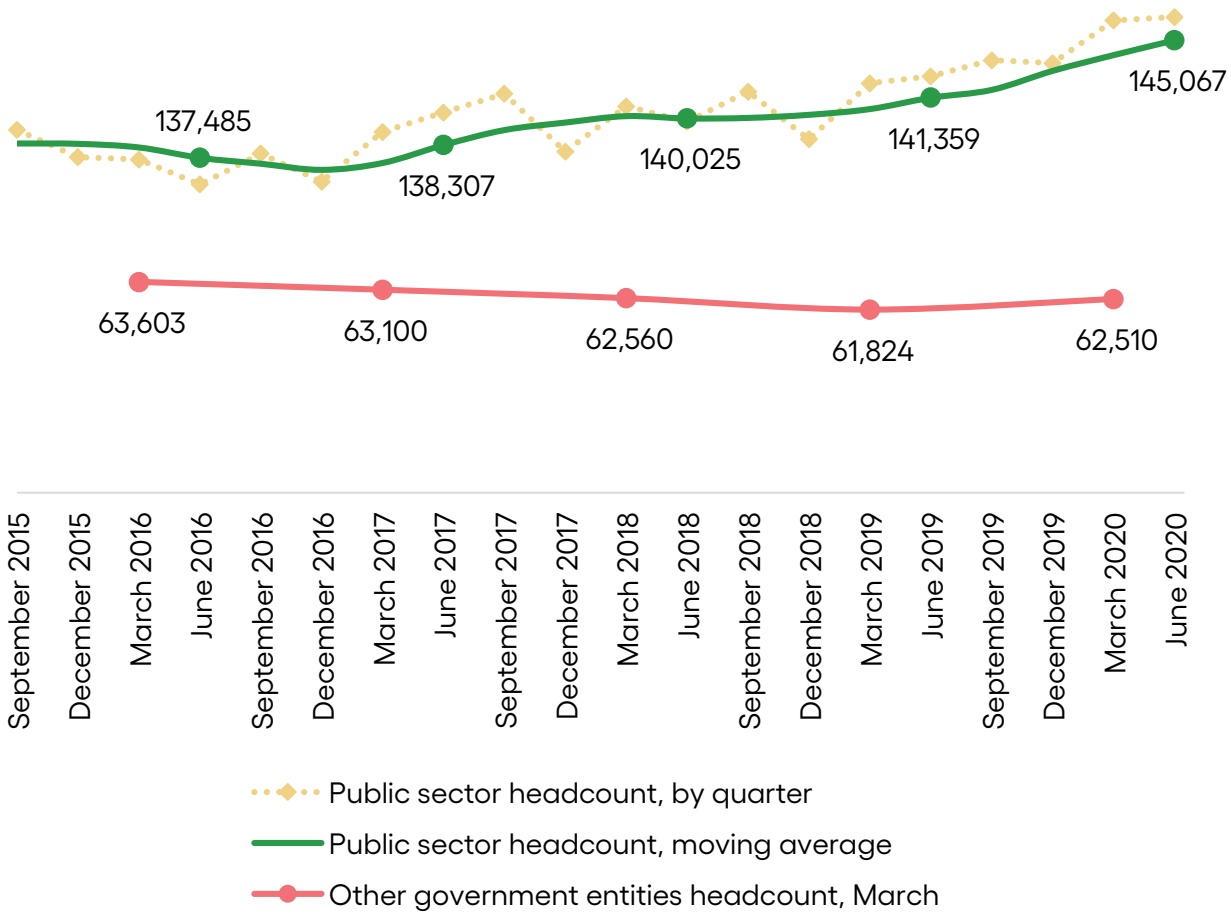
Workforce profile

In 2019–20, the government sector employed 207,577 people.

Workforce size

The public sector employed 145,067 people, an increase of 3,708 people (2.6%) from 2018–19 and 7,582 people (5.5%) from 2015–16. For other government entities, slight declines in headcount between March 2017 and March 2019 stabilised this year, with a 1.1% increase to 62,510 people[1] (Figure 2 and Table 1).

Figure 2: WA government sector workforce (headcount) 2015–16 to 2019–20



1. Total reported headcount for other government bodies includes casual staff not paid in the last pay period of each March quarter.

Table 1: WA government sector workforce (headcount and annual change) 2015–16 to 2019–20

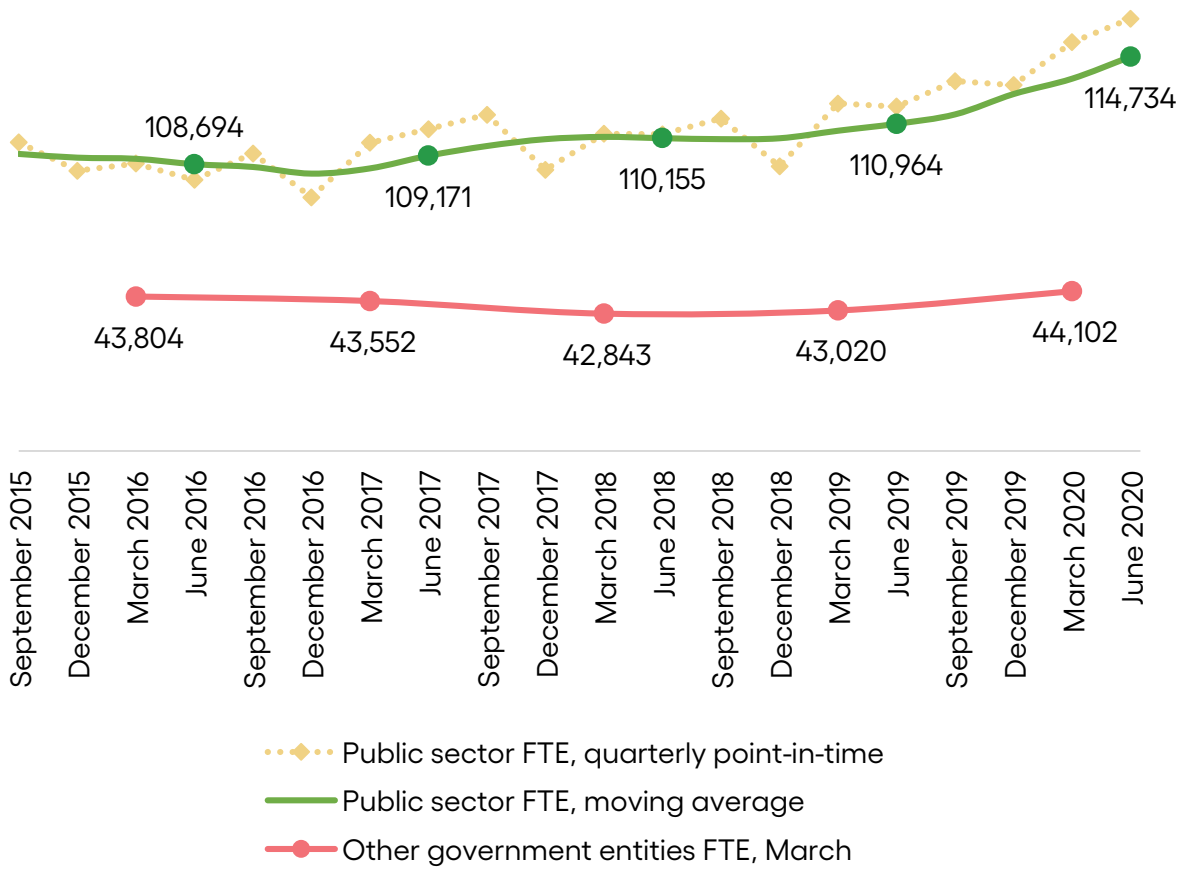
	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20
Public sector headcount, annual average	137,485	138,307	140,025	141,359	145,067
Annual change	-692	+823	+1,717	+1,334	+3,708
Annual percent change	-0.5%	+0.6%	+1.2%	+1.0%	+2.6%
Other government entities headcount, March	63,603	63,100	62,560	61,824	62,510
Annual change	+1,236	-503	-540	-736	+686
Annual percent change	+2.0%	-0.8%	-0.9%	-1.2%	+1.1%

Note: Some items may not add up to totals provided due to rounding.

Individual staff may be employed on a full-time, part-time, casual, sessional or other basis. The 145,067 staff employed across 2019–20 in the public sector represented 114,734 full-time equivalent (FTE) roles (Figure 3). The 62,510 staff of other government entities represented 44,102 FTE.[2]

In line with the increase in staff noted above, public sector FTE increased by 5.6% (6,040 FTE) between 2015–16 and 2019–20 while FTE of other government entities increased by 0.7% (298 FTE) between March 2016 and March 2020 (Table 2).

Figure 3: WA government sector workforce (FTE) 2015–16 to 2019–20



2. FTE figures for other government bodies reflect only staff active (paid) in the final March 2020 pay period.

Table 2: WA government sector workforce (FTE and annual change) 2015–16 to 2019–20

	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20
Public sector FTE, annual average	108,694	109,171	110,155	110,964	114,734
Annual change	-440	+477	+984	+809	+3,770
Percent change	-0.4%	+0.4%	+0.9%	+0.7%	+3.4%
Other government entities FTE, March	43,804	43,552	42,843	43,020	44,102
Annual change	n/a	-252	-710	+177	+1,082
Percent change	n/a	-0.6%	-1.6%	+0.4%	+2.5%

A number of external factors impacted the overall size and shape of the workforce this year.

The public sector regularly contracts in size between the September and December quarters (see declines between September and December 2016, 2017 and 2018 in Figures 2 and 3) due to the end of the academic year and release of education staff from schools and TAFE colleges. In December 2019, this decline did not occur to the extent seen in previous years. The 2019 school year ended late, resulting in a higher than usual number of Department of Education staff being captured in the final pay of the December quarter (approximately 1,700 FTE more than in the previous three years). This coincidence of dates also occurred in 2013 and 2014, and will occur again in December 2020, which in turn will increase quarterly and annual average figures.

Over the past five years, the increase in staff employed in the public sector has mostly been driven by growth in WA Health (increasing by 2,679 headcount since 2015-16, rising from 33.1% to 33.2% of the public sector) and Department of Education (increasing by 4,376 headcount in since 2015-16, rising from 36.4% to 37.6% of the public sector).

Other growth this year included the Department of Justice commencing recruitment of 450 prison officers, including targeted recruitment for regional locations. In addition, Melaleuca Remand and Reintegration Facility was returned to the public sector in April 2020 and renamed the Melaleuca Women's Prison, with staff transitioning to the public sector.

A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

Workforce changes in response to a pandemic

March 2020 saw the workforce in WA Health agencies increase in size to a larger extent than in previous years. While WA Health regularly expands between December and March as fixed term contracts are re-established and newly graduated medical officers are employed, this year saw a larger increase than usual associated with the setup of COVID-19 clinics, increased COVID-19 testing and other pandemic preparations.

The Department of Education employed almost 1,000 cleaners by June 2020 to meet additional health and safety requirements in schools.

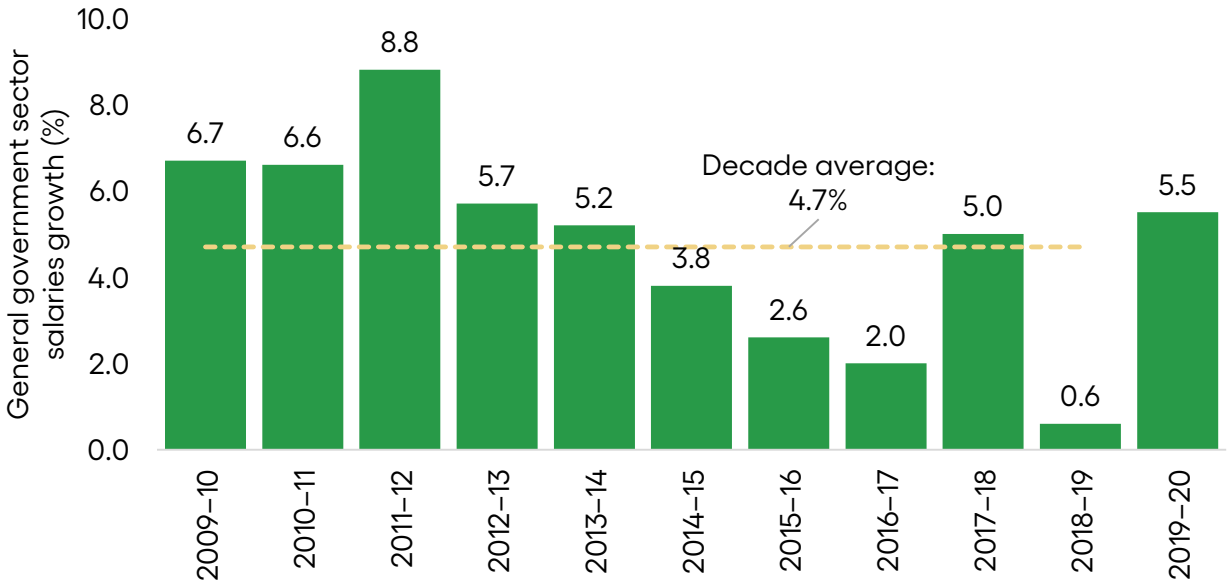
A number of smaller public sector agencies with venues open to the public reported decreases in casual staff between the March and June quarters as a result of the pandemic. Employment is anticipated to recover as restrictions ease and public venues and events recommence operations.

State finances

The 2019–20 Annual Report on State Finances details government financial results. This year, general government salaries expenditure grew by 5.0% to a total of $12,887 million. This included increases in workforce numbers particularly in health, education, law and order, and community services as well as increased wage rates consistent with the Government's $1,000 a year wage increase policy.

Salaries remained the largest component of general government sector expenses, comprising 42% of total operating expenses in 2019–20. The 5.0% increase in salaries expenditure was an increase on last year's very low rate of growth, and a slight increase on the average growth of 4.7% a year over the preceding decade (Figure 4).

Figure 4: General government salaries growth 2009-10 to 2019–20



Recruitment in the public sector

This year, 16,143 public sector external recruitment advertisements were posted on jobs.wa.gov.au, resulting in 278,259 applications submitted. These numbers may not reflect the total number of vacancies available, or the total number of staff engaged, as a single advertisement may be used to fill more than one position. However, the number of advertisements posted provides some insight into recruitment activity over time.

Across 2019–20, 40.7% of advertisements were for permanent roles, 32.6% for fixed term roles and 2.2% for casual roles. This distribution is very similar to 2018–19. Of all advertisements, 20.5% were pool recruitments, indicating that more than one role may have been filled from a single advertisement. The proportion of advertisements for permanent roles has increased each year since 2017–18 (Table 3).

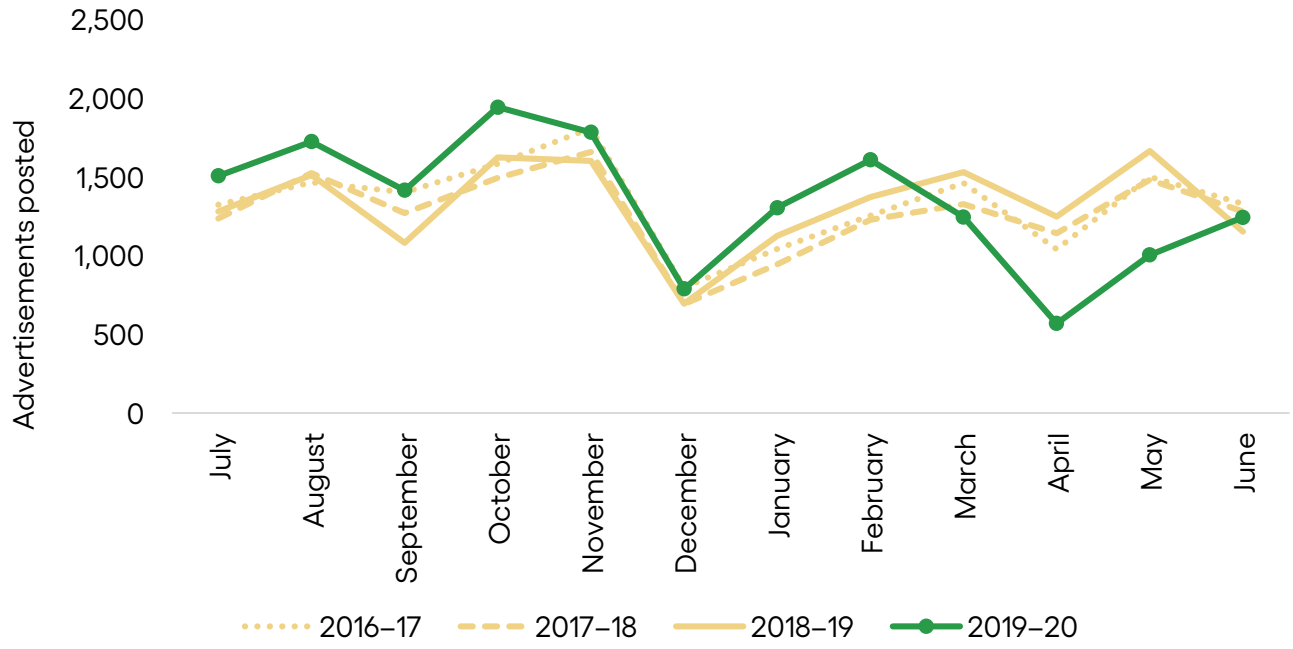
Table 3: WA public sector job advertisements posted on jobs.wa.gov.au by financial year and employment type

Employment type	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20
Permanent full time	942 (18.6%)	4,643 (29.0%)	4,090 (26.8%)	4,738 (29.8%)	5,170 (32.0%)
Permanent part time	267 (5.3%)	1,309 (8.2%)	1,462 (9.6%)	1,537 (9.7%)	1,400 (8.7%)
Permanent total	**1,209 (23.9%)**	**5,952 (37.2%)**	**5,552 (36.3%)**	**6,275 (39.5%)**	**6,570 (40.7%)**
Fixed term full time	2,062 (40.7%)	4,738 (29.6%)	4,863 (31.8%)	4,770 (30.%)	4,394 (27.2%)
Fixed term part time	662 (13.1%)	1,242 (7.8%)	1,041 (6.8%)	904 (5.7%)	876 (5.4%)
Fixed term total	**2,724 (53.8%)**	**5,980 (37.3%)**	**5,904 (38.6%)**	**5,674 (35.7%)**	**5,270 (32.6%)**
Casual	62 (1.2%)	319 (2.0%)	354 (2.3%)	410 (2.6%)	348 (2.2%)
Sessional	4 (0.1%)	56 (0.3%)	85 (0.6%)	77 (0.5%)	64 (0.4%)
Multiple work types	785 (15.5%)	3,302 (20.6%)	3,273 (21.4%)	3,342 (21.%)	3,788 (23.5%)
Other	283 (5.6%)	409 (2.6%)	116 (0.8%)	117 (0.7%)	103 (0.6%)
Total	**5,067 (100%)**	**16,018 (100%)**	**15,284 (100%)**	**15,895 (100%)**	**16,143 (100%)**

Note: Relatively low number of advertisements in 2015–16 reflects impact of a six-month public sector hiring freeze.

The pandemic in the second half of the year had a significant impact on recruitment and employment in both the private and government sectors. In the last quarter of 2019–20, advertisements on jobs.wa.gov.au were down by more than 30% compared to the same quarter in 2018–19. By the end of the quarter, there was some evidence of recovery. Advertisements declined sharply between February and April but by June 2020 had increased to close to previous year levels (Figure 5).

Figure 5: WA public sector advertisements posted on jobs.wa.gov.au by financial year and month 2016–17 to 2019–20



Appointment types

In line with recruitment trends in the public sector, the majority of roles continue to be engaged on a permanent basis and this proportion has been increasing since 2015-16. In 2019–20, on average 77.8% of public sector FTE were engaged on a permanent basis compared to 77.4% in 2018–19 and 75.2% in 2015–16 (Table 4). Similar to the public sector, the majority (just over 70%) of FTE in other government entities were employed on a permanent basis (Table 5).

Table 4: WA public sector FTE by appointment type (%), annual average 2015–16 to 2019–20

	2015–16 (%)	2016–17 (%)	2017–18 (%)	2018–19 (%)	2019–20 (%)
Permanent full time	54.3	53.7	54.0	54.6	54.9
Permanent part time	20.9	21.5	22.1	22.8	22.9
Permanent total	**75.2**	**75.2**	**76.1**	**77.4**	**77.8**
Fixed term full time	13.4	13.5	13.0	11.9	11.4
Fixed term part time	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.0	5.1
Fixed term total	**18.4**	**18.9**	**18.3**	**16.9**	**16.5**
Casual	5.7	5.5	5.2	5.2	5.2
Other	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6

Table 5: WA other government entities FTE by appointment type (%) March 2020

	Government trading enterprises and other authorities (%)	Local governments (%)	Public universities (%)	Other government entities total (%)
Permanent full time	87.2	68.8	49.1	70.6
Permanent part time	4.3	11.7	8.3	8.1
Permanent total	**91.5**	**80.5**	**57.3**	**78.7**
Fixed term full time	6.7	11.4	24.1	12.9
Fixed term part time	0.7	2.0	7.0	2.8
Fixed term total	**7.4**	**13.4**	**31.1**	**15.7**
Casual	1.0	6.1	8.2	4.8
All others	0.0	0.1	3.4	0.9

Converting contract and casual staff to permanency

In the past two years 13,173 public sector staff have been converted to permanency under the Government's policy to convert existing contract and casual staff to permanent roles (Table 6). During the year, the Public Sector Commissioner worked with public sector agencies to encourage conversion of staff to permanent employment, including forums, proactive discussions with CEOs, improvements to quarterly reporting, discussions with unions and engagement with chief human resource officers. Public sector agencies responded with higher numbers of conversions this year.

Permanency was achieved either through employer discretion through Commissioner's Instruction No 2: Filling a public sector vacancy or by one of two temporary measures which required reviewing fixed-term and casual staff employed for two or more years:

- Commissioner's Instruction No 22: Interim arrangements for colleges constituted under the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996* to appoint certain fixed term contract lecturers to permanency (effective 2 July 2018 to 14 February 2020)
- Commissioner's Instruction No 23: Conversion and appointment of fixed term contract and casual staff to permanency (issued 10 August 2018).

At the end of June 2020, 39,375 fixed term contract and casual arrangements (over 90% of arrangements requiring review) had been reviewed under Commissioner's Instruction No 23.

Table 6: Number of WA public sector staff converted to permanent employment 2018–19 and 2019–20

	2018–19	2019–20	Total
Commissioner's Instruction No 2*	1,343	8,178	9,521
Commissioner's Instruction No 22#	274	0	274
Commissioner's Instruction No 23*	1,074	2,304	3,378
Total	**2,691**	**10,482**	**13,173**

* Data captured from 10 August 2018 only

Data captured between 2 July 2018 and 14 February 2020

Age and gender

The median age of public sector staff was 46.0 years in 2019–20 (annual average of medians), with male staff slightly older overall than female staff (Tables 7 and 8, Figures 6 and 7). The annual average median age of the public sector has increased slightly over the last five years, from 45.3 years in 2015–16.

This year, detailed staff age data was collected from other government entities. The median age of staff in other government entities was slightly younger than the public sector at 42.0 years in March 2020, with males slightly older than females. Historic comparison data is not available.

Table 7: Median age of male and female staff; WA public sector annual average median, other government bodies at March 2020

	Median age (years)		
	Male	**Female**	**Total**
Public sector 2019–20, annual average	47.0	45.0	46.0
Other government entities, March 2020	44.0	41.0	42.0

Figure 6: Distribution of male and female staff by age group, WA public sector (annual average) 2019–20

Figure 7: Distribution of male and female staff by age group, WA other government entities March 2020

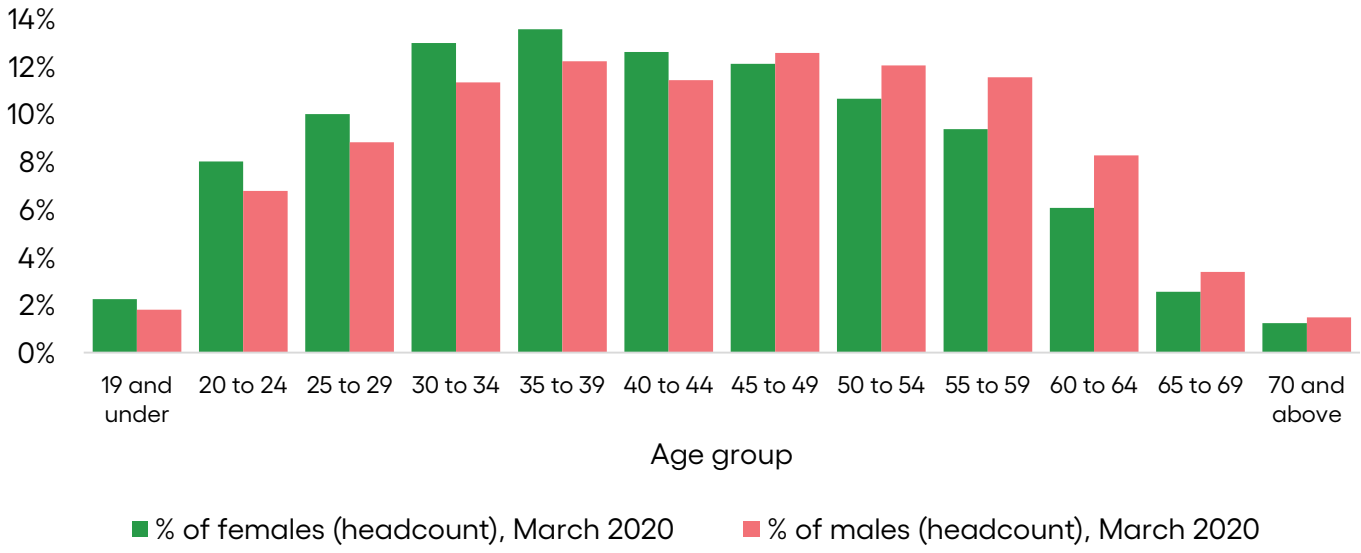


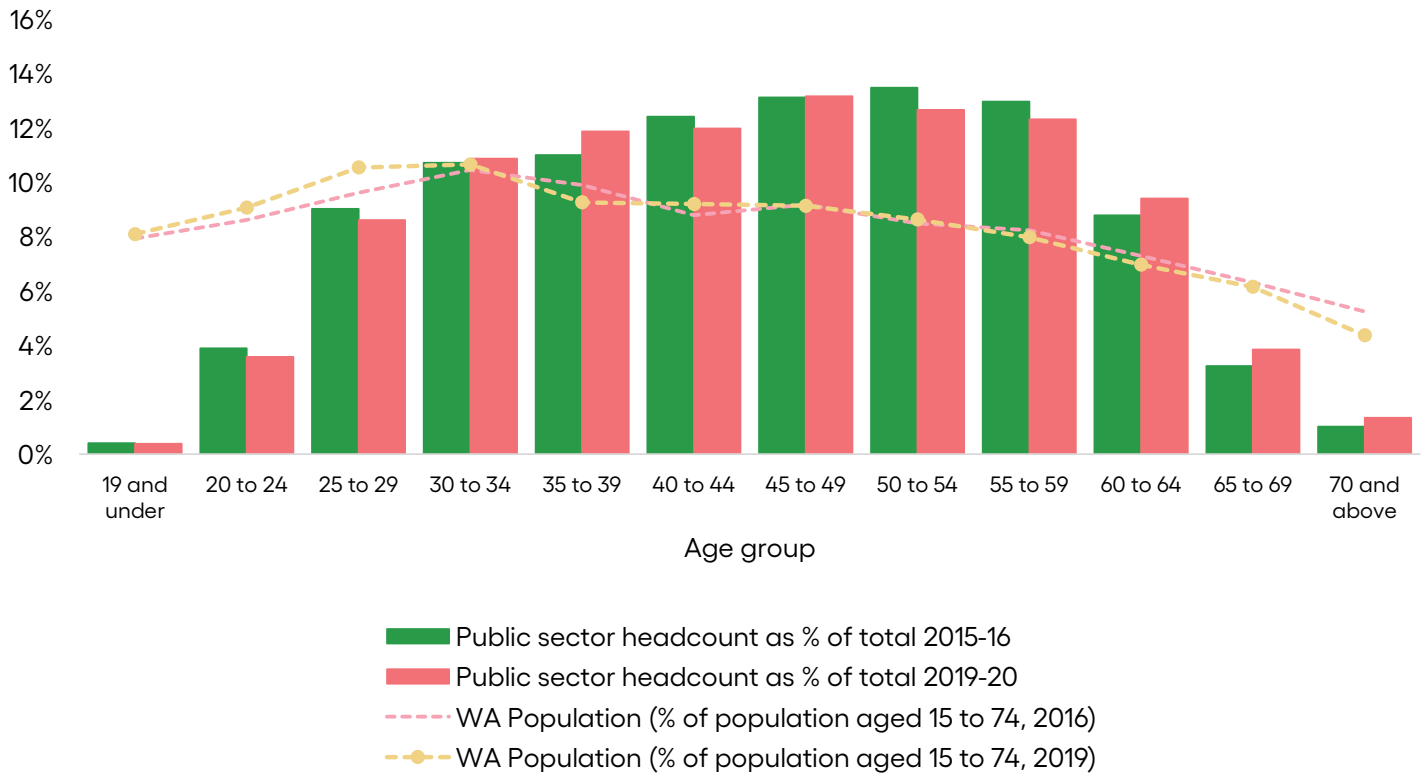
Table 8: Headcount by age group WA public sector and other government entities 2019–20

	Public sector headcount, annual average 2019–20			Other government entities headcount March 2020*		
Age in years	Female	Male	Neither male nor female	Female	Male	Neither male nor female
19 and under	396	157	0	693	551	0
20 to 24	3,995	1,200	0	2,475	2,075	1
25 to 29	9,471	3,019	1	3,091	2,697	6
30 to 34	11,689	4,073	1	4,011	3,466	14
35 to 39	12,607	4,604	1	4,188	3,734	4
40 to 44	12,834	4,541	0	3,896	3,495	6
45 to 49	14,218	4,871	1	3,743	3,842	10
50 to 54	13,492	4,876	1	3,290	3,681	4
55 to 59	12,869	4,989	1	2,897	3,529	1
60 to 64	9,264	4,372	0	1,874	2,527	0
65 to 69	3,663	1,925	0	789	1,033	0
70 and above	1,080	861	1	382	453	0
Total	**105,575**	**39,485**	**7**	**31,329**	**31,083**	**46**

*Excludes some staff for whom no date of birth/age was provided.

Since 2015-16, staff aged 65 and above have increased from 4.2% to 5.2% of the public sector workforce (Figure 8). In line with this trend, the percentage of staff in younger age groups has declined (see also Youth). This is in contrast to trends in the overall WA population which have seen slight declines in the proportion of the population aged 70 to 74, and slight increases in groups aged 15 to 34.

Figure 8: WA public sector headcount by age group (annual average) 2015–16 and 2019–20



This trend is evident for both male and female staff (Figures 9 and 10). In 2019–20, both female and male staff were more likely to be aged 60 and above than they were five years ago, and female staff were less likely to be aged 29 and under than they were five years ago. The headcount of female staff aged 65 and above has increased by 1,301 since 2015-16, increasing the proportion of females in this age group from 3.5% to 4.5%. There has been an increase in the proportion of males aged 39 and under.

Figure 9: Distribution of females by age group, WA public sector 2015–16 and 2019–20 (annual average percent)

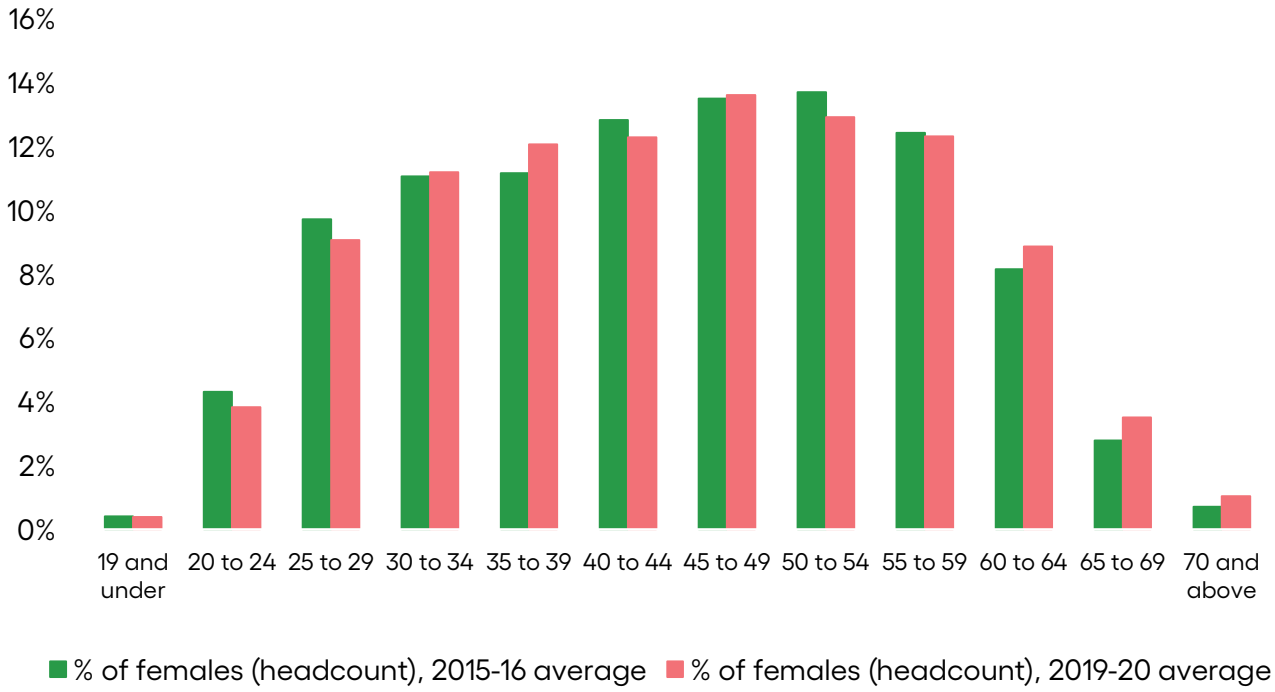
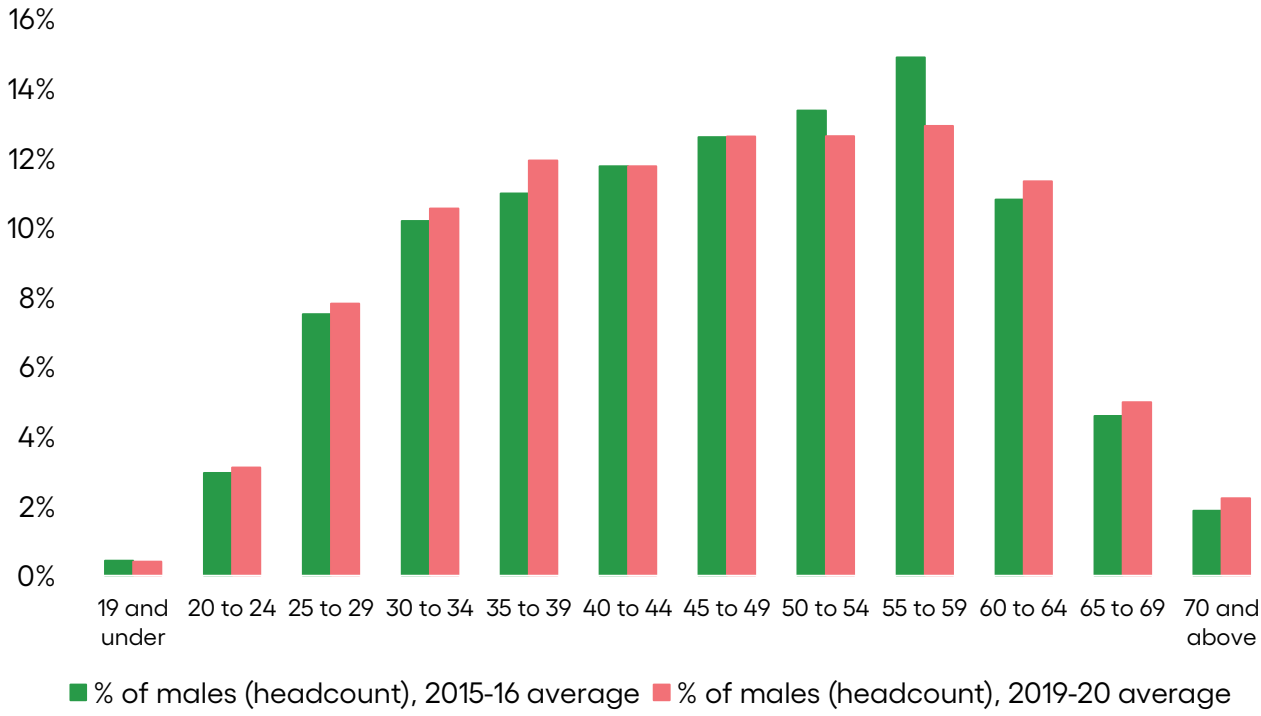
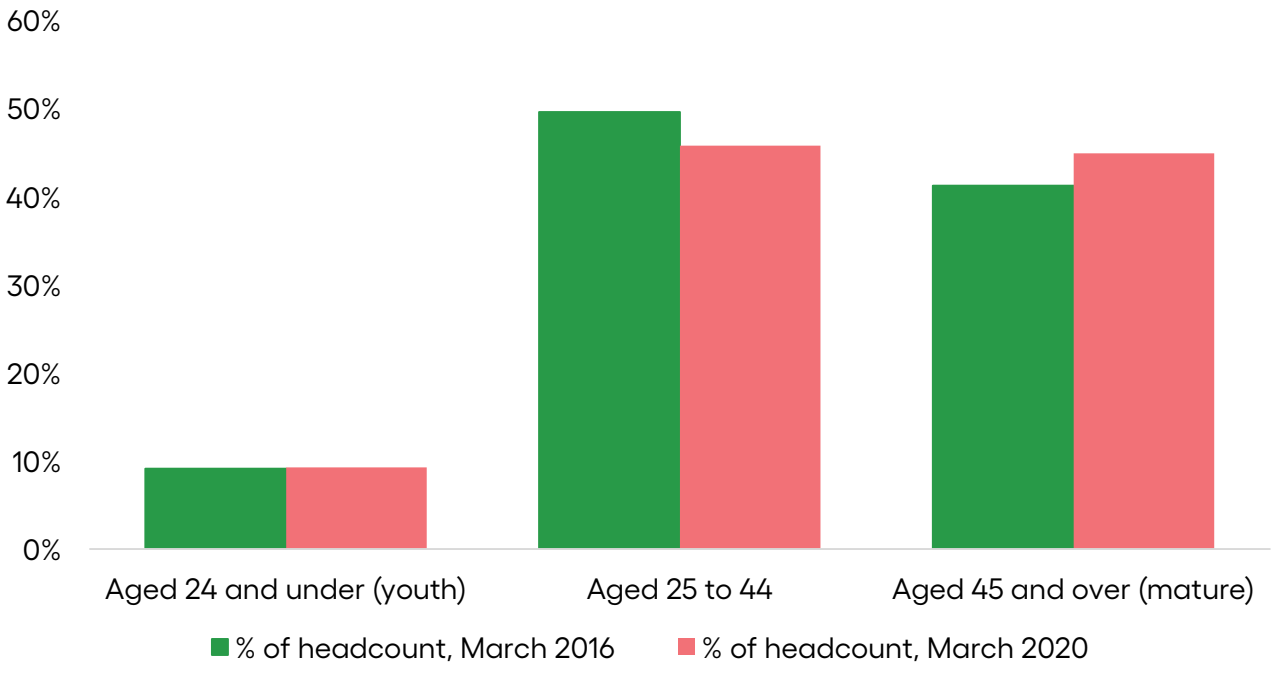


Figure 10: Distribution of males by age group, WA public sector 2015–16 and 2019–20 (annual average percent)



While historic data on individual staff ages is not available for other government entities, data has been collected in previous years on three broad age groups – youth (aged 24 and under), aged 25 to 44, mature (aged 45 and over). Comparison of these groups between 2015-16 and 2019-20 shows other government entities are also seeing their age profiles shift upwards (Figure 11).

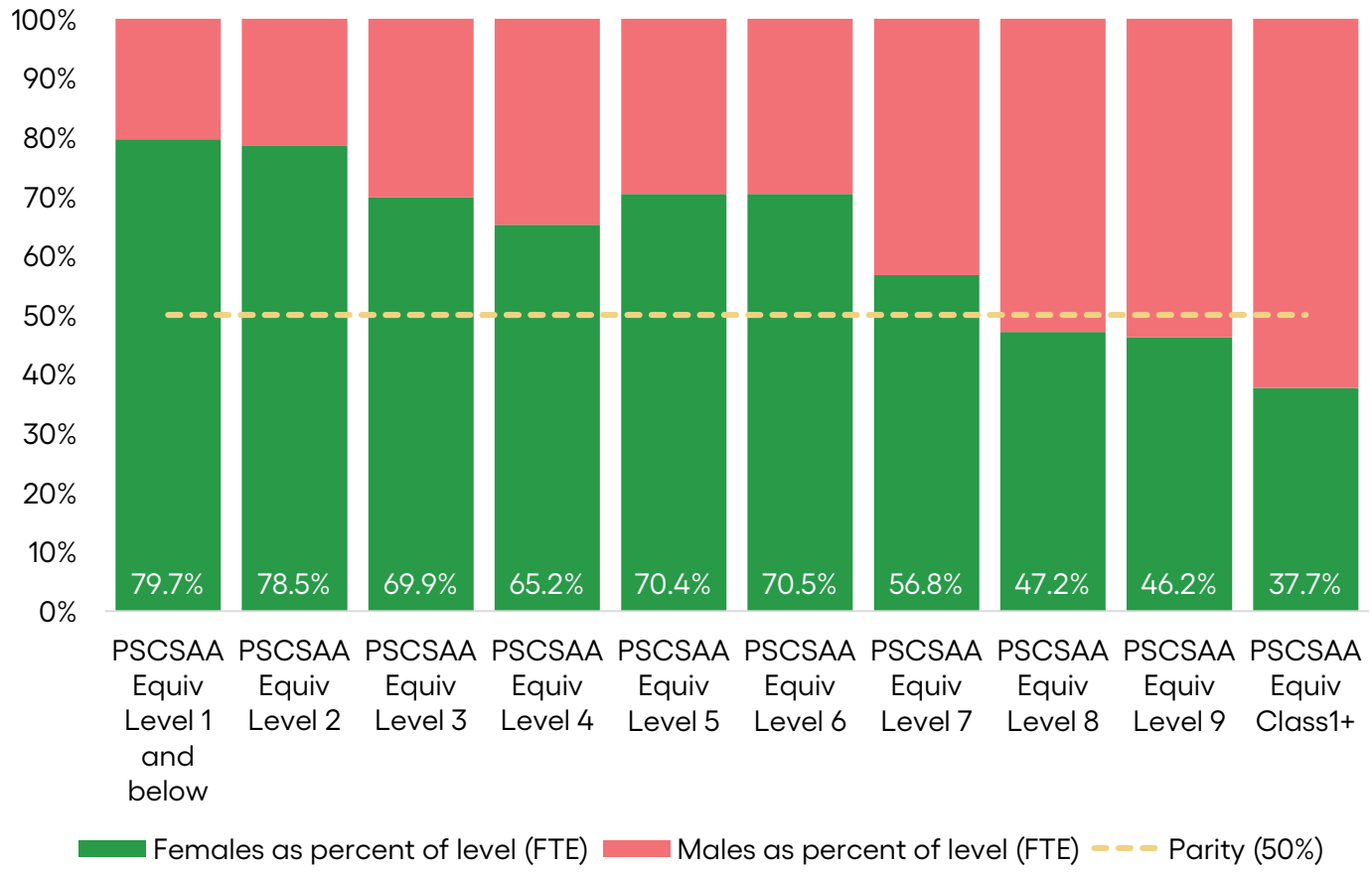
Figure 11: Distribution of headcount by broad age groups, WA other government entities March 2016 and March 2020



Women made up 72.8% of the public sector workforce in 2019–20 and 50.2% of other government entities. Staff who reported as neither male nor female made up 0.1% of staff in other government entities and less than 0.1% of staff in the public sector.

Despite women making up the majority of the public sector workforce, when all staff are mapped to salary bands of the Public Sector Civil Service Association Agreement (PSCSAA), males outnumber females from Level 8 equivalent and above (equivalent annual salaries of $135,296 and over; Figure 12). The proportion of female FTE at each salary band drops steadily from Level 6 equivalent and above, a pattern that has persisted since 2015-16. See Diversity in leadership for more information.

Figure 12: Male and female FTE staff (annual average %) by PSCSAA equivalent salary band 2019–20



When all staff are mapped to the salary bands of the PSCSAA the distribution of public sector FTE across salary bands has remained consistent between 2015–16 and 2019–20 (Figure 13). The same holds true when only staff directly employed under the PSCSAA are taken into account.

When FTE related to male and female staff is mapped to PSCSAA salary bands (Figure 14), the pattern of female over-representation at lower levels shifting to under-representation at higher levels is demonstrated in both 2015–16 and 2019–20 (Figures 13 and 14). However, the proportion of roles at Level 6 and above held by women has increased in the last five years.

Figure 13: WA public sector annual average distribution of FTE by level and proportion of FTE held by female staff at level 2015–16 and 2019–20

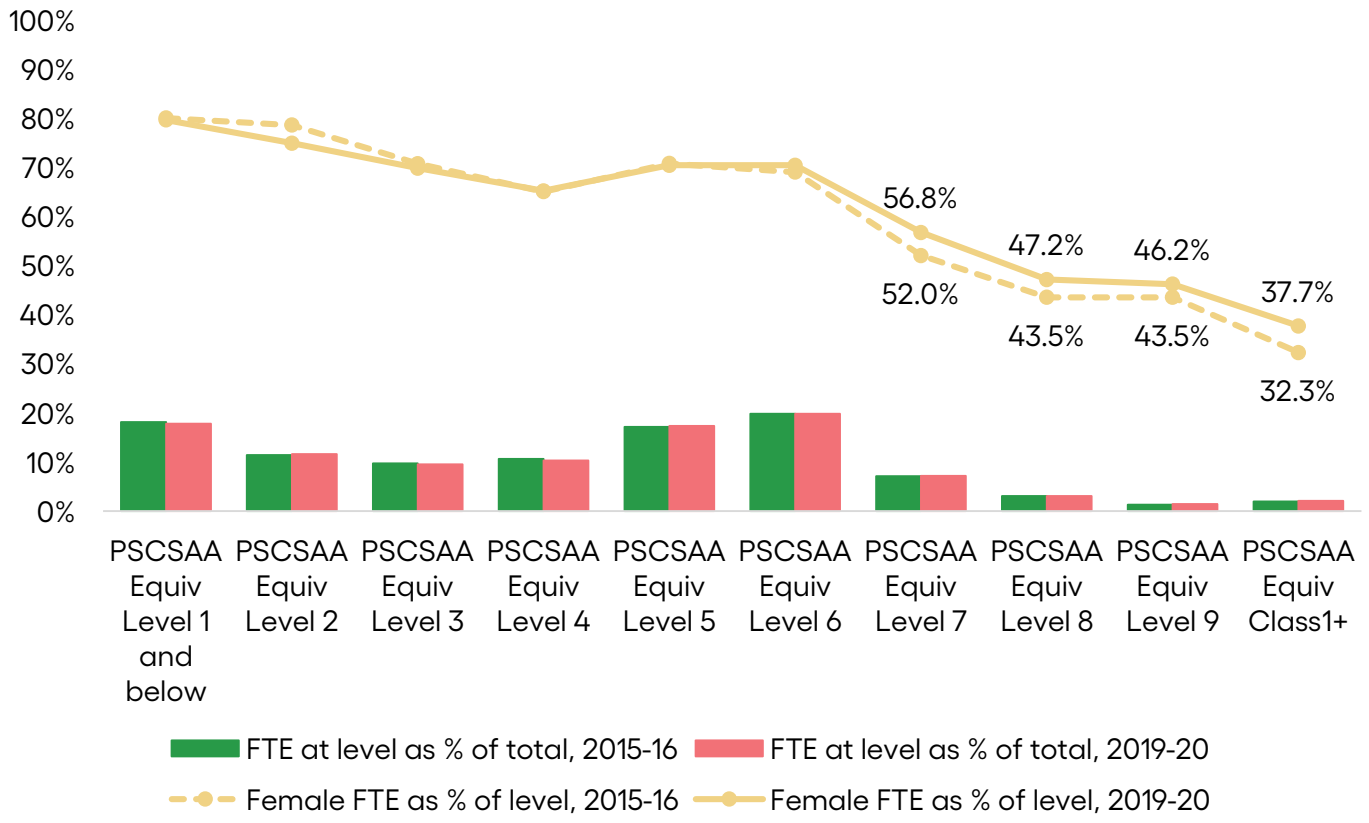
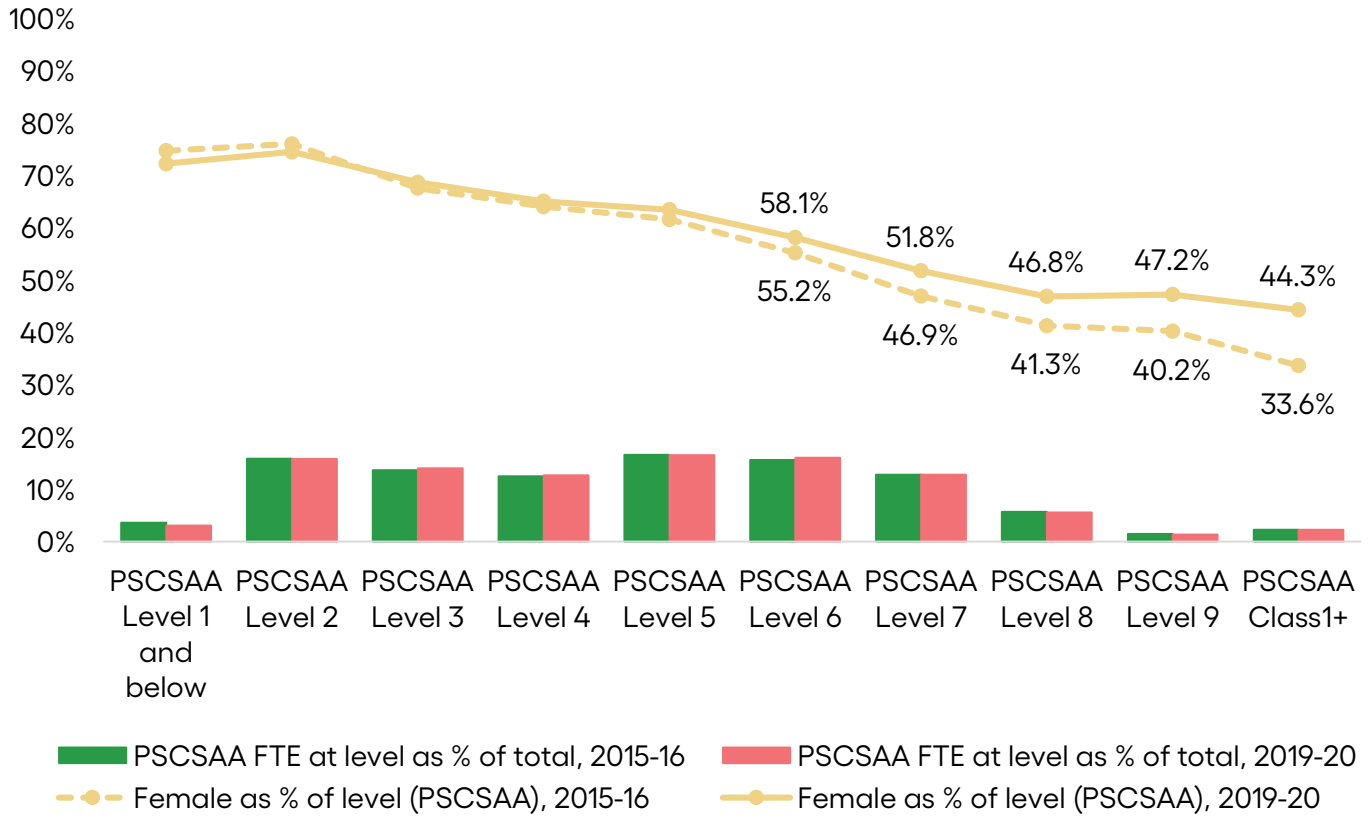


Figure 14: Annual average distribution of FTE by level and proportion of FTE held by female staff at level 2015–16 and 2019–20 (public sector PSCSAA staff only)



Occupations

The public sector workforce is categorised into 23 occupational groups (Figure 15 and Table 9). On average, the top four occupational groups made up more than half of all staff in the public sector across 2019–20:

- teachers (19.3% of total FTE)
- clerical and administrative workers (16.6% of total FTE)
- nurses and midwives (10.8% of total FTE)
- education aides (7.6% of total FTE).

Figure 15: Key occupational groups, WA public sector 2019–20 (annual average FTE – size indicates relative FTE per group)

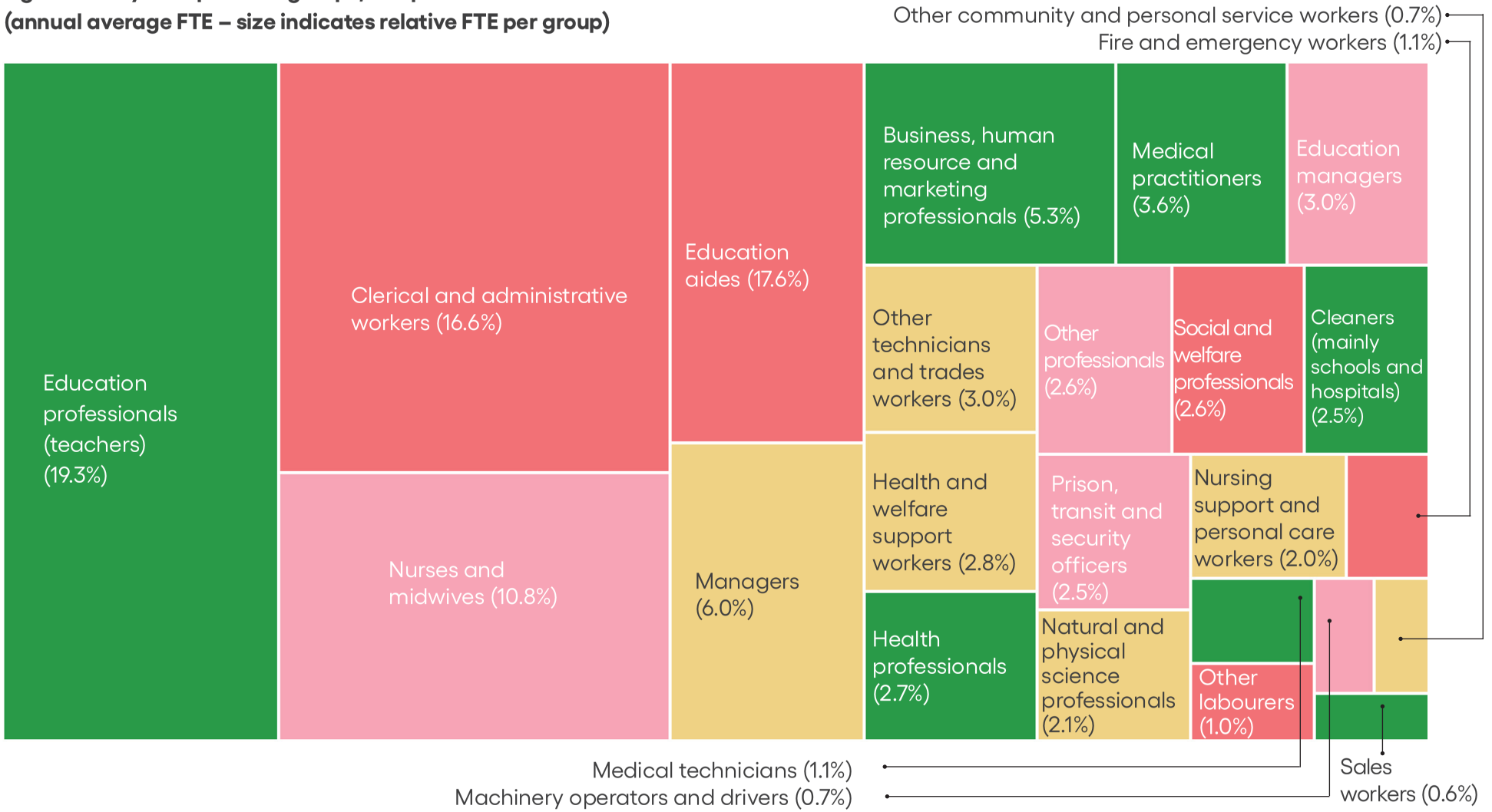
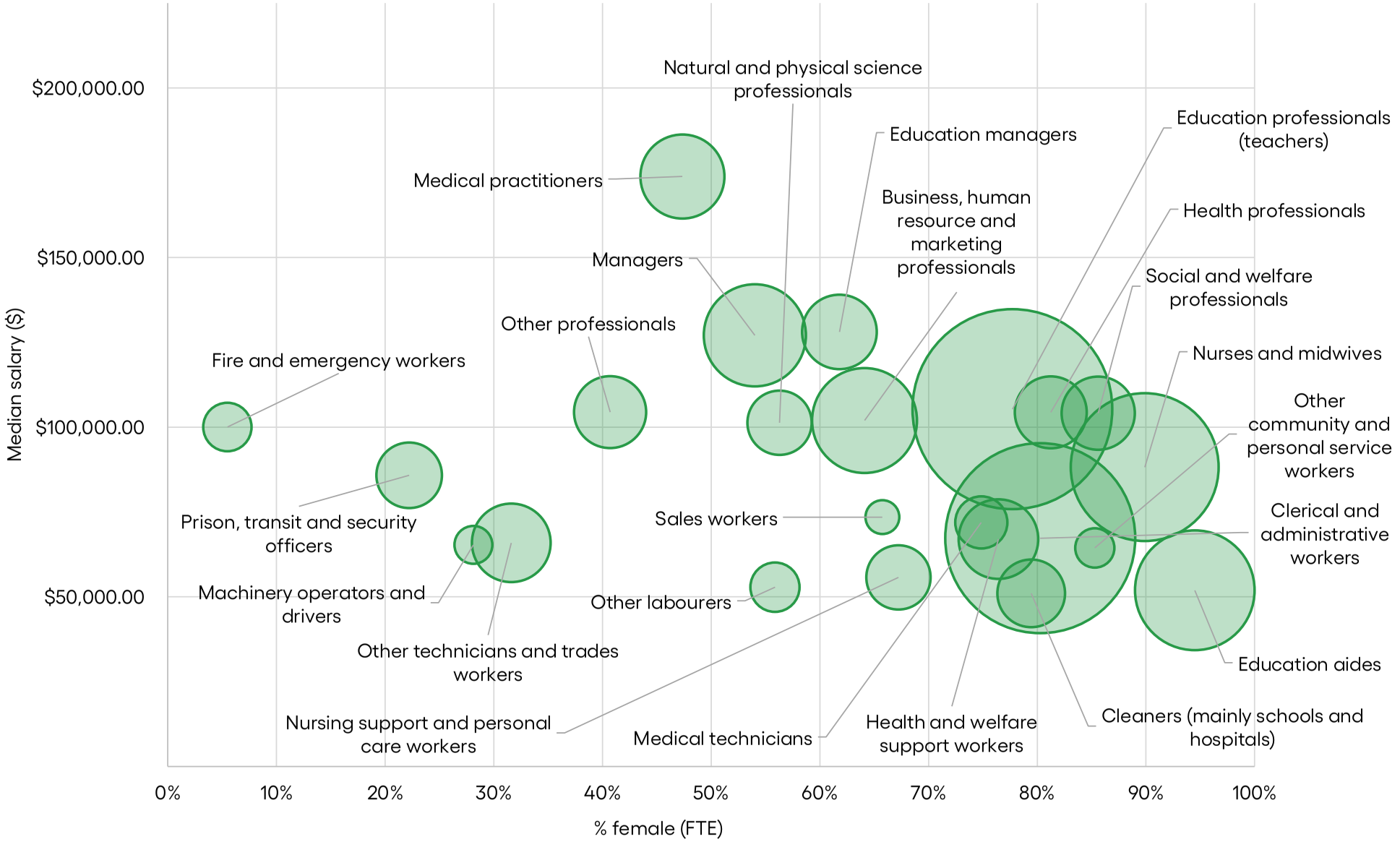


Table 9: Key statistics, WA public sector workforce by occupation 2019–20 (annual average)

Occupational group	FTE 2019–20	FTE change since 2015–16	Median age	Median salary	Female % (percentage point change since 2015–16)
Education professionals (teachers)	22,168	+808 (+3.8%)	44.0	$105,299	77.7% (-0.9 ppt)
Clerical and administrative workers	19,013	-304 (-1.6%)	47.0	$67,256	80.3% (+0.6 ppt)
Nurses and midwives	12,412	+732 (+6.3%)	42.8	$88,202	89.9% (+0.0 ppt)
Education aides	8,738	+1,083 (+14.1%)	47.0	$51,906	94.5% (-1.5 ppt)
Managers (managerial roles regardless of profession; includes CEOs)	6,836	+1,261 (+22.6%)	50.0	$127,033	54.0% (+4.0 ppt)
Business, human resource and marketing professionals	6,050	+159 (+2.7%)	44.0	$101,966	64.1% (+1.1 ppt)
Medical practitioners	4,120	+352 (+9.4%)	37.8	$173,864	47.4% (+3.2 ppt)
Education managers	3,477	+499 (+16.8%)	50.3	$128,060	61.8% (+3.7 ppt)
Other technicians and trades workers	3,421	+120 (+3.6%)	50.0	$65,885	31.6% (-1.8 ppt)
Health and welfare support workers	3,252	-142 (-4.2%)	47.3	$67,006	76.4% (-0.1 ppt)
Health professionals	3,060	+300 (+10.9%)	38.0	$104,340	81.2% (-0.5 ppt)
Other professionals	3,013	+237 (+8.5%)	43.0	$104,429	40.7% (-0.3 ppt)
Social and welfare professionals	2,952	+85 (+3.0%)	43.0	$104,090	85.6% (+1.5 ppt)
Cleaners (mainly schools and hospitals)	2,847	+389 (+15.8%)	50.8	$51,009	79.4% (+1.2 ppt)
Prison, transit and security officers	2,828	+534 (+23.3%)	48.0	$85,817	22.2% (+1.6 ppt)
Natural and physical science professionals	2,378	+170 (+7.7%)	42.8	$101,257	56.3% (+2.8 ppt)
Nursing support and personal care workers	2,284	+74 (+3.4%)	49.8	$55,703	67.2% (-3.0 ppt)
Fire and emergency workers	1,253	+0 (+0.0%)	43.5	$100,033	5.5% (+0.7 ppt)
Medical technicians	1,245	-206 (-14.2%)	42.5	$71,913	74.8% (+1.1 ppt)
Other labourers	1,132	-164 (-12.7%)	57.0	$52,823	55.9% (-2.1 ppt)
Machinery operators and drivers	812	+46 (+6.0%)	52.8	$65,287	28.1% (+2.4 ppt)
Other community and personal service workers	783	-40 (-4.9%)	45.1	$64,396	85.3% (+6.3 ppt)
Sales workers	659	+46 (+7.5%)	46.3	$73,465	65.7% (-1.2 ppt)

There is a weak relationship between occupational groups, gender profiles and salary ranges in the public sector with occupational groups comprising a majority of women tending to have lower median salaries (Figure 16).

Figure 16: WA public sector occupational groups by percent female staff and median salary 2019–20 (size of each point reflects relative size of occupational group in annual average FTE)



Sworn Police officers are not part of the public sector. Key statistical information for sworn officers of the WA Police Force is in Table 10. Detailed information on occupations is not collected from other government entities. Summary information for other government entities is in Table 11.

Table 10: Key statistics, sworn officers of the WA Police Force 2019–20 (annual average)

	FTE 2019–20	FTE change since 2015–16	Median age	Median salary	Percent female (percentage point change since 2015–16)
WA Police Force	6,677	+308 (+4.8%)	41	$97,148	24.4% (+1.6 ppt)

Table 11: Key statistics, WA other government entities (excluding WA Police Force) March 2020

	FTE March 2020	FTE change since March 2016	Median age March 2020	Percent female (percentage point change since March 2016)
Local governments	16,887	-384 (-2.2%)	43	55.1% (+1.0 ppt)
Public universities	11,064	-410 (-3.6%)	41	60.5% (+0.5 ppt)
Government trading enterprises and other entities	9,459	+322 (+3.5%)	44	33.7% (+0.7 ppt)

Locations

Consistent with previous years, the majority of public sector staff (annual average 75.8% or 110,015 headcount) worked in the metropolitan region during 2019–20. The public sector employed 34,996 staff in regional WA (24.1% of the public sector) and 80 staff outside WA (0.1% of the public sector). Public sector employment in regional WA has increased by 4.7% (from 33,402 headcount) since 2015–16.

In regional WA, the highest rates of growth since 2015-16 have been in the Peel (13.7% increase to 3,524 staff) and Pilbara regions (10.3% increase to 3,117 staff) – see Table 12. Declines in total workforce occurred in the Gascoyne and Wheatbelt although in each case the change was less than 5.0%. For both metropolitan and regional staff, median salaries and the proportion of staff with permanent appointments have increased since 2015-16.

Table 12: Key statistics, WA public sector workforce by location, annual average 2015–16 to 2019–20.

Region	Headcount 2019–20	Headcount percent change from 2015–16	FTE 2019–20	FTE percent change from 2015–16	Median age 2019–20	Median salary 2019–20	Median salary percent change from 2015–16	Permanent FTE as percent of total 2019–20	Change in permanent FTE (percentage point) since 2015–16
Gascoyne	661	-4.0%	532	-3.7%	46	$72,214	+5.3%	71.6%	+1.1
Goldfields Esperance	3,102	-0.4%	2,532	+2.5%	46	$77,010	+5.8%	78.6%	+5.6
Great Southern	3,526	+2.4%	2,616	+2.1%	49	$80,971	+4.6%	80.5%	+4.0
Kimberley	3,740	+5.7%	3,151	+4.5%	43	$83,172	+5.0%	73.2%	+4.5
Mid West	3,611	+4.4%	2,839	+4.7%	47	$77,234	+4.2%	76.2%	+1.4
Peel	3,524	+13.7%	2,804	+14.7%	47	$77,787	+4.2%	85.3%	+4.7
Pilbara	3,117	+10.3%	2,576	+10.9%	41	$79,748	+3.4%	79.6%	+10.8
South West	9,518	+6.9%	7,104	+7.5%	48	$80,027	+5.4%	79.5%	+2.5
Wheatbelt	4,167	-3.7%	3,041	-3.1%	49	$70,731	+7.2%	78.5%	+3.0
Metropolitan	110,015	+5.8%	87,465	+5.6%	45	$88,202	+5.1%	77.5%	+2.1
Outside WA	80	+7.0%	69	+13.5%	46	$105,299	+5.4%	41.1%	-19.8

A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

Workforce mobility in a pandemic

Western Australia declared a State of Emergency on 15 March 2020 and a Public Health Emergency on 23 March 2020. On 31 March 2020, the Public Sector Commission initiated a weekly workforce data collection from larger departments on the proportion of public sector staff working from home, and from 20 April 2020 expanded this to capture data from 42 public sector agencies covering just over 50,000 staff (excluding teachers and frontline health staff). This was the first weekly collection the Commission had administered and contributing public sector agencies worked hard to provide immediate data on staff leaving and returning to the office.

The data showed the public sector was flexible and responsive, rapidly adapting to allow ongoing service delivery in a COVID-safe way. By 28 April 2020, approximately 15,535 public service staff had left their usual workplaces and were working from home (63% of staff who worked in roles that were able to be performed from home). In comparison, reporting suggested approximately 57% of Australian public service staff were working from home[3] by the end of May 2020.

On 27 April 2020, WA's first phase of lifting restrictions began. From the week of 18 May 2020, with the second phase commencing, a staged transition of staff back to their usual workplaces saw working from home rates decline. By the end of June 2020, 3,397 staff were reported to be working from home (13% of those in roles able to be performed from home), with the remainder having returned to their usual places of work. Public sector agencies continued to extend flexibility to support staff during the transition back, including rosters for part time return, measures to ensure hygiene and distancing requirements, and allowing high-risk staff to continue working from home.

Across the same period, staff were mobilised across the government sector to support pandemic response and recovery. The Commission began capturing data on these mobilisations from 28 April 2020. By 4 May 2020, at least 161 public sector staff had been deployed to other agencies. This is likely an underestimate as some early urgent arrangements were made and not immediately captured in agency recording processes. The majority of these staff were deployed to the WA Police Force, Department of Health, and Department of the Premier and Cabinet. These mobilised staff were in addition to staff mobilised internally to support response activities.

To assist with the rapid mobilisation, the Public Sector Commission worked with public sector agencies to develop and implement a staff mobilisation initiative called Switch.

Redeployment, redundancy, severances and separation payments

At 30 June 2020, there were 477 staff (475 registrable staff and 2 registered staff) in the public sector surplus to requirements, for example, through structural reform, or whose jobs had been abolished.

In 2019–20, there were 200 voluntary severances totalling $22,965,386. This comprised $14,269,585 in severances based on years of service, $4,406,330 in incentive payments and $4,289,471 on leave components. This was a decrease from 233 voluntary severances totalling $27,368,201 in 2018–19.

The three public sector agencies with the most voluntary severances in 2019–20 were the Department of Communities (73), Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (39) and North Metropolitan TAFE (24). There was one involuntary severance payment totalling $80,173.

While Senior Executive Service (SES) officers are not eligible to receive voluntary severances, separation payments for early termination in the SES are dealt with under section 59 of the PSM Act. This year, there were two section 59 separation payments totalling $190,107, a decrease from 7 in 2018–19 totalling $1,100,000.

3. See The Conversation.

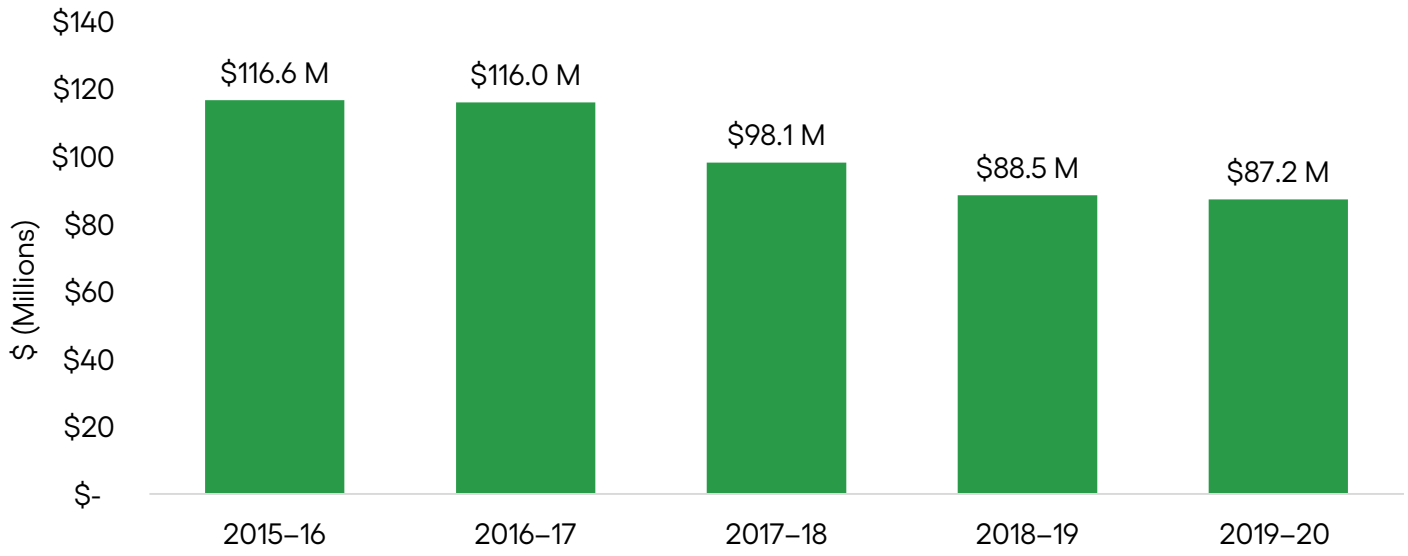
A targeted separation scheme for the Department of Communities was approved in December 2019 to manage impacts of the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). A total of 73 eligible staff accepted severances under this scheme and exited at a cost of $7,525,261 in 2019-20.

Managing temporary personnel in the public sector

The Government is committed to reducing the engagement of temporary personnel in the public sector.

This year, public sector agencies spent $87.2 million under the Temporary Personnel Services Common Use Arrangement, a 1.5% decrease from 2018–19 and a 25.2% decrease from $116.6 million in 2015–16 (Figure 17). The average number of engagements each quarter has also declined from 1,732 in 2018–19 to 1,585 in 2019–20. As in 2018–19, the majority of engagements (52.4% in the June 2020 quarter, compared to 55.7% in June 2019) were for less than six months.

Figure 17: Annual expenditure on temporary personnel in WA public sector 2015–16 to 2019–20



A review of compliance with Approved Procedure 5: Approved Contract for Services Procedures was undertaken, assessing 168 engagements from 2017–18 across a sample of 10 public sector agencies. The review found the majority of engagements were compliant but there was room for improvement in relation to recordkeeping.

Managing leave

In the public sector, employees took less leave of all types in the June 2020 quarter, compared to the June 2019 quarter. On average, long service leave taken declined from 1.2 days per FTE in April to June 2019 to 0.8 days per FTE in April to June 2020; annual leave taken declined from 6.3 days per FTE to 5.4 days per FTE; personal leave (including sick and other types of personal leave) declined from 3.5 days per FTE to 3.1 days per FTE; and sick leave from 1.7 days per FTE to 1.5 days.

As a consequence, leave liability (that is, leave hours owed to current staff) increased in terms of hours in the second half of the year (Figures 18 and 19 – this data includes the public sector and sworn officers of the WA Police Force).

The annual leave liability recorded in June 2020 was the largest the public sector has accrued since June 2015 and well above the usual March to June cycle. WA Health, WA Police Force and the Department of Justice were the top contributors to the jump in annual leave liability, making up 65% of the increase from December 2019.

Long service leave liability also increased in the second half of the year, reaching the greatest number of hours accrued since December 2016.

Figure 18: Annual leave liability WA public sector and WA Police Force 2015–16 to 2019–20 (point-in-time data)

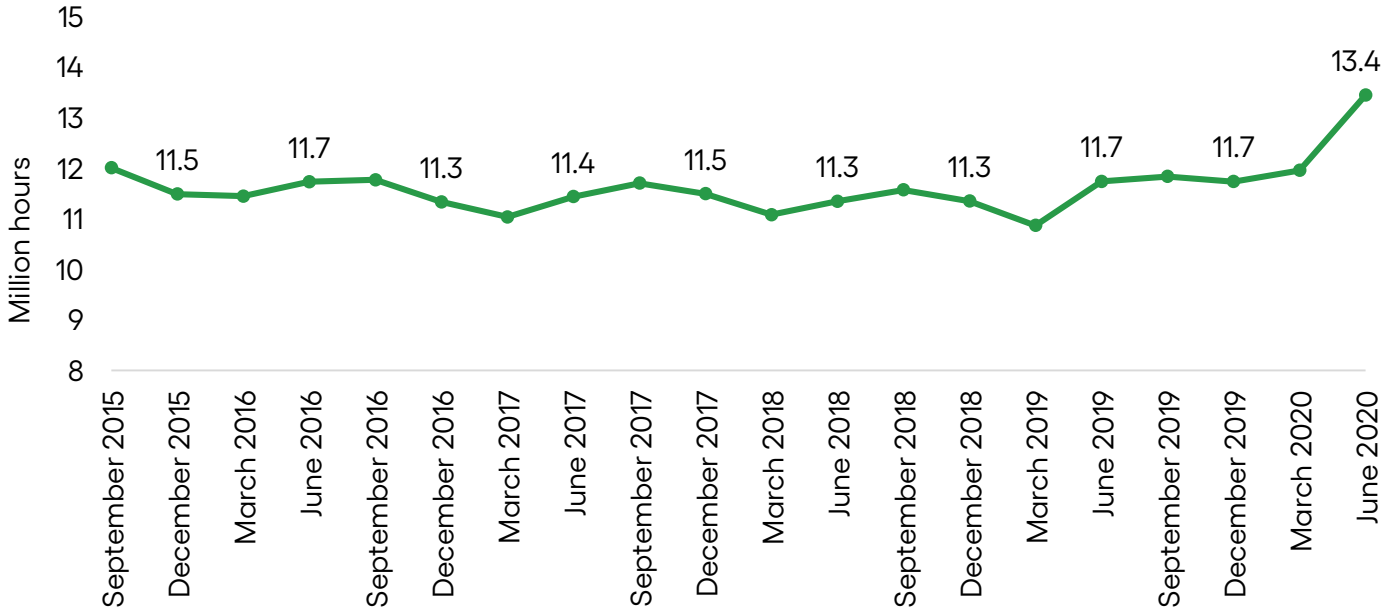
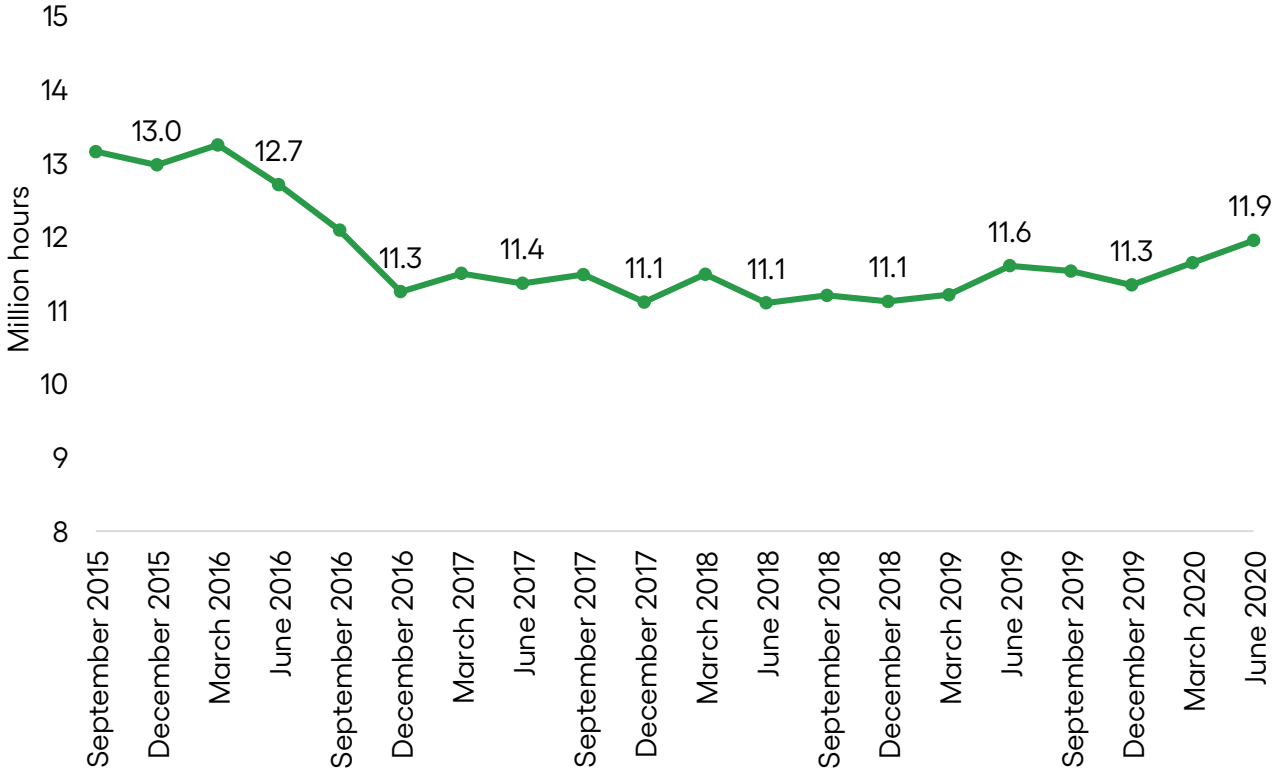


Figure 19: Long service leave liability WA public sector and WA Police Force 2015–16 to 2019–20 (point-in-time data)



A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

Public sector leave in a pandemic

The trend of increased leave liability is given additional context by data collected from 53 public sector agencies about leave reversals. Across these agencies, hours of annual leave reversed in the June 2020 quarter were 61.2% higher than in the June 2019 quarter, and long service leave hours reversed were 41.4% higher. Leave reversals peaked in the January to March quarter of 2020. The declaration of the State of Emergency in mid-March 2020, and increasing awareness of the scale of the pandemic before that point, are highly likely to have influenced the hours of leave reversed in this period. These reversals, as well as reduced opportunity to take leave during the pandemic, have impacted leave liability in the public sector.[4]

Additional data was collected relating to the uptake of COVID-19 leave introduced by the Government in March 2020. This leave was available to all public sector staff, including casuals, who were: diagnosed with COVID-19 when all personal/sick leave entitlements were exhausted; self-isolating in line with Government requirements where working from home arrangements were not available; staff with COVID-19 related caring responsibilities who had exhausted their carers' leave entitlements; and casual staff not required to work because of changed service delivery arrangements.[5] A total of 78 public sector agencies provided information on staff taking the special COVID-19 leave and, where available, other COVID-19 related personal leave.

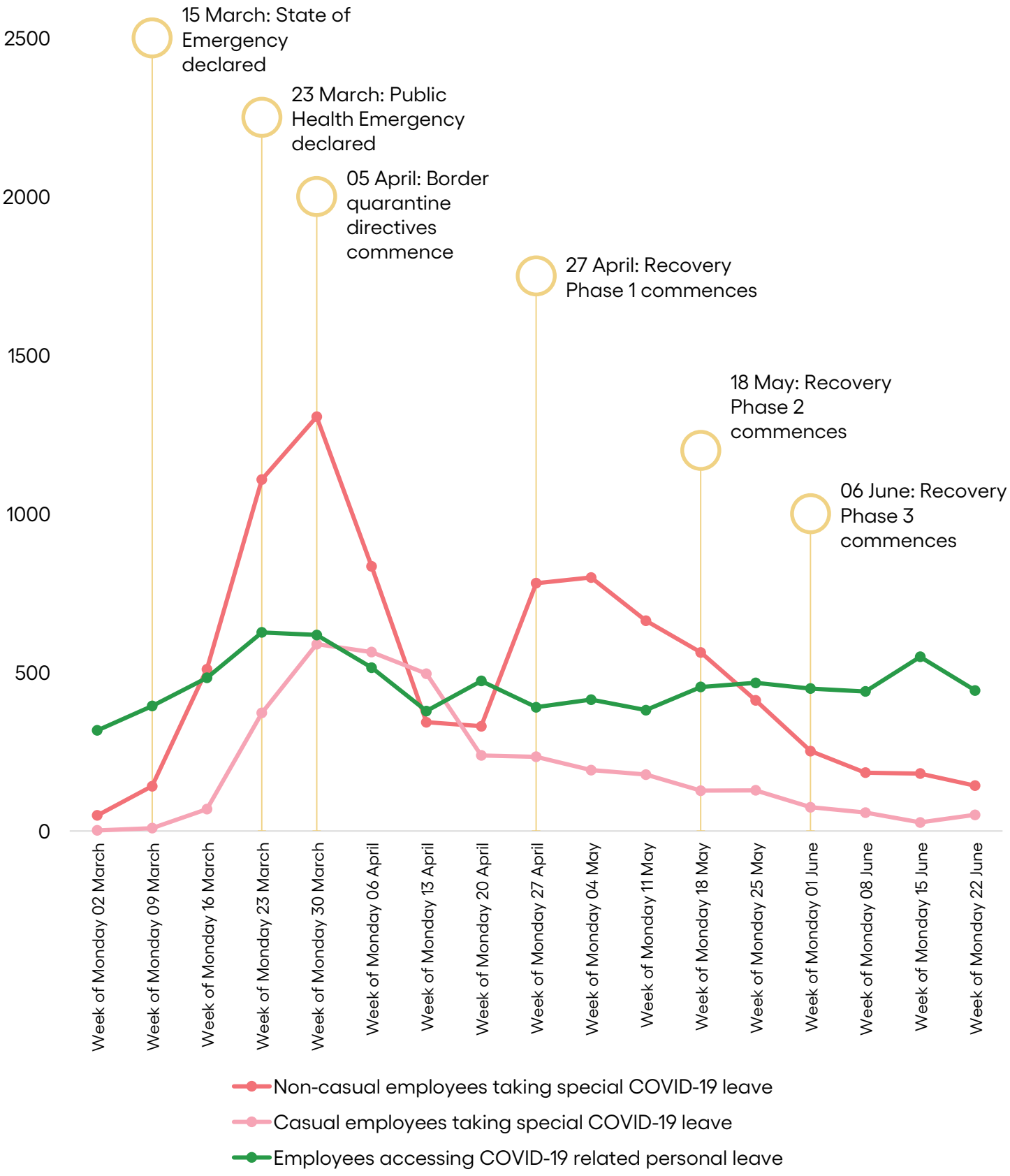
At least 104,000 hours of COVID-19 related personal leave were taken between March and July 2020; 129,000 hours of special COVID-19 leave were accessed by casual staff of reporting public sector agencies; and 197,000 hours of special COVID-19 leave were accessed by non casual staff. Given some respondents were unable to separately report COVID-19 related leave, these figures are likely to be underestimates. Each employee had access to up to 20 days of special COVID-19 leave, and 500 casual and 172 non-casual staff exhausted their full 20 day entitlements in the four-month collection period.

Overall, the number of staff taking COVID-19 related leave peaked within a fortnight of the declaration of the Public Health State of Emergency (Figure 20).

4. See Public Sector Labour Relations Management of accrued leave in the public sector policy statement for more information.

5. See Public Sector Labour Relations Circular 6 for more information.

Figure 20: WA public sector staff accessing COVID-19 related leave by week, March to June 2020



COMMISSIONER'S OBSERVATIONS

State of the workforce profile

The information in this report has been expanded again this year, with most coming from existing data acquired from the government sector or obtained with minimal additional effort.

This is the first step to improved use of data holdings by the Public Sector Commission. I hope the government sector can build on this greater access to information and find value in its application.

The data in this report shows the public sector continued to grow this year, mostly related to delivering services to the community but also associated with responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The government sector is also working to bring recovery projects to life and strategies to create jobs in the State still require government sector support to develop and administer grants, process planning applications, expand training opportunities and coordinate project delivery.

I am pleased that over the past two years, more than 13,000 staff have been provided with job security in the public sector. This is a great outcome for those previously employed on casual and contract arrangements, and a great outcome for the public sector and the community as it provides security, continuity of knowledge and service delivery.

In relation to recruitment, data suggests the public sector is more likely to advertise permanent roles compared to five years ago. While the conversion program commenced in response to a Government election commitment, now is the time to embed this into practice and continue to preference permanency and stability.

The number of people employed in local governments, public universities, government trading enterprises and other government entities has remained stable. The level of information available to the Commission does not allow an understanding of the workforce impacts of the pandemic on other government entities in detail but I will continue to liaise with and support the government sector in recovery.

I believe it is essential to understand the underpinning structure of the workforce, its strengths and weaknesses as well as the challenges emerging for the future. One of these is the increasing number of older staff. The increase in older staff within the sector is not simply a reflection of underlying changes in community demographics, and we need to plan for an ageing workforce.

Similarly, while we are increasing representation of women in more senior roles, improving gender balance across all levels and occupational groups remains a challenge. I intend for future work in this area to lead to improved and more equitable outcomes for staff as well as for the community.

We need to take the lessons learned and rapid adoption of new practices in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to shape workforce planning. There is an opportunity to build on aspects like workforce mobility, both in normal times and in times of crisis. We must maintain the positive changes made in response to the pandemic and use them for improvement.

The impact of the pandemic on the workforce will continue to have effects into the future which need to be considered early and planned for. Widespread cancellation of previously planned leave may impact workforce wellbeing, and also has implications across the government sector if there is a surge in demand for leave once the impact of the pandemic has ebbed.

SECTION 3

Workforce diversity

During the year, the Commission and public sector agencies worked on developing a Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy.

The strategy was released in September 2020, after the reporting period for this report, and sets aspirational targets for the representation of diverse groups in public sector employment. While targets were set only for people with disability and women in the Senior Executive Service (SES) in the 2019–20 financial year, information in this section is compared to the targets as a baseline for future reporting.

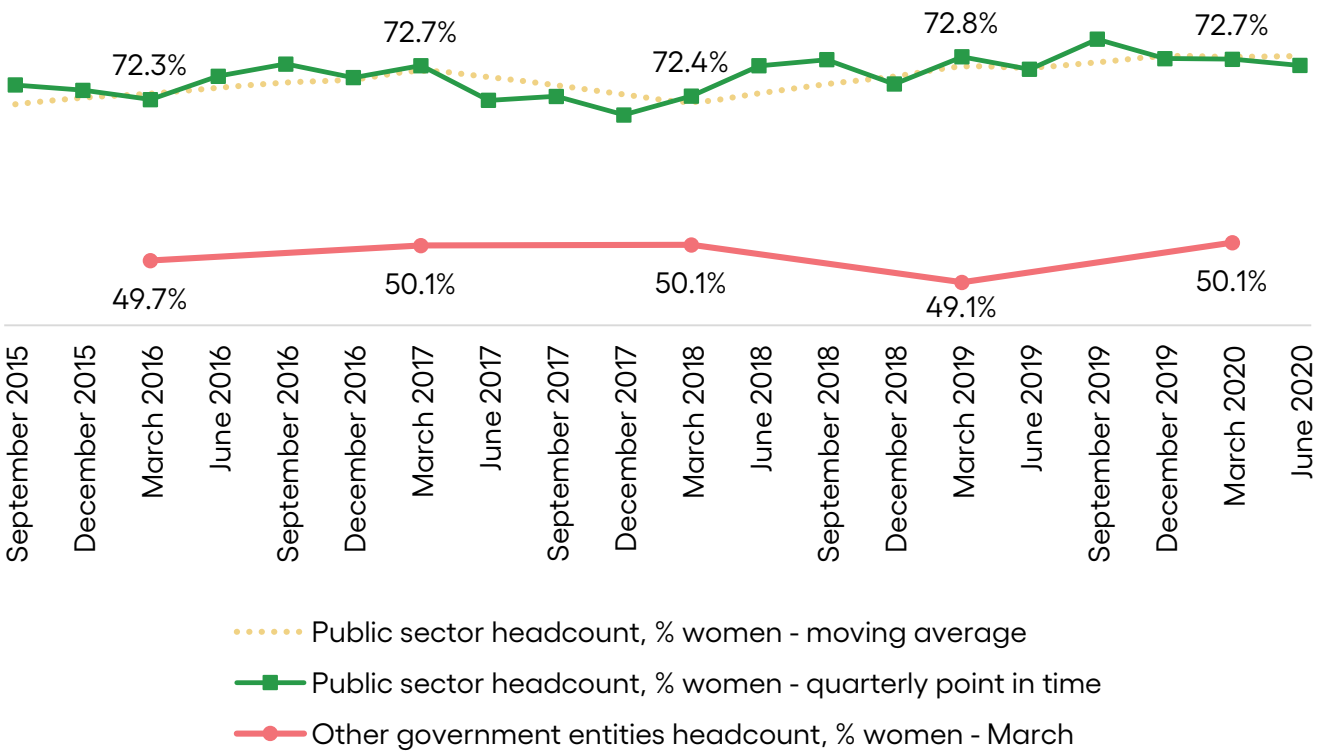
This section summarises workforce diversification in the government sector. For additional information, see the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment Annual Report 2019–20. For consistency with the Director's reporting, information in this section is based on March point-in-time data.

Women

In March 2020, 137,787 government sector staff (66.3%) identified as women. This included 106,451 women in the public sector (72.7% of the workforce) and 31,336 women in other government entities (50.1%).

The percentage of women in the public sector fluctuates slightly throughout a year as fixed term and other staff enter and depart the workforce. The movement in Figure 21 reflects small changes in total percentages. Over the past five years, the proportion of women in the public sector has been very stable, increasing slightly from 72.3% in March 2016 to 72.7% in March 2020. In other government entities, the proportion of women increased from 49.7% in March 2016 to 50.1% in March 2020, but representation of women in the public sector remains higher than in other government entities.

Figure 21: Women as % of workforce (headcount) WA public sector and other government entities 2015–16 to 2019–20 (March data highlighted)



Gender pay gap

The pay gap is the difference between the median salaries of men and women across the public sector. It compares the salaries of all staff at all levels. The gender pay gap has narrowed in each of the last three years. In 2019–20, the median female salary was 10.7% lower than the median male salary (Table 13).

Table 13: Median salary and gender pay gap WA public sector (March point-in-time data)

	Median salary ($) all active contracts			
	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020	Change 2019 to 2020
All staff	$85,052	$85,175	$87,543	+$2,368
Women	$81,797	$82,797	$83,820	+$1,023
Men	$93,341	$93,548	$93,896	+$348
Gender pay gap	$11,544 (12.5%)	$10,751 (11.5%)	$10,076 (10.7%)	-$675

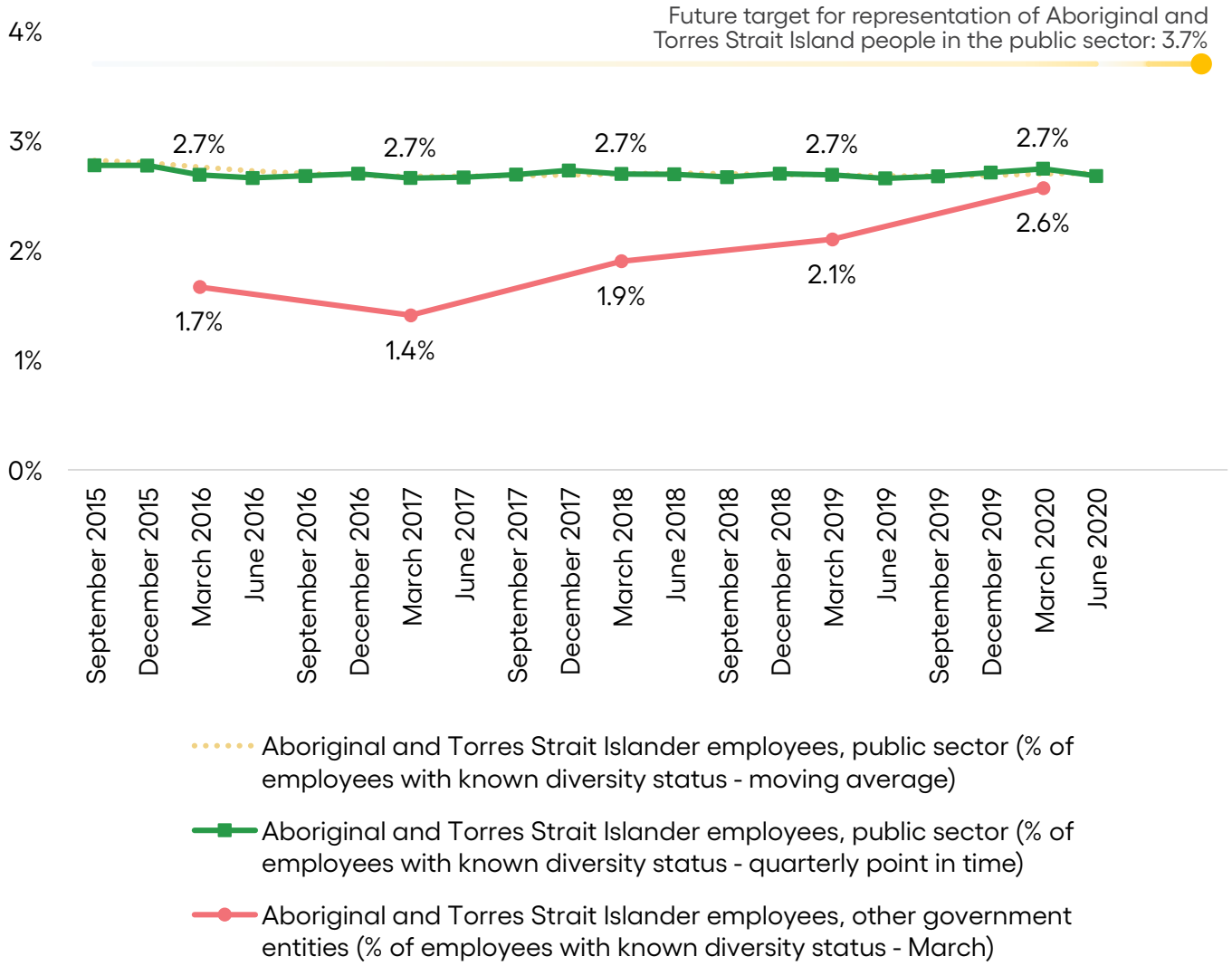
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

In March 2020, 4,252 government sector staff identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander including 3,019 staff in the public sector and 1,233 in other government entities (Figure 22).

Representation in the public sector has been unchanged at 2.7% each March for the last five years. Representation in other government entities was 2.6% in March 2020 and has been increasing steadily since March 2017.

The aspirational target for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in public sector employment (in the workforce diversification and inclusion strategy) is set at 3.7%. If this target had been in place during 2019-20, and based on 2019-20 workforce size, more than 2,500 additional staff would have needed to identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander if the sector was to meet this target.

Figure 22: Representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, WA government sector 2015–16 to 2019–20 (March data highlighted)

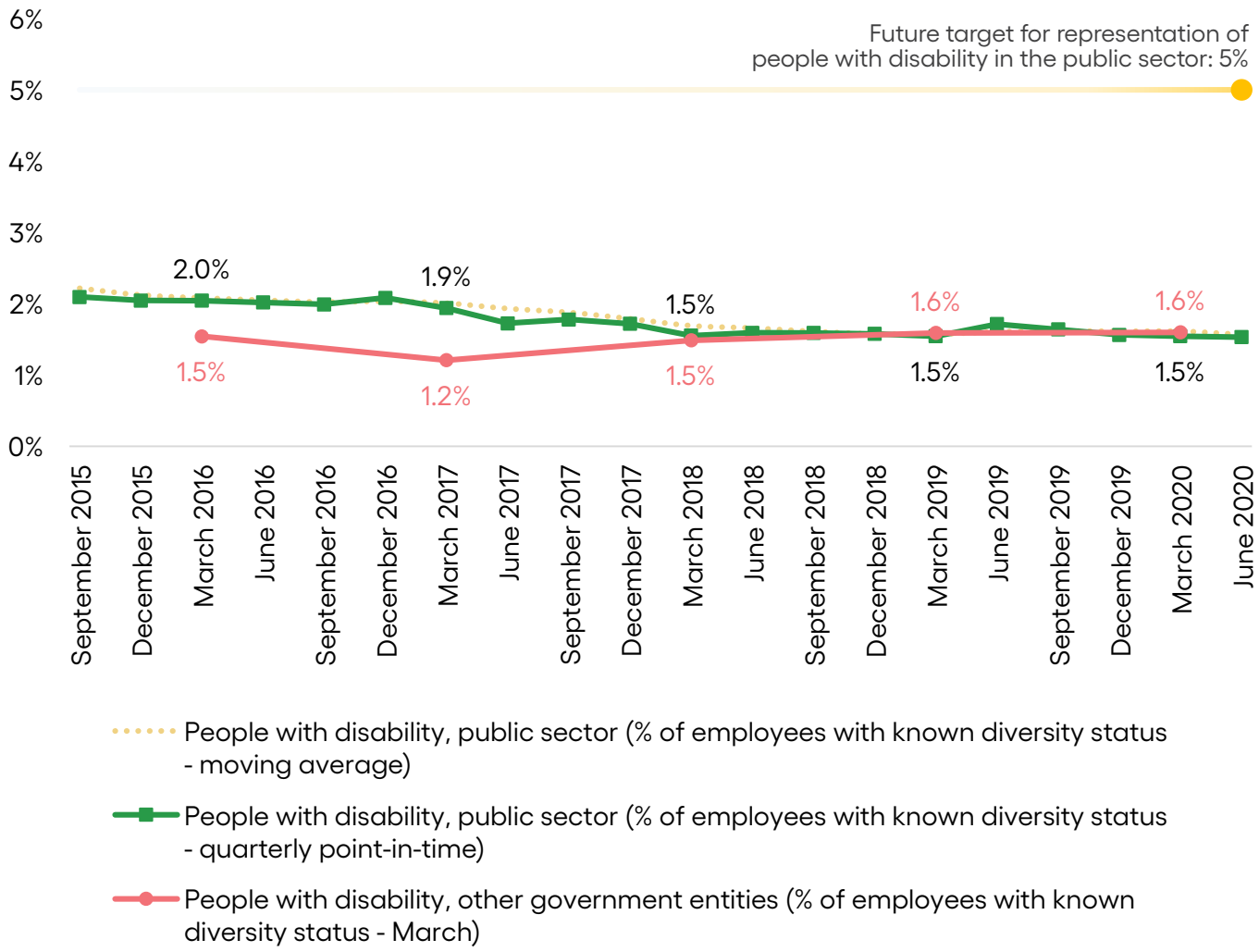


People with disability

In March 2020, 2,439 government sector staff identified as having disability: 1,703 in the public sector and 736 in other government entities[6] (Figure 23). In the public sector representation of people with disability has been stable since March 2018 at 1.5%, while in other government entities representation has increased very slightly from 1.5% in March 2018 to 1.6% in March 2019 and 2020.

The aspirational target set in the workforce diversification and inclusion strategy is to increase the representation of people with disability employed in the public sector to 5.0%. If this target had been in place during 2019-20, and based on 2019-20 workforce size, an additional 5,600 staff would have needed to identify as having disability in order to meet the target.

Figure 23: Representation of people with disability, WA government sector 2015–16 to 2019–20 (March data highlighted)



6. Following publication of the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment Annual Report 2019–20, additional data relating to disability was provided by one of the four public universities – see Data Quality Statement.

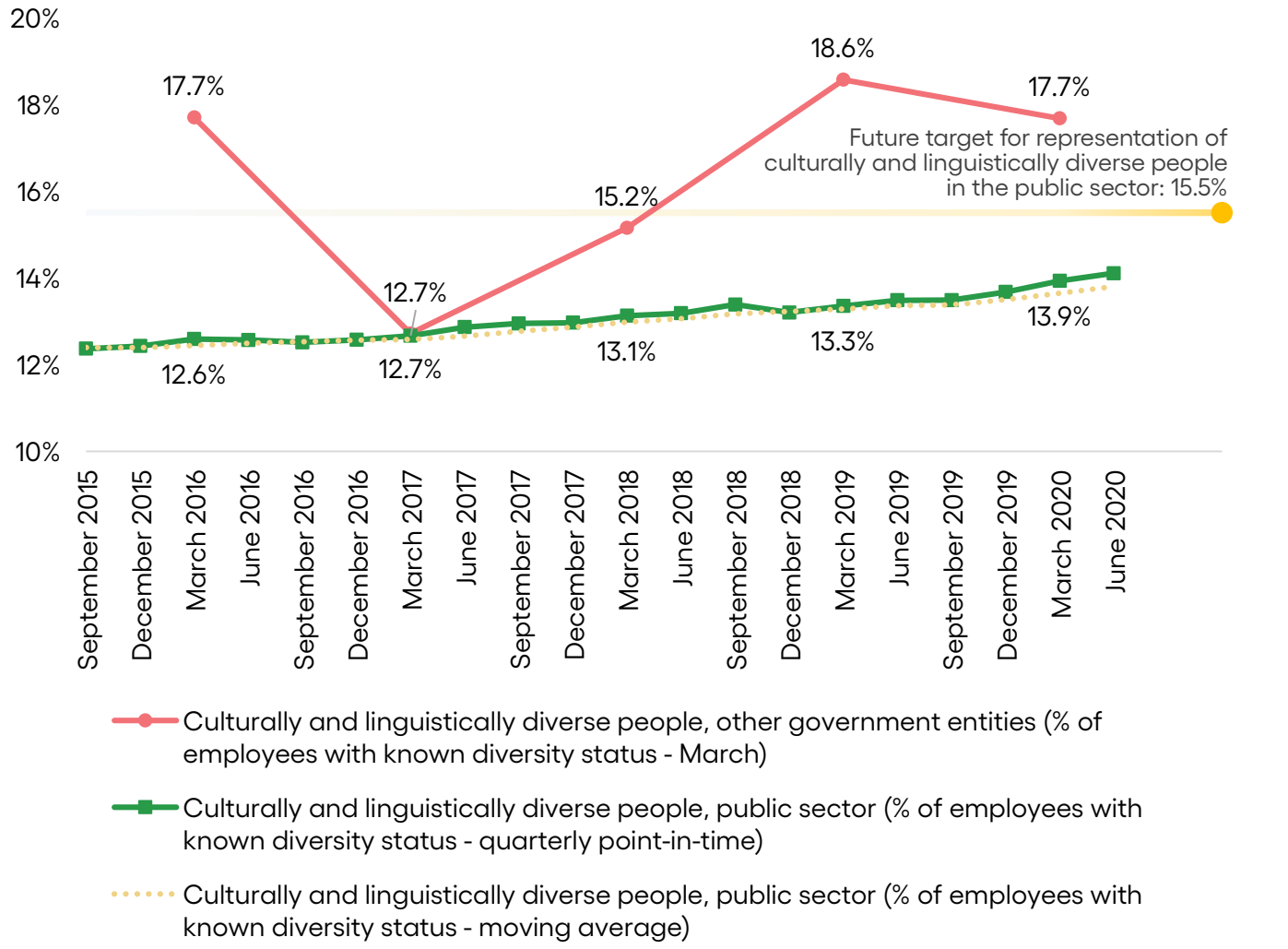
Culturally and linguistically diverse people

In March 2020, 23,082 government sector staff identified as culturally and linguistically diverse: 14,320 in the public sector and 8,762 in other government entities (Figure 24). Representation of culturally and linguistically diverse people has been steadily increasing in the public sector from 12.6% in March 2016 to 13.9% in March 2020.

In other government entities, an apparent drop then recovery in representation of culturally and linguistically diverse staff occurred between March 2016 and March 2018. This may have been influenced by the fact that only 59% of staff in other government entities shared their diversity status in 2016. Since that time, more than 70% of staff in other government entities have shared their diversity status so the overall increasing trend is likely to be reliable.

An aspirational target of 15.5% is set in the workforce diversification and inclusion strategy for representation of culturally and linguistically diverse staff in the public sector. Other government entities have, in aggregate, already surpassed this goal.

Figure 24: Representation of culturally and linguistically diverse people, WA government sector 2015–16 to 2019–20 (March data highlighted)

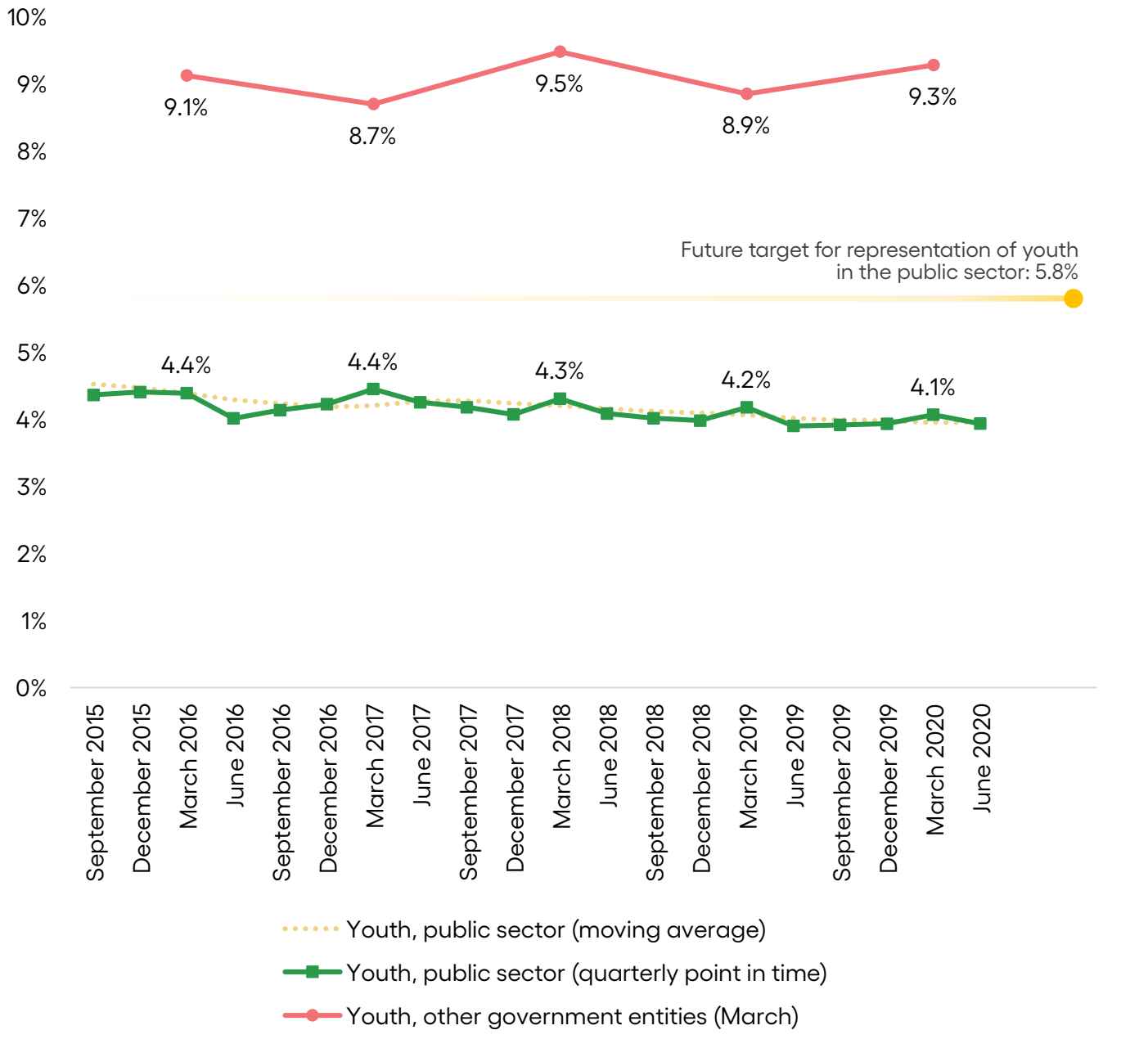


Youth

In March 2020, 11,752 (5.6%) government sector staff were aged 24 or under: 5,951 in the public sector and 5,801 in other government entities. Youth made up 9.3% of staff in other government entities, compared to only 4.1% in the public sector (Figure 25). The proportion of youth in the public sector is particularly affected by seasonal trends as casual workers, whose numbers regularly increase and decrease, are more likely to be young.

Overall, however, it is clear that the representation of youth in the public sector has declined. In contrast, representation of youth in other government entities is relatively stable. An aspirational target is set in the workforce diversification and inclusion strategy for youth to comprise 5.8% of the public sector workforce. Halting and then reversing the decline in youth staff will be required to achieve this target.

Figure 25: Representation of youth, WA government sector 2015–16 to 2019–20 (March data highlighted)



People of diverse sexualities and genders

The government sector does not currently report data to the Commission that measures representation of staff of diverse sexualities and genders.

While data is routinely reported on staff who identify as neither male nor female, this does not fully reflect diverse sexualities and genders. This data shows that across the government sector less than 0.1% of all staff identify as being neither male or female, with staff less likely to be recorded as neither male nor female in the public sector compared to other government entities.

COMMISSIONER'S OBSERVATIONS

State of workforce diversity

The WA community needs a government sector workforce that is diverse in background and experience to deliver appropriate and inclusive services for all Western Australians. Continued innovation and accomplishment also require diversity of thought and openness to new ideas.

In 2019–20, the Government released an action plan to improve public sector employment outcomes for people with disability and set a target of 50% for women in the SES. It is so pleasing to see that this target is likely to be achieved in the next few years rather than taking until 2035 as was the previous trajectory. I am also pleased that in March 2020 there was a greater representation of women in the SES than at any time in the history of the WA public sector. Representation for women in leadership is also increasing in other government entities.

The overarching Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy for WA Public Sector Employment 2020–2025 was released by the Government in September 2020, the financial year following this report. This is the first comprehensive strategy and is accompanied by action plans for women, youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, culturally and linguistically diverse people, people of diverse sexualities and genders and an updated plan for people with disability.

I am confident that setting targets in the strategy for workforce representation will help drive change. The targets, while ambitious, deliberately aim high to achieve real impact. While the strategy and plans directly address the public sector, most actions can be applied to the entire government sector to improve diversity outcomes. I encourage all chief executive officers to consider how they can apply these targets and actions to improve both diversity and inclusion.

In relation to staff diversity across the public sector, I am keen to improve data through both collection strategies and by conducting a census pilot for the public sector in 2021. This pilot, which will involve a sample of public sector agencies, had been planned for 2020 but was rescheduled for the coming year to avoid additional impost on participating agencies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Implementing the workforce diversification and inclusion strategy is a priority in the coming year as is refining mechanisms for public sector reporting. The pandemic has not impacted everyone equally and there is a particular focus on the employment impacts for young people and women. Government sector employers have existing flexible approaches to working and recruitment, and future employment activity can be directed to those who have been most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and those under-represented in the workforce.

SECTION 4

Leadership

All government sector leaders faced unexpected challenges arising from the pandemic including managing the transition to flexible working, maintaining staff wellbeing and continuing to provide services to the community in a COVID-safe way.

In response to the pandemic, the Public Sector Commissioner took on responsibility for convening and administering weekly Public Sector Leadership Council meetings, and similar meetings with public sector and government trading enterprises' chief executives, throughout the peak of the pandemic response. This provided the ability to make informed decisions rapidly, and ensured that communications were broad and consistent. These aspects were vital during the pandemic response where advice and context changed rapidly and decisive leadership was needed to ensure business continuity. The Public Sector Leadership Council also played a key role in recovery planning.

To better understand the impacts of the pandemic on the public sector, 19 semi-structured interviews were conducted with directors general of public sector departments and a questionnaire was sent to 41 public sector agencies. Leadership was among the most commonly identified topics in both the interviews and questionnaire responses, with respondents commenting that it had been either good or excellent, and that leaders responded to the crisis with agility and flexibility. Almost all respondents spoke about the resilience of staff, and most noted that the rapid adoption of remote communication technologies and processes allowed service delivery to continue without negative impacts.

The information gathered from this research is helping the public sector implement the WA Recovery Plan.

Senior Executive Service

The SES only relates to the public sector. In 2017, the Government committed to reduce the SES by 20% from 521 to 417 (a reduction of 104 officers). In June 2020 there were 413 SES officers (Table 14).

The size of the SES cohort:

- reduced by 138 SES officers between February 2017 and June 2018
- remained the same (383 SES officers) between June 2018 and June 2019
- increased by 30 SES officers between June 2019 and June 2020.

Table 14: Senior Executive Service officers February 2017 to June 2020 (point-in-time data)

	Headcount (total)	Women	Men
February 2017	521	178 (34.2%)	343 (65.8%)
June 2018	383	125 (32.6%)	258 (67.4%)
June 2019	383	143 (37.3%)	240 (62.7%)
June 2020	413	173 (41.9%)	240 (58.1%)

Diversity in leadership

As a group, leaders across the government sector tend to be less diverse than the workforce as a whole (Table 15).

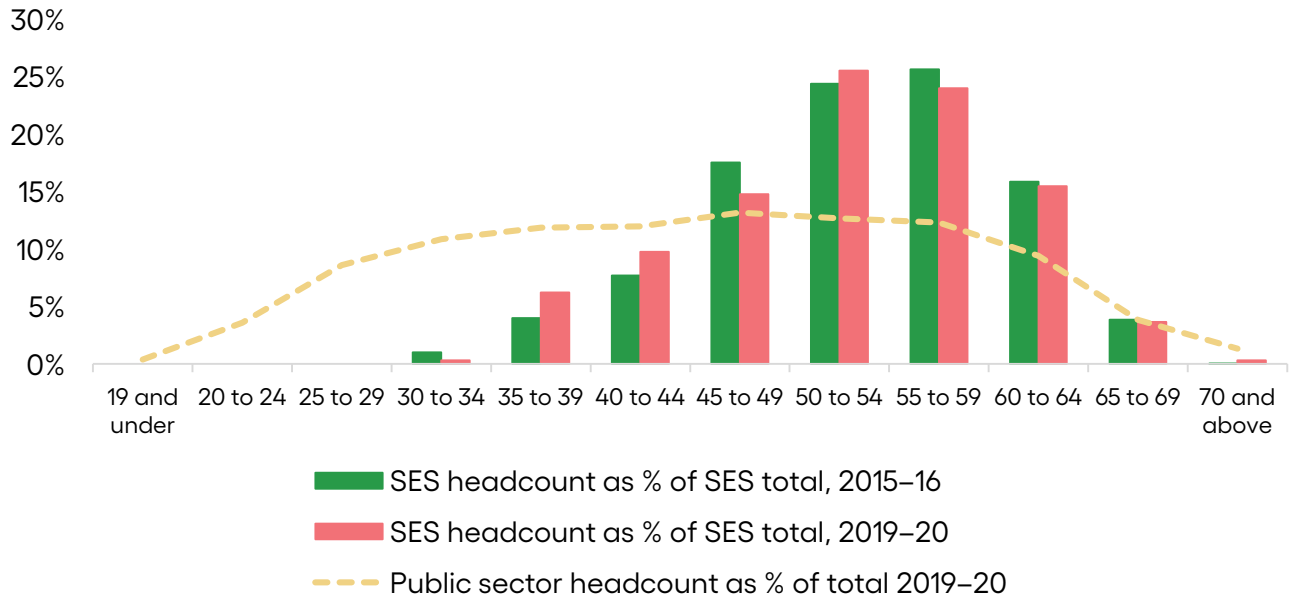
Table 15: Diversity representation (percent of staff whose diversity status is known), WA government sector in leadership March 2020

	Total representation	Representation in SES public sector	Representation in management tiers* public sector	Representation in management tiers other government entities
Women	72.7%	42.5%	49.0%	41.2%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	2.7%	1.6%	1.4%	1.1%
People with disability	1.5%	2.0%	1.3%	0.9%
Culturally and linguistically diverse people	13.9%	7.1%	11.9%	10.5%

* Management tiers refer to staff in top three tiers of organisations relating to management and decision-making responsibilities rather than salary (more information).

Between 2015–16 and 2019–20, representation of people aged 44 and under in the SES increased (Figure 26). The overall age profile of the SES remains older than the wider public sector.

Figure 26: Age profile of SES 2015–16 and 2019–20 (annual average)



On 4 March 2020, the WA Government announced a public sector employment target of 50% for women in the SES. The Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy and action plan for women provide a suite of actions aimed at improving outcomes for women in leadership. In March 2020, there was a greater representation of women in the SES at 42.5% than at any time in the history of the WA public sector (Figure 27). In addition, the representation of women in all management tiers is increasing across the government sector (Figure 28).

Figure 27: Women in SES 2015–16 to 2019–20 (March data highlighted)

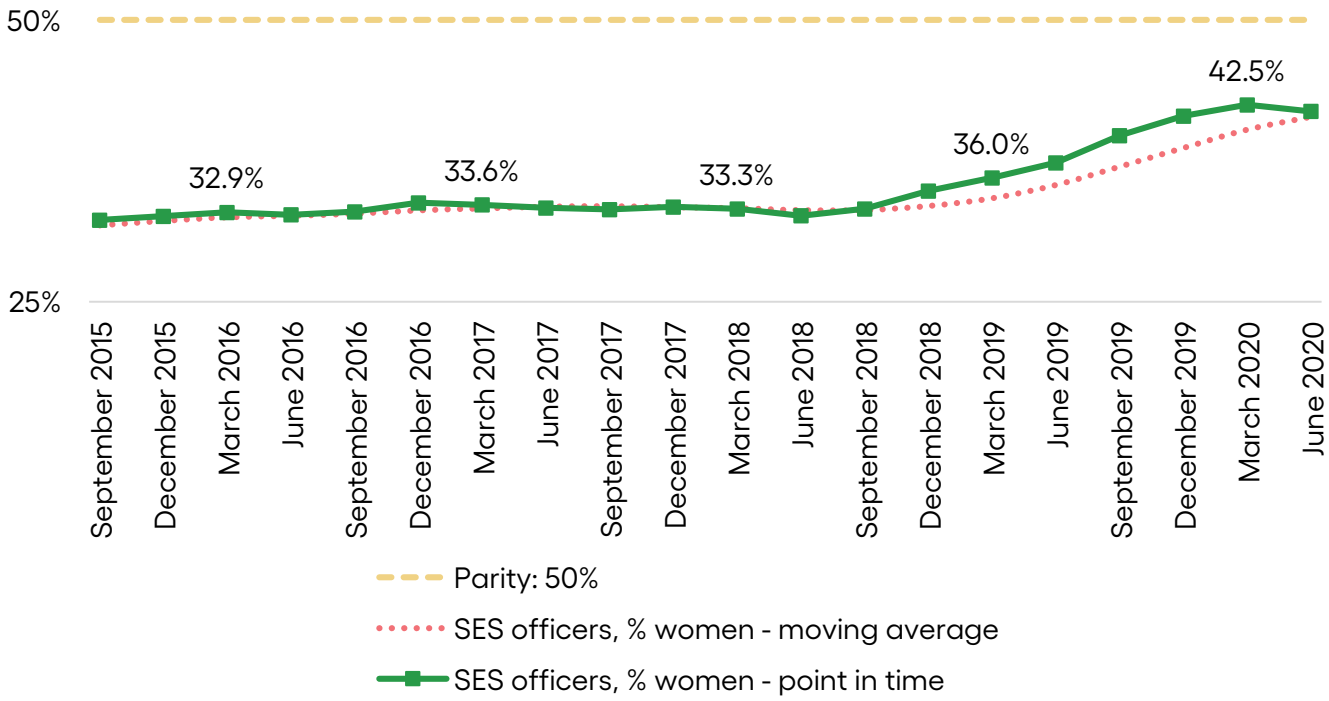
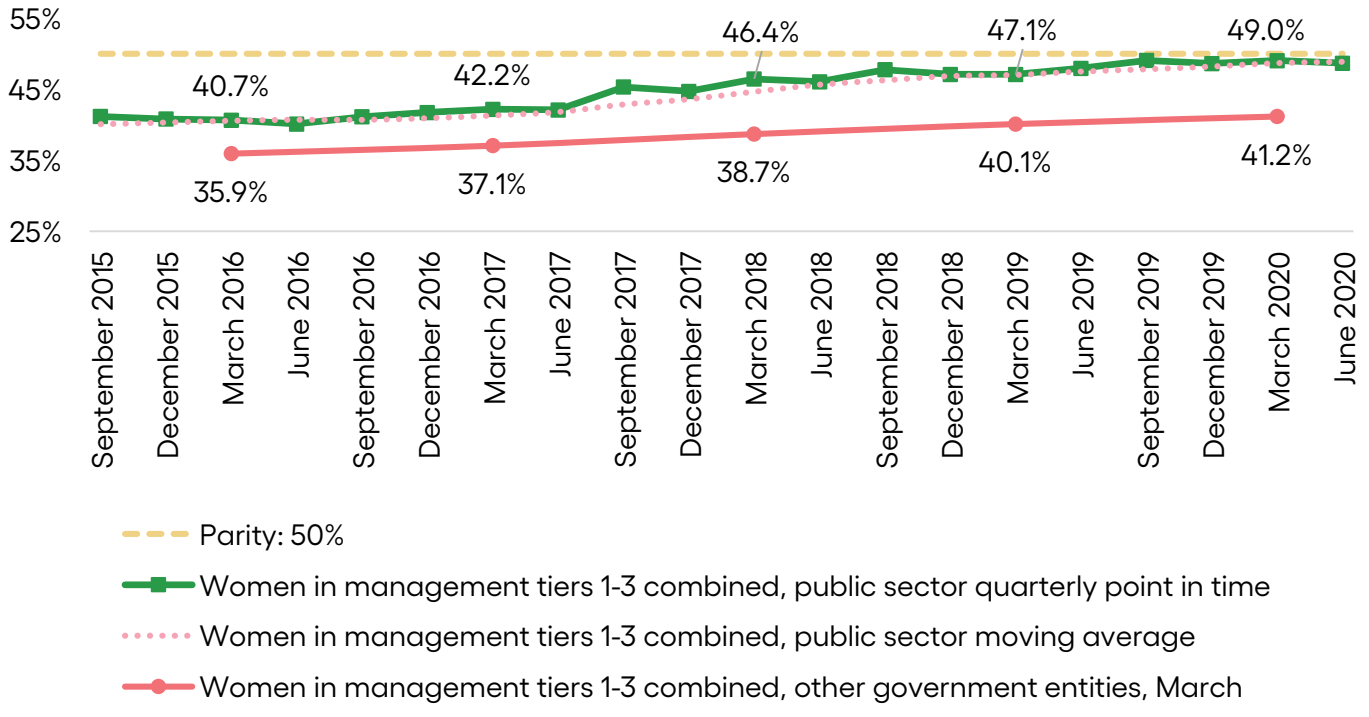
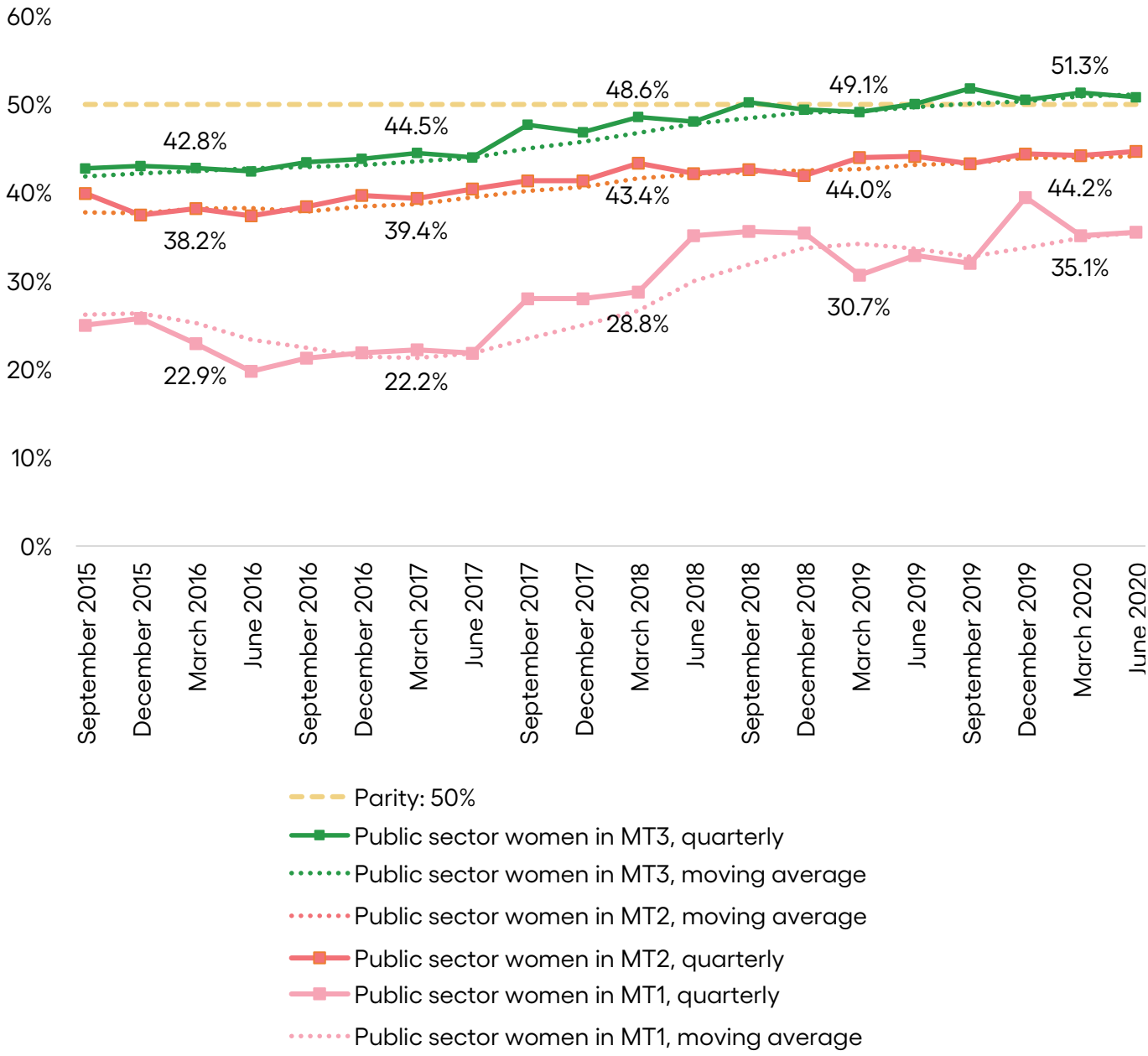


Figure 28: Women in management tiers 1 to 3 combined, WA government sector 2015–16 to 2019–20 (March data highlighted)



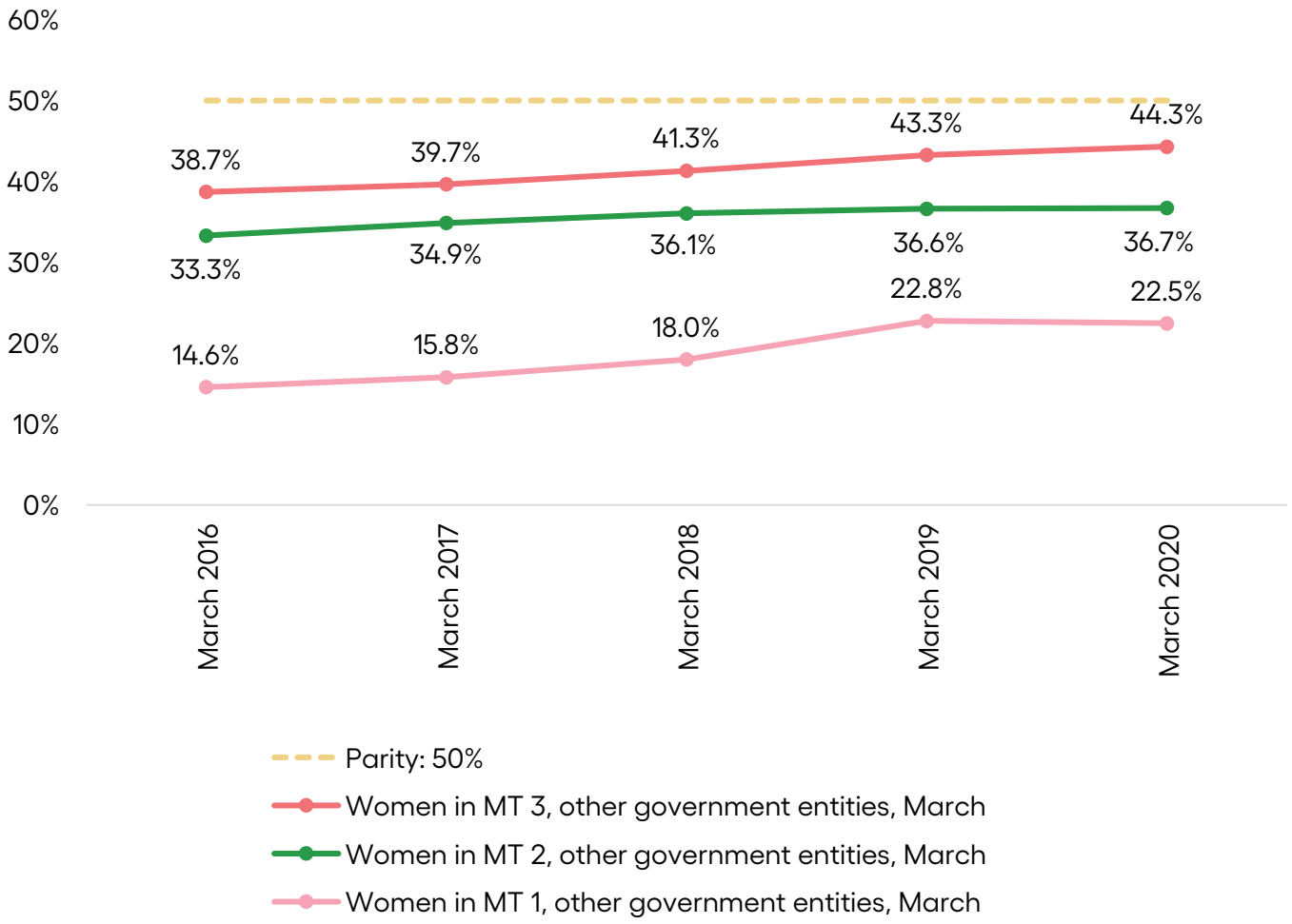
This year, women in management tier 3 in the public sector surpassed 50% for the first time (Figure 29). Taken in conjunction with trends demonstrating increasing representation of women in higher salary bands, this is a positive sign for the future of women in leadership.

Figure 29: Representation of women in management tiers (MT) 1 to 3, WA public sector 2015–16 to 2019–20



Representation of women in leadership in other government entities remains lower than in the public sector but has increased over the longer term from 35.9% in March 2016 to 41.2% in March 2020 (Figure 30).

Figure 30: Representation of women in management tiers 1 to 3, WA other government entities March 2016 to March 2020



In March 2020, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up 1.6% of SES officers in the public sector, an increase from 1.4% in March 2019. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accounted for 1.4% of public sector leaders in management tiers 1 to 3 and 1.1% in management tiers 1 to 3 in other government entities.

In March 2020, people with disability formed 2.0% of SES officers in the public sector (down from 3.0% in March 2019) and 1.3% of public sector leaders in management tiers 1 to 3. People with disability accounted for 0.9% of staff in management tiers 1 to 3 in other government entities.

Culturally and linguistically diverse people made up 7.1% of SES officers, 11.9% in management tiers 1 to 3 in the public sector and 10.5% in management tiers 1 to 3 in other government entities.

COMMISSIONER'S OBSERVATIONS

State of leadership

Our best asset is our people and now more than ever we need diverse and talented leaders across the government sector.

Leading into the COVID-19 pandemic recovery, adaptability and responsiveness were identified as the most important challenges for the government sector. The performance of the government sector during this year of disruption suggests current and future leaders are well placed to face these challenges. In my role as State Recovery Controller, I was able to see first-hand how senior leaders collaborated to support shared goals. This was supported by research in the public sector to better understand the impacts of the pandemic on its work.

The quality and value of the work done to date in leading through the pandemic suggests that, should a second wave affect Western Australia, the government sector is prepared and in a position to respond rapidly and effectively.

With continuing lack of diversity in senior leadership of the government sector, we need to increase diversity of thought and direction – and provide a model for diversity at lower levels. While I know that change takes time, I also know that change achieved at the highest level may accelerate progress in diversity across the workforce. I am confident that the workforce diversification and inclusion strategy can assist not only the public sector but also the government sector more broadly as many actions are aimed at leadership levels.

I am also looking at a more strategic approach to identify and develop talent to build a cohort of future public sector leaders and ensure critical gaps can be filled and emerging challenges met. My observation of the public sector's current approach is that it is unsystematic and rather sporadic.

In terms of the Senior Executive Service in the public sector – and in light of external reviews which noted the need for clear roles and accountabilities as well as efficiency in administration – I am considering how the SES is managed and developed including the executive classification process.

During the year in the Commission we commenced work to help ensure the public sector is led by the best. A capability framework, new approach to performance for CEOs and an overarching leadership strategy are continuing to be progressed.

SECTION 5

Conduct

Codes of conduct and integrity training

Codes of conduct set the standards of conduct and integrity to be complied with by employees.

Key information on codes of conduct is reported by the government sector, including the public sector, local governments, public universities, government trading enterprises, other entities and some boards and committees, to the Public Sector Commission each year. Over 93% of responding government sector entities this year reported they covered the requirements of their codes in inducting new staff. Approximately 80% reported requiring staff to acknowledge their codes in writing, and 55% included the requirement to comply with their codes in job descriptions. Fewer government sector entities reported actively promoting their codes after staff commenced, with less than half stating their codes were reinforced in performance management, through regular informal information sessions or through staff newsletters and bulletins.

In the public sector, 77,591 staff in 71 agencies were reported to have completed accountable and ethical decision making training in the last five years. Eighty-six percent (86%) of responding public sector agencies reported that this training was run for all new staff and 72% reported that refresher training was offered.

Government sector entities reported conducting activities to monitor compliance with their codes of conduct. Just over 70% of responding government sector entities reported conducting internal reviews or audits to monitor compliance. Some also reported using other methods such as external reviews or audits, surveying staff, exit interviews, analysis of complaints and reports, and regular discussion of integrity and conduct matters as part of leadership team meetings.

Almost all government sector entities reported measures to encourage staff reporting unethical conduct. Over 70% of respondents reported incorporating this in their codes of conduct, identifying to whom reports can be made and incorporating information about external reporting avenues in their codes or policies. This year 37% of respondents reported that managers were trained in how to handle reports of unethical conduct, up from 31% in 2018–19.

Discipline

In 2019–20, government sector entities reported that they completed 1,785 discipline processes, identical to 2018–19. While the number of processes remained stable, reporting government sector entities identified fewer allegations arising from these processes. This year, 2,638 allegations were identified compared to 3,381 last year (Table 16). The proportion of allegations found to be substantiated increased from 54% in 2018–19 to 72% in 2019–20. Taken together, these trends may indicate that reporting government sector entities are improving their ability to identify and develop appropriate allegations relating to discipline matters.

Allegations of failing to act with integrity declined this year from 573 (16.9% of all allegations) to 168 (6.4% of all allegations) while allegations of offensive or inappropriate personal behaviour increased from 489 (14.5% of all allegations) to 514 (19.5% of all allegations).

The majority (71%) of government sector entities completing discipline processes reported the average time taken to complete a process was less than three months; 99% reported the average time taken to complete a process was less than 12 months.

Seventy-one (71) government sector entities reported they had discontinued one or more discipline processes during 2019–20 compared to 65 in 2018–19. Consistent with last year, the most common reason mentioned for discontinuing processes was the departure of employees subject to the processes through retirement, resignation or conclusion of contracts.

Table 16: Allegations of unethical conduct by type and number, WA government sector 2018–19 and 2019–20

	2018–19		2019–20	
Type of unethical conduct	Number of allegations (% of total)	Number of substantiated allegations (% of total)	Number of allegations (% of total)	Number of substantiated allegations (% of total)
Offensive or inappropriate personal behaviour (e.g. threatening or abusive language/conduct)	489 (14.5%)	267 (14.7%)	514 (19.5%)	332 (17.4%)
Repeated unreasonable or inappropriate behaviour directed towards a worker, or group of workers, that creates a risk to health and safety (e.g. bullying)	269 (8.0%)	181 (10.0%)	269 (10.2%)	184 (9.6%)
Failure to manage conflict of interest (public role vs personal interests)	91 (2.7%)	26 (1.4%)	51 (1.9%)	27 (1.4%)
Inappropriate acceptance/provision of gift/benefit	17 (0.5%)	11 (0.6%)	4 (0.2%)	4 (0.2%)
Corrupt behaviour (e.g. misusing position for benefit for self/detriment to others)	87 (2.6%)	46 (2.5%)	93 (3.5%)	59 (3.1%)
Misuse of computer/internet/email (e.g. illegal content)	75 (2.2%)	33 (1.8%)	35 (1.3%)	26 (1.4%)
Discrimination, harassment, sexual assault or other discriminatory/indecent behaviour	127 (3.8%)	75 (4.1%)	111 (4.2%)	54 (2.8%)
Illicit drug use/alcohol intoxication	136 (4.0%)	109 (6.0%)	106 (4.0%)	90 (4.7%)
Inappropriate physical behaviour (e.g. assault)	125 (3.7%)	50 (2.8%)	99 (3.8%)	63 (3.3%)
Inappropriate access/use/disclosure of information	228 (6.7%)	122 (6.7%)	171 (6.5%)	129 (6.8%)
Workplace bribes/theft (e.g. cash/workplace equipment)	33 (1.0%)	19 (1.0%)	24 (0.9%)	12 (0.6%)
Misuse of public resources (e.g. vehicles, credit card)	150 (4.4%)	133 (7.3%)	175 (6.6%)	157 (8.2%)
Fraudulent behaviour/falsification of information/records	188 (5.6%)	152 (8.4%)	110 (4.2%)	75 (3.9%)
Neglect of duty (e.g. careless or negligent behaviour in performance of duties)	442 (13.1%)	183 (10.1%)	356 (13.5%)	273 (14.3%)
Criminal behaviour outside work	30 (0.9%)	17 (0.9%)	25 (0.9%)	19 (1.0%)

	2018–19		2019–20	
Type of unethical conduct	Number of allegations (% of total)	Number of substantiated allegations (% of total)	Number of allegations (% of total)	Number of substantiated allegations (% of total)
Unauthorised secondary employment outside work	19 (0.6%)	10 (0.6%)	15 (0.6%)	13 (0.7%)
Disobeying or disregarding a direction or lawful order	171 (5.1%)	142 (7.8%)	205 (7.8%)	189 (9.9%)
Failing to act with integrity (e.g. intentionally failing to perform or acting in a dishonest way)	573 (16.9%)	158 (8.7%)	168 (6.4%)	125 (6.5%)
Committing an act of victimisation within the meaning of section 15 of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003*	n/a (n/a)	n/a (n/a)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Other	131 (3.9%)	83 (4.6%)	107 (4.1%)	80 (4.2%)
Total	**3,381 (100%)**	**1,817 (100%)**	**2,638 (100%)**	**1,911 (100%)**

Individual processes may include a number of allegations to which a range of outcomes may eventually be applied.

Of the 1,785 discipline processes completed by government sector entities in 2019–20, 1,314 contained substantiated allegations. These allegations resulted in 1,682 actions taken (Table 17). The number of termination actions taken declined from 250 in 2018–19 to 192 this year, and also decreased slightly as a percentage of all outcomes (17.7% of actions taken in 2018–19 down to 11.4% in 2019–20). More detailed information on outcomes was collected this year, indicating that warning, counselling and training/development were the most common outcomes for discipline processes.

Table 17: Number of actions taken as a result of completed discipline processes where a breach of discipline was found to occur, 2018–19 and 2019–20 (individual processes may be counted against more than one row where multiple actions were taken)

Action taken	2018–19	2019–20
Warning/reprimand	602 (42.5%)	797 (47.4%)
Counselling	427 (30.2%)	312 (18.5%)
Training and development		210 (12.5%)
Termination	250 (17.7%)	192 (11.4%)
No sanction (i.e. no further action was taken)	72 (5.1%)	66 (3.9%)
Other		
Imposition of fine (e.g. financial penalty)	64 (4.5%)	21 (1.2%)
Reduction in level of classification		16 (1.0%)
Reduction in monetary remuneration of employee		12 (0.7%)
Transfer		12 (0.7%)
Other		44 (2.6%)
Total	**1,415 (100%)**	**1,682 (100%)**

Misconduct reporting

Minor misconduct

Minor misconduct is defined in the *Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003* (CCM Act) and includes behaviours that could constitute reasonable grounds for termination of employment. Principal officers (generally chief executive officers and directors general) are obligated under the CCM Act to notify the Public Sector Commission of allegations of minor misconduct, and the Corruption and Crime Commission of allegations of serious misconduct. In 2019–20, 37 public sector agencies and 53 other government entities reported that they managed at least one conduct matter that could constitute suspected minor misconduct.

Approximately half of these agencies and entities reported that on at least one occasion they did not notify the Public Sector Commission of suspected minor misconduct before starting their own investigations. Where this is the case, they often notify the Public Sector Commission after starting their investigation if they realise the matter is more significant than first thought.

Total minor misconduct matters received by the Public Sector Commission in 2019–20 was consistent with last year, declining from 478 to 473 (1.0% decrease) (Table 18). To date, analysis shows that misconduct data from the peak of COVID-19 restrictions (3 April to 29 June 2020) showed no differences from regular trends.

Table 18: Minor misconduct notifications (received from principal officers of government sector entities) and reports (received from individuals) relating to WA government sector, received 2018–19 (at 30 June 2019) and 2019–20 (at 30 June 2020 including matters pending assessment)

	2018–19			2019–20		
Sector subject of notification/report	**Notifications**	**Reports**	**Total**	**Notifications**	**Reports**	**Total**
Public sector	201	104	305	206 +5 (+2.5%)	109 +5 (+4.8%)	315 +10 (+3.3%)
Other government entities	106	63	169	97 -9 (-8.5%)	50 -13 (-20.6%)	147 -22 (-13.0%)
Out of jurisdiction of CCM Act	0	4	4	3 +3 (n/a)	8 +4 (+100%)	11 +7 (+175%)
Total	**307**	**171**	**478**	**306** **-1** **(-0.3%)**	**167** **-4** **(-2.3%)**	**473** **-5** **(-1.0%)**

Each minor misconduct matter may include multiple allegations covering a range of different behaviours. A matter is the individual notification made by a government sector entity or a report made by an individual. Within each matter there may be one or more allegations about the conduct of one or more public officers. Each allegation is assessed as to whether it meets the definition of minor misconduct under the CCM Act.

The total number of allegations received by the Public Sector Commission in 2019–20 was similar to last year, with 779 allegations received (Table 19). Allegations relating to fraudulent or corrupt behaviour increased from 68 in 2018–19 to 99 this year, while allegations relating to the use of information or recordkeeping increased from 26 to 45.

The Public Sector Commission assessed fewer allegations as not consistent with the CCM Act this year. Such allegations declined from 92 (11.8% of allegations) in 2018–19 to 35 (4.5% of allegations) this year. The Public Sector Commission's prevention and education efforts may be leading to minor misconduct being more appropriately identified and reported.

Table 19: Allegations of minor misconduct received by Public Sector Commission 2018–19 (at 30 June 2019) and 2019–20 (at 30 June 2020)

Allegation type	2018–19	% of total	2019–20	% of total	Change
Related to personal behaviour of public officers	502	64.6%	510	65.5%	+8 (+1.6%)
Related to fraudulent or corrupt behaviour	68	8.8%	99	12.7%	+31 (+45.6%)
Related to use of information/ recordkeeping	26	3.3%	45	5.8%	+19 (+73.1)
Related to conflict of interest	35	4.5%	39	5.0%	+4 (+11.4%)
Defined as not consistent with the CCM Act	92	11.8%	35	4.5%	-57 (-62.0%)
Related to use of public resources	36	4.6%	33	4.2%	-3 (-8.3%)
Related to inappropriate provision of gifts or hospitality	7	0.9%	2	0.3%	-5 (-71.4%)
Pending assessment at 30 June	11	1.4%	16	2.1%	+5 (+45.5%)
Total	**777**	**100%**	**779**	**100%**	**+2 (+0.3%)**

In many cases, the Public Sector Commission refers matters to other appropriate authorities (Table 20). The number of matters referred to the Corruption and Crime Commission increased in 2019–20. The types of matters referred to the Corruption and Crime Commission varies between years, often influenced by systemic or emerging issues of concern during the year. The Public Sector Commission liaises regularly with the Corruption and Crime Commission to ensure misconduct matters are managed efficiently and effectively.

Table 20: Actions taken by Public Sector Commission in relation to minor misconduct matters 2018–19 (at 30 June 2019) and 2019–20 (at 30 June 2020)

Action	Matters 2018–19	Matters 2019–20	Change
No action: Did not meet definition of minor misconduct or had otherwise been dealt with appropriately at time of receipt	211	181	-30 (-14.2%)
Referred to appropriate authority with no obligation to provide any further information to Public Sector Commission	82	47	-35 (-42.7%)
Referred to appropriate authority with request to advise Public Sector Commission of outcome	36	66	+30 (+83.3%)
Referred to appropriate authority with request to provide report on action taken to be reviewed by Public Sector Commission	77	79	+2 (+2.6%)
Referred to appropriate third party	46	80	+34 (+73.9%)
Referred to Corruption and Crime Commission	45	80	+35 (+77.8%)
Referred to other appropriate third party	1	0	-1 (-100%)
Assessment ongoing at 30 June	26	20	-6 (-23.1%)
Total	**478**	**473**	**-5 (-1.0%)**

Note: Table 21 (serious misconduct) reflects allegations referred to CCC; Table 20 reflects matters referred.

Serious misconduct

For public sector staff, serious misconduct refers to corrupt or criminal conduct as defined in the CCM Act. While minor misconduct is dealt with by the Public Sector Commission, the Corruption and Crime Commission deals with serious misconduct. In addition, all allegations of misconduct against officers of the WA Police Force are defined as serious and are dealt with by the Corruption and Crime Commission. The following information about serious misconduct is provided by the Corruption and Crime Commission.

The proportion of allegations received from members of the public rose to 44.9% in the reporting period (Table 21). This continued an upward trend observed over the last three years. This may be due to increased public awareness of the Corruption and Crime Commission's work from high profile cases during the reporting period, and its continued website and social media presence.

Table 21: Source of allegations of serious misconduct in WA government sector received by Corruption and Crime Commission in 2018–19 and 2019–20

		2018–19		2019–20	
Allegation source	**CCM Act**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**
Allegations of serious misconduct notified by public authorities	s 28	2,930	58.2%	2,992	52.1%
Allegations of serious misconduct reported by individuals (the public)	s 25	2,043	40.6%	2,580	44.9%
Allegations of serious misconduct referred from the Public Sector Commission	s 45M(d)	61	1.2%	129	2.3%
Corruption and Crime Commissioner's propositions of alleged serious misconduct	s 26	2	0.04%	42	0.7%
Total		**5,036**	**100%**	**5,743**	**100%**

Table 22: Action taken in relation to allegations of serious misconduct, WA government sector 2018–19 and 2019–20

	2018–19		2019–20	
Action taken	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**
No further action taken – s 33(1)(d)	3,429	68.1%	4,154	72.3%
No further action taken by Corruption and Crime Commission	2,569	51.0%	3,458	60.2%
No further action taken by Corruption and Crime Commission (record public authority outcome)	659	13.1%	563	9.8%
Disclose to Public Sector Commission	142	2.8%	54	0.9%
Disclose to other agency	59	1.2%	79	1.4%
Allegations referred to an appropriate authority or independent agency for action – s 33(1)(c)	1,554	30.9%	1,450	25.3%
Referred to appropriate authority – monitor for outcome	1,484	29.5%	1,398	24.3%
Referred to appropriate authority – monitor for review (active monitoring and review)	70	1.4%	50	0.9%
Referred to independent agency	-	-	2	0.03%
Corruption and Crime Commission to investigate – s 33(1)(a) and (b)	21	0.4%	99	1.7%
Independently – s 33(1)(a)	17	0.3%	38	0.7%
In cooperation with appropriate authority or independent agency – s 33(1)(b)	4	0.1%	61	1.1%
Allegations pending outcome of a preliminary investigation by Corruption and Crime Commission – s 32(2)	29	0.6%	36	0.6%
Refer to Operations Committee – pending decision	3	0.05%	4	0.07%
Total	**5,036**	**100%**	**5,743**	**100%**

For more information on serious misconduct, see the Corruption and Crime Commission Annual Report 2019–20.

Public interest disclosures

The *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003* (PID Act) provides an avenue for disclosure of public interest information across the government sector and sets requirements in relation to such disclosures.

In 2019–20, 12 government sector entities reported they did not have at least one PID officer assigned to receive disclosures (as required under s 23(1)(a) of the PID Act), and 54 reported they had not published internal procedures in relation to the PID Act (as required under s 23(1)(e) and s 23(1)(2)). These figures improved from last year when 20 government sector entities reported not having at least one PID officer, and 84 reported they had not published PID procedures.

The number of disclosures received across the government sector increased from 60 in 2018–19 to 69 in 2019–20 (15% increase). This was the third consecutive year of increase, rising from 54 in 2017–18. Information relating to improper conduct was the most common type of disclosure received.

Despite this increase, the number and proportion assessed as appropriate disclosures declined from 23 in 2018–19 (38.3% of all disclosures received) to 21 (30.4% of all disclosures received) in 2019–20.

Table 23: Public interest disclosures, WA government sector, where disclosure assessed as appropriate, by type of information 2018–19 and 2019–20

	Number of times raised	
Types of public interest information contained in appropriate public interest disclosures*	**2018–19**	**2019–20**
Improper conduct	28	20
Offence under written (State) law	7	9
Substantial irregular or unauthorised use of public resources	9	6
Substantial mismanagement of public resources	7	4
Act or omission that involves a substantial and specific risk of injury to public health	1	1
Act or omission that involves a substantial and specific risk of prejudice to public safety	2	2
Act or omission that involves a substantial and specific risk of harm to environment	0	0
Matters covered by Ombudsman	2	0
Total	**56**	**42**

* One appropriate public interest disclosure may contain more than one type of public interest information.

Breaches of public sector standards

Breach of standards claims are lodged directly with the public sector agency that made the reviewable decision to which a standard applies. Public sector agencies must attempt to resolve claims and must forward them to the Public Sector Commission if they are not resolved within 15 days.

This year the Public Sector Commission finalised 130 claims of breaches of public sector standards compared to 123 in 2018–19 (Table 24). Of all breach claims finalised by the Public Sector Commission this year, 8 were upheld – an increase from 3 upheld in both 2018–19 and in 2017–18.

Public sector agencies reported that 159 breach of standards claims were resolved by them without reporting the matters to the Public Sector Commission (6.7% increase from 150 reported in 2018–19).

Claims in regards to breaches of the employment standard remained the most common type of claims finalised by both public sector agencies and the Public Sector Commission. However, the number of breach of employment standard claims (217 in total in 2019–20) remained extremely low in light of more than 250,000 applications submitted to jobs.wa.gov.au in the same time period.

Table 24: Breach of standards claims finalised by public sector agencies and Public Sector Commission 2018–19 (at 30 June 2019) and 2019–20 (at 30 June 2020)

Type of breach of standard claim	Public sector agencies 2018–19	Public sector agencies 2019–20	Public Sector Commission 2018–19	Public Sector Commission 2019–20	Total 2018–19	Total 2019–20
Employment	122	108 -14 (-11.5%)	101	111 +10 (+9.9%)	223	219 -4 (-1.8%)
Grievance resolution	18	19 +1 (+5.6%)	20	17 -3 (-15.0%)	38	36 -2 (-5.3%)
Performance management	6	23 +17 (+283%)	2	1 -1 (-50.0%)	8	24 +16 (+200%)
Redeployment	4	4 (no change)	0	1 +1 (n/a)	4	5 +1 (+25.0%)
Termination	0	5 +5 (n/a)	0	0 (no change)	0	5 +5 (n/a)
Total	**150**	**159** **+9 (+6.0%)**	**123**	**130** **+7 (+5.7%)**	**273**	**289** **+16 (+5.9%)**

The number of grievances reported to have been completed by public sector agencies decreased from 598 in 2018–19 to 408 in 2019–20 (31.8% decline). Information relating to grievances was not collected from other government entities this year.

COMMISSIONER'S OBSERVATIONS

State of integrity

My observations on the state of integrity take into consideration the pandemic-related disruption experienced this year, when integrity vulnerabilities may have been heightened.

The rollout of significant pandemic recovery initiatives during the year and into the future requires a strong focus on misconduct risk mitigation, good governance and high levels of integrity, both in systems and people. I will continue to focus on integrity as the Integrity Strategy for WA Public Authorities 2020-2023 is implemented.

This year's data saw reports of minor misconduct, breaches of discipline and breaches of public sector standards largely stable from last year. This shows government sector entities and individuals demonstrating continued trust in the systems and processes in place to ensure suspected breaches are investigated and actioned appropriately.

As we move to a more flexible and digital future state of work, we must continue to ensure that mechanisms are in place to identify misconduct and support high levels of integrity.

To maintain the highest level of integrity in our workplaces, staff must not lose sight of their code of conduct and its relevance to how they do their everyday work. Likewise, leaders must be confident of systems and processes that can confirm staff are adhering to their codes.

The Commission's actions in the integrity strategy include developing a model integrity framework, supporting guide and maturity self-assessment tool to help government sector entities develop or improve their integrity frameworks for the purposes of promoting integrity and preventing misconduct. I expect frameworks based on good practice principles to drive improvements in the integrity environment.

As identified in the strategy, regular integrity training must be conducted so staff develop the skills to deal with ethical issues and awareness of integrity remains contemporary. This year, there was a decline in the number of public sector staff who had completed accountable and ethical decision making training in the last five years. It is likely that this decline reflects the number of staff who have completed this training in the past but may require refresher training. The government sector must ensure that short term changes in priority, even such significant ones as responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, do not erode the longer term commitment to communicate ethical standards and expectations.

It remains important for government sector entities to provide avenues for disclosure of public interest information and raise awareness of the public interest disclosure process and reporting pathways. I draw to the attention of government sector entities their obligations under the PID Act to have at least one designated PID officer and prepare and publish PID procedures for their staff.

The Commission provides advice and support to the government sector to help deal with reported gaps in their approach to managing conduct matters, and ensure ongoing compliance. Through collaboration with integrity agencies and government sector entities, I will continue to support the development of a high level of integrity so the community maintains its trust in the work of the government sector.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1
Public Sector Commission data quality statement

This report contains information from a range of sources including:

- data reported to the Public Sector Commission through the quarterly Human Resource Minimum Obligatory Information Requirement (HR MOIR)
- data collected as part of the Commission's annual collection program – Public Sector Entity Annual Collection (previously the Public Sector Entity Survey), Equal Employment Opportunity Annual Collection (previously the Equal Employment Opportunity Survey) and Integrity and Conduct Annual Collection (previously the Integrity and Conduct Survey)
- data sourced through other Commission initiatives and projects which this year included special collections to monitor and support COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery
- data provided by other government sector entities including the State Budget, serious misconduct data and expenditure on common use arrangements.

About our workforce data has more information on definitions and methodologies applied.

Human Resource Minimum Obligatory Information Requirement

The Commission collects and reports workforce data from public sector agencies quarterly to support evidence-based policy formation and other public sector workforce related purposes. The data includes demographic information about staff such as age, gender, diversity status and occupation. HR MOIR data has been used to derive information in the workforce profile and diversity of the public sector.

Point-in-time information on the public sector is published quarterly in the Commission's Quarterly Workforce Reports.

Data on occupation is reported by public sector agencies following the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO). Occupational groups referred to in this report consist of aggregated groups of related ANZSCO codes. Detail on the composition of the various occupational groups is reported in the 2019–20 statistical bulletin.

Methodology change in this report: Annual average figures

Quarterly HR MOIR reporting reflects agency holdings as at the last pay period for that month. This is referred to as point-in-time data. In previous years, the size of the public sector and other workforce trends were estimated based on June quarter point-in-time data. However, the size of the sector fluctuates throughout each year, exhibiting regular, seasonal variation such as growth and shrinkage of Department of Education and TAFE colleges in line with academic terms. As can be seen in Figure 2, June quarterly headcount figures in the public sector are regularly followed by an increase in September, then a decline in December.

While June quarter point-in-time data provides a comparable series of snapshots of the sector, it does not account for these seasonal changes. In this report, year on year analysis is based on an annual average of figures reported in the four quarters in each financial year. Averaged figures for the financial year provide a more reliable estimate of the size and composition of the public sector over the long term.

Data for local governments, public universities, and government trading enterprises is collected only once each year in March. As such, no average figures can be provided and March point-in-time data is reported.

Public Sector Entity Annual Collection

This collection requested information from 119 public sector agencies relating to conduct and integrity and activities supporting diversity and inclusion. This year, additional information was also reported relating to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on the public sector workforce.

The collection opened on Friday 3 July and closed on Friday 21 August 2020, and was administered through the Commission's online collection tool, Qualtrics. A 100% response rate was achieved.

In line with the Equal Employment Opportunity Annual Collection, questions relating to equal employment opportunity in the 2020 collection were streamlined compared to the 2019 collection to reduce the reporting burden on respondents while remaining compliant with statutory requirements. Consequently, not all items in last year's report could be included this year.

Following the close of the collection, a quality assurance process was undertaken to identify data quality issues including missing values, partial responses and erroneous data. Issues were queried and discussed with relevant agencies, and updated as appropriate. Figures in this report reflect the updated data set.

In the public sector, some agencies are supported by departments or larger entities. These entities may have none or few of their own staff as the majority of staff are provided by the department. In 2020, these agencies were able to advise that another department or entity would respond to the annual collection on their behalf. Figures provided in this report relate only to entities that reported on their own behalf or on behalf of themselves and other entities – that is, entities whose data was provided by another are excluded. Entities that reported on their own behalf or on behalf of themselves and others comprised:

- 25 departments
- 25 SES organisations
- 28 non-SES organisations.

Detailed information as reported by responding entities is in State of the Western Australian Government Sector Workforce statistical bulletins.

Integrity and Conduct Annual Collection

This collection is used to gather information on integrity and conduct matters in other government entities (local governments, public universities, government trading enterprises and some government boards and committees). Data collected aligns with integrity related fields in the Public Sector Entity Annual Collection apart from questions relevant only to public sector agencies.

In 2020, other government entities were able to advise that another department or entity would respond to the annual collection on their behalf. Figures provided in this report relate only to entities that reported on their own behalf or on behalf of themselves and other entities – that is, entities whose data was provided by another are excluded.

Data for the WA Police Force, parliamentary electorate offices, and Western Australian Land Authority was obtained through the Public Sector Entity Annual Collection. Racing and Wagering Western Australia reported on behalf of the Western Australian Greyhound Racing Association. The Governor's Establishment does not report through this collection as employees are directly appointed by the Governor.

Entities that reported on their own behalf or on behalf of themselves and others comprised:

- 145 local governments
- 14 government trading enterprises
- 4 public universities
- 50 boards and committees.

Data related to boards and committees is only relevant to Section 5: Conduct in this report.

Detailed information as reported by responding entities is in State of the Western Australian Government Sector Workforce statistical bulletins.

Equal Employment Opportunity Annual Collection

Workforce data for other local governments, public universities and government trading enterprises is reported through the Equal Employment Opportunity Annual Collection.

In 2019–20, this collection requested information from 145 local governments, 15 government trading enterprises and 4 public universities. A 100% response rate was achieved. The collection opened on Monday 1 June and closed on Friday 19 June 2020, and was administered through the Commission's online collection tool, Qualtrics.

All data collected relates to the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. Workforce data provided by respondents comprised information on all staff paid in the last pay period of March 2020, and information on all casual staff employed at any time between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020 whether paid or not in the last pay period of March 2020. This is consistent with the approach and data definitions in previous years. The collection of additional data on casual staff may impact the relative proportion of youth staff reported by other government entities (Figure 25).

Workforce data for sworn officers of the WA Police Force and parliamentary electorate offices was obtained through the March 2020 quarter HR MOIR workforce data. This was combined with data reported by the 15 government trading enterprises. Racing and Wagering Western Australia reported on behalf of the Western Australian Greyhound Racing Association. The Governor's Establishment does not report through this collection as employees are directly appointed by the Governor.

Following the close of the collection, a data quality assurance process was undertaken in consultation with entities and some corrections were made to workforce data provided.

Following publication of the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment Annual Report 2019–20, additional data relating to disability was provided by one of the 4 public universities. This information had minimal impact on the number of staff who had shared that they had disability, but positively impacted on the proportion of staff whose disability status was known ('valid response rate') for 2019–20.

See the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment Annual Report 2019–20 for more information.

Additional data sources

State finances

Data relating to salaries expenditure and growth is reported to the Commission by the Department of Treasury.

Recruitment

Data relating to advertisements posted on jobs.wa.gov.au jobs board has been drawn from the online Recruitment Advertising Management System (RAMS). Data was extracted on 17 September 2020 comprising advertisements with a posting date in the 2015–16 to 2019–20 financial years which were posted for at least one day and had an expiry date in the calendar years 2016 to 2020.

Workforce mobility and working from home

The Commission launched a weekly data collection on 31 March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The primary purpose of this collection was to capture information on the proportion of public sector staff working from home. The sample frame was initially limited to Public Sector Leadership Council agencies and then, from 20 April 2020 onwards, increased to capture data from 42 public sector agencies. Agencies provided weekly counts of total headcount, staff on leave and staff in roles unable to be performed from home such as sworn police officers. Staff on leave were classified as unable to work from home on a given week.

Entities provided estimates obtained from a combination of data sources including administrative data. There are some known and unavoidable quality and consistency issues in the data set, for example agencies used their own determination to assess what constituted a role that could not be undertaken from home, and some agencies were able to provide estimates only of staff working from home on a given date.

On 28 April 2020, the weekly data collection was expanded to include collection of the number of staff mobilised to other entities to support the COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery. All reported data are estimates only.

The Commission concluded the collection on 29 June 2020. It is not currently intended to undertake this collection again.

Redeployment, redundancy, severances and separation payments

Data relating to redeployment, severances and separation payments is extracted from RAMS and Agency Executive Management System (AEMS) for the 2018–19 and 2019–20 financial years.

Temporary personnel

Data relating to temporary personnel engagements and related expenditure are provided by the Department of Finance based on data provided by reporting entities and temporary personnel providers under the Temporary Personnel Services Common Use Arrangement.

COVID-19 related leave

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, additional data items were included in the Public Sector Entity Annual Collection. In response, 78 public sector agencies supplied spreadsheets containing aggregate information relating to COVID-19 related leave:

- weekly total hours of special COVID leave taken by casual and non-casual staff between March and July 2020
- weekly number of casual and non-casual staff taking special COVID leave
- weekly total hours of 'COVID-related personal leave'
- weekly number of staff taking 'COVID-related personal leave'
- total number of casual and non-casual staff who exhausted their special COVID leave entitlements
- number of staff reversing previously booked leave in each of the last five quarters, and the hours reversed.

Data quality checks were conducted to identify missing values, potential outliers and erroneous formats. Where anomalies existed, entities were contacted for follow-up. Not all respondents were able to provide all data requested as record keeping for COVID-19 related leave differed across the public sector.

It is not currently intended to undertake this collection again.

Senior Executive Service

The Public Sector Commissioner manages SES positions under the PSM Act. Data relating to the number of SES officers in the public sector is based on snapshots of active contracts recorded in the AEMS extracted at the end of each quarter. Diversity information for SES officers is derived by matching AEMS information with HR MOIR data reported by public sector agencies in the relevant quarter.

Other relevant definitions and notes

All data is accurate as reported to the Commission by contributing entities.

Public sector gender pay gap calculations are based on the median salary of all active contracts based on gender (male or female only) of staff holding the contracts. As salary information was not collected from public universities, government trading enterprises and local governments, no pay gap calculations are provided beyond the public sector.

Information reported on the diversity status for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, and culturally and linguistically diverse people are based on self-disclosure questionnaires generally provided to staff as part of their engagement or induction package, or as updated throughout their tenure in their entity. It is not compulsory for staff to disclose their diversity status. As such, the total number (i.e. the population) is based on the headcount of valid responses, and those who disclose diversity status are represented as a proportion of this population, or nominal value.

Some table totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Data is provided for the last five financial years. Previous years' reports are online. Additional data is published annually in State of the Western Australian Government Sector Workforce statistical bulletins.

Data reported here may vary from data reported in other Commission publications which may draw on quarterly point-in-time figures.

APPENDIX 2
Compliance statements

In accordance with section 31(2) of the PSM Act, organisations not listed in Schedule 1 of the F*inancial Management Act 2006* are required to provide a statement to the Public Sector Commissioner each year on the extent to which they have complied with public sector standards, codes of ethics and any relevant code of conduct.

Architects Board of Western Australia	No compliance issues concerning the public sector standards, the Public Sector Commission's Code of Ethics or the Board's Code of Conduct arose during the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.
Commissioner for Children and Young People	The Commissioner for Children and Young People and his staff comply with the public sector standards, codes of ethics and other relative codes of conduct in relation to the organisation.
Conservation and Parks Commission	The Conservation and Parks Commission has fully complied with relevant Public Sector Standards, codes of ethics and its code of conduct for the 2019–20 financial year.
Equal Opportunity Commission	In accordance with section 31(2) of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*, the Commission has fully complied with regard to the Public Sector Standards, Commissioner's Instructions, the WA Government Code of Ethics and the Commissions' Code of Conduct.
Legal Practice Board	The Legal Practice Board of WA had no compliance issues concerning the public sector standards, the Public Sector Commission's Code of Ethics or the Board's Code of Conduct that arose during the reporting period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.
Office of the Information Commissioner	The Office of the Information Commissioner has a code of conduct which has been distributed to staff and is available on our intranet and knowledge management system. New staff members are provided a copy as part of their induction. Among other things, the Code outlines the requirements to refer to the WA Public Sector Code of Ethics to guide decision-making; not divulge any information received under the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* (FOI Act) for any purpose except in accordance with the FOI Act; adhere to the principles of natural justice when dealing with matters before the Information Commissioner; report conflicts of interest; treat stakeholders without discrimination; and report any gift or offer of hospitality. The OIC's gift decision register and all purchasing card transactions are published on our website. The OIC is guided by the Public Sector Standards in our employment processes. During 2019/20, the OIC managed two recruitment processes. No staff were redeployed or disciplined, and no grievances lodged.
Ombudsman Western Australia	In the administration of the office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations, I have complied with the public sector standards in human resource management, the Code of Ethics and the office's code of conduct. I have put in place procedures designed to ensure such compliance, and conducted appropriate internal assessments to satisfy myself that the above statement is correct.
Veterinary Surgeons' Board	The Board has complied with the public sector standards and ethical codes.