OFFICE OF THE **COMMISSIONER FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT**

State of the Service Report 2025–2026







NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

Acknowledgement

The Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (OCPE) acknowledges Aboriginal people as the Traditional Custodians and Owners of the lands on which we work and gather, and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. The term Aboriginal is used throughout this report to refer to all people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.



Publication information

ISSN 1835-3037

Published by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment.

© Northern Territory Government of Australia 2026.

Apart from any use permitted under the Australian Copyright Act 1968, no part of this document may be reproduced without prior written permission from the Northern Territory Government through the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment.

Enquiries should be directed to:

The Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment

GPO Box 4371
Darwin NT 0801

T 08 8999 4282
E Commissioner.OCPE@nt.gov.au

ocpe.nt.gov.au

Contents

Letter to the Minister 4
Purpose of the report 5

Commissioner's foreword 6

Executive summary 8
Human resource management principle 9
Merit principle 9
Equality of employment opportunity principle 10
Performance and conduct principle 10
Building a capable and sustainable workforce 11

01 Workforce profile 12
Growth in the NTPS, labour force and population 16
Gender balance 17

02 Workforce capability and development 24
Capability in action 27

03 Employee experience and workplace culture 28
The 2025 People Matter Survey 29
Supporting performance through feedback and development 32
Employee recognition and celebrating excellence 34

04 Leadership and mobility 44
Building leadership excellence across the NTPS 45
Leadership development pathways 45

05 Workforce sustainability 52
Workforce planning 54
Recruitment and retention 55
Early career pathways 55
Retention 56
Building the workforce of the future 58

06 Diversity, equity and inclusion 60
Building a workforce that reflects the Territory 61
Aboriginal employment and career development 62
Special measures and inclusive recruitment 65
Building cultural capability across the NTPS 66
Gender equity 68
Disability employment and inclusion 69

07 Industrial relations and employment framework 72
Enterprise bargaining landscape 73
Enterprise bargaining supporting a stronger workforce 74
Enterprise bargaining in action 75
Industrial activity 76
Promotion appeals 79

08 Digital capability and future of work 82
Building a digitally capable and adaptable public sector 83
NT Digital Futures Strategy 2026–2028 83
Use of artificial intelligence in the NT public service 84

09 Workforce impact on service 86
Emergency management response and surge workforce 87

10 Preparing for the future 90

Appendix A 92
Commissioner's Employment Instructions 92
List of figures 93
List of tables 93
Acronyms, initialisms and abbreviations used in this report 94

Letter to the Minister

The Hon. Jo Hersey MLA
Minister for Public Service
PO Box 3
KATHERINE NT 0851

Dear Minister

2025–2026 State of the Service Report

In accordance with section 18 of the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993* (PSEM Act), I am pleased to present the 2025–2026 *State of the Service Report* (the Report) for the Northern Territory Public Service (NTPS). The information contained in the report meets my reporting obligations under section 18.

The report is organised around three major themes: developing a capable and sustainable workforce; fairness, inclusion and opportunity; and performance, conduct and workplace culture.

The first theme considers how agencies plan for their workforce, attract and retain skilled employees, build leadership and specialist capability, and give people opportunities to learn and progress. It also examines how the NTPS is responding to workforce shortages, changing technology and the challenges of delivering services across urban, regional and remote communities.

The second theme, fairness, inclusion and opportunity, examines how agencies apply merit in recruitment and employment decisions while removing barriers to participation and career progression. It highlights work to support Aboriginal employment, disability inclusion, cultural capability and broader workforce diversity through targeted pathways, workplace adjustments and inclusive employment practices.

The third theme, performance, conduct and workplace culture, considers how clear expectations, regular feedback, leadership, recognition and formal processes help employees perform well and meet public sector standards. Workforce data, agency reporting and employee feedback show where progress has been made and where further work is needed to strengthen wellbeing, safety, accountability and employees' experience of work.

Under section 18(4) of the PSEM Act, you are required to lay a copy of the Report before the Legislative Assembly within six sitting days of receiving it.

Yours sincerely



Nicole Hurwood
Commissioner for Public Employment
30 September 2026

Purpose of the report

The *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993* (PSEM Act) requires the Commissioner to report annually to the Minister on human resource management in the NTPS. Section 18(2) sets out the matters that must be included in the report:

a. the extent to which the human resource management principle and performance and conduct principle have been upheld in the Public Sector during the financial year, including:
   i. measures taken to ensure they are upheld; and
   ii. any significant failures to uphold them of which the Commissioner is aware;
b. measures, if any, taken to improve human resource management in the various agencies;
c. the extent to which disciplinary, redeployment and inability procedures were invoked in the Public Sector;
d. those matters specified in section 28(2) in so far as they relate to the Commissioner's Office; and
e. any other matters prescribed by regulation.

The matters associated with the '(d)' above are reported separately in the Commissioner's Annual Report.

Public sector principles

The public sector principles:

- administration management
- human resource management
- merit
- equality of employment opportunity
- performance and conduct principles

underpin the PSEM Act as the basis for administrative action, administration of the NTPS, and conduct expected of NTPS employees.

Adherence to these principles will ensure agencies have culture and values that support efficient and effective service delivery and meet employee and community expectations of a high performing public sector.

Commissioner's foreword

The 2025–2026 State of the Service Report provides an overview of the Northern Territory Public Sector workforce and the measures taken during the year to uphold the public sector principles.

It was another busy and important year for the NTPS. Agencies continued to manage workforce pressures while delivering essential services across urban, regional and remote communities. This report highlights the practical work undertaken to build capability, strengthen leadership, support employees and improve workforce systems.

A recurring theme is the importance of investing in people. Across the sector, agencies provided leadership and professional development, supported early-career pathways, strengthened specialist capability and created opportunities for employees to develop their skills and careers. This investment helps agencies respond to immediate workforce needs while preparing for future changes in technology, service demand and the way people work.

Employee feedback, workforce data and agency reporting show progress in several areas. Participation in the People Matter Survey increased, employees reported stronger connections to their work, and fewer employees reported witnessing bullying or sexual harassment. Aboriginal employment, disability inclusion and workforce diversity remained important priorities.

Attracting and retaining skilled employees remains challenging, particularly in regional and remote locations and in occupations where demand is high. The NTPS will continue to strengthen leadership, support employee wellbeing and respond to changing workforce and community needs.

While workforce data provides valuable insights, the stories throughout this report show what this work means in practice. They highlight employees building new skills, agencies finding practical solutions to workforce challenges and teams working across organisational boundaries to improve services for Territorians.

I thank the employees, leaders and agencies who contributed to the work reported here and who continue to serve communities across the Northern Territory.



Nicole Hurwood
Commissioner for Public Employment



Executive summary

The 2025–2026 State of the Service Report fulfils the Commissioner for Public Employment's reporting obligations under section 18 of the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993* (PSEM Act).

The report draws on workforce data, agency reporting, employee feedback and Chief Executive Officer assurances to assess how the public sector principles were upheld during the year. It also reports on practical measures taken to strengthen workforce capability and performance, improve human resource management and support a capable and sustainable public sector workforce.

The public sector principles provide the foundation for workforce management across the NTPS. They guide employment decisions, workforce development, employee conduct and the way agencies manage and support their people.

As part of the annual reporting process, Chief Executive Officers were asked to report on compliance with applicable Employment Instructions and identify any significant workforce management matters. All agencies reported compliance with applicable Employment Instructions. Five Chief Executive Officers identified significant workforce management matters and advised that these were managed through mechanisms available under the PSEM Act. No agency reported a systemic failure to uphold the public sector principles or associated employment obligations.

Human resource management principle

The human resource management principle supports agencies to manage their workforces effectively and develop the people and capability needed to deliver services.

During 2025–2026, agencies used workforce planning, recruitment initiatives, leadership and capability programs, employee development, early-career pathways and wellbeing measures to respond to workforce pressures and prepare for future needs.

Agencies also invested in succession planning, digital capability, specialist expertise and opportunities for employees to develop through training, mentoring, coaching and higher duties. These activities helped agencies maintain essential capability, respond to workforce shortages and prepare employees for future roles.

Merit principle

The merit principle provides the basis for fair and transparent employment decisions, including recruitment, selection, promotion and transfer.

Agencies continued to apply recruitment and selection processes within the framework established by the PSEM Act and Employment Instructions. OCPE also revised recruitment guidance and supporting resources, strengthened conflict-of-interest arrangements, introduced additional selection-panel support and updated Special Measures requirements.

These measures provide agencies with clearer and more consistent processes for making employment decisions based on merit while supporting transparent and accountable recruitment practices.



Equality of employment opportunity principle

The equality of employment opportunity principle supports fair access to employment and career opportunities and helps address barriers that may prevent people from joining, participating in or progressing within the NTPS.

During 2025–2026, agencies continued to support Aboriginal employment and career development, disability inclusion, cultural capability and broader workforce diversity. Special Measures Recruitment Plans, targeted employment pathways, workplace adjustments and inclusive recruitment practices provided practical ways to improve participation and career opportunities.

Work also continued to strengthen cultural capability, improve access to development opportunities and create workplaces where employees from different backgrounds can contribute and progress.

Performance and conduct principle

The performance and conduct principle helps employees understand what is expected of them, develop their capability and meet the standards required of public sector employees.

Agencies used performance management and development systems, regular feedback, leadership development, employee recognition and workplace conduct processes to support performance and address concerns. Discipline, inability, appeal and grievance mechanisms provided formal processes for managing matters where required.

The 2025 People Matter Survey provided further evidence about employees' experience of workplace culture. Participation increased to 48 per cent, with 2,822 more responses than in 2023. Employees reported stronger connections to their work, greater confidence to speak up and high levels of respect within workgroups. The proportion of employees who reported witnessing bullying or sexual harassment decreased by four percentage points.

These findings reinforce the importance of clear expectations, regular feedback, supportive leadership and safe processes for raising and addressing workplace concerns.

"Employees reported stronger connections to their work, greater confidence to speak up and high levels of respect within workgroups."

Building a capable and sustainable workforce

The public sector principles apply within a workforce environment that continued to present challenges. Agencies faced competition for skilled employees, regional and remote recruitment pressures, increasing service demand, changing expectations about work and the need to retain and transfer specialist knowledge.

During the year, agencies used workforce planning, targeted recruitment, professional and leadership development, early-career pathways and flexible work arrangements to respond to these challenges. Agencies also invested in digital and artificial intelligence capability, strengthened inclusion and developed approaches to retain knowledge as experienced employees retired or moved on.

The report provides a detailed account of these measures and their results. Together, agency reporting, Chief Executive Officer assurances, workforce data and employee feedback indicate that the public sector principles continued to guide workforce management across the NTPS, while also identifying priorities for further improvement.



"The public sector principles continued to guide workforce management across the NTPS."

01

Workforce profile

This section sets out who makes up the Northern Territory Public Sector workforce — its size, gender and age profile, location, employment type and pay — and how each has shifted over the past year. That picture matters because it shows whether the NTPS has the people it needs, where, and on what basis, to keep delivering services across the Territory.

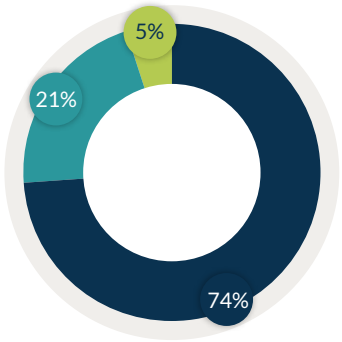
Section 3 covers how employees experience working in the NTPS, drawing on the 2025 People Matter Survey.

FIGURE 1: TOTAL WORKFORCE



25,356
Total workforce

23,211
FTE



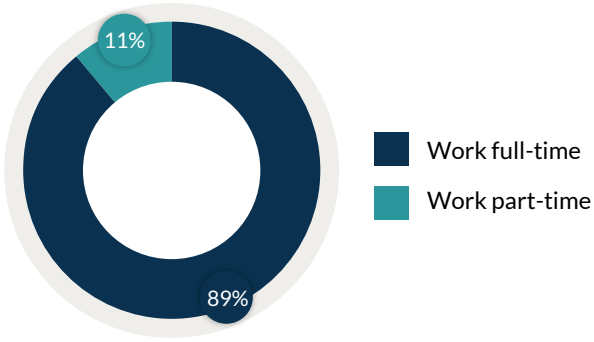


TABLE 1: NTPS WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

Workforce diversity group	Number of people	Percentage of workforce	Number in leadership roles	Leadership representation	Average length of service (years)	Other measure
People with disability	558	2.1%	78	—	8.1	—
Women	16,346	64.5%	530	62% of senior management roles	6.89 (men: 7.23)	Gender pay gap: 3.96%
People from culturally diverse backgrounds	5,914	23.3%				

* Based on data from 28 agencies, including the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, which is not an agency for the purpose of the PSEM Act.

FIGURE 2: PROPORTION OF STAFF IN NTPS AGENCIES

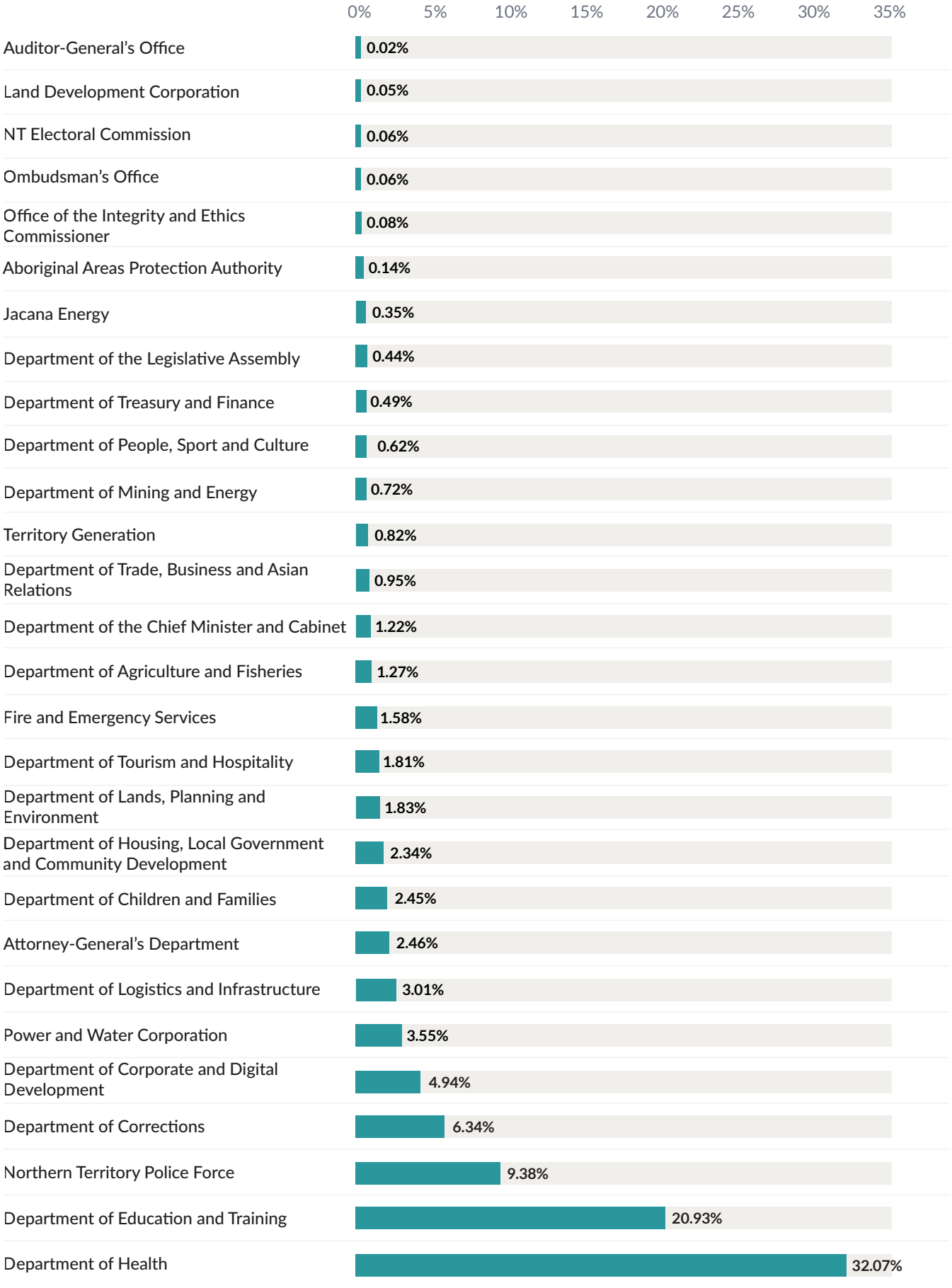
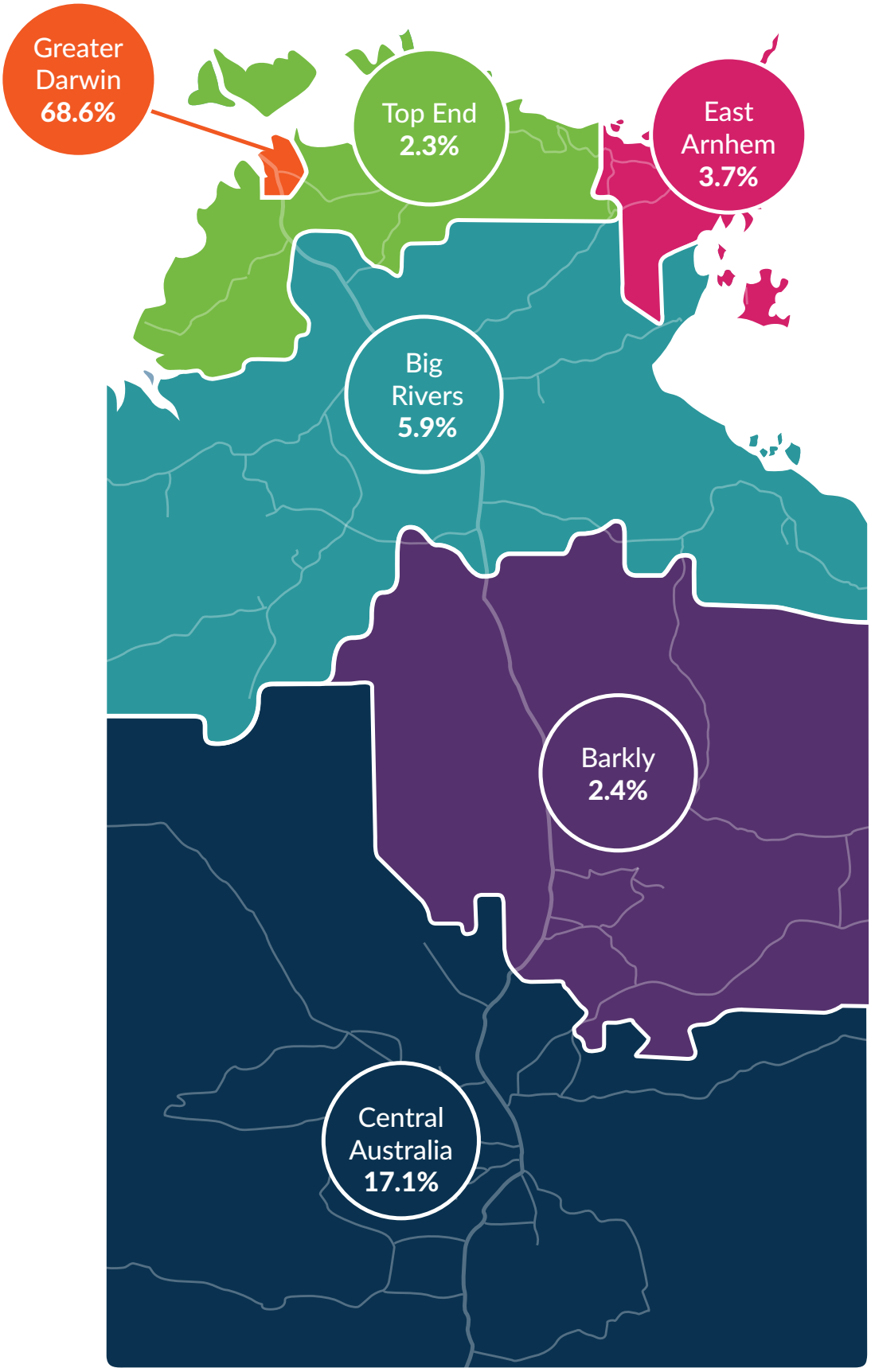


FIGURE 3: WORKFORCE PROFILE BY LOCATION



Growth in the NTPS, labour force and population

Since 2021, the NT population and labour force have experienced modest growth, with a slight acceleration over the past 12 months. The NTPS workforce has also increased since 2023, with growth over the past 12 months largely reflecting increases in frontline service delivery areas, particularly Police, Health, Education and Corrections.

FIGURE 4: NTPS, LABOUR FORCE AND POPULATION GROWTH

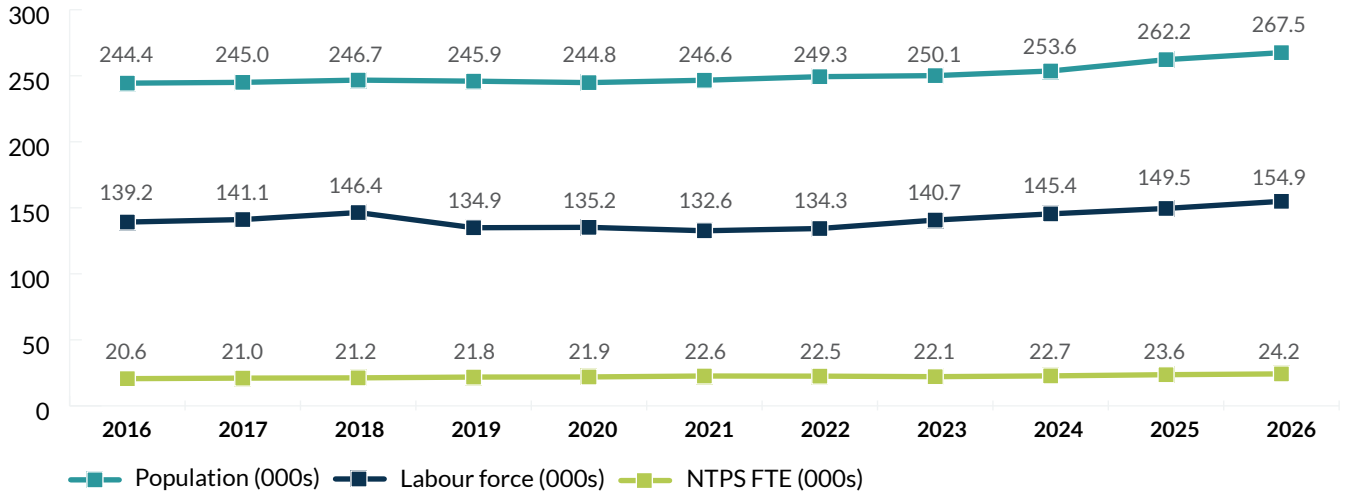


TABLE 2: STAFFING BY EMPLOYMENT TYPE

Type	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Ongoing	69.5%	69.5%	69.8%	70.4%	71.5%	69.1%	68.6%	70.4%	71.5%	73.7%	74.0%
Fixed Period	27.0%	27.0%	26.7%	26.0%	25.0%	26.7%	28.0%	26.2%	24.6%	22.2%	21.3%
Casual	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	3.6%	3.5%	4.2%	3.4%	3.4%	3.9%	4.1%	4.7%

The NTPS continues to focus on providing job security to employees through ongoing, rather than fixed period, employment, consistent with the job security provisions of the *Fair Work Act 2009*. The results of these efforts are reflected in the continued increase in ongoing employment, which rose to 74 per cent in 2026, and the corresponding decline in fixed period employment to 21.3 per cent.

Fixed period and casual employment arrangements continue to remain appropriate in some circumstances, including to fill short-term vacancies, backfill parental or other leave, support time-limited funding arrangements, or provide work on an 'as and when required' basis. Casual employment increased slightly to 4.7 per cent in 2026, remaining a small proportion of the overall NTPS workforce.

FIGURE 5: STAFFING BY ONGOING EMPLOYMENT

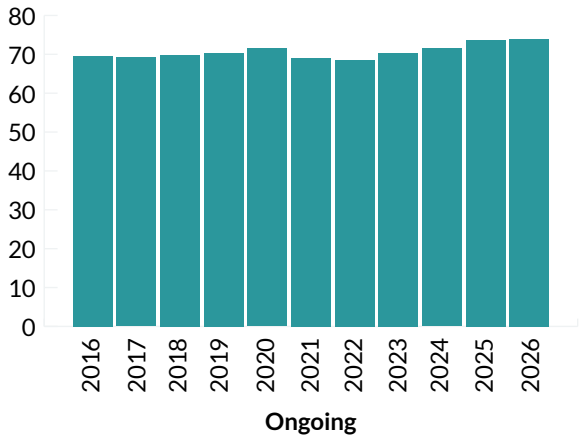
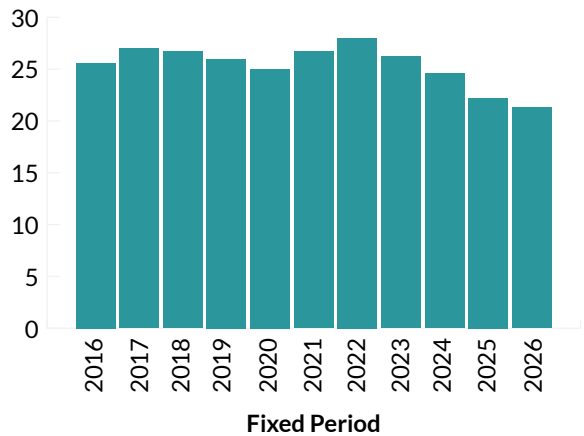


FIGURE 6: STAFFING BY FIXED PERIOD EMPLOYMENT

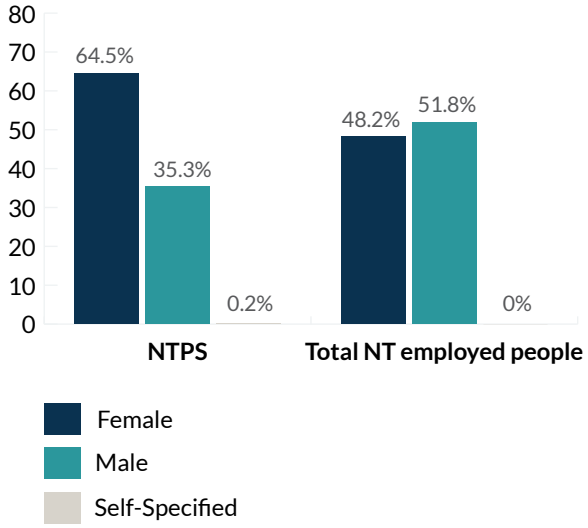


Gender balance

The gender profile of the NTPS remained stable over the past 12 months. Women make up 64.5 per cent of employees, compared with 35.3 per cent men and 0.2 per cent who did not disclose. This is different from the broader NT labour force, where women represent 48.2 per cent of employed people and men 51.8 per cent.

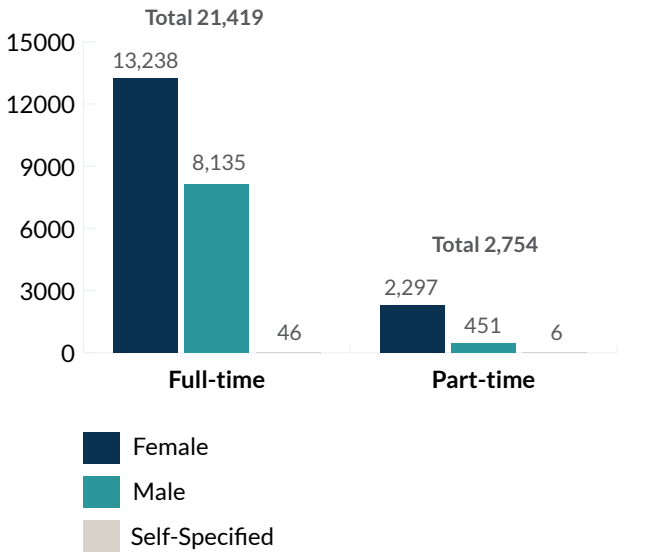
Women are also strongly represented in leadership, making up 62.1 per cent of senior management roles, and continue to outnumber men in every salary range below $140,000. In 2026, women also made up the larger share of employees earning $140,000 or more, although the difference was small. Together, this shows that women are not only a large part of the NTPS workforce, but are also leading teams, shaping decisions and moving into senior roles across the sector.

FIGURE 7: GENDER BALANCE OF NTPS EMPLOYEES VS TOTAL NT EMPLOYED PEOPLE



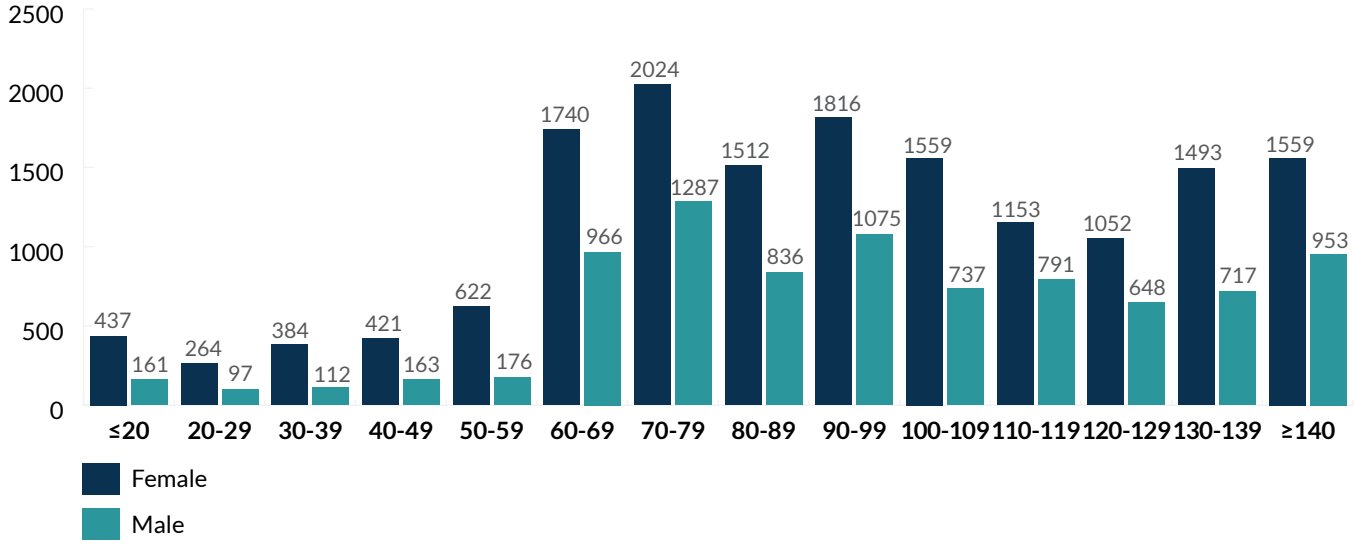
NB: Data includes casuals.

FIGURE 8: NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES WORKING FULL-TIME VS PART-TIME BY GENDER AS A PROPORTION OF THE NTPS



NB: Data excludes casual workers. Figure is based on paid headcount.

FIGURE 9: DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALES AND MALES IN THE NTPS BY SALARY LEVEL



NB: Data includes casuals. The above graph is based on paid headcount. The figures for this report are calculated based on females and males in the NTPS by salary range as a proportion of the total NTPS staff number. Self-specified persons are in the total figures but are too low a proportion to show.

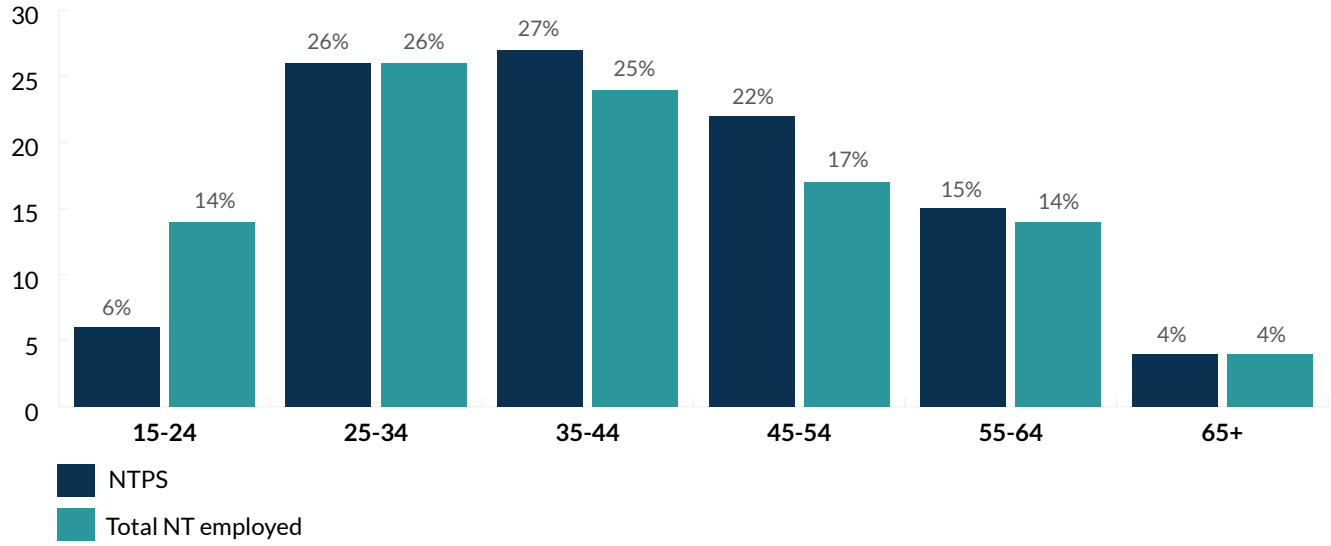
TABLE 3: FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

Number and percentage of NTPS employees with approved flexible work arrangements.

	Total	
Flexible Work Hours	13	0.05%
Variations to full-time hours	1,000	3.94%
Compressed or Averaging Hours	609	2.40%
Home-Based Work	662	2.61%
Job Sharing	3	0.01%
Part-Time	473	1.87%
Career Break/Part-Year Employment	3	0.01%
Cultural Leave	2	0.01%
Rec Leave at HP	38	0.15%
Purchase of Additional Leave	4	0.02%
Transition to Retirement	0	0.00%
Total in the agency (if known)	**2807**	**11.07%**

NTPS employees can apply for a range of flexible work arrangements using the NTPS Online form. Individual arrangements are approved by agencies in accordance with the relevant enterprise agreement provisions. The data excludes group arrangements and any arrangements not approved and recorded through the online process.

FIGURE 10: AGE DISTRIBUTION – TOTAL EMPLOYED NT PEOPLE VS NT PUBLIC SECTOR



NB: NTPS figures are based on paid headcount. NT Total employed persons are sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Figures have been rounded.

The age profile of the NTPS remained broadly consistent with the previous reporting period. The largest NTPS cohorts were employees aged 35–44 years and 25–34 years, while employees aged 15–24 years continued to represent a smaller proportion of the NTPS than of the broader NT labour force.

TABLE 4: CHANGES TO NTPS AND TOTAL NT EMPLOYED PEOPLE – 2024–2025 AND 2025–2026

	15–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+
NTPS	-	+1%	-	-	-1%	-
Total NT Employed	+1%	-	-	-1%	-	-1%

TABLE 5: CHANGE IN EXECUTIVE CONTRACT NUMBERS BY CLASSIFICATION AND GENDER

	Female			Male			Total		
	2025	2026	Diff	2025	2026	Diff	2025	2026	Diff
Administration									
Executive Contract Officer 1	119	104	-15	93	92	-1	212	196	-16
Executive Contract Officer 2	110	124	14	80	81	1	190	205	15
Executive Contract Officer 3	21	27	6	26	34	8	47	61	14
Executive Contract Officer 4	14	17	3	13	12	-1	27	29	2
Executive Contract Officer 5	4	6	2	4	3	-1	8	9	1
Executive Contract Officer 6	8	8	0	11	12	1	19	20	1
Subtotal	**276**	**286**	**10**	**227**	**234**	**7**	**503**	**520**	**17**
Education									
Principal Level Executive Contract 3				1		-1	1		-1
Principal Level Executive Contract 4	20	15	-5	4	5	1	24	20	-4
Principal Level Executive Contract 5	15	11	-4	6	3	-3	21	14	-7
Principal Level Executive Contract 6	6	6		3	2	-1	9	8	-1
Principal Level Executive Contract 7	1	1		1	1		2	2	
Subtotal	**42**	**33**	**-9**	**15**	**11**	**-4**	**57**	**44**	**-13**
Police									
Commissioner					1	1		1	1
Police Contract Officer	4	4		12	9	-3	16	13	-3
Subtotal	**4**	**4**		**12**	**10**	**-2**	**16**	**14**	**-2**
Government owned corporations									
Executive Contract Manager	2	2		10	5	-5	12	7	-5
Subtotal	**2**	**2**		**10**	**5**	**-5**	**12**	**7**	**-5**
TOTAL	**324**	**325**	**1**	**264**	**260**	**-4**	**588**	**585**	**-3**

NB: This table is based on paid headcount.

GOCS: Government Owned Corporations included Jacana Energy, Power and Water Corporation, and Territory Generation.

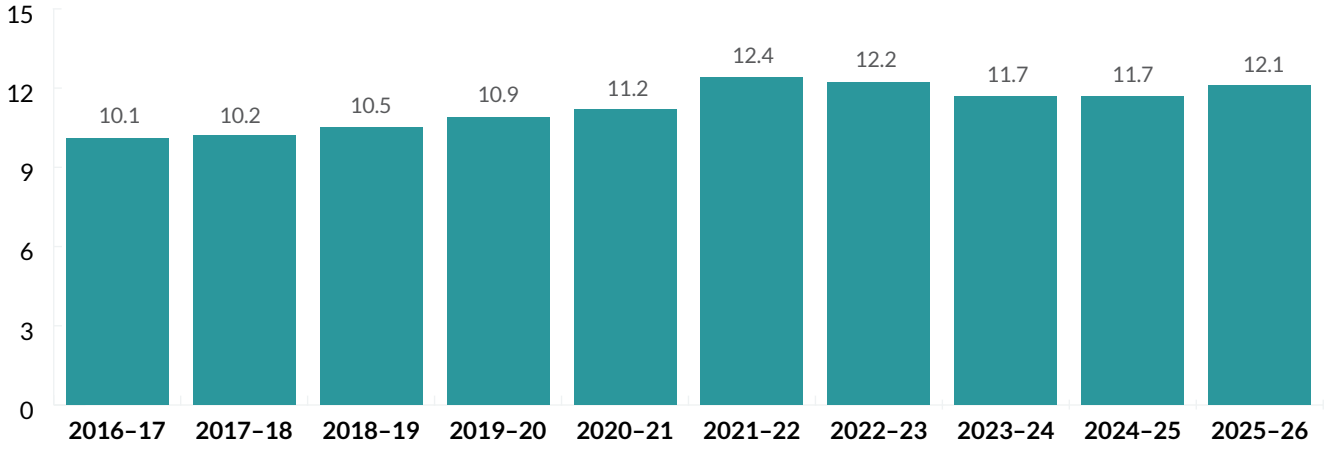
Executive contract officer numbers decreased slightly overall, from 588 in 2025 to 585 in 2026. There was a small increase in female executive contract officers, from 324 to 325, and a decrease in male executive contract officers, from 264 to 260.

Leave

NTPS employees' personal leave accumulates during periods of continuous service, generally accruing at a rate of up to three weeks paid personal leave annually for full-time employees. Part-time employees accrue personal leave on a pro-rata basis and casual employees receive up to two days unpaid leave for each admissible occasion needed to provide care.

Personal leave includes leave taken because the employee is unwell or injured (sick leave) or to provide care or support to a member of the employee's immediate family or household who is unwell or injured, or because of an unexpected family emergency affecting the member (carer's leave).

FIGURE 11: NTPS AVERAGE PAID PERSONAL LEAVE DAYS PER EMPLOYEE 2016–2017 TO 2025–2026



This figure is based on FTE and includes casual employees. It excludes miscellaneous sick leave.

TABLE 6: NTPS AVERAGE PAID PERSONAL LEAVE DAYS TAKEN PER EMPLOYEE BY STREAM AND GENDER

STREAM	Females	Males	Self Spec	Total
Administrative	13.1	10.8	10.4	12.4
Health workers	10.4	8	8	9.8
Physical	10	9.6	16.8	9.8
Professional	10.8	9.8	8.1	10.5
Teaching	12.8	12.9	13.2	12.8
Technical	11.4	11.6	9.5	11.5
Uniformed	21.2	14.1	8.7	15.9
Total	**12.5**	**11.4**	**9.8**	**12.0**

NB: This table is based on FTE. Uniformed includes correctional officers, police officers, fire fighters. Health workers includes nurses, medical officers, dentists, Aboriginal health practitioners.

Average paid personal leave use varied by stream and gender. Overall, employees used an average of 12 days, with females averaging 12.5 days, males 11.4 days and self-specified employees 9.8 days. The highest overall average was in the uniformed stream at 15.9 days, followed by teaching at 12.8 days and administrative at 12.4 days.

The largest variation between female and male personal leave usage was in the uniformed stream, where females averaged 21.2 days and males averaged 14.1 days, a difference of 7.1 days.

TABLE 7: NTPS AVERAGE PAID CARER'S LEAVE DAYS TAKEN PER EMPLOYEE BY GENDER

STREAM	Females	Males	Self Spec	Total
Administrative	2.1	1.4	0.6	1.9
Health workers	1.2	1.1	0	1.2
Physical	0.9	0.7	0	0.8
Professional	1.8	1.6	0	1.7
Teaching	2.1	1.8	5.4	2
Technical	1.5	1.6	1.3	1.5
Uniformed	2.7	1.8	1.4	2
Total	**1.8**	**1.5**	**1.3**	**1.7**

NB: This table is based on FTE. Uniformed includes correctional officers, police officers and fire fighters. Health workers includes nurses, medical officers, dentists, Aboriginal health practitioners.

The above table shows the average number of paid carer's leave days used by employees to provide care or support to a member of the employee's immediate family or household who is unwell or injured, or because of an unexpected emergency affecting the member. These numbers are included in Table 6.

Average paid carer's leave use remained relatively low across all streams, with an overall average of 1.7 days. Females averaged 1.8 days, males 1.5 days and self-specified employees 1.3 days. The highest overall averages were recorded in the Teaching and Uniformed streams, both at 2.0 days.

Diversity

Representation increased across all reported EEO groups in 2026. Aboriginal employee representation remained stable at 11.1 per cent, people who self-identify as having disability increased to 2.1 per cent, culturally and linguistically diverse representation increased to 23.3 per cent, and women in senior management increased to 62.1 per cent.

TABLE 8: REPRESENTATION OF EEO GROUPS IN THE NTPS AT JUNE 2026 AS A PERCENTAGE

CATEGORY	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	10 Yr % pts change
Aboriginal	10.0	10.5	10.4	10.6	10.9	10.3	10.3	10.8	11	11.1	10.9	11
People with disability	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.6	1.6	1.8	1.9	2.1	110
Culturally and linguistically diverse*						14.3	16.3	18.0	19.7	21.5	23.3	63
Women in snr mgmt (SAO2 to ECO6)	49.0	51.0	51.0	51.0	53.0	53.2	53.7	55.6	56.0	57.8	62.1	27

* Cultural background definitions and counting methodology were updated in October 2021, therefore comparisons to previous years' data are not possible. Percentage Point difference based on five, not 10 years.

TABLE 9: CHANGES TO AVERAGE NTPS STAFF EMPLOYED BY AGENCY: JUNE QUARTER 2025 TO JUNE QUARTER 2026

The most significant growth in agencies over the past 12 months has occurred in the frontline agencies of Corrections, Education, Health and Police.

Agency	2025 Ave Jun Qtr	2026 Ave Jun Qtr	Annual change Jun Qtr 2025 to Jun Qtr 2026
Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority^	37	34	-3
Agriculture & Fisheries	300	307	7
Attorney General's Department	603	594	-9
Auditor General's Office	3	5	2
Chief Minister & Cabinet	297	297	
Children & Families	561	593	32
Corporate & Digital Development	1 245	1 196	-49
Corrections	1 359	1 533	174
Education & Training	4 882	5 063	181
Health	7 611	7 758	147
Housing, Local Government & Community Development	528	567	39
Independent Commissioner Against Corruption	17	20	3
Jacana Energy	88	81	-7
Land Development Corporation	13	12	-1
Lands, Planning & Environment	448	440	-8
Legislative Assembly	100	106	6
Logistics & Infrastructure	758	728	-30
Mining & Energy	169	175	6
Northern Territory Fire & Emergency Services	375	381	6
Northern Territory Police Force^	2 181	2 269	88
NT Electoral Commission	15	15	
Ombudsman's Office	18	15	-3
People, Sport & Culture	143	150	7
Power & Water Corporation	906	854	-52
Territory Generation	191	196	5
Tourism & Hospitality	429	438	9
Trade, Business & Asian Relations	233	229	-4
Treasury & Finance	109	119	10
Total [2,3]	**23 619**	**24 175**	**556**

1. Reporting does not include board members.
2. Results are represented as whole figures for ease of reading, with rounding performed at the last stage of calculation for maximum accuracy. Values from X.00 to X.49 are rounded down, and values from X.50 to X.99 are rounded up.
3. Totals may not add due to rounding.

^ Uniformed Police and the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority are administered under their own Acts, not under the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993*.

TABLE 10: NTPS RETENTION, CESSATION AND SEPARATION RATES 2025–2026

The 2026 results show an improvement in workforce retention, with the proportion of ongoing employees who remained in the NTPS increasing from 83.6 per cent in 2025 to 87.2 per cent in 2026.

While cessation, voluntary cessation and separation rates also increased, the results provide a broader picture of movement across the workforce. These changes highlight the continued importance of attracting and retaining employees and creating workplaces where people want to stay and build their careers.

Statistic	Percentage 2025	Percentage 2026	Annual Percentage Change
Retention Rate[1]	83.6%	87.2%	3.57%
Cessation Rate[2]	11.1%	11.89%	0.84%
Voluntary Cessation Rate[3]	12.5%	13.10%	0.61%
Separation Rate[4]	24.0%	25.99%	2.04%

1 The percentage of all **ongoing** employees present at the beginning of a period and **still with the agency** at the end of the period.

2 **Ongoing** employees whose employment ceases (voluntarily or non-voluntarily) during the period as a percentage of the total average headcount for the period.

3 **All** employees (ongoing, fixed period and casual) whose employment ceases voluntarily during the period as a percentage of the total average headcount for the period.

4 **All** employees whose employment ceases (voluntarily and non-voluntarily) during the reporting period as a percentage of the total average headcount for the period.



02

Workforce capability and development

The capability of the Northern Territory Public Sector extends beyond workforce numbers. Changing community needs, advances in technology, increasing demand for accessible and responsive services, and the complexity of delivering services across urban, regional and remote communities are reshaping the skills and expertise agencies need.

Building capability is therefore more than providing training. It involves identifying current and emerging skill requirements, giving employees opportunities to learn and develop, maintaining professional and technical expertise, strengthening leadership and preparing people to take on future roles.

The NTPS uses a structured capability framework based on four capability areas: technical, professional, business and core capabilities. Together, these describe the knowledge, skills and behaviours employees need to perform their roles, contribute to results and adapt as workforce and service needs change.

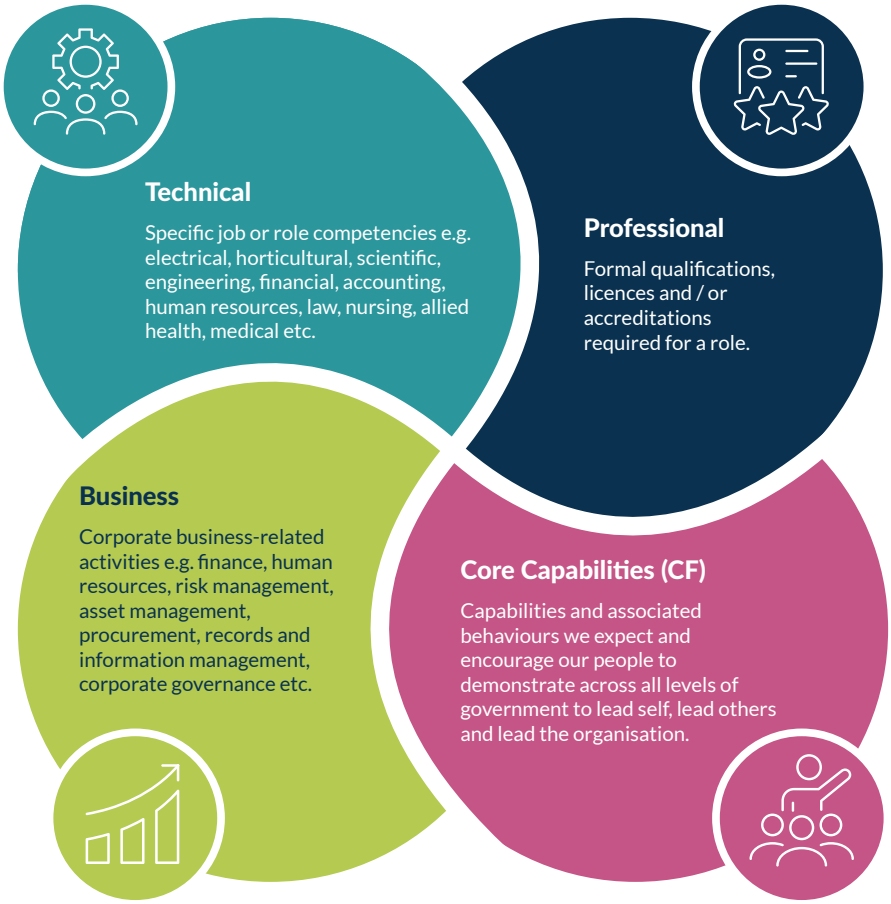
Capability development is closely connected to workforce planning and performance management. Agencies use performance and development planning, workforce data, training participation, succession planning, analysis of skill gaps and employee feedback to identify priorities and assess whether capability-building activities are meeting workforce needs.

Across the sector, employees accessed learning and development through MyLearning, NTPS-wide programs delivered by OCPE and the Department of Corporate and Digital Development, agency-led programs, formal qualifications and specialist training delivered by accredited providers. In many agencies, development needs were identified through MyPerformance conversations, helping connect employee aspirations with organisational priorities.

Agencies reported investment in leadership development, mentoring, coaching, succession planning and higher duties opportunities. Several agencies also developed capability frameworks, reviewed organisational structures or established workforce taskforces to address critical capability gaps and prepare for future workforce needs.

Specialist development undertaken during the year covered areas including health and clinical practice, child protection, youth justice, emergency management, environmental management, procurement, contract management, engineering, finance, project management, digital capability, artificial intelligence and regulatory enforcement. Professional qualifications and accreditation continued to play an important role in maintaining capability in specialised occupations.

FIGURE 12: THE 4 CAPABILITY AREAS OF THE NTPS CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK



Advisors unite to back Territory business

A new program is giving Territory Business Advisors sharper skills, stronger networks and a shared way to support local businesses.

Territory Business Advisors are working as one team after a landmark three-day development workshop brought all 18 advisors together from across the Northern Territory.

The Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations ran the workshop to strengthen the advisory network and give businesses more consistent, practical support, no matter where they are based.

Advisors focused on the skills businesses need most: commercial know-how, clear diagnosis, active listening, strategic thinking, stakeholder engagement and the confidence to connect people with the right help quickly.

The workshop also built stronger links between regions. Advisors can now draw more easily on each other's local knowledge and specialist expertise, creating a smarter, more connected service for Territory businesses.

The program will continue over 12 months through coaching, peer learning, leadership support and on-the-job practice.

For businesses, the payoff is simple: advisors who are better connected, better informed and ready to help.

Changing community needs, advances in technology, increasing demand for accessible and responsive services, and the complexity of delivering services across urban, regional and remote communities are changing the skills the NTPS needs. Agencies continued to develop the knowledge, skills and specialist expertise employees need to perform their roles and respond to emerging challenges.

Capability development includes learning, professional development and targeted initiatives to build specialist expertise. The NTPS uses a structured capability framework based on technical, professional, business and core capabilities.

Agencies monitor performance planning, workforce development data, training participation, organisational objectives, succession planning, skills gaps and employee feedback to identify capability needs and target investment.





Capability in action

During 2025–2026, agencies strengthened workforce capability through:

- leadership development, mentoring, coaching and succession planning
- release of occupational-specific capability frameworks for Information Management and Finance
- professional qualifications and specialist accreditation
- digital capability, data and artificial intelligence training
- graduate, trainee and other early-career pathways
- targeted training and workforce responses in areas experiencing critical skill shortages
- higher duties and workplace-based development opportunities
- workforce planning linked to future capability and service delivery needs.

These activities helped employees build practical skills, maintain professional expertise and prepare for future roles. They also helped agencies address immediate capability gaps, strengthen talent pipelines and retain important knowledge within the NTPS.

Detailed leadership development outcomes are reported in Section 4. Workforce planning, recruitment and early-career pathways are covered in Section 5.

Financial capability supports better decisions

More than 70 NT Health staff have taken part in a new Financial Literacy Program designed to make public money easier to understand and manage.

The program helps clinical and non-clinical staff build the skills and confidence to make better financial decisions, manage resources responsibly and deliver better value for Territorians. Run by the agency's Financial Services team, the one-day, face-to-face training was delivered in Darwin, Katherine, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Nhulunbuy.

Sessions use practical examples, group discussion and hands-on activities to explain finance, procurement, delegations and governance in plain English. For many managers and clinicians, the program helped to connect day-to-day service delivery with the funding, costs and rules behind it.

Participants said the training made complex systems easier to understand and gave them the confidence to ask better questions, speak with finance teams and make informed decisions.

The program is also building a stronger culture of accountability across NT Health by showing that finance is not just a specialist function. It is a shared responsibility that supports better decisions for patients, staff and the wider community. Six more training blocks are expected by the end of 2026, with 12 more planned for 2027.

03

Employee experience and workplace culture

How employees experience their work shapes their wellbeing, how they do their jobs, and ultimately the services they deliver to Territorians. Employees do their best work when they feel respected and included, understand what's expected of them, get useful feedback, and feel safe to raise concerns.

This section draws on two main sources: the biennial People Matter Survey, which asks employees directly how they experience their workplace, and agency reporting on what's happening day to day across the sector. It covers the 2025 survey results, how the sector responded to them, performance and development conversations, and how the NTPS recognises employees' contributions.

The 2025 People Matter Survey

One of the strongest findings in this year's report is the improvement in how employees experience their workplaces.

The 2025 People Matter Survey showed positive movement across several key measures, including employees' connection to their work, workplace respect and confidence to speak up. Fewer employees also reported witnessing bullying or sexual harassment. Together, these results point to positive changes in workplace culture across the NTPS.

Participation also increased significantly. Of the 24,947 employees in the NTPS workforce at the time the survey was conducted, 11,976 responded to the 2025 survey, representing a participation rate of 48 per cent. This was nearly 3,000 more responses than in 2023, with the participation rate increasing by nine per cent.

The higher participation rate provides a broader picture of how employees experience their workplaces and the issues that matter to them.

Key results

48% participation rate

2,822 more employees participated than in 2023

66% employee engagement – 2 per cent increase from the previous survey

80% reported respectful workgroups

Four in five

employees agreed that people in their workgroup treat each other with respect

21% witnessed bullying or sexual harassment – 4 per cent decrease from 2023

The survey results show positive movement in how employees experience their workplaces. Employees reported feeling more connected to their work, greater confidence to speak up and strong levels of workplace respect. Fewer employees also reported witnessing bullying or sexual harassment.

The results highlight the importance of good leadership, clear communication, regular performance feedback and employee wellbeing in creating workplaces where people feel valued, supported and able to do their best work.

The survey also found that employees were more positive about their work when they received timely feedback from their managers. This reinforces the importance of clear expectations, meaningful feedback and recognition in helping employees understand what is expected of them, feel valued and perform at their best.

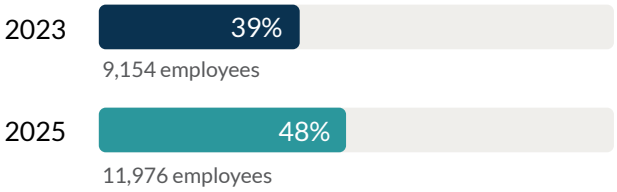
Across the NTPS, these elements are supported through employee recognition and performance management practices. Respectful and psychologically safe workplaces also give employees greater confidence to contribute ideas, challenge established practices, support innovation and identify opportunities to improve workplace practices and service delivery.

While the 2025 results show progress across the NTPS, they also highlight areas where further work is needed. The key areas of focus are leadership, employee wellbeing and workplace culture.

Continued attention to these areas will help create workplaces where people feel supported, valued and able to do their best work. Agencies will continue to use survey findings, employee feedback and workplace information to identify areas for improvement and strengthen the experience of working in the NTPS.

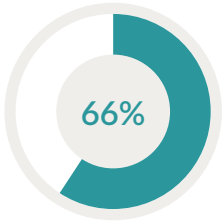
FIGURE 13: PEOPLE MATTER SURVEY RESULTS

Response rate



2,822 ↑

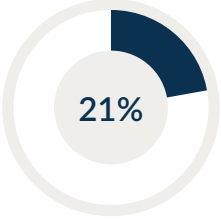
more employees completed the survey than in 2023



Employee engagement

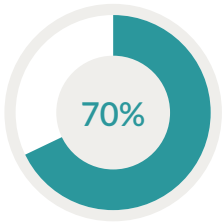
A strong commitment to the organisation, feeling connected and wanting to be part of its future success

↑ +2% from 2023 survey



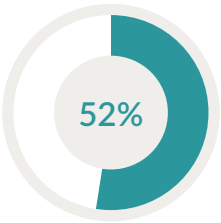
Employees witnessed bullying/sexual harassment at work in the last 12 months

↓ -4% from 2023 survey



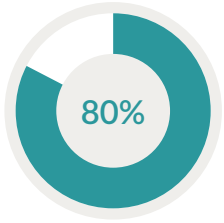
My organisation demonstrates a commitment to diversity and inclusion

New questions in 2025



It is safe to speak up and challenge the way things are done in my organisation

↑ +3% from 2023 survey



People in my workgroup treat each other with respect

↑ +1% from 2023 survey

Responding to employee feedback

The 2025 People Matter Survey findings informed the development of the NTPS Sector Response Plan 2025. The plan focuses on the areas employees identified as most important to improving their experience at work, including leadership, communication, workplace culture, wellbeing and performance conversations.

The plan brings together actions to support leaders and managers to:

- communicate effectively and lead through change
- strengthen performance and career conversations
- support employee wellbeing
- foster inclusive and respectful workplaces
- improve workload management
- strengthen leadership capability
- expand mentoring and coaching
- improve administrative efficiency through digital tools and automation.

The sector response plan provides a coordinated approach to addressing the survey findings across the NTPS, while allowing agencies to implement local actions that respond to their workforce needs.

Progress against the actions will continue to inform workforce planning, leadership development and initiatives to improve the employee experience across the sector.

FIGURE 14: NTPS SECTOR RESPONSE PLAN 2025



Supporting performance through feedback and development

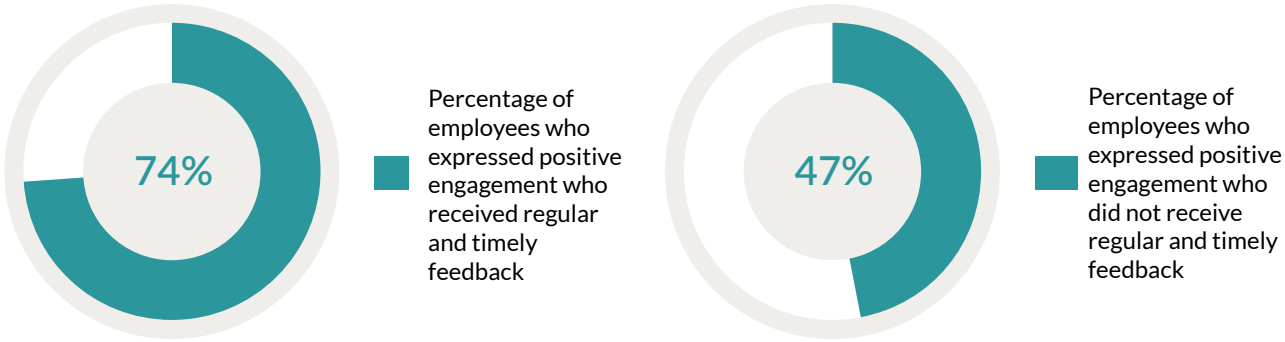
Employees' experiences of working in the NTPS are shaped by the support they receive to perform, develop and progress.

Clear expectations about roles, responsibilities and performance standards help employees understand what they need to achieve and how their work contributes to agency objectives. Regular conversations about performance, development needs and career goals provide opportunities to recognise strengths, identify areas for improvement and agree on development priorities.

Performance management and development processes provide a structured framework for these conversations. While individual agencies take different approaches to performance planning, all agencies maintain procedures consistent with Employment *Instruction Number 4: Employee Performance Management and Development Systems*.

The results demonstrate that employees are more likely to be engaged when they receive regular feedback, understand what is expected of them and have opportunities to discuss their development and career aspirations.

FIGURE 15: IMPACT OF REGULAR FEEDBACK ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

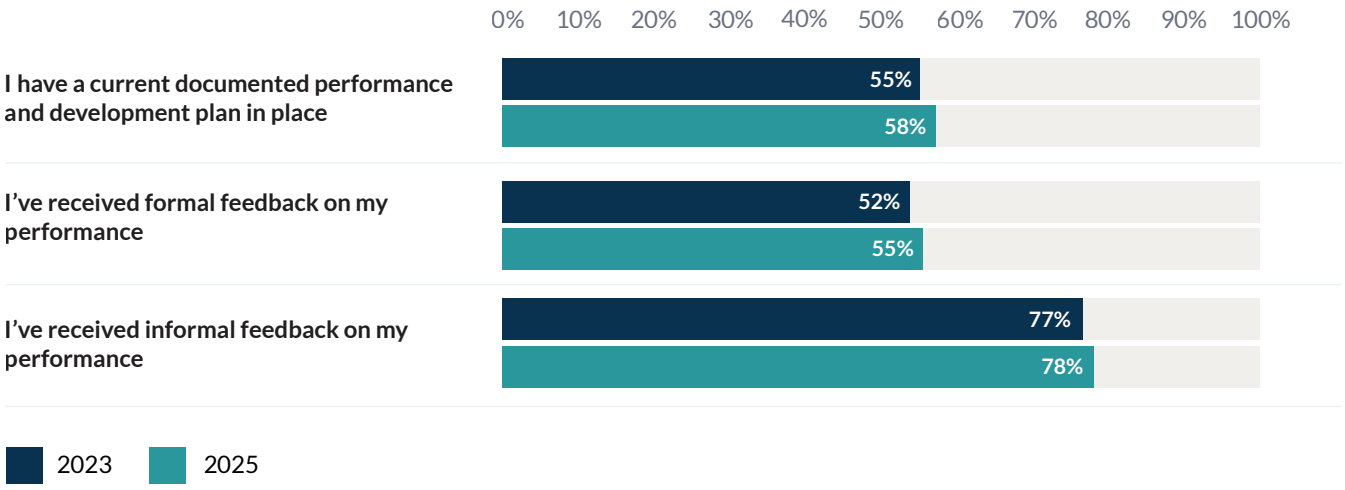


Performance and development

Performance management works best as an ongoing conversation between a manager and employee, rather than as a compliance exercise. Regular discussions about performance, development and career goals help employees understand expectations, build capability and plan for future roles.

Agency reporting shows that the proportion of employees with documented performance and development plans varies across the sector. In the 2025 People Matter Survey, 58 per cent of employees reported having a documented plan, compared with 55 per cent in 2023. Formal and informal feedback were more common, with 55 per cent reporting formal feedback and 78 per cent reporting informal feedback.

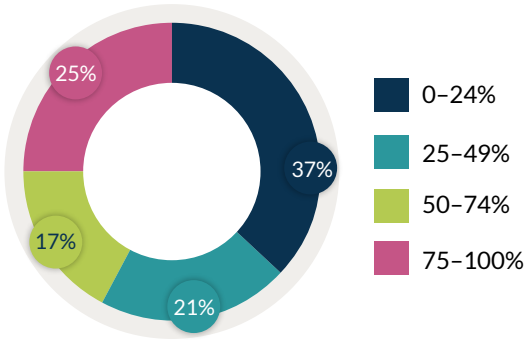
FIGURE 16: PERFORMANCE PLANS AND FEEDBACK



A OneNTG online performance planning tool is supporting greater continuity by allowing performance plans and development records to move with employees as they change roles or agencies.

The distribution of documented performance plans also varies between agencies. In 2025–2026, 37 per cent of agencies reported that 0–24 per cent of their employees had a documented performance and development plan, while 25 per cent reported plans for 75–100 per cent of employees.

FIGURE 17: EMPLOYEES WITH A DOCUMENTED PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN



Agencies also use tools aligned with the NTPS Capability Framework to connect performance discussions with capability development and career growth. These resources help employees and managers identify strengths, development priorities and opportunities to build capability for current and future roles.

Remote staff get fairer access to career conversations

Aboriginal health workers in very remote Northern Territory communities are now getting better access to performance, wellbeing and career conversations through a new paper-based MyPerformance process.

Limited internet access had meant some remote employees could not use the online system. This created a practical barrier to discussions with managers about achievements, feedback, development goals and future career pathways.

The Aboriginal Health, Engagement and Workforce Division raised the issue through the Strategic Workforce Committee and introduced a paper-based option. Employees can now complete their plans with Clinic Managers, giving remote staff the same opportunity to take part as the wider NT Health workforce.

"Access should never determine opportunity," Executive Director Samara Hanley said. "True equity means designing systems that work for everyone."

Employee recognition and celebrating excellence

Employee reward and recognition programs are widely recognised as important elements of a successful and supportive workplace culture.

In the NTPS, the contributions employees make are recognised both formally and informally at agency and sector levels through the programs outlined below.

In 2025–2026, two Northern Territory public servants also received national recognition by being awarded the Public Service Medal in the national 2026 Australia Day honours.

Recognition of service milestones

Employee service milestones are formally recognised in the NTPS when employees reach 10, 20, 30, 35, 40, 45 and 50 years of continuous service. Recognition certificates are arranged and coordinated by OCPE in partnership with the Department of Corporate and Digital Development (DCDD).

This past year was notable for one employee reaching 50 years of continuous service to the Northern Territory.

In 2025, 1,231 employees reached 10 or more years of service and received their Recognition of Service Certificates signed by the Minister for Public Service and Chief Minister, as follows:

- 10 years – 664 people
- 20 years – 325 people
- 30 years – 127 people
- 35 years – 55 people
- 40 years – 44 people
- 45 years – 15 people
- 50 years – 1 person.

Agencies arrange celebrations to recognise the importance of service milestones. In 2025–2026 the Minister for Public Service hosted a recognition event for staff in the Katherine region who had reached 20 or more years of service.

Employees who reach 50 years of continuous service are invited to the annual Chief Minister's Awards for Excellence in the Public Sector.

Celebrating 50 years of service

In 2025, Power and Water Corporation system controller Ron Kirk was recognised for clocking up 50 years helping to keep the lights on across the NT. He had marked 51 years' service by his retirement in July 2026.

Ron began his career in electrical maintenance at Darwin's Stokes Hill Power Station in 1974 before joining Operations as a system controller. In 1987 he took on the system controller role at Hudson Creek Power Station near Berrimah.

In his 50 years of public service, Ron has worked with Power and Water solving the impacts of Cyclone Tracy, self-government in 1978, the decision to fuel Channel Island Power Station with gas as opposed to coal and the subsequent transition away from Stokes Hill Power Station, which closed in 1987.



Pictured: Power and Water Corporation's Ron Kirk was recognised for his 50 years' contribution to keeping the lights on.

Chief Minister Medals

The Chief Minister's Medal recognises and rewards an individual's outstanding and commendable public service, including for qualities and achievements such as:

- innovation in program, project and policy development
- demonstrated passion and capability for frontline work
- demonstrating NTPS values daily
- providing excellent customer service
- demonstrating outstanding Aboriginal leadership.

In 2025, eight individuals from six agencies were awarded a Chief Minister's Medal.

TABLE 11: CHIEF MINISTER'S MEDAL

Recipient	Agency
Eva Kafetzis	Attorney-General's Department
Anthony (Tony) Shelley	Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet
Don McKinnon	Department of Education and Training
Angela Brannelly	NT Health
Lorraine Corowa	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
Neva McCartney	Department of Tourism and Hospitality

TABLE 12: OUTSTANDING ABORIGINAL LEADERSHIP MEDAL

Recipient	Agency
Naomi Hanson	Attorney-General's Department
Terrence Guyula	NT Health

Public Service Medal

Two members of the Northern Territory Public Service were recognised in the national Australia Day Honours by receiving The Public Service Medal

a. Mr Chris Hosking, Chief Executive, Department of Health

b. Mrs Gemma Lake, Chief Executive, Department of Logistics and Infrastructure

The medal recognises outstanding service by employees of the Australian Government and, state, territory and local governments. Outstanding service may include excellence in service delivery to the public or clients, or innovation in program, project or policy development.

2025 Chief Minister Awards

The Chief Minister's Awards for Excellence in the Public Sector are held annually to recognise and celebrate initiatives and projects that have delivered significant positive outcomes and benefits for the Northern Territory.

The awards provide opportunities to share knowledge and promote successful approaches across the Northern Territory Government by showcasing the achievements and ideas of finalists and winners. This helps other agencies learn from their work and encourages the adoption of effective approaches across government.

There are eight awards categories.

- Rebuilding the Territory's Economy
- Restoring the Territory Lifestyle
- Safer Territory
- Outstanding Partnerships
- Excellence in Frontline Service Delivery
- Inspiring Innovation
- Empowering our Communities
- Spirit of the Territory

The awards nomination process recognises the outstanding work of NTPS employees, as well as the cross-agency and community collaboration that contributes to delivering positive outcomes for Territorians.

Agencies can nominate projects or initiatives across the award categories, which are assessed by judging panels comprising three agency Chief Executive Officers. The Chief Minister selects the final winners.

Winners receive their awards at a formal ceremony and are featured on the Chief Minister's Awards website.

Following is a snapshot of the 2025 winning initiatives to celebrate the winners and to showcase excellence across the public sector.

Rebuilding the Territory's Economy

Winner

Tax and Homeowner Grant Reforms for Rebuilding the Economy – Department of Treasury and Finance

The Department of Treasury and Finance delivered a package of tax and grant reforms to support home ownership, business growth and essential community services, with more than 740 applications received and $13.7 million injected into the economy at the time of nomination.

Finalists

- Migration and Worker Attraction Initiatives 'Delivering for the Territory' – Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations
- Job ready innovation building the NT workforce – VET Community of Practice – Department of Education and Training

Restoring the Territory Lifestyle

Winner

Swimming and Water Safety in Schools – Department of Education and Training

The Swimming and Water Safety in Schools initiative is helping students in Years 1 to 6 develop essential swimming and water safety skills, regardless of where they live or attend school.



Pictured: Students learning to swim and be safe around water.

Finalists

- Aviation – Connectivity, Choice and Competition – Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations, with the Department of Tourism and Hospitality
- Operation Skyburst – Saving Territory Day – Attorney-General's Department

Safer Territory

Winner

‘Reducing Crime’ legislative reform – Attorney-General’s Department

The Attorney-General’s Department delivered a comprehensive package of legislative reforms to support delivery of the government’s priority to reduce crime across five Acts within the Government’s first 100 days.



Pictured: Alice Springs Supreme Court building

Finalists

- Growing our own Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services Workforce – Department of Education and Training, with the NT Police Force and NT Fire and Emergency Services
- Tennant Creek Youth Justice Accommodation Facility – Department of Corrections
- Circuit Breaker – Department of Children and Families

Outstanding Partnerships

Winner

Safer Care – NT Health

The Safer Care initiative brought together health services and partners to strengthen the safety and quality of care delivered across the Northern Territory.



Pictured: A winning team: health care professionals banded together to improve health care across the NT

Finalists

- Sustainable economic practices for schools' partnership – Department of Education and Training, with Power and Water Corporation, Department of Logistics and Infrastructure, Department of Lands, Planning and Environment and Department of Corporate and Digital Development
- Operation: Don't Be a Dumper (OBAD) – Department of Lands, Planning and Environment

Excellence in Frontline Service Delivery

Winner

Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) – Looking to the future: A review of SARC's Model of Care – NT Health

NT Health's review of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre's Model of Care delivered a revised approach that supports consistent, responsive and person-centred care while providing a foundation for the ongoing development of services across the Northern Territory.



Pictured: These 911 stick figures displayed at the Nightcliff foreshore represent the number of people SARC Darwin helped in 2024

Highly commended

- Berrimah Correctional Centre Commissioning Project – Department of Corrections, in partnership with the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure and NT Health

Finalists

- Joint Emergency Services Communications Centre Aboriginal Interpreter Initiative – Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development, in partnership with the NT Police Force
- Targeted Intervention Group: Early Resolutions – Attorney-General's Department

Inspiring Innovation

Winner

The Array Digital Games and Esports Centre – Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations

The Array in Darwin is the Territory's first technology school of excellence. It is a hub for digital games, esports and creative technology that supports education, industry development, commercialisation and community participation while helping to grow the Territory's digital economy.



Pictured: A first for the NT, the Array Digital Games and Esports Centre is located inside the historic Victoria Hotel in the Darwin CBD

Highly commended

- KSA Connect – Department of Education and Training

Finalists

- Whole of Government Recruitment Project – Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet
- Department of Corporate and Digital Development Service Development Program – Department of Corporate and Digital Development

Empowering our Communities Award

Winner

Celebrating 25 Years of Youth Week in the Territory – Department of People, Sport and Culture

The Northern Territory Youth Week initiative celebrated 25 years of creating opportunities for young Territorians to participate, connect and contribute to their communities.



Pictured: Empowering youth won the Empowering Communities award

Finalists

- Empowering School to Work Transitions – Tennant Creek – Department of Education and Training
- Library & Archives NT Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Project – Department of People, Sport and Culture

Spirit of the Territory Award

Winner

The delivery of the Workforce Services HR Service Centre – Department of Corporate and Digital Development, Workforce Operations and Partnerships

The Workforce Services HR Service Centre provides frontline human resource support to almost 26,000 employees across Northern Territory public sector agencies.



Pictured: The HR Service Centre Team at DCDD supports nearly 26,000 NTPS employees

Finalists

- Boosting Resilience: Developing a Mentally Healthy Workplace – Attorney-General's Department, in partnership with the Department of Corporate and Digital Development
- Strengthening Integrity and Inclusion in NTPS Recruitment – Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment



04

Leadership and mobility

Building leadership excellence across the NTPS

Development of the leaders and managers who deliver services is an important part of building a strong NTPS workforce.

Leadership development programs help public sector employees develop the skills they need to lead effectively. These include strategic thinking, leading people, working with stakeholders, making decisions, managing change, managing performance and understanding their responsibilities.

OCPE provides leadership programs for employees at different stages of their careers, from people preparing for their first leadership role through to senior executives. The programs are guided by the NTPS Capability Framework, which outlines the skills and behaviours expected at different leadership levels. This helps employees understand what is expected of them and supports their development and career progression.

During 2025–2026, OCPE supported 11 leadership development programs. A total of 530 employees from 25 agencies participated in accredited and non-accredited training, helping them develop their leadership skills.

Leadership development pathways

The 2025 People Matter Survey was used to identify areas where NTPS leaders could strengthen their skills. In response to the survey feedback, professional learning focused on helping more leaders communicate effectively, provide clear strategic direction and create workplaces where people can perform at their best.

The leadership programs also provide opportunities for employees to prepare for future roles and gain experience at different levels of the public sector. This includes programs for emerging leaders, middle managers, senior leaders and executives, as well as succession planning, regional development opportunities and executive coaching.

Programs are regularly reviewed to make sure they remain relevant to the needs of employees and the public sector. Feedback from participants, the People Matter Survey and workforce planning help identify areas where further development is needed.

The OCPE is also developing a more coordinated approach to talent management across the NTPS. This will help identify and support people who are ready to take on greater responsibility, while giving current and future leaders opportunities to develop their skills and careers. The 2027 Leadership Development Program suite will form part of this approach, supporting leadership development, career progression and succession planning across the public sector.

Leadership development program completions

The following graphic explains the leadership development programs offered and their take-up and completion by employees.

FIGURE 18: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CORE OFFERINGS

Leadership Development – Core Offerings

	Emerging – Middle Manager	Middle – Senior Leaders	Executive
Accredited Programs	**Kigaruk and Lookrukin NTPS Aboriginal Leadership Program** Qualification: Diploma of Leadership and Management CF level: 5-8 (AO5–SAO1). Program delivery: 2-year program – delivered in Darwin with blend of online learning, workshops, webinars and four x week blocks of face-to-face training. **Current completions as of 30 June 2026: 19**	**Public Sector Management Program** Qualification: Graduate Certificate in Business – Public Sector Management CF level: 6-8 (AO6 – SAO1). Program delivery: 12–15-month program, face to face and virtual options. Programs run in Darwin and Alice Springs. **Current completions as of 30 June 2026: 32**	**Executive Master of Public Administration – ANZSOG** Qualification: Masters of Public Administration CF level: 10+. Program delivery: 2 years part-time study. **Current enrolments as of 30 June 2026: 17** **Company Directors Course – AICD** Qualification: Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors CF Level 9 -12 (SA02+). Program delivery: 5 days plus examination – face to face and online delivery. **First program to be run in October 2026**
Non-Accredited Programs	**Leadership for New Managers** CF level: 5-7 (AO5-AO7 or equivalent). Program delivery: 3-day program, F2F and virtual options. **Current completions as of 30 June 2026: 145** **Emerging Leaders Program** CF level: 5-7 (AO5-AO7 or equivalent). Program delivery: 10 days over 5 months, face to face in Darwin, East Arnhem and Alice Springs. **Current completions as of 30 June 2026: 185** **Foundations of Public Sector Governance** CF level: all CF levels. Program delivery: 4 days face to face in Darwin. **Current completions as of 30 June 2026: 38**	**Senior Leaders Program** CF level: 8-9 (SAO1- SAO2 or equivalent). Program delivery: 10 days over 5 months, face to face in Darwin 2 programs. Alice Springs 1 program up to 54 people. **Current completions as of 30 June 2026: 70** **Mini Master of Business Administration (MBA)** CF level: 8-9 (SAO1-SAO2 or equivalent). Program delivery: 5 days, face to face in Darwin and virtual delivery. **Current completions as of 30 June 2026: 29**	**Delivering in Partnership with Government and Community Program – CDU, Cranlana and ANZSOG** CF level: 10+ (ECO2 and above). Program delivery: face to face and on country in NT **Current completions as of 30 June 2026: 8** **Executive Fellows Program – ANZSOG** CF level: 11+, (ECO3 and above). Program delivery: Melbourne 5 days, 3 days online **Current completions as of 30 June 2026: 3** **Deputies Leadership Program – ANZSOG** CF level: 12+ (ECO4 and above). Program delivery: 4 days F2F, 1 online session. **Current completions as of 30 June 2026: 1** **Career Discovery and Coaching and Mentoring Services** CF level: 9+ (ECO1 and above). **Other Professional Development for Executives** **Senior Executive Professional Leaders Network** **CF level:** Direct reports to CEs (CF 10 and above. Quarterly events (including 1 regional visit) dedicated to addressing government's key priority areas, networking and professional development. **CEO Collaborative Learning** – Quarterly professional development events. • Professional learning opportunities undertaken by senior executives: • 37 executive leaders participated in Leading through reform: priorities, people and practical change workshop in Alice Springs. • CEOs attended a session leader ship through strategic storytelling. • 29 executive leaders participated in a half day workshop focused on strategic recruitment and Growing Our Own in the Territory. • 72 senior executives and Chief Executive Officers attended Building a High-Performance Culture in the NTPS. • 32 members of the Senior Executive Professional Leaders' Network participated in the Emotionally Intelligent Leader workshop.

NTPS paid head count (Approx.):	CF5 - 2,462	CF6 - 3,114	CF7 – 3,089	CF8 – 2,126	CF9 - 1,202	CF10+ - 625

Feedback and measures of success

OCPE uses the Kirkpatrick Evaluation Model to assess leadership development programs. It looks at whether participants enjoyed the programs, learned from them, applied what they learned, and whether this ultimately contributed to better career progression and retention.

Measures include participant and manager assessments, changes in capability before and after a program, access to higher duties, promotions and participant feedback. These measures provide different forms of evidence about whether programs are strengthening leadership capability and supporting career development.

Results from the Senior Leaders Program and Emerging Leaders Program show measurable capability growth. Pre-program, post-program and follow-up assessments indicate that improvements were sustained after participants completed the programs.

Among Senior Leaders Program participants, 69 per cent gained higher duties allowance and 20 per cent were promoted. Employee capability assessments increased by 5.5 per cent and manager assessments increased by 6.3 per cent.

Among Emerging Leaders Program participants, 78 per cent gained higher duties allowance and 37 per cent were promoted. Employee capability assessments increased by 18.53 per cent and manager assessments increased by 15.76 per cent.

These results indicate that the programs are helping participants strengthen their leadership capability and, for many participants, progress into higher-level duties or roles. They also provide OCPE with evidence to refine future program content and target leadership development investment.





Pictured top: Senior Leaders Program Graduation 2025

Pictured bottom: Emerging Leaders Program Graduation – Cohorts 7 and 8 – 2025

What participants said: Senior Leaders Program

"Participating in the Senior Leaders Program has been one of the most valuable leadership development experiences of my career. The program provided a unique opportunity to step away from day-to-day operational demands and reflect on my leadership approach, strengths and areas for growth."

Ann Lewis, Principal Advisor, Public Sector Appeals and Grievance Reviews

"*The Senior Leaders Program has encouraged me in a way that I did not expect. My surprise has been how well this program has connected me to my excellent peers. How inspiring, that throughout our NTPS there is such a cohort of talented, hopeful, curious and compassionate current (and future) leaders!"*

Beau Clark, Department of Corporate and Digital Development

"The Senior Leaders Program has been an incredibly valuable experience. The trainers and facilitators were excellent – engaging and able to strike the right balance between aspirational ideas and practical takeaways. I'd highly recommend this program to anyone wanting to grow their leadership skills and broaden their perspective."

Lori Uden, Department of Tourism and Hospitality

"The Senior Leadership Program has been a truly eye-opening experience. One of the most valuable aspects was gaining a deeper understanding of my own leadership style – both its strengths and areas for development. I'm incredibly grateful for the experience – it's been both professionally enriching and personally transformative."

Darlene Moneron, Department of Education and Training

What participants said: Emerging Leaders Program

"The Emerging Leaders Program has given me numerous strategies to enhance my leadership. I have gained an appreciation of the need to step back and see how my team fits into the bigger picture of Government. The course has also facilitated excellent networking with likeminded public servants."

Legal Policy Officer John Swan – Department of Chief Minister and Cabinet

"*Participating in the Emerging Leaders Program has been transformative for me. This journey has not only equipped me with invaluable skills but also inspired me to reach new heights in my professional development. Truly grateful for the insightful guidance and inspiring stories shared throughout this program."*

A/Senior Business Intelligence Systems Administrator Tegan Campbell – Department of Corporate and Digital Development

Agency initiatives

Agencies also provide leadership development opportunities that respond to the needs of their employees and the work they do. These programs build on the leadership development provided across the NTPS and give employees opportunities to develop skills that are particularly relevant to their roles. Examples include leadership initiatives delivered by the Department of Corrections and the Department of Education and Training.

Corrections builds leadership capability for a growing workforce

The Department of Corrections continued to develop its leaders and managers to support its growing workforce and the changing needs of the corrections system. This work aligns with the Department's Strategic Plan 2024–2028, which recognises the importance of developing its people and strengthening leadership.

During 2025–2026, frontline adult custodial leaders took part in the Elevate Frontline Leadership Program. The program helped participants strengthen their skills in communication, giving feedback, managing people, building resilience and leading through change. It also helped frontline leaders understand their role in supporting employee wellbeing, guiding their teams and responding to changes in the workplace.

The Department also developed the Department of Corrections Leadership Development Program to give middle managers more opportunities to develop their leadership skills and prepare for future roles. The program will support approximately 200 middle managers, with the first group of 18 to 20 participants commencing in 2026.

Delivered by Yellow Edge, the program includes self-reflection, individual leadership development plans, mentoring and opportunities to apply new skills in the workplace. The mentoring component will also give experienced leaders an opportunity to share their knowledge and support employees who are developing their leadership skills.

Together, these programs support the Department's Strategic Plan by giving employees at different levels opportunities to strengthen their leadership skills, learn from experienced colleagues and prepare for future leadership roles.



Pictured: Corrections Commissioner Matthew Varley meeting with participants of the inaugural DoC Leadership Development Program.

Horizon program builds future school leaders across the Territory

The 2025 *Horizon* program brought together participants from across the Northern Territory for a year of leadership development through workshops, online sessions and coaching.

Facilitated by CC Solutions, Growth Coaching International and Department of Education and Training staff, the program helps participants prepare for principal roles and develop the skills they need to lead school improvement. It also gives participants opportunities to build professional networks and learn from experienced school and system leaders.

A central part of the program is each participant's Learning Through Action (LTA) project. Participants identify an area of their school where improvement is needed and use the project to develop and apply their strategic leadership skills while working with their school community. At the final workshop, participants presented their projects to principals and system leaders and received positive feedback about their leadership development and the impact of their work.

Throughout the program, system leaders also shared their own leadership experiences and lessons, giving participants practical insights into the challenges and opportunities of leading schools.



Pictured: The 2025 Horizon program cohort marked the conclusion of a year of leadership learning, collaboration, and growth, presenting projects that are making a positive difference in their school communities.

Early Career Principal Program supports new school leaders

The Early Career Principal Program was developed by the Department of Education and Training and Ernst & Young to support principals in the early stages of their careers. Twenty-two Northern Territory principals took part in the 14-month program, which combined face-to-face and online learning, coaching and mentoring.

The program is designed for principals who have completed their first year in the role and have up to five years' experience. Participants developed their leadership skills, explored ways to support cultural inclusion and built connections with other principals. They also worked with peers, mentors and coaches to reflect on their school communities and the challenges they face as school leaders.

As part of the program, each participant led a strategic school improvement project, applying what they learned to a priority in their school. Participants also heard from experienced leaders and guest speakers and developed a clearer understanding of their own leadership approach and the kind of leader they want to be.



Pictured: The 2025 cohort of early career principals came together for coaching and mentoring

05

Workforce sustainability

This section looks at the NTPS staffing needs to continue services, this year and in the years ahead: how agencies plan for future workforce needs, how recruitment is performing, the pathways bringing new employees in, and what's keeping people in the sector once they're here.

The operating environment was challenging in 2025–2026 — competition for skilled employees, regional and remote recruitment pressures, and people moving between roles and agencies all continued — but workforce numbers and most retention indicators held steady across the year.

Remote scientists leave a lasting legacy through Fellowship Program

Retired marine scientists are helping shape the next generation of Territory experts through the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment's Fellowship Program. The initiative keeps valuable knowledge and experience within the organisation while supporting early-career scientists to grow their skills and confidence.

The program was developed to address a growing challenge: the risk of losing specialist expertise as experienced marine scientists retire. Rather than losing decades of knowledge, the department continues to engage retired experts as Fellows, enabling them to provide advice on complex marine programs, mentor staff and contribute to major projects across the Northern Territory.

The benefits are being felt across the workforce. Fellows are helping early-career scientists develop technical skills, sharing practical knowledge gained over years of experience, and supporting major environmental assessments and management strategies. Their continued involvement ensures critical expertise remains available while building capability within the department's current workforce.



Workforce planning

During 2025–2026, OCPE began developing the NTPS Workforce Strategy 2027–2032. The strategy will provide direction for attracting, retaining and developing the people the NTPS needs to deliver services now and into the future. It will also help agencies respond to changes in their workforces and the needs of the communities they serve.

Agencies continued to use workforce strategies, workforce action plans, workforce data and employee feedback to identify priorities and plan for future workforce needs.

As of 30 June 2026, eight agencies had implemented a workforce strategy or workforce action plan, with further planning underway across the NTPS.

Common areas of focus included:

- strengthening leadership
- supporting employee wellbeing and psychological safety
- expanding entry-level career pathways
- advancing inclusion and diversity
- building digital, data and technology skills

These priorities, together with contemporary ways of working, succession planning and knowledge transfer, help agencies prepare for workforce changes, support employees to develop and progress, and retain important skills and knowledge.





Pictured top: East Arnhem Region employees Emily Diggins and Karen Gurruwiwi participating in NTPS whole of sector workforce strategy consultation.

Pictured bottom: Northern Territory Youth Round Table members participating in NTPS whole of sector workforce strategy consultation.

Recruitment and retention

Workforce sustainability depends on having enough people with the skills agencies need and creating conditions that support them to stay. This section focuses on workforce planning, recruitment, early-career pathways and retention.

Recruitment activity remained stable across the NTPS, with 4,831 recruitment processes finalised in 2025–2026, compared with 4,863 in 2024–2025.

The average time to complete recruitment increased slightly from 5.7 to 6.0 weeks during 2025–2026. The proportion of recruitment actions completed within the six-week benchmark also decreased from 57 per cent to 53 per cent. Despite this, more than half of recruitment actions were still completed within six weeks.

Early career pathways

The NTPS continued to support people starting their careers through graduate and trainee programs, Aboriginal employment initiatives, vacation employment, school-based traineeships and work experience placements. These programs help people gain skills and experience while creating pathways into the public sector.

During 2025–2026, these programs helped people enter the public sector while supplying agencies with the skills and people they need now and into the future.

These early career opportunities also help the NTPS prepare for future workforce needs by developing new employees, passing on knowledge and skills, and preparing people to take on more senior roles as experienced staff leave or move on.



Territory students bring fresh support to flood response

A Territory partnership is giving students hands-on emergency response experience while boosting support for communities when it matters most.

When flooding from Tropical Lows 29U, 30U and 31U stretched welfare response teams across the Northern Territory, a practical local solution helped bring fresh support to the frontline.

Social Work and Humanitarian Aid and Development students joined the Emergency Management Welfare Group through a paid placement model delivered by the Department of Children and Families, Charles Darwin University and WorkPac.

Working alongside experienced practitioners, students supported evacuation centres, family support services and wider welfare operations—building confidence and skills while helping Territorians affected by the floods.

The result was immediate and lasting: extra workforce capacity during the response, real-world learning for students, and a stronger pipeline of future social services workers for the Territory.

By linking education with frontline practice, the partnership is helping communities recover today while building the skilled local workforce the Territory will need tomorrow.



Pictured: Students from Charles Darwin University who helped out with the flood response (left to right) – Temitope Akinbule, Linkai (Lucas) Liu, Gursimer Singh with Hector the Road Safety Cat

Workforce stability and turnover

A stable workforce helps the NTPS maintain consistent services, retain valuable knowledge and reduce recruitment costs.

During 2025–2026, employee turnover remained relatively stable, although employees continued to move between roles and agencies across the public sector. Previous analysis found that opportunities for career progression, moving between roles and agencies, and work–life balance were common factors influencing these moves.

Retention

Workforce movement is reported here to show where agencies are focusing retention efforts. Workforce headcount and detailed retention statistics are reported in Section 1.

Together, these results show progress in creating supportive, flexible and positive workplaces where employees feel valued and want to stay and build their careers with the NTPS.

FIGURE 19: INTENTION TO STAY

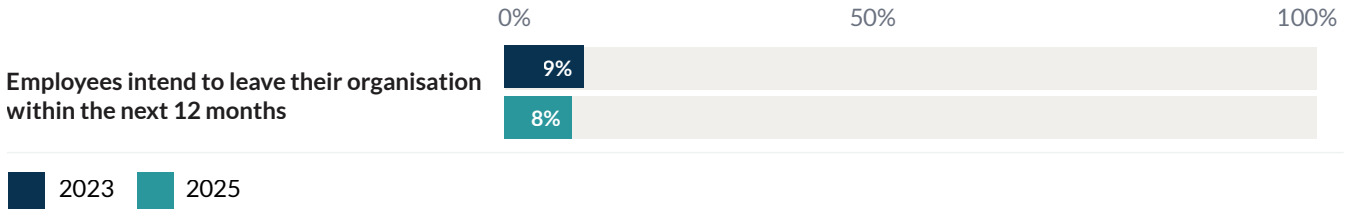


FIGURE 20: EMPLOYEE SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

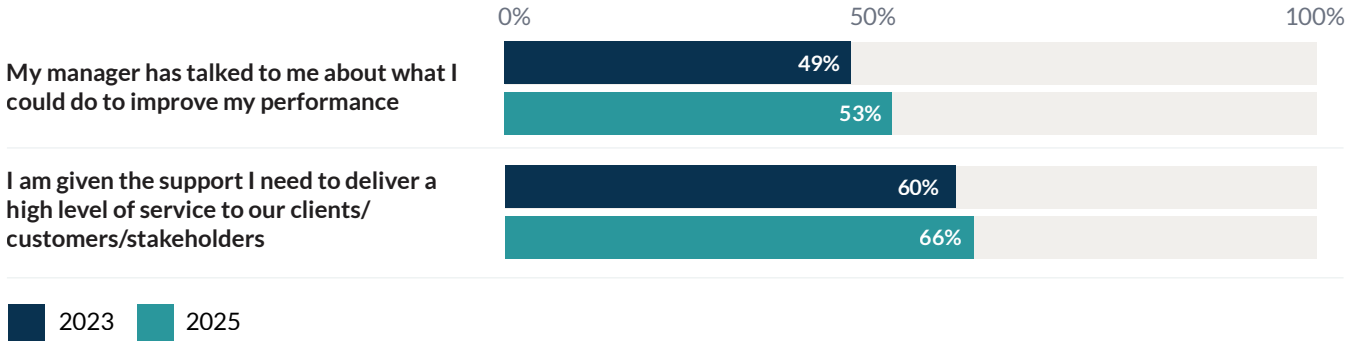


FIGURE 21: WELLBEING

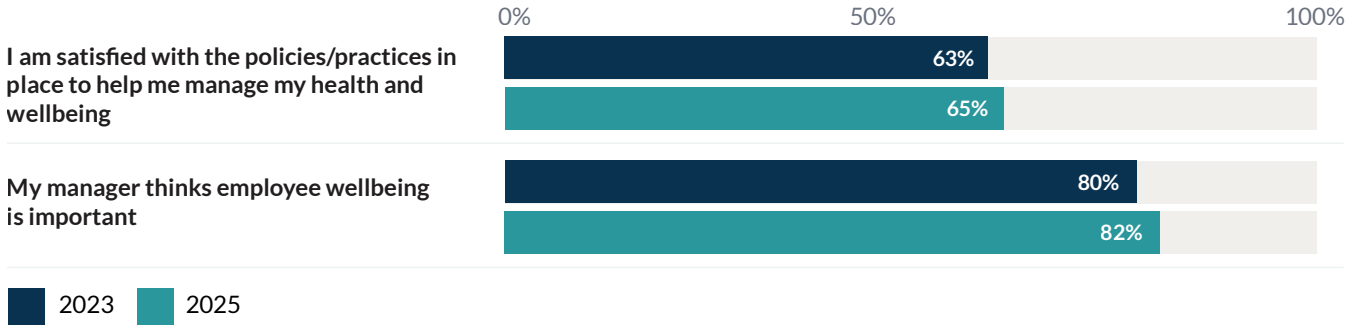
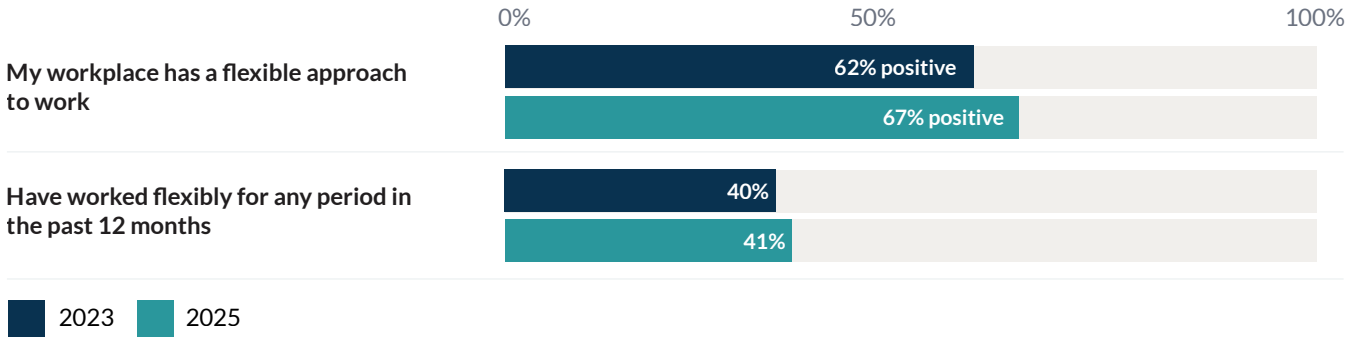


FIGURE 22: FLEXIBLE WORK



Building the workforce of the future

While workforce planning, capability development and employee experience all contribute to retaining employees, targeted recruitment remains important to address workforce shortages and attract people to priority occupations and locations.

During 2025–2026, the Department of Corporate and Digital Development supported agencies experiencing recruitment challenges through strategic recruitment support, workforce attraction initiatives and targeted recruitment approaches.

The department supported agencies to recruit for 350 hard-to-fill, critical and high-demand roles, developing strategic advertising content, targeted recruitment campaigns and attraction strategies tailored to specific roles and locations. This support helped agencies reach potential candidates for roles that were difficult to fill through standard recruitment approaches.

The department also delivered the Standardised Roles and Recruitment (SRR) Program, providing a coordinated approach to recruiting for common, high-volume roles across the NTPS. The program helped agencies build a pool of candidates for high-demand roles, resulting in 40 appointments in 2025.

The SRR Program was redesigned during 2025–2026, with an enhanced model to be implemented in 2026–2027. The new model will strengthen candidate attraction and care, while making it easier for agencies to participate and reducing the administrative workload involved in recruitment.

Together, these initiatives are helping agencies reach more candidates, fill hard-to-staff roles and strengthen recruitment for occupations where the NTPS faces ongoing workforce shortages.

Secondary student work experience

The Secondary School Work Experience Program gives young Territorians an opportunity to explore public sector careers and gain practical workplace experience.

During 2025–2026, 78 students completed placements across 14 agencies and four regions, an increase of 56 per cent from 50 students in 2024–2025.

Through their placements, students develop workplace skills, learn about different career opportunities and build connections with people working in the public sector. The growth in the program and increased participation by agencies is giving more young Territorians an opportunity to experience the NTPS and consider it as a place to start their careers.

Remote Aboriginal educators graduate

The Department of Education and Training's Remote Aboriginal Teacher Education (RATE) program supports Aboriginal educators in remote communities by providing pathways to teaching qualifications.

The program helps build a culturally responsive education workforce and contributes to improved educational outcomes for Aboriginal students.

In June 2026, ten RATE participants graduated from Batchelor Institute with qualifications ranging from Certificates I and II in Workplace Skills to Certificate III and IV in School Based Education Support.

Programs such as RATE strengthen local workforce capability, create pathways into teaching careers and support the long-term sustainability of the remote education workforce.



Pictured right: Rhonda Henry from Bulla Camp and Clint Miliken from Maningrida Homelands School



Pictured below: Caroline Djinnganbuy, Samantha Dhamarrandji, Lloyd Malalung Garawirrtja, Daphne Gumiyalawuy Gondarra, and Natasha Munyarrun from Shepherdson College

06

Diversity, equity and inclusion

A workforce that reflects the community it serves is better placed to understand and respond to the needs of Territorians. This section covers the NTPS's work on Aboriginal employment and career development, inclusive recruitment, cultural capability, gender equity, and disability employment during 2025–2026.

Building a workforce that reflects the Territory

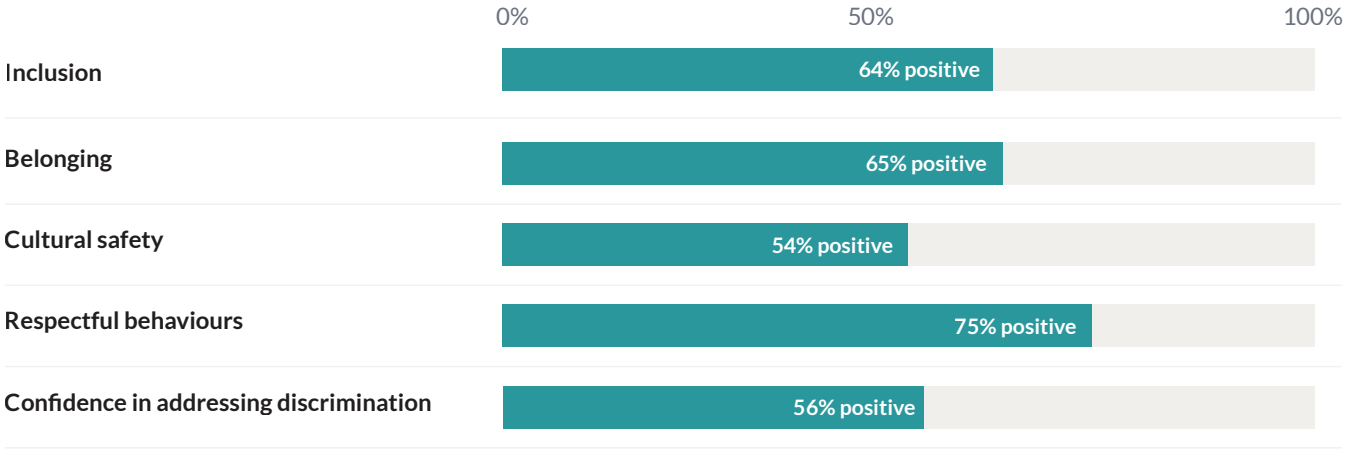
A strong public sector draws on the skills, experience and perspectives of people from across the Northern Territory. Creating fair and inclusive workplaces helps the NTPS attract and retain employees, remove barriers to participation and build a workforce that better understands the communities it serves.

During 2025–2026, agencies continued work to improve Aboriginal employment and career development, strengthen cultural capability, support gender equity and increase employment opportunities for people with disability, veterans and other under-represented groups. This included targeted employment pathways, Special Measures recruitment, mentoring and leadership development, workplace adjustments, cultural learning and more inclusive recruitment practices.

Workforce data and employee feedback show progress in several areas, but they also identify where further attention is needed. Representation alone does not provide a complete picture of inclusion. Employees also need equitable access to development and career opportunities, culturally and psychologically safe workplaces, practical support to undertake their roles and confidence that concerns will be addressed.

This section reports on the measures taken across the NTPS, the results achieved during the year and the priorities that will guide further work.

FIGURE 23: MEASURING THE SENSE OF INCLUSION



Aboriginal employment and career development

During 2025–2026, the NTPS continued to strengthen Aboriginal employment and career development as part of building a representative, capable and culturally responsive workforce.

The Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Strategy 2021–2025 provided whole-of-sector direction for attracting, developing and retaining Aboriginal employees. It also supported agencies to create culturally inclusive workplaces and strengthen Aboriginal leadership.

The strategy focused on six priorities: targets, attraction, retention, leadership, workplace culture and remote employment. It aimed to improve employment pathways, career progression, workforce participation and employee engagement, with targets of 16 per cent Aboriginal workforce representation and 10 per cent representation in senior roles.

An evaluation completed in 2026 found positive outcomes across the sector, including strong recruitment approaches, established workforce development programs and greater attention to inclusion and employee engagement. It also identified the need for further work on career progression, leadership development, cultural safety, remote employment and workforce participation.



Targets



Attraction



Retention



Leadership



Workplace Culture



Remote

Progress during the strategy period

Between the beginning and end of the strategy period:

- Aboriginal workforce representation increased by 331 employees, reaching 11.19 per cent at the end of 2025
- Aboriginal representation in senior roles increased by 56 employees, reaching 5.01 per cent
- 95.4 per cent of vacancies advertised between 2021–22 and the second quarter of 2025–2026 were identified under a Special Measures Recruitment Plan, with Aboriginal applicants filling 9.13 per cent of these positions
- 87 Aboriginal employees registered on the Merit Selection Register to support Aboriginal participation on selection panels
- 694 Aboriginal employees participated in Aboriginal Employee Forums in Darwin, Alice Springs and Katherine
- 162 employees participated in the Aboriginal Employee Mentor Program through mentoring partnerships and professional development workshops
- Aboriginal employees accounted for 7.88 per cent of participants in OCPE leadership programs and 5.17 per cent of participants in capability development programs.

Aboriginal employment and career development will remain a priority under the NTPS Workforce Strategy 2027–2032. The next phase of work will draw on the strategy evaluation, workforce data, employee feedback and other government commitments such as Aboriginal affairs, economic participation and Closing the Gap.

The focus will remain on practical employment pathways, cultural capability and safety, career and leadership development, and participation in regional and remote communities.

Alongside employment and career development initiatives, recognising the leadership and contribution of Aboriginal employees helps make achievement visible, valued and shared across the NTPS.



331

more Aboriginal employees across the sector, including 56 more in senior roles.



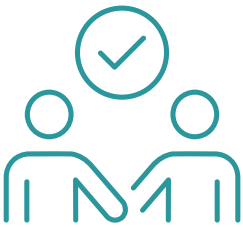
694

Aboriginal employees took part in 8 forums across Darwin, Alice Springs and Katherine, with an average of 87 people at each.



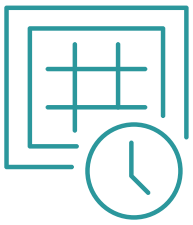
162

employees trained and supported through the Aboriginal Employee Mentoring Program.



10%

of all vacancies were filled by Aboriginal candidates, supported by stronger pathways into the Northern Territory Public Sector (NTPS) such as Special Measures recruitment.



NAIDOC Week

Sector-wide events celebrated and recognised Aboriginal days of significance, including NAIDOC Week.



satisfaction



engagement

Aboriginal employees reported improvements in their experience at work in the 2025 People Matter Survey.

Interpreters connect communities and strengthen services

Aboriginal interpreters from across the Northern Territory came together in Darwin for the Aboriginal Interpreter Forum 2026, strengthening skills, building connections and helping shape the future of one of the Territory's most important workforces.

Organised by the Aboriginal Interpreter Service (AIS), the two-day forum brought together 30 Aboriginal interpreters, trainers and mentors representing more than 18 language groups from every region of the Territory.

For many participants, the forum was a rare opportunity to meet face to face, share experiences and learn from colleagues who work in courts, hospitals, child protection, housing and community services. Sessions covered interpreter wellbeing, trauma-informed practice, legal and health interpreting, career development and language preservation.

The event delivered practical results. Interpreters reported stronger professional networks, greater knowledge of government service systems and increased awareness of wellbeing and resilience strategies. Participants also identified workforce priorities, including mentoring, shadowing opportunities and clearer career pathways.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with yarning sessions receiving an average satisfaction rating of 4.61 out of 5. The forum also produced seven recommendations to strengthen workforce capability, retention and professional support.

Aboriginal interpreters play a vital role in helping Aboriginal Territorians understand legal, health and government information, participate in decisions and access essential services.

One participant said the forum was a reminder that interpreters are "not working alone", while another called for more opportunities to "see each other and yarn".

Recognising Aboriginal leadership and contribution

Agencies across the NTPS recognise and celebrate the leadership and contribution of Aboriginal employees through locally led initiatives and awards programs, such as:

- The Northern Territory Police Force's annual NAIDOC Recognition Awards, acknowledging the leadership and contributions of Aboriginal Community Police Officers and Aboriginal Liaison Officers.
- NT Health's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker and Practitioner Excellence Awards, recognising excellence in culturally safe healthcare delivery and supporting the future workforce through student awards.
- The Chief Minister's Aboriginal Leadership Medal, which recognises Aboriginal leaders who have made significant and lasting contributions to their communities and the Territory.



Pictured: Winners of the 2025 NT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker and Practitioner Excellence Awards

Special measures and inclusive recruitment

Special Measures Recruitment Plans help improve employment opportunities for groups that are under-represented in the NTPS. Plans may give priority consideration to applicants from a specified group or identify positions that can only be filled by people who meet particular eligibility requirements.

Special Measures plans are used across the NTPS to support Aboriginal employment. They have also previously been used to increase women's representation in areas such as fire and emergency services.

Agencies must obtain approval from the Commissioner for Public Employment before implementing a plan. During 2025–2026, the Commissioner approved 19 Special Measures Recruitment Plans reflecting current agency arrangements and priority workforce needs.

OCPE also reviewed 920 Special Measures recruitment reports during the year. Of these, 77 were returned to agencies for further consideration. Across the reporting period, Aboriginal applicants filled 9.13 per cent of vacancies advertised under Special Measures.

Strengthening recruitment processes

OCPE introduced a range of changes during 2025–2026 to make recruitment more consistent, transparent and accountable. These included:

- gazettal of revised Employment Instruction 15: Special Measures
- publication of revised Commissioner's Special Measures Guidelines
- introduction of a single NTPS statutory declaration process for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants
- release of an updated Special Measures Recruitment Plan template
- introduction of the Designated Positions Guideline
- updated information for applicants
- additional options for advertising remote vacancies locally to reach community-based applicants
- stronger conflict-of-interest and merit-selection processes
- introduction of a Selection Panel Checklist
- establishment of a myLearning register for qualified selection panel members
- changes to streamline the Applicant of Potential Risk Register and provide clearer information for employees and managers
- revision of the NTPS pre-employment screening guideline.

Together, these changes give agencies clearer processes and practical resources to support fair, consistent and accountable recruitment across the NTPS.

Building cultural capability across the NTPS

Cultural capability helps employees work respectfully and effectively with Aboriginal colleagues, communities and service users. It supports culturally informed decisions, stronger community relationships and services that respond to the circumstances of people across the Territory.

Under Employment Instruction 10, agencies are to provide access to cross-cultural awareness training. The online module Foundations of Cross-Cultural Training: Working in the NTPS forms part of the OneNTG essential training suite. Employees are required to complete it within three months of commencing work and undertake refresher training every three years.

Agencies reported that 5,399 employees completed the module during 2025–2026. Work also began to update the module, with the revised version planned for release later in 2026.

Agencies supplemented the mandatory module with learning tailored to their work and regional contexts. This included:

- agency-specific cultural awareness training
- Aboriginal engagement and cultural responsiveness programs
- anti-racism and Positive Duty training
- Closing the Gap learning
- cross-cultural components in vocational training programs.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) continued to deliver dedicated cross-cultural awareness training incorporating its Aboriginal Cultural Security Framework, principles developed by SNAICC – National Voice for our Children, and learning focused on the needs of Aboriginal children and families.

Some agencies also delivered governance and engagement training in partnership with Traditional Owners and the Northern Land Council. This supported more culturally informed decision-making and stronger relationships with Aboriginal communities.

FIGURE 24: CROSS CULTURAL FRAMEWORK – FIVE KEY AREAS OF TRAINING



Promoting cultural understanding through sector-wide events

During NAIDOC Week 2025, OCPE partnered with the Department of Education and Training and the Department of People, Sport and Culture to host a Youth Yarning Panel aligned to the national NAIDOC theme *"The Next Generation: Strength, Vision and Legacy."*

The event, held at the Library and Archives NT, brought together emerging Aboriginal leaders and senior executives from across the NTPS to discuss aspirations, leadership, workforce participation and opportunities for future generations. More than 80 online participants from across the NTPS also joined the discussion alongside 20 senior executives, fostering meaningful dialogue and encouraging commitments to strengthen youth engagement, mentoring opportunities and Aboriginal representation in leadership and decision-making.

Aboriginal employees from OCPE, the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet, and Power and Water Corporation also collaborated on a cross-agency NAIDOC Week video message celebrating the theme and highlighting the strength, vision and legacy of future generations of Aboriginal Territorians.

The message was:

"Our strength is carried in the stories of our ancestors, and our vision is shaping the future we deserve."

And our vision is shaping the future we deserve.

I am the next generation.

We honour those who walked before us and light the path ahead.

Legacy isn't left behind. It lives in us, every day.

Through art, language, land and culture, we carry it forward.

This is a time to listen, learn and walk alongside.

Our voices are powerful. Our future is unstoppable.

We are strong. We are proud. We are the next generation."



Pictured right: The youth yarning panel focused on the NAIDOC week theme "The Next Generation: Strength, Vision and Legacy."

Pictured below (left to right): Getting the NAIDOC message across in the video were Kiara Diamond, Suzanne Munkara, Miriama Walsh, Ursula White, Denise Raymond, Jasmine Valodze.



Gender equity

Agencies continued to support women's participation and career progression through flexible work, professional development, mentoring and leadership opportunities.

These arrangements help employees balance their work and personal responsibilities while continuing to develop their skills and careers. They also complement the sector-wide employment settings and leadership programs reported elsewhere in this report.

Workforce data presented in Section 1 shows that women made up 64.5 per cent of the NTPS and 62.1 per cent of senior management roles in 2026.

NTPS gender pay gap

The June 2026 NTPS gender pay gap was 3.96 per cent, a decrease from 5.3 per cent in June 2025. In dollar terms, the average difference reduced from $0.05 to $0.04; ie for every $1.00 earned by a male employee, a female employee earned, on average, $0.96.

Although not directly comparable due to the way in which different states and territories measure their gender pay datasets, the NTPS gender pay gap is below the ABS national gender pay gap figure of 11.5 per cent (for every $1 earned by a male, a female earned $0.88). Across the NT as a whole the gap is 10.3 per cent, while the Commonwealth public sector gender pay is 6.4 per cent (for every $1 earned by a male, a female earned $0.94).*

Factors that may contribute to the lower NTPS gender pay gap include the classification-based remuneration framework, equal employment opportunity settings, access to flexible working arrangements, paid carer's leave, and paid superannuation during parental leave.

The increased representation of women in senior management roles also supports continued progress in reducing the gender pay gap.

* Source: Workplace Gender Equality Agency data released on 26 February 2026.

Northern Territory Fire and Emergency Service (NTFES) award celebrates leadership supporting women in emergency services

Station Officer Yva Woerle has been recognised by her colleagues for helping women across Northern Territory Fire and Emergency Services connect, grow and lead.

The inaugural Women in Fire and Emergency Services Award was created to mark International Women's Day 2026 and shine a light on people who make NTFES a more inclusive workplace.

Ms Woerle received the award for her leadership, mentoring and work to establish the Female Firefighter Network. The network gives women in NTFES a place to share experience, build confidence and support each other's professional development.

Colleagues nominated Ms Woerle because her work has created practical benefits: stronger peer support, more visible role models and a clearer pathway for women to take on leadership opportunities.

NTFES says the award reinforces the values of respect, commitment and positive conduct by recognising people who help others succeed. It also sends a simple message: small acts of mentoring, encouragement and advocacy can change workplace culture.

The award will be presented each year on International Women's Day to an employee or volunteer of any gender who supports, advances or promotes women across NTFES.



Disability employment and inclusion

The NTPS continued to strengthen disability employment and inclusion during 2025–2026 through the EmployAbility Strategy 2024–2027.

At June 2026, 558 employees had identified as having disability, representing 2.1 per cent of the NTPS workforce. This included 78 employees in leadership roles. Reported representation increased by 0.2 percentage points during the year.

Workforce figures rely on employees choosing to identify in corporate systems and may not reflect the full number of employees with disability. De-identified People Matter Survey data recorded a higher proportion, indicating that some employees may report disability through an anonymous survey but not through workforce records.

Disability employment pathways continued to create opportunities for people to enter the NTPS, build experience and develop their careers. These included the Disability Employment Program and the EmployAbility Work Experience Program.

As the Territory's largest employer, the NTPS also contributes to the broader disability sector through employment, partnerships, accessible services and initiatives that promote inclusion and participation. Continued implementation of the EmployAbility Strategy will focus on improving representation, strengthening accessibility and creating workplaces where people with disability can contribute, develop and progress.

Debbie's journey shows the impact of inclusive employment

When Debbie Lorymer joined NT Health as an Administrative Assistant through the Disability Employment Program (DEP) in October 2025, she brought enthusiasm, a positive attitude and a willingness to learn.

In a busy clinical environment, she quickly became a valued member of the team.

With the support of her colleagues and managers, Debbie steadily developed her skills and confidence. As her capability grew, so did her contribution to the team and the work of the service. She became more confident in her role, built strong workplace relationships and found a real sense of belonging.

Debbie's experience has also given her a strong appreciation of the support provided through the DEP. She regularly recommends the program to others looking for meaningful employment, development opportunities and workplace support.

Debbie's journey is a great example of what inclusive employment can achieve. With the right opportunity and support, people can build their skills, grow in confidence and make a valuable contribution to their workplace. Her experience demonstrates the difference inclusive employment can make — not only to individuals, but to the teams and workplaces they become part of.

Pictured: Fletcher Austin, Clinical Administration Manager, and Debbie Lorymer, DEP participant



Workplace adjustments

Workplace adjustments help employees with disability get the support they need to do their jobs. The right support, provided at the right time, can improve people's wellbeing, participation and productivity, and help them stay in the workforce.

During 2025–2026, agencies continued to provide a range of adjustments to meet individual needs. These included changes to the workplace, equipment, work arrangements and other practical support.

The NTPS also worked to make it easier and more consistent for employees to access workplace adjustments. This included developing a Preferred Supplier List and starting work to simplify and automate the process for requesting adjustments.

Further changes planned for 2026 will make it easier for employees with disability, injury or ongoing health conditions to access the support they need, while improving consistency across the NTPS.

Veteran representation

Veterans, Reservists and their families bring valuable skills and experience to the NTPS. The sector's commitment under the Soldier On Pledge supports meaningful employment pathways for ex-serving members, Reservists and veteran family members. Soldier On is a national not-for-profit organisation that provides support services to current and ex-serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and their families.

In the 2025 People Matter Survey, 456 employees identified as ex-serving ADF members or current or former Reservists. Employees were also asked, for the first time, whether they were a family member of a current or former ADF member. This provided new insights into the broader veteran community across the NTPS.

Veterans, Reservists and their families bring experience gained through military service to a range of NTPS roles. The survey findings reinforce the value of targeted recruitment, transition support and inclusive employment practices in helping people with military connections bring their skills and experience to the public sector and build new careers.

The NTPS will continue to support employment pathways for veterans, Reservists and their families and promote the public sector as a place where people with military experience can build meaningful and rewarding careers.





Pictured left: Tanya Pederick, from Youthworx NT with the Honourable Jinson Charls MLA, Minister for Disability at the 2025 Disability Inclusion Awards.

Pictured right: Nicole Hurwood, Commissioner for Public Employment with Tanya Pederick from YouthWorx NT receiving the award for the Excellence in Education and Employment at the 2025 Disability Inclusion Awards.

The Commissioner for Public Employment sponsored the 2025 Disability Inclusion Award category of Excellence in Education and Employment. The winner was YouthWorx NT for their Career Launchpad Program. The Northern Territory Disability Inclusion Awards are held annually to celebrate the outstanding achievements of people, teams and organisations making the Territory more inclusive and accessible for everyone.

07

Industrial relations and employment framework

Industrial relations activity increased across the Northern Territory Public Sector during 2025–2026, as agencies progressed a significant enterprise bargaining program, OCPE managed a rise in Fair Work matters, and employees continued to use appeal and grievance processes to review employment decisions.

Effective employment frameworks underpin a fair, transparent and accountable public sector. Clear employment conditions, fair processes and effective ways for employees to raise concerns or challenge decisions give both employees and agencies confidence in how employment decisions are made.

This section reports on enterprise bargaining outcomes, industrial activity managed by OCPE, and the outcomes of promotion appeal, discipline and inability, and grievance review processes during the year.

Enterprise bargaining landscape

The Northern Territory public sector continues to progress a significant enterprise bargaining program while maintaining its commitment to fair remuneration, sustainable employment conditions, workforce retention, and fiscal responsibility.

The OCPE is responsible for negotiating and managing 12 enterprise agreements covering a diverse range of employee groups, including medical officers, nurses and midwives, dental officers, firefighters, correctional officers, government owned corporation employees (Jacana Energy, Power and Water Corporation and Territory Generation), police, educators, Aboriginal health practitioners and general stream (administrative, professional, technical and physical) employees (inclusive of allied health workers and senior correctional officers).

During the reporting period, the NTPS General Agreement and Aboriginal Health Practitioner enterprise agreements were successfully finalised and approved by the Fair Work Commission. These outcomes represent a significant achievement, particularly for one of the NTPS's largest workforce groups.

The Police Consent Agreement was also approved and a Determination issued for the new rank of Police Public Safety Officer.

Enterprise bargaining remained as a major focus throughout the year, with negotiations progressing for a further eight agreements:

- Jacana Energy
- Correctional officers
- Fire and Rescue services
- Medical officers
- Power and Water Corporation
- Territory Generation
- Nurses and midwives
- Dental officers.

Enterprise bargaining is led by the OCPE in partnership with relevant agencies, employee representatives, and the respective unions supporting a collaborative, transparent and constructive process.

Bargaining outcomes are guided by the Government-approved NTPS Bargaining Policy, which took effect in February 2025. The policy supports collective bargaining in line with the *Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)* and sets clear expectations for bargaining outcomes.

The policy aims to ensure that bargaining outcomes remain within the Government's approved financial limits, unless otherwise approved by the government. It also supports government and agency priorities, encourages efficiencies where possible, and maintains fair and reasonable employment conditions for NTPS employees.

Offers are designed to provide a balanced package of improved employment conditions while maintaining job security for employees.

Over the next 12 months, OCPE will focus on progressing and finalising enterprise bargaining negotiations currently under way and preparing for negotiations on the Teachers Agreement. OCPE will also continue work to deliver commitments made in existing agreements, including the Remote Entitlements Review.

Enterprise bargaining supporting a stronger workforce

Enterprise agreements negotiated during the year included changes to employment conditions, career development, flexibility, wellbeing, health, safety and employment security. The infographic below summarises the main changes.

Enterprise bargaining delivered a range of improvements to employment conditions across the Northern Territory public sector. While wage increases were an important part of negotiations, agreements also introduced measures to attract and retain employees, support wellbeing, provide clearer career development opportunities and modernise workplace conditions.

Supporting attraction and retention, particularly in regional and remote areas, was a key priority. New retention incentives were introduced for employees in Katherine and Alice Springs, while several agreements strengthened remote employment provisions and committed to a broader review of remote locality arrangements. Police negotiations also delivered significant improvements to benefits for employees working in remote and isolated locations, recognising the particular challenges of living and working in some of the Territory's most remote communities.

Agreements also included measures to build employees' skills and create clearer pathways for career progression. These included improvements to professional development allowances, new recognition and excellence schemes, and changes to classification structures that support progression and recognise specialist skills and experience.

New trainee pathways for Aboriginal health practitioners and enhanced professional recognition arrangements across the public sector will also help develop skills and create opportunities for people to build careers in the NTPS. These measures will support the growth and capability of the future public sector workforce.

A number of outcomes were aimed at making the NTPS an even more attractive place to work. Flexible work provisions were strengthened and new right-to-disconnect provisions were introduced. Employees also gained access to improved leave arrangements, including new provisions supporting medical appointments, organ donation, emergency volunteering activities and employee wellbeing services.

Negotiations also delivered stronger commitments to workplace health, safety and inclusion. Agreements included measures to better address psychosocial risks, support workplace health and safety representatives, and reinforce commitments to diversity, inclusion and cultural safety.

Several agreements also strengthened employment security arrangements and gave employees greater certainty through modernised employment provisions aligned with current workplace legislation.

Together, these outcomes show how enterprise bargaining can respond to workforce challenges while improving employees' experience at work. The changes support the NTPS to attract and retain skilled employees, help people build their skills and careers, and provide modern employment conditions that reflect the needs of a diverse workforce and the communities it serves.

Enterprise bargaining in action

Enterprise bargaining outcomes extended beyond wages to support a modern, capable and sustainable public sector workforce using a range of tools.

FIGURE 25: ENTERPRISE BARGAINING OUTCOMES

ATTRACT	Regional and remote incentives to help attract and retain employees where they are needed most.
DEVELOP	Career pathways, professional development opportunities and recognition of high performance.
FLEX	Stronger flexible work arrangements and new right-to-disconnect provisions to support work-life balance.
SUPPORT	Enhanced wellbeing and leave provisions, including support for medical appointments, volunteering and donor leave.
PROTECT	Safer, more inclusive workplaces supported by improved health and safety measures and stronger employment security provisions.

Industrial activity

Fair Work proceedings

The OCPE manages Fair Work proceedings involving Northern Territory Public Sector employment matters under the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth).

During 2025–2026, OCPE managed 49 matters, an increase of 40 per cent from the 35 matters managed in 2024–2025. The increase was mainly due to more unfair dismissal applications, disputes arising from enterprise agreement negotiations and new types of disputes relating to flexible work arrangements.

Most matters continued to be managed internally by OCPE, with external legal advice or representation used only when matters involved complex legal issues, arbitration proceedings or appeals.

Unfair dismissal and general protections applications remained the most common types of proceedings, accounting for 30 of the 49 matters. As of 30 June 2026, approximately 27 per cent of matters were still ongoing.

Finalised matters were resolved in a range of ways, including settlement, withdrawal, discontinuance, dismissal by the Fair Work Commission or administrative closure.

The increase in matters reflects greater use of Fair Work processes to review or dispute employment decisions across the NTPS. The matters managed during the year covered workplace rights, enterprise bargaining and flexible work arrangements, reflecting the range of employment issues that can be considered under the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth).

TABLE 13: SUMMARY OF FAIR WORK MATTERS

Matter type	2023–2024	2024–2025	2025–2026
Unfair dismissal	10	10	18
General protections	2	12	12
Flexible work practices	-	-	5
Dispute management	5	8	4
Bargaining disputes	-	-	4
Stop bullying or sexual harassment	1	4	3
Unlawful termination	0	1	2
Appeal against Fair Work decision	0	0	1
Representational rights	1	0	0
Ambiguity or uncertainty applications	1	0	0
TOTAL	**20**	**35**	**49**

Discipline matters

The NTPS maintains high standards of integrity and accountability through the application of the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993* (PSEM Act) and NTPS Code of Conduct which apply to all public sector employees, including Chief Executive Officers and the Commissioner. Breaches of the PSEM Act or NTPS Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action. Serious breaches can result in termination of employment.

Disciplinary processes play a critical role in maintaining public trust, ensuring that employee conduct across the NTPS is managed fairly, consistently and in accordance with legislative and ethical standards.

Matters relating to conduct and performance are managed under:

- Part 7 – Employee Performance and Inability, or
- Part 8 – Discipline.

Disciplinary matters

During the reporting period, 93 discipline actions were commenced across 15 agencies, addressing alleged misconduct, negligence and breaches of professional obligations. Outcomes ranged from formal cautions and mandatory training to termination of employment in serious cases. This figure was the same as the previous year.

TABLE 14: SUMMARY OF DISCIPLINARY CASES 2020–2021 TO 2025–2026

	2020–2021	2021–2022	2022–2023	2023–2024	2024–2025	2025–2026
Number	101	127	81	77	93	93
Percentage of total NTPS	**0.41%**	**0.52%**	**0.34%**	**0.31%**	**0.36%**	**0.37%**

Common reasons for disciplinary action

Disciplinary processes were initiated for one or more of the following reasons:

- failing to uphold the performance and conduct principles or otherwise contravening the PSEM Act.
- disregarding or disobeying a lawful order or direction given by a person authorised to give such an order or direction.
- being negligent or careless in the performance of duties, or fails to perform the duties assigned duties.
- improper conduct in the course of employment or in circumstances connection to employment.
- harassment or coercion of another employee.
- engaging in unauthorised outside employment, occupation or business activities.
- providing information in the course of employment that the employee knows, or ought to reasonably know, is false or misleading.
- failing to remedy previous unsatisfactory conduct or comply with a formal caution.

While not all matters were finalised within the reporting period, and some of the employees may resign before the discipline process is completed, actions that may be applied under section 49C of the PSEM Act include:

- no further action (including where an employee resigns before finalisation of the process)
- formal caution
- attendance at mandatory training or counselling
- payment of a fine
- salary reduction
- employee transfer to other duties
- termination of employment.

Inability procedures

The NTPS supports employee performance and capability through fair, consistent and transparent processes under the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993* (PSEM Act).

Performance and inability processes are designed to identify and address barriers to effective performance, give employees opportunities to improve and ensure they can safely and satisfactorily perform the requirements of their roles. Where performance remains unsatisfactory or an employee is unable to perform their duties, the processes provide a fair and consistent way for agencies to manage these situations while maintaining high standards of public sector service delivery.

Under Part 7 of the PSEM Act, inability processes apply to ongoing employees and address circumstances where an employee:

- is unable to perform their duties effectively due to illness (whether because of physical or mental illness, disability or any other reason)
- is not suited to perform, or capable of efficiently performing those duties
- is not licensed, registered or otherwise qualified for the efficient and satisfactory performance of those duties
- is not performing those duties efficiently or satisfactorily.

Consistent with the principles of natural justice, these processes are also applied to contract employees where relevant.

Remedial actions applied by agencies as a result of these processes were:

- no further action
- training, counselling or other remedial action
- employee transferred to perform other duties
- termination of employment.

During the reporting period, seven employees across five agencies were formally subject to inability or unsatisfactory performance actions where they were unable to perform their duties effectively or where performance did not meet the required standard. This was a significant decrease on the previous reporting period.

TABLE 15: SUMMARY OF INABILITY CASES

	2020–2021	2021–2022	2022–2023	2023–2024	2024–2025	2025–2026
Number	78	1,668	19	14	36	7
Percentage of total NTPS	**0.32%**	**6.8%**	**0.08%**	**0.06%**	**0.13%**	**0.03%**

(The unusual and major increase in case numbers in 2021-22 was the result of employees not complying with the mandatory Chief Health Officer (CHO) Directions during the COVID-19 pandemic. The CHO Directions required employers and employees across the NT to have received COVID-19 vaccinations in order to attend the workplace, unless they had approved evidence of a medical contraindication to all COVID-19 vaccines).

Promotion appeals

Appeals under section 59B of the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993* play an important role in strengthening confidence in NTPS recruitment and promotion processes. The framework supports robust workforce governance by providing eligible employees with access to an independent review mechanism, helping to ensure promotion decisions are transparent, merit-based and consistent with legislative requirements.

TABLE 16: SUMMARY OF PROMOTION APPEAL OUTCOMES 1 JULY 2025 TO 30 JUNE 2026

Promotion Appeal Board outcomes	2024–2025	2025–2026
Varied (varying suitability of appellant)	0	10
Replaced (promoting the appellant)	0	1
Decision affirmed	18	18
Set aside and returned to be redone	2	2
Vacated (promotion cancelled)	2	3
Withdrawn	19	15
Total finalised	**22**	**34**
Still open	0	1

Where an appeal is withdrawn after lodging it is usually because either the employee is not eligible to appeal and will instead lodge a s59 grievance, or they decide not to pursue the appeal after a discussion with the Public Sector Appeals and Grievance Reviews (PSAGR) team.

Discipline and inability appeals

Section 59A of the PSEM Act enables an employee to appeal certain decisions made by a CEO or delegate including disciplinary actions, or termination of employment.

An appeal must be lodged within 14 days of receiving written notice of the decision.

Lodging an appeal does not suspend or delay the decision's implementation.

TABLE 17: SUMMARY OF DISCIPLINARY AND INABILITY APPEAL OUTCOMES 1 JULY 2025 TO 30 JUNE 2026

Appeal Board Outcomes	Discipline	Inability
Affirm the decision of the CEO	1	2
Withdrawn	0	1
Total Finalised	**1**	**2**

When an appeal is withdrawn after lodging it is generally because the employee has commenced proceedings in another jurisdiction (eg Fair Work Commission).

TABLE 18: REASONS FOR SECTION 59 PSEM ACT GRIEVANCE REVIEWS 1 JULY 2025 TO 30 JUNE 2026

Reasons	2024–2025	2025–2026
Management action or decision	46	24
Selection decision	27	23
Application of procedures and policies	2	7
Application of conditions of service	8	4
Agency handling of bullying	3	4
Termination of probationary employment	1	5
Termination of Executive Contract	0	0
Disciplinary action	1	1
Bullying	16	0
Unfair Treatment	5	2
Total handled	**109**	**70**

TABLE 19: OUTCOMES OF SECTION 59 GRIEVANCE REVIEWS 1 JULY 2025 TO 31 MARCH 2026

The Commissioner for Public Employment may decline to review matters where the request for review is frivolous, vexatious or not made in good faith, or if alternative proceedings have commenced in another jurisdiction (ie Fair Work Commission).

Where a grievance is withdrawn after lodging it is generally because:

a. the matter is resolved in the workplace,

b. after a discussion with PSAGR, the employee is made aware of another more appropriate action to take or

c. the employee is advised that the Commissioner for Public Employment may not be able to assist in the matter e.g. workers compensation claims.

Outcomes	2024–2025	2025–2026
Agency directed to take/refrain from taking action	0	2
Agency action confirmed	8	11
Agency action confirmed with comment from the Commissioner	0	10
Resolved through PSAGR involvement	43	17
Resolved within the agency	3	1
Being handled by the agency	18	18
Declined to review (eg no jurisdiction)	11	2
Withdrawn	21	6
Total finalised	**104**	**67**
Still open	5	3

08

Digital capability and future of work

Building a digitally capable and adaptable public sector

Technology is changing how the NTPS works, makes decisions and delivers services. Digital, data and artificial intelligence skills are increasingly important to the way employees work and services are delivered.

Digital transformation is not only about new technology. It also requires employees to have the skills, confidence and judgement to use digital tools safely, effectively and responsibly, while adapting roles, systems and work practices as service needs change.

During 2025–2026, the NT Government strengthened its approach through the Digital Futures Strategy 2026–2028 and expanded practical support for responsible use of artificial intelligence. These initiatives provide a foundation for a more digitally confident workforce and simpler, more accessible services for Territorians.

NT Digital Futures Strategy 2026–2028

The NT Government's Digital Futures Strategy 2026–2028, launched in June 2026, sets a whole-of-government direction for using digital technology to connect Territorians with jobs, services and each other.

The strategy recognises digital capability as both an economic and workforce priority. Stronger digital and data skills will help Territorians participate in a digital economy and enable NTPS employees to improve productivity, decision-making and service accessibility.

The strategy is organised around four digital directions:

1. increasing digital skills and supporting local digital industry
2. innovating with technology and growing connectivity
3. using and securing Territory data
4. transforming and improving online government services.

For the NTPS workforce, the strategy reinforces two priorities: building digital skills and confidence so employees can adapt to changing work, and using artificial intelligence to improve productivity and service delivery.

The Territory has a local digital workforce to build on. The Deloitte and ICT Industry Association of the NT report, Exploring the Digital Frontier, estimated the local digital industry employed about 5,100 workers in 2025, providing a base for partnerships between government, industry and education providers.

Use of artificial intelligence in the NT public service

Artificial intelligence is being adopted across the NTPS as a practical workforce and service delivery tool.

In December 2025, DCDD launched the Say H.I. to A.I. campaign to encourage safe, confident and responsible use of AI by NT Government employees. H.I. stands for human intelligence.

The NT Government's approved assistive AI environment includes Microsoft Copilot, which is managed securely within the government's technology environment.

Use of Microsoft Copilot grew from about 1,000 active employees in December 2025 to 3,239 employees by the end of June 2026.

A DCDD survey of NTPS employees conducted in June 2026 received 646 responses from almost all agencies. Of respondents:

- 84 per cent reported using AI tools at work regularly or occasionally
- 70 per cent reported a positive attitude towards using AI at work
- the most common uses were writing and editing, summarising information and research.

The results suggest early adoption is focused on administrative and knowledge-based work, with employees using AI to support tasks while retaining responsibility for checking information, applying professional judgement and making decisions.

A separate NTPS agency AI survey showed strong appetite for AI, with different maturity levels across government.

Agencies identified increased productivity, innovation, workforce capability and improved service delivery as key benefits. They also highlighted the need for whole-of-government support to build skills, share practical examples, manage risks and provide access to approved tools.

The intent is to use AI safely and responsibly to reduce administrative burden, support better decisions, improve service delivery and give employees more time to focus on higher-value work for Territorians.

Discussions with the Commonwealth, states and territories indicate that the NT is broadly aligned with other governments in its approach to AI. Larger jurisdictions are also developing tailored AI tools, including the Australian Government's GovAI platform and South Australia's EdChat.

The NTPS is exploring opportunities to adopt or adapt relevant products for local use, including a Department of Education trial of South Australia's EdChat with teachers and students in Northern Territory schools.

These findings show that AI use is growing, while employees still need practical support to use it confidently and responsibly. This includes learning when AI is appropriate, how to check its outputs and how to protect government and personal information.

Building employees' confidence with technology, alongside critical thinking, leadership, adaptability and cultural capability, will help the NTPS use AI in ways that support its people, strengthen public administration and improve services for Territorians.

Learning how to be AI safe

The Department of Corporate and Digital Development established the AI Advisory service to help agencies adopt artificial intelligence safely, confidently and responsibly.

The service provides a trusted place for public servants to ask questions, test practical use cases and understand how AI can support better government services. It also underpins the Say H.I. to A.I. campaign, which reminds staff that AI should support, not replace, human judgement, accountability and experience.

Through agency meetings, executive briefings, workshops, training and practical advice, the AI Advisory service has supported capability development and AI awareness across government.

By combining clear governance with hands-on learning, the service is helping agencies move from curiosity to confident experimentation, improve productivity and reduce administrative burden while supporting better services for Territorians.



09

Workforce impact on service

The value of workforce investment is clearest when it changes what agencies can do for Territorians. During 2025–2026, agencies used specialist expertise, cross-agency workforce mobilisation and targeted capability development to strengthen services.

Emergency management response and surge workforce

A key example this year developed in response to one of the Territory's most significant emergency seasons, as the NTPS demonstrated its ability to rapidly mobilise people and resources in response to major flooding and cyclone events affecting communities across the Territory.

Employees from across government were redeployed from their usual roles to support evacuation centres, welfare services, logistics, emergency payments and recovery activities.

This required significant coordination across agencies and the ability to temporarily shift employees and resources as the scale and needs of each emergency changed. Emergency welfare operations were activated across seven evacuation sites, with planning identifying a workforce requirement of approximately 600 employees to support evacuation centres, welfare functions and emergency payment activities.

As the emergency response and recovery efforts expanded, agencies were asked to identify more employees who could be temporarily released from their substantive duties for at least four weeks to support response and recovery efforts.

The scale and duration of the emergency season highlighted the importance of a flexible and agile public sector workforce.

Throughout the prolonged response and recovery efforts, the Welfare Group, led by the Department of Children and Families, supported 2,600 Territorians across seven evacuation centres, and emergency accommodation sites and welfare recovery efforts. This included ongoing support for communities affected by flooding and cyclone events, with welfare services helping residents access accommodation, wellbeing support and assistance to recovery and return home safely.

Following major flooding, 480 Nauiyu (Daly River) and Nganmarriyanga (Palumpa) residents, including over 130 children were accommodated at Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) and Batchelor Outdoor Education Centre, after initially being evacuated to Marrara Indoor Stadium in Darwin when floodwaters inundated the communities.

This extended operation demonstrated the ability of government agencies and community partners to work together to support displaced residents over an extended period.

The emergency season highlighted the professionalism, resilience and commitment of NTPS employees, as well as the strong partnerships between government agencies, volunteers, humanitarian organisations and community leaders.

Pictured below: Welfare Group working together for Territorians



TABLE 20: EMERGENCY WELFARE RESPONSE AND RECOVERY EFFORTS SURGE WORKFORCE AT A GLANCE

Measure	Result
Territorians supported through welfare operations	2,600
Regions affected	5
Emergency shelter and evacuation sites operationalised	7
Total staff utilised (unique) ○ 601 NTG ○ 119 external work force (recruitment service provider)	720
Staff operating hours	57,900
Residents supported through extended accommodation arrangements (Nauiyu and Palumpa)	480

Pictured top: Welfare Group in Foskey Evacuation Centre

Pictured bottom: Welfare Group in Kakadu





Weather expert gives NTFES sharper edge in emergencies

A dedicated meteorologist is now working inside NTFES, giving frontline teams faster weather advice when severe conditions threaten communities across the Northern Territory.

The three-year partnership with the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM), funded through the Disaster Ready Fund, brings specialist forecasting and environmental intelligence directly into emergency planning and response.

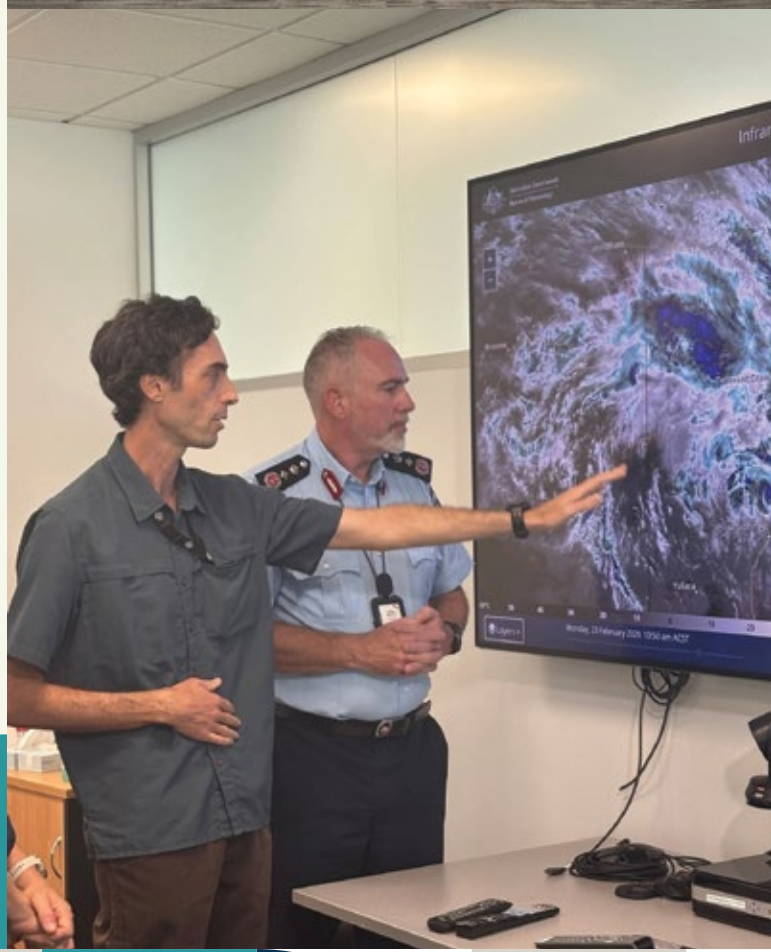
That means clearer information sooner for incident controllers, executive leaders and emergency management staff as they prepare for cyclones, floods, storms and dangerous fire weather.

NTFES secured $495,000 for the program, which has a total value of $990,000 over three years.

The role is helping staff make quicker risk assessments, deploy resources earlier and work more closely with the Bureau of Meteorology when weather risks rise.

By placing expert advice alongside operational teams, NTFES is building staff capability and supporting safer, evidence-based decisions for Territorians.





Pictured top: NT Emergency Services and BoM Personnel

Pictured bottom: BoM Senior Forecaster Billy Lynch explains weather satellite imagery to NTFES Commissioner Andrew Warton

10

Preparing for the future

The NTPS Workforce Strategy 2027–2032 will provide the whole-of-sector direction for workforce priorities from 2027. Agency workforce strategies and people plans will translate this direction into actions based on local workforce needs.

During 2026–2027, priorities will include strengthening leadership and priority skills, supporting Aboriginal employment and career development, improving digital capability and the responsible use of artificial intelligence, and creating inclusive and respectful workplaces. The focus will be on the workforce capability and employment settings agencies need to deliver their services.

DCDD workforce strategy puts people at the centre of future-ready public service

A new four-year strategy is helping the Department of Corporate and Digital Development attract talent, build capability and support a safer, more flexible workplace for employees across the Territory.

The Department of Corporate and Digital Development has launched its Workforce Strategy 2026–2029, setting a clear path to strengthen the people, skills and culture needed to deliver modern services for Territorians.

Facing strong competition for digital, technology and specialist corporate talent, DCDD is taking a coordinated approach to attracting and retaining skilled people, developing careers and supporting employee wellbeing.

The strategy focuses on three priorities: attracting innovative and collaborative talent, building capability through learning and leadership pathways, and fostering a healthy, inclusive and diverse workplace.

It also has a strong regional focus, recognising the importance of connected teams and practical workforce planning across the Territory.

Early outcomes are already visible. More than 76 per cent of employees completed a myPerformance agreement during 2025–2026, helping employees and managers have clearer conversations about goals, development and future opportunities.

DCDD has also continued investing in leadership, professional development and specialist capability programs, while 771 approved flexible work arrangements are supporting employee wellbeing and work-life balance.



Appendix A

Commissioner's Employment Instructions

Employment Instruction	Summary of Employment Instruction
1. Filling Vacancies	Sets out rules for undertaking actions to employ a person or promote or transfer an employee in accordance with PSEM Act.
2. Probation	Sets out rules for managing probation for an ongoing employee in accordance with PSEM Act.
3. Natural Justice	Sets out the principles of natural justice to ensure that persons exercising powers and functions under PSEM Act understand the principles and apply them properly.
4. Employee Performance Management and Development Systems	Sets out rules for developing and implementing employee performance management and development systems in accordance with PSEM Act.
5. Medical Examinations	Sets out rules for requiring an employee to attend a medical examination.
6. Performance and Inability	Sets out rules for undertaking an employee performance and inability process in accordance with PSEM Act.
7. Discipline	Revoked (replaced with NTPS Discipline Handbook)
8. Internal Agency Complaints and Section 59 Grievance Reviews	Sets out rules for handling internal employee grievances and procedures for employees lodging grievances in accordance with section 59 of PSEM Act.
9. Employment Records	Sets out rules for keeping employment records in accordance with PSEM Act.
10. Equality of Employment Opportunity Programs	Sets out rules for developing programs to ensure that employees have equal employment opportunities in accordance with PSEM Act
11. Occupational Health and Safety Standards Programs	Sets out the rules for developing occupational health and safety standards and programs in NTPS agencies.
12. Code of Conduct	The Code of Conduct which stipulates the basic level of conduct expected of 'public sector officers' (employees, CEOs and the CPE). CEOs may issue agency specific codes of conduct consistent with PSEM Act, Regulations, By laws, and Employment Instructions.
13. Appropriate Workplace Behaviour	Sets out the requirement for all employees to behave appropriately in the workplace and for CEOs to foster a culture which supports appropriate behaviour and is free from bullying. It also provides the NTPS definition of workplace bullying and inappropriate behaviour.
14. Redeployment and Redundancy Procedures	Designed to assist NTPS employees and agencies in understanding their rights and obligations in redeployment and redundancy situations, and to ensure that these situations are handled as sensitively, efficiently, and effectively as possible.
15. Special Measures	Sets out the requirements and conditions for approval by the CPE of agency special measures programs, plans, or arrangements.

List of figures

Figure 1: Total workforce 13
Figure 2: Proportion of staff in NTPS agencies 14
Figure 3: Workforce profile by location 15
Figure 4: NTPS, labour force and population growth 16
Figure 5: Staffing by ongoing employment 16
Figure 6: Staffing by fixed period employment .. 16
Figure 7: Gender balance of NTPS employees vs total NT employed people 17
Figure 8: Number of employees working full-time vs part-time by gender as a proportion of the NTPS 17
Figure 9: Distribution of females and males in the NTPS by salary level 17
Figure 10: Age distribution – total employed NT people vs NT public sector 18
Figure 11: NTPS average paid personal leave days per employee 2016–2017 to 2025–2026 20
Figure 12: The 4 capability areas of the NTPS capability framework 25
Figure 13: People Matter Survey results 30
Figure 14: NTPS Sector Response Plan 2025 31
Figure 15: Impact of Regular Feedback on Employee Engagement 32
Figure 16: Performance plans and feedback 32
Figure 17: Employees with a documented performance and development plan 33
Figure 18: Leadership development core offerings 46
Figure 19: Intention to stay 56
Figure 20: Employee support and development 56
Figure 21: Wellbeing 57
Figure 22: Flexible work 57
Figure 23: Measuring the sense of inclusion 61
Figure 24: Cross Cultural Framework – five key areas of training 66
Figure 25: Enterprise bargaining outcomes 75

List of tables

Table 1: NTPS Workforce diversity 13
Table 2: Staffing by employment type 16
Table 3: Flexible Work Arrangements 18
Table 4: Changes to NTPS and total NT employed people – 2024–2025 and 2025–2026 19
Table 5: Change in executive contract numbers by classification and gender 19
Table 6: NTPS average paid personal leave days taken per employee by stream and gender 20
Table 7: NTPS average paid carer's leave days taken per employee by gender 21
Table 8: Representation of EEO groups in the NTPS at June 2026 as a percentage 21
Table 9: Changes to average NTPS staff employed by agency: June quarter 2025 to June quarter 2026 22
Table 10: NTPS Retention, cessation and separation rates 2025–2026 23
Table 11: Chief Minister's Medal 35
Table 12: Outstanding Aboriginal Leadership Medal 35
Table 13: Summary of Fair Work matters 76
Table 14: Summary of disciplinary cases 2020–2021 to 2025–2026 77
Table 15: Summary of inability cases 78
Table 16: Summary of promotion appeal outcomes 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026 79
Table 17: Summary of disciplinary and inability appeal outcomes 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026 79
Table 18: Reasons for section 59 PSEM Act grievance reviews 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026 80
Table 19: Outcomes of section 59 grievance reviews 1 July 2025 to 31 March 2026 81
Table 20: Emergency welfare response and Recovery Efforts surge workforce at a glance 88

Acronyms, initialisms and abbreviations used in this report

Aboriginal	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ADF	Australian Defence Force
AECD	Aboriginal Employment and Career Development
AI	Artificial Intelligence
BoM	Bureau of Meteorology
CCT	Cross Cultural Training
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
Commissioner	Commissioner for Public Employment
DCDD	Department of Corporate and Digital Development
DCF	Department of Children and Families
DCMC	Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
HR	Human resources
HRBP	Human Resource Business Partners
HRM	Human resource management
MBA	Master in Business Administration
NT	Northern Territory
NTFES	Northern Territory Fire and Emergency Services
NTG	Northern Territory Government
NTPS	Northern Territory Public Sector
OCPE	Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment
PSAGR	Public Sector Appeals and Grievance Reviews
PSEM Act	*Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993*
RATE	Remote Aboriginal Teacher Education
Report	State of the Service Report
SRR	Standardised Roles and Recruitment



Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment

Level 10, Charles Darwin Centre
19 The Mall, Darwin NT 0800

GPO Box 4371, Darwin NT 0801

E Commissioner.OCPE@nt.gov.au

General enquiries

T 08 8999 4282

E enquiries.ocpe@nt.gov.au

NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT