



Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment

Annual Report 2021-22



Letter of transmittal

Hon Mark McGowan MLA
Premier of Western Australia

In accordance with section 144 of the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*, I hereby submit my report for the year ending 30 June 2022 for your information and presentation to the Parliament of Western Australia.



Lindsay Warner
Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment

1 September 2022

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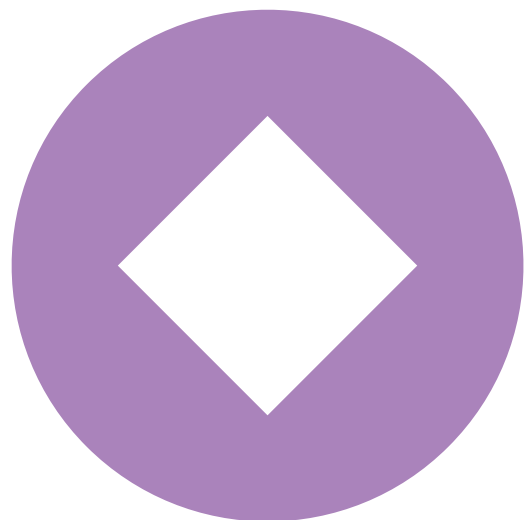
This publication can be copied in whole or part with due acknowledgement.

Copies are available in different formats on request.

The Government of Western Australia acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of the Aboriginal communities and their cultures; and to Elders both past and present.

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From the Director



I am pleased to present the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment Annual Report 2021-22, my first as Director.

This year's report outlines the

activities of the office of the Director over the year to 30 June 2022, while I was Acting Director, and highlights progress in outcomes for diverse groups in public employment. It complements the [State of the Western Australian Government Sector Workforce Report](#) and accompanying [Statistical Bulletin](#) which provide detailed workforce and diversity data, analysis and commentary.

In my dual roles as Director, and Executive Director Workforce Policy and Diversity, my responsibilities in supporting the sector to address discrimination and promoting equal opportunity in public employment align with my role leading the Commission's actions under the [Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy for WA Public Sector Employment 2020-2025](#).

These functions show the Western Australian Government's long term commitment to reflect the diversity of the communities we serve by recognising and leveraging the value of difference, and building safe and inclusive public sector workplaces.

Notwithstanding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic throughout this reporting period, this year has been one of 'getting back to basics', with a focus on the statutory objectives of the Director.

Key to this has been a review of the Director's advice and assistance tools available on the Public Sector Commission's website.

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed across all sectors has increased, though only marginally. Given the importance of a workforce that reflects our community, the Public Sector Commission released a modernised Aboriginal cultural awareness resource to support culturally informed and inclusive ways of working. Aboriginal cultural awareness training is now mandatory for public sector employees and board members. I encourage other public authorities to make use of this training.

A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020-2030 was released in 2020, and implementation of the WA Government's Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy for WA Public Sector Employment 2020-2025 and People with Disability Action Plan to Improve WA Public Sector Employment Outcomes 2021-2025 is our commitment under this strategy.

Except for local government, the number of people with disability in employment has marginally increased across sectors, however more effort is required to increase representation to reach the targets. Greater focus on employment, development and inclusion of people with disability is required if we are to make the government sector a place of opportunity for people with disability.

I am pleased to see that representation of young people (people aged 24 years and under) has increased across all sectors.

Promoting equal opportunity, addressing discrimination, and improving outcomes for diverse groups requires our continued commitment. This does not necessarily mean doing more, but doing things differently. For example, using the exceptions in the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* for [recruiting and developing diverse talent](#) and implementing innovative approaches for inclusive recruitment, and building [psychologically safe and inclusive workplaces](#) are key to addressing barriers experienced by diverse groups.

I thank all public authorities for their ongoing efforts in creating a diverse and inclusive workforce. I also thank the Public Sector Commissioner, Sharyn O’Neill, for her ongoing support.



Lindsay Warner
Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment



Staff from the Commission’s Aboriginal Employment Unit display materials used to promote the Solid Futures Aboriginal traineeship program

Role of the Director

The Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment is an independent office appointed by the Governor of Western Australia under the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* (EO Act).

The Director's jurisdiction covers all public sector agencies, local governments, public universities, government trading enterprises and other statutory bodies. The term 'public authority' is used throughout this report to refer to these organisations collectively. For more information about the government sector, see the [structure of the Western Australian government sector](#).

Public authorities are responsible for having policies, programs and practices that eliminate and ensure the absence of discrimination, and promote equal employment opportunity. Creating a more diverse and inclusive workforce ensures public authorities are better suited to meeting the needs of the Western Australian community.

The Director works with public authorities to eliminate and prevent discrimination, and promote equal opportunity in public employment by:

- advising and supporting public authorities to develop equal employment opportunity (EEO) management plans
- evaluating the effectiveness of EEO management plans
- reporting and making recommendations about the operation of EEO management plans, and other matters relating to workforce diversity and inclusion in public employment.

Relationship with the Public Sector Commission

The Director holds concurrent appointments as the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment and as an executive director at the Public Sector Commission. While the Director is an employee of the Commission, the role remains independent.

In promoting equal opportunity and preventing discrimination in public employment, the Director works closely with the Commission. The Director's functions are delivered with the support of staff, accommodation, corporate services and administration provided by the Commission.



Darellyn Ogilvie is “a proud Noongar woman” and graduate of the Commission's Solid Futures Aboriginal traineeship program who now works for the WA Country Health Service in Broome

Report on activities

Advising and assisting public authorities

Equal employment opportunity management plans

Every public authority is required to develop and implement an EEO management plan and provide this plan to the Director. The plan needs to outline how the public authority promotes equal employment opportunity, and eliminates and prevents discrimination in the workplace.

Each plan must include information on the public authority's work to:

- develop, implement, communicate and evaluate policies and programs for promoting equal opportunity and eliminating discrimination in public employment
- collect, analyse and report on relevant workforce information
- review people management practices and policies to identify and eliminate discriminatory practices
- set goals and targets which support measuring the effectiveness of the plan
- revise and amend the plan
- appoint staff to be responsible for implementing the plan.

In 2021-22, 272 out of 285 public authorities reported having EEO management plans (an overall increase of 4 from last year):

- Of the responses received for 120 public sector agencies, 110 reported having plans (a decrease of 1 from last year)
- Of the 145 local government authorities that responded, 143 reported having plans (an increase of 5 from last year)

- Of the 4 public universities that responded, 3 reported having plans (same as last year)
- Of the 16 government trading enterprises and other statutory bodies that responded, all reported having plans (same as last year).

EEO management plans typically span a number of years, with the Director reviewing new and revised plans when they are submitted. This financial year the Director received plans from 33 public authorities.

Public authorities continued to be encouraged to use the Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy in their EEO management planning. In 2021-22, 268 out of 285 public authorities reported they had considered or are considering the strategy in their approach.

Events and forums

Throughout 2021-22, the Director attended a range of events and forums to support and advocate for equal opportunity in employment matters including:

- Accountability Agencies Collaborative Forum
- Senior Officer Group Meeting – Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy and Closing the Gap
- National Disability Services' International Day of People with Disability event
- Department of the Premier and Cabinet's 16 Days in WA campaign event
- Department of Communities' Seniors Strategy Working Group
- Closing the Gap Deputies Group.

Contribution to government strategies

The Director continued to support a range of WA Government and national strategies aimed at delivering positive outcomes for underrepresented and vulnerable groups. This included:

- participating in the review of gender equality reporting as part of National Cabinet's in principle agreement to provide data to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency
- contributing to development of Western Australia's actions in [Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031](#)
- contributing to the implementation of the state disability strategy called [A Western Australia for Everyone](#)
- participating in the steering committee for Western Australia's strategy to reduce family and domestic violence, [Path to Safety](#)
- contributing to the implementation group for Western Australia's plan for gender equality, [Stronger Together](#)
- contributing to the development of the [Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy 2021-2029](#) and [Western Australia's Implementation Plan](#) for the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Supporting the work of the Commission

Workforce diversification and inclusion

The Director continued to support the Commission's actions under the Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy. This includes development of guidance resources, programs and other initiatives aimed at delivering better workforce diversity and inclusion outcomes, and promoting equal opportunity in public employment.

The Director supported the Commission to release the following in 2021-22:

- A modernised [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness resource](#) to support the public sector work in a culturally informed way. Under [Commissioner's Instruction 29](#) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training is mandatory for all public sector employees employed for more than 3 months, and board members. The Commission also strongly encourages its use in other government entities. Information about completion of this training will be available in the [State of the Western Australian Government Sector Workforce](#) Report.
- The [Hiring Managers Toolkit](#) to help agencies apply best practice in recruitment. It includes tools and templates to support inclusive recruitment and selection policy and processes. The toolkit website homepage received 8,929 visits from its launch in late November 2021 to 30 June 2022.

- Enhancements to the [diversity and inclusion calendar](#) which highlights Western Australian, Australian and international days of recognition, commemoration and celebration. The improvements included incorporating a wider range of days of significance to increase the visibility of diversity and foster inclusive workplace cultures. The page received 7,594 visits in 2021-22.
- A rebranded Aboriginal traineeship program, [Solid Futures](#), was successful in placing 47 young Aboriginal people in a range of host agencies where they will build their skills and kickstart a successful career. Aboriginal artist Acacia Collard created a refreshed look to emphasise the focus of the program, and better connect with young Aboriginal people.
- An innovative new brand, [A place of Opportunity](#), aimed at establishing the public sector as a career destination of choice for the state's best university qualified young people. The project included establishing a one stop directory of public sector graduate and cadetship programs, with the directory homepage receiving 29,302 visits between its launch in February 2022 through to 30 June 2022.
- Coordinating traineeships for students entering Year 11 through its [School Based Traineeship Program](#). In February, 21 new school based trainees were employed across 11 public sector agencies.
- Supporting public sector internships through the [McCusker Centre for Citizenship Internship Program](#) at the University of Western Australia, where 54 interns contributed new ideas and fresh thinking to programs and projects across 21 public sector agencies.



Using and aligning data to add value

Equal employment opportunity annual collection

Each year, public authorities are required to provide information to the Director about their workforce and current and planned initiatives to improve employment representation and inclusion of diverse groups.

The Commission facilitates the EEO annual collection on the Director's behalf, to assist public authorities to meet these reporting obligations.

In 2022 the Director collected data about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training across Public Sector authorities. This information will be published in the [State of the Western Australian Government Sector Workforce Report](#).

The EEO annual collection took place throughout April and May 2022. The Commission provided information, communications and advisory support to public authorities in the lead up to, and throughout, the collection period. This included facilitating information sessions for public authority contact officers to help them prepare for and complete the collection.

In 2022 all 235 public authorities completed the EEO annual collection, responding on behalf of 285 authorities.



Participants in the Public Sector Commission's Launch program, Sarah Scardigno and Rachel Nesaraj

Staff sharing their diverse information

Response rates are the proportion of people who have responded to questions (shared) about whether or not they identify as belonging to a diverse group.

Response rates are important, as they form the basis for calculating representation for diverse groups. Increasing response rates leads to a more accurate view of representation. Public authorities are encouraged to focus on:

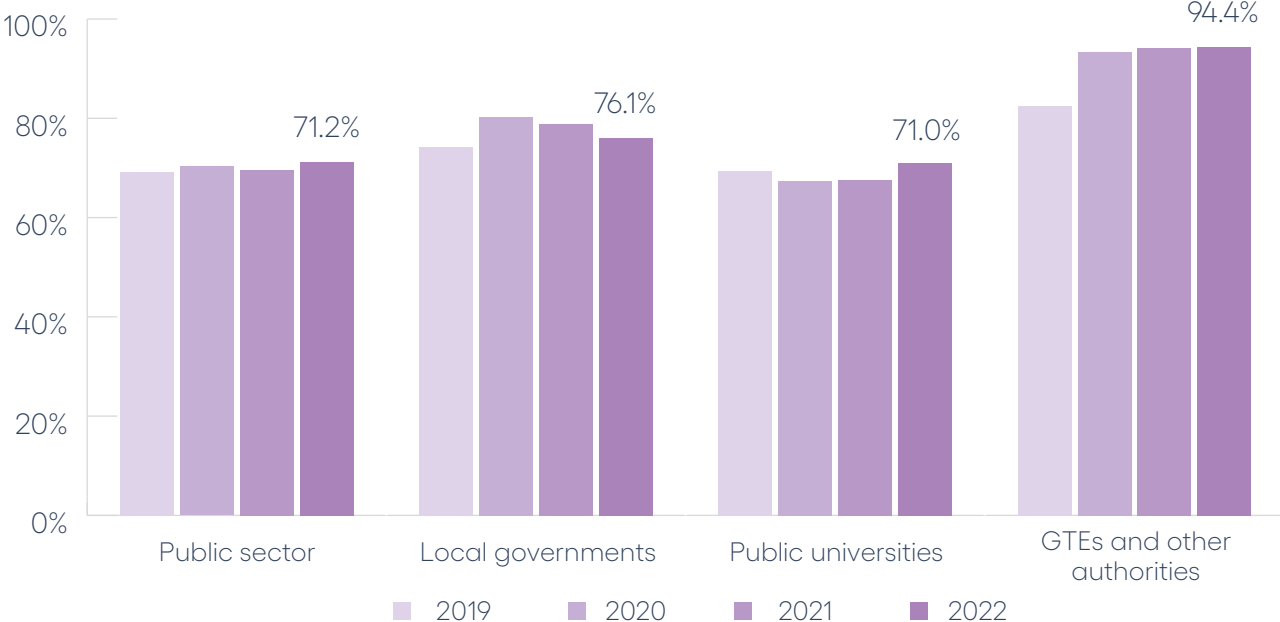
- providing regular opportunities for staff to share and update their diverse information on a regular basis
- fostering [psychologically safe and inclusive workplaces](#) so staff feel comfortable in sharing their diversity information
- implementing data collection approaches and systems which make it easy for staff to share and for meaningful information to be captured and reported.

In 2021-22 government trading enterprises and other authorities continued to lead the way with the highest response rates. Response rates for diverse groups in public sector agencies have increased.

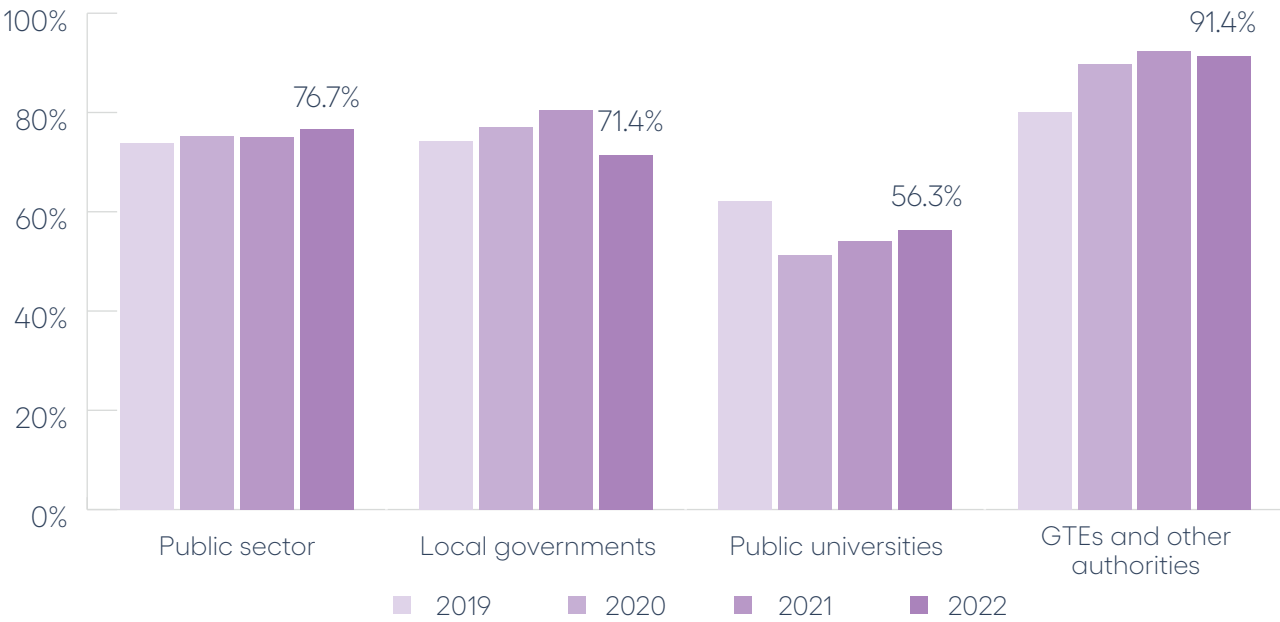
Though response rates for public universities have increased, they remain low for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people with disability. This impacts the reliability of representation numbers for these groups.

This year local governments have decreased response rates across all groups, and local government authorities are encouraged to investigate the reasons behind this change.

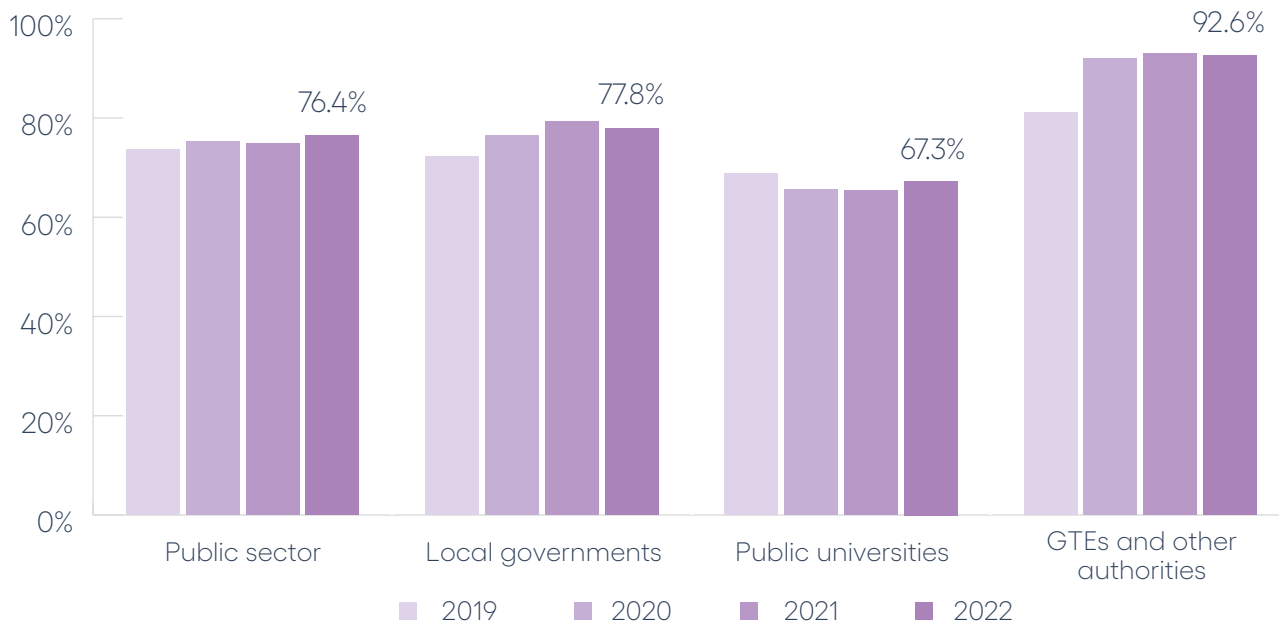
Response rates for culturally and linguistically diverse people, by sector



Response rates for people with disability, by sector



Response rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, by sector



Equity index

The equity index provides insight on where diverse groups exist across a public authority’s hierarchy.

An equity index of 100 is considered optimal, indicating the distribution of diverse staff is equitably spread across salary ranges when compared with all staff.

An equity index of less than 100 means diverse staff are concentrated at lower salary levels, that is, under represented at higher salary levels.

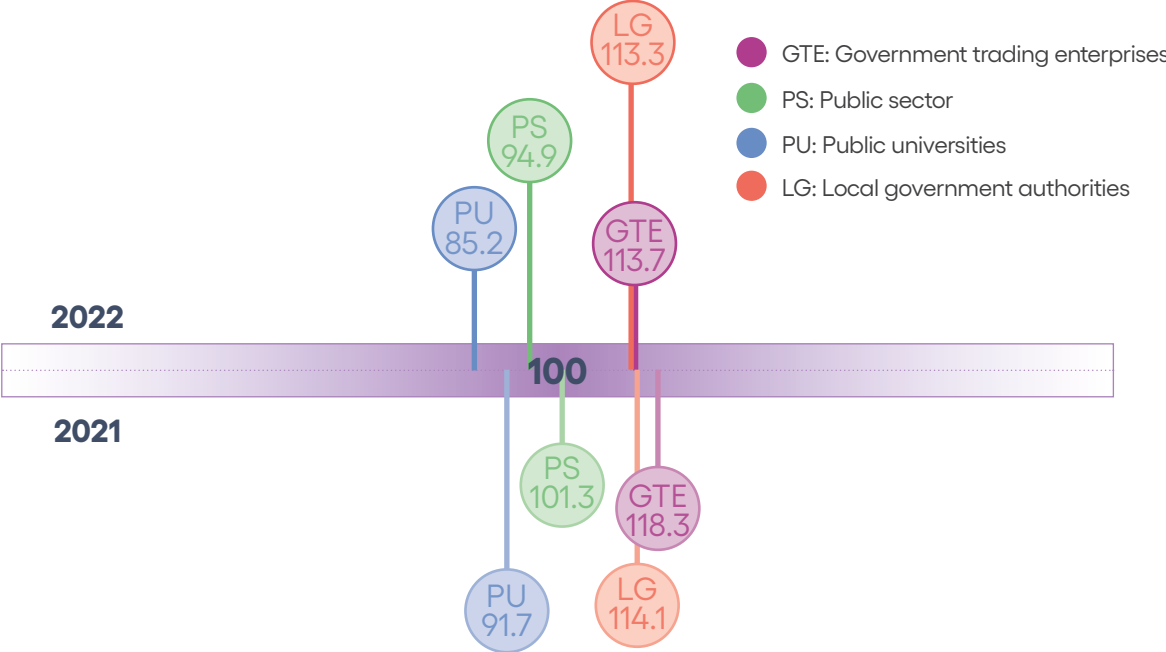
An equity index of greater than 100 means diverse staff are concentrated at higher salary levels, indicating an overrepresentation in the higher salary levels.

Equity index is a useful measure in workforce planning, providing insight to whether diverse staff are employed in senior roles, and if a pipeline of diverse talent exists.

The equity index for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people increased across all sectors. However, with the exception of public universities, this index remains the lowest of all diverse groups, continuing the trend that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are employed in lower level roles.

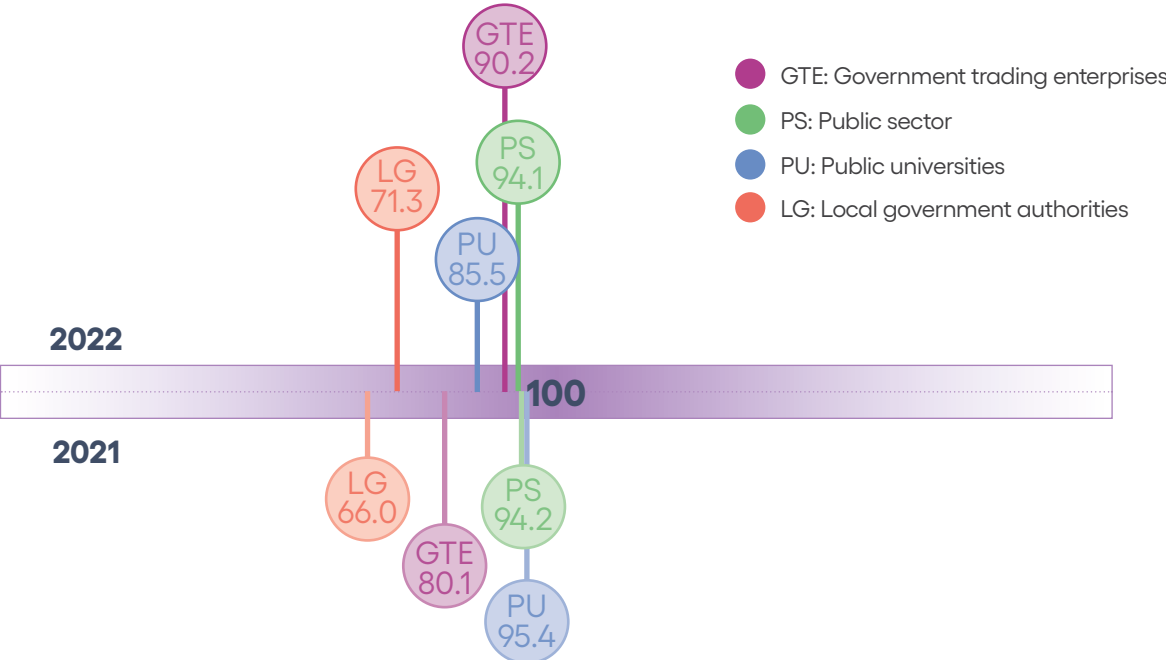
Public authorities are encouraged to gather more detailed information about the distribution and mobility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across salary bands or classification levels (or equivalent) in their organisation. This will assist making decisions and designing targeted interventions and initiatives to support employment opportunities and development pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to progress their careers in public employment.

Equity Index for culturally and linguistically diverse people, by sector

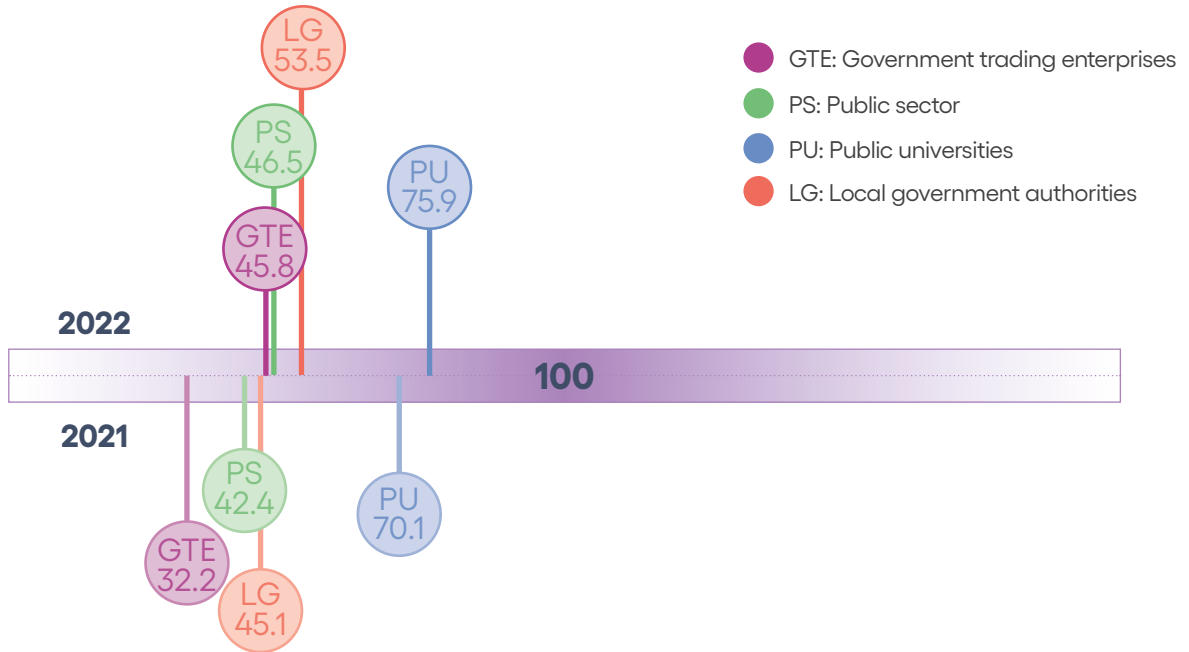


Note: It is important to interpret the equity index in the context of the relevant response rates and number of diverse staff in that diverse group/sector. There must be a high enough response rate and large enough number of diverse staff to have confidence in the equity index. As noted previously, improved rates of sharing strengthen the reliability of all measures.

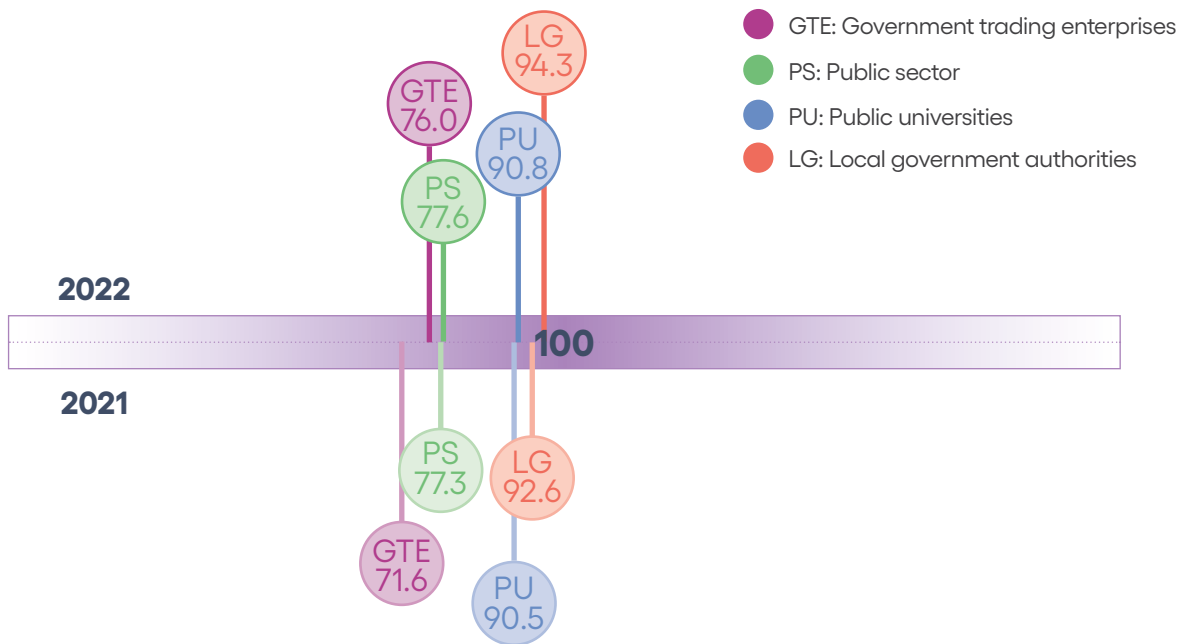
Equity index for people with disability, by sector



Equity index for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, by sector



Equity index for women, by sector



Appendix 1: Data quality statement

Data used in this report was acquired through the 2022 Equal Employment Opportunity annual collection and March 2022 Human Resource Minimum Obligatory Information Requirements reporting. There is more detail on [collection processes and methodologies](#).

The 2022 EEO annual collection sample frame comprised 70 public sector agencies (reporting on behalf of 120 public sector agencies); 145 local governments; 16 government trading enterprises and other statutory bodies, and 4 public universities. All 235 public authorities provided responses to the EEO annual collection, responding on behalf of 285 authorities.

Equal employment opportunity management plans

The count of public authorities reported as having EEO plans in place reflect responses to the 2022 EEO annual collection, and include respondents that reported having either EEO management plans or workforce and diversity management plans.

In the public sector, some entities are supported by departments or larger agencies. As in previous years, responding agencies were able to provide responses on behalf of other entities. For the purposes of counting EEO management plans and workforce and diversity management plans, where a department or entity responded on behalf of another, both entities are considered to have the same response.

Workforce information

In 2022 workforce data was received from all public authorities in the sample frame that were required to provide it.

A data quality assurance process was undertaken in consultation with public authorities and some changes were made to workforce data provided. This quality assurance process focused on ensuring workforce data spreadsheets were complete, filled out consistently and contained meaningful data. Some errors and omissions (such as blank fields for 'unknown' or clearly erroneous dates of birth) were amended by the Commission. Where broader data quality matters were identified, public authorities were contacted to clarify or resubmit data. Information presented in this report reflects the final data set.

