

# OUR PEOPLE



# OUR PEOPLE SNAPSHOT

55%  
male

45%  
female

Average age of staff  
**44 years**

female average – 42 years  
male average – 45 years



81%

of our staff are ongoing (permanent) employees

67 employees work part-time and 120 other staff have a flexible work arrangement



10+ years

39%

of our staff have more than 10 years of service with the NTPS

46%



Parks and Wildlife is our largest division

9%

of our staff identify as Aboriginal

40+ years

1.7%

of our staff have more than 40 years of service with the NTPS

Our full-time equivalent staff numbers at 30 June 2021 were  
**557.24**

**587**

Our headcount of staff

70%

of our staff are employed in the professional (24%) and technical (46%) streams

Our separation rate is

**22%**



1.5%

people with disability

**NESB 7.5%**

people have a non-English speaking background

## OVERVIEW

The Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security has a diverse workforce. Our people are our most important asset and in recognition of this, the department aims to attract and recruit the best available talent to protect and support the sustainable use of the Northern Territory's natural resources and showcase our wildlife, parks and reserves.

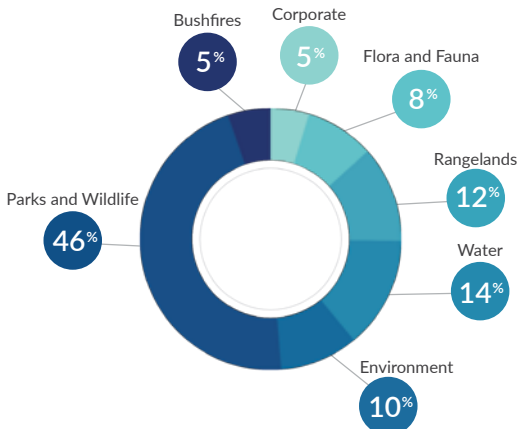
In 2020-21 the former Department of Environment and Natural Resources merged with the Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission and as of 30 June 2021, employed 587 people across the Territory.

Our staff are passionate and dedicated to providing valuable outcomes for the public. We understand that an engaged and motivated workforce is more likely to be productive and invested in their work, resulting in us achieving our organisational outcomes.

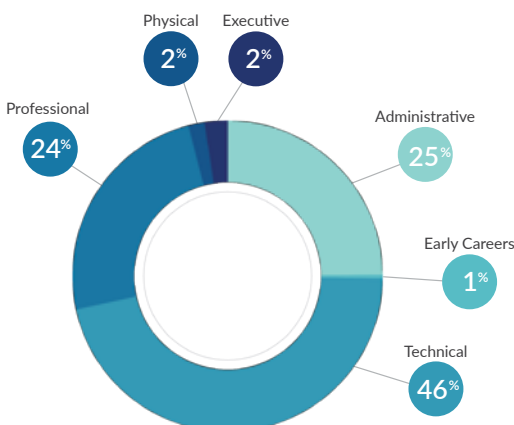
During 2020-21, the department advertised and filled 159 positions of which 93 were advertised under Special Measures arrangements designed to increase Aboriginal employment participation.

The turnover rate during the same period was 22%. This is equivalent to 127 employee separations from 587 established positions.

### Employees by division



### Employees by stream



## OUR CULTURE

The department aims to inspire and support a workplace culture that is collaborative, respectful and accountable. We achieve this by:

- building and enhancing our strategic leadership across the department
- maintaining an increasing capability through succession planning and development programs
- delivering a healthy and safe environment through reducing risk and supporting continual improvement
- making ongoing improvements to business processes and streamlining internal systems.

### Developing our workforce capacity and capability

We support, retain and develop our people to ensure they are capable and committed to achieving the department's strategic objectives.

The department has a suite of online essential training that has been developed to support all staff to better understand their obligations as public sector employees and the frameworks within which the department operates. In 2020-21 there were 1,189 instances of online training using the department's MyLearning platform.

The department also promotes and encourages attendance at training activities, including the suite of targeted leadership programs offered by OCPE.

### Investment in our people

The department training expenditure for 2021-21:

	2020-21
Training, study and other	479,667
Conferences	17,606
<b>Total</b>	<b>497,273</b>

### Study assistance

The department encourages employees to gain relevant professional and technical skills through higher education studies. The department had 5 employees apply for study assistance during 2020-21 with a total of \$2,840 provided support.

# PEOPLE MATTER SURVEY 2021

The People Matter Survey 2021 was conducted in February 2021 and resulted in a 71% survey response rate from staff in the department. Compared to the NTPS this was a higher than average response rate.

An Action Statement outlining how our agency will respond to the People Matter Survey was developed. The Statement complements the actions and responses being delivered by each division.



## PEOPLE MATTER SURVEY 2021 ACTION STATEMENT

Department of ENVIRONMENT, PARKS AND WATER SECURITY



### Priority



### Ideas and Focus Areas



### Delivery and Actions

#### ***A clearly articulated Strategic Agenda for a new Agency***

The results suggest that the strategic direction of the agency is not clear or is not being effectively communicated. This suggests that we need to consider strategies for greater engagement on, and alignment with, the Strategic Agenda and Strategic Plan across and down the agency.

- Annual Senior Leader's Forum convened for all nominated managers, Directors and Executives
- Executive Directors and the CEO include briefing with all staff on agency priorities as part of regional visits
- Review Business Plans to ensure alignment with the Strategic Plan
- Include the role of the Strategic Plan in Boost discussions

#### ***Broader and more consistent communication***

The results indicate that staff are seeking improved communication at all levels and in ways that are more accessible than newsletters and bulletins.

- Release a brief communique following each Governance Board meeting of decisions and outcomes
- Each Division committing to all staff meetings or forums to share news, achievements and information
- Executive Directors and Senior Directors presenting to regional staff on whole of Government and agency priorities and issues
- Supporting and ensuring team meetings within individual Divisions occur

#### ***Performance management***

Survey respondents raised a perception that poor performance was not being well managed in the agency, leading to a sense of inequity.

Staff say they understand their roles and have positive and regular contact with their managers but they want more structured or formal feedback on how they are going.

- Support the delivery of a mentoring program across DEPWS
- Skills development for managers to support performance management and performance management conversations
- Ensuring formal performance management (ie BOOST or WPP) is undertaken twice a year
- Mandated participation in bullying and harassment training being organised across the Northern Territory Public Sector
- Request policy identification and prioritisation through the People Matter Reference Group

#### ***Collaboration and Engagement***

The results indicate strong interest and commitment to working collaboratively across different areas of the agency, and across Government. This should be recognised and supported. DEPWS is comprised of its people who have unique talents, skills and experience at all levels that should be celebrated and shared.

- 'Lunch and Learn' - Monthly Teams Based Forums focusing on sharing interesting projects/outcomes or professional development on topics of interest to our work
- Practice reflection/debriefing at the conclusion of a project to other work units of areas
- Prioritising the presentation of project and program success to other agencies and NTG Forums
- Facilitate opportunities through program design and Governance to engage across Divisions

#### ***Providing a safe environment for feedback***

Making ourselves more available and receptive to feedback from all levels.

- Introduction of Skip Meetings<sup>1</sup>
- Scheduled open door time (lunch with the ED/CEO)

1. Skip meetings are a process whereby a manager meets with the level below their direct reports to hear and participate more directly about the delivery and operation of the work unit or team.

#### ***Reward and Recognition***

Good work should be recognised and acknowledged. This is important to balance out the focus on performance improvement and because it's the right thing to do.

- Rebadge and reconsider the GEM awards

#### ***Closing the loop on changes***

There is a view expressed in the survey that the survey will not result in positive changes. People Matter Survey responses and reforms need to be identified as such and be well communicated and shared. Badging changes as 'people matter outcome' is one way to connect the outcome with the action that follows.

- Badging success using the People Matter Action stamp
- Establishing a 'People Matter Outcomes' Reference Group made up of Managers to advise and inform actions and provide further feedback on progress

## Staff designation breakdown

Designation	2019-20 Headcount	% of Paid Headcount
AO1	2	0.3%
AO2	4	0.7%
AO3	9	1.5%
AO4	21	3.6%
AO5	20	3.4%
AO6	22	3.7%
AO7	26	4.4%
AQF4A	1	0.2%
EO1C	1	0.2%
EO2	1	0.2%
EO2C	10	1.7%
EO3C	1	0.2%
EO5C	1	0.2%
P1	14	2.4%
P1R	4	0.7%
P2	46	7.8%
P3	56	9.5%
PH2	10	1.7%
PH2R	0	0.0%
SAO1	17	2.9%
SAO2	25	4.3%
SBA	1	0.2%
SP1	15	2.6%
SP2	8	1.4%
T1	37	6.3%
T1R	44	7.5%
T2	32	5.5%
T2R	33	5.6%
T3	49	8.3%
T3R	25	4.3%
T4	25	4.3%
T4R	10	1.7%
T5	16	2.7%
T6	1	0.2%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Data variation is not available as the department was established in the September 2020 Machinery of Government changes.

## WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

### Equal Employment Opportunity

The department is committed to having a diverse workforce and values the contributions of people from different cultures and backgrounds. In December 2020, the department introduced a Special Measures Plan to increase Aboriginal employment participation through priority consideration for Aboriginal applicants against advertised vacancies.

As at 30 June 2021, 9% of the department identified as Aboriginal.

The department also creates indirect Aboriginal employment opportunities, through partnerships, such as Aboriginal custodians delivering local cultural inductions on jointly managed parks.

## EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

The department continued to support early career development programs over the 2020-21 period.

### Apprenticeships – school-based and full-time trainees

These programs combine employment with structured learning to develop workplace skills and provide a nationally recognised qualification.

In 2020-21, the department supported 3 school-based trainees and 2 full-time trainees.

### Vacation Employment program

The vacation program provides paid short-term employment for university students. Employment is during semester breaks. In 2020-21, the department supported 1 work placement.

## Volunteers

The department provides unpaid work placements to suit a variety of arrangements including school work experience, university placements, return to work placements, general work placements and volunteers.

The Parks and Wildlife division has well-established volunteer programs as well as a number of conservation-focused volunteer groups operating across the Northern Territory.

Volunteer groups assist with projects such as weed control, pruning, track maintenance, rubbish removal, fire breaks and reducing fuel loads, drone surveys, general maintenance, and signage installation.

The Parks and Wildlife Volunteer Campground Host program was at 48% capacity for 2021-21. A successful campground host trial was held at Karlu Karlu for the first time and had 6 hosts cover a period of 6 weeks.

General volunteers participated in opportunities at 18 different parks and reserves and 3 Parks and Wildlife branches.

A total of 127 people volunteered as individuals (general volunteers), 26 were campground hosts and 10 were Caretakers (Munbililla Campground at Limmen National Park and Arltunga Historical Reserve).

Bushfires NT supports 20 volunteer fire brigades across the Northern Territory with about 500 active volunteers. Bushfire volunteers are landholders and members of the community - men and women from all cultural backgrounds, age groups and professions.

Bushfires volunteers take part in a range of activities including fighting and preventing bushfires, fuel hazard reduction, operational support during a bushfire, and fundraising for local brigades. Bushfires NT greatly values the role of its volunteers.

## WELLBEING

The Department is committed to the health and wellbeing of all employees, offering a range of initiatives to support staff such as flexible working arrangements, flu vaccinations and the Employee Assistance Program.

### Work-life balance

The department offers flexible working options, recognised as a valuable tool in achieving greater productivity and supporting employees to improve their balance between work and personal commitments.

These arrangements allow staff to adjust their working arrangements for an agreed period of time. This is due to a variety of circumstances such as returning from parental leave, undertake responsibilities as a care giver, and transition to retirement.

In 2020-21, the department supported 120 individual flexible work arrangements.

### Employee Assistance Program

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides important support services to assist staff who may be affected by personal, family or work related issues. Employees can choose to access counselling sessions from a panel of 8 providers.

The department continued to promote the EAP with 218 employees and family members accessing the Program in 2021-21.

### Flu vaccination program

The department again offered all staff influenza (flu) vaccinations. The program was well-received with a total of 183 staff having the vaccination in Darwin, Palmerston, Katherine and Alice Springs in 2020-21.



# WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY (WHS)

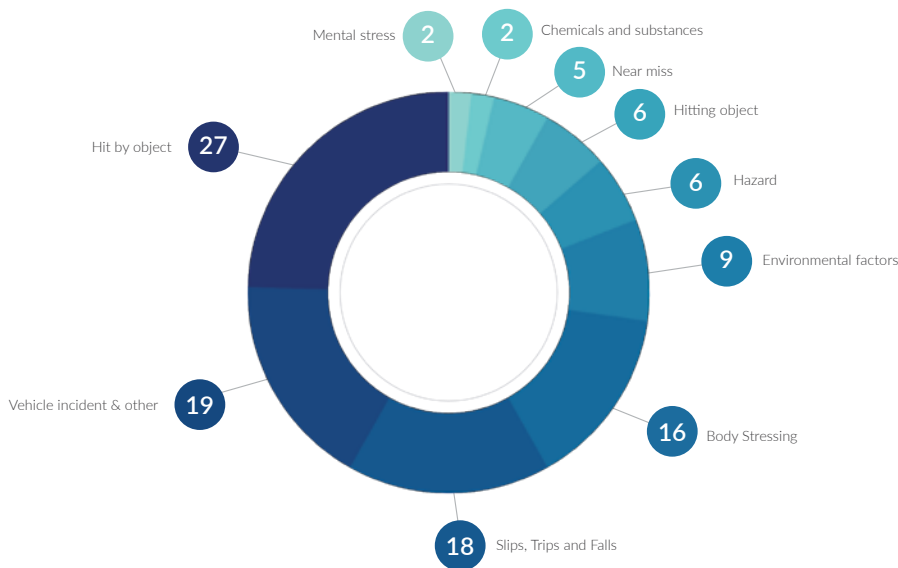
The department is committed to providing and maintaining safe and healthy workplaces and ensuring compliance with the *Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011* and the *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2015*.

Activities undertaken to implement the Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation include:

- continual review of current policies, procedures and systems
- regular committee and workplace meetings
- staff trained for committees and fire warden duties
- training provided for field working staff, for example, 4WD training.

The Governance Board is the department's WHS approving body and is supported by a WHS committee for each division.

## Workplace Health and Safety Incidents



## LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

### Employment instructions

Under the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993* (PSEMA), Employment Instructions provide direction to agencies on human resource management matters. The department's performance against each Employment Instruction is reported below.

EMPLOYMENT INSTRUCTION	ACTION
1 Filling vacancies	Recruitment and establishment procedures are available on the intranet. Completion of the online Merit Selection Training is a requirement for all staff who take part in the selection process.
2 Probation	The department has a probation procedure consistent with legislation on our intranet site. New employees are advised of the probation process during induction and given information about their responsibilities. Probation is monitored on a regular basis and managers are advised of upcoming probation due dates to ensure timely compliance. In 2020-21 one staff member was terminated during the probation process.

EMPLOYMENT INSTRUCTION	ACTION
3 Natural justice	The principles of natural justice are communicated to all employees. Natural justice is adhered to in all dealings with employees and reflected appropriately in internal policies and procedures.
4 Employee management	The department has a performance management system called Building Our Own Staff Talent (BOOST). A total of 51% of staff had records of performance discussions being held in 2020-21.
5 Medical examinations	Advice is provided to managers as required by The Department of Corporate and Digital Development (DCDD). There were no medical incapacity cases in 2020-21.
6 Performance and inability	The performance and inability guidelines are available from the department's intranet. DCDD HR Services supports managers dealing with under-performance issue, and helps managers and staff to improve performance. There were no formal performance improvement processes undertaken in 2020-21.
7 Discipline	The discipline employment instruction and associated guidelines are available from the department's intranet. DCDD works closely with managers to ensure processes are followed correctly and natural justice is provided. There were no section 49 disciplinary action undertaken in 2020-21.
8 Internal agency complaints and section 59 grievance reviews	There is significant documentation on the department's intranet in relation to resolving complaints and the formal grievance process. In 2020-21 there were 2 internal agency complaints and 1 section 59 grievance lodged with the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment.
9 Employment records	DCDD stores employment records on personnel files. The department complies with the DCDD policy regarding access to these files. There were no requests to access employee information lodged under the <i>Information Act 2002</i> in 2020-21.
10 Equality of employment opportunity programs	The department adheres to the principles of the NTPS EmployAbility Strategy. The department has an Inclusion and Diversity Policy which is available on the staff intranet.
11 Occupational health and safety programs	The department has a Work, Health and Safety Management System with policies and procedures to support a healthy and safe work environment that is consultative and co-operative.
12 Code of conduct	The code of conduct is available on the department's intranet site and is reinforced by the activities of HR Services. The code of conduct is available online and is covered as part of the mandatory training program for new staff.
13 Appropriate workplace behaviours	There is significant documentation available on the intranet site about addressing inappropriate behaviour in the workplace, including bullying.
14 Redeployment and redundancy procedures	The department adheres to the current redeployment and redundancy provisions. A total of 4 staff members received a voluntary redundancy in 2020-21.
15 Special measures	The department has an Inclusion and Diversity Policy that supports increasing employment opportunities for people from all Equality of Employment Opportunity (EEO) groups and introduced a Special Measures Plan in January 2021.