

Performance for Queensland

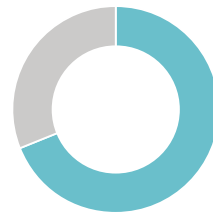
Over the past three years, the sector has proved itself to be productive and resilient, with year-on-year improvements in employee perceptions of working in the Queensland public sector. We are committed to continuous improvement, sectorwide.

Source: Robert Setter, Commission Chief Executive (Acting), Public Service Commission, 2015

Measuring workforce performance



59%
overall positive
engagement with agency,
up from 49% in 2013



62%
positive perception
of innovation,
up from 56% in 2015



56%
positive perceptions of
performance assessment,
up from 49% in 2013



average full-time days taken
per employee as sick leave, per annum



average full-time days taken
per employee for unplanned
absenteeism, per annum

Agency engagement in the Queensland public sector

Agency engagement is an important indicator of productivity and performance.

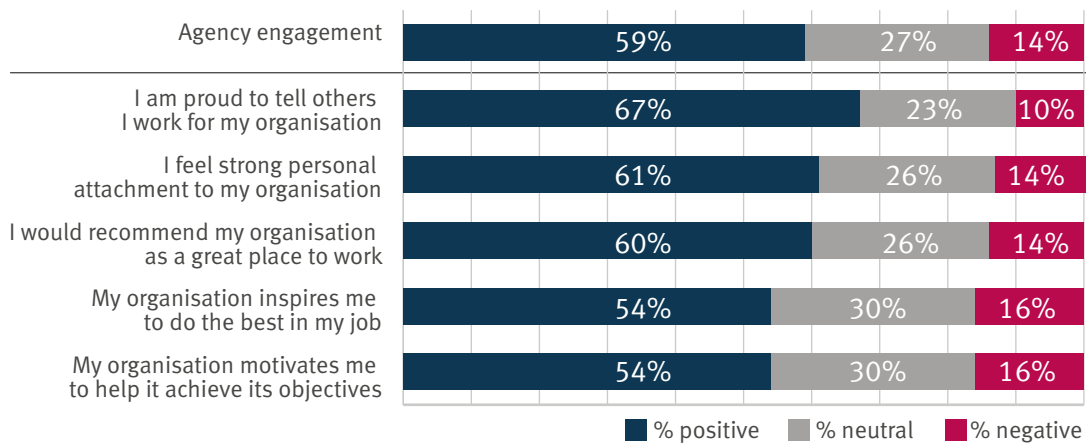
It indicates the extent to which the individual feels a sense of connection with their employing agency. Broadly speaking, higher levels of agency engagement equate to an agency that is more effective and efficient.

Agency engagement relates to the extent to which an agency, its leadership and its strategy captures the ‘hearts and minds’ of employees.²

While some aspects of agency engagement can be emotive and difficult to improve—agency engagement is vital in the creation of constructive workplace cultures.

Agency engagement data from the WfQ Employee Opinion Survey 2015 suggests the state of the Queensland public sector is good and improving.

Figure 1: Agency engagement



Source: WfQ Employee Opinion Survey 2015

² MacLeod and Nita, 2008, Engaging for Success, United Kingdom

Agency engagement varies notably by the type of work people do.

Figure 2: Agency engagement according to work type

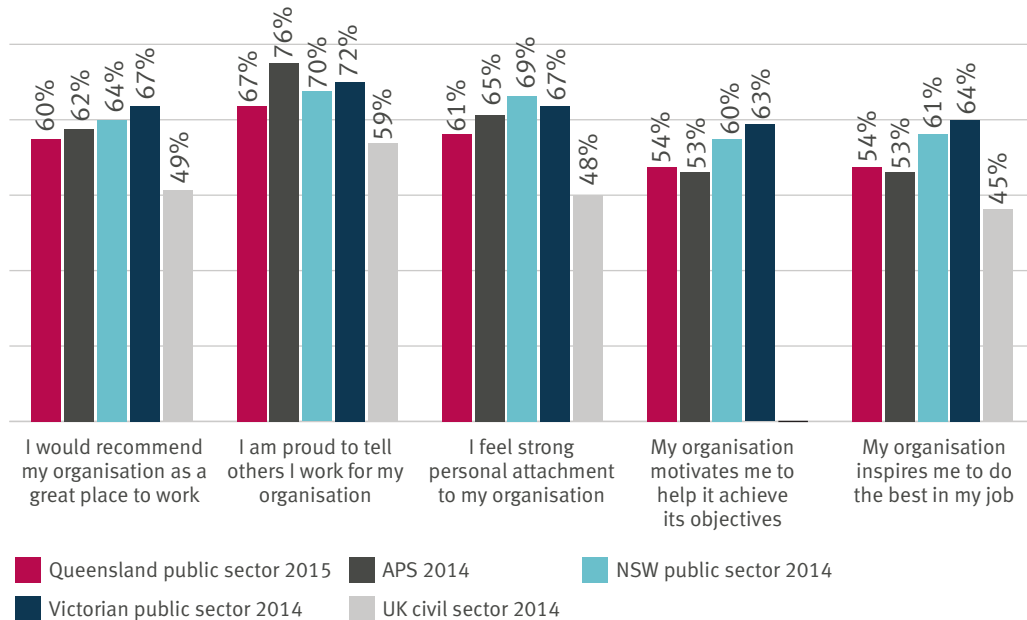
Type of work	% positive
Administrative support	63%
Program design/management	61%
Service delivery—direct to public (e.g. nurses, teachers)	60%
Research	58%
Finance and accounting	58%
Policy	57%
HR	57%
Service delivery—not direct to public (e.g. technical support, catering)	56%
Exercising regulatory authority (e.g. setting of an compliance with statutory standards)	56%
Other corporate (e.g. procurement, legal)	56%
Information and communications technology	51%

Source: WfQ Employee Opinion Survey 2015

Comparative data on agency engagement is available from public sectors in the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia (federal), Victoria and NSW.³

When considered within the context of other jurisdictions the evidence suggests continued focus is required for Queensland to reach the levels of our peers and our own aspirations as a public sector.

Figure 3: Employee perceptions of agency engagement by item and jurisdiction



Sources: See Appendix end notes, Figure 3

³ UK Civil Service People Survey 2014; APS State of the Service Employee Census 2014; Victorian Public Sector 2014 People Matter Survey; NSW Public Sector 2014 People Matter Survey.

Future focus: agency engagement

The capacity of the Queensland public sector to attract, engage and retain a high performing workforce that meets the needs of the community is dependent on a quality employee-agency relationship.

The PSC is delivering key strategic initiatives to support this relationship:

- A sectorwide workforce strategy to future-proof the public sector, ensuring it continues to be responsive and relevant in a time of rapid global change. This will support better services for Queenslanders and better workplaces for Queensland public sector employees.
- Strategies to position the Queensland public sector to attract, engage and retain high performing employees.

These initiatives are informed by sectorwide consultations and the results of the WfQ Employee Opinion Survey, including employee satisfaction with their jobs, their work-life balance, learning and development opportunities, and their intention to or reasons for leaving.

Research indicates major selling points for the Queensland public sector are:

- We offer a variety of rewarding opportunities and careers.
- We make a real difference to people's lives, every day.
- We care about the people and places of Queensland.
- We are Queensland's biggest employer with workplaces around the state.
- We value inclusion and diversity in everything we do.

Absenteeism

A key measure of productivity in the public sector is unplanned absenteeism, which includes:

- sick leave
- carers' leave
- workers' compensation leave
- miscellaneous special leave
- industrial dispute leave.

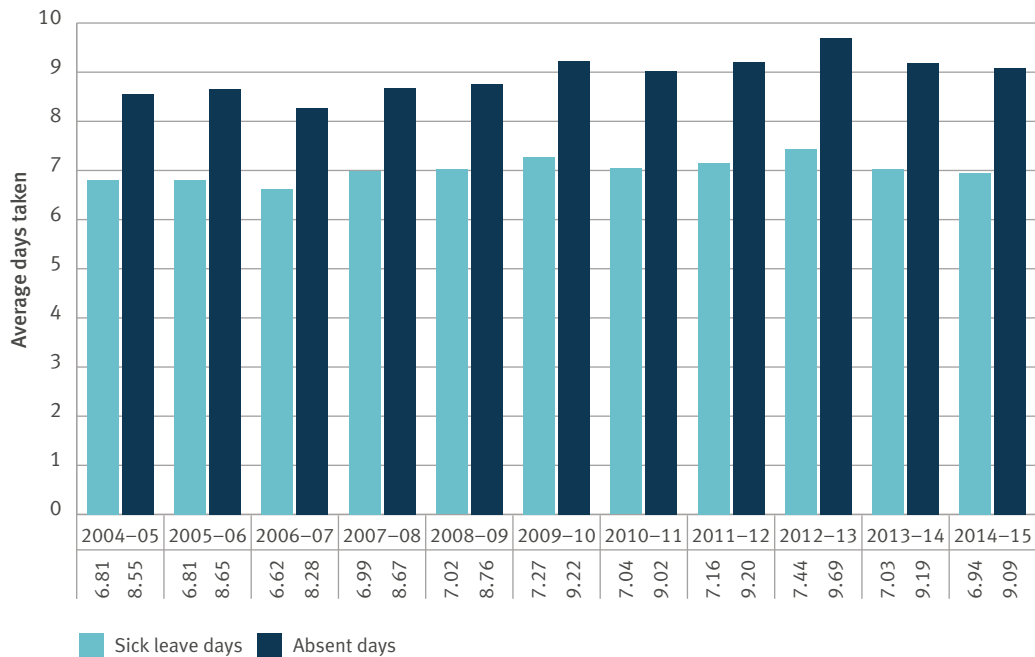
High levels of absenteeism impact organisational effectiveness and efficiency. Absenteeism disrupts the flow of work, the continuity of service provision and the cohesiveness of work groups.

- Direct costs of absenteeism—in the Queensland public sector, the direct cost of absent days taken in 2014–15 was \$579 million.⁴
- Indirect cost of absenteeism—indirect costs are difficult to quantify. They include costs associated with backfilling roles, lost productivity and reduced employee morale.

While high levels of agency engagement are likely to lead to decreased absenteeism, factors such as organisational change and uncertainty can increase absenteeism.

Employees took approximately nine unplanned absent days on average in 2015 of which about seven were sick leave.

Figure 4: Absenteeism and sick leave



Source: MOHRI data, average full-time days taken per employee in the 12 months to March of each year

⁴ The direct cost of absenteeism was calculated by absent hours for each employee multiplied by their hourly pay rate. Yearly pay increases and inflation means the cost of absenteeism will rise each year, even if the average absent days taken remains the same or decreases.

Absenteeism rates in Queensland can be contextualised by comparing them with other jurisdictions.

For the Australian Public Service⁵ in the three-year period from 2011–12 to 2013–14:

- unplanned absence increased from 11.1 to 12.0 days
- sick leave increased from 8.5 to 8.8 days.⁶

In Queensland, during the same period of time (2011–12 to 2013–14):

- unplanned absence decreased to 9.19 (after a 10-year high of 9.69 days in 2012–13)
- sick leave decreased from 7.16 to 7.03 average days.

In the NSW public service, average sick leave per FTE in 2013–14 was at the highest recorded level since 2007–08 (60.5 average hours per FTE).

In the Queensland public sector, average hours' sick leave peaked in 2012–13 at 60.49 hours per FTE. In the last two years, the average hours' sick leave in the Queensland public sector has declined to levels similar to 2007–08 (53.3).

Figure 5: Queensland/NSW comparison of average hours' sick leave per FTE



Refer to Appendix for the technical notes to support Figure 5.

Source: Queensland—MOHRI 2015 (average full-time hours taken in the 12 months to March of each year); NSW PSC.

5 In comparing figures to the APS, it should be noted that APS unscheduled absent leave includes sick leave, carer' leave, compensation leave, miscellaneous leave, and unauthorised leave which is similar to the Queensland public sector (see page 13). However, APS data reporting methodology reports the median and includes paid and unpaid leave, while the Queensland public sector reports averages based on paid leave only.

6 APS Commission, 2014, State of the Service Report 2013–14, Canberra.

Future focus: absenteeism

One facet in the reduction in absenteeism is the management of workload and health.

In 2015, 32 per cent of respondents said that poor workload and health was an issue for them with 40 per cent saying that they were overloaded with work.

The Queensland public sector is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of its employees, as well as reducing the cost of absenteeism to taxpayers. Areas of future focus include providing greater support:

- for more flexible work arrangements, including hours of work (e.g. flexible start and finish times or compressed working hours), patterns of work (e.g. split shifts or job sharing) and locations of work (e.g. working from home and work centres)
- to employees experiencing domestic and family violence.

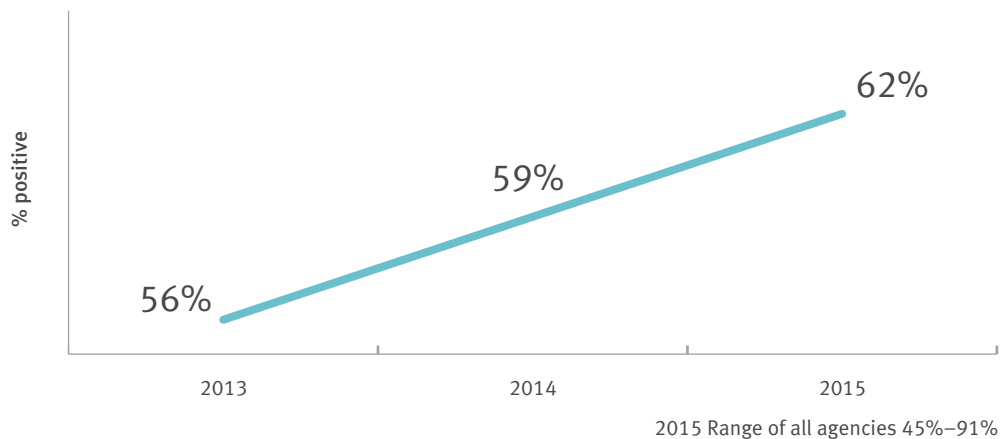
Research strongly indicates that flexible work arrangements reduce emotional exhaustion and burnout, and provide pathways to gender equality.

Innovation in the Queensland public sector

Innovation can be a powerful contributor to public sector productivity. In the Queensland public sector, innovation is considered a key contributor to maximising public sector values. In fact, the presence of integrated, innovative services and solutions is a key Queensland public sector goal.

Perceptions of innovation within the Queensland public sector have improved consistently over the past three years, from 56 per cent positive in 2013 to 62 per cent positive in 2015.

Figure 6: Employee perceptions of innovation



Source: WfQ Employee Opinion Survey 2015, 2014 and 2013

Innovation is typically characterised by an organisational climate that displays:

- high levels of role clarity and goal alignment to ensure people understand the scope of their role and how it fits in with the broader organisation
- clearly delineated risk taking boundaries, as outlined through strong leadership and clear performance assessment
- perceived fairness and trust so people feel they will not be unduly penalised if innovation based risks are not entirely successful
- a level of red tape that does not inhibit new styles of work.

Many of these characteristics are existing strengths of the public sector or areas that have shown recent improvement.

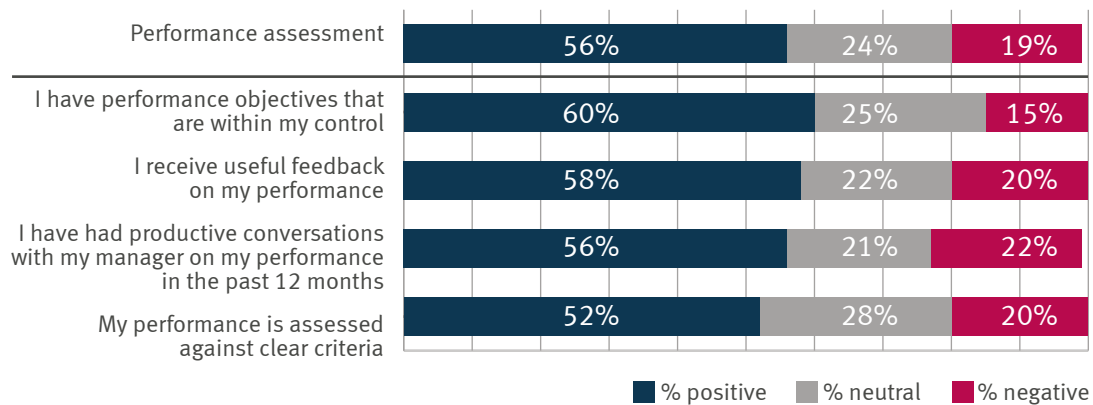
Measuring individual performance—one conversation at a time

Employees are the most valuable asset of any organisation.

Organisational environments that support constructive and empowering performance discussions also indicate high levels of engagement. An accountable and constructive work environment is reliant on formal and informal performance assessment processes. Regular conversations about performance are vital to build a more open and performance-orientated culture.

The WfQ Employee Opinion Survey measures various aspects of individual performance assessment, including the extent to which employees receive feedback on their performance. Overall, perceptions of performance assessment have improved, rising from 49 per cent in 2013 to 56 per cent in 2015.

Figure 7: Employee perceptions of performance assessment



Source: WfQ Employee Opinion Survey 2015