

# 5

## THE QPS WORKFORCE: A SNAPSHOT

People are more than a ‘resource’ in organisations. Organisations exist because of and for people. Whereas resources such as buildings, equipment and finance are finite or limited, it is people who can provide unlimited intangibles to their organisation, such as passion, drive, commitment, initiative and creativity.

Source: Rod Jones, Human Resource Management author, 2010.<sup>34</sup>

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This chapter discusses QPS employment trends over the past decade, workforce demographics such as age, gender and diversity, and workforce movements, including separations and retirements. It draws predominantly on MOHRI trend data for up to 2008-09, but also reports on results from the State of the Service employee survey.

### • Introduction

The chapter provides a selection of workforce information about Queensland public servants who are employed under the PS Act. While this information does not include data relating to a number of occupational groups such as police officers, health professionals, and fire and ambulance officers, as was contained in the previous chapter, it does still include information on a range of employees who provide front line service delivery to the community. These front line service delivery public servants include teachers, child safety officers, psychologists, other allied health professionals, engineers and road workers.

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<sup>34</sup> Jones, R. 2010, *Managing Human Resource Systems*, 2nd edition, Pearson Australia, Frenchs Forest, NSW, p. xiii.

It should be noted that not all agencies who employ staff under the PS Act contribute to the MOHRI data collection system.<sup>35</sup> As a result, unless otherwise stated, data in this chapter is limited to those agencies that do provide data to the MOHRI system.

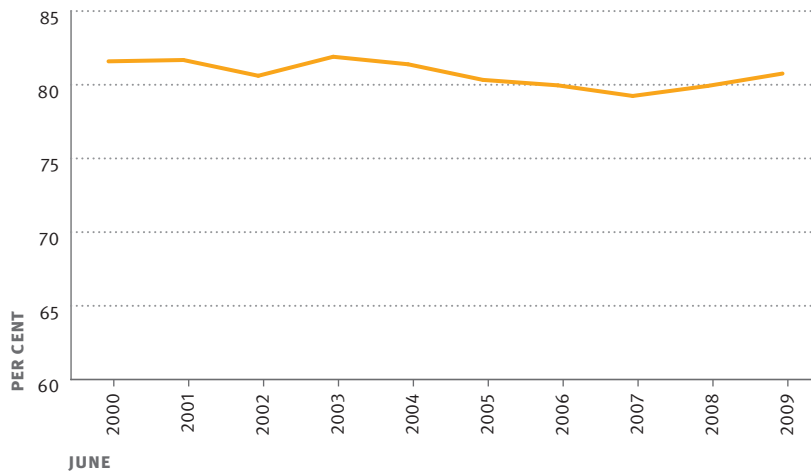
### • Employee profiles: who we are and the way we work

There were 119 797.64 FTEs employed under the PS Act at 30 June 2009. This is just over 60 per cent of the total number of staff employed in all QPS agencies.

Just as there has been sustained growth in the Queensland population over the past nine years, there has also been a 21 per cent increase in the number of staff employed under the PS Act, with the number of FTEs increasing by 20 685.50 from 99 112.14 in June 2000.

As is the case in a number of organisations, QPS employees can be employed on a permanent, temporary or casual basis, or contracted for a period of time under the PS Act. However, the majority of these staff (80.8%) are employed as permanent employees. The proportion of staff who are employed on a permanent basis within the QPS has remained stable at around the 80 per cent mark for almost a decade. The figure below displays the trend between June 2000 and June 2009.

**FIGURE 11: PERMANENT FTE EMPLOYMENT IN THE QPS**



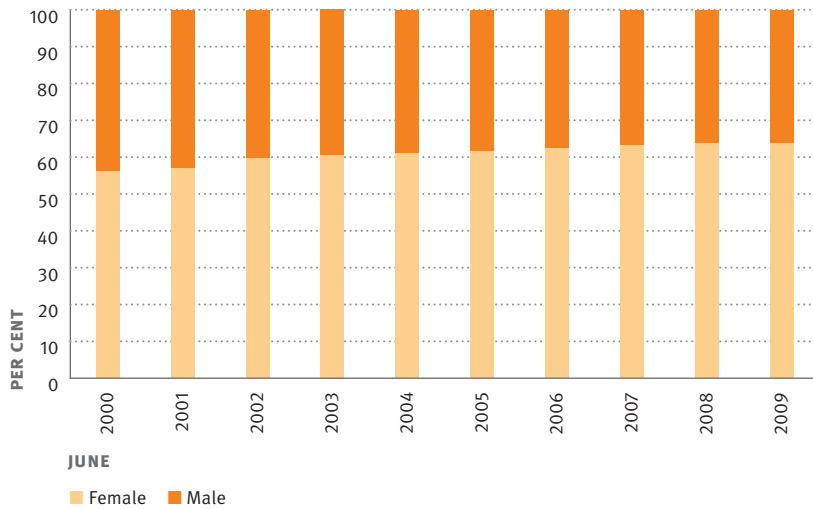
Source: MOHRI

<sup>35</sup> Government owned corporations and a number of public service offices are not included in the MOHRI collection. These are listed in Appendix 1.

## Gender

The proportion of women employed in the QPS continues to increase, with women now comprising some 63.8 per cent of the permanent workforce (Figure 12). This level has risen from 56.1 per cent in 2000. This level is similar to that of other jurisdictions with Victoria reporting two thirds of its public sector workforce being female<sup>36</sup>, Northern Territory being at around 63 per cent<sup>37</sup> and Western Australia having 68 per cent.<sup>38</sup> It also compares quite favourably with the APS where females comprise 57.8 per cent of total employment.<sup>39</sup>

**FIGURE 12: PROPORTION OF QPS BY GENDER FTE**



Source: MOHRI

The mix of employee appointment types by gender is shown in the figure below. While the majority of both male and female employees hold permanent appointments, there is a higher proportion of women than men in temporary and casual employment. This may reflect lifestyle choice and/or may be an indication of the need to balance working arrangements with carer responsibilities. The results of the State of the Service employee survey may shed some light on this as 18.7 per cent of women and 16.9 per cent of men responding to the survey stated that they had carer responsibilities.

While the numbers are very small, men are four times more likely to be in contract employment than women. This reflects the higher number of males in SES and CES positions, and a large number of males on contracts of employment for specialised roles under section 122 of the PS Act. Trends in the senior executive workforce are discussed in further detail in Chapter 7.

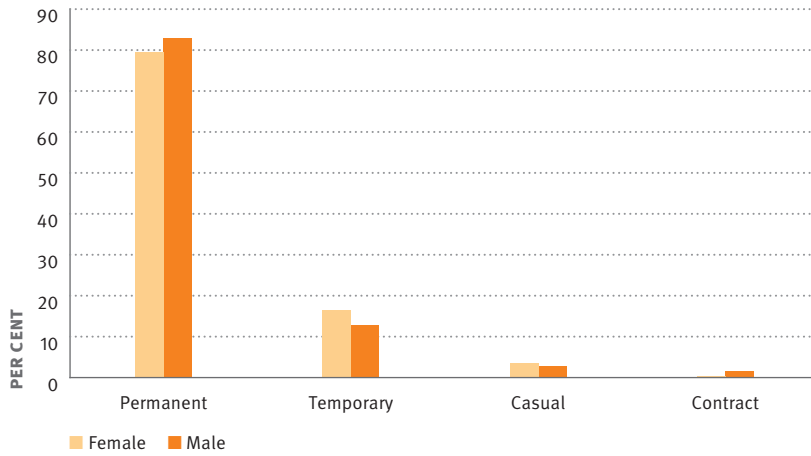
36 State Services Authority (SSA) 2009, *The State of the Public Service in Victoria 2008-09*, p. 20, SSA, Melbourne.

37 Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (OCPE) 2009, *State of the Service Report 2008-09*, p. 61, OCPE, Darwin.

38 Office of the Public Sector Standards Commissioner (OPSSC) 2009, *State of the Service Report 2009*, p. 15, OPSSC, Perth.

39 Australian Public Service Commission 2009, *State of the Service Report 2008-09*, p. 4, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

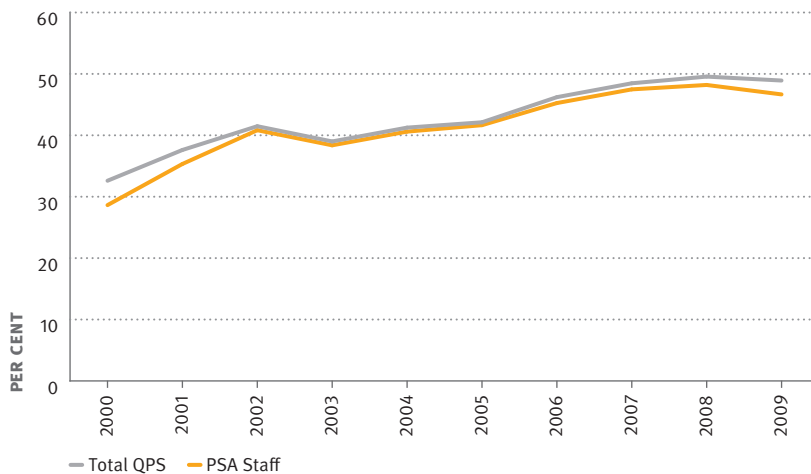
**FIGURE 13: APPOINTMENT TYPES BY GENDER AS AT JUNE 2009**



Source: MOHRI

There has been an upward trend in the number and proportion of female employees within the A07 to SO equivalent range in the past nine years. This would suggest that women are now moving into supervisory and management positions and into positions where their natural career progression will be to the SES.

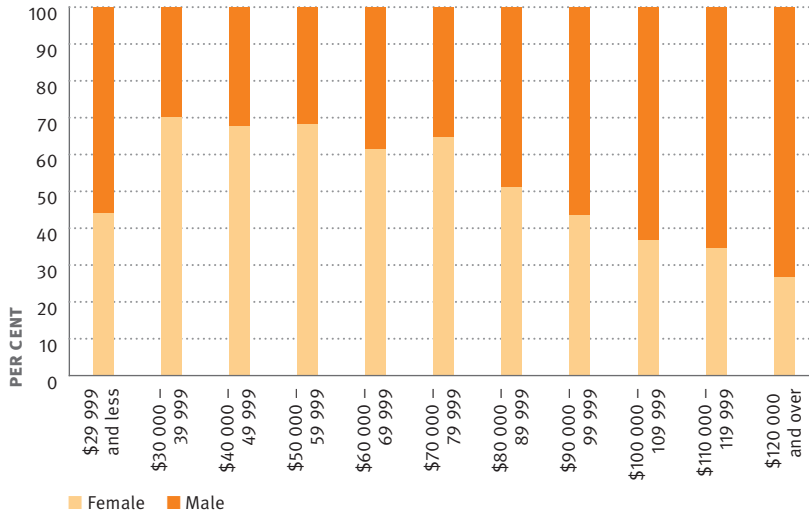
**FIGURE 14: EMPLOYMENT TREND FOR WOMEN EMPLOYED IN THE A07 TO SO RANGE**



Source: MOHRI

Despite the growth in the proportion of female employees over time, many women remain at the lower and middle salary levels, earning between \$30 000 and \$89 000 per year. There is a greater proportion of men than women in the lowest salary band. These male employees are predominantly trade persons and related workers, whereas the females in this band are predominantly administrative staff. The figure below shows that the ‘cross-over’ salary point, where there is a greater proportion of men than women, is in the \$90 000 – \$99 000 salary band.

**FIGURE 15: ANNUAL SALARIES (FTE) BY GENDER AS AT JUNE 2009**

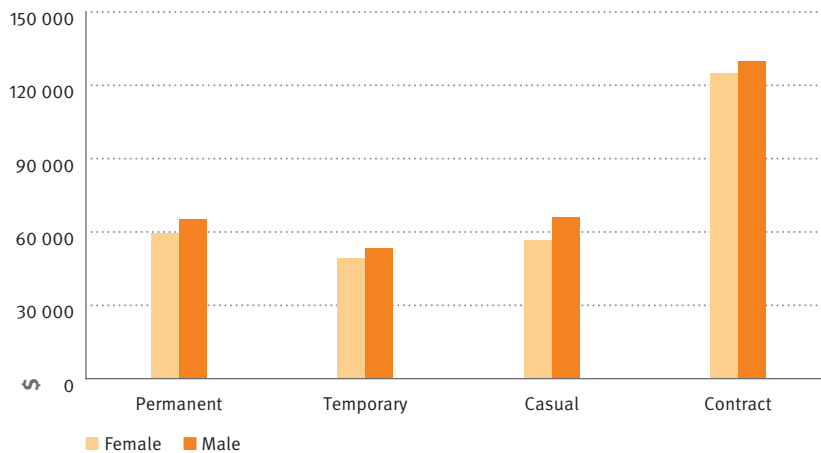


Source: MOHRI

In view of the trend indicated in the figure above, it is anticipated that this ‘cross-over’ salary point for gender will change over time and women will be represented in greater numbers in the higher salary bands.

When examining the average annual salary as at 30 June 2009 by appointment type and gender, it is clear that there is also a pay gap between male and female employees for all appointment types (Figure 16). For permanent employees, there is a \$5574 pay gap between men and women. While the largest gap occurs for casual employees, where the average annual salary for males is \$9608 more than that for female employees, this is more complex as it is influenced by the nature of casual employment and the number of hours worked by each casual employee.

**FIGURE 16: AVERAGE ANNUAL SALARY (FTE) BY APPOINTMENT TYPE AND GENDER AS AT JUNE 2009**



Source: MOHRI

Despite this pay gap, State of the Service employee survey results indicated that women were more satisfied with their remuneration than men. Just less than half of women agreed with the statement that they were fairly remunerated for the work that they do, in comparison to 40.4 per cent of men. Conversely, 33.6 per cent of women and 38.5 per cent of men disagreed with the statement.

While the factors that might contribute to this survey result are difficult to identify with certainty, research undertaken by the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA) may provide some insight. EOWA's 2006 online survey found that only 15 per cent of women and 21 per cent of men are most likely to consider good pay and bonuses as the single most important consideration when choosing employment.

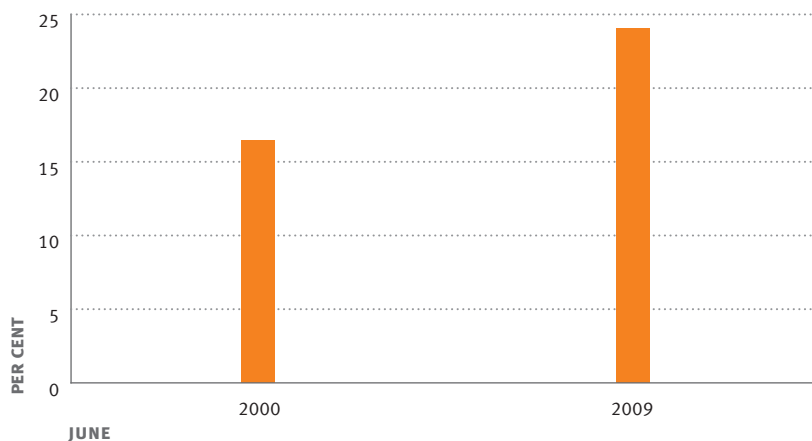
However, female respondents also tended to place significantly more value than men on the following employer characteristics: a good organisational record of promoting and supporting women; flexible work conditions; an organisation with a large number of women in senior positions; a position that does not involve long hours or overtime; and the provision of paid maternity leave.<sup>40</sup>

When making decisions about prospective employment, and their satisfaction with current employment, women may therefore make some trade-offs in relation to their remuneration.

#### *Employment status: full-time, part-time and casual work*

More than two-thirds of QPS employees (67.5%) are employed on a full-time basis. However, this way of working has changed over the years with almost a quarter of QPS employees now working on a part-time basis. Figure 17 below displays how the percentage of employees working part-time has increased significantly, from 16.4 per cent in 2000 to 24.1 per cent in 2009.

**FIGURE 17: QPS PART-TIME WORKERS (HEADCOUNT)**



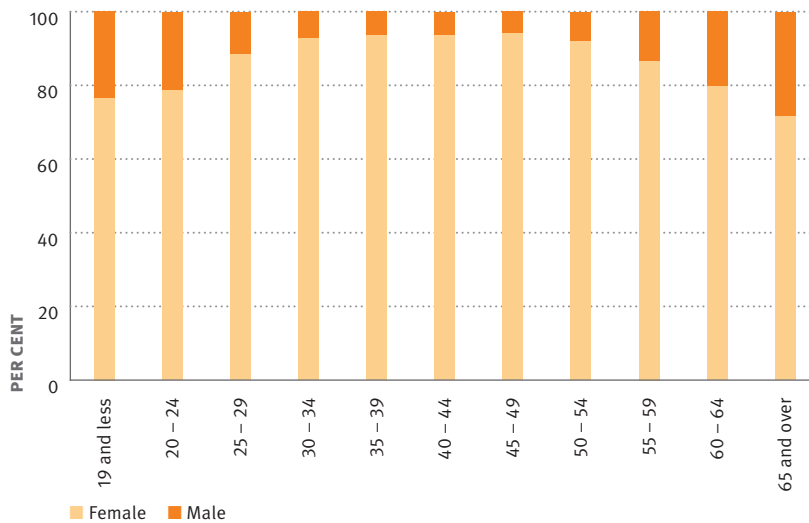
Source: MOHRI

40 Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency 2008, *Generation F: Attract, Engage, Retain*, p. 6, <http://www.eowa.gov.au>

Part-time work is more prevalent among women (Figure 18), with 90.6 per cent of part-time workers being women. Women who work part-time are most likely to be employed at the AO2-AO6 and equivalent salary levels (97.1%), with 56.1 per cent working at the AO2 equivalent salary level.

Part-time work is most prevalent for women aged 35 or more, with 37.7 per cent of the total female workforce working part-time after that age. Males tend to work more on a part-time basis when they are aged 24 years and under or once they have reached the age of 55.

**FIGURE 18: PROPORTION OF MALES AND FEMALES WHO WORK PART-TIME BY AGE, AS AT JUNE 2009**



Source: MOHRI

Part-time work becomes just as prevalent for all employees as they grow older. Some 28.7 per cent of the total workforce aged 60 and over works on a part-time basis.

### *Types of work*

Almost half the employee survey respondents (44.7%) indicated they were involved in direct service delivery to the public (Table 2). A further 14.0 per cent were in administrative and clerical roles, 12.5 per cent were in corporate services, 6.3 per cent were in program design/management roles, and 3.7 per cent worked in policy.

While at first glance it may appear that the proportion of employees indicating that they worked in service delivery roles is low, it needs to be remembered that the respondents to the State of the Service employee survey are staff employed under the PS Act. Police officers, health professionals, fire and ambulance officers and a range of other front line service delivery employees are not included in this data.

As reported in Chapter 4, when these employees are included in the QPS data the proportion of employees in service delivery roles is around 80 per cent. However, what these figures reflect, even without those very visible front line employees, is the state's strong focus on service delivery.

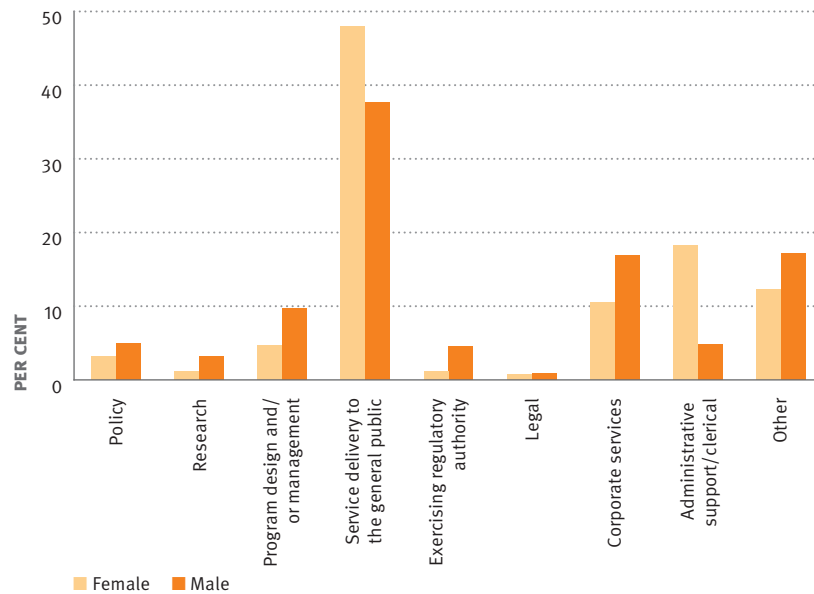
**TABLE 2: TYPE OF WORK UNDERTAKEN IN THE QPS**

Type of work	Total %
Service delivery to the general public	44.7
Administrative support / clerical	14.0
Corporate services	12.5
Program design and/or management	6.3
Policy	3.7
Exercising regulatory authority	2.3
Research	1.8
Legal	0.8
Other	13.9

Source: Employee Survey 2010

There are some notable gender trends in the types of work undertaken in the QPS. Women feature most predominantly in service delivery roles (48.0%) and administrative support and clerical roles (18.3%). Men feature most predominantly in service delivery roles and corporate services roles. The men outnumber their female colleagues in corporate services roles and program design and/or management.

**FIGURE 19: TYPES OF WORK BY GENDER**



Source: Employee Survey 2010

**Educational qualifications**

Data collected through the State of the Service employee survey indicated that 57.7 per cent of respondents held a bachelor degree or higher qualification. Only 8.9 per cent had less than a year 12 or equivalent qualification.



Males had a slightly higher qualification profile than that of females, with 61.6 per cent of men holding a bachelor degree or higher qualification, in comparison with 55.9 per cent of women. The percentage of women whose highest qualification was a vocational qualification or year 12 or equivalent qualification was marginally higher than that of men. The percentage of women who had less than year 12 or equivalent (10.6%) was double that of men (5.3%).

The qualifications profile is likely to change over time; firstly as the Toward Q2 target of having three out of four Queenslanders holding trade, training or tertiary qualifications is progressed, and secondly as women’s educational attainment improves. Research published in 2009 showed that there are now more women than men enrolled in bachelor degree courses or higher. Further, the research indicated that over 50 per cent of Australian women aged 25 to 34 years with post-school qualifications hold a bachelor degree or higher, compared with around 43 per cent of men in the same group.<sup>41</sup>

### Diversity in the QPS

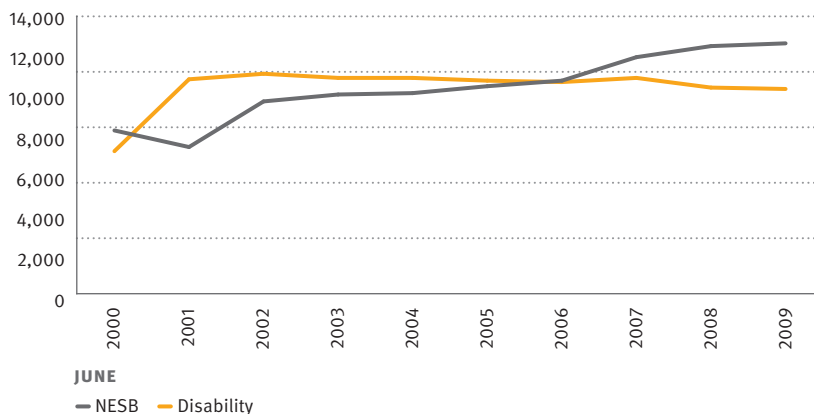
Under section 30(4) of the PS Act, the following groups are EEO target groups:

- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people
- people from a non-English speaking background
- people with a disability, and
- women.

The QPS generally performs well in the employment of EEO groups, with women now comprising 63.8 per cent of the workforce.

Figure 20 below shows the representation of two of the EEO groups (people with a disability and people from a non-English speaking background) among two of the employees over a nine year period.

**FIGURE 20: REPRESENTATION OF EEO GROUPS AMONG EMPLOYEES (HEADCOUNT)**



Source: MOHRI

The EEO trend data reported in the above figure is based on self-identification and therefore carries some limitations in terms of its completeness. The data represents those employees that chose to respond to agency EEO census forms and identify themselves as a member of one or more of those groups. As the response rate across the sector to the EEO census is approximately

41 Cassells, R., Miranti, R. I., Nepal, B. and Tanton, R. 2009, ‘She works hard for the money: Australian women and the gender divide’, *AMP.NATSEM Income and Wealth Report*, Issue 22, April, p. 8.

80 per cent, it is likely that the EEO figures are understated on the basis that some employees have chosen not to respond to the census. The methods for calculating the proportional employment of EEO groups is summarised in the footnote below.<sup>42</sup>

The number of PS Act employees from a non-English speaking background has increased, rising from 8241 in 2000 to 12 596 in 2009. Proportionally, this equates to 8.9 to 12.2 per cent of the PS Act workforce, depending on the method used to calculate the data.

The number of employees with a disability increased from 7166 in 2000 to 10 281 in 2009. While this increase may seem significant, the overall trend is downwards, with the number of employees with a disability peaking at 11 072 employees in 2002. This downward trend is similar to that experienced in the APS, where there has been a decline for the fifth consecutive year in the absolute number of employees with a disability.<sup>43</sup> In Queensland, the percentage of people with a disability employed in 2009 under the PS Act is in the range of 7.3 to 10.1 per cent, depending on the method used to calculate the data.

While this downward trend is counter intuitive given the ageing of the QPS workforce, there may be a range of reasons for it occurring. While some employees may be choosing not to disclose their status, the most likely reason is that there has been decreasing representation at the AO1 to AO4 level where many people with a disability have traditionally been employed. Between 2000 and 2009 the proportion of employees with a disability in the AO1 to AO4 range decreased from 63.2 per cent to 55.0 per cent for all QPS employees and from 60.7 per cent to 55.5 per cent for those staff employed under the PS Act.

As would be expected with the ageing workforce, the proportion of employees with a disability increased in both the AO5 to AO8 and the SO and above ranges. For the AO5 to AO8 range this increase was from 33.5 to 40.8 per cent for all QPS employees and from 36.8 to 41.5 per cent for those employed under the PS Act.

Similarly, for the SO and above range the increases have been from 3.3 to 4.2 per cent for all QPS employees and from 2.5 to 3.1 per cent for those employed under the PS Act.

The Queensland Government has continued its strong commitment to increasing the representation of Indigenous employees. This commitment is delivered through the signing of the COAG National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation in 2009, setting a target of at least 2.6 per cent Indigenous representation by 2013 and the more recent signing of the Australian Employment Covenant in February 2010, offering 2800 Indigenous employment opportunities by June 2013.<sup>44</sup>

The Indigenous employment targets under both these agreements are sector-wide targets. On this basis, the information detailed in Figure 21 represents the number of Indigenous employees across the Queensland Public Sector. The number of Indigenous people employed across the

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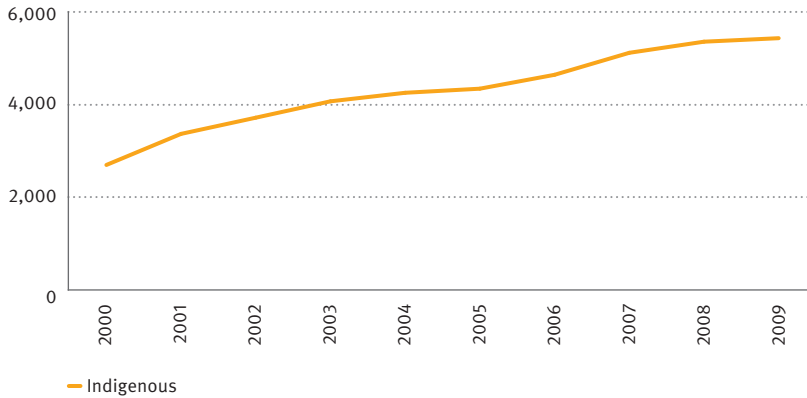
42 A number of different methods are used to calculate the percentage of EEO employment. For example, the EEO Statistical Bulletin prepared annually on the Queensland Public Sector uses a percentage calculation that includes non-respondents (including those who chose not to respond on agency EEO census forms) in the total census population. The PSC Annual Report includes percentage calculations for EEO groups which include and exclude non-respondents. Percentage calculations that include non-respondents are likely to understate EEO representation, while methods which exclude non-respondents from the calculation may result in a higher EEO percentage. While both methods are used in this section of the report, each approach has its limitations.

43 Australian Public Service Commission 2009, *State of the Service Report 2008-09*, p. 22, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

44 Council of Australian Governments 2009, *National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation*, p.7, [http://www.coag.gov.au/intergov\\_agreements/federal\\_financial\\_relations/index.cfm](http://www.coag.gov.au/intergov_agreements/federal_financial_relations/index.cfm). See also the Department of Justice and Attorney-General 2009, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2009-2012* at <http://www.justice.qld.gov.au>

sector has more than doubled over the past nine years, rising from 2,696 in 2000 to 5,445 in 2009. Indigenous employment has continued to rise each year during this period.

**FIGURE 21: INDIGENOUS REPRESENTATION AMONG EMPLOYEES IN QUEENSLAND PUBLIC SECTOR (HEADCOUNT)**



Source: MOHRI

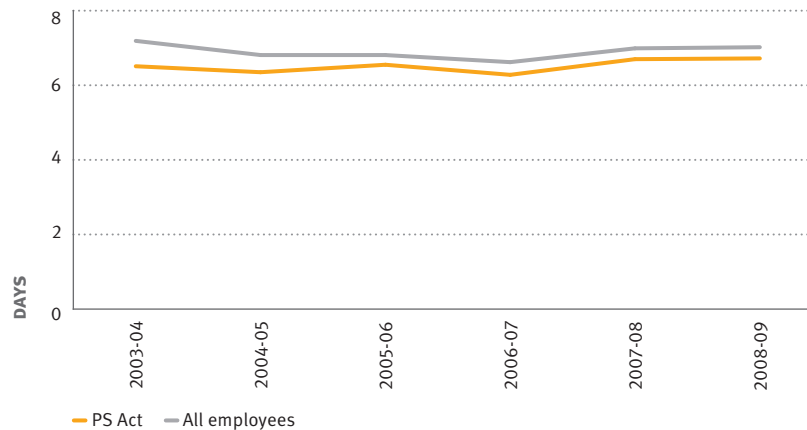
Overall, the percentage of Indigenous people employed across the Queensland Public Sector in 2009 is in the range of 2.1 to 2.8 per cent, depending on the methodology used to calculate the data. Achieving the 2013 targets will require an ongoing, concerted effort in the retention of our Indigenous employees and the attraction of new Indigenous people to the Queensland Public Sector.

*Sick leave*

The use of sick leave has not changed a great deal over the past six years. The average full-time sick days taken per employee rose only slightly from 6.5 days in 2003-04 to 6.7 days in 2008-09. The average number of full-time sick days taken per employee, at 7 days, is higher for the broader QPS, the group which includes a far greater number of people in front line service delivery roles.

Figure 22 compares average full-time sick days taken per employee employed under the PS Act, with the average full-time sick days taken per employee by the QPS as a whole.

**FIGURE 22: AVERAGE FULL-TIME SICK DAYS TAKEN PER EMPLOYEE**



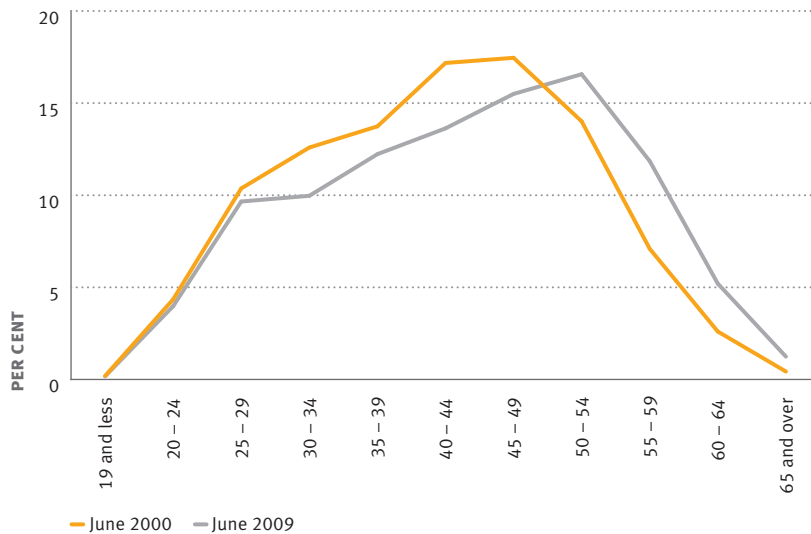
Source: MOHRI

## • The changing of the generational guard: age and separations

### *An ageing workforce*

The permanent QPS workforce is ageing (Figure 23). In 2000, the average age of a permanent QPS employee was 42.1 years, while in 2009 the average is up to 44.4 years. As a consequence of the average age of employees increasing, the percentage of the workforce aged over 50 has also grown and was significantly higher in 2009 than in 2000.

**FIGURE 23: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE PERMANENT QPS WORKFORCE**



Source: MOHRI

The trend of the ageing QPS workforce means that it is important that strategies are put into place to encourage the continued participation of older workers in the workforce and that, when they have made their decision to leave, their departure is managed well. This is vital to ensure that there is not a significant loss of corporate or operational knowledge to the QPS, a loss of managerial/executive experience, and that there are sufficiently skilled employees available to take over the roles being vacated.

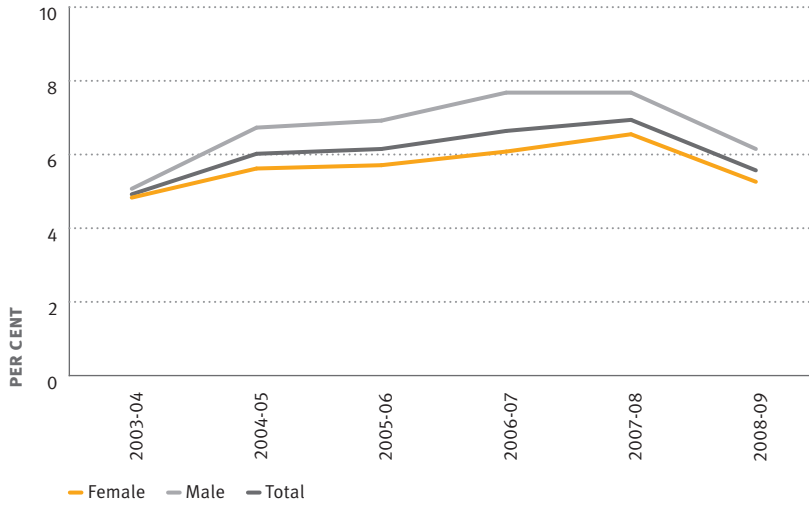
In early 2007 the Queensland Government launched the Experience Pays Awareness Strategy to address this issue. This strategy aims to encourage age-friendly work practices and the continued participation of older workers in the workforce. The strategy is not just for government: it is also being implemented in the private and non-government sectors.

The use in the QPS of other workplace strategies to support the continued participation of mature-aged people in the workplace, such as flexible working conditions, is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

### *Separations in the QPS*

Separations from the QPS are measured by the 'separation rate'. This is the percentage of QPS permanent employees who leave their jobs as a proportion of the total permanent workforce. It does not include transfers, mobility programs or promotions within the QPS. The proportion of permanent employees exiting the QPS increased marginally over the past six years from 4.9 per cent to 5.6 per cent (Figure 24).

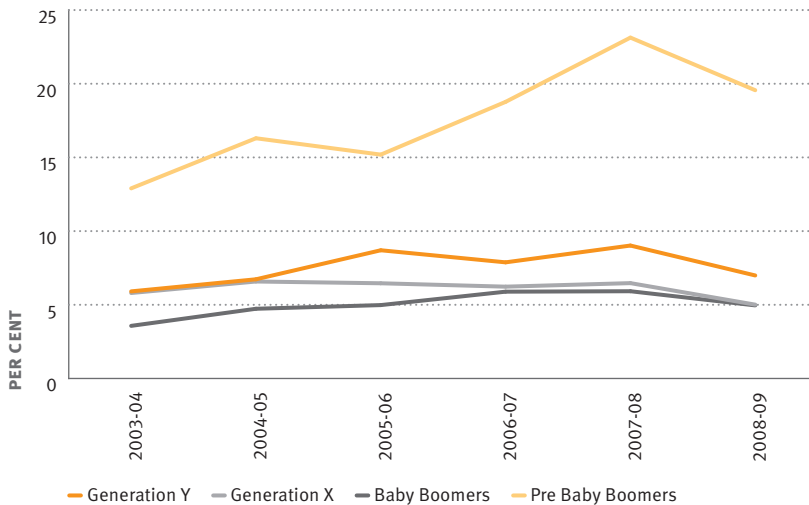
**FIGURE 24: SEPARATION RATES BY GENDER**



Source: MOHRI

The separation rate for male employees is consistently higher than that for female employees, although there is not a great difference between the two. While separation rates for men and women are fairly similar, there are significant differences between different demographic groups. The figure below shows that Generation Y employees are more likely to leave the QPS than Baby Boomers or Generation X.<sup>45</sup>

**FIGURE 25: SEPARATION RATES BY AGE GROUPS AS A PROPORTION OF THEIR DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS**

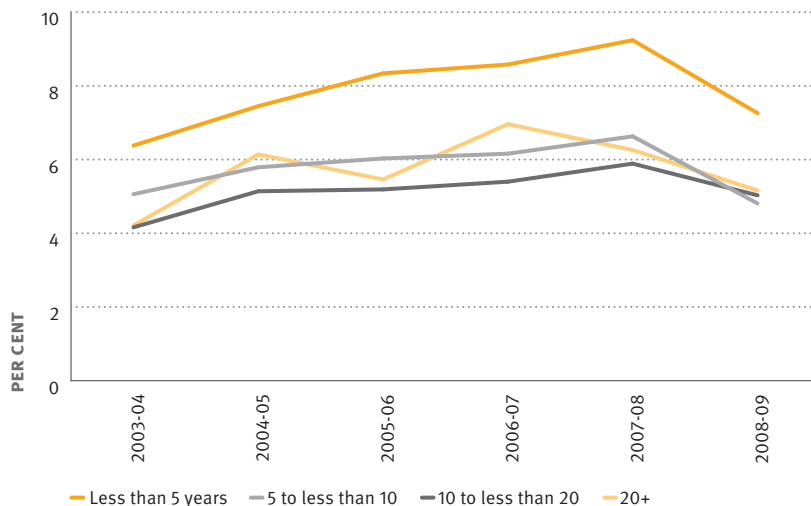


Source: MOHRI

<sup>45</sup> The definition of who are included in these groups is contained in Appendix 3.

Separation patterns are also influenced by an employee's length of service. The figure below displays the trends for employees who have worked less than five years, between five and 10 years, 10 to 20 years and 20 years and more. The data indicates that people who have worked for less than five years in the QPS are consistently more likely to leave.

**FIGURE 26: SEPARATION RATES BY LENGTH OF SERVICE**



Source: MOHRI

Despite adverse global economic conditions, and ongoing public policy discussions about the adequacy of retirement savings, the average age of retirement for QPS employees has remained at 60 years for the past six years to June 2009. The average age of retirement is calculated as the mean age of permanent employees aged 55 years or older who exited from the QPS.

• **Key themes and future directions**

The QPS workforce profile has changed significantly over the past decade, with increases in the proportion of women, older workers and part-time workers. The proportion of employees with an Indigenous or non-English speaking background has also increased, but the percentage of staff with a disability has declined over time. The average age of retirement remains steady at 60 years. Separations are more common among Generation Y employees and those who have worked in the QPS for less than five years.

One of the key challenges facing the QPS is the demographics of an ageing workforce. When asked to list their top five workforce challenges, agencies listed an ageing workforce as the second highest challenge. The top five workforce challenges raised by agencies in order of greatest challenge were:

- Attracting and retaining skilled staff. This was particularly relevant where there were skill shortages in some technical or specialist areas, and where there was competition with the market place and pay and conditions were not always competitive with the external market
- Ageing workforce. Agencies raised the potential loss of managerial/executive, corporate and operational knowledge as an issue, particularly as a high proportion of older employees are due to retire in the next few years
- Capability development. This related to all staff and also for a range of more specific occupations/staff groups, including managers/leaders, young inexperienced employees and staff in technical areas
- Workload/demand management. Agencies raised the issue of increasing community expectations and growth in demand for services that could be accentuated by limited resources, and a desire to avoid staff burnout in trying to meet this demand, and
- Balancing flexible arrangements and workload management. This issue was raised predominantly by the smaller agencies with less than 300 staff.

Not only was the ageing workforce listed as a significant workforce challenge, it was raised in the top five organisational challenges for agencies by almost half (48.6%) of the agencies. These top organisational challenges could include any significant challenge to the organisation.<sup>46</sup> Clearly, strategies that support the continued participation of older workers will be critical to ensure the delivery of services. More flexible work practices, such as part-time work and telecommuting, will continue to be utilised as a way of encouraging these highly experienced and skilled workers to remain in the QPS.

Conversely, if the workforce is to be refreshed and the best and the brightest attracted to and retained by the QPS, there is a need to encourage younger employees to remain in the QPS. Generation Y plays a critical role in providing the QPS with the skills and agility it needs, and strategies which reverse their higher separation rates will be critical. These strategies will need to be balanced against the benefit of young people gaining experience and skills in other sectors and bringing these to the QPS at a later stage. Strategies to engage and retain employees are discussed in further detail in Chapter 6.

Improving workforce diversity will also be high on the agenda, with the need to increase the representation of Indigenous employees in the QPS and in particular in meeting the 2013 Indigenous employment target set by COAG. In addition, while the participation of women in the QPS workforce is quite high, there may need to be strategies developed to bridge or at the very least monitor the apparent gender pay gap. Women's representation in senior executive roles is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

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<sup>46</sup> These organisational challenges are listed in Chapter 3: Public Sector Reform.

