

How many applications were lodged?

The total number of valid applications received increased by 30% in 2020/21, representing the highest recorded number of valid access applications

At the time of reporting, agencies advised that they received 22,349 valid applications during 2020/21. This compares with 17,246 valid applications in the previous financial year and represents a total increase of 5,103 (30%) in valid applications received. This is the largest increase in over a decade of reporting and has resulted in 2020/21 producing the highest number of valid applications received. The trend in applications is shown in Figure 5.

The number of applications received by agencies can be affected by certain factors, such as the type of information sought, the extent to which agencies proactively make information available and the use of the informal access pathway. This year, NSW agencies operated under volatile and unprecedented pandemic conditions. These conditions may also stimulate

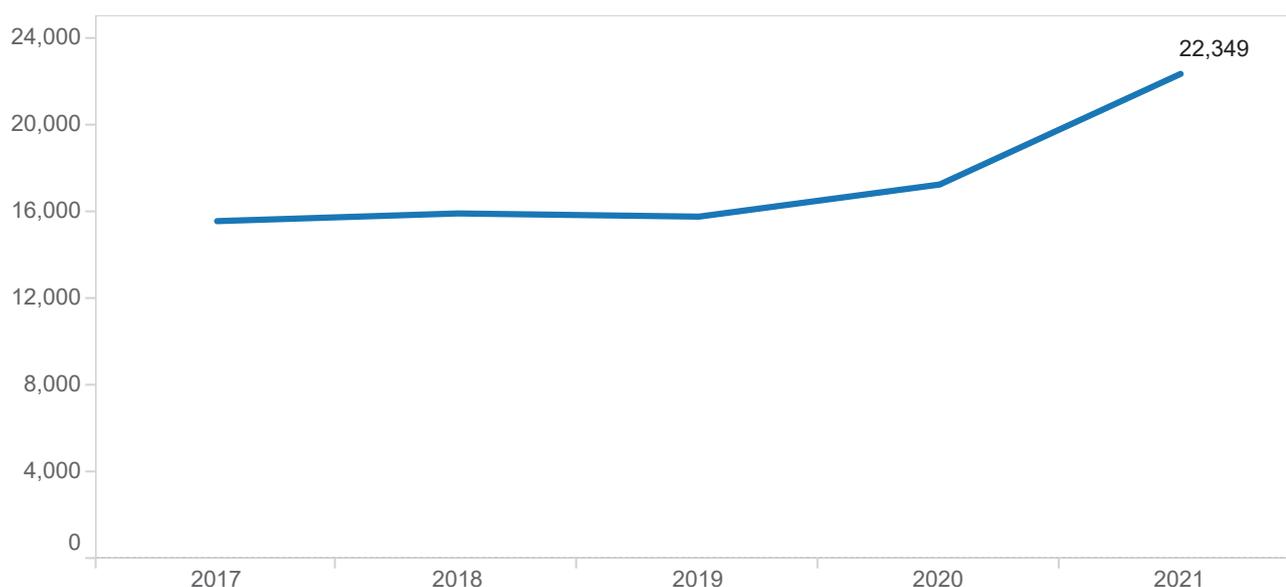
requests for access to government information. This observation is informed by:

- a 33% increase in application outcomes for members of the public (representing an additional 4,539 applications in 2020/21)
- 41% of applications were made by legal representatives on behalf of members of the public (representing an additional 2,598 applications in 2020/21 or a 39% increase from 2019/20), and
- the significant increase in applications that sought information other than personal information and those that sought a combination of partially personal and partly other information.

Most applications were made to the Government sector³

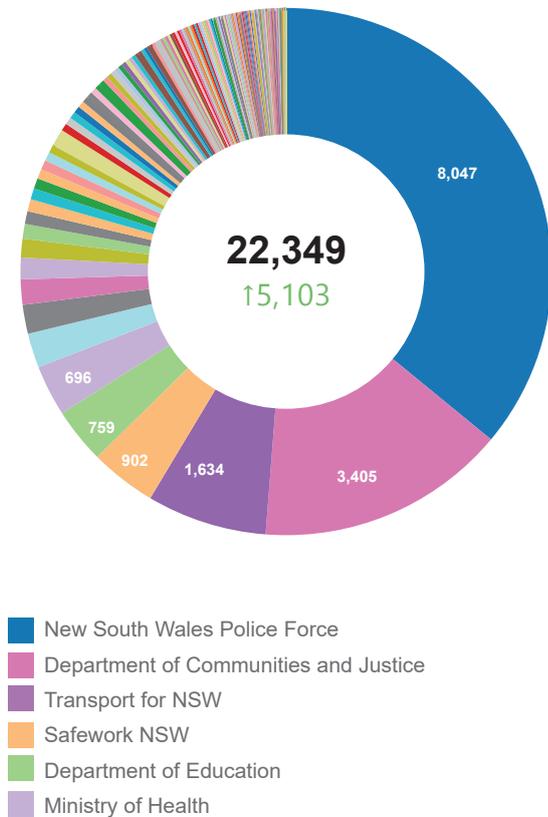
Consistent with previous years, the Government sector continued to account for the great majority (17,870 or 80%) of valid applications (Figure 7). While the overall proportion of valid applications received by the

Figure 5: Total number of valid applications received, 2016/17 to 2020/21



³ Since 2016/17 data is reported across five sectors, including state-owned corporations. This will affect comparisons with the published reports in previous years.

Figure 6: Distribution of valid applications received, by government agency, 2020/21



Government sector remained stable, the number of applications significantly increased by 27% from 14,082 in 2019/20 to 17,870 in 2020/21.

In 2020/21, the NSW Police Force received 36% (8,047) of all valid applications, consistent with 35% in 2019/20 (Figure 6). While the NSW Police Force continued to receive the largest proportion of valid applications across all sectors, this proportion has declined steadily over time from 42% of valid applications in 2014/15 to 36% in 2020/21. The NSW Police Force has also experienced a significant increase in the overall number of valid applications received as set out below.

The top six government agencies by number of applications received is similar to last year (Figure 6).

Notable changes in valid applications received across these agencies were a:

- 71% increase in applications received by Transport for NSW (from 955 in 2019/20 to 1,634 in 2020/21)
- 58% increase in applications to the Department of Communities and Justice (from 2,151 in 2019/20 to 3,405 in 2020/21)
- 34% increase in applications received by the NSW Police Force (from 5,997 in 2019/20 to 8,047 in 2020/21)
- 28% increase in applications received by the Department of Education (from 595 in 2019/20 to 759 in 2020/21)
- 23% increase in applications received by the Ministry of Health (from 567 in 2019/20 to 696 in 2020/21)
- 1% increase in applications received by SafeWork NSW (from 896 in 2019/20 to 902 in 2020/21). This is a change from last year where SafeWork NSW had an 18% increase in applications.

Applications in the Government and Council sectors rose significantly, with declines recorded in the Minister and University sectors

The number of applications received by the Council sector also increased significantly by 47%. This is in part due to 11 more councils reporting in 2020/21 compared with 2019/20. The IPC will work closely with the Council sector in the coming year to ensure that compliance levels are maintained (Figure 7).

The number of applications received by the Government sector increased significantly by 27% compared with the 2019/20 results.

Applications received in the University sector moderately increased by 9% in 2020/21.

The State-Owned Corporations sector remained stable with an increase of 4%.

Applications received by the Minister sector declined by 5% in 2020/21.

Each of the above three sectors receive relatively few applications and their year-on-year results are therefore more variable.

'How many applications were lodged?' is reported and measured by the requirement for agencies to report on the total number of formal applications received during the year and that were assessed as valid in clause 8(b) of the GIPA Regulation.

Figure 7: Number of applications received, by sector, 2016/17 to 2020/21

