Fact sheet

Destinations of female, male and non-binary or other school leavers

2023 NSW Post-School Destinations and Experiences Survey

Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation

This fact sheet provides a high-level overview of findings from the 2023 NSW Post-School Destinations and Experiences Survey relating to Year 12 completers and early school leavers who identify as female, male, or non-binary or other.

Survey sample

In 2023, 64,487 Year 12 completers and 26,263 early school leavers from across NSW were invited to take part in the survey. Of these, it was estimated that:

- 32,555 (50.5%) Year 12 completers identified as female, 30,611 (47.5%) identified as male, 853 (1.3%) identified as non-binary or other and 468 (0.7%) did not report their gender.
- 10,257 (39.1%) early school leavers identified as female, 15,206 (57.9%) identified as male, 549 (2.1%) identified as non-binary or other and 250 (1.0%) did not report their gender.

Responses were received from 28,831 Year 12 completers and 5,892 early school leavers. Of these responses, 15,303 Year 12 completers and 2,345 early school leavers identified as female, 12,911 Year 12 completers and 3,374 early school leavers identified as male and 404 Year 12 completers and 125 early school leavers identified as non-binary or other.

January 2025

In reporting on the 2023 survey, results are based on an individual's gender as identified in their survey response. This is a change from previous years, where this identification was based on an individual's sex in their school enrolment data. This change was made out of respect for recent leavers' understandings and expressions of their gender identity, to promote greater sensitivity and inclusivity, and to improve the recency and validity of the data provided. To ensure consistency and accuracy in this 2023 fact sheet, survey data from previous years has also been presented based on an individual's gender identity in their survey response.

Main post-school destinations in 2023

Female school leavers

It was estimated that in 2023, 92.5% of all female recent school leavers, 95.1% of female Year 12 completers and 84.2% of female early school leavers were in education, training or employment.

Year 12 completers

Early school leavers

Male school leavers

It was estimated that in 2023, 90.0% of all male recent school leavers, 92.1% of male Year 12 completers and 85.7% of male early school leavers were in education, training or employment.

Year 12 completers

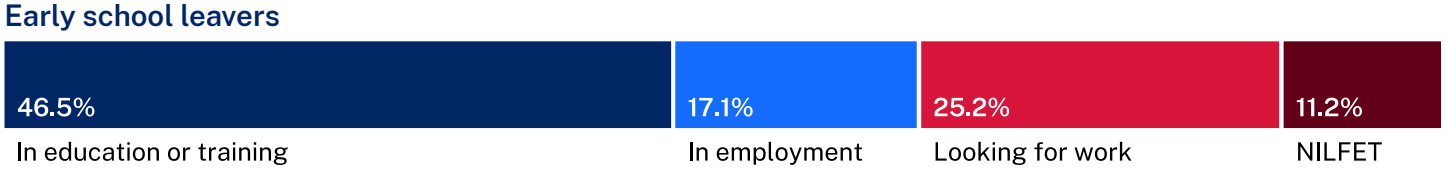
Early school leavers

Non-binary or other school leavers

It was estimated that in 2023, 79.2% of all non-binary or other recent school leavers, 89.3% of non-binary or other Year 12 completers and 63.6% of non-binary or other early school leavers were in education, training or employment.

Year 12 completers

Early school leavers



1 NILFET = not in the labour force, education or training

School leavers across NSW in education, training or employment

Undertaking a bachelor's degree or VET qualification

	Bachelor	VET cert IV+	VET cert III	VET cert I–II
Female	**43.9%** ▼ down 1.4 pp[2] since 2022	**5.6%** ▲ up 0.6 pp since 2022	**5.5%** ▲ up 1.7 pp since 2022	**1.6%** ▲ up 0.2 pp since 2022
Male	**32.9%** ▼ down 0.1 pp since 2022	**3.7%** ▲ up 0.2 pp since 2022	**2.1%** ▲ up 0.2 pp since 2022	**1.1%** ~ no change since 2022
Non-binary or other	**29.6%** ▼ down 3.4 pp since 2022	**7.5%** ▲ up 1.2 pp since 2022	**9.3%** ▲ up 5.8 pp since 2022	**2.3%** ▼ down 0.1 pp since 2022

In an apprenticeship, traineeship, full-time work or part-time work

	Apprenticeship	Traineeship	Full-time work	Part-time work
Female	**3.5%** ▲ Up 0.1 pp since 2022	**7.0%** ▼ down 0.7 pp since 2022	**8.7%** ▼ down 0.8 pp since 2022	**16.7%** ~ no change since 2022
Male	**23.3%** ▼ down 0.6 pp since 2022	**3.8%** ▼ down 0.7 pp since 2022	**9.9%** ▼ down 0.7 pp since 2022	**13.2%** ▲ up 0.3 pp since 2022
Non-binary or other	**5.9%** ▲ up 2.2 pp since 2022	**2.8%** ▼ down 1.3 pp since 2022	**4.3%** ▼ down 1.0 pp since 2022	**17.4%** ▼ down 6.3 pp since 2022

Compared to female school leavers, there were:

- fewer male and non-binary or other school leavers studying a bachelor's degree or engaged in traineeships
- fewer male school leavers studying a VET certificate III or engaged in part-time work
- fewer non-binary or other school leavers engaged in full-time work
- more male and non-binary or other school leavers engaged in apprenticeships
- more non-binary or other school leavers studying a VET certificate III, looking for work or NILFET.

2 pp = percentage points

In education or training

Between 2021 and 2023, a higher estimated proportion of Year 12 completers were in education or training than early school leavers. This applied to school leavers identifying as male, female, or non-binary or other.

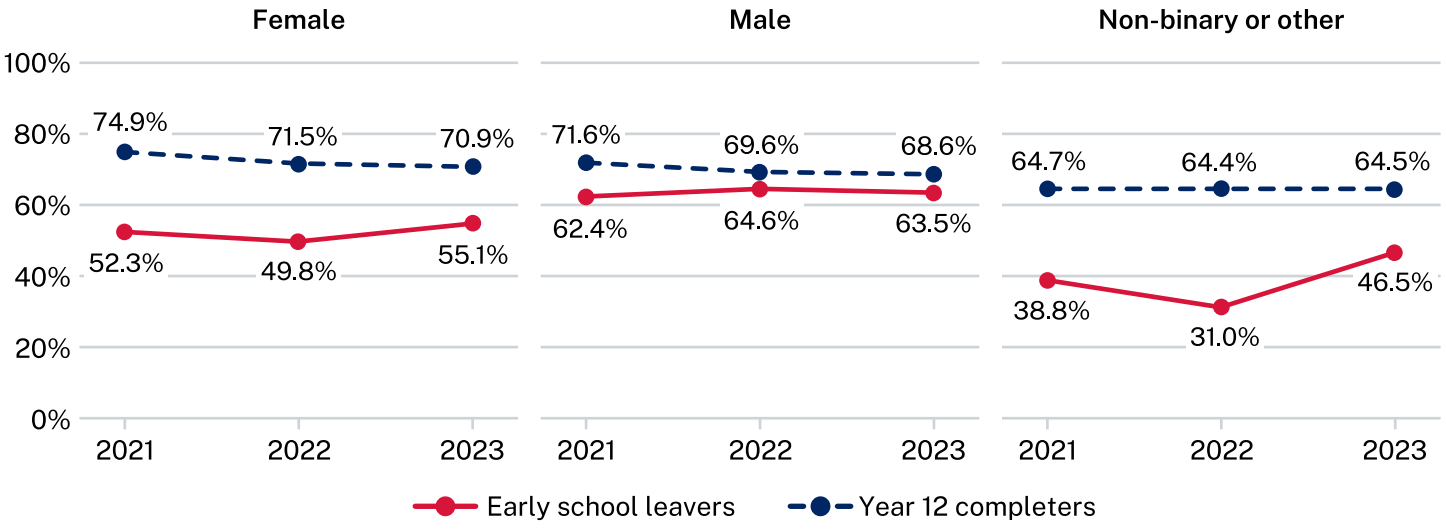
The estimated proportion of female Year 12 completers in education or training has decreased since 2021 from 74.9% to 70.9% (an average decrease of 2.0 pp per year), while the estimated proportion of female early school leavers in education or training increased by 5.2 pp between 2022 and 2023.

The estimated proportion of male Year 12 completers in education or training has decreased since 2021 from 71.6% to 68.6% (an average decrease of 1.5 pp per year). The estimated proportion of male early school leavers in education or training first increased by 2.2 pp between 2021 and 2022 before falling slightly in 2023.

The estimated proportion of non-binary or other Year 12 completers in education or training has remained relatively steady since 2021. The estimated proportion of non-binary or other early school leavers in education or training has fluctuated a lot, first decreasing by 7.8 pp between 2021 and 2022 before increasing by 15.5 pp between 2022 and 2023.

This shows that a higher proportion of Year 12 completers in each cohort were in education or training than early school leavers from each cohort, although this was only slightly higher for males. In addition, a slight decline was evident for female and male Year 12 completers over time. Note, the fluctuations in non-binary or other early school leavers may be due to the smaller sample size, potentially leading to greater variability year-on-year.

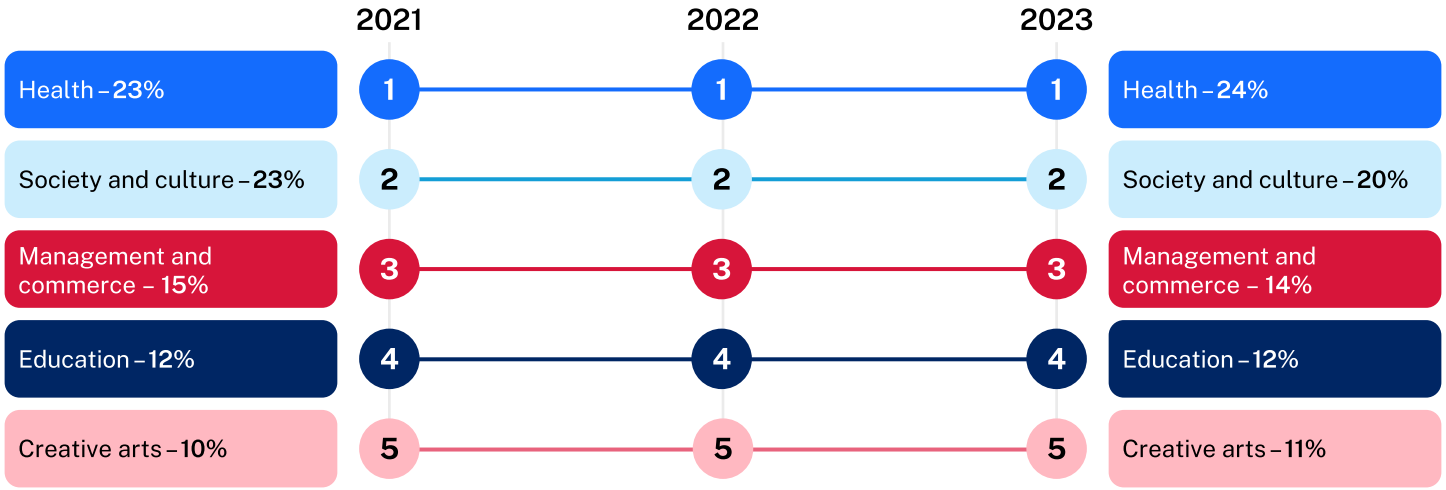
Estimated proportion of female, male, and non-binary or other school leavers in education or training, 2021 to 2023



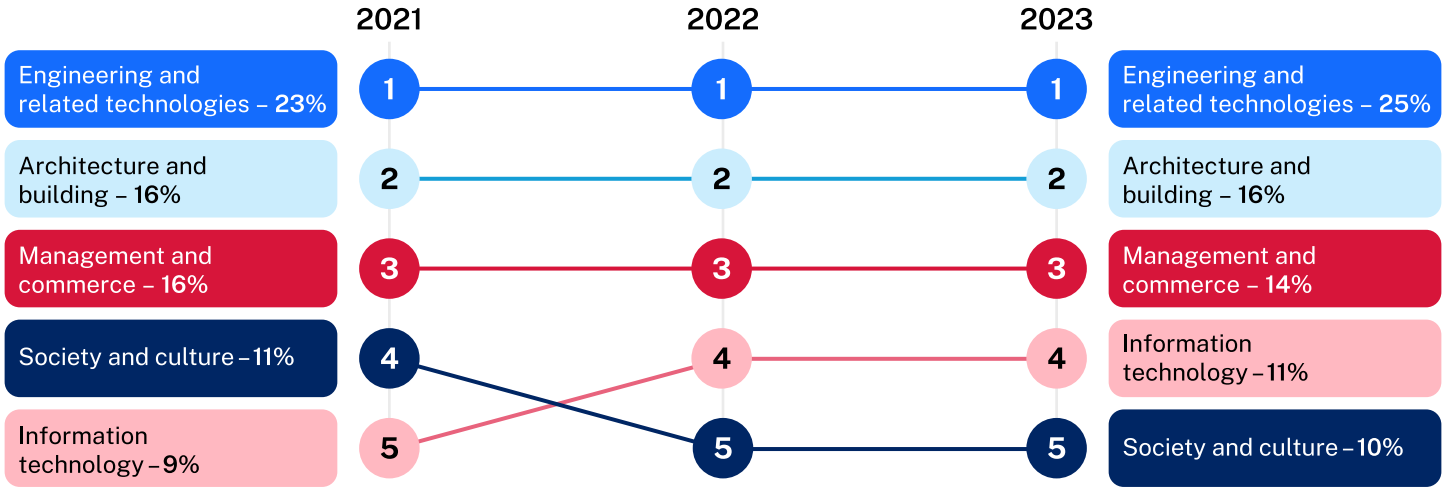
Most popular education enrolment areas

The top 5 educational areas for female, male, and non-binary or other school leavers in 2022 have stayed relatively consistent since 2021. For females, health has consistently been the most popular area of education since 2021. For males, engineering and related technologies has consistently been the most popular area of education since 2021. For non-binary or other school leavers, creative arts and society and culture have been the 2 most popular areas of education since 2021.

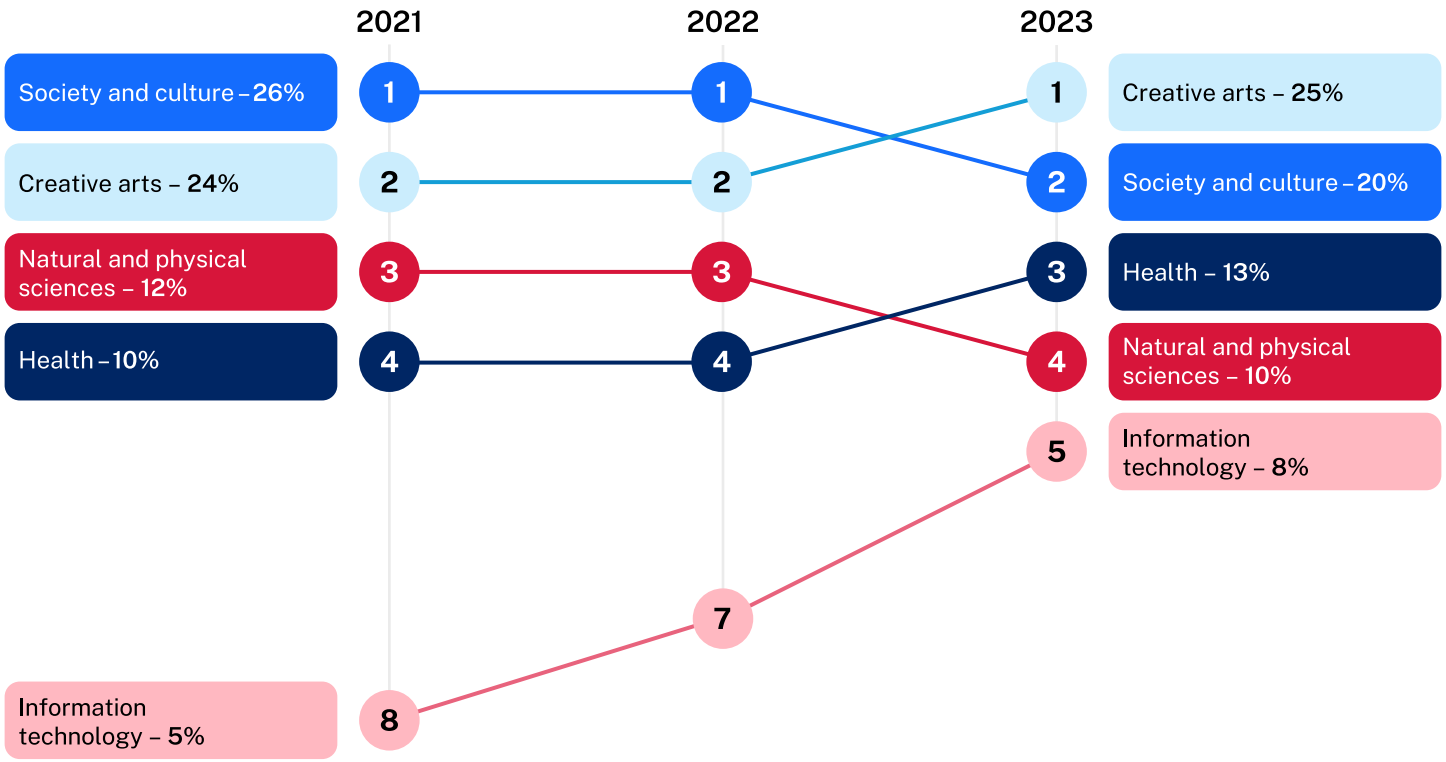
Historical rankings for top 5 education areas in 2023 (females)



Historical rankings for top 5 education areas in 2023 (males)



Historical rankings for top 5 education areas in 2023 (non-binary or other)

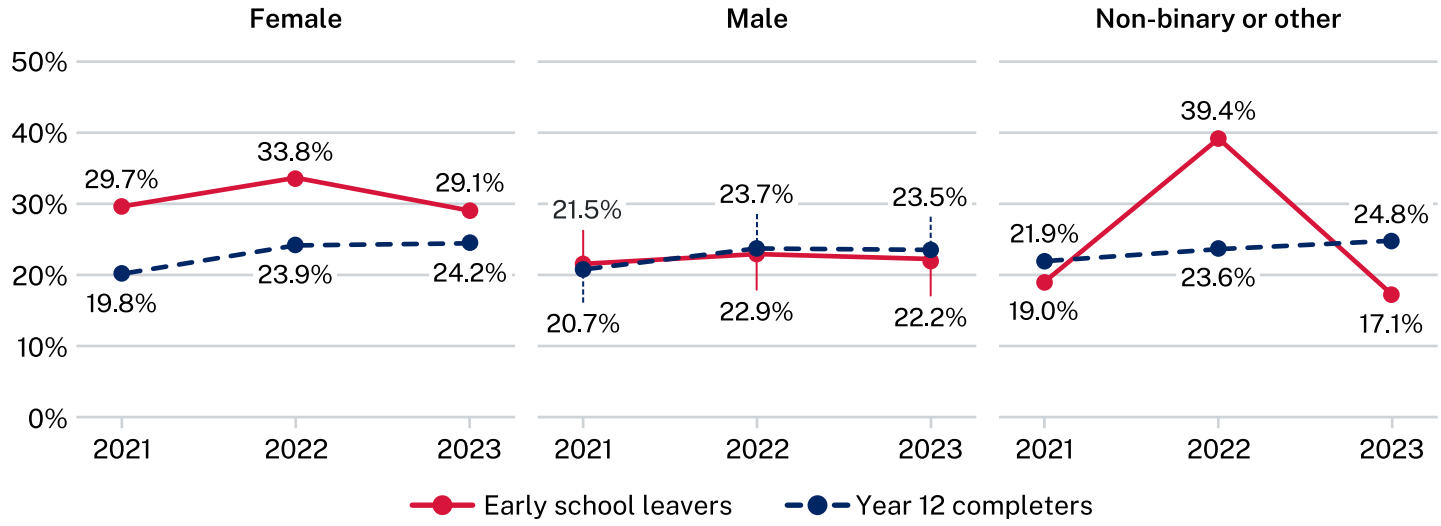


In employment

Between 2021 and 2022 there was an increase in the percentage of female (4.1 pp), male (3.0 pp) and non-binary or other (1.7 pp) Year 12 completers who had employment as their main destination.[3] Between 2022 and 2023 the proportion of female and male Year 12 completers in employment showed little change (0.3 pp increase for females and 0.1 pp decrease for males) while an increase was observed for non-binary or other Year 12 completers in employment (1.2 pp). The percentage of early school leavers who had employment as their main destination has been more variable during this time and was at its highest for all 3 gender groups in 2022.

Since 2021, compared to female Year 12 completers, a higher proportion of female early school leavers were in employment-only destinations 6 to 12 months after they left school. For males there has been a similar proportion of early school leavers and Year 12 completers in employment-only destinations since 2021.

Estimated proportion of female, male and non-binary school leavers in employment, 2021 to 2023

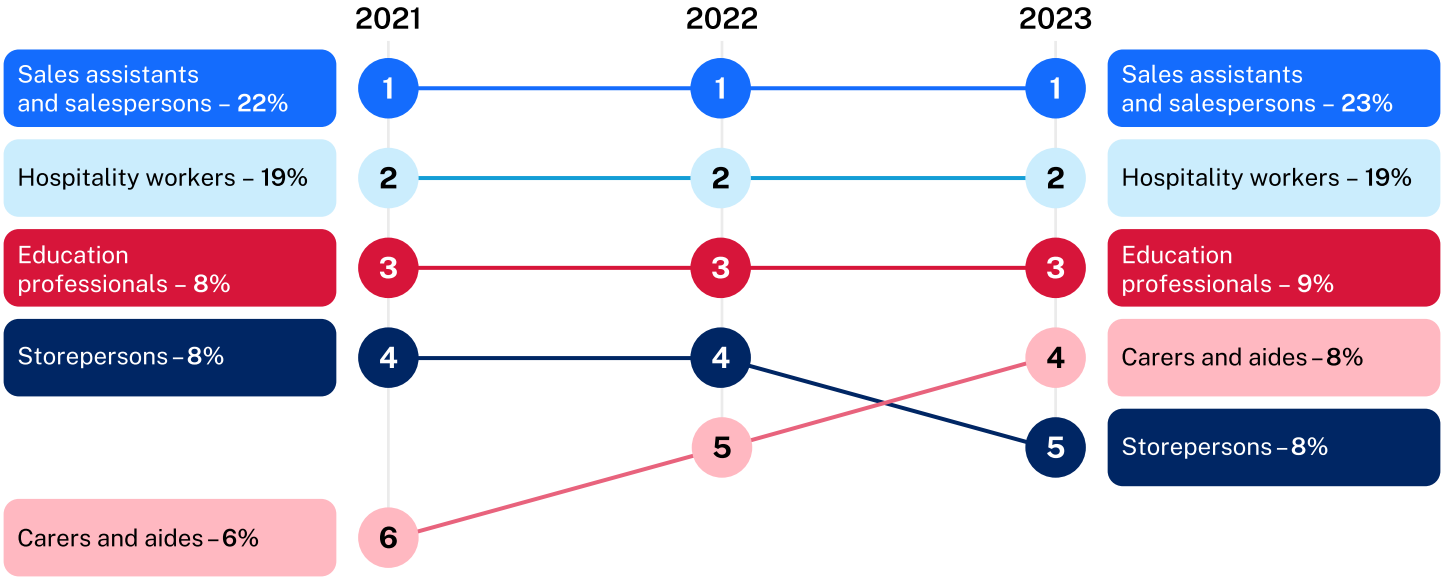


3 Estimated proportions for employment include recent school leavers whose main destination was part-time or full-time work.

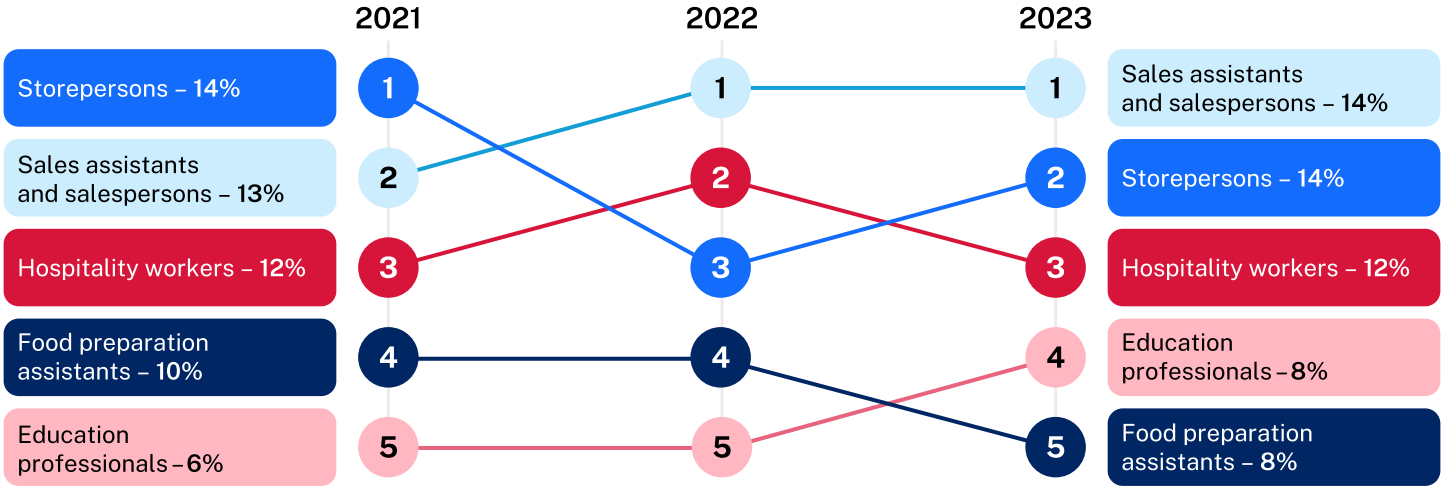
Most popular employment areas[4]

The top 5 areas of employment have remained relatively consistent since 2021 and were similar for male, female, and non-binary or other school leavers. Just under 1 in 4 females and 1 in 5 non-binary or other school leavers worked as sales assistants and salespersons while 1 in 7 males occupied these jobs. For females, sales support workers was the fifth most popular employment area in 2021 and reached sixth position in 2022. For non-binary or other school leavers, food preparation assistants was the third most popular employment area in 2021 and fifth most popular employment area in 2022, reaching sixth position in 2023.[5]

Historical rankings for top 5 employment areas in 2023 (females)



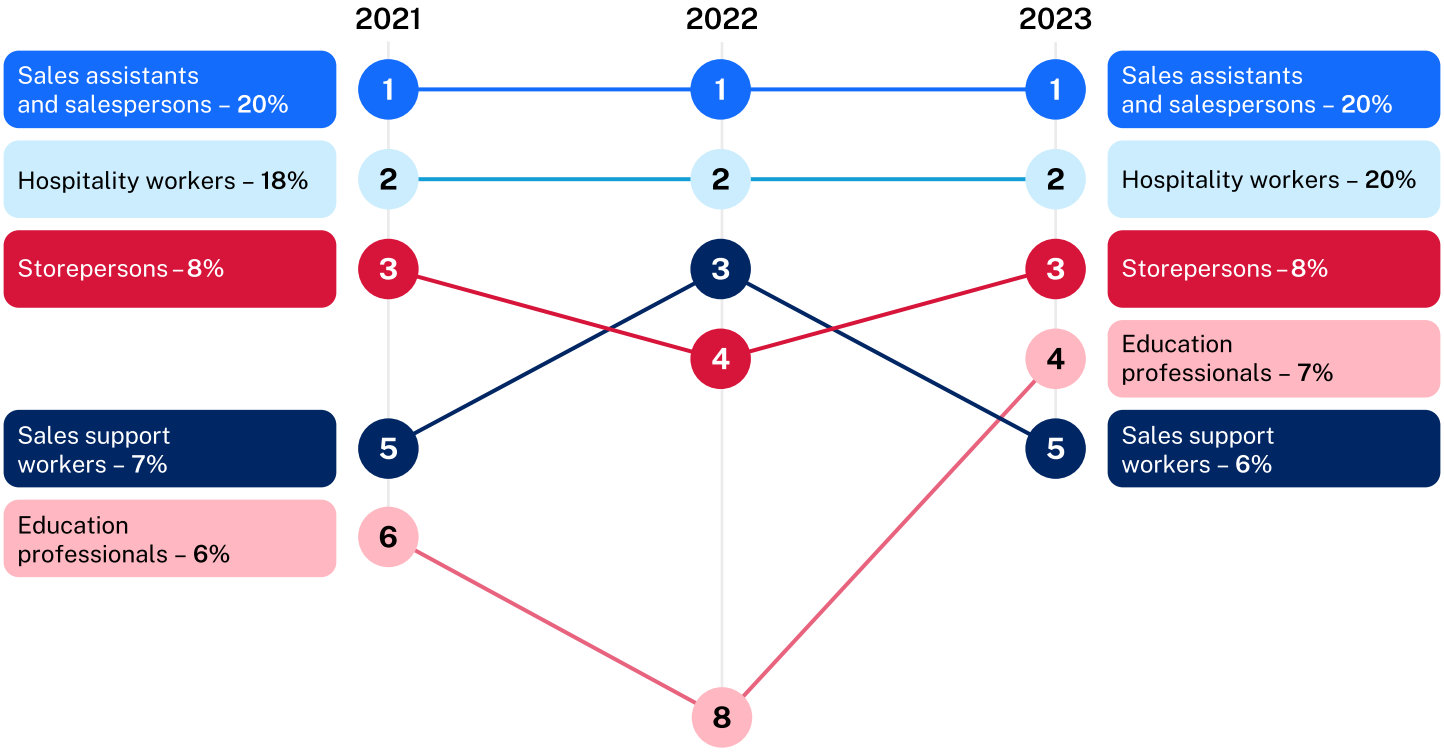
Historical rankings for top 5 employment areas in 2023 (males)



4 Most popular employment areas are defined by the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) sub-major groups. Refer to the ANZSCO latest release for more information.

5 Employment trends and rankings include those in education and in the workforce but exclude those in an apprenticeship or traineeship.

Historical rankings for top 5 employment areas in 2023 (non-binary or other)



Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation GPO Box 33, Sydney NSW 2001, Australia

info@cese.nsw.gov.au education.nsw.gov.au/cese yammer.com/det.nsw.edu.au

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

460c_131224_VRc_v2_AA1YC