



Brochure  
Dragon Professional Anywhere

# Report: public sector strategies for 2022

How leaders can help their teams focus on citizen support by tackling admin burdens

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# Australian public services: a sector under pressure

After 18 months of unprecedented pressure on Australian public services, we wanted to understand how the public sector was preparing for a post-pandemic future. So, we surveyed more than 100 public sector professionals to learn about their priorities for 2022, and the challenges they're facing as they build their strategies.

## The survey

To better understand how public sector organisations are making decisions and planning for 2022, we started the survey with some questions around business goals for the next year.

Our main aim was to understand the real impact of admin and documentation requirements on public sector professionals—and how factors such as typing habits and working environments are affecting that admin burden. We were also interested in the technologies people are using to make their working lives easier, particularly speech recognition.

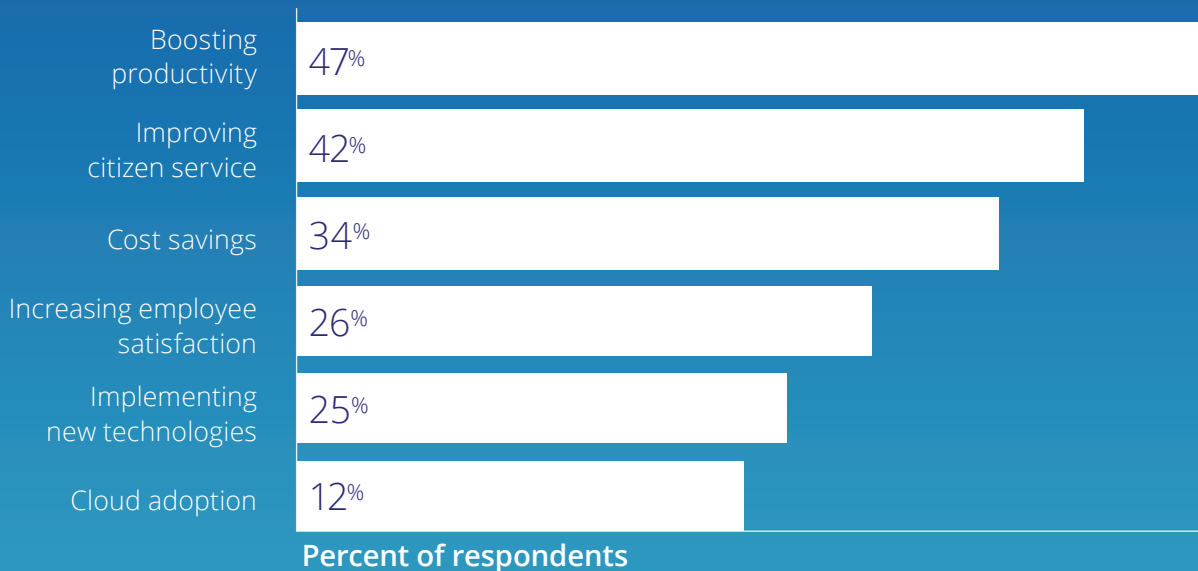
In the following sections, we'll outline our key findings, and reflect on how public sector organisations and individual professionals can address some of the issues and take advantage of new opportunities to boost efficiency and service.

# 1. Striking a difficult balance between service and savings

Maintaining an effective balance between budget and service can be a challenge for any organisation. But it's especially complex for public sector organisations, where budgets may need to cover unexpected pandemic and natural disaster responses and recovery efforts.

We asked our respondents to select their top three priorities for the next 12 months. Many are focused on boosting productivity and improving the services their teams provide in the coming year, but that work will need to be done with a close eye on the number three priority, cost savings.

**Here are the top priorities for public sector teams in 2022:**



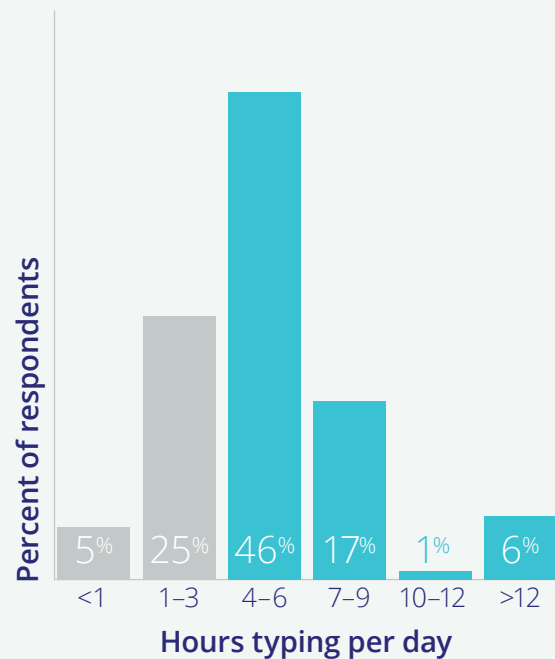
Although there is a wide spread of different priorities across our respondents, they can all be complimentary goals. If public sector leaders choose the right solutions, new technologies and cloud adoption will help boost productivity and save on costs by replacing outdated legacy systems.

With the 2022 budget looking to keep Australian public servants busier than ever, the government has promised it will take action to reduce administrative overheads and streamline businesses' engagement.<sup>1</sup> And with better tools, employees are often happier in their work, which makes them more productive<sup>2</sup> and more likely to deliver a higher standard of service.

1 <https://www.themandarin.com.au/185455-batten-down-the-hatches-where-this-budgets-major-announcements-will-keep-public-servants-busy/>  
2 [https://warwick.ac.uk/newsandevents/pressreleases/new\\_study\\_shows/](https://warwick.ac.uk/newsandevents/pressreleases/new_study_shows/)

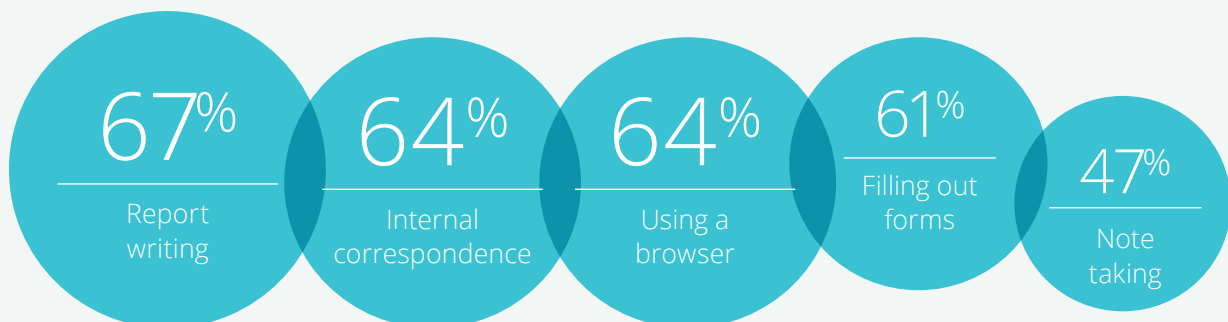
## 2. Most public sector professionals spend over half their workday typing

70% of the public sector professionals we surveyed reported spending at least four hours a day typing for work, with 58% spending a further hour or more typing for personal reasons once they've finished work for the day.



To see how all those hours are allocated, we asked our respondents what kind of typing tasks they do most frequently in their role.

**These are their main tasks:**



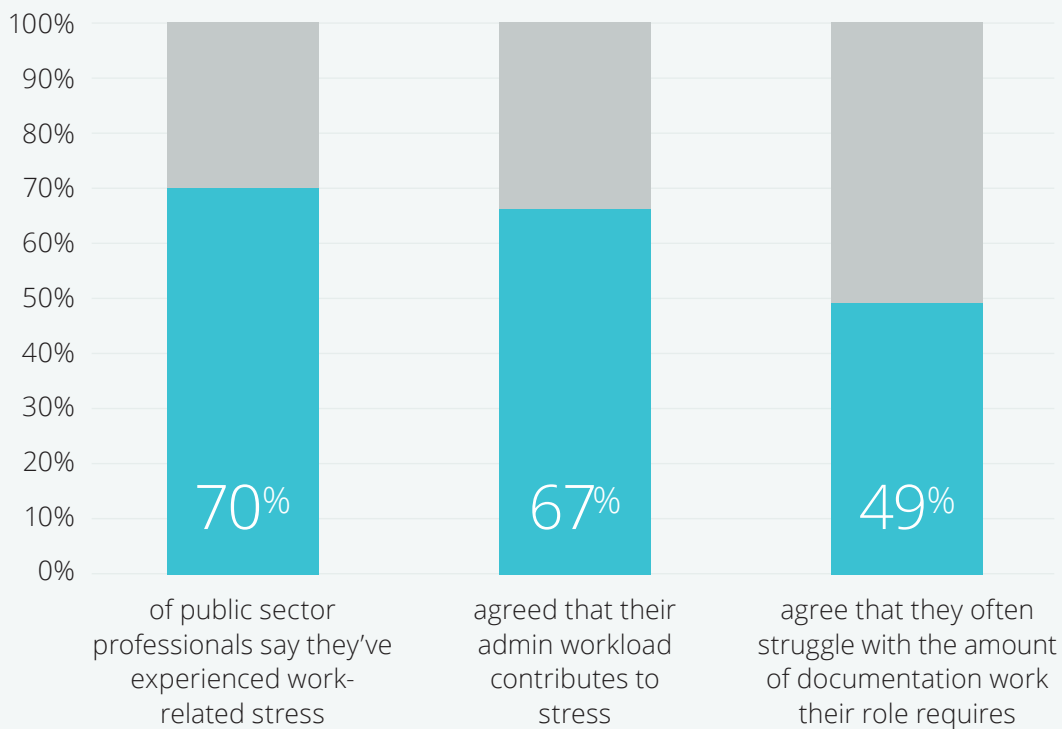
40% of our respondents said their typing speed was either average—40 words per minute—or slow. Over a quarter agreed that their typing speed makes documentation tasks more difficult and time-consuming to complete.

With so much time spent on communicating, filling out forms, and typing up notes, organisations could benefit from looking to productivity-boosting technologies—tools designed to make repetitive tasks such as sending emails and drafting letters faster and easier. With fewer hours spent typing, there's more scope for public sector professionals to focus their time on improving services, working directly with citizens, and other higher-value tasks.

### 3. Work-related stress is exacerbated by the admin workload

Nearly three quarters of public sector professionals say they've experienced work-related stress. And part of that is down to the amount of admin they need to do on a daily basis; 67% agreed that their admin workload contributes to stress, with 49% admitting that they often struggle with the amount of documentation their role requires.

Over half of our respondents also noted that their organisations experience difficulty sharing information, communicating, or collaborating across teams or departments—which often contributes to admin workloads.



With increasing employee satisfaction in their top five goals for the next year, public sector leaders need to focus on addressing their people's stress levels and the workloads that contribute to them. However, we also identified another factor that's adding to admin and the stress it creates—adapting public services during the pandemic.

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#### Slaying the documentation bottleneck for social workers

Explore how speech recognition can alleviate stress and burnout for public services in our [whitepaper](#).

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## 4. Changing roles have created even heavier workloads

The pandemic has put many public sector organisations under enormous pressure. The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) stated that from the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia in early 2020, the Australian Public Service (APS) workforce had to adapt within a short timeframe to a new operating environment and position itself to handle a surge in demand for government services.<sup>3</sup>

The Australian Public Service Commission also reports that APS employees took fewer breaks from work than usual with unscheduled absences in the 3 months to June in 2020, 25% lower per employee compared with the previous year, all while navigating new working environments.<sup>4</sup>

“Increased demand on the APS during the COVID-19 pandemic was largely met through increased hours, less leave and reliance on proven performers.”<sup>4</sup>

To see if our respondents had similar experiences, we asked about how our respondents’ roles had changed in the past 18 months. More than half reported taking on extra responsibilities to support their organisation during the pandemic.

And, crucially, 92% of them also said that their new responsibilities had increased their workload.



92%

of our respondents said that their new responsibilities during the pandemic had increased their workload

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.anao.gov.au/work/performance-audit/management-the-australian-public-service-workforce-response-to-covid-19>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.apsc.gov.au/state-service/state-service-report-2019-20/chapter-1-commitment-service/resilient>



## 5. Speech recognition is well known, but sometimes misunderstood

In various forms, speech recognition has been available for several decades now, and we wanted to know whether it was a popular tool—and if not, why not?

With 100% of respondents stating they have used voice-based technologies of some kind professionally, we were keen to delve further into their understanding of the speech recognition they were using.

We found that only 13% of public sector professionals were using speech recognition where their spoken words appeared on the screen immediately.

Which of the following statements best describes your use of speech recognition in your work? (tick up to three)	
I use free personal assistants/apps for speech recognition.	10%
I use free personal assistants/apps in my personal life	23%
I use a dictation service with speech recognition where I record my voice and speech recognition converts it into text and sends it back.	13%
I use a dictation service where I record my voice and someone later transcribes what I say and sends back the text.	14%
I use speech recognition software where what I say appears on the screen immediately	13%
I do not use speech recognition in my work, have never used it and I'm not considering it	33%
I do not use speech recognition in my work, but I have used it professionally in the past	10%

Our respondents showed good awareness of speech recognition, but they also highlighted some issues that are preventing even more widespread adoption and regular use. For example, 67% of public sector professionals say the speech recognition tools they've encountered struggle to recognise the specialist terms they use at work.

Lack of accuracy is a major barrier that prevents public sector organisations adopting speech recognition, cited by over a quarter of our respondents. There are also concerns about difficulty of use, the amount of IT management involved and whether special equipment was required.

Like any other technology implementation, all this comes down to choosing the right solution. Many use their device's built-in speech-to-text or freeware tools which often lack the professional-grade backend required for seamless speech recognition.

## Alleviate the burden with Dragon

41% of public sector professionals say their organisation outsources transcription work and other admin tasks to typists. Although this can help alleviate some of the workload for employees, it often adds an unnecessary costs to budgets that are already over-stretched.

Speech recognition is a versatile solution that helps solve many of the problems facing overworked public sector employees—without major expenditure or adding to the list of tools for IT teams to manage.

Dragon Professional Anywhere is our purpose-built, professional-grade speech recognition solution, designed to deliver fast, accurate speech-to-text through an intuitive tool. With the ability to transcribe up to 160 words per minute, Dragon is more than three times faster than the average typing speed, and twice as fast as most professional typists.

Users can create documents, fill out digital forms, navigate apps, and even use browsers with voice commands. It provides up to 99% accuracy out of the box, and uses AI and machine learning to adapt to users' accent and speech patterns over time.

The dictionary is fully customisable, which makes it simple for individuals to add the non-standard words and phrases that they use frequently in their roles—particularly useful for roles with very specific terminology, such as social work.

### Secure sensitive data

Our whole family of Dragon solutions is supported by a secure Microsoft Azure backend and 256-bit end-to-end encryption, which protects sensitive data in transit and at rest.

The Nuance Management Centre also helps leaders track usage and visualise ROI, to help monitor productivity and cost savings.

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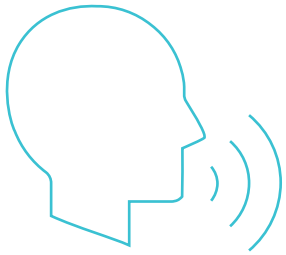
## Did you know?

Speech recognition can help police officers spend less time on paperwork and more time out in the field—serving and protecting the community? Read the [whitepaper: Overcoming the Police Paperwork Challenge](#)

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64%

of public services professionals agree that the ability to complete documentation faster would help improve the service they provide citizens.



Speech recognition is a powerful way to rethink documentation and admin for public sector organisations.

## Looking to the future of public services

After an especially difficult period for public sector organisations, leaders are turning their attention to the coming months, with citizen service and budget concerns at the top of their agenda.

However, admin workloads and stress levels are high—and won't be improving anytime soon without a new approach to complex, manual, and often paper processes. Speech recognition is a powerful way to rethink documentation and admin for public sector organisations. Our survey showed that users and decision-makers do have reservations about accuracy and complexity, but with the right solution, public sector organisations could offer their people an intuitive way to work using their voice—with high accuracy, and without adding to their IT team's workload.

Particularly for those organisations that plan to focus on technology adoption in the coming year, selecting a professional-grade speech recognition solution like Dragon Professional Anywhere will boost productivity, reduce outsourcing costs, and help employees focus on citizen service.

### LEARN MORE

**Talk to us today about Dragon**

[nuance.com/en-au/dragon/engage-us](https://nuance.com/en-au/dragon/engage-us)



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[Nuance Communications](#) (Nuance) is a technology pioneer with market leadership in conversational AI and ambient intelligence. A full-service partner trusted by 77 percent of U.S. hospitals and 85 percent of the Fortune 100 across the globe, we create intuitive solutions that amplify people's ability to help others.

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