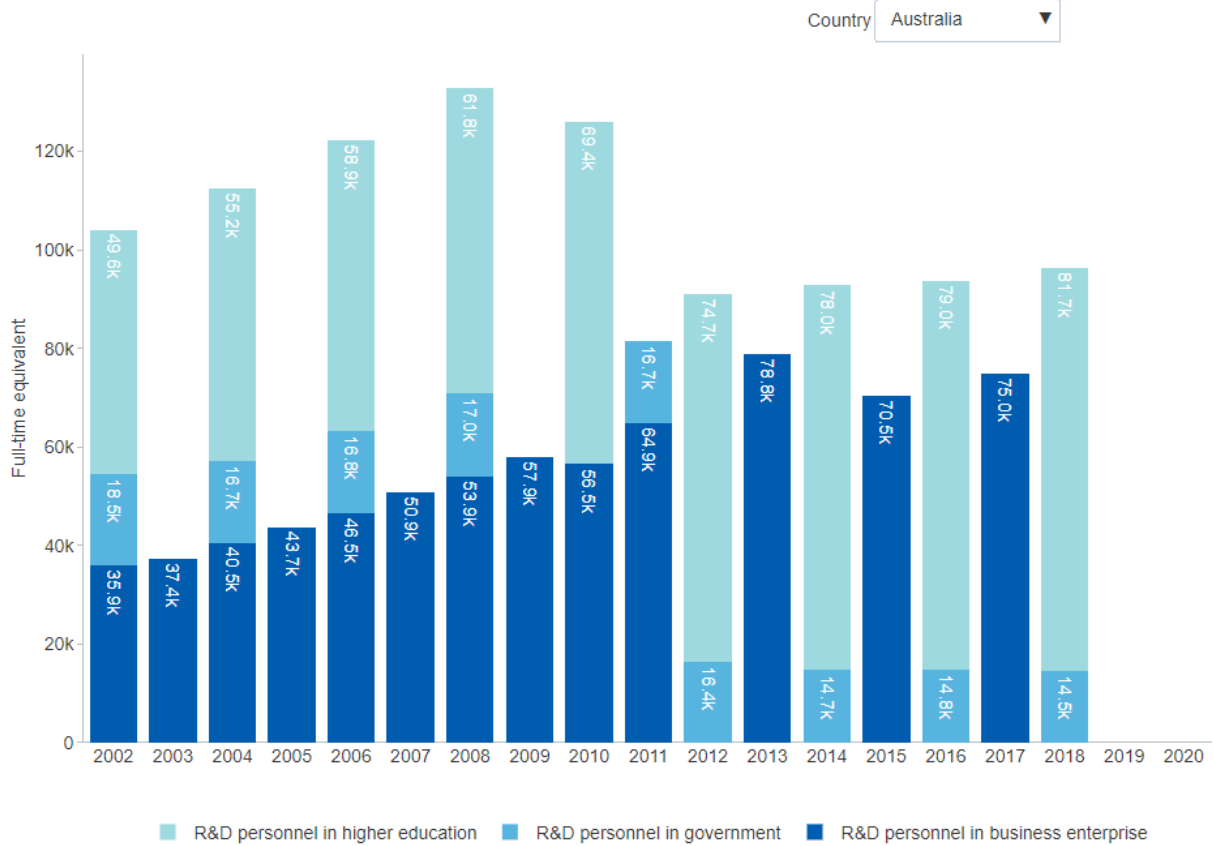


### 5.2.1 R&D personnel by sector

Researchers and other R&D personnel constitute a vital input to R&D activity. In Australia, the number of R&D personnel in the business and higher education sectors increased dramatically since the turn of the century, but declined in the government sector. *Business sector R&D personnel* numbers nearly doubled, from around 35,900 in 2002 to nearly 75,000 in 2017. The rise in *R&D personnel numbers in the higher education sector* was more modest but still significant (from 49,600 in 2002 to 81,700 in 2018). By contrast, the number of *R&D personnel in government* declined in the same period, from 18,500 to 14,500. Based on the OECD definition, R&D personnel include all persons employed directly in R&D activities, and comprises researchers, technicians and support staff. R&D personnel are represented in full-time equivalent units defined as the ratio of working hours actually spent on R&D during a specific reference period divided by the total number of hours worked in the same period by an individual or a group. In *Australia*, just as in many other OECD countries, the business enterprise and higher education sectors are the leading employers of R&D personnel.<sup>12</sup>

**Figure: R&D personnel, by sector, OECD countries, full-time equivalent, latest 2020**



<sup>1</sup> OECD (2021) *Main Science and Technology Indicators*, September 2021, OECD Publishing (<http://www.oecd.org/sti/msti.htm>)

<sup>2</sup> OECD (2017) *OECD Science, Technology and Industry Scoreboard 2017: The digital transformation*, OECD Publishing ([https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/science-and-technology/oecd-science-technology-and-industry-scoreboard-2017\\_9789264268821-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/science-and-technology/oecd-science-technology-and-industry-scoreboard-2017_9789264268821-en))