



Australian Government



Jobs and Skills Australia

Skills Shortage Quarterly

December 2023

26 February 2024



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December quarter 2023 results

The Skills Shortage Quarterly report offers analysis on occupations that may be in shortage or are experiencing shortage pressures. The insights are based on the percentage of advertised vacancies filled by occupation (fill rate), drawn from Jobs and Skills Australia’s Survey of Employers who have Recently Advertised (SERA). More background on the fill rate and other metrics used in the report and their definitions are provided in the Explanatory Notes.

Fill rates are gradually rising

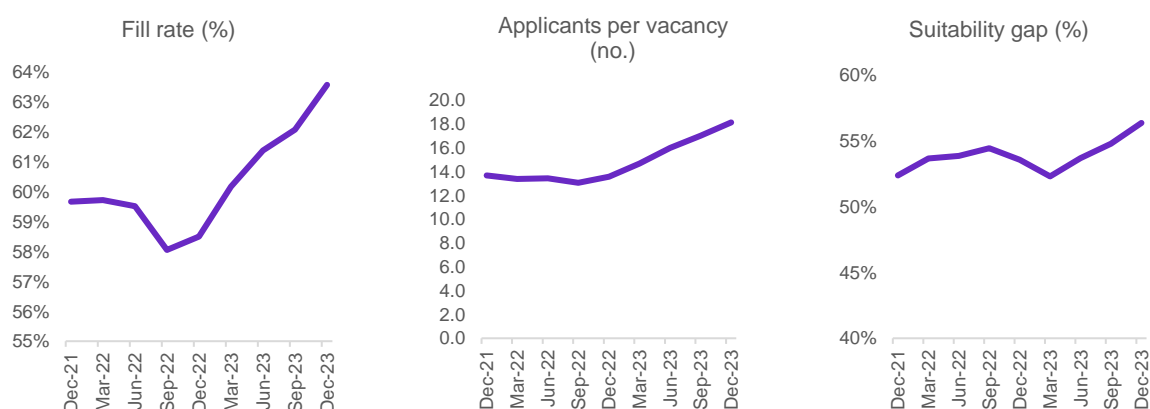
The fill rate across all occupations increased slightly, by 1.5 percentage points, to 64% over the December quarter 2023 (Table 1).¹ The fill rate has gradually increased since a trough of 58% in September 2022. Based on an average per vacancy basis, the number of applicants, qualified applicants, and suitable applicants have also increased over the December quarter 2023 (Figure 1 and Table 1).

Table 1: National snapshot

	Fill rate (%)	Applicants per vacancy (no.)	Qualified applicants per vacancy (no.)	Suitable applicants per vacancy (no.)	Suitability gap (%)
December 2023 quarter	63.6%	18.1	6.1	2.7	56.3%
Change since September 2023 quarter	↑ 1.5% pts	↑ 1.1	↑ 0.3	↑ 0.02	↑ 1.6% pts

Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Survey of Employers who Recently Advertised (SERA).

Figure 1: Quarterly trends since the December quarter 2021

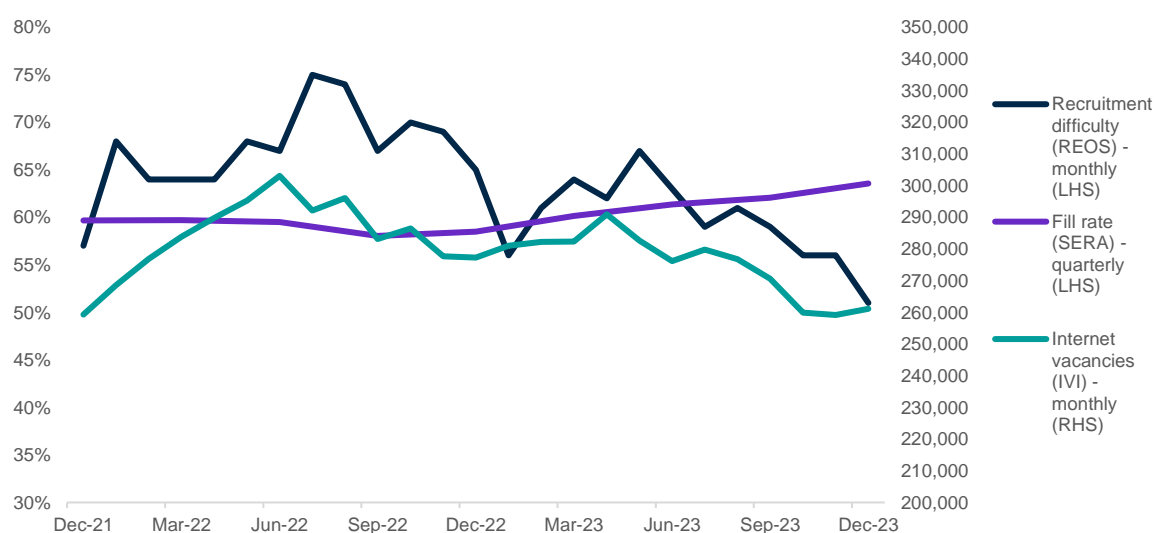


Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Survey of Employers who Recently Advertised (SERA).

¹ Note that in this report, we have changed our methodology to calculate the fill rate and other metrics such as applicants, qualified applicants and suitable applicants per vacancy using 12 months of data leading to the latest quarter. Using a rolling annual period as opposed to the latest quarter itself removes the impact of data volatility attributable to SERA sampling, whereby concentrations of sampling with respect to different occupational major groups can occur at different times of a year.

The quarterly movement in the fill rates and other metrics mentioned above are consistent with signs of labour market conditions softening. The number of internet vacancies as measured by JSA's *Internet Vacancy Index (IVI)* and the recruitment difficulty rate from JSA's *Recruitment Experiences and Outlook Survey (REOS)* both eased in December 2023 and are lower than a year ago (Figure 2). The Australian Bureau of Statistics January 2024 Labour Force Survey also showed an uptick in the unemployment rate to 4.1%. Even though fill rates have been trending up, employers may still face difficulties filling vacancies.

Figure 2: Fill rate (%), recruitment difficulty (%) and internet vacancies (no.)



Source: Jobs and Skills Australia: Survey of Employers who Recently Advertised (SERA); Recruitment Experiences and Outlook Survey (REOS); and Internet Vacancy Index (IVI) (seasonally adjusted).

Fill rates increased in most states and territories, except in Queensland and South Australia, where the fill rates both fell by around 1 percentage point. The largest increases were observed in Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory, where the fill rates both increased by more than 3 percentage points (see Appendix Table 1 for more details).

By Skill Level, fill rates increased across all levels from 1 to 4. The largest increase was observed for Skill Level 4 occupations, increasing by 3 percentage points (see Appendix Table 1 for more details). The fill rate for Skill Level 3 occupations increased by 1 percentage point. But the rate remained low at 48%. The modest rise and the low fill rate may indicate that skill shortage pressures for these occupations persist.

In the December quarter 2023, fill rates for both metropolitan and regional areas (see definitions in the Explanatory Notes) increased modestly to 66% and 59%, respectively. But in metropolitan areas, fill rates remained well above the fill rates in regional areas.

The average difference in fill rates between the two areas has widened over time from an average of 2 percentage points in 2022 to 6 percentage points in 2023, indicating skill shortage pressures in regional areas have become more pronounced. This is supported by data from the REOS, which also show the average difference in recruitment difficulty between Capital Cities and the Rest of State areas has increased from an average of 2 percentage points in 2022 to 6 percentage points in 2023.

The gap between qualified and suitable applicants

Over the quarter to December 2023, the suitability gap increased by 1.6 percentage points to 56.3%.² A suitability gap captures the percentage of applicants who have the required qualifications but are deemed unsuitable for the job advertised.

The metric has several interpretations. For example, a wide or widening gap may indicate:

- that qualifications of applicants may not be equipping them with all skills and experiences needed, including the need for greater work experience and/or other soft or hard skills.
- slack in the labour market, allowing employers greater scrutiny of candidates that apply for vacant roles.

State and territory

In the December quarter 2023, all states have a suitability gap above 52%. Only Western Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania had suitability gaps between 40% and 46% (see more details in the Appendix Table 1).

Tasmania had the lowest suitability gap, at 40.2%. The fill rate in the state also increased by 3.5 percentage points in the December 2023 quarter. The two combined, may reflect Tasmanian employers needing to relax scrutiny of applicants due to, on average, having a smaller pool of qualified applicants to select candidates from than the other jurisdictions.

Skill Level

In the current quarter, Skill Level 1 occupations had the widest suitability gap of 65.7%, while Skill Level 3 occupations had the lowest suitability gap of 44.8% (see more details in the Appendix Table 1).³

The low suitability gap for Skill Level 3 occupations, and low fill rate of 48%, may suggest ongoing challenges that employers are facing with filling vacant positions.

Regions

The suitability gap is much larger in metropolitan areas than in regional areas (58.5% versus 47.8%). The large difference is a product of much larger pools of applicants in metropolitan areas compared to regional areas (21.1 versus 11.0 applicants per vacancy) that allow metropolitan-based employers greater scrutiny of applicants. Moreover, the gap increased more in regional areas (5.8 percentage points), potentially reflecting ongoing challenges for regional employers in finding suitably skilled workers to fill vacant roles.

² Note that in this report, we have changed the measure of suitability gap to percentages which is the difference between the number of qualified applicants and suitable applicants, both at per vacancy base, as a proportion of the number of qualified applicants per vacancy. Compared with the previous measure used, this new measure is more user friendly, easier to interpret particularly when tracking changes over time. Moreover, it is less subject to the impact from changes in the number of qualified applicants per vacancy.

³ As reported in previous editions of the Skill Shortage Quarterly reports, the persistent and wide suitability gap for Skill Level 1 occupations may be due to megatrends shaping the economy. Technology-driven changes in business processes and the net zero transformation of the economy could be raising employers' demand for certain skills and experiences over and above those provided by qualifications.

Professionals snapshot

The fill rate, the number of applicants per vacancy, and the number of qualified and suitable applicants per vacancy all increased in the December quarter 2023 for occupations in the Professionals major group (Table 2). The suitability gap was 65.4% (up 1.5 percentage points). Occupations within the Professionals group tend to have a large gap, due to employers seeking highly qualified, skilled, and experienced workers.

Table 2: Professionals snapshot

	Fill rate (%)	Applicants per vacancy (no.)	Qualified applicants per vacancy (no.)	Suitable applicants per vacancy (no.)	Suitability gap (%)
December 2023 quarter	62.9%	18.6	7.6	2.6	65.4%
Change since September 2023 quarter	↑ 1.0% pts	↑ 1.0	↑ 0.4	↑ 0.05	↑ 1.5% pts

Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Survey of Employers who Recently Advertised (SERA).

Regions

The fill rate for Professionals was significantly lower in regional areas (53.6%) than in metropolitan areas (67.2%). While the fill rate increased by 1.2 percentage points in metropolitan areas, the rate remained largely unchanged in regional areas.

For Professionals occupations, the suitability gap was similar for both metropolitan and regional areas (65.7% and 63.5%, respectively). This similarity was due to the gap increasing by 5.5 percentage points in regional areas over the quarter.

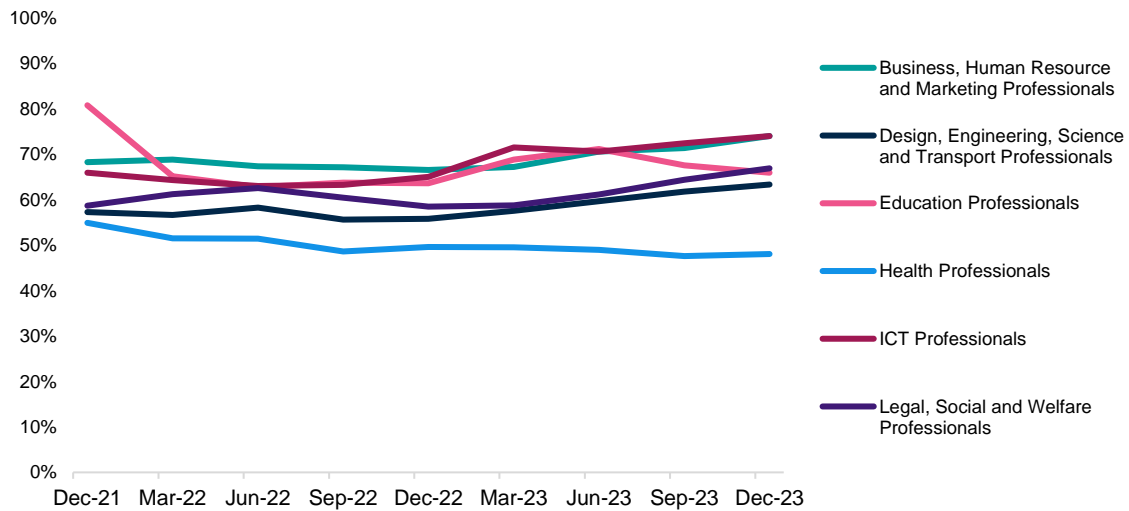
Sub-major occupation groups

The fill rate for all sub-major occupation groups increased this quarter except for Education Professionals, which declined by 1.6 percentage points (Figure 3). The increase for Health Professionals was slight (up 0.4 percentage points), indicating continued challenges filling vacancies in the health-related occupations.

The suitability gap was the largest for Design, Engineering, Science and Transport (75.9%) and ICT Professionals (65.4%) and has remained high over time.⁴

⁴ As mentioned in previous reports, the magnitude of the suitability gap for these sub-major groups may signify that the acquisition of skills occurs to a greater extent through on-the-job-learning. This is reinforced by the fact that these occupations have relatively higher average years of relevant labour market experience required from applicants (more than 3.7 years) than other occupations.

Figure 3: Quarterly fill rate (%) of Professional sub-major groups, 2021 to 2023



Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Survey of Employers who Recently Advertised (SERA).

Technicians and Trades Workers snapshot

The Technicians and Trades Workers major occupation group experienced a 0.5 percentage point increase in the fill rate (Table 3). At 49% the fill rate for this broad group is the lowest, compared to Professionals and Community and Personal Service Workers, which have rates over 60%.

The results indicate that skill shortage pressures persist for Technicians and Trades Workers occupations. As these occupations mostly require VET and/or apprenticeship qualifications, improving VET and apprenticeship completions could help to alleviate the shortage pressures within this occupation group.

Table 3: Technicians and Trade Workers snapshot

	Fill rate (%)	Applicants per vacancy (no.)	Qualified applicants per vacancy (no.)	Suitable applicants per vacancy (no.)	Suitability gap (%)
December 2023 quarter	49.0%	13.5	3.7	1.8	52.3%
Change since September 2023 quarter	↑ 0.5% pts	↑ 0.6	↑ 0.1	↓ 0.02	↑ 1.4% pts

Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Survey of Employers who Recently Advertised (SERA).

Regions

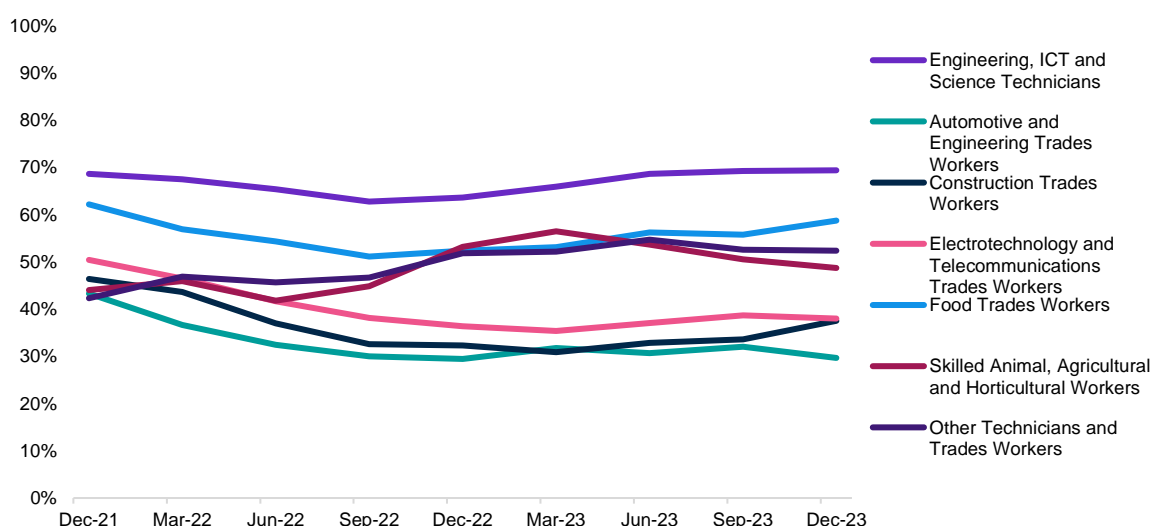
The fill rates for Technicians and Trades Workers were low in both metropolitan areas (50%) and regional areas (47%). The suitability gap was significantly higher in metropolitan areas than regional areas (54.5% versus 44.3%).

Sub-major occupation groups

Fill rates for Automotive and Engineering Trades Workers, Electrotechnology and Telecommunications Trade Workers, Skilled Animal, Agricultural and Horticultural Workers, and Other Technicians and Trades Workers fell over the quarter. But fill rates increased for other sub-major occupation groups (Figure 4).

Fill rates for Engineering, ICT and Science Technicians was the highest of the sub-majors, averaging 68% since the March 2023 quarter. But the fill rates remain low for the other occupations, specifically for Automotive and Engineering Trades Workers (30%) and Construction Trades Workers (38%). This suggests that skill shortage pressures are most acute for these occupation groups.

Figure 4: Quarterly fill rate (%) of Technicians and Trade Workers sub-major groups, 2021 to 2023



Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Survey of Employers who Recently Advertised (SERA)

Compared to Professionals, most sub-major occupation groups within Technicians and Trades Workers occupations tend to have low suitability gaps. As mentioned previously, this

could be due to more employers in the Professionals major group valuing experience over qualifications.⁵

Community and Personal Service Workers snapshot

The fill rate for Community and Personal Service Workers in the December 2023 quarter increased by approximately 3 percentage points. The number of applicants, qualified applicants, and suitable applicants per vacancy also increased over the quarter (Table 5).

Table 5: Community and Personal Service Workers snapshot

	Fill rate (%)	Applicants per vacancy (no.)	Qualified applicants per vacancy (no.)	Suitable applicants per vacancy (no.)	Suitability gap (%)
December 2023 quarter	68.4%	13.9	4.3	2.6	40.9%
Change since September 2023 quarter	↑ 2.8% pts	↑ 1.9	↑ 0.5	↑ 0.1	↑ 5.7% pts

Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Survey of Employers who Recently Advertised (SERA).

Regions

The fill rate for Community and Personal Service Workers increased more in regional areas to be slightly higher than that in metropolitan areas (69% compared to 67%). The total number of applicants per vacancy increased in both metropolitan and regional areas (1.3 compared to 1.5).

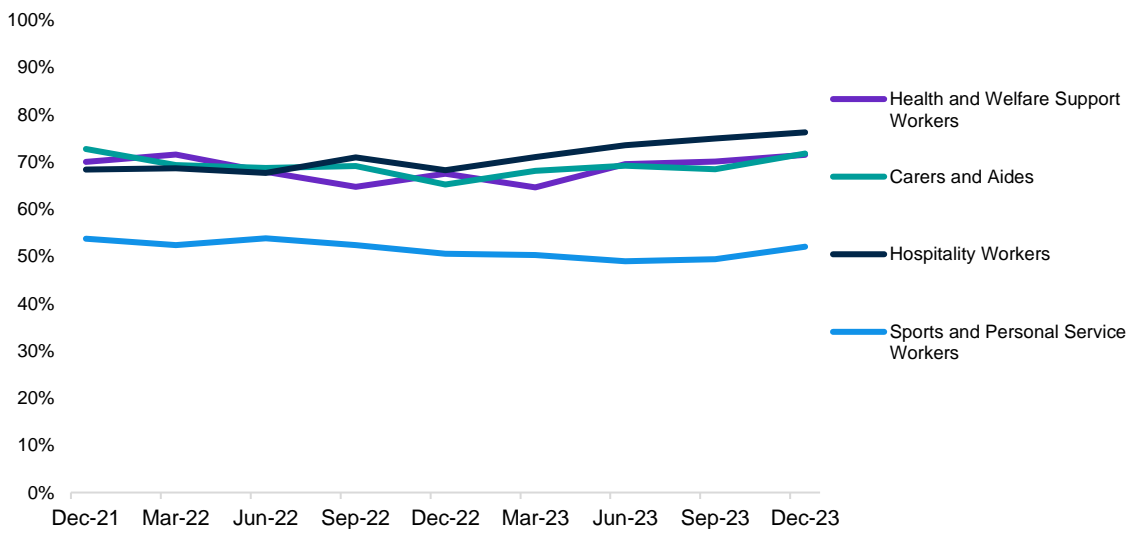
Sub-major occupation groups

The fill rates for the Sports and Personal Service group increased by nearly 3 percentage points to 52%, while the fill rate for the Hospitality group rose by around 1 percentage point to 76% (Figure 5).⁶ The fill rates for Carers and Aides and Health and Welfare Support groups increased by 1.5 and 3.3 percentage points respectively, to around 72%.

⁵ The only exception is Automotive and Engineering Trades and Engineering, ICT and Science Technicians, which had higher suitability gaps of 61.4% and 59.8% respectively. For both occupation groups, the gap has averaged over 55% in the last two years, and employers' experience requirements of applicants for these occupation groups were also extensive at almost 3 years. Similar to Design, Engineering, Science and Transport and ICT Professionals, skills acquisition through on-the-job-learning may also play a key role for Automotive and Engineering Trades and Engineering, ICT and Science Technicians.

⁶ Fill rates for the Sports and Personal Service Group have been consistently low since the occupation was included in the survey in the June quarter 2021. This sub-major group includes a diverse set of occupations such as Beauty Therapists, Fitness Instructors, and Sports Coaches, Instructors and Officials.

Figure 5: Quarterly fill rate (%) of Community and Personal Service Workers sub-major group, 2021 to 2023



Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Survey of Employers who Recently Advertised (SERA)

Spotlight piece: skill shortage

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In this section we outline how a skill shortage is defined by Jobs and Skills Australia, and provide a brief overview of possible causes, and the impact on businesses and the economy. We also explain some common misconceptions on skill shortages.

Defining skill shortages

Jobs and Skills Australia uses the following definition of skill shortages:

An occupation is in shortage when employers are unable to fill or have considerable difficulty filling vacancies for an occupation or cannot meet significant specialised skill needs within that occupation, at current levels of remuneration and conditions of employment and in reasonably accessible locations.

The above definition therefore uses the percentage of advertised vacancies filled as the primary measure of skill shortages (fill rate). This metric is objective and has a simple intuition which is a low fill rate would imply a high likelihood of an occupation being in shortage while a high fill rate would suggest a lower chance of the occupation being in shortage.

Below are some examples of terms that are not the same but commonly confused with the Jobs and Australia definition of skill shortages:

- **Labour shortages:** this generally refers to the quantity of the gap between demand for and supply of labour. This gap is difficult to measure: one key reason being that both demand and supply of labour change regularly, leading to any gap between the two being highly volatile.
- **Qualification shortages:** qualified applicants are not always suitable to employers as employers often seek additional requirements like experience or employability skills.
- **Skills gaps:** employers may need workers with a specialised skill set. This is not the same as shortages of an entire occupation.
- **High turnover:** this can give the impression of skill shortages because employers are constantly recruiting. However, many lower skilled occupations employ casual workers such as in the hospitality or retail sector. Workers often use these jobs as stepping stones to progress further in the labour market. If the supply of workers can meet the demand created by high turnover, the occupation may not be in shortage.

Causes and consequences

There are many broader, economy wide factors that may lead to skill shortages. For example, from the demand side,

- Skill shortages often occur in a tight labour market in which employers compete intensively for limited talent.
- Major government spending on specific projects (such as healthcare or infrastructure) often leads to a high demand for specialised skill needs in the relevant occupations.

- Demographic changes, particularly towards an ageing population, can generate a high demand for some occupations particularly in the Health Professionals and Community and Service Workers groups. When the supply of skilled labour is insufficient, this leads to skill shortages.
- Similarly, changes in technology (for example, towards AI) and economic structural change (for example, towards a more service-based economy) can also create significant needs for specialised skills within relevant occupations.

On the other hand, factors such as insufficient supply from training systems for specific skills, poor employment conditions or pay, high staff turnover and cultural barriers (particularly against female workers entering male-dominated occupations) also impact employers' ability to fill vacancies.

For businesses, the most common impacts of skill shortages are increased workload for current staff members and increased recruitment costs. In other instances, some businesses raise their wages, while others are severely hampered in terms of output, quality, competitiveness, or ability to introduce new technologies and products.

For the economy, skill shortages can lower productivity. This is because they can increase recruitment costs, reduce the quality of skill matching in recruitment, cause firms to substitute from skilled labour to less productive labour, discourage investment in technology, and reduce the opportunity for localised learning effects.

Some myths and misconceptions

Myth 1: Governments alone can address skill shortages

The labour market is incredibly complex, differentiated, and dynamic. Available skills in the market are determined by the individual decisions of millions of students, workers, and businesses.

Addressing skill shortages requires action from all main actors of the labour market – government, business, education and training sector and workers. Alone, the government can only address certain areas such as by helping remove the critical blockages in the labour market, providing relevant information to employers and workers, supporting education and training, or targeting skilled migration to address skills shortages.

Myth 2: Rapid expansion in demand always drives shortages

Increased demand will only drive shortages if the supply of specialised skilled labour cannot meet its demand. The relationship between employment growth and shortages is not nearly as strong as most would expect. Sometimes rapidly expanding industries are not in shortage because supply is able to meet demand. Sometimes stable or declining occupations are in shortage because the current supply of suitable workers is insufficient. It is always the balance of demand and supply that matters.

Myth 3: Increased training funding is a good response to all skill shortages

Skill shortages can be driven by many factors. Increasing training funding is helpful if the funding is targeted towards a shortage where the main driver is a lack of qualified or trained workers. Shortages are also driven by low staff retention – stemming from poor pay and workplace conditions. Ways to enhance the attractiveness of the occupation through improved remuneration and/or working conditions, professional development and clearer career pathways would be the solution to alleviate this kind of shortage.

It can also be caused by employer demand for skills and experience that are not necessarily acquired through the education system, such as 'soft skills'. In that case, simply increasing

the throughput of qualified people would be a questionable strategy. The solution would be to enhance the attributes of qualified applicants through investing in their employability skills and work experience.

Myth 4: Wages always rise in response to shortages

Increasing wages is one of many employers' responses to skill shortages, and employers may prefer other responses. As reported in many studies (for example, Leal 2019), there is limited evidence that firms raise wages (temporarily or permanently) in response to skill shortages.⁷ This is consistent with our analysis in the [2023 SPL Key Findings Report](#), which shows only 1% of employers adjusted remuneration to attract suitably skilled workers to fill vacancies. However, the opposite is often true. That is, flat constrained wages may cause a skill shortage.

Myth 5: Demands of all employers can be met

Not all employer vacancies in the labour market can be filled. For example, a hospitality employer may not be able to fill their advertised vacancies as workers may have access to better pay, conditions and career progression opportunities elsewhere. But this is exactly how the market is supposed to work and produce the most productive outcomes for the economy. Theoretically, the market should allocate workers to the most productive businesses, areas and uses, including in places that are generally higher paid, have better employment conditions or yield better staff satisfaction.

Myth 6: Skill shortages can only be bad for the economy

There are positive aspects to some skills shortages. During periods of tight labour markets, skill shortages prompt more employers to provide more hours of work to existing workers and hire unemployed workers, including those that are long term unemployed and marginalised. This leads to better labour market efficiency. That is, those that want a job are more likely to find a job. Also, there might be increased training and upskilling opportunities for workers. Shortages may also create upward pressure on wage growth. These impacts benefit vulnerable workers the most, including younger, and lower-income Australians with fewer skills.

⁷ Leal, 2019, [Firm-level insights into skills shortages and wages growth](#), RBA Bulletin, March 2019.

Appendix

Appendix Table 1: December 2023 quarter data

Category	Fill rate (%)		Applicants per vacancy		Qualified applicants per vacancy		Suitable applicants per vacancy		Suitability gap	
	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change
Overall	63.6%	+1.5% pts	18.1	+1.1	6.1	+0.3	2.7	+0.0	56.3%	+1.6% pts
<i>States and territories</i>										
New South Wales	61.9%	+1.9% pts	17.5	+1.3	6.2	+0.4	2.7	+0.0	56.5%	+2.4% pts
Victoria	61.4%	+1.2% pts	18.8	+1.0	6.8	+0.2	2.6	-0.1	61.5%	+2.4% pts
Queensland	63.1%	-1.3% pts	16.0	+0.7	5.2	+0.1	2.4	-0.1	53.1%	+1.8% pts
South Australia	63.6%	-0.6% pts	18.6	+0.4	6.5	+0.3	2.5	-0.0	62.2%	+2.2% pts
Western Australia	66.7%	+1.7% pts	16.3	+0.1	4.6	-0.1	2.5	+0.1	45.8%	-3.9% pts
Tasmania*	62.0%	+3.5% pts	14.6	-1.5	4.0	-1.1	2.4	-0.3	40.2%	-7.9% pts
Northern Territory*	53.2%	+0.1% pts	11.0	+0.5	3.4	+0.0	1.6	-0.0	52.7%	+1.1% pts
Australian Capital Territory*	60.7%	+3.0% pts	10.7	-0.3	3.3	-0.0	1.8	-0.1	44.4%	+2.6% pts

Category	Fill rate (%)		Applicants per vacancy		Qualified applicants per vacancy		Suitable applicants per vacancy		Suitability gap	
	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change
<i>Skill level⁸</i>										
Skill Level 1	65.3%	+1.0% pts	20.6	+1.2	8.2	+0.4	2.8	+0.0	65.7%	+1.4% pts
Skill Level 2	72.6%	+1.7% pts	21.6	+1.4	6.2	+0.2	3.1	+0.0	50.4%	+1.1% pts
Skill Level 3	48.2%	+1.0% pts	10.6	+0.6	2.8	+0.1	1.5	+0.0	44.8%	+2.8% pts
Skill Level 4	69.9%	+2.9% pts	19.2	+1.5	5.8	+0.3	3.3	+0.1	43.3%	+1.7% pts
<i>Occupations – select categories⁹</i>										
Professionals	62.9%	+1.0% pts	18.6	+1.0	7.6	+0.4	2.6	+0.0	65.4%	+1.5% pts
Business, Human Resource and Marketing	74.0%	+2.6% pts	25.4	+3.1	8.9	+1.1	3.3	+0.2	62.6%	+2.7% pts
Design, Engineering, Science and Transport	63.3%	+1.5% pts	23.7	+0.3	11.1	+0.4	2.7	-0.1	75.9%	+1.4% pts
Education	65.9%	-1.6% pts	7.3	+0.5	3.5	-0.2	1.5	-0.1	56.6%	+1.2% pts
Health	48.0%	+0.4% pts	5.6	-0.2	2.9	-0.0	1.4	-0.0	51.1%	+0.2% pts
ICT	74.0%	+1.6% pts	43.3	+3.0	16.6	+1.5	5.7	+0.4	65.4%	+0.9% pts

⁸ Skill level categories are based on the [Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations](#) (ANZSCO).

⁹ Sub-occupations are based on the 2-digit ANZSCO level and only includes those with a large enough sample size over the quarter.

Category	Fill rate (%)		Applicants per vacancy		Qualified applicants per vacancy		Suitable applicants per vacancy		Suitability gap	
	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change
Legal, Social and Welfare	66.9%	+2.5% pts	9.8	+1.2	3.9	+0.6	2.0	+0.2	48.4%	+4.7% pts
Technicians and Trades Workers	49.0%	+0.5% pts	13.5	+0.6	3.7	+0.1	1.8	-0.0	52.3%	+1.4% pts
Engineering, ICT and Science Technicians	69.3%	+0.1% pts	26.9	+0.7	8.1	-0.3	3.3	-0.3	59.8%	+2.0% pts
Automotive and Engineering Trades	29.7%	-2.4% pts	7.7	+0.7	2.4	+0.1	0.9	+0.0	61.4%	+0.9% pts
Construction Trades	37.5%	+3.9% pts	7.1	+0.9	1.3	+0.1	0.8	+0.1	36.4%	+2.1% pts
Electrotechnology and Telecomm. Trades	38.0%	-0.7% pts	8.0	-0.2	2.2	-0.1	1.3	-0.0	40.3%	-1.3% pts
Food Trades	58.7%	+3.0% pts	11.2	+1.1	3.8	+0.9	2.0	+0.3	46.9%	+5.7% pts
Skilled Animal, Agricultural and Horticultural	48.7%	-1.8% pts	11.8	+0.5	2.0	-0.2	1.6	+0.0	19.1%	-8.9% pts
Other Technicians and Trades Workers	52.3%	-0.2% pts	8.5	-0.0	1.5	+0.0	1.1	-0.1	23.0%	+3.7% pts

Category	Fill rate (%)		Applicants per vacancy		Qualified applicants per vacancy		Suitable applicants per vacancy		Suitability gap	
	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change
Community and Personal Service Workers	68.4%	+2.8% pts	13.9	+1.9	4.3	+0.5	2.6	+0.1	40.9%	+5.7% pts
Health and Welfare Support	71.5%	+1.5% pts	13.5	+1.0	4.9	+0.2	2.5	-0.0	49.1%	+3.2% pts
Carers and Aides	71.7%	+3.3% pts	10.1	+0.9	3.7	+0.5	2.0	-0.1	45.4%	+9.3% pts
Hospitality Workers	76.2%	+1.3% pts	28.4	+4.9	6.7	+0.6	5.0	+0.2	26.5%	+3.4% pts
Sports and Personal Service	52.0%	+2.7% pts	9.9	+1.8	2.5	+0.1	1.4	-0.0	43.4%	+3.1% pts
<i>Metro/regional</i>										
Metro	65.6%	+1.4% pts	21.1	+1.2	7.2	+0.3	3.0	+0.0	58.5%	+1.0% pts
Regional	58.5%	+0.3% pts	11.0	+0.6	3.5	+0.2	1.9	-0.1	47.8%	+5.8% pts
<i>Metro/regional – broad occupation groups</i>										
Professionals										
Metro	67.2%	+1.2% pts	21.5	+1.0	8.7	+0.4	3.0	+0.1	65.7%	+0.7% pts
Regional	53.6%	+0.2% pts	10.7	+0.7	4.6	+0.5	1.7	-0.0	63.5%	+5.5% pts
Technicians and Trades Workers										
Metro	49.6%	+0.2% pts	15.6	+0.7	4.2	+0.0	1.9	-0.0	54.5%	+0.5% pts
Regional	47.3%	+0.5% pts	8.9	+0.3	2.4	+0.1	1.4	-0.1	44.3%	+4.6% pts

Category	Fill rate (%)		Applicants per vacancy		Qualified applicants per vacancy		Suitable applicants per vacancy		Suitability gap	
	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change	Dec-2023 quarter	Quarterly change
Community and Personal Service Workers										
Metro	66.9%	+1.4% pts	15.7	+1.5	5.0	+0.5	2.8	-0.0	44.3%	+6.9% pts
Regional	69.0%	+2.3% pts	9.6	+1.3	3.0	+0.3	1.9	-0.1	36.5%	+9.0% pts

Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Survey of Employers who Recently Advertised (SERA), December 2023 quarter.

Explanatory Notes

The Survey of Employers who have Recently Advertised (SERA) is designed for the specific purpose of assessing occupational shortages for skilled occupations and provides a direct measure of the employer experience when recruiting. The survey receives around 2,000 responses each quarter from employers who have advertised vacancies online. Only those occupations with a sufficient quarterly sample size are included for analysis in this report to ensure data changes are more reflective of labour market developments.

The survey covers occupations, as defined by [Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations](#), generally requiring a university degree, trade apprenticeship or Certificate III or Certificate IV. As a result, the survey outcomes are reflective of occupations requiring post-school education and training.

The fill rate is used as a proxy for identifying occupations that may be in shortage: lower fill rates generally imply greater employer difficulties filling vacant positions. In contrast, higher fill rates suggest fewer challenges and in general, imply a lower likelihood of shortage.

Additional metrics collected in SERA include applicants on a per vacancy basis; the average number of total applicants; qualified applicants; suitable applicants; and the average years of labour market experience sought by employers (for definitions, refer to the following section). Movements in these variables add context to changes in fill rates over time.

Data found in Skilled Shortage Quarterly is not an indicator of occupations appearing on the 2023 Skills Priority List (SPL).

Caution should be exercised when interpreting data for Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory given lower sample sizes.

Definitions of metrics

The fill rate is the percentage of vacancies employers advertised that were filled. The metric is calculated by dividing the number of filled vacancies by total advertised vacancies.

The average number of applicants per vacancy is calculated as the sum of the number of applicants divided by the sum of advertised vacancies.

The average number of qualified applicants per vacancy is calculated as the sum of the number of qualified applicants divided by the sum of advertised vacancies. Qualified applicants are the applicants who are assessed by employers as meeting the required qualification criteria of an advertised vacancy.

The average number of suitable applicants per vacancy is calculated as the sum of the number of suitable applicants divided by the sum of advertised vacancies. Suitable applicants are those who are deemed by employers to be suitable for the job advertised.

The average years of labour market experience sought by employer is the average number of years that employers require applicants to have spent in relevant occupations and is calculated as the mean of the years required per employer.

Metropolitan area refers to Capital City, while **Regional area** refers to Rest of State locations. Capital City and Rest of State areas are defined by the [Australian Statistical Geography Standard \(ASGS\): Volume 1 – Main Structure and Greater Capital City Statistical Areas](#), July 2016.

Suitability gap is the difference between the average number of qualified applicants per vacancy and the average number of suitable applicants per vacancy. A suitability gap

greater than zero would mean that there are fewer suitable applicants than qualified applicants.

For more information, contact SkillsPriorityList@jobsandskills.gov.au.

Please refer to [Skills Shortages Analysis | Jobs and Skills Australia](#) for the 2023 SPL key findings reports, stakeholder submission snapshot, methodology paper and data.