



Australian Government



Jobs and Skills Australia

Occupation Shortage Report

March quarter 2026

3 June 2026



Contents

Introduction	2
National results	2
Metropolitan area results	3
Regional area results	4
Results by Skill Level	5
Results by Major Group	7
Explanatory Notes	9
Definitions of metrics	9

Introduction

The Occupation Shortage Report presents select data from Jobs and Skills Australia’s Survey of Employers who have Recently Advertised (SERA). The [Explanatory notes](#) section defines the metrics used in this report.

National results

Table 1: National snapshot

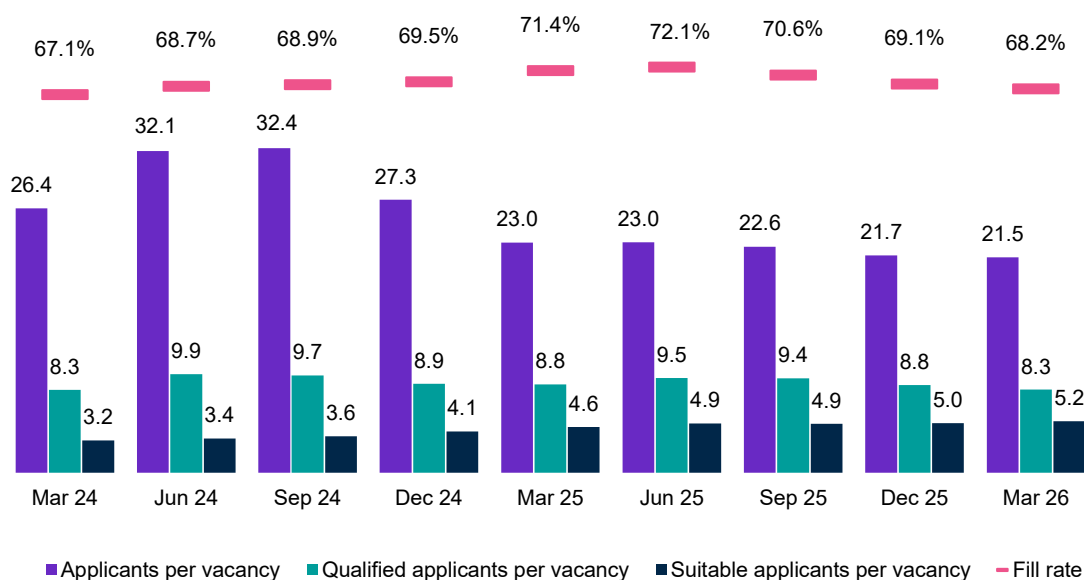
	March quarter 2026	Change over the quarter	Change over 12 months
Vacancy fill rate (%) ¹	68.2%	▼0.9% pts	▼3.3% pts
Total applicants per vacancy (no.)	21.5	▼0.2	▼1.5
Qualified applicants per vacancy (no.)	8.3	▼0.5	▼0.5
Suitable applicants per vacancy (no.)	5.2	▲0.2	▲0.6

Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, SERA.

Note: The change from previous quarter refers to the change from December quarter 2025 to March quarter 2026. The change from the previous 12 months refers to the change from March quarter 2025 to March quarter 2026.

The vacancy fill rate fell by 0.9 percentage points in the March quarter 2026 to 68.2% (down from 69.1% in the December quarter 2025). Over the 12 months to the March quarter 2026, the rate fell by 3.3 percentage points (Table 1 and Figure 1).^[2]

Figure 1: Fill rate (%) and total, qualified, and suitable applicants per vacancy (no.), national level



Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, SERA.

Total applicants per vacancy were very similar to the previous quarter, but they were lower than 12 months earlier (March quarter 2025).

¹ This metric shows the percentage of advertised vacancies that are filled by employers.

The decline slowed, which suggested this measure may have stabilised after falling quickly between the September quarter 2024 and the March quarter 2025.

Qualified applicants per vacancy fell over the quarter to 8.3 and were slightly lower than 12 months earlier. Suitable applicants per vacancy increased steadily over time and reached 5.2 in the March quarter 2026.

Metropolitan area results

Table 2: Metropolitan snapshot

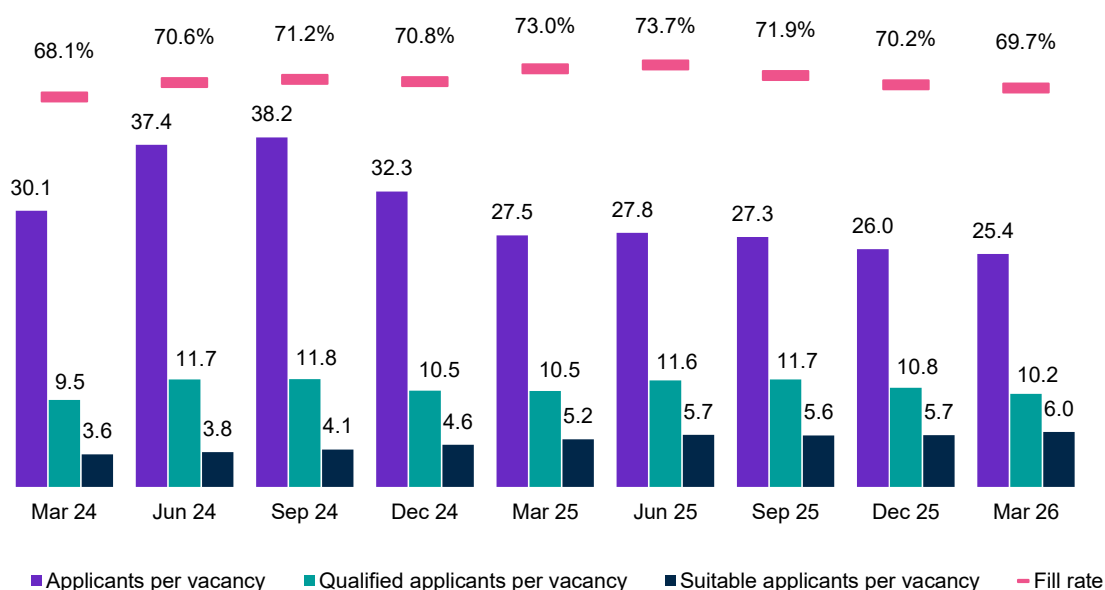
	March quarter 2026	Change over the quarter	Change over 12 months
Vacancy fill rate (%)	69.7%	▼0.6% pts	▼3.4% pts
Total applicants per vacancy (no.)	25.4	▼0.5	▼2.0
Qualified applicants per vacancy (no.)	10.2	▼0.6	▼0.3
Suitable applicants per vacancy (no.)	6.0	▲0.3	▲0.8

Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, SERA.

Changes in metropolitan areas over the quarter and over the 12 months to the March quarter 2026 were generally similar to the national results (Table 2).

- The fill rate in the March quarter 2026 was 69.7%. It fell slightly over the quarter and also fell over the past 12 months (it was 73.0% in the March quarter 2025).
- Total applicants per vacancy and qualified applicants per vacancy both fell over the quarter and over the past 12 months.
- Suitable applicants per vacancy increased over the quarter and over the past 12 months.

Figure 2: Fill rate (%) and total, qualified, and suitable applicants per vacancy (no.), metropolitan area



Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, SERA.

Regional area results

Table 3: Regional snapshot

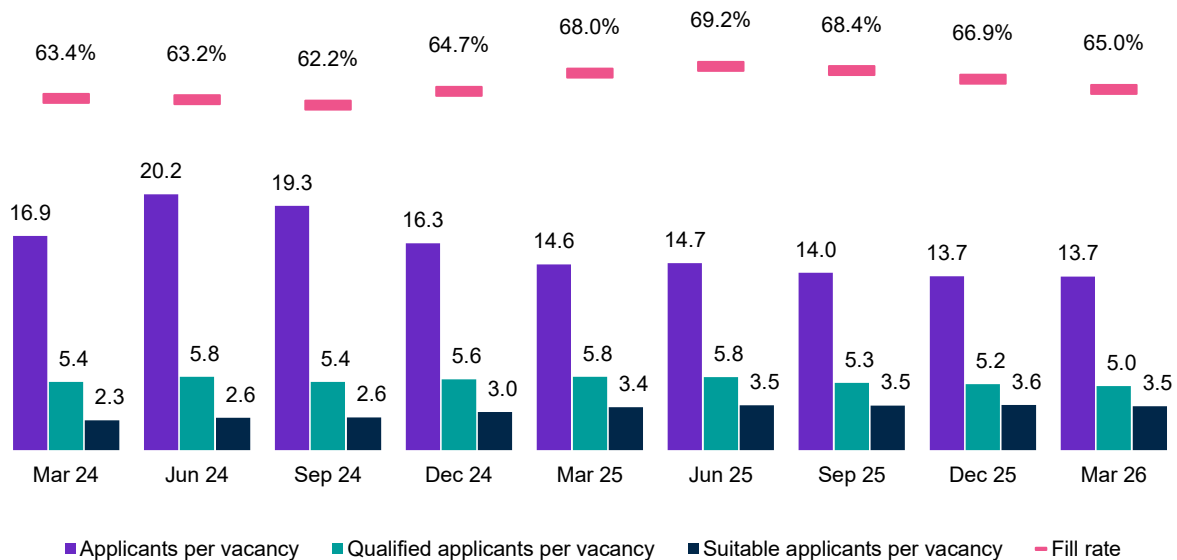
	March quarter 2026	Change over the quarter	Change over 12 months
Vacancy fill rate (%)	65.0%	▼1.9% pts	▼2.9% pts
Total applicants per vacancy (no.)	13.7	--	▼1.0
Qualified applicants per vacancy (no.)	5.0	▼0.1	▼0.7
Suitable applicants per vacancy (no.)	3.5	▼0.1	▲0.1

Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, SERA.

The fill rate in regional areas stayed below the metropolitan fill rate in the March quarter 2026. The gap between metropolitan and regional areas increased to 4.6 percentage points.

- The regional fill rate fell to 65.0% in the March quarter 2026, down from a peak of 69.2% in the June quarter 2025 (Figure 3).
- Total applicants per vacancy did not change over the quarter, but it fell over the past 12 months.
- Qualified applicants per vacancy fell slightly over the quarter and over the past 12 months.
- Suitable applicants per vacancy was largely unchanged over the quarter and over the past 12 months.

Figure 3: Fill rate (%) and total, qualified, and suitable applicants per vacancy (no.), regional area



Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, SERA.

Results by Skill Level

In the March quarter 2026, vacancy fill rates fell for all skill level occupation groups compared with the previous quarter at the national level. The fill rate for Skill Level 3 occupations improved slightly over the past 12 months, but it was still the lowest of all skill level groups (55.5%).

Total applicants per vacancy fell for Skill Levels 1 to 3 over the quarter and over the past 12 months. For Skill Level 4, while the total applicants per vacancy also fell over the past 12 months, it remained unchanged over the quarter.

Changes in qualified applicants per vacancy varied across the skill level groups over the quarter and over the past 12 months.

Suitable applicants per vacancy increased for Skill Levels 1 to 3 over the quarter and over the past 12 months, but it fell for Skill Level 4 in both periods.

Table 4: ANZSCO skill level snapshot - National

Skill levels		March quarter 2026	Change over the quarter	Change over 12 months
Skill level 1	Vacancy fill rate (%)	70.2%	▼1.7% pts	▼2.8% pts
	Total applicants per vacancy (no.)	21.6	▼0.3	▼0.4
	Qualified applicants per vacancy (no.)	10.1	▼0.7	▼0.3
	Suitable applicants per vacancy (no.)	5.7	▲0.5	▲1.2
Skill level 2	Vacancy fill rate (%)	74.3%	▼0.8% pts	▼0.2% pts
	Total applicants per vacancy (no.)	25.6	▼0.5	▼1.6
	Qualified applicants per vacancy (no.)	10.9	▲0.1	▲0.4
	Suitable applicants per vacancy (no.)	5.9	▲0.2	▲0.7
Skill level 3	Vacancy fill rate (%)	55.5%	▼0.9% pts	▲1.2% pts
	Total applicants per vacancy (no.)	15.2	▼0.1	▼0.1
	Qualified applicants per vacancy (no.)	5.0	▼0.3	▲0.4
	Suitable applicants per vacancy (no.)	3.5	▲0.4	▲0.7
Skill level 4	Vacancy fill rate (%)	69.6%	▼0.6% pts	▼3.9% pts
	Total applicants per vacancy (no.)	22.6	--	▼2.8
	Qualified applicants per vacancy (no.)	6.9	▼0.9	▲0.3
	Suitable applicants per vacancy (no.)	5.1	▼0.2	▼0.1

Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, SERA.

Table 5 showed the same measures as Table 4, split by metropolitan and regional areas.

Overall, changes in metropolitan and regional areas were similar to the national results. There, however, differences between the two areas across the skill levels.

- The gap in vacancy fill rates between metropolitan and regional areas was larger for Skill Level 1 and Skill Level 2 occupations (over 7 percentage points).

- Regional areas had fewer total, qualified, and suitable applicants per vacancy than metropolitan areas.

Table 5: ANZSCO skill level snapshot – Metropolitan and regional areas

Skill levels		March quarter 2026		Change over 12 months	
		Metro.	Region.	Metro.	Region.
Skill level 1	Vacancy fill rate (%)	72.0%	64.1%	▼3.0% pts	▼4.3% pts
	Total applicants per vacancy (no.)	25.7	11.7	▲0.6	▼2.7
	Qualified applicants per vacancy (no.)	12.2	5.3	▲0.4	▼2.0
	Suitable applicants per vacancy (no.)	6.6	3.6	▲1.6	▲0.3
Skill level 2	Vacancy fill rate (%)	77.2%	69.8%	▼1.0% pts	▲1.4% pts
	Total applicants per vacancy (no.)	30.7	14.5	▼3.3	▼1.8
	Qualified applicants per vacancy (no.)	13.7	6.0	▲0.4	▼0.8
	Suitable applicants per vacancy (no.)	6.9	3.7	▲0.6	▲0.2
Skill level 3	Vacancy fill rate (%)	57.3%	52.9%	▲2.6% pts	▲0.2% pts
	Total applicants per vacancy (no.)	18.0	10.0	▲0.1	▼1.1
	Qualified applicants per vacancy (no.)	6.0	3.2	▲0.5	▲0.2
	Suitable applicants per vacancy (no.)	4.2	2.1	▲1.1	▼0.2
Skill level 4	Vacancy fill rate (%)	69.5%	69.0%	▼3.8% pts	▼3.8% pts
	Total applicants per vacancy (no.)	26.2	16.4	▼6.2	▲0.7
	Qualified applicants per vacancy (no.)	8.2	5.3	--	▲0.8
	Suitable applicants per vacancy (no.)	5.8	3.8	▼0.2	--

Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, SERA.

Results by Major Group

Table 6: ANZSCO major group snapshot²

Major group		March quarter 2026	Change over the quarter	Change over 12 months
Managers	Vacancy fill rate (%)	79.1%	▲0.2% pts	▲2.7% pts
	Total applicants per vacancy (no.)	33.9	▼0.1	▲0.2
	Qualified applicants per vacancy (no.)	15.1	▼0.4	▲1.9
	Suitable applicants per vacancy (no.)	8.3	▲0.6	▲2.4
Professionals	Vacancy fill rate (%)	66.5%	▼1.9% pts	▼5.3% pts
	Total applicants per vacancy (no.)	17.1	--	▼3.9
	Qualified applicants per vacancy (no.)	8.2	▼0.4	▼1.6
	Suitable applicants per vacancy (no.)	4.8	▲0.6	▲0.7
Technicians and Trades Workers	Vacancy fill rate (%)	55.1%	--	▼1.1% pts
	Total applicants per vacancy (no.)	18.4	▼0.3	▼2.9
	Qualified applicants per vacancy (no.)	6.8	▼0.4	▼0.9
	Suitable applicants per vacancy (no.)	3.8	▼0.3	--
Community and Personal Service Workers	Vacancy fill rate (%)	70.8%	▼0.4% pts	▲3.4% pts
	Total applicants per vacancy (no.)	16.1	▲0.8	▲1.8
	Qualified applicants per vacancy (no.)	7.0	▲0.1	▲1.7
	Suitable applicants per vacancy (no.)	4.6	▲0.7	▲1.7
Clerical and Administrative Workers	Vacancy fill rate (%)	83.8%	▼1.2% pts	▲2.6% pts
	Total applicants per vacancy (no.)	38.3	▼1.3	▲2.5
	Qualified applicants per vacancy (no.)	11.8	▼1.1	▲2.9
	Suitable applicants per vacancy (no.)	7.3	▼0.4	▲0.3
Sales Workers	Vacancy fill rate (%)	64.9%	▼6.5% pts	▼2.2% pts
	Total applicants per vacancy (no.)	20.3	▼5.6	▼0.1
	Qualified applicants per vacancy (no.)	4.8	▼1.2	--
	Suitable applicants per vacancy (no.)	3.7	▼0.3	▼0.1
Machinery Operators and Drivers	Vacancy fill rate (%)	60.8%	▼1.0% pts	▼9.4% pts
	Total applicants per vacancy (no.)	16.1	▼0.4	▼6.8
	Qualified applicants per vacancy (no.)	6.7	▼0.9	▼1.8
	Suitable applicants per vacancy (no.)	4.6	▼0.3	▼0.9

Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, SERA.

² Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations, 2022 version.

Major group		March quarter 2026	Change over the quarter	Change over 12 months
Labourers	Vacancy fill rate (%)	56.3%	▼0.8% pts	▲0.5% pts
	Total applicants per vacancy (no.)	19.5	▼0.1	▲1.6
	Qualified applicants per vacancy (no.)	6.0	▼1.8	▲1.6
	Suitable applicants per vacancy (no.)	4.3	▼1.3	▲2.3

Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, SERA.

Fill rates varied across major groups in the March quarter 2026 and over the past 12 months.

- For Managers, fill rates rose slightly over the quarter and rose more over the past 12 months (up 2.7 percentage points).
- For Professionals, Sales Workers, and Machinery Operators and Drivers, fill rates fell over the quarter and over the past 12 months.
- For Technicians and Trades Workers, fill rates fell over the past 12 months but remained unchanged over the quarter.

Total, qualified, and suitable applicants per vacancy showed mixed results across major groups over both periods.

- For Machinery Operators and Drivers, total, qualified, and suitable applicants per vacancy fell over the quarter and over the past 12 months.
- For Labourers, these measures fell over the quarter but rose over the past 12 months.
- For Community and Personal Service Workers, these measures increased over the quarter and over the past 12 months.

Explanatory Notes

SERA is a stratified survey run for Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) by an external contractor. It is designed to understand employers' experiences when recruiting. Each month, about 900 employers take part. Over the most recent 12 months, more than 11,000 surveys were completed, covering more than 20,000 vacancies.

The survey covers advertised job vacancies across Australia in ANZSCO 2022 Skill Level 1 to 4 occupations, where at least 1,500 people were employed in that occupation (based on the 2021 Census). The survey is stratified by Major Group and State/Territory. The population frame is provided by web-scraped internet job advertisements in Australia.

Within each stratum, all vacancies have an equal chance of being selected. This helps to ensure that the sample provides unbiased and representative statistics but also means that we can't ensure a minimum sample size for each occupation.

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.

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 \(ASGS\) Edition 3, July 2021](#).

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