



Vacancy Report

September 2023

Released 18 October 2023

Internet Vacancy Index Key Points

This month's report shows underlying labour market conditions easing, with online job advertisements decreasing at the national level and across most regions. While online recruitment grew in some regional areas, declines were recorded for most Major Occupation and all Skill Level groups. Nationally, vacancy numbers remain at relatively high levels.

- Online job advertisements at the national level decreased in September 2023 (down 2.0% or 5,600 job advertisements) to stand at 272,900.
 - Over the year to September 2023, online job advertisements decreased by 4.1% (or 11,800 job advertisements). Vacancy numbers, though, are at high levels historically, with this decline coming from a near series peak recorded in June 2022.
- Recruitment activity decreased in six states and territories over the month. Small increases were recorded in Tasmania (up 2.2% or 90 job advertisements) and South Australia (0.3% or 50). The Australian Capital Territory recorded the strongest decrease (down 5.8% or 470).
- Over the month, advertisements decreased across all Skill Level groups. Online job advertisements for Skill Level 1 (commensurate with Bachelor degree or higher) occupations saw a comparatively large decrease (down 2.8% or 3,000 job advertisements) as did Skill Level 4 (commensurate with certificate II or III) occupations (down 1.9% or 1,400). The proportional decreases in recruitment activity for Skill Level 2, 3 and 5 occupations over the month equated to smaller changes in the number job advertisements (down 2.2%, 1.0% and 2.4% respectively).
- Recruitment activity decreased across six Major Occupation groups in September 2023. Small increases were recorded for Community and Personal Service Workers (up 0.2% or 70 job advertisements over the month) and Machinery Operators and Drivers (0.2% or 40).
- In three-month moving average terms, recruitment activity was concentrated in capital cities (71.7%) in September 2023. Over the last 12 months, job advertisements have decreased slightly in regional areas (down 1.9%), whereas a larger decrease was recorded for capital cities (down 10.2%).
- Each month the IVI report provides a more detailed analysis of a particular labour market segment. This month's report spotlights demand for entry-level occupations.

272,900

Seasonally adjusted

▼ **2.0%** Monthly change

▼ **4.1%** Annual change

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Strong labour demand for entry-level occupations and youth employment in the COVID-19 recovery period

With the Australian job market predominately recovered from the impact of COVID-19, and a sense of normalcy returning, it is encouraging to see demand for entry-level occupations remains relatively high compared to pre-pandemic levels. However, employment figures from the ABS suggest fewer young people (15 to 24-year-olds) are finding employment in the occupations that have been available to those with limited experience, qualifications or references. The availability of entry-level jobs influences the ability of job seekers to successfully transition into employment.¹

- For this analysis, four entry-level occupations were assessed: Sales Assistant (General), Café Workers, Kitchenhands, and Checkout Operators and Office Cashiers.
 - All four occupations have a relatively young age profile, part-time work is common and roles generally don't require post-school qualifications.
- Demand for Sales Assistants (General), Café Workers and Checkout Operators and Office Cashiers has generally followed the seasonal demand fluctuations for retail and hospitality workers. Vacancy numbers are at their lowest in February and March and peak around October with businesses hiring for the commencement of the Christmas shopping season.
 - Kitchenhand vacancies, though, show weaker seasonal variation and were relatively stable over the decade preceding the pandemic.
- Between 2021 and 2022, online vacancies increased markedly for Sales Assistants (General) (up 67.7% or 4,700 job advertisements), Kitchenhands (85.4% or 1,200), Café Workers (130.4% or 340), and Checkout Operators and Office Cashiers (304.1% or 300).
- Since their series highs recorded in 2022, IVI results for these four occupations indicate demand has contracted. That said, when compared to pre-pandemic numbers, vacancies for these occupations remain at relatively high levels.
 - Most notably, over 5 years to September 2023, vacancies for Sales Assistant (General) have increased by 55.9% or 4,600 job advertisements.
- While demand remains elevated for these entry-level roles, data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Labour Force Survey² provides indicative evidence that while younger workers (15 to 24-year-olds³) may have more readily found employment in these occupations during 2022, this has not have continued through 2023.
 - In 2022, the annual change in employment for all occupations increased by 6.5% for younger workers but only by 2.8% for all age groups.



1. National Careers Institute, ['Australian Jobs 2022'](#), 2023.

2. Jobs and Skills Australia calculations using Australian Bureau of Statistics, ['Labour Force, Australia, Detailed'](#), August 2023.

3. The estimates provided in the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (detailed) use standard 10-year age categories.

- From a more detailed occupational viewpoint, the annual change in employment appears to favour younger workers even more sharply over this period.⁴
 - Employment in the Sales Assistant and Salespersons sub-major group increased by 17.2% for younger workers but only by 4.7% for all age groups. A similar pattern is observed for younger workers employed in Food Preparation Assistant occupations (up by 1.1% compared with a 3.0% decline among all age groups) and Sales Support Workers (up by 4.2% compared with a 7.9% decline among all age groups).
- Labour Force Survey results for 2023 indicate a reversal of the pattern observed in 2022.
 - In 2023, the change in employment for all occupations decreased by 1.8% for younger workers but increased by 0.6% for all age groups.
- Results for the sub-major occupations groups of interest showed a similar reversal during 2023, though in less stark relief.
 - Employment in the Sales Assistant and Salespersons sub-major group decreased by 7.6% for younger workers but only by 1.1% for all age groups. Similarly for Sales Support Workers, employment for younger workers was up by 14.2% compared with 16.5% among all age groups.
 - In contrast, employment in Food Preparation Assistant occupations for younger workers increased by 0.1% compared with a 5.8% decline among all age groups.
- These results suggest more experienced job seekers may already be in competition for some entry-level jobs.
 - It is noteworthy that recently published analysis of entry-level opportunities through the first half of 2023 based on the Recruitment Experiences and Outlook Survey indicate one-third of employers recruiting for Skill Level 4 and 5 occupations that did not require experience hired someone with experience.⁵ This finding is comparable to previous research on entry-level employment completed in 2015, a period of greater competition among job seekers.⁶
- Recent longitudinal research finds early engagement in employment increased the likelihood of later educational attainment and positive employment outcomes.⁷
 - This effect was found to be stronger for early employment compared to socially connected leisure activities and persisted across socio-economic gradients.
 - Furthermore, recent Australian research using the Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia dataset found the psycho-social qualities of the work young people undertake can have profound effects.⁸
- Australian Jobs 2022 provides useful information, guidance and practical tips for job seekers that may be particularly beneficial for those competing for entry-level positions.
 - The report highlights that meaningful proportions of employers turn to their interpersonal network to fill positions, rely on various strategies, such as word-of-mouth, to advertise vacancies and may be receptive to job seekers approaching them directly.
 - Other useful information for job seekers covering what employers are looking for, how to emphasise employability skills and best practice for winning the job are covered in the report along with a range of links to other resources.

4. The estimates provided in the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (detailed) capturing occupational employment by age group are only available at the sub-major occupation group level. Results for Sales Assistant and Salesperson, Sales Support Worker, and Food Preparation Assistant occupation sub-major groups are cited as more than 70% of employment in these sub-major groups is made up by Sales Assistants (General), Checkout Operators and Office Cashiers and Kitchenhands respectively. Thus, these results may be considered generally reflective of the more detailed occupation categories of interest. Results are omitted for Café Workers as this occupation only accounts for approximately 10% of their containing sub-major category.

5. Jobs and Skills Australia, [‘Recruitment Experiences and Outlook Survey: Recruitment patterns for entry level vacancies’](#), August 2023.

6. Department of Employment, [‘Entry level jobs – opportunities and barriers’](#), June 2015.

7. V Just-Noerregaard, JH Andersen, EA Nohr, JM Vestergaard and TN Winding, [‘How does engagement in society in adolescence affect educational attainment and employment in early adulthood: A prospective cohort study’](#), PLoS One, 2021, 16(4), doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0249312.

8. National Careers Institute, [‘Australian Jobs 2022’](#), 2023.

Internet Vacancy Index Summary Sheet

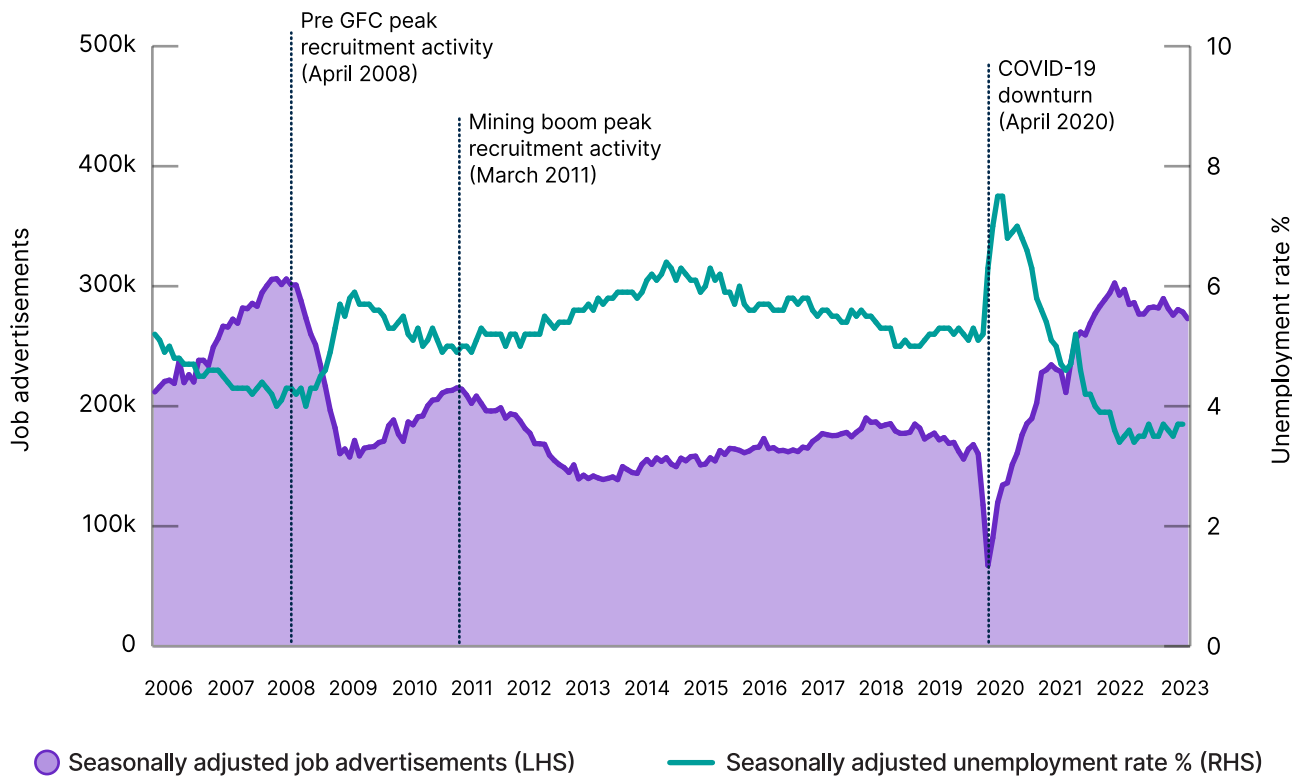
- September 2023

	Number of job ads (no.)	Monthly change (no.)	Monthly change (%)	Annual change (no.)	Annual change (%)
Australia	272,900	-5,600	▼ -2.0%	-11,800	▼ -4.1%
New South Wales	82,900	-3,000	▼ -3.5%	-7,000	▼ -7.8%
Victoria	69,900	-2,300	▼ -3.2%	-8,200	▼ -10.5%
Queensland	57,900	-1,300	▼ -2.2%	510	▲ 0.9%
South Australia	14,500	50	▲ 0.3%	110	▲ 0.8%
Western Australia	31,700	-40	▼ -0.1%	1,300	▲ 4.3%
Tasmania	4,100	90	▲ 2.2%	520	▲ 14.7%
Northern Territory	3,300	-90	▼ -2.5%	420	▲ 14.5%
Australian Capital Territory	7,600	-470	▼ -5.8%	-250	▼ -3.1%
Managers	30,600	-890	▼ -2.8%	-110	▼ -0.4%
Professionals	82,200	-2,200	▼ -2.6%	5,500	▲ 7.1%
Technicians and Trades Workers	37,600	-530	▼ -1.4%	-250	▼ -0.7%
Community and Personal Service Workers	30,300	70	▲ 0.2%	-2,800	▼ -8.5%
Clerical and Administrative Workers	40,600	-1,800	▼ -4.3%	-4,800	▼ -10.7%
Sales Workers	20,400	-1,100	▼ -5.0%	-3,100	▼ -13.1%
Machinery Operators and Drivers	14,400	40	▲ 0.2%	-780	▼ -5.1%
Labourers	16,800	-120	▼ -0.7%	-5,400	▼ -24.4%
Skill Level 1 - Bachelor degree or higher	103,100	-3,000	▼ -2.8%	5,200	▲ 5.3%
Skill Level 2 - Advanced Diploma or Diploma	29,500	-670	▼ -2.2%	-620	▼ -2.1%
Skill Level 3 - Certificate IV or III* (Skilled VET)	41,000	-430	▼ -1.0%	-200	▼ -0.5%
Skill Level 4 - Certificate II or III	70,200	-1,400	▼ -1.9%	-8,200	▼ -10.5%
Skill Level 5 - Certificate I or secondary education	29,300	-740	▼ -2.4%	-7,700	▼ -20.8%

*Includes at least two years of on-the-job training.

Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, *Internet Vacancy Index*, September 2023, seasonally adjusted data.

Figure 1: Job advertisements and unemployment rate, January 2006 to September 2023



The next IVI release is scheduled for 15 November 2023. The IVI is published on the JSA website at jobsandskills.gov.au/work/internet-vacancy-index.

The Internet Vacancy Index (IVI) is a monthly data series measuring online job advertisements, compiled by Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA). The IVI counts job advertisements newly lodged on the SEEK, CareerOne and Workforce Australia online job boards. Commencing in 2006, the IVI is the longest continuous time series for vacancy data in Australia. JSA research indicates the proportion of all vacancies covered by IVI has increased from 38% in 2016 to 60% in 2022. More detail on the IVI is available at jobsandskills.gov.au/work/internet-vacancy-index.



Australian Government



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