



Australian Government



Jobs and Skills Australia

Vacancy Report

February 2024

Released 20 March 2024

Internet Vacancy Index Key Points

This month's report shows the period of record growth in advertisements following the COVID-19 pandemic is ending, with vacancy numbers having decreased in five of the past six months. Despite this, vacancy numbers remain at record levels, with around 50% more advertisements in the labour market presently than compared with the monthly average for 2019.

- Online job advertisements at the national level decreased in February 2024 (down by 2.3% or 5,900 job advertisements) to stand at 247,400.
 - Over the year to February 2024, online job advertisements decreased by 12.8% (or 36,300 job advertisements). Vacancy numbers, though, are at high levels historically.
 - This downward trend is present in other demand indicators, with the ABS *Job Vacancies, Australia* series showing a 14.4% decrease in advertisements over the year to November 2023.¹
- Recruitment activity declined in all states and territories over the month, with the strongest decreases recorded in the Northern Territory (down by 3.8% or 130 job advertisements) and the Australian Capital Territory (down by 3.7% or 260).
 - The largest declines by number of vacancies were recorded in New South Wales (down by 2.4% or 1,700) and Victoria (down by 2.7% 1,600).
- Over the month, advertisements decreased across all Skill Level groups, with the strongest declines recorded for Skill Level 4 (commensurate with certificate II or III) and Skill Level 1 (commensurate with bachelor degree or higher) occupations (down by 3.2% or 2,100 job advertisements and 2.7% or 2,500 respectively).
- Managers was the only Major Occupation group to record an increase in vacancies in February 2024 (up by 0.5% or 150 advertisements). The strongest decrease was for Community and Personal Service Workers (down by 6.3% or 1,800).
- Recruitment activity was concentrated in metropolitan Australia, with 71.0% of job advertisements in February 2024 found in Australia's capital cities. Over the last 12 months, job advertisements have decreased in regional areas (down by 6.6%), however a larger decrease was recorded for capital cities (down by 11.7%).
- Each month the IVI report provides a more detailed analysis of a particular labour market segment. This month's report spotlights Journalists and Other Writers.

247,400

Seasonally adjusted

▼ **2.3%** Monthly change

▼ **12.8%** Annual change

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¹ November 2023 is the latest release of the ABS Job Vacancies, Australia, which is released quarterly.

BLACK, WHITE and RED ALL OVER: The tipping point for Journalists and Other Writers

Journalism and the news media sector have faced successive disruptions in recent years. Digital technology's upending of the advertising-driven business model is now coupled with the uncertain role of artificial intelligence, following the recent proliferation of large language models and their deployment in newsrooms.² Recognising the potential for dramatic change in this sector, this month's Vacancy Report spotlights Journalists and Other Writers, with this occupation covering journalists, copywriters, and editors across both print (physical and online media), radio and television.³ This occupation appears to be at the apex of a tipping point as the sector grapples with a maelstrom of disruption.

Vacancy numbers for Journalists and Other Writers remain at relatively high levels. Over the five years to February 2024, internet vacancies have increased by 47.5% (compared with a 39.4% increase for all occupations).⁴ Since the series high recorded in March 2023 however, internet vacancies have declined by 31.0% (compared with a 21.7% decline for all occupations). This drop in demand has yet to be reflected in the occupation's employment numbers.

The number of Journalists and Other Writers employed in Australia was stable over the November quarter, growing by 0.8% to almost 26,000.⁵ This is consistent with recent trends for the occupation, with employment remaining relatively unchanged over the past decade, increasing by just 4.3% over this period.⁶

Employment data showing innocuous stability for a sector experiencing successive disruptions, may mask more concerning dynamics. Administrative occupational mobility data indicates a negative net average annual inflow (-1.0%) of workers into Journalists and Other Writers occupations between 2011 and 2020, with the last substantial annual net inflow occurring in the 2011-12 financial year.⁷ The bulk of the outflows have come from the subcategory of Print Journalist.⁸ This indicates that, since 2011-12, outflows of journalists from the profession have been greater than inflows, though data is not currently available covering the post-pandemic period.

Media organisations are responding to the upheavals. Highly publicised redundancies occurred at major Australian media organisations during 2023. News Corp Australia reportedly made 200 workers redundant amid the organisation's worldwide personnel reduction.⁹ Also, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation made 120 roles redundant.¹⁰ Technological advancements are also being utilised as a cost saving measure. News Corp Australia's executive chair revealed in August 2023 that the media giant has been producing a staggering 3,000 news articles a week through generative artificial intelligence.¹¹ Since these revelations, almost 5% of job advertisements for Journalists and Other Writers have included references to using these technologies.¹²

Perhaps indicative of the increase in precarious employment reported elsewhere, self-employment within this occupation is increasing. In 2021, almost one in five Journalists and Other Writers indicated they were self-employed (an increase of around three percentage points compared to 2016).¹³

This labour market presently represents the intersection of disruptive innovation and changing consumer habits. The consequences of these shifts are important due to the sector's critical role for the wellbeing of Australian society and communities. Some new technologies appear potentially facilitative to this indispensable work. However, it remains to be seen whether the way it is deployed aids journalists to deliver the value Australians have come to expect and for which they have shown a readiness to pay.¹⁴ With softening economic conditions forecasted for 2024 and the uptake of new generative tools in newsrooms proceeding rapidly here and internationally, Jobs and Skills Australia will revisit this analysis in the Vacancy Report's annual review.

² L Taylor, 'News Corp using AI to produce 3,000 Australian local news stories a week', *The Guardian Australia*, 1 August 2023.

³ Please note, authors, television presenters or talk back radio hosts are categorised elsewhere in the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations and are not covered in this analysis.

⁴ Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), 'Internet Vacancy Index', three-month averaged data, February 2023.

⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 'Labour Force Survey, Detailed', November 2023, trend data by Jobs and Skills Australia.

⁶ ABS, 'Labour Force Survey, Detailed', November 2023, trend data by Jobs and Skills Australia.

⁷ JSA, 'Data on Occupation Mobility', 2023.

⁸ JSA, 'Data on Occupation Mobility'.

⁹ S Buckingham-Jones, 'Up to 200 jobs likely to go at News Corp amid strategy shift', *The Australian Financial Review*, 13 March 2023.

¹⁰ Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 'ABC to cut 120 jobs as major changes are announced', *ABC News*, 16 June 2023.

¹¹ L Taylor, 'News Corp using AI to produce 3,000 Australian local news stories a week'.

¹² Lightcast, 'Australian Online Job Advertisements Data', 2024.

¹³ ABS, 'Journalists and Other Writers (OCCP) by Status in Employment (SIEMP) 2016 and 2021' [Census TableBuilder], 2021; N Dawson, S Molitorisz, MA Rizoio and P Fray, 'Layoffs, inequity and COVID-19: A longitudinal study of the journalism jobs crisis in Australia from 2012 to 2020', *Journalism*, 2023, 24(3), 531-559, doi: 10.1177/1464884921996286.

¹⁴ S Park, K McGuinness, C Fisher, J Lee, K McCallum, X Cai, M Chatskin, L Mardjianto and P Yao, 'Digital News Report: Australia 2023', News and Media Research Centre, University of Canberra, 2023, doi: 10.25916/v0mt-9k87.

Internet Vacancy Index Summary Sheet -
February 2024

	Number of job ads (no.)	Monthly change (no.)	Monthly change (%)	Annual change (no.)	Annual change (%)
Australia	247,400	-5,900	▼ -2.3%	-36,300	▼ -12.8%
New South Wales	72,500	-1,700	▼ -2.4%	-14,900	▼ -17.1%
Victoria	58,300	-1,600	▼ -2.7%	-14,200	▼ -19.6%
Queensland	56,600	-670	▼ -1.2%	-3,900	▼ -6.5%
South Australia	14,700	-440	▼ -2.9%	-580	▼ -3.8%
Western Australia	30,700	-580	▼ -1.8%	-1,800	▼ -5.5%
Tasmania	4,600	-50	▼ -1.0%	580	▲ 14.3%
Northern Territory	3,400	-130	▼ -3.8%	40	▲ 1.1%
Australian Capital Territory	6,700	-260	▼ -3.7%	-1,100	▼ -13.6%

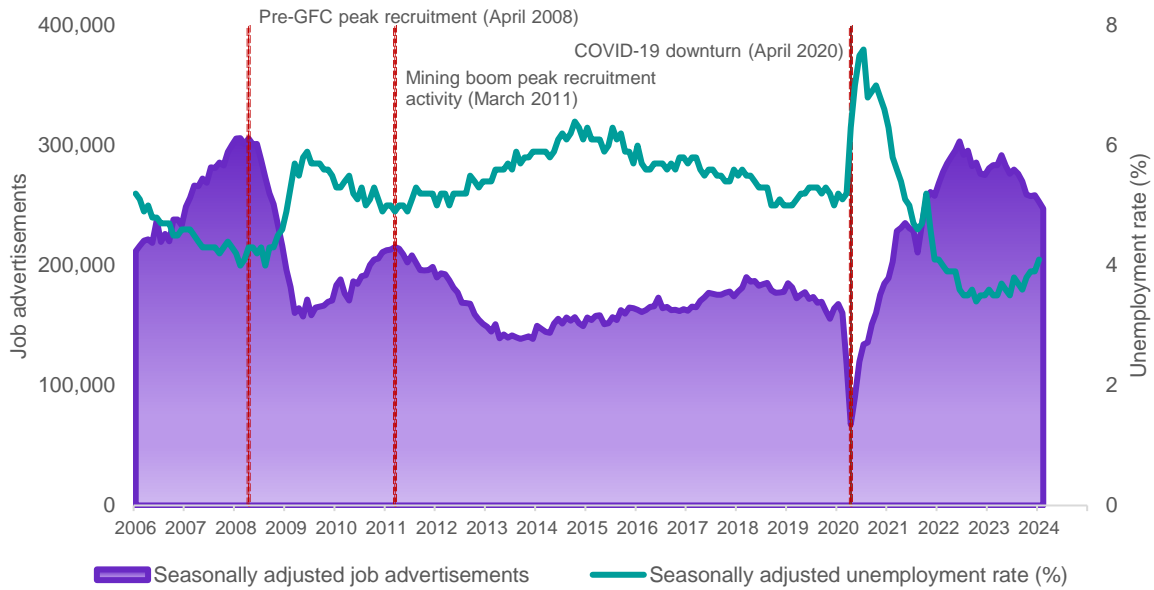
Managers	28,800	150	▲ 0.5%	-2,500	▼ -7.9%
Professionals	72,900	-2,700	▼ -3.5%	-8,800	▼ -10.8%
Technicians and Trades Workers	34,100	-430	▼ -1.2%	-4,200	▼ -11.1%
Community and Personal Service Workers	26,800	-1,800	▼ -6.3%	-5,800	▼ -17.9%
Clerical and Administrative Workers	37,800	-710	▼ -1.8%	-5,500	▼ -12.7%
Sales Workers	19,000	-90	▼ -0.5%	-2,200	▼ -10.5%
Machinery Operators and Drivers	12,800	-300	▼ -2.3%	-2,600	▼ -16.6%
Labourers	15,100	-390	▼ -2.5%	-4,800	▼ -24.1%

Skill Level 1 - Bachelor degree or higher	92,300	-2,500	▼ -2.7%	-11,100	▼ -10.7%
Skill Level 2 - Advanced Diploma or Diploma	27,700	-20	▼ -0.1%	-3,000	▼ -9.7%
Skill Level 3 - Certificate IV or III* (Skilled VET)	37,400	-900	▼ -2.3%	-3,900	▼ -9.4%
Skill Level 4 - Certificate II or III	63,600	-2,100	▼ -3.2%	-11,500	▼ -15.4%
Skill Level 5 - Certificate I or secondary education	26,100	-650	▼ -2.4%	-6,900	▼ -20.9%

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

Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Internet Vacancy Index, February 2024, seasonally adjusted data.

Figure 1: Job advertisements and unemployment rate, January 2006 to February 2024



The next IVI release is scheduled for 17 April 2024. 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 2023. More detail on the IVI is available at jobsandskills.gov.au/work/internet-vacancy-index.



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