



# Vacancy Report

## July 2024

Released 14 August 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 eleven of the past 12 months. Despite this, vacancy numbers remain at elevated levels, with around 25% more advertisements in the labour market presently than compared with the monthly average for 2019.

- Online job advertisements at the national level decreased in July 2024 (down by 3.7% or 8,300 job advertisements) to stand at 217,900.
  - Over the year to July 2024, online job advertisements decreased by 23.1% (or 65,300 job advertisements). Vacancy numbers, though, are at high levels historically.
  - This downward trend is present in other demand indicators, with the Australian Bureau of Statistics' [Job Vacancies, Australia](#) series showing a 17.7% decrease in vacancies over the year to May 2024.<sup>1</sup>
- Recruitment activity decreased across seven states and territories over the month. The strongest decreases were recorded in Victoria (down by 7.0% or 3,700 job advertisements) and the Australian Capital Territory (down by 6.0% or 370). The only increase was recorded in the Northern Territory (up by 7.7% or 230).
- Over the month, advertisements decreased across all five Skill Level groups. The strongest decreases were recorded for Skill Level 1 (commensurate with Bachelor degree or higher) occupations (down by 5.3% or 4,500 job advertisements) followed by Skill Level 5 (commensurate with Certificate I or secondary education) occupations (down by 3.0% or 720).
- Advertisements decreased across seven Major Occupation groups over the month. The strongest decreases were recorded for Sales Workers (down by 6.1% or 1,100 job advertisements) followed by Professionals (down by 5.6% or 3,700). A slight increase was recorded for Labourers (up by 0.4% or 50).
- Recruitment activity was concentrated in metropolitan Australia, with 72.1% of job advertisements in July 2024 found in Australia's capital cities. Over the last 12 months, job advertisements have decreased in regional areas (down by 18.7%); exceeding the decline recorded for capital cities (down by 18.6%) for the first time since the recovery from COVID-19 downturn.
- Each month the IVI report provides a more detailed analysis of a particular labour market segment. This month's report spotlights Delivery Drivers.

# 217,900

Seasonally adjusted



## 3.7%

Monthly change



## 23.1%

Annual change

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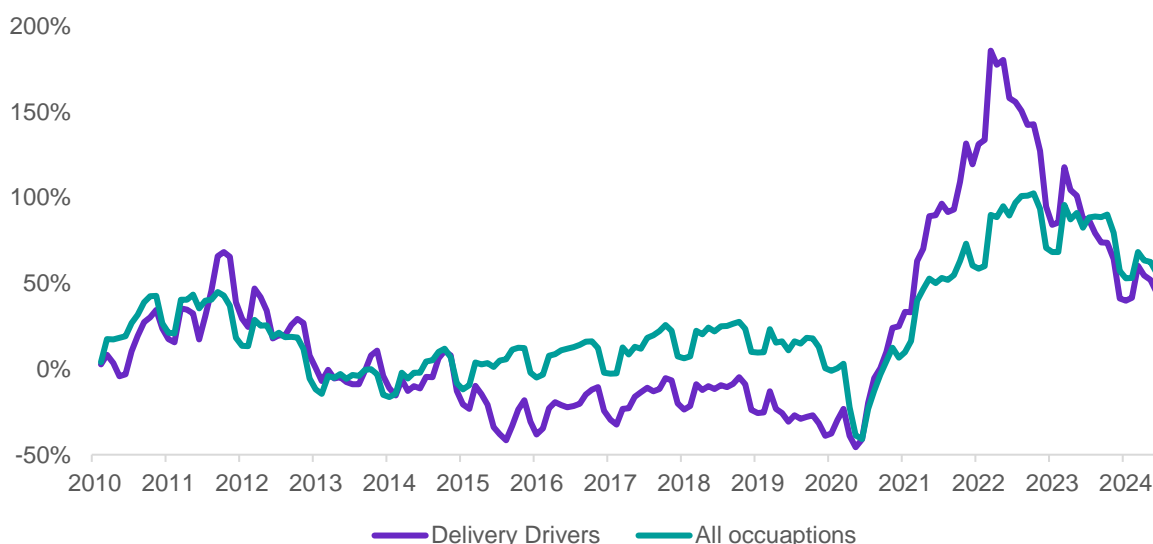
<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), [Job Vacancies, Australia](#), May 2024.

## Package Deal: The persistent demand for Delivery Drivers, new protections for vulnerable workers and the potential benefit of autonomous technologies

Delivery Drivers are an increasingly important link in Australia's economic chain. The dramatic increase in employment in this occupation over the last decade speaks to the lasting reliance on residential deliveries, surging e-commerce, increasing delivery quality demands and other shifts such as the transformation of work.<sup>2</sup> While food delivery drivers and riders represent a highly visible manifestation of this change in consumer behaviour, others have been more salient to the remarkable growth in employment numbers. Online job advertisements for Delivery Drivers followed a predictable growth trajectory during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recent declines in recruitment activity may represent a combination of demand and supply side factors, given the timing and severity. The declining demand for Delivery Drivers is unlikely to dampen employment growth, with historically elevated levels of recruitment activity continuing. With new protections for the most vulnerable workers in this occupation coming into effect, and the promise of automation to help solve key Australian issues, the continued success of this aspect of society's digital transformation appears likely to be enjoyed more widely.

After a decade of generally declining numbers of online job advertisements, recruitment activity for Delivery Drivers increased dramatically during and following the COVID-19 pandemic, reaching a series high in early 2022, as illustrated in Figure 1.<sup>3</sup> Over the decade to January 2020, online job advertisements for Delivery Drivers decreased by 37.7% (or 220), a much larger decline than the average across all occupations over this period (down by 1.0%). The rapid rise in online job advertisements during the pandemic saw these double in just 6 months. This growth continued, attaining an almost four-fold increase over the monthly average recorded in 2019, to reach a series high of 1,700 job advertisements in March 2022. The start of the dramatic decline in online job advertisements following this peak, began around 6 months earlier than the more gradual decline observed across all occupations. The declining likelihood of further lockdowns and the intensity of supply-chain difficulties may have driven falling demand, rather than the cooling of the post-pandemic rebound. Online job advertisements have decreased by 49.9% to 840 by July 2024. This is around double the average decline of 24.3% recorded across all occupations since the peak of recruitment activity in 2022. The continuing decline could reflect cost-of-living pressures that have, for example, prompted cutbacks in the use of food delivery services, particularly among high-income households.<sup>4</sup> Despite this sharp decline, online job advertisements for Delivery Drivers continue at elevated levels historically, with current numbers almost double the monthly average recorded in 2019 (far in excess of the 34.7% average for all occupations).

**Figure 1: Growth rate in online job advertisements for Delivery Drivers and all occupations from January 2010**



Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Internet Vacancy Index, July 2024, three-month average data.

The robust employment growth trend among Delivery Drivers preceded the recent increases in recruitment activity by many years. While employment in this occupation has been growing since the earliest available Labour Force Survey

<sup>2</sup> M Said, S Aeschliman and A Stathopoulos, '[Robots at your doorstep: acceptance of near-future technologies for automated parcel delivery](#)', *Scientific Reports*, 2023, 13. doi: 10.1038/s41598-023-45371-1

<sup>3</sup> Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), '[Internet Vacancy Index](#)', 3-month average data, July 2024.

<sup>4</sup> National Australia Bank, '[NAB Consumer Sentiment Survey Q2-2024](#)', 2024.

data, a sharp increase in the rate of growth has been evident since 2013.<sup>5</sup> Over the decade to May 2024, employment numbers have increased by 93.7%, almost four times the 24.6% growth in employment for all occupations. More recently the growth trend has eased slightly with a 4.0% increase, to just over 86,000 employed Delivery Drivers, recorded over the last year (compared with 2.7% growth in employment for all occupations). Employment growth for Delivery Drivers is expected to continue, with recent projections forecasting a 13.5% increase over the five years to May 2028, doubling the average growth of 6.5% expected over this period.<sup>6</sup>

The notable growth in employment of Delivery Drivers has included a strong swell in the number engaged under independent contractor type employment arrangements. However, far larger numbers have been engaged as employees.<sup>7</sup> Between the two most recent Censuses, the number of Delivery Drivers increased by approximately 30,000 workers (or 70%). While around one-third of this increase was among independent contractor type workers, almost two-thirds was for those working as employees. These proportions show the relative growth of food delivery drivers and riders, and other Delivery Drivers working in a form of self-employment. Concerns about conditions for food delivery drivers and riders have garnered attention with the formalisation of their status as non-employees in 2020.<sup>8</sup> New powers for the Fair Work Commission, in effect from August 2024, target improving conditions for such 'employee-like' workers with low bargaining power, low authority over the performance of work or those remunerated at or below the rate of employees performing comparable work.<sup>9</sup> With industry insiders reportedly describing Australia as 'a big profit centre' for major digital labour platforms, careful adjudication of the conditions experienced by on-the-road workers seems timely.<sup>10</sup>

Automation of segments of logistics chains is considered a near-term advancement with likely consequences for the demand for workers, including Delivery Drivers.<sup>11</sup> For example, drone food delivery has recently rolled out in some metropolitan areas.<sup>12</sup> The relatively high cost associated with the 'last mile' of deliveries marks it a priority target for automation. Recent research suggests the combined deployment of autonomous vehicles, drones, 'side walk' robots and bipedal robots provide the optimal flexibility, sustainability and cost-effectiveness for 'last mile' delivery challenges. Such combined deployments are also earmarked to improve delivery services to rural and remote locations, an advancement with great potential for Australia's widely dispersed population. For example, the U.S. Department of Transportation recently announced a 25 million (USD) research funding opportunity for the development of autonomous vehicles for underserved rural communities to facilitate mobility and delivery of goods.<sup>13</sup>

The continuing elevated demand for Delivery Drivers alongside the robust employment growth in this occupation denotes an area of considerable success facilitated by society's digital transformation. Surging e-commerce and changes to the organisation of work have contributed to the increasing importance of these workers. New protections for vulnerable workers in this occupation are coming into effect. Also, forthcoming automation technologies are expected to help overcome structural challenges for the provision of services to Australia's dispersed population. The continued success of these changes appears set to be enjoyed more widely.

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<sup>5</sup> ABS, 'Labour Force, Australia, Detailed', May 2024, trend data by Jobs and Skills Australia; ABS, '[Labour Force, Australia](#)', May 2024.

<sup>6</sup> JSA, '[Victoria University Employment Projections - May 2023 to May 2033](#)', 2023.

<sup>7</sup> ABS, '[Delivery drivers \(OCCP\) by status in employment \(SIEMP\), 2016 and 2021](#)' [Census of Population and Housing, TableBuilder], 2016 and 2021.

<sup>8</sup> Fair Work Commission, '[Gupta, Amita v Porter Pacific Pty Ltd & Uber Australia Pty Ltd T/A Uber Eats - \[2020\] FWCFB 1698](#)', 2020.

<sup>9</sup> Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, '[Fair Work Legislation Amendment \(Closing Loopholes\) Act 2023](#)', 2024.

<sup>10</sup> N Bonyhady, '[Australia is Uber's crown jewel after collections surge to \\$9.2b](#)', *Australian Financial Review*, 29 October 2023.

<sup>11</sup> Said et al., 'Robots at your doorstep: acceptance of near-future technologies for automated parcel delivery'.

<sup>12</sup> R Bennett and K Backholer, '[Drone food delivery is spreading across Australia. Research suggests we will eat more junk food as a result](#)', *The Conversation*, 26 July 2024.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation, '[Rural Autonomous Vehicle Research Program](#)' [media release], USDOT, 13 December 2023.

# Internet Vacancy Index Summary Sheet - July 2024

	Number of job ads (no.)	Monthly change (no.)	Monthly change (%)	Annual change (no.)	Annual change (%)
<b>Australia</b>	<b>217,900</b>	<b>-8,300</b>	<b>▼ -3.7%</b>	<b>-65,300</b>	<b>▼ -23.1%</b>
New South Wales	63,500	-2,200	▼ -3.3%	-23,100	▼ -26.7%
Victoria	48,900	-3,700	▼ -7.0%	-23,200	▼ -32.1%
Queensland	52,400	-1,100	▼ -2.0%	-8,400	▼ -13.8%
South Australia	12,900	-580	▼ -4.3%	-2,300	▼ -14.9%
Western Australia	27,200	-670	▼ -2.4%	-5,300	▼ -16.3%
Tasmania	3,700	-70	▼ -1.8%	-570	▼ -13.4%
Northern Territory	3,200	230	▲ 7.7%	-160	▼ -4.6%
Australian Capital Territory	5,800	-370	▼ -6.0%	-2,100	▼ -27.0%

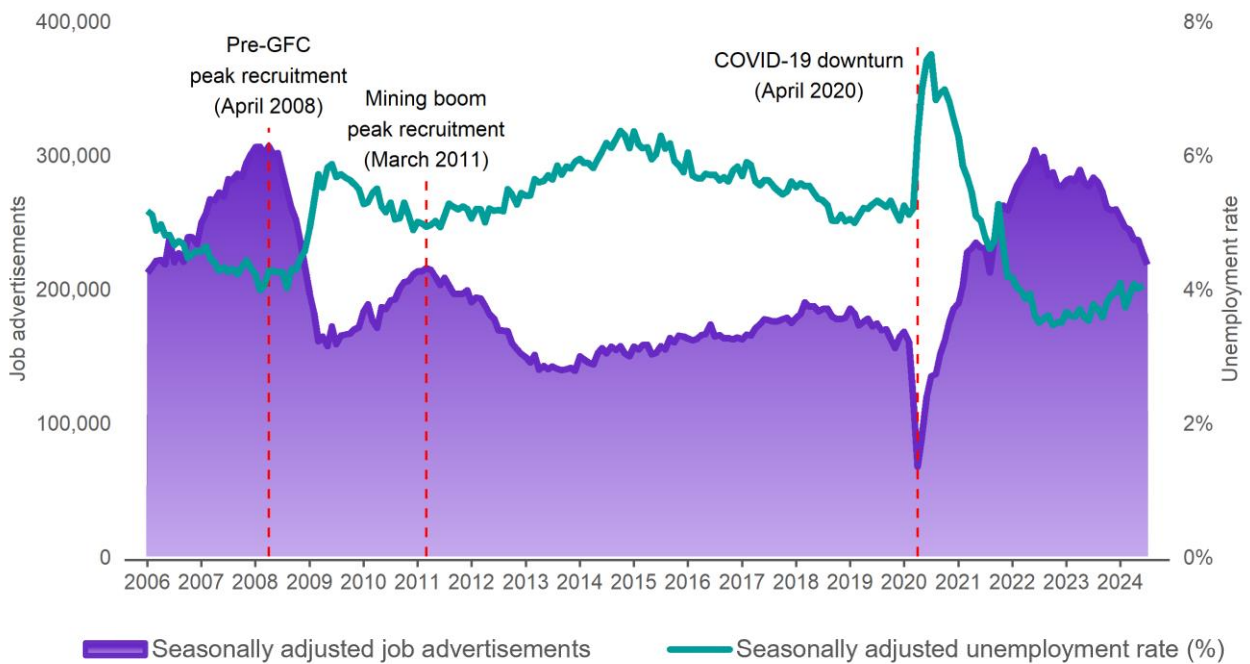
Managers	25,700	-1,100	▼ -4.2%	-5,800	▼ -18.5%
Professionals	61,400	-3,700	▼ -5.6%	-23,100	▼ -27.3%
Technicians and Trades Workers	31,300	-90	▼ -0.3%	-7,500	▼ -19.4%
Community and Personal Service Workers	24,000	-380	▼ -1.6%	-8,100	▼ -25.2%
Clerical and Administrative Workers	32,900	-1,400	▼ -4.2%	-9,800	▼ -23.0%
Sales Workers	16,800	-1,100	▼ -6.1%	-3,900	▼ -19.0%
Machinery Operators and Drivers	12,000	-320	▼ -2.6%	-2,900	▼ -19.4%
Labourers	13,900	50	▲ 0.4%	-3,600	▼ -20.7%

Skill Level 1 - Bachelor degree or higher	78,800	-4,500	▼ -5.3%	-27,200	▼ -25.7%
Skill Level 2 - Advanced Diploma or Diploma	24,700	-630	▼ -2.5%	-5,900	▼ -19.2%
Skill Level 3 - Certificate IV or III* (Skilled VET)	35,100	-630	▼ -1.8%	-7,400	▼ -17.5%
Skill Level 4 - Certificate II or III	56,100	-1,600	▼ -2.8%	-17,800	▼ -24.1%
Skill Level 5 - Certificate I or secondary education	23,500	-720	▼ -3.0%	-6,500	▼ -21.7%

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

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

**Figure 2: Job advertisements and unemployment rate, January 2006 to July 2024**



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force, Australia, June 2024, seasonally adjusted data; Jobs and Skills Australia, Internet Vacancy Index, July 2024, seasonally adjusted data.



The next IVI release is scheduled for 18 September 2024. The IVI is published on the JSA website at [jobsandskills.gov.au/data/internet-vacancy-index](https://jobsandskills.gov.au/data/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/data/internet-vacancy-index](https://jobsandskills.gov.au/data/internet-vacancy-index).



Australian Government



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