



Vacancy Report September 2024

Released 16 October 2024

Internet Vacancy Index Key Points

This month's report shows a second consecutive month of increasing online job advertisement numbers in September 2024. Prior to this, online vacancies were, generally, on a declining trend since mid-2023. The number of online job advertisements continue at elevated levels, with around 35% more advertisements in the labour market presently than compared with the monthly average result based on data across 2019.

- Over the month, online job advertisements at the national level increased in September 2024 (up by 1.3% or 3,000 job advertisements) to stand at 232,600.
 - Over the year to September 2024, online job advertisements decreased by 13.7% (or 37,000). Vacancy numbers, though, are at high levels historically.
 - This downward trend over the year is present in other demand indicators, with the Australian Bureau of Statistics' [Job Vacancies, Australia](#) series showing a 17.1% decrease in vacancies over the year to August 2024.¹
- Recruitment activity increased across six states and territories over the month. The strongest increases were recorded in the Northern Territory (up by 4.0% or 130 job advertisements) followed by the Australian Capital Territory (up by 3.7% or 220). There were decreases recorded for New South Wales and Tasmania.
- Over the month, advertisements increased across four Skill Level groups. The strongest increases were recorded for Skill Level 5 (commensurate with Certificate I or secondary education) occupations (up by 4.3% or 1,100 job advertisements) followed by Skill Level 3 (commensurate with Certificate IV or III) occupations (up by 3.4% or 1,200). There were decreases recorded for Skill Level 1 occupations (commensurate with Bachelor degree or higher).
- Advertisements increased across six Major Occupation groups over the month. The strongest increases were for Technicians and Trades Workers (up by 4.1% or 1,300 job advertisements) followed by Community and Personal Service Workers (up by 4.0% or 980). Small decreases were recorded for Managers and Professionals.
- Over the month, recruitment activity was concentrated in metropolitan Australia with 71.7% of job advertisements found in Australia's capital cities. Over the last 12 months, job advertisements have decreased in regional areas (down by 17.3%) and capital cities (down by 17.2%).
- Each month the IVI report provides a more detailed analysis of a particular labour market segment. This month's report spotlights Veterinarians.

232,600

Seasonally adjusted

▲ **1.3%** Monthly change

▼ **13.7%** Annual change

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¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), '[Job Vacancies, Australia](#)', seasonally adjusted data, August 2024.

Labour demand for Veterinarians and the complex challenges exacerbated by occupational shortages

Veterinarians play an important role in key industries and caring for highly valued companion animals. Growing numbers of Australian households are enjoying pet ownership, estimated at around 70%, and ambitious growth targets prevail in the animal agriculture sector.²

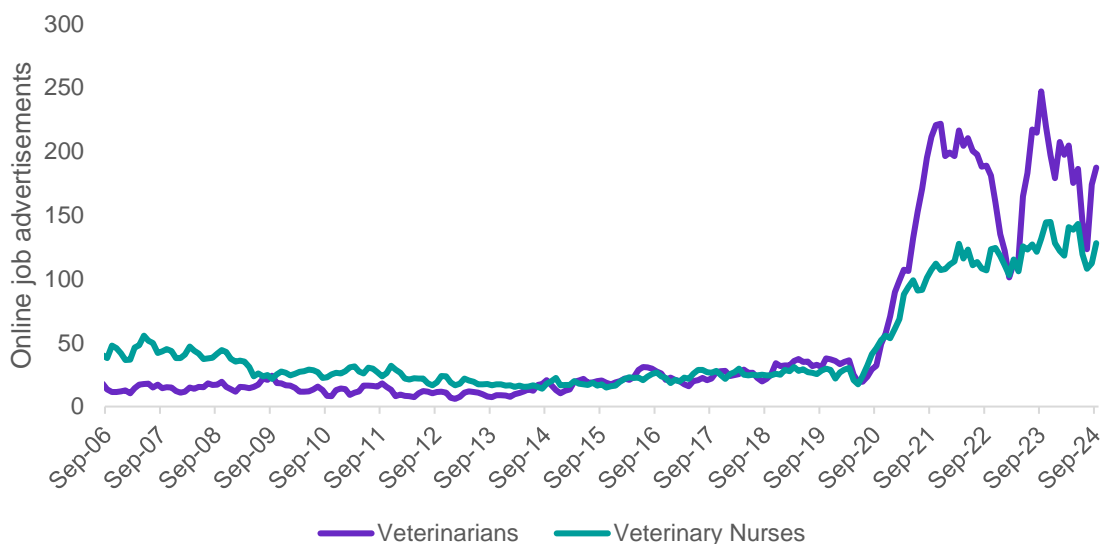
The value placed on companion animals is demonstrated by resilient spending patterns. Spending on premium pet products continues despite enduring cost-of-living pressures.³ Notably, the inclination to cut back on pet related spending is only somewhat lesser than that of spending on children and school fees. Yet, workforce issues present barriers to meeting increasing demand.

Recent increases in online job advertisements for Veterinarians in Internet Vacancy Index results are further indicators of the difficulties confronting this workforce. A combination of labour market conditions and occupation characteristics create a diverse set of challenges. The severity of these challenges is generally acknowledged. For example, the New South Wales government recently provided in principle support for most recommendations from an inquiry into the veterinary workforce. Also, participants of a roundtable convened by Australia's Chief Veterinary Officer recognised 'maintaining business as usual is not an option'.⁴

Historically, Veterinarians and related occupations have recorded remarkably low numbers of online job advertisements in the Internet Vacancy Index. The prominence of specialised online job boards for these occupations, not captured in the Internet Vacancy Index, limit visibility of recruitment activity for these occupations.⁵

For example, over the decade preceding the COVID-19 downturn, there were only 18 job advertisements for Veterinarians on average each month recorded in the Internet Vacancy Index. Since the COVID-19 downturn however, the number of vacancies for Veterinarians (and related occupations such as Veterinary Nurses) posted to non-specialised job boards increased dramatically. Despite strong volatility, vacancy numbers for Veterinarians continue at elevated levels, with 190 advertisements recorded in September 2024 results. These trends are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Job advertisements for Veterinarians and Veterinary Nurses, September 2006 to September 2024



Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Internet Vacancy Index, 3-month average data, September 2024.

Reports from a specialist job board for Veterinarians highlight that Internet Vacancy Index results are only the tip of the iceberg of growing recruitment activity and recruitment difficulty for these occupations.⁶ On one such job board, between 2014 and 2023, the number of permanent veterinary jobs increased more than 300% to 735 vacancies. Over this period,

² Animal Medicines Australia, 'Pets in Australia: A national survey of pets in Australia', 2022; C Secombe, 'Declining engagement of veterinary services in Australian animal production systems: why has this occurred and what are the risks?', *Australian Veterinary Journal*, 2023, 102(1-2): 30-34, doi: 10.1111/avj.13302.

³ National Australia Bank, 'NAB Consumer Sentiment Survey Q2-2024', 2024.

⁴ Legislative Council – Portfolio Committee No.4, 'Veterinary Workforce Shortages in New South Wales', NSW Government, September 2024; Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, 'Australian Chief Veterinary Officer coordinates national vet workforce data roundtable', *Three Chiefs Newsletter*, 23 August 2024.

⁵ For example, *Kookaburra Veterinary Employment*.

⁶ W Nathan, 'Update on the Workplace Staff Shortage – May 2023', *Kookaburra Veterinary Employment*, May 2023.

the average time to fill vacancies increased from 8 weeks to 25 weeks. Also, the proportion of vacancies open to applications from graduates more than doubled to half of all vacancies. These indicators align with results from Jobs and Skills Australia's [Occupational Shortage List](#) that found Veterinarians and related occupations in persistent shortage.⁷ Similarly, since international borders re-opened, temporary skill visa grants for Veterinarians have exceeded pre-COVID-19 levels.⁸

Increasing demand for veterinary services is reflected in employment and qualification holder numbers. [Labour Force Trending](#) data show employment for Veterinarians (up by 32.1%, to almost 14,000) has grown nearly three-times faster than the national average (up by 12.3%) over the last five years.⁹ The number of Australians holding Veterinary Science qualifications increased by 61.3% from the 2011 to the 2021 census, to almost 18,000. More than half of this growth came between 2016 and 2021.

Despite strong growth in employment and qualification attainment, occupational shortages exacerbate complex workforce challenges. Recent media attention and research shed light on issues of burnout and more serious mental health issues concentrated in this workforce.¹⁰ Unique stressors arising from the conflict between the motivations to join this workforce and confronting realities, such as financial euthanasia, are compounded by other challenges. For example, Australian studies have shown higher levels of burnout related to managing emotionally distressed clients, ongoing critical staffing shortages, unpredictable and irregular work patterns with frequent need for significant over-time work and lack of work autonomy.¹¹ The relatively lower pay compared with other occupations with stringent entry requirements and lengthy training periods add weight to role demands. Some of these challenges are amplified in regional Australia. Particularly around work patterns and workloads, with related risks connected to large animal care specialisation and biosecurity risks in animal production systems.¹²

Labour market conditions and occupation characteristics presents significant stressors to Veterinarians and related workforces. While government provides financial options supporting those completing tertiary qualifications and other improvements such as the prospective development of comprehensive national workforce data, the complexity of challenges for these workforces warrants multifaceted intervention.

Studies have suggested technological advancements offer some new options, such as tele-health and more sophisticated scheduling approaches. Also, the prospect of greater support for the mental health needs of these workers has garnered recent attention. Collaborative efforts across government, industry and workers will have the best prospects to design and prioritise responses to navigate towards optimised worker wellbeing and satisfaction, animal welfare and provision of care, alongside industry growth and biosecurity.

⁷ JSA, '[Skill Priority List](#)', 2023.

⁸ Department of Home Affairs, '[Temporary Work \(skilled\) visas granted](#)', July 2024.

⁹ JSA, '[Labour Force Trending](#)', August 2024; ABS, Labour Force, Australia, trend data, August 2024.

¹⁰ K Li, E Mooney, M McArthur, E Hall, A Quain, '[A comparison between veterinary small animal general practitioners and emergency practitioners in Australia. Part 2: client-related, work-related, and personal burnout](#)', *Frontiers in Veterinary Science*, 2024, 11, doi: 10.3389/fvets.2024.1355511; E Middleton, '[Long hours and overworked: regional Australia is facing a vet shortage](#)', *The Guardian*, 22 July 2023; K Morgan, '[The acute suicide crisis among veterinarians: 'You're always going to be failing somebody'](#)', *BBC News*, 11 October 2023.

¹¹ Li et al., 'A comparison between veterinary small animal general practitioners and emergency practitioners in Australia. Part 2: client-related, work-related, and personal burnout'.

¹²Secombe, 'Declining engagement of veterinary services in Australian animal production systems: why has this occurred and what are the risks?'

Internet Vacancy Index Summary Sheet - September 2024

	Number of job ads (no.)	Monthly change (no.)	Monthly change (%)	Annual change (no.)	Annual change (%)
Australia	232,600	3,000	▲ 1.3%	-37,000	▼ -13.7%
New South Wales	67,200	-180	▼ -0.3%	-14,300	▼ -17.6%
Victoria	53,800	280	▲ 0.5%	-14,300	▼ -21.1%
Queensland	55,500	1,100	▲ 2.1%	-2,200	▼ -3.8%
South Australia	14,100	230	▲ 1.7%	-490	▼ -3.4%
Western Australia	28,200	700	▲ 2.5%	-3,700	▼ -11.7%
Tasmania	3,800	-80	▼ -2.0%	-440	▼ -10.4%
Northern Territory	3,200	130	▲ 4.0%	-90	▼ -2.6%
Australian Capital Territory	6,400	220	▲ 3.7%	-1,100	▼ -15.2%

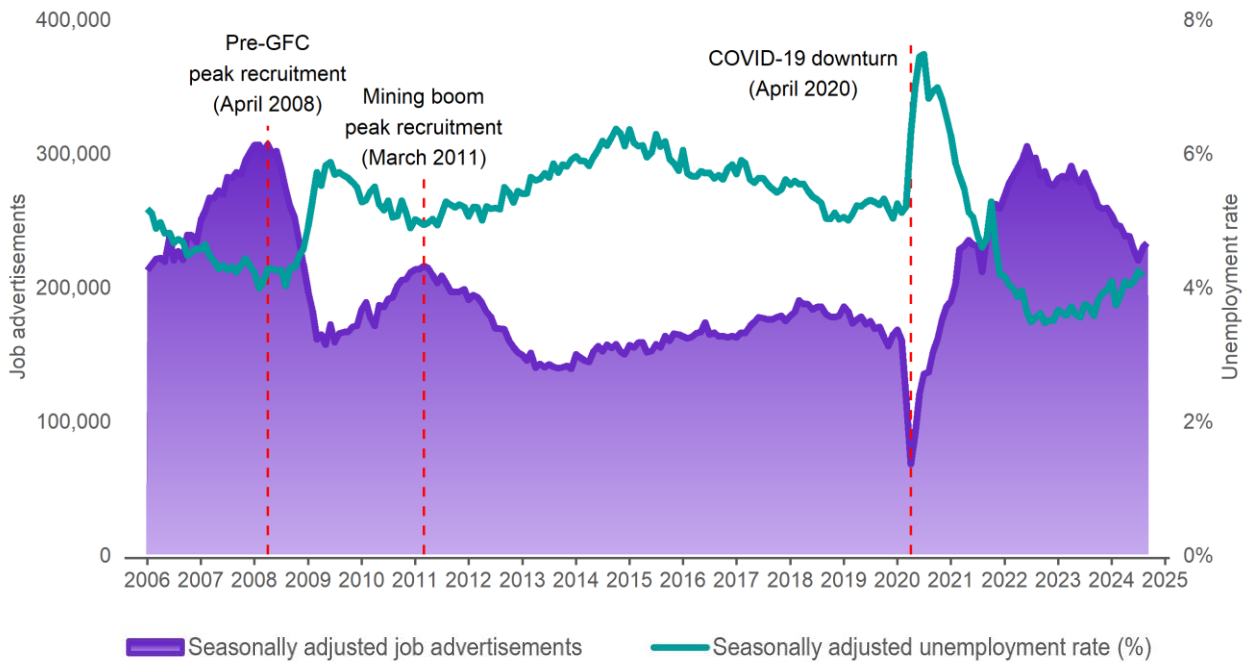
Managers	27,600	-50	▼ -0.2%	-2,900	▼ -9.4%
Professionals	65,200	-290	▼ -0.4%	-16,300	▼ -20.0%
Technicians and Trades Workers	33,700	1,300	▲ 4.1%	-3,200	▼ -8.7%
Community and Personal Service Workers	25,500	980	▲ 4.0%	-4,300	▼ -14.4%
Clerical and Administrative Workers	35,200	140	▲ 0.4%	-5,000	▼ -12.5%
Sales Workers	18,400	290	▲ 1.6%	-1,700	▼ -8.6%
Machinery Operators and Drivers	12,500	310	▲ 2.5%	-1,700	▼ -12.0%
Labourers	14,900	500	▲ 3.5%	-1,500	▼ -9.1%

Skill Level 1 - Bachelor degree or higher	83,600	-570	▼ -0.7%	-18,600	▼ -18.2%
Skill Level 2 - Advanced Diploma or Diploma	26,700	750	▲ 2.9%	-2,500	▼ -8.4%
Skill Level 3 - Certificate IV or III* (Skilled VET)	37,400	1,200	▲ 3.4%	-3,000	▼ -7.4%
Skill Level 4 - Certificate II or III	59,100	580	▲ 1.0%	-10,100	▼ -14.6%
Skill Level 5 - Certificate I or secondary education	26,000	1,100	▲ 4.3%	-2,600	▼ -9.1%

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

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

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



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



The next IVI release is scheduled for 13 November 2024. The IVI is published on the JSA website at 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.



Australian Government



Jobs and Skills Australia