



RLMI Results – December 2025

Key Findings

1. The RLMI has been expanded to leverage 10 input indicators, including new measures of long-term income support, job matching efficiency, skill underutilisation, wage outcomes, and vacancy pressure, enabling a more comprehensive measure of labour market performance across regions. This improvement has been reflected across the entire time series.
2. The December 2025 release also introduces a combined rating for Northern Australia, reflecting that labour markets and mobility patterns in Northern Australia operate across State and Territory boundaries, providing a more integrated evidence base to guide cross-jurisdictional jobs and skills planning.
3. The results show that Regional and remote areas continue to be more likely to experience relatively weaker labour market conditions than their major city counterparts.

A more comprehensive measure of labour market performance

The Regional Labour Market Indicator (RLMI) has been enhanced to include 5 additional factors, expanding the list of input factors to 10. This improvement allows the RLMI to capture a broader set of labour-market dynamics across labour supply, labour demand, and the interaction between the supply and demand.

Table 1: New RLMI Indicators – December 2025

Factor	Description	Factor Type
JobSeeker income support for 2 or more years rate	Proportion of the working age (15-64 years) population on JobSeeker Income Support for 2 or more years	Supply (structural)
Job vacancy rate	The number of new job vacancies as a proportion of the labour force (%)	Demand
Job matching efficiency rate	The efficiency with which available jobseekers and vacancies result in successful hires (%)	Intersection
Annual median wage growth rate	The percentage change in median total income over the past year (%)	Intersection
Skill underutilisation rate	Proportion of employed population working at a lower skill level than their qualification (%)	Intersection

The updates introduced in the December 2025 release reflect the continued development of the RLMI, and innovation in JSA data and methods, as JSA continues to review and refine the input factors included in the indicator. This ensures the RLMI is a highly robust and reliable measure of labour-market strength.

For the job vacancy rate and the job matching efficiency rate, new data produced by JSA¹ has enabled aspects reflecting employer-side pressures and the job-matching process to be reflected in the RLMI's measurement of labour market strength.

Other additions, including long-term income-support reliance, median income growth and skill underutilisation, have been introduced to capture important dimensions of labour-market dynamics that were not previously captured, enabling RLMI to better capture the different ways spare capacity can appear across regions.

Together, the ten indicators provide a more comprehensive summary measure of labour-market performance by:

- **capturing both current and persistent forms of spare capacity**, including long-term income-support receipt and underutilised skills;
- **reflecting employer-side pressures**, such as elevated vacancy rates or difficulty filling roles;
- **measuring how effectively jobseekers and employers are connected**, through the job-matching process; and
- **capturing how overall labour-market pressures are reflected in wage outcomes**, providing an additional signal of tightness or spare capacity.

Importantly, while the RLMI now draws on a wider set of indicators, its purpose is unchanged: it provides a single, easy-to-interpret summary measure that reflects relative labour-market performance and spare capacity across regions.

Please refer to the [RLMI Methodology Paper](#) for more information on the RLMI, including its purpose and factor selection.

Northern Australia

New in the December 2025 RLMI release is the inclusion of a combined rating for Northern Australia, produced in addition to the standard SA4-level ratings. This recognises Northern Australia as a single, multi-jurisdictional labour market.

- Northern Australia comprises the following SA4 regions: Cairns, Central Queensland, Mackay – Isaac – Whitsunday, Queensland – Outback, Townsville, Western Australia – Outback (North), Darwin, and the Northern Territory – Outback.

This addition acknowledges that labour markets, workforce challenges and mobility patterns in Northern Australia routinely span State and Territory borders. This approach improves the consistency and quality of evidence available for Northern Australia, helping guide more effective, evidence-based planning and decision-making across the region.

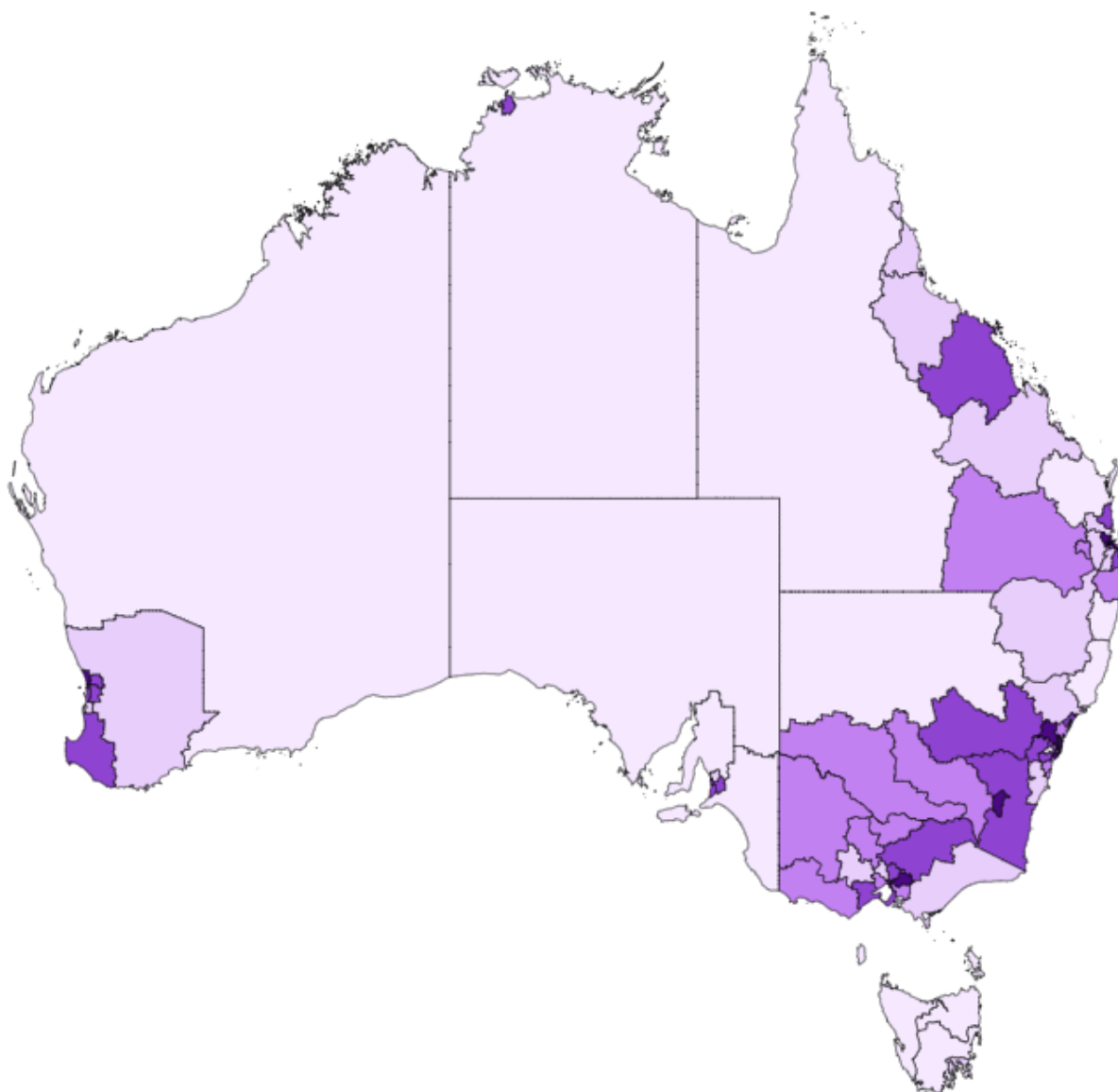
¹ JSA, [Total New Vacancies](#)

Labour market challenges are more pronounced in many regional areas

The December 2025 RLMI results show that regional and remote areas continue to be more likely to experience relatively weaker labour market conditions than their major city counterparts, highlighting the additional challenges faced in many regional areas by both employers and jobseekers (see Chart 1, below).

- Almost half of the SA4's (17 out of 37) located in regional areas were rated either 'below average' or 'poor' in December 2025, while all six (or 100%) remote areas were rated 'poor'.
- Almost three quarters of the SA4's (32 out of 44) located in major city areas were rated either 'strong' or 'above average' in December 2025.

Chart 1: RLMI ratings of relative labour market performance, December 2025



Source: JSA, *Regional Labour Market Indicator (RLMI)*, December 2025

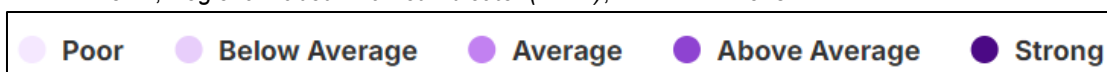
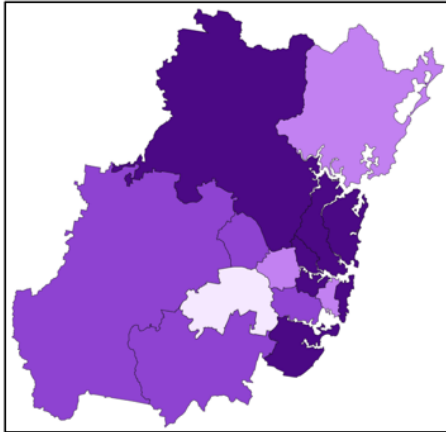
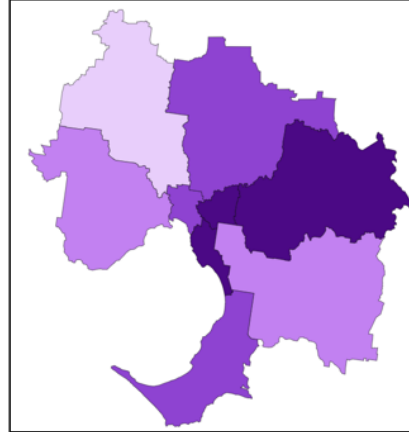


Chart 2: RLMI ratings of relative labour market performance, by selected Capital Cities, December 2025

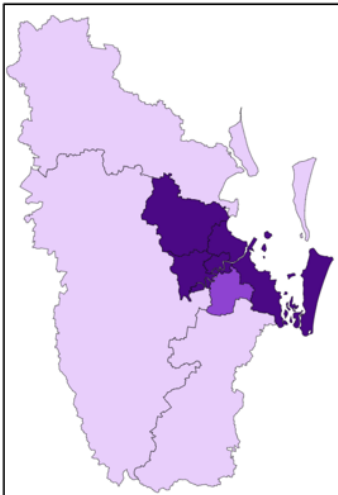
Sydney



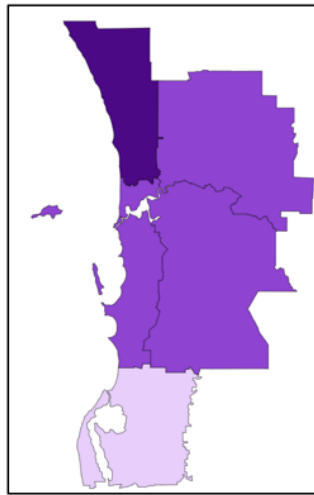
Melbourne



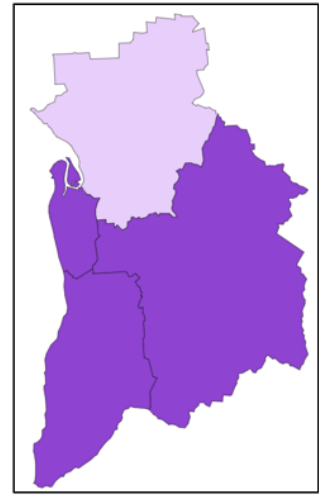
Brisbane



Perth



Adelaide



Source: JSA, *Regional Labour Market Indicator (RLMI)*, December 2025

Labour Market Rating by SA4, December 2025

Statistical Area Level 4 (SA4)	Remoteness	Dec-24	Dec-25	Direction
Central Coast	Major City	Average	Average	Stable
Sydney - Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Sydney - Blacktown	Major City	Above average	Above average	Stable
Sydney - City and Inner South	Major City	Above average	Average	Declined
Sydney - Eastern Suburbs	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Sydney - Inner South West	Major City	Above average	Above average	Stable
Sydney - Inner West	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Sydney - North Sydney and Hornsby	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Sydney - Northern Beaches	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Sydney - Outer South West	Major City	Above average	Above average	Stable
Sydney - Outer West and Blue Mountains	Major City	Above average	Above average	Stable
Sydney - Parramatta	Major City	Average	Average	Stable
Sydney - Ryde	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Sydney - South West	Major City	Poor	Poor	Stable
Sydney - Sutherland	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Capital Region	Regional	Above average	Above average	Stable
New South Wales - Central West	Regional	Above average	Above average	Stable
Coffs Harbour - Grafton	Regional	Poor	Poor	Stable
Far West and Orana	Remote	Poor	Poor	Stable
Hunter Valley exc Newcastle	Regional	Below average	Below average	Stable
Illawarra	Cities of Regional Australia	Average	Average	Stable
Mid North Coast	Regional	Poor	Poor	Stable
Murray	Regional	Average	Average	Stable
New England and North West	Regional	Below average	Below average	Stable
Newcastle and Lake Macquarie	Cities of Regional Australia	Above average	Above average	Stable
Richmond - Tweed	Regional	Below average	Average	Improved
Riverina	Regional	Average	Average	Stable
Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven	Regional	Below average	Below average	Stable
Melbourne - Inner	Major City	Above average	Above average	Stable
Melbourne - Inner East	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Melbourne - Inner South	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Melbourne - North East	Major City	Above average	Above average	Stable
Melbourne - North West	Major City	Below average	Below average	Stable
Melbourne - Outer East	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Melbourne - South East	Major City	Above average	Average	Declined
Melbourne - West	Major City	Average	Average	Stable
Mornington Peninsula	Major City	Above average	Above average	Stable
Ballarat	Regional	Below average	Below average	Stable
Bendigo	Regional	Average	Average	Stable
Geelong	Cities of Regional Australia	Above average	Above average	Stable
Hume	Regional	Average	Above average	Improved
Latrobe - Gippsland	Regional	Below average	Below average	Stable
Victoria - North West	Regional	Below average	Average	Improved
Shepparton	Regional	Below average	Average	Improved
Warrnambool and South West	Regional	Average	Average	Stable

Statistical Area Level 4 (SA4)	Remoteness	Dec-24	Dec-25	Direction
Brisbane - East	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Brisbane - North	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Brisbane - South	Major City	Above average	Above average	Stable
Brisbane - West	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Brisbane Inner City	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Ipswich	Major City	Average	Below average	Declined
Logan - Beaudesert	Major City	Average	Below average	Declined
Moreton Bay - North	Major City	Below average	Below average	Stable
Moreton Bay - South	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Cairns	Cities of Regional Australia	Below average	Below average	Stable
Darling Downs - Maranoa	Regional	Above average	Average	Declined
Central Queensland	Regional	Below average	Below average	Stable
Gold Coast	Cities of Regional Australia	Strong	Above average	Declined
Mackay - Isaac - Whitsunday	Regional	Above average	Above average	Stable
Queensland - Outback	Remote	Poor	Poor	Stable
Sunshine Coast	Cities of Regional Australia	Above average	Above average	Stable
Toowoomba	Cities of Regional Australia	Average	Average	Stable
Townsville	Cities of Regional Australia	Below average	Below average	Stable
Wide Bay	Regional	Poor	Poor	Stable
Adelaide - Central and Hills	Major City	Above average	Above average	Stable
Adelaide - North	Major City	Poor	Below average	Improved
Adelaide - South	Major City	Average	Above average	Improved
Adelaide - West	Major City	Average	Above average	Improved
Barossa - Yorke - Mid North	Regional	Poor	Poor	Stable
South Australia - Outback	Remote	Poor	Poor	Stable
South Australia - South East	Regional	Poor	Poor	Stable
Mandurah	Major City	Below average	Below average	Stable
Perth - Inner	Major City	Above average	Above average	Stable
Perth - North East	Major City	Above average	Above average	Stable
Perth - North West	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Perth - South East	Major City	Above average	Above average	Stable
Perth - South West	Major City	Above average	Above average	Stable
Bunbury	Regional	Above average	Above average	Stable
Western Australia - Outback (North and South)	Remote	Poor	Poor	Stable
Western Australia - Wheat Belt	Regional	Average	Below average	Declined
Hobart	Cities of Regional Australia	Below average	Below average	Stable
Launceston and North East	Regional	Poor	Poor	Stable
Tasmania - South East	Regional	Poor	Poor	Stable
Tasmania - West and North West	Remote	Poor	Poor	Stable
Darwin	Cities of Regional Australia	Above average	Above average	Stable
Northern Territory - Outback	Remote	Poor	Poor	Stable
Australian Capital Territory	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
<i>Northern Australia</i>		Below average	Below average	Stable

Source: JSA, Regional Labour Market Indicator (RLMI), December 2025

RLMI Explanatory Notes

Overview

The Regional Labour Market Indicator (RLMI) combines key indicators of labour supply and demand, including several indicators capturing dynamics at the intersection of those dimensions, into a single, and easy to interpret, summary measure.

Regions are grouped into distinct categories of relative overall labour market performance, ranging from 'poor' to 'strong', which provides an accurate and reliable view of labour market performance, relative to the national average.

A strong labour market, that is characterised by a high rate of employment, where employers can attract, develop and retain sufficient suitable labour to meet current skills needs, and where employment opportunities are broadly accessible and secure, help drive a more productive economy that is central to building a prosperous and inclusive society.

Factors used to assess labour market performance

The 10 input factors currently included in the RLMI are listed below. The factors can be grouped into broader measures of labour supply, demand, with several indicators capturing dynamics at the intersection of these dimensions.

Factor	Description	Factor Type	Availability	Geography	Weight
Employment rate (15-64 years)	The number of employed persons as a proportion of the working age (15-64 years) population (%)	Supply	Monthly	SA4	20%
Unemployment rate	The number of unemployed persons as a proportion of the total labour force (%)	Supply	Monthly	SA4	5%
JobSeeker income support rate	Proportion of the working age (15-64 years) population on JobSeeker Income Support*	Supply	Monthly	SA4	15%
JobSeeker income support for 2 or more years rate	Proportion of the working age (15-64 years) population on JobSeeker Income Support for 2 or more years ¹	Supply (structural)	Monthly	SA4	20%
Underemployment rate	The number of underemployed persons as a proportion of the labour force (%)	Supply	Monthly	GCCSA	4%
Job vacancy rate	The number of new job vacancies as a proportion of the labour force (%)	Demand	Monthly	SA4 ²	10%
Job matching efficiency rate	The efficiency with which available jobseekers and vacancies result in successful hires (%)	Intersection	Monthly	SA4	20%
Vacancy fill rate	The percentage of vacancies that have been filled (%)	Intersection	Monthly	GCCSA	4%
Annual median income growth rate	The percentage change in median total income over the past year (%)	Intersection	Yearly ³	SA4	1%
Skill underutilisation rate	Proportion of employed population working at a lower skill level than their qualification (%)	Intersection	5-yearly ³	SA4	1%

¹ JobSeeker income support' is a combination of the JobSeeker payment and Youth Allowance (other) payment

² Measured at the Greater Capital City Statistical Area (GCCSA) for Major Cities (Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth)

³ Note, the data is released with a substantial delay (typically 1–2 years after collection), which limits its usefulness for assessing current labour market conditions.

Methodology

Please refer to the [RLMI Methodology Paper](#) for more information on the RLMI, including its purpose and factor selection.

Referencing this report

Data in this release should be referenced as: Jobs and Skills Australia, RLMI, December 2025

Contact us

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