



# Vacancy Report January 2026

Released 18 February 2026

## Job ads up 3.6% nationally in January

Online job advertisements rose slightly in January, continuing the recent pattern of minor monthly variations and indicating a potential slowing of the medium-term downward trend that was observed from June 2022 to early-2025. Advertisement numbers remain at elevated levels, with around 30% more advertisements in the labour market presently than compared with the monthly average for 2019.

- Online job advertisements at the national level increased in January 2026 (up by 3.6% or 7,700) to stand at 221,500.
  - Over the year to January 2026, online job advertisements decreased by 0.9% (or 2,000). Advertisement 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 5.2% decrease in vacancies over the year to November 2025.<sup>1</sup>
- Recruitment activity increased across 7 states and territories over the month. The strongest increases were recorded in New South Wales (up by 4.9% or 3,100 job advertisements) followed by South Australia (up by 3.1% or 440) and Victoria (up by 2.8% or 1,300).
- Over the month, advertisements increased across all Skill Level groups. The strongest increases were recorded for Skill Level 5 (commensurate with Certificate I or secondary education) occupations (up by 6.9% or 1,600 job advertisements) followed by Skill Level 4 (commensurate with Certificate II or III) occupations (up by 4.5% or 2,400).
- Advertisements increased across all Major Occupation groups over the month. The strongest increase was for Sales Workers (up by 7.3% or 1,200 job advertisements) followed by Labourers (up by 7.0% or 950). The smallest increase was recorded for Professionals (up by 0.2% or 120).
- Recruitment activity was concentrated in metropolitan Australia, with 69.1% of job advertisements in January 2026 found in Australia's capital cities. Over the last 12 months, job advertisements have decreased in regional areas (down by 1.5%); however, a larger decrease was recorded for capital cities (down by 6.1%).

Each month the Vacancy Report provides a more detailed analysis of a particular labour market segment. This month's report spotlights IVI's new data using the JSA remoteness classification.

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), '[Job Vacancies, Australia](#)', seasonally adjusted data, November 2025.

221,500

Online  
Job Advertisements

(seasonally adjusted)



3.6%

Monthly  
change



0.9%

Annual  
change

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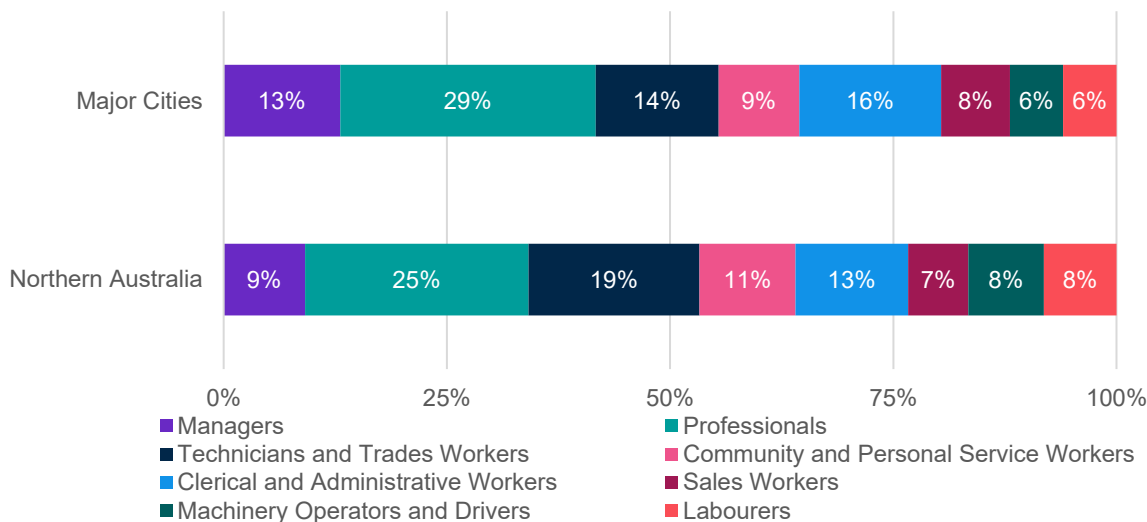
## Spotlight on Northern Australia: Strong demand and strong resilience

The [Jobs and Skills Roadmap for Regional Australia](#) emphasised the need for more comprehensive, frequent and useful data on regional workforce and skills needs.<sup>2</sup> For more than a decade, the Internet Vacancy Index (IVI) has supported analysis of labour demand outside major cities by providing online job advertisement data covering regional Australia. Along with the IVI-derived [Total New Vacancies](#) series, it remains the only freely available labour demand indicator with data disaggregated below state and territory level. This began with a bespoke ‘IVI regions’ classification and later expanded to include Statistical Area 4 (SA4) regions.<sup>3</sup> Continuing this commitment, IVI data using the JSA Remoteness and Northern Australia geographic classifications were released in late 2025. Developed through analysis and consultations underpinning the Roadmap, the classification delineates coherent labour market systems and facilitates analysis of regional labour market trends. The new IVI series provides online job advertisement numbers for occupation unit groups (ANZSCO level 4) across regional Australia, a refined metropolitan category labelled ‘Major Cities’ and an 8-region SA4 grouping for Northern Australia.<sup>4</sup>

The Northern Australia classification provides a lens on structural dynamics across an interconnected set of regions that show internal differentiation, rather than a collection of small, volatile labour markets. This system exhibits labour demand features that differ from metropolitan Australia. During the post-COVID-19 pandemic recruitment peaks, job advertisement counts in Northern Australia grew more strongly than in Major Cities, likely because the region was less affected by sustained lockdowns and dependencies on non-essential activity and population movement.<sup>5</sup> Relative to the 2019 average, online job advertisements in Northern Australia peaked at more than 90% above baseline (compared with 65% in Major Cities) during the post-pandemic surge.<sup>6</sup> Since these peaks, advertisement counts have eased more gradually in Northern Australia than in Major Cities. Systemic recruitment difficulties described in [Recruitment Experiences and Outlook Survey](#) analyses exacerbate lagged demand.<sup>7</sup> Internal migration patterns also contribute to the sustained, elevated labour demand.<sup>8</sup> By January 2026, counts in Northern Australia remained 37% above the 2019 average, while Major Cities were 5% below.

Beyond aggregate counts, high-level occupation groupings reveal compositional differences between labour demand in Northern Australia and Major Cities.<sup>9</sup> As Figure 1 shows, Northern Australia has a higher concentration of advertisements for Technicians and Trades Workers, Machinery Operators and Drivers, Community and Personal Service Workers and Labourers than in Major Cities. This profile reflects a labour market oriented towards production, maintenance, logistics and frontline service delivery, rather than the professional and corporate functions that dominate Major City economies.

**Figure 1: Proportion of online job advertisements across Major Occupation groups in Northern Australia and Major Cities in January 2026.**



Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Internet Vacancy Index, 3-month average data, January 2026.

<sup>2</sup> Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), ‘[Jobs and Skills Roadmap for Regional Australia – Phase 1](#)’, July 2025.

<sup>3</sup> ABS, ‘[Australian Statistical Geography Standard](#)’, July 2021.

<sup>4</sup> The 8 SA4 regions in the Northern Australia classification are: Cairns, Central Queensland, Mackay - Isaac - Whitsunday, Queensland - Outback, Townsville, Western Australia - Outback (North), Darwin, and Northern Territory - Outback.

<sup>5</sup> Major Cities in the JSA Remoteness classification include the Greater Capital City Statistical Areas for Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and the Australian Capital Territory, and the following metropolitan SA4s: Central Coast (NSW), Mornington Peninsula (VIC), Ipswich (QLD), Logan - Beaudesert (QLD), Moreton Bay - North (QLD), Moreton Bay - South (QLD), and Mandurah (WA).

<sup>6</sup> JSA, ‘[Internet Vacancy Index](#)’, 3-month average data, January 2026.

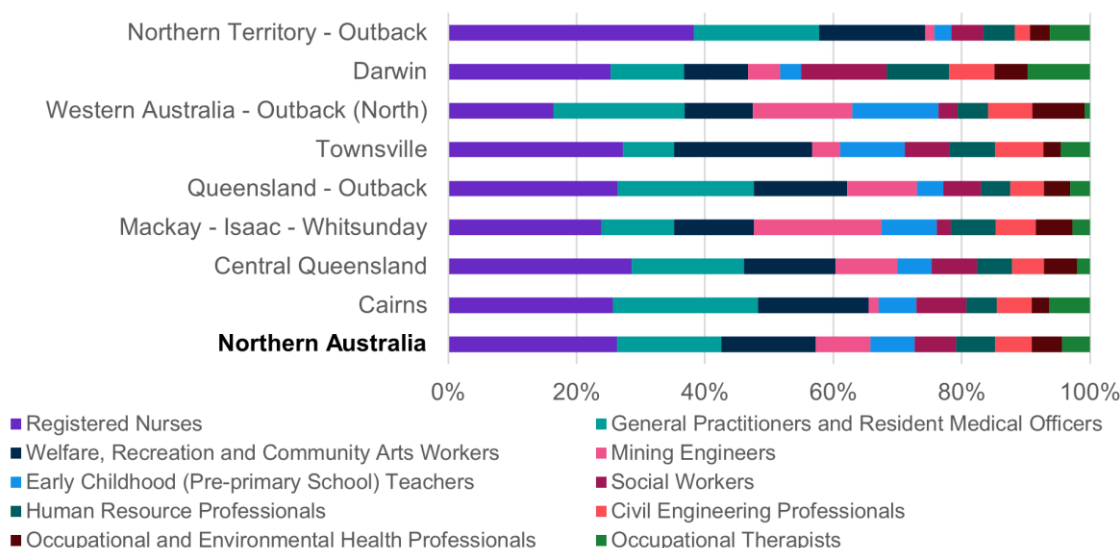
<sup>7</sup> JSA, ‘[From the Big Smoke to the Back of Bourke: Recruitment experiences across Australia's regions](#) [pdf 490KB]’, October 2024.

<sup>8</sup> Regional Australia Institute, ‘[Regional Movers Index](#)’, September 2025.

<sup>9</sup> JSA, ‘[Internet Vacancy Index](#)’.

Figure 1 also shows the prominence of Professional occupations in Northern Australia. At a more detailed level (Figure 2), differing shares for large-emplying Professional occupations reveal the sectoral specialisations across regions. They also point to occupations in broad demand that are likely subject to cross-region competition and recruitment bottlenecks.<sup>10</sup> Registered Nurses attract the largest share of Professional job advertisements across all 8 regions, however this share is typically lower outside major 'service-hub' regions. In contrast, specialised engineering professionals and Occupational and Environmental Health Professionals show greater variation across regions, reflecting sectoral concentration.

**Figure 2: Proportion of online job advertisements for each of the 10 most frequently advertised Professional occupations in Northern Australia and these proportions for the 8 SA4 regions that make up the Northern Australia aggregated classification, January 2026.**



Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Internet Vacancy Index, published and unpublished 3-month average data, January 2026.

Changes in labour demand over time make it harder for the job market to run smoothly. When demand suddenly increases, employers can compete for the same skilled workers, making existing shortages worse. Figure 3 shows the ratio of job advertisements-to-employment for Registered Nurses and Electricians in Northern Australia compared with Major Cities.<sup>11</sup> The consistently higher ratios in Northern Australia suggest ongoing difficulty attracting and keeping workers.<sup>12</sup> Short-term spikes frequently evident for Electricians in Northern Australia, however, may reflect large projects drawing these workers away, which can create flow-on shortages in other industries that rely on the same skills. Workforce planning research, including Jobs and Skills Australia's '[The Clean Energy Generation: Workforce needs for a net zero economy](#)' report, shows that demand for occupations like Electricians will remain strong.<sup>13</sup> This is driven not only by new industries and economic transitions, but also by steady demand from areas like residential construction.

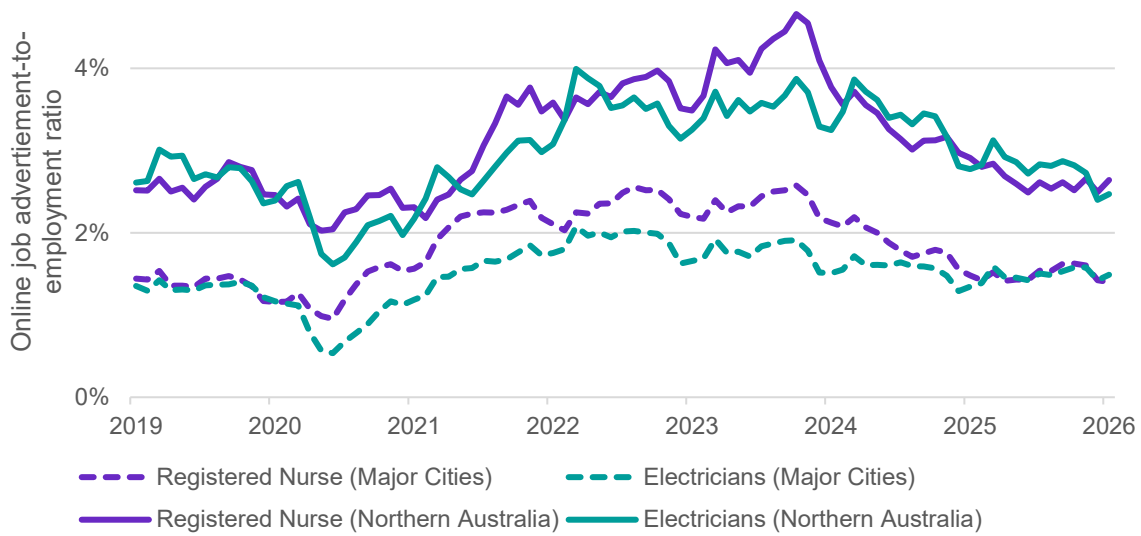
<sup>10</sup> JSA, 'Internet Vacancy Index', unpublished 3-month average data, January 2026.

<sup>11</sup> JSA, 'Internet Vacancy Index'; JSA, '[Nowcast of Employment by Region and Occupation](#)', January 2026.

<sup>12</sup> JSA, 'From the Big Smoke to the Back of Bourke: Recruitment experiences across Australia's regions [pdf 490KB]'.

<sup>13</sup> JSA, '[The Clean Energy Generation: Workforce needs for a net zero economy](#)', October 2023.

**Figure 3: Job advertisement-to-employment ratio for Registered Nurses and Electricians, in Northern Australia and Major Cities, January 2019 to January 2026.**



Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Internet Vacancy Index, 3-month average data, January 2026; Jobs and Skills Australia, Nowcast of Employment by Region and Occupation, January 2026.

Regional labour markets underpin Australia’s economic and social wellbeing. Their unique challenges and opportunities warrant targeted support to maximise their contribution to national goals.<sup>14</sup> More comprehensive, frequent and useful data on regional workforce and skills needs can help local decision-makers quantify and track changing labour-market dynamics. Jobs and Skills Australia looks forward to continuing to support Australians in our diverse regions, and to working collaboratively to ensure systems meet present and future skills needs.

<sup>14</sup> JSA, 'Jobs and Skills Roadmap for Regional Australia – Phase 1'.

# Internet Vacancy Index Summary Sheet - January 2026

	Number of job ads (no.)	Monthly change (no.)	Monthly change (%)	Annual change (no.)	Annual change (%)
<b>Australia</b>	<b>221,500</b>	<b>7,700</b>	<b>▲ 3.6%</b>	<b>-2,000</b>	<b>▼ -0.9%</b>
New South Wales	66,600	3,100	▲ 4.9%	1,300	▲ 1.9%
Victoria	46,600	1,300	▲ 2.8%	-2,300	▼ -4.7%
Queensland	53,800	820	▲ 1.5%	-380	▼ -0.7%
South Australia	14,500	440	▲ 3.1%	-20	▼ -0.1%
Western Australia	27,300	400	▲ 1.5%	350	▲ 1.3%
Tasmania	3,400	50	▲ 1.5%	-10	▼ -0.3%
Northern Territory	2,900	20	▲ 0.6%	-380	▼ -11.6%
Australian Capital Territory	4,700	-20	▼ -0.4%	-700	▼ -12.9%

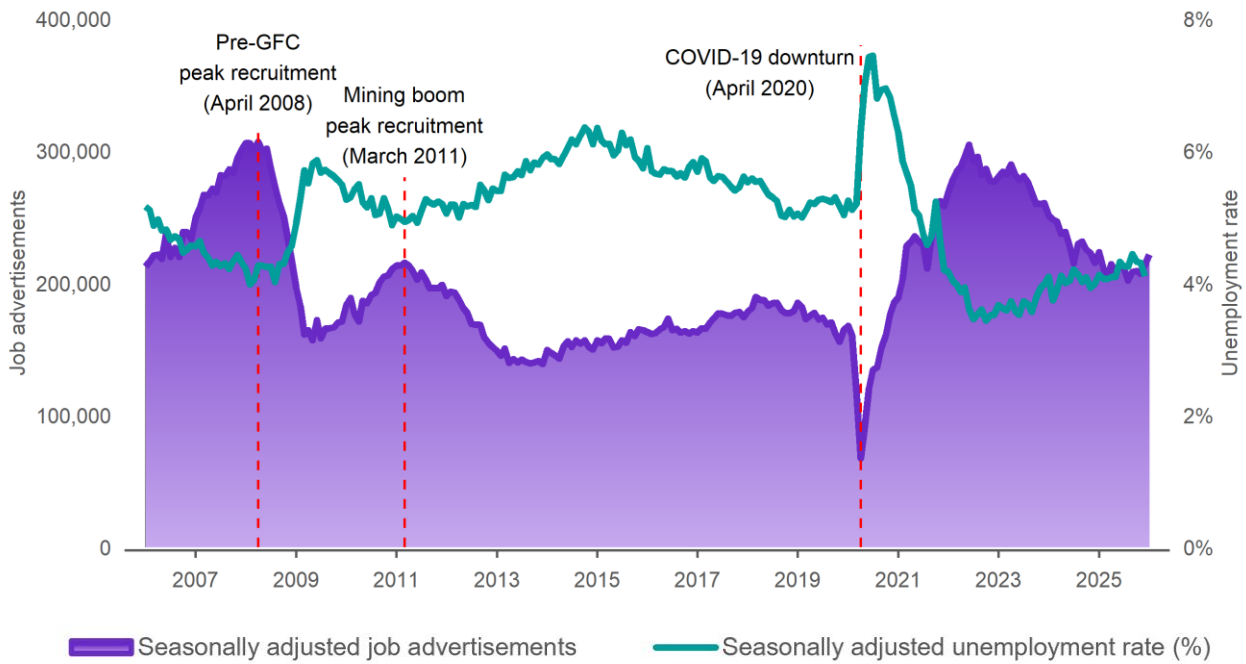
Managers	26,200	510	▲ 2.0%	-1,000	▼ -3.8%
Professionals	62,300	120	▲ 0.2%	-400	▼ -0.6%
Technicians and Trades Workers	30,600	860	▲ 2.9%	-880	▼ -2.8%
Community and Personal Service Workers	21,800	700	▲ 3.3%	50	▲ 0.2%
Clerical and Administrative Workers	32,900	1,500	▲ 4.7%	-1,500	▼ -4.4%
Sales Workers	18,100	1,200	▲ 7.3%	100	▲ 0.6%
Machinery Operators and Drivers	13,500	340	▲ 2.6%	730	▲ 5.7%
Labourers	14,500	950	▲ 7.0%	490	▲ 3.5%

Skill Level 1 - Bachelor degree or higher	80,100	470	▲ 0.6%	-800	▼ -1.0%
Skill Level 2 - Advanced Diploma or Diploma	24,800	830	▲ 3.5%	-1,500	▼ -5.5%
Skill Level 3 - Certificate IV or III* (Skilled VET)	33,800	1,100	▲ 3.3%	-1,300	▼ -3.7%
Skill Level 4 - Certificate II or III	56,000	2,400	▲ 4.5%	590	▲ 1.1%
Skill Level 5 - Certificate I or secondary education	25,000	1,600	▲ 6.9%	560	▲ 2.3%

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

Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Internet Vacancy Index, seasonally adjusted data, January 2026.

**Figure 4: Job advertisements and unemployment rate, January 2006 to January 2026**



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force, Australia, seasonally adjusted data, December 2025; Jobs and Skills Australia, Internet Vacancy Index, seasonally adjusted data, January 2026.



The next IVI release is scheduled for 18 March 2026. 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 **57% in 2024**. More detail on the IVI is available at [jobsandskills.gov.au/data/internet-vacancy-index](https://jobsandskills.gov.au/data/internet-vacancy-index).



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