



Vacancy Report February 2026

Released 18 March 2026

Job ads down 5.0% in February

Online job advertisements fell in February, 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. Despite this, advertisement 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 February 2026 (down by 5.0% or 11,100) to stand at 210,700.
 - Over the year to February 2026, online job advertisements increased by less than 0.1% (or 30). Advertisements numbers continue at high levels historically.
 - Other indicators, such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics' [Job Vacancies, Australia](#) series show vacancies continuing to fall, with a 5.2% decline over the year to November 2025.¹
- Recruitment activity decreased across all states and territories over the month. The strongest decreases were recorded in New South Wales (down by 6.2% or 4,200 job advertisements) followed by the Australian Capital Territory (down by 5.2% or 250) and Tasmania (down by 4.1% or 140).
- Over the month, advertisements decreased across all Skill Level groups. The strongest decreases were recorded for Skill Level 4 (commensurate with Certificate II or III) occupations (down by 5.7% or 3,200 job advertisements) followed by Skill Level 5 (commensurate with Certificate I or secondary education) occupations (down by 5.0% or 1,300).
- Advertisements decreased across all Major Occupation groups over the month. The strongest decrease was for Sales Workers (down by 8.1% or 1,500 job advertisements) followed by Community and Personal Service Workers (down by 6.2% or 1,400). The smallest decrease was recorded for Managers (down by 2.1% or 550).
- Recruitment activity was concentrated in metropolitan Australia, with 69.4% of job advertisements in February 2026 found in Australia's capital cities. Over the last 12 months, job advertisements have increased in regional areas (up by 3.6%); but have continued to decline in capital cities (down by 2.9%).

Each month the Vacancy Report provides a more detailed analysis of a particular labour market segment. This month's report spotlights Storepersons.

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

210,700

Online
Job Advertisements

(seasonally adjusted)



5.0%

Monthly
change



0.0%

Annual
change

Online job advertisements decreased by 5.0% (or 11,100 job advertisements) in February 2026 to stand at 210,700.

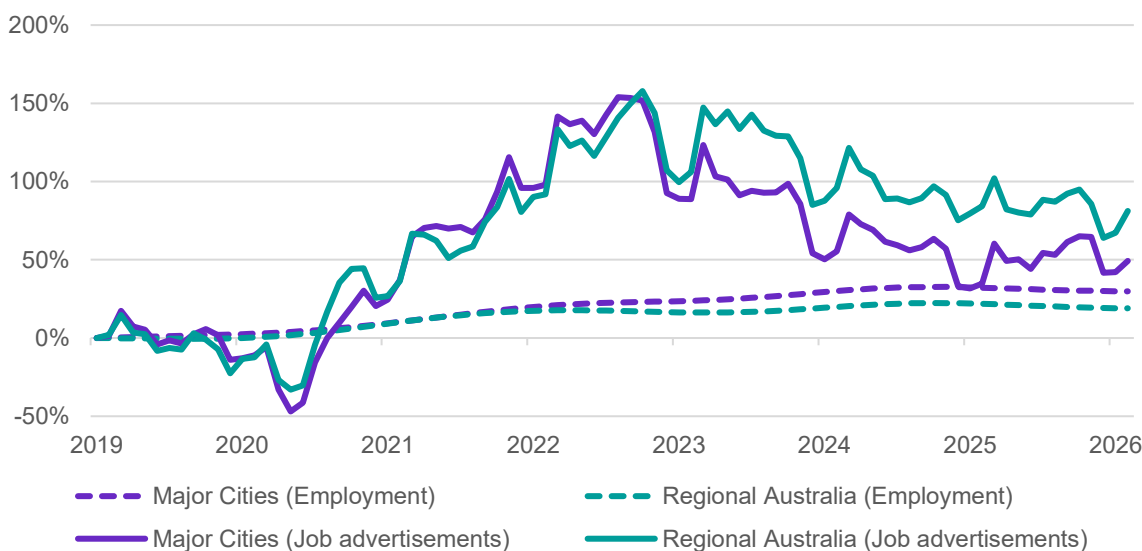
Over the year to February 2026, online job advertisements increased by 0.0% (or 30 job advertisements).

Hands-on to Heads-on: Growing demand for Storepersons and automated logistics

Storepersons play a foundational role in Australia’s transport, warehousing and distribution systems; supporting the movement of goods across retail and industrial supply chains. Broad growth in logistics activity and complexity is consistent with growing employment and demand for Storepersons. This demand has been reinforced by the expansion of e-commerce and omni-channel retailing that has increased the volume, rapidity and coordination required in modern warehousing.² Simultaneously, the continuing advancement of technological augmentation of logistics processes is changing the nature of the role, evolving from what was once predominated by manual handling towards greater interaction with inventory systems and process-driven workflows.³ These dynamics influence role complexity and have the potential to alter career pathways in the transportation and logistics sector, for which the Storepersons occupation has served as an entry point.

Online job advertisement numbers for Storepersons increased more strongly than the all-occupation average during the post-COVID-19 surge in recruitment activity and have sustained an elevated level, while following the overall trend of declining demand over the last 3 years.⁴ In February 2026, advertisement numbers for Storepersons were more than 60% above their 2019 average, compared with 25% across all occupations. The concentration of these job advertisements across major cities and regional Australia mirrors the all-occupation average, with around three-quarters seeking to fill vacancies in major cities. However, growth in demand for Storepersons from their 2019 average has been stronger in regional Australia (up by more than 85%) than in major cities (up by 47%), as illustrated in Figure 1. The strong demand growth in regional Australia underlines the breadth of industries, across primary industry, manufacturing and healthcare, supported by supply chains underpinned by the work of Storepersons.

Figure 1: Growth rate in online job advertisements and employment (January 2019 base) for Storepersons in Major Cities and Regional Australia, January 2019 to February 2026.



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

Employment numbers for Storepersons have been trending upwards for more than 2 decades, with more recent intensification of this growth aligning with expanding e-commerce and evolving retail sales’ channels. Over the five years to November 2025, the number of Storepersons increased by 15.6% (equivalent to the proportional increase across all occupations) to almost 165,000 workers.⁵ [Employment Projections](#) similarly forecast growth (7.2%) marginally in excess of the all-occupations average (6.5%) over the 5 years to May 2030.⁶ As shown in Figure 1, recent employment growth rate has been stronger in Major Cities than in Regional Australia. The growth differential across demand and

²Australia Post, ‘[Australia Post eCommerce Report 2025](#)’, 2025; KPMG, ‘[Australian Retail Outlook 2026](#)’, 2025.

³A Nand, A Sohal, I Fridman, S Hussain and M Wallace, ‘[An exploratory study of organisational and industry drivers for the implementation of emerging technologies in logistics](#)’, *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 2023, 123 (5): 1418–1439, doi: 10.1108/IMDS-08-2022-0467.

⁴Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), ‘[Internet Vacancy Index](#)’, 3-month average data, February 2026.

⁵ABS, ‘[Labour Force, Australia](#)’, trend data, January 2026; JSA, ‘[Labour Force Trending](#)’, November 2025.

⁶JSA, ‘[Employment Projections – May 2025 to May 2035](#)’, 2025.

employment outcomes likely reflects identified recruitment and retention difficulties employers experience in Regional Australia.⁷

Alongside these labour market shifts, the functions and skills required for Storepersons are continuing to evolve; driven by both changing workflow processes, consumer expectations and sales channel expansion. Warehousing management systems interact with scanning technology and inventory tracking; increasing the cognitive load to maintain rigid process compliance. Simultaneously, growing e-commerce uptake and consumers' service expectations have increased speed and accuracy requirements, with exception handling and returns processing also increasing in volume. The combination of workflow process prioritisation, speed and accuracy pressures, and exception volume creates a mire of cognitive demands that can exceed the manual handling demands displaced by technologies routinely deployed in modern warehouses.

The distribution of educational attainment across age groups of Storepersons reflects the progression of task complexity in this role. While more than two-thirds of mature-age Storepersons obtained no post-school qualification, fewer than half of all Storepersons aged 25-34 years lacked a post-school qualification, with early exit from school also far more common among older cohorts.⁸ Occupation gender diversity has also increased with changing role requirements, however, men continue to account for around three-quarters of Storepersons and women's participation has only increased gradually.⁹

The dynamics of role complexity have important downstream ramifications for the broader warehousing and logistics workforce moving forward. Storepersons roles have typically had few entry qualification requirements, and as such, have served as a pipeline for more skilled occupations requiring licencing, further qualification or sector specific work experience. Data on Occupation Mobility reveal more than 80% of Storepersons continue in the occupation year-on-year, with many of the remaining share transitioning to other industries, most frequently to Skill Level 3-5 occupations, over the last 5 years covered by these data.¹⁰ A notable proportion of those leaving the occupation, but continuing in the transport and logistics sector, move into higher skilled administrative or licensed machinery operation, with forked career trajectories neatly progressing from this low entry-barrier occupation.

The progression of technological and artificial intelligence augmentation across the transportation and logistics career ladder is likely to accelerate increases in qualification and skill requirements for roles such as Storepersons, which have traditionally featured low entry barriers and offered pathways for upskilling and in-sector mobility. Workforce analysis including Jobs and Skills Australia's '[Our Gen AI Transition: Implications for Work and Skills](#)' highlights how advanced technologies may reshape the skill profiles of lower-skilled occupations.¹¹ As these changes proliferate, a critical challenge will be ensuring that sector-specific skills and tacit, experience-based knowledge continue to be cultivated and effectively transmitted to new entrants.

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

⁸Mature-age workers is defined as workers aged 55 years and older; ABS, '[Storepersons \(OCCP\) by Age \(AGE5P\) and Highest Level of Educational Attainment \(HEAP\) 2021](#)' [Census of Population and Housing, TableBuilder], 2021.

⁹ABS, '[Labour Force, Australia, Detailed](#)', original data, November 2025.

¹⁰JSA, '[Data on Occupation Mobility: Unpacking Workers Movements](#)', January 2024.

¹¹JSA, '[Our Gen AI Transition: Implications for Work and Skills](#)', September 2025.

Internet Vacancy Index Summary Sheet - February 2026

	Number of job ads (no.)	Monthly change (no.)	Monthly change (%)	Annual change (no.)	Annual change (%)
Australia	210,700	-11,100	▼ -5.0%	30	▲ 0.0%
New South Wales	62,900	-4,200	▼ -6.2%	1,400	▲ 2.2%
Victoria	45,100	-1,300	▼ -2.8%	-1,100	▼ -2.3%
Queensland	51,200	-1,800	▼ -3.3%	-420	▼ -0.8%
South Australia	14,000	-330	▼ -2.3%	510	▲ 3.8%
Western Australia	26,900	-240	▼ -0.9%	660	▲ 2.5%
Tasmania	3,300	-140	▼ -4.1%	0	— 0.0%
Northern Territory	2,800	-20	▼ -0.9%	-220	▼ -7.3%
Australian Capital Territory	4,500	-250	▼ -5.2%	-810	▼ -15.4%

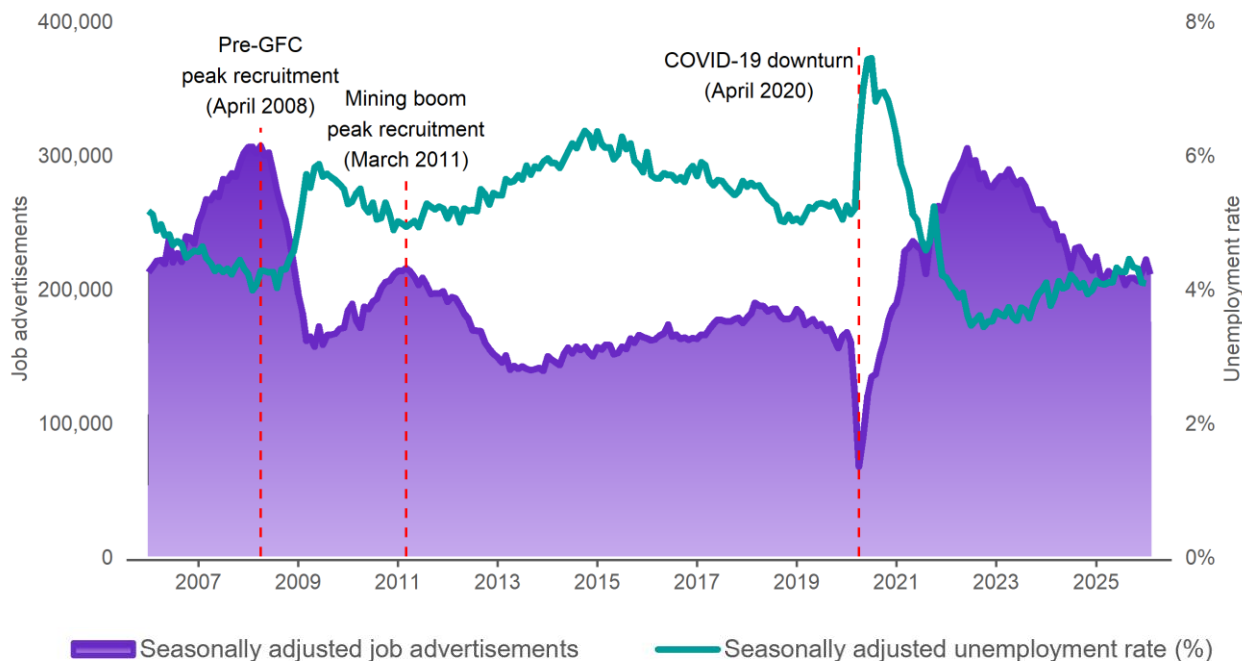
Managers	25,400	-550	▼ -2.1%	500	▲ 2.0%
Professionals	60,500	-1,700	▼ -2.7%	70	▲ 0.1%
Technicians and Trades Workers	29,400	-850	▼ -2.8%	-260	▼ -0.9%
Community and Personal Service Workers	20,500	-1,400	▼ -6.2%	-320	▼ -1.5%
Clerical and Administrative Workers	31,000	-1,900	▼ -5.7%	-1,400	▼ -4.4%
Sales Workers	16,600	-1,500	▼ -8.1%	-50	▼ -0.3%
Machinery Operators and Drivers	13,000	-360	▼ -2.7%	1,000	▲ 8.3%
Labourers	14,100	-540	▼ -3.7%	530	▲ 4.0%

Skill Level 1 - Bachelor degree or higher	77,900	-2,300	▼ -2.9%	550	▲ 0.7%
Skill Level 2 - Advanced Diploma or Diploma	23,800	-970	▼ -3.9%	-410	▼ -1.7%
Skill Level 3 - Certificate IV or III* (Skilled VET)	31,900	-1,500	▼ -4.4%	-850	▼ -2.6%
Skill Level 4 - Certificate II or III	53,100	-3,200	▼ -5.7%	-100	▼ -0.2%
Skill Level 5 - Certificate I or secondary education	23,800	-1,300	▼ -5.0%	880	▲ 3.8%

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

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

Figure 2: Job advertisements and unemployment rate, January 2006 to February 2026



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



The next IVI release is scheduled for 15 April 2026. 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 is higher in 2025 (at 52%) compared with 2016 (when it was 38%), although it has decreased since the peak of 60% in both 2022 and 2023. More detail on the IVI is available at jobsandskills.gov.au/data/internet-vacancy-index.



Australian Government



Jobs and Skills Australia