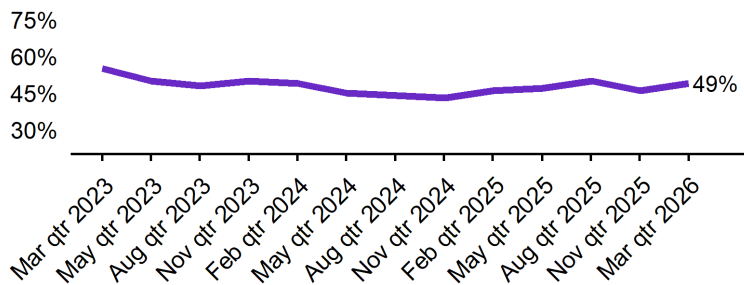




# Recruitment Experiences and Outlook Survey: March quarter 2026

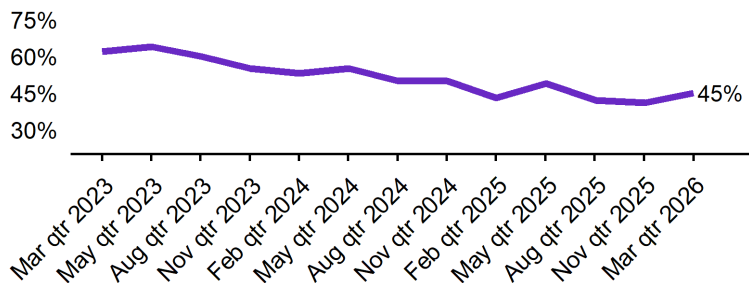
Jobs and Skills Australia conducts the Recruitment Experiences and Outlook Survey (REOS) to monitor recruitment activity and conditions across Australia. Key national indicators from the survey are released monthly. Detailed data disaggregated by state, area, industry, and occupation are released in this quarterly report. For definitions or further information on this data and the REOS, see the notes on the last page.

### Recruitment rate - National level



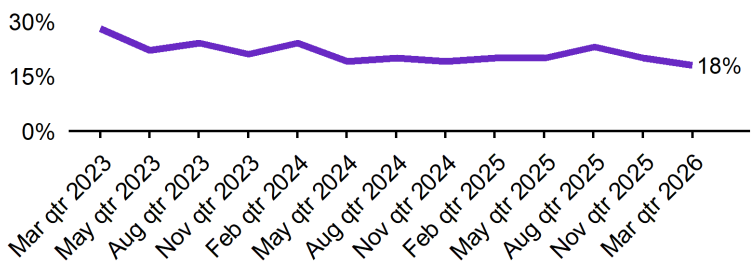
- The recruitment rate in the March quarter 2026 was 49%.
- This was 3 percentage points higher than this time last year (46%).

### Recruitment difficulty rate - National level



- The recruitment difficulty rate in the March quarter 2026 was 45%.
- This was 2 percentage points higher than a year earlier (43%).

### Expecting to increase staff - National level



- In the March quarter 2026, 18% of employers expected to increase staff. This was 2 percentage points lower than this time last year (20%).
- The proportion of employers who expected to decrease staff was 4% in the March quarter 2026.

## Key indicators by state/territory

In the March quarter 2026, Tasmania recorded the highest recruitment rate of the six states (57%). At 50%, Queensland recorded the highest recruitment difficulty rate. Out of all states and territories, Northern Territory reported the highest recruitment rate (65%), the highest recruitment difficulty rate (61%) and the highest optimism around future staffing (34%) in the March quarter 2026, noting the smaller sample size for this quarter.

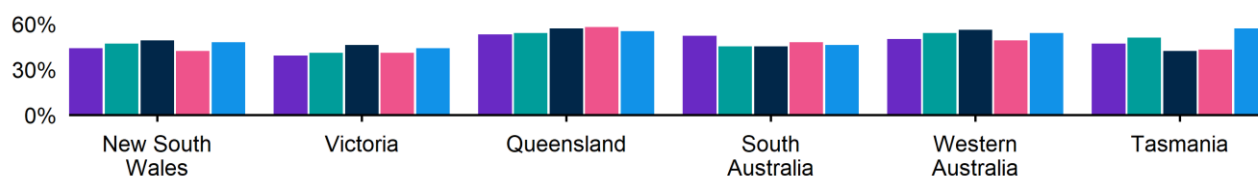
**Table 1. Key indicators by state/territory, March quarter 2026**

	Recruitment rate		Recruitment difficulty rate		Expect to increase staff	
	% of employers	Annual change (% points)	% of recruiting employers	Annual change (% points)	% of employers	Annual change (% points)
NSW	48%	4 pts	43%	0 pts	19%	1 pts
VIC	44%	5 pts	43%	0 pts	18%	-1 pts
QLD	55%	2 pts	50%	5 pts	19%	-3 pts
SA	46%	-6 pts	45%*	3 pts*	13%	-4 pts
WA	54%	4 pts	48%	5 pts	12%	-10 pts
TAS	57%	10 pts	38%*	2 pts*	24%	9 pts
NT#	65%*	4 pts*	61%*	4 pts*	34%*	2 pts*
ACT#	47%	2 pts	50%*	19 pts*	15%	-3 pts

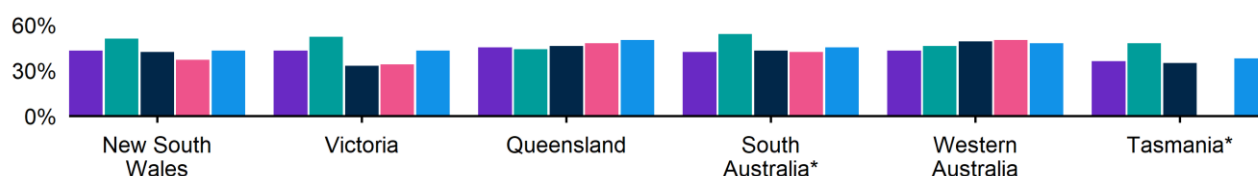
# Due to smaller sample sizes, data for the NT and ACT are based on six-month average data (Dec qtr. to Mar qtr.).

\* Interpret with caution due to low sample size.

**Figure 1. Recruitment rate by state, March quarter 2025 - March quarter 2026**

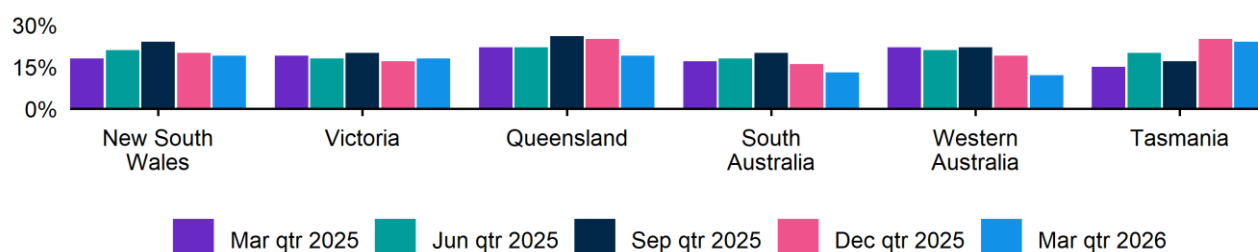


**Figure 2. Recruitment difficulty rate by state, March quarter 2025 - March quarter 2026**



Note: No data are shown for Tasmania in the December quarter 2025 due to a small sample size

**Figure 3. Expecting to increase staff numbers over the next 3 months by state, March quarter 2025 - March quarter 2026**



## Key indicators by remoteness classification<sup>1</sup> (ARIA location)

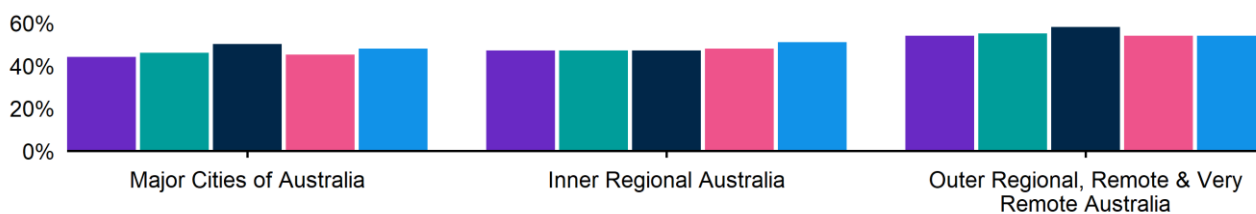
In the March quarter 2026, Outer Regional, Remote and Very Remote Australia recorded the highest recruitment rate of the ARIA regions (54%) and the highest rate of recruitment difficulty (52%). Future staffing expectations fell in all three regions compared with a year ago.

**Table 2. Key indicators by ARIA location, March quarter 2026**

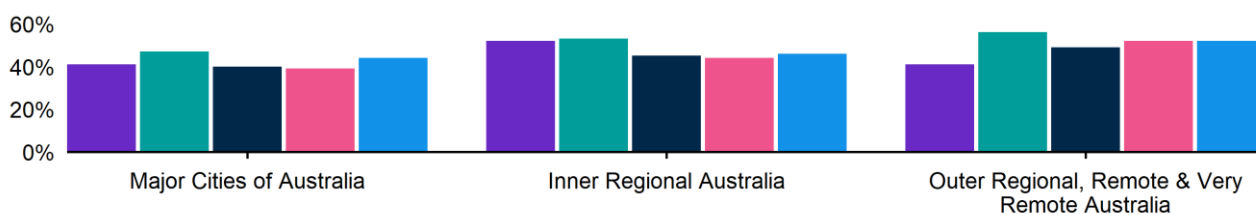
	Recruitment rate		Recruitment difficulty rate		Expect to increase staff	
	% of employers	Annual change (% points)	% of recruiting employers	Annual change (% points)	% of employers	Annual change (% points)
Major Cities of Australia	48%	4 pts	44%	3 pts	18%	-1 pts
Inner Regional Australia	51%	4 pts	46%	-6 pts	16%	-4 pts
Outer Regional, Remote	54%	0 pts	52%	11 pts	18%	-5 pts

\* Interpret with caution due to low sample size. Accessibility and Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) classifications of Outer Regional Australia, Remote Australia, and Very Remote Australia have been combined into one category to increase sample size.

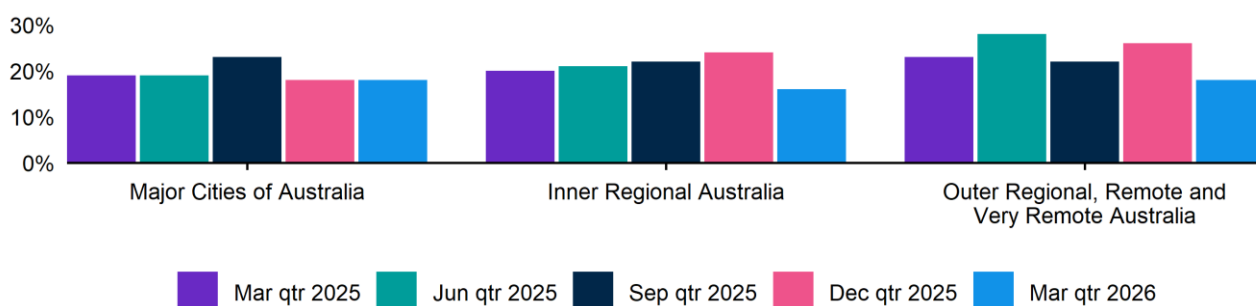
**Figure 4. Recruitment rate by ARIA location, March quarter 2025 - March quarter 2026**



**Figure 5. Recruitment difficulty rate by ARIA location, March quarter 2025 - March quarter 2026**



**Figure 6. Expecting to increase staff numbers over the next 3 months by ARIA location, March quarter 2025 - March quarter 2026**



<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Remoteness Areas, Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Edition 3, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/standards/australian-statistical-geography-standard-asgs-edition-3/jul2021-jun2026/remoteness-structure/remoteness-areas>

## Key indicators by selected industries

In the March quarter 2026, Accommodation and Food Services recorded the highest recruitment rate of the selected industries (67%). Construction and Professional, Scientific and Technical services shared the highest recruitment difficulty rate across industries, both at 58% this quarter. Compared to a year ago, Health Care and Social Assistance experienced the highest increase in future staffing optimism (at 25%, 6 percentage points higher than this time last year).

Table 3. Key indicators by industry, March quarter 2026

	Recruitment rate		Recruitment difficulty rate		Expect to increase staff	
	% of employers	Annual change (% points)	% of recruiting employers	Annual change (% points)	% of employers	Annual change (% points)
Manufacturing	43%	-5 pts	50%*	-1 pts*	14%	-8 pts
Construction	52%	10 pts	58%*	16 pts*	21%	-2 pts
Wholesale Trade	42%	6 pts	50%*	11 pts*	16%	0 pts
Retail Trade	51%	13 pts	38%	-12 pts	12%	-6 pts
Accommodation and Food Services	67%	5 pts	34%*	7 pts*	24%	1 pts
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	41%	0 pts	58%*	8 pts*	22%	5 pts
Health Care and Social Assistance	51%	-1 pts	50%*	15 pts*	23%	6 pts

\* Interpret with caution due to low sample size.

Figure 7. Recruitment rate by industry, March quarter 2025 - March quarter 2026

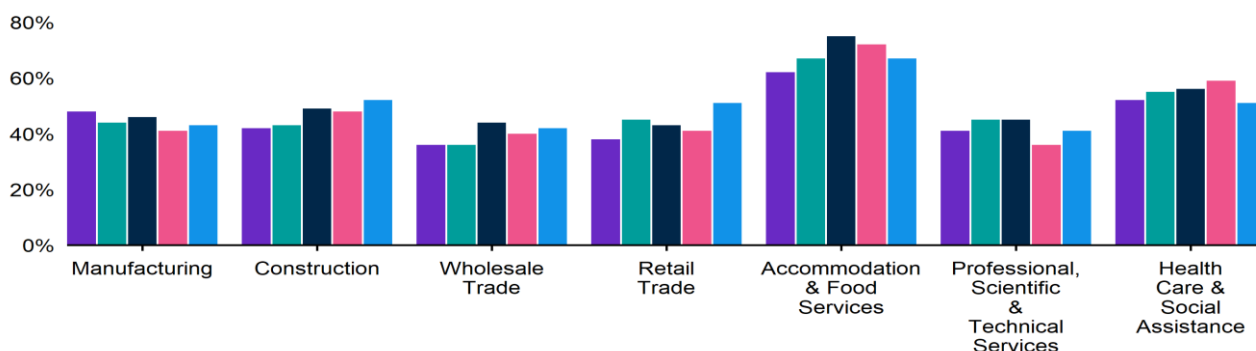
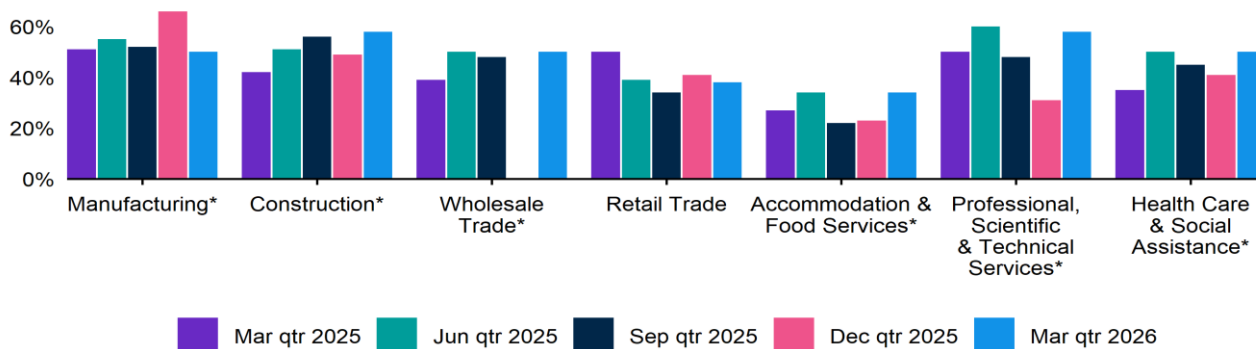


Figure 8. Recruitment difficulty rate by industry, March quarter 2025 - March quarter 2026



Note: No data are shown for Wholesale Trade in the December quarter 2025 due to a small sample size.

## Key indicators by selected occupation groups

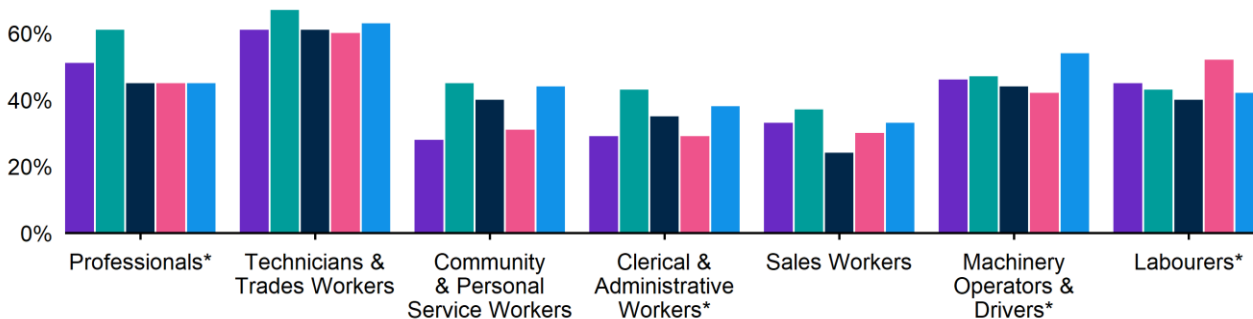
In the March quarter 2026, Technicians and Trades Workers recorded the highest rate of recruitment difficulty (63%). At 59%, employers recruiting for Technicians and Trades Workers and Machinery Operators and Drivers both had the highest proportion of vacancies unfilled for longer than a month. These two occupation groups also experienced the highest difficulty levels, at 63% and 54%, respectively.

**Table 4. Key indicators by occupation, March quarter 2026**

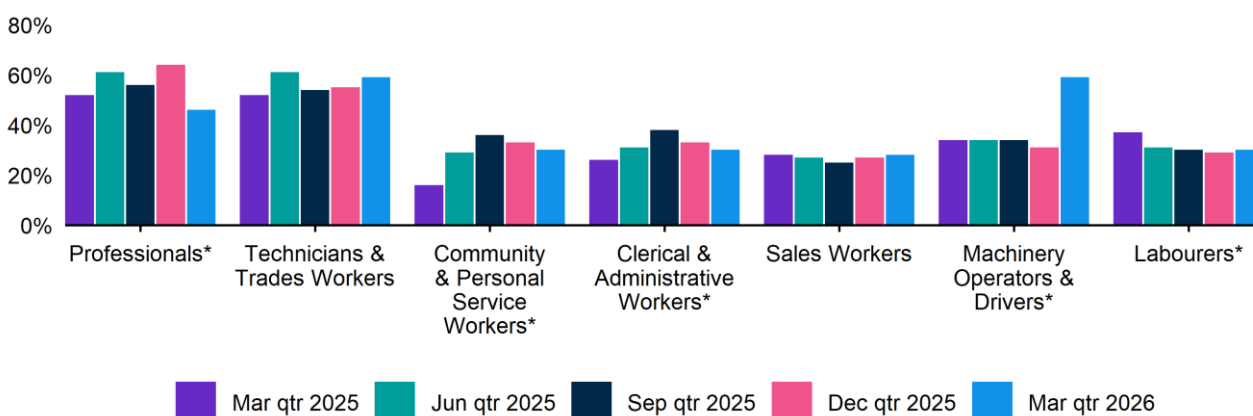
	Recruitment difficulty rate		Vacancies taking longer than 1 month to fill	
	% of recruiting employers	Annual change (% points)	% of recruiting employers	Annual change (% points)
Professionals	45%*	-6 pts*	46%*	-6 pts*
Technicians and Trades Workers	63%	2 pts	59%	7 pts
Community and Personal Service Workers	44%	16 pts	30%*	14 pts*
Clerical and Administrative Workers	38%*	9 pts*	30%*	4 pts*
Sales Workers	33%	0 pts	28%	0 pts
Machinery Operators and Drivers	54%*	8 pts*	59%*	25 pts*
Labourers	42%*	-3 pts*	30%*	-7 pts*

\* Interpret with caution due to low sample size.

**Figure 9. Recruitment difficulty rate by occupation, March quarter 2025 - March quarter 2026**



**Figure 10. Vacancies taking longer than 1 month to fill, by occupation group, March quarter 2025 - March quarter 2026**



## REOS Background and Notes

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Jobs and Skills Australia conducts the Recruitment Experiences and Outlook Survey (REOS), a telephone administered survey of around 1,000 employers each month (except for December and January, during which fewer employers are surveyed). While the results are indicative of recruitment activity, they may be subject to seasonal factors and other volatility and should therefore be used with a degree of caution. In addition, the survey is targeted towards employers with 5 or more employees, and excludes many government organisations. More detail is available at <https://www.jobsandskills.gov.au/work/reos-survey-methodology>. REOS data are published on the [Jobs and Skills Australia website](#).

Data in this release should be referenced as: *Jobs and Skills Australia, Recruitment Experiences and Outlook Survey: March quarter 2026*.

### Data notations

\* Interpret with caution due to low sample size.

### Recruitment rate

The proportion of employers either currently recruiting or who had recruited in the previous month. It is calculated by dividing the number of employers who recruited or were attempting to recruit by the number of employers that responded to the survey (excluding 'unsure' responses).

### Recruitment difficulty rate

The proportion of recruiting employers who experienced difficulty hiring staff. This indicator focusses on the most recent recruitment round in the month prior to being surveyed. The indicator is calculated as: employers who recruited and reported difficulty, divided by all employers who recruited (excluding 'unsure' responses).

### Expectations to increase staffing levels over the next 3 months

This is calculated as the percentage of employers who expect to increase staff over the next 3 months, divided by all employers. Expectations to decrease staff is also collected.

### Vacancies taking longer than 1 month to fill

The proportion of recruiting employers unable to fill all their vacancies within a month. It excludes employers with unfilled vacancies who have been recruiting for less than a month.

## Recent REOS releases

The [Jobs and Skills Australia website](#) includes:

- The March 2026 monthly REOS report, including a more detailed excel datafile. The datafile includes both the monthly results as well as the quarterly series. The quarterly estimates are aggregated results for the 3 months within each quarter.
- REOS Spotlight series featuring analysis on topics of interest not covered in the regular monthly. Recent spotlight releases cover successful methods of recruitment, and entry level jobs across city, coastal, inland and remote regions.

For queries, contact: [REOS@jobsandskills.gov.au](mailto:REOS@jobsandskills.gov.au)