



# Vacancy Report

## March 2026

Released 15 April 2026

### Job ads up 1.2% nationally in March

Online job advertisements increased slightly in March, 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 remained at elevated levels in March 2026, with around 25% more advertisements in the labour market than compared with the monthly average for 2019.

- Online job advertisements at the national level increased in March 2026 (up by 1.2% or 2,600) to stand at 214,800.
  - Over the year to March 2026, online job advertisements increased by 4.7% (or 9,700).
  - Other indicators, such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics' [Job Vacancies, Australia](#) series show vacancies continuing to fall, with a 0.3% decline over the year to February 2026.<sup>1</sup>
- Recruitment activity increased across all states and territories over the month. The strongest increases were recorded in the Northern Territory (up by 3.1% or 90 job advertisements) followed by Tasmania (up by 2.9% or 100) and Australian Capital Territory (up by 2.8% or 130).
- Over the month, advertisements increased across 4 Skill Level groups. The strongest increases were recorded for Skill Level 1 (commensurate with Bachelor degree or higher) occupations (up by 3.3% or 2,600 job advertisements) followed by Skill Level 3 (commensurate with Certificate IV or III) occupations (up by 2.2% or 690).
- Advertisements increased across 6 Major Occupation groups over the month. The strongest increase was for Professionals (up by 4.0% or 2,400 job advertisements) followed by Technicians and Trades Workers (up by 2.6% or 780).
- Recruitment activity was concentrated in metropolitan Australia, with 69.9% of job advertisements in March 2026 found in Australia's capital cities. Over the last 12 months, job advertisements have increased in regional areas (up by 5.1%); however, a decrease was recorded for capital cities (down by 1.5%).

Each month the IVI report provides a more detailed analysis of a particular labour market segment. This month's report spotlights Welfare Support Workers.

# 214,800

## Online Job Advertisements

(seasonally adjusted)



### 1.2%

Monthly change



### 4.7%

Annual change

Online job advertisements increased by 1.2% (or 2,600 job advertisements) in March 2026 to stand at 214,800.

Over the year to March 2026, online job advertisements increased by 4.7% (or 9,700 job advertisements).

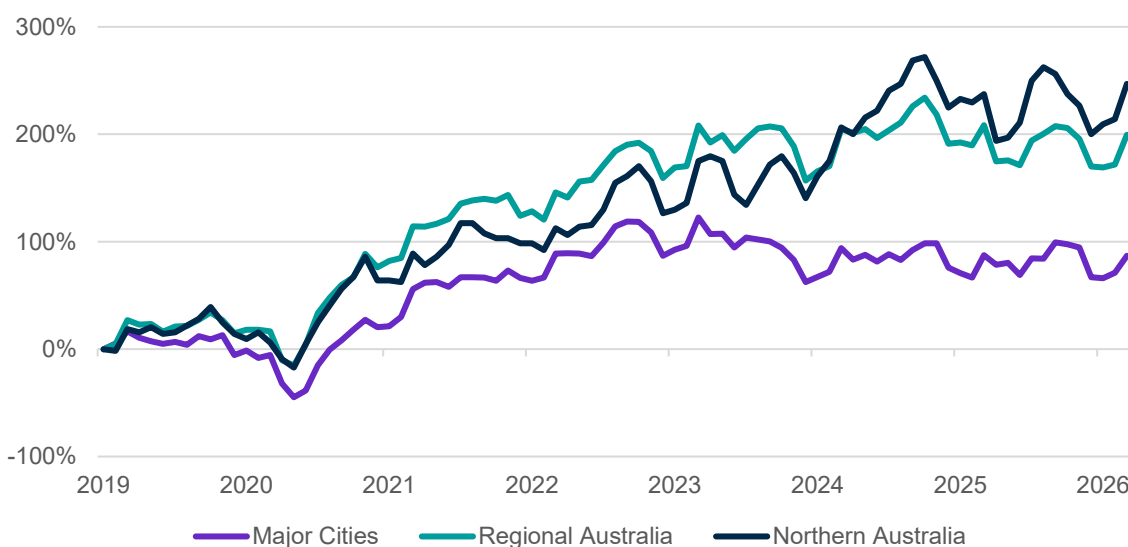
<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), '[Job Vacancies, Australia](#)', seasonally adjusted data, February 2026.

## Supporting communities, sustaining workforces: Labour demand for Welfare Support Workers

Welfare Support Workers provide professional services to Australians through support, information, advice and coordination across service agencies, addressing emotional and financial wellbeing, health and housing, and other social welfare matters. This diverse group helps individuals and communities manage challenges to sustained social participation and economic contribution.<sup>2</sup> Growing employment and labour demand for these workers are underpinned by demographic change, increasing complexity and expectations in mental health care, and a policy focus on supporting younger Australians to overcome barriers to civic engagement.<sup>3</sup> With continued growth in Australia's care sector expected over coming decades, workforce pressures and uneven regional service needs present significant challenges that require active management to ensure these services remain available to Australians who need them.

Internet Vacancy Index results suggest demand for Welfare Support Workers remains well above historically typical levels, despite gradual easing in aggregate job advertisement counts since early 2023. In March 2026, there were 1,300 online job advertisements for Welfare Support Workers; more than double the 2019 average (compared with a 25% increase across all occupations).<sup>4</sup> Underlying the elevated level of aggregate job advertisement counts is considerable variation in growth across Major Cities, Regional Australia, and Northern Australia.<sup>5</sup> As illustrated in Figure 1, online job advertisements in Major Cities are currently 74.6% above the 2019 average, compared with substantially stronger demand growth in Regional Australia and Northern Australia (up by 149.7% and 195.0% respectively).

**Figure 1: Growth rate in online job advertisements for Welfare Support Workers (January 2019 base) across Major Cities, Regional Australia and Northern Australia, from January 2019 to March 2026.**



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

Employment growth for Welfare Support Workers has also been robust; without the pronounced regional variation evident in labour demand indicators. Over the 5 years to February 2026, employment numbers for Welfare Support Workers increased by 34% to almost 95,000 workers (compared with 14% growth across all occupations).<sup>6</sup> More disaggregated employment estimates show that growth rates over the last 5 years have been remarkably similar across Major Cities, Regional Australia and Northern Australia (up by 36%, 22% and 23% respectively).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> This occupation group is primarily composed of Community Workers (40%), Youth Workers (23%) and Disabilities Services Officers (22%) but also includes Family Support Workers (6%), Residential Care Officers (4%) and Parole or Probation Officers (3%); ABS, 'Welfare Support Workers unit-group by 6-digit (OCCP)' [Census of Population and Housing, TableBuilder], 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 'Prevalence and impact of mental illness', 30 April 2024; OECD, 'Adolescent Education and Pre-Employment Interventions in Australia: Keeping Young People in Education, Employment and Training', OECD Publishing, 2023, doi: 10.1787/7bf19171-en.

<sup>4</sup> Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), 'Internet Vacancy Index', 3-month average data, March 2026.

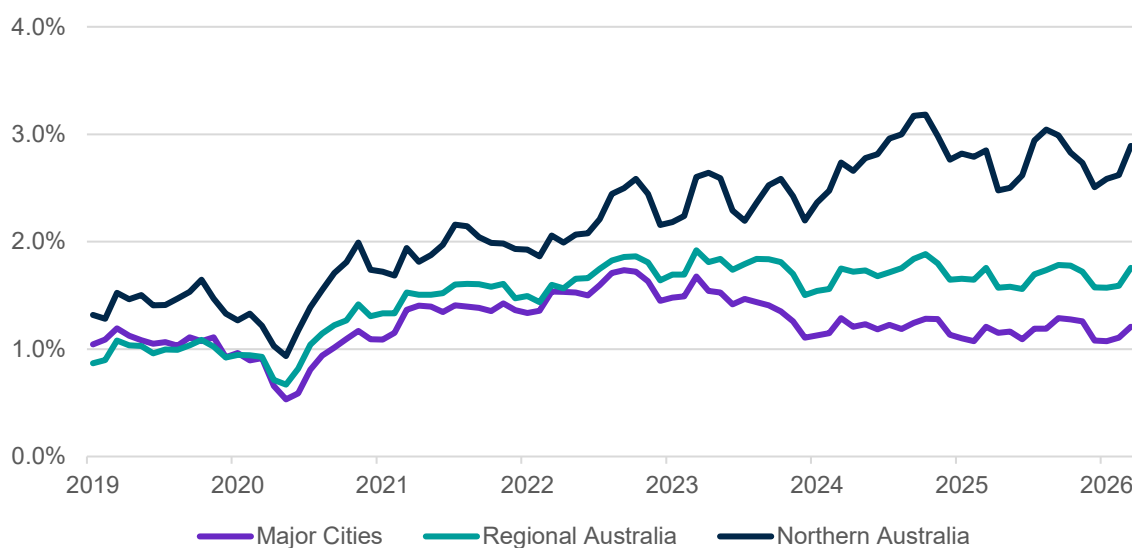
<sup>5</sup> Major Cities in the JSA Remoteness classification include the Greater Capital City Statistical Areas for Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and the Australian Capital Territory, and the following metropolitan SA4s: Central Coast (NSW), Mornington Peninsula (VIC), Ipswich (QLD), Logan – Beaudesert (QLD), Moreton Bay – North (QLD), Moreton Bay – South (QLD), and Mandurah (WA). 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>6</sup> JSA, 'Labour Force Trending', February 2026; ABS, 'Labour Force, Australia', trend data, February 2026.

<sup>7</sup> JSA, 'Nowcast of Employment by Region and Occupation', March 2026.

The pattern of employment growth provides important context for interpreting relative labour demand pressures. The job advertisement-to-employment ratio, shown in Figure 2, provides an indicator of demand pressure and labour market tightness, rather than reflecting demand expansion alone.<sup>8</sup> This contextualised measure indicates that Northern Australia faces more persistent demand pressures and tighter labour market conditions for Welfare Support Workers. Over the past two years, the ratio has exceeded 2.5% (or more than 2.5 job advertisements for every 100 employed workers) surpassing levels in Regional Australia and Major Cities, as well as the all-occupation average of 1.5%. This regional discrepancy aligns with results from the [Occupation Shortage List](#), which has identified shortages among the large occupations in this unit group in Western Australia and the Northern Territory.<sup>9</sup>

**Figure 2: Job advertisement-to-employment ratio for Welfare Support Workers across Major Cities, Regional Australia and Northern Australia, January 2019 to March 2026.**



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

Persistent elevated labour demand for Welfare Support Workers may, to some degree, be exacerbated by challenges common to these occupations. However, strategic initiatives are underway to address supply-side issues and support these fundamentally place-based services. Like other occupations in the care sector, Welfare Support Workers face high relational and emotional demands, often intensified by work with clients who have complex needs, contributing to elevated burnout risks.<sup>10</sup> Research also highlights challenges associated with heavy workloads, exposure to secondary trauma, and limited professional recognition and remuneration, all of which influence decisions to enter or remain in these occupations.<sup>11</sup> National investments in Fee-Free TAFE are expanding access to community services-related qualifications, supporting entry into Welfare Support Worker roles.<sup>12</sup> Regional and indigenous workforce initiatives are supporting locally embedded workforces, with a strong place-based focus, to build care-sector capacity.<sup>13</sup> Together, these efforts point to a more coordinated and responsive approach to strengthening the capacity and resilience of this essential workforce.

<sup>8</sup> JSA, 'Internet Vacancy Index'; JSA, 'Nowcast of Employment by Region and Occupation'.

<sup>9</sup> JSA, '[Occupation Shortage List](#)', October 2025.

<sup>10</sup> H Maheen, S Dimov, MJ Spittal and TL King, '[Suicide in welfare support workers: a retrospective mortality study in Australia 2001–2016](#)', *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 2021, 78(5): 336-341.

<sup>11</sup> A Thompson and C Shockley, '[Developing youth workers: Career ladders for sector stability](#)', *Children and Youth Services Review*, 2013, 35(3): 447-452.

<sup>12</sup> Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, '[Free TAFE removing cost barriers for priority skills courses \[media release\]](#)', January 2025.

<sup>13</sup> National Indigenous Australians Agency, '[Community Development Program \(CDP\): Workforce Development initiatives](#)', January 2025.

# Internet Vacancy Index Summary Sheet - March 2026

	Number of job ads (no.)	Monthly change (no.)	Monthly change (%)	Annual change (no.)	Annual change (%)
<b>Australia</b>	<b>214,800</b>	<b>2,600</b>	<b>▲ 1.2%</b>	<b>9,700</b>	<b>▲ 4.7%</b>
New South Wales	64,800	1,400	▲ 2.2%	4,100	▲ 6.8%
Victoria	45,600	300	▲ 0.7%	200	▲ 0.4%
Queensland	51,800	400	▲ 0.8%	3,200	▲ 6.5%
South Australia	14,500	360	▲ 2.6%	870	▲ 6.4%
Western Australia	27,800	630	▲ 2.3%	1,700	▲ 6.3%
Tasmania	3,400	100	▲ 2.9%	250	▲ 8.1%
Northern Territory	2,900	90	▲ 3.1%	-60	▼ -1.9%
Australian Capital Territory	4,600	130	▲ 2.8%	-270	▼ -5.6%

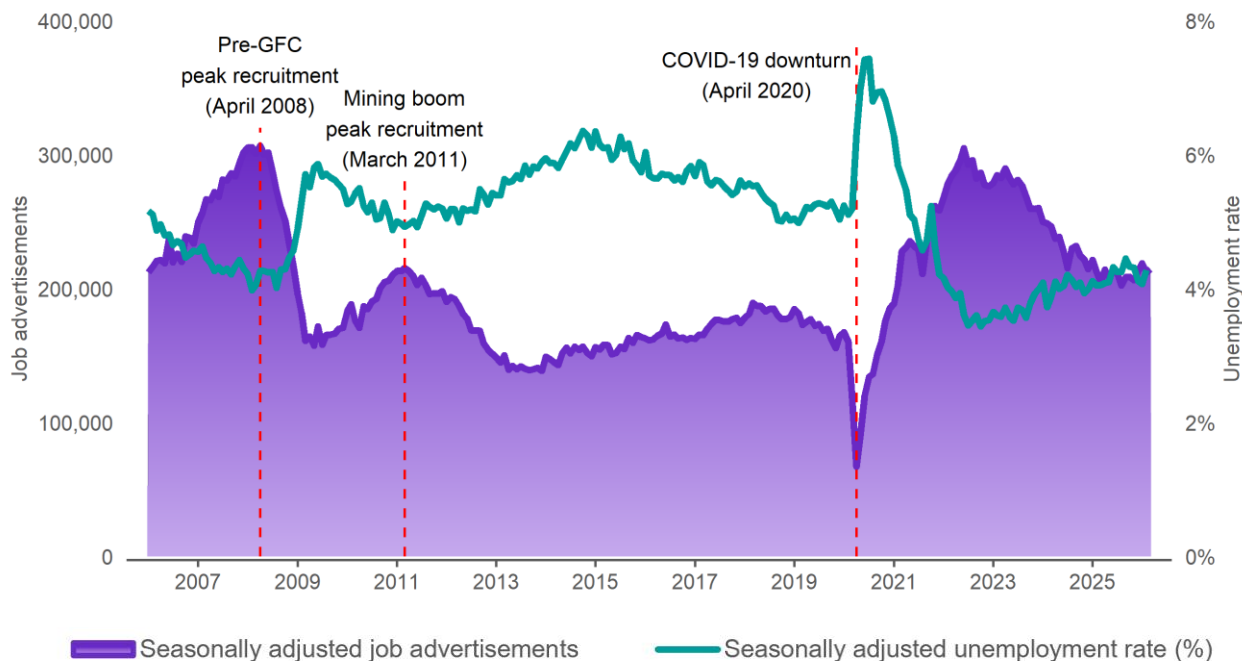
Managers	25,900	430	▲ 1.7%	1,200	▲ 4.9%
Professionals	63,700	2,400	▲ 4.0%	5,800	▲ 10.0%
Technicians and Trades Workers	30,400	780	▲ 2.6%	680	▲ 2.3%
Community and Personal Service Workers	20,600	10	▲ 0.0%	550	▲ 2.7%
Clerical and Administrative Workers	31,100	40	▲ 0.1%	-530	▼ -1.7%
Sales Workers	16,400	-150	▼ -0.9%	320	▲ 2.0%
Machinery Operators and Drivers	13,300	240	▲ 1.8%	1,400	▲ 11.9%
Labourers	13,800	-240	▼ -1.7%	430	▲ 3.2%

Skill Level 1 - Bachelor degree or higher	81,400	2,600	▲ 3.3%	6,600	▲ 8.9%
Skill Level 2 - Advanced Diploma or Diploma	24,000	160	▲ 0.7%	200	▲ 0.8%
Skill Level 3 - Certificate IV or III* (Skilled VET)	32,900	690	▲ 2.2%	130	▲ 0.4%
Skill Level 4 - Certificate II or III	53,800	400	▲ 0.7%	2,000	▲ 3.9%
Skill Level 5 - Certificate I or secondary education	23,400	-410	▼ -1.7%	860	▲ 3.8%

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

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

**Figure 3: Job advertisements and unemployment rate, January 2006 to March 2026**



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



The next IVI release is scheduled for 20 May 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 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](https://jobsandskills.gov.au/data/internet-vacancy-index).



Australian Government



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