



# Vacancy Report

## April 2026

Released 20 May 2026

### Job ads down 0.9% nationally in April

Online job advertisements decreased in April, 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 April 2026 (down by 0.9% or 1,900) to stand at 212,000.
  - Over the year to April 2026, online job advertisements decreased by 1.4% (or 3,000). Vacancy 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 0.3% decrease in vacancies over the year to February 2026.<sup>1</sup>
- Recruitment activity decreased across 6 states and territories over the month. The strongest decreases were recorded in the Australian Capital Territory (down by 5.9% or 270 job advertisements) followed by New South Wales (down by 2.5% or 1,600).
- Over the month, advertisements decreased across 4 Skill Level groups. The strongest decreases were recorded for Skill Level 1 (commensurate with Bachelor degree or higher) occupations (down by 2.6% or 2,100 job advertisements) followed by Skill Level 4 (commensurate with Certificate II or III) occupations (down by 1.1% or 600).
- Advertisements decreased across 5 Major Occupation groups over the month. The strongest decrease was for Professionals (down by 3.1% or 1,900 job advertisements) followed by Community and Personal Service Workers (down by 2.8% or 580).
- Recruitment activity was concentrated in metropolitan Australia, with 70.3% of job advertisements in April 2026 found in Australia's capital cities. Over the last 12 months, job advertisements have increased in regional areas (up by 6.7%); and decrease slightly in capital cities (down by 0.7%).

Each month the IVI report provides a more detailed analysis of a particular labour market segment. This month's report spotlights Bus and Coach Drivers.

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

212,000

Online Job Advertisements

(seasonally adjusted)



0.9%

Monthly change



1.4%

Annual change

Online job advertisements decreased by 0.9% (or 1,900 job advertisements) in April 2026 to stand at 212,000.

Over the year to April 2026, online job advertisements decreased by 1.4% (or 3,000 job advertisements).

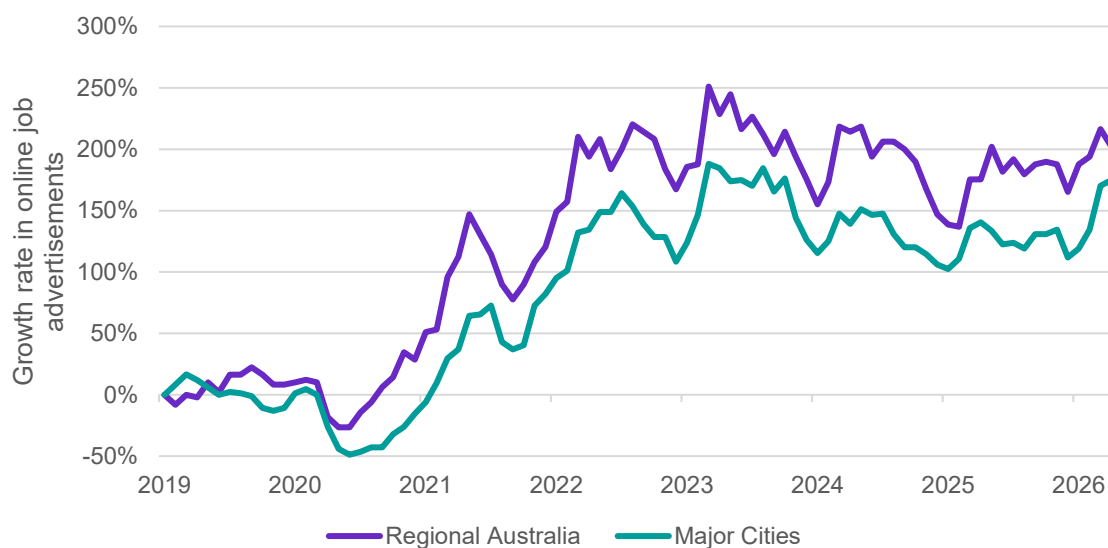
## Keeping to the timetable: Strong demand for Bus and Coach Drivers

Australia's Bus and Coach Drivers provide a valuable service by connecting individuals and communities and enabling broader economic and social participation. Beyond these direct contributions, these workers underpin value creation in Australia's tourism sector, while progress toward net zero goals depends on the availability of sustainable and efficient public transport systems.<sup>2</sup>

The continuation of these contributions is constrained by workforce challenges that are already evident in labour market indicators and are likely to intensify. A national shortage of these drivers, alongside declining employment levels and growing labour demand, signals a range of interrelated pressures threatening workforce sustainability and wellbeing. The pressures arise from an increasing concentration of mature-age workers in a highly gendered workforce, acknowledged limitations in succession planning, and limited scope for augmentation through labour-saving technologies. Together, these factors interact with difficult working conditions and increasing rates of negative workplace experiences to constrain recruitment and retention.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, worker organisations, industry peak bodies, and governments broadly concur on these challenges and have articulated objectives and support measures aimed at promoting workforce stability.

Internet Vacancy Index data indicate that demand for Bus and Coach Drivers has remained elevated in recent years, following a surge to a series high after the COVID-19 pandemic. In April 2026, there were 380 online job advertisements for Bus and Coach Drivers, representing a 180% increase on the 2019 average, compared with a 25% increase across all occupations.<sup>4</sup> As illustrated in Figure 1, growth in online job advertisements has been stronger in Regional Australia, likely reflecting systemic recruitment difficulties described in [Recruitment Experiences and Outlook Survey](#) analyses.<sup>5</sup> However, the overall demand trajectory has been similar across Major Cities and Regional Australia.

**Figure 1: Growth rate of online job advertisements for Bus and Coach Drivers (January 2019 base) across Major Cities and Regional Australia, January 2019 to April 2026.**



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

Despite persistently elevated demand, employment numbers for Bus and Coach Drivers have declined in recent years, reversing the stable growth trend observed in the decades preceding the COVID-19 pandemic. In February 2026, almost 41,000 Bus and Coach Drivers were employed across Australia, representing a 6.7% decrease over the past five years, compared with a 14% increase across all occupations.<sup>6</sup> Proportional changes in employment have been consistent across Major Cities and Regional Australia, aligning with [Occupation Shortage List](#) results that identify this occupation

<sup>2</sup> Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sports and the Arts, '[Transport and Infrastructure Net Zero Roadmap and Action Plan](#)', September 2025; The Bus and Coach Driver unit group is primarily Bus Drivers (91%) with the remaining proportion shared between Passenger Coach Driver (5%) and Charter and Tour Bus Drivers (4%); ABS, '[Bus and Coach Drivers unit-group by 6-digit \(OCCP\)](#)' [Census of Population and Housing, TableBuilder], 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Industry Skills Australia, '[2026 Transport and Logistic Workforce Planning Update](#)', 2026.

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

<sup>5</sup> JSA, '[From the Big Smoke to the Back of Bourke: Recruitment experiences across Australia's regions](#)' [pdf 490KB], October 2024.

<sup>6</sup> JSA, '[Labour Force Trending](#)', February 2026; ABS, '[Labour Force, Australia](#)', trend data, March 2026.

group in shortage across every jurisdiction in Australia.<sup>7</sup> Looking ahead, [employment projections](#) forecast weaker-than-average growth for Bus and Coach Drivers (up by 4%) over the 5 years to May 2030.<sup>8</sup>

Structural workforce issues play a role in hindering employment growth for this in-demand occupation, and the variety of these challenges may require collaborative responses.<sup>9</sup> The demographic characteristics of the Bus and Coach Driver workforce contribute to retention difficulties and present opportunities for engaging yet underrepresented cohorts.<sup>10</sup> Almost 60% of this workforce are mature age workers, with the proportion of workers over 65 years of age almost doubling to more than 20% in the decade to the most recent Census.<sup>11</sup>

Other work characteristics exacerbate recruitment and retention difficulties. Irregular work hours, increasing anti-social behaviour from passengers, time-pressured working processes alongside constrained amenity availability contribute to workplace hazards.<sup>12</sup> The capability and experience of a predominantly mature-age workforce may buffer against the challenges of facing anti-social behaviour and irregular or inflexible working hours. It may simultaneously amplify the deleterious effects of the difficult workplace conditions of extended sedentary periods and constrained adjustment possibilities within drivers' cabs.<sup>13</sup> Segments of the transport and logistics sector are looking to new technologies to replace and augment role demands. However, typical role requirements for Bus and Coach Drivers, including navigating dynamic and congested road conditions and frequent customer interaction limit the scope for automation and technological augmentation.<sup>14</sup>

Taken together, these factors make it hard to maintain the workforce. Improving recruitment and retention is critical. There is also a need to attract new workers, especially given competition from other driver roles that offer higher pay.<sup>15</sup> Industry and worker representative organisations are working in concert with Industry Skills Australia, the relevant Jobs and Skills Council, to [identify priorities](#), [consult with workers](#), [deploy best-practice recruitment and retention strategies](#) and [coordinate responses](#).

<sup>7</sup> JSA, '[Nowcast of Employment by Region and Occupation](#)', April 2026; JSA, '[Occupation Shortage List](#)', October 2025.

<sup>8</sup> JSA, '[Employment Projections – May 2025 to May 2035](#)', 2025.

<sup>9</sup> Bus Industry Council, '[BIC conference brings all together](#)', *Australasian Bus & Coach*, 18 December 2025; Industry Skills Australia, '[Driving change: Bus Industry unites to tackle workforce challenges](#)', 6 November 2025.

<sup>10</sup> Industry Skills Australia, '2026 Transport and Logistic Workforce Planning Update'.

<sup>11</sup> ABS, '[Bus and Coach Drivers \(OCCP\) by Age \(AGE5P\) 2011 and 2021](#)' [Census of Population and Housing, TableBuilder], 2021.

<sup>12</sup> Transport Workers' Union of Australia, '[Torrens bus driver safety survey](#)', January 2023; Industry Skills Australia, '2026 Transport and Logistic Workforce Planning Update'.

<sup>13</sup> C LaBond, C Banwell, M Pescud, T Doan and L Strazdins, '[Blue collar timescapes: work, health, and pension eligibility age for mature age Australian bus drivers](#)', *Critical Public Health*, 2022.

<sup>14</sup> Industry Skills Australia, '2026 Transport and Logistic Workforce Planning Update'.

<sup>15</sup> For example, Truck Drivers attract an average salary approximately 20% higher than Bus Drivers; ABS, '[Bus Drivers and Truck Drivers \(General\) \(OCCP\) by Total Personal Income \(INCP\) 2021](#)' [Census of Population and Housing, TableBuilder], 2021.

# Internet Vacancy Index Summary Sheet - April 2026

	Number of job ads (no.)	Monthly change (no.)	Monthly change (%)	Annual change (no.)	Annual change (%)
<b>Australia</b>	<b>212,000</b>	<b>-1,900</b>	<b>▼ -0.9%</b>	<b>-3,000</b>	<b>▼ -1.4%</b>
New South Wales	62,500	-1,600	▼ -2.5%	-480	▼ -0.8%
Victoria	45,600	-130	▼ -0.3%	-1,100	▼ -2.3%
Queensland	51,800	-70	▼ -0.1%	-780	▼ -1.5%
South Australia	14,800	190	▲ 1.3%	520	▲ 3.7%
Western Australia	27,000	-580	▼ -2.1%	-380	▼ -1.4%
Tasmania	3,400	-10	▼ -0.4%	-40	▼ -1.3%
Northern Territory	3,000	80	▲ 2.8%	-30	▼ -0.9%
Australian Capital Territory	4,300	-270	▼ -5.9%	-800	▼ -15.7%

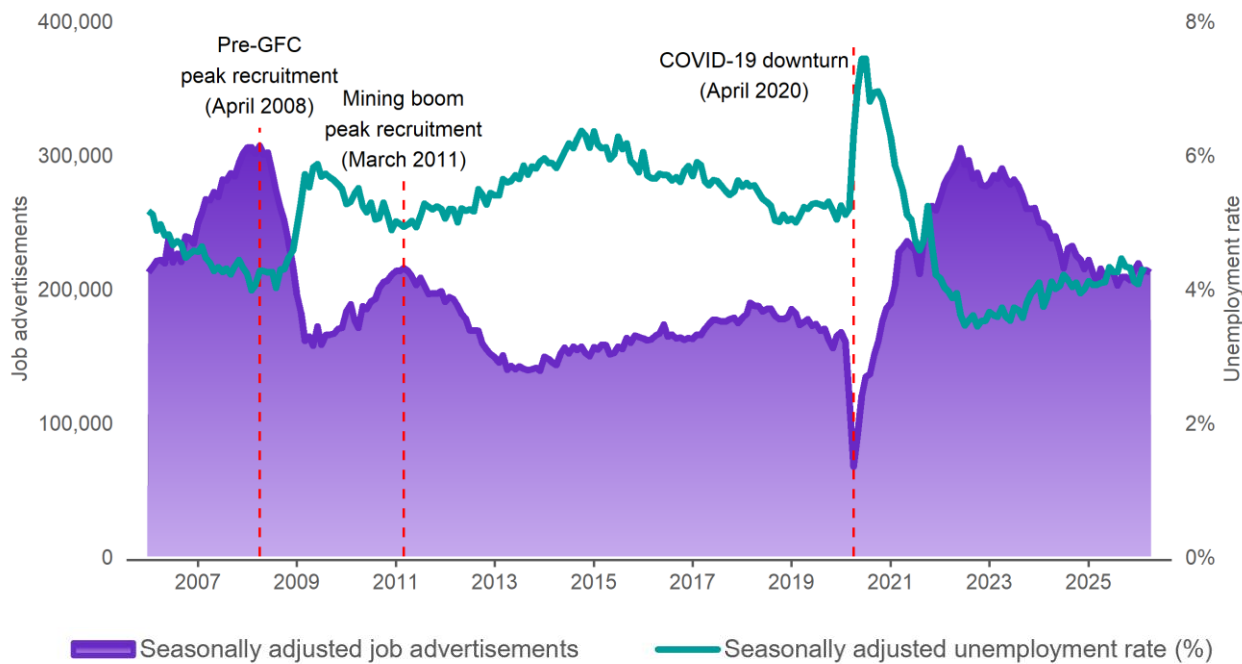
Managers	25,600	-300	▼ -1.2%	-560	▼ -2.1%
Professionals	61,200	-1,900	▼ -3.1%	-490	▼ -0.8%
Technicians and Trades Workers	30,400	-10	▼ 0.0%	-410	▼ -1.3%
Community and Personal Service Workers	19,900	-580	▼ -2.8%	-770	▼ -3.7%
Clerical and Administrative Workers	31,000	-170	▼ -0.5%	-2,300	▼ -7.0%
Sales Workers	16,900	350	▲ 2.1%	100	▲ 0.6%
Machinery Operators and Drivers	13,500	90	▲ 0.7%	1,300	▲ 10.4%
Labourers	13,900	50	▲ 0.4%	210	▲ 1.5%

Skill Level 1 - Bachelor degree or higher	78,700	-2,100	▼ -2.6%	-830	▼ -1.0%
Skill Level 2 - Advanced Diploma or Diploma	23,800	-240	▼ -1.0%	-960	▼ -3.9%
Skill Level 3 - Certificate IV or III* (Skilled VET)	32,800	-100	▼ -0.3%	-1,300	▼ -3.9%
Skill Level 4 - Certificate II or III	53,100	-600	▼ -1.1%	-470	▼ -0.9%
Skill Level 5 - Certificate I or secondary education	23,800	210	▲ 0.9%	590	▲ 2.6%

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

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

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



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



The next IVI release is scheduled for 24 June 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).



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