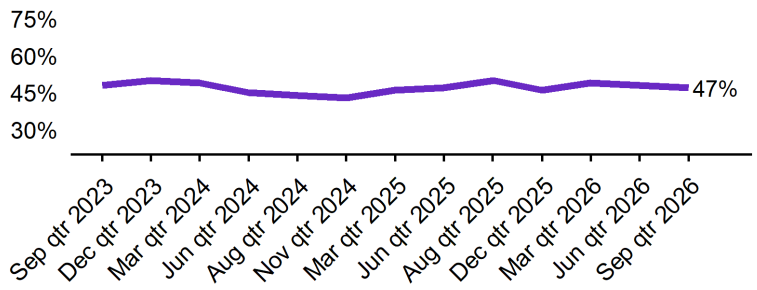
Australian Government | Jobs and Skills Australia

Recruitment Experiences and Outlook Survey: September quarter 2026

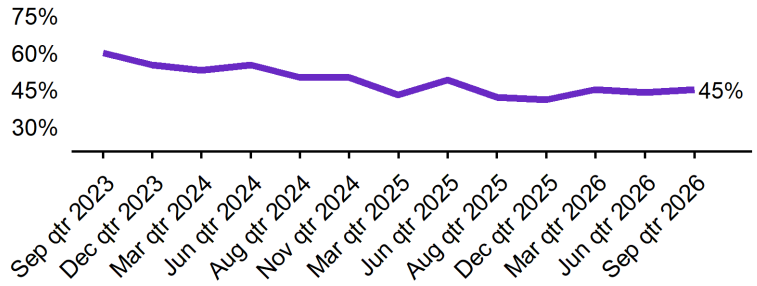
Jobs and Skills Australia conducts the Recruitment Experiences and Outlook Survey (REOS) to monitor recruitment activity and conditions across Australia. Key national indicators from the survey are released monthly. Detailed data disaggregated by state, area, industry, and occupation are released in 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



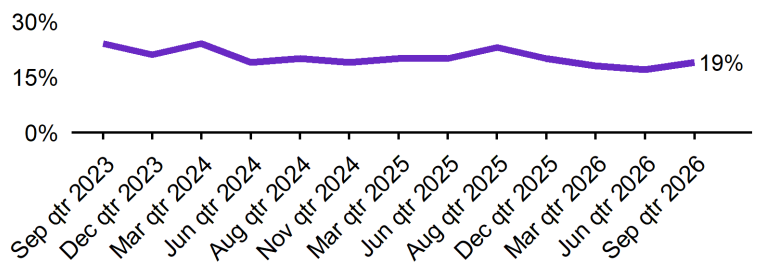
- The recruitment rate in the September quarter 2026 was 47%.
- This was 3 percentage points lower than this time last year (50%).

Recruitment difficulty rate - National level



- The recruitment difficulty rate in the September quarter 2026 was 45%.
- This was 3 percentage points higher than this time last year (42%).

Expecting to increase staff - National level



- In the September quarter 2026, 19% of employers expected to increase staff. This was 4 percentage points lower than this time last year (23%).
- The proportion of employers who expected to decrease staff was 3% in the September quarter 2026.

Key indicators by state/territory

In the September quarter 2026, Queensland recorded the highest recruitment rate among the states (54%), while also recording the highest state-level recruitment difficulty (49%). Across all jurisdictions, the Northern Territory reported the highest recruitment rate (55%) and recruitment difficulty (63%*) in the September quarter 2026.

Table 1. Key indicators by state/territory, September 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	46%	-3 pts	47%	5 pts	19%	-5 pts
VIC	40%	-6 pts	36%	3 pts	15%	-5 pts
QLD	54%	-3 pts	49%	3 pts	21%	-5 pts
SA	46%	1 pts	47%	4 pts	23%	3 pts
WA	51%	-5 pts	46%	-3 pts	21%	-1 pts
TAS	38%	-4 pts	38%*	3 pts*	18%	1 pts
NT#	55%	-14 pts	63%*	6 pts*	16%	-7 pts
ACT#	46%	6 pts	28%*	-12 pts*	19%	0 pts

Due to smaller sample sizes, data for the NT and ACT are based on six-month average data (**Jun** qtr. to **Sep** qtr.).
* Interpret with caution due to low sample size.

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

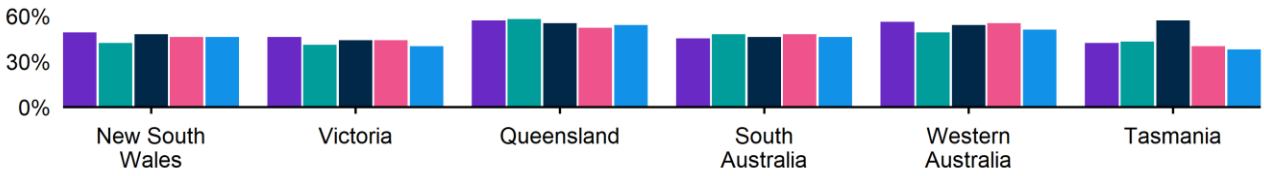


Figure 2. Recruitment difficulty rate by state, September quarter 2025 - September quarter 2026

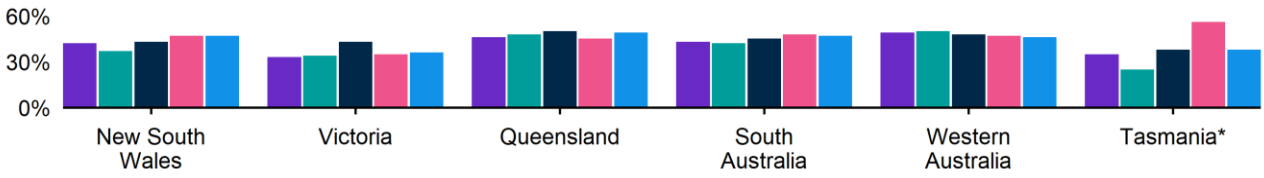
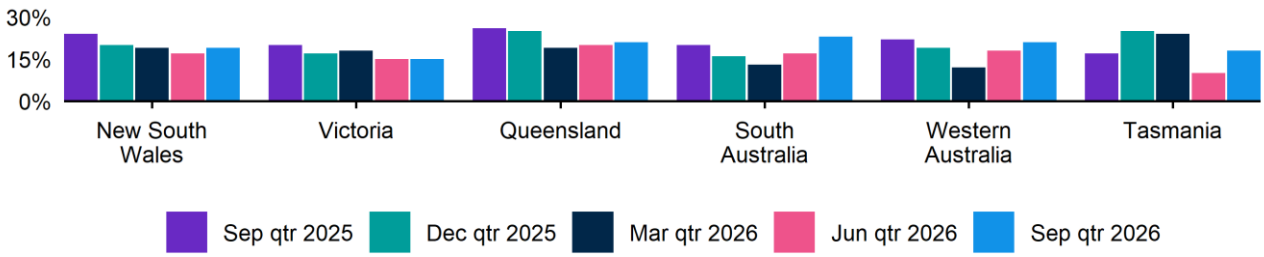


Figure 3. Expecting to increase staff numbers over the next 3 months by state, September quarter 2025 - September quarter 2026



Key indicators by remoteness classification[1] (ARIA location)

Labour market conditions remained comparatively stronger outside major cities. In the September quarter 2026, Outer Regional, Remote and Very Remote Australia recorded both the highest recruitment rate (53%) and recruitment difficulty rate (53%) among the ARIA regions. Employers in these areas were also the most likely to expect staff growth over the next three months (21%).

Table 2. Key indicators by ARIA location, September 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	45%	-5 pts	42%	2 pts	19%	-4 pts
Inner Regional Australia	52%	5 pts	49%	4 pts	20%	-2 pts
Outer Regional, Remote and Very Remote Australia	53%	-5 pts	53%	4 pts	21%	-1 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.

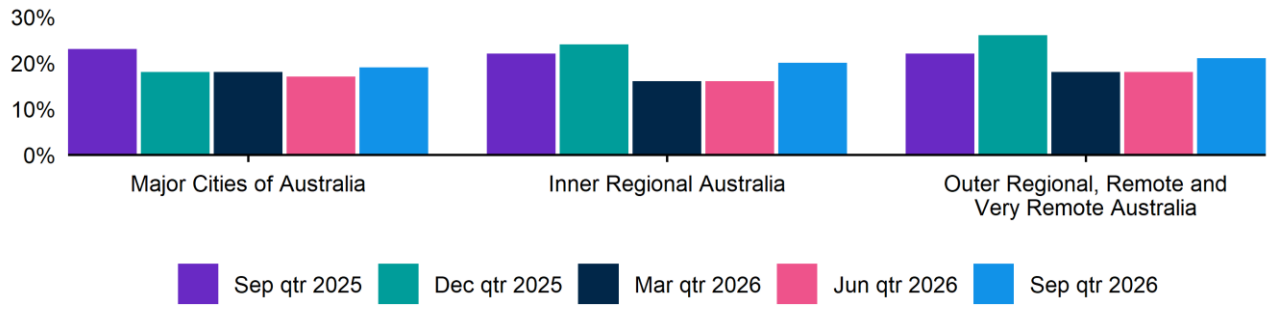
Figure 4. Recruitment rate by ARIA location, September quarter 2025 - September quarter 2026



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



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



[1] 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

Recruitment activity remained strongest in Accommodation and Food Services, where two-thirds of employers (66%) were recruiting. Recruitment difficulties were most pronounced in Manufacturing (58%) and Construction (56%), suggesting ongoing hiring challenges in parts of the goods-producing sector. Despite maintaining the highest staffing intentions (32%), employers in Accommodation and Food Services were less likely to expect staff growth than a year ago (down 10 percentage points).

Table 3. Key indicators by industry, September 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	45%	-1 pts	58%	6 pts	20%	-3 pts
Construction	46%	-3 pts	56%	0 pts	19%	-2 pts
Wholesale Trade	43%	-1 pts	43%*	-5 pts*	21%	-2 pts
Retail Trade	44%	1 pts	37%	3 pts	16%	1 pts
Accommodation and Food Services	66%	-9 pts	26%	4 pts	32%	-10 pts
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	39%	-6 pts	49%	1 pts	13%	-7 pts
Health Care and Social Assistance	55%	-1 pts	44%	-1 pts	19%	-4 pts

*Interpret with caution due to low sample size.

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

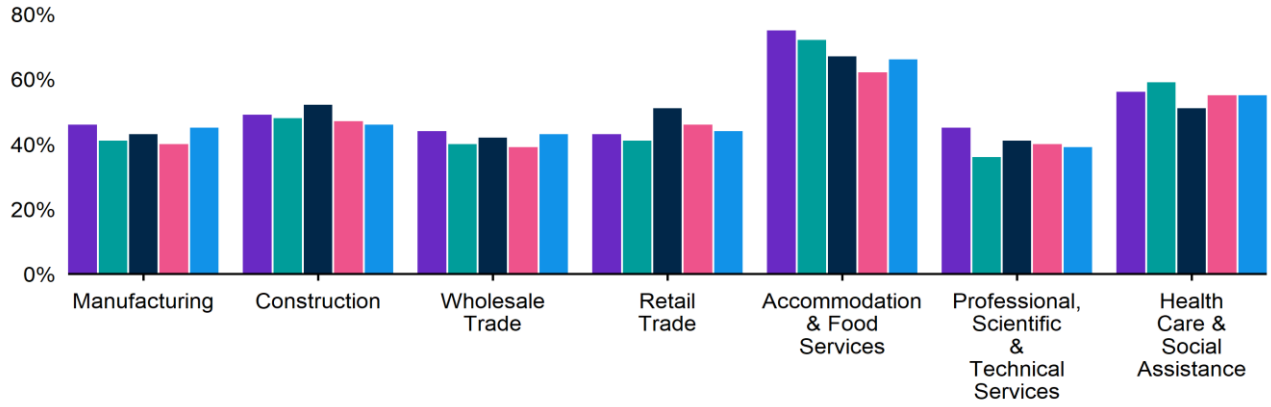
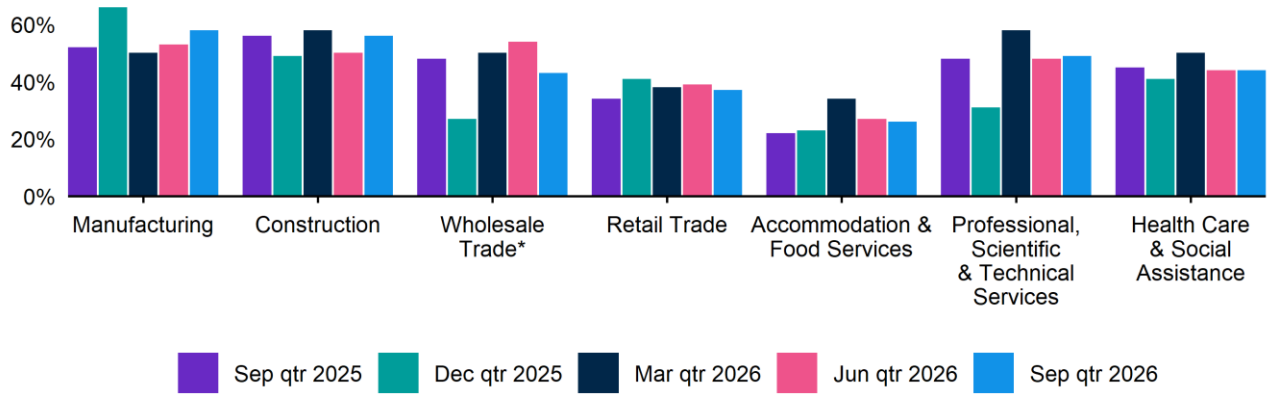


Figure 8. Recruitment difficulty rate by industry, September quarter 2025 - September quarter 2026



Key indicators by selected occupation groups

Recruitment challenges remained most acute for Technicians and Trades Workers. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of employers recruiting for these occupations reported difficulty filling positions, while 60% reported vacancies remaining unfilled for more than one month. This was the highest result across all major occupation groups on both measures.

Table 4. Key indicators by occupation, September 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	50%	5 pts	51%	-5 pts
Technicians and Trades Workers	65%	3 pts	60%	5 pts
Community and Personal Service Workers	41%	1 pts	27%	-9 pts
Clerical and Administrative Workers	29%	-6 pts	26%	-12 pts
Sales Workers	34%	10 pts	27%	2 pts
Machinery Operators and Drivers	44%	-1 pts	36%*	3 pts*
Labourers	37%	-3 pts	22%	-6 pts

*Interpret with caution due to low sample size.

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

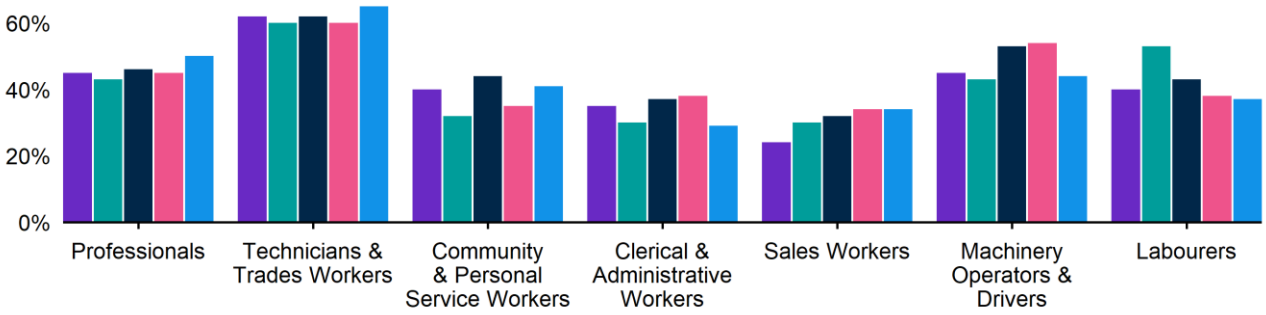
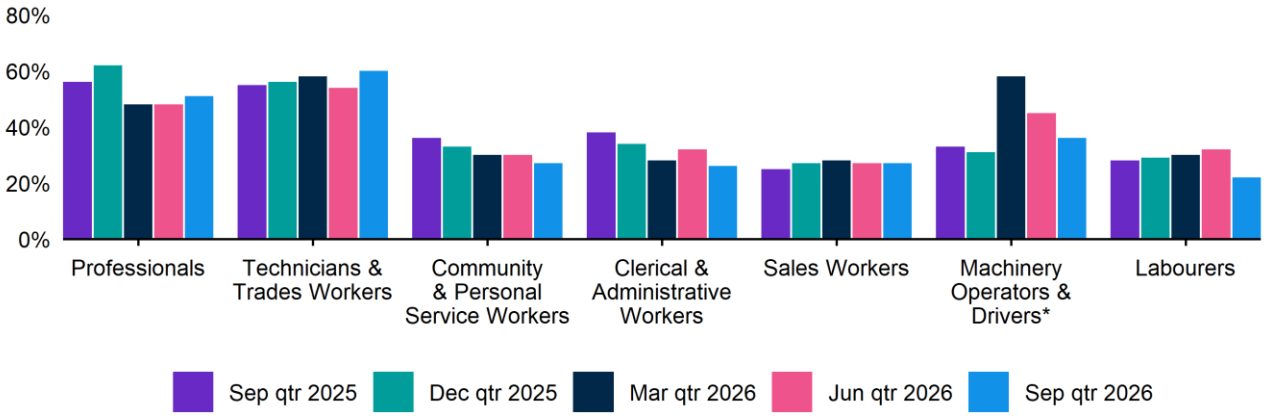


Figure 10. Vacancies taking longer than 1 month to fill, by occupation group, September quarter 2025 - September quarter 2026



REOS Background and Notes

Jobs and Skills Australia conducts the Recruitment Experiences and Outlook Survey (REOS), a telephone administered survey of at least 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: September 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 September 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 recruitment trends in the IT industry and recruitment pressures in the higher-skilled labour market.

For queries, contact: REOS@jobsandskills.gov.au