



Labour Market Conditions in the Bundaberg region

Overall, labour market conditions in the Bundaberg region are soft.

- In September 2014, the unemployment rate in the region was 8.5 per cent¹, compared with 6.1 per cent nationally².
 - There is, however, significant variation across the region ranging from 6.3 per cent in Bargara – Burnett Heads to 10.0 per cent in Walkervale-Avenell Heights.¹
- In August 2011 (latest available data), the youth (15-24) full-time unemployment rate was also well above the comparable national rate (21.3 per cent compared with 12.8 per cent).³
- The region's labour force participation rate, in August 2011, was much lower than the national rate (55.1 per cent compared with 65.0 per cent).³
- The region has an older population with 57 per cent of the adult population aged 55 years and over, compared with 38 per cent nationally.
 - Those aged 55 years and over are less likely to participate in the labour market (25.4 per cent compared with 34.0 per cent nationally).³
- Between 2001 and 2011, employment in the Agriculture industry fell by 21 per cent. In 2001, this sector was the largest employing industry in the region; however, it has since fallen behind the Health Care and Social Assistance and Retail industries.⁴
 - Over the same period, the Health Care and Social Assistance industry recorded a 72 per cent increase in employment and now employs more than 5000 people.⁴



What employers are telling us

The survey results confirm the softness in the labour market.⁵

- Competition for vacancies is high overall with, on average, 11.0 applicants for each vacancy, however, there is significant variation across occupations.
 - Vacancies for Machinery Operators and Drivers attracted an average of 17.1 applicants, whereas vacancies for Community and Personal Service Workers only attracted 2.5 applicants per vacancy.
- Employers reported that only 2.2 per cent of vacancies remained unfilled.⁶
- While 67 per cent of employers did not change staff numbers, only 11 per cent increased staff in the 12 months prior to the survey compared with 16 per cent in all regions surveyed.⁶
- Future recruitment activity is also likely to be subdued with only 31 per cent of employers expecting to recruit in the next 12 months.⁶
- In line with the expected low recruitment activity, some 56 per cent of employers reported that their single greatest concern for the future was the demand for products and services and/or the economy, compared with 46 per cent for all regions.⁶

Where are the opportunities?

- Despite the softness in the labour market, opportunities exist for job seekers seeking to gain entry into the labour market through entry level occupations. Of employers who expect to recruit over the next 12 months, 56 per cent will recruit for lower skilled occupations such as Sales Assistants, Bar Attendants and Baristas, Receptionists, Truck Drivers, Waiters and Child Carers.

¹ Department of Employment, Small Area Labour Market data, September 2014

² ABS, Labour Force data, December 2014 (seasonally adjusted)

³ ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2011

⁴ ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2001 and 2011

⁵ This report is based on a Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences of 309 employers in the Bundaberg region (Employment Services Area) undertaken in October 2014

⁶ Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences, all regions surveyed in the 12 months to June 2014