



# Labour market conditions in Mid West and Gascoyne

- Labour market conditions in the Mid West and Gascoyne<sup>1</sup> region continue to soften.
  - The unemployment rate has increased by 0.6 percentage points over the year, to stand at 7.2 per cent in the September quarter 2014 (latest available data).<sup>2</sup>
  - Moreover, the number of people receiving unemployment benefits has increased by 17 per cent over the year.<sup>3</sup>
- While *Construction* and *Retail Trade* were the largest employing industries at the time of the 2011 Census, *Mining* comprised 7 per cent of the workforce.
- In 2011, 10 per cent of the region’s working age (15-64) population was Indigenous.<sup>4</sup>

## What employers told us<sup>5</sup>

Recruitment conditions have eased since the Mid West and Gascoyne region was last surveyed in May 2011.

- Businesses recruited at an average annual rate of 21.7 vacancies per 100 staff, well below the 36.8 recorded in May 2011.
  - Recruitment was highest in the *Accommodation and Food Services* industry (52.1 vacancies per 100 staff).
- Some 31 per cent of businesses had difficulty recruiting in their most recent recruitment round, a significant reduction from the 56 per cent recorded in the 2011 survey.
  - Over the same period, the proportion of unfilled vacancies fell from 8.0 per cent to 1.8 per cent.
  - Recruitment difficulty remained relatively common for higher skilled occupations<sup>6</sup>, with 62 per cent of employers reporting difficulty filling vacancies for Technicians and Trades Workers.
  - By contrast, recruitment difficulty for lower skilled occupations has eased significantly, falling from 56 per cent of employers in 2011 to 22 per cent in 2014.
- Recruitment activity is likely to soften further during 2015, with just 13 per cent of employers expecting to increase staff numbers.

	MW&G 2014	MW&G 2011	All regions (2014)
Average annual vacancies per 100 staff	21.7	36.8	16.1
Unfilled vacancies	1.8%	8.0%	2.3%
Experienced difficulty recruiting staff	31%	56%	31%
Expect to increase staff numbers	13%	30%	19%

## Where are the opportunities?

- Despite the softening in labour market conditions, opportunities for job seekers are likely to exist in higher skilled occupations for which employers had difficulty recruiting, such as Chefs, Registered Nurses and Motor Mechanics, as well as lower skilled occupations like Housekeepers.
- In addition, many employers intended to recruit for Sales Assistants and Bar Attendants and Baristas in the 12 months following the survey.

<sup>1</sup> The Mid West and Gascoyne Employment Service Area (ESA) comprises 20 Local Government Areas including Greater Geraldton, Carnarvon and Exmouth.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Employment, *Small Area Labour Markets*, September quarter 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Centrelink Administrative Data - Department of Human Services Administrative Data (Department of Social Services Extract), December 2014.

<sup>4</sup> ABS, *Census of Population and Housing*, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Based on responses from 311 employers in the Mid West and Gascoyne ESA in December 2014. The region was previously surveyed in May 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Higher skilled vacancies refer to those with *Australia and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations* (ANZSCO) skill level 1, 2 or 3. Lower skilled refer to ANZSCO occupations with skill level 4 or 5.