



# Peel Region

## Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences May 2013

### Key findings

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Despite strong employment growth in the Peel region in recent years, the survey results suggest that the labour market is relatively subdued.

- The annual recruitment rate was substantially lower than other areas of Western Australia that have been surveyed in the past two years. However, there was some variability across the region. Recruitment activity was considerably stronger in the Mining and Primary Metal Manufacturing dominated areas of Boddington, Murray and Waroona than in Mandurah and Serpentine-Jarrahdale.

Despite the soft recruitment conditions overall, there was some evidence of recruitment difficulty and skill shortages, particularly for Technicians and Trades Workers, with almost two thirds of employers recruiting for this occupation reporting difficulty.

Recruitment expectations for the year following the survey were also cautious due to employer uncertainty about future economic conditions. However, despite the potentially slowing recruitment activity, a range of employment opportunities is expected for job seekers across the region.

### Peel region

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The Peel region consists of the LGAs of Boddington, Mandurah, Murray, Serpentine-Jarrahdale and Waroona. In August 2011, the Peel region had an adult population of 90,850, 66 per cent of whom lived in the Mandurah LGA. The region experienced adult population growth of 25 per cent between 2006 and 2011, which was higher than the growth for Western Australia of 15 per cent over the same period.<sup>1</sup>

- Employment growth in the Peel region was very strong in the five years to the August 2011 Census (31 per cent) compared with Australia overall (10 per cent).<sup>2</sup>
- Despite the strong employment growth, the unemployment rate in the Peel region was 6.1 per cent<sup>3</sup> in March 2013, which was higher than for both the State (4.6 per cent) and Australia (5.7 per cent).<sup>4</sup> Over the last 12 months, the unemployment rate has increased by 0.5 percentage points.

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<sup>1</sup> ABS, *Census of Population and Housing*, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> ABS, *Census of Population and Housing*, August 2011.

<sup>3</sup> DEEWR, *Small Area Labour Markets*, March 2013.

<sup>4</sup> ABS, *Labour Force Survey*, seasonally adjusted, July 2013.

- Employment growth in the Peel region was very strong in the five years to the August 2011 Census (31 per cent) compared with Australia overall (10 per cent).<sup>5</sup>
- In the five years to 2011, the occupations that recorded the largest increases in employment in the Peel region were Community and Personal Service Workers (54 per cent), followed by Professionals (45 per cent).<sup>6</sup>
- The Mandurah and Serpentine-Jarrahdale LGAs have diverse economies, with large Retail Trade, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Accommodation and Food Services industries.
- By contrast, the Boddington, Murray and Waroona LGAs are heavily reliant on employment in Mining and Primary Metal and Metal Product Manufacturing (44 per cent of all employment).<sup>7</sup>

## Recruitment activity

The department conducts Surveys of Employers' Recruitment Experiences in regions across Australia. A survey of the Peel region, with 236 employers participating, was conducted in May 2013.

Recruitment levels in the Peel region (15 vacancies per 100 staff) were well below those for other parts of Western Australia that have been surveyed over the past two years. For instance, in the Kimberley ESA there were 66 vacancies per 100 staff. However, recruitment levels were consistent with levels of recruitment activity across all regions surveyed in Australia.

Despite the softer recruitment conditions, the proportion of employers who reported recruitment difficulty (55 per cent) was higher than for all regions (49 per cent) despite the softer recruitment conditions. The unfilled vacancy rate was also higher (7.5 per cent).

**Table 1. Recruitment experiences in the 12 months preceding the survey**

|   | Peel Region | Boddington, Murray and Waroona | Mandurah and Serpentine-Jarrahdale | All regions surveyed (12 months to Mar 2012) |
|---|-------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Proportion of employers who recruited</b>                  | 60%         | 61%                            | 60%                                | 58%  |
| <b>Vacancies per 100 staff (recruitment rate)</b>             | 15          | 24                             | 13                                 | 17   |
| <b>% of vacancies unfilled</b>                                | 7.5%        | 11.0%                          | 5.7%                               | 4.5%   |
| <b>Proportion of employers who had recruitment difficulty</b> | 55%         | 57%                            | 54%                                | 49%  |

## Strong competition for vacancies

Overall, competition for vacancies was strong in the Peel region. Nonetheless, employers still had difficulty filling some vacancies, most notably for Technicians and Trades Workers and Labourers.

- On average, employers had 10.7 applicants per vacancy in their most recent recruitment round, of whom an average of 3.1 were interviewed with 1.6 deemed to be suitable.

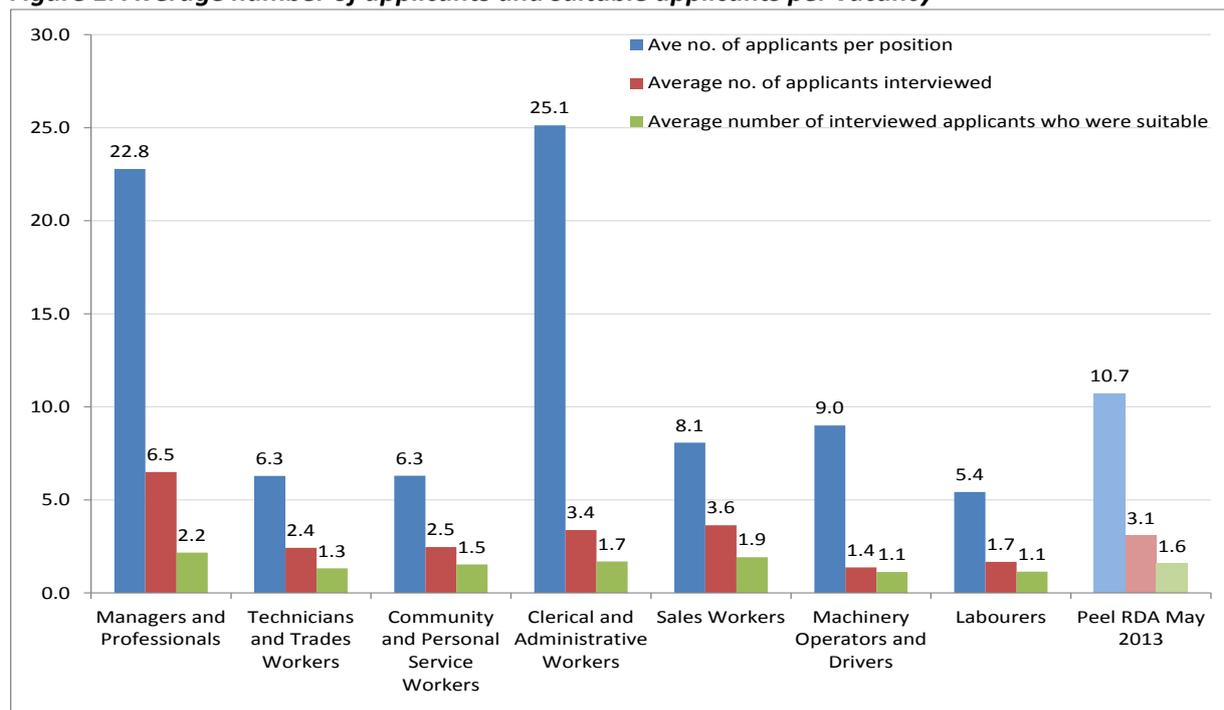
<sup>5</sup> ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, August 2011*.

<sup>6</sup> ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2011*.

<sup>7</sup> ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2011*.

- The applicant's experience and qualifications were the most common reason employers cited for applicants not making it to the interview stage (59 per cent of employers). Some 13 per cent of employers also cited poor applications.
- Despite the high average number of applicants per vacancy, the unfilled vacancy rate in employers' most recent recruitment round (8.0 per cent) was almost double the rate for all regions (4.3 per cent).
  - Unfill rates were particularly high for Technicians and Trades Workers (16.7 per cent) and Labourers (22.6 per cent).

**Figure 1. Average number of applicants and suitable applicants per vacancy**



## Regional diversity

The survey results highlight significant differences across the LGAs.

### Boddington, Murray and Waroona

- The unemployment rate for Boddington, Murray and Waroona in March 2013 was 6.2 per cent.<sup>8</sup>
- The annual recruitment rate was relatively high (24 vacancies per 100 staff).
- Average applicant numbers for vacancies were relatively low (6.9 applicants per vacancy).
- Half of employers reported recruitment difficulty in their most recent recruitment round and almost two thirds (61 per cent) of these employers cited skill requirements as a cause for their recruitment difficulty.
- The fewer average number of applicants and greater recruitment difficulty resulted in a higher unfilled vacancy rate over the past year (11.0 per cent).

<sup>8</sup> DEEWR, *Small Area Labour Markets*, March 2013.

### Mandurah and Serpentine-Jarrahdale

- The unemployment rate for Mandurah and Serpentine-Jarrahdale in March 2013 was 6.0 per cent.<sup>9</sup>
- The annual recruitment rate was low (13 vacancies per 100 staff).
- In line with the subdued recruitment activity, average applicant numbers for vacancies were very high (13.1 applicants per vacancy).
- The low recruitment rate and high average applicant numbers resulted in a lower unfilled vacancy rate (5.7 per cent) than Boddington, Murray and Waroona. However, the rate was still higher than the rate for all regions surveyed (4.5 per cent).

## Recruitment expectations cautious

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Recruitment expectations for the year following the survey were cautious with almost two thirds of employers not planning to recruit staff. Many employers cited future economic conditions as their single greatest concern.

- Across the entire Peel region a lower proportion of employers expected to recruit in the year following the survey (35 per cent) compared with all regions surveyed in the year to March 2013 (42 per cent). However, 19 per cent of surveyed employers still expected to increase staff numbers in the year following the survey.
- Recruitment expectations were strongest in the Health Care and Social Assistance industry with 50 per cent of surveyed employers expecting to recruit. Within the Accommodation and Food Services industry, 43 per cent of employers anticipated recruiting over the next 12 months.
- Some 41 per cent of employers reported that their single greatest concern over the next 12 months was demand/economic conditions.

## Opportunities for job seekers

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The softer labour market conditions in parts of the Peel region may present some challenges to job seekers. However, the survey results indicate that there are opportunities for job seekers in growth industries, including Health Care and Social Assistance and industries experiencing a high level of staff turnover, such as Accommodation and Food Services and Retail Trade.

Moreover, many surveyed employers reported recruitment difficulty and that a majority of job applicants were unsuitable. There was a high unfilled vacancy rate for Technicians and Trades Workers and almost two thirds of employers recruiting for this occupation reported difficulty, indicating some skill shortages in the region. This suggests that opportunities are available to job seekers with the relevant qualifications and experience.

In the next year, employers anticipated recruiting for a range of higher and lower skilled occupations, including Sales Assistants, Waiters, Bar Attendants and Baristas, General Clerks, Kitchenhands, Motor Mechanics, Structural Steel and Welding Trades Workers and Metal Fitters and Machinists. Opportunities will also be available for job seekers in the broader Perth labour market.

There are also opportunities in the broader Perth area. While transport can be an issue, some 40 per cent of the employed working age population living in the Peel region already travel outside the region for work.

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<sup>9</sup> DEEWR, *Small Area Labour Markets*, March 2013.

## More information

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Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences: [www.deewr.gov.au/regionalreports](http://www.deewr.gov.au/regionalreports)

Labour Market Information Portal: [www.deewr.gov.au/lmip](http://www.deewr.gov.au/lmip)

Skill Shortages: [www.deewr.gov.au/skillshortages](http://www.deewr.gov.au/skillshortages)

Job Outlook: [www.joboutlook.gov.au](http://www.joboutlook.gov.au)

SkillsInfo: [www.skillsinfo.gov.au](http://www.skillsinfo.gov.au)

Australian Jobs: [www.deewr.gov.au/australianjobs](http://www.deewr.gov.au/australianjobs)



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The document must be attributed as the 'Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences – Peel region – May 2013'.

This report was prepared by the Labour Market Research and Analysis Branch and is based on research conducted by the Branch.

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