



Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences Richmond-Tweed and Clarence Valley Priority Employment Area June 2012

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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The document must be attributed as 'Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences – Richmond-Tweed and Clarence Valley Priority Employment – Area June 2012'.



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The Richmond-Tweed and Clarence Valley Priority Employment Area

- The Richmond-Tweed and Clarence Valley Priority Employment Area (PEA) includes the Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Byron, Kyogle, Tweed, Lismore, Richmond Valley, Clarence Valley, Coffs Harbour, Glen Innes Severn and Tenterfield.
- While the unemployment rate in the LFR decreased by 1.1 percentage points over the year to stand at 4.8 per cent in May 2012, this occurred in conjunction with a sizeable 1.9 percentage point fall in the region's participation rate, which declined to 53.6 per cent, well below the 65.4 per cent recorded for Australia.

Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences

- The Department conducts surveys of employers' recruitment experiences in regions and industries across Australia. The surveys provide information on employers' recent and expected demand for skills and labour at a local level. The results are provided to local stakeholders to develop employment strategies to better match job seekers with job opportunities.
- Survey responses were provided by 395 employers in the Richmond-Tweed and Clarence Valley Priority Employment Area (PEA) in June 2012. This region was previously surveyed in May 2010 and July 2009.
- In this analysis, the results of the survey are compared with the May 2010 and July 2009 findings, as well as aggregate results for all regions surveyed over the 12 months to March 2012.

Key Findings

- Labour market conditions in the Richmond-Tweed and Clarence Valley PEA remained subdued since the region was last surveyed in May 2010. The results of the survey suggest a continued softening in local labour market conditions in the 12 months following the survey. A smaller than average proportion of employers expected to increase staff numbers and a larger proportion expect to reduce staff numbers.
 - The recruitment rate has fallen since May 2010 and was lower than that for all regions surveyed to March 2012. There was a large decrease in the proportion of employers recruiting to increase staff numbers and a larger proportion of employers recruiting to replace staff.
 - The number of applicants and suitable applicants in the Richmond-Tweed and Clarence Valley PEA had increased considerably since May 2010, and is also higher than the average across all regions surveyed. There was also a notable decrease in the proportion of recent vacancies that remained unfilled. Despite this, a slightly larger proportion of employers reported recruitment difficulty compared with May 2010.
 - Future recruitment expectations in the Richmond-Tweed and Clarence Valley PEA were softer than when the region was last surveyed. A larger proportion of employers expected new or ongoing challenges to affect their business in the 12 months following the survey. The main challenges anticipated by employers were reduced business activity and business regulations.

Recruitment Experiences in the 12 Months Preceding the Survey

- Recruitment activity as measured by the annual recruitment rate (12 vacancies per 100 staff) was lower than the results for May 2010 (17 vacancies per 100 staff) and for all regions surveyed (20 vacancies per 100 staff).
 - The Accommodation and Food Services and Health Care and Social Assistance industries reported the highest recruitment rates, while recruitment activity in Manufacturing was well below average.
 - The proportion of recruiting employers who recruited to increase staff (32 per cent) was significantly lower than the May 2010 and July 2009 results (58 per cent and 60 per cent respectively).
- The proportion of unfilled vacancies (1.7 per cent) was substantially lower than in May 2010 (4.6 per cent).

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

	Richmond-Tweed and Clarence Valley PEA			All Regions (12 months to March 2012)
	June 2012	May 2010	July 2009	
Proportion of employers who recruited	61%	61%	65%	68%
- to increase staff	32%	58%	60%	50%
- to replace staff	89%	75%	80%	86%
Vacancies per 100 staff	12	17	17	20
Proportion of unfilled vacancies	1.7%	4.6%	2.8%	7.4%
Proportion of recruiting employers who experienced difficulty	49%	49%	52%	59%

Most Recent Recruitment Activity

- Employers recruiting for Managers and Professionals; Community and Personal Service Workers; Clerical and Administrative Workers; and Sales Workers filled all of their vacancies, while employers who recruited for Labourers had a very low unfill rate (1.1 per cent).
- Employers recruiting for Machinery Operators and Drivers reported the largest proportion of vacancies remaining unfilled (4.5 per cent) while 2.5 per cent of vacancies for Technicians and Trades Workers remained unfilled.
- Some 38 per cent of employers reported difficulty recruiting for their most recent vacancy, compared with 47 per cent for all regions surveyed.
 - Technical skill requirements for the job was the most common reason given for this recruitment difficulty (48 per cent), while 20 per cent of employers reported that the nature of the work made the vacancy difficult to fill.
 - Motor Mechanics, Chefs and Child Carers were among the occupations most commonly mentioned as being difficult to fill (Table 2).

Table 2. Occupations difficult to fill by skill level

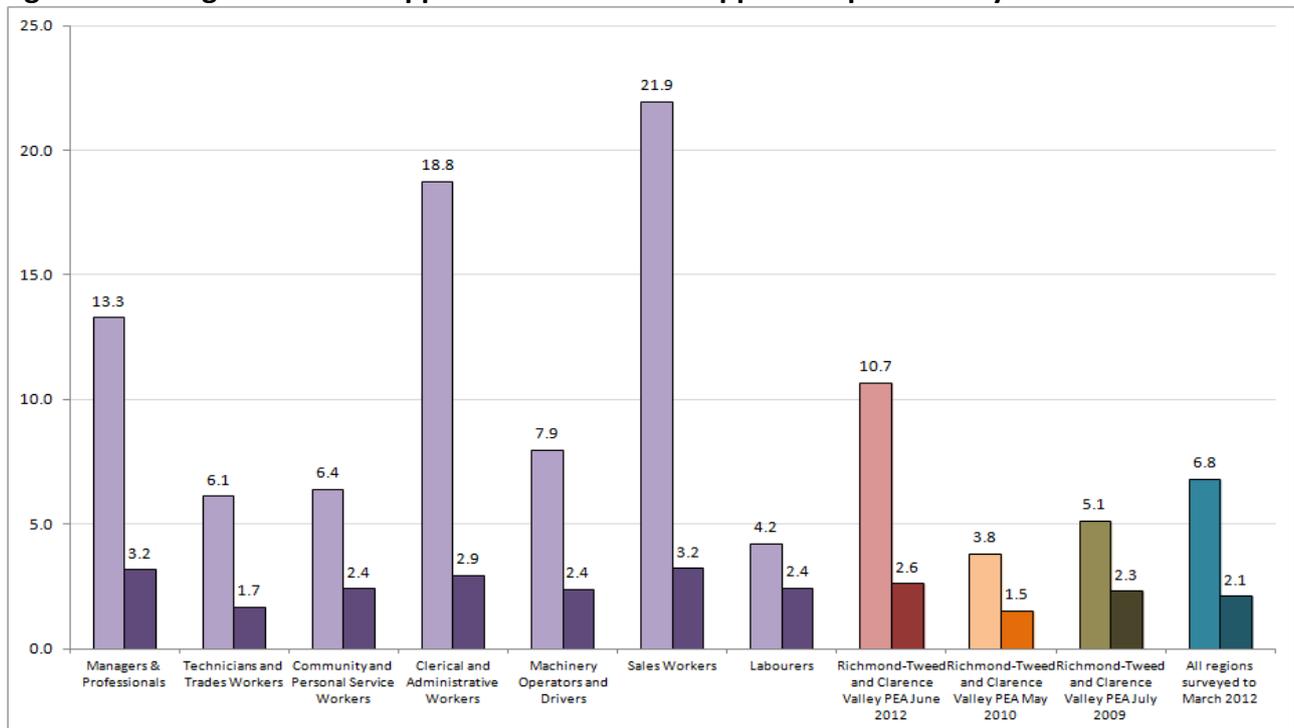
High Skill Level (1)- Bachelor Degree or Higher	
Early Childhood (Pre-primary School) Teachers	Registered Nurses*
Medium Skill Level (2&3)- Certificate II to Associate Degree	
Motor Mechanics	Waiters
Dental Assistants	Chefs*
Real Estate Sales Agents	Truck Drivers*
Motor Vehicle and Motor Vehicle Part Salespersons	Child Carers*
Receptionists	
Low Skill Level (4&5) – Compulsory Secondary Education to Certificate I	
Sales Assistants (General)*	Kitchenhands
Gardeners	

*These occupations were also difficult to fill in the May 2010 survey

Applicants and Suitability

- There was a high level of competition for vacancies in employers' most recent recruitment round with, on average, 10.7 applicants per vacancy. The average number of suitable applicants per vacancy (2.6) was also higher than the average across all regions surveyed. Further, the average number of applicants and suitable applicants per vacancy had increased significantly since May 2010 (3.8 applicants and 1.5 suitable applicants).
 - All occupation groups attracted a higher average number of applicants and suitable applicants compared with the May 2010 survey.

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



Apprentices and Trainees

- The proportion of surveyed employers with an apprentice or trainee on staff in the Richmond-Tweed and Clarence Valley PEA was slightly higher than when the region was last surveyed in May 2010.
 - At the industry level, a larger proportion of employers in the Health Care and Social Assistance industry (55 per cent) employed an apprentice or trainee compared with the results for May 2010 (42 per cent) and all regions surveyed (41 per cent).
 - There was a decrease in the proportion of employers in the Construction industry who employed an apprentice or trainee compared with the May 2010 result (37 per cent compared with 63 per cent).
 - Only 23 per cent of employers who had an apprentice or trainee reported that they had experienced challenges in employing them, which is substantially lower than in May 2010 (64 per cent). This was due to a decline in the proportion of employers who had challenges recruiting an apprentice or trainee with the necessary soft skills, suggesting that the pool of young job seekers from which they could select may have increased.

Staff Training

- The proportion of surveyed employers (48 per cent) who had staff undertake recognised training in the 12 months prior to the survey had fallen since May 2010 (61 per cent).
- A small proportion of employers reported barriers to providing recognised training to their staff (16 per cent compared with 31 per cent for May 2010).

Job Services Australia and Recruitment Methods

- A small proportion (4 per cent) of recruiting employers identified having used a Job Service Provider (JSA) to fill vacancies in the past 12 months.
 - Most of these employers (82 per cent) were satisfied with the service provided by JSA providers.
- The most common recruitment methods used by employers in their most recent recruitment round were word of mouth (29 per cent), the internet (28 per cent) and newspapers or magazines (26 per cent). Around 42 per cent of recruiting employers *only* used informal methods in their most recent recruitment round.

Future Recruitment Expectations

- The survey results suggest that many employers remain cautious in terms of their recruitment expectations.
 - More than two thirds (69 per cent) of employers expected challenges to their business in the 12 months following the survey. This has risen since May 2010 (59 per cent). Reduced business activity was most commonly expected to cause challenges (47 per cent of employers), followed by business regulations (28 per cent).
 - Only 17 per cent of employers anticipated increasing staff numbers in the 12 months following the survey (compared with 29 per cent for all regions surveyed) and 7 per cent anticipated decreasing staff numbers (compared with 4 per cent for all regions surveyed).

- The proportion of employers who expected to have difficulty recruiting (32 per cent) had fallen since May 2010 (41 per cent).

Table 3. Recruitment expectations for the 12 months following the survey

	Richmond-Tweed and Clarence Valley PEA			All Regions (12 months to March 2012)
	June 2012	May 2010	July 2009	
Expects to recruit	45%	31%	40%	52%
Expects to increase staff numbers	17%	19%	23%	29%
Expects to reduce staff numbers	7%	4%	3%	4%
Expects future difficulty	32%	41%	38%	46%
Uncertain about future recruitment	14%	16%	15%	10%
Expects challenges	69%	59%	54%	58%

Opportunities for Job Seekers

- The survey results suggest that opportunities exist for job seekers with the necessary skills and experience in medium-skilled occupations, such as Motor Mechanics, Waiters, Dental Assistants, Chefs, Real Estate Sales Agents, Truck Drivers, Motor Vehicle and Motor Vehicle Part Salespersons, Child Carers and Receptionists. Employment opportunities also exist in lower skilled occupations such as Sales Assistants (General), Kitchenhands and Gardeners.
- The occupations for which employers most commonly expected to recruit were Structural Steel and Welding Trades Workers, Receptionists, Storepersons, Child Carers, Sales Assistants (General), Sales Representatives, Waiters, Motor Mechanics and Housekeepers.

More Information

- **Labour Market Information Portal:**
www.deewr.gov.au/lmip

- **Skill Shortages**
www.deewr.gov.au/skillshortages

- **Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences**
www.deewr.gov.au/regionalreports

- **Job Outlook**
www.joboutlook.deewr.gov.au

- **SkillsInfo**
www.skillsinfo.gov.au

- **Australian Jobs**
www.deewr.gov.au/australianjobs

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