

Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences Rockhampton Local Government Area, February 2012

Overview of Results

In February 2012, 354 employers were surveyed in the Rockhampton Local Government Area (LGA).

- Overall, labour market conditions in the Rockhampton LGA are mixed. The unemployment rate in the LGA has increased slightly and now stands at 6.8 per cent, considerably higher than the national and state average (5.1 and 5.5 per cent respectively).
- Nonetheless, the survey results suggest that there are increasing opportunities, with a high demand for job seekers with appropriate skills and experience and many employers having difficulty filling their vacancies.
- While there is high demand for skilled labour, demand for some lower skilled occupations such as Clerical and Administrative Workers and Sales Workers is very low.
- A majority of recruiting employers were affected by the December 2010-January 2011 floods.
- Strong recruitment activity is expected in the future and labour markets may continue to strengthen as large scale resources projects come on line in surrounding regions. This may intensify existing skills shortages and housing affordability issues.

Survey Results

The Department conducted a *Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences* in the Rockhampton LGA, as part of a survey of the Capricornia Employment Service Area (ESA), in February 2012. These surveys are part of an ongoing research program in the department.

Recruitment Experiences in the 12 Months Preceding the Survey

- The proportion of employers (73 per cent) who recruited in the 12 months preceding the survey was slightly higher compared with all regions surveyed in the 12 months to March 2012 (68 per cent).
- The proportion of employers who recruited to increase staff (43 per cent) was somewhat lower compared with all regions surveyed (52 per cent), however, the proportion of employers who recruited to replace staff (89 per cent) was higher compared with all regions surveyed (85 per cent).
- There were 29 vacancies for every 100 staff employed in the 12 months preceding the survey, substantially higher than all regions surveyed in the 12 months to March 2012 (20 vacancies per 100 staff).
- The proportion of vacancies remaining unfilled (9.8 per cent) was higher compared with all regions surveyed (7.4 per cent).
 - Unfilled vacancies were common in the Construction (26.2 per cent) and Other Services (25.0 per cent) industries.¹
- The proportion of employers who experienced recruitment difficulty (61 per cent) was slightly higher compared with all regions surveyed to December 2011 (59 per cent).
 - Employers in the Construction (86 per cent) and Manufacturing (70 per cent) industries in particular experienced recruitment difficulty.

¹ The Other Services industry includes a broad range of personal services, such as hairdressing; religious, civil, professional and other interest groups; and selected repair and maintenance activities, including automotive repair.

- By contrast, only 45 per cent of employers in the Retail industry experienced recruitment difficulty.

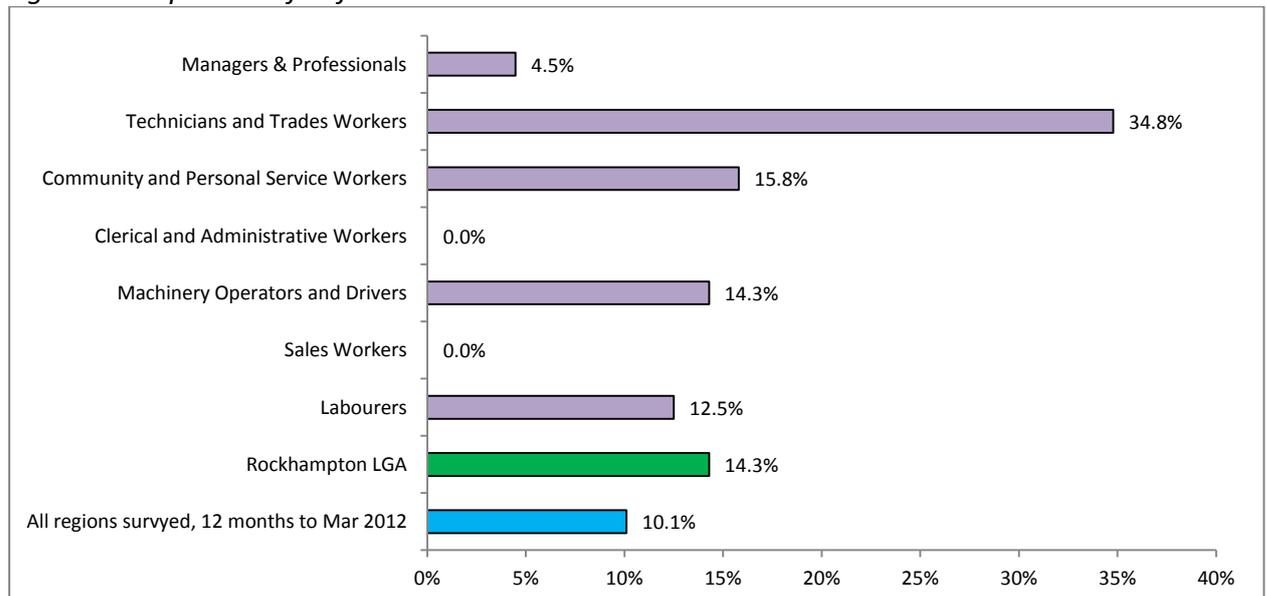
Table 1. Recruitment experiences in the 12 months preceding the survey

	Rockhampton LGA (February 2012)	All Regions (12 months to March 2012)
Proportion of employers who recruited	73%	68%
- to increase staff	43%	50%
- to replace staff	89%	86%
Vacancies per 100 staff	29	20
Proportion of vacancies unfilled	9.8%	7.4%
Proportion of recruiting employers who experienced difficulty	61%	59%

Most Recent Recruitment Activity

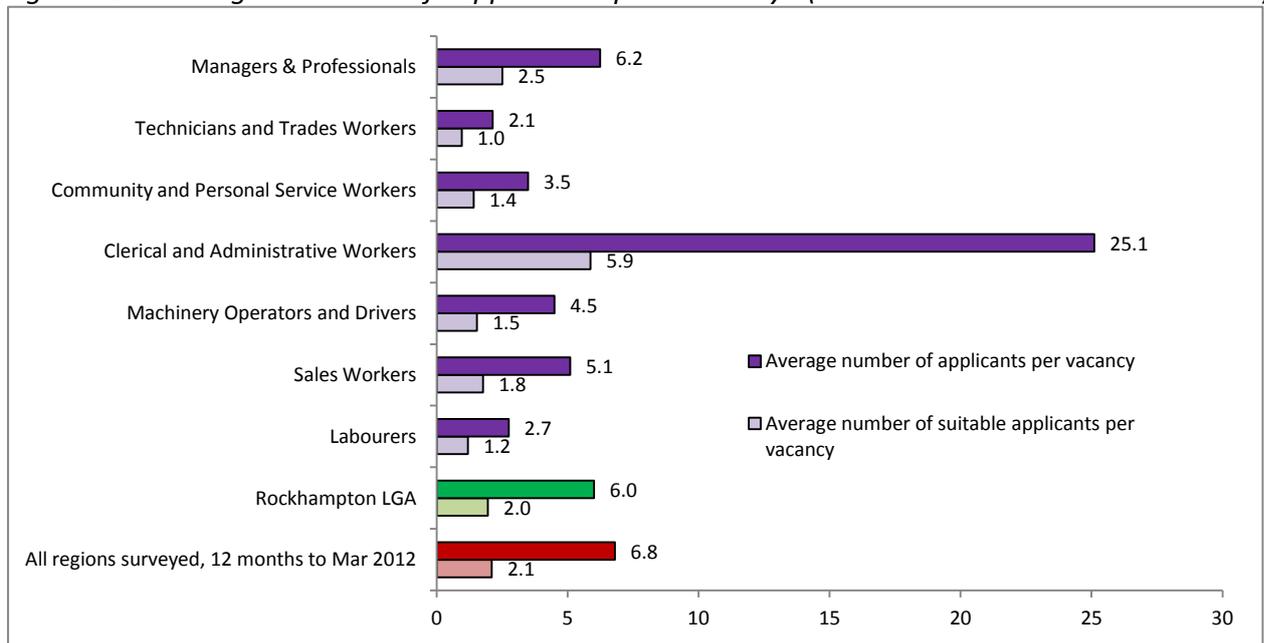
- The proportion of job vacancies that were not filled (14.3 per cent) was higher compared with all regions surveyed to March 2012 (10.1 per cent).
 - The high unfill rate for Technician and Trade Worker vacancies (34.8 per cent) was driven by Metal Fitters and Machinists and Cooks.
 - The unfill rate for Machinery Operator and Driver vacancies (14.3 per cent) was due to unfilled vacancies for Bus and Coach Drivers.
 - All vacancies for Clerical and Administrative Workers and Sales Workers were filled.

Figure 1. Proportion of unfilled vacancies in the most recent recruitment round



- There was an average of 6.0 applicants per vacancy, of whom 2.0 were considered suitable, slightly lower compared with all regions surveyed (6.8 applicants, of whom 2.1 were considered suitable).
 - There was a low average number of applicants (2.1) and a low number of suitable applicants (1.0) for Technician and Trade Worker vacancies, particularly for Motor Mechanics and Structural Steel and Welding Workers.
 - There were low average numbers of suitable applicants for Labourers (1.2), Community and Personal Service Workers (1.4) and Machinery Operators and Drivers (1.5).
 - There was a very high average number of applicants (25.1) for Clerical and Administrative Worker vacancies, of whom an average of 5.9 applicants were considered suitable.

Figure 2. Average number of applicants per vacancy (most recent recruitment round)



- Employers frequently considered applicants unsuitable due to a lack of experience (45 per cent), a lack of qualifications (27 per cent) and a lack of interest in the job (18 per cent).
- Some 47 per cent of recruiting employers experienced difficulty in their most recent recruitment round, the same as all regions surveyed (47 per cent).
- Employers reported difficulty recruiting for a range of occupations (Table 2).

Table 2. Occupations difficult to fill by skill level

Bachelor Degree or Higher VET Qualifications	
Motor Mechanics	Cabinetmakers
Electricians	Accountants
Chefs	Metal Fitters and Machinists
Other Occupations	
Sales Assistants (General)	General Clerks
Bar Attendants and Baristas	Delivery Drivers
Receptionists	Truck Drivers
Waiters	Child Carers

- Employers most commonly cited the tight labour market, wages/remuneration not being competitive and location as reasons for recruitment difficulty.
 - Many employers reported that the high wages in the Mining industry had made it more difficult to attract and retain staff in the service industries.
 - Housing availability and affordability was also identified by employers as contributing to recruitment difficulty.

Flood Impact

- Some 71 per cent of employers in the LGA who had recruited in the 12 months preceding the survey reported being affected by the floods that occurred in December 2010-January 2011, of whom 68 per cent reported that the floods had affected staffing levels.
 - The most common effects of the floods on staffing levels were staff not being able to work (50 per cent), reductions in staff hours (37 per cent) and making staff take leave (20 per cent).
- A small proportion (6 per cent) of those employers whose staffing levels were impacted by the floods reported that staffing levels were still being affected.

Apprentices and Trainees

- Some 33 per cent of employers in the Rockhampton LGA currently employ an apprentice or trainee, similar to all regions surveyed (34 per cent).
- The proportion of employers who expected to recruit an apprentice or trainee in the 12 months following the survey (22 per cent) was similar to all regions surveyed (23 per cent).

Future Recruitment Expectations

- Employers had a positive outlook for the 12 months following the survey, with 58 per cent expecting to recruit, higher compared with all regions surveyed (52 per cent). However, a much larger proportion of employers (57 per cent) expected recruitment difficulty compared with all regions surveyed (46 per cent).
 - A high proportion of employers expected to recruit in the Accommodation and Food Services (71 per cent), Other Services (65 per cent) and Construction (64 per cent) industries.

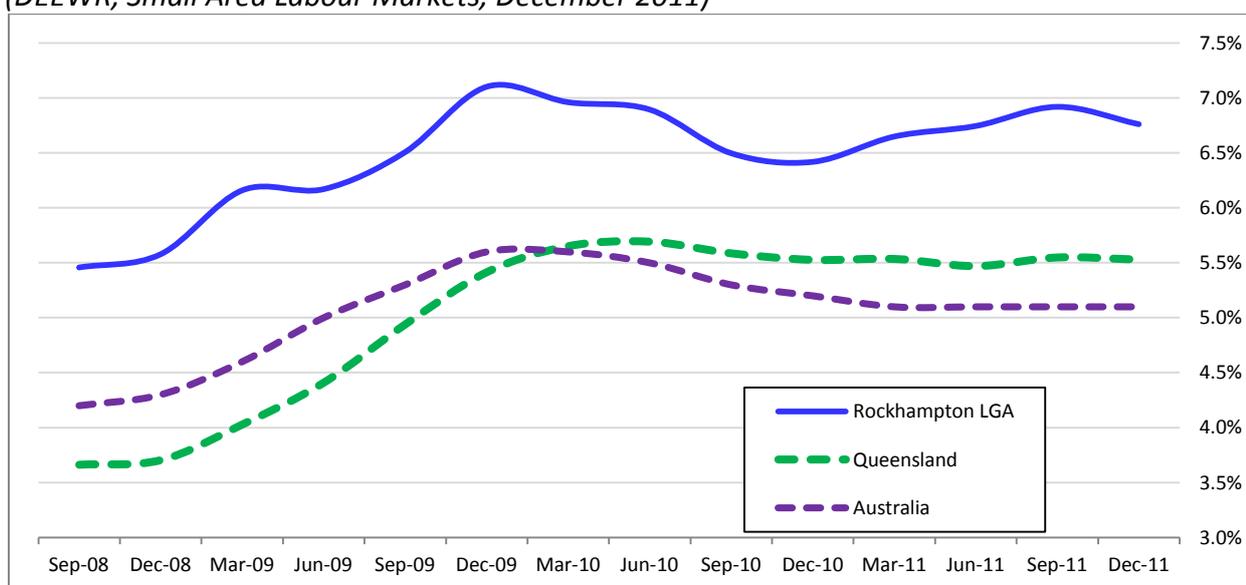
Opportunities for Job Seekers

- Opportunities for job seekers exist in occupations with high unfill rates, high recruitment difficulty and low numbers of suitable applicants, such as:
 - Technicians and Trades Workers (Motor Mechanics, Metal Fitters and Machinists, Cooks);
 - Machinery Operators and Drivers (Truck Drivers and Delivery Drivers);
 - Labourers (Kitchenhands and Other Miscellaneous Labourers);
 - Community and Personal Service Workers (Waiters and Bar Attendants and Baristas).
- There may be opportunities for job seekers to relocate or obtain employment in other regions in the state, although the availability and cost of accommodation may be a barrier, particularly in and around the Gladstone area.
- Support for work experience programs, work readiness skills and support for apprentices and trainees could provide job seekers with the skills that employers are seeking and help increase the stock of skilled workers.

Background

- The main population centres in the Rockhampton LGA are Rockhampton and Yeppoon.
- There were 75 920 people of working age (15-64 years) in the Rockhampton LGA as of 2010.²
- Growth in the adult population was 10.7 per cent over the 5 years to 2010, similar to Australia (10.5 per cent) but lower than Queensland (13.8 per cent).
- The unemployment rate in the Rockhampton LGA is 6.8 per cent (December 2011), having increased from 6.4 per cent in December 2010. This is higher compared with Queensland (5.5 per cent) and Australia (5.1 per cent) (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Unemployment rate, September 2008 to December 2011
(DEEWR, Small Area Labour Markets, December 2011)



- At the time of the 2006 Census, the main employing industries in the LGA were Retail, Health and Social Assistance, Education and Training, Manufacturing and Construction.³

² ABS Estimated Resident Population 2010.

³ ABS Census of Population and Housing 2006.

- The proportion of the working age population that is Indigenous (5 per cent) is higher compared with Queensland (3 per cent) and Australia (2 per cent).⁴
- There are pockets of significant disadvantage within the LGA.
 - Rockhampton SLA - high unemployment rate (7.1 per cent)⁵ and a high proportion of jobless families (23 per cent compared with 20 per cent for Australia).⁶
 - Mount Morgan SLA - very high rate of unemployment (21.8 per cent),⁷ low (working age) labour force participation (51.7 per cent),⁸ a very high proportion of jobless families (53 per cent)⁹ and a high proportion of the working age population in receipt of income support payments (47 per cent).¹⁰
- The LGA was affected by the December 2010-January 2011 floods. Many large mining companies suspended contracts and sales at that time. The Agriculture industry, a major employer in surrounding regions, was also heavily impacted by the floods.
- Due to large scale resources projects in the Bowen Basin, there is strong demand for labour in the region, particularly Technicians and Trades Workers, Community and Personal Service Workers and Machinery Operators and Drivers. Many of these opportunities are in the surrounding LGAs of Gladstone and Central Highlands.

Labour Market Research and Analysis Branch
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⁴ Ibid.

⁵ DEEWR Small Area Labour Markets, December 2011.

⁶ ABS Census of Population and Housing 2006.

⁷ DEEWR Small Area Labour Markets, December 2011.

⁸ ABS Census of Population and Housing 2006. By contrast, the participation rate for Australia was 75.0 per cent.

⁹ Ibid. By contrast, the proportion of jobless families in Australia was 20 per cent.

¹⁰ DEEWR administrative data, March 2011. By contrast, the proportion of the working age population receiving an income support payment in Australia was 17 per cent.