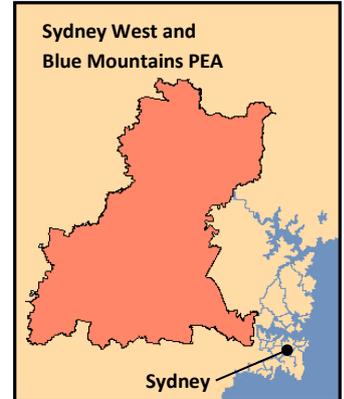




## Labour Market Conditions in the Sydney West and Blue Mountains Priority Employment Area

Labour market conditions in the Sydney West and Blue Mountains Priority Employment Area (PEA) remain subdued.

- The unemployment rate increased by 1.6 percentage points to stand at 7.3 per cent in March 2014, well above that of New South Wales (5.3 per cent).<sup>1</sup>
- In the past five years employment has increased by 6 per cent, although most of this growth was due to the 20 per cent rise in part-time employment. Full-time employment increased by 1 per cent over the period.<sup>2</sup>
- While manufacturing remains one of the largest employing industries, employment decreased by 13 per cent between 2009 and 2014.<sup>3</sup>
- Some people are more vulnerable in a subdued labour market, such as the large proportion (36 per cent) of the working age population born in an Other Than Main English-Speaking Country (OTMESC), compared with Australia (19 per cent).
  - People in the region born in an OTMESC country have softer labour market outcomes compared with those born in a Main English-Speaking Country (unemployment rate of 8.0 per cent and 5.9 per cent respectively).<sup>4</sup>



### What are employers saying?

Consistent with the rise in the unemployment rate, the survey results show recruitment activity has eased and is soft.<sup>5</sup>

- The average number of vacancies was lower than reported in the previous survey in 2012.
- Competition for vacancies continues to be strong with an average of 12.5 applicants per vacancy, although on average there were only 1.5 suitable applicants per vacancy.
- Most vacancies were filled, with only 3.7 per cent remaining unfilled.
- The proportion of employers who reported difficulty recruiting has decreased from 35 per cent (2012) to 30 per cent in the most recent survey.
- The demand for products/services was the most common future concern (39 per cent).
  - Employment in the Health Care and Social Assistance industry has increased by 41 per cent in the five years to 2014 and is now the largest employing industry.<sup>6</sup> Given this large rise in employment, it is not surprising that the most common future concern of employers was recruitment or retention difficulty and skill shortages (21 per cent).

	PEA Dec 2013 / Feb 2014	PEA November 2012	All regions surveyed
Average annual vacancies per 100 staff	12	15	16
Unfilled vacancy rate	3.7%	4.9%	3.7%
Applicants per vacancy	12.5	12.6	10.6
Expects to recruit	41%	41%	38%

### Where are the opportunities?

- Opportunities exist in growth industries such as Health Care and Social Assistance, with employers expecting to recruit for occupations such as Child Carers, Early Childhood Teachers and General Clerks.
- Despite the softness in the labour market, employers reported difficulty filling vacancies for occupations of varying skill levels including Electricians, Registered Nurses, Cooks and Truck Drivers.

<sup>1</sup> ABS, Labour Force Survey, March 2014, 12 month averages; ABS, Labour Force, Australia (Cat. No. 6202.0), March 2014, seasonally adjusted data

<sup>2</sup> ABS, Labour Force Survey, March 2014, 12 month averages

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

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

<sup>5</sup> Department of Employment, Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences, November 2012, December 2013 (Sydney West) / February 2014 (Blue Mountains) and all regions surveyed in the 12 months to March 2014

<sup>6</sup> ABS, Labour Force Survey, February 2014, 4 quarter averages

This report was produced by the Labour Market Research and Analysis Branch. Further results on the Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences can be found at [www.employment.gov.au/regionalreports](http://www.employment.gov.au/regionalreports) or by contacting [recruitmentsurveys@employment.gov.au](mailto:recruitmentsurveys@employment.gov.au).