



Labour Market Conditions in the Cairns region

Labour market conditions in Cairns are generally subdued.

- The unemployment rate across the region remains high at 7.7 per cent, despite a decrease of 0.6 percentage points in the past 12 months.¹
 - 15-24 year olds are particularly vulnerable with the youth unemployment rate increasing by 1.0 percentage points in the 12 months to September 2014 to 20.2 per cent.
- Full-time employment decreased by 4 per cent over the two years to September 2014.
 - Male full-time employment decreased by 8 per cent over the same period.²
- Employment in Accommodation and Food Services, one of the largest employers in the region, has fallen by 20 per cent over the previous two years.³



Region	Unemployment Rate	Youth (15-24 years) Unemployment Rate	Year 12 Completion (Census, 25-34 years)	Proportion of WAP* receiving unemployment benefits
Cairns	7.7%	20.2%	69%	9%
Queensland	6.3% ⁴	13.7%	74%	6%

*Working age population

What employers are telling us

The survey results show that recruitment activity has decreased slightly since the previous survey.⁵

- Some 58 per cent of employers recruited in the year preceding the survey, compared with 67 per cent in 2013.
- Competition for vacancies had increased since the last survey, with an average of 13 applicants per vacancy (compared with an average of 10 applicants in 2013).
- Some 81 per cent of applicants did not qualify for an interview, with the most common reasons being that the applicant lacked relevant experience (45 per cent) or was not available for the required work hours (29 per cent).
- The low proportion of employers (30 per cent) who experienced recruitment difficulty, coupled with the higher competition for vacancies, suggests that employers are able to be more selective in the current labour market.
- Employers' recruitment expectations for the year following the survey were slightly more positive than the year before, with a higher proportion of employers expecting to recruit (41 per cent compared with 38 per cent in 2013) and increase staff (21 per cent compared with 17 per cent in 2013).

Where are the opportunities?

Despite the softness in labour market conditions, opportunities still exist in some industries.

- A high proportion of employers recruited in the Accommodation and Food Services industry (due to high staff turnover), and vacancies in the industry across a broad range of occupations are likely, at least in the short to medium term.
- Opportunities also exist in the Health Care and Social Assistance industry which is projected to employ an additional 2400 people by November 2018.⁶

¹ ABS Labour Force, September 2014, 12 month average of original data.

² Ibid.

³ ABS Labour Force, August quarter 2014.

⁴ ABS Labour Force (Seasonally Adjusted), September 2014.

⁵ This report is based on a Survey of Employers Recruitment Experiences of 290 employers undertaken in July 2014. The region was previously surveyed in July 2013.

⁶ Department of Employment, Regional Projections to November 2018.