



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

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**Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences
Hampden and Western District
Employment Service Areas, Victoria
June-July 2012**



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The document must be attributed as the 'DEEWR - Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences – Hampden and Western District Employment Service Areas – June-July 2012'.



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The Hampden and Western District Employment Service Areas

- The Hampden and Western District Employment Service Areas (ESAs) are located in South-Western Victoria. The main population centre of the Hampden ESA is Warrnambool (Warrnambool LGA). Other population centres include Colac (Colac-Otway LGA), Apollo Bay (Colac-Otway LGA), Port Fairy (Moyne LGA) and Cobden (Corangamite LGA). Urban centres in the Western District ESA include Portland (Glenelg LGA), Casterton (Glenelg LGA), and Hamilton and Coleraine (Southern Grampians LGA).
- The adult population (15 and over) of the Hampden ESA was 66,700 at the time of the 2011 Census, an increase of 3.6 per cent since the 2006 Census.¹
- In the Western District ESA, the adult population was 29,200, an increase of 0.5 per cent since the 2006 Census.²
- The regions have a higher proportion of the adult population aged 65 and over (21 per cent in Hampden and 23 per cent in Western District), compared with Australia (17 per cent).³
- At the time of the 2006 Census, both the Hampden ESA (76.9 per cent) and the Western District ESA (76.3 per cent) had a participation rate slightly higher than that for Victoria (74.9 per cent) and Australia (75.0 per cent).⁴
- The Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing industry is the largest employing industry in both regions. Employment in the Agriculture industry is often subject to seasonal variation.
- The average number of employees in businesses in the Hampden (14) and Western District (15) ESAs was low, compared with all regions surveyed to June 2012 (23).
- This analysis refers to the combined survey results for the Hampden ESA and Western District ESA unless otherwise specified.

Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences

- The Department conducted a *Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences* in the Hampden ESA and Western District ESA in June and July 2012. In total, 627 employers were surveyed (390 in the Hampden ESA and 237 in the Western District ESA). Of these, 322 had recruited in the 12 months preceding the survey (217 in the Hampden ESA and 105 in the Western District ESA).

Key Findings

- In the Hampden ESA, the unemployment rate has decreased from 4.8 per cent to 4.3 per cent over the 12 months to June 2012, lower than both Victoria (5.4 per cent) and Australia (5.2 per cent).⁵
- In the Warrnambool LGA, the main population centre in the region, the unemployment rate fell from 5.6 per cent to 5.0 per cent over the same period.⁶
- In the Western District ESA, the unemployment rate fell from 6.0 per cent to 5.2 per cent over the 12 months to June 2012.⁷

¹ ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2011.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2006.

⁵ DEEWR Small Area Labour Markets, June 2012.

⁶ Ibid.

- While the labour market data suggest that conditions are strengthening in these regions, there is some statistical variability in the data so caution should be exercised in using monthly data. The survey results suggest that labour market conditions in these regions are somewhat subdued.
- Despite the large number of small employers in the surveys, the results suggest that recruitment activity in both regions was subdued, in particular in the Western District ESA. There was a low proportion of employers recruiting in the 12 months preceding the survey, a low proportion of unfilled vacancies and employers reporting recruitment difficulty, compared with all regions surveyed in the 12 months to June 2012.
- The survey results also suggest that employers were cautious, particularly in the Western District ESA, regarding their future recruitment expectations, however, their expectations regarding future recruitment difficulties and challenges were similar compared with all regions surveyed.
- Opportunities for job seekers exist in occupations with high unfill rates, high recruitment difficulty and low numbers of suitable applicants, particularly Technicians and Trades Workers (Chefs, Motor Mechanics and Electricians).

Recruitment Experiences in the 12 Months Preceding the Survey

- The proportion of employers in the Hampden and Western District ESAs who recruited in the 12 months preceding the survey (52 per cent) was lower compared with all regions surveyed in the 12 months to June 2012 (65 per cent).
 - Some 56 per cent of employers in the Hampden ESA recruited in the 12 months preceding the survey.
 - The proportion of employers in the Western District ESA who recruited was low (44 per cent). However, a large number of small employers (2 to 4 employees) were surveyed in the region, who are less likely to recruit.
- A lower proportion of employers (43 per cent) recruited to increase staff numbers compared with all regions surveyed (48 per cent).
- There were 13 vacancies per 100 staff employed in the 12 months preceding the survey, lower compared with all Victorian regions surveyed and all regions surveyed (16 and 19 vacancies per 100 staff respectively).
- The proportion of vacancies remaining unfilled (2.9 per cent) was substantially lower compared with all Victorian regions and all regions surveyed (5.6 per cent and 6.3 per cent respectively).
- While lower staff turnover in the region may be contributing to lower recruitment activity, as 7 per cent of employers reported a problem with staff retention compared with 12 per cent for all regions), it is unlikely to be the only factor.
- The proportion of employers who experienced recruitment difficulty (49 per cent) was lower compared with all regions surveyed (56 per cent).

⁷ Ibid.

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

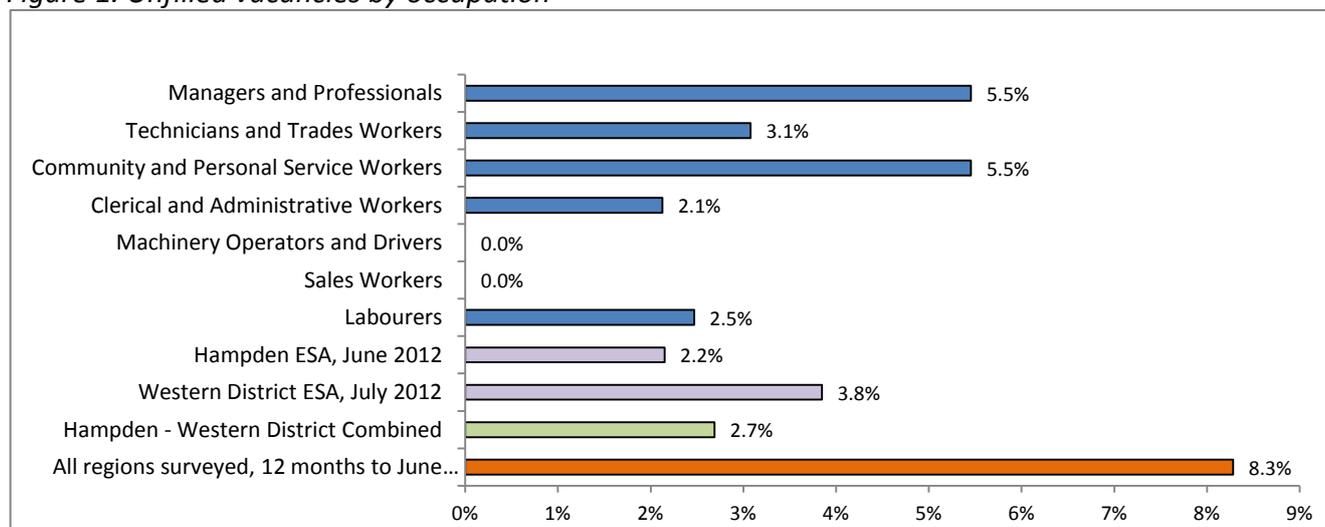
	Hampden ESA June 2012	Western District ESA July 2012	Hampden – Western District Combined	All Regions Surveyed 12 Months to June 2012
Proportion of employers who recruited	56%	44%	52%	65%
- to increase staff	43%	42%	43%	48%
- to replace staff	82%	82%	82%	85%
Vacancies per 100 staff	15	11	13	19
Proportion of vacancies unfilled	2.8%	3.3%	2.9%	6.3%
Proportion of recruiting employers who experienced difficulty	49%	50%	49%	56%

Most Recent Recruitment Activity

Employers were asked about their most recent recruitment experience.

- Some 2.7 per cent of vacancies were not filled, substantially lower compared with all regions surveyed in the 12 months to June 2012 (8.3 per cent).
 - The proportion of unfilled vacancies in the Hampden ESA (2.2 per cent) was particularly low.
 - The highest proportion of vacancies remaining unfilled was reported by employers recruiting for Managers and Professionals and Community and Personal Service Workers (both 5.5 per cent).
 - Vacancies for Machinery Operators and Drivers and Sales Workers were all filled.

Figure 1. Unfilled vacancies by occupation



- The proportion of employers who experienced difficulty recruiting for their most recent vacancy (40 per cent) was slightly lower compared with all regions surveyed (44 per cent).
 - Employers commonly reported finding staff with the requisite technical skills (38 per cent), location (31 per cent) and the tight labour market (31 per cent) as the reason for recruitment difficulty.
- Table 2 shows the occupations for which employers had the most difficulty recruiting.

Table 2. Occupations difficult to fill by skill level

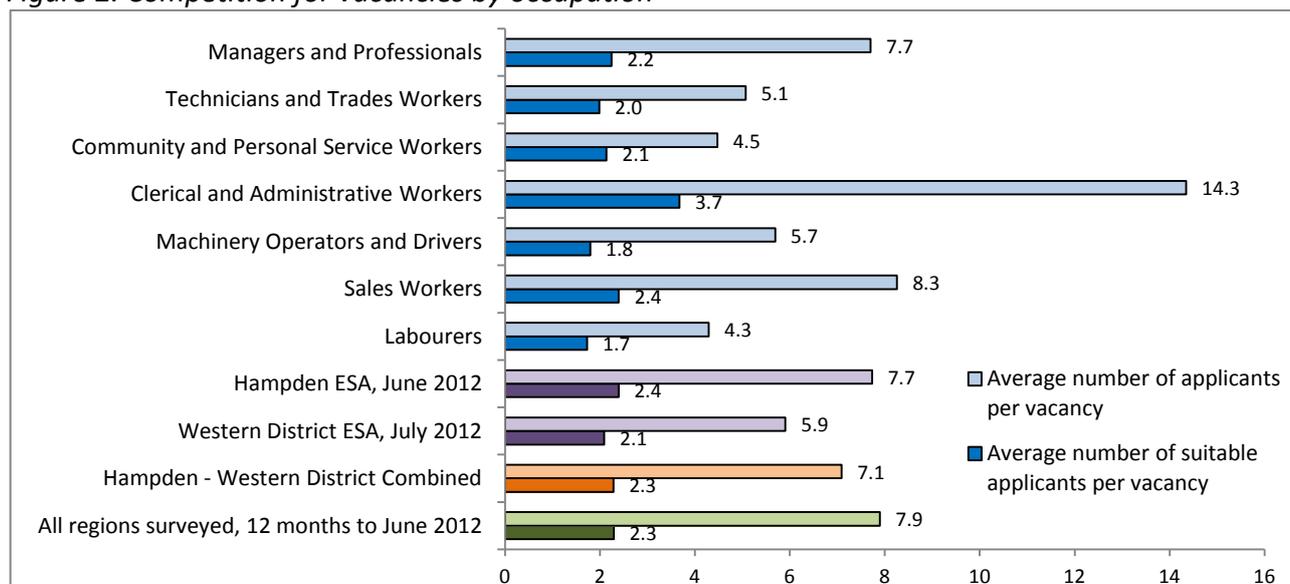
Bachelor Degree or Higher VET Qualifications	
Chefs	Motor Mechanics
Registered Nurses	Generalist Medical Practitioners
Accountants	Electricians
Child Carers	
Other Occupations	
Sales Assistants (General)	Housekeepers
Receptionists	Waiters
Motor Vehicle and Vehicle Parts Salespersons	

Applicants and Suitability

- Competition for vacancies in employers' most recent recruitment rounds was similar to all regions surveyed. While the average number of applicants per vacancy (7.1) was lower compared with all regions surveyed (7.9), the average number of applicants whom employers considered suitable (2.3) was on a par with all regions surveyed.
 - There is less competition for vacancies in the Western District ESA (5.9 applicants per vacancy) than in the Hampden ESA (7.7 applicants per vacancy).
 - There was high competition for Clerical and Administrative Worker vacancies, with an average of 14.3 applicants per vacancy (of whom 3.7 were considered suitable).
 - Competition for Labourer⁸ vacancies was low, with an average of 4.3 applicants per vacancy of whom 1.7 were considered suitable.
- Employers most frequently considered applicants unsuitable due to insufficient experience (69 per cent), insufficient qualifications (22 per cent) and their personality not fitting with the organisation (22 per cent).

⁸ Labourer vacancies occurred most frequently in occupations such as housekeepers, kitchenhands, food and drink factory workers, garden and nursery labourers and motor vehicle parts and accessories fitters.

Figure 2. Competition for vacancies by occupation



Apprentices and Trainees

- The proportion of employers in the combined Hampden and Western District ESAs who currently employ an apprentice or trainee (36 per cent) was slightly higher compared with all regions surveyed (34 per cent).
 - Employers in the Construction (67 per cent), Manufacturing (51 per cent) and Other Services⁹ (49 per cent) industries were most likely to employ an apprentice or trainee.
- The proportion of employers who expected to employ an apprentice or trainee in the 12 months following the survey (18 per cent) was lower compared with all regions surveyed (22 per cent).
 - The proportion of employers in the Hampden ESA who expected to recruit an apprentice or trainee was 22 per cent.
 - A particularly low proportion (12 per cent) of employers in the Western District ESA expected to recruit an apprentice or trainee.

Staff Training

- The proportion of employers who had staff undertake nationally recognised training in the 12 months preceding the survey (34 per cent) was lower compared with all regions surveyed (44 per cent).
- Some 13 per cent of employers reported barriers to providing nationally recognised training, lower compared with all regions surveyed (16 per cent).
 - The most common barriers to providing training were location (55 per cent) and the high cost of training (36 per cent).

⁹ 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.

Job Services Australia and Recruitment Methods

- The recruitment methods used most frequently during employers' most recent recruitment rounds were newspapers/magazines (37 per cent), word of mouth (31 per cent) and the internet (15 per cent).
 - The proportion of employers who used informal methods only (35 per cent) was slightly higher compared with all regions surveyed (32 per cent).
- Some 16 per cent of employers used a Job Services Australia (JSA) provider in the 12 months preceding the survey.
 - Of those employers, 85 per cent were satisfied with the service.

Future Recruitment Expectations

The survey results suggest that while employers were cautious regarding their future recruitment expectations, their expectations regarding future recruitment difficulties and challenges are on a par with all regions surveyed.

- The proportion of employers who expected to recruit in the 12 months following the survey (36 per cent) was substantially lower compared with all regions surveyed (50 per cent).
 - A relatively high proportion of employers in the Accommodation and Food Services industry (46 per cent) expected to recruit in the 12 months following the survey.
 - The proportion of employers who expected to recruit was particularly low in the Western District ESA (26 per cent).
- Some 24 per cent of employers in the Hampden ESA expected to increase staff, while only 13 per cent of employers in the Western District ESA expected to increase staff, both lower compared with all regions surveyed (27 per cent).
- The proportion of employers who expected recruitment difficulty in the 12 months following the survey (42 per cent) was similar to all regions surveyed (44 per cent).
 - The proportion of employers who expected recruitment difficulty was high in the Manufacturing (56 per cent) and the Other Services¹⁰ (47 per cent) industries.
- The proportion of employers who expected challenges in the 12 months following the survey (56 per cent) was similar to all regions surveyed (58 per cent).
 - The most common expected challenges were reduced business activity (51 per cent) and business regulations (28 per cent).

¹⁰ Ibid.

Table 3. Future recruitment expectations

	Hampden ESA June 2012	Western District ESA July 2012	Hampden – Western District Combined June 2012	All Regions Surveyed 12 Months to June 2012
Will recruit	42%	26%	36%	50%
Expect to increase staff	24%	13%	20%	27%
Expect to reduce staff	5%	5%	5%	5%
Will recruit an apprentice or trainee	22%	12%	18%	22%
Expect difficulty	41%	46%	42%	44%
Expect challenges	58%	53%	56%	58%

- Table 4 shows the occupations for which employers expected to recruit in the 12 months following the survey.

Table 4. Occupations for which employers expect to recruit in the 12 months following the survey

Bachelor Degree or Higher VET Qualifications	
Plumbers	Air-Conditioning and Refrigeration Mechanics
Bakers and Pastrycooks	Generalist Medical Practitioners
Other Occupations	
Sales Assistants (General)	Housekeepers
General Clerks	Bar Attendants and Baristas
Commercial Cleaners	Receptionists
Truck Drivers	

Opportunities for Job Seekers

- The survey results indicate that opportunities for job seekers exist for occupations with high unfill rates, high recruitment difficulty and low numbers of suitable applicants, particularly Technicians and Trades Workers (Chefs, Motor Mechanics and Electricians).
- Employers expected to recruit for a range of occupations in the 12 months following the survey, including a number of entry-level occupations, such as Sales Assistants (General) and Housekeepers. This may provide job seekers with an opportunity to enter the labour market.
- There may be opportunities for higher skilled workers, where employers expected to increase staff numbers by recruiting for occupations such as Air-Conditioning and Refrigeration Mechanics and Plumbers.
- There may also be opportunities for job seekers in the Retail Trade and Accommodation and Food Services industries, as well as opportunities for apprentices and trainees in the Construction and Manufacturing industries.

- Despite softness in the labour market, there is a range of occupations which employers are having difficulty filling. Accordingly, JSA providers and job seekers in the region need to target these opportunities and work more closely with employers regarding their needs and expectations.
- One of the main reasons applicants were considered unsuitable for vacancies was a lack of experience. Support for work experience and work readiness programs could assist job seekers.



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

For further information:
Ph: 1800 059 439 | recruitmentsurveys@deewr.gov.au

www.deewr.gov.au
ABN: 63 578 775 294