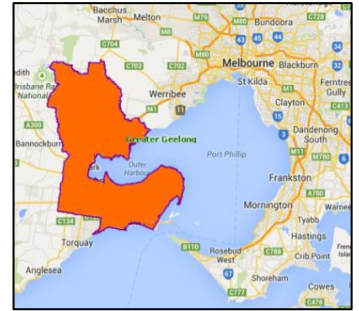




Labour Market Conditions in Geelong

Labour market conditions in Geelong have improved slightly over the past year, however, the region continues to face challenges, including the impact of the recent closure of Alcoa and the impending closure of Ford.

- Total employment has increased by 2.9 per cent (3,400) in the past year.¹
- The unemployment rate has decreased to 6.0 per cent¹ and is now below the rate for Australia (6.3 per cent).²
- Nonetheless, the participation rate in the region remains persistently low (57.0 per cent) when compared with Australia (65.1 per cent).¹
- Additionally, the average duration of unemployment has increased by 11 weeks to 44 weeks in the 12 months to July 2015, and is now well above the average duration of unemployment across Victoria (35 weeks).³



What are employers telling us?⁴

Despite the slight improvement in labour market conditions, the survey results highlight that recruitment activity in Geelong remains relatively soft, and is unlikely to improve in the next 12 months.

- The recruitment rate has been consistently low and few vacancies remain unfilled (Table 1).
- Competition for advertised vacancies is typically high in Geelong (Table 1), although the average number of applicants per advertised vacancy (14.4) is still lower than for all regions surveyed across Australia (17.7).⁴
 - Only one in five applicants who applied for an advertised vacancy secured an interview. Employers cited a lack of relevant experience, lack of soft skills and insufficient qualifications or training as the most common reasons for not interviewing applicants.
- Nonetheless, 31 per cent of employers had difficulty filling their vacancies.
- Almost one third (31 per cent) of employers in Geelong recruited through informal methods only. Competition for informal vacancies tends to be much lower, so tapping into these opportunities by approaching employers directly can improve a job seeker's chance of finding employment.
- Recruitment conditions are likely to remain subdued in the 12 months following the survey with only 18 per cent of employers reporting that they will increase staff numbers. This will create challenges for those job seekers with few transferrable skills or those who are unable or unwilling to expand their job search to areas beyond Geelong.

Table 1	September 2013	June 2014	July 2015	All regions surveyed ⁵
Vacancies per 100 staff	13.4%	14.6%	14.9%	16.1%
Unfilled vacancy rate	2.6%	2.0%	2.5%	2.3%
Recruitment difficulty	31%	31%	32%	31%
Average applicants per advertised vacancy ⁶	13.2	14.5	14.4	17.7

Where are the opportunities?

Opportunities are available in industries where recruitment activity is relatively high, such as Health Care and Social Assistance, Accommodation and Food Services and Retail Trade. More specifically, employers had difficulty recruiting for occupations such as Chefs, Child Carers, Tourism and Travel Agents and Cooks. Over the next 12 months many employers also expect to continue to recruit for Sales Assistants, General Clerks, Waiters, Bar Attendants and Baristas, Child Carers and Aged and Disabled Carers.

¹ ABS, *Labour Force Survey*, July 2015 (3 month averages of original data)

² ABS, *Labour Force Survey*, July 2015 (Seasonally adjusted)

³ ABS, *Labour Force Survey*, July 2015 (12 month averages of original data)

⁴ Based on 302 responses from the *Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences* in the Barwon employment region undertaken in July 2015

⁵ Department of Employment, *Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences*, All regions surveyed in the 12 months to December 2014

⁶ For the purpose of this report an advertised vacancy is a vacancy formally advertised in a newspaper or on the internet.