



Labour Market Conditions in Northern and Western Tasmania

In May 2014 the Department of Employment interviewed 427 employers in a *Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences* in Northern and Western Tasmania.¹ Despite the subdued labour market conditions overall, the survey results highlight a number of positive signs for the region.



Labour market conditions remain subdued in Northern and Western Tasmania

- The unemployment rate has increased from 7.9 per cent to 8.4 per cent in the past year.²
- The youth (15-24 years) unemployment rate has increased from 17.6 per cent to 18.3 per cent in the past year.²
- Total employment has decreased by 5,800 over the past five years.²

Employers continue to recruit, particularly for lower skilled jobs, but many vacancies are hidden

- Recruitment activity in the 12 months to May 2014 (19 vacancies per 100 staff) was higher than the rate for all regions surveyed in the 12 months to March 2014 (16 vacancies per 100 staff) indicating that jobs are still available in the region.
- Three quarters of recent vacancies were for lower skilled occupations such as Sales Assistants, Housekeepers, General Clerks and Truck Drivers, and many of these jobs required no experience.
- More than half of the recent vacancies were not formally advertised and were filled through informal recruitment methods only (such as word of mouth or the job seeker approaching the employer directly). Accordingly, it is important that job seekers, particularly young job seekers, actively pursue employment opportunities by approaching employers directly and following up with them.

There is strong competition for some, but not all jobs

- Despite the high average number of applicants for vacancies overall (7.3) and a very low unfilled vacancy rate (0.7 per cent), vacancies filled through informal recruitment methods only received an average of 2.7 applicants. This suggests that job seekers who can tap into the local informal recruitment market may improve their employment prospects significantly.
- Some employers, particularly in Agriculture and Forestry, had difficulty finding a sufficient number of applicants even when they utilised formal methods of recruitment such as the Internet. Again, this suggests that there are opportunities for local job seekers.

Opportunities for job seekers

- In the next 12 months, employers expect to recruit for a range of occupations, many of which are lower skilled. Specifically, employers intend to recruit for Sales Workers, Housekeepers, Bar Attendants and Baristas, Waiters, Truck Drivers and Child Carers.

¹ Northern and Western Tasmania is comprised of the Launceston Employment Service Area (ESA) and the West and North West ESA.

² ABS, Labour Force Survey, June 2014.