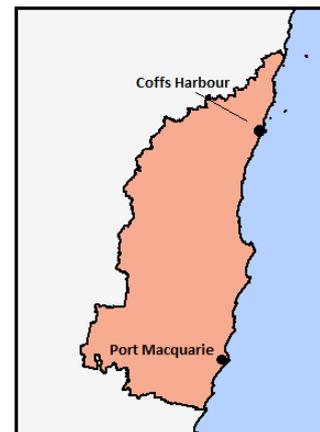




Labour Market Conditions in Coffs Harbour, Macleay and Hastings ESAs

The labour market conditions in the region are mixed.

- The unemployment rate in the region is high, increasing from 5.5 per cent in September 2013 to 7.2 per cent in September 2014.¹
- The regions labour force participation rate is very low (51.7 per cent), compared with 63.1 per cent in New South Wales.² That said, it has increased by 6.6 percentage points since July 2010.
- Encouragingly, total employment in the region has increased by around 13,400 persons (11 per cent) over the past five years, compared with 6 per cent for New South Wales.³
 - Employment has grown by 38 per cent in the Construction industry and 24 per cent in Health Care and Social Assistance industry over the same period.⁴
- The region has an older population with 44 per cent of the adult population aged 55 years and over, compared with 32 per cent nationally.⁵
 - Those aged 55 years and over are less likely to participate in the labour market (21.7 per cent compared with 35.0 per cent nationally) and are more likely to be unemployed (4.4 per cent compared with 3.7 per cent).⁶



What employers are telling us⁷

The survey results suggest that recruitment activity in the region while soft is showing signs of improvement.

- Some 64 per cent of employers recruited in the year preceding the survey.
 - Additionally, of the employers who recruited in the Construction industry, 46 per cent did so to increase staff numbers, compared with 23 per cent for all industries.⁸
- Competition for vacancies is high with an average of 11.2 applicants per vacancy of whom 1.7 were considered suitable. Consequently, only 1.2 per cent of vacancies remained unfilled.
- Employers told us that 77 per cent of applicants did not qualify for an interview with the most common reasons being a lack of relevant experience (57 per cent) or insufficient qualifications and training (23 per cent).
- Employers' recruitment expectations for the year following the survey were more positive than in 2013, with a higher proportion of employers expecting to recruit (42 per cent compared with 33 per cent) and increase staff (25 per cent compared with 21 per cent).⁹

	September 2014	All regions surveyed
Proportion recruited	64%	61%
Unfilled vacancy rate	1.2%	3.0%
Recruitment difficulty	27%	33%

Where are the opportunities?

- Despite some softness in the labour market, employers reported difficulty filling higher skilled vacancies for occupations such as Motor Mechanics, Early Childhood (Pre-primary School) Teachers, Registered Nurses and Chefs.
- Opportunities also exist in growth industries such as Health Care and Social Assistance, Construction and to a lesser extent Retail Trade, with employers expecting to recruit for lower to medium skilled occupations such as Sales Assistants, General Clerks, Child Carers, Aged and Disabled Carers, Receptionists and Truck Drivers.
- Employers expect to recruit in the Accommodation and Food Services industry where staff turnover is high, for occupations such as Bar Attendants and Baristas, Waiters and Fast Food Cooks.

¹ Department of Employment, *Small Area Labour Market*, September Quarter 2014

² ABS, *Labour Force Survey*, November 2014 (12 month averages of original data), Mid North Coast SA4 and Coffs Harbour – Grafton SA4; ABS, *Labour Force Survey*, Seasonally Adjusted, December 2014

³ ABS, *Labour Force Survey*, November 2014 (12 month averages of original data), Mid North Coast SA4 and Coffs Harbour – Grafton SA4

⁴ ABS, *Labour Force Survey*, November 2014 quarter, Mid North Coast SA4 and Coffs Harbour – Grafton SA4

⁵ ABS, *Estimated Residential Population*, 2012

⁶ ABS, *Labour Force Survey*, November 2014 (12 month averages of original data)

⁷ Based on 301 responses from the Coffs Harbour, Macleay and Hastings ESA's *Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences* undertaken by the Labour Market Research and Analysis Branch in September 2014

⁸ *Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences*, All regions surveyed in the 12 months to June

⁹ *Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences*, Mid-North Coast, October 2013