



Australian Government



National
Skills
Commission

Jobs in Demand Employer Survey¹

7 April to 2 October 2020

The Jobs in Demand Employer Survey conducted by the National Skills Commission was developed to identify where job opportunities continued to exist in the Australian labour market despite the economic downturn caused by COVID-19. The survey was based on employer contacts in five major employing industries: Health Care and Social Assistance; Transport, Postal and Warehousing; Manufacturing; Retail Trade; and Wholesale Trade. This survey was replaced by the *Survey of Australian Businesses: The Labour Market Impacts of the Coronavirus (COVID-19)* on 5 October 2020.

Top occupations in demand, April to September 2020

April 2020		June 2020		September 2020	
1	Truck Drivers	1	Retail Sales Assistants	1	Retail Sales Assistants
2	Registered Nurses	2	Child Carers	2	Child Carers
3	Aged and Disabled Carers	3	Truck Drivers	3	Sales Representatives
4	Metal Fabricators and Welders	4	Receptionists	4	Managers
5	Retail Sales Assistants	5	Managers	5	Truck Drivers
6	Enrolled and Mothercraft Nurses	6	Sales Representatives	6	Receptionists
7	Managers	7	Metal Fabricators and Welders	7	Registered Nurses
8	Packers	8	Delivery Drivers	8	Delivery Drivers
9	Pharmacy Sales Assistants	9	Motor Mechanics	9	Bus and Coach Drivers
10	Truck and Freight Loader	10	Metal Fitters and Machinists	10	Aged and Disabled Carers

In April, two of the top four occupations in demand were health related (Registered Nurses, and Aged and Disabled Carers). Enrolled and Mothercraft Nurses and Pharmacy Sales Assistants were also in high demand, reflecting the significant need for health services at the height of the pandemic.

By June, the top occupations in demand were more in line with the workers needed by the businesses able to re-open as COVID-19 restrictions started to ease across much of the country. For example, Retail Sales Assistants and Child Carers were the top two occupations in demand. Receptionists, Managers and Sales Representatives were also among the top ten occupations in demand in June.

The occupations in demand were relatively consistent over the period from June to September, with most of the occupations that were in strong demand in June continuing to be so in September.

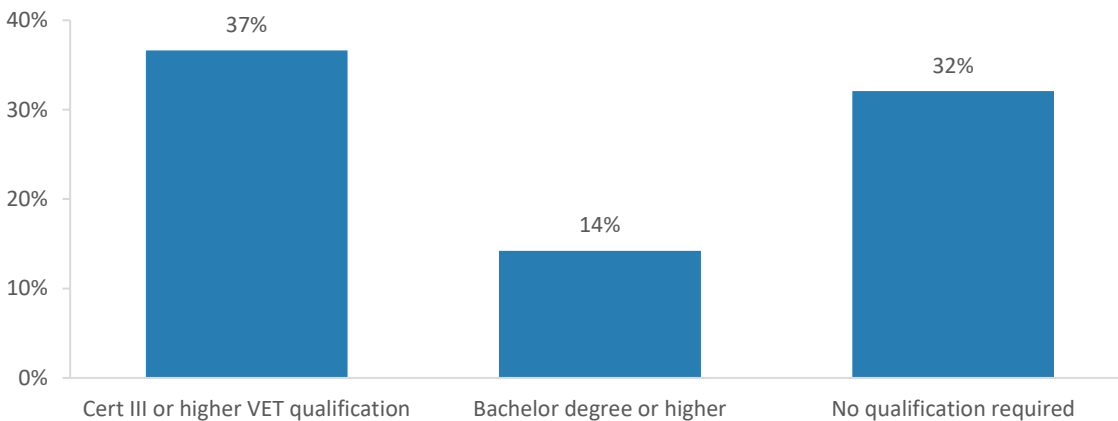
¹ The National Skills Commission spoke with around 11,400 employers, recruiting for almost 7700 positions, during the period from 7 April to 2 October 2020.

Qualifications required

Vocational qualifications were highly valued by employers in the surveyed industries over the research period. The research shows that employers were more likely to require a certificate III or higher VET qualification than a bachelor degree or higher-level university qualification.

Importantly, there were opportunities for people who did not hold post-school qualifications, with around one third of employers recruiting for such roles. For example, the occupation in the greatest demand over most of the research period, Retail Sales Assistants, often does not require formal qualifications.

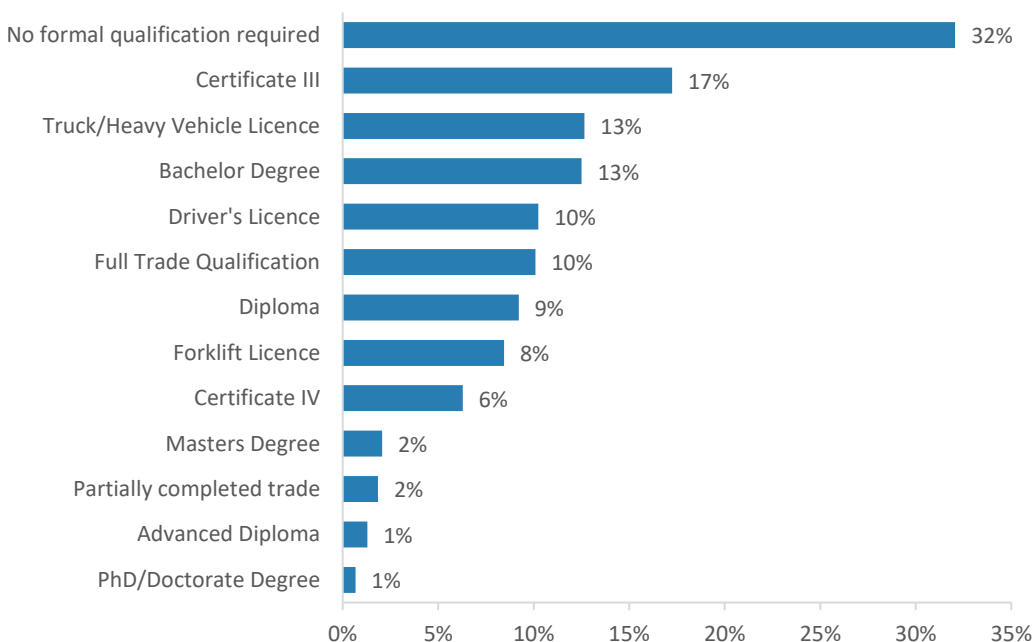
Chart 1: Qualification types required by employers (as a proportion of those recruiting)



Source: National Skills Commission, Jobs in Demand Employer Survey, 7 April to 2 October 2020

A certificate III was the most commonly required qualification (with 17 per cent of recruiting employers seeking workers with this level qualification), followed by a truck/heavy vehicle licence (13 per cent). Bachelor degree qualifications and a driver's licence were also commonly sought.

Chart 2: Qualifications required by employers (as a proportion of those recruiting)



Source: National Skills Commission, Jobs in Demand Employer Survey, 7 April to 2 October 2020

Skills in demand

Employers were asked about the technical skills for which they were looking, i.e. the abilities and knowledge needed to perform specific tasks. The skills in the greatest demand were often directly linked to the job role, highlighting the value of relevant workplace experience. Over the research period, the top five skills in demand have been

1. Assisting and Caring for Others
2. Operating Vehicles, Mechanised Devices, or Equipment
3. Customer and Personal Service
4. Controlling Machines and Processes
5. Selling or Influencing Others.

These skills reflect the occupations in the greatest demand, including caring occupations (such as Child Carers and Registered Nurses), driving positions (such as Truck Drivers and Delivery Drivers) and sales/customer service roles (such as Retail Sales Assistants).

Employability skills

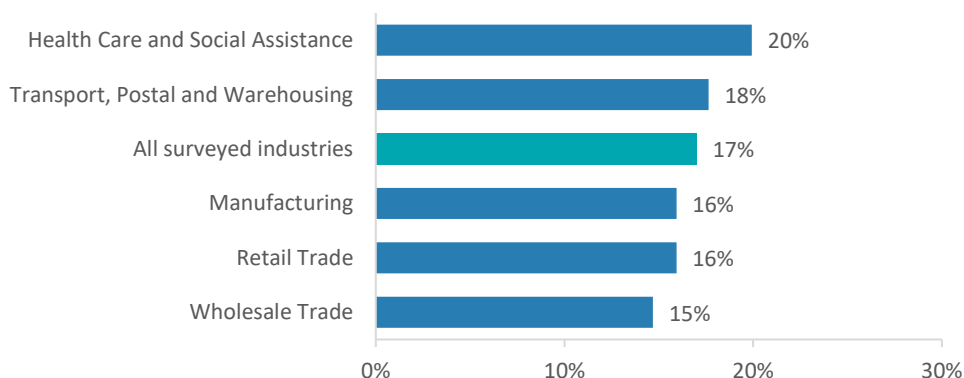
Employability skills (or personal attributes) are often at least as important, if not more important, as technical skills when employers are selecting between candidates. Over the research period, the most commonly mentioned personal attributes that employers were seeking were

1. Reliability
2. Work ethic/motivation
3. Social/people skills
4. Communication
5. Teamwork.

Recruitment activity by industry

Recruitment activity was the strongest in Health Care and Social Assistance over the research period, in line with the major response that was required during this time. Transport, Postal and Warehousing recruitment activity was also relatively strong, with delivery and postal services in demand during the restriction periods due, in large part, to the significant shift towards online shopping.

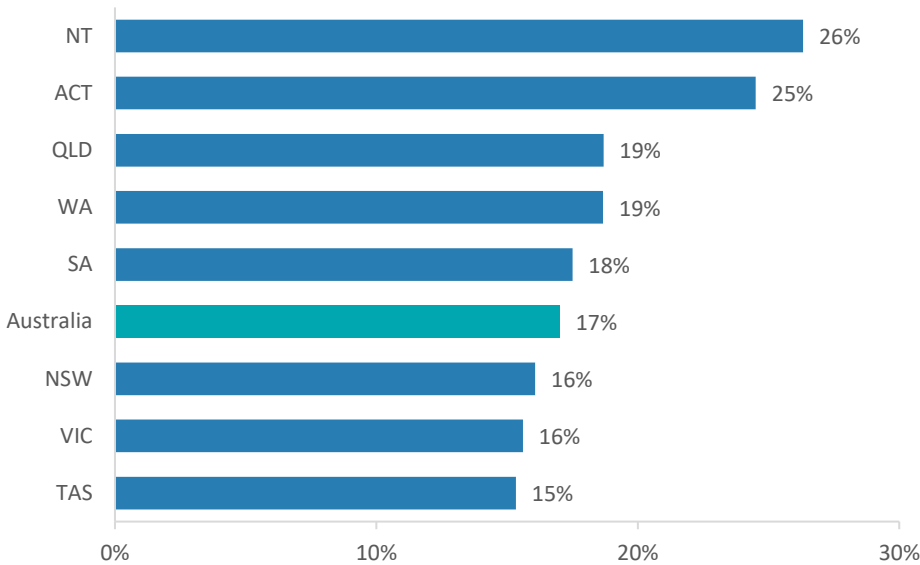
Chart 3: Proportion of businesses recruiting, surveyed industries



Recruitment activity by state and territory

Recruitment activity was the strongest in the Northern Territory and the ACT during the research period, with around a quarter of businesses recruiting. Tasmania, Victoria and New South Wales had the lowest proportion of businesses recruiting over the period.

Chart 4: Proportion of businesses recruiting, states and territories



Source: National Skills Commission, Jobs in Demand Employer Survey, 7 April to 2 October 2020

Regional Australia

Throughout the research period, recruitment activity was stronger in regional Australia, compared with capital cities. Regional employers also reported greater difficulty filling their positions, with many citing their location as a reason for their difficulty.

Chart 5: Recruitment activity, metropolitan and regional Australia

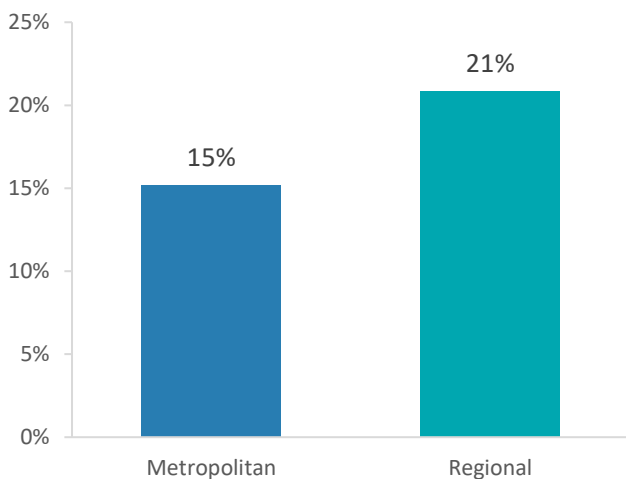
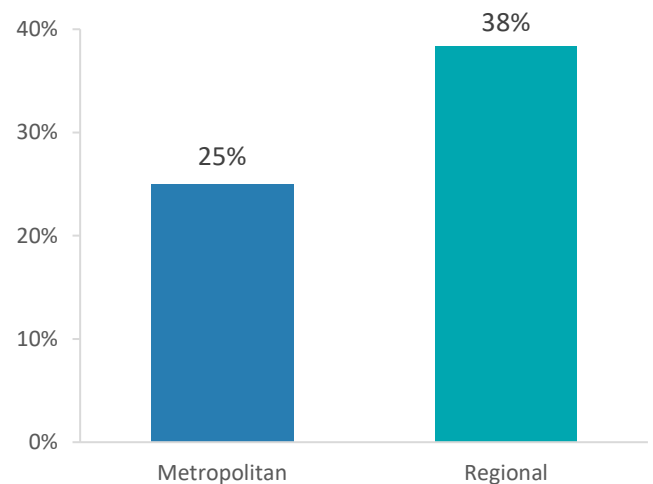


Chart 6: Recruitment difficulty, metropolitan and regional Australia (as a % of those recruiting)



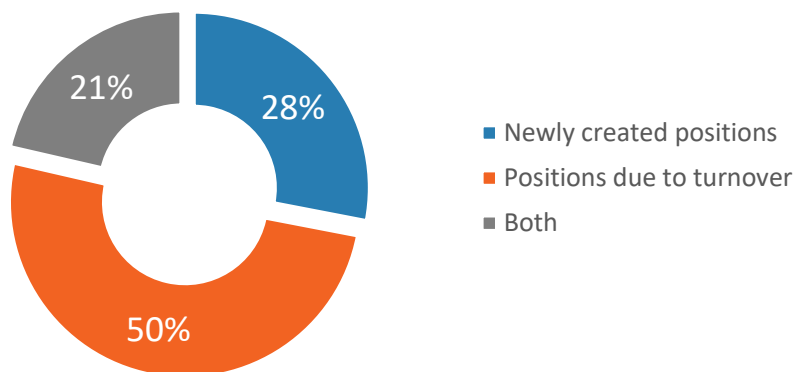
Source: National Skills Commission, Jobs in Demand Employer Survey, 7 April to 2 October 2020

Newly created positions and turnover vacancies

Encouragingly, around half of the surveyed recruiting employers were hiring for newly created positions (with 28 per cent recruiting for new positions, and a further 21 per cent recruiting for both new and replacement positions).

A large number of opportunities were also created due to turnover (with 50 per cent of recruiting employers hiring to replace workers, and a further 21 per cent recruiting as a result of both newly created positions and vacancies due to turnover).

Chart 7: Proportion of businesses recruiting for newly created or turnover positions

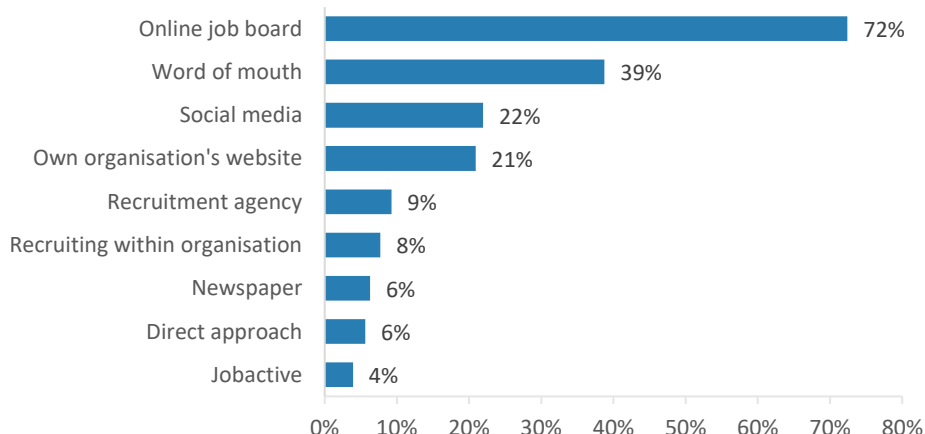


Source: National Skills Commission, Jobs in Demand Employer Survey, 7 April to 2 October 2020

Recruitment methods

A significant share of recruiting employers (72 per cent) advertised their positions using online jobs boards. Employers seeking workers through word of mouth was also common (39 per cent), stressing the need for job seekers to utilise networks, such as friends, family, former co-workers and past employers. Many employers advertised jobs on social media (22 per cent), making this an important platform to take advantage of when seeking employment. Research from the department suggests that recruitment through social media has increased considerably in recent years (more information can be viewed on the [Labour Market Information Portal, Facebook Job Groups for Recruiting and Job Seeking report](#)).

Chart 8: Recruitment methods (as a proportion of those recruiting)



Source: National Skills Commission, Jobs in Demand Employer Survey, 7 April to 2 October 2020

Recruitment experiences by business size

Larger businesses (with 200 or more employees) were more likely to have recruited over the research period than smaller business, and were less likely to have reported difficulty finding the workers they needed.

Chart 9: Recruitment activity, business sizes (number of employees)

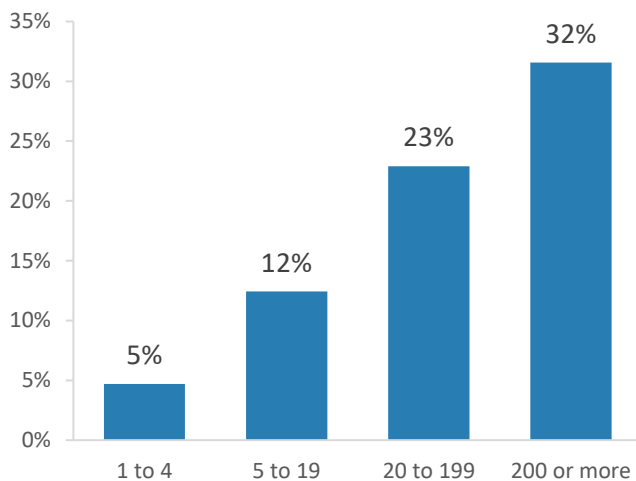
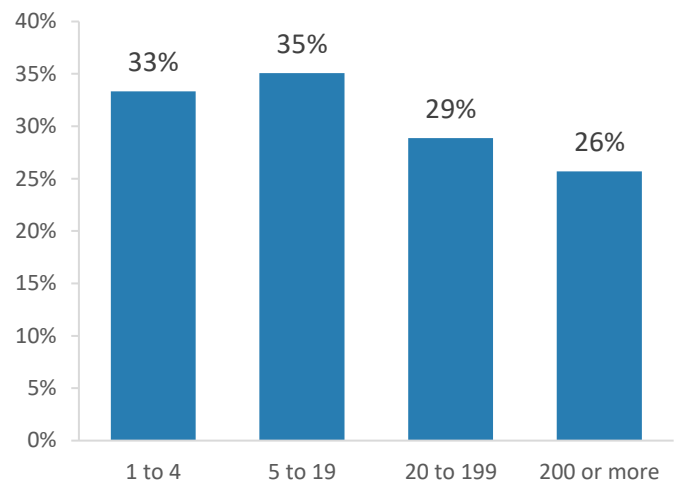


Chart 10: Recruitment difficulty (as a % of those recruiting), business sizes (number of employees)

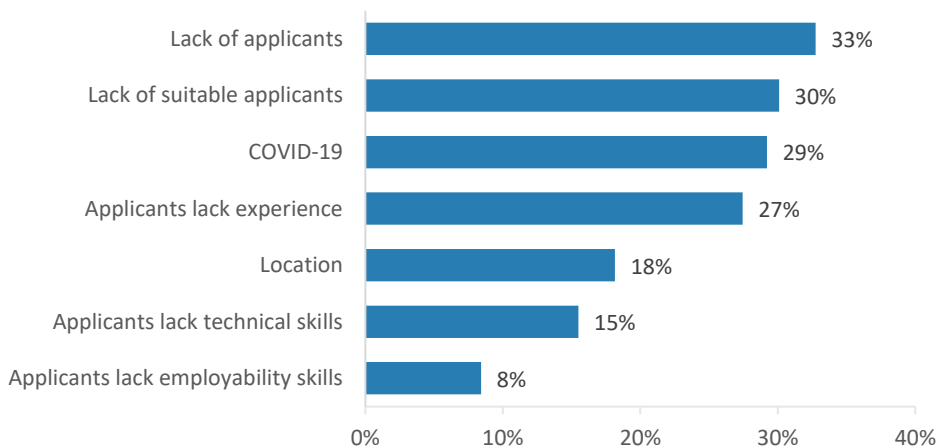


Source: National Skills Commission, Jobs in Demand Employer Survey, 7 April to 2 October 2020

Recruitment Difficulty

Around 30 per cent of recruiting employers were having (or expected to have) difficulty filling their vacancies at the time they were contacted. Common reasons for recruitment difficulty cited by employers included a lack of applicants, a lack of suitable applicants, COVID-19, and applicants lacking experience.

Chart 11: Reasons for recruitment difficulty (as a proportion of employers having difficulty)

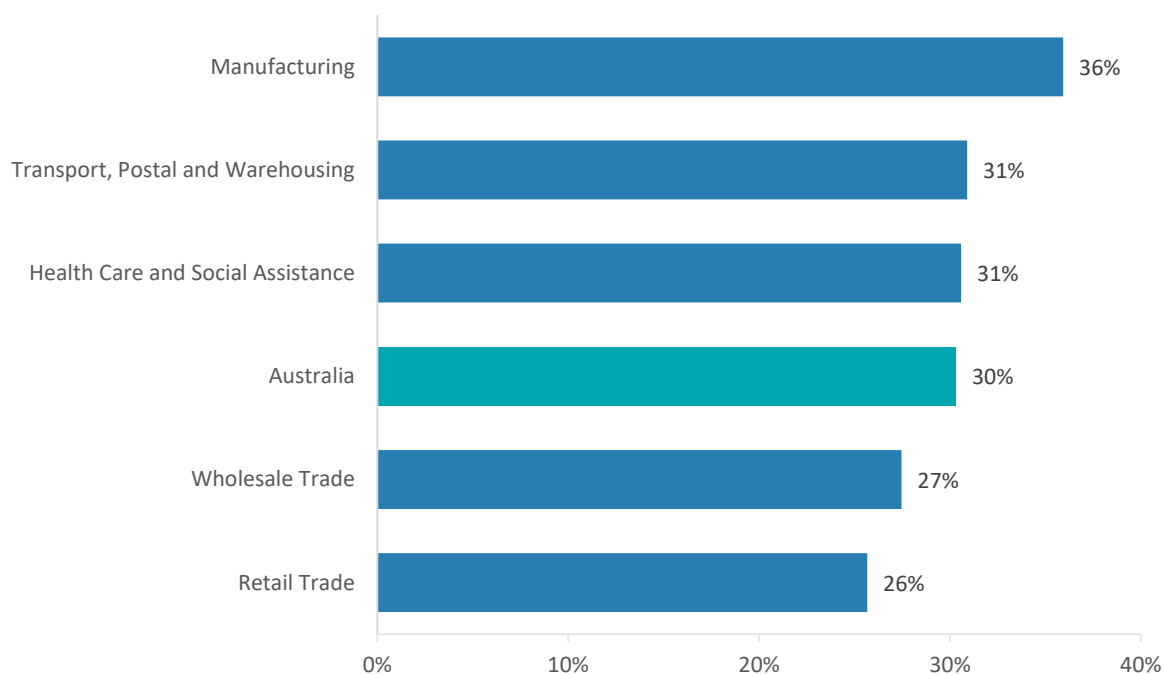


Source: National Skills Commission, Jobs in Demand Employer Survey, 6 July to 2 October 2020

The occupations for which employers reported difficulty recruiting remained relatively consistent over the research period. The occupations most difficult to recruit for were

1. Child Carers
2. Truck Drivers
3. Metal Fabricators and Welders
4. Managers
5. Retail Sales Assistants
6. Motor Mechanics
7. Registered Nurses
8. Metal Fitters and Machinists
9. Receptionists
10. Sales Representatives

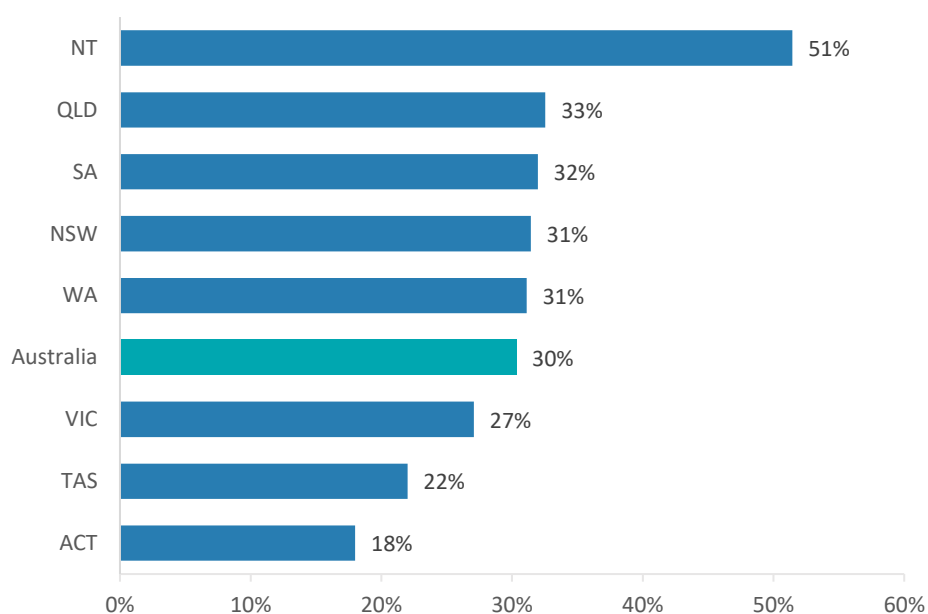
Chart 12: Recruitment difficulty by industry (as a proportion of those recruiting)



Source: National Skills Commission, Jobs in Demand Employer Survey, 7 April to 2 October 2020

A higher proportion of recruiting Manufacturing employers reported recruitment difficulty than in other surveyed industries (with 36 per cent of recruiting employers having difficulty). A relatively low proportion of recruiting Retail Trade employers reported difficulty (26 per cent).

Chart 13: Recruitment difficulty by state and territory (as a proportion of those recruiting)



Source: National Skills Commission, Jobs in Demand Employer Survey, 7 April to 2 October 2020

Recruitment difficulty varied across states and territories. A higher proportion of recruiting employers in the Northern Territory had difficulty compared with the rest of Australia (with just over half of those recruiting reporting difficulty), with many citing their location as a reason for their difficulty. On the other hand, only 18 per cent of recruiting employers in the ACT reported having difficulty recruiting.