

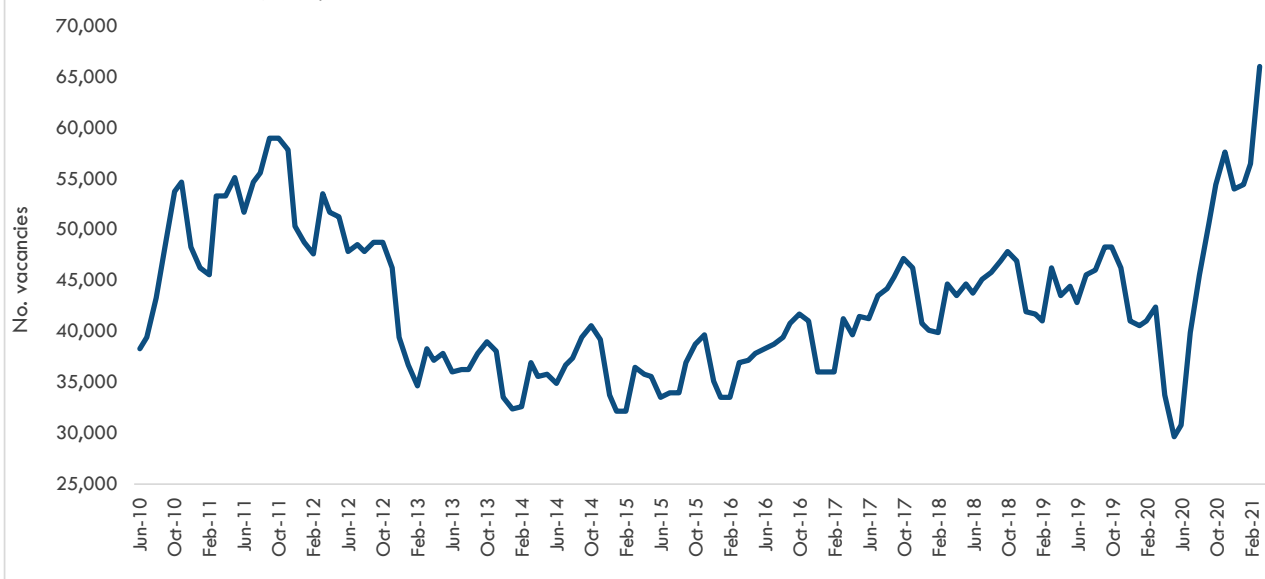


## REGIONAL JOB ADS REACH RECORD HIGH IN MARCH 2021

In March 2021 there were **66,200 job vacancies across regional Australia**. This is the largest number of vacancies in regional Australia since records began in May 2010. The latest level of demand far surpasses the previous record of 59,077 advertised jobs back in October 2011. The latest level of regional job vacancies accounts for nearly one third of all vacancies across the country.

### Regional Australia job vacancies

Source: National Skills Commission, monthly internet vacancies



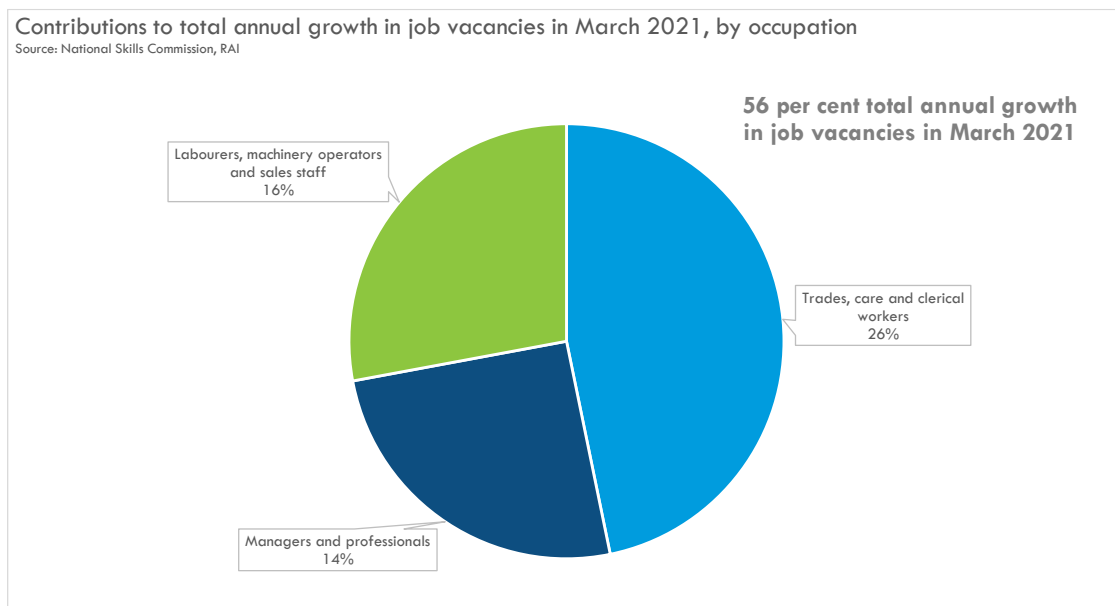
**The current strength in the regional Australian labour market is widespread** across the states and territories and across different occupations. This is very different to the last boom period 2011-2012, when the large number of job ads reflected the country's then-two-speed economy – vacancies were narrowly based across the resources sectors and states (mainly Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory). Total job vacancies in regional New South Wales and Victoria were at best holding steady during that time.

In March 2021 regional NSW, regional Victoria, regional South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory all advertised a record number of jobs. The regional areas of the remaining states – Queensland and Western Australia – each posted job vacancies not far below previous records. As for the Northern Territory, a recovery from a protracted economic downturn is now in train evidenced by job ads trending higher over the last eight months.

Number of advertised job vacancies	Mar-20	Feb-21	Mar-21	% change (annual)	% change (monthly)
<b>Regional Australia</b>	<b>42,498</b>	<b>56,611</b>	<b>66,218</b>	<b>55.8%</b>	<b>17.0%</b>
Regional NSW	11,438	16,655	19,732	72.5%	18.5%
Regional VIC	5,607	8,199	9,601	71.2%	17.1%
Regional QLD	12,324	15,683	18,269	48.2%	16.5%
Regional SA	900	1,310	1,553	72.6%	18.6%
TAS	1,508	2,222	2,569	70.3%	15.6%
Regional WA	3,593	4,667	5,290	47.2%	13.4%
NT	1,572	2,049	2,394	52.3%	16.9%
ACT	5,557	5,826	6,809	22.5%	16.9%
<b>Mainland State Capital Cities</b>	<b>113,966</b>	<b>119,533</b>	<b>145,466</b>	<b>27.6%</b>	<b>21.7%</b>

**SOURCES** The Internet Vacancy Index is updated monthly by the Department of Education Skills and Employment ([lmip.gov.au/default.aspx?LMIP/GainInsights/VacancyReport](http://lmip.gov.au/default.aspx?LMIP/GainInsights/VacancyReport)). The RAI has an interactive Regional Job Vacancy map of the data showing vacancies in 37 regions across Australia ([regionalaustralia.org.au/home/regional-jobs-vacancy-map](http://regionalaustralia.org.au/home/regional-jobs-vacancy-map)).

While demand has increased across all occupational categories over the past year (by 56 per cent), it is **demand for higher to medium-skilled occupations – from managers and professions through to trades, care and clerical workers that are the key drivers of this growth.**



In March 2021, there were three times more skilled jobs advertised in regional Australia than unskilled jobs. The largest share of advertised jobs – 42 per cent (or 27,923 jobs) – was made up of demand for skilled workers in trades, care and clerical worker positions. About a third of total regional jobs advertised were for high skill managers and professionals (or 22,119 positions). Jobs for lower skilled labourers, machinery operators and sales staff made up the smallest share – 24 per cent (16,176 jobs) – of total advertised jobs in March 2021.

The underlying economic drivers of these strong labour markets are diverse, reflecting a broad-based economic resurgence across regional Australia. This resurgence was emerging prior to COVID – and while the restrictions and shutdowns temporarily derailed it, regional Australia was far less affected than capital cities. Moreover the subsequent recovery has seen a jump in employment demand for producing and servicing sectors alike.

The ending of the drought in many parts of regional Australia has brought renewed activity and confidence to farming regions, business confidence is returning in all but the places most reliant on international tourists, and regional hospitality services are starting to pick up as consumers return to spending and domestic residents show that they are keen to explore their own country.

**The stand-out sector driving labour demand in regional areas is Health Care and Social Assistance.** It is the largest contributor to employment growth in five out of the eight states and territories. Public Administration and Safety is the next key source of demand for labour in regional Australia followed by Professional, Scientific and Technical Services.

Looking across the particular regions, annual and monthly growth in job ads continues to be universal – each and every one of the 32 regions outside the mainland state capitals had more vacancies in March 2021 than in the previous month and also more vacancies than a year earlier.

The top five regions with the biggest monthly increases in March 2021 are:

- **Southern Highlands & Snowy** with 21% more vacancies in March 2021 (1,005) than in Feb 2021 (830)
- **Gosford & Central Coast** with 21% more (1,618 compared to 1,342)
- **Blue Mountains, Bathurst & Central West NSW** with 20% more (1,729 compared with 1,439)
- **Fleurieu Peninsula & Murray Mallee** with 20% more (807 compared with 672)
- **Riverina & Murray** with 20% more (2,119 compared to 1,768)

The five regions recording the strongest annual growth saw job ads more than or just about double over the period March 2020 to March 2021:

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- **Dubbo & Western NSW** up by 117%
- **North West Tasmania** up by 107%
- **Riverina & Murray** up by 93%
- **Southern Highlands & Snowy** up by 93%
- **Sunshine Coast** up by 92%

With JobKeeper wage subsidies having ended in March there will be added incentive for people whose jobs were displaced by COVID measures to find employment. But the mix of skills shows clearly that the biggest need is for medium- and high-level skills. This is across all regions and across most industries. Entry level jobs are few and far between in most of our regions. The key to meeting the growing demand for labour in regional Australia is reshaping the formal and informal training offerings in regions to enable regional workers to continue moving up the qualifications, skills and income ladders. This will require a reorientation of COVID recovery support and significant improvements to post school learning pathways in line with the National Regional, Rural, and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy proposed by the Napthine Review of late 2018.