



Labour Market Conditions in the Illawarra Priority Employment Area

Labour market conditions in the Illawarra Priority Employment Area (PEA) remain subdued.

- The unemployment stood at 7.7 per cent in December 2013, well above the rate for New South Wales (5.8 per cent).¹ In the Shoalhaven Local Government Area, the unemployment rate now stands at 10.4 per cent.
- The working age participation rate is also lower than that for New South Wales (71.1 per cent compared with 74.4 per cent).²

There are structural changes occurring across industries.³

- Following strong growth in recent years, Health Care and Social Assistance is now the largest employing industry, accounting for 15 per cent of total employment across the broader region.
- Employment in Manufacturing decreased by 5 per cent over the past 10 years. Despite this, the industry still accounts for 8 per cent of total employment although its share of total employment has fallen from 13 per cent in that period.



What employers are telling us?

The survey results suggest that recruitment activity in the Illawarra PEA is soft and there are signs of further weakening⁴.

- Only 56 per cent of employers had recruited in the past 12 months.
- A smaller proportion of recruiting employers reported recruitment difficulty than when the region was last surveyed in 2013 and the rate of unfilled vacancies had almost halved.
- In addition, a smaller proportion of employers had increased staff numbers in the 12 months prior to the survey compared with the results from 2013.

Key Indicators	Illawarra PEA		All PEAs surveyed (9 months to November 2013)
	February 2014	April 2013	
Proportion of employers who recruited	56%	54%	62%
Vacancies unfilled	3.2%	6.0%	4.1%
Employers who experienced difficulty	39%	44%	42%
Employers who increased staff	16%	19%	17%

- Employers remain cautious about the future, with only 31 per cent expecting to recruit in the year following the survey. Employers in the Health Care and Social Assistance industry most commonly expected to increase staff numbers in the next 12 months.

Where are the opportunities?

- The Health Care and Social Assistance industry is experiencing strong growth with employers in this industry commonly recruiting for a range of occupations, such as Child Carers, Aged and Disabled Carers, Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers and Welfare Support Workers.
- Employers continue to experience difficulties filling vacancies for many Technicians and Trades occupations, such as Motor Mechanics, Electricians and Chefs.
- Employers commonly expected to recruit for a number of lower skilled or entry level occupations following the survey, including Sales Assistants, Bar Attendants and Baristas, Receptionists, Truck Drivers and Housekeepers.

¹ ABS Labour Force, (Seasonally Adjusted), February 2014.

² ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2006 & 2011.

³ Illawarra and Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven combined data. ABS, Labour Force Survey, February 2004 and 2014, 4 quarter averages

⁴ The report is based on a Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences of 407 employers undertaken by the Labour Market Research and Analysis Branch in February 2014.

This report was produced by the Labour Market Research and Analysis Branch. Further results on the Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences can be found at www.employment.gov.au/regionalreports or by contacting recruitmentsurveys@employment.gov.au.