



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Employment and  
Workplace Relations**

# **Richmond Region**

## **Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences**

APRIL  
**2007**

## Background to survey findings

This report was prepared by the Labour Supply and Skills Branch, Labour Market Strategies Group and is based on research conducted by the Branch.

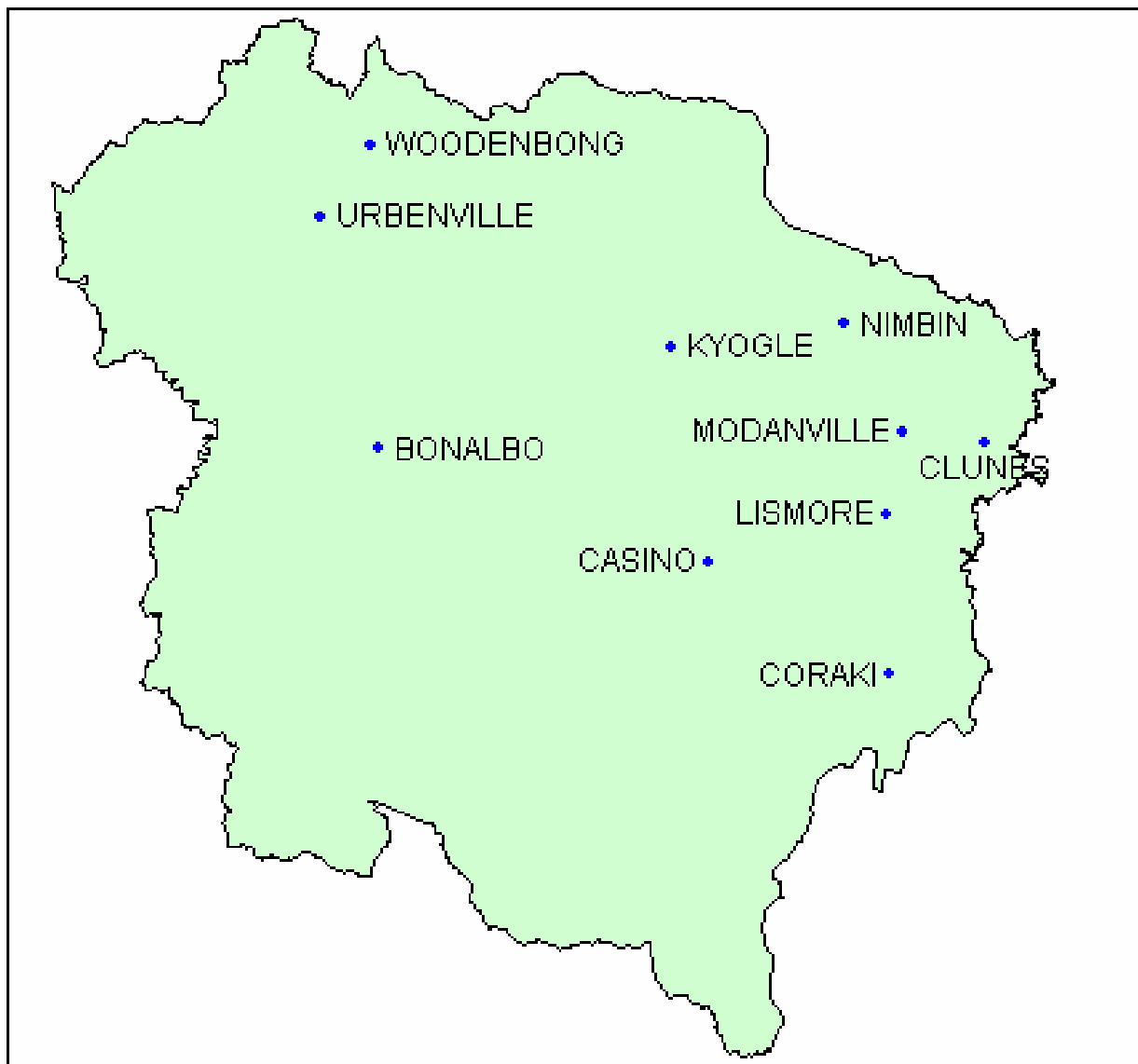
The Labour Supply and Skills Branch would like to thank those who participated in the research for their contribution.

For further information, please contact the Labour Supply and Skills Branch on 1800 059 439 or E-mail: [regionalreports@dewr.gov.au](mailto:regionalreports@dewr.gov.au).

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# Richmond Region



The Richmond Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences was conducted to evaluate the recruitment experiences of employers across the Richmond region.

This region comprises the following local government areas:

- Lismore (City);
- Kyogle (Area);
- Richmond Valley (Area); and
- Partially covers Tenterfield (Area).

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### Background

Australia has experienced strong and sustained economic and employment growth over the past decade which has seen the unemployment rate fall from 8.3 per cent to 4.4 per cent in April 2007.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the labour market is tighter now than it was ten years ago and employers have been increasingly having difficulty recruiting and retaining appropriate staff for their business. As the population ages, recruitment difficulties may become more acute, particularly in industries and regions where there is already a high proportion of older workers.

The extent and nature of recruitment difficulties can vary markedly across regions. Some areas are clearly performing better than others in terms of employment growth and levels of unemployment and this impacts on the number of employment opportunities as well as the number of local job seekers available to fill vacancies. Other factors such as international, interstate and regional migration, education and training, and the emerging demands of new technology also affect the ability of employers to attract appropriate staff to their business. Industry, occupation and employer characteristics can also exacerbate recruitment difficulties.

To gain a better understanding of the recruitment difficulties being experienced by employers in the Richmond region, a phone survey of 202 businesses was conducted in April 2007. This survey gathered information on employers' success in filling vacancies and the quality of applicants they received, as well as their future employment expectations.

This report presents the findings of this survey in the context of local labour market conditions such as the industrial composition of the region and potential sources of untapped labour supply.

### Labour Market Overview

As at June 2005, the estimated adult population (15+) of the Richmond region stood at 58 800, with the working age population (15 to 64 years of age) comprising of 81 per cent of its adult population. In addition, mature age persons (45 years and over) made up 41 per cent of the adult population in Richmond, higher when compared with New South Wales and Australia overall (36 per cent respectively). The major employing industries in the region include Retail Trade, Health and Community Services, and Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing.

As with New South Wales more generally, the unemployment rate in the Richmond region has fallen substantially, from 9.9 per cent in December 2001 to 7.8 per cent in

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<sup>1</sup> *Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rate - ABS Labour Force Survey April 2007.*

December 2006.<sup>2</sup> Despite this fall in the unemployment rate, the proportion of the working age population receiving Centrelink allowances is higher in the Richmond region (33 per cent) than compared with the levels recorded in both New South Wales and Australia (18 per cent respectively).

## Main Findings

The Richmond Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences found that 42 per cent of employers surveyed had recruited or attempted to recruit in the last 12 months. In general, these employers experienced recruitment difficulties in line with those experienced across other areas of Australia with 9 per cent of vacancies reported by employers remaining unfilled. Despite this relative success, the proportion of vacancies that remained unfilled varied significantly across industries. Employers in the Property and Business Services industry had the highest proportion of unfilled vacancies.

Employers' success filling vacancies varied considerably depending on the occupation. Higher skilled occupations were frequently reported by employers in the Richmond region and were more frequently unfilled, while vacancies in lower skilled occupations were more likely to be filled. There were few suitable applicants for vacancies across most skill levels with a lack of technical skills or expertise the main reason applicants were regarded as unsuitable for the job for which they had applied.

This low level of competition for vacancies was commonly identified as contributing to recruitment difficulties in the region, as were the working hours of the job. Overall, 38 per cent of employers reported difficulty filling the occupation for which they had most recently recruited and a further 8 per cent reported difficulty recruiting for any occupation over the past 12 months.

Looking forward, employment in the region is anticipated to be moderate with 37 per cent of the employers surveyed expecting to recruit over the next 12 months. These recruitment expectations are most commonly due to anticipated employee turnover, however, a large proportion of employers surveyed expect to create positions within their business over the next 12 months, with many expecting to have difficulties in filling these positions.

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<sup>2</sup> DEWR, *Small Area Labour Markets Publication – December Quarter 2006*.

## 1. RICHMOND AND REGION LABOUR MARKET

### 1.1. The tightening Australian labour market<sup>3</sup>

Against the backdrop of strong and sustained economic growth, Australia has experienced robust labour market conditions over the last decade, with employment growth averaging 2.4 per cent per year and the unemployment rate falling from 8.3 per cent in April 1997 to 4.4 per cent in April 2007. Despite the labour force participation rate increasing by 1.6 percentage points over this period, the labour market is now much tighter than it was ten years ago. Accordingly, there has been an increase in the severity of shortages in a number of skilled professions, including most trades, many professional health sector occupations, accountants, child care workers and civil engineers.

In the past, the labour market has generally been able to adjust to skill shortages, by increasing the training provided to new entrants or as people have shifted from one career to another. However, the current business cycle is unlike others in the past, because the tight labour market has been accompanied by an increase in the pace of change in the skills required by employers, the ageing of the population, fertility rates that have fallen below replacement levels and an increased life expectancy of the population.

Moreover, the ratio of people of workforce age (15-64) to people of retirement age (65+) will be considerably lower in the future than it is now and labour force growth in the coming years will be significantly slower than it has been in the past. Together, these factors mean that, over the next five years, there will be an estimated 195 000 fewer workers than would otherwise have been the case had the population not begun to age. Clearly, in view of this shortfall, employers are unlikely to be able to meet all of their labour requirements from traditional sources.

The shortfall in available labour will have serious consequences for business if it cannot adapt to the changing circumstances already occurring in the labour market. In particular, it will be more difficult for employers to find and recruit staff and it will become more important to retain existing employees. To meet this challenge, innovative recruitment and retention strategies will be required and businesses will need to look beyond traditional sources of labour to other groups, such as older workers, people with disabilities and people wanting to work part-time.

The reduction in the supply of available labour will be widespread, although the severity will vary by industry, occupation and region. The Mining and Manufacturing industries are expected to be especially affected, as are Tradespersons and Elementary and Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service Workers. In the case of Tradespersons, the estimated labour supply shortfall comes on top of the current skill shortages with which employers are already becoming

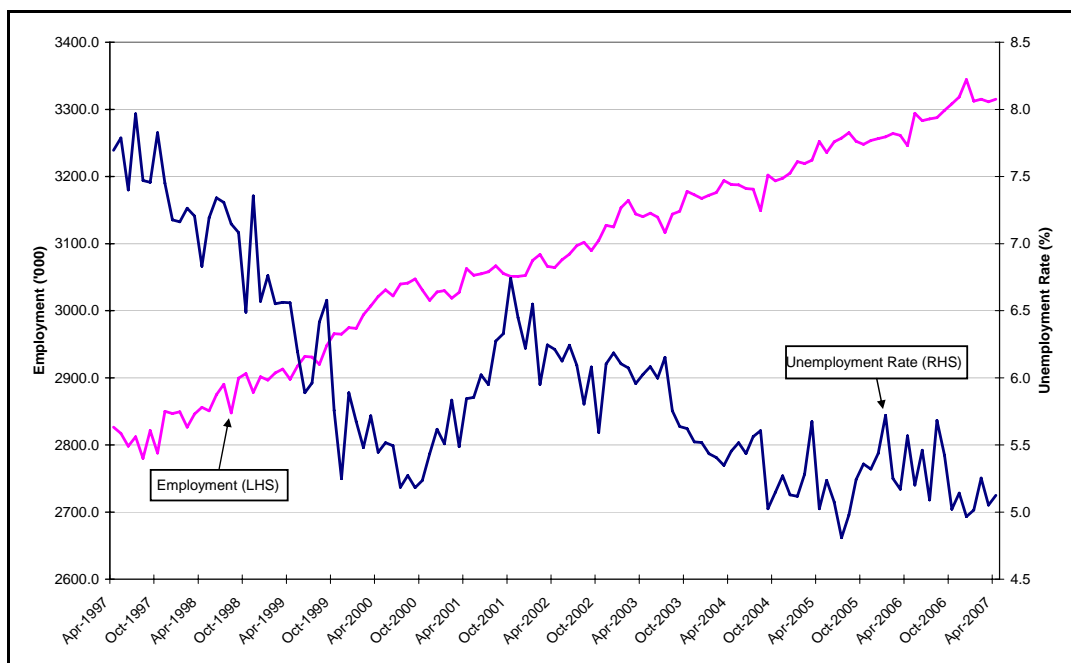
<sup>3</sup> Data are in seasonally adjusted terms

familiar. At the State and Territory level, the impact on employment growth is expected to be greatest in South Australia, followed by the ACT and Tasmania (although all States and Territories will be affected significantly).

## 1.2. New South Wales<sup>4</sup>

In light of strong employment growth in the services sector, economic growth has been particularly strong in New South Wales, which has led to a substantial increase in employment and a significant reduction in the State's unemployment rate, putting pressure on the supply of available skilled labour.

**Chart 1: Employment (LHS) and Unemployment Rate (RHS), New South Wales, April 1997 to April 2007**



Source: *Labour Force Australia*, ABS Catalogue number 6202.0

<sup>4</sup> Data are in seasonally adjusted terms, unless stated otherwise.

Employment in New South Wales increased by 488 400 (or 17.3 per cent) over the ten years to April 2007, with males (up by 237 700 or 14.8 per cent) and females (up by 250 700 or 20.6 per cent) both recording strong growth. Over the same period, the unemployment rate has fallen from 7.7 per cent to 5.1 per cent.

- The level of unemployment in New South Wales population has also fallen substantially, by 56 600 (or 24.0 per cent) over the past decade to now stand at 179 100.
  - The level of long-term unemployment (those unemployed for 12 months or more) fell by 27.2 per cent to 35 900 over the five years to April 2007.<sup>5</sup>

On the supply side, the proportion of the New South Wales actively participating in the labour market has increased by 0.8 percentage points over the decade to April 2007, to now stand at 62.9 per cent. However, the impact this has had on the available labour supply has been more than offset by the strong employment growth recorded over the same period.

As is the case for Australia as a whole, pressure on the available labour supply in New South Wales will become more pronounced over time as the population ages. DEWR has forecast a shortfall of 63 900 workers in New South Wales by 2009-10 as a result of the ageing of the population.<sup>6</sup>

### 1.3. The Richmond Region

As at June 2005, the estimated adult population (15+) of the Richmond region was 58 800. The population of the Richmond region is relatively old compared with the State and Australia overall. For example, persons of working age (15 to 64) account for 81.3 per cent of the adult population, which is slightly lower than for the State and Australia (83 per cent and 84 per cent respectively). Moreover, the proportion of the adult population aged 45–64 (i.e. persons approaching retirement) was higher in the Richmond area than in New South Wales and nationally (41 per cent compared with 36 per cent, respectively).<sup>7</sup>

As with New South Wales more generally, the unemployment rate in the Richmond region has fallen substantially, from 9.9 per cent in December 2001 to 7.8 per cent in December 2006.<sup>8</sup> Despite the fall in the unemployment rate, the proportion of the working age population receiving a Centrelink allowance is higher in the Richmond region. Overall, around 33 per cent of the working age population in the Richmond region is in receipt of a Centrelink payment compared with 18 per cent for both New South Wales and Australia overall.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Data on Long-term unemployment by State are in original terms.

<sup>6</sup> *Workforce Tomorrow, 2005 – DEWR Publication.*

<sup>7</sup> *ABS population estimates, June 2005*

<sup>8</sup> *Small Area Labour Markets Publication – December Quarter 2006 – DEWR publication.*

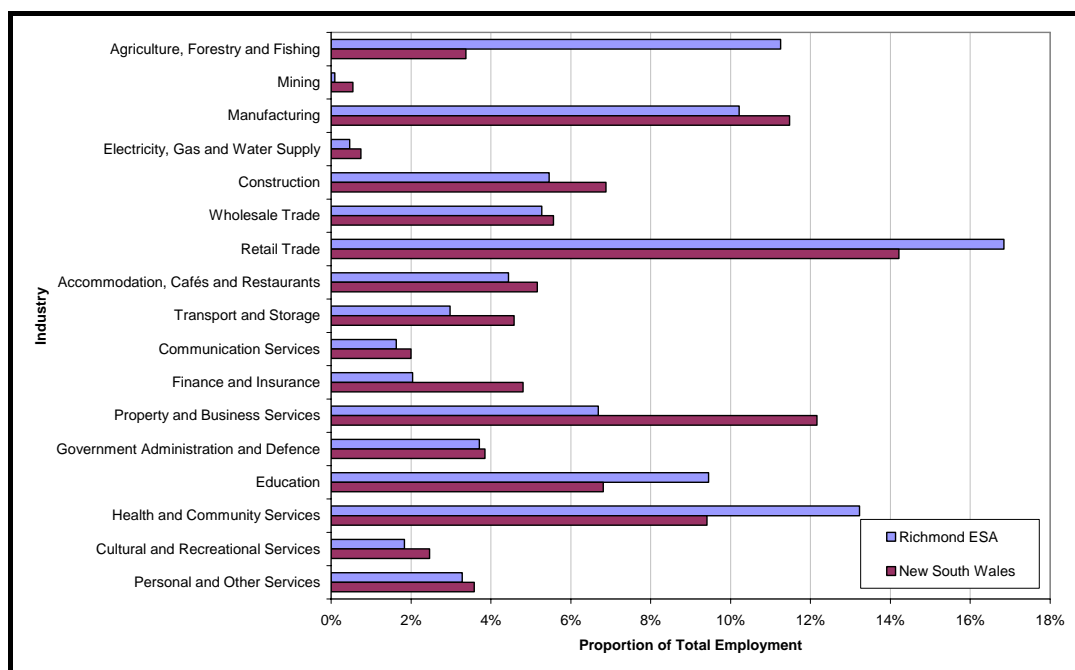
<sup>9</sup> *Centrelink Administrative data – March 2007.*

### 1.4. Industry Composition

Chart 2 compares employment by industry in the Richmond region with New South Wales. This chart shows that Retail Trade is the largest employing industry in the region, and accounts for a higher proportion of the workforce than for the State as a whole. Other major employing industries are Health and Community Services and Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing.

Chart 2 also shows that the employment distribution in Richmond is markedly different to the profile of New South Wales. The most notable difference is for the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing industry, which employs a significantly higher proportion of the workforce in Richmond than in New South Wales. Conversely, there is a much lower proportion of workers employed in Property and Business Services.

**Chart 2: Employment by Industry – Richmond region and New South Wales**



Source: 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

Some insight can be gained into how this industry composition may have changed since the 2001 Census by analysing the industry change that has occurred within the Labour Force Region in which the Richmond region falls.<sup>10</sup> According to figures for the Richmond Tweed-Mid North Coast Labour Force Region, employment in the region has grown by around 16 per cent between August 2001 and May 2007.<sup>11</sup> This employment growth has been particularly strong in the Transport and Storage

<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that the survey region accounts for a small proportion of the Richmond Tweed- Mid North Coast Labour Force Region. Therefore the figures for this Labour Force Region should be used with caution as they are not necessarily representative of the survey region.

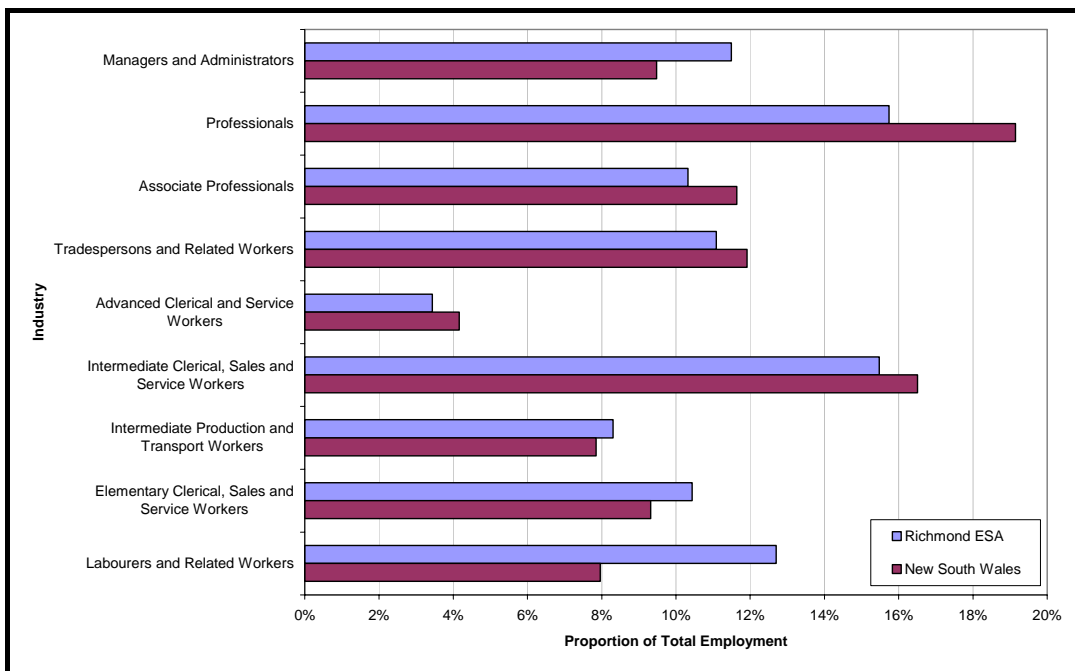
<sup>11</sup> ABS Labour Force Survey, Four quarter averages to August 2001 and May 2007.

(up by 57 per cent), Construction (up by 55 per cent) and Retail Trade (18 per cent) industries. On the other hand, employment in the Accommodation, Cafés and Restaurants industry has declined (down by 18 per cent).<sup>12</sup>

### 1.5. Occupation Composition

Chart 3 compares employment by occupation in the Richmond region with New South Wales. In line with the high employment in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing industry, a large proportion of workers in the region are employed as Managers and Administrators (which includes Farm Managers) and Labourers and Related Workers (which includes Farm Hands). Both of these occupation groups account for a significantly greater proportion of employment in Richmond than in New South Wales more generally.

**Chart 3: Employment by Occupation – Richmond region and New South Wales**



Source: 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

<sup>12</sup> ABS Labour Force Survey, Four quarter averages to August 2001 and May 2007.

## 2. SKILLS IN DEMAND

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Information on skills in demand is difficult to obtain. DEWR monitors and undertakes research on skills in demand and prepares listings of occupations in demand at the State and national level. When determining if an occupation is in demand the Department makes contact with industry and employer organisations.

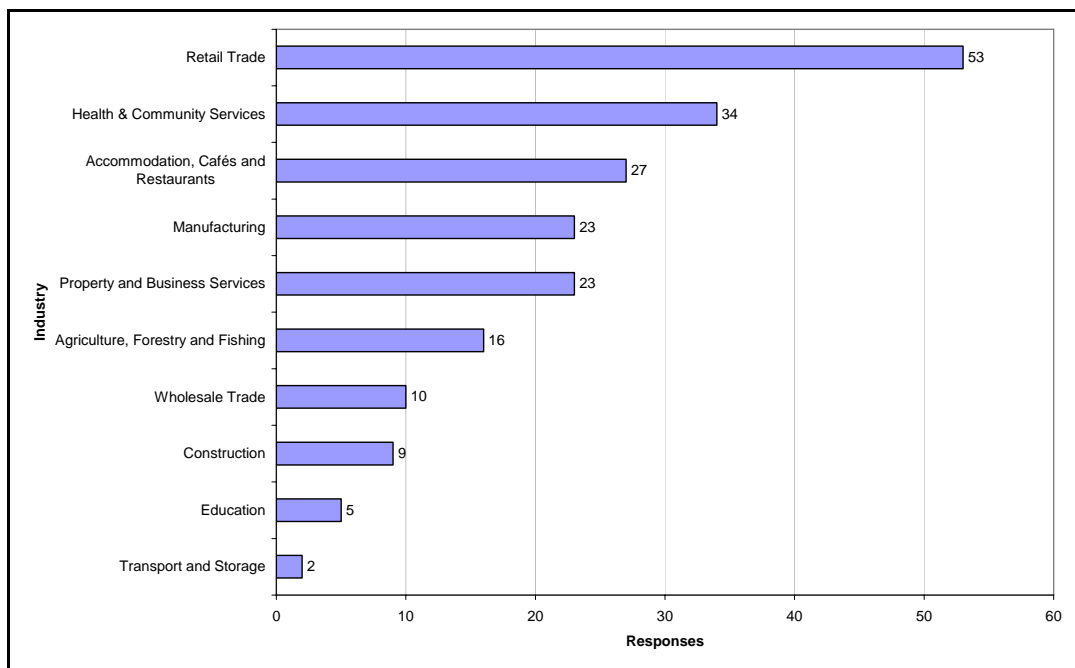
Departmental research shows that in New South Wales skills in demand and recruitment difficulties are widespread in the Professions (such as Engineers, Registered Nurses, Dentists and Physiotherapists), and in the Trades (such as Metal Machinists, Toolmakers, Motor Mechanics, Auto Electricians, Panel Beaters, Electricians, Carpenters and Joiners, Fibrous Plasterers, Bricklayers and Plumbers and Gas Fitters). More information on skills in demand in New South Wales is available on the Department's Workplace site [www.workplace.gov.au/skillsindemand](http://www.workplace.gov.au/skillsindemand).

To gain a greater understanding of the skills in demand in Richmond, DEWR conducted a telephone survey of local employers in April 2007. Findings from the survey provide a good indication of the extent and nature of recruitment difficulties that local employers face and identify labour market opportunities into which employment service providers can tap.

### 3. SURVEY FINDINGS

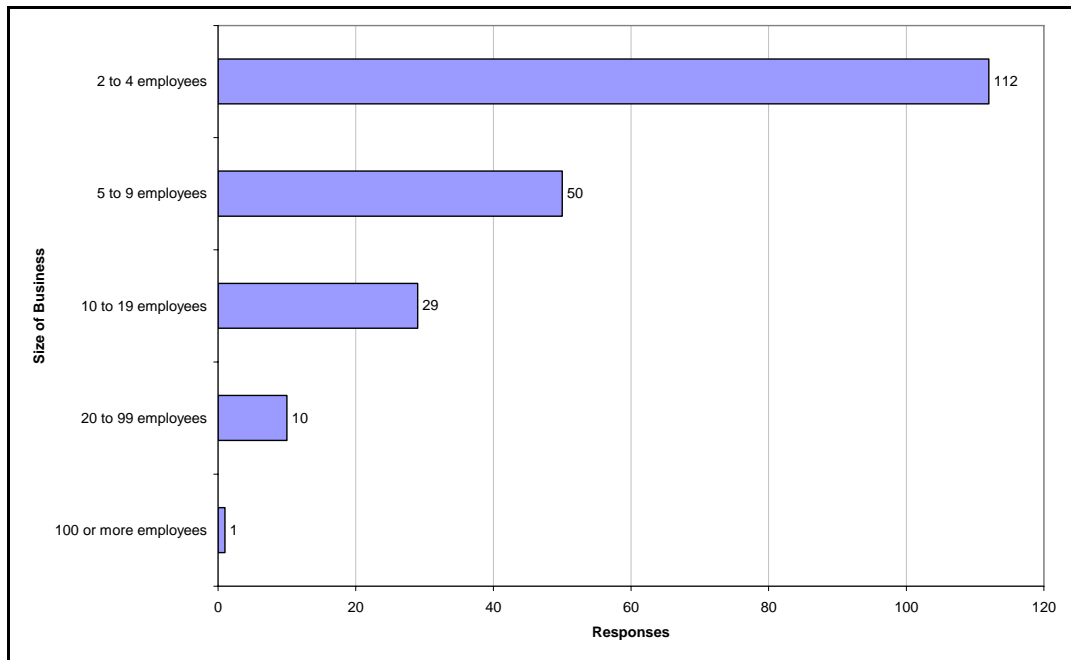
The Richmond Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences collected information from 202 businesses in the region. As shown in Chart 4, these responses were concentrated in six of the major employing industries in the region.<sup>13</sup>

**Chart 4: Responses by Industry**



These responses were also concentrated within smaller businesses. As shown in Chart 5, 55 per cent of the businesses that responded to the survey employed between two and four staff. On the other hand, 11 businesses with 20 or more employees responded to the survey. This distribution needs to be considered when evaluating survey results, as the size of a business is a major determinant of recruitment activity.

<sup>13</sup> In total, ten industries were surveyed, although reliable results were produced for only seven of these industries. The results for the Construction, Education and Transport and Storage industries are considered too unreliable due the small number of businesses interviewed.

**Chart 5: Responses by Size of Business<sup>14</sup>**

### 3.1. Recruitment Experiences in last 12 months

As noted previously in Section 1.4, the Richmond region has experienced moderate growth in employment over the past few years. Consequently, recruitment activity was moderate among the employers surveyed with 42 per cent having recruited or attempted to recruit in the last 12 months. Table 1 presents an overview of the recruitment activity reported by surveyed employers.

<sup>14</sup> A further 40 sole trader businesses were surveyed but due to the nature of these businesses, the fact that they don't employ anyone are not in the scope of this survey and therefore, their results have not been included in this report.

**Table 1: Overview of Recruitment Activity by Industry<sup>15</sup>**

<b>Industry</b>	<b>Employers who had recruited</b>	<b>Number of vacancies reported</b>
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	2	6
Manufacturing	9	20
Construction	3	7
Wholesale Trade	6	11
Retail Trade	26	43
Accommodation, Cafés & Restaurants	16	71
Property & Business Services	10	25
Health & Community Services	12	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>320</b>

### 3.2. Recruitment Difficulty by Industry

Findings from the survey indicate that recruitment success varied significantly across industries. While recruitment success can most simply be measured in terms of whether a vacancy was filled or not, this only provides one component of potential recruitment difficulty in an industry or a region. Other indicators to measure the level of recruitment difficulties across an industry and a region include the proportion of employers who were not able to fill vacancies and the proportion of employers who had some degree of recruitment difficulty, whether that difficulty led to unfilled vacancies or not. Table 2 presents the results for these three key indicators of recruitment difficulty for each industry based on the recruitment experiences of employers over the last 12 months.

<sup>15</sup> The results for some industries may be excluded from this table due to low base sizes but are included in the total. For base sizes of percentages, see Table 1.

**Table 2: Indicators of Recruitment Difficulty by Industry<sup>16</sup>**

<b>Industry</b>	<b>Vacancies unfilled</b>	<b>Employers with unfilled vacancies</b>	<b>Employers who had difficulty recruiting</b>
Manufacturing	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%
Wholesale Trade	9.1%	16.7%	33.3%
Retail Trade	4.7%	7.7%	50.0%
Accommodation, Cafés & Restaurants	9.9%	12.5%	50.0%
Property & Business Services	16.0%	20.0%	50.0%
Health & Community Services	5.4%	16.7%	50.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>11.8%</b>	<b>45.9%</b>

Employers in the Property and Business Services industry had the highest proportion of unfilled vacancies, with 16 per cent of vacancies reported remaining unfilled. These unfilled vacancies were also comparatively widespread with one in five employers reporting at least one unfilled vacancy. By contrast, employers in the Manufacturing industry filled all of their reported vacancies.

Despite the moderate proportion of unfilled vacancies reported across the region, recruitment difficulties, which can arise for a number of reasons, were quite widely reported by employers in the Richmond area. As can be seen from Table 2, 46 per cent of employers reported difficulty recruiting. Despite the low proportion of unfilled vacancies in the Retail Trade industry, difficulty recruiting was commonly reported by employers in this industry, as well as the Accommodation, Cafés and Restaurants, Property and Business Services, and Health and Community Services industries.

### **3.3. Recruitment Difficulty by Occupation**

As mentioned in the previous section, recruitment difficulties can arise for a number of reasons. While many of these reasons are due to the location or availability of local labour supply, many reasons for the recruitment difficulties relate to the type of occupation that an employer is attempting to fill. Table 3 presents an overview of the occupations reported by employers for which they had most recently attempted to recruit.

<sup>16</sup> The results for some industries may be excluded from this table due to low base sizes but are included in the total. For base sizes of percentages, see Table 1.

**Table 3: Overview of Recruitment Activity by Major Occupation Group and Skill level – most recent recruitment round**

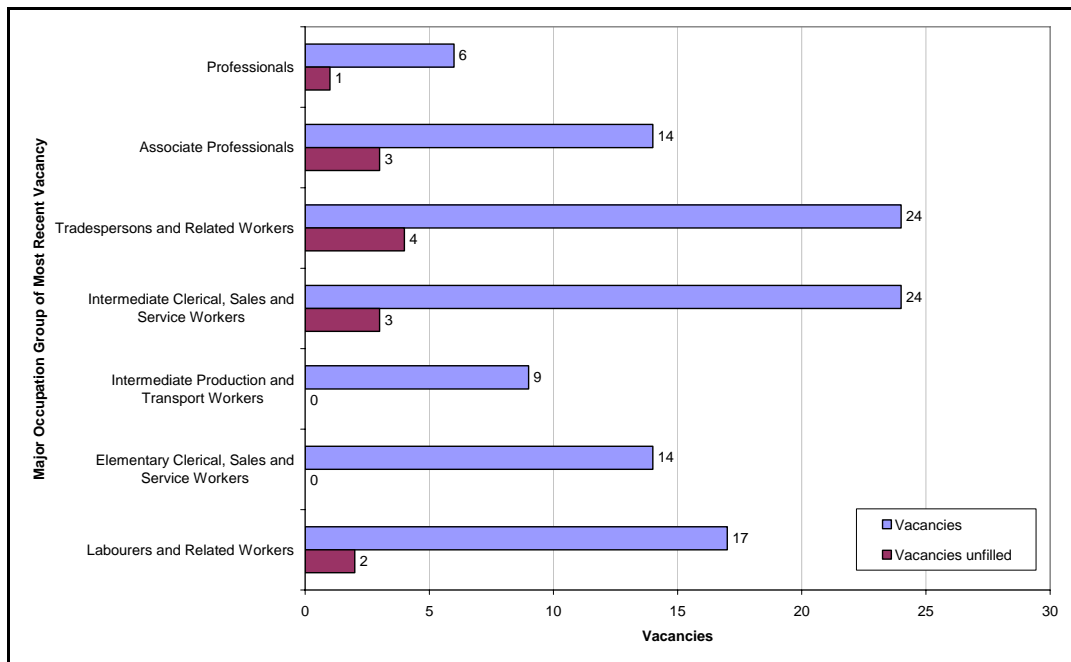
Occupation and Skill level	Employers who had recruited	Number of vacancies reported
<b>Higher skill occupations</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>45</b>
Managers and Administrators	1	1
Professionals	6	6
Associate Professionals	7	14
Tradespersons and Related Workers	21	24
<b>Medium skill occupations</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>34</b>
Advanced Clerical and Service Workers	1	1
Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service Workers	18	24
Intermediate Production and Transport Workers	8	9
<b>Lower skill occupations</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>31</b>
Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service Workers	11	14
Labourers and Related Workers	12	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>110</b>

As with the analysis of recruitment difficulties by industry, recruitment difficulty by occupation cannot solely be measured in terms of whether a vacancy was filled or not. Other indicators that can be used to more accurately measure the level of recruitment difficulties across an occupation include the level of competition for positions, that is, the number of applicants from whom an employer was able to select to fill the position and the proportion of employers who found the occupation difficult to fill. The results for these three key indicators of recruitment difficulty will be analysed in detail in the following sections.

### 3.3.1. Recent Recruitment Success

Of the 110 vacancies for which employers had most recently attempted to recruit, 13 (or 12 per cent) remained unfilled. However as shown in Chart 6, an employer's success filling their most recent vacancy varied considerably depending on the type of occupation and skill level.

**Chart 6: Number of Vacancies and Vacancies Unfilled – By Major Occupation Group of Most Recent Vacancy**

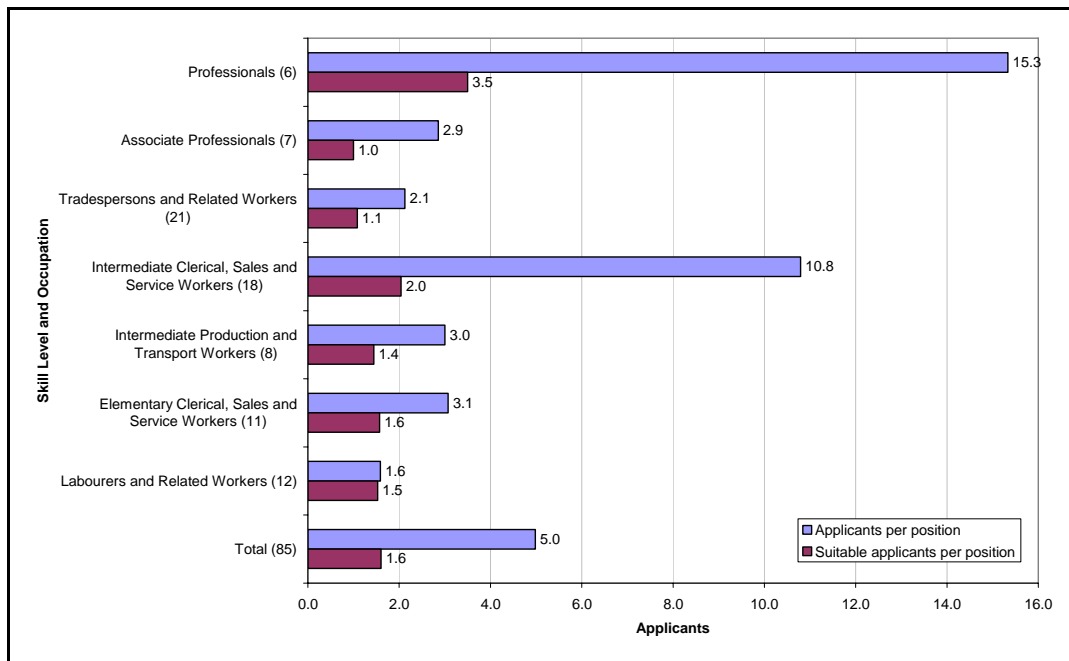


A higher proportion of higher skilled vacancies remained unfilled than for lower skilled vacancies. In total, there were 44 higher skilled vacancies, of which, 8 (or 18 per cent) were not filled. On the other hand, 14 vacancies for Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service Workers were filled, and only two vacancies for Labourers and Related Workers remained unfilled.

### 3.3.2. Level of Competition and Applicant Quality

The level of competition between applicants for positions and the quality of these applicants provides additional insight into the difficulties being experienced by employers in the Richmond region. Overall, employers in the Richmond region reported strong competition for vacancies in the area, with an average of 5.0 applicants per vacancy although, as shown in Chart 7, there is considerable variation across the broad occupation groups.

**Chart 7: Average Applicants and Average Applicants Suitable – By Major Occupation Group of Most Recent Vacancy<sup>17</sup>**

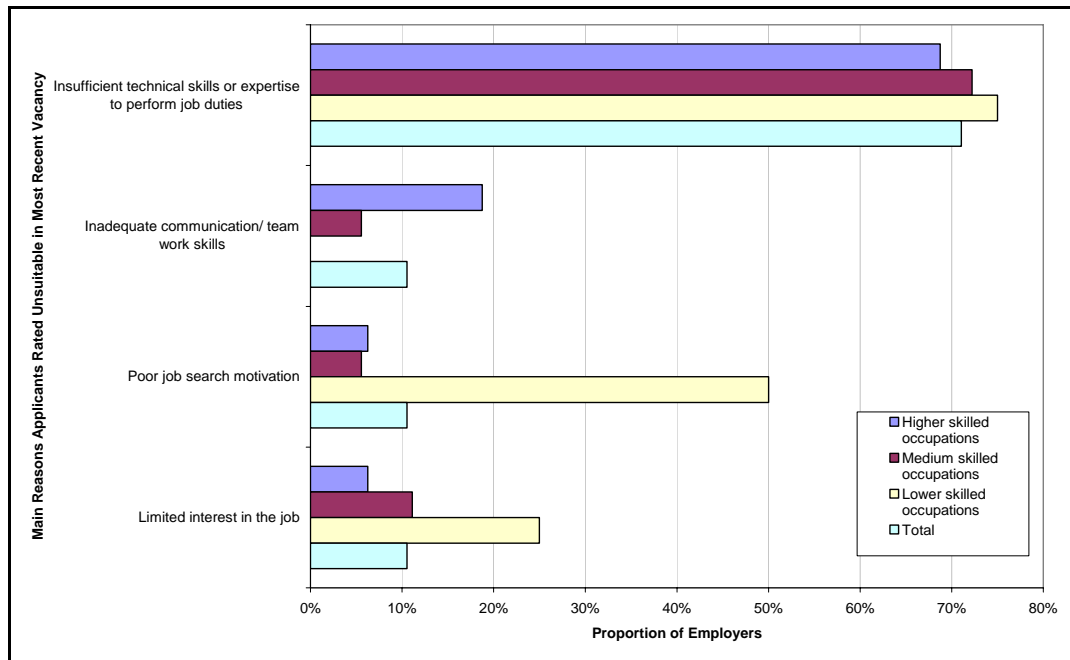


The level of competition for vacancies was lowest among lower skilled positions with vacancies for Labourers and Related Workers attracting an average of just 1.6 applicants per vacancy although most were rated as suitable. On the other hand, positions for Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service Workers attracted an average of 10.8 applicants per vacancy. Of the higher skilled occupation groups, Tradespersons and Related Workers attracted an average of 2.1 applicants while, on average, there were 15.3 applicants for each Professional vacancy.

The average number of applicants per vacancy tells one part of the story in regards to the level of competition in the Richmond region. The suitability of applicants is also a key indicator of recruitment difficulty. As is evident from Chart 7, a large number of people who applied for vacancies were rate as unsuitable, with an average of just 1.6 applicants considered suitable by an employer, indicating employers had little, if any, choice of suitable job seekers to fill a vacancy.

<sup>17</sup> Results for the Managers and Administrators and Advanced Clerical and Service Workers occupation groups have been excluded from this chart due to the small number of vacancies reported.

**Chart 8: Reasons for Applicant Unsuitability by Skill Level**



The results of the survey indicate that, across the region, employers most commonly reported applicants as being unsuitable because they lacked the technical skills or expertise for the position (71 per cent of employers). Other reasons commonly reported by employers for rating one or more applicants as unsuitable included inadequate communication or team work skills, their poor job search motivation, and their limited interest in the job.

Interestingly, the results of the survey show a clear difference in the reasons reported by employers based on the skill level of the occupation. As shown in Chart 8, employers with higher skilled vacancies most commonly reported applicants to be unsuitable due to insufficient technical skills or expertise to perform job duties. On the other hand, employers with lower skilled vacancies most commonly reported applicants were unsuitable due to their poor job search motivation.<sup>18</sup>

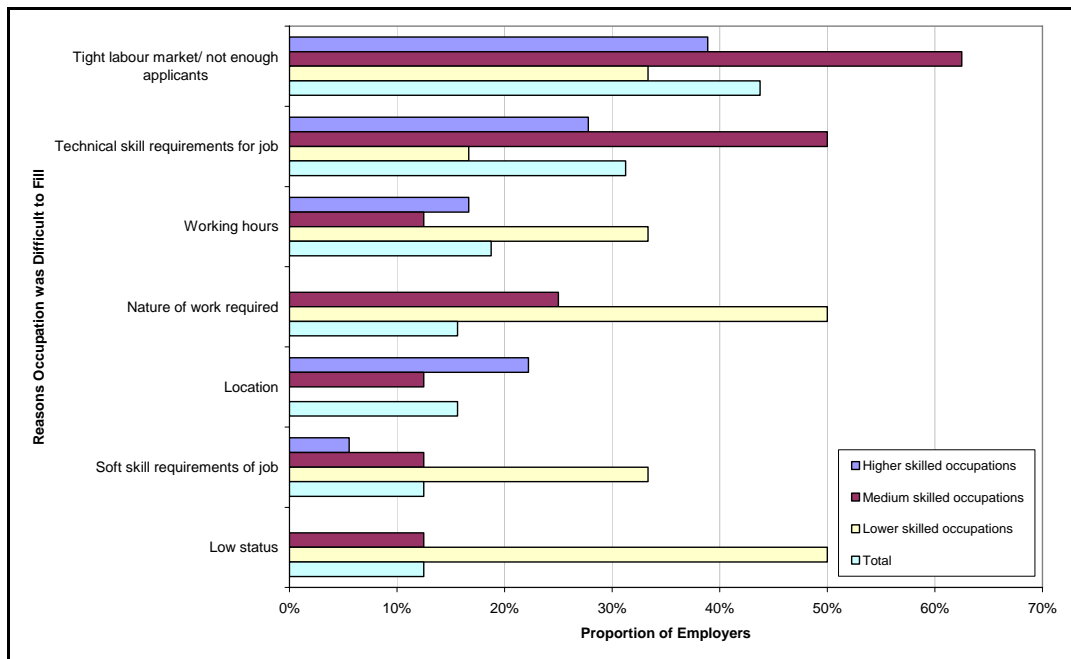
**3.3.3. Reported Recruitment Difficulty**

Overall, 38 per cent of the employers surveyed reported recruitment difficulties for their most recent vacancy. As with other indicators, recruitment difficulty varies significantly depending on the skill level of the vacancy. For instance, 51 per cent of employers with higher skilled vacancies reported difficulty compared with 30 per cent of employers with medium skilled vacancies and 26 per cent of employers with lower skilled vacancies. The level of reported recruitment difficulty was highest among employers with Associate Professional vacancies (71 per cent),

<sup>18</sup> These results were based on small samples for Lower Skilled Occupations.

which is not surprising given the high proportion of unfilled vacancies in this occupation group.

**Chart 9: Reasons for Recruitment Difficulty by Skill Level<sup>19</sup>**



As shown in Chart 9, a lack of applicants was the principal cause of recruitment difficulties in the Richmond region (44 per cent), which to some extent contradicts the average number of applicants per vacancy discussed earlier. This reason for recruitment difficulty was particularly evident among employers recruiting for medium skilled occupations. Other reasons for recruitment difficulty that were commonly reported related to the type of vacancy with 31 per cent of employers reporting difficulty due to the technical skill requirements of the position, 19 per cent due to the working hours and 16 per cent due to the nature of work. The location of the job was reported as a reason for recruitment difficulty by 16 per cent of employers.

Recruitment difficulties are fairly widespread across the region, with 46 per cent of employers who had recruited **in the last 12 months** reporting difficulty doing so. Table 4 presents an overview of the occupations most commonly reported as difficult to fill by employers in the Richmond region.

<sup>19</sup> Most recent occupation only.

**Table 4: Occupations Difficult to Fill by Skill level<sup>20</sup>**

<b>Occupation and Skill level</b>
<p><b>Higher skilled occupations</b> Motor Mechanics</p>
<p><b>Medium skilled occupations</b> Secretaries and Personal Assistants Bar Attendants Waiters Storepersons</p>
<p><b>Lower skilled occupations</b> Sales Assistants Kitchenhands</p>

### 3.4. Future Recruitment Expectations

Overall, 37 per cent of employers surveyed expected to recruit over the next 12 months. As with recruitment activity over the last 12 months, recruitment expectations varied across industries. For instance, employers in the Accommodation, Cafés and Restaurants (52 per cent) and Wholesale Trade (50 per cent) industries were most likely to recruit over the next 12 months, while those in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing industry were least likely to recruit (31 per cent of employers). The recruitment activity is most commonly due to expectations of staff turnover with 57 per cent of employers surveyed expecting to replace staff in the next 12 months.

Despite this expected turnover, a large proportion of the anticipated recruitment activity is expected to stem from employment growth with 43 per cent of employers surveyed expecting to create positions within their business over the next 12 months. These employment growth expectations are particularly high in the Property and Business Services industry (75 per cent of employers). Overall, some 38 per cent of employers expect to have difficulty in recruiting over the next 12 months.

<sup>20</sup> Vacancies for which employers had difficulty recruiting for over the past 12 months. While occupations were reported as being difficult to fill, this does not necessarily mean that vacancies were not filled.

## 4. LABOUR SUPPLY INFORMATION

The results of the Richmond Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences suggest that strong employment expectations will continue to place pressure on the available labour supply. These recruitment expectations will be compounded by the impact of an ageing population in the area with 33 per cent of the working age population aged 45–64 and therefore approaching retirement. Consequently, employers will be increasingly unlikely to be able to meet all of their labour requirements from traditional sources of labour supply and will find it more difficult to fill vacancies across all skill levels.

### 4.1. Centrelink Population

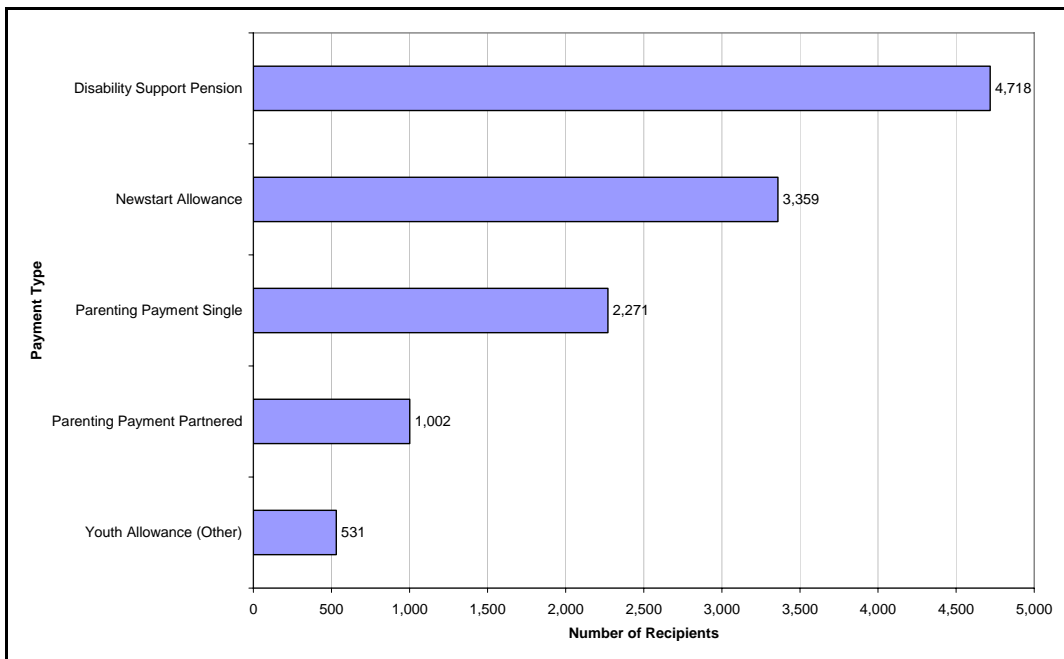
One potential source of labour is people of working age in receipt of a Centrelink payment. In total, Centrelink's working age customer population in the Richmond ESA is over 15 700. Significantly, the proportion of the working age population receiving a Centrelink allowance is higher in the Richmond region (33 per cent) than for New South Wales and Australia overall (both 18 per cent).<sup>21</sup>

Chart 10 shows the distribution of Centrelink clients across selected allowance types. Recipients of the Disability Support Pension account for 30 per cent of all Centrelink recipients, while Newstart allowance and Parenting Payment Single recipients account for a further 21 per cent and 14 per cent respectively.

The high number of Disability Support Pension and Parenting Payment Single customers indicates that there is a large potential source of labour available to local employers who are willing to provide flexible working arrangements, such as casual or part-time work.

<sup>21</sup> *Centrelink Administrative data – March 2007.*

**Chart 12: Centrelink Working Age (15-64) Customer Population – Richmond Region, March 2007**



## **APPENDIX: MAJOR OCCUPATION GROUPS**

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This appendix provides additional detail on the occupation categories used throughout this report. Definitions provided below are based on the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO). More information on ASCO and the definitions of major occupation groups can be found on the Australian Bureau of Statistics website [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au).

### *Managers and Administrators*

Managers and Administrators head government, legislative, industrial or commercial establishments, or departments within these organisations. Examples of occupations in this major group include: Generalist Managers such as Judges, Government Ministers, and Professional Builders; Specialist Managers who coordinate the administration and operation of specialised functions within an organisation such as Human Resource Managers or Sales and Marketing Managers; and Farmers and Farm Managers.

### *Professionals*

Professionals perform analytical, conceptual and creative tasks through the application of theoretical knowledge and experience in the fields of science, engineering, business and information, health, education, social welfare and the arts. Typically Professionals have a level of skill commensurate with a bachelor degree or higher qualification.

### *Associate Professionals*

Associate Professionals perform complex technical and administrative support functions which require an understanding of the underlying theories and methods of a particular field and significant practical skills. Tasks performed typically include conducting scientific tests; assisting health and welfare professionals in the provision of services; organising the operations of retail, hospitality and accommodation establishments; maintaining public order and safety; coordinating sports training and participating in sporting events; and business administration.

### *Tradespersons and Related Workers*

Tradespersons and Related Workers apply trade or industry specific technical knowledge and operate complex precision machinery or plant to complete several stages in the fabrication and maintenance of products. Typically, Tradespersons and Related Workers have a level of skill commensurate with an AQF Certificate III or higher qualification.

*Advanced Clerical and Service Workers*

Advanced Clerical and Service Workers perform a range of complex organisational, administrative, service and liaison tasks. Tasks typically include performing secretarial tasks; recording and maintaining financial information; compiling and preparing technical information; and providing liaison and communication services and sales support.

*Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service Workers*

Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service Workers perform a range of clerical, sales and service tasks requiring a limited degree of discretion and judgement. Typically they have a level of skill commensurate with an AQF Certificate II or higher qualification or at least 1 year's relevant experience.

*Intermediate Production and Transport Workers*

Intermediate Production and Transport Workers operate plant, machinery and vehicles to transport passengers and goods, to generate power and to perform various agricultural, manufacturing and construction functions.

*Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service Workers*

Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service Workers perform a range of clerical, sales and service tasks, usually under supervision, within established routines and procedures.

*Labourers and Related Workers*

Labourers and Related Workers perform routine tasks usually working under close supervision. Tasks performed typically include cleaning various types of premises and machinery; assisting tradespersons; assembling components and performing other manual manufacturing and construction tasks; and assisting in the cultivation and production of plants and animals.



