



Australian Government



National Skills Commission

Labour Force Survey

February 2022 Quarterly Release

Employment by Skill Level

Employment increased for all Skill Level Occupations (1,2,4,5), except for Skill Level 3 Occupations, over the February quarter 2022.

Skill Level 1 Occupations recorded the largest increase in employment over the quarter (up by 162,000 or 3.6%). This accounted for 90.0% of overall employment growth over the period. Skill Level 2 Occupations recorded the second largest increase, (up by 17,200 or 1.0%), followed by Skill Level 5 (16,100 or 0.8%) and Skill Level 4 (10,700 or 0.3%).

- Employment growth for Skill Level 1 Occupations in the quarter was led by Human Resource Managers (up by 31,600 or 27.1%), Accountants (22,400 or 11.4%) and Early Childhood (Pre-Primary School) Teachers (19,200 or 38.8%).

Employment in Skill Level 1 and 2 Occupations increased through the pandemic, with employment for Skill Level 1 Occupations increasing by 497,900 (or 11.8%) and Skill Level 2 Occupations increasing by 43,000 (or 2.7%) since February 2020. By comparison, employment for Skill Levels 3, 4 and 5 Occupations has fallen by 167,500 (or 2.3%) over the COVID-19 period.

The largest decreases in employment since February 2020 were recorded for Skill Level 5 Occupations (down by 112,000, or 5.5%), followed by Skill Level 3 Occupations (34,400, or 1.8%) and Skill Level 4 Occupations (21,100 or 0.7%).

Table 1: Employment growth by skill levels – Seasonally Adjusted

Skill Levels	February 2022	November 2021	Quarterly Change ('000)	Quarterly Change (%)	Change since February 2020 ('000)	Change since February 2020 (%)
Skill Level 1 Occupations	4,713.1	4551.1	162.0	3.6	497.9	11.8
Skill Level 2 Occupations	1,664.2	1646.9	17.2	1.0	43.0	2.7
Skill Level 3 Occupations	1,904.1	1908.4	-4.3	-0.2	-34.4	-1.8
Skill Level 4 Occupations	3,142.6	3131.9	10.7	0.3	-21.1	-0.7
Skill Level 5 Occupations	1,941.9	1925.8	16.1	0.8	-112.0	-5.5
ALL SKILL LEVELS	13,389.1	13,209.1	180.0	1.4	377.7	2.9

The shift towards higher skill levels through the COVID period has been an acceleration of a long-term trend, as the workforce has become more highly educated and employment has transitioned towards services-based industries. Indeed, over the 10 years to February 2020, the share of employment in Skill Level 1 Occupations increased by 2.2 percentage points (to 32.4%), compared with a fall of 1.3 percentage points for Skill Level 5 Occupations (to 15.8%). Since February 2020, the Skill Level 1 share of total employment has increased by 2.8 percentage points (to 35.3%) in February 2022, while the share of Skill Level 5 Occupations has fallen by a further 1.3 percentage points over the period (to 14.5%).

Employment by occupation

Over the **quarter** to February 2022, employment increased in five of the eight occupation groups.

- The largest **gains** in employment were recorded for Professionals (up by 149,200, or 4.4%), Clerical and Administrative Workers (up by 58,400, or 3.4%) and Labourers (up by 16,500, or 1.5%).
- The largest **falls** were for Managers (down by 13,900, or 0.8% - albeit following a 74,300 increase over the November quarter 2021), Sales Workers (down by 9,700, or 0.9%) and Machinery Operators and Drivers (down by 3,200 or 0.4%).

Since February 2020, employment increased in four of the eight occupation groups.

- The largest **gains** were recorded for Professionals (up by 342,700, or 10.8%), Managers (up by 156,600, or 9.7%) and Clerical and Administrative Workers (up by 8,800, or 1.1%).
- The largest **falls** in seasonally adjusted employment were for Labourers (down by 109,300, or 8.7%), Sales Workers (down by 28,800, or 2.6%) and Technicians and Trades Workers (down by 14,600, or 0.8%).

Table 2: Employment growth by major occupation group – Seasonally Adjusted ('000)

Occupation	February 2022	November 2021	Quarterly change	Quarterly change (%)	Change since Feb-20	Change since Feb-20 (%)
Managers	1,770.5	1,784.4	-13.9	-0.8	156.6	9.7
Professionals	3,528.7	3,379.5	149.2	4.4	342.7	10.8
Technicians and Trades Workers	1,789.9	1,774.3	15.6	0.9	-14.6	-0.8
Community and Personal Service Workers	1,413.0	1,407.5	5.5	0.4	-7.7	-0.5
Clerical and Administrative Workers	1,788.0	1,729.6	58.4	3.4	25.5	1.4
Sales Workers	1,093.2	1,102.9	-9.7	-0.9	-28.8	-2.6
Machinery Operators and Drivers	839.4	842.5	-3.2	-0.4	8.8	1.1
Labourers	1,151.3	1,134.8	16.5	1.5	-109.3	-8.7
ALL OCCUPATIONS	13,389.1	13,209.1	180.0	1.4	377.7	2.9

The strong increase in employment **over the February 2022 quarter** was not evenly distributed across detailed occupations. Indeed, while employment for all occupations increased by 180,000 (or 1.4%) in the February 2022 quarter, employment increased in just 168 of the 358 (or 46.9%) of the detailed occupations.

The largest increases in employment in the February quarter 2022 were recorded for Chefs (up by 36,500 or 43.5%), followed by Human Resource Managers (up by 31,600 or 27.1%) and General Clerks (up by 21,900 or 9.9%).

Table 3: Occupations with the largest increases in employment over the February 2022 quarter

Occupation	Skill Level	Employed Feb-22 ('000)	Quarterly employment change to February 2022		Employment change since February 2020	
			('000)	(%)	('000)	(%)
Chefs	2	120.6	36.5	43.5	6.0	5.3
Human Resource Managers	1	148.4	31.6	27.1	78.4	111.9
General Clerks	4	310.1	27.9	9.9	-16.5	-5.0
Accountants	1	219.0	22.4	11.4	43.6	24.9
Truck Drivers	4	196.2	19.9	11.3	1.2	0.6
Early Childhood (Pre-primary School) Teachers	1	68.6	19.2	38.8	18.6	37.3
Chief Executives and Managing Directors	1	61.5	18.3	42.5	27.4	80.5
Aged and Disabled Carers	4	285.0	17.5	6.5	59.4	26.3
Office Managers	2	161.7	17.3	12.0	12.7	8.5
Contract, Program and Project Administrators	2	145.2	16.4	12.7	19.5	15.5

The largest decreases in employment over the quarter were recorded for Retail Managers (down by 29,800 or 12.8%), Livestock Farmers (down by 24,300 or 25.1%) and Sales Representatives (down by 23,700 or 24.5%).

Table 4: Occupations with the largest falls in employment over the February 2022 quarter

Occupation	Skill Level	Employed Feb-22 ('000)	Quarterly employment change to February 2022		Employment change since February 2020	
			('000)	(%)	('000)	(%)
Retail Managers	2	204.0	-29.8	-12.8	-27.7	-12.0
Livestock Farmers	1	72.5	-24.3	-25.1	-25.4	-26.0
Sales Representatives	4	73.0	-23.7	-24.5	-10.8	-12.9
Checkout Operators and Office Cashiers	5	124.7	-20.7	-14.3	-46.3	-27.1
Metal Fitters and Machinists	3	95.6	-18.1	-15.9	-14.0	-12.8
Production Managers	1	53.9	-16.9	-23.8	-8.6	-13.8
Welfare Support Workers	2	63.6	-11.7	-15.5	-3.5	-5.2
Drillers, Miners and Shot Firers	4	50.7	-11.1	-18.0	-12.7	-20.0
Music Professionals	1	12.6	-10.9	-46.6	1.1	9.7
Manufacturers	1	23.8	-10.3	-30.1	1.0	4.5

Comparison to pre-COVID levels

Whilst total employment has increased by 377,700 (or 2.9%) for all occupations over the two years to February 2022, just 174 (or 48.6%) of the 358 detailed occupation groups have recorded an increase in employment over the period. Employment has remained steady in a further five occupations and has decreased in 179 occupations¹.

Six of the ten occupations with the largest **increases** in employment since February 2020 were in Skill Level 1. These include Human Resource Managers (up by 78,400 or 111.9%), General Managers (56,500 or 119.1%), Accountants (43,600 or 24.9%), Database and Systems Administrators, and ICT Security Specialists (30,300 or 75.3%) and Chief Executives and Managing Directors (27,400 or 80.5%).

The four occupations which were in other Skill Levels included Aged and Disabled Carers (up by 59,400, Skill Level 4), Other Hospitality, Retail and Service Managers (45,200, Skill Level 2), Storepersons (37,200, Skill Level 4) and Sales Assistants (General) (28,400, Skill Level 5).

The largest **decrease** in employment since February 2020 was recorded for Checkout Operators and Office Cashiers (down by 46,300 or 27.1%), followed by Retail Managers (down by 27,700 or 12.0%), Café and Restaurant Managers (26,200 or 32.2%), Livestock Farmers (25,400 or 26.2%), Bank Workers (23,800 or 42.4%) and Commercial Cleaners (20,000 or 11.4%) (see Table 5 below for more information).

Concentration of employment growth in specific occupations

That less than half of detailed occupations have recorded employment growth over the last two years despite an increase of 377,700 (or 2.9%) in overall employment can be, in part, explained by the contribution that the top 20 largest growing occupations have made to employment growth over the period.

For instance, over the two years to February 2022, the largest 20 growing occupations have recorded an increase in employment of 620,900, while the remaining 338 occupations have recorded a decline in employment of 303,800².

Chart 1 below illustrates just how extreme the current contribution of the top 20 largest growing occupations over the last two years has been to two year employment growth. Indeed, the 620,900 increase in employment of the top 20 growing occupations over the two years to February 2022 was a record high³, at a time when the aggregate two year employment growth, of 377,700, was only a little above the average two year employment growth for all occupations (of 343,700).

¹ Occupational groups include 4-digit Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) occupations, excluding occupations that are not further defined (nfd).

² Please note that the aggregate of employment growth in the 20 largest growing occupations (up by 620,900) and remaining occupations (down by 303,800) does not equal employment growth for all occupations (up by 377,800) as occupations that are not further defined (nfd) have been excluded from the occupation analysis but are included in the total for all occupations.

³ Earliest available occupation employment data are the two years to the August quarter 1986

Notably, the recent trend towards a greater concentration of employment growth in the largest growing occupations appears to pre-date the onset of COVID-19. For example, over the two years to the November quarter 2019, employment increased by 539,400 for all occupations, with the top 20 largest growing occupations over the two years recording an increase in employment of 559,700.

Chart 1: Two-year employment growth ('000) and two-year employment growth ('000) for largest 20 growing occupations, August quarter 1988 – February quarter 2022

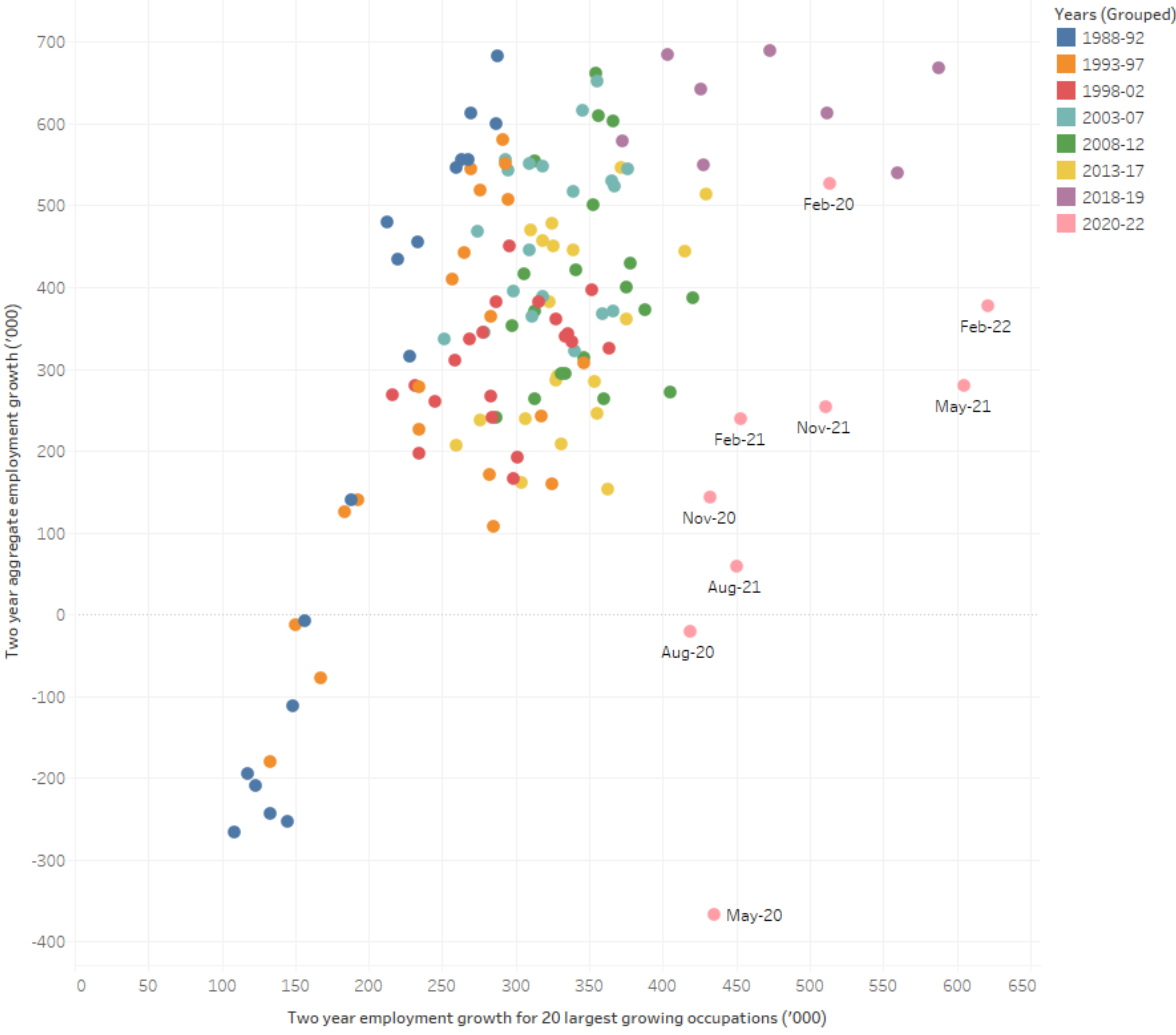


Table 5 below outlines the 20 largest growing and 20 largest declining occupations over the two years to February 2022. Not surprisingly, given the shift towards higher skill levels that has accelerated over the COVID-19 period, the 20 largest growing occupations is dominated by Skill Level 1 (13 of the 20 Occupations), whereas Skill Levels 4 and 5 account for 13 of the 20 largest declining occupations.

Table 5: 20 occupations that recorded the largest increases and decreases in employment, two years to February 2022

Occupation	Skill Level	Employment change since Feb-20 ('000)	Occupation	Skill Level	Employment change since Feb-20 ('000)
Human Resource Managers	1	78.4	Checkout Operators and Office Cashiers	5	-46.3
Aged and Disabled Carers	4	59.4	Retail Managers	2	-27.7
General Managers	1	56.5	Cafe and Restaurant Managers	2	-26.2
Other Hospitality, Retail and Service Managers	2	45.2	Livestock Farmers	1	-25.4
Accountants	1	43.6	Bank Workers	3	-23.8
Storepersons	4	37.2	Commercial Cleaners	5	-20.0
Database and Systems Administrators, and ICT Security Specialists	1	30.3	Waiters	4	-19.3
Sales Assistants (General)	5	28.4	Other Miscellaneous Labourers	5	-18.8
Chief Executives and Managing Directors	1	27.4	Earthmoving Plant Operators	4	-18.1
Graphic and Web Designers, and Illustrators	1	25.1	Accounting Clerks	4	-17.0
Finance Managers	1	23.6	General Clerks	4	-16.5
Receptionists	4	21.8	Information Officers	4	-15.7
Software and Applications Programmers	1	20.9	Education Aides	4	-15.4
Contract, Program and Project Administrators	2	19.5	Tourism and Travel Advisers	3	-15.1
Primary School Teachers	1	19.2	Garden and Nursery Labourers	5	-14.8
Early Childhood (Pre-primary School) Teachers	1	18.6	Food and Drink Factory Workers	5	-14.1
Other Information and Organisation Professionals	1	17.1	Metal Fitters and Machinists	3	-14.0
Carpenters and Joiners	3	16.7	Packers	5	-13.7
Solicitors	1	16.3	Building and Plumbing Labourers	5	-13.4
Financial Dealers	1	15.6	University Lecturers and Tutors	1	-13.3

Employment by industry⁴

ABS Labour Force Survey data released on 24 March 2022 show that employment increased in 11 industries and declined in 8 since February 2020, representing the change in employment from before the declaration of COVID-19 as a global pandemic. Health Care and Social Assistance, Professional, Scientific and Technical Services, Financial and Insurance Services and Public Administration and Safety made the largest contributions to employment growth. The largest falls in employment were recorded in Wholesale Trade, Manufacturing, Accommodation and Food Services and Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing.

⁴ All data are in seasonally adjusted terms unless otherwise stated. Data source is *ABS, Labour Force, Australia, Detailed*

Chart 1: Employment growth by industry ('000) –to February 2022

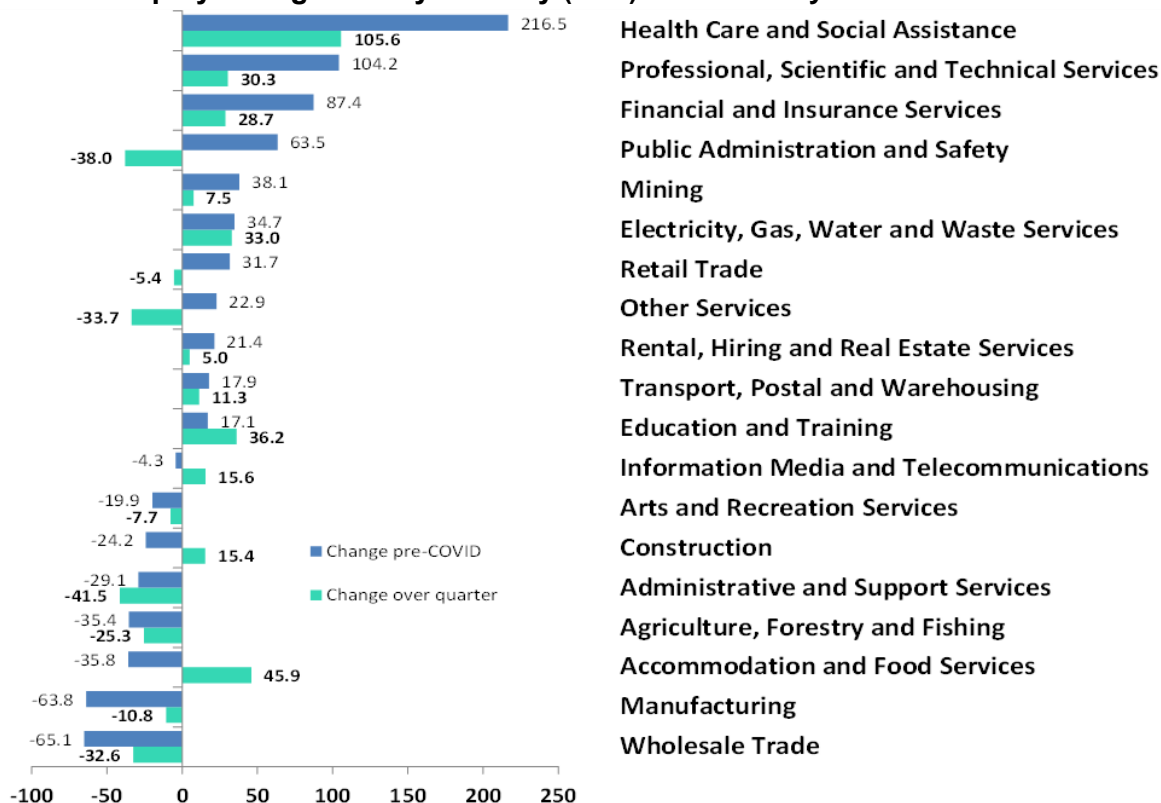


Table 6: Employment growth by Industry – Seasonally Adjusted

Industry	Feb-22	Quarterly change	Quarterly change (%)	Pre-COVID change	Pre-COVID change (%)
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	291.0	-25.3	-8.0	-35.4	-10.8
Mining	279.2	7.5	2.8	38.1	15.8
Manufacturing	854.7	-10.8	-1.2	-63.8	-6.9
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	167.2	33.0	24.5	34.7	26.2
Construction	1161.0	15.4	1.3	-24.2	-2.0
Wholesale Trade	326.9	-32.6	-9.1	-65.1	-16.6
Retail Trade	1277.9	-5.4	-0.4	31.7	2.5
Accommodation and Food Services	896.8	45.9	5.4	-35.8	-3.8
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	667.4	11.3	1.7	17.9	2.8
Information Media and Telecommunications	208.4	15.6	8.1	-4.3	-2.0
Financial and Insurance Services	557.8	28.7	5.4	87.4	18.6
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	240.9	5.0	2.1	21.4	9.8
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	1258.7	30.3	2.5	104.2	9.0
Administrative and Support Services	407.5	-41.5	-9.2	-29.1	-6.7
Public Administration and Safety	884.5	-38.0	-4.1	63.5	7.7
Education and Training	1153.2	36.2	3.2	17.1	1.5
Health Care and Social Assistance	2008.4	105.6	5.5	216.5	12.1
Arts and Recreation Services	226.9	-7.7	-3.3	-19.9	-8.1
Other Services	510.8	-33.7	-6.2	22.9	4.7
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT	13,389.1	180.0	1.4	377.7	2.9

Similar to the detailed occupational level results discussed above, employment growth at the 3 digit sector level has not been evenly dispersed, with just 108 (or 50.5%) of sectors having

recorded an increase in employment since February 2020, while just 110 (or 51.4%) recorded an increase in employment in the February 2022 quarter.

Over the quarter to February 2022:

The largest gains were in Cafes, Restaurants and Takeaway Food Services (up by 31,400 or 5.2%), followed by Hospitals (up by 28,000 or 5.3%) and Residential Care Services (up by 26,500 or 11.0%).

The largest falls were in Sheep, Beef Cattle and Grain Farming (down by 19,800 or 14.0%), followed by Civic, Professional and Other Interest Group Services (16,500 or 28.8%) and Employment Services (down by 16,300 or 16.2%).

Since February 2020, representing the change in employment from pre-COVID levels:

The largest gains in employment were in Other Social Assistance Services (up by 85,300 or 24.8%), followed by Hospitals (up by 53,400 or 10.7%) and Computer System Design and Related Services (up by 44,300 or 16.3%).

The largest falls were in Cafes, Restaurants and Takeaway Food Services (down by 50,100 or 7.3%), followed by Pharmaceutical and Other Store-Based Retailing (down by 42,400 or 19.8%) and Sheep, Beef Cattle and Grain Farming (down by 38,300 or 23.9%)