Victorian Employer Skills Survey 2021 Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing

The Victorian Skills Authority (VSA) asked businesses about their skills, recruitment and training needs for the Victorian Employer Skills Survey 2021.

Findings from the survey will help the Victorian government identify areas of skills demand, drive innovation across the VET sector and better plan for Victoria’s future training needs.

The VSA conducted the survey between August and December 2021. It approached 70,000 businesses and achieved a response rate of 20.5%, with coverage across all industries, business sizes and regions in the state.

*The statistics below reflect the experience of employers across the five key survey domains:*

#### Business climate | Skills | Recruitment | Training | Apprentices, trainees and work placements

## Business climate

#### **Despite the global pandemic, many employers adapted to maintain or grow their workforce. Employers had a mostly positive outlook for the year ahead**

#### Workforce

Fewer employers reported growing their workforce over the past 12 months (compared to the Victorian average)

**Grew**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 17%

Vic Avg 19%

**Contracted**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 12%

Vic Avg 19%

**Remained the same**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 70%

Vic Avg 61%

**Don’t know**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 1%

#### Outlook

Employers in the industry were more cautious about their business outlook. More were expecting their workforce to contract or remain the same size.

**Predict growth**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 20%

Vic Avg 33%

**Remain about the same**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 72%

Vic Avg 56%

**Predict contraction**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 5%

Vic Avg 5%

#### Impacts of COVID-19

COVID-19 skills-related challenges experienced by employers in the industry were lower than the Victorian average.

**Skills-related challenges**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 40%

Vic Avg 57%

**Adopted new ways of working related to COVID-19**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 27%

Vic Avg 45%

**Staff retention challenges**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 19%

Vic Avg 26%

## Skills

#### **Finding candidates with the right skills presented the most common skill challenge in the past year. More employers are expecting skills shortages in 2022 than in 2021**

#### Skills shortages

Almost one-quarter of employers in the industry expect to face skills shortages in 2022. This was higher than the state average.

**Last 12 months**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 18%

Vic Avg 16%

**Next 12 months**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 24%

Vic Avg 21%

#### Skills challenges

The top skills challenges reported by employers were the same across all industries. They were:   
  
**Finding candidates with the right skills**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 47%

Vic Avg 47%

**Adapting to the new ways of working due to COVID-19**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 27%

Vic Avg 45%

**Finding job-ready candidates**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 40%

Vic Avg 37%

#### Skills needs

More employers in the industry reported needing workers with the right mindset and with job-specific skills compared to the state average.

**Technical/job-specific skills**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 83%

Vic Avg 73%

**The right attitude/mindset**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 55%

Vic Avg 50%

**Job-ready skill**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 38%

Vic Avg 47%

## Recruitment

Most employers in the industry had undertaken some recruitment activity over the past year and the majority reported experiencing challenges.

Recruitment need

Fewer employers in the industry undertook some form of recruitment over the past 12 months, compared to the state average.

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 55%

Vic Avg 62%

Recruitment challenges

Four in five employers reported having difficulties recruiting for particular roles. This was higher than the state average

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 80%

Vic Avg 76%

Type of challenge

The most common challenges faced by employers were related to the number, experience and job-specific skills of candidates.

**Few applicants**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 69%

Vic Avg 63%

**Candidates lacked relevant experience**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 48%

Vic Avg 50%

**Candidates lacked relevant technical/job-specific skills**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 45%

Vic Avg 47%

## Training

Close to half of employers in the industry engaged in some form of staff training.

**Engagement in training**

More employers in the industry used external training, fewer used internal training and 37% used both (same as state average).

**Internal training**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 12%

Vic Avg 17%

**External training**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 51%

Vic Avg 45%

**Satisfaction with training**

Levels of satisfaction with training were high, with scores similar to the state average.

**Helped staff do their job better**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 81%

Vic Avg 81%

**Trainers had good industry knowledge**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 79%

Vic Avg 80%

**Training was high quality**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 75%

Vic Avg 76%

**Training was reasonably priced**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 71%

Vic Avg 71%

**Skillsets**

Just over three in five employers said they would consider a skillset (microcredential or part qualification) rather than a full qualification to upskill their staff.

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 62%

Vic Avg 61%

## Apprentices, trainees and work placements

Employers continue to make use of apprentices, trainees and work placements to assist them in filling the skills pipeline.

**Apprentices and trainees**

Uptake of apprentices in the industry over the past 12 months was lower than the state average  
 **Apprenticeship**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 21%

Vic Avg 24%

**Traineeship**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 19%

Vic Avg 18%

**Challenges**

Employers cited lack of suitable applicants as their most common barrier. More employers in the industry reported they did not need more apprentices or trainees.

**Lack of suitable applicants/people**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 28%

Vic Avg 20%

**There are no barriers/challenges**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 18%

Vic Avg 17%

**Don’t need more apprentice(s)/trainee(s)**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 19%

Vic Avg 13%

**Work placement students**

Fewer employers in the industry took on work placement students (15% compared to 21% for Victoria). The most common type of work placement students were:

**University student**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 31%

Vic Avg 49%

**Secondary school student as part of work experience**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 53%

Vic Avg 41%

**Secondary school student as part of a VET qualification**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 29%

Vic Avg 22%

**A VET student**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 21%

Vic Avg 19%

**View the complete report here or visit** [Victorian employer skills survey | Victorian Government (www.vic.gov.au)](https://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-employer-skills-survey)