Victorian Employer Skills Survey 2021 Barwon South West Region

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 Barwon South West employers adapted to maintain or grow their workforce. Employers had a mostly positive outlook for the year ahead.**

#### Workforce

Four in five employers reported that their workforce remained the same size or grew in 2021.

**Grew**

Barwon South West Region 22%

Vic Avg 19%

**Contracted**

Barwon South West Region 18%

Vic Avg 19%

**Remained the same**

Barwon South West Region 60%

Vic Avg 61%

#### Outlook

Employers in the Barwon South West region are optimistic about their future growth. More expected their workforce to remain the same size compared to the state average.

**Predict growth**

Barwon South West Region 31%

Vic Avg 33%

**Remain about the same**

Barwon South West Region 61%

Vic Avg 56%

**Predict contraction**

Barwon South West Region 4%

Vic Avg 5%

#### Impacts of COVID-19

COVID-19 skills-related challenges experienced by employers in Barwon South West were similar to the state average.

**Skills-related challenges**

Barwon South West Region 57%

Vic Avg 57%

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

Barwon South West Region 41%

Vic Avg 45%

**Staff retention challenges**

Barwon South West Region 28%

Vic Avg 26%

## Skills

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

#### Skills shortages

One in five of employers in the Barwon South West region expect to face skills shortages in 2022. This was less than the state average.

**Last 12 months**

Barwon South West Region 16%

Vic Avg 16%

**Next 12 months**

Barwon South West Region 20%

Vic Avg 21%

#### Skills challenges

The top skills challenges reported by employers were the same across all regions. They were:

**Finding candidates with the right skills**

Barwon South West Region 50%

Vic Avg 47%

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

Barwon South West Region 41%

Vic Avg 45%

**Finding job-ready candidates**

Barwon South West Region 41%

Vic Avg 37%

#### Skills needs

More employers in the region reported needing job-specific skills or workers with the right attitude or mindset compared to the state average..

**Technical/job-specific skills**

Barwon South West Region 76%

Vic Avg 73%

**The right attitude/mindset**

Barwon South West Region 56%

Vic Avg 50%

**Job-ready skills**

Barwon South West Region 46%

Vic Avg 47%

## Recruitment

Most Barwon South West employers had undertaken some recruitment activity over the past year and the majority reported experiencing challenges.

Recruitment need

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

Barwon South West Region 69%

Vic Avg 62%

Recruitment challenges

The majority of employers in the region reported having difficulties recruiting for particular roles. This was similar to the state average.

Barwon South West Region 77%

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**

Barwon South West Region 68%

Vic Avg 63%

**Candidates lacked relevant experience**

Barwon South West Region 44%

Vic Avg 50%

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

Barwon South West Region 39%

Vic Avg 47%

## Training

More than half of Barwon South West employers engaged in some form of training.

**Engagement in training**

More employers in the region used both internal and external training (44% compared to 37% state average). Fewer used internal training only.  
 **Internal training**

Barwon South West Region 11%

Vic Avg 17%

**External training**

Barwon South West Region 46%

Vic Avg 45%

**Satisfaction with training**

Levels of satisfaction with training was higher than the state average.

**Helped staff do their job better**

Barwon South West Region 85%

Vic Avg 81%

**Trainers had good industry knowledge**

Barwon South West Region 78%

Vic Avg 80%

**Training was high quality**

Barwon South West Region 77%

Vic Avg 76%

**Training was reasonably priced**

Barwon South West Region 74%

Vic Avg 71%

**Skillsets**

Three in five employers said they would consider a skillset (micro credential or part qualification) rather than a full qualification to upskill their staff.

Barwon South West Region 61%

Vic Avg 61%

## Apprentices, trainees and work placements

Barwon South West employers continue to make use of apprentices, trainees, and work placements to assist them in filling the skills pipeline.

**Apprentices trainees**

Uptake of apprentices and trainees over the past 12 months was higher than the state average.

**Apprenticeship**

Barwon South West Region 27%

Vic Avg 24%

**Traineeship**

Barwon South West Region 28%

Vic Avg 18%

**Challenges**

Higher proportions of employers in the Barwon South West region cited lack of suitable applicants as a barrier.

**Lack of suitable applicants/people**

Barwon South West Region 27%

Vic Avg 20%

**There are no barriers/challenges**

Barwon South West Region 19%

Vic Avg 17%

**Cost of taking on apprentice(s)/trainee(s)**

Barwon South West Region 14%

Vic Avg 14%

**Work placement students**

Over one quarter (26%) of employers had taken on a work placement student. The most common type of work placement students were:

**University student**

Barwon South West Region 44%

Vic Avg 49%

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

Barwon South West Region 45%

Vic Avg 41%

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

Barwon South West Region 37%

Vic Avg 22%

**A VET student**

Barwon South West Region 18%

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)