Victorian Employer Skills Survey 2021 Barwon 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 employers adapted to maintain or grow their workforce. Employers had a mostly positive outlook for the year ahead.** Workforce

More employers reported growing their workforce over the past 12 months (compared to the state average).   
  
**Grew**

Barwon Region 21%

Vic Avg 19%

**Contracted**

Barwon Region 19%

Vic Avg 19%

**Remained the same**

Barwon Region 60%

Vic Avg 61%

#### Outlook

Barwon employers reported the most optimistic business outlook across Victoria, with over one third expecting to grow in the next 12 months

**Predict growth**

Barwon Region 35%

Vic Avg 33%

**Remain about the same**

Barwon Region 57%

Vic Avg 56%

**Predict contraction**

Barwon Region 4%

Vic Avg 5%

#### Impacts of COVID-19

COVID-19 skills-related challenges experienced by employers in Barwon was the highest reported across all regions.

**Skills-related challenges**

Barwon Region 61%

Vic Avg 57%

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

Barwon Region 46%

Vic Avg 45%

**Staff retention challenges**

Barwon Region 28%

Vic Avg 26%

## Skills

COVID-19 presented the most common skills challenge in the past year. More employers are expecting skill shortages in 2022 than in 2021.

#### Skills shortages

Almost one in five of employers in Barwon expect to face skills shortages in 2022. This was less than the state average.

**Last 12 months**

Barwon Region 15%

Vic Avg 16%

**Next 12 months**

Barwon Region 19%

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 Region 49%

Vic Avg 47%

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

Barwon Region 46%

Vic Avg 45%

**Finding job-ready candidates**

Barwon Region 41%

Vic Avg 37%

#### Skills needs

More employers in the region reported needing workers with the right attitude and fewer needed job-ready skills compared to the state average.

**Technical/job-specific skills**

Barwon Region 73%

Vic Avg 73%

**The right attitude/mindset**

Barwon Region 55%

Vic Avg 50%

**Job-ready skills**

Barwon Region 42%

Vic Avg 47%

## Recruitment

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

Recruitment need

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

Barwon Region 68%

Vic Avg 62%

Recruitment challenges

Three in four employers reported having difficulties recruiting for particular roles. This was similar to the state average.

Barwon 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 Region 66%

Vic Avg 63%

**Candidates lacked relevant experience**

Barwon Region 45%

Vic Avg 50%

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

Barwon Region 40%

Vic Avg 47%

## Training

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

**Engagement in training**

More employers in the region used both internal and external training (46% compared to 37% state average). Fewer used internal training only.  
 **Internal training**

Barwon Region 11%

Vic Avg 17%

**External training**

Barwon Region 43%

Vic Avg 45%

**Satisfaction with training**

Levels of satisfaction with training were higher than the state average for helping staff do their job better and price.

**Helped staff do their job better**

Barwon Region 86%

Vic Avg 81%

**Trainers had good industry knowledge**

Barwon Region 77%

Vic Avg 80%

**Training was high quality**

Barwon Region 77%

Vic Avg 76%

**Training was reasonably priced**

Barwon Region 75%

Vic Avg 71%

**Skillsets**

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

Barwon Region 60%

Vic Avg 61%

## Apprentices, trainees and work placements

Barwon 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 and trainees over the past 12 months was higher than the state average.

**Apprenticeship**

Barwon Region 26%

Vic Avg 24%

**Traineeship**

Barwon Region 24%

Vic Avg 18%

**Challenges**

Employers cited lack of suitable applicants, cost and need for apprentices and trainees as the most common barriers.

**Lack of suitable applicants/people**

Barwon Region 25%

Vic Avg 20%

**There are no barriers/challenges**

Barwon Region 18%

Vic Avg 17%

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

Barwon Region 16%

Vic Avg 14%

**Work placement students**

More employers in the region took on work placement students (26% compared to the state average 21%). The most common type of work placement students were:

**University student**

Barwon Region 42%

Vic Avg 49%

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

Barwon Region 43%

Vic Avg 41%

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

Barwon Region 41%

Vic Avg 22%

**A VET student**

Barwon Region 19%

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)