Victorian Employer Skills Survey 2021 Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services

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

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

**Grew**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 22%

Vic Avg 19%

**Contracted**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 12%

Vic Avg 19%

**Remained the same**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 66%

Vic Avg 61%

#### Outlook

Employers in the industry were confident about their business outlook. More were expecting their workforce to grow or remain the same size.

**Predict growth**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 32%

Vic Avg 33%

**Remain about the same**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 61%

Vic Avg 56%

**Predict contraction**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 2%

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**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 44%

Vic Avg 57%

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

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 32%

Vic Avg 45%

**Staff retention challenges**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 16%

Vic Avg 26%

## Skills

#### **Finding job-ready candidates presented the most common skill challenge in the past year. More employers are expecting skill shortages in 2022 than in 2021.**

#### Skills shortages

Three in ten employers in the industry expect to face skills shortages in 2022. This was higher than the state average.

**Last 12 months**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 28%

Vic Avg 16%

**Next 12 months**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 30%

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**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 47%

Vic Avg 47%

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

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 32%

Vic Avg 45%

**Finding job-ready candidates**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 50%

Vic Avg 37%

#### Skills needs

Fewer employers in the industry reported needing workers with the right attitude or mindset compared to the state average.
 **Technical/job-specific skills**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 72%

Vic Avg 73%

**The right attitude/mindset**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 37%

Vic Avg 50%

**Job-ready skills**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 25%

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

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

Administration and Support Service 69%

Vic Avg 62%

Recruitment challenges

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

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 82%

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**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 48%

Vic Avg 63%

**Candidates lacked relevant experience**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 53%

Vic Avg 50%

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

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 35%

Vic Avg 47%

## Training

More than half of employers in the industry engaged in some form of staff training

**Engagement in training**

More employers in the industry used external training or both internal and external training (41% compared to 37% state average). Fewer used internal training only.

**Internal training**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 7%

Vic Avg 17%

**External training**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 52%

Vic Avg 45%

**Satisfaction with training**

Satisfaction levels were higher than the state average for improved staff performance and quality, but lower for price.

**Helped staff do their job better**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 85%

Vic Avg 81%

**Trainers had good industry knowledge**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 77%

Vic Avg 80%

**Training was high quality**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 79%

Vic Avg 76%

**Training was reasonably priced**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 58%

Vic Avg 71%

 **Skillsets**

Half of employers said they would consider a skillset (microcredential or part qualification) rather than a full qualification to upskill their staff, the least of any industry.

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 50%

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 similar to the state average. **Apprenticeship**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 24%

Vic Avg 24%

**Traineeship**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 18%

Vic Avg 18%

**Challenges**

More employers in the industry reported that there were no barriers to uptake and fewer reported lack of suitable applicants as a barrier (compared to the state average).

**Lack of suitable applicants/people**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 18%

Vic Avg 20%

**There are no barriers/challenges**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 25%

Vic Avg 17%

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

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 17%

Vic Avg 13%

**Work placement students**

Fewer employers in the industry took on work placement students (17% compared to 21% for Victoria). The most common type of work placement students were:

**University student**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 27%

Vic Avg 49%

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

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 74%

Vic Avg 41%

**A VET student**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services 7%

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)