

COVID: 12 months on

An A-Z of the last

year



The last 12 months have been a rollercoaster, not least for the employment market.

Taking a look at February 1, 2020 to January 31, 2021, SEEK has compiled an A to Z of key trends and outcomes – from application volumes through to ever-present Zoom meetings and interviews. Click on a letter to see more details.

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A is for Application Volumes

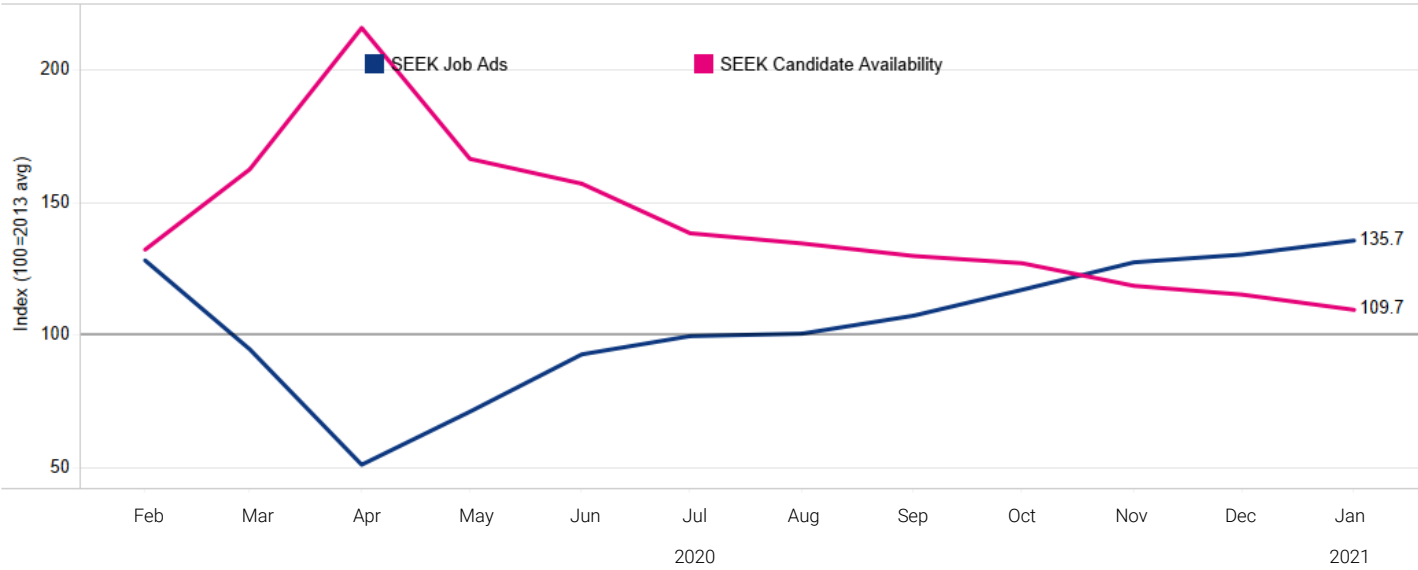
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Towards the end of the year and into 2021, certain states and industries found it harder to fill vacancies. As we saw an increase in job ads this reduced the availability of candidates, as more ads offer more choice for job seekers. Industries with customer-facing roles saw a drop in application volume, in some cases by up to 30% y/y.

Job seekers are being more selective when choosing which roles to apply for. While the number of job seekers viewing ads is equal to the same time in the previous year, the number who go on to apply is 10% lower year-on-year (as at December 2020).

This behaviour is in contrast with what we saw at the start of the pandemic, where applications per ad were typically higher than usual. So, it's increasingly becoming more of a job seekers' market, particularly in Western Australia and Queensland, and in industries like Trades & Services, Manufacturing, Transport & Logistics, Hospitality & Tourism and Retail.

New SEEK job ads compared to SEEK candidate availability (average applications per ad)



Source: SEEK



B

B is for Borders

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Border closures had an impact on candidate application numbers. In particular, Queensland and Western Australia rely heavily on interstate and overseas workers for casual roles in Hospitality & Tourism and Farming, Animals & Conservation. The border closures have meant that QLD and WA struggled to fill these types of positions.

Looking more broadly at QLD and WA, where we saw a decline in applicant engagement during August and September, applications stabilised towards the end of the year as job ad numbers returned. In December, applications per ad were still 31% lower y/y in WA and 24% lower in QLD.





C is for Consumer Services

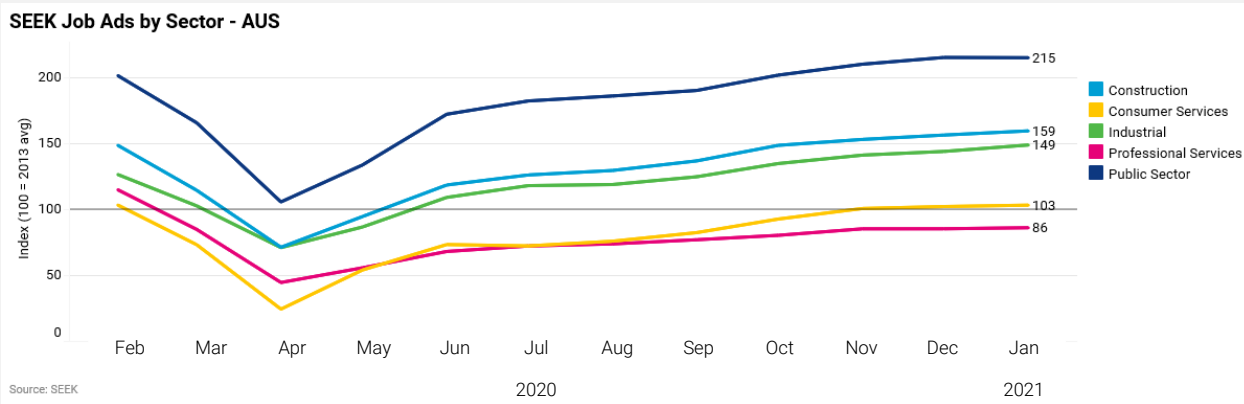
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CONSUMER SERVICES

Consumer Services roles are the front line of customer contact, and unsurprisingly this sector was hit the hardest as the pandemic evolved. However, its recovery also went hand-in-hand with the lifting of restrictions. During the four weeks of April 2020, Consumer Services were at just 17% of pre-COVID levels but have since recovered well.

Consumer Services roles are 7.4% higher from November 2020 to January 2021 than in the same period 12 months prior.

Job ad trends by sector - Feb 2020 to Jan 2021

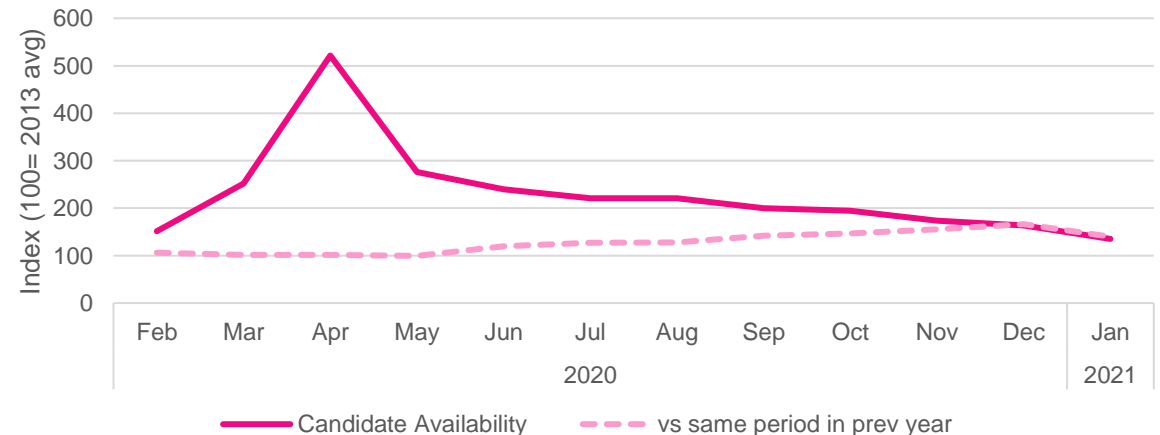


Source: SEEK

A sub-sector of Consumer Services that attracted massive demand at the onset of the pandemic was roles within Call Centre & Customer Service. SEEK candidate availability data shows that during March to May 2020, applications for these roles increased by more than six times (based on the same period in 2019).

Candidate availability for Call Centre Customer Service roles at their peak in April 2020

SEEK Candidate Availability - Call Centre & Customer Service





D is for Demand for roles

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The Top 10 table below shows the roles with the highest growth in job ads in the period September–November 2020 compared with June–August 2020.

Rank	Role Title	Job ad growth
1	Customer Service Assistant Retail & Consumer Products	637%
2	Team Member Retail & Consumer Products	522%
3	Room Attendant Hospitality & Tourism	298%
4	Commis Chef Hospitality & Tourism	223%
5	Sales Merchandiser Retail & Consumer Products	209%
6	Housekeeping Attendant Hospitality & Tourism	206%
7	Sales Role Call Centre & Customer Service	206%
8	Front of House Role Hospitality & Tourism	180%
9	Solutions Designer Information & Communication Technology	180%
10	Air Conditioning Role Trades & Services	176%

Source: SEEK





E is for Everywhere else (ACT, Northern Territory and Tasmania)



Much of the focus has been on Victoria and New South Wales during the pandemic, but here is a look at three other states and territories.

In the below table are the top five industries for each state ranked by job ad volume. The figure in brackets is the percentage change to the same period 12 months prior.

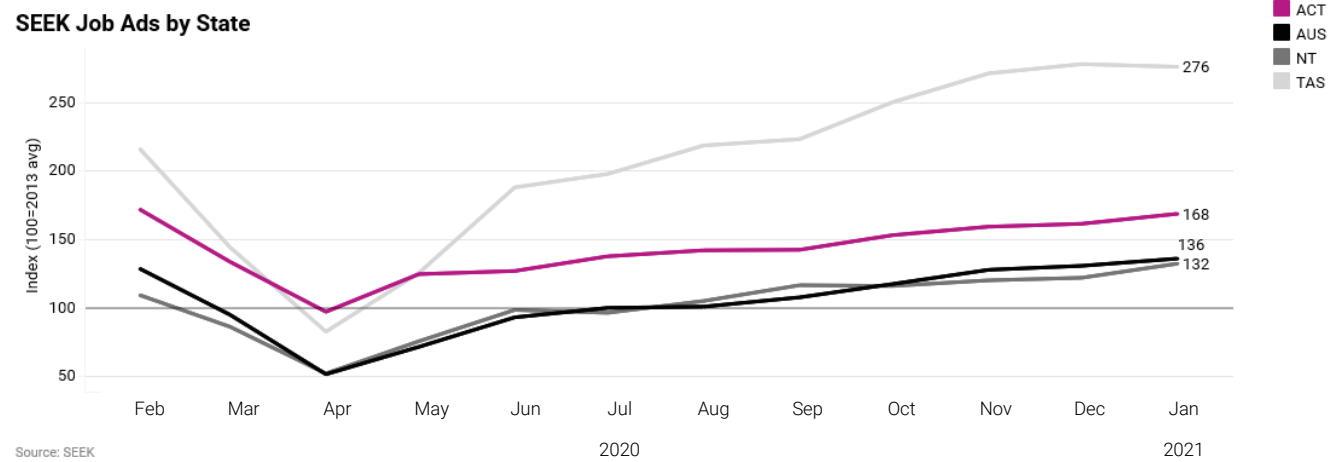
The top five industries by number of jobs for each state with percentage change from Nov 2020–Jan 2021 vs Nov 2019–Jan 2020

ACT	Northern Territory	Tasmania
Information & Communication Technology (-12%)	Trades & Services (56%)	Healthcare & Medical (19%)
Government & Defence (20%)	Healthcare & Medical (-3%)	Trades & Services (63%)
Healthcare & Medical (-3%)	Community Services & Development (45%)	Community Services & Development (49%)
Trades & Services (2%)	Mining, Resources & Energy (14%)	Hospitality & Tourism (56%)
Hospitality & Tourism (-1%)	Hospitality & Tourism (41%)	Manufacturing, Transport & Logistics (51%)

Sectors for each state comparing Nov 2020–Jan 2021 vs Nov 2019–Jan 2020

	Construction	Consumer Services	Industrial	Professional Services	Public Sector	TOTAL
ACT	-4%	-14%	1%	-13%	3%	-6%
Northern Territory	38%	17%	38%	0%	14%	20%
Tasmania	52%	39%	60%	11%	28%	37%

Job ad volumes for each state for Feb 2020–Jan 2021 compared to the whole of Australia



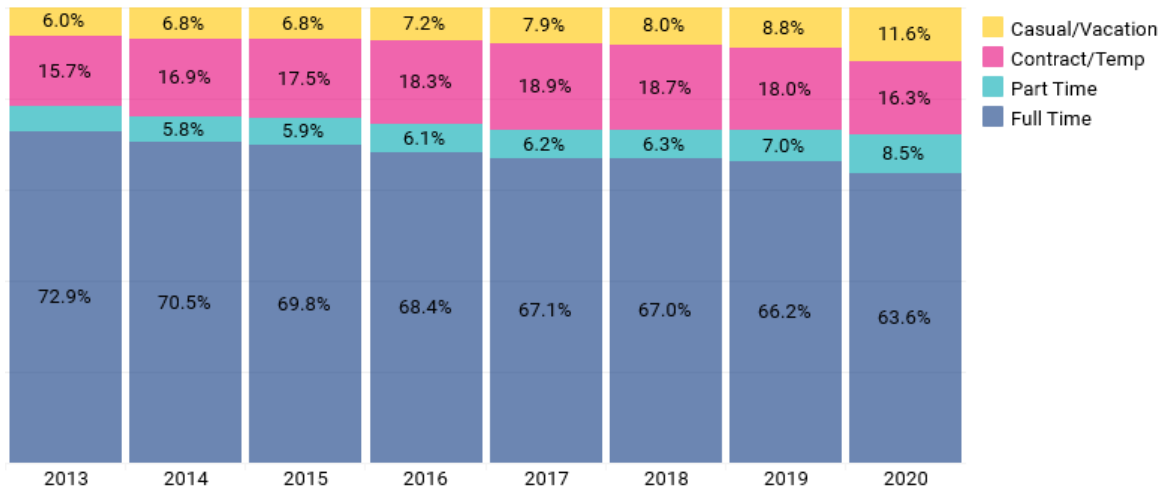
Source: SEEK





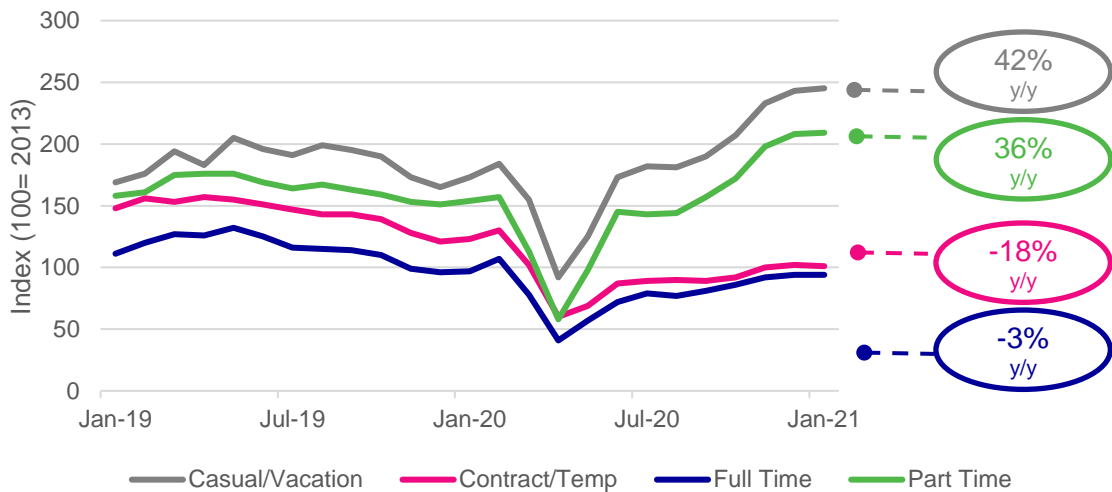
F is for Full-time, part-time and casual roles

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Unsurprisingly, the mix of work type among advertised roles changed slightly in the last year with casual work making up a higher percentage of roles. Looking even further back, from 2013 to 2019 the portion of casual positions advertised on SEEK has grown from 6.0% to 8.8%. This number increased to 11.6% in 2020. In addition, part-time roles rose from 7% in 2019 to 8.5% in 2020.

Leading up to last Christmas, there was an abnormally high demand for casual (36.1% y/y) and part-time (29.4% y/y) roles. This was due to a delayed pre-Christmas ramp up and a change in the mix of role types being sought generally.



The table on the left shows how the different work types have changed since April 2020. There has been a split as more casual, and part-time roles have been advertised. As of January 2021, casual (42% y/y) and part-time (36%y/y) roles increased y/y. Full-time positions still make up the majority of job ads but are down 3% y/y.



G is for GFC comparison

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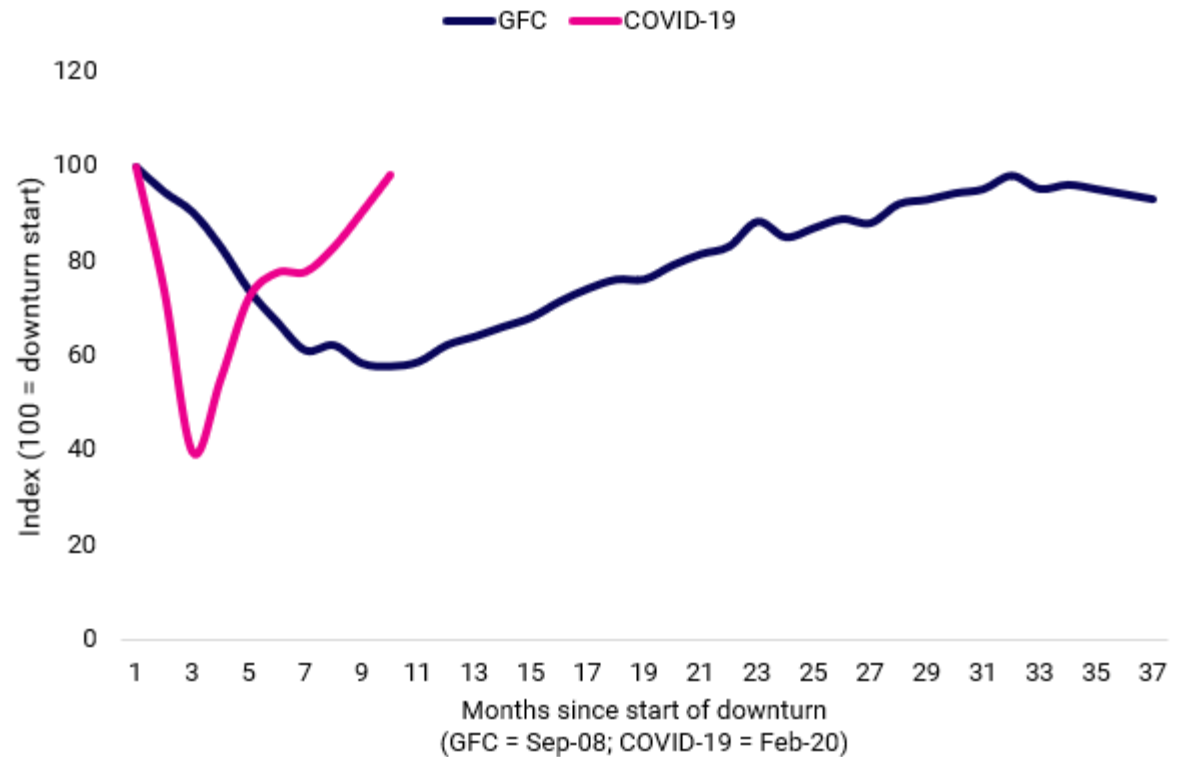
When events impact the labour market, we look back at past data and trends that can give us insights into what may happen. For example, each year, we know that Easter is a quiet job advertising period and the time that it falls impacts job ads differently each year.

The 2008 Global Financial Crisis (GFC) provides the closest comparison for the impact that COVID-19 has had in the job market.

As you can see from the graph, COVID had a swifter and more sudden effect than even the GFC. The good news is that within two months of the initial outbreak here in Australia, we had already reached the lowest number of ads before job ads started to recover.

During the GFC, job ads dropped to below 60% of volumes after seven months and stayed there for four to five months before starting to return. COVID hit rock bottom in April and starting to return from May. In other words, the falls observed in the first three weeks of March 2020 took three months during the GFC.

Recovery of job ads by month following the start of COVID-19 compared to the GFC





H is for Healthcare & Medical and Hospitality & Tourism



HEALTHCARE & MEDICAL

The Healthcare & Medical industry is Australia's largest, fastest-growing industry. Even before COVID hit, the industry was changing by significant drivers, including the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) plus our nation's ageing population.

While Healthcare & Medical job ad numbers dropped significantly across all states and territories during the pandemic, the largest drops were in Victoria, and South Australia – each of these states reported declines of 54%.

The Healthcare & Medical industry didn't escape the downward trend that was seen across all industries. While there was demand for frontline medical staff, there was also a slowing of roles linked to elective surgeries and dental, for example, where many procedures and processes were paused during the height of the pandemic. However, since the low point of April 2020, the industry has recovered quickly. In fact, January 2021 saw an increase on pre-COVID job ad levels in the industry, with job ads up 14% compared to January 2020.

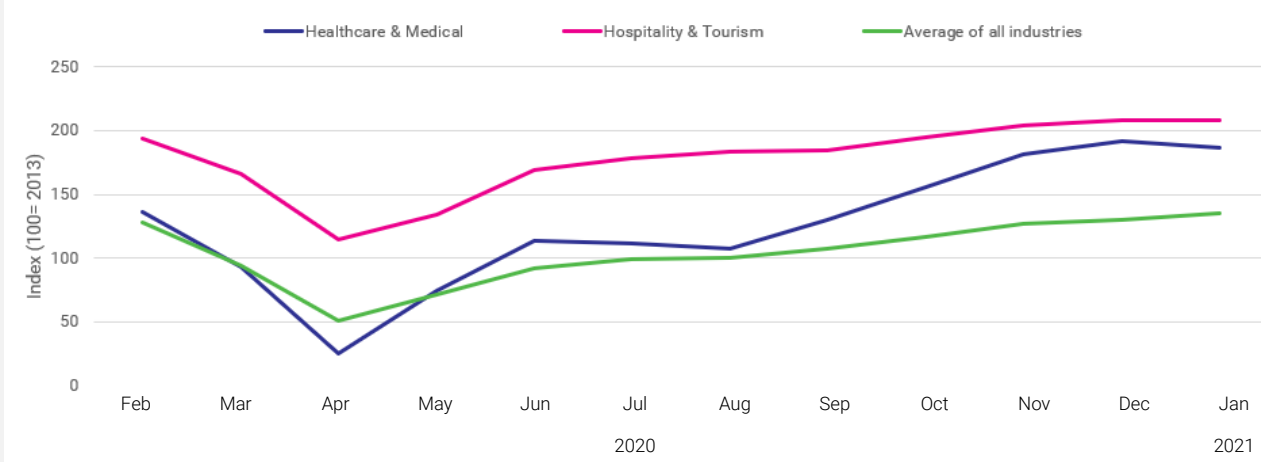
HOSPITALITY & TOURISM

In contrast to Healthcare & Medical – which fared the best during the pandemic – Hospitality & Tourism was, unsurprisingly, one of the worst-hit of 2020.

Despite this, the industry has rebounded and in January 2021 there were 30% more job ads than in January 2020. The second wave in Victoria did dent the recovery but did not hit as hard as the first wave as businesses found new ways to operate.

During 2020 we saw different states recover at different rates, and this industry was one of the first to drop off and the first to return as the restrictions directly impacted these roles.

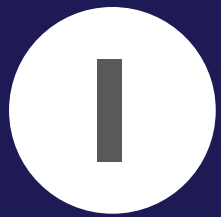
The top 5 most advertised roles within H&M
Physiotherapy, OT & Rehabilitation
Nursing – Aged care
Psychology, Counselling & Social work
Dental
Nursing – General medical & Surgical



The top 5 most advertised roles within H&T
Chefs / Cooks
Waiting Staff
Bar & Beverage staff
Management
Kitchen & Sandwich Hands



Source: SEEK



I is for Information & Communication Technology (ICT)

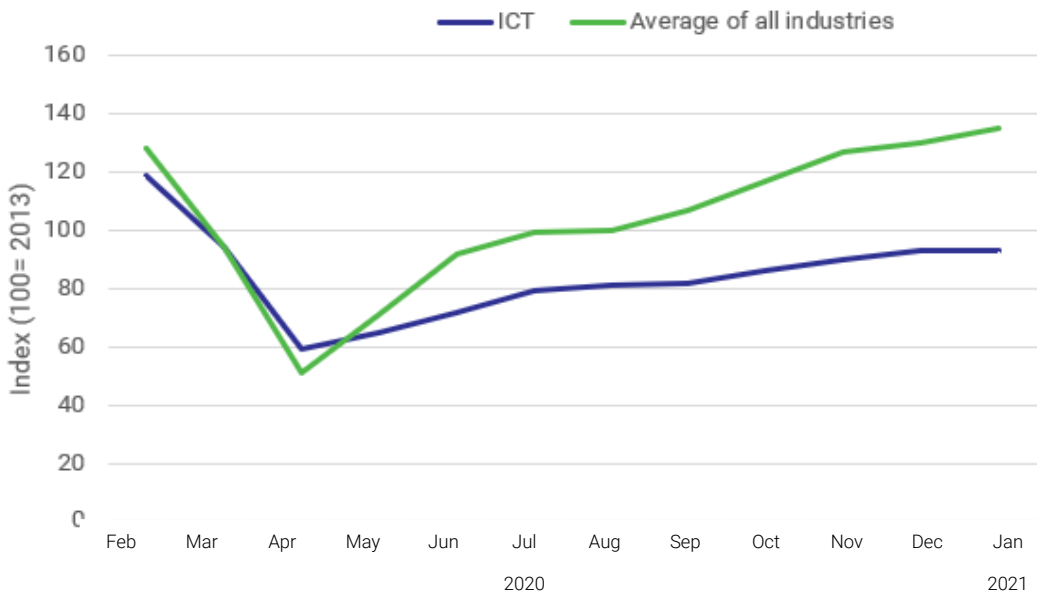
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Information & Communication Technology (ICT) had a challenging year and continues to do so – it has proven to be one of the slowest sectors to recover. In January 2021, compared to 2020, there was a decline of 22% in new job ads for ICT.

ICT has traditionally been filled with more contract / temporary roles than any other industry. Interestingly, the jobs advertised on SEEK in ICT in 2019 compared to 2020 broken down by work type show very similar results. In 2019, the split was 58% full-time roles and 42% temporary, part-time or casual roles. In 2020, there was just a 0.1% difference. Full-time positions accounted for 57.9%, while 42.1% were temporary, part-time or casual roles.

The top 5 most advertised roles within ICT
Developers/ Programmers
Business / Systems Analyst
Engineering – Software
Help Desk & IT Support
Programme & Project Management

Source: SEEK





J is for Job seekers, Job security and Job prospects

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The pandemic has had significant and lasting impacts on peoples' working lives, and its effects are also evident in the way Australians view their careers. SEEK conducts surveys among Australians currently employed and those looking for work to understand their position on work and career-related topics. Two questions we tracked across the year were:

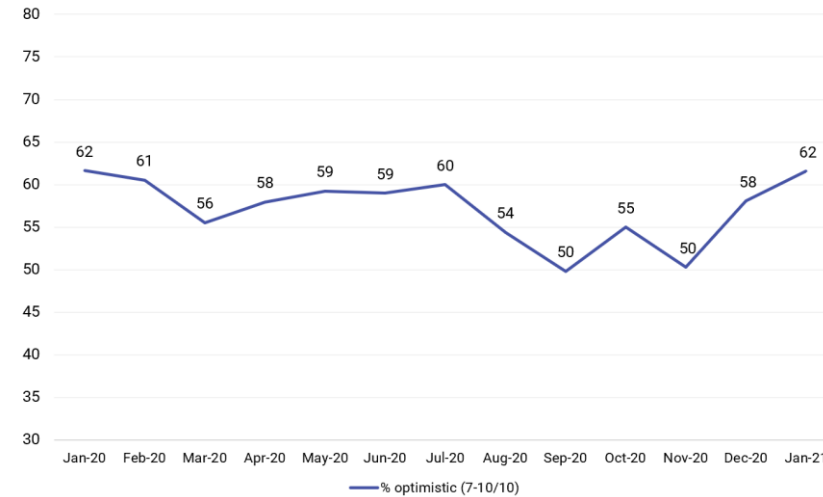
How positively do job seekers feel about their future employment prospects?

- In January and February 2020, the results were just above 60%. This oscillated throughout the year, and has increased since November. In January 2021, this figure equalled last January at 62%.

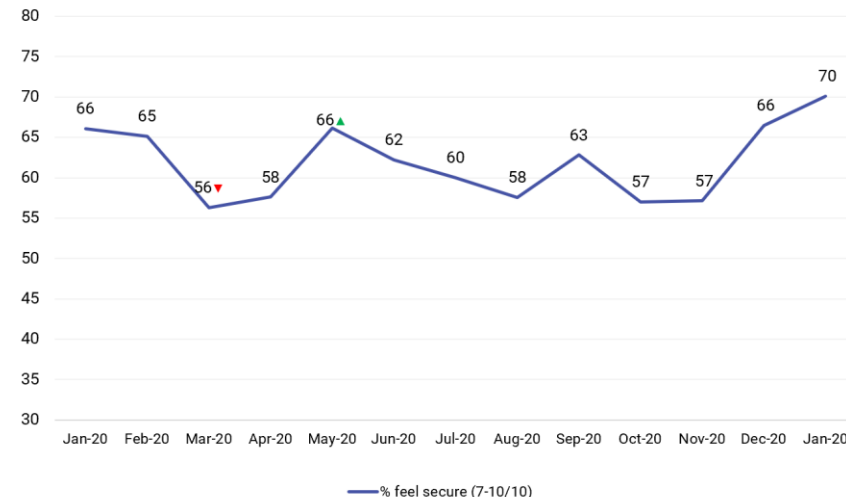
How secure do employed Australians think they are in their current job?

- In January 2021, this number hit 70%, the highest figure of any time in the last 12 months.

In general, how do you feel about your future employment/job prospects?



How secure do you feel your current job is?



Independent research conducted by Nature on behalf of SEEK. Interviewing 4,800 Australians annually
Base sizes: Jan-20 n=950; Feb-20 n=373, Mar-20 (5th - 16th, 27th - 29th) n=1122, Apr-20 (30th Mar - 3rd May) n=708, May-20 (4th - 31st May) n=607, June-20 (1st - 28th June) n=582, Jul-20 (29th June - 2nd Aug) n=403, Aug-20 (3rd Aug - 30th Aug) n=995, Sep-20 (31st Aug - 27th Sep) n=359, Oct-20 (28th Sep - 1st Nov) n=377, Nov-20 (2nd Nov - 29th Nov) n=638, Dec-20 (30th Nov - 18th Dec) n=381, Jan-21 (4th Jan - 31st Jan) n=391





K is for Kids, childcare and education



On top of changes to working life, disruption to education and childcare impacted many Australians in the last 12 months.

Childcare

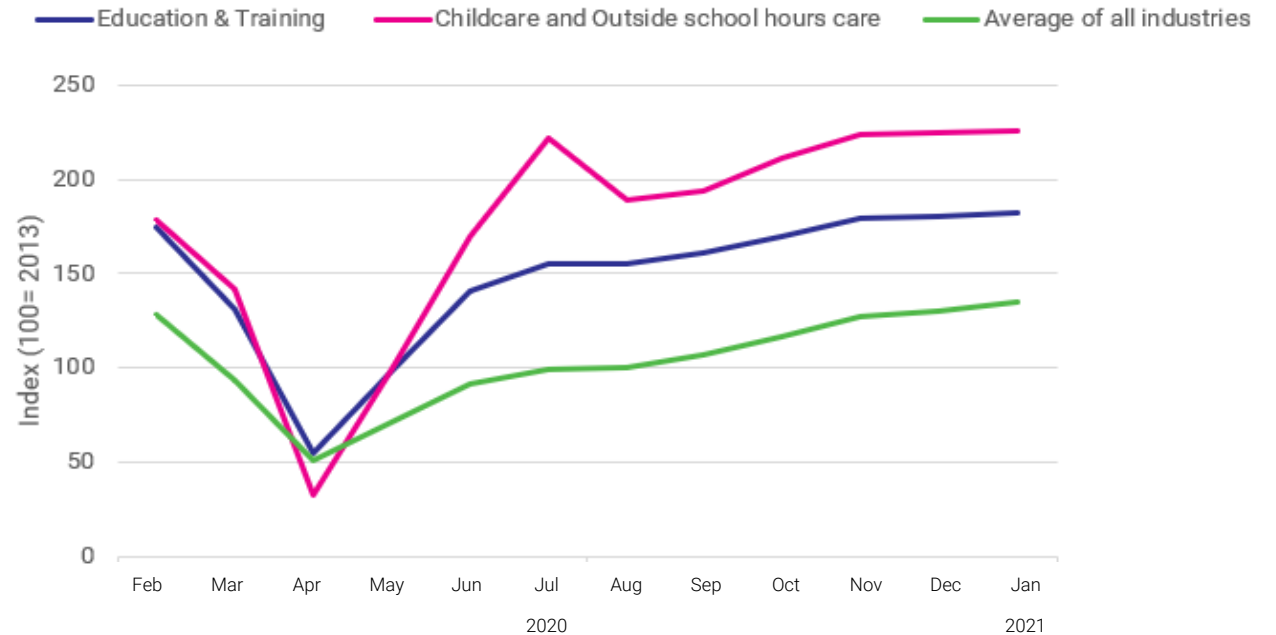
Roles in Childcare are up 26% across the last three months compared to the same period 12 months prior. Childcare is the most in-demand role in the Education industry.

Education & Training

Looking Australia-wide, job ads in the Education & Training sector are 2% higher in the past three months (November 2020 – January 2021) compared to the same period last year. This period includes the start to the school year.

Year 12s

2020 was a difficult year for students, particularly Year 12s, who faced the added pressure of exams and results. SEEK conducted a survey asking Australians if their own Year 12 results affected their career. Only 21% of the Australian workforce believe that their Year 12 results had a positive impact on their career, and only 9% of respondents have been asked for their Year 12 results in a job interview.



The top 5 most advertised roles within Education & Training
Childcare & Outside School Hours Care
Teaching (Early Childhood, Secondary, Vocational, Primary)
Workplace Training & Assessment
Student Services
Management – schools





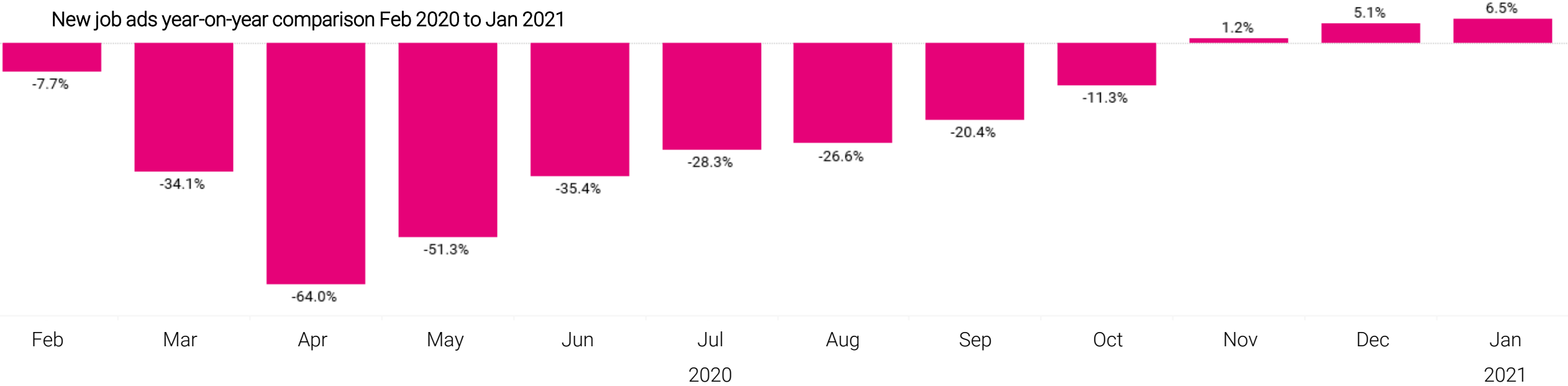
L is for Lowest point of the year

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The lowest point of the last 12 months came in April 2020, when the number of new job ads posted on seek.com.au fell by 49.8% m/m, and 64.0% y/y.

In addition to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, Easter is traditionally one of the quietest times and added to the low point in April. Since May 2020, there has been continuous m/m growth, and from November 2020 to January 2021 there were three consecutive months of y/y growth in job ad volumes.

New job ads year-on-year comparison Feb 2020 to Jan 2021



Source: SEEK



M is for Metro vs Regional

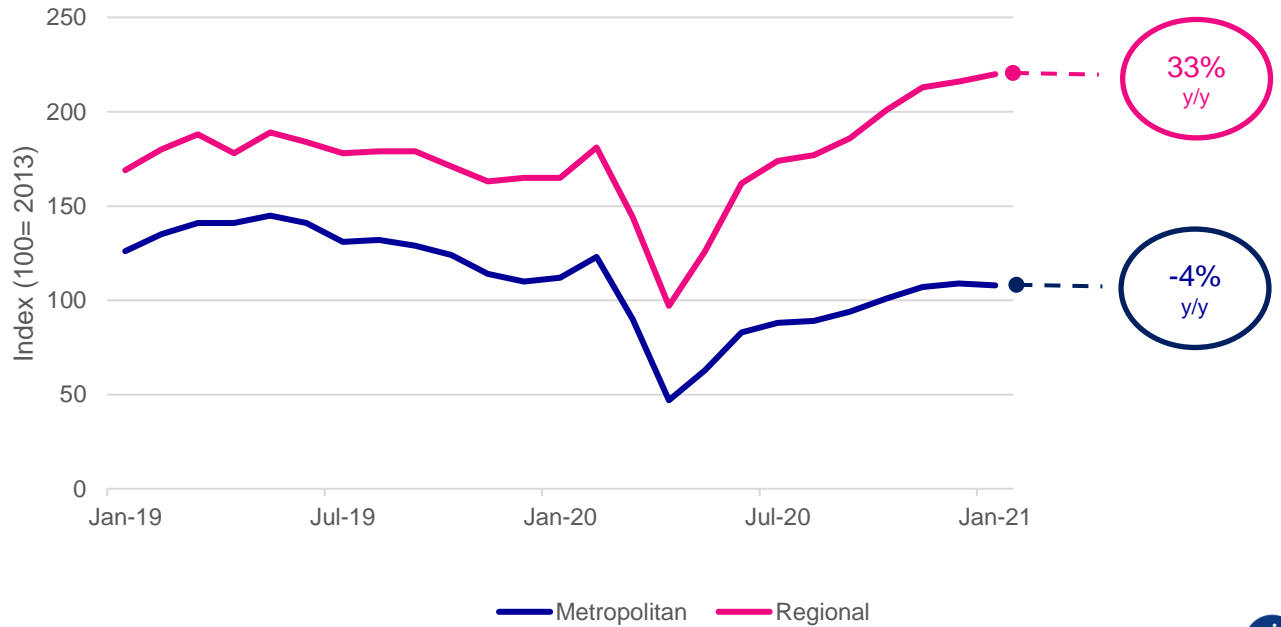
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Job ads in regional areas across Australia hit pre-COVID levels by the end of August 2020. This regional recovery is a result of the job ad mix being less reliant on Professional Services roles. (See 'P for Professional Services' to view the breakdown of job ad mix.)

In January 2021, regional job ads were 33% higher y/y compared to metro job ads which were 4% lower y/y.

SEEK Job Ads by Metro/Region

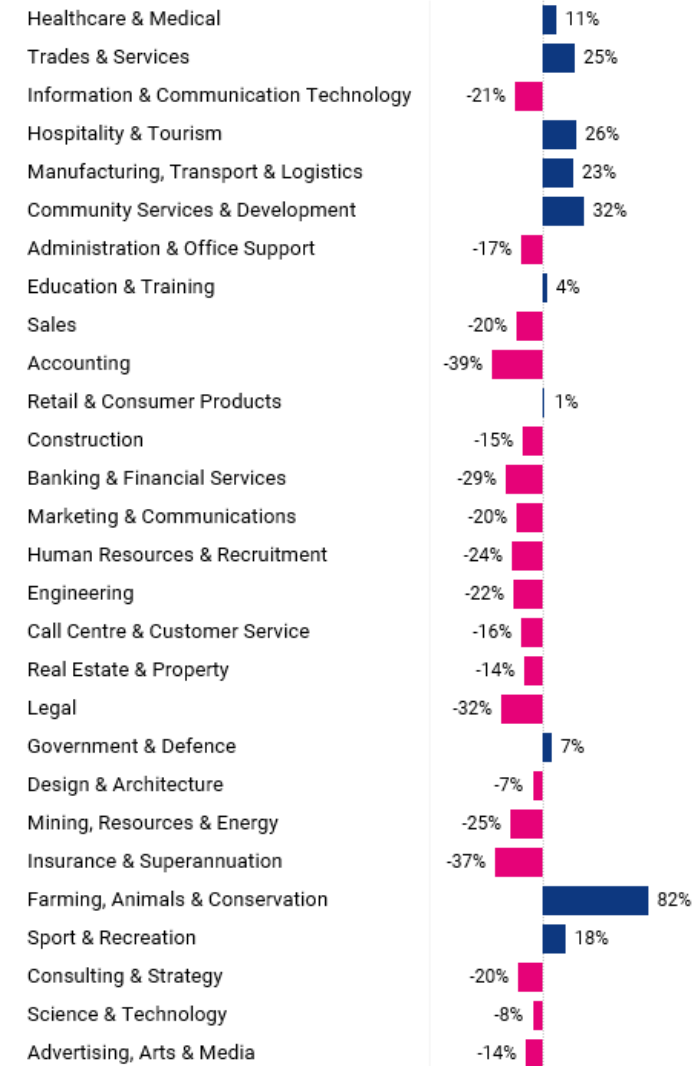




N is for New South Wales

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New SEEK job ads by industry for NSW, Nov 2020–Jan 2021 vs Nov 2019–Jan 2020

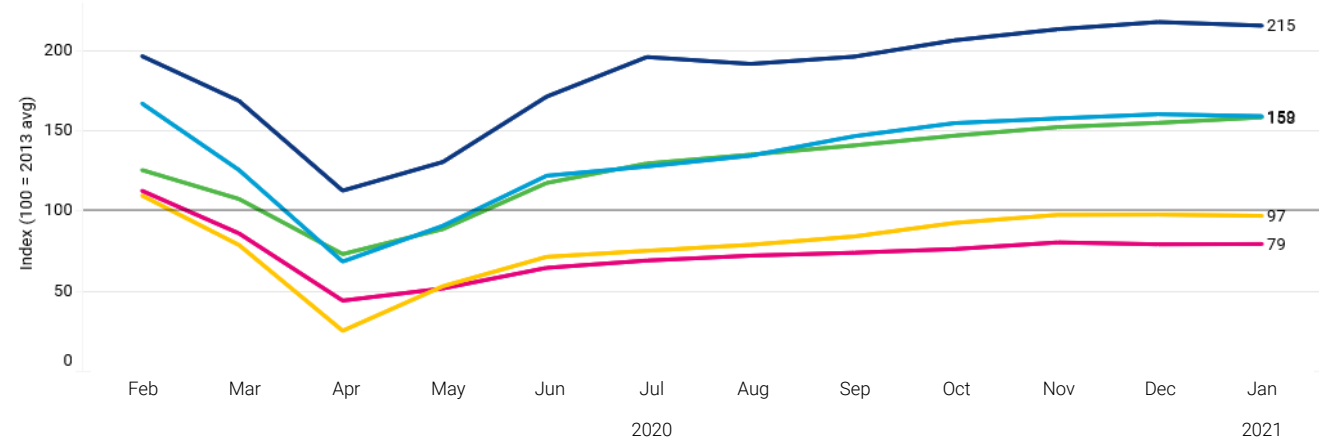


New South Wales consistently has the highest number of jobs of any state or territory in Australia.

At the lowest point of 2020, the state had just 31% of pre-COVID levels of new job ads.

As Australia began to show signs of recovery in May, New South Wales trailed the other states except for Victoria. However, in January 2021, NSW has just 4.8% fewer jobs than the same time 12 months earlier, the lowest difference since the pandemic began.

SEEK Job Ads by Sector - NSW



	Construction	Consumer Services	Industrial	Professional Services	Public Sector
Nov 2020 – Jan 2021 vs Nov 2019 – Jan 2020	4.3%	-4.1%	18.7%	-26.9%	12.7%

Source: SEEK





O is for Offices and working from home

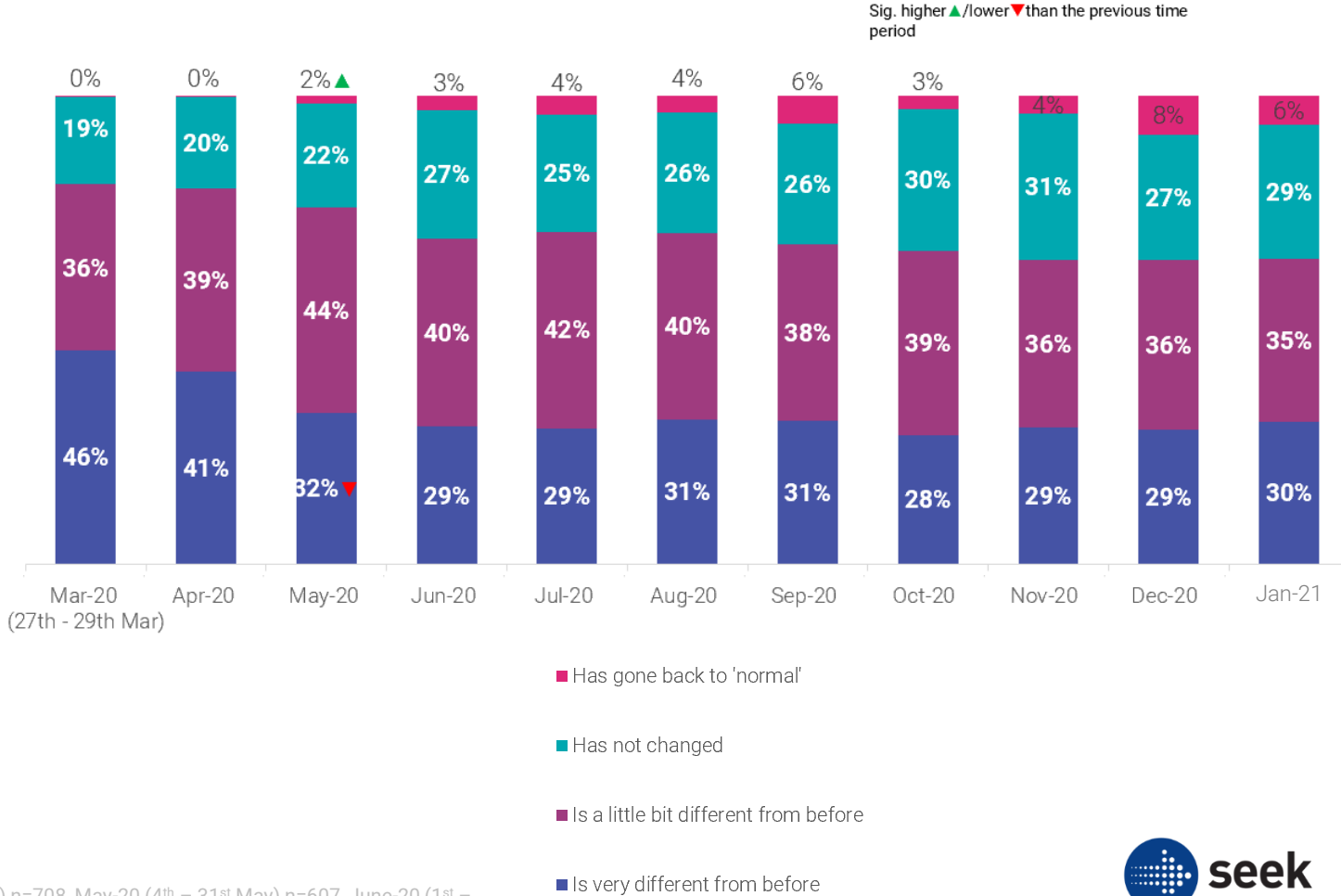
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One of COVID-19's standout impacts on the workforce has been altering the way Australians work and where they do it from – and this has carried through to 2021. SEEK conducts surveys among Australians currently employed and those looking for work to understand their position on work and career-related topics. One of the hot topics for 2020 was working from home and not being able to go to the office. We asked Australians if their working situations had changed as a result of COVID-19 and if work life had started to return to normal.

In March and April 2020, 80% of respondents said that they had experienced changes in their working lives. More than 40% said their working lives had changed significantly.

Interestingly, this figure indicating significant change reduced to 30% by June 2020, but has since stayed consistently around that mark. By January 2021, only 6% told us that their working lives had gone back to normal.

As a result of COVID-19, your current working situation...



Independent research conducted by Nature on behalf of SEEK. Interviewing 4,800 Australians annually
Base sizes: Jan-20 n=950; Feb-20 n=373, Mar-20 (5th - 16th, 27th - 29th) n=1122, Apr-20 (30th Mar - 3rd May) n=708, May-20 (4th - 31st May) n=607, June-20 (1st - 28th June) n=582, Jul-20 (29th June - 2nd Aug) n=403, Aug-20 (3rd Aug - 30th Aug) n=995, Sep-20 (31st Aug - 27th Sep) n=359, Oct-20 (28th Sep - 1st Nov) n=377, Nov-20 (2nd Nov - 29th Nov) n=638, Dec-20 (30th Nov - 18th Dec) n=381, Jan-21 (4th Jan - 31st Jan) n=391





P is for Professional Services

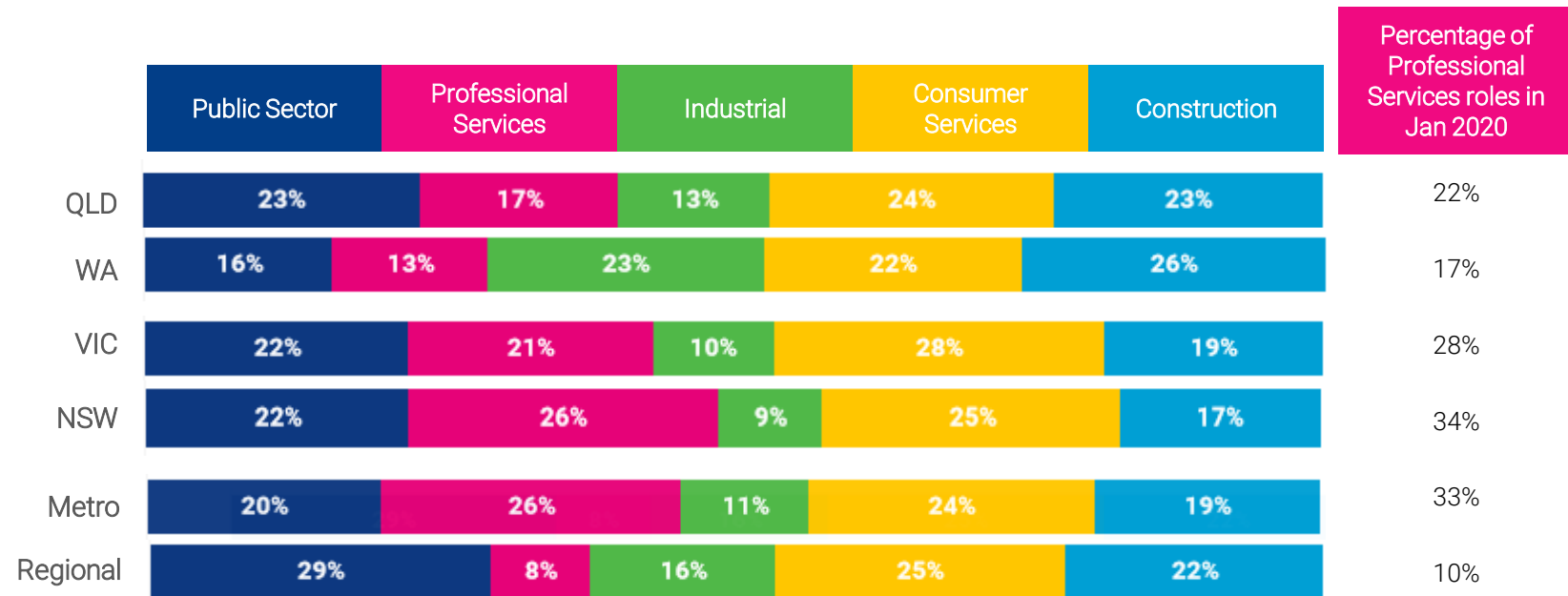


SEEK's job ads are divided into five sectors: Consumer Services, Industrial, Construction, Public Sector and Professional Services.

Professional Services roles across Australia for the last three months (November 2020 – January 2021) were 22.0% fewer than the same period 12 months prior. No state or territory has reached pre-COVID levels in Professional Services roles.

Looking at January 2021 and January 2020, which is representative of pre-COVID, you can see that Queensland (17%) and WA (13%) have fewer Professional Services roles than Victoria (21%) and New South Wales (26%). Hence recovery was stronger as the year progressed.

This was also true for metro vs regional areas as Professional Services roles are more likely located in CBD areas. (26% vs 8%)

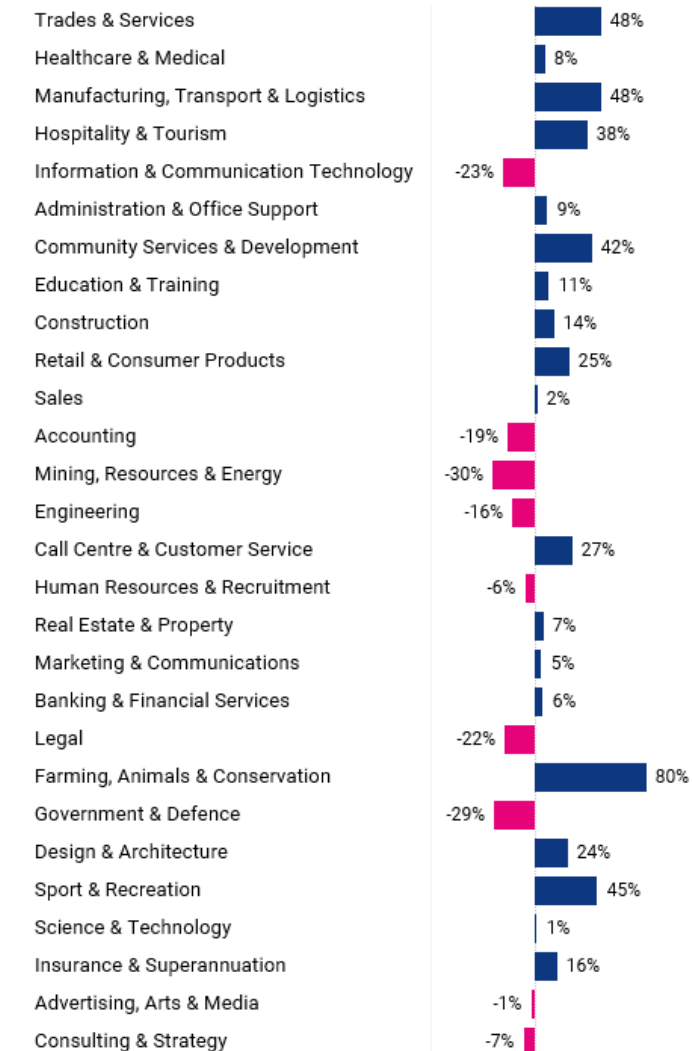




Q is for Queensland

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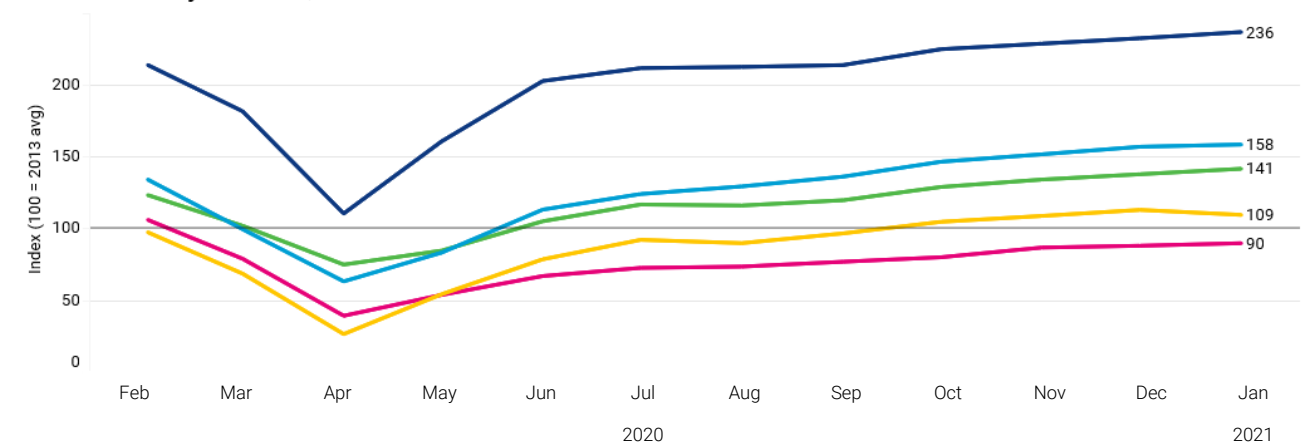
New SEEK job ads by industry for QLD, Nov 2020–Jan 2021 vs Nov 2019–Jan 2020



Queensland's new job ads returned to pre-COVID levels in October 2020. Although Professional Services roles are still to fully recover, roles within the other sectors are more than making up for the difference.

Some industries are struggling to find the right talent for vacancies as Queensland is quite reliant on interstate and overseas workers. See 'B is for Borders' for more details.

SEEK Job Ads by Sector - QLD



	Construction	Consumer Services	Industrial	Professional Services	Public Sector
Nov 2020–Jan 2021 vs Nov 2019–Jan 2020	29.6%	20.9%	17.4%	-14.1%	12.2%





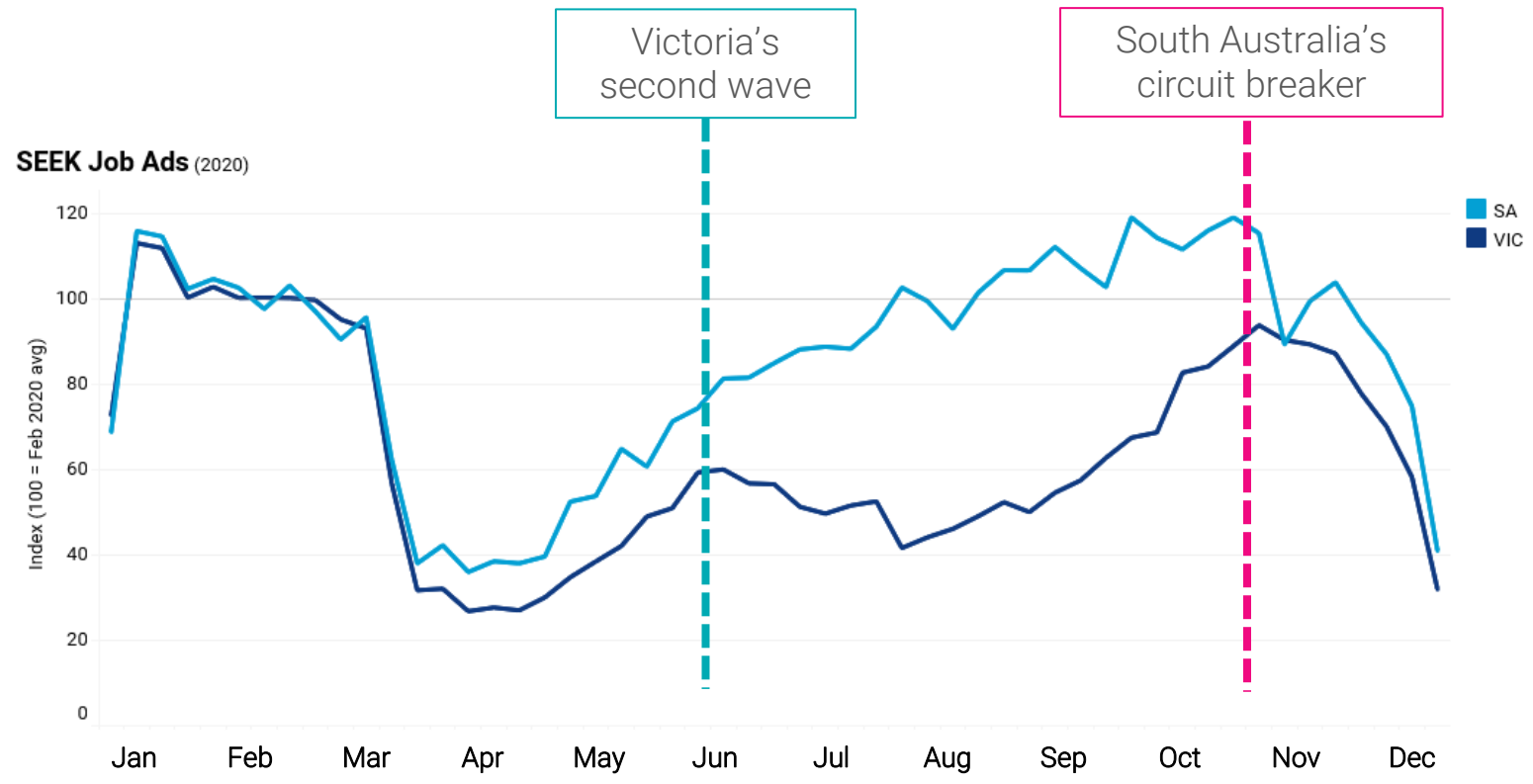
R is for Restrictions

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Restrictions played a big part in 2020's employment market. As COVID-19 restrictions were imposed, the impact on job ads was immediate. However, the reverse was also true; when restrictions were lifted there was an uptick in job ad volumes immediately.

As the year progressed, we could see that businesses became more resilient and found ways to operate under lockdown conditions, as in Victoria. The second wave of restrictions impacted job ad numbers but not as much as the first lockdown in March.

In November, South Australia imposed a short six-day lockdown called a 'circuit breaker'. The 'circuit breaker' (indicated by pink line on the graph) closures saw job ads tumble, but as soon as restrictions were lifted the volume returned somewhat before trailing off for the holiday period.



Source: SEEK

Source: SEEK

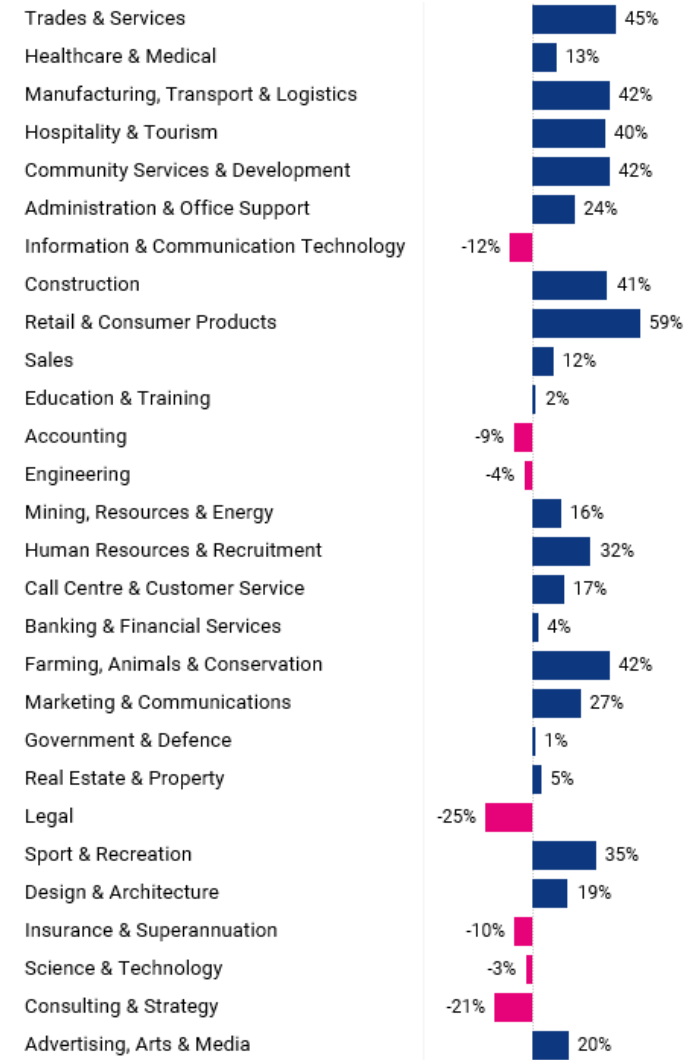




S is for South Australia

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New SEEK job ads by industry for SA, Nov 2020 – Jan 2021 vs Nov 2019 – Jan 2020

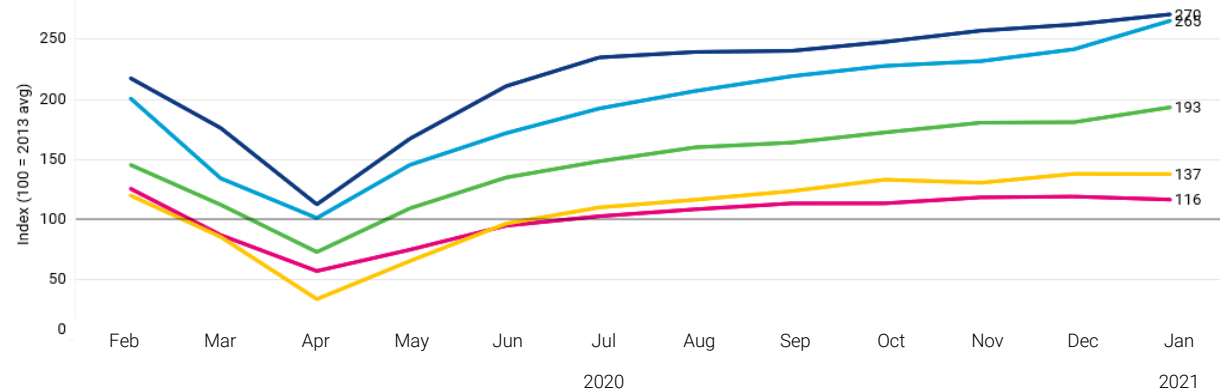


South Australia was one of the first states to recover to pre-COVID levels along with Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory. In the last three months (November 2020 – January 2021) all sectors were considerably higher than in the same period 12 months prior except for Professional Services, which was only 3.7% lower.

Trades & Services, Healthcare & Medical and Manufacturing, Transport & Logistics are the top industries for the state with more roles than the same time in the year before.

See R is for Restrictions to see how the 'circuit breaker' impacted job ad volumes in SA.

SEEK Job Ads by Sector - SA



	Construction	Consumer Services	Industrial	Professional Services	Public Sector
Nov 2020–Jan 2021 vs Nov 2019–Jan 2020	35.0%	30.1%	35.5%	-3.7%	18.1%

Source: SEEK





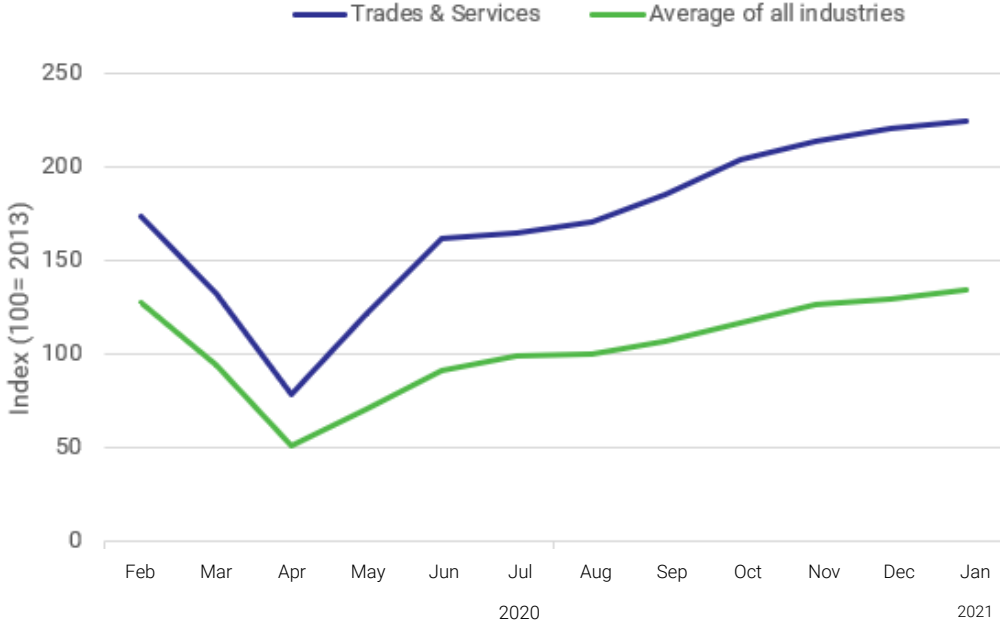
T is for Trades & Services

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The Trades & Services industry has rebounded healthily and is one of the most in-demand industries for jobs.

In the last three months (November 2020 – January 2021) there were 37% more job ads in Trades & Services than in the same period in the previous year. However, as restrictions eased, demand for roles like hairdressers increased significantly. In turn, hirers are struggling to find qualified candidates to fill these roles.



The top 5 most advertised roles within T&S
Automotive Trades
Labourers
Hair & Beauty Services
Electricians
Welders & Boilermakers

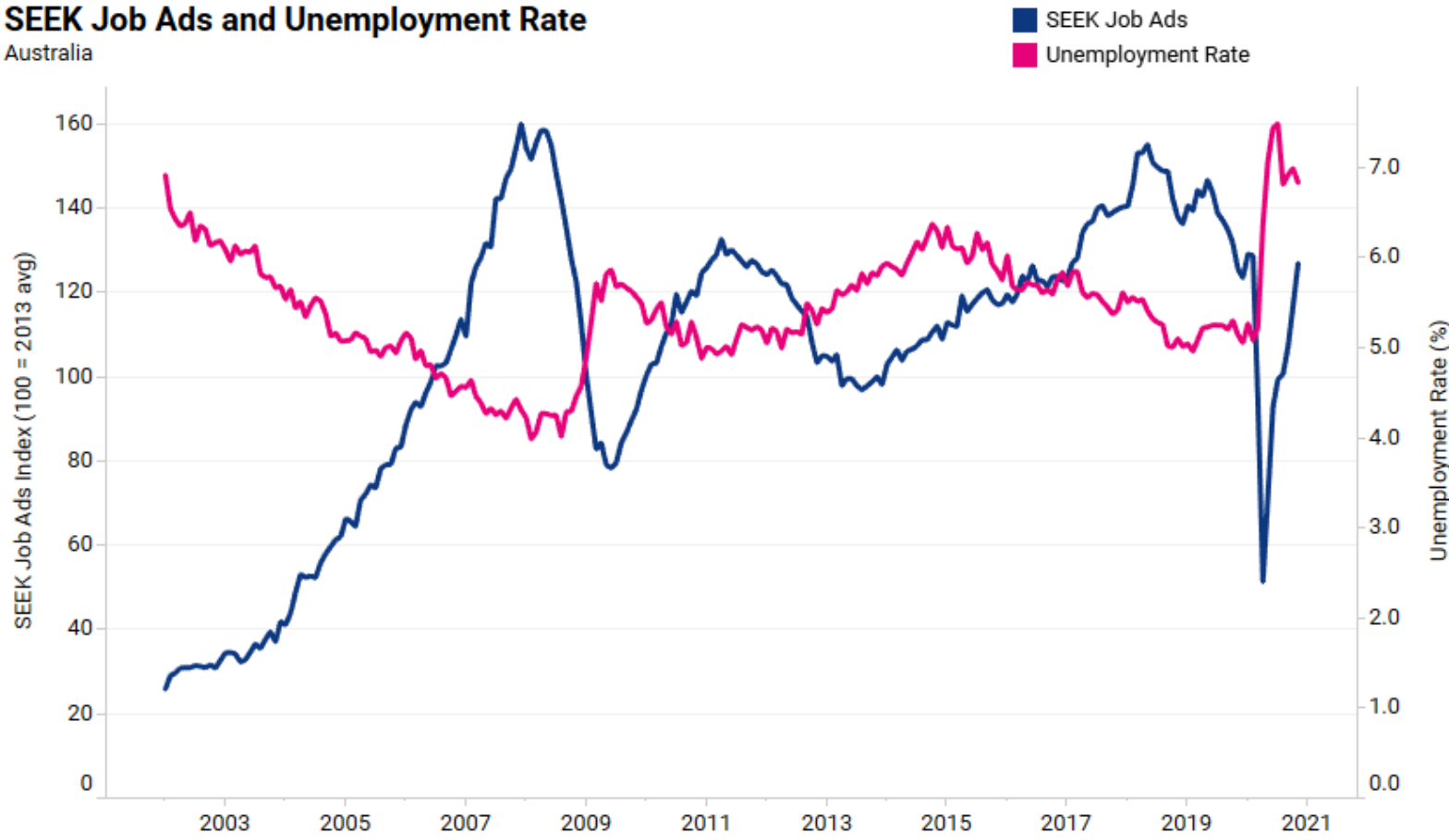




U is for Unemployment rates compared to SEEK job ads

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SEEK job ad data has been a reliable lead indicator of the unemployment rate. Although the two measures reference different aspects of the employment market, generally when job ads decline or increase, the unemployment rate follows with a move in the opposite direction. The time lag between these two measures does differ depending on the drivers of the change and broader environmental influences. For instance, when COVID-19 restrictions were introduced, SEEK job ads and the unemployment rate each showed change in a very short space of time.



Source: SEEK, ABS

Source: SEEK

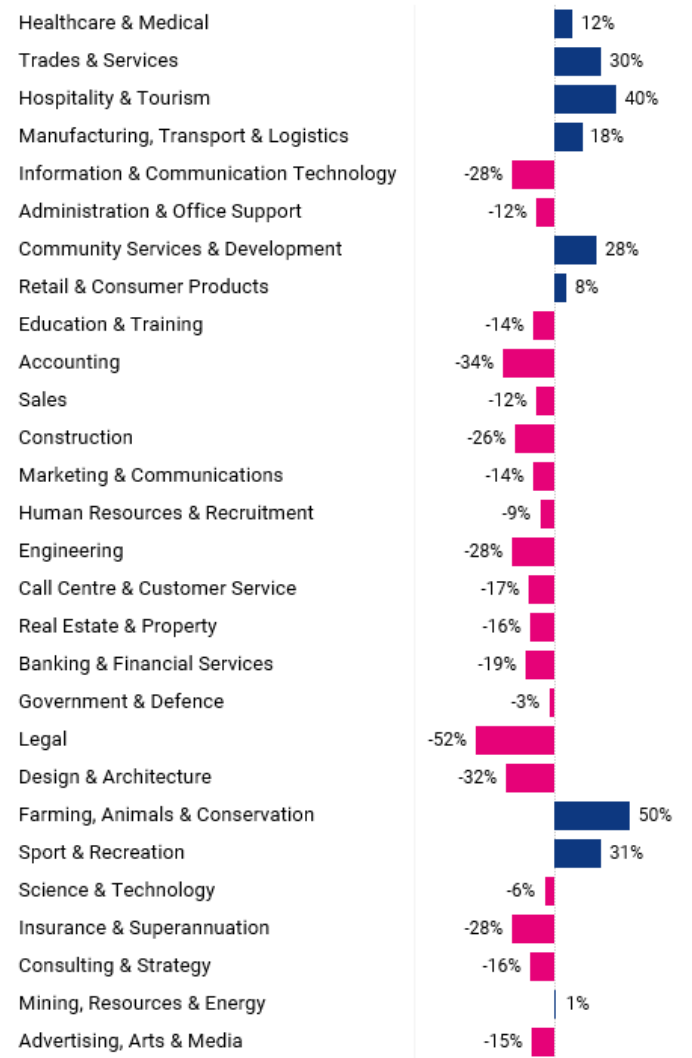




V is for Victoria

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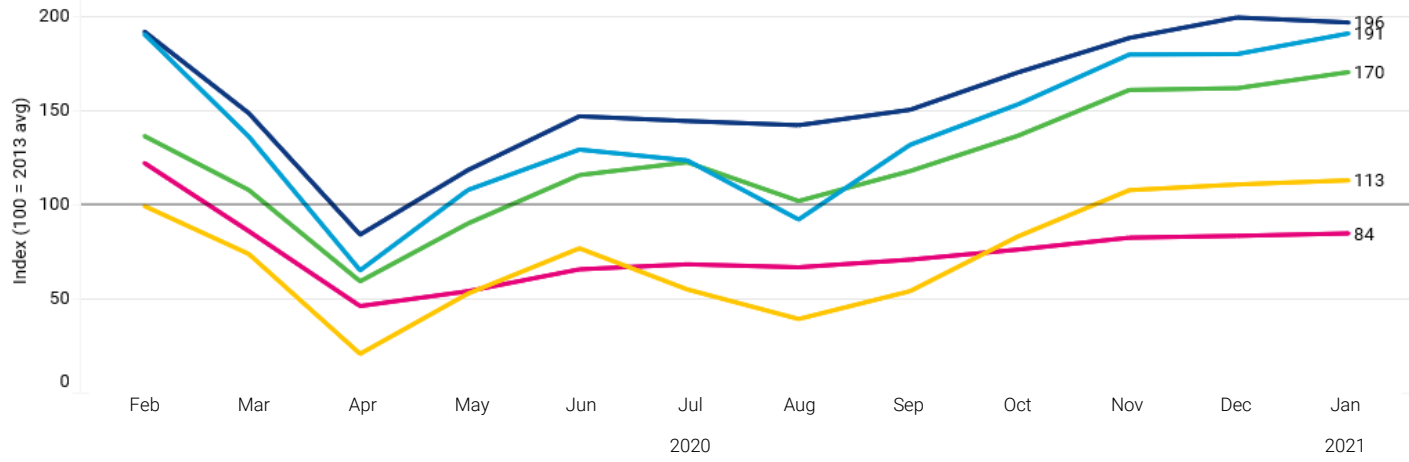
New SEEK job ads by industry for VIC, Nov 2020–Jan 2021 vs Nov 2019–Jan 2020



It's no surprise that Victoria has had the toughest journey to recovery of all the states and territories. With the longest and most severe restrictions of any state, Victoria was lagging for the majority of 2020. In January 2021, for the first time since the pandemic began Victoria reported positive year-on-year growth in new job ads with a 1.8% increase.

As demonstrated below, it is Professional Services roles that account for the biggest deficit.

SEEK Job Ads by Sector - VIC



	Construction	Consumer Services	Industrial	Professional Services	Public Sector
Nov 2020–Jan 2021 vs Nov 2019–Jan 2020	1.1%	5.9%	19.0%	-26.8%	8.2%

Source: SEEK





W is for Women and Western Australia

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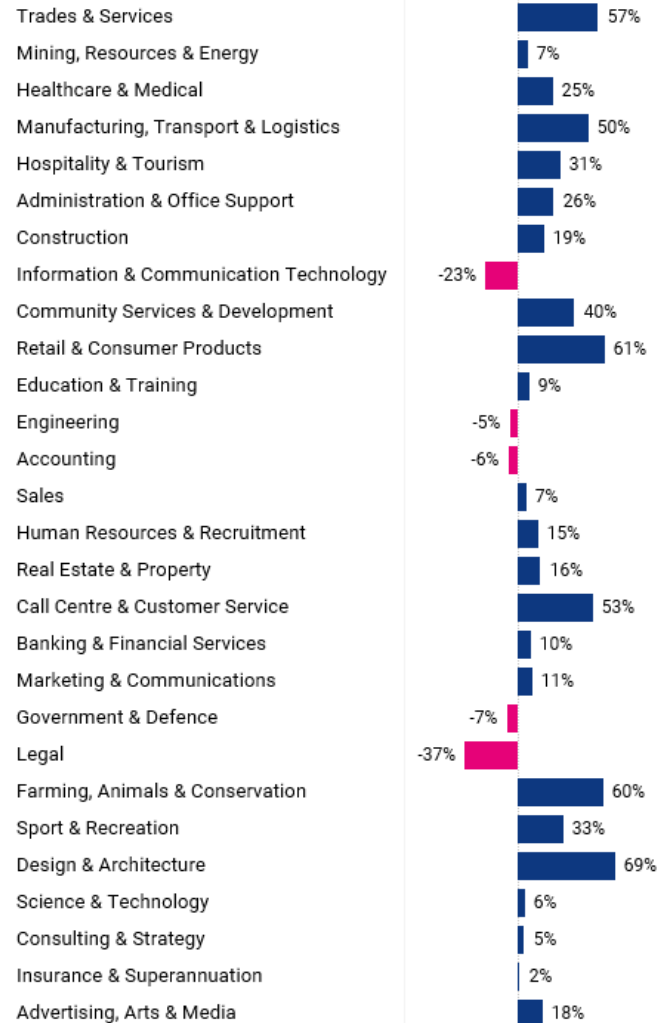
WOMEN

In March and April 2020, we noticed a clear drop in the number of female candidates applying for roles. This gap between male and female candidates started to improve from around May onwards.

Two key factors contributed to this decrease. Firstly, more women chose to leave the workforce to take responsibility for the disrupted childcare needs.* Secondly, the industries most impacted by the imposed restrictions were retail/hospitality roles which have higher female representation than other industries.

*ABS – participation rate in May 2020 was 57.5% for women and 67.9% for men

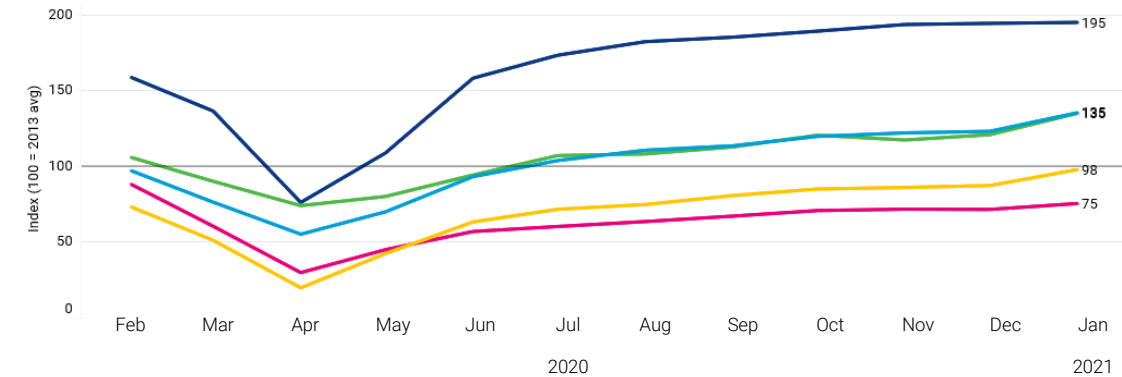
New SEEK job ads by industry for WA, Nov 2020–Jan 2021 vs Nov 2019–Jan 2020



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Western Australia was among the first states to recover to pre-COVID levels along with South Australia, Northern Territory, and Tasmania. In the last three months (November 2020 – January 2021) in WA, all sectors were considerably higher than in the same period 12 months prior, except for Professional Services, which was down 9.5%.

SEEK Job Ads by Sector - WA



	Construction	Consumer Services	Industrial	Professional Services	Public Sector
Nov 2020–Jan 2021 vs Nov 2019–Jan 2020	38.1%	31.4%	19.3%	-9.5%	23.6%



Source: SEEK

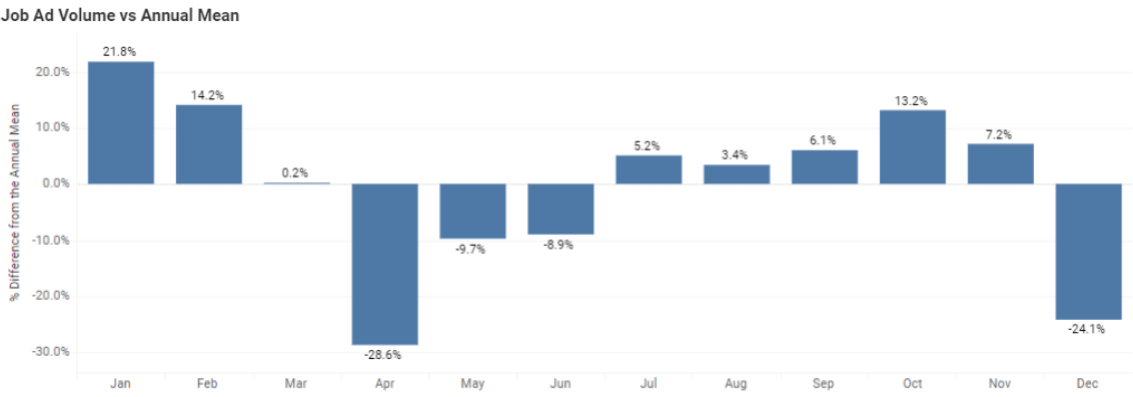


X is for Xmas to Australia Day

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A traditional seasonal slowdown wasn't the case this summer. The graph below looks at how each month for the last two years compares to the average of the rest of the year. December is typically 24% lower than the average of the rest of the year, compared to January which is 22% higher.

December is traditionally quiet for hiring activity, but in 2020 hiring continued much later into the year and job ads were up 5% y/y. January usually gets busier as the month progresses, but in 2021 we saw job ads posted on site from the very first week of the year. January this year had 6.5% more job ads than January 2020.



Note: Easter (April) and the end of the financial year are traditionally lower than average.

Source: SEEK



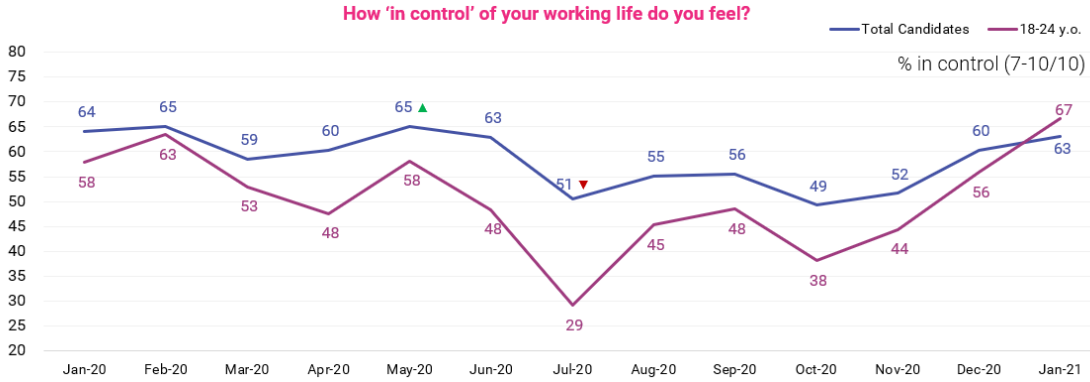


Y is for Young people

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Two industries that were hit hardest – and which continue to be disrupted by short lockdowns – are the Hospitality & Tourism and Retail industries. At the low point of April 2020, these industries saw job ad drops that were among the largest experienced by any industry; Hospitality & Tourism down 84% y/y, and Retail down 82% y/y.

These industries are made up of a high proportion of younger employees (18–24 years old). SEEK conducts surveys among Australians currently employed and those looking for work to understand their position on work and career-related topics. When asked the question “How ‘in control’ of your working life do you feel?”, 18- to 24-year-olds’ responses ranked below average all year. They were least confident in April, with only 29% saying they felt ‘in control’. This improved throughout 2020, and in January 2021 we can see that young people are feeling the most confident they have felt in more than 12 months.



Independent research conducted by Nature on behalf of SEEK. Interviewing 4,800 Australians annually
Base sizes: CD1. How ‘in control’ of your working life do you feel? Give a 7-10 rating out of 10
Base sizes: Total candidates sample sizes range from n=406 to n=1205; 18-24 y.o. candidates sample sizes range from n=49 to n=201





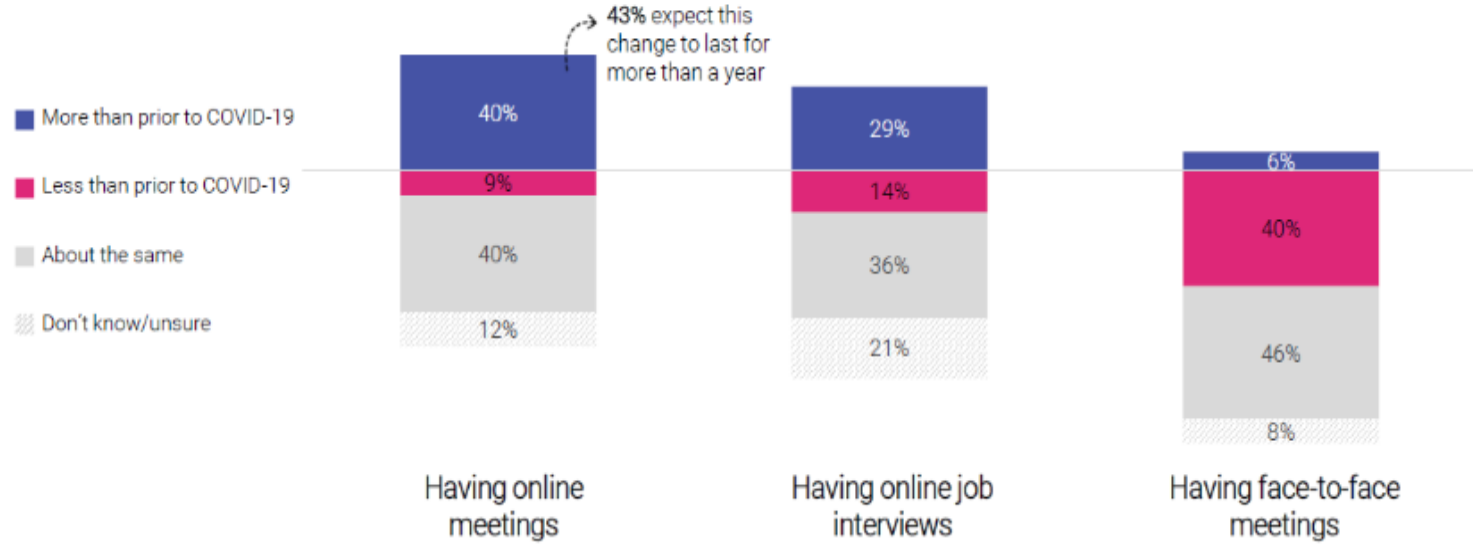
Z is for Zoom meetings and interviews

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Last but not least is the major shift towards technology in our daily work practices. SEEK conducts surveys among Australians currently employed and those looking for work to understand their position on work and career-related topics. The changing use of technology in our day-to-day working lives has been prevalent in peoples' responses. At the height of the pandemic, 80% of respondents said that they had experienced changes in their working lives, and over 40% said that things had changed significantly.

We asked Australians what changes in 2020 they see continuing into 2021 and beyond. Two in five workers indicated that they will take part in more online meetings in the future. Almost 30% of those surveyed say that online interviews will occur more often, and 40% think that face-to-face meetings will be less frequent.

Thinking about life after COVID-19, do you think you will do each of these more, less or about the same as prior to COVID-19?



Independent research conducted by Nature on behalf of SEEK. Interviewing 4,800 Australians annually. Base sizes: n= 611



