



2020 SKILL SHORTAGES PULSE SURVEY

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In brief

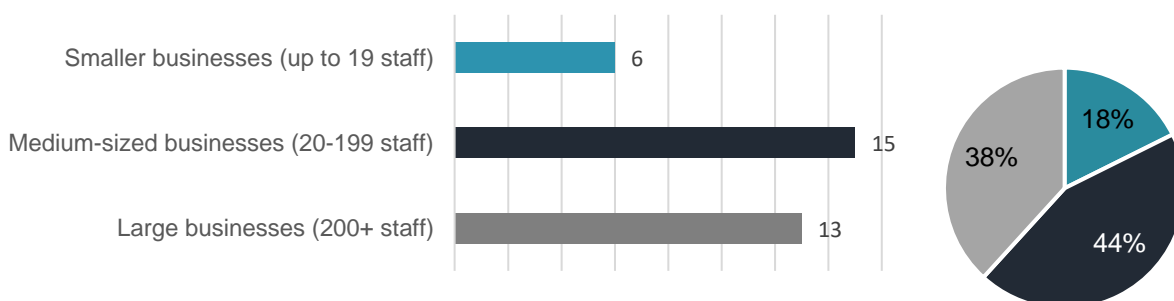


Consult Australia is the industry association representing businesses in design, advisory, and engineering. Our members provide services to a broad client base including governments, companies, and individuals. We represent an industry comprising some 48,000 businesses across Australia, ranging from sole practitioners through to some of Australia’s top 500 companies.

Consult Australia conducts a skills survey each year to provide an account of skills, human resources and other workforce demands affecting its members. Due to COVID-19 impacts and Consult Australia’s complementary industry health checks throughout 2020, a pulse survey taking a deep dive on skill shortages, particularly in light of changing demands on the industry from the pandemic, was conducted instead. This deep dive seeks to identify occupations most affected by shortages in the current market and to understand the business impacts from skill shortages.

This report summarises findings from Consult Australia’s pulse survey on skill shortages. The survey was undertaken from 23 November to 2 December 2020.

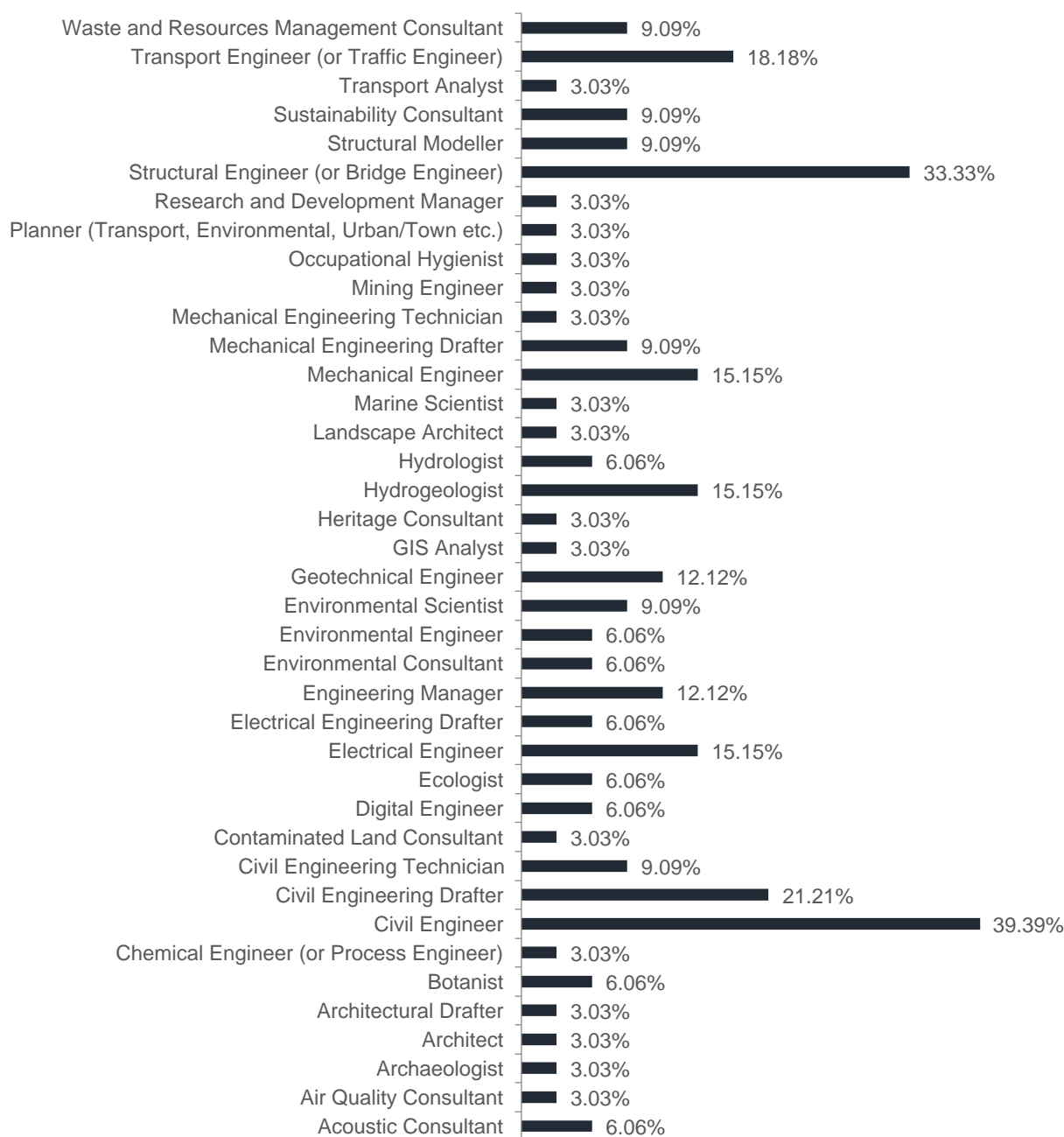
34 firms participated in the pulse survey, representing 16 per cent of the membership. A breakdown by business size (based on their Australian operations) is provided below.



Breakdown of participants by business size (based on their Australian operations)

Skill shortages in the current market – overview

Despite changing demands on our industry, our pulse survey results on skill shortages highlights a significant challenge for businesses to recruit certain occupations in the current market. Below are occupations identified by our members as being one of their three most difficult to recruit. Occupations not included does not imply they are not experiencing shortages – instead, they simply do not sit in the top three occupations identified by respondents.



Occupations in the industry that are most difficult to recruit in the current market (those identified in the top three most difficult for businesses participating in the survey)

Skill shortages

Pulse survey results (December 2020)



As this year's focus is on the top three occupations that businesses find difficult to recruit in the current market, rather than identifying any occupation that has been affected by skill shortages, we have not provided a year-on-year summary of changes to these percentages.

Instead, a focus on the top three occupations has enabled us to request further information from participants on the impacts on their business from these shortages, specific to the occupation, and on what businesses are themselves needing to do to address these recruitment difficulties. This has allowed us to collect occupation specific information on:

- Geographic locations most affected by shortages
- Experience levels (i.e., level of seniority) impacted
- What businesses are seeing a lack of in applications
- Steps outside of advertising that businesses are undertaking to address skill shortages

This deep dive for key occupations (those over 15 per cent) is below.

Business impacts and responses to current skill shortages – deep dives for key occupations

Civil engineers

39%

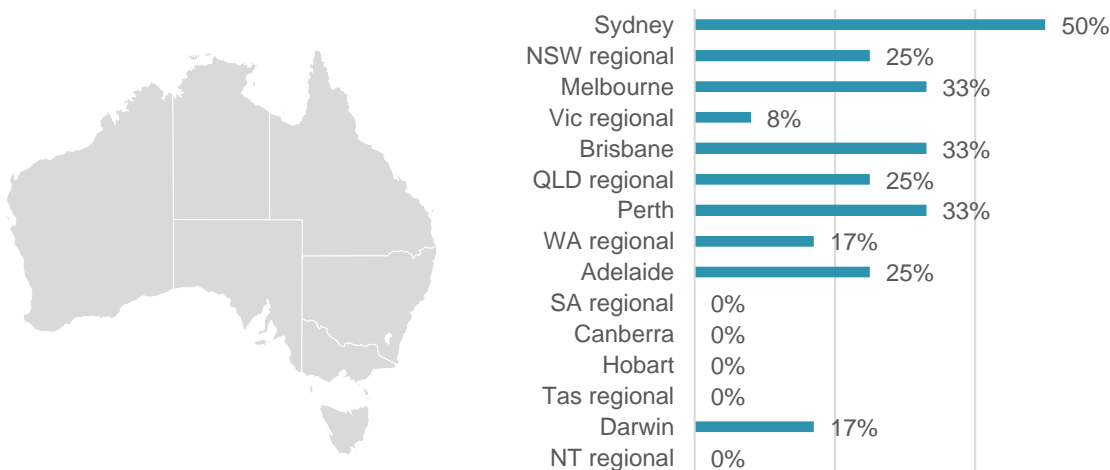
Percentages of businesses who included this occupation is in their top three most difficult to recruit

233211

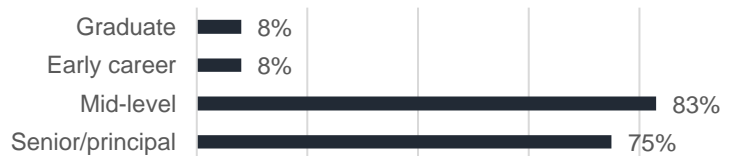
ANZSCO code



Please see footnote below for further information on ANZSCO code.¹



Locations where businesses are experiencing recruitment difficulties for civil engineers (percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)

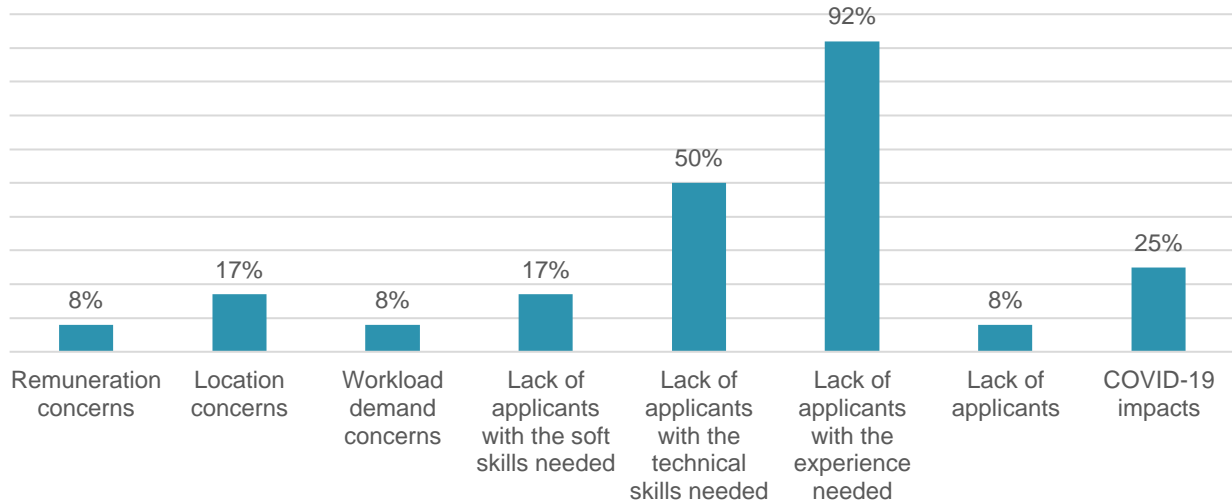


Experience levels where businesses are experiencing recruitment difficulties for civil engineers (percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)

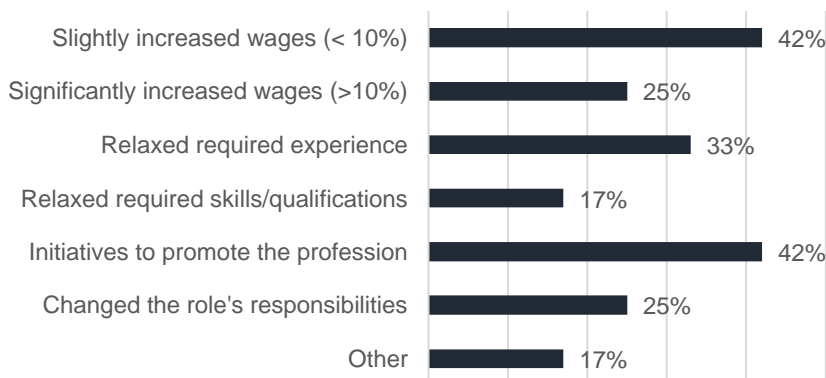
¹ ANZSCO stands for 'Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations' and is used by governments as a standardised approach to categorising occupations in the labour market. ANZSCO codes are therefore used for skills-related policy activities, and to inform government programs such as the skilled migration program. See more [here](#).

Skill shortages

Pulse survey results (December 2020)



*Key reasons behind the recruitment difficulties for civil engineers
(percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)*



*Businesses who use
employer sponsored visas
for civil engineer roles*

58%

*Steps taken by businesses in response to recruitment difficulties for civil engineers
(percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)*

It was also noted that some businesses have increased job flexibility and superannuation, and covered relocation costs as other steps to respond to recruitment difficulties.

Businesses also noted that the current circumstances mean it is difficult to use the skilled migration system as a next step to recruitment difficulties for civil engineers.

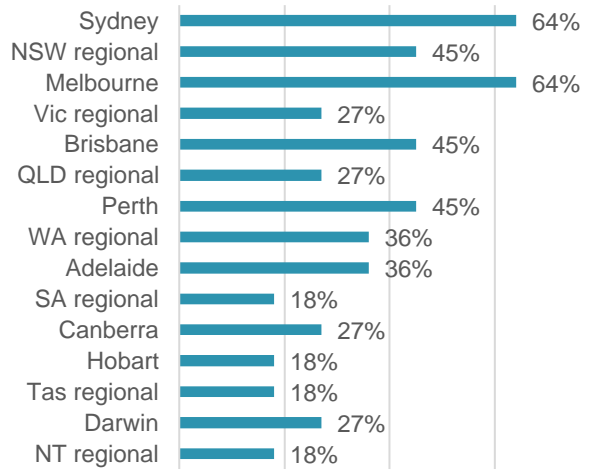
Structural engineers (or bridge engineers)

33%

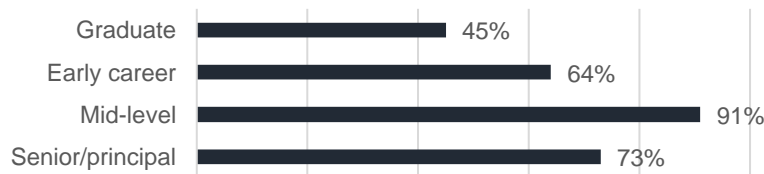
Percentages of businesses who included this occupation is in their top three most difficult to recruit

233214

ANZSCO code



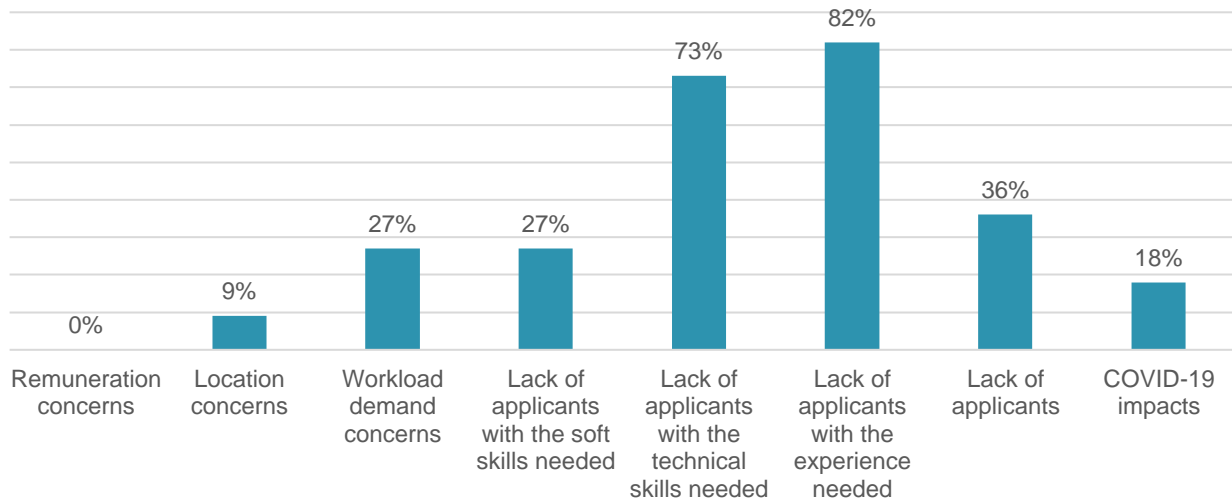
Locations where businesses are experiencing recruitment difficulties for structural engineers (percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)



Experience levels where businesses are experiencing recruitment difficulties for structural engineers (percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)

Skill shortages

Pulse survey results (December 2020)



*Key reasons behind the recruitment difficulties for structural engineers
(percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)*

Candidates being poached by contractors and government agencies, along with larger consulting businesses were flagged as other key reasons behind the recruitment difficulties facing businesses for structural engineers.



Businesses who use employer sponsored visas for structural engineer roles

45%

*Steps taken by businesses in response to recruitment difficulties for structural engineers
(percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)*

COVID-19 impacts on the skilled migration system was again flagged as a significant impact on businesses in regards to their recruitment difficulties.

Skill shortages

Pulse survey results (December 2020)



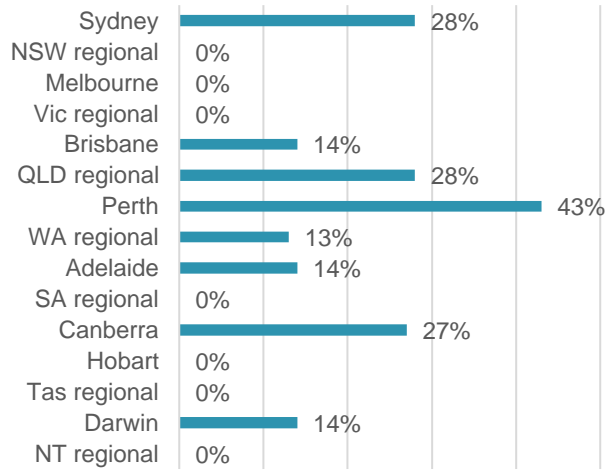
Civil engineering drafters

21%

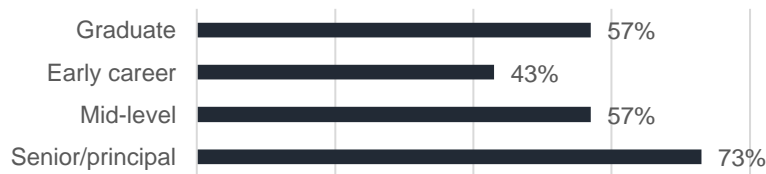
Percentages of businesses who included this occupation is in their top three most difficult to recruit

312211

ANZSCO code



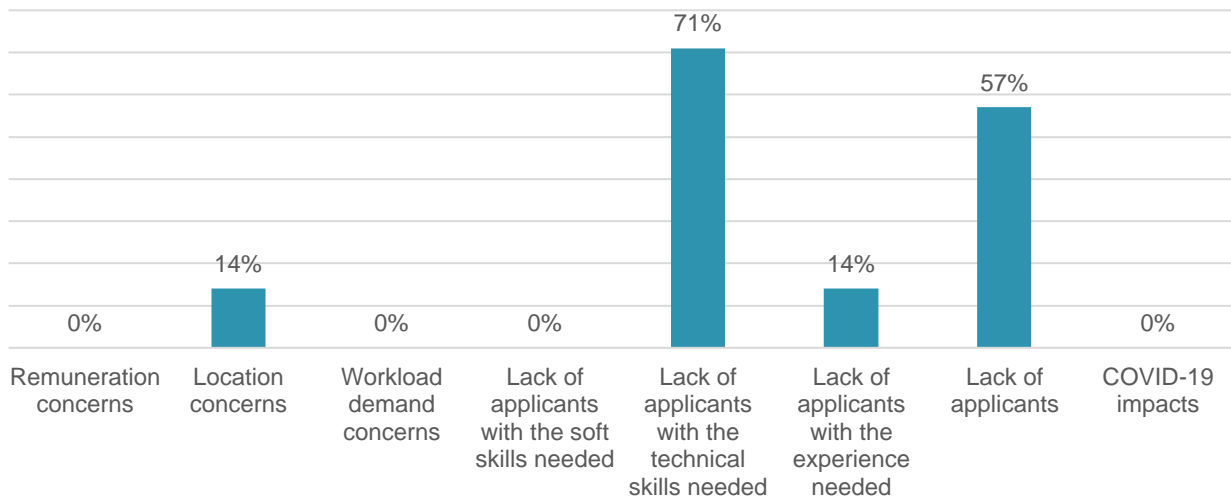
Locations where businesses are experiencing recruitment difficulties for civil engineering drafters (percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)



Experience levels where businesses are experiencing recruitment difficulties for civil engineering drafters (percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)

Skill shortages

Pulse survey results (December 2020)



Key reasons behind the recruitment difficulties for civil engineering drafters (percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)

Inadequate vocational training for civil engineering drafters was flagged by multiple businesses as a key reason behind recruitment difficulties.



Businesses who use employer sponsored visas for civil drafter roles

0%

Steps taken by businesses in response to recruitment difficulties for civil engineering drafters (percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)

Businesses flagged that they are reaching out to local schools to promote opportunities in this occupation, and are actively offering cadetship to year 12 students.

Skill shortages

Pulse survey results (December 2020)



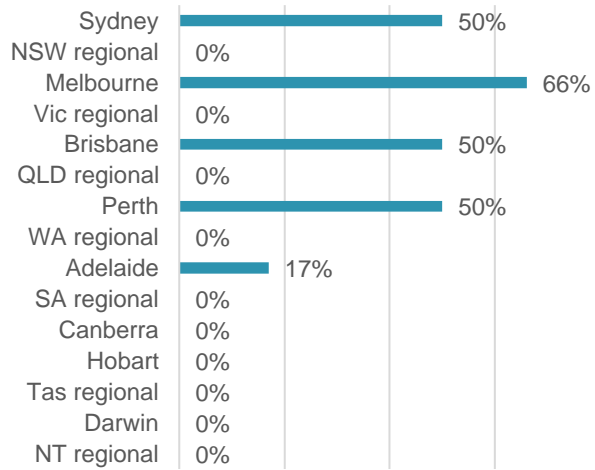
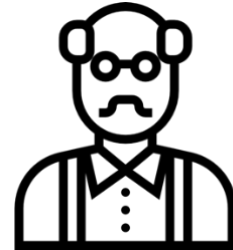
Transport engineers (or traffic engineers)

18%

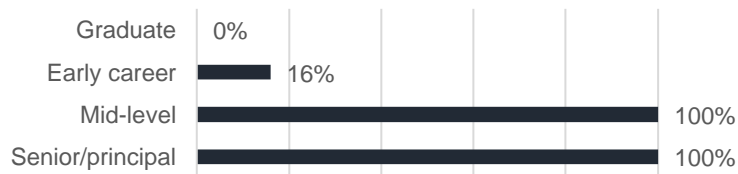
Percentages of businesses who included this occupation is in their top three most difficult to recruit

233215

ANZSCO code



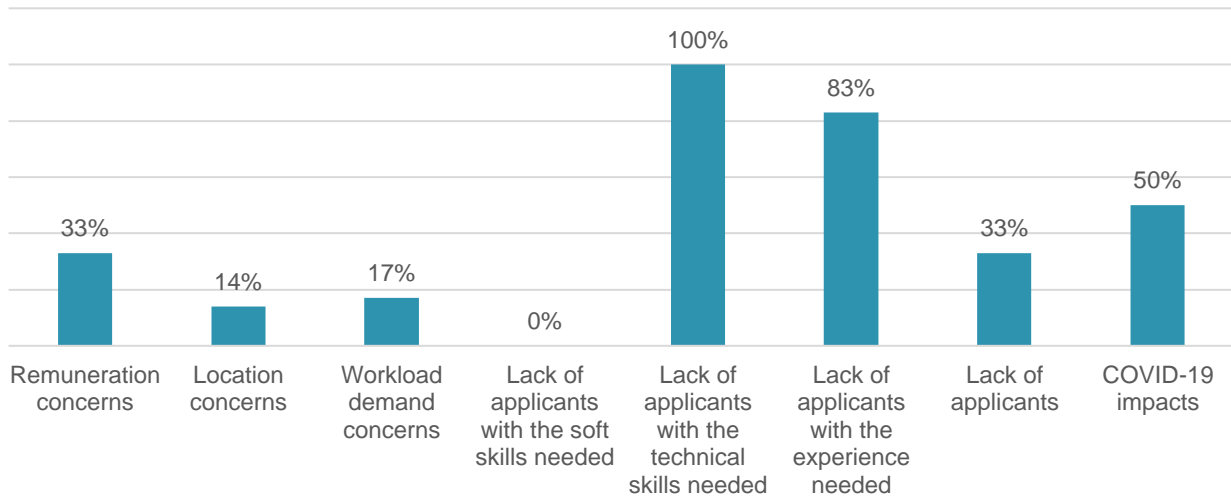
Locations where businesses are experiencing recruitment difficulties for transport engineers (percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)



Experience levels where businesses are experiencing recruitment difficulties for transport engineers (percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)

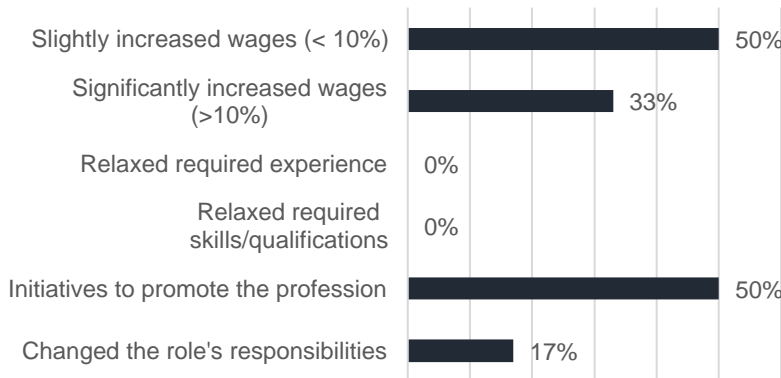
Skill shortages

Pulse survey results (December 2020)



*Key reasons behind the recruitment difficulties for transport engineers
(percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)*

One business noted a distinct lack of applicants in the local labour market, which is exacerbated because transport engineering is highly specialised work.



*Businesses who use
employer sponsored visas
for transport engineer roles*

83%

*Steps taken by businesses in response to recruitment difficulties for transport engineers
(percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)*

Businesses emphasised that this occupation has been significantly impacted by limited access to global talent through the skilled migration system throughout 2020.

Skill shortages

Pulse survey results (December 2020)



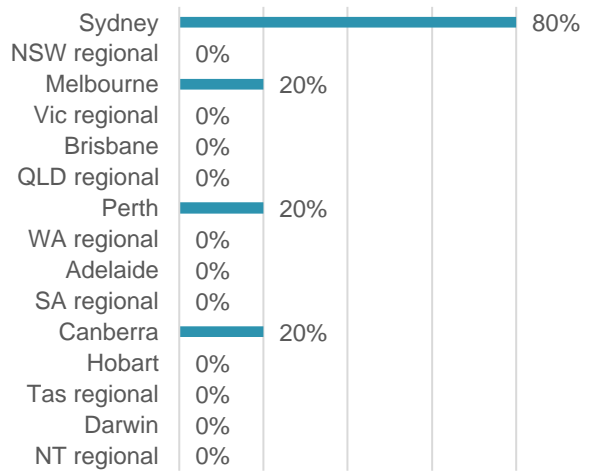
Mechanical engineers

15%

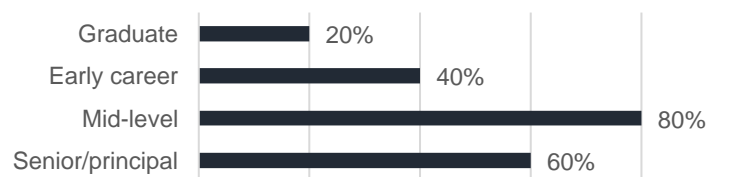
Percentages of businesses who included this occupation is in their top three most difficult to recruit

233512

ANZSCO code



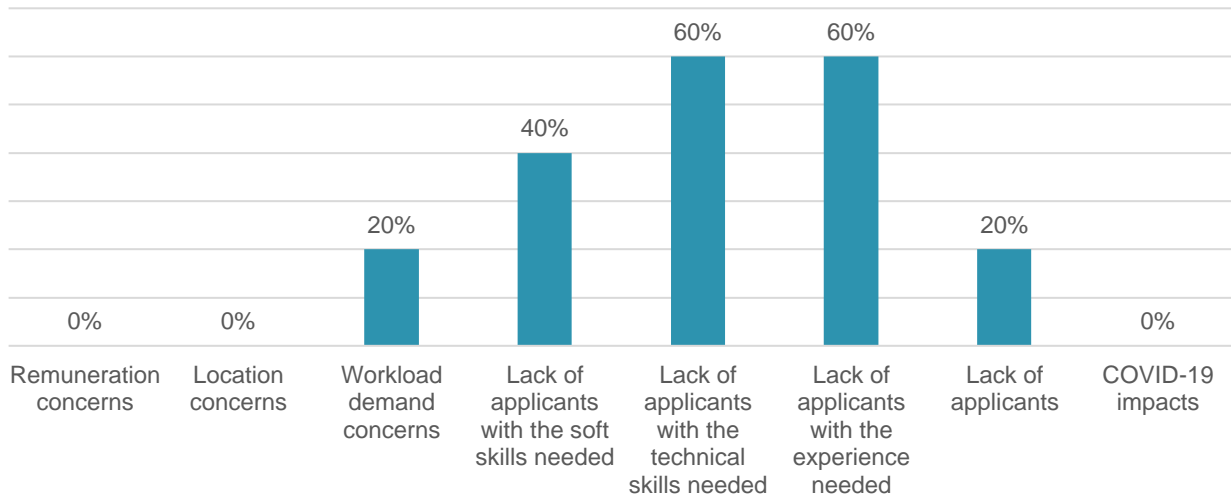
Locations where businesses are experiencing recruitment difficulties for mechanical engineers (percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)



Experience levels where businesses are experiencing recruitment difficulties for mechanical engineers (percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)

Skill shortages

Pulse survey results (December 2020)



*Key reasons behind the recruitment difficulties for mechanical engineers
(percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)*



*Businesses who use
employer sponsored visas
for mechanical engineers*

20%

*Steps taken by businesses in response to recruitment difficulties for mechanical engineers
(percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)*

Skill shortages

Pulse survey results (December 2020)



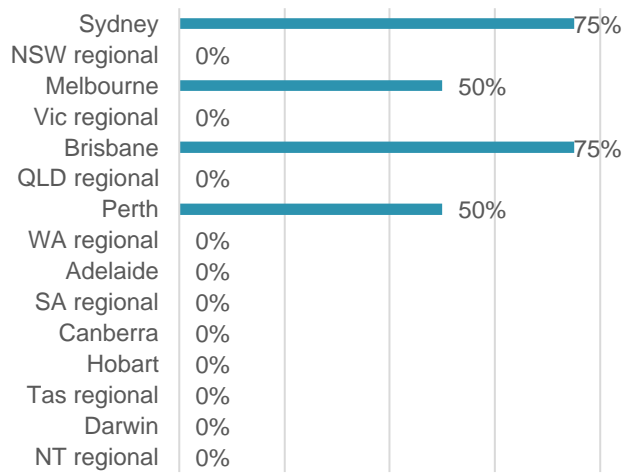
Hydrogeologists

15%

Percentages of businesses who included this occupation is in their top three most difficult to recruit

234413

ANZSCO code



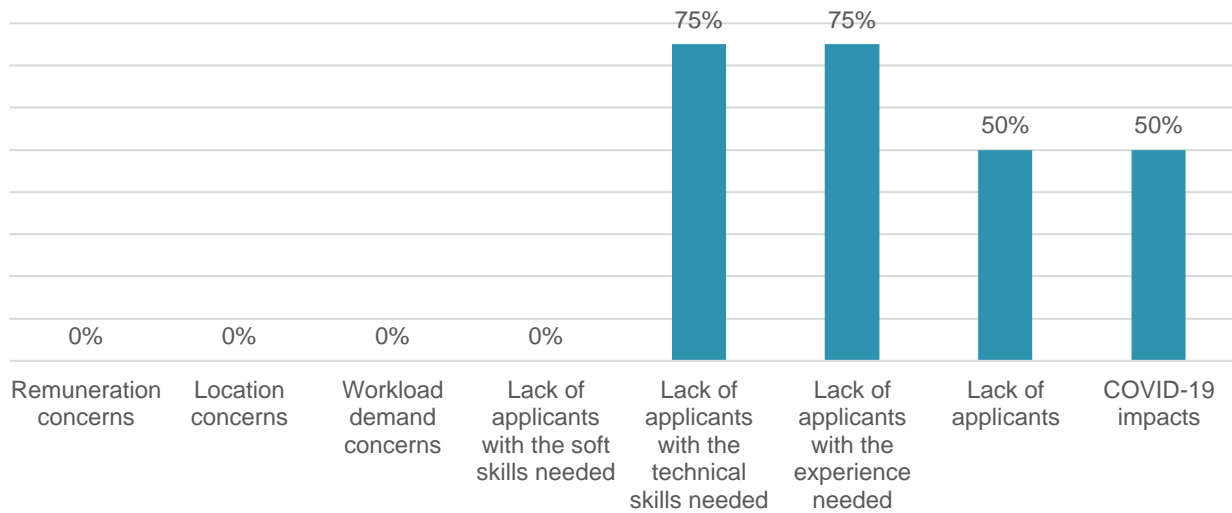
Locations where businesses are experiencing recruitment difficulties for hydrogeologists (percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)



Experience levels where businesses are experiencing recruitment difficulties for hydrogeologists (percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)

Skill shortages

Pulse survey results (December 2020)



*Key reasons behind the recruitment difficulties for hydrogeologists
(percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)*



*Businesses who use
employer sponsored visas
for hydrogeologists*

100%

*Steps taken by businesses in response to recruitment difficulties for hydrogeologists
(percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)*

Businesses again noted the significant impacts of COVID-19 and reduced skilled migration on the recruitment difficulties for this profession.

Skill shortages

Pulse survey results (December 2020)



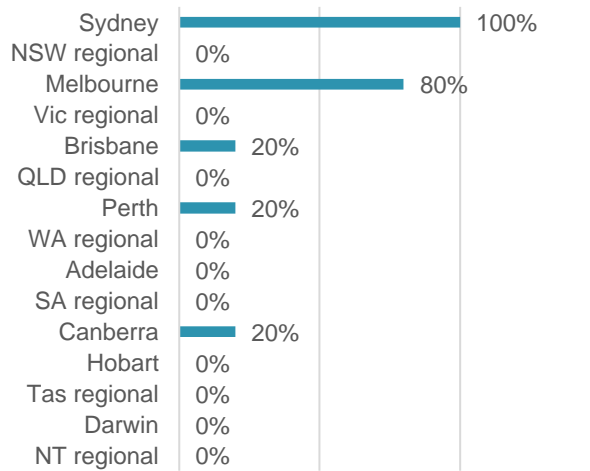
Electrical engineers

15%

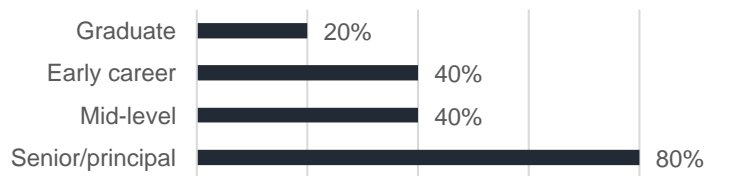
Percentages of businesses who included this occupation is in their top three most difficult to recruit

233311

ANZSCO code



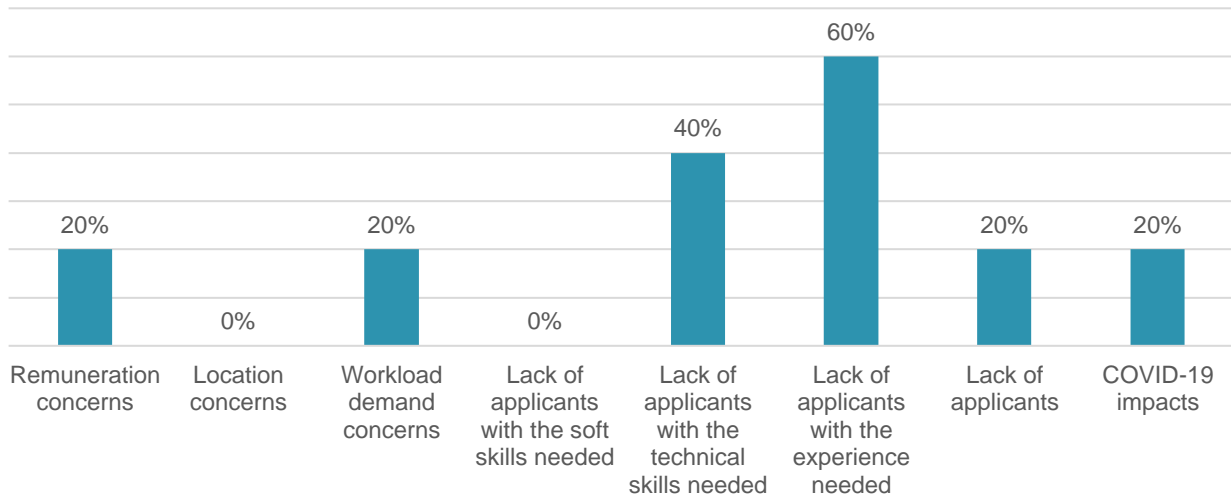
Locations where businesses are experiencing recruitment difficulties for electrical engineers (percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)



Experience levels where businesses are experiencing recruitment difficulties for electrical engineers (percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)

Skill shortages

Pulse survey results (December 2020)



*Key reasons behind the recruitment difficulties for electrical engineers
(percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)*

One business noted a lack of appropriate training courses as another reason for recruitment difficulties for electrical engineers.



*Businesses who use
employer sponsored visas
for electrical engineers*

80%

*Steps taken by businesses in response to recruitment difficulties for electrical engineers
(percentage of applicable businesses who agreed)*

Skill shortages

Pulse survey results (December 2020)



Contact us

We would welcome any opportunity to further discuss this report. To do so, please contact:

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