

25 trends that defined the way Australians work





INTRODUCTION

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In 1997, working from a garage in Melbourne's St Kilda, Andrew Bassat, Paul Bassat and Matt Rockman saw the potential of the internet to better deliver opportunities to Aussie workers and businesses. At the time, just 19% of Australian households were online – but things were about to transform. In March 1998, 7,000 job ads were posted on a brand-new website at seek.com.au, and the Australian employment market was forever changed.¹

In the 25 years since, Australians have weathered a global financial crisis, multiple natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to great change in the way we work, live and plan for our futures.

What's more, there has been the adoption of the internet and social media, wireless technology and AI, a growing population and domestic business landscape that is increasingly online, plus the introduction of new multinational corporations to our shores. These changes have greatly altered our working lives – from the fundamentals of how and when we commute, and where and when we work, to the practical details of work life, including desk essentials, work wardrobes and perks.

As the market leading employment marketplace in ANZ and across all six markets in Asia,² SEEK has been both an instigator of some of this change, and in a front row seat to the impacts the changing world is having on worker attitudes and business policy.

The following report provides a snapshot of some of the 25 biggest changes in the Australian labour market from the past 25 years.

In retrospect, the evolution of our working lives can seem both astonishing in its breadth (was the average retirement age really 41 for women only 25 years ago?)³ and surprising in how little has changed (at this pace, we will only reach gender pay parity by the late 2040s).⁴

Looking ahead, SEEK is buoyed by the possibilities of the next 25 years in Australia's vast employment landscape – and looks forward to delivering on its Purpose of helping people live more fulfilling and productive working lives and helping organisations succeed.

¹ Finding work meets the web – Page 5.

² Based on share of placements.

³ Living and working longer – Page 21.

⁴ Gender pay gap progress – Page 31.

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Technology at work



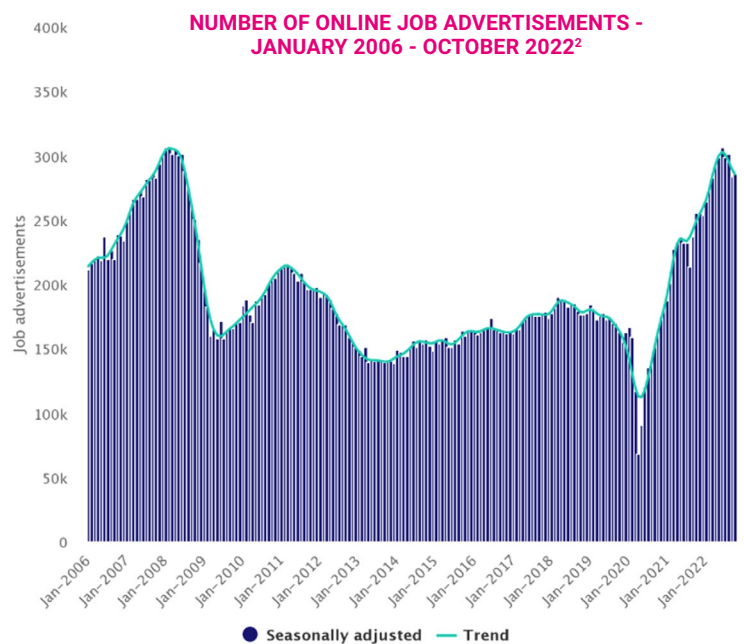
FINDING WORK MEETS THE WEB

Internet adoption takes the job market online

The 90s saw the dawn of the dot com era, with a period of massive internet adoption that revolutionised the way Australians live, socialise and work – and how we hire and apply for jobs. No more waiting to see what came up in the classifieds, or for the right person to respond to a ‘help wanted’ poster.

As SEEK launched in 1998, just 19% of Australian households were using the internet.¹ Fast forward to now, the web is so widespread that the Australian Census no longer bothers to ask about household internet use. And of course, finding work – or workers – has largely shifted online.

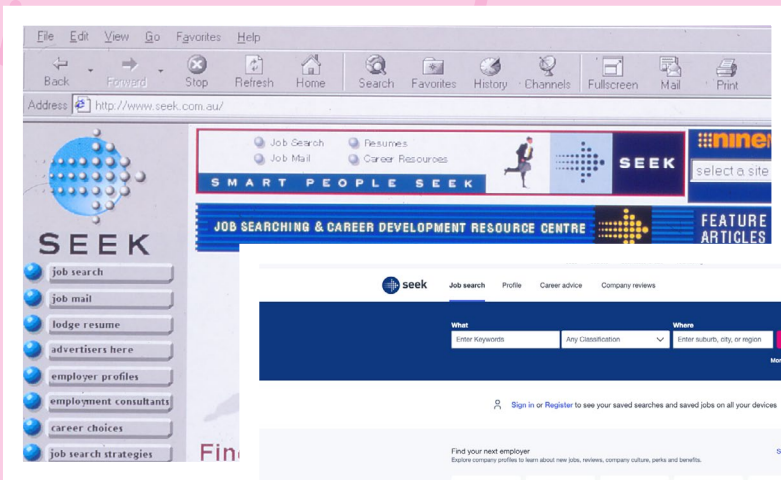
Online job ads, including those on SEEK.com.au, are the leading method for recruitment in Australia. There were 7,000 jobs on SEEK when it launched in March 1998, and now over 250,000 job ads are posted per month.



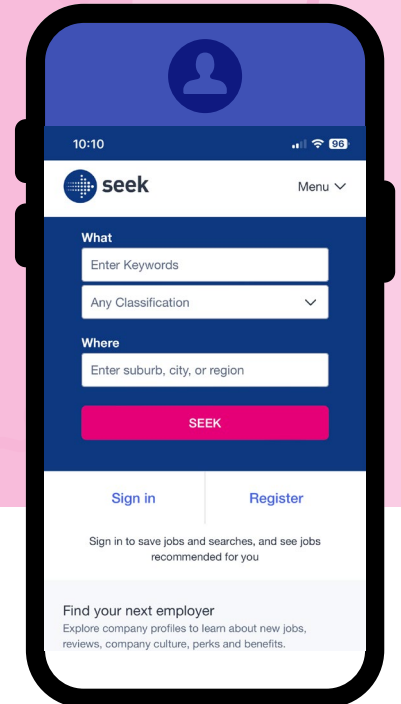
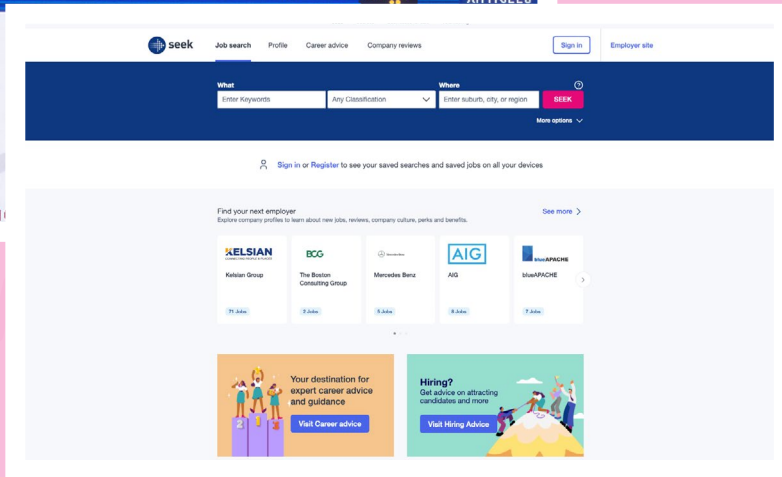
Source: Source is National Skills Commission

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (November 2000) Use of Internet By Households, “<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/productsbytopic/AE8E67619446DB22CA2568A9001393F8?OpenDocument>”, ABS Website, accessed 15 January 2023.

TECHNOLOGY AT WORK



The SEEK website has changed over time. But the biggest changes are under the hood.



SEARCHING GETS SMARTER

Evolving technology to make the best match

On the surface, your experience using SEEK may not appear to have changed very much over the years – aside from a more modern look.

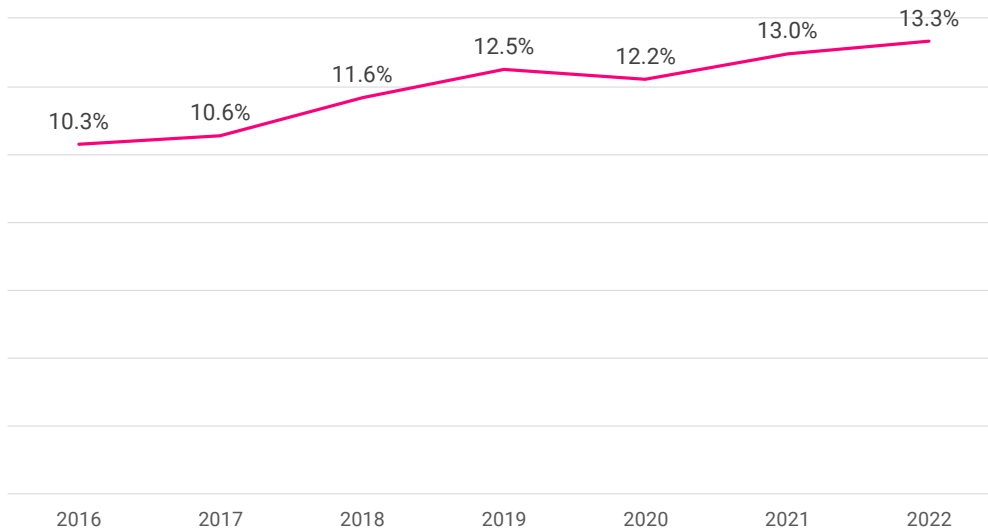
But under the hood – or rather, the website – the evolution of SEEK's technology is testament to how machine learning, artificial intelligence (AI) and personalised searching have shaped people's experiences online at large. These days, people expect things to be intuitive and relevant, and to get effective search results.

So over time, the way SEEK supports search has evolved. It goes beyond simply matching text by spotting behavioural patterns.

SEEK modifies large language models (like those that power ChatGPT) with its unique employment data. AI identifies the skills and requirements in the job ad and application text to deliver personalised, real-time recommendations. All of this helps provide Australians with the best possible match to what they're searching for – whether that's a new job or a new employee.

Investing in AI has been central to SEEK's development. This includes investment in ethical, responsible AI to mitigate bias, and there are now around 250 people across Asia Pacific solely focused on using data and AI to make sure SEEK is the best place to find jobs and employees.

PROPORTION OF JOB ADS THAT MENTION 'TECHNOLOGY'



Source: SEEK.

TECH TAKES OVER

Once a specialist industry, tech now crosses all sectors

Working with technology might once have conjured up the idea of binary code. But as tech has evolved, so too have technology jobs – and technology use has spilled into almost every sector.

Job ads in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have for many years been one of the greatest by volume. But the need for technology skills are no longer confined to roles in the technology industry. Job ads that mention technology continue to climb, with roles across management, logistics, marketing and more all requiring a technology skill set.

“Technology has ceased to be any one industry or skill set – it’s multidisciplinary and essential to all businesses that work with, service or employ people,” says Lisa Tobin, Managing Director Technology at SEEK.

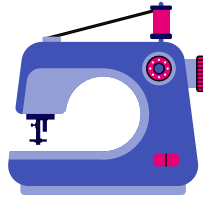
“The real skill in effectively deploying technology for business today is in understanding how it should interact with the human experience. As such, skills that bridge the human and the digital, such as artificial intelligence, data analysis and software integration are considered the fastest-emerging skills in the Australian economy.”

Source: SEEK.

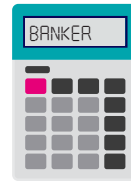
OCCUPATIONS FALLING AND RISING 1998-2022



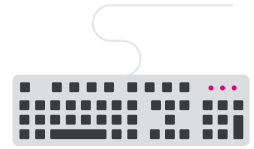
SECRETARY
-71.3%



SEWING MACHINISTS
-76.9%



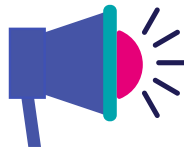
BANK WORKERS
-57.0%



KEYBOARD OPERATOR
-55.4%



GENERAL MANAGER
+746.4%



HR MANAGER
+732.0%



AGED & DISABLED CARERS
+338.2%



REGISTERED NURSE
+85.2%²

Source: ABS (see below)

AUTOMATION TRANSFORMATION

How technology has helped us do our jobs

Automation is reshaping the way Australians work across virtually every industry – from chatbots managing customer queries, to accounting software minimising manual data entry. And that’s created some huge opportunities for the labour market to evolve and advance over the past 25 years.

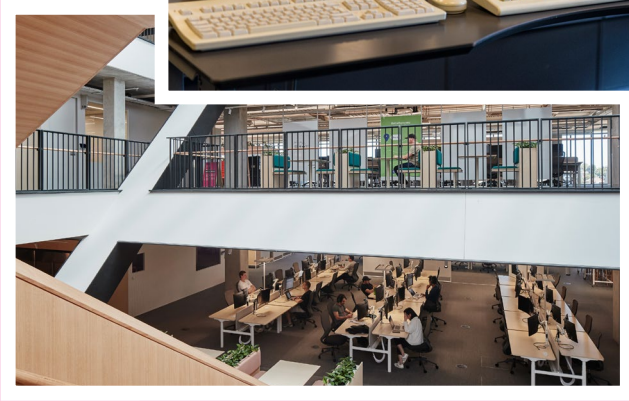
More time intensive, repetitive tasks have been taken on by automation, allowing people to shift into roles that place greater focus on instinct, relationships and creativity. While automation undoubtedly poses some challenges to the labour market, it also presents rich opportunity. It’s forecast that an additional 1.2 million new technology jobs will be created by 2034,¹ thanks to further automation developments.

“25 years ago, there was a lot of speculation about technology taking and replacing jobs. A quarter of a century on we see that technology has the ability to enhance the way we work and rather than replacing us, frees us up to focus on the more human elements of our roles.” – Lisa Tobin, Managing Director Technology at SEEK.

¹ Australian Computer Society (ACS), Technology Impacts on the Australian Workforce, 2020.

² Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022) ‘Employed persons by Occupation unit group of main job (ANZSCO), Sex, State and Territory, August 1986 onwards’ (Pivot Table), accessed 08 February 2023.

TECHNOLOGY AT WORK



From heavy desktops to laptops and home setups, the office of today often isn't an office at all.



EVOLVING WORKPLACE TECH

Replacing clunky desktops with Zoom backdrops

It doesn't seem so long ago that a workplace PC with Windows 98 seemed up to date. But as tech gadgets changed the game at home, they've naturally transformed the workplace, too.

At the time of SEEK's launch in 1998, less than half of Australians owned a mobile phone¹ – that number now sits at 92%,² with 73% of visits to seek.com.au via a mobile device. Back in 2001, only a little over 2 million Australians said they used the internet for work.³

Workplaces of 2023 are kitted out in a way that's far more technologically advanced than even a decade ago. From standing desks to working from multiple locations with video conferencing technology, and digital rostering systems that leave paper timesheets in the past, tech is helping Australians work smarter and more seamlessly each year.

¹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2001, OECD Communications Outlook 2001, OECD, Paris.

² Deloitte Digital Consumer Trends 2021, Australian Edition.

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2001) 'Internet Use by Sex', 2001 Census Working Population Profile, accessed 01 March 2023.



What workers want



WORKING ON WELLBEING

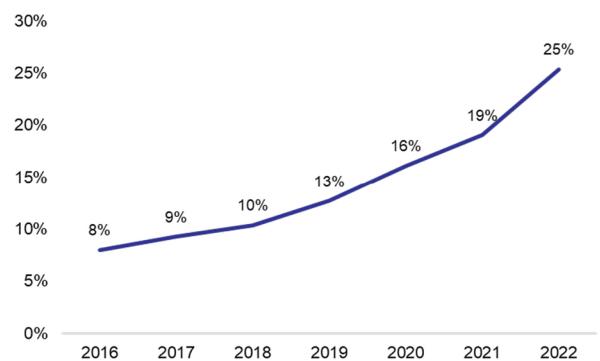
Taking care of people takes a front seat

Burnout. Boundaries. Balance. They've all become commonplace work terms as the push for prioritising wellbeing at work has become more mainstream. This is taking place as public awareness and conversation around mental health keeps growing. More than 2 in 5 Australians aged 16 - 65 experience mental ill-health at some point in their lives.¹ And in response, there's not only been a shift in day-to-day conversations in the workplace around boundaries, but workplaces are also taking more responsibility for the mental wellbeing of their people.

Employee support is growing within business – the market size of the Employee Assistance Program Services industry in Australia increased almost 6% on average per year between 2018 and 2023.²

This is evident in SEEK data that shows that mentions of mental health and wellbeing support in job ads have tripled in the past six years, with 25% of job ads now giving a nod to support being available.

MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE



Source: SEEK.
SEEK job ads that reference mental health and wellbeing support in the job ad 2016 - 2022.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2020-21) National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing, ABS Website, accessed 01 March 2023.

² IbisWorld Employee Assistance Program Services in Australia - Market Size 2007-2022.

WHAT WORKERS WANT



THE RISE OF REMOTE

Tied to your desk turns into work from anywhere

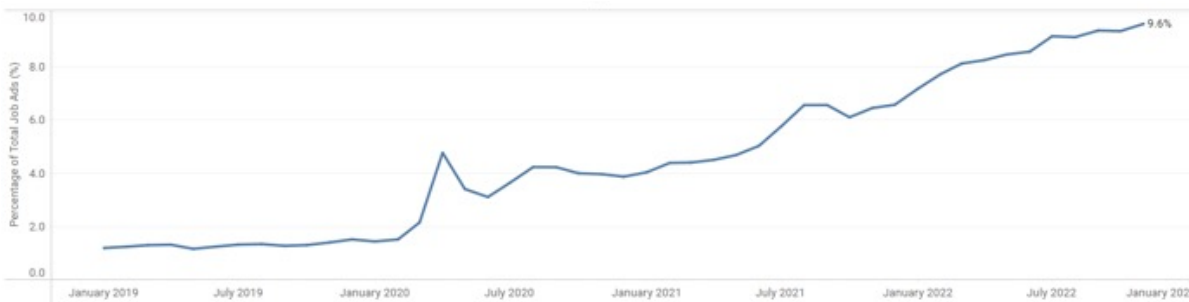
In the lead up to 2020, the number of Australians working from home averaged just 4% (average across 4 Census years) and had been in gradual decline since the late '90s.¹

This of course changed as the world was upended in March 2020. In 2021, 21% of Australians worked from home. Even those states that did not have stay-at-home mandates at the time of the Census, such as Queensland

and South Australia, still recorded a considerable increase in Australians working from home.²

Today, for many industries the ability to work from home some of the time remains an expectation among employees. Research for SEEK shows more than a quarter of Australian workers consider it a must-have when looking for a new role.³

% OF TOTAL ADS OVERALL TREND (ALL)



Job ads that reference "work from home" in the description 2019 - 2023.

Source: SEEK

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022) 'Table 2 – Working from home by state/territory, 1976-2021', Australia's journey to work, accessed 01 March 2023.

² ibid.

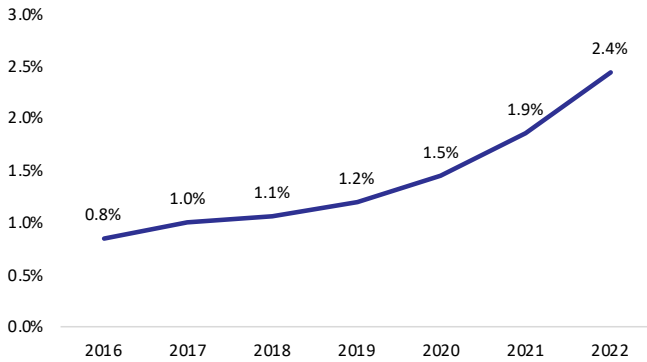
³ SEEK Laws of Attraction.



WHAT WORKERS WANT



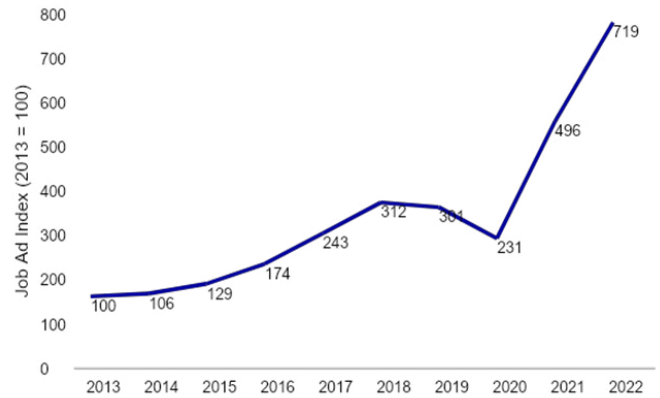
PROPORTION OF JOB ADS CONTAINING SUSTAINABILITY



The above figure reflects companies answering the call to demonstrate their commitment to sustainable practices, with job ads mentioning sustainability tripling over the last six years (0.8% in 2016 to 2.4% in 2022).

Source: SEEK

VOLUME OF JOB ADS - ENVIRONMENTAL & SUSTAINABILITY CONSULTING



To help companies meet their commitments, there has been a flow-on effect to specific job roles created. This is evident in the Environmental & Sustainability Consulting roles, where the number of job ads for these types of roles had more than 7x its volume in 2022 compared to 2013.

Source: SEEK

SPOTLIGHT ON SUSTAINABILITY

From doing good business to doing good

Social and environmental issues have become a growing focus in many people's lives – and that flows into their working lives, too.

The extent of people's worries about environmental issues fluctuated heavily between the 1990s and early 2010s, but concern has been on a steady trajectory in the past decade and peaked in response to the pandemic. What's more, almost half of Australians say what they value and the way they look at life has changed since the pandemic hit.¹

Protecting the environment remains a top priority for Gen Z and Millennials – among these groups, about three-quarters of people believe the world is at a tipping point for climate change.² Less than half are optimistic that efforts to protect the planet will be successful.³

So, how has this translated into the workplace? There has been a growing expectation for Australian companies to demonstrate a commitment to sustainable practices. And they've done so. The number of ASX200 companies with a net zero commitment doubled between 2021 and 2022.⁴ The number of roles in Environment & Sustainability Consulting has multiplied seven times and job ads that reference sustainability have tripled since 2016.⁵

The extent to which employers prioritise their sustainable practices is playing an increasingly important role in staff retention and satisfaction, with research showing Australian employees are often subsequently more proud to work for, and recommend, their organisation.⁶

¹ EY Sustainability Isn't What It Used To Be, https://www.ey.com/en_au/future-consumer-index/sustainability-isn-t-what-it-used-to-be.

² The Deloitte Global 2022 Gen Z and Millennial Survey.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ ACSI, Promises, Pathways & Performance: Climate Change Disclosure in ASX200 companies, 2022.

⁵ SEEK.

⁶ BCG, The Australian Employee Perspective on ESG, 2021.



WHAT WORKERS WANT



SWITCHING SUITS FOR SNEAKERS

Workwear follows a casual trend

Work wardrobes have come a long way. As SEEK launched in the late 1990s, Casual Fridays had officially taken office culture by storm. At the time, the option to don jeans and sneakers was considered a morale-booster amid tough economic conditions.

The concept of Casual Friday is said to have started at Hewlett-Packard in the US in the 1950s, but saw a colourful surge in popularity in the '60s thanks to a marketing campaign by a Hawaiian shirt company.¹

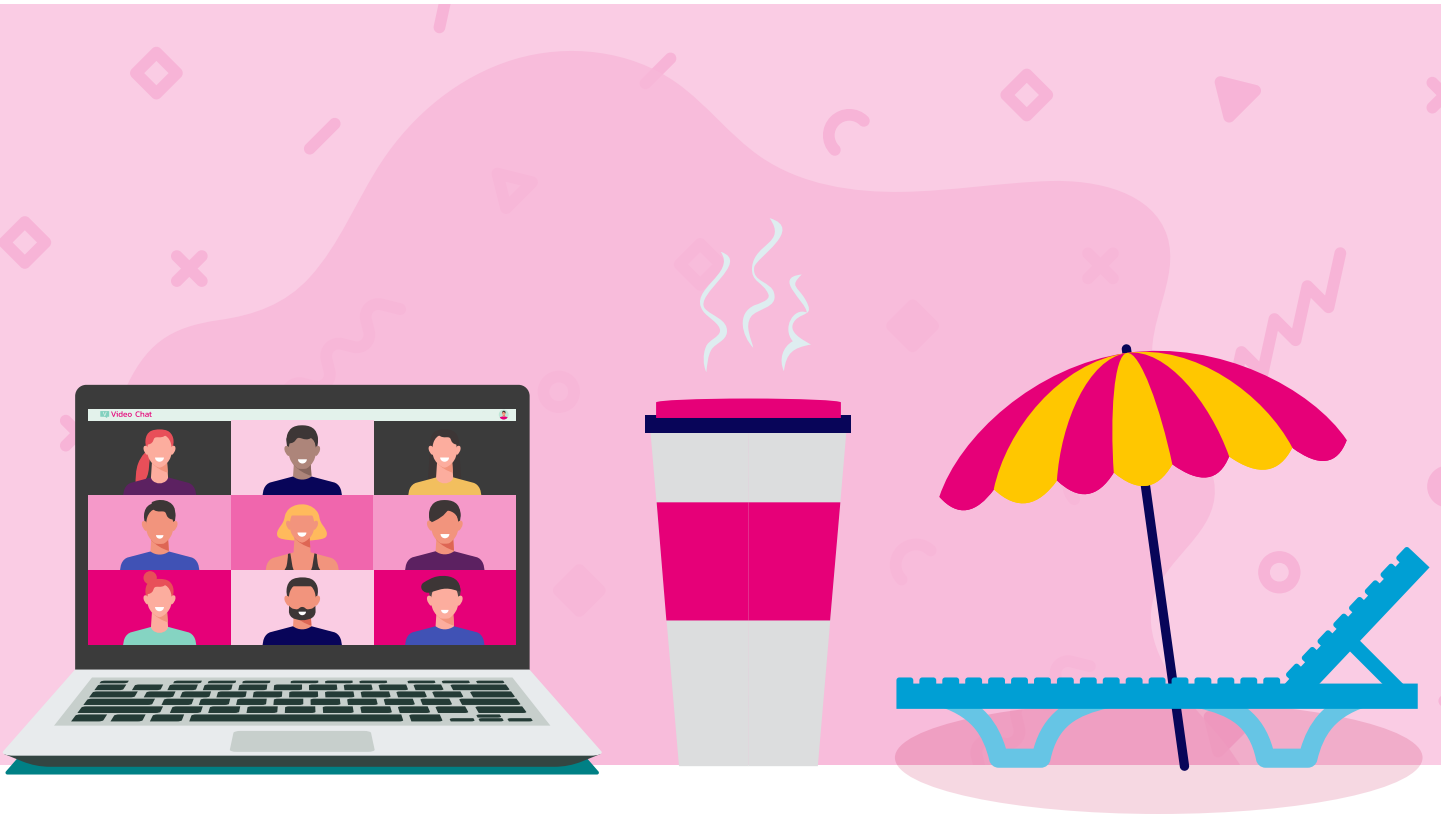
In Australia, there was a gradual casualisation of workwear during the 2010s. Pre-COVID “smart casual” was the ideal dress code for most Australian workers who didn’t wear a uniform, and the majority did not think that what they wore to work impacted their career progression.²

Since lockdowns, and the prevalence of “ZOOM-casual”, the concept of business wear is hardly even a consideration for many white-collar Australians.

¹ Garber, M. 2016, 'Casual Friday and the 'End of the Office Dress Code'', The Atlantic, May 26.

² Independent research conducted by Nature on behalf of SEEK, January 2023.

WHAT WORKERS WANT



WORK PERKS

After salary, what workers value

Phones, cars, discounted health insurance, gym memberships, free merchandise – in the late '90s and early 2000s these were among the top perks used to attract people to jobs.

But in recent years – and especially during the pandemic recovery where job ads boomed and job seekers gained bargaining power – there has been a notable shift. We saw the focus move from these unrelated-to-work perks, to benefits that support employees to do their work on a more fundamental level.

Today, Aussies find the option to work from home, or flexible working practices the most desirable perk when looking at career prospects.

TOP 3 WORK PERKS

1. Option to work from home / flexibility
2. Discounted goods / services
3. Discounted health insurance / travel insurance

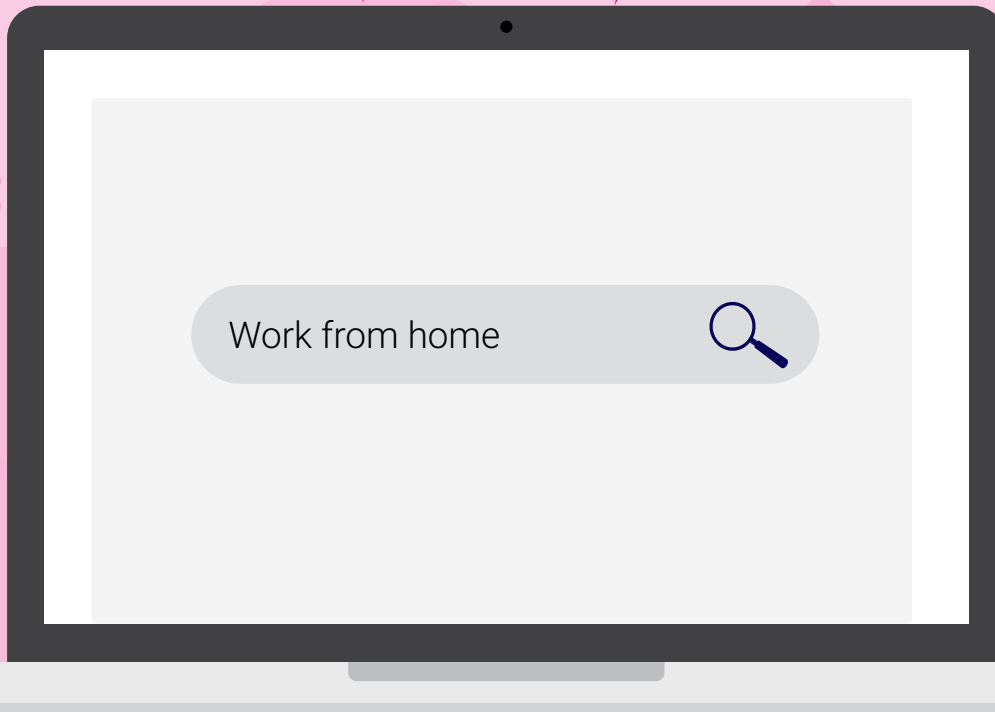
Source: Independent research conducted by Nature on behalf of SEEK, 2023.





Australians' working lives

AUSTRALIANS' WORKING LIVES



TOP JOB SEARCHES ON SEEK

Search results reveal what motivates workers

Job ad numbers and market data paint a valuable big picture, but there's another way to get unique insight into what people really want from work – SEEK search results.

These results provide a glimpse at where and how people want to work, the most popular roles, and the jobs people are just curious to know more about. Much more than just a job search, Australians use SEEK for insight into salaries, job demands and credentials, company information and more.

So, what do SEEK's top search results tell us about the past six months? Well, there's no denying our desire for flexible work – working from home, casual and part-time all make the top ten. FIFO (fly-in fly-out roles) has also appeared in our top searches.

When it comes to the jobs we can't help but research, administration, registered nurse, retail, electrician, truck driver and chef are among the top results.

TOP KEYWORD SEARCHES ON SEEK

1	Work from home	11	Manager
2	Casual	12	Receptionist
3	Administration	13	FIFO
4	Retail	14	Customer Service
5	Registered Nurse	15	Disability Support Worker
6	No Experience	16	Warehouse
7	Part Time	17	Project manager
8	Electrician	18	Driver
9	Truck driver	19	Accountant
10	Chef	20	Labourer

Source: SEEK data, September 2022 – March 2023.



MORE CHANGE, MORE OFTEN

The average tenure of Aussies in their jobs over time

Traditionally, short stints in jobs are associated with the younger generation. And this holds true today – people under 25 spend on average 1 to 2 years in a job. This has stayed steady in the past two decades.

But what's changed significantly is how older generations are viewing their time in roles. At the end of the last century people aged over 45 spent approximately 10 years in a role but today the average tenure for this group is 6 years and 8 months.¹

SEEK research shows that people now consider 3 to 4 years the optimum time to stay in a role. This works out to around 3 jobs per decade.

This means someone starting out at 18 years of age could have 17 different jobs in their lifetime.²

**3-4
YEARS**

**is the optimum
time in one role**

¹ McCrindle Job Mobility in Australia, 2020.

² *ibid.*

AUSTRALIANS' WORKING LIVES



Camp SEEK is a free annual program open to girls and non-binary young people that aims to foster a love of new technology applications and encourage careers in technology.

WOMEN AT WORK

Strengthening female representation in our workforce

In 1998, 53.6% of Australian women participated in the workforce.¹ With changes to the structure of the economy, stronger government policy and positive societal shifts, there has been steady growth in female participation in the workforce over the past 25 years.²

In 2014, the Australian Government committed to a 2025 target to reduce the participation gap between men and women from 12.1% to 9.1%.³ This target was reached in 2019, and since then, the gap has fluctuated (with a brief peak above the target in response to COVID-19) and is now estimated to sit between 8-9%.⁴

While the greater presence of women in the Australian working population is a significant win, there's still much progress to be made to achieve true equal representation in the workforce.

While SEEK data shows a gradual rise in applications for senior roles, women hold only 17.6% of chair positions, and

represent 19.4% of CEOs and 34.5% of key management personnel.⁵ Similarly, recent studies show there remains a low proportion of women in male-dominated industries such as construction, mining, and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).⁶

"Diversity at work is more than just a 50/50 ratio of men to women in the workforce, although that is a good start. It's about having as close to an accurate representation of your customer base as possible to encourage decision making that is fit for purpose.

"At SEEK we are actively encouraging diversity, particularly in the field of technology, through our hiring practices and programs like Camp SEEK.

"As we have become more collaborative with technology, the need for diversity of thought and experience across practical application, UX, learning and innovation has never been greater." – Kendra Banks, Managing Director ANZ

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (1999) 'Table 1 – Labour Force', 4102.0 Australian Social Trends, 1999, accessed 01 March 2023.

² Australian Bureau of Statistics (January 2023) Labour Force, Australia, ABS Website, accessed 9 February 2023.

³ Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet, National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality.

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (October 2021) Labour Force, Australia, ABS Website, accessed 6 February 2023.

⁵ WGEA, Women in Leadership.

⁶ CEDA, Occupational Gender Segregation, 2023.



AUSTRALIANS' WORKING LIVES



LIVING AND WORKING LONGER

Rising retirement age

It might sound baffling now, but the average retirement age when SEEK launched was just 48 (58 for men and 41 for women).¹ As life expectancy has continued to climb, so has the average age for retirement – it now sits at 55.4 years. But with the pension age at 67, most Aussies are expecting to retire at around 65.5 years of age.²

While we're working for longer, this has set the scene for a generation of older workers with an appetite to take on a new phase in their working lives. In fact, 1 in 5 workers over 55 are willing to change jobs to look for new challenges – more than any other generation.³

Average retirement age in 1998:

48

Current average retirement age:

55.4

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (1998) 6238.0 - Retirement and Retirement Intentions, Australia, Nov 1997, ABS Website, accessed 01 March 2023.

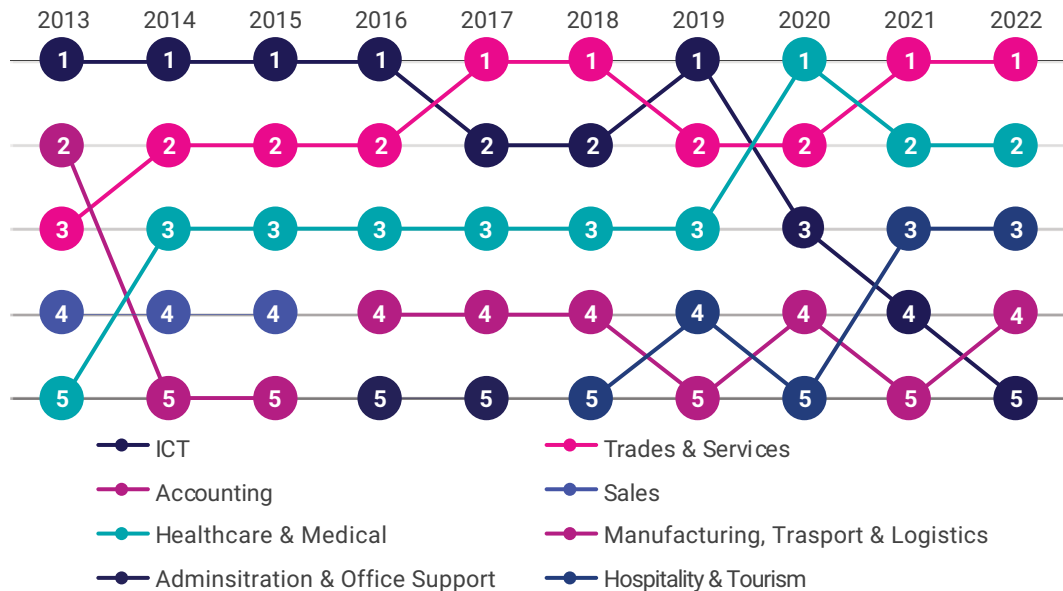
² Australian Bureau of Statistics (May 2020) Retirement and Retirement Intentions, Australia, ABS Website, accessed 7 February 2023.

³ Independent research conducted by Nature on behalf of SEEK, Aug 2022.



Industries and skills

TOP 5 INDUSTRIES BY JOB AD VOLUME ON SEEK 2013 - 2022



Source: SEEK

THE INDUSTRIES ON TOP

Exploring Australia's evolving industry make-up

In the early 2000s, retail was our country's biggest industry by employment, followed by manufacturing, property and business services, and healthcare.¹ Underpinning this was the reign of bricks and mortar stores before the E-commerce revolution, along with the housing boom.

Today, just four industries employ 40% of Australia's workforce.² It's no surprise that these top industries – healthcare, retail, construction and education – are critical to keeping the country up and running.

SEEK data capturing job ad numbers across the past decade also paints a valuable picture of Australia's industry make-up. It highlights industry shifts as our

needs, technology and economy have evolved – from the spike in healthcare job ads early in the pandemic, to accounting's fall from the top five as automation has transformed the industry.

As well as the rise of job ads for service-based industries through the decade, the position of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is worth taking note of. Ten years ago, jobs in ICT were the most in-demand according to SEEK's job ad volume. But the shift away from traditional tech roles – plus the permeation of technology into other industries across the board – saw the ICT industry drop to fifth by 2022.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2001) 'Industry by Sex', 2001 Census Working Population Profile, accessed 01 March 2023.

² Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) 'Industry of Employment by Sex', 2021 Census Working Population Profile, accessed 01 March 2023.



	2001	2021
1	Sales Assistants	Sales Assistants (General)
2	Cleaners	Registered Nurses
3	Secretaries & Personal Assistants	General Clerks
4	General Clerks	Aged and Disabled Carers
5	Shop Managers	Retail Managers

Source: ABS Census. Australia's most common jobs.

TOP JOBS OF THE LAST 25 YEARS

Tracking change in the most common Aussie jobs

Any guesses on the number one most common occupation for Australians for more than two decades? From food, clothing and beauty to hardware and appliances, sales assistants are often the face of our retail experience – and have taken out the top occupation spot since 1998.¹

The list of top jobs for Aussies over the past 20 years shows a fascinating glimpse of how the fabric of Australia has changed. One of the biggest shifts has been the rise of workers stepping into care-centric roles as our population has grown.

While primary and secondary school teachers always ranked highly throughout the years, childcare workers first reached the top 20 occupations in 2016 and are now in the seventh most common occupation in the country. Notably, a dedicated occupation for aged and disabled care workers was not included in the census in 2001. Fast forward to today, and it's the fourth most common occupation in Australia.

OTHER INTERESTING CALLOUTS INCLUDE:

- While self-service checkouts have become a fixture of our supermarkets, checkout operators remain in the top 30 most common occupations in the country.
- Back in 2001, 'computer professionals' were the ninth most common occupation. These days, this occupation title no longer exists in the Census. The highest ranked role of a similar ilk is 'software and applications programmers', which comes in at number 18 in the 2021 Census.
- Our growing focus on wellbeing and fitness is apparent through the number of fitness instructors more than doubling since 2001.
- Takeaway anyone? The number of delivery drivers has increased by 42% over the past 22 years.

¹ The data from this slide has been sourced from occupation data in the ABS Census conducted between 2001 and 2021. Australian Bureau of Statistics (November 2002) 'Classification Counts: Occupation By Sex' [data set], Census of Population and Housing: Classification Counts, Australia, 2001, accessed 9 February, 2023; Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006) Occupation (OCC06P) [Census TableBuilder] accessed 14 February 2023.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011) Occupation (OCCP) [Census TableBuilder] accessed 14 February 2023. Australian Bureau of Statistics (March 2018) 'Table 8: Occupation (4-digit level) by sex' [data set], Census of Population and Housing: Reflecting Australia - Stories from the Census, 2016, accessed 6 February, 2023. Australian Bureau of Statistics (May 2022) 'Table 11: Occupation (4-digit level) by sex', [data set] Income and work: Census, accessed 6 February, 2023.

INDUSTRIES AND SKILLS



The term “soft skills” originated in the US military in the mid-20th century, with leaders discovering that how a group of soldiers was led had a lot to do with the group’s success.

SOFT SKILLS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Non-technical skills gain attention

There’s a lot of talk of tech right now, but the value of foundational or employability skills – often referred to as ‘soft’ skills – cannot be underestimated.

SEEK research reveals that the older generations were less likely to highlight human-centred skills on their first resumés, instead leaning to more technical skills. But the disruptions of recent years have reinforced the importance of soft skills in the workplace. Now up to 64% of employers agree people with strong soft skills are more likely to land a job.¹

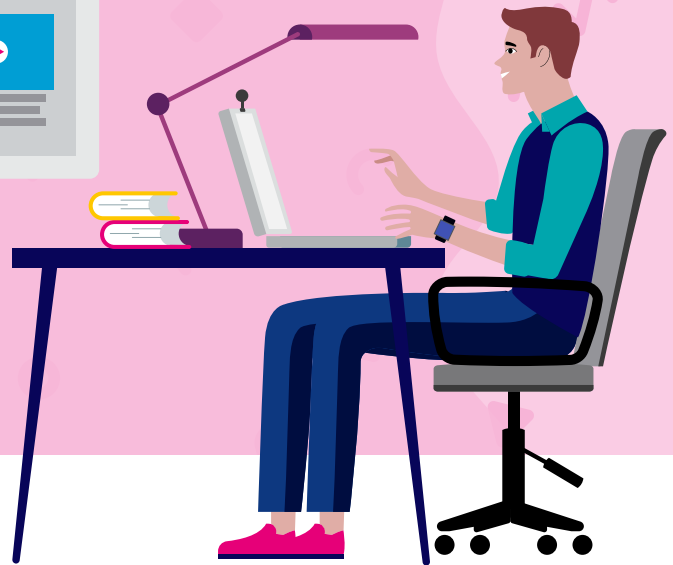
Breaking this down further, skills such as problem solving, oral communication, teamwork, and planning and organising have continued to climb in value for employers, at times even seen as more valuable than ‘hard’ or technical skills.²

AGE	45 +	25-44	18-24
Top skills on first CV	School reports/ Exam results	Computer skills	People skills & positive attitude

The top skill included in people’s first CV by age. Source: Independent research conducted by Nature on behalf of SEEK, Jan 2023.

¹ Independent research conducted by Nature on behalf of SEEK, May 2022.

² National Skills Commission, State of Australia’s Skills 2021: now and into the future.



PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT

Steps to greater representation in tertiary education

In the past 25 years, we've seen not only greater numbers of people gaining further education, but also more diverse groups as well.¹

There's been increasing commitment from government and education institutions to reduce barriers to further study for women, migrants, Indigenous Australians, students from rural and remote Australia and people from lower socio-economic backgrounds. What's more, advancements in technology have helped bridge geographical barriers to further education by allowing for remote learning.

While there's undoubtedly still work to be done, we can see progress in participation figures. For example, the number of Indigenous Australians aged 20-64 who are studying or who've completed a Certificate III or above has almost doubled, rising from 26% in 2002 to 50% in 2018-19.²

Better representation in vocational and higher education qualifications is helping to build a more diverse future workforce and one that better represents the Australian social fabric. It also means a broader group of people are now able to access the benefits of obtaining a non-school qualification – including improved opportunities for remuneration, wellbeing and life satisfaction.

¹ National Skills Commission, Australian Jobs 2021 Education and Employment.

² National Indigenous Australians Agency, 2.06 Educational participation and attainment of adults.



MAKING MOVES

How 'industry hopping' could evolve our workforce

Between 1998 and 2020 the number of workers changing jobs was on the decline. Australians were staying in jobs longer, and staying within their careers longer than in the decades prior.¹

Then came the pandemic and many expected The Great Resignation, as was reported in the US, to cause an uplift in Australians choosing to change not only their jobs, but their careers.

In fact the number of Australians changing their careers decreased between 2018 (2.7% of the population did so) and 2022 (2.1% of the population).²

But it's a figure that could be set to grow, considering 43% of Australian workers now say they'd look to move to a different industry should they change roles.³

So, are employers open to industry hoppers? It seems so. Since 2020, the number of SEEK job ads referencing 'no experience necessary' has doubled – albeit from a small base (0.3% to 0.6%), indicating that more hirers are happy to retrain industry hoppers, or new workers, than before.

43%

**of Aussies would change industries
if they were to change roles**

¹ Reserve Bank of Australia, Job Mobility in Australia during the COVID-19 Pandemic, June 2022

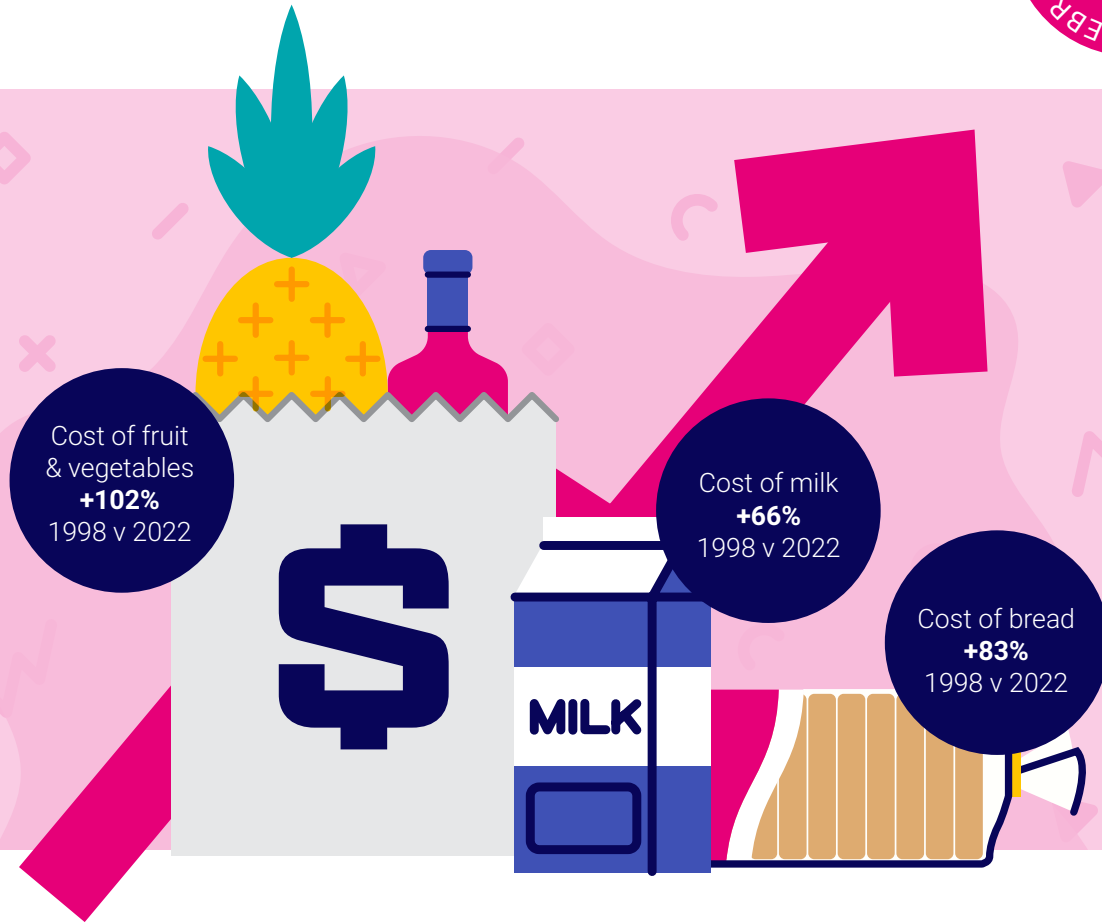
² Australian Bureau of Statistics (February 2018) Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia, February 2018, ABS Website, accessed 09 March 2023, and Australian Bureau of Statistics (February 2022) Job Mobility, ABS Website, accessed 09 March 2023

³ Independent research conducted by Nature on behalf of SEEK, 2022.



Wages and economy

WAGES AND ECONOMY



CLIMBING COST OF LIVING

Charting the change in how far pay packets stretch

Talk of inflation is hard to escape in 2023. And if we weigh up what the average wage covers now compared to 25 years ago, the picture is pretty striking.

Inflation targeting was introduced just a couple of years before SEEK launched in 1998 and over the following two decades, inflation stayed largely stable. But there were notable ebbs and flows – a spike in 2000 as the GST was introduced, a steady climb due to high commodity prices and domestic labour demand in the 2000s resources boom, then a rapid inflation decline and bounce back in response to the Global Financial Crisis.

Fast forward to 2023, Australians are experiencing the highest inflation since 1990. In total, the cost of living has soared by around 90% since SEEK's launch. Knock-on effects of the COVID pandemic, increasing cost of resources and overall strong consumer demand are all at play in this latest surge of inflation.

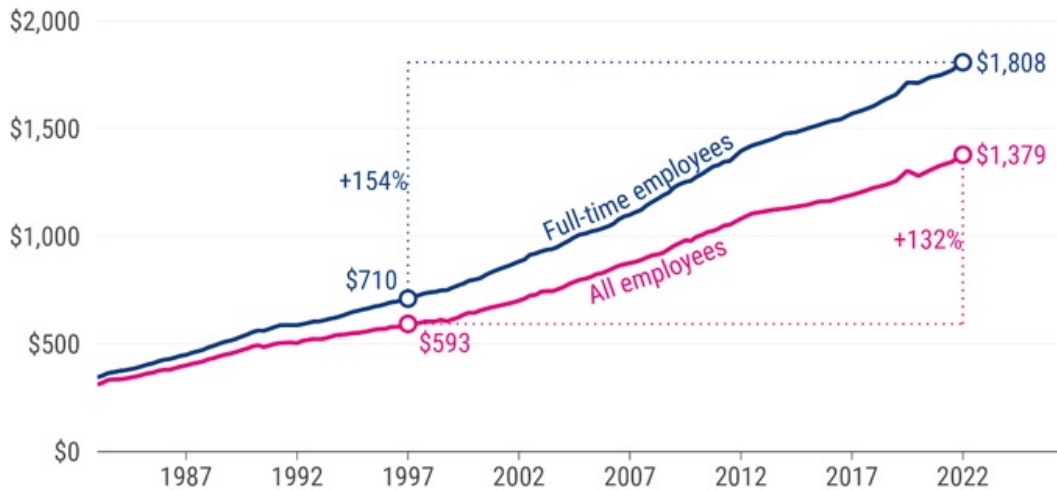
Food, fuel and new home construction have seen especially steep climbs – and it's clear that everyday essentials take a much bigger portion of pay packets right now.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (December Quarter 2022) Consumer Price Index, ABS Website, accessed 01 March 2023.



FULL-TIME WORKERS EARN 154% MORE NOW THAN IN 1998... BEFORE ADJUSTING INFLATION

Nominal average weekly earnings of employees



Note: Seasonally adjusted. 'Full-time employees' is average weekly ordinary time earnings of full-time adults; 'all employees' is average weekly total earnings of all employees. Source: ABS Average Weekly Earnings

SHOW US THE MONEY

How wages have grown – by year and by industry

The story of wage growth is not as simple as pay packets rising over time – inflation and industry differences play a role, too.

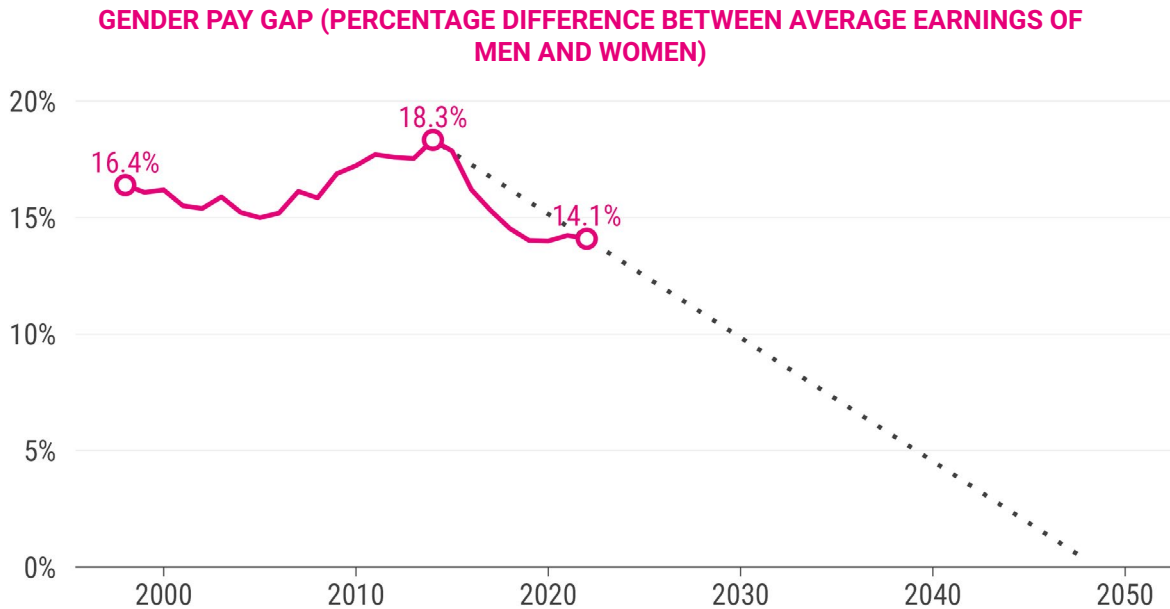
The average wage for a full-time worker in early 1998 was \$710 a week, working out to around \$37,000 per year – which is below the national minimum wage in 2023. And the average back then for all workers – including part timers – was lower, at \$593 per week. Now the average full-time wage is \$1,808 per week, which is just over 150% higher. And the average for all workers is \$1,379 – up 132%.

These might sound like huge jumps, but with inflation soaring, the real inflation-adjusted growth in average wages is a more modest 32% for full-time workers and 20% overall.

And not every industry has seen wages grow at the same

pace. The fastest growth has been in Information, Media and Telecommunications, where inflation-adjusted full-time wages are 46% higher than in 1998. At the other end of the scale is the 'Other Services' group which includes things like automotive repair, and hair and beauty services. A full-time worker in that area makes about 14% more than in 1998 after adjusting for inflation. Transport, Postal and Warehousing saw only slightly more growth in the past 25 years.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (November 2022) Average Weekly Earnings, ABS Website, accessed 01 March 2023.



Note: Projection based on extrapolation of the linear trend between 2014 and 2022, as per WGEA. Source: WGEA.

GENDER PAY GAP PROGRESS

The long road to pay parity

In 1998, the gender pay gap saw Australian women earn 33% less than men for the same hours worked.¹ Since then, government and private sector have taken steps to close the gap – including the Workplace Gender Equality Act introduced in 2012, and the Australian Gender Equality Council formed in 2018.

Despite these moves in the right direction, progress has been slow – and between 2020 and 2021 the national gender pay gap increased. It has now fallen to 13.3%, close to where it was pre-pandemic, which equates to women earning \$253.20 less than men each week.²

The push to close the gender pay gap continues – as recently as February, the Federal Government introduced a bill that will see Australian businesses with 100 or more employees made to publicly disclose their workplace gender pay gap.

There's still a long way to go before Australian women see pay parity in the workplace, with Australia lagging behind its international counterparts. Latest estimates suggest it will take another 26 years for the gender pay gap to be closed.³

On recent trends, the gender pay gap won't close until the late 2040s.

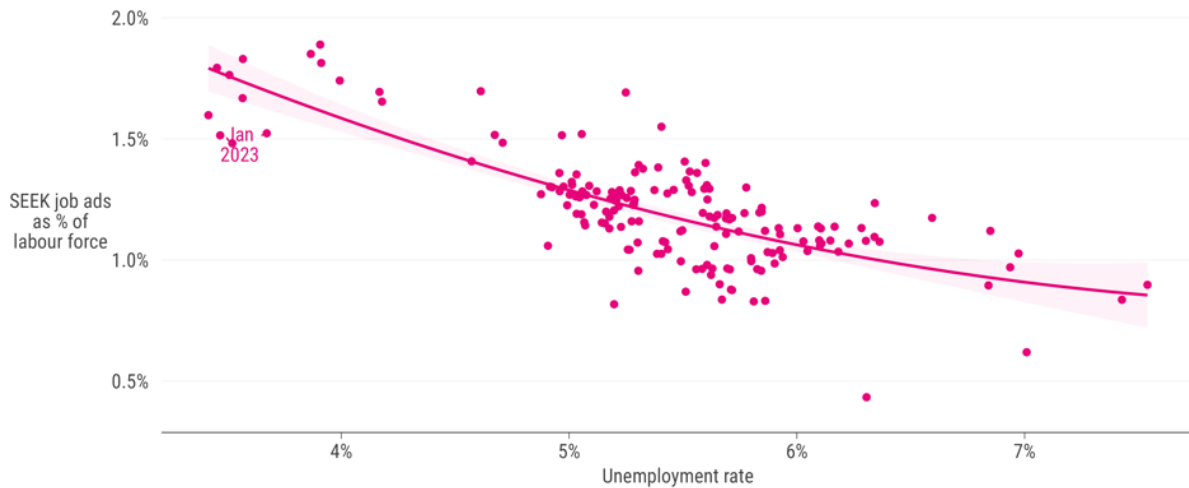
¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2000) 4102.0 Australian Social Trends, 2000, ABS Website, accessed 01 March 2023.

² Workplace Gender Equality, Gender Pay Gap data 2019 - 2021 <https://www.wgea.gov.au/data-statistics/data-explorer>.

³ ibid.

WHEN UNEMPLOYMENT IS LOW, JOB ADS ARE GENERALLY PLENTIFUL

Relationship between job advertisements and unemployment, as a percentage of the labour force, 2009-present



Note: 'RBA forecast' points assume COVID-era Beveridge Curve relationship continues.
Source: ABS Labour Force and SEEK.

JOB ADS VS. UNEMPLOYMENT

A record-setting rate and rising job ads

The past year has been a record-setting period when it comes to employment. Last year Australia reached its lowest officially recorded unemployment rate since August 1974 – 3.4% – and the rate has stayed only slightly lifted in 2023.¹

Alongside record low unemployment, there have been record high job ad numbers on SEEK.com.au, reaching a peak of more than 265,000 ads in May 2022. This was not only a peak for the year – but also for SEEK’s entire 25 years in market.²

The 1990s began with record-high unemployment at 11.2% in December 1992³ – as the country recovered from recession. As the economy stabilised, the unemployment rate dropped for much of the next decade until the next major economic event – the Global Financial Crisis of 2007-2008. The fallout saw unemployment climb to a peak of 5.9% in June 2009, though still far from the levels of the early 1990s.⁴

A decade of relative stability preceded the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic which served as the catalyst for the next great shift. Australians experienced mass upheaval of their working lives – especially for those in accommodation, food services, arts and recreation. In this period, unemployment peaked at 7.5% in July 2020.⁵

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023) 'Table 3 – Unemployment Rate', Labour Force, Australia, accessed 01 March 2023.

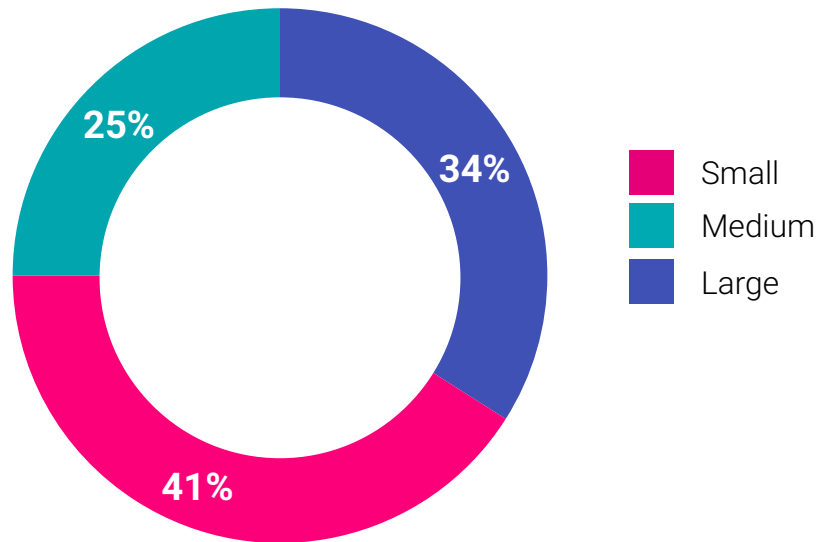
² SEEK, 2022 Employment Market Year in Review.

³ National Skills Commission.

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022) 'Chart 1 – Unemployment rate, Australia, August 1996 to May 2022, Seasonally adjusted, Historical Charts from August 1966 to May 2022, accessed 01 March 2023.

⁵ *ibid.*

AUSTRALIAN EMPLOYMENT BY BUSINESS SIZE AS AT MAY 2020



External graph data: ABS Catalogue No. 8155.0 Australian Industry Table 5 2018-19, May 2020 and ASBFEO Calculations

SMALL BUT MIGHTY

The strength and staying power of small business

The local coffee shop, gym and hairdresser. The neighbourhood tradie, and our all-time favourite Thai restaurant. Despite drastic changes to the Australian economy over the past 25 years, one thing has stayed the same: small businesses remain the backbone of our workforce.

In 1998, small businesses accounted for 95% of businesses in Australia, and this has continued to climb, reaching 97.5% in 2022.¹ Large businesses make up less than 1% of Aussie operations and medium-sized business 2 - 3%.²

In 2018-2019, small businesses contributed over \$418 billion to Australia's GDP,³ representing more than 32% of the economy. So, it follows that small businesses are

the nation's biggest employer – more than 4.7 million people or 41% of Australia's workforce are employed by a small business.⁴

While many small businesses were hit incredibly hard by the pandemic, Australian entrepreneurialism is booming. In 2021, the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) reported a record 34,868 new business registrations⁵ – the highest ever in one month. Another positive? Those opening small businesses amid the COVID economic recovery are increasingly representing Australia's diverse community, with more small businesses founded by young people, migrants and women.⁶

¹ Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman, Contribution to Australian Business Numbers, 2022.

² *ibid.*

³ Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman, Small Business Counts December 2020.

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ ASIC, Company registration statistics, 2021.

⁶ Xero - Where Opportunity Lies: Australia's new small business boom, 2022.

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