

29 May 2025

Unemployment falls across region as more join the job market

Unemployment rates in the Hunter improved during April, along with an uptick in workforce participation, bringing the proportion of jobseekers across the region into line with the state and national figures.

The most marked improvement was in the Hunter statistical area (excluding Newcastle and Lake Macquarie), where the jobless rate dropped from 6.1 per cent in March to 4.1 per cent – now level-pegging with the NSW and national figures, which are also 4.1 per cent.

The number of jobseekers in the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie statistical area remained relatively stable between March and April, trending down slightly from 4.2 to 4.1 per cent.

The April figure of 4.1 per cent for the entire region compares favourably with the 5 per cent recorded in March.

Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force employment data shows employment increased by 89,000 in Australia in April, with 11,500 – or nearly 13 per cent – of those jobs spread across the two statistical areas of the Hunter region.

“This shows the region is still punching hard, despite the challenges that remain with skills shortages,” Business Hunter CEO Bob Hawes said.

“The majority of the region’s growth was in fulltime positions, with more roles filled by females than males. This is reflective of a trend nationally, influenced by factors such as increased workplace flexibility and improved access to childcare.

“The growth in employment was supported by higher participation rates across the region, meaning more people are either working or actively looking for work.

“We are aware from employment providers and recruitment companies there has been a lift in the response rate to calls for applications and the improvement in the participation rate is a reflection of this as the employment pool expands.”

The number of job ads in the region, as measured by the Jobs and Skills Australia Internet Vacancy Index, fell by nearly 300 from March to April, as the rate of jobs being filled outpaced new roles being posted. The figure of 4,691 advertised roles for April is down by about 1,100 jobs – or approximately 20 per cent – on the corresponding month in 2024.

Youth employment continues to be a strong story across the region, with the unemployment rate for 15- to 24-year-olds falling from 8.6 per cent in March to 5.4 per cent in April.

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Comparison of regional, state and national unemployment trends

