



Barriers to hiring disadvantaged or vulnerable entry-level job seekers

Victorian employers' attitude survey.

December 2009



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Definitions

Employability: Relates to a worker 'having the capability to gain initial employment, maintain employment and obtain new employment if required'(Hillage & Pollard 1998 p.2).

Employability skills: The skills required to gain employment or establish an enterprise, but also to progress within an enterprise or expand employment capability, so as to achieve one's potential and contribute successfully to enterprise strategic directions. (DEST 2002)

Entry level jobs: Throughout this report the term 'entry-level' is used to refer to jobs that 'require workers to have no more than a high school education and no more than one year of work experience' (Maxwell 2006 p.3) . These kinds of jobs tend to be concentrated in services, retail, trade and manufacturing. Most employed young people work in these types of jobs (ABS 2006), but importantly, many women across the life course continue to work in 'low skilled' jobs that are characterised as 'entry level' (ABS 2006).

Executive Summary

Since 2007 the Brotherhood of St Laurence and VECCI have had a close relationship based on bridging the gap between disadvantaged members of the community and businesses that are in need of a reliable and productive labour force. The Brotherhood is a partner of VECCI's corporate social responsibility program, "Business Cares", which aims to invigorate the lives of those who are disadvantaged and to improve social welfare.

In 2008, VECCI collaborated with the Brotherhood of St Laurence with the intention of developing work readiness programs to better match disadvantaged job seekers with potential employers. In order to obtain evidence to inform policy and to assist in the development of such programs, this research project was undertaken.

The research project surveyed a sample of Victorian businesses on their views of the barriers to hiring disadvantaged or vulnerable job seekers in entry level positions. It also aimed to identify the types of assistance or support that potential employers need to enable them to take on and retain this group of job seekers.

The research found that despite employers reporting difficulty in recruiting for entry level vacancies, a significant number are hesitant in hiring disadvantaged job seekers, and hold perceptions that they are unsuitable due to inadequate job-readiness, lack of relevant skills or appropriate behaviours. The research also suggests that a significant number of businesses believe suitable job seekers are discouraged from applying for or accepting entry level positions.

A key finding from the research was that three in five businesses surveyed reported they were experiencing difficulty in filling entry level positions. The main reasons cited for these difficulties was the work was not seen as attractive and that the remuneration offered was not competitive. The findings suggest that where employers were unable to fill entry level jobs this was due to the applicants' lack of relevant experience.

Three in four employers reported they had hired entry level employees from disadvantaged groups, with the primary groups of interest being workers over 45 years of age and parents returning to work.

There was strong interest from employers (90%) in employing people from disadvantaged groups provided assistance was available. The assistance reported to be most essential was an opportunity for work experience or a work trial period, targeted pre-employment training and government subsidised training for low skilled employees.

Two in three employers reported challenges with retaining entry level employees, and more than one in two reported 'poor work ethic' and 'poor attitude' as the primary reason. On the job training was cited by more than 50% of employers as the most beneficial

assistance with entry level employees and more than 40% reported team building skills, mentoring and other soft skills training as being useful support.

One in five employers reported having hired an apprentice and three in ten reported hiring a person into a traineeship position. However, 42% reported having no interest in employing an apprentice or a person to a traineeship.

These findings are promising in respect to the interest indicated by employers in considering employing disadvantaged people, provided the necessary support for the employee and the employer is available. Given that the most commonly cited reason for not employing entry level employees was 'lack of relevant experience' it is therefore not surprising that the type of assistance suggested as most helpful when employing entry level people was 'targeted industry based training' and 'on the job training'.

This research suggests that businesses are prepared to take a proactive role in invigorating the lives of those who are disadvantaged by helping them into paid employment provided that the right kind and level of support is available. As the Australian economy emerges from the downturn in 2010, the long term trends in the labour market due to globalisation, climate change, technology and Australia's demography will lead to emerging labour shortages once again.

The Australian Government in collaboration with States and Territories have implemented significant reform through their education and productivity agenda. However, this research indicates that additional investment is needed to encourage and support employers (SMEs) to take on and retain disadvantaged jobseekers as well as build the foundational skills and capabilities of jobseekers.

1 Introduction

This research was conducted in October 2008, at the beginning of an economic slowdown and a significant rise in unemployment. While Australia avoided recession and the unemployment rate peaked below 6 per cent, it is expected the numbers of long-term unemployed will grow (Chapman 2009). At the same time, given the long term trends in the labour market, skill shortages remain an issue for employers. Research conducted by VECCI and other organisations has highlighted the challenge of ensuring a supply of well-trained, adaptable, competent people to meet the demands of industry is a significant and ongoing issue for Victorian businesses.

Over the past two decades the labour market has changed dramatically. In many skilled occupation areas, Australia does not have sufficient skilled workers to meet industry demand. Equally, despite the rise in unemployment over the last 12 months, some industries still report difficulty in finding sufficient job-ready workers for entry level positions.

The pool of unemployed persons who lack foundation skills, vocational qualifications and recent work experience is significant. These job-seekers generally require mentoring and support in order for them to take-up and sustain employment.

Australian workplaces have seen a rapid adoption of technology and other innovations over the last 20 years, and operate in an increasingly globalised, complex and changing competitive business environment. This in turn has increased demand for people with immediate skills and experience. Work ready skills required for today's labour market are known as 'employability skills'. The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) describe employability as the 'skills required not only to gain employment, but also to progress within an enterprise so as to achieve one's potential and contribute successfully to the enterprise's strategic directions' (DEST 2002).

This research highlights the dilemma facing some employers: the workers who are available for entry level work tend to need more support and mentoring. This additional support and mentoring translates as a cost to business and industry. This report examines this dilemma from the perspective of employers. It examines employer perceptions of disadvantaged jobseekers and the kinds of assistance that would influence their decisions to consider such groups for entry level positions.

2 Research Objectives

The aim of the research project was to survey a sample of Victorian businesses regarding their views on the barriers to hiring disadvantaged or vulnerable job seekers into unskilled or low skilled roles. It also aimed to identify the types of assistance or support that potential employers need to enable them to take on and retain this group of job seekers in the future.

The importance of engaging business in welfare reform processes has become more apparent in recent years. Research suggests that there are benefits to linking training and other services for low-wage workers to the needs of employers in local labour markets.

In 2008, VECCI collaborated with the Brotherhood of St Laurence with the intention of developing work readiness programs to better match disadvantaged job seekers with potential employers. In order to obtain evidence to inform policy and to assist in the development of such programs, a research project was undertaken.

3 Methodology

Sample

An invitation to participate in the research was emailed to 5,500 VECCI members from the VECCI membership database (October 2008). The sample included both large and small businesses from the whole of Victoria.

Actual Completions Sample Size

The total sample comprised 193 respondents. This is a small sample and as such statistical results will only be reported where there is sufficient cases (greater than $n=50$) to do so. The survey was emailed to 5,500 VECCI members and this sample represents a response rate of 3.6%. Therefore results, whilst indicative, must be treated with caution.

Questionnaire

Survey questions were developed jointly by the Brotherhood of St Laurence and VECCI project committee, and included questions regarding employers difficulty with recruiting for entry level positions; if they currently employed people from disadvantaged or low skilled groups; how satisfied they were with these employees if they had hired them; their level of interest in employing people from these groups; what support and assistance they would require when hiring people from these groups.

Demographic questions included primary location of their business, size of business (number of FTE), and industry group. The survey questions can be found in Appendix A of the report.

Data Collection

The survey was a self-report pre-coded online survey which was set up on a web based survey site – Survey Monkey. Participants were emailed an invitation to participate from VECCI and a link to the survey was embedded in the email. The survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete. A follow-up email reminder was set out approximately four weeks later.

Reporting

The survey contained a number of open ended questions which elicited insightful responses. Therefore given the small sample with this current study it will be reported as a qualitative / quantitative piece of research using the rich and numerous responses to these open ended questions to support the quantitative findings. Industry categories will

not be reported due to small sample sizes. These verbatim responses will add considerably to the value of the research and improve the robustness of the quantitative statistics by including these responses as additional supporting evidence. The responses to the open ended questions are included in Appendix B.

4 Sample Demographics

Industry

A diverse range of businesses / employers responded to the survey. The most represented industry categories (comprising at least 10 per cent of respondents or more) were:

- Health and community services (20%)
- Manufacturing, metals and engineering (20%)
- Wholesale and retail trade (14.5%).

Comparison with ABS data of Victorian industry indicates an overrepresentation by respondents in manufacturing, metals and engineering; health and community services; and, accommodation, cafes & restaurants. Given the self-selecting nature of the survey (i.e. employers responding because they had specific views / experience relating to low skilled employment) this may indicate that these industries had greater demand for low skilled employment or greater difficulty in meeting this demand at the time of the survey. Alternatively it may be owing to VECCI member characteristics.

Table 1 Comparison of Victorian businesses, ABS, VECCI members, current research sample

Industry	Victorian Businesses (%)	Skills Survey (%)
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	10.2	5.7
Mining	0.2	0.5
Manufacturing, metals and engineering	5.9	20.2
Electricity, gas and water supply	0.1	1.6
Construction	15.2	6.7
Wholesale and retail trade	15.9	14.5
Accommodation, cafes & restaurants	2.8	8.3
Transport and storage	6.0	5.2
Communication services	1.2	2.6
Finance and insurance	6.8	0.5
Property and business services	25.4	6.2
Education	0.8	4.1
Health and community services	4.4	19.7
Cultural and recreational services	2.4	2.1
Personal and other services	2.8	7.3
Number of responses	476,966	193

NOTE: Metals and engineering' was merged with 'manufacturing' on the basis of ABS subdivisions.

SOURCES:

ABS Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits, 8165.0, table 1.7 Victorian data, 2006 Census

VECCI member's database.

Business size

Survey respondents represented businesses of varying size with respect to employees although just under half were organisations with 20 or fewer paid staff.

- 2% Sole traders
- 47% 1–20 employees
- 19% 21–40 employees
- 14 % 41–99 employees
- 20 % 100+ employees.

Location

- 55% primary business location was in greater Melbourne
- 45% primary business located in regional and rural Victoria.

More specifically:

- 39% inner and middle Melbourne suburbs, including Western Melbourne
- 16% outer Northern, East and South Eastern Melbourne suburbs
- 19% regional cities
- 26% rural areas.

5 Summary of Key Findings

The key findings from the research are reported below, with the full responses provided in the Detailed Findings section.

Difficulty filling employment positions

- Three in five employers reported that they were currently experiencing occasional (38%) or frequent (22%) difficulty filling entry level positions.
- More than four in five employers reported that they were currently experiencing occasional (40%) or frequent (43%) difficulty filling skilled positions.
- The two major factors employers reported as contributing to difficulty in filling entry level positions were; the work not seen as attractive (40%) and wages/remuneration not being competitive (39%)

Reasons for not hiring people at entry level positions.

- Half of employers reported lack of relevant experience (52%) as being the primary reason for not hiring entry level employees and 46% reported poor attitude as the primary reason.
- Businesses with 21-40 employees reported poor attitude (57%) and poor motivation (41%) to be the primary reasons for not employing entry level people.

Persons employed at entry level

- Respondents indicated that they had more frequently employed; older people 45+ years (29% often, 50% sometimes) and, parents including sole parents returning to work, (20% often, 52% sometimes);
- High proportions reported they never employed young people attending school (50%) indigenous Australians (46%) and or the disabled (42%).

Satisfaction with entry level employees once hired.

- Employers who had hired an entry level employee from one of these groups (school attendees, young school leavers, people aged 45+, Cultural and Linguistic Diverse (CALD) people, parents, indigenous Australians and the disabled), - 86 per cent were satisfied (76%) or very satisfied (10%) with these employees and (8%) were dissatisfied

Interested in hiring entry level people from these groups

- More than one in two businesses reported they would be more interested in hiring older people aged 45+ (60%), and parents including sole parents returning to work (50%)
- Larger businesses (100+ employee's) where more likely to hiring people from each of these groups compared to smaller businesses.
- Interest in employing people from these groups into entry level positions increased if support to the business was provided
- The reported preferred employment arrangements if they hired one a person from one of these groups into a entry level position was; permanent full time (43%), and casual (38%)

Type of support in hiring these entry level employees reported as essential or helpful

- Nine in ten employers reported that work experience or work trial opportunities (90%);
- targeted industry pre-employment training for employees (89%); and
- government training subsidies for low skilled workers (88%) would be essential or helpful.

Apprenticeships and traineeships

- In the last 12 months, one in five respondents had employed people in entry level apprenticeships and three in ten businesses had employed people in entry level traineeships.
- 42 per cent of respondents had no interest in employing a school-based apprentice.

Entry level staff retention difficulties and opportunities

- When asked about retaining new staff over the last 12 months, 35 per cent of employers reported they had experienced difficulties
- The top three reasons for employees in entry level positions being unsuitable were; poor performance / work ethic 59%, poor attitude 53% and absenteeism 39%.
- The most commonly provided services to support the retention of entry level workers were in-house:
 - Non-accredited on-the-job/off-the-job training (54%)
 - Team building skills (46%)
 - Mentoring (44%)
 - Soft skills training (44%).
- The most commonly sourced external agency services for entry level workers were to develop linkages with training providers (23%) and find new entry level employees (22%).

6 Detailed Findings

6.1 Employer recruitment difficulties and opportunities

Recruitment difficulties - Skilled positions

Respondents were asked if they were experiencing any difficulties filling both entry level positions and skilled positions in the current labour market.

More than four in five employers reported that they were currently experiencing occasional (40%) or frequent (43%) difficulty filling skilled positions.

Respondents from regional and rural Victoria (93%) were more likely to report frequent or occasional difficulties filling skilled positions than those in greater Melbourne (76%).

Figure 1 indicates that more than four in five businesses reported difficulty in filling skilled positions with those businesses employing 41-99 employees reporting frequent difficulties (52%); however 19% of this group also reported having no difficulty filling skilled positions.

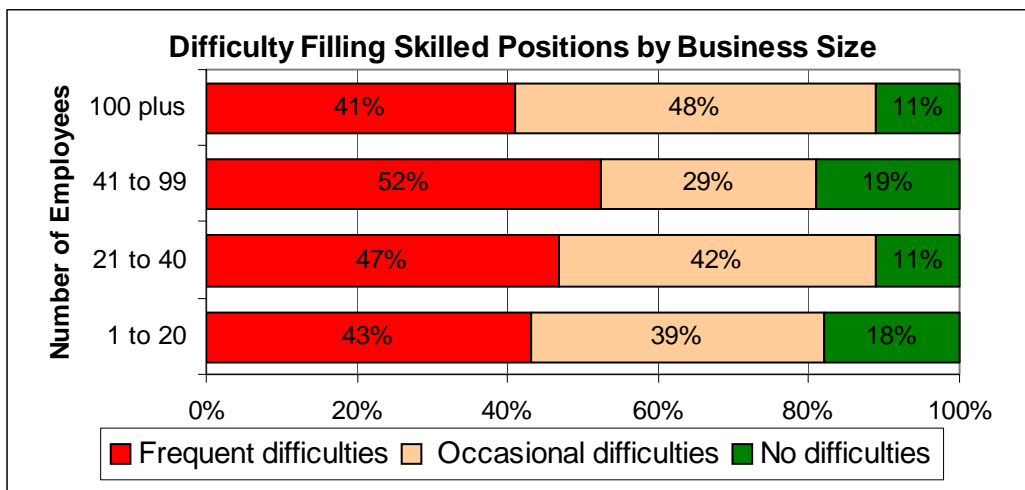


Figure 1 – Difficulty filling skilled positions by business size

Recruitment difficulties - Entry level positions

When asked if they were experiencing any difficulties filling entry level positions, three in five employers reported that they were currently experiencing occasional (38%) or frequent (22%) difficulty filling entry positions.

Regional and rural businesses in Victoria (60%) were equally likely to report frequent or occasional difficulties filling entry positions as those businesses in greater Melbourne (60%).

Approximately three in five businesses reported difficulty in filling entry positions with those businesses employing 21-40 employees reporting frequent (29%) and occasional

(45%) difficulties. 44% of businesses employing 1-20 employees reported having no difficulty filling entry positions, as indicated in figure 2.

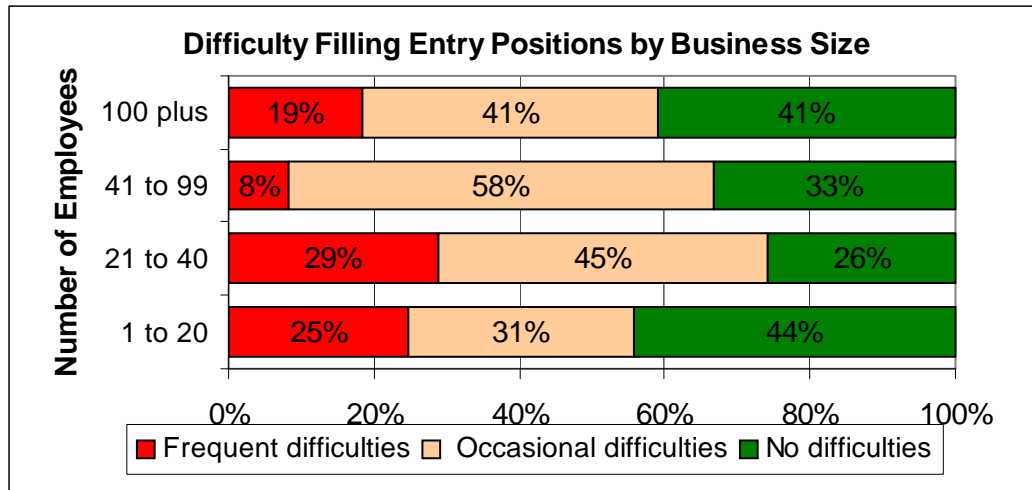


Figure 2 -Difficulty filling entry level positions by business size

Reasons for difficulty in filling entry level positions

According to respondents, a range of factors made it difficult to fill entry level positions. The top reasons cited are:

- Work not seen as attractive (40%)
- Wages/remuneration not competitive (39%)
- Difficult/physically demanding work (25%)
- Industry/job not well understood (22%).

Figure 3 below indicates that smaller businesses (1-20 employees) were more likely to report wages not being competitive (47%) and work not being seen as attractive (42%) as reasons for difficulty filling entry level positions.

Those businesses employing 41-99 employees were the least likely to report these issues as being reasons for difficulty filling entry level positions. This group were also less likely to report frequent difficulties (8%) in filling entry level positions, compared to 25% of those businesses employing 1-20 employees (see figure 2).

There were no differences with reporting of reasons for difficulty in filling entry level positions between urban and regional/rural businesses.

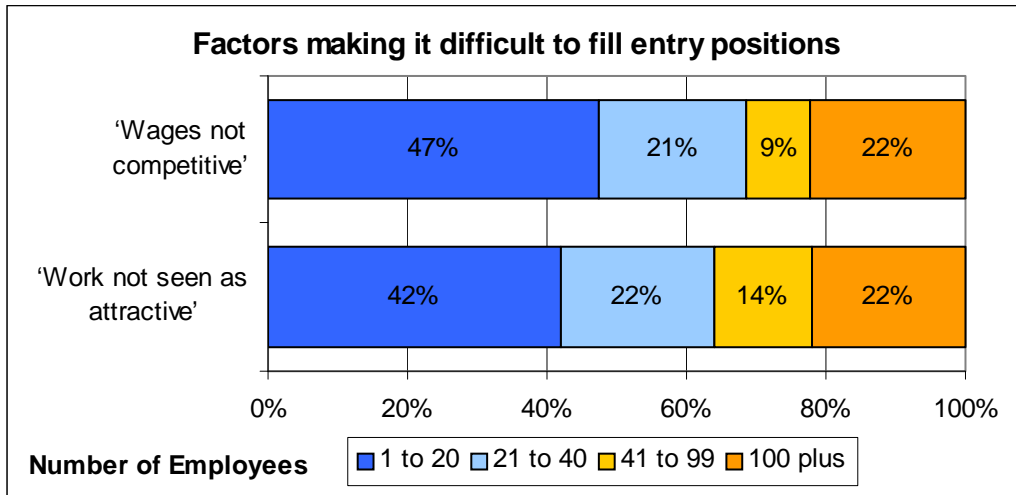


Figure 3 - Factors making it difficult to fill entry level position

Some 30 verbatim comments were given by respondents as to other reasons why they found it difficult to fill entry level positions. These comments emphasised attitudinal factors, skill shortages and difficulty in consistently providing the number hours of work required.

Attitudinal/ behavioural factors

- Lack of work ethic
- Lack of commitment: when offered job often they then accept our position as well as another job and then decide which one they will attend.
- transient nature of young generation of workers

Skill shortages

- Lack of professionally trained or qualified people
- Loss of skills base from regional Victoria to city
- Shortage of people with appropriate skills and Lack of qualified people

Casual work

- Availability of work hours: People needing at least 15 hours work regularly each week, which was not always available.

Reasons for not hiring people for entry level positions

The survey listed 22 possible reasons employers may have for NOT hiring entry level employees as well as an option to provided a verbatim “other” reason. This was a multiple response question (see questionnaire in Appendix A). The most often cited reasons respondents selected for not hiring people for entry level positions (as cited by at least one quarter of respondents) are shown in figure 4 below.

Some 13 verbatim comments were given by respondents as to other reasons for NOT hiring people applying to entry level positions. The following comments illustrate key concerns:

concern with the applicant wanting to take the next step after this position, and this not always being on offer - not content with staying at this level for some time.

No time to train at basic level on the job

OH&S becomes even more of an issue when people have no experience or have trouble understanding safe working instructions.

Gen Y syndrome - will they still be here when it gets "boring"? i.e. not worth investing all that training to someone who will move on.

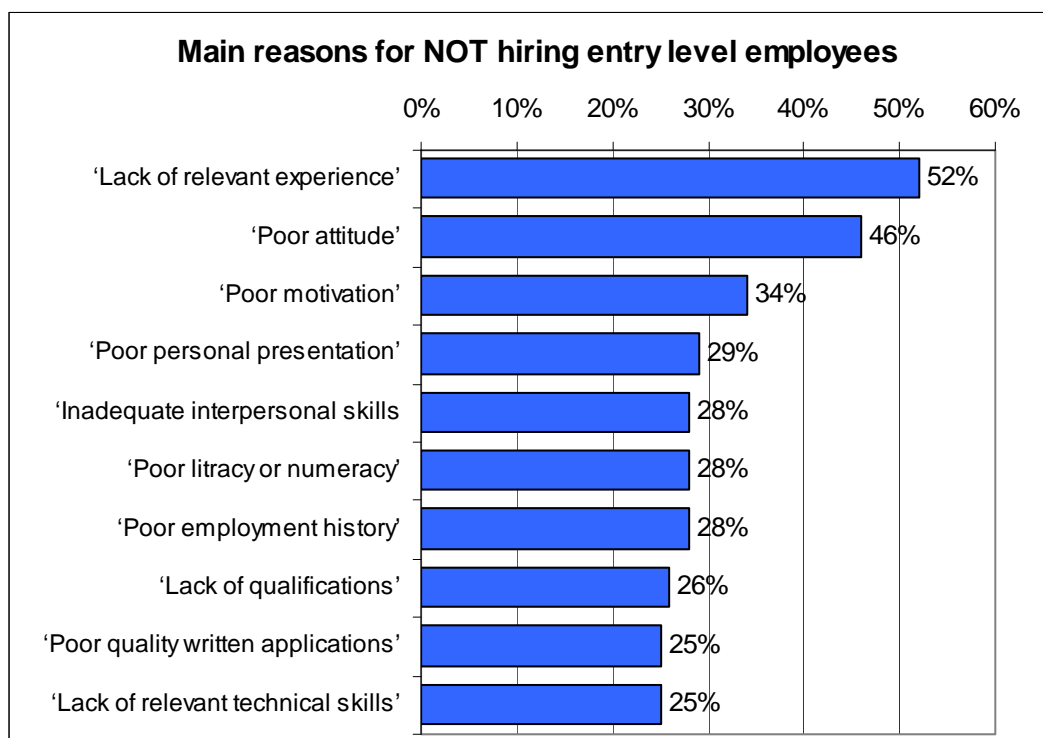


Figure 4 - Main reasons for NOT hiring entry level employees

Of the top two reasons, lack of experience was more likely to be an issue for urban employers than regional/rural ones and for employers of 100+ employees (62%) compared to those employing 21-40 employees (46%).

Figure 5 indicates that businesses with 21-40 employees reported poor attitude (57%) and poor motivation (41%) to be most significant reasons why they did not employ entry level employees, whereas this was not reported as high with businesses of 100+ employees, poor attitude (37%) and poor motivation (29%).

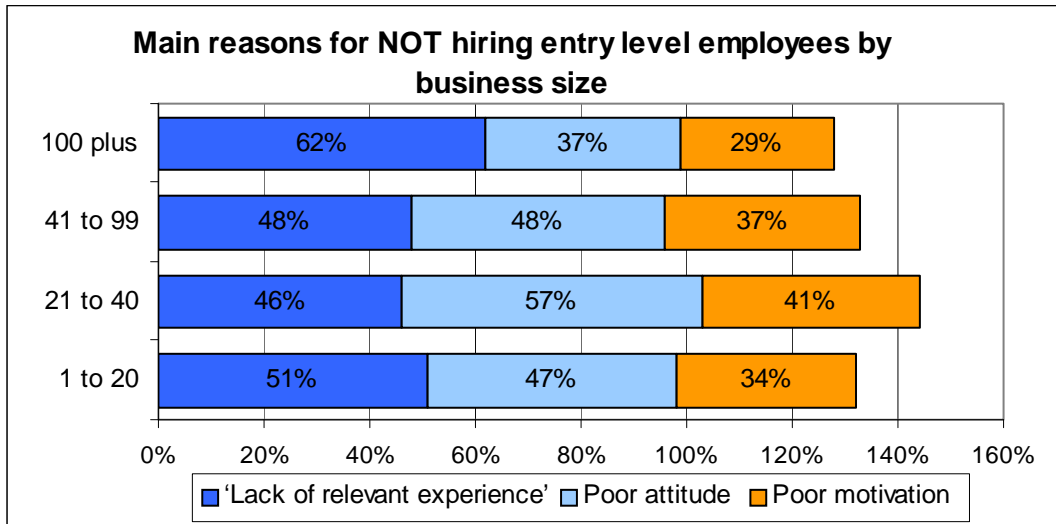


Figure 5 - Main reasons for NOT hiring entry level employees by business size

Entry level employees by group

Respondents were asked how frequently they had employed a person from one of the groups represented in figure 6.

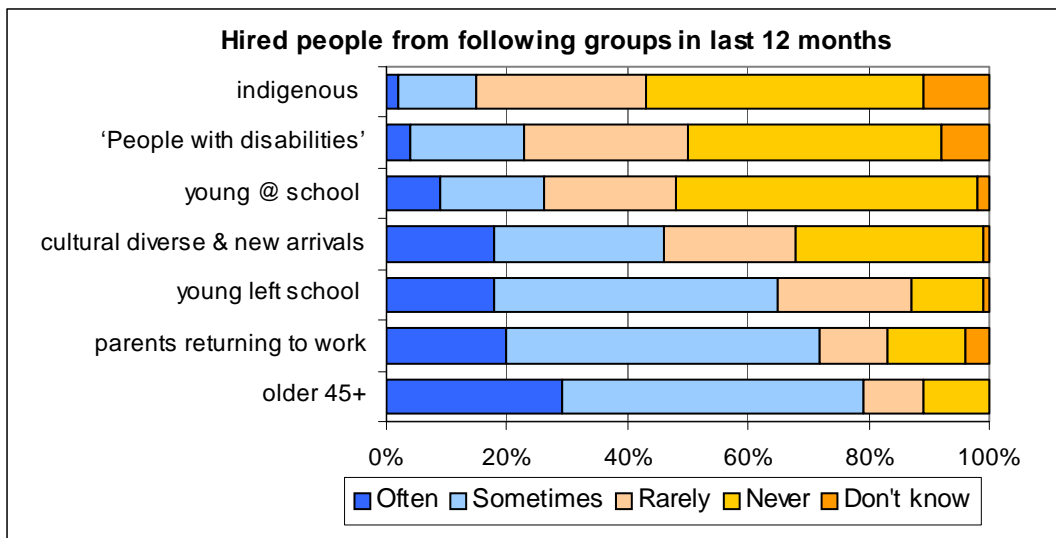


Figure 6 - Hired people from following groups in last 12 months

Respondents indicated that they had more frequently employed:

- Older people 45+ years: 29% often; 50% sometimes
- Parents including sole parents returning to work: 20% often; 52% sometimes
- Young people who have left school aged 15-24: 18% often; 47% sometimes.

High proportions reported they never employed young people attending school (50%) indigenous Australians (46%) and or the disabled (42%).

Further analysis of groups that employers '*never*' employed people from some groups indicated that:

- 60% of urban respondents and 36% regional/rural respondents 'never' employed young people attending school
- 25% of urban respondents and 43% regional/rural respondents 'never' employed culturally and linguistically diverse workers, including new arrivals
- 16% of urban respondents and 7% regional/rural respondents 'never' employed parents (including sole parents) returning to work
- 50% of urban respondents and 32% regional/rural respondents 'never' employed people with disabilities.

When examining entry level employment behaviours with businesses of differing sizes findings indicate that:

- Larger businesses 100+ employees more likely to have employed school attendees (38% often or sometimes), and are also more likely to employ young people who have left school (77% often or sometimes)
- Larger businesses more likely to employ culturally and linguistically diverse workers, including new arrivals' 100+ employees (55% often or sometimes), 1-20 employees (35% often or sometimes)
- Larger businesses more likely to employ 'parents returning, 100+ employees (87% often or sometimes), 1-20 employees (66% often or sometimes)
- Larger businesses more likely to employ 'indigenous' 100+ employees (24% often or sometimes), 1-20 employees (10% often or sometimes)
- Larger businesses more likely to employ 'disability' 100+ employees (35% often or sometimes), 1-20 employees (20% often or sometimes).

Satisfaction with entry level employees by group

When recruiting the groups specified in the previous question (school attendees, young school leavers, people aged 45+, Cultural and Linguistic Diverse (CALD) people, parents, indigenous Australians and the disabled), 86 per cent were satisfied (76%) or very satisfied (10%) with these employees and (8%) were dissatisfied as indicated in figure 7.

Overall satisfaction was greater among larger businesses with 100+ employees (95% being satisfied or very satisfied) than those with fewer employees (78% satisfied or very satisfied 1-20 employees). Satisfaction with these employees was not significantly related to location.

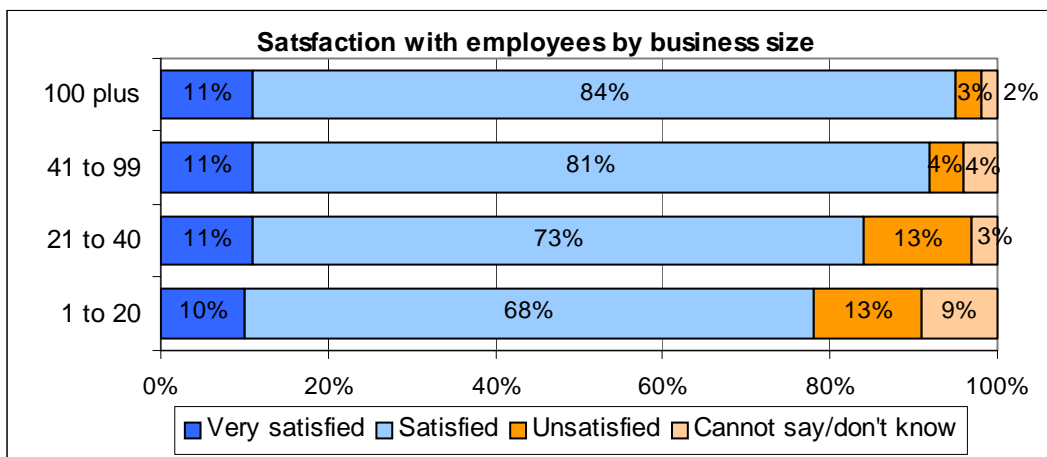


Figure 7 - Satisfaction with employees by business size

The two main themes of dissatisfaction as gleaned from the verbatim comments were:

1. Poor attitude, lack of job commitment and motivation exemplified by expectations about pay and taking personal leave. Dissatisfaction was directed specifically at young people - 'Generation Y'.

The younger they are the less reliable they are!

Commitment to job is not there. Only interested if the job suits their lifestyle, family and preferences to working.

Staff are unmotivated and take all available personal leave, and are only interested in what they can take from the business.

Lack of motivation - Too many people leave school with the idea that a job is just an extension of school. They don't understand that to be paid a wage, they have to earn a wage!

2. English literacy was identified with respect to migrants and younger people. Literacy barriers to the completion of paperwork, meeting OHS requirements and filing were noted. Related issues were migrant acceptance of the need for greater supervision and cultural awareness.

Specific language requirements of our positions mean very close supervision and assistance. This would be OK if the employee accepted the need for much assistance. We found resistance to seeking or accepting specific help or general advice. It seems the strong determination & character needed to emigrate is at odds with the dependence on assistance required for these employees, many of whom were formerly highly skilled people in their own countries.

The difficulty we found with "special needs" people is that they require a lot of supervision. As we are a production nursery on 70 acres, this has proved difficult. We have also experienced difficulty with disabilities due to the "terrain" of our workplace. The difficulty we have experienced with people with little English speaking/writing skills is their ability to follow OH&S requirements and in particular, paperwork.

Other comments were made about lack of experience and skill, lack of government support to hire disabled people and the level of supervision required, a negative experience of hiring an indigenous employee through a government scheme, and stress or tension imposed on workers by Centrelink.

Often we are very satisfied with the staff however they either quit or become "unavailable" as they get hassled by Centrelink and they would rather not work and "look" for a job full time than cope [with] the pressure from Centrelink.

Lack going the distance, normally move on after 3 to 9 months

Interest in employing particular groups

When asked if they would be interested in employing people from the same groups in entry level roles, the greatest 'definite' interest was in (see figure 8):

- Older people aged 45+ (60%)
- Parents including sole parents returning to work (50%)
- Indigenous Australians (37%).

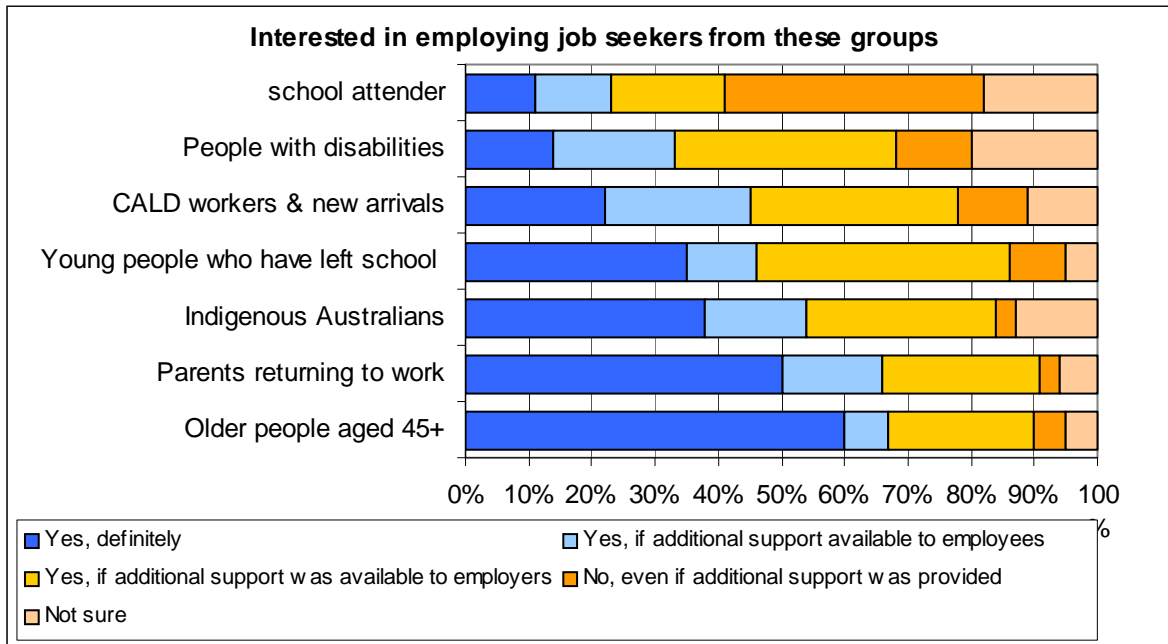


Figure 8 - Interested in employing job seekers from these groups

Figure 8 also shows that the group respondents reported having the least interest in employing at entry level were the young attending school (41%).

When looking at business size and interest in employing people from these groups as shown in figure 9:

- Larger businesses with 100+ employees were more likely to “definitely” interested in employing people in entry levels across all of the groups.
- Those businesses employing 1-20 employees were least likely to be interested in employing people from these groups, except for reporting a slightly higher interest than businesses employing 21-40 and 41-99; for definitely interested in employing young at school, young left school and indigenous people at entry level.

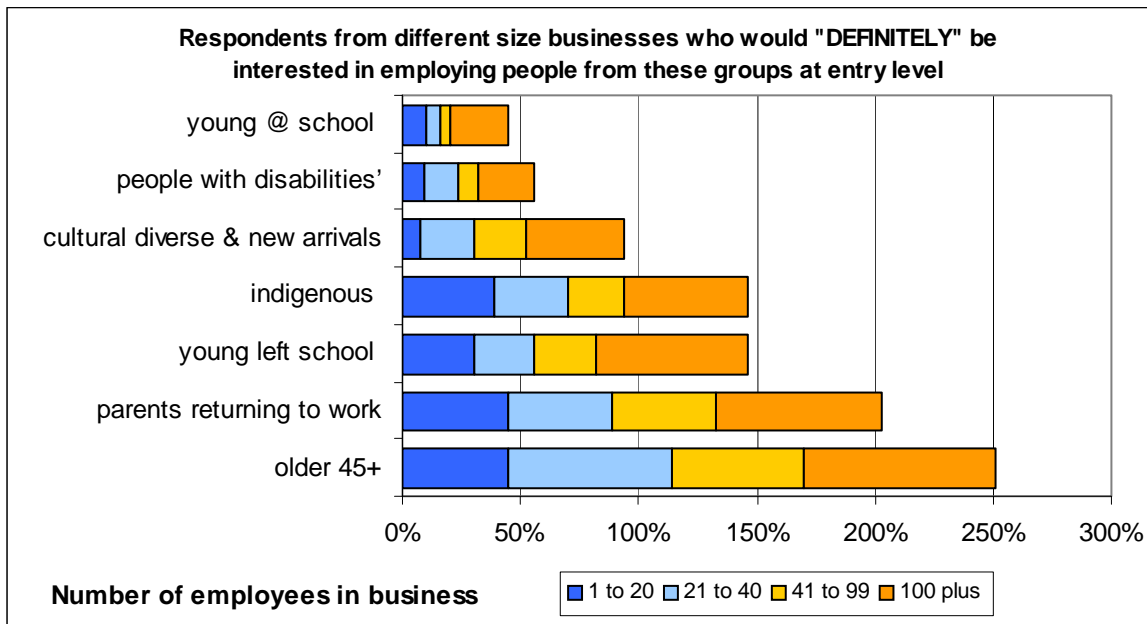


Figure 9 - Respondents from different size businesses who would "DEFINITELY" be interested in employing people from these groups at entry level

Definite interest if support was provided to employees or employers

Respondents expressed interest in young school leavers aged 15-24 (39%), people with disabilities (35%) and CALD employees (35%) if additional support was available to employers.

Further analysis of groups that employers would 'definitely' be interested in employing or interested if support was available either to employers or employees indicated that of:

- School attendees, there was greater interest in rural and regional areas. Employers of 100+ were more likely to be interested.
- Young people, there was more interest among employers of 21-99 employees.
- Older people, there was greater interest among urban businesses, and employers of 1-20 employees.
- CALD people, there was greater interest with regional and rural businesses and among employers of 1 – 99 employees.
- Parents returning to work there was more interest with employers of 1 – 99 employees.
- Indigenous Australians, there was greater interest among regional and rural employers but less interest with businesses employing 1-20 employees.
- The disabled; no real differences by location or business size.

Preferred employment arrangement

Respondents were asked to identify their preferred employment arrangements for people from the listed groups (note that they could select more than one option). The most preferred options as shown in figure 10 were:

- Permanent full time (43%)
- Casual (38%)

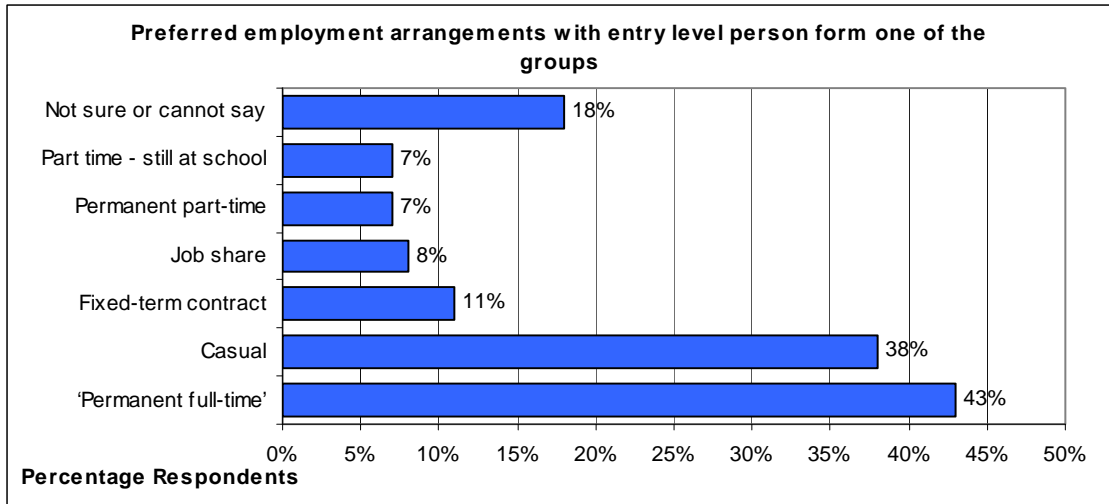


Figure 10 - Preferred employment arrangements with entry level person form one of the groups

The least preferred options were part time – permanent part time (7%), still at school (7%) and job share (8%).

Support for employing particular groups

Figure 11 indicates the most helpful types of support for employers when employing people from these groups.

- Targeted industry pre-employment training for employees (24% essential; 45% very helpful; 20% helpful)
- Government training subsidies for low skilled workers (26% essential; 40% very helpful; 22% helpful)
- Work experience or work trial opportunities (26% essential; 37% very helpful; 27% helpful).

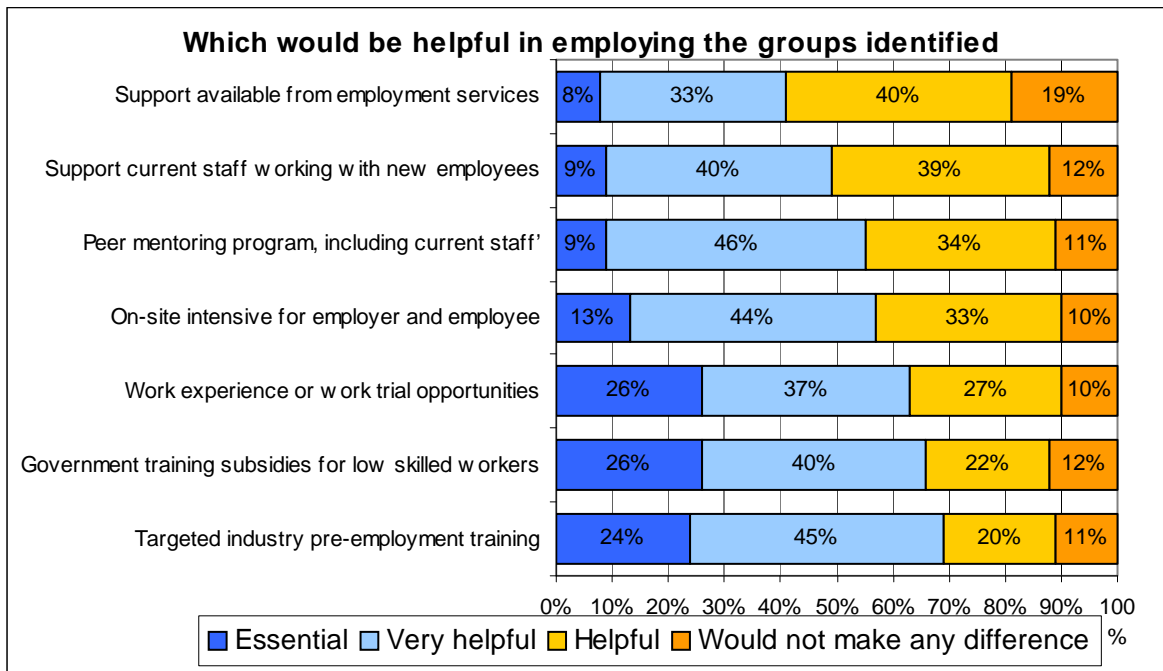


Figure 11 - Which would be helpful in employing the groups identified

Nineteen per cent of respondents indicated the availability of support from employment services (telephone or face to face) would not make any difference.

Some verbatim comments regarding support for employers are as follows:

Increased recurrent funding for our sector to employ people on an ongoing basis, not just subs for a short period of time.

At present Federal Government procurement is global & based on a value (price times specification). As such no amount of support will bridge the price gap between a caring employer who has job training, who employs people with disabilities, follows OH&S to a "t" etc compared with the price (value) from China. Because the government procurement people complain about shrinking budgets etc they now tend to place more & more orders on product made from China or Asia. Further, because there is no allowance in government work for "Made in Australia" let alone employing people with disabilities then it should be no shock when employers say why bother doing the right thing when our federal & state government agencies who place orders do not value it & frankly don't care.

Apprenticeships & Traineeships

In the last 12 months, one fifth of respondents had employed people in entry level apprenticeships and 29% of businesses had employed people in entry level traineeships.

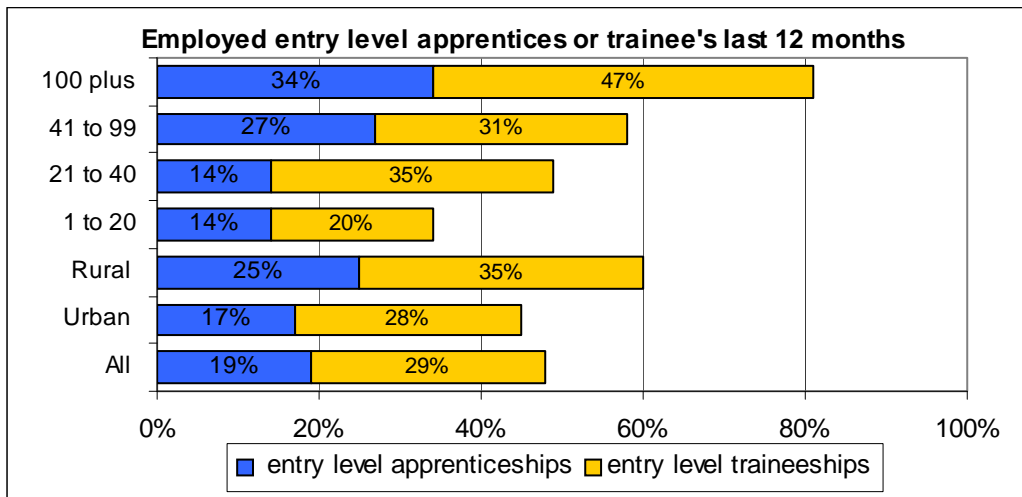


Figure 12 - Employed entry level apprentices or trainee's last 12 months

Figure 12 indicates that employers based in regional and rural areas were more likely to employ entry level apprentices (25%) and trainees (35%) as were those employing 100 or more staff, 34% entry level apprentices and 47% entry level trainees.

Interest in school based apprenticeships

42 per cent of respondents had no interest in employing a school-based apprentice. While 7% said 'yes, definitely', 12% were interested but needed more information and 39% per cent said 'maybe in the future'.

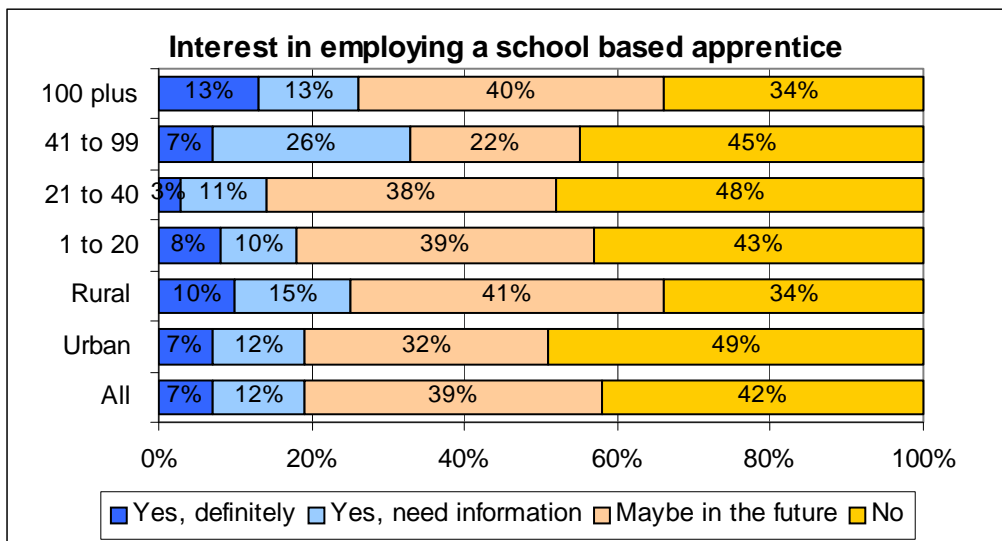


Figure 13 - Interest in employing a school based apprentice

Employers with 41-99 employees ("Yes, definitely 7% and 'yes if more information' 26%) and rural businesses ("Yes, definitely 10% and 'yes if more information' 15%) were more likely to be interested in employing a school based apprentice.

6.2 Entry level staff retention difficulties and opportunities

When asked about retaining new staff over the last 12 months, 35 per cent said they had experienced difficulties as indicated in figure 14.

There was little difference across geographic regions with urban (36%) and rural (30%) reporting difficulties.

There was also little difference with businesses employing 1-20 (31%), 21-40 (35%) and 41-99 (33%) people, but employers of 100+ staff were more likely to report difficulties (49%). This may be due to this group being more likely to have employed people at entry levels (see figure 9).

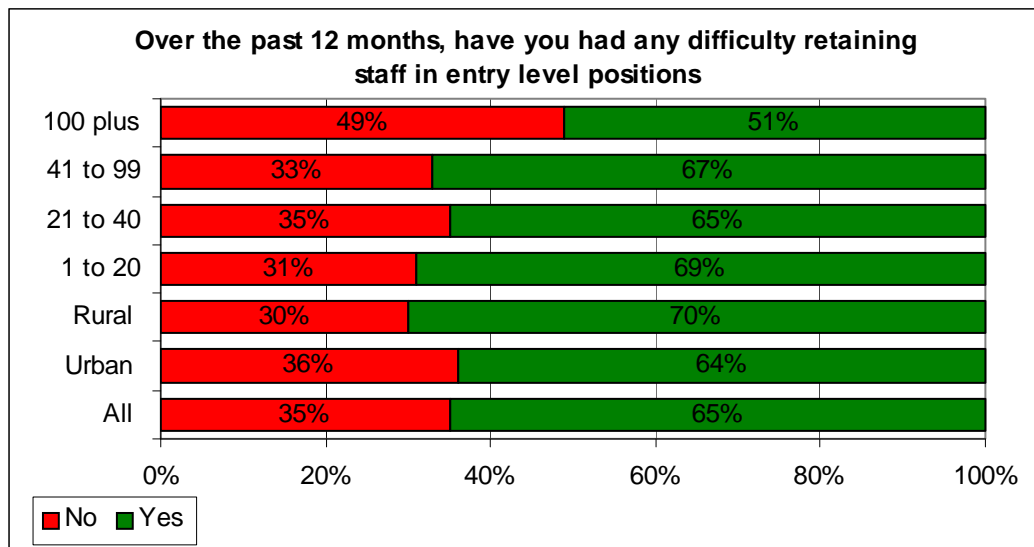


Figure 14 - Over the past 12 months, have you had any difficulty retaining staff in entry level positions

Written responses highlighted the following, often overlapping issues with regards to the retention of staff:

1. Lack of work ethic was commented on frequently, this related to poor attitude, time off, punctuality and leaving without notice. A related sub theme was a lack of employee interest in or commitment to their industry.

Lack of work ethic, commitment to the job, commitment to full time employment. Attitude.

Have a lot of days absence and poor time keeping. Do not use initiative and will not go out of their way to do extra. It's all about what they can get out of the employer

2. 'Generation Y' was particularly targeted and appears to have an image/marketability issue. Aside from lack of work ethic and the issues mentioned previously, three sub themes emerged with participants variously focussing on:
 - the young people who were perceived to change jobs to suit their preferred 'lifestyle'
 - unrealistic expectations with respect to employment tasks, training requirements, career progression and wage
 - the work itself which lacked the variety of experience and tasks that young people sought.

Some verbatim comments regarding support for employers are as follows:

Generation Y. Very self absorbed.

Gen Y syndrome - if we don't offer a trainee a CEO position within a few months they go to London!! (exaggerating but you get the picture...)

We employ younger staff, they tend to be on the look out for more attractive wages etc and leave quickly if they find it.

Too many opportunities in alternative employment...they commence the job knowingly looking for other opportunities that suit their lifestyle e.g. truck driver but a computer geek; when the computer geek position is available you lose the truck driver - truck driver being a stop gap position.

3. A further theme was that unsuitable candidates were being chosen in terms of their skills and or capacity to learn the skills to undertake the position.

Low apprentice wages, unrealistic expectations on the amount of training / trade school required.

Left to take other positions and/or were not suitable to the type of work (i.e., limited professional boundaries and low demonstrated capacity to pick up required skills)

4. A smaller group highlighted aspects of the position or industry which were problematic for retention. Wages were not competitive, the location of the work was too remote or the hours or nature of the shift work were unattractive. Several said the nature of the work, for example interstate driving, difficult and physically taxing nature of the work or danger were issues.

Wages are low, opportunities in other industries can pay significantly more but without the same job security that we offer - job security and slower development not as attractive.

Due to isolation of workplace. Staff employed turned out to be poorly skilled, lacked a work ethic and were generally unsuited to the position, but owing to our isolation we didn't have many candidates to choose from in the first place

Location, travel time, dangerous travel conditions with native animals

A few comments were also made about lack of program funding, employees not wanting full time employment. One respondent noted lack of affordable childcare.

Reasons why entry level employees have been unsuitable

The top three reasons for employees in entry level positions being unsuitable, according to respondents, were; poor performance / work ethic 59%, poor attitude 53% and absenteeism 39%.

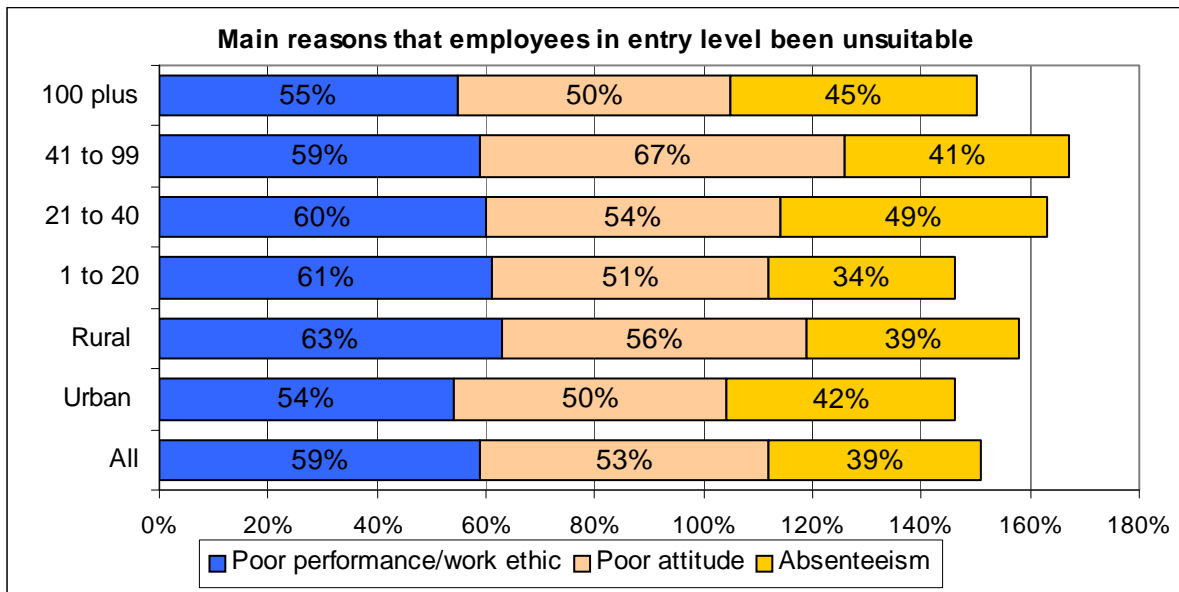


Figure 15 - Main reasons that employees in entry level been unsuitable

The only rural – urban difference was that absenteeism was regarded as a slightly greater issue in urban areas. Businesses employing 21-99 employees were reported higher rates of 'poor attitude' than businesses employing 1-20 or 100+ employees.

Note that the least likely reason for an employee being unsuitable was that they had inadequate English language skills (4%).

Some verbatim comments regarding reasons why entry level employees have been unsuitable include:

most leave due to finding full time or more frequent work

Some drug issues with younger workers

Theft from employer

Remoteness from friends and family. License requirements for job

Services to support retention

The most commonly provided services to support the retention of entry level workers were in-house:

- Non-accredited on-the-job/off-the-job training (54%)
- Team building skills (46%)
- Mentoring (44%)
- Soft skills training (44%).

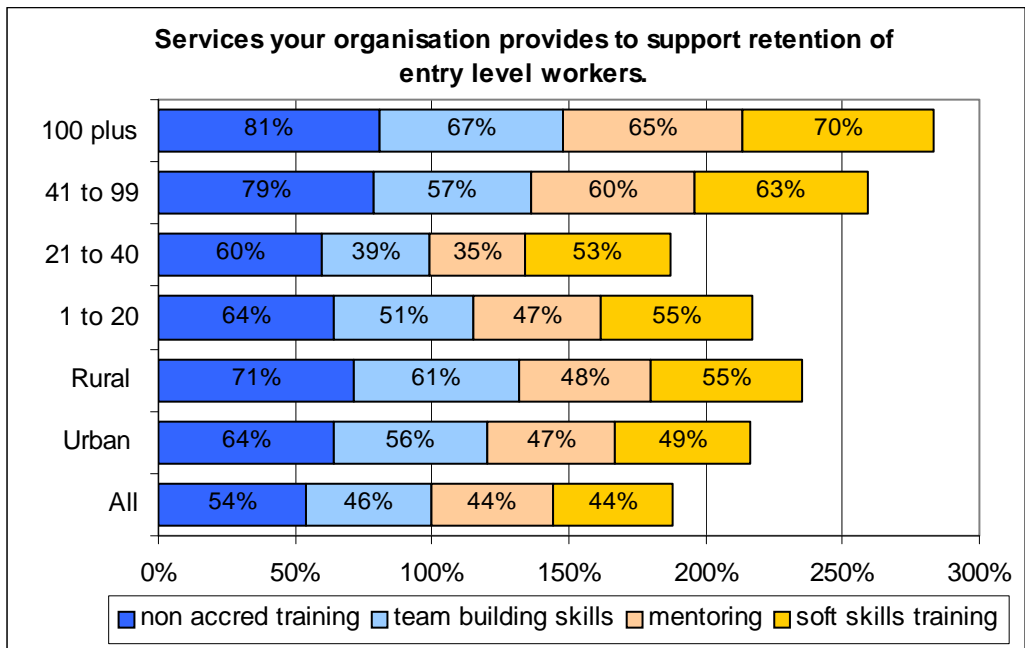


Figure 16 - Services your organisation provides to support retention of entry level workers.

Accredited vocational training was also common but with 44% providing it through external agencies and 15% providing it in-house.

For the most part, rural areas were more slightly more likely to offer a range of internal supports. Urban areas were more likely to report offering career planning and onsite case management to resolve personal issues affecting work. Generally it was the larger businesses with 41 or more employees who were more likely to offer a range of internal supports.

Considerable differences emerged in the types of internal and external supports offered across industry groups. In contrast, the services that respondents said they would not consider providing were:

- Subsidised access to local support services e.g. transport or childcare (47%)
- Basic skills training (literacy and numeracy) 40%
- Subsidised access to local support services e.g. transport or childcare 48%.

One of the main reasons employers were *not* interested in providing the services listed in the previous question was that they did not think that it would be appropriate for their business (36%). 20% gave lack of knowledge/resources as a reason and 18% believed it would not be cost effective.

Sample verbatim comments as to reason with employers were NOT interested in providing the services listed to entry level employees are:

we are a not for profit service and \$ is always tight

Again comes down to recurrent funding to provide support for entry level workers. If we were funded to do this on an ongoing basis we would have a designated support and training system for entry level workers.

We are a small business, most of us work long hours just keeping on top of the work - there would not be the time or resources available (unfortunately) to provide the support required for an entry level worker.

We have tried two agencies relative to government schemes and we have found that our staff were better equipped than their trainers...then the trainers became unreliable. Reported this to government.

We can provide training in our skill areas, & we have spent many hours mentoring, and supporting our team members, but we not here to provide personal basics.

Other services

The most commonly sourced external agency services for entry level workers were to develop linkages with training providers (23%) and find new entry level employees (22%). Employers were willing to consider a broad range of external services. However, least likely to be considered were services to: Design job or career ladders (58%), link employees with child care (51%), analyse employee turnover / retention (51%).

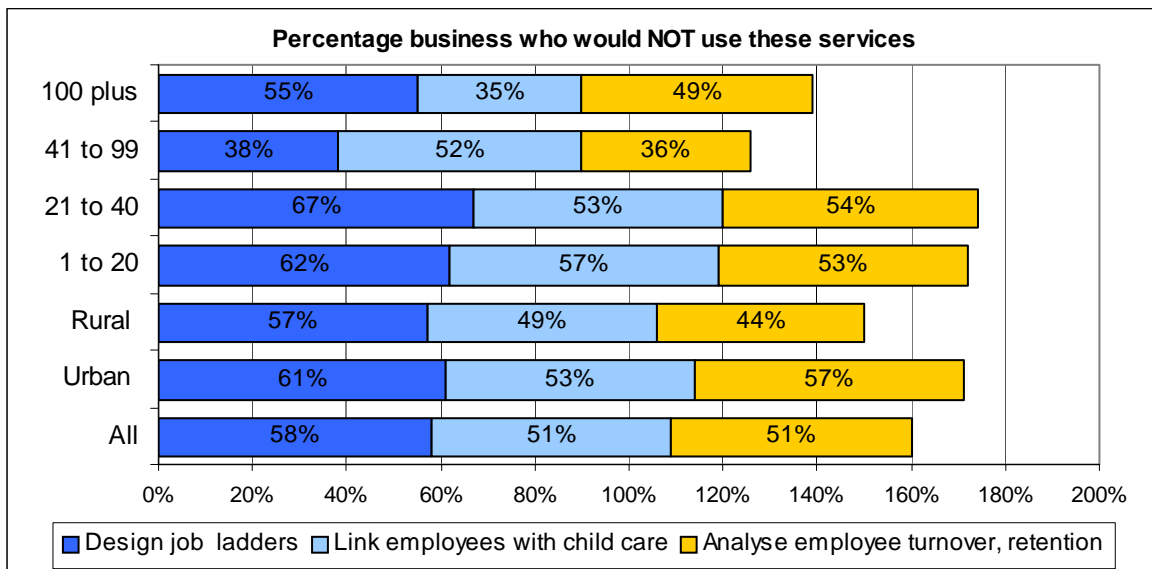


Figure 17 Percentage business that would NOT use these services

A diverse range of other assistance / supports were suggested by respondents. The only broad themes were a desire for wage top-ups and subsidies such as those to partially fund training, and minimum standard qualifications or greater training with better targeting to the needs of industry and specific jobs. See text box for quotes on these themes and other suggestions of interest.

While my first duty is to my full-time team & making a profit in my company, I recognise that my business is part of the community and (especially in this country area) I have a responsibility to give something back to the community my business is drawing from. However, as I am small, I don't have the resources to do some of what you mention above. If the government supported more training services within my business (that didn't mean burdening my current team or costing too much) then I would support it.

Employing low skilled people is a drain on the business, however should they work hard and show improvements then I can't see why you wouldn't persevere, again it would depend on the position and the person.

If there was an agency locally based to train & offer housing assistance

Get the education and training system placement allocations actually targeted to industry needs.

A wage top-up for the employee so that wages were above the poverty line. A wage subsidy for the employer to off-set lost productivity due to training/lack of skills etc.

We currently have 96.4% employment and discussions with large employers in town suggest that they are unlikely to source workers from the remaining group because they have low skills, poor attitudes and low levels of literacy and numeracy. In a smaller town, the less reliable workers tend to churn in the system and develop a reputation for not being up to scratch. Training will help but it is not so much about skills as attitude. The area I believe is most open is employing Mums during school hours but employers would need to vary their shifts to accommodate that group. Much needs to be done around improving employer awareness and understanding of employing people with disabilities. We all have a responsibility to work to support our young disadvantaged people but to assist that, mentoring is essential. Not everyone has a social conscience and not everyone can afford to put the time into developing an employee who has high needs. Small (Micro) Business could only assist with considerable support and assistance from an external mentor.

The 3 tiers of government need to have a good hard look at where they are sourcing their product from. Low skilled people should go into "infant" industries i.e. textiles however if all the uniforms for government people are going to go to Chinese made goods based solely on price then it is inevitable that those running textile operations have to run the tightest, most cost efficient operations & as such the probabilities of doing that successfully mean those who should work in this industry do not get a look in. We must all remember there is not a product we make in Australia that could not be sourced offshore both cheaper & of a better quality so unless we change the rules on how government(s) buy it basically means the long term low skilled unemployed have little prospects unless they are willing to do meaningless tasks like mowing lawns.

Less pressure from industry groups like VECCL on keeping wages and conditions low. The reality is that the community sector is already a low paid sector. When the prevailing business atmosphere is one of 'us vs. them' - like when VECCL regularly take an opposing position whenever unions want to push for pay increases of low paid workers - it makes it that much harder to recruit and retain quality people.

We have recruited a person with depression. We have been very supportive with giving time off and covering for absences. It has taken two years, but he is now a model employee.

Appendix A – Survey

VECCI & BSL Employer Questionnaire 2008

1. BUSINESS PROFILE

1. What postcode is your primary business site located in?

2. If you operate in more than one postcode, please list the postcodes of all suburbs (if more than five postcodes, please list the main locations relevant to entry level employment)

Postcode 1

Postcode 2

Postcode 3

Postcode 4

Postcode 5

3. What is your primary business activity?

- Accommodation, cafe, restaurant
- Agriculture, forestry, and fishery
- Communication services
- Construction
- Education
- Electricity, gas and water supply
- Finance and insurance
- Health and community services
- Manufacturing
- Metals and engineering
- Mining
- Personal and other services
- Property and business services
- Recreational services
- Transport and storage
- Wholesale and retail trade
- Other (please specify)

4. How many staff do you currently employ?

- None
- 1-20
- 21-40
- 41-99
- 100+

VECCI & BSL Employer Questionnaire 2008

2. EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT DIFFICULTIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

5. Are you having difficulties filling any entry level or skilled positions? (Entry level jobs are Certificate III or lower-level qualification, and/or one year's experience or less)

	Yes, experience frequent difficulties	Yes, experience occasional difficulties	No difficulties	Do not recruit for these jobs
Entry level jobs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Skilled jobs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Do any of the following factors make it difficult to fill entry level positions at your workplace? (please tick as many as you wish)

<input type="checkbox"/> Specific licensing or registration requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> Casual/seasonal work
<input type="checkbox"/> Industry/job not well understood	<input type="checkbox"/> Shift work/unusual hours
<input type="checkbox"/> Work not seen as attractive	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of opportunities to progress
<input type="checkbox"/> Wages/remuneration not competitive	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of appropriate local training
<input type="checkbox"/> Difficult/physically demanding work	<input type="checkbox"/> Location remote/difficult to reach
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of childcare in area	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor public transport
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)	

7. What have been the main reasons for NOT hiring people applying for entry level positions? (please tick as many as you wish)

<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of relevant experience	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of interest in training/skill development
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of relevant technical skills	<input type="checkbox"/> No interest in job/industry
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor attitude
<input type="checkbox"/> Low education/basic skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor motivation
<input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate IT skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor health/fitness
<input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate interpersonal/customer service skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor personal presentation
<input type="checkbox"/> Poor literacy/numeracy	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack own transport
<input type="checkbox"/> Poor employment history	<input type="checkbox"/> Family or parenting problems
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of suitable referees	<input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate English-language skills
<input type="checkbox"/> Poor quality written applications	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of flexibility in working time
<input type="checkbox"/> Concern that employees will not stay after training	<input type="checkbox"/> Concerns about personal problems/behaviour
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)	

VECCI & BSL Employer Questionnaire 2008

8. How frequently has your organisation hired people from the following groups in entry level positions over the last 12 months?

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Don't know
Young people attending school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Young people who have left school (aged 15-24 years)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Older people (aged 45+ years)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Culturally and linguistically diverse workers, including new arrivals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents (including sole parents) returning to work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Indigenous Australians	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People with disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. When you have recruited from any of the above groups, overall how satisfied have you been with these employees?

- Very satisfied
 Satisfied
 Unsatisfied
 Very unsatisfied
 Cannot say/don't know

10. If dissatisfied, please describe your reasons:

11. Over the last 12 months have you employed people in entry level apprenticeships?

- Yes
 No

If yes, please state how many?

12. Over the last 12 months have you employed people in entry level traineeships?

- Yes
 No

If yes, please state how many?

VECCI & BSL Employer Questionnaire 2008

13. Are you interested in employing a school based apprentice?

- Yes, definitely
 Yes, but I need more information/advice
 Maybe in the future
 No

14. Would you be interested in the opportunity to employ job seekers from the following groups in entry level roles?

	Yes, definitely	Yes, if additional support was available to employees	Yes, if additional support was available to employers	No, even if additional support was provided	Not sure
Young people attending school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Young people who have left school (aged 15-24 years)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Older people (aged 45+ years)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Culturally and linguistically diverse workers, including new arrivals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parents (including sole parents) returning to work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indigenous Australians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People with disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. What would be your preferred employment arrangements, if employing an unemployed person from one of the above groups? (please tick as applicable)

- Permanent full-time
 Permanent part-time
 Part time - still at school
 Job share
 Casual
 Fixed-term contract
 Not sure/cannot say

VECCI & BSL Employer Questionnaire 2008

16. Which of the following would be helpful in employing people from the groups identified?

	Essential	Very helpful	Helpful	Would not make any difference
Targeted industry pre-employment training for employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
On-site intensive support available to the employer and the employee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support available from employment services (telephone or face to face)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support and training for existing staff who would be working with new employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Peer mentoring program, including support for current staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Government training subsidies for low skilled workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work experience or work trial opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please describe)	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>			

VECCI & BSL Employer Questionnaire 2008

3. STAFF RETENTION DIFFICULTIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

17. Over the past 12 months, have you had any difficulty retaining staff in entry level positions?

- No
 Yes

18. If yes, please state main reason for being unable to retain new staff?

19. What have been the main reasons that employees in entry level positions have turned out to be unsuitable? (please tick as many as you wish)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor performance/work ethic | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor attitude |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Absenteeism | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor health/fitness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of relevant technical skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor personal presentation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of education/basic skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack own transport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate IT skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Family or parenting problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor interpersonal/customer service skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate English-language skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor literacy/numeracy | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of flexibility in working time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of interest in training/skill development | <input type="checkbox"/> Impact of personal problems/behaviours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No interest in job/industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't fit in with workplace norms/culture |

Other (please specify)

VECCI & BSL Employer Questionnaire 2008

20. Does your organisation provide any of the following services to support retention of entry level workers?

	Provide in-house	Provide through external agency	Would consider providing in-house	Would consider providing through outside agency	Would not consider providing
Accredited vocational training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non accredited on-the-job/off-the-job training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Soft skills training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Basic skills training (literacy/numeracy)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Career planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mentoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Team building skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Onsite case management to resolve personal issues affecting work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supervisor training, to improve management of low wage workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lunchtime workshops (money matters, workplace skills, personal wellness etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Subsidised access to local support services e.g. transport or childcare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information or connections for local support services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

21. If you are not interested in providing these services, please indicate reasons why not:

- Believe it would not be cost effective
- Not aware of any agencies that can provide these services
- Do not have the knowledge/resources to implement these services
- Lack necessary connections to the local community
- Do not think these would be appropriate for our business

Other (please specify)

VECCI & BSL Employer Questionnaire 2008

22. Does your organisation currently use, or would consider using, an external agency to provide any of the following services for entry level jobs/workers?

	Currently use external agency	Would consider using external agency	Do not/would not consider
Design job or career ladders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Identify employee skill deficits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Develop linkages with training providers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Link employees with child care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Analyse employee turnover, retention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Develop worker standards, credentials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Find new entry level employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. Are there any other types of assistance or support that would make it easier for your business to employ and retain low skilled people in entry level positions?

Many thanks for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your views are very important to VECCI and BSL in working together to develop more effective assistance that will address labour needs through increasing the job readiness and productivity of unemployed and disadvantaged job seekers.

24. If you are interested in becoming involved in future activities or are keen to take on low skilled unemployed job seekers, we would like to follow up with you to discuss potential opportunities. Please complete the following contact details for BSL or VECCI to get in touch with you.

Contact name:

Business name:

Address 1:

Address 2:

City/Town:

State:

Postcode:

Email address:

Phone number:

IMPORTANT:

Statement of confidentiality: your responses to the questionnaire will be kept in strictest confidence. The data will only be used in aggregate form for subsequent analysis and reporting by BSL and VECCI. The provision of your contact details is voluntary and will only be used to contact you to discuss your potential interest in being involved in new approaches that will better match job seekers to your labour needs.

PLEASE PRESS THE 'DONE' BUTTON TO COMPLETE AND EXIT THE SURVEY

Appendix B – Verbatim comments from survey respondents

VECCI and BSL Survey: Open response items by question

Q6: Do any of the following factors make it difficult to fill entry level positions at your workplace? (please tick as many as you wish) Other (please specify)

- No
- accommodation in Lorne difficult & expensive for working people
- the children's services industry is not highly regarded as a profession
- Just don't understand how hard the job is.
- There are few applicants for any position advertised, irrespective of the placement of the ad, be it the internet or press.
- Lack of work ethic
- Lack of professionally trained people
- any job in my business requires specific experience, therefore a factor might be lack of appropriate experience
- People being forced to obtain at least 15 hours work regularly each week. Not always available.
- Public Service Wage Rates
- Other high paying jobs are available in the district, even though they only last short period of time
- experience
- expensive area to operate as manufacturer, therefore additional cost to travel to work, harder for employees to live locally
- short term contracts i.e. 12 months
- Wages too high for the semi-skilled people we require.
- unskilled labour required with no specific skills required
- Loss of skills base from regional Victoria to city
- Need people who have some customer service experience or complaint handling experience.
- When offered job often they then accept our position as well as another job and then decide which one they will attend. Lack of commitment.
- We do not recruit for entry level positions since all applicants must have a knowledge of both French and English language to a high level.
- Community Sector entry level positions often require a different skill set, not always manifest in the applicant pool
- need to do an apprenticeship
- Being an apprenticeship trade, the wages offered are low and not attractive
- Shortage of qualified university graduates
- General shortage in professional areas.
- shortage of people with appropriate skills and transient nature of young generation of workers
- Lack of qualified tradesmen
- Lack of qualified people

- We find the 15 hour minimum requirement of those receiving government payments a constant battle for our staff. The hospitality industry is a very seasonal one. Some month we cannot commit to 15 hr. And cannot financially carry staff to make up the 15 hrs. There is only so many times you can get the staff to dust, polish, vacuum and wash curtains and bedding.
- skills shortage, all qualified accountants go overseas to London etc, or to the CBD to the top 4 firms for the \$\$\$\$
- industry has declined and so training has diminished

Q7: What have been the main reasons for NOT hiring people applying for entry level positions? (Please tick as many as you wish). Other (please specify)

- we are an employment group - so all of the above is relevant
- No difficulties
- Lack of applicants
- Concern with the applicant wanting to take the next step after this position, and this not always being on offer - not content with staying at this level for some time.
- No sufficient training period at lesser wages eg require a traineeship
- No time to train at basic level on the job
- not usually required but believe not having people skills main area lacking in
- Our hiring needs require qualified people, generally to degree level for technical expertise and to Cert IV level for training delivery. Even our entry level positions such as sales cadets are graduate positions. This does not mean that we will not take on people without those qualifications but we do require a minimum educational standard coupled with some experience.
- OH&S becomes even more of an issue when people have no experience or have trouble understanding safe working instructions.
- Travel time taken from local towns to work
- 1 person business
- Gen Y syndrome - will they still be here when it gets "boring"? i.e. not worth investing all that training to someone who will move on.
- most applicants do not want full time employment - they are usually from 1 of 2 demographics i.e. mothers reentering workforce (with young children) or woman who are older and closer to retirement age - either way they do not want/need full-time employment

Q10: If dissatisfied, please describe your reasons: (Prev Q) How frequently has your organisation hired people from the following groups in entry level positions over the last 12 months? Open-Ended Response

- Mature people know what they want and if they come to work in aged care usually have an infinity with the aged
- Depends - our issue is getting people to work the "undesirable" shifts such as Friday night. As such, we have started a program to try and attract mothers looking to return to the workforce.
- Commitment to job is not there. Only interested if the job suits their lifestyle, family and preferences to working.
- Older persons are on average O/K However parents
- Making numerous mistakes on the job
- Poor attitude to work
- Dissatisfied with 15-24 yr age group. Know everything - don't want to learn.
- poor attitude toward the job; Poor attendance at work;
- The younger they are the less reliable they are!
- Often school students (yr 10-12) can't spell enough to accurately file! Some have a 'how you going' attitude as if they are doing you a favor. Some older employees can be very set in their ways and can have a bad attitude when asked to do things differently. Staff need to be able to speak reasonably clear English to liaise with patients on phone, in person etc.
- Government does not appreciate those hiring people with disabilities.
- Lack work ethic, lack initiative, lack enthusiasm to try to advance themselves, lack reasonable thinking. We seem to be having some very real issues with Generation Y
- Advertised for a store person 20+ applications, organised 5 interviews, only 2 people turned up to the interview, only 1 of those was interested in working and had no previous work history at the age of 18!
- No commitment - often due to stress placed on them by Centrelink
- The difficulty we found with "special needs" people is that they require a lot of supervision. As we are a production nursery on 70 acres, this has proved difficult. We have also experienced difficulty with disabilities due to the "terrain" of our workplace. The difficulty we have experienced, with people with little English speaking/writing skills, is their ability to follow OH&S requirements and in particular, paperwork.
- Younger employees less able to remain focused on job requirements, and seeking more pay quickly.
- The young people I have employed are university students and am satisfied
- Hours do not attract the most appropriate people
- Specific language requirements of our positions mean very close supervision and assistance. This would be OK if the employee accepted the need for much assistance. We found resistance to seeking or accepting specific help or general advice. It seems the strong determination & character needed to emigrate is at odds with the dependence on assistance required for these employees, many of whom were formerly highly skilled people in their own countries.
- See question 7
- Generation Y. Lack work ethic and initiative.
- Language and cultural awareness issues

- different positions have had different outcomes
- Any of the reasons in question 8
- Staff are unmotivated and take all available personal leave, and are only interested in what they can take from the business.
- We have recruited a person with depression. We have been very supportive with giving time off and covering for absences. It has taken two years, but he is now a model employee.
- One of the positions recently attempted to recruit to was an Aboriginal specific position as determined by Government funding guidelines- the organisation experienced considerable difficulty filling the position - it was advertised on 3 separate occasions and interviewed for twice. The eventual selected applicant's employment was subsequently terminated due to dishonesty and erratic behaviour.
- Lack of motivation - Too many people leave school with the idea that a job is just an extension of school. They don't understand that to be paid a wage, they have to earn a wage!
- lack going the distance, normally move on after 3 to 9 months
- unable to recruit due to shortage of qualified people
- See comments question 6. Often we are very satisfied with the staff however they either quit or become "unavailable" as they get hassled by centre link and they would rather not work and "look" for a job full time than cope the pressure from Centrelink. In our busy period 7 months a year they get more work than they know what to do with but it's the other 5 months it slows down a bit.
- some just don't seem to care about their job , have no work ethic and
- work ethic seems to be less than 10 years ago as an example
- Lack the diversity of skills needed to take on surveying. Not just an office job, also requires practical outdoor skills, takes a long time to build up a range of skills, to make the most of a career in surveying, not a short term option to wealth you have to keep working at it to gain the most benefit. People seem to flit from place to place. and have patchy skills
- Don't care about the job, slow, unmotivated

Q 16: Which of the following would be helpful in employing people from the groups identified? Other (please describe)

- It is hard to answer because there are so many variables. In the case of someone with a disability, it would be dependent on the disability and the facilities the organisation has to meet the employee's needs. The question regarding Indigenous workers- we may already employ them but are unaware of their status.
- Increased recurrent funding for our sector to employ people on an ongoing basis, not just subs for a short period of time.
- At present Federal Government procurement is global & based on a value (price times specification). As such no amount of support will bridge the price gap between a caring employer who has job training, who employs people with disabilities, follows OH&S to a "t" etc compared with the price (value) from China. Because the government procurement people complain about shrinking budgets etc they now tend to place more & more orders on product made from China or Asia. Further, because there is no allowance in government work for "Made in Australia" let alone employing people with disabilities then it should be no shock when employers say why bother doing the right thing when our federal & state government agencies that place orders do not value it & frankly don't care.
- Of course all of the above depends on the position that would be available within the company
- We have no entry level positions - all require skill
- Truck license would be required to obtain employment in driving rigid and semis. Training in the field would be desired with person accompany due to enormity of accidents that have occurred for in experience drivers.
- 1 person business no work for any other.
- Land Surveying requires high level Maths & IT skills, high levels of written & verbal communication between clients, allied professions & services. High levels of accuracy & documentation are required at all times.
- I would love apprentices or trainees but there is no formal apprenticeship or traineeship in my industry that I know of and I don't know how to go about this myself

Q 18: If yes, please state main reason for being unable to retain new staff? Open-Ended Response

- Lack of Motivation to work
- Higher wages in public sector
- Generally our entry level staff are students who seem to move on quite frequently
- low wages, don't like work , bad attitudes
- left to take other positions and/or were not suitable to the type of work (i.e., limited professional boundaries and low demonstrated capacity to pick up required skills)
- The school based position roles over most years providing opportunity for more young people so it is not a bad thing- the students see it as a stepping stone
- They leave after a few weeks because the work can be physically taxing.
- Location of Work
- Move to higher paying and less working requirements
- Lack of work ethic, commitment to the job, commitment to full time employment. Attitude.
- They leave without giving suitable reasons
- Job too hard - staff disinterested
- wages, hours of work, lack of skills
- Program funding being time limited for delivery of current service(s); inappropriate fit with job
- Remote location
- Lack of motivation and absenteeism
- Due to isolation of workplace. Staff employed turned out to be poorly skilled, lacked a work ethic and were generally unsuited to the position, but owing to our isolation we didn't have many candidates to chose from in the first place
- "Full" employment meant employment pool was shallow. Young people expect everything straight away.
- Data difficult to comment on. Lots of shift work. Lack of training.
- They mostly cannot be bothered, take off too much time, poor work ethics
- Remuneration
- Wages are low, opportunities in other industries can pay significantly more but without the same job security that we offer - job security and slower development not as attractive.
- Just not interested in the Timber Industry and working in a warehouse.
- Hours - Start/Finish time
- Lack of commitment from the employee
- We employee younger staff, they tend to be on the lookout for more attractive wages etc and leave quickly if they find it.
- Salary level and demands of the job. Seeking broader experience.
- Attitude
- The apprentice was too young for the role and organisational culture
- Personal are required for taxi driving positions - unsure why we have a number train and not commence driving and/or only drive for a short period of time.
- Wrong people chosen for the position - not suited to position.
- Generation Y. Very self absorbed.
- Get offered positions elsewhere with a higher remuneration.
- timing and funding

- Because of their lack of commitment to their future
- Too many opportunities in alternative employment...they commence the job knowingly looking for other opportunities that suit their lifestyle e.g. truck driver but a computer geek; when the computer geek position is available you lose the truck driver - truck driver being a stop gap position.
- moving to what they see as more relevant work for their needs
- Very poor work ethic.
- 1. Poor attendance & low interest/attention to working when in the workplace 2. on acquiring skills they have moved to other employment opportunities, usually in other sectors
- Low apprentice wages, unrealistic expectations on the amount of training / trade school required.
- Competitive market for skilled and experienced people
- Mismatch of expectations of new entrant compared to actual job requirements.
- Basically young people employed in low skill jobs who move on fairly quickly.
- finding people who are willing to train and stay employed
- Have a lot of days absence and poor time keeping. Do not use initiative and will not go out of their way to do extra. It's all about what they can get out of the employer
- Lack of commitment, punctual
- Location, travel time, dangerous travel conditions with native animals
- Again experience and nature of job i.e. interstate driving.
- Some staff applied for part time roles but found child care too difficult to afford or maintain
- Not a competitive salary. Difficult to find the right skill match. Poor quality of staff
- due to red tape and government restriction
- bad attitude or poor performance
- See q6
- Wrong people for the position. Lacked motivation
- Lack of sticking ability on their behalf.....it's hard to compete with Centrelink!
- No interest in our industry so when something else presents they go? Some cannot manage their job? some are just lazy and don't want to work (Dole is too east)
- general willingness to learn & work ethic
- Poor attitude to the level of commitment required in the work place - chatting on mobile phones, personal issues interfering with day's work, continual interruptions from home, friends, not focusing on what required to complete the day's work..Disrupting our current team, not appreciating the opportunity that could be there for them down the track if they apply themselves, think they should be running the place 5 mins after they arrive...no respect for all that goes on to make a position available..
- Lack of interest
- Gen Y syndrome - if we don't offer a trainee a CEO position within a few months they go to London!! (Exaggerating but you get the picture...)
- Don't care about job
- Not wanting full time work
- poor skills, bad attitudes

Q 19: What have been the main reasons that employees in entry level positions have turned out to be unsuitable? (Please tick as many as you wish) Other (please specify)

- most leave due to finding full time or more frequent work
- Have not had entry level vacancies
- N/A
- We do utilise work for the dole and community work programs because of inadequate funding to our community service organisation. This target group on occasions has a bit of all the above.
- Some drug issues with younger workers
- Theft from employer
- Remoteness from friends and family. License requirements for job.
- N/A
- Theft
- NA
- Resigned to pursue increased remuneration
- n/a
- Not really a problem
- childcare and caring for ageing parents/family posed a big problem

Q 21: If you are not interested in providing these services, please indicate reasons why not: Other (please specify)

- NA
- We are a very small hotel struggling to get suitable, reliable, honest managers in an area where staff are difficult to employ. We do not have the funds or the personnel to offer in house training, etc
- we are a not for profit service and \$ is always tight
- Again comes down to recurrent funding to provide support for entry level workers. If we were funded to do this on an ongoing basis we would have a designated support and training system for entry level workers.
- Being a small business, I already do what I can to give kids a go. Each year I offer a disadvantaged kid a basic after school job, I've gone to career days with industry information (with no takers) and I take on between 5 & 10 work experience kids a year. If the government supported more training services within my business (that didn't mean burdening my current team or costing too much) then I would support it.
- We are a small business, most of us work long hours just keeping on top of the work - there would not be the time or resources available (unfortunately) to provide the support required for an entry level worker.
- Also, do not see these issues apart from cost associated with accessing this area as a considerable barrier to employment with us
- Need more information
- Lot of shift work, employment levels tight, not much flexibility. Seven days a week business.
- The two options selected, onsite case management and subsidized access to support services are not within our ability to support, both from a financial point of view but also from a cultural one - we do not have the required people to deal with those issues. In addition, our position is that these options can and should be provided by either state or federal government bodies such as job network providers who should have the qualified staff on board.
- We have tried two agencies relative to government schemes and we have found that our staff was better equipped than their trainers...then the trainers became unreliable. Reported this to government.
- We hire individual contractors as the work can be sporadic our main contractors though we help to provide further training when needed
- We have gone through on job training with all drivers in previous years for accreditation and was not happy with the outcome. The training was inadequate our existing drivers were not assessed properly just ticked off and given some manuals to read a few questions to answer. Their performance did not change: Paper work problems still existed it was a waste of time and government funds.
- We can provide training in our skill areas, & we have spent many hours mentoring, and supporting our team members, but we not here to provide personal basics.
- In a very difficult environment, we have no trouble recruiting staff, simply no money available.
- I don't the business owners could be bothered

Q 23: Are there any other types of assistance or support that would make it easier for your business to employ and retain low skilled people in entry level positions? Open-Ended Response

- SCREENING ENTRY LEVEL EMPLOYEES
- am an external provider of staff
- Assistance of any type is welcomed but there is generally a high level of red tape and nonsense that would turn any business away
- This again is difficult as a local government agency- we have Employee assistance program, we have family day care and have close links with our training providers but it is hard to identify that in the question responses. We have used the Skills Store extensively to assist local businesses and work closely with our RTO's in the region. The only real pathway for unskilled workers is through admin areas on school based apprenticeships and ground staff. The ground staff tend to stay in their roles for their careers and have access to training should they wish to progress through the organisation. There is a real issue at the moment with all the different skills and recruitment available and care needs to be taken to articulate each of these activities. i.e. Rural Skills connect, Global Skills for P.V., Skill up, Cadetships, Traineeships, SB Apprenticeships, etc etc etc. There is a tendency for confusion in the workplace. We currently have 96.4% employment and discussions with large employers in town suggest that they are unlikely to source workers from the remaining group because they have low skills, poor attitudes and low levels of literacy and numeracy. In a smaller town, the less reliable workers tend to churn in the system and develop a reputation for not being up to scratch. Training will help but it is not so much about skills as attitude. The area I believe is most open is employing Mums during school hours but employers would need to vary their shifts to accommodate that group. Much needs to be done around improving employer awareness and understanding of employing people with disabilities. We all have a responsibility to work to support our young disadvantaged people but to assist that, mentoring is essential. Not everyone has a social conscience and not everyone can afford to put the time into developing an employee who has high needs. Small (Micro) Business could only assist with considerable support and assistance from an external mentor.
- If there was an agency locally based to train & offer housing assistance
- Yes, again designated funding!
- Full one-one-one support for the employee to deal with support services rather than the employee dealing with a number of people from different agencies.
- While my first duty is to my full-time team & making a profit in my company, I recognize that my business is part of the community and (especially in this country area) I have a responsibility to give something back to the community my business is drawing from. However, as I am small, I don't have the resources to do some of what you mention above. If the government supported more training services within my business (that didn't mean burdening my current team or costing too much) then I would support it.
- Make it harder to get government benefits
- Possibly financial as business tightens in the next 12 months.
- The 3 tiers of government need to have a good hard look at where they are sourcing their product from. Low skilled people should go into "infant" industries ie textiles however if all the uniforms for government people are going to go to Chinese made goods based

solely on price then it is inevitable that those running textile operations have to run the tightest most cost efficient operations & as such the probabilities of doing that successfully mean those who should work in this industry do not get a look in. We must all remember there is not a product we make in Australia that could not be sourced offshore both cheaper & of a better quality so unless we change the rules on how government(s) buy it basically means the long term low skilled unemployed have little prospects unless they are willing to do meaningless tasks like mowing lawns.

- This survey started with a question about skills and the whole survey bar the first question was about entry level and supported employment, not much interest to us, sorry
- We do some of these things in-house already and would not use an external agency.
- Employing low skilled people is a drain on the business, however should they work hard and show improvements then I can't see why you wouldn't persevere, again it would depend on the position and the person.
- Further relevant pre-vocational skills training and qualifications.
- Get the education and training system placement allocations actually targeted to industry needs.
- Government Grants and reduced wage for traineeships
- no
- Not really. We cover most areas in-house
- No that we can think of. The nature of our business that requires qualified professionals makes this a little difficult to apply to our operation.
- Re 22 above I have ticked no on all of them because we do all that IN HOUSE and do not need to it to be done out house.
- Better education at high school level particularly in communication - written and verbal. Loyalty and a great attitude is a huge attribute.
- Administrative support and data processing would be most helpful.
- Not applicable.
- Wage subsidies
- Truck driver training being more specific to needs i.e. tipper drivers as to parcel pickup and delivery drivers. Eventually, as experienced is gained, drivers are able to perform in all areas but most will eventually move to employment with less stress and difficulty: you can spill a cup of coffee, you clean it up and nothing is said, but do something in a truck and it is seen as harassment - the suburban roads and their users cause many a problem for truck drivers
- less pressure from industry groups like VECCI on keeping wages and conditions low. The reality is that the community sector is already a low paid sector. When the prevailing business atmosphere is one of 'us vs them' - like when VECCI regularly take an opposing position whenever unions want to push for pay increases of low paid workers - it makes it that much harder to recruit and retain quality people.
- As the major activity of the organisation is the provision of disability advocacy -would like to be able to assist staff to access accredited advocacy training -Cert IV as a minimum. As these services are funded by the Victorian and Commonwealth governments and there is no minimum qualification standard -there is no demand for RTOs in rural areas to go to the expense of offering this training. Courses are available in Metro area but not offered by distance education.
- Within the Manufacturing industry, I have little room for low skilled people. I employ welders, they need to weld up to a certain standard otherwise what I manufacture could become a dangerous hazard in the community.

- Not really
- A wage top-up for the employee so that wages were above the poverty line. A wage subsidy for the employer to off-set lost productivity due to training/lack of skills etc.
- Gov't subsidy for travel
- I would consider but only if there was no out of pocket costs as I previously stated the last time we had outside training it was a costly affair and value for money was none existent.
- Travellers Aid is accessing the My Business My People Govt funding program , and whilst helpful for training subsidies and support doesn't specifically address these issues of support for disadvantaged job seekers and productivity issues. We would welcome support and already provide volunteer opportunities and employment but our staff and future ones have particular needs. We can also offer access to internet for job seekers, and safe spaces within the CBD and would be happy to discuss ways that we can work together. Including personal support workers for employees/job seekers with disabilities, travel training (how to use public transport) training facilities, meeting spots, showers (for personal presentation) and lounge spaces, and links with emergency relief and community services. We also provide support to travellers experiencing travel disadvantage.
- Additional funding to pay salary
- We currently use Echo, Box Hill office [name] is my contact he provides workers as required. They are mainly older people who require some special care they mostly fit in well with my Cleaning Services . [His] no is xxxxxx
- Funding
- Note that this organisation's funding does not allow for a growth in staff numbers. There are no positions that would be suitable for entry level and only a few positions suitable for unskilled people. There are no vacancies at the present time.
- Basic certificate training
- We have specific skill sets, which require University level basics to undertake most processes.
- to be guaranteed they will stick around. Not that we could force someone to stay, but the greater the likelihood of them sticking around after we have poured our training time and resources into them, it would be nice to know that a larger firm won't then get the benefit of that and we are back at square one.
- Financial assistance in varied forms, and assistance in business management and infrastructure set up and mentoring of management to be better employers and managers accordingly

Appendix C – Businesses interested in becoming involved in taking on low skilled job seekers.

The survey asked people to provide contact details if they were interested in becoming involved in future activities or if they were keen to take on low skilled unemployed job seekers.

Sixty per cent of those seeking follow up were located within greater Melbourne and 40 per cent in regional and rural Victoria. More specifically:

- 19 were located in Melbourne and the inner suburbs
- 6 were located in the outer suburbs of Melbourne
- 6 were located in regional cities
- 11 were located in rural areas.

A detailed breakdown of those seeking follow up by statistical subdivision is presented in the table below.

Figure 3.1 Employers requesting follow-up by statistical subdivision

Statistical subdivision	Employers requesting follow-up
Inner Melbourne	5
Western Melbourne	4
Melton-Wyndham	1
Moreland City	1
Northern Middle Melbourne	2
Boroondara City	3
Eastern Middle Melbourne	2
Eastern Outer Melbourne	2
Yarra Ranges Shire	1
Southern Melbourne	2
Greater Dandenong City	2
Frankston City	1
Greater Geelong City	1
East Barwon	1
Ballarat City	1
North Wimmera	1
East Mallee	1
Greater Bendigo City	1
North Loddon	2
South Goulburn	1
Wodonga	2
West Ovens-Murray	1
East Ovens-Murray	1
Wellington Shire	1
La Trobe Valley	2

Total number of responses = 42.

Consideration of Brotherhood of St Laurence office catchment areas suggests that:

Fitzroy Office – inner Melbourne and Moreland City (N = 6). If Northern Middle Melbourne is added (i.e. Northcote to Eltham) N = 8.

Craigieburn Office – Hume, Northern Middle Melbourne (N = 0).

Frankston – Frankston & Mornington Peninsula (N = 0).

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