

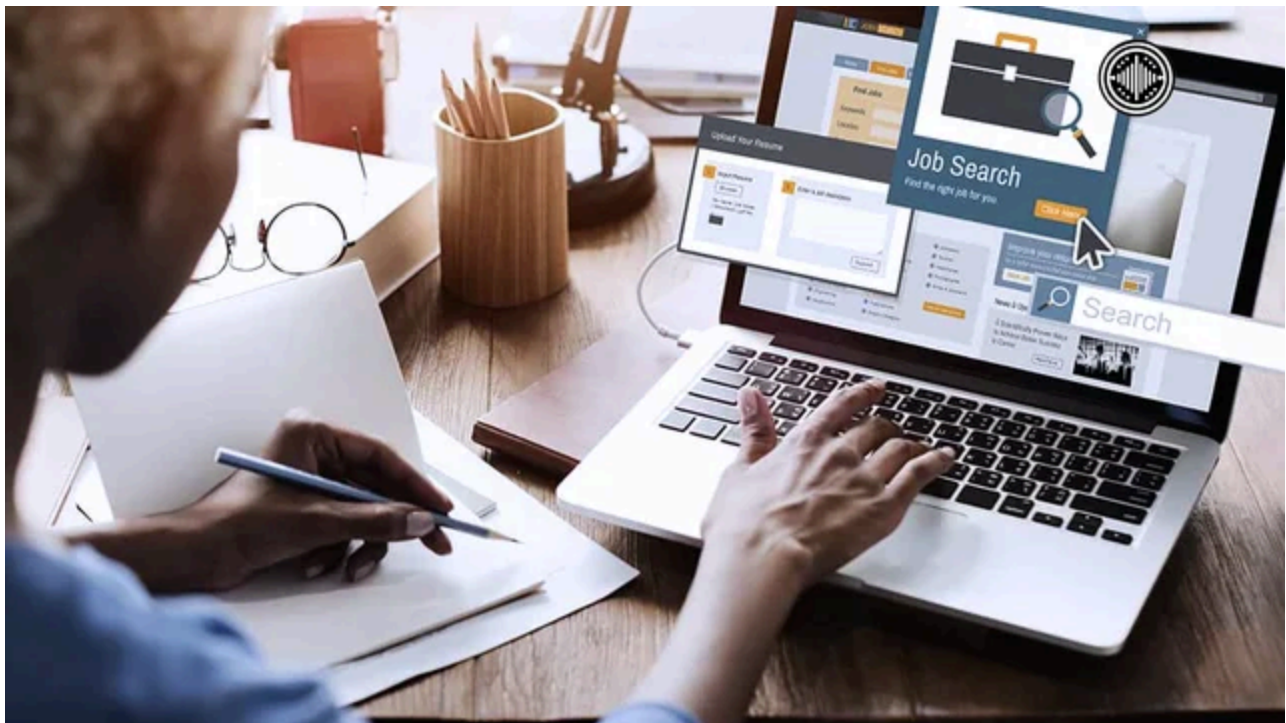
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Rising Job Competition Reflects Economic Strains as More Australians Rejoin the Workforce

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— Categories: Finance



The Australian labor market is tightening as more citizens vie for employment, reflecting the growing financial strain many households are under. According to SEEK, the nation's largest online employment marketplace, the number of job applications per advertisement has reached a record high, surpassing even the levels seen during the 2020 COVID-19 downturn.

The data, released Friday, shows a 2.1% increase in applications per job ad from April to May 2025 and a notable 16.4% jump compared to the same time last year. These figures

highlight the growing urgency among Australians to secure work, whether by rejoining the workforce or taking on additional jobs, as inflation and household expenses continue to rise.

Dr. Blair Chapman, SEEK's senior economist, explained that the spike stems not from individuals applying for more positions, but from a larger pool of job seekers overall. "Over the past couple of years, more Australians have taken on a second job, or are looking to do so, and more workers have entered or re-entered the workforce," Dr. Chapman said. "This is likely in response to increased living costs, and as a result, competition is extremely strong for most available roles."

At the same time, the number of job advertisements has declined. June 2025 saw a 5.3% drop in job ads compared to June 2024. While this decline has remained steady over the last quarter, it underscores a troubling reality: more people are looking for work, but fewer opportunities are being advertised.

The labor market's shifting conditions vary by region. The Northern Territory was the only jurisdiction to post an increase in job listings (up 3.7%) from May to June, while the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) experienced the steepest monthly fall at 7.8%. The ACT also recorded the largest year-on-year drop in ads, down 22.7%, driven largely by reduced demand in healthcare, medical, and information and communication technology (ICT).

Nationally, job postings in the ICT sector are now at their lowest on record, even below levels seen during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, the construction sector was one of the few areas to see month-on-month growth in worker demand.

Despite the slowdown in job ads, advertised salaries have remained relatively steady. While annual and monthly wage growth has eased to its slowest pace since 2021, SEEK reports that advertised pay is still outpacing inflation. Dr. Chapman noted that this, combined with recent reductions in mortgage interest rates, could provide some financial relief. "Existing borrowers who have switched jobs should be able to purchase more goods and services, save more, or pay down their mortgage faster," he said.

Additionally, the recent 3.5% increase in the National Minimum Wage and award rates, effective from July 1, is expected to lend some upward pressure to advertised wages in the short term.

As many Australians feel the squeeze from rising prices, stagnant economic growth, and ongoing policy mismanagement, particularly concerning energy, housing, and immigration, the labor market is bearing the brunt. The data confirms what many families already know: it's getting harder to stay afloat, and for too many, the solution means working more for less.