

Changes in number of employees over time

Since July 2020, the share of businesses reporting a decrease in employment declined from 13 per cent to 5 per cent in June 2021, while those reporting an increase in employment rose slightly from 7 per cent to 8 per cent. Small businesses were generally more stable, with most businesses reporting no change. There was, however, a slight uptick in the share of businesses reporting a decrease in employment in April 2021 due to the cessation of the JobKeeper program.¹ Industries that were on average most likely to report a decrease in the number of employees include *Administrative and Support Services* (15 per cent), *Accommodation and Food Services* (11 per cent) and *Information Media and Telecommunications* (10 per cent). About one in five businesses (19 per cent) reported staff shortages based on current operations. The most common factors reported by businesses were *Inability to find suitable staff* (57 per cent), *Affordability of additional staff* (48 per cent) and *Uncertainty due to COVID-19* (42 per cent). Workforce actions that businesses plan to take over the next three months are Increase staff numbers (23 per cent), Re-train existing staff (22 per cent) and Increase staff hours (17 per cent).²

Figure: Change in number of employees, by employment size



¹ ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, March 2021* (<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/mar-2021>)

² ABS, *Business Indicators, Business Conditions and Sentiments* (<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/business-indicators/business-conditions-and-sentiments/latest-release>)