



## Why is recruitment so hard right now?

Council Recruitment 2023  
An exclusive CouncilJobs report

### Background

In an effort to understand council recruitment continually better across Australia and New Zealand, CouncilJobs periodically undertakes bespoke research and analysis of the market dynamics and publishes its findings and insights to its clients in the form of exclusive insights reports.

Further in 2021, in an effort to increase the talent pool of council-ready jobseekers for council recruiters in both countries, CouncilJobs extended its programme of listing every job vacancy for every council in Australia to include all New Zealand councils. In this way, Jobseekers can now search every council job in every skill area in Australia and New Zealand in one place on the CouncilJobs Website. This capability increased job search traffic on the CouncilJobs website tenfold to over **two million page views in 2022**.

Thus, CouncilJobs is now in the unique position to be able to report to council recruiters on useful trends and insights it has found in the first full year of providing this expanded service to jobseekers. For more details or to explain any aspect of this report please contact the author by email [tony.miller@counciljobs.com](mailto:tony.miller@counciljobs.com).

### Report Highlights

#### Recruitment trends

1. **A perfect storm for recruitment:** Overall recruitment advertising doubled over 2021 to just over 58,000, especially in Victoria, as councils raced to recover from a perfect storm of external factors.
2. **Fierce competition for talent between councils:** Regional city councils competed heavily for talent with metropolitan city councils as they tried to recruit a similar number of employees per council.
3. **Growth in employment flexibility:** Over one third of all recruitment was for non-fulltime and non-permanent roles mirroring trends in the wider job-market and suggesting that councils are trying to become more flexible.
4. **Core council operational roles in highest demand:** The most frequently advertised roles were for core council functions requiring moderate skill levels including Community services, Administration and Governance.

#### JobSeeker search behaviour on the CouncilJobs website

1. **CouncilJobs is the one place to find every job in Council in Australia and New Zealand:** Over 2 million Searches were made on the CouncilJobs website in 2022.
2. **Key roles dominate listings and search:** Governance roles were searched and applied for the most frequently. Engineering roles were a close second in both search and application rates.



## A perfect storm arrived for council recruiters in 2022

Last year saw record job vacancies advertised in Australia and New Zealand councils as councils struggled to catchup from a 'perfect storm' of demand for talent. Average daily vacancies in 2022 across all Australian councils alone doubled to over 2500 vs the prior year at just over 1275. While data for New Zealand Councils is not available for the whole of 2021, figures for 2022 (where daily vacancies averaged 881) plus anecdotal evidence suggests that the overall picture is the same as in Australia.

Three overarching factors are at play here in CouncilJobs view

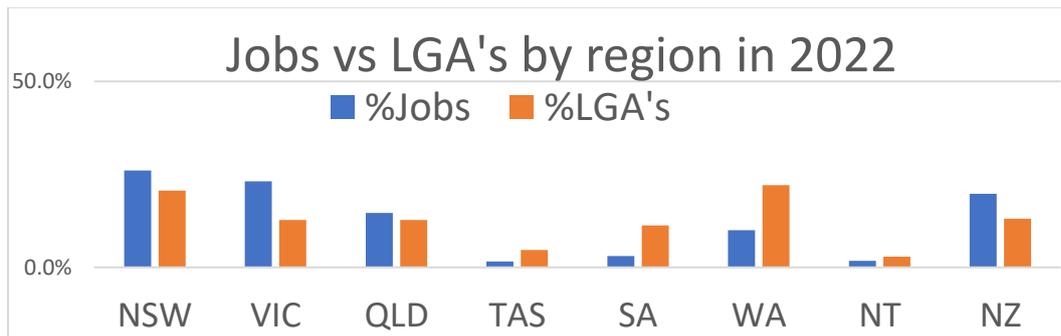
1. The great work environment, job security and having the desire to contribute constructively to one's community has led to most councils having an **ageing workforce issue**. In recent years this has transitioned to **mass retirements** as workers reach critical age or service milestones that encourage thoughts of retirement, which the pandemic only exacerbated.
2. Councils everywhere are in the midst of an infrastructure boom and **key skills are widely recognised to be in critical short supply**, such as Engineering, Project Management, Planning and Building. Added to this, the local pressures of climate change mean that councils have been pressured by their communities to step up their efforts to mitigate climate change locally with new infrastructure and innovative programmes all adding significantly to the **skills shortage for environment leaders and resources managers**.
3. During the Pandemic, councils have had to rapidly adapt workforce planning and work practices to deal with fundamental changes in society including, **Increased workplace flexibility**, e.g. working remotely, the rise in part-time work and higher turnover of staff. This has put **pressures on leadership and management talent** in councils, e.g. in 2022 more than one third of all councils in NSW advertised for a new CEO/General Manager and/or key divisional directors.



### Council Recruitment Advertising in 2022

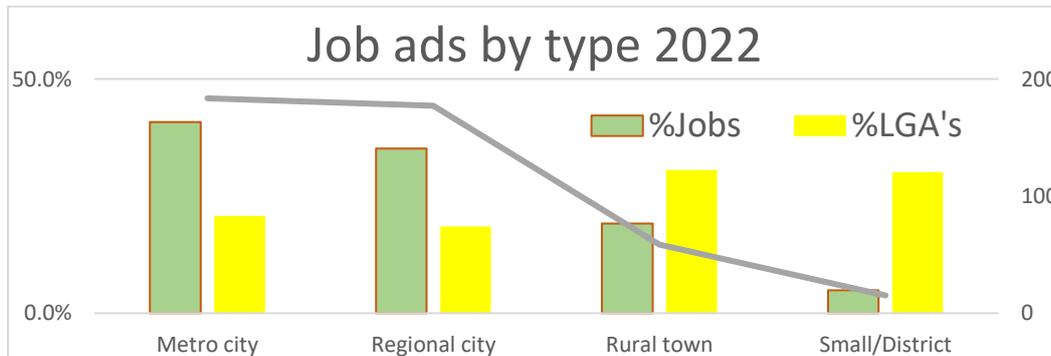
58,016 jobs were advertised by councils in calendar year 2022

This chart shows the relationship between Councils by State/Region & their share of all jobs advertised in 2022. NSW, Victorian and NZ councils were thus disproportionately represented in total job ads.



*Average recruitment per LGA showed issues of competition for skills between council types clearly:*

The chart below shows the relationship between the mix of Council types (Metro, Regional, Rural and District), their share of total Jobs advertised, and their average Jobs advertised. Regional city councils have far fewer employees than Metropolitan city councils yet needed to recruit just as many positions.

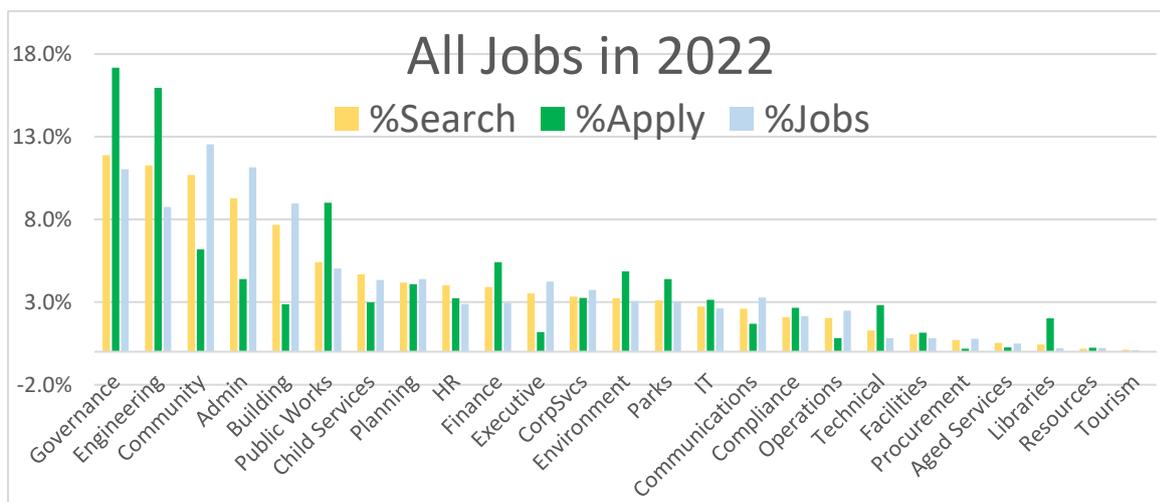




*Which Job types were most popular with Jobseekers in 2022?*

Governance, Community and Admin dominated the year;

	<b>Advertised</b>	<b>Searched</b>	<b>Applied for</b>
1	Community	Governance	Governance
2	Admin	Engineering	Engineering
3	Governance	Community	Public Works
4	Building	Admin	Community
5	Engineering	Building	Finance



Several questions are raised by this analysis and future CouncilJobs studies will aim to address.

1. What is the effect of competition for skills on wages costs for councils?
2. What were the actual recruitment outcomes?
3. What advertising techniques were the most effective?

What questions does the report raise for you? For any points of clarification or to let us know your thoughts send an email to [tony.miller@counciljobs.com](mailto:tony.miller@counciljobs.com)