

The curious case of jobs and training in retail and hospitality

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Careers in everyday industries: Potential benefits of increased visibility

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Project partners

- Federation University
- University of Queensland
- RMIT University
- SkillsIQ (Skills Service Organisation)

Background

Rationale for the project

- Retail and hospitality industries employ around 20 per cent of the Australian workforce, operating throughout Australia, yet the industries suffer from low prestige.
- This historically low perception discourages people from imagining worthwhile careers in those sectors, and can contribute to poor self-image for those working in the industries.
- Yet the COVID-19 crisis has shown just how vital both of these sectors are for the Australian public and the national economy.
- They are recognised internationally, for example by the OECD, as low-status occupations which have become more valued during the crisis.



Preliminary phase: This paper

The paper helps to answer the first of the project research questions: ‘What careers are available in the retail, hospitality and allied industries?’

We wanted to evaluate the importance of retail and hospitality in the workforce, in post-school pathways, and in vocational education and training.

We used:

- **Australian Bureau of Census (ABS) data** for employment in each occupational classification in the industries, including management roles, thus gaining industry overviews.
- **LSAY (Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth) data** (collected by National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) for employment in retail and hospitality.
- **NCVER vocational education and training (VET) data** on students in retail and hospitality qualifications.

Jobs: Employment in the core occupations in retail and hospitality

What data did we use?

We included 13 retail occupations and 19 hospitality (accommodation and food service) occupations at what is known as the ANZSCO '4-digit level'.

2016 ABS Census data were analysed for numbers working in these occupations as their main job. (In the census, people are asked to write their occupation, and their responses are then coded.)

We compared numbers of workers with numbers of managers.

Retail top jobs	Hospitality & accommodation top jobs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 526,013 Sales Assistants (General)• 184,571 Retail Managers• 102,183 Checkout Operators and Office Cashiers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 109,631 Kitchenhands• 106,357 Waiters• 83,915 Bar Attendants and Baristas• 80,719 Chefs

Total in Retail occupations: 970,080;
Retail managers: 238,598 (**25.29%**)

Total in Hospitality occupations:
686,237; Hospitality managers:
122,967 (**17.92%**)

15% of Australian workers were in these jobs.



Jobs: Data from the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth

What data did we use?

- LSAY tracks a sample of Australian young people annually from ages 15 to 25. (We used '09' data).
- They are asked, each year, if they are working and what their jobs are.
- They are asked what jobs they expect to have when they are about 30

What did we find?

Only 3-5% expected to be working in these retail and hospitality jobs when they were 30.

But, many actually worked in these jobs:

- 75% aged 15
- 50% aged 19
- 11% aged 25



- By age 19, 15% were managers

Training: Enrolments in VET qualifications (2017 data)

What data did we use?

- Enrolments in the SIR (retail) and SIT (Tourism, Travel and Hospitality) Training Packages for our occupation codes: 8 retail and 24 hospitality qualifications.
- We looked at total enrolments, and government-funded versus non-government funded.



What did we find?

- Hospitality had 210,378 enrolments. Retail had 53,383 – only one-quarter the hospitality total.
- Largest numbers in retail: Cert II and III in Retail Services
- Hospitality had more high-enrolment quals. Commercial cookery was fourth in the list.
- Retail was slightly more likely than hospitality to be government-funded.

Discussion

- Even taking 'main job' only, 15% of workers are in retail and hospitality-specific occupations.
- 40% more work in retail than hospitality. Almost 1 in 20 workers are sales assistants alone. But four times as many are trained in hospitality.
- VET enrolments in hospitality and retail (20%) qualifications were 263,761 in 2017; there were 3.4 million in VET qualifications in total.



Only 7.75% of VET is provided for 15.50% of the workforce

- **Five people per 100 employed in retail were being trained**
- **31 people per 100 employed in hospitality were being trained**

... and that is the curious case of jobs and training in retail and hospitality!

Sherlock Holmes story (Arthur Conan Doyle)

- Gregory (Scotland Yard detective): “Is there any other point to which you would wish to draw my attention?”
- Holmes: “To the curious incident of the dog in the night-time.”
- Gregory: “The dog did nothing in the night-time.”
- Holmes: “That was the curious incident.”

We’ll leave you thinking about that... !

- Thanks are due to NCVET staff for some of the data in this paper.
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