

Sector Snapshot

Victoria's Retail Sector

November 2020



This document provides a snapshot of skills demand for the retail sector in Victoria. For the purposes of this snapshot, the retail sector includes businesses who sell goods and products, including food; household goods; homewares; office supplies; clothing, footwear and accessories; recreational goods; electrical goods; and pharmaceutical products. It excludes motor vehicle and fuel retailing.

Foreword

This document provides a snapshot of skills demand for the retail sector in Victoria. For the purposes of this snapshot, the retail sector includes businesses who sell goods and products, including food; household goods; homewares; office supplies; clothing, footwear and accessories; recreational goods; electrical goods; and pharmaceutical products. It excludes motor vehicle and fuel retailing. This snapshot provides a genuine understanding of the current and future (1-3 year horizon) skills and training requirements of the sector, with a focus on the element of the workforce using VET courses and their career pathways. It also considers the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the future jobs and skilling needs of the sector.

The success of this work relied on insights from experienced employers within this sector to provide a sector-wide view of skills requirements and workforce challenges. A small representative group of employers, spanning a range of market segments, were engaged in an employer roundtable to develop this snapshot. Insights from public data on the Retail sector were presented and validated with participants.

The roundtable provided the opportunity for retail employers to input their view of priorities and requirements from the VET system in addressing sector skills issues. As such, this presents a picture of the demand side of the training market. This snapshot can be used by TAFE and training providers to better understand the retail sector's priorities in terms of occupation and skill demand to ensure the supply side responds appropriately to VET opportunities.

The Victorian VET system aims to deliver 'real training for real jobs' by providing up to date training for new challenges in the sector. This report is part of a series of sector snapshots which are being developed by the Office of the Victorian Skills Commissioner (OVSC). The set of sector snapshots will complement the Commissioner's Regional Skills Demand Profiles to provide a richer picture of the skills needs of Victorian employers. Insights from consultations will inform Government decisions around funding for accredited training. A collaborative effort between Government, employers and training providers is required to address these challenges.

This snapshot represents a summary of the views of consulted employers and sector representatives on the foreseeable current and future skilling needs of the retail sector. As such, the OVSC has prepared the report with care and diligence, based on information provided through consultations. Information in the snapshot has not subsequently been independently verified or audited.

Acknowledgements

The OVSC would like to acknowledge the time, contribution and insights of participating employers, the Australian Retail Association (ARA) and the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association (SDA) in supporting this process. The findings in this report would not be possible without their shared knowledge, openness, generosity, expertise and commitment.

Table 1: Participating Employers

Member	Organisation
Andrew Gatley	PetStock
Bonnie Plumridge	Peak Pharmacies Group
Cassandra Eifler	API (parent company of Priceline Pharmacy, Soul Pattinson Chemist and Pharmacist Advice)
Craig Edwards	API
Kate Byrdy	Bakers Delight
Paul Smith	Officeworks
Stephen Younane	Retail Prodigy Group
Wayne Gunstone	Bunnings
Karina Wightman	Style By Nature Florist

SUMMARY

VICTORIA'S RETAIL SECTOR

Approximately
290,000
workers across
Victoria

Approximately
11,000
additional
workers
required

Three up to date,
recommended
pathways to
employment

High level of
disruption
due to
COVID-19
pandemic

Increasing
trend to
online sales
across the
sector

High
casualisation
for sales
assistants

CAREER PATHWAYS AND TRAINING



Note: The chart above shows core roles in the retail sector. Additional opportunities exist in head office, including buying and planning, marketing and visual merchandising.

SECTOR WORKFORCE PRIORITIES

- ▶ Work with employers to monitor the increased use of distribution centres and the workforce skills required to support this transition.
- ▶ Communicate the industry's preference for modular, online delivery of training that maximises on-floor time for staff and can be tailored to an individual's needs.
- ▶ Build capability in e-commerce and digital marketing by supporting and promoting new skill sets.
- ▶ Build the skills of future store managers by supporting and promoting new skill sets.
- ▶ Support the development of the entry level workforce to engage effectively with customers by promoting new skill sets for entry-level retail employees.
- ▶ Build the capability of pharmacy employees by supporting and promoting skill sets for entry-level pharmacy employees and delivery employees.

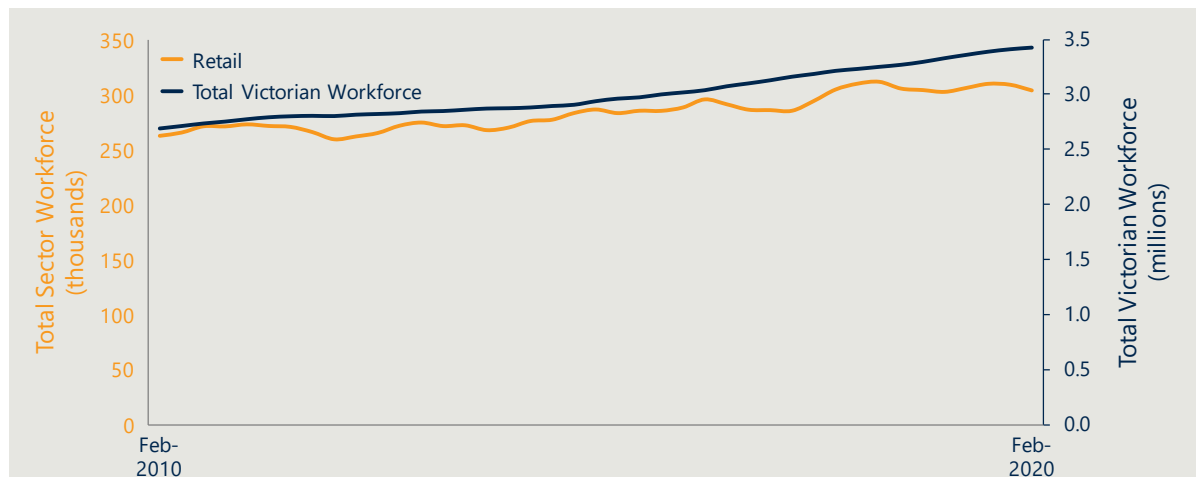
1 Sector overview

The retail sector in Victoria has seen uneven growth over the past 10 years with the largest growth in online sales

The retail sector in Victoria is large and diverse and includes businesses selling a range of goods and products in store and online. Key segments within the sector include supermarkets; department stores; discount department stores; big-box retailers occupying a large stand-alone space; large major retailers with significant floor space within a shopping centre or retail strip; and small speciality retailers. Most of these retailers trade online and in store, with a small number of retailers operating online only. The retail sector can also be segmented by the type of goods and products that are sold, including: food; household goods; homewares; office supplies; clothing, footwear and accessories; recreational goods; electrical goods; and pharmaceutical products.

As of February 2020, the retail sector was one of Victoria's biggest employers with 290,000 people employed across the state, accounting for over eight per cent of the state's total workforce.¹ In 2019 the sector had a turnover of more than \$86 Billion.² Demand for retail fluctuates according to the strength of the economy and is strongly correlated with disposable household income. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, growth in the retail workforce was relatively slow, with an average annual workforce growth of 0.7% per annum, compared to 2.4% per annum across the broader Victorian workforce (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1 | 12-month rolling average workforce size, Feb '10 - Feb '20

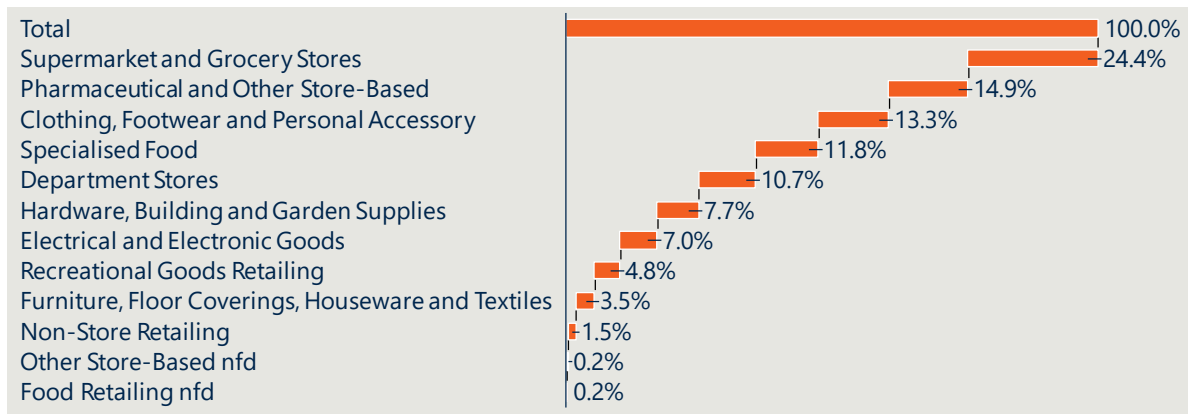


The workforce is dominated by labour-intensive forms of store-based retail, such as supermarket, clothing and department stores. One of the fastest growing components of the retail workforce over the past 10 years was non-store retailing, which grew at 19% per annum, reflecting the increasing importance of online sales. However, non-store retailing remains a relatively small proportion (1.5%) of the overall workforce, as shown in Figure 2.

¹ Excluding motor vehicle and fuel retailing

² ABS, retail trade

Figure 2 | Breakdown of retail workforce (Feb 2020)

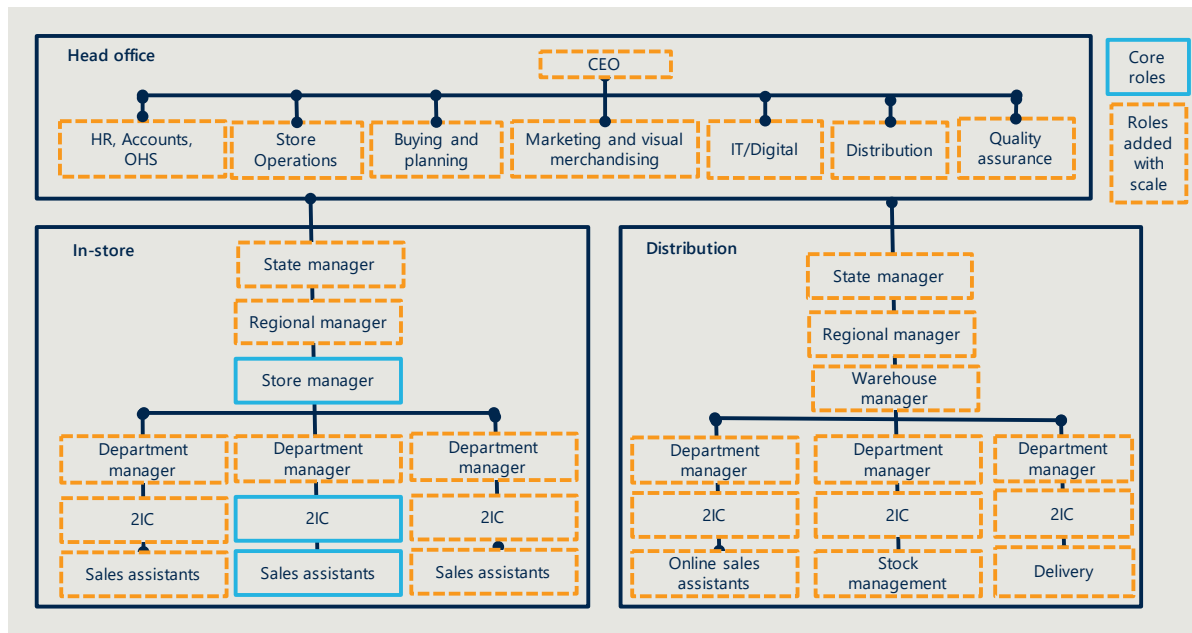


Business structures are increasingly complex with scale

There are approximately 32,500 retail businesses operating in Victoria. 2.6% of those businesses have a turnover of more than \$10m, while 42.2% of retailers were very small, with turnover of less than \$200k. Small businesses are more likely to be in the speciality retail segment and franchising is common.

Retail sector employees work in three main settings: in-store; distribution; and head office. The organisational structure and roles vary according to the size of the retailer and are illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3 | Indicative organisational structure of a retailer



For smaller speciality retailers, the in-store team may include 10-20 staff. Entry level roles are available for shop assistants who are often employed on a casual basis and are overseen by a store manager and a second in command (2IC). In larger stores, such as big-box retailers and department stores, there is a large workforce (up to 400), staff are generally organised into departments and there is a higher degree of specialisation across different product categories.

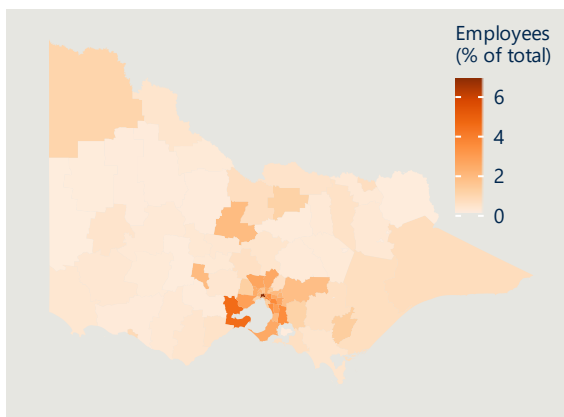
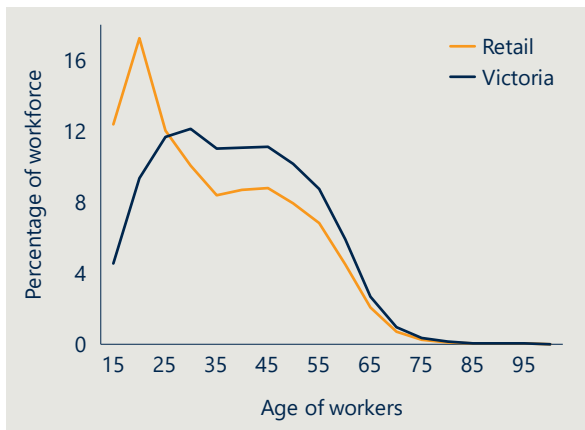
While small businesses may distribute stock directly from their store, large and medium sized businesses tend to have separate warehousing and distribution centres. Large businesses often organise distribution into separate departments for warehousing, online sales, IT and delivery (e.g. drivers), and may have multiple distribution centres organised by region.

Large and medium sized businesses also report to a head office which oversees stores and distribution centres and leads key functions such as buying; merchandise planning; quality assurance; and marketing and visual merchandising. Many large national retailers locate their head offices in Victoria and there is a growing number of international retail companies operating in Victoria. Most Victorian retailers are vertically integrated, sourcing products domestically or internationally and controlling each step of the supply chain from source to sale in order to increase margin.

The workforce is mostly young and includes more women than men

The retail sector employs approximately 290,000 Victorians and the workforce is dominated by women (60%) except in certain sub-sectors with a greater focus on warehousing and distribution, where the gender ratio is closer to parity, such as food retailing (52 per cent female) and non-store retailing (53 per cent female).³ The retail workforce is much younger than the Victorian average, with a high number of workers under the age of 25 (see Figure 1Figure 4). Metropolitan Melbourne is the centre of the retail industry in Victoria.

Figure 4 | Age distribution and geographic distribution



*retail excludes motor vehicle and fuel retailing

³ Census 2016

2 Sector outlook and workforce implications

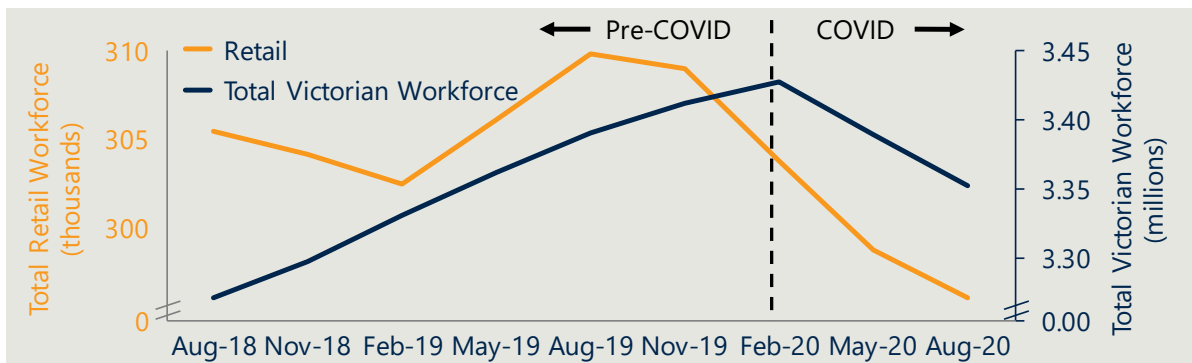
Workforce demand has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic

The entry level workforce is largely engaged on a casual basis and staff generally do not require minimum qualifications, meaning there is an adequate supply of entry level employees in the sector. These labour sourcing arrangements also allow workforce numbers to expand seasonally to meet periods of high demand, such as the Christmas period, and contract once demand decreases. While entry-level employees are easy to source, employers report challenges filling store manager roles across the sector, particularly given the influx of international brands and big box retailers to Australia, which has driven demand across the sector for skilled store managers. Some specialist roles within head offices are also difficult to source, particularly roles relating to IT and merchandise planning.

In 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic has caused an unprecedented disruption in the sector. Under the initial stay-at-home orders in early 2020, retail was still able to operate, but many outlets saw limited business in-store. Under the second wave of COVID-19 in Victoria, most retail in metropolitan Melbourne were forced to close, with the exception of essential retail, and many retailers shifted their operations to online trading. Even essential sub-sectors that were able to remain open, such as food and pharmaceuticals, experienced a shift to online trading and stores in large shopping centres were more strongly affected than high-street outlets due to a decrease in foot traffic.

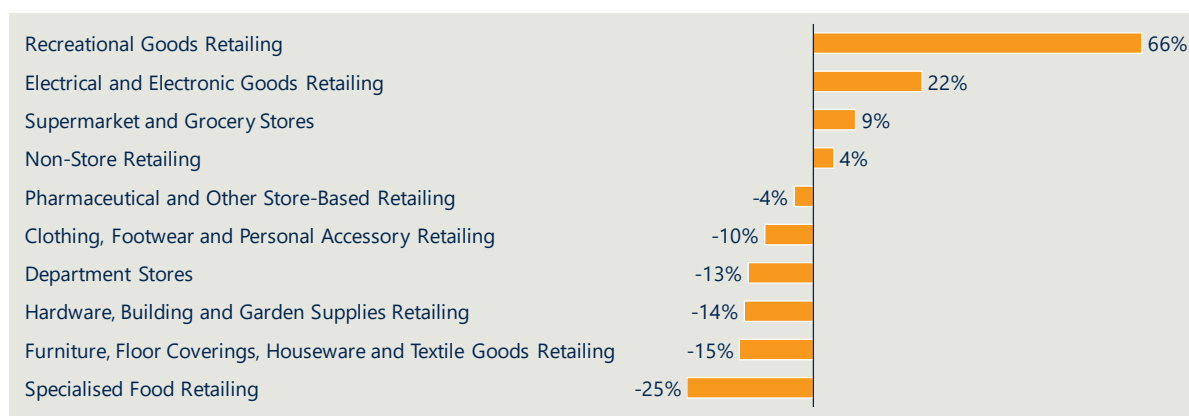
Over this period of disruptions, the JobKeeper subsidy and the ability to trade online have enabled many jobs in the retail sector to be retained, however the impact on workforce numbers was still substantial as illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5 | 12 month rolling average workforce size



The impact of the pandemic on the workforce has been uneven across different retail sub-sectors, with some sub-sectors seeing an increased demand for employees, such as recreational goods (including fitness equipment), and other sub-sectors seeing decreased demand (see Figure 6).

Figure 6 | Change in retail workforce numbers - March-September 2020



Much of the growth in particular sub-sectors was driven by online sales. Online sales were already increasing over recent years, but have accelerated as a result of the pandemic. In April 2020 online goods spending almost doubled compared to the same period the previous year, with the highest growth in home and garden products, and food and liquor. Online purchasing has continued to accelerate in Victoria at a greater rate than in any other jurisdiction, largely as a result of the second wave of COVID-19.⁴

This shift to online sales has resulted in a restructuring of jobs in many industries, with frontline sales roles transitioning into stock management and packing roles. In some industries that require intensive customer service in store, such as clothing, footwear and accessory retailing, the transition to online sales means fewer overall workers are required regardless of the volume of sales. However, in some product categories, the transition to online sales involves more physically demanding work and therefore drives demand for more entry level employees. COVID-19 restrictions meant that fewer workers were able to operate in the same space at the same time within distribution centres, placing staff under pressure to process orders more quickly and highlighting weaknesses in distribution capability.

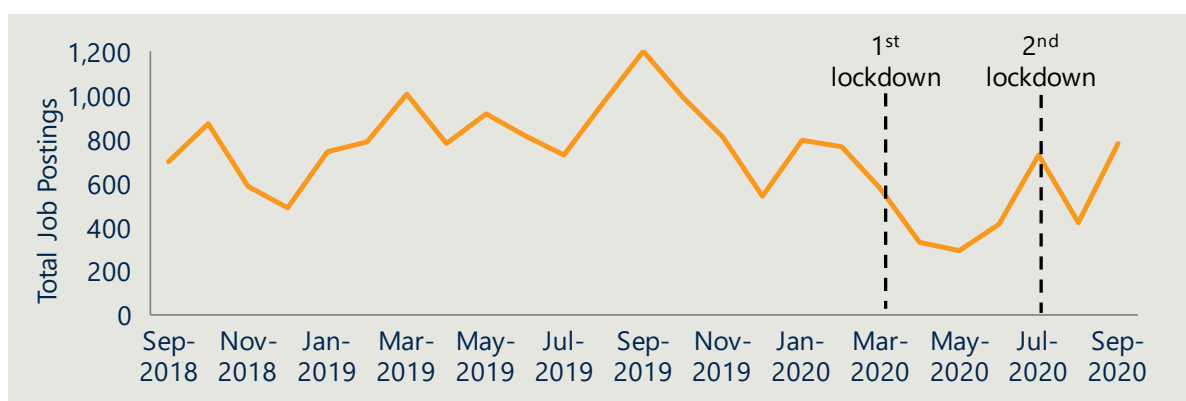
A strong increase in workforce demand can be expected in late 2020 but the longer-term outlook is less certain

In the last quarter of 2020, a recovery in workforce numbers is expected by employers, as COVID-19 restrictions ease and shoppers return to stores after many months. This will also coincide with the Christmas period which tends to be the busiest time of year for many retail outlets. An estimated additional 11,000 workers will be required across the sector based on previous trends⁵, with the greatest increases expected in electrical and electronic goods (up to 3,000 new employees) and department stores (up to 4,000 new employees). There are encouraging signs that the retail sector is already gearing up for re-opening with a recent increase in job advertisements, including for Christmas casuals (see Figure 7). However, the sector may contract again after Christmas and it is unlikely that retailers will significantly expand their store footprint in the current environment. Therefore, increased demand is likely to be for entry level employees rather than store managers in the short term.

⁴ Australia Post, Online Shopping Update October 2020

⁵ ABS data shows a 4 per cent increase in workforce numbers over the Christmas period across the past 5 years

Figure 7 | Monthly job postings in the retail sector (Sep 2018-Sep 2020)⁶



In the longer term, the outlook for the sector is more difficult to predict. Retail fluctuates according to the strength of the overall economy. Reductions in JobKeeper and JobSeeker, increased unemployment and low wage growth have potential to limit disposable income and retail spending. Some employers are optimistic that the retail sector may benefit from increased domestic spending, as a result of limits on international travel, and cuts to personal income tax. However, others are more cautious about the longer-term outlook based on uncertain economic conditions.

Some of the rapid changes in the workforce as a result of COVID-19 may not be sustained in the long term as they were specific to the effects of lockdown, however, an overall trend towards online trading is expected. Nationally, restrictions have largely eased and online growth is slowing, however, online purchases are still 7.2 per cent higher than the 2019 pre-Christmas peak.⁷ Employers estimate a 1-5 per cent shift to online trading in the longer term after restrictions end, which could result in 3,000 to 15,000 jobs moving from store-based roles, such as sales assistants, to online jobs, such as warehousing. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed weaknesses in businesses' online distribution capabilities, and employers indicated they are exploring changes to the way businesses are structured to service increased online demand. For example, building new distribution centres or creating "dark stores", which are traditional retail stores converted into distribution centres. Large retailers are leading this transformation. Amazon established a large distribution centre in Melbourne's south east in 2017, but has also recently announced plans to open a second distribution centre in the western suburbs covering 37,000 square metres. In April 2020, Kmart converted its Brandon Park store into a fulfillment centre and this year Woolworths has also begun to build its first e-store in Melbourne.⁸ These large and increasingly sophisticated distribution centres are highly automated using robotics and predictive analytics. A rapid increase in IT jobs can be expected in distribution centres and in the head offices of many retailers to transform business models towards online delivery and improve the online customer experience.

There is also potential for more roles in delivery, as businesses seek to gain a competitive advantage through timely and efficient delivery of goods to the customer. However, there will be a mix of direct and indirect distribution with some retailers employing third party logistics providers, rather than transforming their own workforce. Smaller retailers may also leverage the technologies of larger businesses. For example, the Fulfillment By Amazon service which is used by small and medium sized businesses.

Interpersonal skills are critical in entry level roles

The core role of most retail employees is to help customers find the products they require. Employers therefore seek individuals with interpersonal skills in communication and engagement to understand

⁶ Burning Glass Technologies, job advertisements, September 2018-September 2020

⁷ Australia Post, Online Shopping Update October 2020

⁸ 'COVID-19 has changed the future of retail: there's plenty more automation in store, The Conversation, June 2020

customer need and demonstrate the need for a product, and problem solving to help customers identify and address their needs. Employers noted that retail professionals are encountering more difficult customers and need resilience and the skills to resolve conflict.

While there are general skills that are common across all entry-level retail positions, technical skills may vary in specific sub-sectors or roles. In a warehousing environment, employees need strong skills in administration and data entry and may need the strength to lift and move heavy items. All entry level retail staff will need to develop strong product knowledge, but there is a higher degree of technical product knowledge required in particular roles such as pharmacy assistants and floristry assistants. Critical skills are summarised in Table 2 below.

Table 2 | Skills for entry level retail workers

Role	General skills	Technical skills
Sales assistant (general)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product knowledge • Stock management and inventory • Computer skills • Merchandising
Warehouse/distribution assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Active listening • Problem solving • Teamwork • Conflict resolution • Resilience • Attention to detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product knowledge • Administration and data entry • Stock management and inventory • Logistics • Heavy lifting • Forklift operation • Computer skills
Pharmacy assistant		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pharmacy product knowledge including schedules of medicines • Protocols and procedures around supplying medicines • Understanding of legal requirements around positioning and advertising • Delivery of pharmacy products in the community
Floristry assistant		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of flower and plant material • Preparing and assembling floristry products

As retail staff progress to store manager or regional manager level, they require more advanced interpersonal skills, in particular emotional intelligence and communication to enable effective team management. Store managers also need more sophisticated product knowledge, and business acumen becomes increasingly important. Head office roles generally require a more specialist skill set in a field such as IT and digital sales or merchandise planning.

The trend towards online sales will shape future skills needs

As an immediate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, all retail outlets will need to have a stronger focus on infection prevention and control to minimise the spread of the virus, but the most critical longer term trend will be the transition towards online sales.

As businesses transform their online presence and seek to provide a positive and engaging online customer experience, key skills will include website development, digital marketing and customer experience design so that retailers can effectively operate across multiple channels, both online and in-store. In large retailers, there will be a specialist head office workforce with many of these skills. However, for smaller retailers without a head office, store managers will also require greater familiarity with e-commerce and website development. As a young workforce, the retail workforce tends to have a high degree of familiarity with IT, but IT skills will become even more important for all staff.

A gradual trend towards online sales will also see more demand for technical skills related to distribution at head office level. This will include sophisticated logistics planning to ensure order collection and fulfilment can be completed as efficiently as possible. Strong IT capabilities will be required at head office level to support the roll out of predictive analytics and automation, to support distribution, stock management and exchange of equivalent products.

At the warehouse or distribution centre level, managers may be overseeing large workforces and will need superior capability in rostering. The entry-level warehouse workforce will also need the skills to work with increasingly sophisticated machines and robots. In businesses where automation is less advanced, heavy lifting skills to manage stock will remain in demand, along with forklift operation and accurate data entry. Skills in delivery will also be critical where employers intend to conduct deliveries themselves. Deliveries may be more complex depending on the type of product or the customer base. Delivery of heavy goods requires skills in heavy lifting and strong understanding of occupational health and safety. Delivery of pharmacy products in the community is also becoming increasingly common since the COVID-19 pandemic and involves dealing with diverse and vulnerable customers.

3 The role of training

Most skills are developed on the job

Most entry level staff recruited to the sector start as casual sales assistants or warehouse assistants and many work in retail while pursuing secondary or tertiary study. As a result, a large proportion of these workers are in short-term jobs, for example over the Christmas period. Employees are also likely to move between retail employers, and many do not see the retail sector as a long-term career path. There are no formal qualifications required to be employed as a general sales assistant and traineeships are rare, but some specialist roles do have specific requirements. In Pharmacies, all sales staff, including casual staff, are generally expected to complete an S2/S3 certificate which includes a single unit from the Certificate III of Community Pharmacy (Support the Supply of Pharmacy Medicines and Pharmacist only medicines). However, if staff are planning to pursue a career in community pharmacy, a Certificate III is preferred and is often completed as a traineeship. To work in a Florist, staff require a Certificate III in Floristry, which may also be undertaken as a traineeship. Some forms of specialist retail also require accredited training and favour apprenticeships or traineeships, for example baking, patisserie and meat processing.⁹ For the majority of entry-level retail employees, training is relatively minimal and is generally delivered in house through online modules or peer learning sessions. This training may relate to product knowledge or interpersonal skills such as dealing with difficult customers.

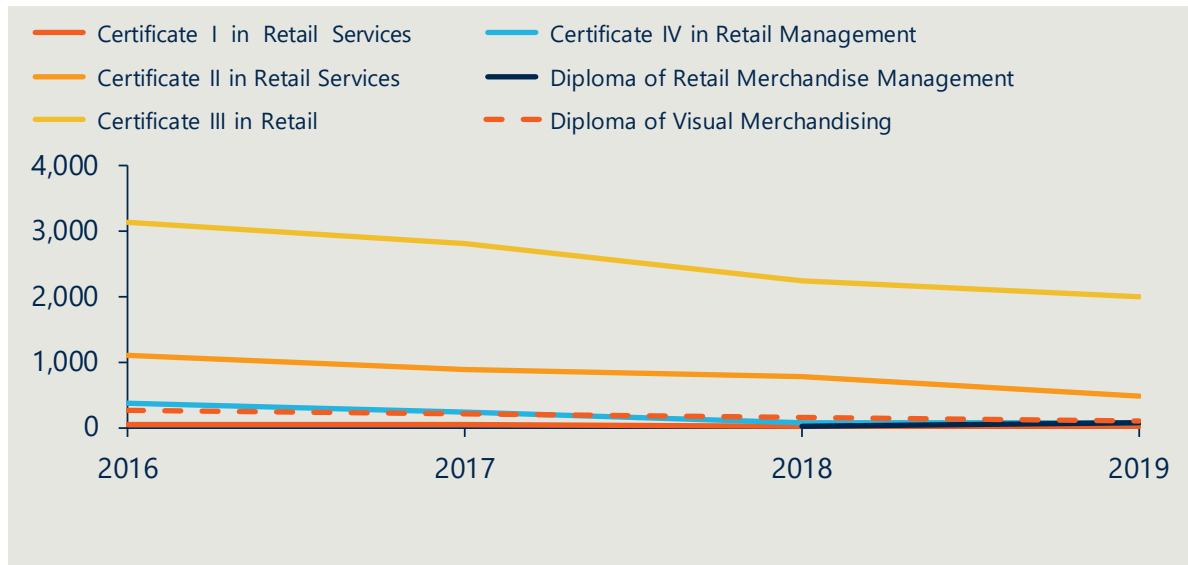
When individuals are motivated to continue in the sector, they may seek out full time employment within a store, or a role as a 2IC. With several years of experience, they may be promoted to a store manager role, although the pathway to store manager will take more time in a large store, such as a big box retailer, where employees may progress via a department manager role. Over the course of their career, skilled and competent store managers may progress to regional managers and to roles in head office, including buying and planning. Retail managers may also move into roles in buying and planning by undertaking the Diploma of Retail Merchandise Management, however, some individuals also enter buying and planning roles from outside the retail sector with a tertiary qualification in business or accounting. Retail employees may also move into specialist visual merchandising roles by undertaking a Diploma of Visual Merchandising. Other head office roles also require tertiary qualifications in fields such as marketing, accounting, IT, Human Resources and business. IT qualifications are a growing need in the head offices of many retailers with the shift to online trading.

Accredited training is rarely pursued for generalist, entry-level roles

While there are a number of accredited training pathways for entry level retail employees, including the Certificate I in Retail Services, the Certificate II in Retail Services and the Certificate III in Retail, these are not sought after by employers. Enrolment rates are low compared to the overall size of the sector and have decreased over recent years (see Figure 8).

⁹ For baking and patisserie requirements see the [Sector Snapshot on Baking](#). Meat processing is also not covered in this snapshot as no meat retailers were available for the employee roundtable.

Figure 8 | Enrolments in general retail courses¹⁰



The diversity of the sector means that technical skills and product knowledge is often industry specific. Generalist qualifications therefore do not always meet the needs of the full range of retail employers, and the casual and seasonal workforce means there is little incentive for employers to invest in training. Employers also note that the retail workforce engages most meaningfully in learning when it is delivered in the flow of work or in bite-sized modules. Interpersonal skills are often successfully developed through staff reflection sessions rather than formal learning.

Employers identify the biggest skill gaps at more senior levels, in particular store management, visual merchandising and merchandise management. There are specific accredited qualifications focused on each of these roles and the Office of the Victorian Skills Commissioner supported the development of the Diploma in Retail Merchandise management to address an identified need in the sector. This course has seen reasonable enrolment numbers given the small size of the workforce (60 enrolments in 2019), as has the Diploma of Visual Merchandising (90 enrolments in 2019).¹¹ However, enrolments remain relatively low in the Certificate IV in Retail Management (79 enrolments in 2019), given the size of the target workforce. Employers reported that this may be a result of funding models. There is currently a traineeship requirement to receive government funding for the Certificate IV, but most employees who are preparing for store management have experience in retail and do not meet the requirements for a traineeship.

To meet the needs of employers and employees who may not wish to commit to undertaking a full qualification, a nationally endorsed series of skill sets has recently been developed that includes the core competencies sought by employers (see Table 3), including customer engagement, managing difficult customers, visual merchandising, frontline management and e-commerce. These range from entry level to more advanced skills.

¹⁰ DET enrolment data

¹¹ NCVET enrolment data 2019

Table 3 | Recently developed Retail Skill Sets

Skill set	Units of competency	Target group
Retail Customer Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise personal work requirements Engage the customer Communicate in the workplace to support team and customer outcomes Work effectively in a service environment Advise on products and services Follow point-of-sale procedures 	Entry level employees
Manage disrespectful, aggressive or abusive customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage disrespectful, aggressive or abusive customers 	Entry level to more experienced employees
Participate in Work Health and Safety in Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handle food safely in a retail environment Receive and handle retail stock Organise and maintain the store environment Manage disrespectful, aggressive or abusive customers Identify and respond to security risks Contribute to workplace health and safety 	Entry level to more experienced employees
Promotion and Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce visual merchandise displays Coordinate visual merchandising activities Support marketing and promotional activities Maintain ethical and professional standards when using social media and online platforms Use social media and online tools 	2ICs and store managers
Retail Customer Relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage the customer Assist with customer difficulties Build customer relationships and loyalty Analyse and achieve sales targets Work effectively in a service environment Sell to the retail customer 	Store managers and area managers
Retail Leadership Transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control stock Monitor retail store financials Manage disrespectful, aggressive or abusive customers Supervise and support frontline team members Roster staff 	2ICs and store managers
People Management in Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit, select and induct team members Maintain employee relations Lead a frontline team Develop the retail frontline 	2ICs and store managers
Result Driven Retail Operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse performance of social media and online business tools Manage risk to organisational reputation in an online setting Monitor retail store financials Develop an ecommerce strategy Roster staff 	2ICs and store managers

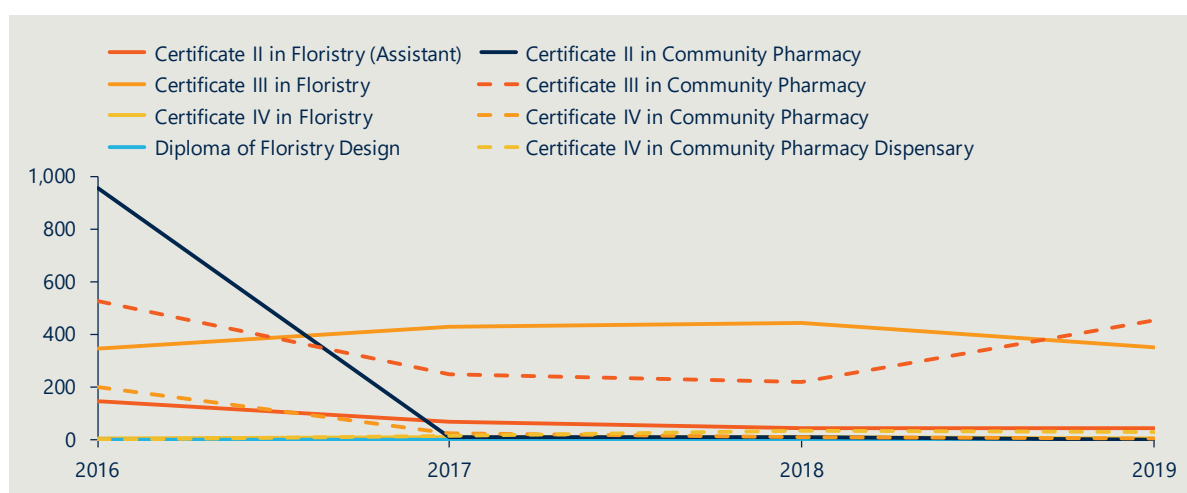
These build on a set of skill sets that was previously developed focused on use of social media, including:

- Understand the use of social media for business purposes
- Implement social media and online customer engagement
- Manage and implement social media and online customer engagement
- Develop an online presence for customer engagement

To support employees during COVID-19, a skill set was also developed specifically on infection prevention and control in the retail environment. Many employers have also developed their own in-house infection control training.

Enrolments in specialist pathways such as Floristry and Pharmacy are relatively low but reflect the smaller size of these subsectors. In the Floristry sector, the Certificate III in Floristry is most valued and is the essential requirement to be a qualified Florist, as reflected in enrolment numbers. The Certificate II is generally only undertaken as a pathway to the Certificate III. The Certificate IV is also valued for florists who wish to run their own business.

Figure 9 | Floristry and Pharmacy enrolments 2016-2019¹²



Pharmacy employers do not generally value the Certificate II in Pharmacy for entry level employees and this is reflected in low enrolment numbers in recent years. The Certificate III in Community Pharmacy is preferred for employees considering a career in the sector. For casual or part time employees, particular units from the Certificate II and III are recommended, with one unit considered mandatory in most pharmacies. Enrolment in these units is usually on a fee-for-service basis and the units include:

- Support the supply of Pharmacy Only and Pharmacist Only Medicines (mandatory within first three months)
- Participate in Workplace Health & Safety
- Interact with Pharmacy Customers
- Work Effectively in a Community Pharmacy
- Use Pharmacy Practices for Infection Control
- Assist Customers with Prescriptions

¹² DET enrolment data

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, pharmacies have also increasingly delivered medicines to consumer in their home. To address the skilling needs required for the delivery workforce, a new skill set has been developed on Community Pharmacy Delivery. This skill set contains the following units:

- Work with diverse people
- Participate in workplace health and safety
- Deliver medicines to customers outside the pharmacy
- Use pharmacy practices for infection control

There are opportunities to enhance accredited training for managers

Employers expressed particular concern about the lack of skilled store managers and lack of clear career and upskilling pathways. This gap could be addressed with the current Certificate IV in Retail Management and there may be merit in investigating whether the current traineeship requirement creates a barrier to take up of this qualification. For managers or prospective managers who do not wish to commit to a Certificate IV, new skill sets may provide an alternative pathway for building skills in specific areas of need and mechanisms to fund new skill sets should be considered. Another key priority for employers is building the skills to transition to online sales and to support more sophisticated approaches to distribution of stock. This is particularly relevant for small retailers who do not have the benefit of a head office to support logistics, marketing, e-commerce and website design. Government could also investigate mechanisms to fund skill sets that focus on digital skills and e-commerce.

While investment in training of the entry level workforce has not tended to be a priority for employers, there are core skills that are required and could be developed through new entry level skill sets. However, a new funding mechanism would be required. Given the high level of risk involved in the Pharmacy sector, there would also be benefit in developing and identifying funding for a new skill set for entry-level Pharmacy employees, including the six units that are most valued by employers: Support the supply of Pharmacy Only and Pharmacist Only Medicines; Participate in Workplace Health & Safety; Interact with Pharmacy Customers; Work Effectively in a Community Pharmacy; Use Pharmacy Practices for Infection Control; and Assist Customers with Prescriptions. Finally, increased government funding for traineeships may provide opportunities for Pharmacy and Floristry employers to increase the skills of their workforce through traineeships in the Certificate III in Community Pharmacy and the Certificate III in Floristry.

Given the trend towards declining enrolments in the Certificate II in Retail Services and the Certificate III and IV in Retail, enrolment numbers should be monitored over the longer term to assess whether changes to these qualifications are required.

Finally, to address the challenges associated with taking time away from the shop floor and meet the needs of a young and technologically skilled workforce, a modular online approach to training delivery should be adopted that can be tailored to the needs of individuals.



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