

BNZ/SEEK Employment Report



09 November 2023

More Down

- Downtrend in job ads solidifies in October
- Did the general election add to the recent refrain?
- Business staffing intentions are perking up, at least
- Candidate availability shadows rise in unemployment rate

OVERVIEW

SEEK NEW JOB ADS

	Oct-21	Oct-22	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23
m/m % change	4.5	-0.2	1.9	-2.5	-5.6
m/m % change (trend)	1.1	-3.2	-2.7	-2.3	-1.7
3m/3m	-10.2	-0.3	-9.0	-7.2	-5.3
Ann % change (m/m)	37.8	16.9	-26.1	-25.3	-29.4
Ann % change (3m/3m)	44.9	22.0	-24.4	-25.7	-26.9
Ann % change (12m/12m)	47.9	23.2	-11.1	-14.6	-18.1

Seasonally adjusted unless otherwise indicated

October's job advertising fell a more definitive 5.6% in October, fortifying the downward trajectory in the trend. Negativity also remained a feature of the annual comparisons, with October's job ads down 29.4% on this basis. They were also starting to slip beneath pre-COVID yardsticks – and clearly so in per capita terms, considering the population has grown 4.1% since 2019.

Looking past the Election (refrain)

Clear as the downtrend remains, there is the nagging question of whether the General Election, of 14 October, hampered job advertising to any material degree. Only a few months' more worth of data will help pass judgement on that hypothesis. What we do know is that staffing intentions amongst NZ's business community – looking out 6-12 months or so – has perked up over recent months. This could start to bend the trend in job ads out of its negative ways in due course but, again, that remains to be seen.

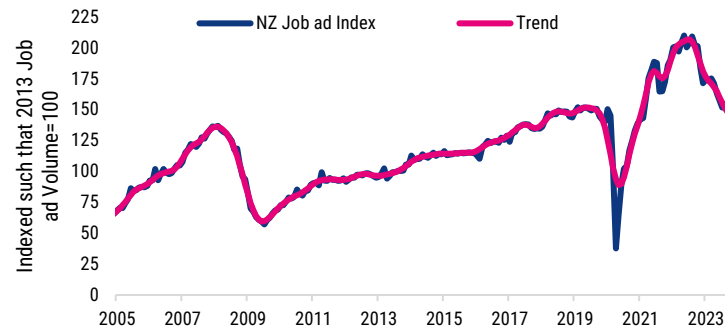
Composition

For the meantime, we have to play the jobs ads as we see them. Regionally, it was worth noting the South Island, excluding Canterbury, registered a 10.6% retreat in October, seasonally adjusted – weighed down by a 22% plunge for the (sparsely populated) West Coast. And what was interesting from the industry side was a much more obvious drop in Government & Defence, accelerating weakness in Information & Communication Technology and, conversely, a sizable bounce in Real Estate & Property Services.

A decent pointer to rising unemployment

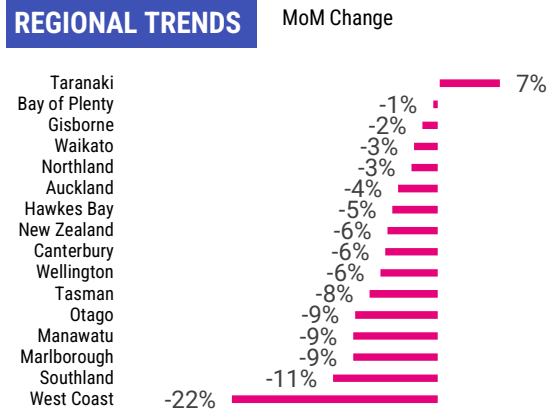
As it turned out, the SEEK series on applications per ad has proved to be a useful pointer to the recent direction, if not the extent, of movement in New Zealand's unemployment rate. The latter rose to 3.9% during the September quarter, compared to the 3.6% level it moved up to in the June quarter. It's been a common message of heat coming out of the labour market this year, after a very tight period in 2021/22.

NZ JOB ADS



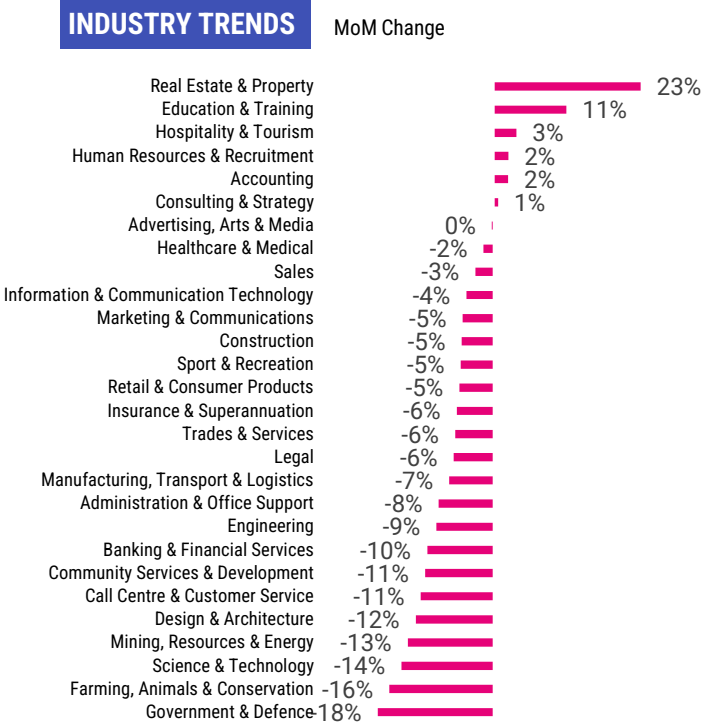
Source: SEEK, BNZ

REGIONAL TRENDS



Source: SEEK, BNZ

INDUSTRY TRENDS



Source: SEEK, BNZ



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