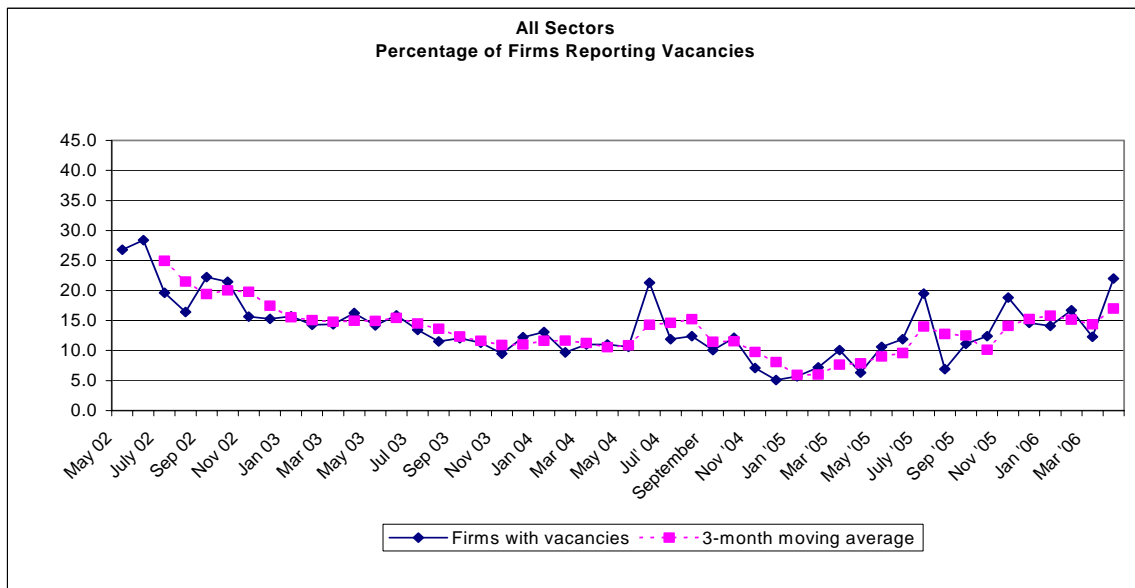




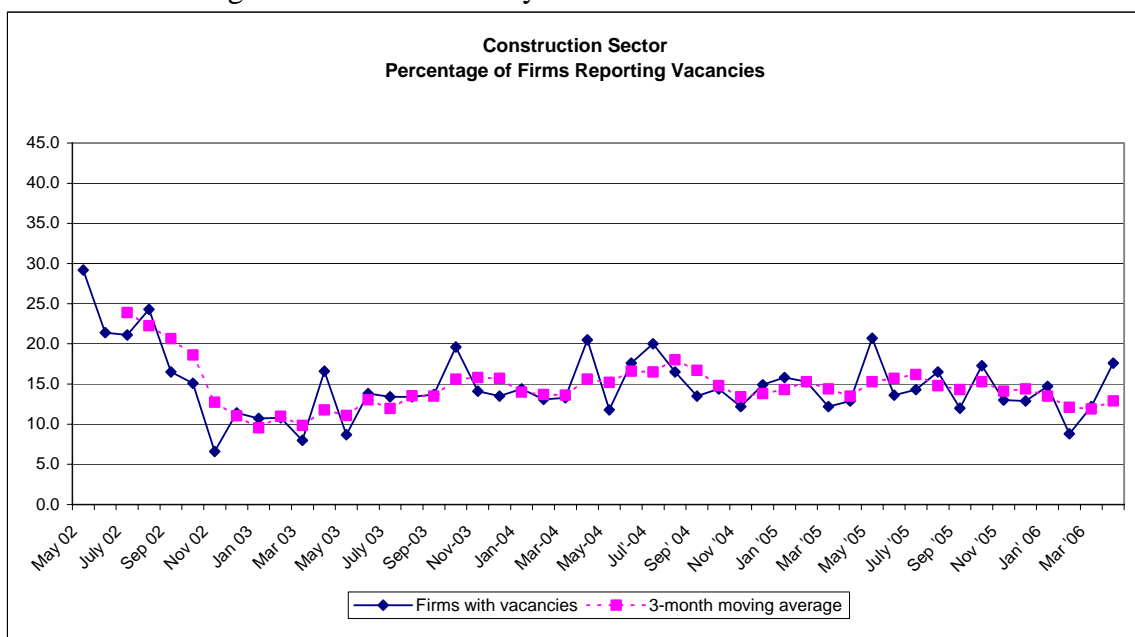
Significant increase in Vacancies in April 2006

Economy wide vacancies increased significantly in April 2005. The percentage of firms reporting vacancies rose by 10 percentage points from 12 per cent in March 2006 to 22 per cent in April 2006. The increase was driven by a considerable increase in the percentage of service sector firms with vacancies and moderate increases in the percentage of construction and industrial firms reporting vacancies. The retail sector experienced a decline in the percentage of firms with vacancies.



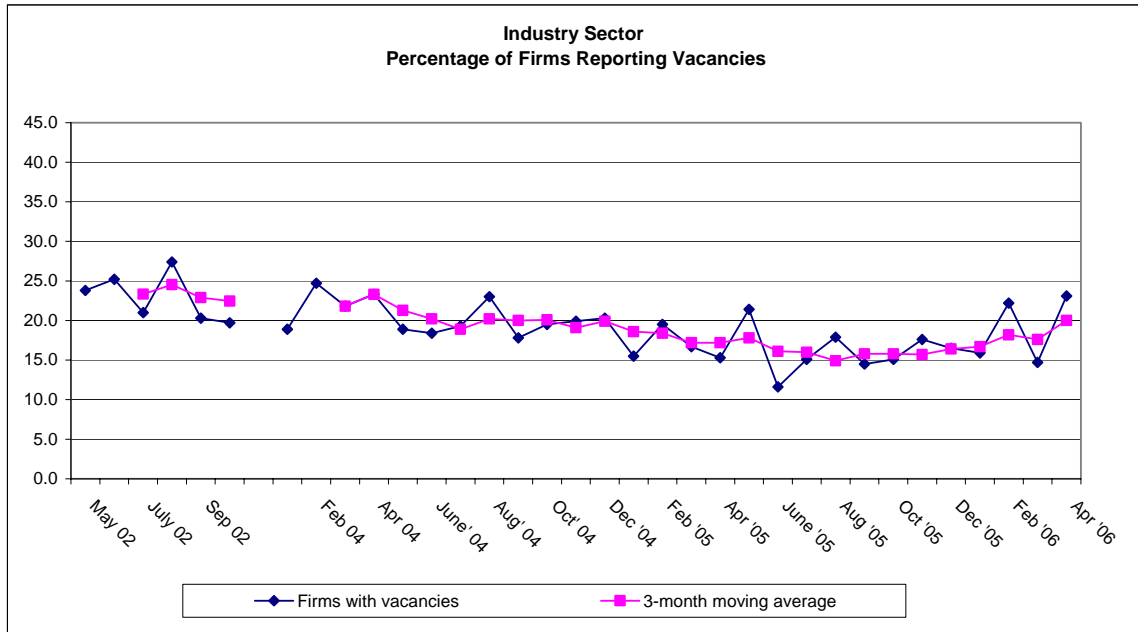
Construction

Latest survey data indicates that the percentage of construction sector firms with vacancies rose by 6 percentage points from 12 per cent in March 2006 to 18 per cent in April 2006. The increase brings the percentage of construction firms with vacancies to its highest level in almost a year.



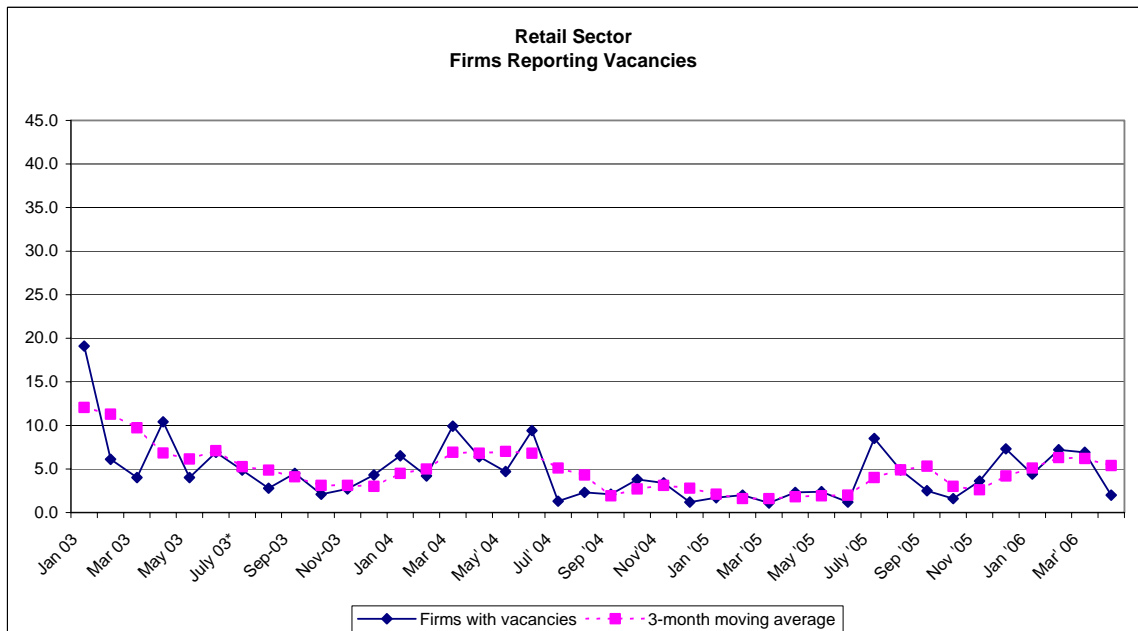
Industrial Sector

Vacancies in the industrial sector are at their highest level since February 2004. Compared to construction the industry sector experienced a larger percentage point increase in vacancies in April 2006. The percentage of firms reporting vacancies in the sector increased from 15 per cent in March 2006 to 23 per cent in April 2006.



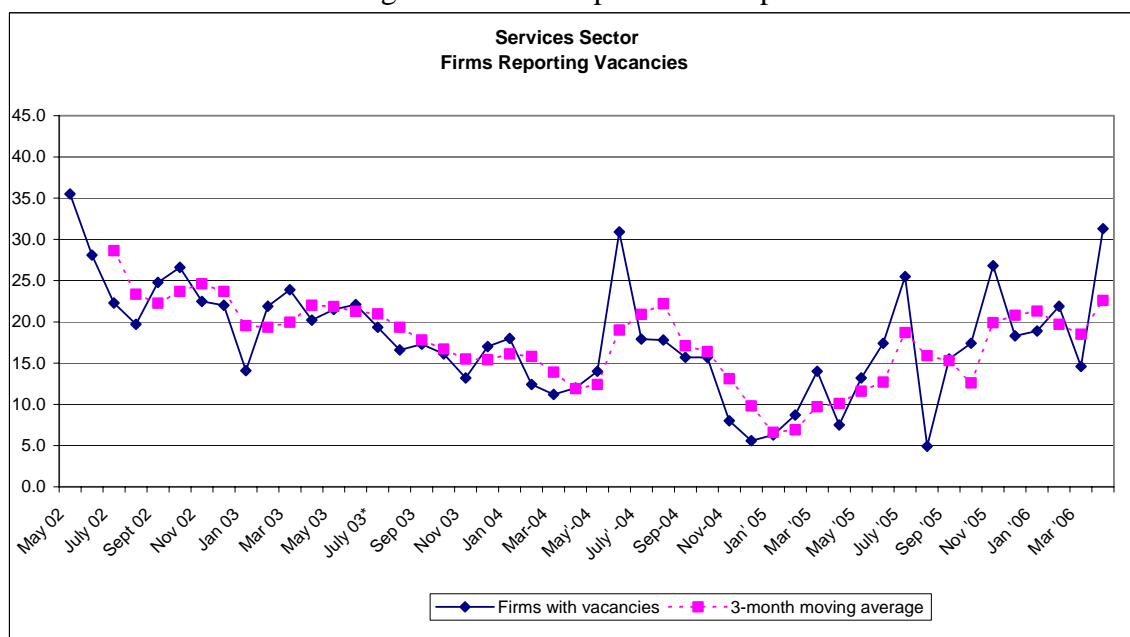
Retail Sector

The retail sector was the only sector that experienced a decline in vacancies in April 2006. The percentage of firms with vacancies in the sector fell 5 percentage points from 7 per cent in March 2006 to 2 per cent in April 2006.



Services Sector

Vacancies in the services sector more than doubled in April 2006. The sector experienced a considerable increase of 16 percentage points in the percentage of firms with vacancies. In March 2006 15 per cent of firms in the sector indicated they had vacancies to be filled. This figure reached 31 per cent in April 2006.



Difficult-to-Fill Vacancies

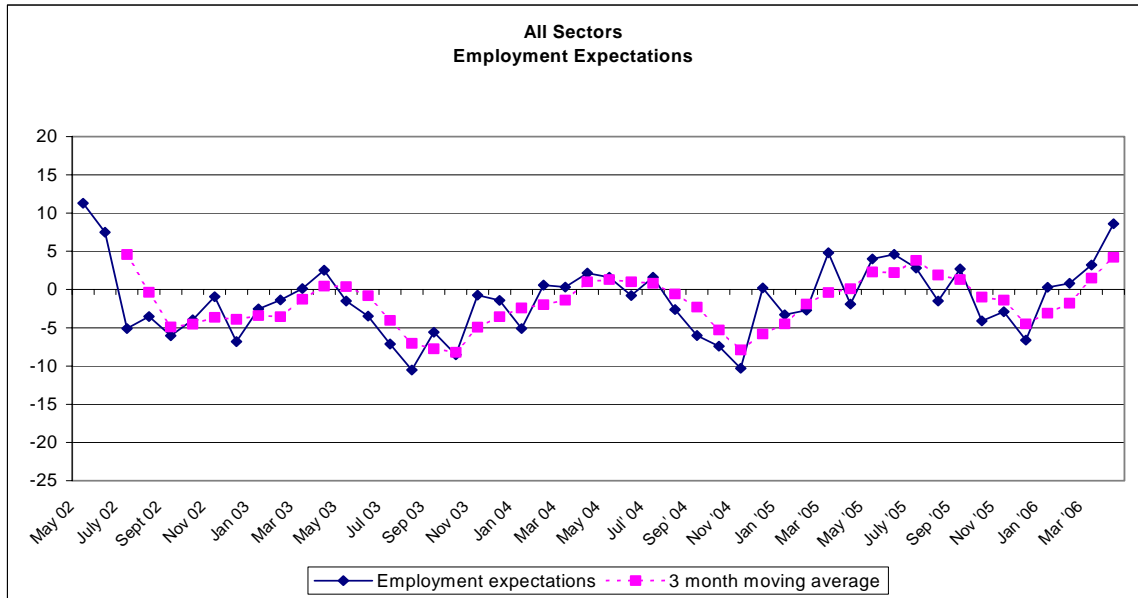
Firms are asked what particular vacancies they experience difficulty in filling. This provides an indication of the job vacancies which may cause bottlenecks within a particular sector.

The most frequently mentioned difficult-to-fill vacancies in April 2006 for the various sectors were:

- quantity surveyors and foremen in the construction sector
- engineers, sales staff and managers in the industry sector
- sales staff in the retail sector
- accountants and sales staff in the services sector.

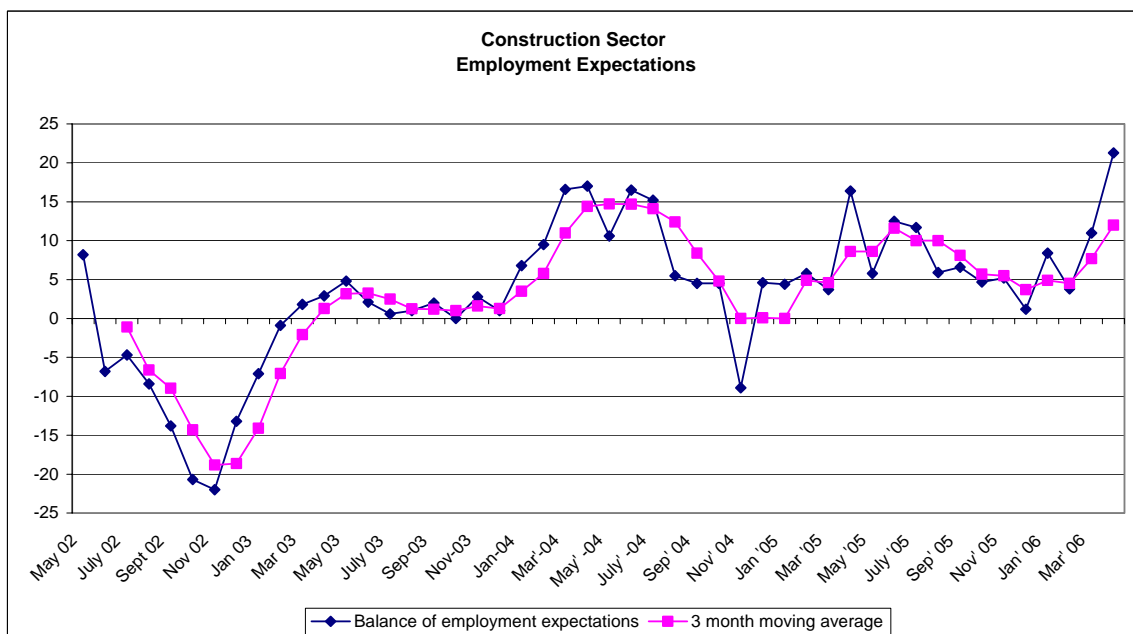
Employer Optimism Reaches Highest Level since May 2002

The Net Employment Expectations indicator for all sectors rose by 6 percentage points to 9 per cent in April 2006, it's highest level since May 2002. This indicates that 9 per cent more employers across all of the sectors surveyed feel that employment levels are going to rise rather than fall over the coming months. The improvement in the all sector indicator was driven by the services, construction and industrial sectors. All of these sectors experienced increases in their respective Net Employment Expectations indicators. The industrial sector experienced the most notable improvement in employer sentiment. The retail sector was the only sector to record a decline in employer expectations in April 2006.



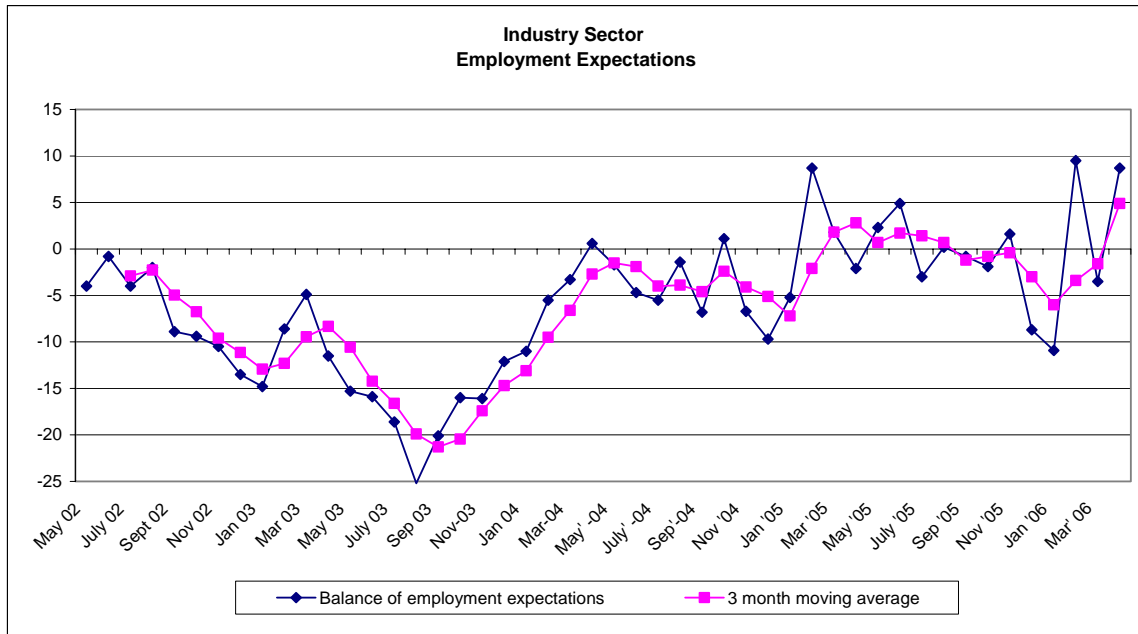
Construction

Employer sentiment in the construction sector reached its most optimistic level for the survey period in April 2006. The Net Employment Expectations indicator climbed ten percentage points from 11 per cent in March 2006 to 21 per cent in April 2006. This indicates that 21 per cent more firms in the sector are anticipating a rise rather than a fall in employment levels in the near future.



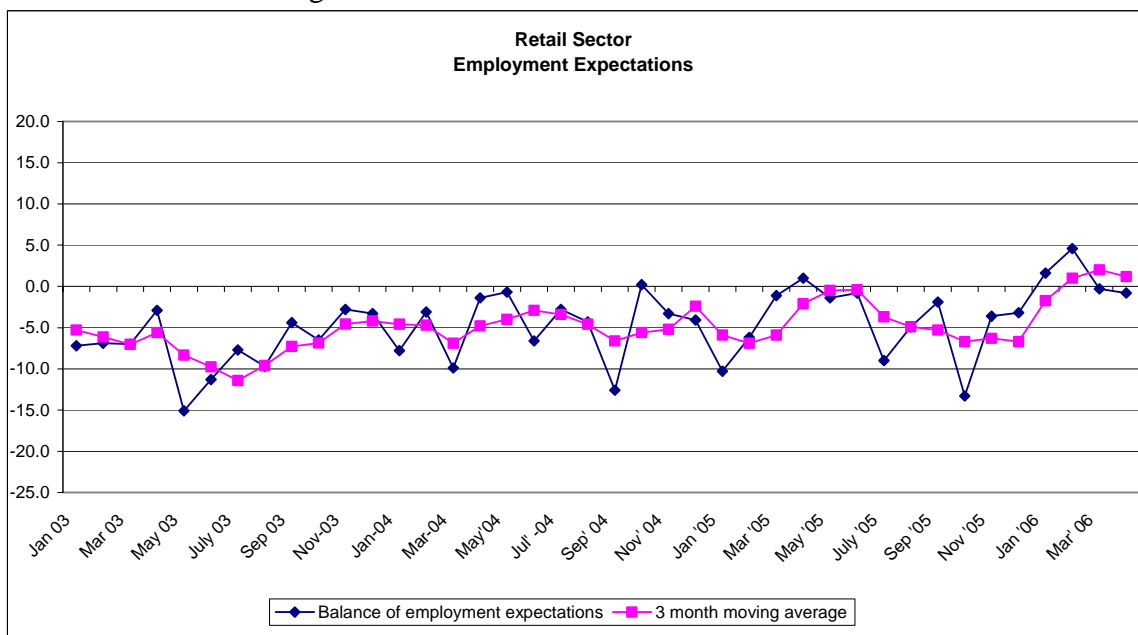
Industrial Sector

Survey results for April 2006 indicate that employers in the industrial sector are optimistic about future employment levels in their firms. The Net Employment Expectations indicator for the sector increased by a significant 12 percentage points from minus 3 per cent in March 2006 to 9 per cent in April 2006.



Retail Sector

Employer sentiment regarding future employment in the retail sector fell to a pessimistic level in April 2006. The Net Employment Expectations indicator for the sector decreased by one percentage point to minus 1 per cent in April. This indicates that 1 per cent more firms in the sector are expecting employment levels to fall rather than rise over the coming months.



Services Sector

Service sector employers expectations about future employment reached their most optimistic level since May 2002. The Net Employment Expectations indicator for the sector rose seven percentage points from 4 per cent in March 2006 to 11 per cent in April 2006. This indicates that 11 per cent more employers are anticipating that employment levels in their firms will increase rather than decrease in the near future.

