

# Where to look for job opportunities in 2021 after a year of record unemployment

By [Claire Moodie](#)

Posted Sat 2 Jan 2021 at 5:31am, updated Sat 2 Jan 2021 at 2:00pm



Founder of DUG Technology, Matthew Lamont, expects huge demand for data scientists in the coming years. *(Supplied: Simon Westlake)*

"Tech heads, Geo Junkies and Supercomputer Heroes please apply!"

That's the rather unusual call out for staff to work at a burgeoning Australian high-performance computing company.

DUG Technology had its humble beginnings in a backyard shed in the Perth suburb of Subiaco in 2003.

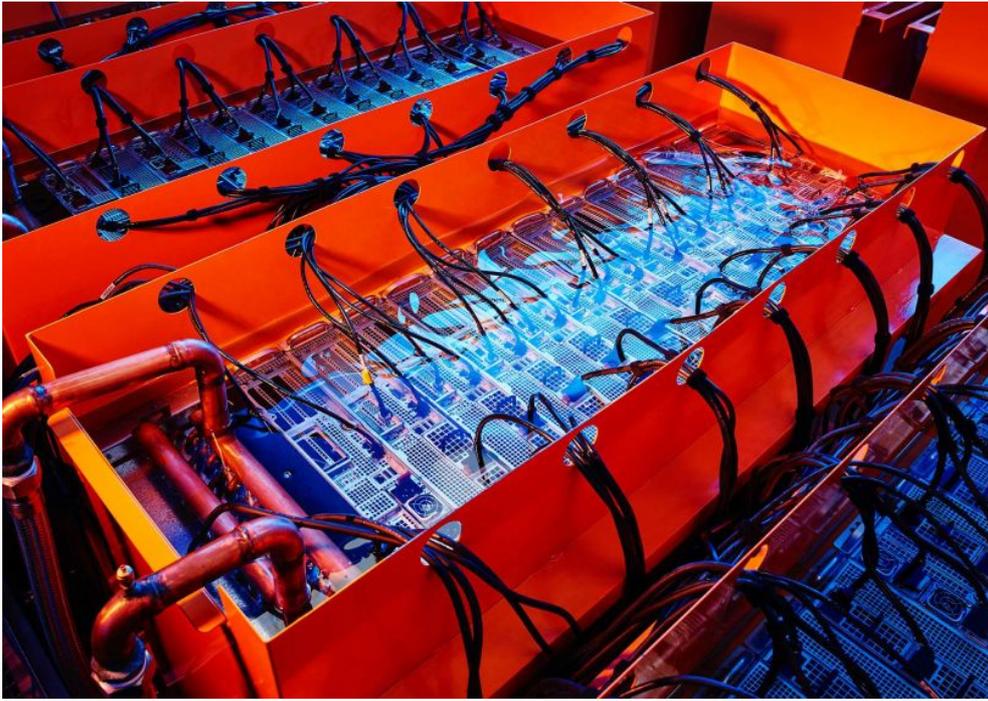
Today, it employs about 300 staff across four international offices, including Perth, where a bright orange supercomputer named "Bruce" is used to store and interpret big, complex data sets for an increasing list of clients.

After a year of turmoil in 2020, the growth of jobs in anything to do with data is one of the few certainties as we continue to navigate the pandemic in 2021.

## Key points:

- Of all occupations, demand for labourers grew the most in 2020
- STEM jobs were also very resilient in 2020
- In 2021, data analysts, call centre operators and health workers are expected to be in demand

And, more than ever before, [high-powered modelling using supercomputers is being used for everything from climate forecasting to astronomy.](#)



According to the company, "Bruce" has the number-crunching capacity of about 100 lap-tops. (Supplied: Simon Westlake)

## So where are the 'emerging' occupations at?

The National Skills Commission has placed "data analysts" and "data scientists" at the top of its [list of 25 frequently advertised "emerging occupations"](#).

About two-thirds of DUG's workforce are data scientists according to Managing Director and co-founder, Matt Lamont.

Mr Lamont said their skill set was increasingly sought-after.

Until now, interpreting seismic data for the global oil and gas industry has been DUG's focus, but it is branching out to other sectors including medical research.

"High performance computing is used in all walks of life now," Mr Lamont said.

"It's a real enabler, it's a scientific enabler.

"There's a pent up demand for high performance computing, there's a big demand for the skill set around high performance computing, around the programming and the manipulating and storing of data."

## Cyber security is booming

Chris Kent, who runs the Perth office of international recruitment firm, Hays, agrees that digital and cyber security skills will be in high demand in 2021.

"The world changed a lot in 2020, so we have seen a greater emphasis on digital platforms and remote

working, therefore lots of importance around security of data, and mobility and workforce agility," he said.

About 7,000 more cyber security workers will be needed across all industries nationwide by 2024, according to a forecast by the the Australian Cyber Security Growth Network.

There are currently 26,500 workers employed across the sector which is small compared to more established industries but it is growing fast, by roughly 4,000 workers every year since 2017.



: Kent of Hays Recruitment says IT professionals that specialise in data security storage will be in high demand in 2021 (*ABC News: Claire Moodie*)

Mr Kent says another employment space to watch this year will be jobs within renewable energy, given the global push to lower emissions.

Solar installers and wind turbine technicians also feature in the National Skills Commission's top 25 emerging occupations.

## High demand for labourers

Normally, the recruitment industry goes into a lull during the summer holiday period but Mr Kent said that was not the case this year.

He said many employers were getting in ahead of the pack due to concerns about skills shortages, especially in the key trades due to demand created by State and Federal home-building grants and a buoyant mining sector.

"Proactive companies are worried about not getting the jump on their competitors in terms of attracting talent in the New Year," Mr Kent said.

"There's a real need to make sure that people secure their talent in that first quarter, as the world starts to improve, and the vaccine starts to be released both around Australia and around the world.

"And hopefully that will coincide with some of those constraints on talent lifting ... not just the interstate borders, but also the international borders."

The National Skills Commission said the strongest growth in recruitment nationally over 2020 had been for labourers, with job advertisements up by 133 per cent —about 7,500 jobs —since the height of the pandemic in April 2020.

The biggest growth in adverts for labourers had been in Queensland and Western Australia with the main sectors driving the recruitment being farming and forestry, food preparation, mining and construction.

STEM jobs have also been highly resilient during the pandemic, according to the commission.

For example, between February and May 2020, STEM jobs fell by just 1.9 per cent nationally, compared to the 7.0 per cent drop in employment recorded across non-STEM jobs.

## Call centres head home



in contact centres are expected to grow with overseas call centres moving back home soil. (Supplied: Citrus Group)

One sector of the Australian jobs market that looks set to grow mainly because of the pandemic is call centres, with some offshore facilities closing down last year.

Both Westpac and Telstra are bringing call centre positions back home after their [overseas operations were affected by COVID-19 restrictions](#).

Mary Blake, of the Citrus recruitment agency in Sydney, predicted between eight and ten thousand jobs would be created over the next year with jobs coming back to home soil, as well as new "contact centres" being set up.



Director, Mary Blake, says contact centre staff will be in increasing demand during  
(Supplied: Citrus Group)

"New centres are being established all over the country as more and more organisations manoeuvre to support increased online sales," she said.

"We are seeing organisations really fighting now for space in the market and the best way for them to gain market share is to have an onshore contact centre in their armoury.

"The Australian customer market is demanding local support."

Where a call centre position may once have been considered a dead-end job, Ms Blake said these days contact centres offered real career opportunities.

"The contact centre is the heart and soul of the business," she said.

"People can come in and really understand the front-line customer interaction, how the business operates, what their greater market strategy is, how they deal with customers in that agile environment to be able to bounce out with that knowledge into other areas of the business."

## Health and aged care the 'resilient' sectors in 2021

On top of identifying emerging occupations, the National Skills Commission has also rated jobs according to their resilience during the pandemic and future jobs growth.

Not surprisingly, nurses and aged and disabled carers head up its list of the top 20 most "resilient occupations" which also features psychiatrists and delivery drivers.

Last week, the West Australian branch of the Australian Medical Association and the Nurses Federation jointly warned about a critical shortage of nurses heading into 2021.



Murray has been an aged carer for 16 years and says the job has changed her life.  
(News: Marcus Alborn)

Traditionally, the aged care sector has struggled for staff and that challenge is set to continue with an estimated 57,000 extra nurses needed across the country to comply with [fixed minimum staffing ratios being recommended to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety](#).

For Jade Murray, a carer who has worked at the same nursing home in Perth for sixteen years, the job has never felt more useful and meaningful than in 2020.

Ms Murray was part of an emergency team who flew to Victoria to help out in a nursing home where more than 80 people had contracted COVID-19, most of them staff.



Carer Jade Murray has been training colleagues in PPE since returning from working out in aged care homes in Victoria. (Supplied: Ryan Ammon)

"When I arrived, it was a little daunting," Ms Murray said of the experience.

"But, I just went in there, did what I do, met some wonderful people, people that I will always be friends with.

"It was eye-opening, but a great experience. I wouldn't trade it."



Carer Jade Murray with care home residents, Rob O'Connell and Anna Melvan. (ABC News: Claire Moodie)

Ms Murray said she would recommend the job to anyone who wanted to try something different and was a kind-hearted, caring person and a good listener.

"It's a massively important job and we actually become part of their lives," Ms Murray said.

"Physically it's a very hard job and mentally it can also be hard.

"It's an industry where you are not going to get thanked all the time.

"But, you know that you are making a difference."

## **Emerging occupations identified by the National Skills Commission:**

### **Data analytics**

- Data analysts
- Data scientists
- Data engineers
- Data architects
- Pricing analysts

### **Emerging business practices**

- Agile coaches
- Devops engineers
- Logistics analysts

### **Regulatory**

- Risk analysts
- Regulatory affairs specialists
- Energy auditors
- Compensation and benefits analysts

### **Health**

- Respiratory therapists
- Nurse liaisons
- Biostatisticians

### **Sustainability, engineering and trades**

- 
- Solar installers
- Energy efficiency engineers
- Wind turbine technicians

- Hazardous materials labourers

### **Refreshing ANZSCO**

- Fundraisers
- Researchers
- Research assistants

### **Digital deepening**

- Digital marketing specialists
- Social media specialists
- User experience analysts