Electronic Engineering Associate Professionals	New South Wales (NSW)
ASCO Code: 3124	April 2008
Labour market rating	Recruitment difficulty
Comment: *Recruitment difficulties are confined to associates with experience in highly specialised areas such as particular radio frequency technologies and specific control systems.*	

Occupational demand

Census data indicate that employment of electronic engineering associate professionals in NSW fell substantially between 2001 and 2006, mainly due to declining employment in the electronic equipment manufacturing industry. Over the past year, however, demand for this group has benefited from faster economic growth, the strong performance of the communications sector and an improvement in manufacturing employment. State Final Demand for NSW rose by four per cent in the year to December 2007 following growth of only one per cent the previous year. The gross value added by the telecommunications industry in Australia rose by 10 per cent in 2007 and it is likely that the growth rate was similar in NSW. Labour Force Survey data suggest that employment in the manufacturing industry in NSW grew in the year to February 2008 after four years of falling employment.

Occupational supply

There is a number of Diploma courses which would be an entry path to this occupation or, depending on the modules taken by the student, to the closely related occupation of electrical engineering associate. DEEWR estimates that completions in TAFE diplomas in electrical, electronics and telecommunications engineering were stable at about 360 persons a year from 2005 to 2007. This represents a training rate (course completions as a percentage of the employed workforce) of 5.1 per cent based on an estimated combined workforce of electrical engineering associates and electronic engineering associates of 6,700. Net immigration of electrical engineering associates to NSW from overseas increased to 52 persons in 2006-07 which was well above the annual average of 23 per annum for the previous five years.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A DEEWR survey of employers who had recently advertised for electronic engineering associate professionals was conducted for this report. The survey found that 80 per cent of vacancies were filled within six weeks of the surveyed advertisements. The majority of surveyed employers were able to fill their vacancies quite readily. For example, one major public sector employer conducted an extensive advertising campaign for associates which attracted a large field of applicants including a number of degree-qualified electronics engineers. The employer was able to recruit four electronic engineering associates and attract another five suitable applicants who were placed on an order of merit in case further vacancies arose. Private sector employers also filled vacancies readily across a range of skill sets, including industrial control systems, electronic security, electronic entertainment and testing of electronic systems. Although a minority of employers were unable to fill vacancies, they were generally seeking associates with experience in highly specialised areas such as particular radio frequency technologies, specific interfaces for PCBs or the calibration of electronic equipment to high standards. On the other hand, several employers working in niche technologies were able to find associates with general electronics skills whom they were prepared to train in their relevant technologies.

Labour market outlook

Demand for this group is expected to remain firm over the next 12 months. Although growth in telecommunications may slow from its recent high levels it is likely to remain solid. The expected strength of general economic activity and the construction and mining sectors should also have a

beneficial effect on manufacturing production. Supply levels should be adequate to meet demand in most industries over the next year and no general shortage is likely in the short term.