

<b>Butcher and Smallgoods Maker</b>		<b>Northern Territory</b>
ANZSCO Code: 3512-11	November 2009	
Labour market rating	Regional shortage	
Comment:		

### Occupational demand

ABS Census data shows that there were just 128 Butchers and Smallgoods Makers employed in the NT in 2006, a decline in comparison with the 2001 and 1996 levels. Food retailing turnover during the three year period since June 2006 has grown by an annual average rate of 10 per cent (ABS 8501.0; Retail Trade). DEEWR's skilled vacancy survey indicates advertised vacancies for butchers grew in 2009, but remained below the level of three years ago.

### Occupational supply

The number of people in butcher apprenticeships has grown over the past three years; however, completions have so far remained at the longer term average. The apprenticeship completion rate for butchers has historically been better than other food trades at greater than 50 per cent and so the increase in commencement should translate into increased completions over time. The local training rate for the trade is relatively high and there is greater reliance on local recruitment, however, there is also a reliance on recruiting travellers and transient workers.

### Employer and industry comments/current labour market

Employers were able to fill 67 per cent of vacancies surveyed. Qualified applicants were rare and few employers had a choice of suitable applicants. Vacancies outside the Darwin and Palmerston area commonly remained unfilled during the survey period; however, all vacancies within this area were able to be filled.

Some employers considered a higher turnover rate was a significant issue for the trade and they tended to have a greater reliance on hiring backpackers or transient workers to temporarily fill positions. Other employers had a more stable workforce and were able to recruit locally (via apprenticeship training). Advertised vacancies surveyed were due to both staff turnover and jobs growth. Employers did commonly suggest that they had trouble retaining apprentices once they became qualified and felt the ease with which they could gain employment interstate at this stage was an influencing factor.

Employers suggested wastage was an issue for the trade (with qualified Butchers choosing to work in other industries) and was caused by long hours on your feet and wage pressures. The high cost of living in the NT, particularly the difficulty securing an affordable rental property, has lead to some Butchers seeking work elsewhere.

### Labour market outlook

Demand for Butchers over the coming year is expected to remain relatively stable. An increase in apprenticeship completions is expected, but this is not likely to impact on the regional shortage rating for the trade over the coming year.