

Butcher or Smallgoods Maker		Western Australia
ANZSCO Code: 3512-11		August 2009
Labour market rating:	Recruitment difficulty	
Comment: <i>There is a shortage of experienced traditionally skilled Butcher or Smallgoods Makers required by independent operators in the private retail sector. No shortages of supermarket level skilled Butcher or Smallgoods Makers who have basic butchering skills due to the nature of the supply of meat already semi prepared by wholesalers.</i>		

Occupational demand

ABS 2006 Census data indicate in Western Australia (WA), the majority of Butcher or Smallgoods Makers (73 per cent) work in the major industry division of Retail, 14 per cent work in Wholesale trade and a further 12 per cent are classified as working in Manufacturing. ABS data shows the number of Butcher or Smallgoods Makers in WA has decreased between 2001 and 2006 by five per cent to 1641. The ABS Labour Force Survey indicates from May 2008 to May 2009 employment of Butcher or Smallgoods Makers in WA increased significantly to approximately 2200. The demand for Butcher or Smallgoods Makers is linked to population and almost three quarters of Butcher or Smallgoods Makers in WA are employed in the Perth metropolitan area. The DEEWR Skilled Vacancy Count of newspaper adverts shows the number of vacancies for Butcher or Smallgoods Makers had remained fairly steady from late 2007 until late 2008 but since then there has been a significant decline in vacancy numbers in line with the general economic downturn.

Occupational supply

Formal supply is by way of an apprenticeship as a General Butcher which involves completion of TAFE study at the Certificate III level. The apprenticeship completions of 'general butcher' in the period 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 totaled 82, there were 72 completions in 2007-08 and 61 in 2006-07. ABS 2006 census data shows 67 per cent of Butcher or Smallgoods Makers have completed a certificate III or above. Many have no formal qualifications and 16 per cent had completed year ten or below. In 2007-08 overseas migration provided a net gain of 124 'meat tradespersons' to WA, which was less than 2006-07 when overseas migration provided a net gain of 155.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A DEEWR Survey of Employers who had Recently Advertised (SERA) for Butcher or Smallgoods Makers showed 71 per cent of vacancies were filled within four weeks of advertising. There were 11 applicants per vacancy of whom approximately three per vacancy were considered by employers to be suitable. Employers reported the main reasons applicants were not suitable were because they did not have appropriate experience, lacked a trade qualification or did not live locally. Employers of Butcher or Smallgoods Makers in WA are independent retailers and wholesalers, major supermarkets or abattoirs. The majority of employers surveyed who have their own business reported it was difficult to locate a traditionally skilled butcher who could make sausages etc, because most of the applicants had previously worked as a supermarket butcher which required a different skill set. They also mentioned applicants needed to have retail skills as they were required to serve customers. Supermarket owners reported no difficulties with recruitment as they required basic butchering skills and there was limited contact with the public. Some employers noted an improved result from their recent recruitment rounds in comparison to the last two years when shortages were reported. They thought this was because people who had left the industry previously to work in higher paid jobs were now retrenched and looking for secure employment. Most employers were of the opinion butchering did not traditionally attract enough apprentices due to the nature of the work and pay rates and there is always a threat of a skill shortage.

Labour market outlook

Recruitment difficulty is expected in the medium term. With the population increasing in WA employment for Butcher or Smallgoods Makers is expected to remain steady in the long term.