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| Pastrycook | Australian Capital Territory |
| ANZSCO Code: 3511-12 | August 2009 |
| Labour market rating: | Shortage |
| Comment: | |

Occupational demand

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census data from 2006 show there were around 100 identified pastry cooks working in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), a decrease of 24 per cent from the 2001 Census. They are predominantly employed in the accommodation and food services (37 per cent), manufacturing (27 per cent) and retail trade (24 per cent) sectors. Employer comments suggest increasing numbers of pastry cooks are employed in factory based manufacturing, producing ready-made goods and pre-mix ingredients, which are sold to individual bakeries for baking at a later stage. The DEEWR Internet Vacancies Index showed a marked increase in advertised vacancies for Bakers and Pastry Cooks over the two years to April 2009. Employers generally reported consumer demand has remained steady despite the current economic downturn and in some cases demand for hand-made speciality pastries has risen slightly.

Occupational supply

At present, new entrants into this occupation usually complete a Certificate III or IV level qualification which incorporates an apprenticeship. ABS Census data show 35 per cent of the industry held a certificate III or IV level qualification in 2006, however 51 per cent of pastry cooks had no post-school qualifications. National Centre for Vocational Education Research data show completions of pastry cook and baker qualifications in the ACT have averaged 14 completions per year over the three years to 2008. Department of Immigration and Citizenship data show a minimal net migration gain for the ACT in recent years.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A survey of employers who had recently advertised for pastry cooks in the ACT was undertaken for this report. There was an average of 5.6 applicants per vacancy with 1 applicant per vacancy considered suitable by employers. Employers generally were able to fill vacancies, however none were filled within four weeks of advertising. Some employers noted it was easier to fill vacancies than in the past, but recruitment was generally considered difficult. Most applicants who were considered unsuitable lacked relevant specialised skills or experience. Employers generally preferred to hire a fully trade qualified pastry cook however many were more concerned with relevant experience, particularly as some duties require a highly refined skills set. Some employers were prepared to recruit inexperienced candidates or those with a similar skill set if they believed the applicant was willing to learn new skills. Employer comments suggest the pre-mixing sector of the industry is increasing and there are fewer applicants with hand-mixing experience or knowledge of the entire speciality pastry making process as more people begin work in large retail chains or wholesale operations.

Labour market outlook

It is unlikely the labour market for this occupation will change over the next six months.