

Surveying and Cartographic Associate		Western Australia (WA)
ASCO Code: 3121-15		November 2006
Labour market rating:	Shortage	
Comment		

Occupational demand

Demand for surveying and cartographic associates has continued to increase due to the buoyant WA economy. Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows that there was an increase of 70 per cent in the value of all engineering construction work done in WA to June 2006, compared with the same period to June 2005. The total value of work remaining to be done at June 2006 is 73.1 per cent higher than a year ago. ABS data shows that there was an increase of 22.7 per cent in the value of all building construction work done in WA in the 12 months to June 2006. Building construction work remaining to be done at September 2006 was 0.2 per cent lower than in the previous quarter. Mineral exploration in WA decreased by 2.2 per cent over the same period.

This occupation is too small for quarterly Australian Bureau of Statistics' Labour Force Survey figures to be reliable, however the number of surveying and cartographic associates recorded in WA decreased by 37.2 per cent to 214 over the five years to the 2001 Census. Given the strong demand from the building industry since then, the number is likely to have increased significantly.

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations' Skilled Vacancy Count shows that newspaper vacancies for surveying and cartographic associates from January to November 2006 decreased by 25 per cent over the number for the same period last year. However, it is possible that an increasing number of surveying and cartographic associate vacancies are being advertised on the Internet.

Occupational supply

Surveying and cartographic associates generally work as survey/cartographic draftspersons. They generally complete an Associate Degree/Advanced Diploma or Diploma in mining and engineering. Supply from such courses has declined over the last two years and, while there was an increase of 5.9 per cent in 2005 over the previous year to 18, this is still well below the peak of 27 in 2001. Employers are reluctant to recruit staff who have no formal training but will consider persons who have some years' experience, particularly given the tight labour market at present. It is not possible to obtain separate migration statistics for surveying and cartographic associates, but the numbers are likely to be low.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

Only one vacancy was identified during the SERA. It was not filled, despite one suitable applicant being located (who subsequently declined the position). The unsuitable applicants did not have enough or the right experience. Several other relatively small employers were contacted by "cold canvassing". A few had sought staff some months prior without success. Experience in certain software applications (CivilCAD, AutoCAD, MicroStation) is often seen as more important than general cartographic drafting experience. Although demand is strong, employers see advertising as somewhat pointless, given the known lack of availability of suitable persons.

The WA Labour Economics Office has not previously assessed this occupation.

Labour market outlook

Demand for surveying and cartographic associates is likely to be maintained for at least the next six months. Supply from course completions has declined and, along with the shortage of experienced surveyors, is likely to exacerbate the overall shortage. Shortages are likely to persist over the short term.