

<b>Mine Deputy</b>	<b>Queensland</b>
<b>ASCO Code:</b> 3129-15	February 2007
<b>Labour market rating</b>	Shortage
<b>Comment:</b>	

### **Occupational demand**

Mine deputies oversee the safety of mining operations and work practices. The role includes monitoring compliance with occupational health and safety regulations and the direct supervision of working miners, and may include providing input into associated mining functions such as planning and project management. Data from the Queensland Department of Mines and Energy indicate that there are approximately two hundred and seventy active mines in Queensland that are likely to employ mine deputies, and larger mines typically have several deputies who work in shifts. Overall employment in the mining industry has increased rapidly in Queensland over the last two years, with Labour Force Survey data showing growth of almost 14 per cent in annual average terms between the year to November 2005 and the year to November 2006.

### **Occupational supply**

In the past, workers have entered this occupation by completing a diploma or higher qualification coupled with relevant on the job experience, or by gaining substantial operational and supervisory experience in the industry from a trade or technical background. Two examples of relevant training courses available in Queensland are the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE's Diploma and Advanced Diploma courses in Underground Coal Mining Management, which presently have 7 and 32 enrolments respectively. These courses are intended to develop personnel who already have some relevant experience since they are restricted to workers currently employed at mine sites.

### **Employer and industry comments/current labour market**

Only six per cent of the vacancies included in this year's survey were filled within six weeks of advertising and less than one third of applicants were regarded as suitable by employers. Applicants were mainly deemed unsuitable because they did not have enough experience in Australia or enough experience overall, or did not have the specific skills required for the position. Generally, employers were cautious about employing overseas applicants since they can lack knowledge of Australian standards and requirements and can have difficulty in adjusting to life and work in remote areas. Several employers advised that it was more difficult to recruit mine deputies than it was twelve months previously. Some employers and recruitment agencies reported approaching employees of other companies directly when normal advertising fails, although candidates with the qualifications and experience needed to fill more senior roles are usually retained by their employers with attractive remuneration. Contacts commonly advised that they would consider employing people without specific qualifications if they have relevant experience and advanced team management skills or other occupational health and safety qualifications. The potential supply pool can therefore be variable, depending on the flexibility of the employer. Generally, an applicant's experience was regarded as more important than formal qualifications, which are usually gained on the job. Some contacts said that they would like to see greater use of school-based and other apprenticeship models in developing future supply for this occupation.

### **Labour market outlook**

Mining activity in Queensland is currently at high levels and is expected to expand further throughout 2007 and 2008, creating additional demand for mine deputies. The occupation is typically seen by Queensland employers as a job role undertaken by highly specialised and experienced workers. Demand is very difficult to meet because of the nature of the role and the very limited supply of suitable candidates available. The present shortage of mine deputies is therefore expected to continue for at least the next few years.