

Sheetmetal Worker (First Class)		Northern Territory
ASCO Code: 4124-11	August 2007	
Labour market rating	Shortage	
Comment: <i>N/A</i>		

Occupational demand

ABS Census data show that there were 54 sheetmetal tradespeople (including apprentices and supervisors) employed in the NT in 2001. Employment of the trade in the NT is too small for the ABS labour force data to provide a meaningful indicator of employment growth for the period following the 2001 census. DEEWR's Skilled Vacancies Index has recorded regular advertised vacancies over the past few years (with a peak in 2004) and the frequency of advertisements for such a small workforce in the NT is a good indicator of recruitment problems.

Occupational supply

Apprenticeship commencements increased significantly in 2004 and again in 2005 for general fabrication trades and sheetmetal employers seemed more inclined to take on apprentices, which suggests strong demand. However, sheetmetal work is not the most desirable trade to start-up in (as it typically is not as well paid as other metal trades). There is a reliance on employing transient workers travelling through the NT, which exacerbates recruitment difficulties over the wet season. Aside from travellers or people already moving to the NT, employers find that they cannot attract sheetmetal tradespeople to move from interstate.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

While employers filled 60 per cent of vacancies surveyed, most contacts noted that there were difficulties filling vacancies, with only 24 per cent of applicants suitable for the positions advertised. Applicants were considered to be unsuitable due to not being qualified, not having relevant skills or not wanting to commit to working full-time for at least one year. Employers consistently commented that there was a local shortage of sheetmetal workers. Some employers reported they had been able to attract qualified sheetmetal workers from interstate.

Employers also commented that at times they resorted to hiring apprentices when they really required a first class sheetmetal worker. There were reports of wastage within the trade, with some sheetmetal workers deciding to work in the mining industry doing other jobs, such as truck driving, because of the higher salaries on offer within that industry. Employers consistently commented that demand for sheetmetal work had increased and vacancies were commonly due to the creation of new positions. Due to the difficulty in filling positions, some employers reported that they had to turn down some work.

Labour market outlook

The construction and commodities industries are predicted to continue strongly in the coming year, keeping demand for the trade high. The difficulties attracting additional sheetmetal workers are expected to remain, leaving the trade in shortage.