

Welder	Australian Capital Territory
ASCO Code: 4122-15	July 2007
Labour market rating	Shortage
Comment:	

Occupational demand

The majority of welders nationally are employed in the manufacturing industry. However, this is a small industry in the ACT. ABS Labour Force survey data show there are around 200 structural steel and welding tradespersons (which includes metal fabricators and welders) employed in the ACT. The same survey suggests employment of structural steel and welding tradespersons in the ACT has fallen over the last five years. DEEWR's Skilled Vacancies Index data show the number of newspaper vacancies for metal trades fell over the year ending June 2007 suggesting declining demand, but the number of advertisements is generally low reflecting the small ACT employment and these data should be used cautiously.

Occupational supply

Entrants to this trade have usually completed a Certificate III in Engineering (Fabrication Trade). Over the past seven years there have been an average of 15 student commencements and an average of nine completions per annum for this certificate in the ACT. Overseas departures and arrivals information from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship show the net inflow of structural steel and welding tradespeople from migration to the ACT is minimal.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A survey of employers who had recently advertised for welders was conducted for this report. The majority of vacancies were in fabrication shops and light engineering companies. Around 55 per cent of vacancies were filled within four weeks of advertising, similar to the fill rate of 50 per cent recorded in 2006. However, several employers described positions as being vacant for long periods and most received low numbers of applicants.

There was an average of three applicants per advertised position, but on average less than one suitable applicant. Employers mostly needed welders who were trade qualified with welding skills obtained either through a welding apprenticeship or a boilermaking apprenticeship. In some cases employers considered completion of part of a boilermaker apprenticeship adequate for applicants to have the necessary welding skills. Often employers advertised for both welders and boilermakers to increase the number of applicants they received with welding skills. Applicants for advertised positions generally had some background in metal trades but many did not meet the requirements of the specific jobs, which in some cases required a few years experience and in others required specialised experience. Some employers surveyed expressed dissatisfaction with the enthusiasm and work ethic of candidates, with a couple describing applicants as perfect, except they did not attend on their first day or for interviews. One recruitment company surveyed suggested the difficulties associated with finding skilled metal trade workers are related to the relatively poor pay and conditions. Attracting people into apprenticeships is also reportedly difficult.

Labour market outlook

There are no indications that the labour market will change significantly over the next six months, consequently the shortage of welders is likely to continue.