

Chef and Cook	Australian Capital Territory
ANZSCO Code: 3513-11/3514-11	August 2009
Labour market rating:	No shortage
Comment:	

Occupational demand

Demand for Chefs and Cooks in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) remains strong. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data from 2006 show there are around 850 Chefs and 630 Cooks working in the ACT. Over 80 per cent of Chefs and Cooks in the ACT were employed in the Accommodation and Food Services industry. ABS Retail Turnover data show over the 12 months to June 2009, retail turnover for the cafe and restaurant sector has continued to grow and has increased by an average of a seasonally adjusted 13 per cent. Employer comments consumer demand has remained steady or slightly increased, despite the current economic downturn, support the ABS data. The DEEWR Internet Vacancies Index showed a substantial increase in advertised positions for both Chefs and Cooks in the two years to April 2009.

Occupational supply

At present, entry to these occupations is typically through completion of a Certificate III or IV level qualification. Over 50 per cent of Chefs in the ACT hold a Certificate III or IV level qualification and additional relevant Cooking or management experience may be required. Seventy per cent of Cooks in the ACT have no post-school qualifications, with on-the-job training prevalent. National Centre for Vocational Education Research data show completions of qualifications in commercial Cooking in the ACT have slightly increased over the last five years to around 60 in 2008. Department of Immigration and Citizenship data show a minimal gain of Chefs in recent years and a net gain of 20 Cooks for 2007-8.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A DEEWR Survey of Employers who had Recently Advertised (SERA) for Chefs and Cooks was undertaken for this report. It found 81 per cent of vacancies were filled within four weeks of advertising, somewhat higher than when last assessed in mid 2008. The average number of applicants per vacancy increased from 4.6 to 6.2, while the number of applicants considered suitable by employers also increased from less than one in the previous research to 1.6.

Some employers reported they found it much easier to recruit qualified and experienced Chefs at this time because the economic downturn caused some restaurants to close which increased the local supply of Chefs and Cooks. Reasons employers considered applicants unsuitable included a general lack of experience, lack of specialised experience or lack of qualifications. For Chef positions, employers usually regarded applicants with some management experience as well as three to five years cooking experience as more suitable and desirable. Employers commented there is generally a high turnover of staff in the industry and it is often hard to retain staff due to the low remuneration, physical nature of the work and the hours required such as split shifts.

Labour market outlook

The supply of Chefs and Cooks may decrease as the economy begins to recover from the recent downturn; however, it is unlikely the labour market will change significantly for this industry over the next six months.