



Are you looking for a job in Australia?

The *Australian Labour Market Update* provides information on the Australian labour market on a quarterly basis. It is intended to help people who may be interested in working in Australia on a temporary or permanent basis.

Further information on job prospects, earnings and related information is available online at **Australian Jobs 2008**, available through www.workplace.gov.au.

Unless otherwise stated, data are from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Labour Force Survey, November 2008.

EMPLOYMENT

Over the 12 months to November 2008, trend employment in Australia grew by 1.6% after growth of 2.7% in the previous year.

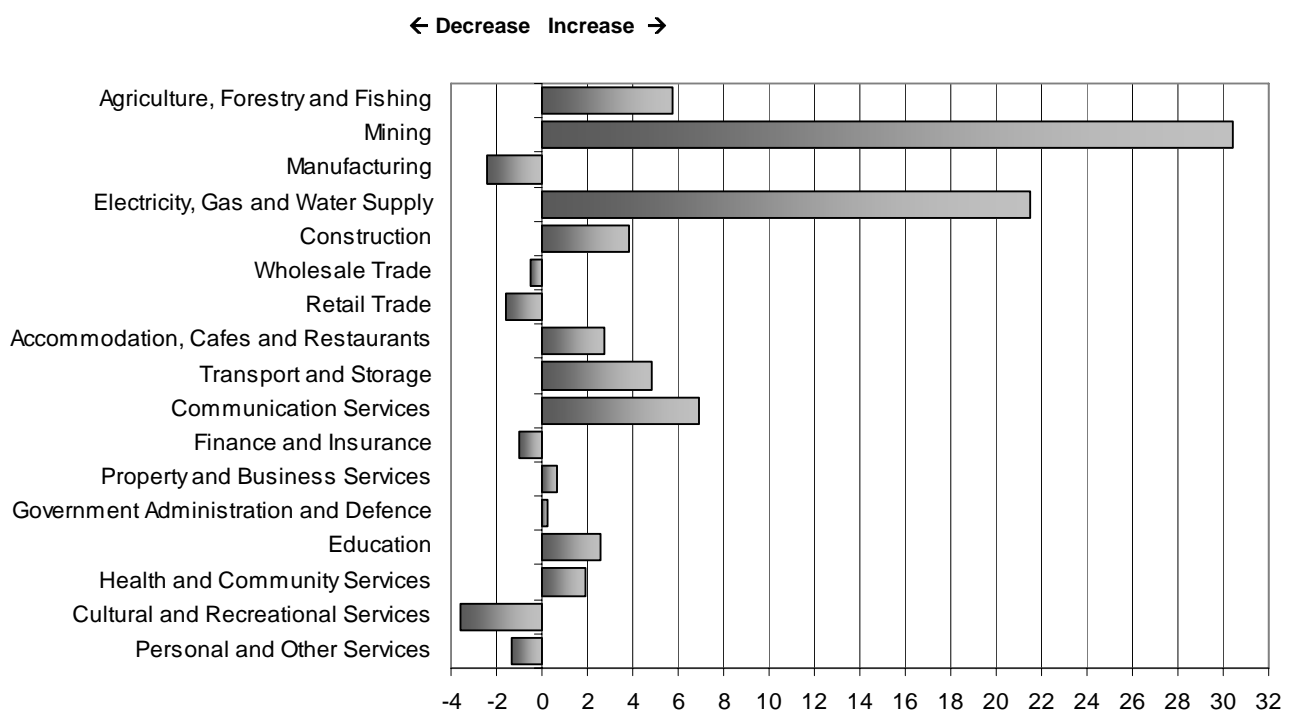
However, it is important to note that the pace of employment growth has now been slowing since its peak in December 2007, from an average of 30 600 jobs per month to its current rate of 2 000 jobs per month.

This slowing, coupled with the recent decline in the pace of economic growth and a deterioration in a number of forward indicators of labour market activity, suggest that the pace of employment growth will continue to slow over 2008-09, resulting in a rise in the unemployment rate. Indeed, according to the Australian Government's November 2008 official forecasts, employment growth is expected to slow to a year average rate of 1¼% in 2008-09 and by ¾% in 2009-10, while the unemployment rate is forecast to increase to 5% in the June quarter 2009, before rising to 5¾% by the June quarter 2010.

Employment (in trend terms) increased in all States and Territories. In percentage terms, employment growth was strongest in Tasmania (4.8%), Western Australia (4.5%) and Queensland (3.0%).

Employment opportunities and growth varied across industries. Over the 12 months to November 2008 the largest increases in trend employment occurred in Mining (up by 42 200), Construction (up by 36 900), Transport and Storage (up by 24 100) and Health and Community Services (up by 21 100). The strongest rates of employment growth were in Mining (30.4%), Electricity, Gas and Water Supply (21.5%) and Communication Services (6.9%). Employment growth rates by industry are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Percentage change in trend employment by industry – November 2007 to November 2008



Source: ABS *Australian Labour Market Statistics*, January 2009, ABS Cat. No. 6105.0.

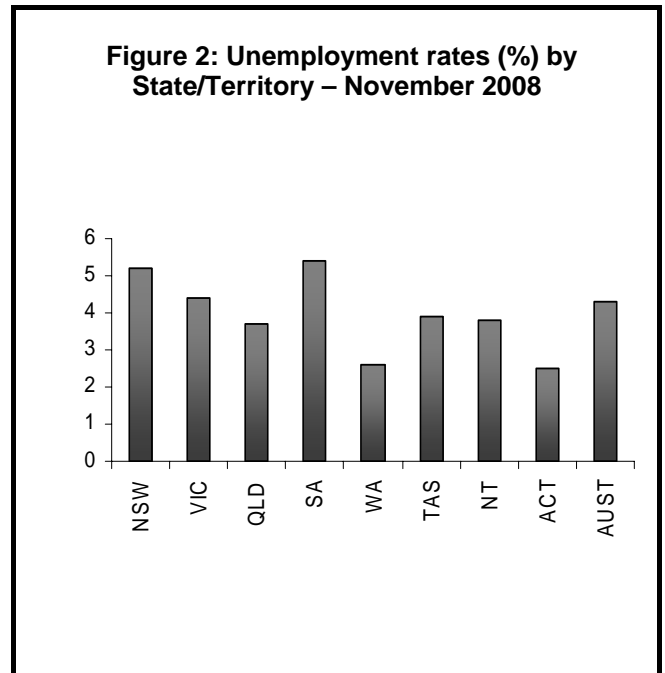
UNEMPLOYMENT

The trend rate of unemployment was 4.3% in November 2008, compared with 4.3% in November 2007. However, given the current slowing in the labour market, discussed above, it is important to recognise the unemployment rate is expected to rise over the course of 2009 and into 2010.

In the past year, trend unemployment rates have decreased in all States and Territories except for South Australia (0.6%), New South Wales (0.5%), Queensland (0.1%) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), where it remained unchanged (0.0%).

In November 2008, the trend unemployment rate was highest in South Australia (5.4%) and New South Wales (5.1%), and lowest in the ACT (2.5%). See Figure 2.

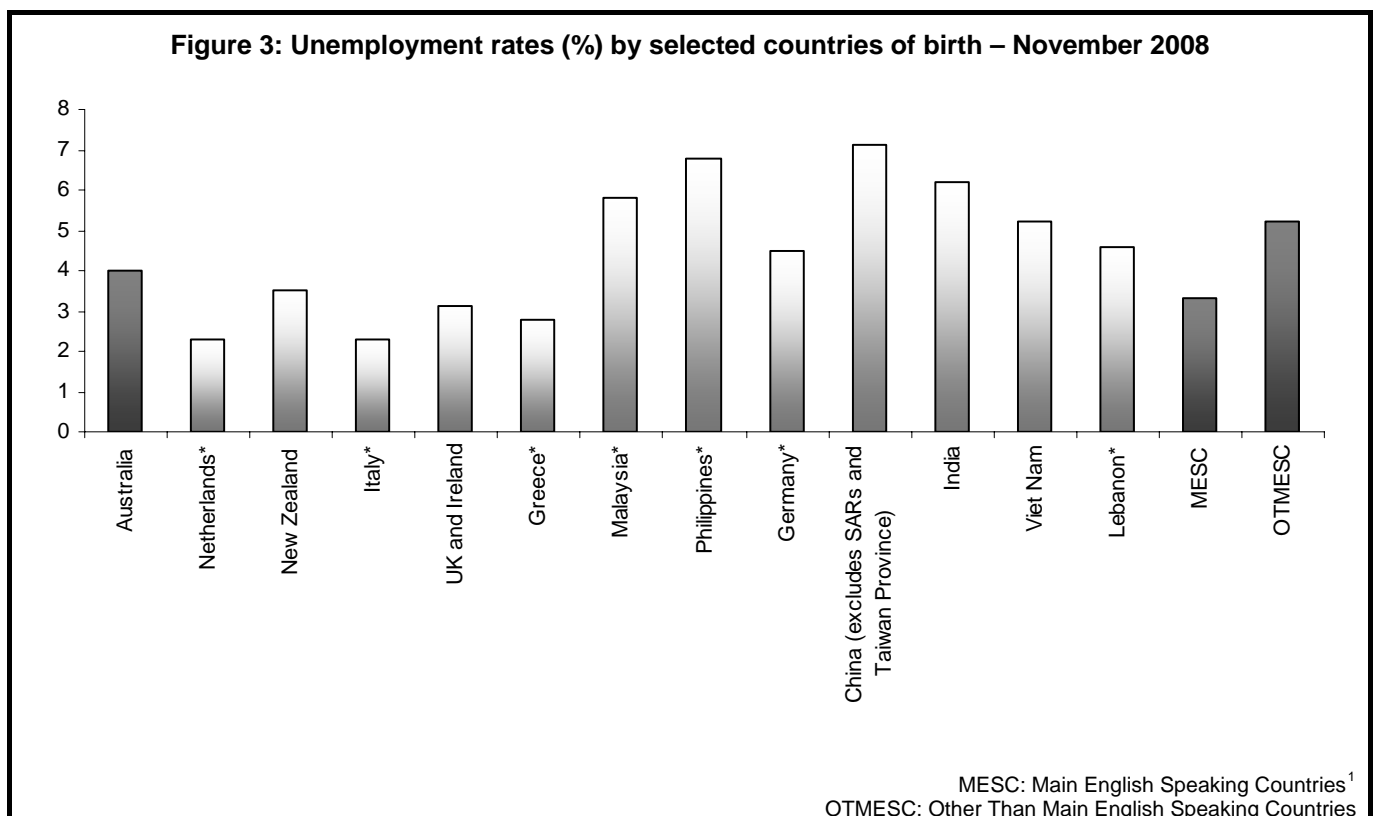
Generally, people in the more highly-skilled occupational groups are less likely to experience unemployment. For example, in November 2008 the unemployment rate for those who were formerly employed as Labourers and Related Workers was 4.2 times that of former Professionals.



MIGRANT UNEMPLOYMENT

The unemployment rates for people who migrate to Australia vary appreciably. Several factors influence migrant unemployment rates including the period since arrival in Australia (data consistently shows that recently-arrived migrants generally have a higher unemployment rate than those who have lived in Australia for some years), skill level, age, English proficiency and recent and relevant work experience.

Figure 3 below shows unemployment rates (original data) for people now resident in Australia who were born in selected overseas countries. For example, people born in the Netherlands and Italy have low unemployment rates (2.3% and 2.3% respectively), whereas unemployment rates for people born in China and the Philippines are relatively high (7.1% and 6.8% respectively).



* Estimate is subject to high sampling variability.

¹ MESC are the United Kingdom, Ireland, South Africa, Canada, the United States of America and New Zealand.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION

While employment growth is not the only factor influencing job prospects, it is often easier to obtain a job in an occupation which is experiencing strong employment growth than one growing only slowly or declining. Over the 12 months to November 2008, the largest increases in employment (original data) occurred for Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service Workers (up by 54 400), Tradespersons and Related Workers (up by 49 500) and Professionals (up by 44 100). Employment growth rates, in declining skill order, are shown below.

The unemployment rate for occupational groups generally reflects skill levels. Highly skilled occupational groups experience lower rates of unemployment, while higher unemployment rates are generally associated with less skilled occupations. The unemployment rates (for those who had worked for two weeks or more in the past two years) by occupational group are presented in descending skill order below.

| Percentage Growth Rates in Employment in the 12 months to November 2008 | | Unemployment Rate at November 2008 | |
|---|-------|--|------|
| Managers and Administrators | -0.6% | Managers and Administrators | 1.3% |
| Professionals | 2.0% | Professionals | 1.3% |
| Associate Professionals | -0.3% | Associate Professionals | 1.9% |
| Tradespersons and Related Workers | 3.7% | Tradespersons and Related Workers | 2.4% |
| Advanced Clerical and Service Workers | -3.8% | Advanced Clerical and Service Workers | 1.7% |
| Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service | 3.2% | Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service | 2.7% |
| Intermediate Production and Transport | 0.1% | Intermediate Production and Transport | 3.4% |
| Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service | -1.0% | Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service | 3.7% |
| Labourers and Related Workers | 4.5% | Labourers and Related Workers | 5.6% |

Additional information on Professional and Trade occupations is provided in the following section on skilled vacancies. Time series of vacancy data are not readily available for less-skilled occupations.

SKILLED VACANCY TRENDS²

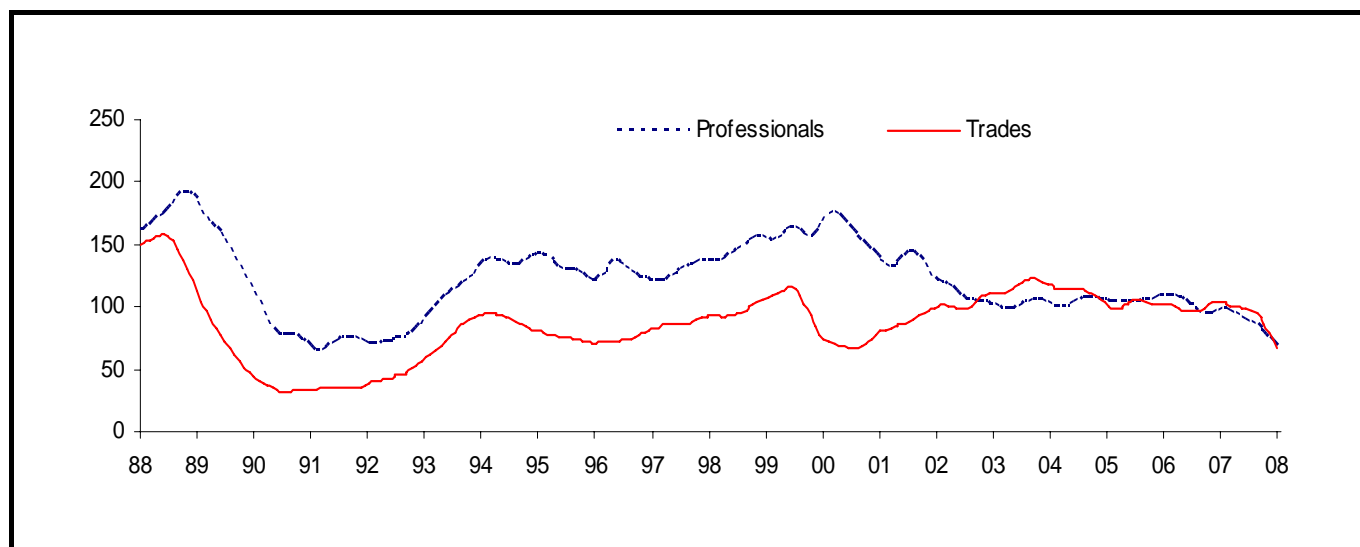
The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations produces the *Skilled Vacancies Index (SVI)* for 18 skilled occupational groups for each State and the Northern Territory (NT). These are aggregated into the Professional, Associate Professional and Trade groups (see Figure 4 overleaf). The SVI indicates where the best employment opportunities may be in the Australian labour market.

In November 2008 skilled vacancies were 29.1% lower than in November 2007. Over the 12 months, SVI decreases were recorded in all States and Territories. The most significant SVI decreases were recorded in New South Wales (down by 45.9%) and Queensland (down by 44.6%).

In the 12 months to November 2008 advertised vacancies decreased for Professional occupations (down by 28.1%) and for Trade Occupations (down by 29.9%). The most significant decreases were for Printing Trades (down by 57.0%), Organisation and Information Professionals (down by 52.3%) and Social Professionals (down by 42.1%). The most significant increase was for Marketing and Advertising Professionals (up by 13.7%).

² Historical series of trend figures are revised monthly.

Figure 4: Skilled Vacancies Index, November 1988 to November 2008



FUTURE JOB PROSPECTS

Future job prospects depend on many factors, some of which are difficult to predict. Prospects differ between and within States and Territories and can change rapidly. Even in occupations with below-average prospects, significant employment opportunities may arise. This information should therefore be used with caution.

The following future job prospect ratings are for the period to 2012-13. The ratings are based on employment trends and projected growth, unemployment rates, SVI trends (where available), and other data. While the global financial crisis could adversely affect prospects for some occupational groups in the short term, it is unclear at this stage what effect it will have on average prospects to 2012-13.

In the following table G stands for good prospects, A for average prospects, BA for below average prospects and L for limited prospects. These are examples from the skilled classifications categories – refer to the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO), Second Edition (ABS Cat. No. 1220.0).

| Occupational Group | Prospects to 2012-13 | Occupational Group | Prospects to 2012-13 |
|--|----------------------|--|----------------------|
| Managers and Administrators | | Associate Professionals | |
| Child Care Co-ordinators* | G | Building, Architectural and Surveying Associates | G |
| Finance Managers | G | Dental Therapists, Technicians* and Hygienists | G |
| Information Technology Managers | G | Enrolled Nurses | G |
| Professionals | | Financial Dealers and Brokers | G |
| Accountants* | G | Medical Technical Officers | G |
| Chemical Engineers* | G | Metallurgical Technicians and Mine Deputies | G |
| Computing Professionals* (part) | G | Trade Qualified Chefs* (part) | G |
| General Medical Practitioners* | G | Tradespersons | |
| Medical Imaging Professionals* (part) | G | Bakers and Pastrycooks* | G |
| Mining and Materials Engineers* (part) | G | Bricklayers* | G |
| Occupational Therapists* | G | Cabinetmakers* | G |
| Pharmacists* (part) | G | Carpenters and Joiners* | G |
| Physiotherapists* | G | Electricians* | G |
| Primary School Teachers | G | Hairdressers* | G |
| Registered Nurses* | G | General Mechanical Engineering Tradespersons | G |
| Registered Mental Health Nurses* | G | Motor Mechanics* | G |
| Registered Midwives* | G | Plumbers* | G |
| Secondary School Teachers | G | Printing Machinists | A |
| Social Workers | G | Refrigeration and Airconditioning Mechanics* | G |
| Specialist Medical Practitioners* | G | Textile and Footwear Machine Operators | BA |

* denotes occupations that are listed in part or in full on the Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL) announced on 17 May 2008. The Australian Labour Market Update uses the latest available detailed and consistent data at time of production. However, the labour market can change quickly and should be re-assessed prior to making a decision to lodge a visa application. Queries relating to this publication should be emailed to migration@deewr.gov.au.



Automotive Trades in Demand

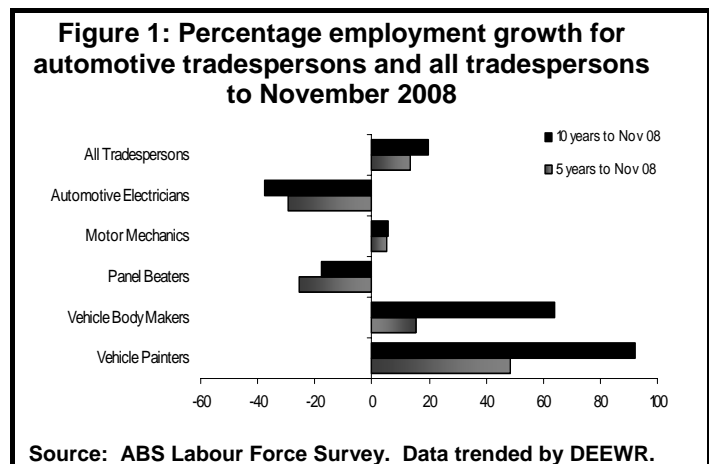
This Hot Topic provides information on the demand for automotive trades in Australia. Automotive tradespersons repair and maintain motor vehicle engines, electrical and electronic systems and bodies, paint vehicles, construct specialised vehicle bodies, and fit or replace interior trim and upholstery in vehicles.

In the Australian labour market, the entry requirement for employment as an automotive tradesperson is the completion of an AQF Certificate III or higher qualification. Qualifications are usually obtained as part of an Australian Apprenticeship (which combines paid work experience with formal training).

EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

Employment growth in automotive trade occupations has generally exceeded growth for trade occupations. Figure 1 presents trend employment growth for automotive trade occupations in Australia in the 5 and 10 years to November 2008.

In the 5 years to November 2008, employment (in trend terms) increased for all automotive trade occupations, except for automotive electricians and panel beaters which decreased by 2 100 and 4 800 respectively. In percentage terms, employment growth was strongest for vehicle painters (48.3%) and vehicle body makers (15.4%).



SKILL SHORTAGES

Labour market research published by DEEWR in 2008 confirms there are skill shortages for certain automotive trade occupations. Skill shortages exist when employers are unable to fill or have considerable difficulty in filling vacancies for an occupation, or specialised skill needs within that occupation, at current levels of remuneration and conditions of employment, and at a reasonably accessible location.

Occupations in shortage in the Australian labour market and which have good job prospects are identified on the Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL), which is used to target permanent migration under the General Skilled Migration (GSM) arrangements to the skill needs of Australian industry. At 17 May 2008, the MODL included the trade occupations of automotive electrician, motor mechanic, panel beater, vehicle body maker and vehicle painter.

While the MODL has a national focus, the DEEWR Skills in Demand Lists – States and Territories and occupational reports (available at www.workplace.gov.au), provide some information on regional skill shortages. These Skills in Demand Lists have no status for migration purposes.

Table A (below) provides information on the labour market for various automotive trades. In the table, S stands for State-wide shortage.

Table A: Labour market for automotive trade occupations – August 2008

| ANZSCO | Occupation | NSW | VIC | QLD | SA | WA | TAS | NT | ACT |
|--------|------------------------|---|-----|-----|----|----|-----|----|-----|
| 321111 | Automotive Electrician | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |
| 321211 | Motor Mechanic | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |
| 324111 | Panel Beater | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |
| 324311 | Vehicle Painter | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |
| 324211 | Vehicle Body Maker | National shortage but not assessed on a state basis | | | | | | | |

SKILLS ASSESSMENT FOR OVERSEAS QUALIFIED AUTOMOTIVE TRADESPERSONS

One of the threshold criteria for permanent entry to Australia as a primary applicant in the GSM categories is the assessment of an applicant's skills (qualifications and work experience) by an Australian assessing authority gazetted for their nominated occupation. Assessing authorities have been appointed by the Australian Government to undertake assessments of whether an applicant has skills appropriate to employment in their nominated profession, associate profession or trade occupation in Australia. These assessing authorities are responsible for undertaking skills assessment for migration purposes only and are not employment agencies. The assessing authorities are not in a position to assist migrants or visa applicants to find jobs in Australia.

Trades Recognition Australia (TRA) is the appointed Australian assessing authority for overseas qualified automotive tradespersons. However, motor mechanics seeking to migrate to Australia from India, South Africa, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and the United Kingdom must have their skills assessed by a consortium of Registered Training Organisations led by VETASSESS. Motor mechanics seeking to migrate from other countries should apply to TRA for a skills assessment.

The TRA uniform assessment criteria requires applicants to demonstrate skills, knowledge and experience equivalent to those of an Australian trained tradesperson (which usually requires the completion of an Australian Apprenticeship). Applicants seeking to have their skills assessed as a supervisor must first satisfy the assessment criteria for their trade and have been working as a supervisor for three or more years after becoming fully qualified in their trade.

On arrival in Australia, applicants may also need to obtain an Australian Recognised Trade Certificate (ARTC) which confers national recognition of an applicant's skills. Automotive tradespersons may also require certification with the relevant authority in the State or Territory in which they wish to work, noting this occupation is licensed in some States. More detailed information is available on the Australian Skills Recognition Information website at www.immi.gov.au/asri.

EMPLOYER-SPONSORED MIGRATION

An alternative to migrating to Australia through the GSM categories is to enter through employer-sponsorship. The Australian Government has in place several employer-sponsored migration arrangements, including the Temporary Business Long Stay Arrangement, Employer Nomination Scheme, Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme and Labour Agreements. Labour Agreements are designed to enable employers to recruit highly-skilled workers either from overseas or from people temporarily in Australia, where an employer has not been able to fill vacancies from the Australian labour market through domestic recruitment or training. Detailed information on these migration arrangements is contained in Migration Booklet 5 *Employer Sponsored Migration* available on the DIAC website www.immi.gov.au.

The trade occupations of automotive electrician, motor mechanic, panel beater, vehicle body maker and vehicle painter appear on the current MODL and the gazetted list of eligible occupations for the Temporary Business Long Stay Arrangement.

SEEKING EMPLOYMENT IN AUSTRALIA

Overseas qualified automotive tradespersons seeking to work in Australia who are not Australian citizens or permanent residents will need to contact the nearest Australian Embassy, Consulate or High Commission to apply for a visa with a work right. Addresses of all Australian Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates are available from the DIAC website at www.immi.gov.au/contacts.

Overseas qualified automotive tradespersons should note that acceptance of overseas qualifications for migration does not guarantee employment in the trade in Australia. Employment will depend on other factors, such as the number of vacancies available, skill needs in the Australian labour market, meeting State and Territory licensing requirements and suitability for employment in a particular job in Australia.