

<b>Butcher or Smallgoods Maker</b>		<b>Queensland</b>
<b>ANZSCO Code:</b> 3512-11	November 2009	
<b>Labour market rating:</b>	Shortage	
<b>Comment:</b>		

### **Occupational demand**

Butcher or Smallgoods Makers select, cut, trim and prepare meat for sale or supply and manage the processes in the production of smallgoods such as ham and bacon. Butcher or Smallgoods Makers work in small retail businesses, supermarkets, meat wholesalers and meat processing and smallgoods manufacturing operations. While Queensland is the largest beef producing state with 48 per cent of the Australian beef herd, demand for Butcher or Smallgoods Makers is dependant on meat consumption, which is affected by consumer trends, meat prices and changes in discretionary spending. Meat and Livestock Australia's monthly butcher survey shows consumption of beef, lamb, pork and chicken decreased late in 2008 as consumers responded to economic uncertainty and higher prices. Meat sales began to recover in June and July 2009, attributed to the economic stimulus package and a trend towards eating at home. Over this period, demand for Butcher or Smallgoods Makers remained steady.

### **Occupational supply**

Entry to these trades is via the completion of a three year apprenticeship in Meat Processing (Meat Retailing) to become a Butcher or Smallgoods Maker or the completion of a two year traineeship in Meat Processing (Smallgoods - Manufacture) to become a smallgoods maker. DEEWR data show Butcher or Smallgoods Maker apprenticeship commencements almost doubled between 2005 (382) and 2007 (604) before moderating to 598 in 2008. With wastage from training averaging around 54 per cent since 2003, it is anticipated 280 newly qualified Butcher or Smallgoods Makers will enter the labour market at the end of 2009. Figures from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship show a net gain of 294 self-identified meat tradespersons to the Queensland workforce in 2007-08. While this might indicate overseas migration played a significant role in supply to this trade, three quarters of this group entered on 457 visas, and it is probable these were skilled meat workers rather than trade qualified butchers. There is no training data available for smallgoods manufacturers and the training is not publicly funded under the state's User Choice program.

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

There were no vacancies for smallgoods makers notified in Queensland in the target range of dates for this year's study. However, 67 per cent of vacancies for Butcher or Smallgoods Makers were filled within four weeks of advertising, with one third of applicants considered suitable. Contacts advised unsuitable applicants were unqualified, lacked experience or presented poorly. Almost half of the employers contacted in this survey advised vacancies for Butcher or Smallgoods Makers with portion control experience were especially difficult to fill. Those applicants who received approaches from overseas Butcher or Smallgoods Makers stated they were not given serious consideration due to their poor English speaking skills. Industry contacts and employers from retail butcheries stressed the need for qualified tradespeople with generalised abilities, including skills such as rolling roasts and making sausages. They argued apprentices indentured to businesses which buy in case ready products fail to develop these skills. A number of respondents advised the demanding and physical nature of butchery, the cold conditions and the low remuneration compared with other trades makes it difficult to attract and retain tradespeople and apprentices.

### **Labour market outlook**

Meat and Livestock Australia forecast domestic beef and lamb consumption will increase moderately in 2010 which, combined with steady population growth in Queensland, will ensure a steady demand for qualified butchers. While apprenticeship numbers have increased and immigration may play a part in supply, demand outstrips supply and the shortage of Butcher or Smallgoods Makers is expected to persist.

