

<b>Chef and Cook</b>		<b>South Australia</b>
<b>ANZSCO Code:</b> 3513-11, 3514-11	September 2009	
<b>Labour market rating:</b>	3513-11 Chef – No shortage 3514-11 Cook – No shortage	
<b>Comment:</b>		

### **Occupational demand**

ABS data shows retail turnover in the cafe, restaurant and takeaway food industry grew by almost 10 per cent (not adjusted for inflation) in the 12 months to June 2009, compared to a 7.7 per cent increase for all industry sectors during the same period. ABS Labour Force Survey data, however, shows employment of Chefs and Cooks was largely unchanged in the May quarter 2009 compared to the corresponding quarter a year earlier. DEEWR's Skilled Vacancy Index data show newspaper vacancies for Chefs and Cooks fell by 27 per cent in the year to September, declining to their lowest level in five years. Employers surveyed for this report indicated demand for Chefs and Cooks was being driven largely by replacement needs, rather than growth in aggregate employment.

### **Occupational supply**

Entry into both occupations is achieved through either formal or informal means. ABS 2006 Census data shows less than half of all Chefs and Cooks possess trade-level qualifications. Statistics on the number of persons commencing a contract of training in commercial Cookery show a strong upward trend from the late 1990s to the middle of this decade. Consequently, there was a 23 per cent increase in apprenticeship completions over the five years to 2008. Completions increased from an average of 140 persons per year to approximately 170 over this period. Since 2004, contracted training commencements have been declining, although they remain significantly higher compared to much of the previous decade. Nonetheless, occupational supply is projected to weaken going forward. Net overseas migration of Chefs and Cooks to South Australia decreased from 111 persons in 2006-07 to 50 in 2007-08. (Data for 2008-09 was not available for this report.)

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

A DEEWR Survey of Employers who had Recently Advertised (SERA) for Chefs and Cooks showed that 77 per cent of vacancies were filled within four weeks. This was higher than the 71 per cent fill rate recorded last year and well above the 65 per cent fill rate observed in 2007. This year's employer survey showed that 24 per cent of applicants were suitable for employment, compared to 11 per cent in 2008. Similarly, the number of suitable applicants per vacancy improved from 1.9 to 3.1, over the same period. As in previous years, the majority of unsuitable applicants were rejected because of inadequate levels of skill and/or experience, although a range of other issues precluded some applicants from employment (eg failed background employment checks, poor communication skills or lacked maturity for higher-level positions). Only one quarter of surveyed employers stipulated trade qualifications as a mandatory requirement for employment, with most placing greater emphasis on previous experience and proven on-the-job performance. Overall, most employers were able to recruit suitably skilled and experienced Chefs and Cooks when required, often having more than one suitable applicant to choose from. The current labour market rating for Chefs and Cooks is therefore 'no shortage'.

### **Labour market outlook**

The Australian economy is forecast to improve through 2009-10, although household consumption expenditure is expected to weaken over the second half of 2009 as the effect of government stimulus measures fades. Retail spending on hospitality services may, therefore, also moderate over the short-term. Employers note that staff turnover is persistently high in the hospitality industry and this is likely to remain a key demand determinant for Chefs and Cooks going forward. On balance, the labour market for Chefs and Cooks is not expected to change significantly over the next six months.