

Metal Fabricator		Australian Capital Territory
ASCO Code: 4122-11	July 2007	
Labour market rating	Shortage	
Comment:		

Occupational demand

Nationally, manufacturing is the main employing industry employing metal fabricators but this is a small industry in the ACT. ABS Labour Force Survey data show there are around 200 structural steel and welding tradespersons 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 Skilled Vacancies Index data show the number of newspaper vacancies for metal trades fell by 14 per cent over the year ending June 2007. However, the number of advertisements is generally low reflecting the small employment size and these data should be used cautiously.

Occupational supply

Entry to the trade of metal fabrication is generally through an AQF 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 shows the net inflow from overseas of general fabrication engineering tradespeople to the ACT is minimal.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A survey of employers who had recently advertised for boilermakers was conducted for this report, with the majority of vacancies surveyed being positions in fabrication shops and light engineering. Slightly more than 60 per cent of vacancies were filled within four weeks of advertising, a significant increase from the vacancy fill rate recorded in 2006. However, several employers described these positions as being vacant for long periods and most received low numbers of applicants.

There were three applicants per advertised vacancy on average, with less than one of those applicants considered by employers to be suitable per vacancy. Employers were seeking to recruit metal fabricators who had completed their apprenticeship and gained a minimum of a couple of years of experience. Not all advertisers who were recruiting metal fabricators needed applicants to have completed a metal fabrication apprenticeship, and some were willing to employ someone who had skills in welding or maintenance work developed over the first few years of the course. Most employers screen candidates over the phone before inviting them to trial in the work place, and some expressed frustration that candidates did not always attend trials. A recruitment company surveyed suggested the difficulties associated with finding skilled metal trade workers are related to the relatively poor pay and conditions.

Labour market outlook

There are no indications that the labour market conditions will change significantly over the next six months.