

Construction project manager	Tasmania
ANZSCO Code: 1331-11	April 2009
Labour market rating	Shortage
Comment	

Occupational demand

ABS Census data indicate the number of construction project managers in Tasmania increased from 128 in 2001 to 287 in 2006, suggesting a significant increase in demand. However, it is likely that there are definitional and classification issues surrounding this occupation. Civil engineers, construction estimators, building associates and various building and engineering technicians are often involved in construction project management to some extent at least, making an accurate estimate of the workforce in this field difficult. What is clear, however, is that total employment in the construction industry grew by 42 per cent between the 2001 Census and the 2006 Census. ABS labour force data also confirm that in February 2009, employment in the construction industry was 64 per cent higher than five years earlier, compared with employment growth for all industries of 14 per cent.

Occupational supply

ABS census data suggest there are a number of pathways into this occupation. The highest percentage of people in the occupation at 40 per cent, had achieved a Certificate III or IV level qualification, and it seems reasonable to assume that many of this group were formerly tradespeople in the construction industry. The next largest group at 17.3 per cent had a bachelor degree or higher, while 14.9 per cent had a diploma or advanced diploma. The ABS occupation classification system suggests a construction project manager is a building professional with a degree level qualification. Based on the above data, it appears as though the term refers to a broader range of managerial activities and encompasses a more diverse range of responsibilities. Many industry sources make a distinction between “office based” and “site based” project managers, with those engaged at construction sites more likely to be ex-tradespeople while those based in offices are more likely to be degree or diploma qualified. However, it is also the case that many of those who are now degree or diploma qualified are also ex-tradespeople.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

None of the employers surveyed for this report had advertised in the lead up to this report, but some had attempted to recruit project managers in the last 6 months or so. Employers generally indicated they received large numbers of applications but that very few of them were suitable – one employer quoted figures of a single suitable candidate from 60 applications, for example. Applicants were generally considered to be unsuitable because they failed to meet the specific requirements of the employer, typically being for engineering qualifications and/or extensive industry experience. Other feedback suggested that many employers train their own project managers due to the difficulty in recruiting appropriately skilled people at the price they are able to pay, with some employers indicating they paid for their employees to undertake diploma and degree courses via external studies because they were unable to recruit people with the required skills.

A number of employers advised they had received enquiries from project managers in mainland States, but couldn't afford the wages they were asking.

Labour market outlook

The effects of the global recession may ease shortages over the next 12 months or so, although some employers reported that the Federal Government's stimulus package may increase demand across the construction industry.