

Primary Products Inspector		Victoria
ASCO Code: 3991-11		March 2008
Labour market rating	No shortage	
Comment:		

Occupational demand

The Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO) defines primary product inspectors as persons who inspect animals, plants, agricultural produce and facilities to conform to government and industry standards. Also included in this ASCO definition are quarantine inspector and meat inspectors. In Victoria, over 68 per cent of primary products inspectors are employed in the government administration and defence sector. 2006 Census data suggests that 707 persons were employed as primary products inspectors in Victoria, an increase of 26 per cent over the number recorded in the 2001 Census.

Occupational supply

2006 Census data suggest the educational profile for employed primary products inspectors in Australia shows that about 21 per cent have bachelor degrees or above, 18.6 per cent have Advanced Diplomas or Diplomas, 27 per cent have Certificate III or IV and 14 per cent have no post-school qualifications. This broad spread of educational attainments suggest that there are several routes through which a person may take up the occupation of primary products inspector and furthermore that many employers may recruit unqualified staff and provide in-house training. Figures provided by DIIRD suggest that many VET courses such as Certificate IV in Meat Processing (Meat Safety and Quality Assurance) are completed by existing workers. DEEWR estimates the number of persons who completed entry level tertiary education which could lead to employment as a primary products inspector rose around 34 per cent in 2006, from 91 completions in 2005. Net immigration to Victoria of self-identified primary products inspector had no impact on supply to the profession.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A survey of employers who had recently advertised for primary product inspectors was undertaken for this report. However due to the difficulty finding advertised vacancies for positions specifically dealing with primary product inspection, survey data was supplemented with information collected from cold canvassing of government departments and organisations which deal with primary product quality control and inspection. The Survey of Employers who Recently Advertised (SERA) found that approximately 98 per cent of vacancies were filled with an average of over six suitable applicants and an average of more than 12 applicants per vacancy. Note however that these figures are based on limited employer numbers and are affected by the large number of applications. The minimum requirements were good communication skills, the aptitude to understand and apply regulations, the capacity to do shift work and have transport at all hours to work locations such as airports or wharves. Many employers were seeking people with meat industry experience to be trained in inspection. Tertiary qualifications in agriculture and related disciplines were also sought after. Experience in a regulatory environment was also valued.

Overall, the research indicates employers generally have little difficulty recruiting primary products inspectors. Contact with employers in the public sector agencies looking for quarantine inspectors advised that they usually recruited through bulk recruitment exercises and filled all their positions, with qualifications and experience required at the senior levels.

Labour market outlook

The limited evidence from the small survey undertaken and from discussions with employers suggest there are unlikely to be significant shortages of primary products inspectors in the next six months.