

Solid Plasterer	Queensland
ANZSCO Code: 3332-12	September 2009
Labour market rating:	No shortage
Comment:	

Occupational demand

Solid Plasterers apply decorative and protective coverings of plaster, cement, or similar materials to the interiors and exteriors of buildings. With 97 per cent of Solid Plasterers employed in the construction industry, demand for their services fluctuates in line with building activity. ABS data indicates that over the year to June 2009, although non-residential building activity in Queensland held steady, the volume of residential building activity contracted by 6.9 per cent. This weakened demand for this trade which is indicated by the DEEWR Skilled Vacancy Index (SVI) for Queensland. Over the year to September 2009, the SVI shows the number of newspaper advertisements for Solid Plasterers falling to be one third of the advertisements recorded in the previous year.

Occupational supply

Entry to this occupation is via the completion of a 42 month apprenticeship in *Solid Plastering*. In Queensland however, if an individual or company wants to carry out work valued over \$1100 they must also hold the correct licence as determined by the Building Services Authority. To acquire a licence, qualified tradespersons need to complete an approved managerial course. Data from the Queensland Department of Education and Training show that the number of new apprenticeship commencements increased from a long term average of 47 to 64 in 2007 and these high numbers were maintained in 2008. Historically, the number of completions has varied from year to year, but overall wastage appears to be high with an average number of only 11 apprentices completing their training and entering the labour market each year since 2003. Arrivals and departures data from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship suggest that overseas migration may be a significant source of supply to this trade as there was a net gain of 79 self-identified Solid Plasterers to the State in 2007-08.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

Few vacancies for Solid Plasterers were advertised in Queensland in the target range of dates for this year's study. In view of this, a number of employers were cold canvassed to be surveyed on the status of the trade. Generally, employer contacts this year reported an adequate supply of Solid Plasterers with 92 per cent of vacancies filled within four weeks of advertising. Most contacts reported receiving a strong response with this year's results showing an average of seven candidates for each vacancy. Many of these same employers reported however, that they were willing to accept unqualified applicants if they could demonstrate substantial experience and satisfactory skills. Despite this, 50 per cent of the applicants were considered unsuitable. In most cases, candidates were deemed unsuitable because they did not possess trade qualifications or the prescribed licence, they did not own work tools or have any means of transport, or they lacked the full range of solid plastering skills and experience. In particular, larger companies advised that they accepted only trade qualified candidates who could demonstrate an acceptable work history and this limited their pool of suitable applicants significantly. More than half of the employers in this study advised that they do not indenture apprentices because the associated time and costs are beyond the capacity of their businesses.

Labour market outlook

The labour market for Solid Plasterers in Queensland was rated '*No shortage*', this year, but it is anticipated that demand for this trade will strengthen in line with a recovery in building activity. This is indicated by ABS figures which show approvals for residential building rising now for the sixth consecutive month to be 12 per cent higher in August, compared to their low point in February 2009. In the meantime, supply from training to this trade is very low, and based on this year's study, one in two employers are not indenturing apprentices. As building activity continues to expand, it is likely that a shortage of Solid Plasterers will re-emerge in the near future.