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| Chef and Cook | | Queensland |
| ANZSCO Code: 3513-11, 3514-11 | October 2009 | |
| Labour market rating: | 3513-11 Chef – Shortage 3514-11 Cook – Shortage | |
| Comment: | | |

Occupational demand

Both Chefs and Cooks prepare and Cook food, although Chefs may also be responsible for planning and organising food preparation, menus and staff. In Queensland, the majority of Chefs work in cafes, restaurants, pubs, taverns, bars and clubs. Many Cooks work in the same facilities and significant numbers are also employed in hospitals, aged care facilities and nursing homes. Demand for these trades is influenced by activity in tourism and hospitality. While both sectors have been affected by the global downturn, Tourism Queensland reported more than two million international visitors to the State over the year to June 2009. The health and community sectors are also a source of demand for these trades. For instance, data from the Queensland Department of Health shows 109 264 patients were admitted for more than one day in the June 2009 quarter, an increase of 2.2 per cent over the same quarter in 2008.

Occupational supply

Entry to these trades is via the completion of a 36 month apprenticeship in Hospitality (Commercial Cookery, Asian Cookery or Catering Operations). Queensland Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations data show commencements in Cooking apprenticeships have averaged around 2309 annually over the five years to 2008. Historically, wastage from training in these trades has averaged 72 per cent, and if completions stay commensurate with enrolments, it is anticipated 652 newly qualified Chefs or Cooks will enter the labour market at the end of 2009. Supply from overseas migration appears to have been a source of supply to these trades although aggregated data from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship show numbers are declining, with 259 self-identified Cooks and Chefs migrating to Queensland in 2007-08.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

This year, 69 per cent of vacancies for Chefs and Cooks were filled within four weeks of advertising. Although employers reported approaches from high numbers of applicants, only 20 per cent of candidates were considered suitable. Unsuitable applicants had insufficient skills or experience, no qualifications or poor presentation and communication skills. Contacts advised of those applicants considered suitable, a number failed to present for a trial or interview. While employers reported strong interest from overseas applicants, most stated a preference for local candidates who can commit to long term employment. Several non-metropolitan respondents believed their location was a deterrent to potential applicants while others opined the demanding nature of split shifts, weekend work and the low remuneration compared with other trades makes it difficult to attract and retain tradespeople and apprentices. Some regional employers reported an inability to compete with the high levels of remuneration offered by the mining industry and cited high levels of turnover with workers leaving for mining-related positions. A majority of contacts offered above award wages in order to secure reliable staff. Many employers of apprentices requested a review of formal training so it remains relevant to contemporary trade practices and new entrants acquire a realistic view of the trade. Others advised they do not employ apprentices as their businesses lack the financial and supervisory capacity to do so.

Labour market outlook

Consistent demand for Chefs and Cooks is anticipated in the future with Tourism Queensland forecasting an average annual growth rate of 4.2 per cent in international visitors over the next ten years. Employers in this year's survey still report a lack of suitable candidates and high wastage from training for these trades, it is likely the current skill shortage of Chefs and Cooks in Queensland will continue.