

Civil Engineering Associate Professionals		Victoria
ASCO Code: 3122	March 2007	
Labour market rating	Shortage	
Comment:		

Occupational demand

Demand for civil engineering associates is primarily determined by the business levels within the overall economy and more specifically by the level of construction activity. Population growth and rising interest rates impact upon the level of investment being made into construction. Building activity in Victoria has decreased over the last two years. The value of new residential building fell by around seven per cent during this period and the number of housing commencements fell by approximately 13 per cent between 2004 and 2006. However, construction activity may improve in the short to medium term, indicated by a rise in dwelling units approved during the last seven months. DEWR Skilled Vacancies Index data suggest demand for civil engineering associates fell between 2000 and 2006 and although vacancies have increasing slightly during the latter part of 2006, they are lower than the level recorded in 2005.

Occupational supply

ABS educational attainment data suggest over 40 per cent of employed civil engineering associates nationally have advanced diplomas or diploma qualifications. According to the Department of Education, Science and Training the number of persons who were enrolled in an engineering and related technologies diploma (AQF) in Australia increased by almost 60 per cent from 2004 to 2005. The number of persons who were enrolled in an engineering and related technologies advanced diploma (AQF) in Australia increased by almost 30 per cent from 2004 to 2005. The supply of civil engineering associates from net immigration has decreased, down by around 30 per cent from last year. Net immigration to Victoria during 2005-06 was less than 10 civil engineering associates.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

The Survey of Employers who Recently Advertised found around 65 per cent of vacancies were filled. There was 0.7 suitable applicants per vacancy compared with an average of 5.8 applicants deemed unsuitable by employers per vacancy. The most common reason employers considered applicants to be unsuitable was a lack of experience in certain fields. While some commented that graduates and other workers new to the industry were available, a majority sought medium to highly experienced workers. Further, the existence of Australian-specific codes and standards means employers seek staff with local experience. Satisfactory communication skills are also lacking in the potential recruits according to employers. With a majority of the work conducted by consultants and contractors, employers are now seeking strong client service communications to match the standard technical skill base. This has been found lacking in recent times. Regional employers surveyed found sourcing suitable applicants particularly difficult as they felt most were unwilling to make the required lifestyle changes, such as moving to regional areas or extensive travel. Many employers also commented a key factor making it difficult to recruit and retain staff is remuneration. Larger firms reported relatively low turnover rates. Regional employers report a lack of training and skilled workers while city businesses saw the rise in Victorian infrastructure projects as the cause of the skill shortage.

Labour market outlook

The lack of qualified civil engineer associates entering the labour market coupled with the increasingly high demand due to major civil projects in Victoria has led to a shortage, expected to continue over the next six months.