

<b>Earth Science Technical Officer</b>		<b>Victoria</b>
<b>ASCO Code:</b> 3112-13	February 2007	
<b>Labour market rating</b>	No Shortage	
<b>Comment:</b>		

### **Occupational demand**

Demand for earth science technical officers is determined by environmental challenges, the level of construction and mining activity. According to the Department of Sustainability and Environment, Victoria faces numerous environmental challenges, including: land health and productivity, stressed water resources, threatened biodiversity, changing climate, increasing waste, population and urban growth. Demand for earth science technical officers has also been strengthened by the strong construction activity in Victoria. Since 2004 the value of total engineering construction completed has increased by around 67 per cent and total work yet to be done has doubled. Although the number of dwelling commencements fell by approximately 13 per cent between 2004 and 2006, the Housing Industry Association forecasts a three per cent increase in dwelling commencements in 2006-2007. Mining activity is also strong and according to the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE) brown coal production in Victoria has remained stable and refined gold production has increased by 35t in 2005-2006. DEEWR Skilled Vacancies Index data shows that demand for earth science technical officers fell sharply over 2000 to 2002 but have remained relatively stable since 2003.

### **Occupational supply**

ABD Education and Work figures suggest around 28 per cent of employed science technical officers do not have post-school qualifications and 26 per cent have bachelor degrees. DEEWR estimates the number of persons who completed tertiary education in the field of earth sciences remained stable in 2004, with an average of 24 completions since 2000. Supply to the occupation from net immigration has significantly increased, up by around 130 per cent from last year. Net immigration to Victoria during 2005-06 was around 23 science technical officer professionals.

### **Employer and industry comments/current labour market**

The Survey of Employers who Recently Advertised (SERA) in metropolitan and regional areas found all vacancies were filled. The average number of suitable applicants per vacancy was 1.8 and the average number of unsuitable applicants per vacancy was 3.2. Despite 100 per cent of the surveyed vacancies being filled, some employers stated they had advertised the position several times before successfully recruiting. The main reason candidates were found to be unsuitable was a lack of experience and formal qualifications. Although regional employers successfully filled advertised vacancies, they did report having difficulty due to the location and industry competition. Employers commented attracting suitable applicants to regional areas was difficult as it required a lifestyle change that people were not always willing to make without a greater remuneration than was offered. Small business and government employers found competition from other industries, particularly the booming mining industry, a recruitment impediment as large private companies were able to offer higher remuneration and competitive work contracts.

### **Labour market outlook**

The relatively balanced labour market for earth science technical officers in Victoria is expected to continue over the next six months, with no skill shortage.