

<b>Surveyor</b>	<b>South Australia</b>
<b>ANZSCO Code:</b> 2322-12	February 2009
<b>Labour market rating</b>	Shortage
<b>Comment</b>	

### **Occupational demand**

According to the 2006 ABS Census, there were approximately 370 employed surveyors in South Australia. This represented an increase of 15 per cent compared to the number reported in the 2001 Census. Around 61 per cent of surveyors work in the professional, scientific and technical services industry, particularly in surveying and mapping services. A further 15 per cent are employed in the public administration and safety industry, eight per cent in the mining industry and seven per cent in the construction industry. Demand for surveyors is influenced by the level of mining, engineering construction and building activity. Apart from a modest downturn in late 2006 and early 2007, South Australian building activity has been expanding strongly since 2001. ABS data show that the total value of building work done (in trend terms) increased for seven consecutive quarters to the December quarter 2008 (the latest available). There has also been a substantial increase in engineering construction activity in the State over the past few years with the value of work done in the December quarter 2008 being the highest on record. DEEWR's Skilled Vacancies Index data recorded a sharp increase in the number of newspaper vacancies for surveyors in 2007, followed by a fall in 2008. Given growth in both engineering and building construction activity, demand for surveyors has probably increased. Employers contacted for this research reported a slight increase in their surveyor workforce size over the past 12 months. The workforce of licensed surveyors represents a sub-set of the total surveyor workforce and in 2008 there were 150 licensed surveyors in South Australia, compared to 143 the previous year.

### **Occupational supply**

Entrants to the profession have usually completed the Bachelor of Geoinformatics and Surveying course offered at the University of South Australia. Up to 1994, there were around 24 commencements per annum which yielded around 13 completions each year. However, there was a substantial drop in the number of commencements in 1995 resulting in an average of 11 commencements per annum to 2006. Consequently, the number of completions also fell to approximately eight per annum in the period to 2007. In response to these low student numbers, the University of South Australia no longer accepted new enrolments into the course from 2007. Based on DEEWR projections, there will be around eight completions in 2009.

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

A survey of employers who had recently advertised for surveyors showed that 50 per cent of total vacancies were filled within six weeks. Employers attracted an average of 7.5 applicants per vacancy though many were deemed unsuitable and so there were 0.5 suitable applicants per vacancy. Main reasons given by employers for rejecting unsuitable applicants were lack of experience and relevant qualifications. Most employers also reported a notable drop in activity during the last months of 2008 but a pick up in demand occurred at the beginning of 2009. Overall, the employer survey suggests that the labour market for surveyors is currently in shortage.

### **Labour market outlook**

Forward indicators of activity in the South Australian construction industry suggest a slowdown is likely. Nonetheless, many of the firms contacted were confident that their businesses will not be significantly affected but reported they were unlikely to recruit additional staff in 2009. Some employers would use a possible economic slowdown as an opportunity to increase staff training. Unless there is a sharp economic contraction, current shortages are likely to persist. Given there will be no new graduates in 2010, shortages may continue beyond the next 12 months.