

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

Occupational demand

A Chef plans and organises the preparation and cooking of food and a Cook prepares, seasons and cooks food. ABS Census data 2006 indicates there were approximately 11 601 Chefs and 10 020 Cooks employed in Victoria who are either self employed or working in dining, catering or retail businesses.

Occupational supply

A qualified Chef will need to have attained a Diploma or higher qualification or at least three years relevant experience. In some instances relevant experience is required in addition to the formal qualification. To qualify as a Cook you are required to have completed formal qualifications achieved through study, training or work experience. The state education commencements and completions data for 2008-2009 indicates there were 1488 commencements and 540 completions in this field of study. Since 2001 there has been only a slight increase in commencements with approximately one third of the intake reaching completion. Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) net migration figures indicates a total of 86 Chefs and 189 Cooks arriving in Victoria during 2007-08, a slight decrease from the previous year.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

The Survey of Employers who Recently Advertised (SERA) for Chefs and Cooks indicates that 70 per cent of vacancies were filled in a four to six week period, an increase from 2007-2008 where only 50 per cent of vacancies were filled. The survey indicates the number of applicants per vacancy was 22 applicants and the number of suitable applicants was 2.3 persons. Many of the employers contacted stated there were shortages of experienced Chefs and Cooks across the state. These employers agreed with industry contacts who stated that many Chefs and Cooks leave the hospitality industry due to long and unconventional hours. The sector has consequently suffered from a high turnover with experienced and qualified Chefs and Cooks in short supply. Industry contacts stated that the increased profile of this trade, due to popular TV programs, has drawn many potential Cooks and Chefs into the industry, but many enter with unrealistic expectations and a lack of knowledge about the realities of the work. Employers also attributed shortages to low wages and split shifts.

Some contacts stated that Chefs and Cooks tend to move in and out of the industry as they encounter various life stages and because of this it was difficult to encourage staff to stay over long periods of time. Employers surveyed indicated that recent recruitment exercises in both mid range restaurants and high-end businesses highlighted the lack of experienced Chefs and Cooks applying for vacancies. Regional and suburban contacts stated they experienced difficulties employing staff due to locational issues, with some metropolitan suburban venues more difficult to fill than the same position in a regional restaurant, café or hotel. The current shortage of staff appears to have enabled more experienced Chefs and Cooks to demand higher salaries in both regional and metropolitan areas. A small number of employers who had successfully employed overseas qualified Chefs and Cooks stated they would consider using this process to fill vacancies in future, if local shortages continue.

Labour market outlook

It is anticipated that shortages for Chefs and Cooks will continue over the next six months.