

Hairdresser		Australia
ASCO Code: 4931-11	August 2006	
Labour market rating	Shortage	
Comment		

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A survey of employers who had recently advertised for hairdressers was undertaken for this report. Demand for hairdressers is strong nationally with many vacancies advertised in multiple newspapers and on Internet sites. Surveyed vacancies required a range of skills and experience from senior hairdressers with skills and a number of years' experience in style, cut, colour and chemical treatments of hair to only hair cutting.

Many employers reported difficulty recruiting qualified hairdressers. However, a considerable number reported they received applications from significant numbers of suitably qualified and skilled hairdressers. Despite this, the majority of vacancies surveyed were unfilled four weeks after advertising, which in many cases appears to be the result of a mismatch between the hours of work sought by applicants and those offered by employers.

About 40 per cent of the surveyed vacancies were filled within four weeks of advertising, a slight increase on the vacancy filling rate recorded in late 2005 when about a third of vacancies were filled. Employers in New South Wales, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory and those with businesses in regional areas had the most difficulty filling vacancies.

Overall, there were 2.5 applicants per vacancy, but on average only one applicant per vacancy was considered by employers to be suitable. The main reasons for applicants being considered by employers to be unsuitable were lack of skills and experience or applicants and employers being unable to agree on pay and hours of work, with employers seeking to employ hairdressers on a part-time basis but applicants seeking full-time employment or applicants seeking part-time work and employers wanting full-time employees.

Employers commented on the high turnover and mobility of staff, noting that many hairdressers leave the trade either during their apprenticeship or soon after qualifying due to the relatively low wages and long work hours (which include evening and weekend work) and because of family commitments. Many employers are flexible in their work arrangements, offering full-time, part-time or casual hours in the hope of attracting staff, but survey respondents suggested finding staff willing to work Thursday evening and Saturday is particularly difficult.

Labour market outlook

There is no evidence to suggest there will be a significant change in the labour market for hairdressers over the next six months, so the shortage is expected to persist.