

<b>Civil Engineering Associate</b>		<b>New South Wales (NSW)</b>
<b>ASCO Code:</b> 3122-11	December 2006	
<b>Labour market rating</b>	Shortage	
<b>Comment:</b> <i>Shortages are evident for qualified civil engineering drafters with two years or more experience in specialisations including building construction, mining, roads, railways, drainage, sewerage and other infrastructure.</i>		

### **Occupational demand**

Non-residential construction activity in NSW has been strong in recent years, growing by 8.3 per cent in 2005-06 following growth of 6.3 per cent the previous year. The consensus of employers and industry contacts was that demand for the occupation had been solid throughout 2006.

### **Occupational supply**

Supply to the occupation from course completions and net immigration has been fairly stable in recent years. The number of persons commencing Certificate IV and diploma courses in civil and structural engineering rose steadily up to 2003 before easing over the last two years. The apparent completion rate of students in these courses is low, with completions in a range of 60 to 80 a year over the three years to 2005. Completions are projected to remain at a similar level in 2006 but are likely to fall somewhat in 2007. Supply to the occupation from net immigration ranged from 15 to 20 persons a year over the three years to 2005-06.

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

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) survey of employers who had recently advertised for civil engineering associates showed that only 17 per cent of vacancies were filled within six weeks of advertising. The survey results were indicative of a significant shortage. Employers were unable to fill vacancies for qualified drafters with two years or more experience across a range of specialisations including non-residential building, mining, roads, railways, drainage, sewerage and other infrastructure. There was an average of three applicants per advertised vacancy but an average of less than one applicant per vacancy was considered suitable by employers. Employers and recruitment agencies stated that the majority of applicants did not have relevant qualifications or did not have sufficient experience in the relevant industry sectors or were based overseas and were seeking sponsorship in order to migrate to Australia.

The recruitment experience of employers in regional NSW was similar to that of their Sydney counterparts. Vacancies attracted few applicants and even fewer had relevant experience. A number of vacancies remained unfilled after extensive advertising in the Hunter, the Illawarra and Central Western NSW.

### **Labour market outlook**

The Construction Forecasting Council expects solid growth for non-residential construction in 2006-07 and 2007-08 and, as a result, demand for civil engineering associates should remain strong over the next year. No significant increase in supply from course completions and net immigration is expected over the short term. Shortages across most sectors of the industry are likely to persist in Sydney and regional NSW in 2007.