

Ships' Engineer		Australia
ASCO Code: 2542-15	August 2007	
Labour market rating	Shortage	
Comment <i>Labour market rating based largely on anecdotal evidence from small number of surveyed employers.</i>		

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A survey of employers who had recently advertised for ships' engineers was undertaken for this report. No contacts were made in the Australian Capital Territory. The Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO) outlines a ships' engineer's duties as controlling and managing the operation and maintenance of plant and equipment of ships. ASCO recognises the entry requirements for this occupation to be commensurate with a bachelor degree or higher qualification and relevant experience in addition to the formal qualification. Registration or licensing is also required. This occupation includes ships' engineers on vessels of all sizes.

The response rate for this survey was very low. Contact with large shipping companies was limited with most declining to participate. Additionally, advertised vacancies during the survey period were particularly hard to find and cold canvassing of employers was largely unsuccessful. These factors resulted in a very small survey and results and findings are based primarily on anecdotal evidence supplied by those employers who participated and by recruitment companies representing employers. Employers suggest for many smaller vessels, many engineering positions are coupled with ships' master positions, employing persons with dual qualifications, and as such are not advertised autonomously.

Nationally, employers reported a vacancy filled rate of about one quarter of their surveyed vacancies with around 1.5 applicants per advertised vacancy. The number of applicants considered by employers to be suitable for each position surveyed was less than one.

While the sample of this survey was small, many employers commented that there is a shortage of ships' engineers in Australia. One consideration by employers was that qualifications from overseas are not readily recognised by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (ASMA) and that many applicants from overseas do not realise this. Another shared view was that not enough people are choosing this occupation as a career and that industry growth is exceeding increases in supply.

Training in marine engineering is available through Certificate, Diploma and Degree courses. To become an Engineer Trainee it is necessary to complete an engineering course approved by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

Labour market outlook

There is no evidence to suggest there will be any significant change in the level of demand or supply for ships' engineers over the next six months.