

Civil Engineering Associate Professionals		Tasmania
ASCO Code: 3122	November 2006	
Labour market rating	Shortage	
Comment <i>Civil engineering associates can be known by a variety of job titles, such as technical officers, drafting assistants, or civil engineering assistants for example.</i>		

Occupational demand

At the 2001 Census there were 136 civil engineering associates and technicians, and another 193 people classified as building and engineering associate professionals “not further defined”. The increase in construction activity that started around 2001 in Tasmania has created demand for civil engineering associates that has not been met with a corresponding increase in supply. The local government sector is also a significant employer of civil engineering associate professionals, where demand is driven by construction, repair and maintenance of local councils’ infrastructure.

Occupational supply

Most civil engineering associate professionals are diploma qualified, with around 80 per cent with a diploma or certificate level qualification. TAFE Tasmania offers two streams within the civil engineering diploma course, of design and drafting, available at Hobart, Launceston and Burnie. TAFE sources indicate around 23 people complete the diploma of civil engineering course each year. However, it is common practice for employers to approach the various TAFE campuses to recruit people undertaking the course. Sometimes students subsequently return to the course part-time, but sometimes leave altogether, as, particularly in the private sector, employers are more interested in the skills people have acquired to date than the qualification.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

The employers contacted in the lead up to this report who had advertised positions for civil engineering associates advised that only 33 per cent of advertised positions were filled. In addition, there was less than 1 suitable applicant per vacancy, with lack of skills and experience given as the main reason why applicants were considered unsuitable. A number of employers indicated that civil engineering associates are also sought when vacancies for civil engineers cannot be filled, as an alternative option for employers. This was only occasionally successful however. The most common reason for skill shortages in this occupation provided by the employer contacts were that there were simply insufficient numbers being trained. Local councils also pointed to the difficulty they have in matching the wages on offer in the private sector.

Labour market outlook

It is expected that shortages will continue for at least the next 12 months as demand is expected to continue to outstrip supply.