

Boat Builder and Repairer	Victoria
ASCO Code: 4981-13	September 2006
Labour market rating	Shortage
Comment: <i>Shortages are particularly for Tradespersons with specialised experience in aluminium and fibreglass boat building.</i>	

Occupational demand

The labour market in Victoria for boat builders is relatively small compared to some other states - there is a significant proportion of self employed boat builders and firms with only a few employees. Most of the demand for boat builders is in the area of construction, fit out and repair of vessels. The demand for qualified and experienced boat builders remains strong; however, a number of employers indicated that recruitment was not often conducted using newspapers or web sites as the response was invariably poor or non-existent. Most employers rely on "word-of-mouth" to fill a vacancy or try to recruit people who have completed pre-apprenticeship training.

Occupational supply

Supply to this trade is via the completion of a four year apprenticeship. However, commencements in recent years have been very low and the demand continues to outstrip supply and employers consistently express concern about the low number of apprentices in training. Employers indicate that they had low interest by young persons in new apprenticeships and therefore there is a lack of new boat builders coming into the industry.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

All employers contacted expressed previous difficulties in recruiting qualified and experienced boat builders and although none were looking to recruit now, the perception among employers is that recruitment of qualified boat builders would still be difficult. Some smaller employers stated there wasn't enough business to justify hiring additional staff or an apprentice. Other employers have recruited fibreglass laminators, cabinetmakers, carpenters and welders then provided on the job training in boat building. Most employers stated that current training methods are inadequate in that apprentices are only being taught to build in timber, rather than being taught how to build using aluminium and fibreglass, as well as timber. Some employers reported that a number of previous applicants had poor attitudes while others lacked basic skills and experience.

A small number of employers commented there are limited opportunities in boat building in Victoria, as they are unable to provide the breadth of training required. They also stated that the shortage of experienced boat builders in Victoria was partly due to skilled tradesperson seeking better conditions, more work and better wages in NSW and Queensland.

Labour market outlook

Employment in the industry is expected to remain relatively stable, and the current shortages should persist in the short term, particularly for boat builders with either aluminium fabricating or fibreglass laminating experience.