

<b>Urban and Regional Planner</b>		<b>Australia</b>
ASCO Code: 2523-11	January 2007	
Labour market rating	Shortage	
<b>Comment.</b>		

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

A survey of employers who had recently advertised for urban and regional planners was undertaken for this report. Urban and regional planners are primarily employed by state and local government and to a lesser extent by private consultancy businesses.

Fifty nine per cent of the surveyed vacancies were filled by qualified urban and regional planners within six weeks of advertising, although a number of vacancies had been advertised more than once over a period of months before the positions were filled. Some vacancies filled during the survey period were not filled with applicants responding to advertising but through industry contacts or recruited from university.

Employers in South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory were most successful, filling the majority of their advertised vacancies. Employers in New South Wales and Tasmania experienced greater difficulty, filling about one third of their vacancies. Nationally the experience of regional employers was similar to that of metropolitan employers except for regional New South Wales where none of the advertised vacancies were filled.

Employers received an average of about three applications per vacancy, of which less than two applicants per vacancy were considered by employers to be suitable. The main reason applicants were considered by employers to be unsuitable was a lack of relevant experience in a particular division of planning work, e.g. strategic, statutory and development planning. Other reasons noted were the lack of formal qualifications, failure to address the position's selection criteria, poor interview skills or a poor work history.

About half of the surveyed vacancies were for senior planners, those with five or more years experience. However, less than one third of these vacancies were filled. Demand for senior planners is strong, resulting in significant competition between employers for staff. There appears to be a perception between employers that each sector offers better remuneration packages than the other. Some employers offer incentives such as a nine day fortnight, flexible working hours and the use of a vehicle in addition to a competitive salary in the hope of attracting and retaining planners. A number of positions remained vacant when the applicants were unwilling to accept the salary package offered or their current employer bettered the proposed package in order to retain them.

### **Labour market outlook**

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