

Bricklayer	New South Wales
ANZSCO Code: 3311-11	September 2009
Labour market rating:	No shortage
Comment: <i>No significant shortage of Bricklayers was evident in NSW.</i>	

Occupational demand

Based on Census and other data, DEEWR estimates employment of Bricklayers fell by about five per cent from 2001 to 2006. Industry activity has been uneven since then. The real value of building work done in NSW fell by eight per cent in 2008-09 after growing by only one per cent the previous year. While engineering Construction activity has been stronger – growing by 31 per cent in 2008-09, following growth of eight per cent the previous year – this sector employs fewer Bricklayers. The consensus of employers contacted for this report was demand for Bricklayers was subdued. However, a number pointed to a recent improvement in activity in some sectors, especially schools, which have benefited from high government expenditure on infrastructure.

Occupational supply

Apprenticeship completions averaged 115 per annum in the past three years compared with 94 a year over the previous decade. However, the annual training rate for the occupation (apprenticeship completions as a percentage of employed Bricklayers) remains low at 1.7 per cent, compared with the average of 3.0 per cent for all trades. Based on Census data, DEEWR estimates wastage of Bricklayers was 3.0 per cent a year between 2001 and 2006 which suggests supply from apprenticeship completions is insufficient to offset wastage. Official immigration data show net immigration of Bricklayers from overseas to NSW rose to about 60 per annum in the two years to 2007-08, which was well above the average of 20 per annum for the previous five years. However, Census data show while overseas immigration added 104 Bricklayers to supply between 2001 and 2006, this was more than offset by a net loss of 280 Bricklayers interstate.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A DEEWR survey of employers who had recently advertised for Bricklayers found 95 per cent of vacancies were filled within four weeks of advertising. This was similar to the result in 2008. Almost all employers in the residential and commercial sectors were able to fill vacancies on either a wage or sub-contract basis, including vacancies involving some of the more skilled aspects of the trade, such as face work. Overall, there was an average of 14 applicants and two suitable applicants per vacancy. About half of those surveyed reported they received 50 or more responses to their advertisements and were able to trial applicants until they found sufficient numbers who were suitable. In some cases it took employers less than a day to fill multiple positions. A small minority of employers, however, were unable to fill their vacancies or filled them less readily, having to trial several applicants before recruiting a suitable worker. These employers reported most applicants were labourers or informally trained Bricklayers with only a limited range of trade skills. Employer based in inland towns generally received a smaller response to advertised vacancies and in some cases were unable to fill positions because experienced Bricklayers were unwilling to relocate to the towns for the remuneration on offer. However, other employers in these regions were able to fill their vacancies with few problems and the evidence was insufficient to establish a clear regional shortage.

Labour market outlook

The Construction Forecasting Council expects a modest recovery in building activity in 2009-10. On the supply side, DEEWR projections show a decline in apprenticeship completions in the next two years, indicating the training rate will remain below the average for all trades. Although no significant shortages are expected over the short term, recruitment difficulties may emerge as building activity moves into a sustained upswing.