

AUSTRALIA

March 2009

3241-11 Panel Beater

(review)

Review rating: *Shortage*

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

Shortages identified by DEEWR research in late 2008 continue. A survey of employers who had recently advertised for panel beaters was undertaken for this review.

Of the surveyed vacancies 61 per cent were filled. Employers received around four applicants per vacancy and considered less than one applicant per vacancy to be suitable. Employers found applicants to be unsuitable for a number of reasons such as lack of qualifications, lack of experience and poor attitude or work histories. Of the surveyed employers close to 95 per cent required formal qualifications. Some States appear to have greater difficulties in attracting suitable applicants than others, WA had the greatest success in finding suitable applicants, followed by NSW and VIC. QLD, SA and the NT all struggled to find suitable applicants.

Employers were recruiting mainly to replace existing staff. Most employers were not intending to limit apprenticeship numbers in the coming six months despite current economic conditions and 55 per cent were intending to recruit for trade qualified panel beaters over the same period. While some employers commented they were experiencing difficulties in recruiting suitable panel beaters, others said they were receiving more applicants than in previous years. These differences were occurring even in the same areas. This may be attributed to the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) with some workshops shedding staff or closing and also the GFC seeing many trade people returning to the labour market with downturns in the mining sector.

Labour Market Outlook

Employer comments suggest that the labour market for this occupation may change over the next six months with higher numbers of panel beaters seeking employment due to the recent economic downturns. This may indicate a positive shift in recruitment for employers.