

Quantity Surveyor		South Australia
ANZSCO Code: 2332-13	February 2009	
Labour market rating	No Shortage	
Comment		

Occupational demand

According to the 2006 ABS Census, there were approximately 100 employed quantity surveyors in South Australia. This represented an increase of 13 per cent compared to the number reported in the 2001 Census. Around 64 per cent of quantity surveyors work in the professional, scientific and technical services industry, particularly in engineering design and consulting services and a further 25 per cent are employed in the construction industry. Demand for quantity surveyors is linked to the level of residential and non-residential building activity as well as engineering construction activity. Apart from a modest downturn in late 2006 and early 2007, South Australian building activity has been expanding strongly since 2001. ABS data show that the total value of building work done (in trend terms) increased for seven consecutive quarters to the December quarter 2008 (the latest available). There has also been a substantial increase in engineering construction activity in the State over the past few years with the value of work done in the December quarter 2008 being the highest on record. Given the small size of the workforce, DEEWR's Skilled Vacancies Index data recorded only a modest number of newspaper vacancies for quantity surveyors. Despite growth in both engineering and building construction activity, demand for quantity surveyors appears to have declined. Employers contacted for this research reported a slight reduction in their quantity surveyor workforce size over the past 12 months.

Occupational supply

Entrants to this profession have usually completed the four year full-time equivalent Bachelor of Construction Management & Economics at the University of South Australia. In the period 2000 to 2005, there were around 50 to 60 student commencements per annum. An increase in new student enrolments to 64 occurred in 2006 which was followed by a sharper increase to 88 commencements in 2007. However, almost half of commencements do not result in completions. On average, there have been around 28 student completions over the past ten years, with 39 graduates in 2007 – this represents the higher number in nine years. Based on DEEWR projections, there may have been around 36 completions in 2008, with a further 37 completions in 2009 and 51 in 2010. In addition to supply to the occupation from formal training, there has been a significant net inflow from overseas migration since 2005-06.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A survey of some employers in the State indicated that none had advertised for positions for some time and none had any current unfilled positions for quantity surveyors. Indeed, some employers had recently reduced staffing levels because of a lack of work. Consequently, the current labour market for quantity surveyors is rated as not being in shortage.

Labour market outlook

The number of university completions will be sufficient to meet current demand for graduate level positions, and supply is expected to increase in the longer term. Forward indicators of activity in the South Australian construction industry suggest a slowdown is likely. All of the firms contacted were concerned about the current economic conditions and some were not anticipating business conditions to improve in 2009. Some employers advised they had noticed an increase in unsolicited enquiries for people seeking employment, both locally and from overseas. Based on these considerations, it is unlikely that a shortage of quantity surveyors will emerge over the next 12 months.