

<b>Mechanical Engineering Associate Professionals</b>		<b>Victoria</b>
ASCO Code: 3125	March 2007	
Labour market rating	Recruitment difficulty	
<b>Comment:</b> <i>Recruitment difficulties restricted to vacancies requiring specific knowledge and experience.</i>		

### **Occupational demand**

Demand for mechanical engineering associate professionals in Victoria is largely determined by the level of activity in the manufacturing sector. Most of Victoria's manufacturing companies make components that are turned into a range of goods, including motor vehicles. Nationally, transport equipment manufacturing is continuing to decline (*Survey of Australian Manufacturing, September Quarter 2006*). Manufacturing employment in Victoria has also seen a downturn from 2004-2005, a fall of 2.5 per cent. The Survey of Australian Manufacturing forecast an ease in production growth in the next three months. DEEWR Skilled Vacancies Index data suggests demand for mechanical engineering associate professionals has continued to decline since 2001, 2006 vacancies compared to 2000 show a decrease of approximately 82 per cent.

### **Occupational supply**

ABS Education and Work figures suggest around 48 per cent of employed mechanical engineering associates nationally have Certificate III or IV qualifications. DEEWR estimates the percentage of persons in Victoria who have completed a traineeship relating to mechanical engineering increased by approximately 25 per cent from 2004-05 to 2005-06. The percentage of persons in 2004-05 is similar to those of 2003-04. Supply to the profession from net immigration has significantly increased, up by around 140 per cent from last year. Net immigration to Victoria during 2005-06 was approximately 36 mechanical engineering associate professionals.

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

The Survey of Employers who Recently Advertised (SERA) found approximately 40 per cent of mechanical engineering associate professional vacancies were filled. The average number of suitable applicants per vacancy was 6.2 and the average number of unsuitable applicants per vacancy was 42. Some employers had a large number of suitable applicants and were able to fill the position, whereas other employers had a large number of unsuitable applicants and were not able to fill the position.

Employers considered many applicants unsuitable due to lack of high level appropriate skills and industry specific experience. Employers were looking for applicants with practical, hands-on engineering experience, preferably in a mechanical background, but were also looking for experience in other associated trades, such as toolmaking. Employers were seeking applicants with experience and knowledge of specific computer software packages, such as AutoCAD. Highly developed communication skills and an ability to co-ordinate with other skilled workers were also an expectation employers had of candidates. Where the position was not in inner city, employers commented that location was a factor making it difficult to fill vacant positions. According to employers, factors that are currently affecting the demand for mechanical engineering associate professionals include the downturn in both the rural economy and the automotive component industry. Approximately 70 per cent of employers stated there is low turnover of existing employees and attributed it to high job satisfaction.

### **Labour market outlook**

The relatively balanced labour market for mechanical engineering associate professionals in Victoria is expected to continue over the next six months, with recruitment difficulties persisting for vacancies requiring specific knowledge and experience.