

Bricklayer		South Australia
ANZSCO Code: 3311-11	July 2009	
Labour market rating:	No shortage	
Comment:		

Occupational demand

According to the 2006 ABS Census, there were around 1400 employed Bricklayers in South Australia and 96 per cent were employed in the Construction industry. Consequently, demand for Bricklayers is influenced by the level of building and 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 eight consecutive quarters to the March quarter 2009 (the latest available). Most Bricklayers operate in the residential Construction industry, and this sector has also experienced significant growth as indicated by thirteen consecutive quarterly increases in the value of building work done to the March quarter 2009. DEEWR's Skilled Vacancies Index (SVI) data show a significant increase in the number of newspaper vacancies for Bricklayers in 2007-08 and this level was maintained in 2008-09. ABS Labour Force Survey data (averaged over four quarters) recorded an increase in the number of employed Bricklayers up to May 2009.

Occupational supply

The number of persons completing a contract of training in bricklaying averaged 19 per annum over the five years to 2005. However, completions have since increased to 36 in 2006, 50 in 2007 and 29 in 2008. These increases were lagged responses to an increase in trainee commencements in previous years, particularly in 2003 and 2004. Between 1997 and 2001, there was an average of 27 commencements per annum, and this has since increased sharply to 133 in 2008. DEEWR projections suggest that training completions for Bricklayers will average around 40 per annum in 2009 and 2010, with possibly 60 completions in 2011. Supply to the occupation from net overseas migration represents over one per cent of the workforce.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A survey of employers who had recently advertised for Bricklayers showed that 95 per cent of vacancies were filled within four weeks, compared to a filled rate of 71 per cent a year ago. Employers received an average of 4.9 applicants per vacancy, compared to 5.2 in 2008. The number of suitable applicants per vacancy was 1.1, compared to 1.0 a year earlier. None of the employers had an existing long-term vacant position at the time contacted. Some employers reported difficulties in attracting suitably skilled Bricklayers with high quality work standards. Most of the advertised vacancies were for replacement workers. Although some employers noted a modest slowing in building activity earlier in the year, there was general consensus that building activity levels were steady with an expectation that work will remain steady or possibly increase in the short-term. Many of the employers also commented that turnover of Bricklayers was moderate to high due to fluctuations in demand from builders and termination of unsatisfactory employees. Overall, it appears that there is no shortage of Bricklayers.

Labour market outlook

With regards to labour demand, although the value of residential building approvals increased during the first half of 2009, it remains below the level reached a year earlier. Furthermore, overall economic activity across the state has been impacted by the global recession and consequently construction activity will likely be more subdued in 2009 than in previous years. Training completions are projected to remain at above average historical levels over the next two years. Therefore shortages of Bricklayers are unlikely to emerge over the next 12 months.