Legal Professional	Victoria
ASCO Code: 2521	April 2007
Labour market rating	No shortage
Comment:	

Occupational demand
Demand for legal professionals is broadly generated by overall economic activity. Victoria's economy had relatively strong growth of 2.9 per cent over the year to December 2006, and the Australian economy grew by 3.7 per cent. Demand is also affected by social factors such as the divorce rate and medical litigation. Industry sources have reported a relatively high demand from firms which concentrate on specialised areas of legal practice, such as business law, workplace relations, family law and funds management. DEEWR Skilled Vacancies data show demand for legal professionals declined over the past five years, but commenced trending upward since the latter part of 2005.

Occupational supply
DEEWR estimates the number of persons who completed tertiary education in the field of law in 2005 fell significantly, approximately 15 per cent compared to completions of 2004. Since 2000 completions have been an average of approximately 1500 per year. Supply to the profession of legal professionals from net immigration has decreased, down from last year. There was a net loss from to Victoria during 2005-06.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market
The Survey of Employers who Recently Advertised (SERA) found 86 per cent of vacancies were filled. The average number of suitable applicants per vacancy was three and the average number of unsuitable applicants per vacancy was 8.6. The majority of employers surveyed stated the main reason applicants were found unsuitable was due to a lack of practical experience and specific industry skills. Most employers were particularly seeking applicants with at least two years practical experience. Other employers were seeking people with previous long term job stability, while employers who advertised for higher level positions were also seeking candidates with highly developed communication, leadership and analytical skills.

Employers commented that there is fairly low turnover of existing employees in the occupation due to long term stability and job satisfaction. Many employers are able to retain staff for long periods, particularly large, high profile firms, as they are able to offer more attractive remuneration packages and opportunities for career progression. Community organisations and regional employers though are experiencing particular difficulty in attracting and retaining staff, as they are unable to offer the same remuneration packages. It appears that once large companies have the right employee they will use many tools to retain them.

Labour market outlook
The relatively balanced labour market for legal professionals in Victoria is expected to continue over the next six months.