

Chemical Plant Operator		South Australia
ASCO Code: 4987-11	September 2006	
Labour market rating	No Shortage	
Comment		

Occupational demand

Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data show that employment in this occupation grew from around 110 persons in 1996 to around 130 persons in 2001. Almost all chemical plant operators work in the manufacturing industry. Anecdotal information suggests that employment opportunities are limited due to the small number of chemical plants currently operating in South Australia. DEWR's count of skilled vacancies indicates that demand for chemical plant operators has remained low for several years.

Occupational supply

There is no formal training for this occupation in South Australia. It is therefore assumed that employment growth and/or replacement demand has been satisfied via other means, such as on-the-job training or skilled migration, or a combination of the two.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

Very few recently advertised vacancies were available for follow-up for this report. Of the few employers who had advertised, none were seeking trade qualified chemical plant operators nor was there an expectation that applicants would have extensive previous experience. Employers acknowledged that the labour market for chemical plant operators is small and consequently there are few people to choose from when vacancies arise. Some employers were unable to identify whether their positions would be filled as, at the time of contact, selection processes were incomplete, but other employers had successfully recruited suitable candidates.

In addition to the above contacts, several firms were cold-canvassed for information regarding the current labour market for chemical plant operators. None of the firms contacted operated chemical manufacturing facilities in South Australia, and therefore they were unable to provide relevant feedback on current labour market conditions for plant operators. Nonetheless, the feedback from these contacts indicated that SA has only a small number of chemical production facilities relative to other parts of Australia, and this supports the low levels of employment and demand for chemical plant operators observed in recent years.

Labour market outlook

There are no indications that demand for chemical plant operators will increase in the short-term. Moreover, it appears that there is little demand for trade qualified workers, as evidenced by the lack of apprenticeship commencements and completions during the previous ten years. It therefore appears likely that occupational supply will continue to be met via informal means, and this should be sufficient to satisfy replacement demand over the next twelve months.