

Wall and Floor Tiler	Queensland
ANZSCO Code: 3334-11	September 2009
Labour market rating:	No shortage
Comment:	

Occupational demand

Wall and Floor Tilers provide protective and decorative finishes to walls and floors by laying ceramic, clay, slate, marble, glass and other types of tiles on external and internal walls. With almost 98 per cent of Wall and Floor Tilers working in the construction industry, demand for their services is strongly influenced by levels of building activity. According to figures released by the ABS, residential and private sector building in Queensland slowed in the wake of the recent economic downturn. At the same time however, non-residential building continued unabated with the total volume of construction work done in Queensland strengthening over the year to June 2009 by 6.9 per cent. For the most part, this growth was supported by expanding capital works projects including the refurbishment or development of new hospitals, schools, housing and public amenities projects, and according to employer contacts demand for this trade held steady.

Occupational supply

Entry into this trade is via the completion of a 42 month apprenticeship in *Wall and Floor Tiling*. In Queensland however, if an individual or company wants to carry out work valued over \$1100 they must also hold the correct licence as determined by the Building Services Authority. To acquire a licence, qualified tradespersons need to complete an approved managerial course. Department of Education and Training data indicate that apprenticeship commencement numbers for this trade have grown substantially with 152 recorded in 2004 compared to 325 in 2008. Wastage from training has also improved with 53 per cent of apprentices completing their training in 2008, compared to only 23 per cent in 2006. Based on the 2008 attrition rate, it is anticipated that around 154 newly qualified Wall and Floor Tilers will enter the labour market at the end of 2009. Department of Immigration and Citizenship data indicates that overseas migration provides a minimal contribution to this trade with only 25 self-identified Wall and Floor Tilers and stonemasons migrating to the State in 2007-08.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

This year, 90 per cent of vacancies for Wall and Floor Tilers in Queensland were filled within four weeks of advertising. Employers reported a stronger than expected response although they advised that there was minimal changes to the number of suitably skilled and qualified applicants. Indeed, employers considered two in three applicants as unsuitable because they did not hold trade qualifications or a licence, they had insufficient skills or experience, or they did not own work tools or have any means of transport. Most respondents reported minimal concerns attracting apprentices, but consider the demanding physical nature of the work, long hours and low remuneration contribute to the difficulty of attracting 'suitable' applicants. They attribute the high levels of wastage from training and wastage from the occupation to these same factors. Some respondents who had been successful in supporting an apprentice through to graduation reported acute difficulties retaining them beyond that time. Many of these respondents stated that this has become a major disincentive for indenturing apprentices in the future. A number of employers advised that the formal training component of this apprenticeship is incompatible with industry expectations and they would welcome a review of, or greater collaboration with the education sector about, current practices.

Labour market outlook

According to the ABS, building approvals in Queensland strengthened for the fifth consecutive month in July 2009 and Housing Industry Australia have forecast that residential building in Queensland will increase by a solid 15 per cent over 2010. Wall and Floor Tilers were found to be 'not in shortage' this year and the positive growth in apprenticeship numbers may be enough to support the balance between supply and demand for the present. However, if building activity returns to pre-2008 levels, demand could once again outstrip supply and shortages may re-emerge.