

Child Care Worker	Tasmania
ASCO Code: 6312-11	February 2008
Labour market rating	Shortage
Comment	

Occupational demand

Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) 2006 Census data show that there were around 1955 child care workers employed in Tasmania. This figure represents an 87 per cent increase in child care workers in the past five years. The main demand drivers for child care services are the size of the 0-13 year old population and the female participation rate. ABS Census data show that the number of 0-13 year olds has decreased from 90 950 in 2001 to 87 357 in 2006. However the number of 0-13 year old children using child care services continues to increase. The *Census of Child Care Services* produced by Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) reveals that in 2002 there was a total of 12 881 children using licensed Long Day Care (LDC) and Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services and in 2004 there was a total of 14 478 children using these services.

Participation rates for females rose from 50.8 per cent to 54.7 per between 2001 and 2006. The relationship between participation rates and child care is demonstrated by the *2004 Census of Child Care Services* data which shows 85 per cent of all families using licensed LDC and 97 per cent of families using OSHC care were doing so for work-related purposes.

Occupational supply

Under Tasmanian licensing regulations child to staff ratios can only be met by qualified child care workers. The entry level qualification for child care is a two-year full-time or equivalent Diploma of Children's Services. It is also possible for unqualified child care workers to be employed temporarily in qualified positions but this must be approved by the licensing body, the Child Care Unit (CCU) of the State Education Department. According to data from the *Industry Training Demand Profile – Children's Services (Feb, 2007)* the number of CCU 'approved positions' has increased from 36 in 2006 to 130 in 2007 indicating a shortage of qualified child care workers.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

Employers overwhelmingly expressed concern about the low number of qualified applicants for positions in their services. Pay rates, rostered hours and the physically demanding nature of the job were identified as some of the reasons for the shortage. Employers who recently advertised for 'qualified' carers filled 73 per cent of vacancies. However, many of these positions are not included in the DEEWR research as filled as they were generally filled by 'unqualified' Certificate III Children's Services workers because these applicants had the best chance of meeting the Child Care Unit's criteria to temporarily work in a qualified 'approved position'.

Labour market outlook

Positions were generally filled with Certificate III 'unqualified' applicants who would need to either upgrade their skills on-the-job or be approved to work temporarily in a qualified position. The number of qualified applicants was low, suggesting there is a shortage of Diploma qualified workers. This is not expected to change over the next 12 months.