

Chef and Cook		Tasmania
ANZSCO Code: 3513-11, 3514-11	August 2009	
Labour market rating:	3513-11 Chef – Shortage 3514-11 Cook – Shortage	
Comment:		

Occupational demand

According to 2006 Census data there were 1036 Chefs in Tasmania, which was a 24.9 per cent increase on the number employed in 2001. There were also 1199 Cooks, which was an increase of 27.4 per cent on the number recorded in 2001. In the year to May 2009, there have been approximately 2350 Cooks and Chefs employed on average each quarter. Generally speaking the term Chef refers to someone with at least a trade level qualification. A Cook is more often used to describe someone with Certificate II or below level qualifications or someone who has learnt on the job. However the terms are often used interchangeably within the hospitality industry. Demand for Cooks and Chefs is related to the general health of the economy, the more buoyant the economy the higher the level of disposable income. Demand for Cooks and Chefs in Tasmania also tends to peak in the summer, which is when most tourists visit the State.

Occupational supply

Formal supply to the occupation of Chef is generally through the apprenticeship system, with the off-the-job component delivered through the Tasmanian Skills Institute (formerly TAFE Tasmania). The number of people completing their apprenticeship in commercial Cookery has been steadily increasing over the last few years and in 2008-09 reached it's highest level ever of 103. In addition the number of commencements last financial year also reached its highest level since the current data series commenced, at 340. However, one of the features of the training figures for apprentice Chefs is the relatively high attrition rate. Over the last 10 years, non-completions have averaged 55.6 per cent of commencements each year. In addition to formal training sources, 367 Chefs and Cooks arrived in Tasmania between 2001 and 2006. The largest number, 72, came from overseas, while NSW and Victoria were the next largest supplying States at 68 and 54 respectively. According to Census data, around 31 per cent of Cooks have a qualification at Certificate III level or above, compared to 75 per cent of Chefs. This suggests informal on-the-job training pathways are more important for Cooks than for Chefs. The data also suggests most Chefs are trained formally through the apprenticeship system.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

Employers who recently advertised were contacted in the lead up to this report, and only around 55 per cent of them were able to fill their vacancies. Retention of Chefs and Cooks in the industry was a common reason given by employers for recruitment difficulties as the unsocial hours, and high pressure nature of the work mean only the most committed tend to stay in the industry. In addition, vacancies outside of Hobart and Launceston tended to be even more difficult to fill. Some of the more prestigious establishments indicated they did not have much trouble filling their vacancies but this seems to be related to their status in the industry and also their capacity to pay higher wages due to the higher prices they charge. Another feature of employers' recruitment experience was the high number of unsuitable applicants. Often this was due to insufficient skills or experience, but employers also reported a high number of people applying with no industry experience at all, which suggests unrealistic expectations of the occupation exist among some jobseekers.

Labour market outlook

A high level of turnover and high levels of demand in summer, suggest shortages of Chefs and Cooks will continue for at least the next 12 months.