

Primary Products Inspector		Tasmania
ASCO Code: 3991-11	April 2008	
Labour market rating	No shortage	
Comment		

Occupational demand

There were 98 primary products inspectors recorded at the 2006 Census, slightly down on the 109 recorded in 2001. Almost 75 per cent of primary products inspectors work for the public sector in Tasmania, with small numbers in the private sector fragmented across the meat industry, transport industry and agriculture industry, according to 2006 Census data.

The major demand factors for primary product inspectors are related to levels of regulation surrounding the packing, movement and storage of plant and animal produce. The occupation is also male dominated at 70 per cent, according to 2006 Census data. Primary products inspectors working for the State Government (around 42 per cent of the occupation in Tasmania) work in the areas of meat, seafood and egg inspections to ensure compliance with food safety regulations. Those working for the Federal Government (around 30 per cent of the occupation) work in the quarantine service ensuring that primary produce coming in and going out of the State meet the required safety and health standards, and are free of pests and diseases.

Occupational supply

Primary products inspectors in the meat inspection areas are required to have a food safety auditing qualification approved by industry. In general, food inspection qualifications endorsed by Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Australia, and food safety auditing endorsed by certification company RABQSA are those held by primary products inspectors. In the public sector, people are recruited as technical staff at entry level, and then have the opportunity to train on the job to progress to the level of food safety auditing. There are also a small number of staff who have a Certificate IV in meat inspection, as that is their main area of activity. Quarantine staff, although technically Federal Government employees, are actually based in, and paid by a State Government agency.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

No employers advertised for primary products inspectors in the lead up to this report. However, other industry sources contacted indicated that they generally did not have any recruitment problems, in that they had significant numbers of applicants when they advertised their entry level positions. This then forms the pool from which they recruit and train staff for the next level. Some industry sources did state they felt there were shortages in the sense that there were not enough positions being funded to deal with all the available work. This was more an issue of levels of government funding however, rather than existing positions not being filled.

Labour market outlook

Primary products inspectors make up a very small occupation in Tasmania, dominated by public sector employment, and characterised by on the job training to raise skills to the required level. Unless there is a significant unexpected increase in demand, the occupation is expected to remain in balance for at least the next 12 months.