

Roof Tiler		Queensland
ANZSCO Code: 3333-11	August 2009	
Labour market rating:	Shortage	
Comment:		

Occupational demand

Roof tilers install, replace or repair roofs of residential and other buildings with roof tiles, slates, shingles or steel sheeting to form waterproof surfaces. Roof tilers work predominantly for roofing services and demand is dependant on the levels of activity in the construction industry. High numbers of roof tilers work as self-employed sub-contractors. Although the value of construction work done in Queensland has declined over the past three quarters, this followed 22 consecutive quarterly increases. Consequently, ABS figures show that construction activity grew by 6.9 per cent over the year to June 2009, with demand for roof tilers responding accordingly.

Occupational supply

Entry to this trade is via the completion of a 42 month apprenticeship in Roof Tiling and licensing by Building Services Australia to carry out or supervise building work over the value of \$1100. Data from the Department of Education and Training shows that training commencements decreased between 2003 (59) and 2006 (28) before recovering in 2007 when 58 students commenced the apprenticeship. Wastage from training has been historically high with over two thirds of students not completing their trade in 2007 and if this trend continues only nine newly qualified roof slaters and tilers would enter the labour market by the end of 2009. Overseas migration may be a significant source of supply to this trade with data from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship showing a net gain to the State of 38 self-identified roof slaters and tilers in 2007-08.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

This year, 39 per cent of vacancies for roof slaters and tilers were filled within four weeks of advertising, with metropolitan vacancies twice as likely to remain unfilled than regional ones. Overall, 82 per cent of applicants were considered unsuitable because they were not qualified, they lacked experience or they had no means to travel to worksites. Employers advised that a high number of applicants were from overseas but because they lacked local skills and experience they were not given serious consideration. Some employers advised that they preferred mature aged workers who they consider are more stable employees Respondents reported that the demanding physical nature of the trade and low remuneration rates compared with other trades has made it difficult to attract and retain tradespeople. While some employers stated that the attraction and retention of apprentices was problematic, the majority of employers advised that they do not indenture apprentices. Many do not have the capacity to manage the costs and others stated that block release training, especially for regional employers who must send apprentices to Brisbane, is incompatible with their business needs. A number of employers reported offering above-award wages to encourage retention while others advised that where they could not place a qualified and experienced roof tiler, they were accepting non-qualified applicants with skills that could be developed.

Labour market outlook

Department of Public Works projections for Queensland construction in 2009-10 show a decline of 10.1 per cent with residential construction expected to recover by 2010-11. However, demand for roof tilers in Queensland is expected to continue to exceed supply, given the low numbers entering the trade, the high wastage from training, limited supply from immigration and retention difficulties.