

Sheetmetal Worker (First Class)		Victoria
ASCO Code: 4124-11	September 2007	
Labour market rating	Shortage	
Comment:		

Occupational demand

Demand for sheetmetal workers (first class) in Victoria is largely determined by the level of activity in the manufacturing industry, as most sheetmetal workers are employed in this sector, and more generally by overall economic activity. The Survey of Australian Manufacturing June 2007 showed that growth in manufacturing activity strengthened moderately in the June quarter 2007, largely reflecting a broadening in demand, this has improved the 12 month outlook moderately for the industry. However, the appreciating dollar is continuing to dampen export prospects. Manufacturing employment in Victoria for the August quarter grew by 4.8 per cent compared with the August quarter 2006.

DEEWR Skilled Vacancies Index data show demand for sheetmetal workers has been declining since 2001 and declined sharply in 2006.

Occupational supply

ABS Education and Work figures suggest around half of employed sheetmetal workers nationally do not hold post-school qualifications, and a further 45 per cent have certificate III/IV qualifications. About 470 people completed a Certificate III in Engineering (Fabrication Trade, Production Systems and other related streams) in 2005-06, a significant rise from the figure in 2004-05 of 383. Supply to the profession in Victoria from migration is low, with a net gain of less than ten sheetmetal workers in 2004-05 and 2005-06 and slightly more in 2006-07 when there were 14.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

The survey of Employers who Recently Advertised (SERA) found that slightly more than half of the surveyed vacancies were filled. There were more than four applicants per vacancy with slightly less than one suitable applicant per vacancy.

The reasons applicants were considered by employers to be unsuitable for their advertised positions included lack of appropriate qualifications or experience. Employers commented that many less skilled sheetmetal workers (considered to be second class) applied for first class positions, and some of the qualified sheetmetal workers (first workers) did not have the specific experience (for example, experience working with stainless steel or previous employment with a similar company). Several employers who advertised online mentioned they had many applications from overseas, and found these applicants often did not have appropriate qualifications or experience.

Most employers rated staff turnover as low. However when staff did leave they found it difficult to replace them, with a percentage of the positions being vacant for longer than three months. Some employers filled positions through word of mouth rather than advertising.

Labour market outlook

Strong demand for sheetmetal services in Victoria has led to a shortage of skilled sheetmetal workers and this is expected to continue over the next six months.