

Solid Plasterer	New South Wales
ANZSCO Code: 3332-12	September 2009
Labour market rating:	No shortage
Comment: <i>No general shortage of Solid Plasterers was evident in NSW.</i>	

Occupational demand

Census data indicates employment of Solid Plasterers grew strongly between 2001 and 2006. This was most likely the result of strong building activity from 2002 to 2005 and the vogue for cement and acrylic rendering of buildings. Demand for the trade has been more subdued since then, with the real value of building work done in NSW falling by eight per cent in 2008-09 after growing by only one per cent the previous year. The consensus of industry contacts was demand for the occupation was subdued.

Occupational supply

Additions to supply from apprenticeship completions have increased marginally in the past four years to an average of 11 per annum. However, the formal training rate (annual apprenticeship completions as a percentage of employed Solid Plasterers) is only 0.6 per cent, which is well below the average of three per cent for the trades as a whole. The consensus of industry sources was most training of Solid Plasterers was now done on-the-job rather than through formal apprenticeships and while this supplements supply, many informally trained plasterers only have a narrow range of skills. Supply from net immigration has increased markedly in recent years, averaging 32 per annum over the four years to 2007-08, compared with four per annum over the previous four years.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A DEEWR survey of employers of Solid Plasterers found 88 per cent of vacancies were filled within four weeks of advertising, which was an improvement on the result for 2008 (73 per cent). Employers were generally able to fill vacancies with few problems on a wage or sub-contract basis across most sectors of the industry including high-rise and low-rise residential and commercial building, and maintenance, renovations and repair work. There was an average of 10 applicants per vacancy of which an average of two per vacancy were considered suitable by employers. Just over half of the employers surveyed were able to select the best of two or more suitable applicants. A minority of employers found it less easy to fill vacancies, having to trial several applicants before finding one who could demonstrate suitable trade skills. In a small number of cases vacancies remained unfilled because suitable applicants were seeking a remuneration which the employer was unprepared to pay. Of the employers surveyed in regional NSW, the majority had not recently advertised for Solid Plasterers. The consensus of regional employers was demand was currently subdued and any additional requirements for Solid Plasterers which arose from sporadic projects were met from their list of preferred sub-contractors or from unsolicited approaches from Solid Plasterers seeking work.

Labour market outlook

The Construction Forecasting Council expects only a modest recovery in building activity in 2009-10 and, as a result, demand for Solid Plasterers is likely to remain subdued over the short term. DEEWR projections do not indicate a significant increase in apprenticeship completions in the short term and the training rate is therefore likely to remain well below the average for the trades as a whole over the next two years. As a consequence, recruitment difficulties may develop when the building industry moves into a sustained recovery.