Australian Government
Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

AUSTRALIAN LABOUR MARKET UPDATE
January 2007

Are you looking for a job in Australia?

The *Australian Labour Market Update* provides information on the Australian labour market on a quarterly basis. It is intended to help people who may be interested in working in Australia on a temporary or permanent basis.

Further information on job prospects, earnings and related information is available online at **Australian Jobs 2006**, available through http://www.workplace.gov.au.

Unless otherwise stated, data are from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Labour Force Survey, November 2006.

OVERVIEW

In the 12 months to November 2006, the Australian labour market continued to experience solid growth. In trend terms, total employment increased by an estimated 261 200 persons (2.6%). Advertised vacancies increased for Professional occupations and decreased for Trade occupations. Migrants with the best prospects for finding employment in the Australian labour market include those with strong proficiency in the English language, recognised post-secondary qualifications and high skill levels.

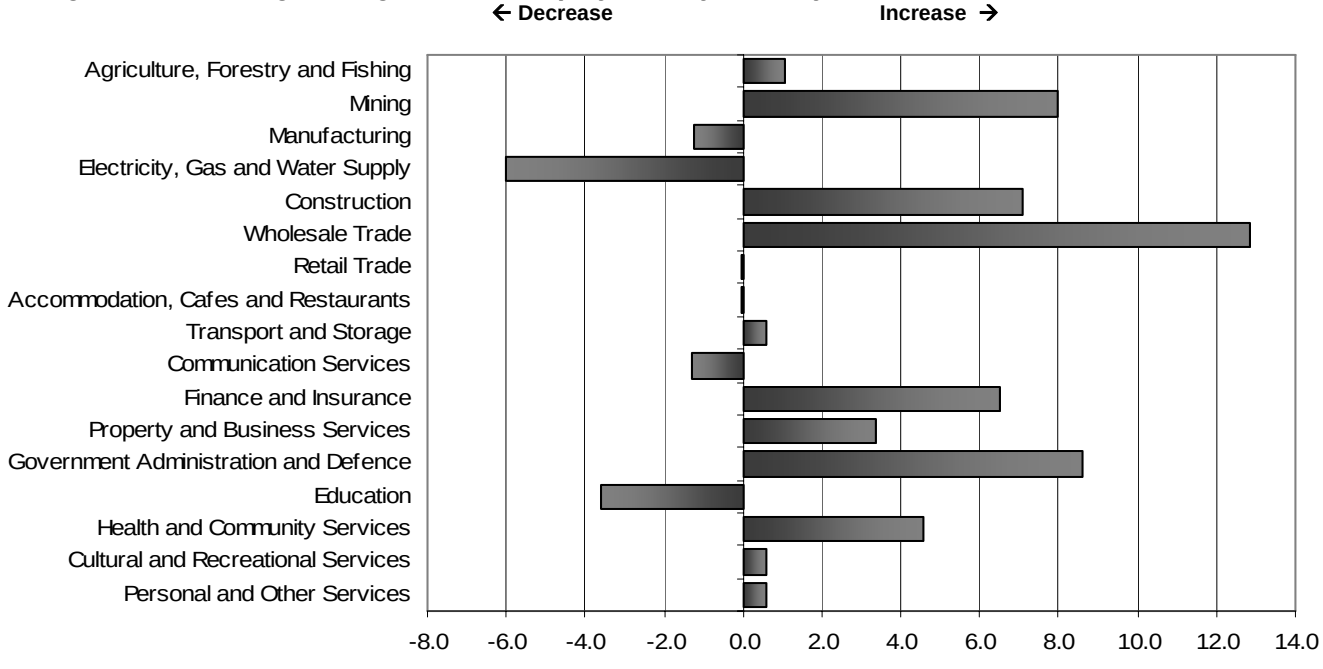
EMPLOYMENT

Over the 12 months to November 2006, trend employment in Australia grew by 2.6% after growth of 2.3% in the previous year.

Employment (in trend terms) increased in all States and Territories except in Tasmania where it decreased by 1 900. In percentage terms, employment growth was strongest in the Australian Capital Territory (6.1%) and the Northern Territory (4.6%).

Employment opportunities and growth varied across industries. Over the 12 months to November 2006, the largest increases in trend employment occurred in Construction (up by 61 700), Wholesale Trade (up by 54 800) and Health and Community Services (up by 47 200). The strongest rates of employment growth were in Wholesale Trade (12.8%), Government Administration and Defence (8.6%) and Mining (8.0%). Employment growth rates by industry are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Percentage change in trend employment by industry – November 2005 to November 2006



Source: ABS *Australian Labour Market Statistics*, *January 2007*, ABS Cat. No. 6105.0.

UNEMPLOYMENT

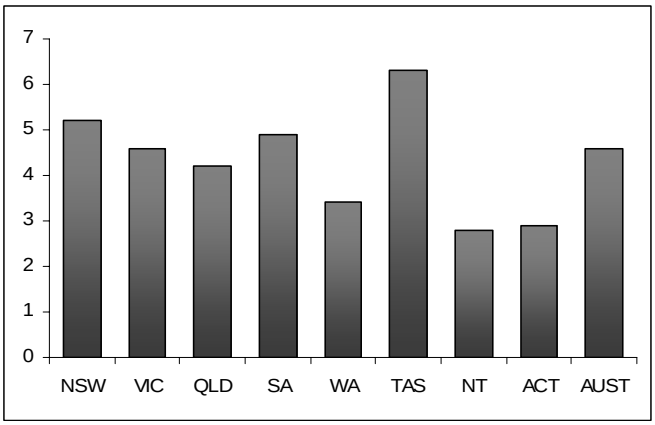
The trend rate of unemployment was 4.6% in November 2006, compared with 5.2% in November 2005.

In the past year, trend unemployment rates have decreased in all States and Territories.

In November 2006, the unemployment rate was highest in Tasmania at 6.3% and New South Wales at 5.2% and lowest in the Northern Territory at 2.8%. See Figure 2.

Generally, people in the more highly-skilled occupational groups are less likely to experience unemployment. For example, in November 2006 the unemployment rate for those who were formerly employed as Labourers and Related Workers was almost seven times that of former Professionals.

Figure 2: Unemployment rates (%) by State/Territory – November 2006

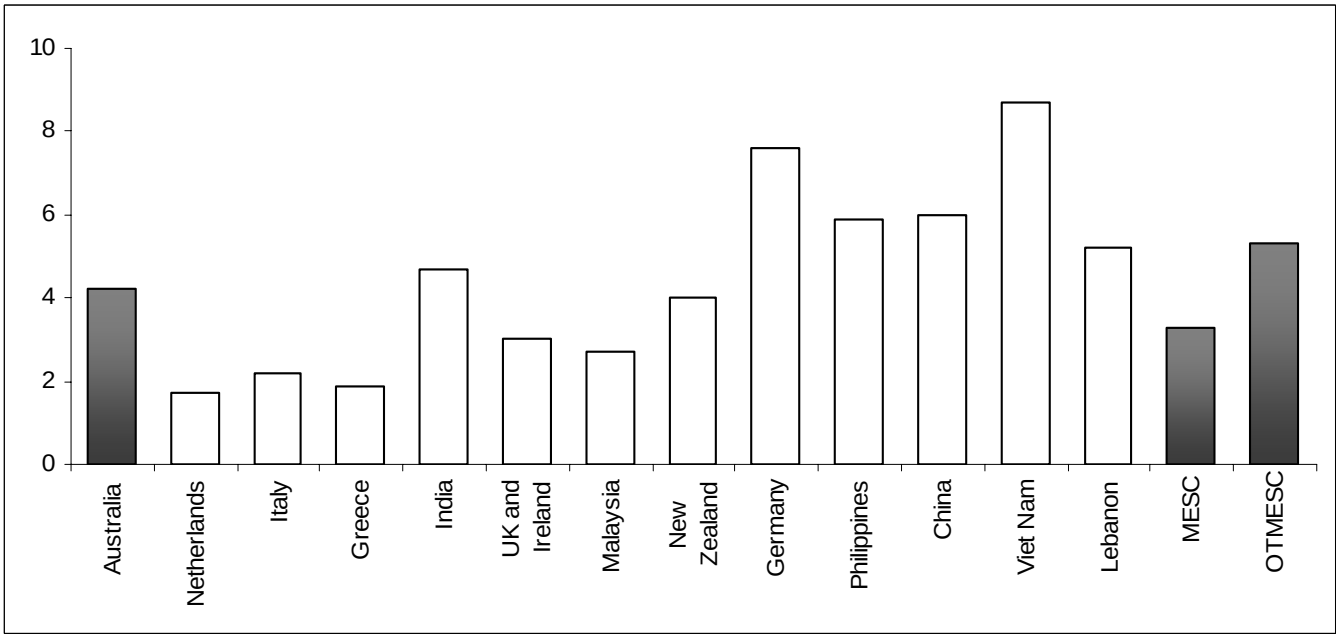


MIGRANT UNEMPLOYMENT

The unemployment rates for people who migrate to Australia vary appreciably. Several factors influence migrant unemployment rates including the period since arrival in Australia (data consistently show that recently-arrived migrants generally have a higher unemployment rate than those who have lived in Australia for some years), skill level, age, English proficiency and recent and relevant work experience.

Figure 3 below shows unemployment rates (original data) for people now resident in Australia who were born in selected overseas countries. For example, people born in the Netherlands and Greece have low unemployment rates (1.7% and 1.9% respectively), whereas unemployment rates for people born in Viet Nam and Germany are relatively high (8.7% and 7.6% respectively).

Figure 3: Unemployment rates (%) by selected countries of birth – November 2006



MESC: Main English Speaking Countries[1]
OTMESC: Other Than Main English Speaking Countries

[1] MESC are the United Kingdom, Ireland, South Africa, Canada, the United States of America and New Zealand.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION

While employment growth is not the only factor influencing job prospects, it is often easier to obtain a job in an occupation which is experiencing strong employment growth than one growing only slowly or declining. Over the 12 months to November 2006, the largest increases in employment (original data) occurred in Associate Professionals (up by 107 300), Professionals (up by 69 300) and Intermediate Production and Transport Workers (up by 67 600). Employment growth rates, in declining skill order, are shown below.

The unemployment rate for occupational groups generally reflects skill levels. Highly skilled occupational groups experience lower rates of unemployment, while higher unemployment rates are generally associated with less-skilled occupations. The unemployment rates (for those who had worked for two weeks or more in the past two years) by occupational group are presented in descending skill order below.

Percentage Growth Rates in Employment in the 12 months to November 2006	
Managers and Administrators	2.7%
Professionals	3.6%
Associate Professionals	8.7%
Tradespersons	3.0%
Advanced Clerical and Service Workers	-7.9%
Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service	2.3%
Intermediate Production and Transport	8.3%
Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service	-6.3%
Labourers and Related Workers	0.6%

Unemployment Rate at November 2006	
Managers and Administrators	1.1%
Professionals	1.0%
Associate Professionals	1.5%
Tradespersons	1.9%
Advanced Clerical and Service Workers	1.1%
Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service	2.7%
Intermediate Production and Transport	3.6%
Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service	3.8%
Labourers and Related Workers	6.7%

Additional information on Professional and Trade occupations is provided in the following section on skilled vacancies. Time series of vacancy data are not readily available for less-skilled occupations.

SKILLED VACANCY TRENDS[2]

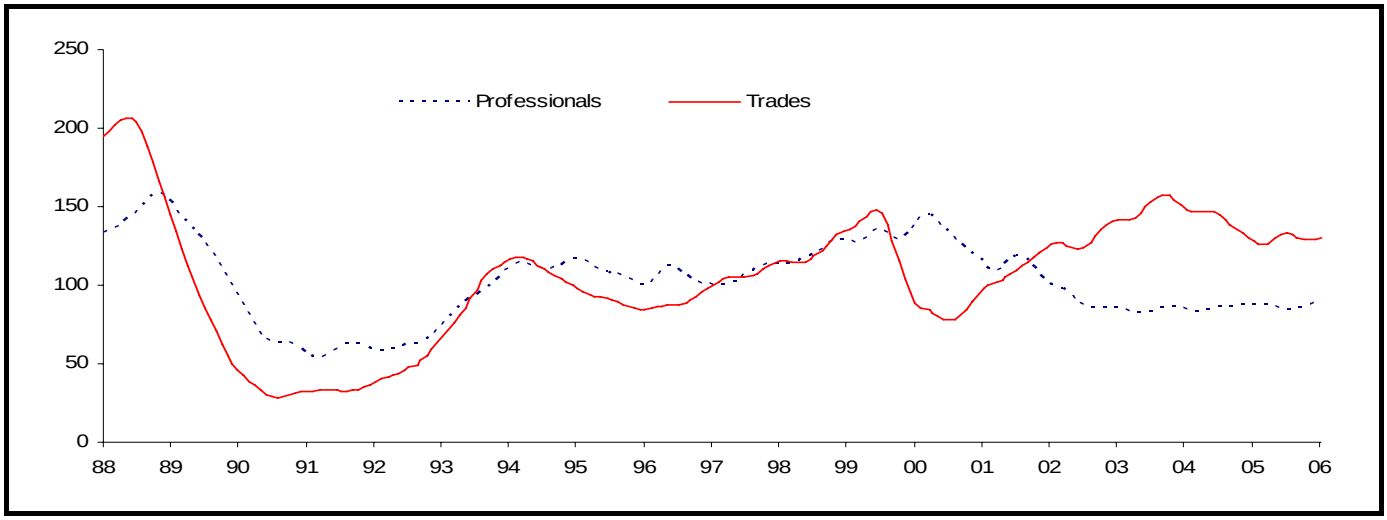
The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations produces the Skilled Vacancies Index (SVI) for 18 skilled occupational groups for each State and the Northern Territory (NT). These are aggregated into the Professional, Associate Professional and Trade groups. The SVI indicates where employment opportunities may exist in the Australian labour market.

In November 2006, skilled vacancies were 0.9% higher than in November 2005. Over the 12 months, SVI increases were recorded in the Northern Territory (up by 8.9%), Queensland (up by 6.2%) and Western Australia (up by 4.1%). The most significant SVI decreases were for New South Wales (down by 11.8%) and Tasmania (down by 3.4%).

In the 12 months to November 2006, advertised vacancies increased for Professional occupations (up by 1.7%) and decreased for Trade occupations (down by 0.6%) (see Figure 4 overleaf). Within these broad groups, five occupations recorded decreases, including Metal Tradespersons (down by 16.6%), Accountants and Auditors (down by 10.8%), Electrical and Electronics Tradespersons (down by 10.6%), Wood Tradespersons (down by 7.1%) and Health Professionals (down by 6.8%). The remaining occupations recorded increases, with the most significant increases being for Printing Tradespersons (up by 40.7%) and Marketing and Advertising Professionals (up by 40.2%).

[2] Historical series of trend figures are revised monthly.

Figure 4: Skilled Vacancies Index, November 1988 to November 2006



FUTURE JOB PROSPECTS

Future job prospects depend on many factors, some of which are difficult to predict. Prospects differ between and within States and Territories and can change rapidly. Even in occupations with below average prospects, significant employment opportunities may arise. This information should therefore be used with caution.

The following future job prospect ratings are for the period to 2010-11. The ratings are based on employment trends and projected growth, unemployment rates, SVI trends (where available) and other data.

In the following table VG stands for very good prospects, G for good prospects, A for average prospects, BA for below average prospects and L for limited prospects. These are examples from the skilled classifications categories; refer to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO), Second Edition (ABS cat. no. 1220.0).

Occupational Group	Prospects to 2010-11	Occupational Group	Prospects to 2010-11
Managers and Administrators		**Associate Professionals**	
Child Care Co-ordinators*	***VG***	Building, Architectural and Surveying Associates	***G***
Finance Managers	***VG***	Dental Technicians	***G***
Information Technology Managers	***VG***	Enrolled Nurses	***G***
Professionals		Financial Dealers and Brokers	***VG***
Accountants*	***VG***	Medical Technical Officers	***VG***
Chemical Engineers*	***G***	Metallurgical Technicians and Mine Deputies	***A***
Computing Professionals* (part)	***G***	Trade Qualified Chefs* (part)	***VG***
General Medical Practitioners*	***VG***	**Tradespersons**	
Medical Imaging Professionals* (part)	***VG***	Bakers and Pastrycooks*	***A***
Mining and Materials Engineers* (part)	***G***	Bricklayers*	***G***
Occupational Therapists*	***VG***	Cabinetmakers*	***G***
Pharmacists* (part)	***VG***	Carpenters and Joiners*	***G***
Physiotherapists*	***VG***	Electricians*	***VG***
Primary School Teachers	***G***	Hairdressers*	***VG***
Registered Nurses*	***VG***	General Mechanical Engineering Tradespersons	***A***
Registered Mental Health Nurses*	***VG***	Motor Mechanics*	***G***
Registered Midwives*	***VG***	Plumbers*	***G***
Secondary School Teachers	***VG***	Printing Machinists	***BA***
Social Workers	***G***	Refrigeration and Airconditioning Mechanics*	***G***
Specialist Medical Practitioners*	***VG***	Textile and Footwear Machine Operators	***L***

* denotes occupations that are listed in part or in full on the Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL) gazetted on 20 September 2006.
The Australian Labour Market Update uses the latest available detailed and consistent data at time of production. However, the labour market can change quickly and should be re-assessed prior to making a decision to lodge a visa application. Queries relating to this publication should be emailed to migration@dewr.gov.au.

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HOT TOPIC

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS IN DEMAND

This Hot Topic provides information on the demand for professional engineers in Australia. Engineering professionals design, plan and organise the testing, construction, installation and maintenance of structures, machines and production systems and plants, and plan production schedules. Mainstream engineering is traditionally divided into the four broad disciplines of chemical, civil, electrical and mechanical engineering. Within each discipline there are several branches of engineering with new branches and specialisations emerging.

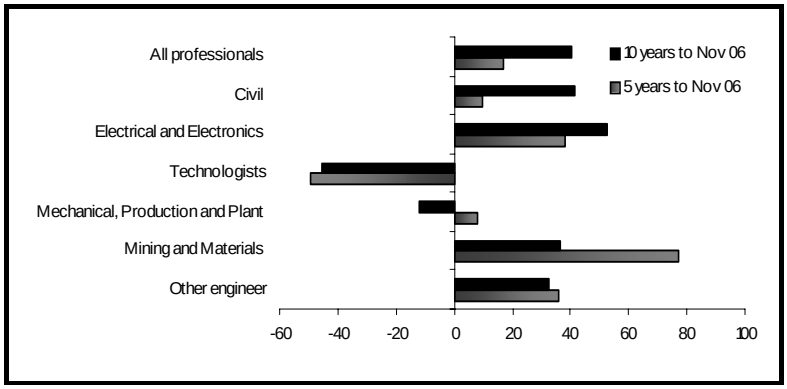
In the Australian labour market, the entry requirement for employment is the completion of a four year bachelor degree. This contrasts with engineering associates and technicians where the entry requirement is an advanced diploma/diploma. Most professional engineers are employed in the property and business and manufacturing industries, followed by the mining, government and defence, electricity, construction and gas and water supply and construction sectors. Research undertaken by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) indicates that a number of professional engineering occupations are in demand in the Australian labour market.

EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

Employment growth in professional engineering occupations has generally exceeded growth for all professional occupations. Figure 1 presents trend employment growth for professional engineering occupations compared with all professional occupations in Australia in the 5 and 10 years to November 2006.

In the 5 years to November 2006, employment (in trend terms) increased for all professional engineering occupations, except engineering technologists which decreased by 1 900. In percentage terms, employment growth was strongest for mining and materials engineers (77.4%) and electrical and electronics engineers (38.3%).

Figure 1: Percentage employment growth for professional engineers and all professionals to November 2006



STATE AND TERRITORY DEMAND

Labour market research undertaken by DEWR confirms several professional engineering occupations are in strong demand around Australia. Skills in demand exist when employers are unable to fill or have considerable difficulty in filling vacancies for an occupation, or specialised skill needs within that occupation, at current levels of remuneration and conditions of employment, and at a reasonably accessible location.

Occupations in demand in the Australian labour market are identified on the Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL), which is used to target permanent migration under the General Skilled Migration (GSM) arrangements to the skill needs of Australian industry. At 20 September 2006, the MODL included professional chemical, civil, electrical, mechanical, mining and petroleum engineers.

While the MODL has a national focus, DEWR's Skills in Demand Lists – States and Territories 2006 (most recently published in July 2006 and available on the Australian Workplace website at www.workplace.gov.au), provide some information on occupational demand. These Skills in Demand Lists have no status for migration purposes.

Table A (below) provides information on the current demand for various engineering professionals by State and Territory. In the table, S stands for State-wide shortage, D for recruitment difficulties, an asterisk (*) identifies qualifying comments (for example, demand may be limited to specialist skills or regions) and na stands for not available.

Table A: Demand for professional engineering occupations by State/Territory – July 2006

ANZSCO	Occupation	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT
233111	Chemical Engineer	na	na	S*	na	S	na	na
233211	Civil Engineer	S*	S	S	S	S	S	S
233311	Electrical Engineer	S*	S	S	S	S	S	S
233411	Electronics Engineer	D*	na	na	na	na	na	na
233512	Mechanical Engineer	S*	D*	S*	na	S	na	na
233611	Mining Engineer	na	na	S	na	S	na	S
233612	Petroleum Engineer	na	na	S	na	S	na	na
233513	Production/Plant Engineer	na	na	S*	na	na	na	na

SKILLS ASSESSMENT OF OVERSEAS-TRAINED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS

One of the threshold criteria for permanent entry to Australia as a primary applicant in the GSM categories is the assessment of an applicant's skills (qualifications and work experience) by an Australian assessing authority gazetted for that occupation. Assessing authorities have been authorised by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) to undertake an assessment of whether an applicant has qualifications that will be recognised, and work experience that is appropriate to employment, in the profession, associate profession or trade occupation in Australia. These assessing authorities are responsible for undertaking skills assessment for migration purposes only and are not employment agencies. The assessing authorities are not in a position to assist migrants or visa applicants to find jobs in Australia.

Engineers Australia is the appointed Australian authority to provide advice on the recognition of professional and associate professional qualifications for most engineering occupations for prospective migrants to Australia. Individuals seeking to migrate to Australia as a professional engineer must complete an assessment through *Engineers Australia* prior to lodging a migration application. *Engineers Australia* provides two pathways to the recognition of engineering qualifications, through assessment of accredited training qualifications and a competency demonstration report (for applicants with non-recognised qualifications). *Engineers Australia* will provide the applicant with a copy of the assessment, indicating the suitability of their professional engineering skills. This assessment does not guarantee residency status or employment.

More information on the skill assessment process and contact details can be obtained from the *Engineers Australia* website at www.engineersaustralia.org.au.

EMPLOYER-SPONSORED MIGRATION

An alternative to migrating to Australia through the GSM categories is to enter through employer-sponsorship. The Australian Government has in place several employer-sponsored migration arrangements, including the Temporary Business Long Stay Arrangement, Employer Nomination Scheme, the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme and Labour Agreements. Labour Agreements are designed to enable employers to recruit highly-skilled workers either from overseas or from people temporarily in Australia, where an employer has been unable to fill vacancies from the Australian labour market through domestic recruitment or through their own training efforts. Detailed information on these migration arrangements is contained in DIAC Migration Booklet 5 *Employer Sponsored Migration* available on the DIAC website www.immi.gov.au.

SEEKING EMPLOYMENT IN AUSTRALIA

If you wish to work in Australia, and are not an Australian citizen or permanent resident, you will need to contact your nearest Australian Embassy, Consulate or High Commission to apply for a visa that allows you to travel and work in Australia. Addresses of all Australian Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates are available from the DIAC website at www.immi.gov.au/contacts/index.htm.

If your qualifications are acceptable for migration purposes this does not guarantee you employment in your profession, associate profession or trade in Australia. That will depend on other factors, such as the number of vacancies available, skill needs in the Australian labour market, your meeting State and Territory licensing requirements and your suitability for employment in a particular job in Australia.