

<b>Child Care Workers</b>		<b>Northern Territory</b>
ASCO Code: 6312-11	January 2008	
Labour market rating	Shortage	
Comment:		

### **Occupational demand**

ABS Census data indicate there were slightly more than 1000 child care workers employed in the NT in 2006 and that there has been growth of 4.4 per cent per annum over the five years since 2001. The DEEWR skilled vacancies survey shows vacancies for child care workers are regularly advertised, with the frequency of advertisements in 2007 and 2006 stable.

### **Occupational supply**

Charles Darwin University offers Certificate III and Diploma of Children's Services at their Alice Springs and Casuarina campuses. There is a large reliance on the use of staff development plans allowing unqualified people studying at the Certificate III or Diploma level to be placed in team or group leader roles. Supply of child care workers is predominantly sourced from local residents.

### **Employer and industry comments/current labour market**

Contacted employers had difficulty filling advertised vacancies with a fill rate of 39 per cent achieved. Multiple applicants were commonly received for vacancies. However, they rarely held the required qualifications. The positions were filled most commonly by people with (or studying for) Certificate III level qualifications and placed on staff development plans to gain diploma level qualifications.

Vacancies for unqualified carers are significantly easier to fill. However, turnover in these positions is high. Few carers in these positions are keen to commit to training and so securing qualified staff via building skills in-house is difficult. In addition to the high transience of the labour force generally, wastage is a significant issue for the occupation with people leaving to take up opportunities in other industries such as in hospitality. This is reportedly due to the relatively low remuneration for the occupation.

High turnover for this occupation is also an issue for qualified workers. The turnover rate for the occupation is adversely impacted by child care workers leaving employment for family reasons. Employers have found they need to develop more flexible options, such as part-time employment, to cater for child care workers who have other commitments. However, difficulties arise due to the staffing requirements and maintaining sufficient staff to children ratios needed for all hours of operation.

Some centres are reported to be operating below their licensed child placement number due to the inability to attract sufficient qualified staff. Employers at many centres reported parents experienced a long wait time to receive a child care place and this was particularly evident when securing placements for children under three.

### **Labour market outlook**

Demand for child care workers is expected to remain higher than supply next year leaving the occupation in shortage.