

Surveying and Cartographic Associate		New South Wales (NSW)
ASCO Code: 3121-15	December 2006	
Labour market rating	No shortage	
Comment <i>Although the supply of qualified and experienced surveying associates is limited, no significant shortages were reported in Sydney or regional NSW.</i>		

Occupational demand

Demand for surveying and cartographic associates has been subdued over the last year due to the weak residential building sector. In NSW, the downturn in residential construction was partly offset by increased activity in non-residential and engineering construction. The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) Skilled Vacancies Index indicates a substantial decline in vacancies for surveying associates from the last peak in 2003. This is consistent with the consensus of employers and industry contacts surveyed for this report that demand for the occupation had been patchy over the last year.

Occupational supply

Supply to the occupation from relevant certificate and diploma courses increased to 54 in 2005 which was slightly above the average of 40 a year for the previous five years. DEWR estimates that completions were at a similar level in 2006 but are projected to fall back to the medium-term average in 2007. Separate immigration data are not available for this occupation but net immigration for the combined occupations of building, architectural and surveying associates over the last five years has been stable at an average of only 16 a year.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A survey of employers of surveying associates was conducted for this report. A majority of the surveyed employers had not advertised for this occupation in the preceding six months, citing low staff turnover and limited activity in their sector of the industry. Some used contractors or firms specialising in drafting services when the need arose while others preferred to recruit school leavers or students who had part-completed relevant courses and train them in survey drafting.

Of the minority which had advertised vacancies, all managed to fill them within six weeks of the surveyed vacancy. There was an average of over eight applicants per vacancy and an average of three applicants per vacancy was considered suitable by employers. The response to advertisements varied considerable. Most employers who had advertised filled their vacancies with few difficulties and had a choice of several suitable applicants. A minority filled their vacancies with more difficulty, having to compromise on the skills or experience level they had hoped for. Employers in some locations (for example the Central Tablelands) stated that building activity in their region was still strong and that many firms were short of staff. Nevertheless, these employers had not advertised positions recently and had no immediate intention of doing so. Those regional employers who had recently recruited survey associates, either after advertising or through word of mouth, were successful in filling their vacancies, although most said that there were few quality applicants available.

Labour market outlook

The Construction Forecasting Council expects little real growth in residential building activity in 2006-07 but forecasts a strong recovery in this sector in 2007-08. Non-residential construction is expected to remain firm in 2006-07 and 2007-08. No significant increase in supply from course completions or net immigration is expected in the short term. Although some recruitment difficulties for surveying drafters may emerge as residential building recovers, no significant shortage is likely in 2007.