

Carpenter and Joiner		Queensland
ANZSCO Code: 3312-11, 12, 13		September 2009
Labour market rating:	No shortage	
Comment:		

Occupational demand

Carpenters and Joiners construct, install, finish and repair wooden and metal objects and fixtures on residential, commercial, industrial and civil structures and cut, shape and fit timber parts to form structures and fittings, ready for installation. Carpenters and Joiners are employed predominantly in the construction and manufacturing industries, particularly in the manufacturing of furniture and wooden structural fittings and components such as roof trusses, doors or shop fronts. Occupational demand corresponds to levels of building activity, and although the value of construction work done in Queensland has declined over the past three quarters, this followed 22 consecutive quarterly increases. Consequently, Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show that construction activity grew by 6.9 per cent over the year to June 2009, with demand for Carpenters and Joiners responding accordingly.

Occupational supply

There is no specific training course for 'Carpenter and Joiner' in Queensland, with apprentices qualifying as either a Carpenter or a Joiner. Entry to these trades requires the completion of a 42 month apprenticeship in Off Site Construction or Carpentry and licensing by Building Services Australia for building work over the value of \$1100. Department of Education and Training figures indicate that the number of students commencing carpentry courses doubled over the five years between 2003 (1942) and 2007 (3907) before moderating in 2008 (3581). The number of newly qualified Carpenters graduating each year over the same period increased, from 671 in 2003 to 1645 in 2008. Commencements for Joiner apprentices are much lower, averaging around 27 annually between 2003 and 2008. Completion numbers for Joiners have improved, with 21 Joinery students completing their studies in 2008. Data from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship shows that overseas migration may be a moderate source of supply to these trades as 333 self-identified Carpentry and Joinery tradespersons migrated to Queensland in 2007-08.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

Overall, 94 per cent of vacancies for Carpenters and Joiners were filled within four weeks of advertising. While there were a good number of applicants, most employers reported that the 71 per cent were unsuitable as they were not qualified, inexperienced or lacking specific skills such as commercial or renovation experience. Many employers reported interest from overseas but employers did not give these applicants serious consideration as the duration of the immigration process fails to meet their immediate business needs. Employers specifically seeking Joiners reported numerous approaches from cabinetmakers while other contacts reported an increase in applications from residential Carpenters, reflecting the current weakness in the domestic building sector. Respondents also reported that significant numbers of sub-contractors are now seeking permanent employment and that applicants are willing to work at lower levels of remuneration than twelve months ago. However the majority of contacts believed that any easing of the labour market is temporary and shortages will reappear as building activity returns to higher levels. Several employers noted that an increase in business specialisation, for example in fit out or framing, has reduced the number of newly qualified applicants with generalised carpentry abilities.

Labour market outlook

Building activity is expected to grow slightly over the next year, with record government spending on infrastructure and the Housing Industry Association forecasting that levels of new home building in Queensland will grow by about 14 per cent in 2009/10. However, with significant numbers of apprentices and residential activity still weak, it is probable that this occupation will not be in shortage in the next six months although skill shortages are expected to reappear over time.