

Construction Project Manager		New South Wales (NSW)
ANZSCO Code: 1331-11	July 2009	
Labour market rating:	Recruitment difficulty	
Comment: <i>Recruitment difficulties are evident for specialised areas such as dam construction.</i>		

Occupational demand

Demand for construction project managers has been mixed over the past year. The Construction Forecasting Council (CFC) estimates that the total value of construction in NSW grew by 9.1 per cent in 2008-09 (not adjusted for inflation) following growth of 7.4 per cent the previous year. The CFC estimates that a five per cent fall in non-residential building activity over this period was more than offset by a 31 per cent rise in engineering construction, with the biggest increases in roads, electricity infrastructure, heavy industry and mining, and recreation and other industry.

Occupational supply

The supply of construction project managers is dependent on the number of engineering and construction graduates and other persons with experience in the construction industry who progress to managerial roles. As a result, no reliable figures for domestic supply are available. Immigration, however, is a significant supply source for the occupation. Data from Department of Immigration and Citizenship show that net permanent and long-term arrivals of building and construction managers from overseas to NSW were 100 in 2007-08 which was double the average for the previous five years.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A DEEWR survey of employers who had recently advertised for construction project managers found that 75 per cent of vacancies were filled within six weeks of advertising. The majority of employers in Sydney and regional NSW were able to fill positions with little difficulty across most sectors of the industry, including residential building, commercial construction, infrastructure projects and general civil engineering. The consensus of employers and recruitment agencies was that the supply of experienced project managers seeking work had increased significantly as a result of the economic downturn. For the surveyed advertisements there was an average of three suitable applicants per vacancy and most employers were able to select the best of several good applicants. In some cases, advertisements attracted experienced construction project managers but positions remained unfilled because employers were hesitating to recruit less-than-ideal applicants in the hope that better applicants would become available in the current downturn. In other cases advertisements attracted a number of potentially promising candidates but employers suspended the recruitment process due to the economic downturn. In a small number of instances, advertisements attracted suitable applicants but they were unable to reach an agreement with the employer on remuneration. Recruitment difficulties were mainly confined to positions with specialised requirements such as recent experience in dam construction.

Labour market outlook

It is likely that demand for construction project managers will remain patchy over the short term. The CFC expects non-residential building activity to fall further in 2009-10, although, once again, this is forecast to be more than offset by solid growth in engineering construction (by 12 per cent in nominal dollars). The CFC expects growth to be led by bridges, railways and harbours, roads, and telecommunications. Construction activity in 2009-10 will be boosted by high levels of expenditure on infrastructure by the Australian Government and NSW Government. The NSW Government has budgeted for a 31 per cent increase in state infrastructure expenditure in 2009-10. The \$18 billion in infrastructure expenditure includes funding under various Australian Government infrastructure programs. As a result it is likely that recruitment difficulties will persist for construction managers with experience in specified types of infrastructure projects.