

<b>Child Care Worker</b>		<b>Victoria</b>
<b>ASCO Code: 6312-11</b>	<b>February 2008</b>	
<b>Labour market rating</b>	Recruitment difficulty	
<b>Comment:</b> <i>Recruitment difficulty is for diploma qualified child care workers</i>		

### **Occupational demand**

Demand for child care workers is primarily determined by population growth; child care staffing ratios (in Victoria, services aimed at 0-6 year olds are usually provided in centres by a mix of qualified and other staff); and the overall level of Government funding for these services. The Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services 2008 (Part B; Early Childhood Education and Training) shows the number of primary contact staff employed across all child care services in Victoria rose by 30 per cent between 2002 and 2006.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data for employed persons to November 2007 indicates the total number of child care workers has remained at around 20 000 on average since 2001.

### **Occupational supply**

The main qualification for qualified child care worker is a diploma (or advanced diploma) of Community Services (Children's Services). These are the minimum qualifications required to be counted under the staffing ratios set for government funding and State Government accreditation. However ABS education and work data show of all those employed as child care workers, approximately 45 per cent of workers nationally do not have post-school qualifications, 19 per cent have a diploma or advanced diploma and 18 per cent hold a certificate III or IV.

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

The Survey of Employers who Recently Advertised (SERA) indicates about half of vacancies surveyed were filled. The average number of applicants per vacancy was 4.4 while there was an average of 1.9 suitable applicants per vacancy. These results do not differentiate between advertisements for qualified (Certificate IV and above) and 'unqualified' (up to Certificate III) workers. Many respondents reported receiving limited applications from qualified staff, with most applicants being unsuitable. To meet child/staff ratio regulations many respondents used agency staff, while others stated they felt compelled to employ the 'qualification and not the worker'. Employers reported applicants were unsuitable due to inadequate qualifications (where a diploma qualified position was required); lack of experience; and poor attitude. Most employers suggested wages are not commensurate with the level of responsibility, the paperwork and the hours worked. They also reported many qualified workers chose to work through agencies, as they received more money, had less responsibility and could pick their own hours. Some respondents felt child care was perceived to be an 'easy' profession but a lot of workers quickly moved into another career after experiencing the demands of the occupation.

### **Labour market outlook**

The Victorian State Office for Children is undertaking a review of the current regulations to determine what changes need to be made for child care. Any changes to the regulations (particularly increasing staff-to-child ratios) may impact on the future demand for child care workers and increase the demand for higher qualified child care workers.