

| | | |
|---|--|------------------------|
| Civil Engineer, Structural Engineer & Transport Engineer | | South Australia |
| ANZSCO Codes: 2332-11, 2332-14, 2332-15 | March 2009 | |
| Labour market rating | Civil Engineer: Shortage. Structural Engineer: No Shortage. Transport Engineer: No Shortage. | |
| Comment | | |

Occupational demand

Demand for this group of professionals is influenced by the level of engineering construction activity. ABS data show that the total value of South Australian engineering construction work completed in the December quarter 2008 was around 26 per cent higher than the corresponding quarter a year earlier. However, industry contacts indicated that demand conditions weakened in late 2008, with this trend continuing into early 2009. DEEWR's Skilled Vacancy Index data show a sharp decline in the number of advertised vacancies for civil engineering professionals in the first three months of 2009, although in year-to-date terms vacancy levels were relatively stable.

Occupational supply

Entrants to these professions have usually completed a four year degree in a related engineering course at either the University of South Australia or the University of Adelaide. Combined student completions from both universities have been stable over the past decade at around 70 persons per annum (including single and mixed degrees in civil, structural, water and environmental engineering). Recently, there has been an increase in the aggregate number of related engineering degree course commencements relative to earlier years. As a consequence, DEEWR projections suggest that student completions will be slightly higher in 2009, at around 77 persons. Immigration is an additional source of supply for civil engineering professionals, averaging around 30 persons per annum (in net terms) in both 2006-07 and 2007-08.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A survey of employers who had recently advertised for civil engineering professionals indicated that 31 per cent of total vacancies were filled within six weeks, which was only slightly higher than the 27 per cent fill rate recorded in early 2008. Both the number and percentage of suitable applicants declined in the most recent survey period. Most applicants were rejected due to lack of appropriate qualifications and/or relevant industry experience. Employers had the greatest difficulty recruiting civil engineers with significant levels of experience in piping, water and road construction work. A small number of vacancies for new graduate civil engineers also proved hard to fill. Vacancies for experienced structural engineers were fewer in number and recruitment difficulties were less apparent for these professionals. Recruitment and hiring intentions had clearly weakened as a result of the current economic downturn, although a number of firms remained committed to filling vacancies for civil engineers and shortages for this occupation were still in evidence relative to a year earlier. Only one unfilled vacancy for a structural engineer was identified, although the employer later decided to suspend filling action due to lack of work. No information was available to suggest that transport engineers are currently in shortage.

Labour market outlook

Demand conditions for civil engineering professionals have deteriorated in recent months due to the worsening global financial crisis and its related effect on the Australian economy. Engineering construction activity is therefore expected to slow over the next year as projects are deferred or possibly cancelled altogether. At the same time, formal supply of civil engineering professionals is projected to increase. Current shortages should therefore ease over the short-term.