

Librarian	Australia
ANZSCO Code: 2246-11	August 2008
Labour market rating	No Shortage
Comment	

Occupational Demand

2006 ABS Census data show employment of librarians is concentrated in three industries, education and training (which employs one in every three librarians), public administration and safety (almost 30 per cent of employment) and information, media and telecommunications (more than 20 per cent). Census data indicate employment fell slightly over the five years to 2006, but more recent data from the Labour Force Survey show slight growth in the year to August 2008 compared with the previous year.

The Australian Public Libraries Statistical Report for 2005-06 noted that use of public libraries had increased in terms of both the number of items lent and the number of customer visits in the previous five years. There is also likely to be increasing demand for librarians to replace existing staff over the next few years as the 2006 ABS Census age profile of the workforce shows more than 60 per cent of librarians were aged 45 years or older in 2006 compared with about 40 per cent for all workers.

Occupational Supply

Entry to this occupation is via completion of a bachelor degree or higher qualification. Relevant qualifications include an undergraduate degree in library and information studies or a postgraduate course. ABS 2006 Census data show about three quarters of librarians hold a bachelor degree or higher qualification. Department of Immigration and Citizenship data indicate the net gain of librarians through migration is negligible.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A survey of employers who had recently advertised for librarians was undertaken for this report. Nationally, about 80 per cent of surveyed vacancies were filled within six weeks of advertising. However, about 10 per cent of the vacancies, predominately those in regional areas, were advertised more than once before attracting suitable applicants. On average, employers received more than nine applications per advertised vacancy, with more than three applicants per vacancy considered by employers to be suitable. This result is consistent with the result recorded in 2007.

Lack of appropriate qualifications was the main reason applicants were considered by employers to be unsuitable, although applicants who lacked experience and who did not adequately address the selection criteria were also considered to be unsuitable. Employers in the Northern Territory experienced the most difficulty recruiting, filling about one quarter of their vacancies. In most cases employers unsuccessfully advertised more than once over a period of months with little or no response.

Nearly half of the surveyed vacancies were in local government libraries where the fill rate was slightly lower than the national average. The most successful employers were state libraries and universities where all surveyed vacancies were filled and there was an average of more than 12 applications per vacancy with five suitable applicants per vacancy. Graduate entry level and permanent full time roles attracted significantly more applicants than other positions.

More than one third of the vacancies surveyed were either fixed terms and/or part time positions. Employers commented on the ageing workforce and low staff turnover. Although contact numbers for specialist Children and Youth Services and Outreach Service librarians were small, there is some evidence to suggest recruitment is more difficult for these specialist positions and for experienced staff for mid and senior level roles.

Labour market outlook

There is no evidence to suggest the labour market for librarians will change significantly over the next six months.