

Civil, Structural & Transport Engineers		New South Wales (NSW)
ANZSCO Codes: 2332-11,14,15	April 2009	
Labour market ratings:	Civil Engineer - No shortage Structural Engineer – Recruitment difficulty Transport Engineer – Recruitment difficulty (regional)	
Comment: <i>Recruitment difficulties are evident for structural engineers with experience in dams and bridges and for structural and transport engineers for positions in inland councils.</i>		

Occupational demand

ABS Census data indicate that combined employment of civil, structural and transport engineers grew by a solid 3.5 per cent per annum from 2001 to 2006. Non-residential construction activity has been strong in recent years, with the Construction Forecasting Council (CFC) expecting the value of work done to grow by 16 per cent in 2008-09, following growth of 11 per cent the previous year. However, non-residential building approvals have fallen sharply since September 2008 which suggests that activity in this sector will weaken once work currently underway is completed.

Occupational supply

DEEWR estimates that supply to these occupations from university completions averaged 300 per annum in the three years to 2008, which was slightly above the average of 285 for the previous three years. The annual training rate (entry-level course completions as a percentage of employed civil engineering professionals) is 3.2 per cent. DEEWR estimates that the wastage rate for the occupation was 2.3 per cent per annum from 2001 to 2006, which suggests that supply from local training is sufficient to offset wastage and allow for modest employment growth. Net overseas immigration to NSW is also an important supply source, growing to 390 persons in 2007-08, compared with an average of 240 per annum for the previous five years.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A DEEWR survey of employers who had recently advertised for civil engineers, structural engineers or transport engineers was conducted for this report. The survey found that 78 per cent of vacancies were filled within six weeks of advertising, which was a significant improvement on the success rate of 47 per cent in 2008. Employers had most success in filling vacancies for civil engineers. About 88 per cent of such vacancies were filled, with advertisers experiencing few difficulties in recruiting suitable applicants across a range of sectors including construction, consulting and local government. While positions requiring extensive experience in specialised areas such as dams and those based in inland regional councils proved more difficult to fill, there was insufficient evidence to establish a shortage in any particular specialisation or region.

Positions for structural engineers with experience in building design or building project work were also filled fairly readily, although recruitment difficulties were evident for those with extensive experience in specialised areas such as dams and bridges. The recruitment experience of employers seeking transport engineers was mixed. Half of the vacancies surveyed were withdrawn by employers due to a lack of funding of relevant projects. Employers and recruitment agencies also reported that a number of consulting firms had recently cut back their employment of traffic engineers. While employers in Sydney were generally able to fill vacancies, a number of positions based in inland regional councils remained unfilled after repeated advertising.

Labour market outlook

The CFC expects non-residential construction activity to grow by 7 per cent (not adjusted for inflation) in 2009-10 which should further improve demand for civil engineering professionals. As a result, some recruitment difficulties are likely to persist, especially in sectors benefitting most from planned increases in Australian Government and NSW Government spending on infrastructure.