

<b>Fitter</b>	<b>Victoria</b>
ASCO Code: 4112-11	September 2007
Labour market rating	Recruitment difficulty
<b>Comment:</b> <i>Unfilled vacancies generally attracted suitable applicants but employers were often unable to meet pay and conditions expectations of candidates.</i>	

### **Occupational demand**

Demand for fitters in Victoria is largely determined by the level of activity in the manufacturing industry, as most fitters are employed in this sector, and by overall economic activity. The Survey of Australian Manufacturing June 2007 showed that growth in manufacturing activity strengthened moderately in the June quarter 2007, largely reflecting a broadening in demand. However, the appreciating dollar is continuing to dampen export prospects.

Manufacturing employment in Victoria for the August quarter rose by 4.8 per cent compared with the same period in 2006. Victoria's economy had relatively strong growth of 2.9 per cent over the year to December 2006. DEEWR Skilled Vacancies Index data show newspaper vacancy levels for fitters have been steadily declining since 2003.

### **Occupational supply**

ABS education and work figures suggest around two thirds of employed metal fitters and machinists nationally hold Certificate III/IV qualifications. Almost 650 persons completed a Certificate III in Engineering (Mechanical Trade, Production Systems and other related streams) in 2005-06 a significant increase compared with 465 persons in 2004-05. Supply to the trades of metal fitter and machinist from net migration increased slightly, up by about 7 per cent between 2005-06 and 2006-07. Net immigration to Victoria during 2006-07 contributed around 140 metal fitters and machinists.

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

The Survey of Employers who Recently Advertised (SERA) found that slightly less than two thirds of vacancies were filled. There were around nine applicants per vacancy with an average of 2.7 suitable applicants per vacancy. The reasons some applicants were considered by employers to be unsuitable included lack of experience, qualifications, and work place fit. Employers were looking for either several years of broad experience or specific CNC experience. Employers required applicants to hold trade qualifications for their advertised positions.

Although employers for some positions attracted suitable applicants their positions were not filled due to the candidates and employers being unable to agree on salary and conditions or employers considering the applicant would not fit into the work team. Given the relatively high suitable applicant to vacancy ratio and the reasons vacancies remained unfilled being differences in expectations between employer and candidate rather than a lack of suitable applicants it is considered there are recruitment difficulties rather than shortages of fitters in Victoria.

Some employers suggested applicants have high salary expectations because it is believed there is a shortage of skilled fitters so some applicants believed employers should be willing to pay higher salaries to attract highly experienced and skilled candidates.

Employers noted that vacancies advertised online attracted many applications from overseas and that these applicants often lacked relevant qualifications and were unaware the positions required trade certificates.

### **Labour market outlook**

The relatively balanced labour market for fitters in Victoria is expected to continue over the next six months, with recruitment difficulty persisting for employers who are unable to reach applicant salary expectations.