

<b>Mechanical Engineering Associate</b>		<b>Tasmania</b>
SCO Code: 4421-11	March 2007	
Current market rating	Shortage	
Occupational demand		

### Occupational demand

There were just 71 mechanical engineering associates employed in Tasmania at the time of the 2001 ABS Census. Of these, approximately 39 per cent were employed in the manufacturing sector and 20 per cent in consultancy services. The manufacturing sector is the third largest employing industry in Tasmania and turnover within the industry would be expected to generate significant levels of demand. However, while turnover may necessitate the need for an adequate supply into the workforce, employment in the State's manufacturing industry has been declining, largely due to technological advancements. This decline would be expected to predominately impact on the lower skilled end of the workforce.

### Occupational supply

The main source of supply of mechanical engineering associates in Tasmania is through the TAFE training system. Courses are available at the diploma and advanced diploma level in Mechanical Engineering (Design) and Mechanical Engineering (Drafting). The qualifications are recognised by the University of Tasmania, which may grant credit of up to 18 months towards an engineering degree. Sources from TAFE report that enrolments in the mechanical engineering diploma course have increased in recent years. There were a total of 8 completions in 2006 and 18 students have enrolled for 2007. A small number, about two per year, go on to university studies in mechanical engineering, according to industry sources.

### Employer and industry comments/current labour market

There were no vacancies for mechanical engineering associates advertised in the lead up to this report. Few employers who were contacted had recruited for the occupation in the last six to twelve months. However, all employer and industry sources reported that mechanical engineering associates were in shortage. It was suggested that this was, in part, due to the small size of the occupation and low number of students completing TAFE training. Several employers commented that they preferred to employ degree qualified mechanical engineers, suggesting that demand for mechanical engineering associates is in decline. However, it was also reported that students graduating from the TAFE are highly sought by employers and have little difficulty finding employment. Recent increases in TAFE enrolments were attributed to more marketing of the occupation and its career prospects.

### Labour market outlook

Employer and industry sources support a rating of shortage. Shortages may ease in twelve to eighteen months due to the increase in students in training and decreasing in demand.