

Bricklayer	Queensland
ANZSCO Code: 3311-11	August 2009
Labour market rating:	No shortage
Comment:	

Occupational demand

Bricklayers lay bricks, pre-cut stone and concrete blocks to construct and repair walls, foundations, partitions, arches and other structures. Approximately 98 per cent of Bricklayers work in the Construction industry where demand for their services is highly influenced by the level of activity in building and construction. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data indicate that while the volume of non-residential building activity in Queensland held steady over the year to June 2009, the volume of residential building contracted by 6.9 per cent. Consequently, demand for Bricklayers weakened and this is indicated by the DEEWR Skilled Vacancy Index for Queensland which shows 'Bricklayers' averaging 26 vacancies per month in 2007-08 and this average falling to only four vacancies per month in 2008-09.

Occupational supply

Entry to this trade is via the completion of a 42 month apprenticeship in *Bricklaying*. Data from the Department of Education and Training indicate that the number of commencements in bricklaying courses recorded steady growth until they peaked at 303 in 2007, before moderating to 267 in 2008. Historically, wastage from training has been high with only one in three bricklaying apprentices completing their training each year. In 2008 however, approximately 56 per cent of students completed bricklaying apprenticeships, and if this trend continues, it is anticipated that around 142 newly qualified Bricklayers will enter the labour market at the end of 2009. Overseas migration may be a moderate source of supply to this trade as Department of Immigration and Citizenship arrivals and departures data show a net gain of 69 self-identified Bricklayers to the State in 2007-08.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

Despite all of the surveyed vacancies for Bricklayers in Queensland being filled within four weeks of advertising, employers reported that they continue to experience difficulties securing suitably qualified and skilled applicants. This year, employers considered 94 per cent of the applicants to be unsuitable in most cases because they lacked trade qualifications, were unwilling to travel to worksites or they could not demonstrate the necessary skills for the job at trial. Regional employers reported a stronger than average response to their vacancies compared to previous years, but stated the applicants often declined the position if the job entailed working away from home for extended periods or if the remuneration did not match the wages offered in Brisbane. The majority of contacts reported satisfaction with the current quality of apprenticeship training but advised the trade may be best suited to younger apprentices as the remuneration during training could be considered inadequate for older or mature aged apprentices. Some employers expressed a preference for employing school based apprentices stating they are able to make a smoother transition into the trade because they come without any predetermined bricklaying ideas or practices. A large number of respondents expressed confidence in their own work situation, recording either steady or increasing work orders.

Labour market outlook

ABS data show that building approvals have grown now for the fifth consecutive month to be 8.3 per cent higher in July compared to their low point in February 2009. Demand for Bricklayers will no doubt strengthen in response to this growth. The labour market for Bricklayers in Queensland is currently not in shortage, but this occupation has an ageing workforce with 44 per cent of Bricklayers aged 45 years or older at the last Census in 2006. It is therefore likely that a number of retirements are pending. At the same time, the number of apprentices entering training is declining and if building activity returns to pre-2008 levels, shortages of Bricklayers are likely to re-emerge in the future.