

Butcher or Smallgoods Maker		Victoria
ANZSCO Code: 3512-11	September 2009	
Labour market rating:	Shortage	
Comment:		

Occupational demand

Butcher or Smallgoods Makers select, cut, trim, prepare and arrange meat for sale or supply, operate meat and smallgoods processing machines, and manage the processes in the production of smallgoods. ABS 2006 Census data indicates there were 4204 Butchers or Smallgoods Makers employed in Victoria who were either self employed, working in retail businesses or supermarkets. The state government is currently offering visa sponsorship to potential overseas candidates to counteract the shortage of Butcher or Smallgoods Makers in various regions of Victoria.

Occupational supply

A qualified Butcher, as part of their trade skills can produce small goods, however, a smallgoods maker usually completes an apprenticeship in Meat Processing (Smallgoods – Manufacture) and is not qualified to undertake the full range of Butchery duties. The state education commencements and completions data for 2008-2009 indicates there were 297 commencements and 85 completions. There were similar figures recorded during 2007-2008. Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) net migration figures for Victoria during 2007-08 totalled 28 additional Butcher or Smallgoods Makers.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A DEEWR Survey of Employers who Recently Advertised (SERA) for Butcher or Smallgoods Makers found that approximately 71 per cent of vacancies were filled. The average number of applicants per vacancy was 2.6 and the number of suitable applicants per vacancy was 0.8. All contacts indicated there was a shortage of Butcher or Smallgoods Makers across Victoria stating they have experienced difficulties in recruitment for a number of years. A small number of contacts in regional Victoria indicated they have never been able to recruit a qualified Butcher or Smallgoods Maker and therefore opted to train apprentices with the view they would stay on in the business when qualified. The majority of employers expressed the view that there was little incentive for qualified Butcher or Smallgoods Makers to work for owner/managers because career options and pay structures were limited. Contacts indicated qualified Butcher or Smallgoods Makers either started their own business, continued working in already established businesses, worked for national supermarket chains managing meat sections, stores or regions or drifted in and out of the trade either working in markets, meat processing plants or abattoirs. Some contacts stated that casual work in market environments was a more lucrative employment option for some Butcher or Smallgoods Makers, although this reduced their supply to work for regular wages in suburban retail outlets. Many of the employers contacted expressed their concern at not being able to attract apprentices and indicated they believe this relates to the early starts, perceived low income and low profile of the trade with young school leavers. Some contacts stated the implementation of strict guidelines, regulations and practices for the production of small goods within the meat industry has deterred many smaller businesses from producing these food items. Employers stated, as a result, a large percentage of small goods manufacturing in Victoria is now produced by bulk-produced manufacturers who are unable to provide the array and variety of individual smallgoods recipes that were characteristic of the skill and expertise of producers whose goods originate from Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

Labour market outlook

The is no evidence to indicate that the labour market rating for Butcher or Smallgoods Makers will change significantly over the next six to twelve months.