

<b>Fibrous Plasterer</b>		<b>Queensland</b>
<b>ANZSCO Code:</b> 3332-11	August 2009	
<b>Labour market rating:</b>	No shortage	
<b>Comment:</b>		

### **Occupational demand**

Fibrous plasterers make, apply and fix the internal linings of commercial and domestic buildings. As approximately 97 per cent of fibrous plasterers work in the construction industry, demand for their services depends on building activity especially the level of building activity in the residential and commercial building sectors. Over the last year, demand for this occupation was mixed. For instance, demand for fibrous plasterers from the residential building sector weakened in line with moderate falls in residential building activity between September 2008 and March 2009. At the same time, activity in the non-residential building sector continued unabated, extending a steady flow of demand for fibrous plasterers across the state.

### **Occupational supply**

Entry to this trade is via the completion of a 42 month apprenticeship in *Plastering (Fibrous)*. However, in Queensland if an individual or company wants to carry out work valued over \$1100 they must also hold the correct licence as determined by the Building Services Authority (BSA). To acquire a licence, qualified tradespersons are required to complete an approved managerial course. Data from Queensland's Department of Education and Training show that apprenticeship numbers for this trade have remained almost unchanged over the last five years with commencement figures averaging approximately 240 each year since 2004. Over the last three years, wastage from training has averaged around 50 per cent, and if completions stay commensurate with enrolments, it is anticipated that approximately 111 newly qualified fibrous plasterers will enter the labour market at the end of 2009. Arrivals and departures data from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship indicate that overseas migration provides minimal support to the fibrous plasterer workforce as records show a total net gain of 12 self-identified fibrous plasterers to Queensland since 2003.

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

Employers contacted for this year's study reported receiving high volumes of telephone calls in response to their advertisements, and in an effort to secure the most suitable candidate, a number of employers conducted licence and referee checks and requested resumes and evidence of qualifications. Despite 90 per cent of this year's vacancies for fibrous plasterers being filled within four weeks of advertising, the more comprehensive selection process resulted in employers considering more than 81 per cent of the applicants as unsuitable. In most cases, candidates were deemed unsuitable because they did not have trade qualifications and /or a BSA licence, or they failed to demonstrate a history of acceptable work ethics and reliability. This year's employers also reported a high response from overseas visa holders but they did not give these applicants serious consideration because they often presented with no tools or means of transport. While a number of employers advised they had limited financial capacity to indenture apprentices, others noted that when they do recruit apprentices they are more likely to approach existing labourers who displayed reliability, commitment and the right attitude at work, rather than advertise and commit to an untested applicant through the normal recruitment process.

### **Labour market outlook**

Forward indicators suggest that the building sector in Queensland is in recovery. For instance, ABS data shows building approvals strengthened for the fifth consecutive month in July 2009 and Housing Industry Australia forecast that residential building in Queensland will increase by a solid 15 per cent over 2010. It is anticipated that demand for fibrous plasterers will grow in line with this growth in building activity. Although this year's study shows that the current labour market for fibrous plasterers in Queensland is '*not in shortage*', supply to this trade through migration and training has remained virtually unchanged since 2004 and if building activity continues to expand, a shortage of fibrous plasterers may re-emerge in the near future.