

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

Occupational demand

According to ABS 2006 Census data, there were 506 Butcher or Smallgoods Makers, an increase of 4.3 per cent on the 482 recorded in 2001. ABS Census data indicates almost 30 per cent of fresh meat, fish and poultry retailers do not employ any staff. Over 60 per cent employ fewer than 20. However, Butcher or Smallgoods Makers are also employed in other retail outlets, particularly supermarkets, where just over 25 per cent of all Tasmanian Butcher or Smallgoods Makers are employed. ABS Census data shows 75.4 per cent of Butcher or Smallgoods Makers are employed in the retail industry, 15.8 per cent in the wholesale industry, and just over 8.0 per cent in manufacturing. Demand for Butcher or Smallgoods Makers is therefore driven by trends in consumer spending, and also by trends in consumers' tastes.

Occupational supply

The major source of supply to the occupation in Tasmania has been through the traditional apprenticeship system. Off-the-job training is delivered by the Tasmanian Skills Institute (formerly known as TAFE) via a Certificate III in Meat Processing (Meat Retailing). There has also been a Certificate III in Smallgoods established over the last couple of years, but a Certificate II in Smallgoods has been in place for many years. There were 58 commencements in the meat retailing and smallgoods courses in 2008-09, which was the highest number since the current statistical series began in 1995-96. The average number of completions over the last five years has been 15 per year, but this should increase over the next few years to reflect the recent improvement in the number of commencements. As well as supply through the formal training systems, 45 meat tradespersons (including abattoir tradespeople) arrived in Tasmania between 2001 and 2006. The largest number came from Victoria at 11, with nine from Queensland and nine from overseas, also.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

Of the few employers who advertised for Butcher or Smallgoods Makers in the lead up to this report, none were able to fill their vacancies. Other employers were contacted and they also confirmed it was difficult to recruit qualified butchers. The main reason provided by employers is it was difficult to attract young people to the trade as it was perceived as being less 'glamorous' than other trades. Other employers suggested good experienced Butcher or Smallgoods Makers are being well looked after by existing employers so are hard to attract, and there simply is not a pool of suitable Butcher or Smallgoods Makers looking for work. The major supermarket chains appeared to have fewer difficulties recruiting butchers, but even they could not attract people to work casually, or on weekends. Also industry sources suggest the range of skills required in a supermarket is much smaller than in a traditional butcher's shop, as supermarkets buy in largely pre-cut meat direct from abattoirs. Sausage making skills for example are largely restricted to smaller independent outlets as the supermarkets buy theirs from factories.

Labour market outlook

Most industry sources suggested there had been long standing shortages of Butcher or Smallgoods Maker in Tasmania, and this is likely to continue for at least 12 months. This may change in the longer term as a recent increase in the number of Butcher or Smallgoods Makers in training may translate into increased supply in two to three years time.