

Civil Engineering Associates		Northern Territory
ASCO Code: 3122	November 2006	
Labour market rating	Shortage	
Comment: <i>Present for both draftpersons and engineering assistants</i>		

Occupational demand

ABS Census data show that there were 90 civil engineering associates employed in the Northern Territory (NT) in 2001. Employment in the occupation is too small in the NT for ABS Labour Force Survey data to provide a meaningful indicator of employment growth for the period following the 2001 census. The value of both residential and non-residential building work done has grown considerably since 2001. The annual average growth rate over the past five years to June 2006 has been 19 per cent and growth has been particularly strong for the past two years. In chain volume measure terms, the value of building work done is at the highest level since the previous construction boom peak in 1998, which suggests increased demand for civil engineering associates from the 2001 level.

Occupational supply

Charles Darwin University offer courses in building, building design and drafting at the Certificate IV and Diploma level. The courses each tend to have an architectural rather than an engineering focus, however students from these courses are a key supply source for civil engineering associates. Some employers will look to secure students, in part time or vocational work, before they have progressed very far in their courses. They can then add the engineering perspective to their training in-house.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

Employers typically faced difficulties when recruiting for civil engineering associates, with about half of advertised vacancies being filled within six weeks of advertising.

Wage pressures were commonly considered by employers to be an issue, with competition from better packages available interstate being the concern. Public sector employers also considered that they were now losing out to packages available in the private sector. However, turnover rates for the occupation typically were not considered to be high. Indeed some employers were currently worried about how they would replace some associate professionals who are approaching retirement age.

Although employers consistently claimed that demand for work was very high, causing regular overtime and a backlog of work, most were recruiting just to retain their existing work force numbers. Employers often reported they needed to be more flexible in their conditions and requirements in order to fill roles, for example, being willing to take on less experienced people and part-time workers.

Labour market outlook

Demand for civil engineering associates is expected to remain strong over the next year with new supply being limited. Therefore the occupation is expected to remain in shortage.