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| Fitter | Tasmania |
| ASCO Code: 4112-11 | September 2007 |
| Labour market rating | Shortage |
| Comment <i>In Tasmania, for training purposes the trade is known as engineering - mechanical trade. It is more commonly known as fitting and turning, or fitting and machining.</i> | |

Occupational demand

Between 1996 and 2001, the number of fitters in Tasmania fell by 9.7 per cent, according to Census data. Since 2001 however, Australian Bureau of Statistics labour force data indicates that the number of people in the occupation of fitter and machinist has averaged around 2800 over the last five years, compared to 1,674 at the 2001 Census. This growth is consistent with the general economic upturn the State has experienced over the last six years or so, with total employment in Tasmania increasing by 14.6 per cent between 2002 and 2007. In Tasmania most metal fabrication and engineering trades are employed in the manufacturing industry at about 64 per cent, with construction the next largest at 6.6 per cent. Total employment in this industry has been declining over a long period of time, but industry sources suggest that demand for higher skilled people at the trade and above level remains strong. There is also an increasing trend of tradespeople generally, working for labour hire companies, who are classified as working in the property and business services sector as a result, even though they may be hired out to work in the manufacturing or construction industries.

Occupational supply

The number of fitters and turners in training in Tasmania has increased for each of the last four years, and the current number of 262 is the highest number recorded since the present series began in 1995. Although the number of commencements fell slightly in 2006-07, commencements over the last two years were still at their highest levels since the current series began. In addition to supply through the training system, Census data show that another 90 fitters and turners arrived from interstate, with most from Western Australia.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

Less than 15 per cent of vacancies that had been recently advertised had been filled by employers. In addition, they received on average, two suitable applicants per vacancy. All of the employers contacted including those who had not recently advertised expressed the view that there are shortages of fitters in Tasmania, as the number of tradespeople being produced by vocational training systems has not kept pace with the demand created by the upturn in the economy. Employers indicated that fitting skills were slightly easier to recruit for than positions where the main emphasis was on machining, but that the degree of cross-skilling between the two activities was high, with specialisations often based in individual employees' preferences and aptitudes.

Labour market outlook

Shortages of fitters are likely to continue for at least the next six to 12 months, as despite a significant increase in the numbers of apprentices being trained, demand is still outstripping supply.