

Interpreter Translator		Australia
ASCO Code: 2529 – 13,15	February 2007	
Labour market rating	2529 –13 Interpreter 2529 –15 Translator	No Shortage No Shortage
Comment		

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

According to the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations translators are professionals who transcribe written discourse from one language to another while interpreters deal in verbal discourse. Also included in this report are AUSLAN interpreters, who translate sign language for deaf or hearing impaired people. According to employers, interpreters and translators in Australia are mainly accredited through the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters. This industry body supplies the majority of interpreters and translators for the private and public sectors. The research indicates that this is a field largely governed by freelance operators who sub contract to larger companies and organisations. This may explain the low numbers of vacancies that indentified at the time of this research.

A survey of employers who had recently advertised for translators and interpreters was undertaken for this report. Where vacancies could not be located for interpreters and translators, employers were cold canvassed. Generally, employers did not experience problems recruiting interpreters and translators, with the vacancy fill rate reaching almost 95 per cent nationwide. Slightly more than one third of employers used subcontractors in their businesses and commented they had little difficulty recruiting when required. A few employers said they experienced some difficulty finding translators and interpreters with skills in languages such as Sudanese or other African dialects.

There were around three suitable applicants per vacancy. Applicants were considered to be unsuitable because they lacked appropriate skills or qualifications. Those employers with vacancies reported the majority of applicants were National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) accredited or held tertiary qualifications in their chosen language. Employers who used sub-contractors also stated that this was the case. Many employers commented they usually did not need to advertise as many translators and interpreters forwarded résumés to them.

A few translation business contacts commented they did not need translators and interpreters to be qualified or accredited and were happy with people who are fluent in the language. The use of technology such as the Internet or electronic mail was cited by some employers as a reason that many translators worked from home, lowering the need to relocate for work. Employers also commented that the number of interpreters and translators in the labour market is beginning to out weigh available work. A small number of contacts stated that remuneration for qualified or accredited translators and interpreters is low and does not match the workload and training needed for these professions.

Labour market outlook

There is no evidence to suggest there will be any significant change to the labour market for interpreter and translator over the next six months.