

<b>Ships' Master</b>	<b>Australia</b>
<b>ASCO Code:</b> 2542-11	July 2007
<b>Labour market rating</b>	No Shortage
<b>Comment</b>	

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

A survey of employers who had recently advertised for ships' masters was undertaken for this report. According to the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations, a ship's master controls, directs or manoeuvres ships and boats during berthing and mooring, ensures compliance with relevant regulations, ensures the safe and efficient loading of cargo and passengers, controls the receipt and transmission of communications and manages and administers budgets and expenditure. This occupation includes masters of all size vessels. Due to a relatively small number of advertisements identified in the survey period, several employers were also cold canvassed. None of the successful contacts were from large shipping companies or from employers seeking masters of large ships.

The majority of vacancies for these positions were in regional Queensland and Western Australia, reflecting a concentration of tourism activities and fishing industries in these areas. No advertised vacancies were identified in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia or the ACT. Contacts were cold canvassed in those locations, apart from the ACT, where no employers were contacted. Of those States where vacancies were identified, Queensland was the only State where some advertised positions remained unfilled. Employers were generally seeking candidates with industry recognised qualifications and experience, and in some cases strong customer service skills, as they relate to the tourism industry. As all successful contacts were for small vessels, it was common for employers to be advertising for ships' masters who also had ships' engineering qualifications.

Around 85 per cent of vacancies were filled within six weeks of advertising, with employers reporting that, on average, advertised vacancies attracted around four applicants for each position. Nearly three applicants per vacancy were considered by employers to be suitable for the advertised positions. Most employers were very specific in their advertisements regarding level of qualifications sought, which may account for the relatively high suitability rate. Employers in Queensland reported the greatest difficulty recruiting ships' masters, with around two thirds of vacancies filled and 50 per cent of applicants considered to be suitable.

Where some recruiting difficulty existed in northern Queensland, it was thought that this was due to strong competition amongst tourist and fishing vessels. Several employers also commented that while it was generally easy to recruit skippers, it was harder to retain their services. This was thought to be due to the transient nature of the job, in that fishing and tourism are often seasonal and many skippers move around as a result.

### **Labour market outlook**

There is little evidence to suggest that the labour market for ships' masters will change significantly in the near future.