

<b>Architectural Associate</b>		<b>Western Australia (WA)</b>
ASCO Code: 3121-13		November 2006
<b>Labour market rating:</b>	Shortage	
<b>Comment</b>		
<i>The shortage is greatest for those with three or more years' experience.</i>		

### **Occupational demand**

Demand for architectural associates has continued to increase due to the buoyant WA economy. Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows that there was an increase of 22.7 per cent in the value of all building construction work done in WA in the 12 months to June 2006, compared with the same period to June 2005. Of this, there was a 26.7 per cent increase in residential building work and an increase in non-residential building work of 16.5 per cent. The value of all building construction work remaining to be done at September 2006 was 0.2 per cent lower than the previous quarter; however, the value of approvals for residential building work was 10.1 per cent higher.

This occupation is too small for quarterly Australian Bureau of Statistics' Labour Force Survey figures to be reliable, however, the number of architectural associates recorded in WA increased by 40.1 per cent to 768 over the five years to the 2001 Census. Given the strong demand from the building industry since then, the number is likely to have increased significantly.

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations' Skilled Vacancy Count shows that newspaper vacancies for architectural associates from January to November 2006 increased by 45.8 per cent over the number for the same period last year.

### **Occupational supply**

Architectural associates generally work as a draftsman or architectural draftsman. Suitable TAFE courses appear to have become available only in recent years and architectural associates generally complete a Certificate IV in Residential Drafting or Diploma in Building Design and Technology. Completion of a university three-year bachelor degree course in architectural science and environmental design would also be suitable. TAFE course completions were 75 in 2005, compared with an average of 68 the previous two years. Some employers are prepared to recruit people who have no formal qualifications but have gained a number of years of relevant experience. It is not possible to obtain separate migration statistics for architectural associates, but the number is likely to be low.

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

Sixty per cent of the surveyed vacancies were filled, with 1.5 suitable applicants per vacancy. Only one-quarter of the applicants were considered suitable. The main reasons applicants were unsuitable was they were not qualified or had little or no experience. Many applicants had unrealistic expectations about their ability and the work involved. Recruitment was thought to be at least as, if not more, difficult than 12 months ago. The shortage of suitable applicants covered positions for both residential and commercial work, with the shortage more pronounced for drafters with about three or more years' experience. There was no discernable difference in the vacancy fill rate between residential and commercial work positions. Some draftsmen are attracted away from Perth to work on remote mine sites, doing mechanical drawing work, for much higher pay rates. This has exacerbated the shortage of draftsmen in Perth and major regional centres who are in high demand from the building industry. Eighty per cent of the vacancies surveyed were for new positions, reflecting new business growth.

The WA Labour Economics Office has not previously assessed this occupation.

### **Labour market outlook**

Demand for architectural associates is likely to be maintained for at least the next six months. Although supply from course completions is generally considered adequate, this will not alleviate the shortage of experienced draftsmen. Shortages are likely to persist over the short term.