

Baker	Queensland
ANZSCO Code: 3511-11	November 2009
Labour market rating	Shortage
Comment:	

Occupational demand

Bakers prepare and bake bread loaves and rolls, buns, cakes, biscuits and pastries. Bakers can be found working in artisan and small independent bakeries, chain and franchise stores, supermarkets or large factories. Queensland's growing population and subsequent increased consumption of bread continues to be the greatest contributor to demand for Bakers. For example, over the year to March 2009, Queensland recorded the largest population growth of all Australian states and territories with the total population increasing by an additional 112 666 persons. At the same time, an increasing consumer demand for healthier food products has generated corresponding growth in orders for artisan style, preservative free, gluten free and special dietary specific bread products and demand for Bakers has responded accordingly.

Occupational supply

Entry to this trade is via the completion of a 36 month apprenticeship in Food Processing (*Retail Baking-Bread, or Retail Baking-Combined*). Combined data from Queensland's Department of Education and Training show that commencements in baking apprenticeships have been slowly increasing, growing from 295 enrolments in 2006 to reach 465 in 2008. Over the same time, wastage from training and completion numbers have also improved with 119 (33 per cent of original intake) apprentices completing their training in 2006, compared to 134 completions (45 per cent of original intake) in 2008. In 2007, and in an effort to boost supply to this trade, the nominal timeframe for completing a baking course was reduced from 48 to 36 months. Supply from training will therefore occur more frequently from the end of 2009 when the first cohort of apprentices from the three-year course enters the labour market. Arrivals and departures data from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship show that overseas migration may be a moderate source of supply to this trade, as there was a net gain of 67 self-identified Bakers and Pastrycooks to Queensland in 2007-08.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

The vacancy filled rate for Bakers this year was only 12 per cent, with employers from all regions of Queensland reporting significant recruitment difficulties in 2009 and a number of vacancies left unfilled for up to twelve months. Demand was greatest for Bakers with skills to make Bakery products from scratch, rather than premixed and frozen dough baking skills. According to employers around 30 per cent of the applicants failed to present for trial, and of the applicants that did present, 90 per cent were considered unsuitable because they lacked basic collegial and customer service skills, they were asking for remuneration beyond the capacity of the business, or they could not demonstrate a comprehensive range of baking skills at trial. Indeed, all but one employer reported that the applicant pool consisted mainly of Bakers trained in factories and supermarkets with skills specific to those industry sectors. A number of respondents indicated that they are investigating, or in the process of, recruiting Bakers from overseas with a particular focus on tradespersons from South East Asia. In most cases, employers reported a willingness to indenture more apprentices in the future, but declared a preference for mature aged apprentices as they tended to be stable employees.

Labour market outlook

Queensland's population is expected to grow at its current pace thereby generating growth in orders for bakery products and subsequently demand for Bakers. Presently, training figures for this occupation show significant improvements and the State Government's new training strategy should see supply of this trade to the labour market increase more regularly from the end of 2009. Even so, the scale of these advances has yet to make an impact on the availability of suitably skilled Bakers with employers raising concerns about training not meeting the needs of all industry sectors. It is therefore likely that the current shortage of Bakers in Queensland will continue, at least over 2010.