



ANZSCO 3311-11 Bricklayer

Northern Territory September 2017

Current labour market rating

Shortage

Previous labour market rating (September 2016)

No Shortage

Comments

Employers are generally experiencing difficulty in filling their vacancies for qualified bricklayers/blocklayer. With no registered training organisation delivering this qualification there has been no local growth in the number of qualified bricklayers/blocklayers in the Northern Territory.

Survey results¹

- There were very few vacancies advertised for bricklayers/blocklayers during the survey period. This survey was supplemented by cold canvassing employers who employ bricklayers/blocklayers. Some employers who did not recently advertise also provided feedback on the industry and past recruitment activity.
- The survey shows 71 per cent of vacancies were filled, a decrease from 2016 when all vacancies were filled.
- Employers attracted less than one applicant per vacancy. However, employers in the metropolitan area filled 75 per cent of their vacancies compared to regional employers who filled 50 per cent of their vacancies.
- Overall, there was a decrease of qualified applicants per vacancy, with less than one in 2017 compared to 3.6 qualified applicants per vacancy in 2016.
- Employers considered all qualified applicants suitable for the vacancies.
- Recruiting is regularly done through word of mouth and industry contacts who often share a pool of workers.
- There has been an increase in remote works. As these contracts potentially run longer with a higher hourly rate, and offer for accommodation and meals, qualified blocklayers are more attracted to these opportunities, which is impacting on metro-based recruitment.

Demand and supply trends

- The number of people employed as bricklayers/blocklayers in the Northern Territory has increased over the year to August 2017.² However, the Department of Jobs and Small Business occupation projections shows growth of only 2.6 per cent nationally over the five years to May 2022.³

¹ The methodology underpinning this research is outlined at [Skill Shortage Research Methodology | Department of Jobs and Small Business - Document library, Australian Government](#) and can also be accessed by the QR code.

² ABS, *Labour Force Australia*, August 2017, Department of Jobs and Small Business, Trend

³ Department of Jobs and Small Business, Occupational Employment Projections to May 2022



- Total Construction activity has fallen with the value of work done, down by 22.6 per cent over the year to September 2017⁴. The decline was stronger in the residential sector (down by 27.5 per cent) than in the non-residential sector (down by 13.9 per cent).⁵
- The Department's Internet Vacancy Index (IVI) shows that the number of online vacancies for bricklayers fell in the 12 months to August 2017 compared with the previous 12 months.⁶
- The pathway to becoming a bricklayer is through an apprenticeship incorporating a Certificate III in bricklaying/blocklaying, which is not currently being delivered in the Northern Territory.⁷
- In the Northern Territory, there were no apprenticeship commencements in the eight years to March 2017 and no completions in the five years to that date.⁸ Alternatively, a Certificate II in Building and Construction Pathways is a gateway into the primary trades in the construction industry, as it provides meaningful credit in a construction industry Australian Apprenticeship.

Other indicators and issues

- Some employers surveyed advised that the industry mainly hires bricklayers on a sub-contracting arrangement as the nature of the industry is project based. Employers have a small permanent workforce which they expand depending on the needs of projects.
- Employers advised that recruitment and retention of qualified bricklayers/blocklayers depended on the length of the contract that could last anywhere from 2 weeks to 6 weeks. Employers added that they tended to re-employ block layers, whom they had previously contracted, providing them back-to-back work for up to 6 months.
- At present there has been an increase in remote works. As these contracts potentially run longer with a higher hourly rate, and offer for accommodation and meals, qualified block layers are more attracted to these opportunities, which is impacting on metro-based recruitment.
- Some employers indicated their concern for the lack of apprenticeships in this occupation as the current workforce ages.
- A number of developments may add to future demand for bricklayers/blocklayers.
 - In the short term, the Northern Territory Government's 2016-17 Budget includes a \$1.75 billion spend towards infrastructure including \$143 million in major and minor infrastructure projects, and \$106 million in 2017-18 towards remote housing.⁹
 - In the medium term, Defence infrastructure committed projects based in the Northern Territory are projected to be worth at least \$1 billion, including: Air 5431 Facilities Project – Australian Defence Force Air Traffic Control Complex Infrastructure Project at RAAF Base Darwin and Tindal and redevelopment of Larrakeyah Barracks and MHAS Coonawarra.¹⁰

⁴ ABS, Building Activity Australia, September 2017, Cat 8752.0, Value of Building Work Done, Trend data

⁵ ABS, Building Activity Australia, September 2017, Cat 8752.0, Value of Building Work Done, 4 quarter average of original data

⁶ Department of Jobs and Small Business Internet Vacancy Index data, August 2017, 12 month moving average.

⁷ MySkills website

⁸ National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), Apprentices and Trainees, March 2017, estimates (limited to certificate III)

⁹ Northern Territory Government 2017-18, Budget Overview (<https://budget.nt.gov.au/budget-overview>)

¹⁰ Northern Territory Government 2017-18, Budget Overview; and ICN Gateway.