



ANZSCO 3311-12 Stonemason

Australia November 2013

Current labour market rating

Shortage

Previous labour market rating (September 2012)

No Shortage

Comments

Shortages are re-emerging for stonemasons. Employers generally have difficulty filling their vacancies with relatively few applicants having the required qualification or level of experience.

Survey results

- Employers were surveyed for a range of positions.
 - The majority of vacancies were for stonemasons who specialised in kitchen benchtops and bathroom vanities. These vacancies were generally workshop based.
 - Most of the remaining vacancies required proficiency in outdoor landscaping masonry.
 - A small number of vacancies included specialisms such as repairing historical buildings or commercial installations (including staircases, hotel bars and display counters).
- Most employers sought qualified applicants with a high level of skill.
 - Two thirds of the surveyed employers required applicants to hold a Certificate III in Stonemasonry.
 - Employers were seeking applicants who had experience in their particular field of work, suggesting that skills are not readily transferable between stonemason specialisations.
 - Most employers were less concerned with the length of experience than with candidates' ability to demonstrate the required level of skill. That said, more than one quarter sought three or more years experience.
 - Employers also valued an eye for detail, good communication skills and a strong work ethic.
- The labour market for stonemasons has tightened since 2012.
 - Surveyed employers filled 65 per cent of their vacancies, down from 71 per cent in 2012.
 - There were, on average, 6.1 applicants per vacancy, of whom 1.2 were considered by employers to be suitable (compared with 5.3 and 1.8, respectively, in 2012).
- Employers in regional areas filled a higher proportion of their vacancies compared with their metropolitan counterparts (75 per cent and 62 per cent, respectively), despite attracting similar numbers of qualified applicants and suitable applicants per vacancy.
- There was a marked difference in recruitment experiences depending on whether employers required qualifications.
 - Employers who sought applicants with a trade certificate had more difficulty filling their positions than those who did not (61 per cent and 75 per cent filled, respectively).

Reasons for rating

- Although applicant fields were relatively large, few applicants were qualified and suitable.
 - Around one third of employers did not attract any suitable applicants.

Unsuitable applicants

- Applicants were unsuitable for two key reasons, inadequate skills and lack of qualifications.
- Around one in five applicants had relevant qualifications, most of whom (0.6) were considered to be suitable.
- By comparison, relatively few unqualified applicants were considered to be suitable.

Demand and supply trends

- Census data¹ show that employment of stonemasons increased by 10 per cent between 2006 and 2011 to around 4000.
- While around 70 per cent of stonemasons are employed in Manufacturing, demand for these workers is influenced by activity levels in the Construction industry (which employs 22 per cent)².
 - The Construction industry is showing signs of recovery following a sustained period of subdued activity in the residential sector. The Australian Industry Group-Housing Industry Association's (AIG-HIA) Performance of Construction Index³ returned to growth in October 2013 for the first time since 2010. Growth was particularly strong for the housing and apartment building sectors, with both recording high levels of activity.
- NCVER data⁴ show that apprenticeship and traineeship commencements and completions in the stonemason trade are relatively low.
 - Commencements have fluctuated over the past six years, and although completions have increased over this period, they have remained relatively stable since 2010-11.
 - In 2012-13, there were around 140 commencements and 75 completions.

Other indicators and issues

- Metropolitan employers commented that they do not experience difficulty attracting apprentices to this trade, but regional employers noted that the location of the small number of training providers offering stonemasonry courses limits their ability to take on apprentices.
 - NCVER data⁴ and the government training website⁵ confirm apprenticeship courses in stonemasonry are generally available only in major cities in large states.

¹ ABS, *Census of Population and Housing*

² ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2011*

³ AIG-HIA, *Performance of Construction Index (PCI)*, October 2013

⁴ NCVER, *Apprentices and Trainees*, June 2013, estimates (Certificate III in Stonemasonry)

⁵ training.gov.au (accessed 14 January 2014)