



# Carpenters and Joiners

## ANZSCO 3312

# New South Wales

## September 2018

**Current labour market rating:** Shortage

Previous labour market rating (September 2017): Shortage

### Comments

There is a shortage of carpenters and joiners in metropolitan and regional NSW. Generally employers were unable to fill vacancies in metropolitan and regional NSW. There has been a shortage of carpenters and joiners in NSW since 2013, noting a metropolitan shortage only in 2014.

### Survey results<sup>1</sup>

- The Department of Jobs and Small Business surveyed employers who had recently advertised for carpenters and joiners in the following areas: commercial and residential in private and public sectors.

### Employer Requirements

- In general, employers sought the following in applicants:
  - Qualification in carpentry and joinery.
  - Relevant and specific work experience, in commercial or residential carpentry.
  - Some employers sought technical skills by conducting a trial to determine if applicants were suitable.
  - Employers sought specific technical skills, such as, in detailed joinery or stairway repairs.
  - Employers in the construction sector required a white card.
  - Some employers required a driver's licence and own transport.

### Vacancies filled

- Across NSW, 48 per cent of vacancies were filled within the survey period compared with 50 per cent in September 2017.
- Some employers commented that the increased opportunity for contractual work in the industry has allowed many applicants to change employers frequently rather than stay with one employer.
- In this survey period, a small proportion of total vacancies were casual or contract roles, 24 per cent. All of these vacancies were filled.
- Some employers commented that applicants preferred contract work rather than full time long-term employment. This is reflected by the results with only one third of the full time ongoing vacancies filled however in comparison all of the casual or contract roles were filled.

### Applicants per vacancy

- Across NSW, there was an average of 4.8 applicants per vacancy of whom an average of 0.6 applicants were considered suitable by employers.

<sup>1</sup> The methodology for this research is outlined at [Skill Shortage Research Methodology | Department of Jobs and Small Business](#).

- By comparison, in 2017 there was an average of 3.1 applicants per vacancy of whom an average of 0.7 applicants were considered suitable by employers.

### Metropolitan and regional results

- In metropolitan regions, there was an average of 5.6 applicants per vacancy and 9 per cent were considered suitable by employers.
  - Employers in metropolitan areas were able to fill 50 per cent of vacancies.
- In regional areas, there was an average of 1.6 applicants per vacancy and 50 per cent were considered suitable by employers.
  - Employers in regional areas were able to fill 40 per cent of vacancies.
- On average, metropolitan vacancies attracted 2.4 applicants with qualifications compared to 0.8 applicants with qualifications per vacancy in regional areas.

### Unsuitable applicants

- The reasons given by employers on why an applicant was considered unsuitable include:
  - Qualifications in carpentry and joinery.
  - Insufficient experience in specific areas such as, in maintenance carpentry, renovations or fit outs.
  - Lack of a specific technical skills set.
  - Lack of employability such as, not possessing a strong work history.
  - Locality of applicant and their proximity to work.

### Demand and supply trends

- Demand for carpenters and joiners is generally influenced by the level of activity in the engineering and construction industry.
  - The total, inflation adjusted, value of building work done in NSW grew by 6.8 per cent in the year to September 2018, with growth stronger than the Australian average of 4.5 per cent. This was the sixth consecutive year where growth in NSW has been above the national average.<sup>2</sup>
  - The value of residential work increased by 6.1 per cent over the year to September 2018, which followed five years of annual growth in excess of 10 per cent. The growth in the value of work done for the construction of new houses (8.1 per cent) was higher than for new other residential work (6.6 per cent). For the previous five years, the growth in the latter had been higher.<sup>3</sup>
  - The value of non-residential building work increased by 8.3 per cent in the year to September 2018. This followed a fall of 5.7 per cent in the previous year.<sup>4</sup>
  - The value of engineering construction increased by 20.4 per cent in the year to September 2018. This followed a rise of 17.9 per cent in the previous year.<sup>5</sup>
- The Australian PCI (state data are not available) had a modest expansion in September 2018 with a 12 month average of 53.7. Within all sub-sectors of the Australian PCI, the 12-month average, had readings above 50 apart from apartments recording a contraction at 46.2. This indicates a slowing down and cooling of

<sup>2</sup> ABS, *Construction Work Done, Preliminary*, September 2018 (8755.0), chain volume measures, original.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

apartment building activity. An Australian Performance of Construction Index (PCI) reading above 50 indicates that construction activity is generally expanding and below 50, declining. The distance from 50 indicates the strength of increase or decline.<sup>6</sup>

- Engineering construction and Commercial construction had the strongest average annual activity growth at 57 and 55.1 respectively, driving industry growth with a strong expansion of major infrastructure projects.<sup>7</sup>
- Over the year to September 2018, the number of vacancies advertised on the internet for carpenters and joiners in NSW declined by 11 per cent. This followed a period of very strong growth with the number of vacancies more than doubling over the course of three years to early 2017.<sup>8</sup>
- Entry into these trades is commonly through the completion of an apprenticeship.<sup>9</sup>
  - National Centre for Vocational Education Research data shows apprenticeship completions (limited to the certificate III level) for carpenters and joiners averaged around 1660 per annum in the three years to March 2018. This was a little higher than the average for the three years to March 2015 of around 1625.<sup>10</sup>
  - Commencements averaged around 3845 in the three years to March 2018 compared to an average of 2730 for the previous three years.<sup>11</sup>
- The number of temporary resident (skilled) visas granted for carpenters and joiners (individual data is not available) averaged around 230 per annum over the five years ending 2017-18.<sup>12</sup>
  - Please note, on 18 April 2017, the Government announced that the Temporary Work (Skilled) visa (subclass 457 visa) was abolished and replaced with the completely new Temporary Skill Shortage visa in March 2018 to address the genuine skill shortages.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Ai Group, *Performance of Construction Index September 2018*, 5 October 2018, <https://www.aigroup.com.au/policy-and-research/mediacentre/releases/PCI-September-2018/> (accessed 4 December 2018).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Department of Jobs and Small Business, *Internet Vacancy Index*, October 2018, 12 month moving average.

<sup>9</sup> NCVET, *Apprentices and Trainees*, March 2018, estimates (limited to certificate III qualifications).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Department of Home Affairs, *Temporary Work (Skilled) visa programme*, <https://data.gov.au/dataset/visa-temporary-work-skilled> (accessed 4 December 2018).

<sup>13</sup> More information can be found here <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/work/457-abolition-replacement>.