



Plumbers

ANZSCO 3341

South Australia

September 2018

Current labour market rating: No Shortage
Previous labour market rating (September 2017): No Shortage

Comments

Employers surveyed advised there were adequate numbers of suitable applicants to fill most plumber vacancies across the construction, commercial production and residential sectors.

Survey results¹

- Of the employers surveyed, 73 per cent of vacancies were filled. Overall, there were 12.1 applicants per vacancy in comparison to 2017 where employers who advertised for plumbers filled 69 per cent of vacancies with an average of 15.4 applicants.
- There continued to be a decline in the number of suitable applicants per vacancy, with an average of one suitable applicant per vacancy. This result was below the 4-year average of 1.9 suitable applicants per vacancy.
- Of the employers surveyed, several required plumbers who held a gas fitting licences. Employers found it harder to fill these vacancies with applicants that had the required level of experience to do the role and the licence.
- In general, across a range of plumber's vacancy type's qualified and suitable applicants were available to employers advertising vacancies.

Unsuitable applicants

- There were sufficient suitable applicants to fill vacancies in South Australia, 78 per cent of qualified applicants were unsuitable in Metropolitan Adelaide and 93 per cent of qualified applicants were unsuitable in regional South Australia. Overall, 82 per cent of qualified applicants were unsuitable.
- Reasons for unsuitability included lack of basic qualifications, additional qualifications or specific experience. Some applicants were unsuitable due to remuneration expectations.
- Employers surveyed identified some applicants were unsuitable because they could not demonstrate sufficient work experience, or work experience in a specialised field of plumbing.

Demand and supply trends

- According to 2016 ABS Census, there were approximately 4500 Plumbers in South Australia of which 2800 were employed and 1600 were self-employed. The Census indicated that 86 per cent of plumbers were employed in the construction industry and therefore occupational demand was mainly influenced by developments in this sector.²
- Overall, the construction sector in South Australia appeared strong despite some recent indicators of steady activity.

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

² ABS Census Data 2016

- The total value of building work done in South Australia improved in the year to March 2018 compared with the previous 12-month period and was above the five-year average.³
- The value of building work commenced in South Australia was above the five-year average as at March 2018, this is a 19.2 per cent increase compared with the previous 12 months.⁴
- The value of South Australian residential building approvals increased slightly in the year to May 2018,⁵ which provided an indication of future demand, the number of building approvals remained well above the five-year average.⁶
- The value of building work yet to be done had increased by 39 per cent from March 2017 to March 2018.⁷
- The major source of supply to the trade was new apprenticeship graduates who had completed a contract of training in plumbing and gas fitting.⁸
 - Apprenticeship commencement numbers increased since 2012 and in 2018 commencements were above the five-year average.
- The number of trainees completing their contract of training as a plumber improved considerably. There was an average of 219 for completion numbers year ending March 2017-18 in comparison to the average of 175 March 2016-17.⁹
- Although the number fluctuated from year to year, completion numbers were on par with the 5 and 10 year average for the plumbing trade.

³ ABS, Building Activity, Australia, Cat. No. 8752.0, Table 16, estimates based on four quarter totals

⁴ ABS, Building Activity, Australia, Cat. No. 8752.0, Table 44, estimates based on four quarter totals

⁵ ABS, Building Approvals, Australia, Cat. No. 8731.0

⁶ ABS, Building Approvals, Australia, Cat. No. 8731.0, Table 33, estimates based on 12 month totals

⁷ ABS, Building Activity, Australia, Cat. No. 8752.0, Table 50, estimates based on four quarter totals

⁸ NCVET, Apprentices and Trainees, March 2018, estimates (limited to certificate III)

⁹ NCVET, Apprentices and Trainees, March 2018, estimates (limited to certificate III)