



ANZSCO 3212-11,12,13 Motor Mechanics

New South Wales December 2016

Current labour market rating

3212-11 Motor Mechanic (General) – Shortage
3212-12 Diesel Motor Mechanic – Shortage
3212-13 Motorcycle Mechanic - Shortage

Previous labour market rating (Dec 2015)

3212-11 Motor Mechanic (General) – Metro shortage
3212-12 Diesel Motor Mechanic – No shortage
3212-13 Motorcycle Mechanic - Shortage

Comments

There are shortages of general motor mechanics, diesel mechanics and motorcycle mechanics in NSW with employers filling one third of surveyed vacancies. Nearly 60% of employers surveyed received no suitable applicants for their vacancies.

Survey results

- The Department of Employment survey of employers who had recently advertised for motor mechanics found that 33 per cent of vacancies were filled within the survey period. This compares with a success rate of 57 per cent in 2015 and 61 per cent in 2014.
 - Employers in Sydney had more success in filling vacancies than those in regional NSW (42 per cent compared to 25 per cent), although the average number of qualified applicants was similar at around two per vacancy.
 - The proportion of vacancies filled in the current survey was less than half for general motor mechanic and less than a quarter for diesel motor mechanic.
- For general motor mechanic (covering positions in motor vehicle dealerships, workshops and provision of mobile roadside assistance) employers were overall able to fill 40 per cent of surveyed vacancies in Sydney and half in regional NSW.
 - The average number of suitable applicants per vacancy was a little higher in regional NSW (1.0) than in Sydney (0.8).
 - While a small number of employers were able to fill their vacancies fairly easily and attracted more than one suitable applicant, over half the vacancies did not attract any suitable applicants.
- There were unfilled and hard-to-fill vacancies for diesel mechanics working across various types of heavy vehicles including trucks, buses, cranes, mobile plant and agricultural equipment.
 - There was an average of less than two qualified applicants per vacancy and an average of 0.3 applicants per vacancy was considered suitable by employers.
 - Regional employers had particular difficulty in filling vacancies with some applicants being unwilling to relocate to inland NSW.

- Around 40 per cent of Sydney vacancies were filled. Employers indicated that the work conditions associated with some jobs within this occupation, including working afternoon/evening shifts and being on call 24/7, can make such positions difficult to fill.
- Shortages were evident for motorcycle mechanics with two thirds of vacancies remaining unfilled.
 - There was an average of 1.2 qualified applicants per vacancy, of whom an average of 0.3 were considered suitable by employers. Half of vacancies attracted no qualified applicants.
 - Some employers required experience in their brand of motorcycle (such as Harley-Davidson or Suzuki) and/or were looking for an experienced mechanic.
- A couple of employers had to rely on word of mouth to fill their vacancies after advertising failed to attract any qualified applicants, while some vacancies remained unfilled after several months of advertising.
- A number of employers indicated they had a preference for a person with experience on a particular brand of vehicle or a particular type of vehicle (such as buses or tankers), but for some (though not all) this was not essential. Instead, having the right skill set and attitude were important requirements for the job.
- While many employers were offering above award wages, some applicants were asking for more money than the employer was willing or able to pay.

Unsuitable applicants

- Around 58 per cent of applicants did not have the appropriate trade qualifications. The majority of these had no trade qualifications, however a few vacancies for diesel mechanics and motorcycle mechanics attracted light vehicle mechanics as applicants.
- The most frequent reasons cited by employers for the unsuitability of qualified applicants were failure to turn up for an interview or for work and poor references.
- Other reasons for the unsuitability of applicants included lacking the experience required by the employer (such as with performance cars, European cars or agricultural equipment) and not having sufficient experience (as they were in the early stages of their careers).

Demand and supply trends

- While the number of registered vehicles in NSW has increased in recent years (particularly for diesel vehicles and motorcycles), demand for this trade has been adversely affected by the improved reliability of vehicles and industry rationalisation leading to the closure of some smaller workshops.
- New motor vehicle sales increased by 4.8 per cent in the year to November 2016, following growth of 6.3 per cent in the previous 12 months.¹
- Over the past three years there has been particularly strong growth in the number of registered diesel motor vehicles (36 per cent) and motorcycles (15 per cent) in NSW compared with the growth for all motor vehicles registered (eight per cent).²
- ABS Labour Force Survey data shows a moderate fall over the last decade in the number of employed motor vehicle mechanics in NSW.³

¹ ABS *Sales of New Motor Vehicles, Australia* (Catalogue 9314.0), November 2015, original data.

² ABS *Motor Vehicle Census Australia*, (Catalogue 9309.0), January 2016.

³ ABS *Labour Force Survey* data on employed persons by ANZSCO unit group trended by the Department of Employment.

- Apprenticeship completions in these trades in NSW averaged 1680 per year in the three years to March 2016, which was around 17 per cent higher than in the previous three years.⁴
 - However, the number of people commencing apprenticeships in these trades averaged 2220 in the same period and was 21 per cent lower than in the previous three years.
- The number of primary applicant 457 temporary skilled migration visas granted to motor mechanics is small compared to apprenticeship completions, with 165 visas being granted in 2015-16.⁵

Other indicators and issues

- A number of reasons for the difficulty recruiting motor mechanics were suggested by employers including:
 - The perception that the auto trades are not well paid. Therefore, people leave the occupation to earn more money elsewhere (such as driving trucks).
 - Their view is that some skilled and experienced motor mechanics leave paid employment to set up their own business.
 - People are becoming less prepared to engage in hard, physical work.
- Some businesses indicated that due to the difficulty in recruiting experienced motor mechanics, they rely on training their own apprentices only to see them leave either shortly before or after completing their apprenticeship.

⁴ NCVER, *Apprentices and Trainees, March 2016* estimates (limited to certificate III qualifications).

⁵ Department of Immigration and Border Protection, <https://data.gov.au/dataset/visa-temporary-work-skilled>.