



ANZSCO 3312 Carpenters and Joiners

Australian Capital Territory July 2017

Current labour market rating

Shortage

Previous labour market rating (September 2016)

No Shortage

Comments

Relatively strong building construction activity is driving the demand for carpenters and joiners. Employers attract few suitable applicants and experience difficulty filling their vacancies.

Survey results¹

- Around half the surveyed vacancies were filled this year, indicating that the labour market is tight.
- There were, on average, 2.4 applicants per vacancy, of whom 0.9 were qualified carpenters and joiners and 0.6 regarded as suitable.
- Over the past year there has been a significant increase in the percentage of employers with unfilled vacancies (up from 29 per cent to 63 per cent) and shortages are now evident.

Employer Requirements

- Most surveyed employers were residential construction companies looking to employ carpenters on a full-time basis. A smaller number were commercial employers recruiting for carpenters for work on shop fitouts.
- In 2017, perhaps reflecting the tighter labour market and a need to consider a wider array of candidates, a lower proportion of employers required carpenters to hold trade qualifications for their vacancies.
 - In 2016, all surveyed vacancies required qualifications, compared with 62 per cent in 2017.
- An Occupational Health and Safety induction 'white' card is mandatory for working on construction sites in the ACT. Some employers also sought applicants who had their own tools, a driver's licence and transport, as well as asbestos awareness training.

Unsuitable Applicants

- Applicants were considered to be unsuitable for a diverse range of reasons.
 - The most common reason employers deemed applicants unsuitable was concern about their reliability.
 - Employers who required trade qualified applicants considered those applicants who did not hold this qualification to be unsuitable. They also attracted fewer overall applicants and fewer suitable applicants and filled a lower percentage of their vacancies.

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.



Demand and Supply Trends

- Demand for carpenters and joiners is driven by activity in the construction sector, particularly building construction.
- The value of building work done has fallen in the ACT, but remains relatively strong, supporting the demand for these workers.
 - Residential building decreased by 3.0 per cent over the year to June 2017 while non-residential building fell by 16.3 per cent over the same period.²
 - Lower residential building was largely driven by a decrease in new apartment construction, while residential alterations and additions also fell. This fall was partially offset by an increase in new house building.³
- Entry to this trade is usually through the completion of an apprenticeship.
 - Carpenter and joiner apprenticeship commencements in the ACT have increased strongly in recent years to around 300 in the year to March 2017, an historical high.⁴
 - Completions fell significantly over the past two years to around 75 in the year to March 2017, although the recent strong commencement numbers suggest that new supply is likely to increase over the next few years.⁵

Outlook

- The outlook for building in the ACT is mixed, but there is some evidence to suggest that activity will moderate over the next year.
 - ABS data show that there is a solid pipeline of residential work in the ACT, with the number of dwelling approvals increasing strongly over the first half of 2017, although they remain below the peak recorded in September 2016.⁶
 - The Housing Industry Association (HIA) expects that new dwelling commencements will fall by 2.0 per cent in 2017-18 (with large falls in multi-unit construction offsetting growth in house construction), before rising by 5.6 per cent in 2018-19. Renovation activity is expected to be positive, with growth of 8.6 per cent in 2017-18 and 3.1 per cent in 2018-19.⁷

² ABS, *Construction Work Done, Australia, Preliminary*, June 2017, chain volume measures, seasonally adjusted

³ *ibid*

⁴ NCVET, *Apprentice and Trainees*, March 2017, estimates (limited to certificate III qualifications)

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ ABS, *Building Approvals*, July 2017, trend

⁷ HIA, *New Housing Outlook*, March 2017