



ANZSCO 3312 Carpenters and Joiners

Victoria
July 2016

Current labour market rating

Shortage

Previous labour market rating (September 2015)

Shortage

Comments

The 2016 survey found that there was a shortage of skilled and experienced carpenters and joiners across Victoria with over two thirds of the surveyed vacancies remaining unfilled. The 2016 survey results represent the greatest increase in unfilled surveyed vacancies since 2013 when 95 per cent of Carpenter and Joiner vacancies were filled.

Survey results

- Thirty-two per cent of surveyed vacancies were filled in 2016, which is a significant decline on the results of the 2015 survey which found that 60 per cent of vacancies were filled.
- An average of 1.5 applicants per vacancy were considered suitable by employers which, with the exception of 2014 (when 3.1 applicants were considered suitable), is consistent with results since 2013.
- Regional areas experienced a slightly higher fill rate compared to metropolitan areas with 40 per cent and 29 per cent of vacancies filled respectively.
- Three quarters of employers required fully qualified carpenters and joiners with a completed carpentry or joinery apprenticeship. While 70 per cent of applicants were appropriately qualified 78 per cent of these were found to be unsuitable.

Role settings

- The surveyed vacancies were mostly for intermediate to senior positions and encompassed a variety of roles including ongoing maintenance in public venues, renovations and new houses in the domestic sector, as well as high-end residential and large scale projects in the commercial sector.

Qualifications and Experience

- The duration of previous experience most commonly desired by employers was two years for intermediate roles and five years for senior roles.
- Most respondents expressed a need for multi-skilled carpenters and joiners with previous experience in a variety of practices including lock up and fix, cladding, aluminium installation, caulking and stumping.
- In the limited number of cases where employers were willing to consider unqualified applicants, it was on the provision that these candidates were able to demonstrate an equivalent level of trade skills via previous experience in a directly related role.
- All employers surveyed were seeking applicants who had obtained a white card. Some employers also specified the need for a red card which is the Victoria-specific construction induction card.

Skills and personal attributes

- Employers were generally seeking applicants with a good work ethic and excellent time management skills. Other valued skills and attributes included the ability to work in a team environment, effective communication skills, a good attitude, reliability and a willingness to work. It was consistently noted that the ability to work unsupervised was essential to most qualified carpenter and joiner roles.

Unfilled vacancies

- Unfilled vacancies were identified across a range of positions in metropolitan and regional Victoria. The most common reason for unfilled vacancies was successful applicants failing to fulfil job requirements and subsequently applicants left the position within a fortnight of commencement.
- In several cases, applicants were given an interview or offered a trial and failed to attend. There was a perception among employers that newly qualified carpenters and joiners were typically unreliable.

Unsuitable Applicants

- Primarily, inadequate skills and lack of industry knowledge impacted on the suitability of qualified applicants across metropolitan and regional areas. Many employers deemed applicants unsuitable if they did not have at least two years' relevant experience outside of their apprenticeship.
- The majority of employers considered applicants who could not provide their own tools and transport to be unsuitable.
- Multiple employers considered the ability to read architectural plans as essential to the role and deemed applicants unsuitable if they were unable to do this.

Demand and supply trends

- The building industry largely influences the demand for carpenters and joiners.¹ The Victorian building sector has experienced increased activity largely due to record low interest rates and strong population growth.²
- Since peaking in March 2016, and despite a four month decline, house building approvals for July 2016 remain higher than previous years. Building approvals for other dwellings, which includes large scale residential developments such as apartments, peaked in February 2015 and was followed by a period of decline however, approvals for July 2016 are above long term trends. It should be noted that growth in this sector has been uneven.³
- Looking forward, financial commitment data suggests that it is likely that the demand for the construction of dwellings will remain strong through 2017.⁴
- Entry into this occupation is generally through completion of an apprenticeship which includes a Certificate III in Carpentry and Joinery. Alternatively, at least three years of relevant experience may substitute for a formal qualification.
 - Broadly indicating supply, 1432 Victorians completed Certificate III Carpentry and Joinery courses in the year to March 2016. The 2016 completion rate is a five year low and

¹ ABS, *2011 Census*, Persons, Place of Work; Occupation by Industry of Employment, Victoria

² ABS, cat. no. 3101.0, *Australian Demographic Statistics*, December 2015

³ ABS, cat. no. 8731.0, *Building Approvals, Australia*, Table 02. Number of dwelling units approved, Trend, Vic July 2016

⁴ ABS, cat. no. 5609.0 *Housing Finance, Australia*, TABLE 10a. HOUSING FINANCE COMMITMENTS, Original, Vic July 2016

represents a 33 per cent decline on the 2014 peak of 2137 training completions for the same period.⁵

Other

- Several employers said they no longer offered apprenticeships in part due to their stated experience with numerous uncommitted or unproductive apprentices. These employers believed that the lack of reliable apprentices was contributing to a shortage of skilled and experienced carpenters and joiners in the medium to long term.
- Some employers also reported that many newly qualified carpenters were requesting remuneration packages that were above their skill level.

⁵ NCVET, *Apprentices and Trainees*, March 2016, estimates (limited to Certificate III)