



Australian Government



National
Skills
Commission

Skills Priority List Findings

Construction Trades Workers

ANZSCO Sub-Major Group 33

Occupations in Shortage

Shortages were prevalent in the Construction Trades Worker occupations assessed for the 2021 Skills Priority List (SPL), with all 17 occupations in shortage, compared with 19% for all occupations (Table 1).

Table 1: Occupations in shortage, Construction Trades Workers Sub-Major Group and Minor Groups

ANZSCO Group		No. reviewed	% of reviewed in shortage
331	Bricklayers, and Carpenters and Joiners	5	100%
332	Floor Finishers and Painting Trades Workers	2	100%
333	Glaziers, Plasterers and Tilers	5	100%
334	Plumbers	5	100%
33	Construction Trades Workers	17	100%
	All occupations	799	19%

Future Demand

Future demand for Construction Trades Worker occupations is not projected to be as strong as for other assessed occupations. Around 95% are projected to have moderate future demand, compared with 60% for all assessed occupations (Table 2).

Table 2: Future demand, Construction Trades Workers, Sub-Major Group and Minor Groups

ANZSCO Group		No. of occupations reviewed	Future demand ratings (% of reviewed occupations)		
			Strong	Moderate	Soft
331	Bricklayers, and Carpenters and Joiners	5	0%	100%	0%
332	Floor Finishers and Painting Trades Workers	2	0%	100%	0%
333	Glaziers, Plasterers and Tilers	5	0%	80%	20%
334	Plumbers	5	0%	100%	0%
33	Construction Trades Workers	17	0%	94%	6%
	All occupations	799	33%	60%	7%

Results by State and Territory

Apart from the occupation of Plumbers in Queensland, where most employers filled advertised vacancies for the occupation, all other Construction Trades Worker occupations were in shortage across all states and territories.

Predicted Fill Rates

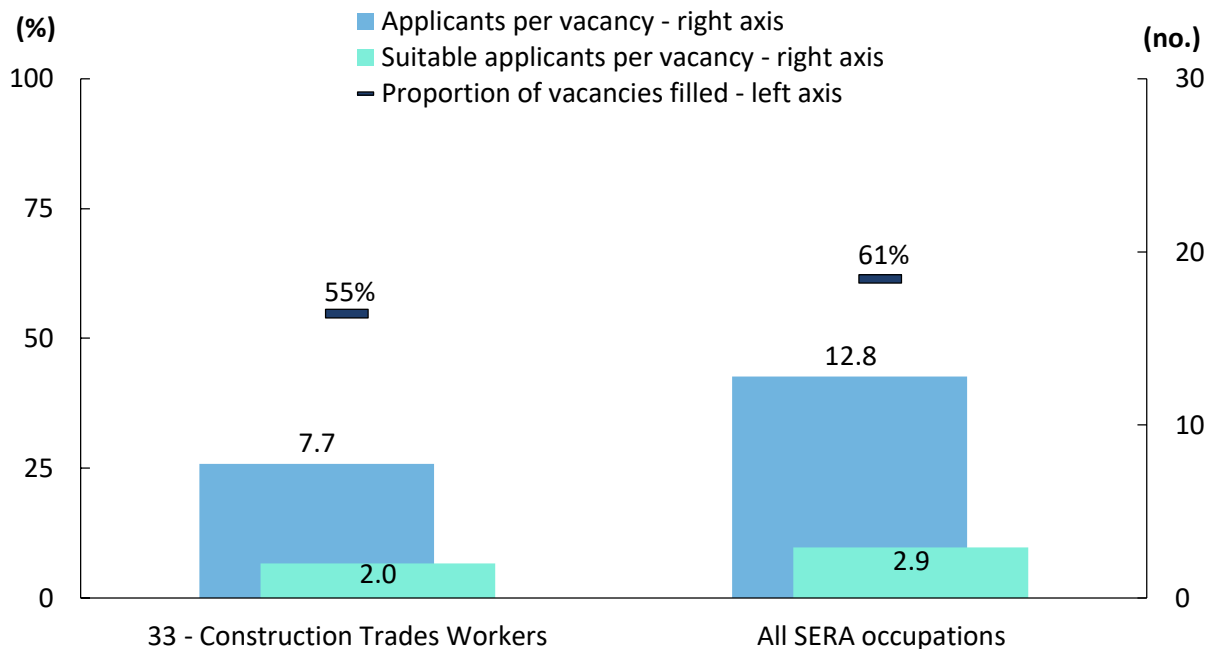
The predicted vacancy fill rates for Construction Trades Worker occupations fall within the broad range of 30% to 69%, with the majority of occupations in this group having predicted fill rates of 50% to 59%.

Survey of Employers

The Survey of Employers who have Recently Advertised (SERA) is a key component of the SPL analysis. Between July 2020 and April 2021, the NSC contacted employers who had advertised vacancies across all of the 17 assessed Construction Trades Worker occupations, to ask about their recruitment experience.

Many employers experienced recruitment difficulties, filling 55% of their advertised vacancies and receiving an average of 2.0 suitable applicants per vacancy (Figure 1). This compares with 61% of vacancies filled and 2.9 suitable applicants per vacancy for all SERA occupations. Almost a quarter of employers of Construction Trades Workers received no suitable applicants for their positions.

Figure 1: Proportion of vacancies filled (%), average number of applicants and suitable applicants per vacancy (no.), Construction Trades Worker surveyed occupations, Australia, July 2020 to April 2021



Over 80% of employers required applicants to hold a formal qualification, usually a trade level qualification (e.g. certificate III or IV). Where qualifications were required, employers received an average of 3.8 qualified applicants per vacancy, with around 42% being unsuitable.

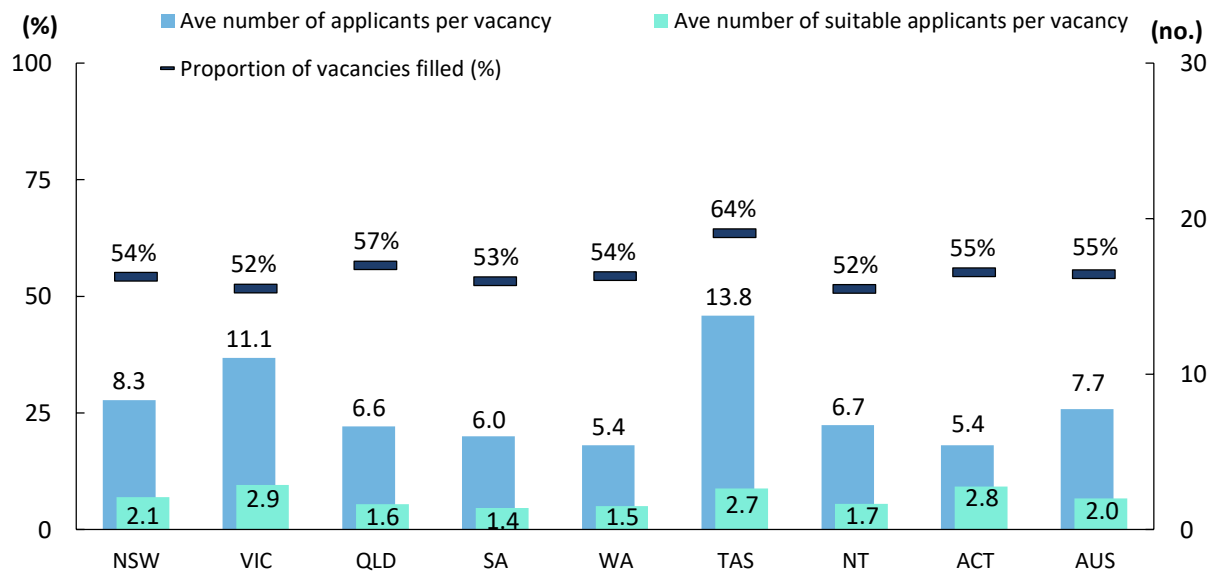
In addition to qualifications, 84% of employers required applicants to have relevant work experience, typically requiring just under two years of experience. Additionally, around 30% of employers required applicants to have specialised skills or experience.

The most common reason applicants were found unsuitable when applying for Construction Trades Worker vacancies was a lack of general experience in the occupation (mentioned by 71% of employers). Other reasons included applicants performing poorly at one or more stages of the recruitment process (mentioned by 47% of employers) and lack of qualifications (46%). The lack of specific skills or experience was mentioned by 32% of employers.

Although employers in regional areas generally experienced more recruitment difficulties than metropolitan-based employers, the differences were minor. For example, while metropolitan employers filled 55% of their vacancies, regional employers filled 53% of their vacancies.

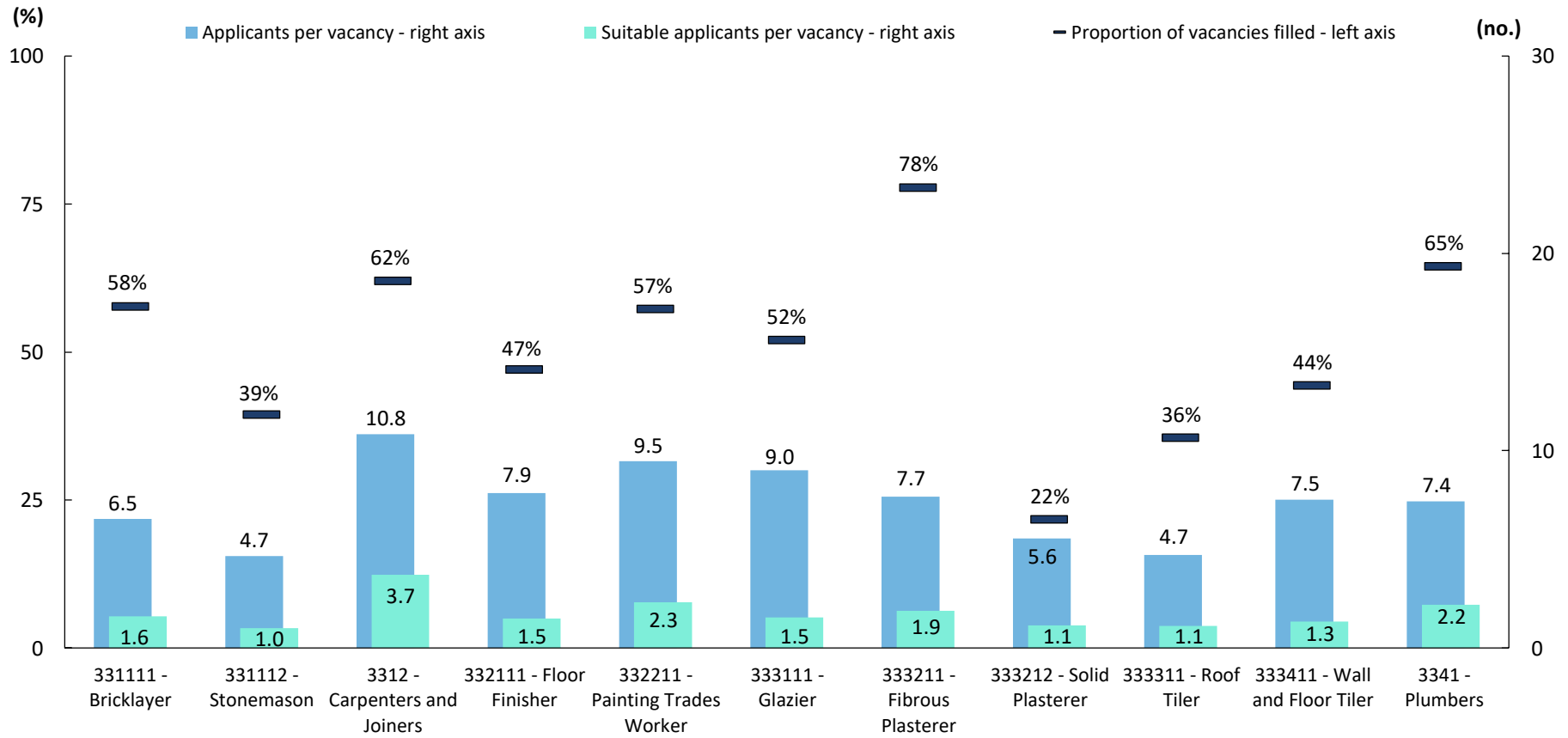
Employers in Tasmania filled the highest proportion of Construction Trades Worker vacancies (64%) (Figure 2), and received the highest average number of applicants per vacancy (13.8). Employers in Victoria and the Northern Territory filled the lowest proportion of vacancies (52%). South Australian employers had the fewest average number of suitable applicants per vacancy (1.4), followed by Western Australian employers (1.5).

Figure 2: Proportion of vacancies filled (%), average number of applicants and suitable applicants per vacancy (no.), surveyed Construction Trades Workers, by State and Territory, July 2020 - April 2021



Among the surveyed Construction Trades Worker occupations, the lowest vacancy fill rates were for Solid Plasterer (22%), Roof Tiler (36%), and Stonemason (39%) (Figure 3). These occupations were also characterised by low numbers of suitable applicants (1.0 to 1.1 per vacancy, on average). Vacancies for Fibrous Plasterers had the highest vacancy fill rate (78%), while vacancies for Carpenters and Joiners received the highest average number of suitable applicants per vacancy (3.7).

Figure 3: Proportion of vacancies filled (%), average number of applicants and suitable applicants per vacancy (no.), Construction Trades Worker occupations, Australia, July 2020 to April 2021



Stakeholder Engagement

Construction Trades Worker occupations were raised by a number of stakeholders through the engagement process where representative bodies were able to provide input on occupations through surveys, meetings with the NSC, or other submissions. The Construction Trades Worker occupations most frequently reported to have recruitment difficulty were Carpenter and General Plumber.

Generally, stakeholders reported recruitment difficulty for the occupations nationally. The major reasons for recruitment difficulty were a general lack of applicants, a lack of suitable applicants, and that applicants lacked technical skills, qualifications, or experience. Difficulty recruiting occurred mainly for experienced positions.

Many stakeholders stated that increasing wages was used to attract employees for vacancies and engaging in partnerships with universities, VET providers or training providers was used to address the recruitment difficulty more generally. Recruitment difficulty was largely expected to worsen in the next 12 months with an aging workforce being the primary future challenge.

Demand and Supply

Indicators of the demand for Construction Trades Workers are mixed. Employment of these workers has fallen since peaking in 2019.¹ The number of advertised vacancies, though, has increased strongly since a low in March 2020, to the highest level in more than a decade.²

New supply to Construction Trades Worker occupations is often through apprenticeships. The number of people completing construction trade apprenticeships fell by 15% in the year to March 2021.³ The number of people commencing relevant apprenticeships, however, increased by 36% over the same period, which may lead to increased supply over the next few years. Notably, apprenticeship commencements have increased significantly since the introduction of the Boosting Apprenticeships Commencements (BAC) measure in October 2020.

Temporary skilled migration is also a source of supply for a range of Technicians and Trades Worker occupations, including Construction Trades. The number of temporary skilled visa

¹ ABS, Labour Force, May 2021, National Skills Commission trend

² National Skills Commission, Internet Vacancy Index, June 2021, trend

³ NCVET, Apprentices and Trainees, March 2021

holders in the Technicians and Trades Workers major group has fallen since early 2020, down by around a quarter, limiting supply to this labour market.⁴

⁴ Department of Home Affairs, Temporary resident (skilled) visa holders in Australia, June 2021 (subclasses 457 and 482)

Appendix – SPL Findings for Construction Trades Worker Occupations

Occupation		Current Labour Market Ratings and Future Demand Rating									
ANZSCO	Occupation	National Labour Market Rating	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	National Future Demand
331111	Bricklayer	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	Moderate
331112	Stonemason	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	Moderate
331211	Carpenter and Joiner	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	Moderate
331212	Carpenter	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	Moderate
331213	Joiner	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	Moderate
332111	Floor Finisher	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	Moderate
332211	Painting Trades Worker	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	Moderate
333111	Glazier	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	Moderate
333211	Fibrous Plasterer	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	Moderate
333212	Solid Plasterer	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	Moderate
333311	Roof Tiler	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	Soft
333411	Wall and Floor Tiler	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	Moderate
334111	Plumber (General)	S	S	S	NS	S	S	S	S	S	Moderate
334112	Airconditioning and Mechanical Services Plumber	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	Moderate
334113	Drainer	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	Moderate
334114	Gasfitter	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	Moderate
334115	Roof Plumber	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	Moderate

Ratings: S – Shortage; NS – No Shortage