

# Bricklayer

## ANZSCO 3311-11

South Australia  
September 2018

**Current labour market rating:** Shortage

Previous labour market rating (September 2017): Shortage

### Comments

Employers surveyed continue to have difficulties in attracting sufficiently experienced bricklayers for their advertised vacancies. There continues to be a shortage of qualified applicants with no significant changes over the past 12 months.

### Survey results<sup>1</sup>

- Surveyed employers were primarily small to medium businesses that worked in residential or commercial construction
- The proportion of vacancies filled in 2018 was 35 per cent. Overall, the percentage of vacancies filled within 4 to 6 weeks had improved slightly from 30 per cent in 2017. The average number of applicants per vacancy has increased from 3.8 applicants per vacancy in 2017 to 7.7 applicants per vacancy in 2018. This is above the five-year average from 2014 to 2018 of 5.3 applicants per vacancy.
- Of the qualified applicants per vacancy, the average remained on par as the previous year with 0.4 suitable applicants per vacancy.
- Employers had significant issues attracting qualified and experienced bricklayers to their vacancies. Employers received the highest number of applicant numbers per vacancy since 2015 with an average of 8 applicants per vacancy.
- Most employers surveyed commented it is very hard to find qualified and suitable bricklayers. Some employers stated this difficulty is due to the increased demand for tradespeople while others cited a lack of interest in apprenticeships from attracting apprentices.
- The occupation of bricklayer remains in shortage and vacancies remained unfilled, as applicants do not possess the correct qualifications or experience.

### Unsuitable applicants

- Of the employers survey only 16 per cent of employers had qualified applicants and 68 per cent of those applicants were unsuitable.
- Applicants were found to be unsuitable as they were not trade qualified or had little or no experience within the field. In these instances, applicants were considered more suitable for a laboring role as they lack the technical skills of the trade.
- Several applicants screened and deemed appropriate for trial failed to present on the day, or left the trial after a few hours.
- Overall, the proportion of employers who had unfilled vacancies was 60 per cent with 30 percent of employers receiving no suitable applicants.
- In addition, some unsuitable applicants lacked the relevant building and workplace safety licences, ABN or access to own transport required by employers.

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

- A high number of employers claimed some workers were unreliable and lacked a good work ethic.

## Demand and supply trends

- According to the 2016, ABS Census there were 1200 employed bricklayers in South Australia, a decrease of 25 per cent from 2011 where there were 1600 employed bricklayers.
- Around 91 per cent of bricklayers are employed in the construction industry with most of these working on the residential construction sector.
- Some surveyed employers noted residential construction activity was stable, consistent with available data that shows overall, the construction activity in South Australia appears strong despite some indicators of steady activity.
  - The total value of building work done in South Australia increased in March 2018 compared with March 2017 and was above the five-year average.<sup>2</sup>
  - The value of work building work commenced in South Australia has increased in March 2018 in comparison to March 2017, an approximate 6 per cent increase compared with the previous 12 months.<sup>3</sup>
  - South Australian residential building approvals increased slightly in the year to May 2018,<sup>4</sup> which provides an indication of future demand, the number of building approvals remain well above the five-year average.<sup>5</sup>
  - Job advertisements for Bricklayers have increased slightly over the last 12 months and have remained steady if not the same with an average 6-7 since 2014 according to the Internet Vacancy index.<sup>6</sup>
- A source of supply to the trade is new graduates who have completed a contract of training in bricklaying and block laying.
  - Completions numbers have been in steady decline since 2013 and are at their lowest since 2007.
  - In the last five years, in spite of a small increase in commencements numbers in 2015, the number of commencements have remained steady but well below the 10-year average.
  - Only around half of those that commence a contract of training in bricklaying complete the qualification.<sup>7</sup>
- In addition to formally recognised contracts of training, there is also a significant informal supply to the occupation. Census data from 2016 indicated that approximately 37 per cent of bricklayers do not hold qualifications at the Certificate III level or higher.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>2</sup> ABS, Building Activity, Australia, Cat. No. 8752.0, Table 16, series type seasonal

<sup>3</sup> ABS, Building Activity, Australia, Cat. No. 8752.0, Table 34, series type seasonal

<sup>4</sup> ABS, Building Approvals, Australia, Cat. No. 8731.0 Table 4, series type seasonal

<sup>5</sup> ABS, Building Approvals, Australia, Cat. No. 8731.0, Table 33, series type seasonal

<sup>6</sup> Department of Jobs and Small Business, Internet Vacancy Index, August 2018, 12 month moving average

<sup>7</sup> NCVER, Apprentices and Trainees, March 2018, estimates (limited to certificate III)

<sup>8</sup> ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016