

Plumbers

ANZSCO 3341

Victoria
September 2018

Current labour market rating: Shortage

This is the second consecutive year that there was a shortage of plumbers in Victoria, noting that recruitment difficulties were identified in the previous three years.

Key research findings

- This year's findings are a five-year low and continues the downward trend in the proportion of vacancies filled since 2015 (see Figure 1).
- The majority of vacancies were for general plumbing, as well as specialist roles in mechanical, drainage, gas fitter and roof plumbing.
- Employers sought fully qualified and registered plumbers. A small number of employers also required plumbers to be licensed in order to work unsupervised.
- Seventy four per cent of qualified applicants were found to be unsuitable due to a lack of specific experience.
 - Applicants were also considered unsuitable because they had a limited range of plumbing skills or poor communication skills.
- Some employers noted that they could not offer comparable remuneration to the commercial sector and were unable to attract suitably qualified and skilled plumbers.

Demand and supply

- Demand for plumbers is driven by population growth and activity in the construction industry.
 - The Victorian population grew by 2.2 per cent in 2017, below the growth rate of 2.5 per cent in 2016 but equivalent to the five-year average of 2.2 per cent.
 - There were 4893 dwelling units approved in August 2018, below the monthly average of 6188 over the past year and below the average of 5513 approved per month since July 2013.
- There were housing finance commitments undertaken in July 2018 for the construction of 1972 dwellings. This is above the monthly averages of 1839 dwellings over the last year and 1636 dwellings over the last five years.
- Internet vacancies increased by an annual average of 25.7 per cent over the five years to August 2018.

2018 Survey Results¹

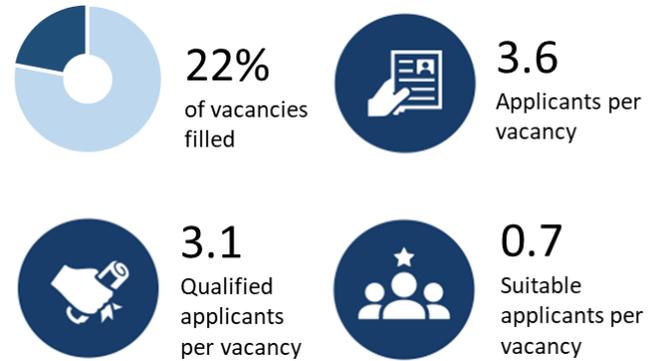
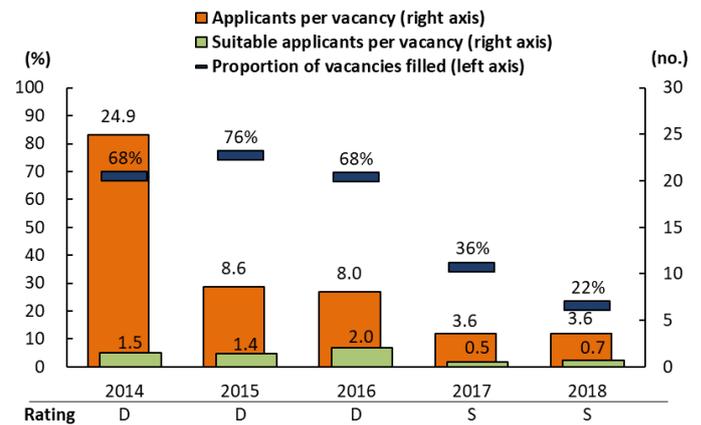


Figure 1: Survey results, Plumbers, 2014 to 2018



Key to ratings: S = Shortage; D = Recruitment difficulty

- An apprenticeship, including completion of a Certificate III qualification, is the main pathway into this trade.
 - The number of commencements and completions each increased over the four quarters to March 2018 (to 2404 and 977), but remained well below their five-year annual averages (2655 and 1072).
- Registrations and licences for plumbing practitioners in Victoria increased by 1.5 per cent over the four quarters to September 2018.
- Shortages in this occupation are likely to persist into the future, given that current supply trends continue to trend down against growing demand.

¹ The methodology underpinning this research is outlined at [Skill Shortage Research Methodology | Department of Jobs and Small Business](#). Additional Data Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Cat. No. 3101.0, Australian Demographic Statistics, March 2018, Table 2 Population growth and growth rate; ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016; NCVER, Apprentices and Trainees, March 2018, estimates (limited to certificate III); Victorian Building Authority, Organisation and Industry Data Update, Quarter 1, 2017-2018; ABS, Cat. No. 8731.0, Building Approvals, Australia, Table 23 Dwelling Units Approved in New Residential Buildings, Number and Value, - Original - Victoria, August 2018; ABS, Cat. No. 5609.0 Housing Finance, Australia, Table 10a, Housing Finance Commitments (Owner Occupation), by Purpose: State, Original, July 2018; Department of Jobs and Small Business, Internet Vacancy Index, August 2018, 12 month moving average