



# Airconditioning and Refrigeration Mechanic ANZSCO 3421-11

South Australia  
September 2018

Current labour market rating: **Shortage**

Previous labour market rating (September 2017): Shortage

## Comments

Employers reported attracting many applications for their advertised vacancies for airconditioning and refrigeration mechanics but they were unable to recruit sufficient suitable workers due to lack of specific experience. Consequently, a portion of vacancies were filled within four weeks (46 per cent).

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

- The survey found that 46 per cent of vacancies were filled within four weeks. This was a slight improvement in comparison to the September 2017 survey where 40 per cent of vacancies were filled within four weeks.
- On average, there were 6.7 applicants per vacancy compared to an average of 7.6 applicants per vacancy reported in the 2017 survey.
- There was a slight increase in the number of suitable applicants per vacancy, with 1.4 suitable applicants per vacancy compared to an average of 1.0 suitable applicants recorded in 2017.
- Due to ongoing difficulty, some employers reported finding it easier to recruit apprentices to train and offer employment upon completion of their apprenticeship.
- In addition to qualifications and experience, employers required applicants to have appropriate licences (such as the ARC tick refrigerant handling license, White Card and restricted electrical licence.)

## Unsuitable applicants

- Although employers required applicants to be trade qualified, only 56 per cent of applicants were qualified and 76 per cent of qualified applicants were found unsuitable.
- The main reason for unsuitability were due to applicants not having sector-specific experience.
- Employers commonly sought applicants with at least two to five years sector-specific experience (e.g. industrial, commercial or residential).

## Demand and supply trends

- According to the 2016 ABS Census there were 1,500 employed airconditioning and refrigeration mechanics in South Australia and approximately 25.4 per cent were self-employed. Approximately 75 per cent obtained Certificate III and IV qualification.<sup>2</sup>
- Census 2016 data also indicated 39.9 per cent were employed in the “construction industry” and 35.7 per cent were employed in an “other services” industry.
- Census 2016 data indicated 84.3 per cent of air-conditioning, refrigeration mechanics in South Australia lived in metro areas, and 15.7 per cent lived in rural areas.

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

<sup>2</sup> ABS, Census of Housing and Population, 2016

- The Australian Refrigeration Council indicated in 2017, there were 2,807 licensed air-conditioning and refrigeration technicians (including apprentice technicians) in South Australia.<sup>3</sup>
- The Internet Vacancy Index online vacancies have trended up over the previous five years.<sup>4</sup>
- Overall, the construction sector in South Australia appears strong with some recent indicators of steady activity.
  - The total value of building work done in South Australia increased in the year to March 2018 compared with the previous 12-month period and is above the five-year average.<sup>5</sup>
  - The value of building work commenced in South Australia as of March 2018 is above the five-year average, a 19.2 per cent increase compared with the previous 12 months.<sup>6</sup>
  - The value of SA residential building approvals increased slightly in the year to May<sup>7</sup>, which provides an indication of future demand, the number of building approvals remain well above the five-year average.<sup>8</sup>
  - The value of building work yet to be done has increased by 39 per cent from March 2017 to March 2018.<sup>9</sup>
  - Financial commitments for the construction of new dwellings in South Australia increased by around 4 per cent in the year to July 2018 compared with the previous year.<sup>10</sup>
- In the last two years however, there has been a slight improvement in completion rates. Completions 4 quarters to March 2018 were 76 and 72 respectively to 4 quarters to March 2017. The number of trainees who completed their contracts of training reached its highest point in 2013 and showed a decline to 2016.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Australian Refrigeration Council, unpublished data

<sup>4</sup> Department of Employment, Internet Vacancy Index, July 2017, 12 month moving average

<sup>5</sup> ABS, Building Activity, Australia, Cat. No. 8752.0, Table 16, estimates based on four quarter totals

<sup>6</sup> ABS, Building Activity, Australia, Cat. No. 8752.0, Table 44, estimates based on four quarter totals

<sup>7</sup> ABS, Building Approvals, Australia, Cat. No. 8731.0

<sup>8</sup> ABS, Building Approvals, Australia, Cat. No. 8731.0, Table 33, estimates based on 12 month totals

<sup>9</sup> ABS, Building Activity, Australia, Cat. No. 8752.0, Table 50, estimates based on four quarter totals

<sup>10</sup> ABS, Housing Finance, Australia, Cat No. 5609.0, estimates based on 12 month totals

<sup>11</sup> NCVET, VOCSTATS