



48%  
of vacancies filled



9.8 applicants  
(on average, per vacancy)



6.3 qualified applicants  
(on average, per vacancy)



1.2 suitable applicants  
(on average, per vacancy)



81% of qualified applicants  
were unsuitable

### Key research findings<sup>1</sup>

- Employers filled 48 per cent of vacancies in this cluster of occupations, the lowest proportion filled since 2012 when employers filled 41 per cent of their roles.
- The proportion of vacancies filled in this cluster has been in decline for three successive years, a trend echoed by the decline in the average number of applicants per vacancy and the average number of suitable applicants per vacancy.
- The availability of suitably qualified applicants varied across occupations.
  - No shortage of Sheet Metal Workers and Metal Fabricators was identified, with employers respectively filling 80 per cent and 64 per cent their vacancies for these trades. Employers seeking Fitters and Metal Machinists experienced shortages across the state, while shortages of First Class Welders were limited to regional areas.
- Qualifications alone were not sufficient to meet the needs of employers, who typically sought applicants with previous experience in a niche product or products for specific sectors.
  - This included previous experience in the manufacture of products for maritime or agricultural use, the oil and gas sector, mining and transport. Employers sought applicants who could commence quickly and required minimal training. As a result, 81 per cent of qualified applicants were deemed unsuitable for roles, with an absence of specialist experience being the main cause of their unsuitability.

- Separate to qualifications and relevant experience employers required applicants to demonstrate maturity, reliability and adhere strictly to workplace health and safety requirements.
- Small to medium-sized employers described many applicants pay expectations as excessive. This issue was present throughout the state.

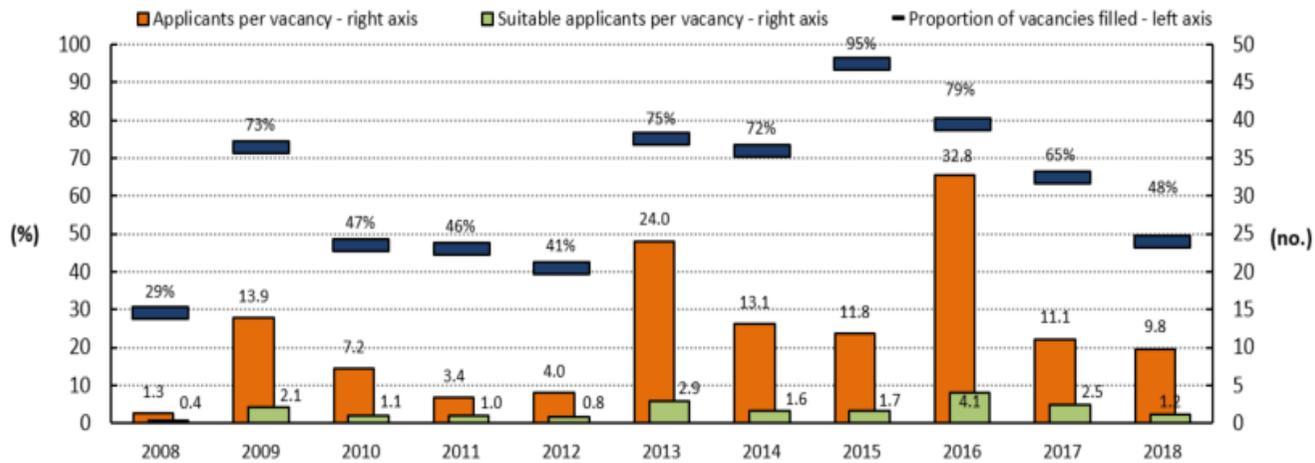
### Supply and demand<sup>2</sup>

- The majority of employees in engineering trades are employed in the manufacturing and construction industries.
  - Employment in manufacturing in WA is projected to shrink by 0.5 per cent over the five years to 2023, compared to projected employment growth of 5.0 per cent across all industries in the state over the same period.
- The value of construction work done has fallen by 35 per cent over the five-years to December 2018 and engineering construction has also recorded drastic falls. However, private engineering and commercial construction is projected to grow by 8.7 per cent over 2019-20, driven in part by investment in mining and resources.
- Completions of engineering trades apprenticeships have trended down over the last five years, falling from around 1,350 in 2013 to 800 in 2018.

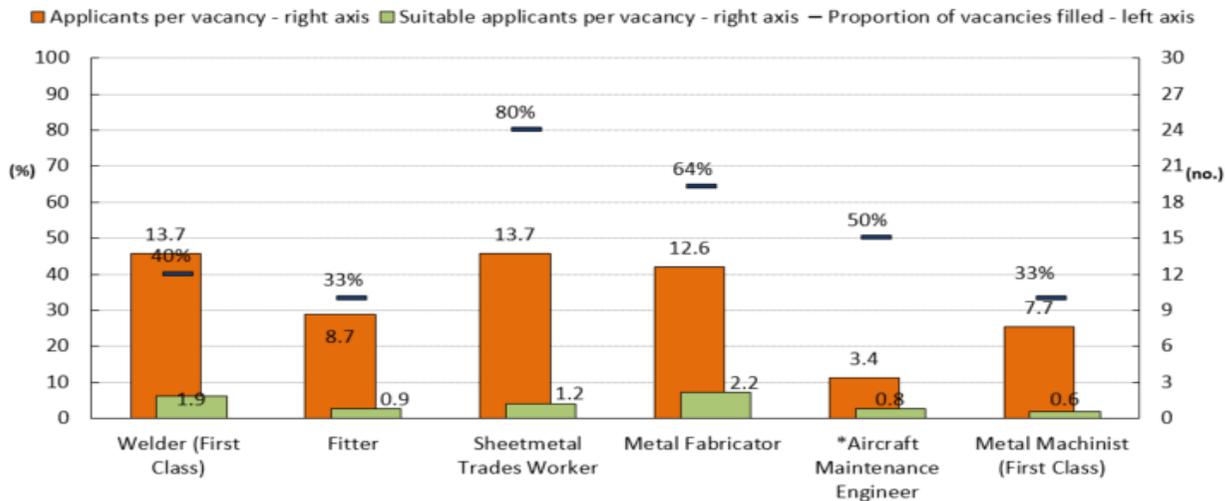
<sup>1</sup> The methodology for this research is outlined at [Skill Shortage Research Methodology | Department of Jobs and Small Business](#). Visit the [skill shortages website](#) for more detailed information on each occupation in this cluster.

<sup>2</sup> Supply and demand sources – ABS, Census, 2016, Occupational Profiles Summary, Western Australia; Department of Jobs and Small Business, Labour Market Information Portal (LMIP) Regional Employment Projections to May 2023, Interactive Tool; ABS, Cat. No. 8755 Construction Work Done, Australia, Preliminary, Table 4, Value of Building Work Done, Chain Volume Measures, States and Territories, Original, latest issue; DAE Business Outlook December 2018; NCVET Apprentices and Trainees, Certificate III in Engineering, estimates to June 2018.

**Figure 1: Proportion of vacancies filled (%), average number of applicants and suitable applicants per vacancy (no.), Engineering Trades, Western Australia, time series 2008 to 2018**



**Figure 2: Proportion of vacancies filled (%), average number of applicants and suitable applicants per vacancy (no.), and Western Australia rating, Engineering Trades, 2018-19.**



\* Occupation assessed at the National level and rating is not available for Western Australia.