

Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace Relations

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012**

Outcome 3 - Tertiary, Skills, International and Indigenous Strategy

DEEWR Question No. EW0638_12

Senator Nash provided in writing (*Refers to previous DEEWR Question [EW0408_12](#)*).

Subject: National Skills Needs List

Question

Skills shortage research program

Following on from Question on Notice reply from budget estimates regarding the National Skills Needs List (NSNL) –

http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/eet_ctte/estimates/bud_1112/answers/EW0408_12.pdf

DEEWR states it researches approximately 150 skilled occupations on an ongoing basis, using a sample Survey of Employers who have Recently Advertised vacancies (SERA) to determine their success recruiting the skilled workers they need. The research focuses on skilled occupations, that is, those which generally require at least three years of post-school education or training and includes trades, professions, associate professions and some management occupations. The NSNL is derived from this research. DEEWR details the criteria in which an occupation is included on the NSNL:

1. the occupation must be classified under ANZSCO as belonging in skill level 3* 'Technicians and Trades Workers' (all occupations that fall within this group are assessed);
2. at least 1500 people are employed in the occupation, based on 2006 Census data; and
3. the occupation is assessed as being in shortage for three of the past five years including one of last two years, as determined by the Department's skills shortage research program.

An analysis of Census 2006 'industry of employment by occupation' data for several regional centres in NSW alone found there were more than 12,870 people employed in the agriculture, forestry and fishing industries. In all, there were 8681 managers/professionals/technicians and trade workers all up that would undoubtedly require at least three years of post school education or training/Skill Level 3. The regional centres include Moree, Tamworth, Armidale, Coffs Harbour, Dubbo, Orange, Bathurst, Albury, Wagga Wagga and Hunter.

Can the dept explain why only three agriculture/horticulture occupations (shearer, arborist, landscape gardener) remain listed on the National Skills Needs List given the size of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in NSW alone, and also factoring in the cumulative effect of drought and floods on employment opportunities?

Answer

Eligibility for the National Skills Needs List (NSNL) is limited to occupations in the Technicians and Trades Workers Major Group which have employment of at least 1 500 nationally (i.e. for the individual occupation measured at the 2006 Census, not at the aggregated level).

2006 Census data show that in the Agriculture industry there are large numbers of skilled workers employed, (that is, in Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) Major Groups 1, 2 and 3 Managers, Professionals and Technicians and Trades Workers). However, around 90 per cent (more than 160 000) of these workers are employed as Farmers and Farm Managers, which are not included in the Technicians and Trades Workers group.

ABS data from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing show that there were 15 occupations in the Technicians and Trades Workers Major Group of ANZSCO which had significant employment (in excess of 100 workers) in the industry 'Agriculture' (defined according to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification).

All except two of these occupations are included in the DEEWR skill shortage research; the exceptions being Wool Classer which had total employment (across all industries) of 780 (i.e. below the 1 500 required for eligibility for the NSNL) and Horse Trainer, which is not assessed by DEEWR as there has been no demand for information about this labour market.

Summary table - Technicians and Trades Workers occupations with employment in excess of 100 in Agriculture

ANZSCO code	Occupation Title	Employment in Agriculture	Total Employment	NSNL	Comment
361211	Shearer	2 380	4 170	yes	
362411	Nurseryperson	1 300	4 900	no	Does not meet shortage criterion
362211	Gardener (General)	1 130	24 590	no	Does not meet shortage criterion
351411	Cook	400	43 320	yes	
323211	Fitter (General)	380	54 120	yes	
361112	Horse Trainer	360	2 760	no	Not assessed
399917	Wool Classer	350	780	no	Does not meet employment size criterion
321211	Motor Mechanic (General)	330	71 970	yes	
311111	Agricultural Technician	290	2 240	no	Although some employers experience difficulty recruiting for particular skills in this occupation, widespread, persistent shortages across the whole occupation have not been identified
362213	Landscape Gardener	210	16 110	yes	
362311	Greenkeeper	200	12 140	no	Does not meet shortage criterion
322313	Welder (First Class)	190	23 060	yes	
322311	Metal Fabricator	130	35 710	yes	
351211	Butcher or Smallgoods Maker	120	17 630	yes	Butcher is included
341111	Electrician (General)	100	87 760	yes	

Source: 2006 Census data – latest available occupation-level (6 digit figures), excludes not elsewhere classified and not further defined codes

2006 Census data provide the latest available employment figures at the 6 digit occupation level, but DEEWR will review its skill shortage occupational coverage when data are available from the 2011 Census, which is expected to be provided by the ABS in late 2012.