

Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace Relations

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

Outcome 3 - Higher Education

DEEWR Question No.EW0408_12

Senator Nash asked on 1/06/2011, Hansard page 45.

Question

Skill shortage research program

Could you actually provide for me in a significant amount of detail the exact agricultural and horticultural skills that you considered as part of the compilation of the list, and which you then discarded through lack of need—obviously the National Skills Needs List—

Answer

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) 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.

Six agriculture and horticulture occupations are being assessed by the research as outlined in the following table:

Occupation Code (ANZSCO)	Occupation Description
234100	Agricultural Consultant/Scientist
311111	Agricultural Technician
361211	Shearer
362212	Arborist
362213	Landscape gardener
362311	Greenkeeper
362411	Nursery person

Employers are surveyed nationally from each occupation. This includes employers from regional areas, and takes into account the significance of regional employment in the particular occupation. Regional areas are identified as those outside the major capital cities in each State and Territory.

The research has occurred bi-annually for the past three decades and historical

listings of skill shortages have been developed. The historic listings enable analysis of skill shortages over time and in relation to economic cycles.

Results are published at www.deewr.gov.au/skillshortages and provide the basis for advice on a range of training and migration programs and policies.

National Skills Needs List

The National Skills Needs Lists (NSNL) derived from this research, is used to identify trade occupations that are deemed to be in national skills shortage and therefore determine eligibility of Australian Apprentices and their employers for a range of incentives.

In order for an occupation to be included on the NSNL, it must be identified by the research as being in skills shortage, and must also meet the following criteria:

- 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);
- at least 1500 people are employed in the occupation, based on 2006 Census data; and
- 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.

*The Australian Bureau of Statistics compiles the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) and classifies occupations according to the level of skills required to work in the occupation.

At present, the three agriculture and horticulture occupations listed on the NSNL and therefore attracting certain incentives and personal benefits payments under the Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program, are:

- Shearer,
- Arborist, and
- Landscape Gardener.

The current payments made because of a listing on the NSNL are the Rural and Regional Skills Shortage Commencement Incentive, Tools for Your Trade payment and Support for Adult Australian Apprentices payment.