

REAP

Regional Employer Alliance Project (REAP) Central Highlands, Queensland

A Project to Develop Alliances with Employers within the Agriculture, Infrastructure, Local Government and Resource Industry Sectors

Seasonal Workforce Attraction: Matching local skill needs to the skill sets of a travelling population

CIVIL CONSTRUCTION SKILLS AND LABOUR REPORT CENTRAL HIGHLANDS, QUEENSLAND

October 2008

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DISCLAIMER

This document has been prepared by the author for Central Highlands Development Corporation, in good faith on the basis of available information. While the information is considered true and correct at the date of publication, changes in circumstances after the time of publication may impact on the accuracy of the information. The information may change without notice and the author is not in any way liable for the accuracy of any information contained in this document.

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Executive Summary

Small to medium civil contracting businesses are reporting a critical inability to attract and retain skilled labour which is impacting on their ability to undertake work, suppressing business growth and affecting productivity and income.

52 of 61 (85%) civil contracting businesses based in the Central Highlands Regional Council area, or conducting substantial operations, were surveyed.

Most Central Hire civil contracting businesses operate 'wet hire' businesses. 'Wet hire' describes the hiring of machinery with an operator and in some circumstances includes fuel. The local industry is characterised by a wide range of business sizes and plant fleets.

Contract workloads can fluctuate dramatically throughout the year; reflected in the total workforce figures provided for the 12 months to August 2008, ranging from 539 to 1075 staff. The largest occupation represented in the workforce is plant operators, comprising 46% of the total civil contracting workforce, and 71.5% of the part time/casual workforce.

72.5% of businesses sampled reported current vacancies. 162 (29%) of full time and 26% of the part time casual positions were unfilled. Plant operators comprised the highest number of vacancies; 28% and 47% of full time and part time positions respectively. The average length of vacancy reported was 6 months, however vacancies of 1 month to 5 years were listed. 1 year was the most commonly reported length of vacancy.

Vacancies impose a critical loss to civil businesses. Their ability to tender or accept available work is reduced while idle machine and plant continues to incur overhead costs such as lease payments. Vacancies occur throughout the year including the peak travelling season.

76% of all respondents stated they were unable to find suitably skilled labour. This included one employer of greater than 100 staff. Small to medium sized employers described their frustration at the loss of newly trained staff to larger companies and mines, and their difficulty in competing with mine wages and packages. Most businesses are training staff on site.

Participating civil contracting businesses showed a strong interest in the project:

- 78% of respondents indicated they would employ skilled staff on contracts for 1 month or more
- 44% were interested in pursuing job-share arrangements

72% of employers and an additional two owner operators registered their interest in the resources of a travelling skilled workforce, and asked to be supplied with further information.

Background to the Report

The Local Government Managers Association (National) commissioned Interim Mining Skills And Labour Report, Central Highlands, Queensland, (the Report) in February 2008 to provide information to REAP (Central Highlands) regarding the civil contracting sector labour needs.

This needs analysis is a companion to analyses of labour in the agricultural, mining and local government sectors of the Central Highlands, a literature review, and analyses of tourists travelling through Emerald currently being undertaken. The Key Evaluation Question for all research undertaken as part of this project is:

Can local skills shortages in agriculture, civil construction, local government & mining be met & matched to the skill sets of the travelling population?

All full report will be presented when data collection and analysis is completed across the four industry sectors in November 2008.

Objectives of the Civil Contracting Skills and Labour (Central Highlands) Report are to:

- Provide a measure of vacant positions
- Identify tasks required and at what times of the year
- Identify skills required
- Measure compatibility of short-term contracts and job-share working arrangements with civil enterprise needs
- Collect information regarding available accommodation/facilities
- Register interest of Central Highlands civil construction enterprises in participating in a potential REAP skill matching program
- Initiate a database of contacts of interested businesses
- Identify barriers to skill matching

This information provides the context, direction and justification that the REAP Steering Committee and Regional Project Manager can use to develop strategies to attract a Seasonal Workforce to match local skill needs.

REAP (Central Highlands) Steering Committee

A Steering Committee provided overview and guided the progress of the REAP project from its instigation in November 2007. The Steering Committee contributes from their experiences, representative across agricultural, mining, civil contracting and local government sectors of the Central Highlands, and provides a conduit for report information through their networks.

- Craig Pressler, Proprietor, 2PH Farms
- Ian Burnett, AgForce Queensland
- Dr Jim Sands, Australian Agricultural College (Emerald Campus)
- Mike McCosker, Central Highlands Cotton Growers & Irrigators Association
- Bryan Ottone, Councillors and staff, Central Highlands Regional Council
- Peter Dowling, Central Highlands Regional Development Corporation
- Michael Gavin, BMA Gregory Crinum Mine
- Graham Morris, Ensham Mine
- Nicola Williams, Rio Tinto Coal Australia Kestrel Mine
- Shayne Shepherd, Shepherd Diesel

- Chris Vine, C&J Excavator Hire

Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference are modified from the REAP (Central Highlands) Project Contract and informed the specific engagement of the Central Highlands mining sector by the Regional Project Manager;

1. Develop and conduct survey of employers, to gather data including the type of work in demand, skill level required, issues to consider such as accreditation, and potential employment arrangements;
2. Analyse the employer and potential employee surveys to determine skill match and training and incentives requirements;
3. Broker comprehensive buy-in to the pilot project from regional employers across the REAP sectors;
4. Garner commitments to the Project and participation in the REAP Regional Employers Alliance from representatives within and across the REAP sectors and across the designated REAP region.

Methodology

The Interim Civil Construction Labour and Skills Report is presented as a qualitative Case Study with Central Highlands businesses, Shepherd Diesel and C&J Excavator Hire, accompanied by the results of a predominantly quantitative industry wide survey. It was understood that a significant number of civil contractors were owner operators, or short-staffed and so a combination of mailed information and personal phone contact was developed to support businesses participate in the survey.

Methods Used

This study was undertaken over two weeks of data collection, and three days of analysis and reporting. The following data collection methods were used to compile information for the Report:

- A semi-structured, face-to-face interview with Shayne Shepherd, Shepherd Diesel and Chris Vine, C&J Excavator Hire was held on 3 June 2008. Information from this interview was collated as the Case Study: Earthmoving Labour Challenges.
- A literature review was undertaken from printed, electronic and other media sources for relevant reports and research.
- A formal structured questionnaire and a collection plan was developed by Regional Project Manager, Liz Alexander and civil contracting committee representative Shayne Shepherd provided guidance and feedback on the design and conduct of survey activities in person and via phone.
- A database of civil contractors was built from the following sources; Yellow Pages, Central Highlands Regional Council register of civil contractors, and circulated through the Steering Committee to identify any further businesses.

- A cover letter introducing REAP and the aims of the project, together with a copy of the survey, and a REAP general information flyer was posted 19 August 2008 to all identified contractors within the Central Highlands, asking for their cooperation and letting them know that they would receive an office visit or phone call to follow up.
- 52 civil contracting businesses either based within the Central Highlands Regional Council, or major operators within the area were surveyed via telephone or in person from 25-29 August 2008. The questionnaire was administered and the information collected by Pam Bartlett-Munt, and Regional Project Manager, Liz Alexander.
- Interviewers filled out surveys for respondents. 8 businesses chose to fax back posted surveys on 21 and 22 August.
- Data was entered by Pam Bartlett-Munt. The database was then checked and analysed by the Regional Project Manager.

Results

Respondents

A total of 52 of 61 civil contracting businesses participated from the Central Highlands, representing 85% of all contracting businesses either based within the Central Highlands Regional Council, or who were major operators within the area.

Location within Central Highlands

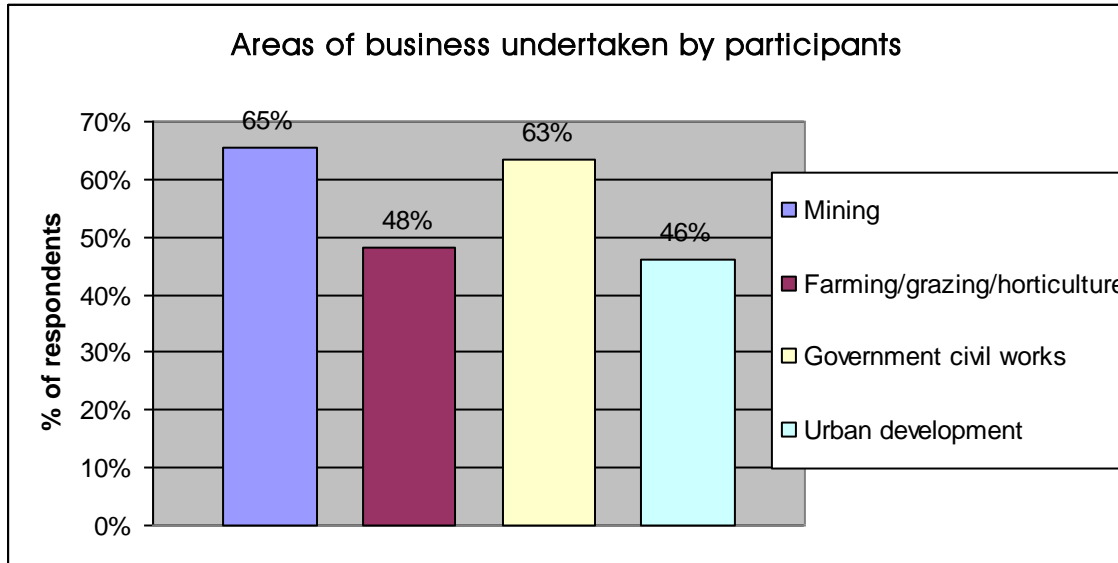
The majority of respondents operated from businesses based in Emerald (24), followed by Capella (10), and Springsure (5). Business listed with principal business residence listed in Gracemere, Mackay, and Oxenford all held significant Central Highlands local government or mining contracts.

Table 1: Location of Respondents' Principal Business Addresses

Nearest Town	No. of respondents
Blackwater	2
Capella	10
Comet	1
Duaringa	2
Emerald	24
Gracemere	1
Mackay	1
Oxenford	1
Roma	1
Rubyvale	1
Rolleston	1
Sapphire	1
Springsure	5
Total	52

Areas of Operations

Of the 52 participating, 11 businesses listed only one area of speciality. All other businesses serviced clients across two or more fields of business, as evidenced in the figure below.



Types of Plant Available in the Central Highlands

With the exception of road rollers, the civil contracting business in the Central Highlands is characterized by 'wet hire' of plant. Dry hire describes the leasing of machinery alone, while wet hire describes the hiring of machinery with labour and in some circumstances includes fuel. Note that all figures following omit dry hire figures from one business, who responded that they were too many to list, and that all were dry hired.

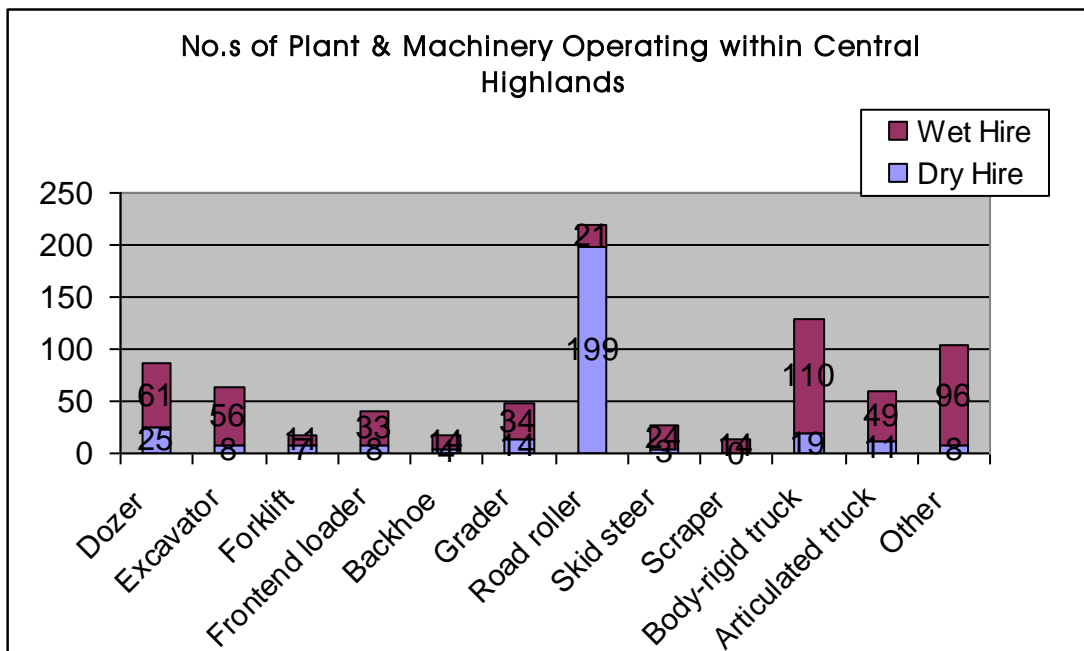


Table 2: Total Numbers of Plant

Plant	Dry Hire	Wet Hire	Total
Dozer	25	61	86
Excavator	8	56	64
Forklift	7	11	18
Front end loader	8	33	41
Backhoe	4	14	18
Grader	14	34	48
Road roller	199	21	220
Skid steer loader	3	24	27
Scraper	0	12	14
Body / rigid truck	19	110	129
Articulated truck	11	49	60
Other:	8	96	104
Total	306	523	928

The road rolling figure shown reflects the number of plant dry-hired by one specialist business. Machinery listed in the category of other included:

Dry Hire

- B-Double trailers

Wet Hire

- Bobcats (2 respondents)
- Laser graders
- Service trucks (2 respondents)
- Water trucks (3 respondents)
- 50 Rear dump trucks
- Tyre handlers
- Knuckle booms
- Dingo
- Telehandler
- Screening plant (2 respondents)
- Cranes
- Trailers

It is not correct to infer a total number of employees from the total number of wet hired plant. Not all plant may be operating simultaneously, one employee may operate more than one machine when there is a work lag.

Owner/operators and Employers

Of the participants, 24 businesses nominated themselves as owner/operators and did not employ staff. 28 civil contractors reported employed staff. However, 1 of the 24 businesses nominated as an owner-operator, because they had two long term vacancies that they had been unable to fill. All following figures have been adjusted accordingly to indicate that 29 civil contractors employ staff. All owner/operators were wet hire enterprises, with between one and eight pieces of machinery or plant. Civil employers reported an average

plant fleet of 18, but numbers ranged from 1 to 86 pieces of machinery, showing the diverse nature of business size within the Central Highlands.

Highest and Lowest Number of Employees

Because many civil businesses employ staff according to the contracts they win on tender, staff numbers can fluctuate dramatically throughout the year. Respondents provided the highest and lowest number of employees on payroll for the last 12 months to August 2008.

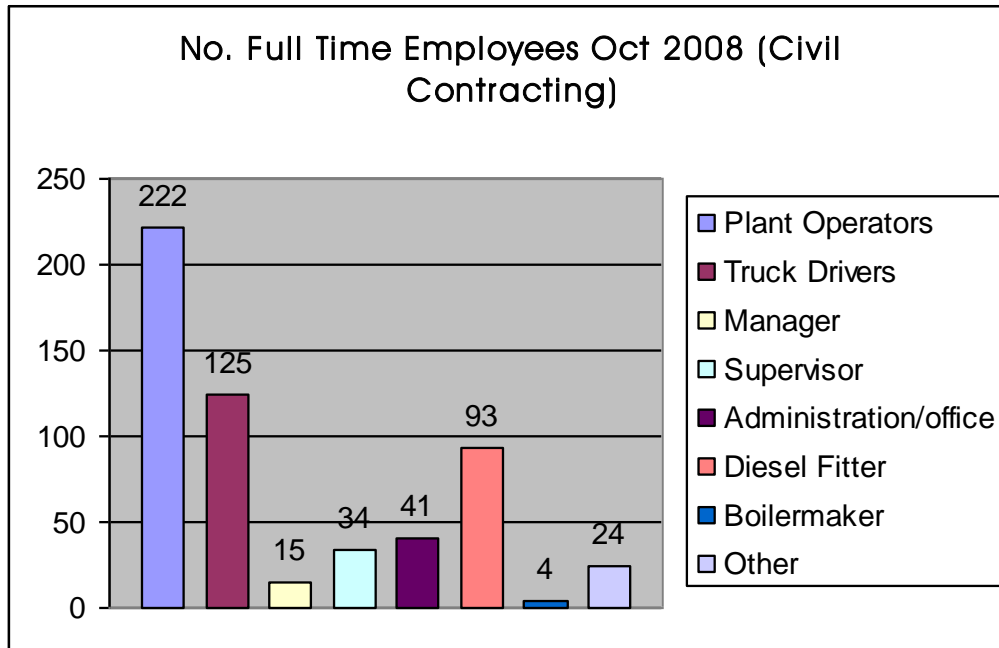
Businesses reported employing a minimum of 539 staff and a maximum of 1075. Civil contracting is also characterised by levels of sub-contracting when required, so participants were not asked to note whether these positions were offered by full time agreement or by contract basis for this question.

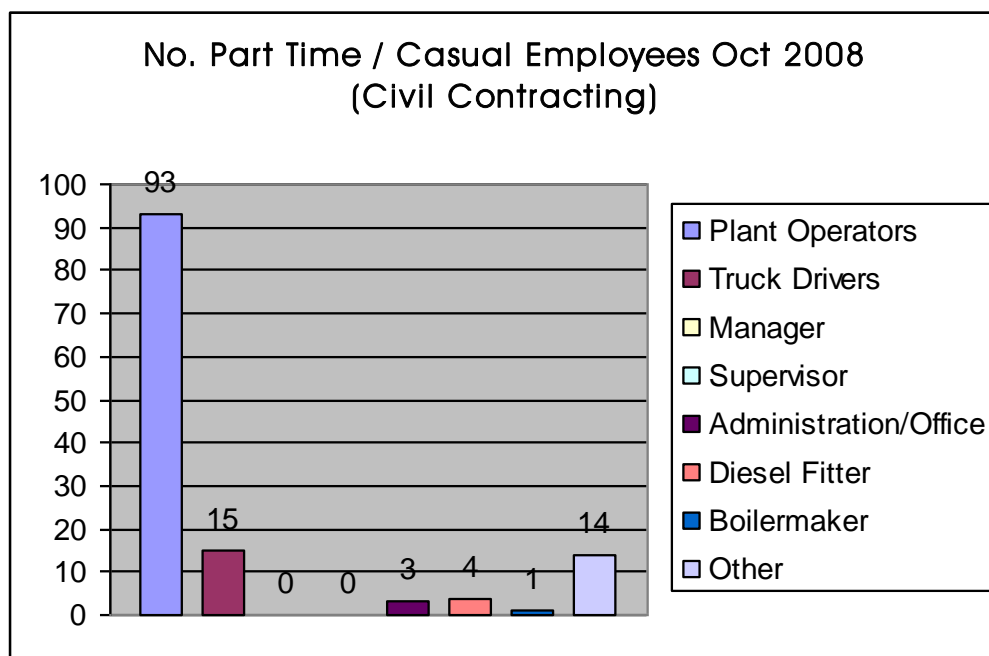
Current Number of Employees

The 29 employer respondents reported their full time and part time/casual staff numbers as below for October 2008. 558 full time employees and 130 part time casual staff were employed by the businesses.

Plant operators comprised 46% of the total civil contracting workforce; 222 employed full time and 93 part time / casual.

The survey only collected data on employed persons within businesses and did not collect data on business owners working within the business.





Positions listed under 'Other' included:

Full Time

- 10 Crane Operators
- 3 Labourers
- 9 Leading Hands (2 respondents)

Part Time / Casual

- 14 Labourers (2 respondents)

Businesses with a Full Workforce

Of the 29 sampled businesses employing staff, 21 businesses (72.5%) reported current job vacancies. Only 8 businesses (27.5%) reported full employment in their businesses.

Current Number of Vacancies

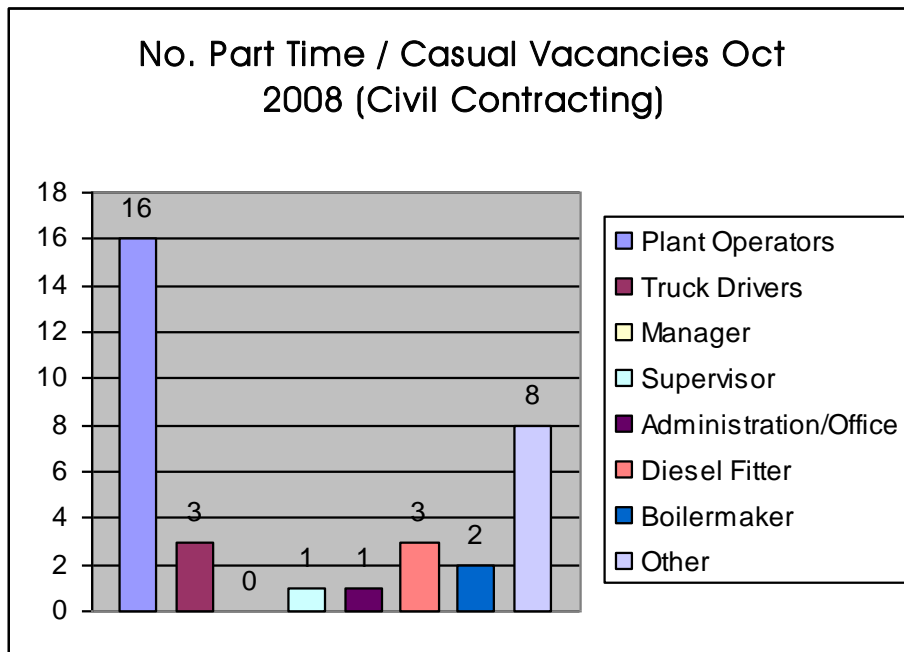
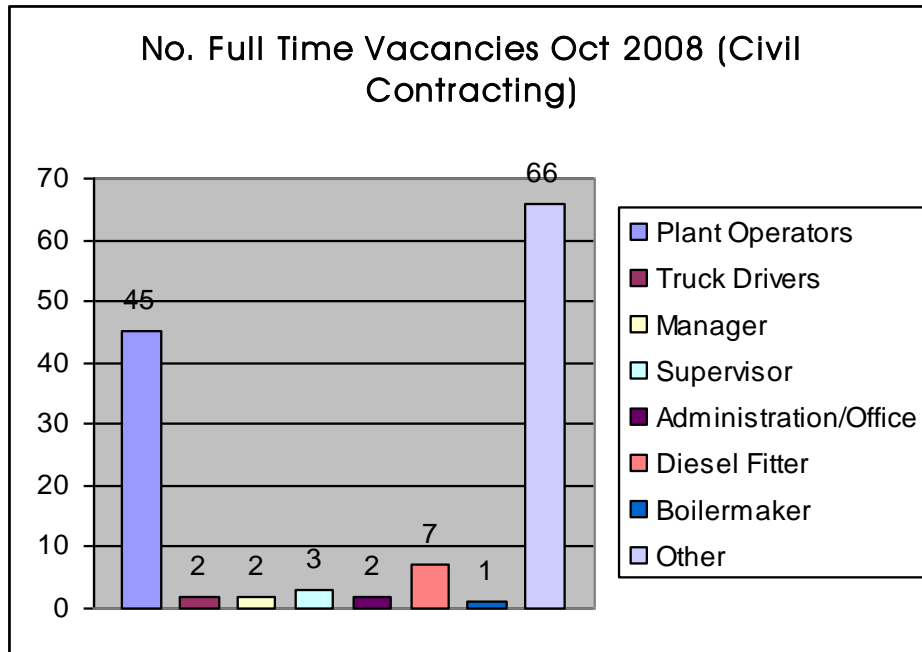
162 fulltime positions were reported unfilled, representing 29% of the total fulltime available workforce sampled. 34 part-time/casual positions were listed as vacant, representing 26% of the total available part-time/casual workforce sampled.

The majority of vacancies were reported for plant operator positions; 28% of fulltime positions and 47% of part-time/casual positions.

The figure reported under 'Other' was comparatively high, but included a figure of 50 for one business that included a mix of all categories. (The business Human Resource Manager was on leave.)

Of those reporting vacancies, 5 businesses, or 17% of those employing staff had all of their positions empty; a further 6 businesses (21%) reported more than 1/3 of their positions vacant.

The staff size averaged across these businesses was 20 full time employees, and 4.6 part time employees. 16 business employed between 1 and 10 staff; 9 businesses between 10 and 50 staff, and 3 businesses employed from 100 to 296 total staff numbers.



Length of Vacancies

The averaged length of vacancies reported by the 29 employers with unfilled positions is 6 months. The shortest length of vacancy reported was 1 month, the longest 5 years. A vacancy of 1 year was the most commonly reported length of unfilled position(s) (24% respondents).

Ability to Employ People with Appropriate Skills

76% of all respondents reported they were unable to source labour with appropriate level of skills for their business.

A number of issues were evident from comments made regarding the ability to employ people with appropriate skills. All responses are contained in Appendix 3.

Key themes from business comments were:

- Productivity and efficiency is affected
- Business growth is stifled
- Business is lost
- Machinery and plant is idle in many businesses due to lack of operators
- Training is commonplace on site
- Training is expensive
- Loss of newly trained staff to large companies and mines
- Inability to compete with mine wages

8 respondents noted that they were employing semi-skilled or 'greenies' (unskilled labour) and training them on the job. Across all businesses, the success of training was mixed; Many businesses (9) reported that as soon as their staff had developed skills they left to take employment with the largest contracting companies and mines who are generally reluctant to take on inexperienced people and able to offer higher wages.

"We have tried to train truck drivers and plant operators with only limited success. We have found that after training jobs are then sought in the mines and we are then out of pocket so we no longer train and have parked equipment."

A machine sitting idle continues to incur overhead costs of between \$4,000 - \$6,000 depending on plant and financing (Pers. comm. Shayne Shepherd & Chris Vine 3 June 08)

Businesses also voiced concerns with training; a number mentioned an upfront costs of training before new staff were able to even start operating machinery. Training appears to be ongoing in many of the smaller businesses participating in the survey.

"Has had a huge impact on ability to run efficiently - have delayed work and haven't reached potential income. Costs \$5000 before we can even put them on a machine."

"For contract work we need to employ already trained people - cannot afford to charge others for training costs."

The most common responses from participants detailed impacts on their business. 8 businesses described drop in productivity from either lack of staff or the inability to man plant and machinery with appropriately skilled staff. 8 businesses also expressed their frustration at lost work, inactive machinery which continued to incur overhead costs to the business and the inability to grow the business despite work being available.

"Have lost business due to inability to find qualified staff."

"Training is always ongoing for new machinery/tickets. Has not assisted business to reach full potential. Have got the machinery but not enough operators."

"Have lost work due to labour shortage which has had a moderate impact on business income."

Concerns were raised predominantly by smaller companies (those with 50 or less total workforce numbers). Two of three larger companies (workforce of over 100 or more) surveyed indicated that they were able to employ skilled staff. The one large company who commented that they found difficulty sourcing skilled staff also commented:

"There is a lack of senior industry members - large companies are reluctant to put on inexperienced people; they use smaller companies to train them up. We are more interested in supporting the local economy without taxing/impacting on local infrastructure. ie: We don't take from council and try not to take from skilled local businesses."

Individual comments also display some of the difficulties faced by smaller to medium sized businesses. They noted that they did not always have full time positions to offer due to work volume fluctuating throughout the year.

Training Costs and Requirements

Before an employee can enter a mine site or work on a civil site, they may spend from one to four weeks training and undertaking induction and gaining tickets while on payroll.

Businesses report there are a limited number of training providers available locally, and some source training from Rockhampton and Mackay. In the AgGrow QMIX Field Day guidebook (QCL June 2008 Pg 27) a mining training package for civil contractors was advertised for \$4990, which included:

- Black Coal Competencies (Generic Mining Induction)
- Bluecard (General Safety Induction)
- Dump Truck Training
- Tickets for 2 machines (excavator and choice of front end loader, back hoe & bulldozer)

This is generally designed for people who want to gain minimum entry requirements to be considered for mine employment but gives an indicative training cost.

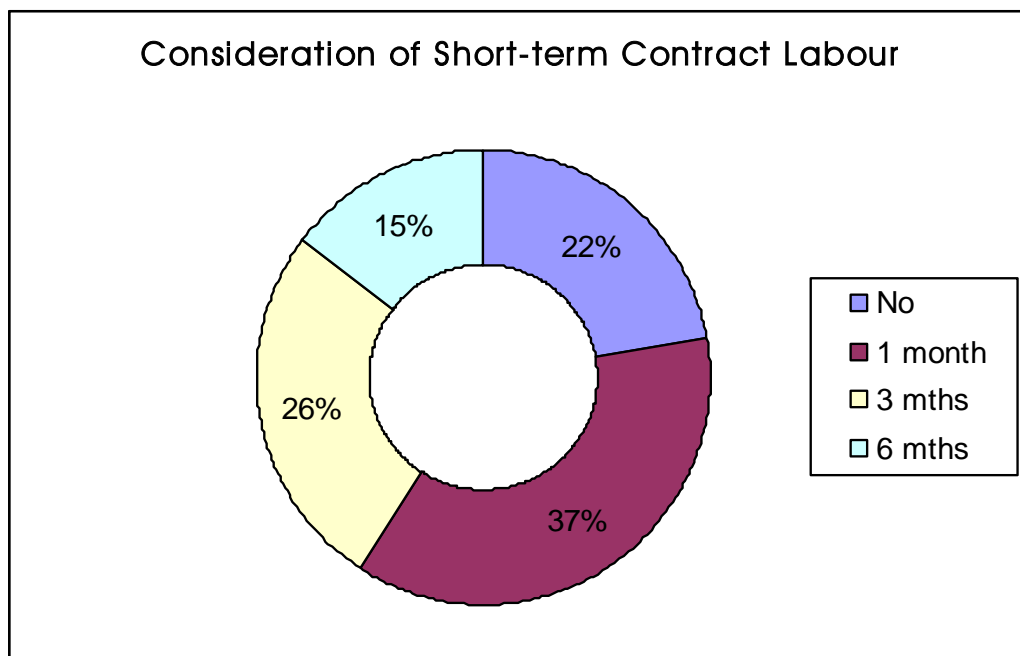
For a business putting an unskilled or semi-skilled staff member through training, this is generally undertaken on site and on a job. Unticketed staff operate machinery under close supervision, keeping hours in a log book until they are at a sufficient skill level to obtain tickets. In addition to external training, civil contractors to mines are required to undertake Site Inductions and Safe Operating Procedures Inductions for each mine site they work on. Again, some mines provide training, but not all. There is a mix of practices regarding payment during site inductions also; at worst the business may be paying staff during the 2 and ½ days of training.

For businesses who do not work within the mining industry, induction and compliance costs are less prohibitive, however operators are still required to have tickets to operate machinery.

Local training providers contacted were supportive of the industry they serviced but reluctant to quote explicit costs in case they were used for cost cutting purposes by competitors. They are also extremely busy.

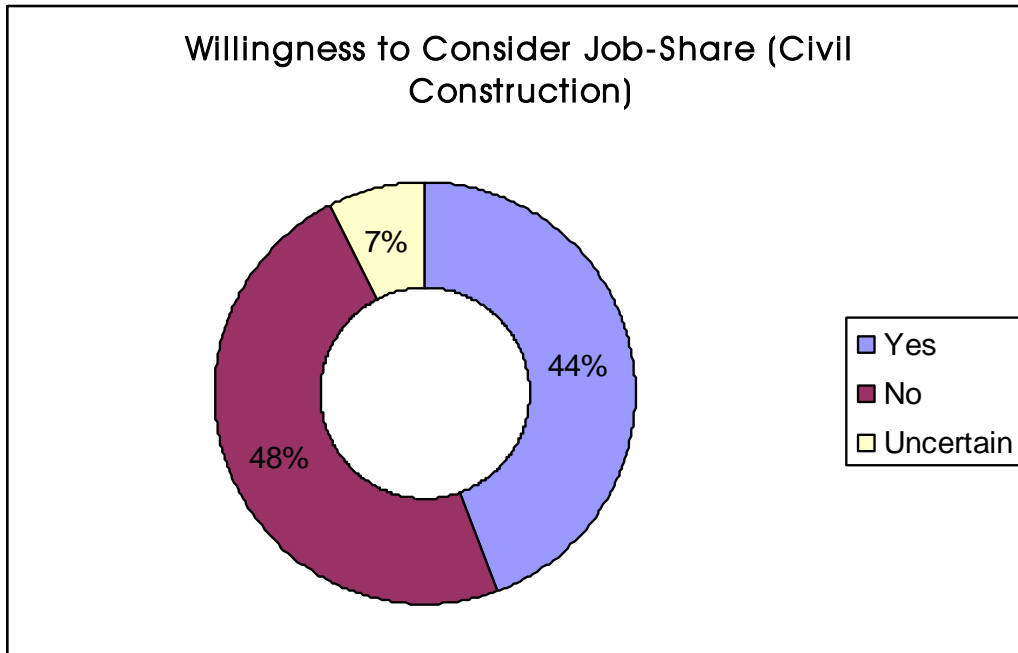
Suitability of Skilled Labour on Short-term Contracts

78% of all respondents indicated their interest in employing staff on short term contracts.



Suitability of Skilled Labour on a Job-Share Basis

48% of all respondents indicated that they would consider employing persons on a job-share basis.



Interest in Seasonal Skilled Workforce

21 of 29 civil contracting employers (72%) requested that they be supplied with information about a potential seasonal workforce program and provided contact details via email and post. An additional 2 owner/operators also asked to be included.

Summary

Limitations

There are limitations to the data collected.

- Every effort was made to include all known civil contractors within the Central Highlands, however there is no official database of contractors, and a small number may have been omitted despite comprehensive review with stakeholders.
- Of the non-respondents, two were larger companies with an estimated workforce of greater than 50.
- One business was only able to provide estimates due to the absence of their Human Resources Manager.

Findings

52 of 61 businesses (85%) identified as conducting civil contracting in the Central Highlands Regional Council area participated in the Civil Contracting Labour Skills Report.

Businesses were located across the Central Highlands, predominantly from Emerald, Capella and Springsure. The majority of civil contractors work across a number of business areas; the largest reported providing mining services (65%) and government civil works (63%). Approximately 1/5th have one area of speciality.

With the exception of road roller dry hire, Central Highlands civil businesses largely operate wet hire businesses. At the time of the survey, participating businesses owned or leased 306 dry hire machinery and plant, and 523 machinery and plant contracted for wet hire. The average plant fleet numbered 18, but total numbers ranged from 1 to 86 machines.

29 of the 52 respondents were employed staff, the remainder running their businesses as owner operators. Contract work can fluctuate throughout the year; accordingly for the last 12 months participants had employed a total of between 539 staff and 1075 staff to August 2008.

The staff size averaged across these businesses was 20 full time employees, and 4.6 part time employees. 16 business employed between 1 and 10 staff; 9 businesses between 10 and 50 staff, and 3 businesses employed from 100 to 296 total staff numbers.

558 full time employees and 130 part time staff were employed at October 2008. Of these plant operators make up 46% of the total civil contracting workforce, and notably 71.5% of the part time/casual workforce.

72.5% of businesses sampled reported current vacancies. 162 full time positions were unfilled (29%) and 26% of the part time casual positions. Plant operators comprised the highest number of vacancies; 28% and 47% of full time and part time positions respectively.

Average length of vacancy reported was 6 months, however actual responses provided the shortest term of 1 month, ranging to the longest of 5 years. 1 year was the most commonly reported length of vacancy.

76% of all respondents stated they were unable to find suitably skilled labour. Key business impacts and issues reported by participating businesses included:

- Productivity and efficiency is affected
- Business growth is stifled
- Business is lost
- Machinery and plant is idle in many businesses due to lack of operators
- Training is commonplace on site
- Training is expensive
- Loss of newly trained staff to larger companies and mines
- Inability to compete with mine wages

Practices regarding training, ticketing and inductions vary from business to business, and from work site to work site. Some firms pay for training for their employees, other train on site and the employee pays for their tickets. Where training is not contracted out, businesses face a drain on their available workforce from the increased supervision required, and a resulting lack of productivity as the new staff member develops skills.

The industry showed strong interest in short-term contracts and some interest in job sharing arrangements. 78% of respondents indicated they would employ skilled staff on contracts for 1 month or more. Only 44% were interested in pursuing job-share arrangements and 7% were uncertain.

21 of the 29 civil contracting employers (72%) have registered their interest in the resources of a travelling skilled workforce, and asked to be supplied with further information. An additional 2 owner operators have also expressed interest.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire cover letter sent on CHDC letterhead, 19 August 2008

Tuesday 19 August 2008

Dear x,

**Regional Employer Alliance Project (REAP) Central Highlands
Civil Contracting Labour & Skills Survey: 25 – 29 September**

Between Monday 25th and Friday 29th September, Central Highlands Development Corporation is surveying all earthmoving businesses in the Central Highlands for the purpose of determining your labour and skills shortages.

I am writing to ask your cooperation by sharing some of your information with us. The survey will be conducted by telephone by Pam Bartlett-Munt or myself. It is very short and will take up very little of your time. All individual business details will be kept in confidence.

A copy of the survey is included with this letter for your information. If you prefer, you are welcome to fill it in yourself and fax it back to me on (07) 4982 1130.

The survey is part of a project which is collecting information about labour and skill needs across agriculture, mining, local government and civil contracting industries.

We are investigating the potential to establish a pool of skilled workers from the 20,000 + baby-boomer and itinerant travellers to Emerald each year that will help fill labour shortages and require little to no employer investment in training and skill development.

The project looks promising so far; nearly 50% of the travellers through Emerald surveyed by the project so far between May and July have indicated that they would work locally, and most of these people would consider contracts of between 3 months and 1 year.

Further information on the project is contained in the flyer attached.

I look forward to discussing your experiences with you next week. The survey will also give you the opportunity to register your interest in being involved in the program. Please give me a ring if you have any questions.

Regards,

Liz Alexander
Regional Project Manager

Ph: 0429 471 511

Appendix 2: Civil Contracting Questionnaire Pg 2 of 2

8. Do you have a full workforce right now?

- Yes (Go to Question 11) No

9. If you answered NO, how many job vacancies do you have right now?

No.	Full Time	No.	Part Time/Casual
	Plant operators		Plant operators
	Truck drivers		Truck drivers
	Manager		Manager
	Supervisor		Supervisor
	Administration/office		Administration/office
	Other (specify)		Other (specify)

10. If you answered NO, how long have you had the job vacancies?

.....

11. Have you been able to employ people with the level of skill that you require? (Please comment – eg. Cost to business, ability to do business)

- Yes No

.....

.....

.....

12. Do you/have you provided staff with training while employed? (Please comment – eg. what type, who with, time taken, cost)

- Yes No

.....

.....

13. Would you consider employing skilled labour on a short-term contract?

- No not all 3 months minimum
 1 month minimum 6 months minimum

14. Would you consider employing skilled labour on a job-share basis?

- Yes No

15. Would you be interested in knowing more about a seasonal skilled travelling workforce?

- Yes No

If YES, Best Contact Name and Email):.....

.....

Appendix 3: Question 11 Ability to employ people with skills required - full responses

- *We have employed people with skills required, however they were hard to find and also left the company.*
- *We have tried to train truck drivers and plant operators with only limited success. We have found that after training jobs are then sought in the mines and we are then out of pocket so we no longer train and have parked equipment.*
- *Majority of people employed don't have skills. Today's education emphasis is on office jobs not on trade jobs. Cannot get staff to do a good job.*
- *Found the dirt works man - starting soon*
- *Not all the time - has affected productivity / efficiency to a point*
- *The mine's have sucked the guts out of it. Haven't lost jobs as yet, but if had more operators could do more work.*
- *Prefer to subcontract but even finding subcontractors is difficult. All the good ones are busy.*
- *To a degree. Have found semi-skilled labour (not up to standard) who requires some training. Our ability to do business compromised - not reach potential of business.*
- *Have had excellent workforce - were employing up to 12 but fuel costs (and other costs) have made it difficult to maintain workforce - and we expect it will get worse!! We'd love to sell out and retire.*
- *Can't afford it - they all want mine wages. Have lost work due to labour shortage which has had a moderate impact on business income.*
- *Has had a huge impact on ability to run efficiently - have delayed work and haven't reached potential income. Costs \$5000 before we can even put them on a machine. Need people to stay for 3+ years.*
- *Have lost business due to inability to find qualified staff.*
- *Ended up employing someone we knew and trained them up. Training is always ongoing for new machinery/tickets. Has not assisted business to reach full potential. Have got the machinery but not enough operators.*
- *Have had to train them but they picked it up quickly. Not being able to find people has affected ability to do enough work.*
- *Until 1 month ago have been dry hire. Plant operators should be a trade - all the good ones are tied in good paying jobs. Smaller companies are training people to a standard and then larger companies employ them. Other major problem is shortage in accommodation in isolated areas. Has spent 20yrs supervising for civil contractors and has just gone out on own - has experience knowing about shortage of skilled workers.*
- *There is a lack of senior industry members - large companies are reluctant to put on inexperienced people; they use smaller companies to train them up. We are more interested in supporting the local economy without taxing/impacting on local infrastructure. ie: We don't take from council and try not to take from skilled local businesses.*

- *Hard to get anyone - can't offer full time work*
- *Staff attraction, retention. Travel to office 13ks from town*
- *For contract work we need to employ already trained people - cannot afford to charge others for training costs. If we could get more trained staff we could get more work.*
- *Limited skills - need to train. It's frustrating because you train them and then they go somewhere else.*
- *Need training.*
- *Not as productive as could be as can't find skilled labour - sometimes have to employ greenies which takes time and money.*
- *Have needed to delay work - definitely have given away work due to lack of employee capacity. Have sometimes needed to send work not local where it should have been retained locally. Need to offer high wages. Could easily expand business if could get quality staff.*
- *Although we employ staff they are mainly admin and sales based. Skilled staff shortages don't really affect us as we don't wet hire. We hire out equipment only to mines and others.*
- *Not necessarily available when required (work volume fluctuates markedly).*
- *Always have vacancies, train on site*