ECONOMIC POLICY
BRIEFING NOTE

DEWR SKILLED VACANCY SURVEY: FEBRUARY 2003

- The latest DEWR Skilled Vacancy Survey* shows that the number of skilled vacancies in Queensland fell 3.1% in February 2003 and has now fallen for six consecutive months in trend terms. Nationally, skilled vacancies fell 0.5% in February and have now fallen for seven consecutive months.

- In annual terms, skilled vacancies in Queensland rose 12.8% in February. Annual growth in skilled vacancies in Queensland has eased substantially in recent months, from a recent peak of 40.6% in June 2002. In comparison, the number of skilled vacancies at the national level increased by only 6.1% over the year.

- Nationally, skilled vacancies decreased for all major occupational groups, with vacancies falling for professionals (-0.2%), associate professionals (-4.5%) and trades (-0.1%). The decline in the number of vacancies for professionals reflected small reductions in vacancies for accountants and auditors (-1.3%), organisation and Information professionals (-0.9%) and building and engineering professionals (-0.7%). The fall in the number of associate professional vacancies was due to a combination of fewer vacancies for medical/science technical officers (-8.3%) and building/engineering associates (-4.4%), while the lower number of skilled vacancies in trades reflected falls in the numbers of vacancies in the food (-3.2%), wood (-2.2%) and automotive trades (-1.1%). In annual terms, skilled vacancies in trades increased by 25.4%, while the number of vacancies for professionals and associate professionals fell by 10.8% and 7.7% respectively.

- Queensland recorded the largest fall in skilled vacancies in February 2003, followed by South Australia (-2.2%) and New South Wales (-0.7%). In contrast, Tasmania (1.7%), Victoria (1.3%) and Western Australia (0.8%) all recorded slight increases in skilled vacancies during the month.

- In annual terms, New South Wales (-13.4%) and Victoria (-3.8%) both recorded falling skilled vacancies, while Western Australia (41.7%), Tasmania (38.2%), Queensland (12.8%) and South Australia (11.1%) continued to record reasonable growth in vacancies over the year.

- The trend number of skilled vacancies in Queensland was 871 in February 2003, representing 20.1% of total skilled vacancies in Australia, higher than the State’s total employment share of 18.9%.

*The DEWR (Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations) Skilled Vacancy Survey is based on the count of skilled vacancies in the major metropolitan newspaper of each State and the Northern Territory, usually on the first Saturday of each month. It should be noted that this index is not necessarily a reliable leading indicator of employment growth in Queensland. The DEWR Skilled Vacancy Survey does not release data in seasonally adjusted terms.