



## ABSTRACT

**Paper title:** Forecasting Future Labour Demand in the Australian Rail Transport Industry (ARTI)

**Author(s) name(s):** Anusha Mahendran  
Dr Michael A. Dockery  
Professor Fred Affleck

**Organisation(s):** Centre for Labour Market Research  
Curtin University

**Email:** Anusha.Mahendran@cbs.curtin.edu.au

### Abstract:

The significant contribution that the Australian rail industry makes both to the national economy and Australia's transport network has long been established. However, in recent times, emerging labour shortages within the industry have threatened to curtail its output capacity.

Increased strains on labour supply due to years of sustained economic growth and an aging population, combined with low to negative industry recruitment levels in recent decades, has left many rail operators increasingly vulnerable to skill shortages. As one part of a major evaluation of the extent and nature of the skills shortages within the Australian Rail Transport Industry (ARTI), this paper presents projections of future labour demand within the sector disaggregated by occupation and skill/competency level. The projections are derived through the initial development of a production function model which differentiates between the main occupational categories of labour as inputs, and with outputs based upon existing projections of passenger and freight task. The modelling assumptions are based on primary research conducted with rail operators and industry representatives, existing literature and historical ABS statistics. Implications for government policy and for human resource management within the ARTI are also discussed.