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TRADE UNION STATISTICS, AUSTRALIA DECEMBER 1979

(including revised figures for the period 1968 to 1978)



If you want to know more about these statistics ring Mr Geoff Winter on Canberra (062) 526576 or our State office, or write to Information Services, ABS, P.O. Box 10, Belconnen, A.C.T. 2616.

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MAIN FEATURES

Note. The figures for the period 1968 to 1978 have been revised. See paragraphs 3 and 4.

At the end of 1979 there were 315 reporting trade unions, compared with 316 at the end of the previous year. The decrease resulted from the amalgamation of two unions.

Total membership was 2,855,100, an increase of 46,800 (1.7 per cent). Males increased by 300 while females increased by 46,600 (5.4 per cent). (See paragraphs 7 and 12).

Seven unions with 80,000 or more members each accounted for 28 per cent of total membership. The 98 unions with fewer than 500 members accounted for little more than half a percent of total membership.

Unions with members in two or more States accounted for about 81 per cent of total membership.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

The figures in this publication have been compiled from data obtained from questionnaires sent to individual trade unions in the annual collection as at the end of December each year.

2. Current lists of reporting trade unions are maintained by reference to lists used in previous years and to trade unions registered under the provisions of the various Federal and State industrial arbitration Acts, trade union Acts, etc.; from names of unions reported to be engaged in conciliation and arbitration proceedings, etc.; and from reports in trade journals, trade union and employer periodicals, newspapers and other publications. It should be noted that not all reporting trade unions are registered under the relevant Federal or State industrial arbitration legislation or State trade union Acts. (See paragraph 9 below.)

Revision of series

3. Many of the figures previously published for the years 1968 to 1978 have been revised. The revised figures are shown in the tables in this issue. The published number of reporting trade unions varies from year to year as a result of amalgamations and mergers of unions, unions ceasing to operate, new unions being formed, existing organisations changing their status such that it brings them within the scope of the definition of a trade union (see paragraph 5), and existing unions reporting for the first time. In the past, when organisations were first identified as being, or having become, trade unions (as defined), membership figures were not always obtained for earlier periods, even for existing unions. During a recent review of the trade union collection, the missing information was obtained from the organisations concerned, but only for the period from 1968. In addition, a number of organisations not previously identified as trade unions have been included for the first time.

4. The treatment of a number of unions with interstate associations, but which are not strictly branches of a common organisation, has been changed: they are now properly counted as separate unions in the totals for Australia. Membership figures generally, and the State and Territory figures for number of unions, are not affected by this change.

Definitions

5. For the purpose of these statistics a *trade union* is defined as an organisation, consisting predominantly of employees, the principal activities of which include the negotiation of rates of pay and conditions of employment for its members. Non-operating unions or branches, i.e. those with no members at the date of collection, are not included in the statistics.

6. When obtaining statistics from trade unions operating wholly within one State or district, trade union secretaries are asked to report whether or not the union is a branch of an interstate, or a larger State or district organisation. This reporting reduces the possibility of duplication in the figures of the number of unions and of membership. An interstate or federated

trade union (i.e. a union with members in more than one State) is treated as a separate union in each State or Territory in which it has members, but is counted only once in the Australian total (see Table 1).

7. The total membership of the reporting trade unions represents the aggregate of the membership of individual unions; persons who are members of more than one union are therefore counted more than once in the totals. The extent of this duplication is not known. Members of unions working overseas (e.g. in Papua New Guinea) are excluded from the reported membership data. Membership figures may be affected by differences in the concept of membership adopted by different unions or by the same union at different times. (See paragraph 12 below.)

8. *Proportion of total employees.* The approximate percentages of wage and salary earners in employment (i.e. employees) who were members of trade unions are shown in Table 3. The estimates of total employees have been derived by adding figures for employees in agriculture and in private households employing staff to the estimates of employees in all other industries as at the end of each year. The percentages shown should be regarded as giving only a broad indication of the extent of union membership among employees, because they are based on estimates of employed wage and salary earners which may be subject to revision and because the degree of unemployment of reported union members will affect the percentages for a particular year and comparisons over time. Revised employment figures recently published in *Civilian Employees, Australia, June 1966 to June 1979* (6214.0) and *Civilian Employees, Australia* (6213.0) have been used in calculating the percentages in Table 3.

9. *Organisations registered under the Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Act.* Details of employer and employee organisations registered under this Act as at the end of 1979 are set out below with comparable figures for 1978 shown in brackets. There were 80(80) employer organisations registered at the end of 1979. The number of employee unions registered was 148 (147), with membership of 2,331,100 (2,324,400) representing 82 (83) per cent of total membership of all reporting trade unions in Australia.

10. *Organisations registered under State industrial arbitration legislation, etc.* New South Wales organisations registered under provisions of the Trade Union Act and the Industrial Arbitration Act are listed periodically in the *New South Wales Industrial Gazette*. The annual reports of the President of the Industrial Court in Queensland contain a list of employer and employee unions registered under provisions of the *Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act*. The *Western Australian Industrial Gazette* contains lists of unions of employers and workers registered under provisions of the *Industrial Arbitration Act*.

11. *Central labour organisations.* The main central labour organisations in Australia are the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), the Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Associations (ACSPA), the Council of Australian Government Employee Organisations (CAGEO), and the Council of Professional Associations (CPA). For information on these organisations reference should be made to *Year Book, Australia* (1301.0).

Comparability of series

12. Comparability of figures for different years may be affected by a number of factors. As stated in paragraph 7, there may be duplication in the count of members. This duplication may vary over time. Union rules on membership may follow different concepts and practices and this may be reflected in the level and fluctuations of the figures reported. Some unions confine their reported membership to 'financial' members whilst others may also include 'unfinancial' members. Individual unions may or may not include in their reported membership unemployed members, members who have retired from the labour force, disabled members, members with dues in arrears (who may be kept on union books for varying lengths of time), etc.

13. Membership of trade unions is shown separately for males and females for each State and Territory. The subdivision of total membership into males and females is not precise because some trade unions are unable to state the exact number of males and females among their members. The subdivision of total membership by States and Territories is also not precise because some unions in the Territories are affiliated with State organisations and their membership is reported under the heading of that State. More accurate reporting of membership by location over the years is reflected in the annual figures for the Territories and this affects their comparability over time.

Related publications

The Labour Force, Australia (6203.0)

Civilian Employees, Australia (6213.0)

Trade Union Members, November 1976 (6325.0)

14. Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications* (1101.0) which is available free of charge from any ABS office.

Symbols and other usages

15. Where figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

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Australian Statistician

TABLE 1. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF SEPARATE UNIONS, DECEMBER 1968 TO DECEMBER 1979

End of December -	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.	Aust.
1968	212	164	139	135	159	115	40	71	361
1969	211	163	139	136	159	116	43	71	354
1970	211	167	143	142	161	119	45	82	347
1971	209	168	146	142	157	115	51	82	351
1972	202	164	141	136	154	112	55	84	341
1973	194	165	144	139	154	118	58	89	327
1974	193	168	142	142	153	123	66	89	317
1975	191	167	140	141	149	122	63	90	313
1976	188	168	138	142	148	120	67	89	315
1977	188	167	137	142	153	122	66	84	316
1978	187	167	138	141	153	123	64	82	315
1979	189	166	139	141	154	120	70		

TABLE 2. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF MEMBERS, DECEMBER 1968 TO DECEMBER 1979
(⁰⁰⁰)

End of December -	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.	Aust.
MALES									
1968	671.9	419.4	251.8	153.3	124.2	55.0	4.6	18.8	1,698.9
1969	683.6	423.5	250.3	158.8	124.5	55.6	5.0	20.9	1,722.2
1970	692.6	439.8	247.6	163.6	130.6	57.6	5.7	23.1	1,760.5
1971	724.3	453.1	251.4	171.9	134.9	58.5	6.7	25.3	1,826.0
1972	717.1	463.0	248.5	172.1	137.1	60.6	8.8	27.7	1,834.9
1973	739.4	486.5	254.4	182.2	142.4	62.4	10.2	33.3	1,910.8
1974	745.4	503.1	264.8	190.5	152.6	67.0	12.1	35.6	1,971.1
1975	750.9	507.4	275.1	188.2	157.3	64.4	12.0	34.9	1,959.5
1976	726.0	504.7	270.4	187.0	160.3	64.0	11.2	34.8	1,940.8
1977	701.5	505.6	268.9	190.4	162.7	65.9	11.2	33.7	1,943.6
1978	707.1	509.9	265.4	191.5	160.1	64.6	11.4	33.3	1,943.9
1979	702.7	513.0	265.2	192.5	160.7	63.6	12.9		
FEMALES									
1968	193.6	134.0	84.1	32.9	41.5	13.4	1.0	5.2	505.9
1969	205.3	139.1	83.4	36.0	43.7	14.8	0.9	5.2	528.5
1970	223.8	154.7	82.7	39.8	46.4	16.6	0.9	5.9	570.9
1971	251.8	168.1	86.4	44.2	49.8	17.4	1.5	7.0	626.1
1972	275.2	191.1	95.3	52.5	55.0	20.4	2.3	12.0	703.8
1973	296.7	197.0	108.1	60.7	61.3	21.6	3.2	14.2	762.8
1974	306.8	210.8	110.8	63.9	70.8	22.0	4.3	17.0	806.2
1975	329.0	217.9	117.5	68.6	67.7	23.7	4.0	17.7	846.0
1976	321.0	214.7	117.4	69.8	72.7	23.5	4.1	18.0	841.2
1977	317.6	222.1	119.6	76.7	77.1	26.4	4.8	16.6	860.9
1978	320.5	222.9	118.0	78.7	75.7	26.3	5.5	16.9	864.6
1979	339.5	234.1	128.4	79.8	80.6	26.4	5.6	16.8	911.2
PERSONS									
1968	865.5	553.5	335.9	186.2	165.7	68.4	5.6	24.1	2,204.9
1969	888.8	562.7	333.7	194.8	168.3	70.5	5.9	26.0	2,250.7
1970	916.4	594.5	330.4	203.5	177.0	74.1	6.6	28.9	2,331.4
1971	976.0	621.2	337.8	216.1	184.7	75.9	8.1	32.3	2,452.2
1972	992.4	654.1	343.8	224.6	192.1	81.0	11.1	39.7	2,538.8
1973	1,036.1	683.6	362.5	242.8	203.7	84.0	13.5	47.5	2,673.6
1974	1,052.2	713.9	375.6	254.4	223.4	89.0	16.4	52.9	2,777.3
1975	1,080.0	725.3	392.6	256.9	225.1	88.0	15.2	51.1	2,834.2
1976	1,047.0	719.4	387.7	256.8	233.0	87.6	16.1	52.9	2,800.6
1977	1,019.1	727.7	388.5	267.1	239.7	92.3	15.9	51.3	2,801.6
1978	1,027.6	732.9	383.4	270.3	235.8	90.9	17.0	50.6	2,808.3
1979	1,042.2	747.1	393.7	272.3	241.3	90.0	18.4	50.1	2,855.1

TABLE 3. TRADE UNIONS : PROPORTION OF TOTAL EMPLOYEES, DECEMBER 1968 TO DECEMBER 1979
(per cent)

<i>End of December -</i>	<i>N.S.W.</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld.</i>	<i>S.A.</i>	<i>W.A.</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>N.T.</i>	<i>A.C.T.</i>	<i>Aust.</i>
MALES									
1968	60	52	63	56	56	62	24	62	58
1969	60	51	61	57	53	61	25	64	57
1970	59	52	59	57	53	63	25	63	56
1971	61	54	59	59	52	64	28	65	58
1972	61	54	57	60	54	66	33	64	58
1973	62	56	56	62	54	67	36	70	59
1974	63	58	58	63	57	72	40	71	61
1975	65	59	60	63	58	69	41	63	62
1976	63	59	59	62	59	69	44	68	61
1977	62	59	59	64	59	71	43	68	61
1978	62	60	58	66	59	70	42	67	61
1979	61	60	57	67	58	69	44	67	60
FEMALES									
1968	36	32	49	25	41	36	13	29	35
1969	36	31	46	26	39	38	11	26	35
1970	37	34	43	27	39	41	10	26	36
1971	41	36	43	29	40	43	16	29	38
1972	44	40	45	33	42	49	20	45	42
1973	44	39	47	35	42	49	25	47	42
1974	47	41	48	36	48	48	30	51	44
1975	50	43	49	37	45	50	31	49	46
1976	49	42	48	37	47	49	32	52	45
1977	48	43	49	41	48	54	36	47	46
1978	48	43	47	43	47	54	40	46	46
1979	49	44	49	43	49	53	36	46	47
PERSONS									
1968	52	45	59	46	51	54	21	50	50
1969	52	44	56	47	48	54	21	49	49
1970	51	46	54	47	48	56	21	49	49
1971	54	48	54	49	48	58	24	51	51
1972	55	49	53	50	50	60	29	57	52
1973	56	50	53	52	50	61	33	61	53
1974	57	52	54	53	54	64	37	63	55
1975	59	53	56	53	54	63	37	58	56
1976	58	52	55	53	55	62	40	62	55
1977	57	53	55	55	55	65	41	59	55
1978	57	53	54	57	54	64	41	58	55
1979	56	54	54	58	55	63	41	58	55

TABLE 4. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF UNIONS ACCORDING TO SIZE, DECEMBER 1968 TO DECEMBER 1979

Number of members	End of December -											
	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
Under 100	57	55	49	54	51	39	41	36	31	29	31	32
100 and under 250	42	40	46	47	41	39	30	36	34	40	41	39
250 " " 500	49	46	45	39	41	39	44	38	35	34	30	27
500 " " 1,000	44	44	39	42	43	40	45	43	48	44	44	46
1,000 " " 2,000	46	46	47	45	38	47	41	39	38	42	42	45
2,000 " " 5,000	47	46	45	46	49	44	44	46	44	43	45	45
5,000 " " 10,000	21	21	19	18	19	21	26	21	24	24	25	19
10,000 " " 20,000	24	24	25	25	23	22	20	21	20	22	20	24
20,000 " " 30,000	8	8	7	10	11	10	9	8	10	9	11	10
30,000 " " 40,000	8	8	8	9	6	5	5	7	9	7	6	5
40,000 " " 50,000	5	5	5	5	7	8	8	7	6	7	6	9
50,000 " " 80,000	5	5	5	5	6	5	6	8	7	7	8	7
80,000 and over	10	11	3	5	6	8	7	7	7	7	7	7
Total	361	354	347	351	341	327	326	317	313	315	316	315

TABLE 5. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF MEMBERS ACCORDING TO SIZE OF UNION, DECEMBER 1968 TO DECEMBER 1979 ('000)

Number of members	End of December -											
	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
Under 100	3.0	2.9	2.8	2.6	2.2	2.2	2.3	1.9	1.6	1.4	1.8	1.7
100 and under 250	7.0	6.2	7.4	7.9	7.6	6.1	4.8	5.7	5.3	6.1	6.0	6.0
250 " " 500	17.1	15.6	16.6	14.8	15.3	14.6	15.5	12.8	12.3	12.3	11.0	10.0
500 " " 1,000	29.3	26.2	25.4	29.9	32.3	28.6	32.2	30.9	34.6	30.5	30.7	30.4
1,000 " " 2,000	62.8	66.6	68.1	61.0	53.4	65.6	58.9	52.3	52.6	59.6	57.7	62.4
2,000 " " 5,000	157.2	153.2	154.3	157.6	156.4	146.8	136.9	151.5	136.5	139.9	145.2	151.9
5,000 " " 10,000	148.7	151.5	133.8	123.6	125.2	153.9	207.0	161.6	171.3	182.1	181.2	147.8
10,000 " " 20,000	333.7	329.9	348.3	325.1	310.2	314.2	300.7	316.0	290.2	327.2	305.2	360.9
20,000 " " 30,000	194.8	192.6	187.1	235.6	258.6	250.9	200.5	196.7	235.8	224.0	264.7	250.4
30,000 " " 40,000	245.3	283.9	281.7	320.6	209.9	179.2	173.3	241.1	320.0	247.3	214.0	174.3
40,000 " " 50,000	263.5	214.5	222.1	217.6	303.9	350.7	357.5	313.3	267.8	309.6	266.4	410.5
50,000 " " 80,000	742.5	807.7	566.3	468.6	400.3	307.4	377.1	485.8	430.8	425.1	525.0	450.7
80,000 and over			317.4	487.3	663.7	853.6	910.5	864.8	841.6	836.6	799.3	798.1
Total	2,204.9	2,250.7	2,331.4	2,452.2	2,538.8	2,673.6	2,777.3	2,834.2	2,800.6	2,801.6	2,808.3	2,855.1

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TABLE 6. TRADE UNIONS : CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF MEMBERS, AUSTRALIA

Number of members	Number of separate unions		Proportion of total unions	Number of members		Proportion of total members	Average number of members per union
	Dec. 1978	Dec. 1979	Dec. 1979	Dec. 1978	Dec. 1979	Dec. 1979	Dec. 1979
			%			%	('000)
Under 100							
100 and under	31	32	10.2	1.8	1.7	-	0.1
250	41	39	12.4	6.0	6.0	0.2	0.2
500	30	27	8.6	11.0	10.0	0.3	0.4
1,000	44	46	14.6	30.7	30.4	1.1	0.7
2,000	42	45	14.3	57.7	62.4	2.2	1.4
5,000	45	45	14.3	145.2	151.9	5.3	3.4
10,000	25	19	6.0	181.2	147.8	5.2	7.8
20,000	20	24	7.6	305.2	360.9	12.6	15.0
30,000	11	10	3.2	264.7	250.4	8.8	25.0
40,000	6	5	1.6	214.0	174.3	6.1	34.9
50,000	6	9	2.9	266.4	410.5	14.4	45.6
80,000 and over	8	7	2.2	525.0	450.7	15.8	64.4
Total	7	7	2.2	799.3	798.1	28.0	114.0
	316	315	100.0	2,808.3	2,855.1	100.0	9.1

TABLE 7. TRADE UNIONS : AREA OF OPERATIONS, AUSTRALIA

End of December -	Unions operating in (a) -						Total all unions
	One state (b)	Two states	Three states	Four states	Five states	Six states	
	NUMBER OF SEPARATE UNIONS						
1968	223	11	6	17	27	77	361
1969	215	10	8	17	23	81	354
1970	201	11	9	15	29	82	347
1971	208	11	6	15	33	78	351
1972	203	11	4	16	30	77	341
1973	185	11	6	14	28	83	327
1974	184	10	6	14	24	88	326
1975	174	11	7	14	24	87	317
1976	172	9	8	13	22	89	313
1977	174	9	8	9	26	89	315
1978	175	10	6	10	26	89	316
1979	174	9	6	11	27	88	315
	NUMBER OF MEMBERS ('000)						
1968	373.4	21.9	62.8	111.6	326.2	1,309.1	2,204.9
1969	378.8	22.5	71.8	89.1	294.9	1,393.5	2,250.7
1970	393.6	21.8	76.0	44.9	382.7	1,412.3	2,331.4
1971	406.1	25.4	63.4	59.8	426.0	1,471.5	2,452.2
1972	419.7	23.1	60.5	96.7	339.1	1,599.8	2,538.8
1973	408.1	51.6	63.3	101.5	327.8	1,721.4	2,673.6
1974	406.9	18.5	97.5	103.9	205.4	1,944.9	2,777.3
1975	443.5	19.0	102.2	101.5	199.4	1,968.7	2,834.2
1976	459.0	18.8	73.7	98.2	225.8	1,925.0	2,800.6
1977	479.1	18.8	67.3	93.1	164.9	1,978.4	2,801.6
1978	492.2	19.6	24.0	156.4	176.4	1,939.7	2,808.3
1979	530.1	19.6	24.5	182.3	149.9	1,948.7	2,855.1

(a) Certain unions have, in addition to branches in the States, branches in the Northern Territory and in the Australian Capital Territory. See paragraph 6, explanatory notes. (b) Includes unions operating only in the Northern Territory or the Australian Capital Territory. (c) Total of previous five columns. Figures refer to interstate unions.

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