



LABOUR FORCE EXPERIENCE DURING THE TWELVE MONTHS TO FEBRUARY 1981, AUSTRALIA (PRELIMINARY)

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MAIN FEATURES

Note: Survey estimates are subject to sampling variability, as explained in paragraph 11 below.

Of the persons in the non-institutional civilian population aged 15 years and over in February 1981, two out of every three (68.2 per cent) had been in the labour force (either employed or looking for work) at some time during the previous 12 months. The proportion for males was 83.2 per cent and for females 53.6 per cent.

Of those who had been in the labour force, 74.7 per cent had been in for the whole 12 months.

An estimated 1,182,200 persons had experienced, during the previous 12 months, at least one period lasting a week or more when they were looking for work. This represents 16.0 per cent of all persons who had been in the labour force at some time during the 12 months. For teenagers the percentage was 40.9.

Of persons who had been looking for work, 734,300 (62.1 per cent) had been out of work for eight weeks or more during the 12 months (including 341,000 (28.8 per cent) who had been out of work for six months or more). (See paragraphs 6 and 7 below concerning the special definitions applicable to this survey.)

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

In February 1981 a survey, based on the monthly population survey, was conducted throughout Australia in order to obtain information about the labour force experience during the previous 12 months of civilians aged fifteen years and over. Information obtained included

the length of time they were employed, looking for work or not in the labour force, the number of spells during which they were looking for work and other aspects of labour force experience. Similar surveys were conducted in a number of earlier years, the first relating to 1968. Results were published in *Labour Force Experience, Australia* (6206.0). However, see paragraph 10 regarding the change in the reference period for the February 1981 survey.

2. This publication contains only a summary of the more important results of the survey. More detailed estimates, which will be published as soon as possible, are available on request. The estimates shown are preliminary and are subject to revision.

3. The survey was based on a multi-stage area sample of private dwellings (about 22,500 houses, flats, etc.) and non-private dwellings (hotels, motels, etc.) and covered about one half of one per cent of the population of Australia. The information was obtained from the occupants of selected dwellings by carefully chosen and specially trained interviewers, the interviews being conducted during the two weeks beginning on Monday, 9 February 1981.

Scope

4. The survey included all persons aged fifteen years and over except:

- members of the permanent defence forces;
- certain diplomatic personnel of overseas governments, customarily excluded from census and estimated populations;
- overseas visitors holidaying in Australia;
- members of non-Australian defence forces (and their dependants) stationed in Australia; and
- boarding school students, patients in hospitals and sanatoria, or inmates of gaols, reformatories, etc.

5. The estimates relate to the labour force experience in the 12 months to February 1981, of persons covered by the survey in February 1981. Because of emigration, deaths and other exits not all persons with labour force experience during the period were covered. Labour force experience may relate to experience outside Australia.

Definitions

6. It is impracticable to obtain information, relating to the reference period, which is strictly comparable with that obtained in the monthly labour force survey (for which the reference period is one week). For this reason the definitions shown below differ slightly from those shown in the regular labour force publications. In particular it should be noted that whereas the monthly survey seeks information on job search during the four weeks prior to the interview week, and does not classify a person as unemployed unless active steps to obtain work were taken during those four weeks and the person was available to start work in the survey week, no such constraints applied in the labour force experience survey.

7. For this survey, each person was assigned to a labour force category for each week of the reference period on the basis of his actual activity (i.e. whether working, looking for work, etc.) during that week. The principal categories appearing in the tables in this publication are:

- (a) *Persons in the labour force.* A person was classified as having been in the labour force during any week in which he was employed or looking for work as defined in (b) and (c) below.
- (b) *Employed persons.* A person was classified as having been employed during a week if, in that week, he:
 - (i) Worked for one hour or more, for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind, in a job or business, or on a farm (including employees, employers and self-employed persons), or
 - (ii) worked fifteen hours or more without pay in a family business (or farm), or
 - (iii) had a job, business or farm, but was on paid leave (including sick leave).
- (c) *Persons looking for work.* A person was classified as looking for work during a week if, in that week, he did no work at all, did not have a job or business, and was looking for work. No constraints concerning the taking of active steps to find work, or availability to start work, applied.
- (d) *Persons not in the labour force* are all those who, in any week, were not in the categories 'employed' or 'looking for work', as defined above. For the purposes of this survey a person who was on strike and who did no work during a week was classified as not in the labour force in that week.

8. A person was classified as having worked *mostly full time* if the number of weeks in which he worked 35 hours or more (*full-time work*) exceeded or was equal to the number of weeks in which he worked less than 35 hours (*part-time work*). If the number of weeks worked full time was less than the number of weeks worked part time he was classified as having worked *mostly part time*. When absent on paid leave (including paid sick leave) he was classified according to the usual hours worked in the job from which he was absent.

9. For the purposes of the survey, a *job* was defined as: (i) employment as a wage or salary earner (or unpaid family helper) by a particular employer, in a particular locality; or (ii) self-employment (with or without employees) in a particular locality. In capital cities and major towns each suburb was considered to be a different locality; otherwise, each town and each country area associated with a town constituted a separate locality.

Discontinuity in the series

10. The estimates in this publication are not strictly comparable with those obtained from previous labour force experience surveys. For the February 1981 survey the reference period used was from the beginning of February 1980 to the end of the survey week. For this reason the reference period could extend to 54 weeks but in this publication it is referred to as the 12 months to February 1981. In previous surveys the reference period was the preceding calendar year.

Reliability of the estimates

11. Since the estimates in this publication are based on information obtained from occupants of a sample of dwellings they are subject to sampling variability; that is, they may differ from the figures that would have been produced if all dwellings had been included in the survey. One measure of the likely difference is given by the *standard error*. There are about two chances in three that a sample estimate will differ by less than one standard error from the figure that would have been obtained if all dwellings had been included, and about nineteen chances in twenty that the difference will be less than two standard errors. A table of estimated standard errors for this survey is shown below. Estimates with a standard error of more than about 25 percent have not been shown in this publication, as the degree of sampling variability would seriously detract from their value for most reasonable uses. Although figures for these small components can, in some cases, be derived by subtraction they should not be regarded as reliable. More information about this topic will be found in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0).

Related publications

12. Other ABS publications which may be of interest include:

The Labour Force, Australia (6203.0)—issued monthly

Labour Force Experience During 1979, Australia (6206.0)

Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia, September 1980 (6220.0)

Persons Looking for Work, Australia, July 1980 (6222.0)

Employment Status of Teenagers, August 1978 (6234.0)

Labour Mobility, Australia, February 1980 (6209.0).

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

Symbols and other usages

- * subject to sampling variability too high for most practical uses. See paragraph 11 above
- .. not applicable

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

R. J. CAMERON
Australian Statistician

STANDARD ERRORS OF ESTIMATES

Size of estimate (Persons)	Approximate standard error of estimates		Size of estimate (Persons)	Approximate standard error of estimates	
	Persons	Per cent of estimate		Persons	Per cent of estimate
4,500	1,100	24.9	200,000	5,900	2.9
6,000	1,300	21.5	500,000	8,250	1.6
10,000	1,650	16.5	1,000,000	10,400	1.0
20,000	2,250	11.3	2,000,000	13,000	0.7
50,000	3,400	6.8	5,000,000	17,050	0.4
100,000	4,500	4.5			

TABLE 1. CIVILIAN POPULATION(a), FEBRUARY 1981 : LABOUR FORCE EXPERIENCE
DURING THE 12 MONTHS TO FEBRUARY 1981(b)
(' 000)

<i>Employment status</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Married females</i>	<i>All females</i>	<i>Persons</i>
Civilian population in February 1981	5,361.5	3,517.4	5,458.8	10,820.3
In the labour force at some time during the period	4,459.4	1,806.1	2,924.3	7,383.7
For the whole period	3,694.3	1,082.6	1,821.3	5,515.6
For part of the period	765.1	723.5	1,103.0	1,868.1
Employed at some time during the period	4,342.2	1,708.6	2,737.6	7,079.8
Mostly full time—				
No part-time work	4,005.6	907.1	1,660	5,666.0
Some part-time work	123.2	64.4	120.0	243.2
Mostly part time—				
No full-time work	177.1	683.6	875.3	1,052.4
Some full-time work	36.2	53.5	82.0	118.2
Number of jobs held during the period(c)—				
One	3,585.7	1,517.3	2,328.3	5,914.0
Two	550.2	154.6	313.9	864.1
Three	122.4	24.6	56.8	179.2
Four	41.7	7.9	23.1	64.8
Five	19.4	*	7.6	27.0
Six or more	22.8	*	7.9	30.7
Looked for work at some time during the period(d)	597.4	247.6	584.8	1,182.2
One spell of looking for work	481.1	214.6	496.1	977.2
Two spells	74.9	21.4	60.7	135.6
Three spells	19.6	4.6	13.1	32.7
Four or more spells	21.8	7.0	14.9	36.7
Out of the labour force for the whole of the period	902.1	1,711.2	2,534.4	3,436.5

(a) Non-institutional population aged 15 years and over. (b) See Explanatory notes, paragraph 10. (c) Excludes second jobs of multiple jobholders. (d) See paragraphs 6 and 7 of the Explanatory notes, concerning the special definitions applicable to this survey.

TABLE 2. PERSONS IN THE LABOUR FORCE
DURING THE 12 MONTHS TO FEBRUARY 1981(a) : AGE AT FEBRUARY 1981
(' 000)

<i>Age group (years)</i>	<i>In the labour force at some time during the period</i>				<i>Average labour force (b)</i>			
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Married females</i>	<i>All females</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Married females</i>	<i>All females</i>	<i>Persons</i>
15-19	503.8	17.6	453.5	957.4	428.2	14.9	385.7	813.8
20-24	610.3	208.8	508.8	1,119.1	568.3	162.0	437.0	1,005.3
25-34	1,155.2	601.5	779.0	1,934.2	1,119.4	458.8	614.2	1,733.6
35-44	893.9	501.9	578.6	1,472.5	864.3	432.8	502.3	1,366.6
45-54	720.7	328.8	396.3	1,117.1	710.3	287.4	353.1	1,063.3
55-59	314.1	94.3	125.1	439.2	301.1	77.8	106.2	407.3
60-64	171.6	35.6	54.4	225.9	146.1	26.6	41.4	187.4
65 and over	89.8	15.6	28.5	118.3	66.0	10.2	22.8	88.8
Total	4,459.4	1,806.1	2,924.3	7,383.7	4,203.6	1,470.4	2,462.7	6,666.2

(a) See Explanatory notes, paragraph 10. (b) Average of the monthly labour force survey estimates, February 1980 to January 1981.

TABLE 3. PERSONS EMPLOYED AT SOME TIME DURING THE 12 MONTHS TO FEBRUARY 1981(a):
DURATION OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE PERIOD
(^{' 000})

<i>Duration of employment (weeks)</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Married females</i>	<i>All females</i>	<i>Persons</i>
1 and under 4	57.1	46.8	96.4	153.6
4 .. 13	134.5	110.9	197.5	332.0
13 .. 26	117.0	126.4	196.6	313.7
26 .. 39	189.2	155.0	242.7	431.9
39 .. 49	313.8	182.6	279.9	593.7
49 .. 52	205.2	96.9	157.0	362.2
52 and over(a)	3,325.2	990.0	1,567.6	4,892.8
Total	4,342.2	1,708.6	2,737.6	7,079.8

(a) See Explanatory notes, paragraph 10.

TABLE 4. PERSONS WHO LOOKED FOR WORK AT SOME TIME DURING THE 12 MONTHS TO FEBRUARY 1981(a):
NUMBER OF SPELLS OF LOOKING FOR WORK AND TIME SPENT LOOKING FOR WORK IN THE PERIOD(b)
(^{' 000})

	Time spent looking for work (weeks)								
Number of spells of looking for work	1 and under 2	2 and under 3	3 and under 4	4 and under 8	8 and under 13	13 and under 26	26 and under 52	52 and over(a)	Total
MALES									
One	31.9	38.7	32.2	97.8	83.4	71.5	56.7	69.0	481.1
Two	..	*	*	10.7	14.4	20.1	26.4	..	74.9
Three	..	..	*	*	5.1	4.3	6.7	..	19.6
Four or more	..	..	..	*	*	6.4	8.0	..	21.8
Total	31.9	42.1	33.5	112.9	107.3	103.0	97.8	69.0	597.4
FEMALES									
One	55.6	35.7	30.1	87.0	78.0	70.8	67.6	71.2	496.1
Two	..	*	*	10.2	8.2	13.7	24.2	..	60.7
Three	..	..	*	*	..	6.1	5.4	..	13.1
Four or more	..	..	..	*	..	6.2	5.8	..	14.9
Total	55.6	39.3	31.6	101.1	90.5	92.5	103.0	71.2	584.8
PERSONS									
One	87.5	74.4	62.3	184.8	161.4	142.4	124.3	140.2	977.2
Two	..	7.0	*	20.9	22.6	33.9	50.6	..	135.6
Three	..	..	*	*	7.2	8.9	12.1	..	32.7
Four or more	..	..	..	*	6.6	10.4	13.8	..	36.7
Total	87.5	81.4	65.1	213.9	197.8	195.5	200.8	140.2	1,182.2

(a) See Explanatory notes, paragraph 10. (b) See paragraphs 6 and 7 of the Explanatory notes concerning the special definitions applicable to this survey.

TABLE 5. PROPORTION OF PERSONS IN THE LABOUR FORCE AT SOME TIME DURING THE 12 MONTHS TO FEBRUARY 1981(a) WHO WERE LOOKING FOR WORK AT SOME TIME DURING THE PERIOD: AGE AT FEBRUARY 1981
(Per cent)

	<i>Age group (years)</i>						<i>Total</i>
	<i>15-19</i>	<i>20-24</i>	<i>25-34</i>	<i>35-44</i>	<i>45-54</i>	<i>55 and over</i>	
Males	36.7	22.0	12.1	6.6	6.6	5.4	13.4
Females	45.4	25.4	17.9	12.0	8.1	3.9	20.0
Persons	40.9	23.6	14.5	8.7	7.1	5.0	16.0

(a) See Explanatory notes, paragraph 10.