

INQUIRIES

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TRADE UNION MEMBERS, NOVEMBER 1976

MAIN FEATURES

- It is estimated that in November 1976 1,741,200 males and 771,500 females were trade union members in their main job (56 per cent of male and 43 per cent of female employees).
- 30 per cent of male trade union members were employed in manufacturing industries and 33 per cent of female members in community services (including health and education).
- 52 per cent of male unionists were tradesmen, production-process workers or labourers; 30 per cent of female unionists were clerical workers.
- The percentage of male employees who were union members increased with age up to the 60-64 age group where 66 per cent of employees were members. For females the highest percentage was in the 55-59 age group (52 per cent).

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

In November 1976, questions were asked at a proportion of the dwellings included in the quarterly population survey in order to obtain information about the number of wage and salary earners who were members of trade unions, their industry and occupation and some of their demographic characteristics. This bulletin contains the results of the survey.

2. For the sake of brevity, wage and salary earners are referred to in this publication as *employees*.
3. The survey was based on a multi-stage area sample of private dwellings (about 7,500 houses, flats, etc.) and covered slightly less than one-sixth of one per cent of the population of Australia. The survey was not carried out in non-private dwellings (hotels, motels, etc.). The information was obtained by carefully chosen and specially trained interviewers, the interviews being carried out during a four-week period.

Scope

4. The survey covered all persons aged fifteen years and over (except those specified in paragraph 5) who were :
 - (i) wage or salary earners in their main job (as defined in paragraph 8), or
 - (ii) unemployed persons who had been wage or salary earners in their most recent job and had lost that job in the period January to November 1976.
5. Persons in institutions and non-private dwellings, members of the permanent defence forces, and certain diplomatic personnel customarily excluded from census and estimated populations were excluded from the survey. Employees in non-private dwellings comprised less than one half of one per cent of all employees.

Comparison with other trade union statistics

6. Trade union membership obtained from censuses of trade unions are published annually in *Trade Union Statistics* (Reference No. 6.24). The figures in that publication are higher than the estimates obtained from this survey for a number of reasons, including the following :
 - (i) the survey estimates relate only to persons residing in private dwellings,
 - (ii) they relate only to trade union membership in the respondent's main job (see paragraph 8); a person who was a member of a trade union only by virtue of holding a second job was excluded,
 - (iii) they relate only to trade union membership in one job, whereas a person who had recently changed jobs could be registered as a member of more than one union in the trade union collection,
 - (iv) the estimates (other than those in Table 10, which refer to unemployed persons) relate only to persons who were employees in their main

job in the survey week : other persons (e.g. those not in the labour force) are excluded even though they may have retained union membership in respect of some earlier employment.

- (v) some persons might elect to belong to more than one trade union,
- (vi) some unions may encounter difficulties in keeping an up-to-date register of members.

Definitions

7. A *trade union* was defined as for the annual census of trade unions (see bulletin Reference No. 6.24), i.e. as an organisation which consists predominantly of employees and whose principal activities include the negotiation of rates of pay and other conditions of employment for its members.

8. Where a person had more than one job the *main job* was defined as the one in which the person had worked most hours during the survey week.

9. *Percentage of all employees* refers to the proportion of employees in that group who were trade union members.

Reliability of the estimates

10. Since the estimates in this publication are based on information obtained from occupants of a sample of private dwellings, they may differ from the figures that would have been produced if the information had been

obtained from occupants of all private dwellings. An indication of the likely differences is given in the Technical Note, page 6.

Related publications

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

Trade Union Statistics (Reference No. 6.24)
The Labour Force (Reference No. 6.20)

12. All publications produced by the ABS are listed in *Publications of the Australian Bureau of Statistics* (Reference No. 1.8) which is available free of charge from any ABS office.

Symbols and other usages

- * Subject to sampling variability too high for most practical uses.
- † Less than 0.5 per cent.
- .. Not applicable.

Any discrepancies between totals and sums of components in tables are due to rounding. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

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TABLE 1. TRADE UNION MEMBERS : STATES AND TERRITORIES, NOVEMBER 1976 (a)

State or Territory	Males		Females		Persons	
	Number ('000)	Per cent of all employees	Number ('000)	Per cent of all employees	Number ('000)	Per cent of all employees
N.S.W.	629.9	56	273.2	43	903.1	51
Vic.	466.4	55	212.3	41	678.6	50
Qld	235.6	55	110.4	49	346.0	53
S.A.	158.4	55	70.8	41	229.2	50
W.A.	143.9	56	60.5	41	204.4	50
Tas.	61.6	67	22.8	47	84.3	60
N.T.	15.8	69	(b)4.2	(b)43	19.9	61
A.C.T.	29.6	61	17.5	59	47.1	60
Aust.	1,741.2	56	771.5	43	2,512.7	51

(a) Civilian employees 15 years and over who resided in private dwellings. For definitions of a trade union see paragraph 6, page 2. (b) Based on an estimate with a standard error greater than 20 per cent but not greater than 30 per cent, see Technical Note, page 6.

TABLE 2. TRADE UNION MEMBERS : INDUSTRY, NOVEMBER 1976 (a)

Industry division	Number ('000)			Per cent of total			Per cent of all employees		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	20.3	*	21.5	1	*	1	23	*	20
Mining	39.2	..	39.2	2	..	2	67	..	63
Manufacturing	529.8	150.0	679.8	30	19	27	59	52	57
Electricity, gas and water	84.0	*	88.1	5	*	4	89	*	83
Construction	187.0	*	188.3	11	*	8	60	*	57
Wholesale and retail trade	125.4	132.9	258.3	7	17	10	23	31	27
Transport and storage	177.5	(b)17.1	194.5	10	(b)2	8	78	(b)45	73
Communication	95.1	26.7	121.8	6	4	5	93	75	88
Finance, insurance, real estate and business services	97.6	70.0	167.6	6	9	7	45	38	42
Public administration and defence (c)	136.5	42.7	179.1	8	6	7	78	59	72
Community services	195.3	256.8	452.1	11	33	18	66	50	56
Entertainment, recreation, restaurants, hotels and personal services	53.4	68.9	122.3	3	9	5	48	36	41
Total	1,741.2	771.5	2,512.7	100	100	100	56	43	51

(a) See note (a) to Table 1. (b) See note (b) to Table 1. (c) Excludes permanent defence forces.

TABLE 3. TRADE UNION MEMBERS : INDUSTRY, STATES, NOVEMBER 1976 (a)
(per cent of all employees)

Industry division	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	Australia (d)
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	*	*	29	*	*	*	20
Mining	(b)95	..	*	..	65	*	63
Manufacturing	56	59	55	59	54	69	57
Electricity, gas and water	92	80	(b)80	(b)73	(b)76	(b)89	83
Construction	59	55	48	66	66	70	57
Wholesale and retail trade	27	24	30	22	30	46	27
Transport and storage	72	68	80	75	76	(b)68	73
Communication	84	95	86	*	(b)80	(b)93	88
Finance, insurance, real estate and business services	37	47	47	47	33	*	42
Public administration and defence (c)	76	62	86	64	71	75	72
Community services	56	49	68	51	57	59	56
Entertainment, recreation, restaurants, hotels and personal services	42	32	57	(b)39	41	46	41
Total	51	50	53	50	50	60	51

(a) See note (a) to Table 1. (b) See note (b) to Table 1. (c) Excludes permanent defence forces. (d) Includes the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory.

TABLE 4. TRADE UNION MEMBERS : OCCUPATION, NOVEMBER 1976 (a)

Occupation group	Number ('000)			Per cent of total			Per cent of all employees		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Professional and technical	196.0	164.2	360.3	11	21	14	51	54	52
Administrative, executive and managerial	45.7	*	50.2	3	*	2	19	*	19
Clerical	212.2	231.5	443.8	12	30	18	64	37	46
Sales	37.1	69.7	106.7	2	9	4	19	30	25
Farmers, fishermen, timber-getters, etc.	40.9	*	41.8	4	*	3	42	*	38
Transport and communication	171.5	19.1	190.6	10	3	8	78	45	72
Tradesmen, production-process workers and labourers, n.e.c. (b)	918.5	142.0	1,060.4	52	18	41	64	67	64
Service, sport and recreation	119.3	139.6	258.9	7	18	10	63	43	51
Total	1,741.2	771.5	2,512.7	100	100	100	56	43	51

(a) See note (a) to Table 1. (b) Includes miners, quarrymen and related workers.

TABLE 5. TRADE UNION MEMBERS : OCCUPATION, STATES, NOVEMBER 1976 (a)
(per cent of all employees)

Occupation group	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	Australia (d)
Professional and technical	51	49	61	51	51	56	52
Administrative, executive and managerial	22	*	*	*	*	*	19
Clerical	41	44	58	45	46	60	46
Sales	25	23	28	(b)20	31	(b)35	25
Farmers, fishermen, timber-getters, etc.	44	*	(b)37	*	52	*	38
Transport and communication	66	72	77	70	85	74	72
Tradesmen, production-process workers and labourers, n.e.c. (c)	67	65	55	62	59	79	64
Service, sport and recreation	53	44	57	51	51	44	51
Total	51	50	53	50	50	60	51

(a) See note (a) to Table 1. (b) See note (b) to Table 1. (c) Includes miners, quarrymen and related workers. (d) Includes the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory.

TABLE 6. TRADE UNION MEMBERS : AGE, NOVEMBER 1976 (a)

Age group (years)	Number ('000)			Per cent of total			Per cent of all employees		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
15 - 20	132.3	144.2	276.5	8	19	11	34	41	37
21 - 24	192.6	114.7	307.3	11	15	12	56	44	51
25 - 34	473.4	176.1	649.6	27	23	26	57	43	52
35 - 44	344.2	133.0	477.1	20	17	19	60	39	52
45 - 54	356.2	148.6	504.8	21	19	20	62	50	58
55 - 59	150.9	41.3	192.2	9	5	8	65	52	62
60 - 64	85.6	*	94.4	5	*	4	66	*	60
65 and over	*	*	(b)10.8	*	*	†	*	*	(b)24
Total	1,741.2	771.5	2,512.7	100	100	100	56	43	51

(a) See note (a) to Table 1. (b) See note (b) to Table 1.

TABLE 7. TRADE UNION MEMBERS : MARITAL STATUS, NOVEMBER 1976 (a)

Marital status	Number ('000)			Per cent of total			Per cent of all employees		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Married	1,291.4	471.9	1,763.3	74	61	70	59	43	54
Not married (b)	449.7	299.7	749.4	26	39	30	48	44	46
Total	1,741.2	771.5	2,512.7	100	100	100	56	43	51

(a) See note (a) to Table 1. (b) Never married, widowed and divorced.

TABLE 8. TRADE UNION MEMBERS : BIRTHPLACE, NOVEMBER 1976 (a)

Birthplace	Number ('000)			Per cent of total			Per cent of all employees		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Australia	1,255.3	578.5	1,833.7	72	75	73	55	42	50
Overseas countries —	485.9	193.1	678.9	28	25	27	59	45	54
United Kingdom and Ireland	174.0	74.1	248.1	10	10	10	53	41	49
Canada, U.S.A., New Zealand,									
South Africa	(b)15.1	(b)11.3	26.5	(b)1	(b)2	1	(b)37	(b)34	36
Italy	47.6	(b)15.1	62.7	3	(b)2	3	66	(b)54	62
Greece	41.0	(b)14.2	55.1	2	(b)2	2	80	(b)44	66
Germany	(b)15.8	*	24.3	(b)1	*	1	(b)47	*	48
Yugoslavia	37.7	15.9	53.6	2	2	2	77	55	69
Other countries	154.7	54.0	208.7	9	7	8	61	49	58
Total	1,741.2	771.5	2,512.7	100	100	100	56	43	51

(a) See note (a) to Table 1. (b) See note (b) to Table 1.

TABLE 9. TRADE UNION MEMBERS : STATE CAPITAL CITIES AND OTHER AREAS, NOVEMBER 1976 (a)

	Number ('000)			Per cent of total			Per cent of all employees		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
State capital cities (b)	1,123.9	532.1	1,656.0	65	69	66	55	42	50
Other areas	617.3	239.4	856.7	36	31	34	58	46	54
Total	1,741.2	771.5	2,512.7	100	100	100	56	43	51

(a) See note (a) to Table 1. (b) State Metropolitan Statistical Divisions adopted for the 1971 Census of Population and Housing.

TABLE 10. UNEMPLOYED TRADE UNION MEMBERS : NOVEMBER 1976 (a)

	Number ('000)	Per cent of total unemployed (b)
Males	37.0	39
Females	(c)12.8	(c)25
Persons	49.7	34

(a) See note (a) to Table 1. (b) Unemployed trade union members as a percentage of unemployed persons who had been wage or salary earners in their most recent job and had lost that job in the period January to November 1976. (c) See note (b) to Table 1.

TECHNICAL NOTE

Estimation procedure

The estimates are derived from the quarterly population survey by use of a complex ratio estimation procedure, which ensures that the survey estimates conform to an independently estimated distribution of the population by age and sex, rather than to the age and sex distribution within the sample itself.

Reliability of the estimates

2. Since the estimates in this bulletin are based on information obtained from the occupants of a sample of dwellings, they may differ from the figures that would have been produced if the information had been obtained from occupants of all dwellings. One measure of the likely difference is given by the *standard error*, which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of dwellings was included in the survey. 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 in the survey, and about nineteen chances in twenty that the difference will be less than two standard errors.

3. Space does not allow for the separate indication of the standard errors of all estimates in this bulletin. Standard errors for general application are given in the table on page 7. They will give an indication of the magnitude, rather than a precise measure, of the standard error of any particular estimate. An example of the use of the table is as follows: If an estimate for Australia obtained from the sample is 50,000 the standard error is 11 per cent of the estimate (i.e. 5,500); there are about two chances in three that the true figure is within the range 44,500 to 55,500 and about nineteen chances in twenty that this figure is between 39,000 and 61,000.

4. As the standard errors in the table show, *the smaller the estimate the higher is the relative standard error*. Very small estimates are thus subject to such high standard errors (relative to the size of the estimate) as to detract seriously from their value for most reasonable uses. In the tables in this bulletin, estimates with a

standard error greater than 30 per cent have not been shown, as the degree of sampling variability would seriously detract from their value for most reasonable uses. In most cases the standard error is not greater than 20 per cent; estimates with higher standard errors are specially noted in the tables. Although where estimates have not been shown the figures for these small components can in some cases be derived by subtraction, they should not be regarded as reliable.

5. The reliability of an estimated percentage, computed by using sample data for both numerator and denominator, depends upon both the size of the numerator and the size of the denominator. However, the per cent standard error of the estimated percentage will generally not be greater than the per cent standard error of the estimate of the numerator. The per cent standard errors of the numerators can be obtained from the table on page 7. For example, the percentage of male employees in manufacturing who are trade union members is shown by Table 2 to be 59. This percentage is based on an estimate of 529,800, which has a standard error of about 3.3 per cent of the estimate. The standard error of the estimated percentage is 3.3 per cent of 59 per cent (i.e. about 2 percentage points); there are thus about two chances in three that the percentage obtained from a full count would be in the range 57 to 61 per cent, and about nineteen chances in twenty that this figure would be in the range 55 to 63 per cent. Some estimates of percentages are published without the corresponding estimate of the number of persons. In these cases the standard errors will generally be less than 20 per cent unless footnoted to indicate a standard error generally greater than 20 per cent but not greater than 30 per cent.

6. The imprecision due to sampling variability, which is measured by the standard error, should not be confused with inaccuracies that may occur because of imperfections in reporting by interviewers and respondents. Inaccuracies of this kind are referred to as the *non-sampling error*, and they may occur in any enumeration, whether it be a full count or only a sample. Every effort is made to reduce the non-sampling error to a minimum by careful design of questionnaires, intensive training and supervision of interviewers and efficient operating procedures.

