

INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES, AUSTRALIA, NOVEMBER 1992

MAIN FEATURES

NOTE: Industrial disputes statistics for November 1992 include the general strikes in Victoria on 10 November, and Australia-wide on 30 November. Statistics of the numbers of employees involved and working days lost in respect of these disputes should be regarded as indicative only, because in some cases actual counts of employees involved were not available and the results were estimated. As ABS estimates include only those employees reported as having been on strike, and exclude those who were unable to attend work as a consequence of the strike, the numbers of employees involved included in these statistics are lower than those reported in the media at the time of the dispute (see paragraph 2 of Explanatory Notes).

The basis for counting the number of disputes has been changed in this issue of this publication, and incorporates revisions back to September 1991. Strikes which affect more than one industry and/or State are counted once in each industry and State but only once at the broader industry, State and Australian level (see paragraph 5 of the Explanatory Notes).

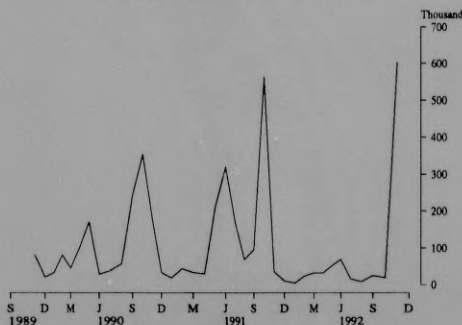
In November 1992—

- There were 63 disputes reported in progress, involving an estimated 645,100 employees and the loss of 603,200 working days. This is the largest number of employees involved in industrial dispute since June 1979 (1,199,400) and the highest number of working days lost since November 1981 (944,500). These high figures were primarily the result of two large general disputes,

in Victoria on 10 November and Australia-wide on 30 November. Together they accounted for 96 per cent of working days lost this month.

- All industries reported high numbers of working days lost. The Metal products, machinery and equipment manufacturing industry reported 102,300 working days lost, the highest since July 1991 when 105,600 working days lost were reported.

CHART 1. WORKING DAYS LOST, AUSTRALIA



Source: Table 1

INQUIRIES

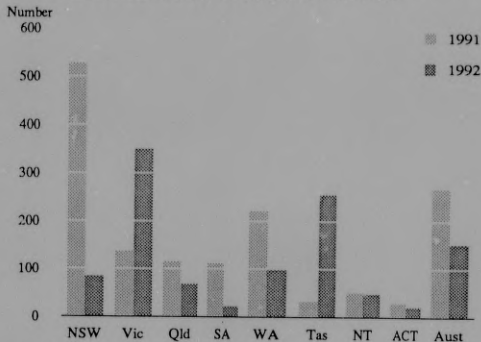
- for further information about statistics in this publication and the availability of related unpublished statistics contact Brenda McMorrow on Canberra (06) 252 6561 or any ABS State office.
- for information about other ABS statistics and services please contact Information Services on Canberra (06) 252 6627, 252 5402, 252 6007 or any ABS State Office.

- Community Services reported 173,700 working days lost, the highest since figures were first compiled for this industry in January 1980.
- There were 26,700 working days lost in the Coal Mining industry, the highest since September 1991 (26,800).
- Disputes in Victoria resulted in 502,400 working days lost, the highest for this State since June 1979 (658,800). The Victorian figure is the highest of all the States and represents 83 per cent of all time lost in November 1992.
- In New South Wales, 71,400 working days were lost, the highest since October 1991, when 550,200 working days were reported lost.

In the twelve months ending November 1992—

- There were 734 disputes in progress involving 842,200 employees and the loss of 904,900 working days.
- In terms of working days lost per thousand employees in the twelve months to November 1992:**
- There were 152 working days lost per thousand employees, an increase from the 12 months to October 1992 when the figure was 56.
- Community Services reported 169 working days lost per thousand employees, the highest figure for this industry since October 1991 (170).
- In Victoria there were 350 working days lost per thousand employees, the highest since October 1982 (530).

**CHART 2. WORKING DAYS LOST PER THOUSAND EMPLOYEES,
12 MONTHS ENDING NOVEMBER 1991 AND 1992**



Source: Table 5

NOTES

Statistics of industrial disputes are compiled mainly from data obtained from employers (both private and public sector) and trade unions concerning individual disputes, and from reports of government authorities.

The statistics relate to disputes which involved stoppages of work in which ten working days or more were lost at the establishments where the stoppages occurred.

Statistics on working days lost per thousand employees are calculated using estimates of employment from the Survey of Employment and Earnings and the Labour Force Survey.

Explanatory Notes and a Glossary are published on pages 6 to 8 of this publication.

IAN CASTLES
Australian Statistician

TABLE 1. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : AUSTRALIA(a)

Period	Number of disputes(b)		Employees involved ('000)		Working days lost ('000)
	Commenced in period	Total(c)	Newly involved(d)	Total(c)	
1991 —					
September	r70	r81	73.2	84.8	96.1
October	r65	r74	534.4	566.3	563.7
November	72	82	15.8	19.9	35.7
December	41	45	6.9	7.7	10.4
1992 —					
January	36	38	4.9	5.1	5.2
February	73	77	17.1	17.9	24.6
March	96	106	30.3	32.5	36.3
April	65	81	16.4	19.3	32.0
May	68	83	41.2	44.2	52.2
June	64	72	24.8	53.3	70.0
July	55	65	20.4	21.1	16.8
August	56	64	7.8	9.4	9.3
September r	60	69	14.3	17.1	25.6
October r	59	70	15.0	15.9	19.3
November	57	63	642.5	645.1	603.2
Twelve months ended —					
November 1990	1,187	1,200	708.9	714.3	1,363.1
1991 r	1,043	1,052	1,193.4	1,201.2	1,634.3
1992	730	734	841.5	842.2	904.9
December 1989	1,391	1,402	706.4	709.8	1,202.4
1990	1,189	1,193	725.9	729.9	1,376.5
1991	r1,032	r1,036	1,178.9	1,181.6	1,610.6

(a) More detailed information by State and industry is available on request. (b) Prior to September 1991 disputes affecting more than one industry and/or State have been counted as separate disputes in each industry and State and in the Australian total. See paragraph 5 of the Explanatory Notes. (c) Refers to all disputes in progress during the period. (d) Comprises employees involved in disputes which commenced during the month and additional employees involved in disputes which continued from the previous month.

TABLE 2. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : INDUSTRY, AUSTRALIA, WORKING DAYS LOST(a) ('000)

(a) More detailed information by State and industry is available on request. (b) Comprises Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting; Electricity, gas and water; Wholesale and retail trade; Finance, property and business services; Public administration and defence; Recreation, personal and other services.

TABLE 3. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : STATES AND TERRITORIES, AUSTRALIA, WORKING DAYS LOST(a)
(^{'000})

Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
1991 —									
September	48.3	28.2	14.7	1.5	3.2	—	0.2	—	96.1
October	550.2	5.9	2.2	2.5	2.3	0.4	0.3	0.1	563.7
November	23.5	1.6	6.9	0.3	2.6	0.8	0.1	—	35.7
December	4.9	0.9	0.8	—	3.8	—	—	—	10.4
1992 —									
January	3.7	0.7	0.5	—	0.3	—	—	—	5.2
February	5.1	9.9	4.5	0.8	3.2	1.0	—	—	24.6
March	10.4	8.9	7.2	1.2	7.9	0.1	0.6	0.1	36.3
April	6.3	9.2	3.3	0.2	4.1	7.1	0.4	1.4	32.0
May	14.4	5.1	7.2	0.3	5.3	18.9	0.3	0.8	52.2
June	34.9	2.3	4.1	0.5	17.4	10.6	0.1	0.1	70.0
July	4.1	0.8	9.7	1.3	0.3	—	0.3	0.3	16.8
August	4.0	2.0	1.6	0.2	1.0	0.5	—	—	9.3
September	r7.5	10.6	3.7	r0.3	2.7	0.3	0.4	0.1	r25.6
October	r8.4	r2.8	6.3	0.1	1.1	0.1	0.5	—	r19.3
November	71.4	502.4	14.5	6.0	8.6	0.1	0.1	0.1	603.2
Twelve months ended —									
November 1990	618.6	381.5	111.8	125.1	107.8	10.1	1.8	6.4	1,363.1
1991	r1,1u7.7	r227.7	108.7	r60.4	117.5	5.2	3.3	3.8	r1,634.3
1992	174.9	555.6	63.6	10.9	55.8	38.8	2.7	2.7	904.9
December 1989	589.6	348.4	100.5	35.0	102.1	10.2	6.9	9.6	1,202.4
1990	622.9	391.2	107.9	125.8	108.4	10.7	1.7	7.9	1,376.5
1991	1,106.3	209.2	106.6	59.3	119.1	4.4	3.3	2.3	1,610.6

(a) State by industry information is available on request

TABLE 4. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : INDUSTRY, AUSTRALIA
WORKING DAYS LOST PER THOUSAND EMPLOYEES FOR THE TWELVE MONTHS ENDED(a)

Period	Manufacturing								
	Mining		Metal products, machinery and equipment	Other	Construction	Transport and storage; Communication	Community Services	Other industries(b)	All industries
	Coal	Other							
Twelve months ended —									
1988 —									
December	15,548	1,777	750	183	725	177	90	83	269
1989 —									
December	5,505	642	473	283	374	160	176	65	190
1990 —									
December	4,879	1,631	1,293	212	204	299	151	25	217
1991 —									
September	4,931	1,383	2,337	197	336	90	96	30	256
October	4,865	806	1,980	332	432	234	170	70	291
November	4,481	703	1,808	299	r426	236	152	68	268
December	4,507	735	1,820	296	428	237	150	63	265
1992 —									
January	4,425	732	1,836	289	420	237	149	64	264
February	4,313	758	1,859	278	419	242	142	64	261
March	4,335	947	1,874	278	396	243	143	65	262
April	4,331	973	1,880	274	382	251	143	67	263
May	4,390	1,007	1,378	289	377	249	151	68	237
June	4,286	1,226	671	309	313	241	167	61	195
July	r4,191	r1,162	371	308	192	251	r163	57	169
August r	3,157	1,103	360	306	193	252	150	56	159
September r	2,315	1,046	340	307	168	241	128	56	148
October	r2,175	r959	108	r121	30	65	r42	12	56
November	3,043	1,028	346	264	151	158	169	59	152

(a) See paragraph 4 of the Explanatory Notes. (b) Comprises Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting; Electricity, gas and water; Wholesale and retail trade; Finance, property and business services; Public administration and defence; Recreation, personal and other services

TABLE 5. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : STATES AND TERRITORIES, AUSTRALIA,
WORKING DAYS LOST PER THOUSAND EMPLOYEES FOR THE TWELVE MONTHS ENDED(a)

Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
<i>Twelve months ended —</i>									
1988 —									
December	341	214	336	93	299	118	158	112	269
1989 —									
December	269	199	102	67	187	64	111	77	190
1990 —									
December	283	226	111	236	200	67	26	62	217
1991 —									
September	379	209	143	193	317	48	51	30	256
October	555	167	126	139	241	31	51	30	291
November	527	138	116	113	220	33	51	29	268
December	528	128	114	112	223	28	51	18	265
1992 —									
January	529	126	112	112	215	28	52	18	264
February	523	125	114	109	213	35	51	18	261
March	524	126	117	102	223	34	61	17	262
April	524	126	117	96	224	77	44	21	263
May	461	121	119	87	160	189	46	26	237
June	398	82	90	44	126	256	39	25	195
July	367	53	69	24	100	255	38	22	169
August	346	47	67	17	95	258	38	19	159
September	326	36	55	15	94	261	42	20	148
October	62	34	59	10	91	260	48	20	56
November	86	349	67	22	101	256	48	20	152

(a) See paragraph 4 of the Explanatory Notes

TABLE 6. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES ENDING IN THE 12 MONTHS TO NOVEMBER 1992 : AUSTRALIA,
REPORTED CAUSE, DURATION AND METHOD OF SETTLEMENT (a)

	Number of disputes(b)	Employees involved (directly and indirectly) ('000)	Working days lost ('000)
CAUSE OF DISPUTE			
Wages	64	12.6	20.6
Hours of Work	3	0.5	0.5
Leave, pensions, compensation	43	5.9	11.8
Managerial policy	412	144.0	215.3
Physical working conditions	98	16.4	26.4
Trade unionism	81	24.3	38.6
Other(c)	25	637.6	588.0
Total	726	841.3	901.3
DURATION OF DISPUTE			
Up to and including 1 day	428	751.9	659.0
Over 1 and up to and including 2 days	156	61.9	90.7
Over 2 and less than 5 days	104	20.4	65.1
5 and less than 10 days	27	4.7	33.2
10 and less than 20 days	7	1.0	12.8
20 days and over	4	1.4	40.4
Total	726	841.3	901.3
METHOD OF SETTLEMENT			
Negotiation	114	24.8	95.5
State legislation	35	5.7	16.3
Federal and joint Federal-State legislation	73	14.5	28.3
Resumption without negotiation	489	791.6	755.5
Other methods	15	4.7	5.6
Total	726	841.3	901.3

(a) More detailed information by State and industry is available on request. (b) Prior to September 1991 disputes affecting more than one industry and/or State have been counted as separate disputes in each industry and State and in the Australian total. See paragraph 5 of the Explanatory Notes. (c) Includes disputes not elsewhere categorised.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

The statistics in this publication relate to disputes which involved stoppages of work of ten working days or more at the establishments where the stoppages occurred. Ten working days is equivalent to the amount of ordinary time worked by ten people in one day, regardless of the length of stoppage, for example, 3,000 workers on strike for 2 hours would be counted as 750 working days lost (assuming they work an 8 hour day).

2. The statistics of working days lost relate to the losses due to industrial disputes only (as defined in paragraph 2 of the Glossary). Effects on other establishments, such as stand-downs because of lack of materials, disruption of transport services, power cuts, etc. are not included.

3. The statistics of industrial disputes are compiled mainly from data obtained from employers (both private and public sector), from trade unions and from reports of government authorities. Particulars of some stoppages eg. State or Australia wide general strikes may have been estimated and the statistics therefore should be regarded as giving only a broad measure of the extent of industrial disputes as defined above.

Change in methodology

4. The basis for the calculation of working days lost per thousand employees was changed in January 1987 to include estimates of employees from the Survey of Employment and Earnings. They are combined with estimates of the number of employees in agriculture and in private households, obtained from the Labour Force Survey. Estimates have been recalculated on this basis for each month back to June 1984 and are available on request. In issues of this publication prior to January 1987, the estimates of numbers of employees were based entirely on Labour Force Survey data. The effect of the change is minimal at the 'all industries' level but is quite significant, in some cases, for individual industry groups.

5. The basis for the calculation of the number of disputes was changed in the November 1992 publication and the series revised back to September 1991. Prior to September 1991, disputes affecting more than one industry and/or State have been counted as a separate dispute in each industry and State and in the Australian total. From September 1991 onwards, a dispute affecting more than one industry and/or State is counted once in each industry and/or State, but only once at the broader industry, State and Australia level. The reason for the change was to align the method of counting the number of industrial disputes with the International Labour Office guidelines. This change does not affect the estimates of employees involved or working days lost.

Reliability of estimates

6. Inaccuracies may occur because of imperfections in information provided by respondents or in processing by the ABS. Although considerable care is taken in questionnaire design; in the instructions given to respondents; and in editing the returns; these inaccuracies may occur in any enumeration, whether it be a full count or a sample.

Other ABS publications

7. Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:

Labour Statistics, Australia (6101.0) — issued annually

The Labour Force, Australia, Preliminary (6202.0) — issued monthly

The Labour Force, Australia (6203.0) — issued monthly

Trade Union Statistics, Australia (6323.0) — issued annually

Trade Union Members, Australia, August 1992 (6325.0)

Employed Wage and Salary Earners, Australia (6248.0) — issued quarterly

Award Rates of Pay Indexes, Australia (6312.0) — issued monthly

Unpublished statistics

8. A range of unpublished data is also available on request including dispute details at more detailed industry levels, cross-classified by States/Territories, and finer cause of dispute and method of settlement categories than those published. Considerable time series exist for most variables. Inquiries regarding data availability and associated charges should be directed to Brenda McMorrow on (06) 252 6561.

9. Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications and Products, Australia* (1101.0). The ABS also issues, on Tuesdays and Fridays, a *Publications Advice* (1105.0) which lists publications to be released in the next few days. The *Catalogue and Publications Advice* are available from any ABS office.

Symbols and other usages

- r estimates revised since last issue
- nil or rounded to zero

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

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Floppy disk service

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GLOSSARY

Cause of dispute

The statistics of causes of industrial disputes relate to the reported main cause of the stoppage of work and not necessarily all causes that may have been responsible for the stoppage of work. For these reasons, the statistics do not reflect the relative importance of all causes of disputes as perceived by both employers and employees. The causes are classified from information supplied by employers and according to standards determined by the International Labour Organisation. The classification of causes is as follows:

Wages. Claims involving general principles relating to wages e.g. increase (decrease) in wages; variation in method of payment or combined claims relating to wages, hours or conditions of work in which the claim about wages is deemed to be the most important. Combined claims in which other claims are deemed to be the most important are included under the relevant cause. Disputes over award restructuring are included under managerial policy.

Hours of work. Claims involving general principles relating to hours of work e.g. decrease (increase) in hours; distribution of hours.

Leave, pensions, compensation. Claims involving general principles relating to holiday and leave provisions; pension and retirement provisions; workers' compensation provisions; insertion of penal clause provisions in awards.

Managerial policy. Disputes concerning the exercise of managerial control by employers e.g. terms and conditions of employment (other than disputes specifically about wages and hours); new awards and agreements; award restructuring; work practices; principles of promotion or deployment of staff including roster complaints and retrenchments; disciplinary matters including alleged victimization of union officials; employment of particular persons; disagreement with managerial decisions.

Physical working conditions. Disputes concerning physical working conditions and safety issues e.g. protective clothing and equipment; first aid services; uncomfortable working conditions; lack of, or the condition of, amenities; claims for assistance; shortage or poor distribution of equipment or material; condition of equipment; new production methods and equipment; arduous physical tasks.

Trade unionism. Disputes concerning employment of non-unionists, inter-union and intra-union disputes; sympathy stoppages in support of employees in another industry; recognition of union activities.

Other. Disputes concerning protests directed against persons or situations other than those relating to the employer/employee relationship e.g. political matters; fining and gaoing of persons; lack of work; lack of adequate transport; non-award public holidays; accidents and attendance at funerals. Stoppages for which no reason is given are also included in this category.

Disputes

2. For these statistics, an *industrial dispute* is defined as a withdrawal from work by a group of employees, or a refusal by an employer or a number of employers to permit some or all of their employees to work, each withdrawal or refusal being made in order to enforce a demand, to resist a demand, or to express a grievance.

3. A dispute affecting several establishments is counted as a single dispute if it is organised or directed by one person or organisation; otherwise it is counted as a separate dispute at each establishment (in each State or Territory) and in each industry in which it occurred.

4. A dispute affecting more than one industry and/or State is counted once in each industry and State but only once at the broader industry, State and Australia level. Prior to September 1991 disputes covering more than one industry and/or State were counted differently (refer to paragraph 5 of the Explanatory Notes for details).

5. When there is a return to work between stoppages over the same issue, and the return to work is for less than two complete months, the stoppages are counted as a single dispute. When the return to work is for two or more months, the dispute is considered to have ended at the time of the return to work. Should a subsequent stoppage occur, it is counted as a new dispute.

6. Information is recorded concerning all industrial disputes where ten or more working days are lost (see paragraph 1 of the Explanatory Notes). Included in these statistics are the following types of industrial disputes:

- unauthorised stopwork meetings;
- unofficial strikes;
- sympathetic strikes (e.g. strikes in support of a group of workers already on strike);
- political or protest strikes;
- general strikes;
- work stoppages initiated by employers (e.g. lockouts); and
- rotating or revolving strikes (i.e. strikes which occur when workers at different locations take turns to stop work).

Excluded from these statistics are work-to-rules, go-slows, bans (e.g. overtime bans) and sit-ins. In addition, industrial disputes in which employees resign are deemed to have been resolved. Statistics on those disputes will cease to be collected from the date of the employees' resignations.

Disputes in progress

7. *Disputes in progress* refers to all disputes occurring within a particular calendar month or year. These disputes may:

- start in the previous month or year and continue into the period being measured, or
- begin and end in the period being measured, or
- begin in the period being measured and continue into the next period.

Duration of dispute

8. The *duration* of a dispute is the average number of working days lost per employee involved in the dispute. The duration of the dispute is calculated by dividing the total number of working days lost in the dispute by the number of employees involved (both directly and indirectly).

Employees

9. *Employees* refer to wage and salary earners only. Excluded are persons who are self-employed (e.g. building sub-contractors, owner-drivers of trucks) and employers.

10. *Employees directly involved* are those who actually participated in the dispute in order to enforce or resist a demand or to express a grievance.

11. *Employees indirectly involved* are those who ceased work at the establishment where the stoppages occurred, but who are not themselves parties to the dispute. Employees who ceased work at establishments other than those where the stoppages occurred are excluded. See paragraph 2 of the Explanatory Notes.

12. *Total employees involved* for any period of time are obtained by adding together the number of employees involved in each dispute in the period. For any period of time the figures may include details of the same employees involved in more than one dispute. The longer the period of reference, the more chance there is of some double counting in the number of employees involved. Where there are varying numbers of employees involved during the progress of a dispute, the figures of employees involved relate to the largest number of individual employees involved on any one day. Generally, the total number of employees involved for each year will equal the sum of the total number of employees involved in the first month of a year plus the number of employees newly involved in subsequent months. Differences between monthly and annual totals can occur due to the temporary cessation of stoppages which resume in subsequent months. Employees re-involved in this type of dispute are not classified as employees newly involved in stoppages in the second period in which the dispute occurs.

Method of settlement

13. Statistics of the *method of settlement* of industrial disputes relate to the *method directly responsible for ending the stoppage of work* as reported and not necessarily to the method (or methods) responsible for settling all matters in dispute. For these reasons, they do not reflect the relative importance of the work of various industrial tribunals

operating under State and Federal legislation. The classification of method of settlement is as follows:

Negotiation. Private negotiation between the parties involved, or their representatives, without the intervention or assistance of authorities constituted under State or Federal industrial legislation.

State legislation. Intervention or assistance of an industrial authority or authorities created by or constituted under State conciliation and arbitration or wages board legislation, or reference to such authorities or compulsory or voluntary conference. Intervention, assistance or advice of State government officials or inspectors.

Federal and joint Federal-State legislation. Compulsory or voluntary conference or by intervention or assistance, of, or reference to, the industrial relation commissions created by or constituted under the Industrial Relations Act, Coal Industry Acts, Stevedoring Industry Act, and other acts such as the Navigation Act; Public Service Arbitration Act. Intervention, assistance or advice of Federal government officials or inspectors.

Resumption without negotiation. This category may include some disputes which are settled subject to subsequent negotiation of a formal nature, such as industrial court hearings. Stop-work meetings are included, and this category may also include disputes settled by 'resumption' as stated, but about which no further information is available.

Other methods. Mediation; filling places of employees on strike or locked out; closing establishments permanently; dismissal or resignation of employees.

Working days lost

14. *Working days lost* refer to working days lost by employees directly and indirectly involved in the dispute and figures are generally as reported by parties to the dispute. For some disputes working days lost are estimated on the basis of the number of employees involved and the duration of the dispute.

Working days lost per thousand employees

15. *Working days lost per thousand employees* are calculated for the 12 month period from working days lost and estimates of employees obtained from the ABS Survey of Employment and Earnings and the ABS Labour Force Survey. Refer to paragraph 4 of the Explanatory Notes for details of the way in which these measures are calculated, and the change in the method of calculation from 1987.

