

## LABOUR FORCE EXPERIENCE DURING 1979, AUSTRALIA (PRELIMINARY)

### INQUIRIES

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### MAIN FEATURES

*Note: Survey estimates are subject to sampling variability, as explained in paragraph 10 below.*

Of the persons in the non-institutional civilian population aged 15 years and over in February 1980, an estimated 1,075,200 had experienced in 1979 at least one period lasting a week or more when they were looking for work. This represents 15.2 per cent of all persons who had been in the labour force at some time during 1979. For teenagers the percentage was 40.5.

Of persons who had been looking for work, 692,100 (64.4 per cent) had been out of work for eight weeks or more during the year, and 347,200 (32.3 per cent) had been out of work for six months or more. (See paragraphs 6 and 7 below concerning the special definitions applicable to this survey.)

Two out of every three persons (66.7 per cent) had been in the labour force (either employed or looking for work) at some time in 1979. The proportion for males was 82.1 per cent and for females 51.8 per cent.

Of those who had been in the labour force, 76.9 per cent had been in for the whole year.

### EXPLANATORY NOTES

#### Introduction

In February 1980 a survey, based on the monthly population survey, was conducted throughout Australia in order to obtain information about the labour force experience during 1979 of civilians aged fifteen years and over. Information obtained included the length of time (in 1979) persons were employed, looking for work or not in the labour force, the number of periods 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* (6206.0).

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 15,000 houses, flats etc.) and non-private dwellings (hotels, motels, institutions, etc.) and covered about one third 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, 11th February, 1980.

#### Scope

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

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

5. The estimates relate to the labour force experience in 1979 of persons covered by the survey in February 1980. Because of emigration, deaths and other exits not all persons with 1979 labour force experience were covered. Labour force experience may relate to experience outside Australia.

#### Definitions

6. It is impracticable to obtain information, relating to a calendar year, 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 in 1979 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 :

- (i) *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 (ii) and (iii) below.
- (ii) *Employed persons.* A person was classified as having been employed during a week if, in that week, he :
  - (a) 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
  - (b) worked fifteen hours or more without pay in a family business (or farm), or
  - (c) had a job, business or farm, but was on paid leave (including sick leave).
- (iii) *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.
- (iv) *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* in 1979 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.

#### Reliability of the estimates

10. 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 per cent 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

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

- . *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0)
- . *Labour Force Experience, Australia* (6206.0)
- . *Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia* (6220.0)
- . *Persons Looking for Work, Australia* (6222.0)
- . *Employment Status of Teenagers, August 1978* (6234.0)
- . *Labour Mobility, Australia* (6209.0)

12. Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in *Catalogue of Publications* (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 10 above.
- n.a. not available.
- .. not applicable.

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<br>(Persons) | Approximate standard error<br>of estimates |                         | Size of estimate<br>(Persons) | Approximate standard error<br>of estimates |                         |
|-------------------------------|--|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--|-------------------------|
|                               | Persons                                    | Per cent<br>of estimate |                               | Persons                                    | Per cent<br>of estimate |
| 6,000                         | 1,500                                      | 25.0                    | 200,000                       | 7,100                                      | 3.6                     |
| 10,000                        | 2,000                                      | 20.0                    | 500,000                       | 10,000                                     | 2.0                     |
| 20,000                        | 2,700                                      | 13.5                    | 1,000,000                     | 12,800                                     | 1.3                     |
| 50,000                        | 4,100                                      | 8.2                     | 2,000,000                     | 16,100                                     | 0.8                     |
| 100,000                       | 5,400                                      | 5.4                     | 5,000,000                     | 21,300                                     | 0.4                     |

TABLE 1. CIVILIAN POPULATION (a), FEBRUARY 1980 : LABOUR FORCE EXPERIENCE DURING 1979 ('000)

| Employment status                             | Labour force experience during 1979 |               |             |          |
|---|-------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|----------|
|   | Males                               | Married women | All females | Persons  |
| Civilian population in February 1980          | 5,251.7                             | 3,448.0       | 5,366.6     | 10,618.3 |
| In the labour force at some time during 1979  | 4,310.1                             | 1,753.7       | 2,777.4     | 7,087.5  |
| For the whole year                            | 3,643.9                             | 1,101.2       | 1,803.7     | 5,447.6  |
| For part of the year                          | 666.1                               | 652.5         | 973.8       | 1,639.9  |
| Employed at some time during 1979             | 4,199.5                             | 1,670.9       | 2,605.3     | 6,804.8  |
| Mostly full time --                           |                                     |               |             |          |
| No part-time work                             | 3,889.9                             | 925.9         | 1,636.0     | 5,525.9  |
| Some part-time work                           | 106.5                               | 64.7          | 103.4       | 209.9    |
| Mostly part time --                           |                                     |               |             |          |
| No full-time work                             | 168.9                               | 638.4         | 800.0       | 968.9    |
| Some full-time work                           | 34.2                                | 41.8          | 65.8        | 100.0    |
| Number of jobs held during 1979 (b) --        |                                     |               |             |          |
| One   | 3,497.2                             | 1,487.2       | 2,238.6     | 5,735.9  |
| Two   | 496.2                               | 134.5         | 253.9       | 750.1    |
| Three   | 116.1                               | 27.6          | 63.1        | 179.2    |
| Four  | 42.5                                | 12.9          | 27.3        | 69.8     |
| Five  | 13.9                                | *             | 8.5         | 22.4     |
| Six or more                                   | 33.6                                | 6.2           | 13.8        | 47.4     |
| Looked for work at some time during 1979 (c)  | 579.9                               | 224.0         | 495.3       | 1,075.2  |
| One period of looking for work                | 458.7                               | 194.9         | 426.4       | 885.1    |
| Two periods                                   | 68.3                                | 14.8          | 39.7        | 108.0    |
| Three periods                                 | 22.6                                | *             | 12.2        | 34.8     |
| Four or more periods                          | 30.2                                | 10.0          | 17.1        | 47.3     |
| Out of the labour force for the whole of 1979 | 941.6                               | 1,694.3       | 2,589.1     | 3,530.8  |

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

TABLE 2. PERSONS IN THE LABOUR FORCE : AGE (a), 1979 ('000)

| Age group (years) | In the labour force at some time during the year |               |             |         | Average labour force (b) |               |             |         |
|-------------------|--|---------------|-------------|---------|--------------------------|---------------|-------------|---------|
|                   | Males  | Married women | All females | Persons | Males                    | Married women | All females | Persons |
| 15 - 19           | 431.9  | 22.7          | 400.8       | 832.6   | 419.2                    | 16.2          | 368.2       | 787.4   |
| 20 - 24           | 579.6  | 204.4         | 489.6       | 1,069.2 | 549.6                    | 169.6         | 417.6       | 967.3   |
| 25 - 34           | 1,131.9  | 572.7         | 723.4       | 1,855.3 | 1,101.6                  | 449.7         | 581.7       | 1,683.3 |
| 35 - 44           | 865.8  | 483.7         | 562.6       | 1,428.4 | 834.7                    | 416.3         | 475.9       | 1,310.6 |
| 45 - 54           | 724.7  | 329.8         | 400.3       | 1,125.0 | 714.6                    | 285.6         | 349.6       | 1,064.2 |
| 55 - 59           | 308.2  | 97.0          | 126.6       | 434.8   | 291.4                    | 72.2          | 99.5        | 390.9   |
| 60 - 64           | 171.5  | 30.9          | 50.0        | 221.5   | 152.1                    | 22.6          | 38.8        | 190.8   |
| 65 and over       | 96.6   | 12.5          | 24.2        | 120.7   | 66.3                     | 7.6           | 19.0        | 85.2    |
| Total             | 4,310.1  | 1,753.7       | 2,777.4     | 7,087.5 | 4,129.4                  | 1,439.9       | 2,350.3     | 6,479.7 |

(a) At the time of the survey. (b) Average of the monthly labour force survey estimates for 1979.

TABLE 3. PERSONS EMPLOYED AT SOME TIME DURING 1979 : DURATION OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE YEAR ('000)

| <i>Duration of employment (weeks)</i> | <i>Males</i>   | <i>Married women</i> | <i>All females</i> | <i>Persons</i> |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 1 and under 4                         | 36.5           | 27.0                 | 52.1               | 88.6           |
| 4 " " 13                              | 107.2          | 113.1                | 174.8              | 282.0          |
| 13 " " 26                             | 126.8          | 119.7                | 174.9              | 301.6          |
| 26 " " 39                             | 209.4          | 151.6                | 236.5              | 445.9          |
| 39 " " 49                             | 290.1          | 185.4                | 280.7              | 570.8          |
| 49 " " 52                             | 176.5          | 78.0                 | 129.9              | 306.4          |
| 52                                    | 3,253.1        | 995.9                | 1,556.4            | 4,809.5        |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>4,199.5</b> | <b>1,670.9</b>       | <b>2,605.3</b>     | <b>6,804.8</b> |

TABLE 4. PERSONS WHO LOOKED FOR WORK AT SOME TIME DURING 1979 : NUMBER OF PERIODS OF LOOKING FOR WORK AND TIME SPENT LOOKING FOR WORK IN THE YEAR (a) ('000)

| <i>Number of periods of looking for work</i> | <i>Time spent looking for work (weeks)</i> |                      |                      |                      |                       |                        |                        |              | <i>Total</i>   |
|--|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------|----------------|
|  | <i>1 and under 2</i>                       | <i>2 and under 3</i> | <i>3 and under 4</i> | <i>4 and under 8</i> | <i>8 and under 13</i> | <i>13 and under 26</i> | <i>26 and under 52</i> | <i>52</i>    |                |
| <b>MALES</b>                                 |  |                      |                      |                      |                       |                        |                        |              |                |
| One  | 33.2                                       | 30.2                 | 21.3                 | 90.8                 | 68.6                  | 75.9                   | 80.1                   | 58.6         | 458.7          |
| Two  | ..   | *                    | *                    | 16.0                 | 8.8                   | 15.5                   | 24.6                   | ..           | 68.3           |
| Three  | ..   | ..                   | *                    |                      | 7.6                   | 7.2                    | 6.1                    | ..           | 22.6           |
| Four or more                                 | ..   | ..                   | ..                   | *                    | 6.1                   | 10.3                   | 10.9                   | ..           | 30.2           |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | <b>33.2</b>                                | <b>32.2</b>          | <b>24.3</b>          | <b>112.1</b>         | <b>88.7</b>           | <b>108.9</b>           | <b>121.8</b>           | <b>58.6</b>  | <b>579.9</b>   |
| <b>FEMALES</b>                               |  |                      |                      |                      |                       |                        |                        |              |                |
| One  | 31.2                                       | 34.6                 | 20.9                 | 84.1                 | 49.7                  | 68.2                   | 63.3                   | 74.5         | 426.4          |
| Two  | ..   | *                    | *                    | *                    | 7.7                   | 8.3                    | 17.4                   | ..           | 39.7           |
| Three or more                                | ..   | ..                   | *                    |                      | 8.1                   | 9.4                    | 11.6                   | ..           | 29.3           |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | <b>31.2</b>                                | <b>36.3</b>          | <b>22.5</b>          | <b>91.3</b>          | <b>61.4</b>           | <b>85.9</b>            | <b>92.3</b>            | <b>74.5</b>  | <b>495.3</b>   |
| <b>PERSONS</b>                               |  |                      |                      |                      |                       |                        |                        |              |                |
| One  | 64.4                                       | 64.8                 | 42.2                 | 174.9                | 118.3                 | 144.1                  | 143.4                  | 133.1        | 885.1          |
| Two  | ..   | *                    | *                    | 19.0                 | 16.5                  | 23.8                   | 42.1                   | ..           | 108.0          |
| Three  | ..   | ..                   | *                    | *                    | 7.1                   | 11.1                   | 11.2                   | ..           | 34.8           |
| Four or more                                 | ..   | ..                   | ..                   | *                    | 8.2                   | 15.8                   | 17.4                   | ..           | 47.3           |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | <b>64.4</b>                                | <b>68.5</b>          | <b>46.9</b>          | <b>203.3</b>         | <b>150.1</b>          | <b>194.8</b>           | <b>214.1</b>           | <b>133.1</b> | <b>1,075.2</b> |

(a) See paragraphs 6 and 7 concerning the special definitions applicable to this survey.

TABLE 5. PROPORTION OF PERSONS IN THE LABOUR FORCE AT SOME TIME DURING 1979 WHO WERE LOOKING FOR WORK AT SOME TIME DURING THE YEAR : AGE (a) (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          | 39.9                     | 23.7         | 12.0         | 7.6          | 5.6          | 4.9                | 13.5         |
| Females        | 41.3                     | 21.9         | 16.6         | 11.6         | 7.1          | 4.6                | 17.8         |
| <b>Persons</b> | <b>40.5</b>              | <b>22.9</b>  | <b>13.8</b>  | <b>9.2</b>   | <b>6.1</b>   | <b>4.8</b>         | <b>15.2</b>  |

(a) At the time of the survey.