

PERSONS NOT IN LABOUR FORCE (including discouraged jobseekers) (PRELIMINARY), MARCH 1979

INQUIRIES

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MAIN FEATURES

In March 1979 an estimated 2,847,200 persons aged 15 to 64 years were not in the labour force (i.e. were not employed or taking active steps to find a job). Of these:

- . 2,167,500 did not want a full-time or part-time job.
- . 70,000 stated they had been looking for work in the four weeks prior to interview week but of these 46,300 had taken no active steps to find employment and 23,700 would have been unable to start work in the survey week.
- . 524,600 would have, or might have, liked a job at the time of the survey. Of these:
 - . 402,800 were not looking for work because of personal or family considerations.
 - . 63,400 were discouraged jobseekers, i.e. they wanted a job but were not looking for work because they believed that there were no suitable jobs in their locality, that employers considered them too young or too old, or they lacked the necessary schooling, experience, etc.
 - . 11,200 were not looking for work because they believed there were no jobs with suitable hours.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

In March 1979 a survey, based on the monthly population survey, was conducted throughout Australia in order to obtain information about persons aged 15 to 64 years who were not in the labour force; in particular whether they wanted a job and, if they did, the reason they were not looking for work. Results of similar surveys conducted in November 1975 and May 1977 were published in *Persons Not in the Labour Force* (6220.0).

2. This bulletin contains only a summary of the more important results of the survey. More detailed estimates, which will be published in a bulletin to be issued 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 30,000 houses, flats etc.) and non-private dwellings (hotels, motels, institutions, etc.) and covered about two-thirds 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, 12th March, 1979.

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) non-Australians on tour or holidaying in Australia, and
- (d) members of non-Australian defence forces (and their dependants) stationed in Australia.

Survey methodology

5. Respondents to the survey, as defined in paragraph 4, were asked "Even though you have not been looking for work would you like a full-time or part-time job now?"; Table 1 summarises replies to this question. A further question was asked of persons who answered "yes" or "maybe" in order to ascertain their reason for not looking for work at the time of the survey (See Table 2).

Definitions

6. The labour force category to which a person is assigned depends on his *actual activity* (i.e. whether working, looking for work, etc.) during a specified week known as *the survey week*, which is the week immediately preceding that in which the interview takes place. Definitions of the principal categories appearing in this statement are given in *The Labour Force* (6203.0).

7. *Discouraged jobseekers* were defined as persons who wanted a job but were not looking for work because they believed they would not be able to find a

job for any of the following reasons: considered too young or too old by employers; language or racial difficulties; lacked necessary training, skills or experience; or no jobs in locality or line of work.

NOTE.

8. Persons looking for work are not classified as discouraged jobseekers. For this reason discouraged job seekers do not include persons who stated that they were looking for work but who were not classified as unemployed because:

- (i) they did not take active steps to find employment, or
- (ii) because they would not have been able to start work in survey week for reasons other than their own temporary illness or injury.

9. *Active steps to find work* include checking or registering with the Commonwealth Employment Service or other employment agencies, writing, telephoning or applying in person to an employer, answering a newspaper advertisement for a job, advertising or tendering for work, contacting friends or relatives and looking on factory or employment service notice boards.

10. Persons included in the survey who wanted a job but were not looking for work were asked to give reasons why they were not doing so. Reasons were ranked in the order of priority shown in Table 2; where more than one reason was given, only the higher or highest-ranked has been included in the estimates in Table 2.

Reliability of the estimates

11. Since the estimates in this bulletin 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 22 per cent have not been shown in this bulletin, 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* (6203.0).

Related publications

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

The Labour Force (6203.0)

Labour Force Experience (6206.0)

Persons not in the Labour Force (6220.0)

Persons Looking for Work (6222.0)

Labour Mobility (6209.0)

13. All 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 11 above.

n.a. Not available

.. Not applicable.

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

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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	970	21.6	100,000	3,900	3.9
5,000	1,000	20.0	200,000	5,100	2.6
6,000	1,100	18.0	300,000	6,000	2.0
10,000	1,400	14.0	500,000	7,200	1.4
20,000	2,000	10.0	1,000,000	9,100	0.9
50,000	2,900	5.8	2,000,000	11,000	0.6
			5,000,000	15,000	0.3

TABLE 1. CIVILIAN POPULATION AGED 15 YEARS AND OVER : EMPLOYMENT STATUS, MARCH 1979

	Number ('000)			Per cent of total		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Civilian population aged 15 years and over	5,238.6	5,365.7	10,604.3	100.0	100.0	100.0
Employed	3,902.1	2,158.1	6,060.2	74.5	40.2	57.2
Unemployed	224.3	203.5	427.8	4.3	3.8	4.0
Not in the labour force	1,112.2	3,004.0	4,116.3	21.2	56.0	38.8
Aged 65 years and over	506.7	762.3	1,269.0	9.7	14.2	12.0
Aged 15 to 64 years	605.5	2,241.7	2,847.2	11.6	41.8	26.9
Inmate of institution, permanently unable to work, boarding school student	57.6	27.5	85.2	1.1	0.5	0.8
Had not looked for work in the four weeks before interview week	523.8	2,168.3	2,692.1	10.0	40.4	25.4
Would have liked a job at the time of the survey	79.2	368.3	447.5	1.5	6.9	4.2
Might have liked a job at the time of the survey	13.5	63.6	77.1	0.3	1.2	0.7
Would not have liked a job at the time of the survey	425.0	1,721.5	2,146.5	8.1	32.1	20.2
Did not know whether would have liked a job at the time of the survey	6.1	14.9	21.0	0.1	0.3	0.2
Had looked for work in the four weeks before interview week	24.1	45.9	70.0	0.5	0.9	0.7
Had taken no active steps to obtain employment	13.3	33.0	46.3	0.3	0.6	0.4
Was unable to start a job in survey week for reasons other than own temporary illness or injury	10.8	12.9	23.7	0.2	0.2	0.2

TABLE 2. PERSONS AGED 15 TO 64 YEARS WHO WERE NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE AND WHO WOULD OR MIGHT HAVE LIKED A JOB : REASON FOR NOT LOOKING FOR WORK (a), MARCH 1979 ('000)

Reason for not looking for work (a)	Age group (years)							Total
	15-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-59	60-64	
MALES								
Personal/family considerations (b)	34.5	9.6	4.5	*	5.9	6.0	6.4	71.1
Discouraged (c)	4.7	*	*	*	*	*	*	9.4
Total all reasons (d)	44.8	11.6	6.9	5.5	8.3	7.0	8.5	92.7
FEMALES								
Had a job to go to	*	5.4	*	*	*	*	*	8.9
Personal considerations (b)	39.6	12.1	22.9	22.3	27.1	10.5	4.8	139.3
Family considerations (b)	5.6	30.5	85.0	44.1	20.0	5.3	*	192.4
Discouraged (c)	6.0	10.3	14.9	14.2	5.5	*	*	54.0
No jobs in locality or line of work	4.6	9.1	11.2	9.3	*	*	*	36.8
Other	*	*	5.0	5.0	5.9	*	*	17.2
No jobs in suitable hours	*	4.5	4.7	*	*	*	*	10.1
Other (including "don't know")	5.4	8.3	5.7	5.6	*	*	*	27.2
Total	53.3	50.5	134.0	91.6	68.9	23.1	10.5	431.9
PERSONS								
Had a job to go to	5.2	4.8	*	*	*	*	*	12.9
Personal considerations (b)	73.8	21.5	26.7	26.2	33.0	16.4	11.1	208.7
Family considerations (b)	5.9	30.7	85.8	44.5	20.0	5.4	*	194.1
Discouraged (c)	7.7	*	10.7	15.3	15.4	6.4	*	63.4
Considered too young or too old by employers	*	*	*	5.4	6.6	*	*	14.0
No jobs in locality or line of work	6.4	*	9.5	11.3	9.7	*	*	43.2
Language or racial difficulties, lacked necessary training, skills, etc,	*	*	4.7	*	*	*	*	6.1
No jobs in suitable hours	*	4.5	4.7	*	*	*	*	11.2
Other (including "don't know")	6.4	*	9.3	6.3	6.3	*	*	34.2
Total	98.1	62.1	141.0	97.1	77.3	30.1	19.0	524.6

(a) Highest ranked reason only. (b) Personal considerations include own ill health, physical disability or pregnancy, studying/returning to studies or where there is no need to work. Family considerations include ill health of other than self, unable to find child care, children too young/prefers to look after children and cases where spouse disapproves. (c) See paragraphs 7 and 8. (d) Includes persons who had a job to go to, those who thought that there were no jobs available in suitable hours and others, including those who gave "don't know" as their reason for not looking for work.