



PERSONS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE, AUSTRALIA, SEPTEMBER 1983 (PRELIMINARY)

- PHONE INQUIRIES** *for more information about these statistics*—contact Ms Susan Purcell on Canberra (062) 52 6503 or any of our State offices.
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- MAIL INQUIRIES** *write to* Information Services, ABS, P.O. Box 10, Belconnen, A.C.T. 2616 or any of our State offices.

MAIN FEATURES

Notes

(i) *New or amended concepts and definitions have been introduced in the September 1983 survey, causing a break in series. Refer to Explanatory Notes for more detail.*

(ii) *Survey estimates are subject to sampling variability, as explained in paragraph 26 below.*

In September 1983, 4,516,800 persons aged 15 years and over were not in the labour force. 765,600 of these wanted work and were either not actively looking or were actively looking but not available to start in the survey week. 733,700 persons wanted work and were available to start work within four weeks and 31,900 persons had been actively looking for work but were not available to start work within four weeks.

Of those who wanted to work and were available to start work within four weeks:

243,800 had not been actively looking for work because of personal reasons

277,200 had not been actively looking for work because of family reasons

a further 118,200 persons (91,800 females) were discouraged jobseekers

and 94,500 had not been looking for work for various other reasons.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

Since 1975, the ABS has conducted regular surveys of persons not in the labour force, seeking information on their labour force aspirations and, if appropriate, their availability for work and reasons for not currently looking for work. As interest has grown over the years in this component of the population, various modifications have been made to the survey to provide a more

comprehensive range of data. The September 1983 survey has been further modified by the introduction of a new concept, '*marginal attachment to the labour force*' (see paragraphs 4 and 13), and some improvements have been made to the measure of discouraged jobseekers. These changes have caused a break in series (see paragraphs 18 to 25).

2. Persons not in the labour force are by definition those persons who do not meet the criteria that would enable them to be classified as being in the labour force. To be classified as being in the labour force, a person must be aged 15 years or over and be either employed or unemployed. Definitions of *employed* and *unemployed* are given in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0).

3. *Persons not in the labour force*, therefore, include all persons aged 15 years and over who are not employed, who want work but do not meet the criteria to be classified as unemployed; who do not want to work; or who through incapacity or infirmity can not work.

4. The revised survey now provides more detailed characteristics concerning those persons who do not meet all of the criteria to be classified as unemployed but who have marginal attachment to the labour force. For the purposes of this survey, marginal attachment includes persons who were not actively looking for work but who wanted to work and were available to start work within four weeks and persons who were actively looking for work but were not available for work in the week prior to interview (the survey week).

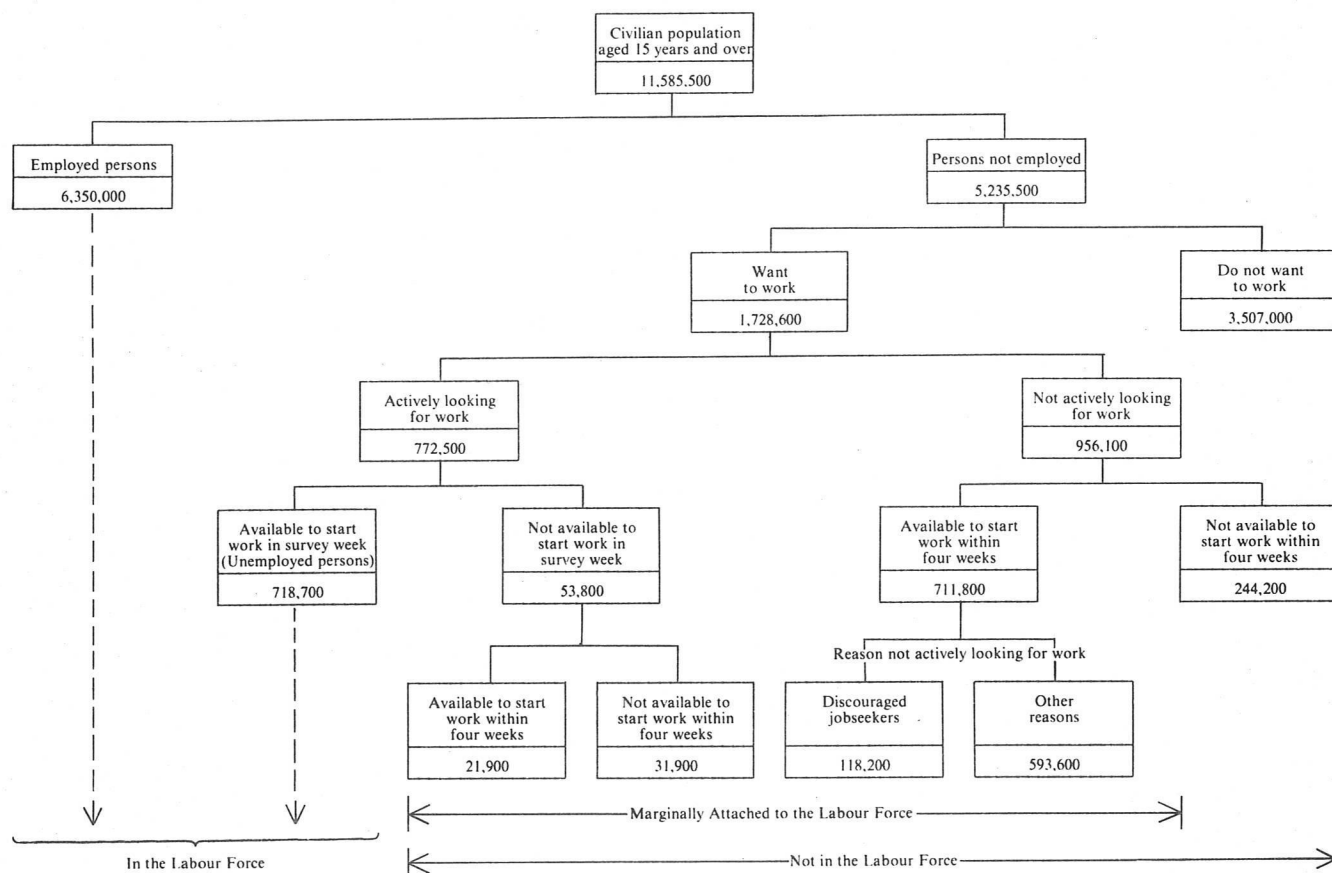
5. The criteria determining those in the labour force are based on actual activity (i.e. working or looking for work) during the survey week. The criteria determining marginal attachment to the labour force, in particular the concepts of wanting to work, availability to start work and reasons for not actively looking, are more subjective and not based on respondents' actual activity. Hence, the measurement of these criteria is affected by the respondents' own interpretation of the concepts used. Individual respondent's interpretation is affected by such factors as the respondent's work aspirations, as well as their family, economic and other commitments.

6. *Discouraged jobseekers* (a subcategory of those marginally attached) are those persons who were available to start work within four weeks but who were not actively looking for work for reasons which are assessed to indicate discouragement. (Refer to paragraph 17 for a fuller definition).

7. The survey also provides details of those persons who stated that they want to work, but who are not defined as marginally attached to the labour force.

8. The various groups of persons either in the labour force or not in the labour force, including those marginally attached to the labour force, are shown schematically in the following diagram.

RELATIONSHIP OF PERSONS MARGINALLY ATTACHED TO THE LABOUR FORCE TO PERSONS IN OR NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE



9. This survey was run in conjunction with the September 1983 labour force survey conducted throughout Australia. During the two weeks beginning Monday 12 September 1983 specially trained interviewers asked questions of those of the 71,000 respondents in the September labour force survey who fell within the scope of this survey.

10. This publication contains only a summary of the results of the survey. Estimates shown are preliminary and may be revised. Further information which will be published as soon as possible is available on request.

Scope

11. The survey includes all persons not in the labour force aged fifteen years and over except:

- certain diplomatic personnel of overseas governments, customarily excluded from census and estimated populations;
- overseas residents in Australia;

(c) dependants of non-Australian defence forces personnel stationed in Australia.

Definitions

12. Definitions of the principal labour force and demographic categories appearing in this publication are given in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0).

13. *Persons marginally attached to the labour force* are those who:

- wanted to work and were available to start within four weeks; or
- were actively looking for work but were not available to start work within four weeks.

14. *Persons who wanted to work and were available to start within four weeks* are those who:

- in the four weeks up to the end of the survey week had taken *active steps* to find work and who were available to start work within four

weeks, even though they were unable to start in survey week for reasons other than own temporary illness or injury; or

- (b) although claiming to have looked for work in the four weeks up to the end of the survey week, had not taken *active steps* to find work; or
- (c) in the four weeks up to the end of the survey week had not looked for work but in the survey answered 'yes' or 'maybe' to the question '*Even though you have not been looking for work would you like a full-time or part-time job?*'.

15. *Persons who are actively looking for work but are not available to start work within four weeks* are those who in the four weeks up to the end of survey week had taken active steps to find work but were not available to start work in survey week for reasons other than own temporary illness or injury or within the four weeks following the interview.

16. *Active steps to find work* include writing, telephoning or applying in person to an employer for work; answering a newspaper advertisement for a job; checking factory or Commonwealth Employment Service noticeboards; being registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service; checking or registering with any other employment agency; advertising or tendering for work; and contacting friends or relatives.

17. *Discouraged jobseekers* are those persons who wanted to work and were available to start work within four weeks but whose main reason for not taking active steps to find work was that they believed they would not be able to find a job for any of the following reasons: considered by employers to be too young or too old; language or racial difficulties; lack the necessary training, skills or experience; no jobs in their locality or line of work or no jobs at all available.

Discontinuities in the series

18. The modifications made to the September 1983 survey included the addition of certain groups of persons excluded from previous 'Persons Not in the Labour Force' surveys and several alterations to the order and wording of questions used in the survey.

19. Only those respondents who reported that they were available to start work within the next four weeks were asked their reasons for not actively looking for work. Hence persons classified as discouraged jobseekers in this survey must have been available to start work within four weeks. This availability criterion was not applied to the definition of discouraged jobseekers in previous surveys. The application of the criterion removes the previous anomaly that persons were classified as discouraged jobseekers regardless of whether or not they were available to start work in the near future. In previous surveys, the number of discouraged jobseekers who were not available to start work within four weeks was small in comparison with the total number of discouraged jobseekers (in recent surveys between 4.0 per cent and 6.5 per cent).

20. Persons not in the labour force aged 65 years and over are now included in the survey and may be classified as being discouraged jobseekers or as otherwise marginally attached to the labour force. An additional 30,600 persons who wanted to work and were available to start and 13,100 discouraged jobseekers aged 65 years and over were included in the September 1983 survey.

21. Persons belonging to two other groups are now included in the survey:

- (a) persons who were actively looking for work but who were unable to start in survey week for reasons other than their own temporary illness or injury (21,900 persons); and
- (b) persons who had been away from work without pay for four weeks or longer and had not been actively looking for work (10,900 persons) are classified as marginally attached, but not as discouraged jobseekers.

22. Respondents not in the labour force who wanted to work and were available to start within four weeks were asked their *main* reason for not actively looking for work to determine, among other things, whether the respondents should be classified as discouraged jobseekers. In earlier surveys, the *main* reason was not asked, and respondents were classified as discouraged jobseekers or otherwise according to the 'highest ranked reason' given for not actively looking for work. For a more detailed explanation of the earlier methodology, reference should be made to previous issues of this bulletin. 22,800 persons in the September 1983 survey gave a higher ranked reason than discouraged yet indicated their main reason was one of discouragement. Under the earlier methodology, these persons would not have been classified as discouraged.

23. An extra reason for not actively looking for work ('no jobs at all') was added to the discouraged jobseeker list. 39,700 discouraged jobseekers gave this reason for not looking for work. However, it is not possible to estimate the number of these who would previously have given another discouraged reason for not actively looking for work. Thus the effect on the estimated number of discouraged jobseekers using the new methodology can not be determined.

24. Some changes have been made to the ordering of the questions. The responses to these questions may differ from responses in previous surveys because of these changes to question order and the subjective nature of some of the questions. It is not possible to measure the effects of these changes to question order on the data.

25. While some of the changes to the survey methodology, such as the inclusion of persons aged 65 years and over and the classification of discouraged jobseekers according to their main reason for not actively looking for work, can be measured, some other changes, such as the introduction of the availability criterion to the definition of discouraged jobseekers (see paragraph 19),

the introduction of the reason 'no jobs at all' to the discouraged jobseeker list, and changes to the ordering of questions, can not be quantified. It is therefore not possible to indicate whether the estimates of persons who wanted to work and were available to start or of discouraged jobseekers have increased or decreased since the last survey.

Reliability of the estimates

26. Estimates in this publication are subject to two sources of error:

- (a) *sampling error*: since the estimates 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*. More information about this topic is contained in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0). A table of estimated standard errors for this survey follows these notes. Estimates with a standard error of more than about 27 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.
- (b) *Non-sampling error*: inaccuracies may occur because of imperfections in reporting by interviewers and respondents and errors made in the coding and processing of data. These inaccuracies may occur in any enumeration, whether it be a full count or 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.

Related publications

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

The Labour Force, Australia (6203.0)—issued monthly

Labour Force Experience, Australia, during the year ending February 1983 (6206.0)

Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia, March 1983 (6220.0)

Persons Looking for Work, Australia, July 1983 (6222.0)

28. Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications, 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

- * subject to sampling variability too high for most practical uses. See paragraph 26 above.
- .. not applicable.

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

A. R. BAGNALL
Acting Australian Statistician

STANDARD ERRORS OF ESTIMATES

Size of estimate (Persons)	Approximate standard error of estimate		Size of estimate (Persons)	Approximate standard error of estimate	
	Persons	Per cent of estimate		Persons	Per cent of estimate
3,000	800	26.7	50,000	2,900	5.8
4,000	900	22.5	100,000	3,900	3.9
5,000	1,000	20.0	200,000	5,100	2.6
10,000	1,400	14.0	300,000	6,000	2.0
20,000	2,000	10.0	500,000	7,200	1.4

TABLE 1. CIVILIAN POPULATION AGED 15 YEARS AND OVER : EMPLOYMENT STATUS, SEPTEMBER 1983

	Males	Females ('000)	Persons	Males (per cent)	Females (per cent)	Persons
Civilian population aged 15 years and over	5,725.7	5,859.9	11,585.5	100.0	100.0	100.0
Employed	3,979.6	2,370.3	6,350.0	69.5	40.5	54.8
Unemployed	435.3	283.4	718.7	7.6	4.8	6.2
Persons not in the labour force	1,310.7	3,206.1	4,516.8	22.9	54.7	39.0
Marginally attached to the labour force	162.8	602.8	765.6	2.8	10.3	6.6
Wanted to work and available to start work within four weeks	142.0	591.7	733.7	2.5	10.1	6.3
Were actively looking for work	7.4	14.4	21.9	0.1	0.2	0.2
Were not actively looking for work	134.6	577.3	711.8	2.4	9.9	6.1
Were actively looking for work but not available to start work within four weeks	20.8	11.1	31.9	0.4	0.2	0.3
Wanted to work but not available to start work within four weeks(a)	64.8	179.4	244.2	1.1	3.1	2.1
Did not want to work	958.4	2,267.0	3,225.4	16.7	38.7	27.8
Permanently unable to work	44.9	32.4	77.3	0.8	0.6	0.7
In institutions(b)	79.8	124.5	204.3	1.4	2.1	1.8

(a) These persons have not been actively looking for work. (b) Includes students boarding at school, some patients in hospitals and sanatoria and inmates of reformatories, jails, etc.

TABLE 2. PERSONS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE WHO WANTED TO WORK AND WERE AVAILABLE TO START WORK WITHIN FOUR WEEKS : REASON FOR NOT ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR WORK AND INTENTION TO LOOK FOR WORK(a), SEPTEMBER 1983 (' 000)

Main reason for not actively looking for work	Intention to look for work					Total		
	Intending to look	Might look	Would not look	Does not know	Not asked(b)	Males	Females	Persons
Had a job to go to	..	..	..	..	11.4	3.3	8.0	11.4
Personal reasons	114.7	39.4	79.8	9.9	..	90.7	153.1	243.8
Own ill health, disability, pregnancy	28.6	11.4	19.4	*	..	25.9	36.1	61.9
Attending an educational institution	54.7	10.7	15.2	*	..	39.9	43.0	82.9
Has no need to work	11.1	9.3	28.1	*	..	10.8	39.7	50.5
Give others a chance	..	3.9	6.5	*	..	*	9.7	11.2
Welfare payments/pension may be affected	7.0	3.6	9.9	*	..	7.7	14.4	22.1
Moved house/holidays	12.3	*	*	*	..	4.9	10.2	15.2
Family reasons	83.0	45.3	132.0	16.9	..	3.4	273.8	277.2
Ill health of other than self	4.3	3.0	4.3	*	..	*	12.6	13.4
Unable to find suitable childcare etc.	66.7	33.8	109.9	11.9	..	*	220.3	222.4
Other family considerations	12.0	8.4	17.7	3.3	..	*	40.9	41.4
Discouraged jobseekers	54.7	20.4	38.3	4.9	..	26.4	91.8	118.2
Considered too young or too old by employers	6.7	4.7	16.9	*	..	11.1	17.9	29.0
Language or racial difficulties	*	*	*	*	..	*	*	*
Lacks schooling, training, skills or experience	3.8	*	3.4	..	..	*	7.2	8.4
No jobs in locality or line of work	21.3	6.5	9.5	*	..	7.4	30.8	38.2
No jobs at all	20.8	7.7	9.2	*	..	6.2	33.5	39.7
No jobs in suitable hours	8.5	3.2	3.0	*	..	*	14.3	15.1
Other reasons	15.7	3.0	7.5	*	..	7.0	20.2	27.2
Don't know	3.6	*	3.1	..	..	*	7.4	8.1
Took active steps to find work	..	..	..	..	21.9	7.4	14.4	21.9
Not asked(c)	..	..	..	..	10.9	*	8.7	10.9
Total	280.2	112.6	263.0	33.8	44.1	142.0	591.7	733.7

(a) In the next twelve months. (b) Comprises persons who had a job to go to, persons who took active steps to find work and persons as defined in footnote (c) below. (c) Persons who had a job but, up to the end of survey week, had been away from work without pay for four weeks or longer and had not been actively looking for work.

TABLE 3. PERSONS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE WHO WANTED TO WORK AND WERE AVAILABLE TO START WORK WITHIN FOUR WEEKS : SUMMARY OF CHARACTERISTICS, SEPTEMBER 1983
('000)

	<i>Discouraged jobseekers</i>			<i>All persons who wanted to work and were available to start work within four weeks</i>		
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>
Total	26.4	91.8	118.2	142.0	591.7	733.7
Marital status—						
Married	17.8	69.7	87.5	63.3	459.6	522.8
Not married	8.5	22.2	30.7	78.7	132.1	210.8
Age group (years)—						
15-19	3.0	3.6	6.6	47.1	57.5	104.5
20-24	*	4.7	6.3	10.6	59.4	70.0
25-34	*	20.5	22.5	14.4	204.2	218.6
35-44	*	25.4	26.7	10.7	146.6	157.3
45-54	3.3	19.3	22.6	11.9	70.0	81.9
55-64	7.3	13.1	20.3	28.2	42.5	70.8
65 and over	7.9	5.2	13.1	19.1	11.4	30.6
Work preference—						
Full-time	12.8	20.6	33.5	69.0	94.5	163.6
Part-time	11.6	66.0	77.6	65.5	472.7	538.2
No preference	*	5.2	7.1	7.5	24.5	31.9
Whether looked for work in the last 12 months—						
Had not looked for work	16.7	59.5	76.2	96.4	454.0	550.4
Had looked for work	9.6	32.3	42.0	45.5	137.8	183.3
Less than 5 weeks ago	3.1	8.0	11.1	19.5	44.9	64.4
5 and less than 8 weeks ago	3.0	8.4	11.4	11.0	33.7	44.6
8 and less than 13 weeks ago	*	5.8	6.7	5.6	22.2	27.9
13 and less than 52 weeks ago	*	10.1	12.7	9.4	37.0	46.4
Work experience—						
Never had a job(a)	*	8.2	10.3	36.7	61.8	98.5
Had a job(a)	24.2	83.7	107.9	105.3	529.9	635.2
Worked in the last year	7.7	11.9	19.6	46.5	103.7	150.2
Within the last 6 months	4.5	6.0	10.4	27.4	56.5	83.9
6 to 12 months ago	3.3	5.9	9.2	19.1	47.2	66.3
Worked 1 to 3 years ago	7.0	19.6	26.6	26.2	126.2	152.3
Worked 3 to 10 years ago	8.2	31.1	39.3	28.6	198.4	227.0
Worked more than 10 years ago	*	21.0	22.4	4.0	101.6	105.7
Reason for leaving last job(a)—						
Dismissed, retrenched	8.7	15.8	24.5	23.8	57.7	81.5
Seasonal/temporary, went back to school	*	10.7	12.6	16.9	62.5	79.4
Retired, did not need to work any longer	6.9	4.7	11.6	22.2	22.0	44.2
Own ill health or injury	*	6.0	8.4	22.0	32.8	54.8
Family considerations	*	27.1	27.2	*	248.0	249.3
Left to get married	*	9.0	9.0	*	48.9	48.9
Left to have children	*	12.2	12.2	*	159.8	159.8
Other family considerations	*	5.8	6.0	*	39.3	40.6
Travel, moved house, spouse transferred	*	11.0	12.0	4.1	53.3	57.4
Unsatisfactory work arrangements	*	6.1	8.7	7.5	32.1	39.7
Other reasons	*	*	*	5.2	12.8	18.0
Not asked(b)	*	*	*	*	8.7	10.9
Never had a job(a)	*	8.2	10.3	36.7	61.8	98.5

(a) Paid employment, full-time or part-time, for two weeks or more in any job or business. (b) Persons who had a job but, up to the end of survey week, had been away from work without pay for four weeks or longer and had not been actively looking for work.

TABLE 4. PERSONS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE WHO WANTED TO WORK BUT WERE NOT AVAILABLE TO START WORK WITHIN FOUR WEEKS : REASON NOT AVAILABLE TO START AND INTENTION TO LOOK FOR WORK(a), SEPTEMBER 1983 ('000)

<i>Reason not available to start within four weeks</i>	<i>Intention to look for work</i>					<i>Total</i>		
	<i>Intending to look</i>	<i>Might look</i>	<i>Would not look</i>	<i>Does not know</i>	<i>Not asked(b)</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>
Personal reasons	58.4	20.1	47.0	4.9	6.1	58.5	78.0	136.5
Own ill health etc.	17.5	10.7	25.9	3.4	5.7	24.4	38.8	63.2
Studying	35.9	7.7	15.2	*	*	31.8	28.7	60.5
At school	32.4	7.5	13.7	*	*	29.0	26.4	55.3
Other educational institution	3.4	*	*	*	*	*	*	5.2
Moved house/holidays	5.1	*	5.8	*	*	*	10.4	12.8
Family reasons	18.0	10.6	49.7	3.3	9.0	*	87.6	90.5
Ill health of other than self	*	*	6.9	*	*	*	9.2	11.6
No suitable child care	3.6	*	7.9	*	*	*	14.1	14.3
Children too young etc.	12.6	6.9	34.8	*	8.0	*	64.3	64.6
Other reasons	*	3.4	9.7	*	*	3.4	13.9	17.3
Total								
Males	30.1	11.5	17.9	*	*	64.8	..	..
Females	49.3	22.6	88.4	6.0	13.1	..	179.4	..
Persons	79.4	34.0	106.4	8.5	16.0	..	..	244.2

(a) In the next twelve months. (b) Persons who had a job but, up to the end of survey week, had been away from work without pay for four weeks or longer and had not been actively looking for work.

