

COMMONWEALTH BUREAU OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS,  
CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA.

# LABOUR REPORT.

1959.

No. 47.

PREPARED UNDER INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE RIGHT HONORABLE  
THE TREASURER,

BY

S. R. CARVER,  
COMMONWEALTH STATISTICIAN.



## PREFACE.

This Labour Report, which is the forty-seventh of the series issued by this Bureau, contains detailed statistics for the year 1959, in addition to providing comparisons for previous years.

The Report follows in the main the lines of its immediate predecessors in scope and arrangement. The subject-matter has been divided into five chapters, namely, Retail Prices and Price Indexes; Wholesale Prices and Price Indexes; Wages and Hours; Employment and Unemployment (including Industrial Disputes); and Labour Organizations. The index at the end of the volume will considerably facilitate reference.

In this issue, particulars of a new index of minimum weekly and hourly wage rates have been included for the first time (*see* Chapter III., § 2 and Appendix, Sections V. and VI.). Particulars are also given of a new retail price index, entitled the Consumer Price Index. (*See* Special Note on page 1, and Appendix Section III.)

Secretaries of trade unions and of employers' associations, officials of Commonwealth and State Departments, private employers, retail traders, house agents and others have readily supplied much information specially for the purposes of this Report, and my thanks are tendered to all who have thus assisted.

Grateful acknowledgment is also made of the continued assistance given by the Statisticians in the several States, especially in regard to the collection of retail prices.

I also desire to express my appreciation of the work done in the preparation of this Report by Mr. T. R. Jones, B.Com., the Supervisor of the Prices Branch, Mr. G. I. Neville, B.Com., the Supervisor of the Employment and Labour Branch, and the staff under their control.

S. R. CARVER,  
*Commonwealth Statistician.*

Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics,  
*Canberra, A.C.T., 13th December, 1960.*

## SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—RETAIL PRICES AND PRICE INDEXES.		Page
§ 1.	Collection of Information as to Retail Prices .. .. .	1
§ 2.	Nature of Retail Price Indexes—	
	1. General .. .. .	2
	2. Essential Features .. .. .	3
	3. The List of Items .. .. .	3
	4. Effects of Changing Conditions on Indexes .. .. .	3
§ 3.	Purpose of Retail Price Indexes—	
	1. General .. .. .	4
	2. Price Indexes for Individual Cities .. .. .	4
	3. Price Indexes and Purchasing Power .. .. .	4
	4. Use of Price Indexes by Industrial Tribunals .. .. .	4
§ 4.	Previous Retail Price Indexes—	
	1. General .. .. .	5
	2. The "Court" Index .. .. .	5
§ 5.	International Comparisons: Retail Price Index Numbers .. .. .	6
CHAPTER II.—WHOLESALE PRICES AND PRICE INDEXES.		
§ 1.	General .. .. .	8
§ 2.	Wholesale Price (Basic Materials and Foodstuffs) Index—	
	1. Price Quotations .. .. .	8
	2. Commodities and Grouping .. .. .	8
	3. Method of Construction .. .. .	8
	4. Index Numbers .. .. .	10
§ 3.	Melbourne Wholesale Price Index—	
	1. General .. .. .	10
	2. Index Numbers .. .. .	11
§ 4.	International Comparisons: Wholesale Price Index Numbers .. .. .	12
CHAPTER III.—WAGES AND HOURS.		
§ 1.	Arbitration and Wages Boards Acts and Associated Legislation—	
	1. General .. .. .	13
	2. Laws Regulating Industrial Matters .. .. .	13
	3. Methods of Administration—	
	(i) Commonwealth .. .. .	13
	(ii) States .. .. .	17
	4. Awards, Determinations and Agreements in Force .. .. .	18
	5. New Legislation and Special Reports .. .. .	19
§ 2.	Rates of Wage and Hours of Work—	
	1. General .. .. .	22
	2. New Indexes of Minimum Weekly and Hourly Wage Rates and Hours of Work .. .. .	22
	3. Adult Male Weekly Wage Rates .. .. .	24
	4. Adult Female Weekly Wage Rates .. .. .	27
	5. Weekly and Hourly Rates of Wage and Weekly Hours of Work .. .. .	28
	6. Hourly Wage Rates .. .. .	30
	7. Standard Weekly Hours of Work .. .. .	31
	8. "Real" Wage Rates .. .. .	32
§ 3.	Average Weekly Wage Earnings—	
	1. Average Weekly Total Wages Paid and Average Earnings .. .. .	32
	2. Average Weekly Wage Earnings Index Numbers .. .. .	34

CHAPTER III.—WAGES AND HOURS—*continued.*

§ 4. Standard Hours of Work—		
1. General .. .. .	.. .. .	34
2. The 44-hour Week .. .. .	.. .. .	35
3. The 40-hour Week .. .. .	.. .. .	35
§ 5. Basic Wages in Australia—		
1. The Basic Wage .. .. .	.. .. .	36
2. The Commonwealth Basic Wage—		
(i) Early Judgments .. .. .	.. .. .	37
(ii) Basic Wage Inquiries, 1930-31, 1932, 1933 .. .. .	.. .. .	38
(iii) Basic Wage Inquiry, 1934 .. .. .	.. .. .	38
(iv) Basic Wage Inquiry, 1937 .. .. .	.. .. .	39
(v) Judgment, December, 1939 .. .. .	.. .. .	39
(vi) Basic Wage Inquiry, 1940 .. .. .	.. .. .	39
(vii) "Interim" Basic Wage Inquiry, 1946 .. .. .	.. .. .	40
(viii) Basic Wage Inquiry, 1949-50 .. .. .	.. .. .	41
(ix) Basic Wage and Standard Hours Inquiry, 1952-53 .. .. .	.. .. .	42
(x) Basic Wage Inquiry, 1956 .. .. .	.. .. .	43
(xi) Basic Wage Inquiry, 1956-57 .. .. .	.. .. .	44
(xii) Basic Wage Inquiry, 1958 .. .. .	.. .. .	45
(xiii) Basic Wage Inquiry, 1959 .. .. .	.. .. .	48
(xiv) Basic Wage Inquiry, 1960 .. .. .	.. .. .	52
(xv) Rates Operative, Principal Towns .. .. .	.. .. .	52
3. Basic Wage Rates for Females .. .. .	.. .. .	52
4. Australian Territories .. .. .	.. .. .	56
5. State Basic Wages .. .. .	.. .. .	62
(i) New South Wales .. .. .	.. .. .	62
(ii) Victoria .. .. .	.. .. .	66
(iii) Queensland .. .. .	.. .. .	67
(iv) South Australia .. .. .	.. .. .	70
(v) Western Australia .. .. .	.. .. .	72
(vi) Tasmania .. .. .	.. .. .	75
§ 6. Wage Margins—		
1. General .. .. .	.. .. .	76
2. Metal Trades Case, 1954 .. .. .	.. .. .	77
3. Margins Cases, 1959 .. .. .	.. .. .	78
§ 7. Child Endowment in Australia .. .. .	.. .. .	84

## CHAPTER IV.—EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT.

§ 1. Employment—		
1. General .. .. .	.. .. .	87
2. Total Occupied Persons .. .. .	.. .. .	87
3. Wage and Salary Earners in Civilian Employment—		
(i) General .. .. .	.. .. .	89
(ii) Australia: Industrial Groups .. .. .	.. .. .	90
(iii) States .. .. .	.. .. .	92
(iv) Factories .. .. .	.. .. .	93
4. Government Employees .. .. .	.. .. .	94
§ 2. Unemployment .. .. .	.. .. .	95
§ 3. Commonwealth Employment Service .. .. .	.. .. .	99
§ 4. Commonwealth Unemployment and Sickness Benefits—		
1. General .. .. .	.. .. .	100
2. Unemployment Benefits .. .. .	.. .. .	102

CHAPTER IV.—EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT—*continued.*

Page.

§ 5. Industrial Disputes—							
1. General .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	102
2. Industrial Groups .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	103
3. States and Territories .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	106
4. Duration .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	107
5. Causes .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	108
6. Results .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	110
7. Methods of Settlement .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	110
§ 6. Industrial Accidents—							
1. General .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	114
2. Mining Accidents .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	114
§ 7. Workers' Compensation Legislation .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	115

## CHAPTER V.—LABOUR ORGANIZATIONS.

§ 1. Labour Organizations in Australia—							
1. General .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	124
2. Trade Unions .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	124
3. Central Labour Organizations .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	128
4. Organizations Registered under the (Commonwealth) Conciliation and Arbitration Act .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	130
§ 2. International Labour Organization—							
1. General .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	130
2. The International Labour Conference .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	131
3. Governing Body .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	131
4. Industrial Committees .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	131
5. I.L.O. Conventions and Recommendations .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	132

## APPENDIX.

Section	I. Average Retail Prices of Food and Grocery Items, each Capital City, monthly, 1959 .. .. .	139
..	II. Average Retail Prices of Food in Principal Cities: Australia and Other Countries, 1959 .. .. .	145
..	III. The Consumer Price Index .. .. .	148
..	IV. Comparative Index Numbers, Six Capital Cities Combined: 1911 to December Quarter, 1959 .. .. .	157
..	V. Weighted Average Minimum Weekly Wage Rates: Adult Males .. .. .	158
..	VI. Weighted Average Minimum Weekly Wage Rates: Adult Females .. .. .	164
..	VII. Minimum Rates of Wage and Hours of Work for Adult Male Workers, 31st December, 1959 .. .. .	167
..	VIII. Minimum Rates of Wage and Hours of Work for Adult Female Workers, 31st December, 1959 .. .. .	182
..	IX. Weekly Rates of Wage and Hours of Work: Australia, the United Kingdom and New Zealand .. .. .	186
..	X. Basic Wage Inquiry, 1960 .. .. .	189
..	XI. Commonwealth Basic Wage Rates, 1923 to 1959 .. .. .	190
..	XII. Industrial Disputes, Australia, 1913 to 1959 .. .. .	194

INDEX .. .. .	195
---------------	-----

## GRAPHS.

1. Wage and Salary Earners in Civilian Employment, Australia, 1950 to 1959, by main Industrial Groups .. .. .	97
2. Industrial Disputes: Working Days Lost in Industrial Groups, Australia, 1950 to 1959 .. .. .	98