



JOB SEARCH EXPERIENCE OF UNEMPLOYED PERSONS (EXCLUDING PERSONS WHO WERE STOOD DOWN), AUSTRALIA, JULY 1984, PRELIMINARY (Previously: Characteristics of persons looking for work, Australia (Preliminary))

PHONE INQUIRIES for more information about these statistics—contact Ms Gail Carters on Canberra (062) 52 6503 or any of our State offices.

other inquiries including copies of publications—contact Information Services on Canberra (062) 52 6627 or in any of our State offices.

MAIL INQUIRIES write to Information Services, ABS, P.O. Box 10, Belconnen, A.C.T. 2616 or any of our State offices.

MAIN FEATURES

Note: Survey estimates are subject to sampling variability, as explained in paragraph 19 following.

In July 1984, 513,400 unemployed persons (excluding those who were stood down) were seeking full-time employment, a decrease since July 1983 (591,700). In July 1984, 88.7 per cent (455,500) of these persons were registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service.

74,000 unemployed persons were looking for part-time work, which is similar to July 1983 (79,500), and 33.5 per cent of these persons were registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service.

In July 1984, 23.8 per cent (139,800) of unemployed persons reported that their main difficulty in finding work was that there were no vacancies at all and a further 16.0 per cent (94,100) reported that there were no vacancies in their line of work. 15.5 per cent (91,300) reported that they were considered either too old or too young by employers. More persons (10.6 per cent) reported that their main difficulty in finding work was lack of the necessary skills or education than in any of the years 1978 to 1983.

33.6 per cent (197,100) of unemployed persons had a current duration of unemployment of 52 weeks or more. This is a greater proportion than that for July 1983 (26.3 per cent). In contrast, a smaller proportion of unemployed persons in July 1984 had a current duration of unemployment of 26 weeks to less than 52 weeks than unemployed persons in July 1983. The average duration of current period of unemployment increased to 47.8 weeks.

The majority (85.1 per cent) of unemployed persons had only one spell of looking for work in the previous twelve months.

49.5 per cent of unemployed persons in July 1984, who were wage or salary earners in their last job and who finished working in that job in the two years ending July 1984 had been retrenched. This is a smaller proportion than in July 1983 (56.5 per cent).

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

In association with the July 1984 labour force survey conducted throughout Australia, unemployed persons (excluding persons who were stood down - see paragraphs 5 and 6) were asked about their job search experience, including their difficulties in finding work, steps taken to find work and whether they had had offers of employment, as well as about their educational attainment and the particulars of their last job, if any.

2. During the two weeks beginning Monday 9 July 1984 specially trained interviewers asked the questions of those of the 72,000 respondents in the July labour force survey who fell within the scope of this survey.

3. 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.

4. Results of similar surveys, the first conducted in May 1976 have been published in *Characteristics of Persons Looking for Work, Australia* (6222.0) as well as in previous issues of this preliminary publication. The title of the publication has been changed in this edition to more clearly indicate the group of persons to which the statistics refer.

Scope

5. This supplementary survey to the labour force survey includes all civilians aged fifteen years and over who were unemployed except:

- (a) certain diplomatic personnel of overseas governments, customarily excluded from census and estimated populations;
- (b) overseas residents in Australia;
- (c) dependants of non-Australian defence forces personnel stationed in Australia;
- (d) students boarding at school, persons permanently unable to work, some patients in hospitals and sanatoria and inmates of reformatories, jails, etc; and

(e) persons who were waiting to be called back to a full-time or part-time job from which they had been *stood down* without pay for less than four weeks up to the end of the survey week (including the whole of the survey week) for reasons other than bad weather or plant breakdown.

6. Persons who were stood down (as defined in paragraph 5(e) above) were excluded from the scope of this supplementary survey as it is inappropriate to ask them about their job search experience.

Definitions

7. *Active steps to find work* comprise 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.

8. *Unemployed persons* are those aged 15 and over within the scope of the survey who were not employed during the survey week (i.e. the week immediately preceding that in which the interview took place), had actively looked for full-time or part-time work at any time in the four weeks up to the end of the survey week, and:

(a) were available for work in the survey week, or would have been available except for temporary illness (i.e. lasting for less than four weeks to the end of the survey week); or

(b) were waiting to start a new job within four weeks from the end of the survey week and would have started in the survey week if the job had been available then.

9. The number of unemployed persons in this supplementary survey differs from that published in *The Labour Force, Australia, July 1984* (6203.0) in that the latter includes persons who were *stood down*. However, persons who were stood down comprised less than 1.4 per cent of all unemployed persons.

10. It is impracticable to obtain information relating to the whole of the previous twelve months which is strictly comparable with that obtained in the monthly labour force survey for which the reference period is one week. The definitions used in determining duration of current period of unemployment (see paragraph 11 following) depend on a detailed set of questions. The items weeks spent looking for work and number of spells of looking for work during the previous twelve months (see paragraphs 12 and 13 following) are based on a more limited set of questions. It is for this reason that the term *looking for work* is used for these items rather than the more rigidly defined term *unemployed*.

11. *Duration of current period of unemployment* is the period from the time the person began looking for work or was laid off to the end of the survey week. Thus the survey measures current (and continuing) periods of unemployment rather than completed spells. For persons who may have begun looking for work while still employed, the duration of current period of unemployment is defined as the period from the time the person last worked full-time for two weeks or more to the end of the survey week. Periods of unemployment are recorded in complete weeks and this results in a slight understatement of duration. *Average (mean) duration* is the duration obtained by dividing the aggregate number of weeks a group has been unemployed by the number of persons in that group. *Median duration* is the duration which divides persons looking for work into two equal groups, one comprising persons whose duration of unemployment is above the median and the other, persons whose duration is below it.

12. *The number of spells of looking for work in the previous twelve months* is the number of different periods including the current period, during which the person reported having been out of work and looking for a job.

13. *Weeks spent looking for work in the previous twelve months* is the total number of weeks the person reported having been out of work and looking for a job, including the weeks in the current period.

14. *A job* is any paid employment, full-time or part-time, lasting two weeks or more.

15. Further definitions of labour force and demographic classifications appearing in this publication are given in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0).

16. Unless otherwise stated, all characteristics referenced in this publication are as at the survey week.

Population benchmarks

17. Following the change in official population estimates to a place of usual residence basis after the 1981 Census, the population benchmarks used in this survey are compiled according to place of usual residence. For an explanation of the new conceptual basis of population estimates see *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0).

18. The change from 1976 Population Census based benchmarks to 1981 Population Census based benchmarks has had little effect on the movement in the estimates between the July 1983 and July 1984 surveys.

Reliability of the estimates

19. 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 will be found 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

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

The Labour Force, Australia (6203.0)—issued monthly

Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families, Australia, July 1983 (6224.0)

Labour Force Experience, Australia, During the year ending February 1984, Preliminary (6206.0)

Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia (including persons who wanted to work but who were not defined as unemployed) (6220.0)—surveyed twice-yearly (March and September)

Employment, Underemployment and Unemployment 1966-1983, Australia (6246.0)

21. 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 19 above.
- .. not applicable
- n.a. not available
- CES Commonwealth Employment Service

22. 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 (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	100,000	3,900	3.9
4,000	920	23.0	200,000	5,100	2.6
5,000	1,000	20.0	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			

TABLE 1. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS : WHETHER LOOKING FOR FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME WORK, JULY 1978 TO JULY 1984

	Looking for full-time work			Proportion of the labour force looking for full-time work —per cent—	Looking for part-time work			Proportion of the labour force looking for part-time work —per cent—	Unemployed persons —'000—
	Males	Females	Persons		Males	Females	Persons		
	—'000—				—'000—				
July 1978	200.9	122.6	323.5	5.1	8.6	38.6	47.2	0.7	370.7
July 1979	185.5	129.2	314.8	4.9	11.8	46.4	58.2	0.9	373.0
July 1980	187.9	133.8	321.6	4.8	14.3	41.5	55.8	0.8	377.4
June 1981	167.3	119.9	287.2	4.3	12.0	43.3	55.2	0.8	342.4
July 1982	229.2	141.7	370.9	5.4	18.9	49.6	68.4	1.0	439.3
July 1983	402.9	188.8	591.7	8.5	21.4	58.1	79.5	1.1	671.2
July 1984	338.8	174.6	513.4	7.2	16.8	57.2	74.0	1.0	587.4

TABLE 2. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS : MAIN DIFFICULTY IN FINDING WORK DURING CURRENT PERIOD OF UNEMPLOYMENT, JULY 1978 TO JULY 1984

	July 1978	July 1979	July 1980	June 1981	July 1982	July 1983	July 1984	
	—per cent—							—'000—
<i>Main difficulty in finding work</i>								
Own ill health or handicap	3.7	3.9	3.9	4.4	3.8	3.7	4.1	24.1
Considered too young/old by employers	10.9	13.8	13.0	14.5	15.3	12.5	15.5	91.3
Unsuitable hours	2.4	3.6	2.8	3.2	4.0	2.2	2.8	16.3
Too far to travel/transport problems	5.4	5.6	6.1	5.5	4.7	3.8	4.9	28.7
Lacked necessary skills/education	6.4	8.0	8.0	7.0	7.3	8.0	10.6	62.0
Language difficulties	n.a.	1.6	1.7	2.0	2.4	1.5	2.8	16.2
Insufficient work experience	7.9	8.1	10.9	10.5	9.7	8.2	9.8	57.5
No vacancies in line of work	15.1	16.8	16.5	18.4	16.3	18.5	16.0	94.1
No vacancies at all	38.2	29.9	27.5	23.6	26.9	33.1	23.8	139.8
Other difficulties	(a)6.4	4.9	5.1	5.6	5.5	4.9	5.3	31.4
No difficulties reported	3.6	3.9	4.4	5.4	4.0	3.5	4.4	26.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	587.4

(a) For July 1978, this estimate includes language difficulties.

TABLE 3. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS : DURATION OF CURRENT PERIOD OF UNEMPLOYMENT, JULY 1978 TO JULY 1984

	July 1978	July 1979	July 1980	June 1981	July 1982	July 1983	July 1984	
	—per cent—							—'000—
<i>Duration of current period of unemployment (weeks)</i>								
1 and under 4	17.7	15.3	17.0	19.4	18.3	11.9	12.7	74.6
4 and under 8	16.3	14.7	13.9	14.3	14.5	9.3	10.1	59.1
8 and under 13	12.1	10.5	12.2	11.4	12.2	10.0	8.7	51.2
13 and under 26	18.7	17.4	17.2	18.5	15.5	16.3	14.6	85.8
26 and under 52	(a)15.2	21.1	20.1	15.9	19.1	26.1	20.4	119.7
52 and over	(b)20.0	21.1	19.6	20.5	20.3	26.3	33.6	197.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	587.4
<i>Average duration of current period of unemployment</i>	26.6	31.6	30.8	34.1	34.3	39.9	47.8	
<i>Median duration of current period of unemployment</i>	15.7	20.1	18.2	16.4	17.1	26.1	26.1	

(a) For July 1978, this estimate is for 26 and under 39 weeks. (b) For July 1978, this estimate is for 39 weeks and over.

TABLE 4. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS : DURATION OF CURRENT PERIOD OF UNEMPLOYMENT, MAIN DIFFICULTY IN FINDING WORK AND ACTIVE STEPS TAKEN TO FIND WORK DURING CURRENT PERIOD OF UNEMPLOYMENT, JULY 1984

	<i>Duration of current period of unemployment (weeks)</i>						<i>Total</i>	<i>Average duration</i>	<i>Median duration</i>
	<i>1 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 and over</i>			
				—'000—				—weeks—	
Main difficulty in finding work—									
Own ill health or handicap	*	*	*	*	5.5	12.5	24.1	77.4	52.1
Considered too young/old by employers	6.3	5.5	4.4	13.8	18.1	43.1	91.3	66.4	43.0
Unsuitable hours	4.1		*	3.7	3.8	*	16.3	29.6	18.1
Too far to travel/transport problems	*	3.7	3.8	3.3	6.0	9.3	28.7	46.7	26.1
Lacked necessary skills/education	4.3	4.7	5.3	9.1	13.4	25.2	62.0	57.6	32.0
Language difficulties	*	*	3.8		*	7.8	16.2	62.7	49.1
Insufficient work experience	5.6	8.2	3.5	8.0	14.9	17.2	57.5	43.8	28.0
No vacancies in line of work	15.7	10.2	10.5	15.3	17.8	24.7	94.1	37.7	20.1
No vacancies at all	18.3	14.3	13.2	19.7	30.7	43.6	139.8	43.2	26.1
Other difficulties	*	4.1	3.6	7.2	5.5	9.4	31.4	44.1	23.0
No difficulties reported	14.9	4.7	3.6		*	*	26.0	10.5	3.0
Active steps taken to find work—									
Registered with the CES and—									
Contacted prospective employers	34.6	35.2	33.8	65.0	92.3	160.4	421.3	54.1	30.1
Took other active steps	7.3	4.4	4.7	4.4	9.0	15.6	45.4	45.3	26.1
Total registered with CES(a)	45.0	41.3	39.6	71.9	103.2	179.2	480.2	52.7	29.1
Not registered with the CES and—									
Contacted prospective employers	25.4	16.7	10.7	12.8	14.9	15.7	96.4	25.4	8.1
Checked CES noticeboards	*	*	*	*	*	*	6.5	41.0	18.0
Took other active steps	3.0		*	*	*	*	4.4	11.6	3.0
Total not registered with CES	29.5	17.8	11.6	13.9	16.4	17.9	107.2	25.8	8.1
Total	74.6	59.1	51.2	85.8	119.7	197.1	587.4	47.8	26.1

(a) Includes a small number of persons who had taken no other active steps.

TABLE 5. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS : WHETHER LOOKING FOR FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME WORK AND ACTIVE STEPS TAKEN TO FIND WORK DURING CURRENT PERIOD OF UNEMPLOYMENT, JULY 1984 ('000)

<i>Active steps taken to find work</i>	<i>Looking for full-time work</i>			<i>Looking for part-time work</i>			<i>Total</i>		
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>
Registered with the CES and—									
Contacted prospective employers	277.7	124.5	402.2	4.3	14.8	19.1	282.0	139.3	421.3
Took other active steps	31.4	9.9	41.3	*	*	4.2	33.0	12.5	45.4
Total registered with CES(a)	315.2	140.3	455.5	6.0	18.8	24.8	321.2	159.0	480.2
Not registered with the CES and—									
Contacted prospective employers	21.1	32.0	53.1	8.9	34.4	43.3	30.0	66.4	96.4
Checked CES noticeboards	*	*	3.9	*	*	*	*	3.8	6.5
Took other active steps	*	*	*	*	*	3.3	*	*	4.4
Total not registered with CES	23.6	34.4	57.9	10.8	38.4	49.2	34.4	72.8	107.2
Total	338.8	174.6	513.4	16.8	57.2	74.0	355.6	231.8	587.4

(a) Includes a small number of persons who had taken no other active steps.

TABLE 6. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS : WEEKS SPENT LOOKING FOR WORK AND NUMBER OF SPELLS OF LOOKING FOR WORK IN PREVIOUS TWELVE MONTHS, JULY 1984 ('000)

Number of spells of looking for work in previous twelve months	Weeks spent looking for work in previous twelve months							52	Total
	1 and under 2	2 and under 4	4 and under 8	8 and under 13	13 and under 26	26 and under 39	39 and under 52		
MALES									
One	7.7	12.9	22.4	17.4	36.4	48.7	18.6	132.8	296.8
Two	*	*	3.6	4.6	12.7	11.5	9.5	*	42.8
Three or more	*	*	*	*	5.8	4.8	3.8	*	16.0
Total	7.7	13.9	26.1	23.3	54.9	64.9	31.9	132.8	355.6
FEMALES									
One	10.6	17.9	18.5	15.6	28.1	35.8	11.8	64.3	202.8
Two	*	*	3.4	*	5.9	7.8	4.5	*	21.8
Three or more	*	*	*	*	*	4.0	*	*	7.2
Total	10.6	18.3	19.8	19.2	35.7	46.2	17.7	64.3	231.8
PERSONS									
One	18.3	30.8	40.9	33.0	64.6	84.5	30.4	197.1	499.6
Two	*	*	4.5	7.1	18.6	19.2	14.1	*	64.6
Three or more	*	*	*	*	7.4	7.4	5.2	*	23.2
Total	18.3	32.2	45.9	42.5	90.6	111.2	49.7	197.1	587.4

TABLE 7. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS WHO WERE WAGE OR SALARY EARNERS IN THEIR LAST FULL-TIME JOB AND WHO FINISHED WORKING IN THAT JOB IN THE TWO YEARS ENDING JULY 1984: DURATION OF AND REASON FOR LEAVING THAT JOB, JULY 1984 ('000)

Reason for leaving	Duration of last full-time job							Total
	Less than one year (weeks)				Total	1 and under 5 years	5 years and over	
	Under 4	4 and under 8	8 and under 26	26 and under 52				
MALES								
Retrenched/lost job	5.1	7.9	27.9	23.0	63.9	38.0	16.7	118.5
Job was temporary or seasonal	5.5	7.2	13.8	4.3	30.8	*	*	33.1
Unsatisfactory work arrangements	*	*	5.1	*	11.0	8.6	3.3	22.9
Other reasons(a)	*	*	6.2	7.2	16.7	14.9	8.8	40.5
Total	14.1	18.3	53.0	36.9	122.4	63.5	29.2	215.1
FEMALES								
Retrenched/lost job	*	*	10.2	6.8	20.4	9.8	*	33.0
Job was temporary or seasonal	*	5.0	5.5	*	14.5	*	*	15.5
Unsatisfactory work arrangements	*	*	3.6	*	7.7	4.9	*	14.3
Other reasons(a)	*	*	4.8	5.2	11.2	13.2	3.7	28.1
Total	4.8	8.8	24.1	16.2	54.0	28.9	8.1	91.0
PERSONS								
Retrenched/lost job	6.3	10.0	38.2	29.8	84.3	47.8	19.4	151.5
Job was temporary or seasonal	7.8	12.2	19.3	6.1	45.3	*	*	48.6
Unsatisfactory work arrangements	*	*	8.6	4.9	18.7	13.5	5.0	37.2
Other reasons(a)	*	*	11.0	12.4	28.0	28.2	12.5	68.6
Total	18.9	27.1	77.1	53.1	176.3	92.4	37.3	306.0

(a) Includes own ill health or injury; to marry, have children, look after family; moved house, spouse transferred; travel, take a holiday; returned to studies.