



### JOB SEARCH EXPERIENCE OF UNEMPLOYED PERSONS, AUSTRALIA, JULY 1985, 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 1985 there were 555,100 unemployed persons (excluding those who were stood down), a decrease from 587,400 in July 1984. Of the unemployed persons in July 1985, 473,200 (85.2 per cent) were looking for full-time work and 81,900 (14.8 per cent) were looking for part-time work.

417,600 (88.3 per cent) of the unemployed persons looking for full-time work and 27,600 (33.7 per cent) looking for part-time work were registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service. The majority (89.2 per cent) of persons reported that they contacted prospective employers to find work.

The proportion of unemployed persons whose duration of current period of unemployment was 52 weeks and over increased steadily from 20.3 per cent in July 1982 to 33.6 per cent in July 1984 and was 32.3 per cent in July 1985.

In July 1985, 21.9 per cent (121,300) of unemployed persons reported that their main difficulty in finding work was that there were no vacancies at all and a further 16.9 per cent (94,100) reported that they were considered too young or too old by employers.

Of those 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 1985, 40.9 per cent (110,200) had been retrenched or lost their job. This is a decrease from July 1984, when 49.5 per cent (151,500) reported this reason for leaving their last full-time job.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES

##### Introduction

The monthly Population Survey (which is described in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0)) comprises the monthly labour force survey and supplementary topics. This publication contains some results of a supplementary survey run in association with the July 1985 labour force survey conducted throughout Australia.

2. Of the respondents to the labour force survey, those who fell within the scope of the supplementary survey were asked additional questions. This subset of respondents was 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.

##### Scope

3. The scope of this supplementary survey was the same as that used for the labour force survey (described in full in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0)) except that it was restricted to persons who were unemployed and excluded 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.

4. Persons who were stood down (as defined in paragraph 3 above) were excluded from the scope of this supplementary survey as it is inappropriate to ask them about their job search experience.

##### Definitions

5. *Active steps taken 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.

6. For this survey *unemployed persons* are those 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.

7. The number of unemployed persons in this supplementary survey differs from that published in *The Labour Force, Australia, July 1985* (6203.0) in that the latter includes persons who were *stood down*. However, persons who were stood down comprised less than 1.9 per cent of all unemployed persons.

8. 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 9 following) depend on a detailed set of questions. The items *time spent looking for work* and *number of spells of looking for work in the previous twelve months* (see paragraphs 10 and 11 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*.

9. *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 this item measures the current (and continuing) period of unemployment rather than a completed spell. 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 unemployed persons into two equal groups, one comprising persons whose duration of unemployment is above the median and the other, persons whose duration is below it.

10. *Time 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.

11. 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.

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

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

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

#### Results of the survey

15. This publication contains only a summary of the results of the survey. Estimates shown are preliminary and may be revised. A more detailed publication will be released as soon as possible, and further information is available on request.

16. Results of similar surveys, the first conducted in May 1976, have been published in catalogue 6222.0.

17. It is proposed that this survey will next be conducted in June 1986.

18. A further survey was conducted in July 1982 (see *Methods of Obtaining Jobs, Australia* (6245.0)), which collected data on persons who had started a job in the six months to July 1982.

#### 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 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.

(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* (\$1.10, \$1.90 incl. postage)

*Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families, Australia, July 1984* (6224.0)

*Labour Force Experience, Australia, during the year ending February 1985* (6206.0)

*Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia* (6220.0)—*surveyed twice-yearly (March and September)*

*Employment, Underemployment and Unemployment 1966-1983, Australia* (6246.0) (\$1.80, \$2.60 incl. postage)

*Methods of Obtaining Jobs, Australia, July 1982* (6245.0)

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  
 CES Commonwealth Employment Service  
 r revised

22. 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**

<i>Size of estimate (Persons)</i>	<i>Approximate standard error of estimate</i>		<i>Size of estimate (Persons)</i>	<i>Approximate standard error of estimate</i>	
	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Per cent of estimate</i>		<i>Persons</i>	<i>Per cent of estimate</i>
3,500	820	23.4	200,000	5,300	2.6
4,000	880	21.9	300,000	6,200	2.1
5,000	980	19.6	500,000	7,500	1.5
10,000	1,400	13.9	1,000,000	9,700	1.0
20,000	1,950	9.7	2,000,000	12,300	0.6
50,000	2,950	5.9	5,000,000	16,500	0.3
100,000	3,950	4.0			

**TABLE 1. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS : WHETHER LOOKING FOR FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME WORK, JULY 1979 TO JULY 1985**

	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 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
July 1985	323.0	150.2	473.2	6.5	17.9	64.0	81.9	1.1	555.1

**TABLE 2. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS : MAIN DIFFICULTY IN FINDING WORK DURING CURRENT PERIOD OF UNEMPLOYMENT, JULY 1979 TO JULY 1985**

	July 1979	July 1980	June 1981	July 1982	July 1983	July 1984	July 1985	
								( ' 000 )
<i>Main difficulty in finding work</i>								—per cent—
Own ill health or disability	3.9	3.9	4.4	3.8	3.7	4.1	5.7	31.8
Considered too young or too old by employers	13.8	13.0	14.5	15.3	12.5	15.5	16.9	94.1
Unsuitable hours	3.6	2.8	3.2	4.0	2.2	2.8	3.8	21.3
Too far to travel/transport problems	5.6	6.1	5.5	4.7	3.8	4.9	5.2	29.1
Lacked necessary skills/education	8.0	8.0	7.0	7.3	8.0	10.6	9.6	53.5
Language difficulties	1.6	1.7	2.0	2.4	1.5	2.8	2.7	14.8
Insufficient work experience	8.1	10.9	10.5	9.7	8.2	9.8	8.6	47.5
No vacancies in line of work	16.8	16.5	18.4	16.3	18.5	16.0	14.4	79.7
No vacancies at all	29.9	27.5	23.6	26.9	33.1	23.8	21.9	121.3
Other difficulties	4.9	5.1	5.6	5.5	4.9	5.3	5.8	32.2
No difficulties reported	3.9	4.4	5.4	4.0	3.5	4.4	5.4	29.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>555.1</b>

**TABLE 3. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS : DURATION OF CURRENT PERIOD OF UNEMPLOYMENT, JULY 1979 TO JULY 1985**

	July 1979	July 1980	June 1981	July 1982	July 1983	July 1984	July 1985	
								( ' 000 )
<i>Duration of current period of unemployment (weeks)</i>								—per cent—
1 and under 4	15.3	17.0	19.4	18.3	11.9	12.7	13.6	75.6
4 and under 8	14.7	13.9	14.3	14.5	9.3	10.1	9.8	54.3
8 and under 13	10.5	12.2	11.4	12.2	10.0	8.7	8.7	48.4
13 and under 26	17.4	17.2	18.5	15.5	16.3	14.6	14.7	81.5
26 and under 52	21.1	20.1	15.9	19.1	26.1	20.4	20.9	116.0
52 and over	21.1	19.6	20.5	20.3	26.3	33.6	32.3	179.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>555.1</b>
								—weeks—
<i>Average duration of current period of unemployment</i>	31.6	30.8	34.1	34.3	39.9	47.8	51.9	
<i>Median duration of current period of unemployment</i>	r20	r18	r16	r17	r26	r26	26	

**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 1985**

	<i>Duration of current period of unemployment (weeks)</i>						<i>Total</i>	<i>Average 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)
<b>Main difficulty in finding work—</b>								
Own ill health or disability	*	4.6		4.8	5.1	14.3	31.8	76.4
Considered too young or too old by employers	5.3	6.9	5.2	11.0	18.4	47.3	94.1	73.1
Unsuitable hours	4.3	6.6		3.6	3.7	*	21.3	21.8
Too far to travel/transport problems	3.6	4.3	*	4.9	5.5	7.7	29.1	41.0
Lacked necessary skills/education	4.7	4.8	4.0	7.3	10.6	22.1	53.5	64.4
Language difficulties	*	*	*	*	3.5	7.1	14.8	80.2
Insufficient work experience	4.4	*	3.5	7.0	14.4	15.2	47.5	52.0
No vacancies in line of work	13.9	9.4	8.6	12.1	19.5	16.3	79.7	34.1
No vacancies at all	13.7	12.5	10.6	20.2	27.7	36.6	121.3	50.3
Other difficulties	4.9	4.0	4.0	5.6	5.4	8.3	32.2	49.7
No difficulties reported	17.0	3.7	5.3		*	*	29.8	10.1
<b>Active steps taken to find work—</b>								
<b>Registered with the CES and—</b>								
Took no other active steps	*	*	*	*	5.2		8.9	64.0
Contacted prospective employers	31.3	29.8	30.9	63.7	94.7	148.9	399.3	59.1
Took other active steps	7.1	5.4	*	4.2	6.2	11.7	37.0	48.8
Total	39.2	36.0	33.9	69.3	103.0	163.8	445.2	58.4
<b>Not registered with the CES and—</b>								
Contacted prospective employers	32.0	15.9	11.8	10.9	12.0	13.4	96.1	25.3
Took other active steps	4.5	5.0		*	*	*	13.8	27.1
Total	36.5	18.2	14.4	12.2	13.1	15.6	109.9	25.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>75.6</b>	<b>54.3</b>	<b>48.4</b>	<b>81.5</b>	<b>116.0</b>	<b>179.3</b>	<b>555.1</b>	<b>51.9</b>

**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 1985  
( '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>
<b>Registered with the CES and—</b>									
Took no other active steps	5.8	*	7.6	*	*	*	6.2	*	8.9
Contacted prospective employers	268.1	110.2	378.2	5.9	15.2	21.1	273.9	125.4	399.3
Took other active steps	23.8	8.0	31.8	*	*	5.2	25.9	11.1	37.0
Total	297.6	119.9	417.6	8.4	19.2	27.6	306.0	139.2	445.2
<b>Not registered with the CES and—</b>									
Contacted prospective employers	22.4	27.8	50.1	7.5	38.4	45.9	29.9	66.2	96.1
Took other active steps	*	*	5.4	*	6.4	8.4	5.0	8.9	13.8
Total	25.3	30.3	55.6	9.5	44.8	54.3	34.9	75.0	109.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>323.0</b>	<b>150.2</b>	<b>473.2</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>64.0</b>	<b>81.9</b>	<b>340.9</b>	<b>214.2</b>	<b>555.1</b>

**TABLE 6. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS : TIME SPENT LOOKING FOR WORK AND NUMBER OF SPELLS OF LOOKING FOR WORK IN THE PREVIOUS TWELVE MONTHS, JULY 1985 (' 000)**

Number of spells of looking for work in the previous twelve months	Time spent looking for work in the previous twelve months (weeks)							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		
<b>MALES</b>									
One	6.5	17.2	15.6	16.9	37.3	44.3	20.8	126.1	284.7
Two	..	3.9	..	4.7	11.5	12.7	9.0	..	41.8
Three or more	..	*	*	4.1	..	5.1	3.7	..	14.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>18.7</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>51.9</b>	<b>62.1</b>	<b>33.5</b>	<b>126.1</b>	<b>340.9</b>
<b>FEMALES</b>									
One	13.1	16.2	17.4	15.2	25.8	32.7	13.6	53.2	187.2
Two	..	*	*	*	4.3	8.1	3.7	..	19.7
Three or more	..	*	*	*	5.2	..	*	..	7.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>19.2</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>32.4</b>	<b>43.6</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>53.2</b>	<b>214.2</b>
<b>PERSONS</b>									
One	19.6	33.4	33.0	32.1	63.1	77.0	34.4	179.3	471.9
Two	..	*	4.5	6.4	15.8	20.8	12.7	..	61.5
Three or more	..	*	*	*	5.5	7.9	4.9	..	21.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>35.1</b>	<b>38.6</b>	<b>40.4</b>	<b>84.4</b>	<b>105.7</b>	<b>52.0</b>	<b>179.3</b>	<b>555.1</b>

**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 1985: DURATION OF AND REASON FOR LEAVING THAT JOB, JULY 1985 (' 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	
	2 and under 4	4 and under 8	8 and under 26	26 and under 52				
<b>MALES</b>								
Retrenched/lost job	4.9	7.3	21.4	17.3	50.8	23.3	12.3	86.4
Unsatisfactory work arrangements	5.1	..	7.7	5.3	18.2	6.5	*	26.5
Job was temporary or seasonal	5.7	6.4	13.5	5.0	30.6	*	*	32.2
Other reasons(a)	5.3	..	7.2	6.8	19.3	11.5	8.8	39.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>19.4</b>	<b>49.7</b>	<b>34.4</b>	<b>118.9</b>	<b>42.8</b>	<b>23.1</b>	<b>184.7</b>
<b>FEMALES</b>								
Retrenched/lost job	5.6	..	7.3	4.8	17.6	5.2	*	23.7
Unsatisfactory work arrangements	*	*	3.6	*	8.5	4.5	*	14.2
Job was temporary or seasonal	*	3.8	6.1	*	14.6	*	*	15.5
Other reasons(a)	*	*	7.7	*	14.3	13.7	*	31.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>24.7</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>55.1</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>84.9</b>
<b>PERSONS</b>								
Retrenched/lost job	7.3	10.4	28.7	22.0	68.4	28.4	13.3	110.2
Unsatisfactory work arrangements	*	4.9	11.3	7.6	26.7	11.0	*	40.7
Job was temporary or seasonal	8.0	10.2	19.6	7.5	45.2	*	*	47.6
Other reasons(a)	4.4	4.1	14.9	10.3	33.7	25.2	12.2	71.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>29.7</b>	<b>74.4</b>	<b>47.4</b>	<b>174.0</b>	<b>67.0</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>269.6</b>

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