



JOB SEARCH EXPERIENCE OF UNEMPLOYED PERSONS, AUSTRALIA, JUNE 1986, PRELIMINARY

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MAIN FEATURES

In June 1986 there were 547,500 unemployed persons (excluding those who were stood down), a decrease from 555,100 in July 1985. Of the unemployed persons in June 1986, 451,200 (82.4 per cent) were looking for full-time work and 96,300 (17.6 per cent) were looking for part-time work. There were 315,900 unemployed males, of whom 290,000 were looking for full-time work (a decrease of 33,000 from July 1985), and 25,900 were looking for part-time work (an increase of 8,000 from July 1985).

398,800 (88.4 per cent) of the unemployed persons looking for full-time work and 32,700 (34.0 per cent) looking for part-time work were registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service. 490,900 persons (89.7 per cent) reported that they contacted prospective employers to find work while 48,300 (8.8 per cent) stated that they took other active steps to find work.

19.0 per cent of unemployed persons reported that their main difficulty in finding work was that there were no vacancies at all, 16.3 per cent reported that they were considered too young or too old by employers and 16.0 per cent considered that there were no vacancies in their line of work.

282,300 unemployed persons had spent 26 or more weeks looking for work in the previous twelve months. This was a decrease from 337,000 in July 1985.

Of the 265,900 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 June 1986, 42.3 per cent (112,600) had been retrenched, 19.7 per cent (52,300) had lost their job because it was temporary or seasonal and 13.9 per cent (36,900) reported that they had left due to unsatisfactory work arrangements.

Note: Survey estimates are subject to sampling variability, as explained in paragraph 22 following.

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 June 1986 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 unemployed persons excluding those 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. The number of unemployed persons published in *The Labour Force, Australia, June 1986* (6203.0) differs from that published for this survey because persons who were stood down were excluded as it was inappropriate to ask them about their job search experience. Persons who were stood down comprised less than 2.6 per cent of all unemployed persons.

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 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. 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 8 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 9 and 10 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 *unemployment*.

8. *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.

9. *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.

10. 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.

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

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

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

Results of the survey

14. Estimates of unemployed persons are also published in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0). However, more detailed information is contained in this publication.

15. Due to the differences in the method of estimation used in this supplementary survey and that used in the labour force survey, there are some small variations between estimates in this publication and those in the June issue of *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0).

16. The estimates in this publication refer to information collected in the survey month and, due to seasonal factors, may not be representative of other months of the year.

17. 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.

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

19. It is proposed that this survey will next be conducted in July 1987.

Discontinuities in the series

20. Estimates for June 1986 contained in this publication are based on a revised labour force questionnaire introduced in April 1986. The definition of employment was expanded resulting in a slight decrease in the estimate of unemployed persons. Further information is contained in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0) and in an information paper *Questionnaires used in the Labour Force Survey* (6232.0). Although estimates for previous years have not been revised in this publication, the June issue of *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0) contains revised estimates for unemployed persons back to May 1985.

21. The revised questionnaire now determines the reasons, either voluntary or involuntary, why persons ceased their last full-time job held within the last two years. Estimates derived from the revised questionnaire are therefore not comparable with those obtained from previous surveys.

Reliability of the estimates

22. 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 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

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

The Labour Force, Australia (6203.0)—issued monthly (\$1.20, \$2.10 incl. postage)

Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families, Australia, July 1985 (6224.0)—issued annually

Labour Force Experience, Australia, During the Year Ending February 1986, Preliminary (6205.0)—issued annually

Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia (6220.0)—issued twice-yearly

Employment, Underemployment and Unemployment 1966-1983, Australia (6246.0)—issued irregularly (\$1.70, \$2.40 incl postage)

Underemployed Workers, Australia, May 1985 (6265.0)—issued irregularly

Methods of Obtaining Jobs, Australia, July 1982 (6245.0)—issued irregularly

24. 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.

New ABS service: AUSSTATS

25. A wide range of economic, social and demographic statistics is now available on AUSSTATS, ABS' new on-line service through CSIRONET.

26. For further information phone the AUSSTATS Help Desk on (062) 52 6017.

Symbols and other usages

* subject to sampling variability too high for most practical uses. See paragraph 22 above.

.. not applicable

CES Commonwealth Employment Service

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

Ian Castles
Australian Statistician

STANDARD ERRORS OF ESTIMATES

Size of estimate	Number	Relative standard error (per cent)	Size of estimate	Number	Relative standard error (per cent)
3,500	820	23.4	50,000	2,950	5.9
4,000	880	21.9	100,000	3,950	4.0
4,500	930	20.7	200,000	5,300	2.6
5,000	980	19.6	300,000	6,200	2.1
6,000	1,100	17.9	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
			5,000,000	16,500	0.3

TABLE 4. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS: ACTIVE STEPS TAKEN TO FIND WORK DURING CURRENT PERIOD OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND DURATION OF CURRENT PERIOD OF UNEMPLOYMENT, JUNE 1986

	Duration of current period of unemployment (weeks)							Total	Average duration	Median duration
	1 and under 4	4 and under 8	8 and under 13	13 and under 26	26 and under 52	52 and under 104	104 and over			
<i>Active steps taken to find work</i>	— '000—									— weeks—
Registered with the CES and—										
Took no other active steps	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	8.3	62.7	26
Contacted prospective employers	32.0	38.9	33.3	76.7	72.2	53.6	78.7	385.4	59.3	26
Took other active steps	*	4.0	*	6.3	5.4	4.3	11.4	37.8	69.8	32
Total	36.4	44.4	37.0	83.8	78.3	59.0	92.6	431.5	60.3	26
Not registered with the CES and—										
Contacted prospective employers	29.4	17.6	13.1	22.7	9.9	7.8	4.9	105.5	22.1	8
Took other active steps	3.5	*	*	*	*	*	*	10.5	19.9	5
Total	32.9	19.6	13.8	24.8	11.0	8.6	5.3	116.0	21.9	8
Total	69.3	64.0	50.8	108.6	89.2	67.6	98.0	547.5	52.2	22

TABLE 5. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS: MAIN DIFFICULTY IN FINDING WORK DURING CURRENT PERIOD OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND DURATION OF CURRENT PERIOD OF UNEMPLOYMENT, JUNE 1986

	Duration of current period of unemployment (weeks)							Total	Average duration	Median duration
	1 and under 4	4 and under 8	8 and under 13	13 and under 26	26 and under 52	52 and under 104	104 and over			
<i>Main difficulty in finding work</i>	— '000—									— weeks—
Own ill health or injury	4.7		4.5		4.6	5.7	12.2	31.7	96.8	56
Considered to young or too old by employers	6.1	6.4	8.2	10.9	14.0	14.8	28.5	89.0	82.6	48
Unsuitable hours	*	3.9	*	7.2	4.6		*	21.9	30.2	15
Too far to travel/transport problems	*	3.7	*	7.6	6.2	3.6	5.1	31.0	47.6	25
Lacked necessary skills/education	5.2	6.4	4.4	10.1	10.2	7.2	11.5	54.9	60.2	26
Language difficulties	*	*	*	*	3.5		3.7	11.3	80.3	48
Insufficient work experience	4.6	5.8	5.0	15.6	11.5	5.5	7.3	55.2	43.5	22
No vacancies in line of work	10.3	15.9	9.4	18.4	15.5	8.5	9.7	87.6	37.4	17
No vacancies at all	11.1	10.7	11.5	23.4	17.7	14.0	15.6	103.9	47.0	22
Other difficulties	5.3	3.7	*	6.1	4.2	*	*	27.5	31.7	14
No difficulties reported	17.8	5.5	*	3.5	*	*	*	33.4	10.5	3
Total	69.3	64.0	50.8	108.6	89.2	67.6	98.0	547.5	52.2	22

TABLE 6. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS: ACTIVE STEPS TAKEN TO FIND WORK DURING CURRENT PERIOD OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND WHETHER LOOKING FOR FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME WORK, JUNE 1986 ('000)

<i>Active steps taken to find work</i>	Looking for full-time work			Looking for part-time work			Total		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Registered with the CES and—									
Took no other active steps	4.5	*	7.2	*	*	*	5.0	*	8.3
Contacted prospective employers	243.1	114.6	357.6	8.9	18.8	27.7	252.0	133.4	385.4
Took other active steps	23.3	10.6	34.0	*	*	3.8	24.6	13.2	37.8
Total	270.9	127.9	398.8	10.6	22.0	32.7	281.5	149.9	431.5
Not registered with the CES and—									
Contacted prospective employers	17.6	30.6	48.1	13.3	44.1	57.3	30.8	74.6	105.5
Took other active steps	*	*	4.2	*	4.3	6.3	3.6	7.0	10.5
Total	19.1	33.2	52.4	15.3	48.4	63.6	34.4	81.6	116.0
Total	290.0	161.1	451.2	25.9	70.4	96.3	315.9	231.5	547.5

TABLE 7. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS: NUMBER OF SPELLS OF LOOKING FOR WORK AND TIME SPENT LOOKING FOR WORK IN THE PREVIOUS TWELVE MONTHS, JUNE 1986 ('000)

Number of spells of looking for work in the previous twelve months	Time spent looking for work in the previous twelve months (weeks)								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	52	
MALES									
One	8.8	15.2	19.7	19.6	39.7	35.5	9.4	115.6	263.5
Two	..	*	*	4.7	9.6	12.3	8.3	..	38.0
Three or more	..	*	*	*	4.7	3.7	*	..	14.4
Total	8.8	15.7	23.5	26.4	54.1	51.6	20.3	115.6	315.9
FEMALES									
One	15.0	13.3	26.7	20.5	47.6	26.0	6.5	50.0	205.6
Two	..	*	4.9		5.9	6.8	3.5	..	22.1
Three or more	..	*	*	*	*	*	*	..	3.9
Total	15.0	14.7	28.6	24.0	54.4	33.8	11.0	50.0	231.5
PERSONS									
One	23.8	28.4	46.4	40.1	87.3	61.5	15.9	165.6	469.0
Two	..	*	4.1	8.1	15.6	19.1	11.8	..	60.1
Three or more	..	*	3.9		5.6	4.7	3.6	..	18.3
Total	23.8	30.3	52.1	50.4	108.5	85.4	31.3	165.6	547.5

TABLE 8. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS WHO WERE WAGE OR SALARY EARNERS IN THEIR LAST FULL-TIME JOB AND WHO FINISHED WORKING IN THAT JOB DURING THE TWO YEARS ENDING JUNE 1986: REASON FOR CEASING AND DURATION OF THAT JOB, JUNE 1986 ('000)

Reason for ceasing last full-time job	Duration of last full-time job								Total
	Less than one year (weeks)					1 and under 5 years	5 years and over	Total	
	2 and under 4	4 and under 8	8 and under 26	26 and under 52	Total				
MALES									
Job loser	9.4	13.3	39.8	21.7	84.2	31.0	11.8	127.0	
Job leaver	4.5	3.9	9.1	7.5	25.0	13.4	7.2	45.6	
Total	13.9	17.2	48.8	29.2	109.2	44.4	18.9	172.6	
FEMALES									
Job loser	6.1	6.9	16.8	9.6	39.5	11.6	*	53.7	
Job leaver	4.6		7.3	4.5	16.4	17.7	5.6	39.7	
Total	7.5	10.1	24.1	14.2	55.9	29.2	8.3	93.4	
PERSONS									
Job loser	15.6	20.2	56.5	31.4	123.6	42.6	14.5	180.7	
Retrenched	5.4	10.6	31.1	20.0	67.0	34.1	11.5	112.6	
Job was temporary or seasonal and did not leave to return to studies	9.9	8.8	21.8	8.0	48.5	3.8		52.3	
Own ill health or injury	*	*	3.7	*	8.1	5.1	*	15.8	
Job leaver	5.9	7.1	16.4	12.1	41.4	31.1	12.7	85.3	
Unsatisfactory work arrangements	3.5	3.9	8.0	4.9	20.2	13.2	3.5	36.9	
Job was temporary or seasonal and left to return to studies	*	*	*	*	5.6	*	*	5.6	
Other	*	*	5.7	7.0	15.5	17.9	9.3	42.8	
Total	21.4	27.3	72.9	43.4	165.0	73.7	27.2	265.9	