



JOB SEARCH EXPERIENCE OF UNEMPLOYED PERSONS, AUSTRALIA, JULY 1988, SUMMARY

(Previously : Job Search Experience of Unemployed Persons, Australia, Preliminary)

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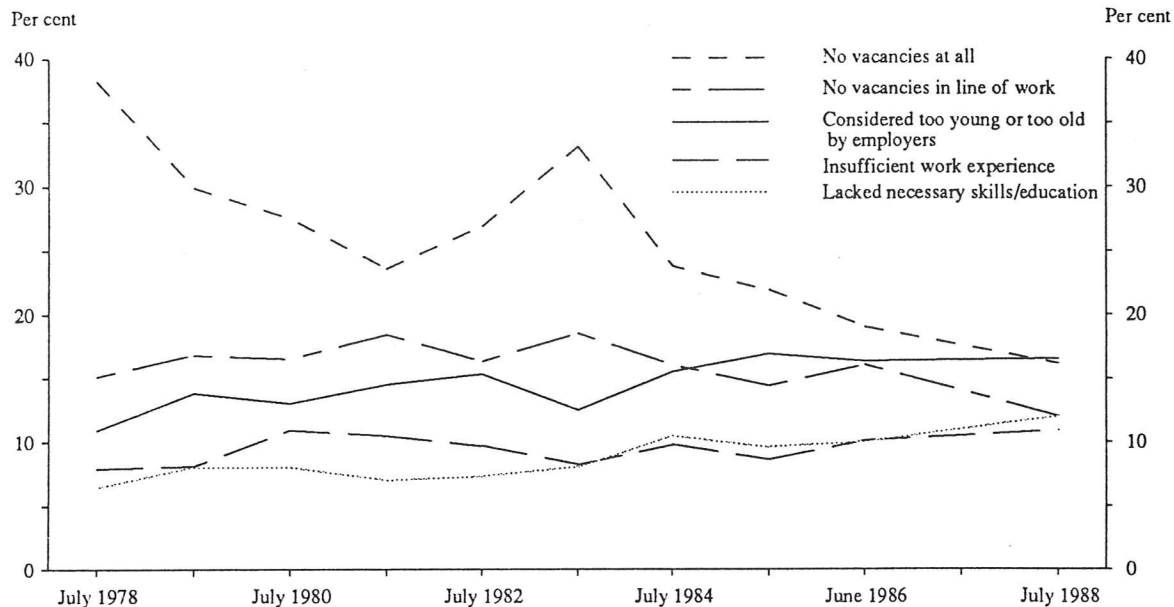
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MAIN FEATURES

DIAGRAM 1. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS : SELECTED MAIN DIFFICULTIES IN FINDING WORK, JULY 1978 TO JULY 1988
(Source of data : Table 2)



In July 1988, the labour force numbered 7,877,000 persons, of whom 503,500 were unemployed (excluding those who were stood down). Persons looking for full-time work outnumbered those looking for part-time work by more than 5 to 1.

For many years the most frequently reported difficulty in finding work was the belief that there were 'no vacancies at all'. Ten years ago, 38 per cent of unemployed persons reported this as the main difficulty. By July 1988 however, that proportion had fallen to 16 per cent, similar to those reporting 'considered too young or too old by employers' to be the main difficulty. Half of the persons reporting 'age' as the main difficulty in finding work had been unemployed for one year or more.

Proportionally, more persons were reporting 'lacked necessary skills/education' as the main difficulty in finding work — 12 per cent in July 1988, compared with 10 per cent in June 1986.

By contrast, fewer people were reporting 'no vacancies in line of work' as the main difficulty — 12 per cent in July 1988 compared with 16 per cent in June 1986.

Unemployed persons looking for full-time work are predominantly registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service. Of males looking for full-time work, 89 per cent were registered with the CES in July 1988, and for females the proportion was 79 per cent.

There were 156,700 persons (31 per cent of total unemployed) whose current period of unemployment (at July 1988) was one year or more. More than half of these people reported their main difficulty in finding work as being considered too young or too old by employers, that there were no vacancies at all or they lacked the necessary skills/education.

Most persons unemployed at July 1988 reported their current period of unemployment as their only spell of looking for work in the previous twelve months — 86 per cent of unemployed persons.

TABLE 4. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS : ACTIVE STEPS TAKEN TO FIND WORK AND DURATION OF CURRENT PERIOD OF UNEMPLOYMENT, JULY 1988

Active steps taken to find work	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			
	--'000--								--weeks--	
Registered with the CES and --										
Took no other active steps	* 2.6	* 1.2	* 1.0	* 0.8	* 0.8	* 0.6	* 1.5	8.4	56.3	8
Contacted prospective employers	36.1	36.9	32.6	48.3	72.2	55.6	79.3	361.0	62.5	28
Took other active steps	4.0	4.1	* 2.5	4.2	5.2	4.3	5.2	29.4	54.4	25
Total	42.6	42.2	36.0	53.3	78.2	60.5	86.0	398.8	61.8	28
Not registered with the CES and --										
Contacted prospective employers	33.5	18.7	10.7	10.9	12.5	5.0	4.3	95.5	20.2	6
Took other active steps	* 1.5	* 1.0	* 0.0	* 1.8	* 0.2	* 0.5	* 0.1	5.1	24.1	13
Total	35.0	19.6	10.7	12.7	12.7	5.5	4.4	100.6	20.4	6
Total	79.4	62.4	47.4	66.3	91.3	66.3	90.4	503.5	53.1	24

TABLE 5. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS : MAIN DIFFICULTY IN FINDING WORK AND DURATION OF CURRENT PERIOD OF UNEMPLOYMENT, JULY 1988

Main difficulty in finding work	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 over				
	--'000--								--weeks--	
Own ill health or injury	5.2	* 2.7	* 2.7	* 3.7	* 3.5	15.5	33.2	83.5	30	
Considered too young or too old by employers	6.7	7.7	5.0	8.2	14.2	41.1	82.9	81.1	48	
Unsuitable hours	* 3.0	4.1	* 1.9	* 3.9	* 3.5	* 1.9	18.2	22.4	13	
Too far to travel/transport problems	4.7	4.5	* 3.5	4.7	5.8	11.4	34.5	51.5	25	
Lacked necessary skills/education	5.6	6.0	6.3	7.3	13.2	22.0	60.3	64.1	27	
Language difficulties	* 1.5	* 1.2	* 0.5	* 3.1	* 2.6	7.1	16.0	66.7	37	
Insufficient work experience	6.3	7.8	6.0	7.3	12.5	14.7	54.8	47.2	25	
No vacancies in line of work	10.7	9.2	6.1	9.3	12.9	12.2	60.5	32.8	17	
No vacancies at all	10.5	9.0	10.2	11.7	15.7	24.3	81.3	51.6	25	
Other difficulties(a)	6.9	4.3	* 2.5	5.4	5.8	5.5	30.5	37.5	14	
No difficulties reported	18.4	5.9	* 2.7	* 1.6	* 1.7	* 1.0	31.3	7.4	3	
Total	79.4	62.4	47.4	66.3	91.3	156.7	503.5	53.1	24	

(a) Includes persons who reported difficulties with ethnic background.

TABLE 6. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS : ACTIVE STEPS TAKEN TO FIND WORK AND WHETHER LOOKING FOR FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME WORK, JULY 1988
(*000)

Active steps taken to find work	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	4.1	* 1.9	6.0	* 0.3	* 2.1	* 2.4	4.4	4.0	8.4
Contacted prospective employers	224.0	109.9	333.9	6.2	20.9	27.1	230.1	130.9	361.0
Took other active steps	17.6	8.2	25.7	* 0.5	* 3.2	* 3.7	18.1	11.3	29.4
Total	245.7	119.9	365.6	7.0	26.2	33.2	252.7	146.2	398.8
Not registered with the CES and --									
Contacted prospective employers	27.8	29.7	57.4	10.7	27.4	38.1	38.4	57.1	95.5
Took other active steps	* 0.9	* 1.3	* 2.3	* 1.1	* 1.8	* 2.8	* 2.0	* 3.1	5.1
Total	28.7	31.0	59.7	11.7	29.2	40.9	40.4	60.2	100.6
Total	275.1	151.6	426.7	19.2	57.5	76.8	294.4	209.1	503.5

TABLE 7. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS : NUMBER OF SPELLS OF LOOKING FOR WORK AND TIME SPENT
LOOKING FOR WORK IN THE PREVIOUS TWELVE MONTHS, JULY 1988
(*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		
MALES									
One	14.7	15.5	21.9	17.1	24.1	36.2	12.0	107.6	249.1
Two	..	* 1.1	* 3.0	* 3.2	8.3	8.0	6.5	..	30.2
Three or more	..	* 0.7	* 1.6	* 1.3	5.4	* 3.9	* 2.3	..	15.1
Total	14.7	17.3	26.5	21.6	37.8	48.0	20.8	107.6	294.4
FEMALES									
One	17.0	14.5	23.9	19.7	26.7	25.5	6.3	49.0	182.6
Two	..	* 1.7	* 1.2	* 2.1	* 3.0	4.3	4.9	..	17.3
Three or more	..	* 0.0	* 0.6	* 2.4	* 2.8	* 1.6	* 1.9	..	9.3
Total	17.0	16.2	25.8	24.1	32.5	31.4	13.1	49.0	209.1
PERSONS									
One	31.7	30.1	45.8	36.8	50.7	61.7	18.3	156.7	431.7
Two	..	* 2.9	4.3	5.3	11.3	12.3	11.4	..	47.5
Three or more	..	* 0.7	* 2.2	* 3.6	8.3	5.5	4.1	..	24.4
Total	31.7	33.6	52.3	45.7	70.3	79.5	33.8	156.7	503.5

TABLE 8. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS WHO WERE WAGE AND SALARY EARNERS IN THEIR LAST FULL-TIME JOB
AND WHO FINISHED WORKING IN THAT JOB DURING THE TWO YEARS ENDING JULY 1988 : REASON FOR CEASING
AND DURATION OF LAST FULL-TIME JOB, JULY 1988
(*000)

Reason for ceasing last full-time job	Duration of last full-time job							Total	
	Under 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					
MALES									
Job loser	9.3	12.2	28.7	21.3	71.5	25.9	16.6	113.9	
Job leaver	4.0	4.2	7.6	7.6	23.5	14.5	11.8	49.8	
Total	13.3	16.4	36.3	29.0	95.0	40.4	28.4	163.7	
FEMALES									
Job loser	5.0	4.9	12.9	9.8	32.6	12.3	* 3.6	48.5	
Job leaver	* 3.4	4.8	9.6	4.8	22.6	14.6	* 3.8	41.0	
Total	8.4	9.7	22.5	14.6	55.2	26.9	7.4	89.5	
PERSONS									
Job loser	14.3	17.2	41.5	31.1	104.1	38.1	20.2	162.4	
Retrenched	5.1	9.6	22.2	20.0	56.8	30.5	15.7	103.0	
Job was temporary or seasonal and did not leave to return to studies	8.2	7.2	16.1	7.2	38.7	* 3.2	* 0.8	42.7	
Own ill health or injury	* 1.0	* 0.4	* 3.2	* 3.9	8.5	4.5	* 3.8	16.8	
Job leaver	7.4	8.9	17.3	12.4	46.1	29.1	15.6	90.8	
Unsatisfactory work arrangements	* 3.6	5.2	7.3	5.3	21.4	10.6	4.9	36.8	
Job was temporary or seasonal and left to return to studies	* 1.9	* 1.2	* 2.3	* 0.4	5.7	* 0.1	* 0.0	5.8	
Other	* 2.0	* 2.5	7.7	6.8	19.0	18.5	10.7	48.1	
Total	21.7	26.1	58.8	43.6	150.1	67.3	35.8	253.2	

APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY

Active steps taken to find work: steps taken during the current period of unemployment. They 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.

All difficulties in finding work: all difficulties experienced during the current period of unemployment.

Average duration of current period of unemployment: the duration obtained by dividing the aggregate number of weeks a group has been unemployed by the number of persons in that group.

Ceased last full-time job: persons who left or lost their last full-time job.

CES: Commonwealth Employment Service.

Duration of current period of unemployment: the period from the time the person began looking for work or was laid off to the end of the reference 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 reference week. Periods of unemployment are recorded in complete weeks and this results in a slight understatement of duration.

Job: any employment, full-time or part-time, lasting two weeks or more.

Job leavers: persons who voluntarily ceased their last full-time job.

Job losers: persons who involuntarily ceased their last full-time job.

Looking for work: persons who were reported as having been out of work and looking for a job.

Main difficulty in finding work: the main difficulty experienced during the current period of unemployment.

Median duration of current period of unemployment: 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.

Number of spells of looking for work in the previous twelve months: the number of different periods, including the current period, during which persons reported having been out of work and looking for a job.

Time spent looking for work in the previous twelve months: the total number of weeks persons reported having been out of work and looking for a job, including the weeks in the current period.

Unemployed persons: those persons who were not employed during the reference 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 reference week, and:

- (a) were available for work in the reference week, or would have been available except for temporary illness (i.e. lasting for less than four weeks to the end of the reference week); or
- (b) were waiting to start a new job within four weeks from the end of the reference week and would have started in the reference week if the job had been available then.

APPENDIX B

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 1988 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. They 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.

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 reference week (including the whole of the reference week) for reasons other than bad weather or plant breakdown.

4. The number of unemployed persons published in *The Labour Force, Australia, July 1988* (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 3.1 per cent of all unemployed persons.

Coverage

5. In the population survey, coverage rules are applied which aim to ensure that each person is associated with only one dwelling, and hence has only one chance of selection. See *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0) for more details.

Definitions

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

7. Unless otherwise stated, all characteristics referenced in this publication relate to the week before the interview (i.e. the reference week).

Results of the survey

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

9. 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 corresponding issue of *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0).

10. 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.

11. This publication contains only a summary of the results of the survey. A more detailed publication *Job Search Experience of Unemployed Persons, Australia* (6222.0) will be released as soon as possible. Tables of unpublished data may be purchased on request.

12. Results of similar surveys, conducted in May 1976, November 1976, and annually from May 1977 to June 1986, have been published in *Job Search Experience of Unemployed Persons, Australia* (6222.0).

13. It is proposed that this survey will be conducted next in July 1990.

Comparability of series

14. 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 depend on a detailed set of questions. The items *time spent looking for work* and *number of spells of looking for work during the previous twelve months* 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*.

Survey sample redesign

15. The labour force survey sample has been redesigned and reselected using information collected in the 1986 Population Census. The new sample was phased in over the period September 1987 to December 1987. For details, see *Information Paper — Labour Force Survey — Sample Design* (6269.0).

Reliability of the estimates

16. Since the estimates in this publication are based on information obtained from occupants of a sample of dwellings, they are subject to sampling variability; that is they may differ from those 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*, which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of dwellings was included. There are about two

chances in three that a sample estimate will differ by less than one standard error from the estimate that would have been obtained if all dwellings had been included, and about nineteen chances in twenty that the difference will be less than two standard errors. Another measure of the likely difference is the *relative standard error*, which is obtained by expressing the standard error as a percentage of the estimate.

17. As can be seen from the standard error table, *the smaller the estimate the higher is the relative standard error*. Very small estimates are thus subject to such high standard errors (relative to the size of the estimate) as to detract seriously from their value for most reasonable uses. In the tables in this publication only estimates with relative standard errors less than 25 per cent and percentages based on such estimates are considered sufficiently reliable for most purposes. However, estimates and percentages with larger relative standard errors have been included and are preceded by an asterisk (e.g. *3.4) to indicate they are subject to high standard errors and should be used with caution.

18. The imprecision due to sampling variability, which is measured by the standard error, should not be confused with inaccuracies that may occur because of imperfections in reporting by interviewers and respondents and errors made in coding and processing data. Inaccuracies of this kind are referred to as the *non-sampling error* and they 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

19. 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 (6224.0)—issued annually

Labour Force Experience, Australia (6206.0)—issued annually

Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia (6220.0)—issued annually

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

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

Successful and Unsuccessful Job Search Experience, Australia, June 1986 (6245.0)—issued irregularly

20. 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 paragraphs 16 and 17 above.
- . . not applicable
- n.a. not available

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

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STANDARD ERRORS OF ESTIMATES

Size of estimate	Number	Relative standard error (per cent)	Size of estimate	Number	Relative standard error (per cent)
			5,000	1,050	21.1
600	—		6,000	1,150	19.2
800	400	49.5	10,000	1,500	14.9
1,000	450	44.9	20,000	2,050	10.4
1,300	510	39.9	50,000	3,150	6.3
1,500	560	37.3	100,000	4,250	4.2
1,800	620	34.3	200,000	5,600	2.8
2,000	650	32.7	300,000	6,600	2.2
2,500	740	29.4	500,000	8,000	1.6
3,000	810	27.0	1,000,000	10,400	1.0
3,500	880	25.1	2,000,000	13,200	0.7
4,000	940	23.5	5,000,000	17,700	0.4
4,500	1,000	22.2	10,000,000	21,800	0.2

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