



INQUIRIES

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**SURVEY OF PERSONS REGISTERED WITH THE CES AS UNEMPLOYED,
MARCH 1977 (PRELIMINARY)**

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

The Advisory Committee on Commonwealth Employment Service Statistics, in a report issued in November 1973, recommended that surveys of persons registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) as unemployed, similar to a survey carried out in 1963 (the results of which were published on page 27 of the Committee's report) should be undertaken from time to time by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). One such survey was conducted in September 1974; the results were published in a press statement issued by the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations on 18 January 1977.

2. A further survey was carried out in March 1977. This statement contains preliminary results of that survey. More detailed figures will be issued as soon as possible.

3. There are two principal series of unemployment statistics available in Australia, namely, the monthly statistics of persons registered with the CES as unemployed, awaiting placement in full-time employment, and the quarterly statistics of unemployed persons derived from the labour force survey conducted by the ABS. Although the trends in the two series are generally similar there are substantial differences in levels.

4. The March 1977 survey of persons registered with the CES was designed to assess how many registrants in Metropolitan Statistical Divisions would have been classified as unemployed according to the definitions used in the labour force surveys of the ABS.

Confidentiality

5. The survey was conducted under the provisions of the Census and Statistics Act 1905 and was designed to provide only aggregate statistics. In conformity with the law under which the ABS operates no individual

records can be shown or made available to any other person, government department or authority. Individual records will be destroyed as soon as processing and publication of final estimates have been completed.

Methodology of the survey

6. The survey was based on a sample, selected by the ABS, of the addresses in the records of CES offices within Metropolitan Statistical Divisions of the six State capital cities at 18 March 1977. Persons registered at these offices but living outside the boundaries of the Metropolitan Statistical Divisions were excluded. About two per cent of addresses were included in the sample.

7. During the period 21 to 25 March, interviews were conducted by ABS officers at the selected addresses, using a questionnaire similar to that used in the normal quarterly labour force survey. Information was sought in respect of all usual residents at the selected addresses. Because the rules that apply to the labour force survey were adopted, information was not obtained for persons under 15 years of age and temporary visitors from overseas on holiday.

8. It should be noted that the person interviewed was not necessarily the person registered with the CES, whose name was not known to the interviewer.

9. Survey questionnaires were matched with the selected CES records by ABS officers.

10. For reasons set out in the table, information was not obtained in respect of some registrants. Such persons are shown as "non-respondents".

Definitions

11. The definitions shown below, which are also used in the quarterly labour force survey, conform very closely to the internationally accepted definitions, as

recommended by the Eighth International Conference of Labour Statisticians, Geneva 1954.

12. In the survey the labour force category to which a person belonged was determined by the person's actual activity (i.e. whether working, looking for work, etc.) during a specified week, known as the survey week, which was the week from 13 to 19 March 1977 inclusive (i.e. the week immediately preceding that in which the interviews were conducted).

13. Registrants were classified as *in the labour force* if, during the survey week, they were either employed or unemployed as defined in paragraphs 14 and 16.

14. CES registrants classified as *employed* comprised those who, during the survey week,

- (a) did any work for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind, in a job, business, or on a farm (including employees, employers or self-employed persons), or
- (b) worked fifteen hours or more without pay in a family business (or farm), or
- (c) had a job, business or farm, but were not at work because of illness, accident, leave, holiday, production hold-up due to bad weather, plant breakdown, etc., or because they were on strike.

Registrants who had a job but were temporarily stood down for the whole week without pay were classified as unemployed. Those who did some work during the week, however, before either losing their jobs or being stood down, were classified as employed.

15. *Full-time workers* were CES registrants who usually worked 35 hours or more per week in the job(s) held in the survey week and registrants who, although usually part-time workers, worked 35 hours or more during the survey week. *Part-time workers* were registrants who usually worked less than 35 hours a week and who did so during the survey week.

16. CES registrants classified as *unemployed* comprised all those aged 15 years and over who either :

- (a) during the survey week did not work and did not have a job, but could have taken one had it been available, and had been looking for full-time or part-time work in the four weeks up to and including the survey week (including persons who would have been prevented from taking a job in the survey week by their own temporary illness or injury, or by their having made arrangements to start after the survey week in a new job in which they would have preferred to start in the survey week), or

- (b) were waiting to be called back to a job from which they had been temporarily stood down without pay for four weeks or less (including the whole of the survey week).

17. Registrants were defined as *not in the labour force* if, during the survey week, they were not in the categories 'employed' or 'unemployed' as defined above.

18. It should be noted that the definition of unemployed persons adopted by the ABS at the time of the previous survey of CES registrants in 1974 differed from the definition now in use (as set out in paragraph 16 above). The definition applicable to the figures for September 1974 shown in the table is as follows :

CES registrants classified as *unemployed* comprised all those aged 15 years and over who, during the whole of the week prior to the interview week, did no work at all and either :

- did not have a job or business and were actively looking for work (including those who stated that they would have done so if they had not (i) been temporarily ill, or (ii) believed no work was available, or (iii) already made definite arrangements to start in a new job in which they would have preferred to start during survey week) or
- had a job from which they were temporarily stood down without pay for the whole week.

Interpretation of the results

19. Of the selected registrants who were respondents to the survey, 70.2 per cent were classified as unemployed by the ABS. However, the extent of the discrepancy between CES figures and those found by the survey is rather less than would appear at first sight.

20. Persons may register with the CES as (i) unemployed, awaiting placement in a full-time position, (ii) unemployed, awaiting placement in a part-time position, or (iii) employed, but seeking an improved position. Statistics of unemployed persons published each month by the CES include only those persons within category (i).

21. The ABS definition of unemployed persons includes those actively seeking either full-time or part-time work, and, in that respect, is wider in scope than the CES definition.

22. It should also be noted that there are some persons not registered with the CES who would, in fact, be classified by ABS as unemployed. A labour force survey conducted in May 1976 showed that, of 243,900

persons looking for work according to the ABS definition, 72,900 or 29.9 per cent were not registered with the CES at the time of that survey.

23. On the other hand, the ABS classifies as *employed* persons who had done any paid work at all during the survey week. Therefore, respondents to the survey who had lost a job in the survey week would have been classified as employed by the ABS even though registered with the CES. Many, if not most, of those who had found a job in the survey week may well have done so without notifying the CES immediately.

24. Those respondents who were classified as being in part-time employment could well be persons who wished to be employed full time. It is known that some people tend to conceal their part-time employment from the CES under the quite erroneous impression that this will militate against their prospects of obtaining full-time employment through the CES.

25. Once a person is registered with the CES claiming to be unemployed he continues to be so classified until placed or lapsed. Such registrants may be classified by the ABS as *not in the labour force* if they had not been actively looking for work at any time during the four weeks up to and including the survey week. Some registrants who would have looked for work except for the belief that no work was available may have been included in this category.

26. The following reasons can be advanced to explain why many of the 15.1 per cent of respondents registered with the CES as unemployed were reported in the survey as being in full-time employment :

- (a) Standard procedures are applied each month to remove from CES records persons who appear to have obtained work, or for some other reason no longer appear interested in using the services of the CES. In doubtful cases, however, individuals are given the benefit of that doubt. Consequently, persons who may have found employment are sometimes carried on the active records for longer periods than may strictly be warranted.

- (b) The current high level of unemployment has resulted in the normal procedures for lapsing or "work testing" of applicants not always being carried out by the CES as speedily as in the past.

- (c) CES experience, which is supported to some extent by this survey as well as by other evidence, indicates that some individuals do not always give the CES consistent information in respect of their employment status. This is particularly so for that proportion of CES registrants who normally engage in part-time, casual or other irregular forms of employment.

Reliability of the estimates

27. Since the estimates appearing in this statement are based on a sample, they may differ from the figures that would have been obtained from interviews at all addresses of CES registrants seeking full-time work and residing within Metropolitan Statistical Divisions, using the same questionnaire and procedures. 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, rather than all, addresses were visited. The smaller the sample estimate the higher the relative standard error : for example, the relative standard error of an estimate of 2,000 in the March 1977 survey is approximately 16.0 per cent (320) while that of an estimate of 100,000 is approximately 2.0 per cent (2,000). There are about two chances in three that a sample estimate will differ by less than one standard error from the figure which would have been obtained from a comparable complete enumeration, and about nineteen chances in twenty that the difference will be less than two standard errors. Estimates of standard errors are given in the table below. An example of the use of the table is as follows : if the estimate obtained from the March 1977 survey is 100,000 the standard error is 2,000; there are then about two chances in three that the true figure is within the range 98,000 to 102,000 and about nineteen chances in twenty that this figure is between 96,000 and 104,000.

STANDARD ERRORS OF ESTIMATES

Size of estimate (a)	27 September 1974		18 March 1977	
	Estimated standard error		Estimated standard error	
	No.	Per cent of estimate	No.	Per cent of estimate
500	105	21.0
700	123	17.6
1,000	144	14.4	230	23.0
2,000	206	10.3	320	16.0
3,000	249	8.3	390	13.0
4,000	288	7.2	440	11.0
5,000	315	6.3	490	9.8
10,000	430	4.3	670	6.7
20,000	540	2.7	940	4.7
30,000	600	2.0	1,140	3.8
50,000	650	1.3	1,450	2.9
100,000	2,000	2.0

(a) Estimates for September 1974 below 500 and estimates for March 1977 below 1,000 have not been published in this statement. Although in some cases such estimates can be derived by deduction they are subject to such high standard errors (relative to the size of the estimate) as to detract seriously from their value for most reasonable uses.

Related publication

The Labour Force (Reference No. 6.20).

All publications produced by the ABS are listed in *Publications of the Australian Bureau of Statistics* (Reference No. 1.8) which is available free of charge from any ABS office.

NOTE. Any discrepancies between totals and sums of components in the following table are due to rounding.

**PERSONS LIVING WITHIN THE SIX STATE CAPITAL CITIES (a) REGISTERED WITH THE COMMONWEALTH EMPLOYMENT SERVICE FOR FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT :
27 SEPTEMBER 1974 AND 18 MARCH 1977**

	27 September 1974					18 March 1977				
			Persons					Persons		
	Males (<i>'000</i>)	Females (<i>'000</i>)	No. (<i>'000</i>)	Per cent of total registrants	Per cent of respondents	Males (<i>'000</i>)	Females (<i>'000</i>)	No. (<i>'000</i>)	Per cent of total registrants	Per cent of respondents
RESPONDENTS										
EMPLOYMENT STATUS (b)										
Employed -										
Full-time worker	6.9	3.0	9.9	15.3	23.2	15.8	7.3	23.1	12.1	17.1
Lost or found job in the survey week	1.1	0.5	1.6	2.4	3.7	1.8	*	2.6	1.4	1.9
Other	5.8	2.5	8.3	12.8	19.4	14.0	6.5	20.5	10.7	15.1
Part-time worker	0.7	0.9	1.6	2.4	3.7	3.5	3.1	6.6	3.5	4.9
<i>Total employed</i>	<i>7.5</i>	<i>3.9</i>	<i>11.4</i>	<i>17.7</i>	<i>26.8</i>	<i>19.2</i>	<i>10.4</i>	<i>29.7</i>	<i>15.6</i>	<i>22.0</i>
Unemployed	17.7	9.5	27.2	42.1	63.8	59.6	35.2	94.8	49.8	70.2
<i>Total in the labour force</i>	<i>25.2</i>	<i>13.4</i>	<i>38.6</i>	<i>59.7</i>	<i>90.6</i>	<i>78.9</i>	<i>45.6</i>	<i>124.4</i>	<i>65.3</i>	<i>92.2</i>
Not in the labour force	1.8	2.2	4.0	6.2	9.4	5.2	5.4	10.6	5.6	7.8
<i>Total respondents</i>	<i>27.0</i>	<i>15.6</i>	<i>42.6</i>	<i>65.9</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>84.1</i>	<i>51.0</i>	<i>135.0</i>	<i>70.9</i>	<i>100.0</i>
NON-RESPONDENTS										
REASON FOR NON-RESPONSE										
Person interviewed refused to supply information	0.7	*	1.0	1.5		3.3	1.6	4.9	2.6	
Non-existent address	0.9	0.6	1.4	2.2		1.5	*	2.4	1.2	
Insufficient address (c)	1.4	0.5	1.9	3.0		3.1	1.0	4.1	2.2	
Dwelling apparently not inhabited	0.8	*	1.2	1.9		2.7	1.0	3.7	2.0	
Registrant left the dwelling in the three weeks before survey week with no intention of returning	*	*	0.6	0.9		*	*	1.2	0.6	
Registrant used address as a postal address	0.6	*	0.9	1.4		1.0	*	1.2	0.6	
Other -										
Registrant did not reside at address (d)	6.2	2.4	8.6	13.3		21.4	8.2	29.6	15.5	
Other (e)	4.9	1.5	6.4	9.9		6.1	2.3	8.3	4.4	
<i>Total non-respondents (f)</i>	<i>15.9</i>	<i>6.2</i>	<i>22.0</i>	<i>34.1</i>		<i>40.0</i>	<i>15.4</i>	<i>55.4</i>	<i>29.1</i>	
Total registrants	42.9	21.7	64.6	100.0		124.1	66.4	190.4	100.0	

(a) See paragraph 6. (b) For definitions see explanatory notes. (c) Address shown in CES records insufficient to identify a particular dwelling unit, e.g. an address of a block of flats, a post office box number. (d) Occupants of the dwelling were contacted but there was no evidence that the registrant resided at the address. (e) No occupants of the dwelling were available after repeated calls by the interviewer, or registrants were away at the time of the interview and information about them could not be provided by other residents. (f) Includes a small number of registrants who claimed to be overseas visitors on holiday or under 15 years of age.

* Subject to sampling variability too high for most practical uses. See paragraph 27.

