



Reference No. 6.24

TRADE UNION STATISTICS : AUSTRALIA
DECEMBER 1975

MAIN FEATURES

- The annual trade union collection showed that there were 280 reporting unions at the end of 1975 – five less than in 1974.
- Total membership increased by 52,100 (1.9 per cent) over 1974 to 2,814,000. Males increased by 1,600 (0.1 per cent) to 1,966,000 and females by 50,600 (6.3 per cent) to 848,000.
- Between 1970 and 1975 male membership increased by 12 per cent and female membership by 50 per cent.
- A number of small unions reported less than 20 members whilst the largest unions reported over 140,000. The 9 largest unions accounted for 39 per cent of total union membership.
- Trade union members at the end of 1975 represented 58 per cent of employed wage and salary earners. The percentage for males was 63 per cent and for females 48 per cent.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The figures contained in this annual bulletin have been compiled from data obtained from questionnaires sent to individual trade unions in the annual collection of membership of trade unions as at 31 December 1975. For comparison, figures for some earlier years are also shown. More detailed statistics for earlier years and a description of these series appear in the *Labour Report* (Reference No. 6.7) and the *Official Year Book*.

2. For the purpose of these statistics a trade union is defined as an organisation, consisting predominantly of employees, the principal activities of which include the negotiation of rates of pay and conditions of employment for its members.
3. Current lists of reporting trade unions are maintained by reference to lists of reporting trade unions used in previous years; by reference to trade unions registered under the provisions of the various Federal and State industrial arbitration Acts, trade union Acts, etc.; from names of unions reported to be engaged

in conciliation and arbitration proceedings, etc.; and from reports of trade unions in trade journals, trade union and employer periodicals, newspapers, and other publications. It should be noted that not all reporting trade unions are registered under the relevant Federal or State industrial arbitration legislation or State trade union Acts.

4. The published number of reporting trade unions varies from year to year as a result of amalgamations and mergers of unions; unions ceasing to operate; new unions being formed; existing organisations changing their status such that it brings them within the scope of the definition of a trade union (see paragraph 2); and existing unions reporting for the first time. These variations generally have little or no effect on total membership figures. Between 1974 and 1975 the number of reporting trade unions decreased from 285 to 280. This change was the result of a number of amalgamations or mergers, the effect of which was that 15 unions were reduced to 8 unions, and of two unions reporting for the first time.

5. The total membership of the reporting trade unions represents the aggregate of the membership of individual unions; persons who are members of more than one union are therefore counted more than once in the totals. The extent of this duplication is not known and it may vary over time. Total reported membership figures are affected by differences in the concept of membership adopted by various unions or by the same union at different times. Union rules on membership may follow different concepts and practices and this may be reflected in the level and fluctuations of the figures reported. Some unions confine their reported membership to "financial" members whilst others may also include "unfinancial" members. Individual unions may or may not include in their reported membership unemployed members, members who have retired from the labour force, disabled members, members with dues in arrears (who may be kept on union books for varying lengths of time), etc. Members of unions working overseas (e.g. in Papua New Guinea) are excluded from the reported membership data.

6. Membership of trade unions is shown separately for males and females for each State and Territory. The subdivision of total membership into males and females is not precise because some trade unions are unable to state the exact number of males and females among their

members. The subdivision of total membership by States and Territories is also not precise because some unions in the Territories are affiliated with State organisations and their membership is reported under the heading of that State. More accurate reporting of membership by location over the years is reflected in the annual figures for the Territories and this affects their comparability over time.

7. Interstate or federated trade unions are those unions which have members in more than one State. The larger interstate unions are usually administered by both Federal and State executives, the degree of control of the respective executives varying from union to union. The State branches, or in some cases intra-State branches, of such unions may be separately registered under provisions of relevant State industrial arbitration legislation, etc., perhaps under several different names. When obtaining statistics from trade unions operating wholly within one State or district, trade union secretaries are asked to report whether or not the union is a branch of an interstate, or a larger State or district organisation. This reporting reduces the possibility of duplication in the figures of the number of unions and of membership. An interstate or federated trade union is treated as a separate union in each State or Territory in which it has members, but is counted only once in the Australian total (see Table 1).

8. **Proportion of total employed wage and salary earners.** Tables 2 and 3 show the approximate

percentages of wage and salary earners in employment who were members of trade unions. The estimates of total wage and salary earners have been derived by adding figures for employees in agriculture and in private households employing staff to the estimates of employees in all other industries as at the end of each year. The percentages shown should be regarded as giving only a broad indication of the extent of union membership among wage and salary earners because they are based on estimates of *employed* wage and salary earners that are subject to revision. The degree of unemployment of reported union members would affect the percentages for a particular year and comparisons over time. The employment estimates have recently been revised to incorporate new benchmarks derived from the 1971 population census and other sources and are now classified according to the Australian Standard Industrial Classification. The percentages shown in Table 3 for 1968 and later years have been revised.

9. **Organisations registered under the Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Act.** Details of employer and employee organisations registered under this Act as at the end of 1975 are set out below with comparable figures for 1974 shown in brackets. There were 78 (82) employer organisations registered at the end of 1975. The number of employee unions registered was 147 (149), with membership of 2,482,200 (2,469,000) representing 88(89) per cent of total membership of all reporting trade unions in Australia.

NOTE. Any discrepancies between totals and sums of components in tables are due to rounding.

NOTE. *Inquiries concerning these statistics may be made in Canberra by telephoning Mr Godfrey Laurie on 52 6573 or, in each State capital, by telephoning the office of the Australian Bureau of Statistics.*

TABLE 1. - TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP

<i>End of December -</i>	<i>N.S.W.</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>S.A.</i>	<i>W.A.</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>N.T. (a)</i>	<i>A.C.T. (a)</i>	<i>Aust.</i>
NUMBER OF SEPARATE UNIONS (b)									
1973	192	159	140	135	154	118	58	87	(c)294
1974	r190	158	137	135	151	r121	65	88	r(c)285
1975	187	159	134	135	147	117	62	87	(c)280
NUMBER OF MEMBERS ('000)									
1973 -									
Males	735.8	484.7	254.2	181.6	142.6	62.5	10.2	33.3	1,904.9
Females	296.2	196.8	107.9	60.2	54.8	21.6	3.2	14.2	755.0
Persons	1,032.0	681.6	362.1	241.8	197.4	84.1	13.5	47.5	2,659.9
1974 -									
Males	r741.6	501.1	264.5	189.4	153.0	67.1	12.1	35.5	r1,964.4
Females	r306.3	210.5	110.6	63.4	63.4	22.0	4.3	17.0	r797.3
Persons	r1,047.9	711.6	375.1	252.8	216.4	89.1	16.4	52.5	r2,761.7
1975 -									
Males	733.5	506.2	275.2	187.3	155.0	64.2	11.2	33.3	1,966.0
Females	341.5	216.1	117.9	68.2	59.3	23.2	4.0	17.6	847.9
Persons	1,075.0	722.3	393.1	255.6	214.3	87.4	15.2	50.9	2,813.8

(a) See paragraph 6, page 1. (b) See paragraph 4, page 1. (c) Without interstate duplication. See paragraph 7, page 2. r - revised.

TABLE 2. - TRADE UNIONS : PROPORTION OF TOTAL EMPLOYED WAGE AND SALARY EARNERS, DECEMBER 1975 (a)

<i>State</i>	<i>Number of members ('000)</i>			<i>Proportion of total employed wage and salary earners (per cent)</i>		
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>
New South Wales and A.C.T.	766.8	359.1	1,125.9	66	53	61
Victoria	506.2	216.1	722.3	60	43	54
Queensland	275.2	117.9	393.1	64	54	60
South Australia	187.3	68.2	255.6	66	41	57
Western Australia	155.0	59.3	214.3	60	43	54
Tasmania	64.2	23.2	87.4	69	49	62
Northern Territory	11.2	4.0	15.2	41	30	38
Australia	1,966.0	847.9	2,813.8	63	48	58

(a) See paragraph 8, page 2.

TABLE 3. - TRADE UNIONS : PROPORTION OF TOTAL EMPLOYED WAGE AND SALARY EARNERS, AUSTRALIA (a)

<i>End of December -</i>	<i>Number of members ('000)</i>			<i>Proportion of total employed wage and salary earners (per cent)</i>		
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>
1966	1,657.5	466.0	2,123.5	60	37	53
1967	1,663.7	487.6	2,151.3	59	37	52
1968	1,691.1	499.5	2,190.7	59	36	52
1969	1,717.5	521.6	2,239.1	58	36	51
1970	1,750.6	564.1	2,314.6	58	37	51
1971	1,818.2	618.3	2,436.6	60	40	53
1972	1,827.4	696.2	2,523.7	59	43	54
1973	1,904.9	755.0	2,659.9	61	44	55
1974	1,964.4	797.3	2,761.7	62	46	56
1975	1,966.0	847.9	2,813.8	63	48	58

(a) See paragraph 8, page 2. Figures for years 1968 to 1974 have been revised.

TABLE 4. - TRADE UNIONS : CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF MEMBERS, AUSTRALIA

Number of members	Number of separate unions (a)				Number of members ('000)				Percent of total members Dec. 1975	
	Dec. 1972	Dec. 1973	Dec. 1974	Dec. 1975	Dec. 1972	Dec. 1973	Dec. 1974	Dec. 1975		
Under 100	42	35	33	30	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.4	0.1	
100 and under	250	42	34	26	33	7.1	5.6	4.3	5.3	0.2
250 " "	500	36	34	39	31	13.6	12.4	14.1	11.5	0.4
500 " "	1,000	38	37	38	38	28.2	26.0	26.9	26.3	0.9
1,000 " "	2,000	37	45	39	38	52.6	63.0	55.5	54.5	1.9
2,000 " "	5,000	45	41	39	40	148.3	135.4	123.2	130.4	4.6
5,000 " "	10,000	12	16	r21	19	85.2	116.7	r167.1	129.2	4.6
10,000 " "	20,000	16	15	14	14	216.1	212.8	190.2	207.6	7.4
20,000 " "	30,000	12	11	9	8	279.9	272.8	226.2	200.5	7.1
30,000 " "	40,000	4	3	4	7	140.1	107.6	139.2	239.1	8.5
40,000 " "	50,000	7	8	7	5	303.9	350.7	315.3	225.3	8.0
50,000 " "	80,000	6	5	6	8	400.3	307.4	377.1	485.8	17.3
80,000 and over		8	10	10	9	846.5	1,047.7	1,120.8	1,097.2	39.0
Total		305	294	r285	280	2,523.7	2,659.9	r2,761.7	2,813.8	100.0

(a) See paragraph 4, page 1. r - revised.

TABLE 5. - TRADE UNIONS : AREA OF OPERATION, AUSTRALIA

End of December -	Unions operating in (a) -							Total all unions
	1 State	2 States	3 States	4 States	5 States	6 States	2 to 6 States (b)	
NUMBER OF SEPARATE UNIONS (c)								
1971	156	12	6	16	32	81	147	303
1972	165	10	5	17	29	79	140	305
1973	150	10	7	14	27	86	144	294
1974	143	8	7	14	21	92	142	r285
1975	139	8	7	14	25	87	141	280
NUMBER OF MEMBERS ('000)								
1971	200.7	24.3	21.0	104.2	425.9	1,660.5	2,235.9	2,436.6
1972	200.6	22.0	62.4	96.7	339.0	1,803.0	2,323.1	2,523.7
1973	178.5	50.6	64.6	101.5	327.7	1,937.1	2,481.4	2,659.9
1974	155.7	17.2	98.9	103.9	202.8	2,183.2	2,606.0	r2,761.7
1975	168.5	18.0	57.3	147.6	202.1	2,220.3	2,645.3	2,813.8

(a) Certain unions have, in addition to branches in the States, branches in the Northern Territory and in the Australian Capital Territory. See paragraph 7, page 2. (b) Total of previous five columns. Figures refer to interstate or federated unions. (c) See paragraph 4, page 1. r - revised

R. W. COLE
Australian Statistician