



TRADE UNION STATISTICS, AUSTRALIA DECEMBER 1983

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- MAIL INQUIRIES** *write to* Information Services, ABS, P.O. Box 10, Belconnen, A.C.T. 2616 or any of our State offices.

MAIN FEATURES

Total membership of reporting trade unions at the end of 1983 was 2,985,200, a slight decrease over 1982 and the first decrease since 1976. An estimated 55 per cent of total employees were trade union members (males 61 per cent, females 46 per cent).

At the end of 1983 there were 319 reporting trade unions, compared with 322 at the end of the previous year. The decrease resulted from the amalgamation of three unions with other existing unions.

Nine unions, with 80,000 or more members each, accounted for 34 per cent of total membership. The 105 unions with fewer than 500 members accounted for less than one per cent of total membership.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

The figures in this publication have been compiled from questionnaires completed by individual trade unions in respect of their membership and area of operation as at the end of December each year.

Scope and coverage

2. Current lists of reporting trade unions are maintained by reference to lists used in previous years and 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 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 (see paragraph 10 below).

3. 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 (i.e. a union with members in more than one State or Territory) 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). Unions with interstate associations which are not strictly branches of a common organisation are counted as separate unions in the totals for Australia.

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 5), and existing unions reporting for the first time.

Definitions

5. 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. Non-operating unions or branches, i.e. those with no members at the date of collection, are not included in the statistics.

6. 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. Members of unions working overseas are excluded from the reported membership data. Membership figures may be affected by differences in the concept of membership adopted by different unions or by the same union at different times. (See paragraph 8 below.)

7. *Proportion of total employees.* The approximate percentages of wage and salary earners in employment (i.e. employees) who were members of trade unions are shown in Table 3. Estimates for 1978 and 1979 are based on estimates of employees as published in *Civilian Employees, Australia* (6213.0). As this series was suspended from April 1980 the proportions of total employees shown for 1980 and subsequent years have been calculated from estimates of employees from the labour force survey published in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0). For purposes of comparison figures for December 1979 have been shown on both bases. The percentages shown should be regarded as giving only a broad indication of the extent of union membership among employees, because they are based on estimates of *employed* wage and salary earners and the degree of unemployment of reported union members will affect the percentages for a particular year and comparisons over time.

Comparability of series

8. Comparability of figures for different years may be affected by a number of factors. As stated in paragraph 6, there may be duplication in the count of members. This duplication may vary over time. 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.

9. 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.

Organisations registered under industrial arbitration legislation

10. Details of employer and employee organisations registered under the *Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Act* as at the end of 1983 (with comparable figures for 1982 shown in brackets) are: 82 (86) employer organisations; 150 (150) employee unions with membership of 2,446,400 (2,481,200) representing 82 (82) per cent of total membership of all reporting trade unions in Australia.

11. *Organisations registered under State industrial arbitration legislation, etc.* New South Wales organisations registered under provisions of the Trade Union Act

and the Industrial Arbitration Act are listed periodically in the *New South Wales Industrial Gazette*. The annual reports of the President of the Industrial Court in Queensland contain a list of employer and employee unions registered under provisions of the *Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act*. The *Western Australian Industrial Gazette* contains lists of unions of employers and workers registered under provisions of the *Industrial Arbitration Act*.

Labour organisations

12. The main central labour organisations in Australia are the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) and the Council of Professional Associations (CPA). For information on these organisations reference should be made to *Year Book, Australia* (1301.0).

Related publications

The Labour Force, Australia (6203.0)—issued monthly

Civilian Employees, Australia (6213.0)—last issue April 1980

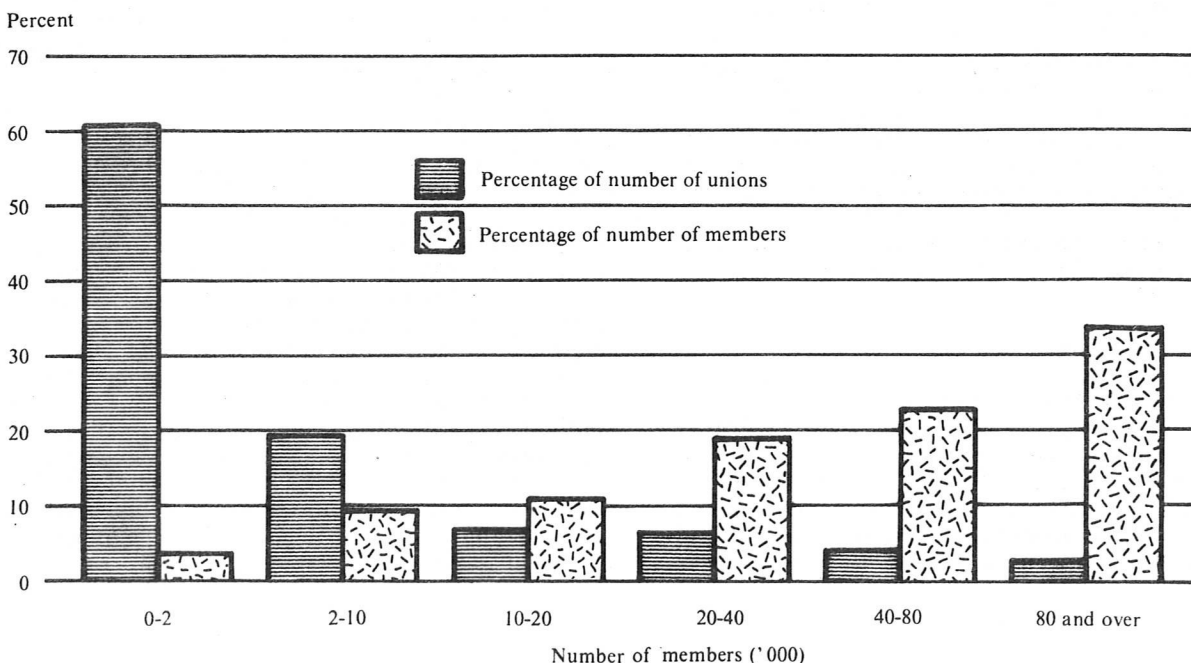
Trade Union Members, Australia, March to May 1982 (6325.0)

13. 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.

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

R.J. CAMERON
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TRADE UNIONS : PERCENTAGE OF NUMBER OF UNIONS AND NUMBER OF MEMBERS ACCORDING TO SIZE, AUSTRALIA, DECEMBER 1983 (a)



(a) For details see tables 4 and 5, page 4.

TABLE 1. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF SEPARATE UNIONS, STATES AND TERRITORIES, DECEMBER 1978 TO DECEMBER 1983

End of December—	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.	Aust.
1978	190	174	138	142	153	123	71	86	330
1979	192	174	139	142	153	121	77	88	328
1980	192	173	137	143	150	122	78	93	325
1981	191	173	138	141	149	123	75	91	324
1982	187	175	142	143	148	124	78	93	322
1983	186	174	138	141	146	123	75	92	319

TABLE 2. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF MEMBERS, STATES AND TERRITORIES, DECEMBER 1978 TO DECEMBER 1983 ('000)

End of December—	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.	Aust.
MALES									
1978	732.3	510.1	265.3	191.4	160.0	62.9	11.7	35.7	1,969.2
1979	727.9	514.5	268.6	191.1	158.1	62.1	13.3	35.8	1,971.4
1980	751.3	523.6	276.0	186.3	158.8	62.3	14.5	36.7	2,009.5
1981	772.3	522.9	285.6	178.0	156.4	63.4	14.2	36.6	2,029.4
1982	745.7	533.4	296.0	176.0	161.2	61.4	13.7	36.9	2,024.4
1983	730.6	529.1	299.6	174.3	162.2	61.1	13.9	36.4	2,007.2
FEMALES									
1978	315.1	225.6	118.3	78.9	74.9	26.0	5.5	17.1	861.5
1979	333.0	235.5	125.2	81.1	78.7	26.1	5.5	17.2	902.2
1980	357.4	246.6	132.1	85.3	75.9	26.1	5.8	17.3	946.3
1981	373.3	248.8	135.4	85.1	72.7	26.3	6.0	17.0	964.7
1982	381.9	256.7	142.7	82.7	73.3	26.7	6.5	17.5	988.0
1983	378.1	259.1	130.6	83.5	75.3	27.6	6.7	17.2	978.0
PERSONS									
1978	1,047.5	735.7	383.6	270.4	234.8	88.9	17.4	52.7	2,830.8
1979	1,060.8	750.0	393.8	272.2	236.7	88.2	18.8	53.0	2,873.6
1980	1,108.7	770.1	408.1	271.6	234.7	88.4	20.3	53.9	2,955.9
1981	1,145.6	771.7	421.0	263.1	229.1	89.8	20.1	53.7	2,994.1
1982	1,127.5	790.1	438.8	258.7	234.5	88.1	20.2	54.4	3,012.4
1983	1,108.7	788.2	430.2	257.8	237.5	88.6	20.6	53.6	2,985.2

TABLE 3. TRADE UNION MEMBERS : PROPORTION OF TOTAL EMPLOYEES, AUSTRALIA, DECEMBER 1978 TO DECEMBER 1983 (per cent)

End of December—	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.	Aust.
MALES									
1978	64	60	58	66	59	68	43	71	62
1979	63	60	57	67	57	67	45	71	61
1979(a)	62	59	58	66	58	66	44	65	61
1980(a)	63	59	57	65	55	66	45	67	61
1981(a)	64	58	58	62	54	67	44	65	60
1982(a)	64	61	59	62	56	69	41	69	62
1983(a)	65	61	58	63	55	68	41	64	61
FEMALES									
1978	47	43	48	43	46	54	40	47	46
1979	48	44	48	44	47	52	35	47	47
1979(a)	48	44	48	47	48	52	38	46	47
1980(a)	51	45	47	49	44	50	33	44	47
1981(a)	52	45	47	48	42	51	31	41	48
1982(a)	54	46	49	47	41	51	31	45	49
1983(a)	51	45	43	45	40	53	33	38	46
PERSONS									
1978	58	53	54	57	54	63	42	61	56
1979	58	54	54	58	54	62	41	61	56
1979(a)	57	53	54	59	54	61	42	58	56
1980(a)	59	53	54	58	51	60	41	58	56
1981(a)	59	53	54	56	50	62	39	55	56
1982(a)	60	55	55	57	50	63	37	59	57
1983(a)	59	54	53	56	49	63	38	53	55

(a) Based on estimates from the labour force survey. See paragraph 7 of the Explanatory notes.

TABLE 4. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF UNIONS ACCORDING TO SIZE, AUSTRALIA, DECEMBER 1978 TO DECEMBER 1983

Number of members	End of December—					1983		
	Number of unions					Number of unions	Per cent of total unions	Cumulative per cent of total unions
	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982			
Under 100	39	41	39	36	46	41	12.9	12.9
100 and under 250	44	41	45	46	38	39	12.2	25.1
250 and under 500	30	28	23	26	25	25	7.8	32.9
500 and under 1,000	44	46	46	48	43	47	14.7	47.6
1,000 and under 2,000	42	44	46	45	45	41	12.9	60.5
2,000 and under 5,000	47	46	43	38	41	41	12.9	73.4
5,000 and under 10,000	26	20	21	22	21	21	6.6	79.9
10,000 and under 20,000	19	23	21	20	21	22	6.9	86.8
20,000 and under 30,000	12	11	11	12	9	13	4.1	90.9
30,000 and under 40,000	6	5	7	9	10	7	2.2	93.1
40,000 and under 50,000	6	9	9	7	9	8	2.5	95.6
50,000 and under 80,000	8	7	7	8	6	5	1.6	97.2
80,000 and over	7	7	7	7	8	9	2.8	100.0
Total	330	328	325	324	322	319	100.0	100.0

TABLE 5. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF MEMBERS ACCORDING TO SIZE OF UNION, AUSTRALIA, DECEMBER 1978 TO DECEMBER 1983

Number of members	End of December—					1983				
	Number of members					Number of members	Average number of members per union	Per cent of total members	Cumulative per cent of total members	
	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982					
	— '000—									
Under 100	2.2	2.2	1.9	1.7	2.5	2.0	—	0.1	0.1	
100 and under 250	6.5	6.3	7.1	7.3	6.1	6.0	0.2	0.2	0.3	
250 and under 500	11.0	10.4	8.6	9.8	9.1	8.9	0.4	0.3	0.6	
500 and under 1,000	30.8	30.6	31.6	33.4	28.8	33.9	0.7	1.1	1.7	
1,000 and under 2,000	56.4	60.6	64.1	64.3	61.3	57.7	1.4	1.9	3.6	
2,000 and under 5,000	152.3	155.9	145.5	129.0	132.0	132.0	3.2	4.4	8.1	
5,000 and under 10,000	186.7	152.1	155.9	156.1	147.3	149.3	7.1	5.0	13.1	
10,000 and under 20,000	294.2	349.8	317.6	287.4	305.6	328.1	14.9	11.0	24.0	
20,000 and under 30,000	285.9	272.2	256.0	280.2	207.4	315.2	24.2	10.6	34.6	
30,000 and under 40,000	214.0	174.3	243.9	316.5	354.6	254.7	36.4	8.5	43.1	
40,000 and under 50,000	266.4	410.5	422.5	329.2	402.7	363.2	45.4	12.2	55.3	
50,000 and under 80,000	525.0	450.7	466.4	531.6	405.6	320.9	64.2	10.7	66.1	
80,000 and over	799.3	798.1	834.8	874.4	949.4	1,013.4	112.6	33.9	100.0	
Total	2,830.8	2,873.6	2,955.9	2,994.1	3,012.4	2,985.2	9.4	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 6. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF STATES AND/OR TERRITORIES OF OPERATION, AUSTRALIA

End of December—	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six or more	Two or more	Total all unions
NUMBER OF SEPARATE UNIONS								
1978	188	11	6	10	27	88	142	330
1979	186	10	6	11	26	89	142	328
1980	183	10	6	13	24	89	142	325
1981	183	9	6	13	24	89	141	324
1982	178	11	3	12	16	102	144	322
1983	176	11	5	11	15	101	143	319
NUMBER OF MEMBERS ('000)								
1978	516.0	23.0	24.0	152.9	178.5	1,936.4	2,314.9	2,830.8
1979	550.9	22.7	24.3	177.5	149.3	1,948.9	2,322.7	2,873.6
1980	532.1	58.9	25.3	161.1	111.2	2,067.2	2,423.7	2,955.9
1981	540.5	57.0	25.4	165.2	121.0	2,085.1	2,453.6	2,994.1
1982	502.9	21.2	55.7	132.2	135.4	2,165.0	2,509.5	3,012.4
1983	531.9	22.9	56.3	132.1	133.6	2,108.5	2,453.3	2,985.2