



### EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS, AUSTRALIA, AUGUST 1983 (PRELIMINARY)

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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

Of the estimated 5,187,900 employees in August 1983, 57.9 per cent received some kind of employment benefit in addition to their regular wage or salary. For males the proportion was 67.0 per cent and for females 43.4 per cent.

Almost one quarter of the employees (22.9 per cent) received more than one type of benefit.

The higher the employees' weekly earnings, the more likely they were to have received a benefit—only 31.3 per cent of employees earning under \$160 per week in their main job received any benefit compared with 85.0 per cent of employees earning \$420 per week or more in their main job.

The most common benefits were superannuation fund membership (68.9 per cent of beneficiaries) and free or discounted goods and services (30.4 per cent).

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES

##### Introduction

In association with the August 1983 labour force survey conducted throughout Australia, employed wage and salary earners ('employees') were asked about a range of employment benefits provided to them by employers.

2. During the two weeks beginning Monday 8 August, 1983, specially trained interviewers asked the questions of those of the 70,000 respondents in the August labour force survey who fell within the scope of this survey.

3. This publication contains only a summary of results of the survey. Estimates shown are preliminary and may be revised. Further information which will be published as soon as possible is available on request. Results of a similar survey, conducted in February to May 1979, have been published in *Employment Benefits, Australia, February to May 1979* (6334.0).

##### Scope

4. The survey included all civilians aged fifteen years and over who were employees in their main job except:

- (a) certain diplomatic personnel of overseas governments, customarily excluded from census and estimated populations;
- (b) overseas residents in Australia;
- (c) dependants of non-Australian defence forces personnel stationed in Australia;
- (d) students boarding at school, persons permanently unable to work, some patients in hospitals and sanatoria and inmates of jails, reformatories etc.

##### Definitions

5. An *employment benefit* was defined as a concession, allowance or other privilege, etc. received in addition to wages or salary and award, etc. minimum provisions under which a person was employed in their main job. Not all benefits were received direct from the current employer. Some benefits received by employees from other sources as a result of their employment in a particular occupation or industry have been included in the tables (e.g. a concession air fare granted by an airline to a travel agency employee). All types of wage and salary payments, including bonuses, payments for leave of various kinds and overaward payments, as well as emoluments received in accordance with award, etc. provisions (e.g. safety clothing), were not considered to be benefits for the purposes of the survey. Definitions of particular benefits are given in the following paragraphs.

6. *Holiday costs*: Any free or discounted holiday or holiday travel expenses paid for or subsidised as a result of a person's employment at the time of the survey.

7. *Low interest finance*: Finance provided by the employer at a low interest rate. In cases where the employer was an institution which provided loans to persons other than its own employees, e.g. banks, a benefit was recorded only if the loan was at a lower rate of interest than the lender's usual rate for the particular

purpose for which the loan was made. While loans made by lending institutions to non-employee members were not included under this definition, it is nevertheless known that some respondents reported, as low interest finance, loans provided by institutions whose borrowers were restricted to employees of certain other organisations (e.g. some credit unions set up by companies, public service, etc.).

8. *Goods and services*: Goods and services (not included under other headings) provided free or at a discounted price to an employee, e.g. a motor vehicle supplied at a discount price to an employee of a car manufacturer.

9. *Housing*: Assistance in the provision of or subsidisation of the costs of accommodation used as a residence by a person or his family. It includes the provision to an employee, as an employee entitlement, of a residence owned by the employer, payment or subsidisation of rent or board, provision of a housing allowance and payment or subsidisation of water, sewerage or general rates payable to local government authorities.

10. *Electricity, etc.*: Payment or subsidisation by a person's employer of household fuel and/or power expenses, including electricity, gas, oil and firewood.

11. *Telephone*: Payment or subsidisation, by the employer, of private telephone charges.

12. *Transport*: Assistance with *day-to-day* travelling for *private purposes* by the provision of a vehicle or by other means, e.g. travelling allowance, excluding payment or subsidisation of the cost of travel to and from work. This type of emolument when used for less frequent purposes, e.g. holidays, was classified as another type of benefit e.g. holiday costs.

13. *Medical*: Payment or subsidisation by the employer, of an employee's medical and/or hospital expenses, etc. and/or benefits fund contributions. Deduction from the employee's wages or salary, where the employee paid the full contribution, was not considered to be a benefit.

14. *Union dues*: Payment or subsidisation by the employer of the employee's union membership dues or professional association membership fees. Deduction from the employee's wages or salary, where the employee paid the full amount, was not considered to be a benefit.

15. *Club fees*: Payment or subsidisation of the employee's membership fee for a club or society (not being a union or professional association) of which he/she was a member. Deduction from the employee's wages or salary, where the employee paid the full amount, was not considered to be a benefit.

16. *Entertainment allowance*: Regular provision of an amount for entertainment or hospitality expenses, or the reimbursement of expenses regularly incurred for entertainment or hospitality purposes.

17. *Shares, etc.*: Receipt or provision of shares, rights or options in the employer's business as an employee entitlement.

18. *Study leave*: Time off granted by the employer for attendance at classes during working hours, provided that the course being studied was not undertaken as a condition of employment. Thus apprentices, etc. attending college were not considered to be receiving a benefit, but other students were, even if they lost pay while on study leave or had to make up all of the time they were absent during working hours.

19. *Superannuation etc.*: Membership of a superannuation or retirement benefits scheme, but only if the scheme was arranged or provided by the person's current employer and even if the employer did not contribute to the fund.

20. *Children's education expenses*: Payment in full or in part by the employer of any expense incurred in the education of an employee's child(ren), e.g. tuition fees, books.

21. The mere availability of or entitlement to a benefit (as defined) was not sufficient reason for its inclusion in the tables in this publication; only those benefits which were used or taken up were counted.

#### Comparability of series

22. The scope of the previous survey conducted in February to May 1979 was restricted to employees who usually worked 20 hours or more per week. In addition, for the 1979 survey respondents were interviewed personally whereas for the August 1983 survey respondents were either interviewed personally or another adult member of the household responded on their behalf. The methodology adopted for the current survey may have resulted in the non-reporting of particular benefits compared with the 1979 survey.

#### Reliability of the estimates

23. 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 27 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 of 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

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

*The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0)—issued monthly  
*Working Conditions, Australia, February to May 1979*  
(6335.0)

*Alternative Working Arrangements, Australia, March to May 1982* (6341.0)

25. 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 paragraph 23 above.

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

**R. J. CAMERON**  
Australian Statistician

### STANDARD ERRORS OF ESTIMATES

Size of estimate (persons)	Approximate standard error of estimates		Size of estimate (persons)	Approximate standard error of estimates	
	Persons	Per cent of estimate		Persons	Per cent of estimate
3,000	800	26.7	50,000	2,900	5.8
4,000	920	23.0	100,000	3,900	3.9
5,000	1,000	20.0	500,000	7,200	1.4
10,000	1,400	14.0	1,000,000	9,100	0.9
20,000	2,000	10.0	5,000,000	15,000	0.3

**TABLE 1. ALL EMPLOYEES: TYPE OF BENEFIT RECEIVED AND INDUSTRY, AUGUST 1983 ('000)**

	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	Mining	Manufacturing	Electricity, gas and water	Construction	Wholesale and retail trade	
Total employees	125.9	89.4	1,074.8	135.8	243.4	968.2	
No benefits	51.4	11.2	459.5	26.7	131.5	402.4	
One or more benefits	74.6	78.2	615.3	109.1	111.9	565.8	
Holiday costs	*	13.4	15.1	*	4.2	17.5	
Low-interest finance	*	*	15.8	4.2	*	5.8	
Goods and services	33.4	17.1	234.0	20.1	21.9	353.5	
Housing	41.5	24.3	12.0	7.7	12.5	16.3	
Electricity	33.7	15.7	7.8	5.1	10.1	14.5	
Telephone	26.8	9.2	79.3	12.4	37.0	99.1	
Transport	15.3	5.4	91.6	*	36.7	143.2	
Medical	3.7	15.5	30.4	*	7.4	28.6	
Union dues	*	*	21.2	*	10.7	18.1	
Club fees	*	*	16.1	*	5.0	19.4	
Entertainment allowance	*	*	46.0	*	14.4	71.8	
Shares	4.0	*	21.6	*	7.5	22.3	
Study leave	*	*	7.9	3.9	*	6.5	
Superannuation	18.5	68.4	452.5	99.5	61.0	237.8	
Children's education expenses	*	*	*	*	*	3.3	
	Transport and storage	Communication	Finance, etc.	Public admin. and defence	Community services	Recreation, etc.	Total
Total employees	299.8	136.7	475.5	315.3	1,015.6	307.4	5,187.9
No benefits	92.2	21.8	188.8	70.8	533.1	195.5	2,184.9
One or more benefits	207.6	114.9	286.6	244.5	482.5	111.9	3,003.0
Holiday costs	82.9	*	24.2	*	11.7	3.8	181.9
Low-interest finance	*	*	83.2	3.2	11.2	*	133.5
Goods and services	48.7	9.1	52.0	8.3	58.0	57.8	913.9
Housing	13.4	3.7	18.9	8.7	40.0	6.4	205.6
Electricity	5.5	*	8.6	*	14.8	6.0	124.2
Telephone	27.0	15.0	59.3	18.4	44.6	15.9	444.0
Transport	31.7	*	57.0	7.7	26.6	17.6	436.7
Medical	4.1	*	61.2	*	17.5	*	172.8
Union dues	6.8	*	26.3	*	11.3	4.6	107.3
Club fees	*	*	25.5	*	7.3	3.2	84.1
Entertainment allowance	10.4	*	52.9	4.2	12.0	12.0	230.2
Shares	4.2	*	17.2	*	*	*	83.4
Study leave	5.2	*	15.0	11.3	27.4	3.5	88.5
Superannuation	141.4	111.9	206.2	236.7	397.4	37.6	2,068.9
Children's education expenses	*	*	*	*	4.7	*	16.8

**TABLE 2. ALL EMPLOYEES: TYPE OF BENEFIT RECEIVED AND WEEKLY EARNINGS(a) IN MAIN JOB, AUGUST 1983**  
( ' 000)

	Weekly earnings(a) in main job (\$)								Total
	Under 160	160 and under 220	220 and under 240	240 and under 280	280 and under 320	320 and under 380	380 and under 420	420 and over	
Total employees	947.2	677.9	419.4	802.9	642.1	604.9	339.9	753.5	5,187.9
No benefits	651.2	381.3	213.1	348.6	219.3	175.9	82.7	112.7	2,184.9
One or more benefits	296.0	296.6	206.3	454.3	422.8	429.0	257.2	640.8	3,003.0
Holiday costs	8.8	17.0	10.6	25.4	24.4	27.4	15.5	52.8	181.9
Low-interest finance	4.5	8.5	7.6	18.9	18.9	23.3	14.0	37.9	133.5
Goods and services	170.9	120.6	78.8	145.2	118.0	102.9	56.7	120.7	913.9
Housing	31.6	24.7	14.2	18.5	17.2	20.4	18.2	60.7	205.6
Electricity	30.6	20.6	6.4	13.5	10.2	11.3	6.3	25.3	124.2
Telephone	53.6	32.3	17.8	33.1	42.5	58.7	45.5	160.4	444.0
Transport	44.4	31.2	20.8	41.9	52.1	65.1	47.6	133.7	436.7
Medical	16.6	12.3	8.3	25.1	21.7	25.4	16.7	46.7	172.8
Union dues	9.5	8.8	6.9	10.4	11.4	14.8	7.5	38.1	107.3
Club fees	6.9	6.3	3.1	5.5	5.9	9.5	7.6	39.2	84.1
Entertainment allowance	10.4	11.1	7.5	15.0	22.8	36.5	25.2	101.8	230.2
Shares	11.3	8.9	3.5	7.1	10.8	11.5	9.0	21.3	83.4
Study leave	10.9	7.6	3.5	11.8	9.3	13.9	9.5	21.9	88.5
Superannuation	63.9	154.4	126.8	318.2	319.2	338.4	207.1	541.0	2,068.9
Children's education expenses		5.0		4.4			3.7	3.8	16.8

(a) Refers to weekly earnings from last pay.

**TABLE 3. ALL EMPLOYEES: NUMBER OF SEPARATE TYPES OF BENEFIT RECEIVED AND AGE, AUGUST 1983**  
( ' 000)

Number of separate types of benefit	Age group (years)							Total
	15-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-59	60 and over	
MALES								
None	192.5	216.4	261.3	170.3	112.3	54.8	41.9	1,049.4
One or more	83.9	241.0	637.9	547.1	395.4	161.2	67.4	2,133.9
One	63.3	156.4	336.4	275.3	216.9	96.1	39.5	1,183.9
Two	14.1	52.9	153.0	115.9	88.1	35.8	15.2	474.9
Three	4.4	20.1	74.4	70.9	41.8	15.3	5.7	232.7
Four	*	6.8	37.1	39.2	23.8	6.7	3.8	118.6
Five or more	*	4.8	37.1	45.8	24.8	7.4	3.3	123.9
Total	276.4	457.4	899.2	717.4	507.7	216.0	109.3	3,183.4
FEMALES								
None	168.0	213.9	271.4	261.0	154.0	45.2	22.0	1,135.5
One or more	99.4	182.5	237.5	176.7	123.6	35.1	14.3	869.1
One	83.2	130.7	170.1	122.4	90.4	24.8	9.0	630.5
Two	12.6	33.7	42.5	33.1	21.3	7.2	*	153.4
Three	*	12.8	15.2	10.3	6.4	*	*	50.6
Four or more	*	5.2	9.7	11.0	5.5	*	*	34.5
Total	267.3	396.3	509.0	437.7	277.6	80.3	36.3	2,004.5
PERSONS								
None	360.4	430.3	532.7	431.3	266.3	100.0	63.9	2,184.9
One or more	183.3	423.4	875.4	723.9	519.0	196.3	81.7	3,003.0
One	146.5	287.1	506.4	397.7	307.4	120.9	48.5	1,814.4
Two	26.7	86.7	195.5	149.0	109.4	43.0	18.1	628.3
Three	6.8	32.9	89.6	81.2	48.2	17.4	7.2	283.3
Four		10.8	42.2	45.0	26.2	7.0	4.3	137.7
Five or more	3.3	6.0	41.7	51.0	27.9	8.0	3.6	139.3
Total	543.7	853.8	1,408.2	1,155.1	785.3	296.2	145.6	5,187.9