# WEEKLY EARNINGS OF EMPLOYEES (DISTRIBUTION), AUSTRALIA, AUGUST 1986 PRELIMINARY 

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## MAIN FEATURES

In August 1986 the mean weekly earnings of full-time employees was $\$ 391$. Married males in this group had the highest mean weekly earnings of $\$ 456$ while married females had mean weekly earnings of $\$ 353$. The corresponding figures for not-married males and females were lower at $\$ 348$ and $\$ 312$ respectively. Part-time employees also had lower mean weekly earnings. Females in this group had mean weekly earnings of $\$ 157$ while males had a mean of $\$ 151$.

For male full-time employees the mean weekly earnings from all jobs varied with age. The lowest mean for males was $\$ 209$ for those aged 15 to 19 rising to a peak of $\$ 479$ for those aged 35 to 44 and tapering to $\$ 408$ for those aged 60 and over. Although female full-time employees had lower mean weekly earnings in all age groups the pattern was similar with the peak of $\$ 378$ occurring in the 25 to 34 age group.
Male employees who worked in a second job had a mean weekly income of $\$ 97$ from their second job while female employees had a mean of $\$ 85$ from their second job.

Notes (i) Caution should be exercised when comparing estimates in this publication with those included in the quarterly publication Average Weekly Earnings, States and Australia (6302.0). There are important differences in the purpose, scope and methodology of this household survey and the Average Weekly Earnings survey of employers. See paragraph 14 below.
(ii) Survey estimates are subject to sampling variability, as explained in paragraph 17 below.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

## Introduction

The monthly Population Survey (which is described in The Labour Force, Australia (6203.0)) comprises the monthy labour force survey and supplementary topics. This publication contains some results of a supplementary survey run in association with the August 1986 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. This subset of respondents was asked about their weekly earnings and frequency of pay.

## 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 persons who were employed as wage and salary earners ('employees') in their main job excluding persons on workers' compensation and persons who worked solely for payment in kind.

## Definitions

4. Weekly earnings referred to the amount of 'last total pay' prior to the interview (i.e. before taxation and other deductions had been made). For persons paid other than weekly, earnings were converted to a weekly equivalent. No adjustment was made for any back payment of wage increases or pre-payment of leave, etc.
5. Median weekly earnings is the amount which divides the distribution of individuals into two equal groups, one having earnings above and the other below that amount. Medians were calculated from grouped data, the class intervals in some cases being finer than those published in the tables. Linear interpolation was used within the class interval in which the median fell.
6. Mean weekly earnings is the amount obtained by dividing the total earnings of a group by the number of units in that group.
7. The main job was defined as the job in which the greatest number of hours were usually worked. The second job was defined to include all remaining wage and salary earner jobs in which some hours were worked during the survey week. A person who held more than one job was classified to the industry and occupation of the main job. Service in the reserve defence forces was not regarded as a second job. Persons who by the nature of their employment worked for more than one employer, e.g. domestics, odd-job workers, baby-sitters, etc., were not counted as having a second job unless they also held another job of a different kind, nor were those who worked for more than one employer solely by reason of changing jobs during the survey week. Alljobs comprised main job and second job as defined above.
8. Full-time employees are those who usually work 35 hours a week or more (in all jobs) and others who, although usually part-time employees, worked 35 hours or more during the survey week. It should be noted that some full-time employees may have worked or been paid for less than a full week. Part-time employees are those who usually work less than 35 hours a week and who did so during the survey week. When recording hours of work, fractions of an hour are disregarded.
9. Further definitions of labour force and demographic classifications appearing in this publication are given in The Labour Force, Australia (6203.0).

## Results of the survey

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. Estimates shown are preliminary and may be revised. A more detailed publication will be released as soon as possible and further information is available on request.
12. Results of similar surveys, the first conducted in August 1975, have been published in Weekly Earnings of Employees (Distribution), Australia (6310.0).
13. It is proposed that this survey will next be conducted in August 1987.

## Comparability of series

14. This survey was conducted primarily to obtain statistics on the distribution of earnings of employees classified by characteristics such as marital status, sex, age and whether the earnings came from the main job or any second job. Caution should be exercised when comparing the means of distributions of earnings in this publication with estimates of average weekly earnings included in the quarterly publication Average Weekly Earnings, States and Australia (6302.0) which are compiled from a survey of employers. There are important differences in the scope of and methodology used in the two surveys. The quarterly survey of average weekly earnings excludes employees in the industries of Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (ASIC Division A) and Private Households Employing Staff (ASIC Subdivision 94) both of which are included in the August household survey. Data from the quarterly survey of average weekly earnings are collected from employers who fill in a mailed questionnaire giving details of their employees' weekly earnings. For the August household survey, respondents are either interviewed personally at their dwelling or another adult member of their household responds on their behalf. There are many factors which account for the differences between data from the two collections, including lack of consultation of records by respondents to the household survey, misunderstanding of the type of earnings required (i.e. gross rather than net earnings), earnings being reported in ranges, lack of
recognition of irregular sources of earnings and lack of awareness of earnings of other household members not answering for themselves.
15. Respondents have been asked to indicate the amount of earnings in terms of ranges, with the highest range being $\$ 600$ or more for some years. For August 1986 six additional ranges were introduced, the highest being $\$ 800$ or more. This may have affected the distribution of persons receiving $\$ 600$ or more per week.

## Discontinuities in the series

16. Estimates contained in this publication are based on a revised labour force questionnaire introduced in April 1986. Further information is contained in The Labour Force, Australia (6203.0) and in an information paper Questionnaires used in the Labour Force Survey (6232.0).

## Reliability of the estimates

17. 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 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, 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 figure 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.
18. The relative standard errors of estimates of mean and median weekly earnings are obtained by first finding the relative standard error of the estimate of the total number of persons contributing to the estimate (see Table A) and then multiplying the figure by the following relevant factors:

Mean weekly earnings

| -Part-time employees | 1.0 |
| :--- | :--- |
| -Full-time employees | 0.7 |
| -All employees | 0.9 |

Median weekly earnings

| -Part-time employees | 1.4 |
| :--- | :--- |
| -Full-time employees | 0.7 |
| -All employees | 1.0 |

19. 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, estimates less than the lowest levels shown in the standard error table have not been published. Although figures for these small components can in some cases be derived by subtraction, they should not be regarded as reliable.
20. 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 the coding and processing of data. These innaccuracies 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. In many cases the answer to the question on earnings was based on the knowledge of one person (generally the housewife). Respondents were asked to indicate the amount of earnings in terms of ranges. (The earnings ranges used are generally those shown in Table 1.) It is considered that there may be some understatement in the estimates because of imperfect recall of minor or irregular sources of earnings. Other errors may be due to genuine misunderstanding.

## Related publications

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

The Labour Force, Australia (6203.0)—issued monthly (\$1.20, \$2.10 incl. postage)

Average Weekly Earnings, Australia (Preliminary) (6301.0), and final publication (6302.0)-issued quarterly

Distribution and Composition of Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia (Preliminary) (6305.0), and final publication (6306.0)-issued annually (\$1.20, \$2.10 incl. postage)

Income of Individuals, Australia, 1981-82 (6502.0)issued irregularly

Multiple Jobholding, Australia, August 1985 (6216.0)issued irregularly

Award Rates of Pay Indexes, Australia (6312.0)—issued monthly
22. 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 following 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 17 above.
. . not applicable

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

## Electronic services

24. VIATEL. Key*656\# for selected current economic, social and demographic statistics.
AUSSTATS. Thousands of up-to-date time series are available on this ABS on-line service through CSIRONET.

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Further information is available on (062) 525404.

| Size of estimate (persons) | N.S.W. | Vic. | Qld | $\begin{aligned} & \text { S.A. W.A. } \\ & \text {-number- } \end{aligned}$ |  | Tas. | N.T. | A.C.T. | Ausiralia |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Per cent <br> of estimate |  |  |
| 1,300 |  |  |  |  |  |  | 280 |  | 310 |  |  |
| 1,500 |  |  |  |  |  | 300 |  | 330 |  |  |
| 1,800 |  |  |  | 430 |  | 330 | 410 | 350 |  |  |
| 2,000 |  |  |  | 460 | 480 | 340 | 430 | 370 |  |  |
| 2,500 |  |  |  | 500 | 530 | 380 | 470 | 400 |  |  |
| 3,000 |  |  | 690 | 550 | 580 | 410 | 500 | 430 |  |  |
| 3,500 |  |  | 750 | 590 | 620 | 440 | 530 | 450 | 820 | 23.4 |
| 4,000 | 950 | 960 | 800 | 620 | 660 | 460 | 560 | 470 | 880 | 21.9 |
| 4,500 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 840 | 650 | 690 | 480 | 590 | 500 | 930 | 20.7 |
| 5,000 | 1,050 | 1,050 | 880 | 690 | 720 | 500 | 610 | 510 | 980 | 19.6 |
| 6,000 | 1,150 | 1,150 | 960 | 740 | 780 | 540 | 650 | 550 | 1,100 | 17.9 |
| 10,000 | 1,450 | 1,450 | 1,200 | 920 | 970 | 660 | 790 | 650 | 1,400 | 13.9 |
| 20,000 | 2,000 | 1,950 | 1,650 | 1,200 | 1,300 | 860 | 1,050 | 810 | 1,950 | 9.7 |
| 50,000 | 2,900 | 2,850 | 2,350 | 1,700 | 1,800 | 1,150 | 1,450 | 1,050 | 2,950 | 5.9 |
| 100,000 | 3,850 | 3,700 | 3,050 | 2,200 | 2,300 | 1,450 |  | 1,250 | 3,950 | 4.0 |
| 200,000 | 5,100 | 4,750 | 3,950 | 2,750 | 2,950 | 1,750 |  |  | 5,300 | 2.6 |
| 300,000 | 5,900 | 5,500 | 4,500 | 3,100 | 3,350 |  |  |  | 6,200 | 2.1 |
| 500,000 | 7,200 | 6,500 | 5,300 | 3,650 | 3,900 |  |  |  | 7,500 | 1.5 |
| 1,000,000 | 9,200 | 8,100 | 6,600 |  |  |  |  |  | 9,700 | 1.0 |
| 2,000,000 | 11,600 | 9,900 |  |  |  |  |  |  | 12,300 | 0.6 |
| 5,000,000 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 16,500 | 0.3 |
| 10,000,000 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 20,300 | 0.2 |

TABLE 1. ALL EMPLOYEES: WEEKLY EARNINGS IN ALL JOBS, MARITAL STATUS AND FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME STATUS, AUGUST 1986

(a) As part-time employees are defined as those who usually work less than 35 hours and who did so in the survey week, these figures may include some school teachers, academic staff in universities, air crew, etc.


TABLE 3. ALL EMPLOYEES : WEEKLY EARNINGS IN ALL JOBS AND FULL-TIME OR
PART-TIME STATUS, AUGUST 1986


TABLE 3. ALL EMPLOYEES : WEEKLY EARNINGS IN ALL JOBS AND FULL-TIME OR
PART-TIME STATUS, AUGUST 1986-continued

(a) As part-time employees are defined as those who usually work less than 35 hours and who did so in the survey week, these figures may include some school teachers, academic staff in universities, air crew, etc.

TABLE 4. EMPLOYEES WHO WORKED IN A SECOND JOB : WEEKLY EARNINGS IN MAIN JOB
AND WEEKLY EARNINGS IN SECOND JOB, AUGUST 1986

|  | Males |  |  |  | Females |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Weekly earnings in second job |  |  | $\begin{array}{r} \text { Mean } \\ \text { weekly } \\ \text { earnings in } \\ \text { second job } \end{array}$ | Weekly earnings in second job |  |  | Mean weekly earnings in second job |
|  | Under \$60 | $\begin{gathered} \$ 60 \text { and } \\ \text { over } \end{gathered}$ | Total |  | Under $\$ 60$ | $\$ 60$ and over | Total |  |
| Weekly earnings in main job (\$)- | - ${ }^{\text {200 }}$ |  |  | \$ | -000- |  |  | \$ |
| Under 120 | * | 4.1 | 6.9 | 60 | 7.7 | 11.5 | 19.2 | 59 |
| 120 and under 200 |  | 5.2 | 6.4 | 92 | \} 3.8 | 10.9 | 13.2 | 93 |
| $200 \quad \text { " } 280$ | \} 3.7 | 5.5 | 6.6 | 85 | \} 3.8 | 7.8 | 8.2 | 105 |
| $280 \quad " \quad 360$ | , | 12.9 | 14.4 | 100 | * | 6.4 | 7.6 | 89 |
| $360 \quad " \quad 480$ | \} 3.6 | 13.6 | 14.9 | 105 | * | 4.7 | 5.3 | 97 |
| 480 and over | \} 3.6 | 9.9 | 12.1 | 113 | * | * | * | * |
| Total | 10.1 | 51.2 | 61.3 | 97 | 12.3 | 44.3 | 56.6 | 85 |
|  | -dollars- |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Median earnings in main job | 280 | 348 | 341 | . . | 102 | 162 | 176 | $\ldots$ |
| Mean earnings in main job | 309 | 375 | 363 | . . | 146 | 265 | 208 | . . |

