

TRADE UNION STATISTICS, AUSTRALIA  
30 JUNE 1991

MAIN FEATURES

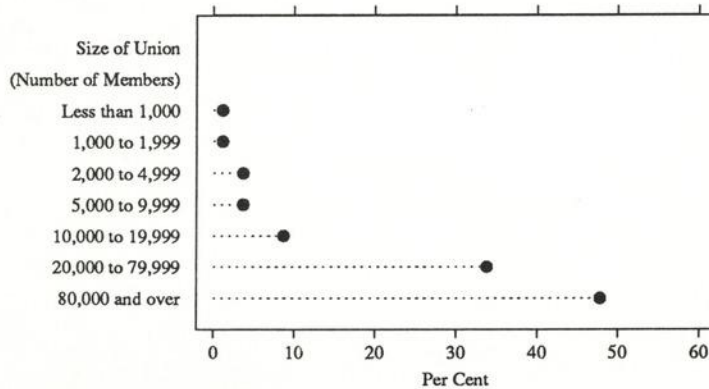
The trade union census of 30 June 1991 identified 275 trade unions with a total membership of 3,382,600. In June 1990 there were 295 unions and a total membership of 3,422,200. In percentage terms, the decrease in total membership was 1.2 per cent.

The reduction in the number of unions was most marked in those unions with fewer than 3,000 members. In June 1990 there were 188 of these unions, representing 3.9 per cent of all union members. In June 1991 this had fallen to 168 unions (3.3 per cent of total union membership).

The number of unions reporting a membership of 80,000 or more increased to 14 in 1991 from 12 in 1990. These unions now account for 47.8 per cent of total union membership compared to 43.5 per cent in the previous year.

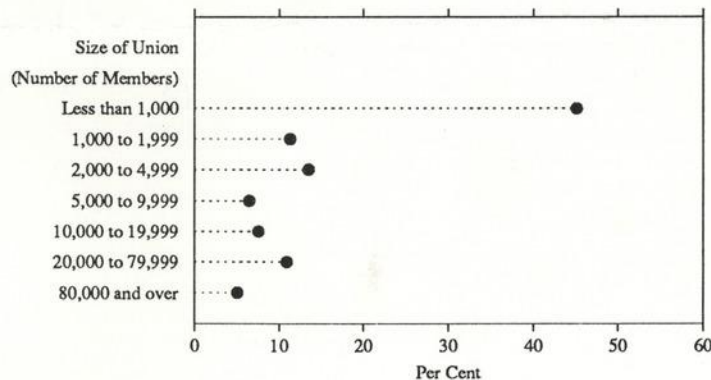
Financial union membership as a proportion of total employees increased to 50 per cent in 1991 compared to 48 per cent in the previous year. Female financial union membership as proportion of total female employees rose from 40 per cent in 1990 to 44 per cent in 1991.

DISTRIBUTION OF TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP BY SIZE OF UNION,  
AUSTRALIA, 30 JUNE 1991



Source: Table 6

DISTRIBUTION OF TRADE UNIONS BY SIZE OF UNION,  
AUSTRALIA, 30 JUNE 1991



Source: Table 5

INQUIRIES

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In the Australian Capital Territory, there was a reported increase of 1.4 per cent in financial union membership compared to the previous year. For the same period, the largest proportional decrease in financial union membership was in Tasmania, falling by 2.8 per cent to 88,600.

members in 1991 compared to 1,136,700 in 1990. As a result of this increase females represent 39.5 per cent of all financial union members compared to 37.2 per cent in 1990. In contrast to this, male financial membership of trade unions dropped from 1,916,300 to 1,831,800.

**Membership of trade unions by females increased in 1991. Trade unions reported 1,196,200 female financial**

**NOTES**

The trade union statistics are compiled from questionnaires completed by individual trade unions. Accordingly, persons who are members of more than one trade union are counted more than once. The statistics relate to trade union membership and State of operation of unions. Membership is that reported by the unions, and may include persons who do not consider themselves as members (eg. unfinancial, honorary, suspended). Explanatory notes are published on pages 6 and 7 of this publication.

**W. McLENNAN**  
Acting Australian Statistician





TABLE 1. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF SEPARATE UNIONS

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>Aust.(a)</i>
30 June									
1986	182	176	141	144	147	135	78	87	326
1987	178	166	137	137	140	130	75	78	316
1988	170	166	130	136	139	120	73	74	308
1989	169	160	129	135	134	125	71	73	299
1990	163	157	126	131	134	121	57	62	295
1991	150	146	115	121	118	110	55	58	275

(a) Australian totals do not equal the sum of the States and Territories. See paragraph 3 of the Explanatory Notes.

TABLE 2. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF MEMBERS ('000)

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>Aust.</i>
MALES									
30 June									
1986—Financial	664.4	527.4	270.6	162.1	152.4	60.9	11.4	42.9	1,892.1
<i>Total</i>	757.0	586.9	309.7	178.7	167.8	65.2	13.9	47.2	2,126.5
1987—Financial	673.6	515.8	260.5	166.2	152.1	61.9	11.6	38.7	1,880.5
<i>Total</i>	772.2	578.4	305.2	184.3	170.8	67.1	13.6	44.4	2,136.0
1988—Financial	675.1	520.2	266.2	165.4	155.1	56.7	10.1	35.9	1,884.6
<i>Total</i>	795.3	589.6	303.1	183.9	178.5	62.5	11.7	42.2	2,166.6
1989—Financial	652.8	523.3	255.1	165.5	157.4	56.3	9.4	31.4	1,851.2
<i>Total</i>	807.6	598.9	300.0	187.3	181.9	63.0	11.6	40.6	2,191.0
1990—Financial	664.7	532.6	280.2	173.4	167.5	58.1	9.7	30.2	1,916.3
<i>Total</i>	812.9	598.5	311.8	189.4	193.6	62.4	10.6	37.9	2,217.1
1991—Financial	643.6	502.1	257.7	169.8	165.9	53.4	9.4	30.0	1,831.8
<i>Total</i>	762.5	573.5	300.5	186.8	186.9	59.3	11.7	34.3	2,115.5
FEMALES									
30 June									
1986—Financial	357.0	277.6	123.6	85.8	80.8	28.8	6.2	18.7	978.4
<i>Total</i>	391.3	299.5	137.7	89.7	84.4	29.2	7.3	20.5	1,059.7
1987—Financial	400.4	279.1	139.0	82.1	76.3	28.9	5.9	16.9	1,028.7
<i>Total</i>	433.5	297.3	151.1	86.6	80.9	29.4	6.6	18.8	1,104.2
1988—Financial	383.9	289.3	132.5	90.9	83.7	31.3	7.0	19.2	1,037.6
<i>Total</i>	423.1	311.9	144.1	95.3	89.6	31.6	7.6	20.8	1,123.8
1989—Financial	430.9	310.2	145.2	103.4	86.9	32.1	7.1	21.6	1,137.2
<i>Total</i>	461.5	332.3	158.0	110.6	92.5	34.0	7.7	22.7	1,219.3
1990—Financial	406.3	307.4	155.2	112.1	94.5	33.1	7.4	20.7	1,136.7
<i>Total</i>	450.5	316.7	161.3	114.8	98.3	33.3	7.9	22.3	1,205.2
1991—Financial	423.9	325.7	171.0	114.2	96.6	35.3	7.9	21.6	1,196.2
<i>Total</i>	454.6	338.5	183.8	119.2	103.0	36.3	8.8	22.8	1,267.0
PERSONS									
30 June									
1986—Financial	1,021.4	805.0	394.1	247.9	233.2	89.7	17.5	61.6	2,870.5
<i>Total</i>	1,148.2	886.4	447.5	268.5	252.2	94.4	21.2	67.7	3,186.2
1987—Financial	1,074.0	794.9	399.6	248.4	228.3	90.8	17.5	55.6	2,909.2
<i>Total</i>	1,205.8	875.7	456.3	270.9	251.7	96.5	20.2	63.1	3,240.1
1988—Financial	1,059.0	809.5	398.7	256.3	238.8	88.0	17.0	55.1	2,922.3
<i>Total</i>	1,218.3	901.5	447.1	279.2	268.0	94.1	19.3	63.0	3,290.5
1989—Financial	1,083.6	833.5	400.3	268.8	244.3	88.4	16.4	53.0	2,988.4
<i>Total</i>	1,269.0	931.2	458.0	297.9	274.4	97.1	19.3	63.4	3,410.3
1990—Financial	1,071.1	840.0	435.3	285.4	262.2	91.2	17.1	50.9	3,053.2
<i>Total</i>	1,263.5	915.2	473.1	304.3	291.9	95.7	18.4	60.2	3,422.2
1991—Financial	1,067.4	827.8	428.7	284.0	262.5	88.6	17.3	51.6	3,027.9
<i>Total</i>	1,217.1	912.0	484.3	306.0	289.9	95.6	20.5	57.1	3,382.6

TABLE 3. TRADE UNION MEMBERS : PROPORTION OF TOTAL EMPLOYEES  
(per cent)

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>Aust.</i>
MALES									
30 June									
1986—Financial	58	57	53	57	50	66	33	66	56
<i>Total</i>	66	63	61	63	55	71	40	73	63
1987—Financial	58	56	52	60	49	67	31	60	55
<i>Total</i>	66	63	61	66	55	73	36	69	63
1988—Financial	54	55	52	57	50	63	32	55	54
<i>Total</i>	64	63	59	63	57	69	38	64	62
1989—Financial	53	54	45	56	52	62	27	49	52
<i>Total</i>	66	62	53	63	60	69	34	63	62
1990—Financial	54	55	50	58	55	63	26	48	54
<i>Total</i>	66	62	55	63	64	68	28	60	62
1991—Financial	56	57	49	59	56	63	23	45	55
<i>Total</i>	66	65	58	64	63	70	28	52	63
FEMALES									
30 June									
1986—Financial	44	41	37	43	37	46	22	35	41
<i>Total</i>	48	44	41	45	39	47	26	38	44
1987—Financial	47	39	40	39	33	43	24	29	41
<i>Total</i>	51	42	44	41	35	44	27	32	44
1988—Financial	42	39	37	42	36	47	28	31	40
<i>Total</i>	46	43	40	45	38	47	30	34	43
1989—Financial	46	40	35	45	36	48	26	36	41
<i>Total</i>	49	43	39	48	39	51	28	38	44
1990—Financial	42	40	37	48	39	47	25	33	40
<i>Total</i>	46	41	38	49	41	48	26	37	43
1991—Financial	46	44	42	48	40	54	27	35	44
<i>Total</i>	49	46	45	50	42	56	31	37	47
PERSONS									
30 June									
1986—Financial	52	50	47	51	44	58	28	52	50
<i>Total</i>	58	55	53	55	48	61	34	57	55
1987—Financial	53	49	47	50	42	57	29	45	49
<i>Total</i>	59	54	54	55	46	61	33	51	55
1988—Financial	49	48	46	51	44	56	30	43	48
<i>Total</i>	57	54	51	55	49	60	34	50	54
1989—Financial	50	48	41	51	45	56	27	43	47
<i>Total</i>	58	54	47	57	50	62	31	51	54
1990—Financial	49	48	44	54	48	56	25	41	48
<i>Total</i>	57	53	48	57	53	59	27	48	54
1991—Financial	51	51	46	54	49	59	24	40	50
<i>Total</i>	58	56	52	58	54	64	29	45	56

TABLE 4. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF STATES AND/OR TERRITORIES OF OPERATION, AUSTRALIA

	<i>One</i>	<i>Two</i>	<i>Three</i>	<i>Four</i>	<i>Five</i>	<i>Six or more</i>	<i>Total all States</i>
NUMBER OF SEPARATE UNIONS							
30 June							
1986	187	6	3	13	14	103	326
1987	180	9	5	12	13	97	316
1988	177	6	4	12	16	93	308
1989	168	6	6	10	15	94	299
1990	168	5	5	12	16	89	295
1991	156	9	3	16	12	79	275
NUMBER OF MEMBERS							
30 June							
1986	540.3	20.1	54.4	94.0	179.5	2,297.8	3,186.2
1987	586.4	23.4	62.2	93.4	185.4	2,289.5	3,240.1
1988	575.3	18.3	54.8	109.3	218.6	2,314.1	3,290.5
1989	531.4	18.9	55.9	111.7	186.6	2,505.7	3,410.3
1990	545.3	18.2	46.3	133.9	127.4	2,551.1	3,422.2
1991	578.6	22.9	4.6	140.5	132.2	2,503.9	3,382.6

TABLE 5. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF UNIONS ACCORDING TO SIZE OF UNION, AUSTRALIA

<i>Size of Union (number of members)</i>	<i>Number of unions</i>				<i>30 June 1991</i>		<i>Cumulative per cent of total unions</i>
	<i>30 June 1987</i>	<i>30 June 1988</i>	<i>30 June 1989</i>	<i>30 June 1990</i>	<i>Number of unions</i>	<i>Per cent total unions</i>	
Under 100	40	37	38	40	35	12.7	12.7
100 and under 250	39	32	31	34	34	12.4	25.1
250 and under 500	25	31	26	18	17	6.2	31.3
500 and under 1,000	45	43	41	44	38	13.8	45.1
1,000 and under 2,000	44	45	42	34	31	11.3	56.4
2,000 and under 3,000	13	11	12	18	13	4.7	61.1
3,000 and under 5,000	25	27	25	23	24	8.7	69.9
5,000 and under 10,000	21	18	19	21	18	6.5	76.4
10,000 and under 20,000	17	19	19	18	21	7.6	84.0
20,000 and under 30,000	14	11	12	11	11	4.0	88.0
30,000 and under 40,000	6	8	10	11	8	2.9	90.9
40,000 and under 50,000	8	8	6	5	6	2.2	93.1
50,000 and under 80,000	10	8	7	6	5	1.8	94.9
80,000 and over	9	10	11	12	14	5.1	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

TABLE 6. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF MEMBERS ACCORDING TO SIZE OF UNION, AUSTRALIA

<i>Size of Union (number of members)</i>	<i>Number of members ('000)</i>					<i>30 June 1991</i>		<i>Cumulative per cent of total members</i>
	<i>30 June 1987</i>	<i>30 June 1988</i>	<i>30 June 1989</i>	<i>30 June 1990</i>	<i>30 June 1991</i>	<i>Average number of members per union</i>	<i>Percent of total members</i>	
Under 100	1.9	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.5	42	—	—
100 and under 250	6.6	5.3	5.3	5.8	5.5	161	0.2	0.2
250 and under 500	9.1	11.4	8.9	6.1	5.7	335	0.2	0.4
500 and under 1,000	32.0	30.6	28.8	31.3	26.2	690	0.8	1.2
1,000 and under 2,000	60.0	65.2	59.5	46.8	41.6	1,341	1.2	2.4
2,000 and under 3,000	31.7	27.8	29.6	42.1	31.8	2,445	0.9	3.3
3,000 and under 5,000	101.9	107.1	98.8	93.4	92.7	3,861	2.7	6.1
5,000 and under 10,000	149.9	131.6	138.9	152.3	124.5	6,914	3.7	9.7
10,000 and under 20,000	234.4	268.5	261.3	265.9	293.3	13,968	8.7	18.4
20,000 and under 30,000	338.0	261.1	295.4	276.3	278.1	25,278	8.2	26.6
30,000 and under 40,000	203.3	277.1	350.2	377.8	264.1	33,017	7.8	34.4
40,000 and under 50,000	366.5	353.9	271.1	227.7	268.2	44,703	7.9	42.4
50,000 and under 80,000	618.9	499.9	453.1	407.9	333.4	66,680	9.9	52.2
80,000 and over	1,085.9	1,249.3	1,407.8	1,487.1	1,616.1	115,437	47.8	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,240.1</b>	<b>3,290.5</b>	<b>3,410.3</b>	<b>3,422.2</b>	<b>3,382.6</b>	<b>12,300</b>	<b>100.0</b>	



## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### Introduction

The statistics in this publication have been compiled from questionnaires completed by individual trade unions in respect of their membership and State of operation as at 30 June 1991. The collection was changed to an end of June basis in 1985. Figures for previous years were collected as at 31 December.

### Scope and coverage

2. Current lists of trade unions are maintained by reference to the following sources:

- trade unions registered under the provisions of the various Federal and State industrial arbitration Acts, trade union Acts, etc.
- unions reported to be engaged in conciliation and arbitration proceedings.
- 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 industrial arbitration legislation or State trade union Acts.

3. To reduce the possibility of duplication of the number of unions and members in these statistics, where a trade union is a branch of a larger trade union, only the larger organisation is counted. 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. 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 trade unions varies from year to year as a result of amalgamations of unions, deregistration 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. *Membership of trade unions.* Financial members are dues paying members no more than 6 months in arrears. The total number of members includes all persons (finan-

cial, unfinancial, honorary, suspended, junior, etc.) regarded by unions as members.

7. Persons who are members of more than one union cannot be separately identified and are therefore counted more than once in the totals. The extent of this duplication is not known. Members of unions who work 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 9 below).

8. *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. From 30 June 1985, the proportions of employees have been calculated using estimates of employees from the ABS Survey of Employment and Earnings (*Employed Wage and Salary Earners (6248.0)*). These estimates have been adjusted by adding Labour Force Survey estimates of employees in Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting and in Private households employing staff (*Labour Force, Australia (6203.0)*). Prior to 30 June 1985, estimates of employees were taken from the Labour Force Survey only. 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. It should be noted that recent employment estimates from the Survey of Employment and Earnings may be subject to revision as a result of changes made to the ABS register of businesses (see the explanatory notes of the publication 6248.0). The percentages will also be affected by union members who were not employed (i.e. unemployed, retired etc.).

### Comparability of series

9. Comparability of figures for different years may be affected by a number of factors. As stated in paragraph 7, 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. Unions reported financial and total membership separately for the first time as at 30 June 1985. In previous years some unions confined their reported membership to 'financial' members whilst others included various other 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.

10. 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 male and female 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. In particular, some unions in the Northern Territory are affiliated with unions registered in Queensland or in South Australia.

#### Organisations registered under industrial arbitration legislation

11. Details of employee organisations registered under the *Federal Industrial Relations Act 1988* as at 30 June 1991, and comparisons for 1990, are as follows:

	1991	1990
Employee unions	125	134
Membership	2,778,985	2,837,300

1991 membership figures reflect 82% of total reported trade union membership.

12. Industrial legislation in most States also provides for the registration of employee associations. Some employee associations are registered under more than one Act but these are counted only once in these statistics.

#### Comparison with other trade union statistics

13. Statistics on trade union membership are also collected periodically by the ABS from a sample survey of employees, published in *Trade Union Members, Australia* (6325.0). Statistics from that survey are not directly comparable with trade union census data due to differences in timing and methodology. There are also significant differences in coverage, which are detailed in the explanatory notes to that publication.

#### Related publications

14. Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:

*Industrial Disputes, Australia* (6322.0) — issued annually

*Industrial Disputes, Australia* (6321.0) — issued monthly

*Labour Statistics, Australia* (6101.0) — issued annually

*The Labour Force, Australia, Preliminary* (6202.0) — issued monthly

*The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0) — issued monthly

*Employed Wage and Salary Earners, Australia* (6248.0) — issued quarterly

*Trade Union Members, Australia, August 1990* (6325.0)

*Award Rates of Pay Indexes, Australia* (6312.0) — issued monthly

*Award Coverage, Australia, May 1990* (6315.0)

#### Unpublished statistics

15. In some cases, the ABS can also make available information which is not published. This information may be made available in one or more of the following forms: microfiche, photocopy, data tape, computer printout, clerically-extracted tabulation. Generally, a charge is made for providing unpublished information. Inquiries regarding data availability and associated charges should be directed to Laura Smith on (06) 252 6561, or to Information Services in the nearest ABS office.

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#### Symbols and other usages

— nil or rounded to zero

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





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