



## UNEMPLOYMENT, AUSTRALIA, FEBRUARY 1981 PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES

### INQUIRIES

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### MAIN FEATURES

In February 1981 the estimated number of unemployed persons looking for full-time work was 357,800, representing 6.3 per cent of the full-time labour force. (See paragraph 10.)

The number aged 15-19 years looking for their first full-time job was 63,700. (See paragraph 4.)

An estimated 65,000 persons were looking for part-time work, representing 6.4 per cent of the part-time labour force.

*Note: Survey estimates are subject to sampling variability, as explained in paragraphs 8 to 10 below. Standard errors of estimates and of movements are shown in the tables.*

### EXPLANATORY NOTES

#### Introduction

This publication contains preliminary unemployment estimates derived from the monthly population survey. It is generally released in the third week following completion of the interviews. (See paragraph 2.) More detailed estimates are published in *The Labour Force, Australia (Preliminary)* (6202.0) and *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0).

#### The population survey

2. The survey is based on a multi-stage area sample of private dwellings (about 30,000 houses, flats, etc.) and non-private dwellings (hotels, motels, etc.), and covers about two-thirds of one per cent of the population of Australia. The information is obtained from the occupants of selected dwellings by carefully chosen and specially trained interviewers. The interviews are generally conducted during the two weeks beginning on the Monday between the 6th and 12th of each month. Because of operational problems arising from the Christmas and New Year holidays the December 1978 and 1979 surveys commenced a week earlier than usual (with most interviews being conducted during the second week) and the January 1979 and 1980 surveys commenced a week later than usual. The information obtained relates to the week before the interview (i.e. the survey week).

### Definitions

3. For purposes of the survey, *unemployed persons* are those aged 15 years and over who were not employed during the survey week and:

- (a) had actively looked for full-time or part-time work at any time in the four weeks up to the end of the survey week and:
  - (i) were available for work in the survey week, or would have been available except for temporary illness (i.e. lasting for less than four weeks to the end of the survey week); or
  - (ii) were waiting to start a new job within four weeks from the end of the survey week and would have started in the survey week if the job had been available then;

or (b) were waiting to be called back to a full-time or part-time job from which they had been stood down without pay for less than four weeks up to the end of the survey week (including the whole of the survey week) for reasons other than bad weather or plant breakdown.

This definition of unemployed persons conforms closely to that recommended by the Eighth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (1954).

4. *Unemployed persons looking for first job* are those who had never worked for two weeks or more in a full-time job.

5. The *unemployment rate* for any group is the number unemployed expressed as a percentage of the labour force (i.e. employed plus unemployed) in the same group.

#### Revision of series

6. Estimates back to August 1966 on a basis comparable with those in this publication were published in the 1978 issue of *The Labour Force, Australia* (6204.0).

#### Comparability of series

7. Since the introduction of monthly surveys in February 1978 the interviews have been conducted during a two-week period, whereas formerly the period was four weeks. This change of timing may affect the level of the figures for any month, but particularly for months during which unemployment may be changing rapidly.

### Reliability of the estimates

8. Since the survey estimates are based on information obtained from occupants of a sample of dwellings they, and the movements derived from them, are subject to sampling variability; that is, they may differ by chance 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*. 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 in the survey, and about nineteen chances in twenty that the difference will be less than two standard errors.

9. Detailed information on standard errors of the estimates and of movements in the estimates is published in current issues of *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0).

10. Standard errors of unemployment estimates for the latest month and of estimates of movements since the previous month are contained in the tables. Examples of the use of these two sets of standard errors are given below.

- (a) The estimate of 357,800 unemployed persons looking for full-time work in February 1981 has a standard error of about 6,400 and therefore there are about two chances in three that the number that would have been produced if all dwellings had been included in the survey will be within the range 351,400 to 364,200 and about nineteen chances in twenty that the number will be within the range 345,000 to 370,600.
- (b) The estimate of movement in the number of unemployed persons looking for full-time work from January to February 1981 is a decrease of 19,200. The standard error of this estimate of movement is about 5,200 and therefore there are about two chances in three that if all dwellings had been included in the survey the movement would have been within the range -24,400 to -14,000 and about nineteen chances in twenty that it would have been within the range -29,600 to -8,800.

### Seasonal adjustment

11. The move to the higher level of unemployment since 1974 appears to have been accompanied by shifts in the pattern of seasonal variation. For this reason the publication of seasonally adjusted quarterly figures of unemployment has been suspended. The matter will be kept under review. Calculation of seasonally adjusted monthly figures is not yet possible.

### Comparability with Commonwealth Employment Service figures

12. The survey estimates of unemployed persons looking for full-time work may differ from the number of persons registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) as not employed, awaiting placement in full-time employment, for a number of reasons, including the following:

- (a) the survey estimates include some unemployed persons (particularly females) who did not register with the CES
- (b) they exclude persons who worked for one hour or more during the survey week, although they may have been registered with the CES—for example because they became unemployed during the week or worked for only short periods
- (c) they exclude persons registered as unemployed who found jobs or who were no longer looking for work but did not notify the CES of their changed situation
- (d) they represent averages over a period (see paragraph 2), whereas the CES figures refer to numbers registered on the Friday nearest the end of the month. This is particularly important at times when there are substantial rises or falls in unemployment or in registrations with the CES
- (e) they are subject to sampling variability. (See paragraphs 8 to 10.)

### Related publications

13. Users may also wish to refer to the following publications which are available on request:

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

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

*The Labour Force, Australia, 1979* (6204.0)

*Job Vacancies, Australia* (6231.0)—issued quarterly

*Unemployment, Underemployment and Related Statistics, Australia, February 1978 to February 1980* (6236.0)

*Information Paper: Questionnaires used in the Labour Force Survey* (6232.0)

14. Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications, Australia* (1101.0), which is available free of charge from any ABS office.

### Symbols and other usages

- .. not applicable
- \* subject to sampling variability too high for most practical uses. See paragraphs 8 to 10 for details.
- p preliminary—figures subject to revision

15. Figures have been rounded and discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

R. J. CAMERON  
Australian Statistician

TABLE 1. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS (a)

Month	Number ('000)										
	Looking for full-time work					Unemployment rate (per cent)					
	Aged 15-19 years			Looking for part-time work		Looking for full-time work			Looking for part-time work		
	Looking for first job	Total	Aged 20 years and over	Total	Looking for part-time work	Total	Aged 15-19 years	Aged 20 years and over	Total	Looking for part-time work	Total
MALES											
1979—											
December	38.5	70.0	132.2	202.2	22.0	224.2	18.2	3.7	5.1	9.5	5.3
1980—											
January	41.2	75.0	151.9	226.9	15.4	242.3	19.8	4.2	5.7	7.2	5.8
February	32.5	65.1	150.1	215.2	15.3	230.4	17.3	4.2	5.4	7.1	5.5
March	24.1	51.3	145.0	196.3	15.2	211.5	14.3	4.0	5.0	6.8	5.1
April	16.3	49.0	143.9	192.9	14.1	206.9	14.0	4.0	4.9	6.2	5.0
May	18.7	54.3	146.7	201.0	18.9	219.9	14.9	4.1	5.0	8.7	5.2
June	19.8	51.7	141.3	193.1	15.8	208.9	14.7	3.9	4.9	7.2	5.0
July	17.1	49.8	140.2	190.0	15.4	205.3	14.3	3.9	4.8	7.1	4.9
August	20.0	52.2	141.1	193.3	15.8	209.1	15.3	3.9	4.9	7.1	5.0
September	24.9	58.0	139.9	197.9	13.2	211.1	16.4	3.8	5.0	5.8	5.0
October	21.7	53.5	126.6	180.1	14.7	194.8	16.0	3.5	4.5	6.4	4.6
November	22.4	50.5	120.9	171.4	11.5	182.8	15.3	3.3	4.3	4.8	4.4
December	43.2	74.8	131.4	206.1	20.1	226.2	19.0	3.6	5.1	8.4	5.3
1981—											
January	34.4	71.6	146.6	218.2	15.7	233.9	18.4	4.0	5.4	7.5	5.5
February p	30.1	60.2	142.9	203.1	16.5	219.6	15.9	3.9	5.0	7.8	5.2
Standard error of—											
February 1981 estimates	2.4	3.2	4.5	5.2	1.8	5.3	0.8	0.1	0.1	0.9	0.1
January to February 1981 movement	2.4	3.1	3.9	4.4	1.8	4.5	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.9	0.1
FEMALES											
1979—											
December	45.6	77.0	74.6	151.6	51.1	202.7	25.2	5.7	9.4	6.3	8.3
1980—											
January	48.4	78.7	75.3	154.1	41.4	195.5	25.1	5.8	9.5	5.8	8.4
February	40.0	71.0	89.6	160.5	53.5	214.1	23.2	6.7	9.8	6.8	8.8
March	31.5	60.3	82.5	142.8	58.1	200.9	20.6	6.2	8.7	6.9	8.1
April	28.5	61.2	85.1	146.3	51.3	197.5	21.0	6.4	9.0	6.2	8.1
May	29.8	63.3	78.3	141.6	52.1	193.7	21.8	5.8	8.7	6.4	7.9
June	26.6	59.5	85.2	144.7	52.5	197.1	21.0	6.4	8.9	6.2	8.0
July	25.6	55.1	79.7	134.8	45.2	180.0	19.6	6.0	8.3	5.3	7.3
August	26.5	59.0	80.4	139.4	43.8	183.2	21.2	6.1	8.7	5.1	7.5
September	23.6	55.6	82.0	137.6	56.8	194.4	19.5	6.1	8.4	6.5	7.7
October	24.1	53.3	73.7	127.0	53.9	180.9	19.3	5.6	7.9	6.2	7.3
November	21.1	51.5	79.9	131.3	42.8	174.1	18.7	6.0	8.2	4.9	7.0
December	39.2	72.3	79.0	151.2	54.5	205.8	23.3	5.9	9.1	6.4	8.2
1981—											
January	43.0	75.0	83.8	158.7	37.7	196.5	23.9	6.3	9.6	5.0	8.2
February p	33.5	67.8	86.9	154.7	48.5	203.2	22.1	6.5	9.4	6.1	8.3
Standard error of—											
February 1981 estimates	2.5	3.3	3.7	4.6	2.9	5.2	1.1	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.2
January to February 1981 movement	2.6	3.1	3.3	4.0	2.7	4.3	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2
PERSONS											
1979—											
December	84.0	146.9	206.8	353.7	73.1	426.9	21.3	4.2	6.3	7.0	6.4
1980—											
January	89.7	153.7	227.2	380.9	56.9	437.8	22.2	4.6	6.8	6.1	6.7
February	72.5	136.1	239.6	375.7	68.8	444.5	20.0	4.9	6.7	6.8	6.7
March	55.6	111.6	227.5	339.1	73.3	412.4	17.1	4.6	6.1	6.9	6.2
April	44.7	110.2	229.0	339.1	65.3	404.5	17.2	4.7	6.1	6.2	6.1
May	48.4	117.6	225.0	342.6	71.0	413.6	18.0	4.5	6.1	6.9	6.2
June	46.4	111.2	226.6	337.7	68.3	406.1	17.5	4.6	6.1	6.4	6.1
July	42.7	104.9	219.9	324.8	60.6	385.4	16.7	4.4	5.8	5.6	5.8
August	46.5	111.2	221.4	332.6	59.7	392.3	18.0	4.5	6.0	5.5	5.9
September	48.6	113.6	221.9	335.5	70.0	405.5	17.8	4.4	6.0	6.4	6.0
October	45.9	106.8	200.3	307.1	68.6	375.7	17.5	4.0	5.5	6.3	5.6
November	43.5	102.0	200.7	302.7	54.3	357.0	16.8	4.1	5.4	4.9	5.4
December	82.3	147.0	210.3	357.4	74.6	432.0	20.9	4.2	6.2	6.8	6.3
1981—											
January	77.4	146.5	230.4	377.0	53.4	430.4	20.8	4.6	6.6	5.6	6.5
February p	63.7	128.0	229.8	357.8	65.0	422.8	18.7	4.6	6.3	6.4	6.3
Standard error of—											
February 1981 estimates	3.3	4.3	5.4	6.4	3.3	6.7	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1
January to February 1981 movement	3.2	3.9	4.5	5.2	3.0	5.4	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1

(a) For definitions see page 1. For information on standard errors see paragraphs 8 to 10.

TABLE 2. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS (a), STATES AND TERRITORIES

State or Territory	Number ('000)					Unemployment rate (per cent)				
	Looking for full-time work				Total	Looking for full-time work				Total
	Aged 15-19 years	Aged 20 years and over	Total	Looking for part-time work		Aged 15-19 years	Aged 20 years and over	Total	Looking for part-time work	
New South Wales—										
1980-February	44.4	80.6	125.0	19.6	144.6	19.7	4.6	6.3	5.8	6.2
1981-January	46.1	77.2	123.3	18.0	141.3	19.4	4.4	6.2	5.5	6.1
February p	40.7	74.7	115.5	20.0	135.4	17.6	4.3	5.8	5.9	5.8
Standard error of—										
February 1981 estimates	2.7	3.5	4.1	2.0	4.4	1.2	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.2
January to February 1981 movement	2.5	2.9	3.4	1.8	3.5	1.0	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.1
Victoria—										
1980-February	30.7	58.4	89.0	20.0	109.0	17.9	4.3	5.8	7.4	6.1
1981-January	34.9	58.9	93.8	14.3	108.1	20.9	4.3	6.1	5.8	6.1
February p	32.2	63.7	95.9	19.3	115.2	19.6	4.6	6.2	7.3	6.4
Standard error of—										
February 1981 estimates	2.3	3.0	3.4	1.9	3.6	1.4	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.2
January to February 1981 movement	2.1	2.4	2.7	1.7	2.9	1.2	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.2
Queensland—										
1980-February	22.7	38.2	61.0	11.0	72.0	20.2	5.4	7.4	7.4	7.4
1981-January	23.9	36.9	60.8	7.8	68.6	19.4	5.1	7.2	5.5	6.9
February p	18.3	36.5	54.8	9.7	64.5	15.5	5.0	6.5	6.2	6.5
Standard error of—										
February 1981 estimates	1.5	1.9	2.3	1.1	2.4	1.3	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.2
January to February 1981 movement	1.4	1.6	1.8	1.0	1.9	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.2
South Australia—										
1980-February	16.2	25.6	41.8	7.1	48.9	23.6	5.9	8.3	7.1	8.1
1981-January	18.5	26.3	44.8	5.5	50.3	28.0	6.0	8.9	5.8	8.4
February p	15.8	23.8	39.7	6.2	45.9	24.8	5.5	7.9	6.3	7.7
Standard error of—										
February 1981 estimates	1.1	1.2	1.5	0.7	1.6	1.7	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.3
January to February 1981 movement	0.9	1.0	1.2	0.7	1.2	1.2	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.2
Western Australia—										
1980-February	12.8	26.1	38.9	7.3	46.2	19.8	6.2	8.0	7.3	7.9
1981-January	14.3	19.7	34.0	4.8	38.8	20.3	4.5	6.7	5.0	6.4
February p	13.1	19.1	32.2	5.3	37.5	18.9	4.4	6.4	5.4	6.2
Standard error of—										
February 1981 estimates	1.0	1.2	1.4	0.7	1.5	1.4	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.2
January to February 1981 movement	0.9	1.0	1.1	0.6	1.2	1.2	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.2
Tasmania—										
1980-February	6.2	6.1	12.3	*	13.6	24.5	4.5	7.7	*	7.2
1981-January	5.3	6.9	12.2	*	13.6	20.9	5.1	7.6	*	7.2
February p	4.7	6.3	11.1	1.5	12.5	19.0	4.7	7.0	5.2	6.6
Standard error of—										
February 1981 estimates	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.3	0.7	2.0	0.4	0.4	1.0	0.4
January to February 1981 movement	0.4	0.4	0.5	..	0.5	1.4	0.3	0.3	..	0.2
Northern Territory—										
1980-February	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1981-January	*	*	2.1	*	3.1	*	*	4.5	*	5.5
February p	*	*	2.6	*	2.6	*	*	5.4	*	4.7
Standard error of—										
February 1981 estimates	..	..	0.5	..	0.5	..	..	1.0	..	0.9
January to February 1981 movement	..	..	0.4	..	0.5	..	..	0.8	..	0.8
Australian Capital Territory—										
1980-February	2.0	3.9	5.9	2.5	8.3	25.3	4.6	6.3	16.0	7.7
1981-January	2.4	3.4	5.8	*	6.7	27.6	4.2	6.5	*	6.3
February p	2.3	3.9	6.2	3.0	9.2	26.4	4.6	6.7	16.5	8.3
Standard error of—										
February 1981 estimates	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.7	5.7	0.7	0.8	2.7	0.6
January to February 1981 movement	0.4	0.4	0.5	..	0.6	4.4	0.5	0.5	..	0.5

(a) See note (a) to Table 1.