



Are you looking for a job in Australia?

The Australian Jobs Update (formerly the Australian Jobs Review) provides information on the Australian labour market on a quarterly basis. It is intended to help people who may be looking at working in Australia on a temporary or permanent basis.

Further information on job prospects, earnings and related information is available online at **Job Outlook**, a feature of the Australian JobSearch site: www.jobsearch.gov.au/joboutlook.

Unless otherwise stated, data are from the Australian Bureau of Statistics February 2004 Labour Force Survey

OVERVIEW

In the 12 months to February 2004, the Australian labour market has experienced solid growth. In trend terms, total employment increased by an estimated 113 600 persons (1.2%). Advertised vacancies increased for trade occupations but decreased for professional and associate professional occupations. Migrants with the best prospects for finding employment in the Australian labour market include those with strong proficiency in the English language, tertiary level education and high skill levels.

EMPLOYMENT

Over the 12 months to February 2004, trend employment in Australia grew by 1.2% after growth of 3.0% in the previous year.

Employment (in trend terms) increased in all States and Territories except the Northern Territory – growth in percentage terms was strongest in Tasmania and Queensland.

Employment opportunities and growth varied across industries. Over the 12 months to February 2004, the strongest numerical rises in employment occurred in construction (up 50 400) and property and business services (up 43 300) while the strongest rates of growth were in mining, construction, transport and storage, and accommodation, cafes and restaurants. Employment growth rates by industry are shown below.



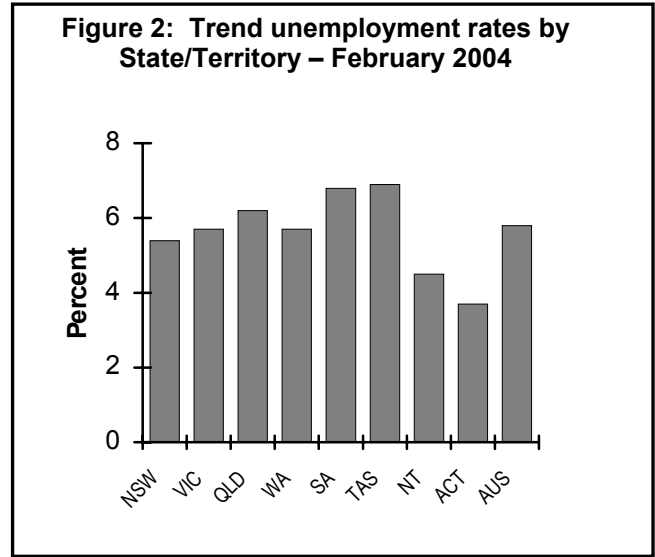
UNEMPLOYMENT

The trend rate of unemployment was 5.8% in February 2004, somewhat lower than in February 2003 (6.2%).

Unemployment trends indicate that the labour market has remained stable or improved in the past year in all States and Territories except South Australia and Victoria.

In February 2004 the trend unemployment rate was highest in Tasmania and lowest in the Australian Capital Territory (see Figure 2).

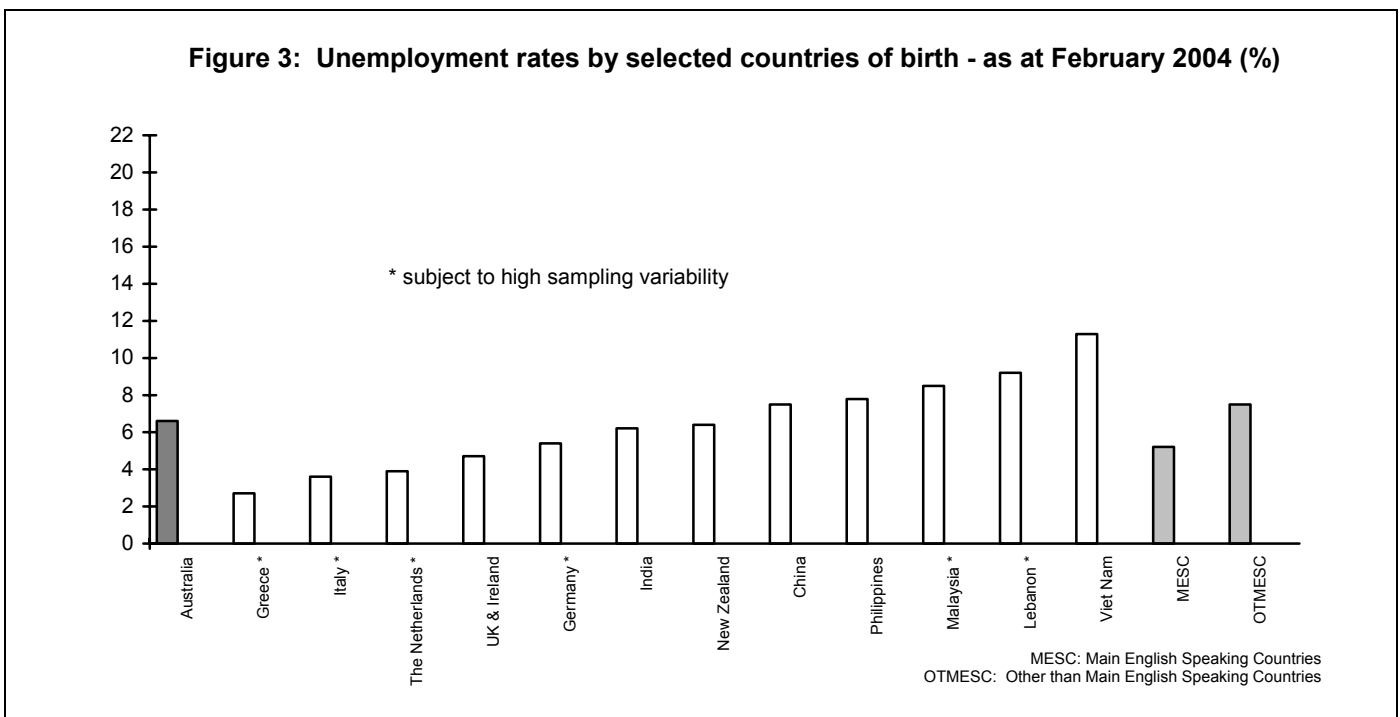
Generally those in more highly skilled occupational groups are less likely to experience unemployment. For example, in February 2004 the unemployment rate for those who were formerly employed as Labourers was about six times that of former Managers and Administrators.



MIGRANT UNEMPLOYMENT

The unemployment rates for people who migrate to Australia vary appreciably. Several factors influence migrant unemployment rates. These factors include the period since arrival in Australia (in general, recently-arrived migrants have a higher unemployment rate than those who have lived in Australia for some years), skill levels and English language proficiency.

Figure 3, below, shows unemployment rates for *people now in Australia who were born in* selected countries. For example, people born in Greece, Italy, and Netherlands have low unemployment rates (2.7%, 3.6%, 3.9% respectively), whereas unemployment rates for people born in Lebanon and Vietnam are high (9.2% and 11.3% respectively).



EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION

While employment growth is not the only factor influencing job prospects, it is often easier to obtain a job in an occupation which is experiencing strong employment growth than one growing only slowly or declining. Over the 12 months to February 2004, the strongest numerical increases in employment (*original data*) occurred in Managers and Administrators (up 41 600), Professionals (up 40 600) and Tradespersons (up 38 700). Employment growth rates, in declining skill order, are shown below.

The unemployment rate for occupational groups generally reflects skill levels. Highly skilled occupational groups experience lower rates of unemployment, while higher unemployment rates are generally associated with less skilled occupations. The rates of unemployment (for those who had worked for two weeks or more in the past two years) for occupational groups are presented in descending skill order below.

Percentage Growth Rates in Employment in the 12 months to February 2004	
Managers and Administrators	6.2%
Professionals	2.3%
Associate Professionals	0.6%
Tradespersons	3.2%
Advanced Clerical and Service Workers	-0.9%
Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service	-2.6%
Intermediate Production and Transport	-2.3%
Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service	0.9%
Labourers	1.7%

Unemployment Rate at February 2004	
Managers and Administrators	1.6%
Professionals	2.5%
Associate Professionals	2.0%
Tradespersons	3.1%
Advanced Clerical and Service Workers	2.2%
Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service	4.2%
Intermediate Production and Transport	5.2%
Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service	6.3%
Labourers	9.7%

Additional information on Professional, Associate Professional and Trades occupations is provided in the following section on skilled vacancies. Time series of vacancy data are not readily available for less skilled occupations.

SKILLED VACANCY TRENDS

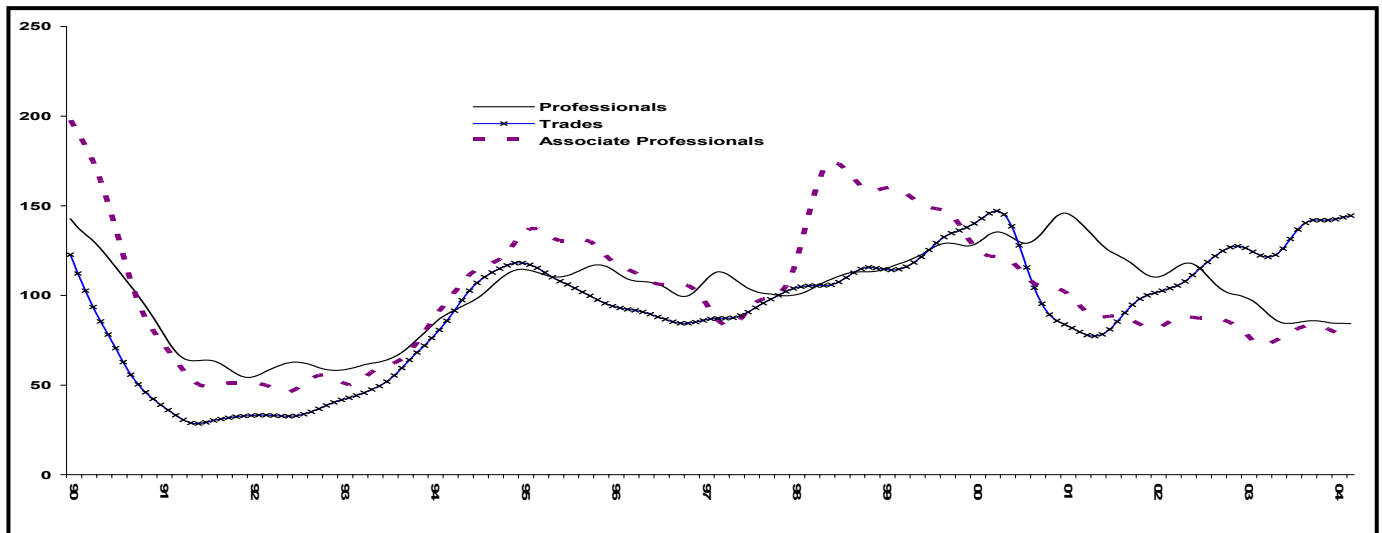
The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations produces the Skilled Vacancies Index (SVI) for 18 skilled occupational groups for each State and the Northern Territory. These are aggregated into the Professional, Associate Professional and Trades groups. The SVI indicates where the best employment opportunities may be in the Australian labour market.

In March 2004, skilled vacancies were 5.4% higher than the previous March. In the 12 months to March 2004, SVI increases were recorded in Queensland (up 25.1%), Western Australia (up 21.6%) and Tasmania (up 17.4%), while decreases were recorded in Victoria (down 8.7%), South Australia (down 4.6%), Northern Territory (down 3.6%) and New South Wales (down 3.2%).

Advertised vacancies in March 2004 increased by 18.2% for Trades occupations and 4.2% for Associate Professional occupations, and decreased by 10.0% for Professional occupations (see Figure 4 overleaf).

- Within these broad groups, the strongest annual increases were for Automotive Trades (up 28.0%), Electrical and Electronics Trades (up 27.4%), Metal Trades (up 26.2%), and Construction Trades (up 24.8%).
- The strongest declines were recorded for Health Professionals (down 20.7%) and Social Professionals (down 11.9%).
- Over the 12 months to March 2004, 14 groups recorded increases and 4 groups recorded decreases.

Figure 4: Skilled Vacancies Index, January 1990 to March 2004



FUTURE JOB PROSPECTS

Future job prospects depend on many factors, some of which are difficult to predict. This information should, therefore, be used with caution. The following future job prospect ratings are for the period to 2009-10. The ratings are based on employment trends and projected growth, unemployment rates, SVI trends (where available), and other data. Prospects can, however, change rapidly and even in an occupation with below average prospects, significant employment opportunities may arise. The listed occupations are examples from the skilled classifications categories, as listed in the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO).

In the following table **VG** stands for very good prospects, **G** for good prospects, **A** for average prospects, **BA** for below average prospects and **L** for limited prospects. For more information on the occupational classification, see ASCO, Second Edition (ABS Cat No 1220.0).

Occupational Group	Prospects to 2009-10	Occupational Group	Prospects to 2009-10
Managers and Administrators		Associate Professionals	
General Managers	G	Medical Technical Officers	G
Finance Managers	G	Building/Architectural Associate Professionals	A
Information Technology Managers	G	Financial Dealers and Brokers	VG
Sales and Marketing Managers	G	Shop Managers	A
Professionals		Trade Qualified Chefs*	VG
Mining and Materials Engineers	A	Hotel and Motel Managers	G
Accountants	VG	Enrolled Nurses	G
Marketing and Advertising Professionals	G	Tradespersons	
Computing Professionals	G	Mechanical Engineering Tradespersons	A
General Medical Practitioners	VG	Motor Mechanics	A
Registered Nurses*	VG	Electricians	G
Registered Midwives*	G	Refrigeration & Airconditioning Mechanics*	VG
Registered Mental Health Nurses*	G	Bricklayers	G
Pharmacists*	VG	Plumbers	G
Occupational Therapists*	VG	Bakers and Pastrycooks	G
Physiotherapists*	VG	Gardeners	G
Medical Imaging Professionals*	VG	Printing Machinists	BA
Primary School Teachers	G	Cabinetmakers	G
Secondary School Teachers	VG	Hairdressers*	VG
Social Workers	G	Clothing Tradespersons	BA

*denotes occupations that are listed on the Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL).

Australian Jobs Update uses the latest available detailed and consistent data at time of production. However, the labour market can change quickly and should be re-assessed prior to decision making. Australian Jobs Update is available in electronic form on the Internet at the Australian WorkPlace Web-site at www.workplace.gov.au and more information on job prospects can be found in DEWR Job Futures on this site as well as in Job Outlook on the Australian Job Search site at www.jobsearch.gov.au/joboutlook. DEWR contact officer: Jane Press (02) 6121 6703.