

LABOUR FORCE EXPERIENCE

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Labour Force Experience publication presents information about the labour force experience of the civilian population aged 15-69 years during the year ending February 2001. It presents information about time spent in labour force activities, including episodes of working or looking for work, and time spent out of the labour force.

The statistics were obtained from the Labour Force Experience Survey conducted as a supplement to the February 2001 monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS). For this reason, the terms *worked and looked for work* are used, rather than the more precisely defined terms *employed and unemployed* as used in the LFS to describe current labour force status. Unless otherwise stated all data is for Western Australia.

Labour force experience relates to a person's labour force activities over a 12-month period. Labour force activity consists for either working or looking for work.

There were 1,330,600 civilian West Australians aged 15-69 years in February 2001. During the year ending February 2001:

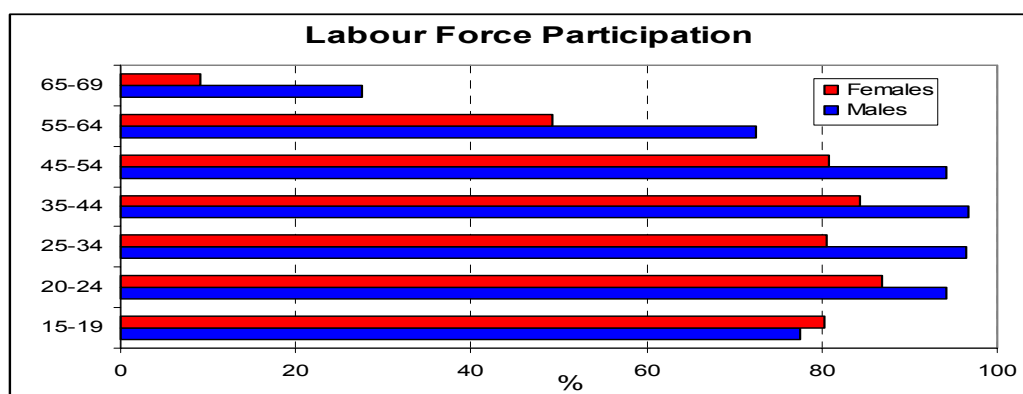
- 1,085,500 worked at some time during the year, of whom 651,200 spent the whole year working;
- 189,400 persons looked for work at some time during the year, of whom 16,400 spent the whole year looking for work; and
- 582,000 persons were not in the labour force at some time during the year, of whom 245,100 spent no time in the labour force.

Participation in the labour force

A total of 1,085,500 (or 81.6%) of persons aged 15-69 years were in the Western Australian labour force at some time during the year ending February 2001. This compares with the national average of 78.0 per cent nationally for the same period. The proportion of males participating over this period was 87.9 per cent while females was 75.1 per cent.

By age group, the highest participation in the labour force in the year ending February 2001 was for persons aged 20-24 years (90.7%) just ahead of persons aged 35-44 years (90.6%). Labour force participation fell to 18.3 per cent for persons aged 65-69 years. Males participated at higher rates than females in all age groups except for persons aged 15-19 years in which females participated at a slightly higher rate (80.3%) than males (77.4%).

Figure 1: Labour Force Participation in Year Ending February 2001, WA



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Labour Force Experience, Catalogue No. 6206.0 (Unpublished data)

The majority of people participating in the labour force spent all or most of the year in the labour force. Of the persons who were in the labour force at some time during the year, 69.0 per cent spent the whole year in the labour force and 16.5 per cent spent 39 to 51 weeks in the labour force.

Over eighty per cent (83.0%) of employed persons had only the one employer/business during the year, 11.6 per cent had two, 3.6 per cent had three and 1.8 per cent had 4 or more employers/businesses.

Persons who worked at some time during the year

There were 1,031,600 persons who worked at some time during the year ending February 2001. Of these, 564,700 (54.7%) were male and 466,900 (45.3%) were female. Nearly two-thirds (66.2%) of these males worked for the entire 52 weeks, compared with 59.4 per cent of females.

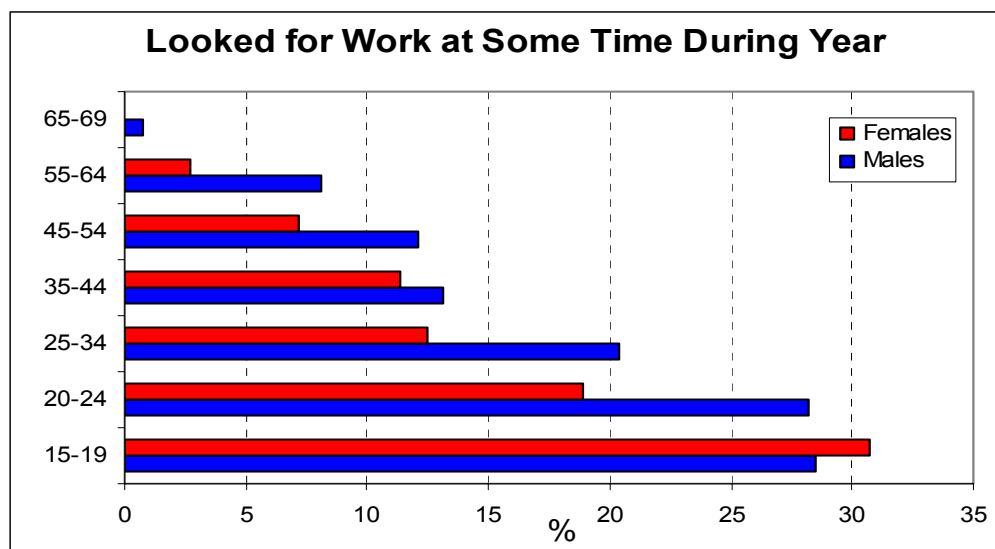
Of those persons who had worked at some time during the year ending February 2001:

- 77.9 per cent of males and 45.2 per cent of females worked full-time only;
- 12.1 per cent of males and 41.7 per cent of females worked part-time only; and
- 10.0 per cent of males and 13.2 per cent of females worked a combination of full and part-time.

Persons who looked for work at some time during the year

During the year ending February 2001, 110,400 males and 79,000 females spent time looking for work. The group with the highest rate of persons looking for work was females aged 15-19 years (30.7%), closely followed by males aged 15-19 years (28.5%) and males aged 20-24 years (28.2%).

Figure 2: Persons Who Looked For Work At Some Time During The Year Ending February 2001, WA



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Labour Force Experience, Catalogue No. 6206.0 (Unpublished data)

The proportion of males who had looked for work at some time during the year has decreased from 16.7 per cent in February 1999 to 16.4 per cent in February 2001, while the proportion of females has dropped from 12.8 per cent to 12.0 per cent over the same period.

Of the 189,400 persons who looked for work during the year ending February 2001, the mean duration was 16.7 weeks (males 18.8 weeks and females 13.8 weeks) while:

- 56.5 per cent looked for work for between 1 and 12 weeks;
- 28.1 per cent looked for work for between 13 and 38 weeks;
- 6.7 per cent looked for work for between 39 and 51 weeks; and
- 8.7 per cent looked for work for the whole year, down from 9.7 per cent in 1999.

Of those who looked for work during the year, nearly seventy per cent (69.2%) of persons had one spell of looking for work over the year, 12.7 per cent had two, 7.8 per cent had three while 10.3 per cent had four or more spells of looking for work.

Nearly three quarters (71.5%) of persons looking for work during the year had also worked during the year, up from 68.9 per cent in 1999.

Persons who were not in the labour force at some time during the year

An estimated 582,000 persons were not in the labour force at some time during the year ending February 2001. Of these 230,100 were male and 352,000 were female. Over 40 per cent (42.1%) of the people in this group spent no time in the labour force during the year.

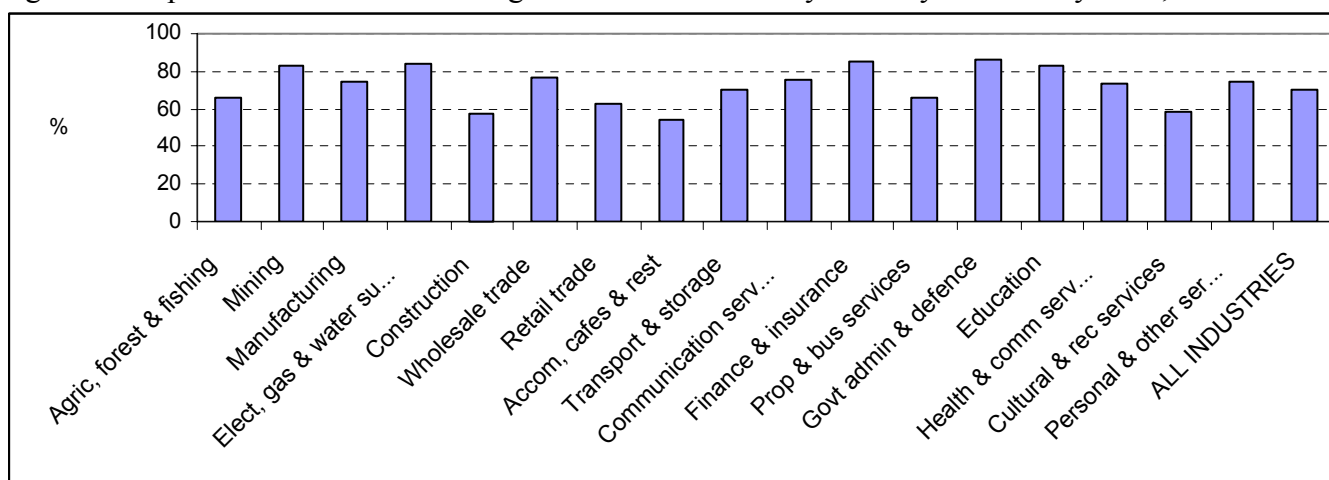
The main activities while not in the labour force most commonly reported by males were ‘holiday, travel or leisure activities’ (30.8%), ‘attended an educational institution’ (25.1%), and ‘retired or voluntarily inactive’ (18.5%). For females, the most commonly reported main activities were ‘home duties or child care’ (51.5%), ‘attended an educational institution’ (16.8%), and ‘holiday, travel or leisure activities’ (15.1%).

Persons who worked for the whole year

While 70.1 per cent of workers have worked for the whole year, 72.2 per cent of males and 67.4 per cent of females worked for the whole year.

The proportion of workers who worked for the whole year differs significantly across industries. The highest proportion was 86.4 per cent for public administration and defence workers (down from 88.2% in 1999), while the lowest proportion at 53.8 per cent was for workers in accommodation, cafés and restaurants (down from 60.9% in 1999).

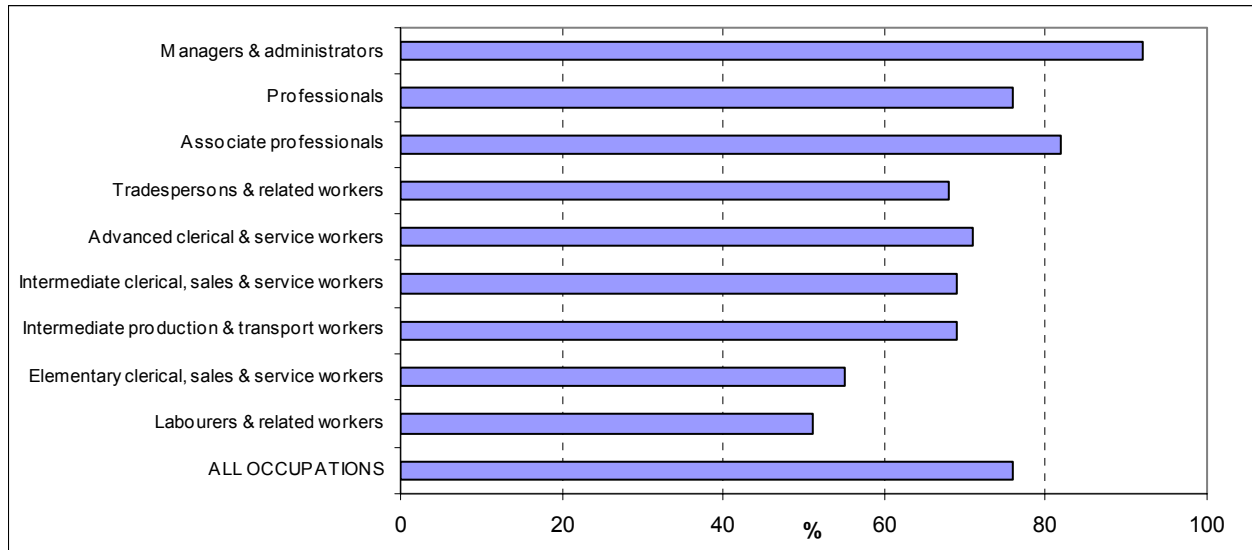
Figure 3: Proportion of Persons Working for the Whole Year by Industry at February 2001, WA



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Labour Force Experience, Catalogue No. 6206.0 (Unpublished data)

Similarly the proportion of workers who worked for the whole year differs significantly across occupations. By far the group most likely to work for the whole year was managers and administrators with 91.7 per cent employed for the whole year (up from 89.9% in 1999), while only just over half (50.9%) of labourers and related workers were employed for the whole year (down from 55.0% in 1999).

Figure 4: Proportion of Persons Working for the Whole Year by Occupation at February 2001, WA



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Labour Force Experience, Catalogue No. 6201.0 (Unpublished data)

Just over one-third (35.1%) of workers had been with their current employer or business for under 2 years, 25.2 per cent between 2 years and less than 5 years, 17.3 per cent between 5 years and under 10 years and 22.5 per cent more than 10 years.