



Are you looking for a job in Australia?

The *Australian Labour Market Update* provides information on the Australian labour market on a quarterly basis. It is intended to help people who may be interested in working in Australia on a temporary or permanent basis.

Further information on job prospects, earnings and related information is available online at **Australian Jobs 2007**, available through <http://www.workplace.gov.au>.

Unless otherwise stated, data are from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Labour Force Survey, May 2008.

OVERVIEW

In the 12 months to May 2008, the Australian labour market continued to experience solid growth. In trend terms, total employment increased by an estimated 263 900 persons (2.5%). Advertised vacancies decreased for Professionals and increased marginally for Trade Occupations. Migrants with the best employment prospects are those who are highly skilled with recognised post-secondary qualifications and good proficiency in the English language.

EMPLOYMENT

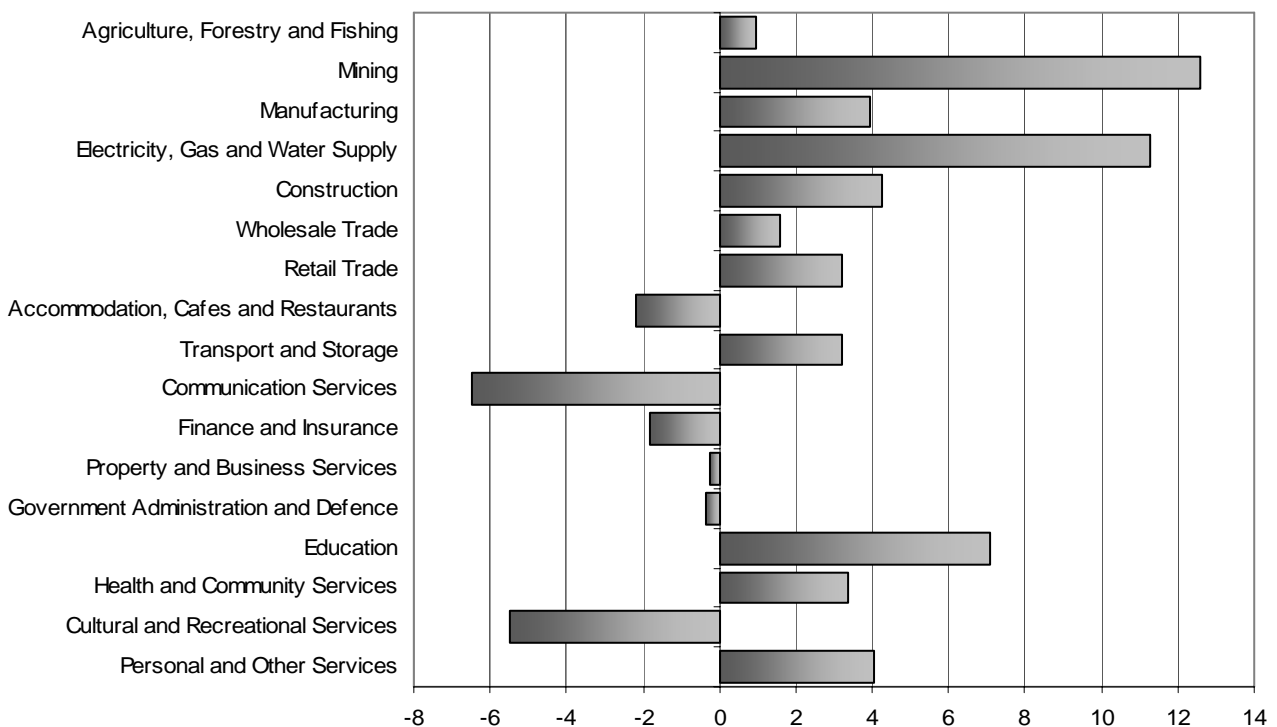
Over the 12 months to May 2008, trend employment in Australia grew by 2.5% after growth of 2.9% in the previous year.

Employment (in trend terms) increased in all States and Territories. In percentage terms, employment growth was strongest in the Northern Territory (4.9%) and Tasmania (3.3%).

Employment opportunities and growth varied across industries. Over the 12 months to May 2008, the largest increases in trend employment occurred in Education (up by 52 100), Retail Trade (up by 48 100), Manufacturing (up by 42 200) and Construction (up by 40 100). The strongest rates of employment growth were in Mining (12.6%), Electricity, Gas and Water Supply (11.3%) and Education (7.1%). Employment growth rates by industry are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Percentage Change in Trend Employment by Industry – May 2007 to May 2008

← Decrease Increase →



Source: ABS *Australian Labour Market Statistics*, July 2008, ABS Cat. No. 6105.0.

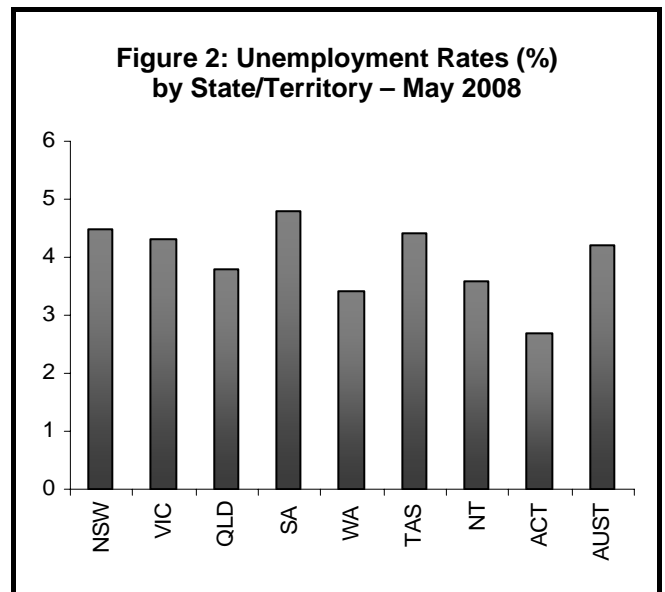
UNEMPLOYMENT

The trend rate of unemployment was 4.2% in May 2008, compared with 4.3% in May 2007.

In the past year, trend unemployment rates have decreased in all States and Territories except for Queensland and Western Australia where it increased (up by 0.2%).

In May 2008, the trend unemployment rate was highest in South Australia (4.8%) and lowest in the Australian Capital Territory (2.7%). See Figure 2.

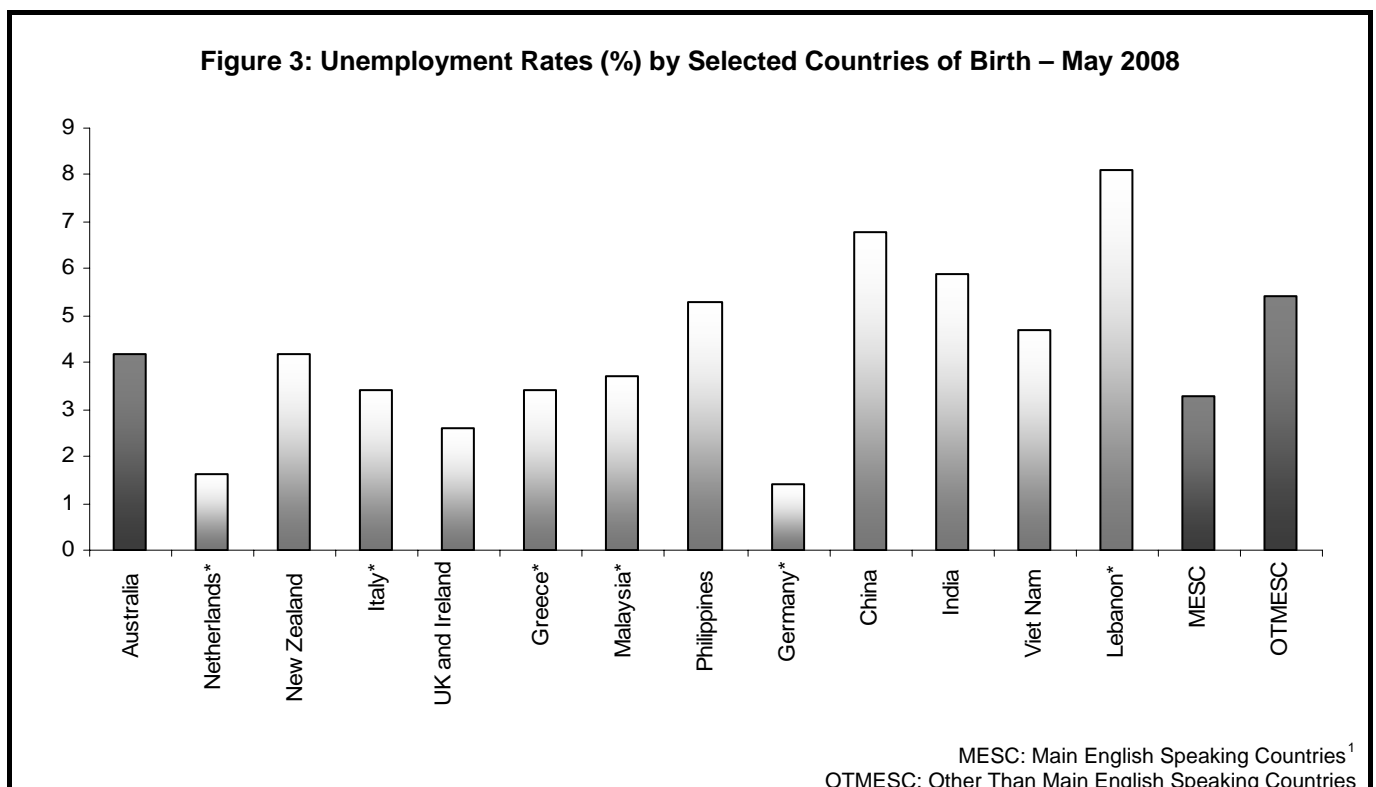
Generally, people in the more highly-skilled occupational groups are less likely to experience unemployment. For example, in May 2008 the unemployment rate for those who were formerly employed as Labourers and Related Workers was 5.6 times that of former Professionals.



MIGRANT UNEMPLOYMENT

The unemployment rates for people who migrate to Australia vary appreciably. Several factors influence migrant unemployment rates including the period since arrival in Australia (data consistently shows that recently-arrived migrants generally have a higher unemployment rate than those who have lived in Australia for some years), skill level, age, English proficiency and recent and relevant work experience. For more information on the labour market characteristics of recent migrants, see the July 2008 Hot Topic (pages 5 to 6).

Figure 3 below shows unemployment rates (original data) for people now resident in Australia who were born in selected overseas countries. For example, people born in the UK and Ireland and New Zealand have low unemployment rates (2.6% and 4.2% respectively), whereas unemployment rates for people born in China and India are relatively high (6.8% and 5.9% respectively).



* Estimate is subject to high sampling variability.

¹ MESC are the United Kingdom, Ireland, South Africa, Canada, the United States of America and New Zealand.

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 May 2008, the largest increases in employment (original data) occurred for Professionals (up by 86 200), Managers and Administrators (up by 69 600) and Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service (up by 46 800). 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 unemployment rates (for those who had worked for two weeks or more in the past two years) by occupational group are presented in descending skill order below.

Percentage Growth Rates in Employment in the 12 months to May 2008		Unemployment Rate at May 2008	
Managers and Administrators	8.1%	Managers and Administrators	1.3%
Professionals	4.2%	Professionals	1.2%
Associate Professionals	-2.0%	Associate Professionals	1.7%
Tradespersons and Related Workers	1.2%	Tradespersons and Related Workers	2.4%
Advanced Clerical and Service Workers	-4.6%	Advanced Clerical and Service Workers	0.9%
Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service	2.7%	Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service	2.3%
Intermediate Production and Transport	1.2%	Intermediate Production and Transport	3.5%
Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service	1.3%	Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service	4.1%
Labourers and Related Workers	3.5%	Labourers and Related Workers	6.9%

Additional information on Professional and Trade 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 TRENDS²

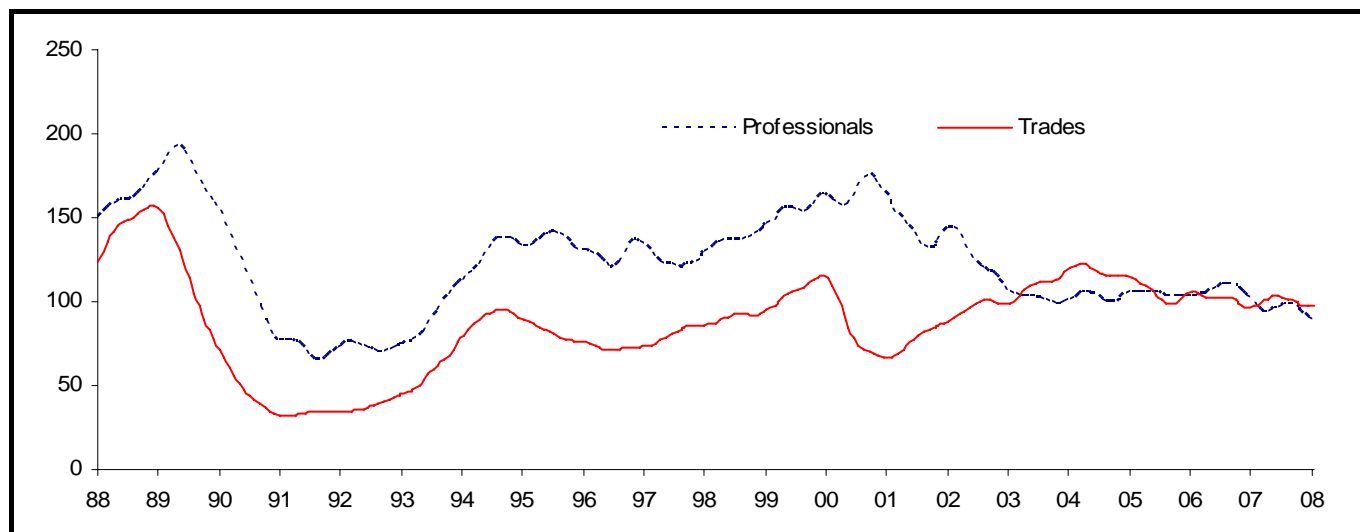
The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations produces the *Skilled Vacancies Index (SVI)* for 18 skilled occupational groups for each State and the Northern Territory. These are aggregated into the Professional, Associate Professional and Trade groups (see Figure 4 overleaf). The SVI indicates where the best employment opportunities may be in the Australian labour market.

In May 2008, skilled vacancies were 2.5% lower than in May 2007. Over the 12 months, the most significant SVI decreases were recorded in Queensland (down by 16.8%) and New South Wales (down by 11.4%). SVI increases were recorded in the Northern Territory (up by 23.3%), Victoria (up by 12.3%) and South Australia (up by 1.1%).

In the 12 months to May 2008, advertised vacancies decreased for Professional Occupations (down by 10.4%) and increased for Trade Occupations (up by 1.9%). The most significant increases were for Science Professionals (up by 31.6%), Metal Tradespersons (up by 19.9%) and Wood Tradespersons (up by 11.1%). The most significant decreases were for Marketing and Advertising Professionals (down by 50.0%), Accountants and Auditors (down by 39.2%) and Printing Tradespersons (down by 37.5%).

² Historical series of trend figures are revised monthly.

Figure 4: Skilled Vacancies Index, May 1988 to May 2008



FUTURE JOB PROSPECTS

Future job prospects depend on many factors, some of which are difficult to predict. Prospects differ between and within States and Territories and can change rapidly. Even in occupations with below-average prospects, significant employment opportunities may arise. This information should therefore be used with caution.

The following future job prospect ratings are for the period to 2012-13. The ratings are based on employment trends and projected growth, unemployment rates, SVI trends (where available), and other data.

In the following table G stands for good prospects, A for average prospects, BA for below average prospects and L for limited prospects. These are examples from the skilled classifications categories – refer to the *Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO), Second Edition (ABS Cat. No. 1220.0)*.

Occupational Group	Prospects to 2012-13	Occupational Group	Prospects to 2012-13
Managers and Administrators		Associate Professionals	
Child Care Co-ordinators*	G	Building, Architectural and Surveying Associates	G
Finance Managers	G	Dental Therapists, Technicians* and Hygienists	G
Information Technology Managers	G	Enrolled Nurses	G
Professionals		Financial Dealers and Brokers	G
Accountants*	G	Medical Technical Officers	G
Chemical Engineers*	G	Metallurgical Technicians and Mine Deputies	G
Computing Professionals* (part)	G	Trade Qualified Chefs* (part)	G
General Medical Practitioners*	G	Tradespersons	
Medical Imaging Professionals* (part)	G	Bakers and Pastrycooks*	G
Mining and Materials Engineers* (part)	G	Bricklayers*	G
Occupational Therapists*	G	Cabinetmakers*	G
Pharmacists* (part)	G	Carpenters and Joiners*	G
Physiotherapists*	G	Electricians*	G
Primary School Teachers	G	Hairdressers*	G
Registered Nurses*	G	General Mechanical Engineering Tradespersons	G
Registered Mental Health Nurses*	G	Motor Mechanics*	G
Registered Midwives*	G	Plumbers*	G
Secondary School Teachers	G	Printing Machinists	A
Social Workers	G	Refrigeration and Airconditioning Mechanics*	G
Specialist Medical Practitioners*	G	Textile and Footwear Machine Operators	BA

* denotes occupations that are listed in part or in full on the Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL) effective as at 17 May 2008. The Australian Labour Market 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 making a decision to lodge a visa application. Queries relating to this publication should be emailed to migration@deewr.gov.au.



The Labour Market Experience of Recent Migrants

Research shows the economic benefits of migration and the employment prospects of migrants are enhanced when migrants have high level skills, tertiary qualifications and good proficiency in the English language.

This Hot Topic provides a summary of the recently released Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) publication *Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Recent Migrants*¹ which defines recent migrants as people who were born overseas, arrived in Australia after 1997, were 15 years and over on arrival in Australia and had permanent resident status (excluding New Zealand born and New Zealand citizens). At November 2007, there were 647 000 recent migrants in Australia.

LABOUR FORCE STATUS OF RECENT MIGRANTS

In November 2007, an estimated 442 100 recent migrants were employed, 23 300 were unemployed and 181 500 were not in the labour force. The labour force participation rate for recent migrants was 71.9% compared with 68.7% for Australian-born people. The unemployment rate for recent migrants was 5.0% compared with 4.1% for Australian-born people.

Skills and Qualifications

The survey shows that for recent migrants, those who entered under the Skill Stream had lower unemployment rates and higher rates of participation in the Australian labour force than those entering under other Streams.

In November 2007, recent Skill Stream migrants had an unemployment rate of 4.7% and a participation rate of 82.6% while recent Family Stream migrants had an unemployment rate of 7.5% and a participation rate of 62.4% (see Figure A).²

Among recent migrants, main applicants had a lower unemployment rate (4.6%) and higher participation rate (74.4%). Main applicants in the Skill Stream also had a lower unemployment rate (1.6%)* and higher labour force participation rate (90.5%) than main applicants in the Family Stream (with an unemployment rate of 6.8% and a participation rate of 62.6%).³

The survey data also shows that recent migrants with recognised qualifications had a lower unemployment rate and higher participation rate than other recent migrants.

For example, recent migrants who arrived with post-school qualifications had an unemployment rate of 3.9% and a participation rate of 80.1%. Recent migrants without a post-school qualification had unemployment and participation rates of 7.2% and 59.9% respectively.

For those recent migrants with post-school qualifications, the level of educational attainment before arrival also affects the labour market outcomes (see Figure B).

Figure A: Unemployment and Participation Rates (%) by Visa Category

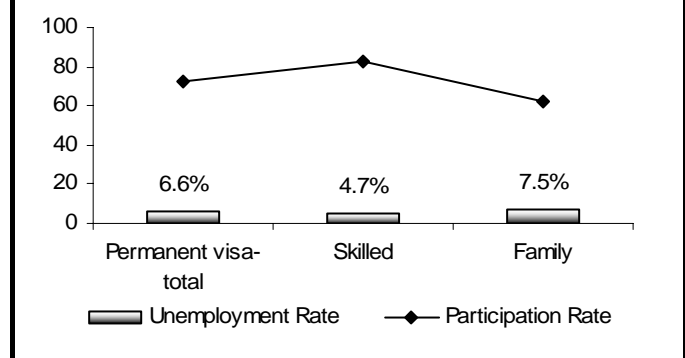
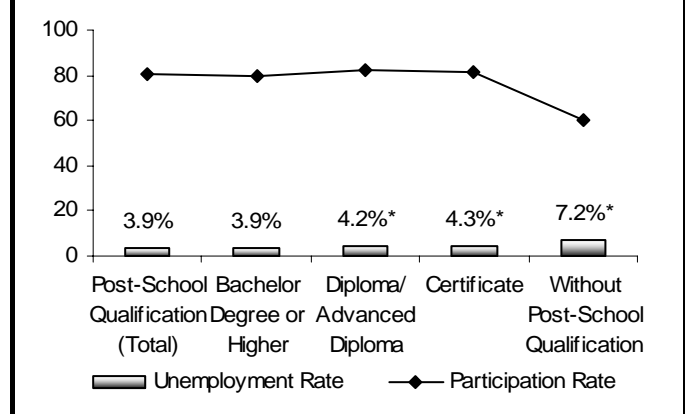


Figure B: Unemployment and Participation Rates (%) by Educational Attainment before Arrival



¹ Unless otherwise stated all data referred to in this Hot Topic are from the ABS, *Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Recent Migrants, November 2007*, ABS Cat. No. 6250.0.

² This excludes recent migrants with Australian Citizenship as of November 2007.

³ This represents only those recent migrants with a permanent visa on most recent arrival to Australia.

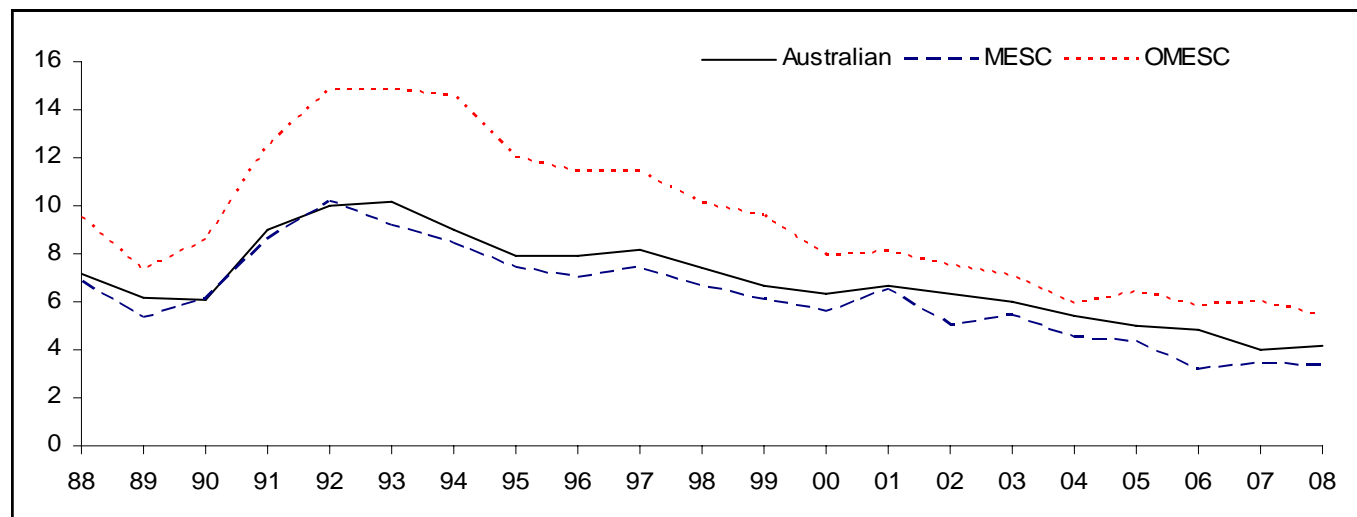
* Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

English Language Proficiency

Migrants who spoke a language other than English at home and those with poor English language proficiency were more likely to not be in the labour force or have a higher rate of unemployment than migrants with good English proficiency.

The Australian-born and migrants from MESC (where migrants are defined as all overseas-born, regardless of period of residency or visa status) have had consistently lower unemployment rates than OTMESC migrants (see Figure C below).

Figure C: Unemployment Rate (%) for Australian-Born and Overseas-Born (May), 1988 to 2008



Source: ABS Labour Force, Australia (Detailed), May 2008, Cat. No. 6291.0.55.001.

OTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF RECENT MIGRANTS

The following findings, based on analysis of the *Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Recent Migrants* data, may be of interest to persons considering migrating to Australia on a temporary or permanent basis:

- the majority of recent migrants (89.0% of males and 70.0% of females) have had a job at some time since arriving in Australia. Of these recent migrants:
 - the majority found employment within 6 months of arrival (69.2%). Specifically, 35.3% arranged a job prior to arrival or found a job within one month or less of arrival, 33.8% spent between two and six months looking for a job and 24.1% took more than twelve months to find employment;
 - those with post-school qualifications found work faster than recent migrants without post-school qualifications. Of those with post-school qualifications, 41.9% arranged a job prior to arrival or found a job within one month or less, compared to 22.9% of recent migrants without post-school qualifications;
 - the majority reported receiving help finding their first job held in Australia (59.9%). Of those receiving help, sources were varied with friends and family the most common source (69.6%), followed by employment agencies (28.5%) and Centrelink (10.1%). Interestingly, those without a post-school qualification were more likely to receive help from friends and family (52.3%) compared to those with a post-school qualification (36.0%); and
 - over a third experienced difficulty finding their first job in Australia (35.6%). Of those who experienced difficulty, the most common difficulties noted were a lack of Australian work experience (56.4%), language difficulties (34.8%) and lack of local contacts and networks (28.7%).
- while recent migrants settled in all states and territories of Australia, the majority reported New South Wales (264 600), Victoria (169 500), Queensland (82 800) and Western Australia (73 100) as their state of usual residence.