



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 2005**, available through <http://www.workplace.gov.au>.

Unless otherwise stated, data are from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Labour Force Survey, February 2006.

OVERVIEW

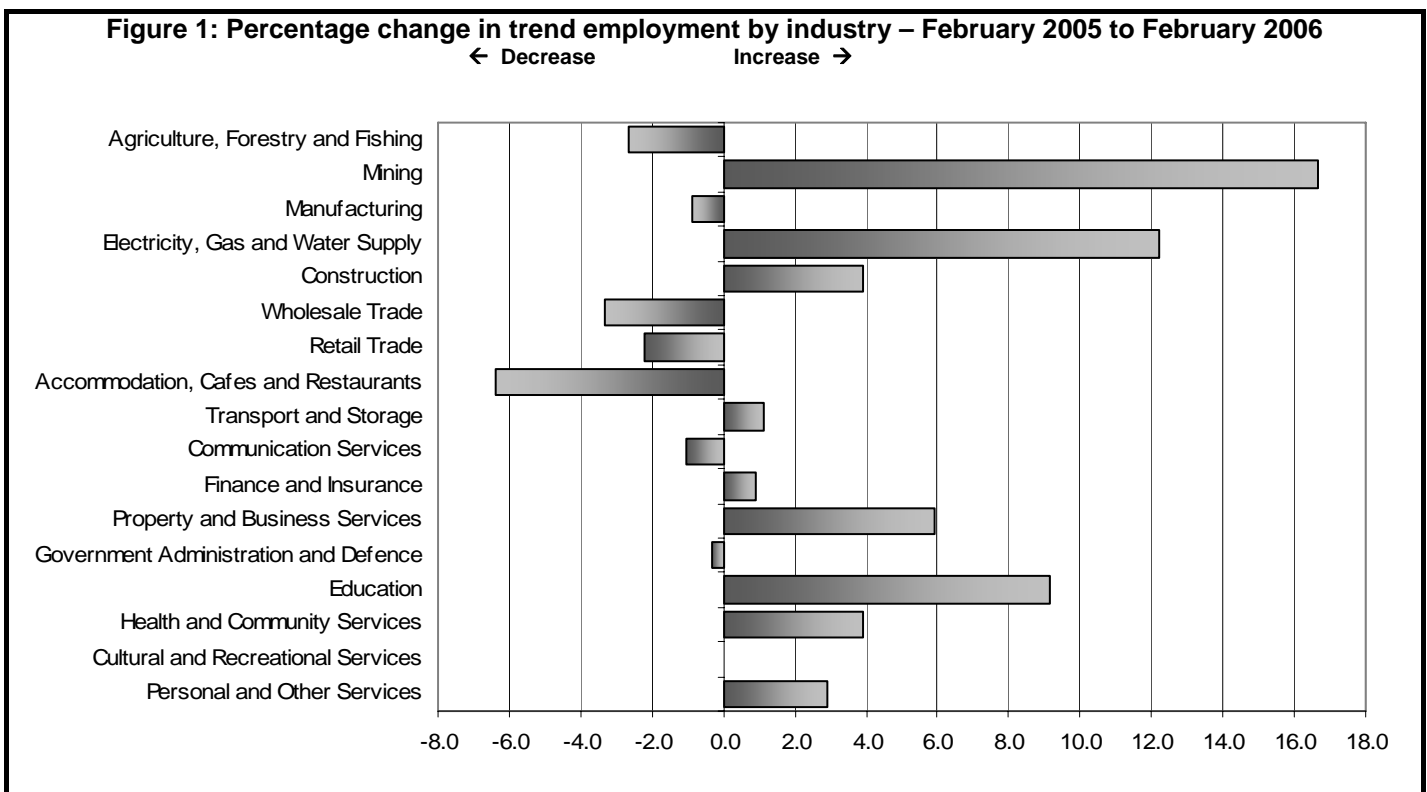
In the 12 months to February 2006, the Australian labour market experienced solid growth. In trend terms, total employment increased by an estimated 141 800 persons (1.4%). Advertised vacancies increased for Professionals and Associate Professionals and decreased for Trade Occupations. Migrants with 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 2006, trend employment in Australia grew by 1.4% after growth of 3.2% in the previous year.

Employment (in trend terms) increased in all States and Territories except in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). In percentage terms, employment growth was strongest in Tasmania (3.7%) and Western Australia (3.3%).

Employment opportunities and growth varied across industries. Over the 12 months to February 2006, the largest increases in trend employment occurred in Property and Business Services (up by 72 000), Education (up by 67 800) and Health and Community Services (40 700), while the strongest rates of employment growth were in Mining, Electricity, Gas and Water Supply, Education, and Property and Business Services. Employment growth rates by industry are shown below.



Source: ABS Australian Labour Market Statistics, April 2006, ABS Cat. No. 6105.0.

UNEMPLOYMENT

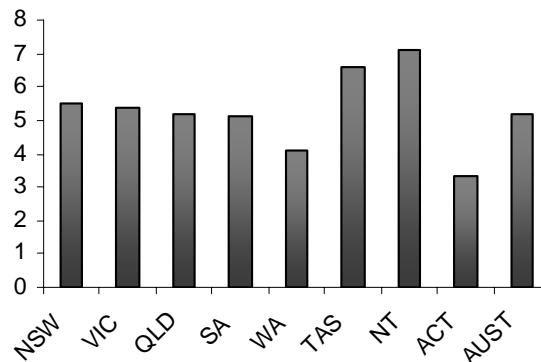
The trend rate of unemployment was 5.2% in February 2006, marginally higher than in February 2005 (5.1%).

Unemployment rates have decreased in the past year in all States and Territories except for New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

In February 2006, the unemployment rate was highest in the Northern Territory at 7.1% and lowest in the Australian Capital Territory at 3.3%. See Figure 2.

Generally, people in the more highly-skilled occupational groups are less likely to experience unemployment. For example, in February 2006 the unemployment rate for those who were formerly employed as Labourers and Related Workers was more than four times that of former Professionals.

Figure 2: Trend unemployment rates by State/Territory – February 2006

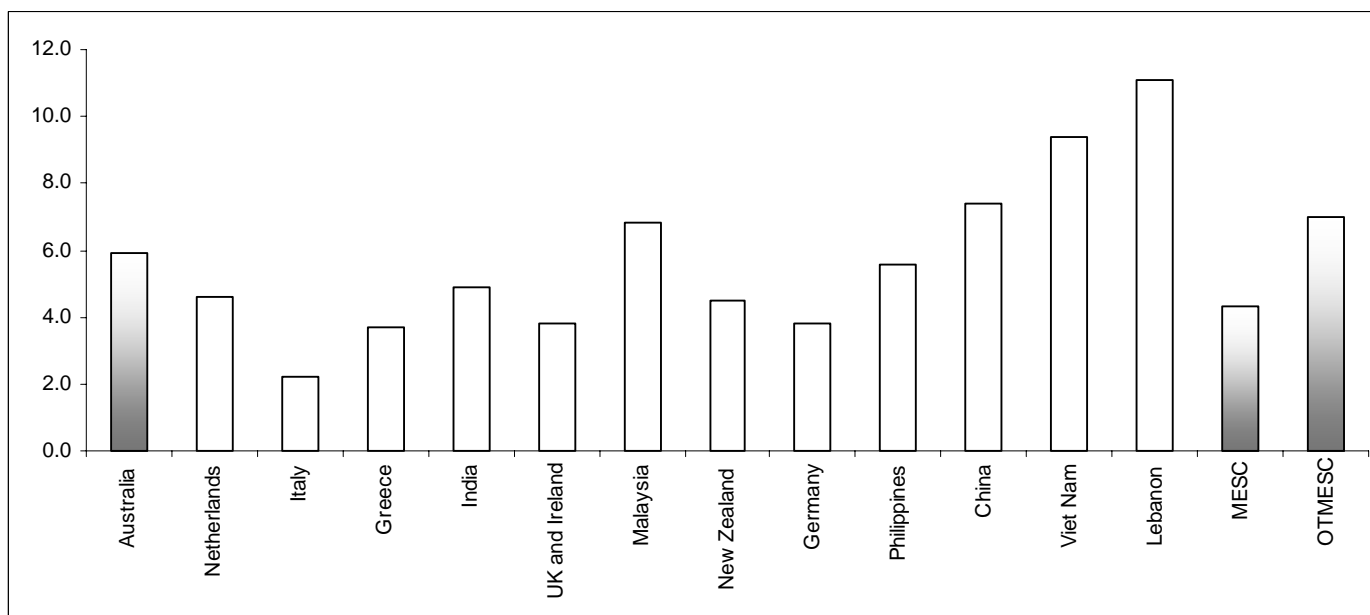


MIGRANT UNEMPLOYMENT

The unemployment rates for people who migrate to Australia vary appreciably. Several factors influence migrant unemployment rates including the period since arrival in Australia (in general, recently-arrived migrants 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.

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 Italy and Greece have low unemployment rates (2.2% and 3.7% respectively), whereas unemployment rates for people born in Lebanon and Viet Nam are relatively high (11.1% and 9.4% respectively).

Figure 3: Unemployment rates by selected countries of birth – as at February 2006 (%)



MESC: Main English Speaking Countries¹
OTMESC: Other Than Main English Speaking Countries

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 February 2006, the largest increases in employment (original data) occurred in Professionals (up by 165 900), Advanced Clerical and Service Workers (up by 49 300) and Managers and Administrators (up by 37 300). 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) for occupational groups are presented in descending skill order below.

Percentage Growth Rates in Employment in the 12 months to February 2006		Unemployment Rate at February 2006	
Managers and Administrators	4.4%	Managers and Administrators	0.9%
Professionals	9.2%	Professionals	2.1%
Associate Professionals	-3.8%	Associate Professionals	2.2%
Tradespersons	1.2%	Tradespersons	2.8%
Advanced Clerical and Service Workers	13.7%	Advanced Clerical and Service Workers	1.5%
Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service	0.7%	Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service	3.7%
Intermediate Production and Transport	1.2%	Intermediate Production and Transport	4.3%
Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service	-3.2%	Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service	6.5%
Labourers and Related Workers	-4.5%	Labourers and Related Workers	8.8%

Additional information on Professional, Associate 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.

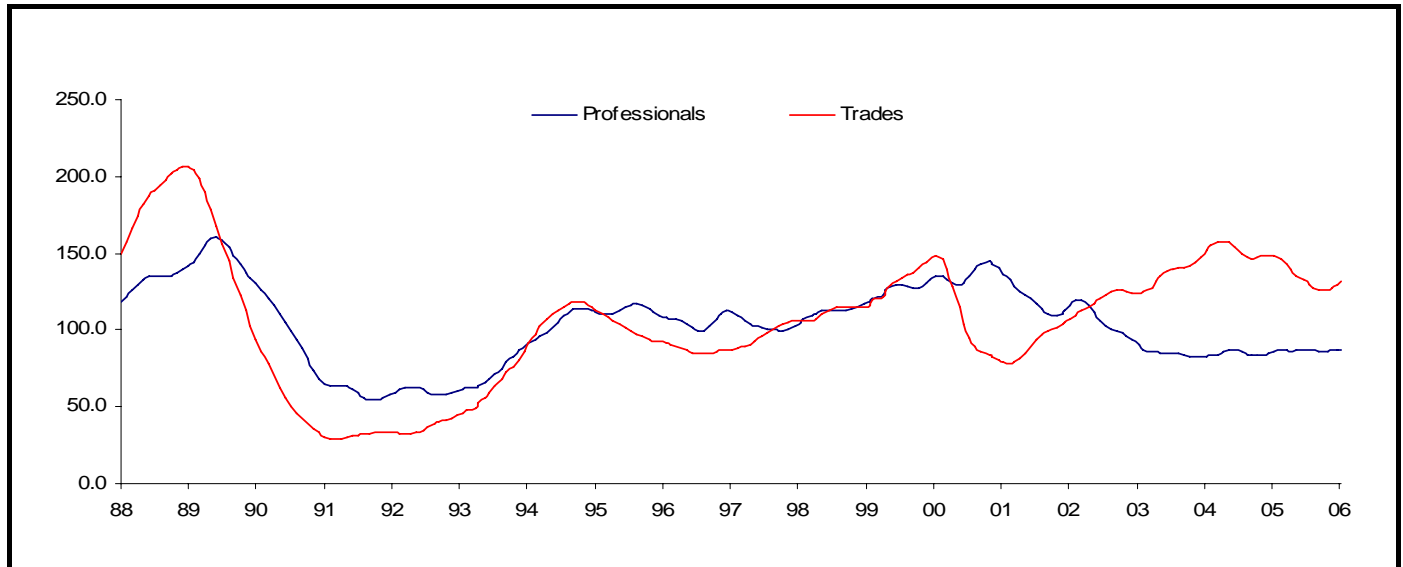
SKILLED VACANCY TRENDS

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 (NT). These are aggregated into the Professional, Associate Professional and Trade groups. The SVI indicates where the best employment opportunities may be in the Australian labour market.

In April 2006, skilled vacancies were 5.6% lower than in April 2005. Over the 12 months, SVI decreases were recorded in most States and Territories, with the largest decrease in New South Wales (down by 16.6%) followed by South Australia (down by 12.6%). Queensland and Tasmania recorded the smallest decreases (down by 1.2% and 1.3% respectively). Only the Northern Territory and Western Australia recorded increases, up by 21.6% and 5.4% respectively.

In the 12 months to April 2006, advertised vacancies increased for Professional occupations (up by 1.6%) and Associate Professionals (up by 19.2%) and decreased significantly for Trade Occupations (down by 11.2%) (see Figure 4 overleaf)². While the majority of occupations within these broad groups recorded increases in skilled vacancies, notable decreases occurred in the Printing and Metal Trades (down by 43.1% and 33.8% respectively) and the Accounting and Auditing Profession (down by 18.1%).

² Associate Professional occupations have been removed from Figure 4.

Figure 4: Skilled Vacancies Index, April 1988 to April 2006


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 2009-10. The ratings are based on employment trends and projected growth, unemployment rates, SVI trends (where available), and other data.

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. These are examples from the skilled classifications categories; refer to the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO), Second Edition (ABS 1220.0).

Occupational Group	Prospects to 2009-10	Occupational Group	Prospects to 2009-10
Managers and Administrators		Associate Professionals	
Finance Managers	VG	Medical Technical Officers	VG
Information Technology Managers	G	Building/Architectural Associate Professionals	G
Sales and Marketing Managers	VG	Financial Dealers and Brokers	VG
Professionals		Shop Managers	A
Mining and Materials Engineers* (part)	G	Trade Qualified Chefs*	VG
Accountants*	VG	Hotel and Motel Managers	A
Marketing and Advertising Professionals	VG	Enrolled Nurses	G
Computing Professionals* (part)	G	Tradespersons	
General Medical Practitioners*	VG	General Mechanical Engineering Tradespersons	A
Specialist Medical Practitioners*	VG	Motor Mechanics*	G
Registered Nurses*	VG	Electricians*	G
Registered Midwives*	VG	Refrigeration and Airconditioning Mechanics*	G
Registered Mental Health Nurses*	G	Bricklayers*	G
Pharmacists*	VG	Plumbers*	G
Occupational Therapists*	VG	Bakers and Pastrycooks*	G
Physiotherapists*	VG	General and Landscape 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 in part or in full on the Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL) announced on 28 March 2006.

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 decision making. Queries relating to this publication should be emailed to migration@dewr.gov.au.



AUSTRALIA – its States and Territories

This Hot Topic focuses on the Australian States and Territories (the States), and provides an overview of the Australian population, its regional distribution and relative economic performance. It is an annual publication included in the April edition of the Australian Labour Market Update.

THE AUSTRALIAN POPULATION

Australia's population is concentrated in the major capital cities of Sydney, New South Wales (20.9% of the total population) and Melbourne, Victoria (17.9% of the total population). The States which experienced the strongest population growth over the 12 months to 30 June 2005 were Queensland (up by 2.0%) and Western Australia (up by 1.6%) while the Australian Capital Territory experienced the weakest growth (0.3%).

Table A The Distribution of the Australian Population as at 30 June 2005									
	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	AUST*
Population	6 774 249	5 022 346	3 963 968	1 542 033	2 010 113	485 263	202 793	325 161	20 328 609
Capital City	4 254 894	3 634 233	1 810 943	1 129 269	1 477 815	203 638	111 300	324 786	12 946 878
Balance of State	2 519 355	1 388 113	2 153 025	412 764	532 298	281 625	91 493	375	7 381 731
Share of Australian Population (%)									100.0
Capital City	20.9	17.9	8.9	5.6	7.3	1.0	0.5	1.6	63.7
Balance of State	12.4	6.8	10.6	2.0	2.6	1.4	0.5	0.0	36.3
Population growth (%)**									1.2
	0.8	1.2	2.0	0.6	1.6	0.6	1.5	0.3	

* Australia includes other territories not represented in this table.

** Percentage growth in the 12 months from 30 June 2004 to 30 June 2005.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2006, *Australian Demographic Statistics, September Quarter 2005*, ABS Cat. No. 3101.0.

REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

As Figure A below shows, trend employment increased in all States and Territories except the Australian Capital Territory in the 12 months to February 2006. The States with the highest employment growth rates in percentage terms in the same period were Tasmania (3.7%) and Western Australia (3.3%).

Figure B shows that Queensland recorded the highest employment growth (up by 5.4%) for the 12 months to February 2006 for 'skilled' occupations (Managers and Administrators, Professionals, Associate Professionals, Tradespersons and Related Workers) (original data).

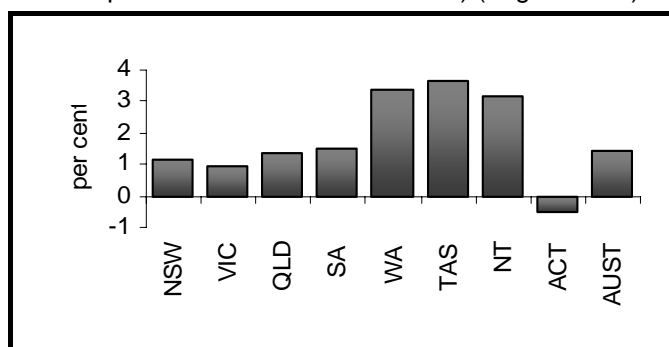


Figure A: Employment Growth (February 2006)

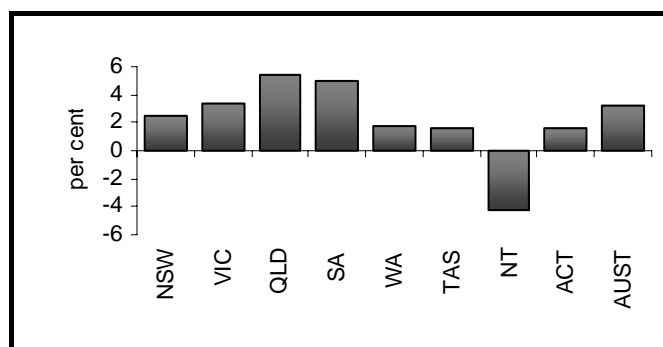


Figure B: Employment Growth for 'Skilled' Occupations by State (February 2006)

THE REGIONAL LABOUR FORCE

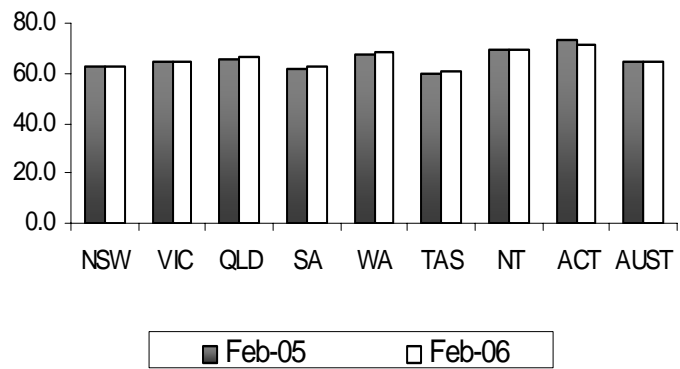
The labour force participation rate is calculated by expressing the labour force as a percentage of the civilian population aged 15 and over. (The labour force is employed persons plus unemployed persons.)

Over the 12 months to February 2006, the labour force participation rate for Australia (original data) increased slightly by 0.3 percentage points to 64.7% (see Figure C). Tasmania and Western Australia recorded the largest increase in the participation rate over this period, while the Australian Capital Territory was the only State to record a decrease.

Full-time employment (original data) increased by 1.5% in the 12 months to February 2006, while part-time employment increased by 2.1%.

Male full-time employment increased by 1.5% and female full-time employment increased by 1.6%. Male part-time employment increased by 2.4% and female part-time employment increased by 2.0%.

Figure C: Labour force participation rates by State (%)



INDUSTRY BY REGION

Table B, below, provides estimates of the percentage of employment in each State that relates to each particular industry (original data). As can be seen, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory had relatively high proportions of employed persons in Government Administration and Defence, Western Australia in Mining, Victoria in Manufacturing, South Australia in Health and Community Services and New South Wales in Finance and Insurance. The most number of persons employed in Australia are in the Retail Trade, Property & Business Services and Manufacturing industries.

Table B Employment Distribution by Industry, States and Territories
Average of 4 quarters to February 2006 (% of total)

INDUSTRY	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	AUST
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	3.0	3.1	3.6	5.2	5.4	7.7	1.8	0.6	3.6
Mining	0.6	0.3	1.7	1.2	4.6	1.0	1.7	0.0*	1.2
Manufacturing	10.1	13.5	9.2	12.7	9.0	10.6	2.8	2.7	10.7
Electricity, Gas & Water Supply	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.3	0.6	0.8
Construction	8.3	8.4	10.1	6.9	9.8	7.1	8.7	6.6	8.7
Wholesale Trade	4.4	4.7	4.0	4.2	4.0	4.1	2.8	2.0	4.3
Retail Trade	15.0	14.7	16.2	15.2	14.5	15.9	15.3	11.7	15.1
Accommodation, Cafes & Restaurants	5.3	4.4	5.4	5.0	4.1	5.1	8.0	4.7	4.9
Transport and Storage	4.9	4.4	5.1	3.7	4.3	3.8	4.9	1.9	4.6
Communication Services	2.0	2.1	1.5	1.9	1.4	1.5	1.0	1.6	1.8
Finance & Insurance	5.1	3.8	2.7	2.8	2.5	2.5	1.4	2.1	3.7
Property & Business Services	12.8	12.2	11.1	9.7	11.7	8.3	9.6	15.0	11.9
Government Administration & Defence	4.1	3.2	4.6	4.4	4.5	5.6	13.6	24.6	4.6
Education	7.0	6.9	7.5	7.4	7.0	7.2	8.5	8.3	7.1
Health & Community Services	9.9	10.7	9.5	12.4	10.1	11.6	10.6	9.1	10.2
Cultural & Recreational Services	2.7	3.0	2.7	2.0	2.5	3.3	3.4	4.1	2.7
Personal & Other Services	4.0	3.7	4.1	4.3	3.8	3.7	4.9	4.2	3.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: ABS Labour Force Survey original data for the 4 quarters to February 2006.

* Indicates an estimate which is subject to sampling variability too high for most practical purposes.