



- **Employment fell marginally to 238,400**
- **Unemployment rate rose to 4.3%**
- **Participation rate fell slightly to 61.9%**

Note: All Labour Force estimates are from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' *Labour Force Survey* and are *Trend estimates* unless otherwise stated.

Employment

Total employment fell slightly this month in Tasmania. However it remains 3.7% higher than it was in December 2007. Full-time employment was 3.7% higher in December, than in the same month last year, while part-time employment grew by 3.6% over the year.

Total male employment increased by 4.0% over the last 12 months. This increase was made up of a 3.5% increase in full-time employment, and a 6.9% increase in part-time employment. Total female employment has grown by 3.2% since December 2007, made up of a 4.2% increase in full-time employment and a 2.3% increase in part-time employment.

Unemployment

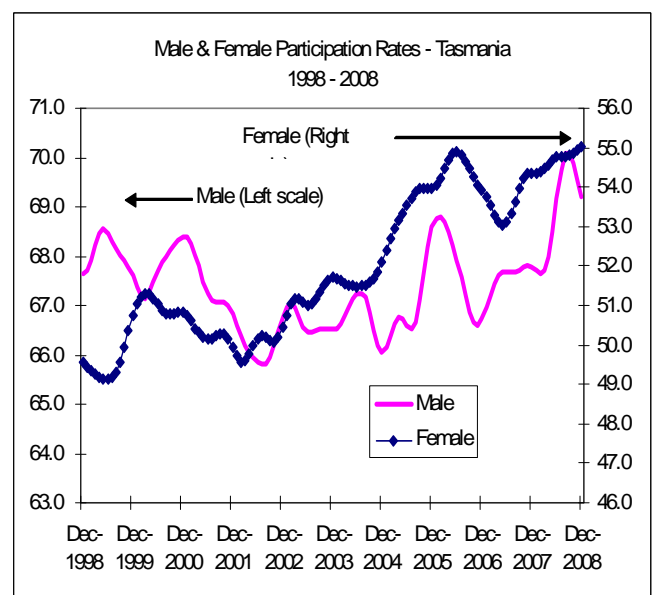
The total number of unemployed Tasmanians in December was estimated to be 10,700, which was 13.4% lower than the number recorded in December 2007. Male unemployment fell by 13.0% to approximately 5,000, while female unemployment fell by 13.7% to an estimated 5,700. Tasmania's unemployment rate rose slightly to 4.3% in December, but was still lower

than the 5.1% recorded in December 2007. Nationally, the unemployment rate remained steady at 4.4%. In the other States and Territories it was 5.2% in NSW, 4.5% in Vic, 3.8% in Qld, 5.4% in SA, 2.7% in WA, 4.4% in the NT and 5.2% in the ACT.

Labour Force & Participation Rates

Tasmania's participation rate remained steady at 61.9% in December, which was a 1.7 percentage point increase on that recorded in December 2007, but still below the national rate of 65.0%.

The size of the labour force in Tasmania currently stands at 249,100, an increase of 2.8% on the December 2007 figure. The male labour force increased by 3.3% over the year, while the female labour force grew by 2.2%.



Labour Force Estimates - Tasmania (Trend data)

| | Dec-2007 | Nov-2008 | Dec-2008 |
|----------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| | 000's | 000's | 000's |
| Employment | | | |
| Male | 126.0 | 131.9 | 131.1 |
| Female | 103.9 | 107.1 | 107.3 |
| Full-time | 158.4 | 164.8 | 164.3 |
| Part-time | 71.5 | 74.2 | 74.1 |
| Persons | 229.9 | 239.0 | 238.4 |
| Unemployment | | | |
| Male | 5.7 | 4.8 | 5.0 |
| Female | 6.6 | 5.6 | 5.7 |
| Persons | 12.4 | 10.4 | 10.7 |
| Labour Force | | | |
| Male | 131.7 | 136.7 | 136.1 |
| Female | 110.5 | 112.8 | 113.0 |
| Persons | 242.3 | 249.4 | 249.1 |
| Unemployment Rate % | | | |
| Male | 4.3 | 3.5 | 3.7 |
| Female | 6.0 | 5.0 | 5.1 |
| Persons | 5.1 | 4.2 | 4.3 |
| Full-time Teenage* | 30.6 | 21.5 | 28.0 |
| Participation Rate % | | | |
| Male | 67.8 | 69.6 | 69.2 |
| Female | 54.4 | 54.9 | 55.0 |
| Persons | 60.9 | 62.1 | 61.9 |
| *unadjusted data | | | |

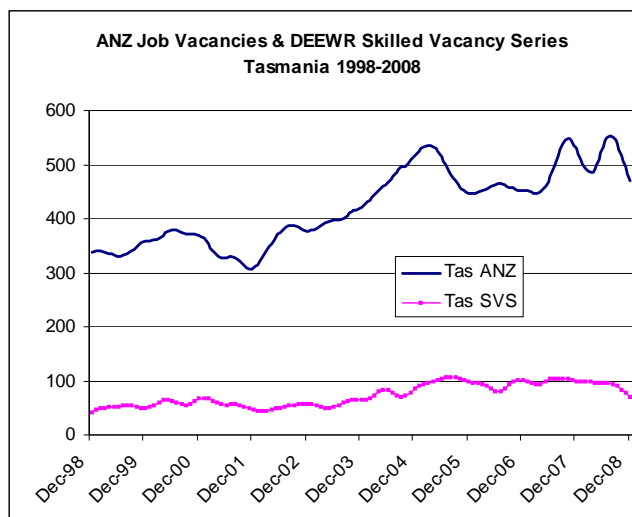
Job Vacancies

The ANZ Bank Job Advertisement series

(trend) for Tasmania fell by 5.0% in the month of December. The series was 11.0% below that recorded in December 2007. Nationally, the series fell by 7.6% over the month, and by 44.0% over the year.

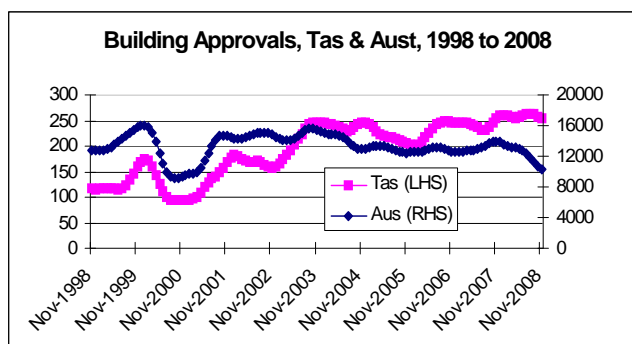
DEEWR's Skilled Vacancy Survey Index

(trend) for Tasmania decreased by 8.5% over the month of December and by 11.0% over the year. Nationally, the series decreased by 7.5% over the month and by 37.9% over the year.



Other Indicators

Building approvals in Tasmania fell by 1.6% in November but were steady over the year with a minor drop of 0.4% compared to November 2007. Nationally, building approvals were down 4.2% for the month and down by 26.2% over the year.



Average Weekly (Total) Earnings for adults

working full-time in Tasmania were \$1,062.80 for the quarter ending August 2008. This was 11.15% less than the national average of \$1,196.20 for the same period.

| Benefit recipients (Newstart & Youth Allowances) | | | | |
|---|------------|-------------|--------|---------------|
| | <12 months | > 12 months | Total | % > 12 months |
| Nov-2007 | 3,883 | 6,989 | 10,872 | 64.3% |
| Nov-2008 | 4,299 | 5,705 | 10,004 | 57.0% |
| Number difference | 416 | -1,284 | -868 | |
| % difference | 10.7% | -18.4% | -8.0% | |

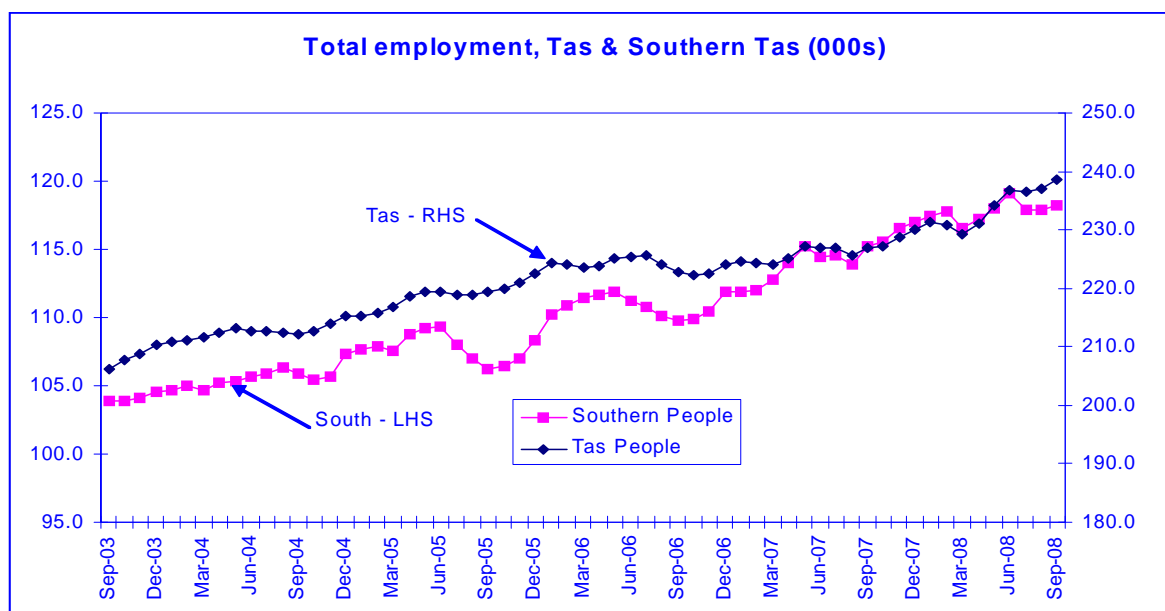
REGIONAL PROFILE – SOUTHERN TASMANIA (GREATER HOBART - SOUTHERN)

Introduction

The following article is the final of a three part series on labour market developments in each of Tasmania's three regions over the last five years. The data is drawn primarily from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) monthly labour force survey, and three month averages have been used in an attempt to smooth the volatility of the data. The main point of the article will be to compare the performance of the labour market in the south of the State to that of Tasmania as a whole. The five years to September 2008 will be the period discussed, so that comparison can be made across all three articles.

Employment

The following graph shows employment growth for the southern region, compared to employment growth for the State overall.



Between September 2003 and September 2008, total employment in the south grew by 13.8 per cent, slightly below the 15.8 per cent experienced by the State as a whole. Total male employment increased by 19.9 per cent compared to growth in female employment of 7.2 per cent. This compares to growth in male employment for the whole State of 15.0 per cent, and growth in female employment of 13.2 per cent. Growth in male employment in the south therefore exceeded that for the State overall, but female employment growth in the south was just over half of that experienced for all of Tasmania.

The number of part-time jobs in the south increased by 14.4 per cent over the last five years, while for the whole State part-time employment increased by 17.2 per cent. Full-time employment in the south grew by 13.6 per cent, compared to state-wide growth of 15.1 per cent.

The south's share of total employment in the State declined slightly from 50.4 per cent in September 2003, to 49.5 per cent in September 2008. This decline was largely driven by the lower growth rate in female employment. Southern females'

share of employment declined from 24.0 per cent five years ago, to 22.2 per cent in September 2008. Over the same period, southern males increased their share of the State's employment from 26.4 per cent, to 27.3 per cent.

Unemployment

Total unemployment in the south in September 2008 was 1,800 lower than the figure recorded five years earlier, representing a drop of 28.2 per cent. Over the same period unemployment for the whole State fell by 35.2 per cent. Male unemployment in the south fell by 53.2 per cent, slightly below the 54.3 per cent drop across the whole of Tasmania. Female unemployment in the south actually rose by 20.4 per cent, compared to a state-wide drop of 5.8 per cent. The unemployment rate in the south fell from 5.7 per cent five years ago to 3.7 per cent in September 2008. Over the same period, the unemployment rate for the State as a whole fell from 7.2 per cent to 4.2 per cent.

In September 2003, 39.2 per cent of the State's unemployed lived in the south, but by September 2008 this had increased to 43.4 per cent.

Labour Force and Participation Rates

The labour force is defined as the number of people in work and the number of people actively looking and available for work. The southern labour force increased by 11.4 per cent over the five years to September 2008, compared to growth of 12.1 per cent for the State overall. Most of the growth in the south occurred in the male labour force, which grew by 14.7 per cent, compared to 7.8 per cent growth in the female labour force. By comparison, the male labour force for the whole of the State grew by 12.2 per cent for males and by 12.0 per cent for females. In September 2003, 49.6 per cent of the State's labour force lived in the south, but by September 2008 this had declined slightly to 49.3 per cent.

The participation rate is the labour force expressed as a percentage of the total civilian population over the age of 15. In the last five years, the participation rate in the south increased from 58.5 per cent to 61.9 per cent. The State's overall participation rate increased from 58.3 per cent to 62.2 per cent. In the south, most of the increase in participation was among males, as the male participation rate increased by 5.5 percentage points from 63.9 per cent to 69.4 per cent, compared to a change from 53.4 per cent to 54.8 per cent in female participation rates.

Summary

- Employment in the south grew at a slightly lower rate compared to the growth rate for Tasmania overall. However, male employment in the south increased more than the State average, while female employment growth in the south was well below that for the whole State;
- Unemployment in the south fell by a smaller percentage than it did for the whole State. Female unemployment rose in the south while male unemployment fell;
- Growth in the southern labour force was slightly below that for the whole State, while participation rates in the south increased by 3.4 percentage points, compared to an increase of 3.9 percentage points for the State overall.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN DECEMBER 2008

Dec 6th The Minister for Economic Development, Michael Aird, has congratulated Ta Ann Tasmania Pty Ltd on winning the Australian Emerging Exporter of the Year Award at the annual National Export Awards in Melbourne. Mr Aird said that Ta Ann opened its Huon rotary veneer mill in the state's south last year and is now operating at full capacity. About 138 Tasmanians have been employed in Ta Ann's two mills. The other mill is located at Smithton in the north west of Tasmania. The two mills are expected to produce 145,000 cubic metres of dried veneer, worth about \$35 million, annually. Other companies representing Tasmania as finalists in the National Export Awards were:

Australian Quality Honey Pty Ltd
 The Learning Edge International Pty Ltd
 Tasmanian Distillery Pty Ltd
 Dobson's Vegetable Machinery Pty Ltd
 Pivot Maritime International
 The Hutchins School
 Premier Travel Tasmanian Pty Ltd
 Incat Holdings Ltd
 Lightning Protection International Pty Ltd

(www.development.tas.gov.au)

Dec 10th Tasmania's most ambitious private irrigation scheme has begun construction south of Cressy in the state's north. The Macquarie Settlement Pipeline is an \$8 million scheme paid for by 17 drought-affected farmers and project-managed by Water Dynamics at Longford in the state's north. (The Mercury)

Dec 11th The redevelopment of steel distribution company OneSteel's depot at Youngtown near Launceston in the state's north was officially opened yesterday. Launceston manager Geoff Morris said the 7500sq.m facility was the company's biggest site in Tasmania, providing steel products worth more than \$100 million a year to the construction, mining and general engineering sectors. "The contract was awarded to Fairbrother who started work in August, 2007," Mr Morris said. "Over the following nine months nearly \$4 million was spent locally to complete this project." (The Examiner)

Dec 12th Marine science received \$3.4 million of an \$11.5 million Federal Government package announced for the University of Tasmania yesterday. It was part of \$111.5 million across 30 universities nationwide announced by Education Minister Julia Gillard. University of Tasmania Vice-Chancellor Darryl Le Grew said the money will go to four key projects: \$2 million for Cradle Coast campus to attract students and undertake long-term planning; \$3.4 million to establish the Australian National Network in Marine Science including the Australian Maritime College with James Cook Uni-

versity in Queensland and the University of WA; \$3.6 million for the primary industry centre for program delivery to year 11 and 12 science class activities, teachers' professional development, resources and student camps and industry placement; and \$2.5 million to co-locate Integrated Tasmanian Creative Arts Education, encompassing TAFE and the university, with links to grades 11 and 12, in Hobart. (*The Examiner*)

- Dec 13th Construction of the Brighton Bypass in the state's south may start soon after March next year with the release of a federal government \$12 million infrastructure package. Tenders for the southern section and the transport hub are expected to be advertised early in the New Year. (www.abc.net.au)
- Dec 13th The State Government has announced road works to improve traffic flow for commuters from Hobart's eastern suburbs. Tasmanian Infrastructure Minister Graeme Sturges said yesterday \$4 million would be spent on improvements to the Tasman Highway, from the Tasman Bridge to the Mornington interchange, and \$1.6 million for improvements to the Mornington roundabout. (*The Mercury*)
- Dec 16th The Harris Scarfe site in Burnie, north-west of the state, is set for a seven-figure redevelopment which is expected to revitalise the city's CBD block. The site's owner, the Victorian-based Crystal Group, says the site will be revamped after Harris Scarfe moves out in mid-2009. Redevelopment plans are yet to be council approved. Other upcoming developments in the north-west of the State include the \$6.3 million Ulverstone Showground redevelopment with construction expected to start in January 2009 and a \$50 million homemaker centre in Devonport which was approved by the Devonport City Council last night. Also, the Waratah-Wynyard council has approved plans to support further development of the \$4 million Azzure Beach Houses tourism development at Boat Harbour. (*The Advocate*)
- Dec 20th Almost 200 mining jobs have gone after embattled miner OZ Minerals decided to shutdown its Avebury nickel mine near Zeehan in western Tasmania. The Avebury nickel mine, which OZ Minerals acquired in a takeover earlier this year for close to \$900 million, was only commissioned in August 2008. There are 64 direct employees and 125 Barmingo mining contractors, which operate the mine, affected by the decision. (www.business.theage.com.au)
- Dec 24th State Treasurer Michael Aird announced the formation of the West Coast Economic Group to assist the west coast to deal with the expected economic downturn, particularly its effects on the mining industry. The group will be chaired by the State Department of Economic Development and Tourism and will include representatives from local government, the mining industry and unions. (*The Mercury*)