



- **Employment increased marginally to 239,300**
- **Unemployment rate increased to 4.6%**
- **Participation rate remained steady at 62.1%**

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

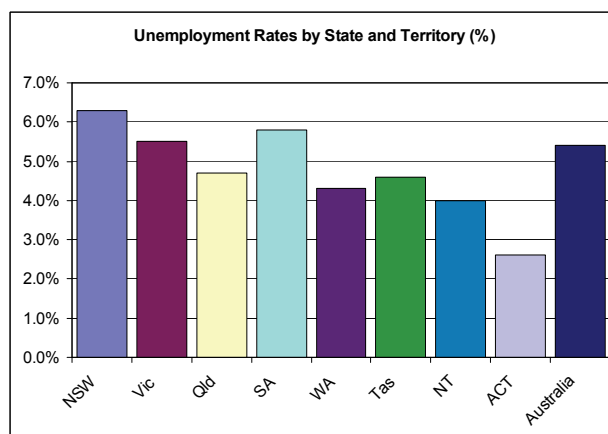
### Employment

Total employment in March was marginally higher than in February, and was 2.7 per cent higher than it was last March. Full-time employment was at the same level it was a year ago, while part-time employment increased by 8.9 per cent over the year. Total male employment was 1.4 per cent higher in March than it was in the same month last year. The increase was made up of 15.2 per cent growth in part-time employment, which was partially off-set by a 1.1 per cent decline in male full-time employment. Total female employment grew by 4.3 per cent over the 12 months to March, an increase which consisted of 2.2 per cent growth in full-time employment and 6.5 per cent growth in part-time employment.

### Unemployment

Total unemployment in Tasmania in March rose by 2.3 per cent over the year to an estimated 11,500. Unemployment in Tasmania has now increased for six consecutive months. Total male unemployment has increased by 24.0 per cent over the year, from 4,900 to 6,100. Total female unemployment actually fell over the year by 14.5 per cent, from 6,300 to 5,400. The unemployment

rate in Tasmania increased slightly over the month from 4.5 per cent to 4.6 per cent. This was the same as the March 2008 rate. In other States and Territories, the unemployment rate was 6.3 per cent in NSW, 5.5 in Vic, 4.7 in Qld, 5.8 in SA, 4.3 in WA, 4.0 in the NT, and 2.8 in the ACT. The national unemployment rate for March was 5.4 per cent.



### Labour Force & Participation Rates

The number of people in the Tasmanian labour force was estimated to be 250,800 in March, which was 2.7 per cent higher than in March last year. The female labour force grew by 3.3 per cent over the year, while the male labour force increased by 2.2 per cent. The participation rate for Tasmania in March was 62.1 per cent, which was one percentage point higher than in March last year. The female participation rate of 55.8 per cent is the highest on record, while the male participation rate was 1.1 percentage points higher than last March. The national participation rate in March was 65.5 per cent, still 3.4 percentage points above the Tasmanian rate.

## Labour Force Estimates - Tasmania (Trend data)

	Mar-2008	Feb-2009	Mar-2009
	000's	000's	000's
Employment			
Male	127.5	129.6	129.3
Female	105.5	109.6	110.1
Full-time	161.6	162.2	161.6
Part-time	71.4	77.0	77.7
Persons	233.0	239.2	239.3
Unemployment			
Male	4.9	5.8	6.1
Female	6.3	5.6	5.4
Persons	11.2	11.4	11.5
Labour Force			
Male	132.4	135.4	135.3
Female	111.8	115.1	115.5
Persons	244.2	250.6	250.8
Unemployment Rate %			
Male	3.7	4.3	4.5
Female	5.7	4.8	4.7
Persons	4.6	4.5	4.6
Full-time Teenage*	23.0	20.4	22.9
Participation Rate %			
Male	67.9	68.7	68.6
Female	54.6	55.7	55.8
Persons	61.1	62.1	62.1
*unadjusted data			

### Job Vacancies

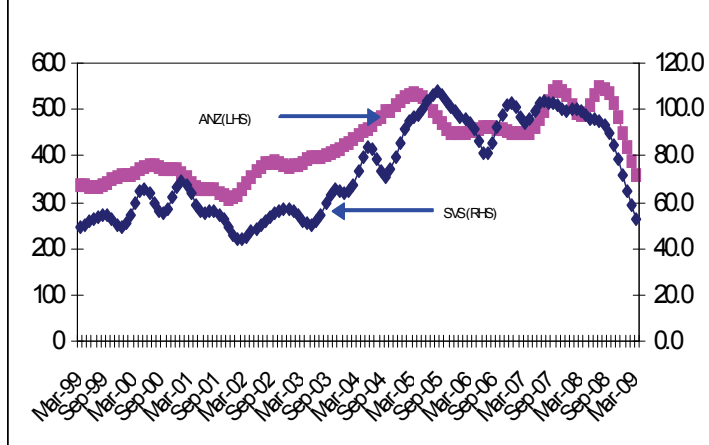
#### The ANZ Bank Job Advertisement series

(trend) fell in Tasmania in March by 7.2% and also fell over the year by 26.1%. The index has now fallen in Tasmania for eight consecutive months, and is at its lowest point since March 2002. Nationally, the series fell by 8.5% over the month, and by 55.3% over the year.

#### DEEWR's Skilled Vacancy Survey Index

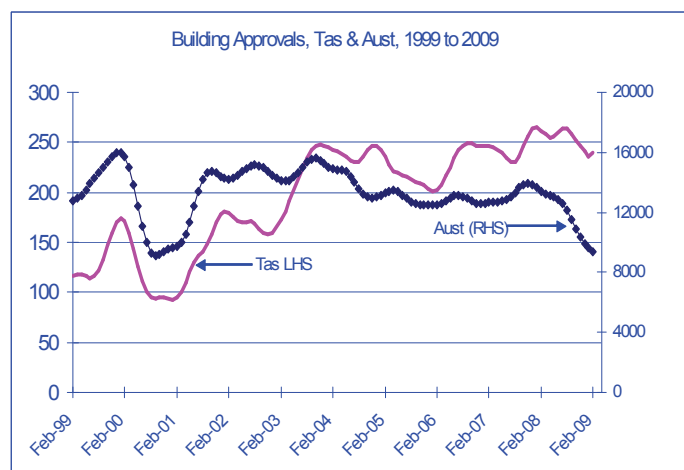
(trend) for Tasmania fell by 10.4% in March and by 47.1% over the year. Nationally, the series declined by 10.8% over the month and by 57.9% over the year.

### ANZ Job Vacancies & DEEWR Skilled Vacancy Series (SVS), Tasmania



### Other Indicators

**Building approvals** in Tasmania increased by 1.7% over February, but fell by 8.0% over the year. Nationally building approvals declined by 2.0% over the month, and by 29.8% over the year to February 2009.



### Newstart Recipients & Youth Allowees

#### Benefit recipients (Newstart & Youth Allowances) Tasmania

	<12 months	> 12 months	Total	% > 12 months
Feb-2008	4,081	7,177	11,258	63.8%
Feb-2009	5,219	6,203	11,422	54.3%
Number difference	1,138	-974	164	
% difference	27.9%	-13.6%	1.5%	

## AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL TRENDS – QUARTERLY

### **Introduction**

For many years the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has released an annual publication called Australian Social Trends. The publication contained articles and statistical summaries of many different aspects of Australian society. This year the ABS has taken the decision to release a shorter publication on a quarterly basis, but still containing areas of interest across a wide range of social and economic issues. The first issue for 2009 was released on March 25, and the following article provides summaries of the different topics presented this quarter. Most of the data will be a comparison of 2007 data compared to 1997, and where possible the emphasis will be on Tasmanian data.

### ***Population***

- The total population of Tasmania increased by approximately 19,000 people or 4.0 per cent between 1997 and 2007;
- The percentage of the population aged 65 and over increased from 12.9 per cent to 14.8 per cent over the same period. The median age of the population increased from 35.1 years to 39.1 during this time, also;
- The number of overseas migrants arriving in Tasmania each year more than doubled between 1997 and 2007. In 1997 12.1 per cent of settlers were in the skilled category, but by 2007, this had increased to 38.3 per cent. Humanitarian arrivals increased from 19.0 per cent of the total, to 25.2 per cent over the same period, while family settler arrivals declined from 44.8 per cent of the total, to 24.5 per cent;
- The ABS have produced some projections of future population growth for Tasmania, which show that the State's population is expected to peak at around 504,000 in 2026. After that it is projected to decline steadily, reaching 453,000 in 2051, which is below the current level.

### ***B) Education & training***

- The total number of school students in Tasmania fell from approximately 84,000 in 1997, to 82,000 in 2007. Over the same period the proportion of students in government schools fell from 74.8 per cent to 72.0 per cent;
- In 1997, 46.4 per cent of all 15 to 24 year olds were participating in some form of education. By 2007 this had risen to 58.0 per cent;
- In 1997, there were an estimated 12,800 higher education students in Tasmania, and by 2006 this had increased to 18,800. (2007 data not yet available);
- In 1997, overseas students made up approximately 8.7 per cent of all higher education students. By 2006 they had increased their share of the total to 21.6 per cent;
- The number of Vocational Education and Training (VET) students was estimated to be 26,600. This had increased to approximately 41,800 by 2006.

### ***C) Labour force***

- In 1997, 12.8 per cent of all employed males worked part-time. By 2007, this had increased to 16.4 per cent;
- The average number of hours worked by part-time employees increased only marginally between 1997 and 2007, from 15.1 per week to 16.0;

- The average number of hours per week worked by full-time employees was estimated to be 39.7 in 1997. This had fallen slightly by 2007 to 38.2 hours per week;
- The percentage of employed people working in the higher skilled occupations increased from 21.4 per cent in 1997 to 24.9 per cent in 2007. Conversely the percentage of people working in lower skilled occupation declined from 23.8 per cent to 19.4 per cent over the same period;

#### **D) Other Indicators**

- The percentage of households without a mortgage declined from 43.6 per cent in 1997, to 39.3 per cent in 2006 (2007 data not yet available). The percentage of households with a mortgage increased over the same period from 27.1 per cent to 33.8 per cent;
- The percentage of households who rented with the State housing authority fell from 8.2 per cent in 1997 to 5.2 per cent in 2006. Over the same period the number of people on public housing waiting lists increased from 2,100 to 3,400;
- The average number of persons per household fell between 1997 and 2006, from 2.58 to 2.39. Somewhat surprisingly perhaps, the average number of bedrooms per dwelling increased over the same period from 2.89 to 2.96;
- In 1998, 36.0 per cent of households owned a computer. By 2007 this had risen to 66 per cent. Also only 10 per cent of households were connected to the internet in 1998, but by 2007 this had grown to 56 per cent;
- The number of passenger vehicles per 1,000 people has increased from 508 in 1997 to 558 in 2007;

Australian Social Trends Quarterly (catalogue number 4102.0) is published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and is available from their web site at

<http://www.abs.gov.au/>

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN MARCH 2009**

- Mar 1<sup>st</sup> Several Tasmanian companies have recently posted record profits, despite the economic downturn. Leading the way is Tasmanian salmon producer Tassal, which posted an underlying net profit after tax of \$13.4 million for the half year to 31 December 2008, representing a 44.5 per cent increase on the same period the year before. Another large Tasmanian company posting record figures last week was retailer K&D Warehouse, which recorded its highest ever interim dividend for shareholders. Melbourne-based Telecommunications group M2 put on more than 30 staff at its Hobart call centre last month, a 25 per cent increase in staff numbers. (*The Mercury*)
- Mar 9<sup>th</sup> Jetstar announced it will close its Hobart Airport operations, resulting in the loss of 41 jobs including 35 cabin crew and 6 pilots. The jobs of 14 check-n staff will remain in Hobart. (*The Mercury*) March 12, 2009.
- Mar 10<sup>th</sup> Work is under way on what will be the new Teacher Learning Centre at Rokeby High School. The \$600,000 redevelopment will convert a former classroom area into a specialised teacher learning facility, staff accommodation and meeting

rooms. Part of a partnership between the Education Department and the University of Tasmania, the centre will provide more practical training for pre-service teachers and better facilities for teacher training. (*The Mercury*)

- Mar 10<sup>th</sup> Devonport's skate park in the north of the State is set to receive a \$183,000 face-lift. The Federal Government has signed off on the redevelopment as part of its investment to support jobs and boost the local economy. Braddon MHR Sid Sidebottom said the funds came from the \$800 million Community Infrastructure Program. Other development in the region includes the multi-million dollar redevelopment of the Devonport Surf Club, which will receive \$1m from the Rudd government. Devonport will also benefit from the government's \$2 million contribution to the reconstruction of Formby Rd, which would go ahead once the council completed its planning and consultation on what would be a major project for the city. (*The Advocate*)
- Mar 11<sup>th</sup> Launceston in the north and Devonport in the north west of the State have been earmarked as potential development sites by retail giant Woolworths, as it plans to add 7000 staff to its national workforce in the next six months. Woolworths spokesman Benedict Brook could not say how many new jobs were planned for Tasmania. But did say that Tasmania would benefit a mixture of full-time, part-time and casual jobs becoming available. As part-owner of Statewide Independent Wholesalers, Woolworths has lodged a development application for a \$106 million grocery distribution centre at Launceston's airport precinct. It is understood that if approved, the centre, which would open in 2011, would account for some of the Woolworths-based job growth in the region. (*The Examiner*)
- Mar 17<sup>th</sup> Tasmania's biggest rural merchant and broker, Roberts Limited, is forging new premium markets for Tasmanian lamb in Asia and the United States. Roberts manager of livestock, Chris Taylor, says a new business part-owned by farmers, called the Southern Island Lamb Company (SILCO), plans to export 40,000 lambs a year. ([www.abc.net.au/rural](http://www.abc.net.au/rural))
- Mar 17<sup>th</sup> The latest Sensis Consumer Report shows Tasmanians are the second most confident about their financial prospects at 47 per cent, just behind the Northern Territory at 49 per cent. The Tasmanian Treasurer Michael Aird says it is due to a resilient housing market and a strong retail sector. New data shows parts of Tasmania are defying the national downturn in the housing market but the state's economy remains exposed because of recent falls in commodity prices. The ANZ's Rural and Regional Quarterly survey shows housing construction and sales are cushioning some of the impact of the economic downturn, despite a disappointing three months on the jobs front. ANZ economist Paul Deane says the north-west cities of Burnie and Devonport are performing strongest. On the down side, the value of residential building approvals across the state weakened slightly, after its peak in 2008. Job losses, and the expectation of them, have also led to a softening in business sentiment. ([www.abc.net.au](http://www.abc.net.au))
- Mar 18<sup>th</sup> Tasmania has bucked the national trend of a softening domestic travel climate, and posted strong visitor growth in 2008, the Minister for Tourism, Michelle O'Byrne said today. Ms O'Byrne said the latest Tasmanian Visitor Survey figures for the 2008 calendar year, show that visitor numbers were up nine per cent, visitor nights were up five per cent and expenditure levels were up 12 per cent compared with 2007 – all to record levels. ([www.media.tas.gov.au](http://www.media.tas.gov.au))
- Mar 19<sup>th</sup> Tourism Tasmania has launched an eight-day 'Tas e-Connect' road show aimed at encouraging more Tasmanian travel and tourism companies to do business online. Tas e-Connect aims to help the Tasmanian tourism industry get their

tourism products to the online market through the open booking exchange gateway – connecting them to more distributors and more consumers online. The program will offer advice and information regarding the use of online technology to enhance the potential of tourism businesses. ([www.etravelblackboard.com](http://www.etravelblackboard.com) and [www.tourismtasmania.com.au](http://www.tourismtasmania.com.au))

- Mar 20<sup>th</sup> Tasmanian Premier David Bartlett has committed \$48 million in state and federal funding to revamp schools in Hobart's northern suburbs. Rosetta High and Claremont High will merge on a Rosetta campus after a \$9.7 million redevelopment, Glenorchy Primary and Brent St Primary will merge on a Glenorchy campus after a \$3.5 million revamp, and two new 450-pupil primary schools will be built in the Claremont-Austin's Ferry area for an estimated cost of up to \$24 million. Additionally, there is \$3 million earmarked for the result of a possible merger between Moonah and Goodwood Primary schools. Under the restructure Claremont, Abbotsfield, Mt Faulkner and Roseneath Primary schools will close. Although not involved in mergers, it was announced yesterday that Bowen Rd Primary will receive \$2.1 million and Springfield Gardens Primary \$2.1 million of Federal funding. More than \$24 million of the overall funding will come from the Federal Government with the remainder from the State. Building projects are scheduled commence on July 1 this year. (*The Mercury*)
- Mar 20<sup>th</sup> Construction company Fairbrother shed eight permanent full-time jobs from its Launceston base yesterday, its first job losses in about four years. Fairbrother's Executive officer Craig Edmunds said "Things have tightened in Launceston. While Hobart and the North-West are still very buoyant, (projects in) Launceston have seemed to have dried up." Fifty-two Fairbrother employees remain based in Launceston and Mr Edmunds said the company was hopeful that no more redundancies would be made. (*The Examiner*)
- Mar 20<sup>th</sup> Work has begun on a \$20 million project in Ulverstone in the State's north-west. The project includes a \$3.2 million medical centre and a major residential development. (*The Advocate*)
- Mar 20<sup>th</sup> Three projects worth \$45 million will be built within the Launceston General Hospital's precinct in the next 18 months. Premier David Bartlett and Health Minister Lara Giddings announced construction would start in August on: \$18 million Integrated Care Centre; \$12 million Department of Emergency Medicine; and \$15 million car park. (*The Examiner*)
- Mar 20<sup>th</sup> The Lilydale recreation ground pavilion near Launceston in the State's north will receive a \$200,000 upgrade. Bass Labor MHR Jodie Campbell announced yesterday that the Launceston City Council would receive \$578,000 to complete eight infrastructure projects under the Rudd Government's Community Infrastructure Program. Other projects include:
- Refurbishment of the John Hart Conservatory;
  - Upgrade of the Albert Hall light, sound and temperature systems;
  - Upgrade of Torrens St Park;
  - Upgrade of the Myrtle Park picnic area;
  - Additional seating at the Punchbowl Reserve. (*The Examiner*)
- Mar 25<sup>th</sup> The Tasmania Minister for Economic Development, Michael Aird, has opened Tasmania's first purpose built, fully compliant records storage and information

management centre at Austin's Ferry in the States south. Mr Aird said the multi-million dollar facility which was developed by Iron Mountain, an S&P 500 company, is regarded as a global leader in its chosen field of records and information management. "The company services 38 countries across five continents, operates 700 facilities and is the trusted partner to more than 120 000 corporate clients throughout North America, Europe, Latin America and Asia Pacific. Iron Mountain believes that Tasmania has large growth potential and expects to deliver steadily increasing localised employment opportunities," he said. (*www.sdbmagazine.com*)

Mar 26<sup>th</sup> About 25 low-income earners in the State's rural areas will receive new homes by June next year. Tasmanian Government Human Services Minister Lin Thorp announced yesterday that more than \$1.5 million would go towards the building of new residences for over 55-year-olds on low to moderate incomes in Tasmania's south-east, the Derwent Valley, King Island and Sheffield.

- STEPS will receive \$625,000 to build six cottages in Nubeena, Dunally, Orford and Triabunna
- Tandara Lodge Community Care will receive \$250,000 to build two units in Sheffield
- The King Island Council will receive \$248,000 to build two units in Currie
- The Salvation Army Property Trust will receive \$400,000 to build three units in New Norfolk. (*The Examiner*)

Mar 26<sup>th</sup> The State Government will tap into its \$100 million industry support scheme to help struggling Launceston car parts maker Automotive Components Limited (ACL). The offer has come after it was reported yesterday that ACL faced collapse and the loss of 277 jobs because of a credit shortfall. The Tasmanian Government has called on the Federal Government to match any increase above the State Government loan of \$2.5 million. (*The Mercury*)

Mar 27<sup>th</sup> The Tasmanian Premier David Bartlett flew to King Island this week after Swift Australia announced it would close its King Island abattoir. Mr Bartlett has told sacked workers they would be going back to work as the Government would give the company short-term financial support to pay (an 8 week) wages bill for staff. Swift employs 98 staff at the King Island meatworks, 50 are permanent. (*The Mercury*)

Mar 27<sup>th</sup> Nine Mile Berries, a new blueberry farm being developed in the hills behind Howth in Tasmania's northwest is set to become Australia's second-largest blueberry farm. Berry Exchange, which runs Australia's largest blueberry operation and is owned by fruit and vegetable giant Costa Group are behind the venture. About 17ha of plants are in the ground on the 103ha property and harvesting is expected early in 2011. The growing area will eventually be expanded to 50ha and could employ up to 300 people during the January to March harvest period. The fresh berries will be supplied to mainland markets as well as exported to Asia and Europe. (*Tasmanian Country*).

Mar 28<sup>th</sup> Automotive Components Limited (ACL) chairman Ivan James yesterday confirmed that he had been sent formal notification from GE Commer-

cial to inform the company that it would extend its \$3.5 million loan until June 30. The car parts maker had originally said it only had until Tuesday to service the GE debt. ACL said it had no way of doing so and appealed to the Federal Government for an urgent \$8 million loan to prevent the company falling into administration. Mr James said GE's extension was a welcome relief but it was only a temporary measure. (*The Examiner*)

Mar 30<sup>th</sup> The Tasmanian Government has stepped in to save more than 150 jobs at a north-west carpet weaver. The Government has announced it is giving Tascot Carpets in Devonport a \$1.5 million loan because of the impact of the global economic crisis. Tasmanian Treasurer Michael Aird has approved the Tascot loan under the \$100 million Tasmanian Industry Support Scheme. (*The Examiner*)

Mar 31<sup>st</sup> The latest release of the MyState Financial Tasmanian Economic Index shows that Tasmanians had increased confidence in their ability to repay debt and in their own personal financial situation. There was also a rise in the Tasmanian Economic Situation Index which reflects the perception of current and future prospects for the Tasmanian economy. The Tasmanian Treasurer, Michael Aird says "Lower interest rates, the first home buyers grant and Government stimulus packages are clearly underpinning consumer sentiment in Tasmania". The MyState Index comes just weeks after the Sensis Business Index showed that small businesses in Tasmania had the strongest business conditions in Australia. "This report, along with recent Australian Bureau of Statistics data, again shows that Tasmania continues to perform well relative to other states across the nation. "We are not immune to the global financial crisis and our economy will weaken this year but, as today's report shows, we are well placed to weather the storm" said Mr Aird. ([www.media.tas.gov.au](http://www.media.tas.gov.au))