



- **Employment fell to 229,100**
- **Unemployment rate remained steady at 5.0%**
- **Participation rate fell slightly to 60.5%**

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

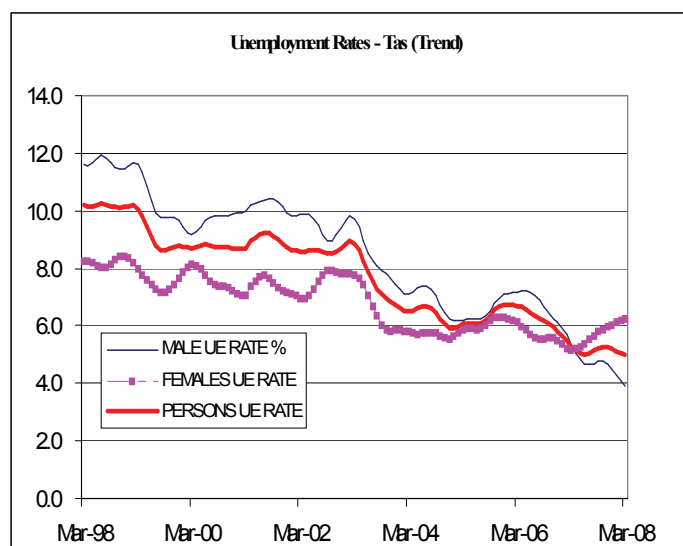
### Employment

Total employment in Tasmania declined over the last 3 months in revised terms, but remains 1.8% higher than it was in March last year. Full-time employment has continued to increase, and is currently 3.4% higher than it was last March, while part-time employment fell by 1.7% over the same period. Total male employment continued to rise this month, and is 2.5% up on the previous March figure. All of these gains were in full-time employment though, with male part-time employment falling by 4.4% over the year. Total female employment fell over the last 4 months, but remains 1.0% higher than in March last year. The annual gains in total female employment were all in full-time work, which increased by 2.5%. Female part-time employment fell by 0.6% over the year.

### Unemployment

The total number of unemployed Tasmanians has continued to fall over the last few months, and currently stands at approximately 12,000 people. This is 4.8% lower than the number recorded in March last year. The drop in the numbers of unemployed occurred entirely among males, as male

unemployment fell by 27.1% over the year. The number of unemployed females rose by 21.4%. The current unemployment rate in Tasmania is estimated to be 5.0% compared to 5.3% last March, and a current national unemployment rate of 4.0%. In other States, the unemployment rate was 4.3% in NSW, 4.3% in Vic, 3.5% in Qld, 4.5% in SA, and 3.1% in SA.



### Labour Force & Participation Rates

There were an estimated 240,000 people in the Tasmanian labour force in March, and increase of 1.5% on the number recorded in March last year. The male labour force increased by 1.0% while the female labour force increased by 2.0%. Participation rates have started to fall over the last 4 months or so, but in March were still 0.4 percentage points above the figure recorded last March. The recent falls in participation rates explain why the unemployment rate has not increased while employment has been falling. Essentially, falls in employment have been offset by an increase in the number of people leaving the labour force.

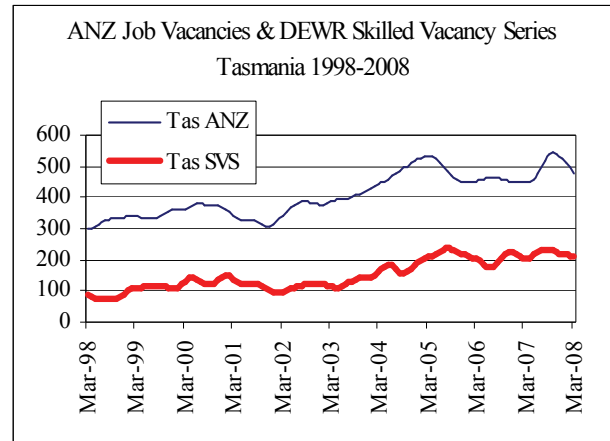
## Labour Force Estimates - Tasmania (Trend data)

	Mar-2007	Feb-2008	Mar-2008
	000's	000's	000's
<b>Employment</b>			
Male	122.9	125.9	126.0
Female	102.1	103.4	103.1
Full-time	154.3	159.3	159.6
Part-time	70.8	70.1	69.5
Persons	225.0	229.4	229.1
<b>Unemployment</b>			
Male	7.0	5.4	5.1
Female	5.6	6.8	6.8
Persons	12.6	12.2	12.0
<b>Labour Force</b>			
Male	129.9	131.3	131.1
Female	107.7	110.2	109.9
Persons	237.6	241.5	241.0
<b>Unemployment Rate %</b>			
Male	5.4	4.1	3.9
Female	5.2	6.2	6.2
Persons	5.3	5.0	5.0
<b>Full-time Teenage*</b>	23.3	16.6	23.0
<b>Participation Rate %</b>			
Male	67.2	67.5	67.3
Female	53.3	54.1	54.0
Persons	60.1	60.7	60.5
*unadjusted data			

### Job Vacancies

The **ANZ Bank Job Advertisement series (trend)** for Tasmania fell by 3.5% in March. The series is 6.7% higher than it was in March last year. Nationally, the series fell by 3.0% over the month, and was 8.7% lower than in March 2007.

**DEWR's Skilled Vacancy Survey Index (trend)** for Tasmania increased by 0.3% in March and was 5.2% higher than in March last year. Nationally, the series decreased by 2.2% over the month and was 6.8% lower than in March last year.



### Other Indicators

**Building Approvals** in Tasmania for February were 1.9% higher than they were last month and 10.1% higher than in February last year. Nationally, building approvals were 1.0% lower than last month and 5.4% higher than in February 2007.

**Private New Capital Expenditure** increased in Tasmania in the December quarter by 55.2% from the previous quarter. The annual increase was 49%. Nationally, expenditure increased by 0.3% for the December quarter and was 12.4% higher than December 2006 with the mining industry being the main contributor.

**Average weekly total earnings** of adults working full-time in Tasmania was \$1058.90 for the quarter ending November 2007. This was 8.9% less than the national average of \$1162.20 for the same period.

### Newstart & Youth Allowees

Benefit recipients (Newstart & Youth Allowances)				
	<12 months	> 12 months	Total	% > 12 months
Feb-2007	4,913	8,693	13,606	63.9%
Feb-2008	4,081	7,177	11,258	63.8%
Number difference	-832	-1,516	-2,348	
% difference	-16.9%	-17.4%	-17.3%	

## REPORT ON SURVEY OF TRENDS READERS 2008

### Introduction

In February this year a survey form was included with all copies of the *Trends* Tasmanian labour market report. Organisations that receive *Trends* include government departments, community organisations, and private businesses. A response rate of 46 per cent was achieved.

The purpose of this annual survey is to regularly consult with readers, in order to ensure that the content of the publication continues to be relevant and useful. Thanks very much to all those who contributed to the survey. This article provides a summary of the results, and also addresses some of the suggestions that people made. As mentioned, a survey is conducted usually about once a year of Trends readers, but if anyone has any suggestions, criticisms or other comments they would like to make at anytime, please e-mail them to [chris.fallon@deewr.gov.au](mailto:chris.fallon@deewr.gov.au).

### Survey Findings

Readers were asked to comment on the usefulness of the different parts of *Trends* such as the section on employment, unemployment, economic indicators, or the feature article. A five point rating scale ranging from “no use” to “extremely useful” was used by readers to indicate the value of each section to them. The following table shows the responses on each of the sections of Trends split into two groups, “little use or no use” and “useful to extremely useful”.

	Little use or less	Useful or more
Trends Sections	%	%
Employment	0%	100%
Unemployment	0%	100%
LF & PR	4%	96%
Job Vacancies	21%	79%
Other Indicators	0%	100%
Newstart & Youth	29%	71%
Feature Article	4%	96%
Economic Dev	0%	100%

Clearly the sections on job vacancies and Newstart and Youth Allowance had the lowest approval rating. It is possible that the lower than average approval rating for the job vacancies section stems from a lack of detail on the types of job vacancies available. There are two statistical series used in this section, the ANZ Job Vacancy series, and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) Skilled Vacancy Survey. The ANZ survey only publishes a total of job vacancies counted by State. The DEEWR Skilled Vacancy Survey does have some data on types of jobs counted, but really on a national basis. The Tasmanian survey is not generally statistically robust enough to allow detailed analysis, due to its small size.

The section on Newstart and Youth Allowance has consistently rated lower than other sections of Trends over the years. A decision was taken to remove commentary on the figures and simply present them as a table in early 2006. Even though the

approval rating is still lower than average for this section, it has at least improved from the 60 per cent recorded in 2005 to 71 per cent this year.

### Readers' Suggestions

A number of readers made suggestions about what they would like to see in Trends. For example, the suggestion was made that data should be made available on a local government area basis. However, the smallest area that the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) release data through the monthly labour force survey, is by statistical division. In Tasmania these regions are greater Hobart-Southern, Northern Tasmania, and Mersey-Lyell (the north-west and west regions). DEEWR do release some data on a local government basis through their Small Area Labour Markets publication. The range of data is limited, with just employment, labour force and unemployment rate data available, and there are also delays associated with producing the data. For example as of April 2008, the latest Small Area Labour Market publication is from December 2007. The publication can be accessed via the following web address:

<http://www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/Publications/LabourMarketAnalysis/SmallAreaLabourMarkets-Australia.htm>

Another suggestion was made that we include male and female figures against each of the major indicators. Usually any differences between the male and female figures are highlighted on the front page commentary, but they are also available in the table on page two, comparing the latest data to that a year ago and a month ago.

Another reader suggested that data on Indigenous Tasmanians be included. According to the 2006 Census, 3.5 per cent of Tasmanians are Indigenous. The monthly labour force survey is a sample survey, which means that a relatively small number of Tasmanian households (around 500) are surveyed and the figures extrapolated to represent the whole of the State's population. This is something of a simplification, but it does demonstrate that the chances of Indigenous people being included in a random survey are quite small. The ABS have explored ways of providing labour force estimates of Indigenous people, and for those who are interested you might like to visit the ABS web site to look at a publication called *Labour Force Characteristics of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, Experimental Estimates from the Labour Force Survey, 2006, cat. number 6287*. This publication highlights some of the limitations in attempting to produce data from sample surveys on relatively small groups within the population.

The above points are a brief summary of the 2008 readers' survey. Decisions taken about what is included and what is left out of Trends are often made on the basis of how reliable the available data is. As stated above, this office welcomes suggestions and feedback at anytime, not just through the survey process, so feel free to contact us whenever you have suggestions to make.

**This report contains material of a speculative nature and therefore should be used with caution. The Commonwealth, its officers, employees or agents disclaim any responsibility for any loss howsoever caused whether due to negligence or otherwise arising from the use of this report**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN MARCH 2008**

- 6<sup>TH</sup> Mar Brazilian-based JBS Friboi Company has paid nearly \$200 million for Australia's Tasman Group, which owns Tasmania's three biggest abattoirs, the Longford Meatworks, the Devonport plant and the King Island Plant. The Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union Tasmanian secretary has said the sale will bring stability to the industry. JBS subsidiary Swift Australia is due to take over the Tasman Group operation on May 2, 2008. (*The Mercury*)
- 11<sup>th</sup> Mar Tasmania is leading the nation in apprenticeship numbers for traditional trades. The latest National Centre for Vocational Education Research figures show that in the year to September 2007, the number of Tasmanians starting apprenticeships in trades rose 32.6 per cent compared with a national rise of 15.5 per cent. The data also showed Tasmania had the highest rate of apprentices and trainees completing their training, with 65.8 per cent. (*The Mercury*)
- 26<sup>th</sup> Mar The Devonport based Fairbrother group which has 400 employees and an annual turnover of \$100 million announced an expansion into Bendigo in rural Victoria. Fairbrother is also expected to build the Federal Hotel's Cole's Bay resort (in the north-east of Tasmania) and is about to start on the \$37 million University of Tasmania development in Hobart CBD. Fairbrother won the Department of Economic Development award for Employer of Choice in 2007. (*The Mercury*)
- 26<sup>th</sup> Mar Tasmania is poised to produce its best vintage in winemaking history. Hundreds of pickers will be working across 1300 ha of vineyards over the picking period. Bigger yields mean an increased capacity to penetrate markets interstate and also overseas. (*The Mercury*)
- 27<sup>th</sup> Mar Federal Hotel's amended resort development at Coles Bay on Tasmania's North-East coast had been given development application approval by the Glamorgan-Spring Bay Council. (*The Examiner*)
- 28<sup>th</sup> Mar Skilled migrants made up nearly half of the permanent additions from overseas to Tasmania's population in 2006-2007. The top five occupations amongst the skilled permanent additions were accountants (72), computing professionals (57), registered nurses (360), electrical distribution trades (35) and medical practitioners (27). (*The Mercury*)

- 29<sup>th</sup> Mar Tasmania's apple production has fallen from 52,509 tonnes produced in 2003 to 28,523 tonnes in 2007. Earnings for Tasmanian growers exporting into India, Taiwan and South-East Asia have fallen from \$21 million in 2000-01 to \$8 million in 2006-07. The value of the Australian dollar, oversupply in the apple market and drought were some of the reasons cited for forcing many to leave the market. (*The Mercury*)
- 31<sup>st</sup> Mar The latest survey of rural confidence in Tasmania reveals a weakening in the sector, with more farmers expecting conditions to worsen rather than improve. A report by Rabobank (a leading specialist in food and agribusiness banking) found rising input costs and the drought has had the biggest effect on confidence. It is the second successive quarter that Tasmanian farmer confidence has dropped. (*ABC News*)