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Full-time employment at highest level in four years



In November 1994, the provisional trend estimate of employment rose to 8,025,600, 5.4 per cent higher than the January 1993 low point. Trend estimates of persons employed full time have been rising for over two years and in November 1994 stood at 6,087,100, the highest level since December 1990. The trend in unemployment continued to fall in November 1994, although the rate of decrease has slowed in recent months. Trend unemployment stood at 814,200 in November 1994, the lowest level since May 1991. The trend estimate of the unemployment rate continued to fall and in November 1994 stood at 9.2 per cent, the lowest level since March 1991. The trend estimate of the participation rate remained unchanged at 63.1 per cent, for the third consecutive month.

Employment

The seasonally adjusted estimate of employed persons for November 1994 rose by 30,400 to 8,029,300. Full-time employment rose by 39,900 to 6,094,200, with male full-time employment rising by 33,000 to 4,105,800. The seasonally adjusted estimate of female full-time employment rose slightly to 1,988,400. Part-time employment fell by 9,500 to 1,935,000 in November, with a fall of 15,000 to 498,800 in male part-time employment.



Unemployment

In November 1994, the seasonally adjusted estimate of unemployed persons rose by 16,100 to 820,800. Male unemployment rose 14,500 to 483,000, with the number of unemployed males seeking part-time work increasing by 11,500 to 57,800. Female unemployment remained relatively steady and stood at 337,800 in November.

Unemployment rate

The seasonally adjusted estimate of the unemployment rate rose by 0.1 percentage points in November, but because of rounding stood at 9.3 per cent (the October estimate was 9.1%). The unemployment rate for males rose by 0.2 percentage points to 9.5 per cent while for females, the unemployment rate remained unchanged at 9.0 per cent.

LABOUR FORCE SURVEY ESTIMATES
(Seasonally adjusted)

	Employed			Unem- ployed	Unem- ployment rate — per cent —	Partici- pation rate
	Full-time workers	Part-time workers	Total			
	— '000 —					
1994						
June	6 012.1	1 869.9	7 882.0	877.7	10.0	62.9
July	6 034.7	1 937.5	7 972.2	833.9	9.5	63.2
August	6 027.2	1 907.0	7 934.2	831.5	9.5	62.8
September	6 096.6	1 913.3	8 009.9	836.1	9.5	63.3
October	6 054.4	1 944.6	7 998.9	804.7	9.1	62.9
November	6 094.2	1 935.0	8 029.3	820.8	9.3	63.2

Participation rate

The seasonally adjusted estimate of the labour force participation rate rose by 0.3 percentage points to 63.2 per cent in November 1994. For males, the participation rate rose by 0.4 percentage points to 73.8 per cent, while for females the rate rose slightly to 52.9 per cent.

For further information, order the publication *The Labour Force, Australia, Preliminary (6202.0)*, or contact Sylvia Sajler on (06) 252 6525.

Further increase in building materials prices

From September 1994 to October 1994 prices of materials used in the construction of houses increased by 0.3 per cent while prices of materials used in other building increased by 0.2 per cent.

Over the year from October 1993 to October 1994, house building material prices increased by 2.9 per cent and prices of materials used in other forms of building increased by 2.1 per cent.

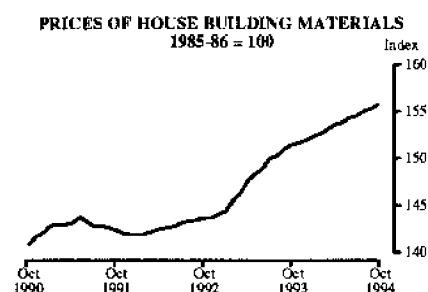
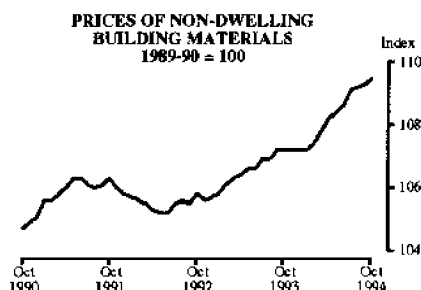
The monthly increase for house building materials reflected higher prices for copper and plastic based building materials. Prices for electric cable, copper pipe and plastic pipe increased in all cities. Price increases for concrete roof tiles in Melbourne and Brisbane were also a significant contributor to the increase. Another contributor to the upward movement was timber window prices, which rose in Sydney and Melbourne but fell in Brisbane.

Major contributors to the overall increase for other types of building this month were higher prices for aluminium windows (in all cities except Hobart and Canberra) and mains cable and copper pipe (in all cities).

PRICES OF BUILDING MATERIALS, OCTOBER 1994
Percentage change

City	House building		Other than house building	
	From previous month	From corresponding month previous year	From previous month	From corresponding month previous year
Sydney	0.6	3.6	0.4	2.6
Melbourne	0.3	3.4	0.1	1.4
Brisbane	0.5	1.6	0.2	1.9
Adelaide	0.1	1.3	0.5	2.7
Perth	0.1	2.8	0.1	2.1
Hobart	0.7	4.0	0.4	1.0
Weighted average of six State capitals	0.3	2.9	0.2	2.1
Canberra	0.3	1.6	0.2	1.5

For further information, order the publications *Price Index of Materials Used in House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra (6408.0)* and *Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra (6407.0)*, or contact Robert Adams (06) 252 6198.



More strong growth in retail trade

The Australian retail turnover trend estimates remain strong with growth of 0.9 per cent per month over the four months to October 1994. The annual growth rate in the trend (October 1994 over October 1993) was 8.4 per cent.



The food retailing group, which contributes slightly less than 40 per cent to the total estimate, continued to record strong growth with the trend showing around 1.0 per cent increase over each of the last four months. Department stores, clothing and soft good retailing, hospitality and services and other retailing have also shown strong growth in recent months. The growth rate for the recreational good retailing group has eased following a period of strong growth. The trend estimates for the household good retailing group have been in decline for the last two months.

RETAIL AND SELECTED SERVICE INDUSTRIES TURNOVER

Industry group	Original value in October 1994 (\$m)	Average monthly percentage change in trend estimates	
		3 months ended October 1994	12 months ended October 1994
Supermarkets, grocers	3 628	1.1	0.7
Department stores	935	1.0	0.6
Clothing and soft good retailing	655	0.8	0.2
Household good retailing	1 022	-0.2	0.3
Recreational good retailing	508	0.6	1.1
Other retailing	906	1.5	1.0
Hospitality and services	1 670	1.0	1.0
<i>All groups</i>	9 324	0.9	0.7

Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Northern Territory have all recorded strong growth in retail turnover in recent months. New South Wales, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory have shown moderate to strong growth, while in Tasmania the trend has shown little growth for several months.

RETAIL AND SELECTED SERVICE INDUSTRIES TURNOVER

Monthly percentage change in State trend estimates

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
1994									
June	0.5	1.1	1.1	0.7	0.3	0.1	1.3	-0.2	0.7
July	0.6	1.2	1.1	1.1	0.6	0.0	1.7	0.3	0.9
August	0.7	1.2	1.1	1.3	0.7	0.0	2.1	0.6	0.9
September	0.6	1.1	1.0	1.3	0.7	0.0	2.1	0.7	0.9
October	0.7	1.2	1.0	1.2	0.8	0.1	2.1	1.0	0.9

New series gives full picture of employer training performance

Australian employers reported employing 15,800 full-time qualified trainers in February 1994, to provide training for their employees. Therefore, approximately one out of every 350 employees was a full-time qualified trainer.

In addition, almost all of the 32 per cent of employers who provided formal training for their employees in the year to February reported using external training providers for part or all of their training needs.

These are among the findings in the new ABS publication *Employer Training Practices, Australia* which also contains information about training expenditure, how training is planned and factors (including the Training Guarantee) affecting the provision of training.

All employers who employed full-time qualified trainers reported providing formal in-house training during the 12 month period ending February 1994. They also reported having a written training plan more often than employers who did not employ full-time qualified trainers but who provided training. For instance, as shown in the table below, large organisations with a full-time qualified trainer or trainers were more than twice as likely to have had a written training plan than large organisations without a qualified trainer(s) (85% compared with 35%).

LARGE EMPLOYERS (a) REPORTING TRAINING: IMPACT OF QUALIFIED TRAINERS DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS, FEBRUARY 1994
Per cent of employers

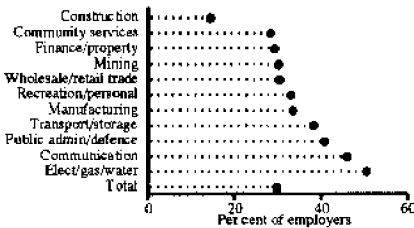
Training practices	No qualified trainer	Qualified trainers		Total
		Full-time	Not full-time	
Employers reporting in-house training	96.9	100.0	95.5	97.5
Employers with a written training plan(s)	35.0	85.2	62.4	66.5
Employers used formal training needs analysis	38.3	73.1	41.4	52.9

(a) Employers with 100 or more employees.

More than 40 per cent of employers in the electricity, gas and water; communication; and public administration and defence industries reported having a written training plan during the reference period. The construction industry had the lowest proportion of employers with a written training plan (14%). Overall, 30 per cent of all employers who were providing some formal training for their employees, reported having a written training plan.

Most training plans (60%) specified an amount of training to be provided for employees. This was specified as either time (35%) or money (25%) to be spent; and/or number of courses to be attended by employees (31%). Sixty-three per cent of employers reported such training plans were applicable to at least half of their employees. The majority of employers also reported these written training plans had been in place for less than three years.

PROPORTION OF EMPLOYERS WITH A WRITTEN TRAINING PLAN DURING LAST 12 MONTHS, FEBRUARY 1994

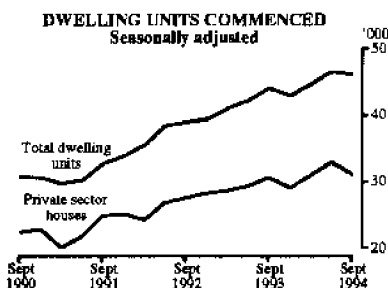


Overall, 62 per cent of all organisations reported providing in-house training for their employees during the 12 month period ending February 1994. The majority of all organisations (87%) used knowledge from within the organisation to determine the content and subject of in-house training courses.

Less than one-third of all organisations (32%) used formal training needs analysis to determine the training needs of employees. Such analysis was most widely used by those large organisations who employed full-time qualified trainers (73%).

For further information, order the publication Employer Training Practices, Australia (6356.0), or contact Karen Collins on (06) 252 7798.

Home starts level off as switch to medium density continues



In seasonally adjusted terms, the preliminary estimate of the number of dwelling units commenced in the September quarter 1994 was 46,028, a decrease of 1.1 per cent from the record high June quarter 1994 estimate. The latest figure was still 4.6 per cent above the September quarter 1993 estimate. Private sector house commencements fell by 5.5 per cent to 31,067 in the September quarter 1994 (also from a record high June quarter estimate), but remained 1.5 per cent above the September quarter 1993 estimate.

Dwelling unit commencements rose marginally in South Australia, but were lower than the June quarter 1994 estimates in all other States and the Australian Capital Territory. In Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory, seasonally adjusted dwelling commencements fell for the second quarter in a row.

In original terms, there were 48,091 dwelling units commenced in the September quarter 1994, an increase of 2.5 per cent over the June quarter estimate, and the highest original quarterly commencements figure recorded by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Total private sector commencements rose by 1.6 per cent (house commencements down by 1.5%; other residential building commencements up by 10.1%).

Total public sector commencements rose by 21.7 per cent (house commencements down by 1.2%; other residential building commencements up by 36.3%). The commencement of 14,976 other residential buildings (flats, townhouses, apartments, etc.) in the September quarter 1994, was also the highest quarterly figure on record.

For further information, order the publication Building Activity, Australia: Dwelling Unit Commencements (8750.0), or contact Paul Seville on (06) 252 6067.

Inquiries

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15 December 1994

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Expected releases over the fortnight to 27 December

- 15** Australian National Accounts: State Accounts, September Quarter 1994 (5242.0; \$26.00)
- 16** Price Indexes of Articles Produced by Manufacturing Industry, Australia, October 1994 (6412.0; \$11.00)
- 19** Merchandise Imports, Australia: Balance of Payments Basis, November 1994 (5320.0; \$10.00)
Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Australia, October 1994 (5609.0; \$11.00)
Export Price Index, Australia, October 1994 (6405.0; \$8.50)
- 20** Price Indexes of Materials Used in Manufacturing Industries, Australia, October 1994 (6411.0; \$11.00)
Import Price Index, Australia, October 1994 (6414.0; \$8.50)
- 21** Registrations of New Motor Vehicles, Australia, November 1994, Preliminary (9301.1; \$12.00)
- 23** Manufacturing Production, Australia: Preliminary, November 1994 (8301.0; \$11.00)

Selected releases: 7 to 13 December

General

Tasmanian Statistical Indicators, December 1994 (1303.6; \$10.00)

Social statistics

Australian Women's Year Book, 1994 (4124.0; \$15.00) — *new issue*

National accounts, Finance and Foreign trade

Discussion Paper: Introduction of Revised International Statistical Standards in ABS Macro-economic Statistics, 1994 (5245.0; \$10.00) — *new issue*

Labour statistics and Prices

Employed Wage and Salary Earners, Aust., June Qtr 1994 (6248.0; \$16.50)

The Labour Force, Aust. — Preliminary Data on Floppy Disk, November 1994 (6271.0; \$66.30)

House Price Indexes: Eight Capital Cities, September Qtr 1994 (6416.0; \$27.50)

The Labour Force, Vic., August Qtr 1994 (6202.2; \$16.50)

Manufacturing, Mining, Energy, Service industries, Building and construction

Dwelling Unit Commencements Reported by Approving Authorities, Vic., September 1994 (8741.2; \$11.00)

Building Approvals, Tas., October 1994 (8731.6; free)

Dwelling Unit Commencements Reported by Approving Authorities, Tas., September 1994 (8741.6; \$10.00)

Transport

Motor \

Key national indicators	Period	Units	Latest figure available		Percentage change (a) on	
			Original	Seasonally adjusted	Previous period	Corresponding period last year
National accounts						
Gross domestic product (GDP(A)) at 1989-90 prices	September qtr 94	\$m	102 432	102 724	1.3	6.4
International accounts						
Balance on current account (b)	October 94	\$m	-1 903	-1 646	12	-29
Balance on merchandise trade (b)	"	"	-516	-319	29	—
Balance on goods and services (b)	"	"	-690	-451	21	—
Merchandise exports	"	"	5 748	5 568	5	3
Merchandise imports	"	"	-6 264	-5 887	2	10
Net foreign debt	September qtr 94	\$m	160 258	n.a.	-1.5	-7.3
Net foreign liabilities	"	"	236 486	n.a.	1.6	2.2
Consumption and investment						
Retail turnover at current prices	October 94	\$m	9 323.9	9 347.2	2.4	9.1
New capital expenditure at current prices	September qtr 94	"	7 885	7 995	-0.9	23.4
New motor vehicle registrations	October 94	no.	54 355	55 799	13.7	22.8
Production						
Manufacturers' sales at 1989-90 prices	March qtr 94	\$m	35 184	37 572	2.3	9.9
Dwelling unit approvals	October 94	no.	15 041	15 970	-8.1	4.4
Building approvals	"	\$m	1 348	2 430	-0.8	6.5
Building work done at 1989-90 prices	June qtr 94	"	6 643	6 303	—	2.7
Prices						
Consumer price index	June qtr 94	1989-90 = 100.0	111.2	n.a.	0.7	1.7
Articles produced by manufacturing industry	September 94	1988-89 = 100.0	116.3	n.a.	0.1	0.3
Materials used in manufacturing industries	" 94	1984-85 = 100.0	124.6	n.a.	-0.8	-2.7
Labour force and demography						
Employed persons	November 94	'000	8 025.1	8 029.3	0.4	3.3
Participation rate †	"	%	62.8	63.2	0.3	0.1
Unemployment rate †	"	"	8.7	9.3	0.1	-1.7
Job vacancies	August qtr 94	'000	68.7	65.2	23.0	75.2
Average weekly overtime per employee	"	hours	1.28	1.33	0.9	10.3
Estimated resident population	March 94	million	17.8	n.a.	0.3	1.0
Short-term overseas visitor arrivals	September 94	'000	253	296	0.2	14.3
Incomes						
Company profits before income tax	September qtr 94	\$m	6 968	6 615	8.2	32.8
Av. weekly earnings, full-time adults; ordinary time	August 94	\$	620.40	622.60	0.7	1.4
Financial markets						
Interest rates (c) (monthly average)						
90-day bank bills †	October 94	% per annum	6.55	n.a.	0.45	1.75
10-year Treasury bonds †	October 94	"	10.50	n.a.	0.15	4.00
Exchange rate — \$US (c)	October 94	per SA	0.7382	n.a.	-0.4	12

(a) Based on seasonally adjusted figures where available. (b) For percentage changes, a minus sign indicates an increase in the deficit; no sign means a decrease in the deficit or an increase in the surplus. (c) Source: Reserve Bank of Australia.

NOTES: † = change is shown in terms of percentage points. n.a. = not available.

Key State indicators	Period	Percentage change from same period previous year								
		NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
New capital expenditure*	June qtr 94	25.2	0.3	12.3	5.2	10.5	-34.8	n.a.	n.a.	16.8
Retail turnover (trend estimate)	October 94	8.7	9.0	10.0	7.2	6.4	1.9	11.5	3.8	8.4
New motor vehicle registrations†	October 94	32.8	21.7	17.2	9.8	18.0	21.8	18.2	-2.4	22.8
Number of dwelling unit approvals*	October 94	16.5	16.8	-6.5	-11.8	-6.7	-6.1	34.9	79.9	4.4
Value of total building work done	June qtr 94	-1.3	-0.4	9.1	-6.1	23.8	14.2	42.9	-2.7	3.9
Employed persons*	November 94	2.9	1.7	6.4	1.5	4.2	2.1	12.3	2.8	3.3
Capital city consumer price index	June qtr 94	1.5	1.7	1.6	1.9	2.2	2.7	2.2	1.5	1.7
Av. weekly earnings (full-time adult ordinary time)	August 94	4.3	2.4	2.0	-0.1	5.3	2.5	-0.1	2.7	3.0
Population	March qtr 93	0.8	0.2	2.6	0.5	1.4	0.2	0.9	0.6	1.0
Room nights in licensed hotels and motels, etc.	June qtr 94	5.7	6.1	6.1	2.3	9.8	14.7	8.0	6.5	6.4

* Seasonally adjusted except for NT and ACT. † Seasonally adjusted.

Figures have been taken from a variety of ABS publications. Copies may be obtained from Information Services (see page 7). Some of the figures shown are preliminary, some final, and some are revisions of previously published figures. Users should check the latest relevant publication or with the ABS Information Services if the status of the statistic is important. The ABS should be acknowledged as the source when reproducing or quoting any part of this publication.

