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## TRADE UNION STATISTICS, AUSTRALIA

30 JUNE 1994

### MAIN FEATURES

**Note:** From this edition of *Trade Unions Statistics, Australia*, statistics presented in Table 3 on the proportion of trade union members to total employees have used estimates of employees from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Labour Force Survey. Prior to this edition of the publication, estimates of employees were taken predominantly from the ABS Survey of Employment and Earnings. For further information see paragraph 8 of the Explanatory Notes.

**Final issue:** For further information, see Explanatory Notes, page 6.

• At June 1994 there were 157 trade unions with 2,524,000 financial members and a total membership of 2,890,200.

• The number of trade unions decreased by 31, or 16 per cent, from the previous year. Amalgamations were the main cause of the reduction in the number of unions. In the year to 30 June 1994, 40 unions amalgamated to form 13 unions.

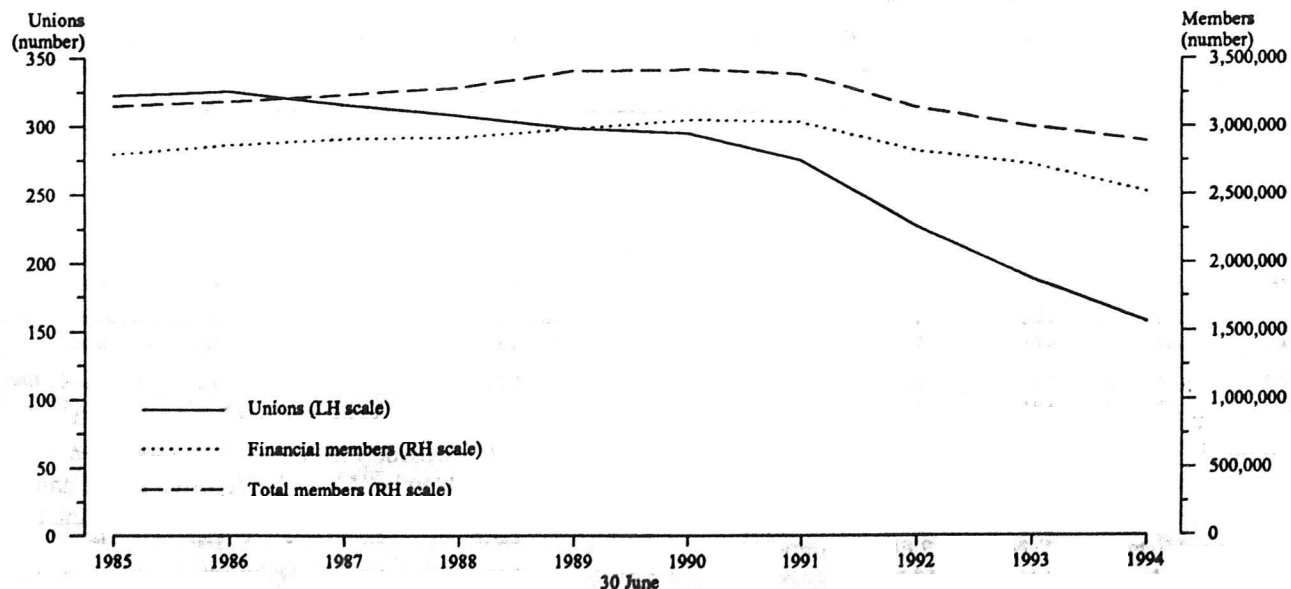
• The number of unions declined in all States and Territories over the period 1989 to 1994 but at different rates (see Table 1). The total number of unions in Australia decreased by 1 per cent between

1989 and 1990, by 7 per cent between 1990 and 1991, by 17 per cent between 1991 and 1992 and between 1992 and 1993.

• Trade union membership decreased by 109,900 or 4 per cent in the year to 30 June 1994. This continues the recent trend in the decline in trade union membership, from 1990 to 1991 by 1 per cent, 1991 to 1992 by 7 per cent and 1992 to 1993 by 4 per cent.

• The number of members reported declined in all States over the period 1989 to 1994 but at different rates (see Table 2).

GRAPH 1. NUMBER OF SEPARATE UNIONS, NUMBER OF FINANCIAL MEMBERS AND TOTAL MEMBERS, AUSTRALIA



Source: Tables 1 and 2

### INQUIRIES

• for further information about statistics in this publication and the availability of related unpublished statistics, call Henry Ferst on Melbourne (03) 615 7980 or any ABS State office.  
• for information about other ABS statistics and services, please refer to the back page of this publication.

Male membership of trade unions has decreased by 3 per cent since 1993 and by 20 per cent since 1989 to 1,754,600 at June 1994. The number of female trade union members has decreased by 4 per cent since 1993 and by 7 per cent since 1989 to 1,135,600 at June 1994. The proportion of male membership to total union membership has decreased from 64 per cent in 1989 to 61 per cent in 1994.

The proportion of financial members to total members has decreased from 91 per cent at June 1993 to 87 per cent at June 1994. Male financial members as a proportion of total male membership decreased from 89 per cent to 83 per cent over this period, while female financial members remained constant at 94 per cent.

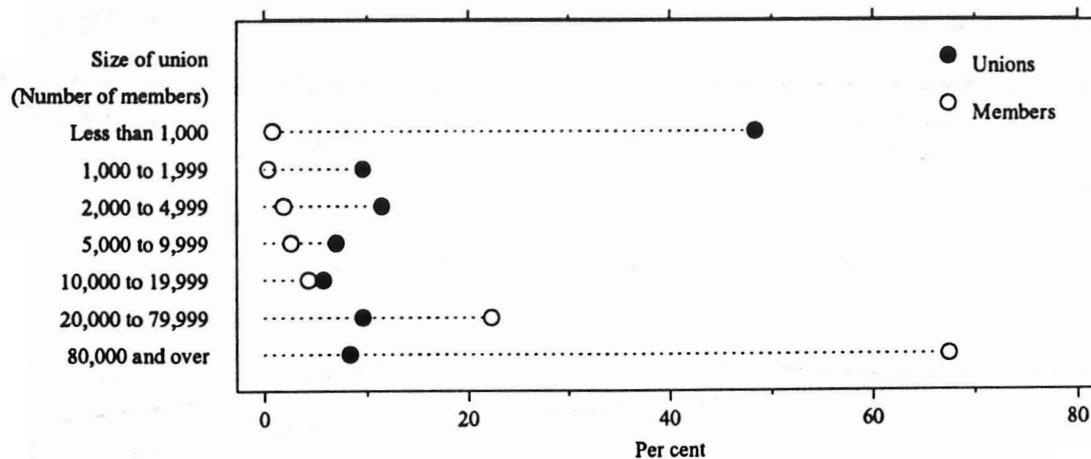
The proportion of total employees who are union members has declined from 47 per cent at June 1993

to 44 per cent at June 1994. Males declined from 51 per cent to 48 per cent and females declined from 42 per cent to 39 per cent in the same period.

Between 1993 and 1994 the number of unions with membership of 100,000 and over increased from 9 to 13, from 5 per cent of unions to 8 per cent of unions. The number of unions with less than 1,000 members has declined from 89 at June 1993 to 76 at June 1994, but the proportion of unions with less than 1,000 members has remained approximately the same at around 48 per cent.

The number of members in unions with membership of 100,000 and over increased from 1,387,100 to 1,948,000 between June 1993 and June 1994, or from 46 per cent to 67 per cent of total union membership. The proportion of members in unions of less than 1,000 members was 1 per cent of total union membership at June 1993 and at June 1994.

GRAPH 2. DISTRIBUTION OF TRADE UNIONS AND  
TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP BY SIZE OF UNION,  
AUSTRALIA 30 JUNE 1994



Source: Tables 5 and 6

## NOTES

The trade union statistics are compiled from questionnaires completed by individual trade unions and employee associations. Accordingly, persons who are members of more than one trade union or employee association are counted more than once. The statistics relate to trade union membership and State of operation of unions. Membership is that reported by the unions and may include persons who do not consider themselves as members (eg. unfinancial, honorary, suspended). Explanatory Notes are published on pages 6 and 7 of this publication.

**RICHARD MADDEN**  
Acting Australian Statistician

**TABLE 1. TRADE UNIONS: NUMBER OF SEPARATE UNIONS**

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust. (a)
30 June									
1989	169	160	129	135	134	125	71	73	295
1990	163	157	126	131	134	121	51	62	295
1991	150	146	115	121	118	110	51	58	275
1992	124	114	94	95	95	91	44	54	227
1993	93	89	69	68	72	67	35	41	185
1994	81	71	57	56	59	54	27	30	157

(a) Australian totals do not equal the sum of the States and Territories. See paragraph 3 of the Explanatory Notes.

**TABLE 2. TRADE UNIONS: NUMBER OF MEMBERS ('000)**

	NSW(a)	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT(a)	Aust.
<b>MALES</b>									
30 June									
1989 - Financial	652.8	523.3	255.1	165.5	157.4	56.3	9.4	31.4	1,851.2
Total	807.6	598.9	300.0	187.3	181.9	63.0	11.6	40.6	2,191.0
1990 - Financial	664.7	532.6	280.2	173.4	167.5	58.1	9.7	30.2	1,916.3
Total	812.9	598.5	311.8	189.4	193.6	62.4	10.6	37.9	2,217.1
1991 - Financial	643.6	502.1	257.7	169.8	165.9	53.4	9.4	30.0	1,831.8
Total	762.5	573.5	300.5	186.8	186.9	59.3	11.7	34.3	2,115.5
1992 - Financial	573.4	464.1	239.5	157.4	160.3	51.5	8.2	27.7	1,682.1
Total	683.9	522.0	279.9	176.8	178.6	57.2	9.9	31.1	1,939.4
1993 - Financial	525.5	429.4	243.6	158.4	156.3	51.3	8.1	32.1	1,604.7
Total	614.0	482.4	273.1	174.6	167.1	55.6	9.2	36.5	1,812.6
1994 - Financial	497.1	375.6	231.5	143.5	124.2	45.4	8.3	30.5	1,456.1
Total	617.2	455.7	274.7	163.5	145.4	51.2	9.7	37.2	1,754.6
<b>FEMALES</b>									
30 June									
1989 - Financial	430.9	310.2	145.2	103.4	86.9	32.1	7.1	21.6	1,137.2
Total	461.5	332.3	158.0	110.6	92.5	34.0	7.7	22.7	1,219.3
1990 - Financial	406.3	307.4	155.2	112.1	94.5	33.1	7.4	20.7	1,136.7
Total	450.5	316.7	161.3	114.8	98.3	33.3	7.9	22.3	1,205.2
1991 - Financial	423.9	325.7	171.0	114.2	96.6	35.3	7.9	21.6	1,196.2
Total	454.6	338.5	183.8	119.2	103.0	36.3	8.8	22.6	1,267.0
1992 - Financial	411.7	291.0	162.5	114.6	96.2	35.9	7.2	21.5	1,140.5
Total	428.4	305.0	175.2	120.4	99.1	36.9	7.9	22.7	1,195.7
1993 - Financial	396.3	265.8	169.5	112.7	98.9	37.1	7.5	22.8	1,110.5
Total	423.6	288.2	183.4	119.3	102.8	38.4	8.1	23.6	1,187.5
1994 - Financial	389.8	253.2	171.3	107.2	81.3	34.9	7.5	22.6	1,067.8
Total	416.5	268.9	182.8	115.9	84.2	35.8	7.8	23.7	1,135.6
<b>PERSONS</b>									
30 June									
1989 - Financial	1,083.6	833.5	400.3	268.8	244.3	88.4	16.4	53.0	2,988.4
Total	1,269.0	931.2	458.0	297.9	274.4	97.1	19.3	63.4	3,410.3
1990 - Financial	1,071.1	840.0	435.3	285.4	262.2	91.2	17.1	50.9	3,053.2
Total	1,263.5	915.2	473.1	304.3	291.5	95.7	18.4	60.2	3,422.2
1991 - Financial	1,067.4	827.8	428.7	284.0	262.5	88.6	17.3	51.6	3,027.9
Total	1,217.1	912.0	484.3	306.0	289.5	95.6	20.5	57.1	3,382.6
1992 - Financial	985.1	755.0	402.0	272.0	256.4	87.4	15.5	49.2	2,822.6
Total	1,112.3	827.0	455.2	297.2	277.7	94.1	17.8	53.7	3,135.1
1993 - Financial	921.8	695.2	413.1	271.1	255.2	88.3	15.6	55.0	2,715.2
Total	1,037.5	770.6	456.5	294.0	269.5	94.6	17.3	60.3	3,000.1
1994 - Financial	886.8	628.8	402.8	250.8	205.5	80.3	15.8	53.2	2,524.0
Total	1,033.8	724.5	457.4	279.4	229.6	87.4	17.5	60.9	2,890.2

(a) Due to changes in union structures some members formerly recorded in New South Wales prior to 1993 are now included in the Australian Capital Territory. See paragraph 10 of the Explanatory Notes.

**TABLE 3. TRADE UNION MEMBERS: PROPORTION OF TOTAL EMPLOYEES<sup>(a)</sup>**  
(per cent)

	NSW(b)	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT(b)	Aust.
<b>MALES</b>									
<i>30 June</i>									
1989 - Financial	51	53	42	54	45	58	25	48	49
<i>Total</i>	63	61	49	61	52	65	30	61	59
1990 - Financial	52	54	46	56	49	61	24	43	51
<i>Total</i>	64	60	51	61	56	65	26	54	59
1991 - Financial	51	55	43	59	49	58	22	45	51
<i>Total</i>	61	62	50	65	55	64	27	51	59
1992 - Financial	47	52	40	57	47	58	20	40	47
<i>Total</i>	56	58	47	64	52	65	25	44	55
1993 - Financial	44	48	39	57	44	59	21	45	46
<i>Total</i>	52	54	44	63	47	64	24	51	51
1994 - Financial	40	41	36	50	34	52	22	42	40
<i>Total</i>	49	50	42	57	40	58	26	51	48
<b>FEMALES</b>									
<i>30 June</i>									
1989 - Financial	46	41	33	44	34	46	24	34	41
<i>Total</i>	50	44	36	47	36	49	26	36	44
1990 - Financial	43	40	34	48	36	48	26	34	40
<i>Total</i>	47	41	36	49	38	48	28	37	43
1991 - Financial	44	43	37	50	37	50	25	37	42
<i>Total</i>	47	45	40	52	39	51	28	39	45
1992 - Financial	43	41	34	51	37	51	23	35	41
<i>Total</i>	45	42	37	53	38	53	25	37	43
1993 - Financial	41	37	36	49	38	55	24	35	40
<i>Total</i>	44	40	39	52	39	57	26	36	42
1994 - Financial	40	34	34	45	29	51	25	35	37
<i>Total</i>	42	36	36	49	30	53	26	36	39
<b>PERSONS</b>									
<i>30 June</i>									
1989 - Financial	49	48	38	49	40	53	24	41	46
<i>Total</i>	57	54	44	55	45	58	28	49	52
1990 - Financial	48	48	41	53	43	55	25	39	46
<i>Total</i>	57	52	45	56	48	58	27	46	52
1991 - Financial	48	50	40	55	43	54	23	41	47
<i>Total</i>	55	55	46	59	48	58	27	45	53
1992 - Financial	45	47	37	54	43	55	22	38	44
<i>Total</i>	51	51	42	59	46	59	25	41	49
1993 - Financial	43	43	38	53	41	57	22	40	43
<i>Total</i>	48	48	42	58	44	61	25	44	47
1994 - Financial	40	38	35	48	32	51	23	38	38
<i>Total</i>	46	44	39	53	36	56	26	44	44

(a) Estimates of total employees used in calculating the proportion of trade union members to total employees have been derived from the ABS Labour Force Survey. See paragraph 8 of the Explanatory Notes.

(b) Due to changes in union structures some members formerly recorded in New South Wales prior to 1993 are now included in the Australian Capital Territory. See paragraph 10 of the Explanatory Notes.

TABLE 4. TRADE UNIONS: NUMBER OF STATES AND/OR TERRITORIES OF OPERATION, AUSTRALIA

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six or more	Total all States
NUMBER OF SEPARATE UNIONS							
30 June							
1989	168	6	6	10	15	94	299
1990	168	5	5	12	16	89	295
1991	156	9	3	16	12	79	275
1992	134	5	3	9	13	63	227
1993	122	5	2	5	8	46	188
1994	104	3	2	3	7	38	157
NUMBER OF MEMBERS ('000)							
30 June							
1989	531.4	18.9	55.9	111.7	186.6	2,505.7	3,410.3
1990	545.3	18.2	46.3	133.9	127.4	2,551.1	3,422.2
1991	578.6	22.9	4.6	140.5	132.2	2,503.9	3,382.6
1992	466.1	13.6	4.4	68.1	135.0	2,447.9	3,135.1
1993	488.7	12.2	9.2	21.5	73.5	2,395.1	3,000.1
1994	438.8	7.3	3.8	10.4	18.3	2,411.6	2,890.2

TABLE 5. TRADE UNIONS: NUMBER OF UNIONS ACCORDING TO SIZE OF UNION, AUSTRALIA

Size of Union (number of members)	Number of unions				30 June 1994		
	30 June 1990	30 June 1991	30 June 1992	30 June 1993	Number of unions	Per cent of total unions	Cumulative per cent of total unions
Under 100	40	35	32	29	26	16.6	16.6
100 and under 250	34	34	26	20	21	13.4	29.9
250 and under 500	18	17	18	14	10	6.4	36.3
500 and under 1,000	44	38	28	26	19	12.1	48.4
1,000 and under 2,000	34	31	21	18	15	9.6	58.0
2,000 and under 3,000	18	13	14	11	11	7.0	65.0
3,000 and under 5,000	23	24	16	15	7	4.5	69.4
5,000 and under 10,000	21	18	19	14	11	7.0	76.4
10,000 and under 20,000	18	21	15	8	9	5.7	82.2
20,000 and under 30,000	11	11	7	5	4	2.5	84.7
30,000 and under 40,000	11	8	6	3	4	2.5	87.3
40,000 and under 50,000	5	6	5	4	3	1.9	89.2
50,000 and under 80,000	6	5	5	8	4	2.5	91.7
80,000 and under 100,000	5	7	7	4	-	-	91.7
100,000 and over	7	7	8	9	13	8.3	100.0
Total	295	275	227	188	157	100.0	

TABLE 6. TRADE UNIONS: NUMBER OF MEMBERS ACCORDING TO SIZE OF UNION, AUSTRALIA

Size of Union (number of members)	Number of members ('000)					30 June 1994		
	30 June 1990	30 June 1991	30 June 1992	30 June 1993	30 June 1994	Average number of members per union	Per cent of total members	Cumulative per cent of total members
Under 100	1.7	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.0	39	-	-
100 and under 250	5.8	5.5	4.1	2.9	3.6	171	0.1	0.2
250 and under 500	6.1	5.7	6.2	4.4	3.7	370	0.1	0.3
500 and under 1,000	31.3	26.2	19.8	18.7	13.4	703	0.5	0.7
1,000 and under 2,000	46.8	41.6	26.6	24.2	20.0	1,334	0.7	1.4
2,000 and under 3,000	42.1	31.8	35.2	26.7	27.7	2,522	1.0	2.4
3,000 and under 5,000	93.4	92.7	60.2	58.6	28.3	4,040	1.0	3.4
5,000 and under 10,000	152.3	124.5	123.9	95.3	75.3	6,847	2.6	6.0
10,000 and under 20,000	265.9	293.3	212.2	106.2	124.9	13,874	4.3	10.3
20,000 and under 30,000	276.3	278.1	170.9	115.2	89.4	22,344	3.1	13.4
30,000 and under 40,000	377.8	264.1	210.5	108.2	143.8	35,956	5.0	18.4
40,000 and under 50,000	227.7	268.2	220.2	168.4	127.3	42,432	4.4	22.8
50,000 and under 80,000	407.9	333.4	331.1	523.8	283.8	70,962	9.8	32.6
80,000 and under 100,000	454.6	627.5	633.7	359.0	-	-	-	32.6
100,000 and over	1,032.5	988.6	1,079.2	1,387.1	1,948.0	149,890	67.4	100.0
Total	3,422.2	3,382.6	3,135.1	3,000.1	2,890.2	18,413	100.0	



## EXPLANATORY NOTES

**Final issue:** Selected tables from this publication will continue to be released once each year in the monthly publication *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0). It is expected that the set of tables previously published in *Trade Union Statistics, Australia* (6323.0) will continue to be available as a standard data service on subscription. Additional unpublished data will also continue to be available on request. For further information, please contact Henry Ferst on (03) 615 7980.

### Introduction

The statistics in this publication have been compiled from questionnaires completed by individual trade unions and employee associations in respect of their membership and state of operation as at 30 June 1994. The collection was changed to an end of June basis in 1985. Figures for previous years were collected as at 31 December.

### Scope and coverage

2. Current lists of trade unions are maintained by reference to the following sources:

- trade unions registered under the provisions of the various Federal and State industrial relations Acts, trade union Acts, etc.
- unions reported to be engaged in conciliation and arbitration proceedings.
- reports in trade journals, trade union and employer periodicals, newspapers and other publications.

It should be noted that not all reporting trade unions are registered under industrial relations legislation or State trade union Acts.

To reduce the possibility of duplication of the number of unions and members in these statistics, where a trade union is a branch of a larger trade union, only the larger organisation is counted. An interstate or federated trade union (i.e. a union with members in more than one State or Territory) is treated as a separate union in each State or Territory in which it has members, but is counted only once in the Australian total. Unions with interstate associations which are not strictly branches of a common organisation are counted as separate unions in the totals for Australia.

4. The published number of trade unions varies from year to year as a result of amalgamations of unions, deregistration of unions, unions ceasing to operate, new unions being formed, existing organisations changing their status such that it brings them within the scope of the definition of a trade union (see paragraph 5), and unions reporting for the first time.

### Definitions

5. For the purpose of these statistics a *trade union* is defined as an organisation, consisting predominantly of employees, the principal activities of which include the

negotiation of rates of pay and conditions of employment for its members. Non-operating unions or branches, i.e. those with no members at the date of collection, are not included in the statistics.

6. *Membership of trade unions.* Financial members are dues paying members no more than 6 months in arrears. The total number of members includes all persons (financial, unfinancial, honorary, suspended, junior, etc.) regarded by unions as members.

7. Persons who are members of more than one union cannot be separately identified and are therefore counted more than once in the totals. The extent of this duplication is not known. Members of unions who work overseas are excluded from the reported membership data. Membership figures may be affected by differences in the concept of membership adopted by different unions or by the same union at different times (see paragraph 9 below).

8. *Proportion of total employees.* The approximate percentages of wage and salary earners in employment (i.e. employees) who were members of trade unions are shown in Table 3. From the 30 June 1994 edition of this publication, the proportions of employees have been calculated back to 30 June 1989 using estimates of employees taken from the ABS Labour Force Survey only. Prior to the 30 June 1994 edition, estimates of employees were taken predominantly from the ABS Survey of Employment and Earnings (*Employed Wage and Salary Earners* (6248.0)). The percentages shown should be regarded as giving only a broad indication of the extent of union membership among employees because they are based on estimates of employed wage and salary earners; the number of union members who were not employed (i.e. were unemployed, retired, etc.) will affect the percentages for a particular year and comparisons over time.

### Comparability of series

9. Comparability of figures for different years may be affected by a number of factors. As stated in paragraph 7, there may be duplication in the count of members. This duplication may vary over time. Union rules on membership may follow different concepts and practices and this may be reflected in the level and fluctuations of the figures reported. Unions reported financial and total membership separately for the first time as at 30 June 1985. In previous years some unions confined their reported membership to 'financial' members whilst others included various other members. Individual unions may or may not include in their reported membership unemployed members, members who have retired from the labour force, disabled members, members with dues in arrears (who may be kept on union books for varying lengths of time), etc.

10. Membership of trade unions is shown separately for males and females for each State and Territory. The subdivision of total membership into males and females is not precise because some trade unions are unable to state the

exact number of male and female members. The subdivision of total membership by States and Territories is also not precise because some unions in the Territories are affiliated with State organisations and their membership is reported under the heading of that State. For example, some unions in the Northern Territory are affiliated with unions registered in Queensland or in South Australia. In addition the record keeping practices of unions may vary over time and this will affect the division of membership by State and Territory.

#### Organisations registered under industrial relations legislation

11. Details of employee organisations registered under the *Federal Industrial Relations Act 1988* as at 30 June 1994, and comparisons for 1993, are as follows:

	1994	1993
Employee unions	52	66
Membership	2,454,000	2,510,500

1994 membership figures reflect 85 per cent of total reported trade union membership.

12. Industrial relations legislation in most States also provides for the registration of employee associations. Some employee associations are registered under more than one Act but these are counted only once in these statistics.

#### Comparison with Trade Union Members, Australia (6325.0)

13. Statistics on trade union membership obtained from a supplementary survey to the labour force survey have been published biennially in *Trade Union Members, Australia* (6325.0) and more recently in the 1993 edition of *Working Arrangements, Australia* (6342.0). The estimates from these surveys are lower than those obtained from this census for a number of reasons, including the following:

(i) estimates from the *Trade Union Members* and *Working Arrangements* surveys relate only to trade union membership in the respondent's main job; a person who was a member of a trade union only by virtue of holding a second job was excluded;

(ii) they relate only to trade union membership in one job, whereas a person who had recently changed jobs could be registered as a member of more than one union in the Trade Union Census;

(iii) the estimates relate only to persons who were employees in their main job in the reference week; other persons (e.g. unemployed and those not in the labour force) are excluded even though they may have retained union membership in respect of some earlier employment;

(iv) some persons may elect to belong to more than one union, but would be counted only once in the supplementary surveys;

(v) some unions may encounter difficulties in maintaining up-to-date registers of members. Numbers reported in the Trade Union Census may therefore include persons who are no longer members.

#### Related publications

14. Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:

*Industrial Disputes, Australia* (6322.0) - discontinued

*Industrial Disputes, Australia* (6321.0) - issued monthly

*The Labour Force, Australia, Preliminary* (6202.0) - issued monthly

*The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0) - issued monthly

*Employed Wage and Salary Earners, Australia* (6248.0) - issued quarterly

*Trade Union Members, Australia, August 1992* (6325.0) - discontinued.

*Working Arrangements, Australia, 1993* (6342.0) - discontinued.

*Award Rates of Pay Indexes, Australia* (6312.0) - issued monthly.

Users interested in obtaining information about statistics previously available from discontinued publications should call ABS Client Services on:

Toll free 1800 620 085 or Fax (06) 253 1404.

#### Unpublished statistics

15. In some cases, the ABS can also make available information which is not published. This information may be made available in one or more of the following forms: microfiche, photocopy, floppy disc, computer printout, clerically-extracted tabulation. Generally, a charge is made for providing unpublished information. Inquiries regarding data availability and associated charges should be directed to Henry Ferst on (03) 615 7980, or to Information Services in the nearest ABS office.

16. Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications and Products, Australia* (1101.0). The ABS also issues, on Tuesdays and Fridays, a *Publications Advice* (1105.0) which lists publications to be released in the next few days. The Catalogue and Publications Advice are available from any ABS office.

#### Symbols and other usages

- nil or rounded to zero

16. Where estimates have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.