



Australian Labour Market for Migrants

The Australian Labour Market for Migrants publication provides information on the Australian labour market. It is intended to inform recent migrants to Australia, people interested in working in Australia on a temporary or permanent basis, and organisations providing services to migrants and potential visa applicants.¹

The Australian economy and labour market remains resilient, although there are signs of further softening in labour market conditions. See the [Jobs and Skills Australia](#) website for recent labour market data and analysis.

Unless otherwise stated, data in this publication are from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Labour Force Survey, February 2026.^{2,3,4}

Employment

Over the 12 months to February 2026, employment opportunities and growth varied widely across industries.

Figure 1 shows the largest increases in trend employment occurred in Health Care and Social Assistance (up by 95,000), Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (up by 80,800) and Education and Training (up by 52,800). The largest decreases in employment occurred in Wholesale Trade (down by 20,400), Manufacturing (down by 8,700) and Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (down by 7,900).

The strongest rates of employment growth were in Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services (up by 8.3%), Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (6.1%) and Other Services (5.8%).

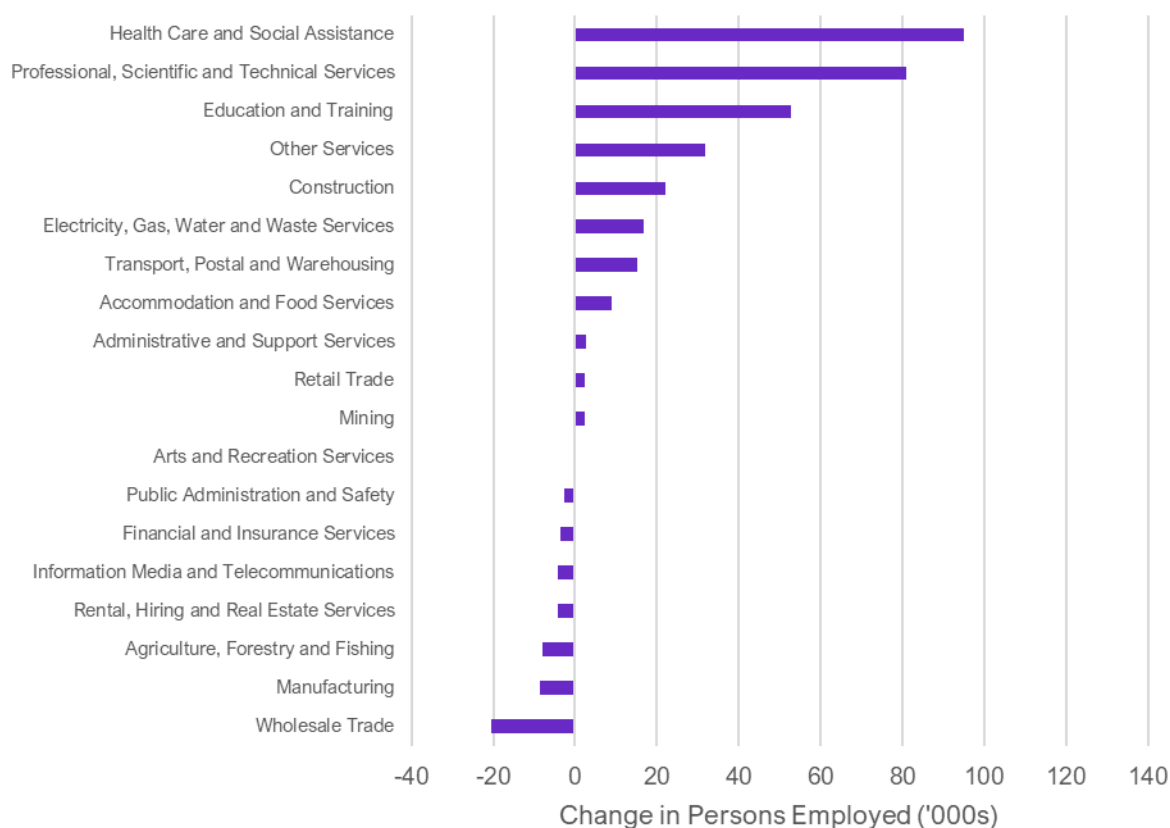
¹ The labour market analysis in this report is relevant to all migrants and potential visa applicants in provisional and permanent visa programs and temporary visa programs with a full or partial work right, administered by the Department of Home Affairs.

² Statistics on employment by industry and occupation in this publication are based on data trended by Jobs and Skills Australia using ABS [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed](#) data for February 2026, released 26 March 2026.

³ The analysis in this publication uses the [Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations \(ANZSCO\)](#). The timeframe for use of the [Occupation Standard Classification for Australia \(OSCA\)](#) for this publication will be determined by the release of official statistics using this new classification.

⁴ Editions of this publication released from January 2026 use different ABS Labour Force Survey tables and/or different country classifications to those used in previous editions.

Figure 1: Employment growth by industry ('000s persons) – February 2025 to February 2026



Source: ABS, [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed](#), February 2026 (Table 04: Employed persons by Industry division of main job (ANZSIC)), released 26 March 2026. Data trended by Jobs and Skills Australia.

Occupation by state/territory

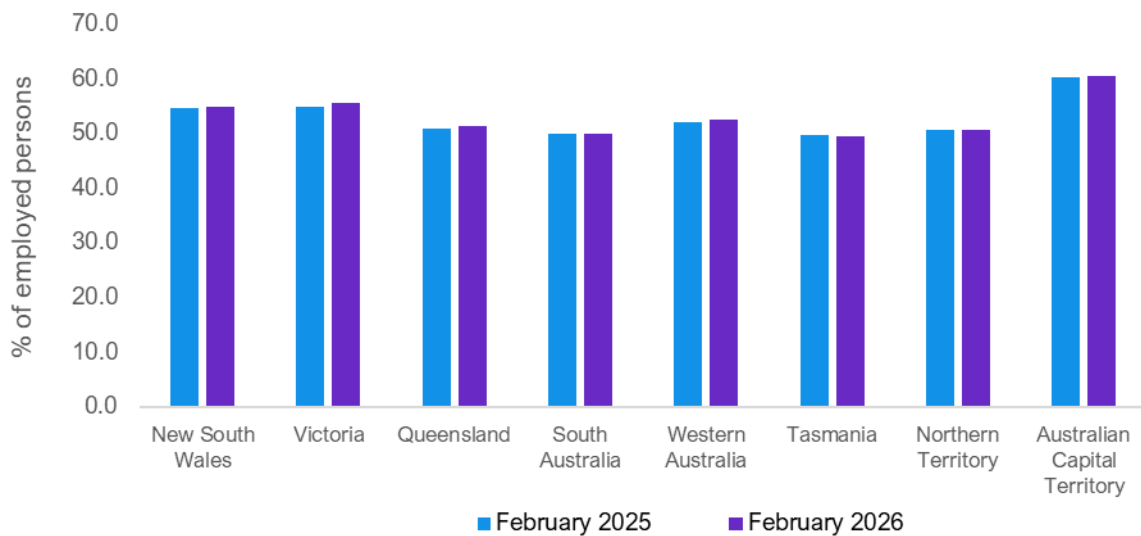
Figure 2 shows that in February 2026 (trend data), the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) had the highest share (60.5%) of employment in the Managers, Professionals, and Technicians and Trade Workers major occupation groups⁵, followed by Victoria (55.4%) and New South Wales (NSW, 54.8%).

In the 12 months to February 2026, the share of workers employed in these occupation groups increased in all states and territories except for Tasmania (down by 0.1pp).⁶ The largest increases were in Queensland (up by 0.6pp) and Victoria (up by 0.5pp). Increases were also apparent for ACT and Western Australia (WA, both up by 0.4pp). The Northern Territory and South Australia (SA) remained about the same.

⁵ In February 2026, the Public Administration and Safety industry (where Australian citizenship and security clearances may be a condition of appointment), accounted for 27.7% of employment in the ACT. Source: ABS Labour Force Survey February 2026 (trended by JSA).

⁶ "pp" means percentage points.

Figure 2: Share of employment in selected occupation groups# by state/territory – February 2025 to February 2026



Note # Selected occupation groups include ANZSCO Major Groups 1 to 3 (i.e. Managers, Professionals, Technicians and Trades Workers).

Source: ABS, [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed](#) (Table EQ08: Employed persons by ANZSCO Occupation Unit Group of main job (ANZSCO, Sex, State and Territory), February 2026, released 26 March 2026. Data trended by Jobs and Skills Australia.

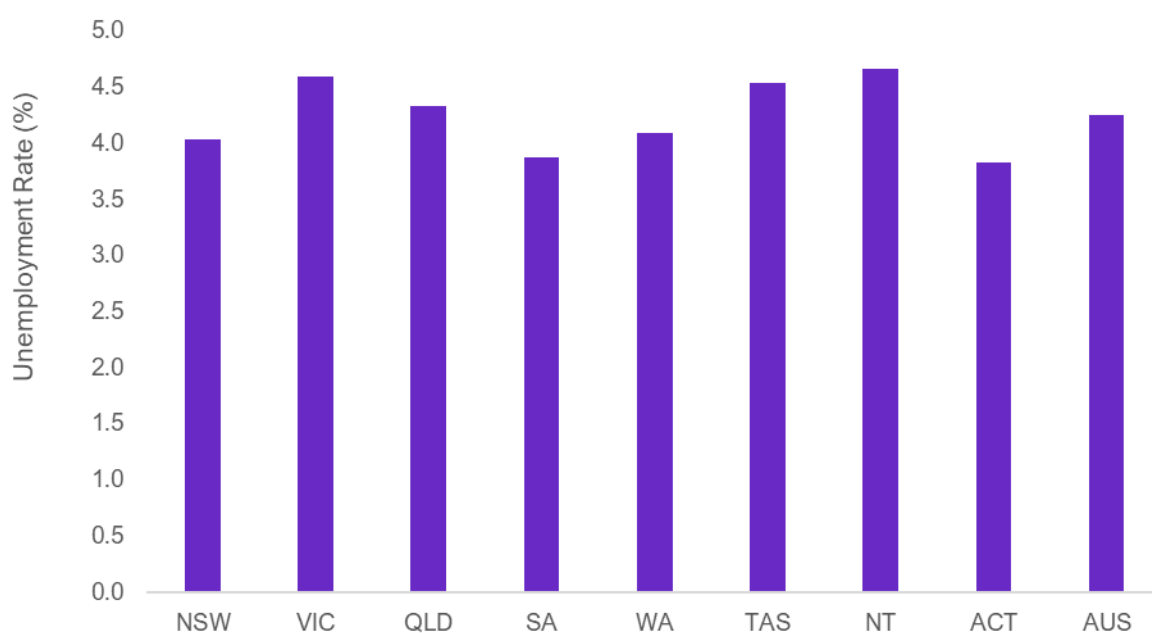
Unemployment

The trend unemployment rate in Australia was 4.2% in February 2026, up from 4.0% in February 2025.

Over the 12 months to February 2026, the unemployment rate decreased in South Australia (4.0% to 3.9%). The unemployment rate rose in the ACT (3.1% to 3.8%), WA (3.6% to 4.1%), NT (4.1% to 4.7%), Queensland (4.0% to 4.3%), Tasmania (4.0% to 4.5%), Victoria (4.4% to 4.6%). NSW remained steady at 4.0%.

Figure 3 shows that the ACT recorded the lowest unemployment rate at 3.8%, while NT recorded the highest rate at 4.7%.

Figure 3: Unemployment rates (%) by state/territory – February 2026



Source: ABS [Labour Force, Australia](#), February 2026 (Table 12: Labour force status by Sex, State and Territory - Trend, Seasonally Adjusted and Original), released 19 March 2026.

Migrant employment

Australian-born people represent the highest share of people employed in Tasmania (80.4%) and the lowest share in WA (57.6%). The share of employed people born in other subcontinents is highest for WA, the ACT and Victoria (42.4%, 38.2% and 38.0% respectively). See Table 1.

Table 1: Percentage of employment by state/territory and subcontinent of birth – February 2026

	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Australia (includes External Territories)	62.8	62.1	67.9	72.5	57.6	80.4	62.9	61.9
Oceania and Antarctica	2.8	3.0	7.4	1.3	5.0	1.6	3.5	1.9
North-West Europe	5.1	3.9	5.6	5.4	11.3	3.9	3.9	4.0
Southern and Eastern Europe	1.9	2.2	1.0	1.6	2.2	0.5	1.1	1.9
North Africa and Middle East	2.4	2.1	0.8	1.2	1.2	0.3	1.2	1.4
South-East Asia	5.8	7.2	4.2	4.2	6.7	2.8	9.5	5.2
North-East Asia	5.9	4.4	3.6	2.2	2.5	1.9	2.3	4.6
Southern and Central Asia	9.3	11.2	4.2	8.2	6.7	5.9	11.1	14.6
Americas	2.9	2.2	2.9	1.6	2.2	1.3	2.2	2.5
Sub-Saharan Africa	1.1	1.8	2.5	1.8	4.6	1.3	2.5	2.1

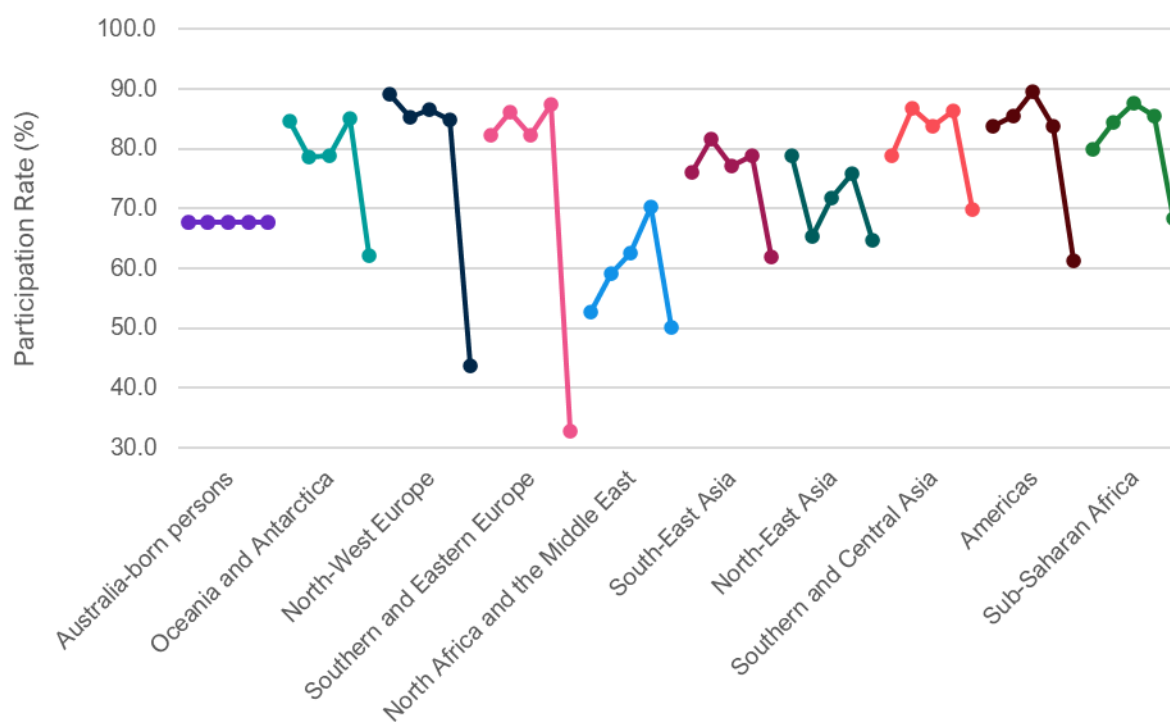
Source: ABS, [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed](#), February 2026, (Table LM4: Labour force status by elapsed years since arrival, major country group (subcontinent) of birth (SACC), sex, state and territory, July 1996 onwards (pivot table)), released 26 March 2026.

Migrant unemployment

The unemployment rates for people who migrate to Australia vary appreciably. Several factors influence migrant unemployment rates including skill level, age, English language proficiency, recent and relevant work experience and the period since arrival in Australia. Data consistently shows that recently arrived migrants have a higher unemployment rate on average than those who have lived in Australia for some years.

Figures 4 and 5 shows the participation and unemployment rates of Australian-born and migrants by subcontinent of birth⁷ and period of residence in Australia (average of the last 12 months to February 2026).

Figure 4: Labour force participation rate by years since arrival in Australia for subcontinents of birth groups – 12 months to February 2026 average

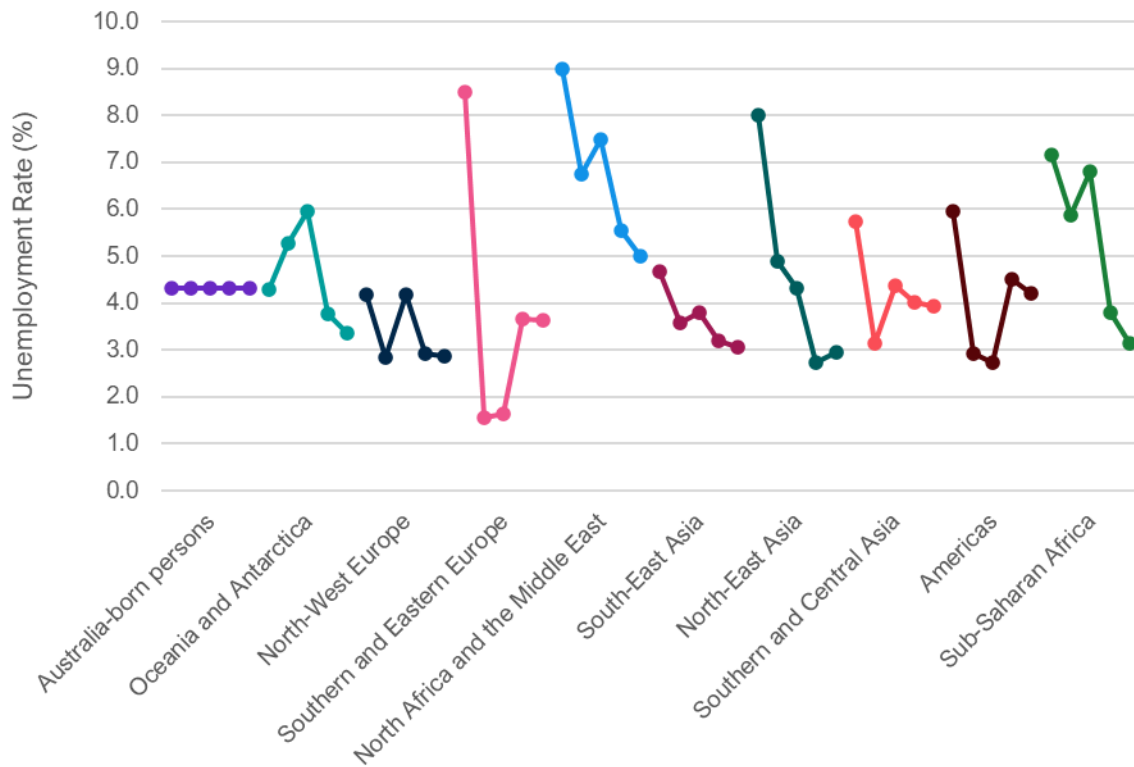


Note: The 5 data points for each subcontinent (left to right) cover Arrived within last 5 years, Arrived 5-9 years prior, Arrived 10-14 years prior, Arrived 15-19 years prior and Arrived 20 or more years prior. The final data point (arrived 20 or more years prior) may reflect aging and transitions to retirement.

Source: ABS [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed](#), February 2026 (Table LM4: Labour force status by elapsed years since arrival, major country group (subcontinent) of birth (SACC), sex, state and territory, July 1996 onwards (pivot table)), released 26 March 2026.

⁷ The [Standard Australian Classification of Countries \(SACC\)](#) was developed by the ABS for the collection, storage and dissemination of Australian statistical data. The SACC Major Groups for country of birth are used for analysis in this publication.

Figure 5: Unemployment rate by years since arrival in Australia for subcontinents of birth groups – 12 months to February 2026 average



Note: The 5 data points for each subcontinent (left to right) cover Arrived within last 5 years, Arrived 5-9 years prior, Arrived 10-14 years prior, Arrived 15-19 years prior and Arrived 20 or more years prior.

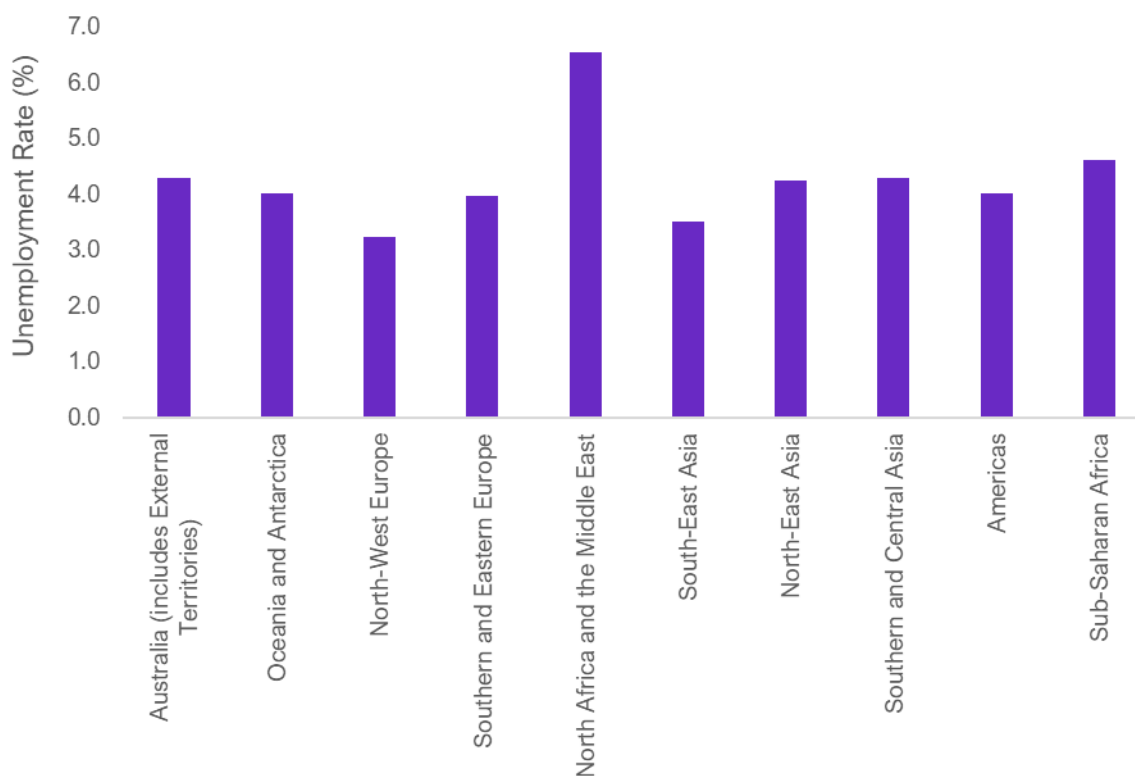
Source: ABS [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed](#), February 2026 (Table LM4: Labour force status by elapsed years since arrival, major country group (subcontinent) of birth (SACC), sex, state and territory, July 1996 onwards (pivot table)), released 26 March 2026.

Figure 6 shows average unemployment rates for the 12 months to February 2026 for people resident in Australia by their subcontinents of birth.⁸ People born in North-West Europe had the lowest unemployment rate (3.2%), while the unemployment rate for people born in North Africa and the Middle East (6.6%) was relatively high⁹.

⁸ Analysis of ABS Labour Force data is major birth country groups by subcontinent, and the cohort covers people resident in or who entered Australia under all temporary and permanent visa programs.

⁹ The variation in unemployment rates between major birth country groups (by subcontinent) may reflect English language proficiency and period of residence in Australia, noting prescribed minimum English language proficiency standards mainly apply to primary applicants in the temporary, provisional and permanent skill related visa programs.

Figure 6: Unemployment rate by subcontinents of birth - 12 months to February 2026 average



Source: ABS [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed](#), February 2026, (Table LM5: Labour force status by age, major country group (subcontinent) of birth (SACC) and sex), released 26 March 2026.

Employment by occupation

Over the 12 months to February 2026, the largest increases in employment (trend data) occurred for Professionals (up by 187,200), Community and Personal Service Workers (up by 49,900) and Machinery Operators and Drivers (up by 16,800). Declines in employment growth occurred for Sales Workers (down by 29,100) and Clerical and Administrative Workers (down by 16,300).

Table 2 shows employment growth for the major occupation groups. Additional information on occupational groups is provided in the following section on internet vacancy data.

Table 2: Trend employment growth by occupation – 12 months to February 2026

Occupational Group	1 Year Change ('000 persons)	1 Year Change (%)
Managers	12.7	0.7
Professionals	187.2	4.8
Technicians and Trades Workers	3.6	0.2
Community and Personal Service Workers	49.9	2.9
Clerical and Administrative Workers	-16.3	-0.9
Sales Workers	-29.1	-2.6
Machinery Operators and Drivers	16.8	1.9
Labourers	-3.8	-0.3

Source: ABS, [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed](#) (Table EQ08: Employed persons by Occupation unit group of main job (ANZSCO, Sex, State and Territory), February 2026, released 26 March 2026. Data trended by Jobs and Skills Australia.

Internet Vacancy data¹⁰

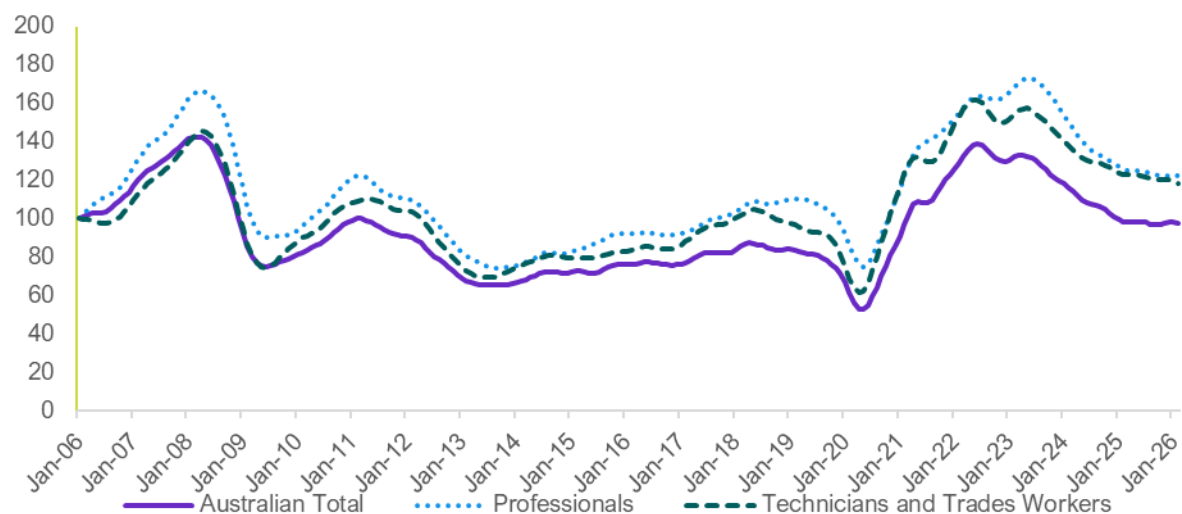
Jobs and Skills Australia produces the monthly Vacancy Report which contains the Internet Vacancy Index (IVI). See Figure 7.

Over the year to February 2026, trend vacancies decreased for most occupation groups: Community and Personal Service Workers (down by 5.2%), Clerical and Administrative Workers (down by 4.5%), Professionals (down by 3.5%), Technicians and Trades Workers (down by 3.3%) and Sales Workers (down by 0.8%).

At the more detailed occupation level, trend vacancies decreased in 28 of the 48 occupation clusters over the year to January 2026. The largest decreases were for Food Preparation Assistants (down by 20.8%), Hospitality Workers (down by 16.6%) and Information Professionals (down by 15.9%). The largest increases were for Medical Practitioners and Nurses (up by 20.6%), Farmers and Farm Managers (up by 12.3%) and Drivers and Storepersons (up by 9.6%).

Over the year to February 2026, trend vacancies fell in most states and territories, decreasing in the ACT (down by 17.2%), NT (down by 9.9%), Victoria (down by 4.8%), Tasmania (down by 4.0%), Queensland (down by 2.5%), NSW (down by 1.0%), increasing in SA (up by 2.4%) and WA (up by 2.2%). For a full list of occupations and their recent growth in vacancies, see the [Vacancy Report](#) and supporting datafiles.

Figure 7: Internet Vacancy Index – January 2006 to February 2026



Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, [Internet Vacancy Index](#), (ANZSCO2 Occupations, States and Territories, Trend), February 2026, released 18 March 2026.

¹⁰ See Jobs and Skills Australia, [Internet Vacancy Index](#) (February 2026, released 18 March 2026). The IVI is based on a count of online job advertisements newly lodged on SEEK, CareerOne and Workforce Australia during the month. Duplicate advertisements are removed before IVI vacancies are coded by Jobs and Skills Australia to occupations based on ANZSCO. The data are seasonally adjusted and trended, then indexed (January 2006=100).



Hot Topic: Australia – States and Territories

This Hot Topic provides an overview of the Australian population; its regional, state and territory distribution; and labour market. Unless otherwise stated, data are from the ABS Labour Force Survey, February 2026.

In December 2025, the Australian Government released its sixth Population Statement¹¹ that provides insights into the demographic changes that will affect the future workforce, housing and infrastructure needs of the economy. The Statement notes that population growth is expected to slow to 1.3% in 2025-26 and gradually fall to 1.2% from 2026–27 onwards.

The Australian population

Australia’s population is concentrated in NSW and Victoria (with 31.1% and 25.6% of the total population respectively). As of June 2025, just over two-thirds of Australians live in capital cities. Tasmania and Queensland had the highest share of their populations living outside their capital cities (55.7% and 50.0%, respectively).

Net Overseas Migration (NOM) was 304,812 in the 2024-25 financial year. NOM was highest in NSW and Victoria (receiving 90,226 and 87,159 persons, respectively) and the lowest in Tasmania (3,023 persons) and the NT (3,753 persons).

Table A: Distribution of the Australian resident population as at June 2025*

	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	AUST
Population	8,592,524	7,073,859	5,669,764	1,902,665	3,044,382	576,261	264,556	484,630	27,613,654
Share of Australian Population (%)	31.1	25.6	20.5	6.9	11.0	2.1	1.0	1.8	100.0
Capital City (%)	65.6	76.8	50.0	78.4	80.6	44.3	60.2	100.0	67.9
Balance of State (%)	34.4	23.2	50.0	21.6	19.4	55.7	39.8	0.0	32.1
Net Overseas Migration**	90,226	87,159	55,673	19,069	41,057	3,023	3,753	4,819	304,812

* Source: ABS [National, State and Territory Population](#), September 2025 (States and Territories, from June 1981 onwards.) Year to 30 June 2025. Released 19 March 2026

** Source: ABS [Regional population](#), 2024-25 financial year (Population estimates by SA2 and above, 2001 to 2025). Released 31 March 2026.

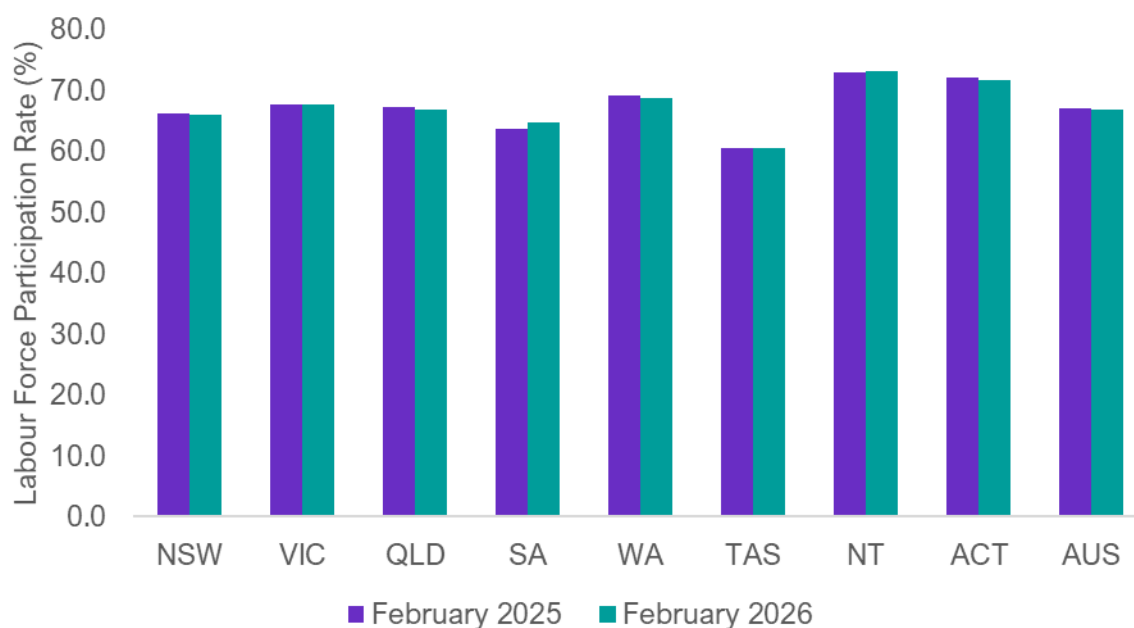
¹¹ [2025 Population Statement - Centre for Population](#)

State and territory labour force

The labour force participation rate is calculated by expressing the labour force as a percentage of the civilian population aged 15 and over. The labour force is based on employed persons plus unemployed persons.

Over the 12 months to February 2026, the labour force participation rate for Australia (trend data) decreased by -0.2pp to 66.8% (see Figure A). SA and Northern Territory (NT) recorded the largest increases in the participation rate (1.2pp and 0.3pp respectively), with WA and ACT recording the biggest decreases (both -0.5pp).

Figure A: Labour force participation rates (trend) by state (%) as at February 2026



Source: ABS [Labour Force, Australia](#), February 2026 (Table 12: Labour force status by Sex, State and Territory - Trend, Seasonally adjusted and Original), released 19 March 2026.

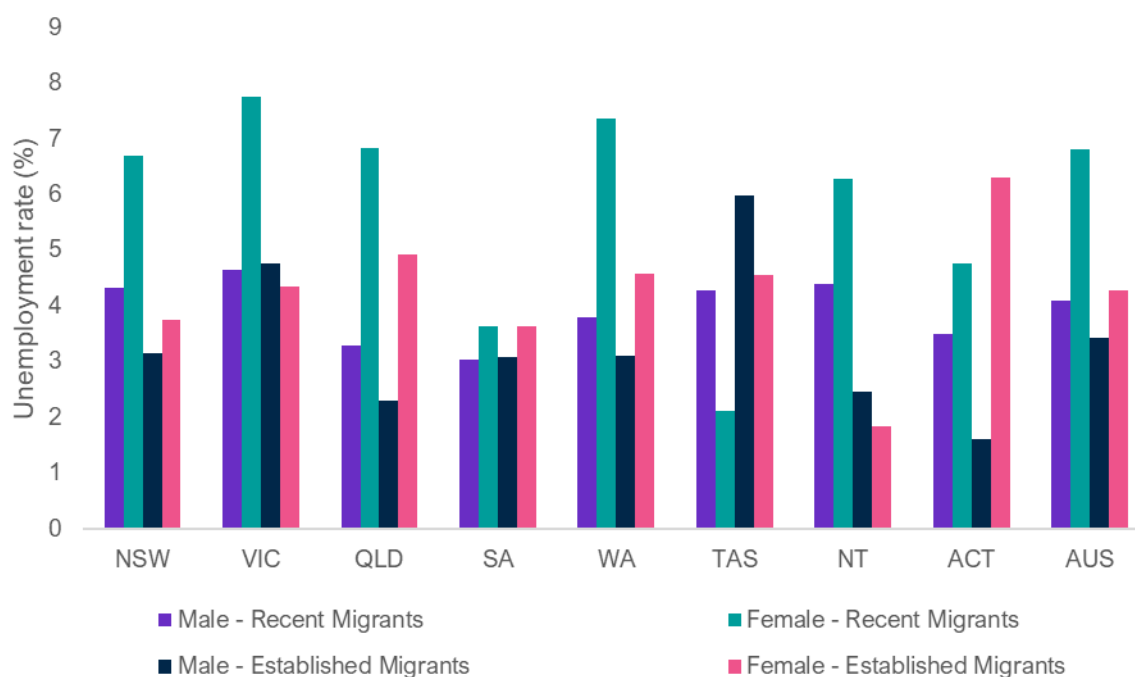
Unemployment and gender

Figure B shows unemployment rates for migrants who have arrived in Australia less than 10 years ago (recent migrants) and 10 or more years ago (established migrants) by gender.

Female migrants had higher unemployment rates than male migrants for most states and territories, except Tasmania (for recent and established migrants) and NT (for established female migrants).

In February 2026, recent female migrants had the highest unemployment rate in 6 states and territories. The highest female recent migrant unemployment rate was in Victoria at 7.7%.

Figure B: Unemployment rates (%), recent and established migrants by state and gender – February 2026



Source: ABS, [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed](#), February 2026, (Table LM4: Unemployment rate (%) by elapsed years since arrival, sex, state and territory), released 26 March 2026.

Industry by state and territory

Table B shows industry share of total employment for each state and territory (trend data). The industries that employ the largest number of persons in Australia are Health Care and Social Assistance (16.3%) followed by Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (9.5%) and Construction (9.3%). These industries feature in the top 8 employing industries in each state and territory. It also shows WA has a considerable proportion of employed persons in Mining (9.3%), and the ACT (27.7%) and NT (15.2%) have considerable proportions of employed persons in Public Administration and Safety.

Table B: Employment Distribution by Industry and state/territory (% of persons) at February 2026

Industry / State and Territory	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	AUS
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	1.6	1.7	2.1	3.8	2.0	5.1	2.2	0.3*	2.0
Mining	0.8	0.3	2.7	1.7	9.3	1.2	2.8	0.1*	2.1
Manufacturing	6.0	6.9	5.7	6.9	5.2	6.7	2.3	1.6	5.9
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	1.1	1.3	1.6	1.5	2.1	2.0	1.9	0.8	1.5
Construction	9.4	9.0	9.5	8.7	9.9	9.1	8.2	6.6	9.3
Wholesale Trade	2.2	2.5	2.1	2.4	2.3	1.7	1.4	0.7	2.2
Retail Trade	9.1	9.4	9.2	9.0	8.7	9.7	7.3	6.0	9.1

Industry / State and Territory	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	AUS
Accommodation and Food Services	6.4	6.3	7.2	6.3	6.0	7.2	7.0	5.6	6.5
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	5.3	5.2	5.4	4.6	4.6	4.1	4.1	2.1	5.1
Information Media and Telecommunications	1.6	1.4	0.8	0.9	0.8	1.0	0.8	1.3	1.2
Financial and Insurance Services	5.4	4.3	2.6	2.6	1.8	1.6	0.8	1.6	3.7
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	1.8	1.3	1.7	1.3	1.5	1.2	1.4	1.3	1.5
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	10.9	10.4	7.9	7.2	8.0	6.4	4.8	14.0	9.5
Administrative and Support Services	2.8	2.9	3.1	3.4	3.0	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.9
Public Administration and Safety	6.2	5.4	6.7	6.7	6.2	7.9	15.2	27.7	6.6
Education and Training	8.9	9.4	8.5	8.2	8.2	8.6	10.4	9.5	8.9
Health Care and Social Assistance	15.0	16.3	17.3	19.5	14.8	17.7	18.9	13.4	16.3
Arts and Recreation Services	1.8	2.0	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.8	3.4	2.0	1.8
Other Services	3.7	3.6	4.2	3.7	3.9	3.8	4.1	2.6	3.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

* Note: Data for smaller industries in the ACT can be volatile and estimates should be interpreted with caution.

Source: ABS, [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed](#), February 2026 (Table EQ06: Employed persons by Industry group of main job (ANZSIC), Sex, State and Territory, November 1984 onwards). Released 26 March 2026. Data trended by Jobs and Skills Australia.

Further Information

Queries on the Australian Labour Market for Migrants publication, including requests for inclusion on the distribution list and copies of Hot Topics attached to previous editions, should be emailed to migration@jobsandskills.gov.au.