



# Australian Labour Market for Migrants— April 2023

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.

Australia's labour market conditions are robust with strong increases in full time employment, and improvements for both the long-term unemployed and underemployed. However, the Australian labour market is not immune to the international forces driving higher inflation and slower global growth. See the [Jobs and Skills Australia](#) and [Labour Market Insights](#) websites for relevant labour market data and analysis.

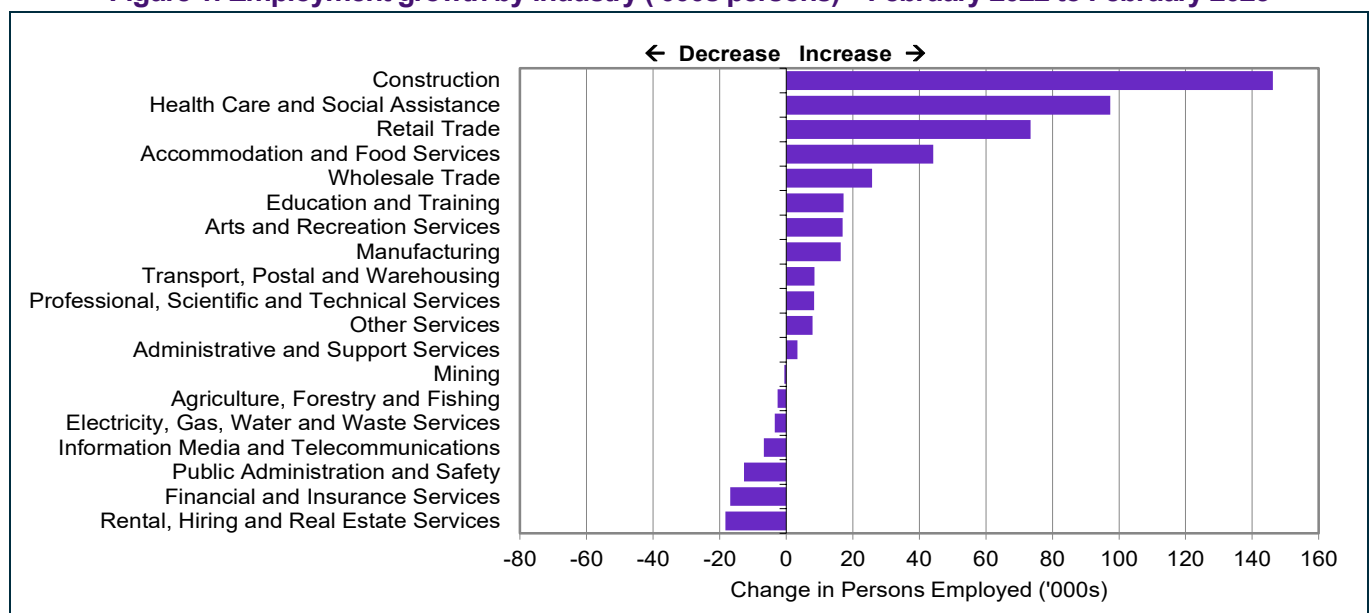
Unless otherwise stated, data in this publication is from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Labour Force Survey, February 2023.<sup>1</sup>

## Employment

Over the 12 months to February 2023, employment opportunities and growth varied widely across industries. The largest increases in seasonally adjusted employment occurred in Construction (up by 146,200), Health Care and Social Assistance (up by 97,300), and Retail Trade (up by 73,400). The largest decreases in employment occurred in Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services (down by 18,300), Financial and Insurance Services (down by 16,900), and Public Administration and Safety (down by 12,700).

The strongest rates of employment growth were in Construction (up by 12.4%), Wholesale Trade (up by 7.8%), and Arts and Recreation Services (up by 7.5%). Changes in employment by industry are shown in **Figure 1**.

**Figure 1: Employment growth by industry ('000s persons)—February 2022 to February 2023**



Source: ABS (2023). Table 04. Employed persons by Industry division of main job (ANZSIC). *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed*. Retrieved March 29, 2023. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/latest-release>

<sup>1</sup> The first paragraph of the Employment section and the Unemployment section use seasonally adjusted data for February 2023 from the ABS' Labour Force, Australia, February 2023 time series spreadsheets. Previous editions of the ABS' Labour Force, Detailed, Australia quarterly release used trend data which was suspended for the COVID-19 pandemic period and reinstated for the November 2022 quarterly release. The ABS has noted that trend data for the COVID-19 period, up to and including February 2022, is subject to volatility and should be used with caution.

**Figure 2** shows that in February 2023 (seasonally adjusted data), the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) had the highest share (59.6%) of workers in selected occupation groups (i.e. Managers, Professionals, and Technicians and Trade Workers), followed by New South Wales (NSW, 54.2%) and Victoria (54.0%).

In the 12 months to February 2023, the share of workers employed in a managerial, professional or trade occupation increased in Tasmania (up by 1.5pp<sup>2</sup>), Queensland (QLD, up by 1.3pp), the ACT (up by 0.8pp), Western Australia (WA, up by 0.6pp) and Northern Territory (NT, up by 0.2pp). The share of workers employed in a managerial, professional or trade occupation was stable in NSW and fell in Victoria (down by 1.2pp) and South Australia (SA, down by 0.2pp).

## Unemployment

The seasonally adjusted rate of unemployment in Australia was 3.5% in February 2023, compared with 4.0% in February 2022.

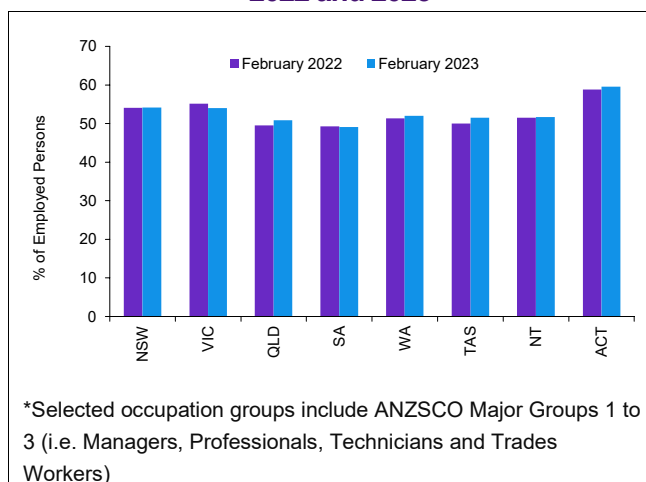
Over the 12 months to February 2023, the unemployment rate decreased in all states and territories apart from the NT where it rose (3.6% to 4.6%). The largest falls were in SA (4.9% to 3.8%), NSW (3.7% to 3.2%) and Queensland (4.2% to 3.8%).

The ACT recorded the lowest unemployment rate at 2.9%, while the NT unemployment rate was the highest at 4.6%. **See Figure 3.**

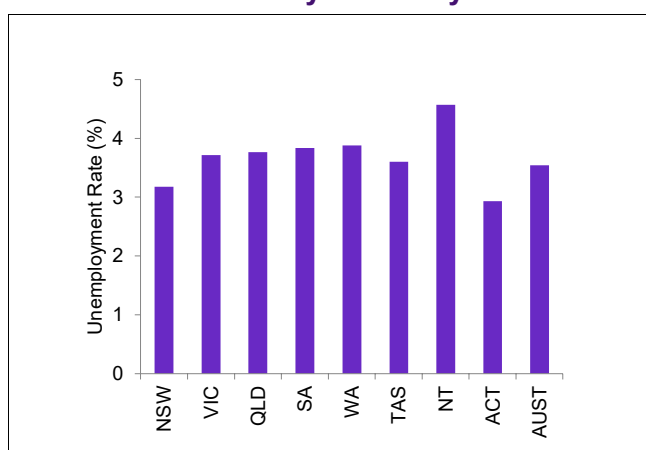
## Migrant Employment

The Australian-born represent the highest share of employed people in Tasmania (81.7%), and lowest share in WA (60.1%). The share of employed people born in other than main English-speaking countries, is highest in the ACT and Victoria (30.7% and 29.0% of workers, respectively). See **Figure 4.**

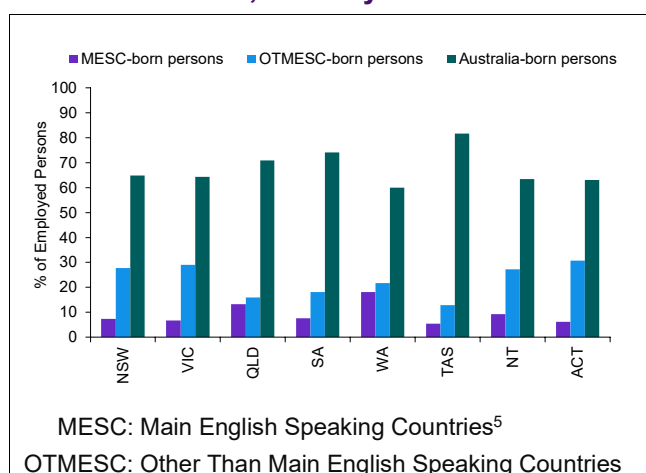
**Figure 2: Share of Employment, Selected Occupation Groups\* by State/Territory, February 2022 and 2023**



**Figure 3: Unemployment rates (%) by State/Territory—February 2023<sup>3</sup>**



**Figure 4: Share of Employment by State/Territory and Place of Birth, February 2023<sup>4</sup>**



<sup>2</sup> "pp" is percentage points.

<sup>3</sup> Source: ABS (2023). Tables 04 to 11. Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rate. *Labour Force, Australia*. Retrieved March 16, 2023. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/feb-2023>.

<sup>4</sup> Source: ABS (2023). LM7. Labour force status by Elapsed years since arrival, Main English-speaking countries, Sex, State and Territory. *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed*. Retrieved March 24, 2023. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/latest-release>

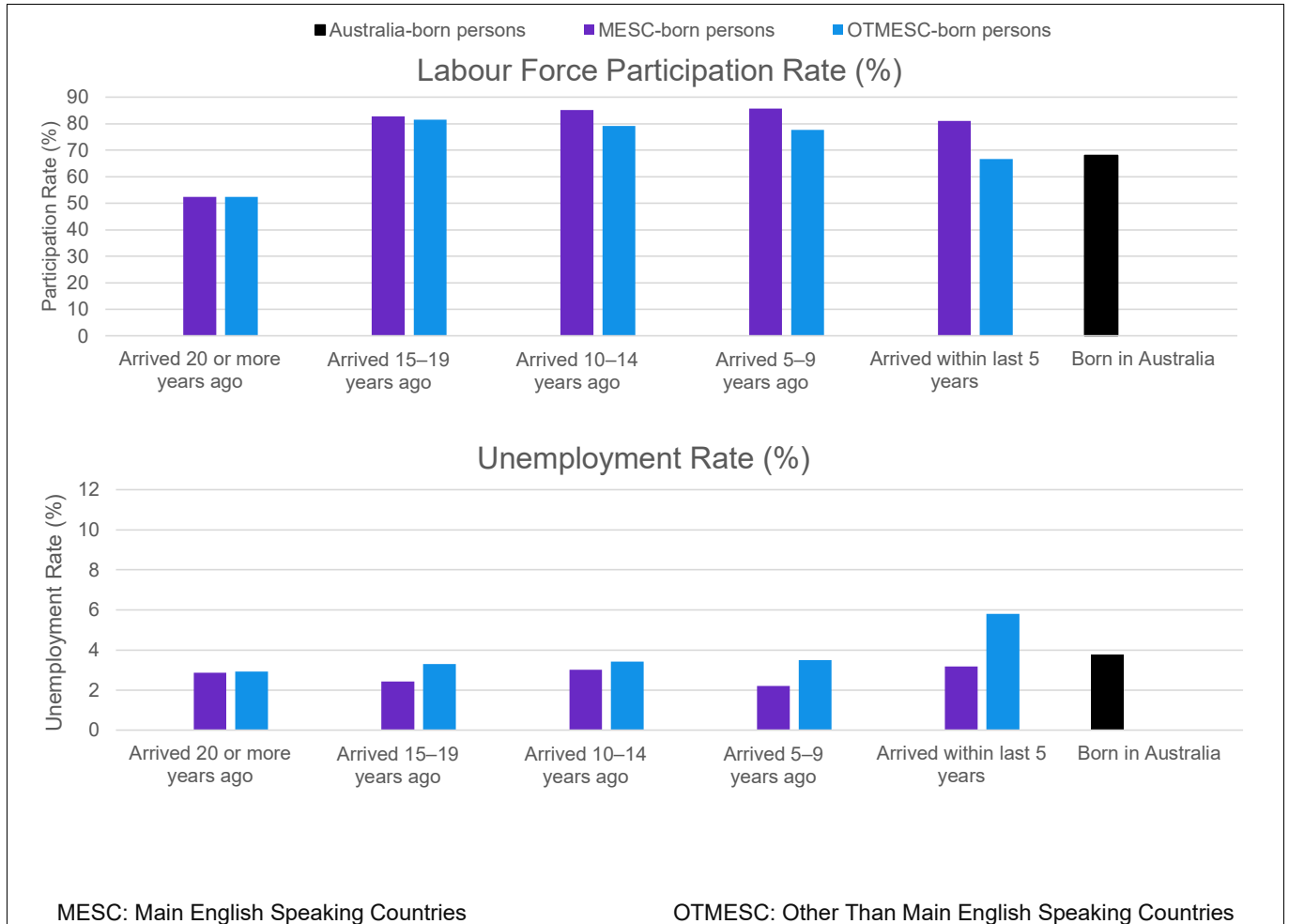
<sup>5</sup> MESC are the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, South Africa, Canada, the United States of America and New Zealand.

## Migrant Unemployment

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

**Figure 5** below shows the participation and unemployment rates of the Australian-born and migrants by broad country of birth groups and period of residence in Australia (average of the last 12 months to February 2023).

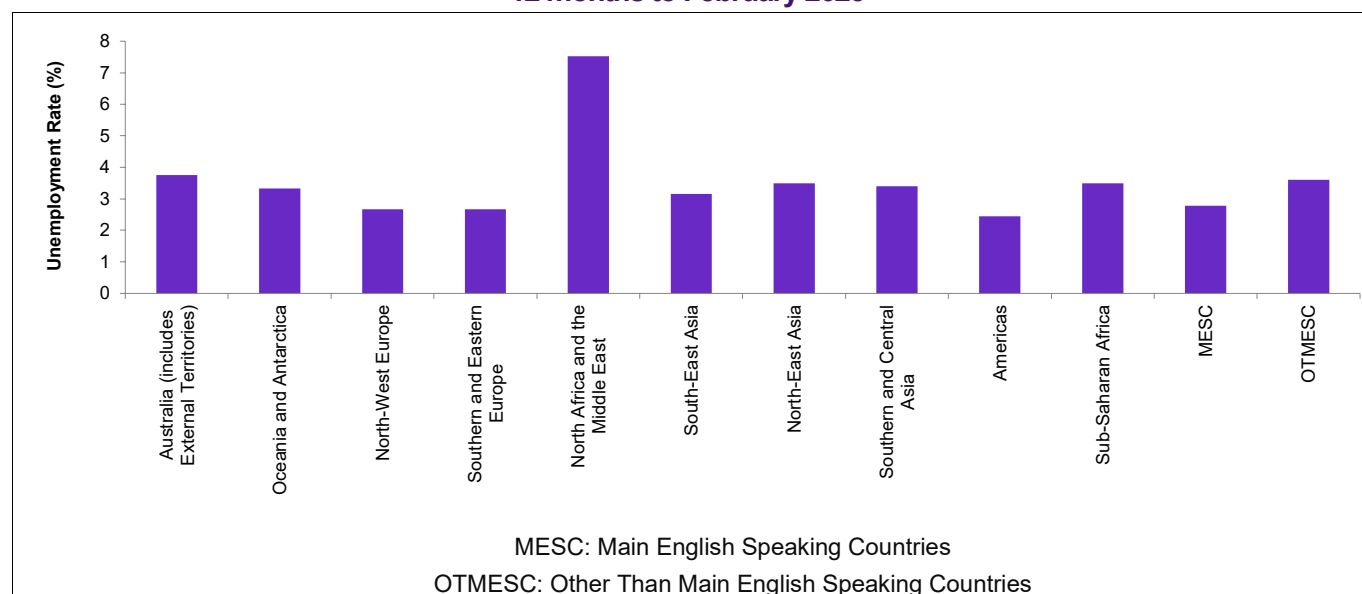
**Figure 5: Years since arrival in Australia by labour force participation rates (%) and unemployment rates (%) for broad country of birth groups—12 months to February 2023**



Source: ABS (2023). LM7 – Labour force status by elapsed years since arrival, main English-speaking countries, sex, state and territory. *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed*. Retrieved March 23, 2023. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/latest-release>

**Figure 6** below shows unemployment rates (average of the last 12 months to February 2023) for people resident in Australia born in major country groups (by subcontinent). People born in the Americas have the lowest unemployment rate (at 2.4%), while the unemployment rate for people born in North Africa and the Middle East (7.5%) is relatively high (possibly reflecting English language proficiency and period of residence in Australia).

**Figure 6: Unemployment rates (%) by major country groups (subcontinent) of birth—12 months to February 2023<sup>6</sup>**



Source: ABS (2023). LM5 - Labour force status by age, major country group (subcontinent) of birth (SACC), and sex & LM7 - Labour force status by elapsed years since arrival, main English-speaking countries, sex, state and territory. *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed*. Retrieved March 23, 2023. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/latest-release>.

## Employment by occupation<sup>7</sup>

Over the 12 months to February 2023, the largest increases in employment (in seasonally adjusted terms) occurred for Community and Personal Service Workers (up by 109,300), and Technicians and Trades Workers (up by 85,700). The largest decrease occurred for Sales Workers (down by 32,100). Employment growth rates for the major occupation groups are shown in **Table 1** below.

**Table 1: Seasonally adjusted employment growth by occupation—12 months to February 2023**

Occupational Group	1 Year Change ('000 persons)	1 Year Change (%)
Managers	68.6	3.9
Professionals	71.5	2.0
Technicians and Trades Workers	85.7	4.7
Community and Personal Service Workers	109.3	7.7
Clerical and Administrative Workers	-14.2	-0.8
Sales Workers	-32.1	-2.9
Machinery Operators and Drivers	29.5	3.4
Labourers	84.9	7.3

Additional information on occupational groups is provided in the following section on internet vacancy data.

<sup>6</sup> In Figure 4, 'Australia (includes External Territories)' is within 'Oceania and Antarctica'.

<sup>7</sup> This section is based on February 2023 Jobs and Skills Australia seasonally adjusted data derived from ABS Labour Force Survey data. Occupational Groups are from the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) (ABS Cat. No. 1220.0).

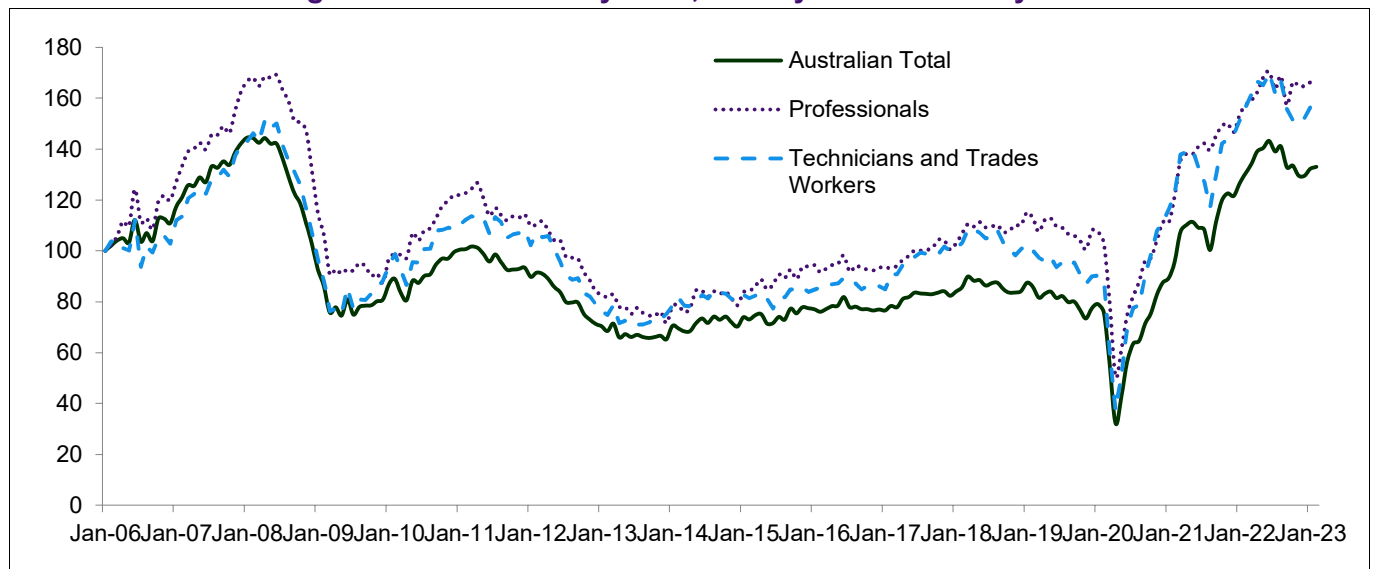
## Internet Vacancy Data<sup>8</sup>

Jobs and Skills Australia produces the monthly Vacancy Report which contains the Internet Vacancy Index (IVI) (see **Figure 7**). Over the year to February 2023, the seasonally adjusted IVI increased by 1.9% with the largest increases for Community and Personal Service Workers (up by 7.7%), Professionals (up by 6.5%) and Managers (up by 5.2%). The seasonally adjusted IVI fell for Labourers (down by 12.9%) and Sales Workers (down by 7.6%) for this period.

At the more detailed occupation level, seasonally adjusted vacancies increased in 23 of the 48 occupation clusters over the year to February 2023, with the strongest increases for Education Professionals (up by 43.8%), Protective Service Workers (up by 42.4%) and Medical Practitioners and Nurses (up by 39.0%). The largest decreases were for Food Preparation Assistants (down by 31.4%), ICT Professionals (down by 24.0%), and Cleaning and Laundry Workers (down by 18.3%).

Over the year to February 2023, seasonally adjusted vacancies rose in Tasmania (up by 21.6%), NT (up by 19.1%), Queensland (up by 12.7%), SA (up by 9.0%), WA (by up 3.8%). Vacancies fell in the ACT (down by 0.5%), NSW (down by 3.0%), and Victoria (down by 3.1%). For a full list of occupations and their recent growth in vacancies, see the [Vacancy Report](#).

**Figure 7: Internet Vacancy Index, January 2006 to February 2023**



Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, [Vacancy Report](#), March 2023, *seasonally adjusted* data.

## Future Employment Change

The [National Skills Commission](#) website<sup>9</sup> contains information on projected future employment change over the five years to November 2026 for different occupations and industries.

Future employment change estimates are indicative only and are intended to provide a guide to opportunities likely to be available over the five years to November 2026. It is important to note that these estimates do not provide any guidance about the number of people looking for opportunities in each occupation. As the Australian labour market can change quickly, information should be re-assessed prior to making a decision to lodge a visa application.

## Further Information

Queries on the Australian Labour Market for Migrants publication, including requests for copies of Hot Topics attached to previous editions, should be emailed to [migration@jobsandskills.gov.au](mailto:migration@jobsandskills.gov.au).

<sup>8</sup> See [Internet Vacancy Index | Jobs and Skills Australia](#) (March 2023). The IVI is based on a count of online job advertisements newly lodged on SEEK, CareerOne and Australian JobSearch during the month. Duplicate advertisements are removed before IVI vacancies are coded by the National Skills Commission to occupations based on ANZSCO. The data are seasonally adjusted and trended, then indexed (January 2006=100). March 2023 data is used in Figure 5 to be consistent with all other data used in this publication.

<sup>9</sup> The National Skills Commission website will soon be archived and future employment change estimates will be released on the [Jobs and Skills Australia](#) website.



## Hot Topic

### Changes in the Migrant Labour Market—Census 2011 to 2021<sup>10</sup>

This Hot Topic provides an overview of the labour market experience of migrants in Australia. Recent migrants are—for the purpose of the analysis in this Hot Topic—defined as people who were born overseas and arrived in Australia in ten years to August 2021, with the intention to live in Australia for one year or more. The data in this Hot Topic is sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census 2021.

#### Migrant Labour Force

Since 2012, the ABS estimates that 2,098,875 migrants entered Australia with 369,736 from main English-speaking countries (MES<sup>11</sup>) and 1,729,139 from other than main English-speaking countries (OTMES<sup>12</sup>). In August of 2021, 9.5% of Australia's resident population aged 15 years and over were recent migrants.

#### Labour Force Participation of Recent Migrants

In August 2021, the labour force participation rate of recent migrants was 72.4%, which was higher than the Australian-born population's participation rate of 66.3%. For recent migrants who were born in main English-speaking countries (MES), the 2021 participation rate was 83.4%. For migrants who were born in other than English-speaking countries (OTMES), it was 70.1%.

#### Unemployment

In August 2021, the unemployment rate for recent migrants was at 7.2%, compared to 4.8% for those born in Australia. The unemployment rate for migrants from other than main English-speaking countries (7.9%) is much higher than for migrants from main English-speaking countries (4.2%).

Between the 2011 and 2021 Censuses, overall unemployment has remained particularly high for youth<sup>13</sup> across the labour market. Over this period, the overall youth unemployment rate averaged at 12.6%. For migrant youth, it averaged at 15.8%.

<sup>10</sup> The definition of recent migrant (i.e. people who were born overseas and arrived in Australia in the ten years to August 2021 when the Census 2021 survey was conducted, is consistent with the definition of recent migrant used by the ABS in the Characteristics of Recent Migrants Survey ([CORMS](#)).

<sup>11</sup> MES refers to migrants who were born in New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, the United States of America and South Africa.

<sup>12</sup> OTMES refers to migrants who were born in countries that are not the main English-speaking countries.

<sup>13</sup> Youth refers to those aged between 15 and 24.

## Migrant Labour Market Outcomes—Education

**Table 1: Education Levels by place of birth**

Place of Birth	Tertiary Qualification	Post-Secondary Vocational/VET	Year 12 and below (secondary)
Australia	24.2%	31.2%	44.6%
MESC	43.3%	25.6%	31.0%
OTMESC	54.8%	16.6%	28.7%

**Table 1** shows that the majority of recent OTMESC migrants have Tertiary Qualifications (54.8%). This is similar for recent MESC migrants with 43.3% having Tertiary Qualifications. In contrast, most of the Australian-born population report having Year 12 and below as the highest level of Educational Attainment (44.6%).

**Table 2: Recent Migrant Labour Force Participation Rate and Unemployment Rate by Level of Education**

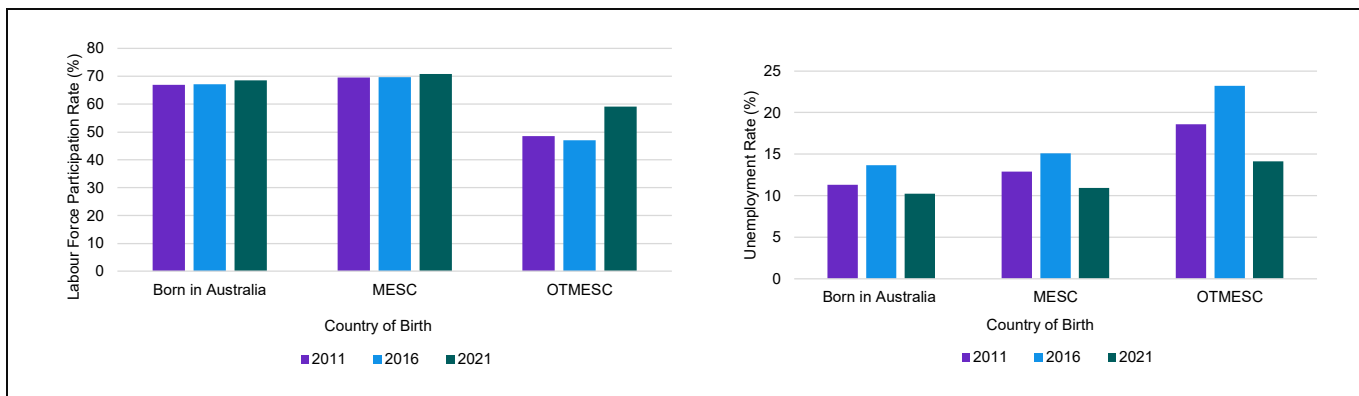
Level of Highest Educational Attainment <sup>14</sup>	Labour Force Participation Rate	Unemployment Rate
Tertiary Qualification	83.0	5.9
Post-Secondary Vocational/VET	78.4	6.1
Year 12 and below (secondary)	53.3	11.5

As seen in **Table 2**, labour force participation tends to rise with education level. In August 2021, the participation rate of recent migrants with tertiary qualifications (83.0%) and post-secondary vocational qualifications (78.4%) was greater than those with secondary qualifications (53.3%). The unemployment rate was also significantly higher for recent migrants with secondary qualifications.

## Migrant Labour Market Outcomes—Youth

**Figure A: Youth Labour Force Participation Rates, Census 2011, 2016 and 2021**

**Figure B: Youth Unemployment Rates, Census 2011, 2016 and 2021**



**Figure A** shows that Australian-born youth and youth from MESC have seen a gradual improvement in labour force participation in the 10 years following the 2011 Census. Despite a significant increase between 2016 and 2021, young migrants from OTMESC continued to record a significantly lower youth participation rate of 59.2%, compared to 70.9% for MESC migrants and 68.5% for Australian-born youth.

As seen in **Figure B**, the unemployment rate for OTMESC youth had the largest decline of 4.5 percentage points since 2011. Overall, the unemployment rate for youth declined by 1.4 percentage points since 2011 for all groups. In 2021, the unemployment rate for recent young migrants (13.8%) remains significantly higher than recent adult (6.0%) and mature adult (9.1%) migrants.

<sup>14</sup> Tertiary qualifications are defined as Postgraduate and Bachelor degrees, Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas. Post-secondary vocational qualifications include Certificates I, II, III and IV level, Advanced Diplomas and Diplomas.

## Migrant Labour Market Outcomes—Gender

**Table 3: Migrant Labour Force Participation Rate (LFP) and Unemployment Rate (UR) by Gender—Census 2011, 2016 and 2021**

Birthplace	Gender	2011 LFP	2016 LFP	2021 LFP	2011 UR	2016 UR	2021 UR
Australian-Born	Female	61.8	62.5	63.3	5.1	5.9	4.3
Australian-Born	Male	72.8	70.9	69.5	5.5	6.8	5.3
MESC	Female	59.9	60.4	60.0	5.0	5.7	3.9
MESC	Male	72.1	69.8	67.5	4.5	5.6	4.2
OTMESC	Female	51.1	52.9	57.0	8.4	10.0	6.7
OTMESC	Male	66.0	66.6	67.9	6.8	8.2	6.0

**Table 3** highlights that female migrants from MESC are more successful in the Australian labour market than all other cohorts, recording the lowest unemployment rate at 3.9% in 2021. Despite having the highest unemployment rates in each of the past three Census, female OTMESC migrants had the greatest improvement between 2016 and 2021 (with a decrease of 3.3 percentage points), while also recording the largest increase in participation rates over the same period (of 4.1 percentage points).

In terms of recent migrants, the unemployment rate for recent male migrants (6.4%) was lower than that of recent female migrants (8.0%). Recent female migrants also show a significantly lower interest in joining the labour market with a participation rate of 66.7% compared to 78.6% for males.

### Further Information

Queries on this Hot Topic should be emailed to [migration@jobsandskills.gov.au](mailto:migration@jobsandskills.gov.au).