

Labour Force, April 2020

Source: ABS 6202.0, released 14 May 2020, 11:30 am AEST.

NOTE: The ABS has suspended trend data due to COVID-19. Trend data will be reinstated by the ABS when more certainty emerges in the underlying trend in the labour market. As a result, all numbers in this brief are seasonally adjusted.

Key data (monthly)

Employment:	Queensland,	-129,600	(-5.1%)
(persons, growth)	Australia,	-594,300	(-4.6%)
Unemployment:	Queensland,	24,800	(6.8%)
(persons, rate)	Australia,	104,500	(6.2%)
Labour force:	Queensland,	-104,700	(-3.9%)
(persons, growth)	Australia,	-489,800	(-3.6%)
Underemployment:	Queensland,	95,700	(13.1%)
(persons, rate)	Australia,	603,300	(13.7%)
Hours worked:	Queensland,	-26,800	(-7.6%)
(thousands, growth)	Australia,	-163,900	(-9.2%)

Main findings

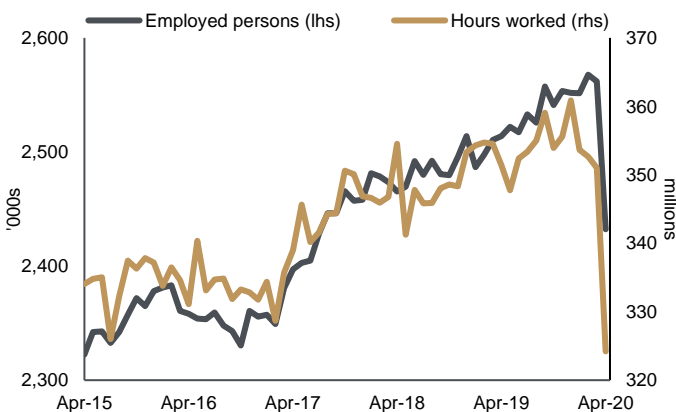
Employment in Queensland fell 129,600 persons (or 5.1%) in April 2020, the first month of *Labour Force* data following the implementation of social distancing measures designed to limit the spread of COVID-19. The decline in April was the largest monthly decline in employment on record (since 1978). The decline in employment would likely have been larger if not for the *JobKeeper* program, which had the effect of keeping many people classified by the ABS as 'employed' even if they were not actually working.

The decline in April reflected a fall in both full-time (down 51,800) and part-time (down 77,800) employment, while over the year, employment fell by 81,600 persons (or 3.2%).

With persons not working but receiving *JobKeeper* payments from their employers classified as 'employed' by the ABS, the reduction in hours work is probably the clearest example of the full impact of COVID-19 social distancing measures on labour market activity.

There were 324.2 million hours worked in Queensland in April 2020, down 7.6% from March 2020 and down 7.7% over the year (Chart 1). Of all the states, Queensland recorded the smallest drop in hours worked in the month (down 7.6%, see Table 2) and was behind only the ACT (where hours worked increased) and the Northern Territory.

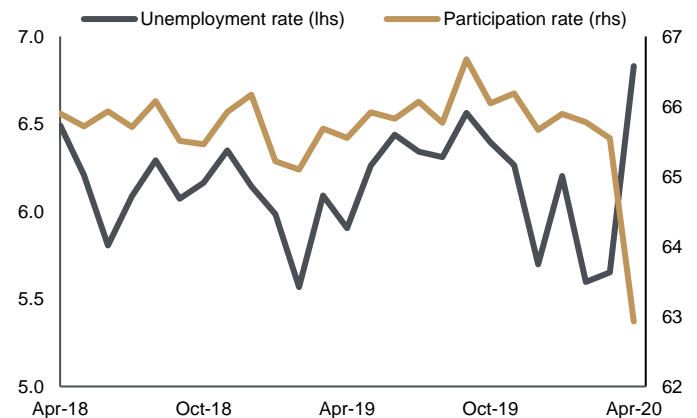
Chart 1: Employment and hours worked, Queensland (monthly)



The unemployment rate in Queensland increased from 5.7% in March 2020, to 6.8% in April 2020, the largest monthly increase in the unemployment rate on record.

The increase in the unemployment rate was muted by a decline in the participation rate, which fell from 65.5% in March 2020, to 62.9% in April (Chart 2), the largest drop in the participation rate on record. This equates to 104,700 persons leaving the labour force in Queensland in April.

Chart 2: Unemployment and participation rate, Queensland (monthly, %)



Nationally, employment fell by 594,300 persons (or 4.6%) in April, to be 395,100 (or 3.1%) lower over the year. The national unemployment rate increased from 5.2% in March 2020, to 6.2% in April 2020. Hours worked nationally fell 9.2% in April 2020, to be down 8.0% over the year (Table 1).

New South Wales (down 221,400), Queensland (down 129,600) and Victoria (down 127,100) were the largest contributors to the 594,300 persons decrease in national employment in the month.

Table 1: Labour force outcomes¹, April 2020

	Queensland				Australia					
	Apr-20	Monthly change	Yearly change		Apr-20	Monthly change	Yearly change			
	'000	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	
Employed	2,432.4	-129.6	-5.1	-81.6	-3.2	12,418.7	-594.3	-4.6	-395.1	-3.1
Full-time	1,687.8	-51.8	-3.0	-41.1	-2.4	8,656.9	-220.5	-2.5	-123.0	-1.4
Part-time	744.6	-77.8	-9.5	-40.4	-5.2	3,761.8	-373.8	-9.0	-272.0	-6.7
Unemployed	178.3	24.8	16.2	20.6	13.0	823.3	104.5	14.5	117.7	16.7
Underemployed	341.1	95.7	39.0	86.7	34.1	1,816.1	603.3	49.7	666.1	57.9
Labour force	2,610.7	-104.7	-3.9	-61.0	-2.3	13,242.0	-489.8	-3.6	-277.3	-2.1
	millions	millions	%	millions	%	millions	millions	%	millions	%
Hours worked	324.2	-26.8	-7.6	-27.2	-7.7	1,625.8	-163.9	-9.2	-142.1	-8.0
	Apr-20	Mar-20	Apr-19			Apr-20	Mar-20	Apr-19		
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Unemployment rate	6.8	5.7	5.9			6.2	5.2	5.2		
Underemployment rate	13.1	9.0	9.5			13.7	8.8	8.5		
Participation rate	62.9	65.5	65.6			63.5	66.0	65.9		

Table 2: Interstate comparison¹, April 2020

	Qld	NSW	Vic	SA	WA	Tas	Aus
Employed							
% change on a month ago	-5.1	-5.4	-3.7	-4.8	-4.6	-3.4	-4.6
Change on a month ago (no.)	-129,600	-221,400	-127,100	-40,800	-62,300	-8,700	-594,300
% change on a year ago	-3.2	-4.7	-1.3	-4.9	-3.2	0.4	-3.1
Change on a year ago (no.)	-81,600	-194,900	-43,200	-42,100	-43,400	900	-395,100
Unemployment rate (%)							
April-20	6.8	6.0	6.0	7.2	6.0	6.2	6.2
March-20	5.7	4.9	5.2	6.3	5.4	4.9	5.2
April-19	5.9	4.5	4.9	6.1	6.0	6.8	5.2
Hours worked (millions)							
April-20	324.2	518.2	429.6	102.6	170.7	29.9	1,625.8
monthly % change	-7.6	-9.1	-10.3	-10.2	-10.3	-10.6	-9.2
annual % change	-7.7	-8.8	-6.9	-10.8	-10.6	-6.1	-8.0

1. Note – numbers may not add due to rounding.