

Labour Force, August 2020

Source: ABS 6202.0, released 17 September 2020, 11:30 am AEST.

NOTE: The ABS has suspended trend data due to COVID-19. As a result, all numbers in this brief are seasonally adjusted.

Key data (monthly)

Employment:	Queensland,	18,000	(0.7%)
(persons, growth)	Australia,	111,000	(0.9%)
Unemployment:	Queensland,	-36,900	(7.5%)
(persons, rate)	Australia,	-86,500	(6.8%)
Labour force:	Queensland,	-18,900	(-0.7%)
(persons, growth)	Australia,	24,500	(0.2%)
Underemployment:	Queensland,	-36,700	(-9.3%)
(persons, rate)	Australia,	-7,100	(-11.2%)
Hours worked:	Queensland,	7,800	(2.4%)
(thousands, growth)	Australia,	1,600	(0.1%)

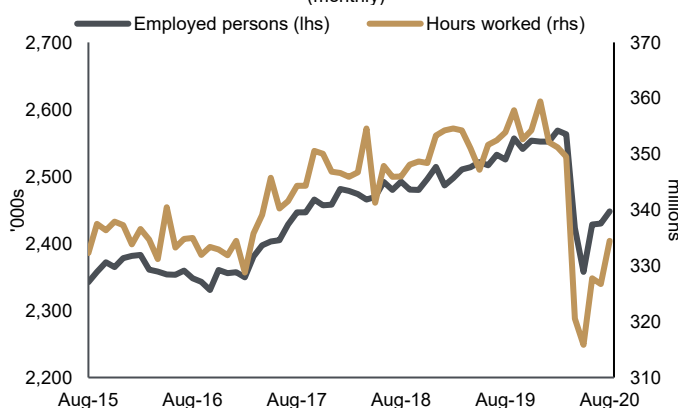
Main findings

Employment in Queensland rose by 18,000 persons (0.7%) in August 2020, five months following the implementation of social distancing measures designed to limit the spread of COVID-19. The rise in August reflected an increase in both the part-time employment¹ (up 17,900) and full-time employment (up 200 persons) during the month.

It should be noted that employment growth in Queensland in July was revised up from a 3,700 person decline to a 1,700 person increase. Employment is up 90,300 (3.8%) since its recent low in May 2020 but remains 115,100 (4.5%) below its pre-pandemic level in March 2020.

With persons not working but receiving *JobKeeper* payments from their employers classified as 'employed' by the ABS, the reduction in hours worked is probably the clearest indicator of the impact of COVID-19 social distancing measures on labour market activity. Hours worked in Queensland rose 2.4% in August 2020, and were up 5.9% from May but down 4.3% since March (Chart 1).

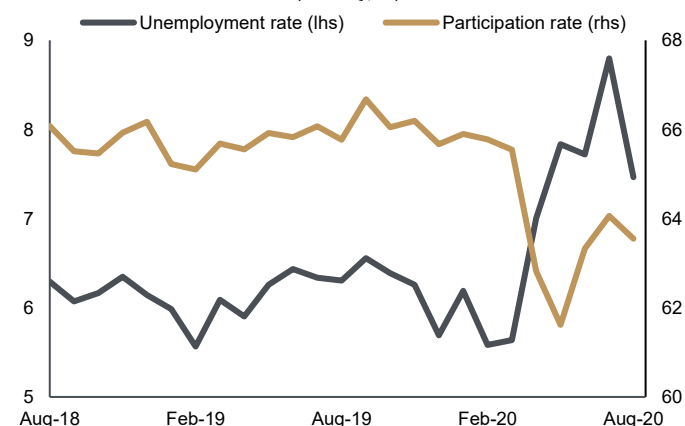
Chart 1: Employment and hours worked, Queensland (monthly)



The unemployment rate in Queensland fell from 8.8% in July 2020, to 7.5% in August, but remained higher than its pre-pandemic level of 5.6% in March 2020 (Chart 2).

The participation rate in Queensland was 63.6% in August 2020 (64.1% in July), down from 65.5% in March. This equates to 70,800 persons leaving the labour force in Queensland since March 2020.

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



Nationally, employment rose by 111,000 persons (0.9%) in August but was 413,600 persons (3.2%) lower than its pre-pandemic level in March. The national unemployment rate fell from 7.5% in July to 6.8% in August but remained higher than its pre-pandemic level of 5.2% in March (Table 1). The number of hours worked nationally was broadly unchanged in August (up 0.1%) at 1.7 billion, due to a large decline in Victoria largely offsetting growth in all other states.

New South Wales (up 51,500), Western Australia (up 32,300) and Queensland (up 18,000) contributed to the monthly increase in national employment in the month (Table 2). Employment in Victoria fell 42,400 persons in August, following the re-imposition of restrictions on 8 July and further tightening on 5 August.

Table 1: Labour force outcomes¹, August 2020

	Queensland				Australia			
	Aug-20 '000	Monthly change '000	Yearly change '000 %		Aug-20 '000	Monthly change '000	Yearly change '000 %	
Employed	2,447.9	18.0	0.7	-77.2 -3.1	12,583.4	111.0	0.9	-338.3 -2.6
Full-time	1,676.4	0.2	0.0	-73.5 -4.2	8,584.5	36.2	0.4	-234.2 -2.7
Part-time	771.5	17.9	2.4	-3.7 -0.5	3,998.9	74.8	1.9	-104.1 -2.5
Unemployed	197.5	-36.9	-15.8	27.5 16.2	921.8	-86.5	-8.6	206.2 28.8
Underemployed	245.2	-36.7	-13.0	17.6 7.7	1,506.8	-7.1	-0.5	346.8 29.9
Labour force	2,645.4	-18.9	-0.7	-49.7 -1.8	13,505.2	24.5	0.2	-132.1 -1.0
	millions	millions	%	millions %	millions	millions	%	millions %
Hours worked	334.5	7.8	2.4	-19.4 -5.5	1,683.4	1.6	0.1	-90.3 -5.1
	Aug-20	Jul-20	Aug-19		Aug-20	Jul-20	Aug-19	
	%	%	%		%	%	%	
Unemployment rate	7.5	8.8	6.3		6.8	7.5	5.2	
Underemployment rate	9.3	10.6	8.4		11.2	11.2	8.5	
Participation rate	63.6	64.1	65.8		64.8	64.7	66.2	

Table 2: Interstate comparison¹, August 2020

	Qld	NSW	Vic	SA	WA	Tas	Aus
Employed							
% change on a month ago	0.7	1.3	-1.3	1.6	2.4	0.9	0.9
Change on a month ago (no.)	18,000	51,500	-42,400	13,400	32,200	2,300	111,000
% change since May 2020	3.8	4.9	0.3	4.1	5.8	6.6	3.8
Change since May 2020 (no.)	90,300	188,000	9,500	33,300	73,400	15,800	458,000
% change since March 2020	-4.5	-2.0	-5.5	-1.8	-1.6	-1.3	-3.2
Change since March 2020 (no.)	-115,100	-80,700	-188,400	-15,200	-21,900	-3,400	-413,600
Unemployment rate (%)							
August-20	7.5	6.7	7.1	7.9	7.0	6.3	6.8
July-20	8.8	7.2	6.8	7.9	8.3	6.0	7.5
May-20	7.8	6.4	6.9	7.9	8.1	6.3	7.1
March-20	5.6	4.9	5.2	6.3	5.4	4.9	5.2
Hours worked (millions)							
August-20	334.5	547.5	418.3	110.5	188.3	33.1	1,683.4
monthly % change	2.4	0.7	-4.8	1.8	3.8	4.3	0.1
% change since May 2020	5.9	7.9	0.5	7.5	8.5	15.0	5.6
% change since March 2020	-4.3	-3.2	-12.0	-3.0	-1.1	-0.8	-5.4

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