

Labour Force, October 2020

Source: ABS Labour Force, released 19 November 2020, 10:30 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)

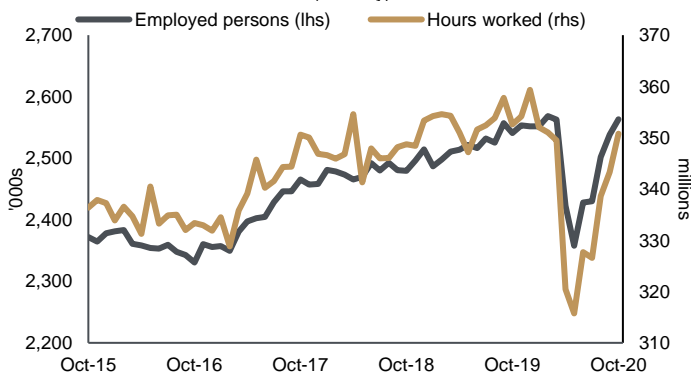
Employment:	Queensland,	25,300	(1.0%)
(persons, growth)	Australia,	178,800	(1.4%)
Unemployment:	Queensland,	4,800	(7.7%)
(persons, rate)	Australia,	25,500	(7.0%)
Labour force:	Queensland,	30,100	(1.1%)
(persons, growth)	Australia,	204,300	(1.5%)
Underemployment:	Queensland,	-32,000	(9.5%)
(persons, rate)	Australia,	-114,800	(10.4%)
Hours worked:	Queensland,	7,500	(2.2%)
(thousands, growth)	Australia,	20,600	(1.2%)

Main findings

Employment in Queensland rose by 25,300 persons (1.0%) in October 2020, reflecting an increase in both the full-time employment (up 21,300) and part-time employment (up 4,000) during the month. Further, the ABS revised up Queensland's employment in August 2020 by 16,300 persons and in September 2020 by 20,200 persons. As a result, employment has rebounded strongly to be 205,900 persons (8.7%) above its low in May 2020 and 500 persons above the pre-pandemic level of March 2020.

With persons not working but receiving *JobKeeper* payments from their employers classified as 'employed' by the ABS, hours worked is probably the clearest indicator of the impact of COVID-19 social distancing measures on labour market activity in recent months. Hours worked in Queensland rose 2.2% in October 2020, up 11.1% from May and have now exceeded (up 0.4%) the pre-pandemic level of March (Chart 1).

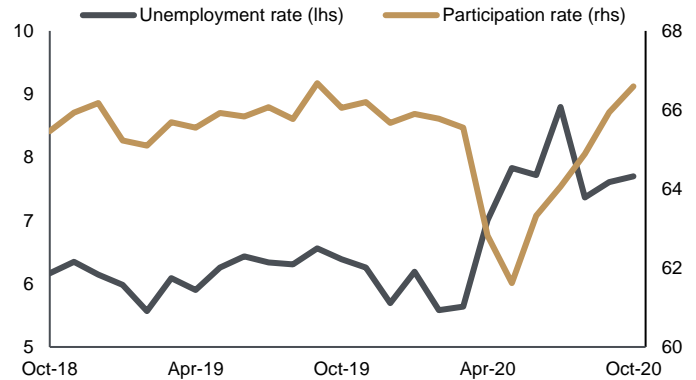
Chart 1: Employment and hours worked, Queensland (monthly)



The unemployment rate in Queensland increased to 7.7% in October, up from downwardly revised rate of 7.6% in September and higher than the pre-pandemic level of 5.6% in March (Chart 2).

The number of unemployed persons in Queensland rose 4,800, primarily driven by 30,100 people re-entering the labour force in October, pushing the participation rate up 0.7 percentage point to 66.6%. The participation rate in Queensland has consistently increased in the last five months since its low of 61.6% in May 2020, to now be higher than the pre-pandemic level of 65.5% in March. This equates to 219,400 people entering the labour force in Queensland since May 2020.

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



Nationally, employment rose by 178,800 persons (1.4%) in October but is 223,100 persons (1.7%) lower than its pre-pandemic level in March. The monthly rise was primarily supported by a strong increase in Victoria (up 81,600), accounting for almost half of national employment growth in October. The rise in employment in Victoria is the first since the reintroduction of restrictions to curb the second wave of COVID-19 in that state.

The number of hours worked nationally rose in October (1.2%) to 1.71 billion, due to strong increases in Victoria (up 5.6%) and Queensland (2.2%), offsetting declines in New South Wales (1.7%), Western Australia (0.5%) and South Australia (0.4%). The national unemployment rate increased from 6.9% in September to 7.0% in October and remained higher than its pre-pandemic level of 5.2% in March (Table 1).

Table 1: Labour force outcomes¹, October 2020

	Queensland			Australia		
	Oct-20 '000	Monthly change '000 %	Yearly change '000 %	Oct-20 '000	Monthly change '000 %	Yearly change '000 %
Employed	2,563.5	25.3 1.0	22.6 0.9	12,773.9	178.8 1.4	-132.3 -1.0
Full-time	1,711.0	21.3 1.3	-39.8 -2.3	8,643.7	97.0 1.1	-186.8 -2.1
Part-time	852.5	4.0 0.5	62.4 7.9	4,130.2	81.8 2.0	54.5 1.3
Unemployed	213.9	4.8 2.3	40.5 23.4	960.9	25.5 2.7	238.9 33.1
Underemployed	263.9	-32.0 -10.8	24.8 10.4	1,424.8	-114.8 -7.5	266.8 23.0
Labour force	2,777.4	30.1 1.1	63.1 2.3	13,734.8	204.3 1.5	106.6 0.8
	millions	millions %	millions %	millions	millions %	millions %
Hours worked	350.8	7.5 2.2	-1.8 -0.5	1,711.0	20.6 1.2	-60.9 -3.4
	Oct-20	Sep-20	Oct-19	Oct-20	Sep-20	Oct-19
Unemployment rate	7.7	7.6	6.4	7.0	6.9	5.3
Underemployment rate	9.5	10.8	8.8	10.4	11.4	8.5
Participation rate	66.6	65.9	66.1	65.8	64.9	66.0

Table 2: Interstate comparison¹, October 2020

	Qld	NSW	Vic	SA	WA	Tas	Aus
Employed							
% change on a month ago	1.0	0.9	2.5	0.7	1.1	0.0	1.4
Change on a month ago (no.)	25,300	36,400	81,600	6,300	15,300	0	178,800
% change since May 2020	8.7	5.6	1.8	5.6	7.0	5.0	5.3
Change since May 2020 (no.)	205,900	216,500	56,800	45,100	89,300	12,100	648,500
% change since March 2020	0.0	-1.3	-4.1	-0.4	-0.4	-2.7	-1.7
Change since March 2020 (no.)	500	-52,300	-141,100	-3,400	-6,100	-7,100	-223,100
Unemployment rate (%)							
October-20	7.7	6.5	7.4	7.0	6.6	8.2	7.0
September-20	7.6	7.1	6.7	6.9	6.7	7.7	6.9
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)							
October-20	350.8	546.8	432.4	111.1	186.0	32.5	1,711.0
monthly % change	2.2	-1.7	5.6	-0.4	-0.5	0.9	1.2
% change since May 2020	11.1	7.8	3.9	8.1	7.2	13.0	7.4
% change since March 2020	0.4	-3.3	-9.0	-2.5	-2.3	-2.6	-3.8

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