

# Labour Force, February 2021

Source: ABS Labour Force, released 18 March 2021, 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)

<b>Employment:</b>	Queensland,	23,900	(0.9%)
(persons, growth)	Australia,	88,700	(0.7%)
<b>Unemployment:</b>	Queensland,	-23,500	(6.1%)
(persons, rate)	Australia,	-69,900	(5.8%)
<b>Labour force:</b>	Queensland,	400	(0.0%)
(persons, growth)	Australia,	18,800	(0.1%)
<b>Underemployment:</b>	Queensland,	-8,700	(8.3%)
(persons, rate)	Australia,	56,200	(8.5%)
<b>Hours worked:</b>	Queensland,	28,600	(8.5%)
(thousands, growth)	Australia,	101,900	(6.1%)

## Main findings

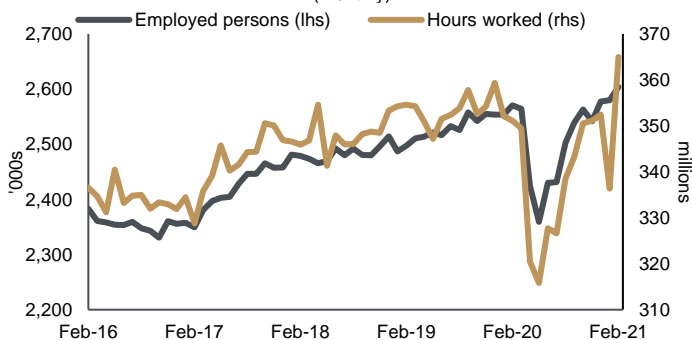
Employment in Queensland rose 23,900 persons (0.9%) in February 2021, with a rise in full-time employment (up 53,800 persons) more than offsetting a fall in part-time employment (down 29,900). Employment in Queensland is 244,700 persons (or 10.4%) above its COVID-impacted low in May 2020 and 39,500 persons (or 1.5%) above the pre-pandemic level of March 2020.

In February 2021, there were 365.0 million hours worked in Queensland, up 8.5% from January and up 4.5% since March 2020 (Chart 1).

In last month's publication, the ABS noted 'there is a fall in hours worked every January as many people take annual leave, which the seasonal adjustment process makes allowances for. However, a larger than usual number of people took annual leave in January 2021. This led to the unusual combination of a rise in seasonally adjusted employment and a large fall in seasonally adjusted hours worked. Given the extent of the disruption during 2020, including to people's leave plans. It is not surprising that more than the usual amount of leave was taken in the Christmas-New Year holiday period'.

Importantly, the strong growth in hours worked in February 2021 should be viewed in this context.

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

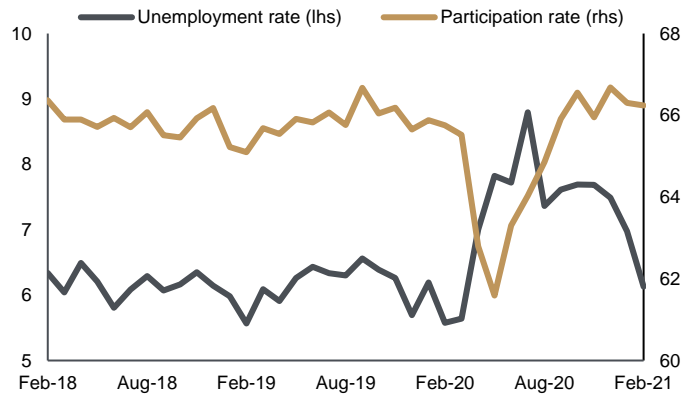


The unemployment rate in Queensland was 6.1% in February 2021, down from 7.0% in January 2020, but above the pre-pandemic level of 5.6% in March 2020 (Chart 2). The number of unemployed persons in Queensland fell 23,500 in February to

170,000, down from a peak of 234,400 persons in July 2020 but 16,700 persons higher than the pre-pandemic level in March 2020.

The participation rate in Queensland was 66.2% in February 2021, down from 66.3% in January but up from 65.5% in March 2020.

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



Nationally, employment rose by 88,700 persons (or 0.7%) in February but was 3,600 persons lower than its pre-pandemic level in March 2020. All jurisdictions recorded an increase in employment in February, however, the monthly rise in national employment was driven by New South Wales (up 42,000), Victoria (up 26,600) and Queensland (up 23,900).

There were 1,766.8 million hours worked in Australia in February 2021, up 6.1% from January but down 0.7% from March 2020. The national unemployment rate fell from 6.3% in January to 5.8% in February 2021 (Table 1) but remained higher than its pre-pandemic level of 5.2% in March 2020.

**Table 1: Labour force outcomes<sup>1</sup>, February 2021**

	Queensland			Australia		
	Feb-21 '000	Monthly change '000 %	Yearly change '000 %	Feb-21 '000	Monthly change '000 %	Yearly change '000 %
Employed	2,603.8	23.9 0.9	33.6 1.3	13,006.9	88.7 0.7	-1.8 0.0
Full-time	1,794.5	53.8 3.1	39.7 2.3	8,895.0	89.1 1.0	5.5 0.1
Part-time	809.3	-29.9 -3.6	-6.1 -0.7	4,111.9	-0.5 0.0	-7.3 -0.2
Unemployed	170.0	-23.5 -12.1	18.1 11.9	805.2	-69.9 -8.0	109.5 15.7
Underemployed	231.0	-8.7 -3.6	-6.6 -2.8	1,178.7	56.2 5.0	-5.3 -0.4
Labour force	2,773.8	0.4 0.0	51.8 1.9	13,812.1	18.8 0.1	107.7 0.8
	millions	millions %	millions %	millions	millions %	millions %
Hours worked	365.0	28.6 8.5	13.9 4.0	1,766.8	101.9 6.1	3.0 0.2
	Feb-21	Jan-21	Feb-20	Feb-21	Jan-21	Feb-20
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Unemployment rate	6.1	7.0	5.6	5.8	6.3	5.1
Underemployment rate	8.3	8.6	8.7	8.5	8.1	8.6
Participation rate	66.2	66.3	65.8	66.1	66.1	65.9

**Table 2: Interstate comparison<sup>1</sup>, February 2021**

	Qld	NSW	Vic	SA	WA	Tas	Aus
<b>Employed</b>							
% change on a month ago	0.9	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.1	1.5	0.7
Change on a month ago (no.)	23,900	42,000	26,600	6,600	1,800	3,800	88,700
% change since May 2020	10.4	6.7	6.0	4.8	7.1	9.0	7.2
Change since May 2020 (no.)	244,700	256,800	195,900	38,500	90,800	21,500	876,400
% change since March 2020	1.5	-0.3	-0.1	-1.2	-0.3	0.9	0.0
Change since March 2020 (no.)	39,500	-11,900	-4,200	-10,000	-4,500	2,400	3,600
<b>Unemployment rate (%)</b>							
February 2021	6.1	5.6	5.6	6.8	6.0	5.7	5.8
January 2021	7.0	6.0	6.3	7.1	6.2	5.9	6.3
May 2020	7.8	6.4	6.9	7.9	8.1	6.3	7.1
March 2020	5.6	4.9	5.2	6.3	5.4	4.9	5.2
<b>Hours worked (millions)</b>							
February 2021	365.0	567.7	455.9	114.0	179.3	34.0	1,766.8
monthly % change	8.5	10.3	4.1	5.0	-4.2	6.7	6.1
% change since May 2020	15.6	11.9	9.7	10.9	3.3	18.1	10.9
% change since March 2020	4.5	0.4	-4.0	0.1	-5.8	1.8	-0.7

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