

Labour Force, August 2021

Source: ABS Labour Force, released 16 September 2021, 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,	-29,800	(-1.1%)
(persons, growth)	Australia,	-146,300	(-1.1%)
Unemployment:	Queensland,	2,600	(5.3%)
(persons, rate)	Australia,	-21,900	(4.5%)
Labour force:	Queensland,	27,200	(-1.0%)
(persons, growth)	Australia,	-168,100	(-1.2%)
Underemployment:	Queensland,	17,500	(8.4%)
(persons, rate)	Australia,	119,300	(9.3%)
Hours worked:	Queensland,	-19,300	(-5.3%)
(thousands, growth)	Australia,	-66,000	(-3.7%)

Main findings

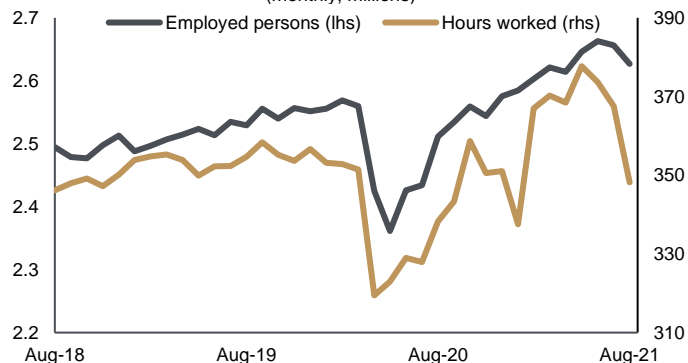
Employment in Queensland fell 29,800 persons (-1.1%) in August 2021, with a fall in both full-time (down 23,700) and part-time employment (down 6,100). These falls reflect conditions during the survey reference period (1 to 14 August 2021), which includes the most recent COVID-19 snap lockdowns in South East Queensland (31 July to 8 August) and Cairns & Yarrabah (8 to 11 August).

Despite the fall, employment in August in Queensland was 265,300 persons (or 11.2%) above its COVID-impacted low in May 2020 and 67,000 persons (or 2.6%) above the pre-pandemic level of March 2020.

In August 2021, there were 348.2 million hours worked in Queensland, down 5.3% in the month, to be 0.9% below March 2020 levels (Chart 1). The ABS noted 'hours worked data continues to provide the best indicator of the extent of labour market impacts and recovery from lockdowns.'

Further, there were 32,800 people who were employed, but worked no hours for economic reasons in August, up 23,500 from July 2021 and to its highest level since June 2020. There were also 131,100 people in Queensland who worked fewer (or no hours) for economic reasons, up 55,500 over the month.

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

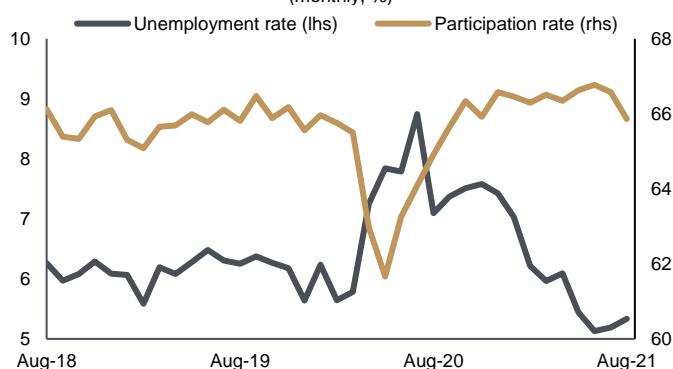


The unemployment rate was 5.3% in August, up from 5.2% in July, but below the pre-pandemic level of 5.8% in March 2020 (Chart 2).

The number of unemployed persons in Queensland increased by 2,600 persons in August to 148,000 persons, but was down from a peak of 233,300 persons in July 2020 to be 9,100 persons below the pre-pandemic level in March 2020.

Queensland's participation rate was 65.9% in August 2021, down from 66.6% in July 2021. This equates to 27,200 persons leaving the labour force in the month. The participation rate in August remained higher than March 2020 (65.5%), equating to a total of 57,900 persons having entered the labour force since March 2020.

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



Nationally, employment fell 146,300 persons (-1.1%) in August 2021 but was 27,100 persons (0.2%) above its pre-pandemic level in March 2020. The monthly fall in national employment was driven by New South Wales (down 172,800) which more than offset growth in Victoria (up 29,100) and Western Australia (up 12,300).

There were 1,713.9 million hours worked in Australia in August 2021, down 3.7% from July 2021 and 2.9% below March 2020. The national unemployment rate fell marginally to 4.5% in August 2021 (Table 1). The ABS noted 'the fall in the unemployment rate reflects a large fall in participation during the recent lockdowns, rather than a strengthening in labour market conditions.'

Table 1: Labour force outcomes¹, August 2021

	Queensland						Australia					
	Aug-21		Monthly Change		Yearly Change		Aug-21		Monthly Change		Yearly Change	
	'000	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	
Employed	2,626.7	-29.8	-1.1	115.1	4.6	13,022.6	-146.3	-1.1	396.1	3.1		
Full-time	1,779.5	-23.7	-1.3	90.8	5.4	8,956.5	-68.0	-0.8	370.8	4.3		
Part-time	847.2	-6.1	-0.7	24.2	2.9	4,066.1	-78.2	-1.9	25.3	0.6		
Unemployed	148.0	2.6	1.8	-43.8	-22.8	617.1	-21.9	-3.4	-298.0	-32.6		
Underemployed	233.1	17.5	8.1	-37.5	-13.9	1,268.0	119.3	10.4	-262.9	-17.2		
Labour Force	2,774.7	-27.2	-1.0	71.3	2.6	13,639.7	-168.1	-1.2	98.0	0.7		
	Millions	Millions	%	Millions	%	Millions	Millions	%	Millions	%		
Hours Worked	348.2	-19.3	-5.3	10.0	2.9	1,713.9	-66.0	-3.7	26.7	1.6		
	Aug-21	Jul-21	Aug-20	Aug-21	Jul-21	Aug-20						
	%	%	%	%	%	%						
Unemployment Rate	5.3	5.2	7.1	4.5	4.6	6.8						
Underemployed	8.4	7.7	10.0	9.3	8.3	11.3						
Participation Rate	65.9	66.6	64.9	65.2	66.0	65.0						

Table 2: Interstate comparison¹, August 2021

	Qld	NSW	Vic	SA	WA	Tas	Aus
Employed							
% change on a month ago	-1.1	-4.2	0.8	-0.3	0.9	-0.2	-1.1
Change on a month ago (no.)	-29,800	-172,800	29,100	-2,800	12,300	-700	-146,300
% change since May 2020	11.2	2.4	7.5	7.8	11.0	9.3	7.3
Change since May 2020 (no.)	265,300	94,500	244,700	63,100	141,300	22,300	882,900
% change since March 2020	2.6	-4.1	1.4	1.8	3.3	1.6	0.2
Change since March 2020 (no.)	67,000	-171,200	49,400	15,700	45,800	4,200	27,100
Unemployment rate							
August-21	5.3	4.9	4.1	5.0	4.6	5.5	4.5
July-21	5.2	4.5	4.4	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6
May-20	7.8	6.4	6.8	7.9	7.9	6.4	7.0
March-20	5.8	4.9	5.2	6.3	5.6	5.0	5.3
Hours worked (millions)							
August-21	348.2	503.9	461.3	118.8	197.5	34.2	1,713.9
monthly % change	-5.3	-6.5	-3.4	1.6	1.6	-0.2	-3.7
% change since May 2020	7.8	-1.3	9.9	15.7	13.7	17.4	6.6
% change since March 2020	-0.9	-11.1	0.5	5.3	3.8	3.1	-2.9

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