

Labour Force, January 2026

Source: ABS *Labour Force*, released 19 February 2026, 10:30 am AEST.

	Queensland		Australia	
Trend - January 2026				
Employment (persons, growth)	6,700	0.2%	24,700	0.2%
Unemployment (persons, rate)	300	4.2%	-8,100	4.1%
Labour force (persons, growth)	7,000	0.2%	16,600	0.1%
Underemployment (persons, rate)	400	6.2%	900	5.9%
Hours worked (thousands, growth)	600	0.1%	4,700	0.2%
Seasonally adjusted - January 2026				
Employment (persons, growth)	18,000	0.6%	17,800	0.1%
Unemployment (persons, rate)	13,600	4.3%	-1,900	4.1%

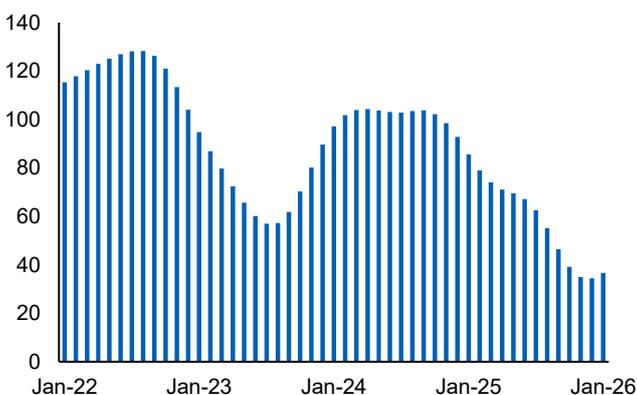
Queensland

In trend terms, employment in Queensland rose by 6,700 persons (0.2%) in January 2026 to be 36,700 persons (1.2%) higher over the year (**Chart 1**). Both full-time (up 2,900) and part-time (up 3,800) employment rose in January.

In more volatile seasonally adjusted terms, employment rose 18,000 persons (up 0.6%) in the month and was 1.4% higher over the year.

Chart 1: Annual change in employment, Queensland

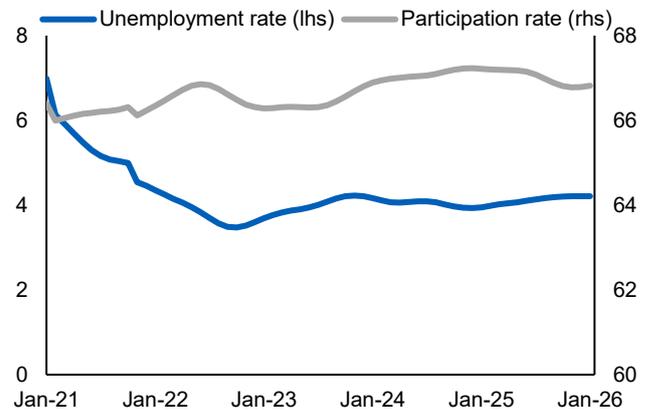
(trend, monthly, '000s)



The trend unemployment rate was 4.2% in January, unchanged from a revised 4.2% in December and up from 3.9% in the previous year. Queensland's unemployment rate has been relatively stable since late 2023, at between 3.9% and 4.2% (**Chart 2**).

Chart 2: Unemployment and participation rates, Queensland

(trend, monthly, %)



Queensland's participation rate was 66.8% in January, down from 67.2% a year ago but remaining above its 10-year average.

The employment-to-population ratio was 64.0% in January 2026, down from 64.6% a year ago. Hours worked remained unchanged in January but was 0.2% higher than a year ago.

Queensland's underemployment rate¹ was unchanged at 6.2% in the month but was up slightly from 6.1% a year ago. The underutilisation rate¹ was 10.4% in January, unchanged from December but up from 10.1% a year earlier.

National

Nationally, trend employment rose 24,700 persons in January (up 0.2%, **Table 1**) to be 179,900 (1.2%) higher over the year. In seasonally adjusted terms, employment nationally rose by 17,800 persons in the month, a little below market expectations of a 20,000 person increase.

The trend unemployment rate was 4.1% in January, up from 4.0% a year earlier and has been edging higher from the low of 3.5% in late 2022. In seasonally adjusted terms, the unemployment rate was 4.1% in January, unchanged in the month and over the year.

Hours worked rose 0.2% in January, to be up 1.5% over the year, broadly in line with employment growth.

Interstate comparison

In January, Queensland (up 36,700 persons) recorded the third largest annual employment growth behind Victoria (up 61,900) and slightly behind South Australia (up 38,600, **Table 1**).

In percentage terms, Queensland employment grew 1.2% over the year to January, on par with the national average (up 1.2%, **Chart 3**). This growth outpaced New South Wales (up 0.4%) and Tasmania (up 0.3%) but was slightly behind Western Australia (up 1.3%). Among the other states, South Australia experienced the strongest growth (up 4.0%), followed by Victoria (up 1.6%).

Compared with a year ago, South Australia was the only state to record a lower unemployment rate at 3.8%. While Victoria's rate remained unchanged at 4.5%. The unemployment rate increased in Tasmania

(4.5%), Queensland (4.2%), and New South Wales (4.0%), contributing to a rise in the national average to 4.1%.

Chart 3: Annual employment growth, Jan-26
(trend, %)

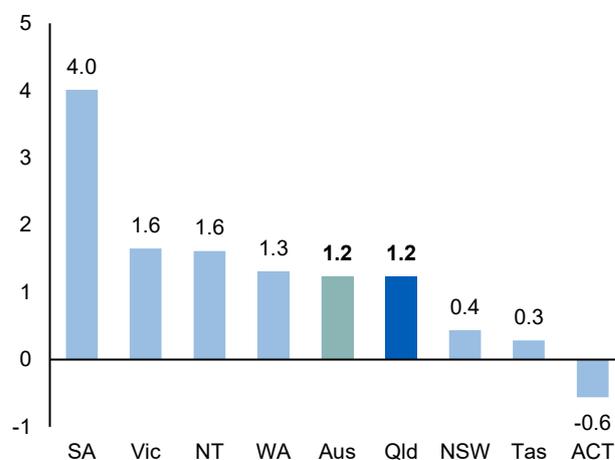


Table 1: Key labour force indicators, January 2026
(trend)

	Qld	NSW	Vic	SA	WA	Tas	Aus
Employed (000s persons)	3,010	4,500	3,820	1,000	1,670	280	14,710
Monthly change (%)	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.4	-0.4	0.2
Monthly change (no.)	6,700	10,600	3,900	3,500	6,300	-1,100	24,700
Annual change (%)	1.2	0.4	1.6	4.0	1.3	0.3	1.2
Annual change (no.)	36,700	19,500	61,900	38,600	21,500	800	179,900
Unemployment rate (%)							
January 2026	4.2	4.0	4.5	3.8	3.9	4.5	4.1
December 2025	4.2	4.1	4.5	3.9	4.0	4.4	4.2
January 2025	3.9	3.9	4.5	3.9	3.6	4.0	4.0
Hours worked (millions)	411.3	613.6	514.7	133.3	237.1	36.2	2006.9
Monthly change (%)	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.6	-0.4	0.2
Annual change (%)	0.2	0.6	2.6	3.5	1.6	-0.8	1.5
Participation rate (%)							
January 2026	66.8	65.6	67.6	65.0	68.5	60.5	66.7
December 2025	66.8	65.6	67.7	64.9	68.4	60.7	66.8
January 2025	67.2	66.3	67.8	63.4	69.1	60.3	67.0
Underemployment rate (%)							
January 2026	6.2	5.5	6.5	6.2	5.3	7.2	5.9
December 2025	6.2	5.4	6.5	6.2	5.3	7.2	5.9
January 2025	6.1	5.8	6.2	6.5	5.6	7.6	5.9

1. The underemployment rate measures underemployed persons as a proportion of the total labour force, and the underutilisation rate combines both unemployment and underemployment to indicate spare capacity in the labour market.