

# Labour Force, May 2026

Source: ABS *Labour Force*, released 25 June 2026, 11:30 am AEST.

	Queensland		Australia	
<b>Trend - May 2026</b>				
Employment (persons, growth)	9,500	0.3%	20,200	0.1%
Unemployment (persons, rate)	-2,000	3.9%	3,000	4.4%
Labour force (persons, growth)	7,500	0.2%	23,200	0.2%
Underemployment (persons, rate)	-2,300	5.6%	-600	5.8%
Hours worked (thousands, growth)	1,700	0.4%	2,800	0.1%
<b>Seasonally adjusted - May 2026</b>				
Employment (persons, growth)	18,300	0.6%	40,300	0.3%
Unemployment (persons, rate)	-17,300	3.7%	-18,300	4.4%

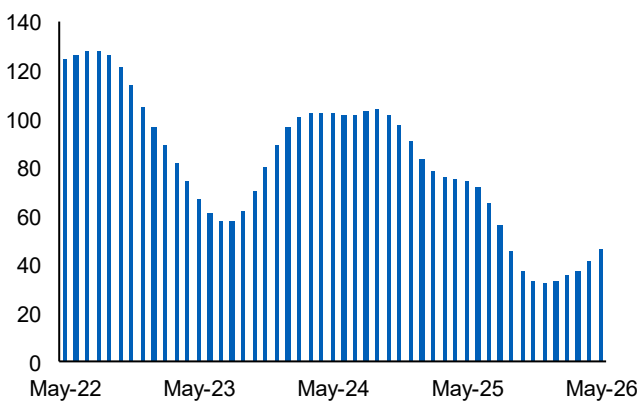
## Queensland

In trend terms, employment in Queensland rose by 9,500 persons (0.3%) in May 2026 to be 46,400 persons (1.5%) higher over the year (**Chart 1**). Both full-time (up 3,000) and part-time (up 6,400) employment rose in May.

In more volatile seasonally adjusted terms, employment rose 18,300 persons (up 0.6%) in the month and was 1.3% higher over the year.

**Chart 1: Annual change in employment, Queensland**

(trend, monthly, '000s)

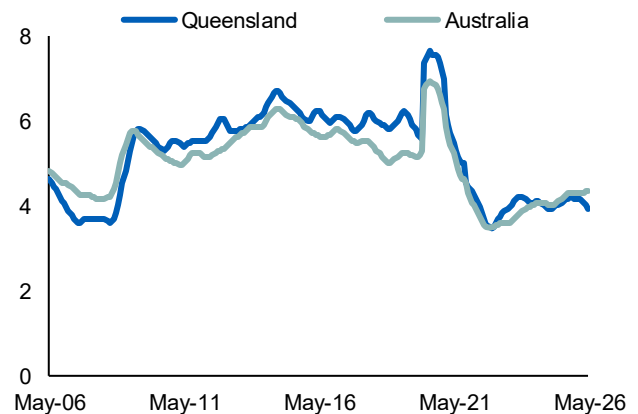


The trend unemployment rate fell to 3.9% in May, down from 4.0% in April and 4.1% a year ago. Queensland's unemployment rate has been relatively stable since mid-2023, oscillating between 3.9% and 4.2% (**Chart 2**).

Queensland's participation rate was 66.9% in May, down from 67.3% a year ago but remaining close to its highest rate in well over a decade and near the record 68.0% in early 2009 during the coal mining investment boom.

The employment-to-population ratio was 64.3% in May 2026, down from 64.5% a year ago. Hours worked rose 0.4% in May to be up 2.6% annually.

**Chart 2: Unemployment rate**  
(trend, monthly, %)



Queensland's underemployment rate<sup>1</sup> was 5.6% in May, down from 6.1% a year ago. The underutilisation rate<sup>1</sup> was 9.5% in May, down from 9.7% in April and 10.2% a year earlier.

## National

Nationally, trend employment rose 20,200 persons in May (up 0.1%, **Table 1**) to be 185,000 (1.3%) higher over the year. In seasonally adjusted terms, employment nationally rose by 40,300 persons in the month, above market expectations of a 30,000 person increase.

The trend unemployment rate was 4.4% in May up from 4.2% a year earlier and has been edging higher from the recent low of 3.5% in June 2023 (**Chart 2**). In seasonally adjusted terms, the unemployment rate fell to 4.4% in May, down from 4.5% in April but up from 4.1% in the previous year.

Hours worked rose 0.1% in May, to be up 2.2% over the year, ahead of annual employment growth (1.3%).



## Interstate comparison

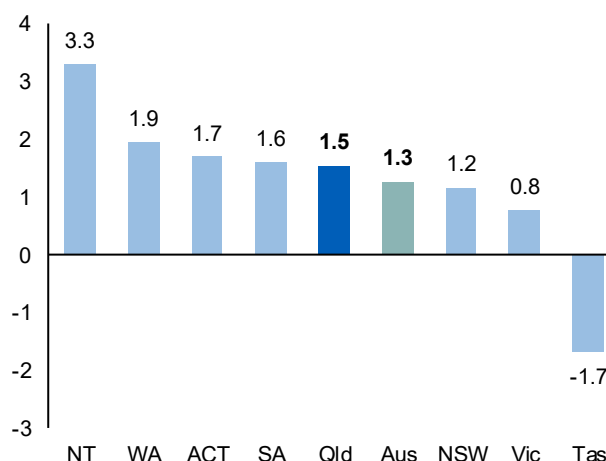
In May, Queensland recorded the second largest annual employment growth (up 46,400 persons) behind New South Wales (up 52,200) and ahead of Western Australia (up 32,200, **Table 1**).

In percentage terms, Queensland employment grew 1.5% over the year to May, above the national average (up 1.3%, **Chart 3**). This growth outpaced New South Wales (up 1.2%) and Victoria (up 0.8%) but was just behind South Australia (up 1.6%). Among the other states, Western Australia experienced the strongest growth (up 1.9%), while Tasmania recorded the only decline (down 1.7%).

Compared with a year ago, the unemployment rate rose across most states with the only declines seen in Queensland and South Australia (both down 0.2%-pt). The largest increase was seen in Tasmania

with a 1.1%-pt increase to 5.0%, to be the highest rate of any state. This was followed by a 0.5%-pt increase in Victoria, 0.4%-pt in Western Australia, and 0.2%-pt in New South Wales.

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



**Table 1: Key labour force indicators, May 2026**

(trend)

	Qld	NSW	Vic	SA	WA	Tas	Aus
<b>Employed (000s)</b>	3,040	4,530	3,800	990	1,680	280	14,750
Monthly change (%)	0.3	0.1	0.0	-0.1	0.2	-0.1	0.1
Monthly change (no.)	9,500	5,600	1,500	-500	3,200	-300	20,200
Annual change (%)	1.5	1.2	0.8	1.6	1.9	-1.7	1.3
Annual change (no.)	46,400	52,200	29,200	15,500	32,200	-4,700	185,000
<b>Unemployment rate (%)</b>							
May 2026	3.9	4.3	4.9	4.1	4.4	5.0	4.4
April 2026	4.0	4.3	4.8	4.0	4.3	5.0	4.3
May 2025	4.1	4.1	4.4	4.3	4.0	3.9	4.2
<b>Hours worked (millions)</b>	419.9	619.9	508.6	133.1	241.4	36.5	2018.5
Monthly change (%)	0.4	0.0	-0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1
Annual change (%)	2.6	2.3	1.1	2.8	2.7	-2.5	2.2
<b>Participation rate (%)</b>							
May 2026	66.9	66.0	67.2	64.1	68.9	60.2	66.7
April 2026	66.9	65.9	67.3	64.2	68.9	60.2	66.7
May 2025	67.3	66.0	67.6	64.1	69.0	60.9	66.9
<b>Underemployment rate (%)</b>							
May 2026	5.6	5.6	6.5	6.2	5.0	6.9	5.8
April 2026	5.7	5.6	6.4	6.2	5.1	6.9	5.9
May 2025	6.1	5.4	6.4	6.2	5.5	7.4	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.