Labour Force, October 2026

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

	Queensland		Australia	
Trend - October 2026				
Employment (persons, growth)	-400	0.0%	7,200	0.0%
Unemployment (persons, rate)	2,700	4.7%	9,800	4.8%
Labour force (persons, growth)	2,300	0.1%	16,900	0.1%
Underemployment (persons, rate)	1,900	6.8%	-2,700	6.3%
Hours worked (thousands, growth)	1,400	0.3%	1,100	0.1%
Seasonally adjusted - October 2026				
Employment (persons, growth)	-9,900	-0.3%	-43,500	-0.3%
Unemployment (persons, rate)	7,900	4.8%	17,800	4.9%

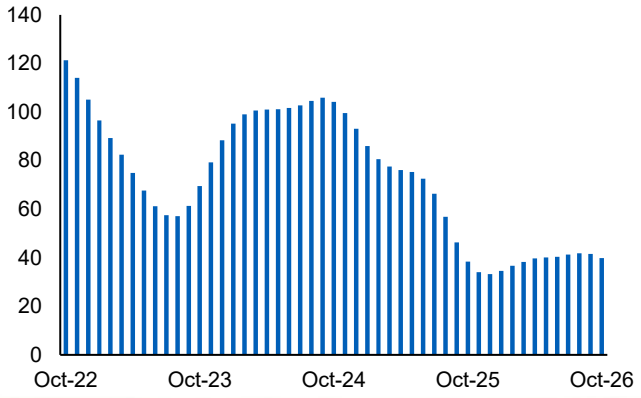
Queensland

In trend terms, employment in Queensland was little changed in October, down 400 persons (0.0%), but was 39,900 persons (1.3%) higher over the year (**Chart 1**). The monthly result reflected a rise in full-time (up 7,800) employment being more than offset by a fall in part-time (down 8,200) employment.

In more volatile seasonally adjusted terms, employment fell 9,900 persons (down 0.3%) in the month but was 0.9% higher over the year.

Chart 1: Annual change in employment, Queensland

(trend, monthly, '000s)



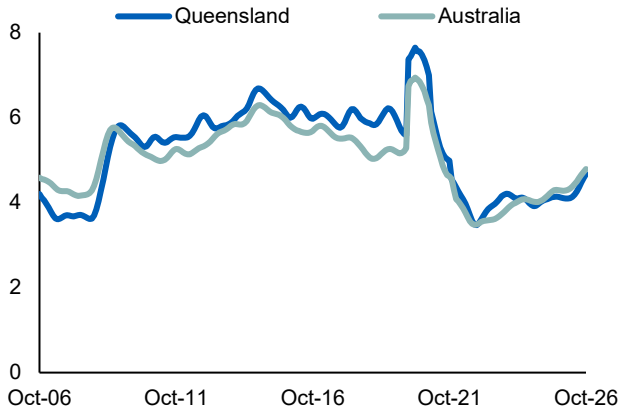
The trend unemployment rate rose to 4.7% in October, up from 4.6% in September and 4.1% a year earlier. After remaining stable at a very low rate for some time, Queensland's unemployment rate has drifted higher in recent months (**Chart 2**).

Queensland's participation rate was 66.8% in October, unchanged from 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 63.7% in October 2026, down from 64.1% a year ago. Hours worked rose 0.3% in October to be up 2.0% annually.

Chart 2: Unemployment rate

(trend, monthly, %)



Queensland's underemployment rate[1] was 6.8% in October, up from 6.1% a year ago. The underutilisation rate[1] was 11.4% in October, up from 11.3% in September and 10.2% a year earlier.

National

Nationally, trend employment rose 7,200 persons in October (up 0.0%, **Table 1**) to be 161,200 (1.1%) higher over the year. In seasonally adjusted terms, employment nationally fell 43,500 persons in the month, well below market expectations for a 25,000 persons increase.

The trend unemployment rate was 4.8% in October, up from 4.3% 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 rose to 4.9% in October, up from 4.7% in September and up from 4.3% in the previous year.

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Hours worked rose 0.1% in October, to be up 0.9% over the year, behind annual employment growth (1.1%).

Interstate comparison

In October, Queensland recorded the second largest annual employment growth (up 39,900 persons), slightly behind New South Wales (up 40,000) but ahead of Western Australia (up 37,500) and Victoria (up 31,300, **Table 1**).

In percentage terms, Queensland employment grew 1.3% over the year to October, above the national average (up 1.1%, **Chart 3**). This growth outpaced New South Wales (up 0.9%) and Victoria (up 0.8%) but behind Western Australia (up 2.3%). Among the other states, South Australia was unchanged while Tasmania fell (down 1.5%).

Compared to a year ago, the unemployment rate was higher in all states, seeing the national rate increase to 4.8%. Tasmania (5.3%) and Victoria (5.2%) had the highest unemployment rates of the states, with the other states lower, ranging between 4.5%-4.7%.

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

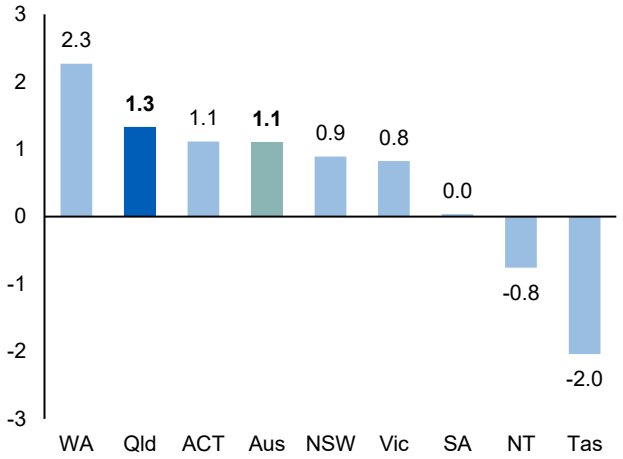


Table 1: Key labour force indicators, October 2026
(trend)

	Qld	NSW	Vic	SA	WA	Tas	Aus
Employed (000s)	3,040	4,520	3,830	990	1,690	280	14,800
Monthly change (%)	0.0	-0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
Monthly change (no.)	-400	-7,300	5,600	600	2,200	0	7,200
Annual change (%)	1.3	0.9	0.8	0.0	2.3	-2.0	1.1
Annual change (no.)	39,900	40,000	31,300	400	37,500	-5,800	161,200
Unemployment rate (%)							
October 2026	4.7	4.6	5.2	4.6	4.5	5.3	4.8
September 2026	4.6	4.5	5.2	4.5	4.4	5.2	4.7
October 2025	4.1	4.1	4.7	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.3
Hours worked (millions)	417.6	616.0	505.1	132.7	243.5	36.5	2006.9
Monthly change (%)	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	-0.1	0.1
Annual change (%)	2.0	1.1	-0.6	1.2	4.5	-1.8	0.9
Participation rate (%)							
October 2026	66.8	65.7	67.6	64.2	68.5	60.3	66.8
September 2026	66.9	65.8	67.6	64.2	68.5	60.3	66.8
October 2025	66.8	65.6	67.9	64.7	68.5	61.4	66.9
Underemployment rate (%)							
October 2026	6.8	5.5	7.0	7.0	5.5	6.9	6.3
September 2026	6.7	5.5	7.0	6.9	5.6	7.0	6.3
October 2025	6.1	5.3	6.4	6.3	5.4	7.2	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.

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