



## Are you looking for a job in Australia?

The *Australian Labour Market Update* provides information on the Australian labour market on a quarterly basis. It is intended to help people who may be interested in working in Australia on a temporary or permanent basis.

Further information on job prospects, earnings and related information is available online at **Australian Jobs 2008** available through [www.workplace.gov.au](http://www.workplace.gov.au).

*Unless otherwise stated, data are from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Labour Force Survey, February 2009.*

## EMPLOYMENT

The pace of trend employment growth in Australia has slowed to 0.7% over the 12 months to February 2009 (compared with growth of 2.7% in the previous year) and has fallen from its peak of 29 900 jobs per month in December 2007, to an average decline of 5 000 jobs per month in March 2009. This slowing, coupled with the recent decline in the pace of economic growth and a deterioration in a number of forward indicators of labour market activity, suggest the pace of employment growth will continue to slow over 2009, resulting in a further rise in the unemployment rate.

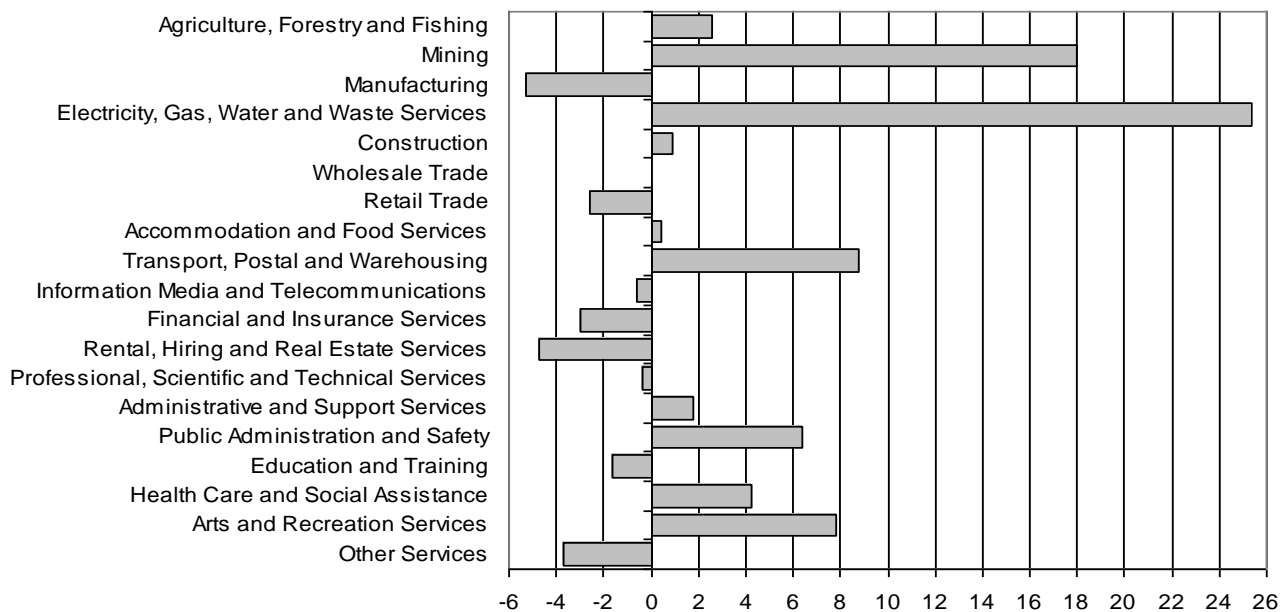
Indeed, according to the Australian Government's February 2009 official forecasts, the level of employment is expected to contract by ¼% over 2008-09 and remain weak during 2010, while the unemployment rate is projected to rise to 7% by the June quarter 2010. It should be noted, however, that there are considerable upside risks to these projections, as global conditions have deteriorated considerably since these forecasts were released. An update of these official forecasts will be released on 12 May 2009.

Over the 12 months to February 2009, employment (in trend terms) increased in all States and Territories except New South Wales and Victoria. In percentage terms, employment growth was strongest in the Northern Territory (4.0%), Tasmania (3.4%) and Western Australia (2.7%).

Employment opportunities and growth varied across industries. Over the 12 months to February 2009, the largest increases in trend employment occurred in Transport, Postal and Warehousing (up by 48 300), Health Care and Social Assistance (up by 46 700), Public Administration and Safety (up by 40 100) and Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services (up by 29 200). The strongest rates of employment growth were in Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services (25.4%), Mining (18.0%) and Transport, Postal and Warehousing (8.8%). Employment growth rates by industry are shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Percentage change in trend employment by industry – February 2008 to February 2009**

← Decrease Increase →



Source: ABS (2009), *Australian Labour Market Statistics*, April 2009, ABS Cat. No. 6105.0

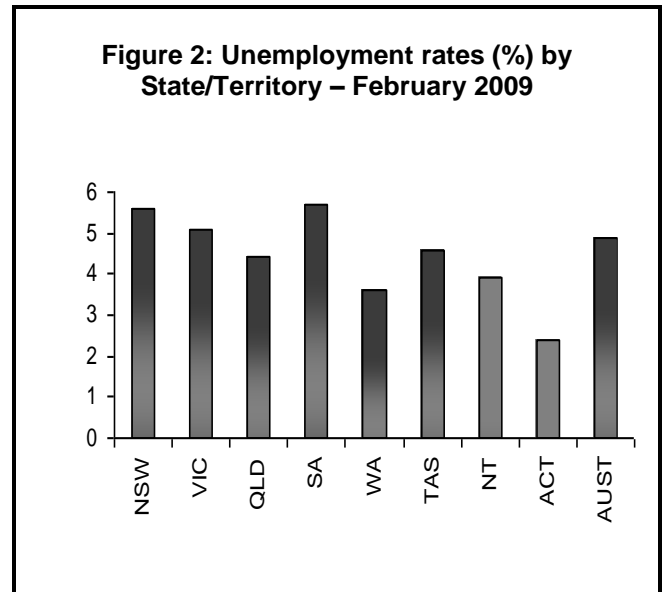
## UNEMPLOYMENT

The trend rate of unemployment was 4.9% in February 2009, compared with 4.1% in February 2008.

In the past year, trend unemployment rates have increased in all States and Territories except for the Northern Territory (down by 0.6%), the Australian Capital Territory (ACT – down by 0.2%) and Tasmania (down by 0.2%).

In February 2009, the trend unemployment rate was highest in South Australia (5.7%) and New South Wales (5.6%), and lowest in the ACT (2.4%). See Figure 2.

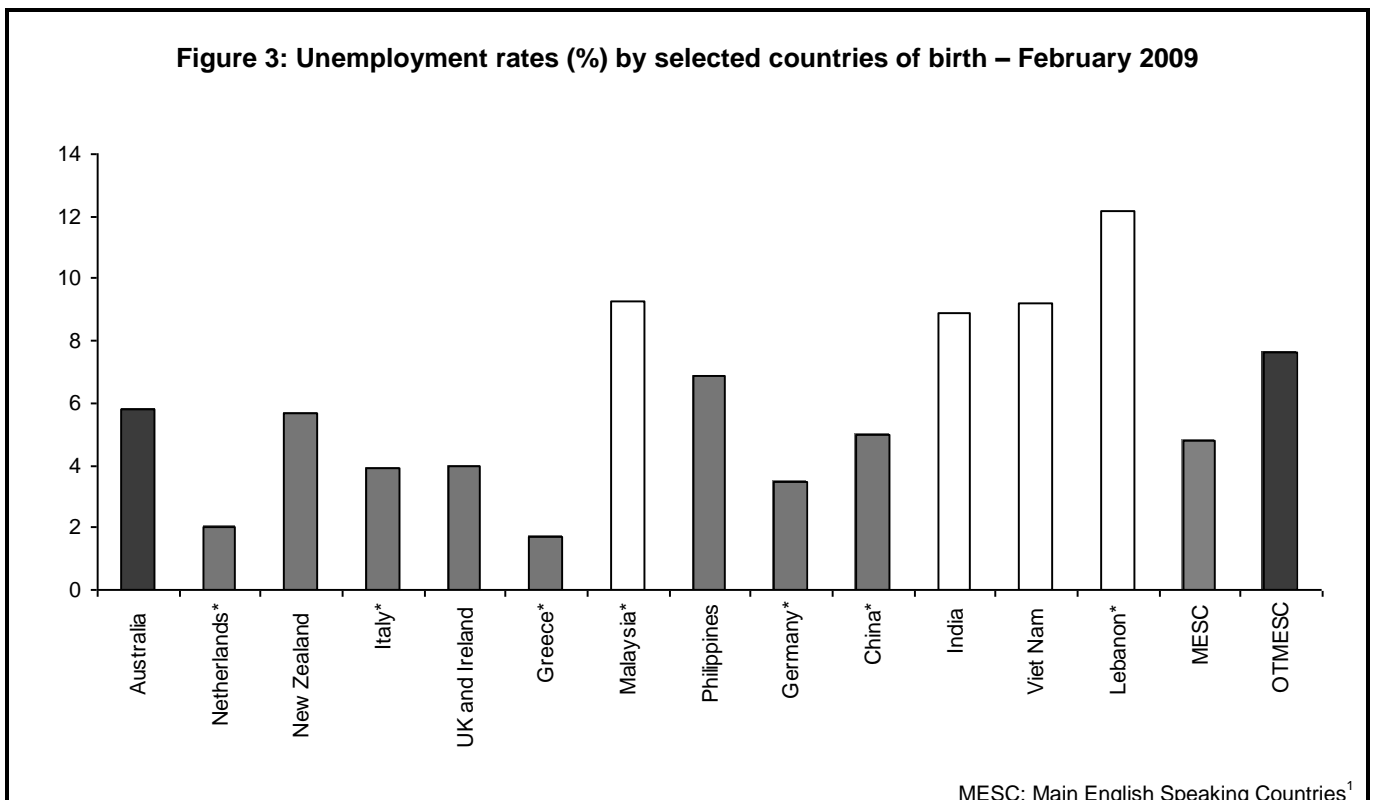
Generally, people in the more highly skilled occupational groups are less likely to experience unemployment. For example, in February 2009 the unemployment rate for former Labourers was three times that of former Professionals.



## MIGRANT UNEMPLOYMENT

The unemployment rates for people who migrate to Australia vary appreciably. Several factors influence migrant unemployment rates including the period since arrival in Australia (data consistently shows that recently arrived migrants generally have a higher unemployment rate than those who have lived in Australia for some years), skill level, age, English proficiency and recent and relevant work experience.

Figure 3 below shows unemployment rates (original data) for people now resident in Australia who were born in selected overseas countries. For example, people born in Greece and the Netherlands have low unemployment rates (1.7% and 2.0% respectively), whereas unemployment rates for people born in Lebanon and Malaysia are relatively high (12.2% and 9.3% respectively).



MESC: Main English Speaking Countries<sup>1</sup>

\* Estimate is subject to high sampling variability.



OTMESC: Other Than Main English Speaking Countries

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<sup>1</sup> MESC are the United Kingdom, Ireland, South Africa, Canada, the United States of America and New Zealand.

## EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION

While employment growth is not the only factor influencing job prospects, it is often easier to obtain a job in an occupation which is experiencing strong employment growth than one growing only slowly or declining. Over the 12 months to February 2009, the largest increases in employment (original data) occurred for Community and Personal Service Workers (up by 59 700), Clerical and Administrative Workers (up by 24 600) and Managers (up by 11 500). Employment growth rates, in declining skill order, are shown below.

The unemployment rate for occupational groups generally reflects skill levels. Highly skilled occupational groups usually experience lower rates of unemployment, while higher unemployment rates are generally associated with less skilled occupations. The unemployment rates (for those who had worked for two weeks or more in the past two years) by occupational group are presented in descending skill order below.

Percentage Growth Rates in Employment in the 12 months to February 2009		Unemployment Rate at February 2009	
Managers	0.8%	Managers	2.2%
Professionals	-0.6%	Professionals	2.7%
Technicians and Trades Workers	0.1%	Technicians and Trades Workers	3.5%
Community and Personal Service Workers	6.6%	Community and Personal Service Workers	4.4%
Clerical and Administrative Workers	1.5%	Clerical and Administrative Workers	3.5%
Sales Workers	-0.5%	Sales Workers	5.5%
Machinery Operators and Drivers	1.5%	Machinery Operators and Drivers	6.1%
Labourers	-1.7%	Labourers	8.1%

Additional information on Professional and Trade occupations is provided in the following section on skilled vacancies. Time series of vacancy data are not readily available for less-skilled occupations.

## SKILLED VACANCY TRENDS<sup>2</sup>

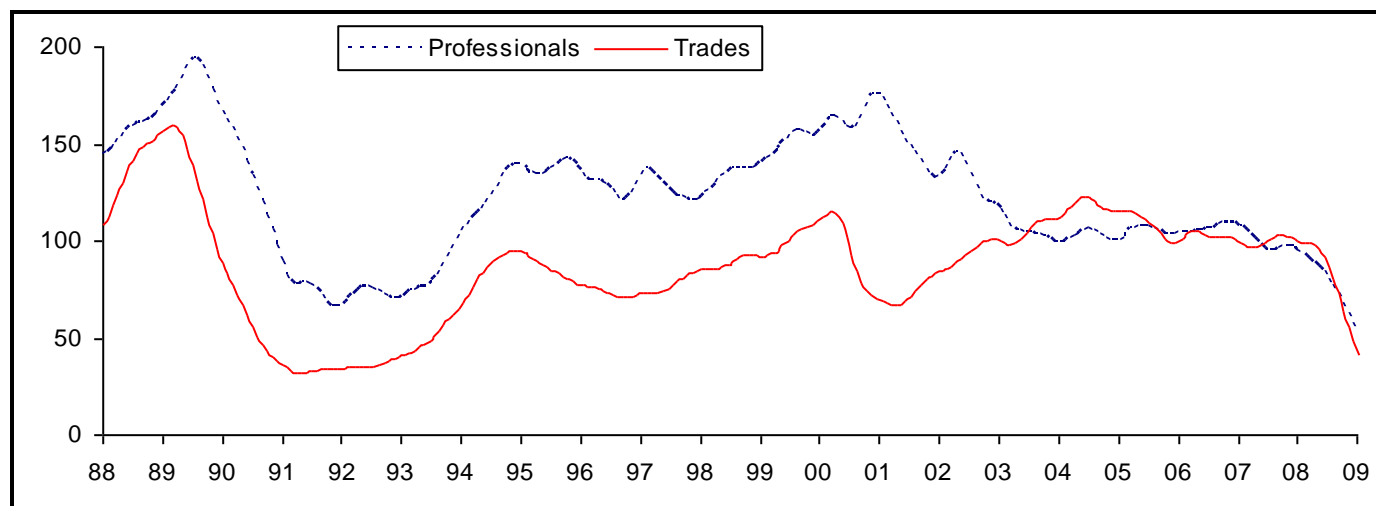
The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations produces the *Skilled Vacancies Index (SVI)* for 18 skilled occupational groups for each State and the Northern Territory. These are aggregated into the Professional, Associate Professional and Trade groups (see Figure 4 overleaf). The SVI indicates where the best employment opportunities may be in the Australian labour market.

In February 2009, skilled vacancies were 52.4% lower than in February 2008. Over the 12 months, SVI decreases were recorded in all States and Territories. The most significant decreases were recorded in New South Wales (down by 62.1%) and Queensland (56.0%).

In the 12 months to February 2009, advertised vacancies decreased for Professional occupations (down by 41.5%) and for Trade occupations (down by 57.6%). The most significant decreases were for Printing Trades (down by 83.0%), Metal Trades (down by 74.1%) and Wood Trades (down by 68.4%). The only occupation within these broad groups to record an increase was Marketing and Advertising Professionals (up by 6.6%).

<sup>2</sup> Historical series of trend figures are revised monthly.

Figure 4: Skilled Vacancies Index, February 1988 to February 2009



## FUTURE JOB PROSPECTS

Future job prospects depend on many factors, some of which are difficult to predict. Prospects differ between and within States and Territories and can change rapidly. Even in occupations with below-average prospects, significant employment opportunities may arise. This information should therefore be used with caution.

The following future job prospect ratings are for the period to 2012-13. The ratings are based on employment trends and projected growth, unemployment rates, SVI trends (where available), and other data. While the global recession could adversely affect prospects for some occupational groups in the short term, it is unclear at this stage what effect it will have on average prospects to 2012-13.

In the following table G stands for good prospects, A for average prospects and BA for below average prospects; L (not in the table) stands for limited prospects. These are examples from the skilled classifications categories – refer to the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO), Second Edition (ABS Cat. No.1220.0)<sup>3</sup>.

Occupational Group	Prospects to 2012-13	Occupational Group	Prospects to 2012-13
<b>Managers and Administrators</b>		Social Workers	<b>G</b>
Child Care Co-ordinators*	<b>G</b>	Specialist Medical Practitioners*	<b>G</b>
Finance Managers	<b>G</b>	<b>Associate Professionals</b>	
Information Technology Managers	<b>G</b>	Building, Architectural and Surveying Associates	<b>G/A</b>
<b>Professionals</b>		Dental Therapists, Technicians* and Hygienists	<b>G</b>
Computing Professionals* (part)	<b>G</b>	Enrolled Nurses	<b>G/A</b>
General Medical Practitioners*	<b>G</b>	Financial Dealers and Brokers	<b>G/A</b>
Medical Imaging Professionals* (part)	<b>G</b>	Medical Technical Officers	<b>G</b>
Occupational Therapists*	<b>G</b>	Metallurgical Technicians and Mine Deputies	<b>G</b>
Pharmacists* (part)	<b>G</b>	<b>Tradespersons</b>	
Physiotherapists*	<b>G</b>	Bakers and Pastrycooks*	<b>G</b>
Primary School Teachers	<b>G</b>	Cabinetmakers*	<b>G</b>
Registered Nurses*	<b>G</b>	Lift Mechanics*	<b>G</b>
Registered Mental Health Nurses*	<b>G</b>	General Mechanical Engineering Tradespersons	<b>G</b>
Registered Midwives*	<b>G</b>	Printing Machinists	<b>A</b>
Secondary School Teachers	<b>G</b>	Textile and Footwear Machine Operators	<b>BA</b>

\* denotes occupations that are listed in part or in full on the Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL) announced on 17 May 2008. **The Australian Labour Market Update uses the latest available detailed and consistent data at time of production. However, the labour market can change quickly and should be re-assessed prior to making a decision to lodge a visa application. Queries relating to this publication should be emailed to migration@deewr.gov.au.**

<sup>3</sup> Job prospect ratings are based on the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO), First Edition (ABS Cat. No. 1220.0).

## AUSTRALIA – its States and Territories

This Hot Topic focuses on the Australian States and Territories (the States), and provides an overview of the Australian population, its regional distribution and relative economic performance. It is an annual publication included in the April edition of the Australian Labour Market Update.

Unless otherwise stated, data are from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Labour Force Survey, February 2009.

### THE AUSTRALIAN POPULATION

Australia's population is concentrated in New South Wales (NSW – 32.6% of the total population) and Victoria (24.8%). The States which experienced the strongest population growth over the 12 months to 30 June 2008 were Western Australia (WA – up by 2.8%), Queensland and the Northern Territory (NT – up by 2.3%), while Tasmania experienced the weakest growth (0.9%).

	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	AUST**
Population	6 984 172	5 313 823	4 293 915	1 603 361	2 171 197	497 529	219 818	345 551	21 431 781
Share of Australian Population (%)	32.6	24.8	20.0	7.5	10.1	2.3	1.0	1.6	100.0
Capital City	20.5	18.2	9.1	5.5	7.5	1.0	0.6	1.6	63.9
Balance of State	12.1	6.6	11.0	2.0	2.7	1.3	0.5	0.0	36.1
Aged 15 years and over	26.4	20.1	16.0	6.1	8.1	1.9	0.8	1.3	80.7
Aged 65 years and over	4.5	3.4	2.5	1.1	1.2	0.3	0.1	0.2	13.2
Population growth (%)***	1.1	1.8	2.3	1.1	2.8	0.9	2.3	1.3	1.7

\* Estimated resident population at 30 June 2008 is preliminary.

\*\* Australia includes Other Territories not represented individually in this table.

\*\*\* Percentage growth in the 12 months from 30 June 2007 to 30 June 2008.

Source: ABS (2009), *Australian Demographic Statistics, September Quarter 2008*, ABS Cat. No. 3101.0; and ABS (2009), *Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2007-08*, ABS Cat. No. 3218.0.

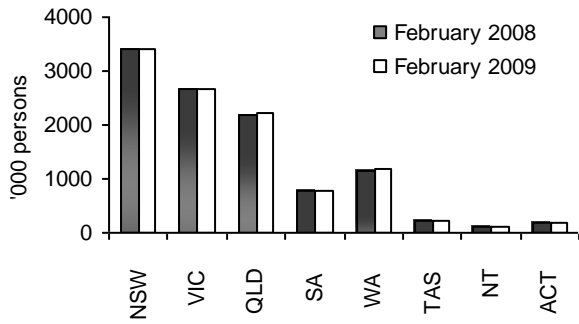
### STATE AND TERRITORY EMPLOYMENT

Trend employment increased in all States and Territories except for NSW and Victoria over the 12 months to February 2009. Figure A shows NSW (3.4 million), Victoria (2.7 million) and Queensland (2.2 million) had the highest employment. Of the States and Territories, the NT had the highest employment growth in percentage terms (up by 4.0%) over the 12 months to February 2009.

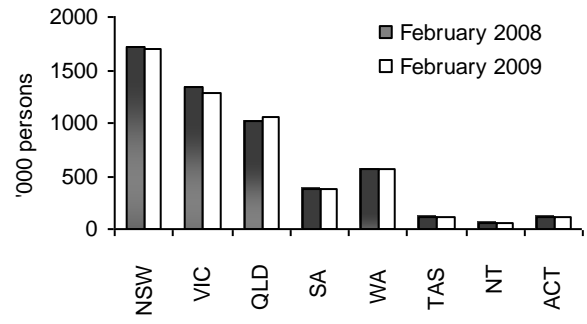
Figure B shows NSW (1.7 million), Victoria (1.3 million) and Queensland (1.1 million) employ the largest number of workers in skilled occupations<sup>4</sup> (Managers, Professionals, Technicians and Trades Workers) (original data). Of these States, only Queensland recorded employment growth (up by 2.6%) over the 12 months to February 2009.

<sup>4</sup> ANZSCO Major Groups 1 to 3 includes most but not all skilled occupations where the entry requirement for employment in the Australian labour market is an Australian Qualifications Framework Certificate III or higher level qualification.

**Figure A: Employment by State/Territory – February 2008 to February 2009**



**Figure B: Employment for 'Skilled' Occupations by State/Territory – February 2008 to February 2009**



## STATE AND TERRITORY LABOUR FORCE

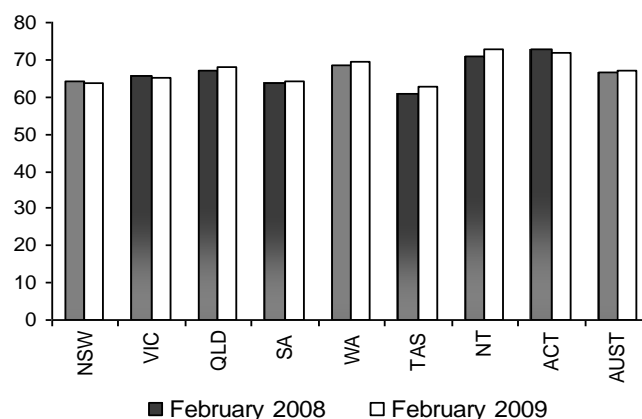
The labour force participation rate is calculated by expressing the labour force as a percentage of the civilian population aged 15 and over. (The labour force is employed persons plus unemployed persons.)

Over the 12 months to February 2009, the labour force participation rate for Australia (original data) increased slightly by 0.3 percentage points to 65.8% (see Figure C). Tasmania recorded the largest increase in the participation rate over this period, while the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), Victoria and NSW recorded a decrease.

Full-time employment (original data) decreased by 0.5% in the 12 months to February 2009, while part-time employment increased by 3.7%.

Male full-time employment decreased by 0.7% and female full-time employment decreased by 0.3%. Male part-time employment increased by 1.3% and female part-time employment increased by 4.7%.

Figure C: Labour force participation rates by State (%)



## INDUSTRY BY STATE AND TERRITORY

Table B provides estimates of the percentage of employment in each State for each industry (original data). It shows the ACT has a relatively high proportion of employed persons in Public Administration and Safety, WA in Mining, Victoria and South Australia in Manufacturing, and NSW in Financial and Insurance Services.

Table B Employment Distribution by Industry, States and Territories  
Average of 4 quarters to February 2009 (% of total)

INDUSTRY	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	AUST
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	2.6	3.1	3.8	5.4	3.8	7.0	2.4	*0.2	3.4
Mining	1.0	0.4	2.0	1.2	5.9	1.0	4.2	*0.0	1.6
Manufacturing	8.8	12.1	8.7	11.9	8.7	8.5	4.0	2.2	9.6
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.4	1.7	1.4	1.3	0.7	1.2
Construction	8.6	8.4	11.1	7.4	10.6	8.3	8.4	6.8	9.2
Wholesale Trade	3.8	4.7	3.0	3.4	3.5	3.9	2.0	1.2	3.7
Retail Trade	11.4	10.8	11.9	11.3	11.1	12.1	10.6	8.6	11.3
Accommodation and Food Services	7.1	6.1	7.1	6.2	5.7	7.4	6.0	5.7	6.6
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	5.6	5.2	6.2	4.6	4.9	3.9	5.1	2.9	5.4
Information Media and Telecommunications	2.5	2.4	1.7	1.6	1.3	1.7	1.9	2.5	2.1
Financial and Insurance Services	5.1	3.7	2.8	3.1	2.5	2.9	1.8	2.3	3.7
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	1.6	1.7	2.5	1.4	2.0	1.5	1.7	1.3	1.8
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	8.3	7.7	6.3	5.6	6.5	4.4	4.4	11.5	7.3
Administrative and Support Services	3.1	3.4	3.1	3.5	3.2	3.0	3.1	2.3	3.2
Public Administration and Safety	5.8	4.6	5.7	5.9	5.8	7.7	16.5	28.7	6.1
Education and Training	7.2	7.6	7.6	7.5	7.2	8.5	9.5	8.3	7.5
Health Care and Social Assistance	10.5	10.6	9.8	12.5	9.6	12.0	10.2	8.8	10.4
Arts and Recreation Services	1.8	2.1	1.5	1.7	1.7	1.6	2.6	2.2	1.8
Other Services	4.3	4.1	4.2	4.4	4.2	3.3	4.3	3.7	4.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: ABS Labour Force Survey original data for the 4 quarters to February 2009.

\* Indicates an estimate which may be subject to sampling variability too high for most practical purposes.