

Thursday, 19 May 1994

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statistics

Unemployment at lowest level for more than two years

The provisional trend estimate of unemployment continues to fall and in April 1994 stood at 887 000, the lowest level since December 1991. The trend estimate of employment in April 1994 stood at 7 836 300, 2.9 per cent higher than the January 1993 low point. The trend estimate of the unemployment rate and the participation rate both fell slightly to 10.2 per cent and 62.7 per cent respectively.

Employment

The seasonally adjusted estimate of employed persons for April 1994 was 7 832 500, an increase of 5 800 since March 1994. Full-time employment increased by 8 800 to 5 960 200 while the number of persons employed part time decreased slightly to 1 872 300. For males, employment increased by 15 100 to 4 502 900 with an increase of 22 700 to 4 036 500 in full-time employment and a decrease of 7 600 in part-time employment. Female employment decreased by 9 400 to 3 329 600, with a decrease of 13 900 to 1 923 700 in full-time employment.



LABOUR FORCE SURVEY ESTIMATES

Seasonally adjusted

	Employed			Un- employed — '000 —	Unem- ployment rate — per cent —	Partici- pation rate
	Full-time workers	Part-time workers	Total			
1993						
November	5 924.2	1 847.1	7 771.3	957.7	11.0	63.1
December	5 941.5	1 850.5	7 792.0	921.5	10.6	62.9
1994						
January	5 920.5	1 884.7	7 805.3	917.7	10.5	62.9
February	5 960.3	1 859.4	7 819.7	913.9	10.5	62.9
March	5 951.4	1 875.3	7 826.8	902.7	10.3	62.9
April	5 960.2	1 872.3	7 832.5	875.1	10.1	62.6

Unemployment

In April 1994, the seasonally adjusted estimate of unemployed persons fell below 900 000 for the first time since April 1992 and now stands at 875 100. The number of unemployed persons seeking full-time work fell by 18 200 to 732 600 due to falls of 9 200 and 9 000 respectively in the numbers of unemployed males and females seeking full-time work. Unemployed persons seeking part-time work fell by 9 400 to 142 600.

Unemployment rate

The seasonally adjusted estimate of the unemployment rate fell by 0.3 percentage points to 10.1 per cent in April 1994, the lowest rate recorded since October 1991. For males, the unemployment rate decreased by 0.4 percentage points to 10.4 per cent, and for females the unemployment rate decreased slightly to 9.5 per cent.



Participation rate

The April 1994 seasonally adjusted estimate of the labour force participation rate fell to 62.6 per cent, after standing at 62.9 per cent in the previous four months. For males, the participation rate fell by 0.2 percentage points to 73.5 per cent and for females, the participation rate fell by 0.3 percentage points to 52.1 per cent.

For further information order the publication *The Labour Force, Australia, Preliminary (6202.0)* or contact Heather Crawford on (06) 252 6525.

Building costs edge upwards

From February 1994 to March 1994 prices of materials used in the construction of houses increased by 0.3 per cent while prices of materials used in other building increased by 0.4 per cent.

From March 1993 to March 1994 prices of materials used in house building increased by 4.6 per cent while prices of materials used in other forms of building increased by 1.4 per cent.

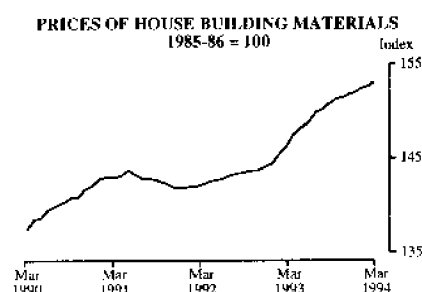
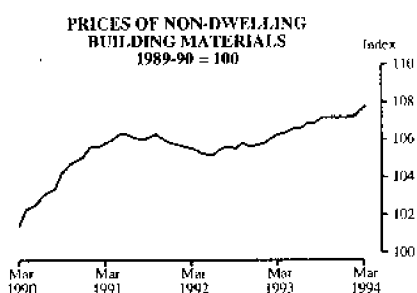
Contributing most to the overall increase for house building in March were timber prices (up 1.5%), especially in Melbourne and Perth. Higher prices for ready mixed concrete, especially in Sydney and Melbourne, also contributed to the increase of the index.

Contributing most this month to the overall increase for other building were ready mixed concrete prices, especially in Sydney and Melbourne.

PRICES OF BUILDING MATERIALS, MARCH 1994
Percentage change

City	House building		Other than house building	
	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Sydney	0.1	4.2	0.5	0.8
Melbourne	0.8	5.8	0.3	1.9
Brisbane	-0.3	2.7	0.0	0.7
Adelaide	-0.3	9.9	0.3	2.6
Perth	0.9	2.2	0.4	1.1
Hobart	0.6	3.1	-1.1	0.5
Weighted average of six State capitals	0.3	4.6	0.4	1.4
Canberra	-0.1	5.7	0.1	1.0

For further information, order the publications *Price Index of Materials Used in House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra (6408.0)* and *Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra (6407.0)*, or contact Robert Adams (06) 252 6198.



New tool for tourism decision-makers

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has substantially increased its statistical service to the tourism industry with the recent release of the first issue of a new quarterly publication *Tourism Indicators*.

The publication draws on previously unpublished data from a number of sources, particularly the ABS Survey of Tourist Accommodation and the Overseas Arrivals and Departures series. It provides a more comprehensive information base for investment and policy decisions in the tourism field for both the public and private sectors. Seasonally adjusted and trend data are included to provide a clearer picture of underlying patterns in the tourism industry.

Tourism Indicators offers analysis and feature articles as well as a broad range of statistical data on aspects of Australian tourism. In the first issue, for instance, data and analysis are presented from recent ABS surveys of inbound tourism operators and overseas tourism marketing expenditure.

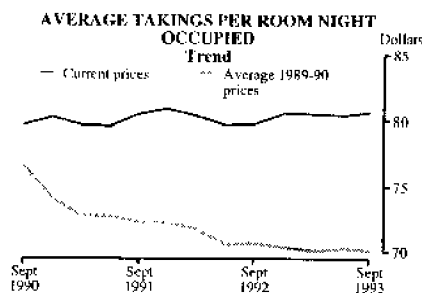
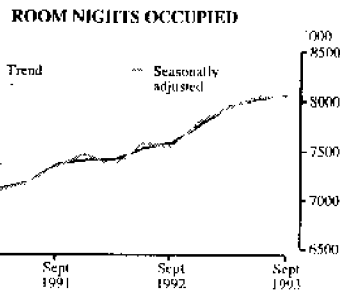
Analysis of the Tourist Accommodation series showing the relationship between the trends of room nights occupied and takings in constant prices provides a useful picture of the movement of real returns per room night. This ratio shows a smooth decline from around \$76 per room night at the beginning of 1990 down to around \$70 per room night in the latest quarter (in constant 1989-90 prices).

A special profile of Japanese tourism to Australia reports that Japanese tourists accounted for 22.3 per cent of all visitors to Australia in 1991, up from 10.2 per cent just five years earlier. But, although the number of Japanese visitors have more than trebled over that period to 528 500 in 1991, Australia still ranked only twelfth among countries most visited by Japanese people.

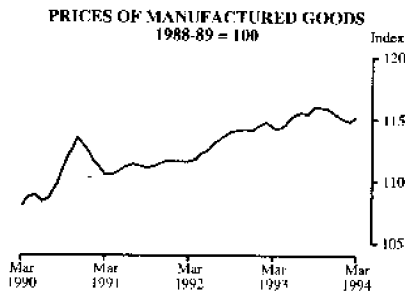
Our Japanese guests tend not to stay long, however. In the September quarter 1993, the 168 100 Japanese visitors who arrived here stayed an average of just six days. This makes them second only to Koreans (4.6 days) as the shortest staying visitors.

JAPANESE VISITOR ARRIVALS BY MAJOR PORTS September quarter 1993

	Sydney	Cairns	Brisbane	Australia
Japanese arrivals	71 200	43 800	37 000	168 100
Median age	26	29	26	27
Per cent males	42	47	42	44
Per cent females	58	53	58	56
Per cent married	41	42	45	42
Per cent never married	57	57	53	56



Small increase in prices of manufactured goods



The Price Index of Articles Produced by Manufacturing Industry increased by 0.3 per cent in March 1994.

There were small increases in prices for a wide range of items, partly offset by small price decreases for about 20 per cent of the items in the index.

The Manufacturing Division index increased by 0.8 per cent between March 1993 and March 1994.

PRICES OF MANUFACTURED GOODS, MARCH 1994

Percentage change

<i>Manufacturing sector</i>	<i>From previous month</i>	<i>From corresponding month of previous year</i>
Food, beverages and tobacco	0.9	3.4
Transport equipment	0.0	2.3
Clothing and footwear	0.2	0.9
Basic metal products	0.0	0.3
Fabricated metal products	0.3	-0.2
Other industrial machinery	-0.1	-0.2
Chemicals and chemical products	-0.4	-1.3
Petroleum products	1.7	-16.5
<i>Total manufacturing</i>	0.3	0.8

For further information, order the publication *Price Indexes of Articles Produced by Manufacturing Industry, Australia (6412.0)*, or contact Peter Cordy on (06) 252 5541.

A profile of the nursery, cut flower and turf industries

Final figures from the 1992-93 nursery, cut flower and cultivated turf statistics collection are now available. The collection was undertaken with the assistance of funding from the Horticultural Research and Development Corporation (HRDC) and the Nursery Industry Association of Australia (NIAA). The collection obtained information covering the activities of growers, wholesalers and retailers. On a national level, the results showed the following:

	<i>\$ million</i>
Production sales	
Nursery	381.1
Flower	106.0
Turf	34.5
Total	521.6
Wholesale sales	167.8
Retail sales	615.4

Other information available from this collection includes employment, wages and salaries, sales of nursery stock and cut flowers by kind. Details are available at State level.

These series are available on subscription to a special data service. For further information, contact Kolin Toivonen on (06) 252 7578.

The Australian labour market 1993

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has drawn together, in one publication, a number of reports of the results of the monthly Labour Force Survey and associated supplementary surveys relating to the 1993 calendar year.

Published as *The Australian Labour Market*, the compilation offers a summary profile of developments in the labour market during 1993. While touching on the broad aggregates such as employment and unemployment, the publication's emphasis is on the wide range of more specific data available from the Labour Force Survey and supplementary questionnaires. Included, for example, are articles on:

- The educational qualifications of the labour force.
- The job search experience of the unemployed.
- Movement in and out of the labour force.
- The nature of change experienced by employees in their jobs over a 12 month period.
- A profile of the long-term unemployed in Australia.
- A comparison of the Australian unemployment rate to that of other OECD countries.
- The family characteristics of the employed and unemployed.

The articles are reprinted partly from *Statistics Weekly*, which frequently publishes summary reports on such labour market issues, and partly from feature articles in the primary monthly publication *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0). The information is thus presented in an eminently readable style for users wanting an overview of recent developments in the labour market.

For further information, order the publication Australian Labour Market (6284.0), or contact Jenny Poulton on (06) 252 6504.

Finance in brief ...

Personal finance

The provisional trend estimate for personal finance commitments for March 1994 was \$2 395.9 million, an increase of \$40.0 million (1.7%) on February 1994 and an increase of \$724.6 million (43.4%) on March 1993.

Seasonally adjusted, personal finance commitments for March 1994 was \$2 233.8 million, a decrease of \$94.8 million (4.1%) on February 1994 but an increase of \$537.7 million (31.7%) on March 1993.

Inquiries

The ABS supplies a wide range of statistical information:

- through its bookshops
- by mail order
(including subscription)
- by facsimile
- electronically.

To order any of the publications mentioned in *Statistics Weekly* or to inquire about the statistics and services available from the ABS, contact Information Services at any of the offices listed below. An Information Consultancy Service in each office provides assistance of a more extensive or complex nature.

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19 May 1994

Commercial finance

The provisional trend estimate for commercial finance commitments for March 1994 was \$7 879.6 million, a decrease of \$4.1 million (0.1%) on February 1994 but an increase of \$1 020.3 million (14.9%) on March 1993.

Seasonally adjusted, commercial finance commitments for March 1994 was \$8 801.5 million, an increase of \$1 347.8 million (18.1%) on February 1994 and an increase of \$1 798.0 million (25.7%) on March 1993.

Lease finance

The provisional trend estimate for lease finance commitments for March 1994 was \$487.1 million, an increase of \$11.1 million (2.3%) on February 1994 and an increase of \$89.1 million (22.4%) on March 1993.

Seasonally adjusted, lease finance commitments for March 1994 was \$507.1 million, an increase of \$14.2 million (2.9%) on February 1994 and an increase of \$77.5 million (18.0%) on March 1993.

Financial institutions

Figures released this week show that for 1992-93: assets of finance companies totalled \$30 071.0 million, a fall of 8.8 per cent on 1991-92; assets of authorised dealers in the short-term money market totalled \$5 619.9 million, an increase of 42.0 per cent on 1991-92; and assets of money market corporations totalled \$44 253.7 million, down 6.2 per cent on 1991-92.

These series are available on subscription to a special data service. For further information, contact Michael Sharpe on (02) 268 4788.

Order from the following:

Expected releases over the fortnight to 31 May

- 18 Export Price Index, Australia, March 1994 (6405.0; \$8.50)
- 19 Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Australia, March 1994 (5609.0; \$11.00)
Company Profits, Australia, March Quarter 1994 (5651.0; \$11.00)
Average Weekly Earnings, States and Australia, February 1994 (6302.0; \$13.00)
- 23 Price Indexes of Materials Used in Manufacturing Industries, Australia, March 1994 (6411.0; \$11.00)
Import Price Index, Australia, March 1994 (6414.0; \$8.50)
- 25 Private New Capital Expenditure, Australia, Actual and Expected Expenditure to June 1995, March Quarter 1994 Survey, Preliminary (5625.0; \$11.00)
Manufacturing Production, Australia, April 1994, Preliminary (8301.0; \$11.00)
Registrations of New Motor Vehicles, Australia, April 1994, Preliminary (9301.0; \$12.00)
- 26 Stocks, Manufacturers' Sales March Quarter 1994 and Expected Sales December Quarter 1995, Australia (5629.0; \$11.00)
- 30 Balance of Payments, Australia, April 1994 (5301.0; \$16.50)
Building Approvals, Australia, April 1994 (8731.0; \$13.50)

Key national indicators	Period	Units	Latest figure available		Percentage change (a) on	
			Original	Seasonally adjusted	Previous period	Corresponding period last year
National accounts						
Gross domestic product (GDP(A)) at 1989-90 prices	December qtr 93	\$m	105 897	98 581	1.7	4.0
International accounts						
Balance on current account (b)	March 94	\$m	-1 553	-1 582	23	18
Balance on merchandise trade (b)	"	"	-195	177	—	70
Balance on goods and services (b)	"	"	-235	-317	—	61
Merchandise exports	"	"	5 601	5 474	5	13
Merchandise imports	"	"	-5 796	-5 651	13	4
Net foreign debt	December qtr 93	\$m	171 980	n.a.	-1.3	5.2
Net foreign liabilities	"	"	244 540	n.a.	3.7	16.9
Consumption and investment						
Retail turnover at current prices	March 94	\$m	8 613	8 782	3.7	8.9
New capital expenditure at current prices	December qtr 93	"	7 277	6 759	4.0	2.0
New motor vehicle registrations	March 94	no.	52 687	45 755	-9.4	1.7
Production						
Manufacturers' sales at 1989-90 prices	December qtr 93	\$m	38 567	36 863	3.1	9.4
Dwelling unit approvals	March 94	no.	16 512	14 919	-0.9	2.4
Building approvals	"	\$m	2 263	2 149	-10.5	7.1
Building work done at 1989-90 prices	December qtr 93	"	6 643	6 303	...	2.7
Prices						
Consumer price index	March qtr 94	1989-90 = 100.0	110.4	n.a.	0.4	1.4
Articles produced by manufacturing industry	March 94	1988-89 = 100.0	115.2	n.a.	0.3	0.8
Materials used in manufacturing industries	February 94	1984-85 = 100.0	121.7	n.a.	-0.8	-3.9
Labour force and demography						
Employed persons	April 94	'000	7 835.5	7 832.5	0.1	3.1
Participation rate †	"	%	62.7	62.6	-0.2	0.7
Unemployment rate †	"	"	10.1	10.1	-0.3	0.7
Job vacancies	November qtr 93	'000	38.2	38.9	5.1	31.0
Average weekly overtime per employee	"	hours	1.30	1.22	1.7	8.0
Estimated resident population	September qtr 93	million	17.7	n.a.	0.3	1.0
Short-term overseas visitor arrivals	January 94	'000	251	252	0.6	6.2
Incomes						
Company profits before income tax (d)	December qtr 93	\$m	6 618	5 255	2.5	33.5
Av. weekly earnings, full-time adults; ordinary time (d)	February 94	\$	612.30	609.50	0.9	3.1
Financial markets						
Interest rates (c) (monthly average)						
90-day bank bills †	March 94	% per annum	4.95	n.a.	0.15	-0.4
10-year Treasury bonds †	March 94	"	7.95	n.a.	0.9	0.15
Exchange rate — \$US (c)	March 94	per \$A	0.7117	n.a.	-1	1

(a) Based on seasonally adjusted figures where available. (b) For percentage changes, a minus sign indicates an increase in the deficit; no sign means a decrease in the deficit or an increase in the surplus. (c) Source: Reserve Bank of Australia. (d) Later figures expected to be released Thursday, 19 May 1994.

NOTES: † = change is shown in terms of percentage points. n.a. = not available.

Percentage change from same period previous year

Key State indicators	Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
New capital expenditure*	December qtr 93	-19.5	30.3	-20.4	-27.2	26.7	-39.5	n.a.	n.a.	-1.5
Retail turnover (trend estimate)	March 94	6.2	4.2	6.0	8.1	12.1	4.7	n.a.	7.7	6.4
New motor vehicle registrations†	March 94	-1.2	14.4	-12.4	5.9	10.3	-13.1	5.7	6.8	1.7
Number of dwelling unit approvals*	March 94	-8.0	3.1	14.4	-8.1	24.7	-15.9	13.7	9.5	2.4
Value of total building work done	December qtr 93	-1.3	-0.4	9.1	-6.1	23.8	14.2	42.9	-2.7	3.9
Employed persons*	April 94	4.3	2.1	3.5	0.9	4.6	2.4	-7.8	1.7	3.1
Capital city consumer price index	March qtr 94	0.8	1.6	1.6	1.8	2.1	2.6	1.5	1.2	1.4
Av. weekly earnings (full-time adult ordinary time)	November 93	2.5	2.2	5.0	2.5	3.3	4.2	0.5	3.7	3.0
Population	September qtr 93	0.9	0.3	2.8	0.5	1.3	0.4	0.9	1.6	1.0
Room nights in licensed hotels and motels, etc.	September qtr 93	6.3	0.1	9.1	2.4	9.0	5.4	18.4	12.0	6.7

* Seasonally adjusted except for NT and ACT. † Seasonally adjusted.

Figures have been taken from a variety of ABS publications. Copies may be obtained from Information Services (see page 7). Some of the figures shown are preliminary, some final, and some are revisions of previously published figures. Users should check the latest relevant publication or with the ABS Information Services if the status of the statistic is important. The ABS should be acknowledged as the source when reproducing or quoting any part of this publication.

