

CHAPTER 8

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

The ABS produces statistics about industrial disputes, trade union membership, and the incidence of awards, determinations and collective agreements which cover some aspects of Australian industrial relations.

Industrial Disputes

The industrial disputes statistics presented in this chapter are compiled mainly from data obtained from employers (both private and government) and trade unions concerning individual disputes and from reports of government authorities. The statistics relate to disputes which involved stoppages of work involving the equivalent of ten or more working days lost at the establishments where the stoppages occurred.

Working days lost per thousand employees in the twelve months ending December 1989 (190) decreased by 294 per cent compared to 1988 (269) representing the lowest rate since December 1981 when this measure was first introduced on a monthly basis.

There were 1,202,200 working days lost for disputes during 1989 compared to 1,641,400 in 1988, a decrease of 26.9 per cent.

Those disputes involved 709,600 employees (both directly and indirectly), a decrease of 7.1 per cent from 1988 (894,400).

TABLE 8.1. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES, AUSTRALIA, 1972 TO 1989

Period	Number of disputes		Employees involved ('000)						Total working days lost ('000)
			Directly		Indirectly		Total		
	Commenced during period	Total	Newly involved (a)	Total	Newly involved (a)	Total	Newly involved (a)	Total	
1972	n.a.	2,298	n.a.	1,041.2	n.a.	72.6	n.a.	1,113.8	2,010.3
1973	n.a.	2,538	n.a.	758.0	n.a.	45.0	n.a.	803.0	2,634.7
1974	n.a.	2,809	n.a.	1,947.1	n.a.	57.8	n.a.	2,004.8	6,292.5
1975	n.a.	2,432	n.a.	1,343.8	n.a.	54.1	n.a.	1,398.0	3,509.9
1976	n.a.	2,055	n.a.	2,137.3	n.a.	52.6	n.a.	2,189.9	3,799.2
1977	2,083	2,090	539.0	539.4	56.8	56.8	595.8	596.2	1,654.8
1978	2,276	2,277	1,011.9	1,011.9	63.7	63.7	1,075.6	1,075.6	2,130.8
1979	2,040	2,042	1,816.7	1,818.0	44.9	44.9	1,861.6	1,862.9	3,964.4
1980	2,420	2,429	1,101.8	1,108.6	63.2	64.0	1,165.0	1,172.6	3,319.7
1981	2,887	2,915	1,147.9	1,170.6	76.5	76.6	1,224.5	1,247.2	4,189.3
1982	2,045	2,060	654.2	680.6	24.2	25.5	678.4	706.1	1,980.4
1983	1,779	1,787	427.4	444.9	25.4	25.4	452.8	470.2	1,641.4
1984	1,958	1,965	520.0	529.2	31.1	31.1	551.1	560.3	1,307.4
1985	1,876	1,895	524.5	542.3	28.2	28.2	552.7	570.5	1,256.2
1986	1,747	1,754	653.8	671.6	20.1	20.1	673.9	691.7	1,390.7
1987	1,512	1,517	574.9	590.3	18.5	18.5	593.4	608.8	1,311.9
1988	1,502	1,508	883.6	884.1	10.3	10.3	893.9	894.4	1,641.4
1989	1,390	1,401	695.1	698.4	11.2	11.2	706.3	709.6	1,202.2

(a) Comprises workers involved in disputes that commenced during the period and additional workers involved in disputes that continued from previous periods.

Source: *Industrial Disputes, Australia* (6322.0).

CHART 8.1. WORKING DAYS LOST AND NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES INVOLVED IN INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES, AUSTRALIA

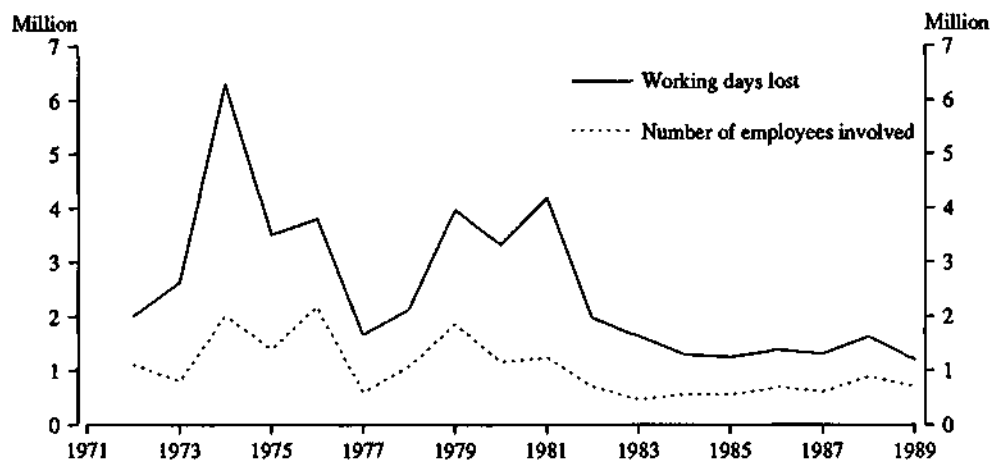


CHART 8.2. WORKING DAYS LOST PER THOUSAND EMPLOYEES, AUSTRALIA

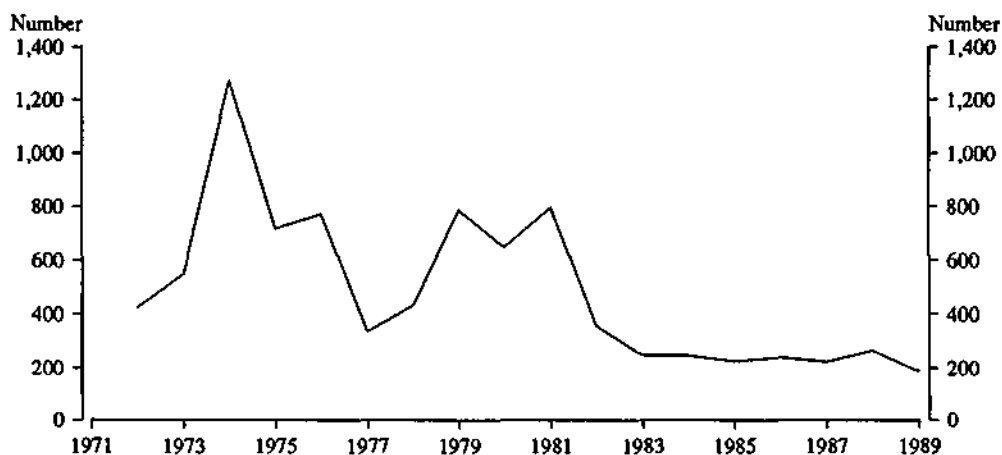
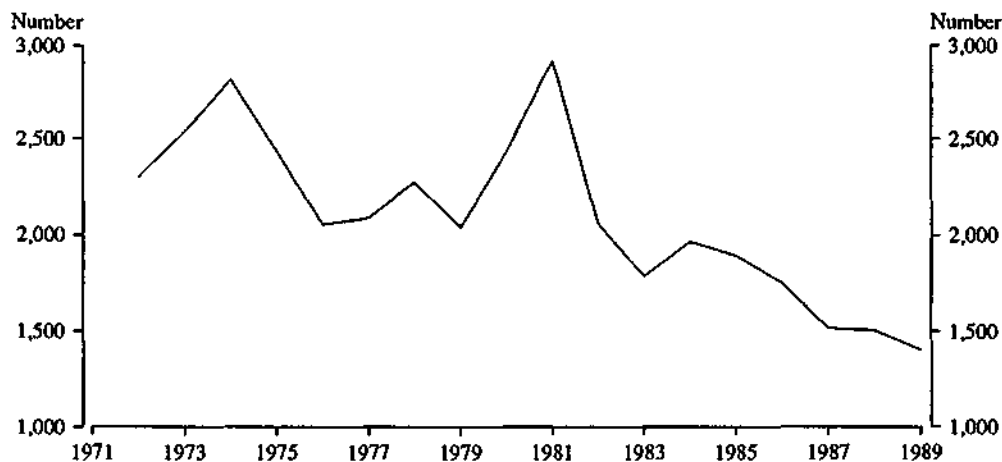


CHART 8.3. NUMBER OF INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES, AUSTRALIA



Source: *Industrial Disputes, Australia, December* (6321.0).

TABLE 8.2. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES : WORKING DAYS LOST PER THOUSAND EMPLOYEES, INDUSTRY, AUSTRALIA, 1972 TO 1989

Period	Mining		Manufacturing		Transport and storage; Communication			Other industries (a)	All industries
	Coal	Other	Metal products, machinery and equipment	Other	Construction	Stevedoring services			
						Other	Other		
1972	2,909	1,152	1,113	533	1,037	1,990	578	89	435
1973	4,268	2,860	1,405	889	1,119	2,705	256	133	552
1974	7,725	2,625	4,876	1,026	3,009	6,172	1,352	194	1,273
1975	14,991	1,576	2,376	674	1,255	2,581	379	230	717
1976	6,602	3,952	1,467	1,245	1,433	2,276	1,010	292	773
1977	4,145	3,182	398	679	591	2,625	450	101	336
1978	5,669	2,415	1,460	747	378	8,418	435	74	434
1979	8,220	5,752	1,886	1,112	1,100	3,724	1,138	269	787
1980(b)	23,362	4,036	1,194	1,080	674	2,548	353	202	649
1981	10,209	5,238	2,287	986	1,405	2,952	970	238	797
1982	9,698	2,686	471	505	768	—	672	84	358
1983	3,223	3,375	353	186	1,269	—	485	42	249
1984	3,913	3,745	343	416	503	—	372	91	248
1985	6,892	1,928	256	312	666	—	430	71	228
1986	10,741	3,328	445	328	458	—	135	72	242
1987	8,920	1,072	479	305	743	—	217	70	223
1988	15,548	1,777	750	183	725	—	177	85	269
1989	5,432	651	474	282	374	—	161	96	190

(a) Excludes agriculture, etc. and private households employing staff for the years 1976-1983. These are included from 1984. (b) For change in method of estimation see paragraph 90 of the Technical Notes.

Source: *Industrial Disputes, Australia* (6322.0).

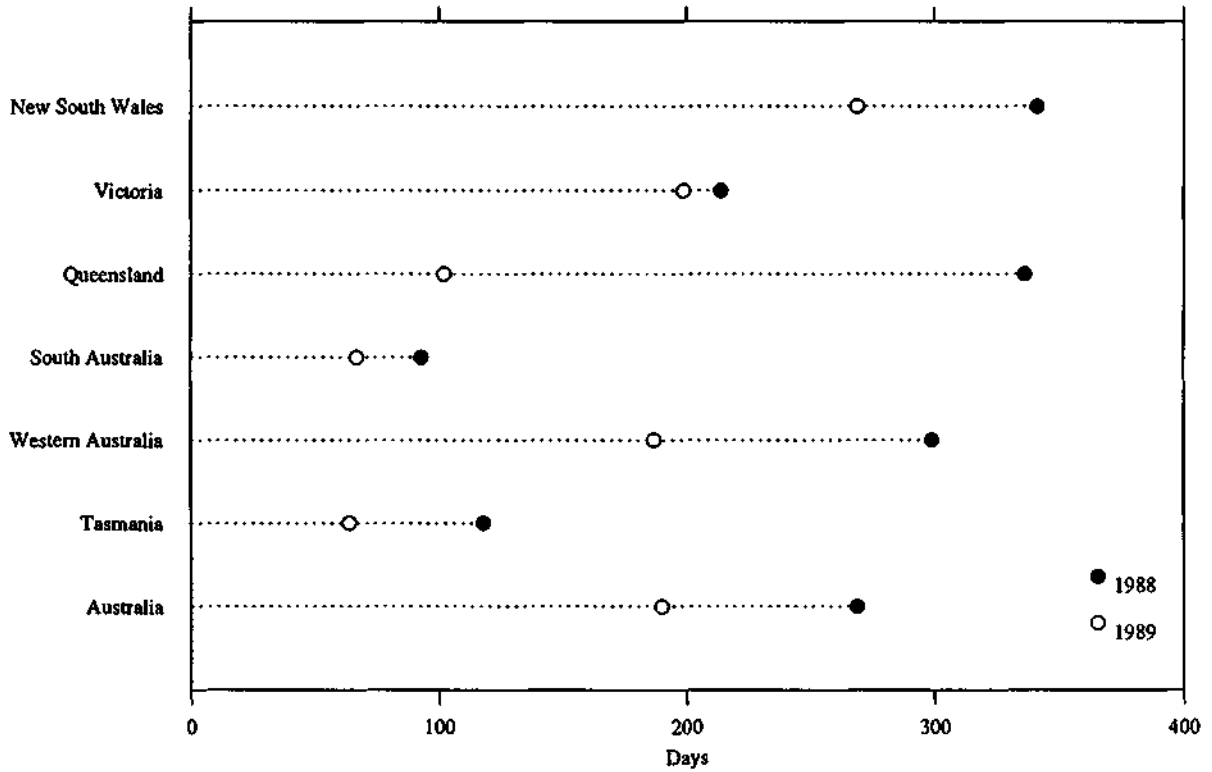
TABLE 8.3. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES : WORKING DAYS LOST PER THOUSAND EMPLOYEES(a), STATES AND AUSTRALIA

Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	Aust.(b)
1972	503	497	485	143	261	152	435
1973	622	590	509	296	313	1,089	552
1974	1,462	1,757	807	686	656	672	1,273
1975	831	910	718	277	253	305	717
1976	827	1,051	638	323	623	464	773
1977	308	433	359	65	532	197	336
1978	555	346	536	172	473	261	434
1979	742	1,083	679	402	838	439	787
1980	657	792	863	132	446	668	649
1981	1,023	863	620	320	548	461	797
1982	381	258	660	101	348	431	348
1983	287	163	176	115	577	478	249
1984	357	132	302	56	256	350	248
1985	209	236	411	48	187	138	228
1986	304	240	208	95	272	190	242
1987	366	172	87	91	213	177	223
1988	341	214	336	93	299	118	269
1989	270	199	103	67	188	64	190

(a) For details, see paragraph 90 of the Technical Notes. (b) Includes the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory.

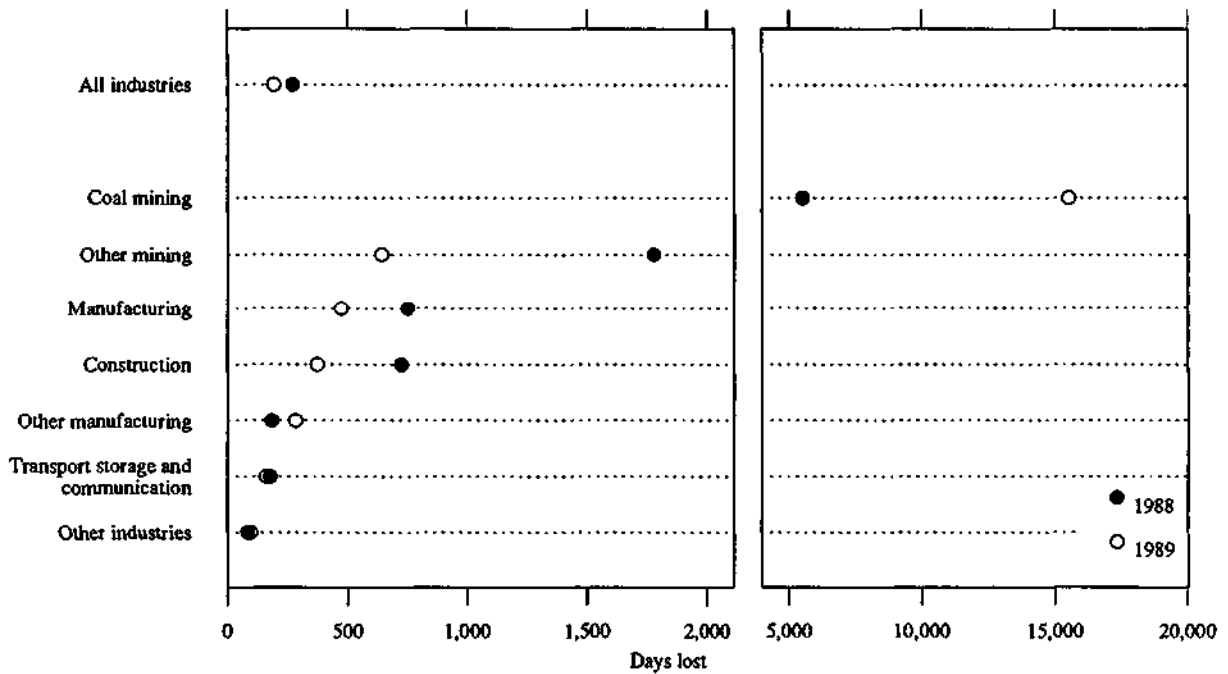
Source: *Industrial Disputes, Australia* (6321.0).

**CHART 8.4. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS DURING EACH YEAR 1988 AND 1989:
WORKING DAYS LOST PER THOUSAND EMPLOYEES**



Source: *Industrial Disputes, Australia, December* (6321.0).

**CHART 8.5. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS DURING EACH YEAR 1988 AND 1989:
WORKING DAYS LOST PER THOUSAND EMPLOYEES, AUSTRALIA**



Source: *Industrial Disputes, Australia, December* (6321.0).

Trade Union Members

Of the 6,101,900 employees in August 1988, 42 per cent were members of a trade union. This result shows the decline in union membership evident from the November 1976 survey (51%) and the August 1986 survey estimates (46%).

The number of female employees increased by 710,500 (38%) between November 1976 and August 1988, whereas the number who were members of trade unions increased by 124,200 (16%). For male employees, employment increased by 339,300 (11%) and the number who were members of trade unions fell by 101,000 (6%). Approximately 46 per cent of males and 35 per cent of females were trade union members.

While the median age (35 years) of employees who were trade union members has not changed since 1976 the proportion of trade union members in all of the age groups has dropped. The proportion for the 15 to 24 years group has dropped from 43 per cent in 1976 to 32 per cent in 1988. The 60 to 64 years group recorded a decrease from 60 per cent in 1976 to 45 per cent in 1988, while the proportion of trade union members in the 65 and over age group fell from 24 per cent in 1976 to 9 per cent in 1988.

In 1988, the level of trade union membership increased with age, from 27 per cent of the 15 to 19 years grouping to peak at 51 per cent of the group aged 55 to 59 years.

The number of employees in the private and public sectors grew by 25 per cent and 3 per cent respectively between May 1982 and August 1988. Over the same period, the number who were members of trade unions increased by 2 per cent for the private sector, and fell by 5 per cent for the public sector. In 1988, some 68 per cent of public sector and 32 per cent of private sector employees were members of a trade union.

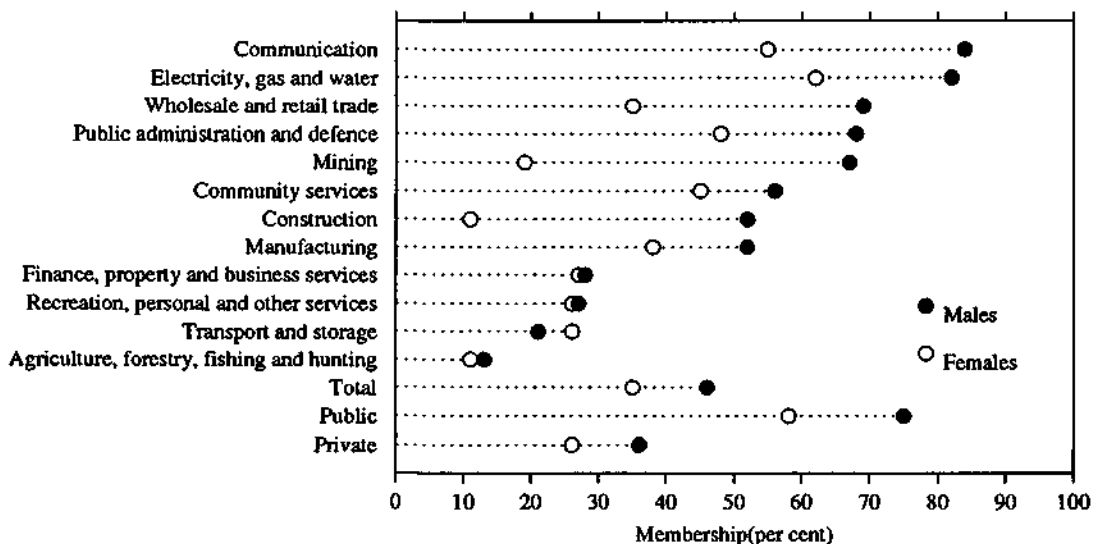
While males had a higher level of membership than females overall and in full-time employment, female part-time employees recorded a higher level of membership (25%) than their male counterparts (22%). Approximately 46 per cent of full-time and 25 per cent of part-time employees were members of a trade union.

The distribution of weekly earnings from main job shows that both male and female trade union members earn on average, more than persons who are not union members.

The difference in the proportion of trade union members and non-members having superannuation coverage was greatest for employees in the Construction industry with 72 per cent of members and 41 per cent of non-members. The smallest difference (1%) was recorded for employees in the Wholesale and retail trade industries.

For the various industry divisions the highest rate of union membership was recorded in the Electricity, gas and water industry, 80 per cent of employees belonging to a union. The lowest rate was recorded in the Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting industry division with 13 per cent of employees belonging to a union.

CHART 8.6. TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP: INDUSTRY AND SECTOR, AUSTRALIA, AUGUST 1988



Source: Trade Union Members, Australia (6325.0).

TABLE 8.4. EMPLOYEES WHO WERE TRADE UNION MEMBERS : SUMMARY OF SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS, AUSTRALIA, NOVEMBER 1976, MARCH TO MAY 1982, AUGUST 1986, AUGUST 1988

	November 1976		March to May 1982		August 1986		August 1988	
	Number of members ('000)	Proportion of all employees in same category (per cent)	Number of members ('000)	Proportion of all employees in same category (per cent)	Number of members ('000)	Proportion of all employees in same category (per cent)	Number of members ('000)	Proportion of all employees in same category (per cent)
<i>State or Territory of usual residence—</i>								
New South Wales	903.1	51	949.8	51	903.1	46	894.5	42
Victoria	678.6	50	658.5	48	695.6	46	682.4	42
Queensland	346.0	53	383.9	50	396.0	45	369.9	39
South Australia	229.2	50	227.7	50	226.8	47	228.6	46
Western Australia	204.4	50	199.9	46	210.6	41	205.1	37
Tasmania	84.3	60	86.2	58	85.6	55	85.3	52
Northern Territory	19.9	51	20.8	41	25.6	43	20.8	35
Australian Capital Territory	47.1	60	40.9	44	50.6	42	49.5	39
<i>Age group—</i>								
15-19	} 583.8	43	173.9	31	166.0	28	168.3	27
20-24			399.3	44	369.9	42	327.8	36
25-34			712.1	51	750.1	48	726.6	43
35-44			562.9	52	642.8	48	688.1	45
45-54			440.0	57	433.2	53	423.5	47
55-59			192.9	61	158.0	55	137.5	51
60-64			79.0	59	70.9	53	61.1	45
65 and over	10.8	24	7.5	25	*2.9	12	*3.0	9
<i>Industry—</i>								
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	21.5	20	21.0	20	16.9	15	16.9	13
Mining	39.2	63	68.5	64	67.0	72	56.5	63
Manufacturing	679.8	57	635.0	54	545.4	51	546.7	48
Electricity, gas and water	88.1	83	101.5	78	112.7	82	91.3	80
Construction	188.3	57	127.0	50	145.3	48	157.5	47
Wholesale and retail trade	258.3	27	253.0	28	279.4	25	287.1	23
Transport and storage	194.5	73	199.7	72	211.9	67	186.3	62
Communication	121.8	88	108.2	85	117.0	80	101.0	76
Finance, property and business services	167.6	42	194.5	42	193.2	34	185.4	28
Public administration and defence	179.1	72	211.9	63	197.9	60	195.9	61
Community services	452.1	56	536.9	54	609.8	52	604.0	49
Recreation, personal and other services	122.3	41	110.2	36	97.6	29	107.4	26
<i>Sector—</i>								
Public	n.a.	n.a.	1,202.1	73	1,238.2	71	1,146.6	68
Private(a)	n.a.	n.a.	1,365.5	39	1,355.7	34	1,389.3	32
<i>Birthplace—</i>								
Born in Australia	1,833.7	50	1,803.6	48	1,899.0	45	1,866.7	41
Born outside Australia	r678.9	r54	764.0	55	694.9	48	669.2	43
Main English speaking countries	r274.6	r47	295.3	48	293.5	44	285.0	39
United Kingdom or Ireland	248.1	r49	248.0	48	244.6	47	231.0	42
Canada, U.S.A., New Zealand or South Africa	26.5	36	47.3	43	48.9	33	54.0	30
Other countries	r401.4	r60	468.7	60	401.4	53	366.4	46
Germany	24.3	48	23.8	44	21.3	43	23.7	45
Greece	55.1	66	42.4	71	32.5	60	33.3	58
Italy	62.7	62	89.5	67	60.5	59	56.0	54
Yugoslavia	53.6	69	65.5	75	60.2	72	44.0	63
Other	208.7	58	247.6	56	227.0	48	213.9	41
<i>Permanent/Casual—</i>								
Permanent	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2,388.4	51	2,308.4	47
Casual	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	205.5	21	227.5	20
<i>Hours worked in main job—</i>								
Less than 35 hours	n.a.	n.a.	256.8	33	663.1	40	786.2	39
35 hours or more	n.a.	n.a.	2,310.8	52	1,775.8	47	1,749.7	43
Total	2,512.7	51	2,567.6	49	2,593.9	46	2,535.9	42
Males	1,741.2	56	1,706.9	53	1,685.1	50	1,640.2	46
Females	771.5	43	860.7	43	908.8	39	895.7	35

(a) Includes some persons for whom sector could not be determined.

Source: Trade Union Members, Australia, August 1988 (6325.0).

Trade Union Statistics

Data on trade unions are obtained from two sources. Supplementary household surveys were conducted in August 1986 and August 1988 to provide information on the characteristics of trade union members such as their age, occupation, industry of work and earnings. For the annual collection of trade unions, statistics are compiled from questionnaires completed by individual trade unions. The statistics relate to trade union membership and state of operation.

At 30 June 1989, 299 trade unions were identified with a total membership of 3,410,300 persons (an estimated 54% of all employees). This compares with 328 trade unions as at 31 December 1979 with a total membership of 2,873,600 persons (an estimated 56% of all employees).

Of the 299 trade unions reported for 1989, 11 had membership of 80,000 or more, accounting for 41.3 per cent of total union membership.

TABLE 8.5. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF MEMBERS, AUSTRALIA, DECEMBER 1979 TO JUNE 1989

	Number of separate unions	Number of members ('000)			Proportion of total employees (per cent)		
		Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
<i>End of December—</i>							
1979	328	1,971.4	902.2	2,873.6	61	47	56
1980	325	2,009.5	946.3	2,955.9	61	47	55
1981	324	2,029.4	964.7	2,994.1	60	47	54
1982	322	2,024.4	988.0	3,012.4	62	48	56
1983	319	2,007.2	978.0	2,985.2	61	47	56
1984	329	2,041.2	987.3	3,028.5	61	45	55
30 June 1985	323	2,121.6	1,032.6	3,154.2	65	46	57
30 June 1986	326	2,126.5	1,059.7	3,186.2	63	44	55
30 June 1987	316	2,136.0	1,104.2	3,240.1	63	44	55
30 June 1988	308	r2,166.6	r1,123.8	r3,290.5	r62	43	r54
30 June 1989	299	2,191.0	1,219.3	3,410.3	62	44	54

Source: Trade Union Statistics, Australia (6323.0).

TABLE 8.6. TRADE UNIONS : CLASSIFICATION BY SIZE OF MEMBERSHIP, AUSTRALIA, DECEMBER 1979 AND JUNE 1989

Number of members	Number of unions		Proportion of total unions (per cent)		Number of members ('000)		Proportion of total members (per cent)	
	December 1979	June 1989	December 1979	June 1989	December 1979	June 1989	December 1979	June 1989
Under 100	41	38	12.5	12.7	2.2	1.7	0.1	0.1
100 and under 250	41	31	12.5	10.4	6.3	5.3	0.2	0.2
250 and under 500	28	26	8.5	8.7	10.4	8.9	0.4	0.3
500 and under 1,000	46	41	14.0	13.7	30.6	28.8	1.1	0.8
1,000 and under 2,000	44	42	13.4	14.0	60.6	59.5	2.1	1.7
2,000 and under 3,000	} 46 {	12	} 14.0 {	4.0	} 155.0 {	29.6	} 5.4 {	0.9
3,000 and under 5,000		25		8.4		98.8		2.9
5,000 and under 10,000	20	19	6.1	6.4	152.1	138.9	5.3	4.1
10,000 and under 20,000	23	19	7.0	6.4	349.8	261.3	12.2	7.7
20,000 and under 30,000	11	12	3.4	4.0	272.2	295.4	9.5	8.7
30,000 and under 40,000	5	10	1.5	3.3	174.3	350.2	6.1	10.3
40,000 and under 50,000	9	6	2.7	2.0	410.5	271.1	14.3	7.9
50,000 and under 80,000	7	7	2.1	2.3	450.7	453.1	15.7	13.3
80,000 and over	7	11	2.1	3.7	798.1	1,407.8	27.8	41.3
Total	328	299	100.0	100.0	2,873.6	3,410.3	100.0	100.0

Source: Trade Union Statistics, Australia (6323.0).

Incidence of Awards

Statistics of the award coverage of employees were obtained from the Survey of Employee Earnings and Hours conducted in May 1985. Further data on incidence of awards will be available from the 1990 collection.

The occupation group with the highest coverage by awards, determinations and collective agreements was Nurses (males 100.0 per cent and females 99.0 per cent). The lowest coverage, 34.8 per cent was recorded for males in the Administrative, executive and managerial employees group.

TABLE 8.7. INCIDENCE OF AWARDS : ALL EMPLOYEES, OCCUPATION GROUP, AUSTRALIA, MAY 1985
(Per cent)

Occupation group	Males				Females			
	Covered by awards, determinations and collective agreements			Not covered by awards, etc.	Covered by awards, determinations and collective agreements			Not covered by awards, etc.
	Federal	State	Total		Federal	State	Total	
Professional, technical and related employees	27.7	48.9	78.9	21.1	8.8	81.2	92.1	7.9
Nurses	*	97.5	100.0	*	4.6	93.9	99.0	1.0
Teachers	13.0	77.7	93.1	6.9	6.1	86.3	95.0	5.0
Draftspersons and technicians	46.5	35.9	84.3	15.7	*	61.0	86.8	13.2
Other professionals	31.3	30.6	64.6	35.4	20.1	47.6	71.7	28.3
Administrative, executive and managerial employees	15.7	13.0	34.8	65.2	*	*	*	66.0
Clerical employees	48.6	33.4	87.0	13.0	27.9	53.4	85.4	14.6
Sales employees	17.7	57.1	78.2	21.8	4.2	83.4	88.6	11.4
Farmers, fisherpersons and related employees	25.1	61.0	87.5	12.5	10.8	76.2	91.6	8.4
Miners, quarryworkers and related employees	57.1	26.9	86.6	13.4	*	*	*	*
Employees in transport and communications	49.9	38.3	91.7	8.3	*	*	88.2	*
Tradespersons, production-process employees and labourers, n.e.c.	52.9	37.7	92.5	7.5	53.8	40.0	94.8	5.2
Textile, clothing, footwear and leather goods makers and related employees	60.4	31.1	93.5	*	64.4	32.6	97.2	*
Machine toolmakers, metal machinists, mechanics, plumbers and related metal employees	63.8	27.2	92.3	7.7	*	*	*	*
Electricians and related electrical and electronics employees	67.1	27.6	95.7	*	93.6	*	96.7	*
Metalmaking and related employees	68.3	26.8	95.5	4.5	90.4	*	95.7	*
Carpenters, cabinetmakers and related employees, building etc. tradespersons and construction employees	41.5	44.2	87.3	12.7	*	*	85.2	*
Packers, wrappers, labellers, storepersons and freight handlers	41.1	50.9	94.3	*	25.8	67.2	94.1	*
Labourers, apprentices, factory employees n.e.c.	42.5	47.5	92.8	7.2	48.1	*	92.7	*
Service, sport and recreation employees	20.1	71.2	92.3	*	17.8	71.5	90.0	*
Other	97.2	*	97.2	*	*	*	79.9	*
All occupations	40.0	40.5	83.4	16.6	21.6	63.4	87.4	12.6

Source: Incidence of Awards, Australia, May 1985 (6315.0).

TABLE 8.8. INCIDENCE OF AWARDS : ALL EMPLOYEES BY INDUSTRY, AUSTRALIA, MAY 1985
(Per cent)

Industry	Males				Females			
	Covered by awards, determinations and collective agreements			Not covered by awards, etc.	Covered by awards, determinations and collective agreements			Not covered by awards, etc.
	Federal	State	Total(a)		Federal	State	Total(a)	
Mining	53.1	26.2	81.9	18.1	29.7	27.4	60.9	39.1
Manufacturing	48.9	32.5	84.0	16.0	39.7	46.7	87.9	12.1
Food, beverages and tobacco	25.5	56.3	85.7	14.3	20.4	69.1	91.4	8.6
Textiles; Clothing and footwear	56.7	23.0	80.7	n.a.	63.2	30.7	94.2	n.a.
Paper, paper products, printing and publishing	45.4	28.8	84.9	15.1	33.5	44.0	80.6	19.4
Chemical, petroleum and coal products	36.2	32.5	70.7	29.3	21.3	59.3	81.1	n.a.
Metal products, machinery and equipment	62.3	22.1	85.6	14.4	49.3	37.3	88.3	11.7
Basic metal products	38.8	46.3	85.7	14.3	29.1	48.6	77.7	n.a.
Fabricated metal products; Other machinery and equipment	61.0	17.8	80.6	19.4	42.1	42.2	86.6	13.4
Transport equipment	80.0	13.6	94.0	6.0	75.2	20.4	96.0	n.a.
Other	39.7	41.1	82.6	17.4	25.2	54.6	80.9	19.1
Electricity, gas and water	38.6	59.9	98.5	n.a.	44.0	54.3	98.3	n.a.
Construction	35.4	38.9	77.0	23.0	10.8	42.0	56.0	44.0
Wholesale trade	28.1	33.4	66.2	33.8	11.8	62.2	77.2	22.8
Retail trade	30.4	45.8	77.9	22.1	6.3	80.5	87.5	12.5
Transport and storage	55.3	31.5	90.6	9.4	47.2	29.7	79.3	n.a.
Communication	99.8	n.a.	99.9	n.a.	99.6	n.a.	99.9	n.a.
Finance, property and business services	32.1	28.7	69.1	30.9	29.1	46.4	84.2	15.8
Public administration and defence	53.4	44.3	98.6	n.a.	64.7	32.3	98.2	n.a.
Community services	14.0	72.9	88.4	11.6	6.9	82.6	90.9	9.1
Recreation, personal and other services	31.6	46.6	81.1	18.9	27.3	56.5	85.2	n.a.
All industries	40.0	40.5	83.4	16.6	21.6	63.4	87.4	12.6

(a) Includes small numbers of employees covered by unregistered collective agreements.

Source: Incidence of Awards, Australia, May 1985 (6315.0).