



TRADE UNION STATISTICS, AUSTRALIA DECEMBER 1980 (including revised figures for the period 1975 to 1979)

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MAIN FEATURES

Note. The figures for the period 1975 to 1979 have been revised. See paragraph 3.

At the end of 1980 there were 316 reporting trade unions, compared with 323 at the end of the previous year. The overall decrease resulted from the amalgamation of ten unions into five, two unions reporting for the first time and four unions ceasing to operate.

Total membership was 2,943,900, an increase of 74,900 (2.6 per cent). Males increased by 36,500 (1.9 per cent) while females increased by 38,400 (4.3 per cent). See paragraphs 6 and 11.

Seven unions, with 80,000 or more members each, accounted for 28 per cent of total membership. The 100 unions with fewer than 500 members accounted for little more than half a per cent of total membership.

Unions with members in two or more States accounted for about 82 per cent of total membership.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

The figures in this publication have been compiled from data obtained from questionnaires sent to individual trade unions in the annual collection as at the end of December each year.

2. Current lists of reporting trade unions are maintained by reference to lists used in previous years and to trade unions registered under the provisions of the various Federal and State industrial arbitration Acts, trade union Acts, etc.; from names of unions reported to be engaged in conciliation and arbitration proceedings, etc.; and from reports in trade journals, trade union and employer periodicals, newspapers and other publications. It should be noted that not all reporting trade unions are registered under the relevant Federal or State industrial arbitration legislation or State trade union Acts (See paragraph 8 below).

Revision of series

3. Many of the figures previously published for the years 1975 to 1979 have been revised. The revised figures are shown in the tables in this issue. The published number of reporting trade unions varies from year to year as a result of amalgamations and mergers of unions, unions ceasing to operate, new unions being formed, existing organisations changing their status such that it brings them within the scope of the definition of a trade union (see paragraph 4), and existing unions reporting for the first time. Prior to 1979, when organisations were first identified as being, or having become, trade unions (as defined), membership figures were not always obtained for earlier periods, even for existing unions; the missing information is now obtained from the organisations concerned, but only for the period from 1968. In addition, a number of organisations not previously identified as trade unions have been included for the first time. Revised estimates for the period 1968 to 1974 are available on request.

Definitions

4. For the purpose of these statistics a *trade union* is defined as an organisation, consisting predominantly of employees, the principal activities of which include the negotiation of rates of pay and conditions of employment for its members. Non-operating unions or branches, i.e. those with no members at the date of collection, are not included in the statistics.

5. When obtaining statistics from trade unions operating wholly within one State or district, trade union secretaries are asked to report whether or not the union is a branch of an interstate, or a larger State or district organisation. This reporting reduces the possibility of duplication in the figures of the number of unions and of membership. An interstate or federated trade union (i.e. a union with members in more than one State) is treated as a separate union in each State or Territory in which it has members, but is counted only once in the Australian total (see Table 1). Unions with interstate associations which are not strictly branches of a common organisation are counted as separate unions in the totals for Australia.

6. The *total membership* of the reporting trade unions represents the aggregate of the membership of individual unions; persons who are members of more than one union are therefore counted more than once in the totals. The extent of this duplication is not known. Members of unions working overseas (e.g. in Papua New Guinea) are excluded from the reported membership data. Membership figures may be affected by differences in the concept of membership adopted by different unions or by the same union at different times. (See paragraph 11 below.)

7. *Proportion of total employees.* The approximate percentages of wage and salary earners in employment (i.e. employees) who were members of trade unions are shown in Table 3. Estimates for 1975 to 1979 are based on estimates of employees as published in *Civilian Employees, Australia* (6213.0). As this series was suspended as from April 1980 the proportions of total employees shown for December 1980 have been calculated by using estimates of employees from the labour force survey. For purposes of comparison figures for December 1979 have been shown on both bases. The percentages shown should be regarded as giving only a broad indication of the extent of union membership among employees, because they are based on estimates of *employed* wage and salary earners which may be subject to revision and because the degree of unemployment of reported union members will affect the percentages for a particular year and comparisons over time.

8. *Organisations registered under the Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Act.* Details of employer and employee organisations registered under this Act as at the end of 1980 are set out below with comparable figures for 1979 shown in brackets. There were 81 (80) employer organisations registered at the end of 1980. The number of reporting employee unions registered was 150 (148), with membership of 2,428,300 (2,326,500) representing 82 (81) per cent of total membership of all reporting trade unions in Australia.

9. *Organisations registered under State industrial arbitration legislation, etc.* New South Wales organisations registered under provisions of the Trade Union Act and the Industrial Arbitration Act are listed periodically in the *New South Wales Industrial Gazette*. The annual reports of the President of the Industrial Court in Queensland contain a list of employer and employee unions registered under provisions of the *Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act*. The *Western Australian Industrial Gazette* contains lists of unions of employers and workers registered under provisions of the *Industrial Arbitration Act*.

10. *Central labour organisations.* The main central labour organisations in Australia are the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), the Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Associations (ACSPA), the Council of Australian Government Employee Organisations (CAGEO), and the Council of Professional Associations (CPA). For information on these organisations reference should be made to *Year Book, Australia* (1301.0).

Comparability of series

11. Comparability of figures for different years may be affected by a number of factors. As stated in paragraph 6, there may be duplication in the count of members. This duplication may vary over time. Union rules on membership may follow different concepts and practices and this may be reflected in the level and fluctuations of the figures reported. Some unions confine their reported membership to 'financial' members whilst others may also include 'unfinancial' members. Individual unions may or may not include in their reported membership unemployed members, members who have retired from the labour force, disabled members, members with dues in arrears (who may be kept on union books for varying lengths of time), etc.

12. Membership of trade unions is shown separately for males and females for each State and Territory. The subdivision of total membership into males and females is not precise because some trade unions are unable to state the exact number of males and females among their members. The subdivision of total membership by States and Territories is also not precise because some unions in the Territories are affiliated with State organisations and their membership is reported under the heading of that State. More accurate reporting of membership by location over the years is reflected in the annual figures for the Territories and this affects their comparability over time.

Related publications

The Labour Force, Australia (6203.0)—issued monthly
Civilian Employees, Australia (6213.0)—issued monthly
Trade Union Members, November 1976 (6325.0)

13. Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications, Australia* (1101.0) which is available free of charge from any ABS office.

Symbols and other usages

p preliminary — figure subject to revision

14. Where figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

TABLE 1. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF SEPARATE UNIONS, DECEMBER 1975 TO DECEMBER 1980

End of December—	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.	Aust.
1975	191	171	140	142	150	122	63	90	323
1976	188	172	138	143	149	120	67	90	319
1977	188	172	137	143	153	122	66	90	321
1978	188	174	138	142	153	123	64	85	325
1979	190	174	139	142	153	120	70	85	323
1980	188	172	137	142	150	120	70	90	316

TABLE 2. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF MEMBERS, DECEMBER 1975 TO DECEMBER 1980
('000)

End of December—	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.	Aust.
MALES									
1975	749.2	507.5	275.1	188.3	157.3	62.6	11.2	35.1	1,986.5
1976	725.1	504.9	270.4	187.1	160.3	62.2	12.0	35.8	1,958.0
1977	703.6	505.8	268.9	190.5	162.9	64.1	11.2	35.8	1,942.5
1978	729.5	511.2	265.4	191.6	160.2	62.9	11.4	34.7	1,966.7
1979	725.5	514.5	268.8	192.5	158.3	62.1	12.9	34.8	1,969.3
1980	747.3	523.2	276.1	188.8	159.1	62.3	13.9	35.1	2,005.8
FEMALES									
1975	328.9	218.9	117.5	68.6	67.7	23.4	4.0	17.8	846.8
1976	321.0	215.7	117.4	69.8	72.7	23.2	4.1	18.0	841.9
1977	312.1	223.3	119.6	76.7	76.1	26.1	4.8	16.6	855.3
1978	314.7	224.3	118.0	78.7	74.7	26.0	5.5	17.0	858.9
1979	332.4	235.5	124.8	80.0	78.4	26.1	5.4	17.0	899.7
1980	352.0	246.7	131.7	83.1	75.6	26.1	5.7	17.1	938.1
PERSONS									
1975	1,078.2	726.5	392.6	257.0	225.1	86.0	15.2	52.9	2,833.4
1976	1,046.1	720.5	387.7	256.9	233.0	85.5	16.1	53.8	2,799.8
1977	1,015.7	729.1	388.5	267.2	238.9	90.2	15.9	52.3	2,797.7
1978	1,044.3	735.5	383.4	270.4	234.8	88.9	17.0	51.6	2,825.7
1979	1,057.9	750.0	393.7	272.5	236.7	88.1	18.3	51.8	2,869.0
1980	1,099.3	769.9	407.9	271.9	234.7	88.4	19.6	52.2	2,943.9

TABLE 3. TRADE UNIONS : PROPORTION OF TOTAL EMPLOYEES, DECEMBER 1975 TO DECEMBER 1980
(per cent)

End of December—	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.	Aust.
MALES									
1975	65	59	60	63	58	67	41	67	62
1976	63	59	59	62	59	67	44	70	61
1977	62	60	59	64	59	69	43	70	61
1978	64	60	58	66	59	68	42	69	62
1979	63	60	57	67	57	67	44	69	61
1979(a)	62	59	58	67	58	66	43	64	61
1980(a)	63	59	57	65	56	66	43	64	61
FEMALES									
1975	50	43	49	37	45	49	31	50	46
1976	49	42	48	37	47	48	32	52	45
1977	47	43	49	41	48	53	36	47	46
1978	47	43	47	43	46	54	40	47	45
1979	48	44	48	43	47	52	34	46	46
1979(a)	48	44	48	46	48	52	38	46	47
1980(a)	50	45	47	47	44	50	33	44	47
PERSONS									
1975	59	53	56	53	54	61	37	60	56
1976	58	52	55	52	54	61	40	63	55
1977	57	53	55	55	55	63	41	60	55
1978	58	53	54	57	54	63	41	60	56
1979	57	54	54	58	54	62	40	60	56
1979(a)	57	53	54	59	54	61	41	56	55
1980(a)	58	53	54	58	51	60	40	56	55

(a) Based on estimates from the labour force survey. See paragraph 7 of the explanatory notes.

TABLE 4. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF UNIONS ACCORDING TO SIZE, DECEMBER 1975 TO DECEMBER 1980

Number of members	End of December—					1980	
	Number of unions					Number of unions	Per cent of total unions
	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979		
Under 100	40	35	34	36	38	36	11.4
100 and under 250	37	35	41	43	40	41	13.0
250 and under 500	38	35	34	30	28	23	7.3
500 and under 1,000	44	49	45	44	46	46	14.6
1,000 and under 2,000	39	38	40	42	44	46	14.6
2,000 and under 5,000	46	44	44	46	45	43	13.6
5,000 and under 10,000	21	24	24	26	20	19	6.0
10,000 and under 20,000	21	20	22	19	23	21	6.6
20,000 and under 30,000	8	10	9	12	11	11	3.5
30,000 and under 40,000	7	9	7	6	5	7	2.2
40,000 and under 50,000	7	6	7	6	9	9	2.8
50,000 and under 80,000	8	7	7	8	7	7	2.2
80,000 and over	7	7	7	7	7	7	2.2
Total	323	319	321	325	323	316	100.0

TABLE 5. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF MEMBERS ACCORDING TO SIZE OF UNION, DECEMBER 1975 TO DECEMBER 1980

Number of members	End of December—					Number of members	Average number of members per union	Proportion of total members
	Number of members							
	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979			
								— '000—
								%
Under 100	2.1	1.8	1.7	2.1	2.0	1.9	0.1	0.1
100 and under 250	5.8	5.5	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.6	0.2	0.2
250 and under 500	12.8	12.3	12.3	11.0	10.4	8.6	0.4	0.3
500 and under 1,000	31.8	35.4	31.4	30.7	30.5	31.3	0.7	1.1
1,000 and under 2,000	52.3	52.6	56.2	56.4	60.6	64.8	1.4	2.2
2,000 and under 5,000	151.5	136.5	142.4	147.6	151.5	145.5	3.4	4.9
5,000 and under 10,000	159.6	169.2	177.5	186.7	152.1	143.7	7.6	4.9
10,000 and under 20,000	316.0	290.2	327.2	294.2	349.8	317.7	15.1	10.8
20,000 and under 30,000	196.7	235.8	224.0	285.9	272.5	256.3	23.3	8.7
30,000 and under 40,000	241.1	320.0	247.3	214.0	174.3	243.9	34.8	8.3
40,000 and under 50,000	313.3	267.8	309.6	266.4	410.5	422.5	46.9	14.4
50,000 and under 80,000	485.8	430.8	425.1	525.0	450.7	466.4	66.6	15.8
80,000 and over	864.8	841.6	836.6	799.3	798.1	834.8	119.3	28.4
Total	2,833.4	2,799.8	2,797.7	2,825.7	2,869.0	2,943.9	9.3	100.0

TABLE 6. TRADE UNIONS : AREA OF OPERATIONS, AUSTRALIA

End of December—	Unions operating in (a)—							Total all unions
	One State (b)	Two States	Three States	Four States	Five States	Six States	Two to six States (c)	
	NUMBER OF SEPARATE UNIONS							
1975	180	11	7	14	24	87	143	323
1976	178	9	8	13	22	89	141	319
1977	179	10	8	9	27	88	142	321
1978	183	11	6	10	27	88	142	325
1979	181	10	6	11	27	88	142	323
1980	175	10	6	12	25	88	141	316
	NUMBER OF MEMBERS ('000)							
1975	442.7	19.0	102.2	101.5	199.4	1,968.7	2,390.8	2,833.4
1976	458.2	18.8	73.7	98.2	225.8	1,925.0	2,341.6	2,799.8
1977	475.1	22.2	67.3	90.6	168.5	1,973.9	2,322.6	2,797.7
1978	510.7	23.0	24.0	152.9	178.5	1,936.6	2,315.1	2,825.7
1979	545.7	22.7	24.5	177.5	149.9	1,948.8	2,323.3	2,869.0
1980	539.2	58.9	25.6	141.7	111.8	2,066.7	2,404.7	2,943.9

(a) Certain unions have, in addition to branches in the States, branches in the Northern Territory and in the Australian Capital Territory. See paragraph 5, explanatory notes. (b) Includes unions operating only in the Northern Territory or the Australian Capital Territory. (c) Total of previous five columns. Figures refer to interstate unions.