



TRADE UNION STATISTICS, AUSTRALIA DECEMBER 1981

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MAIN FEATURES

At the end of 1981 there were 324 reporting trade unions, compared with 325 at the end of the previous year. The overall decrease resulted from the amalgamation of four unions into two, six unions reporting for the first time and five unions ceasing to operate.

Total membership was 2,994,100, an increase of 38,200 (1.3 per cent). Males increased by 19,900 (1.0 per cent) while females increased by 18,400 (1.9 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 108 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 questionnaires completed by individual trade unions in respect of their membership and area of operation 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 1976 to 1980 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. Consequently, the figures contained in this publication may be revised in later issues. Revised estimates for the period 1968 to 1975 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 1976 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 1980 and 1981 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 1981 are set out below with comparable figures for 1980 shown in brackets. There were 82 (81) employer organisations registered at the end of 1981. The number of employee unions registered and included in the figures in this publication was 150 (150) with membership of 2,442,500 (2,412,300) representing 82 (82) 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 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)

Trade Union Members, November 1976 (6325.0)

13. Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications, Australia* (1101.0). The ABS also issues, on Tuesdays and Fridays, a *Publications Advice* (1105.0) which lists publications to be released in the next few days. The Catalogue and Publications Advice are available from any ABS office.

Symbols and other usages

- p preliminary—figure subject to revision
- nil or rounded to zero
- r revised since previous issue

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

R.J. CAMERON
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TABLE 1. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF SEPARATE UNIONS, DECEMBER 1976 TO DECEMBER 1981

End of December—	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.	Aust.
1976	188	172	138	143	149	120	r70	90	r322
1977	188	172	137	143	153	122	r70	90	r324
1978	r190	174	138	142	153	123	r71	r86	r330
1979	r192	174	139	142	153	r121	r77	r88	r328
1980	r192	r173	137	r143	150	r122	r78	r93	r325
1981	191	173	138	141	149	123	75	91	324

TABLE 2. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF MEMBERS, DECEMBER 1976 TO DECEMBER 1981 ('000)

End of December—	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.	Aust.
MALES									
1976	r724.9	r504.2	r270.3	r187.0	160.3	62.2	r12.2	35.8	r1,956.8
1977	r703.3	r504.7	r268.6	r190.3	r162.7	r64.0	r11.4	35.8	r1,940.6
1978	r732.3	r510.1	r265.3	r191.4	r160.0	62.9	r11.7	r35.7	r1,969.2
1979	r727.9	514.5	r268.6	r191.1	r158.1	62.1	r13.3	r35.8	r1,971.4
1980	r751.3	r523.6	r276.0	r186.3	r158.8	62.3	r14.5	r36.7	r2,009.5
1981	772.3	522.9	285.6	178.0	156.4	63.4	14.2	36.6	2,029.4
FEMALES									
1976	r321.3	r216.4	r117.5	r69.9	72.7	23.2	4.1	18.0	r843.3
1977	r312.4	r224.4	r119.8	r76.9	r76.3	r26.2	4.8	16.6	r857.4
1978	r315.1	r225.6	r118.3	r78.9	r74.9	26.0	5.5	r17.1	r861.5
1979	r333.0	235.5	r125.2	r81.1	r78.7	26.1	r5.5	r17.2	r902.2
1980	r357.4	r246.6	r132.1	r85.3	r75.9	26.1	r5.8	r17.3	r946.3
1981	373.3	248.8	135.4	85.1	72.7	26.3	6.0	17.0	964.7
PERSONS									
1976	1,046.1	720.5	387.7	256.9	233.0	85.5	r16.3	53.8	r2,800.0
1977	1,015.7	729.1	r388.4	267.2	238.9	90.2	r16.2	52.3	r2,797.9
1978	r1,047.5	r735.7	r383.6	270.4	234.8	88.9	r17.4	r52.7	r2,830.8
1979	r1,060.8	750.0	r393.8	r272.2	236.7	r88.2	r18.8	r53.0	r2,873.6
1980	r1,108.7	r770.1	r408.1	r271.6	234.7	88.4	r20.3	r53.9	r2,955.9
1981	1,145.6	771.7	421.0	263.1	229.1	89.8	20.1	53.7	2,994.1

TABLE 3. TRADE UNIONS : PROPORTION OF TOTAL EMPLOYEES, DECEMBER 1976 TO DECEMBER 1981 (per cent)

End of December—	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.	Aust.
MALES									
1976	63	59	59	62	59	67	44	70	61
1977	62	r59	59	64	59	69	r44	70	61
1978	64	60	58	66	59	68	r43	r71	62
1979	63	60	57	67	57	67	r45	r71	61
1979(a)	62	59	58	r66	58	66	r44	r65	61
1980(a)	63	59	57	65	r55	66	r45	r67	61
1981(a) p	64	58	58	62	54	67	44	65	60
FEMALES									
1976	49	42	48	37	47	48	32	52	45
1977	47	43	49	41	48	53	36	47	46
1978	47	43	r48	43	46	54	40	47	r46
1979	48	44	48	r44	47	52	r35	r47	r47
1979(a)	48	44	48	r47	48	52	38	46	47
1980(a)	r51	45	47	r49	44	50	33	44	47
1981(a) p	52	45	47	48	42	51	31	41	48
PERSONS									
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	r42	r61	56
1979	r58	54	54	58	54	62	r41	r61	56
1979(a)	57	53	54	59	54	61	r42	r58	r56
1980(a)	r59	53	54	58	51	60	r41	r58	r56
1981(a) p	59	53	54	56	50	62	39	55	56

(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 1976 TO DECEMBER 1981

Number of members	End of December—					1981	
	Number of unions					Number of unions	Per cent of total unions
	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980		
Under 100	r37	r36	r39	r41	r39	36	11.1
100 and under 250	r36	r42	r44	r41	r45	46	14.2
250 and under 500	35	34	30	28	23	26	8.0
500 and under 1,000	49	45	44	46	46	48	14.8
1,000 and under 2,000	38	40	42	44	46	45	13.9
2,000 and under 5,000	44	44	r47	r46	43	38	11.7
5,000 and under 10,000	24	24	26	20	r21	22	6.8
10,000 and under 20,000	20	22	19	23	21	20	6.2
20,000 and under 30,000	10	9	12	11	11	12	3.7
30,000 and under 40,000	9	7	6	5	7	9	2.8
40,000 and under 50,000	6	7	6	9	9	7	2.2
50,000 and under 80,000	7	7	8	7	7	8	2.5
80,000 and over	7	7	7	7	7	7	2.2
Total	r322	r324	r330	r328	r325	324	100.0

TABLE 5. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF MEMBERS ACCORDING TO SIZE OF UNION, DECEMBER 1976 TO DECEMBER 1981

Number of members	End of December—					1981		
	Number of members					Number of members	Average number of members per union	Proportion of total members
	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980			
	— '000—							%
Under 100	r1.9	1.7	r2.2	r2.2	1.9	1.7	—	0.1
100 and under 250	r5.6	r6.4	r6.5	r6.3	r7.1	7.3	0.2	0.2
250 and under 500	12.3	12.3	11.0	10.4	8.6	9.8	0.4	0.3
500 and under 1,000	35.4	31.4	r30.8	r30.6	r31.6	33.4	0.7	1.1
1,000 and under 2,000	52.6	56.2	56.4	60.6	r64.1	64.3	1.4	2.1
2,000 and under 5,000	136.5	142.4	r152.3	r155.9	145.5	129.0	3.4	4.3
5,000 and under 10,000	169.2	177.5	186.7	152.1	r155.9	156.1	7.1	5.2
10,000 and under 20,000	290.2	327.2	294.2	349.8	r317.6	287.4	14.4	9.6
20,000 and under 30,000	235.8	224.0	285.9	r272.2	r256.0	280.2	23.4	9.4
30,000 and under 40,000	320.0	247.3	214.0	174.3	243.9	316.5	35.2	10.6
40,000 and under 50,000	267.8	309.6	266.4	410.5	422.5	329.2	47.0	11.0
50,000 and under 80,000	430.8	425.1	525.0	450.7	466.4	531.6	66.5	17.8
80,000 and over	841.6	836.6	799.3	798.1	834.8	847.4	121.1	28.3
Total	r2,800.0	r2,797.9	r2,830.8	r2,873.6	r2,955.9	2,994.1	9.2	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								
1976	r181	9	8	13	22	89	141	r322
1977	r182	10	8	9	27	88	142	r324
1978	r188	11	6	10	27	88	142	r330
1979	r186	10	6	11	r26	r89	142	r328
1980	r183	10	6	r13	r24	r89	r142	r325
1981	183	9	6	13	24	89	141	324
NUMBER OF MEMBERS ('000)								
1976	r458.4	18.8	73.7	98.2	225.8	1,925.0	2,341.6	r2,800.0
1977	r475.3	22.2	67.3	90.6	168.5	1,973.9	2,322.6	r2,797.9
1978	r516.0	23.0	24.0	152.9	178.5	r1,936.4	r2,314.9	r2,830.8
1979	r550.9	22.7	r24.3	177.5	r149.3	r1,948.9	r2,322.7	r2,873.6
1980	r532.1	58.9	r25.3	r161.1	r111.2	r2,067.2	r2,423.7	r2,955.9
1981	540.5	57.0	25.4	165.2	121.0	2,085.1	2,453.6	2,994.1

(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.