



Australian Government



National
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Commission

Australian Labour Market Update—January 2022

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 inform recent migrants and people interested in working in Australia on a temporary or permanent basis.

Analysis by the National Skills Commission suggests the COVID-19 pandemic will have longer term impacts on the Australian labour market. While they may not be dramatic, these effects will be enduring and include the way in which jobs are done and the need for post-secondary qualifications. Information on job prospects, earnings and related information is on the [JobOutlook](#) website.

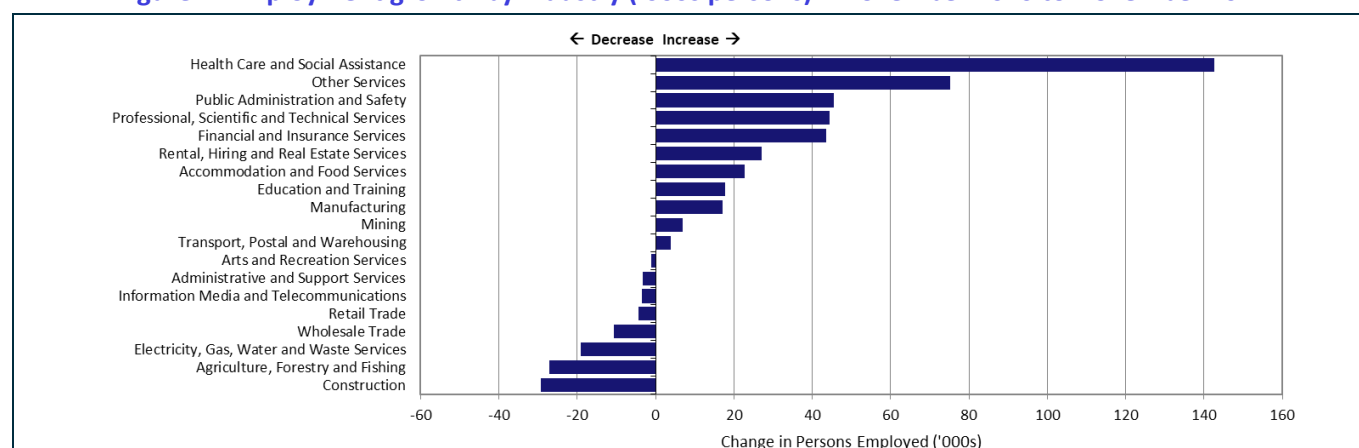
Unless otherwise stated, data in this publication is from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Labour Force Survey, November 2021.¹

Employment

Over the 12 months to November 2021, employment opportunities and growth varied widely across industries. The largest increases in employment occurred in Health Care and Social Assistance (up by 142,700), Other Services (up by 75,100), Public Administration and Safety (up by 45,400), Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (up by 44,300) and Financial and Insurance Services (up by 43,500). The largest decreases in employment occurred in Construction (down by 29,400), Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (down by 27,000) and Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services (down by 19,200).

The strongest rates of employment growth were in Other Services (up by 16.0%), Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services (up by 13.0%), and Financial and Insurance Services (up by 9.0%). Changes in employment by industry are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Employment growth by industry ('000s persons)—November 2020 to November 2021



Source: ABS (2021). Table 04. Employed persons by Industry division of main job (ANZSIC). *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed*. Retrieved January 20, 2022.

<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/latest-release>.

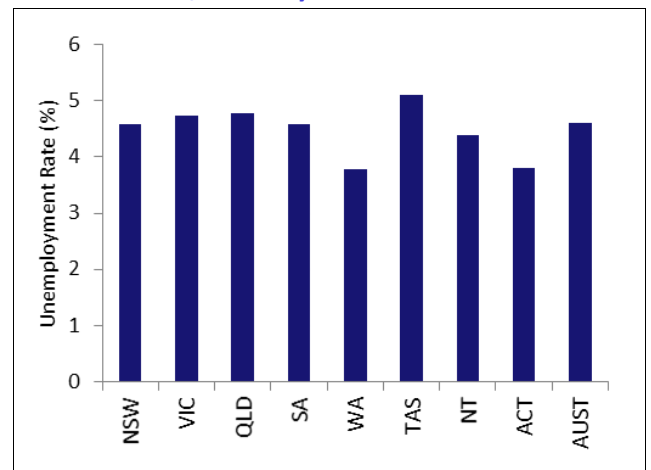
¹ The first paragraph of the Employment section and the Unemployment section use seasonally adjusted data for November 2021 from the ABS' Labour Force, Australia, November 2021 time series spreadsheets. Previous ALMU publications used trend data which is not currently available due to a break in time series.

Unemployment

The seasonally adjusted rate of unemployment in Australia was 4.6% in November 2021, compared with 6.8% in November 2020.

Over the 12 months to November 2021, the unemployment rate decreased in New South Wales (6.4% to 4.6%), Victoria (7.2% to 4.7%), Queensland (7.6% to 4.8%), South Australia (6.4% to 4.6%), Western Australia (6.4% to 3.8%), Tasmania (7.7% to 5.1%), Northern Territory (5.9% to 4.4%) and the ACT (4.0% to 3.8%). See Figure 2.

Figure 2: Unemployment rates (%) by State/Territory—November 2021

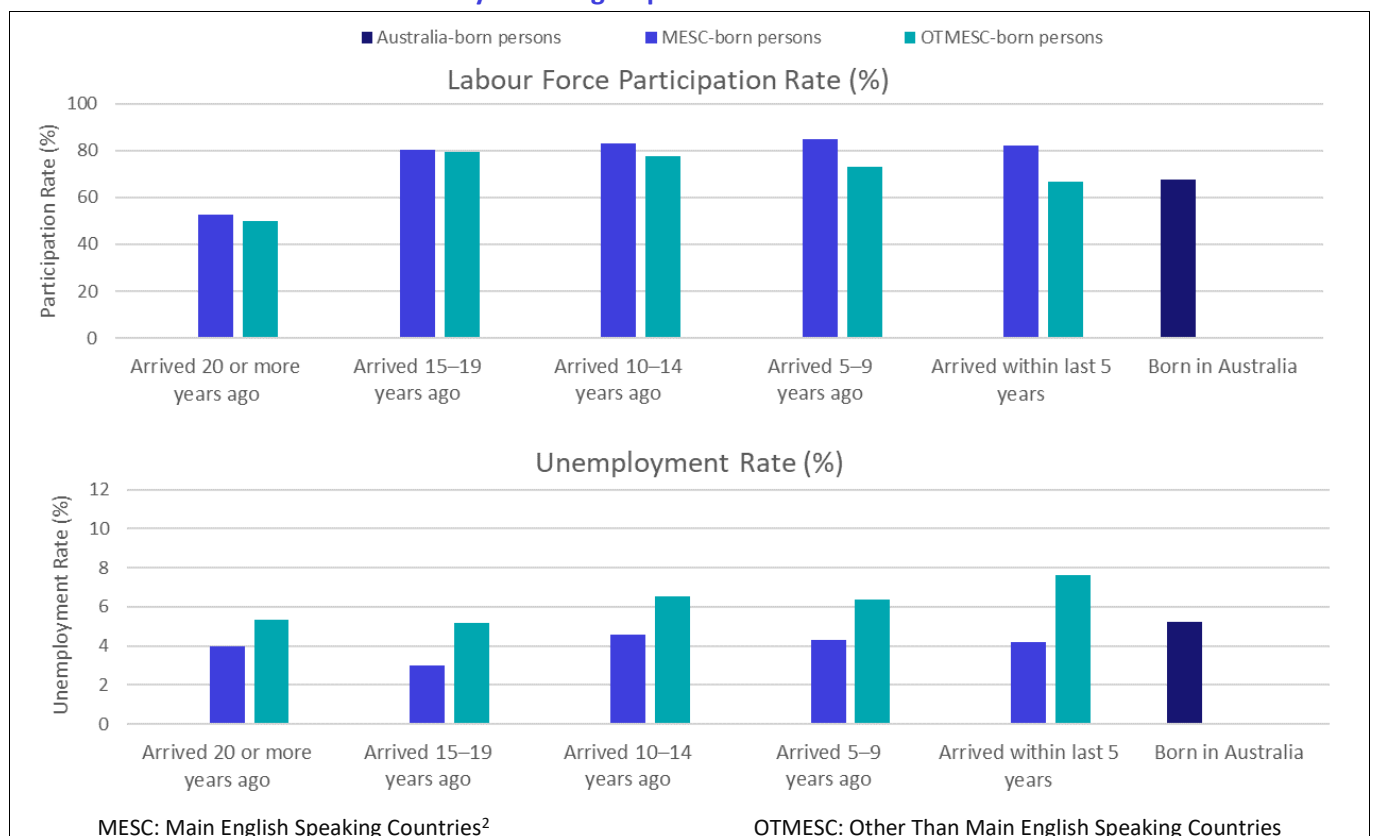


Migrant Unemployment

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

Figure 3 below shows the participation and unemployment rates of the Australian-born and migrants by broad country of birth groups and period of residence in Australia (average of the last 12 months to November 2021).

Figure 3: Years since arrival in Australia by labour force participation rates (%) and unemployment rates (%) for broad country of birth groups—12 months to November 2021

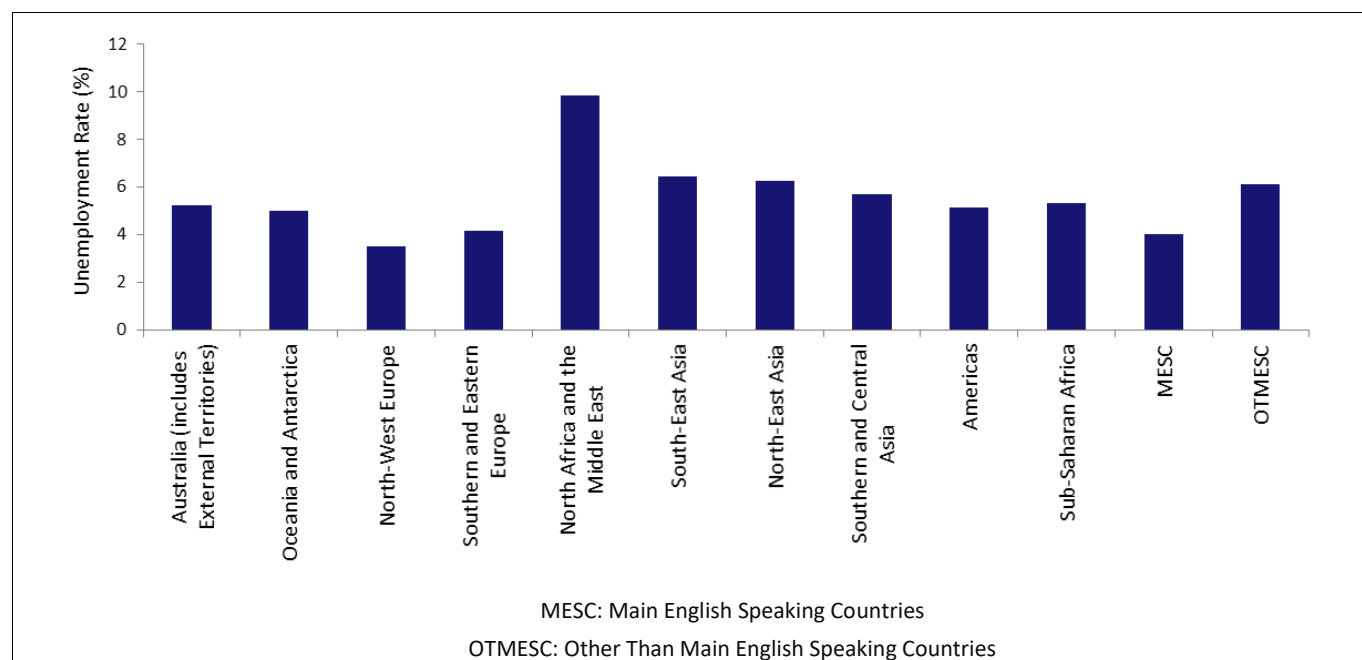


Source: ABS (2021). LM7 – Labour force status by elapsed years since arrival, main English-speaking countries, sex, state and territory. *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed*. Retrieved January 20, 2022. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/latest-release>

² MESC are the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, South Africa, Canada, the United States of America and New Zealand.

Figure 4 below shows unemployment rates (average of the last 12 months to November 2021) for people resident in Australia born in major country groups (by subcontinent). People born in North-West Europe, and Southern and Eastern Europe have relatively low unemployment rates (3.5%, and 4.2% respectively), while unemployment rates for people born in North Africa and the Middle East (9.9%) and South-East Asia (6.5%) are relatively high (possibly reflecting English language proficiency and period of residence in Australia).

Figure 4: Unemployment rates (%) by major country groups (subcontinent) of birth—12 months to November 2021³



Source: ABS (2021). LM5 - Labour force status by age, major country group (subcontinent) of birth (SACC), and sex & LM7 - Labour force status by elapsed years since arrival, main English-speaking countries, sex, state and territory. *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed*. Retrieved January 20, 2022. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/latest-release>.

Employment by Occupation⁴

Over the 12 months to November 2021, the largest increases in employment (in seasonally adjusted terms) occurred for Managers (up by 182,800), and Community and Personal Service Workers (up by 114,900). The largest decrease occurred for Labourers (down by 43,600). Employment growth rates for the major occupation groups are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Seasonally adjusted employment growth by occupation—12 months to November 2021

Occupational Group	1 Year Change ('000 persons)	1 Year Change (%)
Managers	182.8	11.4
Professionals	50.0	1.5
Technicians and Trades Workers	1.7	0.1
Community and Personal Service Workers	114.9	8.9
Clerical and Administrative Workers	-29.8	-1.7
Sales Workers	32.1	3.0
Machinery Operators and Drivers	32.8	4.1
Labourers	-43.6	-3.7

Additional information on occupational groups is provided in the following section on internet vacancy data.

³ In Figure 4, 'Australia (includes External Territories)' is within 'Oceania and Antarctica'.

⁴ This section is based on November 2021 National Skills Commission seasonally adjusted data derived from ABS Labour Force Survey data. Occupational Groups are from the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) (ABS Cat. No. 1220.0).

Internet Vacancy Data

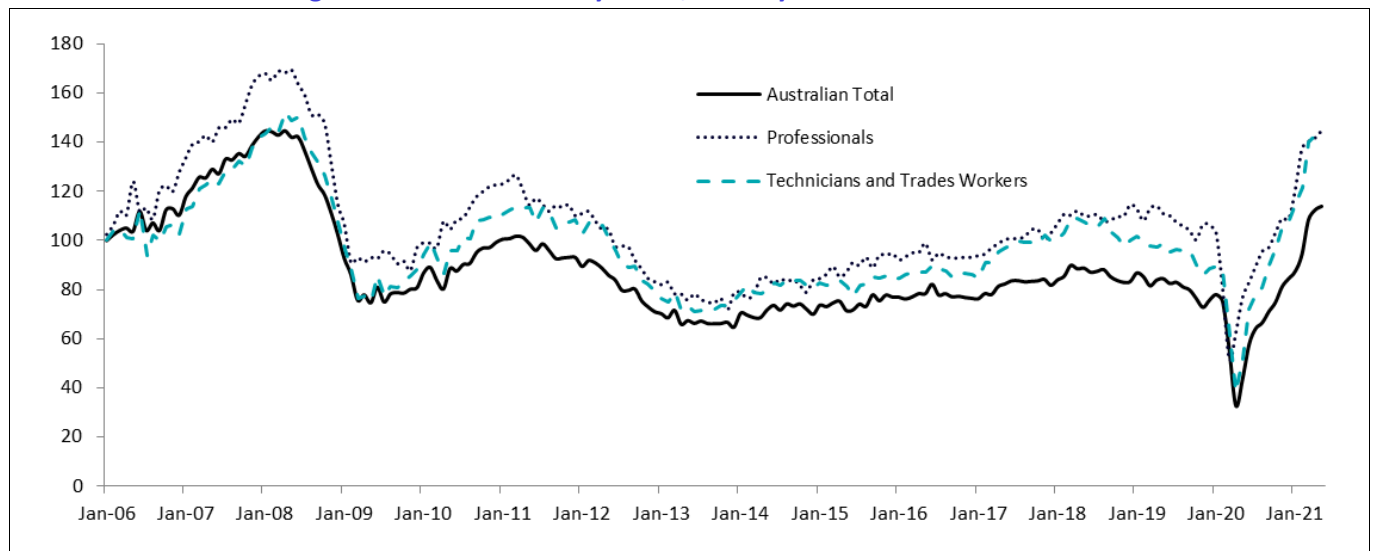
The National Skills Commission produces the monthly Vacancy Report which contains the Internet Vacancy Index (IVI) (see Figure 5). Over the year to November 2021, the seasonally adjusted IVI increased by 46.7% with the largest increases for Labourers (up by 58.0%), Clerical and Administrative Workers (up by 55.2%) and Sales Workers (up by 55.0%).

While there were no occupational group decreases in seasonally adjusted IVI, the smallest occupational group increases recorded were for Technicians and Trades workers (up by 31.9%) and Machinery Operators and Drivers (up by 36.7%).

At the more detailed occupation level, seasonally adjusted vacancies increased in all of the 48 occupation clusters over the year to November 2021, with the strongest increases for Food Preparation Assistants (up by 125.2%), Sales Support Workers (up by 95.9%) and Science Professionals and Veterinarians (up by 75.7%). The weakest increases were for Hairdressers, Printing, Clothing and Wood Trades Workers (up by 6.1%), Skilled Animal and Horticultural Workers (up by 19.1%) and Mobile Plant Operators (up by 20.3%).

Over the year to November 2021, seasonally adjusted vacancies rose in all states and territories. Vacancies rose in Victoria (by 56.8%), NT (by 52.8%), SA (by 47.7%), NSW (by 46.3%), Tasmania (by 46.0%), QLD (by 41.5%), WA (by 38.2%) and ACT (by 29.8%).

Figure 5: Internet Vacancy Index, January 2006 to November 2021



Source: National Skills Commission, [Vacancy Report](#) (December 2021), Seasonally Adjusted Index data.

Future Employment Change⁵

The [Labour Market Information Portal](#) contains information on projected future employment change over the five years to November 2025 for different occupations and industries. As there may be significant variation between and within states, information on future employment change should be used with caution.

Future employment change estimates are indicative only and are intended to provide a guide to opportunities likely to be available over the five years to November 2025. It is important to note that these estimates do not provide any guidance about the number of people looking for opportunities in each occupation. As the Australian labour market can change quickly, information should be re-assessed prior to making a decision to lodge a visa application.

Queries on the quarterly Australian Labour Market Update publication, including requests for copies of previous editions, should be emailed to migration@skillscommission.gov.au.

⁵ See National Skills Commission, [Vacancy Report](#) (December 2021). The IVI is based on a count of online job advertisements newly lodged on SEEK, CareerOne and Australian JobSearch during the month. Duplicate advertisements are removed before IVI vacancies are coded by the National Skills Commission to occupations based on ANZSCO. The data are seasonally adjusted and trended, then indexed (January 2006=100). November 2021 data is used in Figure 5 to be consistent with all other data used in this publication...



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Hot Topic

COVID-19 and the Australian Labour Market⁶

The Australian labour market has weathered the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic reasonably well. While the outbreak of the Delta variant and associated lockdowns had a significant, negative impact on the labour market for much of the second half of 2021, activity has rebounded strongly in recent months.

Employment grew 348,600 (or 2.7%) over the 12 months to November 2021 and was 181,800 (or 1.7%) above the pre-pandemic estimate for March 2020. Similarly, full-time employment increased by 338,200 (or 3.9%) from November 2020 and up by 226,700 (or 2.6%) from March 2020. Further, an estimated 588,600 Australians were unemployed which is 285,000 (or 32.6%) less than in November 2020 and 176,500 (or 23.1%) below the level recorded in March 2020.

Migrants

The labour market outcomes for people who migrate to Australia vary appreciably. Several factors influence migrant unemployment rates including skill level, age, English proficiency, recent and relevant work experience, and the period since arrival in Australia.

Overall, migrants have performed well in the Australian labour market since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, with key labour market indicators improving alongside (and sometimes surpassing) the Australian born population (see **Table 1** and **Annex A**).

In the year to November 2021, the unemployment rates for the Australian born and those born outside Australia fell by 1.8 and 2.7 percentage points respectively. In comparison to the rates prior to COVID-19 (March 2020), unemployment rates fell for both groups – by 1.0 percentage points for Australian-born and 1.8 percentage points for those born outside Australia.

While employment has contracted by 0.7% (or 59,330) for the Australian born since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, it increased by 0.4% (or 39,150) since November 2020. Employment for those born outside Australia increased by 7.6% (or 309,500) since November 2020, and by 7.0% (or 284,700) since March 2020.

Country and region of birth

Employment for migrants from the main English-speaking countries (MESC) grew by 5.9% in the year to November 2021, coinciding with a 0.7% growth in the participation rate. Employment has risen above pre-pandemic levels, up 3.0% since March 2020. However, the participation rate remains slightly lower than pre-pandemic levels, down 0.3 percentage points (see **Table 1**).

For people from other than main English-speaking countries (OTMESC), employment increased by 8.3% over the 12 months to November 2021, and is above pre-pandemic levels. The participation rate for people from OTMESC has surpassed pre-pandemic levels, up 1.2 percentage points from November 2020 and 0.6 percentage points from March 2020.

Those from MESC recorded a fall in the unemployment rate in the year to November 2021, down by 2.1 percentage points (and 1.9 percentage points lower than pre-pandemic levels). The OTMESC unemployment rate also improved, down by 2.9 percentage points in the year to November 2021 (and 1.8 percentage points lower than pre-pandemic levels).

Employment for almost all subcontinents of birth has recovered to above pre-pandemic levels, except for those born in Southern and Eastern Europe, which remains 1.7% lower than pre-pandemic levels. Employment for all

⁶ For consistency, this Hot Topic uses LM5 and LM7 pivot tables (original data) from the ABS detailed Labour Force Survey (November 2021) publication and estimates may differ from analysis that use seasonally adjusted data from Table 1 of the ABS Labour Force Survey (November 2021).

subcontinents of birth grew in the year to November 2021 Except for those born in Southern and Eastern Europe, which fell by 10.6%.

The unemployment rate fell for people born in all subcontinents both in the year to November 2021, and since March 2020. The largest fall in unemployment rates in the year to November 2021 was for those born in North Africa and the Middle East (6.5 percentage points), followed by those born in Southern and Central Asia (3.3 percentage points).

Table 1: Key Labour Market Indicators—November 2021

	Nov-2021	Nov-2020	Mar-2020	Change from November 2020 to November 2021	Change from March 2020 to November 2021	Change from March to November 2020
Main English-speaking countries						
Employed total ('000)	1337.6	1263.5	1298.2	5.9%	3.0%	-2.7%
Unemployed total ('000)	44.7	71.5	71.0	-37.4%	-37.0%	0.7%
Unemployment rate (%)	3.2	5.4	5.2	-2.1 pp ⁷	-1.9 pp	0.2 pp
Participation rate (%)	65.7	64.9	66.0	0.7 pp	-0.3 pp	-1.1 pp
Other than main English-speaking countries						
Employed total ('000)	3021.2	2789.5	2780.7	8.3%	8.6%	0.3%
Unemployed total ('000)	136.4	216.8	182.3	-37.1%	-25.2%	18.9%
Unemployment rate (%)	4.3	7.2	6.2	-2.9 pp	-1.8 pp	1.1 pp
Participation rate (%)	63.9	62.7	63.3	1.2 pp	0.6 pp	-0.7 pp

Source: ABS, Labour Force, Australia, December 2021, seasonally adjusted data.

Period of Residence

The initial impact of the COVID-19 restrictions was greatest for those who arrived in Australia within the last 5 years. In June 2020, the unemployment rate peaked for this group at 16.3%. At that time, this unemployment rate was three times higher than the unemployment rate of those born in Australia or who had arrived in Australia more than 5 years ago. By November 2021, the unemployment rate for this group has improved significantly. With an unemployment rate of 5.0%, migrants who had arrived in Australia within the last 5 years are only 0.6 percentage points higher than Australian born persons or 1.2 percentage points higher than longer-term migrants.

While the participation rate has fluctuated monthly for recently arrived migrants in the year to November 2021, this group has had a higher participation rate than both Australian born persons and longer-term migrants for at least 11 of those 12 months.

Young People

Youth unemployment has been a long-term issue in the Australian labour market. Unsurprisingly, the COVID-19 pandemic had a disproportionate effect on this group. Young people often work in more volatile occupations and industries which are typically characterised by casual employment (such as Retail and Hospitality), and are more susceptible to economic shocks like COVID-19. These problems appear to be exacerbated for young migrants. In June 2020, young migrants aged between 15 and 24 years had an unemployment rate of 21.6%. This rate was 7.2 percentage points higher than Australian born persons of the same age, 14.7 percentage points higher than older migrants and 16.5 percentage points higher than older Australian born persons.

In the 12 months to November 2021, the unemployment rate of young migrants has recovered to be comparable with Australian-born persons of the same age. At 10.0% in November 2021, this figure is 0.1 percentage points better than Australian-born persons of the same age, and the disparity between youth and non-youth workers has returned to roughly pre-pandemic levels.

Females

Women are also overrepresented in industries that were most severely affected by the pandemic and were more likely to have been employed casually, which raised the likelihood of job losses.

In the year to November 2021, female employment increased by 211,500. Most of this increase was due to female migrants, who accounted for 93.9% of this increase. Female migrants were disproportionately affected the COVID-19 pandemic, being the cohort which had both the lowest participation rate and highest unemployment rate during this period (when accounting for sex and place of birth).

⁷ "pp" is percentage points

Annex A: Key Labour Market Indicators—Place of Birth and Years Elapsed Since Arrival in Australia

	Nov-21	Nov-20	Mar-20	Change from November 2020 to November 2021	Change from March 2020 to November 2021	Change from March to November 2020
Born in Australia						
Employed total ('000)	8863.1	8823.9	8922.4	0.4%	-0.7%	-1.1%
Unemployed total ('000)	406.9	584.8	511.9	-30.4%	-20.5%	14.2%
Unemployment rate (%)	4.4	6.2	5.4	-1.8 pp	-1.0 pp	0.8 pp
Participation rate (%)	68.1	68.2	68.3	0.0 pp	-0.1 pp	-0.1 pp
Non-Australian born						
Employed total ('000)	4367.5	4058.0	4082.8	7.6%	7.0%	-0.6%
Unemployed total ('000)	181.6	288.8	253.2	-37.1%	-28.3%	14.0%
Unemployment rate (%)	4.0	6.6	5.8	-2.7 pp	-1.8 pp	0.8 pp
Participation rate (%)	64.5	63.4	64.2	1.1 pp	0.3 pp	-0.8 pp
Arrived within last 5 years						
Employed total ('000)	578.5	585.2	609.0	-1.1%	-5.0%	-3.9%
Unemployed total ('000)	30.3	66.7	61.2	-54.6%	-50.6%	8.8%
Unemployment rate (%)	5.0	10.2	9.1	-5.3 pp	-4.2 pp	1.1 pp
Participation rate (%)	69.8	68.5	67.0	1.3 pp	2.8 pp	1.5 pp
Arrived 5-9 years ago						
Employed total ('000)	787.1	650.6	666.2	21.0%	18.1%	-2.3%
Unemployed total ('000)	33.6	48.1	46.6	-30.1%	-27.8%	3.3%
Unemployment rate (%)	4.1	6.9	6.5	-2.8 pp	-2.4 pp	0.3 pp
Participation rate (%)	74.8	74.9	77.8	-0.2 pp	-3.0 pp	-2.8 pp
Arrived 10-14 years ago						
Employed total ('000)	526.4	452.5	446.2	16.3%	18.0%	1.4%
Unemployed total ('000)	19.7	29.6	23.0	-33.3%	-14.2%	28.6%
Unemployment rate (%)	3.6	6.1	4.9	-2.5 pp	-1.3 pp	1.2 pp
Participation rate (%)	80.4	77.2	77.8	3.3 pp	2.6 pp	-0.6 pp
Arrived 15-19 years ago						
Employed total ('000)	526.4	452.5	446.2	16.3%	18.0%	1.4%
Unemployed total ('000)	19.7	29.6	23.0	-33.3%	-14.2%	28.6%
Unemployment rate (%)	3.6	6.1	4.9	-2.5 pp	-1.3 pp	1.2 pp
Participation rate (%)	80.4	77.2	77.8	3.3 pp	2.6 pp	-0.6 pp
Arrived 20 or more years ago						
Employed total ('000)	1681.4	1639.1	1611.1	2.6%	4.4%	1.7%
Unemployed total ('000)	66.8	96.1	80.6	-30.6%	-17.2%	19.3%
Unemployment rate (%)	3.8	5.5	4.8	-1.7 pp	-0.9 pp	0.8 pp
Participation rate (%)	52.0	51.6	52.1	0.3 pp	-0.1 pp	-0.4 pp

Further Information

Queries on the Australian Labour Market Update publication, including requests for copies of previous Hot Topics, should be emailed to migration@skillscommission.gov.au.