

# Wage price index

## March quarter 2026 | Economic brief

The wage price index (WPI) measures changes in the hourly price of labour. It reflects changes in awards, enterprise agreements, minimum wage, and individual contracts but does not reflect changes in the composition of the workforce or employee characteristics which may impact the quality and quantity of the work performed.

Territory WPI data are only reported in original terms. Data in this briefing is in original terms unless stated otherwise.

Wage price index	NT	Aust
Quarterly change (seasonally adjusted)	n.p.	↑0.8%
Year-ended change (original)	↑2.3%	↑3.2%
Year-ended change (seasonally adjusted)	n.p.	↑3.3%

n.p.: not published

## Year-ended result

The Territory WPI increased by 2.3% in the year-ended March quarter 2026 (Chart 1), reflecting an increase of 2.8% in the private sector and an increase of 1.8% in the public sector (Chart 2). This compares to 2.2% growth in the previous quarter.

The Territory reported the weakest growth of the jurisdictions. In other jurisdictions, the year-ended change in WPI ranged from 2.9% in Tasmania to 3.7% in the Australian Capital Territory (Chart 3).

Nationally, the WPI increased by 3.2% in the year-ended March quarter 2026, with an increase of 3.4% in the public sector and an increase of 3.3% in the private sector.

Nationally, the electricity, gas, water and waste services industry reported the strongest year-ended growth in the private sector, up by 4.5%. The industry that experienced the weakest year-ended growth in private sector wages in Australia was administrative and support services, up by 2.7%.

Chart 1: Wage price index (Year-ended percentage change)

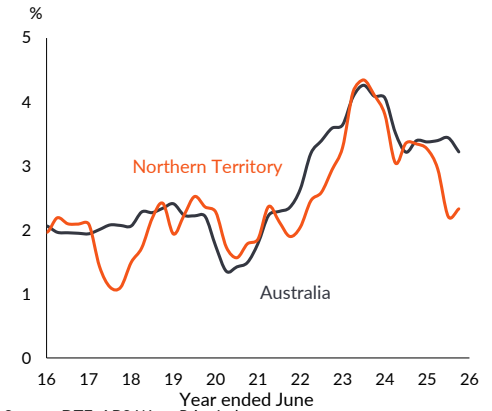


Chart 2: Wage price index, Northern Territory (Year-ended percentage change)

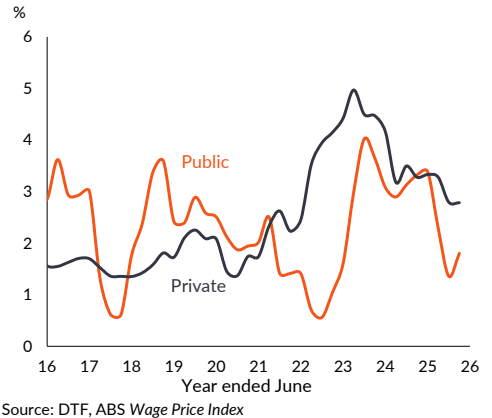


Chart 3: Wage price index by jurisdiction (Year-ended percentage change)



Table 1: Wage price index (hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses)

	Period			Change	
	Mar qtr 25	Dec qtr 25	Mar qtr 26	Quarterly <sup>1</sup>	Year-ended <sup>2</sup>
<b>Northern Territory</b>					
Original	154.5	157.3	158.1	n.p.	2.3%
Public	155.5	156.9	158.3	n.p.	1.8%
Private	154.4	158.2	158.7	n.p.	2.8%
<b>Australia</b>					
Original	155.3	159.4	160.3	n.p.	3.2%
Public	157.7	161.9	163.0	n.p.	3.4%
Private	154.5	158.7	159.6	n.p.	3.3%
Seasonally adjusted	155.3	159.2	160.4	0.8%	3.3%
Public	157.5	161.9	162.7	0.5%	3.3%
Private	154.7	158.5	159.7	0.8%	3.2%

Table 2: Wage price index - Australia industry (hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses, original)

	Period			Change	
	Mar qtr 25	Dec qtr 25	Mar qtr 26	Quarterly <sup>1</sup>	Year-ended <sup>2</sup>
<b>Public</b>					
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	165.0	171.0	171.8	n.p.	4.1%
Professional, scientific and technical services	150.5	155.6	156.6	n.p.	4.1%
Public administration and safety	154.6	159.4	160.4	n.p.	3.8%
Education and training	161.3	164.9	165.7	n.p.	2.7%
Health care and social assistance	157.3	160.7	161.9	n.p.	2.9%
<b>Private</b>					
Mining	154.5	159.4	160.2	n.p.	3.7%
Manufacturing	156.3	160.3	161.3	n.p.	3.2%
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	163.7	168.4	171.1	n.p.	4.5%
Construction	154.3	158.4	159.2	n.p.	3.2%
Wholesale trade	153.5	157.2	158.6	n.p.	3.3%
Retail trade	149.8	154.0	154.2	n.p.	2.9%
Accommodation and food services	151.5	155.8	156.1	n.p.	3.0%
Transport, postal and warehousing	154.1	157.3	158.9	n.p.	3.1%
Information media and telecommunications	148.3	152.6	152.8	n.p.	3.0%
Financial and insurance services	156.0	159.0	160.5	n.p.	2.9%
Rental, hiring and real estate services	148.0	152.2	152.8	n.p.	3.2%
Professional, scientific and technical services	152.9	156.7	157.3	n.p.	2.9%
Administrative and support services	148.6	152.3	152.6	n.p.	2.7%
Public administration and safety	156.0	160.5	160.9	n.p.	3.1%
Education and training	161.2	165.3	166.8	n.p.	3.5%
Health care and social assistance	166.8	172.7	173.6	n.p.	4.1%
Arts and recreation services	155.6	160.0	160.8	n.p.	3.3%
Other services	152.6	157.0	158.1	n.p.	3.6%

<sup>1</sup> Compares the latest quarter with the previous quarter.

<sup>2</sup> Compares the latest quarter with the same quarter last year.

n.p.: not published

Caution is advised when using quarterly data for the Territory, which is often derived from small samples and highly volatile.

Source: Department of Treasury and Finance, ABS Wage Price Index

Term	Definition
Wage price index	The wage price index measures changes in the price of labour, unaffected by compositional shifts in the labour force, hours worked or employee characteristics

Although due care has been exercised in preparing this material, no responsibility is accepted for any errors or omission.

[Wage Price Index, Australia | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au)

## More information

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