

# Labour force

September 2026 | Economic brief

## Trend

|                     | NT      | Aust       |
|---------------------|---------|------------|
| Employed persons    | 145 750 | 14 826 666 |
| - Monthly change    | ↓0.2%   | ↑0.1%      |
| - Year-ended change | flat    | ↑1.4%      |
| Unemployment rate   | 4.8%    | 4.6%       |
| Participation rate  | 71.8%   | 66.9%      |

Employment in the Territory declined by 0.2% to 145,750 persons in September 2026. Part-time employment declined by 0.7% and full-time employment declined by 0.1%. Employment in the Territory was flat in the year-ended September 2026 (Chart 1). This is the second weakest result of the jurisdictions, which ranged from a decline of 2.4% in Tasmania to an increase of 2.9% in Western Australia. Nationally, employment increased by 1.4% in the year-ended September 2026.

The Territory's unemployment rate was flat at 4.8% in September 2026 and by 0.5 ppt in year-ended terms (Chart 2). This is the third highest rate of the jurisdictions, which ranged from 4.2% in the Australian Capital Territory to 5.2% in Tasmania. Nationally, the monthly unemployment rate increased by 0.3 ppt to 4.6%.

The participation rate in the Territory declined by 0.2 ppt to 71.8% and by 1 ppt in year-ended terms. This is the highest rate of the jurisdictions, and is 4.5 ppt above the national rate (66.8%).

## Seasonally adjusted

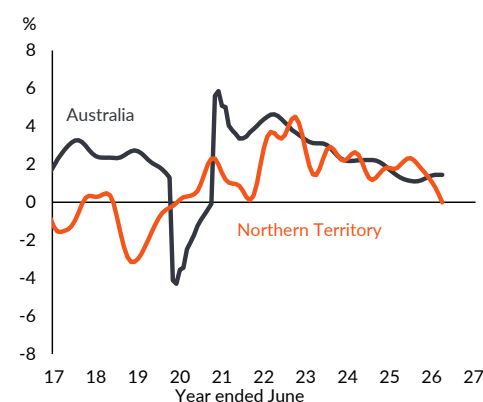
|                       | NT      | Aust       |
|-----------------------|---------|------------|
| Employed persons      | 145 074 | 14 782 670 |
| - Year-ended change   | ↓0.5%   | ↑1.2%      |
| - Year-average change | ↑1.7%   | ↑1.3%      |
| Unemployment rate     | 4.6%    | 4.7%       |
| Participation rate    | 71.3%   | 66.8%      |

Employment in the Territory declined by 0.5% to 145,074 persons in the year-ended September 2026 (Chart 3). This is the second weakest result of the jurisdictions. Nationally, employment increased by 1.2% in the year-ended September 2026.

The Territory's unemployment rate increased by 0.3 ppt to 4.6% in the year-ended September 2026 (Chart 2). This is the fourth highest rate of the jurisdictions. Nationally, the monthly unemployment rate increased by 0.1 ppt to 4.7%.

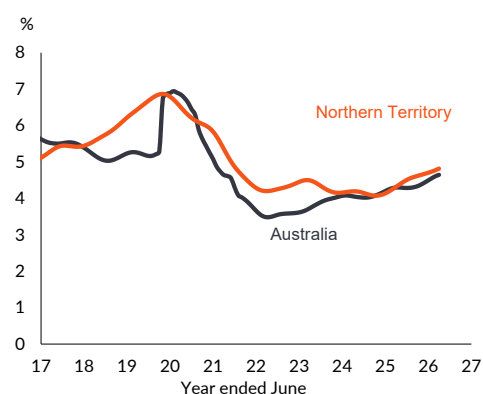
The Territory's participation rate declined by 1.5 ppt to 71.3% in the year-ended September 2026. This is the second highest rate of the jurisdictions, and is 4.5 ppt above the national rate (66.8%).

Chart 1: Employment change (year-ended change, trend)



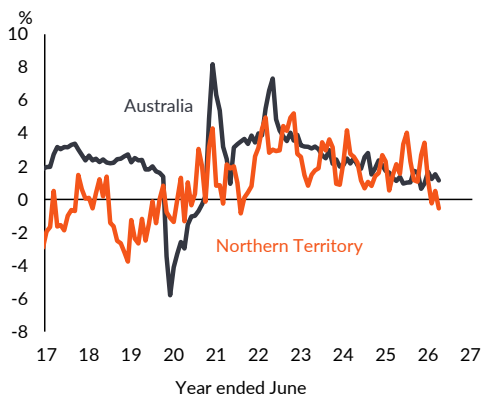
Source: DTF; ABS, Labour Force

Chart 2: Unemployment rate (monthly, trend)



Source: DTF; ABS, Labour Force

Chart 3: Employment change (year-ended change, seasonally adjusted)



Source: DTF; ABS, Labour Force

Table 1: Labour force statistics\*

|                     | Period     |            |            | Monthly change <sup>1</sup> | Year-ended change <sup>2</sup> |         |
|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------|
|                     | Sep 25     | Aug 26     | Sep 26     | %                           | %                              | No.     |
| Northern Territory  |            |            |            |                             |                                |         |
| Trend               |            |            |            |                             |                                |         |
| Employment          | 145 746    | 146 058    | 145 750    | -0.2%                       | 0.0%                           | 4       |
| – full-time         | 113 719    | 114 212    | 114 112    | -0.1%                       | 0.3%                           | 392     |
| – part-time         | 32 026     | 31 845     | 31 638     | -0.7%                       | -1.2%                          | - 388   |
| Unemployment rate   | 4.3%       | 4.8%       | 4.8%       | 0.0 ppt                     | 0.5 ppt                        |         |
| – Unemployed        | 6 572      | 7 321      | 7 376      | 0.8%                        | 12.2%                          | 804     |
| Participation rate  | 72.8%      | 72.0%      | 71.8%      | - 0.2 ppt                   | - 1.0 ppt                      |         |
| Labour force        | 152 318    | 153 379    | 153 127    | -0.2%                       | 0.5%                           | 809     |
| Australia           |            |            |            |                             |                                |         |
| Trend               |            |            |            |                             |                                |         |
| Employment          | 14 615 833 | 14 810 954 | 14 826 666 | 0.1%                        | 1.4%                           | 210 833 |
| – full-time         | 10 071 852 | 10 207 903 | 10 224 687 | 0.2%                        | 1.5%                           | 152 835 |
| – part-time         | 4 543 981  | 4 603 050  | 4 601 978  | 0.0%                        | 1.3%                           | 57 997  |
| Unemployment rate   | 4.3%       | 4.6%       | 4.6%       | 0.0 ppt                     | 0.3 ppt                        |         |
| – Unemployed        | 656 274    | 715 215    | 722 318    | 1.0%                        | 10.1%                          | 66 044  |
| Participation rate  | 66.9%      | 66.9%      | 66.9%      | 0.0 ppt                     | 0.1 ppt                        |         |
| Labour force        | 15 272 107 | 15 526 169 | 15 548 984 | 0.1%                        | 1.8%                           | 276 877 |
| Seasonally adjusted |            |            |            |                             |                                |         |
| Employment          | 14 614 324 | 14 821 999 | 14 782 670 | -0.3%                       | 1.2%                           | 168 346 |
| – full-time         | 10 058 833 | 10 198 055 | 10 232 440 | 0.3%                        | 1.7%                           | 173 607 |
| – part-time         | 4 555 491  | 4 623 944  | 4 550 229  | -1.6%                       | -0.1%                          | - 5 261 |
| Unemployment rate   | 4.4%       | 4.7%       | 4.7%       | 0.1 ppt                     | 0.3 ppt                        |         |
| – Unemployed        | 676 839    | 723 097    | 732 038    | 1.2%                        | 8.2%                           | 55 199  |
| Participation rate  | 66.9%      | 67.0%      | 66.8%      | - 0.2 ppt                   | - 0.2 ppt                      |         |
| Labour force        | 15 291 163 | 15 545 095 | 15 514 708 | -0.2%                       | 1.5%                           | 223 545 |

ppt.: percentage point

1 Compares the latest month with the previous month.

2 Compares the latest month with the same month in the previous year.

\* Due to rounding, changes in the table may not reflect the actual change.

Source: Department of Treasury and Finance; ABS, *Labour force*

Table 2: Unemployment rates by jurisdiction (%)

|                  | September 2026      |            | Ranking (highest to lowest) |       |
|------------------|---------------------|------------|-----------------------------|-------|
|                  | Seasonally adjusted | Trend      | Seasonally adjusted         | Trend |
| <b>States</b>    |                     |            |                             |       |
| NSW              | 4.7                 | 4.5        | 3                           | 4     |
| Vic              | 5.1                 | 5.1        | 1                           | 2     |
| Qld              | 4.5                 | 4.5        | 5                           | 5     |
| WA               | 4.2                 | 4.3        | 7                           | 6     |
| SA               | 4.2                 | 4.3        | 8                           | 7     |
| Tas              | 5.0                 | 5.2        | 2                           | 1     |
| ACT              | 4.5                 | 4.2        | 6                           | 8     |
| NT               | 4.6                 | 4.8        | 4                           | 3     |
| <b>Australia</b> | <b>4.7</b>          | <b>4.6</b> |                             |       |

Source: Department of Treasury and Finance; ABS, *Labour force*

| Term               | Definition                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Employment         | Work for one hour or more for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind, in a job or business or on a farm (comprising employees, employers and own account workers) |
| Employed full-time | Employed people who usually work 35 hours or more a week (in all jobs) and those who usually work less but worked 35 hours or more during the reference week.         |

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Employed part-time  | Employed people who usually worked less than 35 hours a week (in all jobs) or were not at work in the reference week.                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Unemployed          | People aged 15 years and over who were not employed during the reference week and had actively looked for full time or part time work.                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Unemployment rate   | For any group, the number of unemployed people expressed as a percentage of the labour force in the same group.                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Participation rate  | For any group, the labour force expressed as a percentage of the civilian population aged 15 years and over in the same group.                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Labour force        | For any group, people who were employed or unemployed, as defined.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Year-ended change   | Compares the latest quarter with the same quarter last year                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Year-average change | Compares the 12 months up to and including the latest quarter with the previous 12 month period                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Seasonally adjusted | A seasonally adjusted series involves estimating and removing the cyclical and seasonal effects from the original data. Seasonally adjusting a time series is useful if you wish to understand the underlying patterns of change or movement in a population, without the impact of the seasonal or cyclical effects. |
| Trend               | A trend series is a seasonally adjusted series that has been further adjusted to remove irregular effects and 'smooth' out the series to show the overall 'trend' of the data over time.                                                                                                                              |

Caution is advised when using monthly data for the Territory, as it is often derived from small samples and can be highly volatile. Although due care has been exercised in preparing this material, no responsibility is accepted for any errors or omission.

[Labour force, Australia | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://abs.gov.au)

## More information

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