

Labour force

May 2026 | Economic brief

Trend

	NT	Aust
Employed persons	150 136	14 753 749
- Monthly change	↑0.7%	↑0.1%
- Year-ended change	↑3.3%	↑1.3%
Unemployment rate	4.5%	4.4%
Participation rate	74.1%	66.7%

Employment in the Territory increased by 0.7% to 150,136 persons in May 2026. The number of employed people in the Territory is at its highest level on record. Part-time employment increased by 1.6% and full-time employment increased by 0.4%. Employment in the Territory increased by 3.3% in the year-ended May 2026 (Chart 1). This is the strongest result of the jurisdictions, which otherwise ranged from a decline of 1.7% in Tasmania to an increase of 1.9% in Western Australia. Nationally, employment increased by 1.3% in the year-ended May 2026.

The Territory's unemployment rate was flat at 4.5% in May 2026, however increased by 0.4 ppt in year-ended terms (Chart 2). This is the third highest rate of the jurisdictions, which ranged from 3.9% in Queensland to 5.0% in Tasmania. Nationally, the monthly unemployment rate increased by 0.2 ppt to 4.4%.

The participation rate in the Territory increased by 0.3 ppt to 74.1% and by 1.2 ppt in year-ended terms. This is the highest rate of the jurisdictions, and is 7.4 ppt above the national rate (66.7%).

Seasonally adjusted

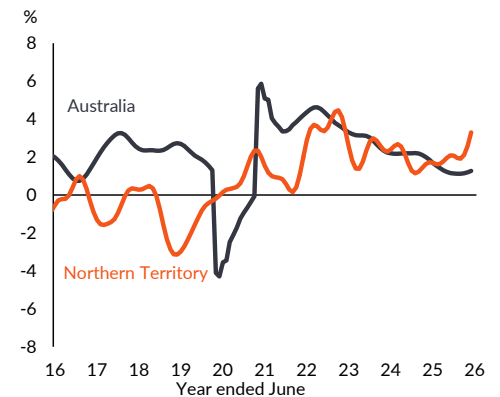
	NT	Aust
Employed persons	150 953	14 738 839
- Year-ended change	↑3.7%	↑1.0%
- Year-average change	↑2.1%	↑1.3%
Unemployment rate	4.2%	4.4%
Participation rate	74.3%	66.7%

Employment in the Territory increased by 3.7% to 150,953 persons in the year-ended May 2026 (Chart 3). This is the strongest result of the jurisdictions. Nationally, employment increased by 1.0% in the year-ended May 2026.

The Territory's unemployment rate was flat at 4.2% in the year-ended May 2026 (Chart 2). This is the third lowest rate of the jurisdictions. Nationally, the monthly unemployment rate declined by 0.1 ppt to 4.4%.

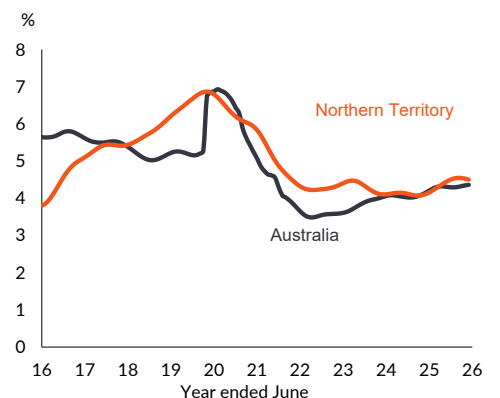
The Territory's participation rate increased by 1.2 ppt to 74.3% in the year-ended May 2026. This is the highest rate of the jurisdictions, and is 7.6 ppt above the national rate (66.7%).

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



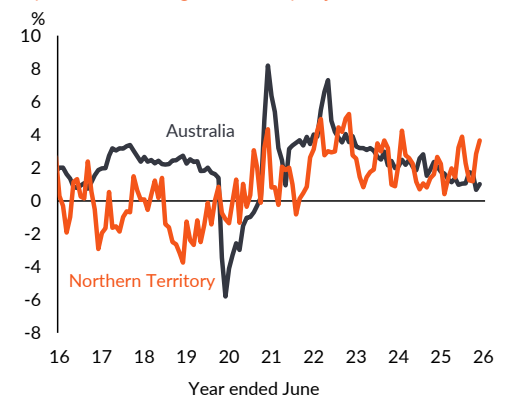
Source: DTF; ABS, Labour Force

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 ¹		Year-ended change ²
	May 25	Apr 26	May 26	%	%	No.
Northern Territory						
Trend						
Employment	145 340	149 109	150 136	0.7%	3.3%	4 796
– full-time	115 075	116 004	116 490	0.4%	1.2%	1 415
– part-time	30 265	33 105	33 646	1.6%	11.2%	3 382
Unemployment rate	4.1%	4.5%	4.5%	0.0 ppt	0.4 ppt	
– Unemployed	6 232	7 070	7 076	0.1%	13.5%	844
Participation rate	72.9%	73.7%	74.1%	0.3 ppt	1.2 ppt	
Labour force	151 572	156 179	157 212	0.7%	3.7%	5 640
Seasonally adjusted						
Employment	145 631	149 067	150 953	1.3%	3.7%	5 322
– full-time	115 870	114 803	117 561	2.4%	1.5%	1 691
– part-time	29 761	34 265	33 392	-2.5%	12.2%	3 631
Unemployment rate	4.2%	5.0%	4.2%	-0.8 ppt	0.0 ppt	
– Unemployed	6 356	7 888	6 619	-16.1%	4.1%	263
Participation rate	73.1%	74.1%	74.3%	0.2 ppt	1.2 ppt	
Labour force	151 987	156 955	157 572	0.4%	3.7%	5 585
Australia						
Trend						
Employment	14 568 794	14 733 590	14 753 749	0.1%	1.3%	184 954
– full-time	10 047 061	10 139 200	10 150 632	0.1%	1.0%	103 571
– part-time	4 521 733	4 594 390	4 603 117	0.2%	1.8%	81 384
Unemployment rate	4.2%	4.3%	4.4%	0.0 ppt	0.2 ppt	
– Unemployed	631 214	669 753	672 794	0.5%	6.6%	41 580
Participation rate	66.9%	66.7%	66.7%	0.0 ppt	-0.2 ppt	
Labour force	15 200 008	15 403 343	15 426 542	0.2%	1.5%	226 534
Seasonally adjusted						
Employment	14 591 384	14 698 496	14 738 839	0.3%	1.0%	147 455
– full-time	10 086 542	10 135 643	10 140 803	0.1%	0.5%	54 262
– part-time	4 504 843	4 562 853	4 598 036	0.8%	2.1%	93 193
Unemployment rate	4.1%	4.5%	4.4%	-0.1 ppt	0.3 ppt	
– Unemployed	620 953	689 593	671 256	-2.7%	8.1%	50 303
Participation rate	67.0%	66.6%	66.7%	0.0 ppt	-0.3 ppt	
Labour force	15 212 337	15 388 089	15 410 095	0.1%	1.3%	197 758

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 (%)

	May 2026		Ranking (highest to lowest)	
	Seasonally adjusted	Trend	Seasonally adjusted	Trend
States				
NSW	4.3	4.3	4	5
Vic	4.9	4.9	2	2
Qld	3.7	3.9	8	8
WA	4.6	4.4	3	4
SA	4.2	4.1	5	6
Tas	5.3	5.0	1	1
ACT	3.9	4.0	7	7
NT	4.2	4.5	6	3
Australia	4.4	4.4		

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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