

Labour force

May 2024 | Economic brief

The ABS has implemented improvements to the labour force estimation method. Refer to 'Revisions to the Territory labour force data' on page 3 for more information.

Seasonally adjusted

	NT	Aust
Employed persons	138 837	14 355 633
- Monthly change	↓0.4%	↑0.3%
- Annual change	↑0.7%	↑2.5%
- Year-on-year change	↑1.6%	↑3.0%
Unemployment rate	4.1%	4.0%
Participation rate	72.5%	66.8%

In May 2024, employment in the Territory decreased by 0.4% to 138,837 persons. Part-time employment decreased by 1.4% and full-time employment decreased by 0.1%. Nationally, employment increased by 0.3%, with full-time employment increasing by 0.4% while part-time employment was flat.

Annually[†], employment increased by 0.7% in the Territory (Chart 1). In the year to May 2024[‡], Territory employment increased by 1.6%, reflecting an increase in full-time employment of 3.1%, partly offset by a decrease in part-time employment of 3.9%.

In May 2024, the Territory's unemployment rate was flat at 4.1% (Chart 2). Nationally, the monthly unemployment decreased by 0.1 percentage points (ppt) to 4.0%. The participation rate in the Territory decreased by 0.4 ppt to 72.5%. This is the second highest rate of the jurisdictions, and well above the national rate of 66.8%.

Trend

	NT	Aust
Employed persons	140 425	14 355 102
- Monthly change	↑0.2%	↑0.3%
- Annual change	↑2.5%	↑2.7%
Unemployment rate	4.0%	4.0%
Participation rate	73.3%	66.7%

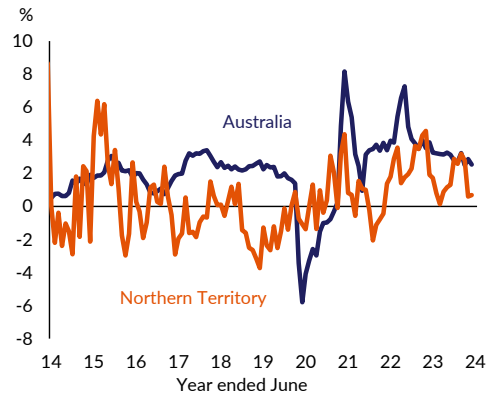
In May 2024, employment in the Territory increased by 0.2% to 140,425 persons. Part-time employment increased by 0.2% and full-time employment increased by 0.1%. Annually[†], employment increased by 2.5% in the Territory (Chart 3).

In May 2024, the Territory's unemployment rate was flat at 4.0%. The participation rate in the Territory was flat at 73.3%.

[†] Compares the latest month with the same month in the previous year.

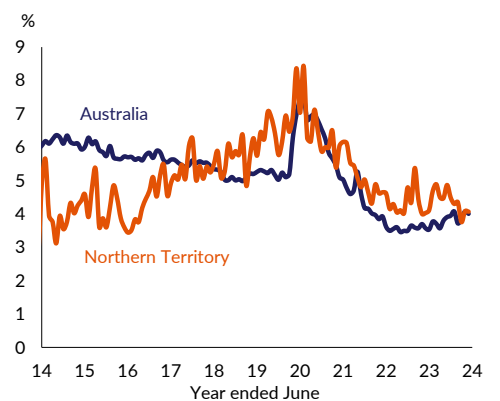
[‡] Compares the 12 months up to the latest month with the previous 12 months.

Chart 1: Employment change (annual, seasonally adjusted)



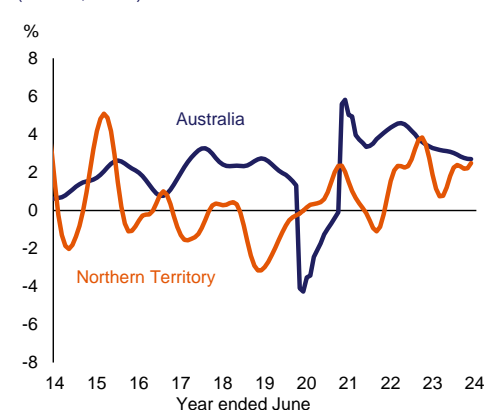
Source: Department of Treasury and Finance, ABS Cat No. 6202.0

Chart 2: Unemployment rate (monthly, seasonally adjusted)



Source: Department of Treasury and Finance, ABS Cat No. 6202.0

Chart 3: Employment change (annual, trend)



Source: Department of Treasury and Finance, ABS Cat No. 6202.0

Table 1: Labour force statistics*

	Period			Monthly change ¹	Annual change ²	
	May 23	Apr 24	May 24	%	%	No.
Northern Territory						
Seasonally adjusted						
Employment	137 889	139 402	138 837	-0.4%	0.7%	948
– full-time	107 587	109 861	109 718	-0.1%	2.0%	2 131
– part-time	30 302	29 540	29 119	-1.4%	-3.9%	- 1 183
Unemployment rate	4.0%	4.1%	4.1%	0.0 ppt	0.0 ppt	
– Unemployed	5 793	5 935	5 891	-0.8%	1.7%	97
Participation rate	73.0%	72.9%	72.5%	-0.4 ppt	-0.5 ppt	
Labour force	143 682	145 337	144 728	-0.4%	0.7%	1 046
Trend						
Employment	137 010	140 199	140 425	0.2%	2.5%	3 415
– full-time	107 725	110 341	110 500	0.1%	2.6%	2 775
– part-time	29 285	29 858	29 925	0.2%	2.2%	640
Unemployment rate	4.4%	4.1%	4.0%	0.0 ppt	-0.4 ppt	
– Unemployed	6 322	5 950	5 895	-0.9%	-6.8%	- 427
Participation rate	72.9%	73.3%	73.3%	0.0 ppt	0.4 ppt	
Labour force	143 331	146 149	146 320	0.1%	2.1%	2 988
Australia						
Seasonally adjusted						
Employment	14 000 701	14 315 979	14 355 633	0.3%	2.5%	354 932
– full-time	9 806 374	9 858 172	9 899 912	0.4%	1.0%	93 539
– part-time	4 194 327	4 457 807	4 455 721	0.0%	6.2%	261 394
Unemployment rate	3.6%	4.1%	4.0%	-0.1 ppt	0.4 ppt	
– Unemployed	518 885	608 077	598 915	-1.5%	15.4%	80 031
Participation rate	66.7%	66.8%	66.8%	0.0 ppt	0.1 ppt	
Labour force	14 519 585	14 924 057	14 954 548	0.2%	3.0%	434 963
Trend						
Employment	13 977 937	14 316 441	14 355 102	0.3%	2.7%	377 165
– full-time	9 792 459	9 865 802	9 891 970	0.3%	1.0%	99 511
– part-time	4 185 477	4 450 639	4 463 132	0.3%	6.6%	277 654
Unemployment rate	3.6%	3.9%	4.0%	0.0 ppt	0.4 ppt	
– Unemployed	522 055	587 871	590 649	0.5%	13.1%	68 593
Participation rate	66.6%	66.7%	66.7%	0.0 ppt	0.1 ppt	
Labour force	14 499 992	14 904 312	14 945 750	0.3%	3.1%	445 758

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 Cat. No. 6202.0

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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Revisions to the Territory labour force data

Table 1: Revisions to labour force data, 12-month average, January 2024

	Previous data	Current (new method)	Change
Employed persons (number)	140 078	136 923	↓3 154
Unemployment rate (%)	3.9	4.5	↑0.6
Participation rate (%)	74.1	72.7	↓1.4

The ABS has implemented improvements to the labour force estimation method to reduce sample variability and other measurement error for various small groups in the labour force survey. The impact of the new methodology is outlined in Table 1. On average, in the year to January 2024:

- monthly employment was revised down by 3,154 persons
- the unemployment rate was revised up by 0.6 ppt on average
- the participation rate was revised down by 1.4 ppt on average.

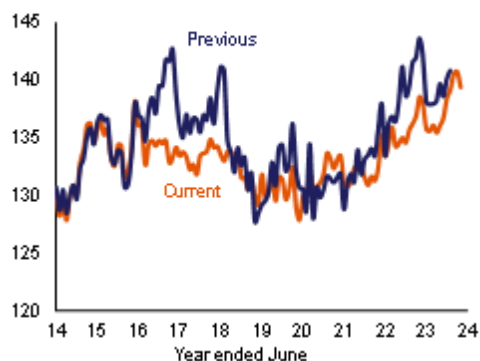
The revised groups include people who do not live in private dwellings (e.g people in prison, living in aged care homes) and some people living in remote and very remote parts of Australia. Revisions have been applied to the estimates dating back to August 2016.

While the revisions are relatively small at the national level and for many jurisdictions, they are considerably larger for the Northern Territory. This is because the difficult-to-enumerate populations account for a higher proportion of the sample in the Northern Territory. An improvement in the estimation of those populations will therefore result in larger relative improvements in the aggregate labour force statistics.

The improved estimation method provides both a more accurate level estimate for the Territory's labour force statistics, and generally reduces the average month-to-month variability in the key indicators (Charts 4, 5 and 6). These changes also flow through to the seasonally adjusted and trend series of the labour force statistics. For most indicators, these revisions reflect a 'level shift' from the previously published estimates to the improved estimates, with the underlying pattern of increases or decreases changes over time being relatively consistent.

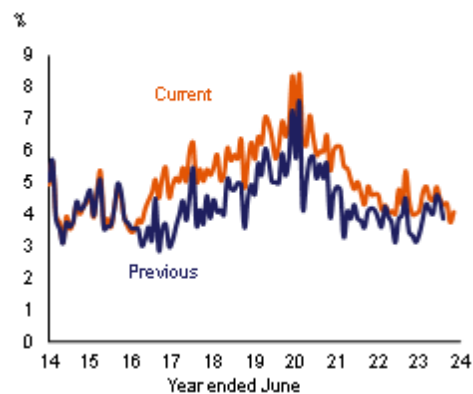
As with any time series revisions, the ABS recommends using the latest available data. For example, comparisons of changes in the unemployment rate for the Territory should use the latest available estimates, and not compare the current and previous economic briefs.

Chart 4: Employed persons (monthly, seasonally adjusted)
Number (000)



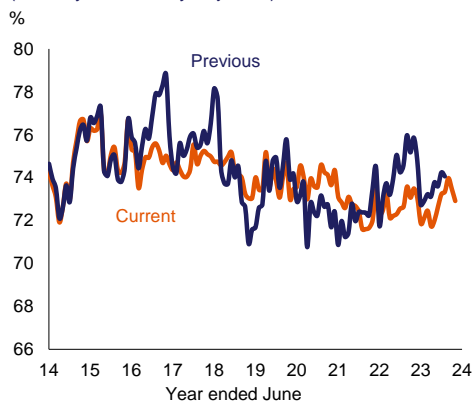
Source: Department of Treasury and Finance, ABS Cat No. 6202.0

Chart 5: Unemployment rate (monthly, seasonally adjusted)
%



Source: Department of Treasury and Finance, ABS Cat No. 6202.0

Chart 6: Participation rate (monthly, seasonally adjusted)
%



Source: Department of Treasury and Finance, ABS Cat No. 6202.0