Labour force

October 2026 | Economic brief

Trend

	NT	Aust
Employed persons	145 015	14 797 501
- Monthly change	⬇0.2%	flat
- Year-ended change	⬇0.8%	⬆1.1%
Unemployment rate	5.0%	4.8%
Participation rate	71.5%	66.8%

Employment in the Territory declined by 0.2% to 145,015 persons in October 2026. Part-time employment declined by 0.8% and full-time employment declined by 0.1%. Employment in the Territory declined by 0.8% in the year-ended October 2026 (Chart 1). This is the the second weakest result of the jurisdictions, which ranged from a decline of 2.0% in Tasmania to an increase of 2.3% in Western Australia. Nationally, employment increased by 1.1% in the year-ended October 2026.

The Territory's unemployment rate increased by 0.1 ppt to 5.0% in October 2026 and by 0.6 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 5.3% in Tasmania. Nationally, the monthly unemployment rate increased by 0.5 ppt to 4.8%.

The participation rate in the Territory declined by 0.2 ppt to 71.5% and by 1.5 ppt in year-ended terms. This is the second highest rate of the jurisdictions, and is 4.7ppt above the national rate (66.8%).

Seasonally adjusted

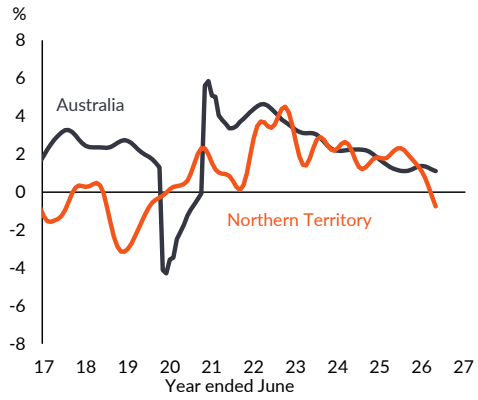
	NT	Aust
Employed persons	145 090	14 738 637
- Year-ended change	⬇0.3%	⬆0.6%
- Year-average change	⬆1.5%	⬆1.2%
Unemployment rate	5.2%	4.9%
Participation rate	71.6%	66.6%

Employment in the Territory declined by 0.3% to 145,090 persons in the year-ended October 2026 (Chart 3). This is the third weakest result of the jurisdictions. Nationally, employment increased by 0.6% in the year-ended October 2026.

The Territory's unemployment rate increased by 0.1 ppt to 5.2% in the year-ended October 2026 (Chart 2). This is the third highest rate of the jurisdictions. Nationally, the unemployment rate increased by 0.6 ppt to 4.9%.

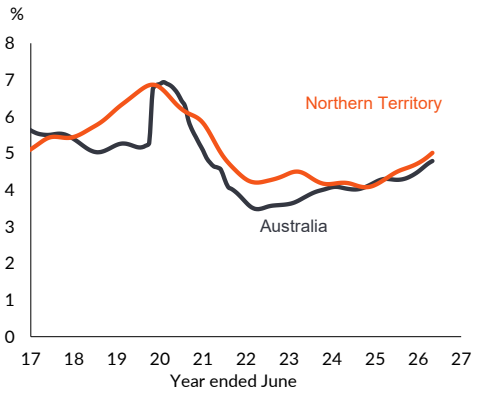
The Territory's participation rate declined by 1.5 ppt to 71.6% in the year-ended October 2026. This is the highest rate of the jurisdictions and is 5.0 ppt above the national rate (66.6%).

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



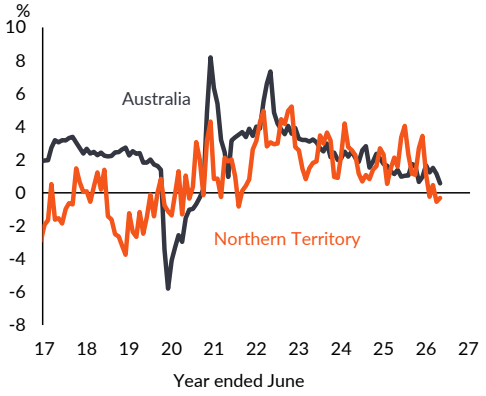
Source: DTF; ABS, *Labour Force*

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]	
	Oct 25	Sep 26	Oct 26	%	%	No.
Northern Territory						
Trend						
Employment	146 121	145 354	145 015	-0.2%	-0.8%	- 1 105
– full-time	113 863	114 245	114 156	-0.1%	0.3%	292
– part-time	32 258	31 109	30 860	-0.8%	-4.3%	- 1 398
Unemployment rate	4.4%	4.9%	5.0%	0.1 ppt	0.6 ppt	
– Unemployed	6 679	7 534	7 650	1.5%	14.5%	971
Participation rate	72.9%	71.7%	71.5%	- 0.2 ppt	- 1.5 ppt	
Labour force	152 800	152 888	152 666	-0.1%	-0.1%	- 134
Australia						
Trend						
Employment	14 636 315	14 790 334	14 797 501	0.0%	1.1%	161 186
– full-time	10 080 524	10 219 421	10 234 774	0.2%	1.5%	154 250
– part-time	4 555 791	4 570 912	4 562 727	-0.2%	0.2%	6 936
Unemployment rate	4.3%	4.7%	4.8%	0.1 ppt	0.5 ppt	
– Unemployed	657 032	734 724	744 497	1.3%	13.3%	87 465
Participation rate	66.9%	66.8%	66.8%	0.0 ppt	- 0.1 ppt	
Labour force	15 293 347	15 525 058	15 541 998	0.1%	1.6%	248 651
Seasonally adjusted						
Employment	14 655 137	14 782 168	14 738 637	-0.3%	0.6%	83 500
– full-time	10 111 121	10 231 689	10 228 741	0.0%	1.2%	117 619
– part-time	4 544 016	4 550 479	4 509 896	-0.9%	-0.8%	- 34 119
Unemployment rate	4.3%	4.7%	4.9%	0.1 ppt	0.6 ppt	
– Unemployed	658 282	735 847	753 675	2.4%	14.5%	95 393
Participation rate	66.9%	66.8%	66.6%	- 0.2 ppt	- 0.3 ppt	
Labour force	15 313 420	15 518 015	15 492 312	-0.2%	1.2%	178 893

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 (%)

	October 2026		Ranking (highest to lowest)	
	Seasonally adjusted	Trend	Seasonally adjusted	Trend
States				
NSW	4.6	4.6	6	5
Vic	5.4	5.2	1	2
Qld	4.8	4.7	4	4
WA	4.5	4.5	7	7
SA	4.8	4.6	5	6
Tas	5.4	5.3	2	1
ACT	4.1	4.2	8	8
NT	5.2	5.0	3	3
Australia	**4.9**	**4.8**		

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)

More information

Economic Group | Department of Treasury and Finance
P: 08 8999 6718 | E: economics.dtf@nt.gov.au | W: nteconomy.nt.gov.au