

Labour force

February 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.

Employment

	NT	Aust
Employed persons (trend)	138 881	14 232 263
Monthly change (trend)	↑0.6%	↑0.2%
Annual change (trend)	↑2.0%	↑2.7%
Year-on-year change (original)	↑1.6%	↑3.2%

In February 2024, trend resident employment in the Territory increased by 0.6% to 138,881 persons. Part-time employment increased by 2.1% and full-time employment increased by 0.2%. Nationally, employment increased by 0.2%, with part-time employment increasing by 0.3% and full-time employment increasing by 0.1%.

Annually[†], trend resident employment increased by 2.0% in the Territory. Nationally, employment increased by 2.7% over the same period (Chart 1). In the year to February 2024[†], Territory employment increased by 1.6%, reflecting an increase in full-time employment of 2.7%, partly offset by a decrease in part-time employment of 2.4%. Nationally, year-on-year employment increased by 3.2%.

Unemployment

	NT	Aust
Unemployment rate (trend)	4.5%	3.8%
Monthly change (ppt)	flat	flat
Annual change (ppt)	↑0.2	↑0.3

The Territory's trend unemployment rate was flat at 4.5% in the month of February 2024 (Chart 2). Nationally, the monthly unemployment rate was flat at 3.8%.

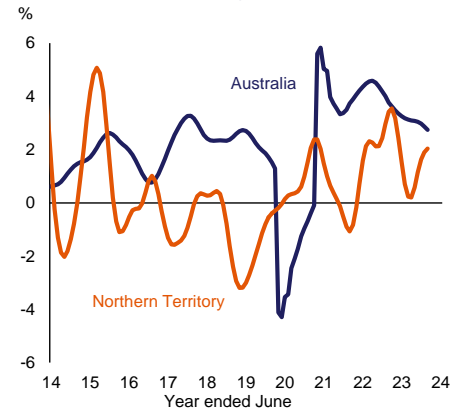
Participation

	NT	Aust
Participation rate (trend)	73.8%	66.6%
Monthly change (ppt)	↑0.3	↓0.1
Annual change (ppt)	↑1.0	↑0.1

The trend participation rate in the Territory increased by 0.3 percentage points to 73.8% in February 2024. The Territory's participation rate is the highest of the jurisdictions, and well above the national rate of 66.6% (Chart 3).

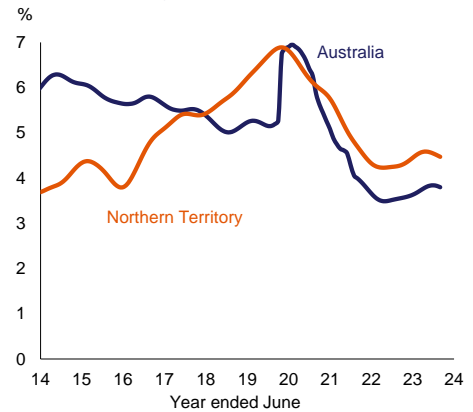
[†] See Table 1 footnotes for definitions of annual and year-on-year change.

Chart 1: Employment change (annual, trend)



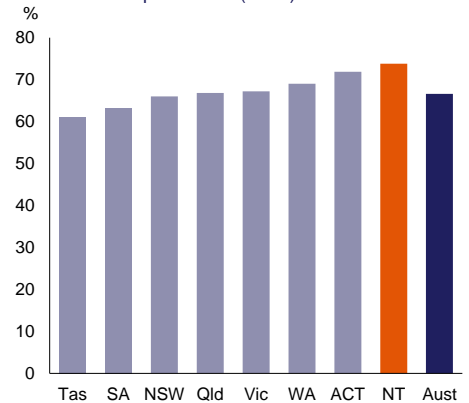
Source: Department of Treasury and Finance, ABS Cat No. 6202.0

Chart 2: Unemployment rate (trend)



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

Chart 3: Participation rate (trend)



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

Table 1: Labour force statistics*

	Period			Change		
	Feb 23	Jan 24	Feb 24	Monthly ¹	Annual ²	Year-on-year ³
Northern Territory						
Original						
Employment	135 806	135 691	139 415	2.7%	2.7%	1.6%
– full-time	107 749	109 314	110 454	1.0%	2.5%	2.7%
– part-time	28 057	26 377	28 961	9.8%	3.2%	-2.4%
Unemployment rate	5.7%	4.4%	4.6%	0.2 ppt	- 1.1 ppt	
Participation rate	73.8%	72.1%	74.1%	2.0 ppt	0.3 ppt	
Labour force	144 029	141 904	146 137	3.0%	1.5%	1.6%
Seasonally adjusted						
Employment	135 834	138 117	139 350	0.9%	2.6%	
– full-time	106 928	110 160	109 560	-0.5%	2.5%	
– part-time	28 906	27 957	29 790	6.6%	3.1%	
Unemployment rate	5.4%	4.4%	4.4%	0.0 ppt	- 1.0 ppt	
Participation rate	73.6%	73.4%	73.9%	0.5 ppt	0.3 ppt	
Labour force	143 624	144 447	145 769	0.9%	1.5%	
Trend						
Employment	136 109	138 052	138 881	0.6%	2.0%	
– full-time	106 499	109 752	109 985	0.2%	3.3%	
– part-time	29 610	28 301	28 895	2.1%	-2.4%	
Unemployment rate	4.3%	4.5%	4.5%	0.0 ppt	0.2 ppt	
Participation rate	72.8%	73.5%	73.8%	0.3 ppt	1.0 ppt	
Labour force	142 182	144 571	145 380	0.6%	2.2%	
Australia						
Original						
Employment	13 907 591	13 907 310	14 344 650	3.1%	3.1%	3.2%
– full-time	9 791 583	9 628 701	9 941 922	3.3%	1.5%	3.1%
– part-time	4 116 008	4 278 609	4 402 727	2.9%	7.0%	3.4%
Unemployment rate	3.9%	4.5%	4.0%	- 0.5 ppt	0.1 ppt	
Participation rate	67.0%	65.7%	67.3%	1.6 ppt	0.3 ppt	
Labour force	14 472 364	14 560 778	14 949 306	2.7%	3.3%	3.3%
Seasonally adjusted						
Employment	13 832 451	14 153 110	14 269 572	0.8%	3.2%	
– full-time	9 677 898	9 746 710	9 824 920	0.8%	1.5%	
– part-time	4 154 553	4 406 399	4 444 652	0.9%	7.0%	
Unemployment rate	3.6%	4.1%	3.7%	- 0.4 ppt	0.1 ppt	
Participation rate	66.4%	66.6%	66.7%	0.1 ppt	0.3 ppt	
Labour force	14 345 702	14 753 356	14 817 836	0.4%	3.3%	
Trend						
Employment	13 852 346	14 205 619	14 232 263	0.2%	2.7%	
– full-time	9 694 183	9 796 032	9 808 985	0.1%	1.2%	
– part-time	4 158 163	4 409 587	4 423 278	0.3%	6.4%	
Unemployment rate	3.5%	3.8%	3.8%	0.0 ppt	0.3 ppt	
Participation rate	66.5%	66.7%	66.6%	- 0.1 ppt	0.1 ppt	
Labour force	14 362 145	14 771 336	14 794 459	0.2%	3.0%	

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.

3 Compares the 12 months up to and including the latest month with the previous 12 month period.

* Due to rounding, percentage 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://www.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

Revisions to the Territory labour force data

Table 2: Revisions to labour force data, 12-month average, January 2024

	Previous data	Current (new method)	Change
Employed persons (number)	140 078	136 233	↓3 845
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 2. On average, in the year to January 2024:

- monthly employment was revised down by 3,845 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.

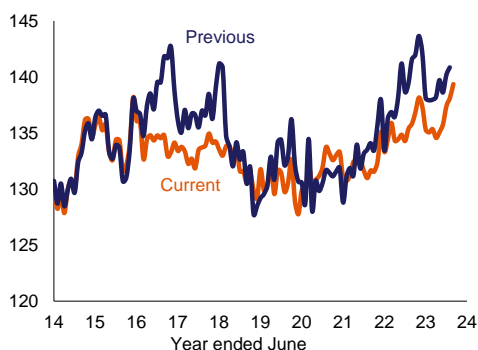
The revised groups include people who do not live in private dwellings (e.g people in prison, living in aged care homes) and some people living in remote and very remote parts of Australia. Revisions have been applied to the estimates dating back to August 2016.

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.

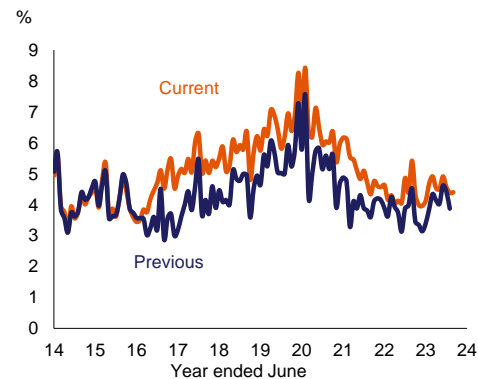
As with any time series revisions, the ABS recommends using the latest available data. For example, comparisons of changes in the unemployment rate for the Territory should use the latest available estimates, and not compare the current and previous economic briefs.

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



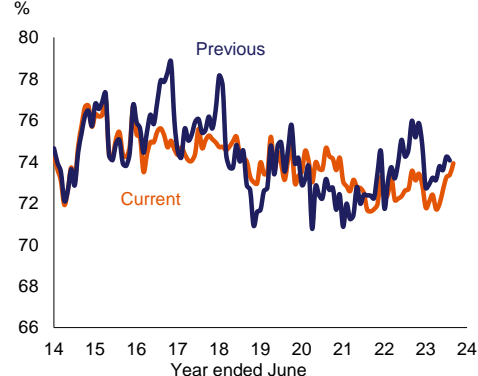
Source: Department of Treasury and Finance, ABS Cat No. 6202.0

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