Australian Labour Account
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Measuring the Australian Labour Market

Four pillars of ABS labour statistics

- Household Surveys
- Business Surveys
- Administrative and Big Data
- Labour Account
Published experimental data for the first time in 2017 in annual series
Moved to quarterly series in 2018
Removed experimental label in 2019
Reviewing the source data and methods on an ongoing basis, culminating in the first historical revisions in 2021
Now used as the source for hours worked data in the National Accounts (replacing Labour Force Survey data)
Comparison of business and household survey estimates of employment/employed persons by industry, 2014-15

Business Surveys (QBIS + SEE)
Household Surveys (LFS)
Focus of the Australian Labour Account

**Jobs**
- The **Jobs** quadrant provides data on the number of filled and vacant jobs.
- **For the first time**, data are available on main and secondary jobs by industry over time.

**People**
- The **Persons** quadrant provides data on Persons employed, persons looking and available for employment and persons with potential for further employment.

**Time**
- The **Labour Volume** quadrant provides data on the relationship between hours of labour supplied by individuals, and hours of labour used by businesses.
- **For the first time**, hours worked will be reallocated to industry of main and secondary jobs.

**Income & Costs**
- The **Labour Payments** quadrant provides data on the relationship between total labour costs by businesses and total labour income of workers.
Complements (and integrates) other traditional labour statistics

Provides headline estimates of employment and jobs across industry divisions on a quarterly basis (and sub-divisions, annually)

A coherent measure of all jobs – i.e. filled and unfilled (job vacancies)

Key source of hours worked (by industry)

Rates of multiple job-holding, and estimates of main/secondary jobs

Estimates labour market activity outside scope of Labour Force Survey

– Mainly regarding the contribution of non-resident workers in the Australian labour market (particularly useful during COVID with closed borders)
Limitations of the Australian Labour Account

- Currently only produced at the national level
  - Currently prototyping regional (state and territory) estimates

- Currently no demographics or employment characteristics
  - No age or sex characteristics
  - No status of employment (employee vs owner/manager, full-time vs part-time, permanent vs casual)

- Limited by data sources
  - Incorporates a range of assumptions
  - Modelling required to produce coherent estimates across quadrants
Future Directions for the Australian Labour Account

- Use of emerging administrative (taxation) data sources
- Sub-national estimates (states and territories)
- Sectoral estimates (enhancing the measurement of public and private sectors)
In scope of the Australian System of National Accounts (ASNA)

- Paid employment
- Self-employment in market enterprises
- Subsistence work (production of goods for own final consumption)
- Reported illegal activities (e.g. unlicensed work; payment below award wages)

Out of scope of the ASNA

- Unpaid household work (production of services for own final consumption)
- Volunteer work
- Unreported transactional illegal activities (e.g. sales of illegal goods)

Other out of scope activities

- Education, training and study
- Leisure and hobbies
- Self-care (e.g. eating, sleeping, grooming, etc.)
- Non-transactional illegal activities (e.g. theft)
There is a potential to broaden the scope of a Labour Account to include work that falls outside the production boundary, such as:

- Unpaid household work
- Volunteering

However, there are challenges and data source limitations that would need to be resolved:

- Need a time use survey, or alternative sources of data
- Many measurement and conceptual challenges e.g. around valuing unpaid work, quantifying hours of care provided
Also potential to explore opportunities for the Labour Account for:

- Measuring extent, volume and share of all ‘hours not worked’
  - looking beyond headline unemployment and traditional part-time measures of underemployment to all forms of underemployment and joblessness
  - Extending existing Labour Force Survey concepts/measurement through an accounts framework
  - Per capita measures of underutilisation

- Human capital (utilisation)

- .... And more!