

8.5% of the Australian workforce changed their employer or the business they operated in the year to February 2019, up from a record low of 7.7% in the year to February 2017.

The ABS estimates that 11.6 million Australian workers stayed in their current job and about 1.1 million Australian workers changed their employer or the business they operated in the year to February 2019. Although the absolute number of people changing businesses rose by about 70,000 in the year to February 2019, so too did the size of the entire workforce, and so the *proportion* of the workforce that changed jobs rose only slightly, to 8.5% in February 2019. This is still near the record low of 7.7% of the workforce that changed businesses in the previous 12 months in 2017. It is much lower than in the 1970's and 1980's when more than 15% of the workforce typically changed employer in each 12-month period (Chart 2). However, when workers do change employers, more are changing occupations (43%) and moving into different industries (56%).

In the year to February 2019, a total of 1.98 million people ceased a job during the year. More than two thirds (1.36 million or 68%) left their job voluntarily and one third (630,000 or 32%) left their job involuntarily. The single most common reason for job separation was 'wanting to obtain better job conditions or wanting a change'. One quarter of job separations were for this reason. Only 23,900 people left their most recent job to start their own business in the year to February 2019. At the same time, about 1.4 million people entered the Australian workforce for the first time ever or for the first time in at least a year (that is, they were working in February 2019 but had not been working in February 2018).

Across industries, hospitality workers were the most likely to change jobs in the year to February 2019, with 17.9% changing their employer or business, followed by workers in rental & real estate (11.7%) and administrative services (11.3%). Public administration workers were the least likely to change employer or business in the past 12 months followed by workers in, agriculture and education & training (Chart 1).

Across occupations, sales workers were the most likely to change jobs in the 12 months to February 2019, followed by labourers. Managers were the least likely to change jobs in the 12 months to February 2019, followed by administrative workers (Table 1).

** There are no national data on labour 'turnover rates' for Australia. Instead, 'duration of continuous employment in current business' is utilised in this factsheet as a proxy indicator.*

Chart 1: Proportion of workforce that changed employer or business in the previous 12 months, by industry

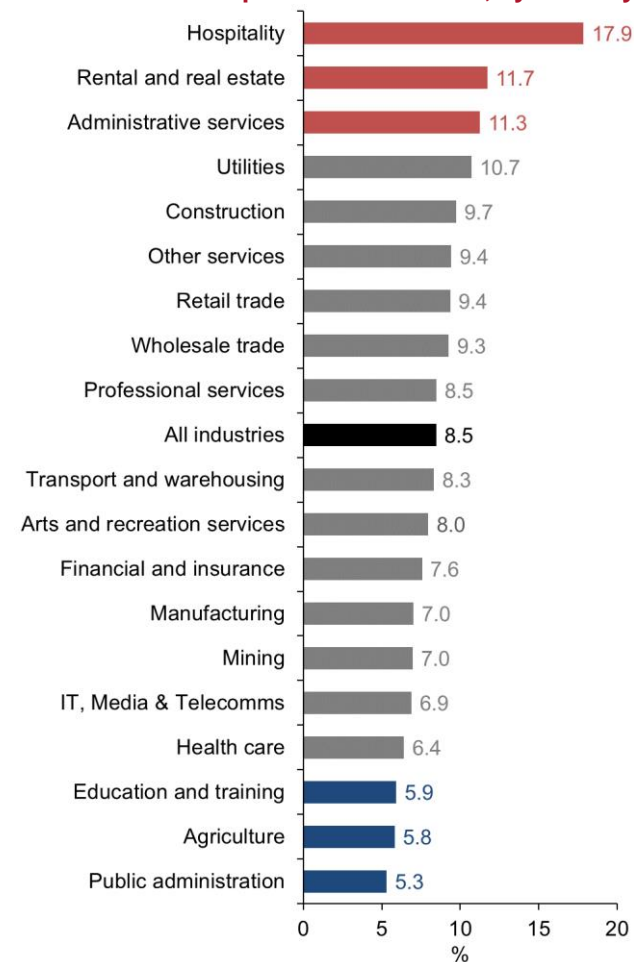
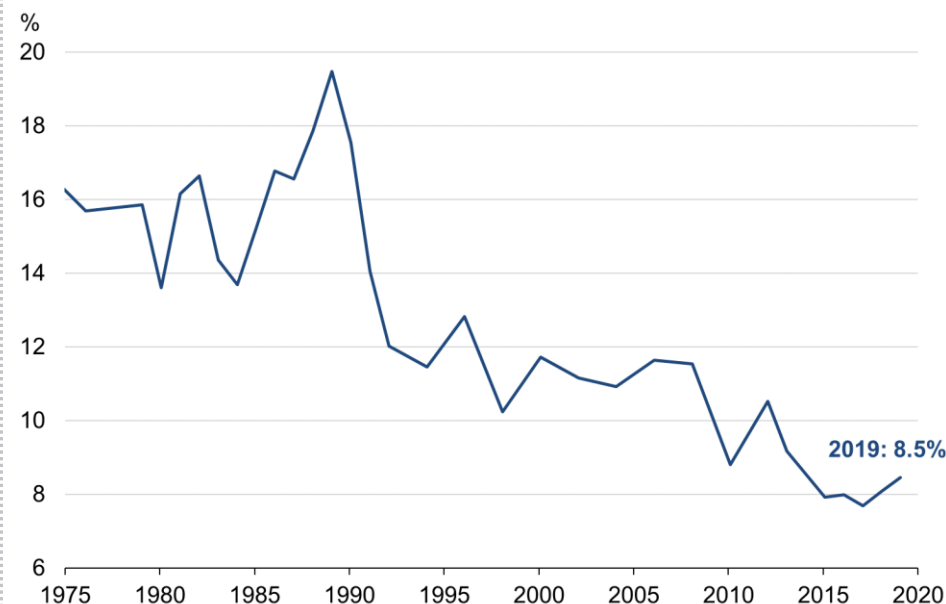


Table 1: Changed job in the 12 months to February 2019, by industry and occupation

	Workforce (Feb 2019)	Changed business in the past year	Proportion of workforce that changed business in the past year
Industry	'000s	'000s	%
Agriculture	316.5	18.4	5.8
Mining	206.6	14.4	7.0
Manufacturing	755.9	53.1	7.0
Utilities	141.9	15.2	10.7
Construction	1032.2	100.5	9.7
Wholesale trade	355.8	33.0	9.3
Retail trade	1145.8	107.3	9.4
Hospitality	744.3	132.9	17.9
Transport and warehousing	581.0	48.4	8.3
IT, Media & Telecomms	198.8	13.7	6.9
Financial and insurance	401.3	30.4	7.6
Rental and real estate services	187.8	22.0	11.7
Professional services	1021.8	86.6	8.5
Administrative services	370.5	41.7	11.3
Public administration	775.0	41.2	5.3
Education and training	928.9	55.1	5.9
Health care	1489.8	95.7	6.4
Arts and recreation services	238.1	19.0	8.0
Other services	483.5	45.6	9.4
All industries	12740.4	1,078.3	8.5
Occupations			
Managers	1419.3	92.7	6.5
Professionals	2847.1	227.4	8.0
Technicians & trades workers	1637.8	161.8	9.9
Community & personal service workers	1173.0	116.7	9.9
Clerical & administrative workers	1598.7	115.8	7.2
Sales workers	958.3	97.8	10.2
Machinery operators & drivers	733.1	59.7	8.1
Labourers	1006.4	102.3	10.2

Sources: ABS, *Participation, Job Search and Mobility*, February 2019 ([here](#));

Chart 2: Proportion of workforce that changed employer or business in the previous 12 months



Data information

The statistics used in this fact sheet were primarily sourced from the *Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia (PJSM)* survey conducted throughout Australia in February 2019 as a supplement to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS). This survey informs on the following broad labour market issues: labour force participation potential; underemployment and marginal attachment; as well as job search experience and labour mobility.

These data illustrate the dynamic nature of the labour market and provides further insights into labour mobility – that is, the ability of workers to move between jobs – in Australia. The monthly labour force numbers are often interpreted in a static way, for example, in May 2019 the trend increase in employment of 28,400 people comprised of well over 300,000 people entering employment, and more than 300,000 leaving employment in the month.

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