

JOB REPORT DECEMBER

Mini Report | Issue date: 15 January 2026

Jobs Up. Hours Down.
Australia's December Reality Check



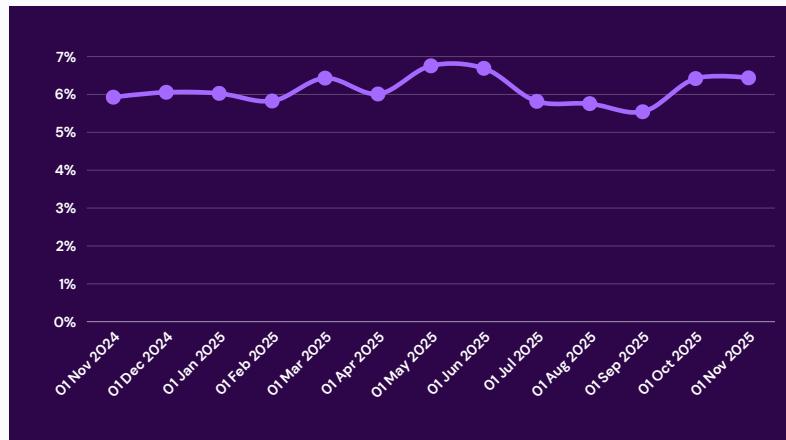
FINDINGS



🔍 Employment Growth

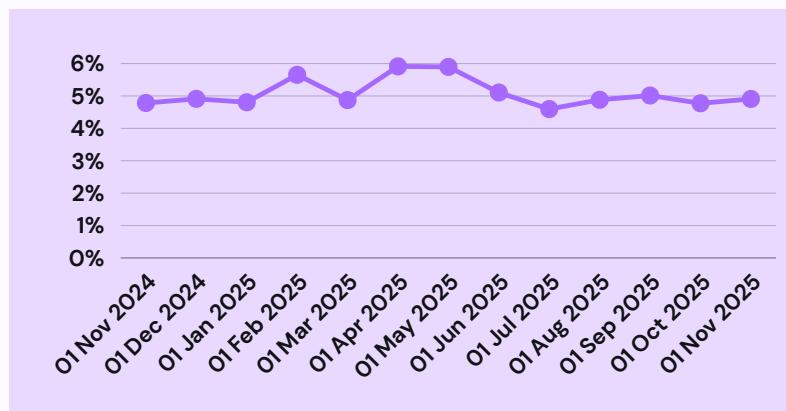
Workforce Shifts Accelerate: Casual Growth Leads, WA Lags

- **Casual employment** surged (+9.1% YoY), outpacing full-time (+3.6% YoY) and part-time (+2.4% YoY), pointing to a continued shift toward more flexible workforce models.
- **WA remains the laggard:** just +3.0% YoY growth and declines MoM and QoQ, making it the slowest-growing major state.
- **Age-group growth has levelled out for the first time in two years:** all cohorts rose 4.6%–6.5% YoY, hinting the youth-led growth burst may be easing.
- **Construction & Trade Services** leads nationally (+9.1% YoY), with **Retail, Hospitality & Tourism** close behind at +7.8% YoY
- Among major cities, **Sydney** topped YoY growth (+9.1%), followed by **Brisbane** (+7.0%) and **Melbourne** (+5.2%).



🔍 Wage Growth Holds Firm

- **WA** leads wage growth: +5.6% YoY to \$45.80/hr.
- **SA** is the monthly standout with the highest MoM lift (+1.5%), while **TAS** is the only state to decline (-0.6% MoM).
- **Adelaide** tops major cities with +8.0% YoY wage growth (with **Perth** also strong at +6.8% YoY).
- **Brisbane** shows the sharpest recent acceleration: +2.3% MoM (and +4.7% YoY).
- **Construction & Trade** leads industries at +5.0% YoY

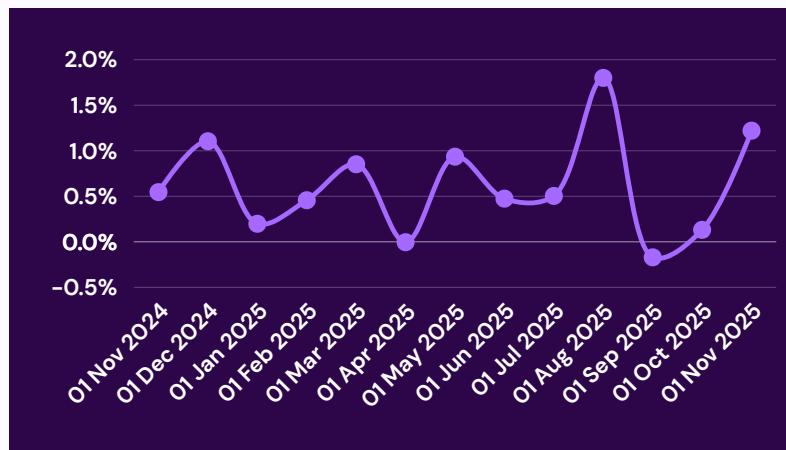


FINDINGS



Hours Worked Slide Nation Wide

- Hours worked fell across every state both YoY and MoM, signalling a broad-based softening in labour utilisation. QLD recorded the steepest monthly drop (-1.7% MoM), followed by SA (-1.6%) and NSW (-1.4%).
- Among major cities, Perth saw the largest decline (-2.0% MoM), ahead of Brisbane (-1.8%), Sydney (-1.7%), and Melbourne (-1.5%).
- Casual hours are contracting sharply: -6.0% YoY and -4.4% MoM.
- By industry, declines were widespread, led by **Retail & Hospitality** (-1.7% MoM). **Healthcare** also weakened (-2.8% YoY; -1.5% MoM).
- The pullback is most pronounced among younger workers: **14–17s** (-5.8% YoY; -6.7% MoM) and **18–24s** (-4.5% YoY; -6.1% MoM).



At-a-Glance Graphics

December looked more like January than the typical festive-season lift. Employers pulled back hours, resulting in fewer shifts even in traditionally busy sectors like retail and hospitality. The impact was most pronounced for younger Australians

Casuals: shorter shifts

CASUAL HOURS

-4.4%
MoM
-6.0%
YoY

↑ HEADCOUNT UP
↓ HOURS WORKED DOWN

Young Australians hit hardest

AGE
18-24

WAGES
-2.0%
MoM

PLUNGE IN WORK HOURS

-6.1%
MoM



Top 5 Hardest working roles

179.6

LOCAL DRIVER



171.2

MINING ENGINEER

170.9

CONSTRUCTION WORKER

161.1

GEOLOGIST

160.9

AUTO ELECTRICIAN

**hours
per
month**