

# JOB REPORT DECEMBER

Mini Report | Issue date: 15 January 2026

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



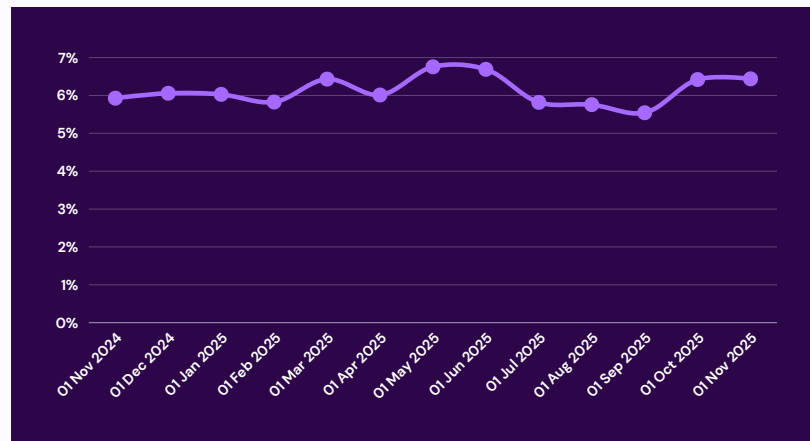
# FINDINGS



## Employment Growth

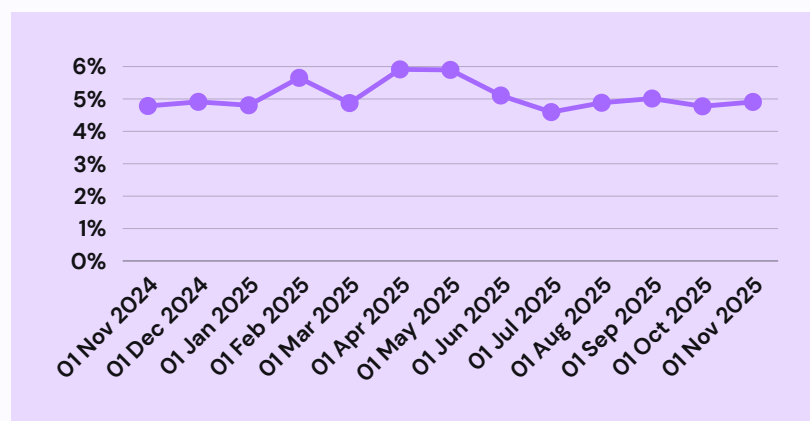
### Workforce Shifts Accelerate: Casual Growth Leads, WA Lags

- **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**

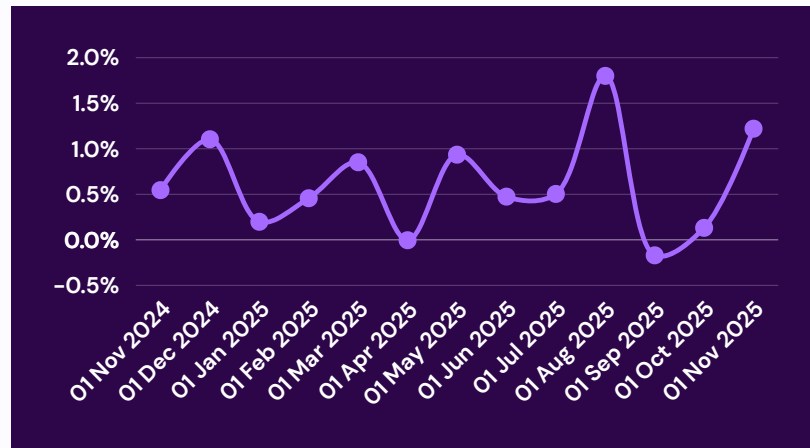






## Hours Worked Slide Nation Wide

- 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**