

# JOB REPORT DECEMBER

Mini Report | Issue date: 15 January 2026

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



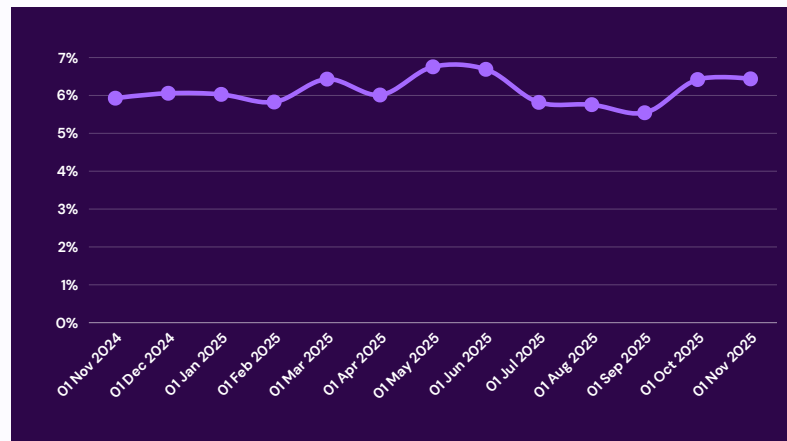
# FINDINGS



## Employment Growth

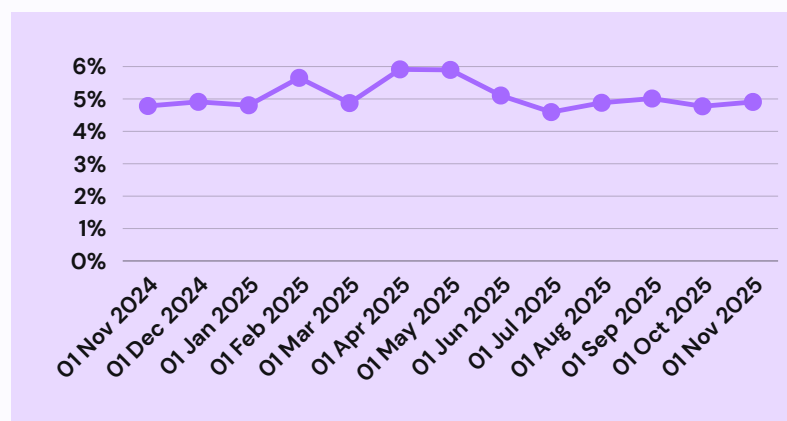
### Workforce Shifts Accelerate: Casual Growth Leads, WA Lags

- **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**

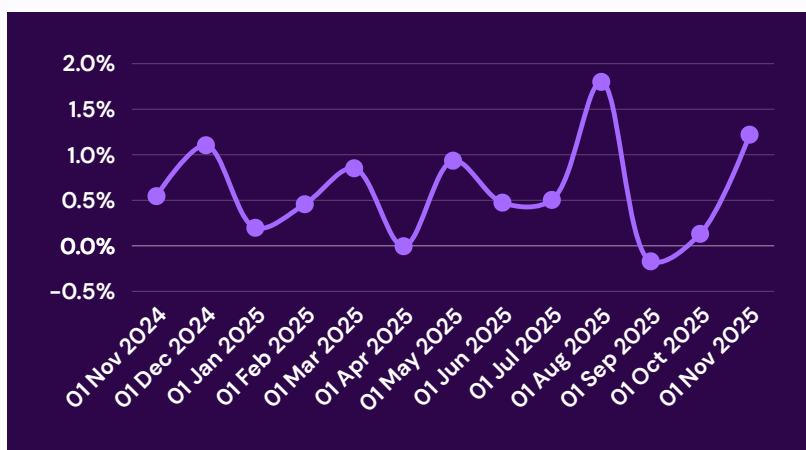






## Hours Worked Slide Nation Wide

- 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**



# At-a-Glance Graphics

December data shows the labour market cooling after November's seasonal surge. Hours worked fell broadly—led by casual and youth cohorts, suggesting businesses are tightening rosters even as employment remains resilient. Wage growth is still holding firm, pointing to continued cost pressure alongside softer utilisation

## 1. Queensland: biggest hours drop (MoM)

- QLD hours worked: -1.7% MoM (largest state fall)
- **Graphic:** Australia map → highlight **QLD** + big **-1.7%** + **Hours worked (MoM)**.

## 2. Casuals: shorter shifts

- Casual hours: -4.4% MoM | -6.0% YoY
- **Graphic:** Two icons (👤 **headcount** ↑ vs ⌚ **hours** ↓) with a big **-4.4%** headline number.

## 3. Young workers hit hardest

- 18–24 year olds: Hours -6.1% MoM and wages -2.0% MoM
- **Graphic:** Youth image → big **-6.1%** with sub-label **Hours (MoM)** + smaller tag **Pay: -2.0% (MoM)**.

## 4. #1 Hardest-working role

- Local Driver
- 179.6 hours / month
- **Graphic:** steering wheel / truck icon + one big number.

or another option we can do Top 5 Hardest working roles

- Local Driver — 179.6 hrs/month
- Mining Engineer — 171.2
- Construction Worker — 170.9
- Geologist — 161.1
- Auto Electrician — 160.9

Some of the  
strongest annual  
wage growth