

Changing patterns of work

The majority of young people, as they move towards the end of their education, can confidently look forward to a role in the workforce for the next 30 to 40 years. Unlike their parents or grandparents, they will probably have more than one occupation or career during that time. Because of the impact of technology it is now predicted that an average worker in the twenty-first century can expect to have four or five career changes throughout his or her working life. In addition, a worker may experience periods of full-time work, part-time work, casual work, self-employment and perhaps even periods of **unemployment**. Because of this, people must have broad skills that will help them to adapt quickly to changes in the workplace.

A few decades ago, employed people—particularly male workers—typically worked in full-time wage and salary jobs with regular working hours. They often expected to remain in the same job for a long period of time. This situation has changed, with the emergence of different forms of employment and different working arrangements. Over the last decade, there has been strong growth in casual and part-time employment, and many people now have flexible working hours or have a working pattern that differs from the five-day working week.

Over recent decades the Australian **labour force** has changed significantly. New technology has contributed to this change. Other contributing factors are:

- the increasing numbers of women in the workforce
- sustained periods of relatively high unemployment
- the government's restructuring of the economy, such as reducing tariffs on imported goods, **industrial relations** reforms (see page 93) and changes to standards and regulations in certain industries (for example, the banking industry)
- the increased ability to sell our products globally due to the internationalisation of product markets
- the adoption of new management strategies by employers that emphasise **workforce flexibility**, which often means increased use of part-time and casual employees.

Changes within industry sectors

Figure 4.1b (page 84) shows how employment by industry sector has changed since 1901. Although the graph shows three industry sectors, industries are commonly classified into five sectors, as follows:

- *primary*—industries that exploit natural resources and produce raw materials; for example, farming
- *secondary*—industries that process raw materials and manufacture finished goods; for example, the production of cars, food and clothes

Getting technical

self-employed People who earn an income from their own work or business rather than working for another person or organisation and receiving a salary or wage.

unemployed That part of the workforce who are able and willing to work but unable to find jobs.

unemployment Being without a job but able and willing to work.

unskilled work Work that lacks specialist training or ability and generally involves simple, manual tasks that can be learned in a short time.

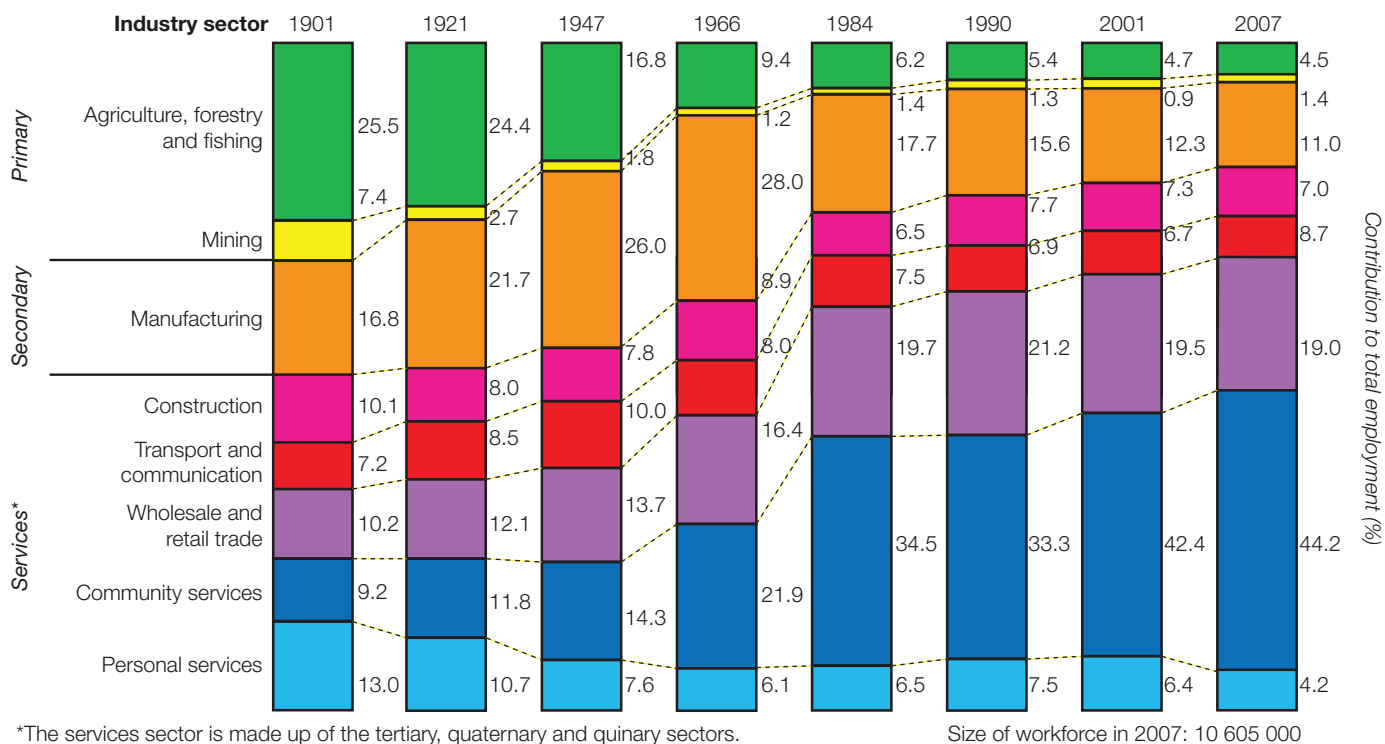
white-collar worker A worker who is employed to do non-manual work (such as in a professional, administrative, technical or clerical position) and is paid a salary rather than a wage. This term originates from the time when men were the traditional holders of such positions and wore a suit, white shirt and tie to work.

workforce flexibility The ability of employers and employees to take advantage of different types of employment; for example, full time, part time and casual.

workplace flexibility The ability of employers and employees to negotiate flexible working hours, conditions, pay and entitlements.

- *tertiary*—industries that distribute goods and provide services other than those provided by the quaternary and quinary sectors (see below); for example, supermarkets, hairdressing and travel agencies
- *quaternary*—industries that provide information-based services; for example, teaching, journalism and banking
- *quinary*—industries that provide household services; for example, carpet cleaning, child care and restaurants.

In 1966, close to 40 per cent of Australian workers were employed in the primary and secondary sectors. By 2007, just 41 years later, that proportion had decreased to just 16 per cent. Employment has grown significantly in the services sector, especially in the accommodation, cafes and restaurants industry and the property and business industry. (The property and business industry includes services such as property managers and developers; real estate agents; and technical, computing, legal, accounting and marketing services.) Factors contributing to this growth include the increase in part-time and casual work and the increase in services that replace work previously done in the home, such as child care, cleaning, gardening, maintenance and food preparation.



*The services sector is made up of the tertiary, quaternary and quinary sectors.

Size of workforce in 2007: 10 605 000

Figure 4.1b Changing structure of the Australian workforce, 1901–2007.

Another important influence has been the recognition that many industries within the services sector have the potential to earn export income (that is, earn money by selling our services to people or organisations outside Australia). For example, over the last 16 years, Australia’s tourism and education industries have been actively promoted overseas. This has resulted in greater tourist dollars for Australia and an increase in full fee paying foreign students, especially tertiary students.

In addition to changes in the relative shares of people employed in different industries, there have been changes in the types of goods produced and how they are produced. This has led to a shift in the sorts of jobs that employers now offer. These jobs generally require employees with a greater level of skill. Technology has been one of the main reasons for these changes. Computerisation, mechanisation and automation have been introduced into the workplace. The result has been a reduction in the demand for labour and creation of new types of work.

All these broad patterns of industrial change have had an effect on the jobs available today. This employment shift has, in general, reduced the opportunities for **blue-collar workers**; for example, labourers, trades-people and plant and machine operators.

It has also increased the opportunities for **white-collar workers**; for example, managers and administrators, salespeople and personal service workers. Employment growth has been greatest in white-collar occupations. In the last 16 years, the number of workers in white-collar jobs has increased by about 1 million while the number in blue-collar jobs has only increased by about 100 000.

Trends in types of employment

A comparison of Figures 4.1d, 4.1e and 4.1f shows an interesting trend: total employment and part-time employment have steadily increased since 1990, while full-time employment has had two periods of decline (1992 - 1994 and 2001 - 2002).

Table 4.1a shows that in the 16 years since 1991 the number of people employed part time increased by nearly three quarters (72 per cent) to approximately 2.9 million. During the same period, the number of people in full-time employment increased by only 20 per cent to about 7.2 million. As a result, the proportion of total employment represented by part-time workers increased from 22 per cent in 1991 to 29 per cent in 2007.



Figure 4.1c Charting the trends in employment.

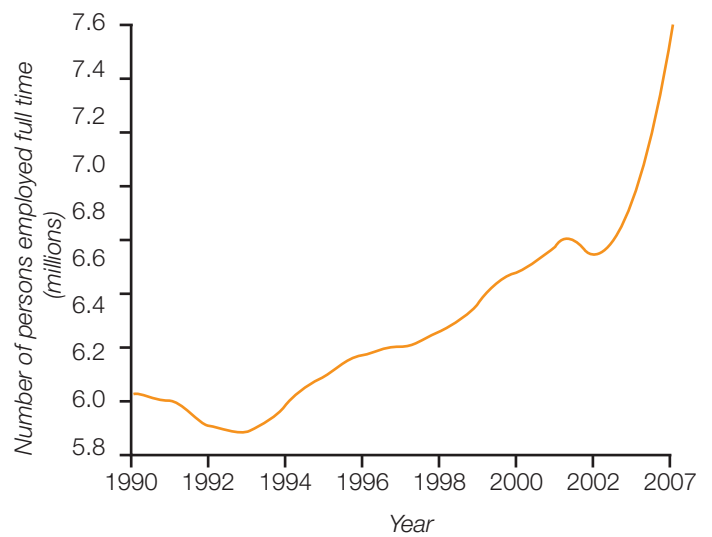


Figure 4.1e Full-time employment, 1990–2007.

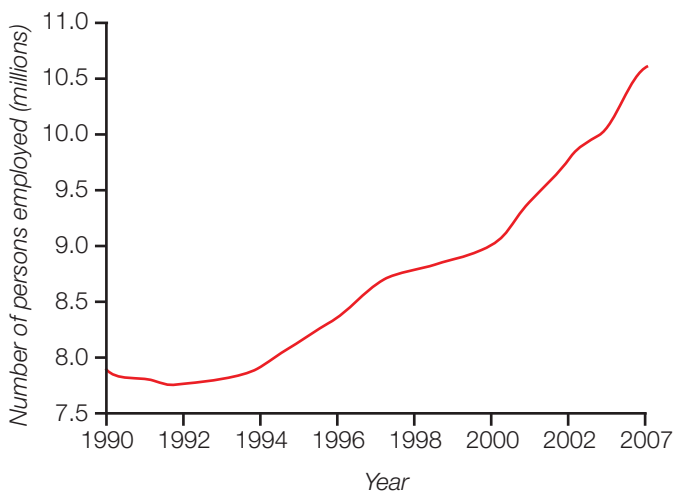


Figure 4.1d Total employment, 1990–2007.

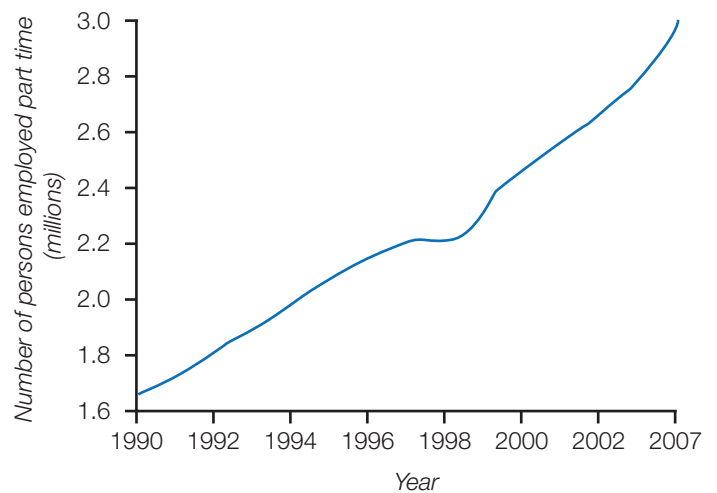


Figure 4.1f Part-time employment, 1990–2007.

Table 4.1a Changes in employment status, 1991 and 2007

Characteristic	1991			2007		
	Total employed ('000)	Full time ('000)	Part time ('000)	Total employed ('000)	Full time ('000)	Part time ('000)
Males	4432.9	4037.0	396.0	5543.3	4724.6	818.7
Females	3212.1	1926.2	1285.8	4522.5	2455.8	2066.8
Total	7645.0	5963.2	1681.8	10 065.8	7180.4	2885.4
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Males	58.0	67.7	23.5	55.0	65.8	28.4
15–24 years	10.6	10.5	10.8	9.2	8.4	11.5
25–54 years	41.3	50.5	8.4	37.1	47.9	10.6
55 years and over	6.2	6.7	4.3	8.7	9.5	6.3
Females	42.0	32.3	76.5	45.0	34.2	71.6
15–24 years	9.7	7.8	16.3	8.7	5.6	16.4
25–54 years	29.6	22.7	54.0	30.7	24.9	45.0
55 years and over	2.8	1.8	6.1	5.6	3.7	10.2

As a student, you may already have a part-time job or know someone who works part time. It is not uncommon for people to work in a number of part-time jobs in any one week. The recent trend towards part-time employment is a continuation of a longer-term trend and is not unique to Australia. Most comparable countries show a similar increase. The large increase in part-time employment over the last decade and a half has occurred at a time of significant underlying changes in the economy and in society more generally. Two main reasons for the changes are the increases in:

- the demand for part-time labour
- the supply of part-time labour.

Table 4.1b Factors contributing to the increase in part-time labour

Changes in demand	Changes in supply
<p>The Australian economy has been restructured and, in particular, there has been growth in the services sector. It is interesting to note that 50 per cent of part-time workers in 2007 were employed in just three service industries: property and business services, health and community services and retail trade. These same industries accounted for only 31 per cent of full-time employment.</p> <p>The workplace has been deregulated, leading to greater workplace flexibility.</p> <p>New technologies have been introduced.</p>	<p>There has been a large increase in the number of women seeking part-time work. In 2007, women aged 25–54 years accounted for almost 45 per cent of all part-time workers. The main reason for this may be that part-time work allows women to balance work and family responsibilities.</p> <p>There has been an increase in the number of young people seeking part-time work. Part-time employment is used as a source of short-term jobs by young people (those aged 15–24 years) while participating in full-time and part-time education or as a stepping stone to full-time work. Young workers represented 28 per cent of total part-time employment in 2007.</p>



Figure 4.1g More women are seeking part-time jobs.

How the workplace has changed

During the 1990s, only a quarter of all new jobs created were full-time jobs; casual and part-time jobs accounted for the rest. While this trend slowed during the 2000s casual workers still accounted for about a quarter of the workforce.

Seventy-four per cent of all employees worked full-time in 1998, compared with 61 per cent in 2002 before increasing again to 71 per cent in 2008. Over this period Australia's labour force increased from 6 million to 10.4 million.

In some industries, including retail trade and hospitality, up to half the workforce is made up of casual employees.

During the economic restructuring of the 1990s job losses occurred in industries with high levels of full-time employment, especially manufacturing. Job gains tended to occur in industries characterised by high levels of casual and part-time employment. This trend was partially reversed during the employment boom of the mid-2000s when labour shortages resulted in increasing participation rates and higher demand for full-time workers.

Five per cent of all employees are now employed on fix-term contracts. One-third of these worked in the education sector.

Many of those employed in part-time jobs don't have access to annual leave, sick leave and other basic entitlements.

The duration of employment with a particular employer has also changed. From a time when people were likely to stay with the same employer for their entire working life, workers are now much more mobile. In 2006, 31% of the workforce had been with their current employer for 2-5 years. Only 19% had been with their current employer for 20 years or more.

Labour mobility has increased over time. In the 12 months to February 2008, 6 per cent of employees changed jobs. A further 11 per cent received a transfer within the same firm and 12 per cent received a promotion.

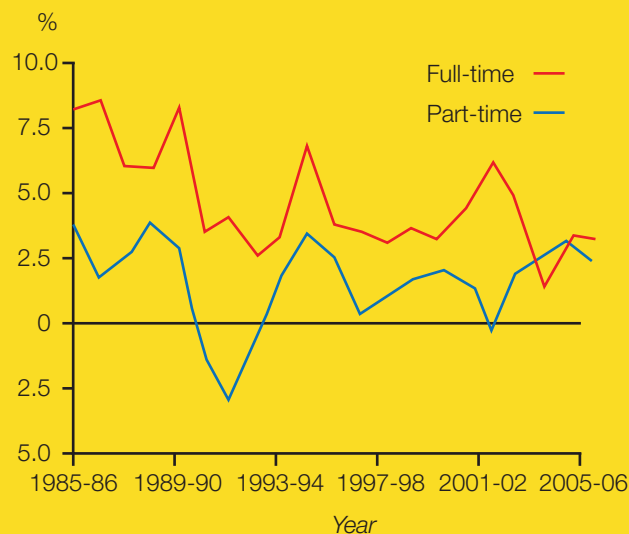


Figure 4.1h Employed Persons: change in annual average employment