

## Fact sheet number 8: Australia

Social Health Atlas series

PHIDU

### The labour force

#### Unskilled and semi skilled workers

*Volume 1: Australia, page 38 –39*

*Includes the occupations of intermediate production & transport workers; labourers & related workers*

- 15.6% of the population of the capital cities were in low status occupations referred to here as unskilled and semi-skilled workers, a decrease since 1986 when they comprised 20.9% of the employed labour force.
- Areas in cities with high proportions of unskilled and semi-skilled workers are socioeconomically disadvantaged, as measured by the IRSD ( $r=-0.72$ ). They also have high proportions of:
  - children in families receiving income support ( $r=0.86$ )
  - women on sole parent pensions ( $r=0.82$ ).
  - people on disability support payments ( $r=0.66$ )
  - people with low levels of education ( $r=0.65$ )
  - low income families ( $r=0.60$ )
  - unemployed people ( $r=0.60$ )
  - people on unemployment benefits ( $r=0.58$ )

They also had low female workforce participation rates ( $r=-0.72$ ) and a low proportion of high income families ( $r=-0.76$ ) and high status occupations (professionals, etc.) ( $r=-0.78$ ) (*page 353-354*)

- Areas in cities with high proportions of unskilled and semiskilled workers were also significantly correlated with poor health. These areas have high rates of:
  - people with low Physical Component Summary scores ( $r=-0.69$ )
  - GP visits (males  $r=0.59$  and females  $r=0.64$ )
  - people reporting their health as fair/poor ( $r=0.58$ ) (*page 353-354*)

#### Unemployed

*Volume 1: Australia, page 40 -43*

- 9.2% of the Australian population was unemployed 1996
- 8.5% of the population of cities was officially unemployed, a slight decrease from 1986 (8.2%).
- 10.1% of the population of non-metropolitan areas was officially unemployed which represents a slight decrease since 1986 (from 10.8%).
- Numbers of unemployed people decreased with increasing remoteness.
- Areas in cities with high proportions of unemployed people are socioeconomically disadvantaged ( $r=-0.72$ ). They also have a high proportion of:
  - low income families ( $r=0.79$ )
  - people on disability support payments ( $r=0.76$ )
  - dependant children of beneficiaries ( $r=0.74$ )
  - women on sole parent pensions ( $r=0.67$ ).
  - unskilled and semi skilled workers ( $r=0.60$ )
  - single parent families ( $r=0.55$ )

These areas also have low female workforce participation ( $r=-0.66$ ) and a low proportion of high income families ( $r=-0.73$ ). (*page 353-354*)

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- Areas in cities with high proportions of unemployed people were also significantly correlated with poor health. These areas have high rates of:
  - people with low Physical Component Summary scores ( $r=-0.75$ )
  - people reporting their health as fair/poor ( $r=0.71$ )
  - circulatory system disease deaths ( $r=0.61$ ) (*page 353-354*)
- Non-metropolitan areas with high proportions of unemployed also had high proportions of:
  - people on disability support payments ( $r=0.66$ )
  - women on sole parents pensions ( $r=0.51$ )

These areas also had a low proportion of high income families ( $r=-0.55$ ) (*page 353-354*)

### Unemployment benefits

*Volume 1: Australia, page 96 -99*

- In 1996, 7.2% of the eligible population were in receipt of unemployment benefits.
- In the capital cities, the rates varied from 5.0% in Canberra to 8.2% in Hobart.
- In non-metropolitan areas, the rates varied from 7.8% in Victoria to 17.2% in the Northern Territory.
- There have been substantial increases in the proportion of people receiving unemployment benefits since 1989 in all capital cities (when the range was between 2.7% and 5.4%) and non-metropolitan areas (from 4.9 % to 8.8%).
- Very Remote areas under the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia have the largest proportion of their populations in receipt of unemployment benefits.

Also see Fact sheet 3: Women **Labour force participation**