

Payroll jobs in mid-February slightly down on last year

Media Release

Released 3/03/2021

Source: [Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages in Australia, Week ending 13 February 2021](#)

Payroll jobs in mid-February were 0.5 per cent lower than a year earlier, according to figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) today.

Bjorn Jarvis, head of Labour Statistics at the ABS, said: "Payroll jobs remained steady in the fortnight between the end of January and mid-February. As a result, over this period payroll jobs went from being around their 2020 level to being slightly below."

"Payroll jobs in mid-February 2021 remained 1.3 per cent below the start of the pandemic. Around 85 per cent of payroll jobs lost in the first month of the pandemic had been regained."

All states and territories, other than Victoria and Western Australia, saw an increase in payroll jobs in the fortnight to 13 February. The largest increase was in the Northern Territory (up 1.4 per cent).

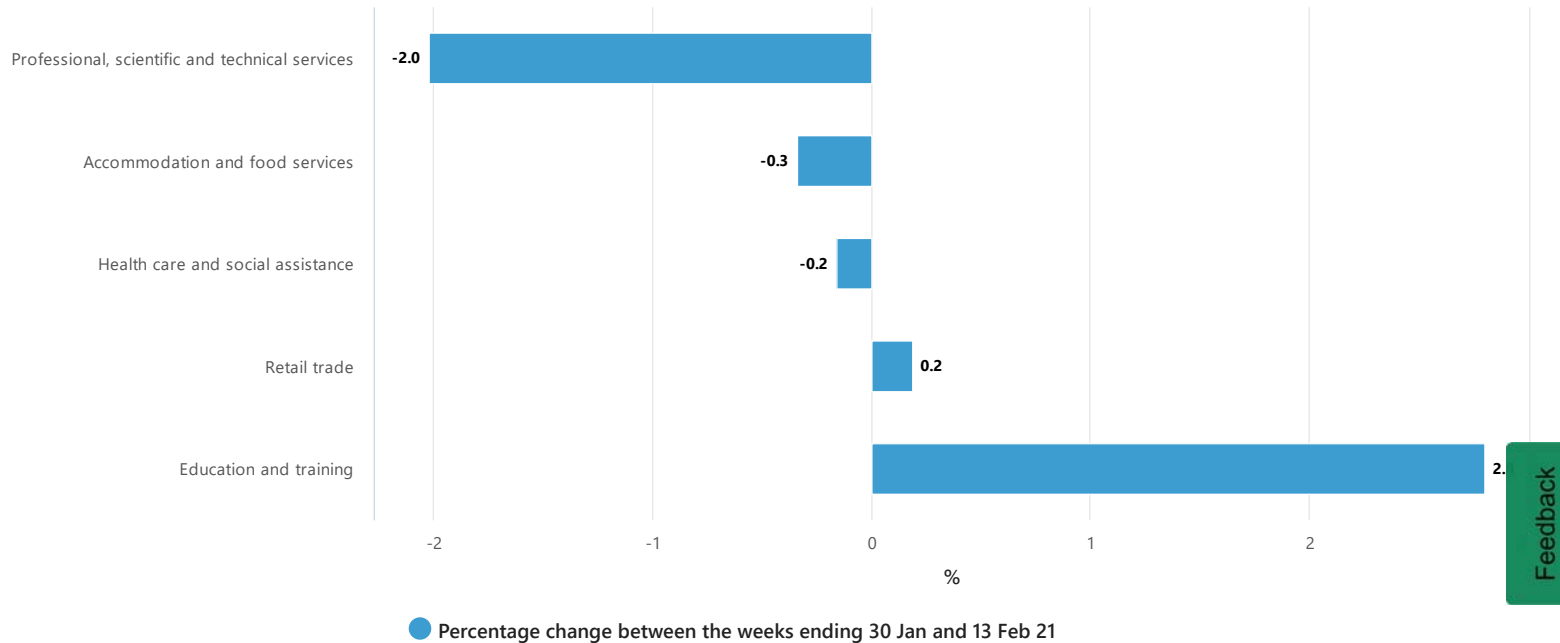
Payroll jobs decreased by 0.4 per cent in both Victoria and Western Australia, with the latter affected by lockdown restrictions in the first week of February.

Differences were also seen across industries in early February.

"Amongst the five largest employing industries, payroll jobs rose across the fortnight in two; Education and training and Retail trade (up 2.8 per cent and 0.2 per cent)," Mr Jarvis said.

"These increases were offset by falls in the three other large employing industries; Professional, scientific and technical services, Accommodation and food services and Health care and social services (down 2.0 per cent, 0.3 per cent and 0.2 per cent)."

Percentage change in payroll jobs for five largest employing industries



These five industries represented 48% of total payroll jobs on 14 March 2020.

The ABS acknowledges the continued support from the Australian Taxation Office in enabling the ABS to produce the statistics providing weekly insights into the Australian labour market.

Media Notes

- Payroll jobs are not seasonally adjusted, which generally require at least three years of data. The seasonal changes accounted for in the longstanding Labour Force statistics series should be considered when interpreting recovery in employment statistics through the COVID period.
- In each release, as more complete data are received, payroll jobs and wages estimates are revised.
- While the ABS accounts for employees being paid with different frequencies, there are points in the year when additional reporting activity is more likely to occur, which may flow through to published estimates.
- Estimates of payroll jobs by industry subdivision, through to the week ending 13 February 2021, will be added to this release on Thursday 4 March 2021.
- When reporting ABS data you must attribute the Australian Bureau of Statistics (or the ABS) as the source.
- For media requests and interviews, contact the ABS Media Team at media@abs.gov.au (8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri).
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 Latest release

Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages in Australia

Experimental estimates on the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on payroll jobs and wages, sourced from Single Touch Payroll (STP) data

Reference period Week ending 13 February 2021

Released 3/03/2021

On this page

[Key statistics](#)

[National](#)

[State and territory](#)

[Interactive maps](#)

[Sex](#)

[Age group](#)

[Industry](#)

[Employment size](#)

[Data downloads](#)

[Changes in this release](#)

[Previous articles](#)

[Methodology](#)

[Media releases](#)

Feedback

Key statistics

Payroll jobs held steady (0.0%) between the weeks ending 30 January and 13 February 2021. Largest changes:

- the Northern Territory (up 1.4%)
- Education and training (up 2.8%)

Total wages increased by 2.1%. Largest changes:

- New South Wales and South Australia (both up 2.4%)
- Mining (up 7.2%)

New data download

Time series estimates of payroll jobs by 5 year age groups have been added to this release, in Table 8 of the Data downloads.

National

Between the weeks ending 14 March 2020 and 13 February 2021:

- Payroll jobs decreased by 1.3%
- Total wages decreased by 0.4%

Between the weeks ending 30 January and 13 February 2021:

- Payroll jobs held steady, at 0.0%, compared to an increase of 2.3% in the previous fortnight
- Total wages paid increased by 2.1%, compared to an increase of 1.6% in the previous fortnight

Graph 1 - Payroll jobs and total wages, indexed to the week ending 14 March 2020 (a)



a. Care should be exercised when focusing on the most recent movements in payroll jobs and wages. For more information, please see [Data limitations and revisions](#). Weekly change data are available in the Data downloads.

State and territory

Since the week ending 14 March 2020 the largest changes across states and territories were:

- Payroll jobs : Victoria decreased by 3.0% and the Northern Territory increased by 2.0%
- Total wages : the Northern Territory increased by 3.5% and Western Australia decreased by 2.1%

Between the weeks ending 30 January and 13 February 2021 the largest changes across states and territories were:

- Payroll jobs : the Northern Territory increased by 1.4% and Queensland and South Australia both increased by 0.5%
- Total wages : New South Wales and South Australia both increased by 2.4% and Queensland increased by 2.3%

Table 1 - Percentage change by states and territories

	Payroll jobs		Total wages	
	Change between 30 Jan 2021 and 13 Feb 2021 (a)	Change between 14 Mar 2020 and 13 Feb 2021	Change between 30 Jan 2021 and 13 Feb 2021 (a)	Change between 14 Mar 2020 and 13 Feb 2021
New South Wales	0.2%	-1.1%	2.4%	-0.9%
Victoria	-0.4%	-3.0%	1.8%	0.3%
Queensland	0.5%	-1.1%	2.3%	0.0%
South Australia	0.5%	0.7%	2.4%	1.5%
Western Australia	-0.4%	0.3%	1.9%	-2.1%
Tasmania	0.3%	-1.4%	1.5%	-0.6%
Northern Territory	1.4%	2.0%	1.7%	3.5%
Australian Capital Territory	0.2%	-1.1%	0.7%	0.8%
Australia	0.0%	-1.3%	2.1%	-0.4%

a. Care should be exercised when focusing on the most recent movements in payroll jobs and wages. For more information, please see [Data limitations and revisions](#). Weekly change data are available in Data downloads.

Sub-state - payroll jobs

Time series estimates of payroll jobs by sub-state regions, Statistical Area 4 (SA4) and Statistical Area 3 (SA3), are presented as index values through to the week ending 30 January 2021 in Table 5 of the Data downloads.

For more information see [Statistical Geography; Australian Statistical Geography Standard, Volume 1 - Main Structure and Greater Capital City Statistical Areas, July 2016](#); or [Australian Statistical Geography Standard, Volume 3 - Non-ABS Structures, July 2018](#).

SA4 regions

SA4 regions are specifically designed to reflect labour markets within each state and territory within population limits. In

regional areas, SA4s tend to have lower populations (100,000 to 300,000), while in metropolitan areas, SA4s tend to have larger populations (300,000 to 500,000).

SA3 regions

SA3 regions generally have populations between 30,000 and 130,000 persons. They are often the functional areas of regional towns and cities with a population in excess of 20,000, or clusters of related suburbs around urban commercial and transport hubs within the major urban areas.

Interactive maps

Maps of SA4 and SA3 regions are updated on alternate fortnights to coincide with the release of sub-state estimates. Change in payroll jobs from the week ending 14 March 2020 for each week up to the week ending 30 January 2021 are presented in the [Interactive maps](#).

SA4 and SA3 boundaries presented accord with the [Australian Statistical Geography Standard, Volume 1 - Main Structure and Greater Capital City Statistical Areas, July 2016](#).

Feedback

How to use the interactive map:

- Select: Geographical area can be selected using the Statistical Area 3 (SA3) or Statistical Area 4 (SA4) upper tabs.
 - Search: the magnifying glass icon opens the search function. It is set to look for locations such as addresses, suburbs and postcodes contained within an SA4 or SA3 region.
 - Reference week: the date slider at the bottom of the map can be moved to select a particular week of interest, or see changes over time.
 - Data: on the relevant map, an SA4 or SA3 can be selected to view the underlying data. The time series index estimates for SA4 and SA3s can be found in Table 5 of the Data downloads.
 - If the maps do not load successfully, please try refreshing the page.
-

Sex

Since the week ending 14 March 2020:

- Payroll jobs : Those worked by males decreased by 3.5% and those worked by females decreased by 2.2%
- Total wages : Payments to males decreased by 2.7% and payments to females increased by 1.5%

Between the weeks ending 30 January and 13 February 2021:

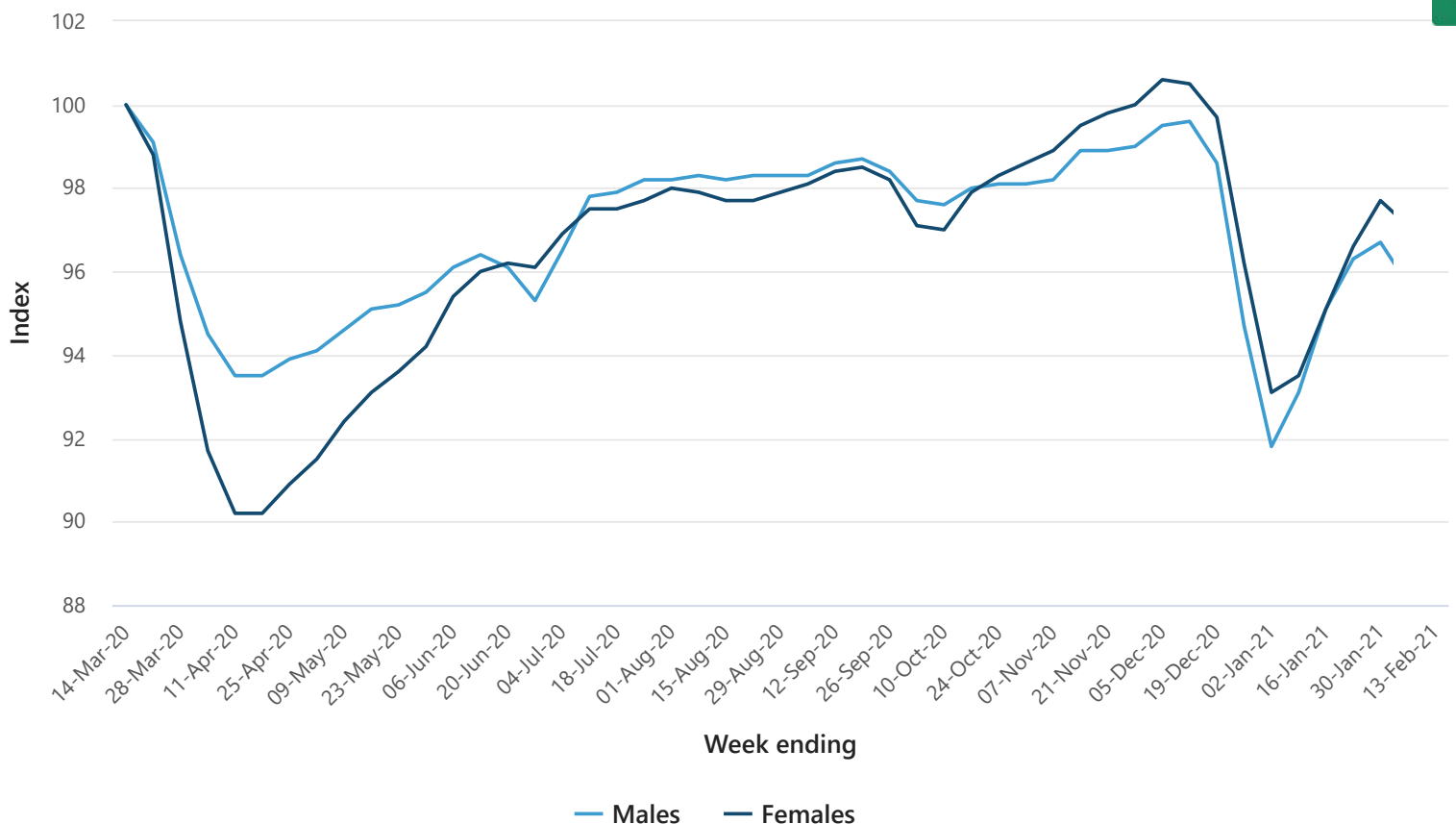
- Payroll jobs : Those worked by males decreased by 0.2% and those worked by females increased by 0.1%
- Total wages : Payments to males increased by 2.4% and payments to females increased by 1.8%

Table 2 - Percentage change by sex

	Payroll jobs		Total wages	
	Change between 30 Jan 2021 and 13 Feb 2021 (a)	Change between 14 Mar 2020 and 13 Feb 2021	Change between 30 Jan 2021 and 13 Feb 2021 (a)	Change between 14 Mar 2020 and 13 Feb 2021
Males	-0.2%	-3.5%	2.4%	-2.7%
Females	0.1%	-2.2%	1.8%	1.5%
All persons	0.0%	-1.3%	2.1%	-0.4%

a. Care should be exercised when focusing on the most recent movements in payroll jobs and wages. For more information, please see [Data limitations and revisions](#). Weekly change data are available in the Data downloads.

Graph 4 - Payroll jobs by sex, indexed to the week ending 14 March 2020 (a)



a. Care should be exercised when focusing on the most recent movements in payroll jobs. For more information, please see [Data limitations and revisions](#). Weekly change data are available in the Data downloads section.

Age group

Since the week ending 14 March 2020 the largest changes across age groups were:

- Payroll jobs : Those worked by people aged 60-69 increased by 2.8% and those worked by people aged 20-29 decreased by 2.5%
- Total wages : Payments to people 15-19 increased by 6.2% and payments to people aged 70 years and over increased by 5.6%

Between the weeks ending 30 January and 13 February 2021 the largest changes across age groups were:

- Payroll jobs : Those worked by people aged 70 years and over increased by 1.7% and those worked by people aged 60-69 increased by 1.1%
- Total wages : Payments to people aged 15-19 decreased by 3.1% and payments to people aged 40-49 and 60-69 both increased by 2.7%

Table 3 - Percentage change by age group

	Payroll jobs		Total wages	
	Change between 30 Jan 2021 and 13 Feb 2021 (a)	Change between 14 Mar 2020 and 13 Feb 2021	Change between 30 Jan 2021 and 13 Feb 2021 (a)	Change between 14 Mar 2020 and 13 Feb 2021
15-19 year olds	0.3%	-0.9%	-3.1%	6.2%
20-29 year olds	0.1%	-2.5%	1.5%	0.7%
30-39 year olds	-0.1%	-0.6%	2.2%	0.1%
40-49 year olds	0.1%	-0.7%	2.7%	-1.8%
50-59 year olds	0.3%	0.3%	2.6%	-0.5%
60-69 year olds	1.1%	2.8%	2.7%	4.0%
Aged 70 years and over	1.7%	1.9%	0.8%	5.6%
All persons	0.0%	-1.3%	2.1%	-0.4%

a. Care should be exercised when focusing on the most recent movements in payroll jobs and wages. For more information, please see [Data limitations and revisions](#). Weekly change data are available in Data downloads.

Industry

Since the week ending 14 March 2020 the largest changes across industry were:

- Payroll jobs : Accommodation and food services decreased by 12.4% and Education and training decreased by 9.3%
- Total wages : Mining decreased by 16.1% and Accommodation and food services decreased by 10.7%

Between the weeks ending 30 January and 13 February 2021 the largest changes across industry were:

- Payroll jobs : Education and training increased by 2.8% and Agriculture, forestry and fishing and Rental, hiring and real estate services both decreased by 2.3%
- Total wages : Mining increased by 7.2% and Construction increased by 5.5%

Table 4 - Percentage change by industry

	Payroll jobs		Total wages	
	Change between 30 Jan 2021 and 13 Feb 2021 (a)	Change between 14 Mar 2020 and 13 Feb 2021	Change between 30 Jan 2021 and 13 Feb 2021 (a)	Change between 14 Mar 2020 and 13 Feb 2021
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	-2.3%	-4.7%	-0.1%	-0.1%
Mining	0.8%	-1.3%	7.2%	-16.1%
Manufacturing	0.3%	-3.5%	5.3%	-2.7%
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	0.3%	1.7%	2.1%	2.5%
Construction	-0.4%	-5.0%	5.5%	-3.5%
Wholesale trade	-0.7%	-3.5%	4.3%	-5.2%
Retail trade	0.2%	-0.5%	0.0%	1.2%
Accommodation and food services	-0.3%	-12.4%	-3.1%	-10.7%
Transport, postal and warehousing	0.8%	-6.0%	3.1%	-6.8%
Information media and telecommunications	-1.1%	-8.2%	-0.4%	-1.7%
Financial and insurance services	0.1%	5.6%	0.7%	-2.4%
Rental, hiring and real estate services	-2.3%	-5.5%	-2.7%	-4.0%
Professional, scientific and technical services	-2.0%	-3.1%	1.4%	-1.0%
Administrative and support services	0.2%	-2.4%	4.7%	1.9%
Public administration and safety	2.1%	5.4%	2.1%	1.9%
Education and training	2.8%	-9.3%	3.3%	-1.4%
Health care and social assistance	-0.2%	4.0%	-0.7%	5.9%
Arts and recreation services	0.1%	-4.1%	-0.4%	-0.2%
Other services	-0.7%	-3.6%	1.2%	2.7%
All industries	0.0%	-1.3%	2.1%	-0.4%

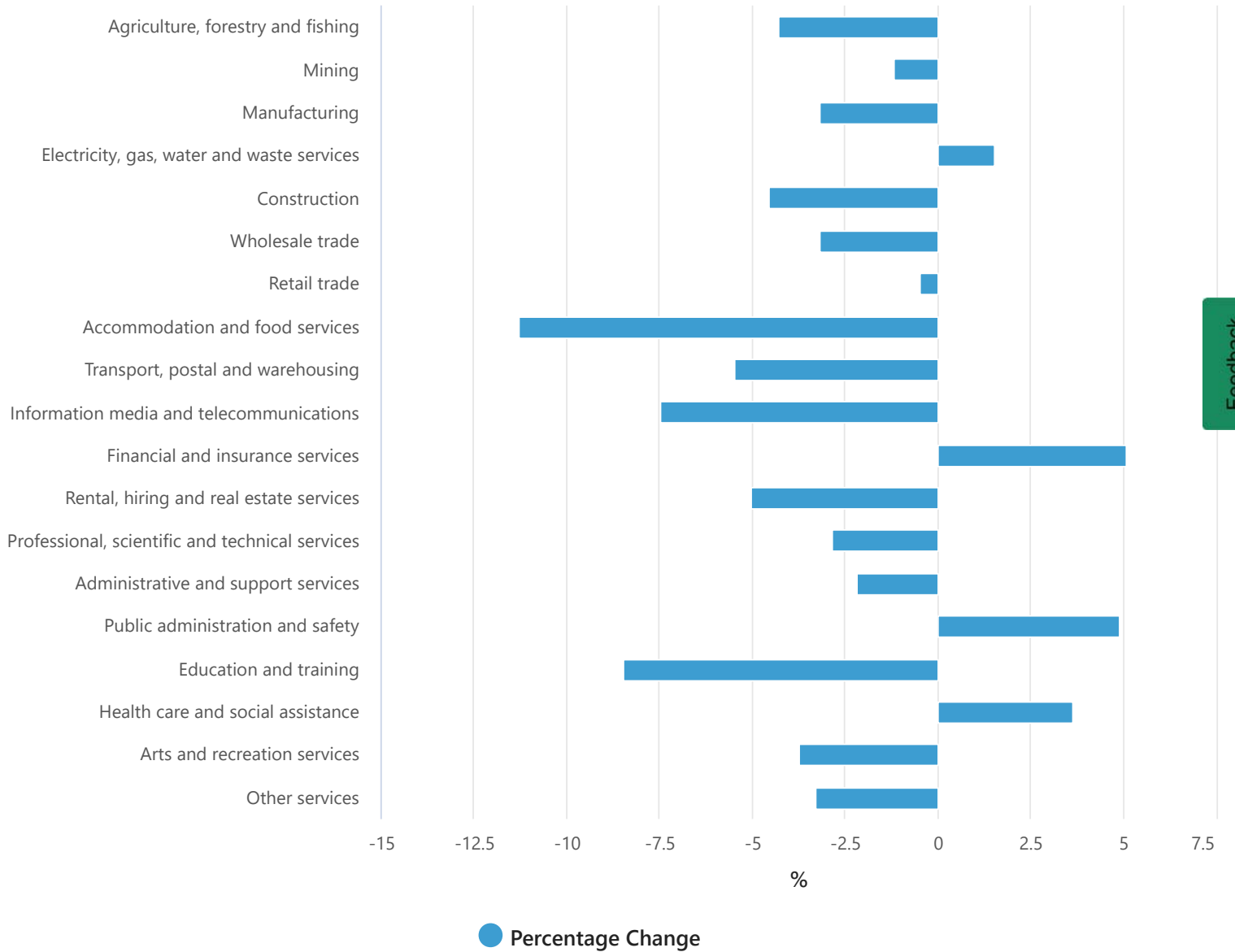
Feedback

a. Care should be exercised when focusing on the most recent movements in payroll jobs and wages. Weekly change data are available in Data downloads.

b. The Mining industry wages estimates in March and September may include annual bonuses. Please refer to the seasonality section in [Data limitations and revisions](#) for further information.

c. The Education and training industry has a marked seasonal low across December and January. Please refer to the seasonality section in [Data](#)

Graph 5 - Percentage change in payroll jobs by Industry between 14 March 2020 and 13 February 2021



Feedback

Industry subdivision - Payroll jobs

Updated estimates of payroll jobs by industry subdivision will be updated through to the week ending 13 February 2021 in Table 6 of the Data downloads, as part of this release on Thursday 4 March 2021.

Time series estimates of payroll jobs by industry subdivision (presented as index values) up to the week ending 16 January 2021 are available in Table 6 of the Data downloads.

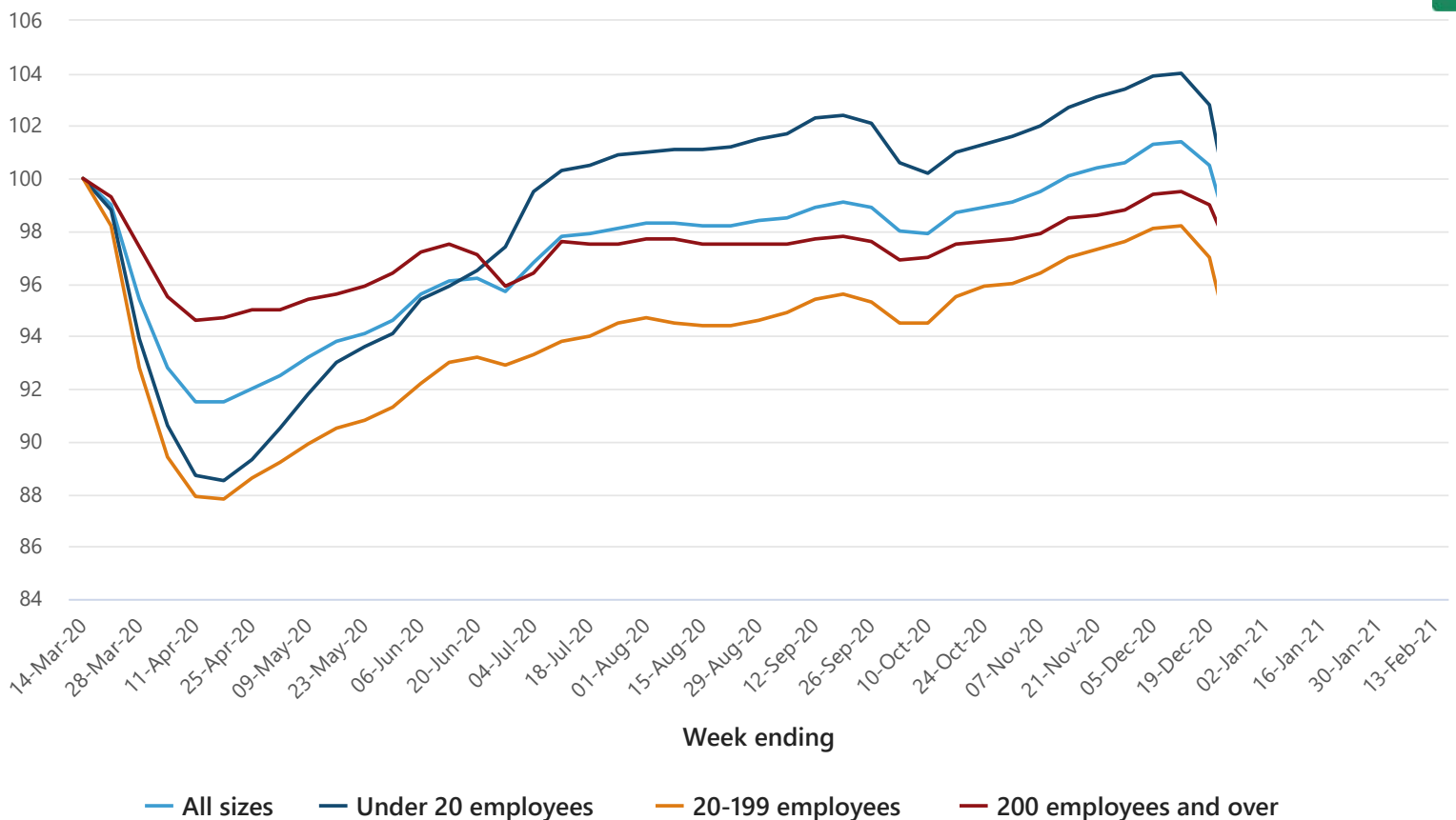
The subdivision level is the second broadest grouping of industries within the [Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification](#). Industry subdivisions are built up from the industry groups which, in turn, are built up from industry classes.

Employment size

The following experimental estimates present payroll jobs by employment size between the weeks ending 14 March 2020 and 13 February 2021.

Care should be exercised when focusing on recent movements in payroll jobs by employment size, as they are subject to higher than usual levels of revision (over a longer period) than other estimates. As part of the updating of additional data sources, the ABS is investigating underlying data to identify the cause and establish a method to reduce the future level of revisions in this series.

Graph 6 - Payroll jobs by employment size, indexed to the week ending 14 March 2020 (a)



Feedback

a. Care should be exercised when focusing on recent movements in payroll jobs. For more information, see the Reporting variability section in [Data limitations and revisions](#).

Table 5 - Percentage change in Payroll jobs by state and territory, by employment size as at 14 March 2020 (a)

		Change between 30 Jan 2021 and 13 Feb 2021 (b)	Change between 14 Mar 2020 and 13 Feb 2021
Under 20 employees	New South Wales	-2.3%	-5.4%
	Victoria	-2.4%	-5.5%
	Queensland	-1.4%	-1.9%
	South Australia	-0.7%	-0.2%
	Western Australia	-2.5%	-1.1%
	Tasmania	-1.0%	-1.7%
	Northern Territory	1.7%	1.2%
	Australian Capital Territory	-2.8%	-3.4%
	Australia	-2.0%	-3.8%
	20-199 employees	New South Wales	0.2%
Victoria		0.5%	-5.6%
Queensland		0.3%	-2.2%
South Australia		0.5%	-2.5%
Western Australia		-1.8%	-2.5%
Tasmania		-1.3%	-6.8%
Northern Territory		1.6%	-1.3%
Australian Capital Territory		0.6%	-3.0%
Australia		0.1%	-3.8%
200 employees and over	New South Wales	1.4%	0.1%
	Victoria	0.2%	-2.4%
	Queensland	1.5%	-2.8%
	South Australia	1.1%	0.5%
	Western Australia	1.3%	0.3%
	Tasmania	2.0%	-0.5%
	Northern Territory	1.2%	2.4%
	Australian Capital Territory	1.2%	-1.2%
	Australia	1.1%	-1.1%

a. Care should be exercised when focusing on the most recent movements in payroll jobs. For more information, please see [Data limitations and revisions](#).

Employment size variables were determined from [ABS Business Register](#) data. The ABS Business Register is populated using administrative data from the Australian Business Register (ABR) and business data from the Australian Tax Office (ATO). Data on the structures of large and complex businesses are also collected by ABS. The ABS Business Register is updated regularly and a frame of business, containing business characteristic information, is produced quarterly for use in the production of statistics.

The March 2020 quarterly frame was used to determine employment size for businesses reporting their payroll via STP and subsequently allocate their reported payroll jobs against. Once a payroll job is allocated to an employment size category, it is held constant against that category over time. By using the March 2020 quarter frame and holding employment size categorisation constant, the ABS is able to present information about the change in payroll jobs based on the employment size of businesses before Australia recorded its 100th confirmed COVID-19 case on 14 March 2020.

Businesses which are newly created after March 2020 are unable to be assigned a size and are subsequently excluded from the index calculation of employment size groups. These 'new' businesses are included in the calculation of all sizes category (for state and territory, and national level estimates). The number of STP reporting businesses 'born' since Australia recorded its 100th confirmed COVID-19 in March 2020 is considered small, hence their exclusion is expected to have minimal impact on the estimates. The ABS exploring how to incorporate newly created businesses into the employment size estimates and may include them in a future release.

Feedback

Data downloads

Table 1: National spotlight

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[87.01 KB]

Table 2: State and territory spotlight

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[413.48 KB]

Table 3: Industry spotlight

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[713.69 KB]

Table 4: Payroll jobs and wages indexes

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[2.5 MB]

Table 5: Sub-state - Payroll jobs indexes

Estimates of payroll jobs by Statistical Area 4 (SA4) and Statistical Area 3 (SA3) to the week ending 30 January 2021, as updated on Wednesday 17 February 2021.

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[214.18 KB]

Table 6: Industry subdivision - Payroll jobs index

Estimates of payroll jobs by industry subdivision to the week ending 16 January 2021, as updated on Wednesday 3 February 2021.

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