

# Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia, September 2005

Source: ABS 6220.0

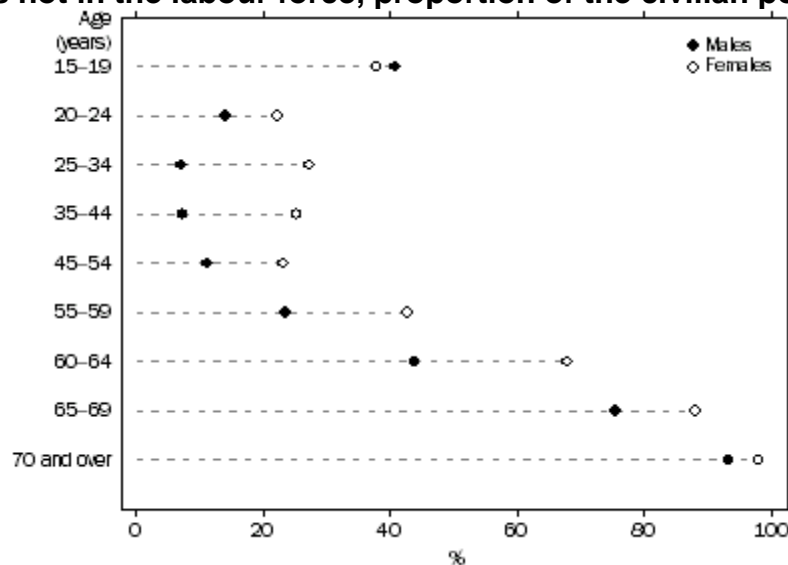
## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### OVERVIEW

In September 2005, there were 5,453,500 people aged 15 years and over who were not in the labour force. This represented 34% of the civilian population aged 15 years and over. Just under one-quarter (21%) of persons not in the labour force wanted to work and 61% of persons not in the labour force were women.

The proportion of people who were not in the labour force varied according to age. In the 15-19 years age group, where there are high levels of participation in education, the proportion was 41% for men and 38% for women. In all other age groups, there were more women than men not in the labour force. The proportion of women not in the labour force decreased from 27% for those aged 25-34 years to 23% for those aged 45-54 years, before increasing sharply to 43% for those aged 55-59 years, and 98% for those aged 70 years and over. For men in the same age groups, the proportion not in the labour force increased from 7% for those aged 25-34 and 35-44 years, to 11% for those aged 45-54 years, 24% for those aged 55-59 years, and 93% for those aged 70 years and over .

Persons not in the labour force, proportion of the civilian population



## **MARGINAL ATTACHMENT**

Of the 840,300 people with marginal attachment to the labour force in September 2005, 771,100 or 92% were not actively looking for work but were available to start work within four weeks. The remainder were actively looking for work but were not available to start work in the reference week.

Some 17% of women and 13% of men not in the labour force were marginally attached to the labour force. Seventy two per cent of women with marginal attachment to the labour force would have preferred part-time work, while 16% preferred full-time work. For men, 49% preferred part-time work and 34% preferred full-time work. The remainder had no preference, or were undecided.

Approximately 59% of people with marginal attachment to the labour force 'intended to enter' the labour force within 12 months, 18% 'might enter' the labour force within 12 months, and 19% 'did not intend to enter' the labour force within 12 months

Of those with marginal attachment to the labour force, 80% previously had a job. Thirty two per cent of those who had a job stated that their last job was less than 12 months ago, and 21% reported their last job was between 1 and 3 years ago.

### **Main reason for not actively looking for work**

The main reasons for not actively looking for work most commonly reported by men were 'attending an educational institution' (34%) and 'own ill health or physical disability' (20%). The most commonly reported main reasons for not actively looking for work for women were 'caring for children' (31%) and 'attending an educational institution' (18%).

### **Discouraged job seekers**

At September 2005 there were 63,100 discouraged job seekers aged 15 years and over. There was a 23% decline in the number of discouraged job seekers aged 15-69, from 82,000 in September 2004 to 59,300 in September 2005. Women accounted for most of this decrease, with 53,600 women who were discouraged job seekers in September 2004 and 37,500 in September 2005.

The characteristics of discouraged job seekers aged 15 years and over in September 2005 included:

- 61% were women
- 29% of men and 21% of women had looked for work in the previous 12 weeks.
- 64% of men and 57% of women intended to enter the labour force in the next 12 months
- 85% had worked before.

The main reasons reported by discouraged job seekers for not actively looking for work were 'considered too old by employers' (39%), 'no jobs in locality or line of work' (27%) and 'lacked necessary schooling, training, skills or experience' (14%). Fifty per cent of men gave the reason 'considered too old by employers' compared with 32% of women. For women, 29% gave the reason 'no jobs in locality or line of work' and 17% gave the reason 'lacked necessary schooling, training, skills or experience'.

## **PEOPLE WITHOUT MARGINAL ATTACHMENT**

Of the 4,613,200 people aged 15 years and over who were without marginal attachment to the labour force in September 2005, the majority (88%) were people who did not want to work, while a further 5% were permanently unable to work. Of those people who did not want to work, 38% (31% of women, 50% of men) reported their main activity as 'retired or voluntarily inactive', 28% (41% of women, 7% of men) as 'home duties or caring for children', and 12% (9% of women, 16% of men) as 'attending an educational institution'.

There were 325,000 people who wanted to work but were neither actively looking for work nor available to start work within four weeks. Of these, 69% were women, forty-four per cent reported their main activity as 'home duties or caring for children' and 28% as 'attending an educational institution'. Twenty-eight per cent reported that they had a job less than 12 months ago.