

**A REVIEW OF:**

**Voices from Working Australia**

**- *Findings from the ACTU  
Working Australia Census 2011***

**Prepared by Dr Tui McKeown**

**Dept of Management,**

**Monash University**

# A REVIEW<sup>1</sup> OF: Voices from Working Australia - *Findings from the ACTU Working Australia Census 2011*

## Background

The stated aim of the ACTU publication is to be the basis of a:

*the Working Australia Papers [which] are an initiative of the ACTU to give working people a stronger voice about social and economic policy.*

The rationale for this initiative is that:

*Although low and middle income Australians ultimately bear the costs of poor policy decisions made in relation to tax, infrastructure, retirement incomes, welfare and services, their voice is too often absent from national debates about these issues.*

Note that an important corollary to this aim and rationale is included in the foreword to the publication where, in her address to the National Press Club in October 2010, ACTU President Ged Kearney announced that:

*“... the ACTU will be commissioning the biggest ever census of union members in the Australian workplace ... to give each and every union member a chance to have their say on issues that matter to them and contribute to the movement’s agenda over the next ten years.”*

The report is thus more accurately one of ‘**Union Voices from Working Australia - Findings from the ACTU Working Australia Census of union members 2011.**’ With this corollary in mind, it also needs to be acknowledged that the ACTU publication is the largest survey of workers that Australian unions have ever conducted. Further, it does provide comparisons with a data set provided by a benchmark public opinion poll of the same questions and so may provide the basis for well-founded generalisations and assumptions about the unionised Australian workforce.

---

<sup>1</sup>Note that all direct quotes from ‘Voices from Working Australia’ will be bolded, italicised and in blue coloured font for ease of identification. The page numbers referred to in headings refer to the appropriate page of the 62 page ACTU publication

What are challenged in this review are the generalisability and even the applicability of these results to the general Australian working population. This review will go through the 68 pages of the ACTU publication sequentially to support the challenges we suggest they raise. This means that some issues will be discussed and analysed across multiple pages because this is the way in which the data has been presented within the original publication.

## **Key Findings (pages 4-5)**

These will be dealt with in detail in the body of the responses which follow but the main issue here is raised in the wording of the first finding that:

*“Census respondents were overwhelmingly union members”*

## **Project Overview (page 6)**

The document begins with a very general preamble which restates the state as to **“engage Australian workers and give them a chance to have their voice heard”**

- this section highlights areas which will require follow up as we progress through the publication, specifically in terms of the fact that it provides no supporting detail as to the:
  - numbers surveyed, union membership or
  - representativeness of the Australian workforce and
  - claims to be working from a **“large and varied dataset”**.

## **Methodology (pages 6-7)**

The way in which the research was conducted provides a strong basis for either the strength or the weakness of the resulting findings. In this publication there are some very definite strengths but there are also major flaws.

The explanation for the questions asked in the data gathering provides the reader with very little information as to the sources used to generate them:

- ***questions were chosen in order to collect information on how people are working, why they working and how they feel about their work and also what they see as the big issues facing them and the country.***
  - Note – it is only through referring back to the Foreword that we find that 60 questions were asked. This is a large online survey!
  - The questions purportedly ***“match up with existing datasets to facilitate comparisons being made in the subsequent analysis of the results.”*** This is strength of the methodology if it is correct but no verification or sources are provided
- ***was open as online survey as well as paper version to all people not only those currently employed, some questions were only asked to those who***

***indicated that they were currently employed, while other questions were posed to the entire sample regardless of employment status.***

- Note that promotion of the survey was through unions and page 7 notes that the associated prize draw was only open to union members
- ***Census Period opened on 2 May 2011 for 8 weeks until 1 July 2011***
  - Quite a long timeframe but supported by the large number of responses which resulted
- ***Analysis of Results - A total of 42,085 responses were received.***
  - Data cleaning resulted in a total census sample of 41,584.
  - ***A weighted dataset was also produced, correcting the skew in the industry distribution in the Census sample towards the education and training and healthcare and social assistance industries. This weighting did not have a significant impact on the overall Census results and a decision was made to not use it, and to present the unweighted results in this report to clearly communicate the experiences of those workers that took the time to complete the Census.*** This statement requires checking as the female/ part time worker domination of these industries may be an issue and it seems more likely that a weighted dataset would be appropriate.
  - ***The results have not been used in a way to claim to be a representative sample; however the results still represent a large sample of workers who are primarily union members which allows this analysis to make some observations about the working life of union members.*** This is a very, very important corollary!
- ***Public Sample - In conjunction with the Census, the ACTU also commissioned a public poll conducted by EMC where the Census questions were posed to a representative sample of approximately 1000 Australians using an online public pool of people. The public poll was intended to be a benchmark and a point of comparison to the Census results. The results of the representative sample poll are presented alongside the Census results in this report to provide not only a comparison point and also to illustrate some of the similarities between both sets of results.***
  - This requires checking as to the representativeness of the sample against both the union population used in this study as well as against the general working population

***Prize Draw - three prizes worth \$1000 each were on offer, to respondents who completed the survey, were union members and over the age 18.***

- Why the restriction to union members only as seems to be a clear indication as to the preferred respondent?

## Survey Findings (pages 8-9)

- Drawn from “*an analysis of the 41,584 valid completions of the ACTU Working Australia Census ... predominately is a union membership biased sample.*”
- *the Census is not a representative sample... [but sample size] allows for this report to draw some qualified commentary about the experiences of union members in the Australian workforce.*
  - o This important corollary appears again and provides a more accurate summation of the research

### Union Membership and Participation

*The Census was open to all Australians of working age to complete, however the promotion was focused around reaching out to working Australians through their unions and their workplaces.*

- But, as already noted, dissemination of details was via unions

*Unsurprisingly the overwhelming majority of Census respondents were union members (91.8%). This was not the case in the Public poll where 13.9% of respondents were union members.*

*...the most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics data from the Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership which reports that there are currently 1.8 million union members in Australia, representing 19.1% of the workforce.*

- ABS (2010) data reveals union membership has dropped to 18%
- The last column in the table below has been added the ABS data to the results and shows that while the Census data is grossly over-represented by union members, the Public poll under-represents union members

**Table 1: Union Membership (%)**

	<b>Census (total) n =41584</b>	<b>Public (Total) n=1020</b>	<b>Census (Employed) n =41584</b>	<b>Public (Employed) n =41584</b>	<b>ABS(2011) (Employed) n=9.8million</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>91.8</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>92.9</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>86.1</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

- Using the basic determinants of sampling size (the number of respondents needed to feel confident of the results – with greater confidence with less of a margin of error), the survey sample of over 40,000 respondents from a population of 1.8 million union members is well within the levels of error provided by the quick formula:

$$n = N / 1 + N(e)^2, \text{ where } n = \text{respondents, } N = \text{population size, and } e = \text{error.}$$

- The basic sampling chart used to determine number of respondents below shows that the ACTU sample is well over the number needed to provide confidence in the results (with the corollary they provide, that it is a census of union members). The Public poll data, as a census of the general workforce is acceptable at both the 5% and 10% levels of error.

**Respondents Needed at Error of ±3%, ±5%, ±10%**

Population	±3%	±5%	±10%
500	345	220	80
1,000	525	285	90
3,000	810	350	100
5,000	910	370	100
10,000	1,000	400	100
100,000	1,100	400	100
1,000,000	1,100	400	100
10,000,000	1,100	400	100

Again, the fact that this data is drawn from a sample of largely union respondents limits the use of these responses.

Referring to Chart 2 on page 11, (ABS, 2011) data collected on trade union members in their main job for August 2010 differs from the ACTU publication in that Tasmania had the highest proportion (24%), while the Northern Territory had the lowest proportion (14%) of employees who were trade union members in their main job

### **Volunteering (page 9)**

All respondents were asked if they had done any volunteer work in the previous 12 months, nearly half the Census sample indicated that they had, compared to a third (34.6%) of the Public sample. According to the ABS *Voluntary Work2* data in 2006 34% of the Australian population aged 18 years and over participated in voluntary work. The Public sample aligns with this data, but the Census sample

with its majority union member make up is well over this figure at 48.3%, and for the Census respondents who were unions members the figure is 48.1% suggesting that union members are significantly more likely to be involved in voluntary work than the broader public.

- The results presented by the ACTU have been updated in the last column in the Table below to incorporate the ABS (2011a) results. The increase in involvement in voluntary work between the 2011 ABS data and the 2006 data ACTU cite should be noted.

<b><i>Voluntary Work in the Last 12 Months (%)</i></b>			
	<b>Census n=41584</b>	<b>Public N=1020</b>	<b>ABS (2011a) N=15,028</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>48.3</b>	<b>34.6</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>51.7</b>	<b>65.4</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

- The lack of demographic data supporting either the Census or the Public poll means the suggestion that “**union members are significantly more likely to be involved in voluntary work than the broader public**” difficult to assess. All I can add here is that the ABS (2011) data also notes that the rate of volunteering is affected by gender (with 37% of men doing volunteer work in 2010 compared to 40% of women) as well as age, life cycle and location. People aged 45 to 54 years reported the highest rate of volunteering (44%) while people in a couple relationship with dependent children were more likely (48% of such persons) to volunteer than those in a couple relationship with no dependent children, lone parents or lone persons (table 8). Volunteer rates were noticeably lower in the major capital cities (34%) than elsewhere (42% inner regional, 41% other areas).

## General Demographics (pages 10-13)

### Age, Gender and Residence

*The majority (60.3%) of Census respondents were aged 45 years of age and over. With a third (33.9%) aged between 45-54 years of age. The results of the Public sample differ with 51.3% of respondents aged 45 years and over, and more respondents aged 18-24 years and over 65. In comparison with the Public poll the Census sample is overrepresented in the 45-54 age groups*

- According to ABS (2010a) the median age of the Australian labour force is 39 so both the Census and Public Poll samples are over- represented by older workers

*Women are over-represented in the Census results, with nearly two thirds (64.3%) of respondents being women. This is significantly different from the Public results, where the majority (54.8%) of respondents were men.*

- ABS (2011b) reports that 45% of the 11.4 million working Australians are women - so women are very over-represented in the Census results

*This difference can be attributed to the strong participation rates from a number of female dominated unions in the healthcare and education industries and the public sector. It can also be partly attributed to the online nature of the survey and these unions having a membership with regular access to the internet and a membership already accustomed with communicating with their unions online.*

- This needs to be followed up in the evaluation of the industry data and is interesting to note that the suggested data weighting to compensate for this was rejected in the methodology section

*The strong female participation is also a reflection of the growing numbers of women who are union members. In 2010 female union density was higher than male union density for the first time.*

- According to ABS (2011) 51% of union members are male

*The Census respondents came from every state and territory in Australia. In comparison to the Public sample, the Census had a greater representation of respondents in the Australian Capital Territory, at more than double the Public sample, 4.4% compared to 2.0%, while South Australia was underrepresented.*

- As the Table below shows, the Public Poll data generally provides a greater match with ABS data so can be accepted as more accurate sampling of the Australian workforce - on a state by state basis.

**ABS (2010a) Total Labour Force by State 2009/2010**

---

	<b>NSW</b>	<b>Vic.</b>	<b>Qld</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>WA</b>	<b>Tas.</b>	<b>NT</b>	<b>ACT</b>
<b><i>Census</i></b>	<b>29.6</b>	<b>30.6</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>4.4</b>
<b><i>Public Poll</i></b>	<b>32.6</b>	<b>25.5</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>ABS %</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

---

*...the Census asked respondents the status of their primary place of residence, that is did they own, rent or have a mortgage.*

- ABS (2010b) data differs quite markedly from both publication datasets. Drawing on the 2007-08 Survey of Income and Housing to show that 33% of households owned their homes outright (i.e. without a mortgage) and 35% were owners with a mortgage. A further 24% were renting from a private landlord and 5% were renting from a state or territory housing authority.
- 

**Table 4: Primary Place of Residence (%)**

	<b>Census</b>	<b>Public Poll</b>	ABS(2010b)
<b>Own it outright (no loan)</b>	<b>21.6</b>	<b>28.9</b>	33
<b>Rent alone or with a spouse/partner</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>19.1</b>	} 29
<b>Rent with another adult or adults</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>8.1</b>	
<b>Have a mortgage</b>	<b>51.9</b>	<b>30.7</b>	35
<b>Live with parents</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>10.4</b>	
<b>Other</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.6</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	

## Education and Background

*The most common qualifications for the Census respondents to have was a Certificate or Diploma (26.8%) or a Bachelor degree (35.9%). This was also the case for the Public sample with Certificate or Diploma qualification for 29.7% of respondents and a Bachelor Degree for 24.0% of respondents. However the Census sample had a higher overall proportion of respondents who had a higher degree, 16.6% compared to 6.6%. The Public sample had more than double the proportion of respondents with a high school graduation qualification (22.7% compared to 9.9%).*

- Table 5 has the ABS (2010c) data added in to reveal significant variations between both the Census and Public Poll samples from ABS data.

**Table 5: Educational Attainment (%)**

	<i>Census</i>	<i>Public Poll</i>	<b>ABS (2010c)</b>
<i>Did not complete secondary school</i>	<i>7.4</i>	<i>11.2</i>	29.1
<i>Completed secondary school (Year 12)</i>	<i>9.9</i>	<i>22.7</i>	20.9
<i>Apprenticeship</i>	<i>3.5</i>	<i>5.8</i>	20.1
<i>Certificate or Diploma course</i>	<i>26.8</i>	<i>29.7</i>	26.9
<i>Bachelor degree</i>	<i>35.9</i>	<i>24.0</i>	16.5
<i>Higher degree (such as Masters or Doctorate)</i>	<i>16.6</i>	<i>6.6</i>	6.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	100

*This variance may be linked to the differing age breakdowns for the samples, as close to a third (31.5%) of those Public respondents with a secondary school graduation qualification was aged 18-24 and the Public sample having three times the number of respondents aged 18-24, compared to the Census sample.*

- No supporting data supplied in the publication so this cannot be assessed.

*When the Census results are analysed by gender women were far more likely than men to have a Bachelor degree (40.0% compared to 28.5%). Men were far more likely to have an Apprenticeship qualification (9.0% compared to 0.4%). Men were also more likely to have not completed secondary school or to have a Year 12 level qualification.*

- The ABS (2010c) data on educational attainment illustrated in the Table below again provides a very different profile to the sample offered in the Census.

***Educational Attainment (%) by Gender***

	<b>Census</b>		<b>ABS (2010c)</b>	
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b><i>Did not complete secondary school</i></b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>6.8</b>	28	30.2
<b><i>Completed secondary school (Year 12)</i></b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>8.9</b>	20.2	21.7
<b><i>Apprenticeship</i></b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0.4</b>	20.2	0
<b><i>Certificate or Diploma course</i></b>	<b>26.2</b>	<b>27.1</b>	30.6	23.1
<b><i>Bachelor degree</i></b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>40</b>	14.8	18.1
<b><i>Higher degree (Masters or Doctorate)</i></b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16.9</b>	6.2	6.9
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b>99.9</b>	<b>100.1</b>	100	100

**Census respondents were less likely than Public sample respondents (17.5% and 25.0% respectively) to identify as being born or having parents born in a non-English speaking country, however they were more likely to identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, 1.2% compared to 0.9%.**

- ABS (2011a) show that both the Census and Public Poll samples are under-represented in that in 2010, 31% of people aged 18 years or over living in Australia were born in another country. Of these 5.1 million people, one third (33%) were born in a main English-speaking country and the rest were born in another country.
- This under-representation continues in the ABS (2011a) which draws on 2006 census data to suggest that Aboriginal and Torres Start Islanders represent 2.5% of the Australian population

***Ethnic Backgorund (%)***

	<b>Census N=41584</b>	<b>Public Poll n=1020</b>	ABS (2011d) N=22.3million
<b><i>I was born in a non-English speaking country</i></b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>10.6</b>	China 1.7 India 1.5 Italy 1
<b><i>I was born in Australia but at least 1 of my parents was born in a non-English speaking country</i></b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>14.4</b>	Italian - 11 German - 4 Chinese-13
<b><i>I identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander</i></b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>0.9</b>	2.5
<b><i>None of the above</i></b>	<b>81.3</b>	<b>74.1</b>	
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	

**The top two countries other than Australia that the Census respondents identified having being born in were India (9.4%) and Germany (7.1%), while the two most common countries for respondents to indicate that one or both parents were born in were Italy (28.4%) and the Netherlands (16.0%).**

- ABS (2011d)) reveals that 27% of the Australian population was born overseas (6.0 million people). Persons born in the United Kingdom continued to be the largest group of overseas-born residents,

accounting for 5.3% New Zealand for 2.4% followed by persons born in China (1.7%), India (1.5%) and Italy (1.0%).

- ABS (2010b) reveals when both parents were born overseas, the most commonly reported ancestries were English (25% of persons for this group), Chinese (10%), Italian (7%), Scottish (6%) and Irish (4%).

## Marital Status and Caring Responsibilities (page 13-15)

*Respondents were asked their marital status, the majority (70.7%) were married or had a partner, which is a larger proportion than the Public sample (65.1%). The Census respondents were less likely to be single and more likely to be divorced or separated. This could be attributed to the differing age breakdowns of the two groups and the greater likelihood that Census respondents were older. Three quarters (77.8%) of Census respondents who indicated they were divorced were aged between 45 and 65, while two thirds (69.9%) of single respondents were aged 45 or below.*

- ABS data again reveals a different profile from both Census and Public Poll respondents
- The explanation provided for the variance between Census and Public Poll samples cannot be examined as the data is not presented in the publication
- There is no supporting data for the explanations provided in the ACTU publication

<b>Marital Status (%)</b>	<b>Census N=41584</b>	<b>Public Poll n=1020</b>	<b>ABS (2011a) N=22.3million</b>
<b>Single</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>26.8</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Married/ defacto/partnered</b>	<b>70.7</b>	<b>65.1</b>	<b>Married 53 Defacto11</b>
<b>Divorced/ separated</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>Divorced 7</b>
<b>total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Census respondents were more likely to have dependent children than the Public sample (37.2% opposed to 28.7%). This is consistent with ABS statistics that state that a third (37%) of private income households has dependent children. Unsurprisingly, two in five (42.5%) of the Census respondents with dependent children were aged between 45-54 years, a further third (36.6%) were aged 35-44 years.**

***Dependent Children (%)***

	<b>Census N=41584</b>	<b>Public Poll n=1020</b>	ABS (2011g) N=22.3million
<b>Yes</b>	<b>37.2</b>	<b>28.7</b>	<b>32.7</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>62.8</b>	<b>71.3</b>	<b>67.3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

- ABS data on dependent children falls between the Census and Public Poll samples

\*\*\*\*Details on caring responsibilities from pages 14-15 and the profile of Sandwich Generation, developed on pages 16-17, to be reviewed if required\*\*\* Note that the appropriate ABS publication for much of this data would be ABS (2008) A Profile of Carers In Australia, 2008 cat no. 4448.0 release 14/10/2008

## Employment Status and Hours of Work (page 18)

*The overwhelming majority (96.5%) of the Census respondents were employed compared with 59.4% of the Public respondents. This is primarily the result of the Census being promoted through unions and workplaces, and the public sample being chosen a representative sample of the wider Australian community*

### *Employment Status (%)*

	<i>Census N=41584</i>	<i>Public Poll n=1020</i>	ABS (2011a &b) & 2009 N=10.7million
<i>Employed</i>	<i>96.5</i>	<i>59.4</i>	<b>68</b>
<i>Unemployed/Not Working</i>	<i>2.0</i>	<i>17.5</i>	<b>5.2</b>
<i>Retired</i>	<i>1.5</i>	<i>23.0</i>	<b>?</b>
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	

- ABS (2009) reports on the 2008–09 Multipurpose Household Survey (MPHS) revealed that of the 7.6 million people aged 45 years and over who had, at some time, worked for two weeks or more, 4.3 million (56%) were in the labour force, 3.0 million (40%) had retired from the labour force, and the remaining 305,300 (4%) were not currently in the labour force but had not retired.

*Respondents who indicated that they were employed were asked to indicate how many jobs they were currently working. The majority of Census and Public respondents were working one job (86.8% and 84.7% respectively), however over one in ten indicated that they were working two jobs, 11.3% of the census sample and 12.7% of the Public respondents*

- Both of the ACTU samples contrast with ABS (2009a) data which reports that in 2007, 657,000 workers had more than one job (6% of employed people). According to data collected in the Labour Force Survey, the incidence of multiple job holding has not changed much since the 1990s, hovering around 5% to 6%.

*Of the 40,113 Census respondents who indicated that they were employed, close to three quarters (72.2%) said that they worked on a full time basis. This is a greater proportion than the Public results, where 57.1% of employed respondents said that they worked on a full time basis.*

<b><i>Full time or part time (%)</i></b>			
	<b><i>Census N=41584</i></b>	<b><i>Public Poll n=1020</i></b>	<b>ABS (2011b) N=11.4 million</b>
<b><i>Full time</i></b>	<b><i>72.8</i></b>	<b><i>57.1</i></b>	<b>70.3</b>
<b><i>Part time</i></b>	<b><i>27.8</i></b>	<b><i>42.9</i></b>	<b>29.7</b>
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b><i>100</i></b>	<b><i>100</i></b>	<b>100</b>

- The Census data is closer to the ABS data while, this time, the Public Poll is skewed towards the part time workforce
- Additional to the ABS (2011b) data above on the general Australian workforce, ABS (2011) data on trade union members in their main job for August 2010 reveals that 20% of full-time employees, and 14% of part-time employees were trade union members in their main job.

## Employment Arrangements (Page 19-21)

*One of the aims of the Census was to collect information on the arrangements under which workers are currently being employed in order to understand the changes that are occurring within the Australian labour market and workers views of them.*

- Note that this appears to be an important claim as to the generalisability and applicability of the findings of the Census data to the general working population of Australia

*The Census results show that while permanent positions are still the majority of positions at 84.8% of respondents, over one in ten (13.3%) of respondents were either on casual or fixed term contract arrangements, neither of which provide for long term job security. This finding is even more pronounced in the Public sample with a quarter (24.9%) of respondents indicating that they were in casual arrangements and a further 4.6% on a fixed term contract.*

- ABS data again reveals a very different profile of the general Australian workforce from the ones captured in both the Census and Public Poll.

<b>Employment Arrangements (%)</b>			
<b>C</b>	<b>Census N=41584</b>	<b>Public Poll n=1020</b>	<b>ABS (2011b) N=11.4 million</b>
<b>Permanent employee</b>	<b>84.8</b>	<b>57.3</b>	<b>61.6</b>
<b>Casual employee</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>24.9</b>	} <b>19.3</b>
<b>Fixed term contract employee</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>4.6</b>	
<b>Temporary/ labour hire employee</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.7</b>	
<b>Independent contractor/ sub contractor</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>*9.8</b>
<b>Business owner/ self-employed</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>9.3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

\*Note that ABS data only identifies Independent contractors, not sub contractors

*The respondents who indicated that they were either employed on a casual, fixed term contract or temporary basis were asked the number of jobs that they had worked in the previous 12 months. Two in five (42.1%) of Census respondents in casual/temporary work had worked either two or three jobs in the previous 12 months, compared to a third (35.0%) of the Public respondents in similar work*

*arrangements, suggesting that those in non permanent forms of work are highly mobile and often working on a short term and insecure basis.*

- ABS data not available but note information on multiple job holding above from ABS (2009a) which reported level of workers with more than one job at 6% of employed people.

*In addition to asking respondents in non-permanent work about the number of jobs they had worked, respondents who indicated that they were an independent or sub-contractor were asked if 80% or more of their work/contracts was with the one client. While the sample size is too small to draw any firm conclusions from, it is worth noting that close to two thirds of both the Census and Public respondents indicated that 80% of their work was with one client. This is noteworthy as it means a clear majority are “dependent contractors”. This group has been included in the cross tabulations as non-permanent workers because as they are heavily reliant on a single client, it places them in an employee type relationship without any protections, making the arrangement insecure.*

- This data contrasts with that on independent contracting in ABS (2009b) which reveals that 73% of independent contractors were able to work for multiple clients and while only 46% of independent contractors had more than one active contract in the reference week. ABS (2009b p.24) suggests “that for many independent contractors, working on one contract at a time may be preferable or provides sufficient income”.
- ABS (2009b) adds to the notions of control and genuine marketplace activity in that 65% of independent contractors, were able to sub-contract their own work – with supplementary data to show that, of those who could not, the 'Nature of the work' was the main reason (62%) while 'Part of contract/conditions' accounted for a further 23%.

*When comparing those workers in non-permanent (casual, fixed term, temporary, dependent contractors) work with those in permanent work, there are a number of differences, ...non-permanent workers said that they were dissatisfied with their current level of job security, and only 30.8% said they were satisfied, compared to 72.4% for permanent workers.*

- See <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4102.0Main+Features50Dec+2009>

*Unsurprisingly, workers in non-permanent arrangements are far more likely to rank greater job security as an important issue for improving their conditions at work (Chart 8). These results suggest that many workers in nonpermanent arrangements would prefer to be in more secure or permanent forms of work situations and that remaining in non-permanent work is more a function of necessity than choice.*

- **ABS data from 2006-7**  
[http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/B1B5E54950C4DFC4CA25748E0012A46B/\\$File/41020\\_2008\\_14.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/B1B5E54950C4DFC4CA25748E0012A46B/$File/41020_2008_14.pdf)

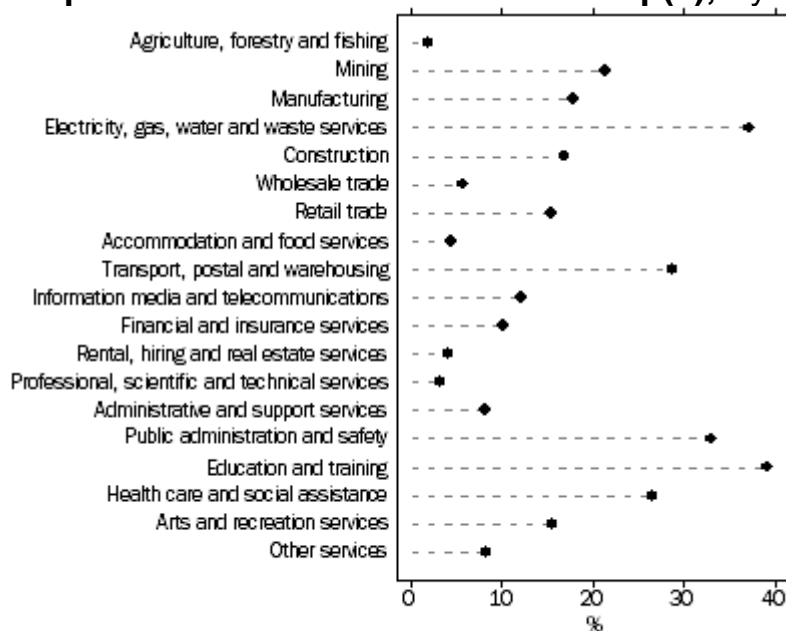


## Industry (Page 22)

*The Census results for industry are biased towards a number of key industries, including healthcare and social assistance and education and training. This strongly correlates to the over representation of professional workers in the occupation results. This can be attributed to the same causes, previously referred to in relation to the overall bias in the Census sample.*

- ABS (2011) data on trade union membership shows that employees in the Education and training industry Division had the highest proportion of trade union membership in their main job (39%), followed by Electricity, gas, water and waste services (37%). The industry Division with the lowest proportion of trade union membership in their main job was Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- The results of the Census do generally reflect union membership data (see ABS Table below for more detail)

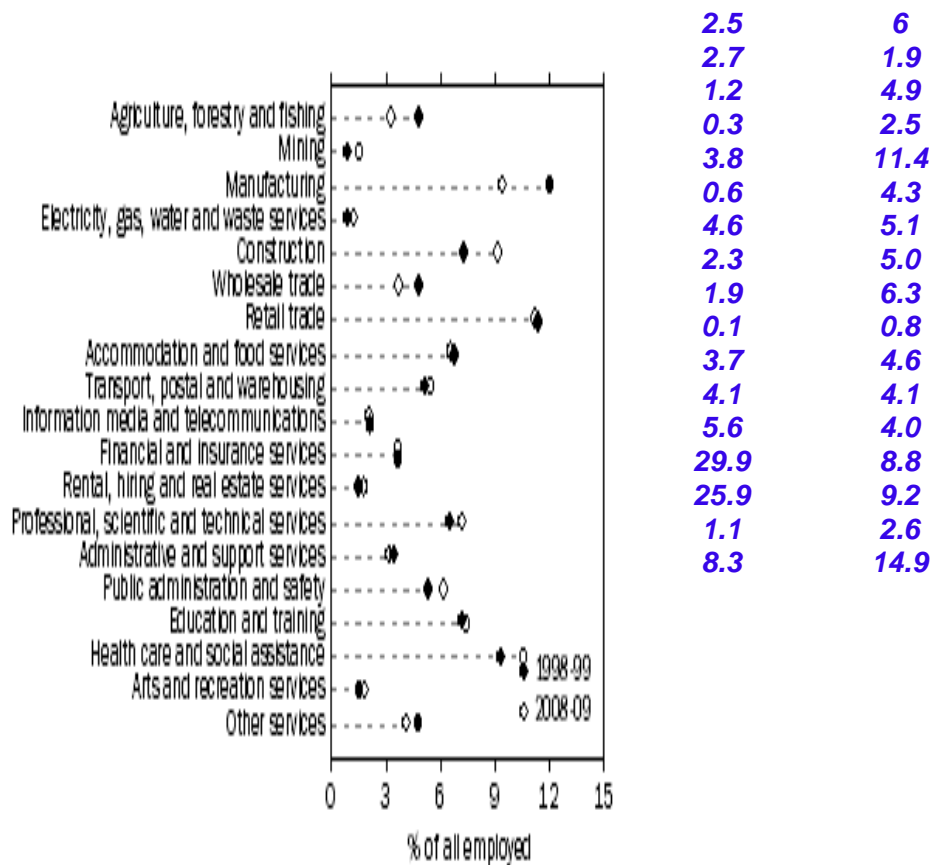
## Proportion of trade union membership(a), By industry



(a) In main job.

- However, ABS data on the general Australian workforce profile is somewhat different. Note particularly the fact that 15% is the highest percentile displayed in the ABS data. Except for the industries of Manufacturing and Other Services, the Public Poll data provides a greater match with ABS data.

## Industry ABS, Census and Public Poll (%)



(a) Annual average of quarterly data.

(b) Classified according to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC), 2006 (1292.0).

Source: ABS Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly (6291.0.55.003).

<i>Census</i>	<i>Public Poll</i>
<i>0.7</i>	<i>2.3</i>
<i>0.8</i>	<i>1.4</i>

### Occupation (page 23)

*All respondents were asked to select their occupation from Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations<sup>6</sup>. Over half (54.3%) of the Census respondents listed their occupation as professional, this classification includes jobs such as accountant, aircraft pilot, engineer, journalist, midwife, musician, occupational therapist, registered nurse, sales representative, school teacher, scientist, social worker, solicitor and university lecturer. This was more than double the Public result, where a quarter (25.6%) of respondents indicated that their occupation was a professional. The second largest (15.9%) occupation group in the Census results was clerical and administrative workers, this was also the case in the Public results (Chart 10). The large bias in the Census sample can be attributed the strong participation of women from unions in the healthcare, education and public sectors.*

### Occupation (%)

	<b>Census N=41584</b>	<b>Public Poll n=1020</b>	ABS (2011b) N=11.4 million
<b>Professional</b>	<b>54.3</b>	<b>25.6</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Clerical &amp; admin Worker</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>21.1</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Community &amp; Personal Service</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Manager</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Technician &amp; Trade</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Sales</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Machinery Operator &amp; Driver</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Labourer</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>10</b>

- The professional bias in the ACTU Census data is clear when placed beside ABS data while the under-representation of Technicians & Trades and Labourers and, to a lesser extent, Managers, appears at odds with the traditional public perception of trade union membership.

*When looking at occupation by gender ..., there is a strong reflection of traditional gendered work roles, with the overwhelming majority of technician and trade workers; and machinery operators and drivers being male (91.0% and 92.4%). Interestingly, the gender split for the manager occupation is more even than the overall gender split of the Census sample, showing that men are more likely than women to be in a manager role. While women were more likely to nominate professional again this is reflective of the high number of women from the healthcare, education and public sectors.*

**Occupation by Gender (Census) (%)**

	Census		ABS (2011j)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Managers</b>	<b>46.7</b>	<b>53.3</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Professionals</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>70.7</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Technicians and Trades Workers</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Community and Personal Service Workers</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>71.4</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Clerical and Administrative Workers</b>	<b>25.5</b>	<b>74.5</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Sales Workers</b>	<b>29.8</b>	<b>70.2</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Machinery Operators And Drivers</b>	<b>92.4</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Labourers</b>	<b>64.4</b>	<b>35.6</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>34</b>

- Major differences between the ACTU Census sample and ABS data emerge in Occupation by gender, most particularly for Managers and Professionals
- Again, the lack of weighting applied to the Census data set appears questionable when looking at these results and comparing them with ABS data
-

## Looking for Work

*All respondents were asked if they were currently looking for work, with an overwhelming majority (84.0%) of the Census respondents said that they were not looking for work. Census respondents were less likely than the Public sample to be looking for work, 16.0% compared to 22.5%, suggesting that union members are less likely to be looking for work.*

**Currently looking for work (%)**

	<b>Census N=41584</b>	<b>Public Poll n=1020</b>	<b>ABS (2011b) N=11.4 million</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>22.5</b>	<b>5.5</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>77.5</b>	<b>94.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

- In more detail, recent ABS (2011) reveals that the number of persons looking for part-time work decreased 15,400 to 165,800 and the number of persons looking for full-time work increased 9,800 to 465,000.

\*\*\*\*Note that data on “**Not looked for work and Reasons for having trouble getting a job** (pages 24-25) and **Reasons for having trouble getting a job** ((page 26)can be supplied if needed\*\*\* This was used in the ACTU publication to develop **The Forgotten Blokes** (pages 27-28) Profile of 228 men identified from Census as men aged 45-64 who say they are currently not working but are looking for work

## Job Information (Pages 29-35)

*The following questions were only asked to respondents that indicated that they were currently employed (Census n=40113 and Public sample n=606). They were designed to give a picture of the day to day working life of ordinary Australians and also learn more about the modern workplace.*

- The above statement is important as the differences in the ACTU data from ABS sources appear to seriously limit or even negate such claims

## Sector

*Respondents were asked to identify what sector they were currently working in. Reflecting the high concentration of respondents in the education and training and healthcare and social assistance industries, the Census sample has a high proportion of respondents in the public (66.0%) and community (10.1%) sectors, when compared to the Public sample*

- ABS (2010f) n June 2010 there were 1,843,500 public sector employees. There were 243,700 employees in Commonwealth government, 1,414,400 in state government and 185,400 in local government.

<b>Sector (%)</b>	<b>Census N=41584</b>	<b>Public Poll n=1020</b>	<b>ABS (2011b &amp;e) N=11.4 million</b>	<b>ABS (2011) Trade Union Nos</b>
<b>Public Sector</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>23.6</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Private Sector</b>	<b>23.9</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>79.5</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Community/Not For Profit</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>4.5</b>	

- Note that recent (ABS, 2011) data collected about trade union members in their main job for August 2010 also showed 41% of public sector employees compared to 14% of private sector employees were trade union members in their main job.

*When the sector results for the Census respondents are analysed by gender (Charts 14, 15 and 16) the results reflect the gendered nature of certain types of work, with the community sector being heavily female dominated (76.0%), along with the public sector (68.8%). While the private sector is an almost even split between men and women.*

**Sector Gender Split (Census) (%)**

	<b>Census N=41584</b>		<b>ABS (2011b &amp;e) N=11.4 million</b>	
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>Public Sector</b>	<b>31.2</b>	<b>68.8</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Private Sector</b>	<b>50.1</b>	<b>49.9</b>		
<b>Community/Not For Profit</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>81</b>

*Of all the sectors the community sector gender split was closest to ABS data, with the ABS reporting that the community sector is 81% women<sup>7</sup>, compared to the 76.0% women of the Census sample.*

### **Length of Time in Current Job**

*Respondents were asked how long they had worked in their current job, a quarter (25.7%) of Census respondents had been in their current job for more than 15 years, this is double the number of Public sample respondents who had been in their current job for the same amount of time. Census respondents were more likely to have worked at their current job for more than 5 years, 56.3% compared to 38.0% for the Public sample. Broadly speaking union members or at least the ones that participated in the Census are more likely to stay in their jobs than the wider labour force and have greater retention rates.*

- Need to locate ABS data on this but...
- ABS (2011?) Australian Labour Market Statistics, Oct 2011 reveals majority employees (91%) expect to be with current employer for next 12 months with 9% expecting to voluntarily leave and 1% involuntarily leaving

**\*\*\* Data provided by ACTU on issues of Work Schedule/ Hours of work/ Paid to work less than 35 hours a week by Gender / Reasons for Part Time Work Comparison et complex but can be worked on and provided if needed\*\*\***

## REFERENCES

ABS (2008) A Profile of Carers In Australia, 2008 cat no. 4448.0 release 14/10/2008

ABS (2009) 6238.0 - Retirement and Retirement Intentions, Australia, Jul 2008 to Jun 2009 <http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/92C65232D4A6CA39CA2573D700178F44?OpenDocument> Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 17/12/2009

ABS (2009a) 4102.0 - Australian Social Trends, Sep 2009 Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 24/09/2009

ABS (2009b) Australian Labour Market Statistics, released Jul 2009 (cat. 6105.0)

ABS (2009c) 4102.0 - Australian Social Trends, Dec 2009 Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 10/12/2009

ABS (2010) 3201.0 - Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories, Jun 2010 <http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/89596F67A93FEB3FCA2574740015D6E5?OpenDocument> Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 21/12/2010

ABS (2010a) cat. no. 4102.0, Australian Social Trends, Data Cube – Work Released at 11.30am (Canberra time) 21 December 2010

ABS (2010b) 1301.0 - Year Book Australia, 2009–10 Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 04/06/2010

ABS (2010c) 6227.0 - Education and Work, Australia, May 2010 Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 24/11/2010

ABS (2010d) 6342.0 - Working Time Arrangements, Australia, November 2009 <http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/096140B171E2428ACA25772900206C57?OpenDocument> Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 21/05/2010

ABS (2010e) 8696.0 - Community Services, 2008-09 <http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/B8EF9EC4926F4B09CA25774B00155CCD?OpenDocument> Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 24/06/2010

ABS (2010f) 6248.0.55.002 - Employment and Earnings, Public Sector, Australia, 2009-10 <http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/80959D0A85033057CA25755A000D1CEB?OpenDocument> LATEST ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 16/12/2010

ABS (2011) Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership, cat. 6310.0 - Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 06/05/2011

ABS (2011a) 4159.0 - General Social Survey: Summary Results, Australia, 2010 catalogue 4159.0 LATEST ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 30/09/2011

ABS (2011b) 6202.0 - Labour Force, Australia, Oct 2011 LATEST ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 10/11/2011

ABS (2011c) 6359.0 - Forms of Employment, Australia, November 2010 Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 29/04/2011

ABS (2011d) 412.0 - Migration, Australia, 2009-10 <http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/015A08786894E37CCA2574170011B87A?OpenDocument> LATEST ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 16/06/2011

ABS (2011e) 6224.0.55.001 - Labour Force, Australia: Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families, Jun 2011 <http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/C447B52574C0E925CA2574880016091B?OpenDocument> Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 28/09/2011

ABS (2011f) 4102.0 - Australian Social Trends, Mar 2011 Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 23/03/2011

ABS (2011g) E N T S 6523.0 HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND INCOME DISTRIBUTION AUSTRALIA 2009 – 10 Released at 11 . 3 0 A M ( C A N B E R R A T I M E ) T U E S 3 0 A U G 2 0 1 1

ABS (2011i) 6105.0 Australian Labour Market Statistics Released at 11:30 am (Canberra time) 11 October 2011

ABS (2011 j) <http://www.deewr.gov.au/lmip/default.aspx?LMIP/EmploymentData>