
J The railway workforce

This appendix provides a statistical overview of Australia's railway workforce, covering employment levels and workforce characteristics. Issues regarding employment in railways are discussed in chapter 11.

J.1 Employment

Railway employment data were obtained from the Steering Committee on National Performance Monitoring of Government Trading Enterprises (SCNPMGTE) (1998) *Performance Indicators* and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) *Labour Force Survey*. Both of these sources have limitations and care needs to be exercised in interpreting the data.

SCNPMGTE employment data are collected on a full-time equivalent basis for monitored government rail authorities. These data underestimate the absolute level of employment because private sector employment in railways is not included — only government rail authorities are monitored by SCNPMGTE. The data are also likely to overestimate the rate of decrease in employment because of the transfer of functions and contracting out of activities that has occurred within government rail authorities.

The ABS *Labour Force Survey* follows the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC). Data are collected on the number of full-time and part-time employees. ANZSIC defines employment in the rail industry (class 6200) as 'units mainly engaged in operating railways (except tramways) for the transportation of freight or passengers, in operating railway terminal or depot facilities for receiving, dispatching or transferring rail freight or cargo, or in providing services allied to transport n.e.c. [not elsewhere classified]' (ABS 1993a, p. 178).

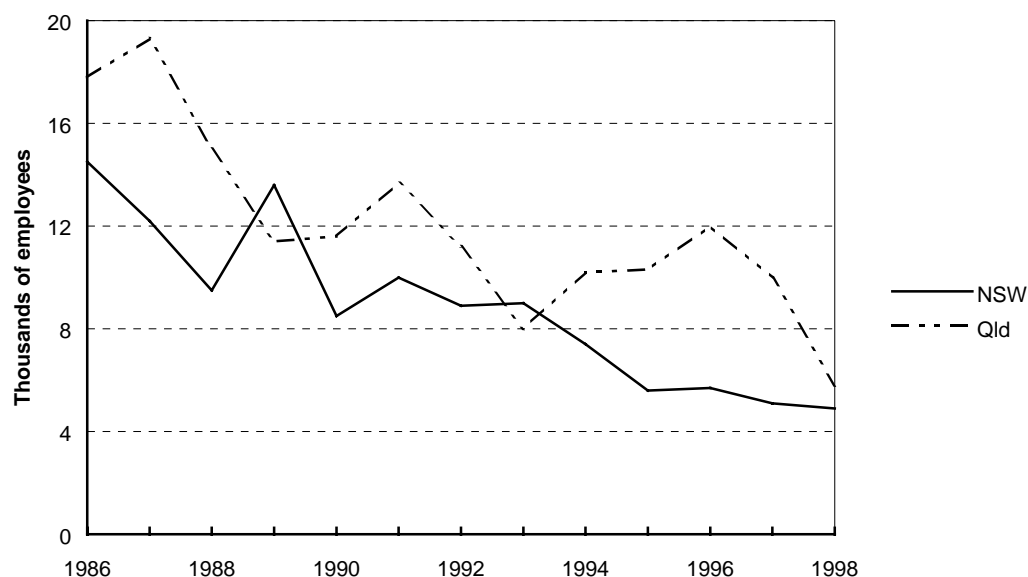
The ANZSIC classification for rail transport (equivalent to its former Australian Standard Industrial Classification) is also likely to understate the level of employment in the rail industry. Class 6200 excludes persons mainly engaged in the maintenance of rollingstock and locomotives and the construction and maintenance of track and associated infrastructure.

There is greater variability in the ABS estimates compared to those of SCNPMGTE. This variability can in part be explained by the fact that the ABS *Labour Force Survey* is based on a sample of 0.5 per cent of households and is therefore subject to sampling error.

Employment outside capital cities

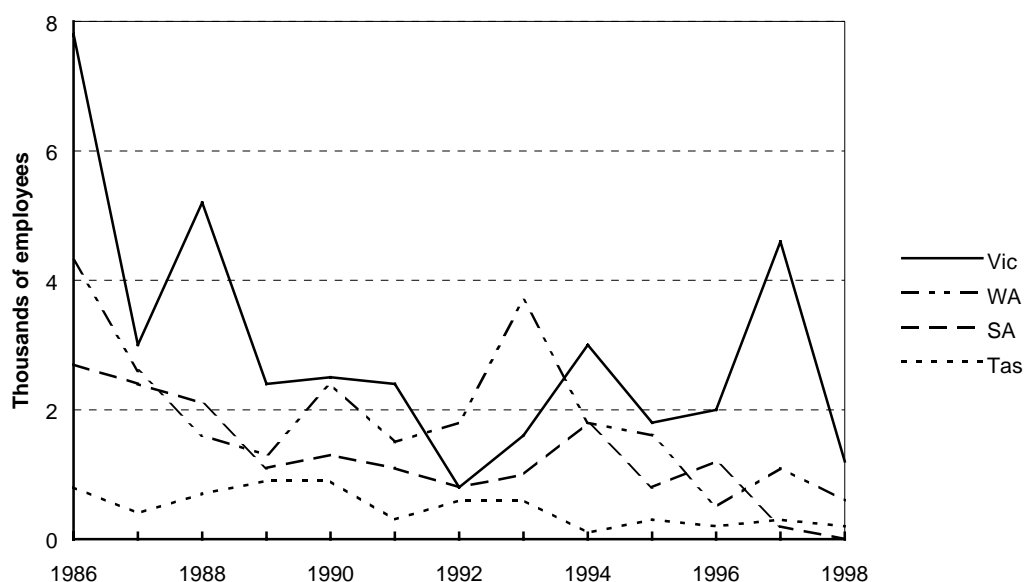
The ABS *Labour Force Survey* indicates that railway employment outside Australia's capital cities has fallen more rapidly than within capital cities. The largest absolute reductions in employment outside capital cities between 1986 and 1998 occurred in New South Wales and Queensland — 9 600 and 12 000 workers respectively (figure J.1). However, reductions in employment were also recorded in Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania (figure J.2).

Figure J.1 **Non-metropolitan full-time railway employment, New South Wales and Queensland, 1986 to 1998**



Source: ABS (*Labour Force, Australia*, Cat. no. 6203.0, unpublished, various years).

Figure J.2 **Non-metropolitan full-time railway employment, Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania, 1986 to 1998**



Source: ABS (*Labour Force, Australia*, Cat. no. 6203.0, unpublished, various years).

J.2 Workforce characteristics

A railway employee is likely to be:

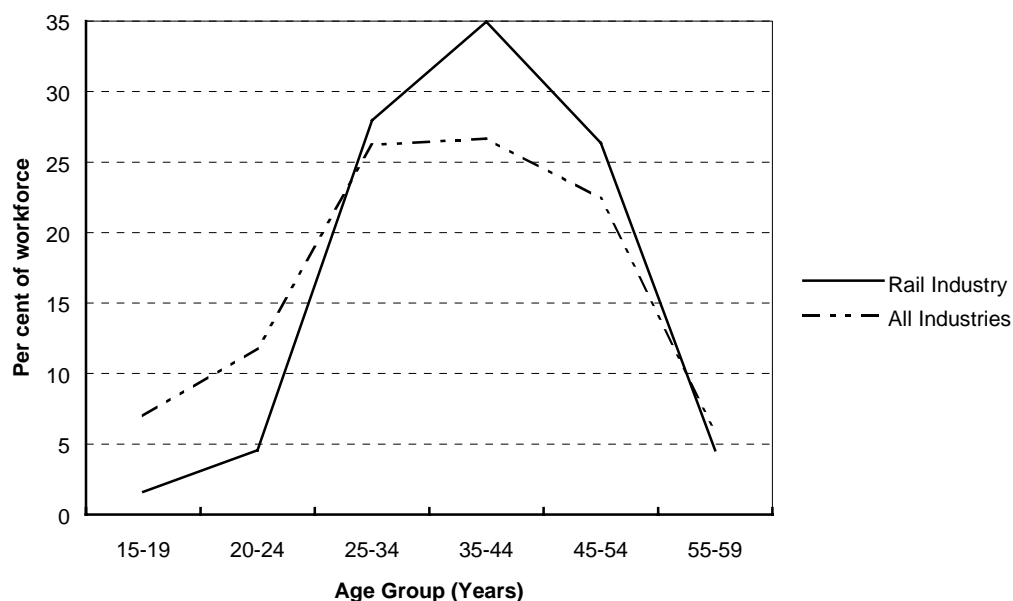
- an older male;
- less 'mobile' than workers in other industries; and
- a member of a trade union.

Age and gender

Railway employees on average tend to be older compared to those in the 'all industries' category. In 1998, over 65 per cent of railway employees were greater than 35 years of age compared to around 55 per cent for 'all industries' (figure J.3). Conversely, only 6 per cent of railway employees are aged less than 24 years compared to 19 per cent for 'all industries'.

Railway workers are predominantly male. Over 90 per cent of railway workers are male compared to around 56 per cent for employees across 'all industries' (ABS 1998b).

Figure J.3 **Age distribution, rail and all industries, 1998**



Source: ABS (*Labour Force, Australia*, Cat. no. 6203.0, unpublished, various years).

Educational attainment

In 1998, just under one half of railway employees had completed the highest level of secondary school. Around one third of railway employees had also completed post-school qualifications — with around two thirds of these employees undertaking some form of basic or skilled vocational training. The remaining third had undertaken some form of diploma or degree (ABS 1998f).

Labour mobility

Labour mobility data provide information on the extent to which railway workers are able to adapt to structural change. The more ‘mobile’ a railway worker is, the more readily adaptable a worker may be to moving to either a new employer (either within or outside the rail industry) or changing the location of employment.

Employees in the rail industry appear to be less ‘mobile’ than the average for ‘all industries’. In the twelve months to February 1998, 4 per cent of all persons employed in the rail industry changed their employer/business and/or location of employment compared with around 14 per cent for ‘all industries’ (table J.1).

Table J.1 Persons who changed employer/business or locality in previous twelve months, February 1998

<i>Whether changed employer/business or location</i>	<i>Rail</i>	<i>All industries^a</i>
	%	%
Changed employer/business only	2	10
Changed employer/business and location	1	1
Changed location only	1	3
Did not change employer/business or location	96	87

^a Totals do not add due to rounding.

Source: ABS (*Labour Mobility, Australia*, Cat. no. 6209.0, unpublished, various years).

Most employment flows over the twelve months to February 1998 occurred within industries rather than between industries. A worker is classified to have changed industry if the new position is outside his or her previous industry of employment as categorised by the two digit ANZSIC subdivision. The proportion of railway employees who changed their industry of employment between 1997 and 1998 was below that for 'all industries' — 2 per cent compared with 6 per cent respectively (table J.2).

Table J.2 Employees who changed industry between 1997 and 1998

	<i>Changed industry</i>		<i>Total industry employment</i>
	<i>Employees</i>	<i>Proportion</i>	
	number	%	number
Rail industry	652	2	38 864
All industries	453 052	6	7 670 078

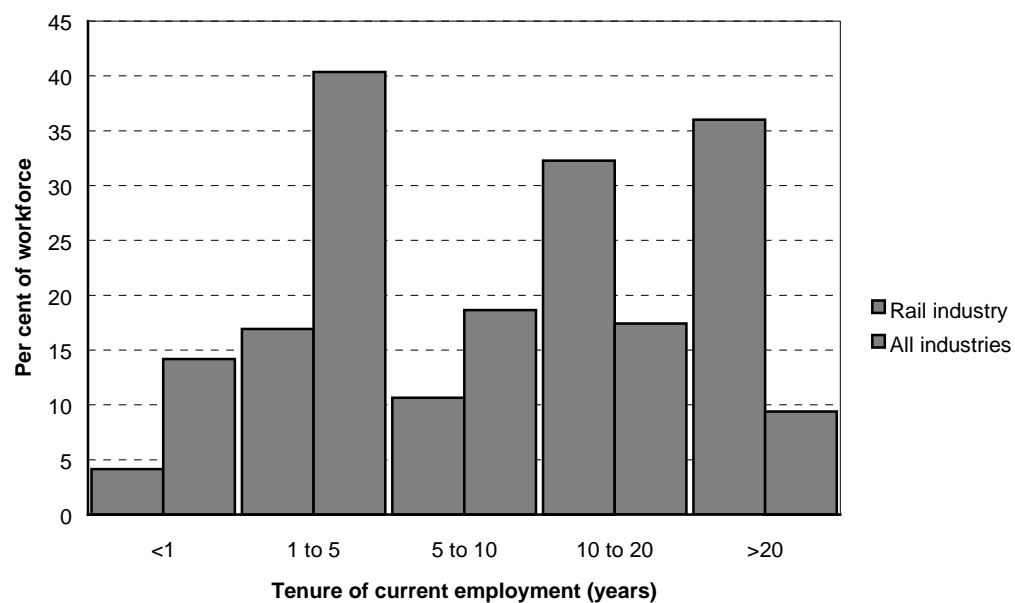
Source: ABS (*Labour Mobility, Australia*, Cat. no. 6209.0, unpublished, various years).

Employment tenure and unionisation

Overall, employment tenure tends to be higher in the rail industry compared to 'all industries'. In 1998, 36 per cent of railway workers had been in the same job (which may have changed responsibility and skill levels over time) for over 20 years compared to around 9 per cent for 'all industries' (figure J.4).

The level of unionisation in railways is high. In 1998 around 85 per cent of railway employees were members of a trade union compared to 31 per cent for 'all industries' (ABS 1998e).

Figure J.4 **Employment tenure, rail and all industries, 1998**



Source: ABS (*Labour Mobility, Australia*, Cat. no. 6209.0, unpublished, various years).