

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011–2012**

Outcome 4 - Employment

DEEWR Question No. EW0789_12

Senator Abetz asked on 19 October 2011, Hansard page 121

Question

Underemployment

Senator Chris Evans: Whereas America is at 9.something and the eurozone is around the 10 per cent mark. But it has been softer in the last few months than was originally predicted. Senator ABETZ: What figures do we have in relation to underemployment? Mr Kovacic: I will have to take that on notice. Ms Paul: We do have some figures on that, but we do not have them here.

Answer

Underemployment is measured quarterly by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). It is composed mainly of part-time workers who preferred to work more hours and were available to start working those hours.

ABS statistics¹ show that, over **the three months** to August 2011, in seasonally adjusted terms:

- The overall underemployment rate was 7.0 per cent, while the rate for men was 5.2 per cent and for women was 9.1 per cent.
- The level of underemployment decreased by 16 000 (or 1.9 per cent) to 838 300, falling by 21 600 (or 6.0 per cent) for men but rising by 5600 (or 1.1 per cent) for women.

Over the **year** to August 2011, in seasonally adjusted terms:

- The underemployment rate decreased by 0.4 percentage points.
- The level of underemployment decreased by 33 000 (or 3.8 per cent), falling by 36 800 (or 9.8 per cent) for men but rising by 3700 (or 0.7 per cent) for women.

The ABS also publishes more detailed annual statistics on underemployment while the Roy Morgan Research group has published monthly statistics on underemployment since October 2008 (see the answer to EW0790_12 for further information).

¹ Source: ABS (2011), *Labour Force, Australia, September 2011*, Cat. No. 6202.0.