

Senate Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Budget Estimates

2017 - 2018

Division/Agency: Macroeconomic Conditions Division

Question No: 240

Topic: Underemployment

Reference: Hansard page 44 (29 May 2017)

Senator: Ketter, Chris

Question:

Senator KETTER: Turning to the issue of underemployment, can you tell us what the extent and distribution is of underemployment?

Mr Ray: Underemployment is 8.7 per cent as measured by the ABS.

Senator KETTER: The distribution?

Mr Ray: How do you mean 'distribution'? Do you mean across the country?

Senator KETTER: Yes.

Mr Ray: We would need to have a look at that for you.

Senator KETTER: Essentially, the number of people who say they wished they worked more hours than they currently work, you are saying, is 8.7 per cent.

Mr Ray: As at the quarter to February. The most recent data is for the quarter to February this year.

Answer:

Table 1 shows underemployment rates for each state and territory as at May 2017. The underemployment rate is the number of underemployed workers as a proportion of the labour force. Underemployed workers are defined as part-time workers who want, and are available for more hours of work than they currently have, and full-time workers who worked part-time hours during the reference week for economic reasons (such as being stood down or insufficient work being available).

Table 1: Underemployment rate Seasonally adjusted, as at May 2017	
Australia	8.8
New South Wales	8.0
Victoria	8.6
Queensland	9.1
South Australia	9.8
Western Australia	10.4
Tasmania	9.8
Northern Territory*	4.8
Australian Capital Territory*	5.9
Note: * trend estimates as seasonally adjusted data are not available. Source: ABS Cat. no. 6202.0	