

Measuring quality of employment

Brief Presentation – Australian Bureau of Statistics

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Broad outline

- Growing demand for information, especially about the labour market
- Changing political and economic conditions
- Ongoing need for NSOs to remain relevant; therefore ongoing need to consider statistics provided (including labour market statistics)
- ABS welcomes the considerable amount of thinking and discussion about quality of employment

Some observations to date

- Need to clarify desires for the direction of quality of employment work
- Different issues have been experienced in its implementation
 - Measurement
 - Relevance of some indicators in some countries
 - Interpretation
- This information will be enormously valuable for other NSOs
- Interesting question around role of an NSO – may vary by country

Recent focus of ABS Labour Market Statistics program

- Primary focus over last couple of years
 - Building up range of quantitative measures (e.g., aggregate monthly hours worked)
 - Improving measures of underutilisation
 - Underemployment rate
 - Underutilisation rate

Upcoming focus of ABS Labour Market Statistics program

- Current focus over coming years
 - Recent large review of program content
 - Wide consultation
 - Streamlining and improving measurement of content
 - Actively considering introducing other aspects

Options to be progressed

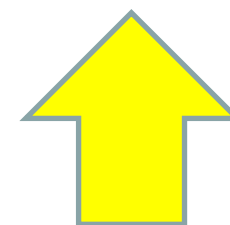
- Improvement to existing indicators
 - More frequent underutilisation information (monthly) and volume measures (quarterly)
 - Underemployed measures to include all employed (not just PT)
 - Collect sick leave and paid holiday leave entitlements on quarterly basis, enabling time series
 - Collect full detail of Duration with current business
 - Investigate options to provide monthly Industry estimates in LFS

Options to be progressed

- Other developments
 - Development of a retrenchment indicator
 - Development of a jobs indicator (as distinct from current headline employment measure)
 - Reorganisation of existing supplementary surveys schedule

Proposed new schedule

Participation, Job Search and Mobility (February)	Characteristics of Employment (August)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job change • Job mobility • Job search (of all people, not just unemployed and some NILF) • Participation and increasing participation (underemployment, marginal attachment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earnings (in main job and all jobs) • Trade union membership • Non-standard employment • Independent contracting • Employment arrangements • Job security • Job flexibility



Most relevance to QoE work

ABS' view of quality of employment work to date

- Appreciates the importance of overall topic and level of user interest
- Supports the continued consideration of the indicators as pool of options, rather than framework/ standard
 - Though to the extent that there is difference in countries' choice and implementation of options, international comparisons may be more difficult

ABS' view (continued)

- Some ongoing reservations about:
 - Inherent subjectivity in topic
 - Different views about what 'quality' is
 - Will inherently reflect a certain set of values (e.g., job tenure is good; working at night is bad)
 - Likely interrelationships between dimensions
 - Not likely to be independent
 - Workers may be prepared to make trade-offs
 - Different workers will have different preferences

ABS' view (continued)

- Some issues with indicators
 - Some indicators will be difficult to measure in practice
 - For some indicators, a change in a particular direction is unlikely to be able to be measured as a change in quality of employment
 - For some indicators, it will be difficult to obtain measures which are comparable across countries

Overall thoughts

- Demand for information about labour market is increasing
 - clearly appreciate usefulness of QoE work to assist in responding to this
- Ongoing concerns about aspects of quality of employment work done to date; but recognise that some of these have been explicitly acknowledged
- Role for a possible best practice guide/ pool of sample indicators or dimensions for interested NSOs to draw on
- Keen to remain involved and contribute on ongoing basis

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