

Australia's Discouraged Job Seekers

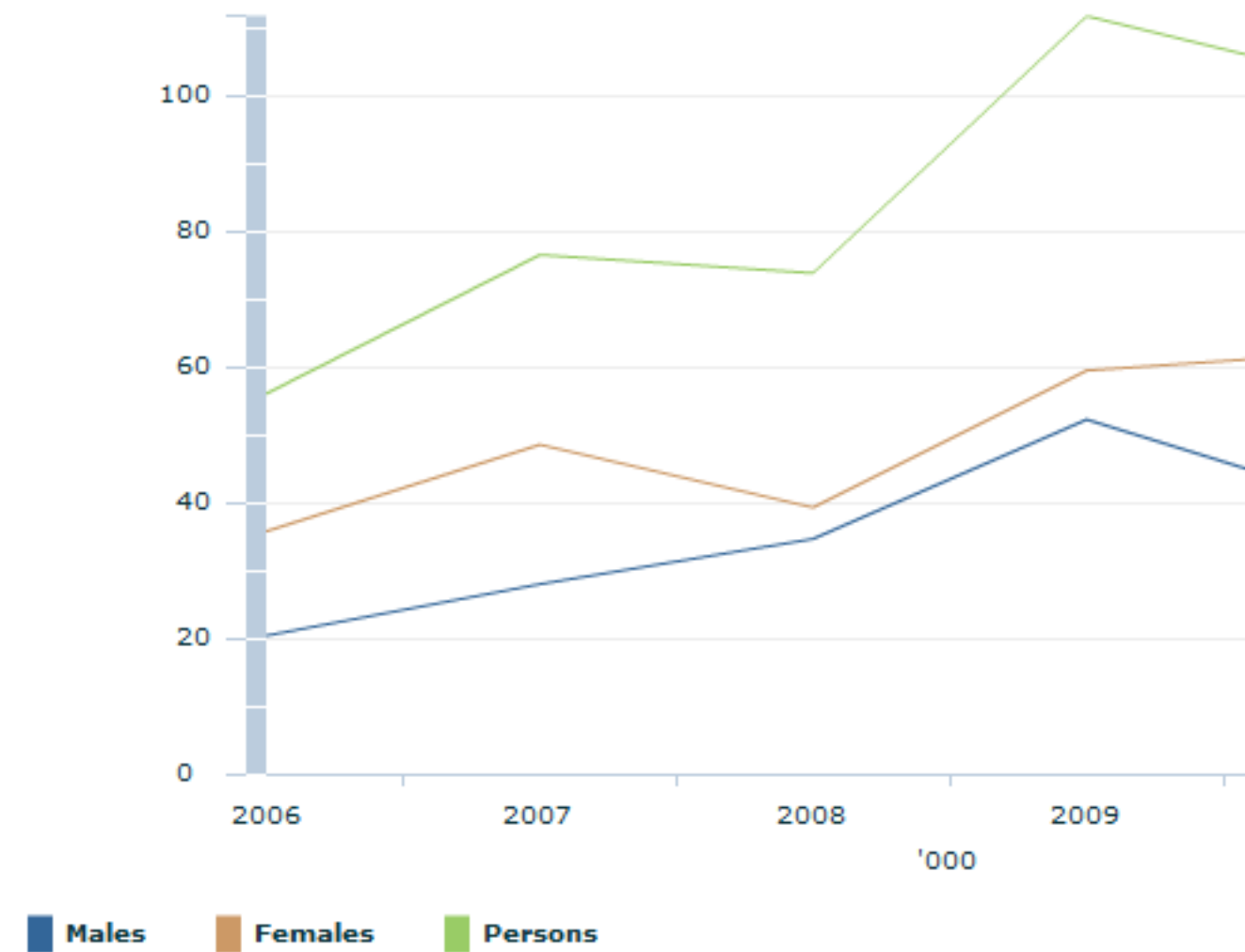
Overview

People who are not in the labour force account for one third (6 million) of working age Australians. While the proportion of people in this group has remained relatively stable since 2006 at 33%, this is not the case for discouraged job seekers. With population growth, the number of people not in the labour force has grown from 5.7 million in 2009 to 6 million in 2011, while the number of discouraged job seekers has fallen from 111,800 in 2009 to 90,700 in 2011. Discouraged job seekers are people who are available for work and want to work, but were not looking for a job because they believed that they would not find a job for a number of reasons, such as being considered to be too old by employers or lacking the necessary schooling, training, skills or experience.

Discouraged job seekers

Discouraged job seekers accounted for 11% (90,700) of the 853,400 people not in the labour force who were available to start work within four weeks but were not looking in 2011. The number of discouraged job seekers in Australia peaked in 2009 following an increase by 53,700 people between 2006 and 2009. This number has since decreased to 90,700 in 2011.

Discouraged job seekers, 2006-2011



Save Chart Image

Australian Bureau of Statistics

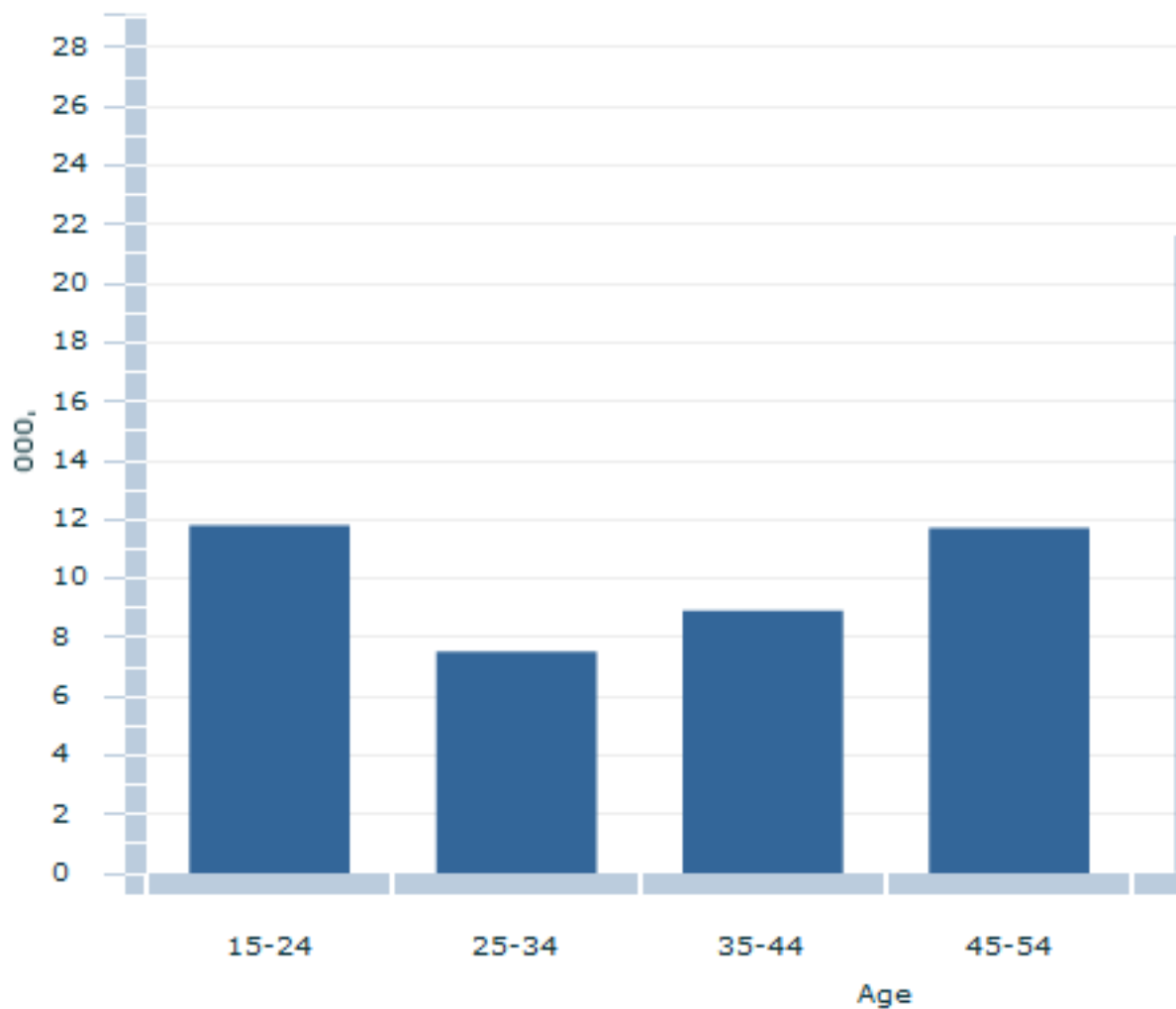
© Commonwealth of Australia 2012.

Source(s): [Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia](#)

Discouraged job seekers by age group

In 2011 the age groups of people containing the largest number of discouraged job seekers were 65 years and over (32%) and 55–64 years (24%), showing that over half of discouraged job seekers (56%) were aged over 55 years. Comparatively, 13% of discouraged job seekers were aged 15–24 years (8,000 men and 3,900 women).

Discouraged job seekers by Age, 2011



Save Chart Image

Australian Bureau of Statistics

© Commonwealth of Australia 2012.

Source(s): [Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia](#)

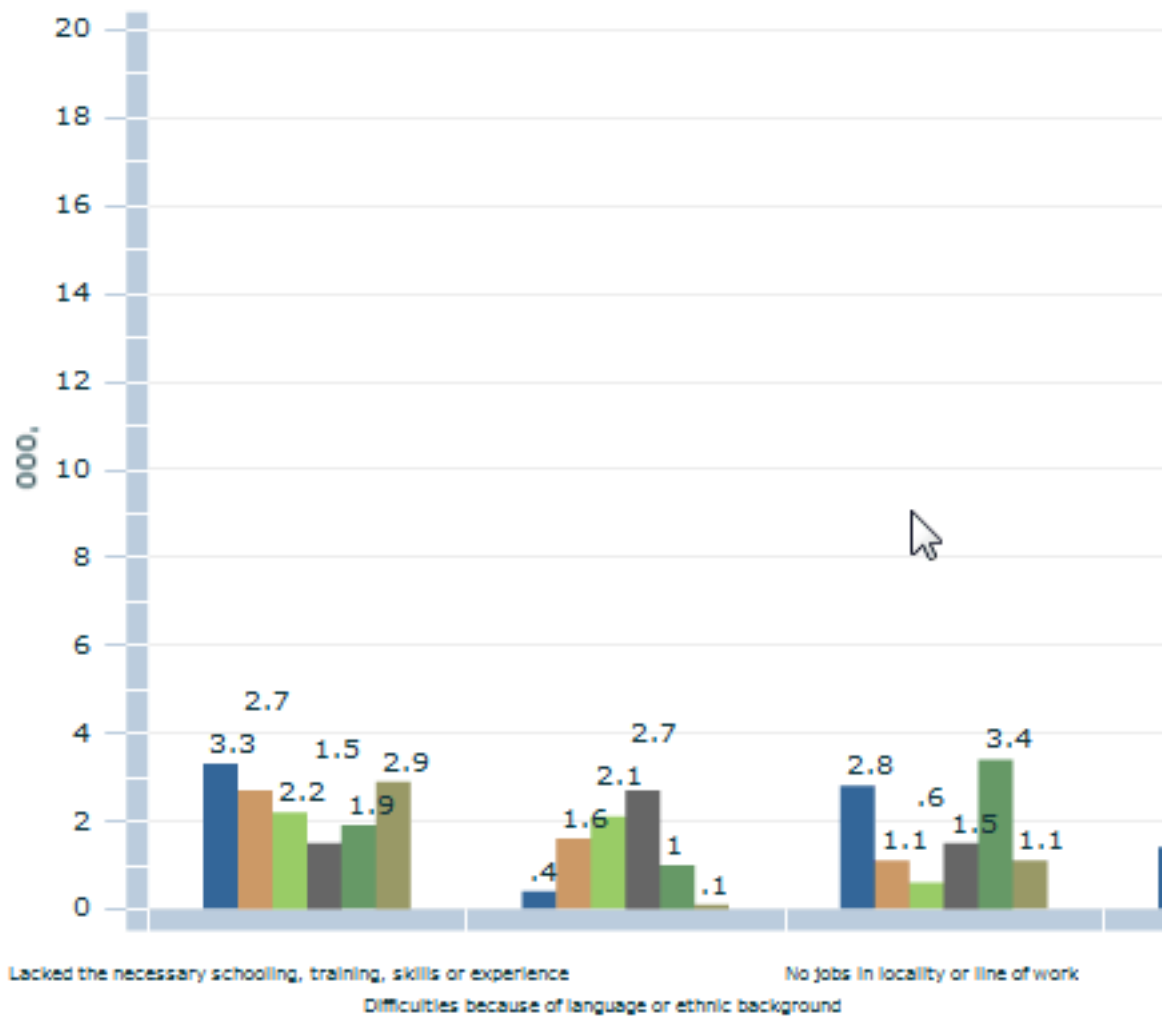
The percentage of female discouraged job seekers has remained higher than the percentage of male discouraged job seekers since 2006, with women consistently accounting for over 50% of discouraged job seekers from 2006 to 2011 (63% in 2006, 53% in 2009 and 58% in 2011). For women in 2011, the age groups containing the most discouraged job seekers were 70 and over (17%), 60-64 years (16%) and 45-54 years (15%).

Reasons for being discouraged

The most common reason for not looking for work reported by discouraged job seekers aged 55 years and over was that they were 'Considered too old by employers' (62%). While the number of people who believe that they are considered too old by employers increased in 2007, peaking in 2009, this number has since declined. People aged 45-54 years most commonly reported that they had given up looking for work because they had 'Difficulties due to language or ethnic background' (23%). Job

seekers aged between 15 and 45 years most frequently reported that they were discouraged because they 'Lacked the necessary skills, training or experience' (29%).

Main reason not looking for a job, by Age, 2011



Save Chart Image

Australian Bureau of Statistics

© Commonwealth of Australia 2012.

Source(s): [Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia](#)

The story of discouraged job seekers

People not in the labour force aged 55 years and over account for more than half of the total number of discouraged job seekers in Australia. Of these discouraged job seekers 55 years and over, 62% believe that employers consider them to be too old and as a result, have stopped actively look for work. In September 2011, there were 40,000 people aged between 15 and 54 years who were discouraged job seekers. Overall the number of discouraged job seekers has decreased since 2009, following the increase of discouraged job seekers during the period of 2008 - 2009.