

# **EMPLOYMENT SITUATION 2014**



**MINISTRY OF  
MANPOWER**

Manpower Research and Statistics Department  
Singapore

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## Manpower Research and Statistics Department

### MISSION

*To provide timely and reliable  
national statistical information on the labour market  
to facilitate informed decision-making within the government and community-at-large*

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## **Notations**

-	: Nil or negligible
P	: Preliminary
Q	: Quarter
M	: March
J	: June
S	: September
D	: December
n.a.	: Not applicable/not available
p.a.	: Per annum
Cont'd	: Continued

## **Abbreviations**

CPF	: Central Provident Fund
CPI	: Consumer Price Index
DOS	: Department of Statistics
MOM	: Ministry of Manpower
SSIC	: Singapore Standard Industrial Classification

## HIGHLIGHTS

- The labour market remained tight. Unemployment for residents and citizens fell in December, even as redundancy rose slightly amidst business restructuring. Employment growth of locals rose, as foreign employment growth continued to moderate. There was a sustained increase in median income for Singaporeans over the last five years, even though growth moderated over the year in 2014.
- Preliminary estimates showed that the overall seasonally adjusted unemployment rate declined from 2.0% in September 2014 to 1.9% in December 2014. Unemployment fell for residents from 2.8% to 2.6% and for citizens from 2.9% to 2.6% over the same period.
- For the whole of 2014, unemployment stayed low averaging 2.0% for overall, 2.7% for residents and 2.9% for citizens, broadly unchanged from 2013.
- Supported by hiring for the year-end festivities, overall employment grew faster in the fourth quarter of 2014 (39,600) than the previous quarter (33,400), but lower than a year ago (40,600).
- For the whole of 2014, total employment is estimated to have increased by 129,000, lower than the 136,200 in 2013 and similar to the 129,100 in 2012. Employment growth among locals rose, as foreign employment growth continued to moderate. In December 2014, locals made up 66.7% of persons employed in Singapore (excluding foreign domestic workers), with foreigners forming 33.3%.
- Some 3,800 workers were made redundant in the fourth quarter of 2014, up slightly from 3,500 in the preceding quarter and 3,660 in the fourth quarter of 2013, amid on-going business restructuring. For the whole of 2014, redundancies rose to 12,800, up from 11,560 in 2013. The increase in layoffs stemmed from services and construction, which more than offset the decline in manufacturing.
- There was a sustained increase in median income for Singaporeans over the last five years, even though growth moderated over the year in 2014. The median income (including employer CPF contributions) of full-time employed citizens rose by 30% from \$2,748 in 2009 to \$3,566 in 2014, or 5.3% p.a. After adjusting for inflation using CPI for all items, real median income grew by 11% or 2.1% p.a. over the recent five years.
- Boosted by on-going initiatives to raise the incomes of low-wage workers, income growth at the 20th percentile kept pace with the median income growth in the recent five years. Income (including employer CPF contributions) at the 20th percentile of full-time employed citizens rose by 26% from \$1,468 in 2009 to \$1,856 in 2014 in nominal terms, or 4.8% p.a. The increase after adjusting for inflation was 8.1% or 1.6% p.a.

## Overview

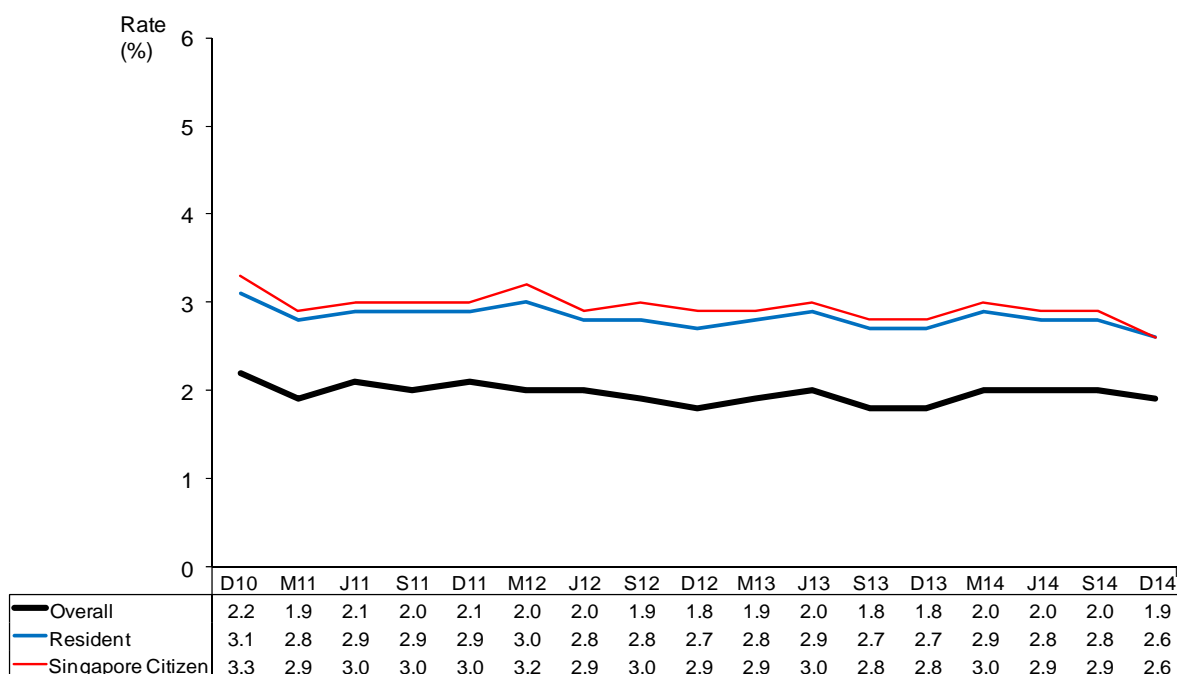
The labour market remained tight. Unemployment for residents and citizens fell in December, even as redundancy rose slightly amidst business restructuring. Employment growth of locals rose, as foreign employment growth continued to moderate. There was a sustained increase in median income for Singaporeans over the last five years, even though growth moderated over the year in 2014.

## Unemployment

### *Unemployment stayed low, easing over the quarter in December 2014*

Preliminary estimates showed that the overall seasonally adjusted unemployment rate declined from 2.0% in September 2014 to 1.9% in December 2014. Similarly, the unemployment rate fell over the quarter for residents from 2.8% to 2.6% and for citizens from 2.9% to 2.6%. An estimated 51,200 residents, including 43,600 Singapore citizens were unemployed in December 2014. The seasonally adjusted figures were 59,900 for residents and 49,500 for citizens.

**Chart 1: Unemployment Rate  
(Seasonally Adjusted)**

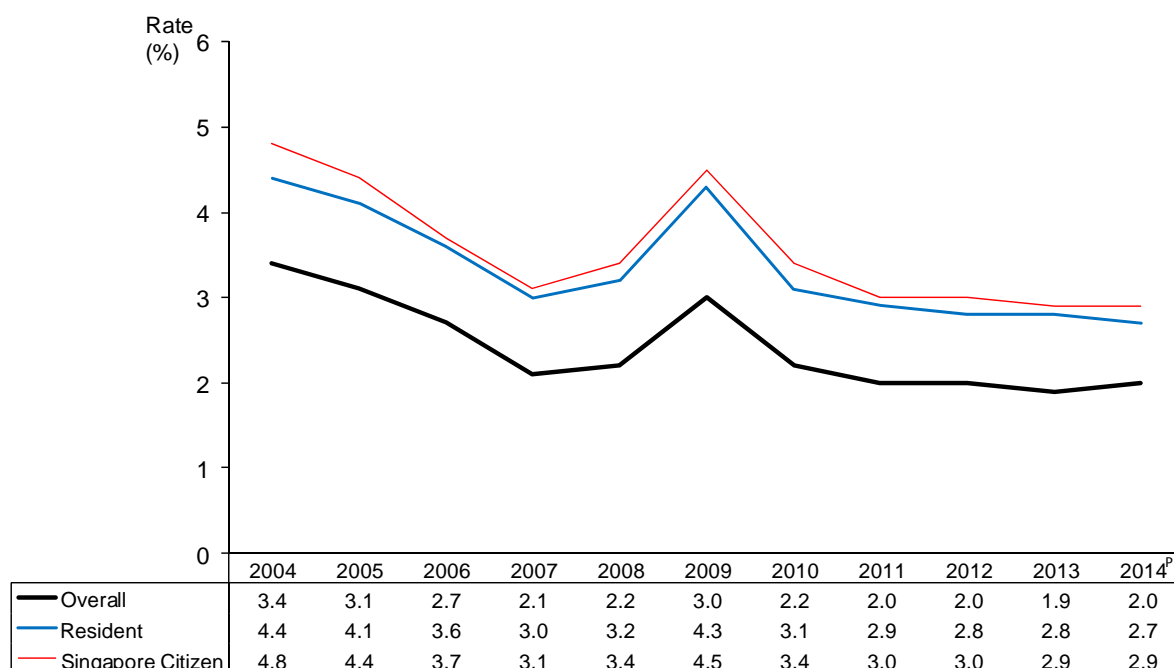


Source: Labour Force Survey, MOM

<sup>P</sup>: Preliminary

For the whole of 2014, unemployment stayed low averaging 2.0% overall, 2.7% for residents and 2.9% for citizens, compared with 1.9%, 2.8% and 2.9% respectively in 2013. On average, 61,200 residents including 53,900 Singapore citizens were unemployed in 2014. The corresponding figures in 2013 were 59,800 and 52,900.

**Chart 2: Unemployment Rate  
(Annual Average)**



Source: Labour Force Survey, MOM, except data for June 2005 which are from the General Household Survey 2005 conducted by Department of Statistics, Ministry of Trade and Industry

<sup>P</sup>: Preliminary

**Note:**

- (1) Annual figures are the simple averages of the non-seasonally adjusted unemployment figures obtained at quarterly intervals.



## Employment

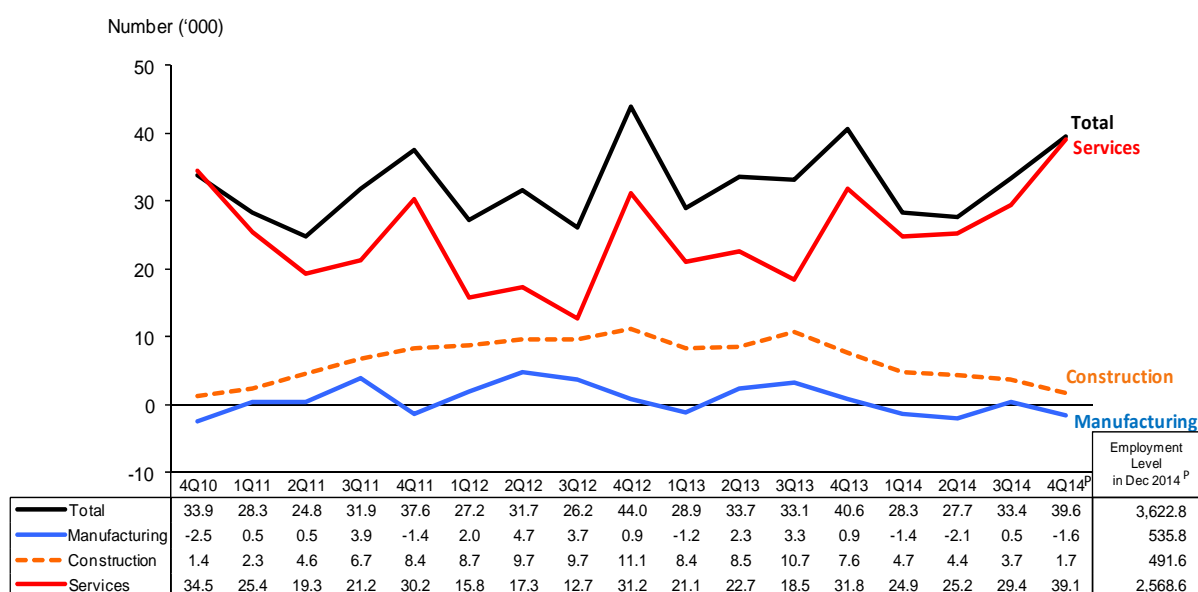
### More locals were employed, as foreign employment growth slowed

Reflecting hiring for the year-end festivities, overall employment grew faster in the fourth quarter of 2014 (39,600) than the previous quarter (33,400), but lower than a year ago (40,600).

Over the entire year of 2014, the employed pool is estimated to have grown by 129,000, lower than the 136,200 a year ago and similar to the 129,100 in 2012. Employment growth among locals rose, as foreign employment growth continued to moderate. Services (118,600) formed the bulk of employment gains, followed by construction (14,500) and manufacturing (-4,600).

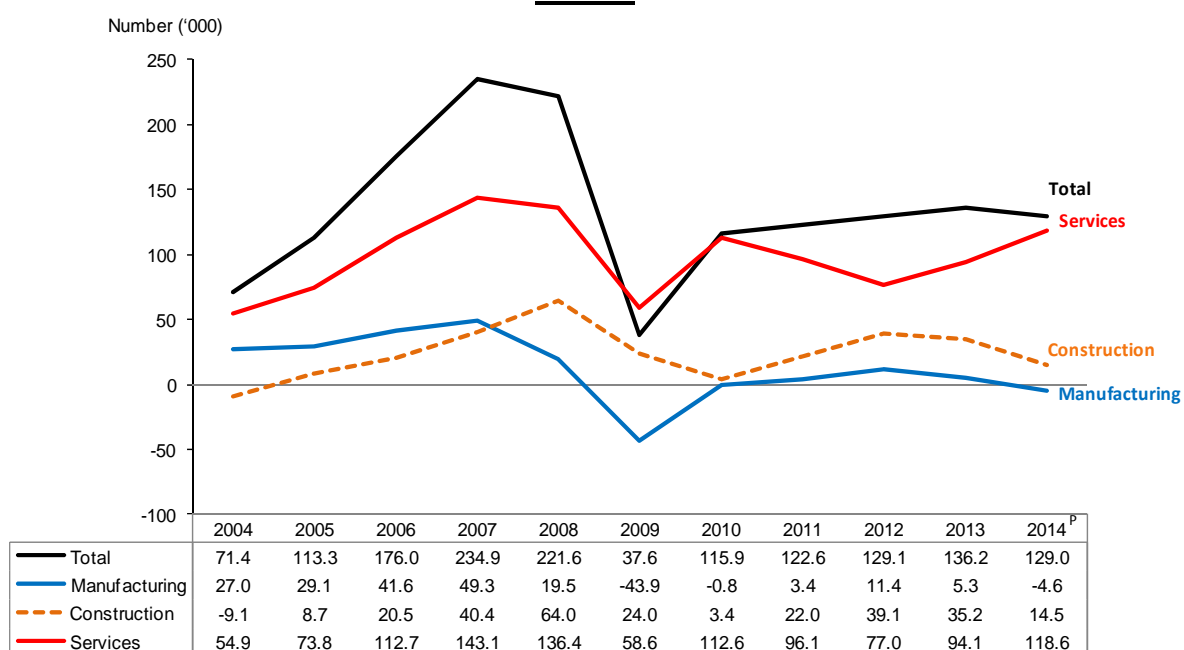
**Chart 3: Employment Change By Sector**

#### Quarterly



(cont'd)

**Annual**



Source: Administrative Records

<sup>P</sup>: Preliminary  
 -: nil or negligible

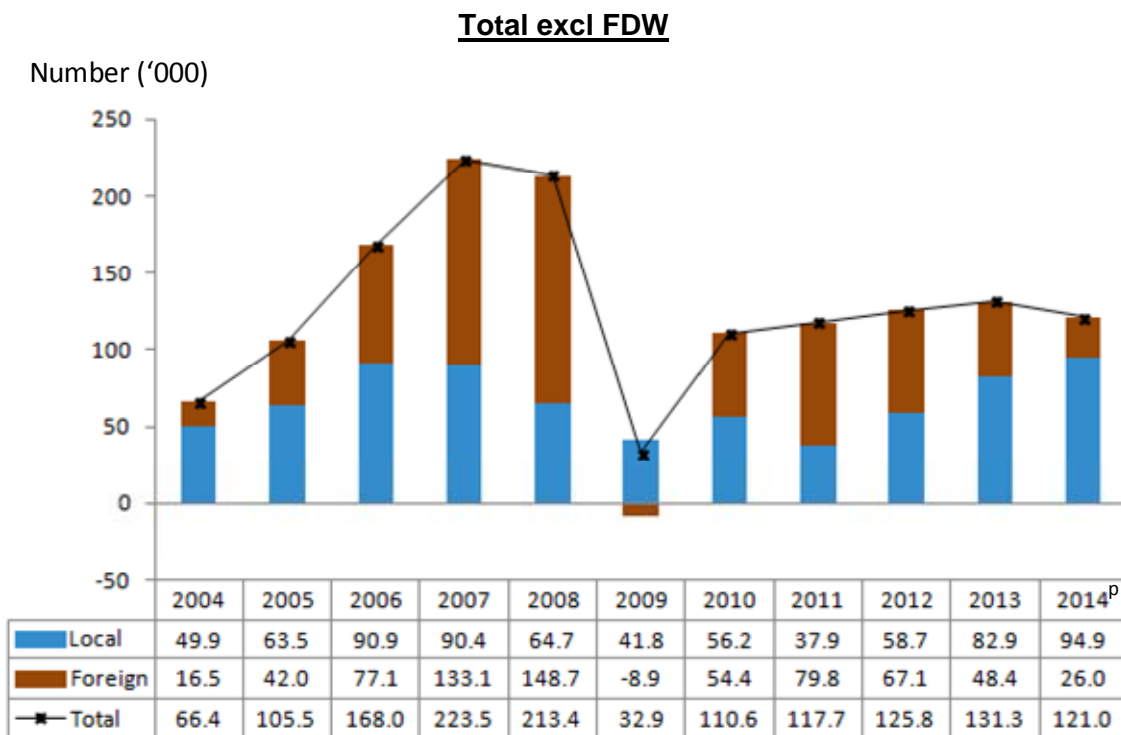
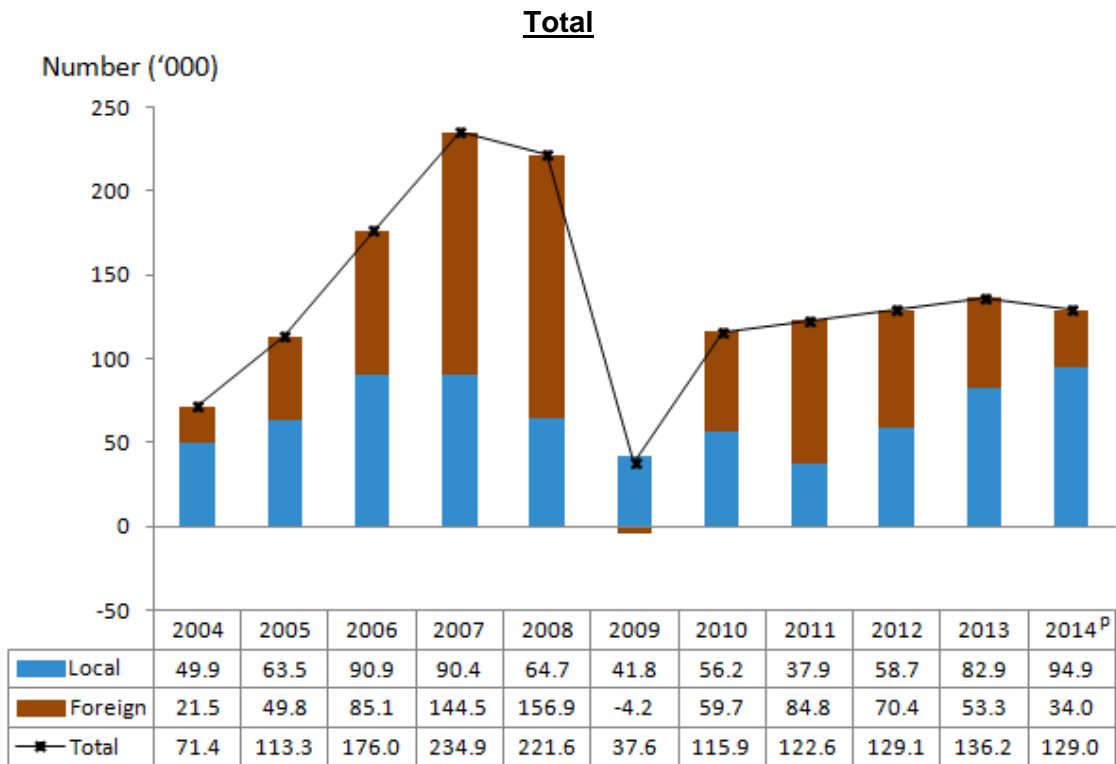
**Notes:**

- (1) The industries are classified based on SSIC 2010 from 2009 onwards and SSIC 2005 before 2009.
- (2) Data for the three major sectors do not add up to the total as the latter includes Agriculture, Fishing, Quarrying, Utilities and Sewerage & Waste Management.

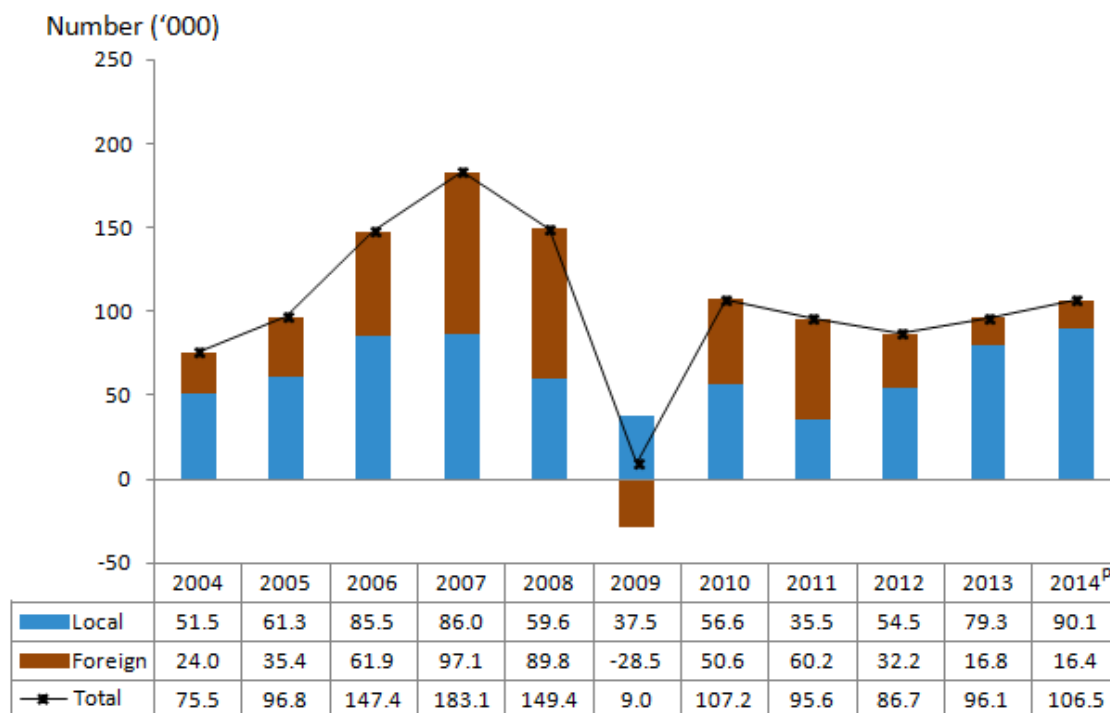
Local employment rose steadily during the year (94,900), faster than in 2013 (82,900) and 2012 (58,700). Meanwhile, foreign employment growth moderated to 34,000 in 2014 from 53,300 in 2013 and 70,400 in 2012. Excluding FDW and construction, the pace of foreign employment growth dipped in 2014 (16,400) from 2013 (16,800), after the sharp drop from 2012 (32,200).

In December 2014, there were 2,267,100 locals and 1,355,700 foreigners (or 1,133,200 excluding foreign domestic workers) employed in Singapore. Of every three persons in employment (excluding foreign domestic workers), two were locals (66.7%) and one was a foreigner (33.3%).

**Chart 4: Annual Employment Change By Residential Status**



### Total excl FDW and Construction



Source: Administrative Records

<sup>P</sup>: Preliminary

Notes:

- (1) Locals also known as residents refer to Singapore citizens and permanent residents.
- (2) 'excl FDW' refers to excluding foreign domestic workers.
- (3) Data may not add up to total due to rounding.

## Redundancy

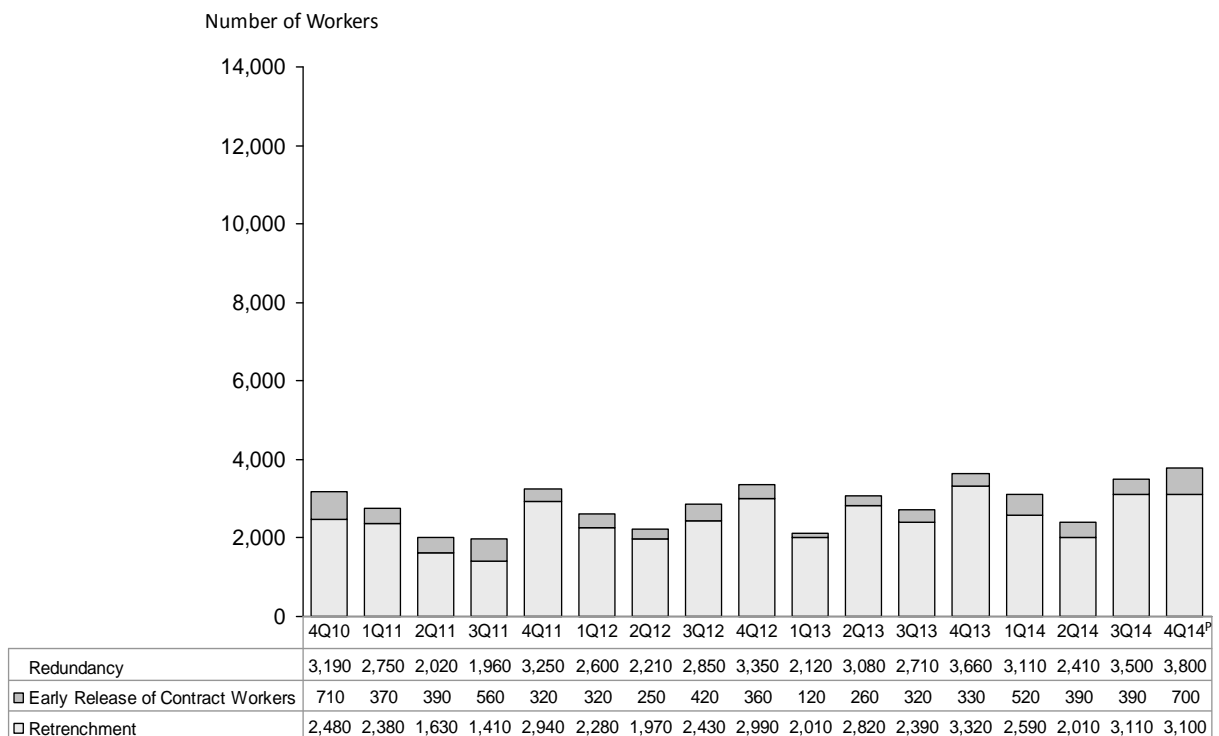
### *Redundancies rose slightly, amidst business restructuring*

Some 3,800 workers were made redundant in the fourth quarter of 2014, up slightly from 3,500 in the preceding quarter and 3,660 in the fourth quarter of 2013, amid on-going business restructuring.

Over the full year of 2014, redundancies rose to 12,800, up from 11,560 in 2013. The increase in layoffs stemmed from services (from 5,430 workers in 2013 to 7,100 workers in 2014) and construction (from 1,120 to 1,500), which more than offset the decline in manufacturing (from 5,000 to 4,200).

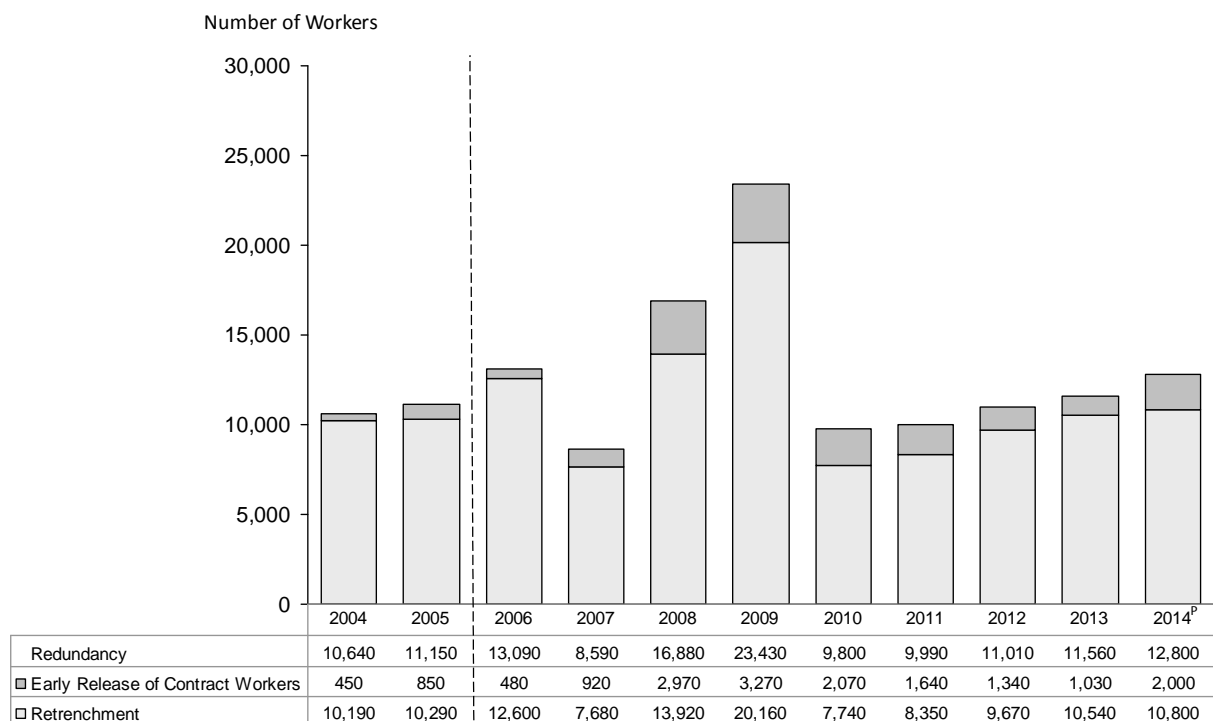
**Chart 5: Redundancy**

### Quarterly



(cont'd)

**Annual**



Source: Labour Market Survey, MOM

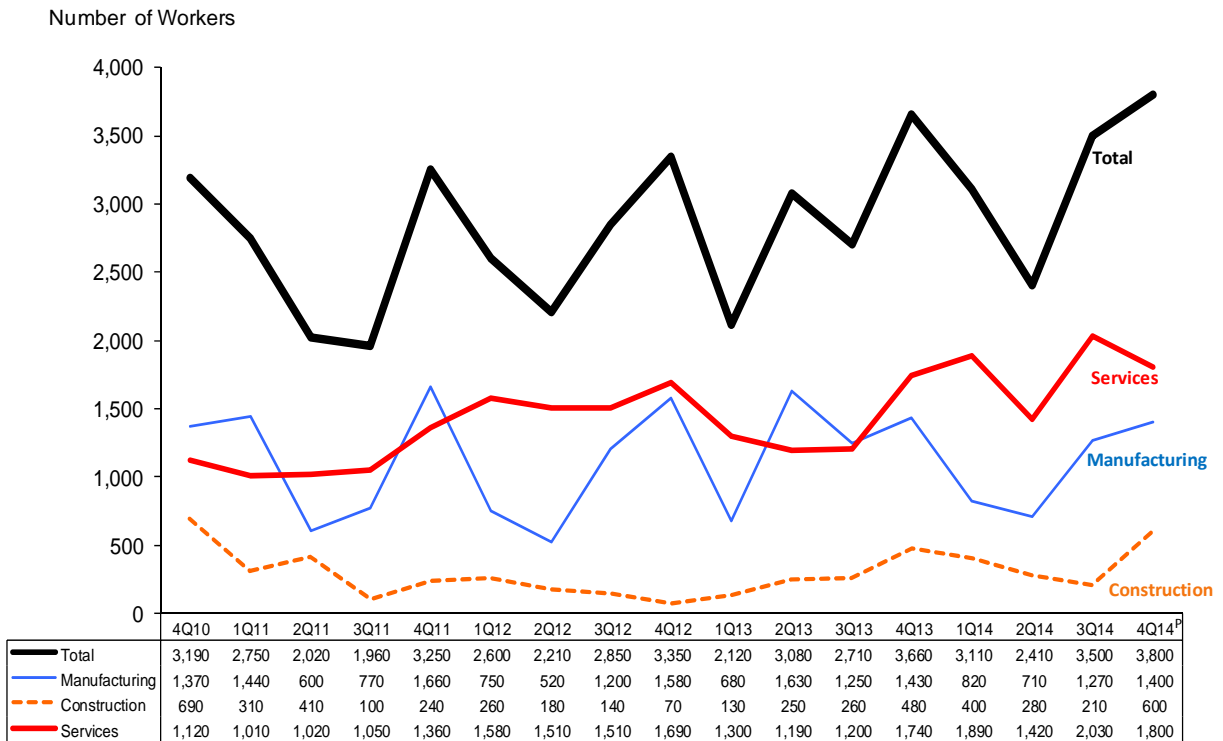
<sup>P</sup>: Preliminary

**Notes:**

- (1) Before 2006, data pertain to private sector establishments each with at least 25 employees. From 2006 onwards, data also include the public sector.
- (2) Data are rounded to the nearest 10. Hence, they may not add up due to rounding.

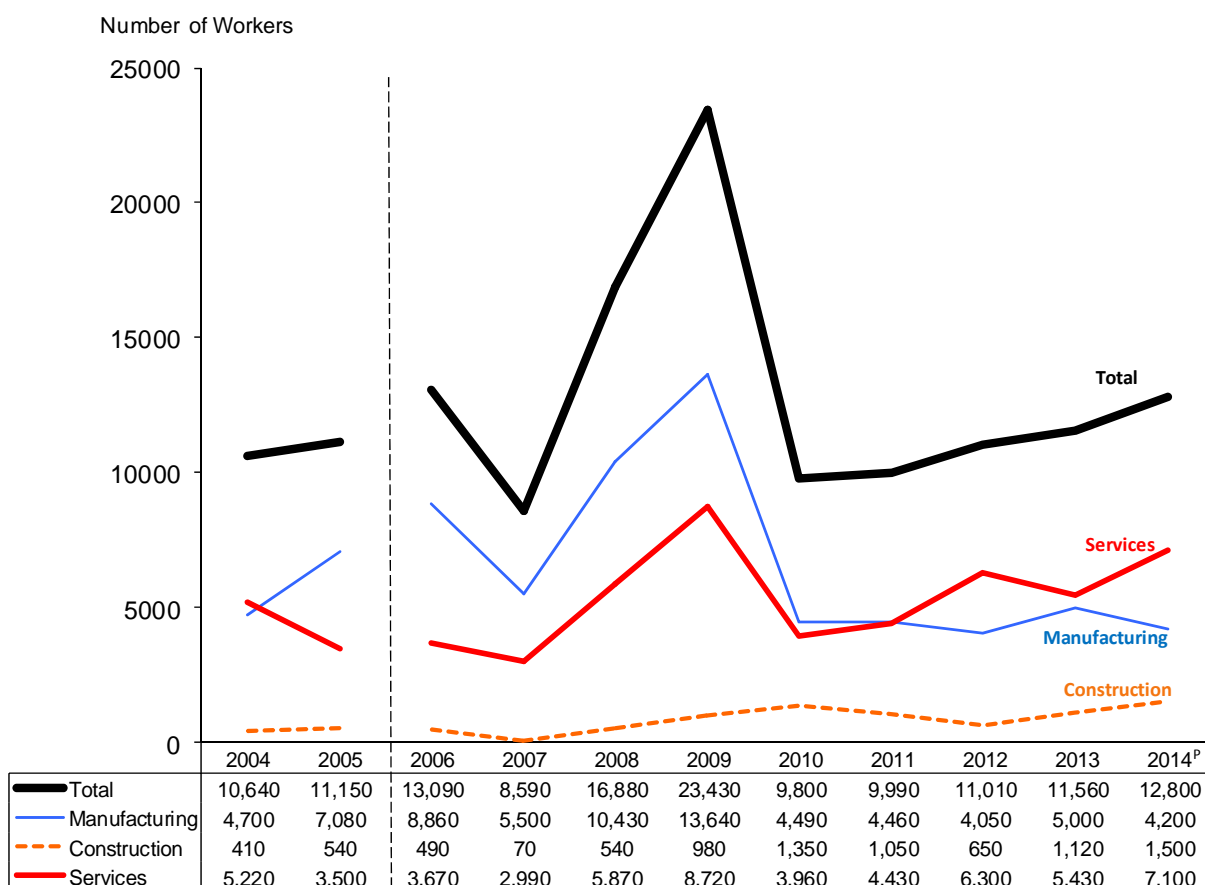
**Chart 6: Redundancy By Sector**

**Quarterly**



(cont'd)

**Annual**



Source: Labour Market Survey, MOM

<sup>P</sup>: Preliminary

**Notes:**

- (1) Before 2006, data pertain to private sector establishments each with at least 25 employees. From 2006 onwards, data also include the public sector.
- (2) The industries are classified based on SSIC 2010 from 2006 onwards and SSIC 2005 before 2006.
- (3) Data for the three major sectors do not add up to the total as the latter includes Agriculture, Fishing, Quarrying, Utilities and Sewerage & Waste Management.
- (4) Data are rounded to the nearest 10. Hence, they may not add up due to rounding

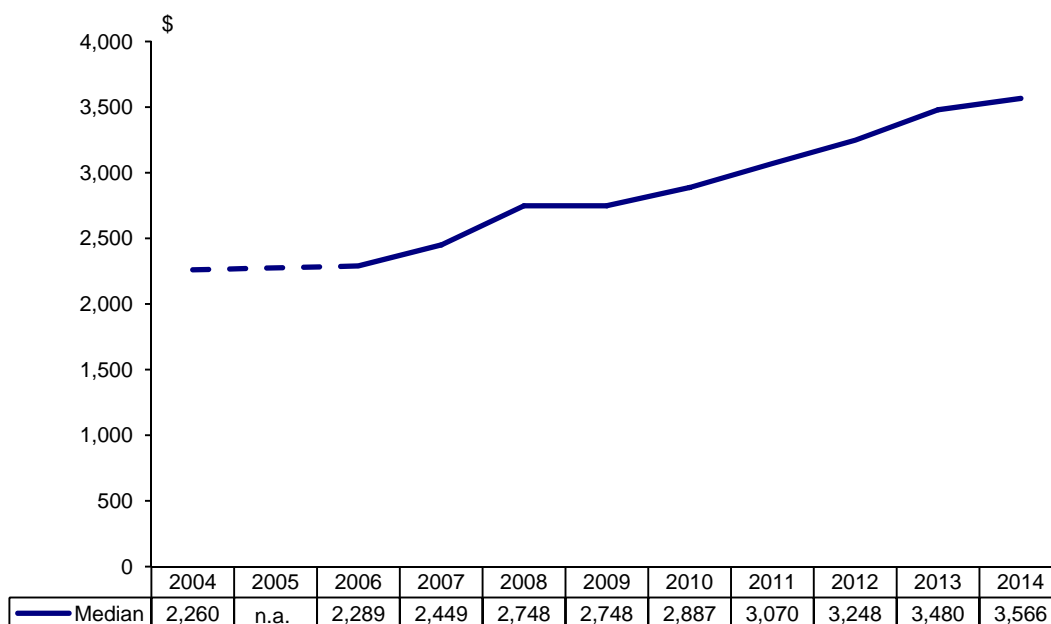


## Income from Work

### *Real income continued to grow*

Real income continued to rise on the back of sustained increases in nominal income, although the pace of growth moderated from the exceptionally high increase<sup>1</sup> a year ago. The nominal median monthly income from work of full-time employed citizens (including employer CPF contributions) rose over the year by 2.5% to \$3,566 in June 2014, lower than the gains of 7.1% in the preceding year. After adjusting for inflation using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all items,<sup>2</sup> the real median income grew by 1.4% in 2014, compared with 4.6% in 2013.<sup>3</sup>

**Chart 7: Median Gross Monthly Income From Work Of Full-Time Employed Singapore Citizens, 2004 To 2014 (June)**



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, MOM

**Notes:**

- (1) Income from work includes employer CPF contributions for employees.
- (2) Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.
- (3) n.a. – Not available. The Comprehensive Labour Force Survey was not conducted in 2005 due to the conduct of the General Household Survey 2005 by the Department of Statistics, Ministry of Trade and Industry.

<sup>1</sup> Income growth was higher than average in 2013, partly pulled up by the initial effect of the Wage Credit Scheme launched in 2013 which could have encouraged employers to give bigger wage increments.

<sup>2</sup> The Consumer Price Index for all items rose over the year by 1.0% in 2014, compared with the increase of 2.4% in 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Real income growth adjusted using CPI less imputed rentals on owner-occupied accommodation, which relates more directly to the actual spending of households, was 1.3% in 2014 compared with 5.2% in 2013.

***Sustained increase in median income over the past five years; income growth of lower income earners broadly kept pace with that at the middle***

Although growth varied from one year to another, there was a sustained increase in median income over the last five years. The median income (including employer CPF contributions) of full-time employed citizens rose by 30% from \$2,748 in 2009 to \$3,566 in 2014, or 5.3% p.a. After adjusting for inflation using CPI for all items, real median income grew by 11% or 2.1% p.a. over the recent five years.

Boosted by on-going initiatives to raise the incomes of low-wage workers, income growth at the 20<sup>th</sup> percentile was broadly similar to the median income growth in the recent five years. Income (including employer CPF contributions) at the 20<sup>th</sup> percentile of full-time employed citizens rose by 26% from \$1,468 in 2009 to \$1,856 in 2014 in nominal terms, or 4.8% p.a.<sup>4</sup> The increase after adjusting for inflation was 8.1% or 1.6% p.a.

**Table 1: Change In Gross Monthly Income From Work Of Full-Time Employed Singapore Citizens, 2009 To 2014 (June)**

	Nominal		Real*	
	Cumulative (%)	Annualised (% p.a.)	Cumulative (%)	Annualised (% p.a.)
Median (50th Percentile)	29.8	5.3	10.9	2.1
			(12.9)	(2.5)
20th Percentile	26.4	4.8	8.1	1.6
			(10.0)	(1.9)

Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, MOM

**Notes:**

- (1) Income from work includes employer CPF contributions for employees.
- (2) Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.
- (3) \* – Deflated by Consumer Price Index for all items at 2009 prices (2009 = 100). Figures in brackets are deflated by Consumer Price Index less imputed rentals on owner-occupied accommodation at 2009 prices (2009 = 100).

<sup>4</sup> As the data are captured from a sample survey, the income changes for the 20<sup>th</sup> percentile nearer the end of the income spectrum tend to be more volatile over shorter (e.g. year-on-year) than longer periods (e.g. 5 or 10 years). Studying income at the 20<sup>th</sup> percentile level over longer periods allows for more meaningful analysis of the income growth, as the year-on-year volatility in the data gets smoothed out.

**TABLE 1**  
**GROSS MONTHLY INCOME FROM WORK (INCLUDING EMPLOYER CPF) OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYED**  
**SINGAPORE CITIZENS, 2004 - 2014**  
 (June)

Year/ Period	Median (50th Percentile)	20th Percentile
Level (Dollars)		
2004	2,260	1,243
2005	n.a.	n.a.
2006	2,289	1,224
2007	2,449	1,300
2008	2,748	1,400
2009	2,748	1,468
2010	2,887	1,500
2011	3,070	1,617
2012	3,248	1,647
2013	3,480	1,800
2014	3,566	1,856
Nominal Change (Per Cent Per Annum)		
2004 - 2014	4.7	4.1
2004 - 2009	4.0	3.4
2009 - 2014	5.3	4.8
Real* Change (Per Cent Per Annum)		
2004 - 2014	2.0 (2.3)	1.4 (1.8)
2004 - 2009	1.8 (2.2)	1.2 (1.6)
2009 - 2014	2.1 (2.5)	1.6 (1.9)

Source : Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, MOM

Notes :

1. Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.
2. The Comprehensive Labour Force Survey was not conducted in 2005 due to the conduct of the General Household Survey 2005 by the Department of Statistics, Ministry of Trade and Industry.
3. As the income data are captured from a sample survey, the income changes for the 20th percentile nearer the end of the income spectrum tend to be more volatile over shorter (e.g. year-on-year) than longer periods (e.g. 5 or 10 years).
4. \* – Deflated by Consumer Price Index for all items at 2009 prices (2009 = 100). Figures in brackets are deflated by Consumer Price Index less imputed rentals on owner-occupied accommodation at 2009 prices (2009 = 100).

**TABLE 2**  
**GROSS MONTHLY INCOME FROM WORK (EXCLUDING EMPLOYER CPF) OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYED**  
**SINGAPORE CITIZENS, 2004 - 2014**  
 (June)

Year/ Period	Median (50th Percentile)	20th Percentile
	Level (Dollars)	
2004	2,000	1,170
2005	n.a.	n.a.
2006	2,072	1,100
2007	2,167	1,200
2008	2,492	1,300
2009	2,500	1,300
2010	2,588	1,400
2011	2,708	1,500
2012	2,925	1,500
2013	3,052	1,613
2014	3,179	1,639
	Nominal Change (Per Cent Per Annum)	
2004 - 2014	4.7	3.4
2004 - 2009	4.6	2.1
2009 - 2014	4.9	4.7
	Real* Change (Per Cent Per Annum)	
2004 - 2014	2.0 (2.4)	0.7 (1.1)
2004 - 2009	2.4 (2.7)	- (0.4)
2009 - 2014	1.7 (2.0)	1.5 (1.9)

Source : Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, MOM

Notes :

1. Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.
2. The Comprehensive Labour Force Survey was not conducted in 2005 due to the conduct of the General Household Survey 2005 by the Department of Statistics, Ministry of Trade and Industry.
3. As the income data are captured from a sample survey, the income changes for the 20th percentile nearer the end of the income spectrum tend to be more volatile over shorter (e.g. year-on-year) than longer periods (e.g. 5 or 10 years).
4. \* – Deflated by Consumer Price Index for all items at 2009 prices (2009 = 100). Figures in brackets are deflated by Consumer Price Index less imputed rentals on owner-occupied accommodation at 2009 prices (2009 = 100).

## Unemployment

### Source

Labour Force Survey

### Coverage

The survey covers private households in Singapore. It excludes workers living in construction worksites, dormitories and workers' quarters at the workplace and persons commuting from abroad to work in Singapore. Estimates of the total labour force are derived by combining data on residents (also known as locals) obtained from the survey with foreign workforce data compiled from administrative records.

### Concepts and Definitions

**Unemployed persons** refer to persons aged 15 years and over who did not work but were actively looking and available for work during the reference period. They include persons who were not working but were taking steps to start their own business or taking up a new job after the reference period.

**Unemployment rate** is defined as the percentage of unemployed persons to the labour force (i.e. employed and unemployed persons) aged 15 years and over.

**Long-term unemployed persons** refer to persons aged 15 years and over who have been unemployed for 25 weeks or more.

**Long-term unemployment rate** is defined as the percentage of long-term unemployed persons to the labour force.

### Uses and Limitations

The unemployment rate is probably the best-known measure of the labour market. It measures unutilised labour supply and is useful in the study of the economic cycle as it is closely related to economic fluctuations.

Unemployment can have frictional, cyclical and structural elements. As it takes time for job seekers and employers to find a match, there is always a certain level of frictional unemployment due to people changing jobs and from new entrants looking for work for the first time. Unemployment can also be structural e.g. arising from a mismatch between the job seekers and the job openings available. With structural unemployment, even if job vacancies and job seekers coexist in the labour market, they may not be matched over a long period of time. Finally, unemployment can be cyclical. This occurs when there is a general decline in demand for manpower as aggregate demand for goods and services fall in the event of a cyclical downturn. Unlike structural and frictional unemployment where the problem is in matching job openings with job seekers, cyclical unemployment occurs when there are not enough jobs to go around.

Unemployment can vary due to changes in demand or supply of manpower. It can decline if more people succeed in securing employment or when the unemployed persons stop looking for a job and leave the labour force either temporarily (e.g. to take up training) or permanently (e.g. to retire). Conversely, unemployment may rise due to increase in labour supply from new entrants or re-entrants to the labour market. It will also rise if more people quit their jobs to look for alternative employment or if there is an increase in layoffs.

## Employment

### Source

Primarily from administrative records. The self-employed component is estimated from the Labour Force Survey.

### Coverage

The employment data comprise all persons in employment i.e. employees and the self-employed. However, it excludes men who are serving their 2-year full-time national service liability in the Singapore Armed Forces, Police and Civil Defence Forces.

Data on the number of local (also known as resident) employees are compiled from the Central Provident Fund (CPF) Board's administrative records of active contributors defined as local employees who have at least one CPF contribution paid for him/her. A local (also known as resident) employee is any Singapore citizen or Permanent Resident who is employed by an employer under a contract of service or other agreement entered into in Singapore. Every local employee and his/her employer are required to make monthly contributions to the CPF which is a compulsory savings scheme to provide workers financial security in old age and helps meet the needs of healthcare, home-ownership, family protection and asset enhancement.

Data on foreigners working in Singapore are compiled from administrative records of foreigners on valid work passes issued by the Ministry of Manpower. Foreigners can work in Singapore only if they have valid work passes issued by the Ministry of Manpower.

The number of self-employed residents is estimated from the Labour Force Survey. The self-employed comprises persons aged 15 years and over who are own account workers, employers or contributing family workers.

### Concepts and Definitions

**Employment change** refers to the change in the number of persons who are in employment, derived by taking the difference in the employment level at the end of the reference period compared with the end of the preceding period. A positive change refers to the additional number of persons who are in employment, while a negative change refers to the decline in number of persons in employment.

### Uses and Limitations

Analysis of employment change over time helps in understanding the impact of cyclical and structural changes in the economy on the demand for workers. In particular, the breakdown of employment by industry helps identify sectors where employment is growing or falling.

Conceptually, the change in employment over the reference period is the difference between people entering and exiting employment during the period. Users should not mistake an increase in employment as gross job creation.

## Redundancy

### Source

Labour Market Survey

### Coverage

Before 2006, the survey covers private sector establishments each with at least 25 employees. From 2006 onwards, the survey also includes the public sector comprising government ministries, organs of state and statutory boards.

### Concepts and Definitions

**Redundancy** comprises retrenchment and early release of contract workers due to redundancy.

**Retrenchment** refers to the termination of employment of a permanent employee due to redundancy. In the public sector, it includes those who left service under the Special Resignation Scheme that allows redundant non-deployable Civil Service or Statutory Board employees to leave their organisations with compensation.

**Early release of contract workers** refers to employees on term contracts which were terminated prematurely because of redundancy.

### Uses and Limitations

Data on redundancy are useful in the analysis of re-structuring or ailing industries.

The number of persons made redundant (flow) should not be confused with persons unemployed (stock). Not all persons made redundant will be unemployed as some will re-enter into employment or decide to leave the workforce.

## Income from Work

### Source

Comprehensive Labour Force Survey

### Coverage

The survey covers private households in Singapore. It excludes workers living in construction worksites, dormitories and workers' quarters at the workplace and persons commuting from abroad to work in Singapore.

### Concepts and Definitions

**Gross monthly income from work** refers to income earned from employment. For employees, it refers to the gross monthly wages or salaries before deduction of employee CPF contributions and personal income tax. It comprises basic wages, overtime pay, commissions, tips, other allowances and one-twelfth of annual bonuses. For self-employed persons, gross monthly income refers to the average monthly profits from their business, trade or profession (i.e. total receipts less business expenses incurred) before deduction of income tax.

**Median (or 50<sup>th</sup> percentile) income** refers to the income level at the middle of the income distribution which divides the bottom half of income earners from the upper half.

**20<sup>th</sup> percentile income** refers to the income level which divides the bottom 20% of income earners from the rest.

### Uses and Limitations

Data on income from work are useful in understanding the living standards of workers. The data are useful in planning economic and social development.

As the Comprehensive Labour Force Survey covers a representative sample of households in Singapore, the data can be used to study the income trends of the workforce covering both employees and the self-employed.

When analysing how workers' income has changed over time, it is more meaningful to focus on workers in full-time employment. This will avoid clouding the income trends with the changing mix of full-timers and part-timers in the workforce, as part-time work involves shorter working hours and correspondingly lower salaries. Moreover, full-timers form the bulk of workers in Singapore.

As the data are captured from a sample survey, the income changes for the 20th percentile nearer the end of the income spectrum tend to be more volatile over shorter (e.g. year-on-year) than longer periods (e.g. 5 or 10 years). Studying income at the 20th percentile level over a longer period allows for more meaningful analysis of the income growth, as the year-on-year volatility in the data gets smoothed out.

Data on the real change in income from work enables users to study the trends in income growth after adjusting for inflation, as changes in the price of consumer goods and services over time affect the purchasing power of individuals. To adjust for inflation, we use the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all items. We also report the real income changes, after adjusting for CPI less imputed rentals on OOA, given that imputed rentals on OOA have no impact on the actual spending of most households in Singapore as they already own their homes.



# Get the latest facts and figures on Singapore's employment landscape

## Just Released

### Employment Situation, 2014

**Date of Release: 30 Jan 2015**

This release provides preliminary estimates of key indicators on the manpower situation covering unemployment, employment and redundancy for the full year and includes trends on Singaporeans' monthly income from work.



### Labour Force in Singapore, 2014

**Date of Release: 30 Jan 2015**

This publication presents a comprehensive range of statistical information on the economic activities of the population, including detailed analysis and data on employment and unemployment as well as characteristics of persons in and outside the labour force. It also examines a wide range of topics including income, training, term contract employment, hours worked and modes of job search.



## Other Resources

Title	Date of Release
• Job Vacancies, 2014	27/01/2015
• Labour Market, Third Quarter 2014	15/12/2014
• Conditions of Employment, 2014	09/12/2014
• Singapore Yearbook of Manpower Statistics, 2014	30/06/2014
• Manpower Statistics in Brief, 2014	20/06/2014
• Report on Wage Practices, 2013	05/06/2014
• Redundancy and Re-entry into Employment, 2013	24/04/2014
• Employer Supported Training, 2012	08/10/2013
• Labour Turnover Time Series, 2006 to 2012	01/04/2013
• Retirement and Re-employment Practices, 2011	20/07/2012
• Report on Wages in Singapore, 2011	29/06/2012
• Singaporeans in the Workforce*	11/10/2011
• Labour Mobility	31/05/2010
• Focus on Older People In and Out of Employment	29/07/2008
• Quality of Employment Creation for Singapore Citizens	29/02/2008
• Employment of Singapore Citizens, Permanent Residents and Foreigners, 1997 to 2006	29/02/2008
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*\* This paper is a collaborative effort between Manpower Research and Statistics Department and Singapore Department of Statistics*

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