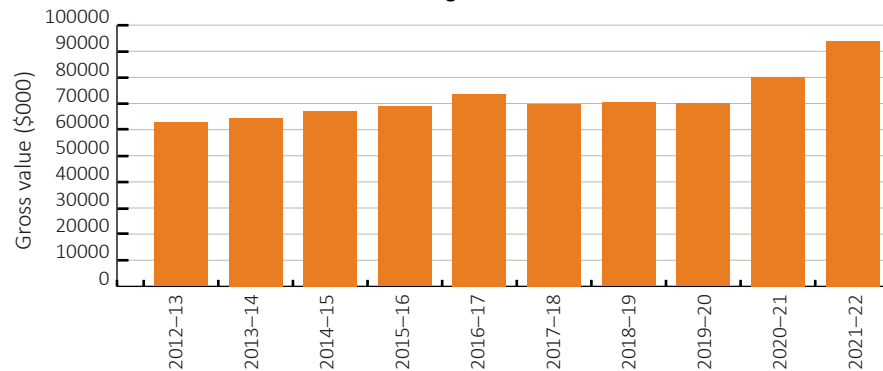Highlight: WHMs have increased back up to almost pre-COVID level since the borders reopened.
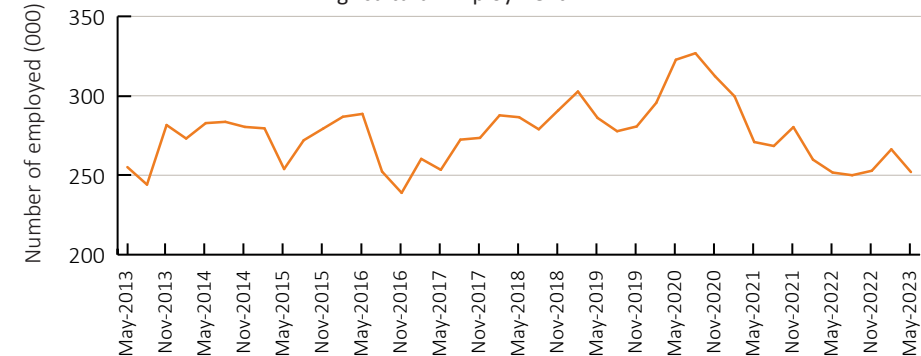
Gross Value of Agricultural Production*

Source: ABARES
The gross value of agriculture production has steadily increased from $63 billion in 2012-13 to $94 billion in 2021-22.
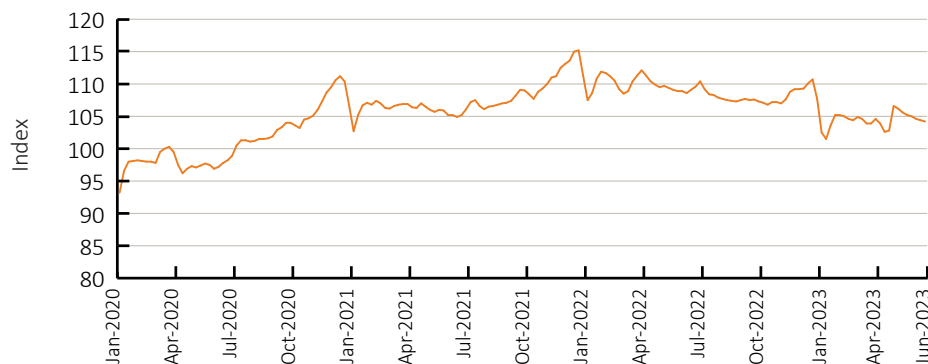* The figures are deflated by CPI (base year 2022-23).

Agricultural Employment

Source: ABS
The total number of agricultural workers has slightly decreased from 255,100 people employed in May 2013 to 252,000 people employed in May 2023. The count includes owner managers of unincorporated enterprises, which are prevalent in agriculture industry, but they are not accounted for in the payroll jobs figures.
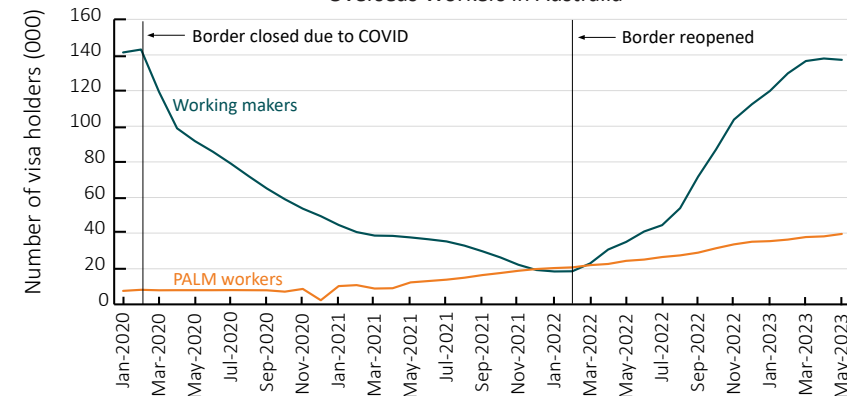
Agricultural Payroll Jobs

Source: ABS
The data reveals an initial upward trend in payroll jobs from January 2020 to December 2021, coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic period. However, starting from 2022 when the borders reopened, there is a gradual decline in payroll jobs. Additionally, a seasonal pattern is observed, with job numbers peaking during the December period.
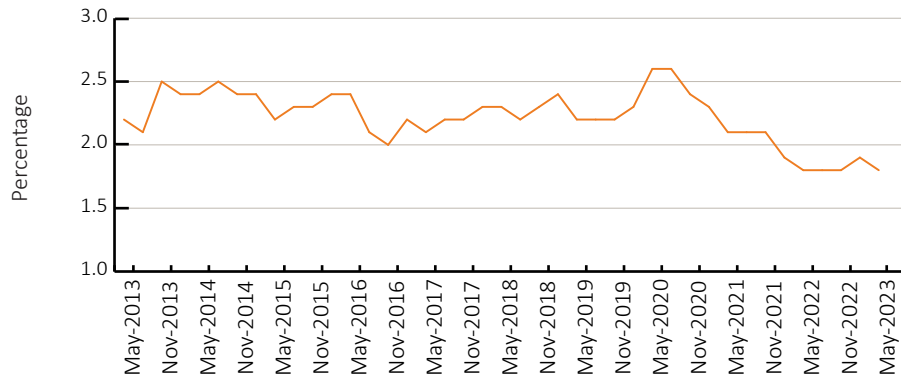
Overseas Workers in Australia

Source: DHA and DEWR
The number of working holiday makers declined steeply from 141,000 workers to 21,000 between COVID border closure and reopening. Since the border reopening, working holiday makers have increased back up to 137,000 as of May 2023.
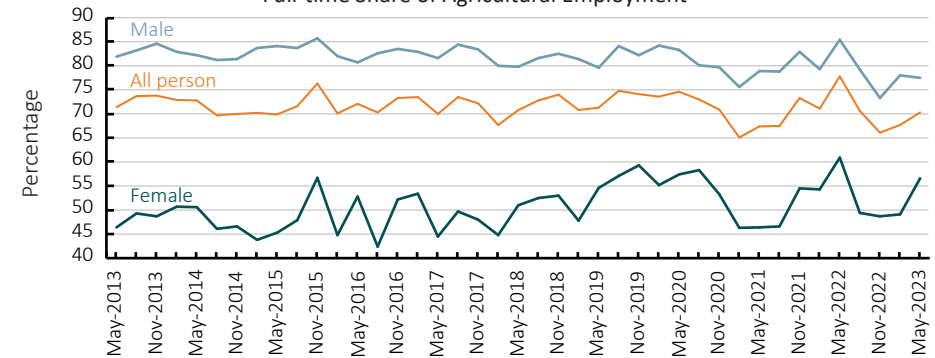
Agricultural Labour Factsheet continued

Agricultural Workforce Share

Source: ABS
The share of agriculture in the workforce has gradually declined since 2013, with agriculture making up 2.2 per cent of the workforce in February 2013 and falling to 1.8 per cent in May 2023.
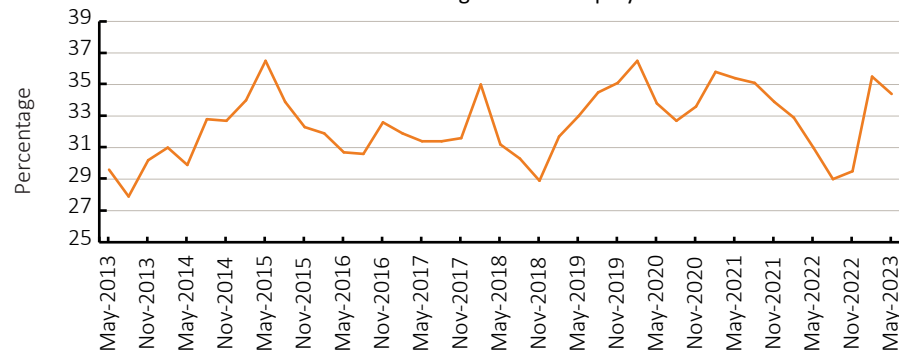
Full-time Share of Agricultural Employment

Source: ABS
There has been a gradual decline in the full-time share of male employment in agriculture over the last decade.
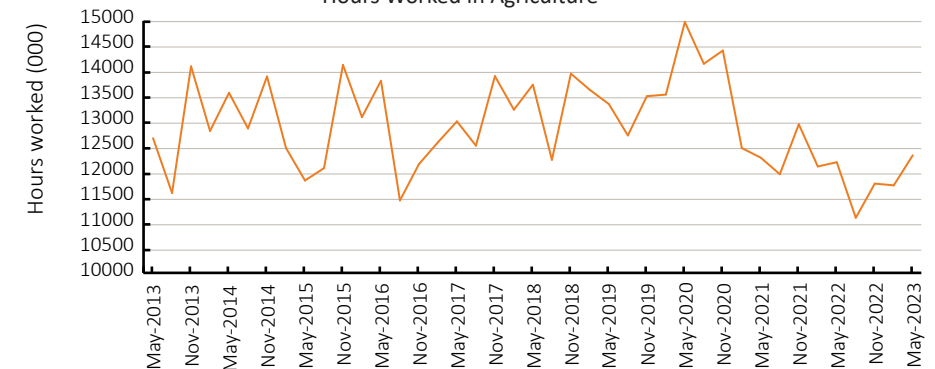
Female Share of Agricultural Employment

Source: ABS
The share of female workers in agriculture has fluctuated within a range of 29 per cent and 37 per cent.

Hours Worked in Agriculture*

Source: ABS
There has been a steady decline in the number of hours worked in the agricultural sector since mid 2020.
* The figures include fisheries and forestry sectors.

Updated August 2023