

Tuesday 16 May 2023



Figure 1: Unemployment levels ('000) and rates

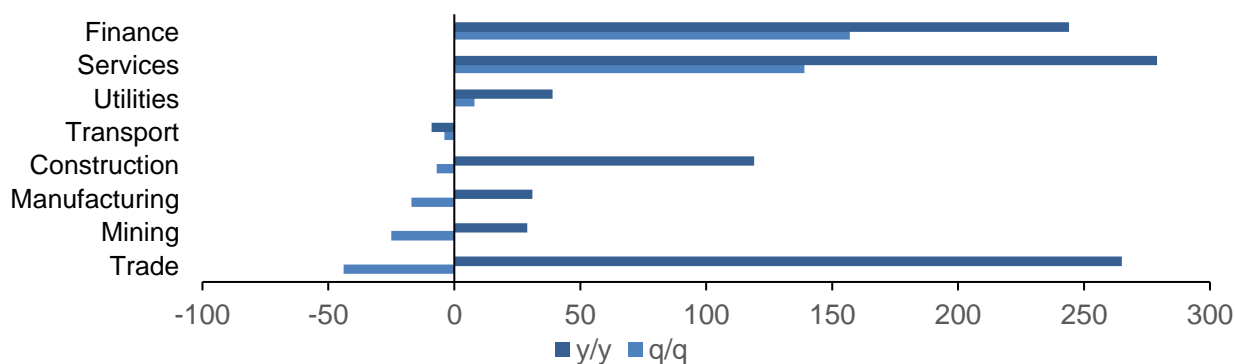
	Q3.22	Q4.22	Q1.23
Economically Active Population – labour force	23 491	23 688	24 125
Not Economically Active Population	16 831	16 774	16 479
Employed	15 765	15 934	16 192
Unemployed (official/ strict definition)	7 725	7 753	7 933
Unemployment rate (official/ strict) definition)	32.9%	32.7%	32.9%
Unemployed (expanded definition)	11 931	11 849	11 937
Unemployment rate (expanded definition)	43.1%	42.6%	42.4%

Source: Stats SA

*Numbers are rounded

- The official unemployment rate picked up marginally to 32.9% in the first quarter of 2023 from 32.7% logged in Q4.22. Although it has fallen from levels recorded during the pandemic, it remains at an elevated level. The overall labour participation rate is below 60% at 59.4% evincing the fragility of the South African economy, which is plagued by ongoing rotational load shedding, significantly impeding activity and weighing heavily on confidence and growth. Indeed, we expect GDP growth of just 0.2% this year with downside risks apparent.
- A “number of persons moved from the “not economically active” category to “employed” and “unemployed” statuses between the two quarters” according to Stats SA, resulting in the 0.2 of a percentage lift in the unemployment rate.
- Specifically, the number of employed persons increased by 258 000 to 16.2 million (1.6% q/q) with the formal sector of the economy primarily absorbing these individuals. The informal (non-agriculture) sector however added an additional 107 000 positions (3.6%) over the quarter and when measured on a year-on-year basis informal sector employment has grown by a notable 8.7%. Employment within private households however slid by -7.5% q/q (-85 000), bringing down the total employment reading.
- A disaggregation of the data (formal employment) on an industry basis, indicates that increases were logged in only three of the eight industries surveyed. Specifically, the finance sector, services sector and utilities sector which added 157 000, 139 000 and 8 000 positions respectively over the quarter.
- Conversely, the trade sector recorded the largest number of job losses at -44 000, after the fourth quarter of the year generally sees a seasonal pick-up in employment in this particular segment of the market, primarily in the tourism, hospitality and related sectors.

Figure 2: Employment levels by industry (Formal Sector) ('000)

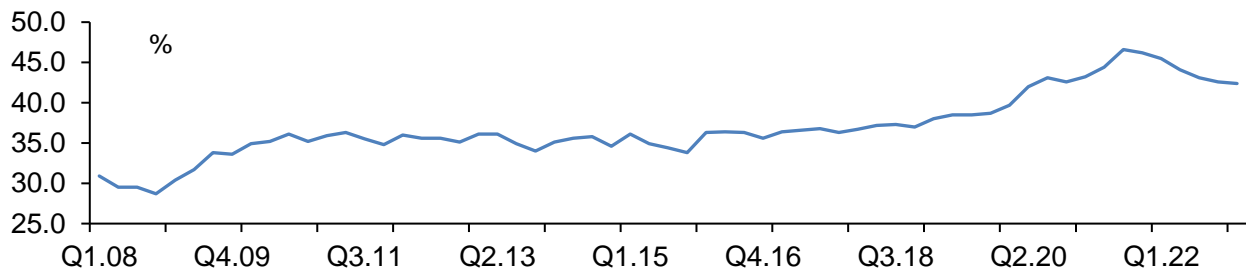


Source: Stats SA

Tuesday 16 May 2023



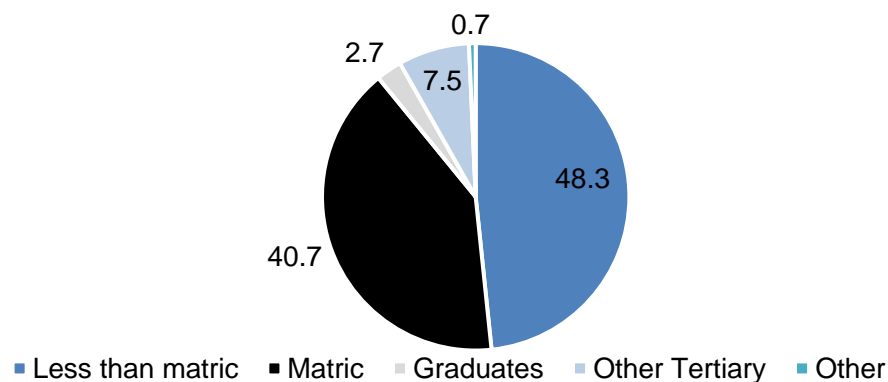
Figure 3: Expanded Unemployment Rate Trend



Source: Stats SA

- Moreover, the mining industry saw unemployment decline by -25 000, while the manufacturing sector shed -17 000 positions. These are highly energy intensive industries and the unprecedented electricity supply situation has weighed heavily on activity in these respective sectors.
- The youth category which comprises those aged 15-24 years are the most disadvantaged segment of the economy when it comes to finding sustainable employment in this subdued market, lacking skills and experience. Unemployment in this group rose to a critically high 62.1% in Q1.23, from 61.0% in Q4.22. Improving the quality of and access to education remains vital. According to Stats SA, “of the 7,9 million unemployed persons in the first quarter of 2023, as many as 48.3% did not have matric, and 40.7% had completed matric ...while only 2,7% of unemployed persons were graduates.”
- There is a priority area for government and while many initiatives have been announced, a significant pick up in confidence is imperative to drive sustainable growth and accordingly job creation. Rectifying the electricity supply situation remains imperative in this regard.
- The expanded unemployment rate, (which includes individuals who desire employment regardless of whether they are actively seeking work) declined marginally to 42.4% (from 42.6% in Q4.22) but is a marked 11.5 percentage points higher than the rate logged during the same period in 2008, demonstrating the extent of SA's dire unemployment situation. Indeed, consumers are highly constrained; the cost of living has spiralled with inflation proving sticky, while the indebted are having to contend with markedly higher interest rates with a further hike expected at next week's MPC meeting.

Figure 4: Proportion of the unemployed by education level – Q1.23 (%)



Source: Stats SA



Tuesday 16 May 2023

Important Disclaimer – please read

For the purposes of this disclaimer, Investec shall include Investec Bank Limited, its ultimate holding company, a subsidiary (or a subsidiary of a subsidiary) of that entity, a holding company of that entity or any other subsidiary of that holding company, and any affiliated entity of any such entities. "Investec Affiliates" shall mean any directors, officers, representatives, employees, advisers or agents of any part of Investec.

The information and materials presented in this report are provided to you solely for general information and should not be considered as an offer or solicitation of an offer to sell, buy or subscribe to any securities or any derivative instrument or any other rights pertaining thereto.

The information in this report has been compiled from sources believed to be reliable, but neither Investec nor any Investec Affiliates accept liability for any loss arising from the use hereof or makes any representations as to its accuracy and completeness. Any opinions, forecasts or estimates herein constitute a judgement as at the date of this report. There can be no assurance that future results or events will be consistent with any such opinions, forecasts or estimates. Past performance should not be taken as an indication or guarantee of future performance, and no representation or warranty, express or implied is made regarding future performance. The information in this report and the report itself is subject to change without notice. This report as well as any other related documents or information may be incomplete, condensed and/or may not contain all material information concerning the subject of the report; its accuracy cannot be guaranteed. There is no obligation of any kind on Investec or any Investec Affiliates to update this report or any of the information, opinions, forecasts or estimates contained herein.

Investec (or its directors, officers or employees) may, to the extent permitted by law, own or have a position or interest in the financial instruments or services referred to herein, and may add to or dispose of any such position or may make a market or act as a principal in any transaction in such financial instruments. Investec (or its directors, officers or employees) may, to the extent permitted by law, act upon or use the information or opinions presented herein, or research or analysis on which they are based prior to the material being published. Investec may have issued other reports that are inconsistent with, and reach different conclusions from, the information presented in this report. Those reports reflect the different assumptions, views and analytical methods of the analysts who prepared them. The value of any securities or financial instruments mentioned in this report can fall as well as rise. Foreign currency denominated securities and financial instruments are subject to fluctuations in exchange rates that may have a positive or adverse effect on the value, price or income of such securities or financial instruments. Certain transactions, including those involving futures, options and other derivative instruments, can give rise to substantial risk and are not suitable for all investors.

This report does not contain advice, except as defined by the Corporations Act 2001 (Australia). Specifically, it does not take into account the objectives, financial situation or needs of any particular person. Investors should not do anything or forebear to do anything on the basis of this report. Before entering into any arrangement or transaction, investors must consider whether it is appropriate to do so based on their personal objectives, financial situation and needs and seek financial advice where needed.

No representation or warranty, express or implied, is or will be made in relation to, and no responsibility or liability is or will be accepted by Investec or any Investec Affiliates as to, or in relation to, the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of the contents of this report and each entity within Investec (for itself and on behalf of all Investec Affiliates) hereby expressly disclaims any and all responsibility or liability for the accuracy, reliability and completeness of such information or this research report generally.


The securities or financial instruments described herein may not have been registered under the US Securities Act of 1933, and may not be offered or sold in the United States of America or to US persons unless they have been registered under such Act, or except in compliance with an exemption from the registration requirements of such Act. US entities that are interested in trading securities listed in this report should contact a US registered broker dealer.

For readers of this report in South Africa: this report is produced by Investec Bank Limited, an authorised financial services provider and a member of the JSE Limited.

For readers of this report in United Kingdom and Europe: this report is produced by Investec Bank Plc ("IBP") and was prepared by the analyst named in this report. IBP is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority and is a member of the London Stock Exchange. This report is not intended for retail clients and may only be issued to professional clients and eligible counterparties, and investment professionals as described in S19 of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (Financial Promotions) Order 2005.

For readers of this report in Ireland: this report is produced by Investec Bank plc (Irish Branch) and was prepared by the analyst named in this report. Investec Bank plc (Irish Branch) is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority in the United Kingdom and is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland for conduct of business rules.

**Tuesday 16 May 2023**

 For readers of this report in Australia: this report is issued by Investec Australia Limited, holder of Australian Financial Services License No. 342737 only to 'Wholesale Clients' as defined by S761G of the Corporations Act 2001.

For readers of this report in Hong Kong: this report is distributed in Hong Kong by Investec Capital Asia Limited, a Securities and Futures Commission licensed corporation (Central Entity Number AFT069) and is intended for distribution to professional investors (as defined in the Securities and Futures Ordinance (Chapter 571 of the Laws of Hong Kong)) only. This report is personal to the recipient and any unauthorised use, redistribution, retransmission or reprinting of this report (whether by digital, mechanical or other means) is strictly prohibited.

For readers of this report in India: this report is issued by Investec Capital Services (India) Private Limited which is registered with the Securities and Exchange Board of India.

For readers of this report in Singapore: this report is produced by IBP and issued and distributed in Singapore through Investec Singapore Pte. Ltd. ("ISPL"), an exempt financial adviser which is regulated by the Monetary Authority of Singapore as a capital markets services licence holder. This material is intended only for, and may be issued and distributed in Singapore only to, accredited investors and institutional investors, as defined in Section 4A of the Securities and Futures Act, Cap. 289 ("SFA"). This material is not intended to be issued or distributed to any retail or other investors. ISPL may distribute reports produced by its respective foreign entities, affiliates or other foreign research houses pursuant to an arrangement under Regulation 32C of the Financial Advisers Regulations. Singapore recipients of this document should contact ISPL at the above address in respect of any matters arising from, or in connection with, this report.

For readers of this report in Canada: this report is issued by IBP, and may only be issued to persons in Canada who are able to be categorised as a "permitted client" under National Instrument 31-103 Registration Requirements and Exemptions or to any other person to whom this report may be lawfully directed. This report may not be relied upon by any person other than the intended recipient.

The distribution of this document in other jurisdictions may be prohibited by rules, regulations and/or laws of such jurisdiction. Any failure to comply with such restrictions may constitute a violation of United States securities laws or the laws of any such other jurisdiction.

This report may have been issued to you by one entity within Investec in the fulfilment of another Investec entity's agreement to do so. In doing so, the entity providing the research is in no way acting as agent of the entity with whom you have any such agreement and in no way is standing as principal or a party to that arrangement.

This publication is confidential for the information of the addressee only and may not be reproduced in whole or in part, copies circulated, or disclosed to another party, without the prior written consent of an entity within Investec. Securities referred to in this report may not be eligible for sale in those jurisdictions where an entity within Investec is not authorised or permitted by local law to do so. In the event that you contact any representative of Investec in connection with receipt of this report, including any analyst, you should be advised that this disclaimer applies to any conversation or correspondence that occurs as a result, which is also engaged in by Investec and any relevant Investec Affiliate solely for the purposes of providing general information only. Any subsequent business you choose to transact shall be subject to the relevant terms thereof. We may monitor e-mail traffic data and the content of email. Calls may be monitored and recorded. Investec does not allow the redistribution of this report to non-professional investors or persons outside the jurisdictions referred to above and Investec cannot be held responsible in any way for third parties who effect such redistribution or recipients thereof. © 2019