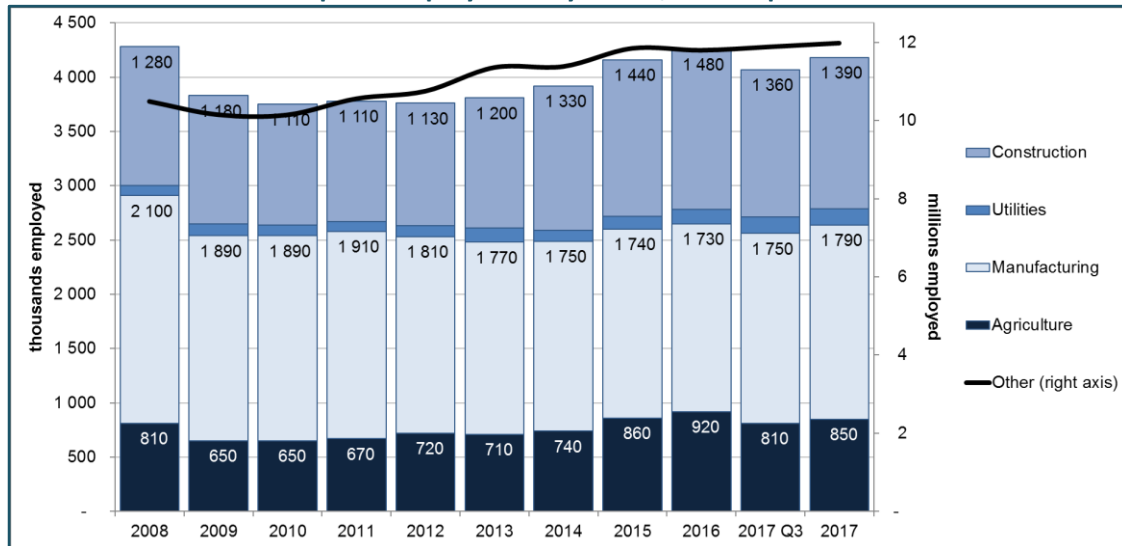


## Employment

Employment in the real economy was lower in the fourth quarter of 2017 than a year earlier. The job losses occurred in agriculture and construction; manufacturing saw a modest increase in employment; and mining employment remained essentially unchanged. Most of the growth in manufacturing resulted from job creation in food processing and beverages.

Employment in the real economy, excluding mining (which is captured in a different data series) was 4,18 million in the fourth quarter of 2017. That represented a fall of 80 000 over the fourth quarter of 2016. The employment data are not seasonally adjusted, and formal non-agricultural growth typically sees a boost in the third and fourth quarters followed by stagnation or even declines in the first half of the following year. In the event, employment climbed 2,5% (or 102 000 jobs) over the quarter, which was slightly stronger than the norm for the fourth quarter (see Graph 8).

**Graph 8: Employment by sector, fourth quarter**

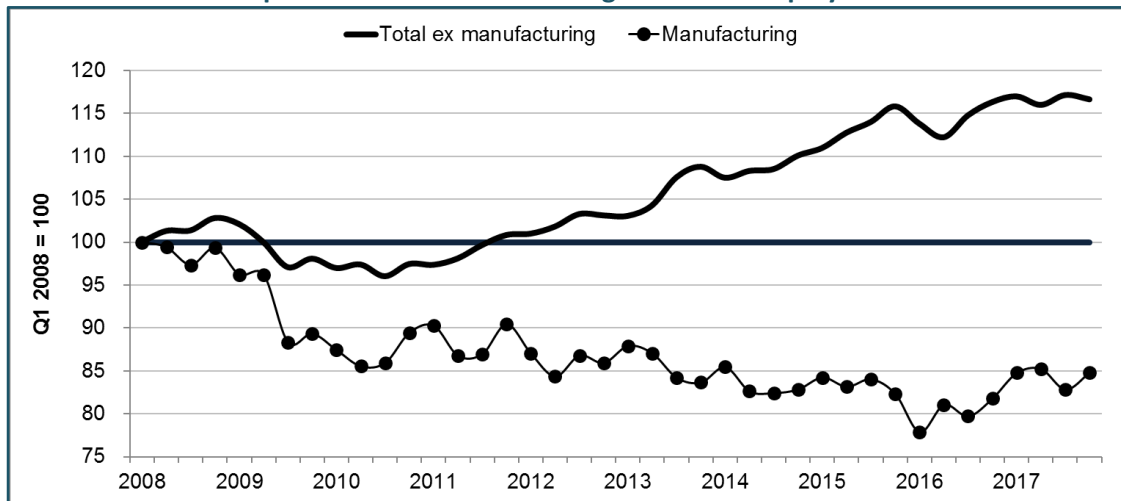


Source: StatsSA. QLFS trends 2008 - 2017. Downloaded from [www.statssa.gov.za](http://www.statssa.gov.za) in February 2018

Job losses from the fourth quarter of 2016 to the fourth quarter of 2017 occurred almost exclusively in construction (92 000 jobs) and agriculture (70 000). In contrast, manufacturing increased employment by 3,5%, or 63 000 jobs, and the small utilities sector climbed 14%, or 18 000 jobs.

As shown in Graph 9, manufacturing employment has essentially stabilised around 15% below its peak before the global financial crisis in 2008/9. As a result, its share in total employment has declined from 14% of total employment in the fourth quarter of 2008 to 11% at the end of 2017.

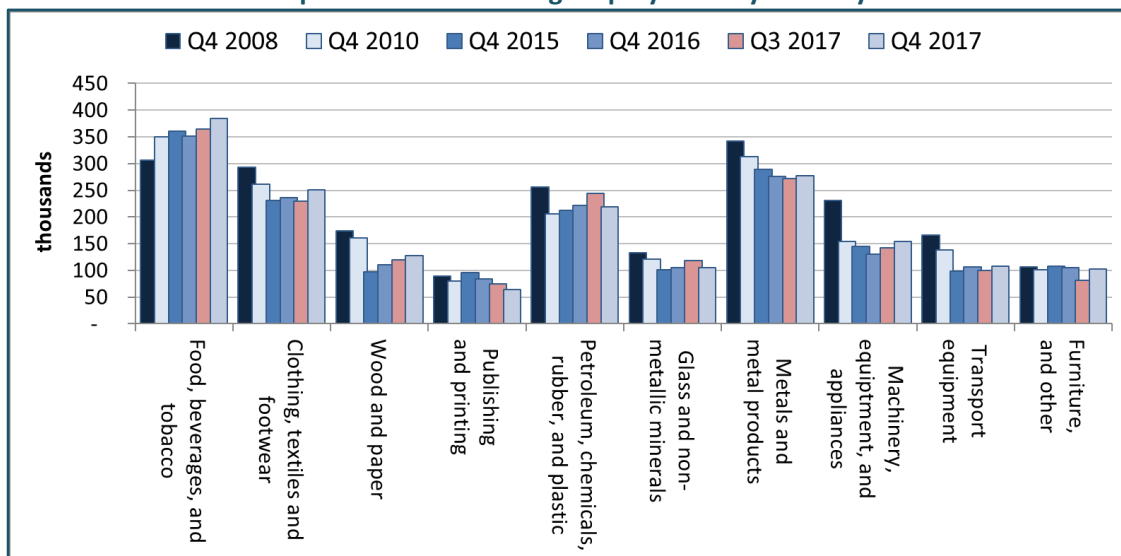
**Graph 9: Index of manufacturing and other employment**



Source: StatsSA. QLFS trends 2008 - 2017. Downloaded from [www.statssa.gov.za](http://www.statssa.gov.za) in February 2018

Food processing accounted for the bulk of job creation in manufacturing, growing by almost 10% from the fourth quarter of 2016. Its expansion presumably resulted in part from the agricultural recovery. In the other industries, the reported changes in employment and sales did not align particularly well. Machinery, equipment and appliances, clothing and footwear and wood and paper saw growth over the year; petroleum, publishing, furniture and glass and non-metallic minerals reportedly shrank (see Graph 10).

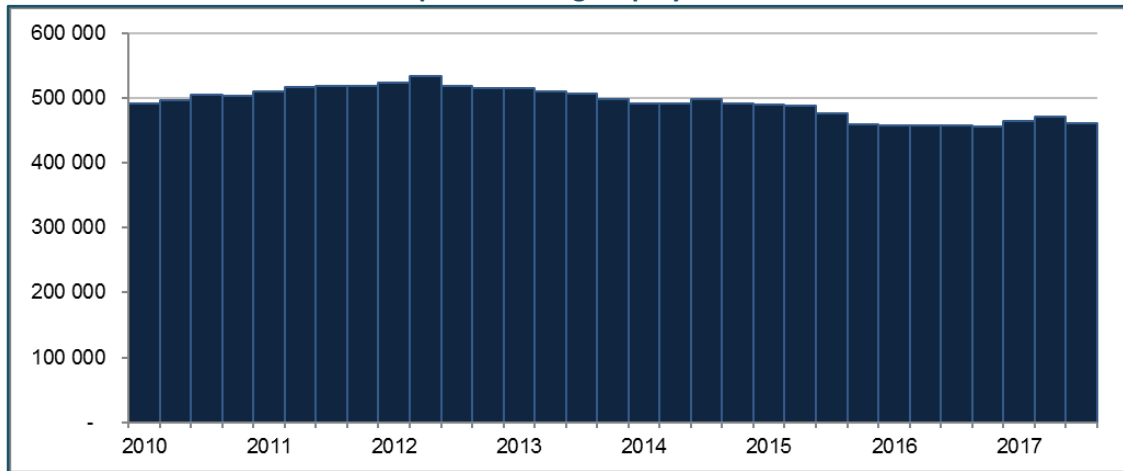
**Graph 10: Manufacturing employment by industry**



Source: StatsSA. QLFS trends. Electronic database. Downloaded from [www.statssa.gov.za](http://www.statssa.gov.za) in February 2018

The mining sector saw virtually no employment growth in the year to the third quarter 2017 – the latest available data – stabilising at around 460 000 jobs. The end of the commodity boom saw the loss of around 50 000 jobs, or 10%, but the decline appears to have ended in the past two years (see Graph 11).

**Graph 11: Mining Employment**



Source: StatsSA. Quarterly Employment Statistics. February 2018