

FEATURE ARTICLE

NEW CONCEPTS, SOURCES AND METHODS PUBLICATION

INTRODUCTION

Australia's international merchandise trade statistics are generally compiled in accordance with the international standards for international merchandise trade statistics established by the United Nations. These standards are described in the United Nations publication *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions* released in late 1998.

To improve understanding of how Australia's international merchandise trade statistics are compiled, the ABS has prepared a new publication *International Merchandise Trade, Australia, Concepts, Sources and Methods* (Cat. no. 5489.0). The first edition of this new publication is planned for release on 30 May 2001.

PURPOSE

The new publication outlines the conceptual framework for Australia's international merchandise trade statistics and describes the data sources and methods used to compile them. It explains the classifications used to capture and disseminate trade statistics, describes how the data are edited and confidentialised, and analyses different aspects of the quality of trade data. It explains the relationship of international merchandise trade statistics to other statistics and discusses several emerging issues in trade statistics.

The ABS considers that the new Concepts, Sources and Methods publication should prove to be a valuable reference document for data providers, compilers and users of trade statistics.

ACCESS

Copies of the printed publication will be available on the official release date from ABS bookshops in each State and Territory. An order form is enclosed with this publication.

Clients are able to access the new publication electronically, free of charge, via the ABS web site (<URL:<http://www.abs.gov.au>>, see Themes, International Trade, Publications). The web site version of the publication will be updated, as required, to reflect changes in the concepts, sources or methods used, resulting from reviews and other developments.
