

Overview

Under the Australian Constitution, the Commonwealth Government is responsible for legislation relating to trade and commerce with other countries. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is in turn responsible for developing and maintaining Australia's position as a world trading nation through international trade and commodity commitments and agreements, developing export markets, and formulating proposals for Government on Australia's international trade policy and trading objectives. It is also responsible for matters relating to the commercial development, marketing, and export of minerals and fuels. It employs Trade Commissioners at many overseas centres.

The statistics in this chapter are recorded on a general trade basis, i.e. total exports include both Australian produce and re-exports; total imports comprise goods entered directly for domestic consumption, together with goods imported into customs warehouses. State statistics for exports comprise State of origin. 'State of origin' is defined as the State in which the final stage of production or manufacture occurs. For imports, the State is that in which the import entry was lodged with the Australian Customs Service.

Imports to Victoria increased by 15% in 1997–98 to \$28,840 million continuing the upward trend since 1992–93. Imports over this six year period increased by 59% (table 10.1). However, the value of exports decreased slightly (2%), from \$16,306 million in 1996–97, to \$15,931 million in 1997–98. This resulted in the excess of imports over exports increasing from \$8,787 million in 1996–97 to \$12,909 million in 1997–98 (47%).

Victorian exports comprised 18% of total Australian trade (\$87,762 million) in 1997–98, a slight decline from 21% in 1996–97. Victoria received 32% of Australia's imports (\$90,673 million) in 1997–98, a proportion that has remained constant since 1995–96.

10.1 OVERSEAS TRADE, Recorded Values of Imports and Exports

Year	Imports	Exports	Excess of imports
	\$m	\$m	\$m
1992–93	18 147	11 044	7 103
1993–94	20 770	12 349	8 421
1994–95	23 967	13 008	10 959
1995–96	24 663	15 410	9 253
1996–97	25 093	16 306	8 787
1997–98	28 840	15 931	12 909

Source: *International Merchandise Trade, Australia* (5422.0).

Imports

In 1997–98, almost two-thirds of Victoria's imports came from seven countries (table 10.2). The major import sources were the United States of America (USA) (\$7,024 million), Japan (\$3,847 million), China (\$2,154 million), Germany (\$2,116 million), the United Kingdom (\$1,694 million), New Zealand (\$1,311 million) and Italy (\$963 million).

10.2 OVERSEAS IMPORTS(a), Countries of Origin and Consignment

Country	1995–96	1996–97	1997–98
	\$m	\$m	\$m
United States of America	5 839	5 944	7 024
Japan	3 429	3 097	3 847
China	1 675	1 755	2 154
Germany	1 994	1 923	2 116
United Kingdom	1 502	1 635	1 694
New Zealand	1 207	1 247	1 311
Italy	807	832	963
Republic of Korea	634	671	878
Taiwan	773	792	852
Malaysia	458	508	668
Other	6 345	6 690	7 334
Total	24 663	25 093	28 840

(a) Customs value.

Source: Unpublished data, Foreign Trade statistics.

10.3 OVERSEAS IMPORTS(a), By Commodity Groups

Description	1995–96	1996–97	1997–98
	\$m	\$m	\$m
Road vehicles (incl. air cushioned vehicles)	2 628	2 924	3 762
General industrial machinery and equipment, n.e.s. and machine parts, n.e.s.	1 717	1 711	2 012
Electrical machinery, apparatus, appliances, parts	1 633	1 571	1 791
Miscellaneous manufactured articles, n.e.s.	1 395	1 460	1 628
Machinery specialised for particular industries	1 339	1 175	1 274
Telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment	1 146	1 051	1 220
Textile yarn, fabrics, made-up articles, n.e.s., and related products	1 131	1 066	1 177
Articles of apparel and clothing accessories	834	885	1 090
Manufactures of metals, n.e.s.	698	673	816
Office machines and automatic data processing machines	685	706	809
Other	11 458	11 872	13 261
Total	24 663	25 093	28 840

(a) Customs value.

Source: Unpublished data, Foreign Trade statistics.

The major commodities imported into Victoria in 1997–98 were road vehicles (including air cushion vehicles) (\$3,762 million), general industrial machinery and equipment (\$2,012 million) and electrical machinery apparatus, appliances, parts (including non-electrical counterparts of electrical domestic equipment) (\$1,791 million) (table 10.3). The largest increases for imports over 1996–97 were articles of apparel and clothing accessories (23%), road vehicles (including air cushion vehicles (22%) and manufactures of metal, n.e.s. (21%).

10.4 IMPORTS FROM MAJOR TRADING PARTNERS—1997–98

Description	USA	Japan	China
	\$m	\$m	\$m
Road vehicles (incl. air cushion vehicles)	675	1 761	34
General industrial machinery and equipment, n.e.s. and machine parts, n.e.c.	634	327	40
Miscellaneous manufactured articles, n.e.s.	363	144	336
Articles of apparel and clothing accessories	23	2	641
Electrical machinery, apparatus, appliances, parts	322	175	133
Machinery specialised for particular industries	397	190	6
Power generating machinery and equipment	468	84	6
Telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment	168	220	98
Gold, non-monetary (excl. gold ores and concentrates)	453	0	0
Professional, scientific and controlling instruments and apparatus, n.e.s.	355	88	9
Other	3 166	856	851
Total	7 024	3 847	2 154
	%	%	%
Percentage of Victorian imports	24	13	8

Source: Unpublished data, Foreign Trade statistics.

The USA continues to be Victoria's major import partner, supplying almost a quarter of Victorian imports, of which a significant proportion were road vehicles (\$675 million) and general industrial machinery and equipment (\$634 million) (table 10.4). Road vehicles (\$1,761 million) were the dominant commodity imported from Japan, comprising nearly half the value of goods imported from that country whereas articles of apparel and clothing accessories (\$641 million) were the dominant commodity from China, followed by miscellaneous manufactured articles (\$336 million).

Exports

In 1997–98, almost half of Victoria's exports went to six countries. The major export destinations were Japan (\$1,684 million), USA (\$1,602 million), New Zealand (\$1,552 million), Hong Kong (\$1,073 million), Republic of Korea (\$1,039 million) and Singapore (\$989 million) (table 10.5).

10.5 OVERSEAS EXPORTS(a), Countries of Origin and Consignment

Country	1995–96	1996–97	1997–98
	\$m	\$m	\$m
Japan	1 952	1 523	1 684
United States of America	788	958	1 602
New Zealand	1 598	2 140	1 552
Hong Kong	821	812	1 073
Republic of Korea	1 921	2 098	1 039
Singapore	1 162	893	989
Taiwan	663	696	656
China	641	658	624
Malaysia	737	669	517
United Kingdom	373	416	454
Other	4 752	5 444	5 742
Total	15 410	16 306	15 931

(a) Free on board.

Source: Unpublished data, Foreign Trade statistics.

Victoria's main exports in 1997–98 were dairy products and bird's eggs (\$1,515 million), gold, non-monetary (excludes gold ores and concentrates) (\$1,505 million), textile fibres and their wastes (not manufactured into yarn or fabric) (\$1,243 million) and non-ferrous metals (\$1,025 million) (table 10.6).

10.6 OVERSEAS EXPORTS(a), Commodity Groups

	1995–96	1996–97	1997–98
	\$m	\$m	\$m
Dairy products and birds' eggs	1 364	1 428	1 515
Gold, non-monetary (excludes gold ores and concentrates)	2 188	1 735	1 505
Textile fibres and their wastes	1 085	1 198	1 234
Non-ferrous metals	1 022	887	1 025
Road vehicles (includes air cushion vehicles)	568	817	922
Petroleum, petroleum products and related materials	592	757	832
Meat and meat preparations	656	556	694
Power generating machinery and equipment	419	465	469
Cereals and cereal preparations	528	589	397
Vegetables and fruit	354	484	392
Other	6 634	7 390	6 946
Total	15 410	16 306	15 931

(a) Free on board.

Source: Unpublished data, Foreign Trade statistics.

The value of Victorian cereal and cereal preparation exports declined by 33% between 1996–97 and 1997–98. Other commodities to show a decline in the value of exports were vegetables and fruit (19%) and gold, non-monetary (excludes gold ores and concentrates) (13%). In contrast, the value of meat and meat preparation exports increased by 25%, and non-ferrous metals by 16%, over the same period.

Japan, with a total in exports of \$1,684 million, replaced New Zealand (\$1,552 million) as Victoria's major trading partner in 1997–98, although the commodities exported to those countries varied significantly. Exports to Japan mainly consisted of dairy products and birds' eggs (\$279 million), non-ferrous metals (\$259 million), and meat and meat preparations, and cork and wood (both with \$133 million) (table 10.7). In contrast, exports to New Zealand consisted of road vehicles (\$161 million) and petroleum, petroleum products and related materials (\$146 million). Exports to the USA, Victoria's second largest major trading partner, comprised gold, non-monetary (excludes gold ores and concentrates) (\$261 million), meat and meat preparations (\$185 million) and road vehicles (\$161 million).

10.7 EXPORTS TO MAJOR TRADING PARTNERS—1996–97

Description	Japan	USA	NZ
	\$m	\$m	\$m
Non-ferrous metals	259	8	29
Transport equipment (excludes road vehicles)	4	126	14
Dairy products and birds eggs	279	27	11
Gold, non-monetary (excludes gold ores and concentrates)	25	261	7
Road vehicles (includes air-cushion vehicles)	10	161	161
Meat and meat preparations	133	185	7
Petroleum, petroleum products and related materials	3	101	146
Office machines and automatic data processing machines	101	31	31
Cork and wood	133	0	1
Textile fibres and their wastes (not manufactured into yarn or fabric)	58	96	2
Other	679	606	1 143
Total	1 684	1 602	1 552
	%	%	%
Proportion of Victorian exports	11	10	10

Source: Unpublished data, Foreign Trade statistics.

References

Data sources

The foreign trade statistics presented in this chapter are compiled in broad agreement with the United Nations' recommendations for the compilation of international trade statistics. Overseas trade statistics are compiled by the Australian Bureau of Statistics from documentation submitted by exporters and importers, or their agents, to the Australian Customs Service, as required by the Customs Act.

ABS sources

International Merchandise Trade, Australia (Cat. no. 5422.0)

