FEATURE ARTICLE:

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TRADE THROUGH AUSTRALIA'S PORTS

INTRODUCTION

This article examines the composition and changes in Australia's international merchandise trade through its seaports and airports over the past four years, in both value and volume terms. The transport of domestically traded goods (e.g. between Sydney and Melbourne) is excluded from this analysis.

Commodities are classified to the Standard International Trade Classification Rev. 3 (SITC Rev. 3), consistent with other data in this publication. Data are on a merchandise trade basis. Gross weight has been used to provide a common unit of measurement for trade volumes across all commodities.

Confidentiality restrictions affect some of the analysis. Depending on the type of restriction applied, data for confidential commodities may have been:

a) excluded from the figures for an individual port; or

b) included in the total figures for the port, but classified to a special category 'Confidential commodities'.

In 2001-02, approximately $0.5b of exports was not attributed to an individual port listed in Tables F1 and F2 for the reasons outlined in (a) above. The only ports affected were Kwinana and Bunbury.

TOTAL TRADE

In 2001-02, Australia's total merchandise trade (exports plus imports) amounted to 566m tonnes of goods valued at $240.8b. This represented a 15% increase (by weight) and a 31% increase (by value) since 1998-99. By value, 76% of goods were transported by sea, accounting for $99.2b (82%) of exports and $84.6b (71%) of imports. Goods transported by air accounted for 24% ($56.7b) of total trade.

Exports accounted for 90% of total trade by weight and 50% by value in 2001-02. The total value of Australia's merchandise exports grew from $86.0b in 1998-99 to $121.1b in 2001-02, an increase of 41%. The volume of exports increased by only 17%, the difference reflecting price increases for some commodities and the depreciation of the Australian dollar against many major currencies. Imports increased 3% by weight and 23% by value in the same period.

PORTS

By value, the seaports of Melbourne ($47.7b in 2001-02), Sydney ($38.2b) and Brisbane ($18.3b), and Mascot Airport ($28.9b), were the largest ports, each handling substantial values of both exports and imports.

Ports that handled the largest tonnage of international goods were the seaports of Newcastle, Hay Point and Port Hedland, which were each responsible for around 70m tonnes of trade (or 12-13% of total trade by weight). For these three seaports, 99% of trade was exports, particularly in raw minerals (coal and iron ore).

Of the top 10 (sea)ports by weight, Port Walcott, Gladstone, Hay Point and Melbourne experienced the biggest increases in total trade by weight over the past three years, ranging between a 50% increase for Port Walcott to a 28% increase for Melbourne. In contrast, Kwinana fell 18%, driven down by a fall in both exports and imports.

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F1: EXPORTS AND IMPORTS—Value

	EXPORTS				IMPORTS				TOTAL TRADE		
	1998– 1999	*1999– 2000*	*2000– 2001*	*2001– 2002*	*1998– 1999*	*1999– 2000*	*2000– 2001*	*2001– 2002*	*2001– 2002*	*2001– 2002*	*Change from 1998-99 to 2001-02*
Ports	*$m*	*$m*	*$m*	*$m*	*$m*	*$m*	*$m*	*$m*	*$m*	*%*	*%*
Seaports											
Melbourne (Vic)	12 730	15 202	18 286	18 844	23 358	25 066	27 620	28 894	47 738	19.8	32.3
Sydney (NSW)	5 788	6 830	8 305	8 104	24 846	26 828	29 061	30 133	38 237	15.9	24.8
Brisbane (Qld)	5 262	5 983	7 354	7 768	7 597	9 119	10 489	10 520	18 288	7.6	42.2
Newcastle (NSW)	4 761	4 182	5 109	5 749	288	241	303	371	6 120	2.5	21.2
Hay Point (Qld)	3 392	3 402	4 303	5 279	0	0	0	0	5 279	2.2	55.6
Port Adelaide (SA)	2 467	3 056	4 199	4 685	2 100	2 157	1 708	1 906	6 591	2.7	44.3
Fremantle (WA)	3 413	3 655	4 391	4 470	4 851	4 476	4 835	4 936	9 406	3.9	13.8
Gladstone (Qld)	2 974	2 960	4 017	4 157	208	290	308	356	4 513	1.9	41.8
Townsville (Qld)	2 179	2 324	3 068	2 853	479	445	373	452	3 305	1.4	24.3
Kwinana (WA)	2 250	2 720	3 168	2 773	888	1 268	1 310	1 465	4 238	1.8	35.1
Port Botany (NSW)	2 245	2 304	2 640	2 540	0	1	14	0	2 540	1.1	13.1
Port Hedland (WA)	1 758	1 708	2 314	2 515	45	43	38	13	2 528	1.0	40.2
Bunbury (WA)	1 642	2 173	2 611	2 471	102	82	162	179	2 650	1.1	51.9
Port Kembla (NSW)	1 662	1 589	2 079	1 908	178	211	347	286	2 194	0.9	19.2
Geelong (Vic)	627	899	1 339	1 391	868	1 506	1 981	1 780	3 171	1.3	112.1
Portland (Vic)	893	1 043	1 356	1 211	81	64	120	85	1 296	0.5	33.1
Launceston (Tas)	521	682	892	953	93	111	174	275	1 228	0.5	100.0
Other (a)(b)	13 383	17 499	23 178	21 573	1 658	3 033	3 652	2 992	24 565	10.2	63.3
Total seaports	*67 946*	*78 209*	*98 609*	*99 244*	*67 640*	*74 941*	*82 495*	*84 643*	*183 887*	*76.4*	*35.6*
Airports											
Mascot (NSW)	6 066	6 926	8 105	8 085	17 387	20 060	22 203	20 765	28 850	12.0	23.0
Melbourne (Vic)	5 040	5 057	5 585	6 173	7 580	8 485	8 497	8 625	14 798	6.1	17.3
Perth (WA)	5 835	5 933	5 787	6 133	2 959	3 136	2 456	2 466	8 599	3.6	-2.2
Brisbane (Qld)	580	630	715	736	1 072	1 335	1 385	1 668	2 404	1.0	45.5
Adelaide (SA)	213	218	270	280	451	493	500	524	804	0.3	21.1
Darwin (NT)	103	90	161	230	105	109	129	197	427	0.2	105.3
Other	97	103	161	131	333	1 435	569	685	816	0.3	89.8
Total airports	*17 932*	*18 956*	*20 784*	*21 769*	*29 887*	*35 053*	*35 741*	*34 930*	*56 699*	*23.5*	*18.6*
Parcel post	114	121	146	116	84	84	82	78	194	0.1	-2.0
All ports	**85 991**	**97 286**	**119 539**	**121 129**	**97 611**	**110 078**	**118 317**	**119 651**	**240 780**	**100.0**	**31.1**

(a) Includes commodities that do not pass through an Australian port, e.g. exports of natural gas and crude petroleum from the North-West shelf and Timor Sea.

(b) Includes exports not attributed to a port due to confidentiality restrictions.

TRADE THROUGH AUSTRALIA'S PORTS

F2: EXPORTS AND IMPORTS—Gross weight

	EXPORTS...................................				IMPORTS......................................				TOTAL TRADE..................		
	1998– 1999	1999– 2000	2000– 2001	2001– 2002	1998– 1999	1999– 2000	2000– 2001	2001– 2002	2001– 2002	2001– 2002	Change from 1998-99 to 2001-02
Ports	t'000	t'000	t'000	t'000	t'000	t'000	t'000	t'000	t'000	%	%
Seaports											
Newcastle (NSW)	70 807	68 154	70 062	71 808	1 316	956	888	1 062	72 870	12.9	1.0
Hay Point (Qld)	53 738	63 894	68 575	69 429	0	0	0	0	69 429	12.3	29.2
Port Hedland (WA)	60 388	60 306	68 484	68 212	15	160	132	72	68 284	12.1	13.0
Gladstone (Qld)	30 130	32 120	38 527	40 053	1 110	1 270	1 252	1 236	41 289	7.3	32.2
Port Walcott (WA)	17 918	26 437	28 665	26 952	0	0	0	0	26 952	4.8	50.4
Melbourne (Vic)	7 106	7 950	9 368	12 318	8 426	8 239	7 129	7 630	19 948	3.5	28.4
Brisbane (Qld)	7 597	8 429	8 905	10 252	8 459	9 132	8 382	8 392	18 644	3.3	16.1
Sydney (NSW)	3 002	3 527	3 963	4 141	8 991	8 924	9 190	10 150	14 291	2.5	19.2
Port Kembla (NSW)	12 726	11 679	13 762	12 295	1 484	1 775	1 630	1 893	14 188	2.5	-0.2
Kwinana (WA)	8 237	7 609	7 052	6 398	5 753	5 277	3 957	5 144	11 542	2.0	-17.5
Abbot Point (Qld)	9 725	8 255	9 199	11 108	0	0	0	0	11 108	2.0	14.2
Geelong (Vic)	3 108	3 925	4 921	4 611	4 816	4 901	5 043	5 328	9 939	1.8	25.4
Bunbury (WA)	7 339	8 423	8 784	8 832	710	822	1 107	1 051	9 883	1.7	22.8
Townsville (Qld)	3 621	3 580	4 387	3 825	3 820	3 795	3 595	3 939	7 764	1.4	4.3
Esperance (WA)	2 775	3 085	3 815	5 391	257	205	129	371	5 762	1.0	90.0
Fremantle (WA)	2 664	3 678	3 278	3 622	1 731	1 535	1 687	1 816	5 438	1.0	23.7
Port Adelaide (SA)	2 658	2 909	3 516	4 044	1 797	2 276	903	957	5 001	0.9	12.3
Other (a)(b)	129 012	138 730	140 941	142 998	7 547	7 094	9 555	9 000	151 998	26.8	11.3
Total seaports	*432 551*	*462 690*	*496 204*	*506 289*	*56 232*	*56 361*	*54 579*	*58 041*	*564 330*	*99.6*	*15.5*
Airports											
Mascot (NSW)	1 220	1 215	1 224	1 277	153	169	153	139	1 416	0.2	3.1
Melbourne (Vic)	513	466	463	476	92	101	93	88	564	0.1	-6.8
Brisbane (Qld)	39	41	45	46	19	22	21	23	69	0.0	19.0
Perth (WA)	30	33	39	35	13	13	12	11	46	0.0	7.0
Adelaide (SA)	7	6	7	8	5	4	5	4	12	0.0	0.0
Darwin (NT)	1	2	3	2	1	1	0	1	3	0.0	50.0
Other	7	7	9	6	1	1	1	1	7	0.0	-12.5
Total airports	*1 817*	*1 770*	*1 790*	*1 850*	*284*	*311*	*285*	*267*	*2 117*	*0.4*	*0.8*
Parcel post	0	52	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	0.0	100.0
All ports	**434 369**	**464 513**	**497 994**	**508 140**	**56 517**	**56 673**	**54 865**	**58 310**	**566 450**	**100.0**	**15.4**

(a) Includes commodities that do not pass through an Australian port, e.g. exports of natural gas and crude petroleum from the North-West shelf and Timor Sea.

(b) Includes exports not attributed to a port due to confidentiality restrictions.

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TRADE THROUGH AUSTRALIA'S PORTS

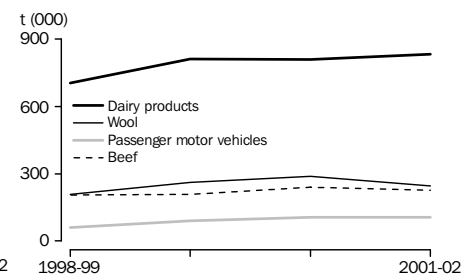PORT OF MELBOURNE
In 2001-02, the Port of Melbourne handled 20% of Australia's trade by value, with exports of $18.8b and imports of $28.9b. Melbourne was Australia's biggest exporting port by value in each of the past four years and ranked second for imports. By weight, it was less significant, ranked 11th in 1998-99 rising to 6th in 2001-02. This was driven by a 73% increase in exports, which was partially offset by a 9% fall in imports.

The major exports from the Port of Melbourne were agricultural commodities, particularly dairy products, wool, beef, lamb and wheat. Over 80% of Australia's exports of dairy products were shipped from Melbourne ($2.8b in 2001-02), destined mainly for South-East Asia and Japan. Exports of passenger motor vehicles and parts were worth $2.1b, double the value of four years ago. There were 72,000 cars ($1.5b) shipped overseas in 2001-02, mostly to the Middle East and New Zealand.

EXPORTS—VALUE
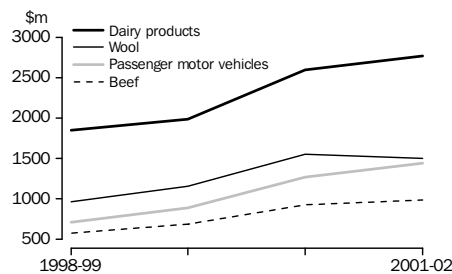
EXPORTS—GROSS WEIGHT

In 2001-02, one fifth of imports to the Port of Melbourne were road vehicles and parts ($5.1b), up from $4.3b in 1998-99. Passenger motor vehicles (144,000 cars valued at $2.8b) and motor vehicle parts ($1.4b) were the largest components in 2001-02, sourced largely from Japan, Germany and USA.

By weight, crude petroleum was the largest import in 2001-02, amounting to 1.2m tonnes (or 1.4b litres) valued at $401m. This was followed by paper and paperboard products at 457,000 tonnes, valued at $742m. Both commodities had lower volumes of imports in 2001-02 than 1998-99, with paper and paperboard products down 11% and crude petroleum down 56%.

IMPORTS—VALUE

IMPORTS—GROSS WEIGHT

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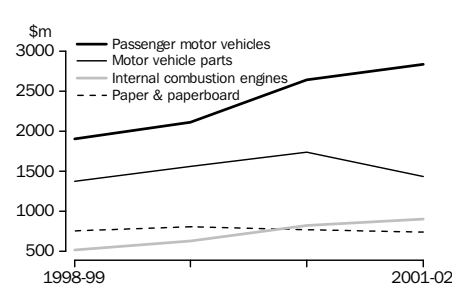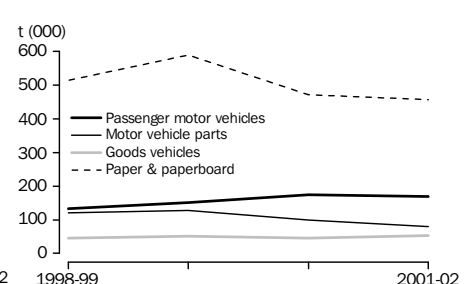
TRADE THROUGH AUSTRALIA'S PORTS

MAJOR PORTS *continued*

PORT OF SYDNEY

By value, the Port of Sydney was the second largest Australian port, accounting for $38.2b (16%) of Australia's total trade in 2001-02. It ranked second by value of exports and first by value of imports. By weight, it ranked 8th, with over 14m tonnes shipped, of which 10m tonnes were imports and 4m tonnes were exports.

The most important exports by value were aluminium, wool, beef, and cotton. In 2001-02, they accounted for 29% ($2.4b) of exports from this port. Aluminium, cotton and refined petroleum were the largest exports by weight.

Strong growth was recorded in exports of wine in the period studied. The value and volume of exports of alcoholic beverages, mainly wine, more than doubled from 1998-99 to reach $357m and 58m litres in 2001-02.

EXPORTS—VALUE
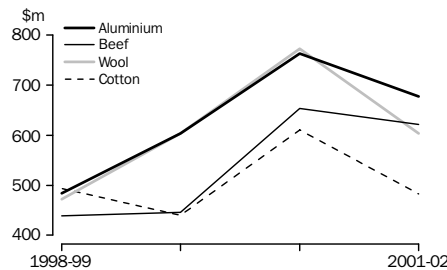
EXPORTS—GROSS WEIGHT
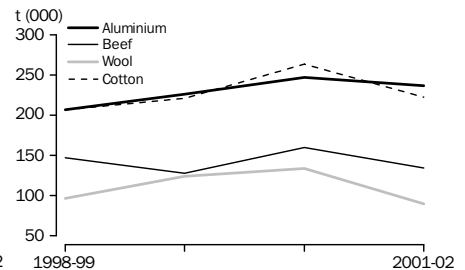
The value of imports to the Port of Sydney increased by 21% over the past three years, reaching $30.1b in 2001-02, or 25% of Australia's total merchandise imports.

Passenger motor vehicles were the largest import by value, worth $3.1b in 2001-02, an increase of 37% since 1998-99. 150,000 vehicles were imported through the port in 2001-02, up from 133,600 in 1998-99. Computers and parts were the next largest import ($1.7b in 2001-02), followed by crude petroleum ($1.2b), which has risen by 150% in value since 1998-99.

Crude petroleum (3.6m tonnes or 4.3b litres) and refined petroleum (987,000 tonnes or 1.1b litres) were the largest imports by weight. Together these accounted for 45% of imports by weight in 2001-02. Paper and paperboard products were the next largest import at 520,000 tonnes in 2001-02.

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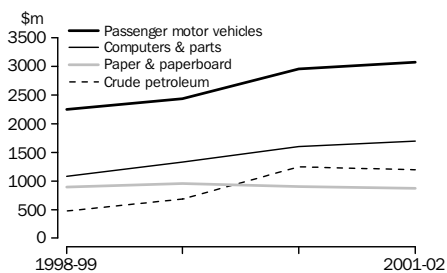
IMPORTS—GROSS WEIGHT

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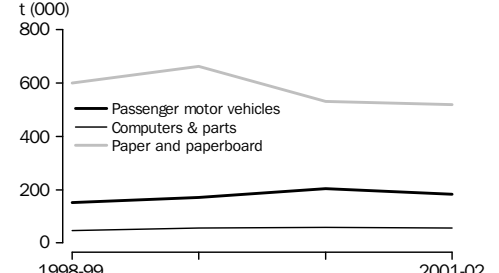
TRADE THROUGH AUSTRALIA'S PORTS

MAJOR PORTS *continued*

PORT OF BRISBANE   By value, Brisbane has been the third largest seaport in Australia for each of the past four years for both exports and imports. Its total trade in 2001-02 was $18.3b, comprising $7.8b of exports and $10.5b of imports. This represented a 42% increase since 1998-99. Over the same period total trade by weight increased 16% to 18.6m tonnes.

Food products contributed almost half the value of exports from the Port of Brisbane over this period. In 2001-02, these were valued at $3.6b. Beef was the major export, accounting for $2.2b (28%) of exports. The next largest were cotton, at $752m (10%), and lamb, at $309m (4%).

By weight, coal was the largest export by a substantial margin, accounting for 3.1m tonnes (30%) of exports in 2001-02. The volume of coal exports was 35% higher than the previous year, after being relatively stable over the three previous years. Refined petroleum, at 682,000 tonnes or 766m litres, and wheat, at 622,000 tonnes, were the next largest exports.
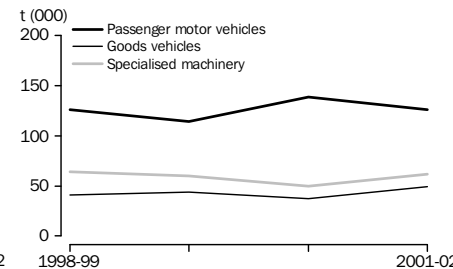
EXPORTS—VALUE
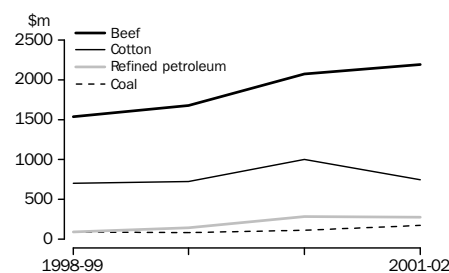
EXPORTS—GROSS WEIGHT
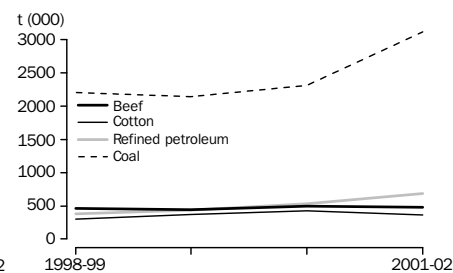
In 2001-02, imports to the Port of Brisbane accounted for $10.5b (9%) of the value of Australia's imports, up from $7.6b in 1998-99. The gross weight of imports peaked at 9.1m tonnes in 1999-00, dropping to 8.4m tonnes in 2001-02. This was 14% of Australia's total imports by weight.

Crude petroleum was one of the two largest imports by value in each of the past four years ($1.7b in 2001-02) and the largest import by weight (5.2m tonnes or 6.4b litres in 2001-02). It accounted for 62% of the gross weight and 16% of the value of imports in 2001-02. Passenger and goods motor vehicles were the other large contributors, together valued at $2.6b (25% of total) in 2001-02, up from $2.0b in 1998-99. Three quarters of these imports were cars.

IMPORTS—VALUE
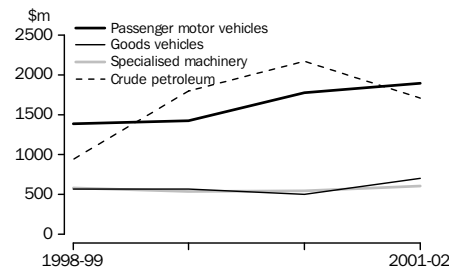
IMPORTS—GROSS WEIGHT

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TRADE THROUGH AUSTRALIA'S PORTS

MAJOR PORTS *continued*

MASCOT AIRPORT   Mascot Airport was the largest airport, and the third largest port overall, by value, during each of the years included in this analysis. In 2001-02, $8.1b (7%) of exports and $20.8b (17%) of imports were transported through Mascot Airport. It accounted for 50% or more of all trade by air over the past four years.

The major exports by value were machinery and transport equipment, which accounted for $3.0b (37%) of exports from Mascot Airport in 2001-02. The most important contributor to this category was computers and parts ($1.2b). Almost 80% of these were re-exports i.e. goods imported and then exported in the same condition or after undergoing minor alterations. Medicinal and pharmaceutical products totalled $1.3b, of which $308m were re-exports.

The major imports by value in 2001-02 were computers and parts ($4.3b), medicinal and pharmaceutical products ($3.1b) and telecommunications equipment ($2.7b).

EXPORTS—VALUE
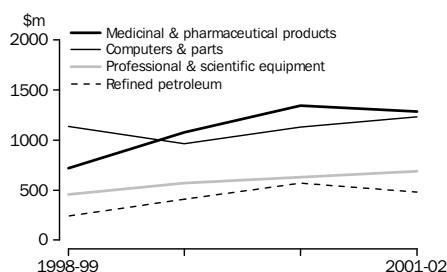
IMPORTS—VALUE
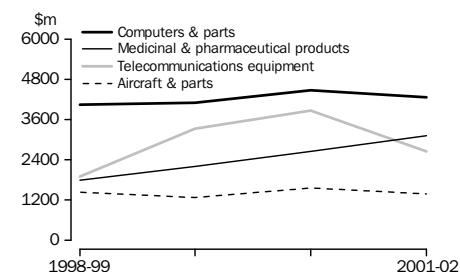
OTHER PORTS   Major imports to the seaports of other Australian capital cities tend to be similar to those examined for the seaports in the previous section i.e. motor vehicles, for both passengers and goods; crude petroleum; and other manufactured goods. Most of the regional seaports have relatively minor imports in comparison to their exports, unless they have, for example, an oil refinery or major manufacturing plant nearby.

NEW SOUTH WALES   Newcastle, Port Botany and Port Kembla were the major NSW seaports apart from the Port of Sydney. In 2001-02, exports from Newcastle were valued at $5.7b, of which 66% ($3.8b) was coal. By weight of exports, Newcastle was Australia's largest port, accounting for 14% of Australia's total exports. Coal and wheat were the major exports from Port Kembla, while from Port Botany they were aluminium and wool.

VICTORIA   Apart from the Port of Melbourne, Geelong was Victoria's other major seaport, accounting for around 5% of Victorian exports by value in 2001-02. Major exports shipped were refined petroleum and wheat, valued at around $400m each.

Melbourne Airport was Australia's second largest airport, and fifth largest port, by value, in each of the past four years. A wide range of goods were exported and imported. Non-monetary gold was the major export, peaking at $2.3b in 1998-99 and worth $1.5b in 2001-02. Over one-third related to gold that was imported for processing and then re-exported.

QUEENSLAND   With significant exports of minerals and agricultural goods, Queensland has several major exporting ports apart from the Port of Brisbane. In 2001-02, Hay Point ($5.3b), Gladstone ($4.2b) and Townsville ($2.9b) together accounted for 52% of Queensland exports. By weight, Hay Point (69m tonnes) and Gladstone (40m tonnes) were Queensland's largest ports, the major commodity shipped from each was coal.

TRADE THROUGH AUSTRALIA'S PORTS

OTHER PORTS *continued*

WESTERN AUSTRALIA — In 2001-02, Fremantle ($4.5b), Kwinana ($2.8b), Port Hedland ($2.5b) and Bunbury ($2.5b) were Western Australia's major seaports. A range of commodities including wheat, nickel, pigments and paints, and live sheep, were the major exports from Fremantle. Wheat and nickel were some of the major exports from Kwinana, whilst Port Hedland ($2.1b) and Dampier ($2.3b) had substantial exports of iron ore.

Perth Airport was Australia's third largest airport by value, with exports exceeding $5b in each of the past four years. Non-monetary gold accounted for $4.0b (69%) of exports in 1998-99 and around half of exports in each of the three subsequent years.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA — Port Adelaide was the major South Australian port with $6.6b of trade in 2001-02. The value of exports increased markedly in the past three years (up 90% by value and 52% by weight), due partly to increased exports of motor vehicles and wine. Exports of passenger motor vehicles were worth $1.4b in 2001-02, up from $565m in 1998-99. Exports of alcoholic beverages, mainly wine, more than doubled in the same period from $404m to $873m. The most significant imports to Port Adelaide were passenger and goods motor vehicles, together valued at $323m in 2001-02.

TASMANIA — Launceston and Hobart are Tasmania's major ports, together accounting for $1.5b of exports in 2001-02. The largest commodities exported by value were zinc from Hobart ($347m) and aluminium ($362m) from Launceston. Some of Tasmania's major exports are subject to confidentiality restrictions. It should be noted that some goods originating from Tasmania are exported from the Port of Melbourne.

F3: LEGEND

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Term used	SITC	Term used	SITC
Live sheep	part of 001	Paper & paperboard	64
Food products	0 excl. 001	Nickel	683
Beef	011	Aluminium	684
Lamb	012	Zinc	686
Dairy products	02 excl. 025	Machinery & transport equipment	7
Wheat	041	Specialised machinery	72
Alcoholic beverages	112	Computers & parts	752,759
Cotton	263	Telecommunications equipment	764
Wool	268	Road vehicles & parts	78
Iron ore	281	Passenger motor vehicles	781
Coal	321	Goods motor vehicles	782
Crude petroleum	333	Motor vehicle parts	784
Refined petroleum	334	Aircraft & parts	792
Pigments & paint	533	Professional & scientific equipment	87
Medicinal & pharmaceutical products	54	Non-monetary gold	971

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