

COMMONWEALTH BUREAU OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS
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INTERIM RETAIL PRICE INDEX - MARCH QUARTER, 1959

- Variations in retail prices as measured by the Interim Retail Price Index for the six State capital cities of Australia are shown herein.
- This Interim Retail Price Index, instituted in March, 1954 with post-war weights and components, is published quarterly and is described in "Labour Report" No. 45 (1957).
- Seasonal fluctuations in prices of potatoes and onions materially affect the movement of the Aggregate All Groups Index. An All Groups Index which excludes potatoes and onions is shown herein in comparison with that calculated in the customary manner.
- An analysis for each capital city of the approximate effect of price movements of potatoes and onions is shown hereunder and similar information for the weighted average of the six capital cities can be derived from Table 3 on page 4.

ANALYSIS OF MOVEMENTS IN INTERIM RETAIL PRICE INDEX
(Base for each City : Year 1952-53 = 100)

Period	Interim Index Points								
	Exclud- ing Potatoes and Onions (a)	Cumulative Movement due to Potatoes and Onions (a)	Aggre- gate All Groups	Exclud- ing Potatoes and Onions (a)	Cumulative Movement due to Potatoes and Onions (a)	Aggre- gate All Groups	Exclud- ing Potatoes and Onions (a)	Cumulative Movement due to Potatoes and Onions (a)	Aggre- gate All Groups
	SYDNEY			MELBOURNE			BRISBANE		
1955-Sept.	104.1	+ 0.5	104.6	105.1	+ 0.7	105.8	104.6	+ 1.0	105.6
Dec.	104.8	+ 0.6	105.4	107.3	+ 1.0	108.3	105.4	+ 0.6	106.0
1956-March	105.3	+ 0.9	106.2	109.4	+ 1.0	110.4	105.8	+ 1.5	107.3
June	107.0	+ 1.5	108.5	111.6	+ 1.7	113.3	107.7	+ 1.8	109.5
Sept.	111.2	+ 2.8	114.0	112.3	+ 3.4	115.7	108.7	+ 3.2	111.9
Dec.	112.6	+ 1.2	113.8	113.1	+ 2.4	115.5	109.5	+ 1.7	111.2
1957-March	113.7	..	113.7	113.7	+ 0.4	114.1	110.9	+ 0.5	111.4
June	114.5	+ 0.2	114.7	114.8	+ 0.5	115.3	112.0	+ 0.4	112.4
Sept.	115.2	- 0.2	115.0	115.3	+ 0.2	115.5	112.3	+ 0.2	112.5
Dec.	115.2	- 0.4	114.8	115.2	+ 0.1	115.3	113.6	- 0.2	113.4
1958-March	116.7	- 0.3	116.4	115.5	..	115.5	114.8	+ 0.1	114.9
June	116.8	- 0.4	116.4	116.1	- 0.1	116.0	117.3	..	117.3
Sept.	116.6	- 0.4	116.2	116.8	- 0.1	116.7	117.9	+ 0.1	118.0
Dec.	117.1	- 0.2	116.9	119.2	+ 0.2	119.4	119.8	+ 0.2	120.0
1959-March	117.3	..	117.3	119.9	+ 0.4	120.3	120.7	+ 0.4	121.1
	ADELAIDE			PERTH			HOBART		
1955-Sept.	105.4	+ 0.6	106.0	110.8	+ 0.3	111.1	107.7	+ 0.5	108.2
Dec.	105.4	+ 1.0	106.4	111.5	+ 0.1	111.6	108.6	+ 1.0	109.6
1956-March	106.1	+ 0.7	106.8	113.1	..	113.1	111.9	+ 1.1	113.0
June	108.4	+ 1.3	109.7	115.0	+ 0.2	115.2	114.1	+ 1.0	115.1
Sept.	108.6	+ 3.0	111.6	116.1	+ 0.5	116.6	116.4	+ 1.9	118.3
Dec.	108.7	+ 2.2	110.9	117.2	+ 0.4	117.6	117.7	+ 1.7	119.4
1957-March	109.7	..	109.7	118.4	+ 0.3	118.7	118.5	+ 0.4	118.9
June	111.0	+ 0.3	111.3	119.9	+ 0.3	120.2	119.2	+ 0.4	119.6
Sept.	112.2	..	112.2	119.8	+ 0.3	120.1	119.0	- 0.2	118.8
Dec.	111.8	- 0.1	111.7	118.9	+ 0.2	119.1	119.4	- 0.3	119.1
1958-March	112.1	..	112.1	119.4	..	119.4	119.7	..	119.7
June	114.2	- 0.2	114.0	120.7	..	120.7	120.6	- 0.3	120.3
Sept.	115.4	- 0.2	115.2	121.2	..	121.2	121.3	- 0.4	120.9
Dec.	115.9	+ 0.1	116.0	121.0	+ 0.1	121.1	122.8	- 0.3	122.5
1959-March	116.6	+ 0.2	116.8	121.6	+ 0.1	121.7	123.0	+ 0.4	123.4

(a) Cumulative from base period.
(+) Denotes increase, (-) decrease.

5. Comparative average retail prices of potatoes for the six capital cities are shown hereunder:-

AVERAGE RETAIL PRICES OF POTATOES

Pence per 7 lbs.

Period	Sydney	Melbourne	Brisbane	Adelaide	Perth	Hobart	Weighted Average of Six Capitals
March Quarter, 1953	40	27	31	25	28	37	33
" " 1954	40	31	52	30	29	35	37
" " 1955	38	27	44	29	28	43	34
" " 1956	66	59	71	46	31	67	60
" " 1957	47	41	45	30	44	52	43
June " "	50	47	41	36	43	52	46
September " "	40	34	37	28	43	34	37
December " "	33	34	30	26	38	31	33
March " 1958	37	33	40	28	35	43	35
June " "	35	29	32	22	35	32	31
September " "	34	28	39	23	35	28	31
December " "	40	37	41	34	38	35	38
March " 1959	46	47	49	38	39	53	45
Month of March, 1959	48	52	49	40	39	48	48

6. The observations in these Statistical Bulletins are made, as is customary, to assist public understanding of the trends in retail prices within the definition of the respective indexes.

7. Tribunals and other authorities concerned with wage adjustment and other purposes decide in the light of their own requirements what price index (if any) is relevant to their purposes and how it shall be applied. The Statistician's function is to supply indexes and information thereon as required by those authorities. The Statistician expresses no view as to the merits or demerits of the use of price indexes in this connection.

8. Group and aggregate Interim Retail Price Index Numbers are shown below:-

TABLE 1 : INTERIM RETAIL PRICE INDEX - GROUP INDEXES

Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities

(Base : Year 1952-53 = 100) (a)

Period	Food		Clothing and Drapery	Rent	Other Items	Aggregate All Groups	
	A	B				A	B
Year ended June -							
1954	102.8	103.7	101.6	105.0	100.9	102.2	102.5
1955	104.8	104.6	102.4	109.6	101.4	103.7	103.6
1956	108.1	110.6	103.3	115.5	106.4	107.0	108.0
1957	112.4	115.8	105.8	122.5	117.8	113.0	114.3
1958	114.0	113.7	109.2	128.4	120.2	115.7	115.6
Quarter -							
1956 : December	111.6	116.2	105.3	121.5	117.8	112.5	114.2
1957 : March	112.6	113.2	106.3	123.1	118.5	113.5	113.7
June	113.3	114.2	107.9	124.6	119.3	114.5	114.8
September	113.7	113.8	108.4	126.1	119.9	115.1	115.1
December	112.8	112.4	109.1	127.0	120.1	115.1	114.9
1958 : March	114.6	114.4	109.3	128.2	120.2	115.9	115.8
June	114.9	114.4	110.2	132.2	120.4	116.7	116.5
September	114.7	114.2	110.3	134.2	121.4	117.1	116.9
December	115.1	115.1	110.5	136.0	124.5	118.3	118.3
1959 : March	116.1	116.7	110.3	137.4	124.7	118.8	119.0

(a) Figures appearing after the decimal point in the tables herein possess little significance for general statistical purposes. They are inserted to avoid the minor distortions that would occur in rounding off the figures to the nearest whole number.

Indexes in columns "A" exclude, and those in columns "B" include, potatoes and onions. See paragraphs 3 and 4 on page 1 of this Bulletin.

9. The next table shows aggregate Interim Retail Price Index Numbers for each of the six State capital cities individually in comparison with the weighted average index for the six State capitals combined.

TABLE 2 : INTERIM RETAIL PRICE INDEX

FOR SIX CAPITAL CITIES, SEPARATELY AND COMBINED

(Base of Index for Each City and for Six Capital Cities : Year 1952-53 = 100) (a)

Period	Sydney	Melbourne	Brisbane	Adelaide	Perth	Hobart	Six Capital Cities (b)
Aggregate - All Groups (c)							
Year ended June -							
1951	74.6	75.2	76.4	74.7	74.5	73.1	74.9
1952	91.7	91.0	92.7	90.9	90.7	89.9	91.4
1953	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1954	102.2	102.4	103.0	102.0	103.9	106.6	102.5
1955	103.1	102.7	104.0	103.6	109.6	105.6	103.6
1956	106.1	109.5	107.1	107.2	112.7	111.5	108.0
1957	114.1	115.1	111.7	110.9	118.3	119.1	114.3
1958	115.7	115.6	114.5	112.5	119.8	119.5	115.6
Quarter -							
1956 : December	113.8	115.5	111.2	110.9	117.6	119.4	114.2
1957 : March	113.7	114.1	111.4	109.7	118.7	118.9	113.7
June	114.7	115.3	112.4	111.3	120.2	119.6	114.8
September	115.0	115.5	112.5	112.2	120.1	118.8	115.1
December	114.8	115.3	113.4	111.7	119.1	119.1	114.9
1958 : March	116.4	115.5	114.9	112.1	119.4	119.7	115.8
June	116.4	116.0	117.3	114.0	120.7	120.3	116.5
September	116.2	116.7	118.0	115.2	121.2	120.9	116.9
December	116.9	119.4	120.0	116.0	121.1	122.5	118.3
1959 : March	117.3	120.3	121.1	116.8	121.7	123.4	119.0

All Groups EXCLUDING Potatoes and Onions (c)

Year ended June -							
1956	105.3	108.4	105.9	106.3	112.6	110.6	107.0
1957	113.0	113.5	110.3	109.5	117.9	118.0	113.0
1958	116.0	115.5	114.5	112.6	119.7	119.7	115.7
Quarter -							
1956 : December	112.6	113.1	109.5	108.7	117.2	117.7	112.5
1957 : March	113.7	113.7	110.9	109.7	118.4	118.5	113.5
June	114.5	114.8	112.0	111.0	119.9	119.2	114.5
September	115.2	115.3	112.3	112.2	119.8	119.0	115.1
December	115.2	115.2	113.6	111.8	118.9	119.4	115.1
1958 : March	116.7	115.5	114.8	112.1	119.4	119.7	115.9
June	116.8	116.1	117.3	114.2	120.7	120.6	116.7
September	116.6	116.8	117.9	115.4	121.2	121.3	117.1
December	117.1	119.2	119.8	115.9	121.0	122.8	118.3
1959 : March	117.3	119.9	120.7	116.6	121.6	123.0	118.8

(a) Figures appearing after the decimal point in the tables herein possess little significance for general statistical purposes. They are inserted to avoid the minor distortions that would occur in rounding off the figures to the nearest whole number. (b) Weighted average. (c) See paragraphs 3 and 4 on page 1 of this Bulletin.

10. The above indexes measure price movements for each city individually and the differences in degree of price movement in respective cities over the periods shown. But they do not provide a comparison of absolute retail price levels in any city with the retail price levels of any other city.

11. The Interim Retail Price Index was first published and described in S.S.265 on 24th March, 1954. It has been compiled for the years 1950-51 to 1957-58 and for each quarter from September quarter, 1952. The list of items covered by the index is representative of a high proportion of expenditure of wage earner households. The group weights and the item weights of the Interim Index relate broadly to the consumption pattern of 1950-53. Those of the "C" Series Index relate to the pre-war pattern.

12. The list of items in the Interim Index is more comprehensive than that of the "C" Series Index and some of the principal food weights and group weights differ substantially from those used in the "C" Series Index. A comparison of group weights and of the list of items in the respective indexes is shown on pages 9 - 12 of the annual "Labour Report" No. 45 (1957).

13. At times appreciable disparities appear in the movement of the respective indexes for individual cities from quarter to quarter. The Interim Index, being based on recent weights and an extended list of items, is the more representative measure of quarterly retail price variations.

14. The following table shows the Interim Index for the six capital cities combined (with the year 1952-53 as base = 100) in comparison with "C" Series Index numbers converted arithmetically to the same base year. In view of the fluctuations in prices of potatoes and onions (see page 1 of this Bulletin) this table shows index numbers for both series including and excluding those two commodities.

TABLE 3 : COMPARATIVE MOVEMENTS IN RETAIL PRICES (Base : Year 1952-53 = 100) (a)

Period	Six Capital Cities (Weighted Average)			
	"C" Series Index		Interim Index	
	A	B	A	B
Year ended June - 1953	100.0		100.0	100.0
1954	102.8		102.2	102.5
1955	103.7		103.7	103.6
1956	107.5	108.8	107.0	108.0
1957	112.2	114.1	113.0	114.3
1958	114.7	114.3	115.7	115.6
Quarter - 1955 : March	103.9		103.8	103.8
June	105.0		104.5	104.7
September	105.9	106.6	105.1	105.7
December	106.7	107.7	106.3	107.0
1956 : March	107.8	109.0	107.4	108.3
June	109.7	111.8	109.4	110.8
September	111.1	115.6	111.5	114.4
December	111.7	114.2	112.5	114.2
1957 : March	112.6	112.8	113.5	113.7
June	113.5	113.8	114.5	114.8
September	114.0	113.8	115.1	115.1
December	114.0	113.5	115.1	114.9
1958 : March	115.0	114.7	115.9	115.8
June	115.9	115.3	116.7	116.5
September	116.3	115.7	117.1	116.9
December	117.3	117.0	118.3	118.3
1959 : March	117.7	117.8	118.8	119.0

(a) See note to Table 1 herein.

Indexes in columns "A" exclude, and those in columns "B" include, the effects of price changes of potatoes and onions. See paragraphs 3 and 4 on page 1 of this Bulletin.

15. The rental component used in these retail price indexes has been continued on the basis described on pages 2 and 10 of "Labour Report" No. 41 (1952). Analysis of data of the Census of 1954 and recent surveys shows that in all cities the numbers of houses privately rented have diminished substantially and that rents of the residual houses (alone) are no longer sufficiently representative as the housing component of the retail price indexes. The housing component is under consideration.

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