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INTERIM RETAIL PRICE INDEX  
SEPTEMBER QUARTER, 1956.

1. Particulars concerning variations in retail prices as measured by the Interim Retail Price Index for the six State capital cities of Australia are given herein.
2. This Interim Retail Price Index was instituted in March, 1954, with post-war weights and components. It is published quarterly and is described in "Annual Labour Report" No. 43 (1954).
3. During September Quarter, 1956, supplies of potatoes and onions diminished rapidly in most cities and towns and abnormal price movements occurred in all States except Western Australia.
4. These circumstances materially affected the movement of the Aggregate All Groups Index, shown herein, calculated in the customary manner with constant weights for each item. The rise shown in these Aggregate indexes (except in Perth) is materially greater than would be shown by corresponding indexes with current weights.
5. Reports from representative vendors indicate that retail sales of potatoes have recently been in the vicinity of one-third of the customary level in many places. But available information is at present insufficient for calculating an index with current weights.
6. However, in order to provide an indication of the recent trend of the index in respect of items not materially affected by seasonal factors, an All Groups Index which excludes the effects of movements in the prices of potatoes and onions is shown herein in comparison with the Aggregate All Groups Index mentioned in paragraph 4 above.

An approximate analysis for each capital city is shown hereunder:-

Analysis of Movements in Interim Retail Price Index  
Six Capital Cities - (Base : Year 1952-53 = 100)

	Interim Index Points					
	Exclud- ing Potatoes and Onions	Increase due to Potatoes and Onions	Aggre- gate All Groups	Exclud- ing Potatoes and Onions	Increase due to Potatoes and Onions	Aggre- gate All Groups
	SYDNEY			MELBOURNE		
Index points for Dec. Quarter, 1955	104.8	0.6a	105.4	107.3	1.0a	108.3
Increase during March Quarter	0.5	0.3	0.8	2.1	..	2.1
Index points for March Quarter, 1956	105.3	0.9a	106.2	109.4	1.0a	110.4
Increase during June Quarter	1.7	0.6	2.3	2.2	0.7	2.9
Index points for June Quarter, 1956	107.0	1.5a	108.5	111.6	1.7a	113.3
Increase during Sept. Quarter	4.2	1.3	5.5	0.7	1.7	2.4
Index points for Sept. Quarter, 1956	111.2	2.8a	114.0	112.3	3.4a	115.7
	BRISBANE			ADELAIDE		
Index points for Dec. Quarter, 1955	105.4	0.5a	106.0	105.4	1.0a	106.4
Increase during March Quarter	0.4	0.9	1.3	2.7	(-)0.3	0.4
Index points for March Quarter, 1956	105.8	1.5a	107.3	106.1	0.7a	106.8
Increase during June Quarter	1.9	0.3	2.2	2.3	0.6	2.9
Index points for June Quarter, 1956	107.7	1.8a	109.5	108.4	1.3a	109.7
Increase during Sept. Quarter	1.0	1.4	2.4	0.2	1.7	1.9
Index points for Sept. Quarter, 1956	108.7	3.2a	111.9	108.6	3.0a	111.6
	PERTH			HOBART		
Index points for Dec. Quarter, 1955	111.5	0.1a	111.6	108.6	1.0a	109.6
Increase during March Quarter	1.6	(-)0.1	1.5	3.3	0.1	3.4
Index points for March Quarter, 1956	113.1	- a	113.1	1.9	1.1a	113.0
Increase during June Quarter	1.9	0.2	2.1	2.2	(-)0.1	2.1
Index points for June Quarter, 1956	115.0	0.2a	115.2	114.1	1.0a	115.1
Increase during Sept. Quarter	1.1	0.2	1.3	2.3	0.9	3.2
Index points for Sept. Quarter, 1956	116.1	0.4a	116.5	116.4	1.9a	118.3

(a) Cumulative from base period. (-) Denotes decrease.

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

**AVERAGE PRICE OF POTATOES**  
Pence per 7 lbs.

	Sydney	Melbourne	Brisbane	Adelaide	Perth	Hobart	Weighted Average of Six Capitals
Sept. Qtr. 1952	41	33	34	32	30	33	36
" " 1953	60	47	43	44	31	49	51
" " 1954	30	18	32	21	32	22	26
" " 1955	54	49	59	44	37	51	51
Dec. Qtr. 1955	56	56	46	54	33	60	53
March Qtr. 1956	66	59	71	46	31	67	60
June Qtr. 1956	88	82	80	64	37	67	79
Sept. Qtr. 1956	127	129	116	110	37	90	118
Month of Sept. 1956	148	156	132	148	37	102	141

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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 -							
1953	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
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
Quarter -							
1953 : September	102.4	103.9	101.5	103.3	101.0	101.9	102.4
December	101.4	103.4	101.6	103.9	100.5	101.5	102.2
1954 : March	103.7	104.0	101.8	104.9	101.2	102.6	102.7
June	103.8	103.7	101.5	107.7	100.9	102.7	102.7
September	103.6	103.0	101.6	108.9	101.2	102.9	102.7
December	104.3	103.7	102.3	109.3	101.2	103.4	103.2
1955 : March	105.3	105.3	102.4	109.7	101.2	103.8	103.8
June	106.0	106.4	103.3	110.5	101.9	104.5	104.7
September	106.7	108.2	103.3	111.4	102.8	105.1	105.7
December	107.0	109.0	103.4	112.0	106.2	106.3	107.0
1956 : March	108.2	110.6	103.3	118.8	106.7	107.4	108.3
June	110.7	114.5	103.4	119.7	110.1	109.4	110.8
September	111.9	119.6	103.8	120.6	115.6	111.5	114.4

(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.

The index in Column "A" excludes, and that in Column "B" includes, potatoes and onions. See paragraphs 3 to 6 on page 1 of this Bulletin.

11. 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							
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
Quarter -							
1952 September	98.6	98.6	99.3	99.7	98.8	97.2	98.8
December	99.4	99.2	99.4	99.0	99.3	97.8	99.3
1953 March	100.5	100.3	100.2	100.1	100.4	101.8	100.4
June	101.5	101.8	101.1	101.2	101.6	103.2	101.6
September	102.2	102.6	102.0	102.1	102.7	106.9	102.4
December	101.8	102.2	103.1	101.7	102.2	107.4	102.2
1954 March	102.6	102.4	103.8	102.0	103.3	106.7	102.7
June	102.2	102.3	103.3	102.0	107.6	105.3	102.7
September	102.2	101.8	102.8	102.5	109.0	105.1	102.7
December	102.9	102.2	103.6	102.8	108.7	104.9	103.2
1955 March	103.4	102.9	104.5	103.5	109.3	105.8	103.8
June	103.8	104.0	105.1	105.4	111.2	106.6	104.7
September (c)	104.6	105.8	105.6	106.0	111.1	108.2	105.7
December (c)	105.4	108.3	106.0	106.4	111.6	109.6	107.0
1956 March (c)	106.2	110.4	107.3	106.8	113.1	113.0	108.3
June (c)	108.5	113.3	109.5	109.7	115.2	115.1	110.8
September (c)	114.0	115.7	111.9	111.6	116.5	118.3	114.4

All Groups EXCLUDING Potatoes and Onions (c)

1955 September	104.1	105.1	104.6	105.4	110.8	107.7	105.1
December	104.8	107.3	105.4	105.4	111.5	108.6	106.3
1956 March	105.3	109.4	105.8	106.1	113.1	111.9	107.4
June	107.0	111.6	107.7	108.4	115.0	114.1	109.4
September	111.2	112.3	108.7	108.6	116.1	116.4	111.5

(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 to 6 on page 1 of this Bulletin.

12. The above indexes measure price movements for each city individually and the difference 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.

13. The Interim Retail Price Index was first published and described in S.S.265 of 24th March, 1954. It has been compiled for the years 1950-51 to 1955-56 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 1950-1953. Those of the "C" Series Index relate to the pre-war pattern.

14. 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 10-12 of the annual "Labour Report" No. 43 - 1954.

15. Lately some appreciable disparities have begun to 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 accurate measure of quarterly retail price variations.

16. In view of the circumstances described briefly on page 1 of this Bulletin the following analysis is provided of the movements in the Interim Retail Price Index for the six capital cities combined (Base year 1952-53 = 100) in comparison with those of the "C" Series Index converted arithmetically to the same base year:-

Approximate Analysis of Movements in the "Interim" and "C" Series Retail Price Indexes  
Weighted Average Six Capital Cities

	Index Points (Base : Year 1952-53 = 100)					
	Exclud- ing Potatoes and Onions	Increase due to Potatoes and Onions(a)	Aggre- gate All Groups	Exclud- ing Potatoes and Onions	Increase due to Potatoes and Onions(b)	Aggre- gate All Groups
	<u>"C" Series Index</u>			<u>Interim Index</u>		
Index points for Dec. Quarter, 1955	106.7	1.0a	107.7	106.3	0.7b	107.0
Increase during March Quarter	1.1	0.2	1.3	1.1	0.2	1.3
Index points for March Quarter, 1956	107.8	1.2a	109.0	107.4	0.9b	108.3
Increase during June Quarter	1.9	0.9	2.8	2.0	0.5	2.5
Index points for June Quarter, 1956	109.7	2.1a	111.8	109.4	1.4b	110.8
Increase during Sept. Quarter	1.4	2.4	3.8	2.1	1.5	3.6
Index points for Sept. Quarter, 1956	111.1	4.5a	115.6	111.5	2.9b	114.4

(a) Cumulative from September Quarter, 1955. (b) Cumulative from base period.

17. The following table shows the Interim Index for the Six Capital Cities combined (with the year 1952-53 as base = 100) in comparison with the "C" Series Index converted arithmetically to the same base year.

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

Period	Six Capital Cities (Weighted Average)				
	<u>"C" Series Index</u>		<u>Interim Index</u>		
			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		108.8	107.0	108.0	
Quarter - 1953 : September		102.7	101.9	102.4	
December		102.9	101.5	102.2	
1954 : March		102.9	102.6	102.7	
June		102.8	102.7	102.7	
September		102.6	102.9	102.7	
December		103.2	103.4	103.2	
1955 : March		103.9	103.8	103.8	
June		105.0	104.5	104.7	
		A	B		
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

(a) See note to Table 1 herein.

The index in Column A excludes, and that in Column B includes potatoes and onions. See paragraphs 3 to 6 on page 1 of this Bulletin.

18. Pending analysis of data of the Census of 1954 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.

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