

Thursday, 25 August 1994

The week in statistics ...

- Export price index firms through June despite stronger dollar ... 2
- ... but import prices pushed lower 2
- Strong commodity markets push up manufacturing materials index 3
- Company profits growth sustained 4
- June data suggests home lending may have peaked in March 5
- Steady earnings growth to May 5
- Wage and salary earners in brief ... 6
- Expected releases over the fortnight to 6 September 7
- Selected releases: 17 to 23 August 7
- The latest ...
— key national/State indicators 8





Export price index firms through June despite stronger dollar ...

The export price index increased by 0.2 per cent in June 1994.

Higher prices for base metals, reflecting increased world prices, was the major contributor to the increase in the index, with aluminium, copper and lead prices all rising substantially. Wool prices also increased following higher auction prices.

These increases were partly offset by price falls resulting from the rise in the value of the Australian dollar against the US dollar. In addition, lower demand in the United States markets led to price falls for beef.

Between June 1993 and June 1994 the Export Price Index decreased by 3.8 per cent.

Price changes for major commodity groups are shown below.

EXPORT PRICES, JUNE 1994
Percentage change

Commodity group	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Wool and cotton fibres	3.1	29.9
Base metals	5.1	5.6
Live animals and animal products	-2.3	-0.9
Machinery and appliances	0.7	-1.3
Motor vehicles, aircraft and vessels	-0.5	-1.6
Prepared food stuffs	-0.9	-4.0
Gold, diamonds and coin	-0.4	-5.3
Vegetable products	-2.4	-16.5
Products of chemical or allied industries	-1.2	-11.1
Mineral products	-0.6	-12.6
<i>All groups</i>	0.2	-3.8

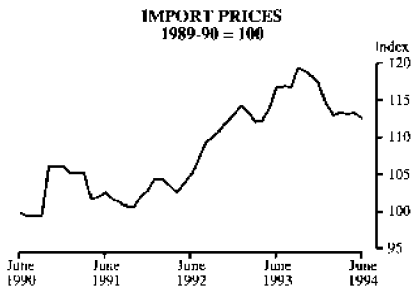
For further information, order the publication *Export Price Index, Australia (6405.0)*, or contact Peter Cordy on (06) 252 5541.

... but import prices pushed lower

The Import price index fell by 0.6 per cent in June 1994.

A further improvement in the value of the Australian dollar against the US dollar and the Japanese yen contributed to price falls in a range of items in June.

Since September 1993, the Australian dollar has appreciated significantly against the major trading currencies, (12.4% against the US dollar and the British pound, 12.8% against the Deutschemark and 9.5% against the Japanese yen). This has resulted in the general downward trend for import prices over the period.



The most significant decreases were lower prices for machinery and equipment (predominantly road vehicles) and for cork and wood prices (reflecting lower world market prices for coniferous timber).

Between June 1993 and June 1994 the index fell by 3.6 per cent, the largest annual percentage decrease since March quarter 1989.

Price changes for selected items are shown below.

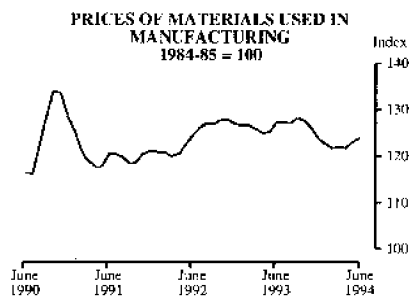
IMPORT PRICES, JUNE 1994

Percentage change

<i>Selected items</i>	<i>From previous month</i>	<i>From corresponding month of previous year</i>
Food and live animals	0.0	-1.3
Machinery and transport equipment	-0.8	-2.5
Manufactured goods	-0.5	-2.7
Crude materials	-1.4	-3.8
Animal and vegetable oils, etc.	1.2	-4.9
Miscellaneous manufactured articles	-0.8	-5.3
Other commodities and transactions	-0.2	-5.3
Chemical products	0.3	-6.1
Mineral fuels, etc.	0.0	-6.7
Beverages and tobacco	-0.2	-12.4
<i>All groups</i>	-0.6	-3.6

For further information, order the publication *Import Price Index, Australia (6414.0)*, or contact Geoff Brown on (06) 252 5348.

Strong commodity markets push up manufacturing materials index



The price index of materials used in manufacturing industries rose by 0.6 per cent in June.

Prices of imported materials fell by 0.2 per cent, mostly as a result of a strengthening Australian dollar, while prices of home produced materials increased by 1.3 per cent.

The main contributors to the increase in the home produced materials index occurred in materials from the mining, agricultural and fishing sectors.

Continuing higher world oil prices led to increases for crude petroleum. Strong demand for grapes, based largely on the expanding wine export market, led to large price increases for the current season's crop. Other contributors include higher prices for fish, prawns and lobsters (an end of season supply shortage of lobsters); sheep and lamb prices (strong demand for export sheep); and higher prices for most metal ores and concentrates (reflecting world recovery in metal prices).

Between June 1993 and June 1994 the price index of manufacturing materials fell by 2.5 per cent. Home produced materials fell by 1.7 per cent and imported materials fell by 3.8 per cent, the largest annual fall since December 1991.

The table below summarises the price movements.

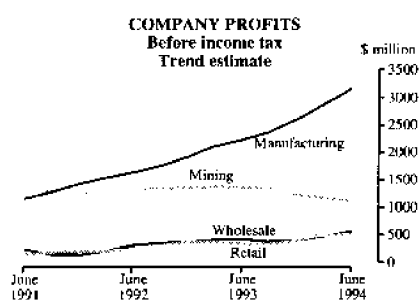
PRICE INDEXES OF MATERIALS USED IN MANUFACTURING, JUNE 1994

Source of material	Percentage change	
	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Imported	-0.2	-3.8
Home produced	1.3	-1.7
<i>All manufacturing</i>	0.6	-2.5

For further information, order the publication *Price Indexes of Materials Used in Manufacturing Industries, Australia (6411.0)*, or contact Geoff Brown on (06) 252 5348.

Company profits growth sustained

The June quarter 1994 provisional trend estimate of company profits before income tax rose by 6 per cent to \$6,193 million. The series indicates sustained growth in company profits over the last three years and is now at the highest level since the series began in September 1984.



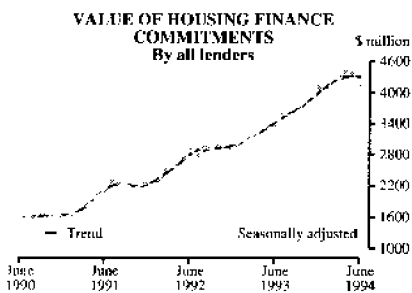
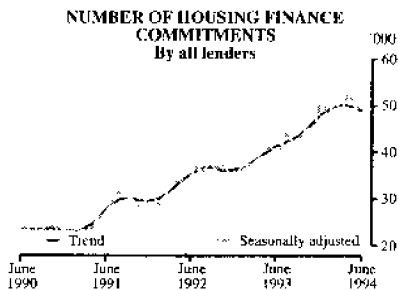
The manufacturing sector continues to show strong growth, up 10 per cent on the revised March quarter estimate which in turn was 11 per cent higher than the December quarter 1993 estimate. Both the wholesale (up 19%) and retail (up 7%) sectors showed solid growth in the June quarter.

Despite the long period of strong growth in other industries, company profits of the mining industry continued the negative trend which began in the June quarter 1993, falling by 4 per cent in the last quarter. Company profits for the mining industry have fallen by 19 per cent since the March quarter 1993.

COMPANY PROFITS, JUNE QUARTER 1994
Percentage change in trend estimate

	\$ million	From March quarter 1994	From June quarter 1993
Mining	1 120	-4	-18
Manufacturing	3 165	10	41
Wholesale trade	560	19	32
Retail trade	525	7	63
<i>Total (including other selected industries)</i>	6 193	6	33

June data suggests home lending may have peaked in March



The provisional trend estimate of the number of new dwellings financed in June 1994 fell by 1.4 per cent on the revised May 1994 trend estimate. The revised monthly trend estimates for April and May 1994 declined by 0.3 per cent and 0.7 per cent, respectively. Although the decline appears to be accelerating, it is too early to assess whether the final trend estimate will be in decline.

The June trend estimate for the category 'purchase of established dwellings' was down 1.4 per cent, 'construction of dwellings' was down 1.2 per cent, and 'newly erected dwellings' was down 1.9 per cent.

HOUSING FINANCE, JUNE 1994

	Number of dwellings			Total
	Established dwellings	Construction of dwellings	Newly erected dwellings	
% change from May 1994				
Trend	- 1.4	- 1.2	- 1.9	- 1.4
Seasonally adjusted	- 6.9	- 4.2	- 10.7	- 6.6
Original	- 3.0	- 3.4	- 4.3	- 3.1
% change from June 1993				
Trend	17.9	16.5	25.4	17.9
Seasonally adjusted	14.0	22.0	18.3	15.7
Original	13.1	19.0	14.4	14.3

In seasonally adjusted terms, the number of dwelling units financed in June decreased by 6.6 per cent on May 1994, but was 15.7 per cent higher than the June 1993 figure. The unadjusted number of dwelling units financed in June was down 3.1 per cent on May but was 14.3 per cent higher than in June 1993.

Refinancing accounted for 13.6 per cent of the total dwellings financed in June 1994 in unadjusted terms, down 1.0 percentage point on May 1994.

For further information, order the publication *Housing Finance For Owner Occupation, Australia (5609.0)*, or contact Ron Manson on (02) 268 4784.

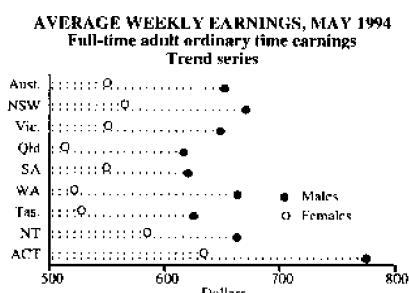
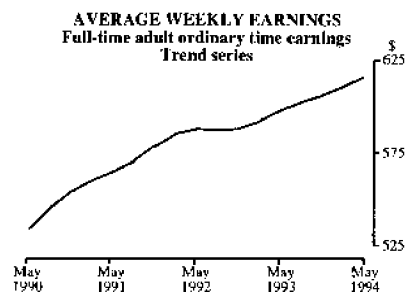
Steady earnings growth to May

Trend estimates for average weekly earnings at the national level continued to show steady growth in the three months to May 1994.

For full-time adult males and females, both average ordinary time and average total earnings increased by around 1.0 per cent over the three months.

In the year to May 1994, increases in ordinary time earnings and total earnings of full-time adult males and females were in the range 3.0 per cent to 3.6 per cent.

AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS, MAY 1994
Full-time adult ordinary time earnings
Trend series



State/territory	Weekly earnings (\$)			Percentage change in 'Persons' from	
	Males	Females	Persons	February	May
				1994	1993
New South Wales	670.70	565.90	632.70	1.1	3.9
Victoria	648.70	551.20	613.50	1.2	2.7
Queensland	616.50	514.20	582.10	0.4	2.7
South Australia	620.70	549.90	598.00	-0.1	0.9
Western Australia	663.50	522.20	612.00	0.7	3.1
Tasmania	625.70	528.10	592.60	0.4	3.5
Northern Territory	663.20	585.70	634.20	0.2	0.1
Australian Capital Territory	775.80	634.70	716.00	1.4	3.5
<i>Australia</i>	<i>652.60</i>	<i>550.40</i>	<i>616.00</i>	<i>0.9</i>	<i>3.1</i>

Over the twelve months to May 1994, industries with the largest national increases in average weekly ordinary time earnings for full-time adults (in original terms) were construction (10.6%), communications (8.3%), and mining (5.8%).

For further information, order the publication *Average Weekly Earnings, States and Australia* (6302.0), or contact Reg Gaull on (09) 360 5304.

Wage and salary earners in brief ...

□ Trend estimates

In the private sector the number of employees grew steadily to a peak of 4,523,000 in November 1989 and then fell steadily to a trough of 4,115,200 in February 1992. Since February 1992 the number of employees has fluctuated over a small range to record a slight rise to 4,141,000 in March 1994.

In the public sector the number of employees remained relatively steady over the five years to April 1990. It then fell steadily from 1,734,800 in April 1990 to 1,577,500 in March 1994.

□ Original estimates

The number of male employees rose from 3,253,900 in February 1986 to a peak of 3,508,600 in November 1989 and then fell to 3,102,700 in February 1994. The number of female employees also rose from February 1986 to a peak in November 1989 (2,793,200) and then fell to 2,592,500 in February 1994. This represents a rise to November 1989 of 490,300 and a subsequent fall to February 1994 of 200,700.

The number of full-time employees grew steadily over a number of years to a peak of 4,745,600 in November 1989 and has since fallen 13.7 per cent to 4,095,600 in February 1994.

The number of part-time employees also grew steadily over a number of years to 1,556,200 in November 1989. In contrast to full-time employees, the number of part-time employees continued to rise after November 1989, at a slower rate, to 1,599,500 in February 1994.

Source: *Employed Wage and Salary Earners, Australia, March Quarter 1994* (6248.0).

Inquiries

The ABS supplies a wide range of statistical information:

- through its bookshops
- by mail order
(including subscription)
- by facsimile
- electronically.

To order any of the publications mentioned in *Statistics Weekly* or to inquire about the statistics and services available from the ABS, contact Information Services at any of the offices listed below. An Information Consultancy Service in each office provides assistance of a more extensive or complex nature.

ABS Central Office

✉ PO Box 10
BELCONNEN ACT 2616

☎ (06) 252 6627
FAX (06) 253 1404

ABS State Offices

☎ NSW (02) 268 4611
Vic. (03) 615 7000
Qld (07) 222 6351
WA (09) 360 5140
SA (08) 237 7100
Tas. (002) 20 5800
NT (089) 432 111
ACT (06) 207 0326

Subscriptions

To subscribe to *Statistics Weekly* or any other ABS printed publication, phone the ABS Subscription Service toll-free on (008) 020608, or contact Information Services at any of the offices listed above.

Editor

Rad Leovic
(06) 252 6104

Statistics Weekly
25 August 1994

Order from the following:

Expected releases over fortnight to 6 September

- 24 Stocks, Manufacturers' Sales June Quarter 1994 and Expected Sales to June 1995, Australia (5629.0; \$11.00)
Registrations of New Motor Vehicles, Australia, July 1994, Preliminary (9301.0; \$12.00)
- 25 Private New Capital Expenditure, Australia, Actual and Expected Expenditure to June 1995, June Quarter 1994, Preliminary (5625.0; \$11.00)
Manufacturing Production, Australia, July 1994, Preliminary (8301.0; \$11.00)
- 26 Balance of Payments, Australia, June Quarter 1994 (5302.0; \$21.50)
- 29 Balance of Payments, Australia, July 1994 (5301.0; \$16.50)
Building Approvals, Australia, July 1994 (8731.0; \$13.50)
- 30 International Investment Position, Australia, June Quarter 1994 (5306.0; \$21.50)

Selected releases: 17 to 23 August

General

- Monthly Summary of Statistics, Aust., August 1994 (1304.0; \$20.50)
- Australian Capital Territory Business Indicators, August 1994 (1303.8; \$7.50)

Demography

- Population Statistics, Tas., 1993 (3204.6; \$25.00)

National accounts, Finance and Foreign trade

- International Merchandise Trade, Aust., June Qtr 1994 (5422.0; \$25.00)
- State Estimates of Private New Capital Expenditure, March Qtr 1994 (5646.0; \$11.00)

Labour statistics and Prices

- Employed Wage and Salary Earners, Aust., March Qtr 1994 (6248.0; \$16.50)

Agriculture

- Livestock Products — Meat, Qld, June 1994 (7204.3; \$5.00)

Manufacturing, Mining, Energy, Service industries, Building and construction

- Research and Experimental Development, Business Enterprises, Aust., 1992-93 (8104.0; \$20.00)
- Manufacturing Production, Aust.: Wood and Wood Products, April to June 1994 (8369.0; \$7.00)
- Tourist Accommodation, ACT, June Qtr 1994 (8635.8; \$10.00)

Key national indicators	Period	Units	Latest figure available		Percentage change (a) on	
			Original	Seasonally adjusted	Previous period	Corresponding period last year
National accounts						
Gross domestic product (GDP(A)) at 1989-90 prices	March qtr 94	\$m	95 551	100 244	1.9	5.0
International accounts						
Balance on current account (b)	June 94	\$m	-1 657	-1 439	-15	4
Balance on merchandise trade (b)	"	"	-3	-160	43	19
Balance on goods and services (b)	"	"	-243	-116	70	65
Merchandise exports	"	"	5 223	5 372	-2	6
Merchandise imports	"	"	-5 226	-5 532	-4	5
Net foreign debt	March qtr 94	\$m	167 264	n.a.	-2.1	3.0
Net foreign liabilities	"	"	233 967	n.a.	0.8	11.0
Consumption and investment						
Retail turnover at current prices	June 94	\$m	8 392	8 616	-0.1	5.7
New capital expenditure at current prices (e)	March qtr 94	"	5 821	6 506	4	0.0
New motor vehicle registrations (d)	June 94	no.	57 950	52 133	2.2	9.3
Production						
Manufacturers' sales at 1989-90 prices (d)	March qtr 94	\$m	35 184	37 572	2.3	9.9
Dwelling unit approvals	June 94	no.	17 478	16 051	-4.9	14.3
Building approvals	"	\$m	2 912.5	2 741.7	31.5	36.2
Building work done at 1989-90 prices	March qtr 94	"	5 783	6 236	2.4	0.0
Prices						
Consumer price index	June qtr 94	1989-90 = 100.0	111.2	n.a.	0.7	1.7
Articles produced by manufacturing industry	June 94	1988-89 = 100.0	116.1	n.a.	0.3	0.7
Materials used in manufacturing industries	June 94	1984-85 = 100.0	124.0	n.a.	0.6	-2.5
Labour force and demography						
Employed persons	July 94	'000	7 985.0	7 972.2	1.1	4.0
Participation rate †	"	%	63.0	63.2	0.3	0.8
Unemployment rate †	"	"	9.1	9.5	-0.6	-1.3
Job vacancies	May qtr 93	'000	49.4	53.0	18.5	64.1
Average weekly overtime per employee	"	hours	1.31	1.33	7.5	11.1
Estimated resident population	December qtr 94	million	17.7	n.a.	0.2	1.0
Short-term overseas visitor arrivals	April 94	'000	255	271	-10.6	12.1
Incomes						
Company profits before income tax	June qtr 94	\$m	5 410	6 115	-2.5	33.9
Av. weekly earnings, full-time adults; ordinary time	May 94	\$	617.50	618.20	1.4	3.3
Financial markets						
Interest rates (c) (monthly average)						
90-day bank bills †	June 94	% per annum	5.45	n.a.	0.6	0.2
10-year Treasury bonds †	June 94	"	9.65	n.a.	0.85	2.3
Exchange rate — \$US (c)	June 94	per \$A	0.7333	n.a.	1	9

(a) Based on seasonally adjusted figures where available. (b) For percentage changes, a minus sign indicates an increase in the deficit; no sign means a decrease in the deficit or an increase in the surplus. (c) Source: Reserve Bank of Australia. (d) Later figures expected to be released Wednesday, 24 August 1994. (e) Later figures expected to be released Thursday, 25 August 1994.

NOTES: † = change is shown in terms of percentage points. n.a. = not available.

Key State indicators	Period	Percentage change from same period previous year								
		NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
New capital expenditure*	March qtr 94	-4.3	8.6	30.1	-14.6	-16.2	-41.0	n.a.	n.a.	0.2
Retail turnover (trend estimate)	June 94	7.1	5.1	6.7	3.8	5.9	4.7	n.a.	2.4	5.8
New motor vehicle registrations†	June 94	15.0	15.2	-6.8	13.5	4.5	15.5	5.1	25.7	9.3
Number of dwelling unit approvals*	June 94	34.3	11.3	10.1	1.6	17.1	-15.0	-41.0	-20.7	14.3
Value of total building work done	March qtr 94	-8.2	5.6	4.6	0.7	20.6	4.6	20.3	-4.7	1.4
Employed persons*	July 94	4.0	4.0	4.8	2.1	4.7	2.1	0.3	2.9	4.0
Capital city consumer price index	June qtr 94	1.5	1.7	1.6	1.9	2.2	2.7	2.2	1.5	1.7
Av. weekly earnings (full-time adult ordinary time)	May 94	3.9	3.6	2.6	1.8	3.0	3.2	1.2	2.6	3.5
Population	September qtr 93	0.9	0.3	2.8	0.5	1.3	0.4	0.9	1.6	1.0
Room nights in licensed hotels and motels, etc.	March qtr 94	7.3	5.4	6.3	5.4	9.5	3.9	16.6	1.5	6.7

* Seasonally adjusted except for NT and ACT. † Seasonally adjusted.

Figures have been taken from a variety of ABS publications. Copies may be obtained from Information Services (see page 7). Some of the figures shown are preliminary, some final, and some are revisions of previously published figures. Users should check the latest relevant publication or with the ABS Information Services if the status of the statistic is important. The ABS should be acknowledged as the source when reproducing or quoting any part of this publication.

