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## MERCHANDISE IMPORTS (BALANCE OF PAYMENTS BASIS) AUSTRALIA, AUGUST 1996

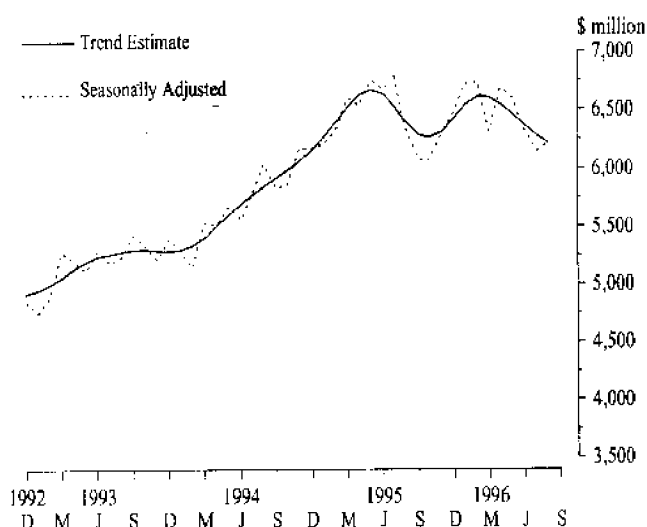
### MAIN FEATURES

#### August 1996 compared with July 1996

The provisional **trend estimate** of merchandise imports fell \$69 million, or 1 per cent, to \$6,213 million.

In **seasonally adjusted terms**, merchandise imports for August rose \$70 million, or 1 per cent, to \$6,215 million. *Consumption goods* rose \$133 million, or 8 per cent, to \$1,813 million. *Capital goods* rose \$59 million, or 4 per cent, to \$1,445 million. *Intermediate and other goods* fell \$122 million, or 4 per cent, to \$2,957 million.

GRAPH 1: MERCHANDISE - IMPORTS F.O.B.



In **original terms**, imports fell \$387 million, or 6 per cent, to \$6,566 million.

Imports of *consumption goods*, in original terms, fell \$27 million, or 1 per cent, to \$1,910 million. The largest decreases were recorded in:

- consumption goods nes, down \$31 million or 6 per cent;
- toys, books and leisure goods, down \$20 million or 8 per cent; and

- textiles, clothing and footwear, down \$18 million or 6 per cent.

These decreases were partly offset by an increase in non-industrial transport equipment, up \$62 million or 14 per cent (due mainly to increased imports of passenger motor cars).

Imports of *capital goods*, in original terms, fell \$13 million, or 1 per cent, to \$1,556 million. The largest decreases were recorded in:

- ADP equipment, down \$71 million or 21 per cent;
- telecommunications equipment, down \$32 million or 21 per cent; and
- capital goods nes, down \$26 million or 13 per cent.

These decreases were largely offset by an increase in civil aircraft, up \$109 million (which includes the import of a Qantas aircraft valued at \$96 million).

Imports of *intermediate and other goods*, in original terms, fell \$347 million, or 10 per cent, to \$3,100 million. Decreases were recorded in 10 of the 14 groups, with the largest being:

- fuels and lubricants, down \$114 million or 27 per cent;
- parts for transport equipment, down \$73 million or 15 per cent;
- organic and inorganic chemicals, down \$64 million or 24 per cent;
- processed industrial supplies nes, down \$30 million or 4 per cent;
- "other" parts for capital goods, down \$28 million or 5 per cent; and
- parts for ADP equipment, down \$27 million or 17 per cent.

The largest increase was recorded in food and beverages, up \$15 million or 29 per cent.

**INQUIRIES**

- for further information about these and related unpublished statistics, contact Frank Bingham on Canberra (06) 252 7193, or any ABS State office.
- for information about other ABS statistics and services please refer to the back page of this publication.

TABLE 1. MERCHANDISE IMPORTS (BALANCE OF PAYMENTS BASIS) — ORIGINAL, SEASONALLY ADJUSTED AND TREND ESTIMATES (a)

	Years			Months												1996-97		
	1994-95			1995-96												1996-97		
	1993-94	1994-95	95-96	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	
Consumption goods fob (b)																		
Food and beverages, mainly for consumption	2,430	-2,592	-2,759	-181	-245	-233	-230	-255	263	242	252	-214	-203	-209	-220	-193	-263	-255
Household electrical items	-1,436	-1,744	-1,765	-129	-157	-167	-138	-179	177	139	119	-129	-137	-148	-151	124	-170	-158
Non-industrial transport equipment	3,800	-4,758	-4,438	-413	-469	-426	-346	-422	404	375	277	-325	-295	-368	-411	320	-436	-498
Textiles, clothing and footwear	2,320	-2,566	-2,729	-157	-266	-274	-220	-212	229	190	262	-293	-226	-207	-195	155	-283	-265
Toys, books and leisure goods	2,496	-2,545	-2,535	-192	-247	-251	-252	-260	-256	185	190	-191	-170	-173	192	168	-243	-223
Consumption goods nes	4,751	-5,213	-5,638	-375	-518	-524	-486	-529	539	450	430	-432	-422	-449	473	-386	-542	-511
Total consumption goods	-17,233	-19,418	-19,864	-1,447	-1,902	-1,875	-1,672	-1,857	-1,868	-1,581	-1,530	-1,584	-1,453	-1,554	-1,642	-1,346	-1,937	-1,910
Capital goods fob (b) —																		
Machinery and industrial equipment	-6,414	7,897	-8,319	-733	-718	-691	-615	-723	726	-687	738	710	-651	-667	-717	-676	699	-707
ADP equipment	-2,629	-3,232	-3,592	-392	-338	-325	-253	-273	-282	-272	263	-274	-283	-326	-361	342	-332	-261
Telecommunications equipment	-1,182	1,804	1,997	-173	-164	-163	-207	-179	-199	-169	170	-141	-173	-150	-132	150	-153	-121
Civil aircraft	-241	-329	-687	-48	-28	-81	-11	31	104	28	44	-77	-31	-70	-116	66	-9	-118
Industrial transport equipment nes	2,084	-2,714	-2,214	-179	-222	-198	-148	-197	-180	-165	-158	-193	-186	198	-191	-178	-168	167
Capital goods nes	-2,293	-2,365	-2,365	-193	-234	-212	-183	-213	-213	-173	-189	192	-185	-194	-206	-171	208	182
Total capital goods	-14,843	-18,541	-19,174	-1,718	-1,704	-1,670	-1,417	-1,616	1,704	-1,494	-1,562	-1,587	-1,509	-1,605	-1,723	-1,583	-1,569	-1,556
Intermediate and other goods fob (b) —																		
Food and beverages, mainly for industry	509	774	699	-61	-65	-65	-65	-55	-77	44	77	-51	-46	-51	-63	40	-51	-66
Primary industrial supplies nes	701	-901	-879	-85	-73	71	66	83	76	76	-64	-62	-106	-75	73	-54	-69	-66
Fuels and lubricants	3,317	-3,566	-4,164	-286	-385	-283	-290	-264	-353	-314	-387	-376	-374	-425	-392	-321	-420	-306
Parts for transport equipment	-4,183	-4,714	-4,600	-351	-447	-446	-338	-406	-340	-344	397	-373	-362	-394	-419	-334	-490	-417
Parts for ADP equipment	1,681	1,858	1,858	-172	-159	-158	-155	-161	-161	-137	160	157	-162	-156	-155	137	160	-133
Other parts for capital goods	5,047	-5,975	-6,392	-520	-620	-584	-509	-563	-550	-471	-540	-526	-526	-490	-559	454	-565	-537
Organic and inorganic chemicals	-2,102	-2,431	-2,754	-234	-242	-249	-193	-225	-245	-193	-274	-215	-248	-243	-232	-195	-264	-200
Paper and paperboard	-1,465	-1,794	-1,868	145	-189	-189	-172	-195	-173	151	162	147	-115	-141	-131	-103	152	151
Textile yarn and fabrics	1,869	2,036	-1,922	-165	-189	-187	-154	-167	-172	137	167	-151	-142	-141	-172	143	-182	-157
Iron and steel	1,039	-1,285	-1,408	-122	117	143	129	125	125	-132	-121	-113	-109	-100	-101	-93	-103	-115
Plastics	1,375	-1,646	-1,684	-129	-170	-155	-146	-158	-149	-129	-150	-131	128	124	-133	-111	-145	-135
Non-monetary gold	-978	-705	-702	-55	-55	-78	-56	-51	-74	48	66	64	-54	-52	-52	45	45	45
Processed industrial supplies nes	-7,783	8,680	8,794	-687	-824	-762	-728	-747	751	660	755	710	-752	-745	-772	588	-778	-748
Other goods	286	-391	-338	-44	-50	38	25	28	14	-30	-42	-15	-14	-13	-50	19	-23	-24
Total intermediate and other goods	-32,335	-36,756	-38,062	-3,056	-3,583	-3,408	-3,026	-3,228	-3,260	-2,866	-3,362	-3,091	-3,138	-3,150	-3,304	-2,644	-3,447	3,100
Total imports fob	-64,411	-74,715	-77,100	-6,221	-7,191	-6,953	-6,115	-6,701	-6,832	-5,941	-6,454	-6,262	-6,100	-6,309	-6,669	-5,573	-6,953	-6,566
Seasonally Adjusted																		
Consumption goods	..	..	..	..	-1,669	-1,790	-1,690	-1,622	-1,570	-1,656	-1,729	-1,603	-1,686	1,533	1,663	1,718	-1,658	-1,813
Capital goods	..	..	..	..	1,754	-1,558	-1,495	-1,399	-1,452	1,533	1,478	1,761	1,835	1,660	1,731	-1,765	-1,627	-1,386
Intermediate and other goods	..	..	..	..	3,239	-3,441	-3,131	-3,051	-3,056	3,109	3,266	-3,353	3,215	3,113	3,285	-3,101	-3,037	-2,957
Total imports fob	..	..	..	..	-6,662	-6,789	-6,316	-6,072	-6,078	-6,298	-6,473	-6,717	-6,736	-6,306	-6,679	-6,584	-6,322	-6,215
Trend Estimates																		
Total imports fob	..	..	..	..	-6,630	-6,520	-6,381	-6,284	-6,260	-6,312	-6,419	-6,534	-6,607	-6,603	-6,539	-6,452	-6,366	-6,213

(a) In keeping with balance of payments conventions, debit items such as merchandise imports, are recorded as negative entries. (b) Definitions of the component series are given in the ABS Information Paper, *Change to Commodity Classification of Merchandise Imports in Balance of Payments Publications* (ABS Catalogue No. 5344.0).

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### Introduction

1. This publication contains preliminary estimates of Australia's merchandise imports on a balance of payments basis for August 1996, together with estimates for previous months.

2. Descriptions of the classifications used for merchandise imports, detailed item definitions and long term historical data are presented in *Change to Commodity Classification of Merchandise Imports in Balance of Payments Publications* (5344.0).

3. Descriptions of the underlying concepts and structure of merchandise imports on a balance of payments basis and the sources and methods used in compiling the estimates are presented in *Balance of Payments, Australia: Concepts, Sources and Methods* (5331.0). That publication also provides explanations of seasonal adjustment and trend estimates; and an analysis of the quality of the estimates.

### Accuracy, reliability and volatility

4. The latest estimates in this publication are **preliminary and subject to revision** as more complete and accurate information becomes available.

5. **Particular care should be exercised in interpreting month-to-month movements** in original and seasonally adjusted series as short term movements cannot be assumed to indicate changes in trend. The monthly estimates are volatile, being subject to seasonal factors (except where adjusted in the table) and large irregular influences. The irregular influences may reflect both random economic events and difficulties of statistical recording. Seasonal adjustment does not aim to remove the irregular or non-seasonal influences which may be present in any particular month. This means that the month-to-month movements of the seasonally adjusted estimates may not be reliable indicators of trend behaviour. For example, irregular factors unrelated to the trend account for more than half the seasonally adjusted monthly movements in merchandise imports fob in 9 out of 10 months.

6. **The impact of the irregular influences upon the seasonally adjusted series is reduced by smoothing**, as shown by the trend estimates in the table and graph. The trend estimates are generally derived by applying a 13-term Henderson-weighted moving average to the seasonally adjusted series.

### Seasonal adjustment

7. The factors to be used in seasonally adjusting the monthly merchandise imports statistics, as well as the monthly balance of payments statistics, during 1996 can be obtained, for \$75.00, from Melissa Marino on Canberra (06) 252 6419.

8. The **seasonally adjusted** statistics in this publication should not be regarded as in any way definitive as results from seasonal adjustment vary according to the method used.

### More detailed and longer term series

9. More detailed information than that shown in this publication is available for August 1996 and earlier months. Estimates for months prior to those shown in this publication are also available. These data can be obtained by contacting Trevor Jolly on Canberra (06) 252 6820. There may be a charge for this information.

### Related products and services

10. Preliminary estimates of Australia's balance of payments for August 1996 are due for release on 30 September 1996 in the monthly publication *Balance of Payments, Australia* (5301.0). The estimates of merchandise imports shown as part of the balance of payments in 5301.0 will normally be the same as those already released in the corresponding issue of this publication.

11. More detailed merchandise imports data, including dissections by commodity and country of origin, are also available on an international merchandise trade basis for August 1996 and previous months. These data series can be obtained by contacting International Trade Client Services on Canberra (06) 252 5400.

### Symbols and other usages

fob	free on board
nes	not elsewhere specified
—	nil or rounded to zero
..	not applicable
p	provisional

**W. McLennan**  
Australian Statistician

### Release date for September 1996 issue

The expected release date for the September issue of this publication is 18 October 1996. Any variations which might occur will be notified in the *ABS Release Advice* (1105.0)

The date can be confirmed a few days prior to release by telephoning  
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