

CATALOGUE NO. 5320.0

EMBARGOED UNTIL 11.30 AM FRI 18 OCTOBER 1996

**MERCHANDISE IMPORTS (BALANCE OF PAYMENTS BASIS)  
AUSTRALIA, SEPTEMBER 1996**

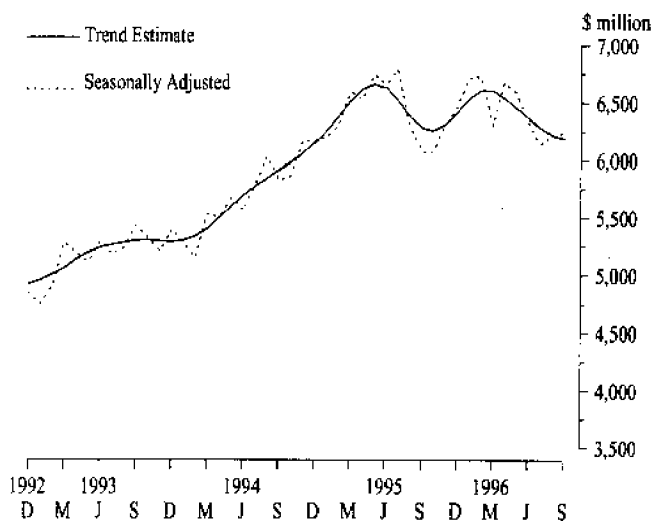
**MAIN FEATURES**

*September 1996 compared with August 1996*

The provisional **trend estimate** of *merchandise imports* fell \$36 million, or 1 per cent, to \$6,189 million. This was the seventh successive monthly fall, bringing the trend estimate of imports to its lowest level since December 1994.

In **seasonally adjusted terms**, *merchandise imports* for September rose \$28 million, to \$6,242 million. *Consumption goods* fell \$85 million, or 5 per cent, to \$1,728 million. *Capital goods* rose \$62 million, or 4 per cent, to \$1,507 million. *Intermediate and other goods* rose \$51 million, or 2 per cent, to \$3,007 million.

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



In **original terms**, *imports* fell \$176 million, or 3 per cent, to \$6,389 million.

Imports of *consumption goods*, in original terms, fell \$110 million, or 6 per cent, to \$1,800 million. The largest decreases were recorded in:

- non-industrial transport equipment, down \$109 million or 22 per cent (due to decreased imports of passenger motor cars); and
- food and beverages, mainly for consumption, down \$30 million or 12 per cent.

These decreases were partly offset by increases in toys, books and leisure goods, up \$27 million or 12 per cent; and household electrical items, up \$19 million or 12 per cent.

Imports of *capital goods*, in original terms, rose \$7 million, to \$1,563 million. The largest increases were recorded in:

- ADP equipment, up \$53 million or 20 per cent; and
- telecommunications equipment, up \$29 million or 24 per cent.

The largest decreases were recorded in machinery and industrial equipment, down \$57 million or 8 per cent; and industrial transport equipment, down \$22 million or 13 per cent.

Imports of *intermediate and other goods*, in original terms, fell \$73 million, or 2 per cent, to \$3,026 million. Decreases were recorded in 8 of the 14 groups, with the largest being:

- fuels and lubricants, down \$52 million or 17 per cent;
- parts for transport equipment, down \$31 million or 7 per cent; and
- food and beverages, mainly for industry, down \$23 million or 35 per cent.

The largest increase was recorded in organic and inorganic chemicals, up \$40 million or 20 per cent.

*Three months ended September 1996 compared with three months ended September 1995*

In **original terms**, *merchandise imports* fell \$360 million, or 2 per cent, to \$19,899 million; with:

- *consumption goods* rising \$198 million (4 per cent);
- *capital goods* falling \$103 million (2 per cent); and
- *intermediate and other goods* falling \$455 million (5 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)  
(\$ million)

	Years			Months												July to Sept.				
	1995-96			1996-97																
	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June		July	Aug.	Sept.	
<b>Consumption goods <i>job</i> (b) —</b>																				
Food and beverages, mainly for consumption	-2,430	-2,592	2,760	-245	-233	230	-255	-263	-242	-252	-215	-203	-209	-220	-193	-263	-255	-225	-708	-743
Household electrical items	-1,436	-1,744	-1,765	-157	-167	138	-179	-177	-139	-119	-129	-137	-148	-151	-124	-170	-158	-177	-462	505
Non-industrial transport equipment	-3,800	-4,758	-4,438	-469	-426	-346	-422	-404	-375	-277	-325	-295	-368	-411	-320	-436	498	389	1,241	-1,323
Textiles, clothing and footwear	-2,320	-2,566	-2,727	-266	-274	-220	-212	-229	-190	-262	-293	-225	-207	-194	-155	-283	265	-244	-760	-792
Toys, books and leisure goods	-2,496	-2,545	-2,535	-247	-251	-252	-260	-256	-185	-190	-191	-170	-173	-192	-168	243	-223	-250	-750	-716
Consumption goods nes	-4,751	-5,213	-5,638	-518	-524	-486	-529	-539	-450	-430	-432	-422	-449	-473	-386	-542	-511	-515	-1,528	-1,568
<b>Total consumption goods</b>	<b>-17,233</b>	<b>-19,418</b>	<b>-19,863</b>	<b>-1,902</b>	<b>-1,875</b>	<b>-1,672</b>	<b>-1,857</b>	<b>-1,868</b>	<b>-1,581</b>	<b>-1,530</b>	<b>-1,585</b>	<b>-1,452</b>	<b>-1,554</b>	<b>-1,641</b>	<b>-1,346</b>	<b>-1,937</b>	<b>-1,910</b>	<b>-1,800</b>	<b>-5,449</b>	<b>5,647</b>
<b>Capital goods <i>job</i> (b) —</b>																				
Machinery and industrial equipment	-6,414	-7,897	8,316	-718	-691	-615	-723	726	-687	-738	-710	-651	-667	-716	-674	-699	707	650	2,024	-2,056
ADP equipment	-2,629	-3,232	-3,593	-338	-325	-253	-273	-282	-272	-263	-274	-283	-327	-361	-342	-332	-261	-314	-916	-907
Telecommunications equipment	-1,182	-1,804	-1,996	-164	-163	-207	-179	-199	-169	-170	-141	-173	-150	-131	-150	-153	-121	-150	-534	-424
Civil aircraft	-241	-529	-687	-28	-81	-11	-31	-104	-28	-44	77	31	-70	-116	66	-9	-118	-108	-120	235
Industrial transport equipment nes	-2,084	-2,714	-2,214	-222	-198	148	-197	-180	-165	-158	193	186	-198	191	-178	-168	-167	-145	-568	-480
Capital goods nes	2,293	2,365	2,365	-234	-212	-183	-213	-213	-173	-189	-192	-185	-194	-206	-171	-208	-182	196	629	-586
<b>Total capital goods</b>	<b>-14,843</b>	<b>-18,541</b>	<b>-19,171</b>	<b>-1,704</b>	<b>-1,670</b>	<b>-1,417</b>	<b>-1,616</b>	<b>-1,704</b>	<b>-1,494</b>	<b>-1,562</b>	<b>-1,587</b>	<b>-1,509</b>	<b>-1,606</b>	<b>-1,721</b>	<b>-1,581</b>	<b>-1,569</b>	<b>-1,556</b>	<b>-1,563</b>	<b>-4,791</b>	<b>-4,688</b>
<b>Intermediate and other goods <i>job</i> (b) —</b>																				
Food and beverages, mainly for industry	-509	-774	-700	-65	-65	-65	-55	-77	-44	-77	-51	-46	-52	-63	-40	-51	-66	-43	-195	-160
Primary industrial supplies nes	-701	-901	-879	-73	-71	-66	-83	-76	-76	-64	-62	-106	75	73	-54	-69	-65	-70	-210	204
Fuels and lubricants	-3,317	-3,566	4,163	385	283	-290	264	-353	314	387	-376	-374	-425	-391	-321	-412	-306	-254	958	-972
Parts for transport equipment	-4,183	-4,714	-4,601	-447	-446	-338	-406	-340	-344	-397	-373	-362	-394	-420	-334	-490	-417	-386	-1,231	-1,293
Parts for ADP equipment	-1,681	-1,858	-1,858	-159	-158	-155	-161	-161	-137	-160	-157	-162	-156	-155	-137	-160	-133	-136	-472	-429
Other parts for capital goods	-5,047	-5,975	6,390	620	584	509	-563	-550	-471	540	-525	-526	-490	-558	-454	-565	-537	-526	-1,713	-1,628
Organic and inorganic chemicals	-2,102	-2,431	-2,754	-242	-249	-193	-225	245	-193	-274	-215	-248	-243	-232	-195	-264	-200	240	-684	-704
Paper and paperboard	-1,465	-1,794	-1,868	-189	-189	-172	-195	-173	-151	-167	-147	-115	-141	-131	-103	-151	-151	-149	-550	-451
Textile yarn and fabrics	-1,869	-2,036	-1,922	-189	-187	-154	-167	-172	-137	-167	-162	-151	142	141	-172	-143	-183	-157	-162	502
Iron and steel	-1,039	-1,285	-1,408	-117	-143	-129	-125	125	132	-121	-113	-109	-100	-101	-93	-103	-115	-109	389	-327
Plastics	-1,375	-1,646	-1,684	-170	-155	-146	-158	-149	-129	-150	-131	-128	-124	-133	-111	-145	135	-134	-471	-414
Non-monetary gold	978	705	-702	-55	-78	-56	-51	-74	-48	-66	-64	-54	-52	-52	-52	-45	-45	-53	-189	-143
Processed industrial supplies nes	-7,783	-8,680	-8,793	-824	-762	-728	-747	-751	-660	-755	-710	752	745	771	-588	-778	-748	-750	-2,314	-2,276
Other goods	-286	-391	-338	-50	-38	-25	28	14	30	42	-15	-14	-13	-50	-19	-23	-24	-14	113	-61
<b>Total intermediate and other goods</b>	<b>32,335</b>	<b>36,736</b>	<b>38,060</b>	<b>-3,585</b>	<b>-3,408</b>	<b>-3,026</b>	<b>-3,228</b>	<b>-3,260</b>	<b>-2,866</b>	<b>-3,362</b>	<b>-3,090</b>	<b>-3,138</b>	<b>-3,151</b>	<b>-3,302</b>	<b>-2,644</b>	<b>3,439</b>	<b>-3,099</b>	<b>-3,026</b>	<b>-1,019</b>	<b>-9,564</b>
<b>Total imports <i>job</i></b>	<b>-64,411</b>	<b>-74,715</b>	<b>-77,094</b>	<b>-7,191</b>	<b>-6,953</b>	<b>-6,115</b>	<b>-6,701</b>	<b>-6,832</b>	<b>-5,941</b>	<b>-6,454</b>	<b>-6,262</b>	<b>-6,099</b>	<b>-6,311</b>	<b>-6,664</b>	<b>-5,571</b>	<b>-6,945</b>	<b>-6,565</b>	<b>-6,389</b>	<b>-20,259</b>	<b>-19,899</b>
Consumption goods	..	..	..	-1,790	-1,690	-1,622	-1,570	-1,656	-1,729	-1,603	-1,687	-1,532	-1,663	-1,717	-1,658	1,680	-1,813	-1,728	..	..
Capital goods	..	..	..	-1,558	-1,495	-1,399	-1,452	-1,533	-1,478	-1,761	-1,835	-1,660	1,732	1,763	1,625	1,386	-1,445	-1,507	..	..
Intermediate and other goods	..	..	..	-3,441	-3,131	-3,051	-3,056	-3,109	-3,266	-3,353	-3,214	3,113	3,286	3,099	3,037	-3,072	-2,956	-3,007	..	..
<b>Total imports <i>job</i></b>	<b>..</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>-6,789</b>	<b>-6,316</b>	<b>-6,072</b>	<b>-6,078</b>	<b>-6,298</b>	<b>-6,473</b>	<b>-6,717</b>	<b>-6,736</b>	<b>-6,305</b>	<b>-6,681</b>	<b>-6,579</b>	<b>-6,320</b>	<b>-6,138</b>	<b>-6,214</b>	<b>-6,242</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>..</b>
<b>Total imports <i>job</i></b>	<b>..</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>-6,520</b>	<b>-6,381</b>	<b>-6,284</b>	<b>-6,260</b>	<b>-6,312</b>	<b>-6,419</b>	<b>-6,534</b>	<b>-6,607</b>	<b>-6,606</b>	<b>-6,542</b>	<b>-6,451</b>	<b>-6,364</b>	<b>-6,288p</b>	<b>-6,225p</b>	<b>-6,189p</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>..</b>

(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 September 1996, together with estimates for previous months.

2. Descriptions of the classifications used for merchandise imports and detailed item definitions 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 September 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 September 1996 are due for release on 30 October 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 September 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 October 1996 issue**

The expected release date for the October issue of this publication is 19 November 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  
Canberra (06) 252 6627.

## **For more information . . .**

The ABS publishes a wide range of statistics and other information on Australia's economic and social conditions. Details of what is available in various publications and other products can be found in the ABS Catalogue of Publications and Products available from all ABS Offices.

### **ABS Products and Services**

Many standard products are available from ABS bookshops located in each State and Territory. In addition to these products, information tailored to the needs of clients can be obtained on a wide range of media by contacting your nearest ABS Office. The ABS also provides a Subscription Service for standard products and some tailored information services.

### **National Dial-a-Statistic Line**

0055 86 400

*Steadycom P/L; premium rate 25c/20 secs.*

This number gives 24-hour access, 365 days a year, for a range of important economic statistics including the CPI.

### **Internet**

<http://www.abs.gov.au>

A wide range of ABS information is available via the Internet, with basic statistics available for each State, Territory and Australia. We also have Key National Indicators, ABS product release details and other information of general interest.

## **Sales and Inquiries**

Keylink STAT.INFO/ABS  
X.400 (C:Australia,PUB:Telememo,O:ABS,FN:STAT,SN:INFO)  
Internet stat.info@abs.telememo.au

National Mail Order Service (06) 252 5249  
Subscription Service 1800 02 0608

	<b>Information Inquiries</b>	<b>Bookshop Sales</b>
SYDNEY	(02) 9268 4611	(02) 9268 4620
MELBOURNE	(03) 9615 7755	(03) 9615 7755
BRISBANE	(07) 3222 6351	(07) 3222 6350
PERTH	(09) 360 5140	(09) 360 5307
ADELAIDE	(08) 8237 7100	(08) 8237 7582
CANBERRA	(06) 252 6627	(06) 207 0326
HOBART	(03) 6220 5800	(03) 6220 5800
DARWIN	(08) 8943 2111	(08) 8943 2111



Client Services, ABS, PO Box 10, Belconnen ACT 2616

