

AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS EXPECTATIONS MARCH QTR 1999 & DECEMBER QTR 1999

EMBARGO: 11:30AM (CANBERRA TIME) TUES 5 JAN 1999

KEY FIGURES

ORIGINAL ESTIMATES

	Short-term Mar Qtr 1999 % change	Medium-term Dec Qtr 1999 % change
Operating income	-0.9	2.7
Selling prices	0.0	0.5
Profit	-7.3	12.8
Employment	-0.7	0.1

TREND ESTIMATES

	Short-term Mar Qtr 1999 % change	Medium-term Dec Qtr 1999 % change
Operating income	0.6	2.6
Selling prices	0.2	0.7
Profit	1.1	11.0
Employment	-0.4	0.2

KEY POINTS

ORIGINAL ESTIMATES

SHORT-TERM

- In the March quarter 1999, businesses expect Operating income, Profit and Employment to fall by 0.9%, 7.3%, and 0.7% respectively and Selling prices to remain unchanged. The falls in Operating income and Profits will have been influenced by seasonal factors.

MEDIUM-TERM

- In the year to December quarter 1999, businesses expect Operating income, Selling prices, Profit and Employment to rise (by 2.7%, 0.5%, 12.8% and 0.1% respectively).

TREND ESTIMATES

SHORT-TERM

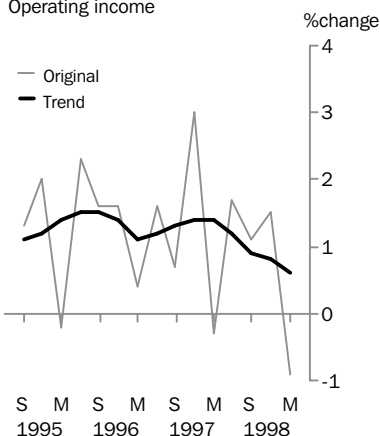
- In trend terms, for the March quarter 1999 businesses expect Operating income, Selling prices and Profit to rise by 0.6%, 0.2% and 1.1% respectively and Employment to fall by 0.4%.

MEDIUM-TERM

- In trend terms for the year to December quarter 1999 businesses expect Operating income, Selling prices, Profit and Employment to rise by 2.6%, 0.7%, 11.0% and 0.2% respectively.

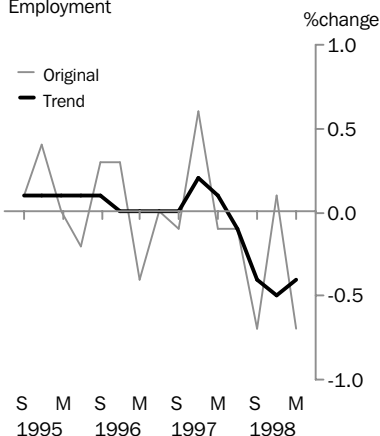
Short term

Operating income



Short term

Employment



- For further information about these and related statistics, contact Jonathan Sim on Canberra 02 6252 7045, or any ABS office shown on the back cover of this publication.

NOTES

FORTHCOMING ISSUES

ISSUE (Quarter)

RELEASE DATE

June 1999

26 March 1999

September 1999

25 June 1999



CHANGES IN THIS ISSUE

There are no changes in this issue.



W. McLennan
Australian Statistician



C O N T E N T S

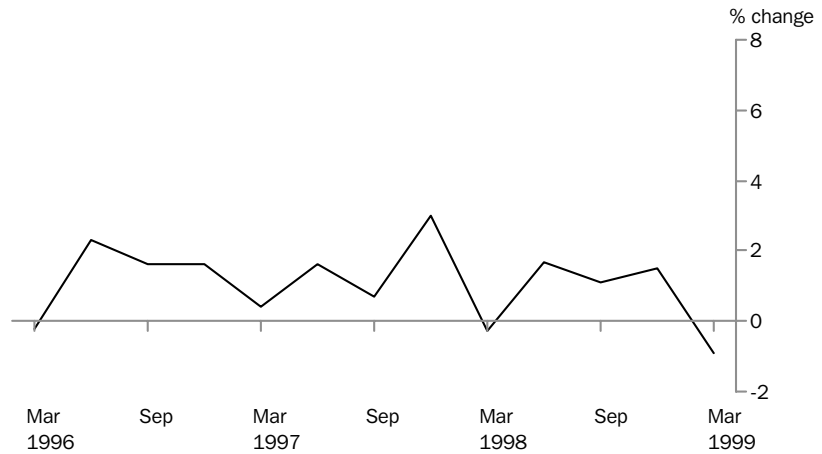
	page
	Notes 2
SUMMARY OF RESULTS	Short-term Outlook 4
	Medium-term Outlook 8
TABLES	<i>Short-term Outlook</i>
	1 March Quarter 1999, expected aggregate change, Australia: original and trend series 12
	2 March Quarter 1999, weighted net balance, Australia 13
	3 March Quarter 1999, expected aggregate change, by industry 14
	4 March Quarter 1999, expected aggregate change, by selected State and Territory 17
	5 March Quarter 1999, expected aggregate change, by size of business 19
	<i>Medium-term Outlook</i>
	6 December Quarter 1999, expected aggregate change, Australia: original and trend series 20
	7 December Quarter 1999, weighted net balance, Australia 21
	8 December Quarter 1999, expected aggregate change, by industry 22
	9 December Quarter 1999, expected aggregate change, by selected State and Territory 25
	10 December Quarter 1999, expected aggregate change, by size of business 27
FURTHER INFORMATION	Explanatory Notes 28
	Glossary 33
	Unpublished Data 35

SUMMARY OF RESULTS: Short-term Outlook

OPERATING INCOME

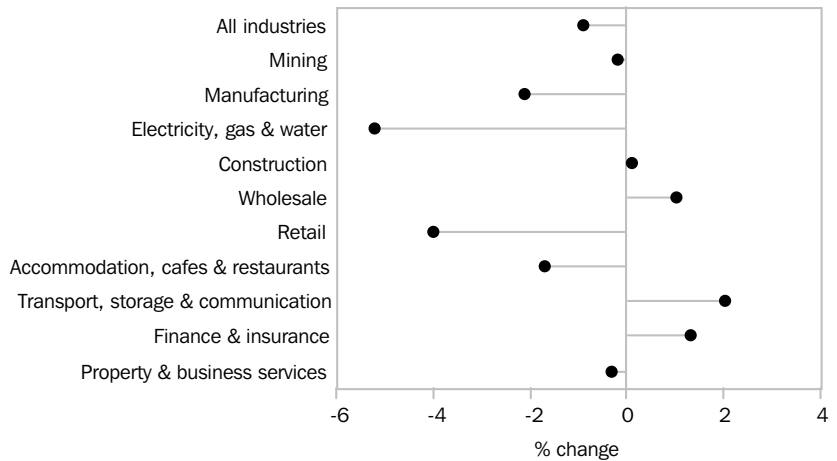
TIME SERIES

Operating income is expected to fall by 0.9% in the March quarter 1999, in part due to the seasonal decrease in sales experienced in a number of industries after Christmas. The trend is still increasing but at a reducing rate since the March quarter 1998.



MAIN INDUSTRY COMPARISON

Six industries expect Operating income to fall in the March quarter 1999. Three of these (Manufacturing, Retail and Accommodation, cafes, & restaurants) also expected falls in Operating income in the March quarter 1998, and so the falls may be largely due to seasonal influences.

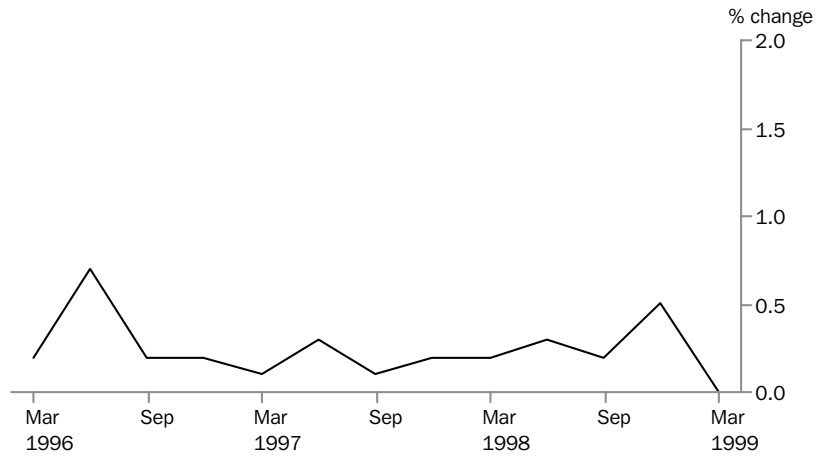


SUMMARY OF RESULTS: Short-term Outlook *continued*

SELLING PRICES

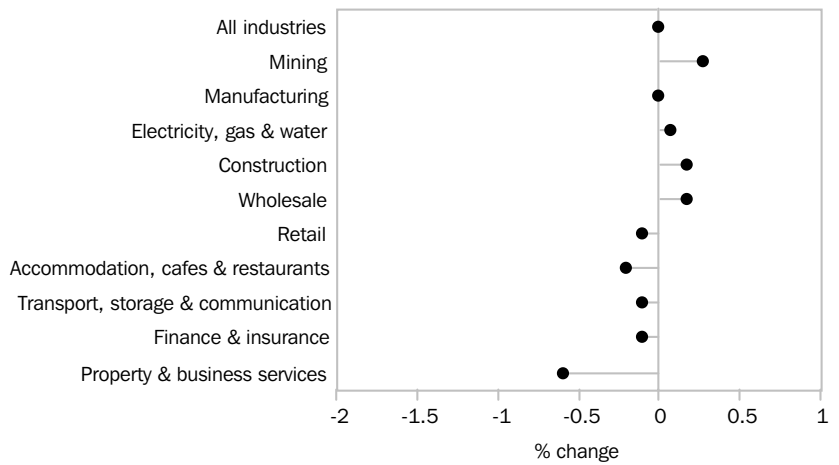
TIME SERIES

Selling prices are expected to remain stable in the March quarter 1999.



MAIN INDUSTRY COMPARISON

Five industries expect Selling prices to fall in the March quarter 1999 with Property & business services expecting the largest fall (0.6%). These falls are balanced out by expected rises in Selling prices in the Mining, Electricity, gas & water, Construction and Wholesale industries.

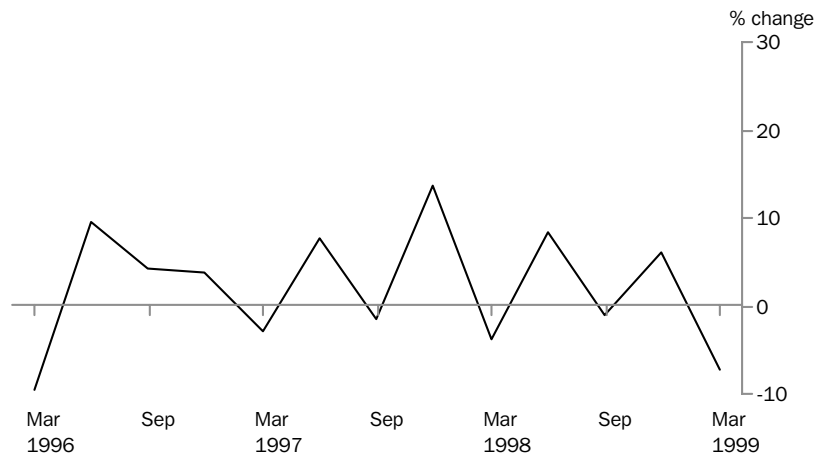


SUMMARY OF RESULTS: Short-term Outlook *continued*

PROFITS

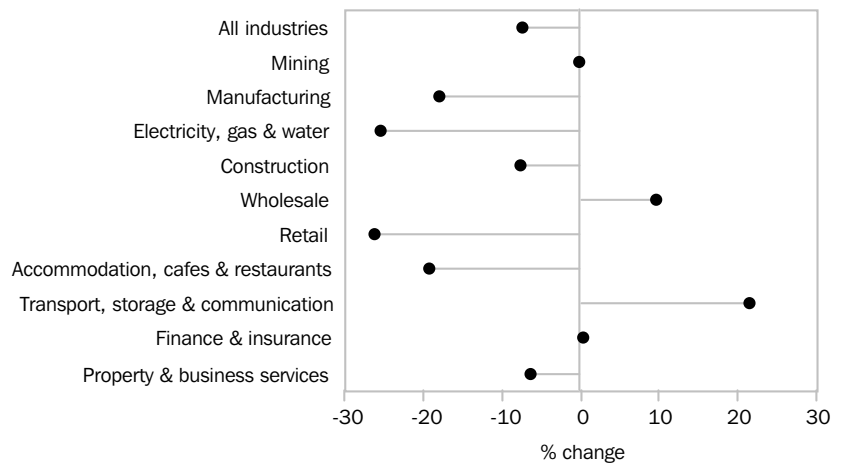
TIME SERIES

Profits are expected to fall by 7.3% in the March quarter 1999, in part due to the seasonal decrease in sales experienced in a number of industries after Christmas. Expected falls have been recorded in each March quarter since the survey began, with the largest expected falls being in the March quarter 1994 (12.3%) and the March quarter 1996 (9.6%).



MAIN INDUSTRY COMPARISON

Seven out of ten industries expect falls in Profits over the quarter. Five (Manufacturing, Construction, Retail, Accommodation, cafes & restaurants, and Property & business services) of the seven also expected falls in profits in the March quarter 1998, and the falls may be largely due to seasonal influences.

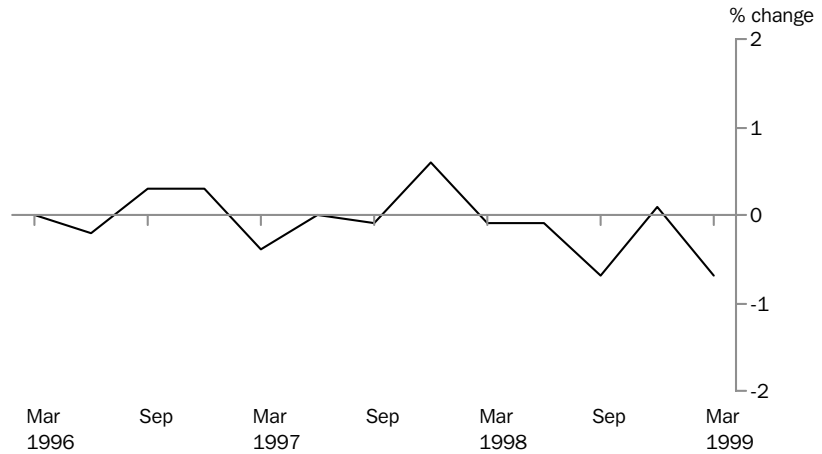


SUMMARY OF RESULTS: Short-term Outlook *continued*

EMPLOYMENT

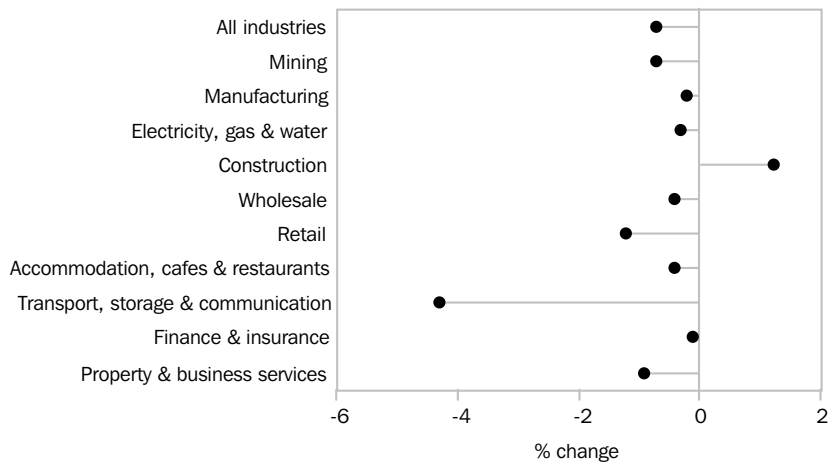
TIME SERIES

Employment (full time equivalent) is expected to fall by 0.7% in the March quarter 1999. Falls have been recorded in five of the past six March quarters.



MAIN INDUSTRY COMPARISON

Nine out of ten industries expect falls in Employment in the March quarter 1999, with only the Construction industry expecting an increase (1.3%). Seven of the nine industries expecting falls also expected Employment to fall in the March quarter 1998. The largest fall (4.3%) is expected in the Transport, storage & communication industry. The Mining and Electricity, gas & water industries continue their long trend of declines in expected employment.

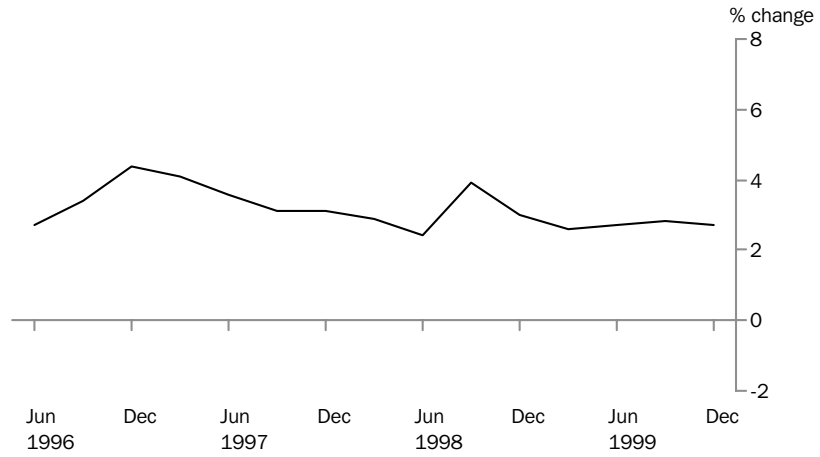


SUMMARY OF RESULTS: Medium-term Outlook

OPERATING INCOME

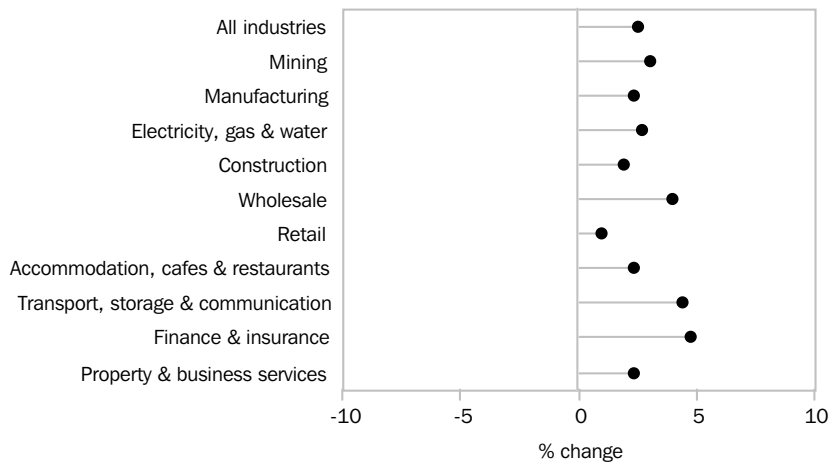
TIME SERIES

Operating income is expected to rise by 2.7% in the medium term. This follows expected rises of 2.6%, 2.7% and 2.8% over the last three quarters.



MAIN INDUSTRY COMPARISON

All industries expect Operating income to increase in the medium term, with three industries (Finance & insurance, Transport, storage & communication and Wholesale) expecting increases in excess of 4.0%.

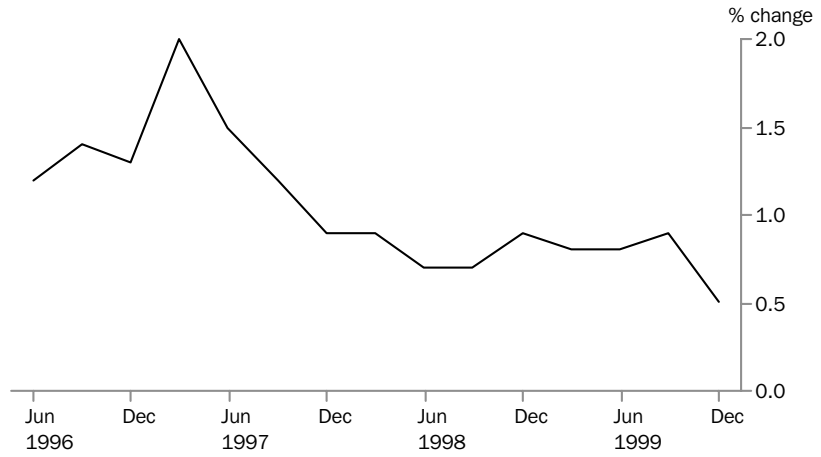


SUMMARY OF RESULTS: Medium-term Outlook *continued*

SELLING PRICES

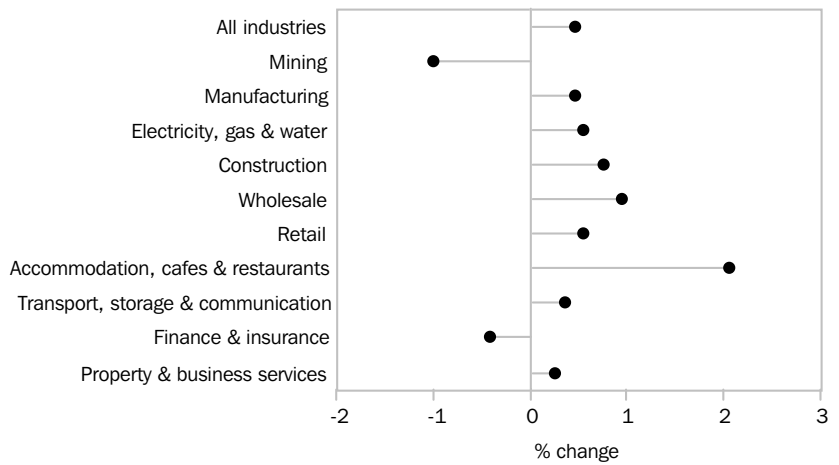
TIME SERIES

Selling prices are expected to rise by 0.5% over the medium term. This is the lowest expected rise in Selling prices over the medium term since the survey began.



MAIN INDUSTRY COMPARISON

Two industries (Mining and Finance & insurance) expect a fall in Selling prices in the medium term (of 1.0% and 0.4% respectively), while a further two (Accommodation, cafes & restaurants and Wholesale) expect increases of 1.0% or more.

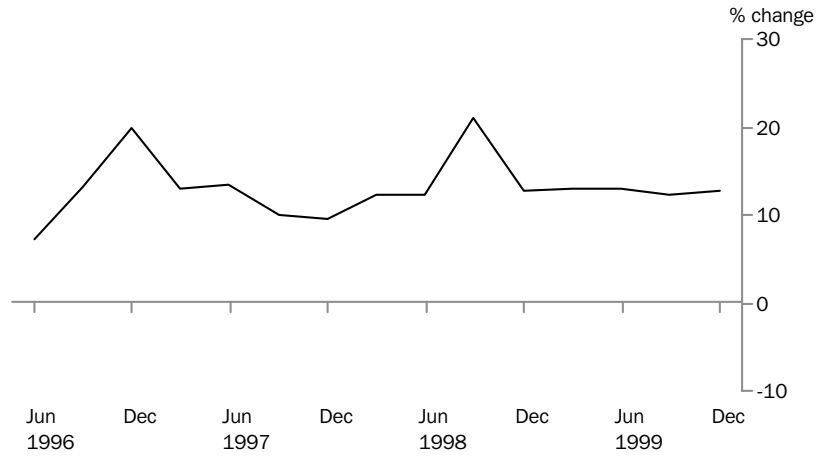


SUMMARY OF RESULTS: Medium-term Outlook *continued*

PROFITS

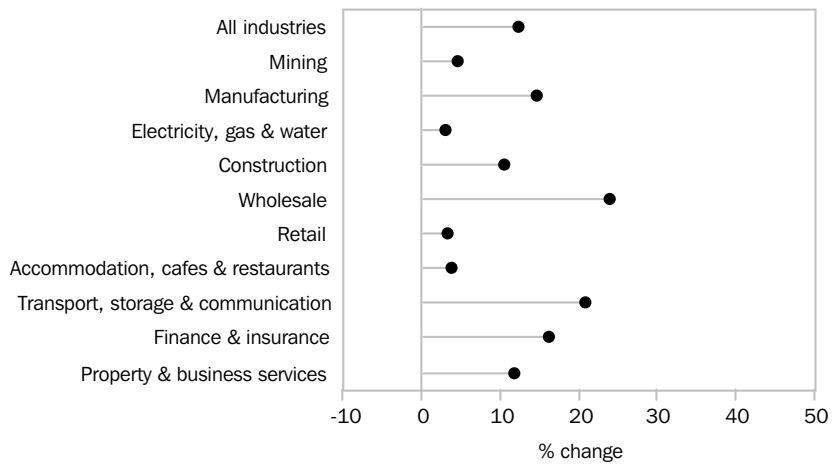
TIME SERIES

The expected increase in Profits over the medium term is almost unchanged from last quarter, increasing from 12.4% to 12.8%.



MAIN INDUSTRY COMPARISON

All industries expect Profits to increase in the medium term, with the largest increases expected in the Wholesale, Transport, storage & communication, Finance & insurance and Manufacturing industries.

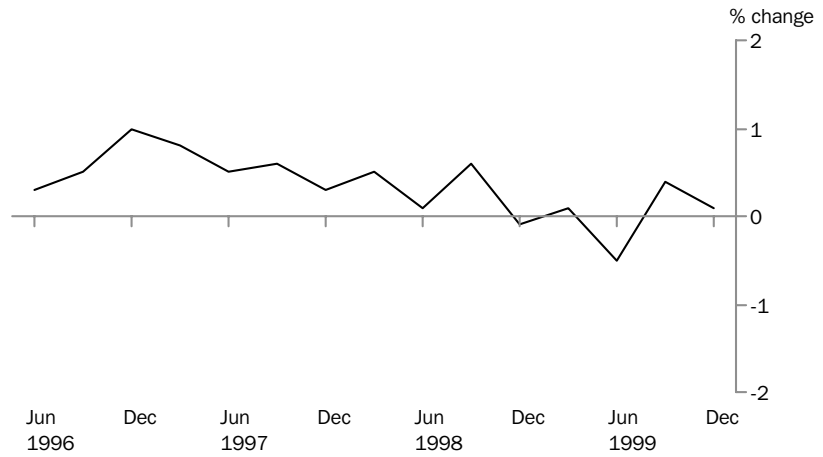


SUMMARY OF RESULTS: Medium-term Outlook *continued*

EMPLOYMENT

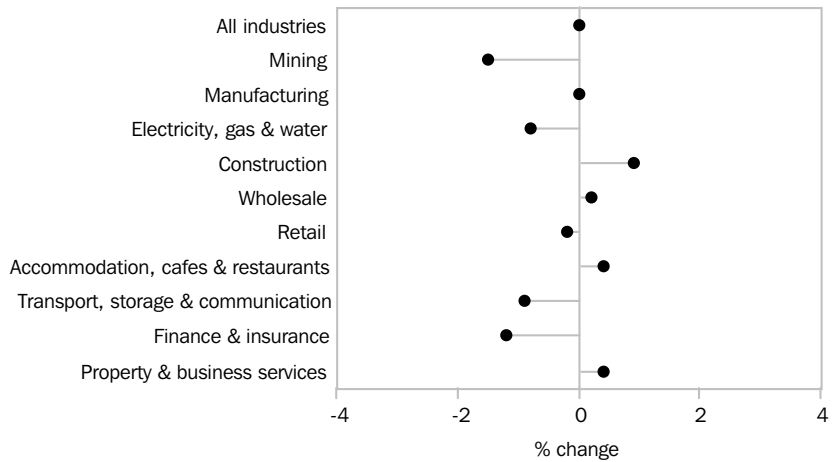
TIME SERIES

Full time equivalent Employment is expected to rise by 0.1% in the medium term.



MAIN INDUSTRY COMPARISON

While five industries (Mining, Electricity, gas & water, Retail, Transport, storage & communication, and Finance & insurance) expect Employment to fall in the medium term, all other industries expect it to increase.



EXPECTED AGGREGATE CHANGE OVER THE PREVIOUS QTR

	<i>Mar Qtr</i> 1998	<i>Jun Qtr</i> 1998	<i>Sep Qtr</i> 1998	<i>Dec Qtr</i> 1998	<i>Mar Qtr</i> 1999
Business performance indicators	%	%	%	%	%

ORIGINAL

Trading performance					
Operating income	-0.3	1.7	1.1	1.5	-0.9
Selling prices	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.0
Profit	-3.8	8.4	-1.0	6.0	-7.3
Investment					
Capital expenditure	1.4	3.8	2.8	4.9	1.3
Stocks	-0.3	-0.5	-0.3	-0.7	-0.3
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-0.1	-0.1	-0.7	0.1	-0.7
Operating expenses					
Wages	0.5	0.5	0.8	1.2	0.1
Non-wage labour	0.3	0.4	0.8	0.6	0.3
Other	0.2	1.1	1.3	1.1	0.0
Total	0.3	1.0	1.2	1.1	0.0

TREND

Trading performance					
Operating income	1.4	1.2	0.9	0.8	0.6
Selling prices	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2
Profit	5.5	3.6	1.1	0.6	1.1
Investment					
Capital expenditure	3.2	3.2	3.5	3.5	2.7
Stocks	-0.3	-0.4	-0.5	-0.5	-0.4
Employment					
Full time equivalent	0.1	-0.1	-0.4	-0.5	-0.4
Operating expenses					
Wages	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.5
Total	0.9	1.0	1.0	0.8	0.6

BUSINESSES EXPECTING.....

	<i>Decreases</i>	<i>No change</i>	<i>Increases</i>	<i>Net balance</i>
Business performance indicators	%	%	%	%
Trading performance				
Operating income	35.9	31.3	32.8	-1.6
Selling prices	15.2	51.1	33.7	17.2
Profit	23.0	22.0	55.4	32.7
Investment				
Capital expenditure	13.5	39.7	46.8	34.4
Stocks	36.5	34.6	28.9	-7.2
Employment				
Full time equivalent	26.5	57.5	16.0	-10.5
Operating expenses				
Wages	19.7	40.5	39.8	20.1
Non-wage labour	16.2	46.8	37.0	20.8
Other	17.0	36.7	46.2	27.9

EXPECTED AGGREGATE CHANGE OVER THE PREVIOUS QTR.....

	Mar Qtr 1998	Jun Qtr 1998	Sep Qtr 1998	Dec Qtr 1998	Mar Qtr 1999
Business performance indicators	%	%	%	%	%

MINING

Trading performance					
Operating income	2.6	0.4	1.3	-2.4	-0.2
Selling prices	-0.3	-1.6	-0.8	0.4	0.3
Profit	10.4	1.7	6.2	2.4	-0.4
Investment					
Capital expenditure	-2.4	11.1	2.5	-4.5	3.4
Stocks	-1.4	-1.3	1.4	4.6	3.0
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-1.1	-0.7	-1.7	-1.2	-0.7
Operating expenses					
Wages	1.2	0.2	-1.6	-1.3	-0.4
Non-wage labour	1.4	-0.2	-0.9	-1.5	-1.0
Other	0.7	0.1	0.2	-4.4	1.1
Total	0.7	0.1	-0.1	-3.8	0.8

MANUFACTURING

Trading performance					
Operating income	-1.1	3.7	3.2	0.4	-2.1
Selling prices	-0.3	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.0
Profit	-9.5	29.0	11.0	4.2	-17.8
Investment					
Capital expenditure	5.6	7.5	8.1	14.7	5.7
Stocks	-0.5	-0.3	-1.0	-1.6	0.1
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-0.3	-0.5	-0.3	-0.4	-0.2
Operating expenses					
Wages	0.6	0.5	0.9	0.6	0.3
Non-wage labour	0.2	0.7	0.8	0.3	0.3
Other	-0.1	1.7	2.3	-0.2	0.0
Total	0.0	1.5	2.0	-0.1	0.1

ELECTRICITY, GAS & WATER

Trading performance					
Operating income	0.3	0.8	-0.2	-2.0	-5.2
Selling prices	-0.2	0.0	0.5	-0.2	0.1
Profit	5.1	4.6	8.3	-12.9	-25.3
Investment					
Capital expenditure	-5.4	5.6	3.7	4.3	-0.8
Stocks	-0.1	-2.2	0.1	-0.4	0.3
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-1.4	-0.7	-1.5	-0.8	-0.3
Operating expenses					
Wages	-1.4	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.3
Non-wage labour	-0.9	-0.3	0.1	0.0	0.4
Other	-0.8	0.7	-2.0	0.2	-0.6
Total	-0.8	0.6	-1.8	0.2	-0.5

CONSTRUCTION

Trading performance					
Operating income	-0.3	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.2
Selling prices	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.6	0.2
Profit	-6.2	-1.4	1.5	5.2	-7.6
Investment					
Capital expenditure	4.1	6.1	0.2	0.7	1.4
Stocks	-0.2	-0.7	0.7	-0.1	-0.3
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-1.1	-0.4	-1.4	-0.5	1.3
Operating expenses					
Wages	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.7
Non-wage labour	-0.3	0.5	1.0	-0.2	0.5
Other	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.5	1.0
Total	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.9

EXPECTED AGGREGATE CHANGE OVER THE PREVIOUS QTR.....

	Mar Qtr 1998	Jun Qtr 1998	Sep Qtr 1998	Dec Qtr 1998	Mar Qtr 1999
Business performance indicators	%	%	%	%	%

WHOLESALE

Trading performance					
Operating income	0.1	2.0	0.6	1.0	1.1
Selling prices	0.3	0.6	0.2	0.7	0.2
Profit	-3.3	13.1	-6.1	-2.4	10.2
Investment					
Capital expenditure	4.2	8.3	4.2	3.6	6.5
Stocks	0.3	0.0	-0.8	-1.1	-0.8
Employment					
Full time equivalent	0.2	0.3	0.0	-0.3	-0.4
Operating expenses					
Wages	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.4	0.5
Non-wage labour	0.5	0.9	0.7	0.9	0.6
Other	0.6	0.9	1.3	1.2	0.4
Total	0.6	0.9	1.2	1.2	0.4

RETAIL

Trading performance					
Operating income	-1.2	1.2	0.4	4.4	-4.0
Selling prices	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.8	-0.1
Profit	-3.1	1.3	-8.2	16.6	-26.2
Investment					
Capital expenditure	3.7	9.1	-10.1	1.0	-3.9
Stocks	-0.7	-1.9	0.8	-0.5	-1.4
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-0.5	-0.1	0.1	0.6	-1.2
Operating expenses					
Wages	0.0	0.5	1.5	2.5	-1.0
Non-wage labour	0.0	0.5	1.6	1.5	-1.0
Other	-0.9	1.2	1.3	3.3	-1.3
Total	-0.7	1.1	1.4	3.2	-1.2

ACCOMMODATION, CAFES & RESTAURANTS

Trading performance					
Operating income	-0.5	0.1	0.2	2.1	-1.7
Selling prices	0.5	0.7	0.2	0.7	-0.2
Profit	-14.5	-4.6	-6.9	-1.0	-19.2
Investment					
Capital expenditure	1.8	-1.2	4.0	2.1	5.3
Stocks	-0.4	-0.5	-0.5	0.5	-0.3
Employment					
Full time equivalent	0.0	-0.6	-0.5	1.0	-0.4
Operating expenses					
Wages	1.4	0.6	1.1	2.1	-0.2
Non-wage labour	1.5	0.6	1.1	2.0	0.0
Other	1.1	0.8	0.9	2.2	0.5
Total	1.2	0.7	1.0	2.2	0.3

TRANSPORT, STORAGE & COMMUNICATION

Trading performance					
Operating income	0.3	1.3	0.5	3.7	2.1
Selling prices	0.4	-0.4	-0.1	0.1	-0.1
Profit	-2.7	3.9	7.7	14.2	21.9
Investment					
Capital expenditure	-2.6	2.1	3.3	8.2	-8.7
Stocks	-0.9	-1.0	-0.1	-4.4	-1.2
Employment					
Full time equivalent	2.2	-0.8	-1.0	-0.8	-4.3
Operating expenses					
Wages	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.4	-0.3
Non-wage labour	1.1	0.6	-0.8	-0.9	0.8
Other	0.5	1.5	-1.0	1.4	-3.4
Total	0.6	1.2	-0.7	1.0	-2.4

EXPECTED AGGREGATE CHANGE OVER THE PREVIOUS QTR.....

	Mar Qtr 1998	Jun Qtr 1998	Sep Qtr 1998	Dec Qtr 1998	Mar Qtr 1999
Business performance indicators	%	%	%	%	%

FINANCE & INSURANCE

Trading performance					
Operating income	0.3	1.4	1.0	3.5	1.4
Selling prices	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.0	-0.1
Profit	-0.6	1.4	0.2	6.7	0.8
Investment					
Capital expenditure	-1.8	0.0	0.5	3.3	3.1
Stocks	0.4	-0.3	-0.2	0.0	0.0
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-0.1	-1.3	-0.6	-0.1	-0.1
Operating expenses					
Wages	-0.5	-0.3	2.2	2.6	0.2
Non-wage labour	0.1	-0.6	3.9	0.8	0.9
Other	0.5	1.5	1.4	3.5	0.8
Total	0.4	1.3	1.5	3.4	0.7

PROPERTY & BUSINESS SERVICES

Trading performance					
Operating income	0.7	0.2	-0.2	1.2	-0.3
Selling prices	0.3	0.2	0.7	0.8	-0.6
Profit	-0.9	0.6	-9.8	5.6	-6.4
Investment					
Capital expenditure	2.8	0.1	3.3	2.7	4.0
Stocks	-0.3	-0.1	0.3	-0.5	0.2
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-0.3	0.4	0.2	1.2	-0.9
Operating expenses					
Wages	0.7	0.4	0.8	2.0	0.0
Non-wage labour	0.5	0.3	0.4	1.3	-0.5
Other	1.3	0.1	1.2	0.0	0.8
Total	1.1	0.1	1.1	0.6	0.5

ALL INDUSTRIES

Trading performance					
Operating income	-0.3	1.7	1.1	1.5	-0.9
Selling prices	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.0
Profit	-3.8	8.4	-1.0	6.0	-7.3
Investment					
Capital expenditure	1.4	3.8	2.8	4.9	1.3
Stocks	-0.3	-0.5	-0.3	-0.7	-0.3
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-0.1	-0.1	-0.7	0.1	-0.7
Operating expenses					
Wages	0.5	0.5	0.8	1.2	0.1
Non-wage labour	0.3	0.4	0.8	0.6	0.3
Other	0.2	1.1	1.3	1.1	0.0
Total	0.3	1.0	1.2	1.1	0.0

STATE EXPECTATIONS, Short-term Outlook Expected Aggregate Change

EXPECTED AGGREGATE CHANGE OVER THE PREVIOUS QTR.....

	Mar Qtr 1998	Jun Qtr 1998	Sep Qtr 1998	Dec Qtr 1998	Mar Qtr 1999
Business performance indicators	%	%	%	%	%

NEW SOUTH WALES

Trading performance					
Operating income	-0.3	2.3	0.8	1.2	-1.2
Selling prices	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.1
Profit	-3.2	8.0	-8.0	-3.1	-12.4
Investment					
Capital expenditure	2.8	2.4	1.7	6.4	4.4
Stocks	-0.5	-0.6	0.0	-1.1	-0.8
Employment					
Full time equivalent	0.0	-0.1	-1.2	0.1	-0.3

VICTORIA

Trading performance					
Operating income	-0.2	1.7	1.1	1.3	-1.3
Selling prices	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.0
Profit	-4.0	1.8	2.0	-3.0	-1.3
Investment					
Capital expenditure	2.0	3.3	5.1	6.1	1.1
Stocks	-0.2	-0.6	0.6	-1.1	-1.1
Employment					
Full time equivalent	0.0	-0.3	-0.1	0.0	-0.3

QUEENSLAND

Trading performance					
Operating income	-0.5	1.6	2.3	1.9	-1.7
Selling prices	0.3	0.0	-0.2	0.7	-0.6
Profit	-5.5	1.3	-0.2	6.5	-7.7
Investment					
Capital expenditure	0.4	5.9	1.1	4.2	6.0
Stocks	-0.6	-0.3	-0.3	-1.8	-0.9
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-0.4	-0.3	-0.2	0.2	-0.7

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Trading performance					
Operating income	0.2	1.9	2.0	0.4	0.4
Selling prices	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3
Profit	3.0	2.9	12.4	-16.0	6.9
Investment					
Capital expenditure	1.5	9.8	2.6	0.4	-4.9
Stocks	1.9	0.2	-2.4	-0.4	-1.3
Employment					
Full time equivalent	0.1	-0.1	-1.2	1.0	-0.8

EXPECTED AGGREGATE CHANGE OVER THE PREVIOUS QTR.....

	Mar Qtr 1998	Jun Qtr 1998	Sep Qtr 1998	Dec Qtr 1998	Mar Qtr 1999
Business performance indicators	%	%	%	%	%

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Trading performance					
Operating income	-0.1	1.2	1.2	1.0	1.5
Selling prices	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.0
Profit	-3.8	1.8	3.4	4.3	18.2
Investment					
Capital expenditure	0.9	2.6	7.5	3.0	0.5
Stocks	-0.6	-0.7	-1.2	2.1	2.6
Employment					
Full time equivalent	0.1	0.0	-0.7	0.2	-0.3

TASMANIA

Trading performance					
Operating income	-1.4	0.8	-4.8	1.5	-1.4
Selling prices	0.2	-0.3	-1.1	0.4	0.3
Profit	-8.0	10.6	-3.9	-3.7	-8.3
Investment					
Capital expenditure	1.6	1.4	1.8	4.0	0.9
Stocks	-0.6	-0.7	-5.1	-0.6	-0.8
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-0.8	-0.6	-0.7	0.1	0.2

AUSTRALIA

Trading performance					
Operating income	-0.3	1.7	1.1	1.5	-0.9
Selling prices	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.0
Profit	-3.8	8.4	-1.0	6.0	-7.3
Investment					
Capital expenditure	1.4	3.8	2.8	4.9	1.3
Stocks	-0.3	-0.5	-0.3	-0.7	-0.3
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-0.1	-0.1	-0.7	0.1	-0.7

SIZE OF BUSINESS, Short-term Outlook Expected Aggregate Change

EXPECTED AGGREGATE CHANGE OVER THE PREVIOUS QTR.....

	Mar Qtr 1998	Jun Qtr 1998	Sep Qtr 1998	Dec Qtr 1998	Mar Qtr 1999
Business performance indicators	%	%	%	%	%

SMALL

Trading performance					
Operating income	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.6	-0.5
Selling prices	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.5	-0.1
Profit	-3.8	-2.5	-7.3	-5.7	-10.8
Investment					
Capital expenditure	2.8	3.3	3.8	5.1	4.1
Stocks	-0.2	-0.6	-0.5	-0.7	0.1
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-0.1	0.1	-1.2	0.0	-0.1
Operating expenses					
Wages	0.5	0.4	0.5	1.0	0.4
Non-wage labour	0.2	0.4	0.7	0.6	0.8
Other	1.0	0.8	1.5	1.2	0.7
Total	0.9	0.7	1.3	1.1	0.6

MEDIUM

Trading performance					
Operating income	0.5	2.1	1.4	0.2	-0.1
Selling prices	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.5	-0.2
Profit	-5.8	14.4	1.1	-6.4	1.4
Investment					
Capital expenditure	2.1	2.0	1.6	3.7	6.1
Stocks	-0.3	0.0	-0.8	-0.6	-1.0
Employment					
Full time equivalent	0.0	-0.2	-0.2	0.2	-0.5
Operating expenses					
Wages	1.1	0.6	0.8	1.6	0.2
Non-wage labour	0.6	0.4	0.5	1.3	0.0
Other	1.0	1.4	1.2	0.5	-0.1
Total	1.0	1.2	1.1	0.8	0.0

LARGE

Trading performance					
Operating income	-1.3	3.3	2.3	3.9	-2.1
Selling prices	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.2
Profit	-3.3	24.8	9.0	17.5	-7.0
Investment					
Capital expenditure	-0.5	4.8	2.2	5.1	-3.1
Stocks	-0.4	-0.9	0.1	-1.8	-0.4
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-0.2	-0.3	-0.3	0.2	-1.5
Operating expenses					
Wages	0.2	0.5	1.2	1.2	-0.4
Non-wage labour	0.3	0.5	1.0	-0.1	-0.3
Other	-1.1	1.4	1.2	1.6	-0.9
Total	-0.9	1.2	1.2	1.5	-0.8

EXPECTED AGGREGATE CHANGE OVER THE SAME QUARTER OF
THE PREVIOUS YEAR

	<i>Dec Qtr</i> 1998	<i>Mar Qtr</i> 1999	<i>Jun Qtr</i> 1999	<i>Sep Qtr</i> 1999	<i>Dec Qtr</i> 1999
Business performance indicators	%	%	%	%	%

ORIGINAL

Trading performance					
Operating income	3.0	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.7
Selling prices	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.5
Profit	12.8	13.1	13.1	12.4	12.8
Investment					
Capital expenditure	2.8	2.0	3.2	2.1	13.9
Stocks	0.8	0.2	0.3	0.4	-0.3
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-0.1	0.1	-0.5	0.4	0.1
Operating expenses					
Wages	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.8	1.2
Non-wage labour	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.4	1.0
Other	1.5	1.4	1.7	1.7	1.4
Total	1.5	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.4

TREND

Trading performance					
Operating income	3.1	2.9	2.7	2.7	2.6
Selling prices	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7
Profit	15.0	13.9	13.0	12.3	11.0
Investment					
Capital expenditure	3.1	2.2	2.8	5.4	8.1
Stocks	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.1	-0.1
Employment					
Full time equivalent	0.1	-0.1	-0.1	0.1	0.2
Operating expenses					
Wages	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Total	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.5

BUSINESSES EXPECTING.....

	<i>Decreases</i>	<i>No change</i>	<i>Increases</i>	<i>Net balance</i>
Business performance indicators	%	%	%	%
Trading performance				
Operating income	10.1	23.8	66.1	55.4
Selling prices	9.3	35.8	54.9	44.8
Profit	18.5	19.2	62.6	44.3
Investment				
Capital expenditure	24.4	37.1	38.5	12.4
Stocks	31.3	38.5	30.3	-0.5
Employment				
Full time equivalent	17.2	50.3	32.5	15.3
Operating expenses				
Wages	9.2	28.3	62.5	53.2
Non-wage labour	7.9	35.4	56.8	48.9
Other	10.1	27.9	62.0	51.0

EXPECTED AGGREGATE CHANGE OVER THE SAME QUARTER OF
THE PREVIOUS YEAR

	<i>Dec Qtr</i> 1998	<i>Mar Qtr</i> 1999	<i>Jun Qtr</i> 1999	<i>Sep Qtr</i> 1999	<i>Dec Qtr</i> 1999
--	------------------------	------------------------	------------------------	------------------------	------------------------

Business performance indicators % % % % %

MINING

Trading performance					
Operating income	3.5	5.3	4.0	1.4	3.2
Selling prices	-0.1	0.3	-2.1	-0.3	-1.0
Profit	10.3	40.1	27.4	-1.2	5.1
Investment					
Capital expenditure	3.7	3.8	-3.3	-6.2	-2.9
Stocks	-1.0	-0.1	-4.5	2.1	-1.2
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-1.4	-0.6	-2.6	-1.7	-1.5
Operating expenses					
Wages	1.4	0.9	-1.3	-1.1	-0.4
Non-wage labour	1.5	0.4	-1.0	-2.1	-2.0
Other	1.0	-1.0	0.2	0.3	3.0
Total	1.0	-0.6	-0.1	0.0	2.4

MANUFACTURING

Trading performance					
Operating income	3.3	3.2	2.3	2.7	2.5
Selling prices	0.7	1.0	0.7	0.6	0.5
Profit	17.9	23.4	19.6	13.4	15.2
Investment					
Capital expenditure	6.3	3.5	1.5	11.1	6.9
Stocks	0.9	-0.5	0.0	-0.3	-0.9
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-0.2	-0.3	-0.2	0.4	0.0
Operating expenses					
Wages	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.9	1.2
Non-wage labour	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.3
Other	1.3	1.4	1.1	1.2	0.7
Total	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.3	0.8

ELECTRICITY, GAS & WATER

Trading performance					
Operating income	0.0	0.4	1.7	2.5	2.9
Selling prices	-1.4	-0.2	0.6	1.2	0.6
Profit	0.8	-4.9	12.3	6.9	3.6
Investment					
Capital expenditure	-6.7	-6.6	15.3	11.0	-4.8
Stocks	-1.7	-2.4	-3.3	-2.1	-1.5
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-2.7	-1.7	-1.9	-1.9	-0.8
Operating expenses					
Wages	-1.5	0.5	0.0	-0.1	1.1
Non-wage labour	-1.8	-0.3	0.3	-0.5	1.1
Other	-0.1	1.4	-0.3	1.7	3.1
Total	-0.2	1.3	-0.3	1.5	2.9

CONSTRUCTION

Trading performance					
Operating income	1.6	1.9	1.8	1.9	2.1
Selling prices	0.9	0.8	0.5	0.9	0.8
Profit	6.3	8.8	5.7	8.9	11.2
Investment					
Capital expenditure	1.1	3.2	1.3	1.7	1.2
Stocks	0.5	0.0	1.1	0.4	-0.1
Employment					
Full time equivalent	0.0	0.7	-0.5	0.0	1.0
Operating expenses					
Wages	0.8	1.1	1.0	0.4	2.0
Non-wage labour	0.2	1.1	1.4	-0.1	1.2
Other	1.0	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3
Total	0.9	1.3	1.4	1.1	1.4

EXPECTED AGGREGATE CHANGE OVER THE SAME QUARTER OF
THE PREVIOUS YEAR

	<i>Dec Qtr</i> 1998	<i>Mar Qtr</i> 1999	<i>Jun Qtr</i> 1999	<i>Sep Qtr</i> 1999	<i>Dec Qtr</i> 1999
--	------------------------	------------------------	------------------------	------------------------	------------------------

Business performance indicators	%	%	%	%	%
---------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---

WHOLESALE

Trading performance					
Operating income	3.8	2.8	3.6	3.1	4.2
Selling prices	1.3	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.0
Profit	17.9	14.8	15.8	23.8	24.6
Investment					
Capital expenditure	5.3	8.0	16.3	1.5	3.4
Stocks	1.2	1.0	0.5	0.2	0.3
Employment					
Full time equivalent	0.9	0.8	0.5	1.3	0.3
Operating expenses					
Wages	2.3	2.2	2.6	1.8	1.7
Non-wage labour	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.1	1.4
Other	1.9	1.6	2.5	1.8	2.2
Total	1.9	1.7	2.5	1.8	2.2

RETAIL

Trading performance					
Operating income	2.8	2.3	2.8	2.8	1.2
Selling prices	1.2	1.0	1.2	1.3	0.6
Profit	11.7	5.5	11.2	6.9	3.9
Investment					
Capital expenditure	3.4	8.0	6.1	2.4	2.5
Stocks	0.8	0.3	1.3	1.0	-0.4
Employment					
Full time equivalent	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.8	-0.2
Operating expenses					
Wages	1.6	1.2	2.0	2.8	1.4
Non-wage labour	1.2	1.1	1.8	1.9	0.8
Other	1.3	1.6	1.9	2.3	0.7
Total	1.3	1.6	1.9	2.3	0.8

ACCOMMODATION, CAFES & RESTAURANTS

Trading performance					
Operating income	2.4	2.2	1.8	2.2	2.5
Selling prices	1.2	1.8	1.6	1.0	2.1
Profit	4.1	7.1	9.3	0.7	4.4
Investment					
Capital expenditure	1.5	1.0	4.7	1.9	1.8
Stocks	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.6
Employment					
Full time equivalent	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.5
Operating expenses					
Wages	2.2	1.9	1.8	1.6	2.1
Non-wage labour	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.9
Other	2.0	1.3	0.7	2.4	2.2
Total	2.0	1.4	1.0	2.2	2.1

TRANSPORT, STORAGE & COMMUNICATION

Trading performance					
Operating income	3.2	3.6	3.2	4.5	4.6
Selling prices	0.7	0.1	-0.3	0.5	0.4
Profit	18.2	21.3	17.7	12.2	21.4
Investment					
Capital expenditure	3.3	-1.4	5.1	-1.6	30.4
Stocks	1.4	2.4	-0.4	3.4	-0.8
Employment					
Full time equivalent	0.0	0.0	-2.1	-2.1	-0.9
Operating expenses					
Wages	1.6	1.9	-0.2	0.0	0.2
Non-wage labour	2.5	2.0	-0.7	0.8	0.5
Other	1.7	2.3	1.5	3.5	0.9
Total	1.7	2.2	1.0	2.5	0.7

EXPECTED AGGREGATE CHANGE OVER THE SAME QUARTER OF THE PREVIOUS YEAR

	Dec Qtr 1998	Mar Qtr 1999	Jun Qtr 1999	Sep Qtr 1999	Dec Qtr 1999
Business performance indicators	%	%	%	%	%

FINANCE & INSURANCE

Trading performance					
Operating income	5.2	3.3	4.2	5.1	4.9
Selling prices	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.0	-0.4
Profit	16.5	8.2	13.7	11.3	16.7
Investment					
Capital expenditure	0.3	-0.4	-1.9	2.8	-0.4
Stocks	0.1	-0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-1.4	-1.8	-1.0	-0.6	-1.2
Operating expenses					
Wages	0.1	0.9	2.2	3.8	1.5
Non-wage labour	0.2	0.3	2.1	3.5	1.3
Other	2.0	1.8	1.7	2.5	1.6
Total	1.8	1.7	1.7	2.7	1.6

PROPERTY & BUSINESS SERVICES

Trading performance					
Operating income	1.9	1.7	2.0	4.0	2.5
Selling prices	0.6	0.2	1.6	1.5	0.3
Profit	7.6	9.7	5.7	25.3	12.5
Investment					
Capital expenditure	1.6	0.5	2.0	1.1	23.1
Stocks	-0.1	-0.3	0.0	1.0	0.4
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-1.2	-0.8	0.6	1.6	0.5
Operating expenses					
Wages	1.1	0.8	1.7	3.0	1.3
Non-wage labour	0.5	0.4	0.9	2.7	0.9
Other	1.0	0.6	1.3	0.7	1.2
Total	1.0	0.7	1.3	1.4	1.2

ALL INDUSTRIES

Trading performance					
Operating income	3.0	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.7
Selling prices	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.5
Profit	12.8	13.1	13.1	12.4	12.8
Investment					
Capital expenditure	2.8	2.0	3.2	2.1	13.9
Stocks	0.8	0.2	0.3	0.4	-0.3
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-0.1	0.1	-0.5	0.4	0.1
Operating expenses					
Wages	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.8	1.2
Non-wage labour	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.4	1.0
Other	1.5	1.4	1.7	1.7	1.4
Total	1.5	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.4

STATE EXPECTATIONS, Medium-term Outlook Expected Aggregate Change

EXPECTED AGGREGATE CHANGE OVER THE SAME QUARTER OF THE PREVIOUS YEAR

	<i>Dec Qtr</i> 1998	<i>Mar Qtr</i> 1999	<i>Jun Qtr</i> 1999	<i>Sep Qtr</i> 1999	<i>Dec Qtr</i> 1999
Business performance indicators	%	%	%	%	%

NEW SOUTH WALES

Trading performance					
Operating income	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.8
Selling prices	0.8	0.7	0.8	1.1	0.6
Profit	7.3	9.6	7.5	11.5	5.6
Investment					
Capital expenditure	3.1	1.8	3.7	1.1	6.8
Stocks	0.4	0.0	0.1	0.4	-0.2
Employment					
Full time equivalent	0.0	0.1	-0.9	0.3	0.0

VICTORIA

Trading performance					
Operating income	3.3	2.6	3.6	3.3	3.0
Selling prices	0.8	0.8	1.1	0.7	0.8
Profit	10.9	11.3	18.4	8.8	11.0
Investment					
Capital expenditure	3.1	1.5	4.3	1.4	33.9
Stocks	1.3	0.1	1.0	0.4	-0.2
Employment					
Full time equivalent	0.2	-0.1	0.2	0.7	0.2

QUEENSLAND

Trading performance					
Operating income	3.0	2.8	2.0	2.5	2.1
Selling prices	1.0	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.0
Profit	10.8	16.3	9.5	6.6	8.6
Investment					
Capital expenditure	3.8	4.7	3.9	8.3	1.8
Stocks	0.8	0.2	-0.1	-0.4	-1.2
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-0.1	-0.1	0.1	0.9	0.0

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Trading performance					
Operating income	4.3	2.7	3.4	2.8	2.7
Selling prices	0.8	0.7	0.8	1.0	0.8
Profit	18.1	22.7	20.9	-0.6	10.2
Investment					
Capital expenditure	2.3	-2.0	8.6	-6.0	22.2
Stocks	2.0	0.2	0.3	1.8	-0.2
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-1.5	-1.3	-0.5	0.6	0.3

EXPECTED AGGREGATE CHANGE OVER THE SAME QUARTER OF
THE PREVIOUS YEAR

	Dec Qtr 1998	Mar Qtr 1999	Jun Qtr 1999	Sep Qtr 1999	Dec Qtr 1999
Business performance indicators	%	%	%	%	%

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Trading performance					
Operating income	3.0	2.6	2.5	1.9	2.6
Selling prices	1.3	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.6
Profit	11.7	9.6	6.6	4.7	6.0
Investment					
Capital expenditure	2.8	1.0	-1.1	-2.4	-4.1
Stocks	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.2
Employment					
Full time equivalent	0.2	0.5	-0.3	0.4	0.1

TASMANIA

Trading performance					
Operating income	2.8	1.4	-3.0	2.1	1.1
Selling prices	0.7	0.4	-0.3	0.7	0.7
Profit	22.7	11.3	1.2	2.8	-0.2
Investment					
Capital expenditure	1.1	2.4	3.0	39.7	5.6
Stocks	0.0	-0.1	-2.3	-1.1	-1.5
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-1.0	-0.6	-1.0	0.1	0.4

AUSTRALIA

Trading performance					
Operating income	3.0	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.7
Selling prices	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.5
Profit	12.8	13.1	13.1	12.4	12.8
Investment					
Capital expenditure	2.8	2.0	3.2	2.1	13.9
Stocks	0.8	0.2	0.3	0.4	-0.3
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-0.1	0.1	-0.5	0.4	0.1

EXPECTED AGGREGATE CHANGE OVER THE SAME QUARTER OF THE PREVIOUS YEAR

	Dec Qtr 1998	Mar Qtr 1999	Jun Qtr 1999	Sep Qtr 1999	Dec Qtr 1999
Business performance indicators	%	%	%	%	%

SMALL

Trading performance					
Operating income	3.1	1.9	1.6	2.6	2.9
Selling prices	0.9	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.7
Profit	14.4	6.8	2.9	13.5	11.4
Investment					
Capital expenditure	2.0	2.3	3.9	5.6	17.4
Stocks	0.9	0.2	0.7	0.3	-0.1
Employment					
Full time equivalent	0.0	0.3	-0.9	0.5	0.5
Operating expenses					
Wages	1.4	1.0	1.0	1.6	1.6
Non-wage labour	0.8	0.8	0.9	1.2	1.3
Other	1.4	1.3	1.9	1.6	2.1
Total	1.4	1.3	1.8	1.6	2.0

MEDIUM

Trading performance					
Operating income	2.9	2.4	2.8	2.7	2.2
Selling prices	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	0.6
Profit	17.6	17.3	19.3	15.3	17.7
Investment					
Capital expenditure	2.7	4.5	3.1	2.2	4.7
Stocks	1.0	-0.3	-0.4	-1.0	-0.4
Employment					
Full time equivalent	0.1	-0.2	-0.1	1.2	0.2
Operating expenses					
Wages	1.7	1.3	1.7	2.4	1.6
Non-wage labour	1.3	1.2	1.2	2.0	0.9
Other	1.7	1.4	0.5	1.7	1.1
Total	1.7	1.4	0.7	1.8	1.2

LARGE

Trading performance					
Operating income	2.9	3.7	4.2	3.3	2.8
Selling prices	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.4
Profit	9.9	22.6	28.8	11.0	12.7
Investment					
Capital expenditure	3.9	1.2	2.6	-1.8	12.1
Stocks	0.5	0.4	0.3	1.5	-0.6
Employment					
Full time equivalent	-0.3	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1	-0.7
Operating expenses					
Wages	1.4	1.7	1.8	1.6	0.7
Non-wage labour	1.2	1.4	1.2	1.1	0.6
Other	1.4	1.6	1.9	1.7	0.7
Total	1.4	1.6	1.9	1.7	0.7

EXPLANATORY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

- 1** This publication contains estimates of future economic activity based on the business expectations of senior executives, managers and proprietors of businesses operating in Australia. The estimates have been compiled from data collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in its quarterly survey of business expectations.
- 2** This survey commenced with short term expectations for the December quarter 1993 and medium term expectations for the September quarter 1994. This quarter's publication contains estimates of the expected change between the December quarter 1998 and the March quarter 1999 and the December quarter 1999.
- 3** The seasonal adjustment of these series has been reviewed, and the series have been found to be either not seasonal and/or very volatile and, hence, not of sufficient quality to be published at this time. The original and trend series will continue to be the published indicators, with the trend providing an indication of the underlying direction of the series. Trend estimates are provided on pages 12 and 20.
- 4** The survey is conducted by mail each quarter. This quarter's survey was collected during November and December 1998.
- 5** It is based on a stratified random sample of approximately 3,000 businesses selected from the ABS annual Economic Activity Survey (EAS). EAS in turn derives its survey population from the ABS central register of business units.
- 6** The sample is stratified by industry, sector and size of business (measured by number of employees). Within each stratum businesses are sampled randomly, with each business in a stratum having the same probability of selection.
- 7** The sample is supplemented by a further sample of businesses which have been added to the ABS business register since the original EAS sample was selected. This ensures that the expectations of relatively new businesses are taken into account in the overall estimates.

SCOPE OF THE SURVEY

- 8** The statistics in this publication relate to employing businesses in all industries and sectors of the Australian economy except:
 - agriculture, forestry and fishing;
 - general government.
- 9** Data related to intended sheep matings are collected annually by the ABS and published in catalogue 7111.0 and 7113.0 publications from the Agricultural Commodity Survey.
- 10** The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE) publishes its forecasts for specific commodities and for the Agriculture industry generally, as part of the annual Outlook conference in February each year. ABARE updates these forecasts in its quarterly publication *Australian Commodities—Forecasts and Issues*.

CLASSIFICATION

- 11** Each statistical unit selected in the survey is classified to an industry according to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC).

EXPLANATORY NOTES

BUSINESS SIZE

- 12** Data presented in this publication is classified by three business sizes :
- small (less than 20 employees, except for manufacturers where it is less than 100);
 - medium (20 to 99 employees, except for manufacturers where it is 100 to 599 employees); and
 - large (100 or more employees, except for manufacturers where it is 600 or more employees).

PROPORTION OF BUSINESSES SELECTED BY SIZE WITHIN AUSTRALIA

	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	<i>All businesses</i>
	%	%	%	%
Manufacturing	58.3	19.2	22.5	100.0
Other industries	53.5	16.9	29.6	100.0
All industries	54.9	17.6	27.6	100.0

STATISTICAL UNIT

13 The statistical unit used in the survey of business expectations is the management unit. The management unit is the highest level accounting unit within a business for which sub-annual accounts are maintained, having regard for industry homogeneity.

14 In nearly all cases the management unit coincides with the legal entity owning the business (i.e. company, partnership, trust, sole proprietor, etc.).

15 In the case of large diversified businesses, however, there may be more than one management unit, each coinciding with a 'division' or 'line of business'.

BUSINESS PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

16 The survey uses a set of well recognised economic trading indicators in measuring future trading activity. These indicators are: Operating income, selling prices, operating expenses, employment, etc. See Glossary for details.

17 The survey asks for full-time equivalent paid persons working. This is not a usual definition of employment as used by the ABS. It would be incorrect to assume a direct comparison with labour force statistics or other ABS employment statistics for instance.

SIMPLE AND WEIGHTED NET BALANCE

18 The simple net balance for a selected indicator is estimated by subtracting the percentage of respondents predicting a 'fall' from the percentage of respondents expecting a 'rise'.

19 The net balance is a *qualitative* statistic best suited to indicating the sentiment of businesses about future business conditions, and measures the net proportion of businesses predicting a rise or fall in future business conditions.

20 The weighted net balance is estimated by weighting the surveyed direction of change for each unit by its benchmark level response for the equivalent variable in the EAS.

21 Weighting the responses enables larger businesses to have an influence upon the net balance proportional to the level of their expenditure, employment size, etc. Movements in the weighted net balance indicate the net proportion of business activity predicting a rise or fall in future business conditions.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

EXPECTED AGGREGATE CHANGE **22** The expected aggregate change measures the forecasted percentage change in the level of a particular indicator. It is estimated by weighting the expected percentage change reported by respondents to the survey by their proportion of aggregate sales, expenditure, employment, etc. in the economy as measured from the benchmark estimate in the EAS.

23 The weighted aggregate estimate of a particular indicator, combined with an estimated level, can be used to quantify its expected future movement.

COMPARISON OF RESULTS **24** The weighted net balance and expected aggregate change are complementary measures which, in combination, give a broad indication of future business conditions. It is possible to obtain estimates in opposite directions for the net balance and weighted aggregate change estimates.

25 The weighted net balance provide a *qualitative* measure of the proportion of businesses predicting the direction of change in future business conditions. The expected aggregate change, however, provides a *quantitative* measure predicting the magnitude of change in a selected variable.

26 A comparison of the various expectations measures is provided in the following table:

COMPARISON OF THREE MEASURES OF BUSINESS EXPECTATIONS

	<i>Simple net balance</i>	<i>Weighted net balance</i>	<i>Weighted aggregate</i>
	%	%	%
Operating income	6.1	-1.6	-0.9
Wage costs	30.3	20.1	0.1
Employment Full time equivalent	-1.9	-10.5	-0.7

27 For the March quarter 1999 a simple net balance of 1.9% of businesses expect a fall in employment. The fall in the employment weighted net balance of 10.5% indicates that the businesses expecting a fall in employment tend to be larger than those expecting a rise.

TREND ESTIMATES **28** The trend estimates are derived by applying a 7-term Henderson moving average to the (unpublished) seasonally adjusted series (The seasonally adjusted series will be available for publication in upcoming releases). The 7-term Henderson average (like all Henderson averages) is symmetric, but as the end of a time series is approached, asymmetric forms of the average are applied. Unlike the weights of the standard 7-term Henderson moving average, the weights employed here have been tailored to suit the particular characteristics of individual series. While the asymmetric weights enable trend estimates for recent quarters to be produced, it does result in revisions to the estimates for the most recent three quarters as additional observations become available. There may also be revisions because of changes in the original data and as a result of the re-estimation of the seasonal factors. For further information, see *A Guide to Interpreting Time Series—Monitoring Trends: an Overview* (Cat. no. 1348.0) or contact the Assistant Director, Time Series Analysis on (02) 6252 6345.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

RELIABILITY OF ESTIMATES

29 All of the estimates in this publication are subject to:

- sampling error;
- non-sampling error; and
- benchmark bias

SAMPLING ERROR

30 Sampling error is due to the use of a sample rather than a complete enumeration; that is, the estimates differ from the values that would have been obtained if all units were surveyed. A measure of the likely difference is given by the *standard error*, which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of units was included. There are about two chances in three that the difference will be within one standard error, and about nineteen chances in twenty that the difference will be within two standard errors.

STANDARD ERRORS

31 The table below provides standard errors for some of the main estimates of this publication. As an example of how the standard errors can be interpreted, given that the short term expectation for *Operating income* for Australia is -0.9% with a standard error of 0.4, there would be two chances in three that the true value would be within the range -0.5% and -1.3% .

STANDARD ERRORS OF KEY ESTIMATES, SHORT-TERM EXPECTATION, AUSTRALIA

<i>Business performance indicator</i>	<i>Survey estimate</i>	<i>Standard error</i>
Operating income	-0.9	0.4
Selling prices	0.0	0.1
Profit	-7.3	0.6
Capital expenditure	1.3	0.9
Stocks	-0.3	0.4
Employment	-0.7	0.2
Wage costs	0.1	0.2

NON-SAMPLING ERROR

32 All other inaccuracies are referred to collectively as non-sampling error. The major areas of concern are: non-response; mis-reporting of data by respondents; and deficiency in the central register of economic units.

33 Every effort is made to reduce the non-sampling error to a minimum by careful design of questionnaires and efficient editing and operating procedures.

34 The expected aggregate change is designed to reflect business expectations for each business performance indicator, as accurately as possible. However, while the estimates should be appropriate measures of business climate, the expectations may not predict actual movements accurately. Businesses may be too optimistic or pessimistic in their predictions at different times.

35 In addition, actual movements would be partly comprised of activity of relatively recently formed businesses, and businesses which are formed during the expectations reference period which are not immediately represented in BES because they would not have been included on the ABS central register of economic units. Allowance is made in other ABS series for coverage deficiencies relating to newly formed businesses but no allowance for this is made in BES. This is important for some variables, where the contribution of new businesses to growth in that variable is relatively substantial (e.g. employment, capital expenditure or stocks).

EXPLANATORY NOTES

BENCHMARKS

36 Benchmark (or base level) information is obtained from the ABS annual Economic Activity Survey (EAS). It is used to weight individual business responses by their relative contribution to each business performance indicator. This enables percentage responses from different businesses to be aggregated.

37 In June each year a new sample is selected from units surveyed by EAS in the previous financial year. New benchmarks are introduced for the survey conducted in August each year. The benchmark data become increasingly out of date as they are used in the surveys conducted in November, February and May. In certain cases, the benchmark data may not accurately reflect the current activity of a business. It is currently not possible to measure the extent of any such inaccuracies.

38 Results from the EAS are published in *Business Operations and Industry Performance* (Cat. no. 8140.0).

SYMBOLS AND OTHER USAGES

— nil or rounded to zero
n.a. not available for publication

G L O S S A R Y

Capital expenditure	The expected change in the value of capital expenditure in new tangible assets.
Closing stocks	The expected change in the book value of closing stocks between the end of the collection quarter and the end of the reference periods.
Non-wage labour expenses	<p>The expected change in the total amount of employment related expenses not paid directly to employees.</p> <p>Some of these expenses are payroll tax, worker's compensation and superannuation.</p>
Operating income	<p>The expected change in operating income derived from the sale of goods or the provision of services by a business in terms of value.</p> <p>Financial institutions report on the expected change in gross interest income plus fees and commissions.</p> <p>Non-profit or charitable organisations report on the expected change in fees received for services, donations from the public and government grants and subsidies.</p>
Other operating expenses	<p>The expected change in the total amount of all expenses which are not classified as labour expenses.</p> <p>Some of these expenses are overheads, advertising, raw materials and packaging and handling.</p>
Paid persons working	The expected change in the number of paid persons working. Where part time or casual employees are involved employers are requested to convert to a full-time equivalent. It should be noted that most other ABS series which provide data on paid persons working do not use a full-time equivalent measure.
Profit	<p>Profit is a derived item based on the present trading performance of a business and the expected changes to the level of sales of goods and services and the sum of all expense items.</p> <p>The difference between the new benchmarks for the <i>sales of goods and services</i> and the sum of all expenses items (the sum of <i>total wage expense, non-wage labour expense and all other operating expenses</i>) as determined by the responses received, the Economic Activity Survey benchmarks for those items and an indicator of present trading performance (cost/income ratio) are used to determine the expected change for profit for the reference periods.</p> <p>Because of reporting difficulties experienced with the cost/income ratios, caution should be exercised in interpreting profit expectations.</p>
Reference periods	<p>There are two reference periods surveyed each quarter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Short-term (if the current quarter is December 1998, then the quarter being surveyed is March 1999); and▪ Medium-term (if the current quarter is December 1998, then the quarter being surveyed is December 1999).
Selling prices	<p>The expected change in the unit price of goods sold or services provided by the business. Where a business sells a range of products or services a representative product or service is used.</p> <p>Financial institutions report on interest rates, services and commissions charged.</p> <p>The benchmark for weighting the selling prices response is derived from associating selling prices with total expenses.</p>

GLOSSARY

State information	<p>State information has been derived for businesses in the survey which operate in more than one State.</p> <p>This has been achieved by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ applying a weight (the proportion of a business's economic activity undertaken in each State) to the benchmarks for that business to arrive at potentially eight different benchmarks for each business performance indicator; and▪ applying the overall percentage change in the business performance indicators obtained from the survey to each of the State benchmarks for each business performance indicator.
Total operating expenses	<p>This is a derived estimate from the weighted response for the total of wage, non-wage labour and all other expenses.</p>
Total wage expenses	<p>The expected change in the total amount of direct wage and salaries paid to employees.</p>

U N P U B L I S H E D D A T A

AVAILABLE DATA	<p>The amount of data collected from the Survey of Business Expectations is much greater than the data contained in this publication.</p> <p>Subject to the ABS provisions for maintaining the confidentiality of respondents and their information, more detailed information by industry and size of business may be made available on request.</p>
SIZE OF BUSINESS	<p>The size of business is based on employment. Additional data can be estimated for the following size ranges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ less than 20 employees.▪ 20 and less than 100 employees.▪ 100 and less than 600 employees.▪ 600 and greater employees.▪ small (less than 20 employees except for manufacturing, which is less than 100).▪ medium (20 to less than 100 employees except for manufacturing, which is 100 to less than 600).▪ large (100 and greater employees except for manufacturing, which is 600 and greater).
INDUSTRY	<p>Industry is classified according to ANZSIC and is available at the 1 and 2 digit level. Additional data is available for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 15 industries categorised at the one digit ANZSIC level;▪ 47 industries categorised at the two digit ANZSIC level; and▪ user defined industry groups such as 'service industries'.
STATE INFORMATION	<p>State information has been derived from the business activity conducted by business in each State. Where sufficient information is available to provide satisfactory estimates, data may be made available at the same level of detail as that for Australia. State information is subject to a greater degree of variance than the Australia data.</p>
NET BALANCE	<p>A weighted net balance for industries and size of business can be produced as a special data service.</p>
MORE INFORMATION	<p>For more information please contact the officer named at the front of this publication or write to:</p> <p>The Assistant Director Business Expectations Survey Australian Bureau of Statistics PO Box 10 Belconnen ACT 2616.</p>

SELF-HELP ACCESS TO STATISTICS

PHONE Call 1900 986 400 for the latest statistics on CPI, Labour Force, Earnings, National Accounts, Balance of Payments and other topics (call cost is 75c per minute).

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

LIBRARY A range of ABS publications is available from public and tertiary libraries Australia wide. Contact your nearest library to determine whether it has the ABS statistics you require.

WHY NOT SUBSCRIBE?

PHONE +61 1300 366 323

FAX +61 03 9615 7848

CONTACTING THE ABS

ABS provides a range of services, including: a telephone inquiry service; information consultancy tailored to your needs; survey, sample and questionnaire design; survey evaluation and methodological reviews; and statistical training.

<i>INQUIRIES</i>	<i>By phone</i>	<i>By fax</i>
Canberra	02 6252 6627	02 6253 1404
Sydney	02 9268 4611	02 9268 4668
Melbourne	03 9615 7755	03 9615 7798
Brisbane	07 3222 6351	07 3222 6283
Perth	08 9360 5140	08 9360 5955
Adelaide	08 8237 7100	08 8237 7566
Hobart	03 6222 5800	03 6222 5995
Darwin	08 8943 2111	08 8981 1218

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



2525000003991

ISSN 1320-811X

RRP \$18.50

© Commonwealth of Australia 1999

Produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics