COMMONWEALTH BUREAU
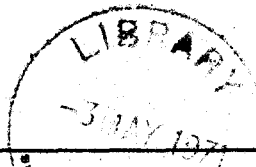**OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS**
CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA

EMBARGO. 6 P.M. 30 APRIL 1971

RETAIL SALES OF GOODS : AUSTRALIA
MONTH OF MARCH 1971 (PROVISIONAL)

Reference No. 11.6

A provisional estimate of the total value of retail sales in Australia (excluding motor vehicles, parts, petrol, etc.) for the month of March 1971 is shown in the table overleaf. Figures for some earlier months are also shown for purposes of comparison.

2.   The provisional monthly estimates of retail sales are obtained from a sub-sample of establishments used to provide quarterly estimates of the value of retail sales. The monthly sub-sample is comparatively small since it is designed to provide prompt estimates of the total value of retail sales (excluding motor vehicles, parts, petrol, etc.) without placing an undue burden on either the resources of the Bureau or upon retail establishments.

3.   As the provisional monthly estimates are derived from returns received from a sample of retail establishments they may differ somewhat from the results which would have been obtained from a comparable complete collection. A measure of the likely difference is given by the standard error of the estimate. There are about 2 chances in 3 that a sample estimate will differ from results which would be obtained from a comparable complete collection by less than 1 standard error and 19 chances in 20 that the difference would be less than 2 standard errors. If, for example, a sample gives an estimate of $500 million and the standard error of this estimate is 1 per cent, i.e. $5 million, then there are 2 chances in 3 that a comparable complete collection would give a figure within the range of $495 million to $505 million and 19 chances in 20 that the figure would be within the range of $490 million to $510 million.

4.   The standard error of the provisional estimates of the total value of monthly retail sales (excluding motor vehicles, parts, petrol, etc.) is about 1.0 per cent. The standard error of the month-to-month movement of the provisional estimates of the value of retail sales is generally about 0.3 per cent of the current monthly estimate. For example, the movement in the value of retail sales between the months of February and March 1971 is shown by the original series in the table overleaf as an increase of $75.0 million. The standard error of this movement is about 0.3 per cent of the March 1971 estimate, i.e. approximately $2.2 million. Therefore, there are 2 chances in 3 that the movement in the value of retail sales between February and March 1971 was between $72.8 million and $77.2 million and 19 chances in 20 that it was between $70.6 million and $79.4 million. Expressed in another way, the estimates show a proportionate movement in the value of retail sales between February and March 1971 of 11.2 per cent and this has a standard error of about 0.3 percentage points, i.e., there are 2 chances in 3 that the proportionate movement was between 10.9 per cent and 11.5 per cent and 19 chances in 20 that it was between 10.6 per cent and 11.8 per cent.

5.   The provisional monthly estimates may also differ from those which would be obtained from a sample as large as that used to provide quarterly estimates. Hence, the sum of the provisional estimates for the three months comprising a quarter may differ from the estimate obtained for that quarter from the full quarterly sample. The standard error of this difference is approximately 0.8 per cent of the quarterly estimate. The monthly estimates are subsequently adjusted in accordance with the preliminary and final quarterly estimates as they become available.

6.   Seasonally adjusted statistics are are also shown in the table overleaf. In the seasonal adjustment, account has been taken of both normal seasonal factors and "trading-day" effects (arising from the varying numbers of Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays, etc. in the month). While the normal seasonal factors should change only gradually from year to year, the trading-day adjustment for any month will vary from year to year in accordance with the combination of days which occur in that month. Adjustment has also been made for the effects of movement in the date of Easter and Australia Day. However, as the series has been compiled only since April 1961 these adjustments are based necessarily on limited data and could be subject to revision when data for further years become available. Details of the methods used in seasonally adjusting these and other series are given in "Seasonally Adjusted Indicators 1970" (Reference No. 1.10) of 29 June 1970. It should be noted that the seasonally adjusted figures reflect the sampling errors to which the original figures are subject.

7.   All figures in this bulletin are on a basis comparable with the 1961-62 Retail Census. Further information relating to the basis on which the statistics of retail sales of goods are compiled is contained in the quarterly bulletin "Retail Sales of Goods" (Reference No. 11.4) December quarter 1970 of 2 April 1971.

TOTAL VALUE OF RETAIL SALES OF GOODS

(EXCLUDING MOTOR VEHICLES, PARTS, PETROL, ETC.)

MONTHLY ESTIMATES : AUSTRALIA (a)(b)

(All figures are on a basis comparable with the 1961-62 Retail Census)

($ million)

Month	1966-67	1967-68	1968-69	1969-70	1970-71
			Original		
July	542.9	577.7	620.0	665.8	714.6
August	556.7	601.0	641.8	669.8	698.5
September	564.6	608.1	600.4	665.6	709.5
October	569.1	613.0	658.3	717.3	771.4
November	603.1	655.2	690.3	707.8	761.3
December	789.5	823.5	861.0	948.2	1,006.4
January	547.9	593.8	646.4	692.5	(c)715.0
February	534.0	583.3	591.6	644.3	(c)670.0
March	578.3	603.9	641.4	675.5	(c)745.0
April	562.8	602.7	639.4	699.3	
May	612.8	664.3	703.3	741.7	
June	580.9	591.1	638.4	689.1	
Total for year	7,042.6	7,517.6	7,932.3	8,516.9	
		Seasonally adjusted (d)			
July	564.9	611.9	643.1	686.1	726.0
August	570.8	612.5	646.3	691.2	732.8
September	573.5	621.2	636.6	691.8	735.1
October	578.0	622.7	650.5	698.8	752.8
November	579.6	626.5	654.7	695.2	748.9
December	584.6	623.7	661.9	713.3	752.0
January	590.1	625.4	666.5	714.9	(c)750.7
February	596.4	625.9	661.3	720.5	(c)754.7
March	594.6	632.3	682.5	723.9	(c)776.1
April	597.5	632.1	668.4	723.0	
May	601.3	638.5	677.0	731.3	
June	603.7	639.8	692.6	732.8	

(a) Excludes Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory. (b) Figures from April 1969 are subject to revision when more precise information is available relating to trading by new businesses. (c) Provisional estimate (see paragraphs 2 to 5, page 1). (d) See paragraph 6, page 1.

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COMMONWEALTH BUREAU OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS

CANBERRA, A.C.T. 2600   30 APRIL 1971

NOTE. Inquiries concerning these statistics may be made in Canberra by telephoning 490 211 extension 293 or, in each State capital, by telephoning the office of the Bureau of Census and Statistics.