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Information Paper

Developments in New Motor Vehicle Statistics

2001

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New Motor Vehicle
Statistics**

2001

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AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS

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INTRODUCTION

1. Since the early 1950's the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has collected and published monthly statistics on New Motor Vehicle Registrations (NMVR). These statistics have provided a proxy for vehicle sales and are mainly used as an indicator of general economic activity. From the early 1990's an alternative data source that measures sales of new vehicles has been available from the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI). Monthly reports on the number of new vehicle sales by make/model are published from the FCAI's VFACTS collection. The aim of the VFACTS collection is to provide detailed data for supply and marketing purposes.

2. While the objectives of the NMVR and VFACTS collections are quite different, they each produce outputs which are largely comparable and which have tracked closely for some time. Given this duplication, the ABS will cease its NMVR collection after the release of statistics relating to the month of December 2001. The ABS will publish monthly statistics on sales of new vehicles (based on the VFACTS collection) on a seasonally adjusted and trend basis from January 2002.

3. This paper describes the NMVR and VFACTS collections in broad terms, compares differences between them (including the impact on data availability) and sets out the future ABS role in the release of new motor vehicle statistics.

NMVR COLLECTION

4. New vehicle registrations are regarded as a good proxy for the sale of new vehicles and are therefore of great interest as an indicator of consumer and business expenditure on motor vehicles. They are considered a key item to assist in measuring the level of economic activity and its change over time.

5. The ABS NMVR series provides monthly details of newly manufactured vehicles registered for use on public roads for the first time in the reference month. The statistics include vehicles with diplomatic and consular plates and State and Commonwealth Government owned vehicles other than those belonging to the Defence Services. The data are collected as a by-product of the registration process from each Motor Vehicle Registry (MVR) in Australia.

6. The results of the NMVR are made available:

- In a monthly publication, *Registrations of New Motor Vehicles, Australia, Preliminary* (Cat. no. 9301.0), which includes original, seasonally adjusted and trend data. The publication is normally released on the last Friday of the month following the reference month. The publication is available in hard copy format and can be accessed electronically by subscribers through the ABS website at <www.abs.gov.au>.

NMVR COLLECTION *continued*

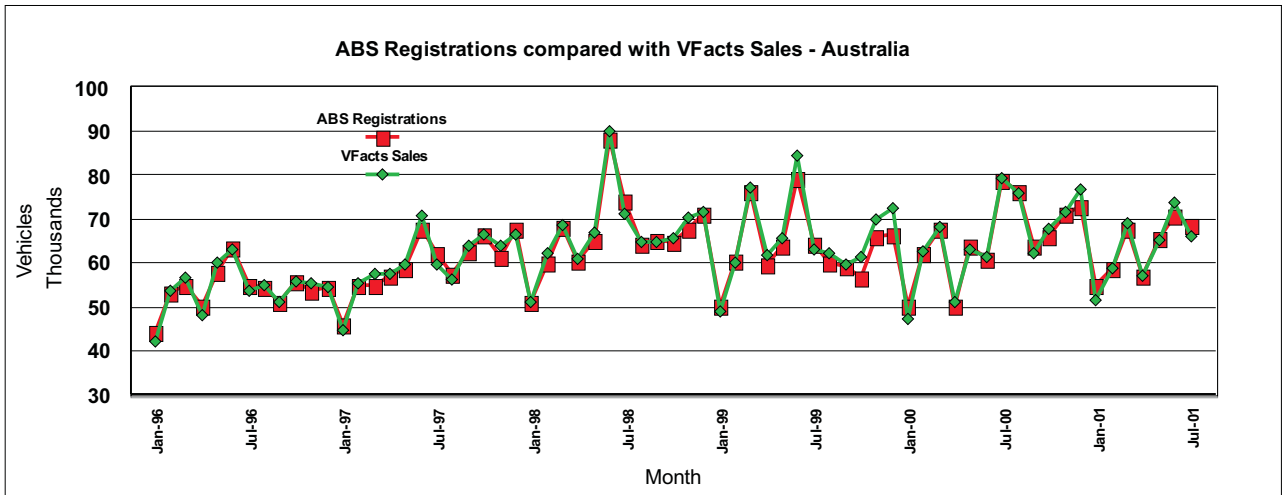
- In the form of data CUBES. Two cubes are produced (Products 9303.0.55.001 and 9303.0.55.002). These contain final (clean) monthly data and are released about two weeks after the preliminary publication. The first CUBE includes monthly data for all vehicles (excluding motor cycles) for the latest 36 months classified by State of registration by make and model by vehicle group type (passenger vehicles, light commercial vehicles, trucks, buses and motorcycles) by fuel type. Commercial vehicles are further classified by Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM) and Gross Combination Mass (GCM). The second CUBE contains monthly data for motorcycles for the latest 36 months classified by postcode by State of registration by make and model. The cubes are available electronically through AUSSTATS or as a data consultancy.

VFACTS COLLECTION

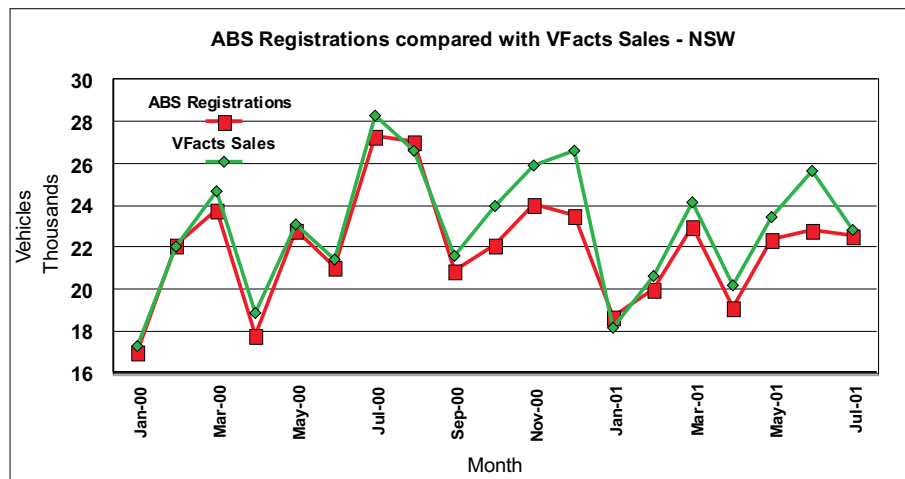
7. VFACTS is based on retail sales by all FCAI member companies. The purpose of the collection is to meet industry needs for timely, detailed statistics for marketing purposes. The data are provided electronically to FCAI which advises that coverage is virtually 100%. Each reported sale contains attributes or reference to a table of attributes which enable VFACTS to report details of the sale by make and model as well as fuel type, transmission type, GCM and GVM, etc.
8. VFACTS data have been produced monthly since 1992 (replacing older collections) with data released on the third working day of the following month to FCAI members. More detailed dealer reports are available 10 days after the end of the month. Pressure from the industry demands that the data are available quickly and FCAI is looking at further improving the timing of delivery. Limited broad level data are made available publicly, usually in the form of press releases. Currently no seasonally adjusted or trend data are published from the VFACTS collection.
9. FCAI disseminates detailed data to its paying members using CUBES tailored to individual needs. VFACTS data can be produced down to the postcode level of either the dealer or purchaser.
10. Data quality is assured through peer pressure as there is strong competition between dealers/manufacturers and members are prepared to challenge information that does not accord with expectations. VFACTS data are processed by an independent company and the industry regards the output as very reliable. A number of checks are made with various sources before monthly releases are made. Revisions are rarely made to published outputs.
11. FCAI expects the VFACTS series to have an indefinite life because demand for the data is strong and they have been able to deliver reliably for the past nine years. At this stage there are no barriers threatening the future of the series.

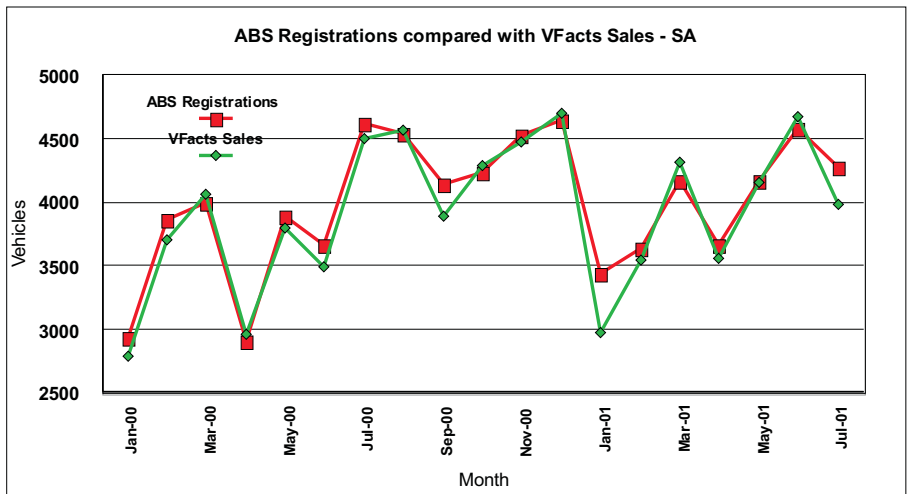
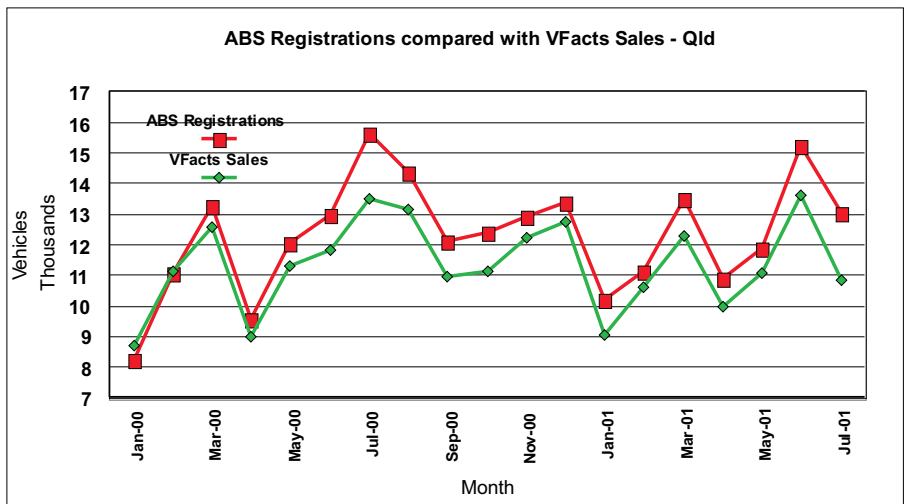
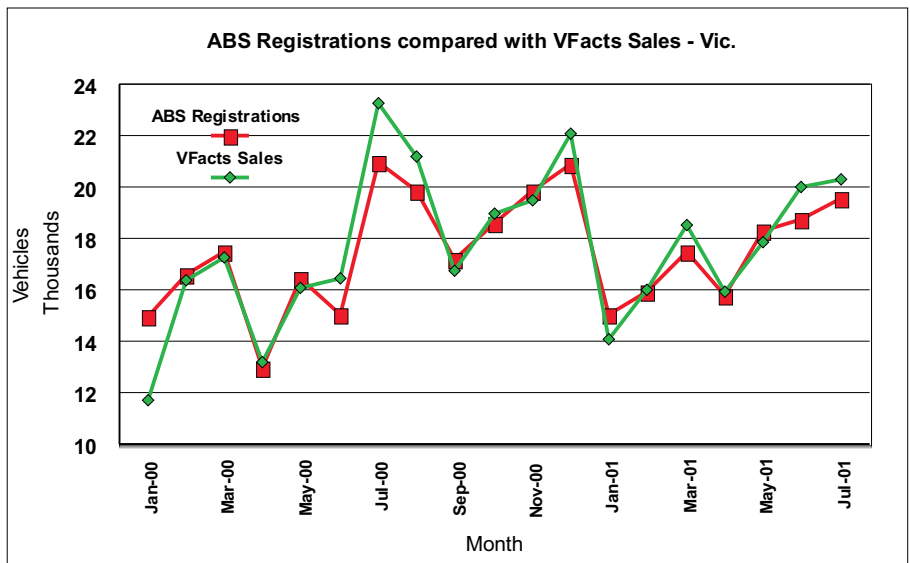
COMPARISON OF NMVR AND VFACTS

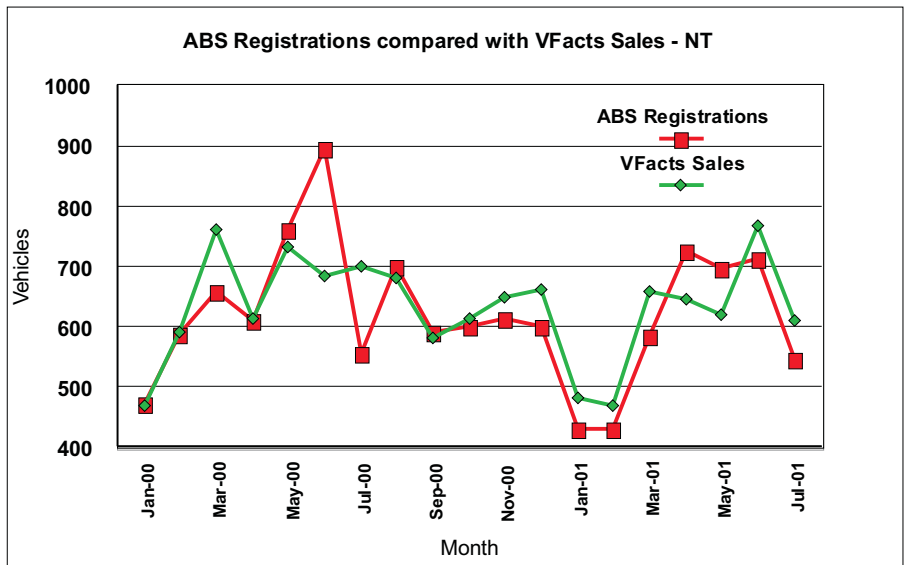
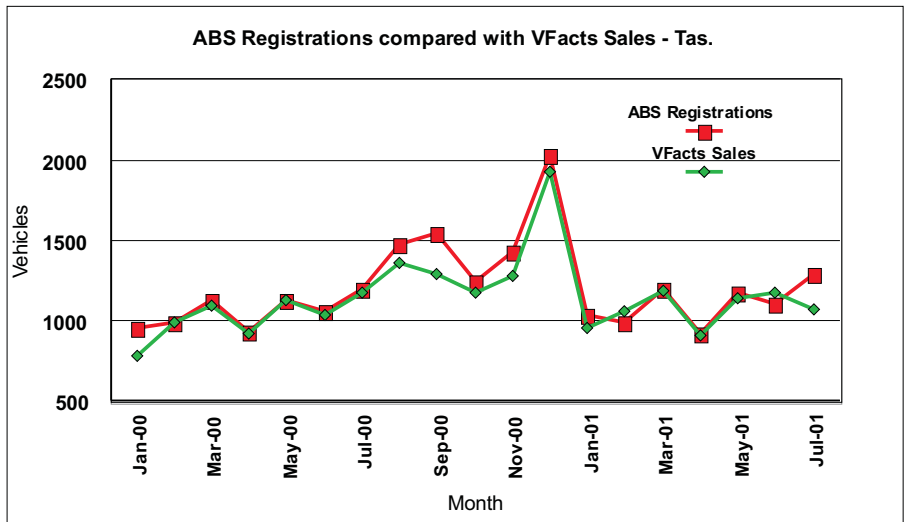
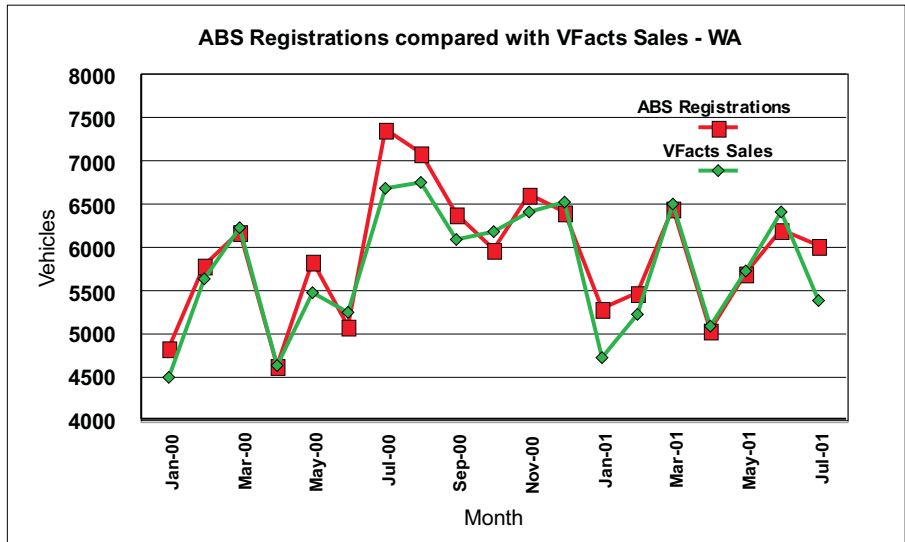
Coverage	<p>12. The main gap between VFACTS data and information produced from the ABS NMVR collection is the coverage of motorcycles (currently VFACTS do not collect motorcycle data). Such data are collected in the NMVR collection for completeness; however this vehicle type represents a small component of all registrations (less than 5%) and is not critical as input to macro-economic models such as the Australian National Accounts.</p> <p>13. The NMVR also provides statistics on registrations of plant and equipment (e.g. tractors and bobcats) and unpowered vehicles such as caravans and trailers. Currently, such statistics, while not published, can be made available on a monthly basis as a special data service on request. The VFACTS collection does not provide information on sales of such vehicles.</p> <p>14. With the cessation of the NMVR, there will no longer be any statistics on new registrations (or sales) of motorcycles, plant and equipment and unpowered vehicles. However, the annual Motor Vehicle Census (MVC) conducted by the ABS will continue to provide information which will assist users to analyse characteristics of these vehicle populations.</p>
Geographic data	<p>15. Statistics from the NMVR are published at the State/Territory level, but can be made available at the postcode level (reflecting the postcode of the registered owner). Demand for such data is not high. Broad level VFACTS data are generally released publicly at the State/Territory level, but detailed data are made available to FCAI members at the postcode level of either the retailer or purchaser of the vehicle.</p>
General Data Availability	<p>16. VFACTS data are collected daily and released monthly on the third working day of the following month, which is some three weeks earlier than ABS NMVR data. The NMVR series produces a similar range of data items to VFACTS for each vehicle type. Some small differences in the series are expected and reflect slight differences in the scope of the two collections. NMVR data are based on the month when a registration is processed, whereas VFACTS measures when a vehicle is sold (which will generally be the same month as registration). VFACTS data are made available to its members. A limited set of data are made available publicly usually in the form of media releases.</p>
Comparisons at National and State Levels	<p>17. When tracked monthly over the five and a half years to July 2001, the NMVR and VFACTS series align well at the national level, as can be seen from the following graph which shows a comparison of the two series since January 1996.</p>

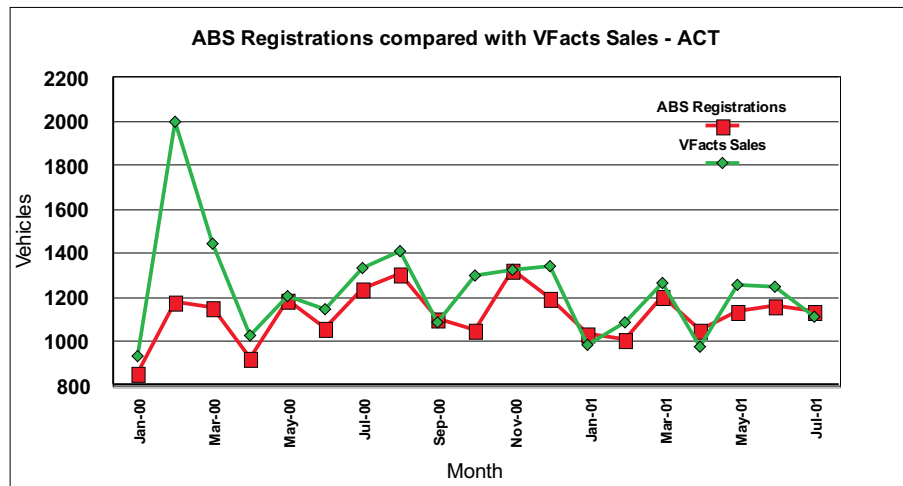


18. When examined for each State and Territory, there is a some variability in the level of sales versus registrations. Such differences, mainly of a minor magnitude, can reflect lags in processing of registrations. Where the differences are consistently higher or lower, it is likely to reflect border effects where State/Territory of sale and registration do not align. However, despite these differences, movements from one month to the next are reasonably consistent, as can be seen in the following graphs which show the VFACTS and NMVR series over the 18 month period ending July 2001.









FUTURE ROLE OF THE ABS

19. The ABS will cease the monthly NMVR collection following the release of statistics for December 2001, but will continue to publish an economic indicator of new motor vehicle sales based on the VFACTS series. FCAI has agreed to provide ABS with aggregate VFACTS data (i.e. number of vehicles by type and State/Territory of registration) which the ABS will re-release in original, seasonally adjusted and trend terms. These statistics will be released as an electronic product in ABS Cat. no. 9314.0.80.001 through the ABS website at <www.abs.gov.au> and will include tables as shown in Appendix 1. These tables (which are the equivalent of tables 1 and 3 in the current NMVR publication) will also be published in the monthly ABS publication *Australian Economic Indicators* (Cat. no. 1350.0) within one month of the reference period. Time series data for new motor vehicle sales will also be available electronically through the ABS website at <www.abs.gov.au>. Detailed data such as vehicle make and model or that relating to small areas will not be available from the ABS; such data will only be available from FCAI.

20. The ABS will continue to conduct an annual census of motor vehicles. Results are published in *Motor Vehicle Census* (Cat. no. 9309.0). The Census provides detailed information on the characteristics of all vehicles registered at a point in time. Detailed data from the motor vehicle census are available as special data services on request.

21. In line with the ABS objective of providing a high quality national statistical service, ABS and FCAI have agreed that ABS will:

- closely monitor changes in movements in the VFACTS data series, ensuring that seasonal factors and irregular behaviours are correctly identified and treated appropriately in the adjusted series;
- undertake comparative analysis of VFACTS data with other economic indicators; and
- undertake a comparative analysis of more detailed VFACTS data with that from the annual Motor Vehicle Census (MVC). Such a study will aim to compare vehicles newly registered in the 12 months prior to the census with monthly sales over the same period, making allowances for attrition and the movement of vehicles between States/Territories.

22. In addition, the ABS role in the development of classifications and standards will be strengthened. Specifically, ABS will develop and maintain, in conjunction with industry representatives, a vehicle classification system that is more relevant and useful to the industry and to promote its wider use.

23. In ceasing the NMVR collection, it is the intention of the ABS to ensure that the needs of users continue to be broadly met, either through the ABS directly or through other agencies.

Australian Bureau of Statistics
December 2001

APPENDIX

1

SALES OF NEW MOTOR VEHICLES, BY TYPE

<i>Month</i>	<i>Passenger vehicles</i>	<i>Other vehicles</i>	<i>Total</i>
ORIGINAL			
2000			
October	xxx	xxx	xxx
November	xxx	xxx	xxx
December	xxx	xxx	xxx
2001			
January	xxx	xxx	xxx
February	xxx	xxx	xxx
March	xxx	xxx	xxx
April	xxx	xxx	xxx
May	xxx	xxx	xxx
June	xxx	xxx	xxx
July	xxx	xxx	xxx
August	xxx	xxx	xxx
September	xxx	xxx	xxx
October	xxx	xxx	xxx
November	xxx	xxx	xxx
December	xxx	xxx	xxx
2002			
January	xxx	xxx	xxx
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED			
2000			
October	xxx	xxx	xxx
November	xxx	xxx	xxx
December	xxx	xxx	xxx
2001			
January	xxx	xxx	xxx
February	xxx	xxx	xxx
March	xxx	xxx	xxx
April	xxx	xxx	xxx
May	xxx	xxx	xxx
June	xxx	xxx	xxx
July	xxx	xxx	xxx
August	xxx	xxx	xxx
September	xxx	xxx	xxx
October	xxx	xxx	xxx
November	xxx	xxx	xxx
December	xxx	xxx	xxx
2002			
January	xxx	xxx	xxx
TREND ESTIMATES			
2000			
October	xxx	xxx	xxx
November	xxx	xxx	xxx
December	xxx	xxx	xxx
2001			
January	xxx	xxx	xxx
February	xxx	xxx	xxx
March	xxx	xxx	xxx
April	xxx	xxx	xxx
May	xxx	xxx	xxx
June	xxx	xxx	xxx
July	xxx	xxx	xxx
August	xxx	xxx	xxx
September	xxx	xxx	xxx
October	xxx	xxx	xxx
November	xxx	xxx	xxx
December	xxx	xxx	xxx
2002			
January	xxx	xxx	xxx

2

SALES OF NEW MOTOR VEHICLES, BY STATE/TERRITORY

Month	New South Wales	Victoria	Queensland	South Australia	Western Australia	Tasmania	Northern Territory	Australian Capital Territory	Australia
ORIGINAL									
2000									
October	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
November	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
December	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
2001									
January	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
February	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
March	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
April	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
May	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
June	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
July	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
August	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
September	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
October	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
November	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
December	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
2002									
January	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED									
2000									
October	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
November	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
December	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
2001									
January	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
February	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
March	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
April	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
May	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
June	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
July	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
August	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
September	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
October	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
November	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
December	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
2002									
January	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
TREND ESTIMATES									
2000									
October	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
November	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
December	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
2001									
January	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
February	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
March	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
April	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
May	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
June	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
July	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
August	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
September	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
October	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
November	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
December	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
2002									
January	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx

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