

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

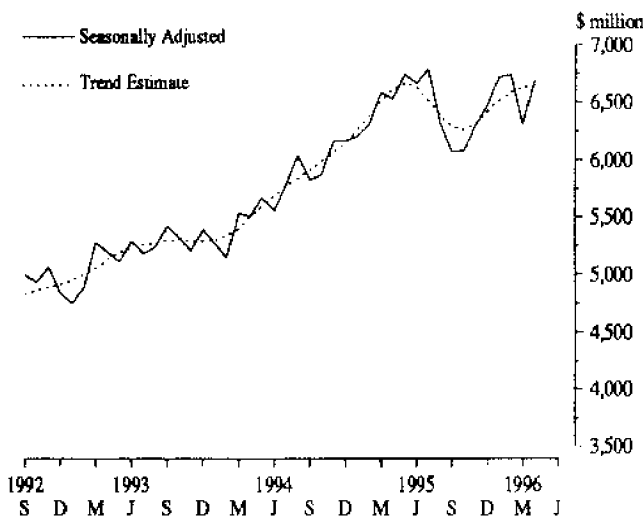
MAIN FEATURES

April 1996 compared with March 1996

The provisional trend estimate of *merchandise imports* rose \$19 million to \$6,649 million.

In *seasonally adjusted terms*, *merchandise imports* for April rose \$381 million, or 6 per cent, to \$6,691 million. *Consumption goods* rose \$133 million, or 9 per cent, to \$1,665 million. *Capital goods* rose \$71 million, or 4 per cent, to \$1,731 million. *Intermediate and other goods* rose \$177 million, or 6 per cent, to \$3,295 million.

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



In *original terms*, *imports* rose \$217 million, or 4 per cent, to \$6,321 million.

Imports of *consumption goods*, in original terms, rose \$104 million, or 7 per cent, to \$1,556 million. The largest increases were recorded in:

- non-industrial transport equipment, up \$73 million or 25 per cent (due to increased imports of passenger motor cars);
- consumption goods nes, up \$28 million or 7 per cent; and
- household electrical items, up \$11 million or 8 per cent.

These increases were partly offset by a decrease in textiles, clothing and footwear, down \$19 million or 8 per cent.

Imports of *capital goods*, in original terms, rose \$96 million, or 6 per cent, to \$1,605 million. The largest increases were recorded in:

- ADP equipment, up \$43 million or 15 per cent;
- civil aircraft, up \$39 million (which includes the import of a Qantas aircraft valued at \$51 million); and
- machinery and industrial equipment, up \$16 million or 2 per cent.

These increases were partly offset by a decrease in telecommunications equipment, down \$23 million or 13 per cent.

Imports of *intermediate and other goods*, in original terms, rose \$17 million, or 1 per cent, to \$3,160 million. The largest increases were recorded in:

- fuels and lubricants, up \$54 million or 15 per cent (mainly due to increased imports of "other" petroleum products);
- parts for transport equipment, up \$32 million or 9 per cent (mainly due to increased imports of parts for aeroplanes); and
- paper and paperboard, up \$27 million or 23 per cent.

These increases were partly offset by decreases in 10 of the 14 groups. The largest decreases were recorded in "other" parts for capital goods, down \$37 million or 7 per cent; and primary industrial supplies nes, down \$32 million or 30 per cent.

Ten months ended April 1996 compared with ten months ended April 1995

In *original terms*, *merchandise imports* rose \$3,367 million, or 5 per cent, to \$64,887 million:

- *consumption goods* rose \$608 million (4 per cent);
- *capital goods* rose \$757 million (5 per cent); and
- *intermediate and other goods* rose \$2,002 million (7 per cent).

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

	Months												July to Apr.							
	Years			1995-96									1994-95		1995-96					
	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	1994-95	1995-96					
<i>Consumption goods fob (b) —</i>																				
Food and beverages, mainly for consumption	-2,261	-2,430	-2,592	-199	-236	-168	-230	-181	-245	-233	-230	-255	-263	-243	-252	-215	-203	-210	-2,181	-2,349
Household electrical items	-1,382	-1,436	-1,744	-119	-147	-132	-145	-129	-157	-167	-138	-179	-177	-139	-119	-129	-137	-148	-1,470	-1,490
Non-industrial transport equipment	-3,478	-3,800	-4,758	-313	-462	-391	-446	-413	-469	-426	-346	-423	-404	-375	-278	-325	-295	-368	-3,899	-3,709
Textiles, clothing and footwear	-2,178	-2,320	-2,566	-249	-235	-179	-189	-157	-266	-274	-220	-212	-229	-190	-262	-293	-226	-207	-2,220	-2,379
Toys, books and leisure goods	-2,238	-2,496	-2,546	-156	-199	-170	-205	-193	-247	-251	-252	-260	-256	-185	-190	-191	-169	-173	-2,148	-2,174
Consumption goods nes	-4,389	-4,751	-5,213	-360	-445	-381	-481	-375	-518	-524	-486	-529	-540	-451	-430	-422	-422	-450	-4,357	-4,782
Total consumption goods	-15,926	-17,233	-19,419	-1,396	-1,724	-1,421	-1,696	-1,448	-1,902	-1,875	-1,672	-1,858	-1,869	-1,583	-1,531	-1,585	-1,452	-1,556	-16,275	-16,883
<i>Capital goods fob (b) —</i>																				
Machinery and industrial equipment	-5,446	-6,414	-7,897	-618	-745	-616	-705	-733	-718	-691	-615	-723	-726	-688	-738	-710	-651	-667	-6,459	-6,927
ADP equipment	-2,319	-2,629	-3,232	-195	-325	-243	-393	-392	-338	-325	-253	-273	-282	-272	-263	-274	-283	-326	-2,447	-2,889
Telecommunications equipment	-1,224	-1,182	-1,804	-119	-153	-117	-150	-173	-164	-163	-207	-178	-199	-169	-171	-141	-173	-150	-1,481	-1,715
Civil aircraft	-828	-241	-529	-57	-18	-43	-16	-48	-28	-81	-11	-31	-104	-28	-44	-77	-31	-70	-465	-505
Industrial transport equipment nes	-1,838	-2,084	-2,714	-197	-190	-189	-234	-179	-222	-198	-148	-197	-180	-165	-158	-193	-186	-198	-2,301	-1,845
Capital goods nes	-2,000	-2,293	-2,365	-170	-205	-189	-215	-193	-234	-212	-183	-213	-213	-173	-189	-190	-185	-194	-1,957	-1,986
Total capital goods	-13,635	-14,843	-18,541	-1,356	-1,636	-1,397	-1,713	-1,718	-1,704	-1,670	-1,417	-1,615	-1,704	-1,495	-1,563	-1,585	-1,509	-1,605	-15,110	-15,867
<i>Intermediate and other goods fob (b) —</i>																				
Food and beverages, mainly for industry	-436	-509	-774	-90	-59	-53	-68	-61	-65	-65	-65	-55	-77	-44	-77	-50	-46	-51	-645	-595
Primary industrial supplies nes	-677	-701	-901	-79	-63	-62	-83	-85	-73	-71	-66	-83	-76	-76	-64	-62	-107	-75	-733	-753
Fuels and lubricants	-3,623	-3,317	-3,566	-314	-323	-317	-379	-286	-385	-283	-290	-264	-353	-314	-387	-376	-372	-426	-2,901	-3,450
Parts for transport equipment	-3,675	-4,183	-4,714	-329	-409	-385	-424	-351	-447	-446	-338	-406	-340	-344	-398	-373	-362	-394	-3,939	-3,848
Parts for ADP equipment	-1,423	-1,681	-1,858	-138	-172	-142	-189	-172	-159	-158	-155	-161	-161	-138	-160	-157	-162	-156	-1,497	-1,567
Other parts for capital goods	-4,236	-5,047	-5,975	-436	-561	-484	-583	-520	-620	-584	-510	-563	-550	-471	-542	-528	-527	-490	-4,872	-5,385
Organic and inorganic chemicals	-2,056	-2,102	-2,431	-201	-245	-203	-228	-234	-242	-242	-193	-225	-245	-193	-274	-215	-248	-243	-1,969	-2,327
Paper and paperboard	-1,381	-1,465	-1,794	-133	-164	-137	-179	-145	-189	-189	-172	-195	-173	-151	-162	-147	-115	-142	-1,470	-1,635
Textile yarn and fabrics	-1,763	-1,869	-2,036	-142	-176	-137	-194	-165	-189	-187	-154	-167	-172	-137	-167	-151	-142	-141	-1,677	-1,607
Iron and steel	-946	-1,039	-1,285	-112	-124	-96	-137	-122	-117	-143	-129	-125	-124	-124	-121	-114	-109	-100	-1,026	-1,215
Plastics	-1,272	-1,375	-1,646	-134	-155	-133	-160	-129	-170	-155	-146	-158	-149	-129	-151	-131	-128	-124	-1,357	-1,441
Non-monetary gold	-1,019	-978	-705	-56	-90	-30	-66	-55	-55	-78	-56	-51	-74	-48	-66	-64	-55	-52	-584	-599
Processed industrial supplies nes	-7,135	-7,783	-8,680	-652	-856	-684	-818	-687	-824	-762	-728	-747	-750	-660	-755	-711	-756	-753	-7,175	-7,446
Other goods	-208	-286	-391	-22	-54	-17	-57	-44	-50	-38	-25	-28	-14	-30	-42	-15	-14	-13	-290	-269
Total intermediate and other goods	-29,850	-32,335	-36,756	-2,858	-3,451	-2,880	-3,565	-3,056	-3,585	-3,408	-3,027	-3,228	-3,258	-2,868	-3,366	-3,094	-3,143	-3,160	-30,135	-32,137
Total imports fob	-59,431	-64,411	-74,716	-5,610	-6,811	-5,698	-6,974	-6,222	-7,191	-6,953	-6,116	-6,701	-6,831	-5,946	-6,460	-6,264	-6,104	-6,321	-61,520	-64,887
Consumption goods	..	..	..	-1,557	-1,698	-1,682	-1,717	-1,670	-1,790	-1,690	-1,622	-1,570	-1,657	-1,731	-1,604	-1,687	-1,532	-1,665	..	..
Capital goods	..	..	..	-1,641	-1,714	-1,596	-1,679	-1,754	-1,558	-1,495	-1,399	-1,451	-1,533	-1,479	-1,763	-1,833	-1,660	-1,731	..	..
Intermediate and other goods	..	..	..	-3,108	-3,177	-3,254	-3,351	-3,239	-3,441	-3,131	-3,052	-3,056	-3,107	-3,268	-3,357	-3,218	-3,118	-3,295	..	..
Total imports fob	..	..	..	-6,306	-6,589	-6,532	-6,747	-6,663	-6,789	-6,316	-6,073	-6,077	-6,297	-6,478	-6,724	-6,738	-6,310	-6,691	..	..
Total imports fob	..	..	..	-6,382	-6,512	-6,616	-6,663	-6,630	-6,520	-6,381	-6,284	-6,261	-6,315	-6,419	-6,521	-6,589p	-6,630p	-6,649p	..	..

(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*

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

1. This publication contains preliminary estimates of Australia's merchandise imports on a balance of payments basis for April 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 Ms Karen McGuigan on Canberra (06) 252 6239.

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 April 1996 and earlier months. Estimates for months prior to those shown in this publication are also available. These data can be obtained by contacting Mr 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 April 1996 are due for release on 30 May 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 April 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 May 1996 issue

The expected release date for the May issue of this publication is 20 June 1996. Any variations which might occur will be notified in the ABS Publications Advice (1105.0) and on DISCOVERY

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