

# INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES AUSTRALIA

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## DECEMBER KEY FIGURES

	Nov 97	Dec 97	12 months ended Dec 97
Number of disputes	52	39	446
Number of employees ('000)	53.5	20.8	312.7
Working days lost ('000)	57.0	22.5	528.8
Working days lost per thousand employees	..	..	74

## DECEMBER KEY POINTS

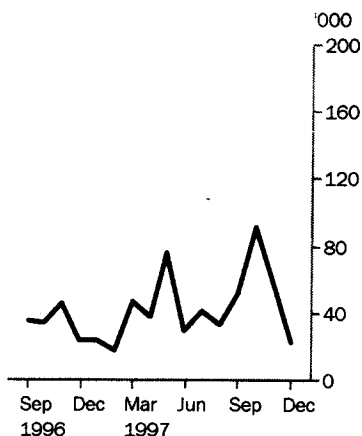
### MONTHLY ESTIMATES

- In December, a total of 22,500 working days were lost through industrial disputation, a decrease of 34,500 from November (57,000).
- The industry recording the highest level of disputation was the Transport and storage; Communication services group with 5,700 days lost, representing 25% of working days lost in Australia.
- On a State basis, Victoria recorded the highest number of working days lost (15,500) which represented 69% of the Australian total.

### ANNUAL ESTIMATES

- The number of working days lost in 1997 was 528,800, a decrease of 399,700 (43%) from the 1996 calendar year. The number of disputes reported in 1997 (446) was 18% less than in 1996, with the number of employees involved decreasing by 46% to 312,700.
- Industries which recorded the highest level of disputation for the year ended December 1997 were Construction with 107,800 working days lost, Coal mining (95,700), and Education; Health and community services (94,000).
- The Coal mining industry had the highest rate of working days lost per thousand employees with 4,206, followed by the Construction industry (290).
- On a State basis, Victoria recorded the highest rate of working days lost per thousand employees with 115, followed by Western Australia (85), Queensland (71), and New South Wales (64).

Working days lost



## INQUIRIES

- For further information about these and related statistics, contact Paula Sutherland on 03 9615 7556, or any ABS Office.

# NOTES

## FORTHCOMING ISSUES

<i>ISSUE</i>	<i>RELEASE DATE</i>
January 1998	22 April 1998
February 1998	20 May 1998
March 1998	17 June 1998

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## CHANGES IN THIS ISSUE

Revisions have been made to the monthly series as the result of disputes which were identified after the release of the previous publication.

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W. McLennan  
Australian Statistician

INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES WHICH OCCURRED DURING THE PERIOD, Australia

NUMBER OF DISPUTES..... EMPLOYEES INVOLVED...

Period	Commenced in period		Newly involved(a)		Working days lost
	no.	Total	'000	Total	
<b>1995</b>	635	643	335.4	344.3	547.6
<b>1996</b>	539	543	575.9	577.7	928.5
<b>1997</b>	443	446	312.4	312.7	528.8
<b>1996</b>					
October	59	66	22.7	23.7	34.3
November	47	53	45.7	46.3	46.0
December	44	49	9.3	20.8	23.0
<b>1997</b>					
January	29	31	6.7	7.1	23.5
February	33	37	16.4	17.4	17.9
March	33	35	33.3	34.8	47.1
April	40	42	30.9	31.3	37.7
May	42	46	49.3	57.2	76.6
June	42	55	10.5	19.5	29.7
July	42	49	25.0	26.1	40.8
August	34	43	9.6	13.1	32.5
September	42	51	20.2	31.3	51.9
October	36	41	76.3	78.1	91.6
November	43	52	28.1	53.5	57.0
December	27	39	6.4	20.8	22.5

(a) Comprises employees involved in disputes which commenced during the month and employees newly involved in disputes which continued from the previous month.

## WORKING DAYS LOST, By Industry—Australia

Period	MINING.....		MANUFACTURING.....		Const- ruction	Transport and storage; Communi- cation services	Education; Health and community services	Other industries(a)	All industries
	Coal	Other	Metal product; Machinery and equipment	Other					
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
<b>1995</b>	111.1	78.0	54.8	105.1	42.7	38.6	70.9	46.3	547.6
<b>1996</b>	160.8	4.4	58.6	44.8	334.8	20.4	239.8	64.9	928.5
<b>1997</b>	95.7	1.1	73.5	66.7	107.8	47.7	94.0	42.1	528.8
<b>1996</b>									
October	12.2	0.0	4.9	2.1	12.8	0.2	0.8	1.5	34.3
November	19.1	0.0	5.7	0.7	1.0	1.2	10.5	7.7	46.0
December	16.2	0.0	0.4	1.0	1.2	1.1	2.0	1.1	23.0
<b>1997</b>									
January	3.3	0.0	0.2	6.1	13.7	0.0	0.0	0.1	23.5
February	2.8	0.0	1.0	0.2	5.3	0.2	8.1	0.3	17.9
March	2.5	0.0	2.0	0.0	3.0	5.4	33.6	0.6	47.1
April	4.0	0.3	7.9	5.7	6.6	1.8	8.6	2.7	37.7
May	14.0	0.6	15.8	6.4	5.8	1.9	21.9	10.3	76.6
June	16.6	0.1	2.2	3.0	2.5	0.8	1.3	3.3	29.7
July	13.3	0.0	1.1	1.8	9.0	5.8	3.6	6.1	40.8
August	3.7	0.0	3.1	1.2	17.5	5.0	0.4	1.8	32.5
September	11.8	0.0	8.2	6.2	1.3	9.8	0.1	14.4	51.9
October	14.0	0.0	17.9	22.9	25.0	9.3	1.2	1.4	91.6
November	5.9	0.0	10.1	9.0	13.7	2.1	15.2	1.1	57.0
December	3.8	0.0	4.2	4.2	4.5	5.7	0.0	0.0	22.5

(a) Comprises: Agriculture, forestry and fishing; Electricity, gas and water supply; Wholesale trade; Retail trade; Accommodation, cafes and restaurants; Finance and insurance; Property and business services; Government administration and defence; Cultural and recreational services; Personal and other services.



## WORKING DAYS LOST

<i>Period</i>	<i>New South Wales</i>	<i>Victoria</i>	<i>Queensland</i>	<i>South Australia</i>	<i>Western Australia</i>	<i>Tasmania</i>	<i>Northern Territory</i>	<i>Australian Capital Territory</i>	<i>Australia</i>
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
<b>1995</b>	113.6	126.1	182.7	15.3	101.6	3.5	3.6	1.2	547.6
<b>1996</b>	377.9	218.1	205.4	41.6	47.3	13.0	4.4	20.9	928.5
<b>1997</b>	153.7	206.7	92.0	8.0	60.1	5.7	0.5	2.1	528.8
<b>1996</b>									
October	7.0	6.4	18.8	0.3	1.6	0.1	0.0	0.0	34.3
November	22.0	13.9	7.1	0.8	0.8	0.3	0.0	1.0	46.0
December	12.2	3.9	6.3	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.0	23.0
<b>1997</b>									
January	3.2	1.1	1.7	1.9	15.5	0.0	0.1	0.0	23.5
February	3.2	10.7	1.3	0.3	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.9
March	16.3	8.1	22.5	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	47.1
April	2.6	11.2	2.3	1.1	20.2	0.0	0.0	0.3	37.7
May	13.2	16.5	33.0	1.6	9.8	1.4	0.1	1.1	76.6
June	10.8	7.4	7.4	0.2	3.7	0.0	0.0	0.3	29.7
July	18.5	10.0	7.4	0.2	0.9	3.7	0.0	0.1	40.8
August	22.1	5.4	3.8	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	32.5
September	23.0	18.3	7.1	1.2	1.6	0.3	0.2	0.2	51.9
October	28.0	58.2	3.6	0.7	1.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	91.6
November	8.1	44.3	0.5	0.4	3.4	0.1	0.1	0.0	57.0
December	4.8	15.5	1.3	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	22.5

WORKING DAYS LOST PER THOUSAND EMPLOYEES, By Industry: Australia-12 months ended

MINING..... MANUFACTURING.....

Twelve months ended	MINING		MANUFACTURING		Const- ruction	Transport and storage; Commun- ication services	Education; Health and community services	Other industries(a)	All industries
	Coal	Other	Metal product; Machinery and equipment	Other					
<b>1996</b>									
October	7 707	128	153	75	887	53	181	16	133
November	6 625	95	150	69	890	42	186	17	130
December	7 171	73	146	70	892	43	187	17	131
<b>1997</b>									
January	7 369	71	145	80	899	42	186	16	132
February	7 095	37	142	76	905	38	179	14	128
March	6 833	26	146	74	907	38	157	12	122
April	6 568	20	165	81	921	42	126	11	117
May	6 934	30	199	87	677	42	102	13	105
June	7 245	32	203	86	405	42	91	14	90
July	6 269	32	197	82	263	49	84	9	75
August	5 150	18	111	64	248	52	73	9	63
September	5 522	18	129	54	215	70	70	13	65
October	5 332	19	160	86	247	89	71	13	73
November	4 750	19	171	99	281	91	74	11	74
December	4 206	19	180	104	290	101	73	11	74
December 1993	2 915	254	426	121	41	37	106	41	100
December 1994	5 964	323	117	123	59	137	63	16	76
December 1995	4 660	1 359	142	160	115	84	57	12	79

(a) Comprises: Agriculture, forestry and fishing; Electricity, gas and water supply; Wholesale trade; Retail trade; Accommodation, cafes and restaurants; Finance and insurance; Property and business services; Government administration and defence; Cultural and recreational services; Personal and other services.

WORKING DAYS LOST PER THOUSAND EMPLOYEES-12 months ended

Twelve months ended	New South Wales	Victoria	Queensland	South Australia	Western Australia	Tasmania	Northern Territory	Australian Capital Territory	Australia
<b>1996</b>									
October	162	115	172	78	70	77	54	141	133
November	155	121	160	77	69	79	54	148	130
December	158	122	162	77	68	78	59	148	131
<b>1997</b>									
January	158	121	161	80	72	73	60	148	132
February	150	123	158	74	70	73	41	129	128
March	132	121	172	55	69	73	37	129	122
April	108	125	171	56	95	73	35	130	117
May	86	117	162	39	95	81	13	122	105
June	70	107	133	30	94	79	13	95	90
July	58	84	117	25	93	75	10	40	75
August	59	60	94	15	82	43	9	22	63
September	64	63	93	14	82	36	12	21	65
October	73	91	80	15	81	36	11	21	73
November	67	108	75	14	84	35	12	15	74
December	64	115	71	15	85	35	7	15	74
December 1993	83	157	117	50	48	28	31	75	100
December 1994	99	52	115	35	42	29	103	8	76
December 1995	48	72	148	28	150	22	48	9	79

INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES, Australia-12 months ended December 1997(a)

	<i>Number of disputes</i>	<i>Employees involved</i>	<i>Working days lost</i>
	<i>no.</i>	<i>'000</i>	<i>'000</i>

CAUSE OF DISPUTE

Wages	57	24.4	108.7
Leave, pensions, compensation	12	2.4	4.3
Managerial policy	239	153.7	238.6
Physical working conditions	60	12.0	14.9
Trade unionism	46	7.3	7.2
Hours of work	8	3.7	4.0
Other	24	109.7	151.9
Total	446	313.1	529.6

DURATION OF DISPUTE

Up to and including 1 day	281	160.3	120.5
Over 1 and up to and including 2 days	81	122.7	181.2
Over 2 and less than 5 days	46	13.8	46.2
5 and less than 10 days	25	11.8	84.4
10 and less than 20 days	8	2.5	39.2
20 days and over	5	2.0	58.0
Total	446	313.1	529.6

METHOD OF SETTLEMENT

Negotiation	73	16.9	69.3
State legislation	26	8.2	31.6
Federal and joint Federal-State legislation	36	20.9	90.6
Resumption without negotiation	305	266.7	336.5
Other methods	6	0.4	1.6
Total	446	313.1	529.6

(a) Includes only industrial disputes which ended during the year.



## EXPLANATORY NOTES

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### INTRODUCTION

**1** The statistics in this publication relate to disputes which involved stoppages of work of ten working days or more at the establishments where the stoppages occurred. Ten working days is equivalent to the amount of ordinary time worked by ten people in one day, regardless of the length of the stoppage, for example, 3,000 workers on strike for 2 hours would be counted as 750 working days lost (assuming they work an 8 hour day).

**2** The statistics of working days lost relate to the losses due to industrial disputes only (see the definition of 'Disputes' in the Glossary). Effects on other establishments, such as stand-downs because of lack of materials, disruption of transport services, power cuts, etc. are not included.

**3** The statistics of industrial disputes are compiled mainly from data obtained from employers (both private and public sector), from trade unions and from reports of government authorities. Particulars of some stoppages, e.g. State or Australia wide general strikes may have been estimated and the statistics therefore should be regarded as giving only a broad measure of the extent of industrial disputes as defined above.

### TYPE OF DISPUTE

**4** Included in these statistics are the following types of industrial disputes:

- unauthorised stopwork meetings;
- unofficial strikes;
- sympathetic strikes (e.g. strikes in support of a group of workers already on strike);
- political or protest strikes;
- general strikes;
- work stoppages initiated by employers (e.g. lockouts); and
- rotating or revolving strikes (i.e. strikes which occur when workers at different locations take turns to stop work).

Excluded from these statistics are work-to-rules, go-slows, bans (e.g. overtime bans) and sit-ins. In addition, industrial disputes in which employees resign are deemed to have been resolved. Statistics on those disputes will cease to be collected from the date of the employees' resignations.

### CHANGE IN METHODOLOGY

**5** The basis for the calculation of working days lost per thousand employees was changed in the January 1995 edition of this publication to use estimates of employees taken from the ABS Labour Force Survey only. Estimates have been recalculated on this basis for each 12 monthly period back to December 1990 and are available on request. For the January 1987 to December 1994 editions of this publication, estimates of employees were taken predominantly from the ABS Survey of Employment and Earnings (*Employed Wage and Salary Earners* (6248.0)).

**6** The basis for the calculation of the number of disputes was changed in the November 1992 publication and the series revised back to September 1991. Prior to September 1991, disputes affecting more than one industry and/or State were counted as a separate dispute in each industry and State and in the Australian total. From September 1991 onwards, a dispute affecting more than one industry and/or State is counted once in each industry and/or State, but only once at the broader industry and Australia level. The reason for the change was to align the method of counting the number of industrial disputes with the International Labour Organisation guidelines. This change does not affect the estimates of employees involved or working days lost.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

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### INDUSTRY CLASSIFICATION

**7** Industry information on a monthly basis from January 1994 and on an annual basis from December 1994 is classified according to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) — for more details refer to *Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification*, 1993, (1292.0). It replaces the Australian Standard Industrial Classification (ASIC) which had been in use for many years. Data for periods prior to January 1994 for monthly data and December 1994 for annual data have been classified only according to ASIC.

### RELIABILITY OF ESTIMATES

**8** Inaccuracies may occur because of imperfections in information provided by respondents or in processing by the ABS. Although considerable care is taken in questionnaire design; in the instructions given to respondents; and in editing the returns; these inaccuracies may occur in any enumeration, whether it be a full count or a sample.

### RELATED PUBLICATIONS

**9** Users may also wish to refer to the following publications and standard data services which are available from ABS Bookshops:

- *Industrial Disputes, Australia*, 1996 (6322.0) — issued annually
- *Labour Statistics, Australia*, 1997 (6101.0) — issued irregularly
- *Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0) — issued monthly
- *Trade Union Statistics, Australia*, 1996 (6323.0) — discontinued
- *Trade Union Members, Australia*, August 1996 (6325.0) — issued biennially
- *Working Arrangements, Australia*, August 1995 (6342.0.40.001) — standard data service
- *Employment Benefits, Australia*, August 1994 (6334.0.40.001) — standard data service — issued irregularly

**10** Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications and Products, Australia* (1101.0). The ABS also issues, on Tuesdays and Fridays, a *Release Advice* (1105.0) which lists publications to be released in the next few days. The Catalogue and Release Advice are available from any ABS office.

### UNPUBLISHED STATISTICS

**11** A range of unpublished data is also available on request including dispute details at more detailed industry levels, cross-classified by State/Territory, and finer cause of dispute and method of settlement categories than those published. Considerable time series exist for most variables. Inquiries regarding data availability and the associated charges should be directed to Paula Sutherland on 03 9615 7556.

### ROUNDING

**12** Where estimates have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

### SYMBOLS AND OTHER USAGES

- .. not applicable
- n.p. not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated.

## GLOSSARY

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**Cause of dispute** The statistics for cause of industrial disputes relate to the reported main cause of stoppage of work and not necessarily all causes that may have been responsible for the stoppage of work. For these reasons, the statistics do not reflect the relative importance of all causes of disputes as perceived by both employers and employees. The causes are classified from information supplied by employers and according to standards determined by the International Labour Organisation. The classification of causes is as follows:

*Wages.* Claims involving general principles relating to wages e.g. increase (decrease) in wages; variation in method of payment or combined claims relating to wages, hours or conditions of work in which the claim about wages is deemed to be the most important. Combined claims in which the other claims are deemed to be the most important are included under the relevant clause. Disputes over award restructuring are included under managerial policy.

*Leave, pensions, compensation.* Claims involving general principles relating to holidays and leave provisions; pension and retirement provisions; workers' compensation provisions; insertion of penal clause provisions in awards.

*Managerial policy.* Disputes concerning the exercise of managerial control by employers, e.g. terms and conditions of employment (other than disputes specifically about wages and hours); new awards and agreements; award restructuring; work practices; principles of promotion or deployment of staff including roster complaints and retrenchments; disciplinary matters including alleged victimisation of union officials; employment of particular persons; disagreement with managerial decisions.

*Physical working conditions.* Disputes concerning physical working conditions and safety issues, e.g. protective clothing and equipment; first aid services; uncomfortable working conditions; lack of, or the condition of, amenities; claims for assistance; shortage or poor distribution of equipment or material; condition of equipment; new production methods and equipment, arduous physical tasks.

*Trade unionism.* Disputes concerning employment of non-unionists, inter-union and intra-union disputes; sympathy stoppages in support of employees in another industry; recognition of union activities.

*Hours of work.* Claims involving general principles relating to hours of work, e.g. decrease (increase) in hours, distribution of hours.

*Other.* Disputes concerning protests directed against persons or situations other than those relating to the employer/employee relationship, e.g. political matters; fining and jailing of persons; lack of work; lack of adequate transport; non-award public holidays; accidents and attendance at funerals. Stoppages for which no reason is given are also included in this category.

## GLOSSARY

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- Disputes** For these statistics, an *industrial dispute* is defined as a withdrawal from work by a group of employees, or a refusal by an employer or a number of employers to permit some or all of their employees to work, each withdrawal or refusal being made in order to enforce a demand, to resist a demand, or to express a grievance.
- A dispute affecting several establishments is counted as a single dispute if it is organised or directed by one person or organisation; otherwise it is counted as a separate dispute at each establishment (in each State or Territory) and in each industry in which it occurred.
- A dispute affecting more than one industry and/or State is counted once in each industry and State but only once at the broader industry and Australia level. Prior to September 1991 disputes covering more than one industry and/or State were counted differently (refer to paragraph 6 of the Explanatory Notes for details).
- When there is a return to work between stoppages over the same issue, and the return to work is for less than two complete months, the stoppages are counted as a single dispute. When the return to work is for two or more months, the dispute is considered to have ended at the time of the return to work. Should a subsequent stoppage occur, it is counted as a new dispute.
- Disputes which occurred during the period** *Disputes which occurred during the period* encompasses those disputes which:
- started in a previous month or year and ended in the reference period, or
  - began and ended in the reference period, or
  - began in the reference period and continued into the next period, or
  - started prior to the reference month or year, continued through the reference period and into the next period.
- Duration of dispute** The *duration* of a dispute is the average number of working days lost per employee involved in the dispute. The duration of the dispute is calculated by dividing the number of working days lost in the dispute by the number of employees involved (both directly and indirectly).
- Employees** *Employees* refers to wage and salary earners only. Excluded are persons who are self-employed (e.g. building sub-contractors, owner-drivers of trucks) and employers.
- Employees directly involved* are those who actually participated in the dispute in order to enforce or resist a demand or to express a grievance.
- Employees indirectly involved* are those who ceased work at the establishment where the stoppages occurred, but who are not themselves parties to the dispute. Employees who ceased work at establishments other than those where the stoppages occurred are excluded (see paragraph 2 of the Explanatory Notes).

## G L O S S A R Y

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**Employees continued** *Total employees involved* for any period of time are obtained by adding together the number of employees involved in each dispute in the period. For any period of time the figures may include details of the same employees involved in more than one dispute. The longer the period of reference, the more chance there is of some double counting in the number of employees involved. Where there are varying numbers of employees involved during the progress of a dispute, the figures of employees involved relate to the largest number of individual employees involved on any one day. Generally, the *total* number of employees involved for each year will equal the sum of the total number of employees involved in the first month of a year plus the number of employees *newly* involved in subsequent months. Differences between monthly and annual totals can occur due to the temporary cessation of stoppages which resume in subsequent months. Employees re-involved in this type of dispute are not classified as employees *newly* involved in stoppages in the second period in which the dispute occurs.

**Method of Settlement** Statistics of the *method of settlement* of industrial disputes relate to the method directly responsible for ending the stoppage of work as reported and not necessarily to the method (or methods) responsible for settling all matters in dispute. For these reasons, they do not reflect the relative importance of the work of various industrial tribunals operating under State and Federal legislation. The classification of method of settlement is as follows:

*Negotiation.* Private negotiation between the parties involved, or their representatives, without the intervention or assistance of authorities constituted under State or Federal industrial legislation.

*State legislation.* Intervention or assistance of an industrial authority or authorities created by or constituted under State conciliation and arbitration or wages board legislation, or reference to such authorities or compulsory or voluntary conference. Intervention, assistance or advice of State government officials or inspectors.

*Federal and joint Federal-State legislation.* Compulsory or voluntary conference or by intervention or assistance of, or reference to, the industrial relation commissions created by or constituted under the Industrial Relations Act, Coal Industry Acts, Stevedoring Industry Act, and other acts such as the Navigation Act; Public Service Arbitration Act. Intervention, assistance or advice of Federal government officials or inspectors.

*Resumption without negotiation.* This category may include some disputes which are settled subject to subsequent negotiation of a formal nature, such as industrial court hearings. Stop-work meetings are included, and this category may also include disputes settled by 'resumption' as stated, but about which no further information is available.

*Other methods.* Mediation; filling places of employees on strike or locked out; closing establishments permanently; dismissal or resignation of employees.

**Working days lost** *Working days lost* refers to working days lost by employees directly and indirectly involved in the dispute and figures are generally as reported by parties to the dispute. For some disputes working days lost are estimated on the basis of the number of employees involved and the duration of the dispute.

## GLOSSARY

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**Working days lost per  
thousand employees**

*Working days lost per thousand employees* are calculated for the 12 month period from working days lost and estimates of employees obtained from the ABS Labour Force Survey. Refer to paragraph 5 of the Explanatory Notes for details of the way in which these measures are calculated, and the change in the method of calculation from the January 1995 edition of this publication.





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2632100012973

ISSN 1031-0347

RRP \$15.50

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Produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics