

# Statistics Weekly

Thursday, 27 January 1994

## *The week in statistics ...*

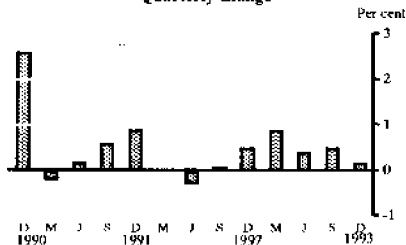
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statistics

## Consumer price index below two per cent in year to December

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX  
Quarterly change

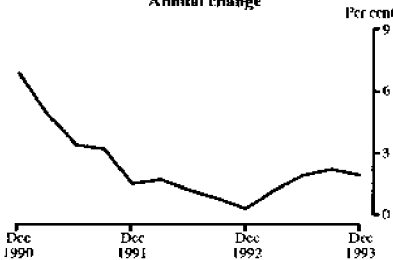


The All groups CPI increased 0.2 per cent between the September and December quarters 1993, resulting in an annual increase (December quarter 1993 on December quarter 1992) of 1.9 per cent.

Contributing most to the overall increase this quarter were cigarette and tobacco prices (up 3.1%); the cost of overseas holiday travel and accommodation (up 9.0%); local government rates and charges (up 2.8%); holiday travel and accommodation in Australia (up 3.7%); furniture (up 1.3%); petrol (up 0.8%) and fresh vegetable prices (up 6.2%).

Partially offsetting those rises were falls in mortgage interest charges (down 5.1% — mainly due to falls in interest rates) and consumer credit charges (down 3.6%).

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX  
Annual change



The main contributors to the annual increase were prices of cigarettes and tobacco (up 15.1%); motor vehicles (up 5.6%); alcoholic drinks (up 3.7%); local government rates and charges (up 7.7%) and the cost of hospital and medical services (up 4.8%), with significant off-sets coming from mortgage interest charges (down 5.2%); consumer credit charges (down 8.6%) and petrol (down 1.4%).

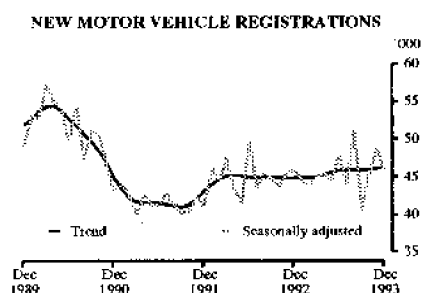
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX, DECEMBER QUARTER 1993  
Weighted average of eight capital cities  
Percentage change

Group	From previous quarter	From corresponding quarter of previous year
Tobacco and alcohol	1.8	7.9
Health and personal care	0.4	3.5
Recreation and education	1.1	3.0
Food	0.6	2.6
Transportation	0.3	2.3
Household equipment and operation	-0.1	-0.1
Housing	-1.4	-0.4
Clothing	-0.3	-0.9
<i>All groups</i>	0.2	1.9
<i>All groups excluding housing</i>	0.5	2.4
<i>All groups excluding tobacco and alcohol</i>	0.1	1.4

For further information, order the publication Consumer Price Index (6401.0), or contact Bohdan Stankewytch on (06) 252 6251.

## New vehicle sales maintain growth

The trend estimate for total new motor vehicle registrations once again recorded a slight increase in December 1993. The trend has been steadily rising since March 1993, apart from flat months in August and September. New passenger vehicles have been rising slowly since January 1993, while 'other' vehicles recorded small falls from December 1992 to February 1993 and July to September 1993.



The increase in the trend estimates (December 1993 over December 1992) was 3.5 per cent for passenger vehicles, 0.9 per cent for 'other' vehicles and 3.0 per cent for total registrations.

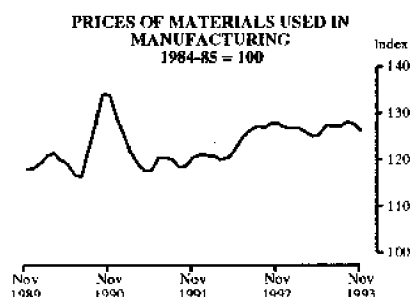
In seasonally adjusted terms, total registrations for December 1993 fell by 6.1 per cent, with passenger vehicles down by 6.8 per cent and 'other' vehicles by 2.5 per cent. All States recorded falls except for Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory.

Unadjusted total new motor vehicle registrations for December 1993 fell by 3.1 per cent, to 48 541 vehicles. Passenger vehicles fell by 2.2 per cent, to 40 758 vehicles while 'other' vehicles recorded a fall of 7.8 per cent, to 7 783 vehicles for December.

Minor rises in Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania were more than offset by falls in the other States and Territories, particularly New South Wales where registrations fell 13.4 per cent.

For further information, order the publication *New Motor Vehicle Registrations, Australia, Preliminary (9301.0)*, or contact Kevin Yeaton on (06) 252 6255.

## Prices down for industry inputs



The price index of materials used in manufacturing industries fell by 1.3 per cent between October and November 1993, the largest monthly decrease since September 1991.

Prices of imported materials fell by 0.4 per cent while prices of home produced materials fell by 1.7 per cent in November.

Price falls for a range of imported materials were mainly due to a further recovery in the value of the Australian dollar against the major trading currencies.

Lower prices for domestic crude petroleum were the major contributors to the fall in the home produced materials index during November.

Between November 1992 and November 1993 the price index of manufacturing materials fell by 1.5 per cent, the largest annual fall since January 1992.

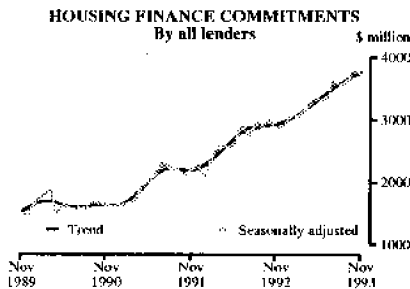
The table below summarises the price movements.

**PRICE INDEXES OF MATERIALS USED IN MANUFACTURING, NOVEMBER 1993**  
Percentage change

Source of material	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Imported	-0.4	3.0
Home produced	-1.7	-4.0
All manufacturing	-1.3	-1.5

For further information, order the publication *Price Indexes of Materials Used in Manufacturing Industries, Australia (6411.0)*, or contact Shirley Clark on (06) 252 5348.

## November housing — the trend upwards continues



There was a 2.2 per cent increase in the provisional trend estimate of the number of dwelling units for owner occupation for which finance was committed to individuals in November 1993. The current sustained upward trend which began in November 1991, has recorded monthly growth rates in excess of 2.0 per cent in every month since February 1993.

Increases in the trend were evident in each of the different categories of housing financed, with the strongest being 'construction of dwellings' up 3.7 per cent, with 'purchase of newly erected dwellings' and 'purchase of established dwellings' up 2.0 and 1.8 per cent respectively.

In unadjusted terms, refinancing of dwelling units accounted for 12.6 per cent of the total November estimate. In the previous month it accounted for 13.6 per cent of the total estimate and in November 1992 represented 10.7 per cent.

### HOUSING FINANCE, NOVEMBER 1993 Number of dwellings

	<i>Established dwellings</i>	<i>Construction of dwellings</i>	<i>Newly erected dwellings</i>	<i>Total</i>
% change from October 1993				
Trend	1.8	3.7	2.0	2.2
Seasonally adjusted	3.0	10.1	15.9	5.0
Unadjusted	15.3	21.2	21.8	16.8
% change from November 1992				
Trend	27.4	32.7	25.0	28.4
Seasonally adjusted	33.3	43.5	35.7	35.4
Unadjusted	37.8	48.4	41.6	40.1

In seasonally adjusted terms, the number of dwelling units financed in November increased by 5.0 per cent over October, and 35.4 per cent over November 1992. The unadjusted number of dwelling units financed in November increased by 16.8 per cent on October and was 40.1 per cent higher than in November 1992.



## Further fall in import prices

The Import Price Index fell by 0.6 per cent in November 1993, following a fall of 0.3 per cent the previous month.

A continuing recovery in the value of the Australian dollar led to small price decreases in a wide range of items in November.

Between November 1992 and November 1993 the index increased by 5.3 per cent.

*Continued ...*

Price changes for selected items are shown below.

**IMPORT PRICES, NOVEMBER 1993**  
Percentage change

<i>Selected items</i>	<i>From previous month</i>	<i>From corresponding month of previous year</i>
Crude materials	0.1	22.4
Commodities and transactions	3.1	16.9
Machinery and transport equipment	-0.9	7.3
Manufactured goods	-0.3	5.4
Miscellaneous manufactured articles	-0.6	3.8
Food and live animals	-0.9	3.3
Animal and vegetable oils, etc.	0.6	-0.4
Chemical products	-0.6	-0.9
Mineral fuels, lubricants and other related materials	-0.4	-5.2
Beverages and tobacco	-3.0	-8.8
<i>All groups</i>	-0.6	5.3

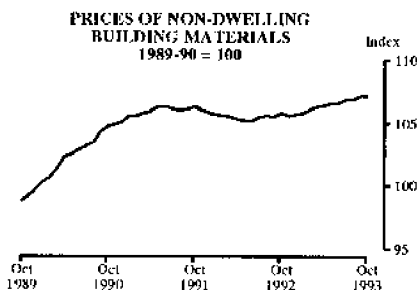
For further information, order the publication Import Price Index, Australia (6414.0), or contact Carole Duthie on (06) 252 5348.

## Prices steady for non-dwelling building materials

Prices of materials used in building other than house building were unchanged from September to October 1993.

Small price increases were offset by small price decreases. The most notable price changes recorded in October were for carpet (2.3%) and air conditioning equipment (-0.5%).

On an annual basis, prices of materials used in building other than houses increased by 1.3 per cent from October 1992 to October 1993, compared with an annual price movement of -0.5 per cent to October 1992.

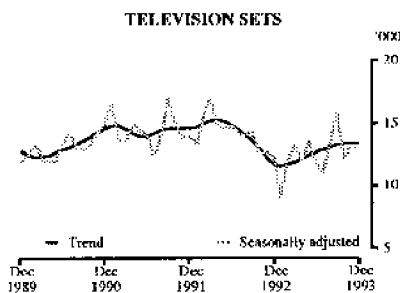
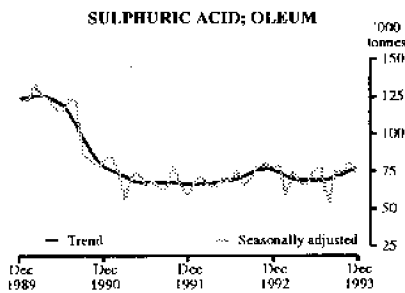


**PRICES OF BUILDING MATERIALS USED IN BUILDING OTHER THAN HOUSE BUILDING, OCTOBER 1993**  
Percentage change

<i>City</i>	<i>From previous month</i>	<i>From corresponding month of previous year</i>
Sydney	0.1	-0.3
Melbourne	0.1	2.6
Brisbane	-0.4	1.2
Adelaide	0.0	2.9
Perth	-0.2	1.3
Hobart	0.0	2.2
<i>Weighted average of six State capitals</i>	0.0	1.3
Canberra	-0.2	0.7

For further information, order the publication Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other than House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra (6407.0), or contact Mark Dickson (06) 252 6198.

## Manufacturing production in December



The publication *Manufacturing Production, Australia, Preliminary* (8301.0) contains up-to-date time series data on the production of twenty-seven major indicators of production (twenty-three with up-to-date trend estimates). The indicator commodities have been selected to give a broad industry representation of the manufacturing sector and are part of a much larger range of commodity items published in the series of ten Manufacturing Production Bulletins.

In the table below, sixteen of the twenty-three items are showing an increase in trend over production levels twelve months earlier. The trend in television sets production has levelled off in recent months after rising since January 1993 while sulphuric acid production has risen gradually from July 1993 after being stable from April 1993. Cotton yarn production has recorded a falling trend since June 1993 while woollen yarn production has continued its gradual rise from March 1993.

The two comparisons shown below should be read together to indicate both longer term trends and current trend direction. Reference should also be made to more detailed data presented in the quarterly publications.

**MANUFACTURING PRODUCTION, DECEMBER 1993**  
Percentage change in trend

Product	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Particle board and similar boards	0.5	16.8
Iron and steel in ingots or other primary forms	1.6	14.4
Television sets	0.1	13.7
Cars and station wagons	1.9	12.9
Domestic clothes washing machines	0.0	12.1
Basic iron, spiegeleisen and sponge iron	0.5	11.8
Chocolate based confectionery	2.3	10.2
Gas available for issue through mains	2.7	8.7
Portland cement	0.8	8.0
Cotton yarn	-0.6	6.6
Textile floor coverings	1.5	6.5
Clay bricks	0.3	4.7
Wool yarn	0.7	4.6
Electricity	0.9	3.9
Sulphuric acid; oleum	1.8	0.9
Electric motors	4.1	0.7
Plastics in primary forms	-1.9	-0.8
Other confectionery	2.3	-0.8
Beer	-0.6	-3.7
Cigarettes and tobacco	-1.0	-4.2
Woven man-made fibre fabric	-1.6	-4.7
Woven wool fabric (including blanketing)	-0.6	-15.4
Blooms and slabs, from rolling and forging	1.1	-29.8

## Inquiries

The ABS supplies a wide range of statistical information:

- through its bookshops
- by mail order (including subscription)
- by facsimile
- electronically.

To order any of the publications mentioned in *Statistics Weekly* or to inquire about the statistics and services available from the ABS, contact Information Services at any of the offices listed below. An Information Consultancy Service in each office provides assistance of a more extensive or complex nature.

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**Statistics Weekly**  
27 January 1994

## Small business and the impact of government paperwork

The Department of Industry, Technology and Regional Development (DITARD) recently released a report presenting final results of a study into the workload placed on small businesses by government paperwork. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) undertook the study for DITARD through a series of case studies conducted over a twelve month period. The results are to be used by DITARD as an input into the development of the Federal Paperwork Reduction Strategy.

The case studies were conducted in two stages. During an initial interview, participants were asked to recall and comment on the paperwork completed for all levels of government over the preceding twelve months. At the completion of the interview, each business was provided with a logbook so that actual workload could be measured over a three month recording period.

Of the 200 or so businesses interviewed, 47 per cent felt that the volume of government paperwork had increased over the last three years and more than half of these businesses considered that the increase was significant.

The median number of forms completed over a three month period by participants in the study was eight forms. About 5 per cent of participants reported completing over 100 forms in their reporting period. The median time registered by businesses in the case study was 4.5 hours, with three businesses recording in excess of 100 hours on government paperwork.

Certain forms took some businesses a particularly long time to complete due to the requested data not being readily available from their internal accounting system. For this reason, participants that reported the most time spent on government paperwork often did not complete a large volume of forms. Conversely, participants that recorded completing a considerable number of forms did not always record a high value for time spent on government paperwork (because many of the forms completed were of the one form type and could be finalised quickly).

*Copies of the final report may be obtained by contacting the Director, Small and Medium Enterprise Policy Section, DITARD, PO Box 9839 Canberra 2601. For further information about the conduct of the study, contact Mel Moses (ABS) on (06) 252 7237.*

## Order from the following:

### Expected releases over the fortnight to 8 February

- 28 Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building, Eight Capital Cities, November 1993 (6407.0; \$11.00)
- Price Index of Materials Used in House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra, November 1993 (6408.0; \$8.50)
- 2 Balance of Payments, Australia, December 1993 (5301.0; \$16.50)
- Building Approvals, Australia, December 1993 (8731.0; \$13.50)

Key national indicators	Period	Units	Latest figure available		Percentage change (a) on	
			Original	Seasonally adjusted	Previous period	Corresponding period last year
<b>National accounts</b>						
Gross domestic product (GDP(A)) at 1989-90 prices	September qtr 93	\$m	n.a.	96 123	0.3	3.2
<b>International accounts</b>						
Balance on current account (b)	November 93	\$m	-1 475	-1 162	10	12
Balance on merchandise trade (b)	"	"	-222	197	43	82
Balance on goods and services (b)	"	"	-248	80	—	—
Merchandise exports	"	"	5 475	5 438	—	5
Merchandise imports	"	"	-5 697	-5 241	-1	3
Net foreign debt	September qtr 93	\$m	177 805	n.a.	3.5	8.1
Net foreign liabilities	"	"	239 057	n.a.	6.6	14.6
<b>Consumption and investment</b>						
Retail turnover at current prices	November 93	\$m	8 636	8 471	2.1	5.6
New capital expenditure at current prices	September qtr 93	"	6 368	6 495	3.5	6.9
New motor vehicle registrations	December 93	no.	48 541	45 857	-6.1	-0.2
<b>Production</b>						
Manufacturers' sales at 1989-90 prices	September qtr 93	\$m	36 435	35 751	1.6	8.3
Dwelling unit approvals	November 93	no.	16 161	14 879	-0.3	4.6
Building approvals	"	\$m	2 209	2 092	6.1	5.3
Building work done at 1989-90 prices	September qtr 93	"	6 433	6 268	3.1	5.0
<b>Prices</b>						
Consumer price index	December qtr 93	1989-90 = 100.0	110.0	n.a.	0.2	1.9
Articles produced by manufacturing industry	November 93	1988-89 = 100.0	115.8	n.a.	1.4	-0.1
Materials used in manufacturing industries	November 93	1984-85 = 100.0	126.0	n.a.	-1.3	-1.5
<b>Labour force and demography</b>						
Employed persons	December 93	'000	7 939.5	7 852.6	0.3	2.5
Participation rate †	"	%	63.7	63.0	-0.2	0.4
Unemployment rate †	"	"	10.7	10.7	-0.4	-0.6
Job vacancies	November qtr 93	'000	38.2	38.9	5.1	31.0
Average weekly overtime per employee	"	hours	1.30	1.22	1.7	8.0
Estimated resident population	March qtr 93	million	17.6	n.a.	0.3	1.0
Short-term overseas visitor arrivals	October 93	'000	267	251	-3.3	14.5
<b>Incomes</b>						
Company profits before income tax	September qtr 93	\$m	5 283	5 073	10.6	21.9
Av. weekly earnings, full-time adults, ordinary time	August qtr 93	\$	602.40	n.a.	0.8	2.8
<b>Financial markets</b>						
Interest rates (c) (monthly average)						
90-day bank bills †	December 93	% per annum	4.85	n.a.	0.05	-1.05
10-year Treasury bonds †	"	"	6.70	n.a.	-0.1	-2.25
Exchange rate — \$US (c)	November 93	per \$A	0.6649	n.a.	1	-4

(a) Based on seasonally adjusted figures where available. (b) For percentage changes, a minus sign indicates an increase in the deficit; no sign means a decrease in the deficit or an increase in the surplus. (c) Source: Reserve Bank of Australia.  
 NOTES: † = change is shown in terms of percentage points. n.a. = not available.

Key State indicators	Period	Percentage change from same period previous year								
		NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
New capital expenditure*	September qtr 93	-8.8	25.4	5.6	27.1	16.8	6.8	n.a.	n.a.	6.1
Retail turnover (trend estimate)	November 93	1.8	5.0	4.5	6.5	9.5	4.4	n.a.	4.6	4.4
New motor vehicle registrations†	December 93	0.2	2.8	-1.3	-12.8	4.4	-14.2	-0.2	5.0	-0.2
Number of dwelling unit approvals*	November 93	4.6	-0.3	19.9	6.9	30.6	-4.5	-26.7	-41.1	4.6
Value of total building work done	September qtr 93	0.4	4.1	9.2	10.3	20.9	13.3	1.1	-6.9	5.6
Employed persons*	December 93	2.5	0.6	3.6	1.9	4.9	3.9	1.2	2.4	2.5
Capital city consumer price index	December qtr 93	1.3	2.4	1.9	1.9	2.3	3.3	2.3	2.1	1.9
Av. weekly earnings (full-time adult ordinary time)	August qtr 93	3.0	2.1	5.2	3.6	-0.1	2.7	2.6	3.4	2.8
Population	June qtr 93	0.8	0.3	2.7	0.4	1.2	0.4	0.7	1.6	1.0
Room nights in licensed hotels and motels, etc.	September qtr 93	6.3	0.1	9.1	2.4	9.0	5.4	18.4	12.0	6.7

\* Seasonally adjusted except for NT and ACT. † Seasonally adjusted.

Figures have been taken from a variety of ABS publications. Copies may be obtained from Information Services (see page 7). Some of the figures shown are preliminary, some final, and some are revisions of previously published figures. Users should check the latest relevant publication or with the ABS Information Services if the status of the statistic is important. The ABS should be acknowledged as the source when reproducing or quoting any part of this publication.

