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**MERCHANDISE IMPORTS (BALANCE OF PAYMENTS BASIS)  
AUSTRALIA, DECEMBER 1995**

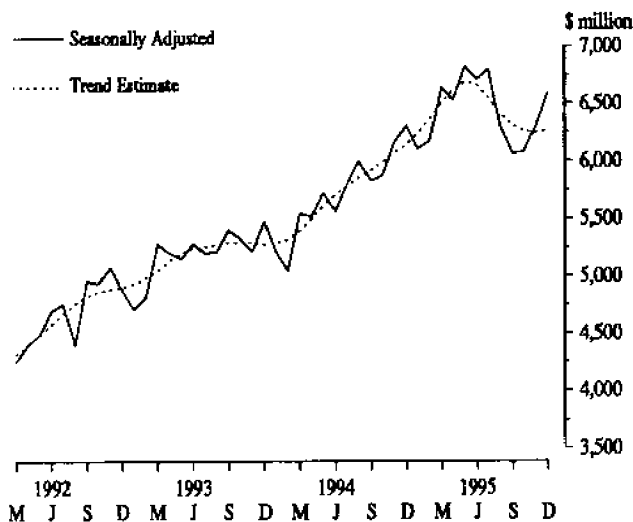
**MAIN FEATURES**

*December 1995 compared with November 1995*

The provisional trend estimate of *merchandise imports* rose \$27 million to \$6,272 million.

In *seasonally adjusted terms*, *merchandise imports* for December rose \$288 million, or 5 per cent, to \$6,590 million. *Consumption goods* rose \$72 million, or 4 per cent, to \$1,734 million. *Capital goods* rose \$59 million, or 4 per cent, to \$1,610 million. *Intermediate and other goods* rose \$157 million, or 5 per cent, to \$3,246 million.

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



In *original terms*, *imports* fell \$891 million, or 13 per cent, to \$5,947 million.

Imports of *consumption goods*, in original terms, fell \$286 million, or 15 per cent, to \$1,583 million. Decreases were recorded in all groups. The largest decreases were recorded in:

- consumption goods nes, down \$89 million or 16 per cent (with most components recording decreases);
- toys, books and leisure goods, down \$72 million or 28 per cent (with all components recording decreases);

- textiles, clothing and footwear, down \$39 million or 17 per cent (with all components recording decreases); and
- household electrical items, down \$38 million or 21 per cent.

Imports of *capital goods*, in original terms, fell \$209 million, or 12 per cent, to \$1,497 million. Decreases were recorded in all groups. The largest decreases were recorded in:

- civil aircraft, down \$75 million or 72 per cent;
- capital goods nes, down \$40 million or 19 per cent (with all components recording decreases); and
- machinery and industrial equipment, down \$39 million or 5 per cent (with most components recording decreases).

Imports of *intermediate and other goods*, in original terms, fell \$396 million, or 12 per cent, to \$2,867 million. Decreases were recorded in 10 of the 14 groups. The largest decreases were recorded in:

- processed industrial supplies nes, down \$90 million or 12 per cent (with most components recording decreases);
- "other" parts for capital goods, down \$80 million or 15 per cent (with most components recording decreases); and
- organic and inorganic chemicals, down \$52 million or 21 per cent (with all components recording decreases).

*Six months ended December 1995 compared with six months ended December 1994*

In original terms, *merchandise imports* rose \$2,137 million, or 6 per cent, to \$39,750 million:

- *consumption goods* rose \$529 million (5 per cent);
- *capital goods* rose \$164 million (2 per cent); and
- *intermediate and other goods* rose \$1,444 million (8 per cent).

**INQUIRIES** • for further information about these and related unpublished statistics, contact Ms Patricia Mahony on Canberra (06) 252 6012, or any ABS State office.  
• for information about other ABS statistics and services please refer to the back page of this publication.

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

	(\$ million)																				
	Years			Months																	
	1992	1993	1994	1995-96																	
	93	94	95	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1994-95	1995-96	
<i>Consumption goods fob (a) —</i>																					
Food and beverages, mainly for consumption	-2,261	-2,430	-2,592	-237	-260	-235	-227	-199	-236	-168	-230	-181	-245	-233	-231	-255	-263	-243	-1,351	-1,470	
Household electrical items	-1,382	-1,436	-1,744	-184	-181	-156	-121	-119	-147	-132	-145	-129	-157	-167	-138	-179	-177	-139	-951	-957	
Non-industrial transport equipment	-3,478	-3,800	-4,758	-392	-407	-409	-337	-313	-462	-391	-446	-413	-469	-426	-346	-423	-404	-376	-2,396	-2,444	
Textiles, clothing and footwear	-2,178	-2,320	-2,566	-208	-225	-192	-246	-249	-235	-179	-189	-157	-266	-274	-220	-213	-229	-190	-1,311	-1,392	
Toys, books and leisure goods	-2,238	-2,496	-2,546	-277	-249	-183	-181	-156	-199	-170	-205	-193	-246	-252	-252	-260	-256	-184	-1,442	-1,450	
Consumption goods nes	-4,389	-4,751	-5,213	-486	-521	-385	-390	-360	-445	-381	-481	-375	-518	-524	-486	-529	-540	-451	-2,781	-3,048	
<i>Total consumption goods</i>	<i>-15,926</i>	<i>-17,233</i>	<i>-19,419</i>	<i>-1,784</i>	<i>-1,843</i>	<i>-1,560</i>	<i>-1,502</i>	<i>-1,396</i>	<i>-1,724</i>	<i>-1,421</i>	<i>-1,696</i>	<i>-1,448</i>	<i>-1,901</i>	<i>-1,876</i>	<i>-1,673</i>	<i>-1,859</i>	<i>-1,869</i>	<i>-1,583</i>	<i>-10,232</i>	<i>-10,761</i>	
<i>Capital goods fob (a) —</i>																					
Machinery and industrial equipment	-5,446	-6,414	-7,897	-646	-675	-620	-637	-618	-745	-616	-705	-733	-718	-691	-616	-723	-727	-688	-3,843	-4,163	
ADP equipment	-2,319	-2,629	-3,232	-255	-251	-217	-189	-195	-325	-243	-393	-392	-338	-325	-253	-273	-282	-272	-1,495	-1,743	
Telecommunications equipment	-1,224	-1,182	-1,804	-148	-310	-127	-119	-119	-153	-117	-150	-173	-164	-163	-207	-178	-200	-170	-973	-1,082	
Civil aircraft	-828	-241	-529	-25	-9	-33	-6	-57	-18	-43	-16	-48	-28	-81	-11	-31	-104	-29	-341	-284	
Industrial transport equipment nes	-1,838	-2,084	-2,714	-227	-239	-518	-150	-197	-190	-189	-234	-179	-222	-198	-148	-197	-180	-165	-1,575	-1,110	
Capital goods nes	-2,000	-2,293	-2,365	-201	-221	-180	-173	-170	-205	-189	-215	-193	-234	-213	-183	-213	-213	-173	-1,220	-1,229	
<i>Total capital goods</i>	<i>-13,655</i>	<i>-14,843</i>	<i>-18,541</i>	<i>-1,502</i>	<i>-1,705</i>	<i>-1,695</i>	<i>-1,274</i>	<i>-1,356</i>	<i>-1,636</i>	<i>-1,397</i>	<i>-1,713</i>	<i>-1,718</i>	<i>-1,704</i>	<i>-1,671</i>	<i>-1,418</i>	<i>-1,615</i>	<i>-1,706</i>	<i>-1,497</i>	<i>-9,447</i>	<i>-9,611</i>	
<i>Intermediate and other goods fob (a) —</i>																					
Food and beverages, mainly for industry	-436	-509	-774	-59	-58	-57	-110	-90	-59	-53	-68	-61	-65	-65	-65	-55	-77	-43	-333	-370	
Primary industrial supplies nes	-677	-701	-901	-66	-96	-55	-80	-79	-63	-62	-83	-85	-73	-83	-66	-83	-76	-76	-449	-445	
Fuels and lubricants	-3,623	-3,317	-3,566	-250	-208	-208	-280	-314	-323	-317	-379	-286	-385	-283	-290	-264	-353	-312	-1,667	-1,887	
Parts for transport equipment	-3,675	-4,183	-4,714	-418	-437	-340	-401	-329	-409	-385	-424	-351	-448	-446	-338	-406	-340	-344	-2,415	-2,322	
Parts for ADP equipment	-1,423	-1,681	-1,858	-152	-165	-136	-133	-138	-172	-142	-189	-172	-159	-158	-155	-161	-161	-138	-912	-932	
Other parts for capital goods	-4,236	-5,047	-5,975	-486	-514	-442	-462	-456	-561	-484	-583	-520	-619	-583	-510	-563	-551	-471	-2,909	-3,297	
Organic and inorganic chemicals	-2,056	-2,102	-2,431	-191	-216	-177	-203	-201	-245	-205	-228	-234	-242	-249	-194	-224	-245	-193	-1,117	-1,347	
Paper and paperboard	-1,381	-1,465	-1,794	-151	-160	-142	-151	-133	-164	-137	-179	-145	-189	-189	-172	-194	-174	-151	-885	-1,069	
Textile yarn and fabrics	-1,763	-1,869	-2,036	-174	-191	-139	-170	-142	-176	-137	-194	-165	-189	-187	-154	-167	-172	-137	-1,052	-1,006	
Iron and steel	-946	-1,039	-1,285	-96	-113	-85	-97	-112	-124	-96	-137	-122	-117	-143	-129	-125	-125	-133	-597	-772	
Plastics	-1,272	-1,375	-1,646	-131	-149	-127	-140	-134	-155	-133	-160	-129	-170	-155	-146	-158	-149	-129	-795	-907	
Non-monetary gold	-1,019	-978	-705	-41	-58	-74	-69	-56	-90	-30	-66	-55	-55	-78	-56	-51	-74	-48	-339	-362	
Processed industrial supplies nes	-7,135	-7,783	-8,680	-740	-753	-650	-700	-652	-856	-684	-818	-687	-824	-762	-728	-749	-752	-662	-4,283	-4,477	
Other goods	-208	-286	-391	-27	-17	-11	-16	-22	-54	-17	-57	-44	-50	-38	-25	-28	-14	-30	-181	-185	
<i>Total intermediate and other goods</i>	<i>-29,850</i>	<i>-32,335</i>	<i>-36,756</i>	<i>-2,982</i>	<i>-3,135</i>	<i>-2,670</i>	<i>-3,012</i>	<i>-2,858</i>	<i>-3,451</i>	<i>-2,880</i>	<i>-3,565</i>	<i>-3,056</i>	<i>-3,585</i>	<i>-3,407</i>	<i>-3,028</i>	<i>-3,228</i>	<i>-3,263</i>	<i>-2,867</i>	<i>-17,934</i>	<i>-19,378</i>	
<i>Total imports fob</i>	<i>-59,431</i>	<i>-64,411</i>	<i>-74,716</i>	<i>-6,268</i>	<i>-6,683</i>	<i>-5,925</i>	<i>-5,788</i>	<i>-5,610</i>	<i>-6,811</i>	<i>-5,698</i>	<i>-6,974</i>	<i>-6,222</i>	<i>-7,190</i>	<i>-6,954</i>	<i>-6,119</i>	<i>-6,702</i>	<i>-6,838</i>	<i>-5,947</i>	<i>-37,613</i>	<i>-39,750</i>	
Consumption goods	..	..	..	-1,576	-1,616	-1,631	-1,601	-1,511	-1,708	-1,699	-1,735	-1,651	-1,812	-1,714	-1,626	-1,564	-1,662	-1,734	..	..	..
Capital goods	..	..	..	-1,336	-1,574	-1,738	-1,441	-1,629	-1,746	-1,568	-1,689	-1,788	-1,525	-1,446	-1,370	-1,445	-1,551	-1,610	..	..	..
Intermediate and other goods	..	..	..	-2,960	-2,959	-2,937	-3,061	-3,027	-3,191	-3,255	-3,398	-3,279	-3,470	-3,134	-3,066	-3,066	-3,089	-3,246	..	..	..
<i>Total imports fob</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>-5,872</i>	<i>-6,149</i>	<i>-6,306</i>	<i>-6,103</i>	<i>-6,167</i>	<i>-6,645</i>	<i>-6,522</i>	<i>-6,822</i>	<i>-6,718</i>	<i>-6,807</i>	<i>-6,294</i>	<i>-6,062</i>	<i>-6,075</i>	<i>-6,302</i>	<i>-6,590</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>..</i>
<i>Total imports fob</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>-5,992</i>	<i>-6,062</i>	<i>-6,141</i>	<i>-6,237</i>	<i>-6,363</i>	<i>-6,503</i>	<i>-6,625</i>	<i>-6,688</i>	<i>-6,659</i>	<i>-6,549</i>	<i>-6,411</i>	<i>-6,308</i>	<i>-6,256p</i>	<i>-6,245p</i>	<i>-6,272p</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>..</i>

(a) Definitions of the component series are given in the ABS Information Paper, Change in Commodity Classification of Merchandise Imports in Balance of Payments Publications (ABS Catalogue No. 5344.0).

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

**Introduction**

1. This publication contains preliminary estimates of Australia's merchandise imports on a balance of payments basis for December 1995, 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 used in seasonally adjusting the monthly merchandise imports statistics during 1995 can be obtained, for \$70.00, from Mr Gary Knox on Canberra (06) 252 5753.

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 December 1995 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 December 1995 are due for release on 31 January 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 a foreign trade basis, for December 1995 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 January 1996 issue**

The expected release date for the January issue of this publication is 19 February 1996. Any variations which might occur will be notified in the ABS Publications Advice (1105.0) and on DISCOVERY

The date can be confirmed a few days prior to release by telephoning Canberra (06) 252 6627.

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