

Overview

Under the Australian Constitution, the Commonwealth Government is responsible for legislation relating to trade and commerce with other countries. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is in turn responsible for developing and maintaining Australia's position as a world trading nation through international trade and commodity commitments and agreements, developing export markets, and formulating proposals for Government on Australia's international trade policy and trading objectives. It is also responsible for matters relating to the commercial development, marketing, and export of minerals and fuels. As part of the Victorian Government's Business Growth Initiative, Business Victoria promotes an Export Assistance Program, which aims to increase the level of exports from Victoria.

The statistics in this chapter are recorded on a general trade basis, i.e. total exports include both Australian produce and re-exports; total imports comprise goods entered directly for domestic consumption, together with goods imported into customs warehouses. State statistics for exports comprise State of origin. 'State of origin' is defined as the State in which the final stage of production or manufacture occurs. For imports, the State is that in which the import entry was lodged with the Australian Customs Service.

Imports to Victoria increased by 7.5% in 1998–99 to \$31,016 million, continuing the upward trend since 1993–94. Imports over this six year period increased by 49% (table 10.1). The value of exports increased 3.5%, from \$15,938 million in 1997–98, to \$16,494 million in 1998–99.

Victorian exports comprised 19.2% of the Australian total (\$86,002 million) in 1998–99, an increase from 18.2% in 1997–98. Victoria received 32% of Australia's imports (\$97,614 million) in 1998–99, a proportion that has remained constant since 1993–94.

10.1 OVERSEAS TRADE, Recorded Values of Imports and Exports

Year	Imports	Exports
	\$m	\$m
1993–94	20 770	12 349
1994–95	23 967	13 008
1995–96	24 663	15 410
1996–97	25 093	16 306
1997–98	28 851	15 938
1998–99	31 016	16 494

Source: Unpublished data, International Trade Statistics.

Imports

In 1998–99, more than two-thirds of Victoria's imports came from eight countries (table 10.2). The major import sources were the United States of America (USA) (\$6,890 million); Japan (\$4,134 million); China (\$2,537 million); Germany (\$2,342 million); the United Kingdom (\$1,840 million); New Zealand (\$1,333 million); Indonesia (\$1,078 million); and Italy (\$1,038).

10.2 IMPORTS(a), Countries of Origin and Consignment

Country	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99
	\$m	\$m	\$m
United States of America	5 944	7 027	6 890
Japan	3 097	3 847	4 134
China	1 755	2 154	2 537
Germany	1 923	2 116	2 342
United Kingdom	1 635	1 694	1 840
New Zealand	1 247	1 311	1 333
Indonesia	507	637	1 078
Italy	832	963	1 038
Taiwan	792	852	905
Malaysia	508	668	873
Other	6 853	7 582	8 046
Total	25 093	28 851	31 016

(a) Customs value.

Source: Unpublished data, International Trade statistics.

10.3 IMPORTS(a), By Commodity Groups

Description	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99
	\$m	\$m	\$m
Road vehicles (incl. air cushioned vehicles)	2 924	3 764	4 207
Electrical machinery, apparatus, appliances, parts (incl. non-elec. counterparts of elec dom equip)	1 571	1 790	2 128
General industrial machinery and equipment, n.e.s. and machine parts, n.e.s.	1 711	2 011	2 056
Miscellaneous manufactured articles, n.e.s.	1 460	1 628	1 738
Telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment	1 051	1 221	1 345
Machinery specialised for particular industries	1 175	1 275	1 306
Textile yarn, fabrics, made-up articles, n.e.s., and related products	1 066	1 171	1 198
Articles of apparel and clothing accessories	885	1 090	1 189
Petroleum, petroleum products and related materials	932	780	1 147
Manufactures of metals, n.e.s.	673	816	888
Other	11 645	13 305	13 814
Total	25 093	28 851	31 016

(a) Customs value.

Source: Unpublished data, International Trade statistics.

The major commodities imported into Victoria in 1998–99 were road vehicles (including air cushion vehicles) (\$4,207 million), electrical machinery apparatus, appliances, parts (including non-electrical counterparts of electrical domestic equipment) (\$2,128 million); and general industrial machinery and equipment, n.e.s. and machine parts, n.e.s. (\$2,056 million) (table 10.3). The largest increases for the top ten imports over 1997–98 were petroleum, petroleum products and related materials (47%); electrical machinery, apparatus, appliances, parts (incl. non-electrical counterparts of electrical domestic equipment) (19%); and road vehicles (including air cushion vehicles) (12%).

10.4 IMPORTS FROM MAJOR TRADING PARTNERS—1998–99

Description	USA	Japan	China
	\$m	\$m	\$m
Road vehicles (incl. air cushion vehicles)	630	2 100	47
General industrial machinery and equipment, n.e.s. and machine parts, n.e.c.	695	301	49
Miscellaneous manufactured articles, n.e.s.	380	152	370
Articles of apparel and clothing accessories	20	2	729
Electrical machinery, apparatus, appliances, parts, (incl. non-elec. counterparts of elec dom equip)	387	174	181
Power generating machinery and equipment	534	99	7
Machinery specialised for particular industries	375	205	7
Telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment	175	226	110
Professional, scientific and controlling instruments and apparatus, n.e.s.	399	56	13
Office machines and automatic data processing machines	317	58	46
Other	2 978	761	978
Total	6 890	4 134	2 537
Percentage of Victorian imports	22	13	8

Source: Unpublished data, International Trade statistics.

Victoria's major source of imports was the United States—a significant proportion of these were general industrial machinery and equipment (\$695 million); and road vehicles (\$630 million) (table 10.4). Road vehicles (including air cushion vehicles) (\$2,100 million) were the dominant commodity imported from Japan, comprising half the value of goods imported from that country whereas articles of apparel and clothing accessories (\$729 million) were the dominant commodity from China, followed by miscellaneous manufactured articles (\$370 million).

Exports

In 1998–99, almost half of Victoria's exports went to six countries. The major export destinations were Japan (\$1,676 million); New Zealand (\$1,653 million); USA (\$1,469 million); United Kingdom (\$1,169 million); Singapore (\$1,084 million); and Taiwan (\$919 million) (table 10.5).

10.5 EXPORTS(a), Country of Destination

Country	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
	\$m	\$m	\$m
Japan	1 523	1 686	1 676
New Zealand	2 140	1 552	1 653
United States of America	958	1 603	1 469
United Kingdom	416	453	1 169
Singapore	893	989	1 084
Taiwan	696	657	919
Hong Kong	812	1 073	899
Republic of Korea	2 098	1 039	862
China	658	624	669
Saudi Arabia	168	268	511
Other	5 944	5 994	5 583
Total	16 306	15 938	16 494

(a) Free on board.

Source: Unpublished data, International Trade statistics.

Victoria's main exports in 1998-99 were gold, non-monetary (excludes gold ores and concentrates) (\$2,263 million); dairy products and birds' eggs (\$1,815 million); non-ferrous metals (\$1,085 million); and road vehicles (includes air cushion vehicles) (\$1,081 million) (table 10.6).

10.6 EXPORTS(a), Commodity Groups

Description	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
	\$m	\$m	\$m
Gold, non-monetary (excl. gold ores and concentrates)	1 735	1 505	2 263
Dairy products and birds' eggs	1 428	1 515	1 815
Non-ferrous metals	887	1 025	1 085
Road vehicles (includes air cushion vehicles)	817	922	1 081
Textile fibres and their wastes (not manufactured into yarn or fabric)	1 198	1 244	843
Petroleum, petroleum products and related materials	757	832	745
Meat and meat preparations	556	694	710
Vegetables and fruit	484	392	412
Medicinal and pharmaceutical products	307	354	394
Cereals and cereal preparations	589	454	394
Other	7 548	7 001	6 752
Total	16 306	15 938	16 494

(a) Free on board.

Source: Unpublished data, International Trade statistics.

The value of gold, non-monetary (excl. gold ores and concentrates) exports increased by 50%; dairy products and birds' eggs by 20%; and road vehicles (includes air cushion vehicles) by 17%, over the same period. In contrast, the value of textile fibres and their wastes exports from Victoria declined by 32% between 1997-98 and 1998-99. Other commodities to show a decline in the value of exports were cereals and cereal preparations (13%) and petroleum, petroleum products and related materials (10%).

Japan, which received \$1,676 million worth of exports in 1998–99, remains Victoria’s main export destination over New Zealand (\$1,653 million), although the commodities exported to those countries varied significantly (table 10.7). Exports to Japan mainly consisted of dairy products and birds’ eggs (\$311 million), non-ferrous metals (\$156 million), and cork and wood (\$134 million). In contrast, exports to New Zealand consisted of road vehicles (\$194 million) and petroleum, petroleum products and related materials (\$153 million). Exports to the USA comprised road vehicles (includes air-cushion vehicles) (\$201 million), meat and meat preparations (\$195 million) and transport equipment (excludes road vehicles) (\$132 million).

10.7 EXPORTS TO MAJOR TRADING PARTNERS—1998–99

Description	Japan	NZ	USA
	\$m	\$m	\$m
Road vehicles (includes air-cushion vehicles)	10	194	201
Dairy products and birds’ eggs	311	12	41
Meat and meat preparations	130	6	195
Petroleum, petroleum products and related materials	17	153	41
Non-ferrous metals	156	25	6
Professional, scientific and controlling instruments and apparatus, n.e.s.	43	18	91
Transport equipment (excludes road vehicles)	3	14	132
Miscellaneous manufactured articles, n.e.s.	14	95	38
Gold, non-monetary (excludes gold ores and concentrates)	133	4	1
Cork and wood	134	1	1
Other	725	1 131	722
Total	1 676	1 653	1 469
	%	%	%
Proportion of Victorian exports	10	10	9

Source: Unpublished data, International Trade statistics.

References

Data sources

The foreign trade statistics presented in this chapter are compiled in broad agreement with the United Nations’ recommendations for the compilation of international trade statistics. Overseas trade statistics are compiled by the Australian Bureau of Statistics from documentation submitted by exporters and importers, or their agents, to the Australian Customs Service, as required by the Customs Act.

ABS sources

International Trade Statistics, unpublished data.

