

## CHAPTER V.—RETAIL PRICES.

1. **General.**—In normal circumstances changes in the cost of living due to variations in prices and not to alteration in standard can best be measured by means of index-numbers of prices. A “composite unit,” consisting of appropriate quantities of the commodities which enter into general consumption in Australia and including housing accommodation has, therefore, been adopted, and a comparison of the value of this composite unit at the prices ruling at any given date with the value determined by means of the prices ruling at some basic date furnishes the retail price index number for the given date, and indicates the proportionate increase or decrease in the amount of money necessary to purchase such a composite unit. This method of computation is usually known as the “aggregate expenditure method.” There are other methods of computing index-numbers, but probably none so satisfactorily combines simplicity of procedure with accuracy of result. Investigations concerning retail prices are made by this Bureau in respect of the following matters :—

- (i.) Monthly variation in the cost of food and groceries in 30 towns.
- (ii.) Quarterly variations in retail prices and house rent in 30 towns.
- (iii.) Quarterly variations in retail prices of clothing and miscellaneous expenditure in 30 towns.
- (iv.) Annual variations in retail prices and house rent in 200 towns.
- (v.) Intermittent Householders' Budget Inquiries.

In earlier reports the results of comprehensive investigations concerning prices and prices-indices for past years were published, and an account was given of the methods used in the collection of data and the computation of results. A discussion of the theory upon which the calculation of the index-numbers is based was furnished in Appendixes to Report No. 1, issued in December, 1912. In Appendix 1, to Report No. 9, an endeavour was made to set forth the essentials of the problem and of its solution.

For further particulars concerning the “aggregate expenditure method” of index-numbers, reference may be made to Report No. 6, pages 19 and 20, and to Report No. 12, pages 22 and 23.

2. **Cost of Commodities, Standard of Living, and Expenditure on Living.**—A change in the “cost of living” may be due to a change in the standard of living, or in the retail price level, or in both; the expenditure on living depends thus on three factors, viz. :—

- (i.) The nature of the commodities consumed ;
- (ii) The quantities of the commodities consumed ; and
- (iii.) The prices of these commodities.

A change in any one of these may produce a change in the expenditure on living. In order to obtain index-numbers that will satisfactorily measure variation in price level, it is necessary that the particular series of commodities selected, and the relative quantities of these, remain constant. This phase of the subject is dealt with more fully in Labour Report No. 1, Appendix VIII. ; in Labour Report No. 5, pp. 17–18 ; in Labour Bulletin No. 9, pp. 27 to 46 ; in Labour Bulletin No. 14, pp. 127 to 130 ; and in Part II. of Appendix I. of Labour Report No. 9.

Notwithstanding the explicit statement of the purpose and scope of these investigations given in the various Labour Reports, misunderstanding in regard thereto is still prevalent. Many persons, having noticed that a different regimen gives a very different aggregate cost, have thought that the computed price-indexes must vary considerably with change of regimen. In Labour Bulletin No. 14, pp. 127 to 130, it is shown, by calculations based on widely different regimens, that the mode adopted of investigating retail price level is not vitiated by employing a fixed regimen. Where a standard of living, or living wage, has been fixed, the tables can be used as a basis to determine the variations in the cost of living until such time as the regimen used as a basis for estimation has ceased to be fairly representative of the usage of the community. Should a change be necessary, certain safeguards which have been indicated in Labour Report No. 1, Appendixes VIII. and IX., and further dealt with in Appendix I. of Labour Report No. 9 must be applied.

3. **The Composite Unit.**—The 47 items making up the "composite unit" may be divided into four groups, viz., (i.) groceries and bread, (ii.) dairy produce, (iii.) meat, (iv.) housing. The cost of these items covers about 60 per cent. of the total expenditure of a normal family.

Special investigations have been made with reference to variations in the cost of the items and services included in the balance of expenditure, and the results are given in Chapter VII. hereof.

The index-numbers computed on the basis of food, groceries, and housing in the past can be accepted as a fair reflection of the variation in the whole ordinary household expenditure in normal times. The question of procedure in abnormal circumstances was referred to in Labour Report No. 6, pp. 20 to 22.

The constitution of the "composite unit" is shown hereunder.

**Retail Prices.—Composite Unit.**

Commodity or Service.	Unity of Quantity.	"Mass Unit."	Commodity or Service.	Unity of Quantity.	"Mass Unit."
<b>GROUP I.—GROCERIES (INCLUDING BREAD).</b>			<b>GROUP III.—MEAT.</b>		
1. Bread .. ..	2 lb. loaf	468	26. Beef, sirloin .. ..	lb.	67
2. Flour, ordinary .. ..	25 lb. bags	11	27. Beef, rib .. ..	"	82
3. Tea .. ..	lb.	30	28. Beef, flank .. ..	"	12
4. Coffee .. ..	"	2	29. Beef, shin .. ..	"	14
5. Sugar .. ..	"	460	30. Beef, steak, rump .. ..	"	24
6. Rice .. ..	"	50	31. Beef, steak, shoulder .. ..	"	53
7. Sago .. ..	"	8	32. Beef, steak, stewing .. ..	"	53
8. Jam .. ..	"	73	33. Beef, corned round .. ..	"	39
9. Oatmeal .. ..	"	35	34. Beef, brisket, with bone .. ..	"	11
10. Raisins .. ..	"	14	35. Beef, brisket, without bone .. ..	"	32
11. Currants .. ..	"	14	36. Mutton, leg .. ..	"	62
12. Starch .. ..	"	1	37. Mutton, shoulder .. ..	"	62
13. Blue .. ..	doz. sqs.	4	38. Mutton, loin .. ..	"	30
14. Candles .. ..	lb.	16	39. Mutton, neck .. ..	"	40
15. Soap .. ..	"	64	40. Mutton, chops, loin .. ..	"	62
16. Potatoes .. ..	14 lbs.	64	41. Mutton, chops, leg .. ..	"	15
17. Onions .. ..	lb.	68	42. Mutton, chops, neck .. ..	"	31
18. Kerosene .. ..	gallon	17	43. Pork, leg .. ..	"	94
<b>GROUP II.—DAIRY PRODUCTS.</b>			44. Pork, loin .. ..	"	84
19. Milk .. ..	quart	300	45. Pork, belly .. ..	"	104
20. Butter .. ..	lb.	66	46. Pork, chops .. ..	"	84
21. Cheese .. ..	"	15	<b>GROUP IV.—HOUSING.</b>		
22. Eggs .. ..	dozen	18	47. House Accommodation .. ..	week	464
23. Bacon, middle .. ..	lb.	16			
24. Bacon, shoulder .. ..	"	16			
25. Ham .. ..	"	8			

This inquiry so far as the capital cities are concerned goes back to 1901, and all possible precautions have been taken to ensure accuracy.

4. **Other Investigations.**—(i.) *General.*—As already indicated, these are concerned with (i.) Annual variations in the price index-numbers for 200 towns, (ii.) the cost of living according to householders' budget inquiries, (iii.) special inquiries as to the cost of food, groceries, and housing in various towns and localities, and (iv.) the investigation by the Royal Commission on the Basic Wage.

(ii.) *Price-Indexes for 200 Towns.*—An investigation as to variation in price-indexes for 100 Australian towns was carried out for the months of November, 1913, and November, 1914. From 1915 to 1922 the number of towns from which returns were collected annually was increased from 100 to 150, and from November, 1923, the number was further raised to 200. The results of the investigations for November of each year from 1913 to 1922 were published in various issues of the Report. Prior to 1912 investigations were made concerning the price-indexes in the capital cities only, but for 1912 and subsequent years monthly inquiries have been extended to 30 towns. The general agreement of the various results shows that the index-numbers published for the capital cities only, for the years prior to 1912, and for the 30 towns for 1912 and subsequent years, fairly indicate the variations in the cost of food, groceries, and housing in each State and throughout Australia.

(iii.) *Householders' Budgets.*—The first collection of these was made in 1910-11, and the results, which covered a period of twelve months, were published in December, 1911. A second was made during 1913 for the month of November only, and results were given in a special report, entitled "Labour Report, No. 4, Expenditure on Living in the Commonwealth, November, 1913." In September, 1917, the Government of Western Australia appointed a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the cost of the necessaries of life in that State. Under the authority of this Commission budgets were obtained from householders showing their weekly expenditure in detail. The Commonwealth Statistician undertook the necessary analysis of the returns, and the report, when completed, was forwarded to the Western Australian Government, at whose request it was published in Labour Report No. 9, pp. 63-71.

(iv.) *Special Investigations.*—During recent years, in connexion with Arbitration Court proceedings, the question has been raised of the cost of living in certain country towns and districts as compared with the cost in the towns usually covered by the investigations of the Bureau. In order to ascertain the necessary particulars inquiries were made in over 100 towns and localities, and index-numbers were computed and submitted to the tribunals concerned.

(v.) *Investigations by the Royal Commission on the Basic Wage.*—In December, 1919, the Commonwealth Government appointed a Commission consisting of three representatives of Employers' Organizations, and three representatives of the Federated Trade Unions, with an independent Chairman. The terms of the Commission are given hereinafter

This Commission issued two reports—the first in November, 1920, and the second in April, 1921. These reports show that, according to the standard assumed by the Commission, the cost of living as at the 1st November, 1920, for a family, consisting of man, wife, and three children under fourteen years of age, was as follows:—

**Royal Commission on Basic Wage—Cost of Living, 1st November, 1920.**

Particulars.	Melbourne.	Sydney.	Brisbane.	Adelaide.	Perth.	Hobart.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Rent ..	1 0 6	1 2 0	0 17 0	0 19 6	0 19 0	0 19 0
Food ..	2 6 2	2 6 9	2 3 1	2 7 2	2 4 11	2 8 11
Clothing ..	1 9 0	1 7 0	1 6 0	1 8 3	1 7 9	1 9 2
Miscellaneous ..	1 0 10	1 1 4	1 0 1	1 1 2	1 2 3	0 19 10
Total ..	5 16 6	5 17 1	5 6 2	5 16 1	5 13 11	5 16 11

The corresponding cost of the commodities and services included (which are fully set out in the first report) for the years 1914 to 1920 was as follows:—

**Royal Commission on Basic Wage—Cost of Commodities, etc., 1914 to 1920.**

Years.	Melbourne	Sydney.	Brisbane.	Adelaide.	Perth.	Hobart.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1914..	3 7 9	3 12 11	3 4 0	3 11 2	3 12 9	3 6 9
1915 ..	3 16 9	4 1 6	3 11 3	3 19 0	3 17 1	3 15 1
1916..	3 17 5	4 4 6	3 13 10	3 19 7	4 1 2	3 15 6
1917..	4 2 2	4 9 8	3 19 3	4 3 2	4 4 2	4 4 10
1918..	4 8 10	4 14 8	4 6 0	4 10 11	4 9 2	4 8 6
1919..	4 18 5	5 5 3	4 15 10	5 2 6	5 0 9	5 0 4
1920..	5 16 6	5 17 1	5 6 2	5 16 1	5 13 11	5 16 11

The results of investigations into the variation in the cost of living since 1920 according to this standard are given in Chapter VII. hereof.

5. **Retail Prices—Capital Cities, 1901 to 1923.**—(i.) *General.*—Index numbers, computed separately for each group of commodities and services included in the investigation, as well as the weighted average for all groups together, are shown for the capital city of each State in the following table. In this table the weighted aggregate expenditure for the whole of the capital cities in 1911 for each group or combination is taken as base (= 1,000), and the figures for the separate cities give the relative cost of the regimen. These index-numbers are comparable in all respects within the limits of a group or combination, since within such limits they show not only the variations from year to year, in each city, but comparisons also as to the relative cost in the different cities for the same year or for different years:—

Retail Price Index-Numbers—Capital Cities, 1901 to 1923.†

The index-numbers given in the separate parts of the table cannot be compared with each other in order to show the relative cost of (a) housing, and food and groceries, since the weighted average cost for the six cities taken together in 1911 in each group or combination is made equal to 1,000.

TOWN.	1901.	1907.	1911	1914.	1915.	1916.	1917.	1918	1919.	1920.	1921.	1922	1923.
GROUP I.—GROCERIES.													
Sydney .. ..	876	904	1,018	1,112	1,281	1,329	1,520	1,393	1,710	2,130	1,976	1,837	1,833
Melbourne ..	897	817	924	996	1,222	1,210	1,188	1,263	1,526	1,926	1,897	1,705	1,708
Brisbane .. .	1,011	969	1,087	1,076	1,331	1,315	1,323	1,400	1,795	2,155	1,958	1,841	1,832
Adelaide .. .	949	903	958	1,061	1,310	1,274	1,210	1,344	1,562	2,030	1,907	1,760	1,714
Perth .. .. .	1,006	1,013	1,276	1,113	1,351	1,345	1,329	1,394	1,618	2,008	1,955	1,729	1,692
Hobart .. .. .	935	888	1,003	1,070	1,250	1,236	1,263	1,341	1,582	1,995	1,927	1,758	1,704
Weighted Average*	912	885	1,000	1,062	1,272	1,278	1,261	1,342	1,631	2,039	1,937	1,774	1,770

GROUP II.—DAIRY PRODUCE.													
Sydney .. .. .	881	932	971	1,110	1,221	1,291	1,319	1,358	1,578	1,957	1,828	1,676	1,831
Melbourne ..	989	967	959	1,075	1,350	1,338	1,271	1,328	1,454	1,920	1,840	1,595	1,745
Brisbane .. .	833	837	983	995	1,277	1,287	1,294	1,334	1,573	1,816	1,664	1,562	1,679
Adelaide .. .	975	928	1,103	1,194	1,360	1,283	1,228	1,345	1,437	1,837	1,723	1,578	1,684
Perth .. .. .	1,290	1,206	1,241	1,244	1,475	1,434	1,406	1,427	1,617	1,954	1,951	1,780	1,806
Hobart .. .. .	931	955	994	1,177	1,439	1,334	1,313	1,365	1,540	1,976	1,848	1,530	1,665
Weighted Average*	945	955	1,000	1,108	1,307	1,316	1,295	1,345	1,526	1,928	1,815	1,627	1,767

GROUP III.—MEAT													
Sydney .. .. .	1,025	994	959	1,230	1,778	2,091	2,154	2,020	2,125	2,388	1,838	1,499	1,788
Melbourne ..	1,077	1,067	929	1,270	1,800	2,027	1,949	1,963	1,956	2,414	1,972	1,591	2,026
Brisbane .. .	1,028	1,024	935	1,169	1,549	1,766	1,667	1,819	1,905	2,126	1,719	1,256	1,468
Adelaide .. .	1,221	1,050	1,037	1,502	1,930	2,240	2,079	2,169	2,187	2,567	2,097	1,815	2,106
Perth .. .. .	1,378	1,511	1,577	1,688	1,722	1,997	1,913	1,708	2,260	2,224	2,113	1,904	2,084
Hobart .. .. .	1,225	1,279	1,221	1,403	1,789	2,217	2,274	2,427	2,256	2,645	2,382	2,128	2,345
Weighted Average*	1,101	1,074	1,000	1,323	1,781	2,066	2,022	1,992	2,063	2,390	1,934	1,587	1,904

GROUPS I, II, AND III. COMBINED.—FOOD AND GROCERIES.													
Sydney .. .. .	917	936	989	1,156	1,399	1,520	1,540	1,549	1,733	2,148	1,898	1,703	1,820
Melbourne ..	965	925	935	1,091	1,411	1,462	1,412	1,466	1,620	2,066	1,901	1,644	1,802
Brisbane .. .	965	947	1,018	1,078	1,373	1,426	1,406	1,405	1,762	2,052	1,812	1,608	1,693
Adelaide .. .	1,028	951	1,020	1,215	1,487	1,532	1,445	1,534	1,719	2,132	1,906	1,723	1,823
Perth .. .. .	1,184	1,197	1,346	1,362	1,483	1,542	1,565	1,486	1,772	2,050	1,995	1,776	1,828
Hobart .. .. .	1,011	1,016	1,058	1,212	1,445	1,523	1,544	1,635	1,748	2,162	2,025	1,794	1,863
Weighted Average*	972	955	1,000	1,144	1,416	1,495	1,472	1,514	1,716	2,101	1,902	1,684	1,805

GROUP IV.—HOUSING													
Sydney .. .. .	858	911	1,090	1,279	1,220	1,212	1,215	1,252	1,289	1,415	1,474	1,535	1,617
Melbourne ..	733	804	970	1,126	1,085	1,080	1,124	1,180	1,283	1,405	1,502	1,507	1,672
Brisbane .. .	488	575	767	882	859	847	859	905	983	1,061	1,079	1,206	1,247
Adelaide .. .	629	812	1,112	1,040	932	930	959	1,022	1,108	1,216	1,289	1,300	1,450
Perth .. .. .	801	084	810	914	848	869	874	885	916	996	1,055	1,092	1,124
Hobart .. .. .	667	708	805	914	928	928	951	956	1,134	1,373	1,440	1,445	1,602
Weighted Average*	751	810	1,000	1,136	1,081	1,081	1,098	1,143	1,215	1,333	1,404	1,480	1,551

ALL GROUPS COMBINED.—FOOD, GROCERIES, AND HOUSING.													
Sydney .. .. .	893	926	1,031	1,206	1,323	1,394	1,406	1,427	1,580	1,847	1,724	1,634	1,737
Melbourne ..	870	875	950	1,103	1,277	1,309	1,294	1,349	1,481	1,788	1,737	1,625	1,749
Brisbane .. .	769	794	915	997	1,162	1,188	1,181	1,232	1,442	1,645	1,511	1,442	1,510
Adelaide .. .	864	894	1,058	1,143	1,259	1,285	1,245	1,335	1,463	1,750	1,653	1,574	1,670
Perth .. .. .	1,027	986	1,126	1,148	1,222	1,266	1,246	1,239	1,420	1,617	1,609	1,495	1,538
Hobart .. .. .	869	836	954	1,090	1,233	1,278	1,301	1,356	1,496	1,837	1,785	1,651	1,756
Weighted Average*	880	807	1,000	1,140	1,278	1,324	1,318	1,362	1,510	1,785	1,697	1,600	1,700

Note.—As to basis of index-numbers, see remarks on pages 25 to 27.

\* For all capital cities.

† Index-numbers for years 1902-13 are given in Labour Report No. 6, p. 26.

(ii.) *Groceries (18 Commodities)*.—The index-number for this group was lower in 1923 than in 1922 in all the capitals except Melbourne. The decrease for all cities in 1923 compared with 1922 amounts to 0.2 per cent. ; compared with 1911 there has been an increase of 77.0 per cent. ; and compared with 1901 an increase of 94.1 per cent. The average cost in 1923 of the commodities included was highest in Sydney and lowest in Perth.

(iii.) *Dairy Produce (7 Commodities)*.—The index-numbers for this group were higher for 1923 than for 1922 in all the capitals. The index-number for all the cities in 1923 was 8.6 per cent. higher than in 1922, 76.7 per cent. higher than in 1911, and 87.0 per cent. higher than in 1901. The average cost in 1923 of the commodities was highest in Sydney and lowest in Hobart.

(iv.) *Meat (21 Cuts or Joints of Butcher's Meat)*.—The index-numbers for this group were higher in 1923 than in 1922 in all the capital cities. The index-number for all the cities in 1923 was 20.0 per cent. higher than in 1922 ; 90.4 per cent. higher than in 1911, and 72.9 per cent. higher than in 1901. The average cost for 1923 of the commodities included was highest in Hobart and lowest in Brisbane.

(v.) *Food and Groceries (Groups I., II., and III. combined)*.—The index-numbers for this group show the aggregate effect of movements in prices of commodities, apart from variations in house rent. There was an increase in 1923 as compared with 1922 in all the cities. Taking the weighted average for all the capitals, the prices of the 46 items of food and groceries specified on page 26 were 7.2 per cent. higher in 1923 than in 1922, 80.5 per cent. higher than in 1911, and 85.7 per cent. higher than in 1901. The average cost of these items for 1923 was highest in Hobart and lowest in Brisbane.

(vi.) *Housing*.—Except in Adelaide—where rents remained stationary from 1901 to 1904, and fell in 1913—and in Perth—where they decreased from 1903 to 1907, and again in 1908-9 and 1914—there was an increase in house rents in each of the capitals from 1901 to 1914. The abnormal situation due to the war resulted in entirely changed conditions for the years 1915 to 1923. For 1915 there was a decrease in the cost of housing in all the cities except Hobart, where there was a small increase. In 1916 Melbourne and Perth showed slight increases, Sydney, Brisbane, and Adelaide slight decreases, while the index-number for Hobart was the same for 1916 as for 1915. From 1917 to 1923, there was an increase in all the cities. The index-number for 1923 is 4.8 per cent. higher than for 1922, 55.1 per cent. higher

than for 1911, and 106.5 per cent. higher than for 1901. The greatest increase since 1901 has occurred in Brisbane (155.5 per cent.), followed in the order named by Hobart (140.2 per cent.), Adelaide (130.5 per cent.), Melbourne (128.1 per cent.), Sydney (88.4 per cent.), and Perth (40.3 per cent.).

(vii.) *Food, Groceries, and Housing combined.*—The weighted average index-numbers for the combined expenditure upon these items show an increase of 6.3 per cent. in 1923 compared with 1922, an increase of 70.0 per cent. compared with 1911, and 93.2 per cent. compared with 1901. The index-number was lower in 1904 than in any other year during the period covered by these investigations. It rose in 1905 and 1906, but fell in 1907. There was a substantial rise in 1908, followed by a slight decline in 1909. Further rises occurred in 1910 and 1911, and again in 1912, when the increase was considerable (10.1 per cent.). The index-number for 1913 was practically the same as for 1912, but in 1914 there was a rise of 3.2 per cent., in 1915 of 12.1 per cent., and in 1916 of 3.6 per cent. The index-number for 1917 was 0.5 per cent. lower than for 1916, but in 1918 there was a rise of 3.3 per cent. The figure for 1919 showed a rise of 10.9 per cent., and there was a further sharp rise of 18.2 per cent. for 1920, the highest recorded. The index-number for 1921 showed a decline of 4.9 per cent. compared with 1920, and that for 1922 was 5.7 per cent. less than the figure for 1921. For 1923 there was a rise of 6.3 per cent. on the figure for 1922.

Compared with 1911, the base-year of the period, the weighted average price index-number showed an increase of 70.0 per cent. for 1923. From 1901 to 1912 inclusive, the index-number for Perth was higher than for any other capital city, except for the year 1909. From 1913 to 1920 the figure for Sydney was the highest, and for 1921, 1922, and 1923 the index-number for Hobart was higher than for any other capital city.

6. **Retail Prices, Thirty Towns, 1919 to 1923.**—The following tables give index-numbers representing the variations in the cost of food and groceries (46 commodities), in 30 of the more important towns in Australia at yearly, quarterly, and monthly periods for the years specified. In addition, index-numbers are given showing for the years specified the quarterly and yearly variations in house rents and in the combined cost of food, groceries, and housing. As explained on pp. 31 and 32 of Labour Report No. 6, these are now computed to the same base as the index-numbers relating to the six capital cities, which go back to the year 1901.

Retail Price Index-Numbers 30 Towns, 1919 to 1923 : Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities in 1911 as Base\* (= 1,000).

	N.S.W.—INDEX-NUMBERS.						VICTORIA.—INDEX-NUMBERS.					
	Sydney.	Newcastle.	Broken Hill.	Goulburn.	Bathurst.	Weighted Average, N.S.W.	Melbourne.	Ballaarat.	Bendigo.	Ceeebong.	Warrnam-bool.	Weighted Average, Victoria.
FOOD AND GROCERIES—46 COMMODITIES.												
1919 ..	1,783	1,803	1,900	1,781	1,681	1,788	1,620	1,587	1,558	1,588	1,604	1,612
1920 ..	2,148	2,140	2,396	2,185	2,113	2,158	2,056	2,080	2,009	1,995	2,035	2,052
1921 ..	1,898	1,936	2,128	1,921	1,884	1,911	1,901	1,912	1,880	1,932	1,920	1,902
1922 ..	1,703	1,706	1,776	1,691	1,682	1,705	1,644	1,654	1,649	1,642	1,691	1,644
1923 ..	<b>1,820</b>	<b>1,838</b>	<b>1,999</b>	<b>1,855</b>	<b>1,766</b>	<b>1,826</b>	<b>1,802</b>	<b>1,793</b>	<b>1,796</b>	<b>1,757</b>	<b>1,750</b>	<b>1,800</b>
1922 1st Qtr.	1,644	1,653	1,705	1,674	1,608	1,647	1,577	1,605	1,585	1,588	1,531	1,579
2nd "	1,673	1,682	1,733	1,688	1,621	1,678	1,650	1,657	1,645	1,660	1,598	1,660
3rd "	1,756	1,753	1,808	1,697	1,657	1,755	1,699	1,694	1,702	1,689	1,644	1,698
4th "	1,739	1,735	1,801	1,707	1,644	1,739	1,650	1,657	1,665	1,630	1,591	1,650
1923 1st Qtr.	1,798	1,725	1,851	1,734	1,648	1,713	1,637	1,638	1,654	1,623	1,581	1,637
2nd "	1,826	1,808	1,976	1,842	1,744	1,828	1,827	1,778	1,804	1,748	1,745	1,829
3rd "	1,909	1,914	2,086	1,950	1,873	1,914	1,950	1,919	1,908	1,859	1,863	1,943
4th "	1,838	1,903	2,082	1,883	1,800	1,849	1,790	1,837	1,816	1,799	1,810	1,798
1923												
January ..	1,722	1,730	1,849	1,732	1,649	1,725	1,642	1,639	1,662	1,615	1,575	1,641
February ..	1,706	1,723	1,852	1,724	1,630	1,710	1,621	1,640	1,647	1,622	1,579	1,622
March ..	1,697	1,723	1,852	1,747	1,665	1,704	1,647	1,636	1,654	1,632	1,587	1,646
April ..	1,787	1,786	1,938	1,823	1,710	1,791	1,740	1,715	1,734	1,709	1,607	1,736
May ..	1,814	1,809	1,967	1,840	1,730	1,817	1,811	1,782	1,794	1,729	1,719	1,805
June ..	1,877	1,830	2,023	1,863	1,780	1,876	1,930	1,856	1,884	1,805	1,849	1,920
July ..	1,901	1,877	2,053	1,966	1,856	1,903	1,907	1,920	1,934	1,870	1,870	1,986
August ..	1,930	1,925	2,122	1,974	1,880	1,935	1,971	1,923	1,921	1,863	1,865	1,902
September ..	1,896	1,940	2,083	1,947	1,835	1,905	1,882	1,916	1,868	1,844	1,854	1,882
October ..	1,839	1,912	2,061	1,907	1,819	1,851	1,826	1,883	1,827	1,820	1,844	1,828
November ..	1,845	1,901	2,083	1,850	1,774	1,856	1,803	1,834	1,825	1,780	1,812	1,804
December ..	1,820	1,895	2,100	1,883	1,800	1,842	1,758	1,794	1,790	1,787	1,773	1,782

HOUSING—(ALL HOUSES).												
1919 ..	1,289	1,048	731	1,156	853	1,238	1,283	640	723	1,002	891	1,185
1920 ..	1,415	1,221	731	1,397	901	1,363	1,405	810	856	1,090	1,073	1,310
1921 ..	1,474	1,286	731	1,309	933	1,410	1,502	914	935	1,135	1,151	1,305
1922 ..	1,535	1,315	731	1,398	949	1,474	1,607	970	1,002	1,232	1,207	1,494
1923 ..	<b>1,617</b>	<b>1,349</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>1,551</b>	<b>995</b>	<b>1,566</b>	<b>1,672</b>	<b>1,075</b>	<b>1,065</b>	<b>1,330</b>	<b>1,301</b>	<b>1,610</b>
1922 1st Qtr.	1,511	1,300	731	1,375	949	1,453	1,553	954	975	1,206	1,191	1,454
2nd "	1,534	1,309	731	1,385	949	1,473	1,594	961	985	1,210	1,207	1,489
3rd "	1,544	1,320	731	1,405	949	1,482	1,606	1,016	991	1,214	1,215	1,503
4th "	1,550	1,331	731	1,425	949	1,489	1,633	984	1,058	1,298	1,216	1,531
1923 1st Qtr.	1,585	1,351	731	1,507	991	1,538	1,640	1,067	1,057	1,324	1,264	1,580
2nd "	1,627	1,348	766	1,620	991	1,570	1,671	1,074	1,070	1,332	1,304	1,610
3rd "	1,628	1,348	751	1,538	998	1,575	1,680	1,079	1,066	1,332	1,314	1,617
4th "	1,620	1,347	752	1,538	998	1,577	1,698	1,070	1,066	1,332	1,324	1,633

FOOD, GROCERIES, AND HOUSING.												
1919 ..	1,580	1,493	1,419	1,524	1,340	1,562	1,481	1,198	1,215	1,347	1,311	1,436
1920 ..	1,847	1,706	1,712	1,836	1,615	1,831	1,788	1,558	1,535	1,623	1,640	1,747
1921 ..	1,724	1,660	1,554	1,694	1,493	1,709	1,737	1,502	1,492	1,612	1,604	1,698
1922 ..	1,634	1,545	1,346	1,571	1,352	1,610	1,625	1,370	1,384	1,474	1,433	1,581
1923 ..	<b>1,737</b>	<b>1,637</b>	<b>1,466</b>	<b>1,730</b>	<b>1,449</b>	<b>1,719</b>	<b>1,749</b>	<b>1,498</b>	<b>1,495</b>	<b>1,582</b>	<b>1,566</b>	<b>1,722</b>
1922 1st Qtr.	1,589	1,508	1,305	1,551	1,337	1,567	1,567	1,337	1,334	1,431	1,391	1,528
2nd "	1,616	1,529	1,356	1,563	1,345	1,594	1,627	1,371	1,374	1,475	1,437	1,584
3rd "	1,689	1,575	1,382	1,577	1,366	1,643	1,661	1,416	1,410	1,494	1,468	1,618
4th "	1,681	1,560	1,361	1,592	1,358	1,636	1,643	1,380	1,416	1,494	1,437	1,601
1923 1st Qtr.	1,658	1,571	1,391	1,641	1,378	1,641	1,638	1,403	1,400	1,500	1,450	1,614
2nd "	1,744	1,619	1,479	1,751	1,435	1,724	1,703	1,488	1,502	1,577	1,564	1,734
3rd "	1,793	1,682	1,537	1,780	1,514	1,775	1,839	1,574	1,562	1,642	1,638	1,809
4th "	1,762	1,675	1,535	1,741	1,470	1,737	1,750	1,525	1,508	1,607	1,610	1,731

\* See explanatory note at head of page 20.



Retail Price Index-Numbers 30 Towns 1919 to 1923 : Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities in 1911 as Base\* (= 1,000)—continued.

	QUEENSLAND—INDEX-NUMBERS						SOUTH AUSTRALIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.					
	Brisbane.	Toowoomba	Rockhampton.	Charters Towers.	Warwick	Weighted Average, Queensland	Adelaide.	Kadina, Mount, and Whyalla.	Port Pirie.	Mt Gambier	Peterborough.	Weighted Average, S.A.
FOOD AND GROCERIES (46 COMMODITIES).												
1919	1,762	1,800	1,827	1,999	1,807	1,792	1,719	1,703	1,744	1,580	1,731	1,716
1920	2,052	1,999	2,067	2,133	2,045	2,065	2,132	2,089	2,096	1,976	2,092	2,123
1921	1,812	1,714	1,834	1,601	1,817	1,813	1,906	1,913	1,960	1,882	1,934	1,909
1922	1,808	1,539	1,618	1,696	1,579	1,609	1,723	1,710	1,725	1,628	1,702	1,720
1923	1,693	1,679	1,738	1,825	1,677	1,700	1,823	1,777	1,809	1,764	1,801	1,819
1922 1st Qtr	1,611	1,516	1,622	1,713	1,578	1,610	1,670	1,663	1,729	1,584	1,747	1,671
2nd "	1,597	1,494	1,600	1,674	1,564	1,592	1,777	1,749	1,777	1,651	1,785	1,772
3rd "	1,613	1,561	1,627	1,659	1,599	1,615	1,756	1,739	1,724	1,648	1,768	1,750
4th "	1,610	1,585	1,617	1,716	1,574	1,610	1,690	1,692	1,671	1,621	1,748	1,683
1923 1st Qtr	1,615	1,567	1,652	1,741	1,591	1,618	1,704	1,718	1,668	1,629	1,756	1,703
2nd "	1,677	1,640	1,701	1,798	1,651	1,680	1,847	1,798	1,801	1,753	1,836	1,842
3rd "	1,720	1,736	1,708	1,860	1,713	1,730	1,803	1,801	1,865	1,833	1,803	1,866
4th "	1,759	1,772	1,830	1,909	1,754	1,772	1,848	1,791	1,822	1,800	1,810	1,846
1923.												
January	1,630	1,580	1,682	1,741	1,571	1,634	1,709	1,723	1,683	1,625	1,764	1,708
February	1,698	1,565	1,641	1,739	1,603	1,612	1,697	1,715	1,690	1,622	1,748	1,697
March	1,698	1,556	1,631	1,713	1,597	1,609	1,704	1,716	1,691	1,636	1,756	1,703
April	1,679	1,617	1,680	1,760	1,629	1,677	1,753	1,757	1,761	1,781	1,861	1,781
May	1,658	1,664	1,706	1,843	1,666	1,670	1,830	1,798	1,811	1,736	1,857	1,835
June	1,694	1,740	1,716	1,783	1,657	1,694	1,918	1,838	1,830	1,791	1,849	1,910
July	1,718	1,720	1,772	1,817	1,704	1,726	1,922	1,793	1,863	1,848	1,798	1,914
August	1,724	1,749	1,767	1,892	1,712	1,736	1,907	1,838	1,869	1,838	1,815	1,900
September	1,718	1,741	1,765	1,870	1,725	1,729	1,848	1,772	1,863	1,813	1,796	1,845
October	1,743	1,741	1,773	1,858	1,711	1,748	1,816	1,764	1,857	1,808	1,804	1,815
November	1,765	1,781	1,841	1,921	1,736	1,777	1,821	1,797	1,884	1,784	1,832	1,821
December	1,770	1,803	1,876	1,949	1,814	1,780	1,908	1,812	1,904	1,808	1,795	1,801

HOUSING (ALL HOUSES).

1919	963	831	807	701	811	921	1,108	701	996	708	851	1,068
1920	1,061	969	826	731	884	905	1,216	829	961	740	911	1,163
1921	1,079	1,028	815	736	960	937	1,280	847	902	753	937	1,225
1922	1,206	997	879	758	954	1,107	1,360	853	936	759	924	1,287
1923	1,247	1,168	883	771	1,067	1,188	1,450	885	945	759	972	1,394
1922 1st Qtr	1,166	989	857	761	950	1,077	1,340	871	931	759	937	1,271
2nd "	1,204	900	866	751	950	1,103	1,351	854	937	759	937	1,260
3rd "	1,222	995	892	761	990	1,120	1,362	847	939	759	937	1,289
4th "	1,231	1,015	900	761	957	1,128	1,386	840	939	759	887	1,308
1923 1st Qtr	1,247	1,172	874	767	1,059	1,187	1,427	891	940	759	929	1,383
2nd "	1,247	1,167	874	767	1,050	1,187	1,456	892	941	759	950	1,409
3rd "	1,247	1,167	893	767	1,056	1,188	1,458	882	941	759	1,004	1,402
4th "	1,249	1,168	893	783	1,056	1,190	1,458	876	958	759	1,004	1,402

FOOD, GROCERIES AND HOUSING.

1919	1,442	1,402	1,408	1,454	1,398	1,434	1,468	1,330	1,424	1,222	1,360	1,440
1920	1,645	1,576	1,557	1,557	1,568	1,519	1,756	1,571	1,630	1,468	1,607	1,728
1921	1,511	1,432	1,424	1,423	1,468	1,486	1,653	1,476	1,525	1,418	1,536	1,628
1922	1,442	1,317	1,313	1,312	1,322	1,403	1,574	1,358	1,401	1,270	1,418	1,543
1923	1,510	1,469	1,387	1,382	1,422	1,490	1,670	1,411	1,454	1,345	1,460	1,647
1922 1st Qtr	1,428	1,300	1,307	1,322	1,320	1,391	1,534	1,337	1,401	1,245	1,414	1,507
2nd "	1,435	1,287	1,298	1,295	1,312	1,391	1,602	1,381	1,432	1,284	1,437	1,570
3rd "	1,452	1,328	1,325	1,308	1,336	1,412	1,594	1,372	1,401	1,282	1,427	1,601
4th "	1,454	1,351	1,322	1,323	1,320	1,416	1,565	1,342	1,370	1,267	1,394	1,532
1923 1st Qtr	1,464	1,405	1,332	1,335	1,373	1,441	1,590	1,378	1,381	1,271	1,416	1,571
2nd "	1,500	1,440	1,361	1,375	1,400	1,477	1,686	1,426	1,447	1,344	1,471	1,664
3rd "	1,525	1,502	1,408	1,411	1,443	1,507	1,714	1,423	1,486	1,302	1,475	1,687
4th "	1,549	1,524	1,445	1,446	1,467	1,533	1,688	1,415	1,502	1,372	1,470	1,664

\* See note at head of page 29.

Retail Price Index-Numbers 30 Towns 1919 to 1923: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities in 1911 as Base (= 1,000)—continued.

	WESTERN AUSTRALIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.						TASMANIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.						Weighted Average of Capital Towns.	Weighted Average of 30 Towns, Australia.
	Perth.	Kalgoorlie.	Northam.	Bunbury.	Geraldton.	Weighted Average, W.A.	Hobart.	Launceston.	Burnie.*	Devonport.*	Queenstown.	Weighted Average, Tasmania.		
<b>FOOD AND GROCERIES (46 COMMODITIES).</b>														
1910 ..	1,772	2,030	..	1,851	1,761	1,827	1,747	1,703	..	..	1,883	1,740	1,716	1,722
1920 ..	2,050	2,302	..	2,055	2,071	2,103	2,162	2,103	..	..	2,149	2,146	2,101	2,104
1921 ..	1,995	2,207	..	2,029	2,017	2,042	1,925	1,934	..	..	2,058	2,000	1,902	1,911
1922 ..	1,776	1,995	..	1,866	1,840	1,828	1,794	1,709	..	..	1,842	1,774	1,684	1,688
1923 ..	1,828	2,101	1,962	1,840	1,918	1,861	1,863	1,820	1,883	1,955	1,953	1,854	1,805	1,808
1922 1st Qtr.	1,738	1,935	..	1,842	1,777	1,786	1,793	1,684	..	..	1,815	1,762	1,630	1,637
2nd "	1,829	2,024	..	1,895	1,866	1,875	1,819	1,710	..	..	1,848	1,793	1,684	1,688
3rd "	1,813	2,048	..	1,873	1,880	1,860	1,808	1,718	..	..	1,849	1,786	1,729	1,731
4th "	1,723	1,972	..	1,807	1,838	1,782	1,750	1,716	..	..	1,852	1,755	1,691	1,695
1923 1st Qtr.	1,737	1,996	1,858	1,749	1,874	1,770	1,774	1,707	1,717	1,731	1,923	1,753	1,680	1,684
2nd "	1,920	2,178	2,003	1,914	1,940	1,950	1,959	1,776	1,862	1,843	1,909	1,837	1,673	1,622
3rd "	1,865	2,140	2,025	1,887	1,938	1,890	1,812	1,806	1,968	1,931	2,017	1,915	1,801	1,801
4th "	1,788	2,081	1,961	1,809	1,912	1,825	1,904	1,893	1,984	1,915	2,056	1,911	1,816	1,825
<b>1923.</b>														
January ..	1,782	1,938	1,848	1,755	1,864	1,760	1,801	1,709	1,707	1,731	1,821	1,769	1,689	1,692
February ..	1,727	2,024	1,867	1,743	1,876	1,765	1,760	1,704	1,715	1,719	1,827	1,743	1,672	1,677
March ..	1,752	2,025	1,860	1,750	1,883	1,780	1,762	1,710	1,720	1,743	1,834	1,748	1,679	1,684
April ..	1,876	2,143	1,942	1,840	1,930	1,906	1,838	1,744	1,801	1,821	1,867	1,810	1,769	1,771
May ..	1,947	2,183	2,036	1,943	1,962	1,975	1,861	1,771	1,868	1,842	1,912	1,837	1,813	1,814
June ..	1,939	2,198	2,030	1,959	1,954	1,969	1,860	1,814	1,917	1,806	1,949	1,895	1,887	1,883
July ..	1,893	2,172	2,038	1,964	1,953	1,927	1,902	1,861	1,953	1,929	1,964	1,896	1,818	1,814
August ..	1,878	2,153	2,029	1,894	1,943	1,911	1,814	1,859	1,953	1,939	2,049	1,915	1,819	1,815
September ..	1,823	2,123	2,068	1,890	1,919	1,901	1,821	1,939	1,997	1,925	2,038	1,933	1,886	1,872
October ..	1,812	2,098	2,023	1,853	1,927	1,849	1,938	1,900	2,006	1,922	2,025	1,893	1,824	1,832
November ..	1,776	2,093	1,959	1,794	1,920	1,816	1,892	1,888	1,997	1,945	2,001	1,903	1,818	1,827
December ..	1,776	2,052	1,901	1,778	1,889	1,810	1,883	1,906	1,947	1,878	2,082	1,808	1,807	1,817
<b>HOUSING (ALL HOUSES).</b>														
1910 ..	916	836	..	593	944	881	1,134	981	..	..	603	975	1,215	1,137
1920 ..	998	851	..	619	976	944	1,373	1,096	..	..	619	1,143	1,333	1,251
1921 ..	1,055	843	..	710	992	992	1,440	1,149	..	..	622	1,198	1,404	1,317
1922 ..	1,092	826	..	826	978	1,020	1,445	1,206	..	..	622	1,246	1,490	1,385
1923 ..	1,124	811	834	897	976	1,077	1,502	1,395	1,301	1,382	623	1,487	1,561	1,489
1922 1st Qtr.	1,080	847	..	783	939	1,015	1,415	1,227	..	..	622	1,208	1,449	1,358
2nd "	1,093	836	..	812	943	1,023	1,449	1,249	..	..	622	1,234	1,478	1,381
3rd "	1,094	815	..	840	912	1,019	1,452	1,327	..	..	622	1,260	1,489	1,383
4th "	1,102	806	..	869	909	1,023	1,463	1,379	..	..	622	1,283	1,505	1,409
1923 1st Qtr.	1,119	806	823	895	921	1,072	1,520	1,393	1,299	1,353	622	1,436	1,519	1,462
2nd "	1,120	803	838	897	1,013	1,082	1,615	1,396	1,299	1,375	622	1,495	1,551	1,480
3rd "	1,122	816	838	897	988	1,076	1,628	1,395	1,299	1,400	622	1,504	1,559	1,496
4th "	1,126	817	838	900	988	1,080	1,646	1,395	1,308	1,400	622	1,515	1,566	1,503
<b>FOOD, GROCERIES, AND HOUSING</b>														
1910 ..	1,420	1,545	..	1,309	1,425	1,438	1,496	1,409	..	..	1,357	1,431	1,510	1,481
1920 ..	1,617	1,706	..	1,465	1,621	1,627	1,837	1,692	..	..	1,521	1,734	1,875	1,753
1921 ..	1,600	1,647	..	1,487	1,596	1,611	1,785	1,612	..	..	1,468	1,671	1,697	1,668
1922 ..	1,495	1,515	..	1,432	1,465	1,406	1,651	1,539	..	..	1,341	1,557	1,600	1,564
1923 ..	1,538	1,571	1,489	1,452	1,632	1,539	1,756	1,649	1,644	1,661	1,496	1,704	1,760	1,617
1922 1st Qtr.	1,467	1,488	..	1,407	1,433	1,409	1,637	1,496	..	..	1,326	1,535	1,586	1,522
2nd "	1,526	1,536	..	1,450	1,487	1,525	1,667	1,526	..	..	1,344	1,593	1,599	1,562
3rd "	1,517	1,541	..	1,451	1,482	1,529	1,607	1,557	..	..	1,345	1,570	1,630	1,592
4th "	1,468	1,493	..	1,421	1,456	1,470	1,636	1,577	..	..	1,347	1,561	1,614	1,578
1923 1st Qtr.	1,483	1,607	1,433	1,398	1,482	1,483	1,670	1,578	1,545	1,576	1,332	1,623	1,614	1,593
2nd "	1,595	1,613	1,524	1,496	1,564	1,593	1,759	1,620	1,631	1,659	1,380	1,697	1,711	1,686
3rd "	1,559	1,601	1,537	1,489	1,548	1,561	1,798	1,680	1,693	1,713	1,444	1,740	1,760	1,735
4th "	1,516	1,562	1,500	1,435	1,533	1,510	1,798	1,691	1,706	1,703	1,467	1,748	1,713	1,693

\* The Towns of Midland Junction (W.A.), Zeehan (Tas.), and Beaconsfield (Tas.), were replaced in 1923 by Northam (W.A.), Burnie (Tas.), and Devonport (Tas.).  
 † See note at head of page 29.

In so far as they relate to the capital cities the index-numbers in these tables are comparable in every respect with those given on page 29 for the respective groups, and where they relate to the same period are identical in both tables.

The index-numbers in the separate parts of the table cannot be directly compared with one another in order to show the relative cost of (say) housing and food and groceries, since the weighted average cost in 1911 is in each case made equal to 1,000.

The last columns in each of the tables above refer to the weighted average for the 30 towns. The method of computing these weighted average index-numbers is explained in Report No. 1, page 35. The population weights used for 1923 in the computations were as follows:—

Population Weights Used for Different Towns.

Town.	Weight.	Town.	Weight.	Town.	Weight.	Town.	Weight.	Town.	Weight.	Town.	Weight.
Sydney ..	899	Melbourne	766	Brisbane	510	Adelaide	255	Perth, etc.	155	Hobart	52
Newcastle	84	Ballarat ..	36	T'woomba	21	Kadma, etc	13	Kalg'lie, etc	19	Launceston	24
Broken Hill	23	Bendigo ..	30	Rockham'n	24	Pt. Pirie	10	Northam	4	Burnie ..	3
Goulburn	13	Geelong ..	32	Chits Twrs	9	Mt Gamb'r	4	Bunbury	4	Devonport	5
Lathurst	9	W'nambo'l	8	Warwick	6	Peterbor'gh	2	Geraldton	4	Queenst'wn	3

The weights differ from those given in previous issues of this Report inasmuch as they are based on the 1921 Census populations, whereas those given previously relate to the population as recorded at the 1911 Census.

7. **Relative Retail Prices, 30 Towns, with Houses of Various Sizes, 1923.**—(i.) *General.*—The figures in the next table represent the relative index-numbers for 1923 for the 30 towns in respect of which particulars are regularly collected, and show the different results obtained by taking into account houses of various sizes. These index-numbers are comparable in all respects. The first column gives the relative expenditure on groceries and food; the second, third, fourth, and fifth columns show expenditure on housing for houses of four, five, and six rooms, and for all houses respectively; while the remaining columns relate to food and groceries combined with housing.

1923.—Relative Index-Numbers, 30 Towns, Food and Groceries and Housing compared with Weighted Average Expenditure on Food, Groceries, and Rent (all Houses) in the Six Capital Cities in 1911 as Base (= 1,000).

TOWN.	Food and Groceries.	HOUSING.				FOOD, GROCERIES, AND RENT OF—			
		Four-roomed Houses.	Five-roomed Houses.	Six-roomed Houses.	All Houses.	Four-roomed Houses.	Five-roomed Houses.	Six-roomed Houses.	All Houses.
<b>NEW SOUTH WALES—</b>									
Sydney .. .. .	1,072	521	616	743	665	1,593	1,088	1,815	1,737
Newcastle .. .. .	1,083	411	560	709	554	1,494	1,041	1,792	1,637
Broken Hill* .. .. .	1,177	283	350	429	309	1,460	1,530	1,006	1,486
Goulburn .. .. .	1,093	476	575	703	637	1,560	1,668	1,796	1,730
Bathurst .. .. .	1,040	280	369	477	409	1,320	1,400	1,517	1,449
Weighted Average .. .. .	1,076	503	602	729	643	1,579	1,078	1,805	1,719
<b>VICTORIA—</b>									
Melbourne .. .. .	1,062	475	619	804	687	1,537	1,681	1,866	1,749
Ballarat .. .. .	1,056	375	380	471	442	1,321	1,430	1,527	1,498
Geelong .. .. .	1,058	302	399	531	437	1,360	1,457	1,589	1,495
Geelong .. .. .	1,035	373	503	620	547	1,408	1,538	1,664	1,682
Warrnambool .. .. .	1,031	377	499	615	535	1,408	1,530	1,646	1,566
Weighted Average .. .. .	1,060	457	596	773	662	1,517	1,656	1,833	1,722
<b>QUEENSLAND—</b>									
Brisbane .. .. .	997	333	448	576	513	1,330	1,445	1,573	1,510
Toowoomba .. .. .	980	289	373	482	480	1,278	1,392	1,471	1,469
Rockhampton .. .. .	1,024	243	287	397	303	1,267	1,311	1,421	1,387
Charters Towers .. .. .	1,075	258	336	407	317	1,333	1,411	1,482	1,392
Warwick .. .. .	988	273	381	448	434	1,261	1,369	1,430	1,422
Weighted Average .. .. .	1,001	318	422	544	480	1,319	1,423	1,545	1,400
<b>SOUTH AUSTRALIA—</b>									
Adelaide .. .. .	1,074	442	592	716	596	1,516	1,666	1,790	1,670
Moonta, etc. .. .. .	1,047	250	377	442	364	1,327	1,424	1,489	1,411
Port Pirie* .. .. .	1,066	320	416	500	388	1,335	1,483	1,566	1,454
Mt. Gambier .. .. .	1,033	235	303	377	312	1,268	1,336	1,410	1,345
Peterborough .. .. .	1,061	309	380	487	399	1,370	1,447	1,548	1,400
Weighted Average .. .. .	1,072	427	571	690	575	1,499	1,643	1,762	1,647
<b>WESTERN AUSTRALIA—</b>									
Perth, etc. .. .. .	1,077	399	492	583	461	1,470	1,569	1,660	1,538
Calgoorlie, etc. .. .. .	1,238	343	407	477	333	1,581	1,645	1,715	1,571
Northern .. .. .	1,156	352	451	557	343	1,598	1,607	1,713	1,499
Manbury .. .. .	1,084	302	468	556	383	1,446	1,552	1,640	1,452
Geraldton .. .. .	1,130	437	628	644	402	1,507	1,658	1,774	1,532
Weighted Average .. .. .	1,096	393	483	573	443	1,489	1,579	1,669	1,539
<b>TASMANIA—</b>									
Hobart .. .. .	1,097	452	620	706	659	1,540	1,726	1,803	1,756
Lancaster .. .. .	1,072	376	545	688	573	1,448	1,617	1,760	1,645
Burnie .. .. .	1,109	411	582	718	535	1,520	1,691	1,827	1,644
Devonport .. .. .	1,093	417	530	646	568	1,510	1,622	1,739	1,661
Queenstown .. .. .	1,150	263	342	369	256	1,413	1,492	1,519	1,406
Weighted Average .. .. .	1,092	421	580	740	612	1,513	1,681	1,832	1,704
<b>Weighted Average 30 Towns, Australia .. .. .</b>	<b>1,065</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>1,635</b>	<b>1,775</b>	<b>1,677</b>

\* See Remarks on page 36 with reference to house rents.

The rent for all houses is obtained separately for each of the 30 towns by weighting the rent paid for each class of house by the number of houses in each class in each town. When houses of one particular size only are included, different results are obtained.

The figures in the last four columns give expenditure on food and groceries combined with expenditure on rent, for each of the three classes of houses and also for all houses.

Expenditure in each town for food, groceries, and housing was multiplied by a number representing the population of the town, and a weighted result for all towns was thus computed. The weights used are given on page 38. The relative expenditure in each town for (a) food and groceries, (b) housing, and (c) food, groceries, and housing combined, is shown, the base being the weighted average expenditure in the six capital cities for 1911 = 1,000. Therefore, in each horizontal line the sum of the index-number for food and groceries and that for rent is equal to the index-number for food, groceries, and housing combined, taking the corresponding house-rent group. The items in the table are comparable in all respects, and in addition show the proportionate cost of food and groceries and of housing. For example, taking the last line in the table, the weighted average expenditure for all the towns on food, groceries, and housing being £1,677, the expenditure on food and groceries alone is £1,065 (1st column), and the average rental £612 (5th column), the sum of the two latter amounts being £1,677. Again, if it be desired to ascertain the relative expenditure for food and groceries and rent of four-roomed houses, it will be found that the figures are £1,065 and £452, which, together, amount to £1,517 (6th column). In addition to showing the relative cost of food and groceries and house rent (for different classes of houses) in each town individually, the table also furnishes comparisons as to the relative cost of these items as between the several towns. Thus, taking food and groceries only (1st column), commodities which would cost £1,072 in Sydney can be purchased for £1,062 in Melbourne, or £1,074 in Adelaide. Again, taking the combined expenditure on food, groceries, and house rent for houses of five rooms (7th column), an expenditure of £1,681 in Melbourne is equivalent to £1,688 in Sydney, £1,666 in Adelaide, £1,645 in Kalgoorlie, or £1,658 in Geraldton.

The index-numbers are reversible, and may be used for comparisons between any of the towns included. Thus, if the average weekly rental of five-roomed houses in Melbourne is 23s. 6d. and the average rental of similar houses in Bendigo is required, the rental in Melbourne must be multiplied by the index-number for five-roomed houses in Bendigo and divided by the index-number for Melbourne (3rd column);  $23s. 6d. \times \frac{399}{619} = 15s. 2d.$  (see Appendix II.).

(ii.) *Food and Groceries.*—The weighted average of the five towns was below the weighted average for all towns for 1923 in Victoria and Queensland, and above it in the other States. The most expensive towns are Kalgoorlie, in Western Australia, and Broken Hill, in New South Wales; Kalgoorlie being 16.2 per cent., and Broken Hill 10.5 per cent. above the weighted average for all towns.

(iii.) *Housing.*—For four-roomed houses, Sydney, Melbourne, and Hobart are the most expensive towns. For five-roomed houses, Hobart, Melbourne, and Sydney are dearest, while six-roomed houses are dearest in Melbourne, Hobart, and Sydney. Taking all houses, Melbourne, Sydney, and Hobart are the most expensive, while Queenstown and Broken Hill are the cheapest towns.

In Broken Hill and Port Pirie for some time after the outbreak of war a number of houses were occupied at purely nominal or reduced rentals by families in which the wage-earner was out of employment, and it was not until the latter half of 1916 that normal conditions were resumed. In 1919, 1920, and 1921 industrial troubles in Broken Hill brought about similar conditions to those in 1914–15. For some years, therefore, the average rents in these towns have been computed in accordance with special investigations quarterly.

(iv.) *Food and Groceries and Housing combined.*—The last column in the foregoing table shows the relative cost of commodities and housing accommodation for all houses in each town during 1923. The average cost was greatest in Hobart, followed by Melbourne and Sydney. The index-number for Hobart was 4.7 per cent., Melbourne 4.3 per cent., and Sydney 3.6 per cent., above the weighted average cost for all towns. The cost was least in Mt. Gambier.

8. **Retail Price Index-Numbers in Terms of Currency.**—In the next table the average cost for the six capital cities in the year 1911 has been taken as base = 20s. The figures measure the variations in the cost of the regimen referred to on page 26 from year to year in each city separately (in the vertical lines), and the relative cost in the several cities in each year (in the horizontal lines). Thus, 20s. 7d. in Sydney in 1911 was equivalent to 18s. 4d. in Brisbane, or 19s. 1d. in Hobart, while 35s. 1d. in Melbourne for the last quarter of 1923 was equivalent to 15s. 5d. in Brisbane in 1901, or 22s. 6d. in Perth in 1911.

Retail Prices—Amounts necessary on the Average in each Year specified from 1901 to 1924 (1st Quarter) to purchase in each Capital City what would have cost on the average £1 in 1911 in the Capitals regarded as a whole.

Year.	Sydney.	Melb'ne.	Brisbane.	Adelaide.	Perth.	Hobart.	Weighted Average of 6 Capital Cities.
<b>FOOD AND GROCERIES (46 COMMODITIES).</b>							
	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>
1901 ..	18 4	19 4	19 4	20 7	23 8	20 3	19 4
1907 ..	18 9	18 6	18 11	19 0	23 11	20 2	19 1
1911 ..	19 9	18 8	20 4	20 5	26 11	21 2	20 0*
1918 ..	31 0	29 4	29 11	31 1	29 9	32 8	30 3
1919 ..	35 8	32 5	35 3	34 5	35 5	35 0	34 4
1920 ..	43 0	41 1	41 1	42 8	41 0	43 3	42 0
1921 ..	38 0	38 0	36 3	38 1	40 0	40 6	38 0
1922 ..	34 1	32 11	32 2	34 6	35 6	35 11	33 8
1923 ..	<b>36 5</b>	<b>36 1</b>	<b>33 10</b>	<b>36 6</b>	<b>36 7</b>	<b>37 3</b>	<b>36 1</b>
1923 1st Qtr.	34 2	32 9	32 4	34 1	34 9	35 6	33 7
" 2nd Qtr.	36 6	36 6	33 6	36 11	38 5	37 2	36 6
" 3rd Qtr.	38 2	39 0	34 5	37 10	37 4	38 3	38 0
" 4th Qtr.	36 9	35 11	35 2	37 0	35 9	38 1	36 4
1924 1st Qtr.	35 8	34 7	35 2	36 11	37 6	37 11	35 7

<b>HOUSE RENT (WEIGHTED AVERAGE ALL HOUSES).</b>							
	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>
1901 ..	17 3	14 8	9 9	12 7	16 0	13 4	15 1
1907 ..	18 4	16 1	11 6	16 3	13 8	14 2	16 4
1911 ..	21 10	19 5	15 4	22 3	16 3	16 1	20 0*
1918 ..	25 0	23 7	18 1	20 5	17 8	19 1	22 10
1919 ..	25 9	25 8	19 8	22 2	18 4	22 8	24 4
1920 ..	28 4	28 1	21 3	24 4	19 11	27 5	26 8
1921 ..	29 6	30 0	21 7	25 9	21 0	28 10	28 1
1922 ..	30 8	31 11	24 1	27 2	21 10	28 11	29 7
1923 ..	<b>32 4</b>	<b>33 5</b>	<b>24 11</b>	<b>29 0</b>	<b>22 6</b>	<b>32 1</b>	<b>31 0</b>
1923 1st Qtr.	31 8	32 9	24 11	28 6	22 5	30 5	30 4
" 2nd Qtr.	32 6	33 5	24 11	29 1	22 7	32 4	31 0
" 3rd Qtr.	32 7	33 7	24 11	29 2	22 5	32 7	31 2
" 4th Qtr.	32 7	34 0	25 0	29 2	22 6	32 11	31 4
1924 1st Qtr.	33 1	34 1	24 10	29 4	22 7	33 3	31 7

<b>FOOD, GROCERIES, AND HOUSE RENT COMBINED.</b>							
	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>
1901 ..	17 10	17 5	15 5	17 3	20 6	17 5	17 7
1907 ..	18 6	17 6	15 11	17 11	19 9	17 9	17 11
1911 ..	20 7	19 0	18 4	21 2	22 6	19 1	20 0*
1918 ..	28 6	27 0	25 1	26 8	24 9	27 1	27 3
1919 ..	31 7	29 7	28 10	29 4	28 5	29 11	30 2
1920 ..	36 11	35 9	32 11	35 1	32 4	36 9	35 8
1921 ..	34 6	34 10	30 3	33 1	32 2	35 8	33 11
1922 ..	32 8	32 6	28 10	31 6	29 11	33 0	32 0
1923 ..	<b>34 9</b>	<b>35 0</b>	<b>30 2</b>	<b>33 5</b>	<b>30 9</b>	<b>35 1</b>	<b>34 0</b>
1923 1st Qtr.	33 2	32 9	29 2	31 10	29 8	33 5	32 3
" 2nd Qtr.	34 11	35 3	30 0	33 9	31 11	35 2	34 3
" 3rd Qtr.	35 10	36 9	30 6	34 3	31 2	35 11	35 2
" 4th Qtr.	35 1	35 1	31 0	33 9	30 4	36 0	34 3
1924 1st Qtr.	34 7	34 4	30 11	33 10	31 4	36 0	33 11

\* Base of each Section.

9. Price Details, 1923.—The summarized results of price-movements are published quarterly, and the actual prices of food and groceries for each month are published in the Quarterly Summary of Statistics. Full information with regard to house rents is published annually. In appendixes to Report No. 1, particulars were given of prices and house rents in the capital cities in each year from 1901 to 1911, and in appendixes to Report No. 2, similar particulars were given of prices and house rents in 1912 for each of the 30 towns from which returns are collected.

Corresponding data for subsequent years were given in the Report as follows:—1913, Report No. 5; 1914 and 1915, No. 6; 1916, No. 7; 1917, No. 8; 1918, No. 9; 1919, No. 10; 1920, No. 11; 1921, No. 12; 1922, No. 13; and 1923 in this Report.

10. **Comparisons with previous years.**—The following tables show for each capital city (i.) the total variation per cent. in the cost of food, groceries, and housing combined for 1923, as compared with preceding years; and (ii.), the amount of such variation due to (a) prices of food and groceries, and (b) house rent. The sum of the percentages for any year and city in the second and third sections of the table is equal to the corresponding total percentage in the first section. Thus, the total percentage of increase in cost of food, groceries, and house rent in Sydney for 1923 compared with 1907 is 87.6 per cent., of which percentage 56.3 is due to increased cost of food and groceries, and 31.3 to increase in house rents.

Variation per cent. in Price Index-Numbers, Capital Cities, 1901 to 1923.

Year.	Sydney.	Melbourne	Brisbane.	Adelaide.	Perth.	Hobart.	Weighted Average for 6 Capital Cities.
1901 ..	94.5	101.1	96.2	93.2	49.8	101.9	93.4
1907 ..	87.6	99.7	90.1	86.7	56.0	98.1	89.0
1914 ..	44.0	58.2	51.4	46.1	34.6	61.1	49.1
1915 ..	31.3	37.0	29.9	32.6	25.9	42.4	33.9
1919 ..	9.9	18.1	4.7	13.8	8.3	17.4	12.6
1920 ..	-5.9	-2.2	-8.2	-4.9	-4.8	-4.5	-4.8
1921 ..	6.8	0.7	-0.1	1.0	-4.4	-1.7	0.2
1922 ..	6.3	7.6	4.7	6.0	2.9	6.4	6.3

VARIATION DUE TO PRICES OF FOOD AND GROCERIES.

1901 ..	59.6	50.7	55.7	54.2	36.9	57.7	56.0
1907 ..	56.3	59.0	55.3	57.4	37.7	56.7	55.9
1914 ..	32.5	37.9	36.3	31.4	27.1	35.2	34.1
1915 ..	18.9	18.1	16.2	15.7	16.6	19.9	17.9
1919 ..	1.4	7.3	-2.8	4.2	2.3	4.5	3.5
1920 ..	-10.4	-8.3	-12.9	-10.4	-8.1	-9.6	-9.8
1921 ..	-2.6	-3.3	-4.7	-3.0	-6.2	-5.4	-3.4
1922 ..	4.2	5.7	3.5	3.7	2.0	2.5	4.5

VARIATION DUE TO HOUSE RENTS.

1901 ..	34.9	44.4	40.5	39.0	12.9	44.2	37.4
1907 ..	31.3	40.7	34.8	29.3	18.3	41.4	33.7
1914 ..	11.6	20.3	16.1	14.7	7.5	25.9	16.0
1915 ..	12.4	18.9	13.7	16.9	9.8	22.5	15.1
1919 ..	8.5	10.8	7.5	9.6	6.0	12.9	9.1
1920 ..	4.5	6.1	4.7	5.5	3.3	5.1	5.0
1921 ..	3.4	4.0	4.6	4.0	1.8	3.7	3.6
1922 ..	2.1	1.9	1.2	2.3	0.9	3.9	1.8

NOTE.—Variations not preceded by a sign represent increases, those preceded by a minus (—) represent decreases.