

COMMONWEALTH BUREAU OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS
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WHOLESALE PRICE (BASIC MATERIALS AND FOODSTUFFS) INDEX
NOVEMBER, 1959

1. The summary overleaf contains particulars of the Wholesale Price (Basic Materials and Foodstuffs) Index from 1936-37 to the present time.
2. A list of the commodities and other information concerning the index is set out in Labour Report No. 46, 1958. (See also paragraph 6 below).
3. Commodities in the index are priced in their primary or basic form wherever possible and as nearly as may be at the point where they first make effective impact on the Australian price structure. The prices of imported goods, for instance, are on an ex-bond or into factory basis.
4. The prices used have, in the main, been obtained directly from manufacturers and merchants. With a few important exceptions, they are from Melbourne sources.
5. The weights are based on estimates of the average annual consumption of the commodities in Australia during the period 1928-29 to 1934-35. The index is constructed on the aggregative fixed weights formula.
6. During 1956, supplies and prices of potatoes and onions fluctuated violently upwards and downwards between abnormally wide limits. These fluctuations were so great as to dominate the movement of the sections of the index in which these items were included, namely, "Foodstuffs and Tobacco", "Goods Principally Home Produced" and "Total All Groups". In the circumstances of the case, neither seasonal adjustment nor conversion of the index to a "changing weights" formula could be applied to eliminate the transient fluctuations. Accordingly, in order to provide a representative measure of general trend in wholesale prices, the index was reconstructed as from the base period by omitting potatoes and onions. Indexes for November, 1959, comparable with previous indexes including potatoes and onions, are shown in a footnote to the table overleaf.
7. Consideration is being given to the enlargement of the index to cover additional groups and to revision of the weighting pattern of the index.

WHOLESALE PRICE (BASIC MATERIALS AND FOODSTUFFS) INDEX

(Base of each Group : Average of 3 years ended June, 1939 = 100)

Period	Basic Materials						Food-stuffs and Tobacco (b)	Basic Materials and Foodstuffs		
	Metals and Coal (a)	Oils, Fats and Waxes	Textiles	Chemicals	Rubber and Hides	Building Materials		Goods principally Imported (c)	Goods principally Home Produced (b)	Total All Groups (b)
1936-37	96	99	118	99	111	99	99	99	98	99
1937-38	101	101	100	100	107	104	102	102	101	101
1938-39	101	100	82	101	92	97	99	101	99	100
1950-51	256	196	641	242	292	268	264	229	256	240
1951-52	343	220	577	314	298	370	321	276	288	300
1952-53	392	234	607	350	224	404	350	293	292	331
1953-54	388	222	566	323	191	363	332	308	271	339
1954-55	391	214	510	314	246	372	330	315	277	340
1955-56	404	220	456	317	328	415	345	325	292	352
1956-57	409	241	520	344	302	463	367	324	311	357
1957-58	398	238	437	349	280	453	355	325	301	355
1958-59	392	231	362	327	293	423	340	332	283	358
1959-60										
October	394	231	341	327	243	432	339	330	282	356
November	394	232	344	327	254	425	338	326	282	352
December	390	231	337	327	267	420	336	322	282	348
January	391	231	333	327	263	422	336	320	280	347
February	392	231	346	327	284	422	338	328	281	354
March	390	232	353	327	326	422	340	341	282	365
April	390	232	398	327	410	422	346	340	283	368
May	387	232	402	327	371	422	344	336	284	361
June	388	232	392	327	361	422	343	338	284	364
1959-60										
July	385	231	392	330	394	422	343	340	282	366
August	386	230	417	330	411	422	346	343	281	371
September	388	223	405	330	414	425	345	339	276	369
October	388	223	p404	328	375	425	p343	p339	277	p367
November	p390	223	p399	328	360	425	p342	p335	279	p363

(a) Special purpose index for the "Metals and Coal" group excluding Coal and Briquettes for November, 1959, was 417.

(b) During 1956 these indexes were reconstructed from the base period by excluding potatoes and onions. For November, 1959, index numbers for these groups comparable with the previous indexes including potatoes and onions were: "Foodstuffs and Tobacco", 336; "Goods Principally Home Produced", 364; "Total All Groups", 339.

(c) Represents only such imported commodities as are included in the Wholesale Price Index and does not measure changes in prices of all imports.

p - preliminary, subject to revision.

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CANBERRA, A.C.T.

4TH JANUARY, 1960.