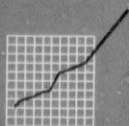
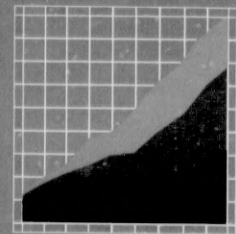


Thursday, 30 April 1992

*The week in statistics ...*

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## Prices of manufacturing materials unchanged

The price index of materials used in manufacturing industries remained unchanged between January and February 1992; prices of home produced materials fell by 0.1 per cent while imported materials increased by 0.2 per cent.

The decrease in home produced materials in February was caused mainly by lower prices for domestic crude petroleum. This decrease was partly offset by higher prices for various agricultural materials in February.

The increase in imported materials was caused by higher prices for imported crude petroleum and condensates. Partly offsetting this increase were lower prices for chemicals and chemical based materials.

Over the year to February prices of manufacturing materials decreased by 0.5 per cent.

The table below summarises the price movements of imported and home produced materials.

PRICE INDEXES OF MATERIALS USED IN MANUFACTURING,  
FEBRUARY 1992  
Percentage change

Source of material	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Imported	0.2	-0.1
Home produced	-0.1	-0.8
All manufacturing	0.0	-0.5

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

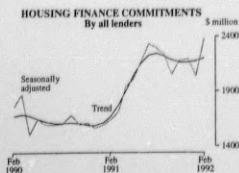
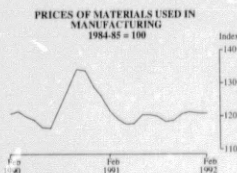
## Home lending bounces back

Seasonally adjusted housing finance commitments increased by 17.1 per cent in February 1992, more than wiping out the previous month's fall.

As the accompanying table and chart show, seasonally adjusted home lending is now fluctuating around a level more than 40 per cent higher than in the early months of 1991.

In seasonally adjusted terms, all three purpose of loan categories recorded increases in February. Finance for the purchase of established dwellings was up 18.5 per cent on January (up 50.1 per cent on February 1991). Finance for the construction of dwellings increased by 11.4 per cent in February, while finance for newly erected dwellings increased by 14.9 per cent.

Continued ...



Trend estimates show a peak in August 1991. Provisional trend estimates, after leveling out in November and December 1991, show an upward movement in January 1992 which continued in February 1992.

HOUSING FINANCE COMMITMENTS, FEBRUARY 1992  
Seasonally adjusted

Purpose of commitment	\$ million	Percentage change from	
		Previous month	Corresponding month of previous year
Construction of dwellings	380.1	11.4	29.7
Purchase of newly erected dwellings	148.1	14.9	31.8
Purchase of established dwellings	1,856.8	18.5	50.1
Total	2,384.9	17.1	45.2

For further information, order the publication *Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Australia* (5609.0), or contact Mark Dennis on (06) 252 7129 or Harry Wilson on (06) 252 6170.

## Export prices hit plateau

Significant falls in the world prices of sugar and petroleum products held Australia's export price index on a plateau in February 1992, with prices falling 0.1 per cent in the month.

Approximately half of the items in the index recorded price decreases, with petroleum gases, crude petroleum and sugar making the biggest negative impacts.

These decreases were partly offset by price increases for approximately 40 per cent of the index items, the only significant increases being for gold and wheat.

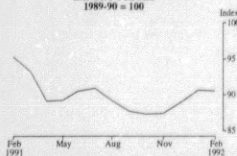
On an annual basis, export prices fell by 4.9 per cent between February 1991 and February 1992.

EXPORT PRICES, FEBRUARY 1992  
Percentage change

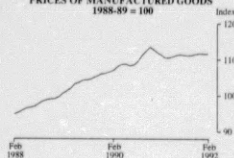
Commodity	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Vegetable products	3.1	22.1
Live animals and animal products	0.9	4.2
Motor vehicles, aircraft and vessels	1.5	0.7
Gold, diamonds and coin	4.3	0.5
Machinery and appliances	0.2	-2.3
Prepared food stuffs	-6.4	-3.2
Mineral products	-1.8	-6.6
Products of chemical or allied industries	-0.8	-8.9
Base metals	-0.8	-14.5
Wool and cotton fibres	0.4	-18.3
All exports	-0.1	-4.9

For further information, order the publication *Export Price Index, Australia* (6405.0), or contact Peter Cordy on (06) 252 5541.

EXPORT PRICES  
1985-90 = 100



PRICES OF MANUFACTURED GOODS  
1988-89 = 100



## Manufactured goods prices remain stable

The price index of articles produced by the manufacturing industry was unchanged in February 1992, maintaining an eleven-month period of only slight movement in the prices of manufactured goods as a whole. On an annual basis, the index rose only 0.3 per cent between February 1991 and February 1992.

Small price increases for about half of the items in the index were offset by price falls for about one-fifth of the index items. The only price changes of significance were decreases in the prices of refined petroleum products, raw sugar and motor vehicles.

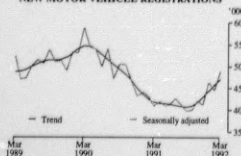
PRICES OF MANUFACTURED GOODS, FEBRUARY 1992

Percentage change

Manufacturing sector	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Food and beverages	0.3	3.3
Clothing and footwear	0.0	1.9
Transport equipment	-0.5	1.9
Fabricated metal products	0.2	0.1
Other industrial machinery	0.1	-0.7
Chemicals products	0.1	-1.5
Basic metal products	-0.3	-4.7
Petroleum products	-2.4	-9.5
Total manufacturing	0.0	0.3

For further information, order the publication *Price Indexes of Articles Produced by Manufacturing Industry, Australia (6412.0)*, or contact Peter Cordy on (06) 252 5541.

NEW MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS



## New vehicle registrations gather momentum

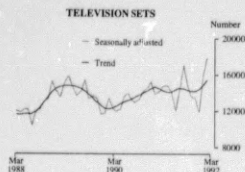
Total new vehicle registrations increased by 9.5 per cent in March 1992 in seasonally adjusted terms, with passenger vehicles rising 9.6 per cent and 'other' vehicles by 9.3 per cent.

The trend estimate for total new motor vehicle registrations rose strongly by 2.9 per cent with both categories of passenger and 'other' vehicles rising by 2.9 per cent. This estimate was 12.6 per cent higher than in the same month last year and has been rising for the last six months.

Total new motor vehicle registrations in original terms for March 1992 rose substantially (by 24.7%) to 51,237 vehicles, from 41,080 vehicles in February. Passenger vehicles increased by 24.9 per cent while 'other' vehicles rose by 24.1 per cent.

All States recorded rises in registrations, with New South Wales and Queensland recording the largest increases. Registrations for all vehicle types increased with the exception of non-freight carrying trucks which fell slightly.

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



## Manufacturing in March

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-five seasonally adjusted). 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, the 'previous year' column is a generally more reliable guide to trends, but should be read in conjunction with the more detailed data presented in the monthly publications, as production of manufacturing commodities can vary quite significantly on a month-to-month basis, even after seasonal adjustment.

### MANUFACTURING PRODUCTION, MARCH 1992 Seasonally adjusted, percentage change

Product	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Basic iron, spiegeleisen and sponge iron	7.2	45.2
Woven cotton fabric (including towelling)	21.8	34.3
Iron and steel in ingots or other primary forms	4.3	31.8
Television sets	12.1	26.2
Woven wool fabric (including blanketing)	-2.9	22.0
Cotton yarn	6.7	19.6
Motor vehicles for goods and materials	-0.4	15.9
Petrol-rotary type lawn mowers	-7.2	15.5
Sulphuric acid; oleum	-10.9	14.9
Cars and station wagons	16.6	7.4
Textile floor coverings	-1.1	5.2
Other confectionery	2.6	4.7
Clay bricks	0.2	2.1
Electricity	-0.4	0.9
Domestic clothes washing machines	17.0	0.3
Gas available for issue through mains	-4.1	0.2
Beer	11.2	-0.8
Blooms and slabs, from rolling and forging	2.9	-4.0
Electric motors	10.5	-4.9
Chocolate based confectionery	4.7	-11.0
Wool yarn	-3.9	-12.0
Woven man-made fibre fabric	-3.6	-12.1
Portland cement	-4.0	-14.0
Cigarettes and tobacco	-4.6	-18.8
Domestic refrigerators	22.0	-22.2

For further information, order the publication *Manufacturing Production, Australia, Preliminary (8301.0)*, or contact Kevin Squair on (06) 252 5558.

## Inquiries

The ABS supplies a wide range of statistical information:

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### ABS State Offices

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### Suggestions

Any suggestions for improvement to this publication should be addressed to:

Robert Nixon  
Editor  
*Statistics Weekly*  
(06) 252 6104

**Statistics Weekly**  
30 April 1992

## All the fortnight's releases: 15 to 28 April

### General

Catalogue of Publications and Products, 1992 (1101.0; \$4.00)  
Publications Advice, 21 April 1992 (1105.0; free)  
Publications Advice, 24 April 1992 (1105.0; free)  
Publications Advice, 28 April 1992 (1105.0; free)  
Monthly Summary of Statistics, Aust., April 1992 (1304.0; \$20.00)  
Statistics Weekly, 16 April 1992 (1318.0; \$4.20)  
Victorian Year Book, 1992 (hardcover 1300.2; \$37.00;  
softcover 1301.2; \$31.00)  
Economic Indicators, Qld, April 1992 (1307.3; \$6.50)  
Economic Indicators, WA, April 1992 (1307.5; \$6.00)  
Tasmanian Statistical Indicators, April 1992 (1303.6; \$9.50)  
Northern Territory Business Indicators, April 1992 (1307.7; \$5.00)

### National accounts, finance and foreign trade

Gross Domestic Product at Purchasing Power Parity in OECD Countries, 1990 (5226.0; \$5.00)  
Foreign Trade, Aust.: Merchandise Exports, February 1992 (5432.0; \$9.50)  
Taxation Revenue, Aust., 1990-91 (5506.0; \$16.00)  
Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Aust., February 1992 (5609.0; \$10.50)  
Lease Finance, Aust., February 1992 (5644.0; \$6.00)  
Assets of Superannuation Funds and Approved Deposit Funds, December Qtr 1991 (5656.0; \$10.00)

### Labour statistics and prices

Export Price Index, Aust., February 1992 (6405.0; \$8.00)  
Price Indexes of Materials Used in Manufacturing Industries, Aust., February 1992 (6411.0; \$10.50)  
Price Indexes of Articles Produced by Manufacturing Industry, Aust., February 1992 (6412.0; \$10.50)

### Agriculture

Agricultural Industries Financial Statistics, Aust. 1990-91, Preliminary (7508.0; \$16.00)  
Agricultural Land Use and Selected Inputs, Vic., 1990-91 (7411.2; \$16.00)  
Livestock Products — Meat, Qld, February 1992 (7204.3; \$5.00)  
Crops and Pastures, Qld, 1990-91 (7321.3; \$19.00)  
Fruit, WA, 1990-91 Season (7322.5; \$12.50)  
Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced, Tas., 1990-91 (7503.6; \$16.00) — *new issue*

### Secondary industry and distribution

Manufacturing Production, Aust., March 1992, Preliminary (8301.0; \$10.50)  
Manufacturing Production, Aust.: Building Materials and Fittings, February 1992 (8361.0; \$8.00)  
Manufacturing Production, Aust.: Plastics, Rubber, Paints, Detergents and Industrial Chemicals, February 1992 (8362.0; \$8.00)  
Manufacturing Production, Aust.: Transport Equipment, February 1992 (8363.0; \$6.00)  
Manufacturing Production, Aust.: Metal Products, February 1992 (8367.0; \$6.00)  
Manufacturing Production, Aust.: Energy Products, February 1992 (8368.0; \$6.00)  
Actual and Expected Private Mineral Exploration, Aust., December Qtr 1991 (8412.0; \$10.00)  
Tourist Accommodation, Aust., December Qtr 1991 (8635.0; \$20.00)  
Building Activity, Aust., December Qtr 1991 (8752.0; \$14.00)

*Continued ...*

### Secondary industry and distribution — continued

Building Approvals — Private Sector, Perth Statistical Division,  
March 1992 (8732.5; \$5.00)

Building Activity, Tas., December Qtr 1991 (8752.6; \$10.50)

Building Activity, ACT, December Qtr 1991 (8752.8; \$10.50)

### Transport

Shipping and Air Cargo Commodity Statistics, Aust., June Qtr 1991  
(9206.0; \$14.00) — final issue

Registrations of New Motor Vehicles, Aust., March 1992, Preliminary  
(9301.0; \$10.50)

Motor Vehicle Registrations, Aust., February 1992 (9303.0; \$10.50)

## Calendar of key releases

Expected releases over the fortnight to 12 May 1992

### April

**29** Consumer Price Index, March Quarter 1992 (6401.0; \$11.50)  
Price Index of Materials Used in House Building, Six State  
Capital Cities and Canberra, February 1992 (6408.0; \$8.00)

**30** Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House  
Building, Eight Capital Cities, February 1992 (6407.0; \$10.50)

### May

**1** Import Price Index, Australia, February 1992 (6414.0; \$8.00)

**4** Balance of Payments, Australia, March 1992 (5301.0; \$16.00)  
Building Approvals, Australia, March 1992 (8731.0; \$13.00)

**7** The Labour Force, Australia, April 1992, Preliminary  
(6202.0; \$10.50)

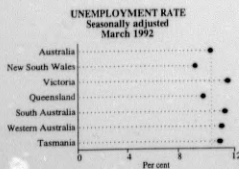
## The latest ...

Changes to key State indicators — consolidated to

28 April 1992

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
	— Percentage change from same period previous year —								
New capital expenditure (Dec. qtr 91)†	-25.6	-17.7	-10.8	-3.6	1.1	-51.4	n.a.	n.a.	-17.4
Retail turnover (Feb. 92) (trend estimate)	4.5	2.2	5.3	-1.1	8.2	3.6	n.a.	9.4	4.2
New motor vehicle registrations (Mar. 92)†	11.4	32.2	29.5	1.4	26.8	10.3	36.4	-9.3	19.2
Number of dwelling unit approvals (Feb. 92)	13.0	10.0	29.2	-17.2	8.0	8.4	187.7	135.3	16.2
Value of total building work done (Sept. qtr 91)	-10.1	-34.2	-7.1	-24.4	-15.7	8.6	-9.6	0.5	-17.2
Employed persons (Mar. 92)*	0.0	-2.2	2.0	-2.7	0.3	-3.8	4.2	-1.6	-0.5
Capital city consumer price index (Dec. qtr 91)	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.8	-0.1	1.8	1.6	1.7	1.5
Average weekly earnings (full- time adult ordinary time) (Nov. 91)	4.7	4.1	3.0	5.3	4.3	3.0	4.8	4.0	4.2
Population (June 91)	1.3	1.1	2.2	1.2	2.0	0.9	1.0	2.9	1.5
Room nights in licensed hotels and motels, etc. (Dec. qtr 91)	3.2	3.6	10.1	-2.6	8.3	3.6	2.8	2.9	5.1

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



# The latest ...

8

Key national indicators – consolidated to 28 April 1992

	Period	Latest figure available		Percentage change (a) on		
		Original	Seasonally adjusted	Previous period	Corresponding period last year	
<b>National production</b>						
Gross domestic product (A) — 1984-85 prices	\$m	Dec. qtr 91	n.a.	64,075	0.3	-0.5
<b>Industrial activity</b>						
New capital expenditure — current prices	\$m	Dec. qtr 91	6,253	5,696	-12.6	-17.7
Expected new capital expenditure	"	Six months to June 92	4,921	4,487	-11.4	-14.5
Retail turnover — current prices	"	Feb. 92	11,732	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
— 1984-85 prices	"	Dec. qtr 91	7,128	7,827	-0.3	3.9
New motor vehicle registrations	no.	Mar. 92	17,320	15,356	-0.8	1.0
Dwelling unit approvals	"	Feb. 92	51,237	48,866	9.5	19.2
Value of all building approvals	\$m	"	11,453	11,882	-7.4	13.8
Value of total building work done — current prices	"	"	1,555	1,751	-0.8	-18.9
— 1984-85 prices	"	Sept. qtr 91	6,026	5,825	-8.2	-17.2
Manufacturers' sales — current prices	"	Dec. qtr 91	3,828	3,701	-7.8	-16.8
— 1984-85 prices	"	"	36,551	34,813	-0.9	-3.4
Expected manufacturers' sales	"	Six months to June 92	25,418	24,215	-1.0	-2.8
			69,535	n.a.	n.a.	-3.2
<b>Labour</b>						
Employed persons (f)	'000	Mar. 92	7,704.4	7,690.7	-0.2	-0.5
Unemployment rate † (f)	%	"	11.0	10.5	-0.1	1.4
Participation rate † (f)	"	"	63.4	63.0	-0.2	-0.4
Job vacancies	'000	Feb. 92	27.6	26.6	3.1	-4.5
Average weekly overtime per employee	hours	"	1.10	1.12	5.7	-6.3
<b>Prices, profits and wages</b>						
Consumer price index (c)	1980-81 = 100.0	Dec. qtr 91	217.7	n.a.	0.9	1.5
Price index of materials used in manufacturing industries	1984-85 = 100.0	Feb. 92	120.9	n.a.	0.0	-0.5
Price index of articles produced by manufacturing industry	1988-89 = 100.0	Feb. 92	111.6	n.a.	0.0	0.3
Company profits before income tax	\$m	Sept. qtr 91	2,982	2,841	21.2	-17.9
Average weekly earnings (Full-time adults; ordinary time)	\$	Nov. 91	578.80	n.a.	2.0	4.2
<b>Interest rates (b) (monthly average)</b>						
90-day bank bills †	% per annum	Feb. 92	7.50	n.a.	-0.05	-4.15
10-year Treasury bonds †	"	"	10.00	n.a.	-0.10	-1.55
<b>Balance of payments</b>						
Exports of merchandise	\$m	Feb. 92	4,622	4,645	4.3	5.4
Imports of merchandise	"	"	3,930	4,132	2.0	-1.8
Balance on merchandise trade (c)	"	"	692	513	27.6	159.1
Balance of goods and services (c)	"	"	744	343	54.5	n.a.
Balance on current account (c)	"	"	-317	-667	26.2	44.2
Terms of trade (d)	1984-85 = 100.0	Dec. qtr 91	n.a.	97.1	-2.9	-4.5
<b>Foreign investment</b>						
Net foreign debt	\$m	31 Dec. 91	144,772	n.a.	2.7	7.6
Net foreign liabilities	"	"	194,273	n.a.	4.3	10.5
<b>Exchange rates (monthly average)</b>						
SUS	per SA	Feb. 92	0.7519	n.a.	0.5	-4.1
Trade weighted index	May 1970 = 100.0	"	56.2	n.a.	1.4	-1.9
<b>Other indicators</b>						
Population (resident at end of qtr)	million	June 91	17.3	n.a.	0.3	1.5
Overseas visitor arrivals	'000	Feb. 92	238	209	1.7	17.6

(a) Based on seasonally adjusted figures where available. (b) Source: Reserve Bank of Australia. (c) 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. (d) The ratio of the price of goods and services for exports to that for imports. (e) Later figures expected to be released Wednesday, 29 April 1992. (f) Later figures expected to be released Thursday, 30 April 1992. NOTES: † = change is shown in terms of percentage points. n.a. = not available. Figures have been taken from a variety of ABS publications. Copies may be obtained from Information Services (see page 6). 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.

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