

COMMONWEALTH BUREAU OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS

CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA

To be treated as strictly CONFIDENTIAL and NOT to be published, broadcast or cabled before NOON on TUESDAY, 3RD MARCH, 1964.

WHOLESALE PRICE (BASIC MATERIALS AND FOODSTUFFS) INDEX

JANUARY, 1964

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. 49, 1961. (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 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, neither seasonal adjustment nor conversion of the index to a "changing weights" formula could be applied to eliminate these 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.

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 NUMBERS

(Base of each Index : 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	Tex- tiles	Chem- icals	Rubber and Hides	Build- ing Mater- ials	Total		Goods Prin- cipally Im- ported (c)	Goods Prin- cipally Home Produced (b)	Total All Groups (b)
1936-37	96	99	118	99	111	99	99	98	99	98	99
1937-38	101	101	100	100	97	104	102	102	102	101	101
1938-39	103	100	82	101	92	97	99	101	99	100	100
1953-54	388	222	566	323	191	363	332	308	271	339	319
1954-55	391	214	510	314	246	372	330	315	277	340	322
1955-56	404	220	456	317	328	415	345	325	292	352	334
1956-57	409	241	520	344	302	463	367	324	311	357	344
1957-58	398	238	437	349	280	453	355	325	301	355	339
1958-59	392	231	362	327	293	423	340	332	283	358	336
1959-60	395	225	403	331	379	431	347	348	281	375	348
1960-61	399	222	387	331	341	439	346	372	278	394	360
1961-62	392	212	400	333	302	439	340	332	270	363	336
1962-63	388	209	432	317	262	439	336	342	272	368	340
1962-63 -											
Dec.	387	208	420	317	267	439	335	340	272	365	338
Jan.	387	208	458	317	259	439	337	343	274	368	340
Feb.	389	208	454	317	249	439	337	341	272	368	339
March	389	208	465	316	246	439	338	340	273	366	339
April	389	209	464	316	250	439	338	338	273	365	338
May	387	209	464	316	246	439	337	343	272	369	340
June	385	209	474	316	231	444	337	354	271	378	346
1963-64 -											
July	385	209	468	316	227	449	338	359	271	382	349
August	383	209	458	283	223	462	336	359	274	380	348
Sept.	383	207	461	283	213	462	335	359	274	379	348
Oct.	385	207	476	283	210	468	338	351	276	374	345
Nov.	384	207	506	283	216	468	339	345	276	370	342
Dec.	383	207	p501	283	219	469	p339	339	276	p366	p339
Jan.	381	208	p506	283	220	470	p339	341	275	p368	p340

(a) The special purpose index number for the "Metals and Coal" group excluding Coal and Briquettes for January, 1964, is 441.

(b) Excluding potatoes and onions (see paragraph 6 overleaf). Index numbers including potatoes and onions for January, 1964, are:-

Foodstuffs and Tobacco 338
 Goods Principally Home Produced .. p365
 Total All Groups p338

(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.

This document is published by the Commonwealth Statistician, and contains statistics or abstracts thereof compiled and tabulated by the Commonwealth Statistician pursuant to the Census and Statistics Act 1905-1949.

COMMONWEALTH BUREAU OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS
CANBERRA, A.C.T. 3RD MARCH, 1964

K.M. ARCHER
COMMONWEALTH STATISTICIAN

NOTE:- Inquiries concerning these statistics may be made in Canberra by telephoning 70413 Extension 455 or, in each State capital, by telephoning the office of the Bureau of Census and Statistics.