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COST OF FOOD AND GROCERIES - FEBRUARY, 1930

The results of the investigations made under the direction of the Minister for Home Affairs by the Commonwealth Statistician and Actuary (Mr Chas. H. Wickens) as to the price of food and groceries (46 Commodities) have been made available for the month of February, 1930.

Change of Base Period - Special attention is directed to the base period to which the index numbers in the attached table are computed. In tabulations of retail prices of food and groceries prior to and including December 1929, the base (1000) to which the index numbers were computed was the weighted average aggregate cost in the year, 1911, for the six Capital Cities of the commodities included in the investigations. Consideration of the desirability of computing retail price indexes on a post war period base was given by the last Conference of Statisticians and it was resolved that the period of five years - 1923-1927 be adopted as base for retail price indexes.

The adoption of a post war base period does not affect the relative positions of index numbers for past periods and localities as compared with the current index numbers, the base to which indexes in the table are computed being the five years period - 1923-1927 - in all cases.

Other leading countries have adopted a post war base period as it was considered that the ante war period was out of date and that index numbers based thereon did not give as clear an idea of modern variations as could be obtained by means of a more recent basis.

It is proposed to continue the computation of the retail price index numbers (food, groceries and rent of all houses) used by the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration in the determination of rates of wage on the original base, viz., Year - 1911 = 1,000.

Compared with the preceding month, January, 1930, decreases of 1.0% have been recorded in the case of the 30 towns considered as a whole, and of 0.9% in the case of the 6 Capital Cities of the Commonwealth.

Decreases were recorded in all States, South Australia with a decrease of 1.6% showed the greatest, followed by Queensland 1.3%; Tasmania, 1.2%; Western Australia, 1.1% and New South Wales and Victoria equal with 0.8%.

Compared with the corresponding month, February of last year, decreases were recorded in all States. New South Wales recorded the largest decrease 7.5%, followed by Western Australia 6.9%; Queensland 6.2%, Victoria 4.7%; Tasmania 4.2% and South Australia last with 3.3%.

The weighted average index number for the 30 towns considered as a whole is 983 in February, 1930, compared with 1045 in February, 1929, a decrease of 5.9%, and is the lowest index number for food and groceries computed since November, 1928.

In the following table particulars are given in the form of index numbers of the price levels of food and groceries in February, 1930, compared with July, 1914, the Base Period 1923-1927, February, 1929, and January, 1930.

In the last column the percentage increase in February, 1930 compared with July, 1914 is shown. The base 1000 to which the index numbers are computed is the weighted average aggregate cost in the recently adopted five yearly base period - 1923-1927 - for the six Capital Cities of the commodities included in the investigation. The increase in the cost since July, 1914 was greatest in New South Wales, 56.7%, followed in order by Victoria, 52.6%; Queensland, 51.2%; Tasmania, 46.1%; South Australia 43.1%, and Western Australia, 30.8%

The increase in the 30 towns considered as a whole since July, 1914 to February, 1930 was 51.0%

The actual cost of the regimen of food and groceries for the month of February, 1930 was highest in Western Australia, and lowest in Queensland. In the case of the individual towns the cost was highest in Broken Hill and lowest in Toowoomba.

During the month under review a further substantial decrease in the price of potatoes was recorded in all States of the Commonwealth. Bread increased in price in Brisbane and eggs also registered a general increase in all States. Butter prices showed a general upward tendency but the cost of meat remained practically stationary throughout the Commonwealth.

COMMONWEALTH BUREAU OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS,

CANBERRA -- 21st March, 1930

RETAIL PRICE INDEXES

Based upon the cost of Food and Groceries only.

FEBRUARY, 1930.

Retail Price Index Numbers for each of the 30 Principal Towns in Australia for the periods specified - Weighted Average Cost in the six Capital Cities during five yearly period - 1923-1927 = 1000.

Town	July 1914	Average- 5 yearly period 1923-1927	February 1929	January 1930	February 1930	Percentage increase from July 1914 to February 1930
Sydney ..	645	1012	1103	1024	1017	57.7
Newcastle ..	642	1015	1080	1022	1015	58.1
Broken Hill ..	821	1155	1265	1250	1231	49.9
Coulburn ..	661	1018	1095	1060	1039	57.2
Bathurst ..	613	974	1070	1010	999	63.0
Wt. Aver. N.S.W. (5 Towns) ..	652	1016	1105	1030	1022	56.7
Melbourne ..	619	978	986	948	940	51.9
Ballarat ..	617	989	1019	994	986	59.8
Bendigo ..	619	993	1033	995	981	58.5
Geelong ..	609	967	1009	941	930	52.7
Warrnambool ..	608	967	956	962	964	58.6
Wt. Aver. Victoria (5 Towns) ..	618	978	989	951	943	52.6
Brisbane ..	591	960	967	914	906	53.3
Toowoomba ..	582	934	938	911	898	52.6
Rockhampton ..	646	988	1017	996	976	51.1
Charters Towers ..	696	1074	1125	1060	1023	47.0
Warwick ..	605	951	991	942	925	52.9
Wt. Aver. Queens- land (5 Towns) ..	605	965	975	927	915	51.2
Adelaide ..	699	1025	1023	1006	990	41.6
Kadina etc. ..	688	1032	1118	1089	1084	57.6
Port Pirie ..	722	1060	1099	1081	1069	48.1
Mt. Gambia ..	595	989	1017	1009	971	63.2
Peterborough ..	749	1064	1173	1103	1085	44.9
Wt. Aver. South Australia (5 Towns) ..	697	1026	1031	1013	997	43.0
Perth ..	749	1042	1088	1025	1011	35.0
Kalgoorlie ..	931	1179	1262	1164	1168	25.5
Northam ..	..	1104	1145	1090	1080	..
Bunbury ..	793	1094	1158	1144	1125	41.9
Geraldton ..	808	1112	1133	1110	1106	36.9
Wt. Aver. W. Aust. (5 Towns) ..	790	1060	1110	1045	1033	30.8
Hobart ..	678	1027	1031	995	984	45.1
Launceston ..	640	1013	988	981	962	50.3
Burnie ..	..	1040	1073	1032	1020	..
Devenport ..	..	1035	1048	965	957	..
Queenstown ..	735	1127	1147	1087	1084	47.5
Wt. Aver. Tasmania (5 Towns) ..	672	1027	1025	994	982	46.1
Wt. Aver. Aust- ralia (30 Towns) ..	651	1003	1045	993	983	51.0
Wt. Aver. Aust- ralia (6 Caps) ..	645	1000	1041	987	978	51.6
Townsville & ..	..	1091	1163	1085	1052	..

Not included in weighted average for Queensland or the Commonwealth.