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INQUIRIES

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RETAIL SALES OF GOODS  
JUNE QUARTER 1977 (PRELIMINARY)

MAIN FEATURES

- The preliminary estimate of the value of retail sales (excl. Motor vehicles, parts, petrol, etc.) for June quarter 1977 is \$5,383.3 million.
- Seasonally adjusted the June quarter preliminary estimate is 2.3 per cent greater than March quarter 1977 and 10.9 per cent greater than June quarter 1976.
- At constant (average 1974-75) prices the seasonally adjusted June quarter preliminary estimate is 0.6 per cent less than March quarter 1977 and 0.9 per cent greater than June quarter 1976.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

The tables in this bulletin contain preliminary estimates of the value of retail sales for the June quarter 1977. Figures for some earlier quarters are also shown for purposes of comparison.

2. Quarterly estimates are compiled on the basis of returns received from a sample of retail establishments. However, to allow prompt publication, the preliminary estimates for the June quarter are based on returns received from approximately 80 per cent of sample establishments. Detailed estimates based on a more complete response will be published in the bulletin *Retail Sales of Goods* (Reference No. 11.4) June quarter 1977. Estimates in this bulletin are subject to revision at a later stage when more precise information is available relating to trading by new businesses.

Scope and coverage of the statistics

3. All figures in this bulletin are on a basis comparable with the 1973-74 Retail Census. Further information relating to the basis on which the statistics of retail sales of goods are compiled is contained in the March quarter 1977 bulletin (Reference No. 11.4).

Reliability of estimates

4. As the preliminary estimates are based on returns received from a sample of retail establishments

they may differ from the results which would be obtained by a comparable complete collection. A measure of the likely difference is given by the standard error of the estimates. There are about 2 chances in 3 that the difference would be less than 1 standard error and 19 chances in 20 that the difference would be less than 2 standard errors. If, for example, a sample gives an estimate of \$1,000 million and the standard error of this estimate is 1 per cent, i.e. \$10 million, then there would be 2 chances in 3 that a comparable complete collection would give a figure within the range \$990 million to \$1,010 million and 19 chances in 20 that the figure would be within the range \$980 million to \$1,020 million.

5. The standard error of the preliminary estimate of the total value of retail sales (excluding motor vehicles, parts, petrol, etc.) for Australia is about 0.4 per cent and for the corresponding estimates for individual states are about 0.6 per cent for N.S.W., 0.7 per cent for South Australia, 0.8 per cent for Victoria and Western Australia, 0.9 per cent for Tasmania and 1.1 per cent for Queensland. The standard error of the preliminary estimate of the value of retail sales of commodity groups is about 0.5 per cent for "food and drink" and "clothing, hardware, electrical and furniture" and about 0.9 per cent for "other".

6. The preliminary estimates may also differ from the final quarterly estimates which are based on returns received from the full sample. The standard error of the difference between the preliminary estimates and the corresponding final estimates of the total value of retail sales (excluding motor vehicles, parts, petrol, etc.) for Australia is about 0.4 per cent of the final estimate and the standard error of the difference between the corresponding preliminary and final estimates for individual States is about 0.8 per cent. The standard error of the difference between preliminary and final estimates of commodity groups for Australia varies between 0.3 and 1.3 per cent of the final estimate.

7. Estimates of retail sales are also subject to non-sampling errors. The major source of such possible error is the necessity to make forward estimates for every period to take account of the probable commencement of new retail businesses. These estimates can only be projected forward on the basis of past

information obtained at regular annual intervals by new business censuses. However this information is of necessity approximately 1½ to 2 years out of date before the total estimates of retail sales can finally be adjusted and the adequacy of new business provisions assessed. The difficulty of making proper allowance for the value of retail sales of new businesses is increased in a period of substantial price increases.

#### Seasonally adjusted statistics

8. Seasonally adjusted statistics are also shown in the tables in this bulletin. In addition to being adjusted for normal seasonal factors, all series have been adjusted for "trading-day" effects arising from the varying numbers of Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays, etc. in each quarter. While the normal seasonal factors should change only gradually from year to year, the trading-day adjustment for any quarter will vary from year to year in accordance with the combination of days which occur in the quarter. Adjustment has also been made for the effects of movement in the date of Easter. Each of the component series shown in Table 2 has been seasonally adjusted independently. As a consequence, while the unadjusted components in the original series shown in Table 2 add to the totals, the adjusted components may not add to the adjusted totals. It should be noted that the seasonally adjusted figures reflect the sampling errors to which the original figures are subject and do not remove random influences (e.g. abnormal weather, strikes). Details of the methods used in seasonally

adjusting these and other series are given in *Seasonally Adjusted Indicators 1977* (Reference No. 1.10).

#### Estimates at constant prices

9. This bulletin includes estimates of the value of retail sales of goods at constant (average 1974-75) prices. Quarterly figures for Australia are presented, in both original and seasonally adjusted form. The scope of the series at constant prices is identical to that of the series at current prices.

10. The series are measures of the value of retail sales after the direct effects of price changes since the base year (1974-75) have been eliminated. Measures of this type are subject to approximations and assumptions and should not be interpreted in any precise quantitative sense.

11. Further details of the nature and concepts of these measures are given in pages 4-6 of the Explanatory Notes of the March quarter 1977 bulletin (Reference No. 11.4).

#### Further information

12. Monthly details of retail sales are shown in *Retail Sales of Goods : Australia (Provisional)* (Reference No. 11.6).

All publications produced by the ABS are listed in *Publications of the Australian Bureau of Statistics* (Reference No. 1.8).

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TABLE 1. TOTAL VALUE OF RETAIL SALES OF GOODS  
(EXCLUDING MOTOR VEHICLES, PARTS, PETROL, ETC.) AT CURRENT PRICES  
(\$ million)

| Quarter   | Original |         |       |       |       |       |           | Seasonally<br>adjusted |
|-----------|----------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|------------------------|
|           | N.S.W.   | Vic.    | Qld   | S.A.  | W.A.  | Tas.  | Aust. (a) | Aust. (a)              |
| 1975-76 - |          |         |       |       |       |       |           |                        |
| March     | 1,653.7  | 1,224.0 | 653.6 | 421.5 | 384.6 | 126.6 | 4,464.0   | 4,750.2                |
| June      | 1,803.0  | 1,315.6 | 714.5 | 462.1 | 421.4 | 137.0 | 4,853.6   | 4,958.2                |
| 1976-77 - |          |         |       |       |       |       |           |                        |
| September | 1,840.6  | 1,334.7 | 738.7 | 478.7 | 445.7 | 144.0 | 4,982.4   | 5,120.8                |
| December  | 2,235.4  | 1,615.8 | 858.7 | 565.6 | 531.5 | 172.3 | 5,979.3   | 5,329.5                |
| March     | 1,852.9  | 1,346.7 | 723.1 | 473.3 | 443.3 | 146.3 | 4,985.6   | 5,375.8                |
| June (b)  | 2,023.5  | 1,429.4 | 788.7 | 507.2 | 476.4 | 158.1 | 5,383.3   | 5,499.1                |

(a) Excludes Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory. (b) Preliminary estimate.

TABLE 2. VALUE OF RETAIL SALES OF GOODS BY BROAD COMMODITY GROUPS AT CURRENT AND CONSTANT (AVERAGE 1974-75) PRICES: AUSTRALIA (a)  
(\$ million)

| Quarter                           | Food and drink (b) | Clothing, hardware, electrical and furniture (c) | Other (d) | Total (excluding motor vehicles, parts, petrol, etc.) |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| ORIGINAL                          |                    |                                                  |           |                                                       |
| Current Prices                    |                    |                                                  |           |                                                       |
| 1975-76 -                         |                    |                                                  |           |                                                       |
| March                             | 2,159.4            | 1,497.3                                          | 807.3     | 4,464.0                                               |
| June                              | 2,214.6            | 1,818.2                                          | 820.8     | 4,853.6                                               |
| 1976-77 -                         |                    |                                                  |           |                                                       |
| September                         | 2,306.8            | 1,819.8                                          | 855.8     | 4,982.4                                               |
| December                          | 2,633.9            | 2,249.3                                          | 1,096.1   | 5,979.3                                               |
| March                             | 2,439.2            | 1,663.5                                          | 882.9     | 4,985.6                                               |
| June (e)                          | 2,530.5            | 1,954.8                                          | 898.0     | 5,383.3                                               |
| Constant (Average 1974-75) Prices |                    |                                                  |           |                                                       |
| 1975-76 -                         |                    |                                                  |           |                                                       |
| March                             | 1,851.1            | 1,325.5                                          | 681.6     | 3,858.2                                               |
| June                              | 1,871.6            | 1,543.3                                          | 681.9     | 4,096.8                                               |
| 1976-77 -                         |                    |                                                  |           |                                                       |
| September                         | 1,911.7            | 1,528.4                                          | 700.9     | 4,141.0                                               |
| December                          | 2,121.5            | 1,827.0                                          | 881.3     | 4,829.8                                               |
| March                             | 1,932.8            | 1,319.7                                          | 688.6     | 3,941.1                                               |
| June (e)                          | 1,956.4            | 1,495.2                                          | 684.7     | 4,136.3                                               |
| SEASONALLY ADJUSTED               |                    |                                                  |           |                                                       |
| Current Prices                    |                    |                                                  |           |                                                       |
| 1975-76 -                         |                    |                                                  |           |                                                       |
| March                             | 2,180.4            | 1,721.7                                          | 852.1     | 4,750.2                                               |
| June                              | 2,270.9            | 1,803.7                                          | 877.2     | 4,958.2                                               |
| 1976-77 -                         |                    |                                                  |           |                                                       |
| September                         | 2,354.4            | 1,870.8                                          | 894.6     | 5,120.8                                               |
| December                          | 2,468.2            | 1,937.2                                          | 934.5     | 5,329.5                                               |
| March                             | 2,496.4            | 1,933.1                                          | 944.5     | 5,375.8                                               |
| June (e)                          | 2,594.6            | 1,939.1                                          | 959.8     | 5,499.1                                               |
| Constant (Average 1974-75) Prices |                    |                                                  |           |                                                       |
| 1975-76 -                         |                    |                                                  |           |                                                       |
| March                             | 1,867.0            | 1,516.5                                          | 720.4     | 4,094.1                                               |
| June                              | 1,916.5            | 1,534.9                                          | 722.4     | 4,174.8                                               |
| 1976-77 -                         |                    |                                                  |           |                                                       |
| September                         | 1,952.8            | 1,562.2                                          | 733.0     | 4,252.1                                               |
| December                          | 1,991.1            | 1,583.5                                          | 755.4     | 4,328.4                                               |
| March                             | 1,975.9            | 1,526.0                                          | 737.9     | 4,237.8                                               |
| June (e)                          | 2,003.1            | 1,487.0                                          | 725.2     | 4,214.2                                               |

(a) Excludes Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory. (b) Includes Groceries; Meat; Other food; and Beer, wine and spirits. (c) Includes Clothing and drapery; Footwear; Hardware, china and glassware; Electrical goods; and Furniture and floor coverings. (d) Includes Chemists' goods; Newspapers, books and stationery; and Other goods. (e) Preliminary estimate.