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COMMONWEALTH BUREAU OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS
CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA

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THE "C" SERIES RETAIL PRICE INDEX
DECEMBER QUARTER, 1957

- Particulars concerning variations in retail prices as measured by the "C" Series Retail Price Index for thirty four cities and towns of Australia are given herein. The base of the index is: Weighted average of six capital cities in 1923-27 = 1,000.
- Very large seasonal fluctuations in prices of potatoes and onions have recently materially affected the movement of the Aggregate All Groups Index. An All Groups Index which excludes their effects is shown in paragraph 3 and on page 4 hereof in comparison with the Aggregate All Groups Index calculated in the customary manner.
- An approximate analysis for each capital city is shown hereunder and a corresponding analysis for the weighted average of the six capital cities is shown on page 2:-

	"C" Series Index Points					
	Exclud- ing Potatoes and Onions	Movement due to Potatoes and Onions	Aggre- gate All Groups	Exclud- ing Potatoes and Onions	Movement due to Potatoes and Onions	Aggre- gate All Groups
	SYDNEY			MELBOURNE		
Index points for June Quarter, 1956	2,501	+ 55a	2,556	2,497	+ 58a	2,555
Movement during Sept. Quarter	(+ 58	+ 51	(+ 109	(+ 9	+ 6a	(+ 73
Index points for Sept. Quarter, 1956	2,559	+ 106a	2,665	2,506	+ 122a	2,628
Movement during Dec. Quarter	(+ 19	- 60	(- 41	(+ 113	- 38	(- 25
Index points for Dec. Quarter, 1956	2,578	+ 46a	2,624	2,519	+ 84a	2,603
Movement during March Quarter	(+ 24	- 44	(- 20	(+ 17	+ 74	(- 57
Index points for March Quarter, 1957	2,602	+ 2a	2,604	2,536	+ 10a	2,546
Movement during June Quarter	(+ 9	+ 5	(+ 14	(+ 22	+ 5	(+ 27
Index points for June Quarter, 1957	2,611	+ 7a	2,618	2,558	+ 15a	2,573
Movement during Sept. Quarter	(+ 17	- 13	(+ 4	(+ 9	- 14	(- 5
Index points for Sept. Quarter, 1957	2,628	- 6a	2,622	2,567	+ 1a	2,568
Movement during Dec. Quarter	(+ 2	- 11	(- 9	(- 8	+ ..	(- 8
Index points for Dec. Quarter, 1957	2,630	- 17a	2,613	2,559	(+ 1a	2,560
	BRISBANE			ADELAIDE		
Index points for June Quarter, 1956	2,263	+ 36a	2,299	2,413	+ 39a	2,452
Movement during Sept. Quarter	(+ 24	+ 47	(+ 71	(+ 113	+ 61	(+ 74
Index points for Sept. Quarter, 1956	2,287	+ 83a	2,370	2,426	+ 100a	2,526
Movement during Dec. Quarter	(+ 18	- 53	(- 35	(- 2	- 27	(- 29
Index points for Dec. Quarter, 1956	2,305	+ 30a	2,335	2,424	+ 73a	2,497
Movement during March Quarter	(+ 25	- 39	(- 14	(+ 10	- 75	(- 65
Index points for March Quarter, 1957	2,330	- 9a	2,321	2,434	- 2a	2,432
Movement during June Quarter	(+ 19	- 3	(+ 16	(+ 32	- 6	(+ 38
Index points for June Quarter, 1957	2,349	- 12a	2,337	2,466	+ 4a	2,470
Movement during Sept. Quarter	(+ 13	- 7	(+ 6	(+ 26	- 11	(+ 15
Index points for Sept. Quarter, 1957	2,362	- 19a	2,343	2,492	- 7a	2,485
Movement during Dec. Quarter	(+ 40	- 12	(+ 28	(- 19	- 1	(- 20
Index points for Dec. Quarter, 1957	2,402	- 31a	2,371	2,473	- 8a	2,465
	PERTH			HOBART		
Index points for June Quarter, 1956	2,646	+ ..a	2,646	2,616	+ 23a	2,639
Movement during Sept. Quarter	(+ 25	(+ 9	(+ 34	(+ 29	+ 35	(+ 64
Index points for Sept. Quarter, 1956	2,671	+ 9a	2,680	2,645	+ 58a	2,703
Movement during Dec. Quarter	(+ 10	+ ..	(+ 10	(+ 14	- 5	(+ 9
Index points for Dec. Quarter, 1956	2,681	+ 9a	2,690	2,659	+ 53a	2,712
Movement during March Quarter	(+ 127	- 3	(+ 24	(+ 26	- 50	(- 24
Index points for March Quarter, 1957	2,708	+ 6a	2,714	2,685	+ 3a	2,688
Movement during June Quarter	(+ 38	- 2	(+ 36	(+ 19	+ ..	(+ 19
Index points for June Quarter, 1957	2,746	+ 4a	2,750	2,704	(+ 3a	2,707
Movement during Sept. Quarter	(- 5	+ 1	(- 4	(- 5	- 21	(- 26
Index points for Sept. Quarter, 1957	2,741	+ 5a	2,746	2,699	- 18a	2,681
Movement during Dec. Quarter	(- 33	- 6	(- 39	(+ 8	- 5	(+ 3
Index points for Dec. Quarter, 1957	2,708	- 1a	2,707	2,707	(- 23a	2,684

a Cumulative from (and including) Sept. Quarter, 1955. (+) Denotes increase, (-) decrease.

3. (continued)

WEIGHTED AVERAGE OF SIX CAPITAL CITIES

	"C" Series Index Points		
	Excluding Potatoes and Onions	Movement due to Potatoes and Onions	Aggregate All Groups
Index points for Sept. Quarter, 1955	2,394	(+) 17a	2,411
Movement during Dec. Quarter	(+119	(+) 5	(+24
Index points for Dec. Quarter, 1955	2,413	(+) 22a	2,435
Movement during March Quarter	(+24	(-) 6	(-30
Index points for March Quarter, 1956	2,437	(+) 28a	2,465
Movement during June Quarter	(+43	(+) 20	(+63
Index points for June Quarter, 1956	2,480	(+) 48a	2,528
Movement during Sept. Quarter	(+31	(+) 53	(+84
Index points for Sept. Quarter, 1956	2,511	(+) 101a	2,612
Movement during Dec. Quarter	(+115	(-) 44	(-29
Index points for Dec. Quarter, 1956	2,526	(+) 57a	2,583
Movement during March Quarter	(+21	(-) 54	(-33
Index points for March Quarter, 1957	2,547	(+) 3a	2,550
Movement during June Quarter	(+118	(+) 4	(+22
Index points for June Quarter, 1957	2,565	(+) 7a	2,572
Movement during Sept. Quarter	(+113	(-) 11	(+ 2
Index points for Sept. Quarter, 1957	2,578	(-) 4a	2,574
Movement during Dec. Quarter	(-) 2	(-) 7	(-) 9
Index points for Dec. Quarter, 1957	2,576	(-) 11a	2,565

a Cumulative from (and including) September Quarter, 1955. (+) Denotes increase, (-) decrease.

This analysis indicates that fluctuations in prices of potatoes and onions caused a rise of the order of 100 points or 4 per cent. in the aggregate index for the Six Capital Cities during the five quarters ended September Quarter, 1956, followed by a fall of almost the same magnitude in the ensuing six months ended March Quarter, 1957.

4. Comparative average retail prices of potatoes for the six capital cities are shown hereunder:-

AVERAGE RETAIL PRICES OF POTATOES

Pence per 7 lbs.

	Sydney	Melbourne	Brisbane	Adelaide	Perth	Hobart	Weighted Average of Six Capitals
December Quarter, 1952	34	24	23	24	28	29	28
" " 1953	61	53	58	52	29	65	55
" " 1954	29	18	30	23	29	29	25
" " 1955	56	56	46	54	33	60	53
March " 1956	66	59	71	46	31	67	60
June " "	88	82	80	64	37	67	79
September " "	127	129	116	110	37	90	118
December " "	81	99	76	88	44	88	85
March " 1957	47	41	45	30	44	52	43
June " "	50	47	41	36	43	52	46
September " "	40	34	37	28	43	34	37
December " "	33	34	30	26	38	31	33
Month of December, 1957	29	33	25	28	35	33	30

5. The "C" Series Retail Price Index is based on pre-war weights and components. It is compiled without significant change in the principles and procedures followed in pre-war years. These are set out in "Annual Labour Report" No. 41 (1952) published by this Bureau.

6. In March, 1954, an Interim Retail Price Index (1952-53 base year) was instituted with post-war weights and components. This index is published quarterly and is described in "Annual Labour Report" No. 43 (1954). For December Quarter, 1957, it is published in a separate document containing an analysis similar to that made herein.

7. The observations in these Statistical Bulletins are made, as is customary, to assist public understanding of the trends in retail prices within the definition of the respective indexes.

8. Tribunals and other authorities concerned with wage adjustment and other purposes decide in the light of their own requirements what price index (if any) is relevant to their purposes and how it shall be applied. The Statistician's function is to supply indexes and information thereon as required by those authorities. The Statistician expresses no view as to the merits or demerits of the use of price indexes in this connection.

9. The main movements in average quarterly prices affecting the "C" Series retail price index number for the six capital cities from September Quarter, 1957 to December Quarter, 1957 were:-

In the food and groceries group, prices of potatoes and onions decreased in five capital cities. Prices of meat decreased substantially in four cities and increased substantially in one. Bacon prices decreased in five capitals. Prices of tea increased in each capital and those of bread increased in five capitals. The food and groceries group of the index (average of six capital cities) showed an overall quarterly decrease of 1.6% including potatoes and onions and an overall quarterly decrease of 1.1% excluding potatoes and onions.

Rents in the index showed increases in each of the capital cities. The weighted average increase in the rent group in the six capital cities was 0.8%.

The index of prices of the clothing group for the six capitals showed a quarterly increase of 0.6%.

In the miscellaneous group, the overall quarterly movement in the average for the six capital cities was an increase of 0.4%.

10. The rental component used in these retail price indexes has been continued on the basis described on pages 2 and 10 of "Labour Report" No. 41 (1952). Analysis of data of the Census of 1954 and recent surveys show that in all cities the numbers of houses privately rented have diminished very rapidly and that rents of the residual houses (alone) are no longer sufficiently representative as the housing component of the retail price indexes. The housing component is under consideration.

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"C" SERIES RETAIL PRICE INDEX FOR QUARTER ENDED DECEMBER, 1957
Food, Groceries, Rents, Clothing and Miscellaneous Household Expenditure
(BASE : Weighted average of six capital cities in 1923-27 = 1,000)

1. INDIVIDUAL TOWNS

Town	Aggregate - All Groups					All Groups EXCLUDING price movement of Potatoes and Onions (b)				
	1956		1957			1956		1957		
	Dec. Qtr.	March Qtr.	June Qtr.	Sept. Qtr.	Dec. Qtr.	Dec. Qtr.	March Qtr.	June Qtr.	Sept. Qtr.	Dec. Qtr.
NEW SOUTH WALES										
Sydney	2624	2604	2618	2622	2613	2578	2602	2611	2628	2630
Newcastle	2575	2541	2564	2554	2573	2528	2548	2565	2568	2597
Broken Hill	2641	2597	2625	2613	2634	2567	2601	2626	2630	2643
Goulburn	2638	2600	2618	2606	2634	2570	2590	2607	2612	2642
Bathurst	2611	2578	2586	2574	2577	2551	2569	2573	2579	2593
FIVE TOWNS (a)	2620	2599	2614	2617	2610	2574	2597	2607	2623	2628
VICTORIA										
Melbourne	2603	2546	2573	2568	2560	2519	2536	2558	2567	2559
Ballarat	2572	2519	2533	2523	2524	2501	2515	2527	2529	2537
Bendigo	2587	2528	2560	2556	2560	2515	2523	2549	2558	2568
Geelong	2585	2523	2543	2535	2526	2512	2518	2533	2542	2540
Warrnambool	2644	2582	2594	2584	2585	2564	2576	2586	2589	2595
FIVE TOWNS (a)	2601	2544	2570	2565	2557	2518	2535	2556	2565	2558
QUEENSLAND										
Brisbane	2335	2321	2337	2343	2371	2305	2330	2349	2362	2402
Toowoomba	2382	2358	2373	2363	2389	2348	2372	2386	2385	2419
Rockhampton	2370	2360	2374	2372	2389	2341	2364	2384	2392	2422
Townsville	2444	2447	2469	2452	2480	2421	2454	2473	2482	2517
Bundaberg	2317	2304	2335	2329	2356	2279	2311	2342	2347	2387
FIVE TOWNS (a)	2347	2334	2351	2353	2380	2317	2343	2362	2373	2412
SOUTH AUSTRALIA										
Adelaide	2497	2432	2470	2485	2465	2424	2434	2466	2492	2473
Kadina, etc.	2395	2325	2356	2364	2343	2327	2327	2355	2372	2351
Port Pirie	2460	2392	2427	2422	2415	2380	2393	2422	2431	2425
Mount Gambier	2471	2387	2424	2428	2421	2391	2384	2418	2430	2427
Peterborough	2456	2383	2418	2429	2419	2376	2382	2412	2436	2423
FIVE TOWNS (a)	2492	2426	2464	2478	2458	2418	2428	2459	2484	2466
WESTERN AUSTRALIA										
Perth, etc.	2690	2714	2750	2746	2707	2681	2708	2746	2741	2708
Kalgoorlie, etc.	2616	2624	2636	2624	2617	2606	2615	2628	2629	2620
Northam	2644	2652	2711	2716	2686	2635	2646	2708	2712	2687
Bunbury	2720	2731	2740	2761	2765	2709	2724	2735	2754	2766
Geraldton	2885	2884	2918	2936	2926	2874	2900	2914	2931	2928
FIVE TOWNS (a)	2688	2710	2744	2741	2706	2679	2704	2740	2737	2708
TASMANIA										
Hobart	2712	2688	2707	2681	2684	2659	2685	2704	2699	2707
Launceston	2696	2642	2653	2651	2662	2622	2637	2645	2658	2666
Burnie	2665	2626	2628	2607	2610	2591	2612	2618	2613	2619
Devonport	2659	2611	2638	2632	2637	2578	2604	2633	2630	2631
Queenstown	2567	2537	2555	2541	2544	2499	2529	2548	2547	2553
FIVE TOWNS (a)	2698	2662	2679	2662	2668	2636	2658	2674	2674	2682
THIRTY TOWNS (a)	2579	2546	2568	2568	2562	2522	2543	2561	2573	2574
SIX CAPITALS (a)	2583	2550	2572	2574	2565	2526	2547	2565	2578	2576
SPECIAL TOWNS (NOT INCLUDED IN WEIGHTED AVERAGES ABOVE)										
Warwick (Queensland)	2332	2300	2325	2326	2351	2293	2311	2331	2336	2377
Port Augusta (South Aust.)	2473	2403	2438	2431	2403	2387	2398	2428	2434	2407
Whyalla (South Australia)	2556	2489	2528	2530	2512	2482	2490	2521	2534	2510
Camberra (A.C.T.)	2714	2677	2695	2664	2680	2650	2672	2686	2674	2689

(a) Weighted Average. (b) Cumulative from (and including) September Quarter, 1955.

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