

RESEARCH NOTE

RETAIL TRADE ESTIMATE* DECREASED BY 17.7 PER CENT IN APRIL 2020 AND BY 9.2 PER CENT YEAR-ON-YEAR

Thursday, June 4 2020 - The latest release (April 2020) of the monthly ABS Retail Trade data indicates that the overall month-on-month (m-o-m) estimate* decreased by 17.7 per cent, down from 8.5 per cent in March 2020. Retail Turnover decreased by 9.2 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y), significantly down from 10.1 per cent in the prior corresponding period (pcp). Following significant spending in March 2020, the latest figures highlight the impacts of COVID-19 on retail spending.

* The ABS has temporarily suspended the publication **trend** data due to volatility.

STATE OF PLAY

The following table summarises the key data in **seasonally adjusted** terms across the six ABS retail categories. The strongest growth (albeit negative on a monthly basis) was recorded for 'Household goods' retailing on both a m-o-m basis (-0.1 per cent) and a y-o-y basis (11.4 per cent). In **seasonally adjusted** terms, Retail Turnover decreased by 17.7 per cent in the month of April, significantly down from 8.5 per cent in March 2020. On a y-o-y basis, Retail Turnover decreased by 9.2 per cent, down from 10.1 per cent in the pcp.

CATEGORIES	\$ billion	m-o-m	last 3 months	y-o-y
Food retailing	\$11.83	↓ -17.4%	↑ 3.6%	↑ 5.1%
Household goods retailing	\$5.06	↓ -0.1%	↑ 10.0%	↑ 11.4%
Clothing, footwear and personal accessory retailing	\$0.75	↓ -53.6%	↓ -65.2%	↓ -64.7%
Department stores	\$1.23	↓ -14.9%	↓ -19.6%	↓ -21.8%
Other retailing	\$3.96	↓ -14.4%	↓ -0.0%	↑ 1.1%
Cafes, restaurants and takeaway food services	\$1.96	↓ -35.4%	↓ -50.1%	↓ -49.6%
Retail Turnover	\$24.79	↓ -17.7%	↓ -10.2%	↓ -9.2%

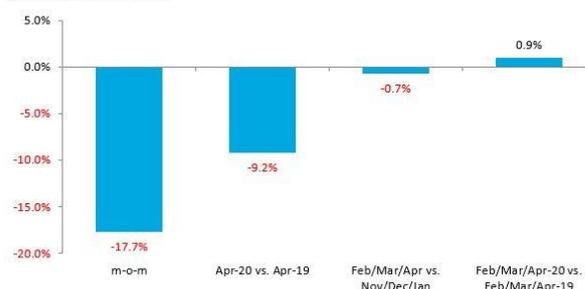
Source: ABS (Cat 8501.0) / SCCA Research

*Seasonally Adjusted

TREND ANALYSIS: VOLATILITY DURING COVID-19

Whilst the latest figures from the ABS are the worst in the time series (stretching back to 1983), it is worth noting that this is due, at least in part, to some of the best numbers on record being reported in March 2020. Indeed, taken in isolation (i.e. month-on-month) it would be easy to overlook the fact that growth the prior month was 8.5 per cent. Looking at slightly longer time periods to smooth some of that volatility reveals a picture that is not quite so dire. The three months to April 2020, comprising the 'best' and 'worst' monthly figures, versus the same period in 2019 indicate an increase in overall retail spending of 0.9 per cent.

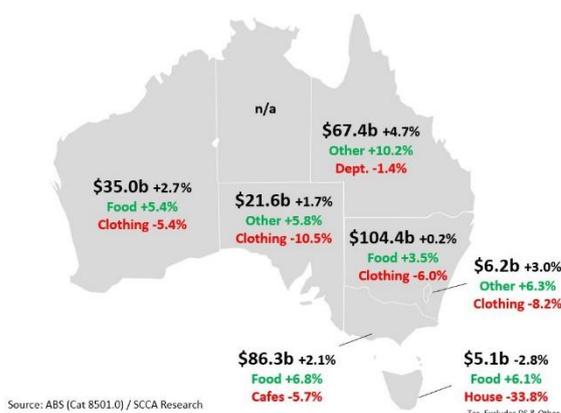
Retail Trade (Seasonally Adjusted)
April 2020 vs. Prior Periods



Source: ABS (Cat. 8501.0) / SCCA Research

STATE BY STATE: BEST AND WORST

Retail turnover varies within the ABS defined six categories and across different jurisdictions. The adjacent map outlines and compares the total and growth of retail trade (y-o-y), and the best and worst retail growth categories. The strongest jurisdictions in seasonally adjusted terms were Queensland (up 4.7 per cent to \$67.4 billion) followed by the ACT (up 3.0 per cent to \$6.2 billion) and WA (up 2.7 per cent to \$35.0 billion). Tasmania (down 2.8 per cent to \$5.1 billion) was the worst performing jurisdiction and for the second month running recorded negative growth, followed by New South Wales (up 0.2 per cent to \$104.4 billion). 'Food' retailing was still the strongest performing category across four jurisdictions, whilst discretionary spending categories were the worst performing across most of the country, most notably 'Clothing, footwear & personal accessory' retailing.



Source: ABS (Cat 8501.0) / SCCA Research

Tas. Excludes DS & Other