

RESEARCH NOTE

RETAIL TRADE ESTIMATE* INCREASED BY 8.5 PER CENT IN MARCH 2020 AND BY 10.1 PER CENT YEAR-ON-YEAR

Wednesday, May 6 2020 - The latest release (March 2020) of the monthly ABS Retail Trade data indicates that the overall month-on-month (m-o-m) estimate* increased by 8.5 per cent, up from (a revised) 0.6 per cent in February 2020. Retail Turnover increased by 10.1 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y), up from 1.8 per cent in the prior corresponding period (pcp).

* The ABS did not publish **trend** data in the March 2020 release.

STATE OF PLAY

The adjacent table summarises the key data in **seasonally adjusted** terms across the six ABS retail categories. The strongest growth was recorded for 'Food' retailing on both a m-o-m basis (24.1 per cent) and a y-o-y basis (27.2 per cent). In **seasonally adjusted** terms, Retail Turnover increased by 8.5 per cent in the month of March, significantly up from (a revised) 0.6 per cent in February 2020. On a y-o-y basis, Retail Turnover increased by 10.1 per cent, up from 1.8 per cent in the pcp.

TREND ANALYSIS: CHAIN VOLUME MEASURES

The quarterly chain volume measure estimates the change in value after the direct effects of price changes have been eliminated, reflecting changes in volume. In the quarter to March 2020, Chain Volume Measures increased by 0.7 per cent, up from 0.5 per cent in the pcp. Retail Turnover increased by 8.7 per cent in the March 2020 quarter, significantly up from 0.4 per cent in the pcp, as panic buying during the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak impacted retail spending.

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 5.6 per cent to \$67.6 billion) followed by the ACT (up 3.7 per cent to \$6.2 billion) and Victoria (up 3.5 per cent to \$87.3 billion). Tasmania (down 1.9 per cent to \$5.1 billion) was the worst performing jurisdiction followed by New South Wales (up 1.2 per cent to \$105.4 billion). Queensland was the only jurisdiction to record positive growth across all six ABS categories. Panic buying at supermarkets during the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak has impacted retail spending with 'Food' retailing being the strongest performing category across four jurisdictions, whilst discretionary spending categories were the worst performing across most of the country.

CATEGORIES	\$ billion	m-o-m	last 3 months	y-o-y
Food retailing	\$14.32	↑ 24.1%	↑ 25.8%	↑ 27.2%
Household goods retailing	\$5.07	↑ 9.1%	↑ 8.7%	↑ 10.3%
Clothing, footwear and personal accessory retailing	\$1.62	↓ -22.6%	↓ -26.1%	↓ -24.9%
Department stores	\$1.45	↓ -8.9%	↓ -8.1%	↓ -6.6%
Other retailing	\$4.63	↑ 16.6%	↑ 16.4%	↑ 19.1%
Cafes, restaurants and takeaway food services	\$3.03	↓ -22.9%	↓ -22.8%	↓ -22.6%
Retail Turnover	\$30.11	↑ 8.5%	↑ 8.7%	↑ 10.1%

Source: ABS (Cat 8501.0) / SCCA Research

*Seasonally Adjusted

ABS Retail Turnover - Seasonally Adjusted

Quarterly Growth in Chain Volume Measures vs. Retail Turnover (%)

