



NAB ONLINE RETAIL SALES INDEX JUNE 2019

NAB Group Economics

- The NAB Online Retail Sales Index contracted (-1.6%) in June on a month-on-month, seasonally adjusted basis. This follows from a rebound in May (3.4% mom, s.a.).
- In year-on-year terms, the NAB Online Retail Sales Index remains positive, albeit barely, up 0.5% (y/y, s.a.) in June. However, this result is compared to June 2018, and it is worth noting that the period January to September 2018 was one of the strongest growth periods in the NAB online retail sales index history.
- After a strong May result, June data shows sales for three of the eight online retail categories contracting in month-on-month growth terms. The largest sales category, homewares and appliances (-7.1% mom, s.a.), was a key contributor to the headline result given its relative weight in the index. Media, and to a lesser extent, grocery and liquor, were the two other categories to contract in the month. The smallest sales category, takeaway food, recorded the fastest growth in the month. For more detail, see Charts 3, 5, 7 & 8 below.
- In month-on-month terms, all states and territories except WA (2.4% mom, s.a.) and ACT (4.5%) recorded a contraction in sales growth. Tasmania (-6.4%) led the monthly decline in sales growth.
- In June, spend growth in metro areas was higher, at 0.4% (mom, s.a.), relative to regional (-3.1%). WA metro areas went against the broader result to record the highest online retail spend growth (+5.4%) in the month. The abovementioned state contraction in online retail sales for Tasmania was associated with a larger contraction in metro area sales, along with a smaller contraction in regional, albeit with sales for the latter also falling last month. See Charts 15 and 16 for more detail.
- While contracting, at -1.6%, domestic online retailers performed better in month-on-month terms relative to international competitors (-1.9% mom, s.a.). In year-on-year terms, from our series, considerable weakness in international online sales remains. See charts 13 and 14, and table 3 for category growth and share.
- We estimate that in the 12 months to June, Australians spent \$29.32 billion on online retail, a level that is just over 9% of the traditional bricks and mortar retail sector (May 2019, Australian Bureau of Statistics), and about 12.7% higher than the 12 months to June 2018.
- See comments from NAB's Chief Economist, Alan Oster, on page 2.

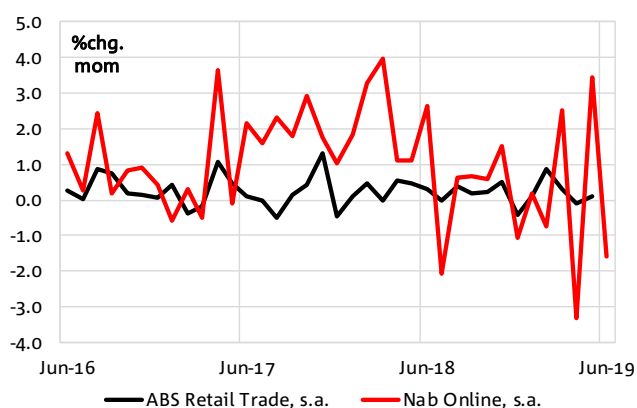
Year-on-year growth (% s.a.)			
	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19
NAB Online Index	2.4	4.8	0.5
ABS Traditional Retail	2.8	2.4	

Month-on-month growth (% s.a.)			
	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19
NAB Online Index	-3.3	3.4	-1.6
ABS Traditional Retail	-0.1	0.1	

Sources: NAB, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). *Data seasonally adjusted (s.a.) using TRAMO/SEATS (incl. trading-day & Easter adjustment.)

Chart 1: Online retail sales

Chart 2: NAB Online retail trade data, s.a.



NAB Chief Economist, Alan Oster commented:

Our NAB Online retail sales index data indicates that sales growth was negative in June 2019, following on from strong growth in May. Online retail sales tend to be more volatile than broader retail, experiencing far greater monthly fluctuations. Looking through the month-to-month volatility, while sales growth through the year is still positive, it slowed in June and is markedly slower than the same period in 2018. It is worth noting, however, that year-on-year growth comparisons are made to a period of elevated sales in 2018. At that time, major new online merchants established an Australian presence, and pre-GST exemptions were in effect.

By category, after weak sales growth earlier in the year, the small sales category of takeaway food led both month-on-month and year-on-year growth in June. The structural changes occurring in the sector, by way of high profile exits and consolidation, have affected sales growth, so the latest result needs to be read with this in mind. The headline result for June appears to be a result of sluggish growth in most categories, combined with a significant sales contraction in media, and the largest spend category, homewares and appliances. Grocery and liquor, which represents around 14% of the index, dipped slightly in the month, but continues to grow over the year.

ACT recorded the strongest rate of growth in online sales in June, followed by WA. All other states contracted in month-on-month terms. ACT also led year-on-year growth.

This month, the growth rate for metropolitan areas (0.4%) remained mildly positive, while online sales in regional areas (-3.1%) recorded a considerable contraction. Both WA metro and regional areas recorded growth in the month. In contrast to the broader result, Tasmanian metro sales performed far worse than regional, albeit both negative in the month.

By merchant location, domestic (-1.6%) and international (-1.9%) online retailers both fell in the month. The domestic result was most negatively impacted by media, and homeware and appliance categories, while for international, the slowdown was in grocery and liquor and department stores.

It is worth noting here that our definition of a domestic online retailer can include those merchants whose parent organisation might be overseas with an Australian subsidiary. Solely using GST as a key defining characteristic of domestic and international is no longer appropriate given changes made in July 2018.

Chart 3: Online retail sales by industry, yoy,s.a.

Chart 4: Online retail sales by state, yoy s.a.

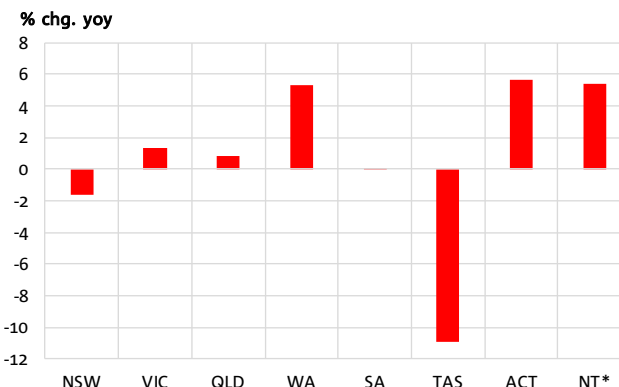
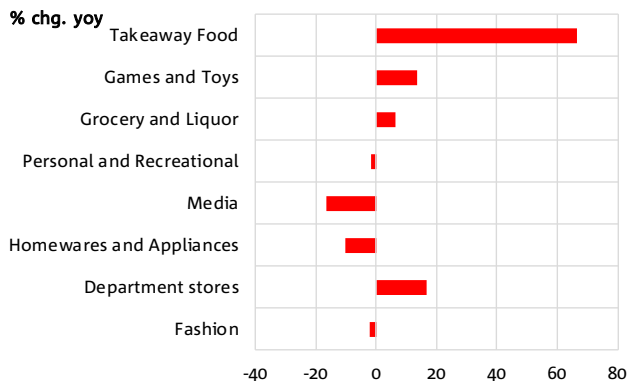


Chart 5: Online retail sales by industry, mom s.a.

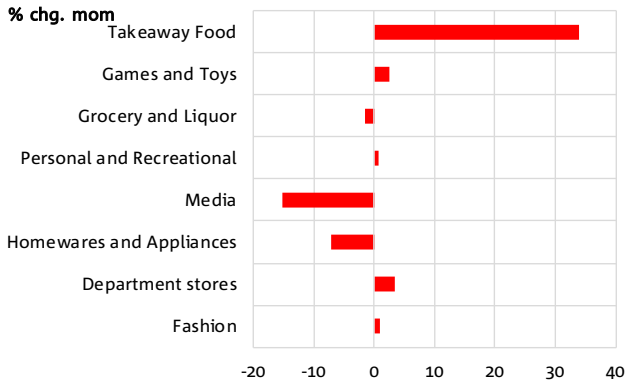
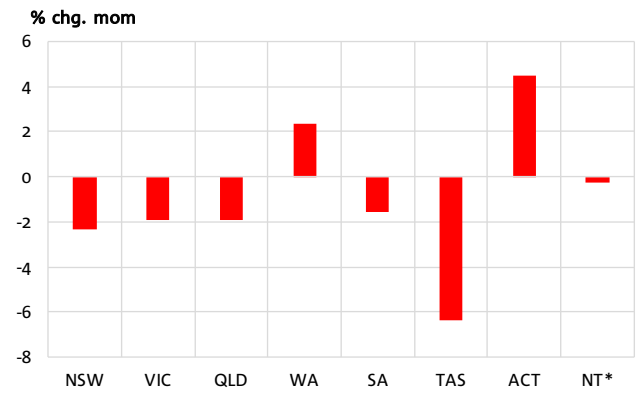
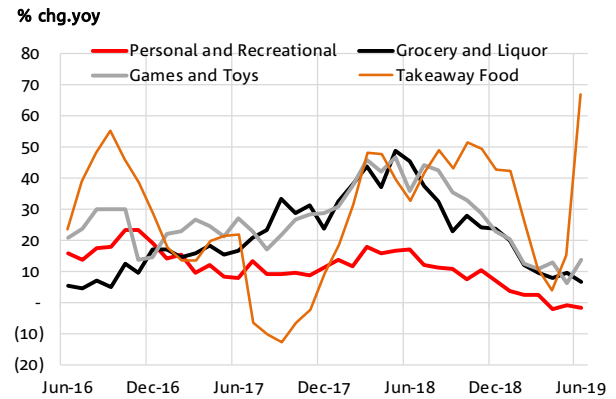
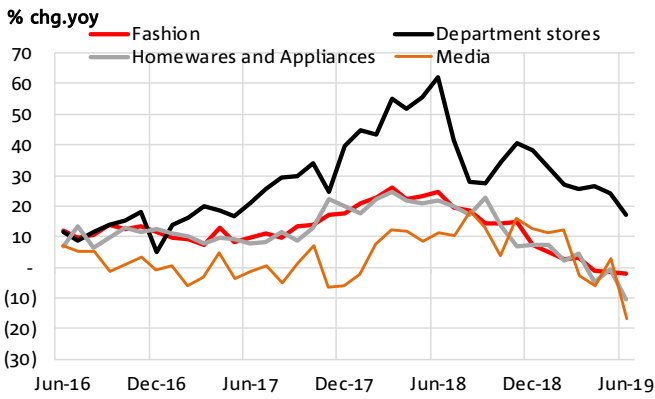


Chart 6: Online retail sales by state, mom s.a.

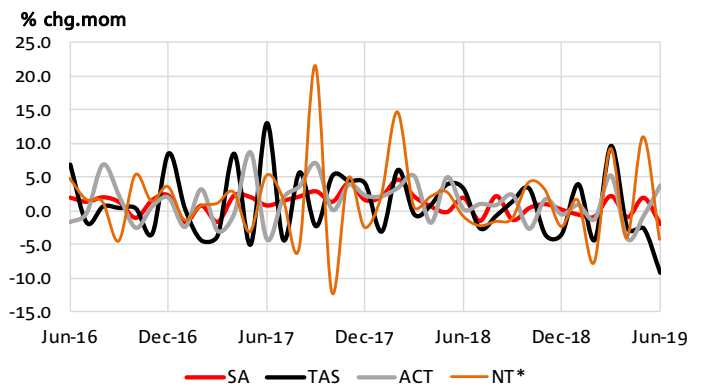
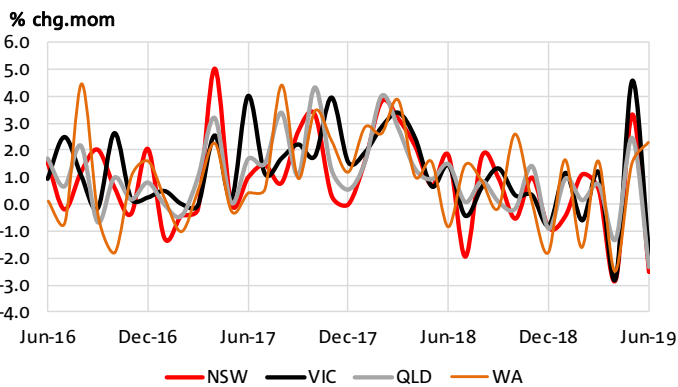


* Note Northern Territory series is highly variable, use with caution

Charts 7 & 8: Online sales by category, seasonally adjusted

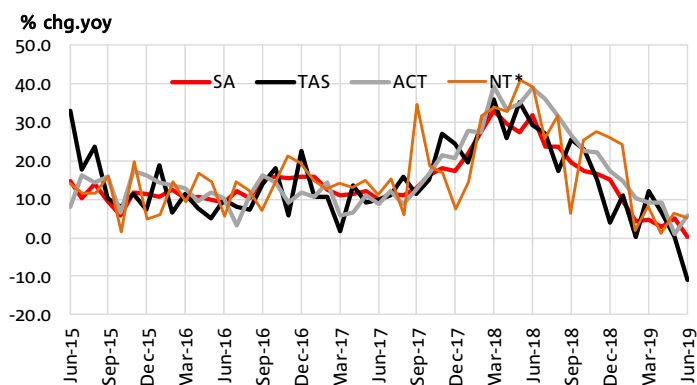
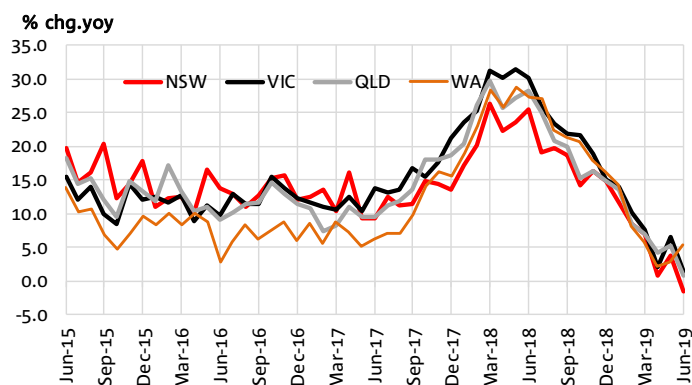


Charts 9 & 10: Online sales by state, trend



*Note that the series representing Northern Territory is highly variable and should be used with caution.

Charts 11 & 12: Online sales by state, yoy, s.a.



Charts 13 & 14: Online sales by merchant location

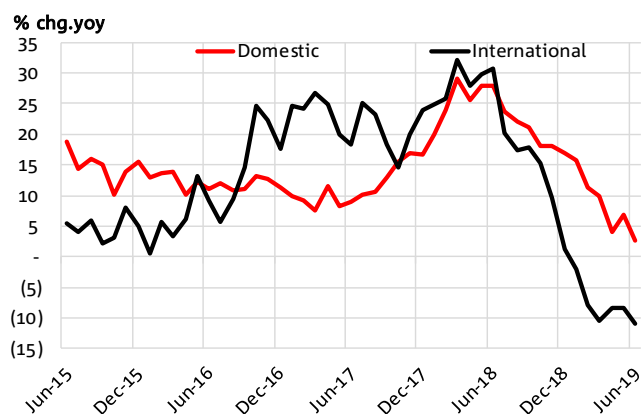
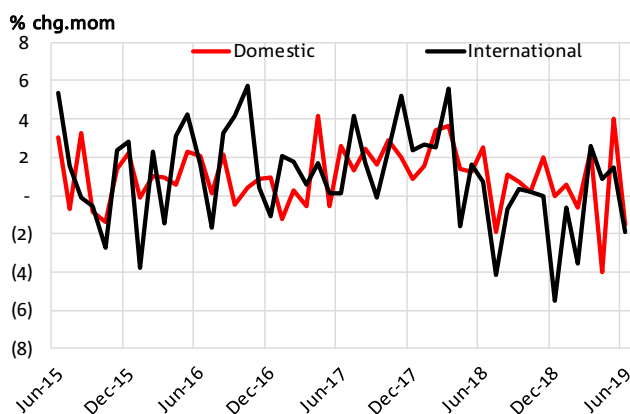


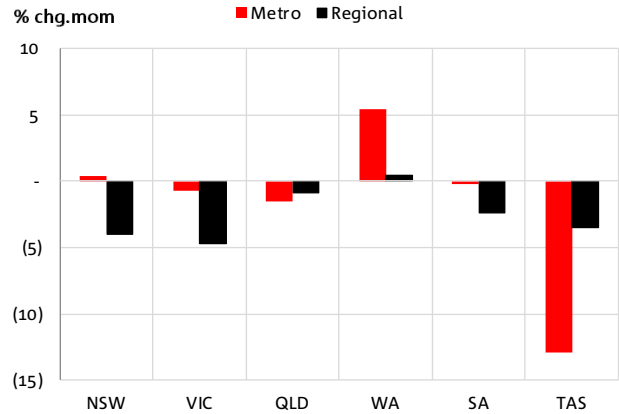
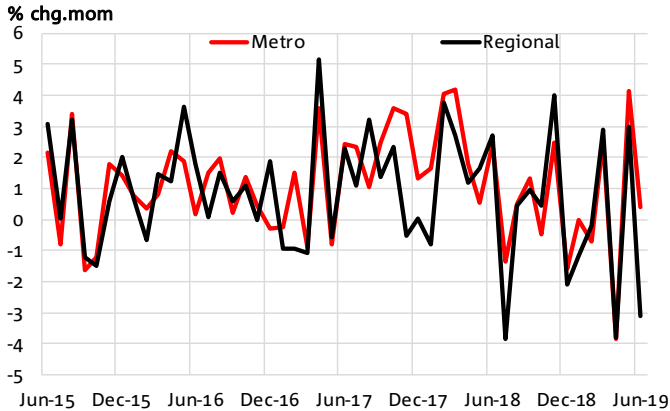
Table 3: Online sales by category and merchant location- Domestic, International(Int'l)

%	Monthly growth – Domestic	Monthly growth – Int'l.	Annual growth – Domestic	Annual growth – Int'l.	Domestic Share of Category Spend	Int'l Share of Category Spend	Overall Category Spend Share
Fashion	2.0	-2.8	1.1	-11.3	77.7	22.3	12.6
Department stores	4.4	-5.2	24.9	-21.6	86.3	13.7	13.3
Homewares and appliances	-7.3	0.9	-10.5	-6.1	95.8	4.2	27.0
Media	-16.5	2.1	-15.9	-21.5	91.0	9.0	9.0
Personal and Recreational	0.3	-0.2	0.1	-10.5	86.4	13.6	14.9
Grocery and Liquor	0.4	-14.1	10.7	-31.2	94.4	5.6	13.8
Games and Toys	0.7	1.9	11.7	17.7	75.1	24.9	6.4
Takeaway Food	29.4	14.6	70.9	45.6	97.8	2.2	2.8
All categories	-1.6	-1.9	2.6	-10.9	89.0	11.0	100.0

METROPOLITAN AND REGIONAL SPEND

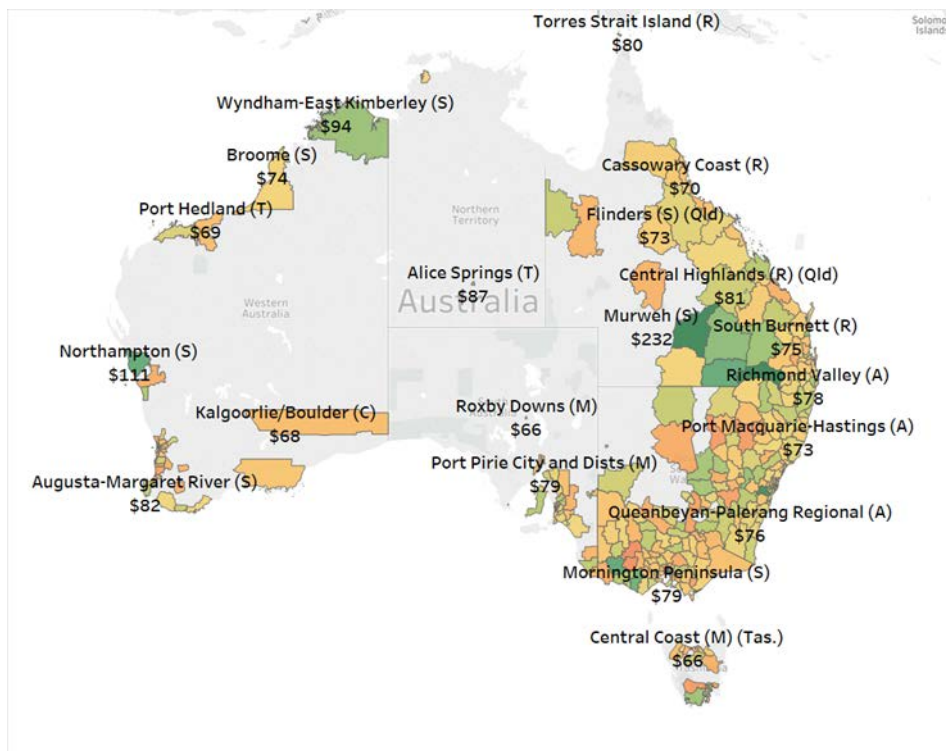
Chart 15: Online retail sales growth by region, mom s.a.

Chart 16: Online retail sales growth by State region, mom s.a.



A HEATMAP VIEW OF AVERAGE ONLINE SPEND BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

Online spend can vary dramatically depending on where people live. The map below shows average spend for each online transaction. Not all the top average spend areas are in capital cities, nor are they all in remote areas.



APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY

The NAB Online Retail Sales Index is now sourced in-house and is produced by Group Economics. We have made some significant changes to the NAB online series (for more details see Appendix). Importantly, we have merged SME and Corporate Online into a single index, and provide more detail by region and industry on a monthly basis.

It is derived from NAB transactions data that have been assigned from particular merchant codes to retail industries by state. To keep the series reasonably consistent with past series, we have left these category descriptions broadly unchanged, albeit we now include new entrants to the Australian market. Against that, we have however removed the standalone previously reported category of 'Daily Deals', as this category was considerably volatile and caused statistical issues with indirect seasonal adjustment.

The NAB Online Retail Sales Index measures all Online Retail spending by consumers using various electronic payment methods such as credit cards, BPAY, and Paypal. We have made adjustments for where merchants appear to be wholesaling goods as opposed for final household consumption, and also incorporate new standards involving purchases using stored customer details. The index is derived from personal transaction data from NAB platforms and is scaled up to be representative of the economy by using scalars including ABS Estimated Resident Population, and RBA payments data.

NAB electronic transactions data for the compilation of this series is collected in real time at event record level, which allows significant flexibility to segment the data by age, time, location and merchant type. In future months, we plan to expand the data provided from the series as we bed-in acceptable seasonal adjustment factors for the new series. Transactions included in these data may incorporate purchases by Card, BPAY, Bank Transfers, Direct Debits and Paypal services where available, and include transactions with Australian and international merchants. Spending represented here includes transactions we have identified as online. NAB's estimate of the online retail market is larger than that of the official ABS measure of Online retail trade as it covers businesses that may not be within the remit of the ABS business register, such as overseas online retailers.

In the previously published series, we were using online retail sales by merchants with turnover greater than \$2.5m ('Corporate') as a proxy for online sales growth of the whole online market. This was due to the shorter time series of the previous market estimate and associated seasonal adjustment issues. With the new extract, we now have sufficient time series, and the growth rates represented are for the total market – i.e. Corporate and SME combined in a single series.

The data captures electronic retail online transactions and is therefore subject to the changing nature and take-up rate of electronic payment methods. Hence, change in growth in the overall transaction value may be attributable to either an increased preference towards a payment type by consumers (such as buy now pay later schemes), or a change in the level of spending across the economy by consumers, i.e. a pick-up in nominal online sales. We continue to work to isolate these effects.

Customer spending is based on where the customer lives, which may or may not be where the actual spending activity occurs. Customers without an Australian residential address are excluded.

These estimates are developed from transaction micro level data are then aggregated to higher level categories based on transaction attributes. The data is made representative of national sales activity by applying both demographic attributes to customer location using the ABS Estimated resident population, and comparing NAB transaction data to RBA payments system data.

The industry and state data have been seasonally adjusted using Tramo-SEATS with a trading day and Easter adjustment. Given the relatively short time frame for the data, this seasonal adjustment process should be regarded as provisional: estimates are likely to change as a longer run of data becomes available, and can be revised from month-to-month given the concurrent process. The trends have been extracted from the same process. Note that the NORSI series prior to December 2018 was using Census Bureau Seasonal adjustment, and a Henderson 13 was applied for trend.

Our aim is to have a data series that is as reflective as possible of online retail spend. As such, each month we will revise previous data to take into account changes in payment processing such as chargebacks and delayed

payments. Given these attributes, typically, larger revisions occur to the most recent months, and diminish as the data ages, but the latter effect cannot be excluded.

Our data differs to that of the ABS series as the NAB series covers a broader spectrum of online retailers – overseas merchants selling to Australian residents for example, and categories that substitute for previously retail purchased goods. Categories such as music and book retailing, and electronic games form part of the current online estimate. These are now substitutes for what may have been purchased in-store, but are now provided by online media streaming companies. While these may not fit the strict retail trade definition, our data reveals that they are increasingly being used by customers who previously purchased media in-store. We incorporate these companies into our estimate of online retail sales.

As part of the continual improvement of the series, this month we have revised our total market estimates. We have identified and removed potential wholesale trade transactions made on personal accounts. We have also identified more transactions that are made using a 'stored credentials' technique of online purchases. This technique is increasing in popularity as consumers opt for convenience especially with purchases made using mobile apps. Finally, in March 2018 the RBA made changes to its Payments System Data which we use as an input into our estimate of online total market size. These revisions are retrofitted to the series history.

We have also added a comparison based on metropolitan and regional areas. The definition of these geographical areas is based on the ABS geographical concordance tables, specifically the Greater Capital City Statistical Areas (GCCSAs).

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