
From: abs.gov.au>
Sent: 2:42 PM
Subject: Design of a complete monthly Consumer Price Index - Consultation closing soon
[SEC=UNOFFICIAL]



EXTERNAL EMAIL: Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Monthly CPI Consultation closing 15 December 2023

Good afternoon,

Only a short time remains to provide a submission for the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) design of the complete monthly measure of the Consumer Price Index (CPI)

Your initial input played a pivotal role in shaping the proposed design. We encourage you to formalise your contribution by providing feedback on essential aspects such as timing, data requirements, publication details, and methods. Your participation is highly valued, and the feedback received will guide the final design and prioritisation of future enhancements.

To share your thoughts, please visit the [ABS Consultation Hub](#) and submit your feedback by **15 December 2023** (11.59pm AEST). If you need to contact us, feel free to reach out at cpi.codesign@abs.gov.au.

Late submissions - If you would like to submit feedback but are not able to by the 15 December, please contact us and we will work with you to arrange a late submission.

Thank you,

Project Manager
Prices and Transformation Division | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

abs.gov.au (W) www.abs.gov.au

FULL MONTHLY CPI: CONSULTATION SUBMISSION

This document outlines the RBA's submission to the ABS's public consultation on the full monthly CPI. Questions are set by the ABS and answers are submitted privately via the [ABS's webpage](#). Individual submissions will not be made publicly available but the ABS will publish a summary of submissions in February 2024. For information on the consultation timeline and proposed design, see [ABS 2023](#) and [Appendix A](#).

1. Name

[name of person submitting answers].

2. Email

Prices@rba.gov.au.

3. Organisation

Reserve Bank of Australia.

4. Do you have feedback on the proposed timing of the complete monthly CPI release, or do you support the proposed approach?

The RBA supports the ABS's proposed approach to release the monthly CPI approximately four weeks after the end of the reference period, as has been done with the monthly CPI indicator and quarterly CPI.

The RBA's overriding preference is to support the successful delivery of a full monthly CPI and so the RBA supports decisions that limit the scope of the project to what is achievable. The RBA also has a preference for the ABS to prioritise accuracy of the CPI over improvements in timeliness. The RBA would support further improvements to the timeliness of the CPI – in line with the ABS' proposed approach – to bring us more in-line with peer economies unless this reduces the accuracy of the CPI. For example:

- Where the CPI uses transactions or web-scraped data, it is desirable that the CPI be computed with raw data on the entire month (as it does currently), rather than cutting off the data before the end of the month to enhance timeliness.
- Improving timeliness might make it infeasible for the ABS to use some data sources received with a lag (e.g. administrative data on the take-up of a government rebate). The RBA would lean against improvements in timeliness that come at the expense of using additional raw data, except when the improvement in timeliness is large relative to the value of the data.
- The ABS intends to reduce the amount of manual processing involved in producing the CPI. Some manual processes may be important for accuracy, such as manual quality-adjustment. We would lean towards continuing these accuracy-enhancing processes, except when the improvement in the quality of the CPI is negligible relative to the staff time required or the possible improvements in timeliness.

5. How valuable would it be to you if the ABS was to release CPI data earlier? (Select: very valuable; slightly valuable; it wouldn't make any difference)

Slightly valuable.

6. What do you consider to be an acceptable trade-off to release the CPI data earlier? (Select: reduced commentary; early data cut-off; revisions; no trade-offs are acceptable)

Reduced commentary.

Additional comments: A limited reduction in commentary to improve timeliness would be acceptable. From the existing commentary, the RBA regularly uses and strongly values the ABS's commentary on the impact of government policies on inflation and details on price movements in more granular data of CPI components, beyond the expenditure class level; the RBA would greatly appreciate for this commentary to continue. Beyond the RBA's direct use of commentary, the RBA also believes the commentary assists with the public's understanding of developments in inflation, ultimately to the benefit of the credibility of the release.

7. Do you have feedback on Data of the proposed complete monthly CPI design, or do you support the proposed approach?

The RBA supports the ABS's proposed approach to publish all data series currently published in the quarterly CPI for the monthly CPI.

Subject to our overriding preference that the ABS prioritise the successful delivery of a full monthly CPI, the RBA would support enhancements to data, including:

- Access to more granular data of CPI components beyond the expenditure class level. This would allow the RBA and other users to better understand price movements in a timely manner.
- Additional analytical series that exclude subsidies or taxes, and indices computed with a superlative index number formula that is free of substitution bias such as a Fisher-type index.

8. Do you have feedback on the Publication of the proposed complete monthly CPI design, or do you support the proposed approach?

The RBA supports the ABS's proposed approach to keep its publication structure similar to the quarterly CPI and release a data table every third month with the quarterly CPI series. The RBA will continue using the quarterly CPI for historical analysis and econometric models, including those used for forecasting. The RBA believes there is considerable public value in having a consistently measured long duration, quarterly frequency, time series that is published by the ABS that will continue to serve as the 'official' historically consistent measure of inflation. This includes for headline CPI as well as important analytical series such as the trimmed mean measure.

As mentioned in question 6, a limited reduction in commentary to improve timeliness would be acceptable, but the RBA would greatly appreciate for the ABS to continue publishing commentary on the impact of government policies on inflation and details on price movements in more granular data of CPI components, beyond the expenditure class level. Beyond the RBA's direct use of commentary, the RBA also believes the commentary assists with the public's understanding of developments in inflation.

The RBA supports the ABS's approach to continue publishing the Selected Living Cost Indexes (SLCIs) on a quarterly basis.

9. Do you have feedback on the Method of the proposed complete monthly CPI design, or do you support the proposed approach?

The RBA supports the ABS's proposed method of deriving the quarterly CPI from the monthly CPI, publishing index numbers to two decimal places and movements to one decimal place. Publishing the index numbers to two decimal places increases the accuracy of the CPI data and reduces rounding errors for the RBA.

It is important to the RBA that the ABS publishes seasonally adjusted data at the expenditure class level for the monthly CPI.

10. Do you have any other suggestions that you feel would help improve the complete monthly CPI design or publication?

Subject to our overriding preference to limit the scope of the project as to ensure the successful delivery of a full monthly CPI, the RBA would be supportive of the ABS changing the format through which we receive the data series (e.g. from downloadable Excel files to an API), as long as the RBA is given sufficient notice to adapt its systems. The RBA also values its current access to CPI microdata for research.

11. Do you wish to receive email updates on the outcomes of this feedback? (Select: yes; no)

Yes.




Proposed Design of the Complete Monthly CPI

The ABS proposes to deliver a complete monthly CPI by late 2025 with the following key design features:

Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The publication will be released at the same time after the end of the reference period as the quarterly CPI is currently released i.e., approximately four weeks.• The ABS will aspire to improve timeliness of publication after the reference period, if possible.
Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The general principle is that all data series currently published in the quarterly CPI will be available in the monthly CPI tables on a monthly frequency.• More specifically, data to be published will include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Headline CPI, 11 groups, 33 sub-groups and 87 Expenditure Classes (EC)○ Capital cities○ Points contribution○ Monthly tables with a minimum 1-year back series• Enhancements will be made to data sources and analytical series, if possible.
Publication
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structure of publication to include an overview, along with detailed analysis of the analytical series and the top 3 main contributing CPI groups.• A Quarterly CPI data table will be included in every third monthly publication. This will include the full historical quarterly time series which includes the CPI going back to 1948.• Existing publication features will remain produced in reference to the most recent month:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Key statistics○ Main features○ Overview○ Data downloads○ Monthly media release○ Ad-hoc articles• Selected Living Cost Indexes (SLCIs) will remain as a quarterly publication.
Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The quarterly CPI will be derived from the monthly data.• Index numbers will be published to two decimal places.• Movements will be published to one decimal place.

NORMAN, David

From: @abs.gov.au>
Sent: AM
To:
Cc:
Subject:
Attachments: CPI Update - Monthly Gas & Partial Re-weight.docx

 **EXTERNAL EMAIL:** Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Good morning Tom and team,

Attached is an update on the monthly gas series and a partial re-weight of the CPI.

We're happy to discuss this further after our expectations meeting next Monday should you have any questions.

Regards,


Director

Consumer Price Index and Selected Living Cost Indexes

Prices Branch | Prices and Economic Statistics Futures Division | Australian Bureau of Statistics
abs.gov.au (W) www.abs.gov.au

NORMAN, David

From: abs.gov.au >
Sent: M
Subject: Design of the complete monthly measure of the Consumer Price Index - Public consultation is live! [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

 **EXTERNAL EMAIL:** Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Good morning

Public consultation for the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) design of the complete monthly measure of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) commences today.

As we commence the public consultation, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your input during the initial discussion stage. Your input was integral in shaping the proposed design of the complete monthly measure of the CPI.

We now invite you to provide a formal submission on key aspects of the design, including timing, data requirements, publication details, and methods. Your participation is valued, and feedback obtained through this consultation process will be used to shape the final design of the complete monthly measure of the CPI and inform priorities for improvements beyond 2025.

To participate, please visit the [ABS Consultation Hub](#) and submit your feedback before **15 December 2023** (11.59pm AEST). For further information, please feel free to contact us at cpi.codesign@abs.gov.au.


Thank you.

Program Manager
Prices and Transformation Division | Australian Bureau of Statistics | www.abs.gov.au
@abs.gov.au



NORMAN, David

From: @abs.gov.au>
Sent: AM
To:
Subject: Complete monthly CPI consultation hub [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

 **EXTERNAL EMAIL:** Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Good morning,

We are pleased to announce that the key design features of the complete monthly Consumer Price Index (CPI) are now accessible on the [ABS Consultation Hub](#).

As a reminder, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) conducted a public consultation for the proposed design of the complete monthly CPI from 16 November to 15 December 2023. During this period, stakeholders highlighted several key requests:

- Prioritising accuracy and data coverage of the complete monthly CPI over improved timeliness of the publication's release after the end of the reference period.
- Maintaining the same level of detailed commentary and analysis as published in the quarterly CPI.
- Continuing a quarterly data series for timeseries analysis and legislated indexation requirements.

Throughout this transformation process, we are committed to further enhancing the design of the complete monthly CPI. We will provide regular updates on the progress of the complete monthly CPI, including any changes to methodology, and design details.

We sincerely thank you for your keen interest and valuable contributions as we work towards publishing the first release of the complete monthly CPI in late 2025.

Thank you,

Project Manager

New Data and Transition BDTI2 | Prices and Transformation Division | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

[@abs.gov.au](#) (W) [www.abs.gov.au](#)

FULL MONTHLY CPI: RBA PREFERENCES

This note outlines the Bank's preferences for the ABS's full monthly Consumer Price Index (CPI) data outputs, publication and method. It is a starting position for consultation with the ABS in October 2023, after which the ABS plans to circulate a proposal for further comment in November. The ABS plans to settle on a final approach by the end of the year, and start collection of the necessary new data around a year after that. The monthly CPI will be released by end-2025. The Bank greatly appreciates the ABS's commitment to developing a monthly CPI. The Bank's top priority is that the ABS produce an accurate monthly CPI, though enhanced timeliness or the provision of additional data would also be appreciated.

Trade-offs between accuracy, timeliness, and additional data

The Bank will benefit greatly from a full monthly CPI and is appreciative of the efforts of ABS staff to gather support for the concept and develop the measure. Our overriding preference is to support the successful delivery of the project.

Subject to that overriding preference, the Bank is keen to understand what opportunities the new systems underpinning the monthly CPI will create, and any trade-offs the ABS faces in designing the monthly CPI between accuracy, timeliness, and the provision of additional data. Where such trade-offs exist, the Bank's preference is generally that the ABS prioritise accuracy. For example:

- Where the CPI uses transactions or web-scraped data, it is desirable that the CPI be computed with raw data on the entire month (as it does currently), rather than cutting off the data before the end of the month to enhance timeliness.
- Improving timeliness might make it infeasible for the ABS to use some data sources received with a lag (e.g. administrative data on the take-up of a government rebate). The Bank would lean against improvements in timeliness that come at the expense of using additional raw data, except when the improvement in timeliness is large relative to the value of the data.
- The ABS intends to reduce the amount of manual processing involved in producing the CPI. Some manual processes may be important for accuracy, such as manual quality-adjustment. We would lean towards continuing these accuracy-enhancing processes, even though cutting them could improve timeliness further or free up staff time for the production of additional data.

The Bank views enhancing timeliness and the provision of additional data as important too. We note the analysis in the consultation pack that several peer economies release their CPI around a week earlier than is the case currently in Australia. We also note that an option for balancing timeliness and additional data would be for the ABS to release additional data in a 'detailed CPI release' that is published later than the main CPI release (similar to current practice with the Labour Force Survey).

Suggestions for additional data

The Bank currently uses all the 14 downloadable tables in the quarterly CPI release.¹ The Bank understands that the ABS would include this existing level of detail in the monthly CPI release, and is keen to discuss further if this is not the case.

The ABS may have scope to add series to the monthly CPI release that are not in the current quarterly CPI release. Series that would be useful to the Bank include:

- Access to more granular data of CPI components, beyond the expenditure class level. These data could be published on the ABS's website (though the RBA could also receive the data bilaterally). This would allow the Bank and other users to better understand price movements in a timely manner, rather than having to reach out to the ABS for further details.
- The CPI currently measures the prices paid by consumers, which may be reduced by subsidies or increased by taxes. Perhaps the ABS could publish price indexes for some or all ECs that exclude subsidies or taxes. This information would help us understand the effects of government policies. For

¹ This includes index numbers, quarterly & year-ended per cent changes, index point contributions and their change to total CPI, and seasonal factors for the CPI aggregates, groups, sub-groups, expenditure classes and analytical series, at the national and capital city level.

example, it would allow us to assess the extent to which changes in electricity prices paid by consumers reflect changes in government rebates vs other factors. The ABS currently publishes commentary on the impact of government policies on an ad-hoc basis only, and this commentary is closely watched by the Bank and other users.

- The ABS could publish an analytical price index computed with a superlative index number formula, such as a Fisher-type index. Such an index would be free of substitution bias.
- Expanding the coverage of the CPI beyond the eight capital cities. This would be nice, but is of lower priority to the Bank because it is not expected to result in meaningfully different inflation rates.

Other publications

- **Living cost indexes (LCIs).** For the RBA, the CPI is much more important than the LCIs, so publishing the LCIs monthly rather than quarterly is not a priority for us.
- **Quarterly CPI.** While a full monthly CPI would become the focus of the Bank's inflation monitoring and reporting, a range of users, including the Bank, will continue to value the quarterly frequency for the long time series history. The Bank's use case for quarterly data is built on graphical presentations, historical analysis and econometric models, including those used for forecasting. If the ABS discontinued the production of the quarterly CPI, the Bank could compute its own quarterly CPI levels as quarter-averages of the monthly CPI levels. However, we believe there is considerable public value in having a consistently measured long duration, quarterly frequency, time series that is published by the ABS that will continue to serve as the 'official' historically consistent measure of inflation for Australia.

Dissemination of the data

The Bank would be supportive of the ABS changing the format through which we receive these series (e.g. from downloadable Excel files to an API), as long as the RBA is given sufficient notice to adapt its systems. The Bank also values its current access to CPI microdata for research.

The ABS could improve accuracy by changing the way it publishes indexes. CPI index levels are published to 1 decimal place, and are set equal to 100 in a recent year. This implies that in previous decades when index levels were lower, rounding introduces substantial error relative to the level of the series. The accuracy of the published numbers could be enhanced by setting the index to 1000 instead of 100, setting the index to 100 at the start of the series, or rounding the index to 2 decimal places instead of 1.

Prices, Wages and Labour
Economic Analysis Department
12 October 2023

NORMAN, David

From: @abs.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 20 December 2023 4:19 PM
Subject: Consultation for CPI proposed monthly design [SEC=OFFICIAL]



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Consumer Price Index (CPI) proposed monthly design

Good afternoon

We would like to extend our appreciation for your valuable submission and active participation in the consultation process for the proposed monthly CPI design. Your feedback has played a pivotal role in identifying areas for enhancement and additional consideration.

We are dedicated to sharing the final design, shaped by the feedback received during this consultation, in early 2024. This will offer stakeholders a comprehensive understanding of how their input directly influenced the design.

As we progress, there may be instances where further clarification or information from you would be greatly appreciated. We will ensure you are kept informed of the latest developments, and once again, thank you for your meaningful contributions as we strive to finalise the design.

Thank you,

Program Manager (a/g)

Prices and Transformation Division | Australian Bureau of Statistics
[@abs.gov.au](https://www.abs.gov.au) | W www.abs.gov.au



@absstats



ABSstatistics




Australian Bureau of Statistics



Big Data,
Timely Insights
Phase 2

NORMAN, David

From: @abs.gov.au>
Sent: 4:04 PM
Subject: Update on the complete monthly Consumer Price Index (CPI) [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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Good afternoon,

We would like to inform you that on **March 18, 2024**, key design features of the monthly CPI along with a summary of stakeholder feedback, will be released via the [ABS Consultation Hub](#).

As you may recall, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) public consultation period for the proposed design of the complete monthly CPI took place from November 16 to December 15, 2023.

The ABS is currently preparing for the collection of monthly CPI data. This is on track to commence in April 2024. Initiating data collection in April will ensure that we have a sufficient back series to produce the annual monthly CPI effectively. As we continue with the transformation process, the ABS remains committed to making further enhancements to the design of the complete monthly CPI. We will keep you informed with regular updates and provide opportunities for you to provide additional feedback.

Thank you once again for your interest and valuable contributions as we work towards publishing the first release of the complete monthly CPI in late 2025.

Best regards

Assistant Director

New Data and Transition Team | Prices Transformation Branch | BDT12

s@abs.gov.au W www.abs.gov.au



@absstats



ABSstatistics




Australian Bureau of Statistics



**Big Data,
Timely Insights**
Phase 2

From:
Sent: Friday, 31 May 2024 3:15 PM
To:
Cc: Prices;
Subject: RE: Data query - 2020 CPI Weights [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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Hi

Apologies for the delay in getting this out to you, the updated table for the 2020 reweight went out on the website today.

[The 2020 annual re-weight of the Australian Consumer Price Index | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#)

While we were at it, we also did an update for the 2022 reweight table, however that change was minor (mainly impacting city splits in housing, no change to 8 caps). The reason for the discrepancy is the same as noted below for the 2020 reweight, with adjustments having to be made after the weights table was created.

[Annual weight update of the CPI and Living Cost Indexes, December 2022 | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#)

Hope you have a lovely weekend!

Kind regards,

Assistant Director

Consumer Price Indexes | Prices Branch | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

[@abs.gov.au](#) (W) [www.abs.gov.au](#)

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From: @rba.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, December 7, 2023 4:31 PM
To: @abs.gov.au>; @abs.gov.au>
Cc: Prices @rba.gov.au>; @rba.gov.au>; @abs.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Data query - 2020 CPI Weights [SEC=OFFICIAL]


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Thanks , greatly appreciate your help.

From: [@abs.gov.au](#)>
Sent: Thursday, 7 December 2023 4:26 PM
To: [@rba.gov.au](#)>; [@abs.gov.au](#)>
Cc: Prices [Prices@rba.gov.au](#)>; [@rba.gov.au](#)>;

@abs.gov.au>

Subject: RE: Data query - 2020 CPI Weights [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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Hi ,

We'll look into your request. If it's not too much effort we will publish the correct points contribution, or otherwise we can send you a table. We will aim to do this before the Christmas holiday period.

Cheers

Consumer Price Index
Australian Bureau of Statistics

@abs.gov.au

From: @rba.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 12:01 PM
To: @abs.gov.au>
Cc: Prices Prices@rba.gov.au>; @rba.gov.au>;
@abs.gov.au>; @abs.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Data query - 2020 CPI Weights [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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Hi ,

Thank you for your reply. Is it possible for the ABS to publish the correct weights from Table 3 of the annual weight update? Having the correct weights would help the RBA create capital city analytical series and it would also be of use to other users of the data. Alternatively, if publishing the weights isn't feasible, would it be possible for the ABS to send us an updated copy of the table bilaterally? In terms of timing, this query isn't time-sensitive and we are happy for the ABS to find a time that best fits within your other work priorities.

Happy to discuss further and please let us know if re-publishing the weights isn't be feasible or would be too resource intensive.

Thanks,

From: @abs.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 28 November 2023 4:49 PM
To: @rba.gov.au>
Cc: @rba.gov.au>; @rba.gov.au>;
@abs.gov.au>; @abs.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Data query - 2020 CPI Weights [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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Hi ,

Thanks for bringing this discrepancy to our attention. We have investigated the historical weighting information and have determined that the quarterly CPI publication points contribution is the correct ones for you to use. These points contributions were the ones used in calculating the CPI, so best suited for your purpose.

The annual reweight table was created first, but adjustments were later made in the CPI system to account for the bounce back in free child care which overlapped with the reweight in December quarter 2020. The adjustments were made so that we best captured the bounce back across the cities.

Let me know if you have any questions on the above.

Kind regards,

Assistant Director

Consumer Price Indexes | Prices Branch | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

(W) www.abs.gov.au

The [ABS Privacy Policy](#) outlines how the ABS will handle any personal information that you provide to us.

From:

Sent: Monday, November 13, 2023 3:16 PM

To: @rba.gov.au>;

@abs.gov.au>

Cc: @rba.gov.au>;

@rba.gov.au>

Subject: RE: Data query - 2020 CPI Weights [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi ,

Thanks for your email. I can see what you have pointed out. The September 2020 points contribution should be consistent between the table in the CPI release and the table in the annual update release. It looks like it's consistent for 8caps, but there seems to be some differences at the capital city level.

We'll look into this a bit more and get back to.

Regards

Consumer Price Index
Australian Bureau of Statistics

@abs.gov.au

From: @rba.gov.au>

Sent: Monday, November 13, 2023 1:13 PM

To: @abs.gov.au>;

@abs.gov.au>

Cc: @rba.gov.au>;

@rba.gov.au>

Subject: Data query - 2020 CPI Weights [SEC=OFFICIAL]

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi

Hope you had a good weekend. The RBA's data team has recently been doing some work on city based CPI analytical series, and for 2020, noticed the *September quarter* index point contributions in [Table 12 of the December 2020 quarterly CPI release](#) are noticeably different to the index point contributions in [Table 4 of the annual CPI reweight](#) for a few expenditure classes. For example, in 2020, Sydney child care *September quarter* point contribution in Table 12 of the December 2020 CPI release is 1.68, but is 1.51 in table 4 of the annual reweight.

the *September quarter* index point contributions in [Table 12 of the December 2020 quarterly CPI release](#) have a note saying they have been revised. However, the revisions don't appear to be reflected in Table 4 of the 2020 annual reweight tables; this would also impact the weights in Table 3 of the 2020 annual reweight.

Can the ABS confirm if the points contributions (Table 4) and weights (Table 3) in the 2020 annual reweight are correct? This request isn't urgent, but it would be great to hear back in the coming weeks. Please reach out via email or phone () if the above question isn't clear.

Thanks,

| Economist | Prices, Wages and Labour | Economic Group
RESERVE BANK OF AUSTRALIA | 65 Martin Place, Sydney NSW 2000
p: | w: www.rba.gov.au

The Reserve Bank of Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Australia and we pay our respects to their past, present, and emerging Elders.

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