

Design of the complete monthly Consumer Price Index (CPI)

Summary of consultation feedback

Data

- Data quality should not be compromised to release data sooner.
- Retaining the current level of published data and commentary in the complete monthly CPI publication.
- Publishing Expenditure Class level data is essential.
- Publishing data below Expenditure Class is desirable.
- Current geographical coverage of quarterly CPI is acceptable.
- Revisions to the CPI are discouraged and should only be undertaken when major errors are identified.
- Analytical series, such as trimmed mean, weighted median, goods and services, discretionary and non-discretionary categories, and tradables and non-tradables, are highly important and frequently used.
- Including capital city analytical series such as, trimmed mean and seasonally adjusted data would be useful.
- Increase the current analytical series to include additional measure of core inflation.
- Annual points contributions should be published in the complete monthly CPI.
- Include information on data collection, quality, and methods that will be used for the complete monthly CPI.
- Expenditure class index points contributions to headline CPI should be available for the full series and not just the current month.
- The ABS has proposed publishing monthly tables with a minimum 1 year back series. A longer back series would be more desirable but not essential.

Timing

- Broad agreement that maintaining quality and coverage is more important than publishing data sooner.
- Most stakeholders agreed that publishing 'Flash estimates' is not required and can lead to confusion.
- Having monthly CPI data earlier would be very valuable. Most countries publish the CPI two weeks after the reference month, this is something the ABS should work towards.

Publication

- The availability of quarterly CPI data is critical. However, a separate quarterly publication is not required.
- Consideration should be given to providing users with the capability to build their own indexes and calculating CPI with a different index formula.
- Publication commentary on the impacts of government policies and details on price movements are highly valuable and should be maintained.
- Limited reduction in commentary to improve timeliness would be acceptable.
- **Selected Living Cost Indexes (SLCIs)**
 - Having access to Monthly SLCI data could be useful for analytical purposes but it is not critical.
 - Consideration should be given to expanding SLCIs data, such as data for families by income quintiles, state-level data, and more family groups.

Methods

- If quarterly data should be the average of the three months.
- Precision is crucial, publish data to more decimal places. Enhancements proposed.

Other suggestions

- Implement a regular feedback and consultation process with key stakeholders such as economists, businesses, and consumer groups to continually improve the CPI measurement process.
- Include details on weights for the analytical series especially from the exclusion-based indices.
- Produce analytical series that can be revised.