

Household Spending April 2026

Overview

Household spending fell by a seasonally adjusted 1.1% in April, double the 0.5% decline expected by the markets.

Annual growth in household spending eased to 4.9% from 6.2%.

The decline in April was evident across goods and services as well as the discretionary and essential spending categories.

Seasonally Adjusted, %	MoM	YoY
Goods	-0.4	6.5
Services	-1.9	3.0
Discretionary	-0.8	4.4
Non-discretionary	-1.7	5.6
Total	-1.1	4.9

Industry Groups

The strongest decline in nominal spending, of 4.7%, was recorded in transport. This reflected mainly the fuel excise cut lowering fuel costs (though the ABS estimates that fuel spending volumes picked up in April). Lower air travel due to cancellations amid high jet fuel costs also added to the decline. This was partly offset by higher purchases of EVs.

Most spending categories saw a decline in April, with the exceptions being health, hotels, cafes and restaurants, as well as alcoholic beverages and tobacco.

Seasonally Adjusted, %	MoM	YoY
Food	-1.3	4.6
Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco	0.3	-7.9
Clothing and Footwear	-2.2	6.9
Furnishings and Household Equipment	-0.1	5.9
Health	0.5	5.6
Transport	-4.7	4.6
Recreation and Culture	-0.2	6.8
Hotels, Cafes and Restaurants	0.5	3.0
Miscellaneous Goods and Services	-1.0	7.7
Total	-1.1	4.9

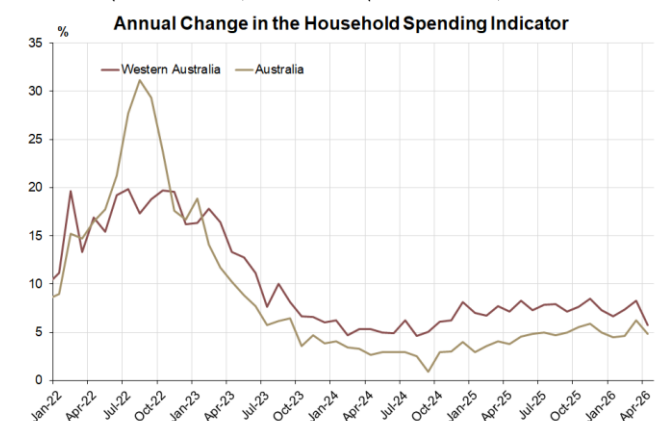
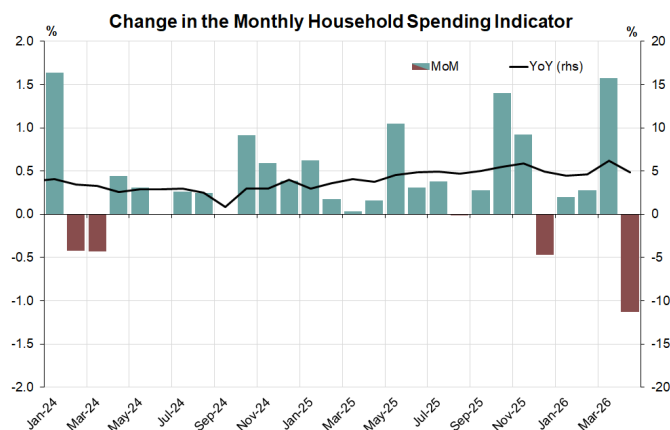
States

Household spending fell in all states except for Tasmania, which saw a 0.3% gain.

Western Australia saw a 1.9% fall in spending in April, due to a drop in transport costs (-8.1%) and food (-2.1%), and – to a lesser extent – ‘miscellaneous goods and services’ (-0.8%).

At the same time, Western Australian household spending picked up in other categories in April, and was up 5.7% through the year.

Seasonally Adjusted, %	MoM	YoY
Western Australia	-1.9	5.7
New South Wales	-0.8	4.8
Victoria	-1.5	3.3
Queensland	-1.0	5.6
South Australia	-1.2	6.0
Tasmania	0.3	7.4



Comment

The fall in nominal household spending in April was a combination of several factors.

First, the decision to cut the fuel excise tax to offset the impacts of a spike in global oil prices due to the war resulted in a decline in fuel costs, lowering nominal spending for fuel despite higher volumes.

Second, flight cancellations due to higher jet fuel prices additionally dragged on nominal transport spending, as well as on spending for recreation and culture.

Third, the ABS reports that households became more price conscious after the war started, with a shift towards generic and cheaper brands in supermarkets pushing food spending lower.

Last, households have clearly cut back on spending for discretionary items such as clothing and footwear, furnishings and household equipment.

Hotels, cafes and restaurants were a bright spot here, with a slight increase in April, though this followed a decent decline in March. Moreover, it cannot be ruled out that higher nominal spending on hospitality could simply reflect a rise in prices, including temporary fuel surcharges imposed by some takeaway services.

The impacts of the conflict in the Middle East will continue to drag on household spending in the coming months, even if the conflict itself ends soon.

28 May 2026