

# Goods Trade Balance May 2026

Australia's seasonally adjusted goods trade balance turned back negative in May, declining by A\$4.4b to a deficit of A\$3.0b.

This was a surprise to market participants, who expected that the goods trade surplus would widen to A\$2.2b.

The decrease in goods trade surplus was caused by both a 6.9% drop in exports and a 2.6% gain in imports.

## Key Numbers (A\$ Millions)

Seasonally Adjusted	Change	May	April
Goods Trade Balance	-4,401	-3,018	1,383
Goods Exports	-3,224	43,614	46,838
Goods Imports	1,177	46,632	45,455

The drop in goods credits was concentrated in metal ores and minerals (mainly iron ore) as well as the volatile non-monetary gold. Metals other than non-monetary gold also saw a slight decline in May.

These declines were partly offset by slight increases in other export categories, particularly coal and rural goods.

## Goods Exports (A\$ Millions)

Seasonally Adjusted	Change	May	April
Rural Goods	168	6,650	6,482
Metal Ores and Minerals (Incl. Iron Ore)	-1,345	13,679	15,024
Coal, Coke and Briquettes	245	6,051	5,806
Other Mineral Fuels (Oil and Gas)	50	5,804	5,754
Metals (Ex Non-monetary Gold)	-147	1,434	1,581
Non-monetary Gold	-2,438	4,521	6,959
Manufactures	106	4,218	4,112

The rise in goods debits was quite broad-based, with gains for all the major categories except for the choppy non-monetary gold.

The strongest gain in absolute terms was recorded for consumption goods, but it was concentrated in non-industrial transport equipment (cars and trucks) as well as apparel.

Capital goods imports also saw a strong gain in May, with the largest contribution from the volatile civil aircraft and other confidentialised items.

Intermediate and other merchandise goods imports recorded only a marginal increase, with fuel imports stabilising.

## Goods Imports (A\$ Millions)

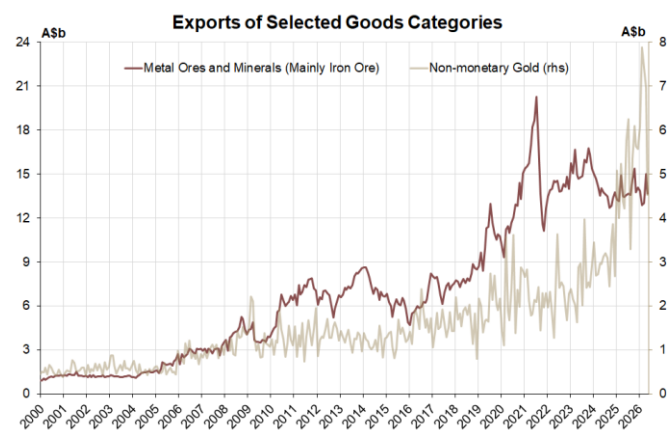
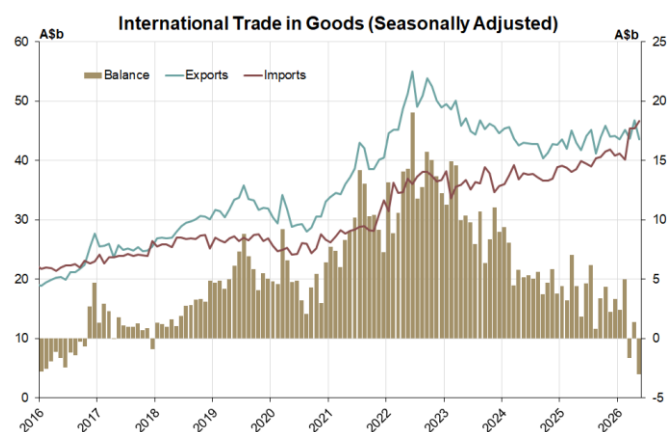
Seasonally Adjusted	Change	May	April
Consumption Goods	973	13,289	12,316
Capital Goods	826	10,857	10,031
Intermediate and Other Merchandise Goods	62	20,718	20,656
Non-monetary Gold	-684	1,768	2,452

Western Australia remains the dominant state in terms of exports.

## State Share Merchandise Goods Exports Excluding Re-Exports (Original, %)

	May	April
Western Australia	41	45
New South Wales	19	19
Victoria	8	7
Queensland	19	18
South Australia	4	4
Tasmania	1	1

\*May not add to 100% due to exclusion of re-exports.



## Comment

After eight years in black, the goods trade balance has turned negative twice this year so far. In both cases this was partly due to the volatility in gold and iron ore exports as well as elevated imports of fuel.

The drop in the value of gold exports reflected most likely a plunge in prices of the yellow metal in the global markets over the past few months. Despite the steep drop from the February peak, gold exports remain high by historical standards.

Supplementary information provided by the ABS suggests that the decline in iron ore export values was also a result of lower prices, while volumes continued to climb steadily.

The ABS has also informed that imports of crude oil and automotive fuel ebbed in May, but – following strong gains after the start of the war in the Middle East – remain around 50% up through the year.

Following the recent memorandum of understanding between the US and Iran, global oil prices returned to their pre-war levels. However, the outlook for global trade in oil and other commodities channelled from and through the Middle East remains highly dependent on further developments. On the other side of the ledger, monetary policy tightening at home might prove to be a dampener for Australian import demand over time.

**02 July 2026**