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August retail sales up

In August 2009, seasonally adjusted core retail sales were up 1.2 percent (\$49 million), Statistics New Zealand said today. Total retail sales also rose, up 1.1 percent (\$60 million), with two-thirds of all retail industries showing increases. These increases follow decreases in July, when core retail was down 0.6 percent and total retail down 0.5 percent.

The biggest movers in the core industries, which exclude the four vehicle-related industries, were clothing and softgoods retailing, up 6.5 percent (\$14 million), and hardware retailing, up 7.2 percent (\$9 million). Decreases were comparatively small, with the largest being \$3 million in supermarket and grocery stores.

In the vehicle-related industries, three of the four showed an increase, led by automotive fuel retailing (up 1.9 percent or \$10 million). The only industry to decrease was motor vehicle retailing (down 1.4 percent or \$7 million).

The total retail sales trend has been rising since February 2009, and has increased 1.4 percent since then, following a 13-month period of decline. The average rate of increase in the core retail trend had flattened to 0.1 percent per month between mid-2007 and early 2009, but since April has risen to 0.3 percent. The long-term average since the series started increasing in September 1995 is 0.4 percent per month.

Seasonally adjusted sales figures were up in all regions except Wellington and Waikato. Since February 2009, the trend for the North Island has risen 1.3 percent, while that for the South Island has declined 1.1 percent.

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