

Printed imports close to \$1 billion in 2018

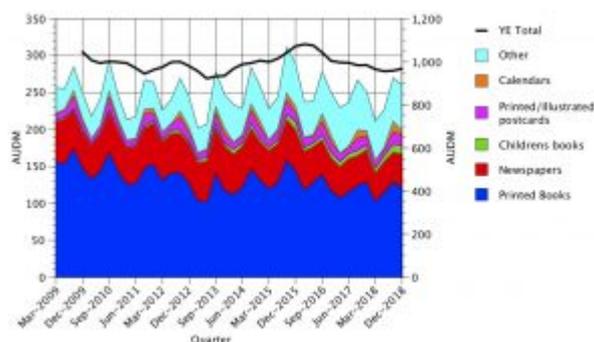
- **Printed material imports were valued at AUD968.6 million in 2018**
- **Local printers missing work as ‘Other printed matter’ continues to assert itself**
- **Printed book import value slips 1.7% to AUD470 million**

At almost one billion dollars in 2018, Australia’s imports of printed material have proved to be very resilient over the decade. Declining a modest 1.7% in total over 2018, industry intelligence advises that unit volumes are down, but average prices increased over the year, for many of the products in this omnibus import grouping.

The value of imports of products as diverse as books, calendars and stamps has hovered around the AUD1 billion mark for much of the last decade. The rise and fall in their value has had something to do with exchange rates of course. Just as important, declining volumes, based on falling print readership appear to have balanced out price increases over the period.

Shown below in the chart, the value of imported printed material has always been dominated by Printed Books. Still at an enormous AUD470 million in 2018, they declined 1.7% in value over the year, accounting for 48% of total imports. Similarly, the value of imported Newspapers fell 3.2% over the year, to AUD1645 million.

Australian Printed Material Imports by Main Type: Jan '09 - Dec '18 (AUDM/month & AUDM pa)



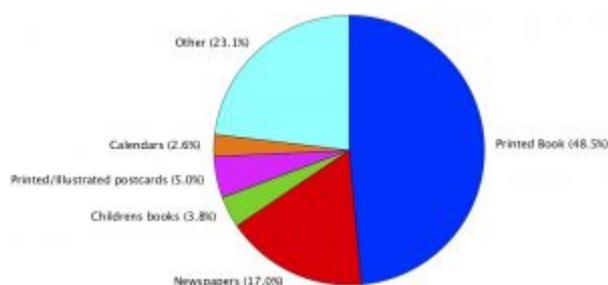
Source: ABS

	2017	2018	YoY % Change
Printed Book	478.4	470.1	-1.7%
Newspapers	170.1	164.6	-3.2%
Children's books	26.6	36.5	37.5%
Music manuscripts	2.4	3.2	33.6%
Maps	6.3	5.5	-12.6%
Plans & Drawings	0.3	0.7	185.6%
Stamps & Bank notes	1.7	9.1	438.8%
Transfers	8.7	8.3	-4.0%
Printed/Illustrated postcards	46.7	48.2	3.2%
Calendars	22.7	25.3	11.9%
Other printed matter	221.5	197.0	-11.0%
Total	985.2	968.6	-1.7%

Proportionally large increases in the value of imports were recorded for Children's Books (+37.5% to AUD37 million) and Calendars (+11.9% to AUD25 million) are the stand-outs, along with the somewhat peculiar Stamps & Bank Notes (+439% to AUD9.1 million). Given the latter are collectibles that increase in value, they could theoretically be a wealthy person buying a serious stamp collection!

To give a sense of the importance of Books and Newspapers to the total value of imports, the pie chart below wraps up a number of the smaller value products.

Australian Printed Material Imports by Main Type: 2018 (%)



Source: ABS

'Other printed matter' remains of interest

Although it is a catch-all designation, the 'Other printed matter' grouping is most important. It includes commercially printed material that covers everything from business cards to commercial brochures and reports. At one level therefore domestic printers may view 2018 as a good year. The value of these printed imports fell 11.0% to AUD197 million.

The less attractive alternative is that import values declined for this material because there was simply less work. Both are feasible options.

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