

NAB Consumer Spend Trend

January 2026



NAB Economics & Markets Research

**Total
spending**

+0.5%
Month on Month (mom)

+6.6%
Year on Year (oy)

Over the last month

+0.5%

Consumer spending

Continued to grow after strong growth in 4Q 2025.

+0.3%

Goods spending

Growth led by a strong increase in personal goods spending.

+0.7%

Services spending

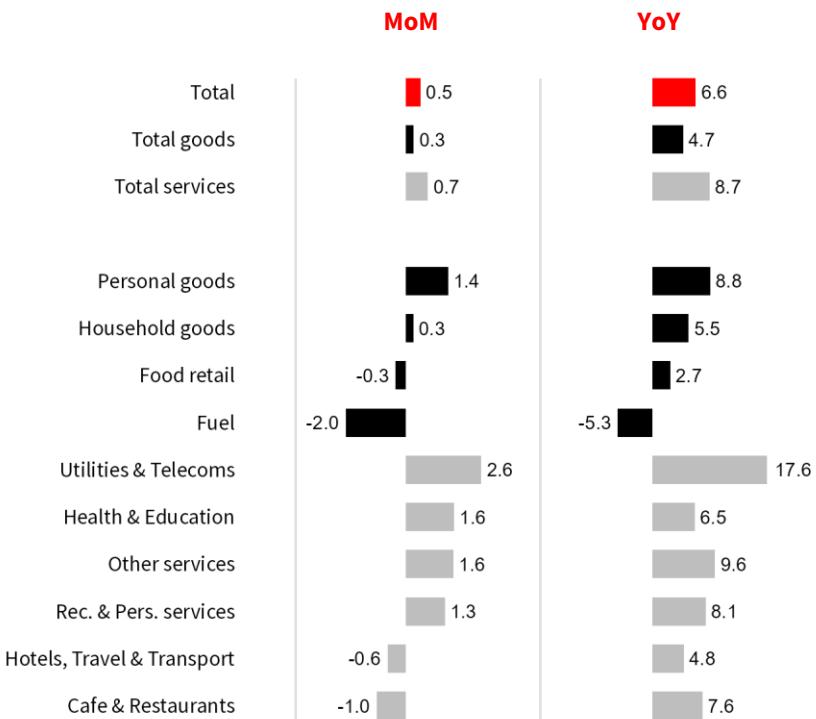
Strong growth in most categories, but lower spending on travel and dining.

- Consumer spending grew 0.5% after a slight decrease in December.
- January's solid rise comes on the back of a very strong quarter for spending in the three months to December.
- Goods spending increased 0.3% mom, with the strongest growth in personal goods spending. This was partially offset by a 2% decrease in fuel spending.
- Services spending rose 0.7% with growth recorded in most categories. Consumers cut back on spending on travel and hospitality in January.

Over the last year

- Total spending grew 6.6% over the past year. Personal goods spending saw the largest increase among goods categories. Services spending growth was mainly driven by higher utilities costs following the end of energy bill rebates.

NAB consumer spending by category



Spending by category

Personal goods

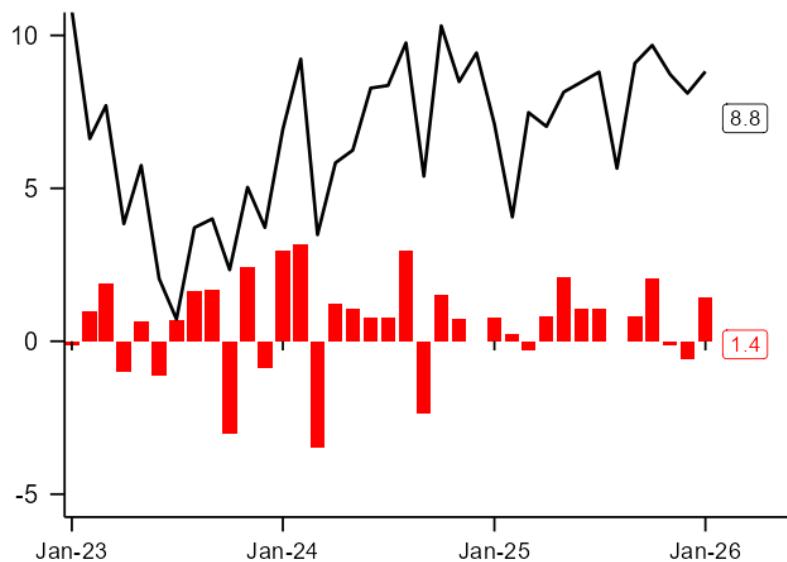
18% Share

+1.4% MoM

+1.6% 3Mo3M

+8.8% YoY

- Personal goods spending rose 1.4% mom in January, after a couple of softer months towards year-end.
- Over the past 12 months, growth in personal goods spending was led by strong growth in spending on toys, games, watches, jewellery and pharmaceuticals.
- Meanwhile, spending on footwear and print products like newspapers and books declined.



Household goods

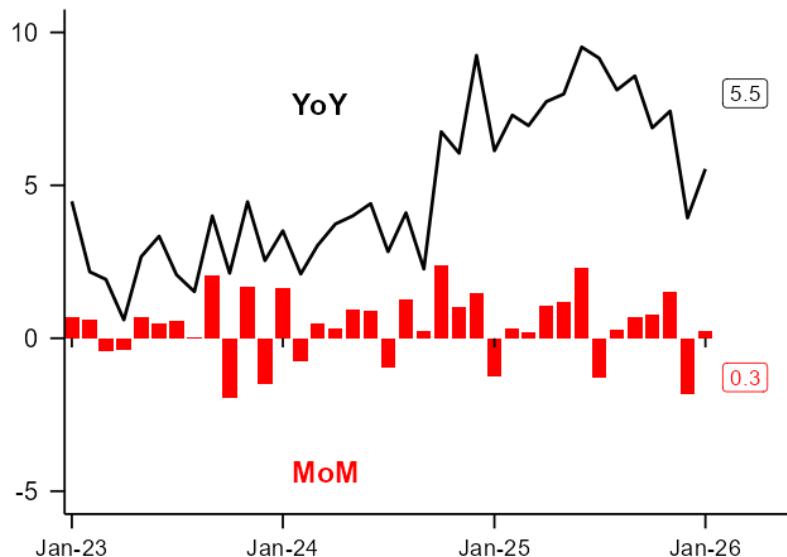
11% Share

+0.3% MoM

+1.1% 3Mo3M

+5.5% YoY

- Household goods spending grew 0.3% in January after a large drop last month.
- In the past 12 months, household goods spending grew 5.5% yoy, but growth in this category has slowed since peaking in mid-2025.
- Furniture, housewares, and building and garden supplies saw the highest growth in the year to January 2026, while spending on recreational goods and electrical appliances declined.

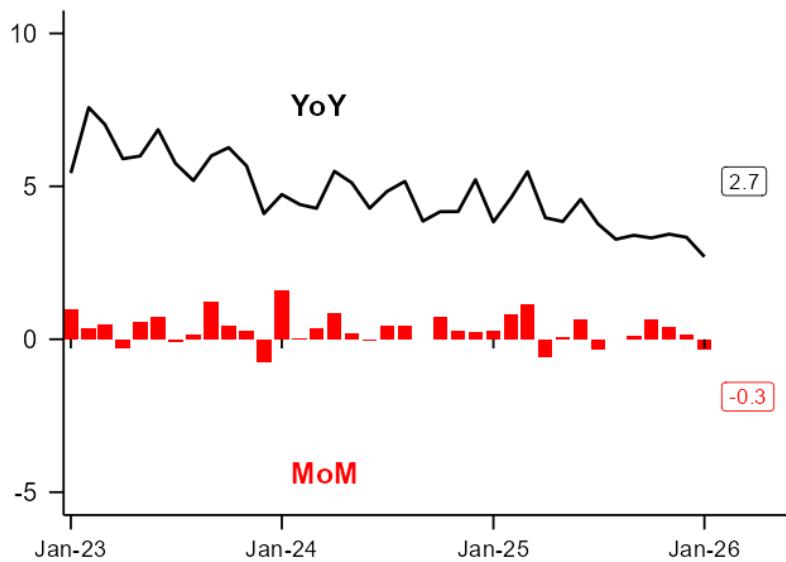


Spending by category

Food retail



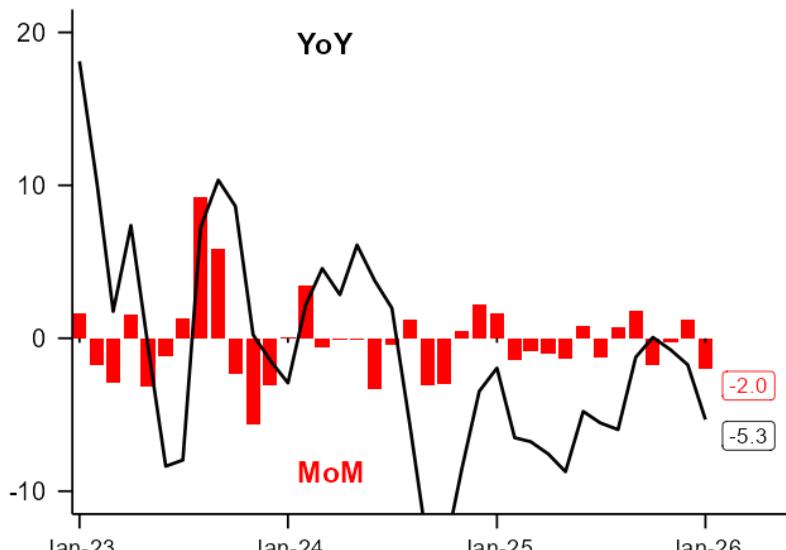
- Food spending declined 0.3% in January but grew 2.7% over the past year.
- Over the past 12 months, the growth in food spending was driven by increases in spending on fresh meat, fish and poultry retailing as well as groceries. Liquor spending saw more modest growth.



Fuel



- Fuel spending fell 2% in January after a strong growth last month due to increased travel activities.
- Over the year to January, fuel spending declined 5.3%, mainly driven by the continued decrease in fuel prices.
- Petrol prices dropped by 6% in 2025.

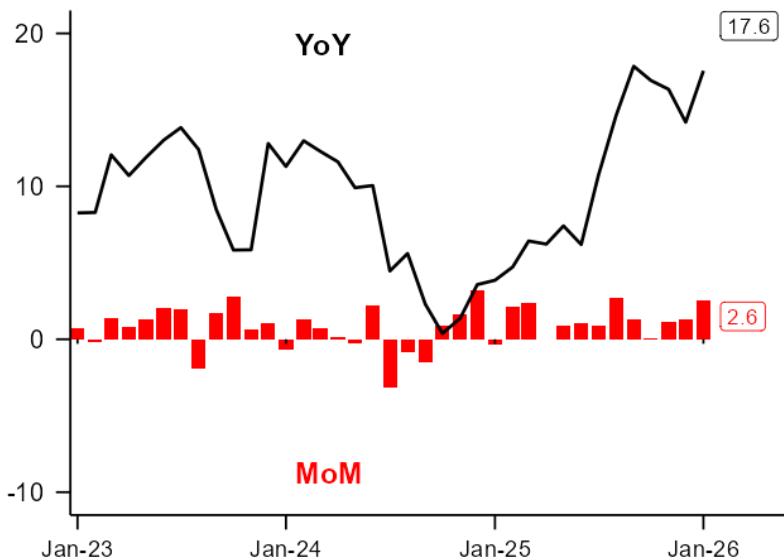


Spending by category

Utilities & Telecoms

- 7% Share
- +2.6% MoM
- +3.4% 3Mo3M
- +17.6% YoY

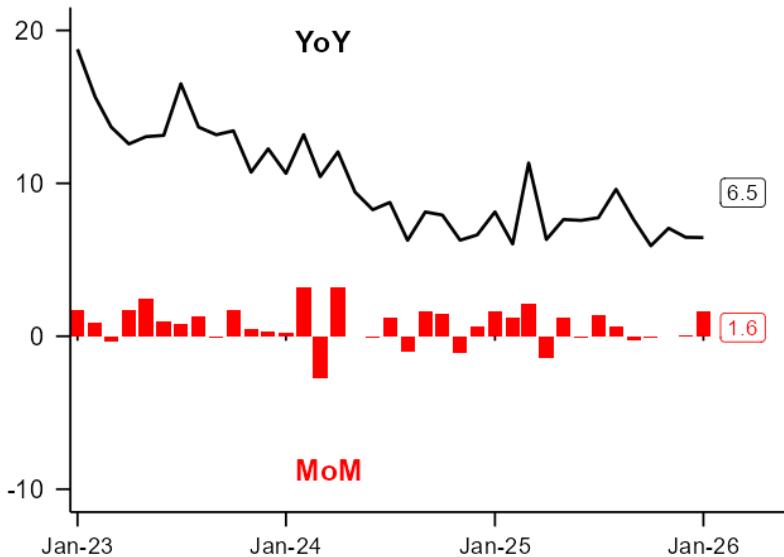
- Spending on utilities and telecoms rose 2.6% in the first month of 2026 and 17.6% yoy.
- Growth resulted primarily from higher electricity spending after energy bill rebates ended.
- Broadcasting and publishing services also experienced significant growth.
- In contrast, expenditures on water and internet subscriptions experienced comparatively moderate growth.



Health & Education

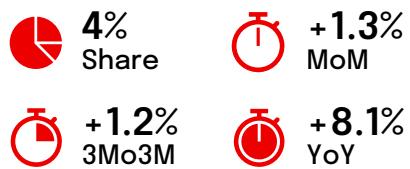
- 7% Share
- +1.6% MoM
- +0.4% 3Mo3M
- +6.5% YoY

- Health & education spending grew 1.6% in January and 6.5% over the past 12 months.
- Growth in the past year was driven by increased spending on social assistance, hospitals, schools, and childcare services.
- In contrast, preschool education spending dropped, as did spending at GP practices due to expanded Medicare bulk billing incentives.

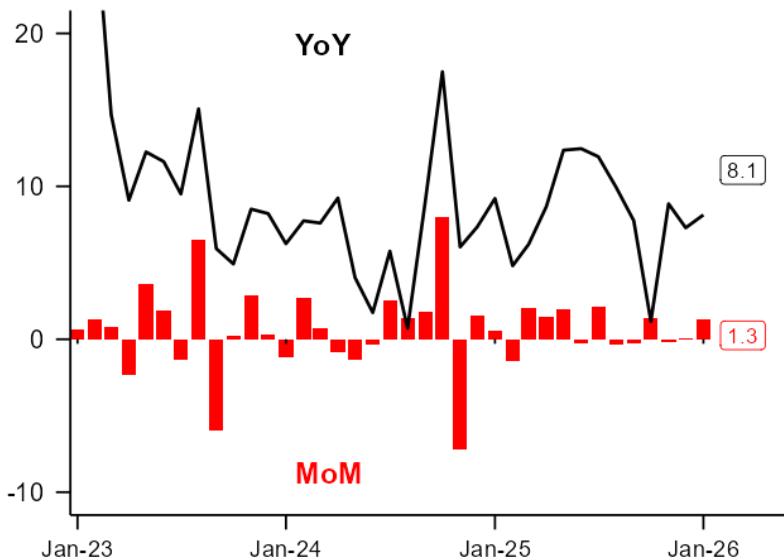


Spending by category

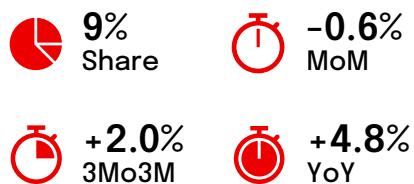
Recreation & Personal services



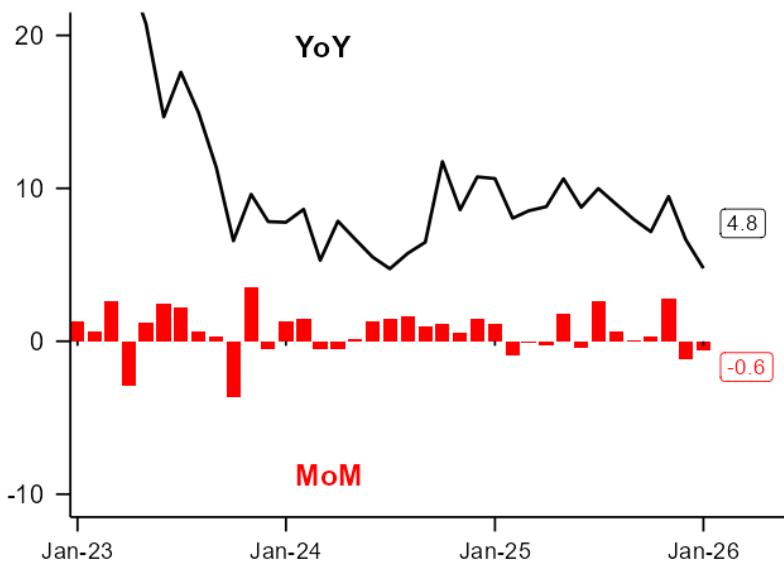
- Recreation spending went up 1.3% in the month, driven by increased spending on school holiday activities such as spending at swimming pools, museums, zoos and botanic gardens.
- Over the past 12 months, spending on recreation & personal services grew 8.1%. Highest growth was recorded in creative and performing arts activities, sports and physical recreation activities and parks and gardens operations.
- In contrast, there was a decrease in spending on gambling activities.



Hotels, Travel & Transport



- Travel spending continued to decline 0.6% in January after a 1.2% decrease in December.
- Hotels, travel & transport recorded the slowest growth (4.8% yoy) among services categories.
- Spending on rail and road travel grew steadily over the past year, while water transport spending increased more slowly.



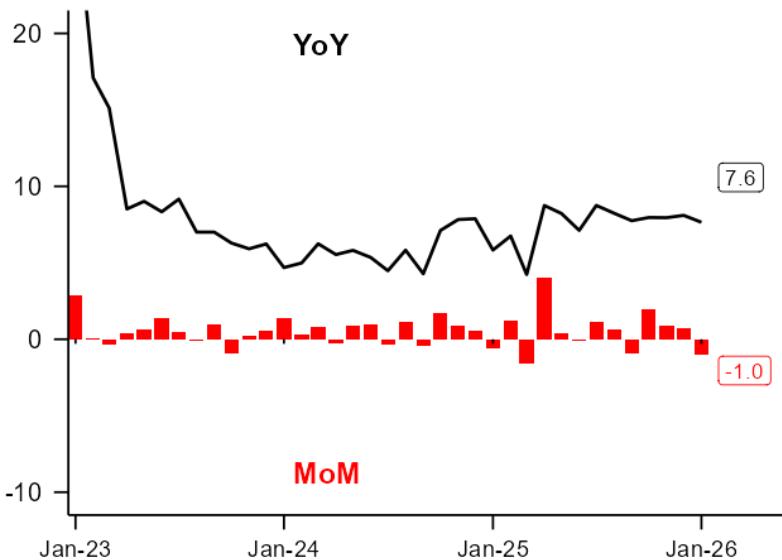
Spending by category

Cafe & Restaurants

10% Share -1.0% MoM

+2.0% 3Mo3M +7.6% YoY

- Hospitality spending fell 1.0% in January after solid growth in the past quarter.
- Hospitality spending maintained steady growth at 7.6% in the year to January.
- Catering services and dining venues experienced the strongest growth. In contrast, takeaway food spending increased at a slower pace, while spending at clubs declined.

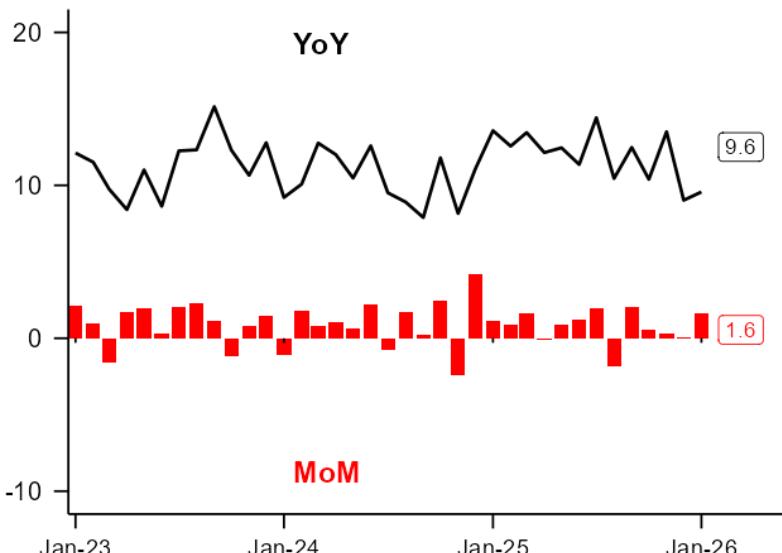


Other services

12% Share +1.6% MoM

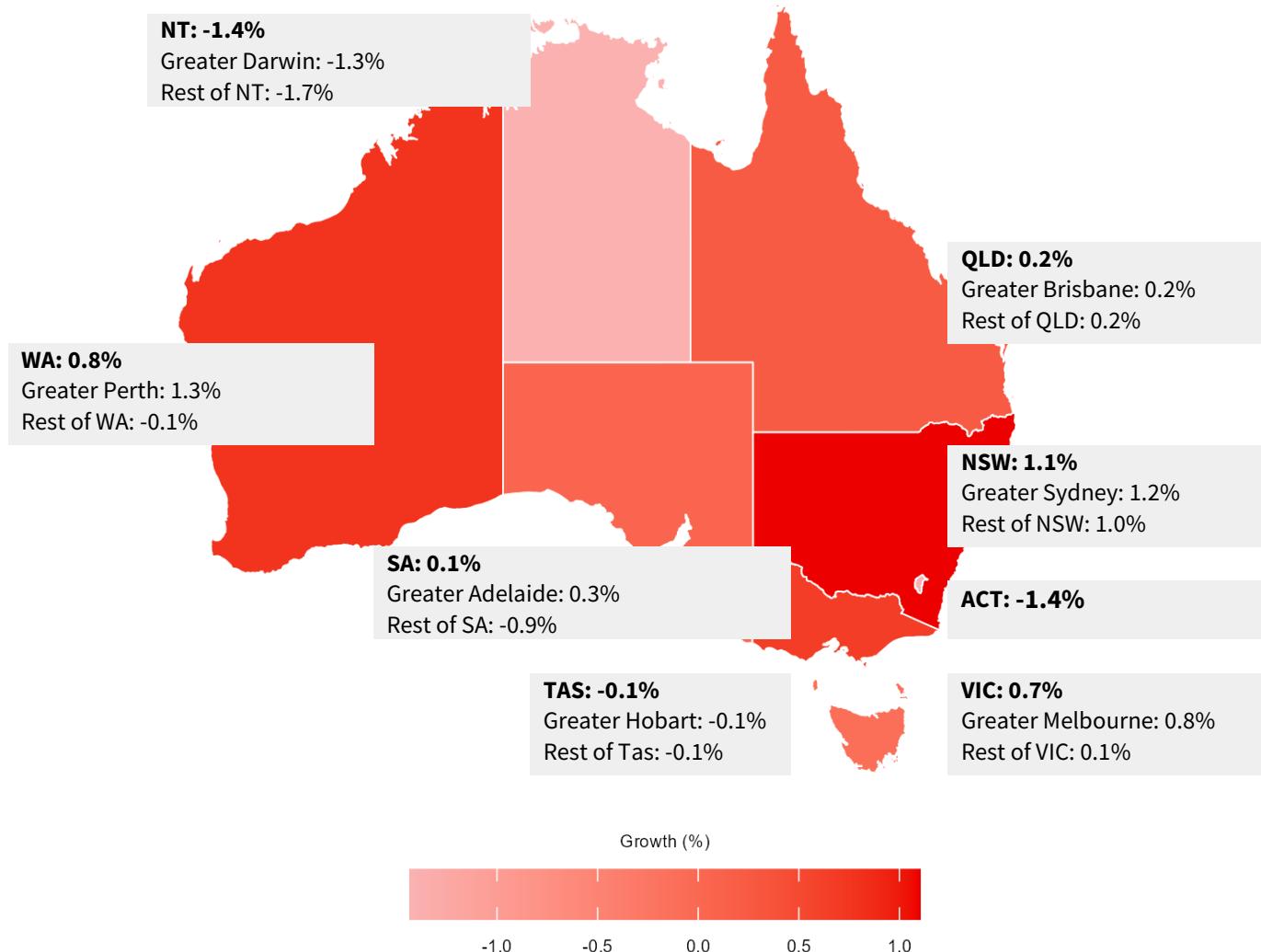
+1.9% 3Mo3M +9.6% YoY

- Other services spending rose 1.6% mom and 9.6% over the past year, being the second fastest-growing category after utilities & telecoms.
- Growth over the past year was primarily driven by significant rises in legal and accounting services, advertising services, and various construction-related services.
- Spending declined in religious services, residential building construction and property operators.



Spending by region

Spending growth by region (MoM, %)



NSW & WA

Leading growth regions

+1.1%

Largest increase (NSW)

-1.4%

Largest decrease (NT & ACT)

- Spending growth in January was led by larger states including NSW (1.1%) and VIC (0.7%). Spending also grew solidly in WA (0.8%) and remained broadly unchanged in TAS (-0.1%) and SA (0.1%). The increases were partially offset by decreases in ACT and NT.
- In NSW and VIC, health & education and other services saw the fastest spending growth in January after

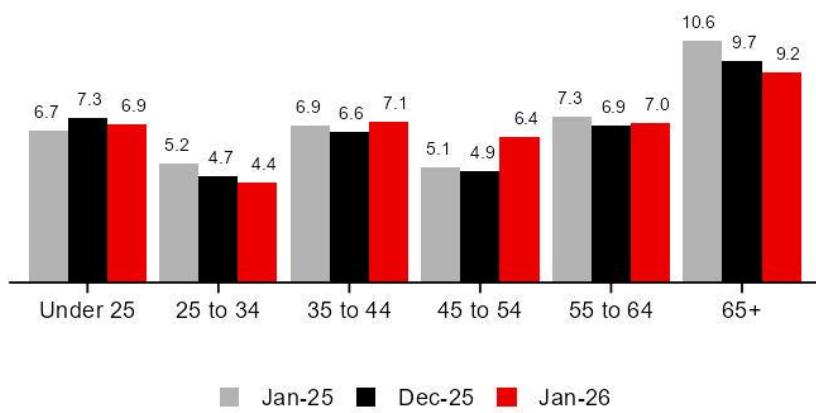
utilities, while spending declined in hospitality and travel in the month.

- In the year to January, WA (9.2%) and QLD (7.1%) led the spending growth while larger states like NSW (6.9%) and VIC (5.6%) recorded solid growth.
- Most states and territories saw the strongest growth in spending on utilities and a decline in spending on fuel except for ACT and WA, where fuel spending rose about 1% yoy.

Spending by demographics

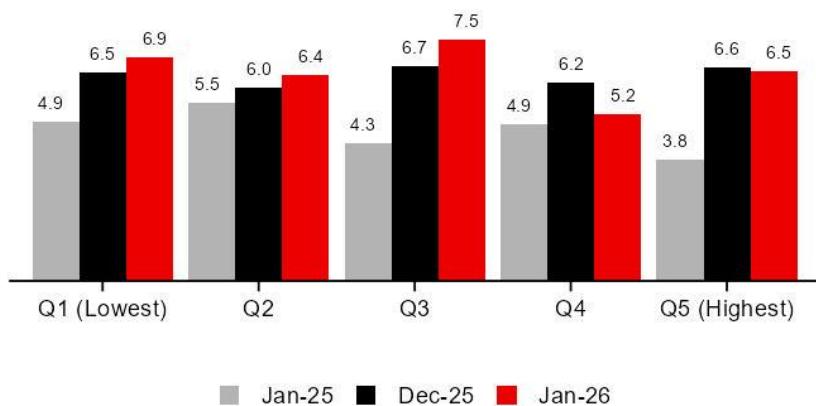
🎂 Spending by age (YoY, %)

- Spending growth was highest among consumers over 65 (9.2% yoy), while the largest improvement was among those aged 35–54, who were more likely to hold a mortgage and benefited the most from the rate cuts last year.
- All age groups reported the strongest increase in utilities spending and a decline in fuel spending. Apart from that, while young people under 25 increased spending most in eating out and recreation activities, people aged over 55 increased their spending most in other services.



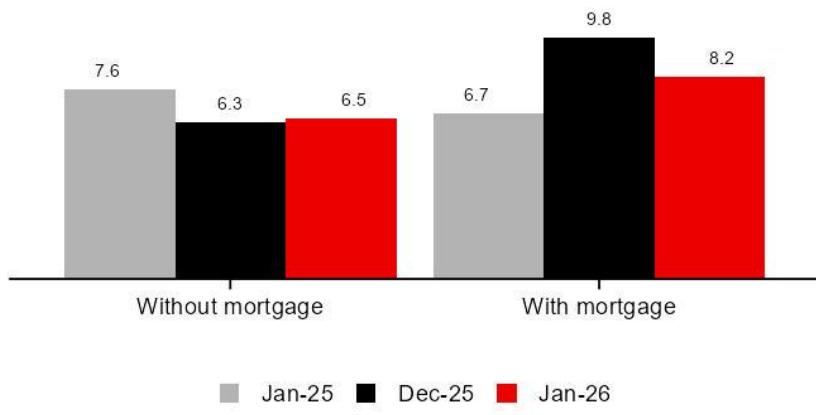
_wallet Spending by income (YoY, %)

- Spending growth was strongest among low and middle-income groups while slowed for higher earners.
- While lower income earners (quintiles 1 – 3) increased spending most in eating out and other services, higher income earners (quintiles 4 and 5) saw highest growth in personal goods and recreation & personal services.



🏡 Spending by mortgage status (YoY, %)

- Mortgage holders experienced an increase in spending growth compared to the same period last year, whereas individuals without mortgages observed a decline in spending growth.
- Utilities spending rose most significantly, while fuel spending dropped for both groups.
- Mortgage holders increased spending more than non-mortgage holders across all categories, especially in hotels, travel & transport.



About this report

NAB publishes aggregated customer transaction data with the view to providing real-time insights into economic activity in Australia. NAB takes data privacy very seriously. All customer transaction data has been aggregated and no individual's data is specifically identified or analysed as part of this process. The underlying data used in this report are not sold or made publicly available. This monthly report replaces the fortnightly *Data Insights* report and the monthly *NAB Cashless Retail Sales Index*, which were discontinued in October 2022.

Consumer Spending Methodology

Data on consumer spending are derived from NAB electronic transactions data, encompassing more than 4 million transactions per day. The data include transactions made by EFTPOS, Credit Card, BPAY, Bank Transfers, Direct Debits and Paypal services where available, and include transactions with Australian and international merchants. Spending includes both online and offline transactions. The data excludes cash withdrawals made during a purchase and purchases made offline in an overseas location. As the data only capture electronic transactions, results can be affected by changes in the take-up rate of electronic payment methods relative to cash. State splits of spending are based on where the customer lives, which may or may not be where the actual spending activity occurs. Customers without an Australian residential address are excluded. Transactions attributable to non-consumer sectors including Manufacturing, Mining, and Wholesale are excluded, as are Financial & Insurance Services (excluding General Insurance, Health Insurance, Life Insurance and Auxiliary Insurance Services) transactions and Public Administration transactions (largely tax payments). Gambling spending and rental and mortgage payments are also excluded. Opportunities to expand coverage to include spending in these areas will be explored in the future. Individual industry and state series are seasonally adjusted using the X-11 method.

Spending categories

Personal goods	Pharmaceutical, cosmetic and toiletry goods, clothing, footwear, watches and jewellery, recreation goods including toys, games, newspapers, books, stationery, flowers
Household goods	Hardware, building and garden supplies, computers, electrical and electronic goods, furniture, vehicles and vehicle parts
Food retail	Supermarket and grocery stores, fresh fruit and vegetables, fresh meat, fish and poultry, liquor, other specialised food
Utilities & Telecoms	Electricity, water, waste collection, mobile phone services, internet, publishing and broadcasting services, data and other information services
Health & Education	Health services including GP, specialist, allied health, hospital, ambulance Childcare, school education, tertiary education, aged care, tutoring, arts and sports instruction
Recreation & Personal services	Sports, arts and recreation activities including event tickets, casino and lottery, personal care including hairdressing, parking, funeral and cemetery services
Hotels, Travel & Transport	Accommodation (hotels, short-term stays), transportation, rental vehicles, travel agent and tour arrangement services
Café & Restaurants	Cafes, restaurants, takeaways, pubs and clubs
Other services	Construction and home repairing/maintenance services, insurance, property management, professional services including accounting and legal services, vet, vehicle maintenance and repairing, other admin services and religious and interest group services

Spending by demographics

Spending analyses by age, income and mortgage status were conducted using restricted samples based on available customer data. Income includes earnings from wages, government allowances, rental income, interest and dividends. The sample excludes outliers and is segmented into 5 income quintiles with quintile 1 representing the lowest 20% of income earners and quintile 5 representing the highest 20%. Due to variations in sample composition, the results for spending by demographic groups may not correspond exactly to the overall totals.

Mortgage status

We have applied a cohort methodology to identify and track mortgage customers, matching to their spending over the analysis period. We may make changes to future iterations of the cohort, which may affect the timeseries series.

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