

Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Key results for May 2011

Table A – Key figures for the month of May 2011

Actual estimates	May 2011	% change between May 2010 and May 2011	% change between March to May 2010 and March to May 2011
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	90 174	-27,5	-21,2
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	50 578	-16,4	-25,1
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	463,6	-10,8	-19,6

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The three months ended May 2011 reflected a 21,2% decrease in the total number of civil summonses issued for debt compared with the three months ended May 2010. A year-on-year decrease of 27,5% was recorded in May 2011 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 21,2% decrease were:

- the money lent category (contributing -8,4 percentage points);
- the goods sold category (contributing -5,3 percentage points); and
- the professional services category (contributing -3,7 percentage points) (see Table 6).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 25,1% for the three months ended May 2011 compared with the three months ended May 2010. A year-on-year decrease of 16,4% was recorded in May 2011 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The main drivers behind the 25,1% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- the money lent category (contributing -13,3 percentage points);
- the services category (contributing -5,6 percentage points); and
- the promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt category (contributing -3,9 percentage points) (see Table 6).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

There was a 19,6% decrease in the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended May 2011 compared with the three months ended May 2010. A year-on-year decrease of 10,8% was recorded in May 2011 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 19,6% decrease were the money lent category (contributing -6,1 percentage points) and the goods sold category (contributing -3,5 percentage points) (see Table 6).

During May 2011, 50 578 civil judgements for debt amounting to R463,6 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R463,6 million were:

- money lent (R160,3 million or 34,6%);
- 'other debts' (R87,1 million or 18,8%);
- services (R76,0 million or 16,4%); and
- goods sold (R73,1 million or 15,8%) (see Tables 3 and 4).

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

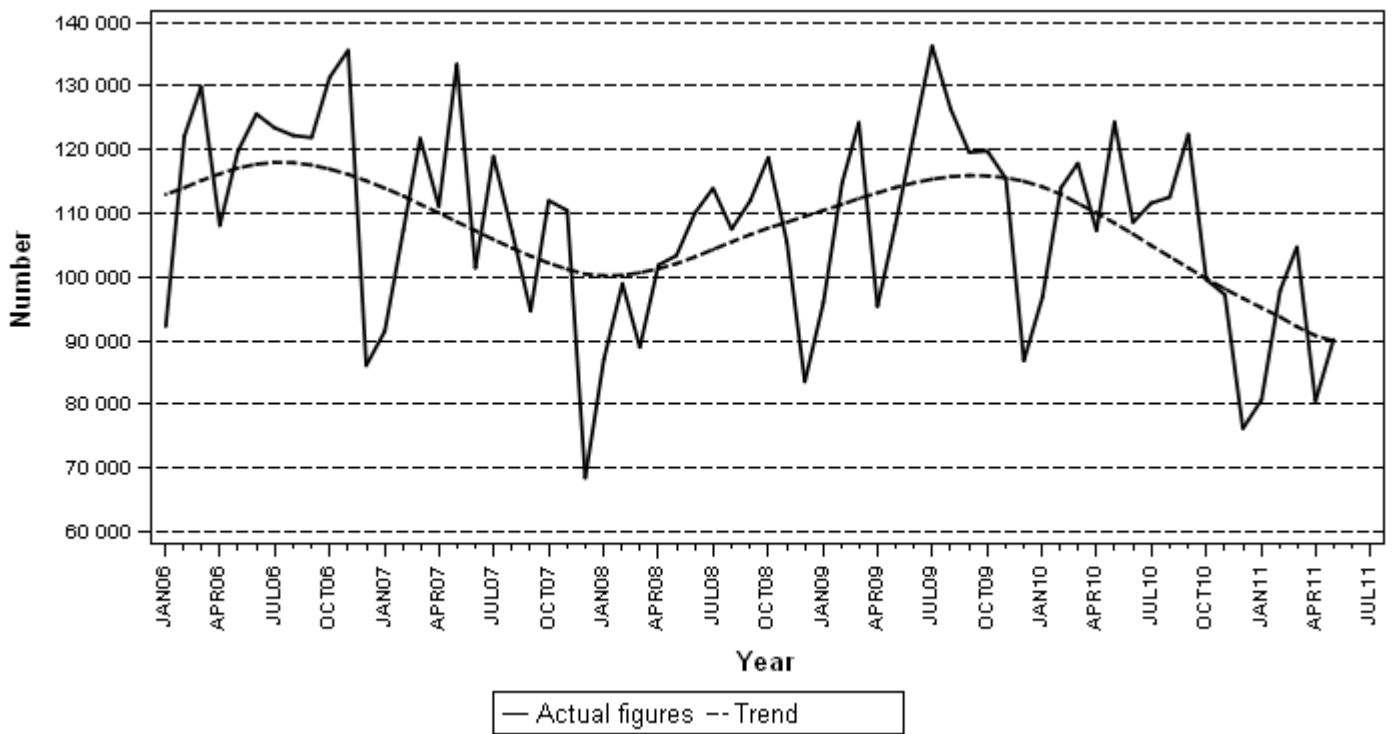
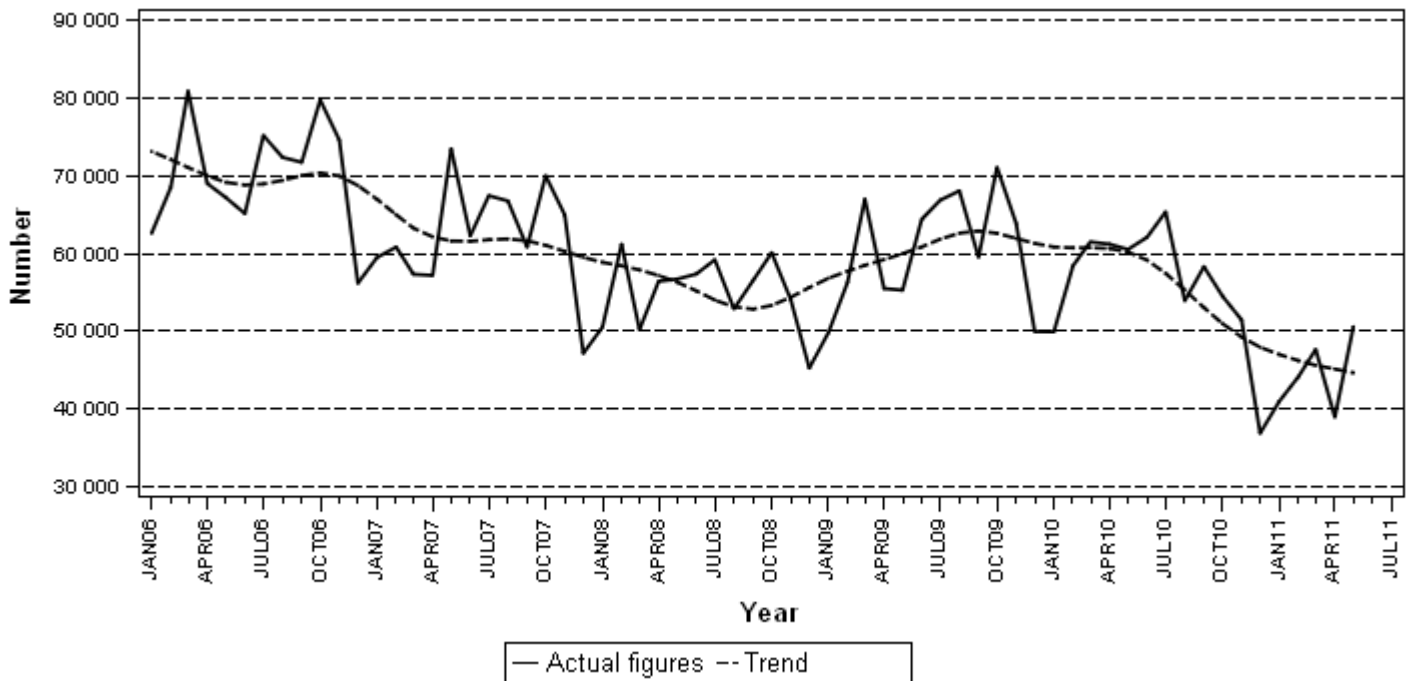


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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Statistician-General

Detailed results: Tables

Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private persons			
	2010	2010	1/ 2011		2010	2010	1/ 2011	
		May	April	May		May	April	May
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 469 321	143 075	98 074	108 096	1 299 023	125 930	87 829	97 553
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		137 159	105 950	103 730		120 172	93 666	93 181
2. Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	108 884	12 349	5 798	6 010	87 313	9 297	4 387	4 492
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	31 736	2 603	1 469	1 511	27 418	2 174	1 270	1 231
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	147 619	15 326	8 794	9 874	128 120	12 997	7 637	8 521
2.2.2 Other	165 477	16 566	14 524	18 630	140 491	13 862	12 921	16 978
2.3 Rent	52 683	5 088	3 400	3 524	43 261	4 062	2 672	2 987
2.4 Money lent	314 868	27 388	17 162	15 586	298 470	25 892	15 838	14 501
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	230 272	23 952	15 742	19 360	214 984	22 536	14 683	18 324
2.6 Other debts	236 788	21 065	13 625	15 679	190 156	16 669	11 869	13 880
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 288 327	124 337	80 514	90 174	1 130 213	107 489	71 277	80 914
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		121 319	87 000	88 170		104 486	76 739	78 764

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Table 2 – Number of civil cases recorded according to selected magistrates' offices

Year and month		Cape Peninsula	Port Elizabeth	East London	Kimberley	Pietermaritzburg	Durban	Johannesburg	East Rand	West Rand	Pretoria	Vereeniging, Vanderbijlpark and Meyerton	Bloemfontein
2009	Year Total	134 632	43 416	18 080	8 026	21 618	91 171	260 137	54 501	38 110	152 361	24 302	40 531
	January	8 015	2 649	1 179	469	1 851	7 973	22 543	3 233	2 629	8 470	1 539	4 856
	February	10 123	4 177	1 516	647	2 069	7 669	19 618	7 236	2 819	11 258	3 699	3 991
	March	11 883	3 920	1 648	686	2 312	6 898	24 373	5 272	2 753	11 882	1 540	5 900
	April	11 127	3 180	1 802	413	1 944	7 668	19 616	4 276	2 849	10 033	1 066	6 000
	May	13 037	3 004	2 074	618	2 179	8 162	20 002	4 536	3 295	20 265	1 001	6 500
	June	13 991	3 375	1 325	360	2 148	8 055	17 263	4 381	2 841	12 186	881	6 000
	July	10 630	2 756	1 779	467	1 911	8 085	22 212	5 041	2 659	10 005	1 658	5 435
	August	10 970	2 904	1 205	353	759	7 540	22 301	4 559	3 114	10 765	1 574	6 200
	September	9 700	3 093	345	316	2 883	7 289	27 645	4 516	3 276	13 402	924	6 800
	October	6 673	2 689	939	465	2 019	7 278	16 794	4 676	3 102	12 802	1 759	5 925
	November	6 983	3 340	1 081	351	1 594	7 022	19 021	3 961	2 618	11 105	1 159	4 012
	December	4 934	2 049	930	101	1 167	7 143	24 746	2 679	2 033	6 421	542	2 640
2010	Year Total	118 066	37 136	15 823	5 246	22 836	90 782	256 134	54 366	33 988	138 594	17 342	64 259
1/ 2011	January	4 253	2 019	876	293	1 493	6 512	22 549	3 222	2 516	8 018	934	3 585
	February	5 379	3 184	1 197	344	1 805	6 343	28 740	4 472	3 473	9 927	1 563	2 946
	March	6 907	4 548	1 301	419	826	6 034	24 728	4 818	2 831	8 569	1 405	4 354
	April	5 317	3 823	1 423	290	1 581	6 031	19 902	3 398	2 711	7 212	1 016	4 428
	May	5 999	6 607	1 430	351	1 469	6 728	20 293	3 590	2 599	9 172	1 098	4 520

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Table 3 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private persons			
	2010	2010	1/ 2011		2010	2010	1/ 2011	
		May	April	May		May	April	May
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	67 065	5 423	3 582	8 573	57 366	4 528	2 920	7 736
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	12 394	1 203	707	791	10 259	983	552	629
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	86 597	8 120	5 124	5 776	77 977	7 494	4 778	5 204
1.2.2 Other	77 202	5 966	4 003	4 883	68 837	5 196	3 343	4 388
1.3 Rent	29 007	2 322	3 404	3 566	23 848	1 750	2 955	3 327
1.4 Money lent	244 032	22 056	12 770	14 742	236 581	21 645	12 258	14 291
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	72 356	5 221	3 515	5 077	65 192	4 317	2 736	3 981
1.6 Other debts	85 559	10 218	5 868	7 170	76 954	9 352	5 217	6 298
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	674 212	60 529	38 973	50 578	617 014	55 265	34 759	45 854
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		59 940	40 020	50 131		54 617	35 131	45 383

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Table 4 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons (R'000)

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private persons			
	2010	2010	1/ 2011		2010	2010	1/ 2011	
		May	April	May		May	April	May
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	613 287	54 904	36 242	51 479	394 335	35 066	24 142	31 347
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	354 943	41 497	28 121	21 659	274 906	27 700	25 352	16 264
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	351 311	28 172	21 156	25 560	281 299	21 366	17 917	20 585
1.2.2 Other	716 644	57 560	41 272	50 406	572 184	45 509	31 873	36 140
1.3 Rent	448 323	49 588	23 885	28 656	298 711	33 938	13 971	18 172
1.4 Money lent	2 202 708	133 606	128 357	160 289	2 059 059	123 627	112 770	148 649
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	792 214	42 658	42 557	38 447	646 469	32 802	31 775	28 705
1.6 Other debts	1 098 153	111 619	60 235	87 111	843 748	95 011	47 035	65 245
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	6 577 583	519 604	381 825	463 607	5 370 711	415 019	304 835	365 107
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		538 520	411 992	482 096		427 680	327 230	378 438

1/ Preliminary.

Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended May 2011 and the three months ended May 2010

Actual estimates	Actual estimates March to May 2010	Actual estimates March to May 2011	% change between March to May 2010 and March to May 2011	Difference between March to May 2010 and March to May 2011
Number of summonses for debt	349 439	275 393	-21,2	-74 046
Number of judgements for debt	183 228	137 227	-25,1	-46 001
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 682,3	1 352,2	-19,6	-330,1

Table 6 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the change in total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended May 2011 and the three months ended May 2010 1/

Item	Contribution (percentage points) to the percentage change in the total number of summonses for debt	Contribution (percentage points) to the percentage change in the total number of civil judgements for debt	Contribution (percentage points) to the percentage change in the total value of civil judgements for debt
Goods sold			
– Open account	-4,1	-1,3	-2,0
– Instalment sale transactions	-1,2	-0,5	-1,5
Services			
– Professional	-3,7	-3,5	-1,8
– Other	1,9	-2,1	-1,3
Rent	-1,1	1,2	-3,0
Money lent	-8,4	-13,3	-6,1
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-1,8	-3,9	-3,1
Other debts	-2,7	-1,8	-0,8
Total	-21,2	-25,1	-19,6

1/ The contribution (percentage points) is calculated by multiplying the three-monthly percentage change of each kind of debt with the percentage contribution to the total number or value of cases recorded during March to May 2010, divided by 100. Figures have been rounded off.

Table 7 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year

Actual estimates	Actual estimates May 2010	Actual estimates May 2011	% change between May 2010 and May 2011	Difference between May 2010 and May 2011
Number of summonses for debt	124 337	90 174	-27,5	-34 163
Number of judgements for debt	60 529	50 578	-16,4	-9 951
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	519,6	463,6	-10,8	-56,0

Explanatory notes

Introduction	1	Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) conducts a monthly sample survey of civil cases recorded and civil summonses for debt issued in South Africa. This information is obtained from selected magistrates' offices.
	2	Except for cases recorded, all other information relates to debt cases only, therefore claims for damages, ejection orders and other non-debt cases are excluded.
Purpose of the survey	3	The survey of civil cases for debt covers a sample of magistrates' offices in South Africa, excluding the former Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (TBVC states). This survey collects information regarding civil cases recorded, civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded in order to provide users with information on the extent of unpaid debt in South Africa. The results of the survey are used by the private and public sectors as an indicator of economic performance.
Scope of the survey	4	This survey covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of civil cases recorded; • number of civil summonses issued for debt; • number of civil judgements recorded for debt; and • value of civil judgements recorded for debt.
Statistical unit	5	The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrate's office. Magistrates' offices include the small claims courts. The largest magistrates' offices in South Africa, which account for approximately 95% of all the civil cases in South Africa, are included in the monthly survey of civil cases for debt. The smallest magistrates' offices are not used in the sample. A sample of 151 magistrates' offices was drawn using the number of civil cases recorded as measure of size.
Survey methodology and design	6	The survey is conducted by mail, fax and telephone each month from 151 magistrates' offices.
Response rate	7	The preliminary response rate for the civil cases for debt survey for May 2011 was 89,4%. Improved response rate for April 2011 was 89,4%.
Trend cycle	8	Smoothed seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.
Publications	9	Users may also wish to refer to the following publications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bulletin of Statistics</i> issued quarterly. • <i>SA Statistics</i> issued annually.
Unpublished statistics	10	In some cases Stats SA can also make available statistics which are not published. The statistics can be made available as computer printouts or electronic versions. Generally a charge is made for providing unpublished statistics.
Symbols and abbreviations	11	R/D Refer to Drawer Stats SA Statistics South Africa TBVC Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei * Revised figures

Glossary

Acknowledgement of debt	Acknowledgement of debt is a statement by a person/debtor in which he admits that he owes money to an individual or a company or a bank.
Bills	Bills are statements of charges for services rendered or for amounts owed.
Civil judgements	Civil judgements are decisions taken in a civil matter or a dispute between two people or parties.
Civil summonses	Civil summonses are notices to appear before the court of law where a dispute between two parties or people has to be heard, i.e. not for a criminal offence.
Consent judgements	Consent judgements refer to where a debtor agrees to subject himself/herself to obey or accept a judgement of a court against him for debt he owes without defending the action. This usually happens before the debtor signs a binding contract, e.g. loan agreement.
Default judgements	Default judgements refer to where the court gives a judgement or a ruling against the defendant who is not present in court and was previously given a notice that was ignored, i.e. a judgement was given against a party or an individual while not present in court.
Instalment sale transaction	Instalment sale transaction relates to where a person buys goods on credit and pays for them in instalments, e.g. every week or month, until he/she settles the debt.
Litigants	Litigants are people who take part in court proceedings, usually against each other, like a debtor and a creditor.
Litigants referred	Litigants referred relates to a case where the parties have been referred to another instance/court.
Open account transaction	Open account transactions are revolving credit, i.e. where an account does not have a final payment date and a person can always take more goods and keep paying as long as he has credit.
Other services	'Other services' refers to municipal services (except outstanding assessment rates), plumbers, builders, mechanics, panel-beaters and electricians.
Other debts	'Other debts' refers to all other kinds of outstanding debts such as salaries and wages, outstanding medical fund debts, outstanding sponsored debts, outstanding class and tuition debt, outstanding income and salaries, tax, outstanding assessment rates, outstanding money in respect of television maintenance contracts and outstanding money in respect of flat levies.
Plaintiff	Plaintiff is a person/party in a civil case who asks the court for judgement against another person.
Professional services	Professional services refer to medical doctors, dentists, advocates, attorneys, auditors, accountants, architects, engineers, hospital services etc.
Promissory note	Promissory note is a written undertaking, signed by a person or party, to pay money to another person or to the bearer of such a note on a specific date or on demand.
Reference month	Reference month refers to one calendar month.
Refer to drawer (R/D) cheques	R/D cheques refer to dishonoured cheques. The drawer is the owner of the cheque. When a person issues a cheque and there is no money in the cheque account, the bank will refuse to pay the bearer. The cheque will be referred back to the drawer.

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