

## ANZ-ROY MORGAN CONSUMER CONFIDENCE FEELING LESS POSITIVE ABOUT NEXT YEAR

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#### CONTACTS

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#### SUMMARY

- Consumer confidence fell for the second consecutive month, as less people feel confident about the outlook for the economy in 12 months time.
- Consumers are also feeling the financial pinch, and last month's rise in intentions to purchase a major household item reverses.
- The labour market may be improving, but there are plenty of other influences working in the opposite direction. It looks like households will remain cautious with their spending for a while.

**The ANZ-Roy Morgan Consumer Confidence measure fell 6 points in July.** While off its recent peak of 131.4 in January, the overall level of household sentiment remains positive at 115.6. However, it has now fallen below the historical average of 119.6, and is the lowest reading in almost a year.

What is unclear is the extent that recent global market volatility played in this month's fall. Ongoing sluggishness in the housing market, with house prices still under downward pressure, is no doubt weighing. And price increases for electricity and petrol as the emissions trading scheme came into effect from 1 July could also have been a factor behind consumers feeling less confident. There are certainly positives out there, including an improving labour market, which official figures out in two weeks time will no doubt show. Longer term fixed mortgage rates have fallen, and those tax cuts are getting ever closer. But it seems the negatives are outweighing the positives in the consumers' minds at present.



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**Out of the five component questions that make up the confidence measure, only one showed an increase.** This was the question relating to consumers' prospects for the economy over the longer term. Even then, the increase was small at +3, and comes after an 8 point decline in the previous month.

The biggest drop among the component questions was the one regarding the outlook for the New Zealand economy in a year's time. Only a net 3 percent of respondents expected better times next year, down 15 points from the previous month. This is the largest monthly decline since October 2008, right after the collapse of Lehmans, which heralded the start of the Global Financial Crisis. While we do not think recent global concerns will have anywhere near the same effect this time, consumers are clearly getting worried.

Despite the economy out of recession for well over a year now, consumers are still feeling the recessionary effects on their own finances. More respondents felt financially worse off now compared to last year (down 9 points), and this reading has been in negative territory since April 2008. There was also a decline in the proportion of respondents expecting to be better off next year.

Last month's increase in the proportion of respondents thinking it is a good time to purchase a major household item was reversed this month. We wondered if last month's reading was influence by a "beat the GST increase" dynamic. The pullback this month suggests there may be some of that at play. While the current reading at +22 is still consistent with a pick-up in retail spending in the months ahead, it is not pointing to a big spending surge that the retail sector had been hoping for.



Both the future and current conditions indexes fell, with the latter falling by more, leading to a slight widening in the gap between the two. The trend since early this year has been for the large gap between future and current conditions to narrow, mainly from the former falling towards the latter, as the reality of a slower than usual cyclical recovery starts to dawn on consumers.



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**The drop in confidence was mirrored across both sexes.** Males recorded a slightly larger drop in confidence, falling 7 points from a month earlier, to 120.2. Females recorded a 6 point drop in sentiment, trimming the overall level of confidence down to 111.3.

**Confidence dropped across the age bands except for the 25-34 year old cohort.** The two youngest age cohorts had the largest drop in confidence. After a lift last month, confidence among the 18-24 year olds dropped 12 points to 128.3. The 14-17 year old age band reported a 10 point drop in confidence, to 134.7. Confidence slipped 7 points for the 35-49 year age group, while the over 50 year olds recorded an 8 point fall in confidence, to 104.1. The 25-34 year old group recorded a 4 point rise in confidence, to 129.9.

# Consumer sentiment was down in the North Island and Canterbury but rose in the remainder of the South Island.

Auckland reported the largest fall in confidence, dropping 14 points to 114.8 – behind Wellington on 116.0 (down 4 points) and Canterbury's 119.3 (down 3 points). The South Island excluding Canterbury recorded a 9 point lift in confidence to 120.3 – the highest of the five areas we measure.



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Survey Summary	Dec-09	Jan-10	Feb-10	Mar-10	Apr-10	May-10	Jun-10	Jul-10
No. of Interviews	1,025	2,049	1,047	993	1,015	995	1,075	1,062
Q1. Would you say you and your family are better-off financially or worse off than you were at this time last year?								
Better Off	23	31	26	28	30	31	30	27
Worse Off	45	33	41	39	41	35	35	41
Net Balance	-22	-2	-15	-11	-11	-5	-5	-14
Q2. This time next year, do you and your family expect to be better-off financially or worse off than you are now?								
Better Off	55	61	57	53	56	56	53	48
Worse Off	15	10	17	20	18	16	23	23
Net Balance	40	50	40	33	38	40	29	26
Q3. Thinking of economic conditions in New Zealand as a whole. In the next 12 months, do you expect we'll have good times financially, bad times or some good and some bad?								
Good Times	47	57	53	48	48	53	44	36
Bad Times	25	17	24	28	26	26	26	33
Net Balance	22	39	29	20	23	27	18	3
Q4. Looking ahead, what would you say is more likely, that in New Zealand as a whole, we'll have continuous good times during the next five years or so, or we'll have bad times, or some good and some bad?								
Good Times	56	61	63	61	60	61	56	58
Bad Times	14	13	14	14	15	14	17	16
Net Balance	42	48	49	46	45	47	39	42
Q5. Generally, do you think now is a good time, or a bad time, for people to buy major household items?								
Good Time to Buy	48	53	49	52	50	54	56	53
Bad Time to Buy	37	32	34	32	34	32	28	31
Net Balance	11	22	15	20	16	21	28	22
ANZ Roy Morgan Consumer Confidence Rating (100 plus the unweighted average of the five net balances)								
Overall Index	118.6	131.4	123.6	121.8	121.9	126.0	122.0	115.6
Current Conditions	94.5	109.6	100.0	104.9	102.3	108.3	111.8	104.0

Q1 . Better off past year 30 20 10 0 -10 -20 -30 -40 06 04 05 07 08 09 10 Sources: ANZ, Roy Morgan

134.6

146.0

**Future Conditions** 





133.1

135.1

139.4





128.8

123.4



Sources: ANZ, Roy Morgan

137.8





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- Associate Member of Investment Savings & Insurance Association of NZ;
- Financial Markets Operations Association; and
- Institute of Finance Professionals.

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- Adjudicated bankrupt;

- Prohibited by an Act or by a court from taking part in the management of a company or a business;
- Subject of an adverse finding by a court in any proceeding that has been taken against them in their professional capacity;
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- Placed in statutory management or receivership.

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- New Zealand and overseas unit trusts;
- · Share in a limited partnership;
- Superannuation schemes and bonds;
- Group investment funds;
- Life insurance products;
- Derivative products including interest rate and currency forward rate contracts and options; and
- Other forms of security, such as participatory securities.

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If you wish to pay investment money to the Bank you can do this in several ways such as by:



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- Providing a cheque payable to the relevant product or service provider and crossed 'not transferable'; or
- Making an automatic payment or payment through another electronic delivery mechanism operated by the Bank.

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