

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

11TH SEPTEMBER 2021

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What's new?

The world

- ❑ 4.09mn new Covid-19 cases were recorded this week, the second consecutive decline and the lowest number in 5 weeks ([slide 4](#))
- ❑ The 'delta wave' may be peaking in the US and appears to have peaked in South-East Asia, but hasn't yet in Europe ([slide 5](#))
- ❑ 59 economies have now reported GDP estimates for Q2, with 37 of them showing growth of more than 10% from what for all but China was the recession trough in Q2 last year ([slide 27](#)) – but only in 15 is the level of GDP above its pre-pandemic peak ([slide 29](#))
- ❑ China's trade surplus widened another US\$1¾bn in August to its largest in seven months, thanks to a record level of exports which appears to reflect 'market share' gains ([slide 50](#))
- ❑ China's producer price index rose 9.5% over the year to August (the largest increase in 13 years), but consumer price inflation remains subdued thanks to falling food prices ([slide 52](#))
- ❑ The European Central Bank flagged a reduction in the pace of its bond purchases at this week's Governing Council, but didn't want this to be seen as 'tapering' ([slide 40](#))
- ❑ Central banks in Russia, Ukraine and Peru raised interest rates (again) this week, but Poland's didn't ([slide 85](#)) and nor did Malaysia's ([slide 64](#))
- ❑ Ireland's Q2 GDP was 17½% above its pre-Covid peak, but that presents an unduly flattering picture of the Irish economy ([slide 84](#))
- ❑ Russia's economy has also surpassed its pre-pandemic peak, and unemployment is at a 2-year low, but inflation is at a 5-year high which is why the central bank has hiked 5 times this year ([slide 86](#))
- ❑ By contrast, South Africa's Q2 GDP was still almost 2% below its pre-pandemic peak and unemployment is nearly 35% ([slide 88](#))

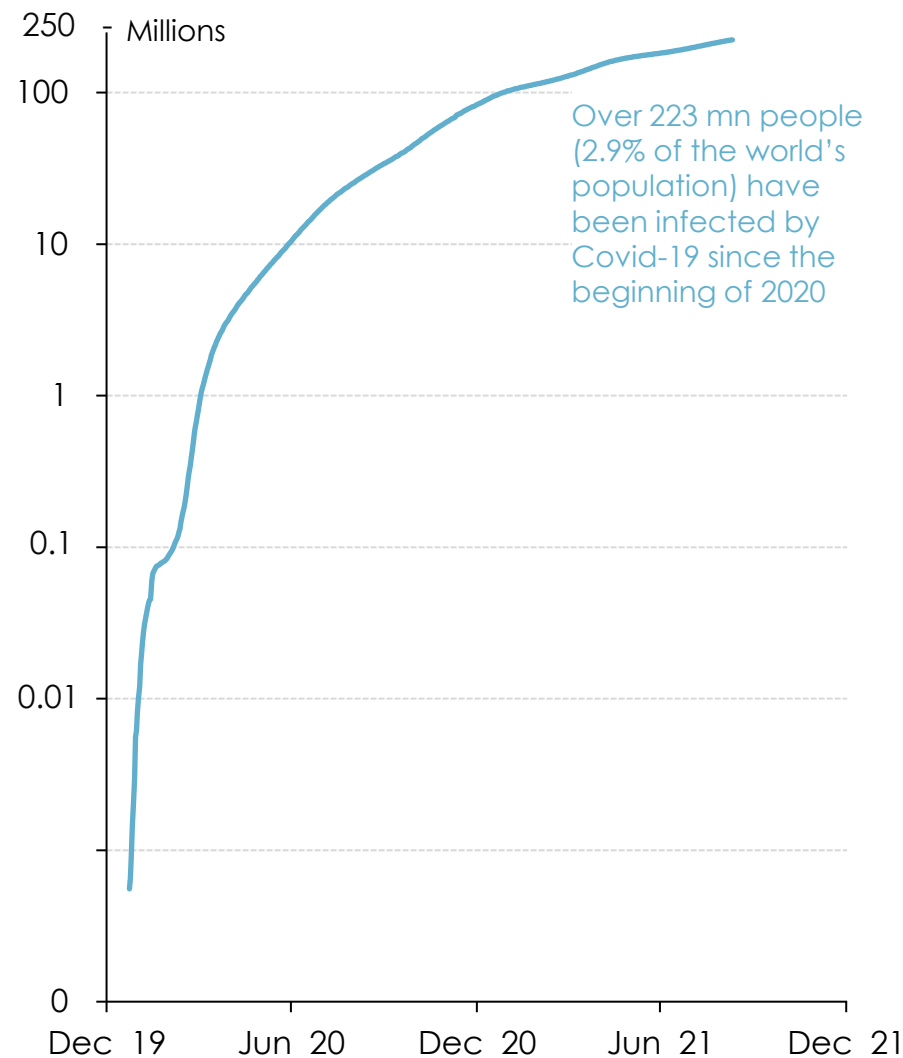
Australia and New Zealand

- ❑ Australia recorded 11,701 new Covid-19 cases this week, the highest number since the start of the pandemic, with all but 36 of them being 'locally acquired' ([slide 13](#))
- ❑ Over 9,800 of those new cases were in New South Wales, and almost 1,730 in Victoria – but both these states have now formally abandoned 'zero Covid' as an objective, and this week eased restrictions outside their state capitals ([slide 14](#))
- ❑ The Federal Government has stipulated full-vaccination 'thresholds' of 70% and 80% for the progressive easing of covid restrictions – but these are expressed as percentages of the 'eligible' (as opposed to total) population: which means 'opening up' at these levels may risk a renewed surge in cases especially if 'test-track-isolate-and-quarantine' capabilities aren't 'optimal' ([slides 22-23](#))
- ❑ Payroll jobs fell another 0.7% over the first two weeks of August, bringing the total decline since the Sydney lockdown began to 3½% ([slide 109](#))
- ❑ The RBA again left interest rates unchanged at this week's Board meeting (as expected) but surprised some by pressing ahead with its previously foreshadowed 'tapering' of its bond purchases from \$5bn a week to \$4bn – although these will now continue through to at least February next year rather than stopping in November ([slide 152](#))
- ❑ The iron ore price fell another 9½% this week, bringing the cumulative decline since China ordered its steel mills to cut production in July to 43% ([slide 130](#)), which pushed the A\$ back below US74¢ ([slide 138](#))
- ❑ Western Australia's state government is the only government in Australia, and one of very few anywhere in the world, which is running surpluses (according to this week's 2021-22 Budget) – thanks to massive iron ore royalties and (despite that) an increased share of GST ([slides 150-151](#))

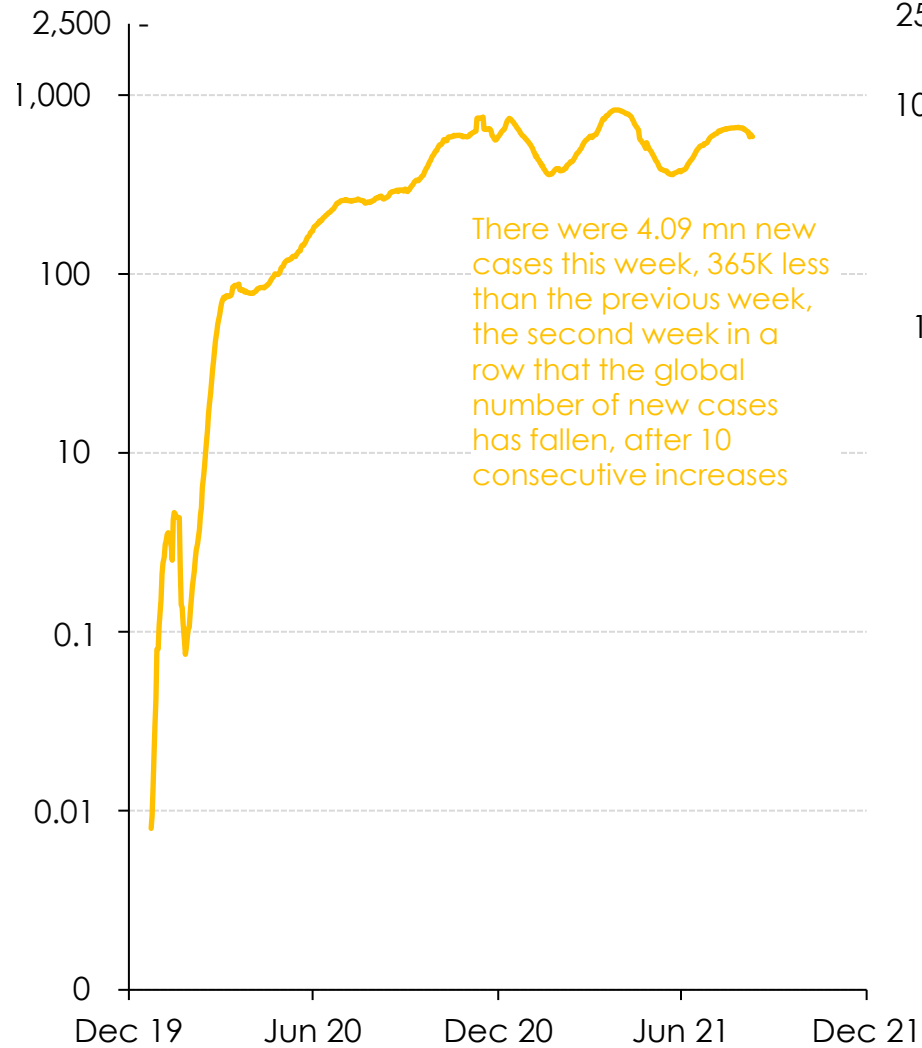
The virus

It's possible that the 'delta wave' may be peaking, globally – the number of new infections and deaths fell for the second week in a row

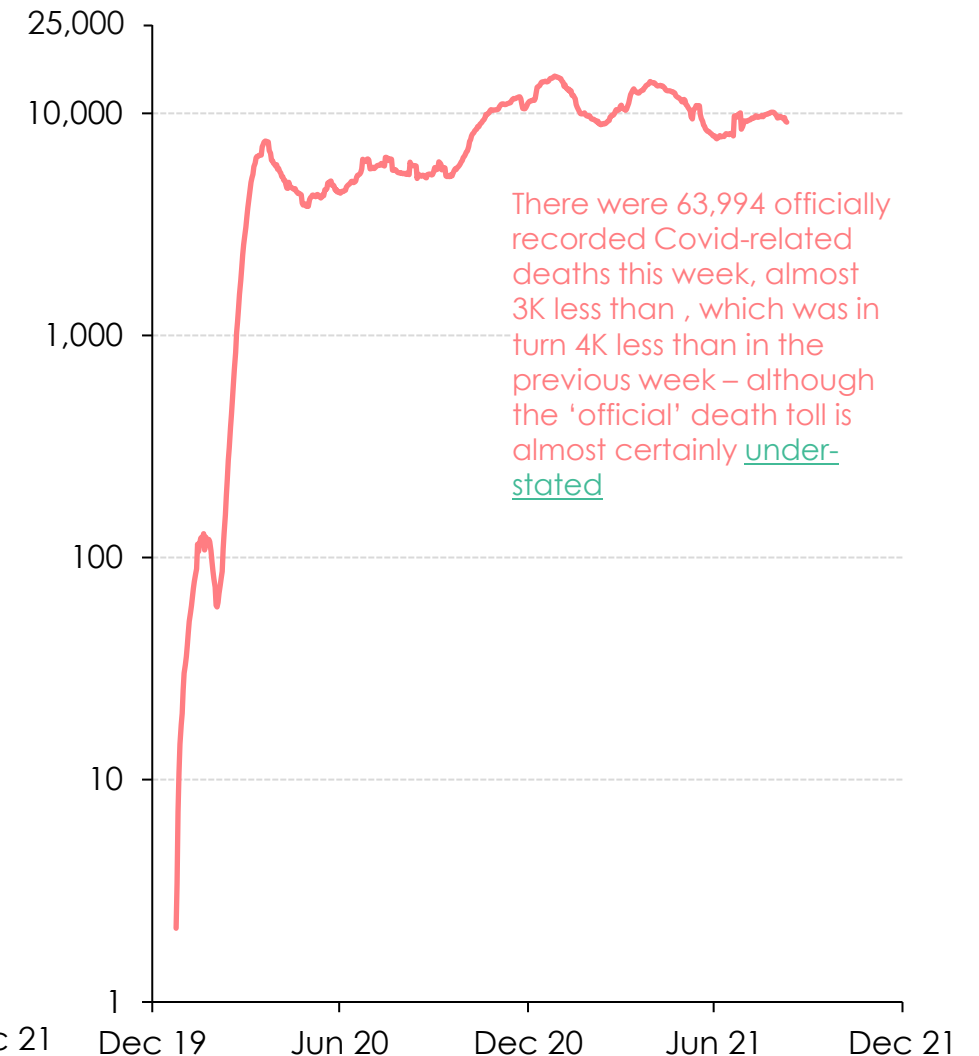
Cumulative confirmed cases – global total



New confirmed cases – global total



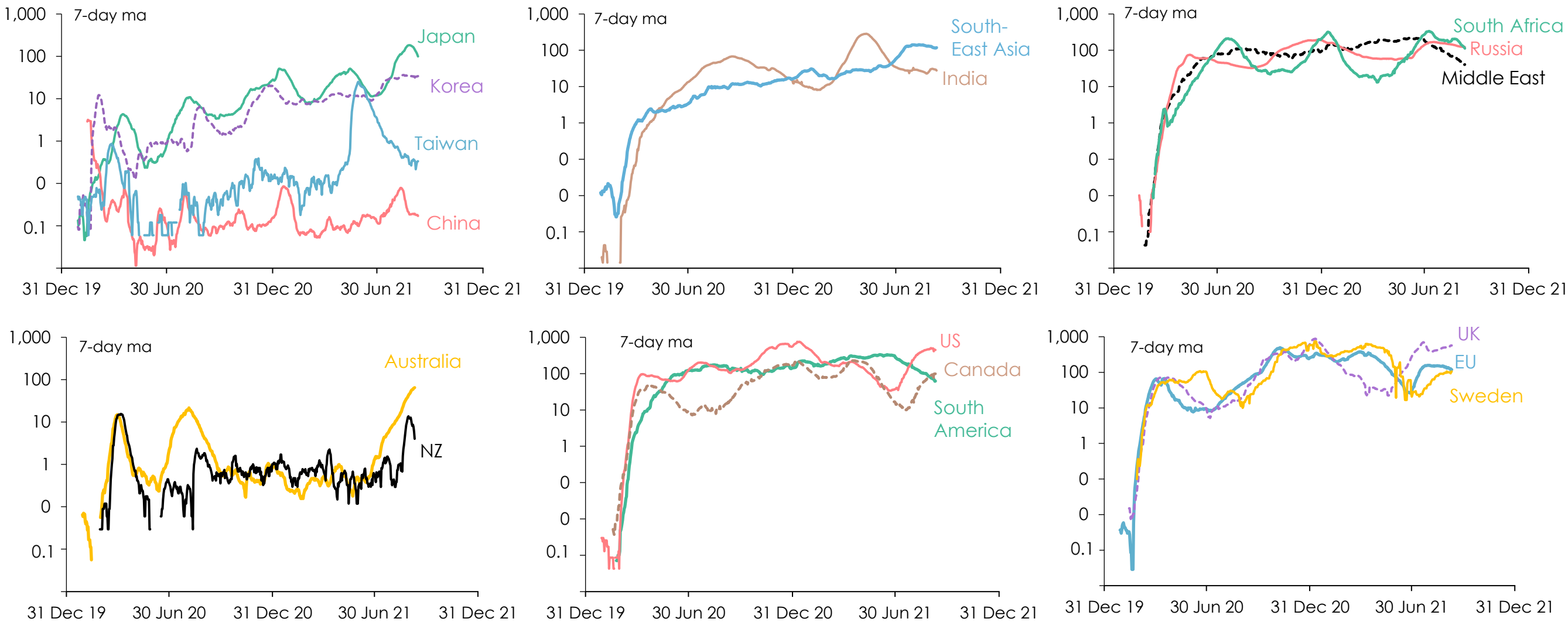
New deaths – global total



Note: All charts are on logarithmic scales. Data up to 9th September. Source: University of Oxford, [Our World in Data](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

25¾% of this week's new cases were in the US, 17¾% in Europe, 13½% in SE Asia, 11½% in the Middle East, 6½% in India, and 4½% in South America

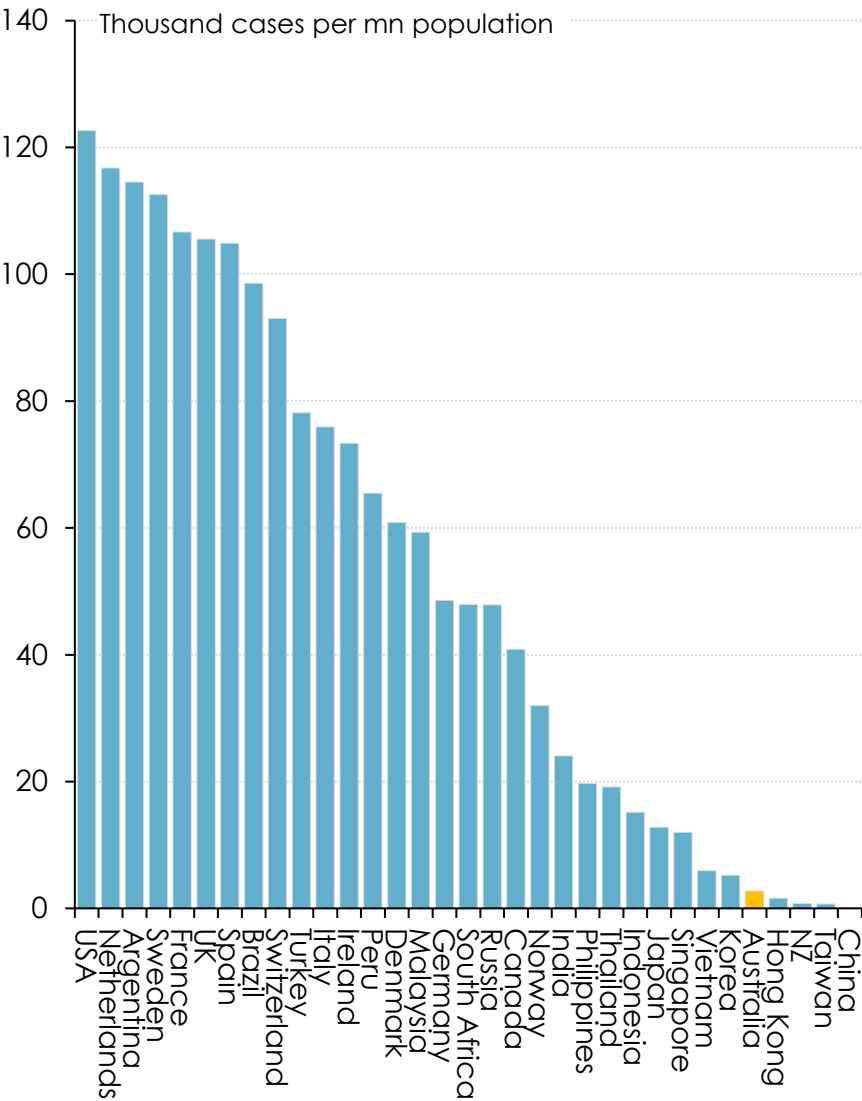
Daily new cases per million population – major countries and regions



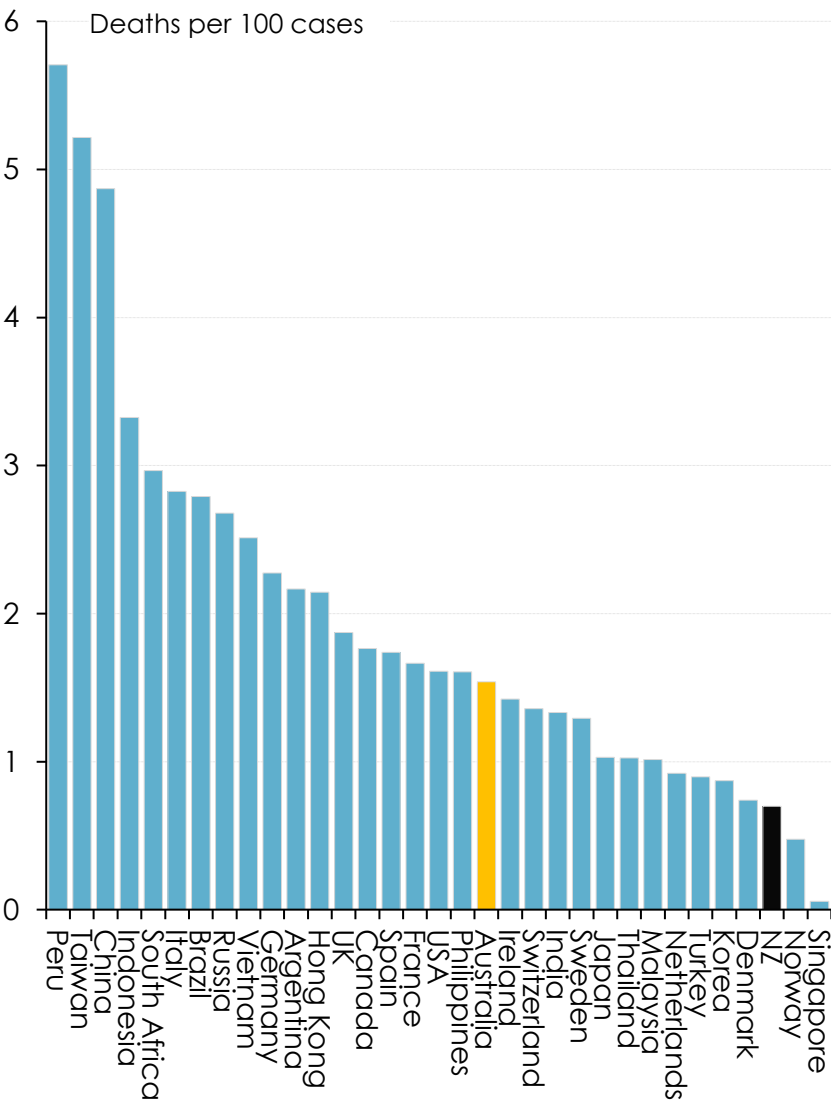
❑ The US accounted for almost one-third of this week's decline in the total number of new cases world-wide – but case numbers also fell in most other major regions, with the exception of Europe (and Australia)

The highest cumulative infection and death rates (since the onset of the pandemic) have been in Europe, South and North America

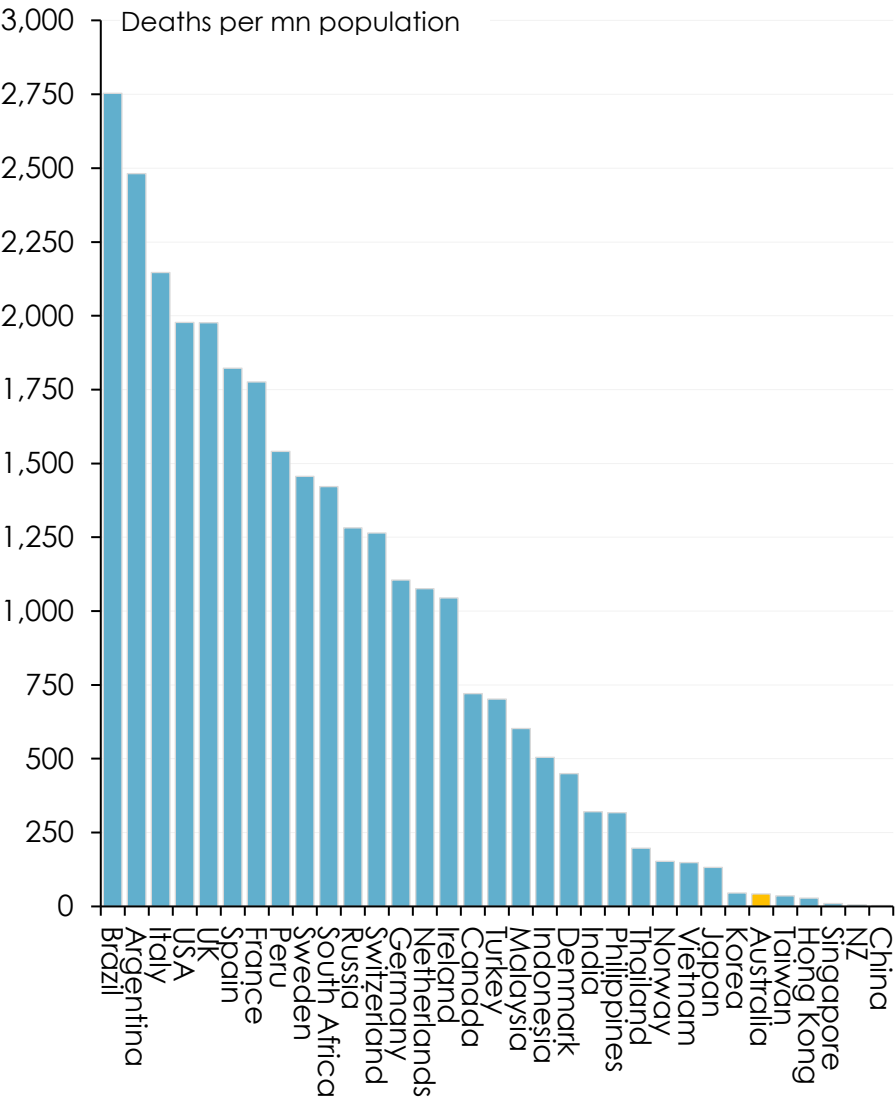
Apparent infection rate



Apparent fatality rate



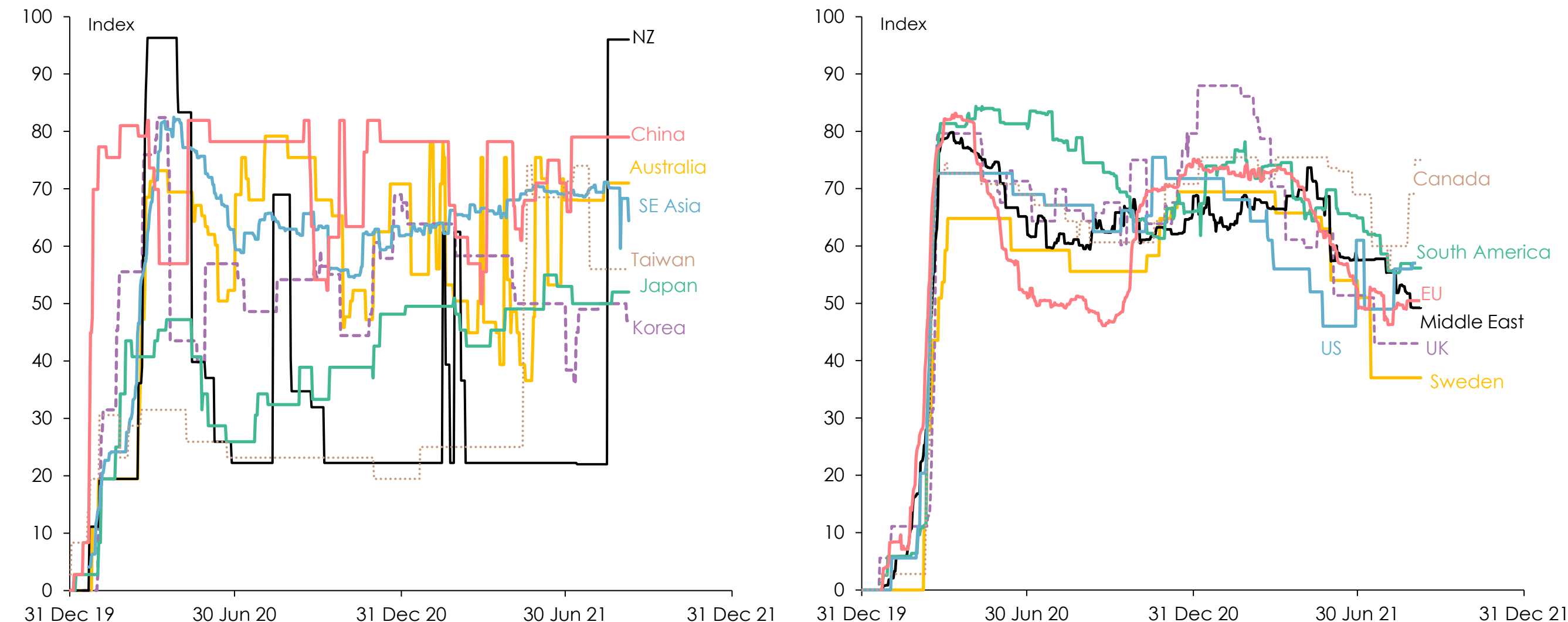
Death rate



Note: Data up to 9th September. Sources: University of Oxford, [Our World in Data](#); Corinna. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Restrictions have been tightened in NZ and parts of Canada in recent weeks, remain tight in Asia, and haven't been eased more in Europe

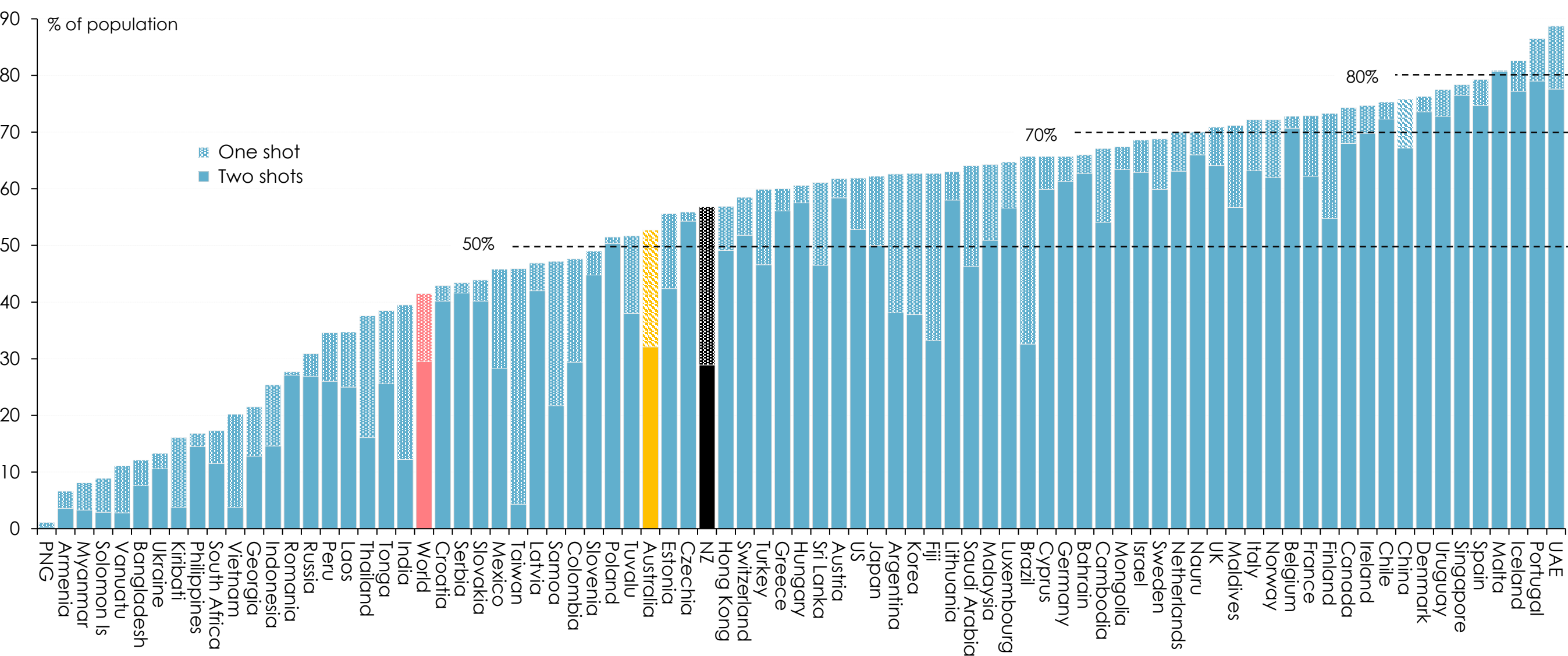
Timing and severity of government restrictions on movement and gathering of people



The Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker collects publicly available information on 11 indicators of government response including school & workplace closures, public events cancellations, restrictions on public gatherings, stay at home requirements, public transport closures, domestic & international travel restrictions, public information campaigns, testing and contact tracing. Source: [Blavatnik School of Government, Oxford University](#). Series for South-East Asia, the EU, South America and the Middle East are population-weighted averages for individual constituent countries. Data up to 7th September. [Return to "What's New"](#).

9 countries have now fully vaccinated more than 70% of their population, another 4 are close to that threshold, and 16 more are over 50%

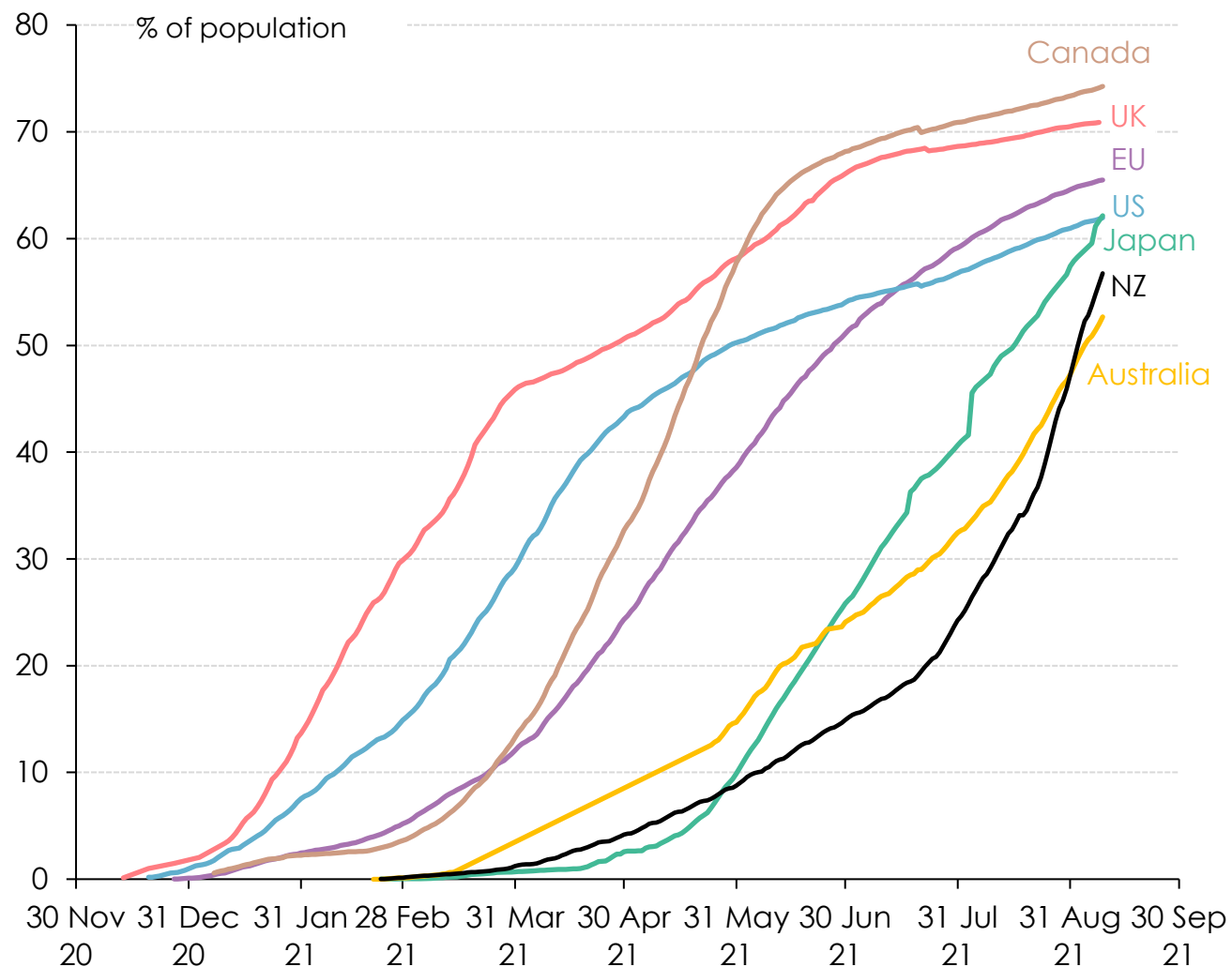
Percentage of population who have had at least one vaccination shot as at 7th – 9th September



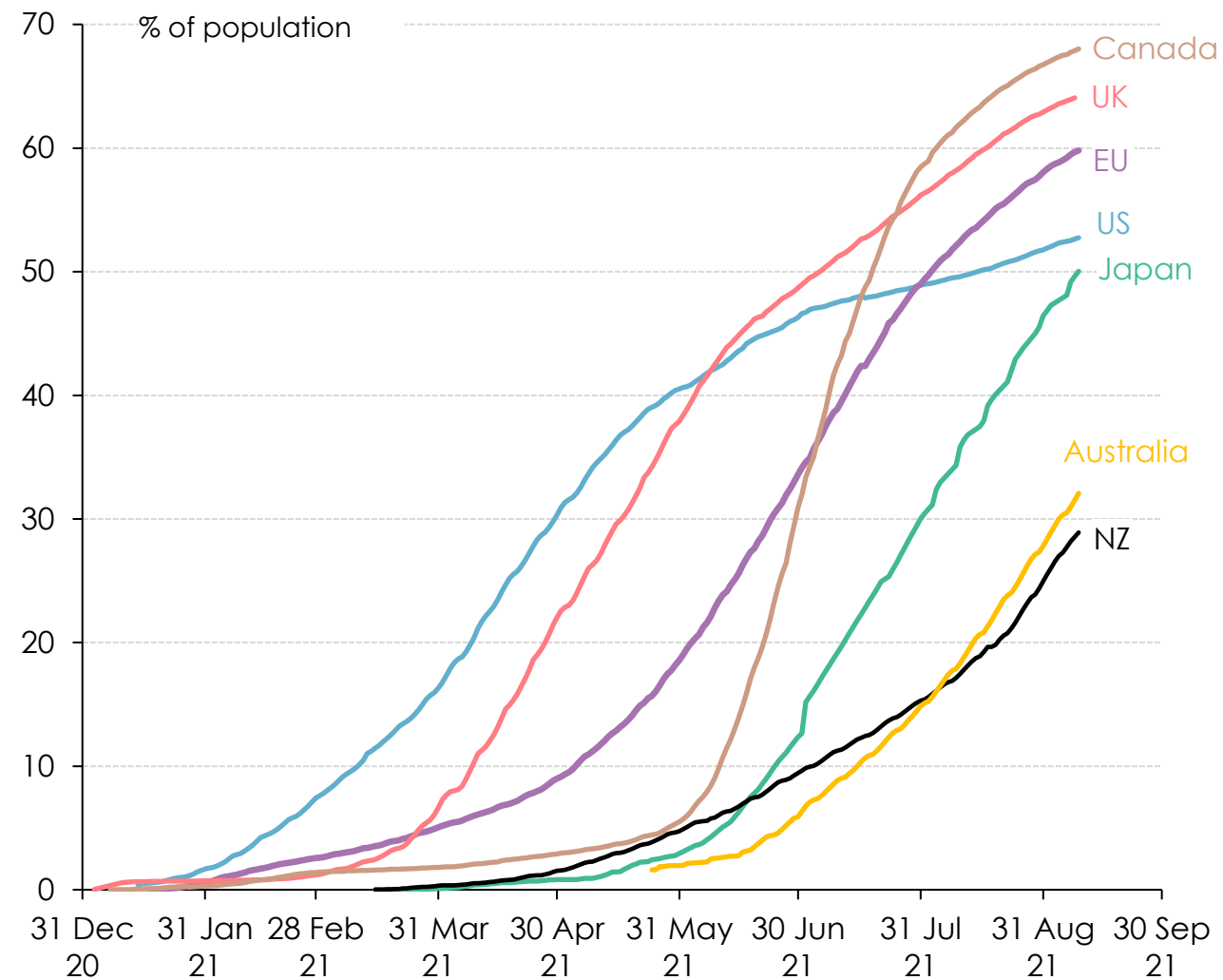
Note: Data for Nauru is at 20th August; Myanmar is 21st August; Kiribati and Tuvalu 26th August; Vanuatu 29th August; PNG 30th August; Solomon Islands and Tonga 31st August; Armenia 5th September. Data on 'first shots' for Philippines is at 15th August, but for 'second shots' is 6th September.
Source: Our World in Data, [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Vaccinations](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

Canada now has 68% of its population fully vaccinated, the UK 64%, the EU 60%, the US 52³/₄%, Japan 50% - and Australia 32%

Percentage of major 'advanced' economies' populations who have had one shot



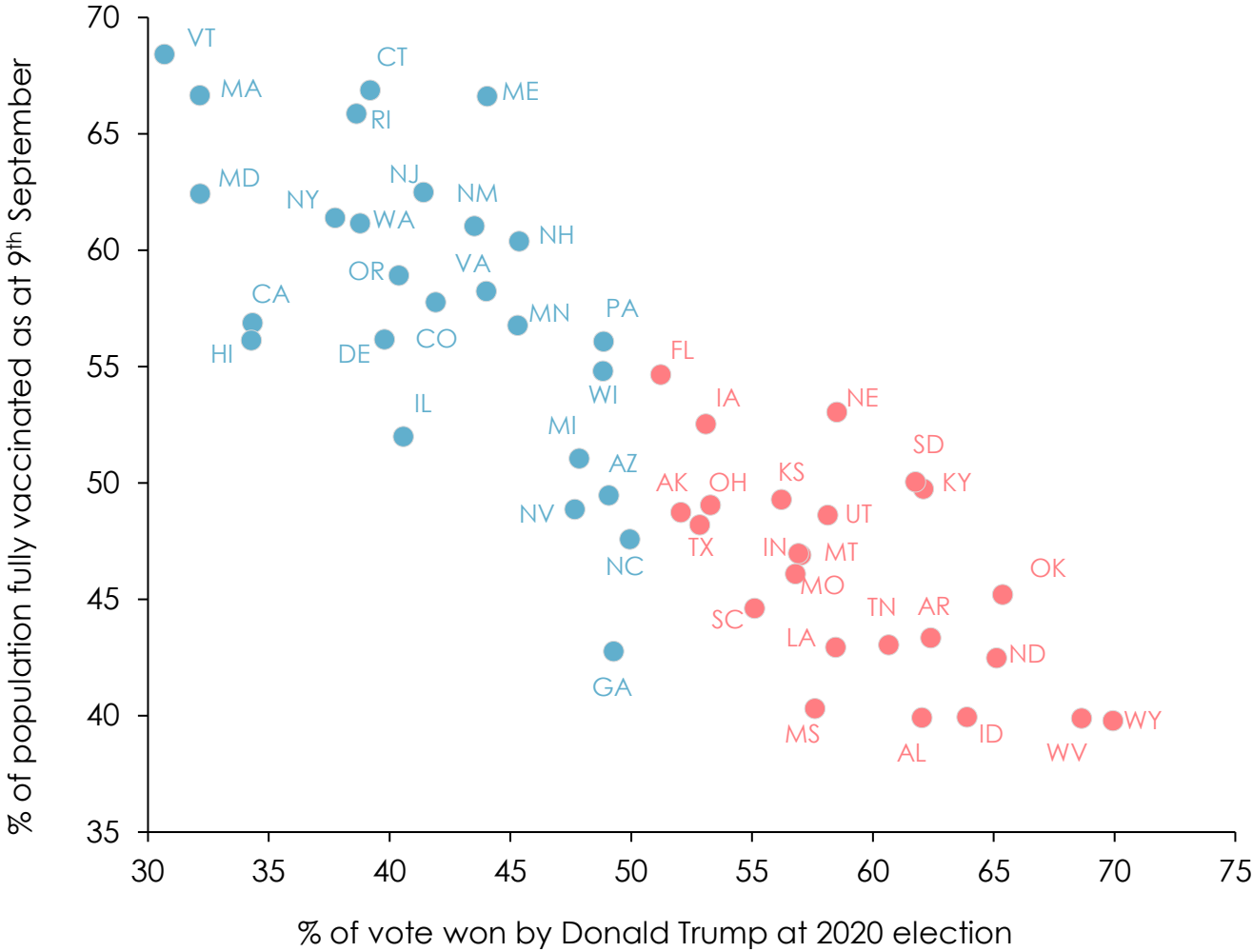
Percentage of major 'advanced' economies' populations who have had two shots



Note: Data up to 9th September, except UK, 8th September. Source: [Our World in Data](#); [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Vaccinations](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

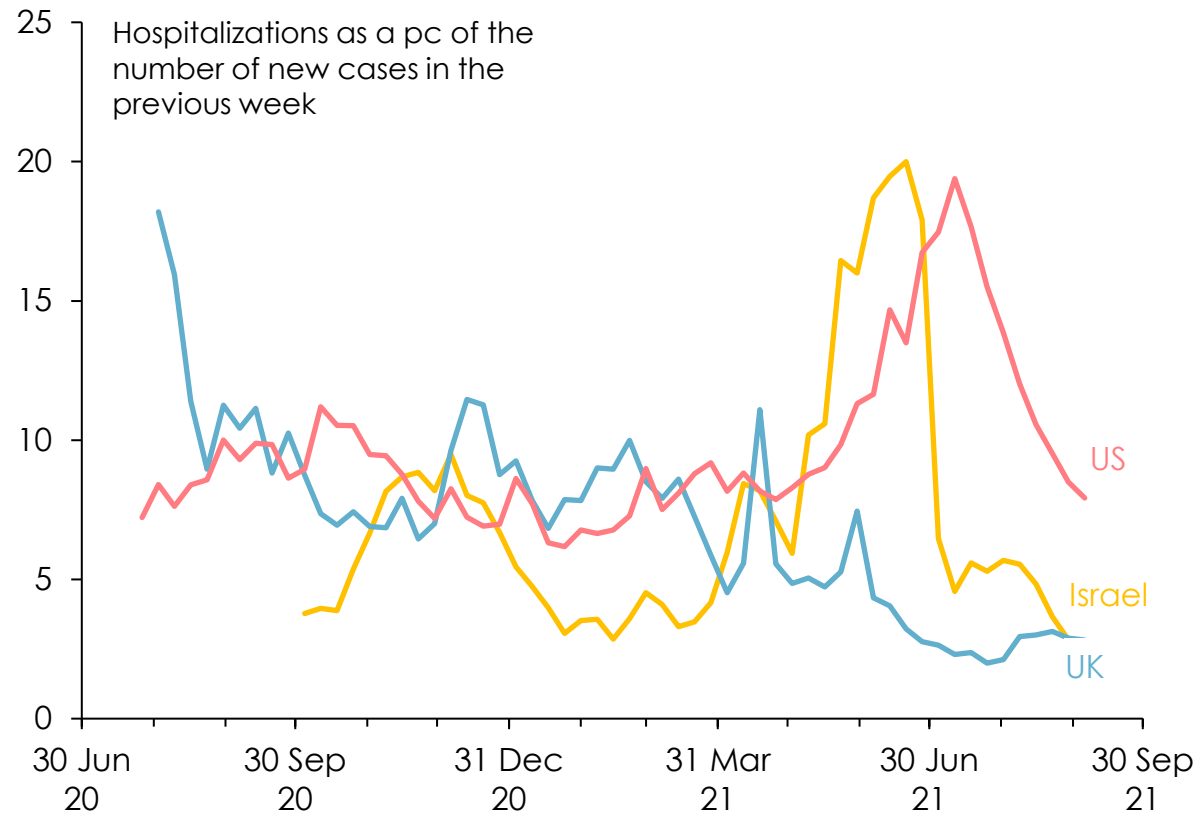
In the US there's a strong correlation between voting patterns and vaccine hesitancy, and between vaccination rates and infection rates

Vaccination rates vs Trump vote at 2020 elections, by state

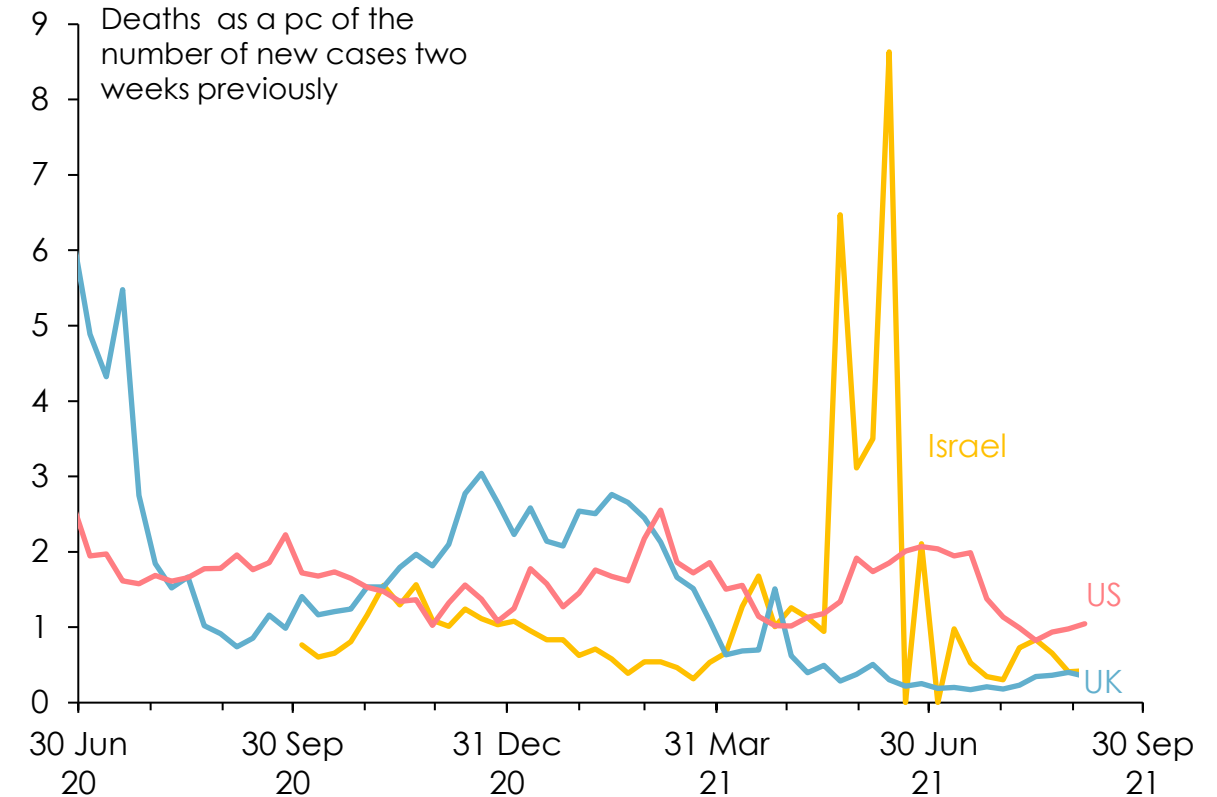


Although vaccination appears not to prevent the 'delta variant' from spreading, it does appear to reduce hospitalization and death rates

Hospitalization rates



Fatality rates

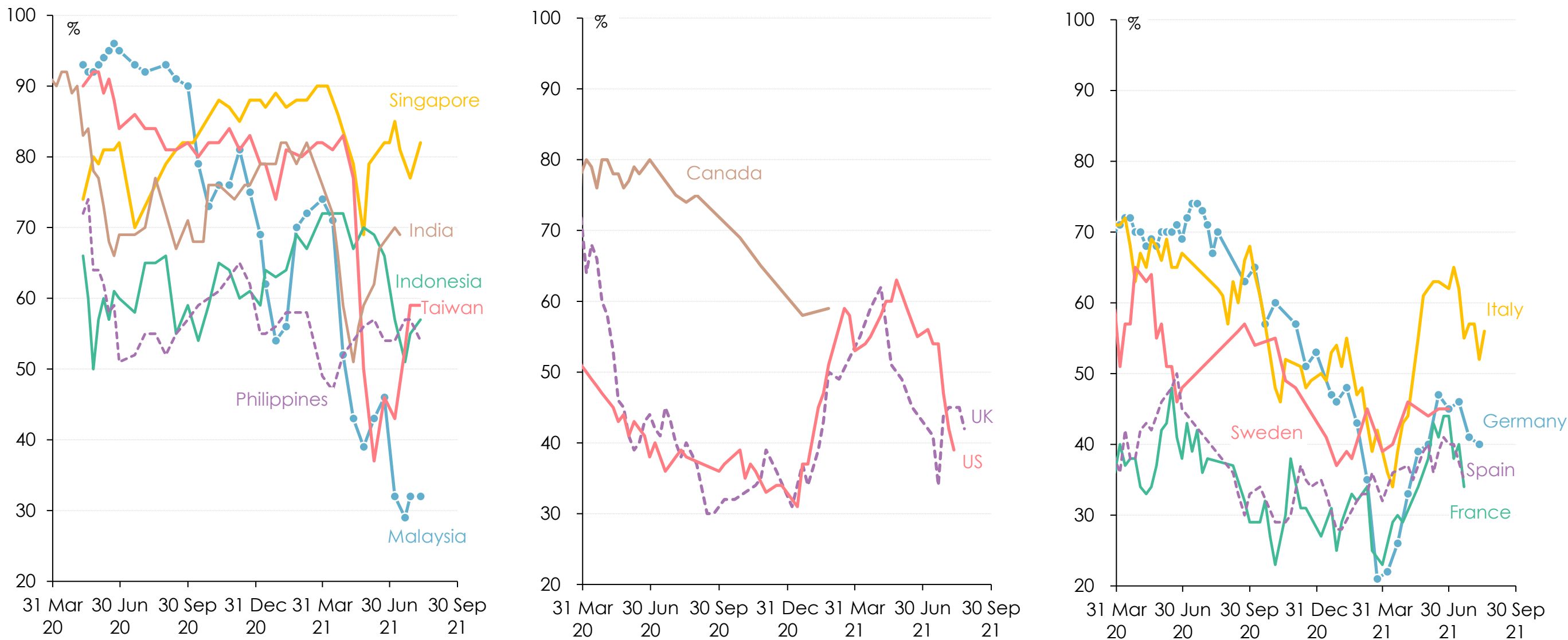


- ❑ Israel, the UK and the US have all experienced a surge in the number of 'delta variant' cases in recent weeks
- ❑ In the US, the increase in cases is concentrated in states and counties where vaccination rates are well below the national average (see next slide)
- ❑ In Israel, the UK and those US states with above-average vaccination rates, hospitalization and death rates from Covid-19 as the delta variant has spread have been much lower than they were in 2020

Note: Data up to 9th September. Source: [Our World in Data](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

Voter approval of the Biden Administration's handling of Covid-19 has fallen sharply over the past month

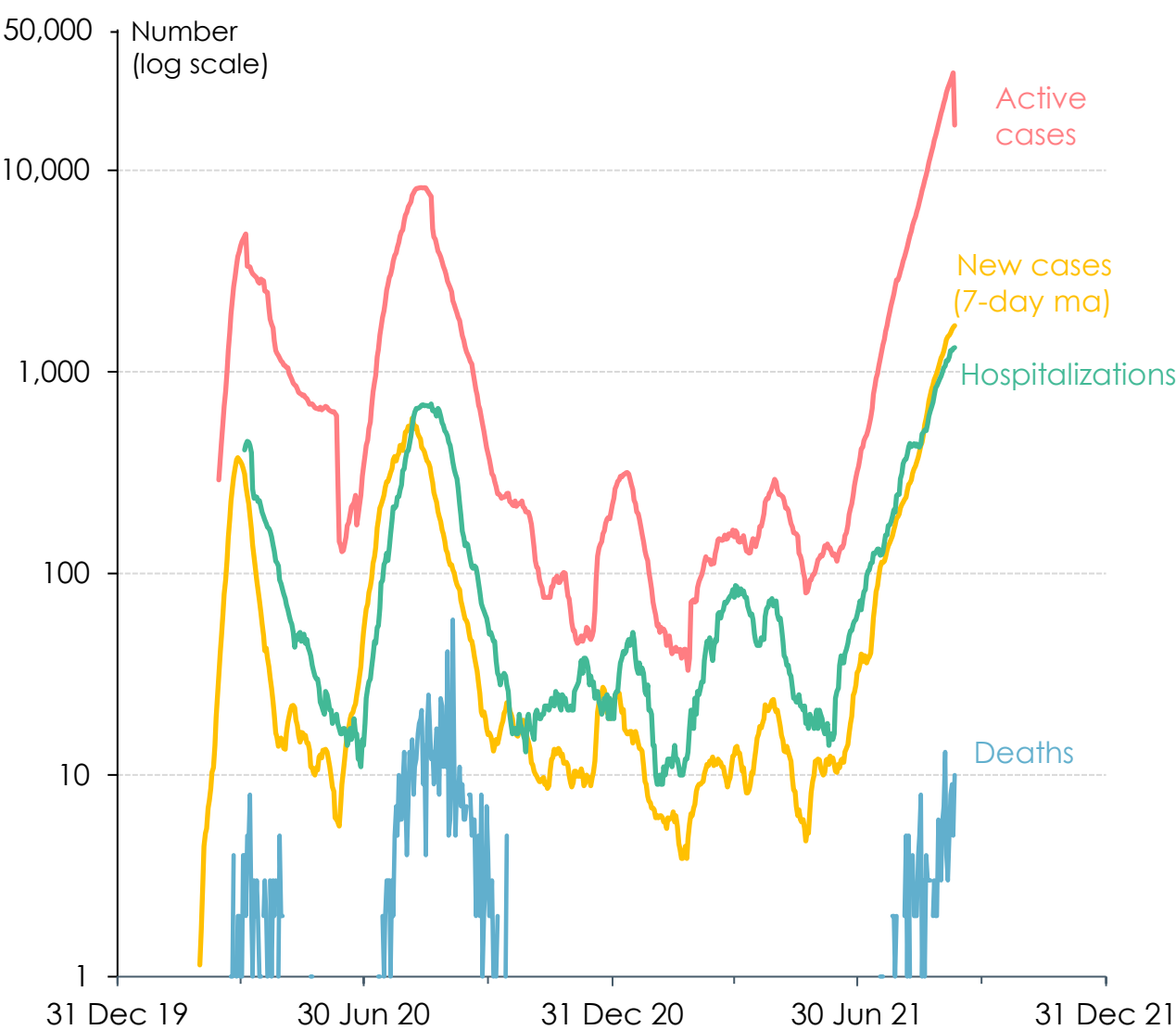
Voter approval of their government's handling of the coronavirus pandemic



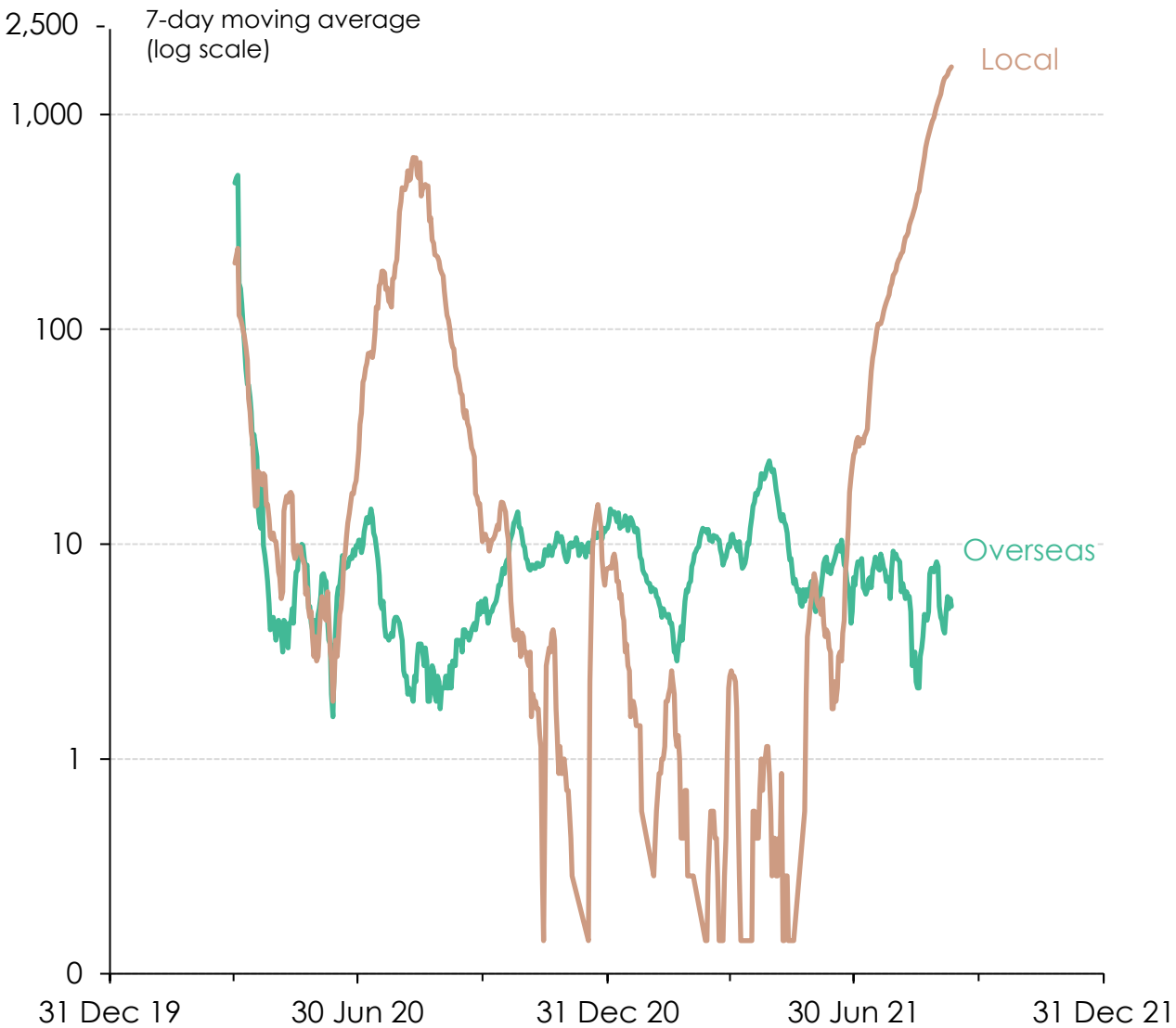
Note: There were no polls published in the past week. Source: YouGov, [Covid-19 tracker: government handling](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

Australia recorded 11,701 new cases this week, the largest number since the start of the pandemic – and all but 36 of them were ‘locally acquired’

Cases, recoveries, hospitalizations and deaths



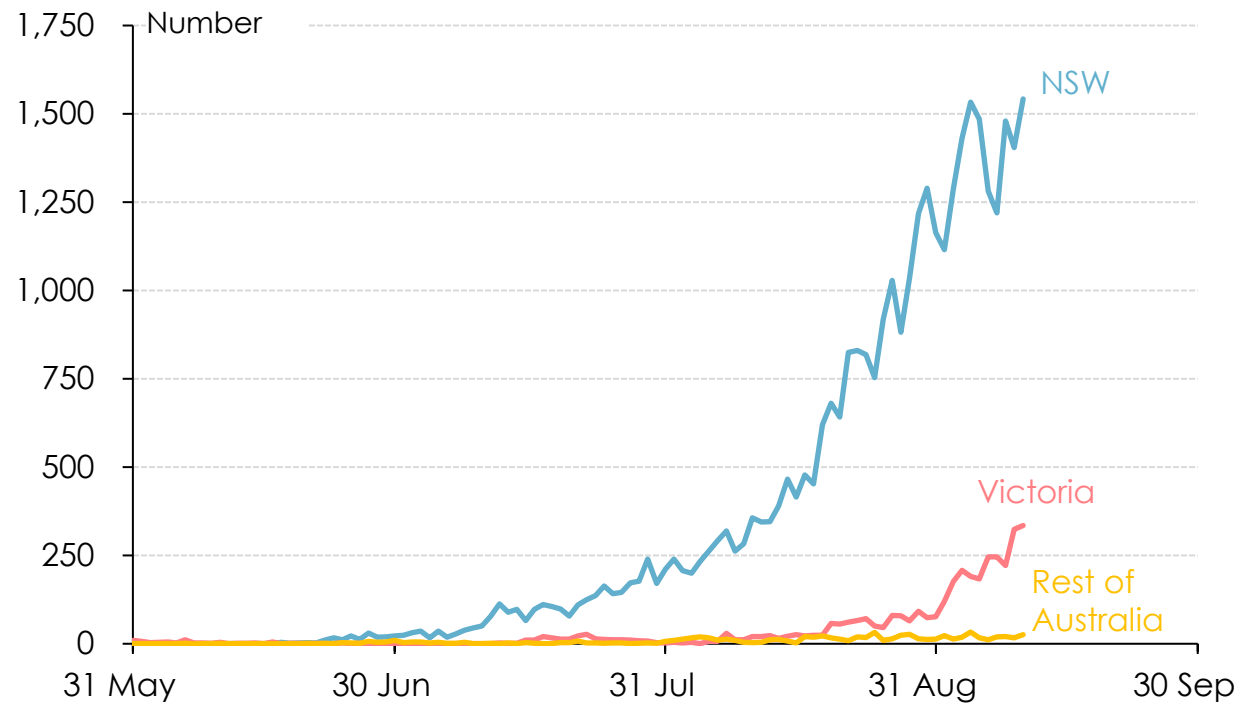
New cases, by source



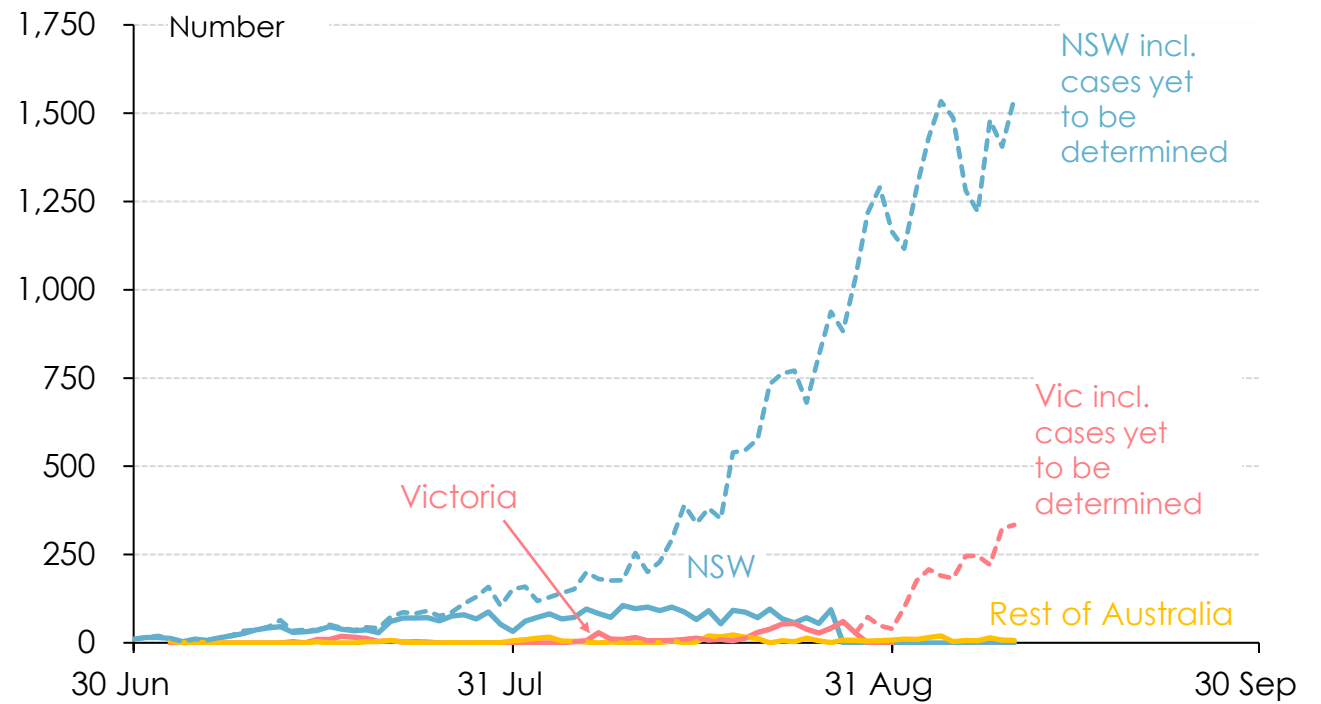
Note: Data up to 10th September. The sharp decline in ‘active cases’ on 10th September is entirely attributable to a 13,949 drop in the number of active cases reported in NSW (the reasons for which are not clear). Source: covid19data.com.au. [Return to "What's New"](#).

NSW and Victoria have formally abandoned 'Covid zero' as an objective, and this week eased restrictions outside Sydney and Melbourne

New locally-acquired cases

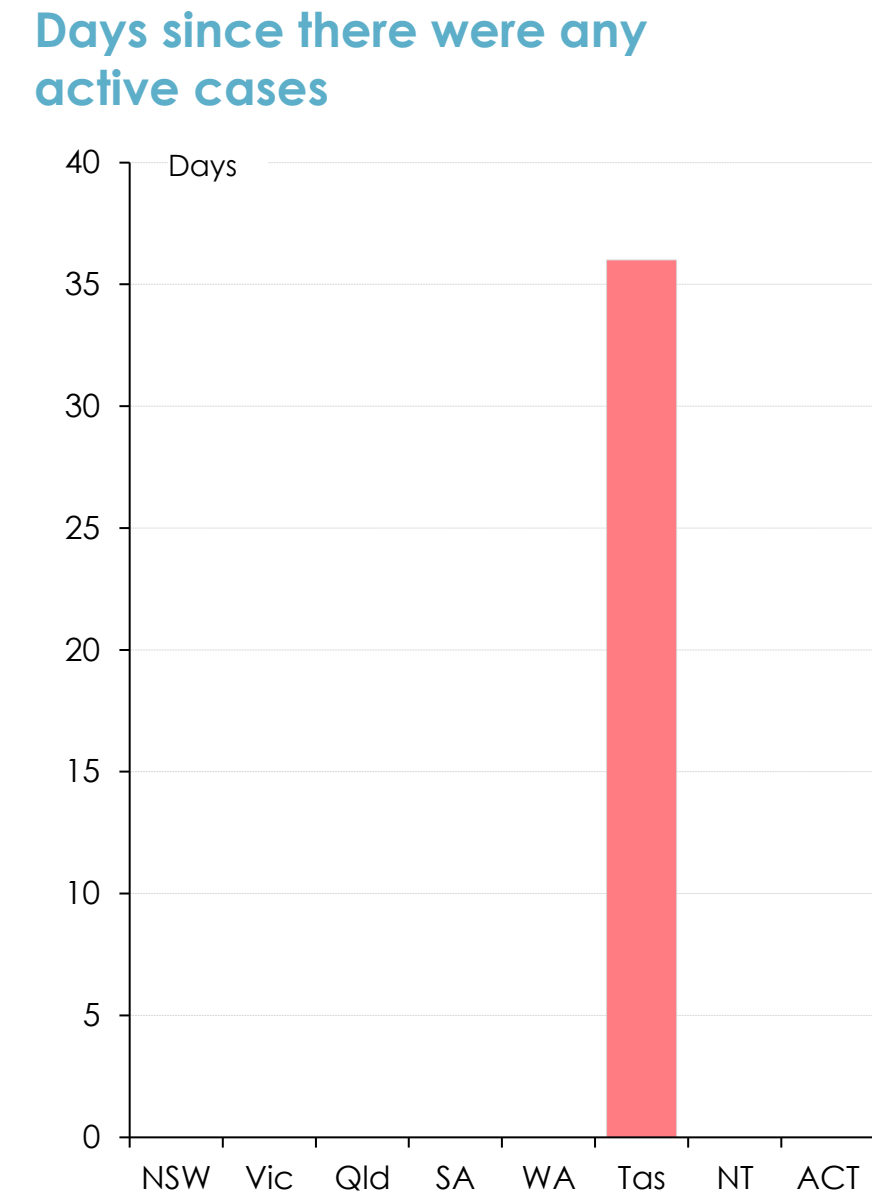
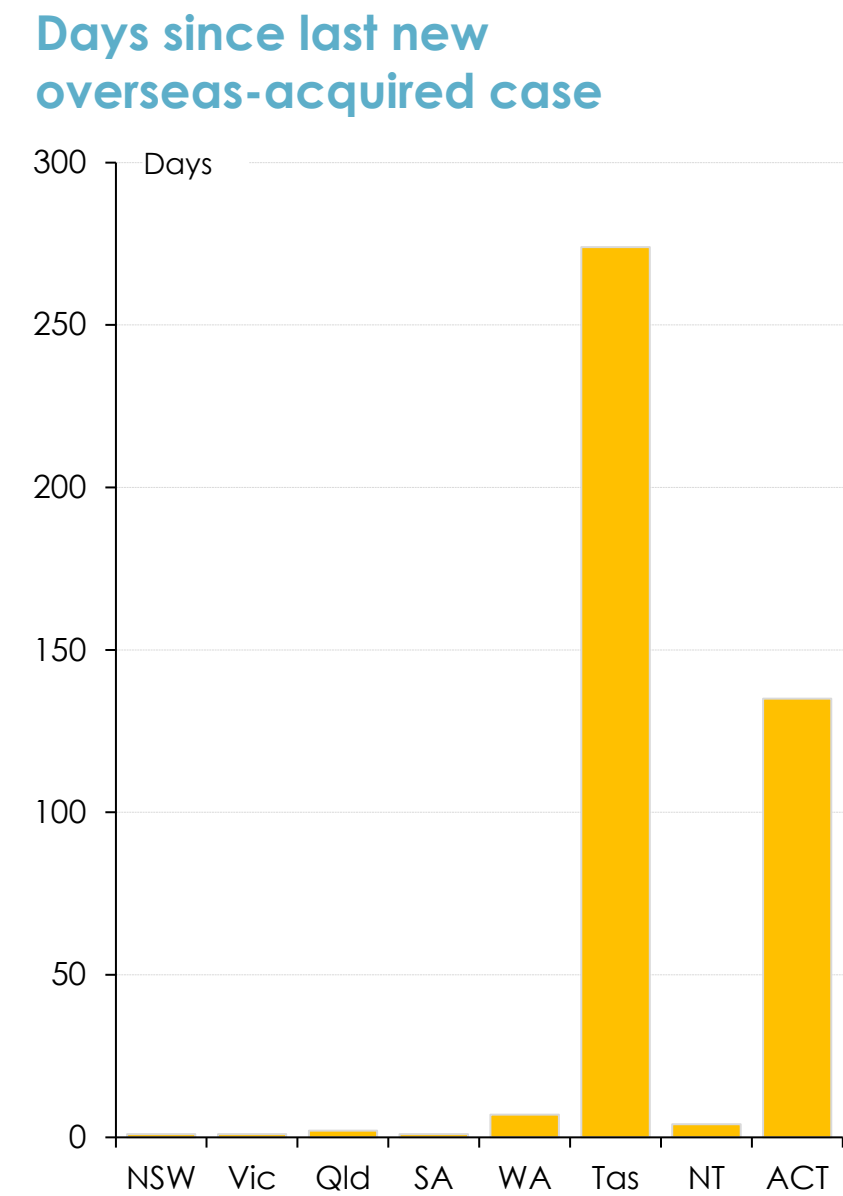
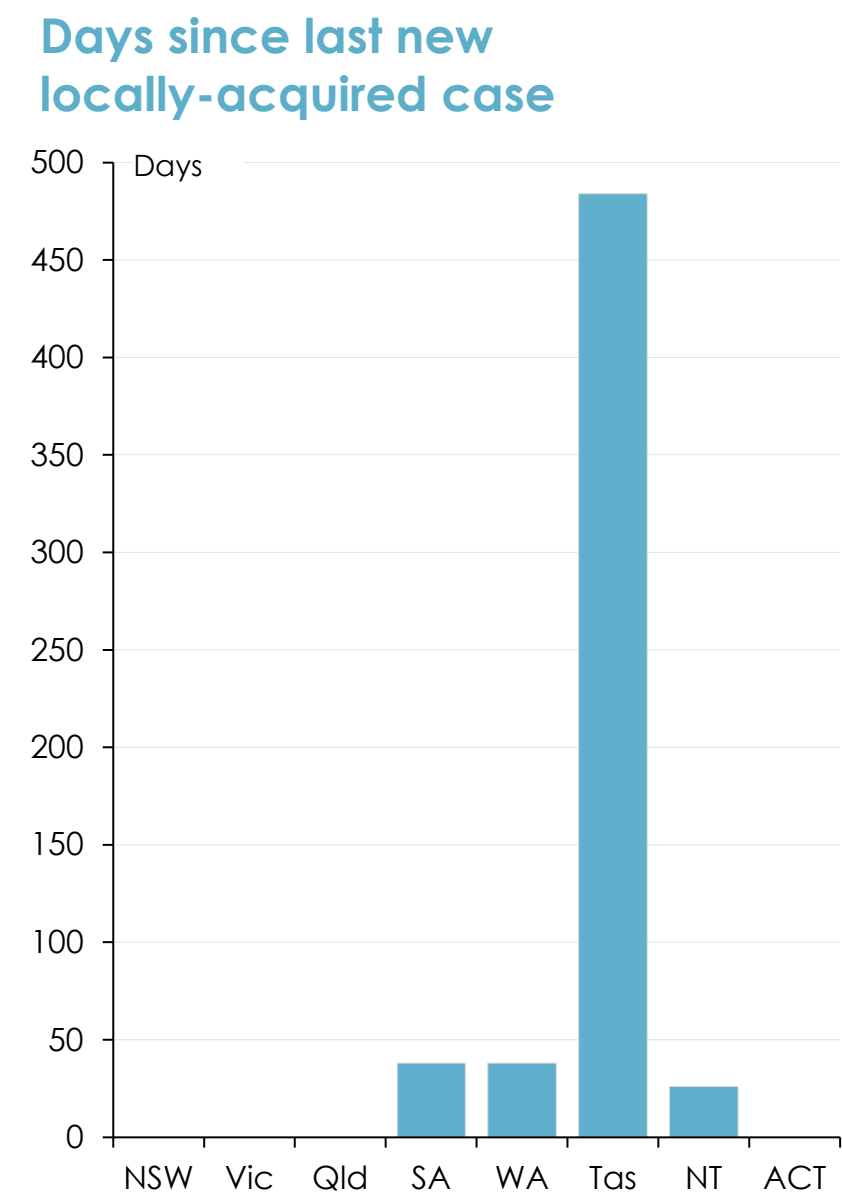


Number of cases 'infectious while in the community'



- ❑ Of ongoing concern to NSW public health authorities is the ongoing high number of new cases of people 'infectious while in the community' (ie not in quarantine or isolation), which including cases 'not yet determined' (which typically turn out to have been 'infectious while in the community') averaged over 1,400 a day this week
- ❑ Victoria average almost 250 'infectious while in the community' cases per day (including those 'not yet determined') this week – Victoria formally joined NSW in formally abandoning 'Covid zero' as an objective
- ❑ Restrictions in regional NSW will be eased from today and the NSW Government has foreshadowed a 'Roadmap to freedom' for fully-vaccinated adults once 70% of the 'eligible' population has been vaccinated
- ❑ Restrictions were also eased in most of regional Victoria this week

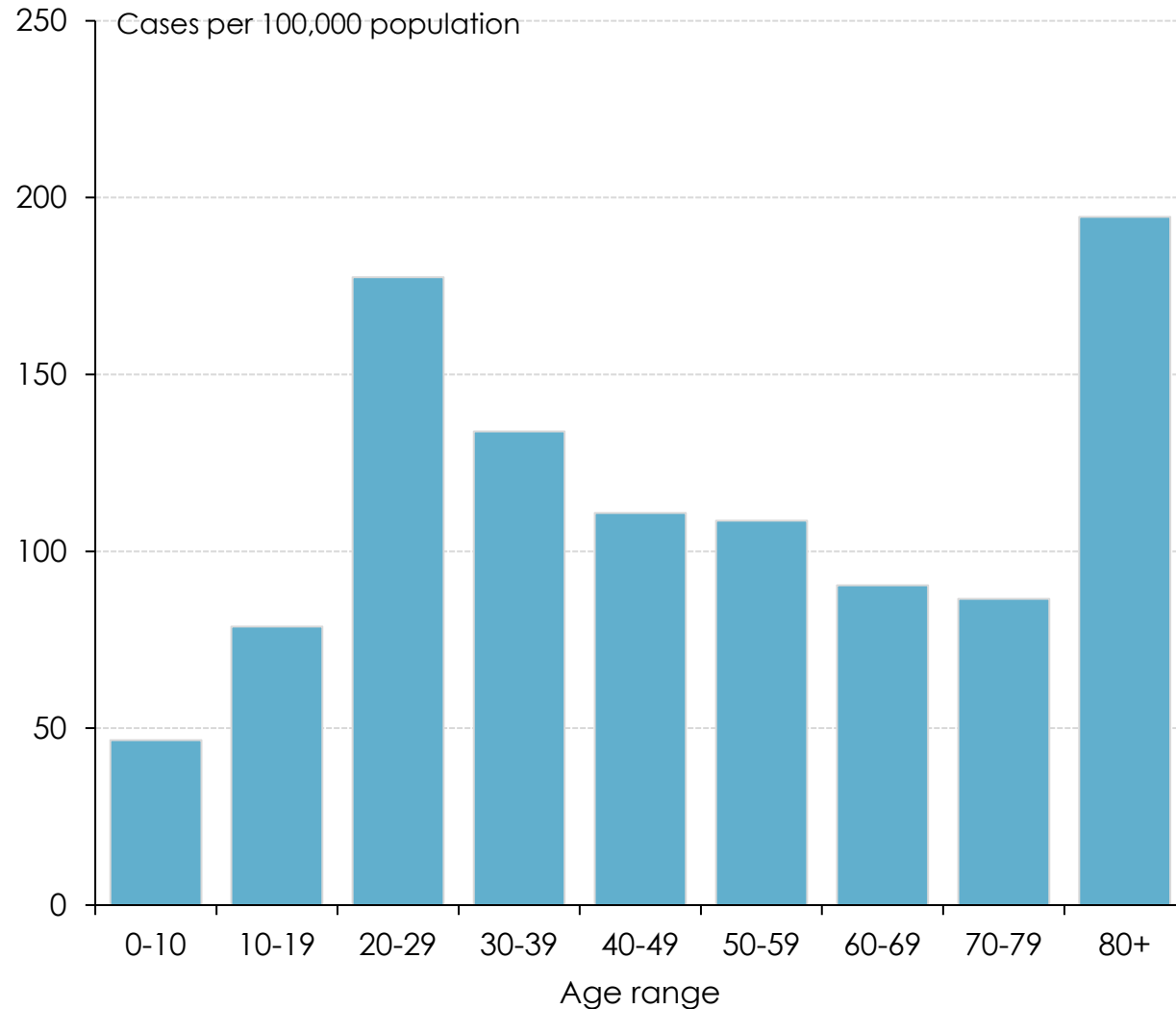
The smaller states and territories have done better at keeping the virus at bay, partly because they receive fewer overseas arrivals



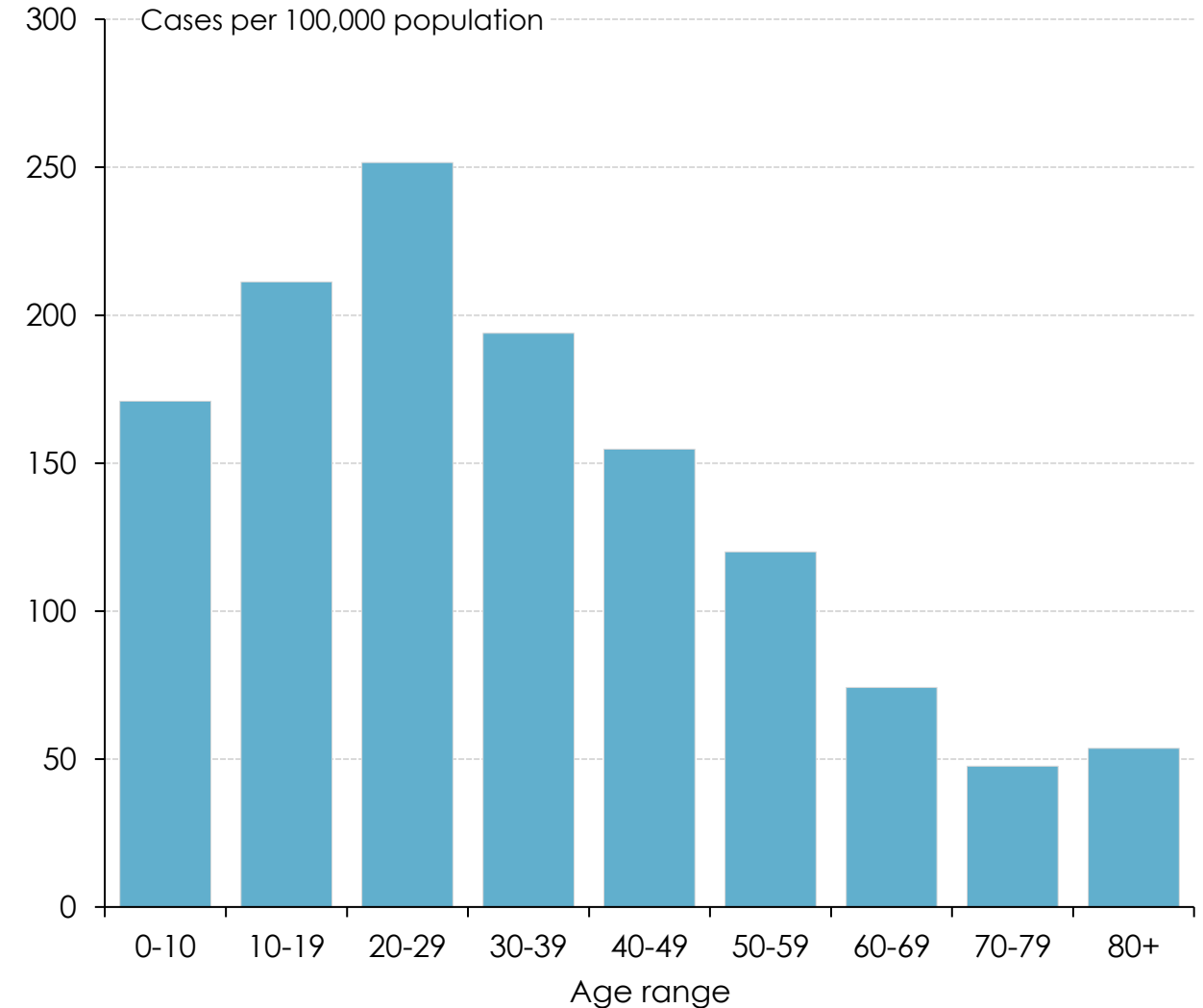
Note: Data are for 10th September. Source: covid19data.com.au. [Return to "What's New"](#).

People in their 20s & 30s have been more likely to become infected than other age groups this year – partly because fewer have been vaccinated

Cumulative confirmed cases per 100,000 population, by age group – 2020



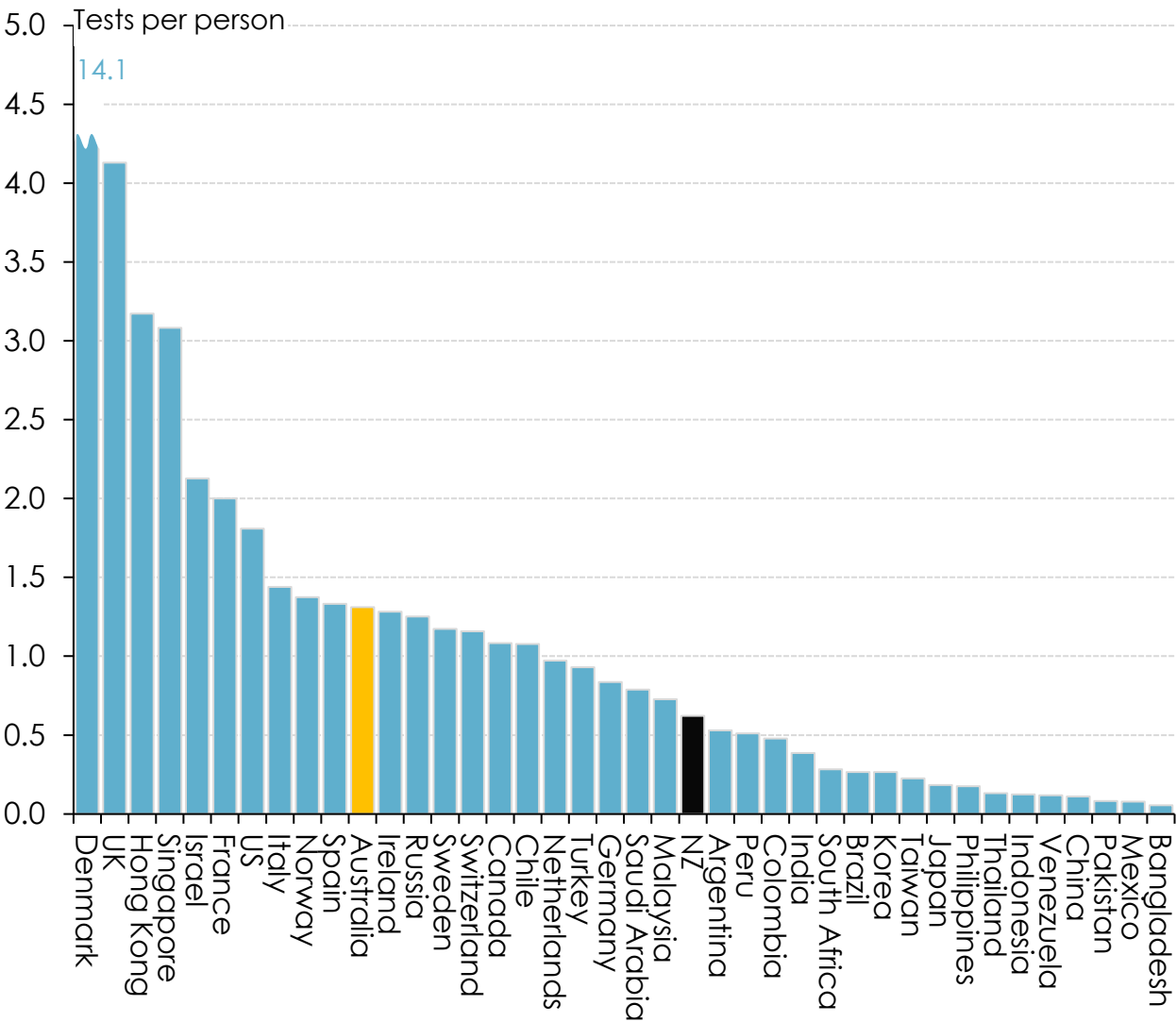
Cumulative confirmed cases per 100,000 population, by age group – 2021 to date



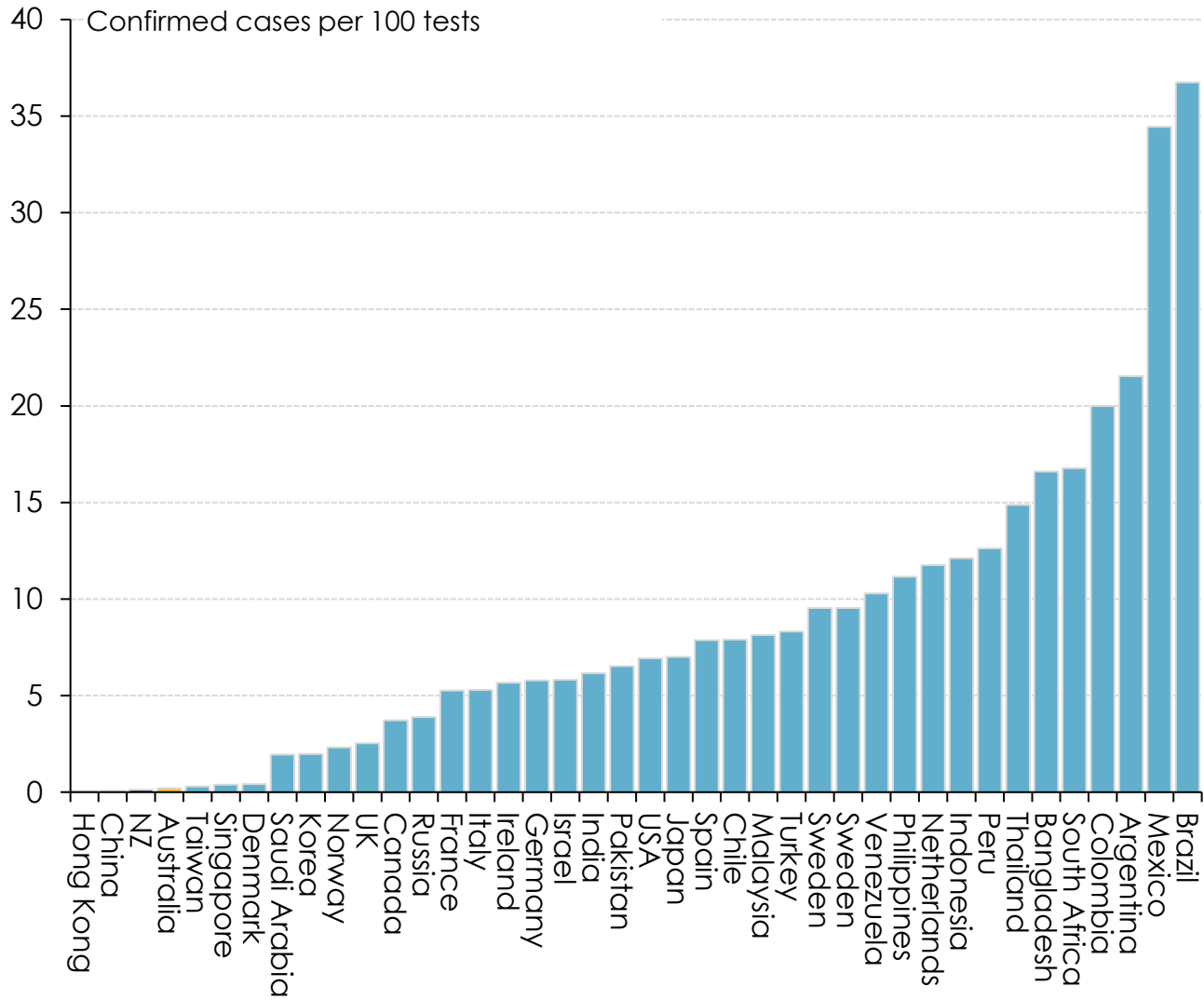
Note: Data up to 10th September. Source: [Australian Government Department of Health](#); ABS; Corinna. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Australia's testing regime appears sufficiently broad for the low infection and death rates to be seen as 'credible' (ie not due to low testing)

Tests per capita



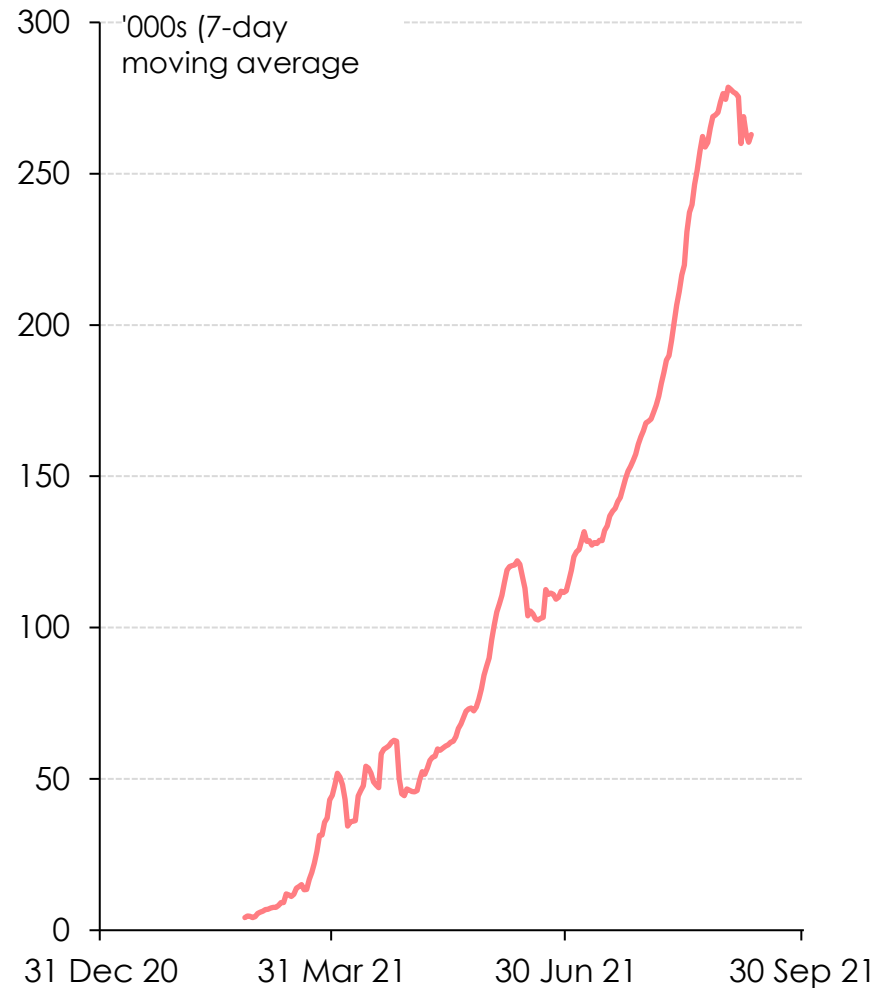
Confirmed cases per 100 tests



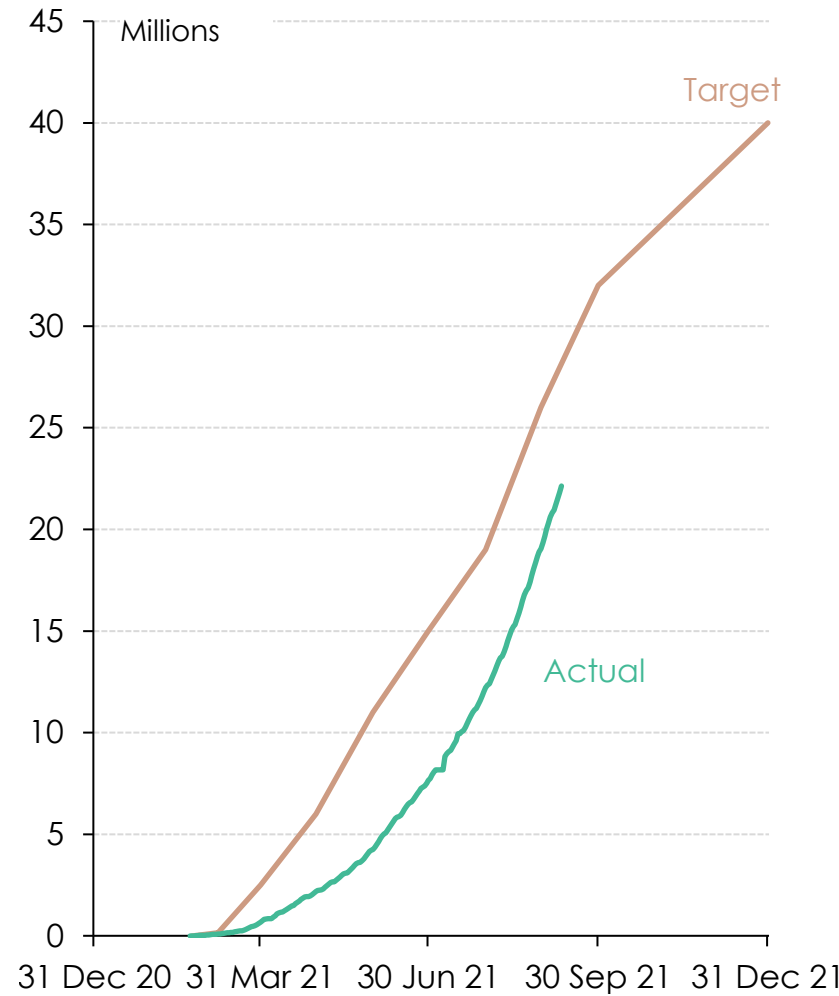
Note: Data up to 9th September (and yes it appears, at face value, that Denmark has tested its entire population more than 14 times, the UK more than four times, Hong Kong & Singapore three times, etc.). A high number of confirmed cases per 100 tests combined with a low number of tests per 000 population is (all else being equal) prima facie evidence of an inadequate testing regime. Source: [Worldometers](#); Corinna. [Return to "What's New"](#).

The number of Australians getting vaccinated has accelerated rapidly in recent weeks, but remains well behind other 'advanced' economies

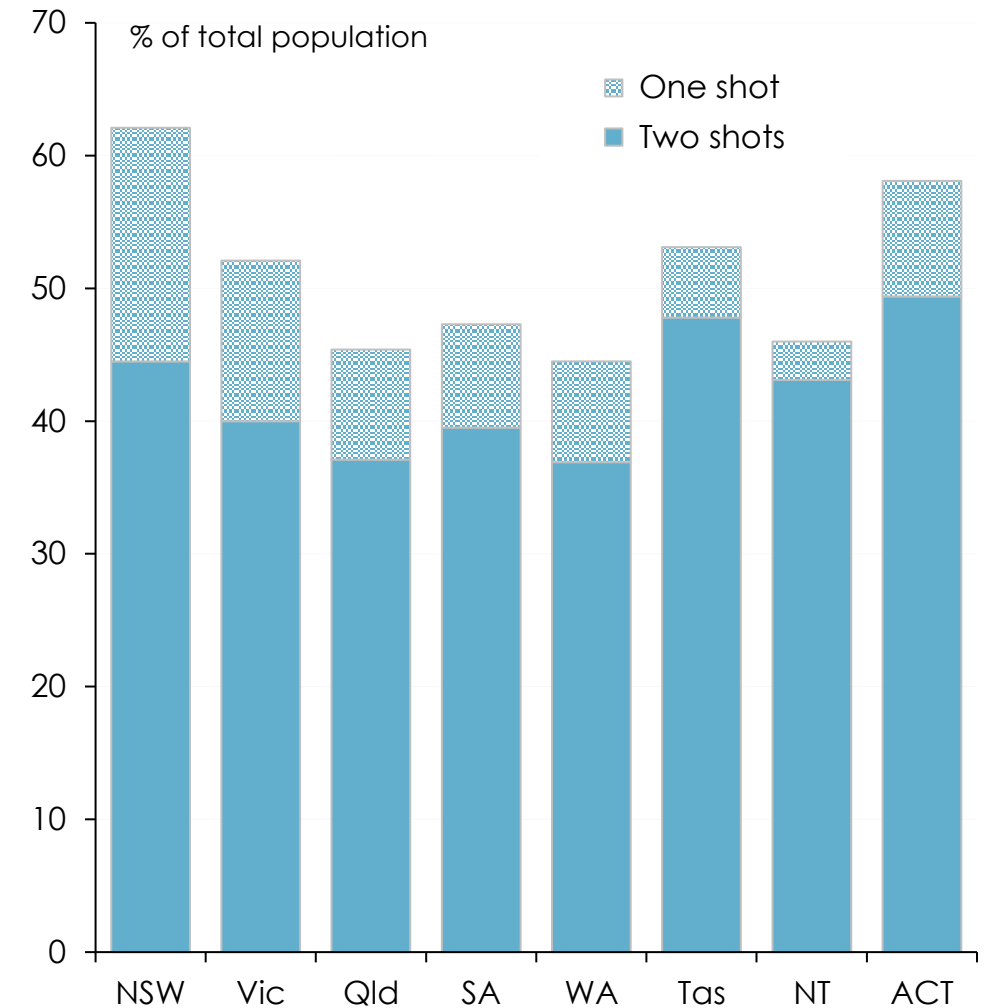
Daily number of vaccines administered



Vaccine doses administered vs Government target



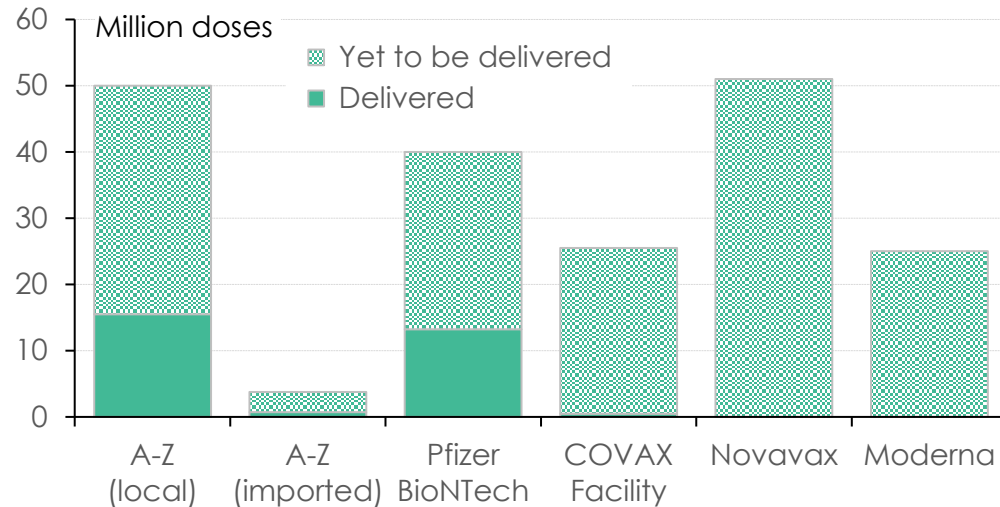
Percentage of total population vaccinated, states and territories



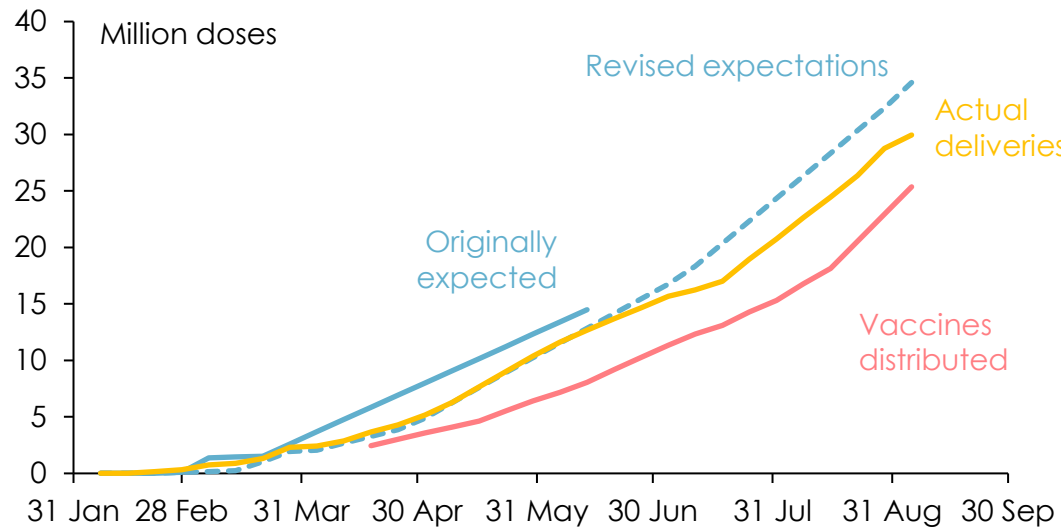
Note: Data up to 10th September. The Federal and State Governments usually cite vaccination rates as percentages of the 'eligible' population – which currently excludes children under the age of 16; the third chart on this page shows vaccination rates as percentages of the total population including children. See also comparisons with other nations on [slides 8](#) and [9](#). Sources: covid19data.com.au; Australian Department of Health, [Australia's COVID-19 vaccine rollout](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

What's gone wrong with Australia's vaccine roll-out?

Australia's vaccine supplies



Original & revised expectations vs supplies

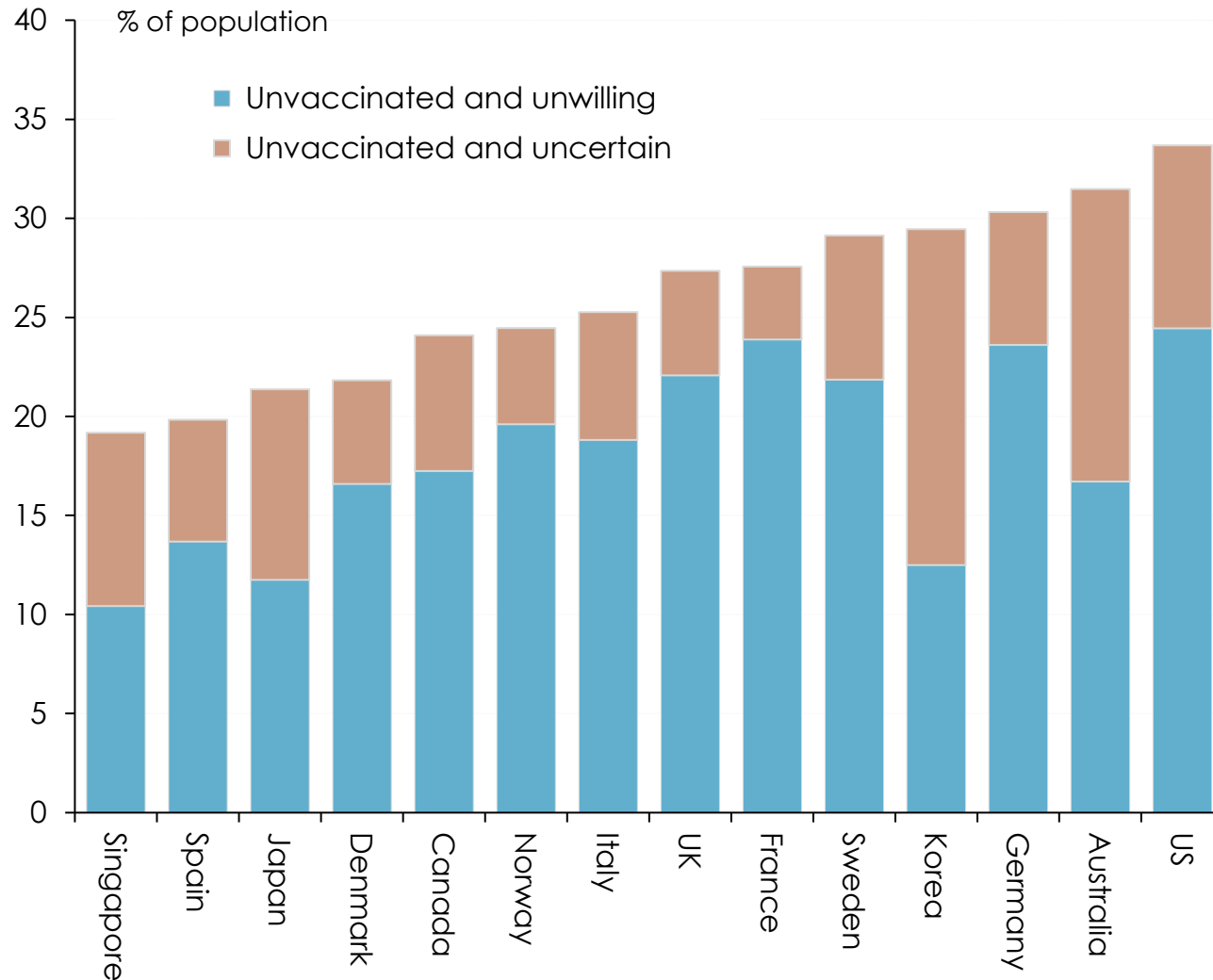


Note: Vaccine supplies are as at 5th September.
Source: <https://www.covid19data.com.au/vaccines>

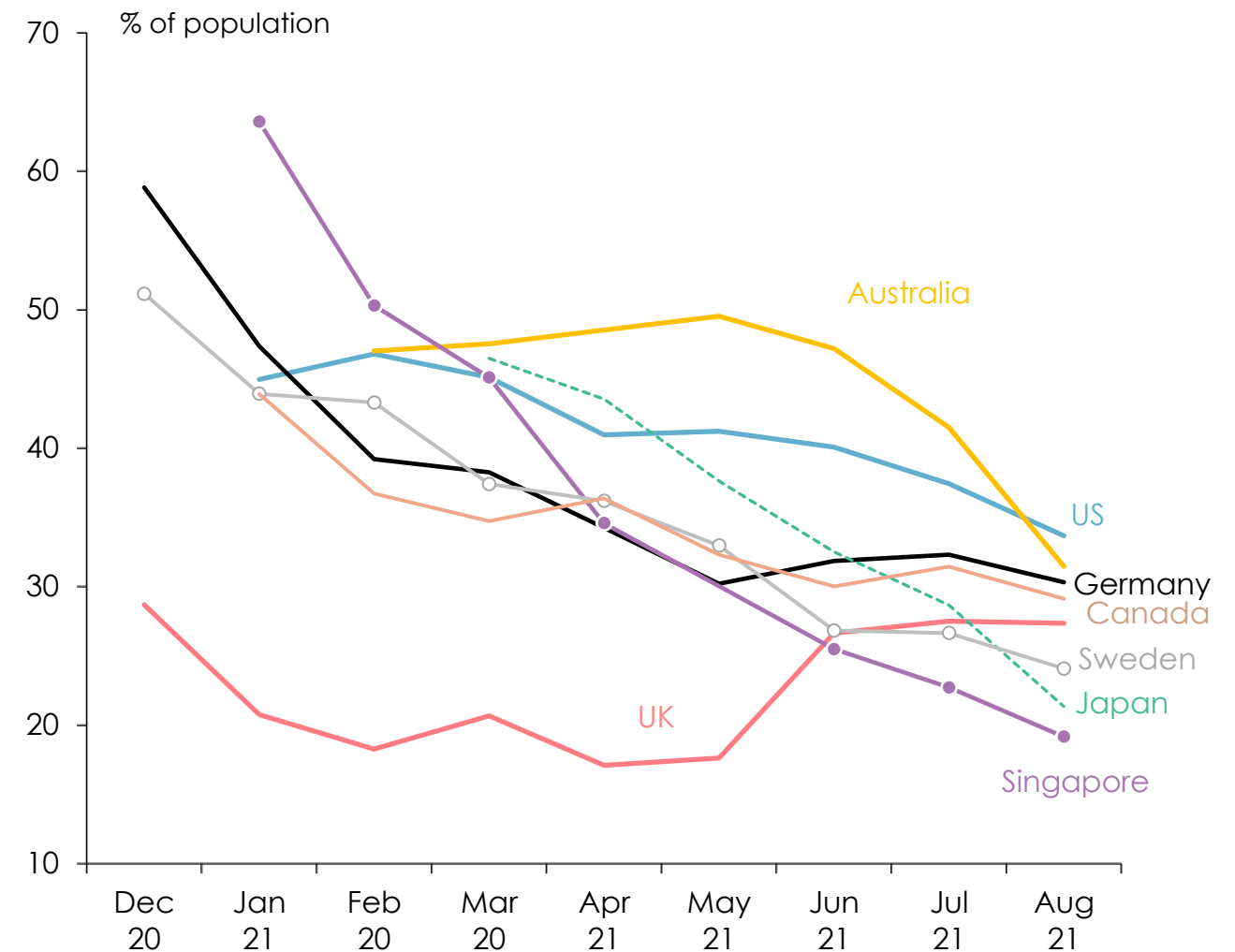
- ❑ Australia originally put too many of its vaccine 'eggs' in the Astra-Zeneca 'basket' – in marked contrast to (in particular) Canada
 - partly because the Astra-Zeneca vaccine was easier to store, and considerably cheaper, than the Pfizer vaccine
 - and partly out of a fixation on what the Government likes to call 'sovereignty' (because the Astra-Zeneca vaccine could be manufactured in Australia, whereas mRNA vaccines like Pfizer and Moderna can't be)
- ❑ Deliveries of the Astra-Zeneca vaccine were slower than expected
 - partly because the EU, at Italy's behest, blocked the delivery of up to 3.1mn doses to Australia (although the EU denies that)
 - local production of the Astra-Zeneca vaccine has taken longer to 'ramp up' than expected – as of end-May, only 2/3 of the originally expected number of doses had been produced; as of end, the number of locally-produced doses was still 5.4mn (26%) behind the revised schedule
- ❑ Australia's previous success in suppressing the virus probably bred popular complacency about getting vaccinated
- ❑ Concerns about the risk of potentially fatal blood-clots as a side-effect of the Astra-Zeneca vaccine prompted the Government's medical advisors to warn against giving A-Z to people under 60
 - but the Government and its advisors failed to put those risks into any kind of perspective (cf. other risks which people bear willingly)
- ❑ Australia has a very high rate of 'vaccine hesitancy' (see next slide) which concerns about A-Z side effects 'played into'
 - and which the Government has been conspicuously unwilling to address

Vaccine hesitancy among Australians has declined in the past two months but remains relatively high – and not seriously confronted by governments

Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy, selected 'advanced' economies, August 2021

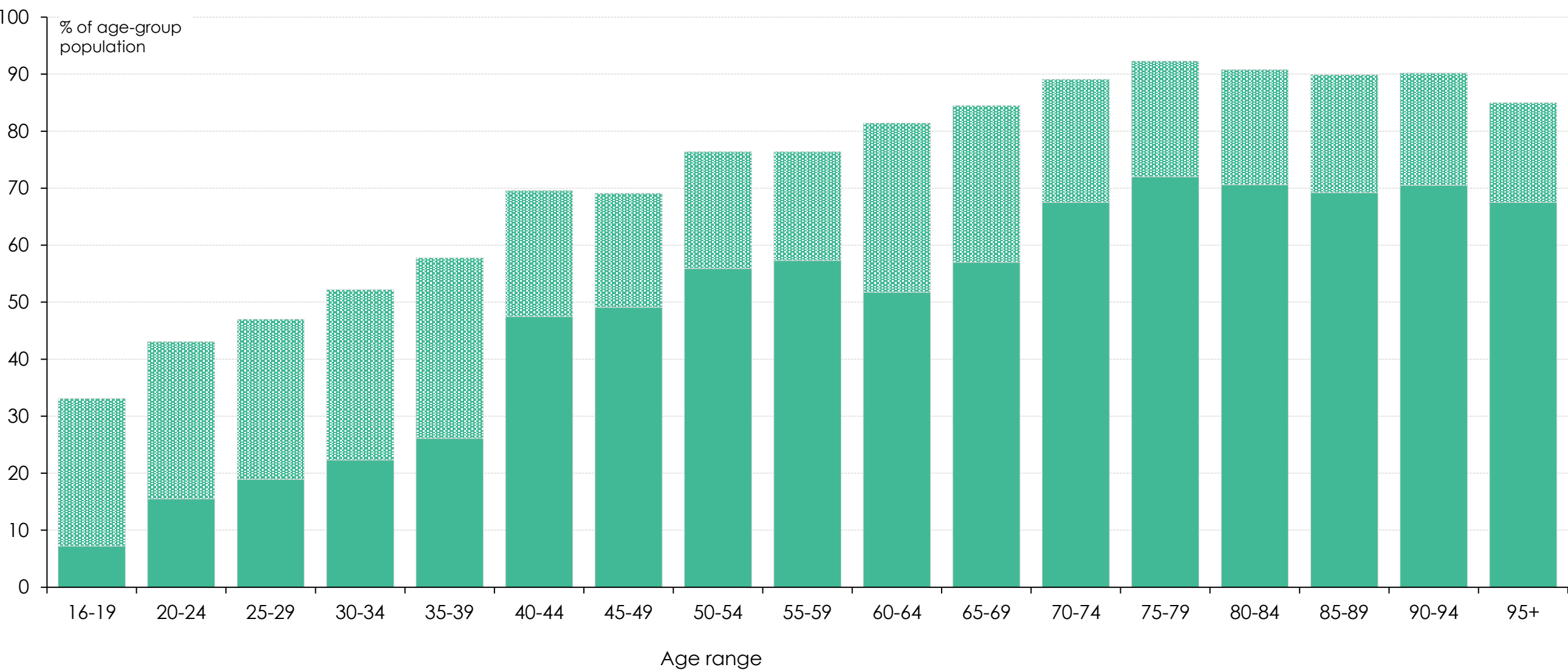


Percentage of populations unvaccinated and unwilling or uncertain about getting vaccinated



Over 70% of those aged 75 & over are now fully vaccinated – but less than 25% of 20-39 year-olds (who account for the largest number of cases)

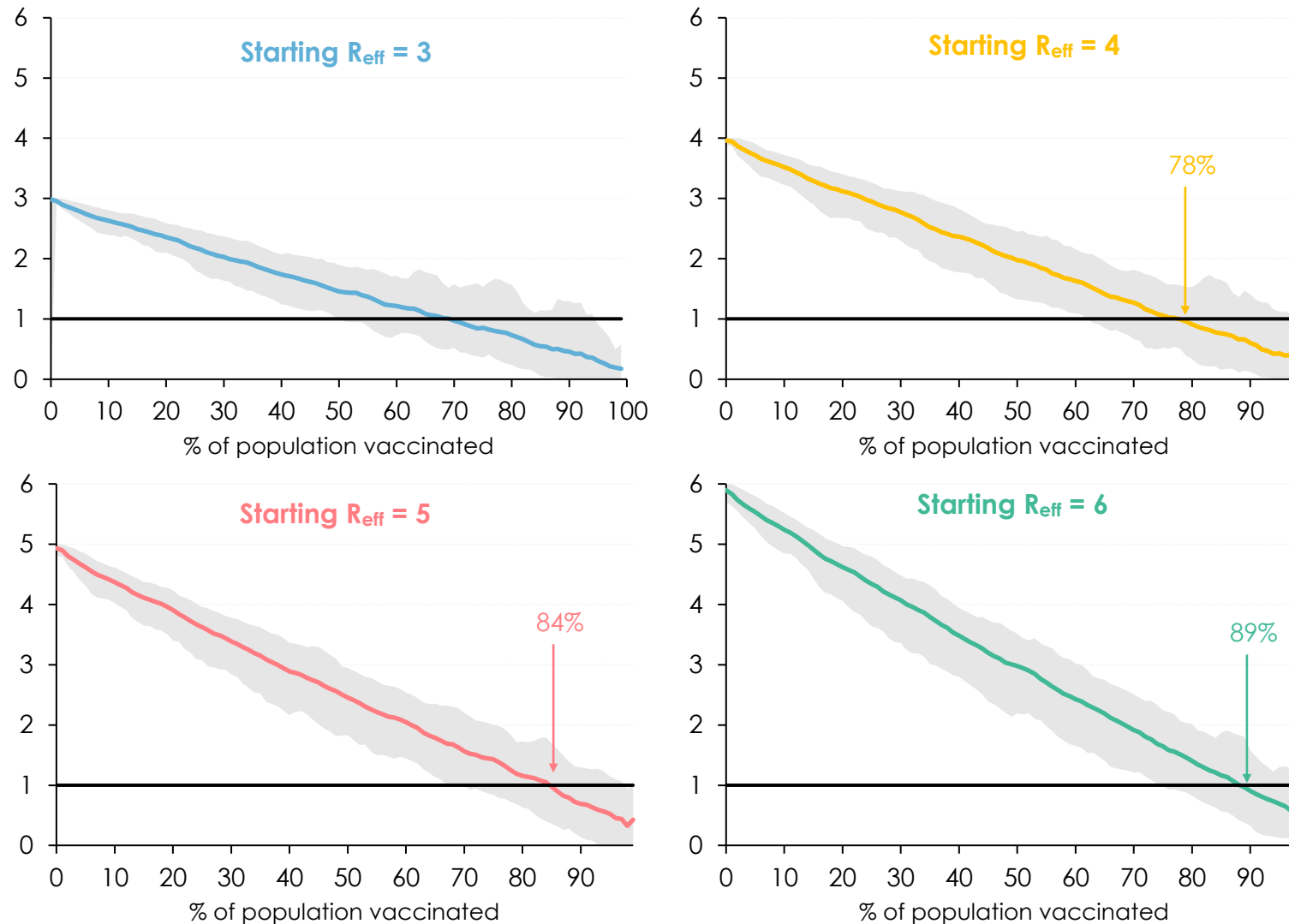
Vaccination rates by age group as at 10th September



Note: For data on infections by age group see [slide 16](#).
Source: Commonwealth Department of Health, [Covid-19 Vaccine Roll-out update](#), 10th September 2021. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Modelling suggests that a vaccination rate of at least 80% of the total population (not just those ≥ 16) will be required in order to 'open up' safely

Alternative scenarios for effective reproduction number (R_{eff}) and vaccination rates



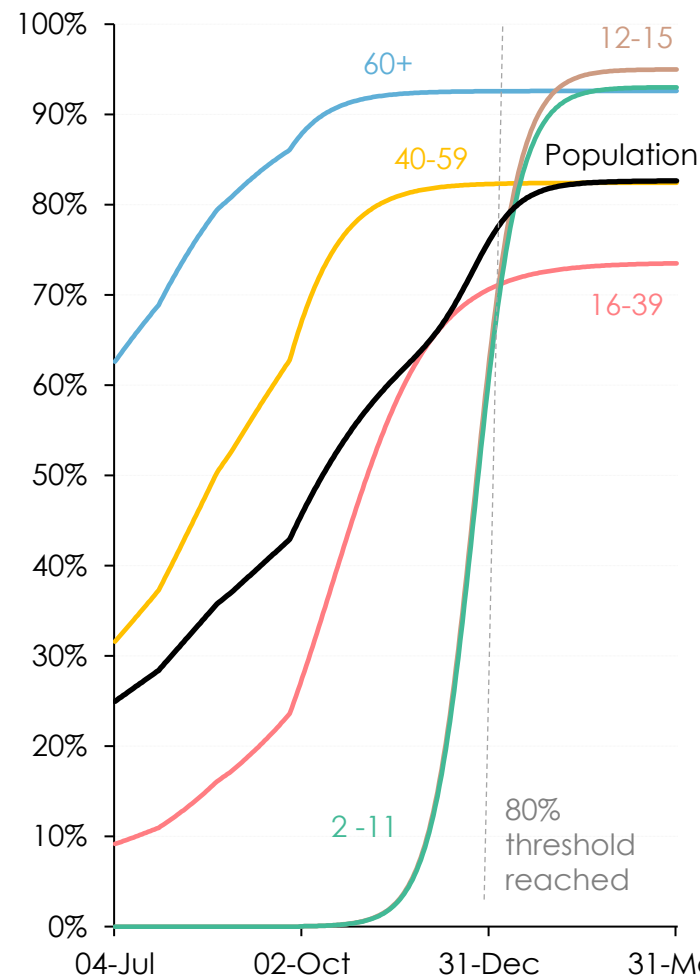
Note: Solid lines show the mean outcomes of the model simulations, while shaded areas show the 10th and 90th percentiles of the simulations. Source: Stephen Duckett, Danielle Wood, Brendan Coates et al, [Race to 80: Our best shot at living with Covid](#), Grattan Institute, 27th July 2021.

- ❑ Modelling released in July by the Grattan Institute (a Melbourne-based non-aligned policy 'think tank') suggests that, on the assumption that the starting ' R_{eff} ' (the number of people likely to be infected by each unvaccinated person) for the 'delta variant' of Covid-19 is at least 4, at least 80% of the total population would need to be vaccinated in order to get the ' R_{eff} ' down to less than 1 (at which point the virus doesn't spread)
- ❑ The modelling suggests that 'opening up' (removing international border restrictions) with vaccination rates of less than 70% and assuming an initial ' R_{eff} ' of 4 or more would likely result in daily infections peaking at more than 70,000, ICU cases peaking at over 8,000 (more than the hospital system's capacity) and between 8,000 and 120,000 deaths
- ❑ The Federal Government's '[National Plan](#)' envisages steps towards 'opening up' starting once 70% of the national 'eligible' population (ie excluding children) have been vaccinated

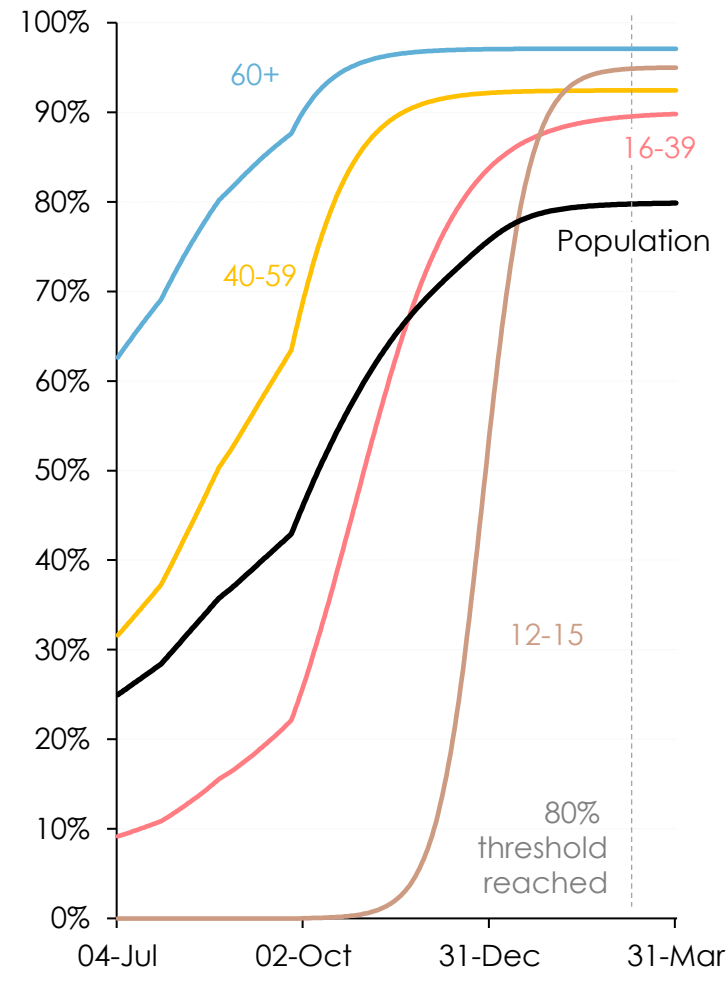
Because the Government's vaccination targets are expressed in terms of the 'eligible' population there may be some risk of opening up 'too early'

Plausible vaccination rates by age group

Assuming children aged 2-11 can be vaccinated



Assuming children aged 2-11 can't be vaccinated

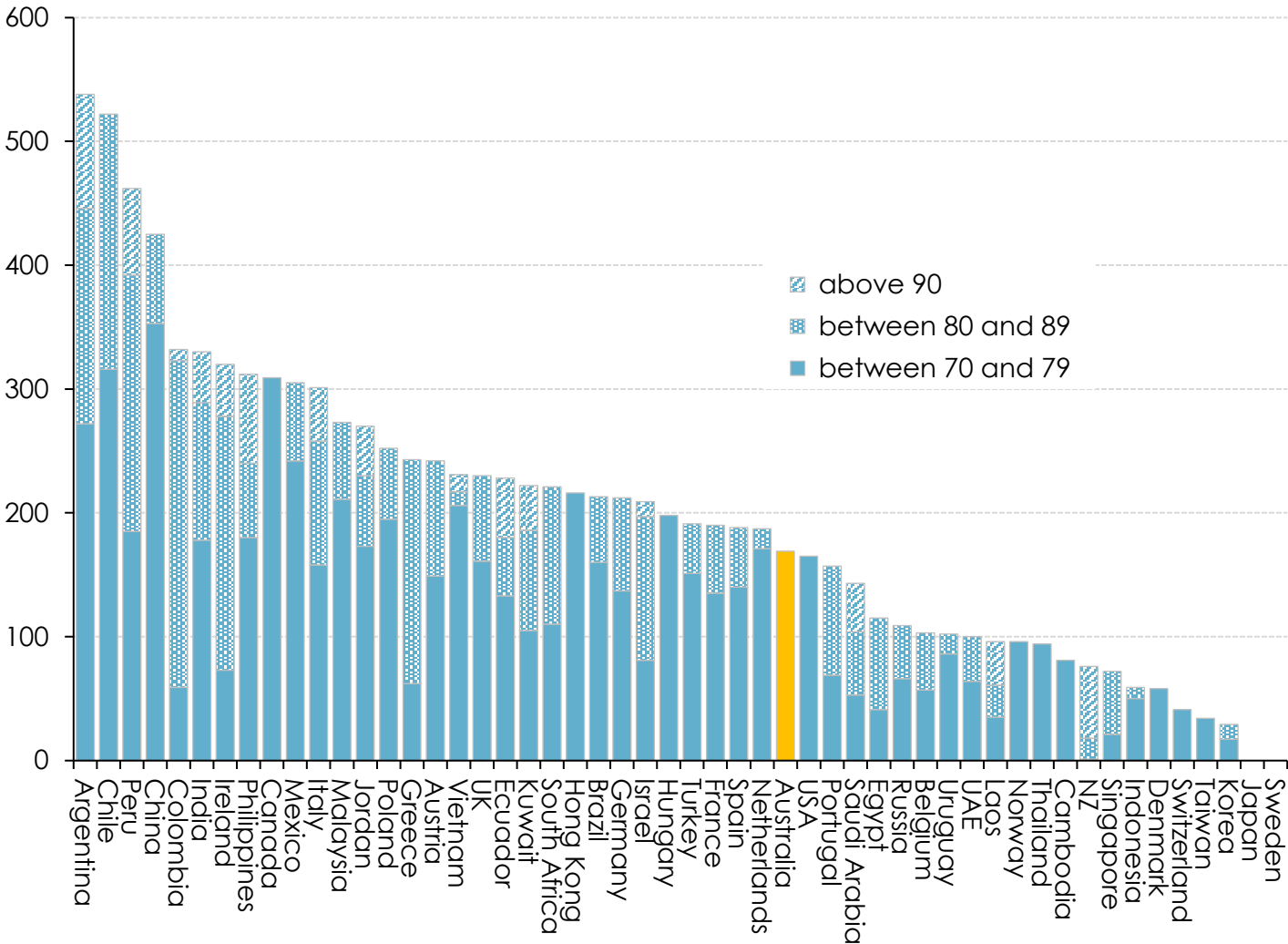


- ❑ the Federal Government's '[National Plan to transition Australia's National COVID-19 Response](#)' (based on [Doherty Institute modelling](#)) specifies 70% and 80% 'full vaccination rates' as thresholds for the progressive easing of restrictions
- ❑ These thresholds are expressed as percentages of the 'eligible population' - ie people aged 16 and over
 - however 19¾% of Australia's population is aged under 16
 - so 70% (or 80%) of the 'eligible' population represents only 56% (and 64%) of the total population
 - alternatively, if children under the age of 16 can't be vaccinated, for 70% of the total population to have been fully vaccinated requires 87% of the 'eligible' population to have been fully vaccinated
- ❑ The Doherty Institute modelling used to underpin these targets also assumes an 'optimal' TTIQ (test, trace, isolate and quarantine) capability
 - which recent experience in NSW and Victoria suggests is dubious in the presence of high case numbers
- ❑ There would thus appear to be a non-trivial risk that Australia could ease restrictions 'too early' (as Israel and the UK did) – possibly resulting in another surge in infections when restrictions are eased

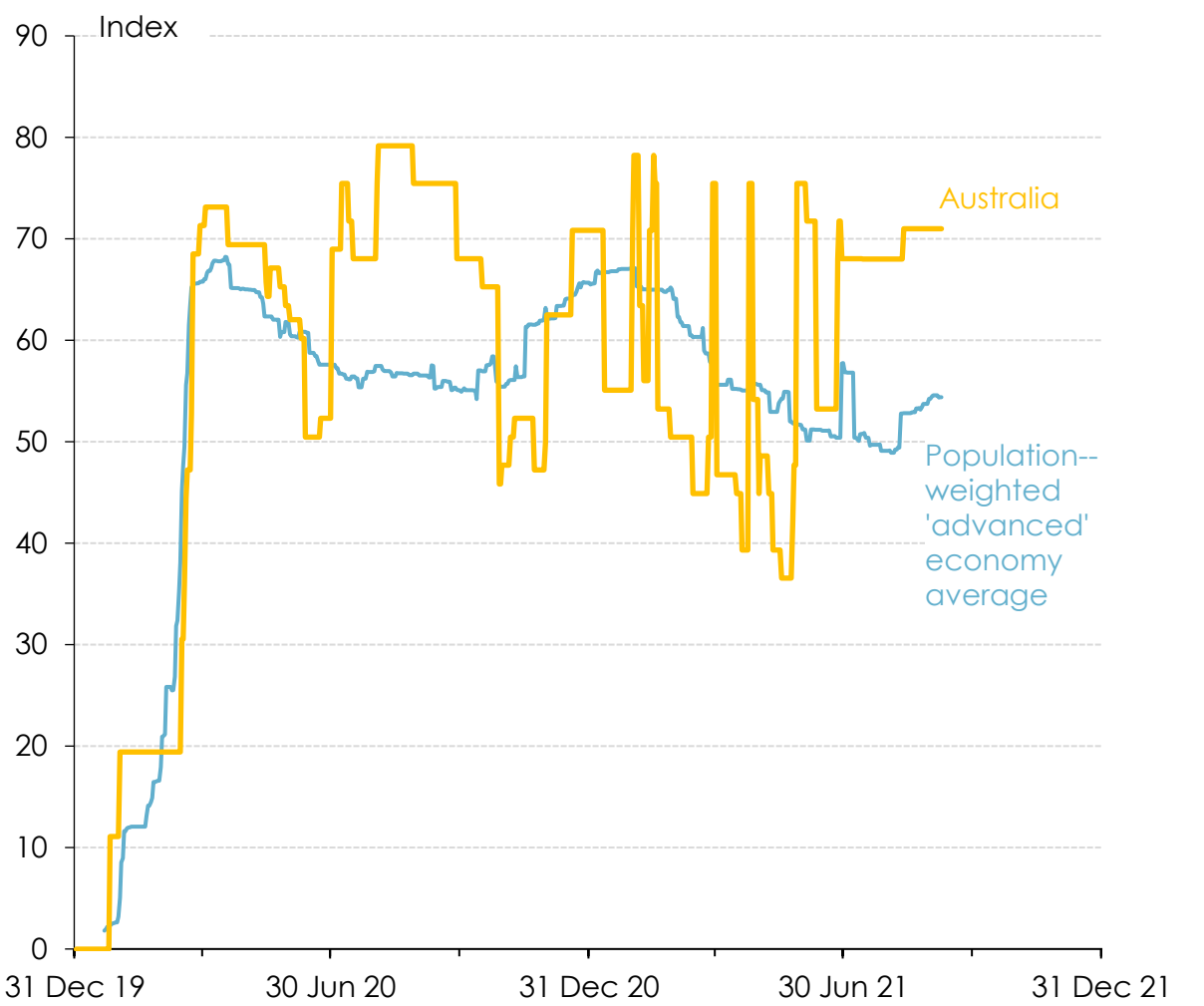
Source: Stephen Duckett, Danielle Wood, Brendan Coates et al, [Race to 80: Our best shot at living with Covid](#), Grattan Institute, 27th July 2021; Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, [Doherty Institute COVID-19 modelling - Key findings and implications](#), 3rd August 2021.

Australia's health restrictions are now significantly more onerous than in other 'advanced' economies, on average

Number of days for which the stringency of restrictions has been above 70 on the Oxford Index



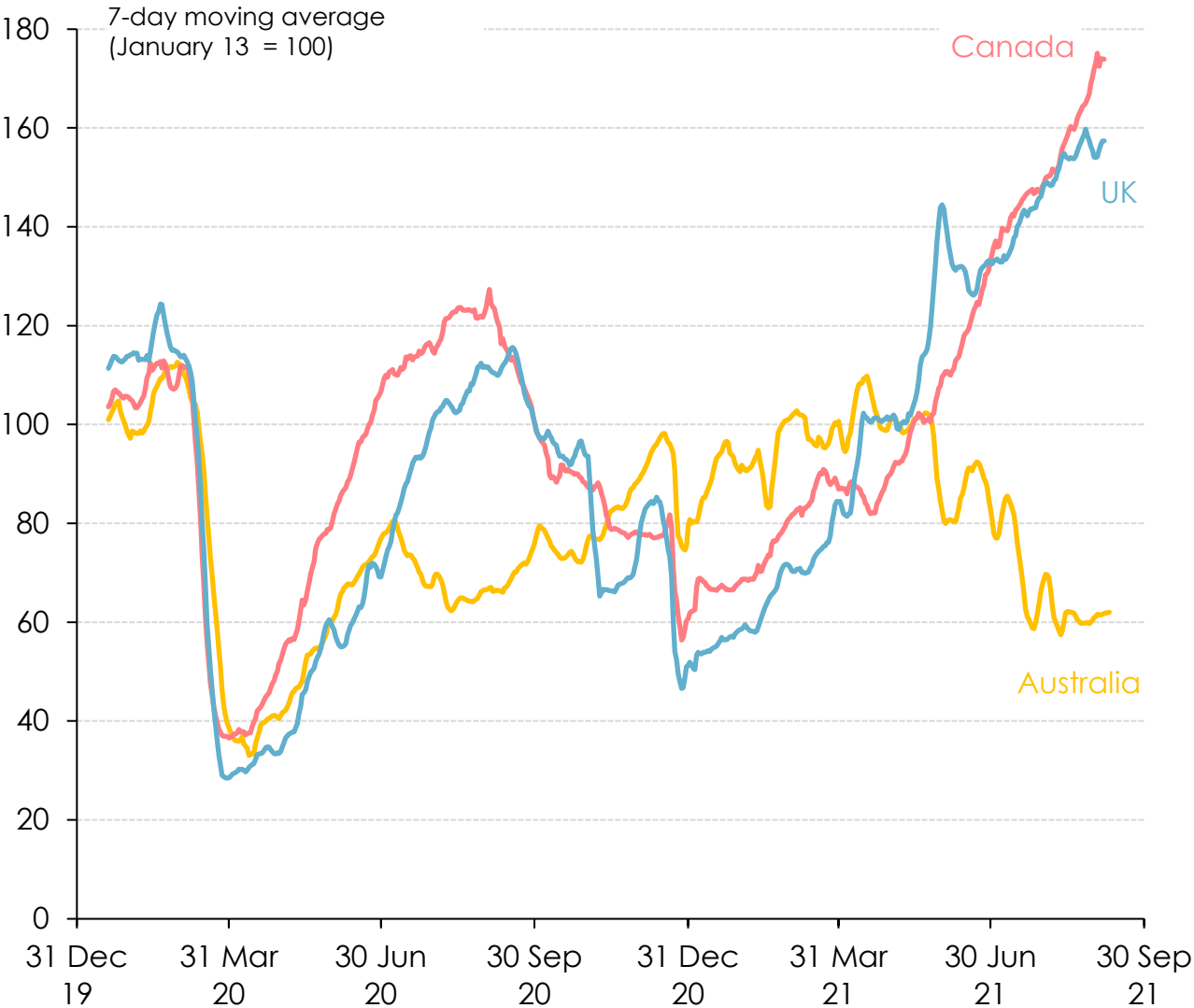
Stringency of Australia's restrictions compared with an average of other 'advanced' economies



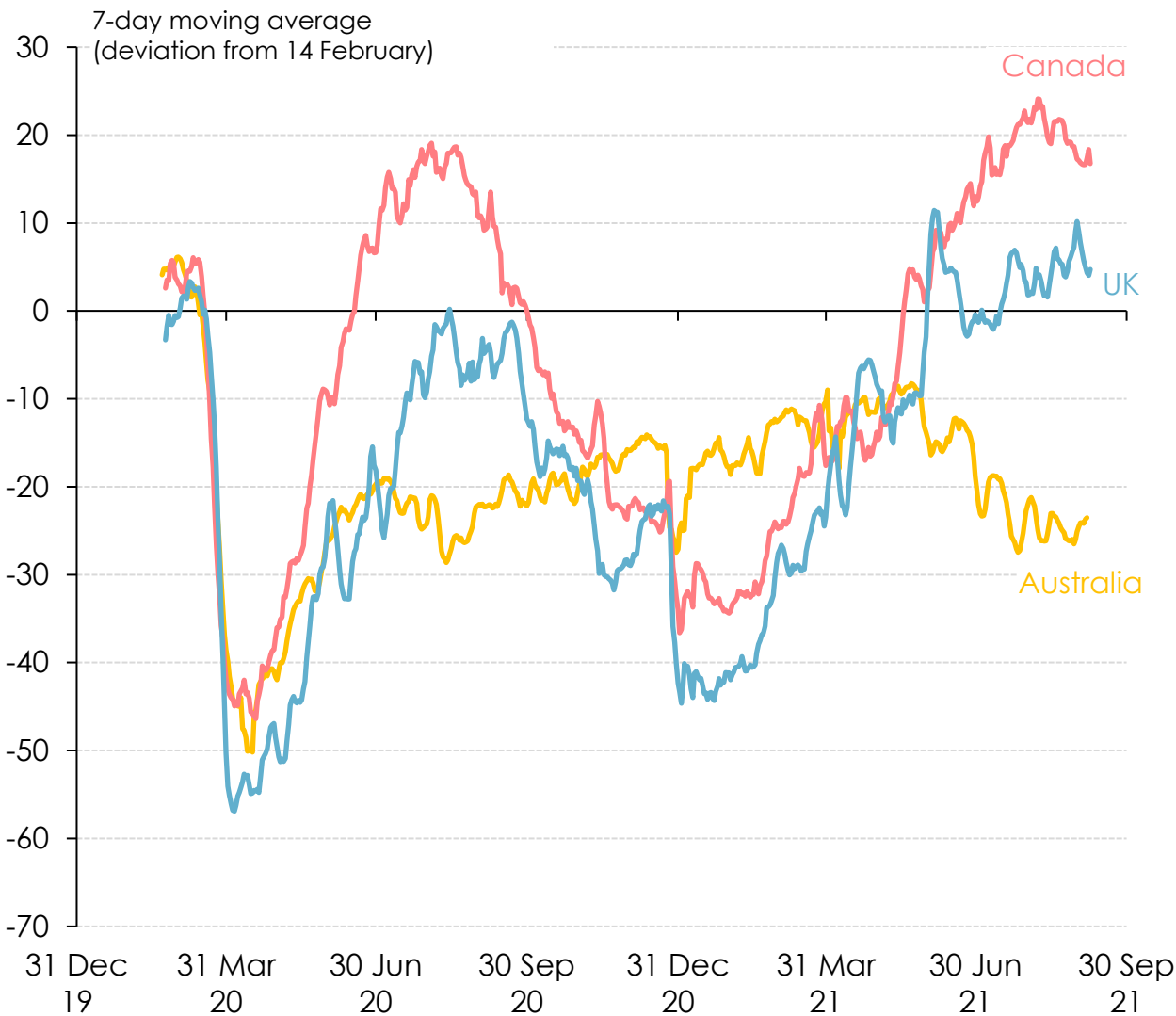
The Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker collects publicly available information on 11 indicators of government response including school and workplace closures, public events cancellations, restrictions on public gatherings, stay at home requirements, public transport closures, domestic and international travel restrictions, public information campaigns, testing and contact tracing. Source: [Blavatnik School of Government, Oxford University](#). Data up to 8th September. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Mobility indicators give some sense of how more onerous restrictions are now affecting Australia's economy compared with (eg) Canada & the UK

Apple mobility indicators



Google non-residential activity mobility indicators

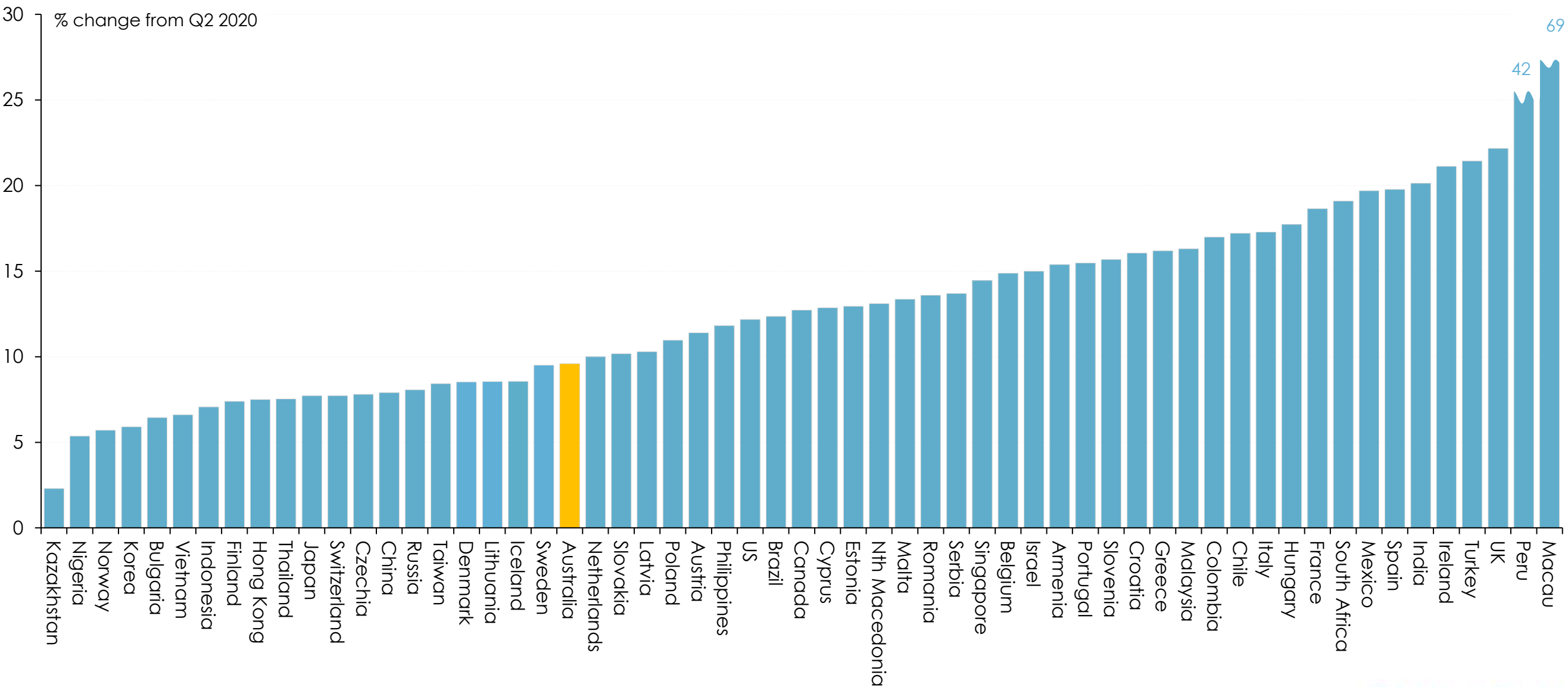


Note: 'Apple mobility indicator' is the average of three separate indicators for driving, use of transit and walking (data up to 9th September). Google 'non-residential activities' indicator is the average of separate indicators for workplaces, retail and recreation, groceries and pharmaceuticals, transit and parks (data up to 6th September).
Sources: Apple, [Mobility Trends Reports](#); Google, [Covid-19 Community Mobility Reports](#); Corinna Economic Advisory. [Return to "What's New"](#).

The world

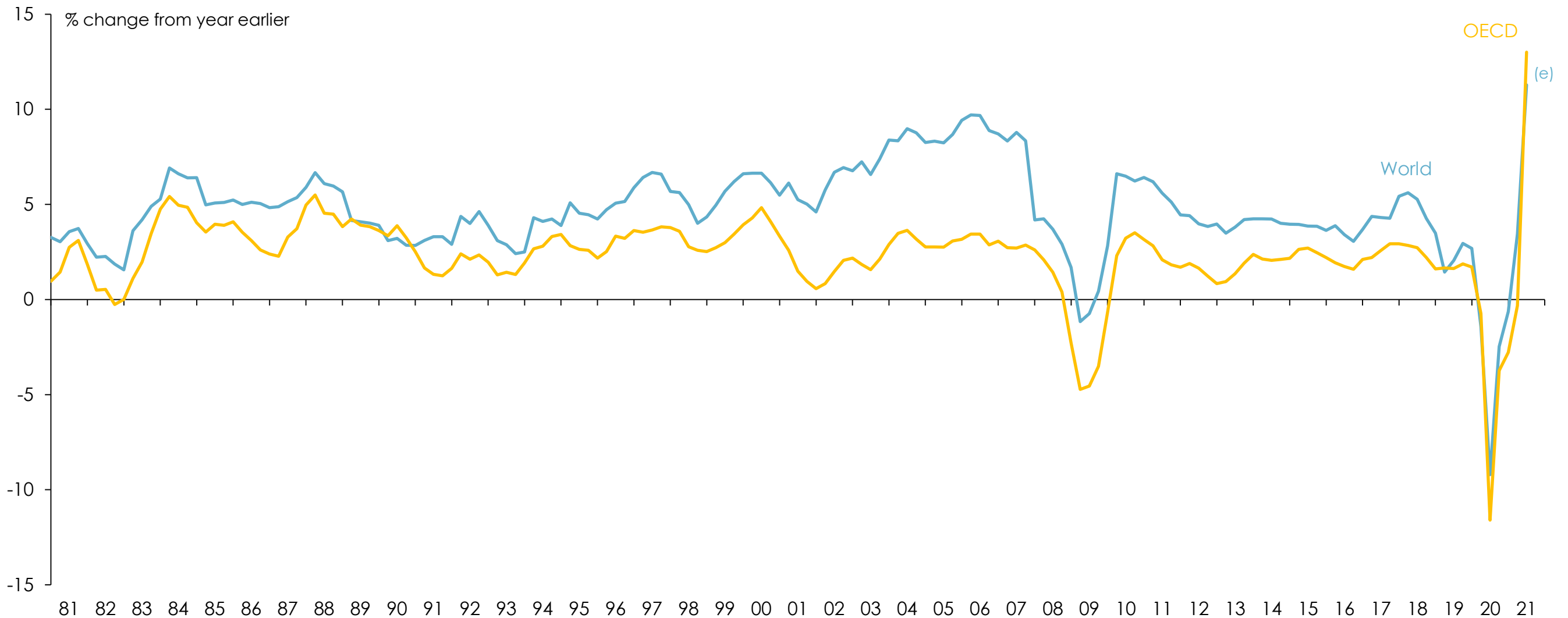
Of 59 countries which have now reported Q2 GDP estimates, 37 have recorded double-digit growth from last year's pandemic-induced trough

Growth in real GDP over the year to Q2 2021



The world economy likely grew by about 11% over the year to Q2 – a figure which is vastly flattered by comparison with last year's trough

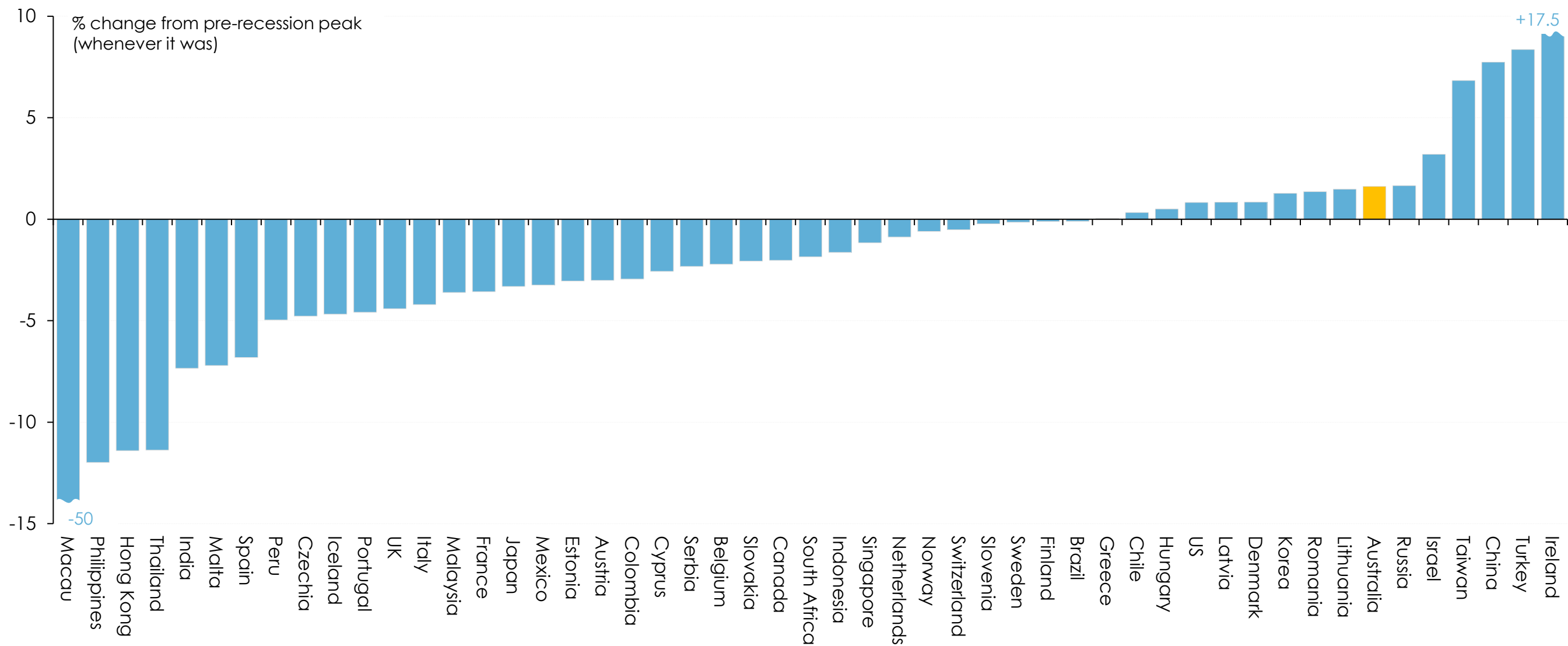
World and OECD area real GDP growth



Note: Estimates of global GDP growth compiled by Corinna using data for 100 countries accounting for 94% of 2019 world GDP as measured by the IMF, weighted in accordance with each country's share of global GDP at purchasing power parities in 2019; excludes constituents of the former USSR before 1993, the former Czechoslovakia before 1995, and the former Yugoslavia before 1998. (e) Estimate for Q2 2021 is based on published results the countries shown in the previous slide. Sources: national statistical agencies and central banks; Eurostat; [OECD](#); IMF; Corinna. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Only 15 countries (out of 49 for which seasonally-adjusted Q2 GDP estimates are available) have exceeded their pre-pandemic peaks

Q2 2021 real GDP compared with pre-recession peak



Note: Estimate for China derived from quarterly growth rates published by China NBS; estimate for India seasonally adjusted by Corinna using Refintiv Datastream.
Source: National statistical agencies and central banks. [Return to "What's New"](#).

The IMF's latest WEO update leaves 2021 growth forecast unchanged at 6% but revises 2022 up 0.5 pc pts to 4.9%

Major global institutions' growth forecasts for 2020, 2021 and 2022 compared

	<i>Actual</i>		<i>IMF</i>		<i>World Bank</i>		<i>OECD</i>		<i>Australian Treasury</i>	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
US	2.2	-3.5	7.0	4.9	6.8	4.2	6.9	3.6	6.5	3.5
China	5.8	2.3	8.1	5.7	7.7	5.3	8.5	5.8	8.5	5.5
Euro area	1.3	-6.6	4.6	4.3	4.2	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.0
India	4.0	-8.0	9.5	8.5	8.3	7.5	9.9	8.2	11.0	5.8
Japan	0.3	-4.8	2.8	3.0	2.9	2.6	2.6	2.0	3.5	1.8
UK	1.4	-9.9	7.0	4.8	na	na	7.2	5.5	na	na
Australia	1.9	-2.4	5.3	3.0	na	na	5.1	3.4	4.3*	2.5*
New Zealand	2.2	-3.0	4.0	3.2	na	na	3.5	3.8	3.2 [†]	4.4 [†]
World	2.8	-3.3	6.0	4.9	5.6	4.3	5.8	4.4	6.0	4.5
World trade	0.9	-8.5	9.7	7.0	8.3	6.3	na	na	na	na

Note: * Forecasts for fiscal years beginning 1st July (and finishing 30th June following year) † Forecasts by New Zealand Treasury for fiscal years beginning 1st July
Sources : International Monetary Fund (IMF), [World Economic Outlook Update](#), 26th July 2021; The World Bank, [Global Economic Prospects](#), 8th June 2021; Organization for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD), [Economic Outlook No. 109](#), 31st May 2021; Australian Treasury, 2021-22 [Budget Paper No. 1, Statement No. 2](#), 11th May 2021; New Zealand Treasury, [Budget Economic and Fiscal Update 2021](#), 20th May 2021. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Revisions to IMF growth forecasts reflect upward revisions for ‘advanced’ economies (esp the US) and downward for most ‘emerging’ economies

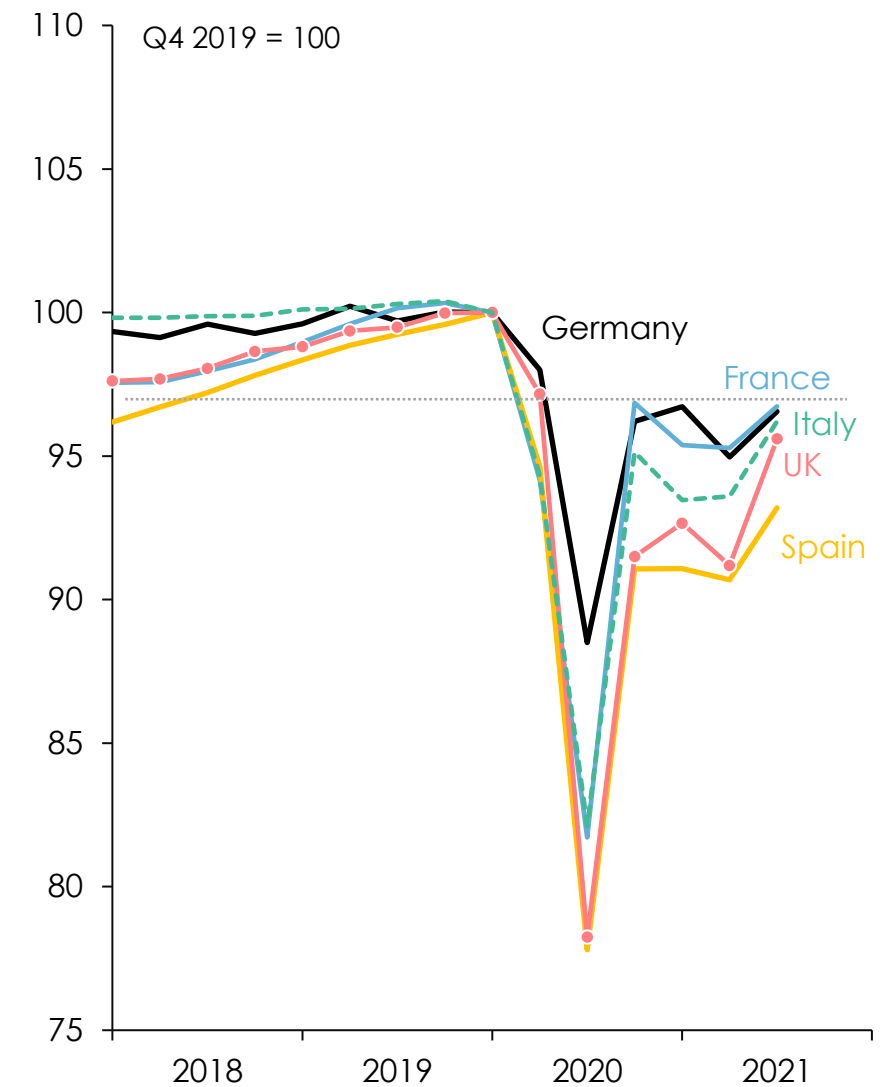
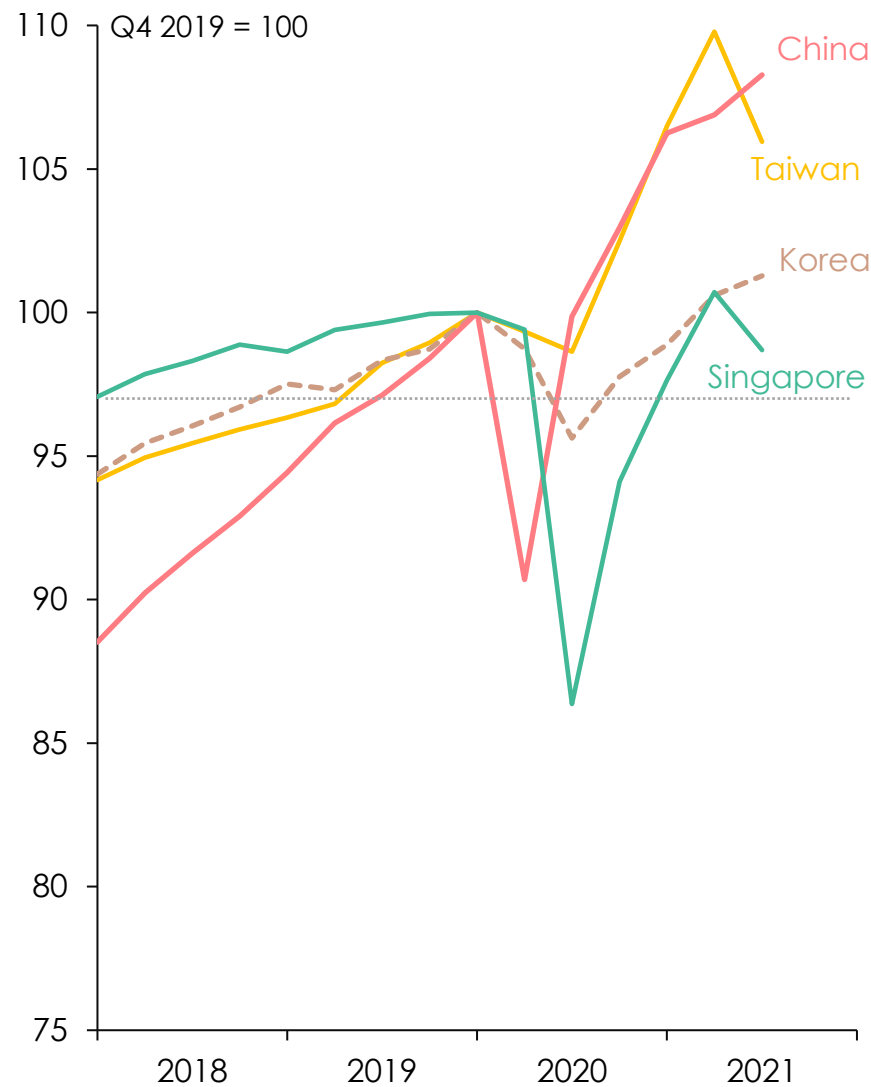
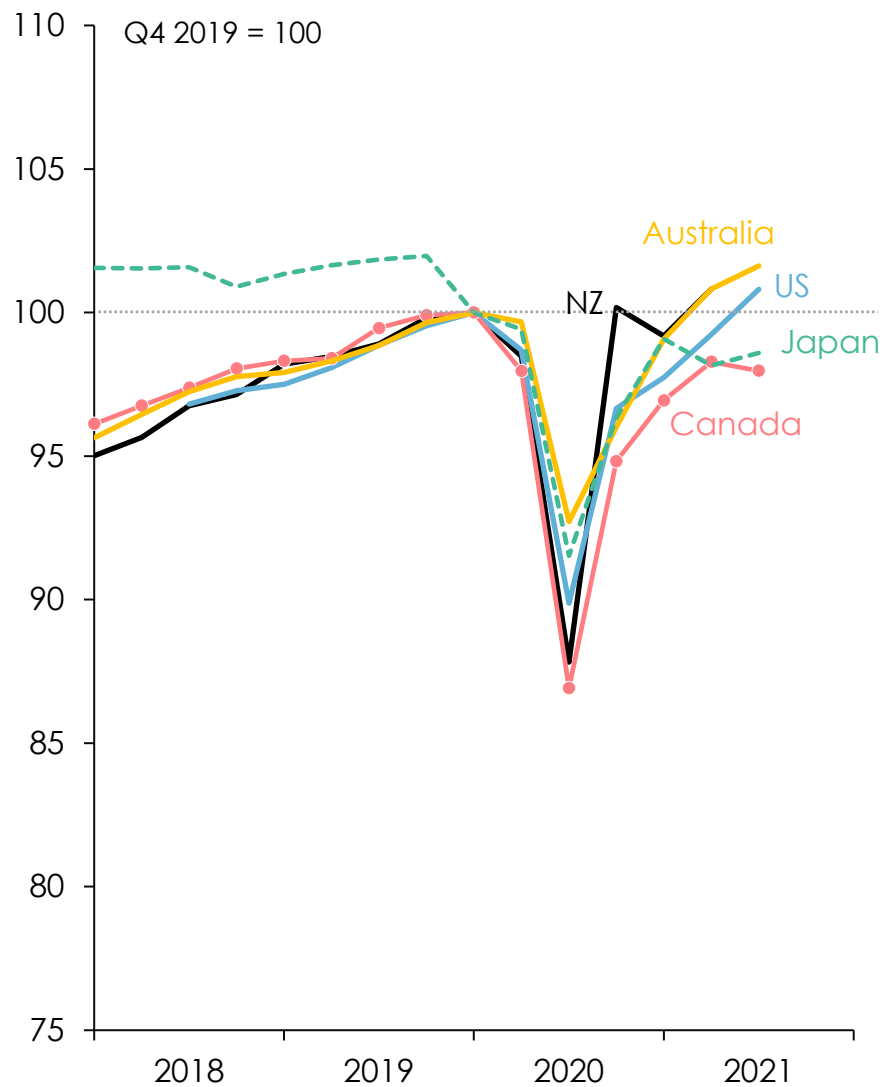
IMF World Economic Outlook real GDP forecasts

	Pc change from previous year		Pc pt change from April WEO forecast	
	2021	2022	2021	2022
Advanced economies				
US	7.0	4.9	0.6	1.4
Euro area	4.6	4.3	0.2	0.5
Japan	2.8	3.0	-0.5	0.5
Australia	5.3	3.0	0.8	0.2
Total	5.6	4.4	0.5	0.8
Emerging economies				
China	8.1	5.7	-0.3	0.1
India	9.5	8.5	-3.0	1.6
Indonesia	3.9	5.9	-0.4	0.1
Philippines	5.4	7.0	-1.5	0.5
Thailand	2.1	6.1	-0.5	0.5
Malaysia	4.7	6.0	-1.8	0.0
Brazil	5.3	1.9	1.6	-0.7
Russia	4.4	3.1	0.6	-0.7
South Africa	4.0	2.2	0.9	0.2
Turkey	5.8	3.3	-0.2	-0.2
Total	6.3	5.2	-0.4	0.2
World	6.0	4.9	0.0	0.5

- ❑ The IMF’s forecast for growth in the world economy in 2021 hasn’t changed since April, but that reflects offsetting revisions to forecasts for ‘advanced’ economies (upwards) and ‘emerging’ economies downwards
 - the IMF’s forecast for the US has been revised upwards by 0.6 pc pt this year (and by 1.4 pc pt for 2022) – largely as a result of the Biden Administration’s proposed fiscal measures which it expects will add 0.3 pc pt to US growth this year and 1.1 pc pt in 2022
 - the forecast for Japan has been revised down by 0.5 pc pt this year because of ongoing health restrictions, but that’s expected to be made good next year
- ❑ By contrast forecasts for most emerging economies – and especially for Asian economies – have been revised down
 - for India, and for South-East Asia, these revisions reflect the effects of the recent (or current) surges in infections
 - for China, the downward revision is attributed to a “scaling back of public investment and fiscal support”
 - upgrades to forecasts for Brazil, Russia and South Africa are largely the result of favourable commodity export market trends
- ❑ The IMF endorses the view that the recent uptick in inflation in ‘advanced’ economies is largely transitory – but stresses the importance of keeping inflation expectations ‘anchored’ near central bank inflation targets

The more 'advanced' Asian economies, Australia's & NZ's and the US's, have recovered more rapidly from last year's recessions than Europe's

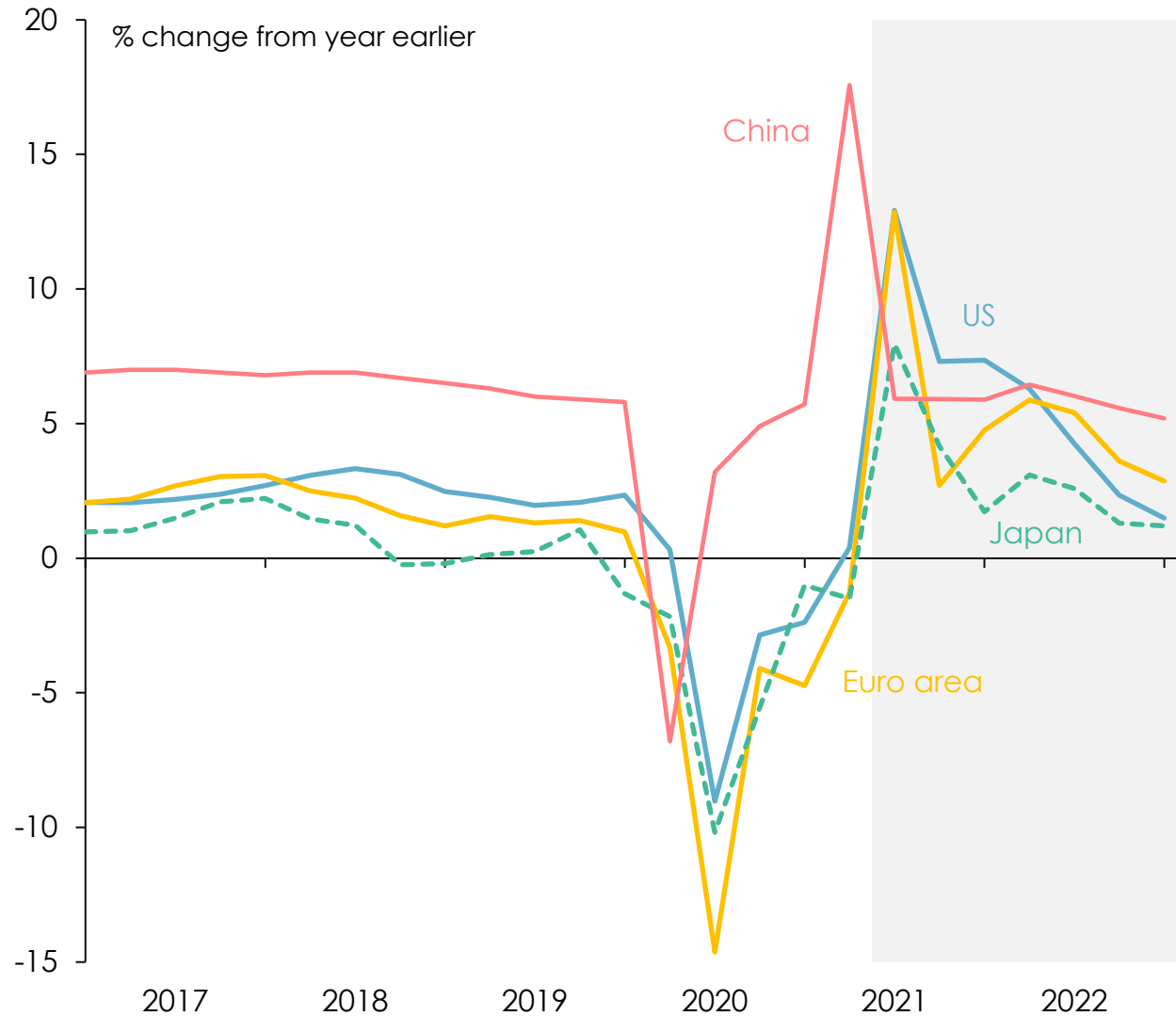
Levels of real GDP indexed to Q4 2019 = 100



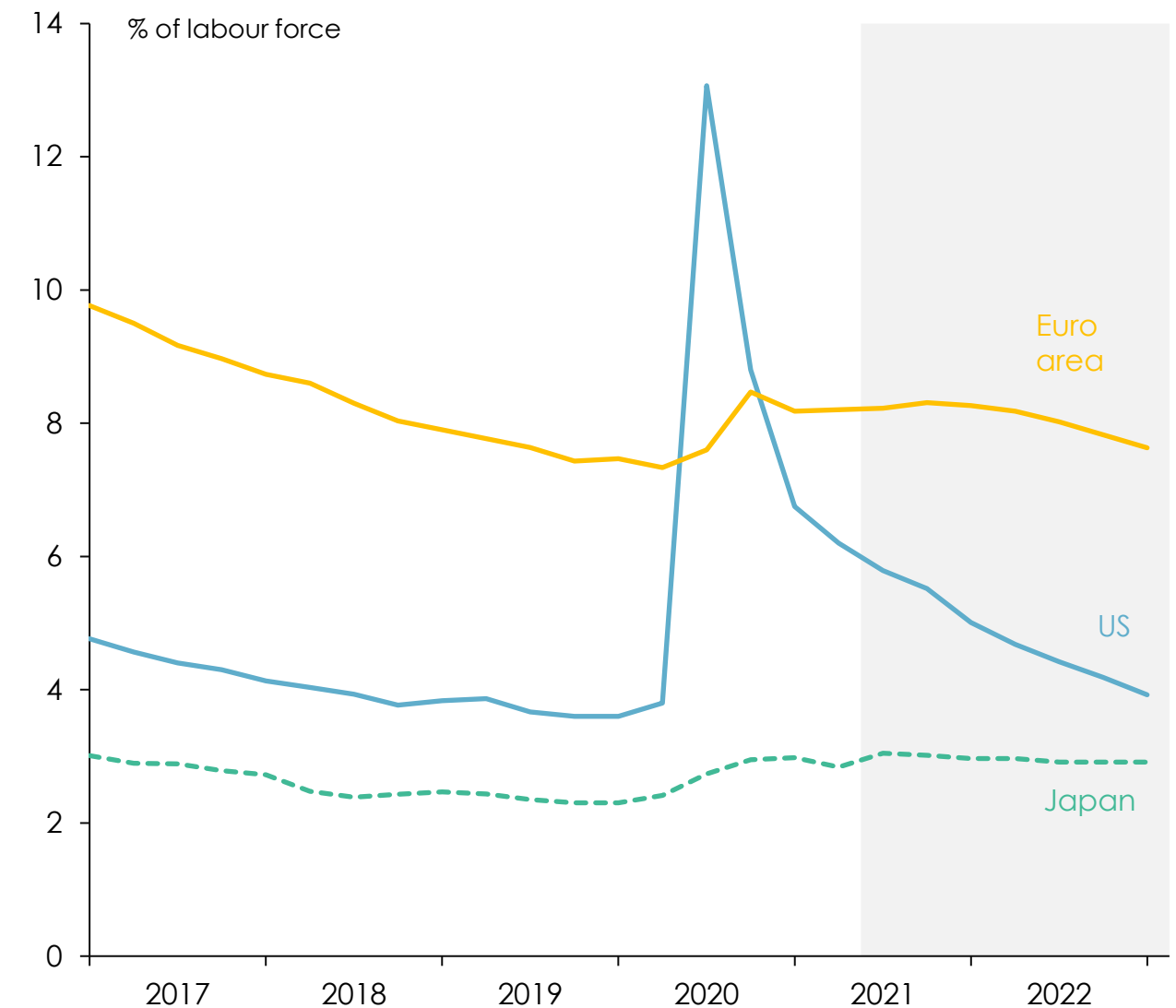
Note: All series shown are seasonally adjusted, except for China's which has been constructed using the estimates of quarterly changes in real GDP published by the China National Bureau of Statistics. Sources: National statistical agencies, Eurostat and Bank of Korea; Corinna.

The OECD expects the US-led spurt of growth this year to be relatively short-lived, with growth slowing noticeably through 2022 ...

OECD real GDP growth forecasts



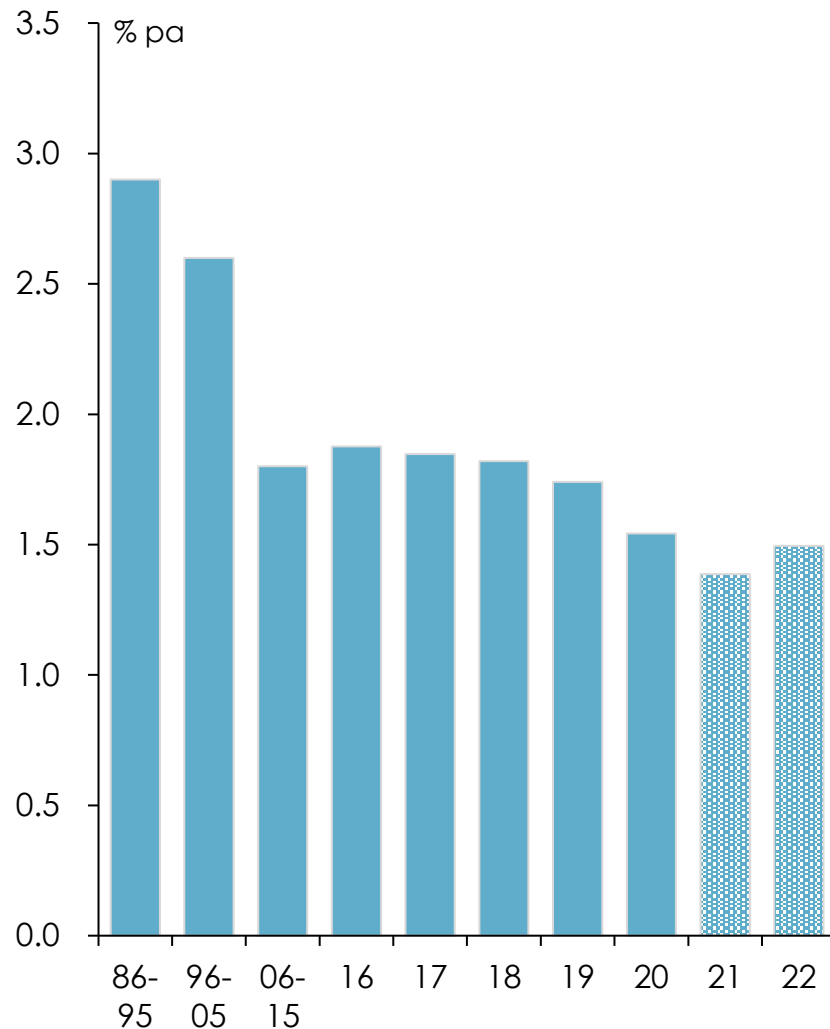
OECD unemployment rate forecasts



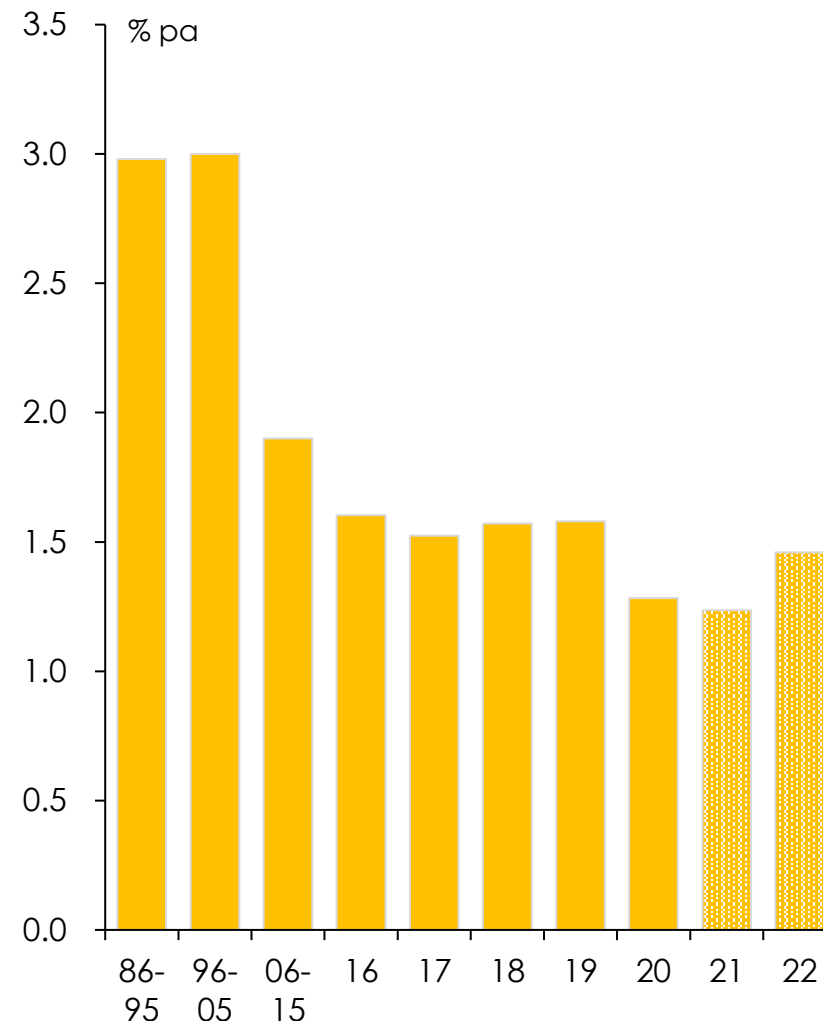
Sources: OECD, [Economic Outlook No. 109 - Statistical Annex](#), Volume 2021, No. 1, 31st May 2021; Corinna.

... because (with the partial exception of the US) nothing has been done (or will be) to tackle long-standing 'structural' headwinds to growth

OECD area potential GDP growth



Growth in the OECD area productive capital stock



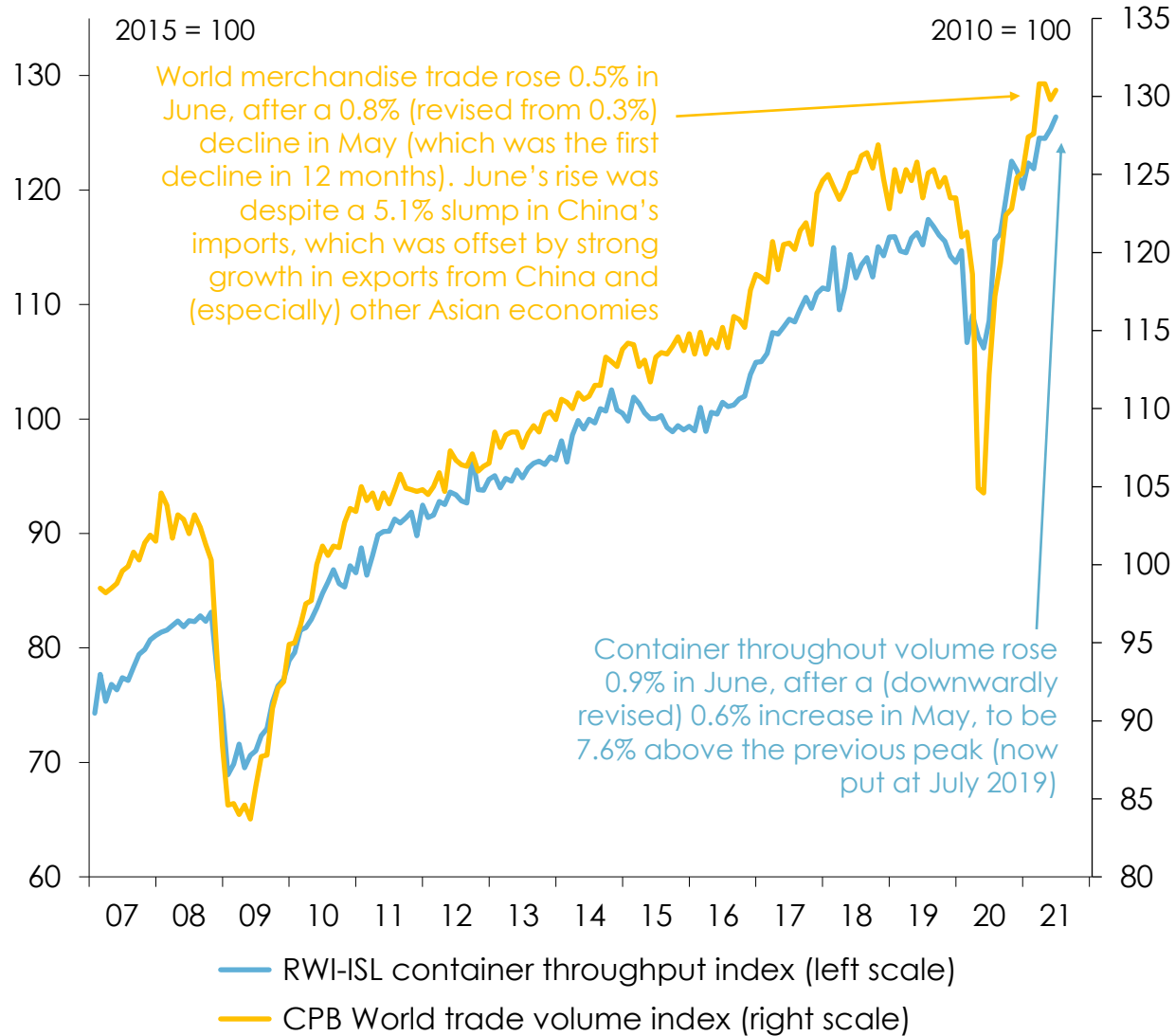
OECD area labour productivity growth



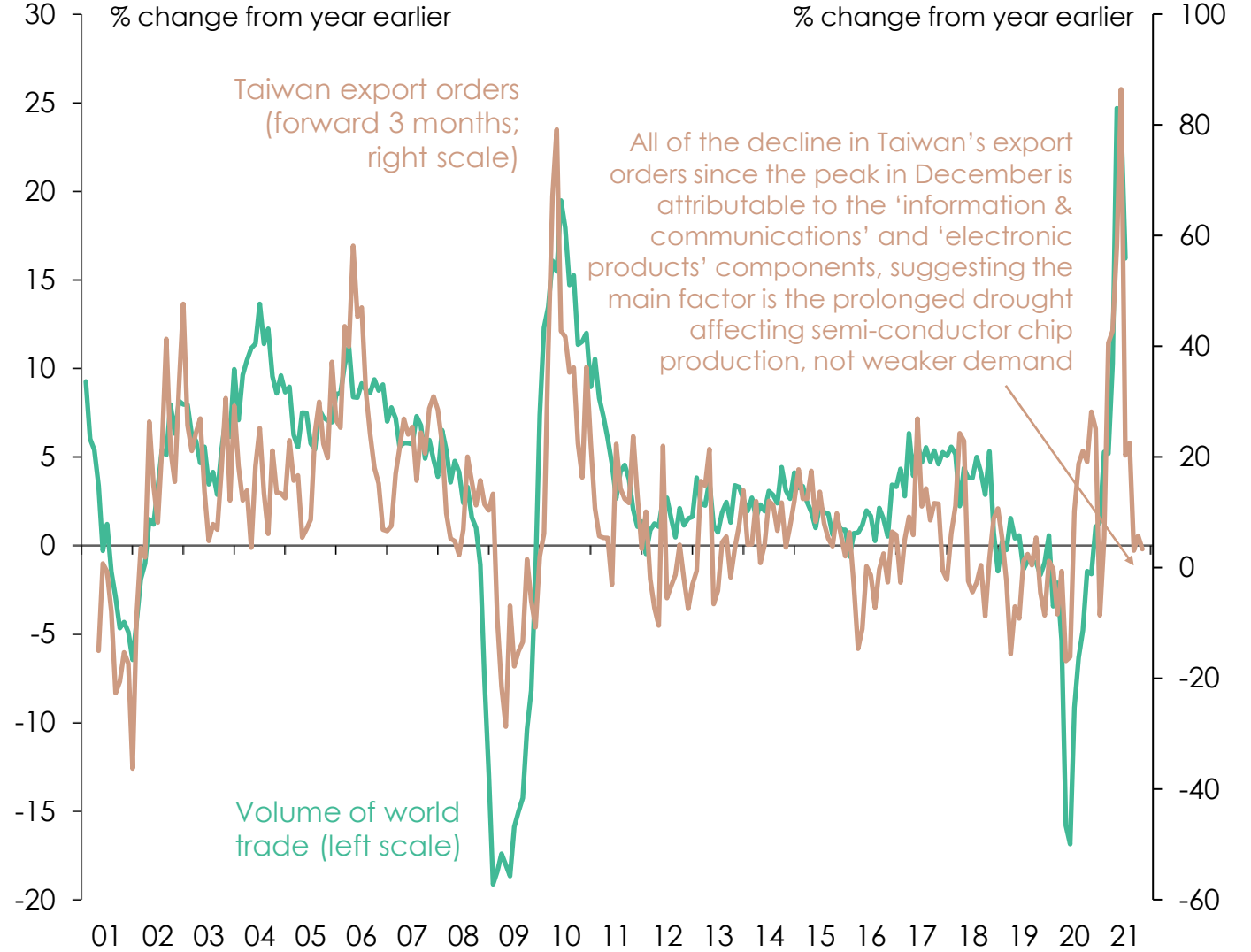
Sources: OECD, [Economic Outlook No. 109 - Statistical Annex](#), Volume 2021, No. 1, 31st May 2021; Corinna.

World trade volumes rose in June, after a setback in May, despite a slump in Chinese imports – but may slow again over the next few months

World trade volumes and container throughput



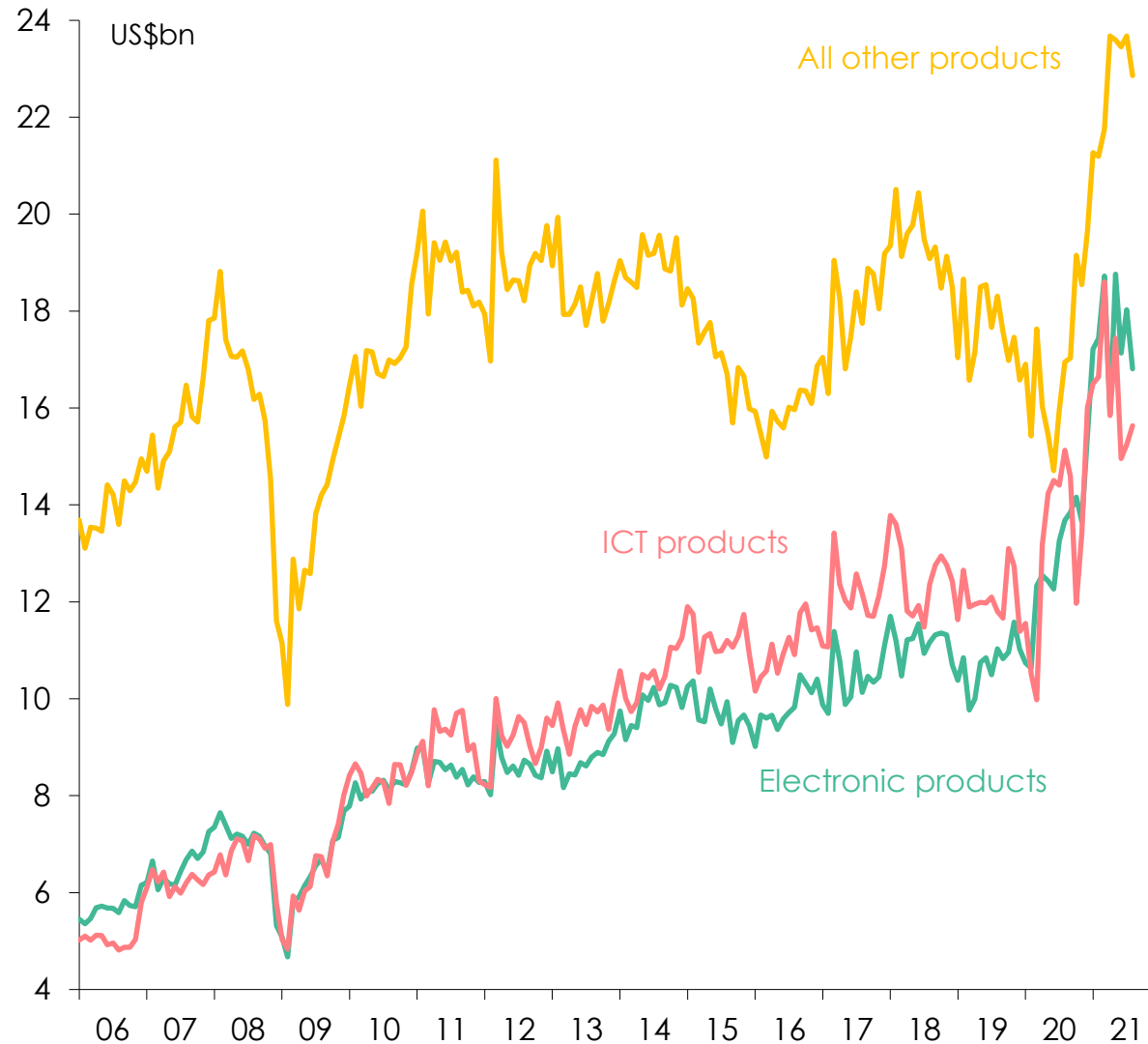
Taiwan export orders and world trade volumes



Note: The shipping container throughput index is based on reports from 91 ports around the world handling over 60% of global container shipping.
 Sources: CPB Netherlands Economic Planning Bureau, [World Trade Monitor](#) (July data to be released on 24th September); Institute of Shipping Economics & Logistics (ISL) and RWI Leibniz-Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (RWI) [Container Throughput Index](#); Taiwan [Ministry of Economic Affairs](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

Taiwan's worst drought in over fifty years is a major factor in the surge in prices of semi-conductor chips (and things which use them)

Taiwan export orders, by product

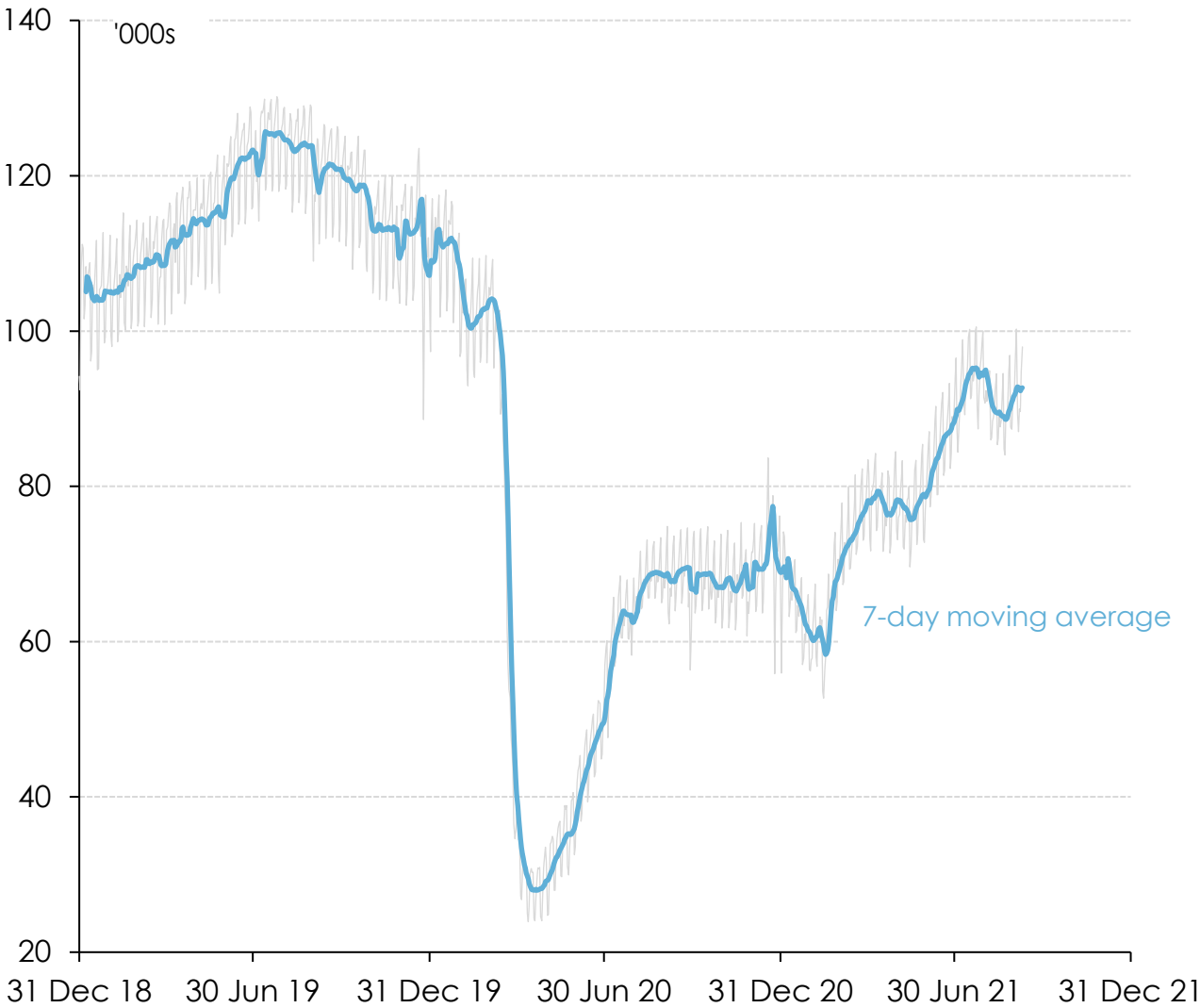


Note: Data have been seasonally adjusted by Corinna using Refinitiv Datastream. Latest data are for July. Source: Taiwan [Ministry of Economic Affairs](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

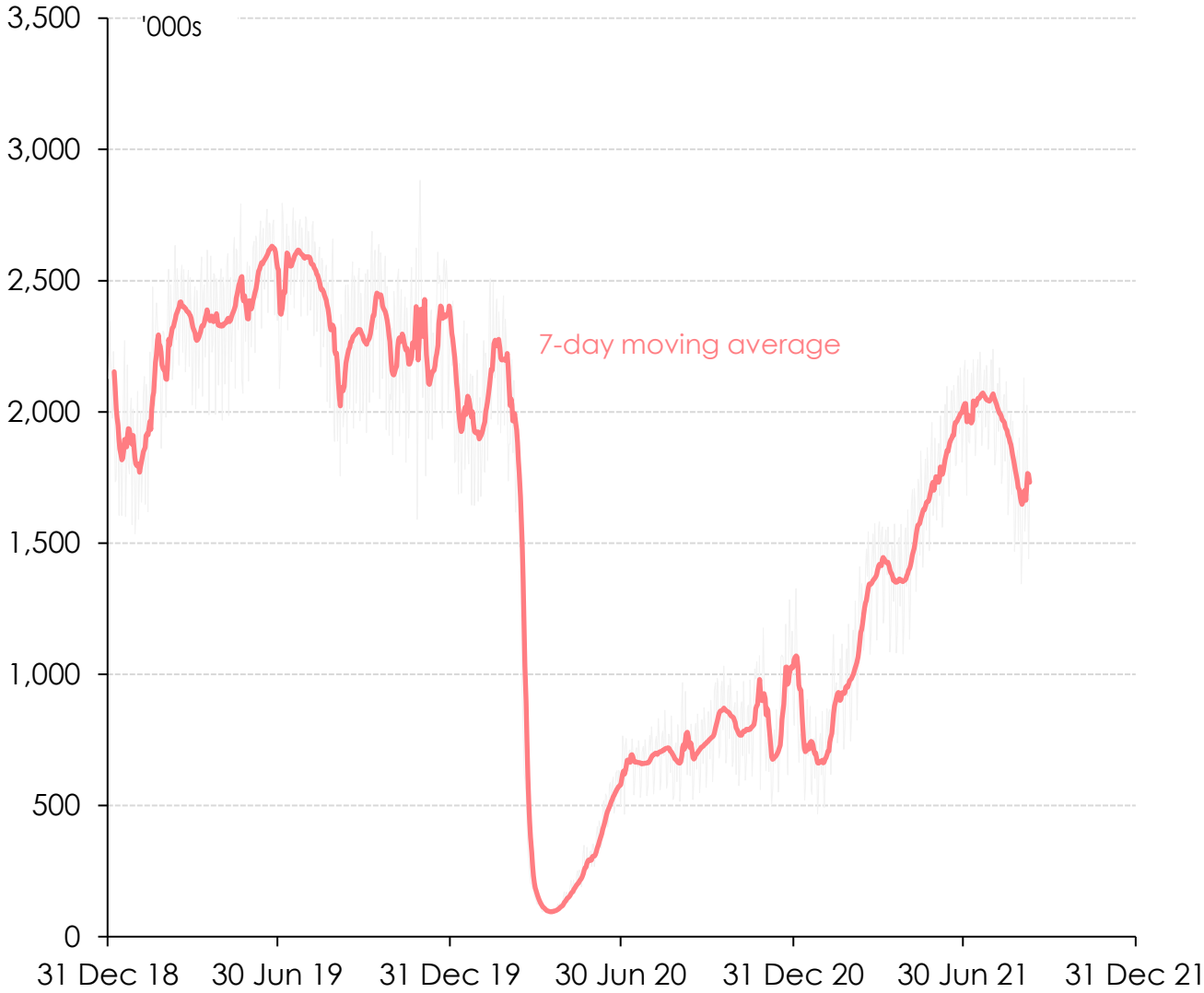
- ❑ Taiwan accounts for 63% of the US\$85bn global semi-conductor chip market (followed by Korea 18% and China 6%)
 - one Taiwanese company, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co (TSMC) has 54% of the world market, and United Microelectronics Co (UMC) a further 7% (Samsung accounts for Korea's 18%)
- ❑ Semiconductor fabrication plants ("fabs") use very large amounts of water to rinse chips during their manufacture – a typical fab uses 7½-15 million litres of water daily (and water in Taiwan is very cheap, at less than US40¢/t)
- ❑ Taiwan has been experiencing its worst drought in 56 years, with the failure of monsoons to arrive last year and unusually low spring rains this year
 - reservoirs are down to less than 20% of capacity overall – with the Baoshan Reservoir which supplies TSMC's Hsinchu plant down to 7%
 - Taiwan's government has reduced water supplies to irrigated farmland, and to residents and businesses in three cities
 - 'fabs' have been asked to reduce their water consumption by 13%
 - water shortages are also constraining hydro-electricity production
- ❑ Foreign orders for Taiwanese ICT products rose 2.6% in July, after a 1.9% increase in June, but are still 16% below their February peak
 - orders for other electronics products fell 6.8% in July to be more than 10% below their peak in February
- ❑ Shortages of semi-conductor chips have caused major headaches for the motor vehicle industry (which uses lots of them)
 - Toyota last month announced a 40% cut in production in September (although virus outbreaks in SE Asia were also a contributing factor)

The upturn in new infections has had a dampening effect on global aviation – although that might now be starting to turn around

Daily commercial flights worldwide

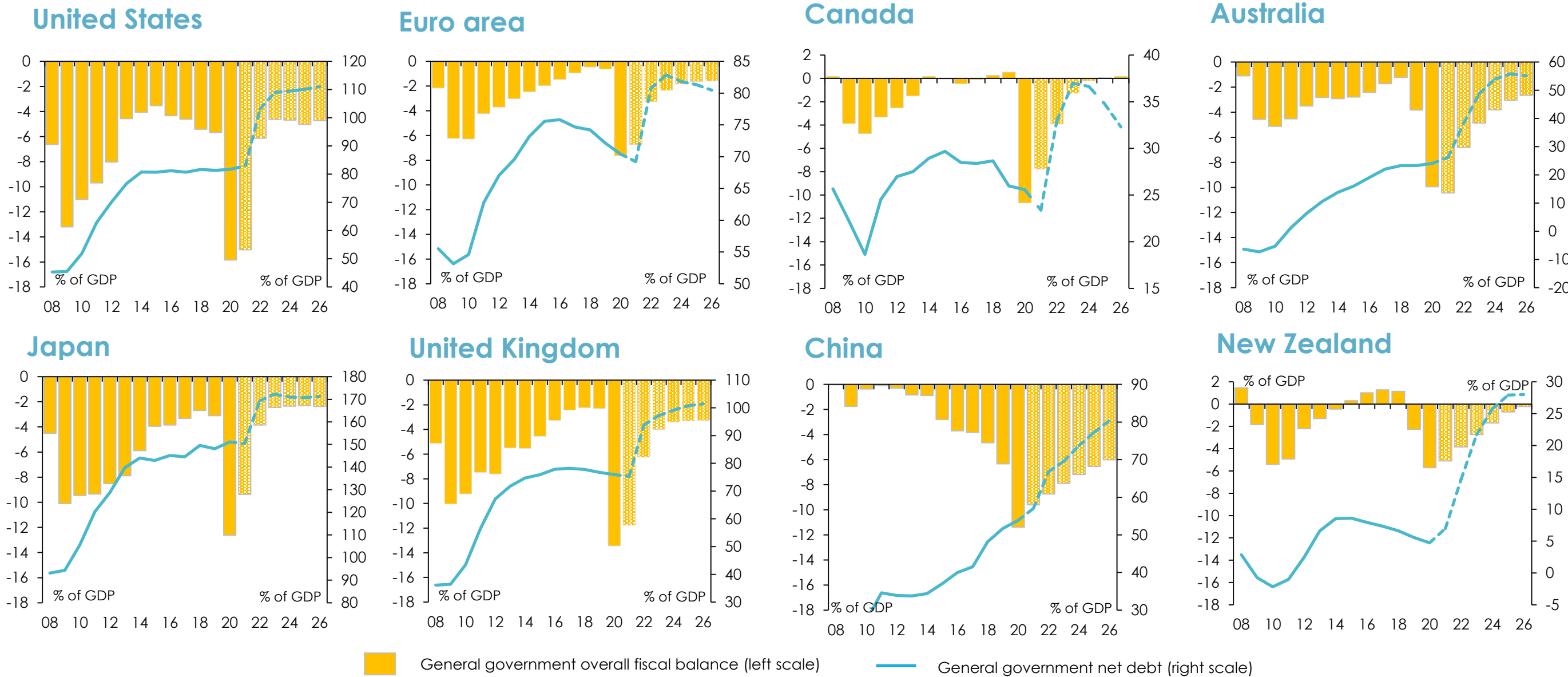


Daily US TSA 'security' checks



Note: Commercial flights include commercial passenger flights, cargo flights, charter flights, and some business jet flights. Data up to 9th September. Thicker coloured lines are 7-day centred moving averages of daily data plotted in thin grey lines. Sources: [Flightradar24.com](https://www.flightradar24.com); [US Transport Safety Administration](https://www.transportation.gov/airport-security) (at last, something useful produced by aviation 'security'!!!). [Return to "What's New"](#).

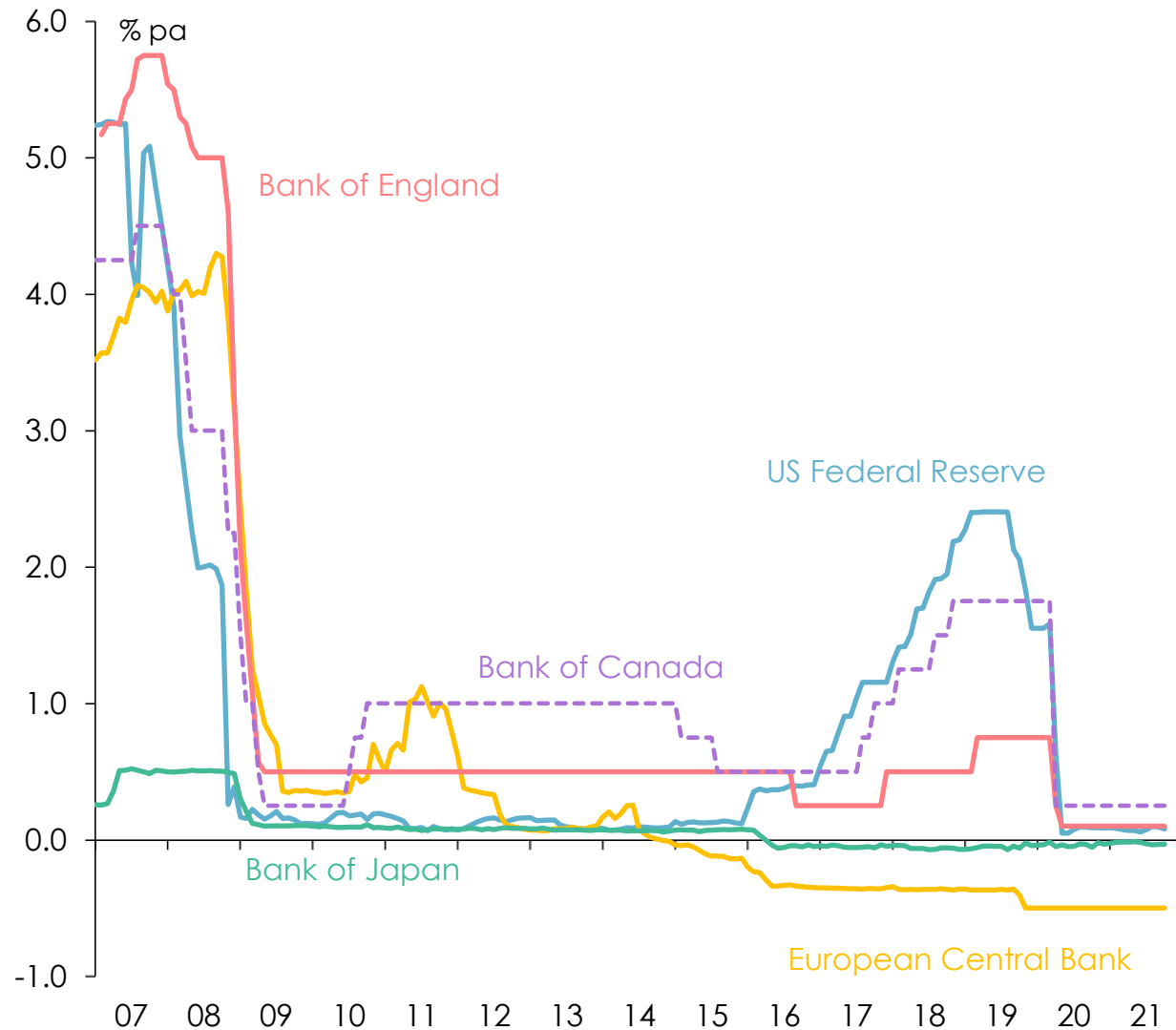
The US fiscal stimulus dwarfs that of any other major economy – although Japan, the UK, Canada and Australia are also doing a lot



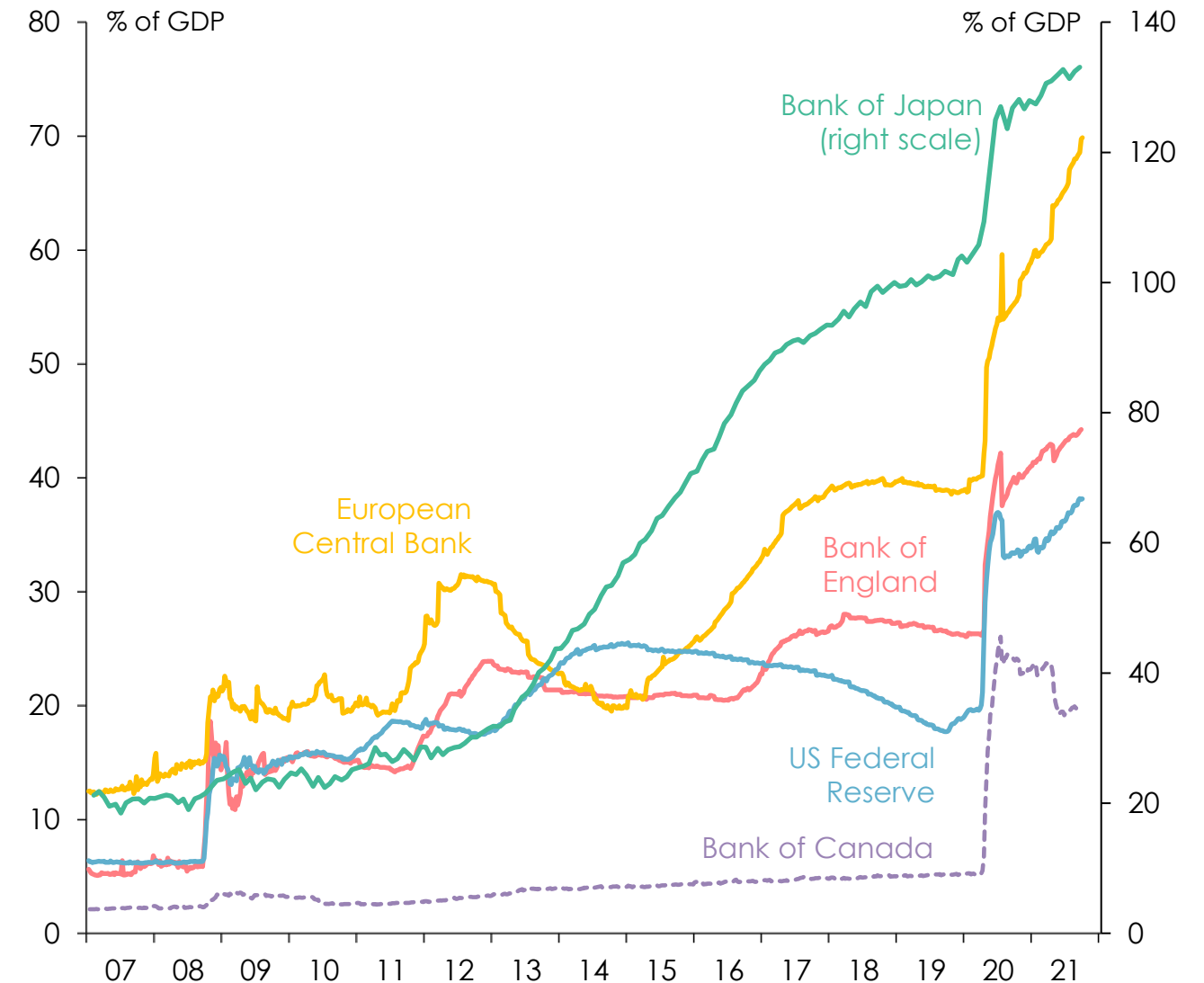
Note: China debt is gross debt, not net. Sources: International Monetary Fund, [Fiscal Monitor](#), and [World Economic Outlook](#), April 2021. [Return to "What's New"](#)

Major central banks have cut interest rates to record lows, and done more 'quantitative easing' than during the global financial crisis

Major central bank policy interest rates



Major central bank balance sheets

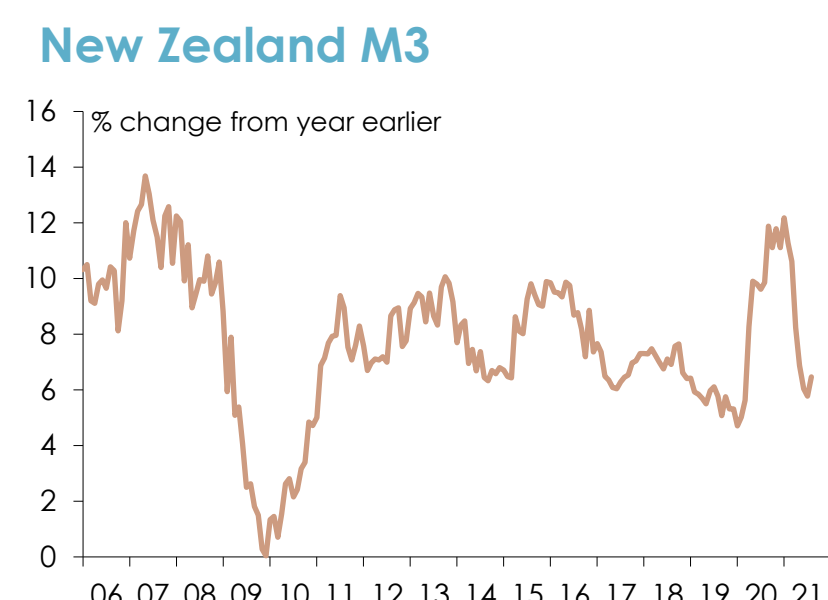
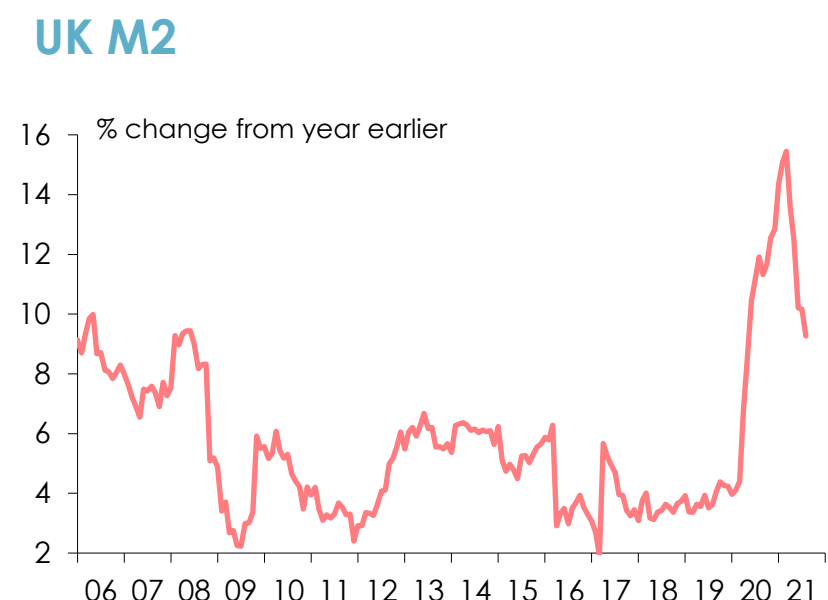
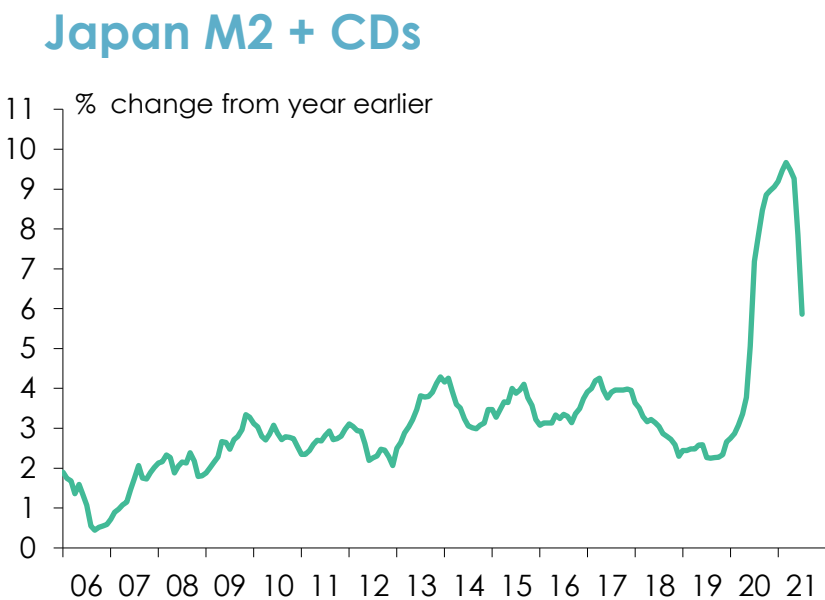
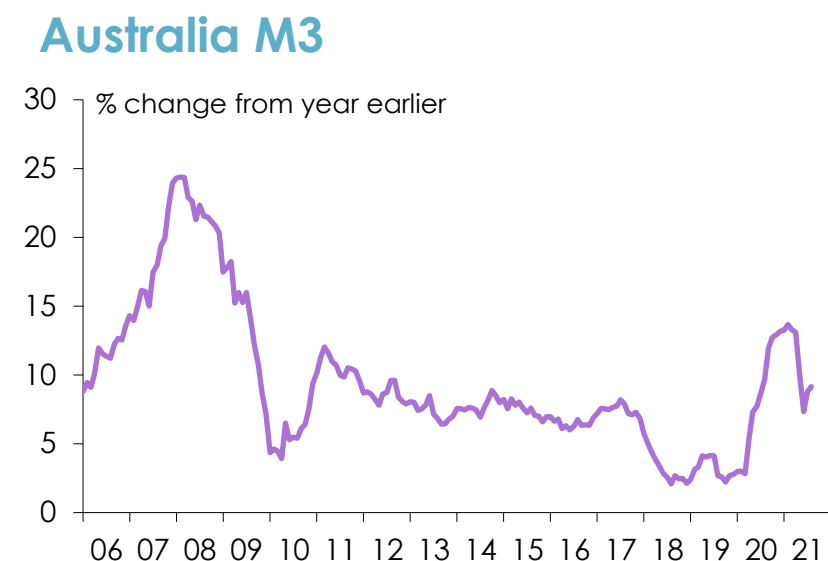
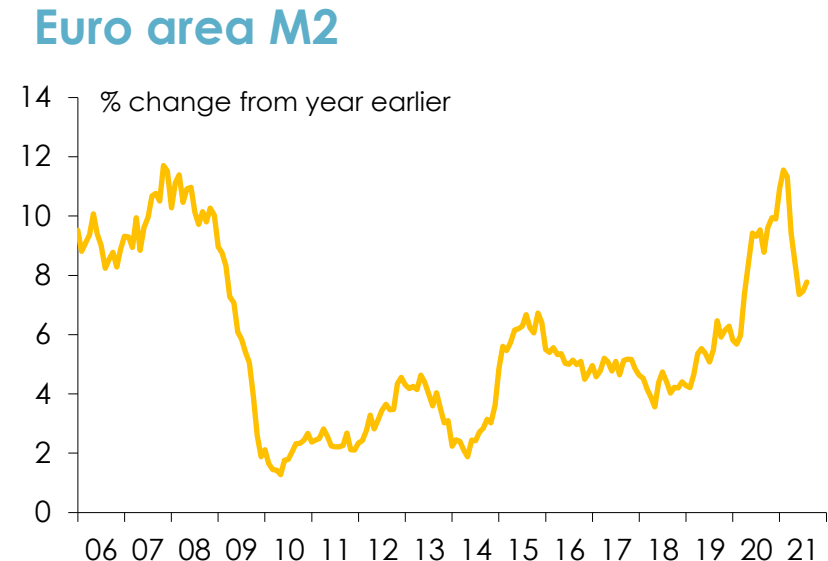
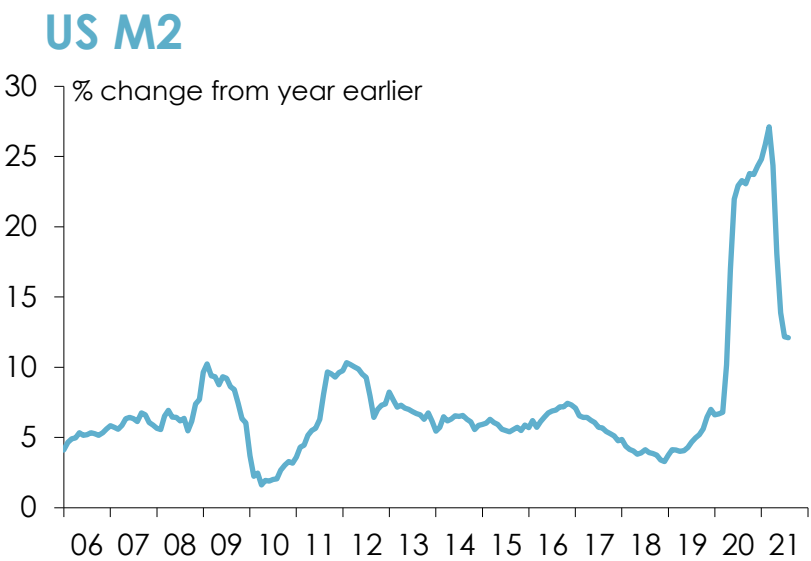


Note: estimates of central bank assets as a pc of GDP in Q2 2020 were inflated by the sharp drop in nominal GDP in that quarter: conversely, declines in estimates of central bank assets as a pc of GDP in Q3 2020 are in large part due to rebounds in nominal GDP. Sources: [US Federal Reserve](#); [European Central Bank](#); [Bank of Japan](#); [Bank of England](#); [Bank of Canada](#); national statistical agencies; Corinna. [Return to "What's New"](#).

The ECB this week signalled a reduction in the pace of its bond purchases (just don't call it 'tapering') and the BoC left its policy settings unchanged

- ❑ The European Central Bank kept its policy interest rates unchanged (as universally expected) at this week's Governing Council meeting, but surprised market participants by reducing its asset purchase program (though at the same time denying that this amounted to 'tapering')
 - the Governing Council judged that a “slight improvement in the medium-term inflation outlook” meant that “favourable financing conditions can be maintained with a moderately lower pace of net asset purchases”
 - speaking after the meeting, ECB President Christine Lagarde noted that the ECB staff forecast for 2021 euro area GDP growth had been revised upwards to 5% (from 4.6% previously), with the forecasts for 2022 and 2023 unchanged at 4.6% and 2.1% respectively, while the 2021 inflation forecast was revised upwards to 2.2% (from 1.9%) with 1.9% and 1.5% (up marginally from 1.7% and 1.4%, respectively) for 2022 and 2023
 - the ECB maintained the 'envelope' for its Pandemic Emergency Purchase Program (PEPP) of €1,850 bn through to March 2022 but agreed that “favourable financing conditions can be maintained with asset purchase flows that do not exhaust the envelope over the net purchase horizon of the PEPP, the envelope need not be used in full”
 - the PEPP has been running at €80 bn a month since March (bringing its total purchases to about €1,350 bn), but the ECB didn't specify what it would be lowered to – and Mme Lagarde (paraphrasing one of Margaret Thatcher's memorable quips) told the post-meeting press conference “the lady's not for tapering”
- ❑ As expected, the Bank of Canada left its overnight rate unchanged at 0.25% and its bond-buying program unchanged at C\$2bn per week (having 'tapered' it from \$3bn per week at its July meeting)
 - the BoC's Governing Council assessed that the Canadian economy “still has considerable excess capacity” and that recovery “continues to require extraordinary monetary policy support” – it expects “factors pushing up inflation” to be “transitory”, but also noted that their “persistence and magnitude are uncertain and will be monitored closely”
 - it re-iterated its previous guidance that adjustments to the pace of bond purchases would be guided by “assessments of the strength and durability of the recovery”, and that the policy rate would be kept at 0.25% until “economic slack is absorbed” which (based on its July forecasts) “happens in the second half of 2022”

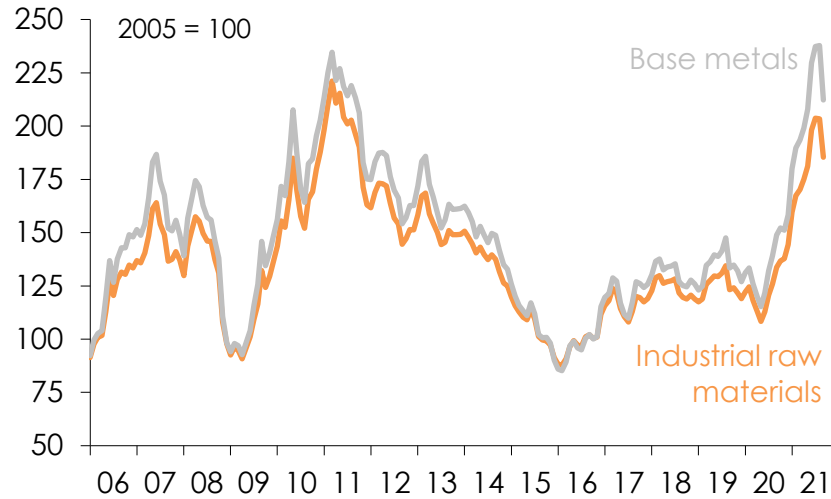
Money supply growth has slowed sharply from the peaks recorded earlier this year as large monthly increases a year ago ‘wash out’



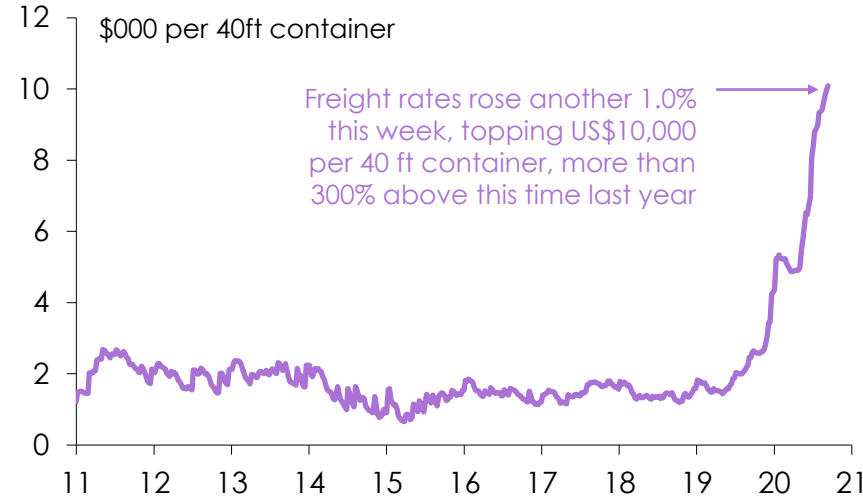
Sources: US Federal Reserve; European Central Bank; Bank of Japan; Bank of England; RBA; RBNZ. [Return to "What's New"](#).

'Upstream' price pressures remain intense – shipping freight rates continue to climb but D-RAM prices have fallen 10% since mid-July

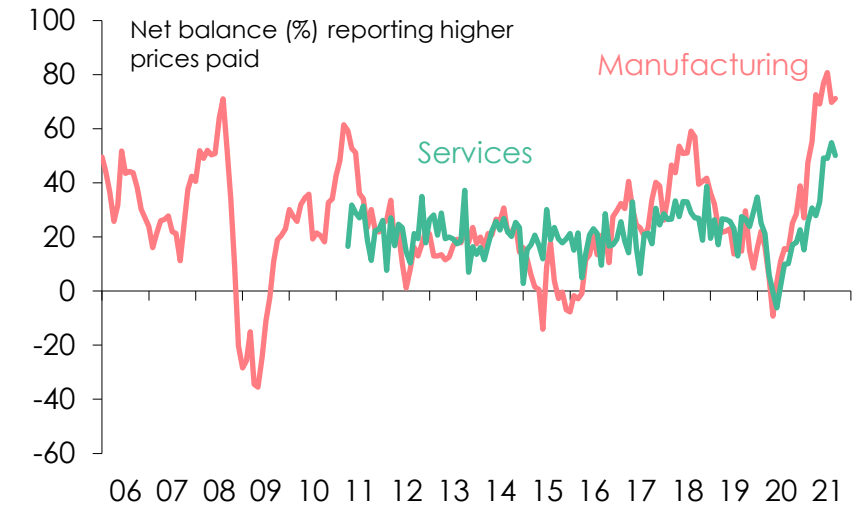
'Hard' commodity prices



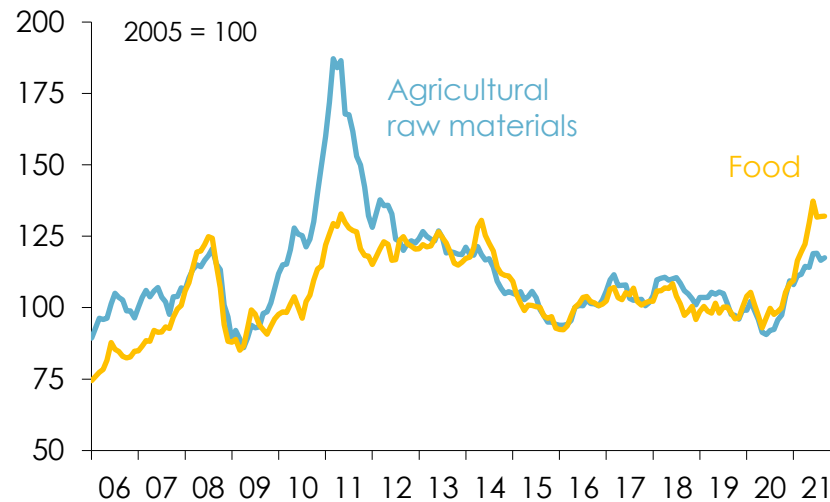
Container freight costs



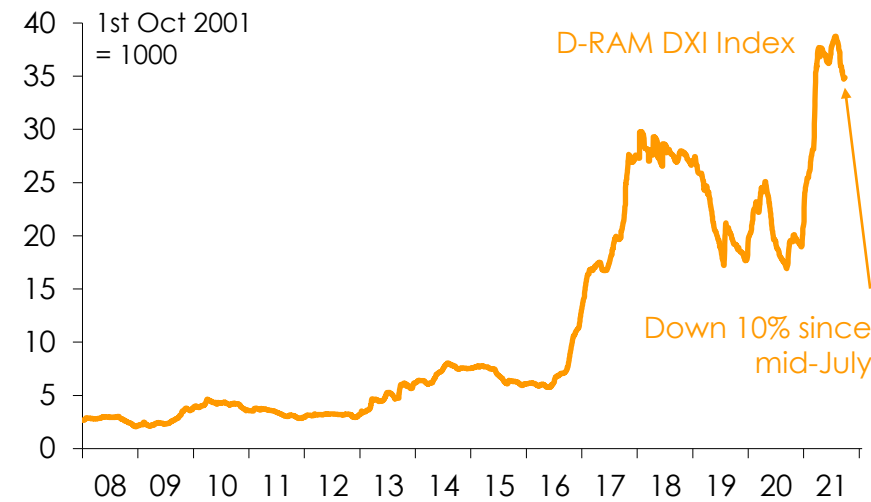
Philly Fed survey – prices paid



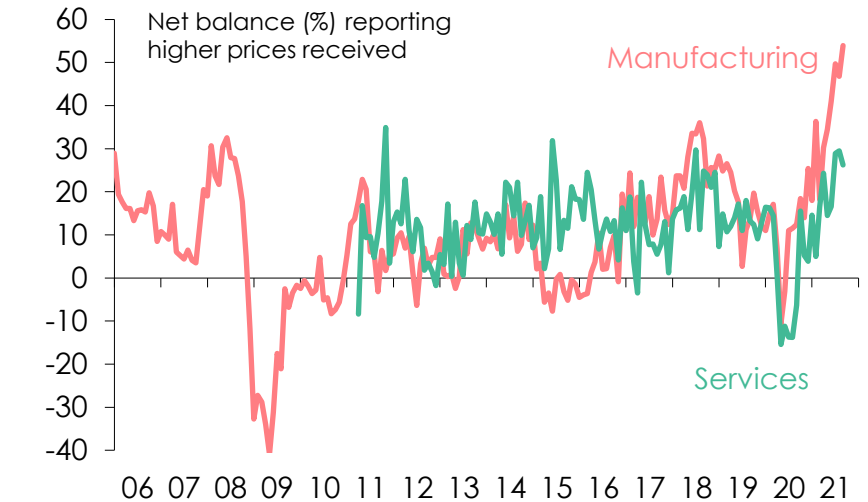
'Soft' commodity prices



Semiconductor prices



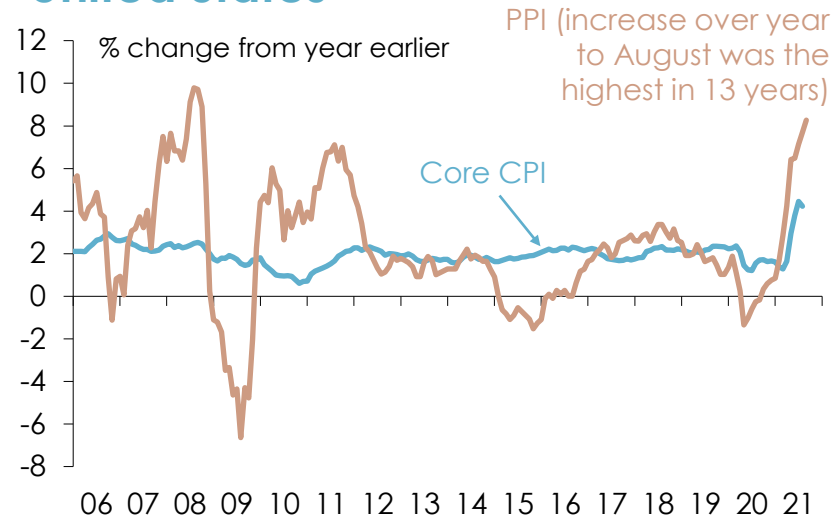
Philly Fed survey – prices received



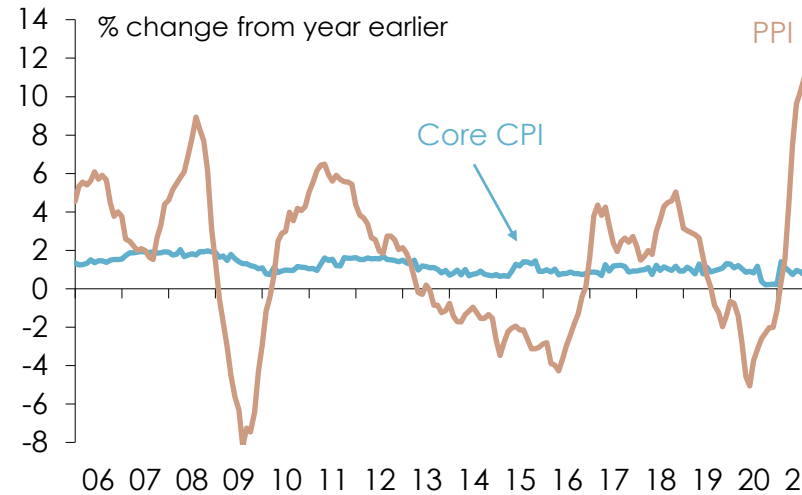
Sources: [International Monetary Fund](#); [Drewry Supply Chain Advisors](#); Refinitiv Datastream; [Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia](#); [Return to "What's New"](#).

Producer prices are surging in all major economies: but only in the US and (to a lesser extent) the UK is this feeding into core CPI inflation

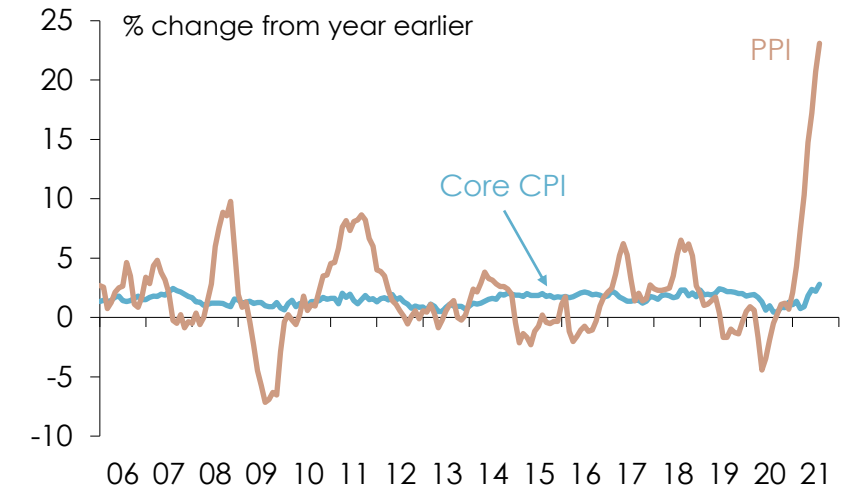
United States



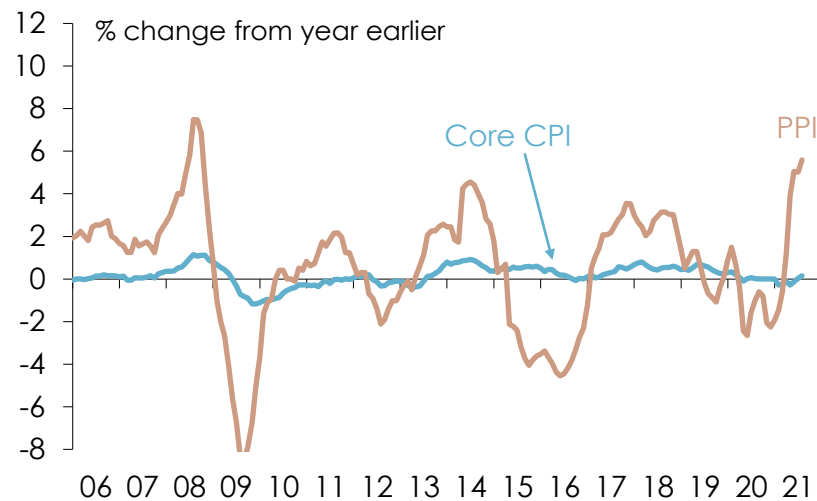
Euro area



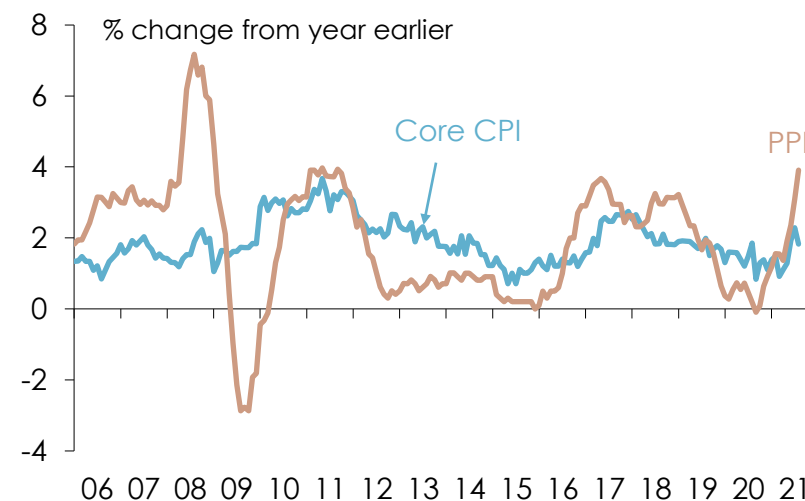
Canada



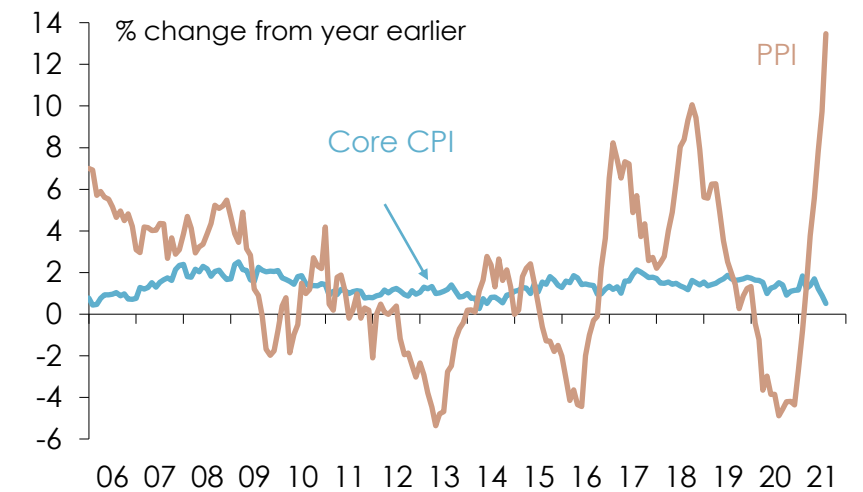
Japan



United Kingdom

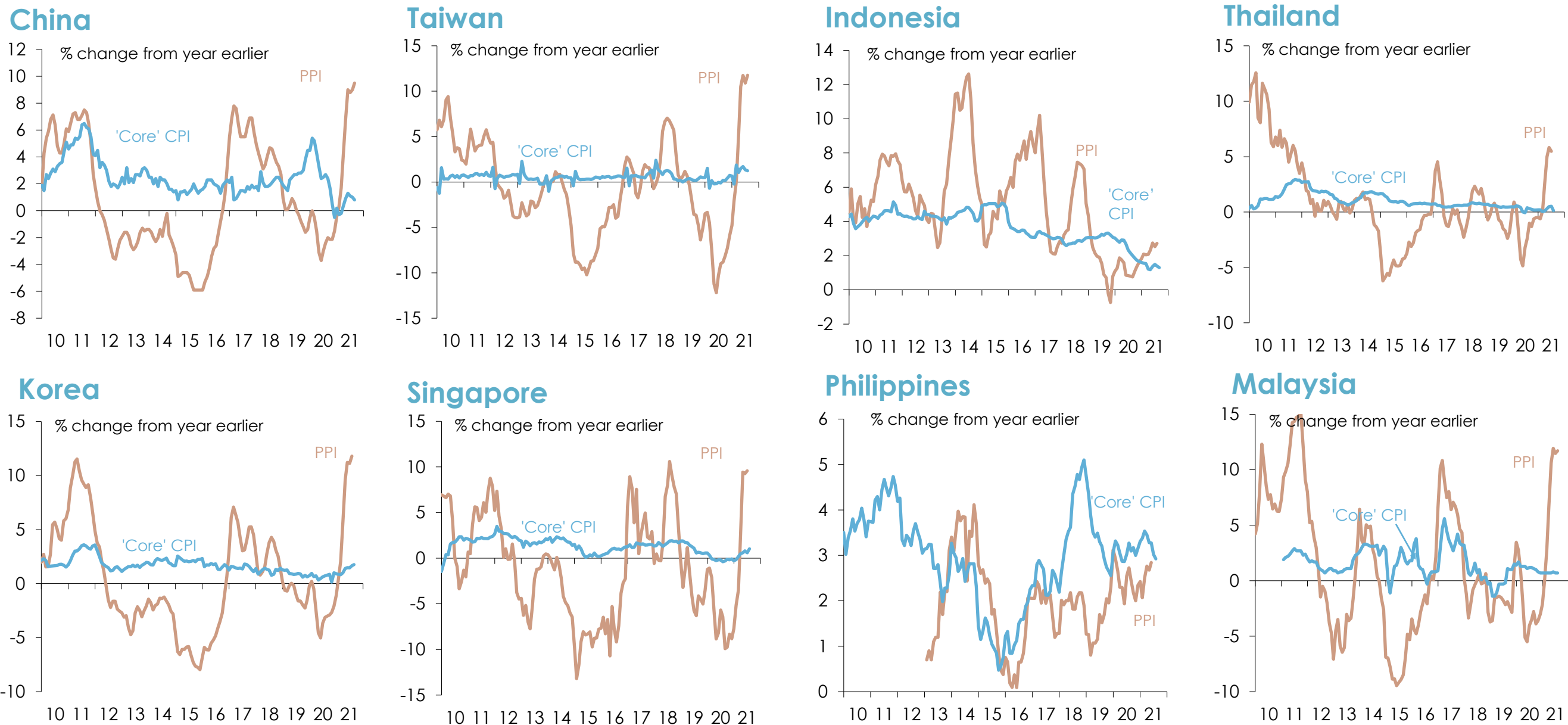


Sweden



For a more detailed analysis of recent US inflation data see [slides 73-77](#). Sources: [US Bureau of Labor Statistics](#); [Statistics Bureau of Japan](#); [Eurostat](#); [UK Office for National Statistics](#); [Statistics Canada](#); [China National Bureau of Statistics](#); [Statistics Sweden](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

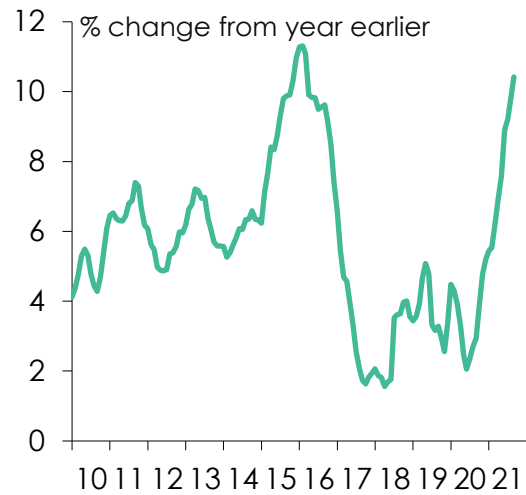
There's been very little pass-through of higher producer prices into 'core' consumer price inflation in Asia



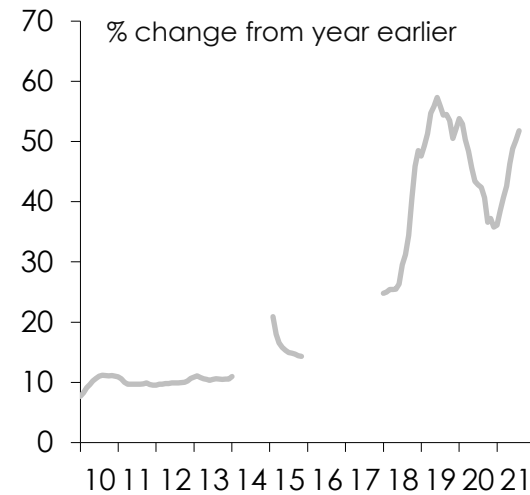
Note: 'Core' CPIs measure different things in different Asian economies – see footnotes to [slide 58](#). Sources: [China National Bureau of Statistics](#); [Statistics Korea](#); [Bank of Korea](#); [Taiwan Statistical Bureau](#); [Singstat](#); [Monetary Authority of Singapore](#); [Statistics Indonesia](#); [Philippine Statistics Authority](#); [Thailand Bureau of Trade and Economic Indices](#); [Department of Statistics Malaysia](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

Consumer price inflation is rising in many other 'emerging' markets

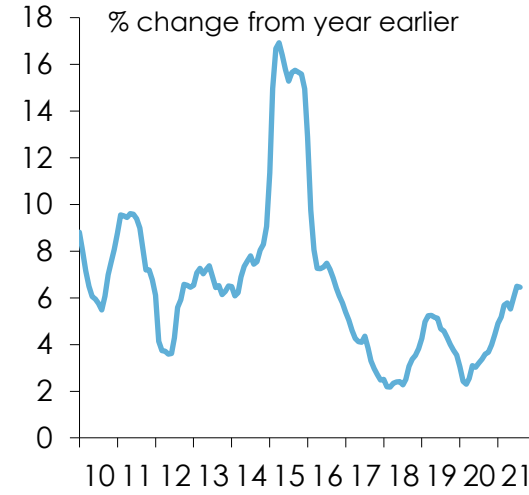
Brazil



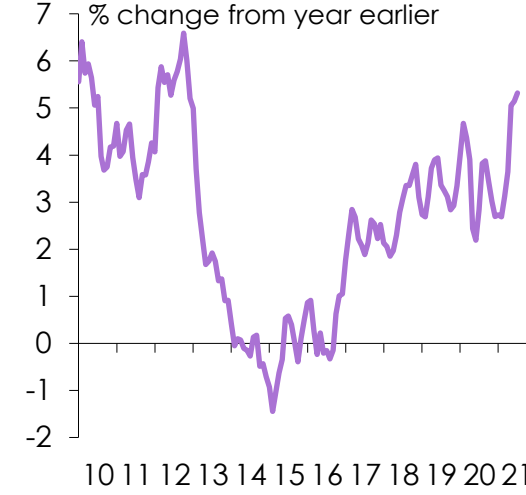
Argentina



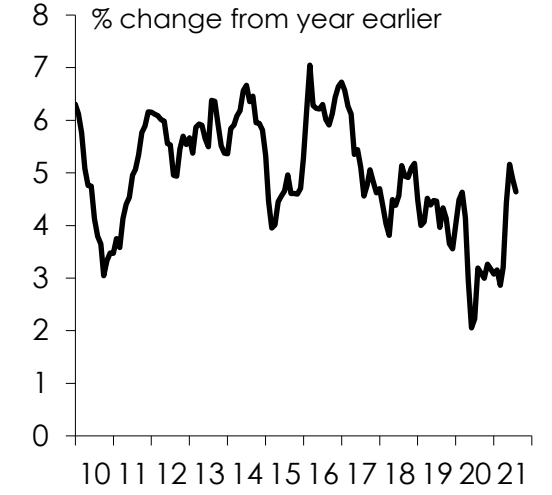
Russia



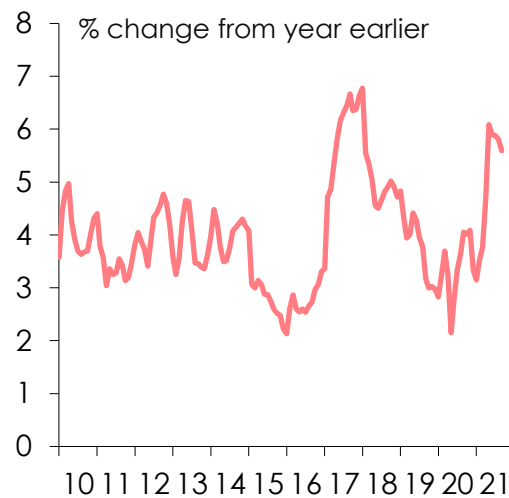
Hungary



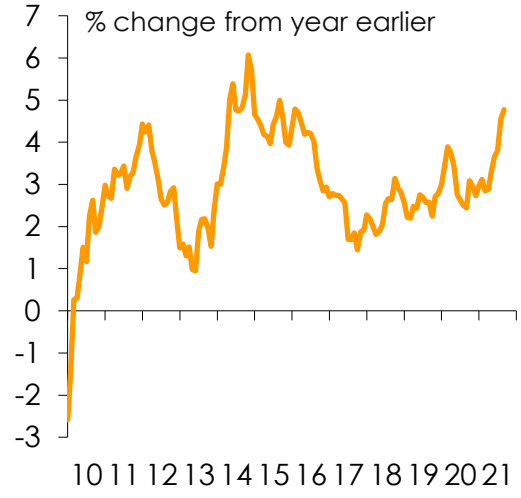
South Africa



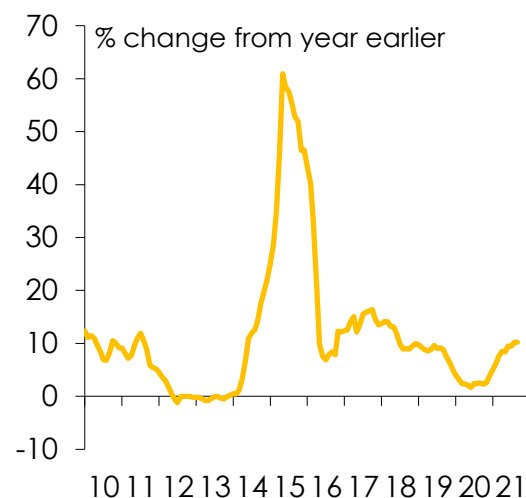
Mexico



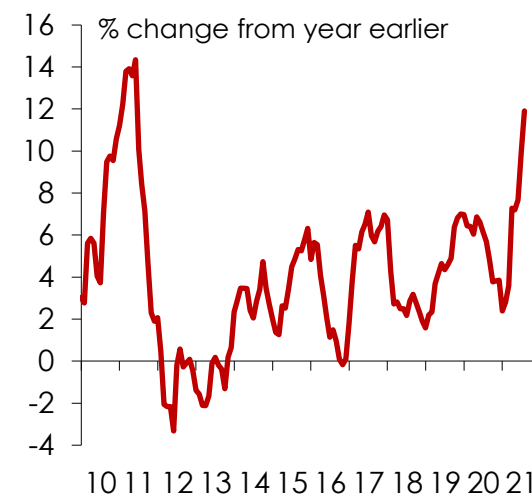
Chile



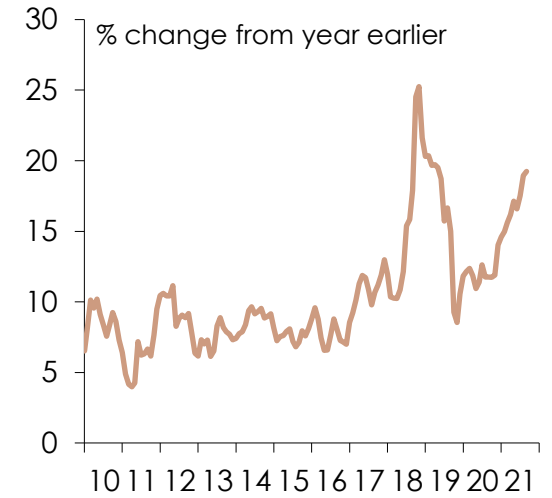
Ukraine



Georgia



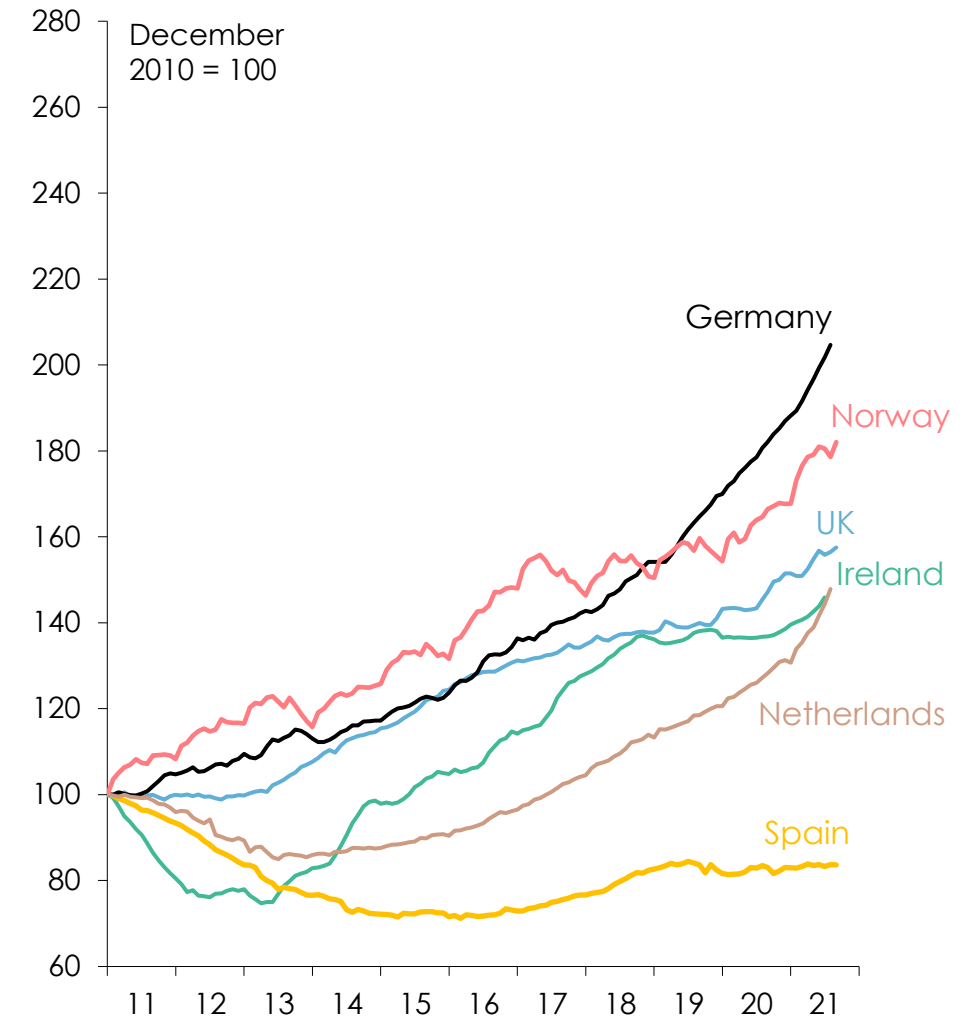
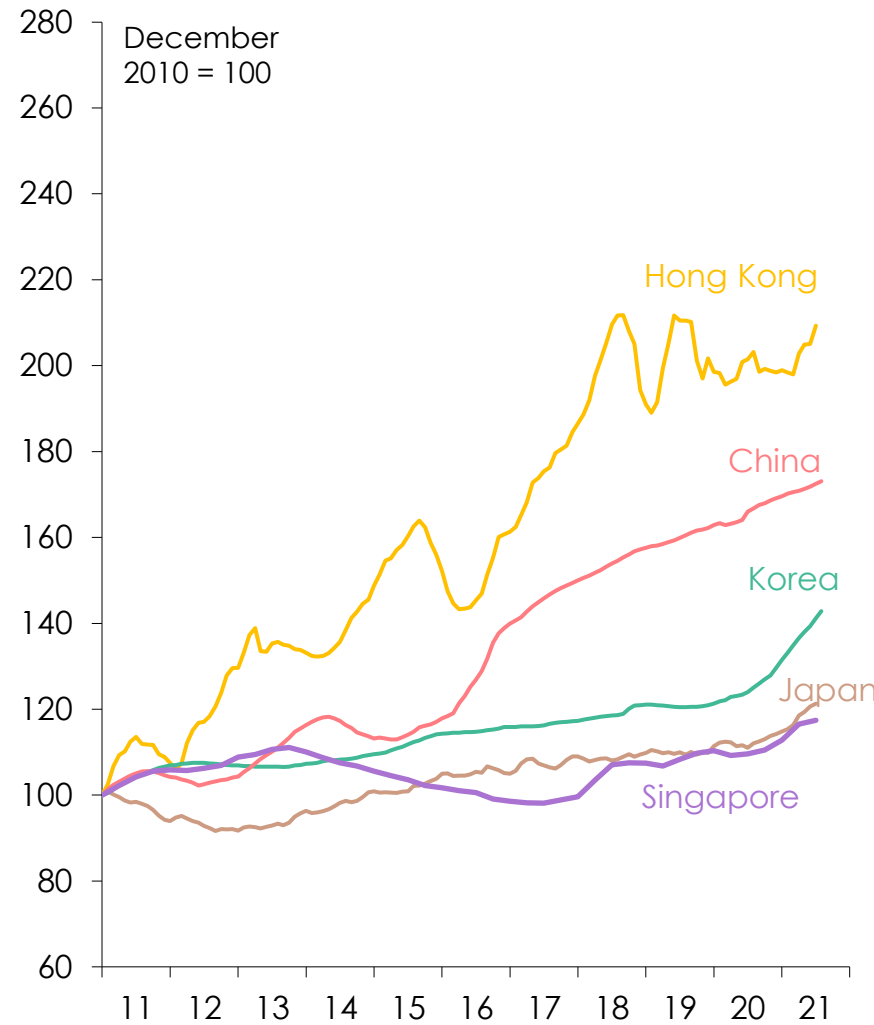
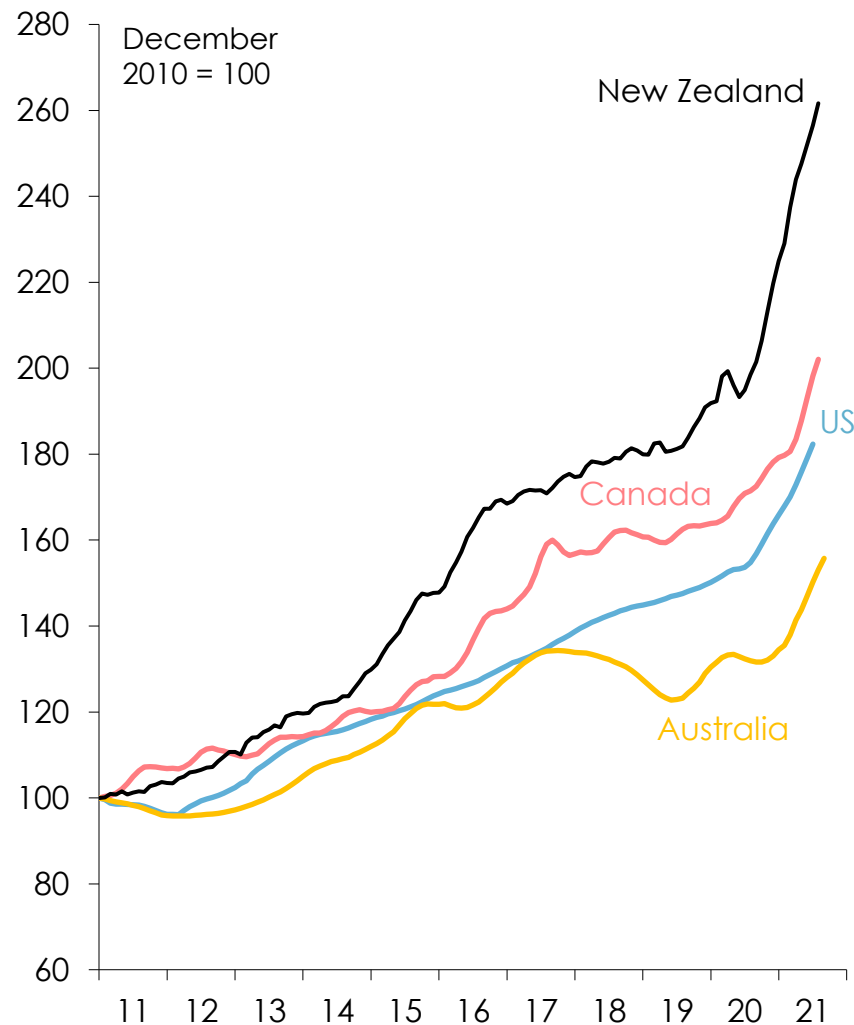
Turkey



Sources: [Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística](#); [Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía](#) (Mexico); [Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos](#) (Argentina); [Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas](#) (Chile); [Rosstat](#); [Ukrstat](#); [Központi Statisztikai Hivatal](#) (Hungary); [Sak'art'velos Statistiki Erovnuli Samsakhuri](#) (Georgia); [Statistics South Africa](#); [Turkstat](#).
[Return to "What's New"](#).

Residential property prices have been remarkably resilient in most countries thanks to record-low interest rates and ample supply of credit

House price indices



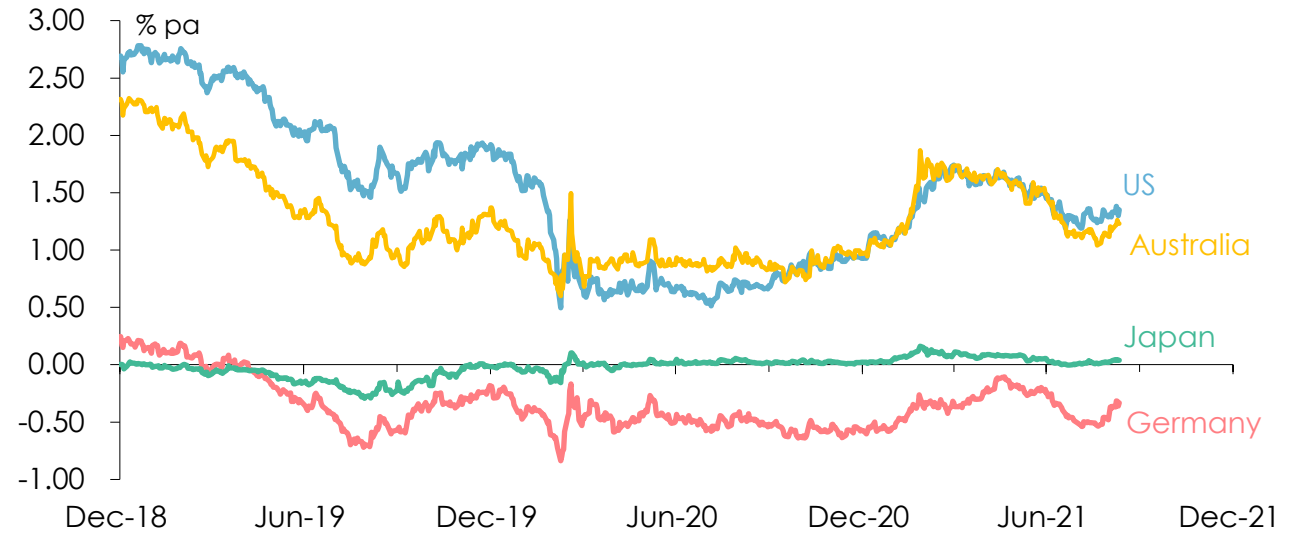
Note: House price indices shown in these charts are those published by [S&P-CoreLogic Case Shiller national](#) (United States); [Teranet-National Bank](#) (Canada); [CoreLogic](#) (Australia); [Real Estate Institute of New Zealand](#); [China Index Academy](#); [Japan Real Estate Institute](#) (Tokyo condominiums); [Kookmin Bank house price index](#) (Korea); [Centaline Centa-City Index](#) (Hong Kong); [Urban Redevelopment Authority](#) (Singapore); [Europace hauspreisindex](#) (Germany); [Halifax house price index](#) (UK); [Central Statistics Office RPPi](#) (Ireland); [Fotocasa real estate index](#) (Spain); [Statistics Netherlands](#); [Eiendom Norge](#) (Norway). These indices have been chosen for their timeliness and widespread recognition: they do not necessarily all measure the same thing in the same way. For more comprehensive residential property price data see the quarterly database maintained by the [Bank for International Settlements](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

Stocks fell this week, on concern that economic growth may have peaked, but bond yields and the US\$ rose after Friday's US PPI data

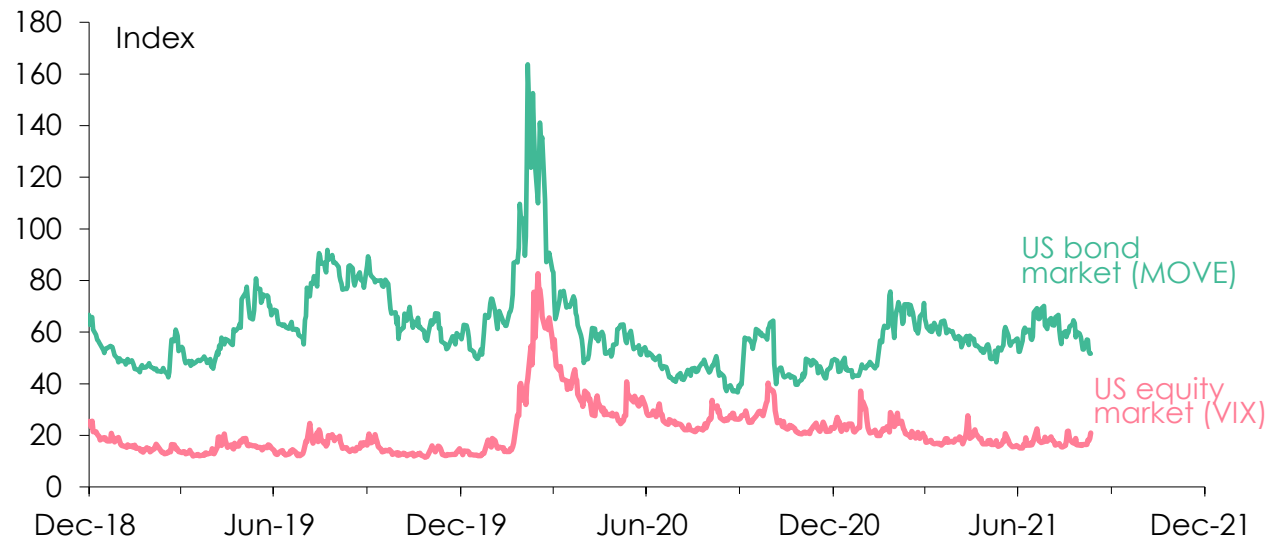
Stock markets



10-year bond yields



Measures of market volatility



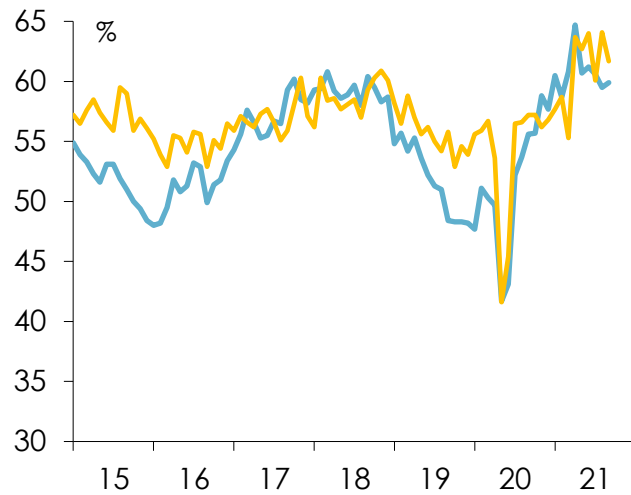
US dollar vs euro and yen



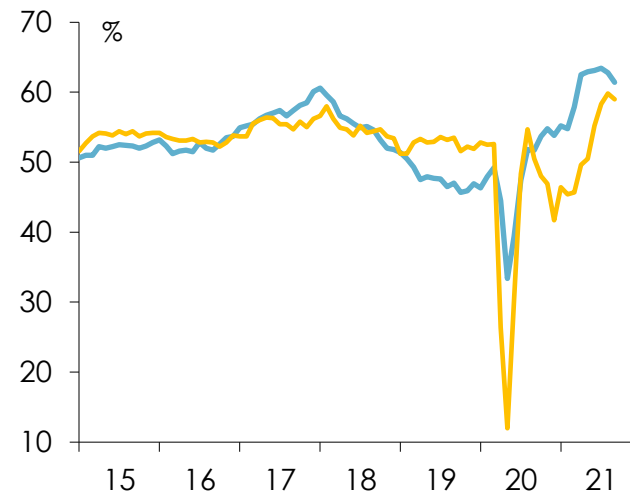
Source: Refinitiv Datastream. Data up to 10th September. [Return to "What's New"](#).

August PMIs show some softening in manufacturing in most economies but still at above-average levels – and a noticeable slowing in China

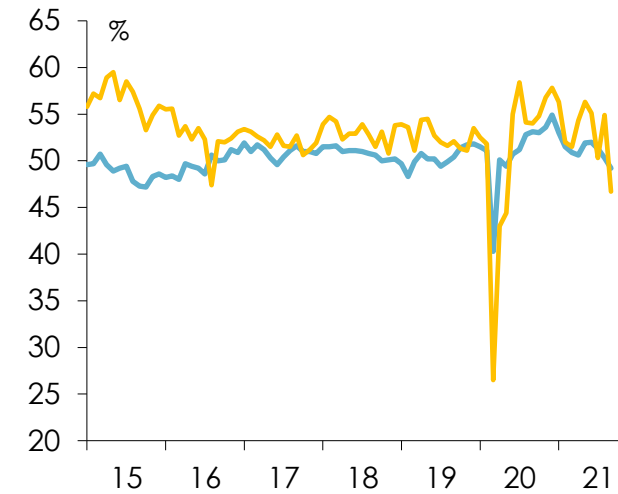
US



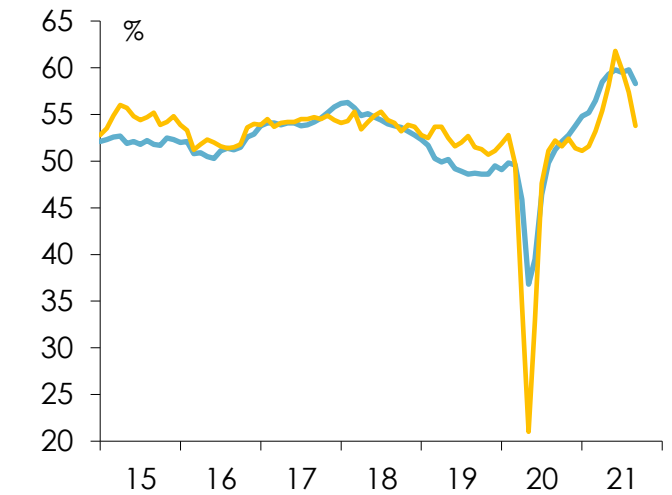
Euro area



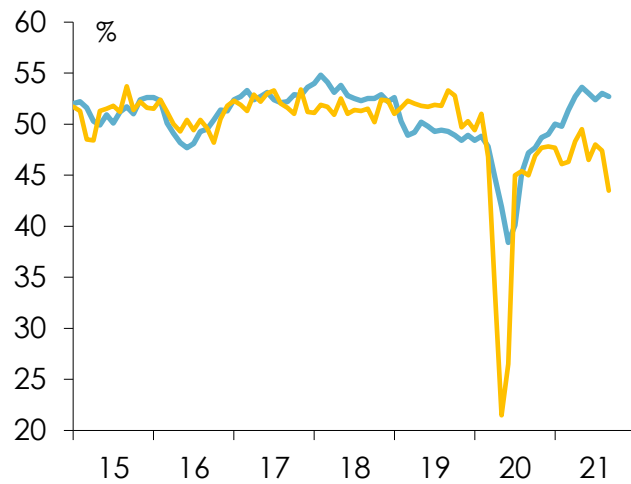
China



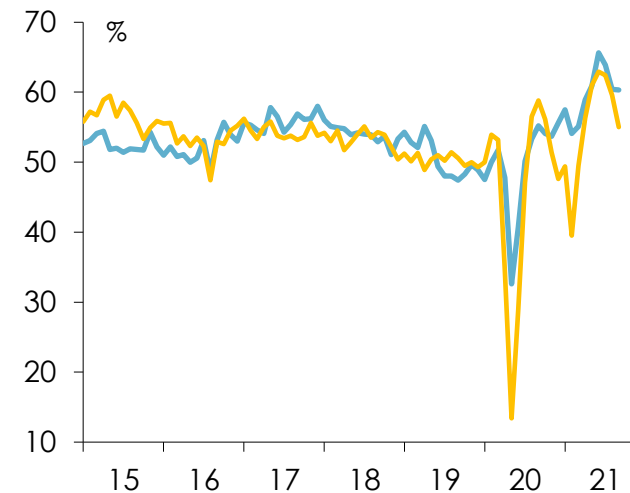
Developed markets



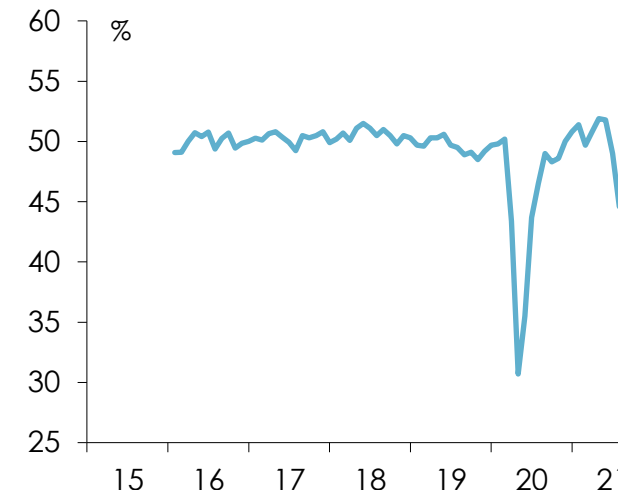
Japan



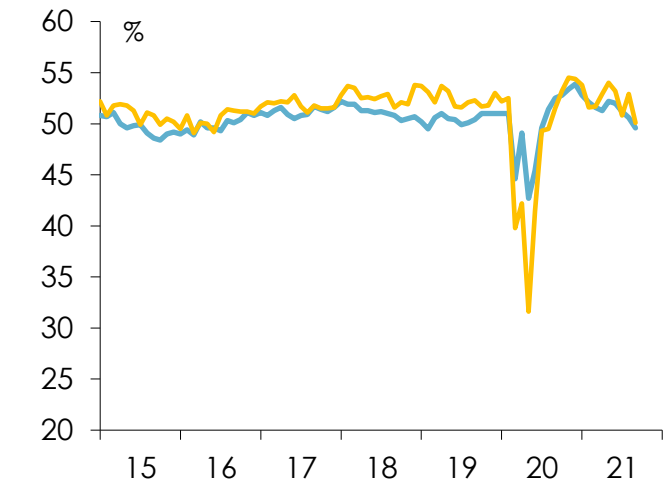
UK



ASEAN



Emerging markets



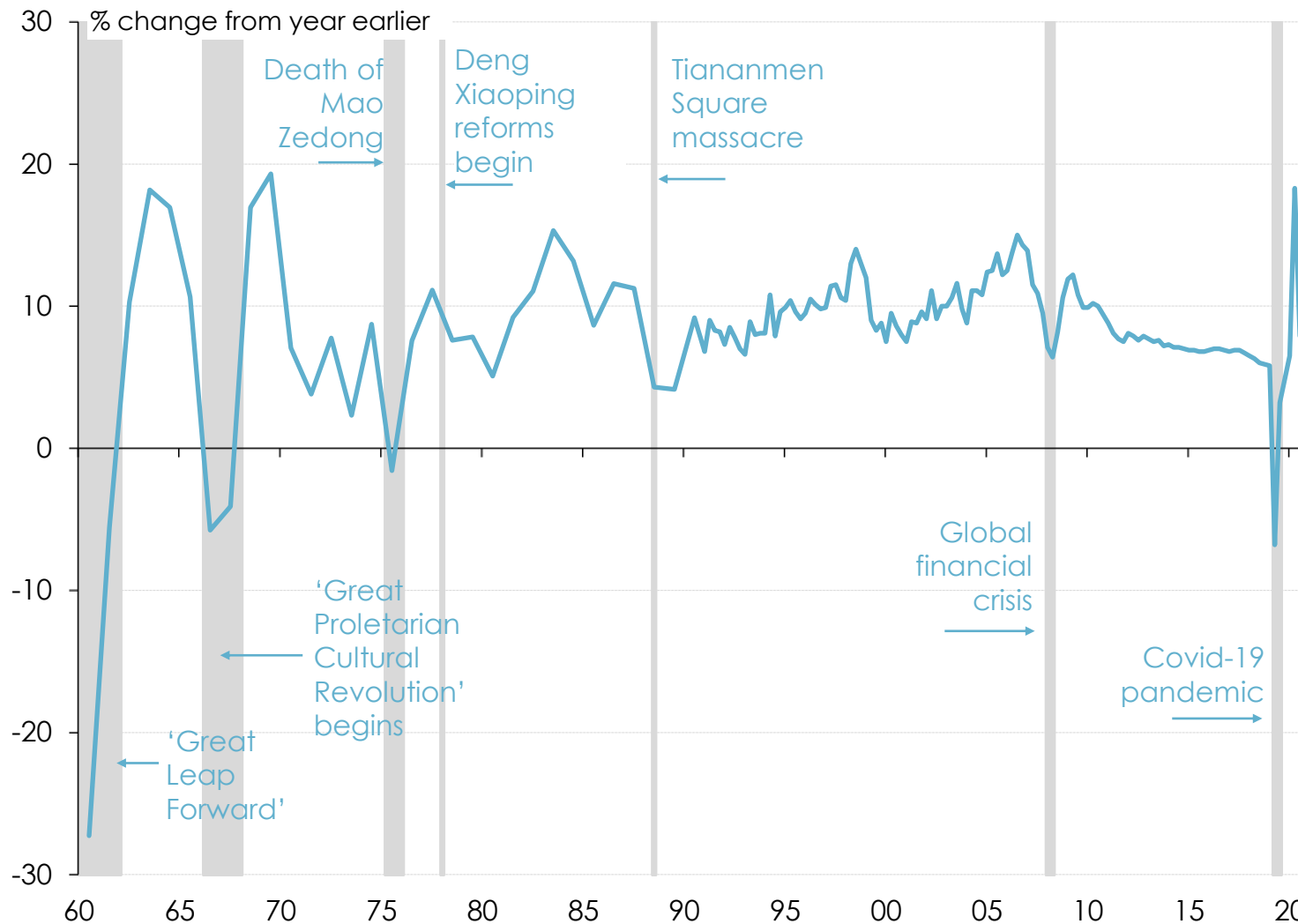
— Manufacturing

— Services

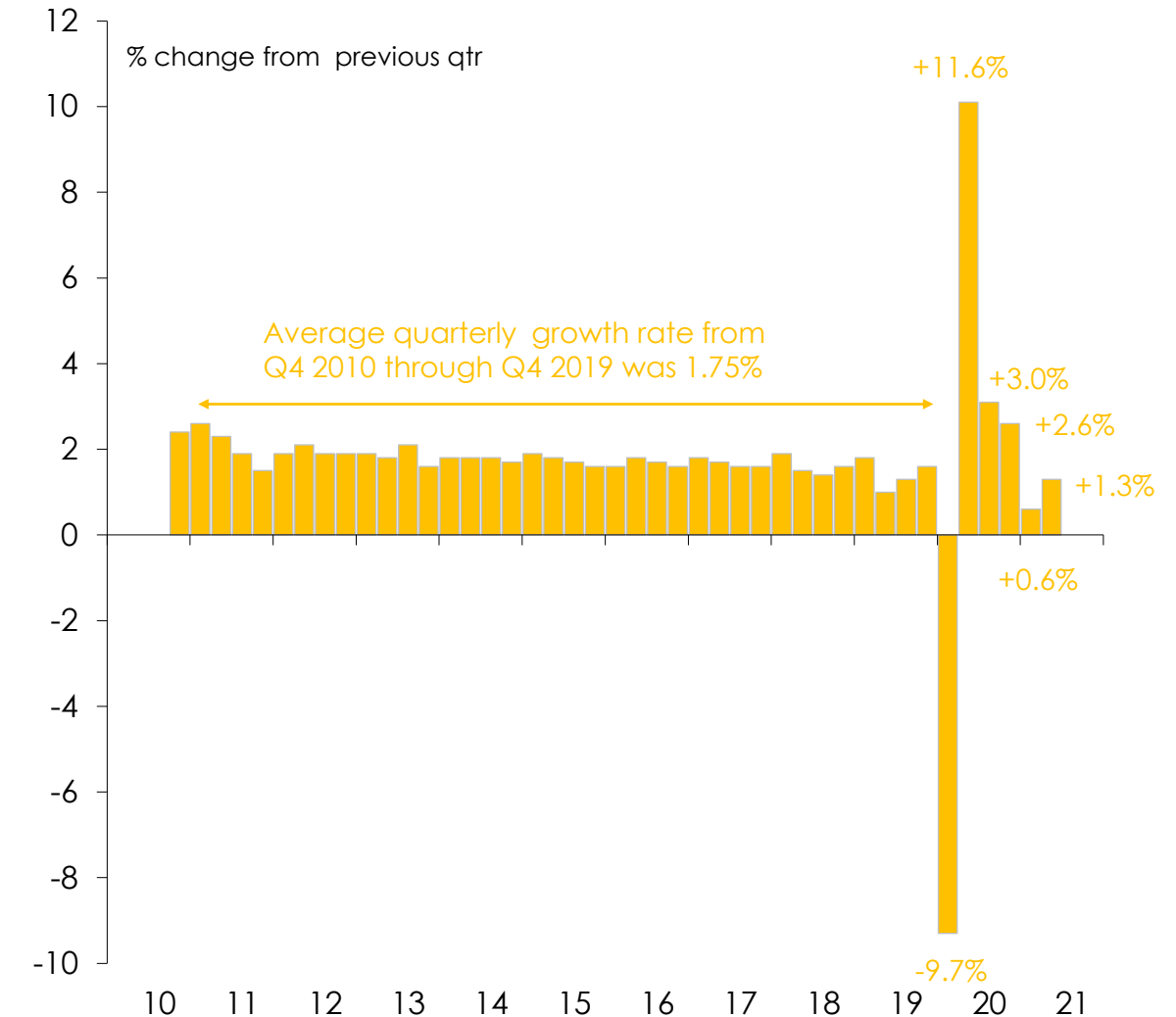
Note: Purchasing Managers' Indexes (PMIs) are derived from surveys of senior executives, who are asked to report whether various dimensions of business activity recorded an increase, decrease or no change compared with the previous month. A reading of 50 indicates an overall increase cf. the previous month, and a reading of less than 50 indicates a decrease. Latest data for Japan, the euro area and UK are 'flash' August; all others are July. See also PMIs for other Asia-Pacific economies on [slide 57](#). Sources: [US Institute for Supply Management](#); [IHS Markit](#); JP Morgan; [Caixin](#); Refinitiv Datastream. [Return to "What's New"](#).

China's real GDP grew by 1.3% in Q2, double the Q1 growth rate but below the pre-pandemic pace

Real GDP growth, from year earlier, 1961-2020



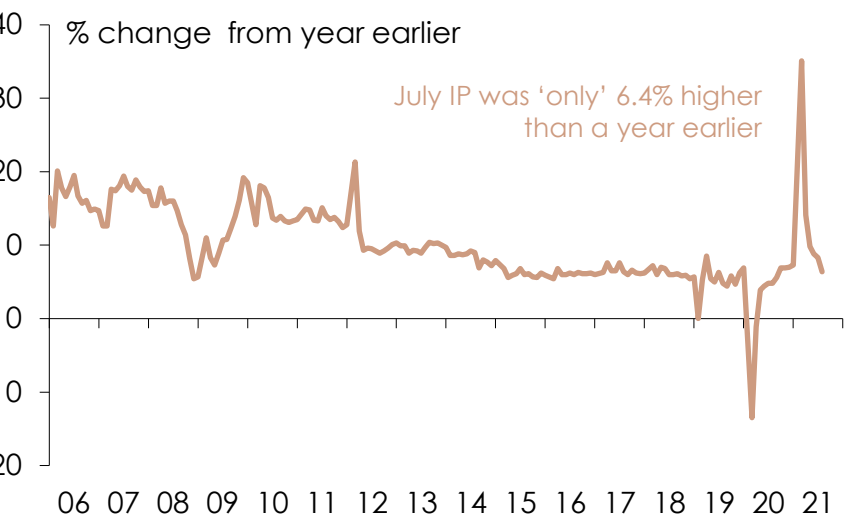
Quarterly real GDP growth, 2010-2020



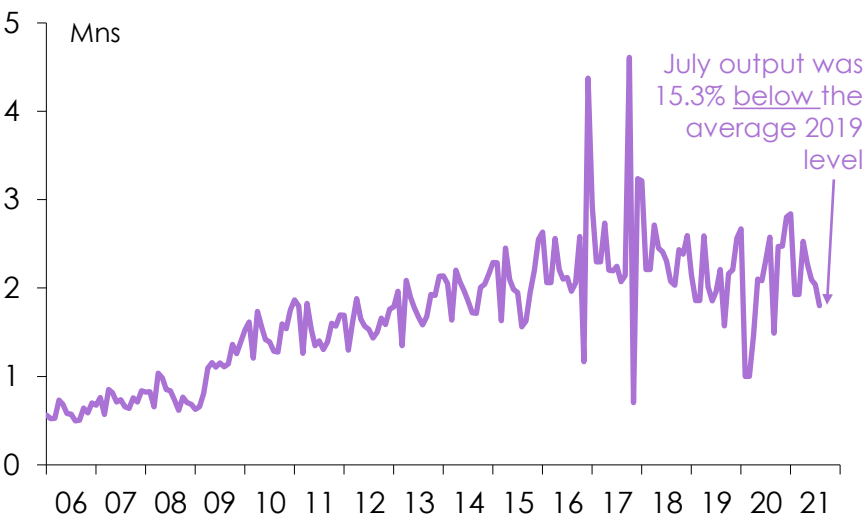
Note: In the left-hand chart, GDP growth rates are annual averages up to the December quarter of 1991, and then quarter-on-corresponding-quarter-of- previous-year thereafter. Source: [China National Bureau of Statistics](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

China's exports reached a record high in August and its trade surplus widened, but domestic growth appears to be slowing

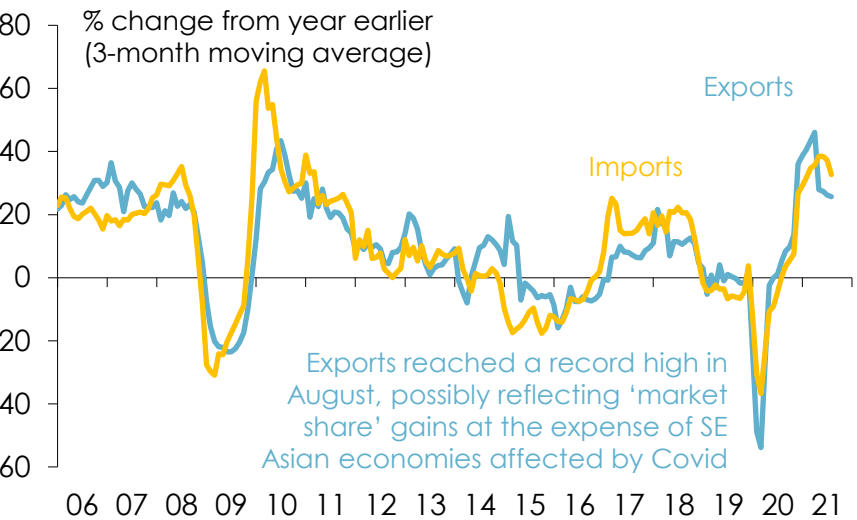
Industrial production



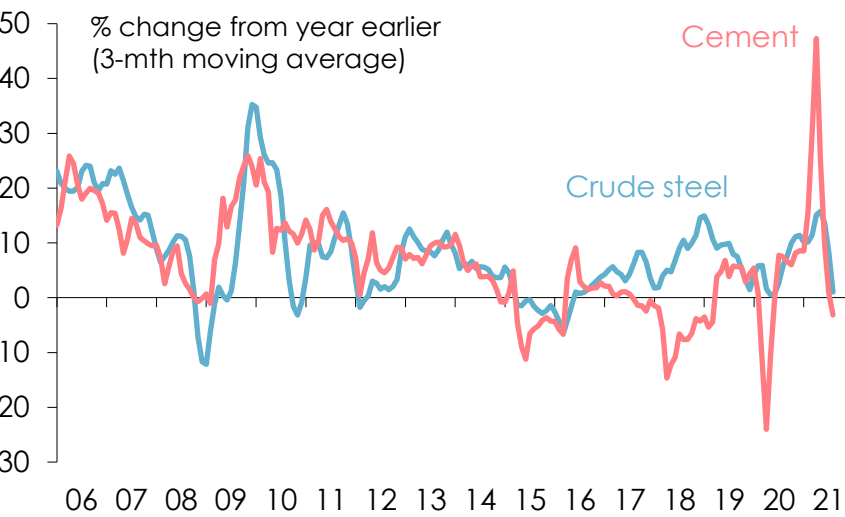
Motor vehicle production



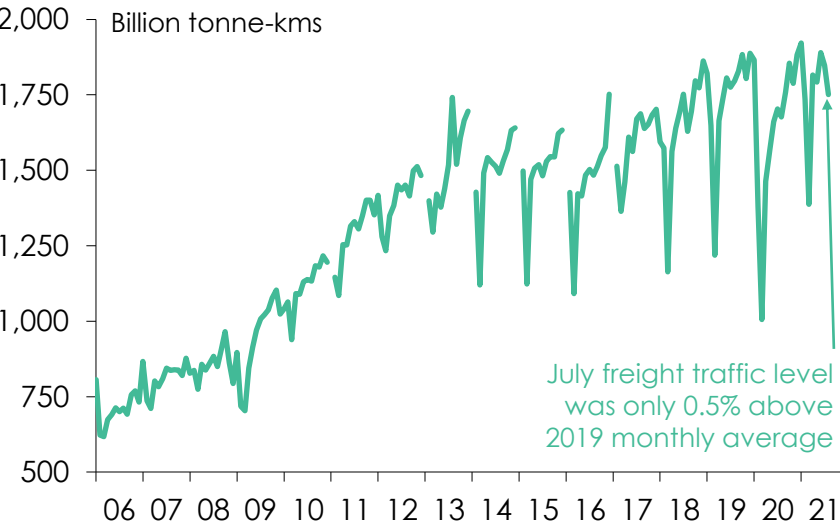
Merchandise trade



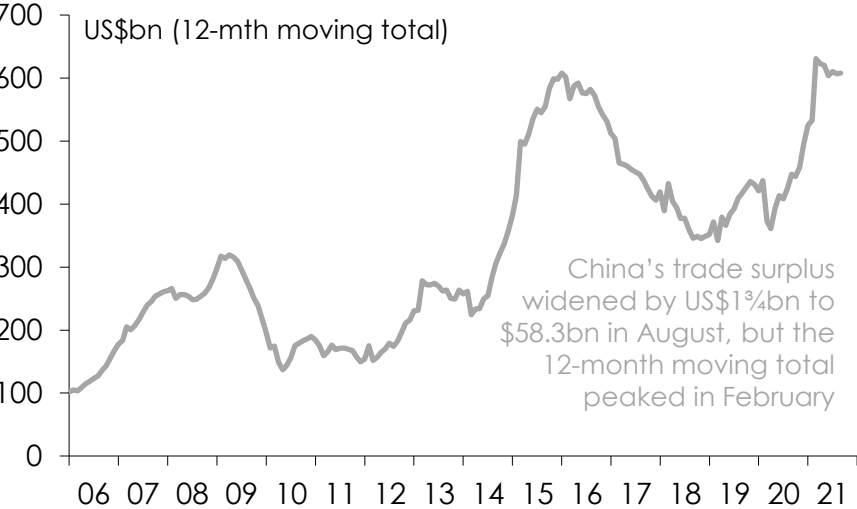
Steel and cement production



Freight traffic volumes



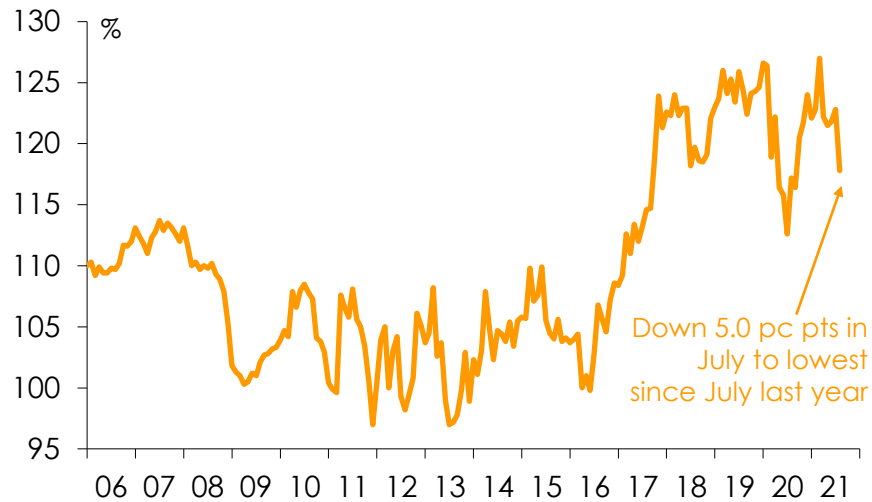
Merchandise trade balance



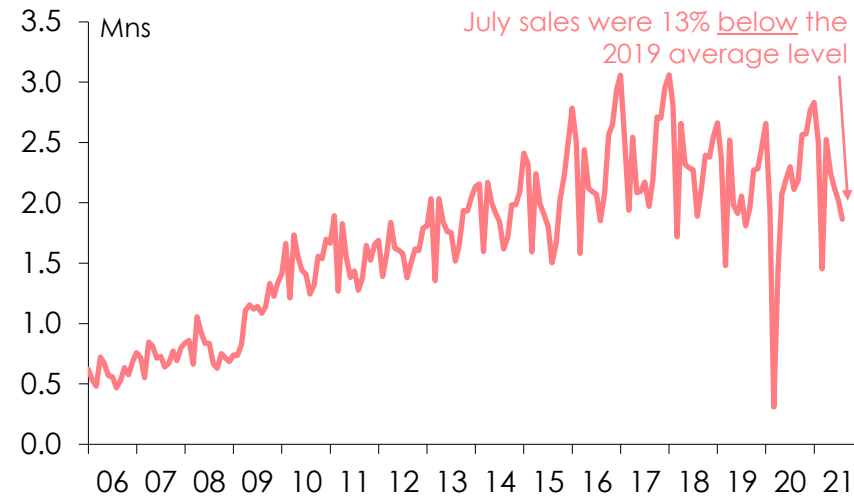
Note: Latest data are for July, except for merchandise trade, which are for August. Sources: [China National Bureau of Statistics](#); [China Association of Automobile Manufacturers](#); [China General Administration of Customs](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

Most measures of consumer spending and of property market activity also continued to soften through July

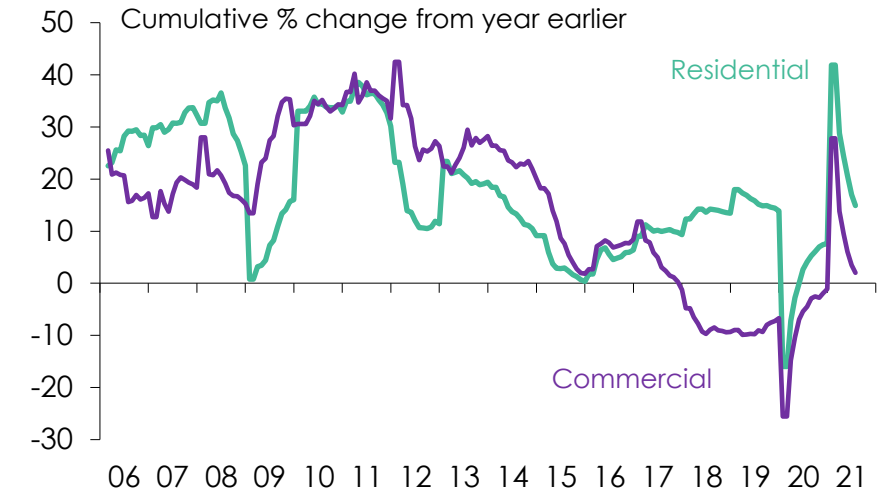
Consumer sentiment



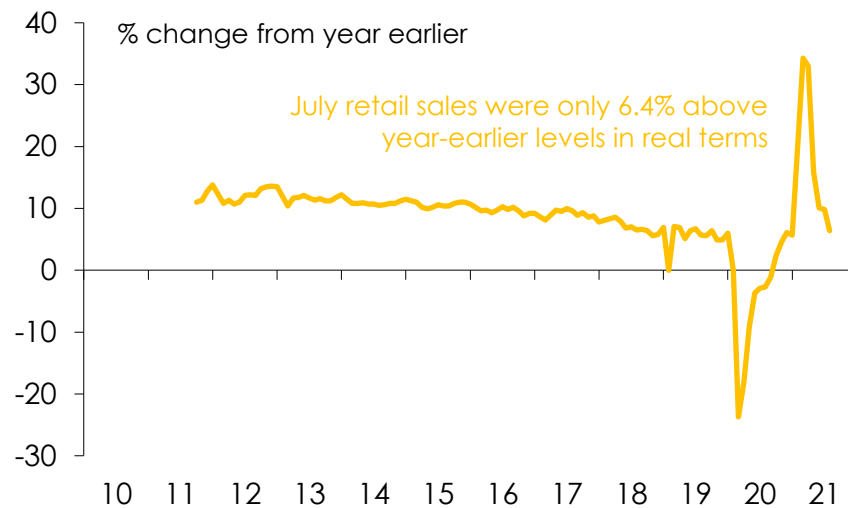
Motor vehicle sales



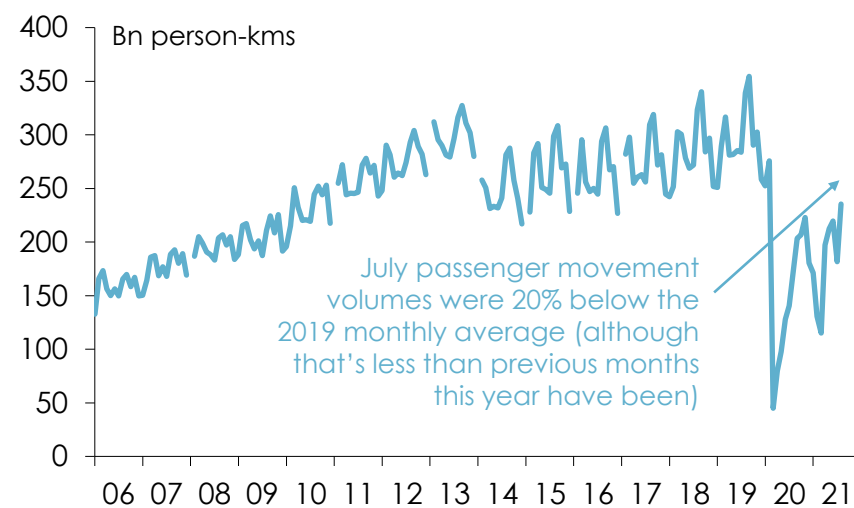
Real estate investment



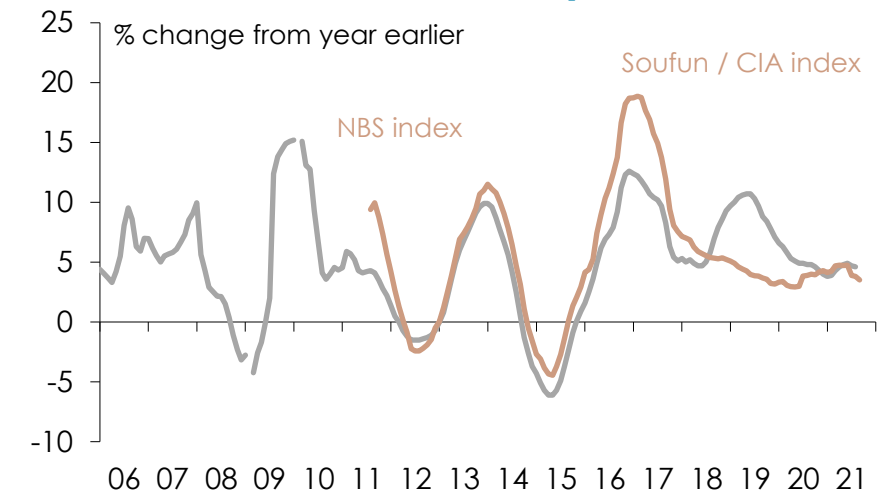
Volume of retail sales



Passenger traffic volumes



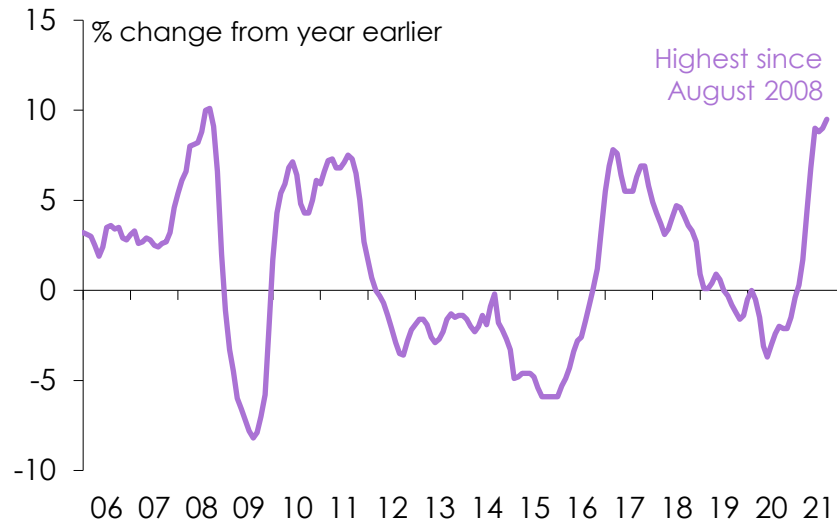
Residential real estate prices



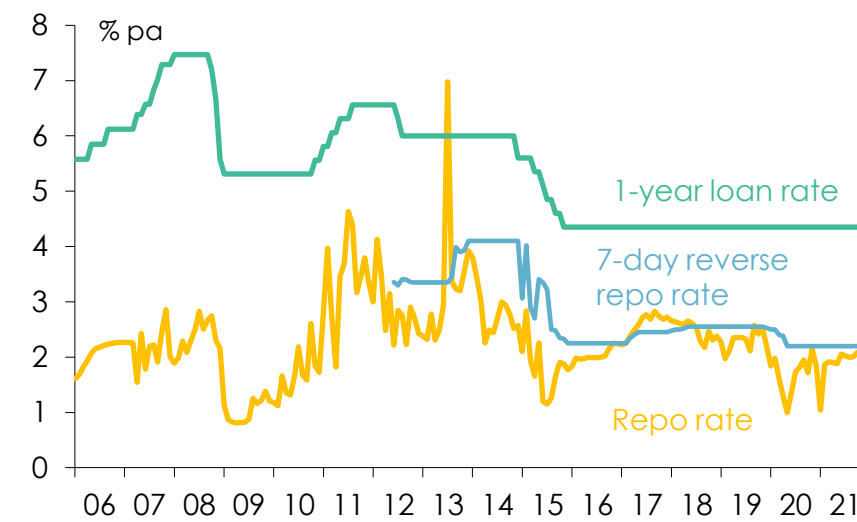
Sources: [China National Bureau of Statistics](#); [China Association of Automobile Manufacturers](#); [China Index Academy](#) (CIA). Latest data are for July.
[Return to "What's New"](#).

China's producer price inflation remained high in August, but consumer price inflation ebbed due to falling food prices – and credit slowed more

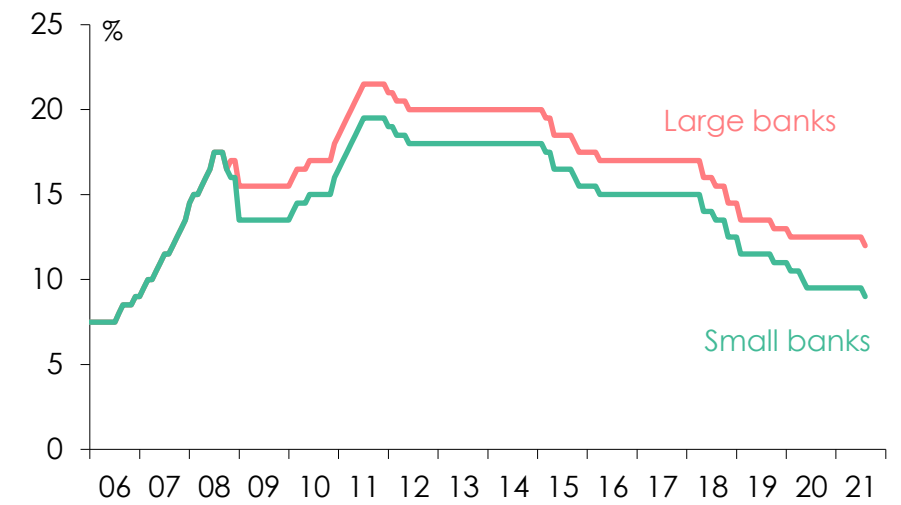
Producer prices



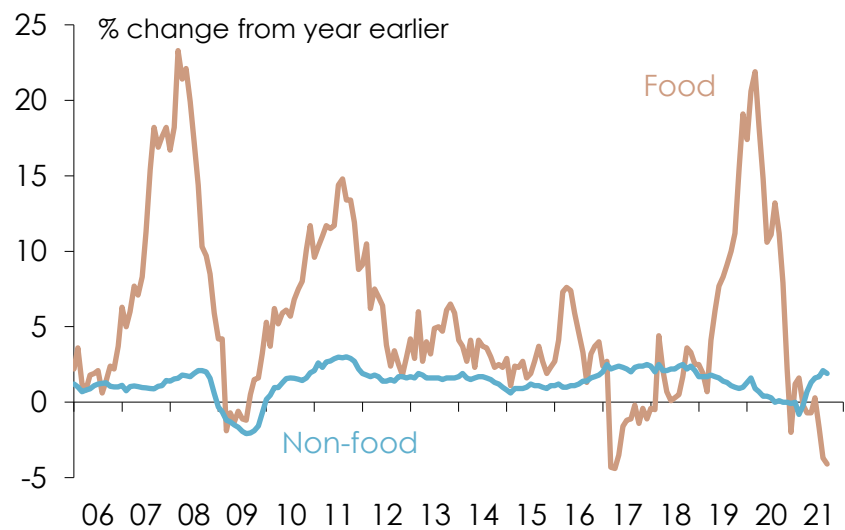
PBoC policy interest rates



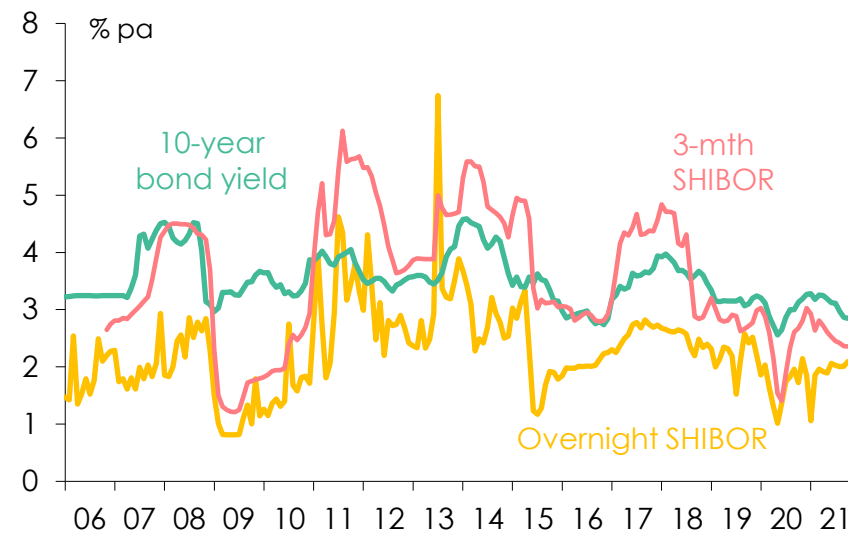
Bank reserve requirement ratios



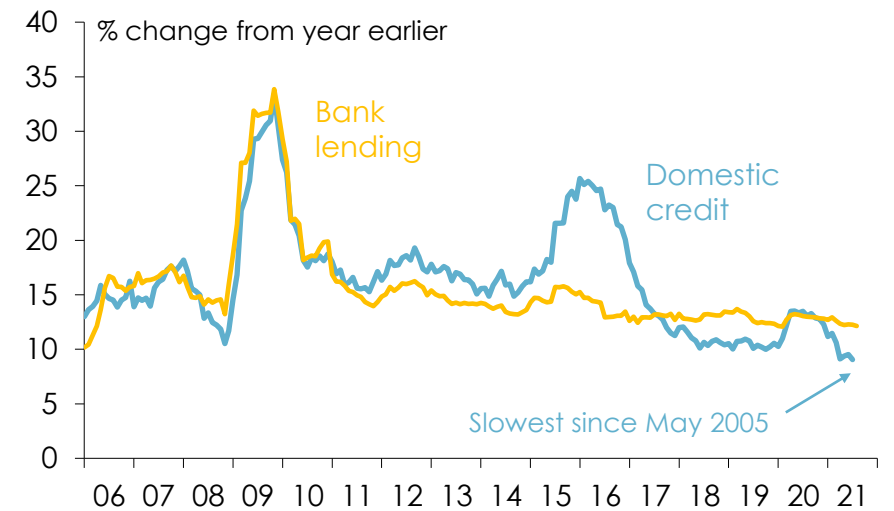
Consumer prices



Market interest rates



Credit growth

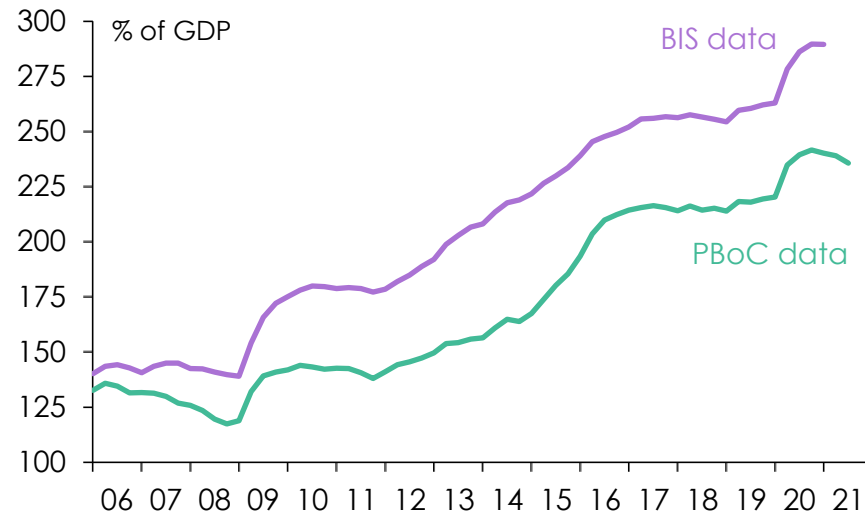


Note: 'SHIBOR' is the Shanghai Inter-Bank Offered Rate. Latest inflation and credit data are for August.

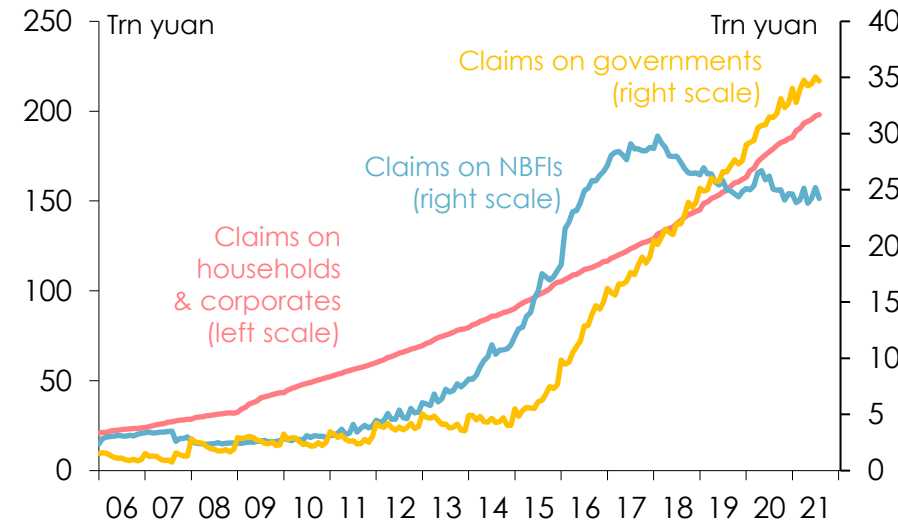
Sources: [China National Bureau of Statistics](#); Refinitiv Datastream; [People's Bank of China](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

The Chinese banking system's risk profile has increased significantly over the past decade – particularly on the liabilities side of its balance sheet

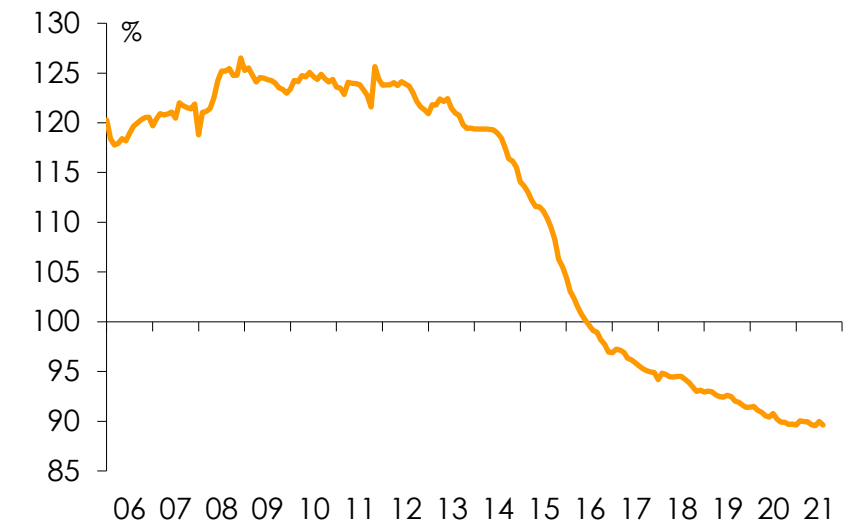
Credit outstanding as a pc of GDP



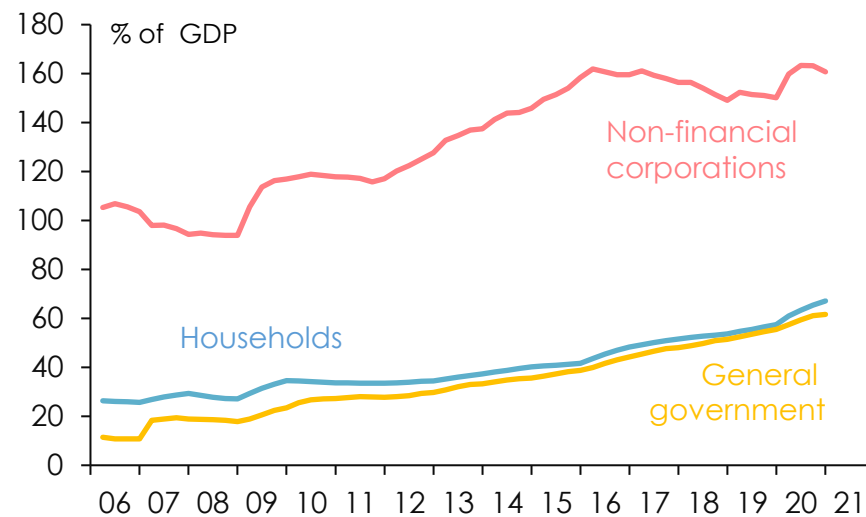
Banks' assets



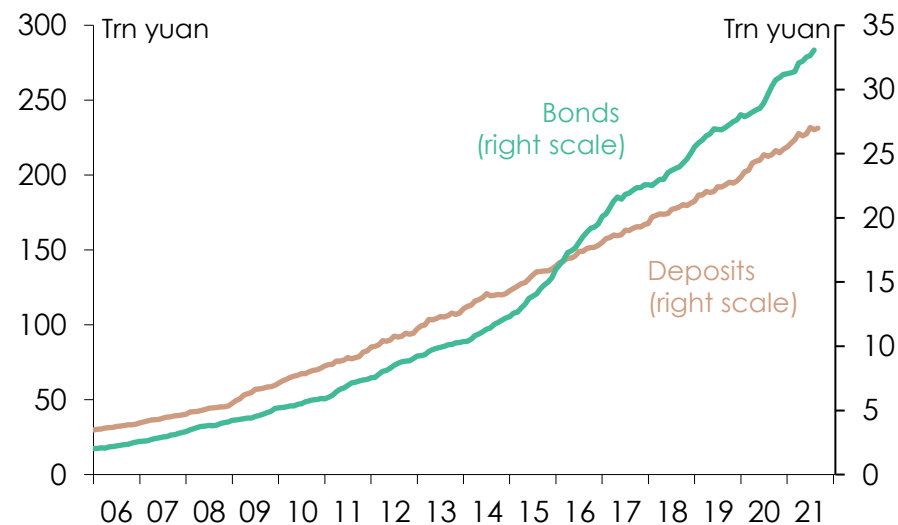
Banks' deposits-to-loans ratio



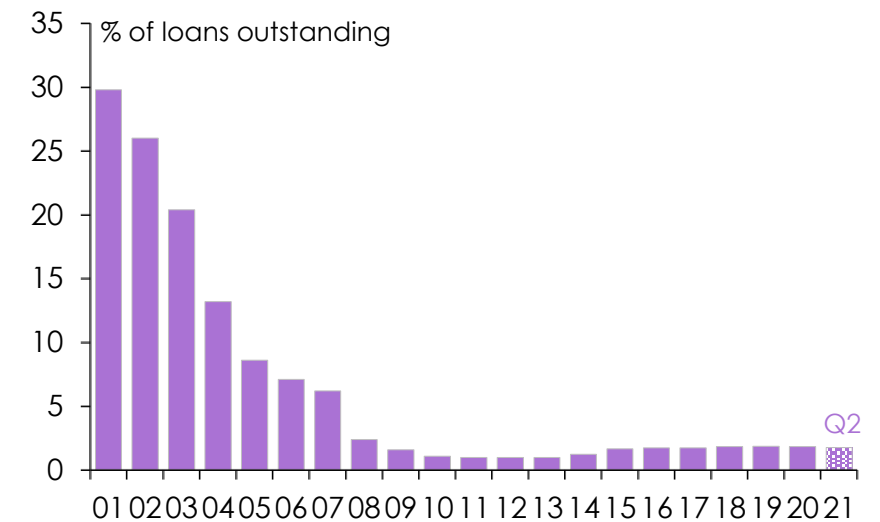
Credit outstanding by sector



Banks' liabilities

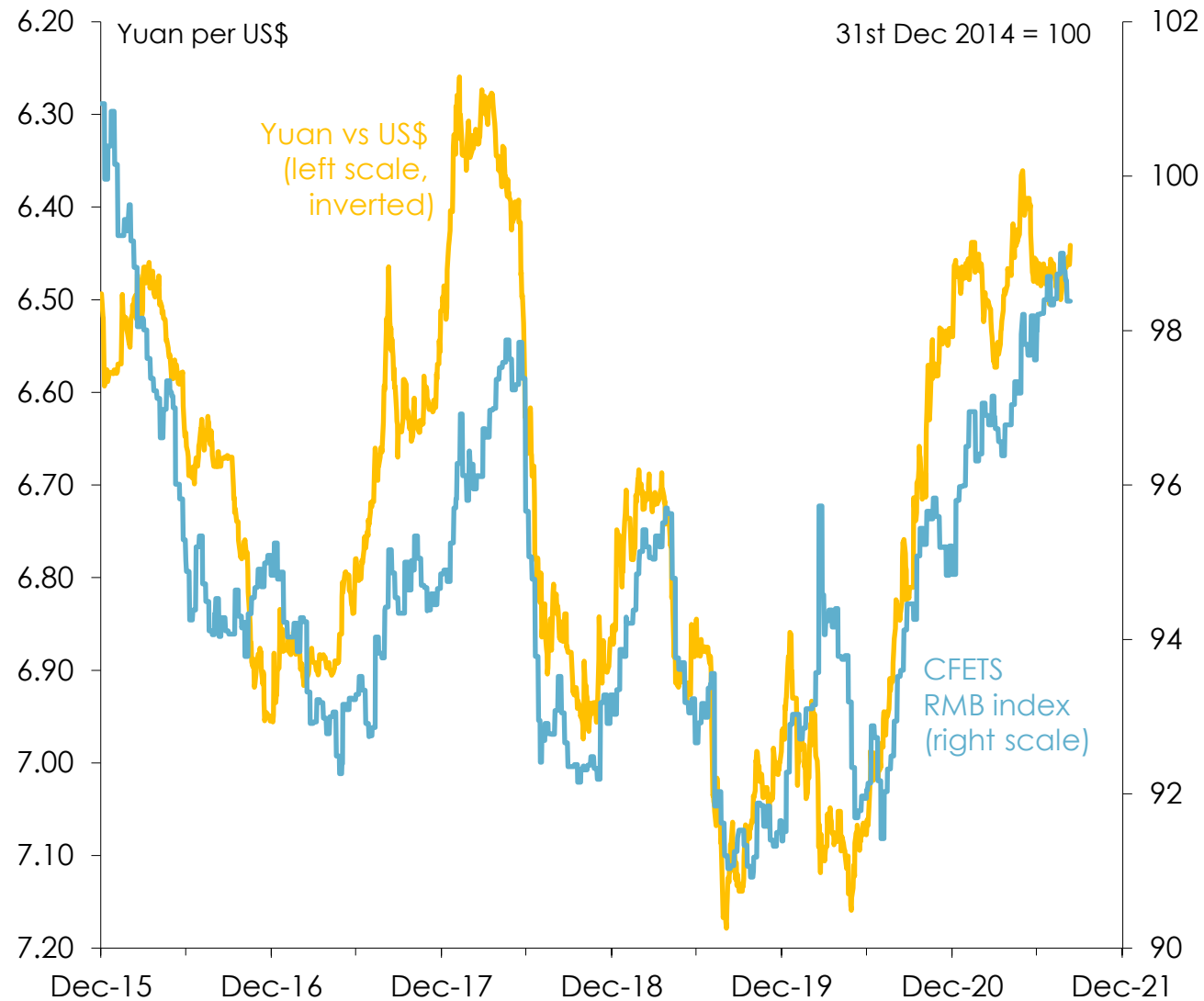


Banks NPLs – official estimates

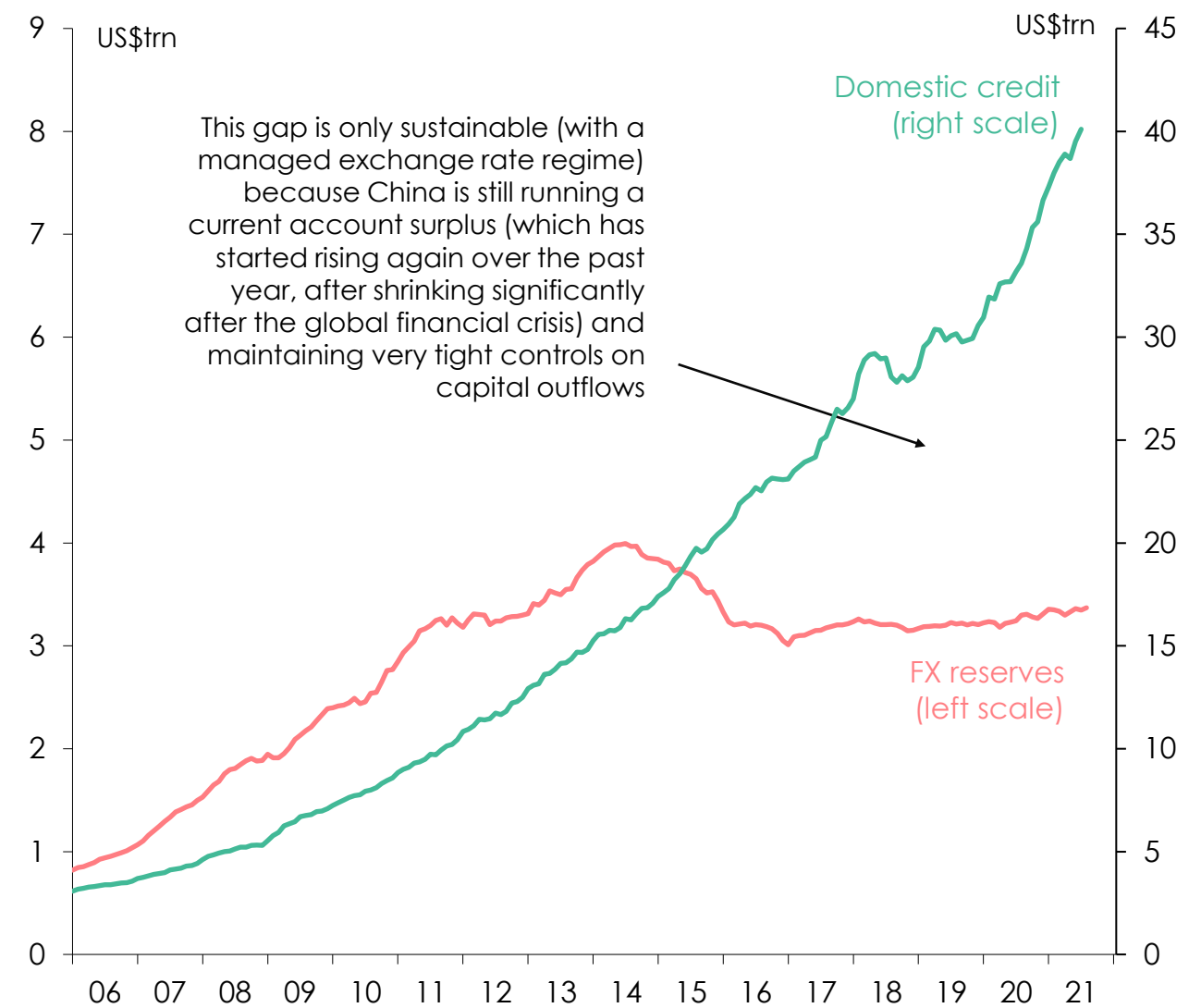


The yuan rose ¼% against the US dollar this week but fell a similar amount in trade-weighted terms

Chinese renminbi vs US\$ and trade-weighted index



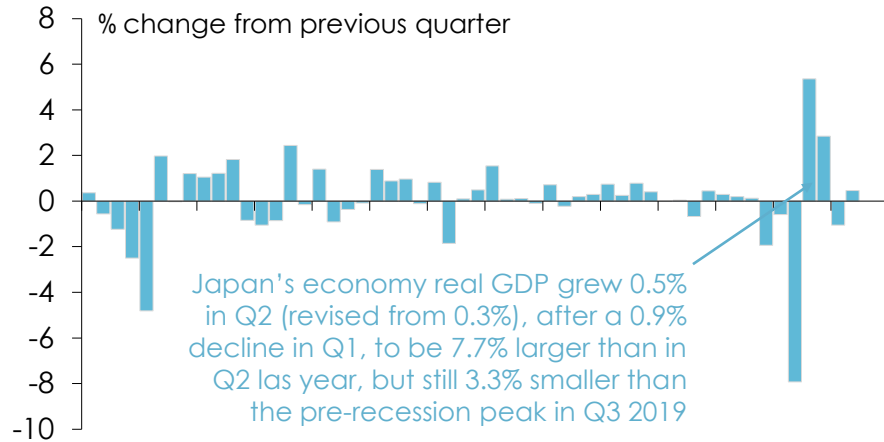
FX reserves and domestic credit



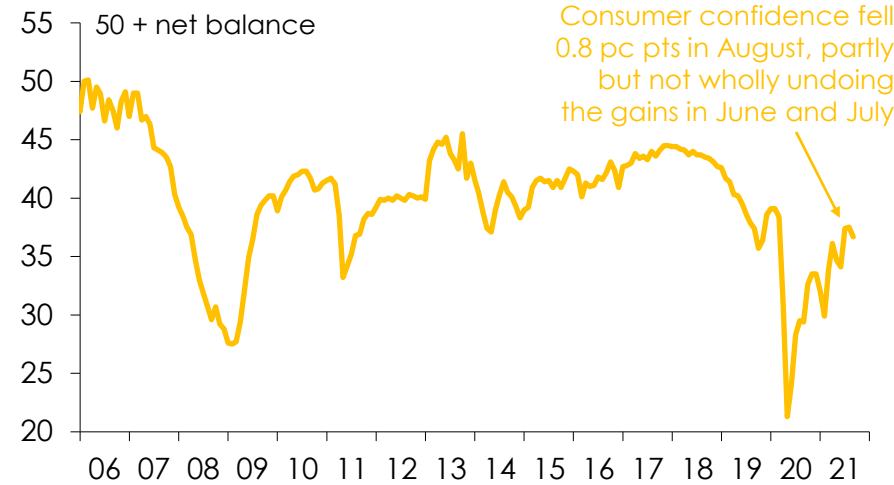
Sources: Refinitiv Datastream; China Foreign Exchange Trading System; People's Bank of China. Exchange rates up to 10th September; FX reserves are up to August and credit are up to July. [Return to "What's New"](#).

In Japan, employment registered its largest monthly gain in July since January 2016, and unemployment dropped to its lowest since last April

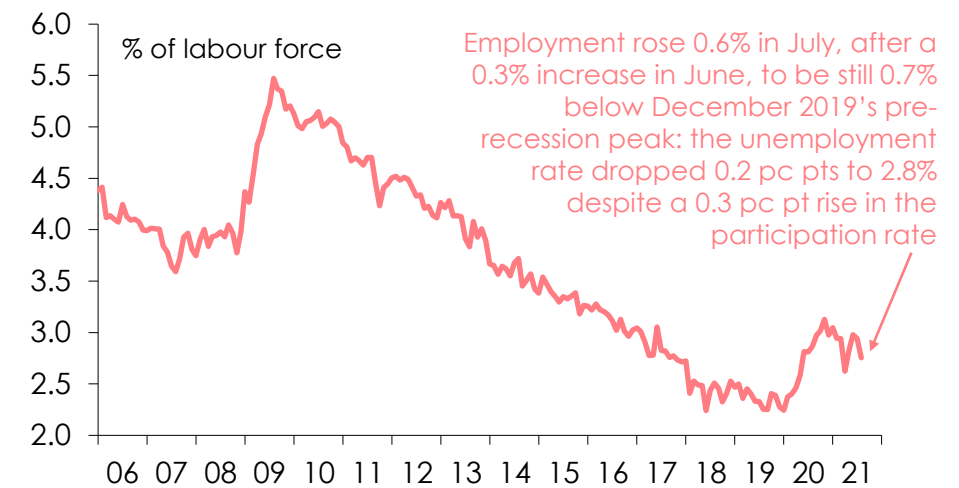
Real GDP



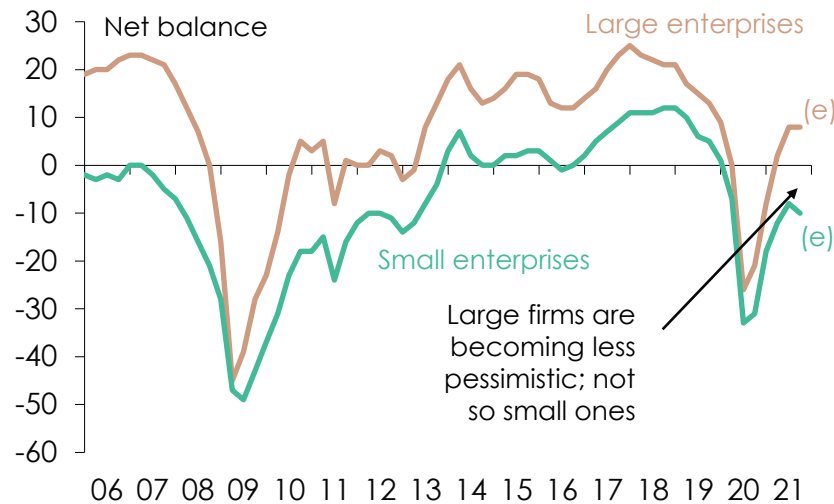
Consumer confidence



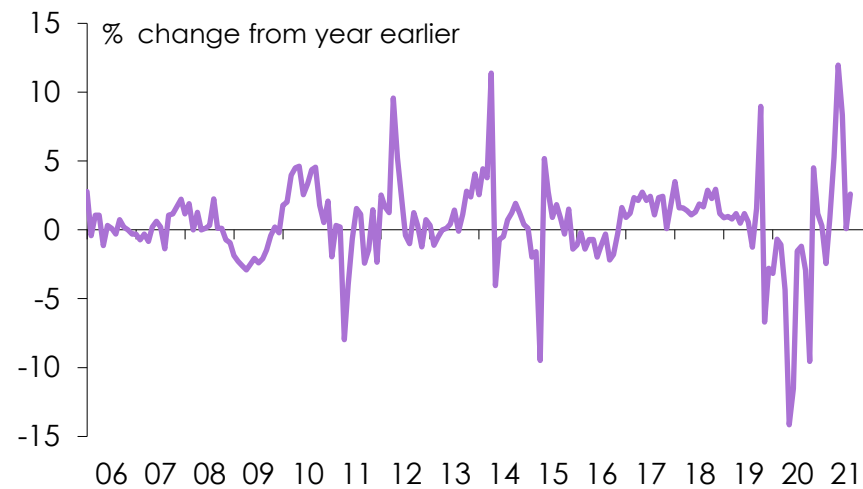
Unemployment



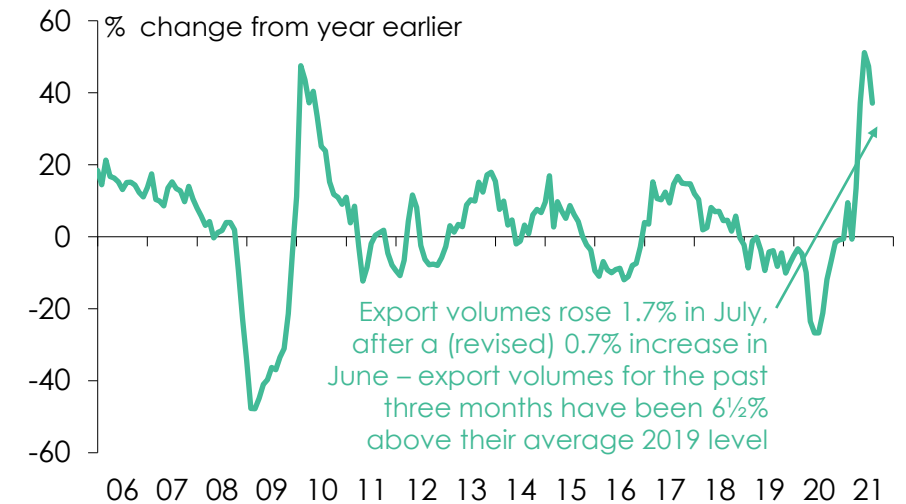
BoJ Tankan business conditions



Value of retail sales



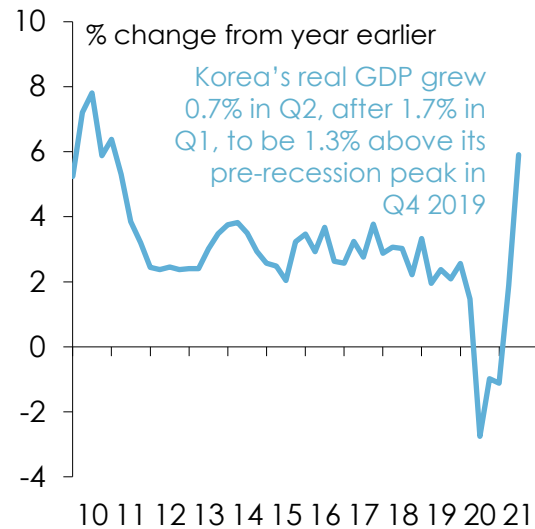
Merchandise export volumes



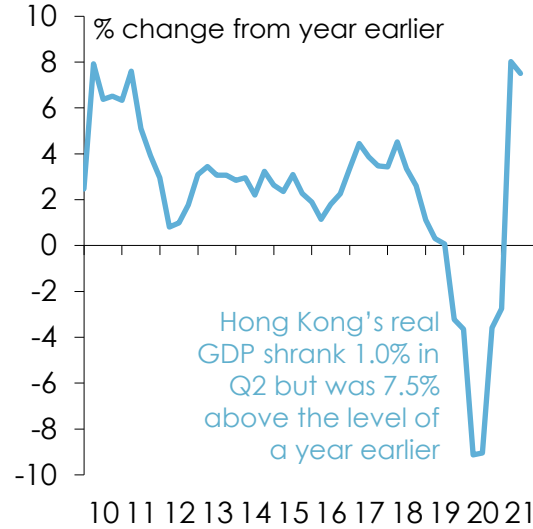
Sources: Japan Cabinet Office [Economic and Social Research Institute](#); [Bank of Japan](#); [Statistics Bureau of Japan](#); Japan [Ministry of Finance](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

All Asian economies have recorded strong rebounds from their pandemic-induced troughs in Q2 2020, but not all have regained previous peaks

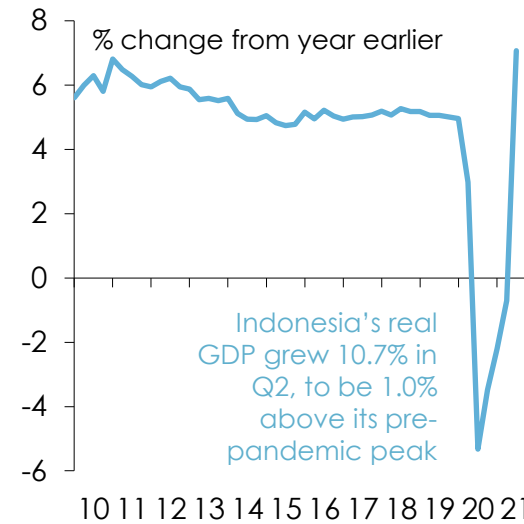
Korea



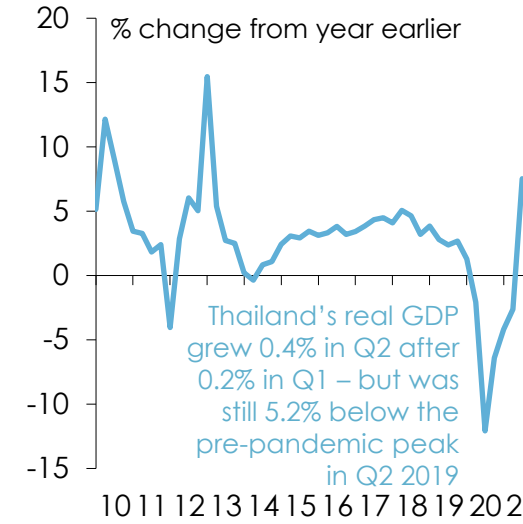
Hong Kong



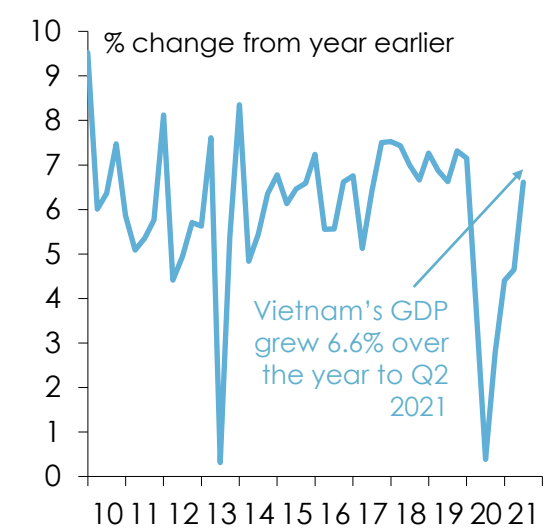
Indonesia



Thailand



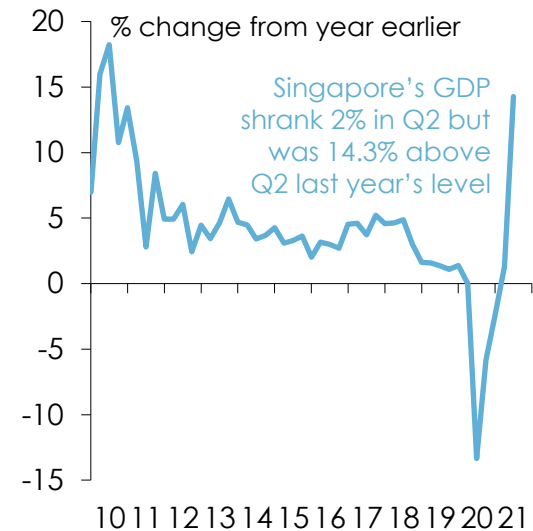
Vietnam



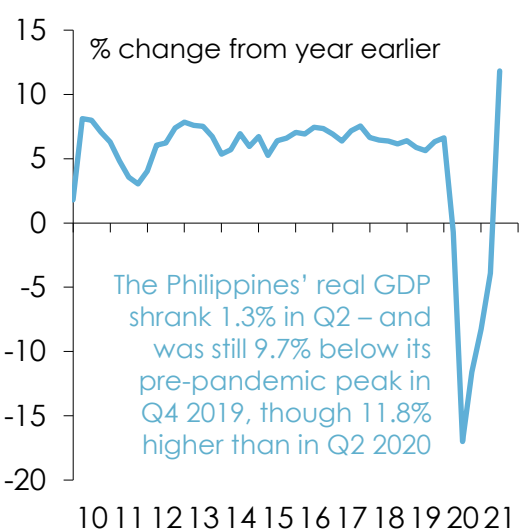
Taiwan



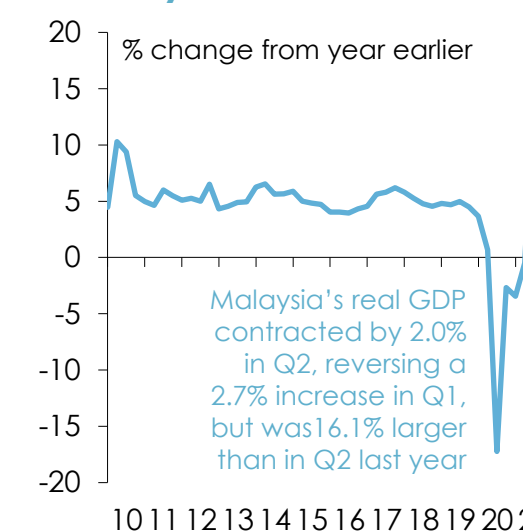
Singapore



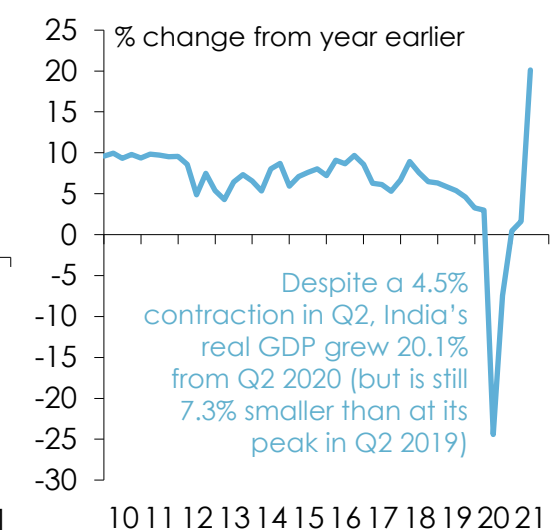
Philippines



Malaysia

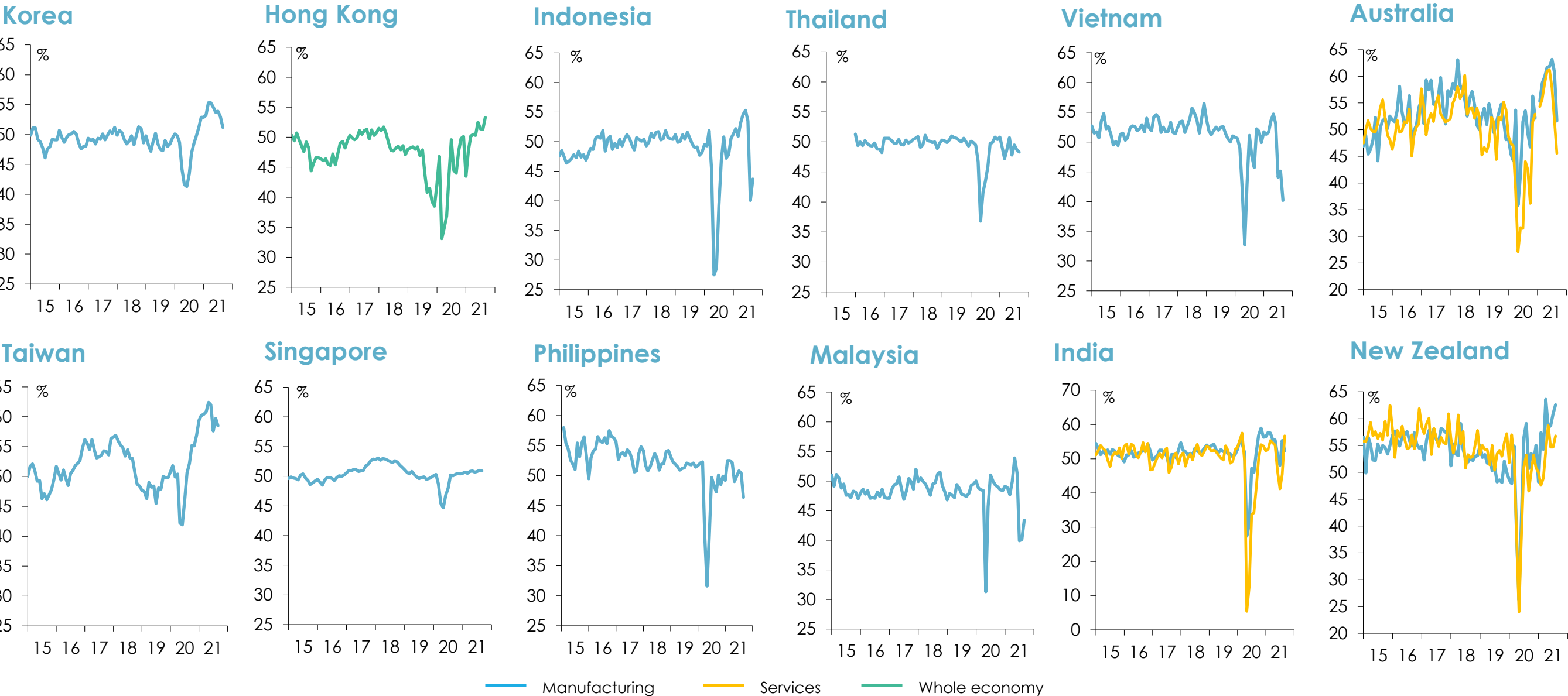


India



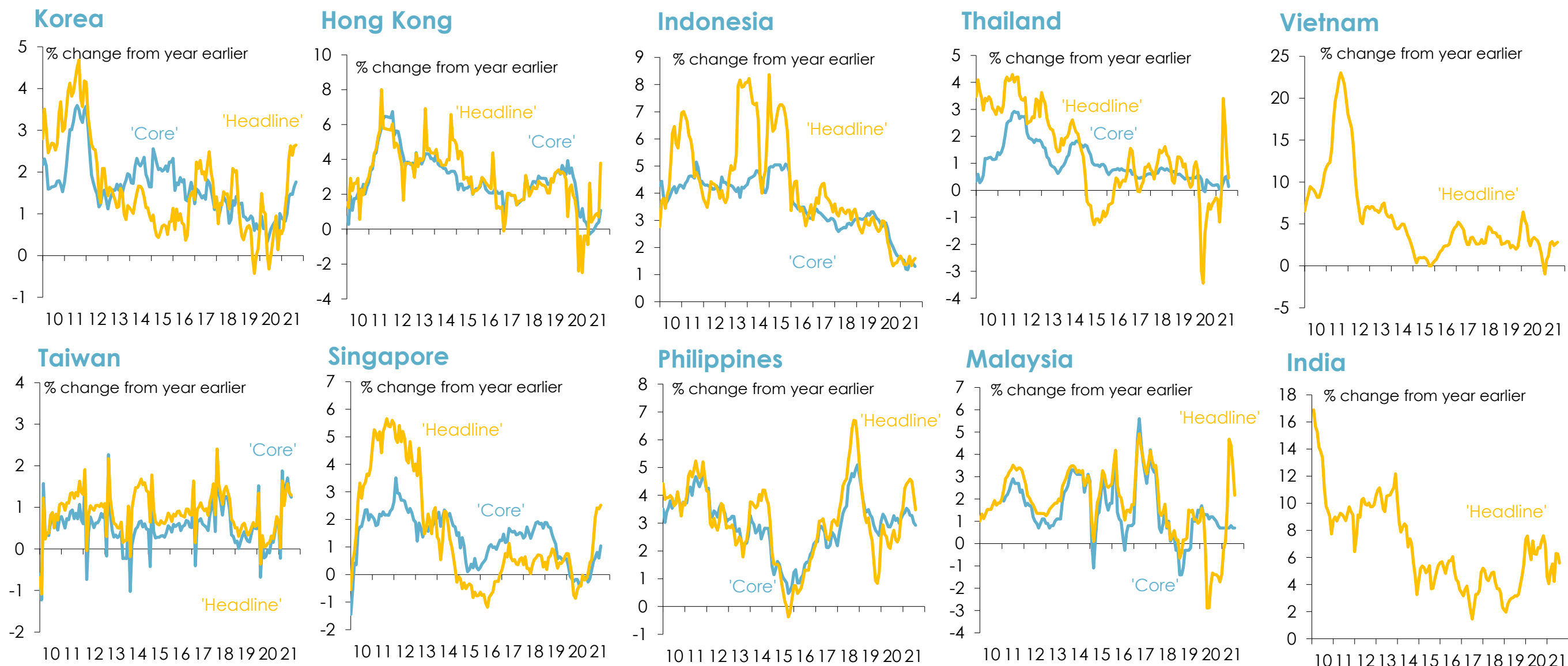
Note: Latest data are Q2 for Korea, Singapore and Vietnam, and Q1 for other countries. Sources: Bank of Korea; Taiwan Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting & Statistics; Hong Kong Census & Statistics Department; Singapore Ministry of Trade and Industry; Department of Statistics Malaysia; Office of the National Economic & Social Development Council of Thailand; Statistics Indonesia; Philippine Statistics Authority; General Statistics Office of Viet Nam; India Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation. [Return to "What's New"](#).

PMIs for August show continuing adverse effects of the wave of infections across south-east Asia, but a pick-up in India as the 'delta wave' eases



Note: Purchasing Managers' Indexes (PMIs) are derived from surveys of senior executives, who are asked to report whether various dimensions of business activity recorded an increase, decrease or no change compared with the previous month. A reading of 50 indicates an overall increase cf. the previous month, and a reading of less than 50 indicates a decrease. Latest data are for August, except for New Zealand. Australian data for January are 'missing'.
Sources: [IHS Markit](#); [Singapore Institute of Purchasing and Materials Management](#); [Australian Industry Group](#); [Business NZ](#); Refinitiv Datastream. [Return to "What's New"](#).

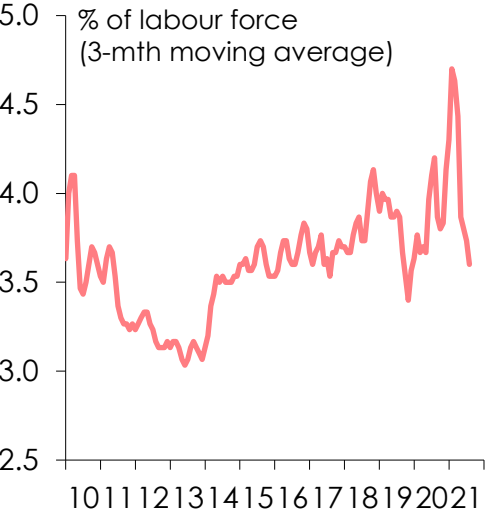
Some (though not all) Asian economies are experiencing temporary upward pressure on inflation as in North America and Europe



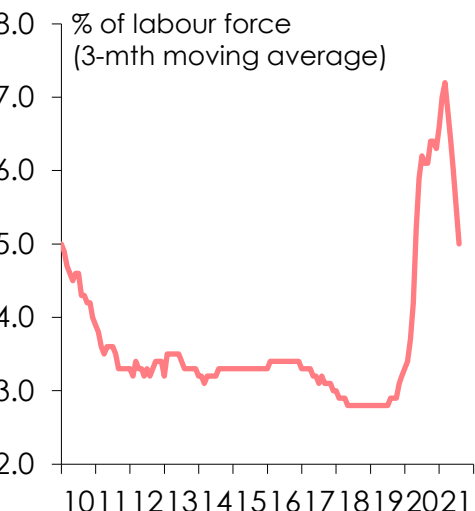
Note: 'Core' inflation in Korea excludes agricultural products and oil; in Taiwan it excludes fresh fruit, vegetables and energy; in Singapore it excludes accommodation and private transport; and in Hong Kong it excludes the effect of 'one-off government relief measures'. 'Core' inflation in Indonesia excludes 'volatile foods' and changes in 'administered prices' (such as fuel subsidies, transport fares and electricity prices); in the Philippines it excludes rice, corn, meat, fish, cultivated vegetables and fuels; in Thailand it excludes fresh or raw food and energy; and in Malaysia it excludes fresh food and 'administered' prices. Vietnam and India do not publish measures of 'core' inflation. Sources: national statistical agencies and central banks. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Unemployment rose sharply in most Asian economies last but is now falling in most of them

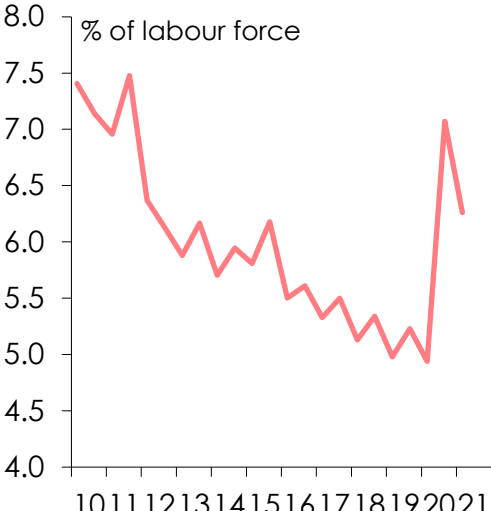
Korea



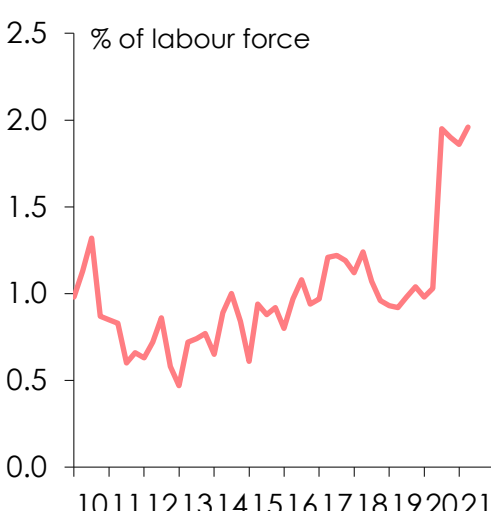
Hong Kong



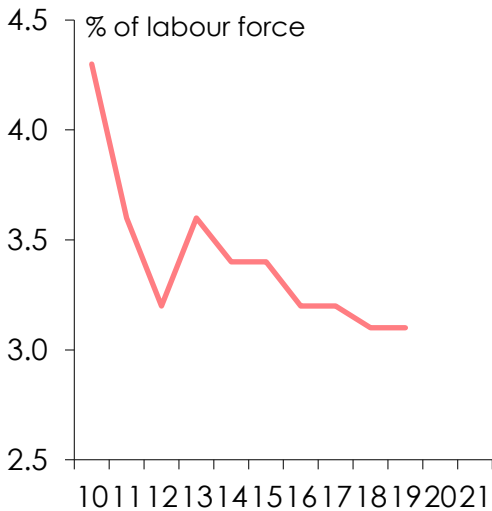
Indonesia



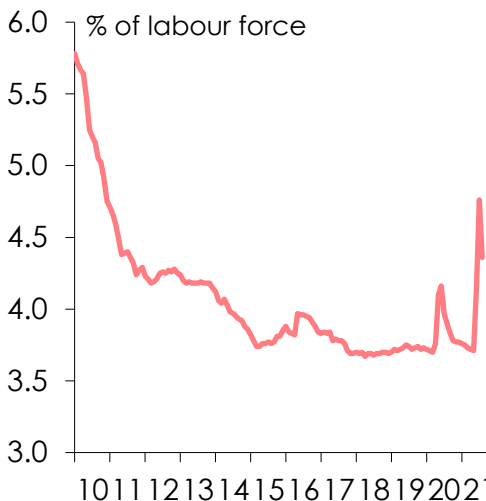
Thailand



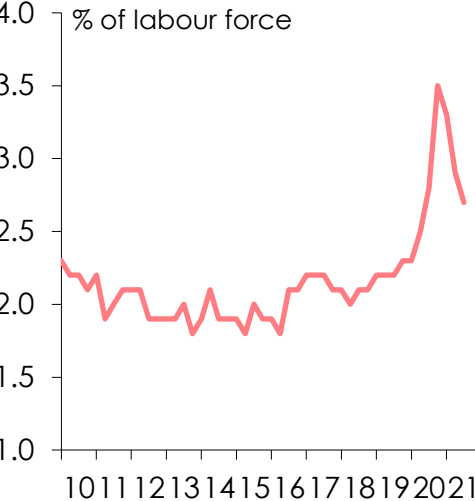
Vietnam



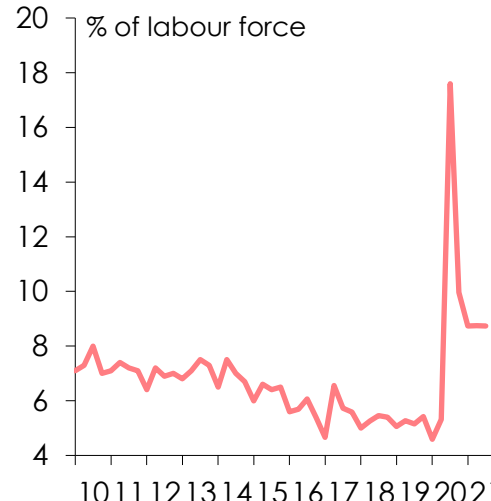
Taiwan



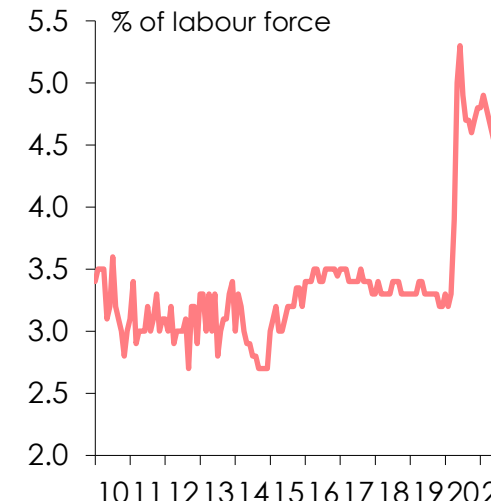
Singapore



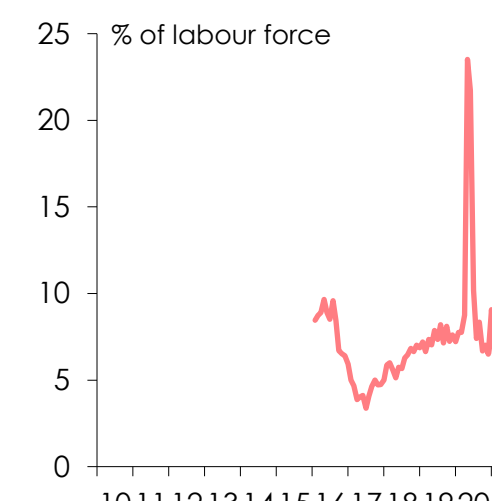
Philippines



Malaysia

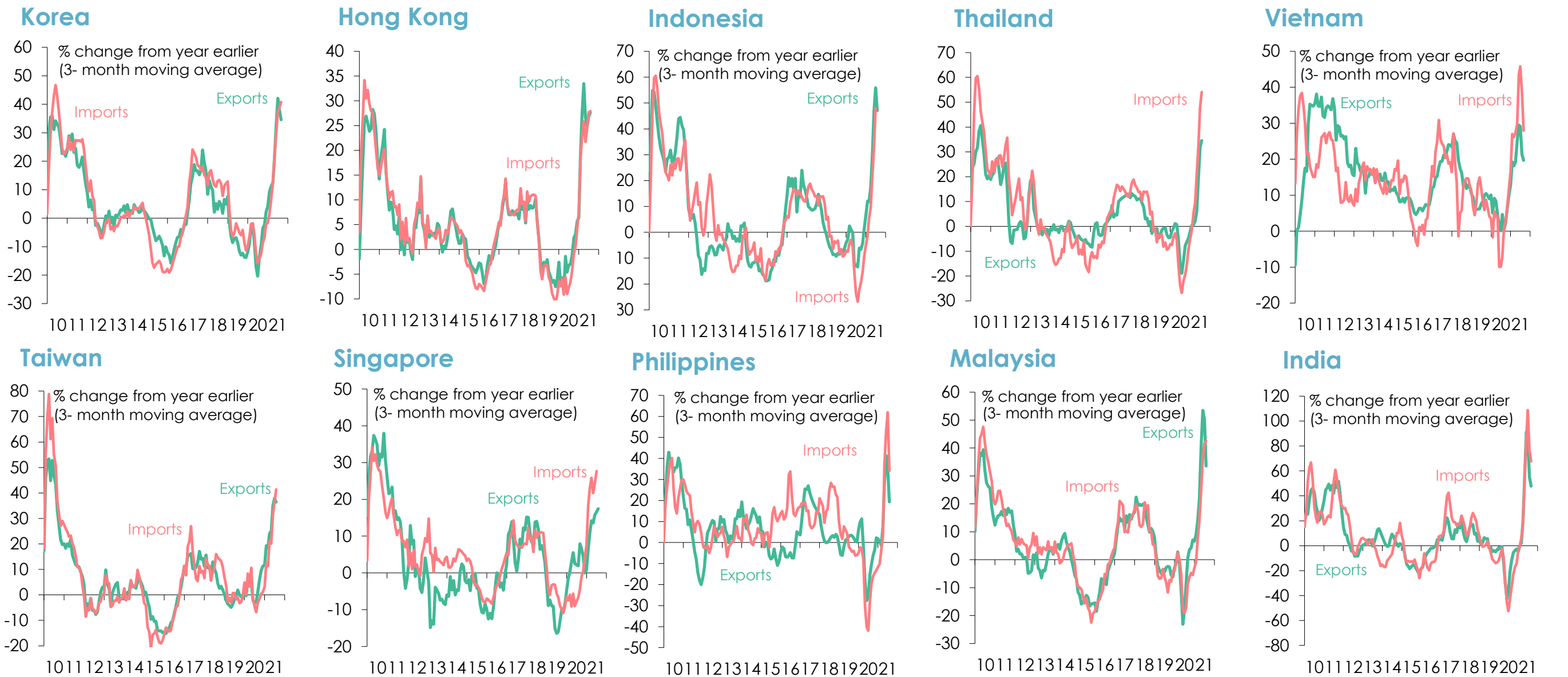


India



Note: Unemployment data is published monthly in Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand and Malaysia; quarterly in Singapore and the Philippines; semi-annually (February and August) in Indonesia; and annually in Vietnam (with the latest reading being for 2019). There is no official unemployment data in India: the estimates shown on this page are compiled by a private sector 'think tank'. Sources: national statistical agencies; [Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy](#) . [Return to "What's New"](#).

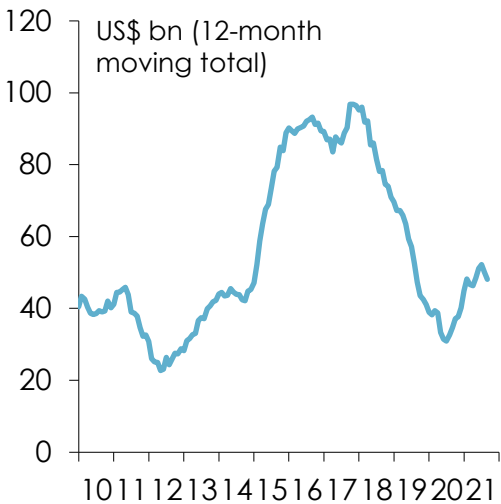
Asian exports are recovering from the Covid-induced slump – although ‘base effects’ from this time last year are inflating the growth



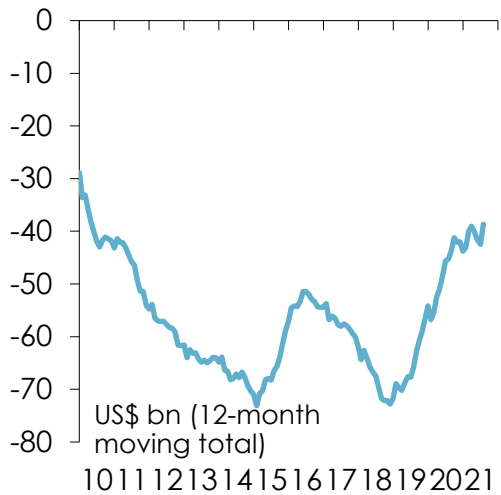
Note: Data for Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia are published in national currencies and converted to US dollars by Corinna using month-average exchange rates.
Sources: national statistical agencies and central banks. [Return to "What's New"](#).

All Asian economies have experienced improvements in their trade balances since the onset of Covid, although some are now turning around

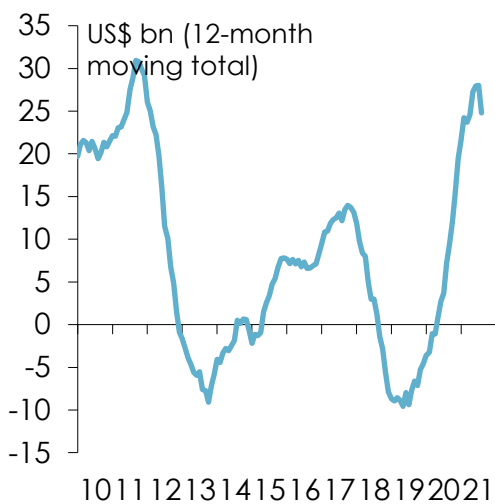
Korea



Hong Kong



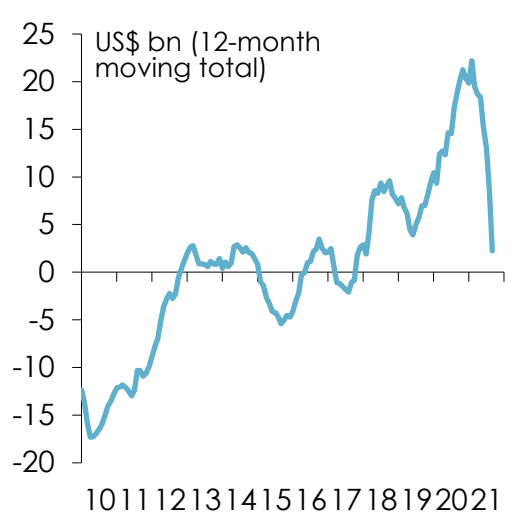
Indonesia



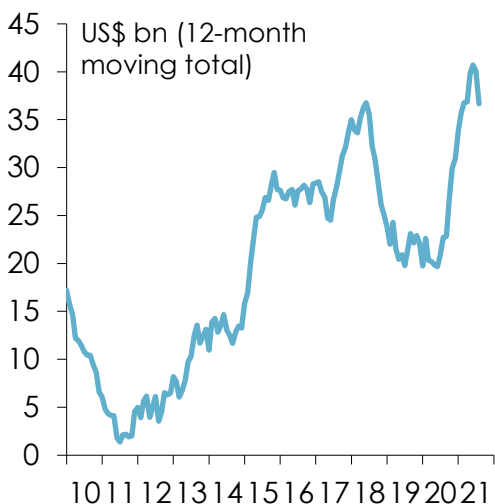
Thailand



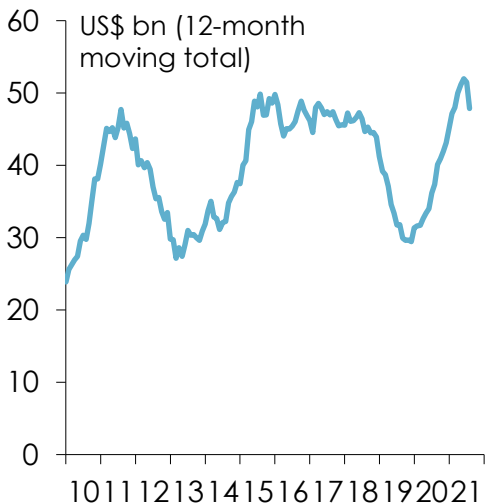
Vietnam



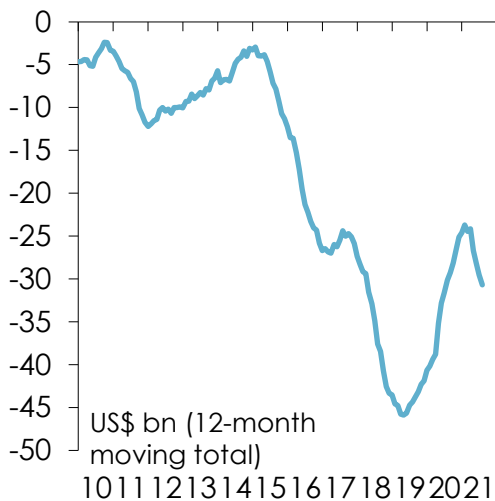
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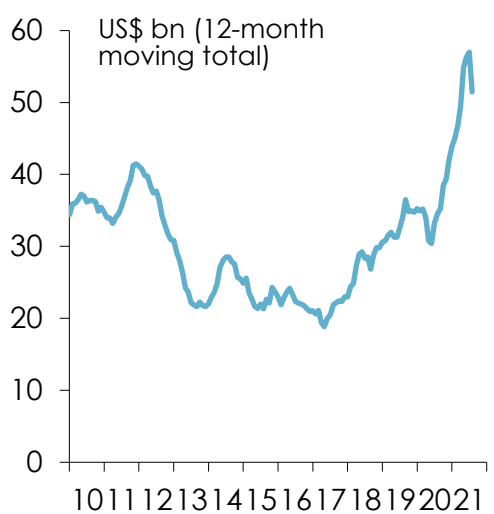
Singapore



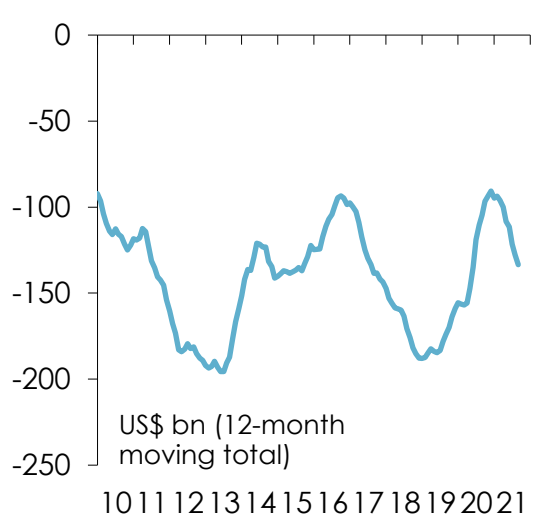
Philippines



Malaysia



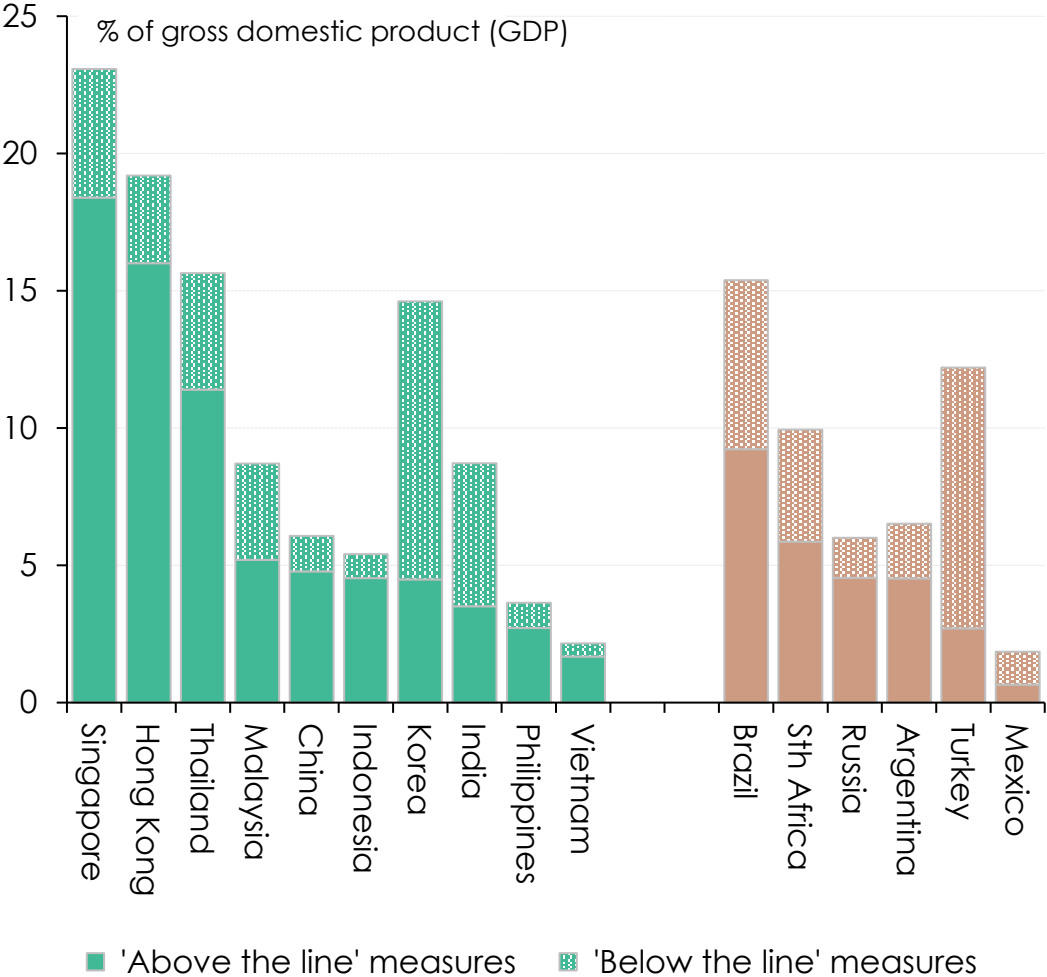
India



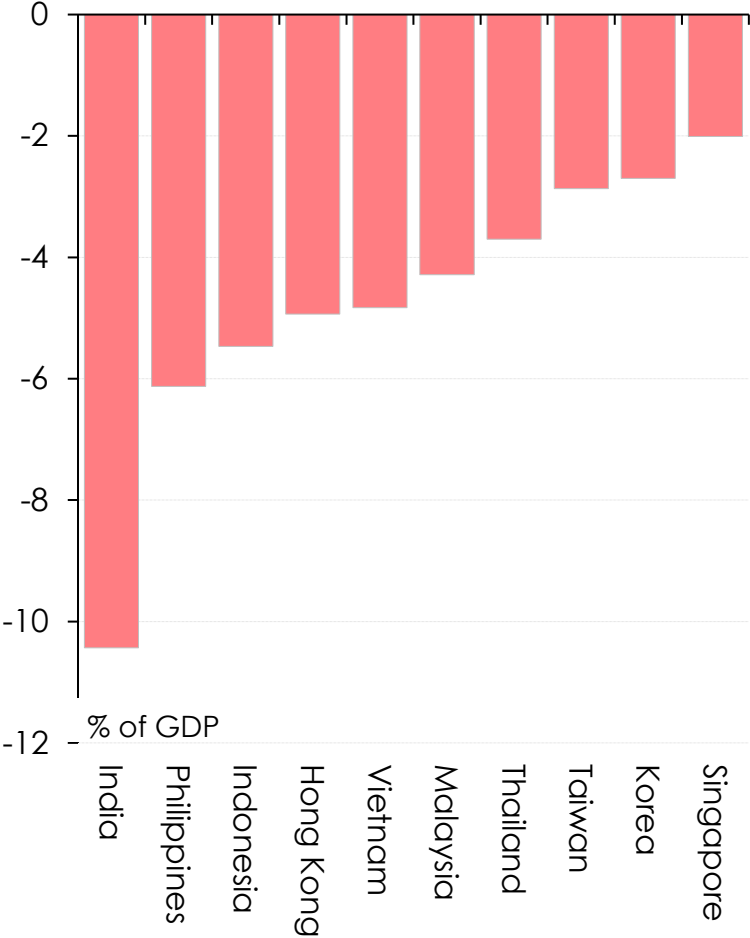
Note: Data for Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia are published in national currencies and converted to US dollars by Corinna using month-average exchange rates.
Sources: national statistical agencies and central banks. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Apart from Singapore, Hong Kong and Thailand, Asian governments' discretionary fiscal responses to Covid-19 have been relatively modest

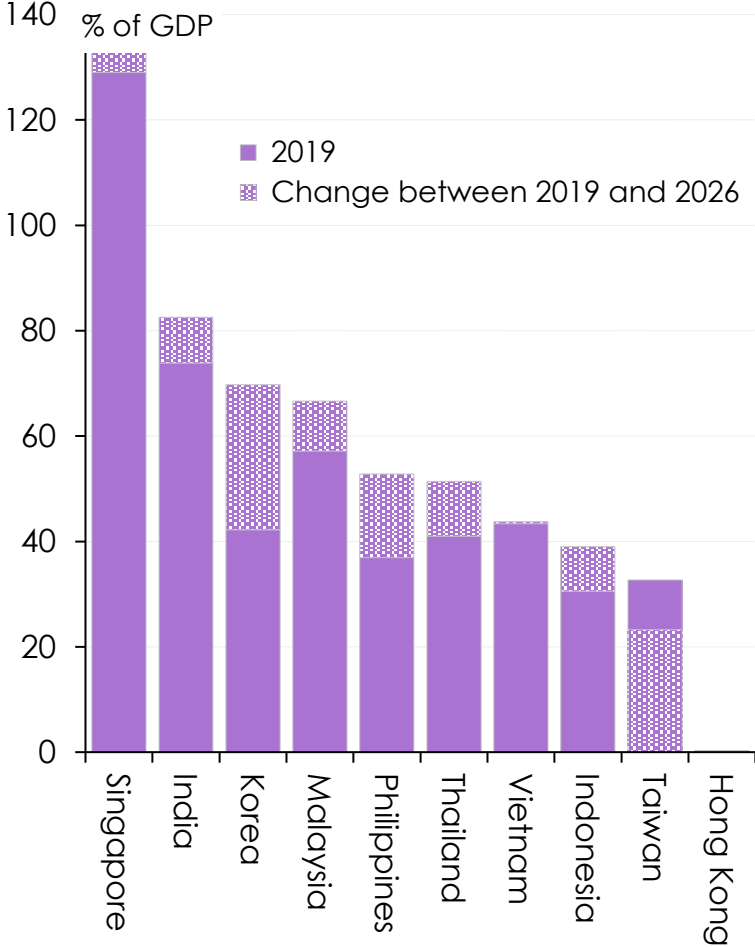
Fiscal policy responses to Covid-19 – Asian & other selected emerging market economies



Budget balances – Asian economies 2020-2022

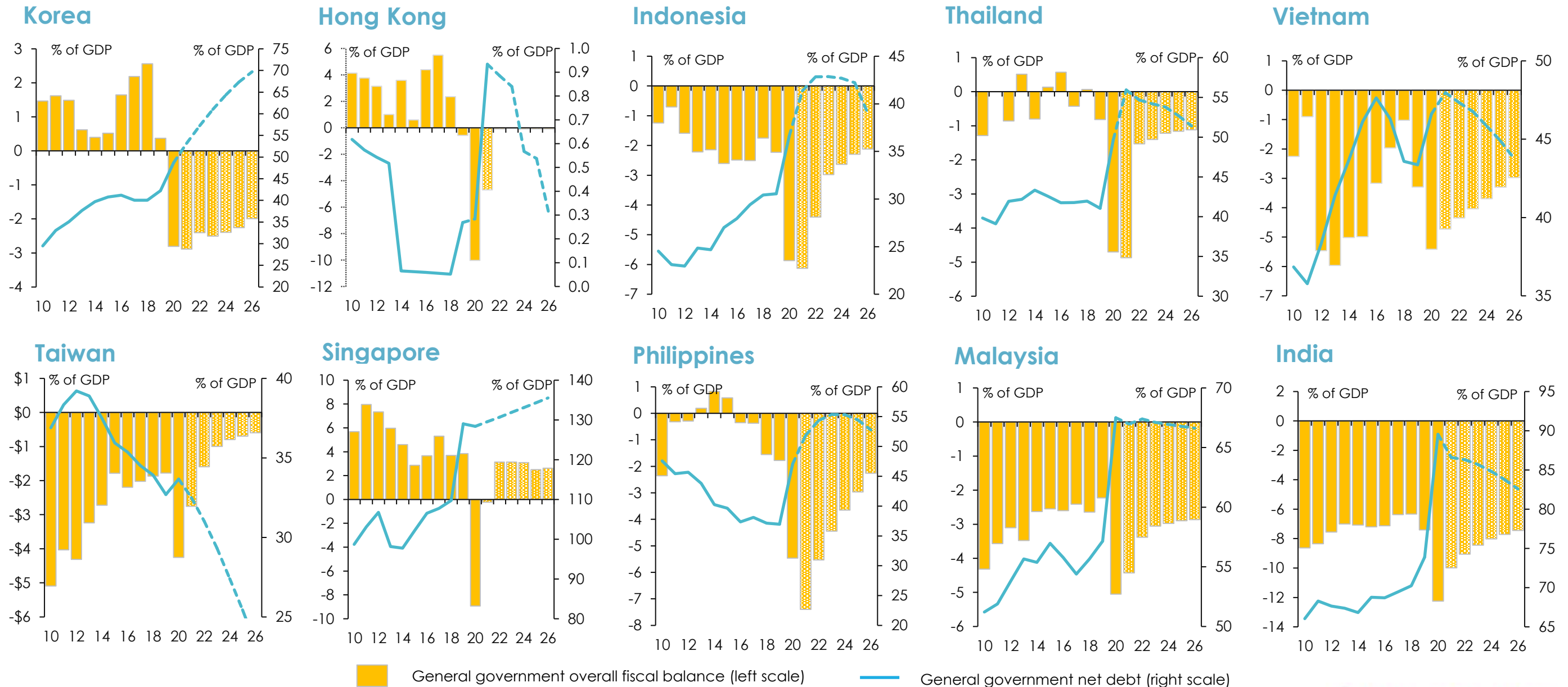


Gross government debt – Asian economies 2019-26



Note: 'Above the line' measures comprise additional or accelerated spending and deferred or foregone revenue. 'Below the line' measures comprise equity injections, loans, asset purchases and debt assumptions, but do not include loan guarantees or other contingent liabilities. 'DMs' means 'developed markets' (or 'advanced economies'). Data includes measures announced up until 5th June 2021. Singapore's apparently very large gross debt is offset by substantial financial asset holdings. Taiwan's gross debt is projected to decline as a percentage of GDP between 2019 and 2026. Sources: IMF, [Fiscal Monitor Database of Country Fiscal Measures in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), July 2021; and [Fiscal Monitor](#), April 2021. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Asian governments, except for Singapore and Hong Kong, will be running large budget deficits for the next five years

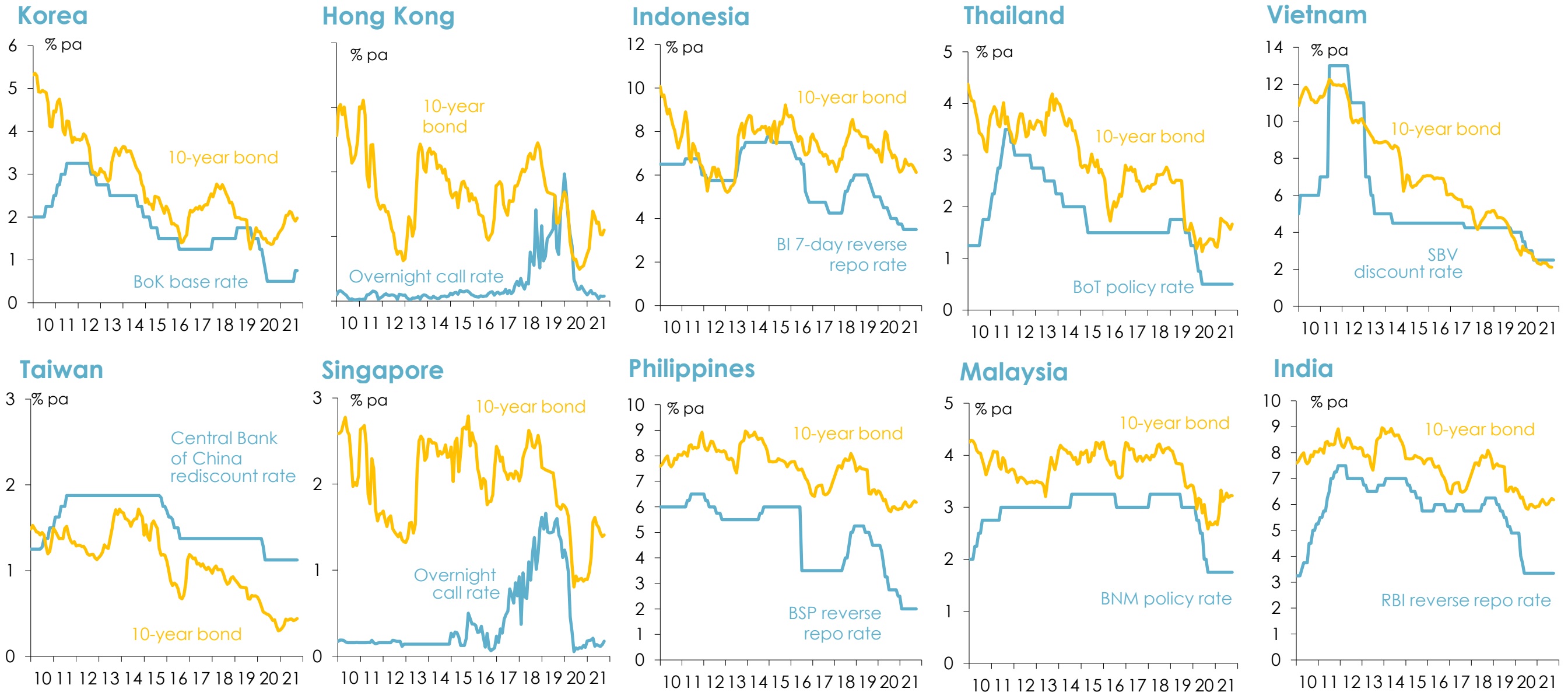


Source: International Monetary Fund, [Fiscal Monitor](#), and [World Economic Outlook](#), April 2021. [Return to "What's New"](#)

Malaysia's central bank left its policy settings on hold this week – as other Asian central banks are likely to do later this month

- ❑ **Bank Negara Malaysia** left its overnight policy rate unchanged at 1.75%, as expected, at its Monetary Policy Committee meeting this Thursday
 - BNM noted that the re-imposition of nation-wide restrictions had “dampened growth momentum” – but expressed optimism that “recent gradual relaxations for more economic sectors to operate” combined with “further easing of containment measures, rapid progress of the domestic vaccination program and continued expansion in global demand” would support “growth momentum going into 2022” – although it also judged that “risks to the growth outlook ... remain tilted to the downside”
 - BNM expects ‘headline’ inflation to average between 2 and 3% in 2021 but with ‘underlying’ inflation remaining ‘relatively subdued’ averaging 0.5-1.5% this year and in 2022
- ❑ The **Bank of Korea** became the first Asian central bank to raise interest rates at its Monetary Policy Board meeting last month, raising its base rate by 25 bp to 0.75%
 - the BoK noted that the Korean economy had “continued its sound recovery” with GDP growth expected to be “around 4%” this year, and consumer price inflation expected to increase to the “lower 2% level”, although with ‘core’ inflation forecast to “run at the lower 1% level”
 - it also noted that “household loan growth has accelerated and housing prices have continued to increase rapidly”
 - the MPB foreshadowed that it would “gradually adjust the degree of monetary policy accommodation as the Korean economy is expected to continue its sound growth and inflation to run above 2% for some time”, with decisions as to when to “adjust the degree of accommodation” depending on “the risk of a build-up of financial imbalances” as well as changes in the pace of growth and inflation
- ❑ The next Asian central bank meeting is Bank Indonesia's on 21st September, followed by Taiwan's and the Philippines' on 23rd September, and Thailand's on 29th September
 - None of these is expected to result in any change in monetary policy settings

Apart from the Bank of Korea, no Asian central bank has yet begun tightening monetary policy (or hinted that it might do any time soon)

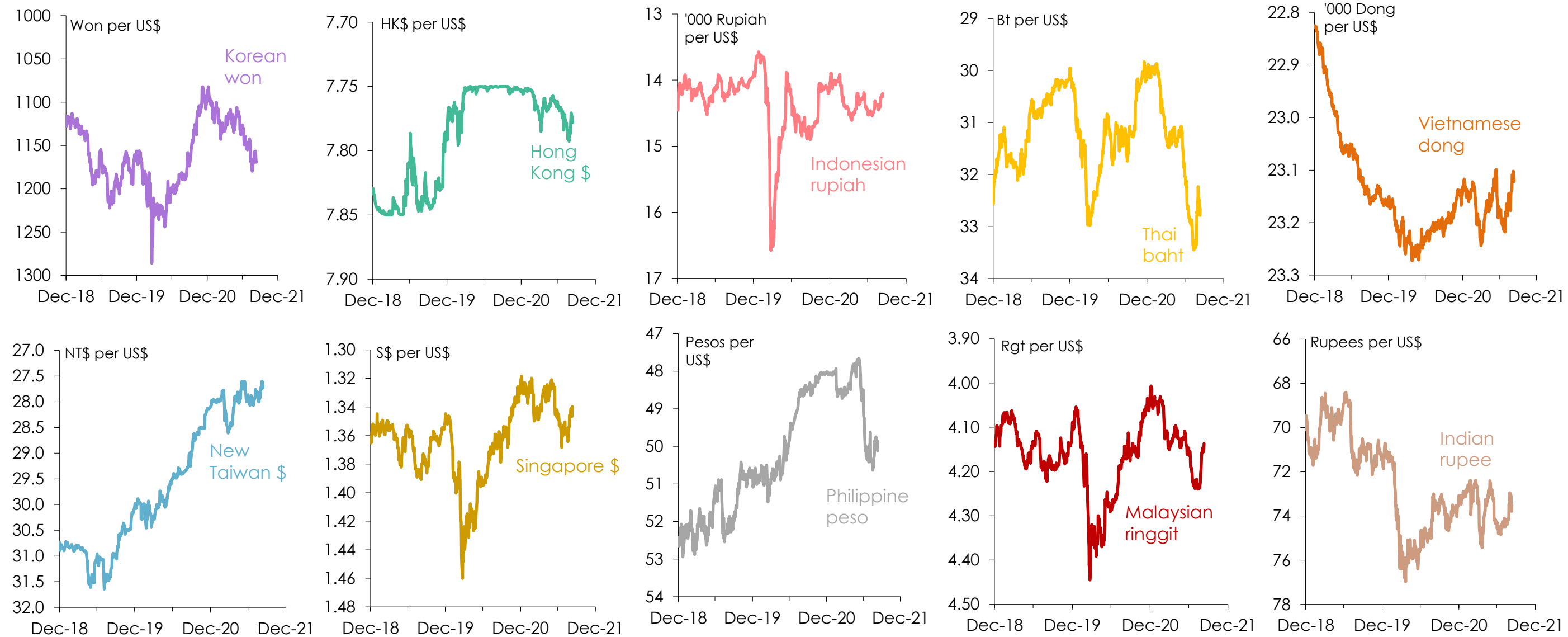


Note: Neither Hong Kong nor Singapore use a monetary policy indicator interest rate. Hong Kong has a currency board system, so HK interest rates track US rates very closely; the Monetary Authority of Singapore uses the (effective) exchange rate as its principal monetary policy instrument. Data are monthly averages up to September 2021.

Sources: national central banks; Refinitiv Datastream. [Return to "What's New"](#).

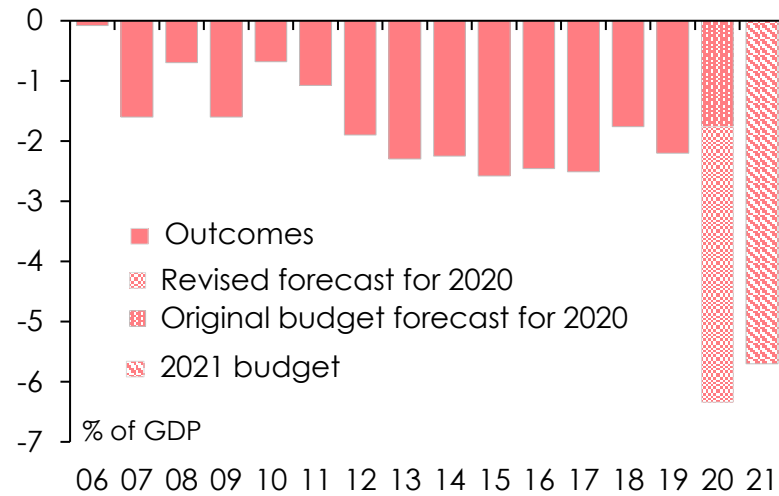
Asian currencies were mixed this week with the won down 1% vs the US\$ and the rupee down ¾% but the rupiah, baht and dong up ¼-½%

Asian currency exchange rates vs US dollar

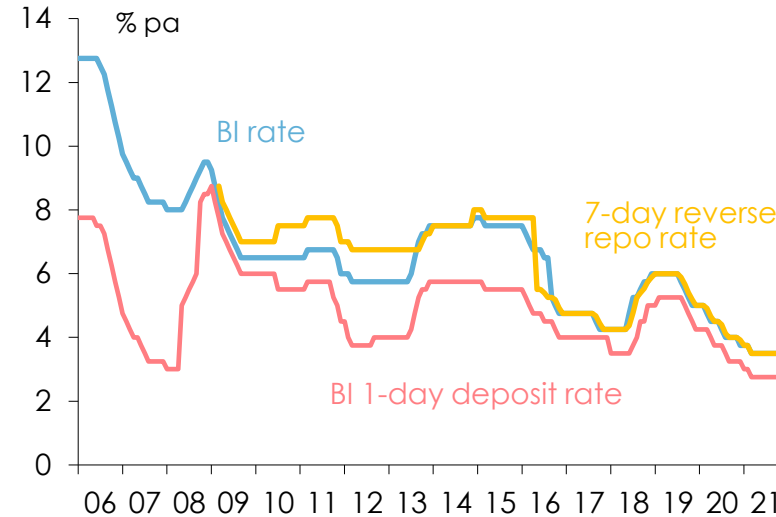


Bank Indonesia's monetary policy settings have been on hold since January although it has continued with its 'synergistic monetary expansion'

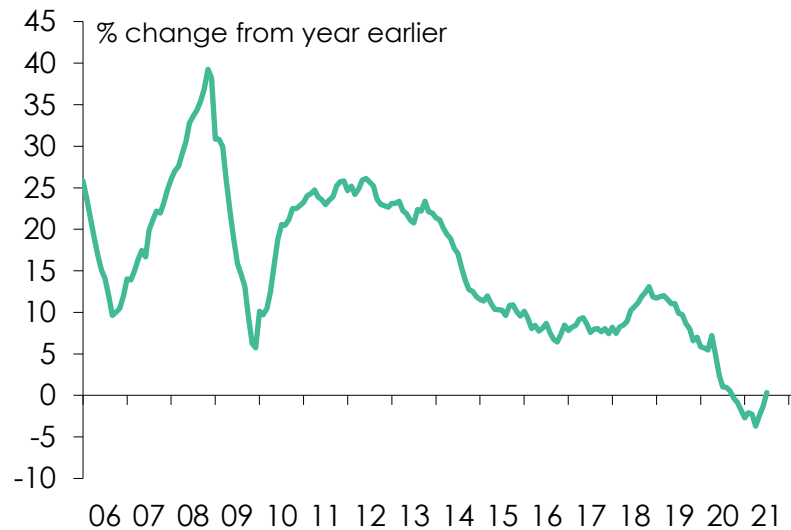
Indonesia budget deficit



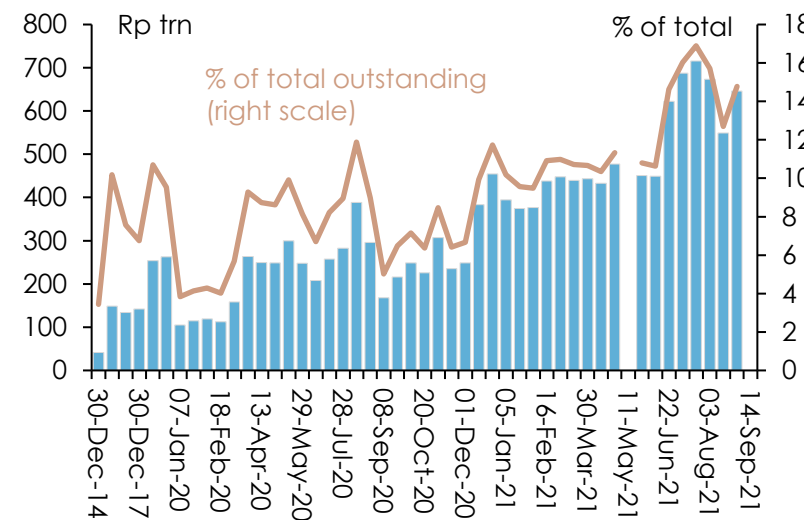
BI monetary policy rates



Bank lending



BI holdings of tradeable SBNs

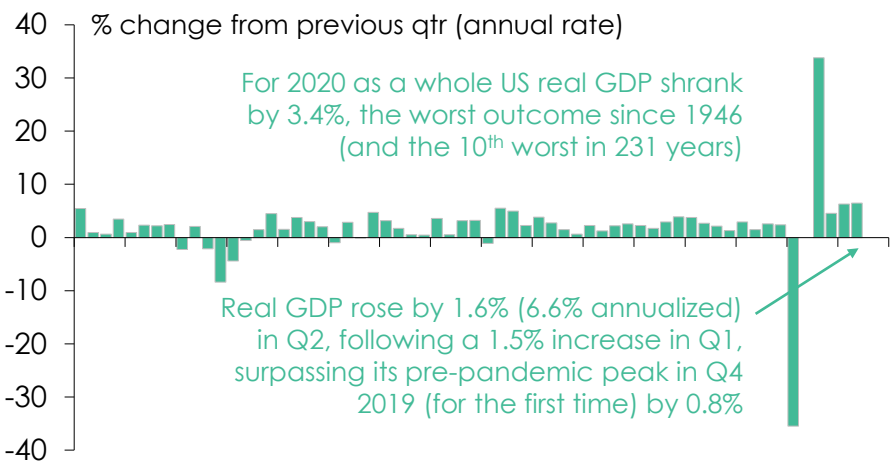


- In April 2020, the Indonesian Government and Bank Indonesia (BI) agreed to a 'burden-sharing' scheme under which BI will directly purchase bonds equivalent to 25% of this year's budget financing requirement (and return the interest received to the Government), as well as subsidizing interest payments on other bonds
 - BI calls this 'synergistic monetary expansion'
 - up to 16th August BI has purchased Rp 132trn of SBN in the primary market (cf. Rp 473trn in 2020)
 - BI has indicated that it will be a 'standby buyer' for up to one-quarter of government borrowing requirements through 2022
- BI's holdings of SBNs dropped by Rp166bn over the past four weeks having risen by Rp266bn over the preceding six weeks
 - BI has absorbed 21% of the increase in the total stock of SBNs outstanding so far this year, cf. just 17% in 2020
- This 'QE' isn't adding to inflationary pressure because lending to the private sector is declining
 - 'core' inflation at 1.4% in July is well below BI's target of 2-4% (slide 58) and BI expects it to remain within target in 2021 and 2022
- BI again left its policy settings unchanged at Thursday's Governing Council meeting
 - BI left its GDP growth forecast for 2021 at 3½-4¼%

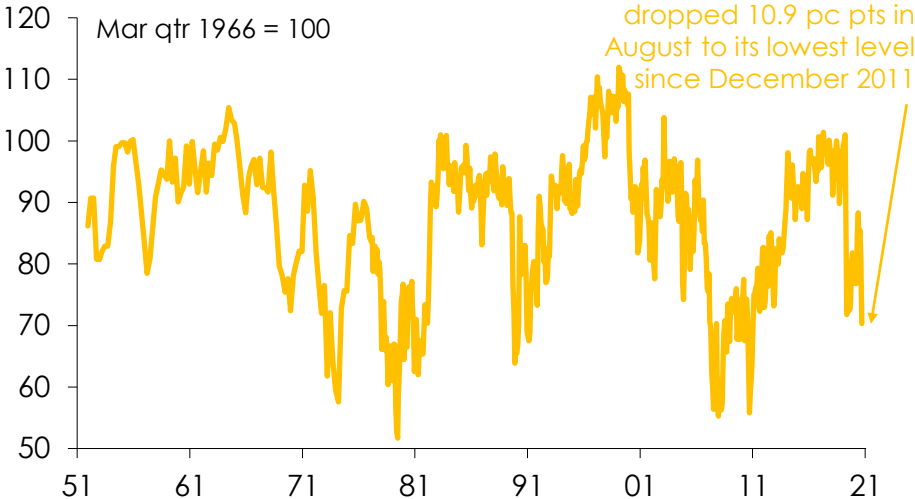
Sources: [Indonesia Ministry of Finance \(Kementerian Keuangan\)](#); [Directorate of Government Debt Securities](#); Bank Indonesia. [Return to "What's New"](#).

US retail sales fell more than expected in July, and consumer sentiment fell sharply in the first half August

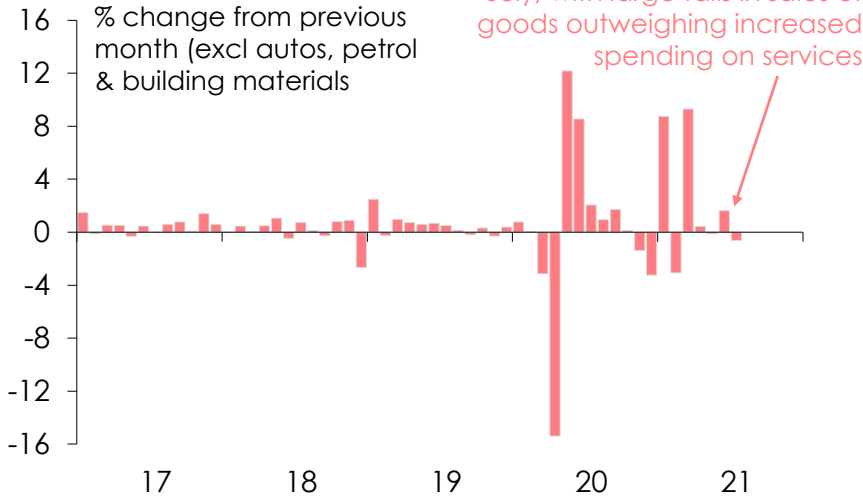
Real GDP



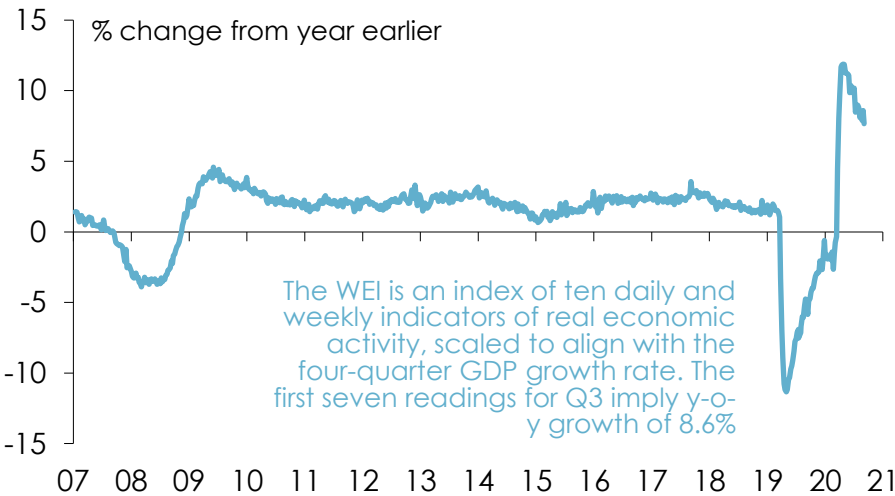
Consumer sentiment



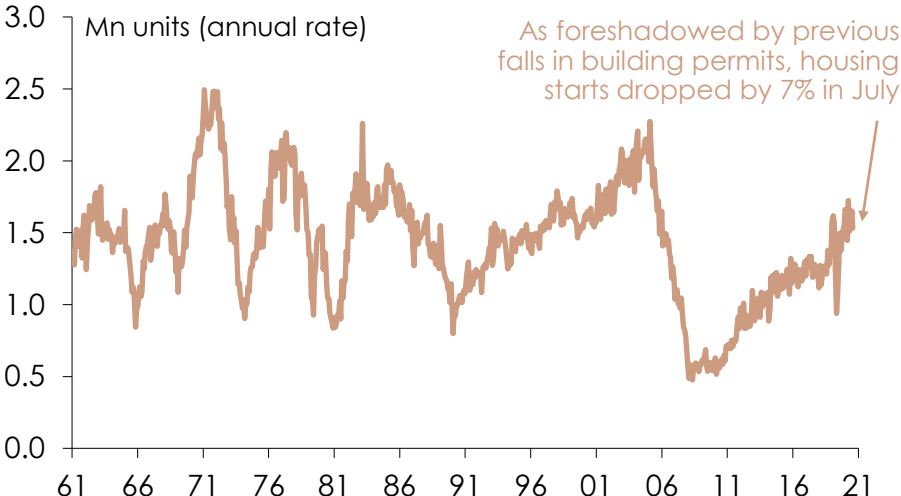
'Core' retail sales



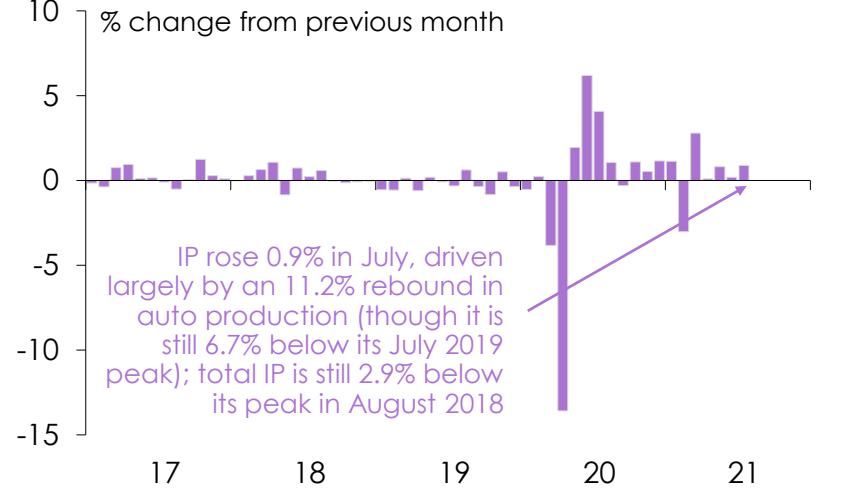
NY Fed weekly economic index



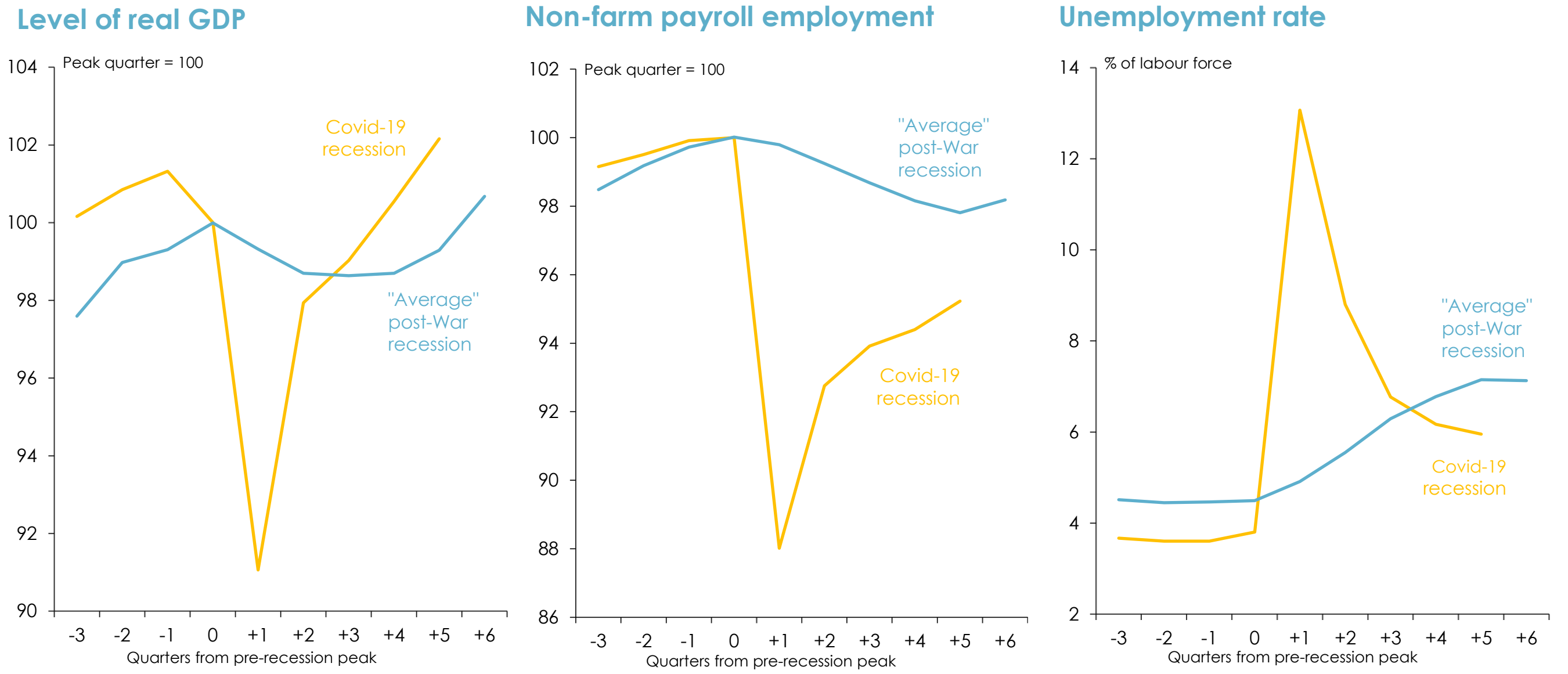
Housing starts



Industrial production



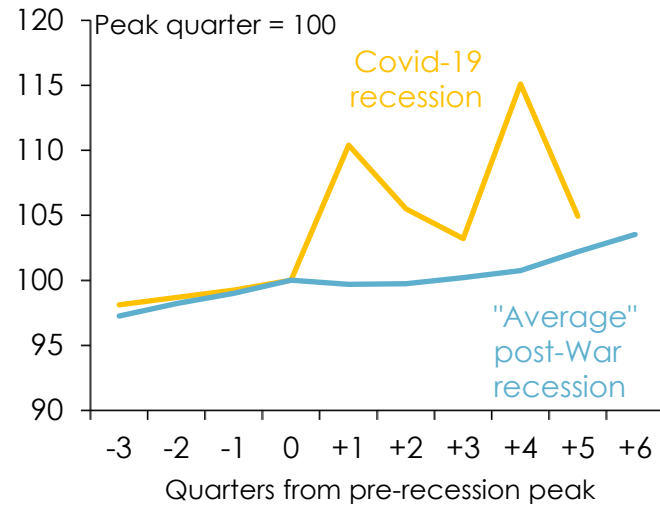
The Covid-19 recession has been quite unlike any other of the recessions the US has experienced since the end of World War II



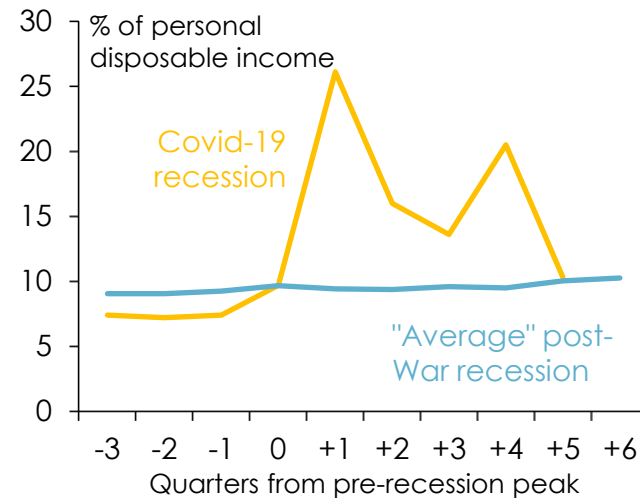
Note: 'average post-war recession' is the average of figures for each of the eleven post-war US recessions as designated by the [National Bureau of Economic Research Business Cycle Dating Committee](#), with the exception of the recession of January-July 1980 (which was too short, and too close to the July 1981-November 1982 recession to be fully reflected in the averages shown here); 'Peak quarter' is the quarter in which real GDP attained its highest level before the onset of the recession. No recession was ever as 'smooth' as implied by the averages shown here. Sources: US [Bureau of Economic Analysis](#); [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

The differences between this recession and previous ones are even more apparent from some of the details in the national accounts

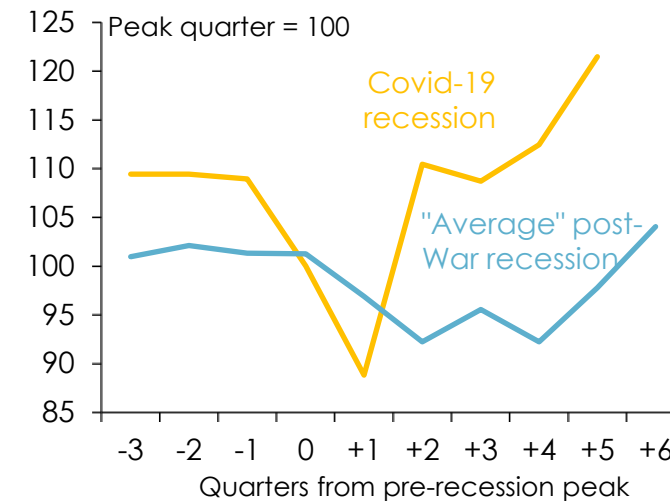
Personal disposable income



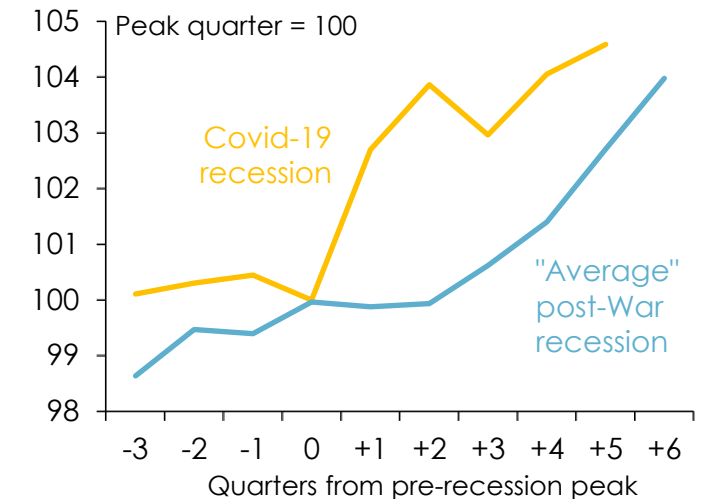
Personal saving rate



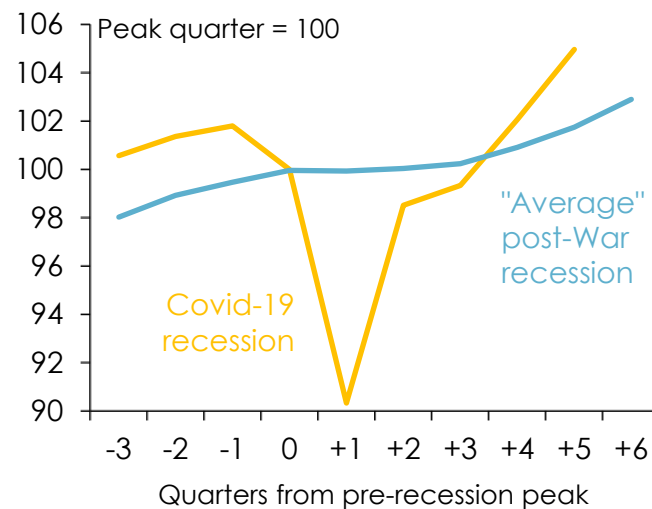
After-tax corporate profits



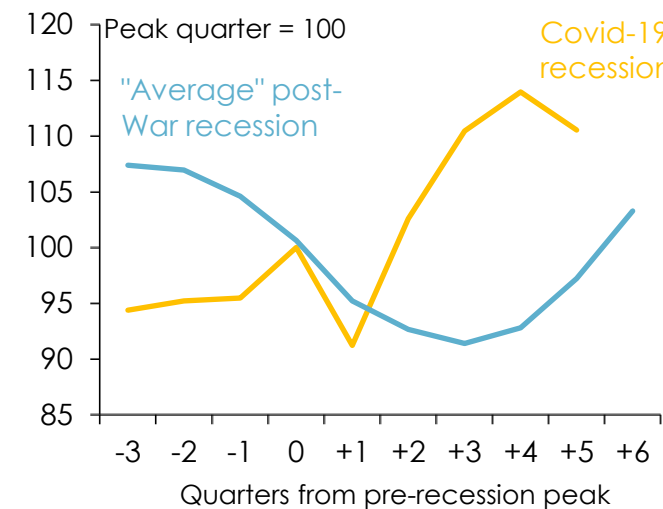
Labour productivity



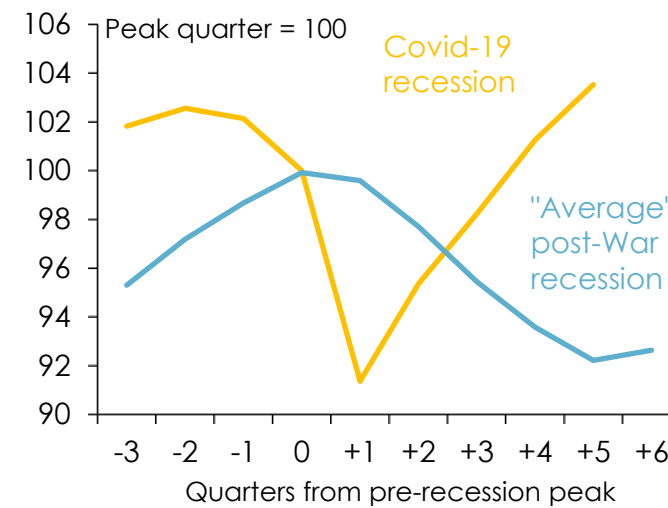
Personal consumption



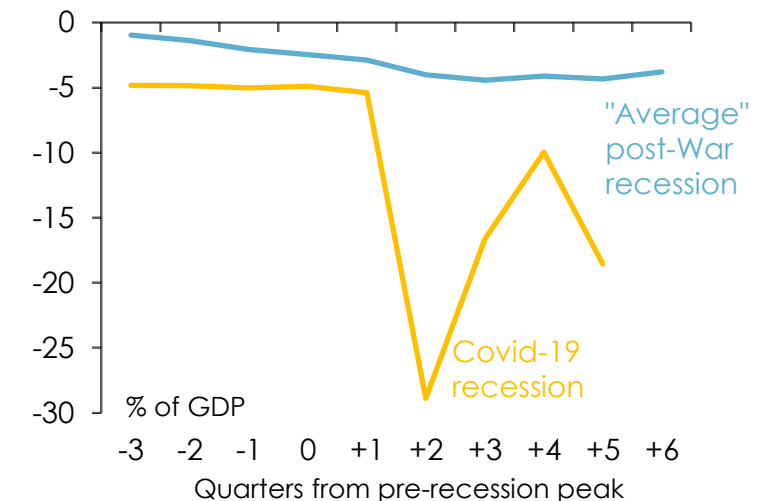
Residential investment



Business investment



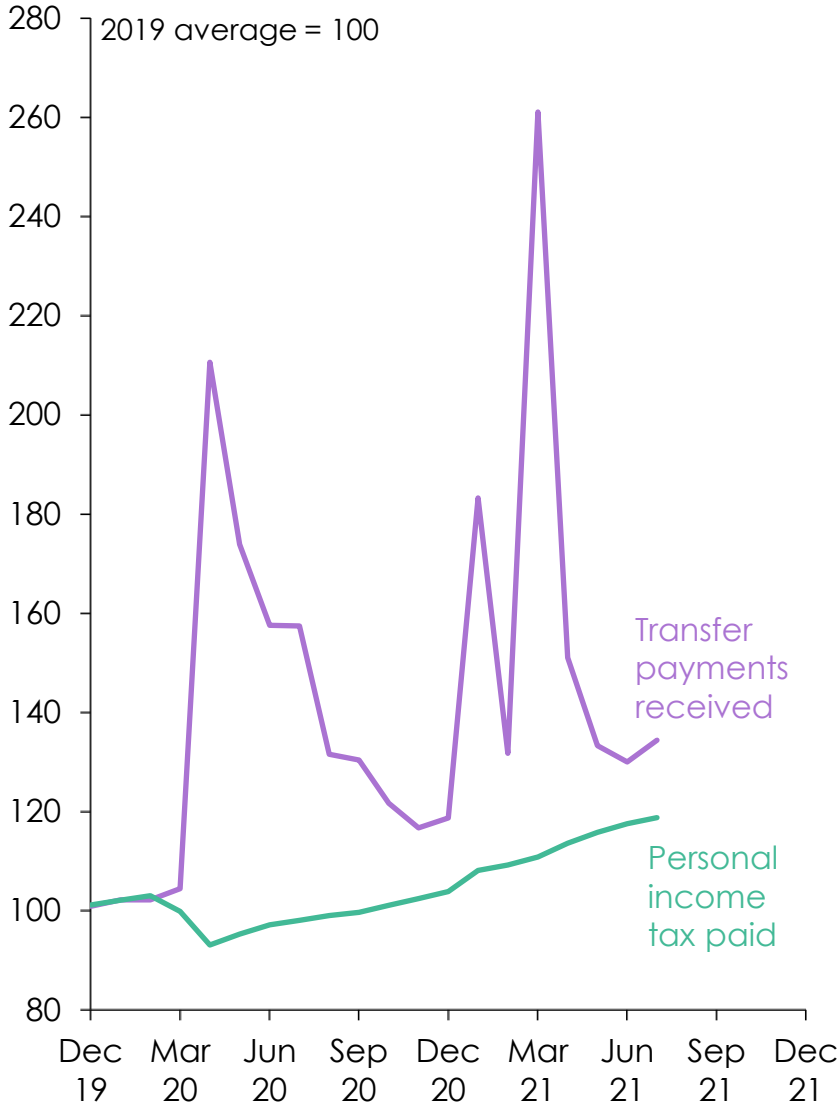
Federal budget balance



Note: 'average post-war recession' is the average of figures for each of the eleven post-war US recessions as designated by the [National Bureau of Economic Research Business Cycle Dating Committee](#), with the exception of the recession of January-July 1980; 'peak quarter' is the quarter in which real GDP attained its highest level before the onset of the recession. All variables in the charts above are in 2012 chain volumes except for the personal saving ratio and budget deficit; after-tax profits are 'economic' rather than 'book' profits; labour productivity is for the non-farm business sector. Sources: US [Bureau of Economic Analysis](#); [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

Recurring cash payments to households (combined with restrictions on movement) have had a major impact on spending patterns

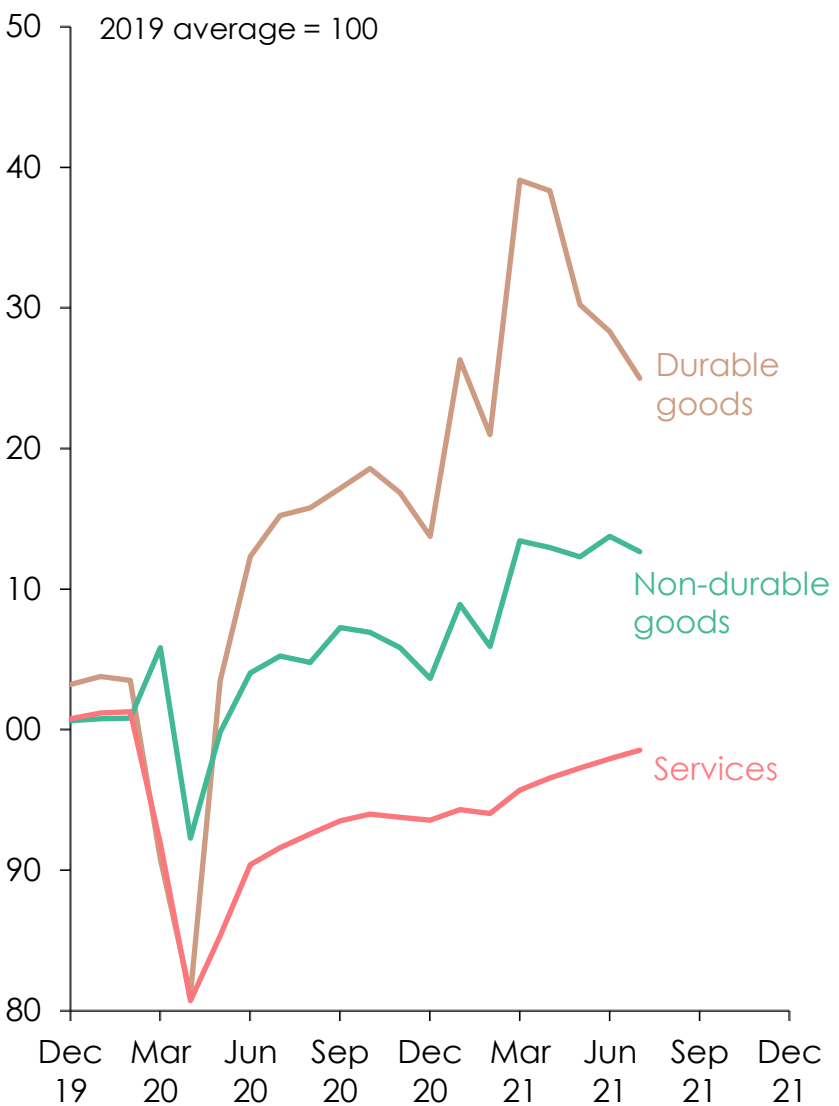
Tax and transfer payments



Real personal income

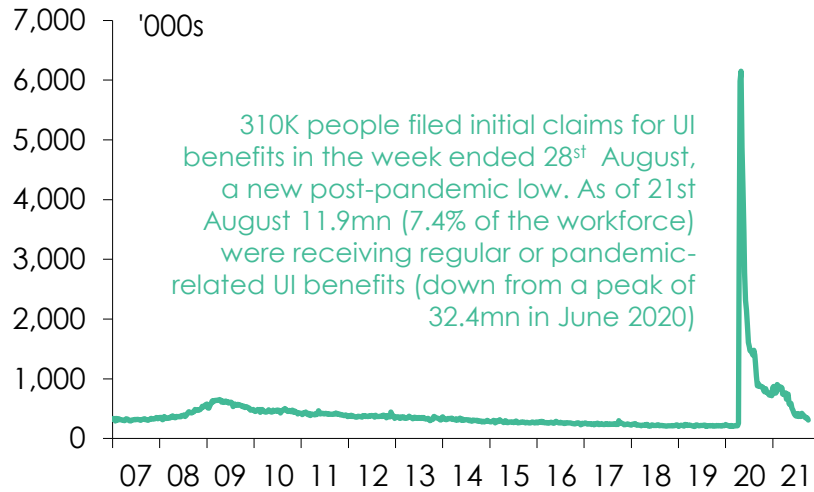


Real consumption expenditure

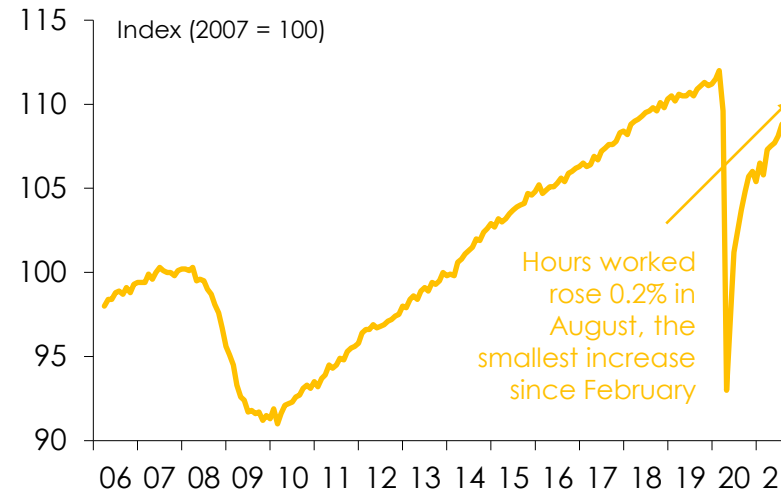


US non-farm payrolls rose 235K (0.2%) in August, to be still 5.3mn (3.5%) below their pre-pandemic peak, while unemployment dropped 0.2 pc pt

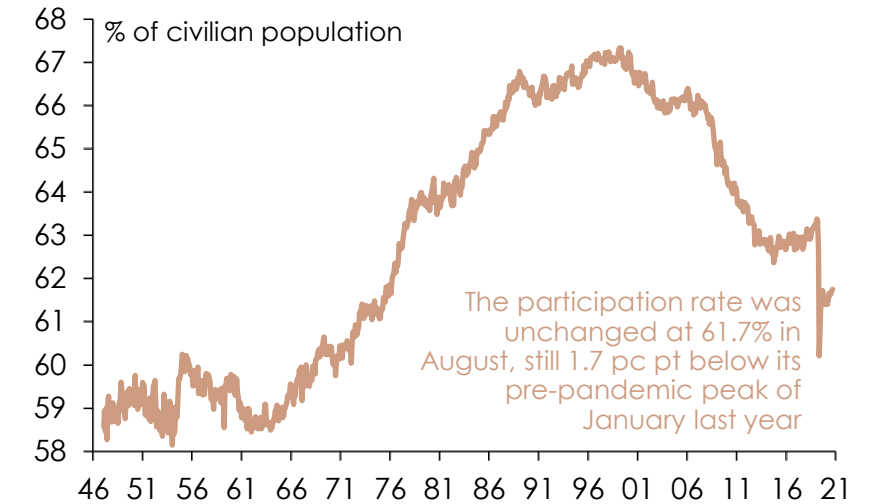
Unemployment benefit claims



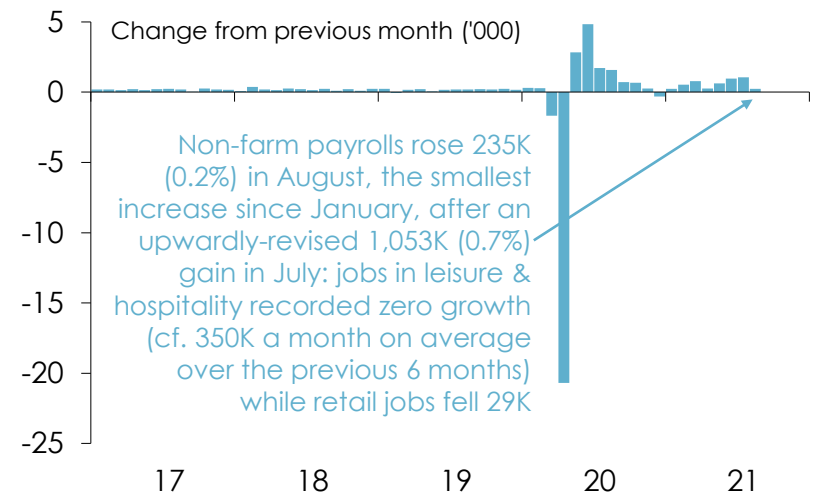
Hours worked (private sector)



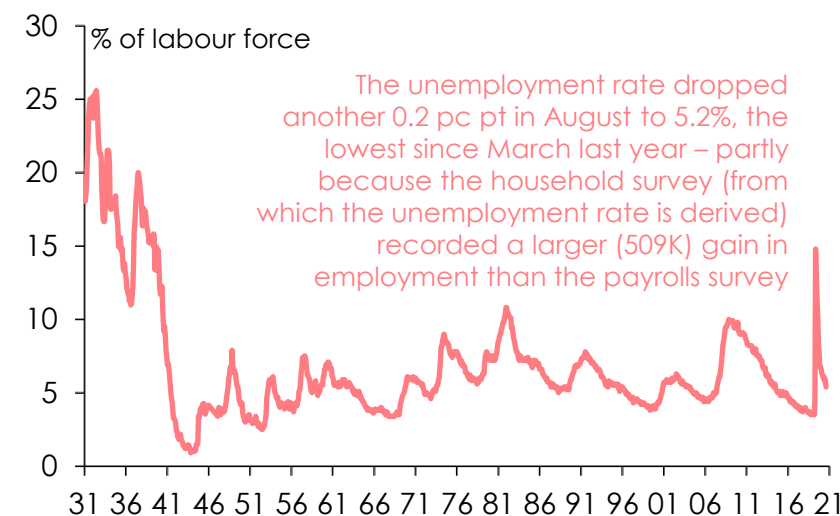
Labour force participation rate



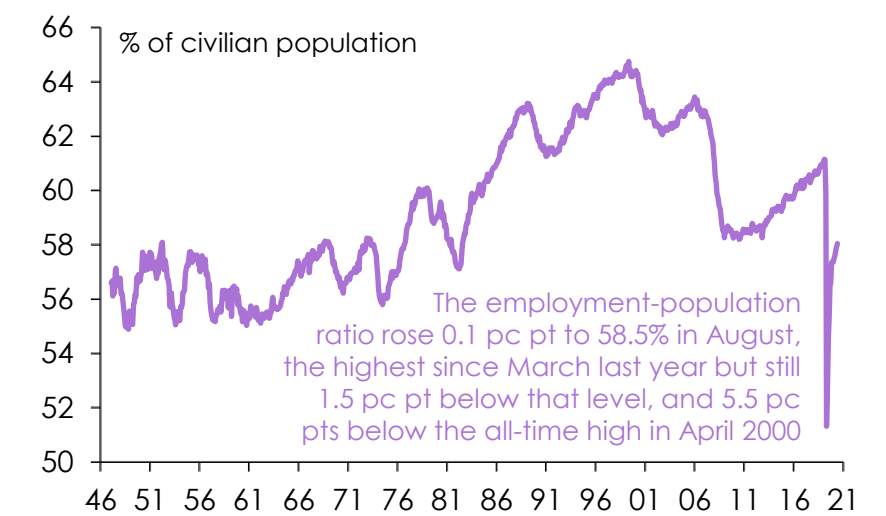
Non-farm payroll employment



Unemployment rate

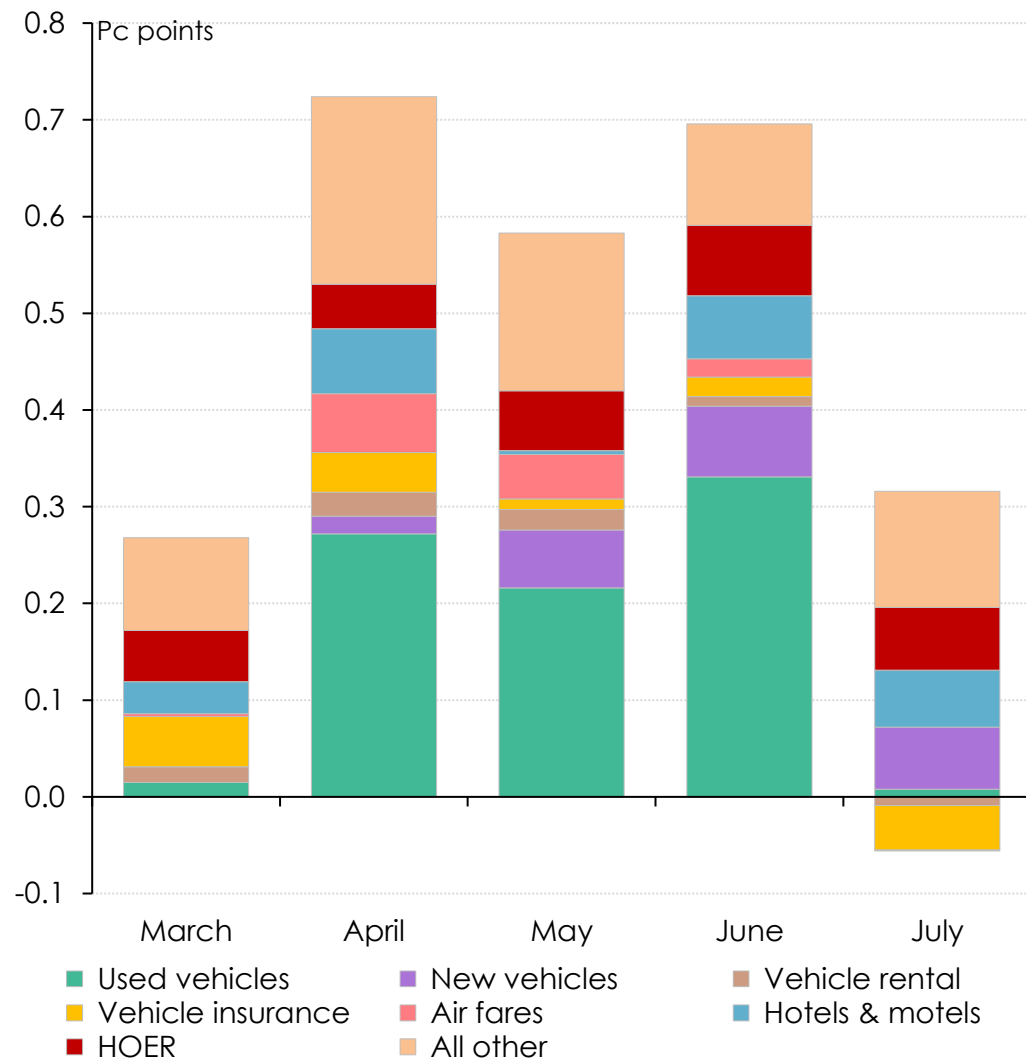


Employment to population ratio



The US 'inflation scare' abated in July – it remains the case that most of the rise in 'core' CPI is attributable to a handful of items

Contributions to recent monthly changes in CPI excluding food and energy



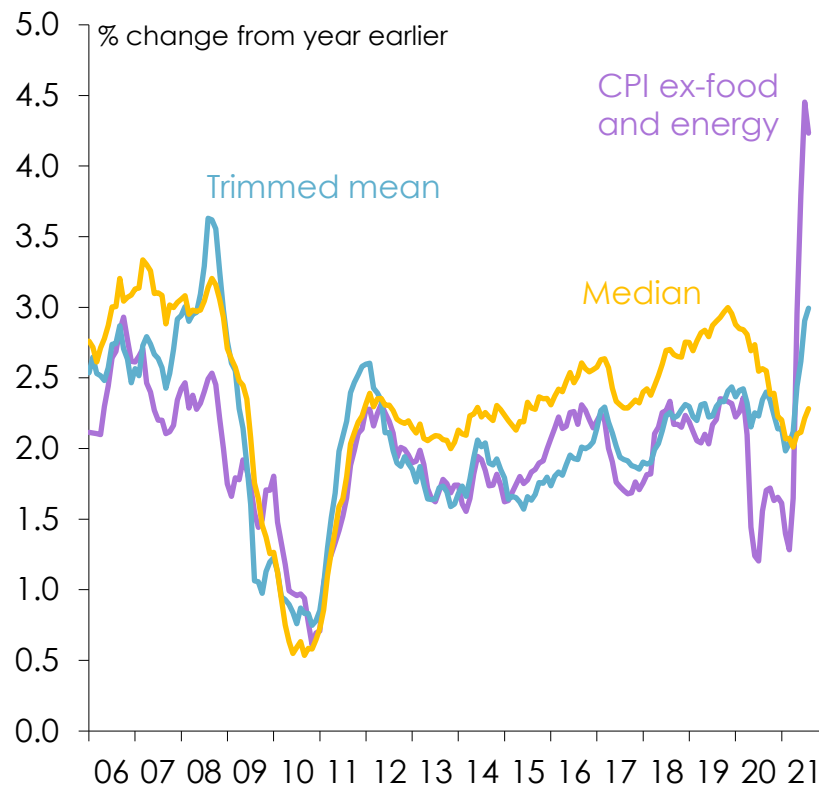
Price indices for items which have contributed most to recent monthly changes in the 'core' US CPI (rebased to December 2019 = 100)



Note: 'HOER' = home-owners' equivalent rent (a measure of the 'imputed rent' notionally paid by owner-occupiers to themselves), and which accounts for 28½% of the CPI excluding food and energy. Source: US [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), Consumer Price Index Table 6; Corinna. [Return to "What's New"](#).

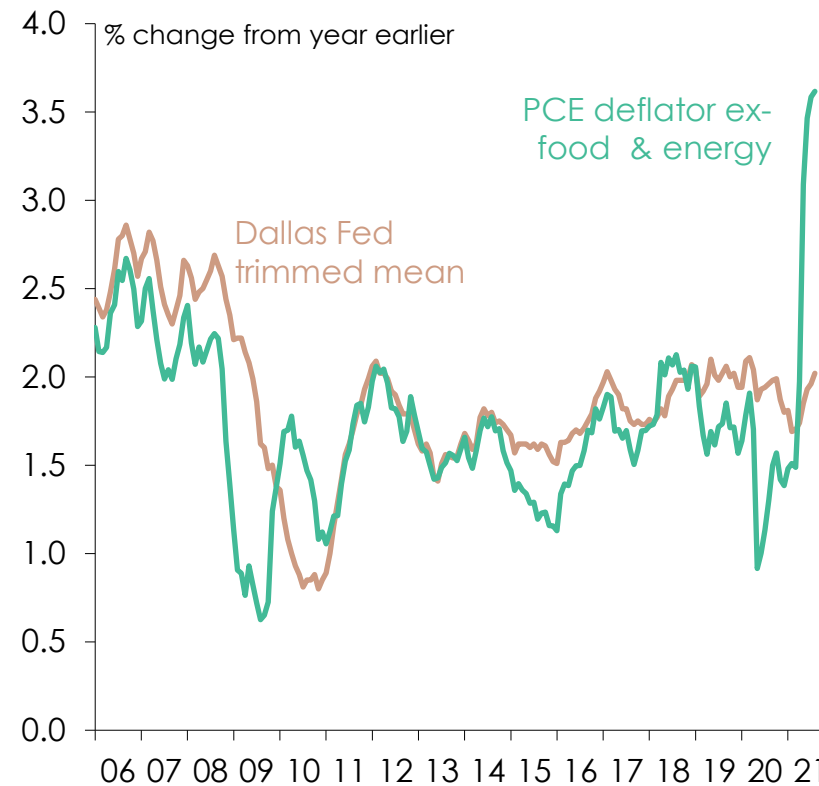
Statistical measures of 'core' inflation haven't increased very much – but longer-term inflation expectations are starting to edge upwards

Alternative measures of US 'core' CPI inflation



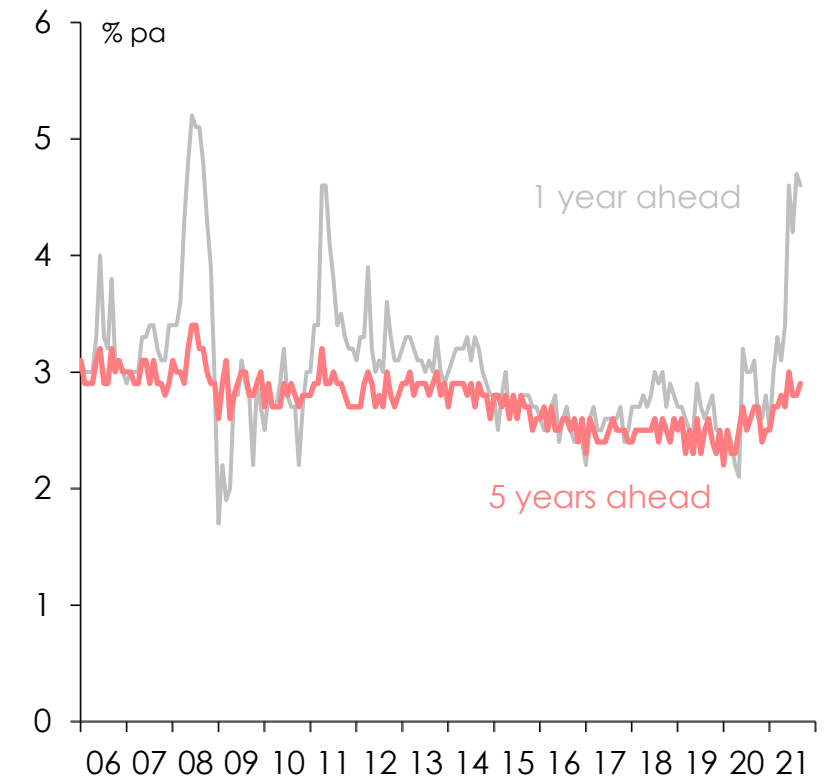
- ❑ Statistical measures (similar to those used by the RBA) confirm that the rise in 'core' CPI inflation is almost entirely due to 'outliers' (see previous slide)

Alternative measures of US 'core' PCE deflator inflation



- ❑ Likewise the trimmed mean of the PCE price deflator (the Fed's targeted inflation measure) has not increased dramatically

Household inflationary expectations

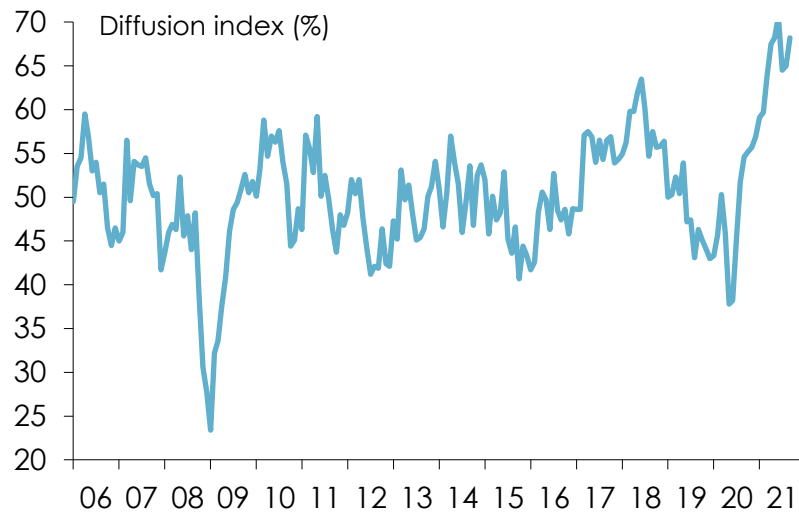


- ❑ Short-term household inflation expectations have risen sharply, but longer-term expectations are also creeping up

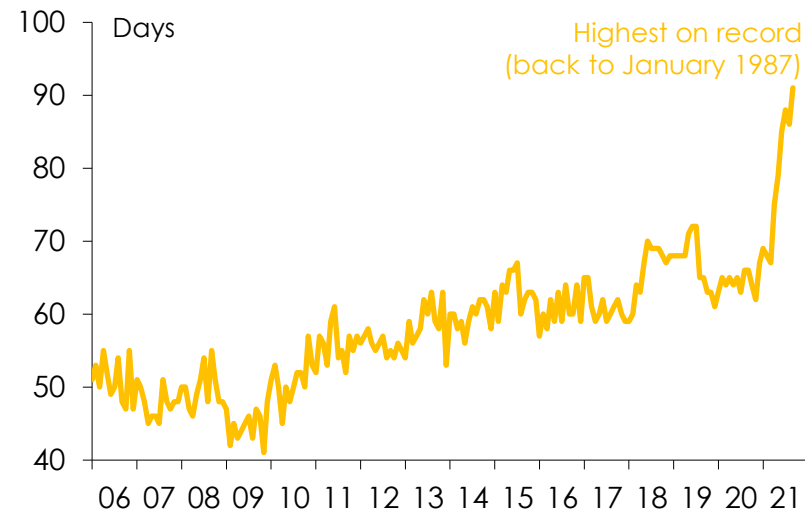
Note: The 'trimmed mean' CPI inflation rate excludes the components of the CPI whose weights fall in the top and bottom 8% of the distribution of price changes; the median is the component whose price change is in the middle of the distribution of price changes. The 'trimmed mean' of the PCE deflator excludes 24% by weight from the lower tail and 31% by weight from the upper tail of the ranked distribution of price changes. Sources: [US Bureau of Economic Analysis](#); [Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland](#); [Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas](#); and [Michigan University Survey Research Center](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

There are some serious supply-chain difficulties in the US – particularly in the auto sector – which will probably persist for some months yet

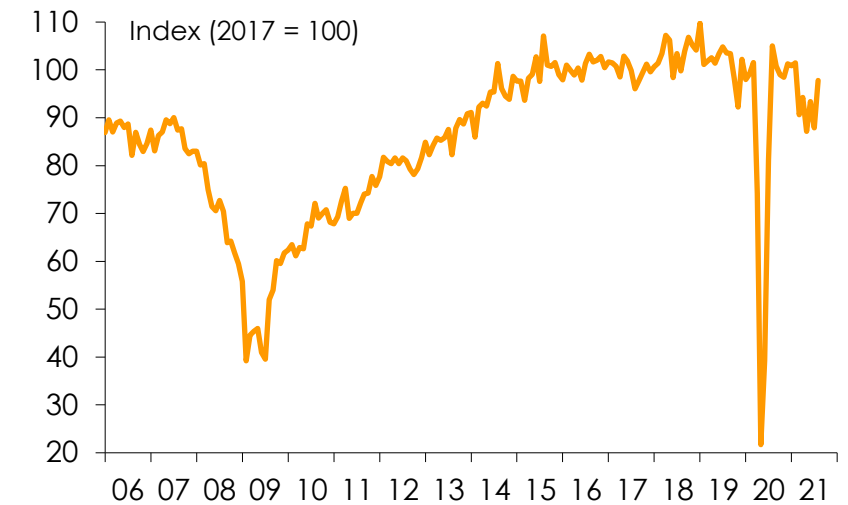
Manufacturers' order backlogs



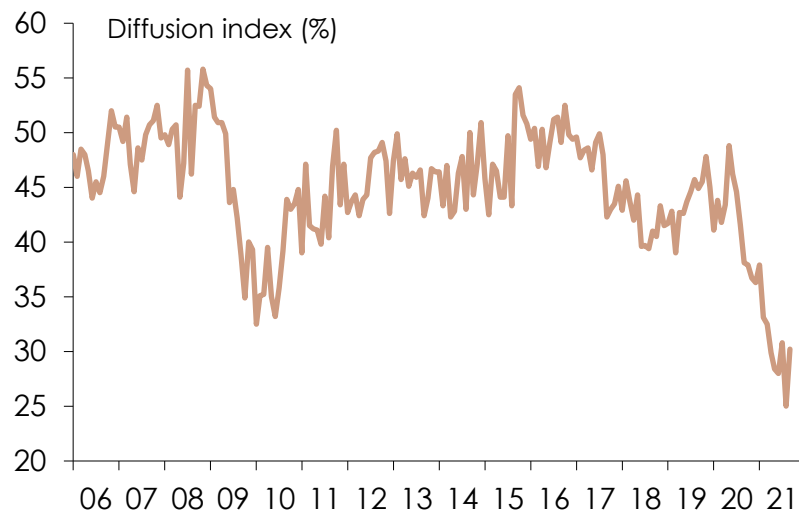
Lead-time for production materials



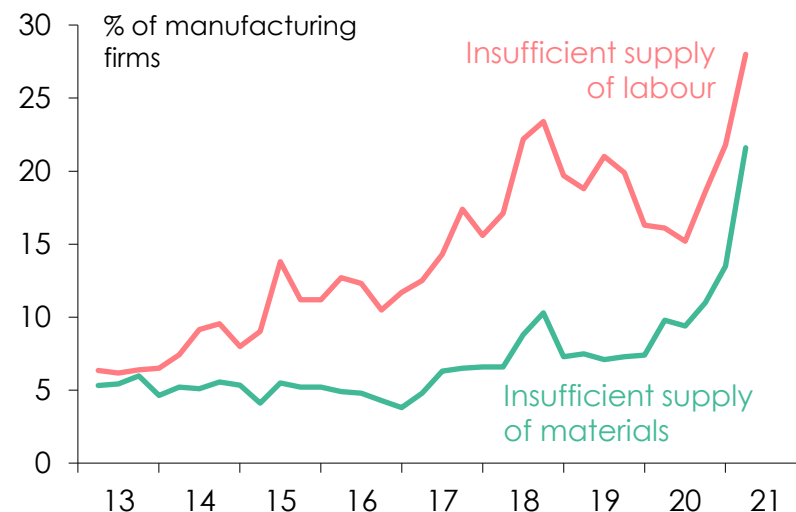
Motor vehicles & parts production



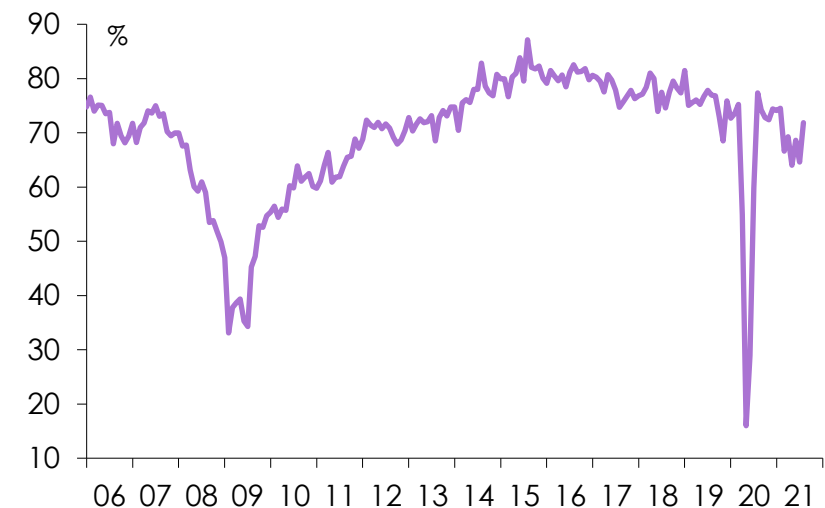
Manufacturers' customer inventories



Reasons for < full capacity



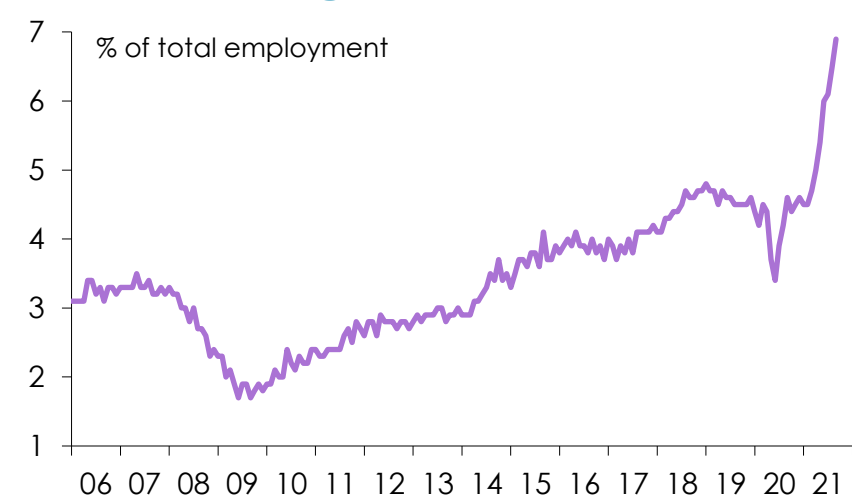
Auto industry capacity utilization



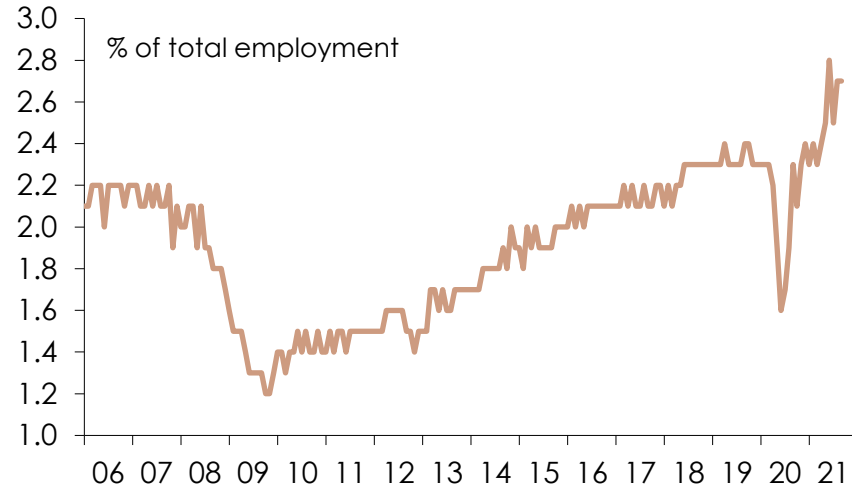
Note: The diffusion index of order backlogs is 50 plus the percentage of respondents reporting longer backlogs minus the percentage reporting shorter backlogs (and similarly for customer inventories). 'Reasons for < full capacity' means reasons for operating at less than full capacity. Sources: Institute for Supply Management, [Report on Business](#); US Census Bureau, [Quarterly Survey of Plant Capacity Utilization](#); Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, [Industrial Production and Capacity Utilization - G17](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

The US labour market appears to be tightening, and wages are rising in some sectors – but it's not clear how broadly-based this will become

Job openings

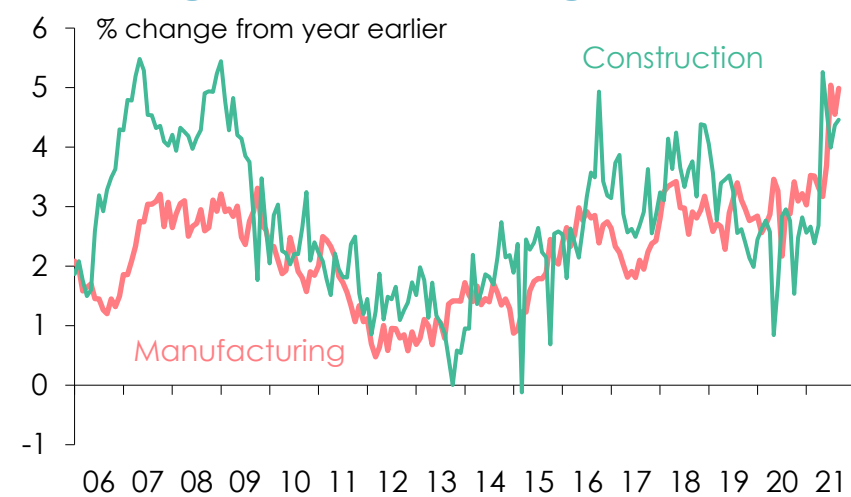


Quit rate

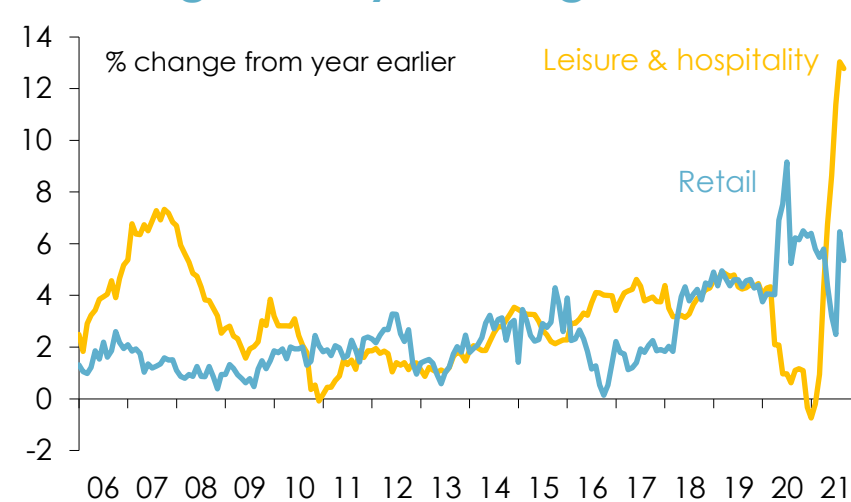


Note: Measures of average hourly earnings (especially the all-industries measures) and of average compensation per hour are affected by changes in the composition of employment (so for example they rose sharply in Q2 2020 when large numbers of low-paid workers were laid off and fell markedly when they returned to work) whereas the Atlanta Fed 'wage growth tracker' (which tracks the wage growth of individuals) and the wages component of the ECI (which is very similar to the ABS' Wage Price Index) are not. Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, [Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey](#), [Current Employment Statistics](#), [Employment Cost Trends](#) and [Labor Productivity and Costs](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

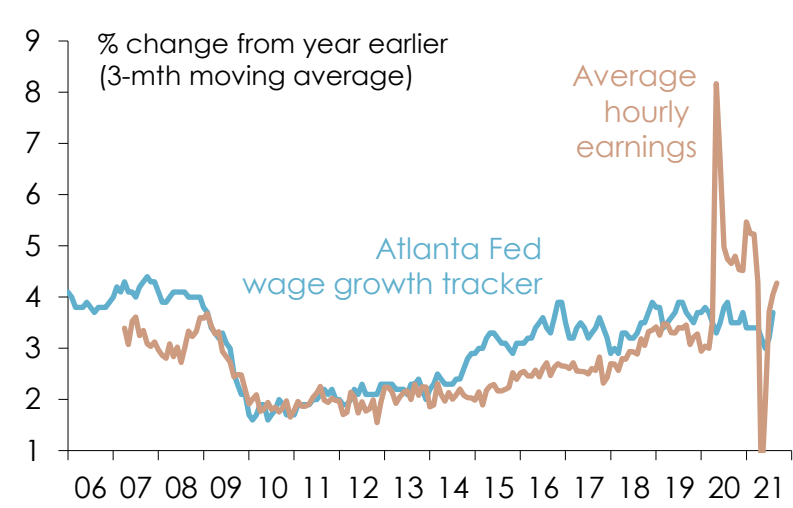
Average hourly earnings



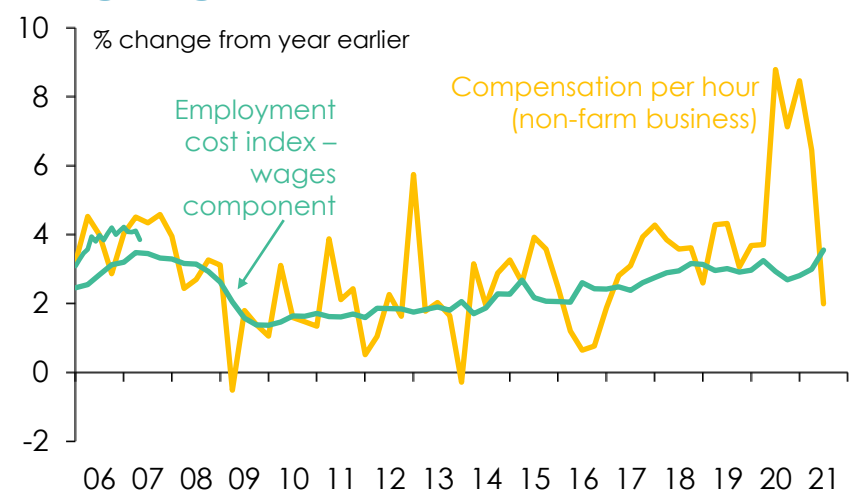
Average hourly earnings



Overall wages growth - monthly

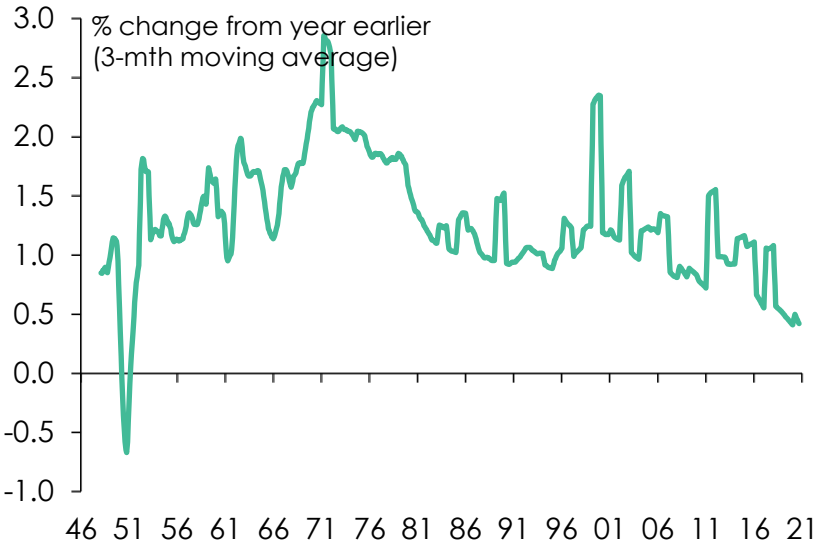


Wages growth - quarterly

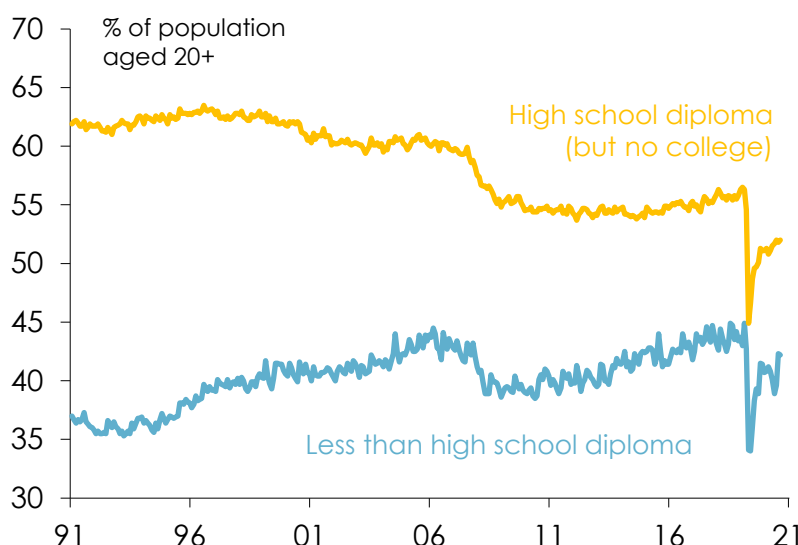


US labour market tightness owes a lot to restrictions on immigration, and to barriers to the return to the labour market of specific groups

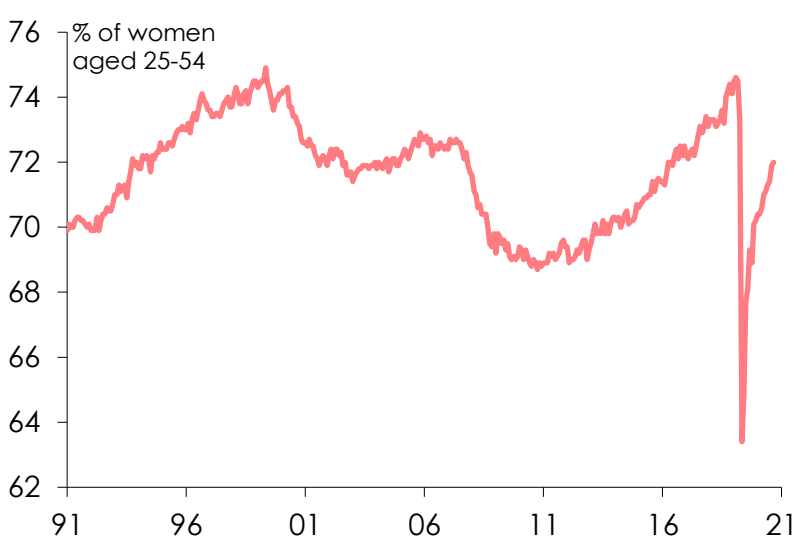
Civilian working age population



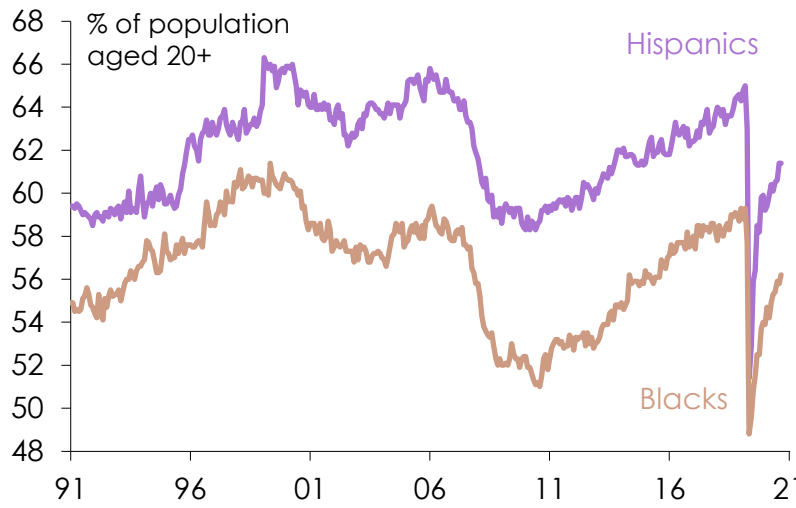
'E-pop' ratio – by education



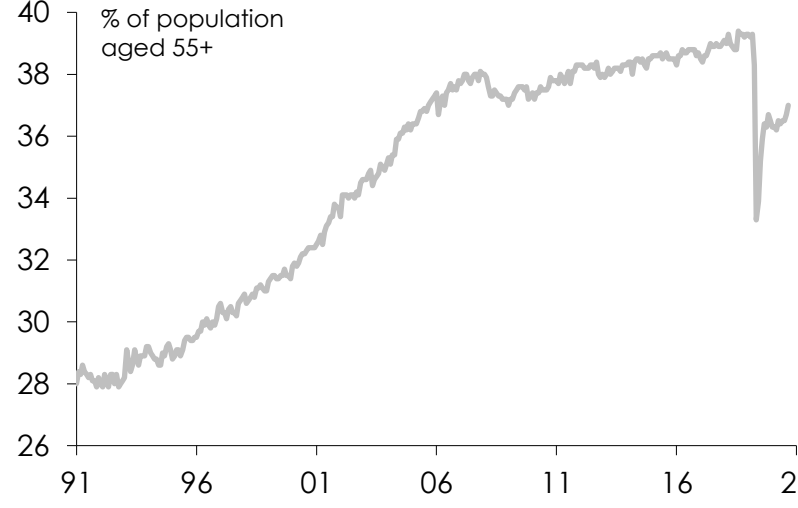
'E-pop' ratio – women 25-54



'E-Pop' ratio – Blacks & Hispanics



'E-pop' ratio – people 55 & over



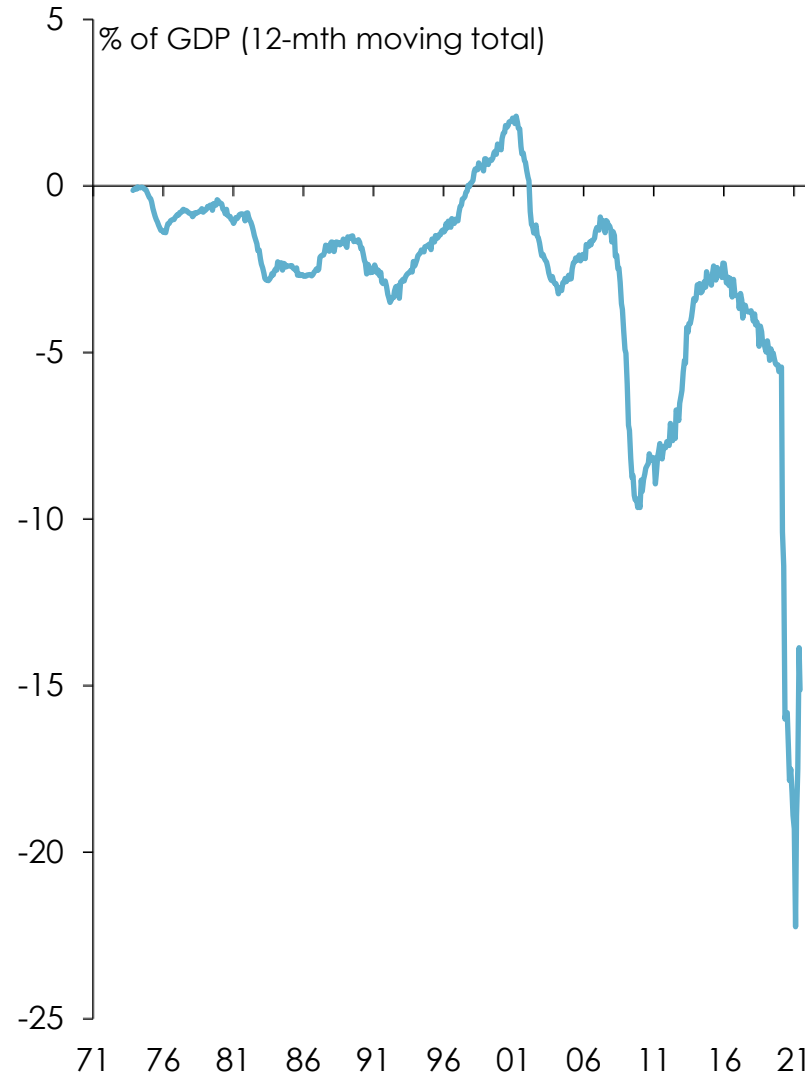
Change from Jan-Feb 2020 to Apr-May 2021(pc of population)

Group	Not in the labor force	Not in the labor force and caregiving
All individuals aged 16 and older	1.7	.7
Women aged 25 to 54 without children	1.8	1.0
Mothers aged 25 to 54 with only children aged 5 and younger	1.4	1.4
Mothers aged 25 to 54 with children aged 6 to 17	2.6	2.6
White	2.7	2.5
Black or African American	2.8	3.6
Asian	2.3	1.3
Hispanic or Latino	5.0	4.0
Fathers aged 25 to 54 with children aged 6 to 17	.7	.6

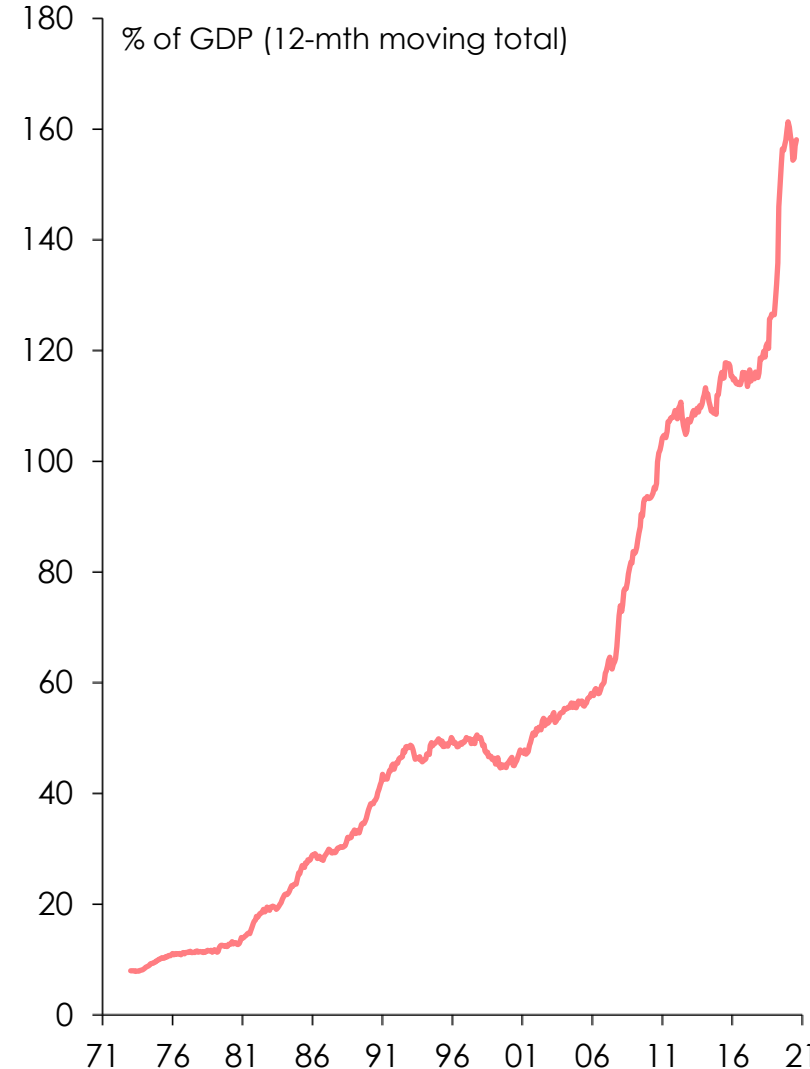
Note: 'E-pop' ratio means employment as a percentage of the civilian (non-institutionalized) population. Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, [Current Employment Statistics](#) (August 2021); Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, [Monetary Policy Report - July 2021](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

The US budget deficit has probably passed its peak, but new stimulus measures will ensure it stays large for some years yet to come

US Federal budget deficit



US gross Federal debt

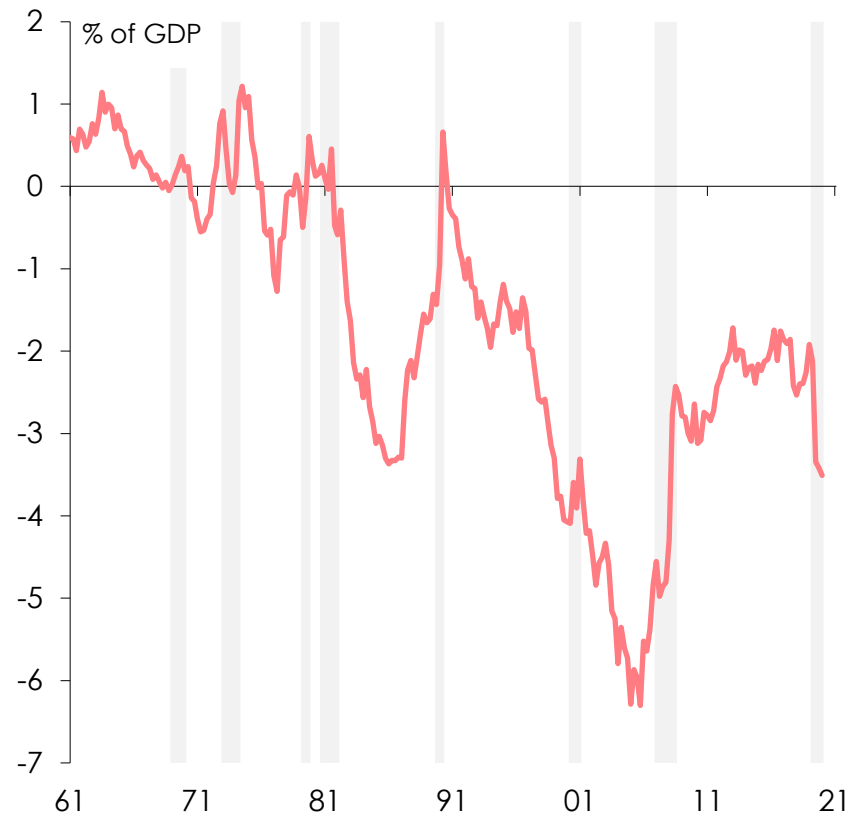


- ❑ The US Federal Government budget deficit widened by US\$128bn to \$302.1bn in July – largely reflecting a bigger-than-usual decline in personal income tax collections
- ❑ The deficit for the 12 months ended July was US\$2.9 trn, down from a peak of \$4.1 trn in the 12 months ended March, but almost exactly the same as in the 12 months to July last year
- ❑ The market value of gross debt outstanding rose by \$210bn to \$29.9 trn (158% of GDP), boosted by falling bond yields
- ❑ The Senate last month passed legislation authorizing US\$1 trn in infrastructure spending over the 10 years to 2031 – which the [Congressional Budget Office](#) reckons will add about \$256bn to the deficit over this period (cf. Democrat claims that it will be fully funded by revenue and other spending measures)
- ❑ The Senate also passed a bill authorizing \$3.5 trn of spending on health & child care, family leave, public education and climate change – however unlike the infrastructure bill this didn't attract any Republican votes and will need to pass via 'reconciliation'

Note: The measure of US gross federal debt is at market value. Sources: [US Treasury Department](#); [Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas](#); US Bureau of Economic Analysis; [US Congressional Budget Office](#); Corinna. [Return to "What's New"](#).

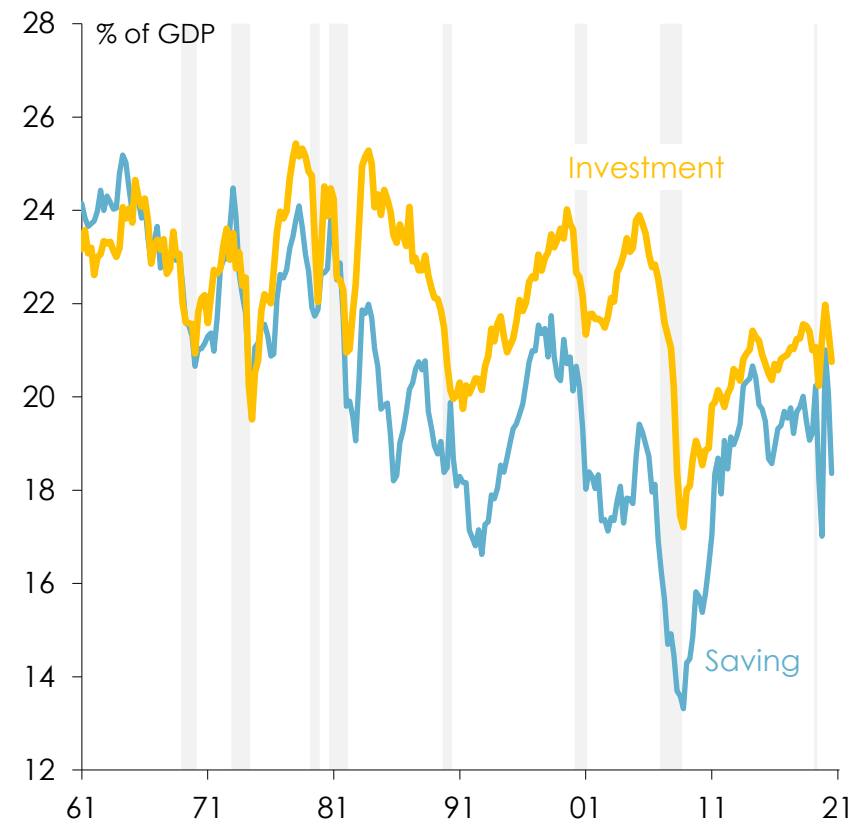
Unusually, the US current account deficit has widened so far during this recession, largely because investment hasn't fallen much

US current account balance



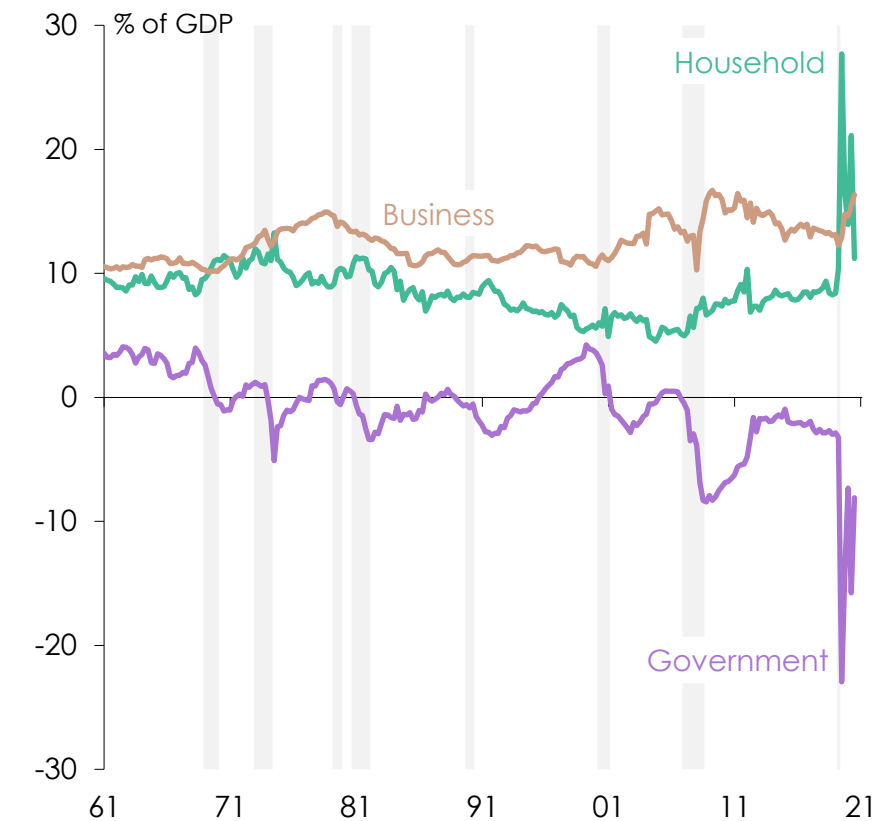
The US current account has *widened* during the recession that began last year – and in Q1 was the largest (as a pc of GDP) since Q4 2008

Gross saving and investment



Investment *didn't* fall much during this recession – perhaps because it didn't rise as much as usual during the preceding expansion (corporate tax cuts notwithstanding)

Gross saving by sector



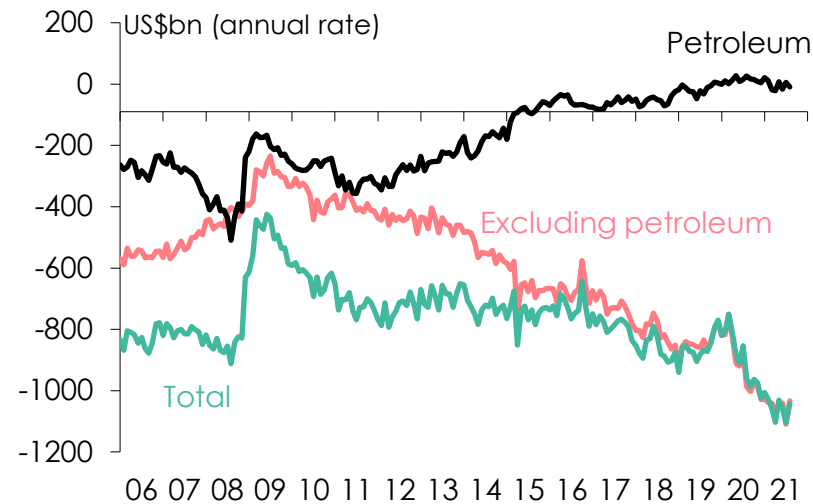
The dramatic increase in the budget deficit has been largely (but not totally) offset by an increase in household saving

Note: shaded areas denote recessions as designated by the US [National Bureau of Economic Research](#). Data up to Q2 2021.

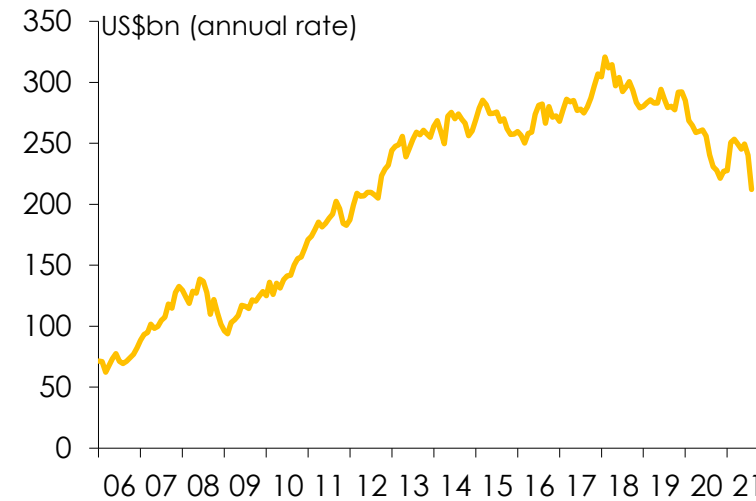
Source: US [Bureau of Economic Analysis](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

The US recorded its third-largest ever goods and services trade deficit in July, continuing a deterioration evident since the onset of Covid-19

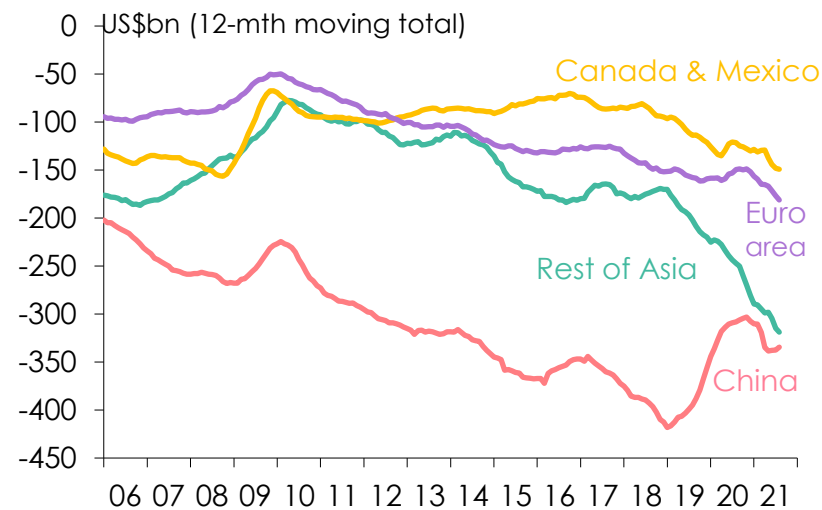
US goods trade balance



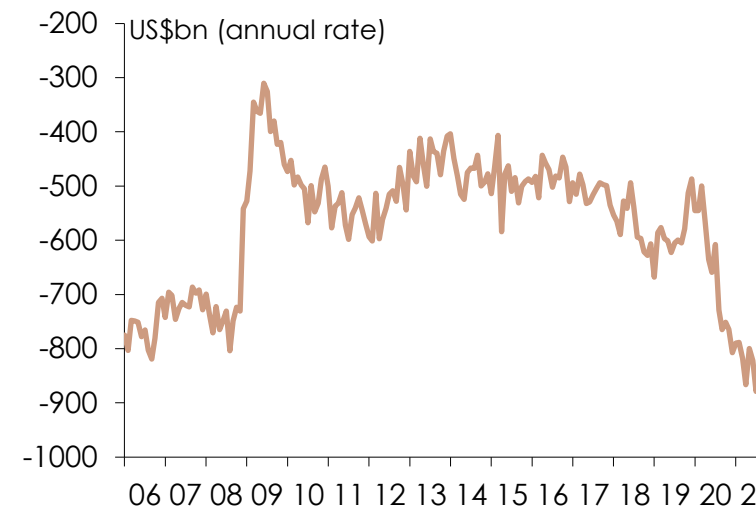
US services trade balance



US bilateral goods trade balances



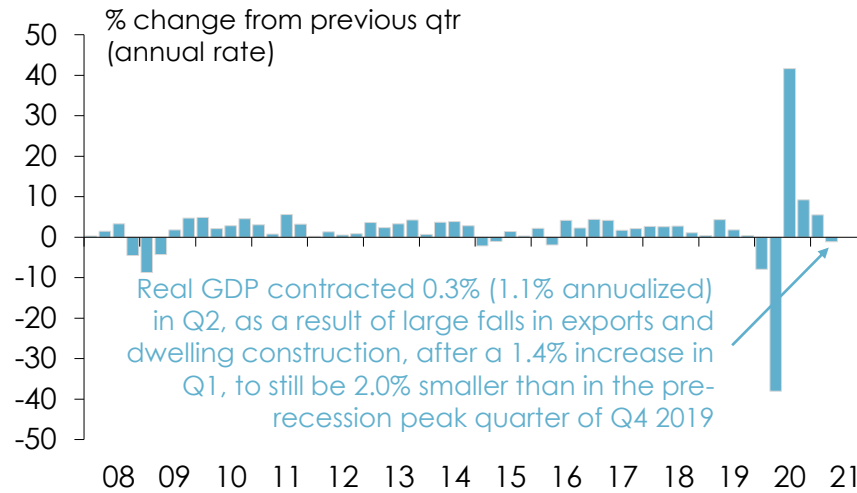
US goods & services trade balance



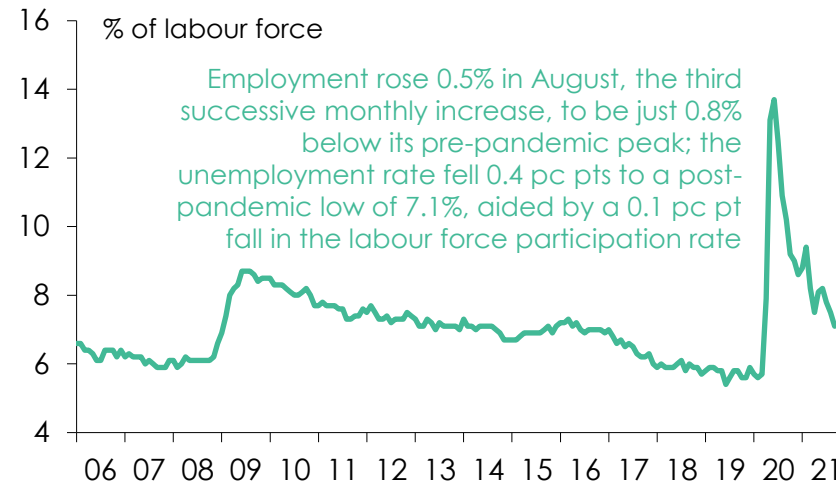
- ❑ The US goods trade deficit narrowed by US\$5.5bn in July to \$87.7bn
 - exports rose 1.8% and imports fell 1.2%
 - this was however still the fifth largest monthly trade deficit on record (after June's largest ever)
 - the US' bilateral deficits with China, ASEAN and the euro area have each widened by about \$25bn between the first seven months of 2020 and the first seven months of 2021
- ❑ The services surplus narrowed by \$2.3bn to \$17.7bn in June, the smallest since August 2012
 - exports rose 0.1% and imports 5.5%
- ❑ The combined goods and services deficit in July was \$70.1bn, the third-largest ever
 - for the first seven months of 2021 the goods and services deficit was \$485bn, compared with \$354bn in the first seven months of 2020
- ❑ Any 'excess demand' resulting from 'over'-stimulatory fiscal and monetary policies is more likely to show up in a larger current account deficit than in higher inflation – and these numbers are consistent with that

Employment in Canada increased in August for the third month in a row, and the unemployment rate fell 0.4 pc pts to 7.1%

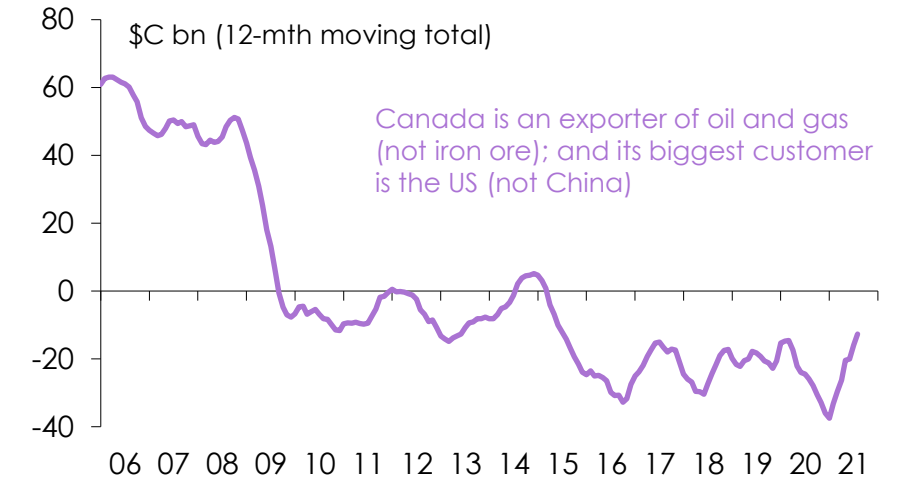
Real GDP



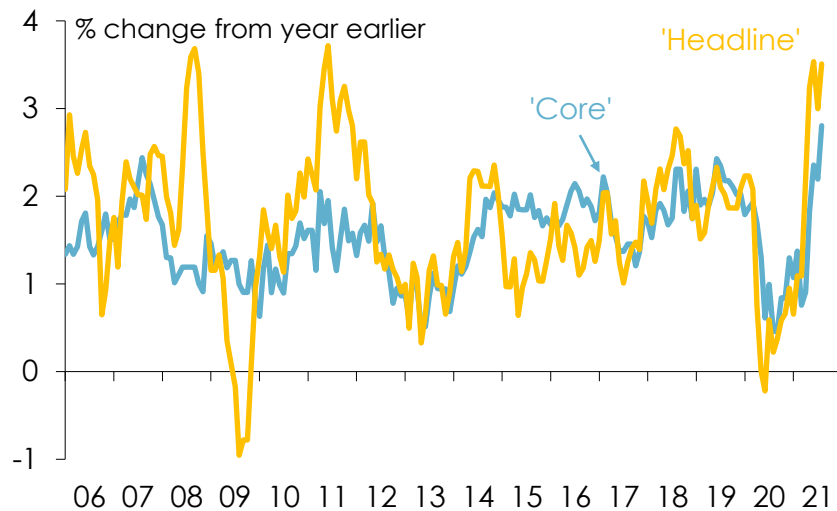
Unemployment rate



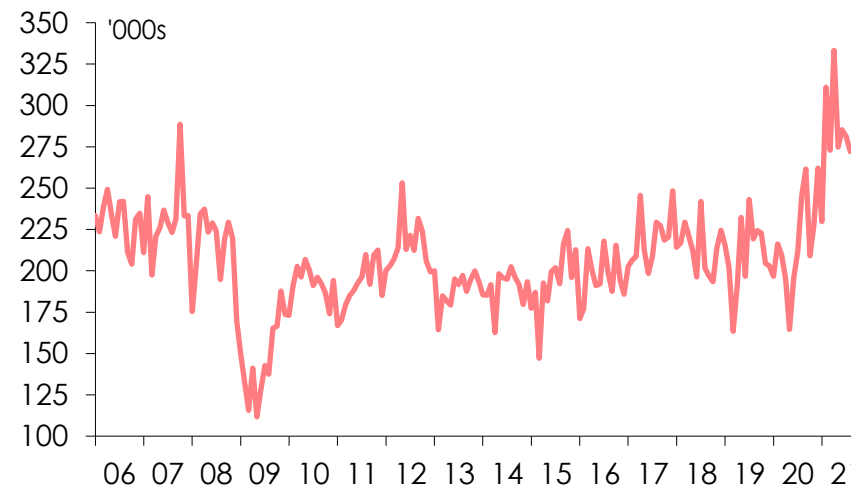
Merchandise trade balance



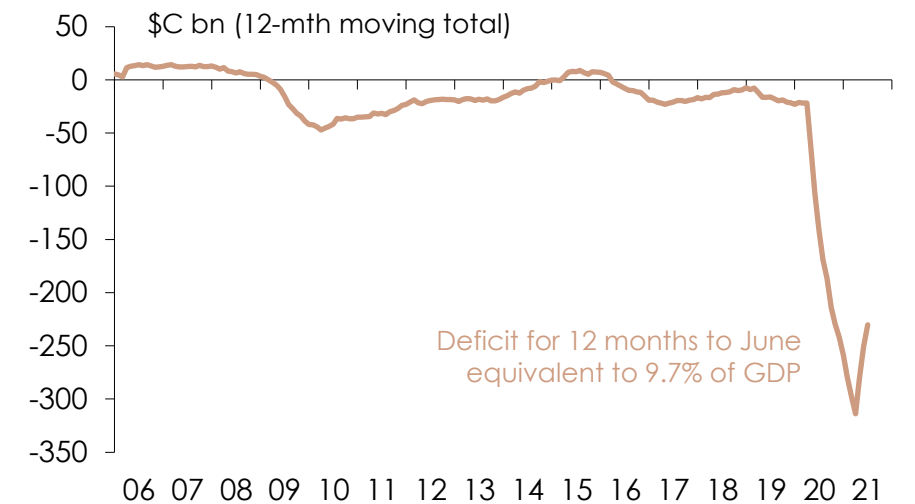
Consumer prices



Housing permits



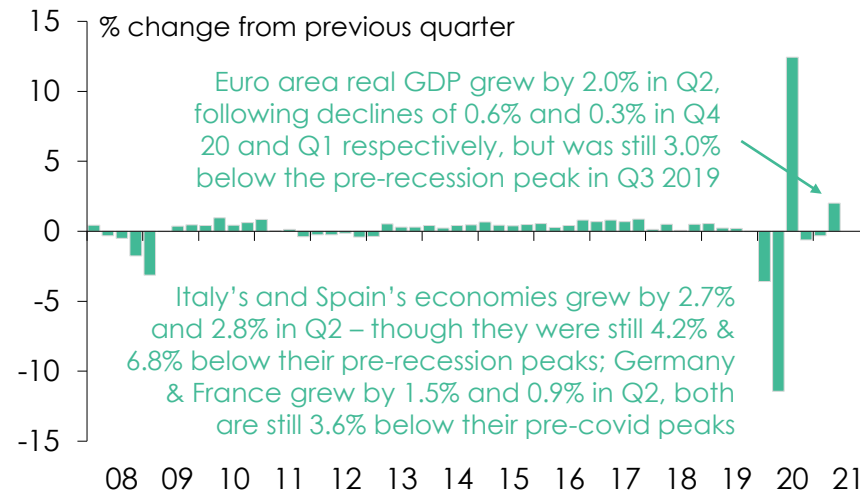
Federal budget balance



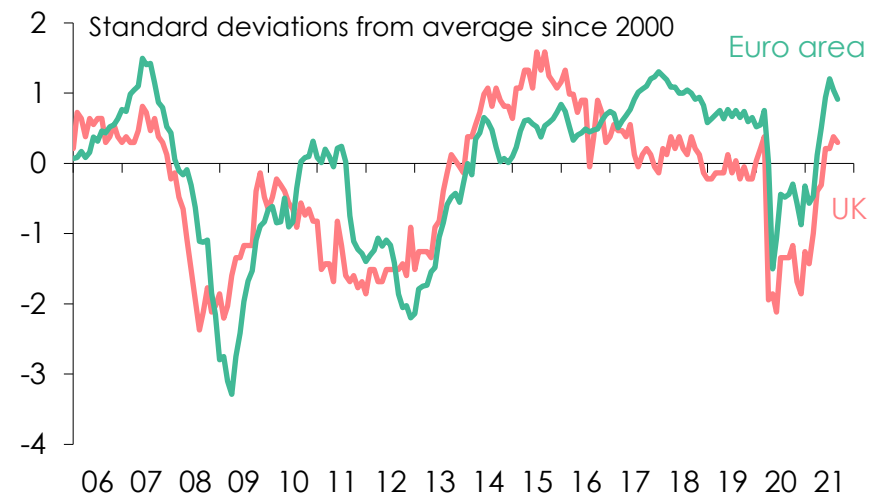
Sources: [Statistics Canada](#); [Teranet-National Bank of Canada](#); [Department of Finance Canada](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

The euro area economy grew by 2% in Q2, though it's still 3% smaller than at its pre-recession peak in Q3 2019: UK GDP rose 4.8% in Q2

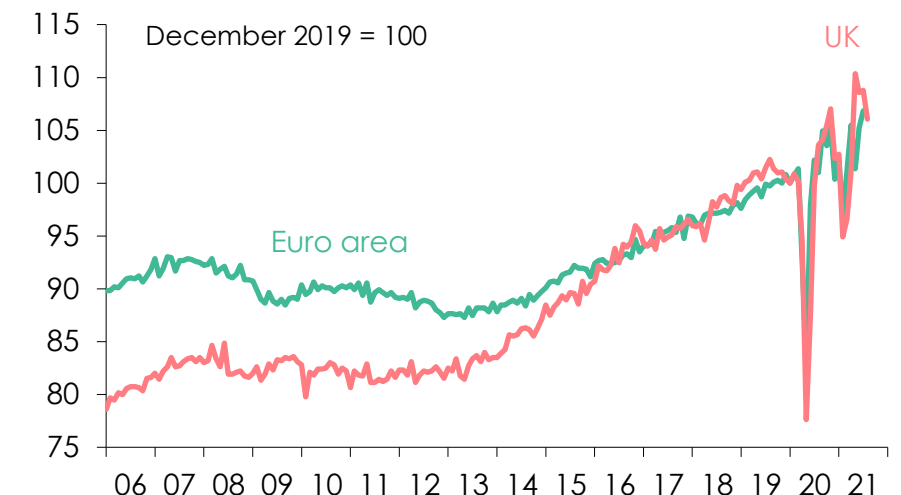
Euro area real GDP



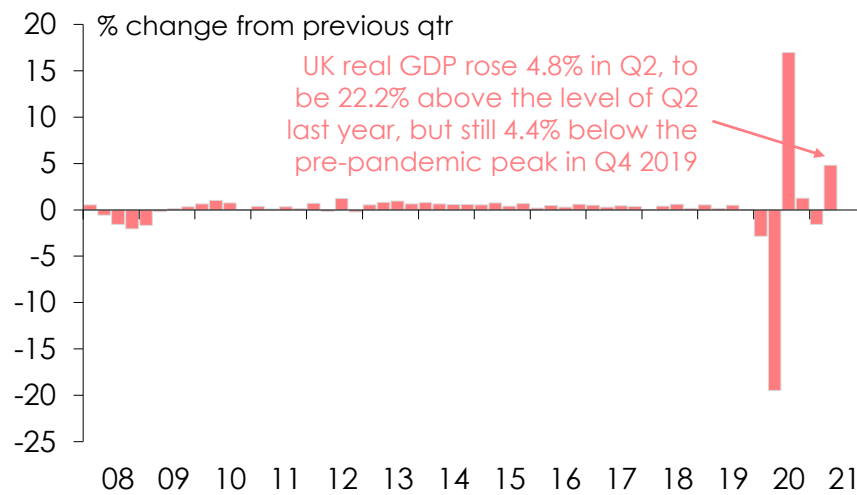
Consumer confidence



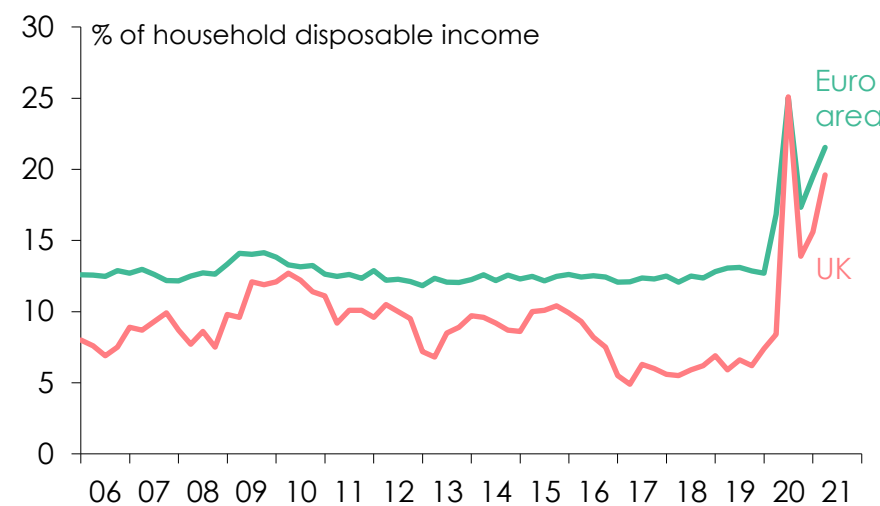
Retail sales volume



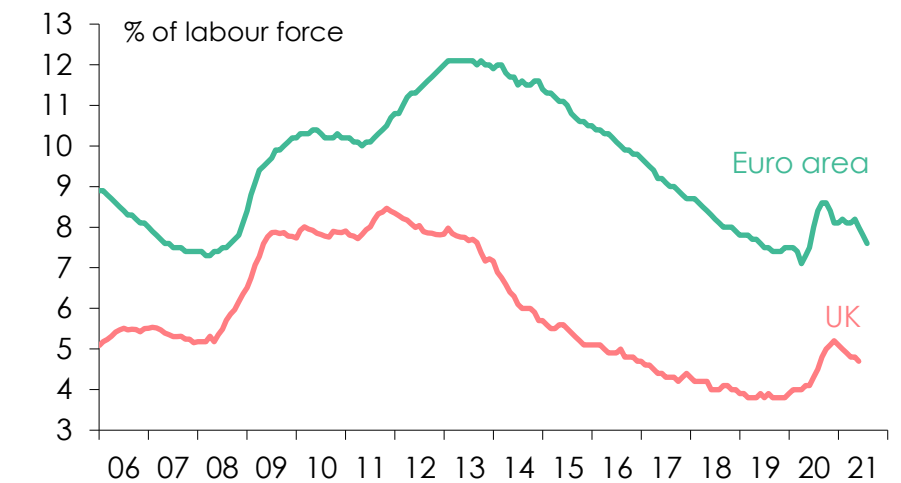
UK real GDP



Household saving ratio



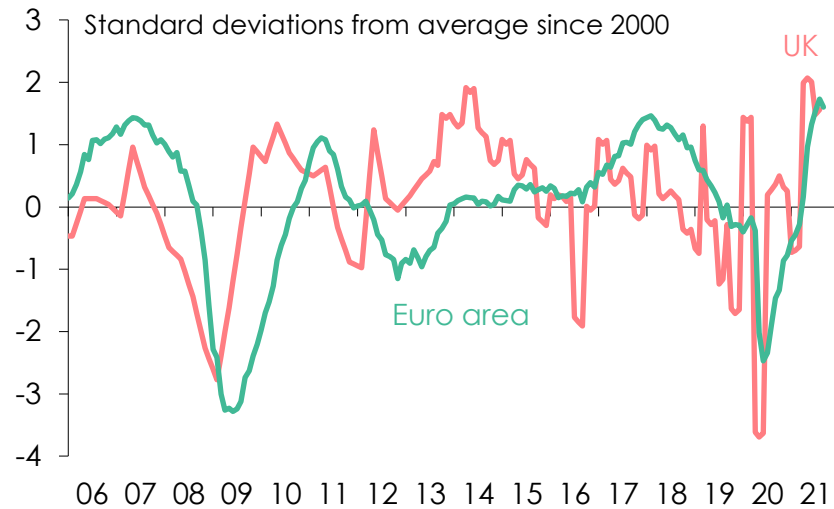
Unemployment



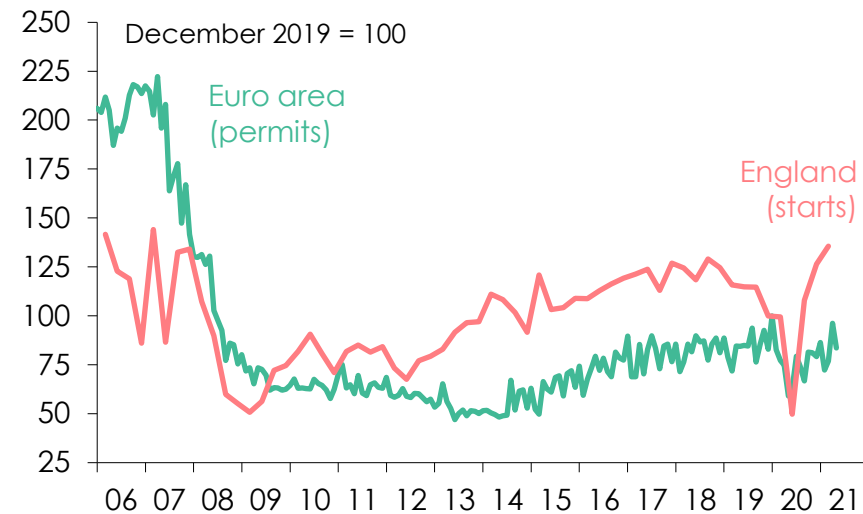
Sources: Eurostat; UK Office for National Statistics; GfK. The UK unemployment rate is published as a 3-month moving average.
[Return to "What's New"](#).

The euro area's recovery is stronger than the UK's (except for housing) even though the UK has provided more fiscal stimulus

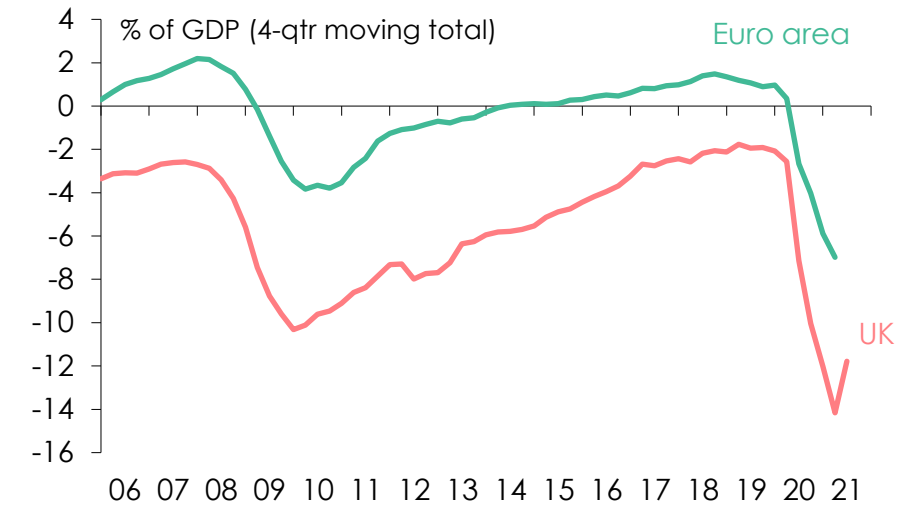
Business confidence



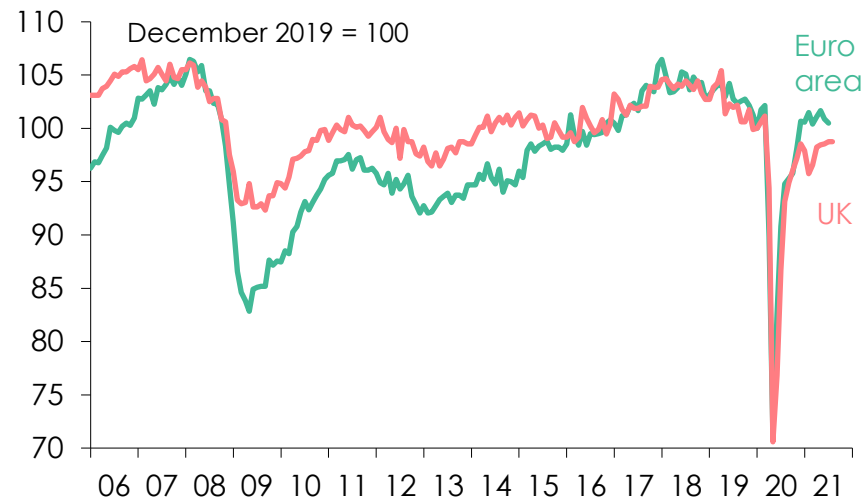
Housing activity



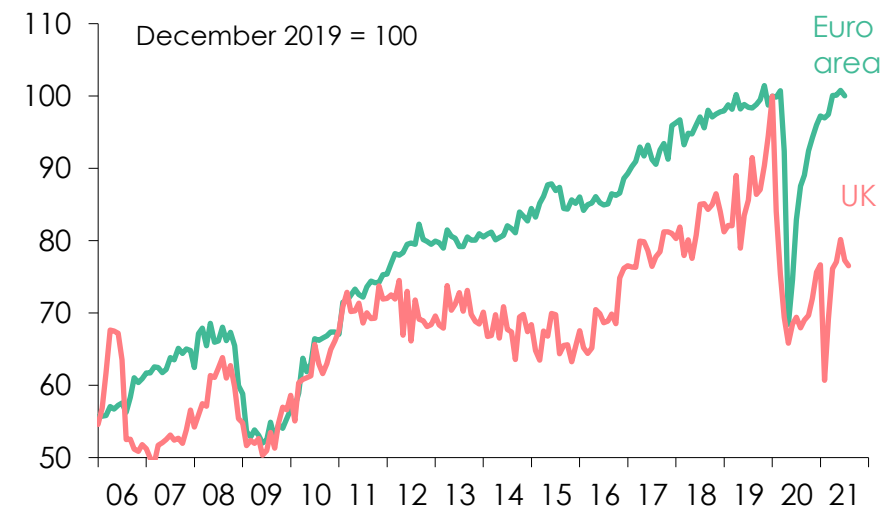
Government fiscal balance



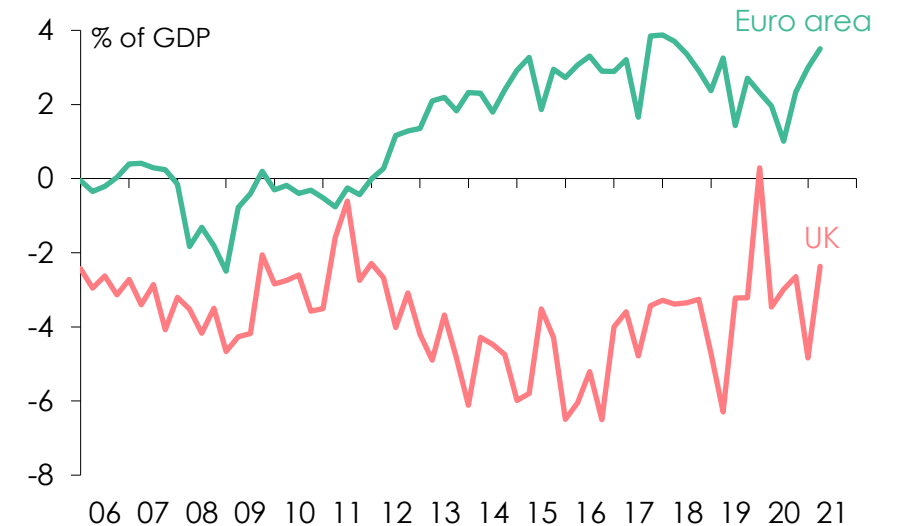
Manufacturing production



Merchandise exports



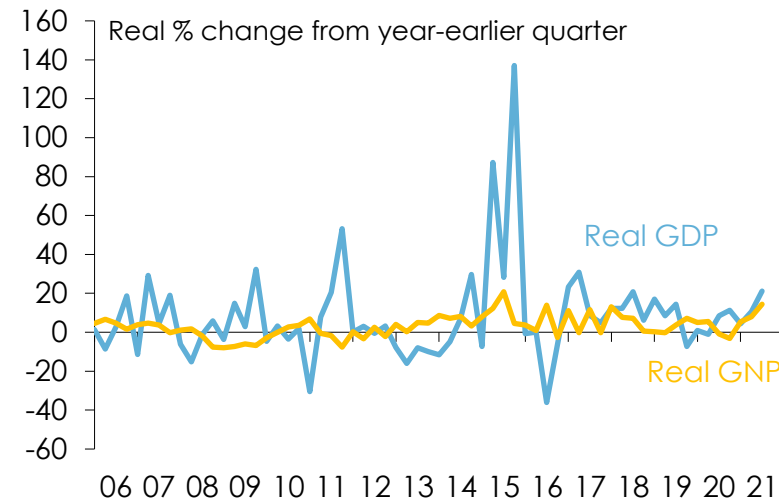
Current account balance



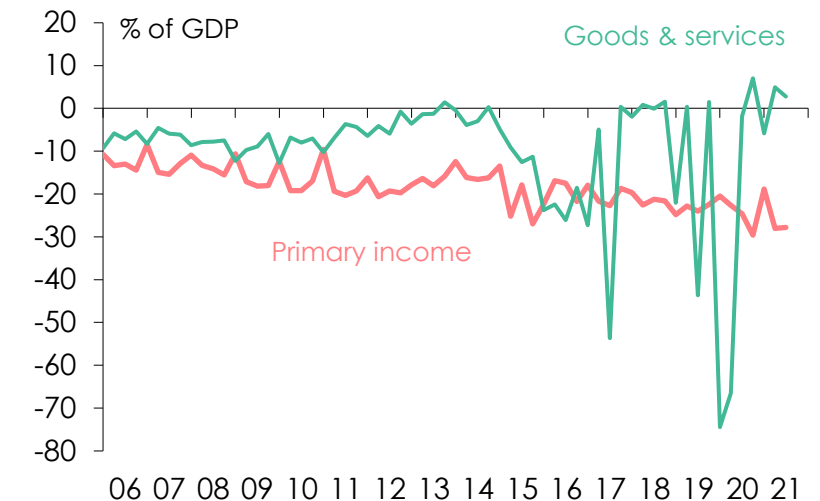
Ireland's apparently world-beating GDP growth paints a misleadingly flattering picture of its economic performance

- ❑ Ireland's real GDP grew by 6.3% in Q2, to be 21.1% larger than in Q2 last year, and 17.6% above its pre-pandemic peak in Q1 2020
- ❑ However Irish GDP figures are highly volatile, and often a misleading indicator of 'underlying' economic growth
 - As Ireland's CSO [explains](#), they are distorted by large gross flows (both trade and income payments) associated with the activities of multi-national enterprises and aircraft leasing companies located in Ireland
 - real gross *national* product (GNP), which abstracts from net factor income payments abroad, is much more stable than real GDP – it is 'only' 9.1% above its pre-pandemic peak
- ❑ The CSO publishes an alternative measure called 'modified domestic demand', which rose 9.4% in Q2 after a 5.8% contraction in Q1, but which was still 1.7% below its pre-pandemic peak in Q1 2019
 - Irish personal consumption is still 4.8% below its pre-pandemic peak in Q2 2019
- ❑ Irish unemployment at 6.4% in August is down 1.1 pc pts from its peak in February but is still 1.7 pc pts above its pre-recession low

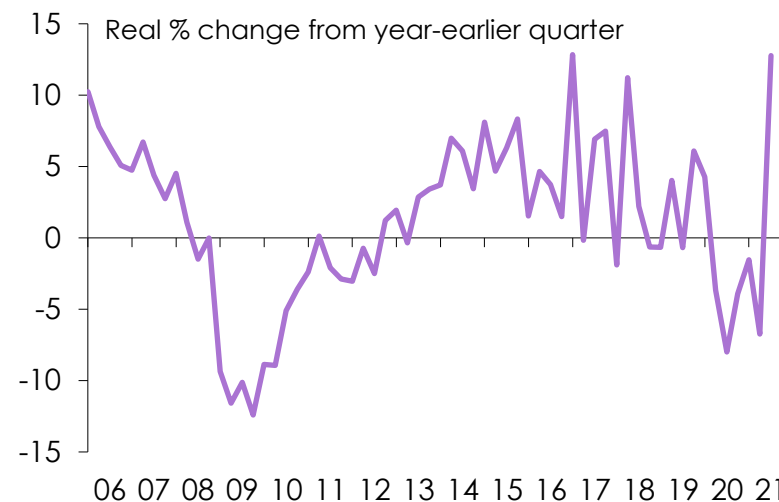
Real GDP and GNP



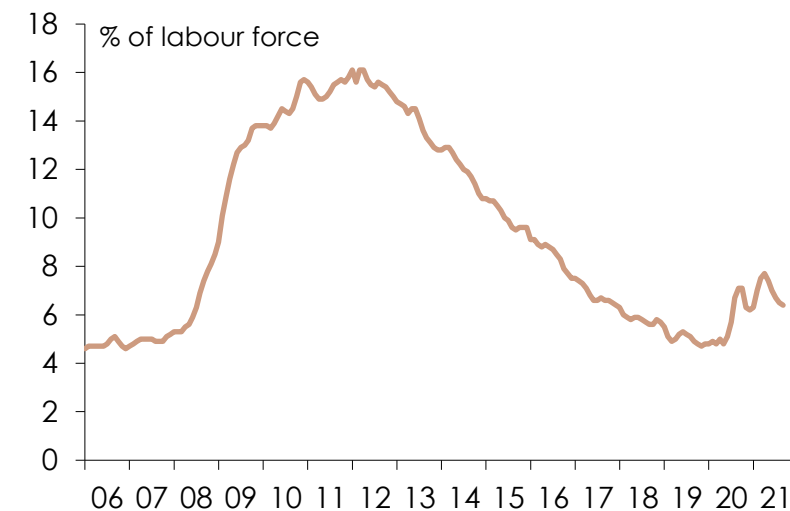
Balance of payments



'Modified domestic demand'



Unemployment



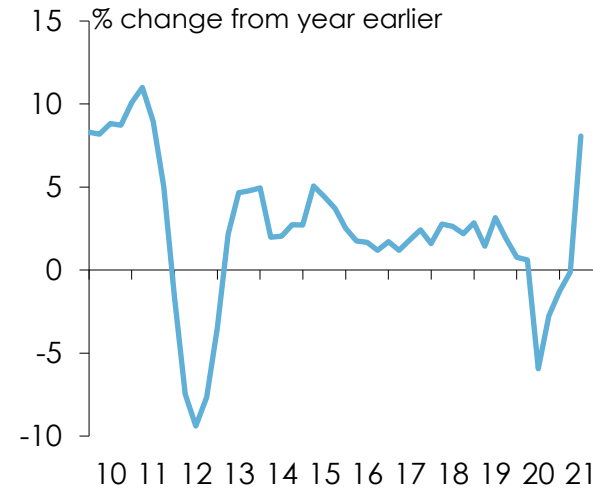
Russia's and Ukraine's central banks raised rates again this week, but Poland's didn't – while in Latin America Peru's central bank raised rates

- ❑ The [Bank of Russia](#) increased its key rate by another 25 bp, to 6.75%, at Friday's Board of Directors meeting – the fifth increase so far this year, by a total of 250 bp
 - this latest increase reflects the Board's judgement that “the balance of risks for inflation is tilted to the upside”, given “faster growth in demand relative to output expansion capacity”
 - the Bank “holds open the prospect of further key rate rises at its upcoming meetings” if “the situation develops in line with the baseline forecast” in order to “return annual inflation to 4%”
- ❑ The [National Bank of Ukraine](#) also raised its policy rate by another 50 bp to 8.5% on Thursday, the fourth increase this year (for a total of 250 bp)
 - NBU noted that Ukraine's annual inflation rate had exceeded 10% in July and had “continued to accelerate in August”, that “wages continue to grow at a rapid pace”, and that “inflation expectations remain high”
 - NBU affirmed that “if underlying inflationary pressures increase significantly and inflation expectations continue to worsen ... it stood ready to take additional measures to return inflation to its 5% target”
- ❑ [Narodowy Bank Polski](#) (Poland's central bank) again declined to follow its Czech and Hungarian counterparts in raising interest rates, keeping its reference rate at 0.1% and maintaining the pace of its bond purchases
 - despite Poland's annual inflation rate having risen to 5.4% over the 12 months to August (higher than in either Czechia or Hungary)
 - NBP Governor Adam Glapinski [said](#) that although the bank “isn't ignoring elevated price growth”, raising rates now would be “very risky” given that “the pandemic continues to cloud the economic outlook”
- ❑ [Banco Central de Reserva del Perú](#) raised its reference rate by 50 bp to 1.0% on Thursday, following on from a 25 bp increase at its previous Board of Directors meeting in July
 - the Board's decision was prompted by an increase in the annual ‘headline’ inflation rate to 5% in August (although ‘core’ inflation remained “around the centre of the target range”)

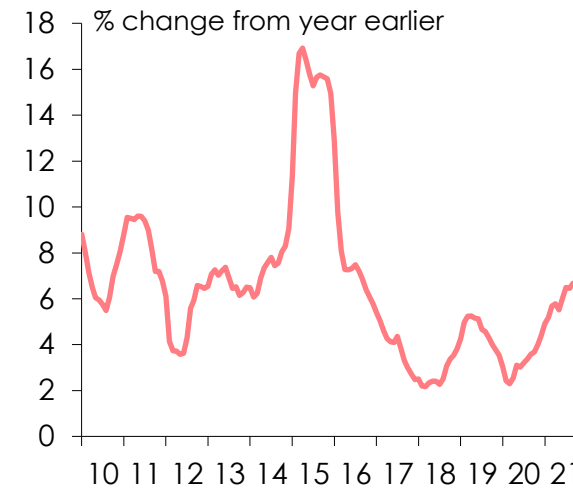
Russia's economy has returned to its pre-pandemic peak, inflation is rising, and the central bank has raised rates five times this year

- ❑ Russia's real GDP expanded by 3.5% in Q2, the fourth consecutive increase, to be 8.1% above last year's trough and 2.7% ahead of the pre-recession peak in Q3 2019
 - the Bank of Russia **judges** that the economy has returned to a "balanced growth path"
- ❑ Unemployment has fallen from a peak of 6.4% in August and September last year to 4.5% in July, the lowest since August 2019
- ❑ Inflation has picked up from a low of 2.3% in February last year to 6.7% in August, the highest since August 2016
 - according to the central bank, household inflation expectations have been at a four-year high for six months
 - the Bank of Russia this week raised rates for the 5th time (see previous slide)
- ❑ According to the Bank of Russia "medium-term inflation is largely influenced by fiscal policy" and it assumes "a return to fiscal rule parameters in 2022"

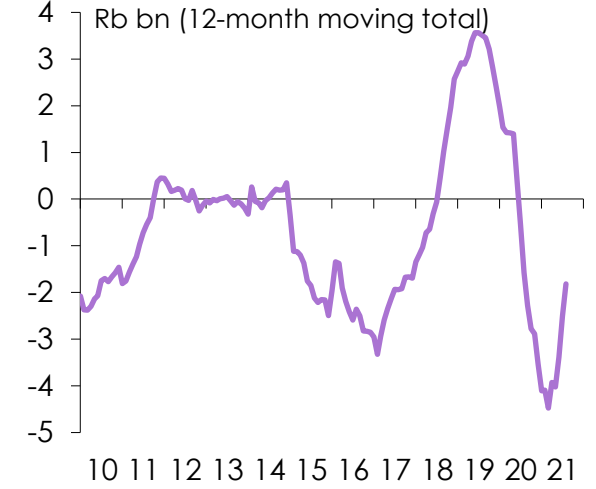
Real GDP growth



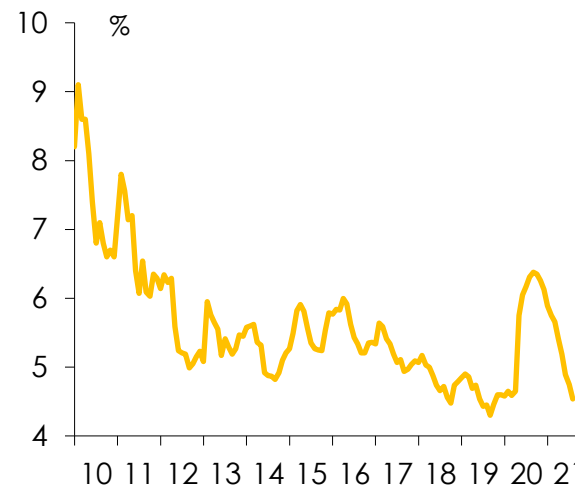
Inflation



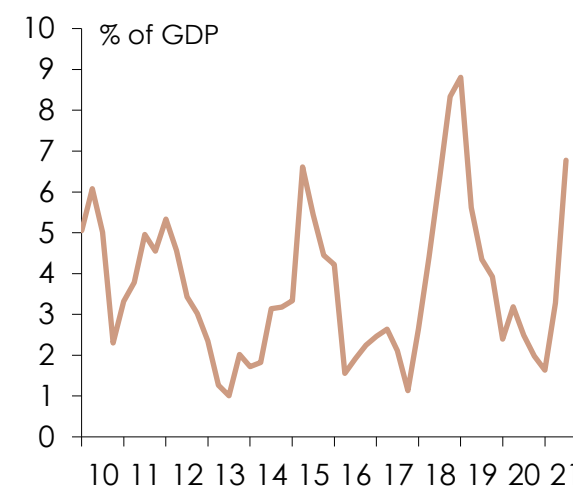
Budget balance



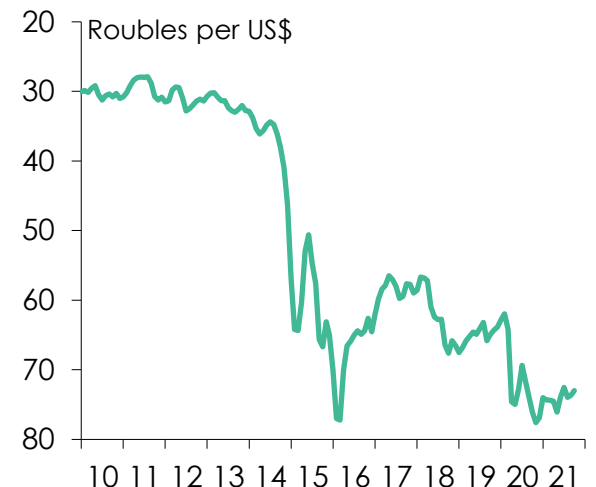
Unemployment



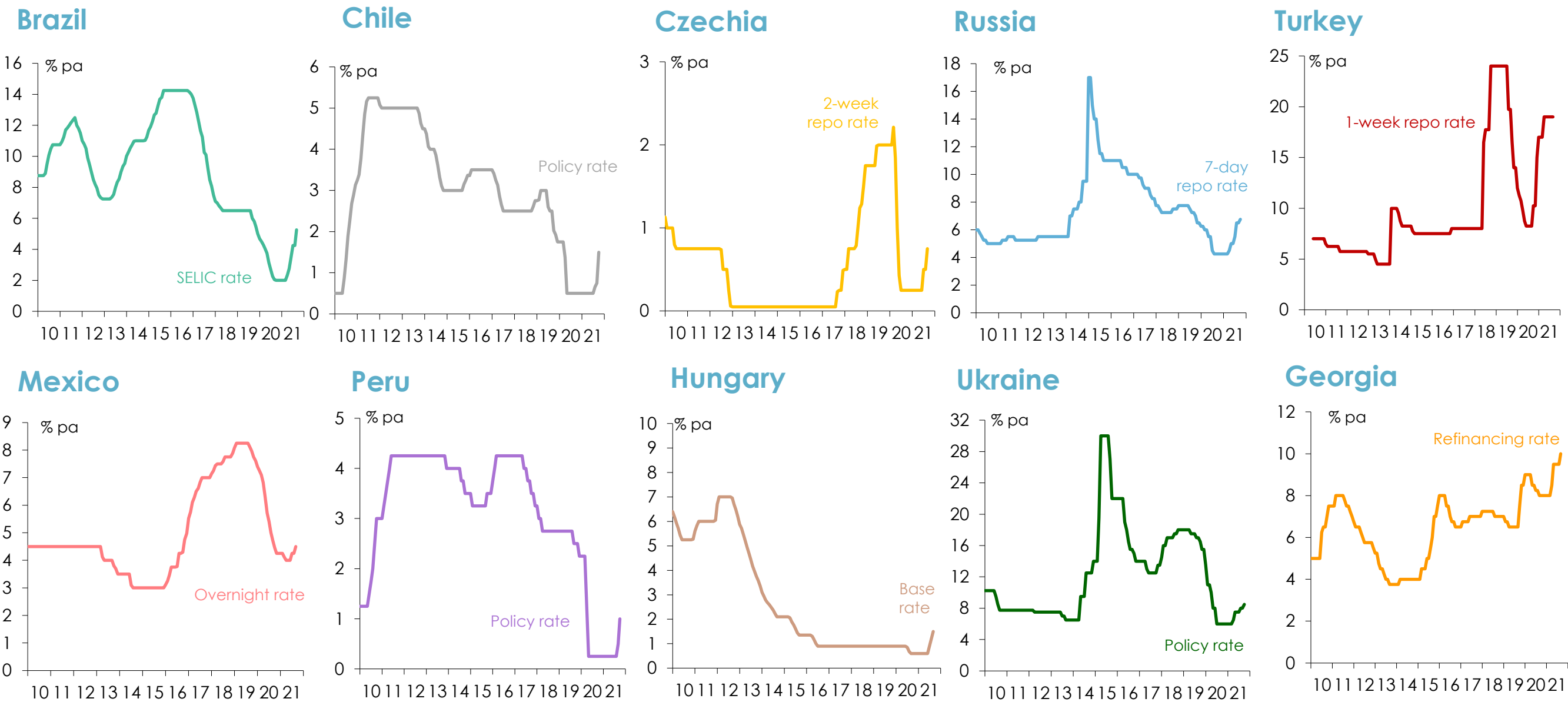
Current account balance



Rouble vs US\$



A growing number of ‘emerging’ market central banks have begun tightening monetary policy

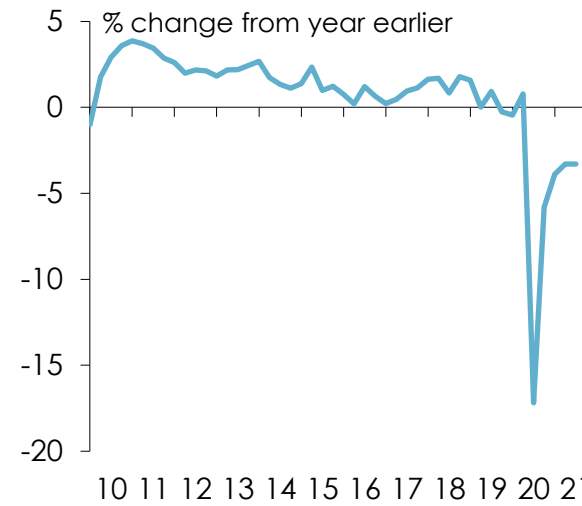


Sources: [Banco Central do Brasil](#); [Banco de México](#); [Banco Central de Chile](#); [Banco Central de Reserva del Perú](#); [Magyar Nemzeti Bank](#); [Česká národní banka](#); [Bank Rusii](#); [National Bank of Ukraine](#); [Türkiye Cumhuriyet Merkez Bankası](#); [Sakartvelos Erovnuli Bank'i](#).

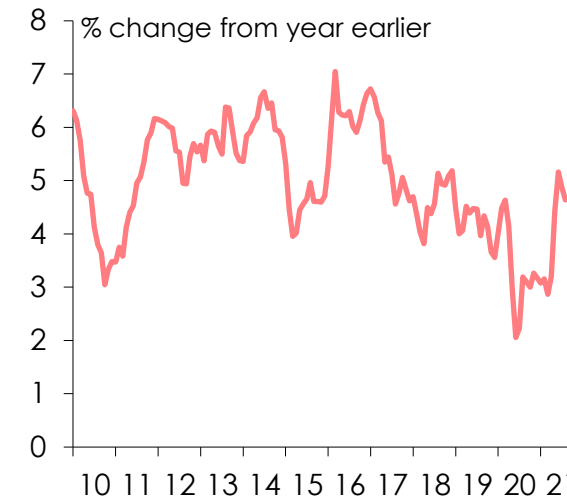
South Africa is one 'emerging' economy where the central bank hasn't yet raised rates – although it expects to start doing so in Q4

- ❑ South Africa's real GDP increased by 1.2% in Q2, after a 0.8% increase in Q1
 - A better-than-expected outcome given the social unrest which occurred during Q2
 - real GDP is still 1.9% below its pre-recession peak (which was in Q4 2018)
 - net exports accounted for 0.9 pc pts of the increase in GDP in Q2, and domestic final demand is still 4.5% below its pre-recession peak
- ❑ Despite the recovery in GDP, unemployment has continued to climb, reaching an all-time high of 34.4% in Q2
- ❑ Business confidence has picked up, but consumer confidence remains weak
- ❑ Inflation dropped to a 16-year low of 2.1% in May last year, but has since picked up to 4.6% as of July
 - that's still comfortably within SARB's 3-6% target range
- ❑ At its last meeting in July, SARB saw the inflation risks as "to the upside", and flagged a rate hike in Q1 and in each quarter of 2022

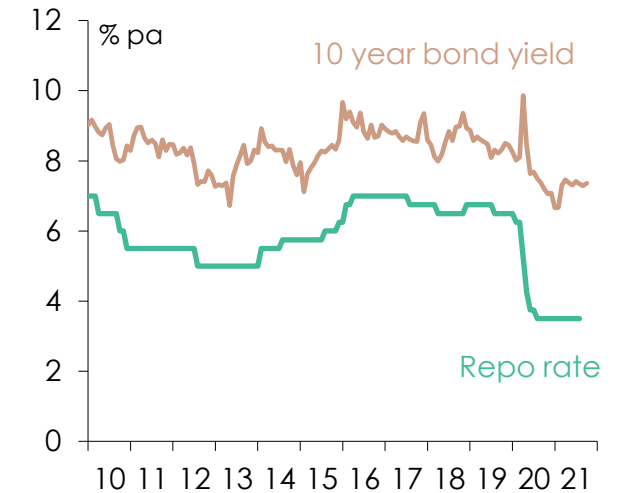
Real GDP growth



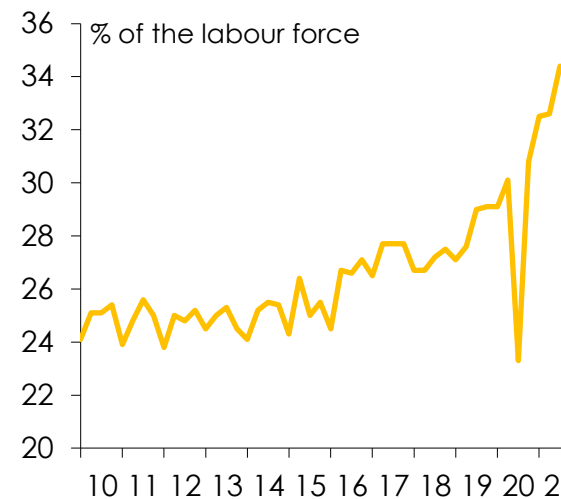
Inflation



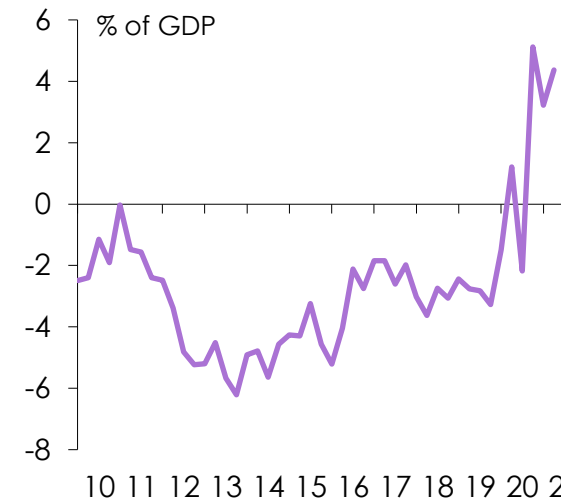
Interest rates



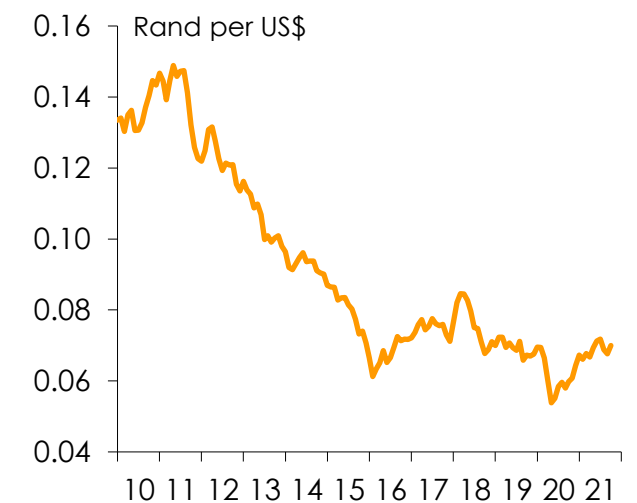
Unemployment



Current account balance



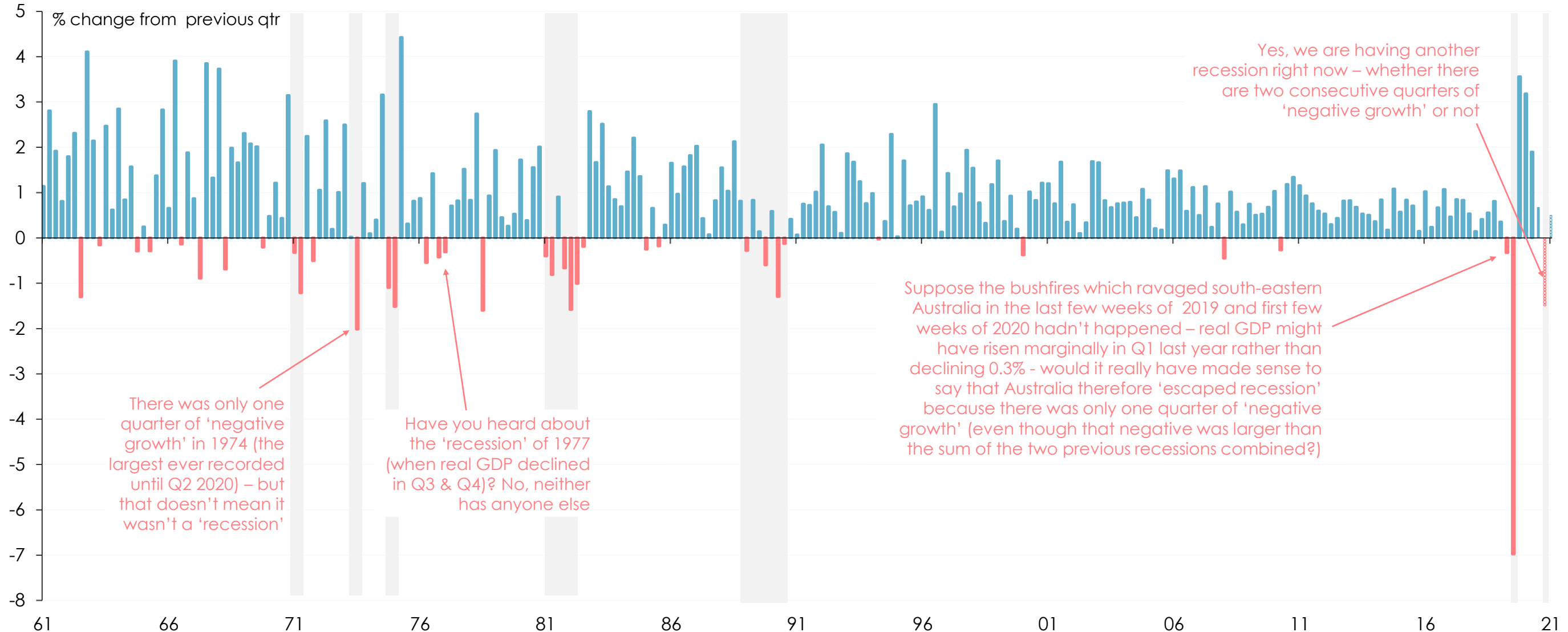
Rand vs US\$



Australia

Australia's real GDP grew by 0.7% in the June quarter, thus (for now) allaying fears of a second 'technical recession' – but this misses the point

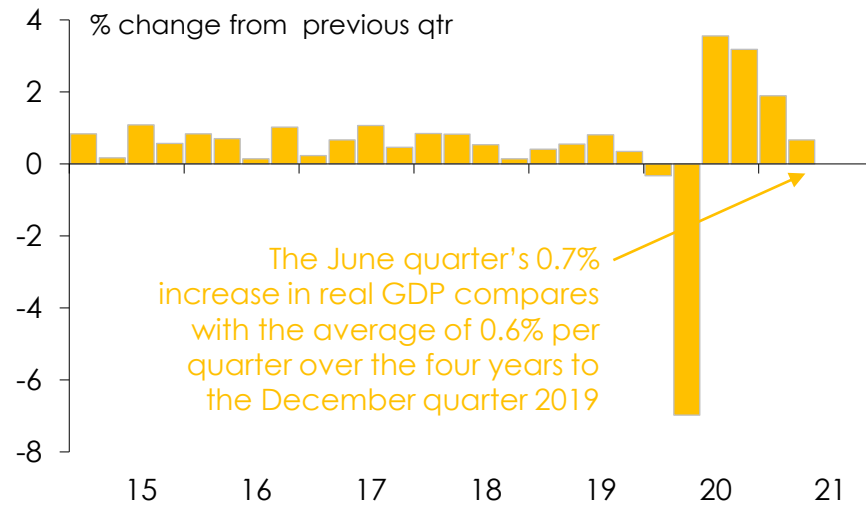
Quarterly growth in Australian real GDP, 1961-2021



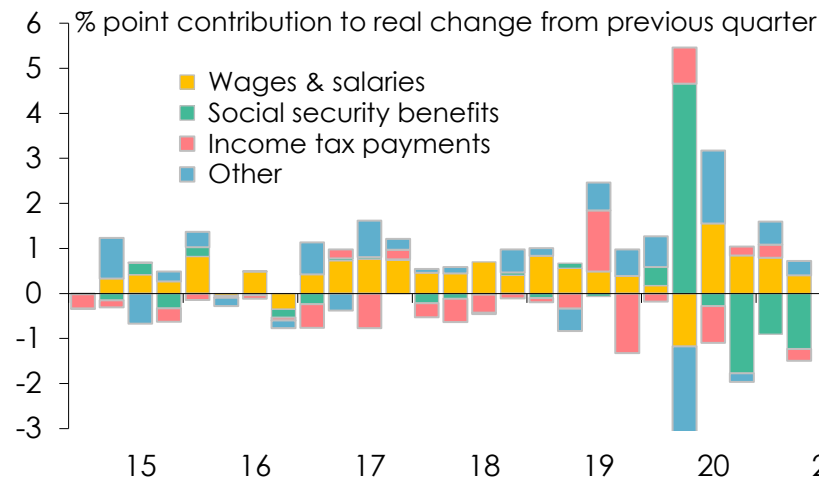
Note: Shaded areas denote recessions. Source: ABS, [Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product](#), March quarter 2021. September quarter GDP will be released on 1st December; and December quarter GDP on 2nd March 2022. [Return to "What's New"](#).

All the major components of domestic demand contributed to the June quarter's 0.7% GDP growth, but stocks and net exports detracted

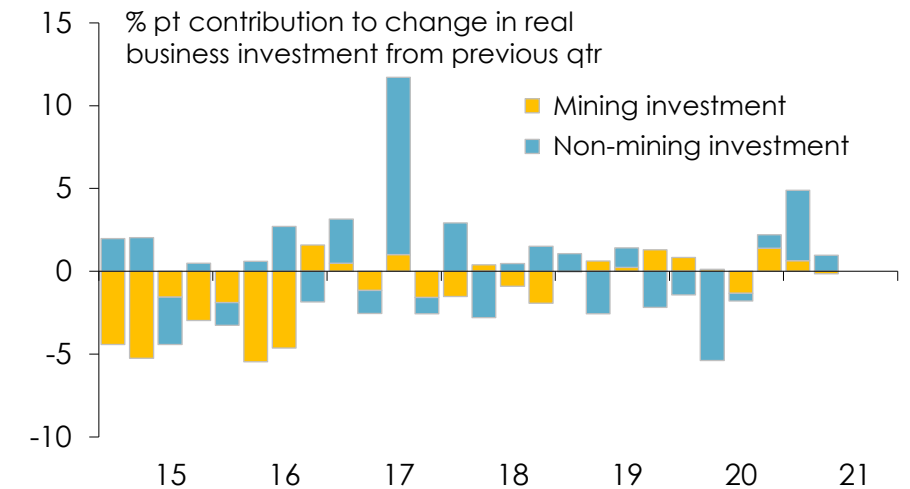
Quarterly change in real GDP



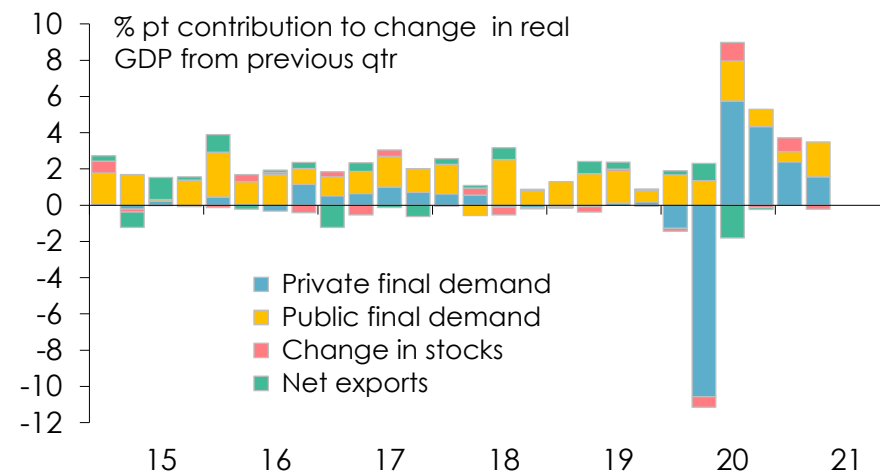
Household disposable income



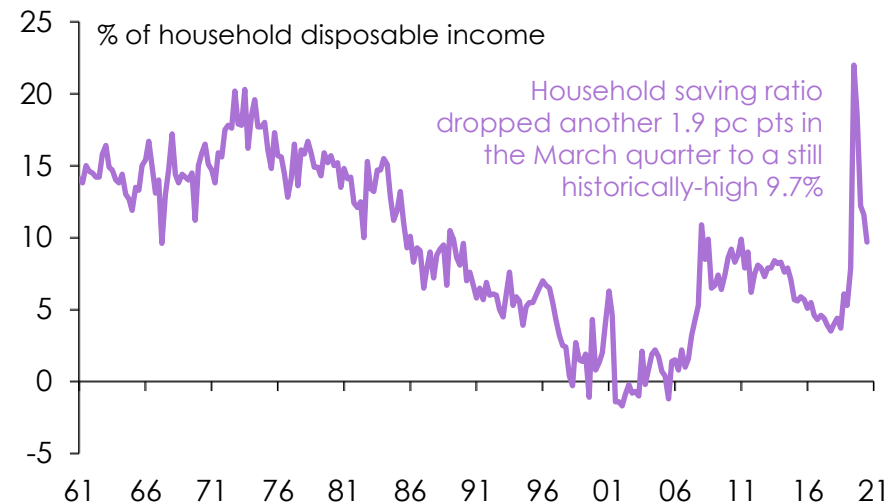
Business investment expenditure



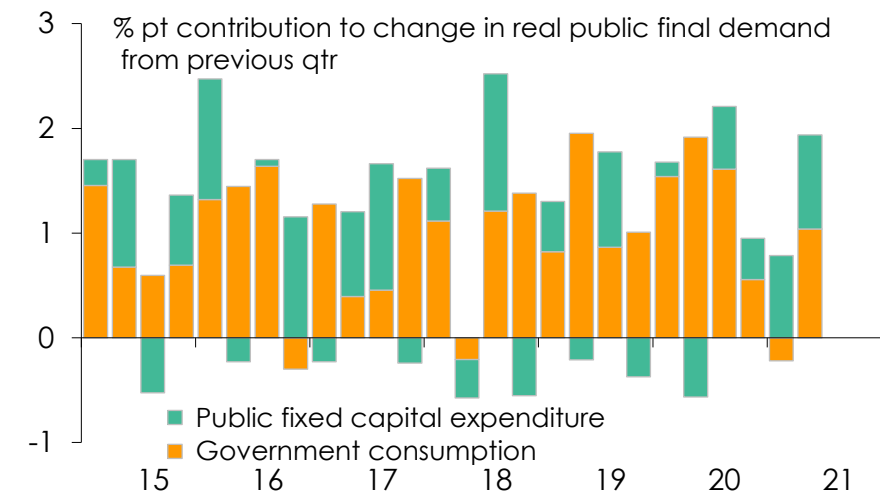
Contributions to quarterly GDP growth



Household saving rate



Public expenditure



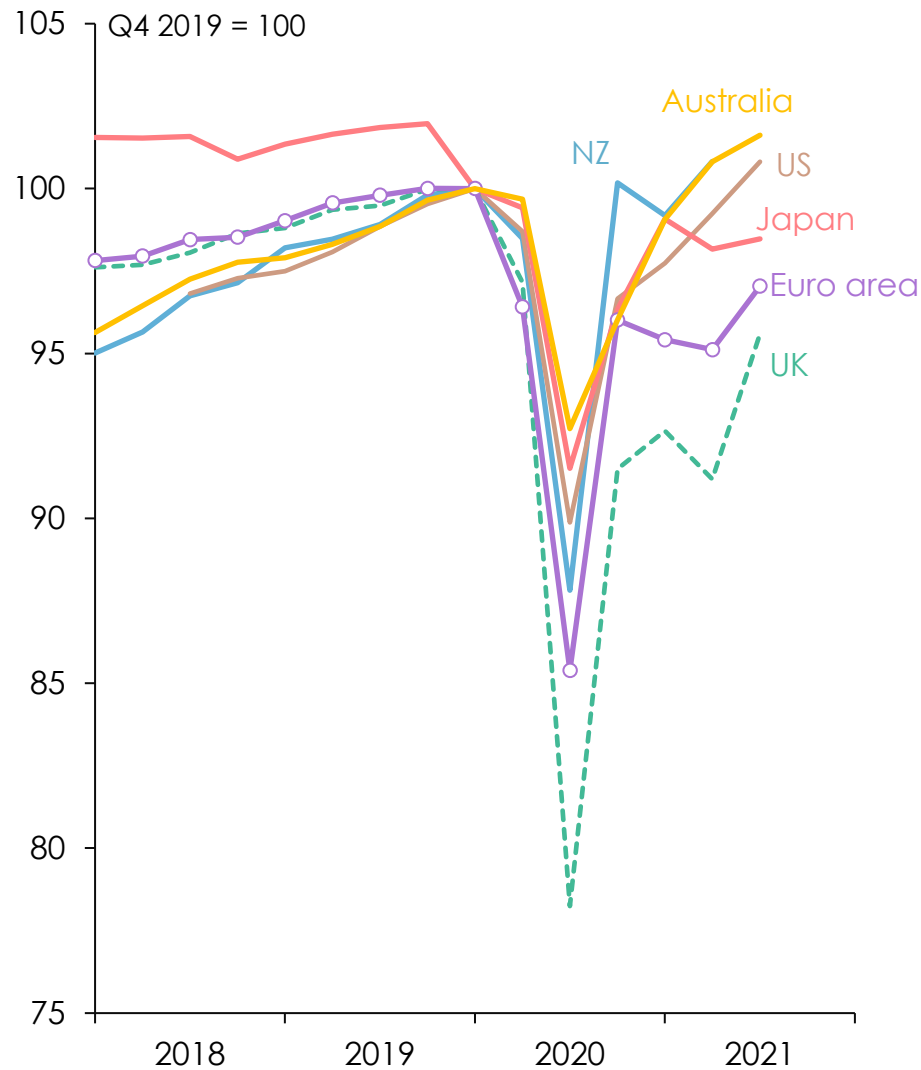
Note: Components of household disposable income are deflated by the implicit price deflator of household final consumption expenditure.

Source: ABS, [Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product](#), June quarter 2021. September quarter national accounts will be released on 1st

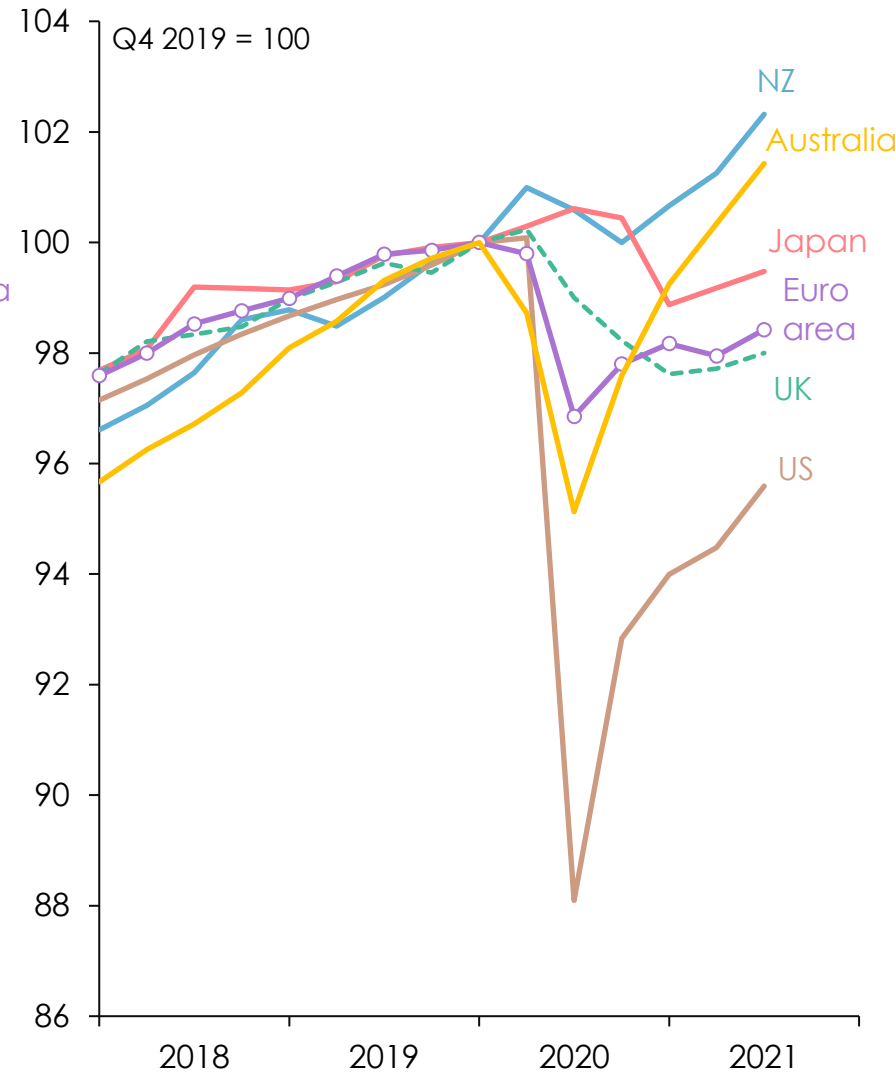
December. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Australia's recession wasn't as severe as, and its recovery has been stronger than, most other 'advanced' economies – but will that continue?

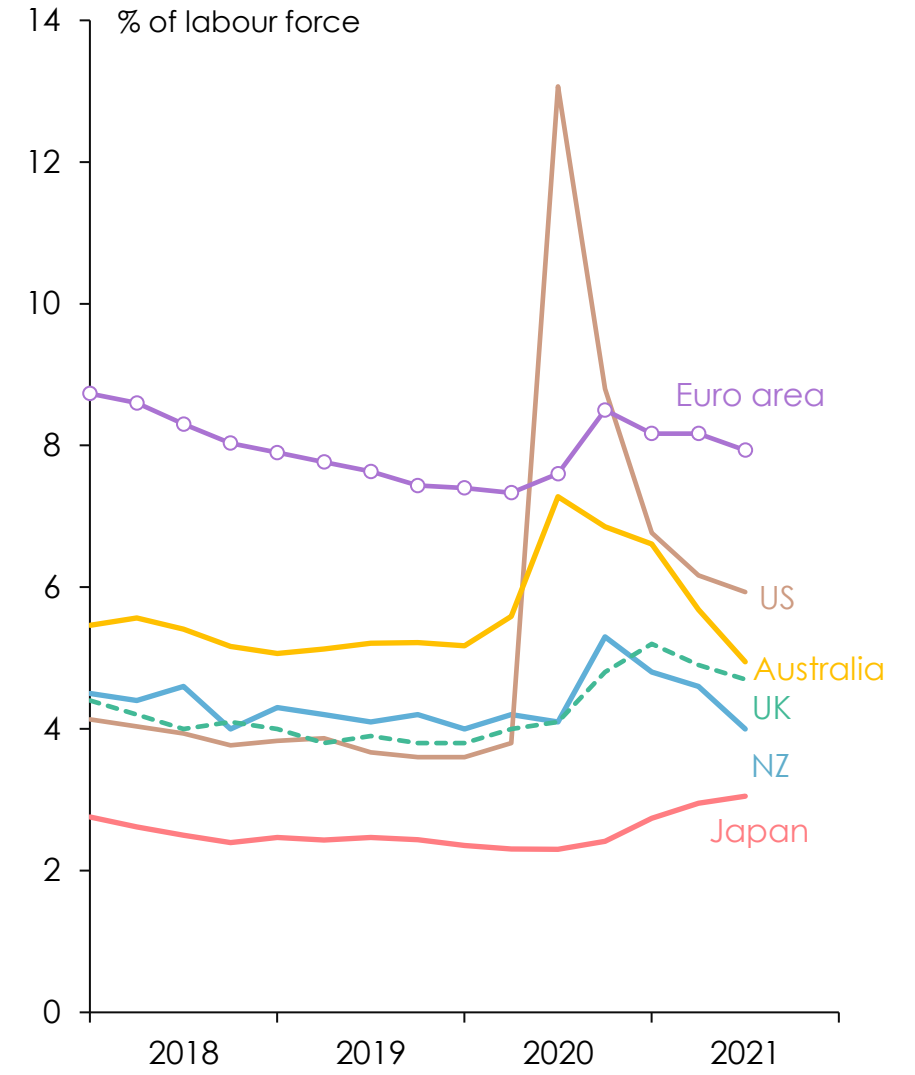
Level of real GDP



Employment



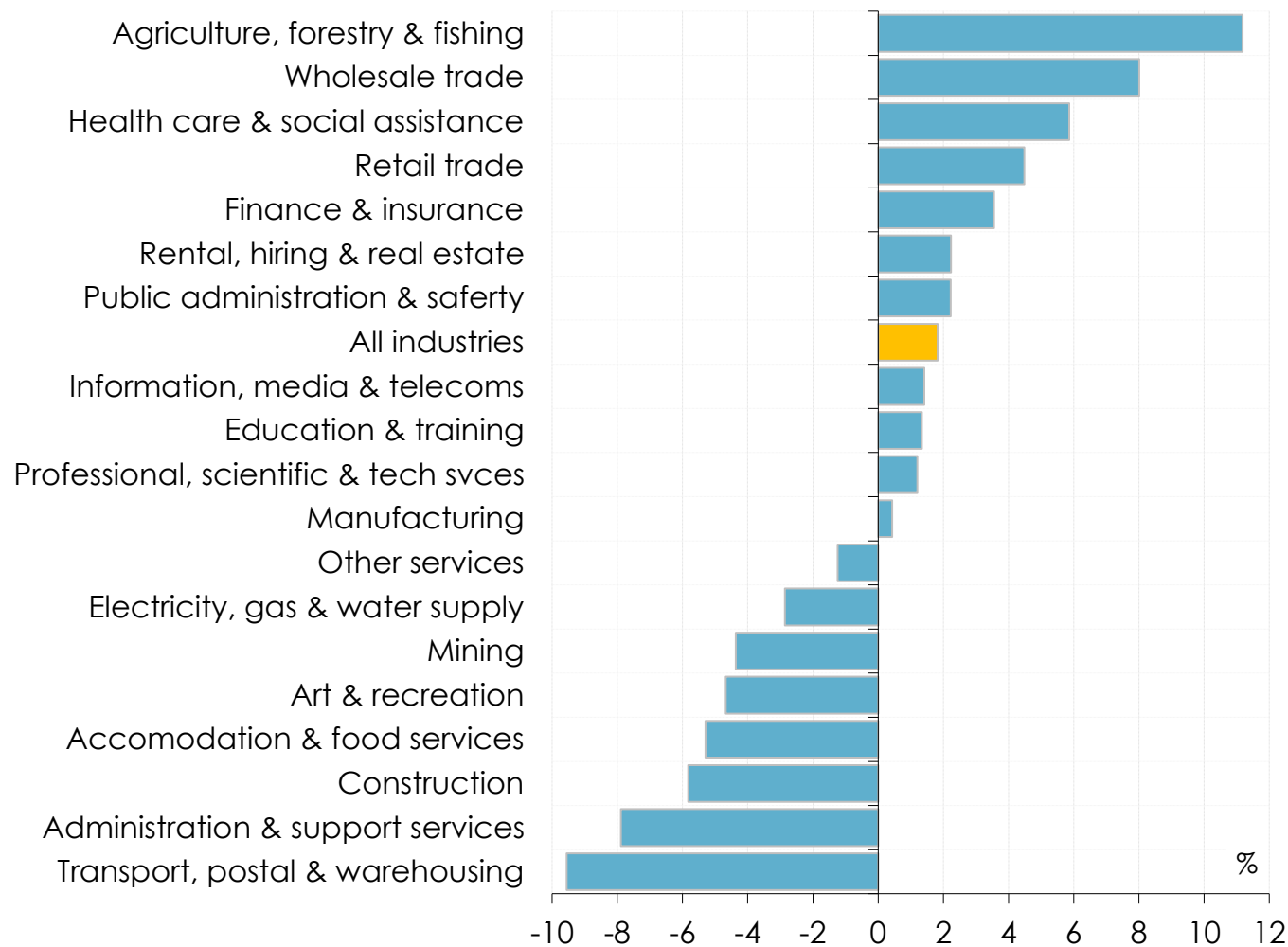
Unemployment



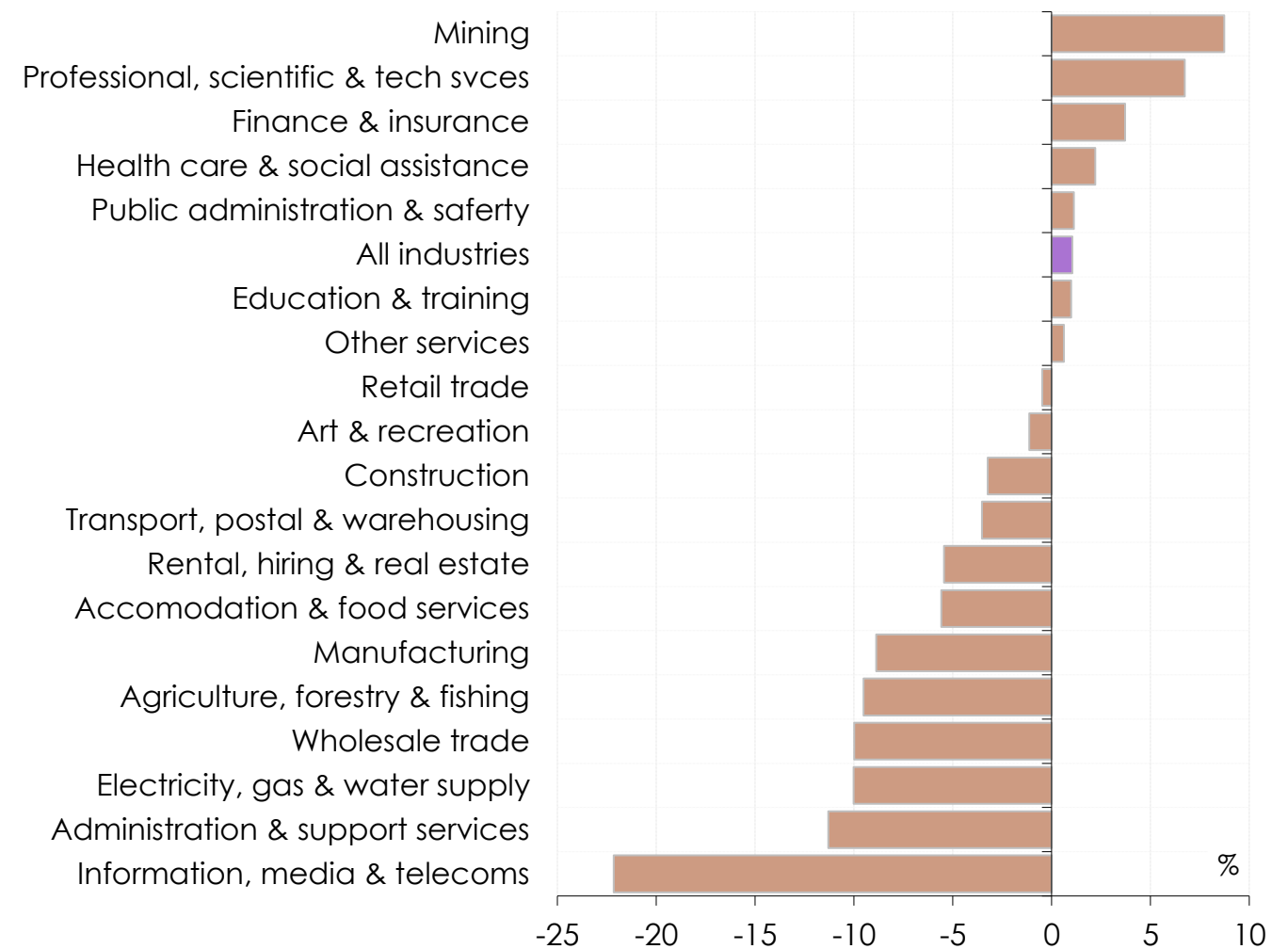
Sources: [ABS](#) ; [Statistics NZ](#) ; US [Bureau of Economic Analysis](#) and [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#); Japan [Cabinet Office](#) and [Statistics Bureau of Japan](#); [Eurostat](#); and UK [Office for National Statistics](#); Corinna.

Though stronger-than-expected overall, the recovery in economic activity and employment has been very uneven across sectors

Q2 2021 real gross value added by industry – change from pre-pandemic peak



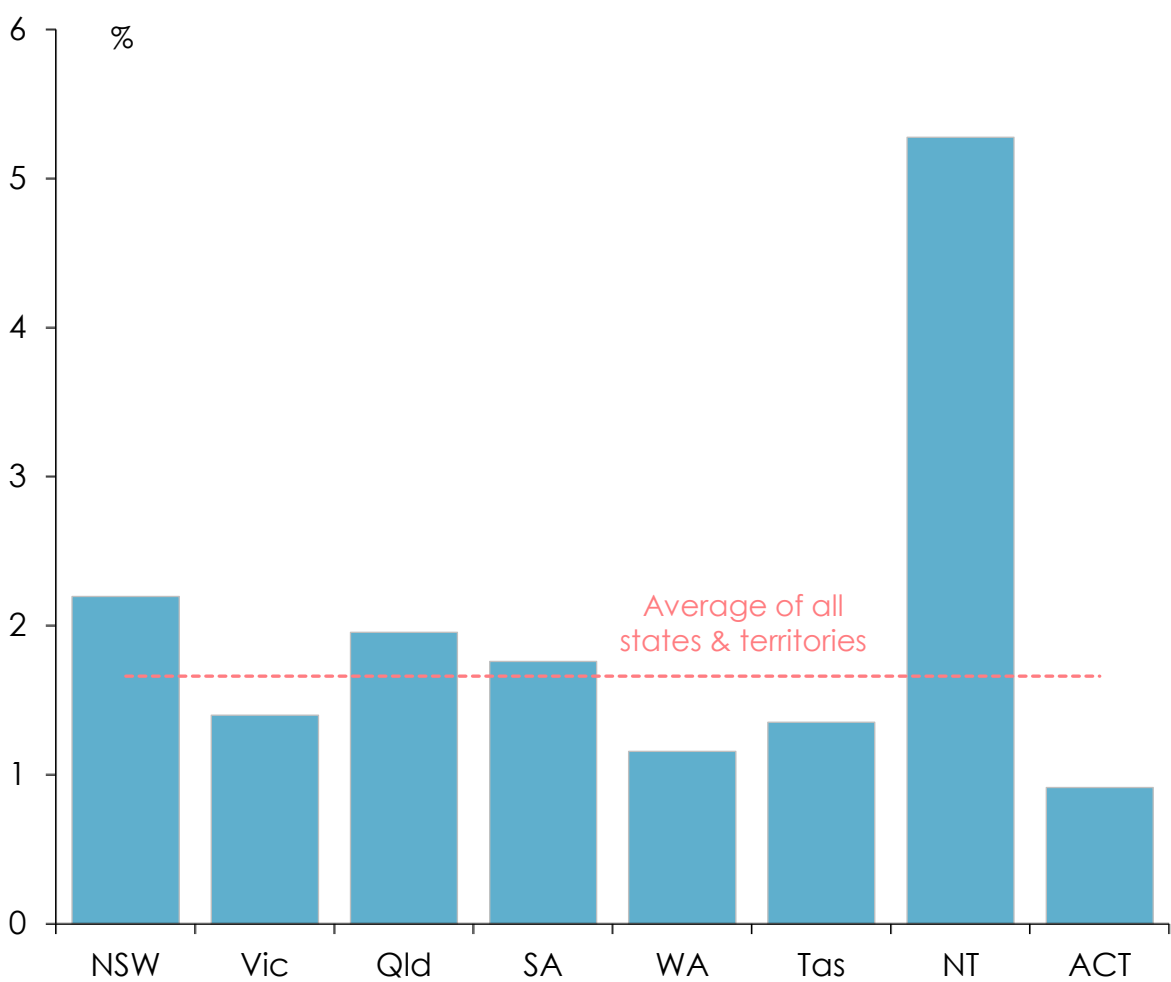
Q2 2021 employment by industry – change from pre-pandemic peak



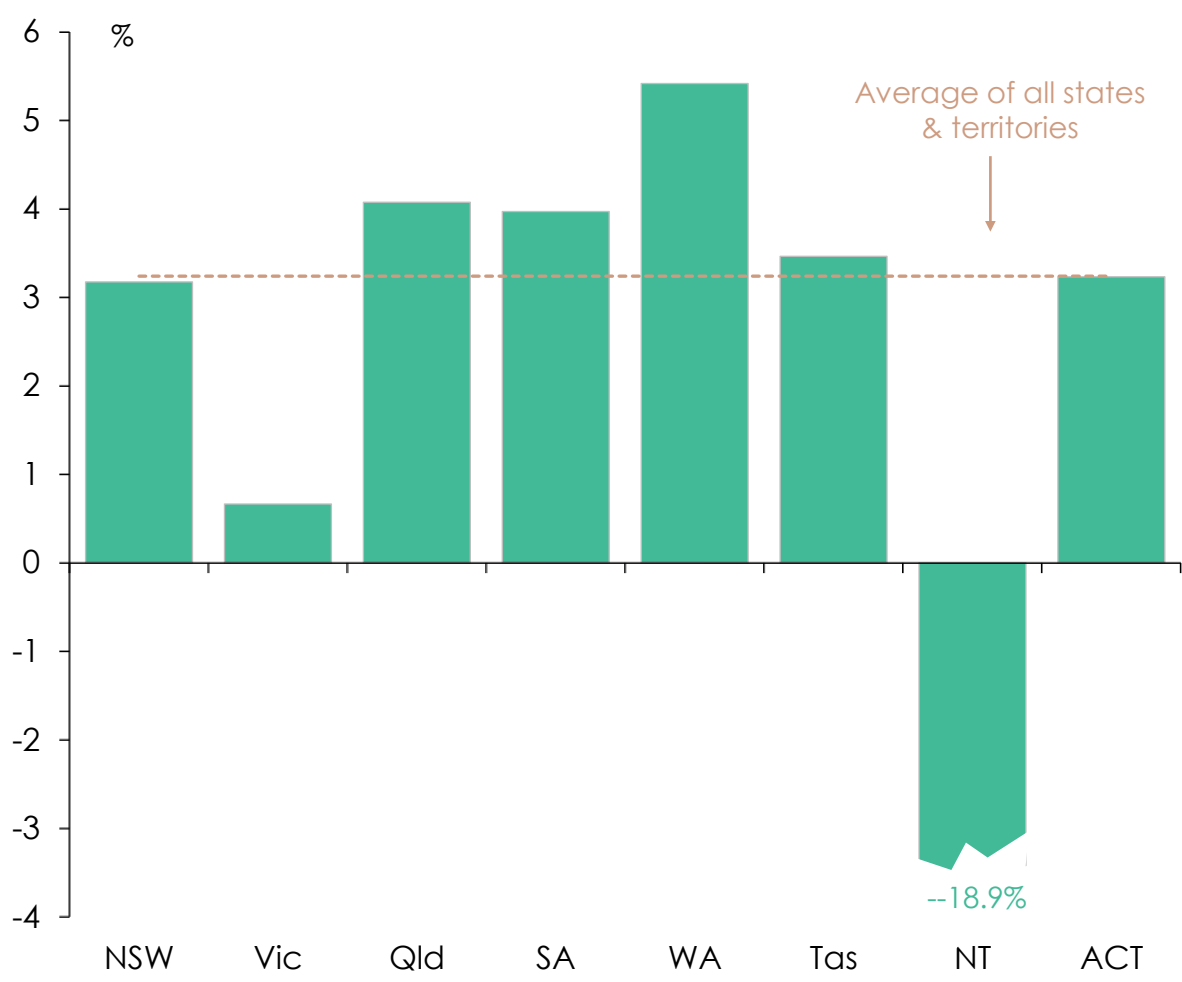
Sources: ABS, [Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product](#), June quarter 2021; and [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed](#), May 2021.

Up to Q2, Western Australia has had the strongest recovery in 'final demand', while Victoria and (especially) the Northern Territory

Change in real state final demand, June quarter 2021 compared with March quarter



Shortfall between June quarter 2020 state final demand and pre-recession peak



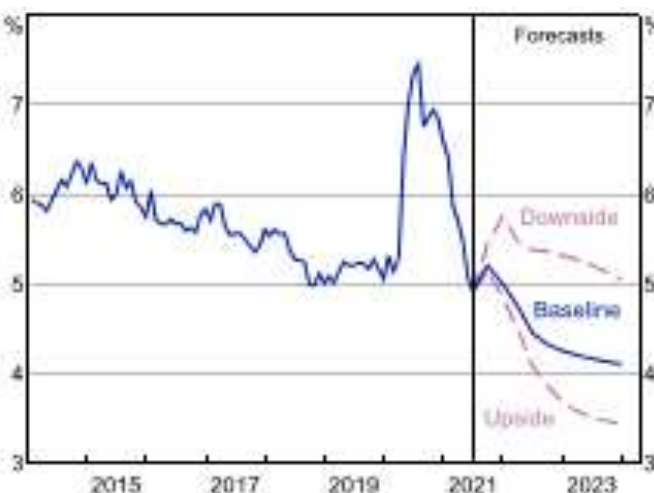
Note: 'State final demand' is the sum of spending by households, businesses and governments within a state or territory's borders: it differs (conceptually) from gross state product (GSP), which is only available on a financial year basis, by the sum of net international and interstate trade, and changes in business inventories. Source: ABS, [Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product](#), June quarter 2021. September quarter national accounts will be released on, 1st December. [Return to "What's New"](#).

The RBA has raised its growth forecasts and lowered its forecast for unemployment next year but its inflation forecast is little changed

GDP



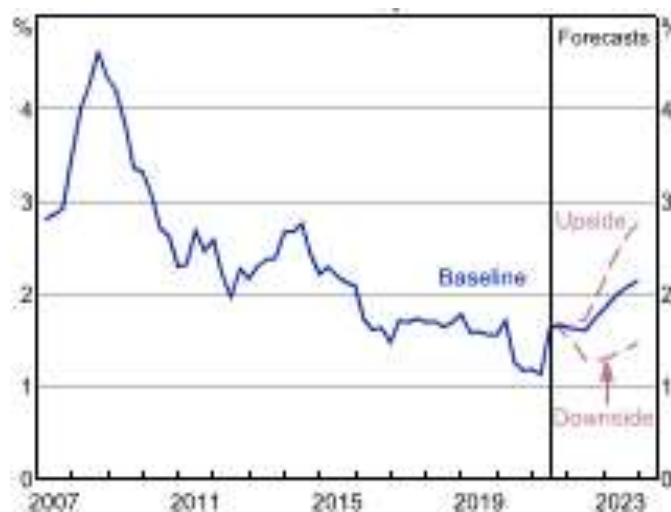
Unemployment



Wages



'Underlying' inflation

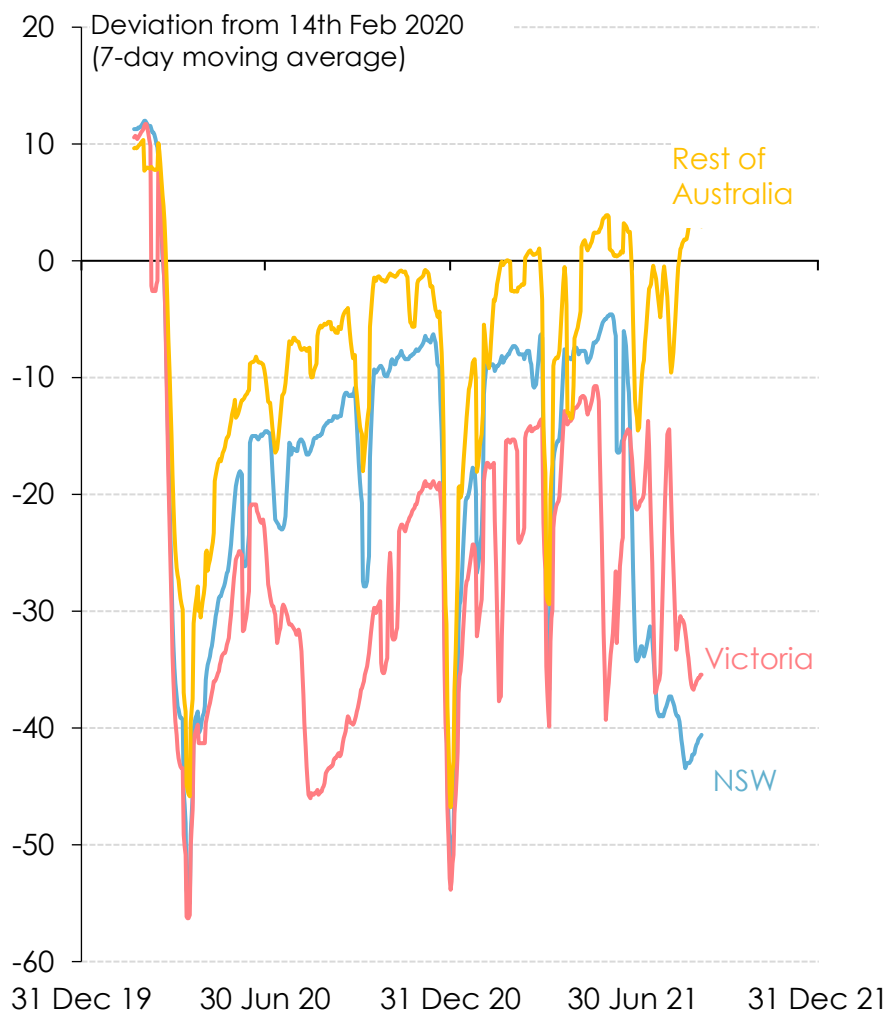


- ❑ Economic growth and in particular employment growth have continued to outpace the RBA's forecasts – but wage and price inflation haven't
- ❑ In its latest [Statement on Monetary Policy](#) published four weeks ago, the RBA acknowledged that current lockdowns would temporarily derail the recovery, with GDP expected to contract by “at least 1%” in Q3, and the unemployment rate to increase
- ❑ Nonetheless, assuming “recent outbreaks can be brought under control soon and further lockdowns are limited”, the RBA has revised up its forecasts for GDP growth over the year to Q4 2022 (from 3½% to 4¼%) after 4% (down from 4¾%) over the year to Q4 2021, and lowered its forecast for Q4 2022 unemployment (from 4½% to 4¼%) with a further fall to 4% expected by Q4 2023
- ❑ The RBA has revised its forecast for wages (WPI) growth marginally higher to 2¾% by end-2023
- ❑ Its forecasts for 'underlying' inflation are unchanged through to Q4 2022 (at 1¾%) but thereafter “to pick up a little more quickly than previously anticipated” (as a result of the “faster reduction in spare capacity” to 2¼% in Q4 23
- ❑ The RBA contemplates other scenarios (based on more outbreaks & lockdowns or faster vaccination rates) but its central scenario remains no rate hikes until 2024

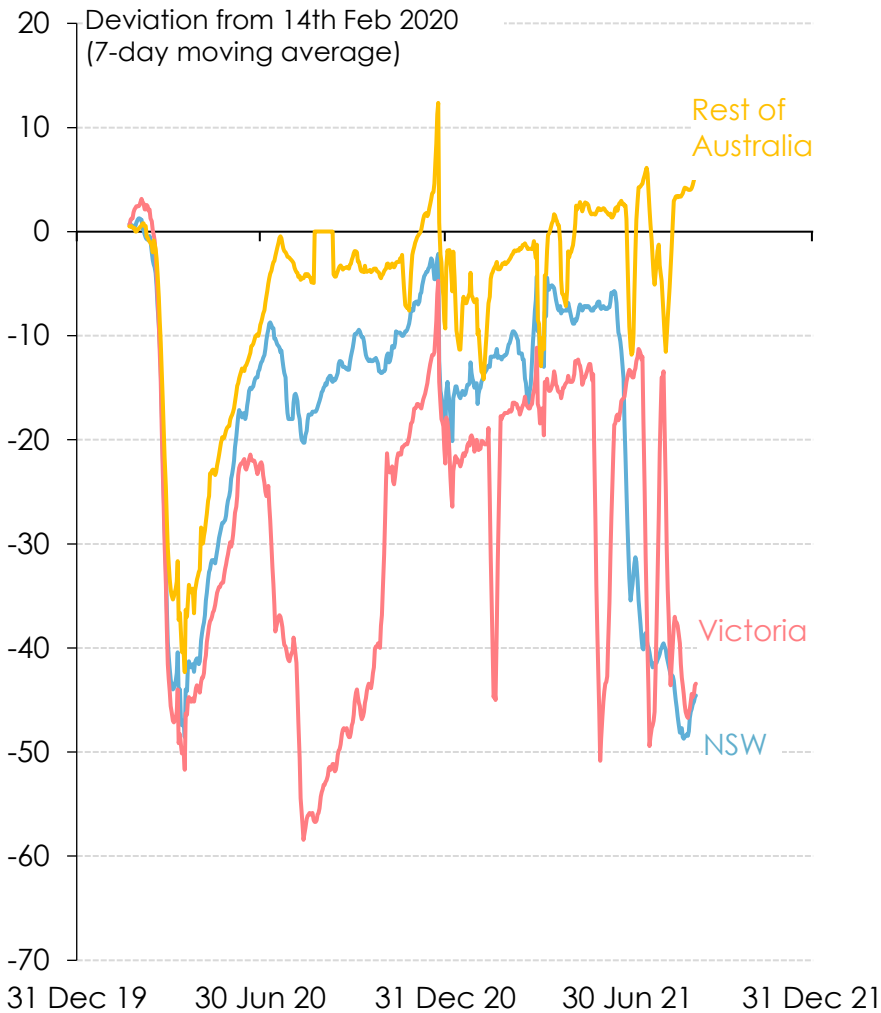
'Mobility indicators' provide a clear indication that the lockdowns in New South Wales and Victoria are affecting those states

Google mobility indicators

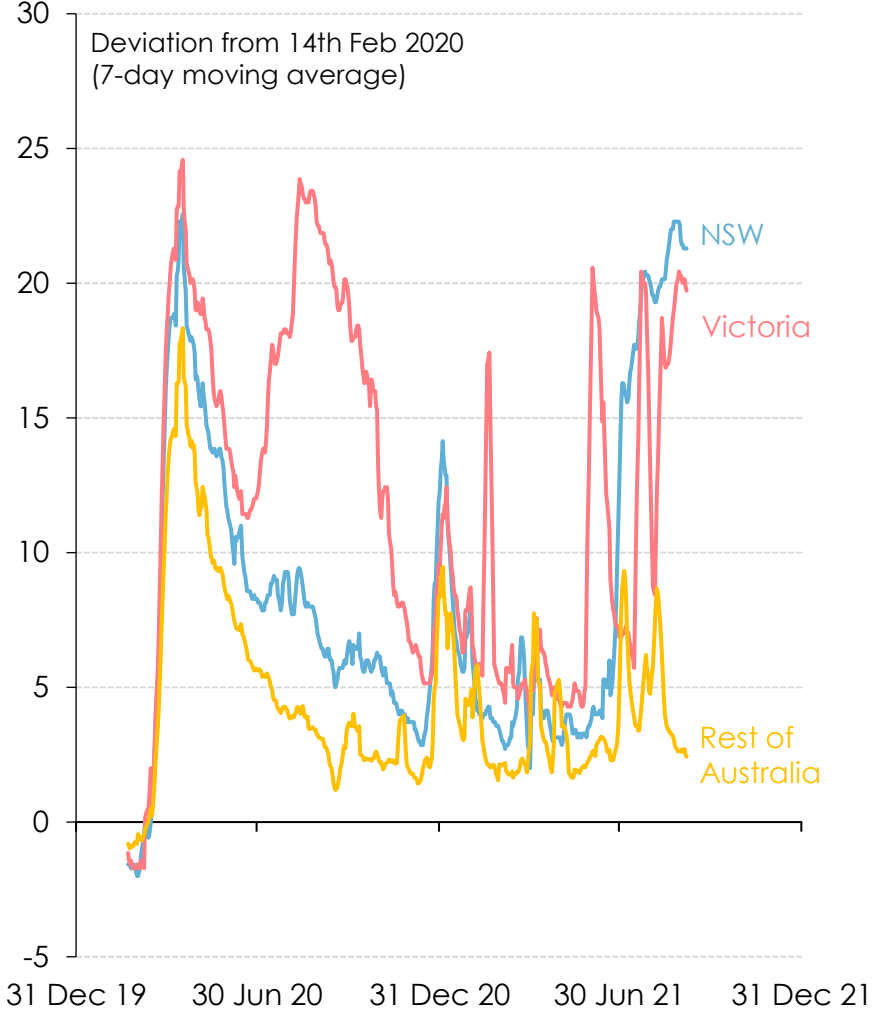
Workplaces



Retail and recreation



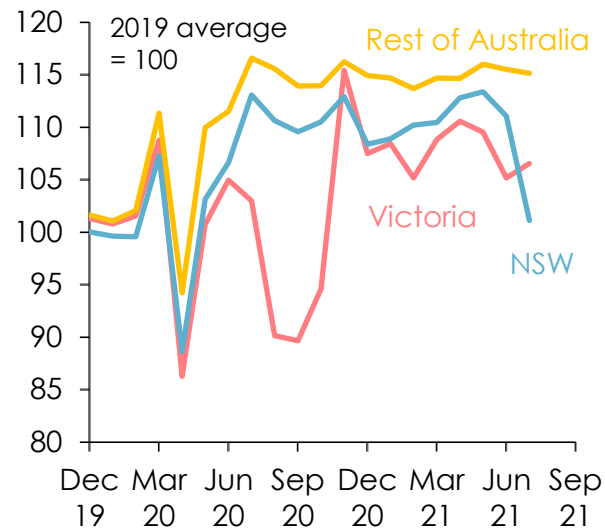
Residences



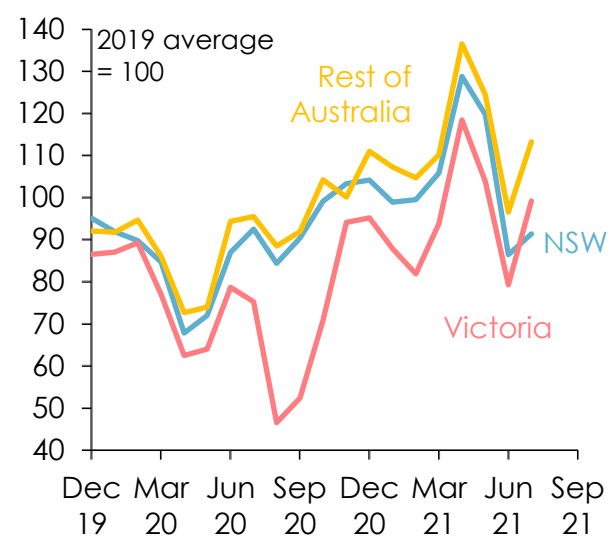
Note: data up to 6th September. Sources: [Google Community Mobility Reports](#); Corinna. [Return to "What's New"](#).

The extended lockdowns in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra are increasing the risk of a second recession in two years

Retail sales



Motor vehicle sales



- ❑ A widely-quoted estimate is that the 'Greater Sydney' lockdown has a 'cost' (economic activity foregone) of about \$1bn a week

- if the 'Greater Sydney' lockdown lasts until the end of September (14 weeks) that would imply a 'cost' of \$14bn
- there will also now be some additional costs arising from lockdowns in the rest of NSW and in the ACT

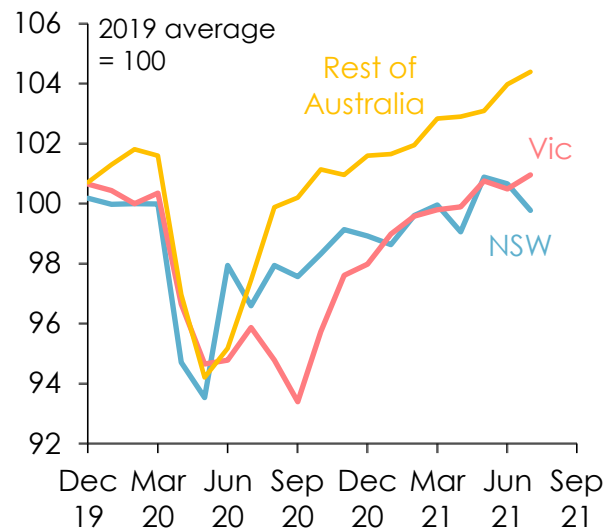
- ❑ Victoria's recurring lockdowns are likely to have a similar weekly cost to that in 'Greater Sydney'

- although it seems reasonable to assume they won't last as long, in total, as New South Wales

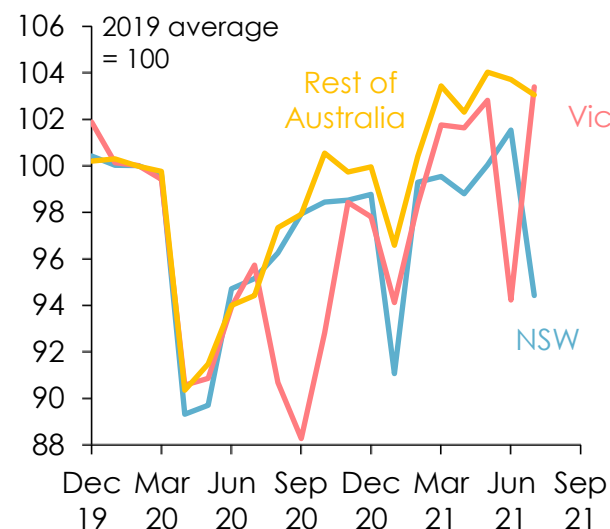
- ❑ Australia's GDP is about \$2,100 billion a year (\$525bn a quarter, \$40 billion a week)

- real GDP might have grown by (say) 1¼% in the September quarter without lockdowns under the above assumptions, but it now seems probable that real GDP will instead contract by at least 2% in the September quarter (see [slide 90](#))
- with real GDP having grown 0.7% in the June quarter Australia will probably avoid consecutive quarters of 'negative growth' if restrictions can be eased in October
- but that's a lazy and silly definition of a recession – a more meaningful one is when unemployment rises by 1½% or more in 12 months or less and that has 'effectively' happened already (see [slide 107](#))

Employment



Hours worked

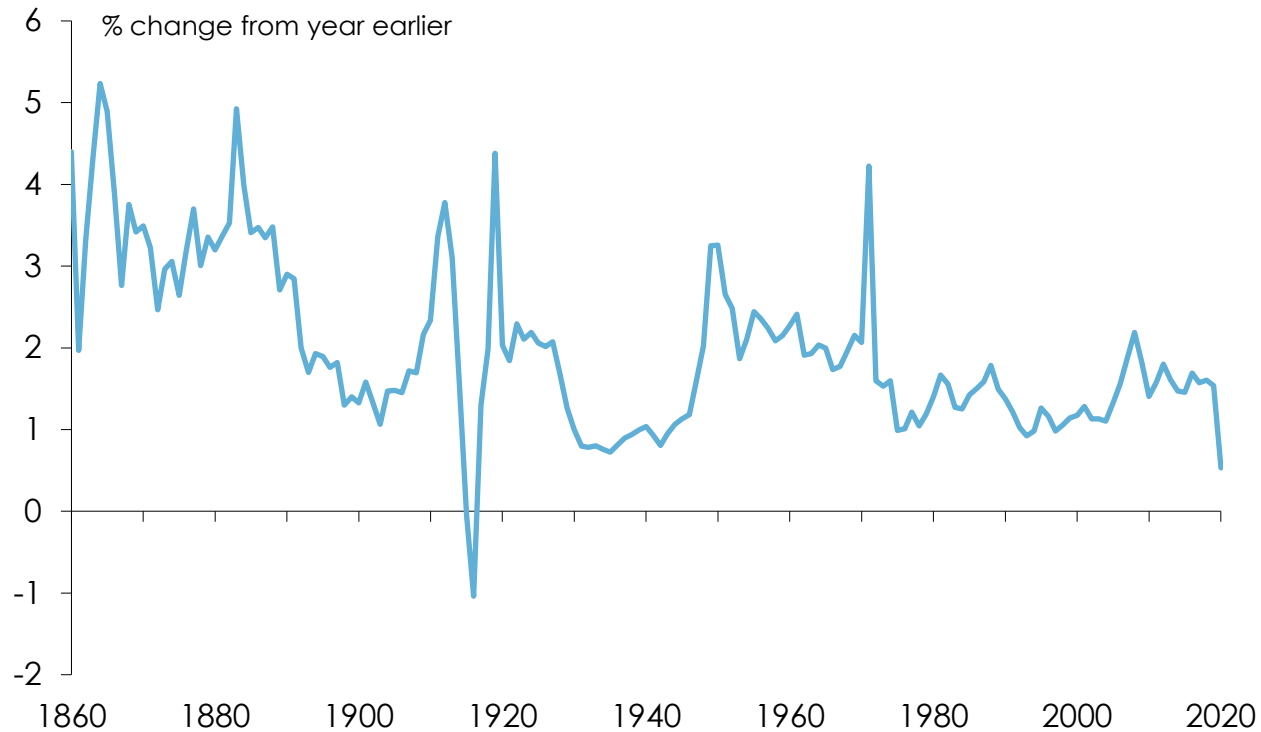


Australia's border measures have been stricter than almost any other country (and certainly any democracy)

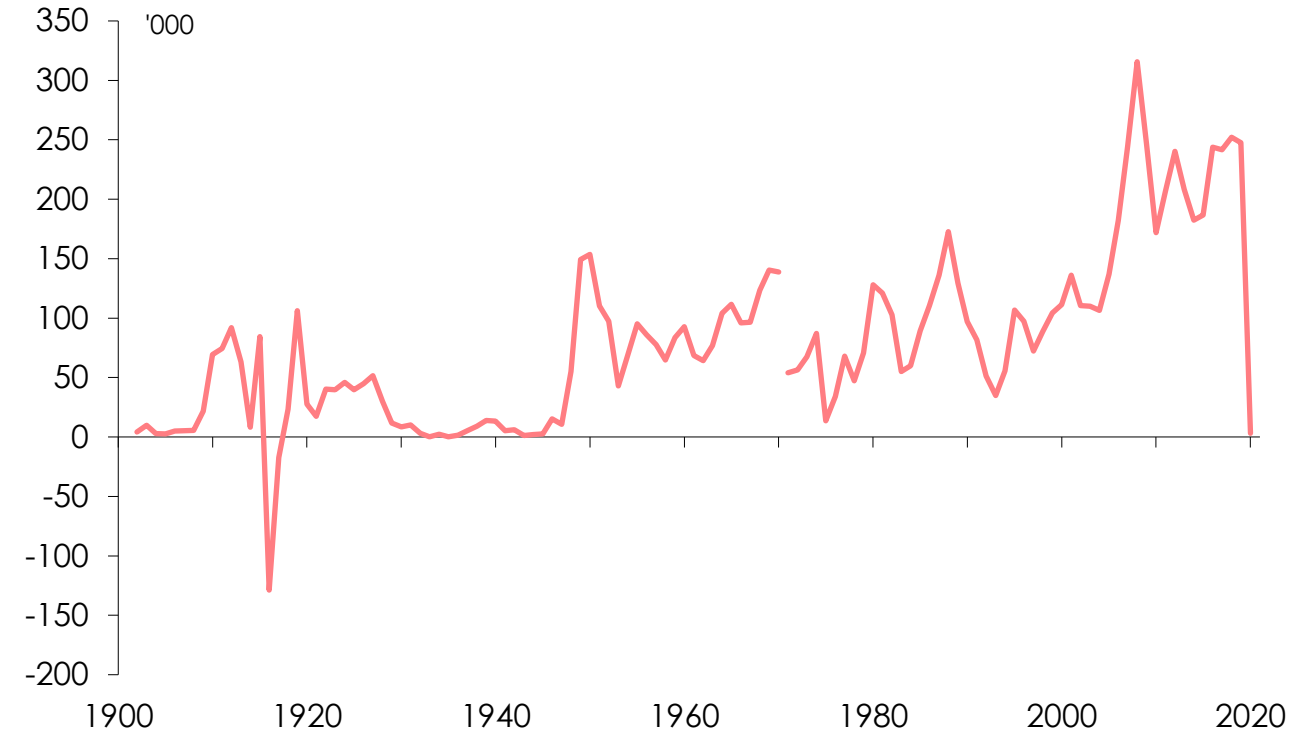
- ❑ Article 12 of the United Nations [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) (which Australia signed in 1972, and which it ratified in 1980) says
 - “everyone shall be free to leave any country, including his [sic] own” and “no-one shall be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter his [sic] own country”
- ❑ Australia is [the only democracy in the world](#) *not* to have enacted this Convention into domestic law
- ❑ The ICCPR does include a couple of ‘get out’ clauses
 - Article 4 provides that “In time of public emergency which threatens the life of the nation and the existence of which is officially proclaimed [parties to this Convention] may take measures derogating from their obligations under [it] to the extent strictly required by the exigencies of the situation”, and
 - Article 12 provides that the rights to leave a country (or to move within it) “shall not be subject to any restrictions except those which are provided by law, are necessary to protect national security, public order, public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others” – although this exclusion doesn’t apply to the above-mentioned right to enter one’s own country
- ❑ No other democracy appears to have availed itself of these ‘get-out’ clauses to the extent that Australia has
 - The Federal Court [decided](#) in May this year that the Federal *BioSecurity Act* over-rode any “rights of entry” into Australia that the ‘common law’ may otherwise confer on Australian citizens
 - and the already-draconian restrictions on Australians leaving were surreptitiously [further tightened](#) last month
- ❑ The widely-cited Oxford University index of the stringency of government Covid-related restrictions does not include outward travel bans or restrictions on citizens returning
 - according to [Toby Phillips](#), the Executive Director of the Oxford Government Response Tracker project, “we assumed countries would always let their own citizens return” and “we even wrote this into our training for data collectors, telling them to only focus on restrictions for non-citizens”
- ❑ The Australian Government’s uniquely ‘hard line’ on border crossings is in marked contrast with its reluctance to directly confront Australia’s surprisingly high ‘vaccine hesitancy’
 - probably because it suspects that ‘vaccine hesitancy’ is highest among groups whose votes it needs at the next election

Australia's population grew by just 0.5% during 2020, the slowest rate since 1916, due to the border closure

Australia's population growth, 1860 -2020



Net migration to Australia, 1900-20

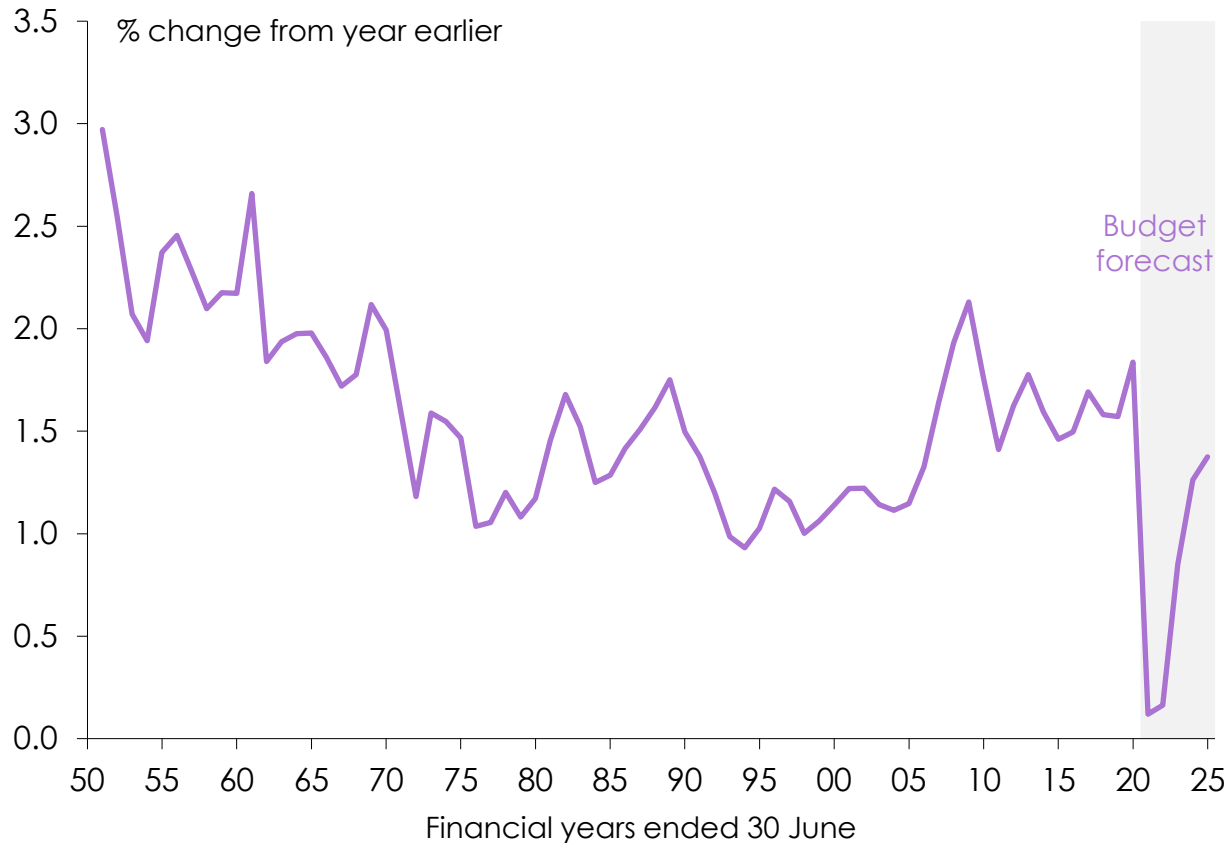


- ❑ Only 76K immigrants came to Australia in the last nine months of 2020, while 151K people departed permanently – implying a net outflow of almost 68,000 people
- ❑ As a result, Australia's population growth rate fell to just 0.5% over the year to Q4 2020, the slowest since 1916
- ❑ Last month's halving of the 'cap' on the number of arrivals allowed into Australia (from 6,070 to 3,035 per week) will likely result in a further slowing in population growth (for as long as the lower 'cap' lasts – no time limit has been given)
- ❑ Slower growth in the working-age population does however mean that a given rate of employment growth results in faster reductions in the unemployment rate (all else being equal) – see slide 111

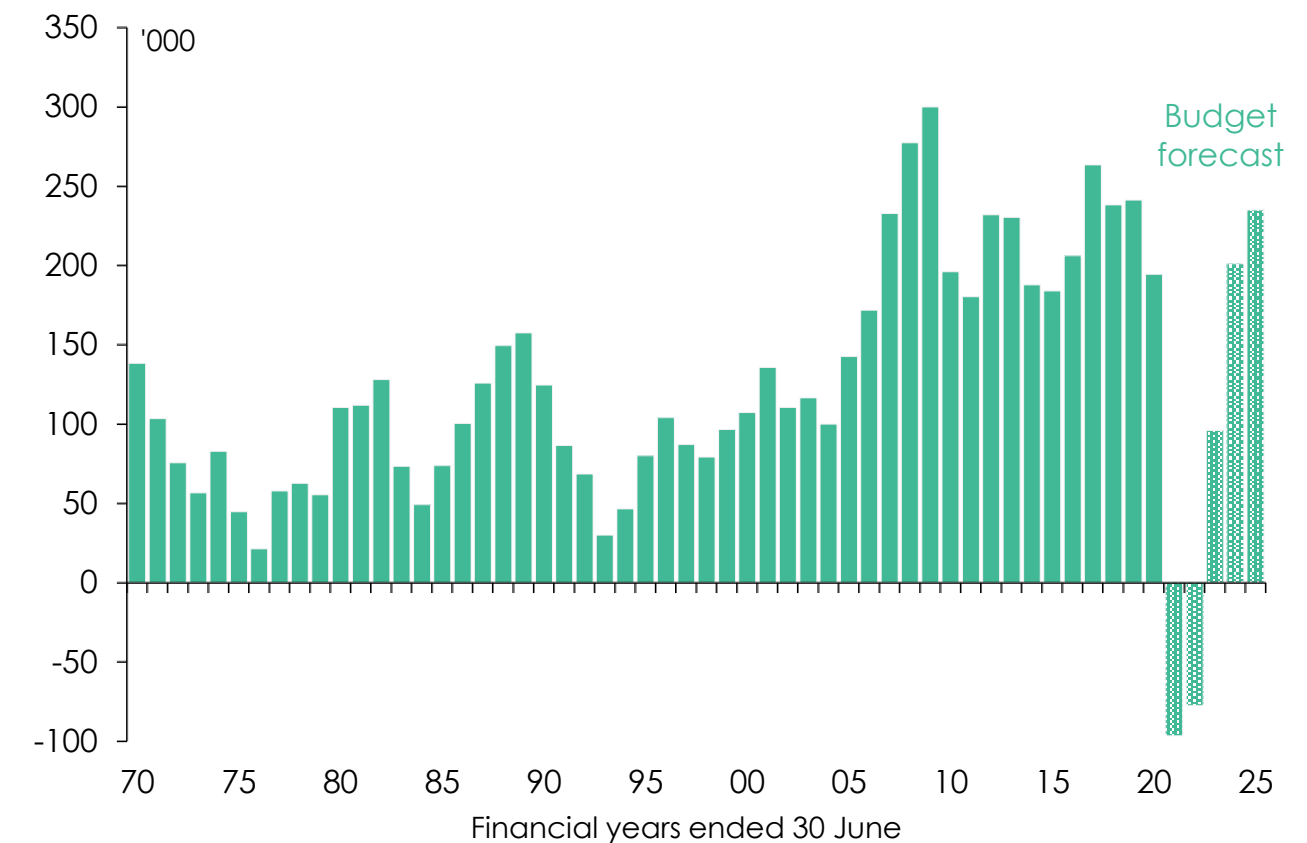
Note: The net migration data has a series break at 1971 due to definitional changes. Sources: ABS, [National, state and territory population](#), December 2020; [Historical Population](#), 2016; [Migration, Australia](#), 2019-20; [Demography Bulletin](#), 1923, 1940, 1950, 1960 and 1971; [Population and Vital Statistics Bulletin](#), 1912. [Return to "What's New"](#).

The Budget assumes that Australia's borders remain closed until after the next election – after which migration returns to pre-covid levels by 2024-25

Population growth



Net overseas migration

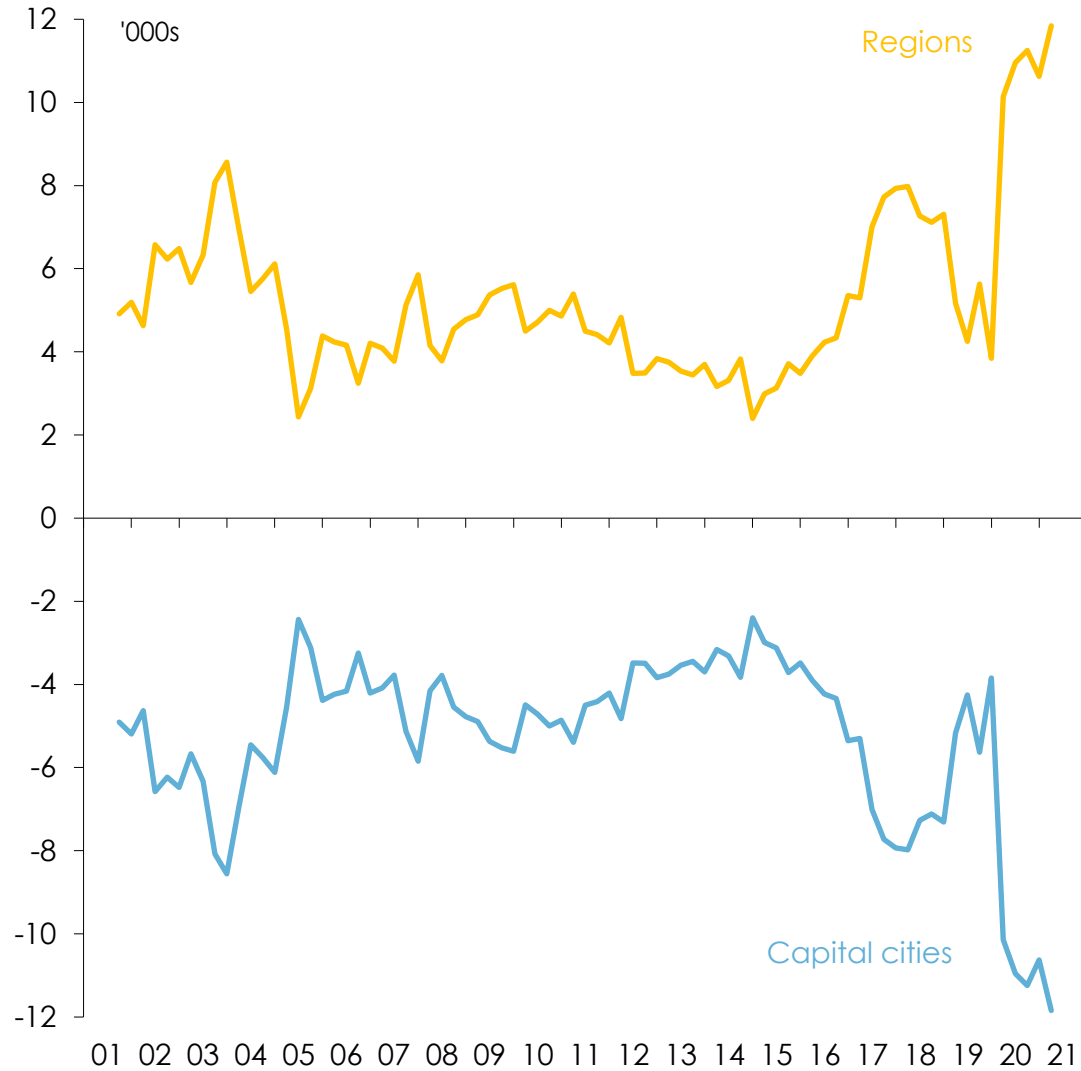


Opinion polls have consistently indicated very high levels of popular support for keeping Australia's international borders closed – which (more than anything else) likely explains why the Government's position has changed from last year's "we can't keep Australia under the doona" to this year's "our borders will remain shut as long as it's in Australia's interest to protect the health of Australians but also to protect Australia's economy" – and why the assumed date for re-opening the borders is after the latest possible date for the next election (21st May)

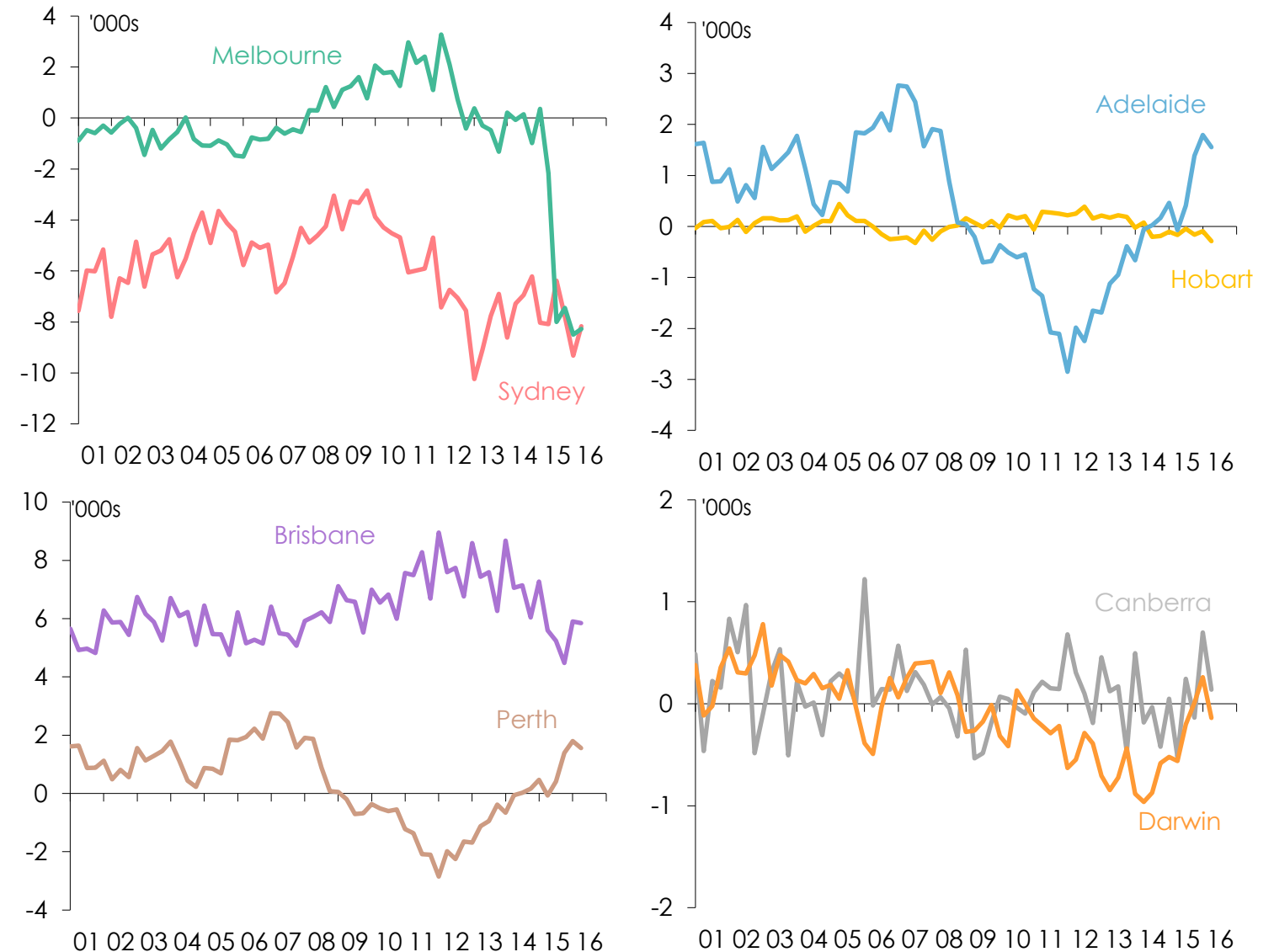
Sources: ABS, [National, state and territory population](#); Australian Government, 2021-22 [Budget Paper No. 1, Statement No. 2](#) and [Budget Paper No. 3, Appendix A, Return to "What's New"](#).

Another important demographic change wrought by Covid-19 has been the shift of people out of capitals (especially Melbourne) to regions

Internal migration flows



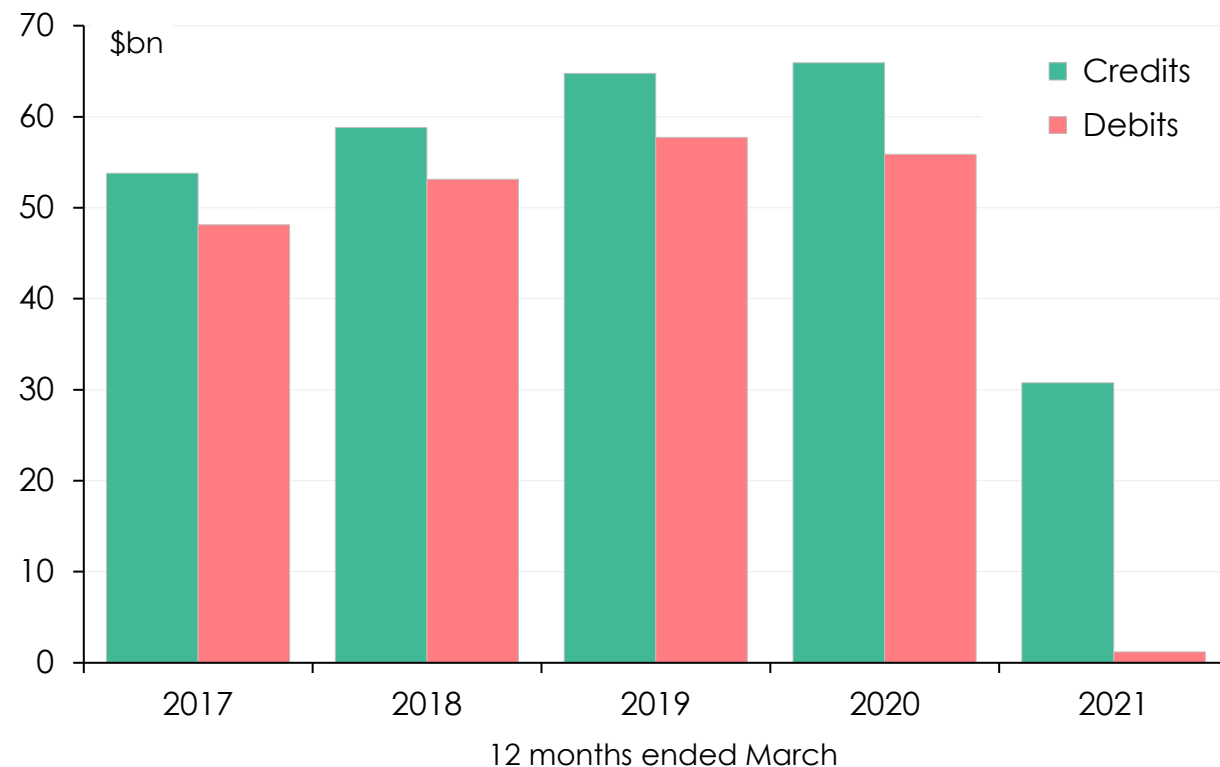
Net internal migration to or from Australia's capital cities



Note: 'internal migration' refers to the movement of people already resident in Australia across specified boundaries (in this case, between 'greater capital city' areas and 'rest of state'), estimated using data from Medicare and (for military personnel) the Department of Defence. It does not include movements of overseas immigrants (or Australian residents departing for overseas). Source: ABS, [Regional internal migration estimates, provisional](#), March 2021. [Return to "What's New"](#).

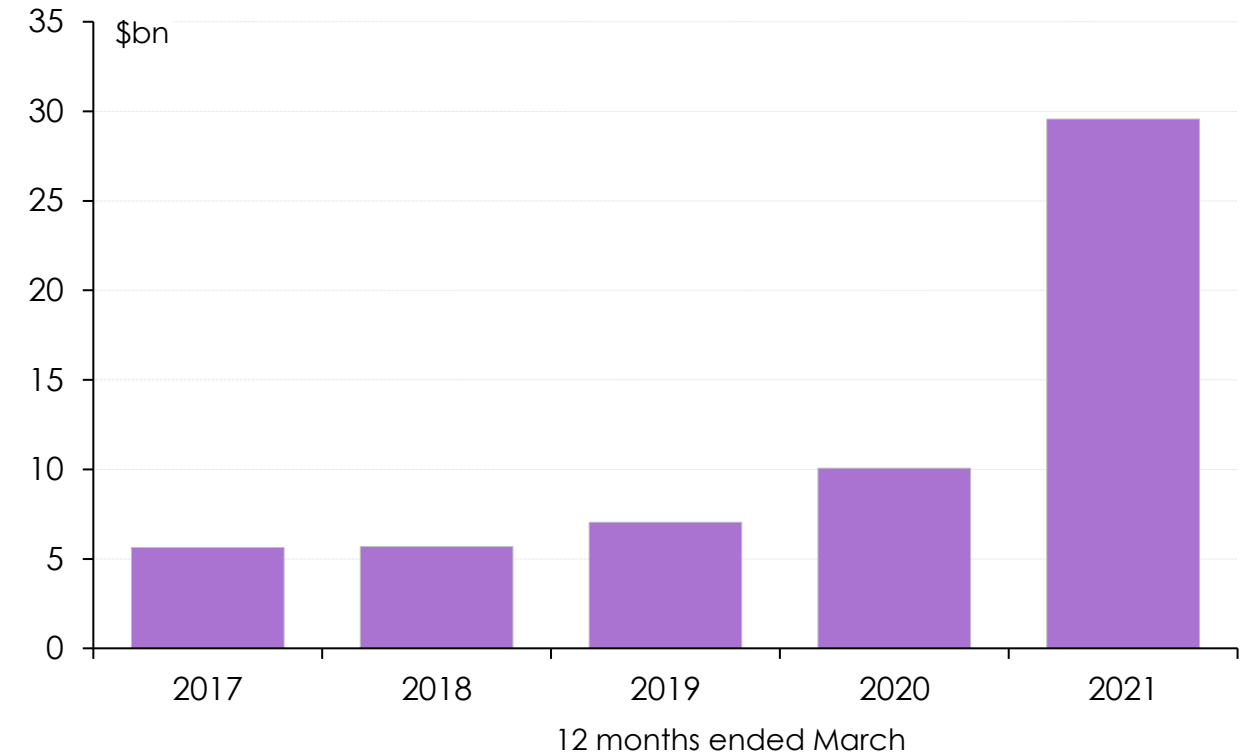
The *taboo* on Australians leaving the country more than offsets the loss of spending by foreign tourists and students

Travel credits and debits



- Over the four years to March 2020, Australians spent an average of \$54bn per annum on overseas travel – as against just \$1bn spend in that way over the 12 months to March 2021, ‘freeing up’ a large amount which appears to have been spent in other ways (electronics, household goods, clothes, cars etc.)

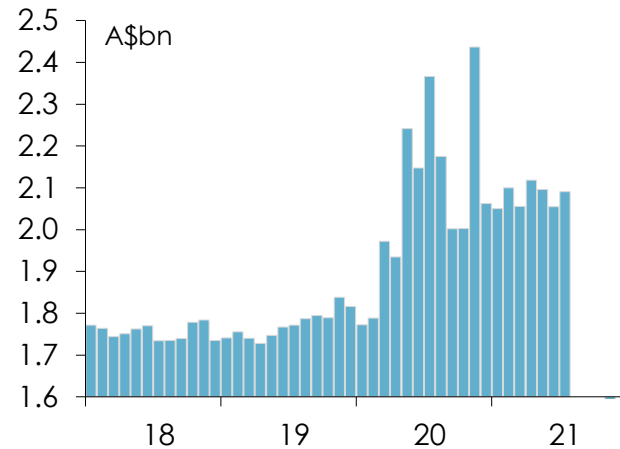
Net travel transactions



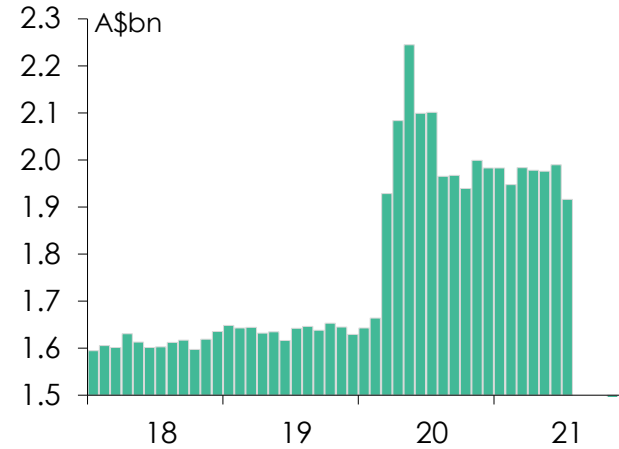
- Despite restrictions, foreigners still spent \$31bn in Australia in the 12 months to March 2021 (cf. an average of \$61bn per annum over the previous four years) implying a *net gain* to Australia during 12 months to March this year of almost \$22½bn by comparison with the 2016-19 average – equivalent to about 1¼% of GDP

The >\$50bn per annum that Australians would have spent overseas if they'd been allowed to

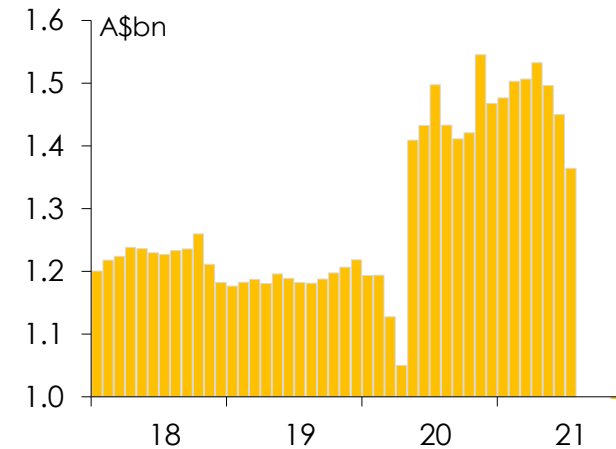
Electronic & electrical goods



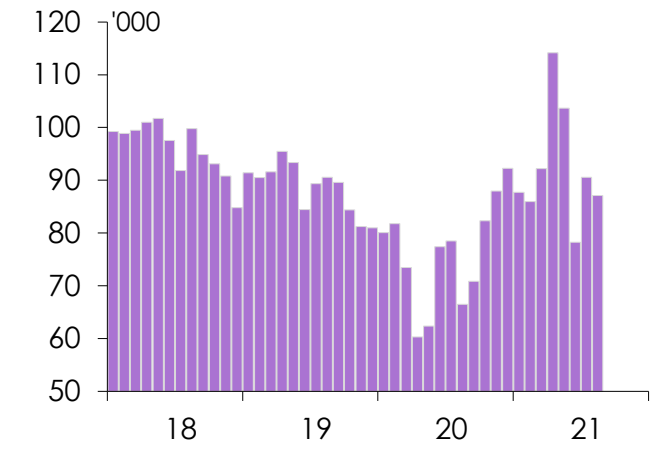
Hardware, building & garden supplies



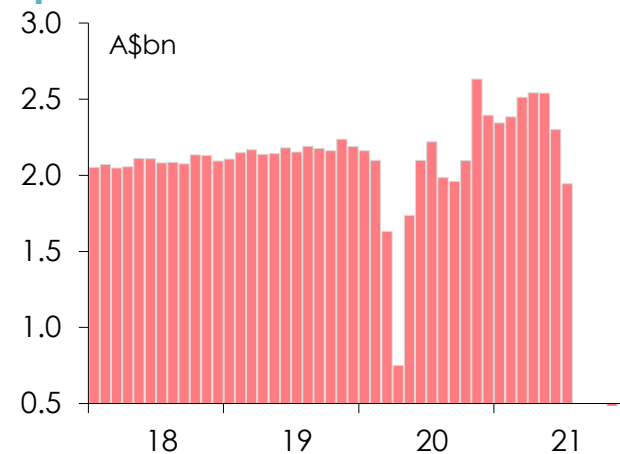
Floor coverings, furniture, housewares etc



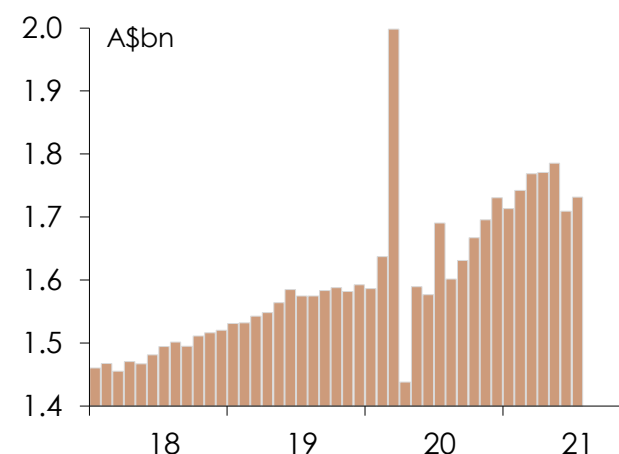
New motor vehicles



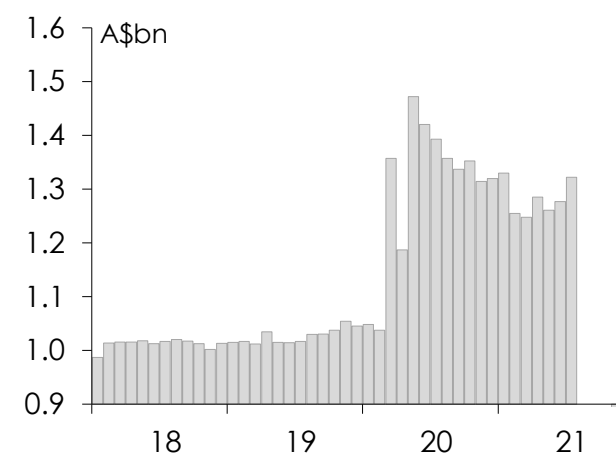
Clothing, footwear & personal accessories



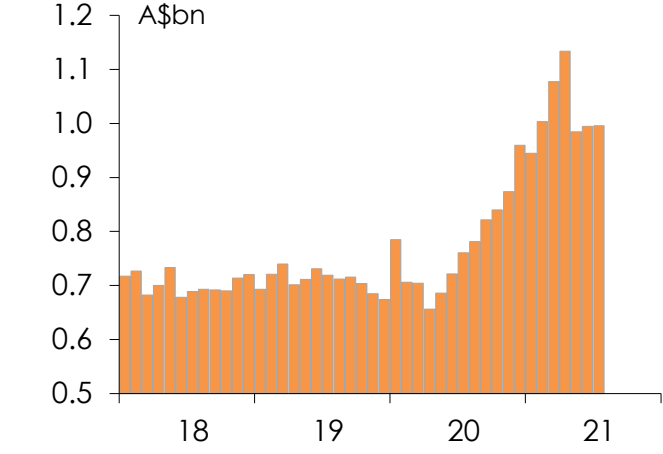
Pharmaceuticals, cosmetics & toiletries



Alcoholic beverages



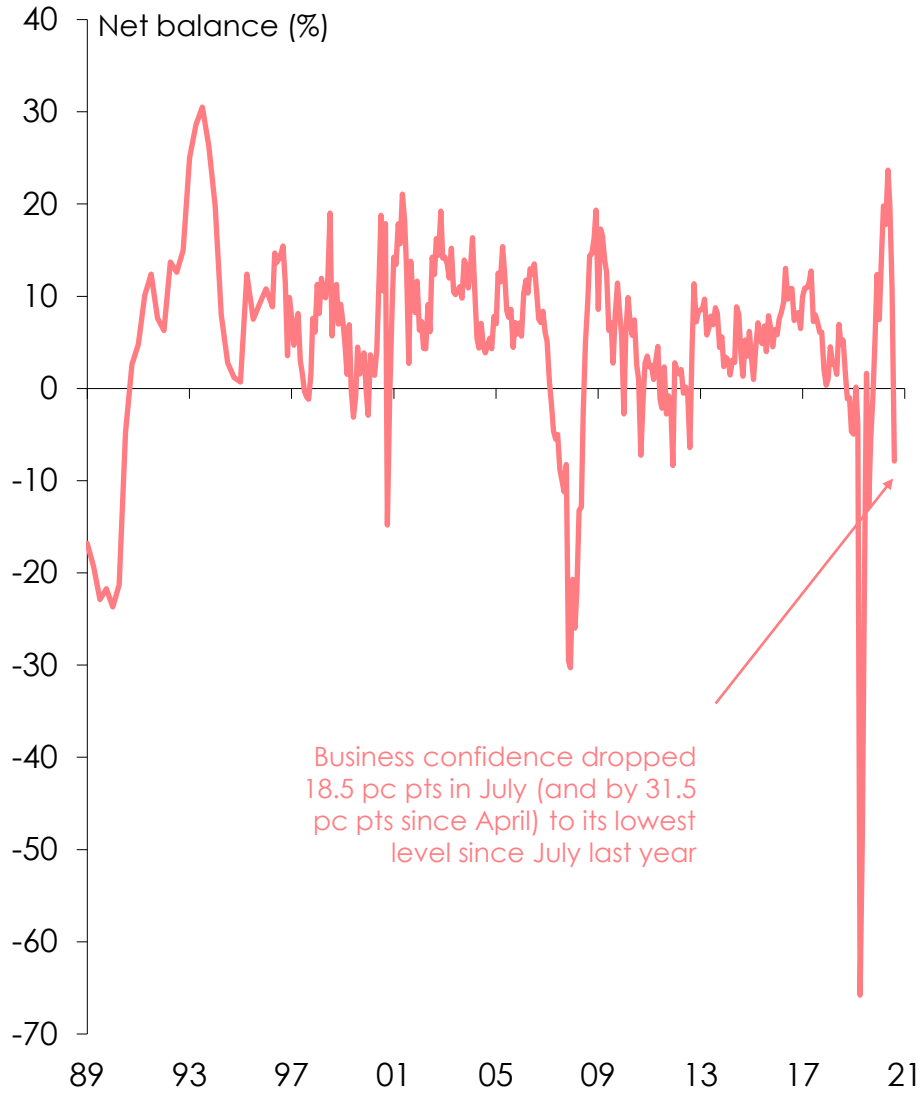
Renovations



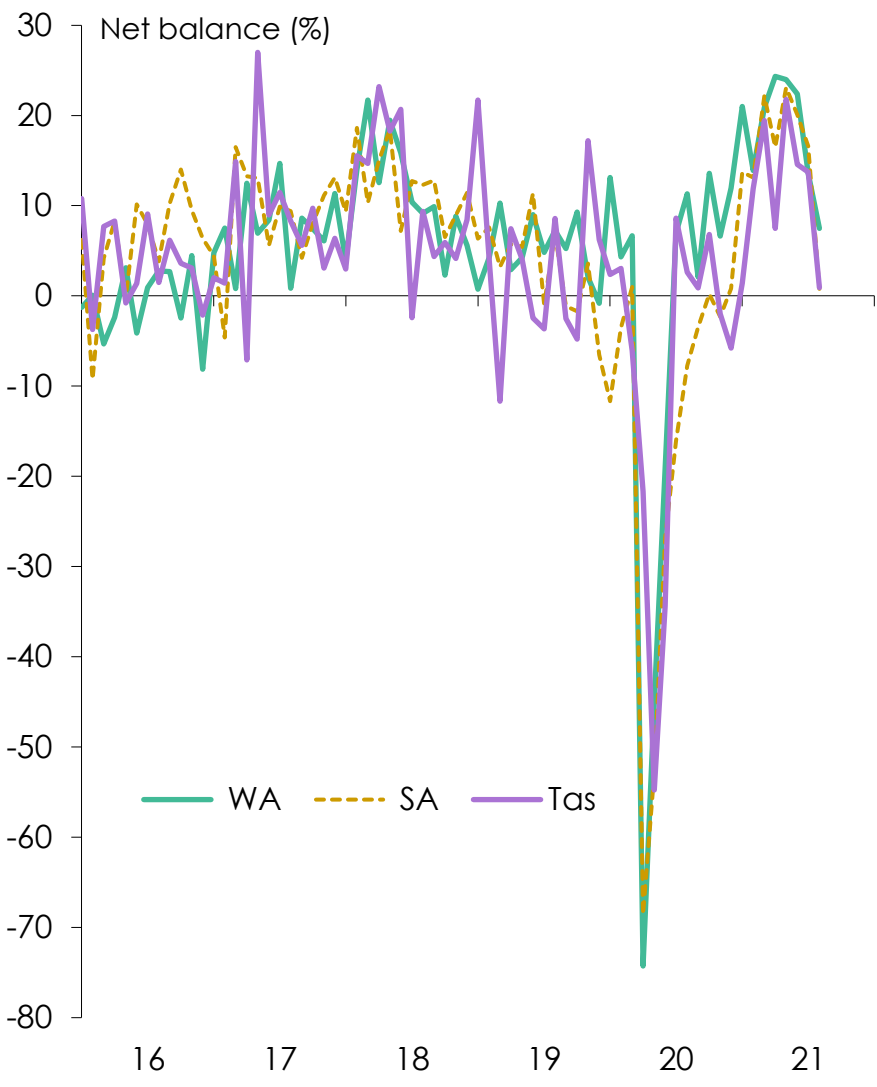
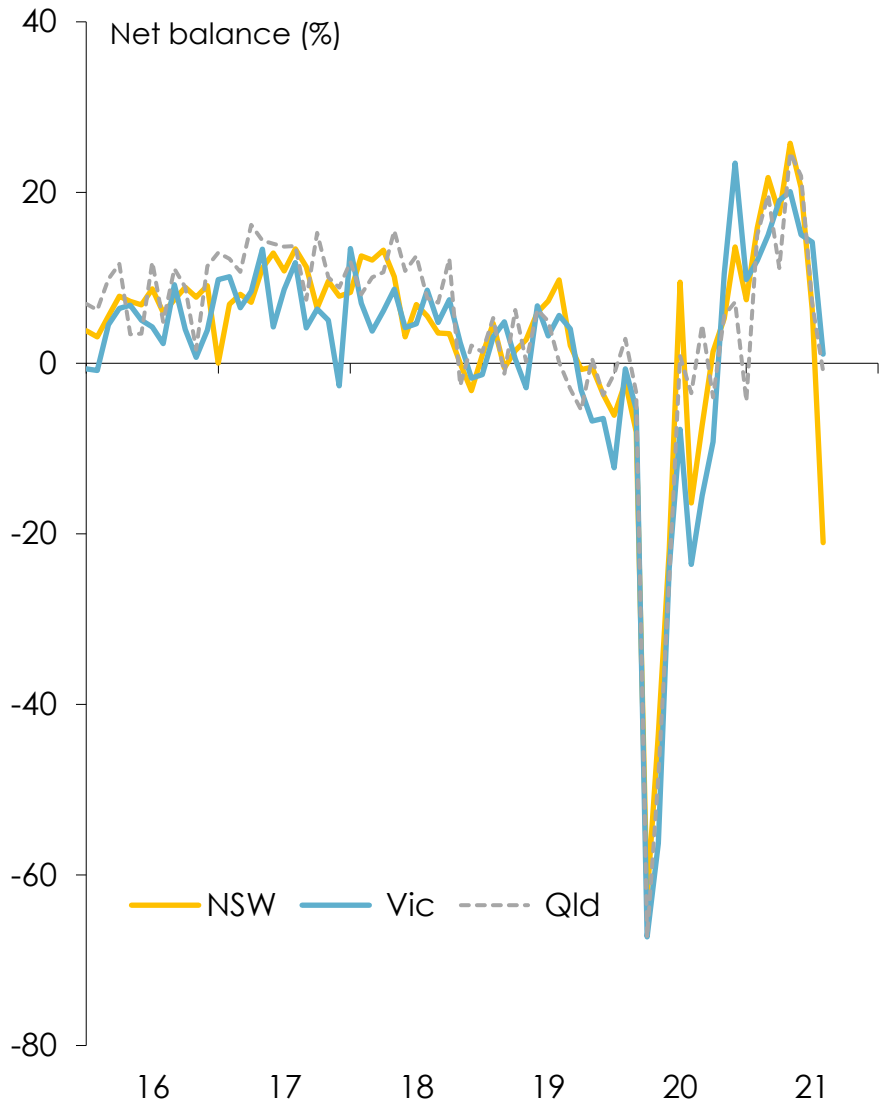
Note: First six charts (from left) are retail sales; new motor vehicles are numbers of vehicles sold; renovations are the value of alterations and additions to residential dwellings approved by local governments. Sources: ABS, [Retail Trade, Australia](#), July 2021 (August data will be released on 5th October); [Building Approvals, Australia](#), July 2021; Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries [VFACTS](#) (seasonal adjustment of Vfacts data by Corinna). [Return to "What's New"](#).

Business confidence plunged in July as a result of the ongoing lockdown in Sydney and renewed lockdowns in Victoria and Queensland

Business confidence

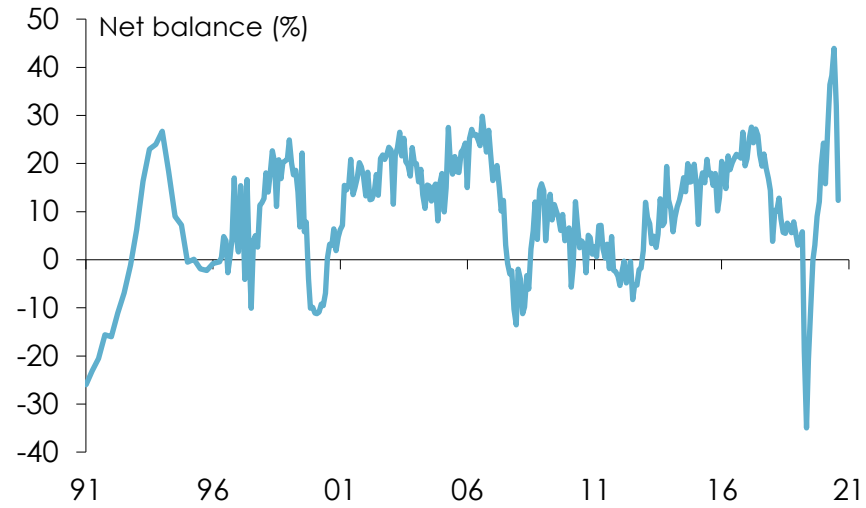


Business confidence, states and territories

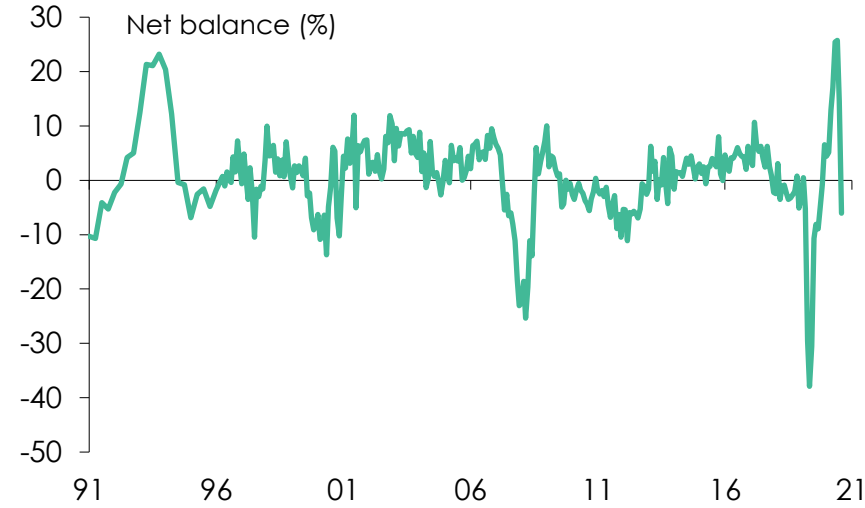


All of the components of 'business conditions' declined sharply in July

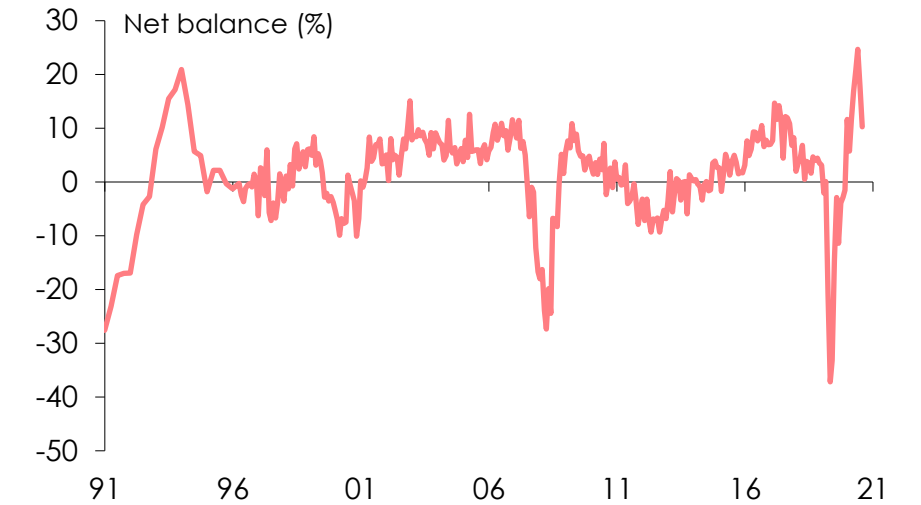
Trading conditions



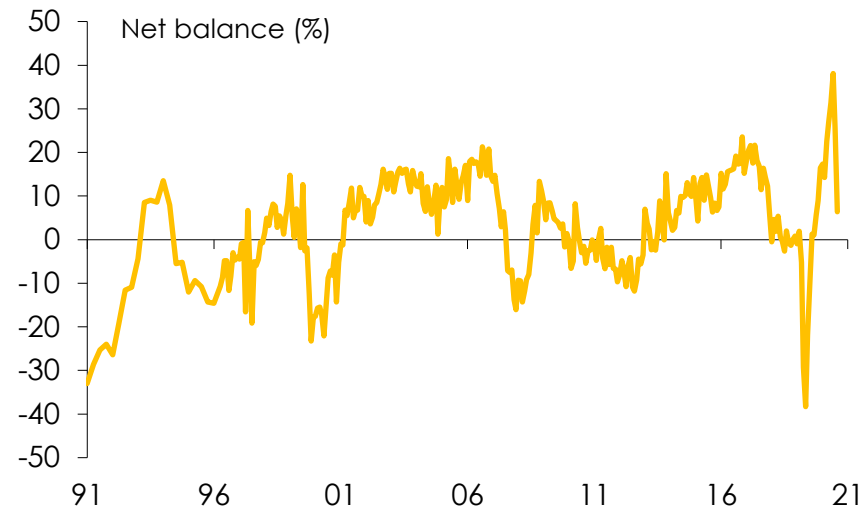
Forward orders



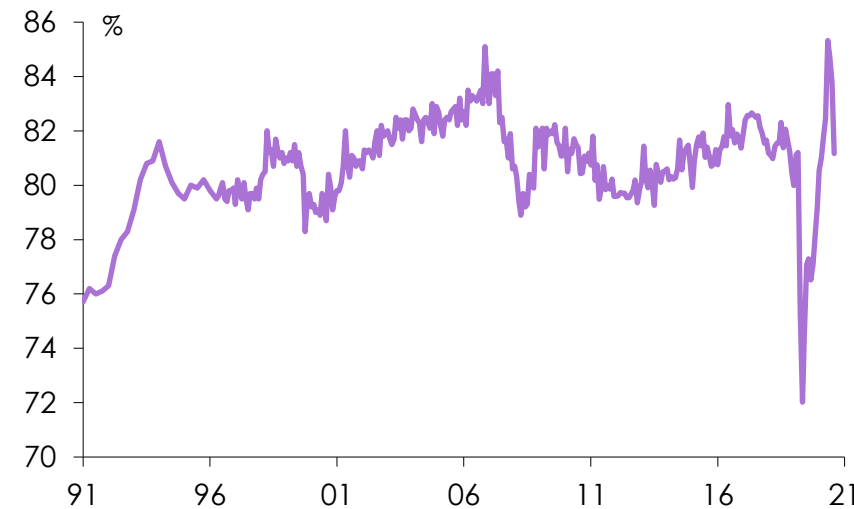
Employee hiring intentions



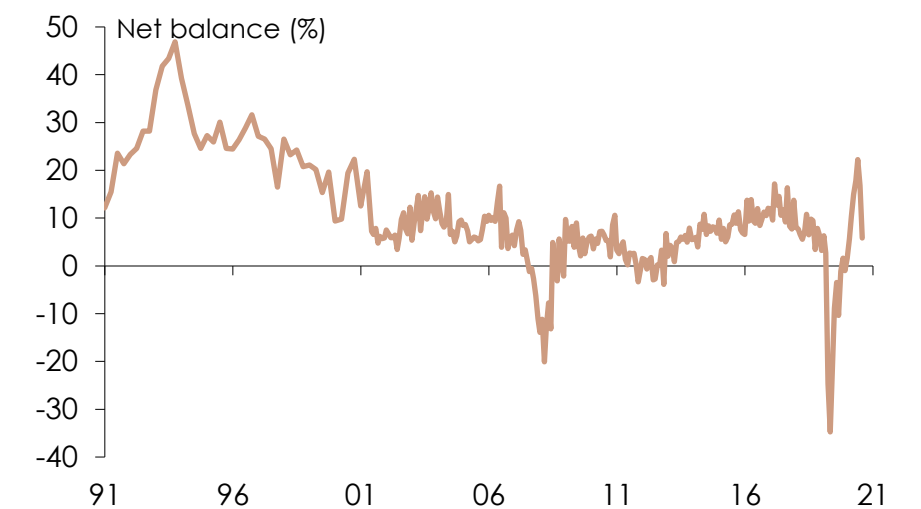
Profitability



Capacity utilization



Capital expenditure intentions

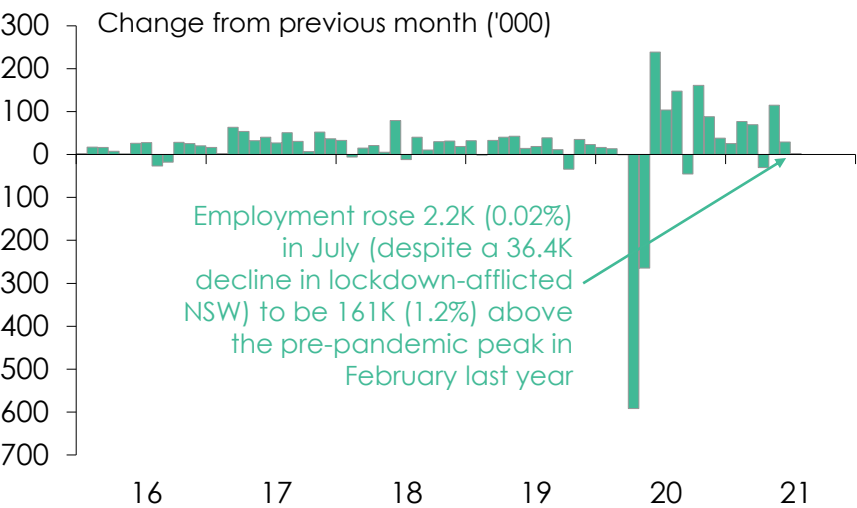


Note: Quarterly data up to March 1997 (May 2002 for capex intentions), monthly thereafter.

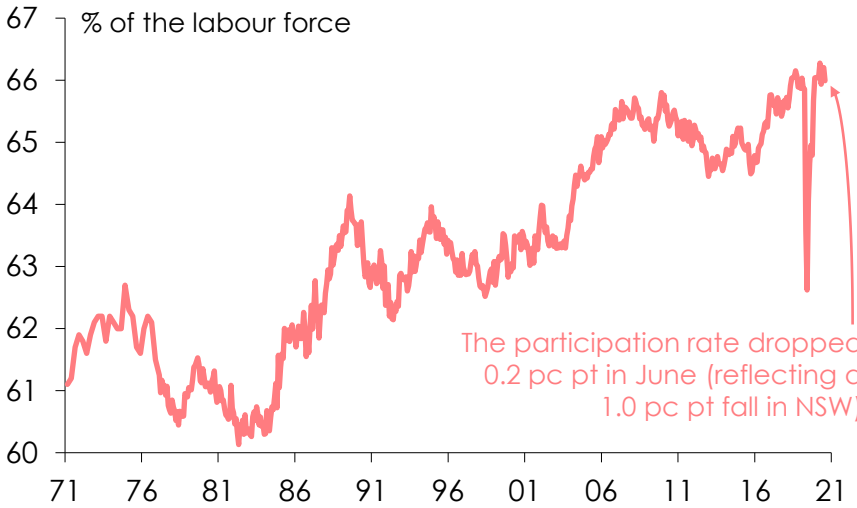
Source: National Australia Bank [Monthly Business Survey](#), July 2021; August survey results will be released this Tuesday, 14th September. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Employment rose fractionally (and unemployment fell) in July, with lockdowns reflected in lower hours worked and lower participation rates

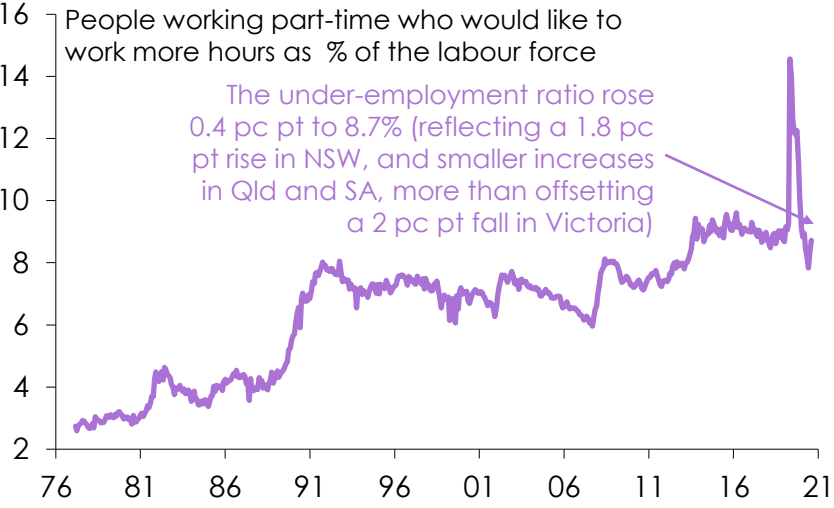
Employment



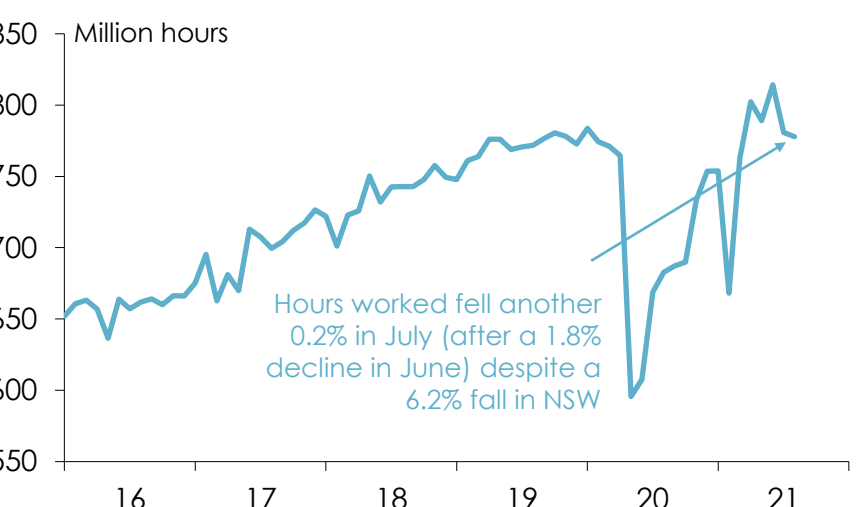
Labour force participation rate



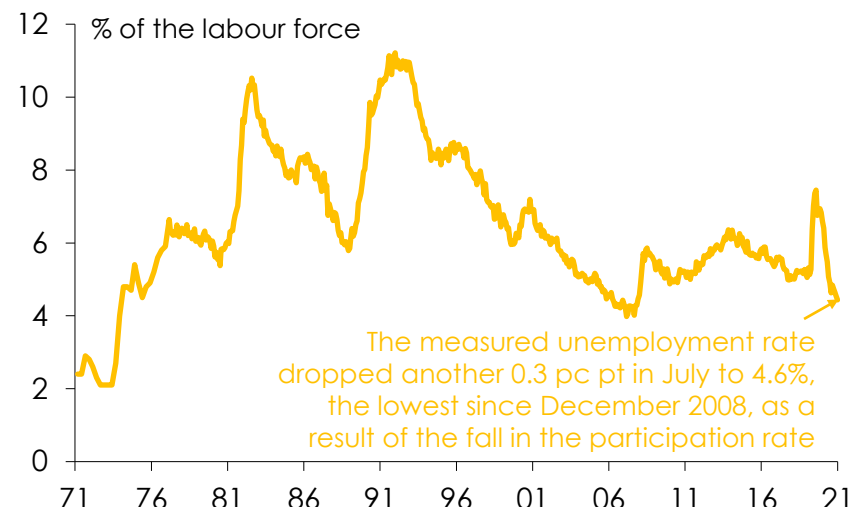
Under-employment ratio



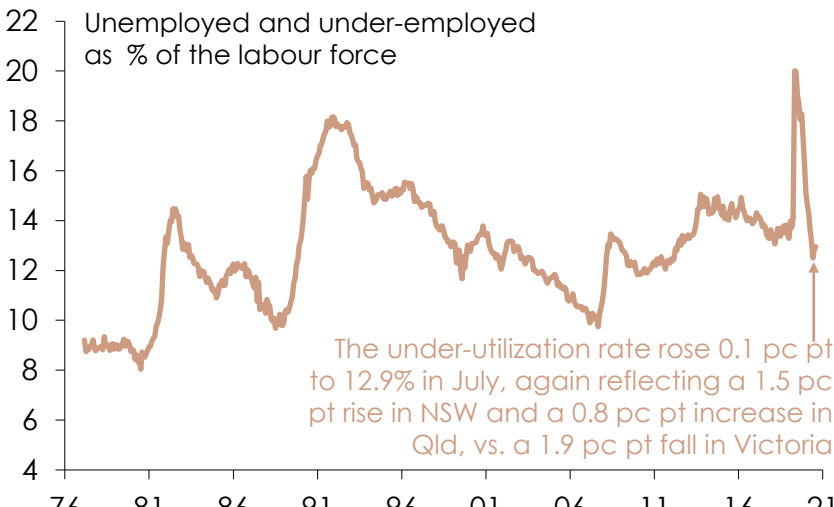
Total hours worked



Unemployment rate

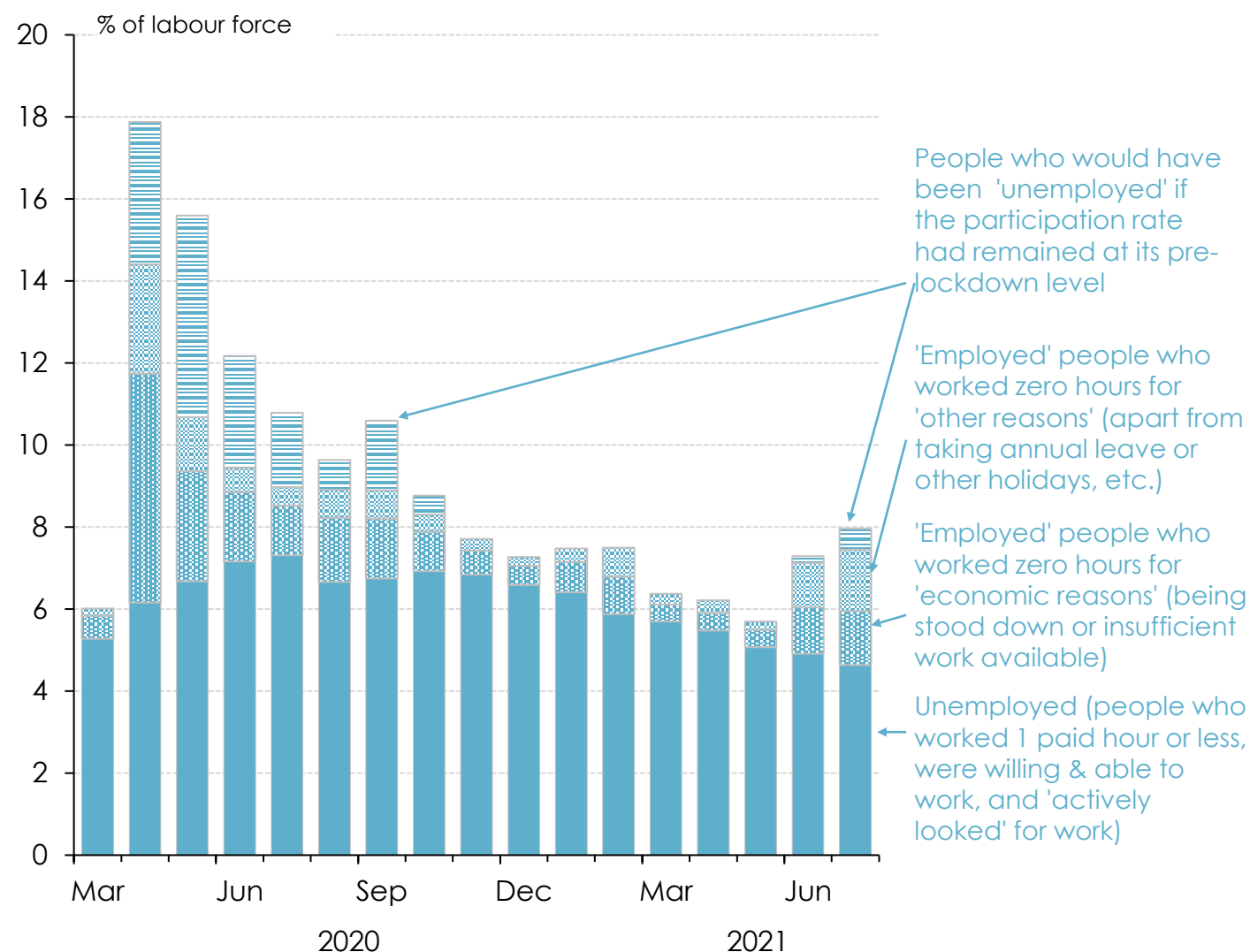


'Under-utilization' rate



The 'effective' unemployment rate has risen from 5.7% in May to 8.0% in July, due to more 'working' zero hours or 'dropping out' of the labour force

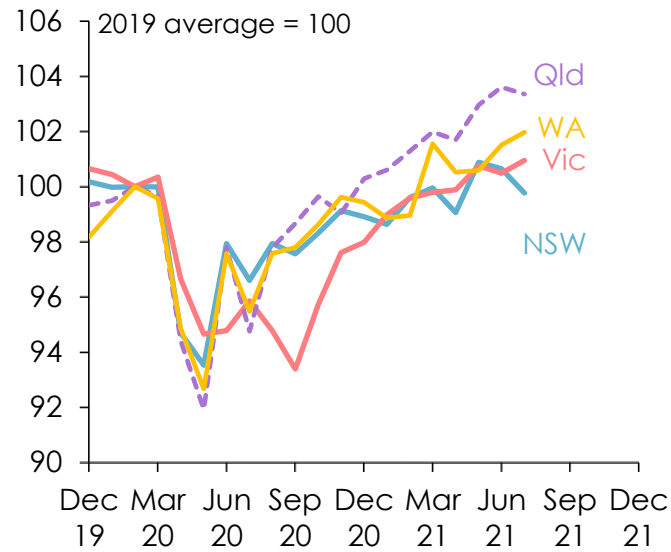
Alternative measures of unemployment



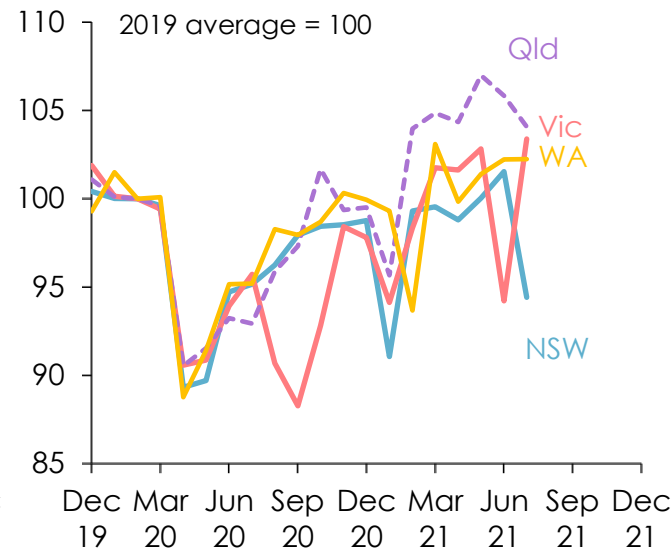
- ❑ The number of people counted as 'employed' but who worked zero hours for 'economic reasons' (no or insufficient work, or 'stood down') rose another 25K in July – reflecting a 103K increase in NSW, offset by a 78K fall in Victoria (after a 104K increase in June)
- ❑ There was also a 57K increase in the number of people counted as 'employed' but working zero hours for 'other reasons' (excluding being on annual or other kinds of leave), after a 121K rise in this category in June
- ❑ Finally, there were 68K people in NSW who would have been classified as 'unemployed' if the participation rate had remained at its June level, and another 2K in Victoria (down from 23K in June) had the participation rate remained at its May level
- ❑ If all of these people are instead regarded as having been 'unemployed', then the unemployment rate would have risen to 8.0% in July, from 5.7% in May and 7.3% in June
 - although that's still well down from a peak of 17.8% in April last year

Lockdowns show up in falls in hours worked and participation rates – in Victoria in June, in NSW in July – rather than in employment

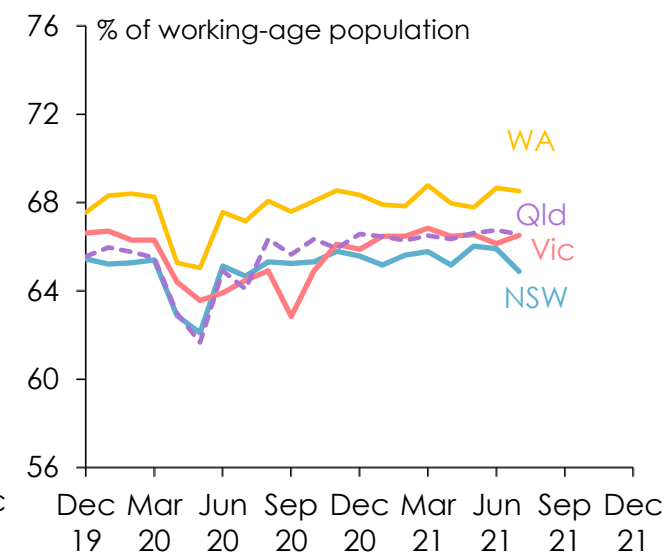
Employment



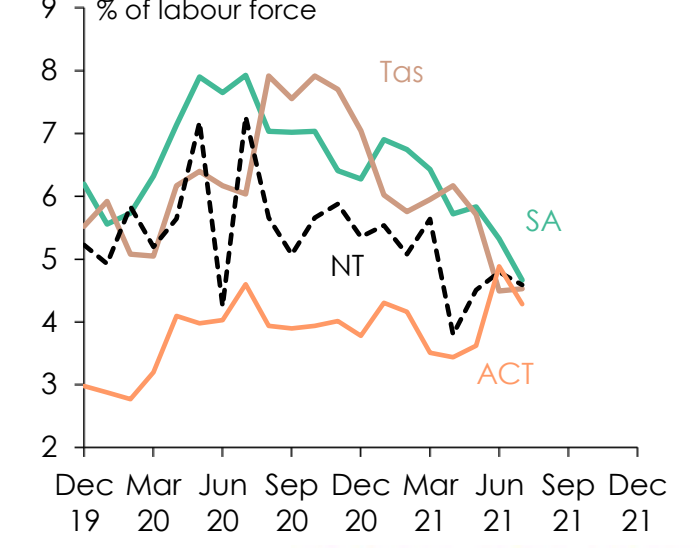
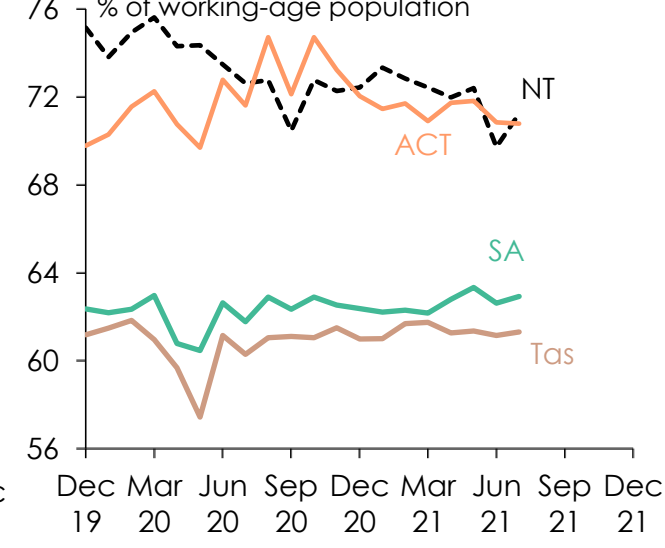
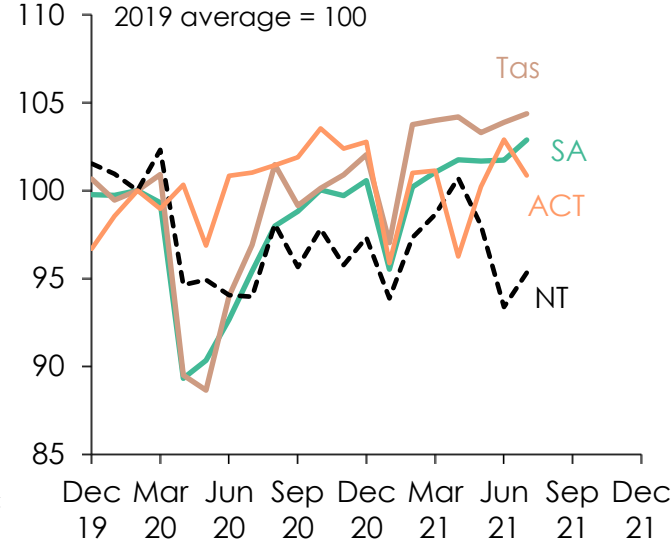
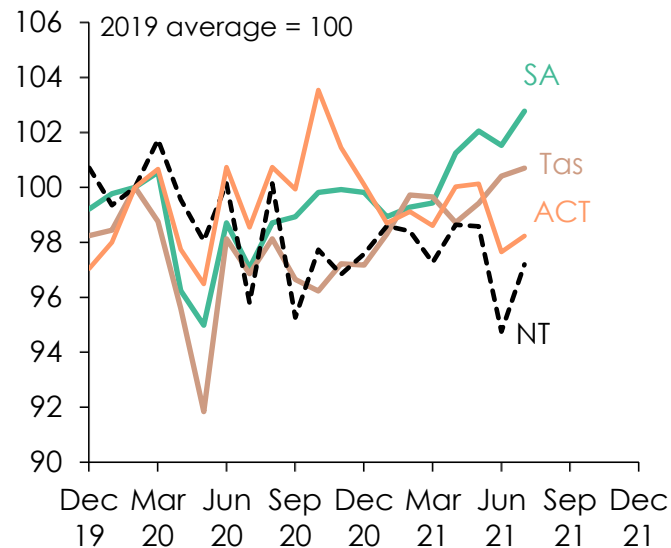
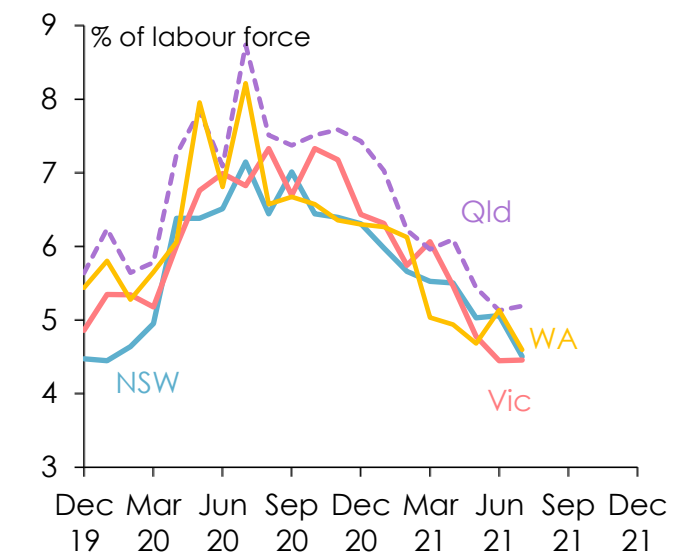
Hours worked



Participation rates



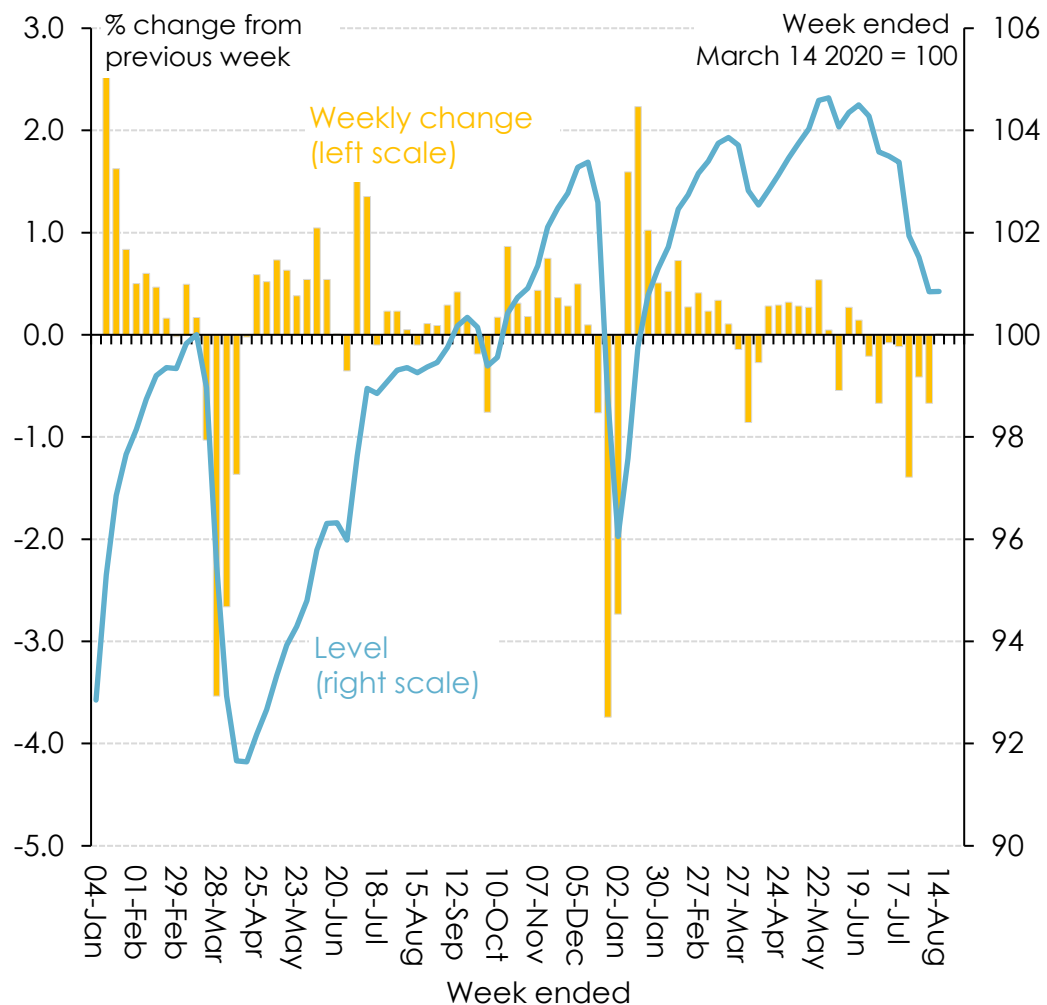
Unemployment rates



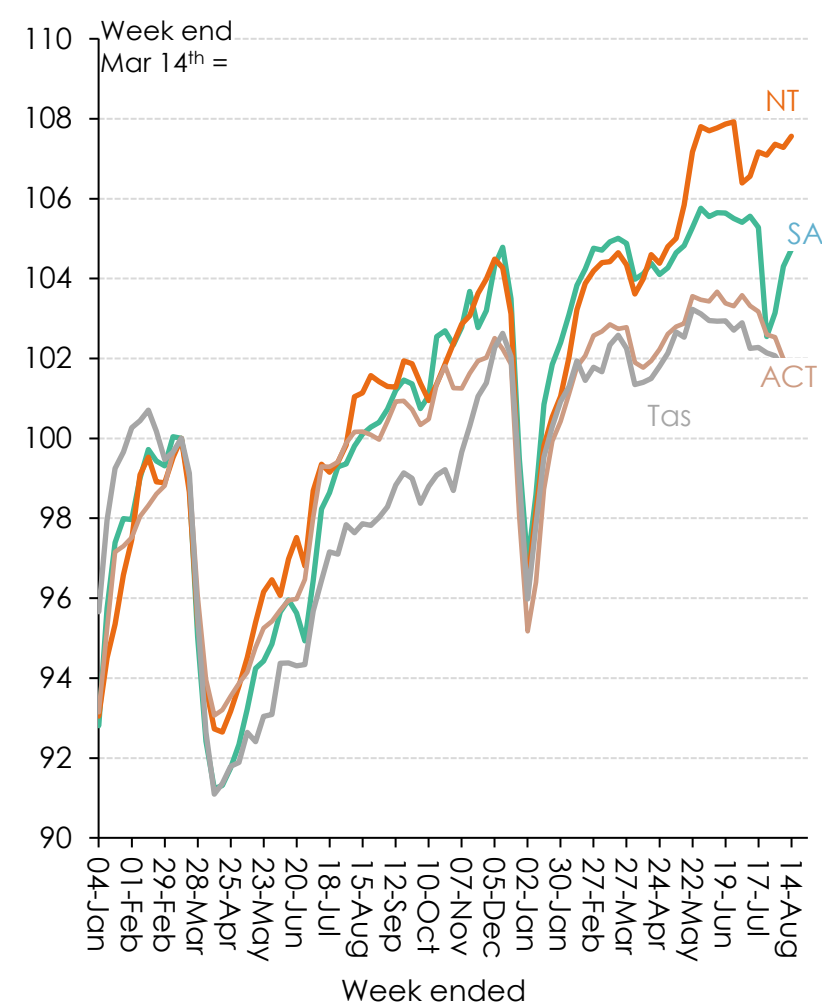
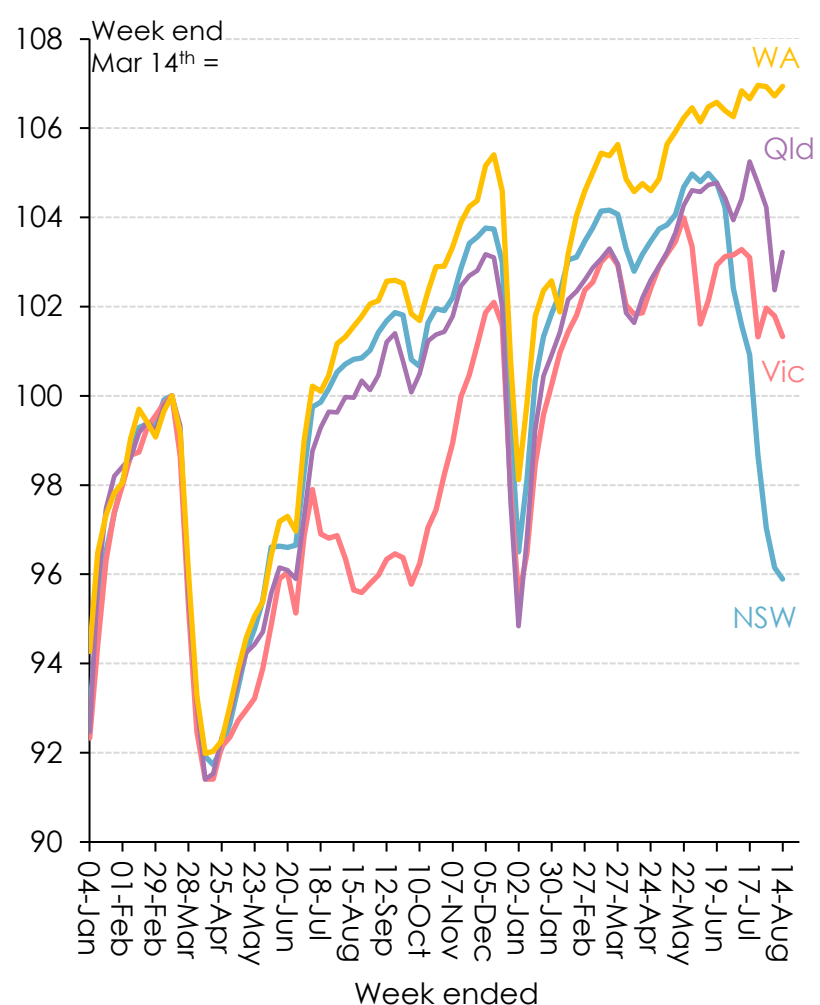
Source: ABS, [Labour Force, Australia](#), July 2021; Corinna. August data will be released this Thursday, 16th September. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Payroll jobs have fallen by 3½% since the NSW lockdown began, with NSW down 8½% but every other state and territory (except WA) is also down

Level and weekly change in the number of payroll jobs



Payroll jobs by State & Territory

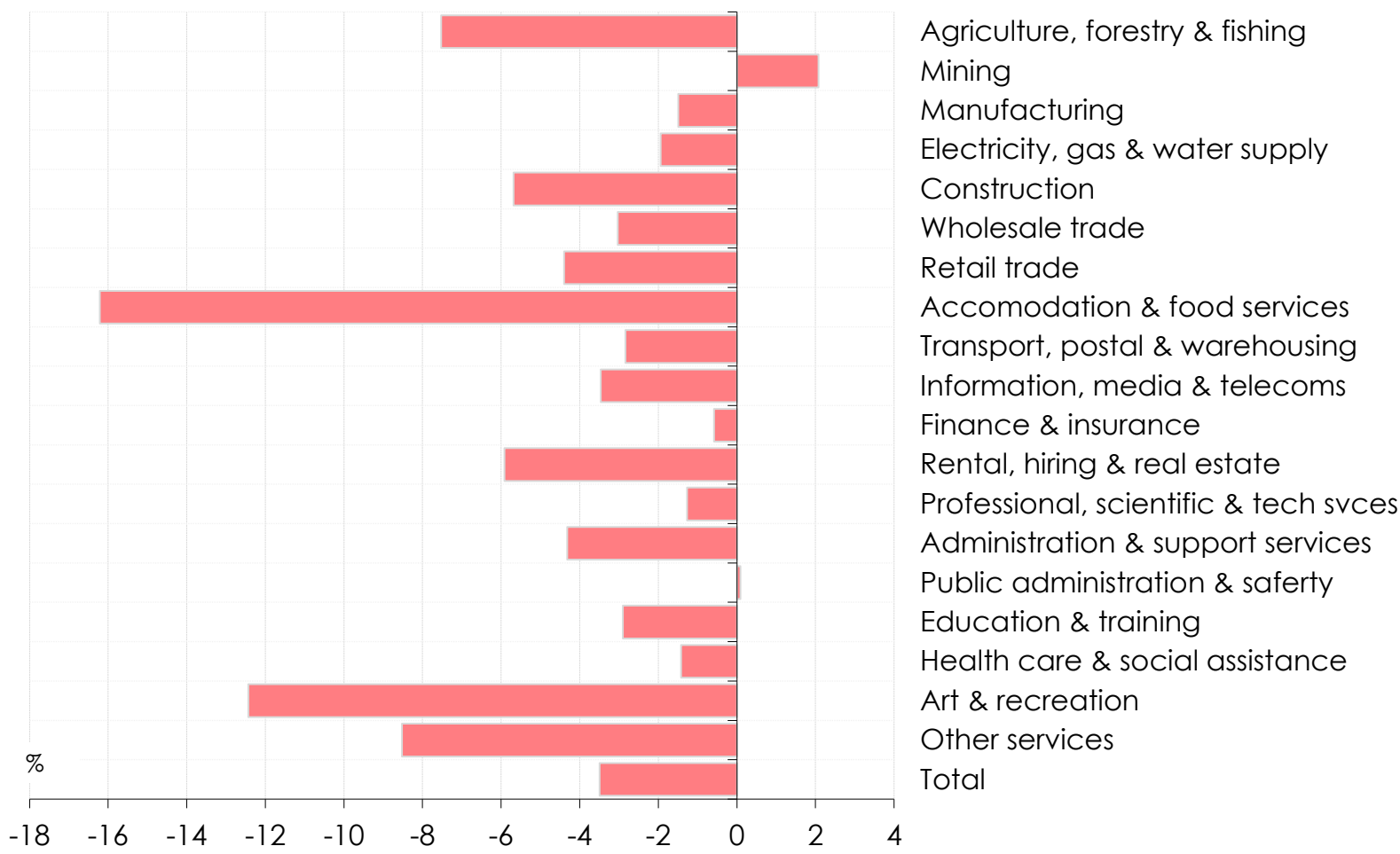


Source: ABS, [Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages in Australia](#). Data refers to the number of payroll jobs at businesses participating in the Australian Taxation Office's Single Touch Payroll system, which covers 99% of employers with 20 or more employees and about 71% of smaller employees. People with two or more jobs (about 6% of the total) are double-counted; employers and the self-employed are not included. Data are not seasonally adjusted (so at least some of the week-to-week variations could be due to 'normal' seasonal factors); and the two most recent weeks are subject to (what have often been large) revisions. Data for the two weeks ended 11th September will be released on 23rd September. [Return to "What's New"](#).

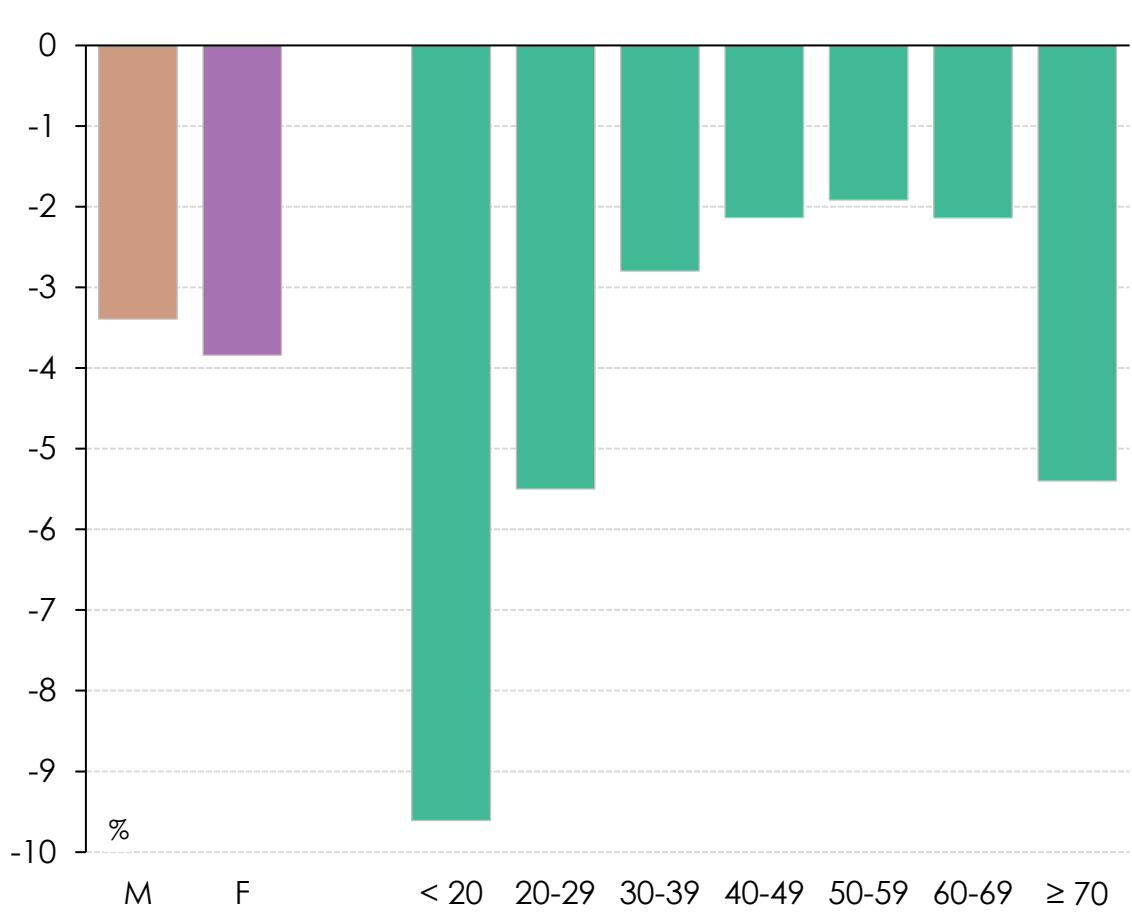
The same sectors, and the same groups, that were hardest hit in last year's lockdowns have been hardest hit in the latest one (plus agriculture)

Change in payroll jobs between week ended 26th June and week ended 14th August

By industry



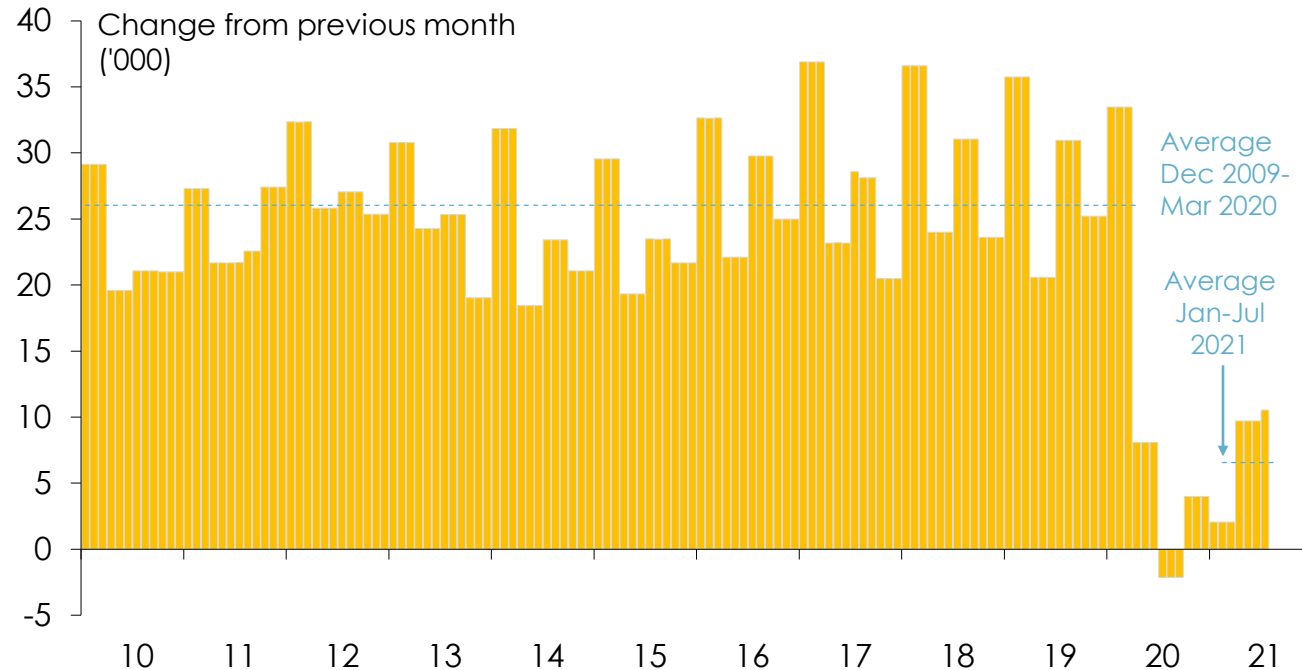
By gender and age



Source: ABS, [Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages in Australia](#). Data refers to the number of payroll jobs at businesses participating in the Australian Taxation Office's Single Touch Payroll system, which covers 99% of employers with 20 or more employees and about 71% of smaller employees. People with two or more jobs (about 6% of the total) are double-counted; employers and the self-employed are not included. Data are not seasonally adjusted (so at least some of the week-to-week variations could be due to 'normal' seasonal factors); and the two most recent weeks are subject to (what have often been large) revisions. Data for the two weeks ended 11th September will be released on 23rd September. [Return to "What's New"](#).

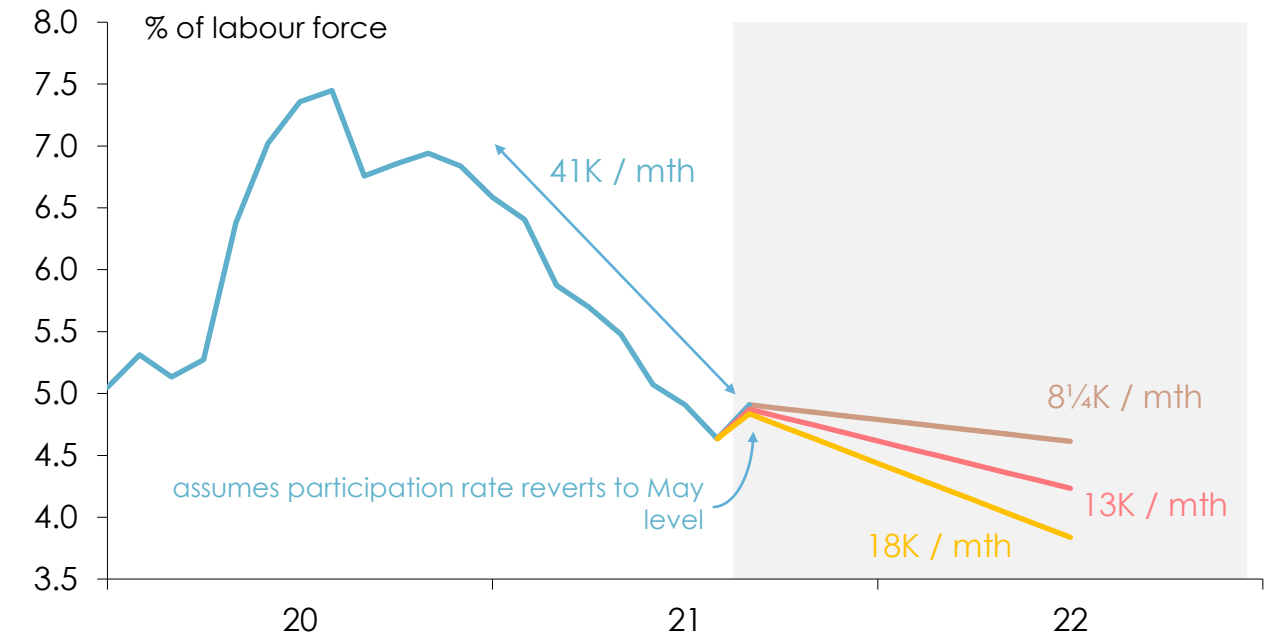
The closure of Australia's borders means that it's much easier to reduce unemployment for any given rate of jobs growth

Monthly growth in civilian working-age population



- ❑ Over the decade prior to the onset of Covid-19, the civilian working-age population (people aged 15 and over) grew by an average of 26K a month – meaning that 16½K new jobs a month, on average, were required to keep the unemployment rate constant (assuming an unchanged participation rate)
- ❑ But so far this year, the working-age population has risen by an average of 6½K a month – which means that anything more than 4K new jobs a month will result in a fall in the unemployment rate, all else being equal

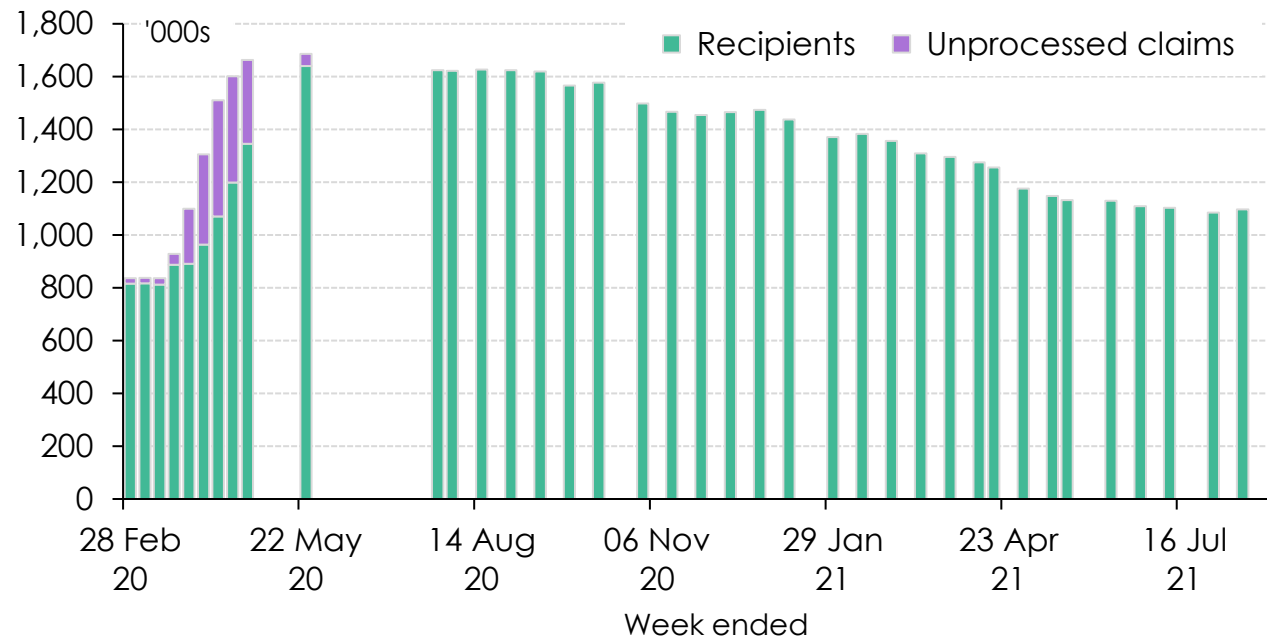
Unemployment rates for alternative rate of jobs growth



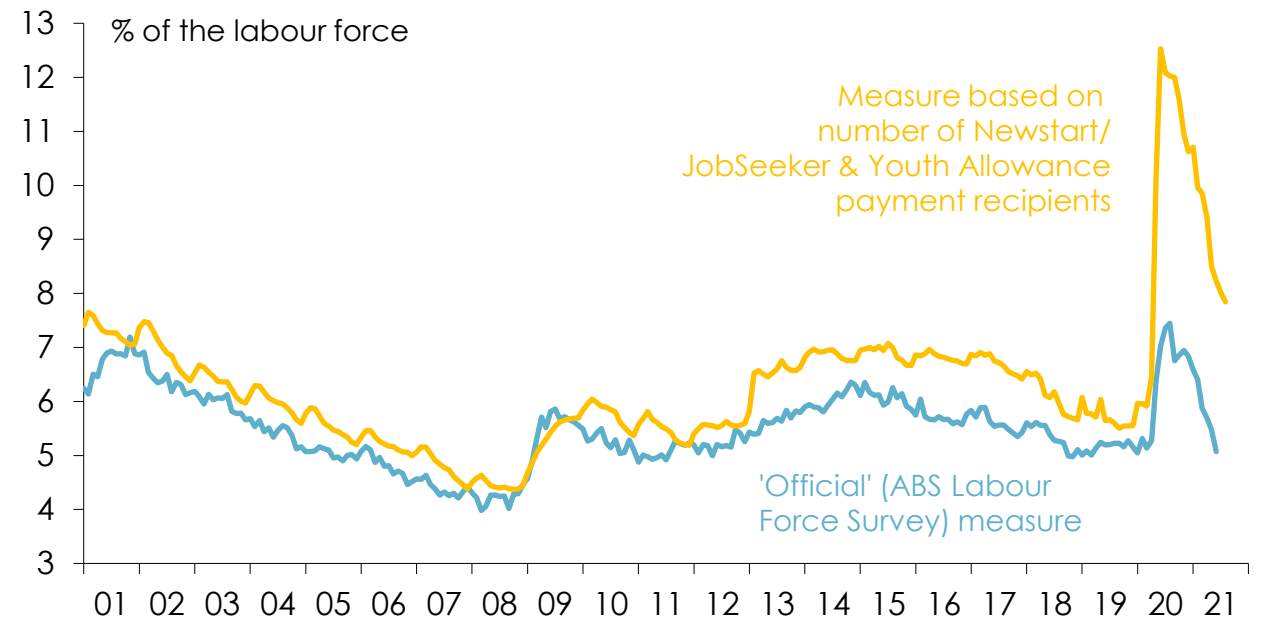
- ❑ Assuming the working-age population grows at the same rate as it has over the first seven months of 2021, and that the participation rate reverts to its May (pre-lockdown) level, employment growth of 8¼K a month will be needed to return the unemployment rate to 4.6% by June 2022
- ❑ If employment grows by an average of 13K a month the unemployment rate will be down to 4¼% by June next year – if it grows by 18K a month it will be down to 3¾% by June (all else being equal)

The number of people receiving 'unemployment benefits' rose by 12,400 over the first two weeks of August – but mostly in Queensland, not NSW

Number of people receiving or seeking Newstart/ JobSeeker or Youth Allowance payments



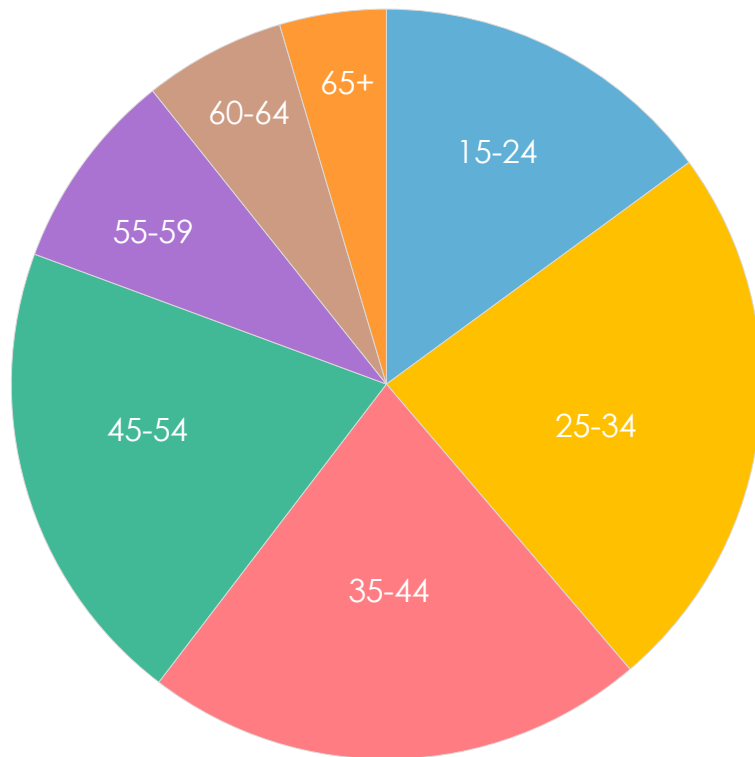
Jobless income support beneficiaries and labour force survey unemployed as a pc of the labour force



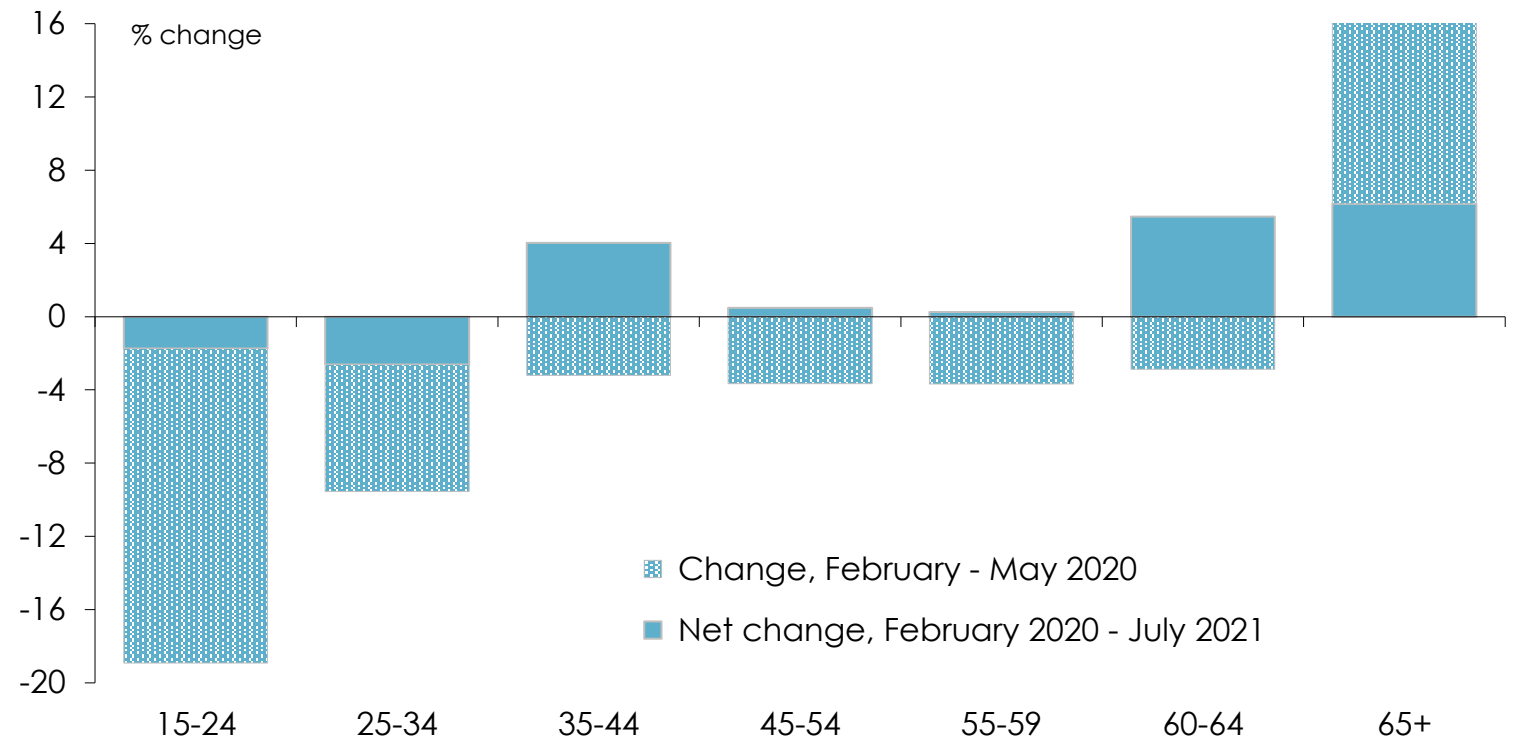
- ❑ Ministers receive weekly data on the number of people on JobSeeker and Youth Allowance (Other) benefits – which since late July last year the Department of Social Services has made this available every second week to the Senate Select Committee examining the Government's responses to Covid-19
- ❑ The number of people receiving JobSeeker or Youth Allowance (Other) payments rose by 12,400 (1.1%) over the two weeks to 13th August – the first increase since early February – although surprisingly most of the increase (12.7K) was in Queensland, not NSW (+3.7K) partly offset by a fall in Victoria (-1.7K) and SA (-2.7K)
- ❑ People displaced from employment as a result of recent lockdowns are entitled to receive a range of other payments from the Federal or state governments – see [slides 143-144](#)

Younger workers bore the brunt of job losses during the early stages of the pandemic and have had a more difficult time regaining jobs

Composition of employment by age group, February 2020



Change in employment between February 2020 and July 2021, by age group

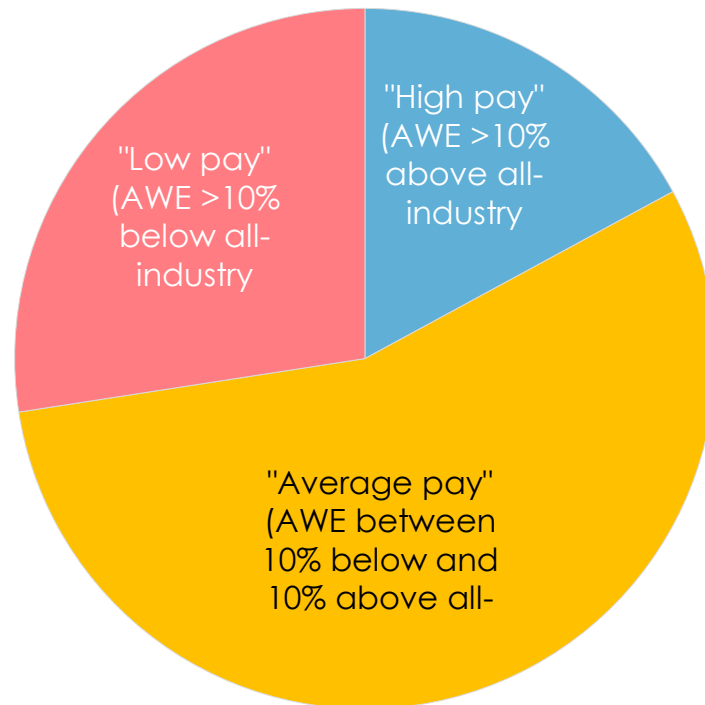


- ❑ People aged 15-24 accounted for 15% of pre-covid employment but experienced 39% of all job losses between February and May last year – and as of July this year their employment was still down 1¾% from where it had been in February 2020, while that of 25-34 year-olds was down by 2½%
- ❑ By contrast older age groups have fared much better, with employment of 60-64 year-olds and those aged 65 & over 5½% and 6¼%, respectively above where it was in February last year, and that of 35-44 year-olds up by 4%

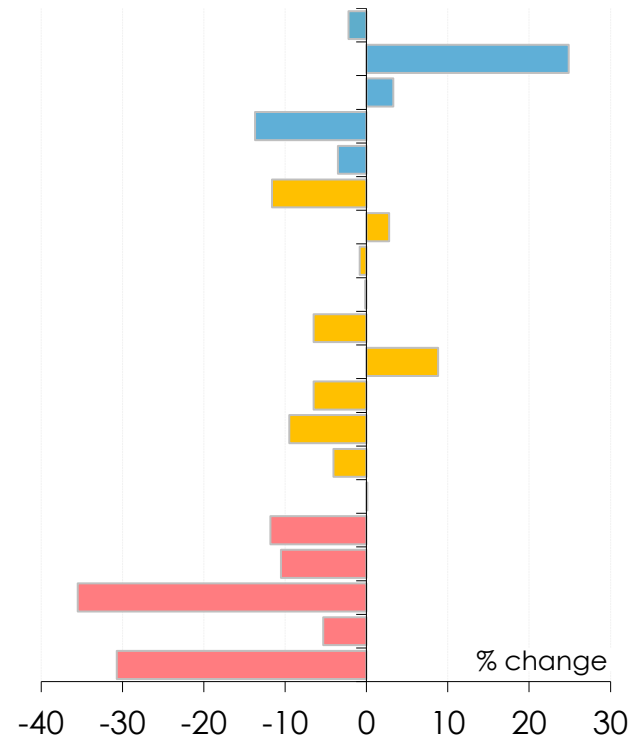
Note: data on employment by age group is not seasonally adjusted. Source: ABS, [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed](#), July 2021: August data will be released on 23rd September. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Workers in low-pay industries experienced the bulk of job losses during the downturn and the greatest difficulty regaining them since then

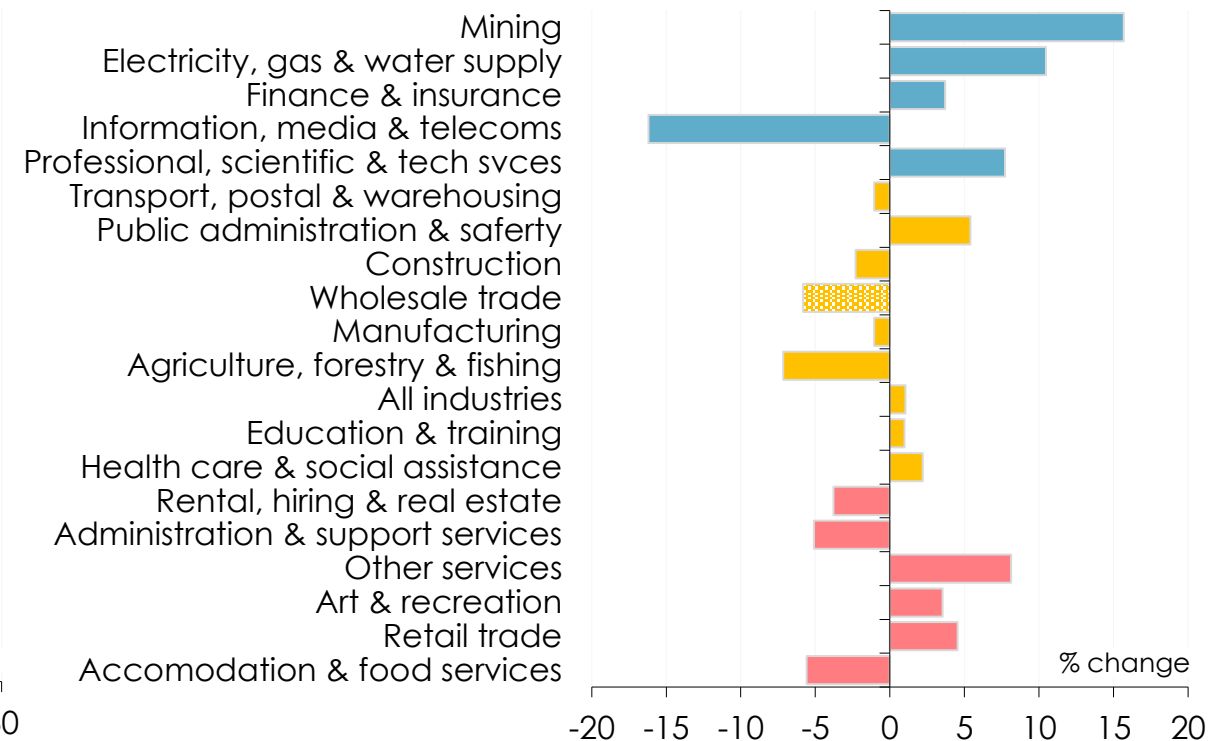
Composition of employment by industry ranked by average weekly earnings, February 2020



Change in employment by industry
February-May 2020



February 2020 – May 2021

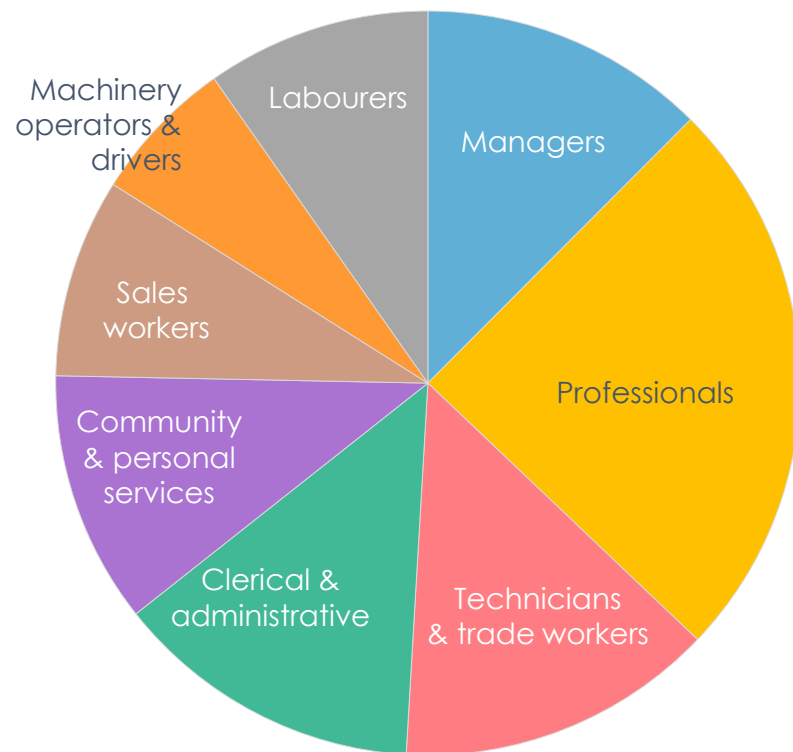


- ❑ Industries with average earnings which are 10% or more below average accounted for 27½% of the pre-pandemic workforce, but experienced 64% of the job losses between February and May last year – and employment in those industries was only 0.6% higher in May this year than it had been in February last year
- ❑ By contrast employment in “high pay” industries (17% of the pre-pandemic workforce) was 5.6% higher than it had been in February last year

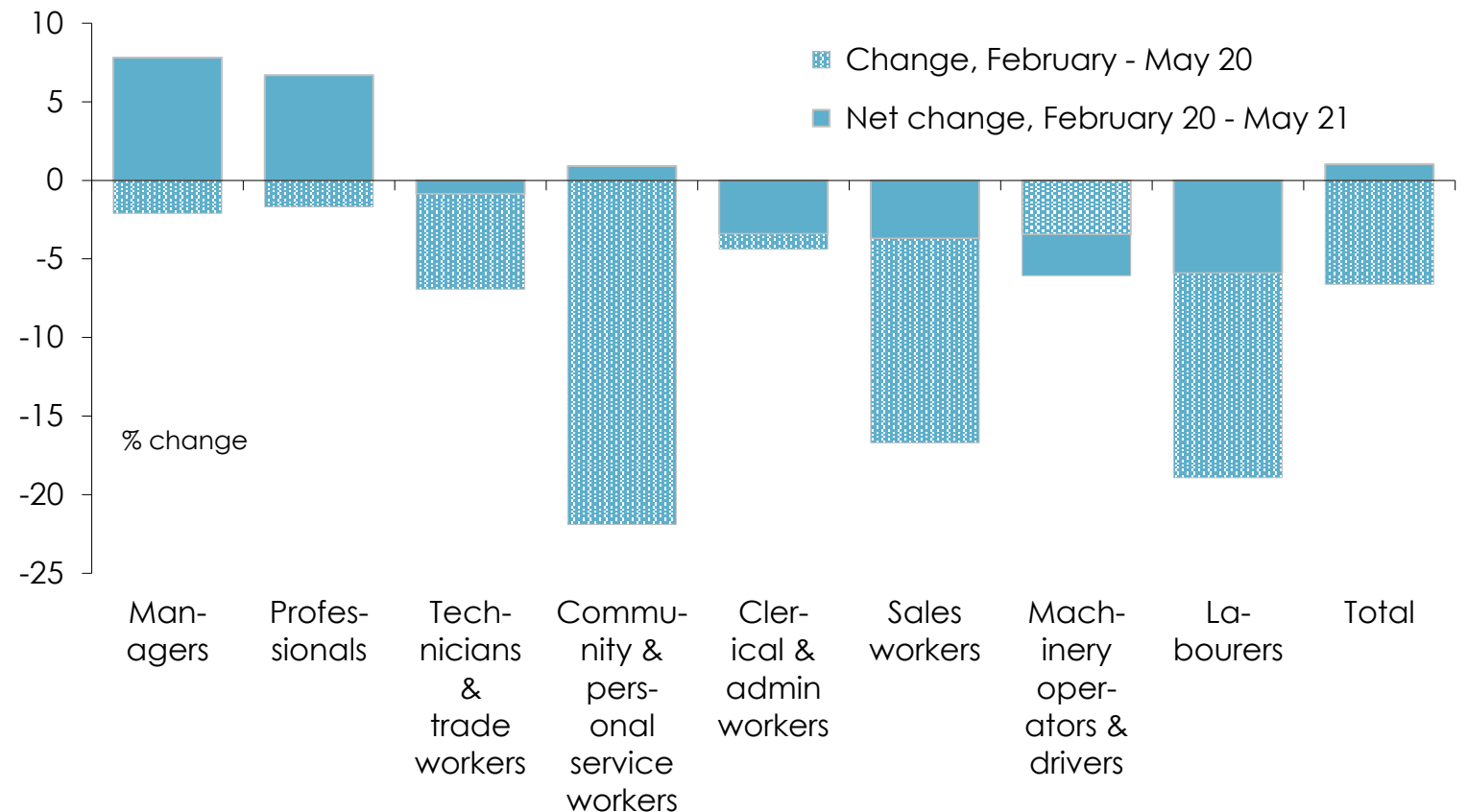
Source: ABS, [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed](#), May 2021 and [Average Weekly Earnings, Australia](#), November 2019. Labour force survey data on employment by occupation are available only for the middle month of each quarter: August data will be released on 23rd September. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Community & personal service workers, sales workers and labourers have borne the brunt of job losses since the onset of the pandemic

Employment by major occupation category, February 2020



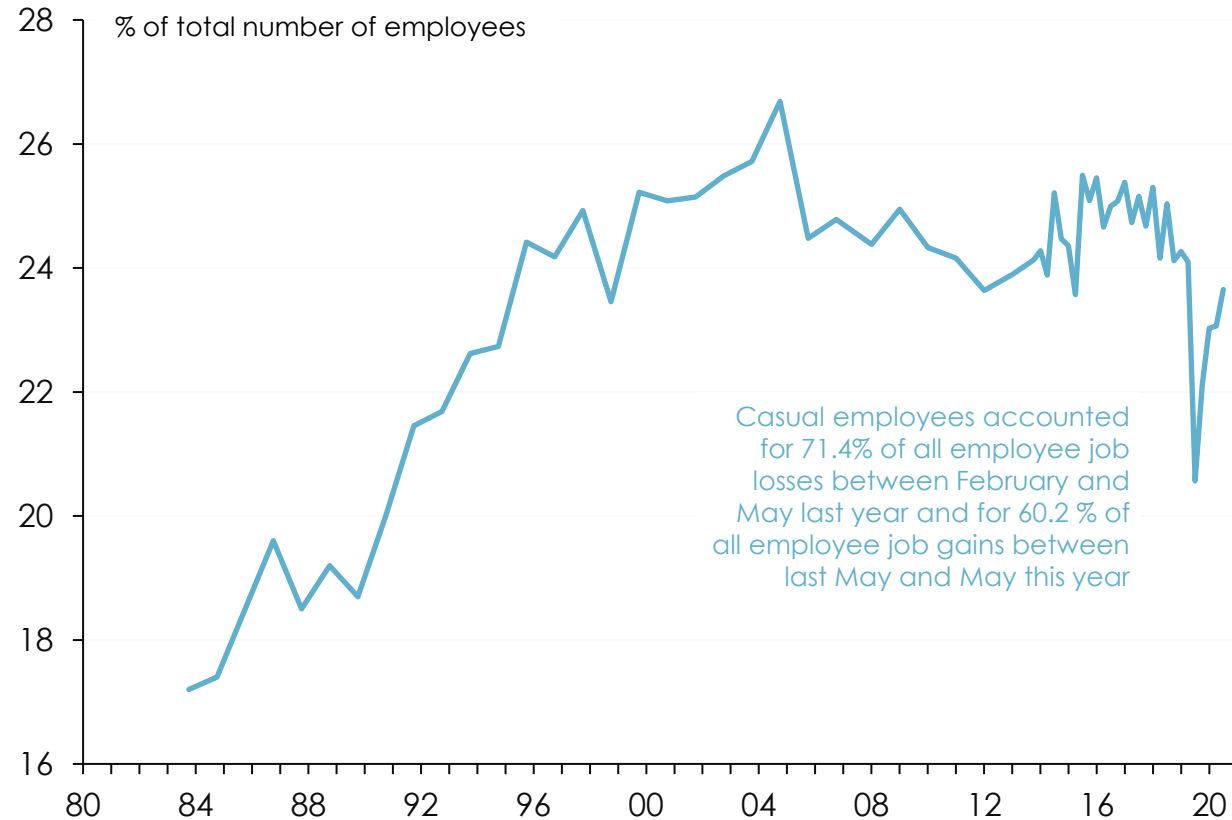
Change in employment between February 2020 and May 2021, by occupation



- ❑ Community & personal services workers, sales workers and labourers accounted for 29% of the pre-covid work force, but experienced 73% of the job losses during the recession – and 17% of them still haven't regained their jobs (or found others) ...
- ❑ ... whereas there are 7% more employed managers and professionals than there were in February last year

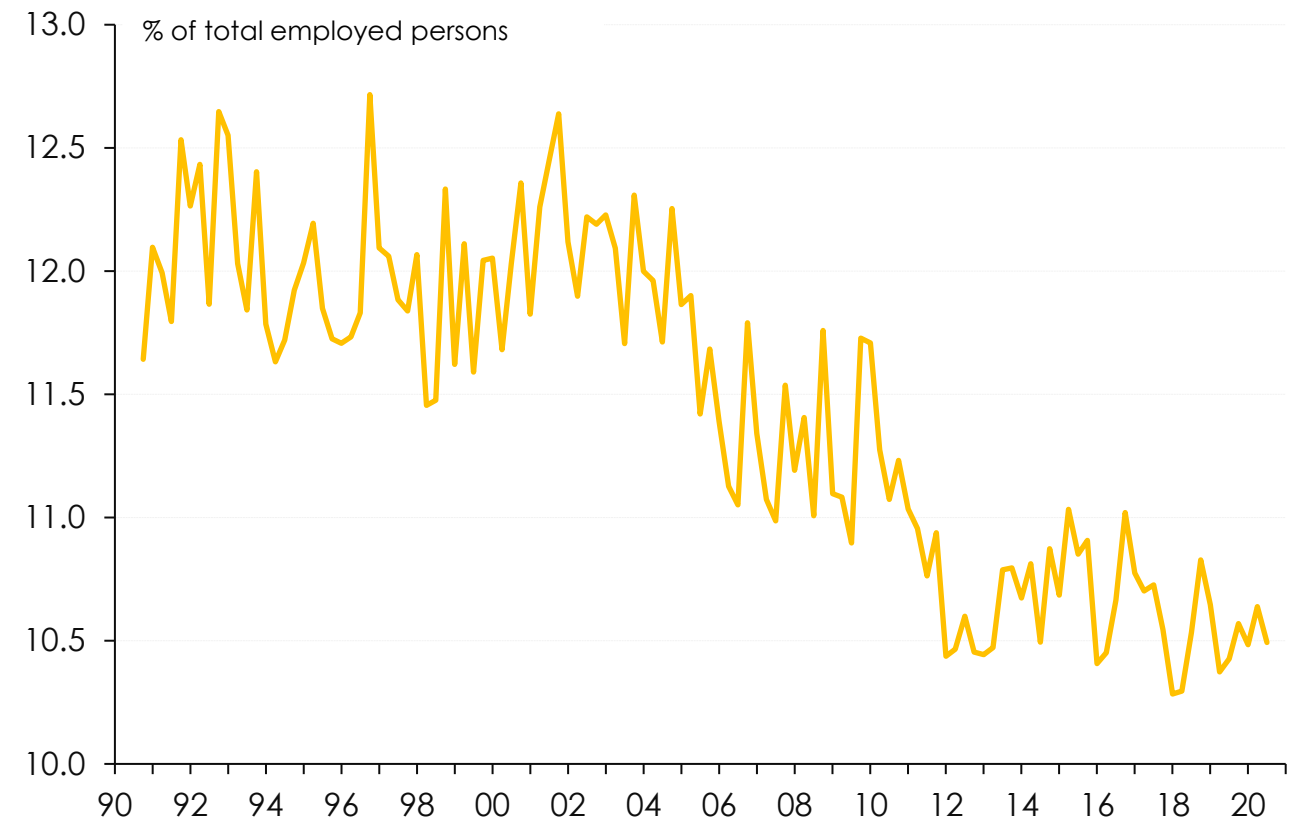
Contrary to popular belief neither casual jobs nor 'gig economy' jobs have become more commonplace during the past two decades

'Casual' employees (those without any kind of paid leave entitlement) as a pc of total



- ❑ Casual employment increased significantly as a share of the total during the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s but has not changed significantly since then – except for a sharp drop during the current recession

Owner-managers of unincorporated enterprises with no employees as a pc of total employment

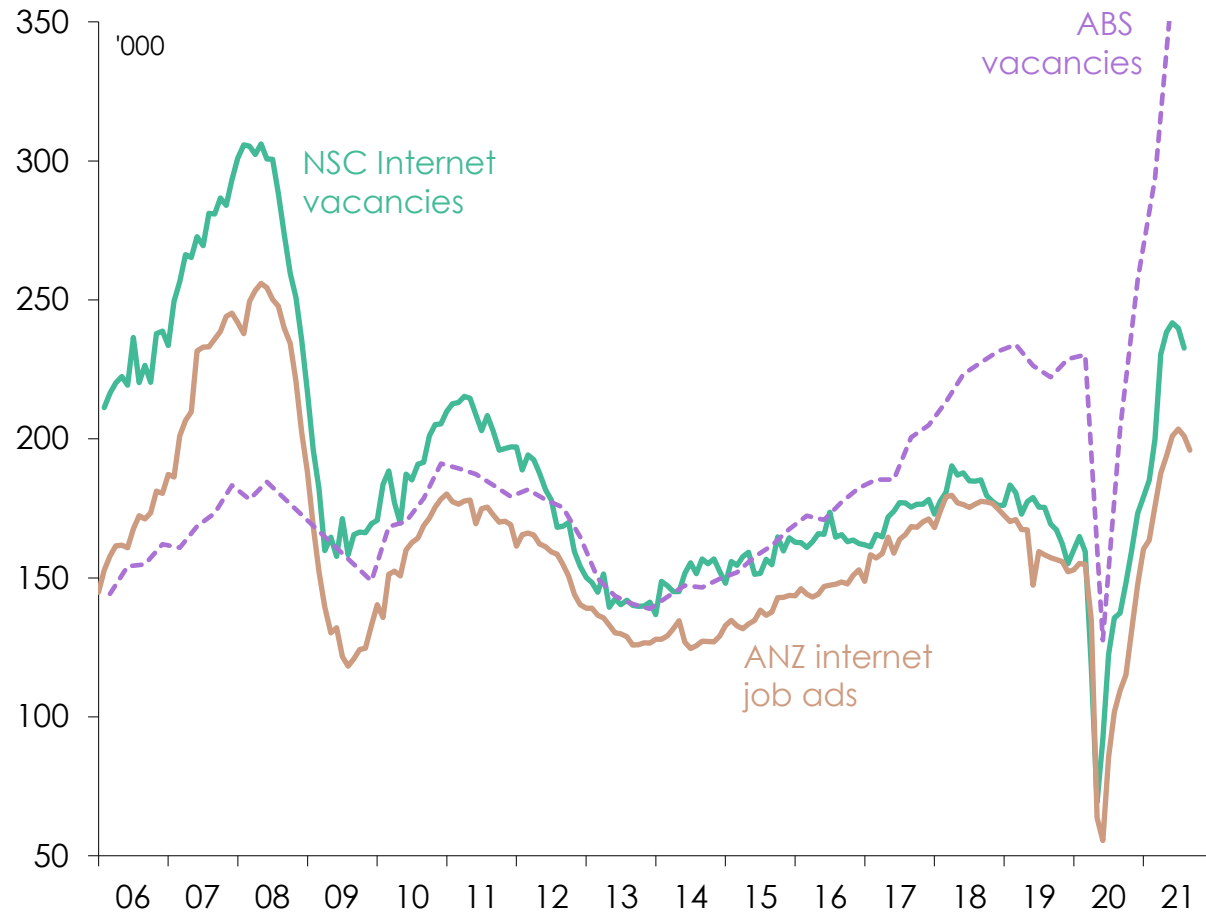


- ❑ 'Independent contractors' have actually declined as a share of the workforce since the early 2000s – had haven't increased during the current recession

Note: data on casual employment are for August between 1984 and 2008; for November between 2009 and 2013; and for the middle month of each quarter since then; data on owner-managers are for the middle month of each quarter. Sources: ABS, [Characteristics of Employment, Australia](#), and earlier equivalents; [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed](#); and [Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership, Australia](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

Job vacancies have rebounded swiftly from their recession lows – there are now fewer than two jobseekers for every vacancy, a record low

Measures of job vacancies



- Both the ANZ and NSC job advertisements measures have more than recouped their pandemic-induced losses, while the ABS vacancies measure is at an all-time high

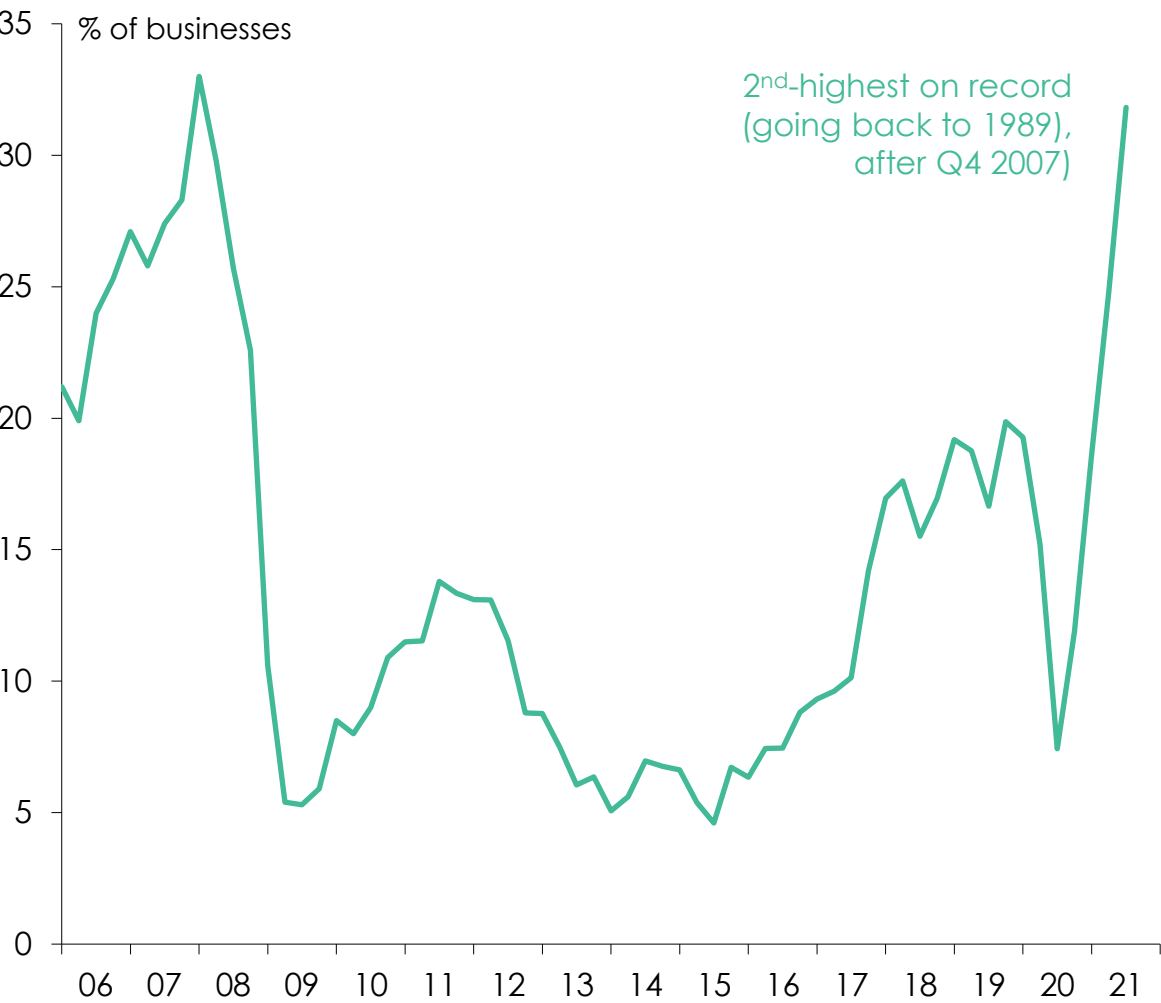
Ratio of unemployed people to job vacancies



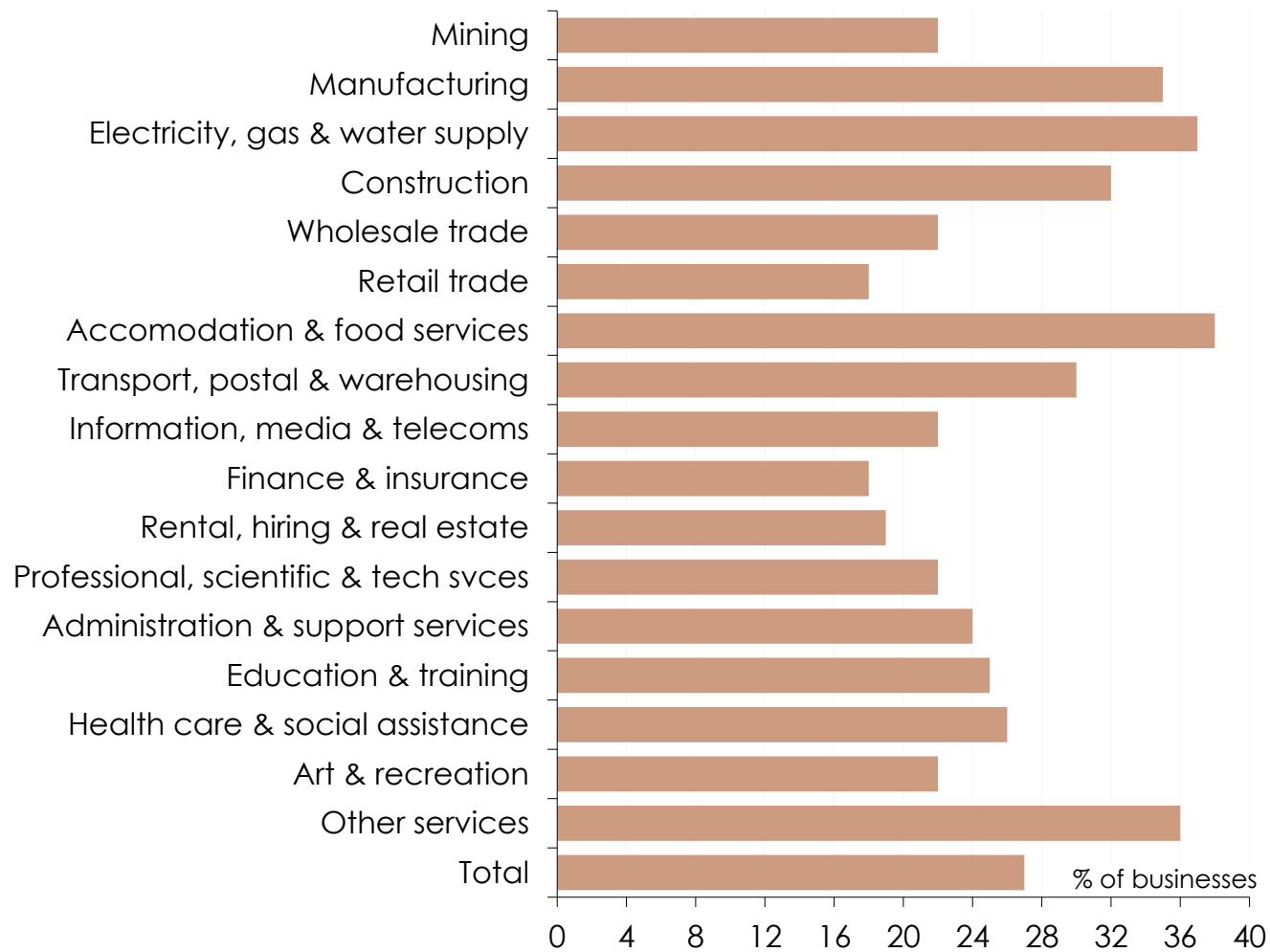
- In May there were just over 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ unemployed people for every vacancy reported to ABS – a record low – and the halving of ‘caps’ on arrivals to Australia may push that ratio down even more

... but employers are encountering increasing difficulty filling those vacancies (at least partly because of the border closure)

Proportion of businesses nominating 'suitable labour as a constraint on output



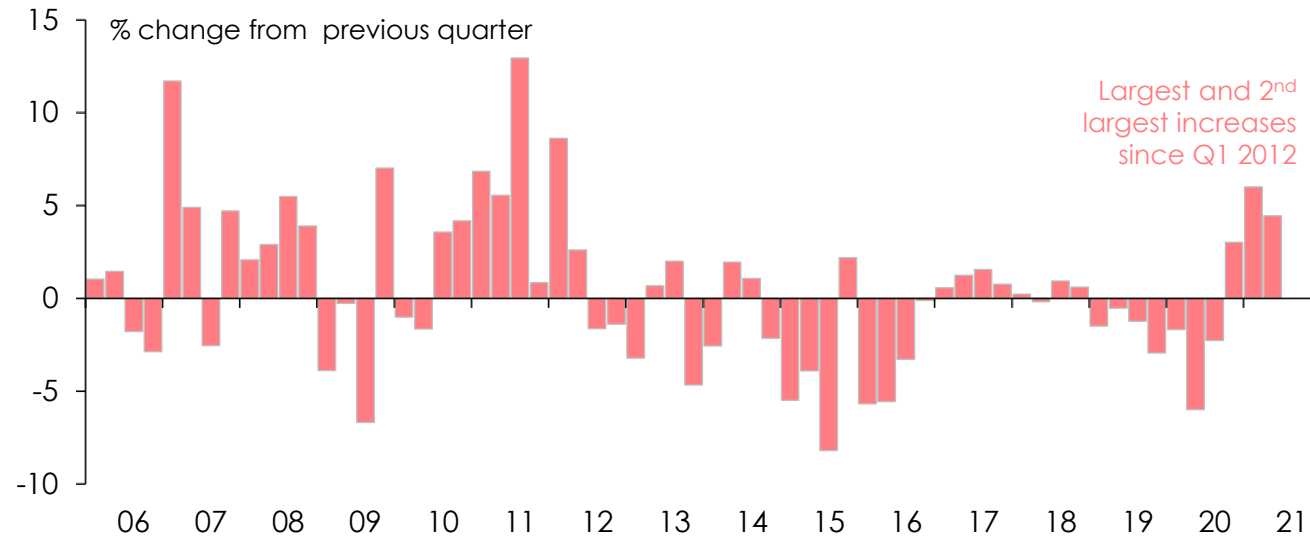
Businesses reporting difficulty finding suitable staff, by industry



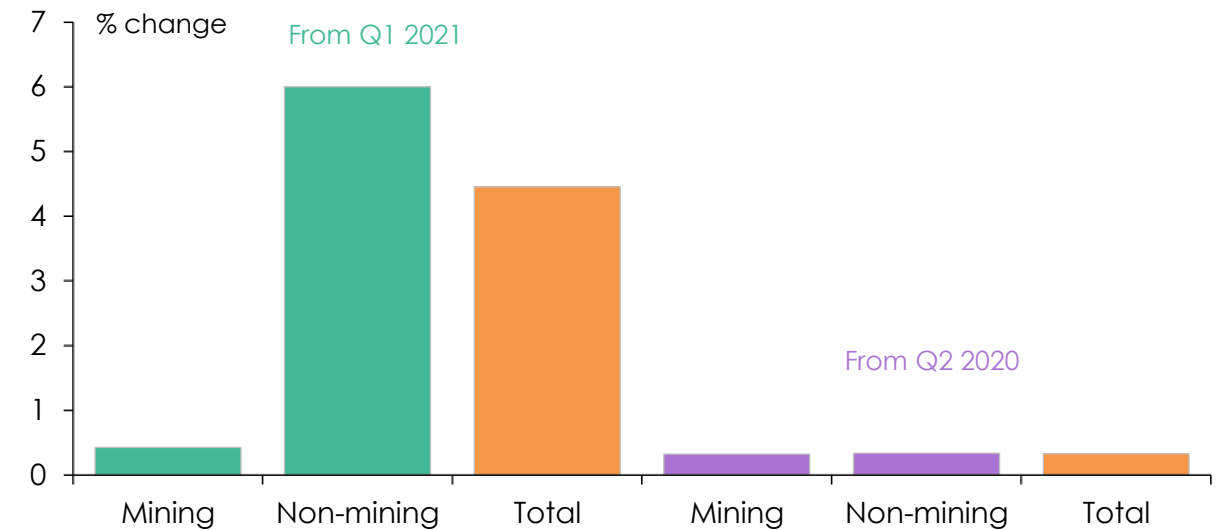
Sources: National Australia Bank, [Quarterly Business Survey](#), June quarter 2021; ABS, [Business Conditions and Sentiments](#), June 2021. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Business capex increased by 4.4% in Q2, the third consecutive rise, this time led by utilities and services sectors

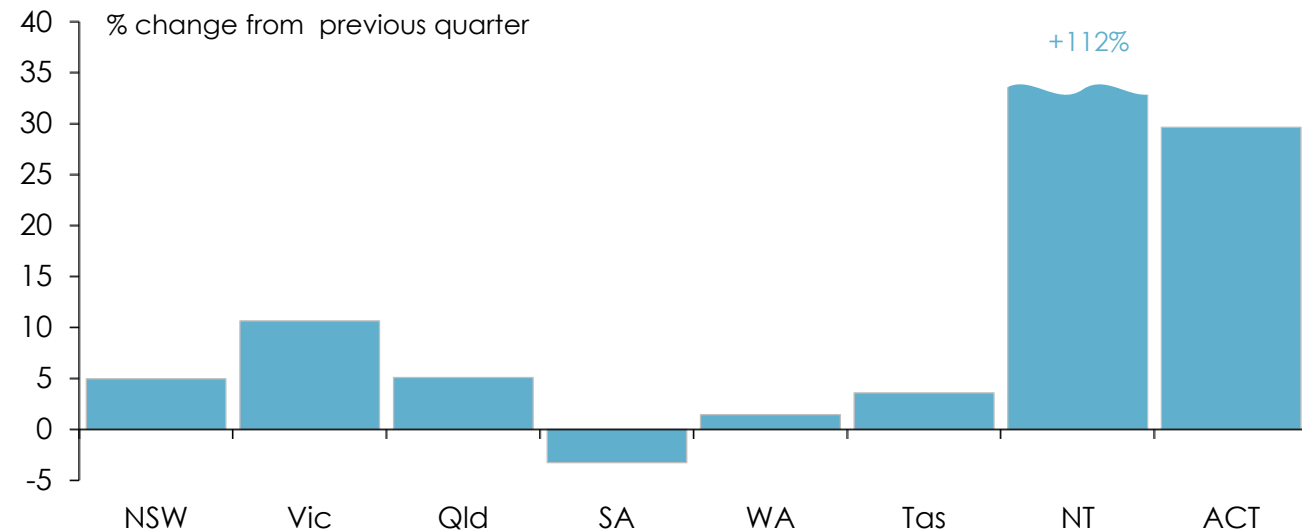
Real business new fixed capital expenditure



Real business new fixed capex, by industry, Q1



Real business new fixed capex, by state, Q2 2021



Real business new fixed capex, by asset, Q1

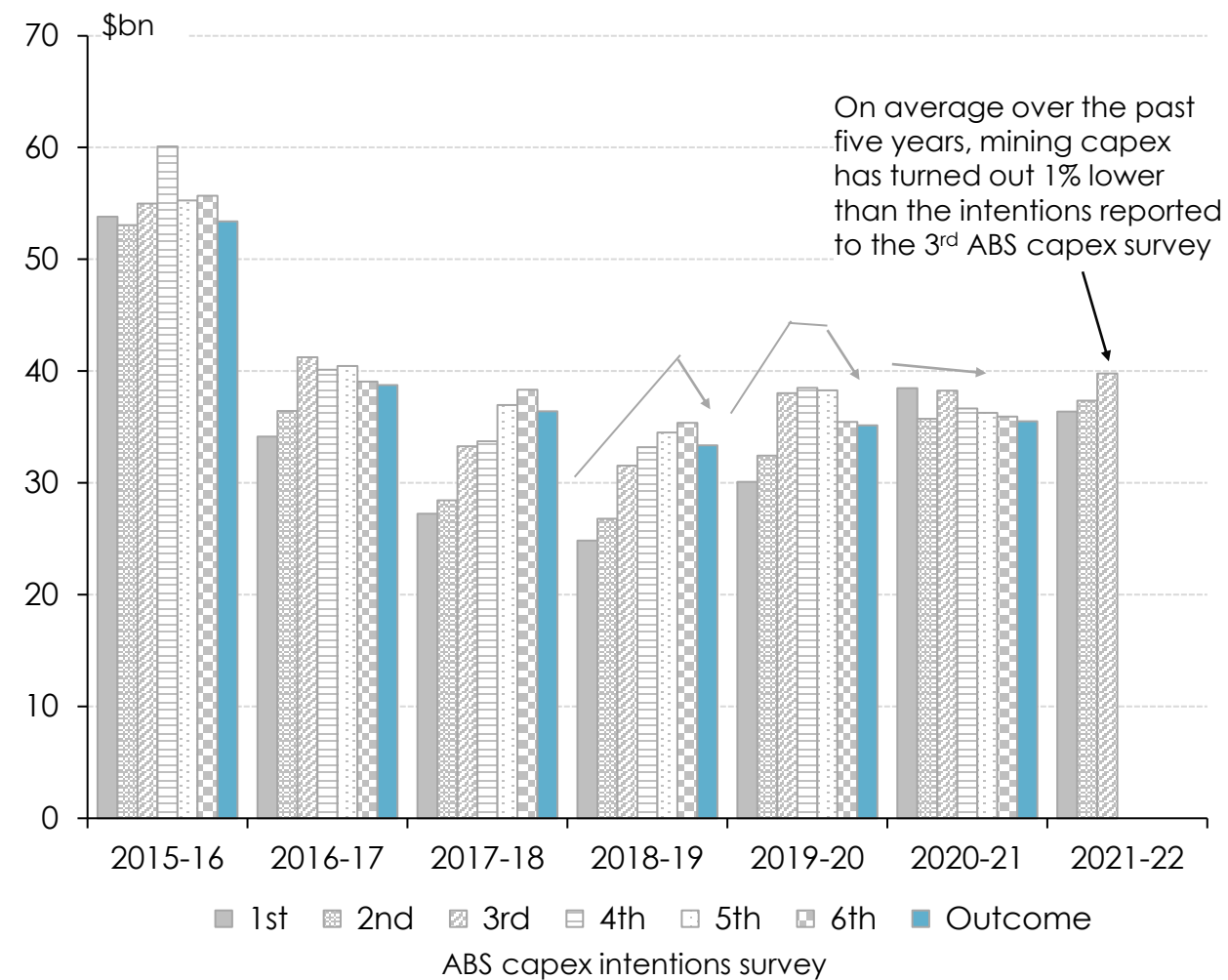


Note: the ABS Survey of New Capital Expenditure excludes the agriculture, forestry & fishing, and public administration & defence sectors, and superannuation funds.

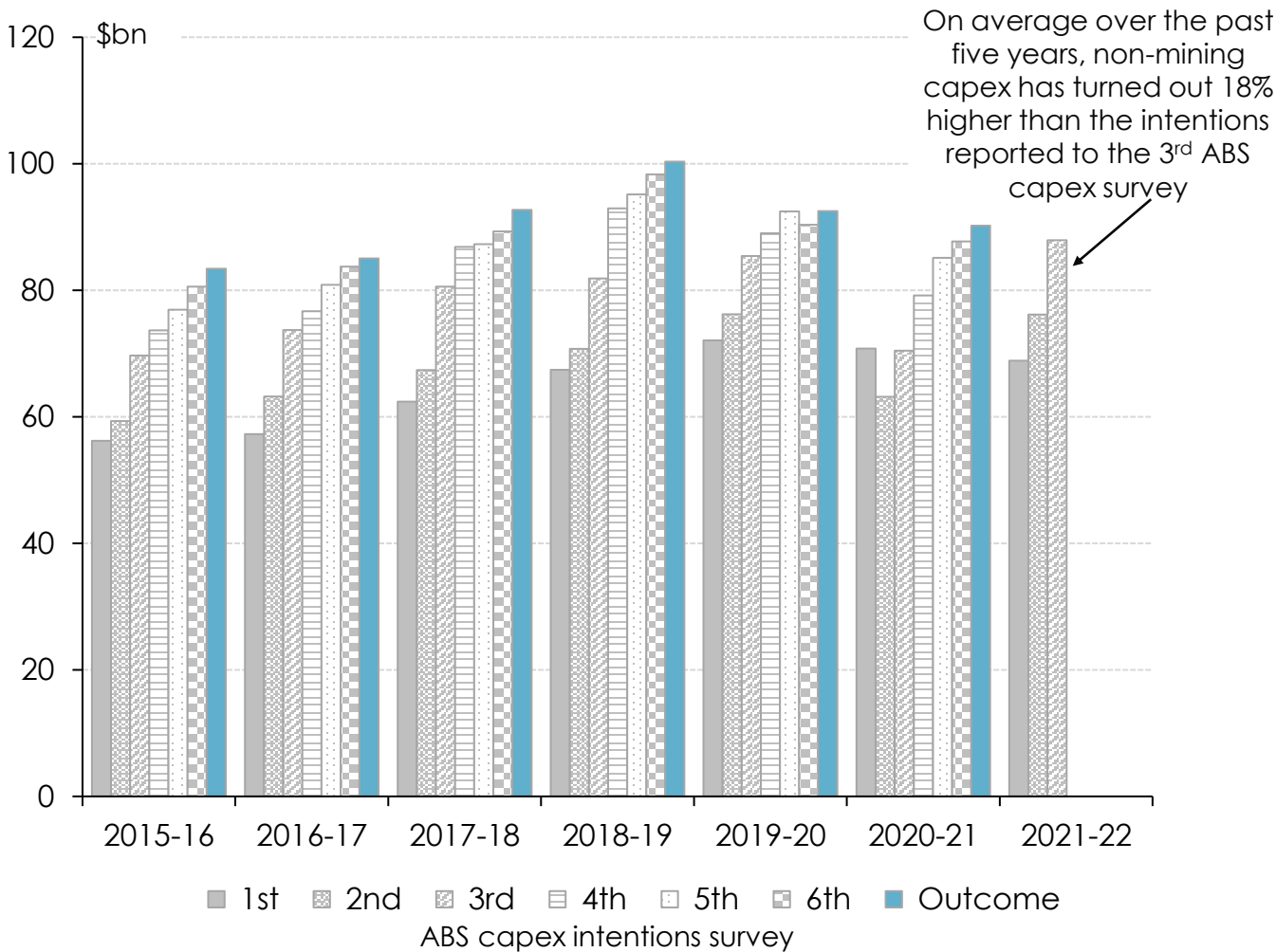
Source: ABS, [Private New Capital Expenditure and Expected Expenditure, Australia](#); March quarter data will be released on 25th November. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Business capex fell by 1.5% in 2021-22 and is expected to increase by 13½% in 2021-22 according to the latest capex intentions survey

Capital expenditure intentions - mining



Capital expenditure intentions – non-mining

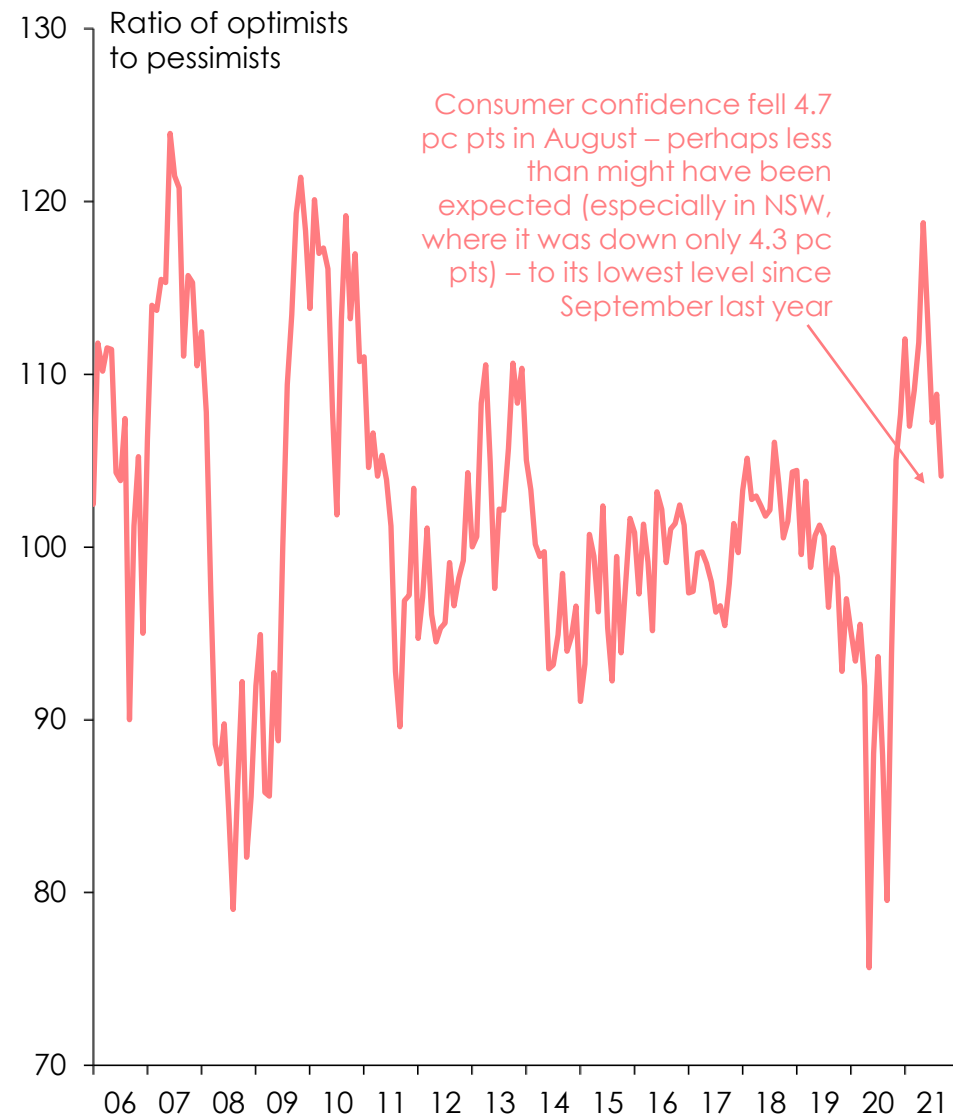


Note: The ABS conducts six surveys of business' capital expenditure intentions in respect of each financial year. The first is conducted in January & February prior to the commencement of the financial year, the second in May & June, the third in July & August of the financial year, the fourth in October & November, the fifth in January & February of the financial year, and the sixth in May & June. The outcome (actual capital expenditure in the financial year) is determined from the survey taken in July & August after the end of the financial year. From the December quarter 2020 the survey includes the education & training, and health care & social assistance sectors. The estimates shown above are in nominal terms.

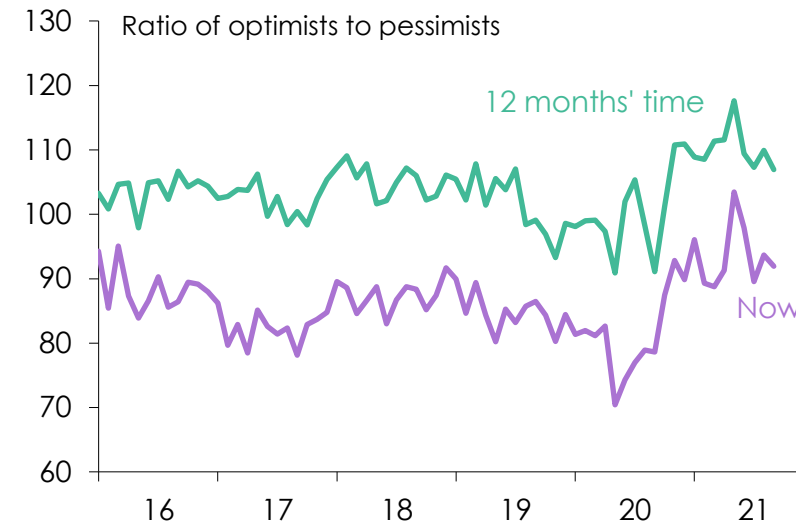
Source: ABS, [Private New Capital Expenditure and Expected Expenditure, Australia](#) (next update is released on 25th November). [Return to "What's New"](#).

Consumer confidence fell 4¾ pc pt in August, less than might have been expected – consumers seem ok about their finances

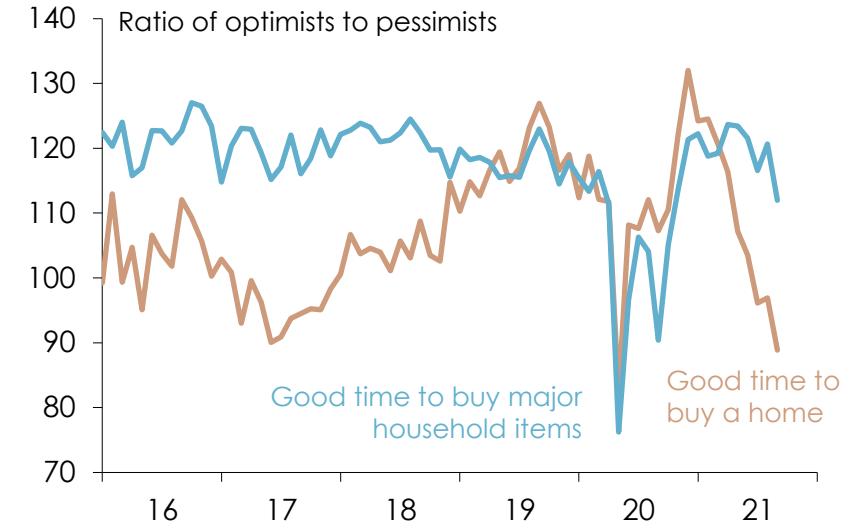
Consumer confidence index



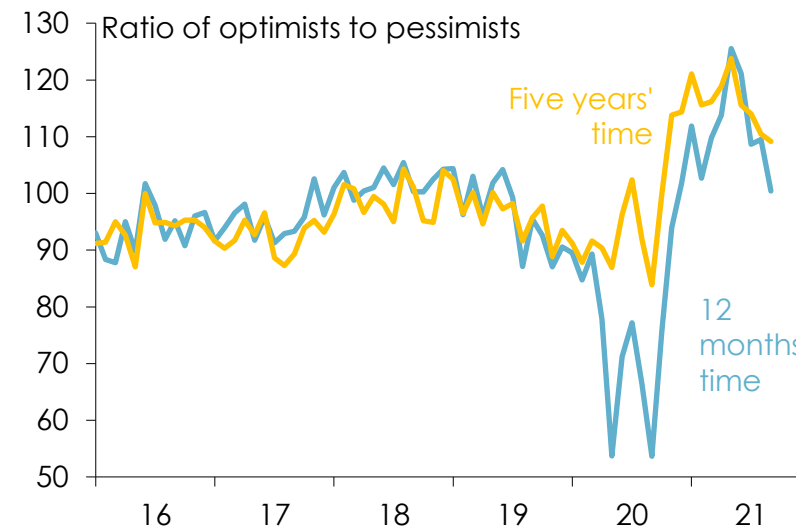
Household finances assessment



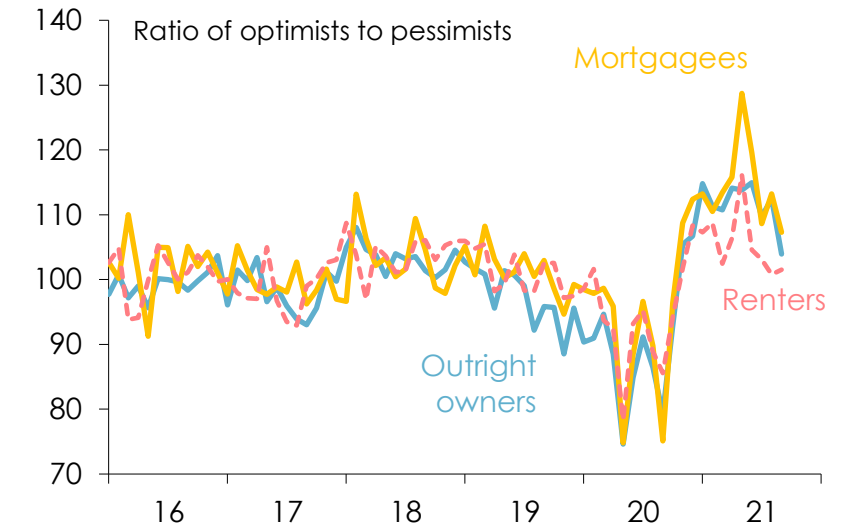
Buying conditions assessment



Economic conditions assessment

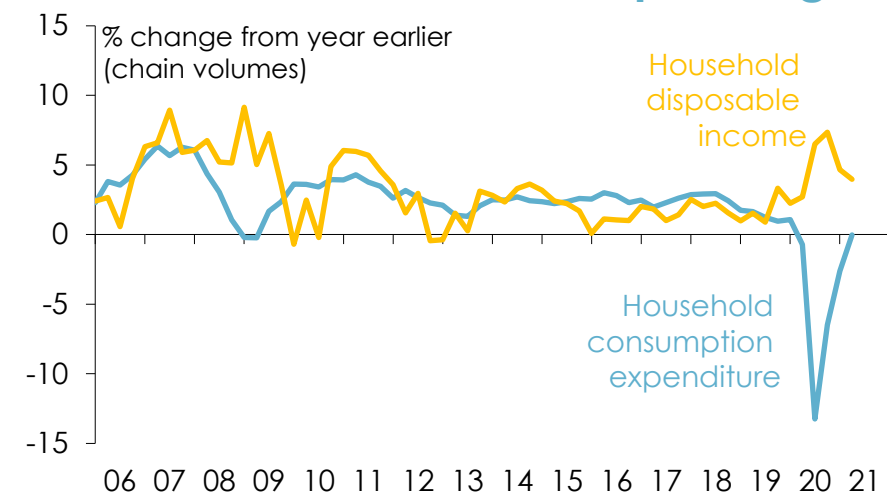


Confidence by housing tenure

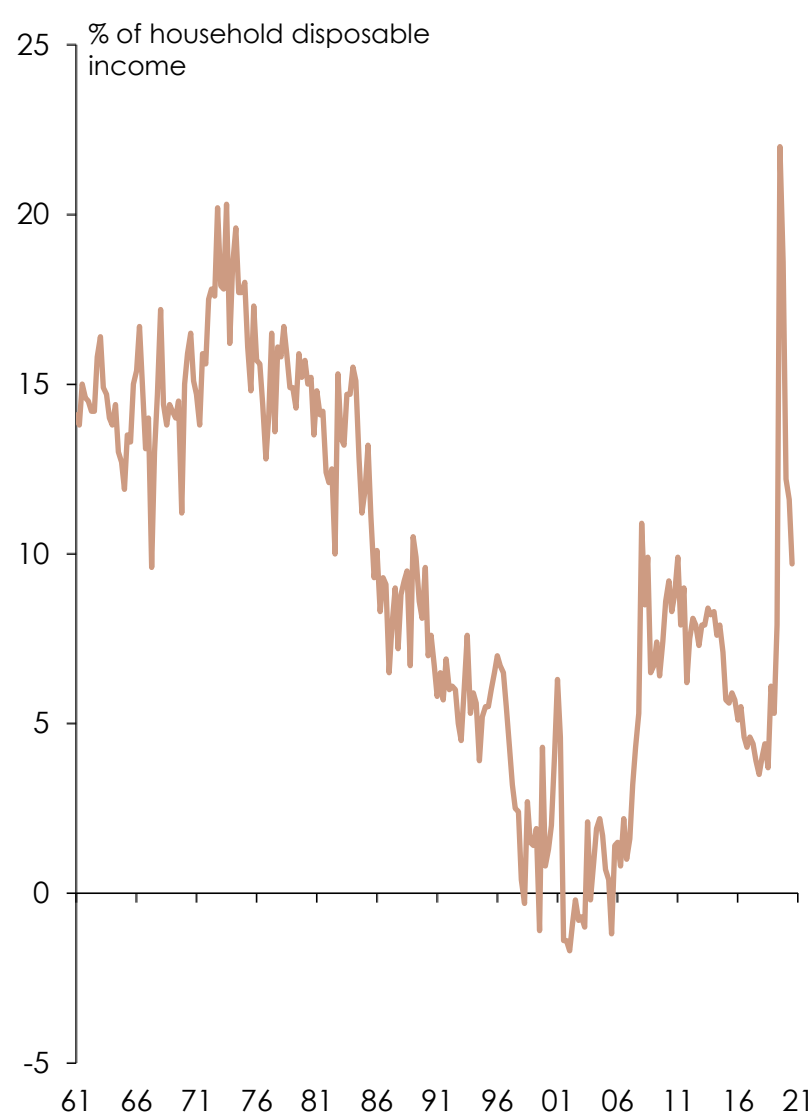


Household incomes have been supported by government payments, but spending has been curtailed, so households have lots of savings to spend

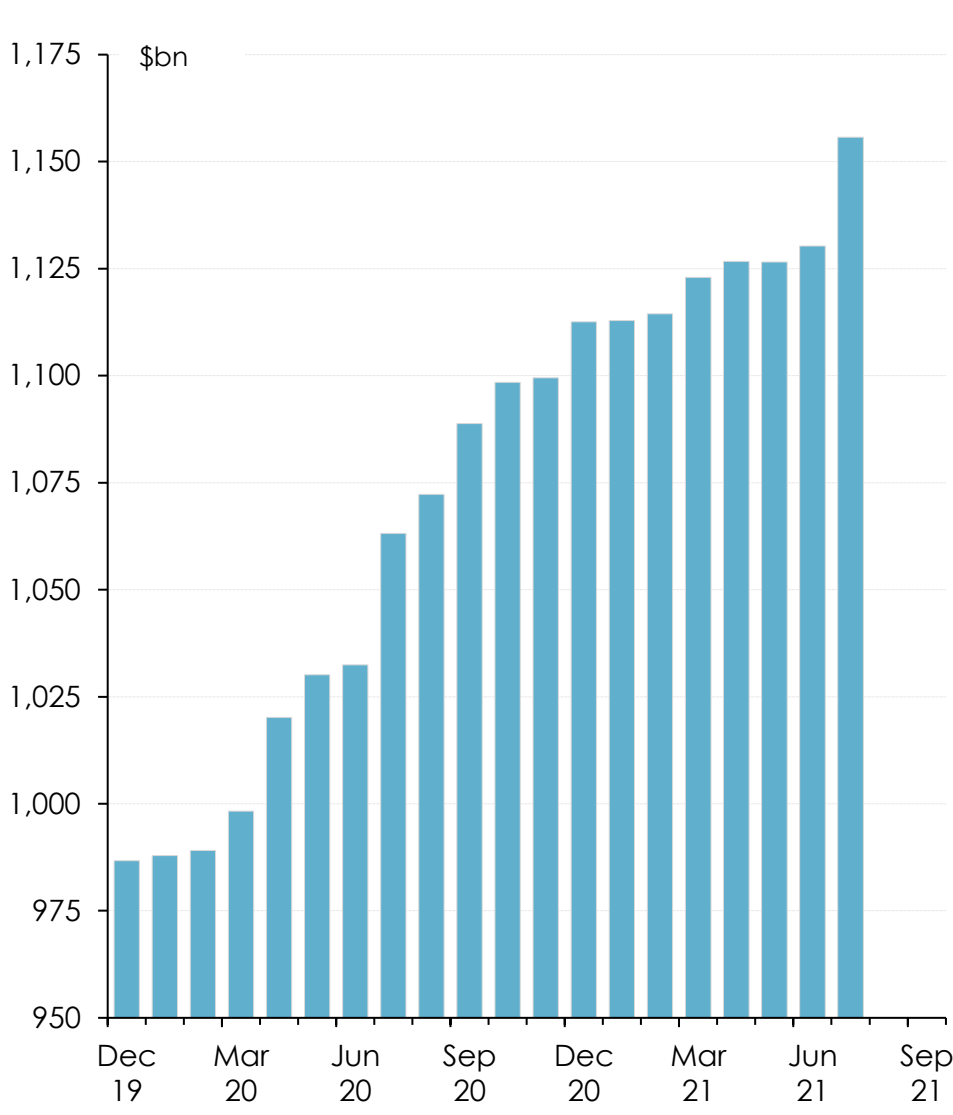
Household income and spending



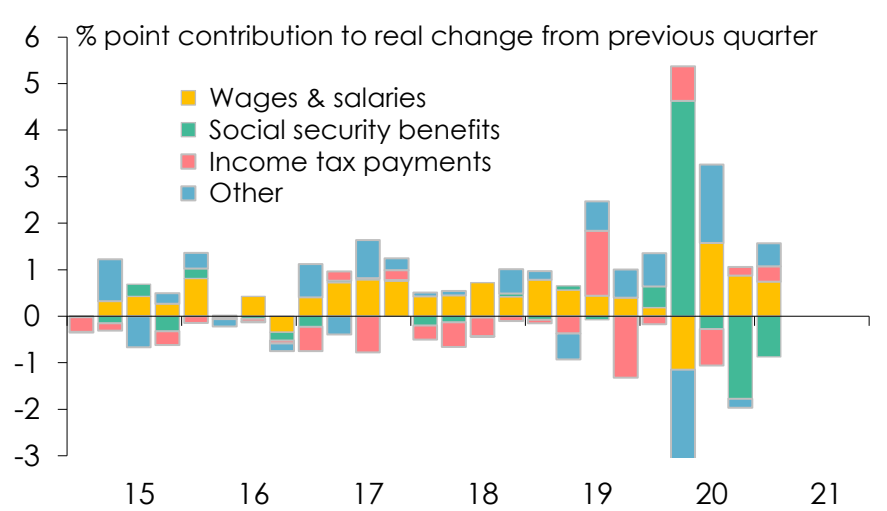
Household saving ratio



Household bank deposits



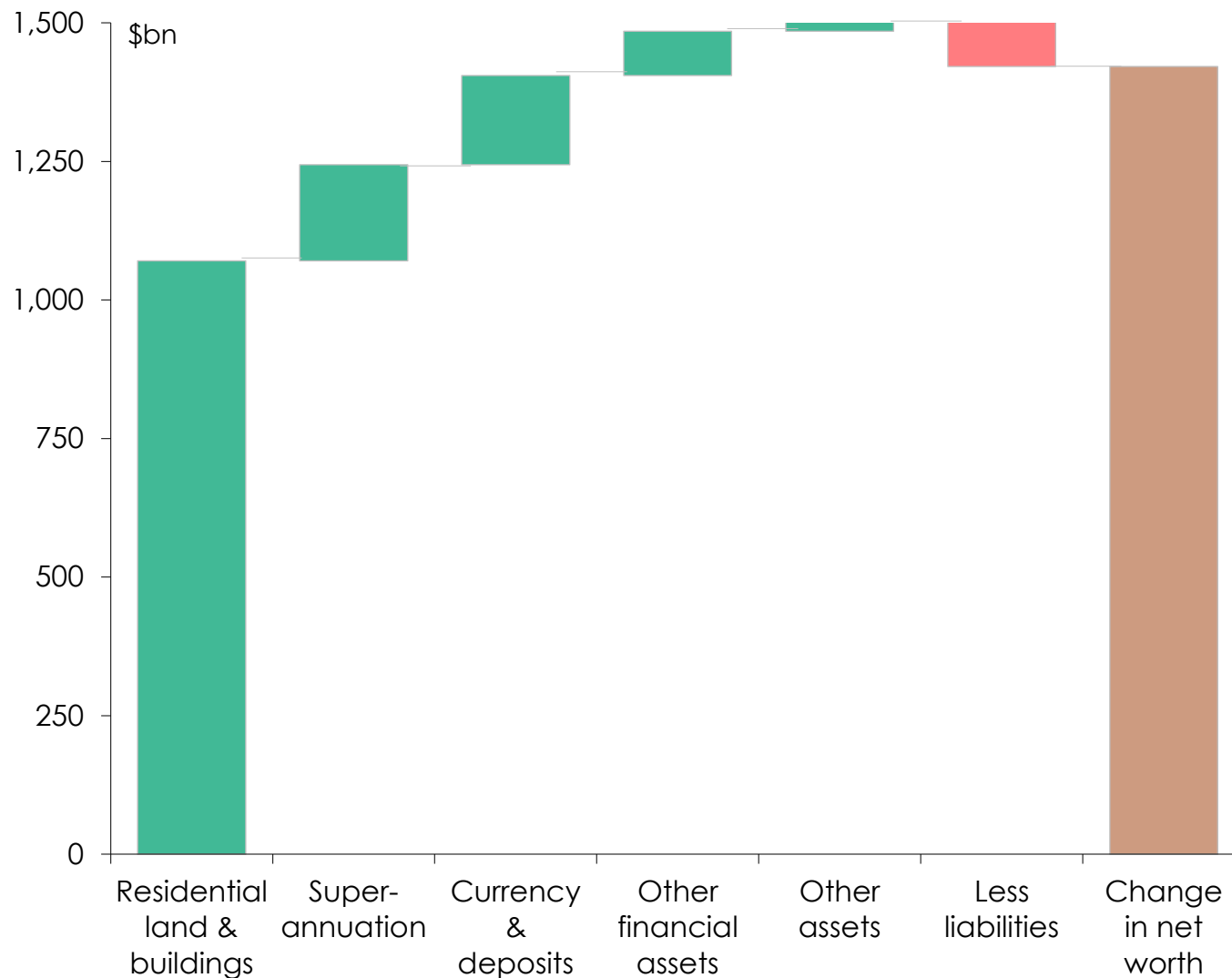
Sources of household income



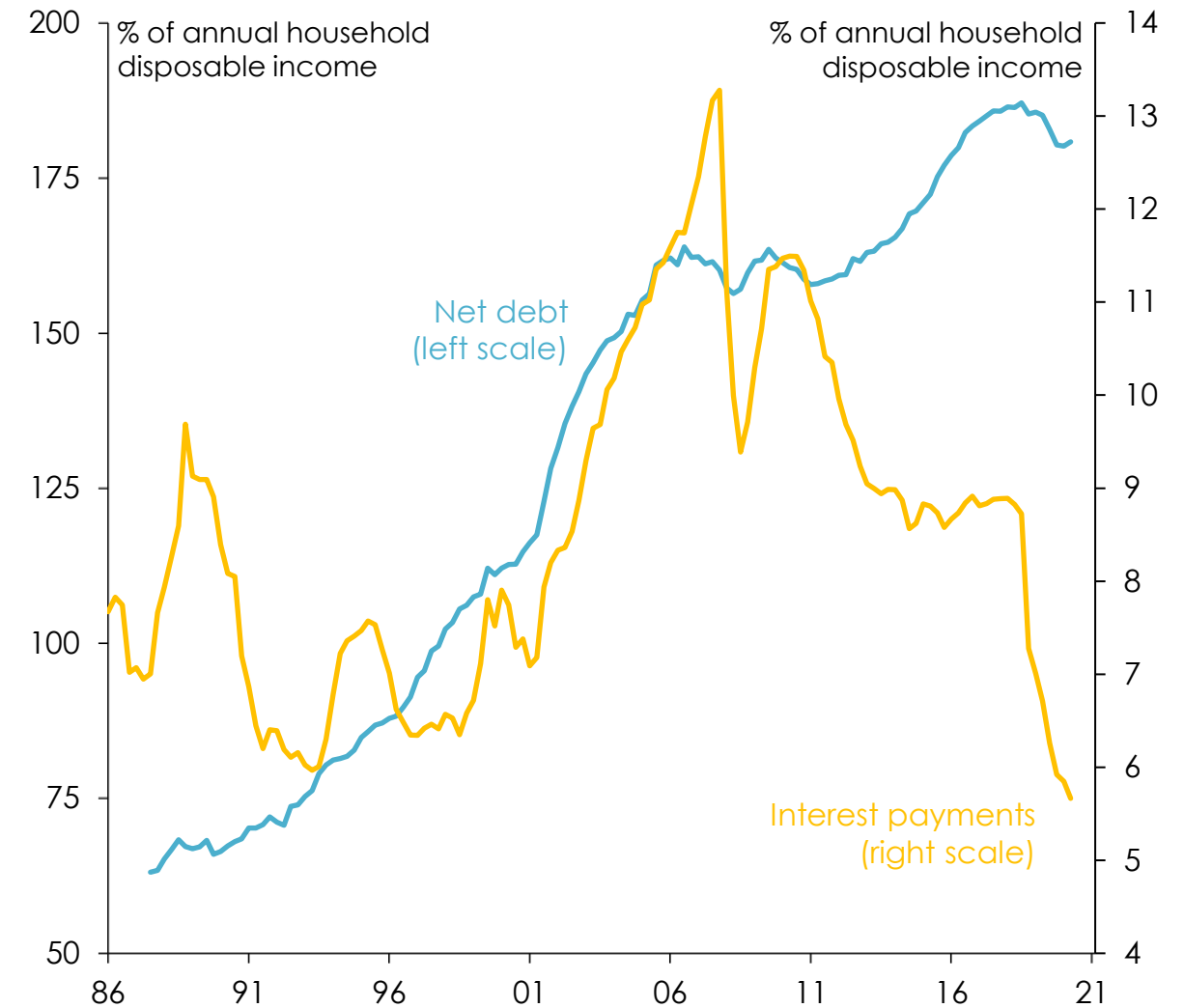
Sources: ABS, [Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product](#), March quarter 2021; Australian Prudential Regulation Authority, [Monthly Authorised Deposit-taking Institution Statistics](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

Household net worth has risen by \$1.4trn (12½%) since the end of 2019, while debt and interest payments have fallen as a pc of income

Sources of gains in household net worth, Q4 2019 to Q1 2021



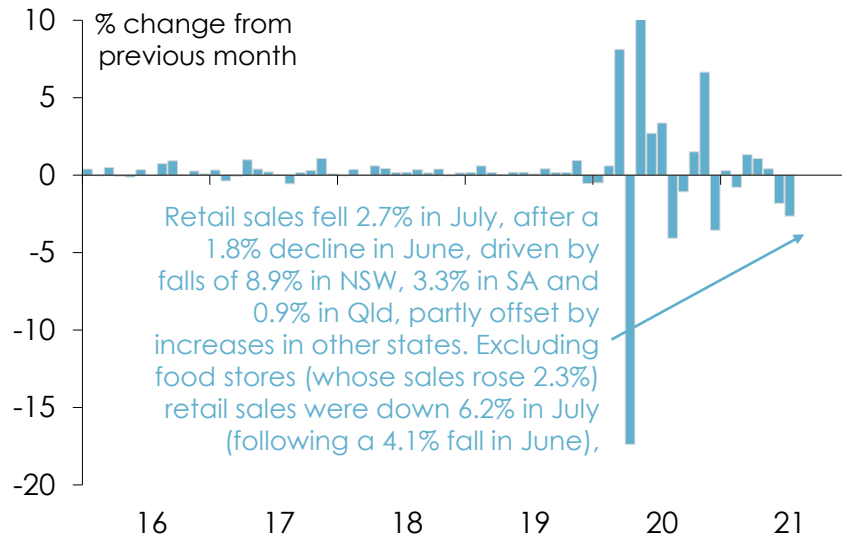
Household net debt and interest payments as a percentage of disposable income



Sources: ABS, [Finance and Wealth Accounts](#), March quarter 2021; RBA, [Statistical Tables](#) E1 & E2. June quarter data will be released on 23rd September.
[Return to "What's New"](#).

Retail sales fell another 2.7% in July (after a 1.8% fall in June), with sales in locked-down NSW falling 8.9%, while car sales fell 3.8% in August

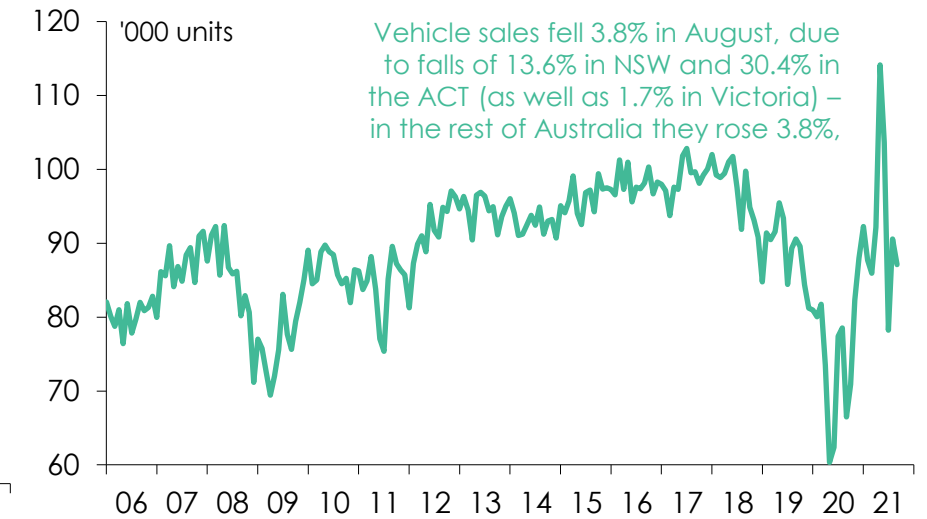
Monthly retail sales



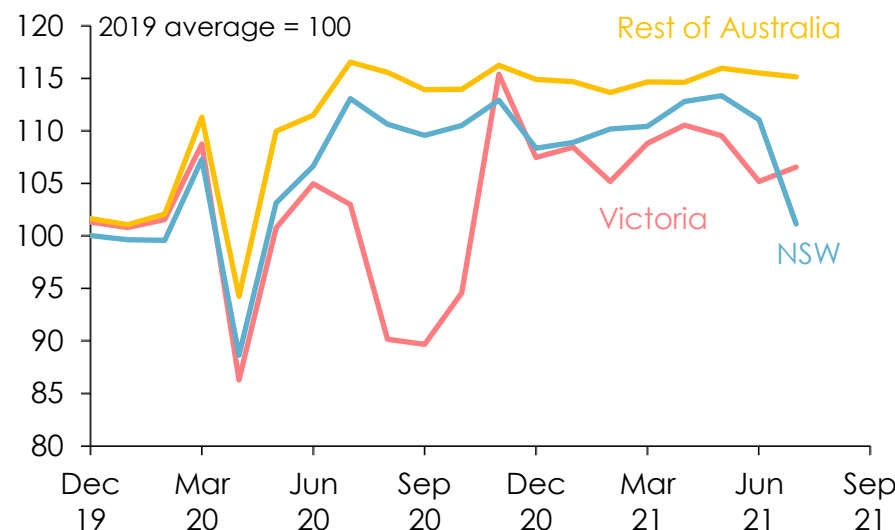
Level of retail sales



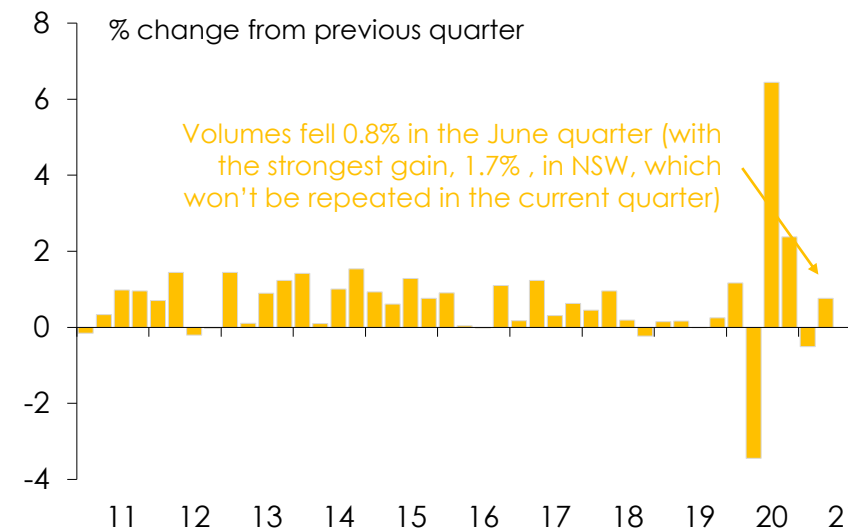
New motor vehicle sales



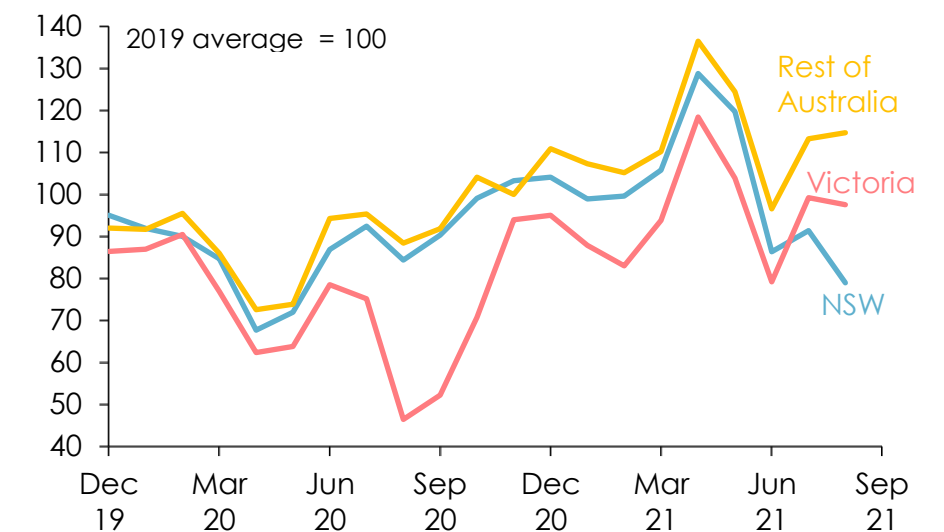
Retail sales – NSW, Vic & the rest



Quarterly retail sales volumes



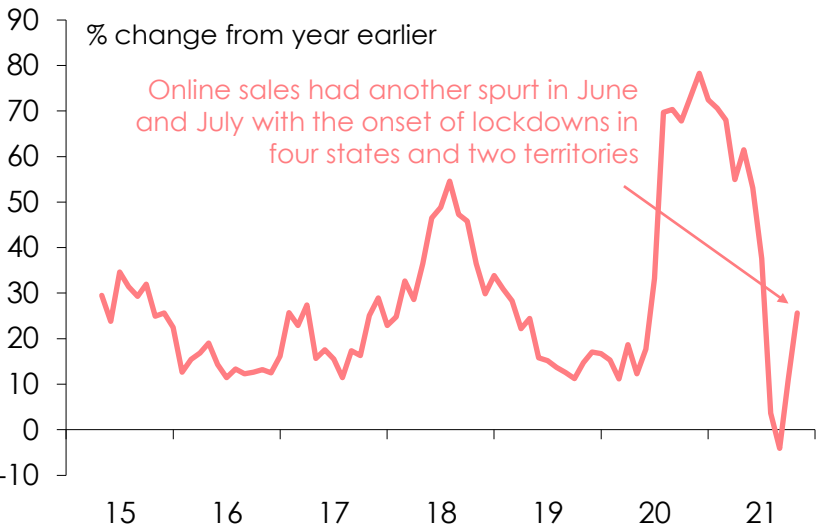
Vehicle sales – NSW, Vic & the rest



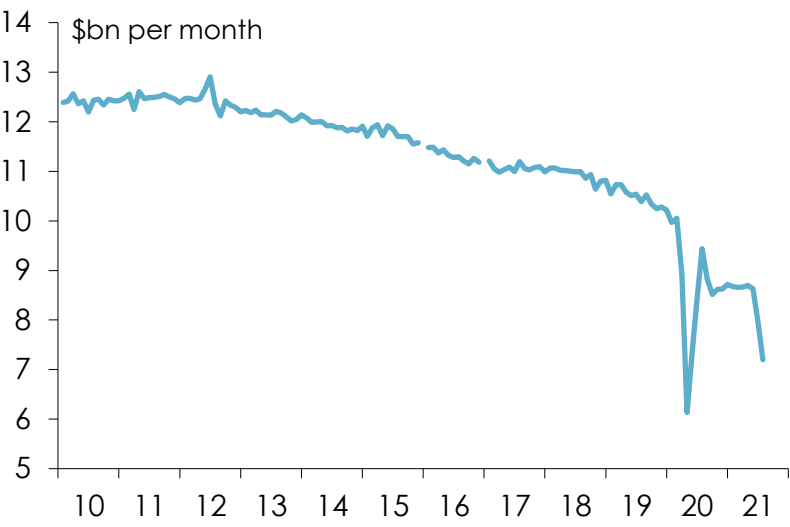
Note: see also [slide 103](#) for more detail on the composition of retail sales since the onset of the pandemic. Sources: ABS, [Retail Trade, Australia](#); Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries [VFACTS](#) (seasonal adjustment of FCAI data by Corinna). August retail sales data will be released on 28th September; August motor vehicle sales data will be released in the second week of September. [Return to "What's New"](#).

The most recent lockdowns have prompted a renewed surge in online spending and accelerated trends away from the use of cash

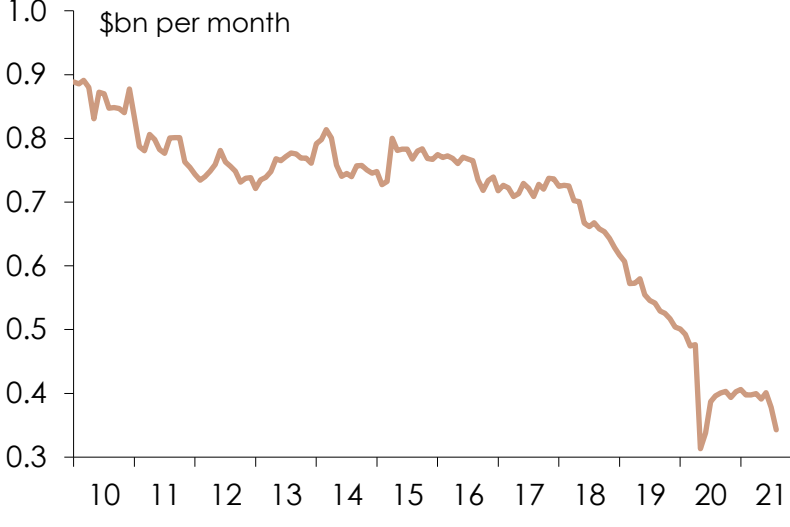
Growth in online retail sales



ATM cash withdrawals



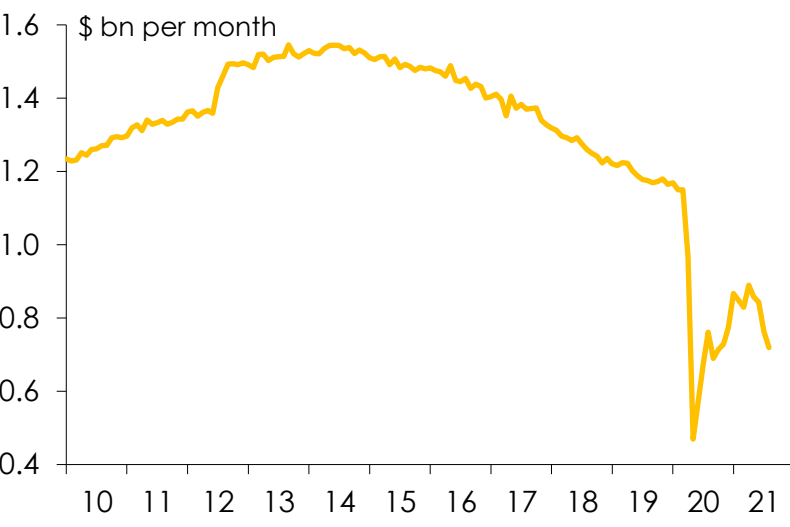
Credit card cash advances



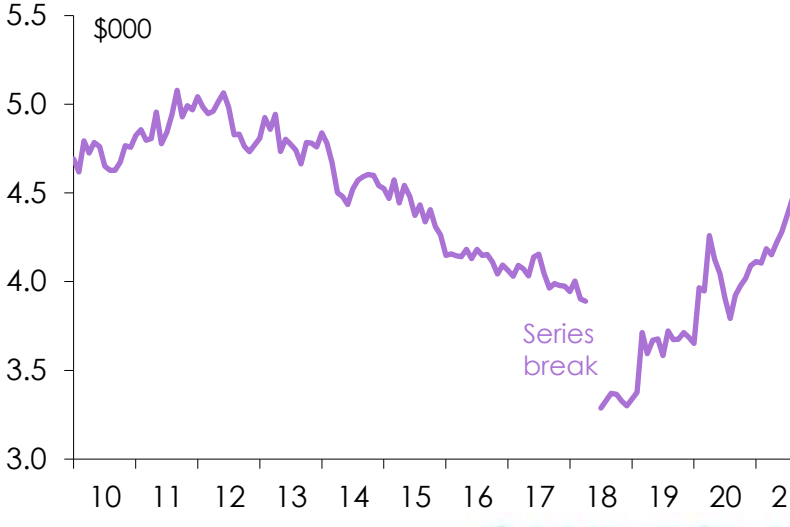
Online retail 'market share'



Debit card cash-outs



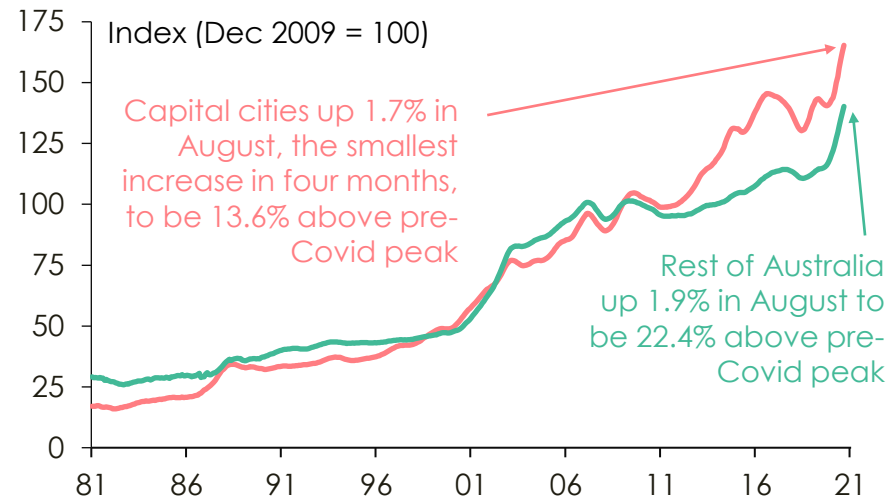
Direct entry payments



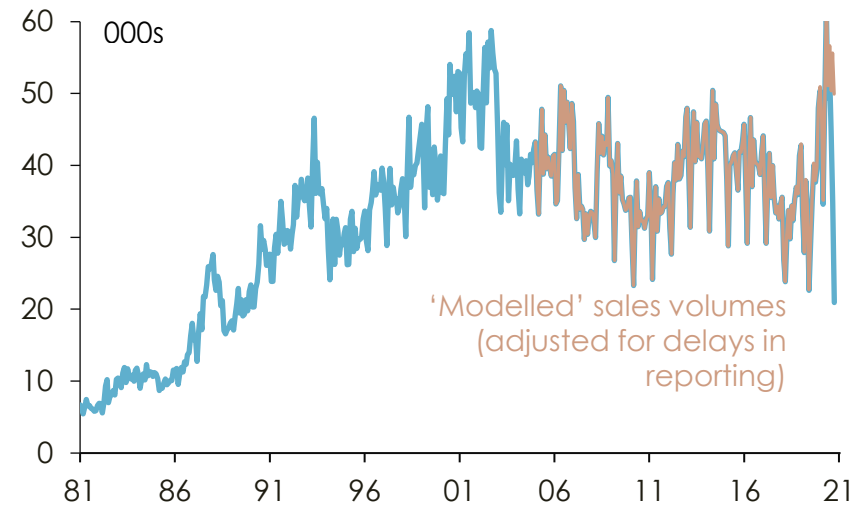
Sources: ABS, [Retail Trade, Australia](#); RBA, [Statistical Tables](#), C1, C2, C4 and C6. Latest data for online retail sales are for July: August online retail sales data will be published on 5th October; while August payments system data will be released on 7th October. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Property prices rose another 1.8% in August, slightly less than in each of May through July, to 16% above their pre-pandemic peak

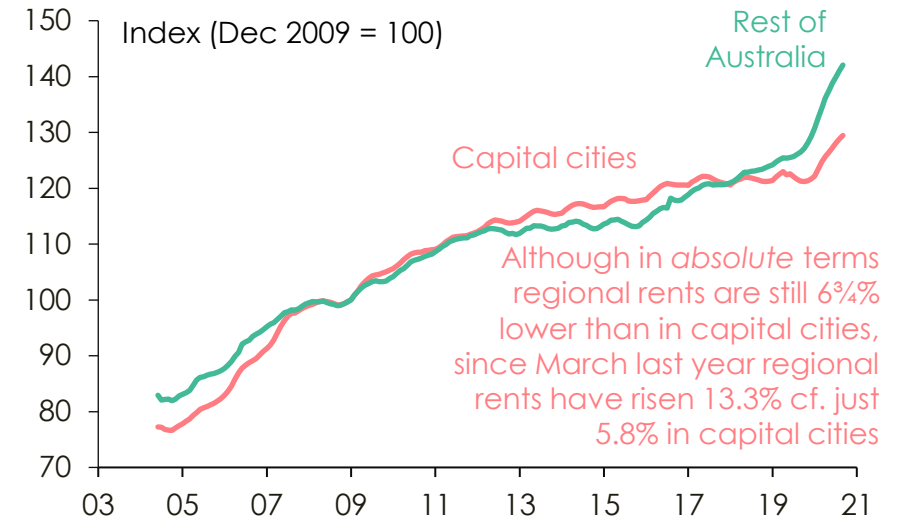
Residential property prices



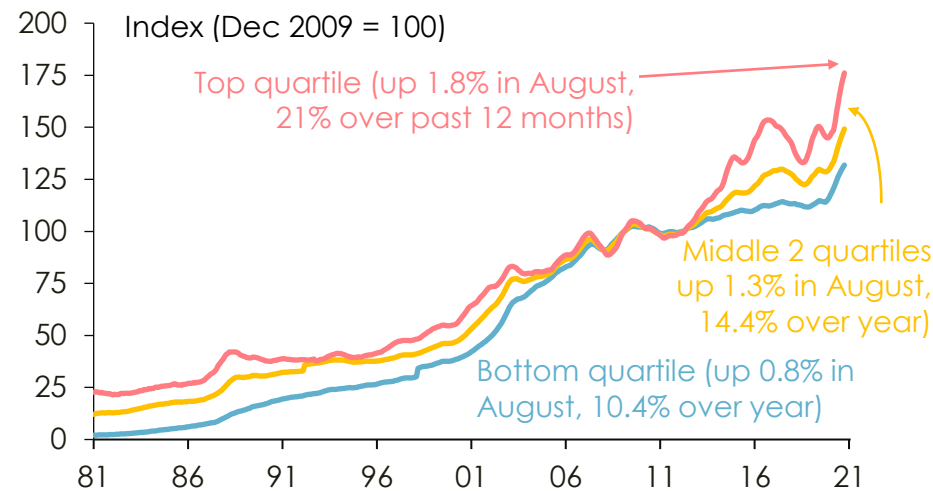
Residential property sales volumes



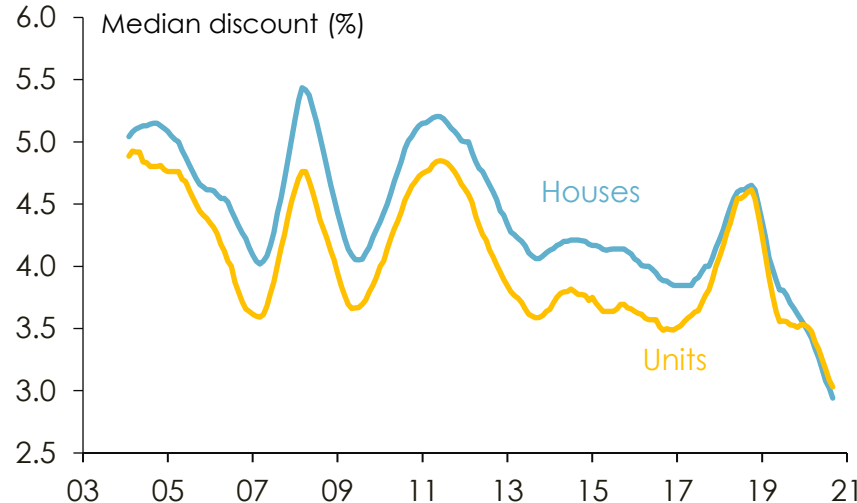
Residential rents



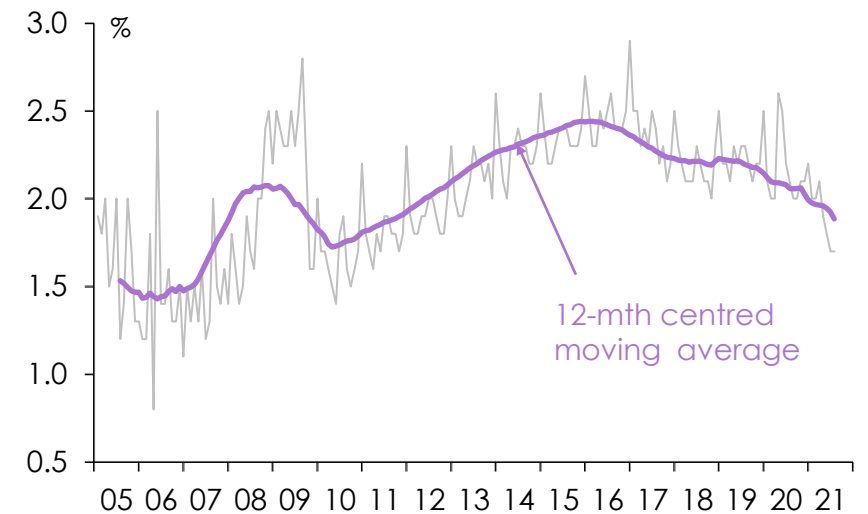
Property prices by tier



Vendor discounting



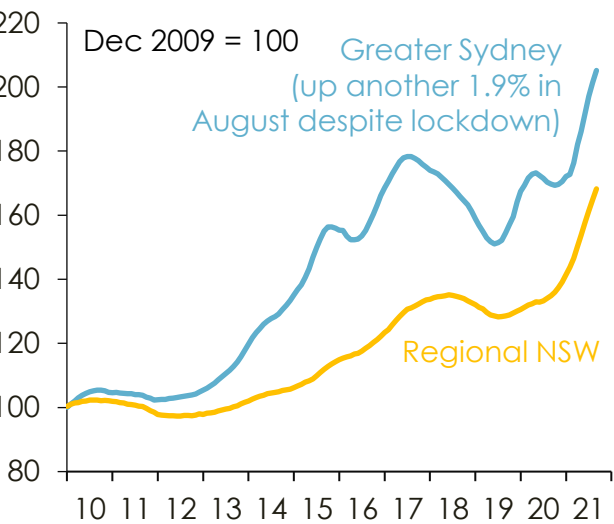
Capital city rental vacancy rates



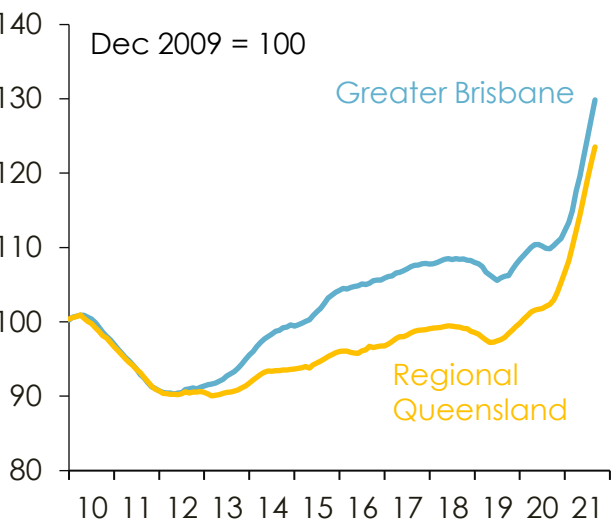
Note: The index of property prices measures the 'organic' change in underlying sales values by using a hedonic regression methodology that takes account of changes in the characteristics of properties being sold from month to month. Property price data shown here are seasonally adjusted. The index of residential rents uses a similar methodology to measure the 'organic' change in underlying rents. The 'modelled' sales volume estimates seek to account for delays in receiving information on transactions that have yet to settle (which can be more than six weeks after the contract date). Latest data are for August (except for vacancy rates which is July). September prices, sales volumes and rents data will be released on 1st October. Sources: [CoreLogic](#); [SQM Research](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

Prices in Hobart, Canberra, and regional New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania are all more than 20% above their pre-pandemic peaks

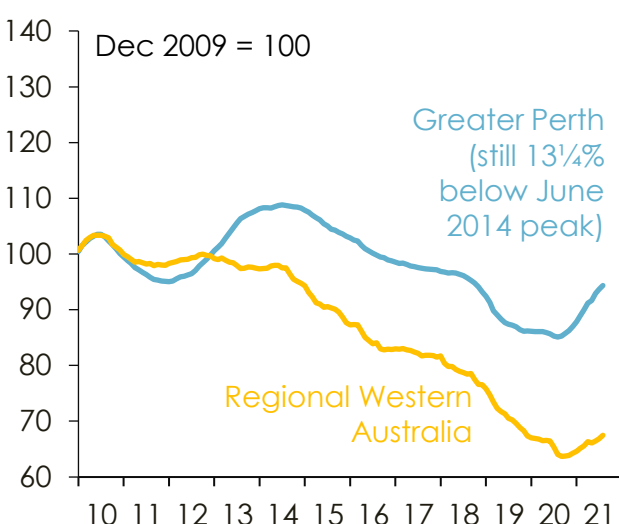
New South Wales



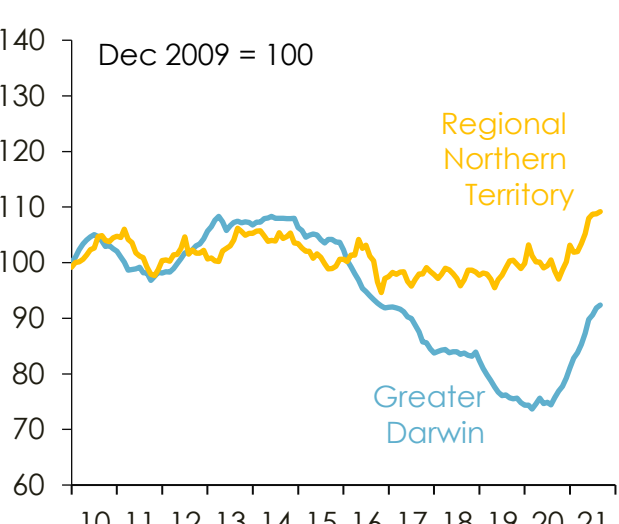
Queensland



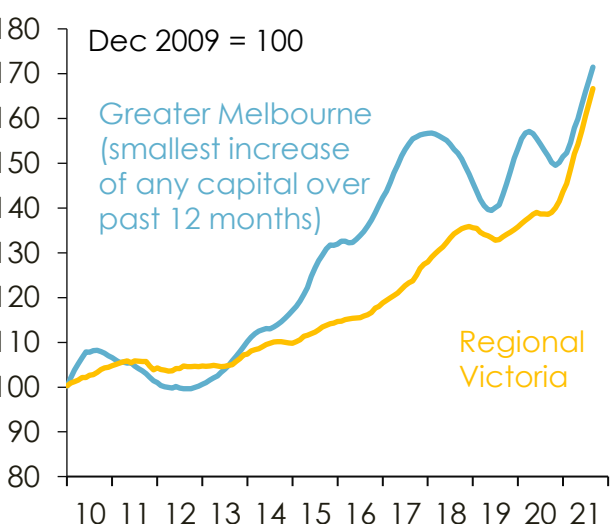
Western Australia



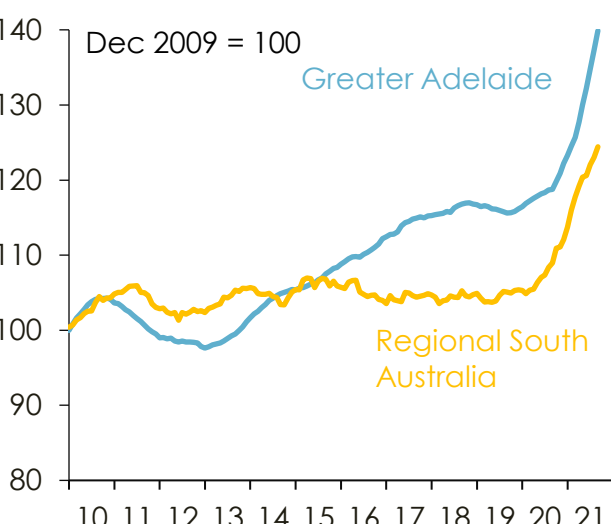
Northern Territory



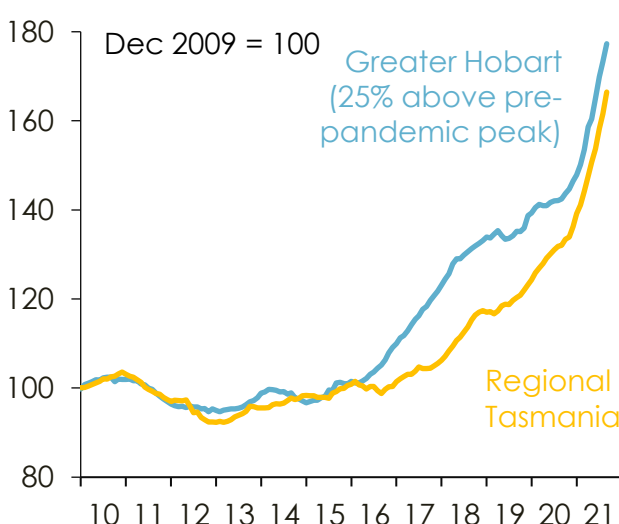
Victoria



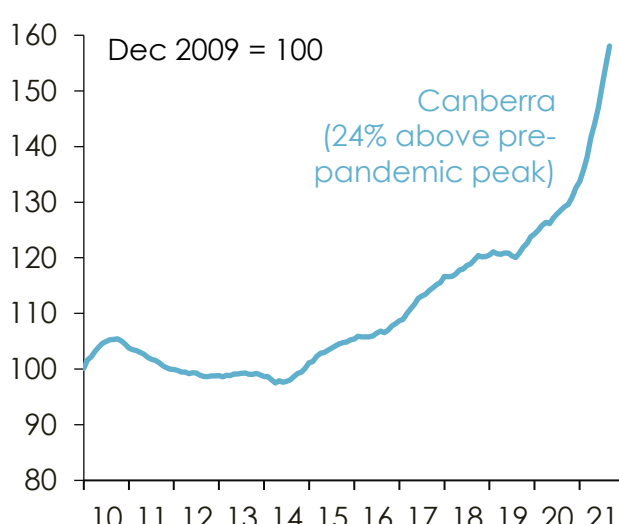
South Australia



Tasmania



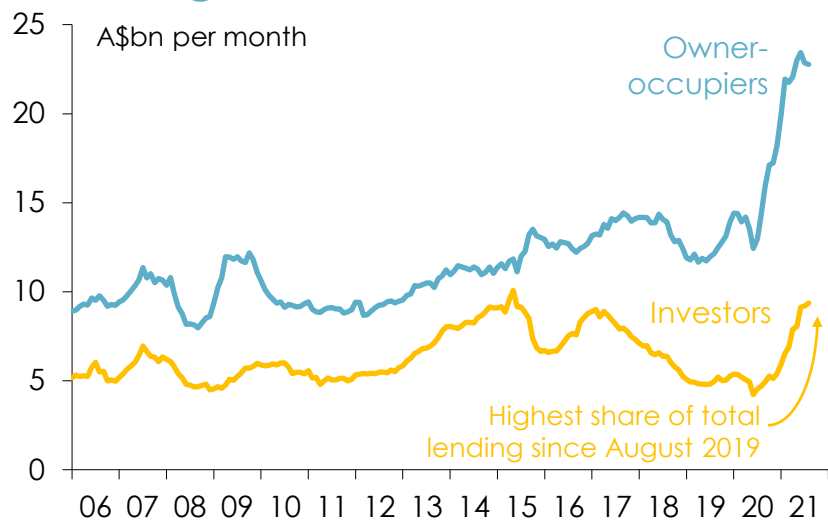
Australian Capital Territory



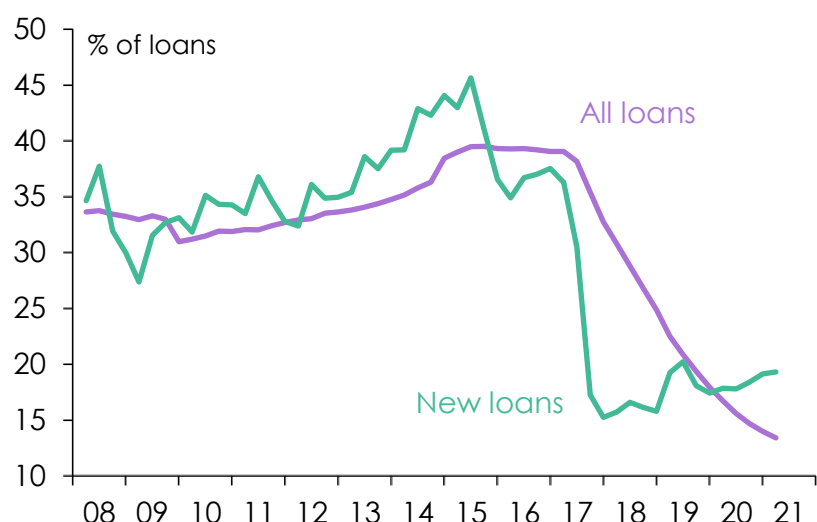
Note: The index of property prices measures the 'organic' change in underlying sales values by using a hedonic regression methodology that takes account of changes in the characteristics of properties being sold from month to month. Property price data are seasonally adjusted. Latest data are for August, except for Western Australia which are July; September data will be released on 1st October. Source: [CoreLogic](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

Lending to property investors and to existing home-owners 'trading up' has risen sharply in recent months while FHBs are again being 'squeezed out'

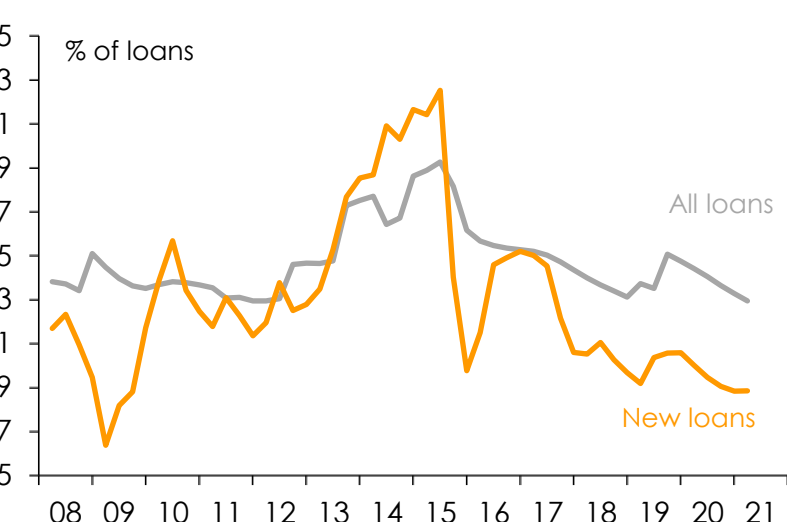
Housing finance commitments



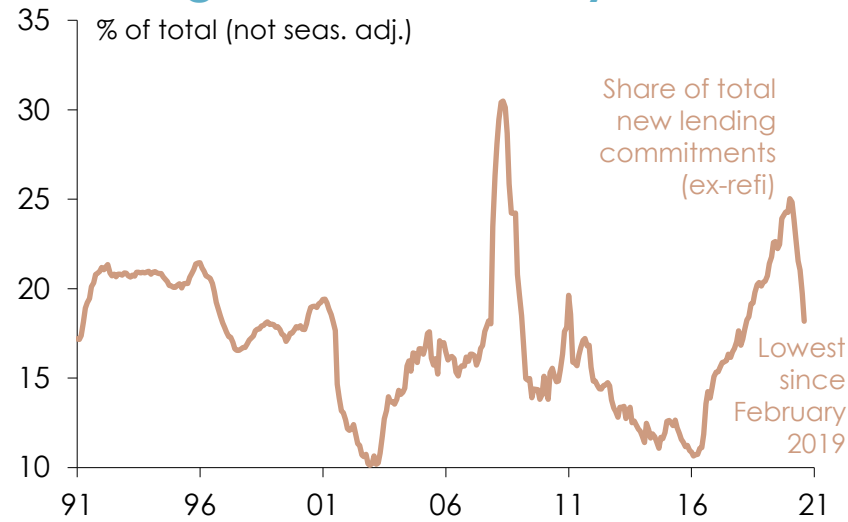
Interest-only loans as pc of total



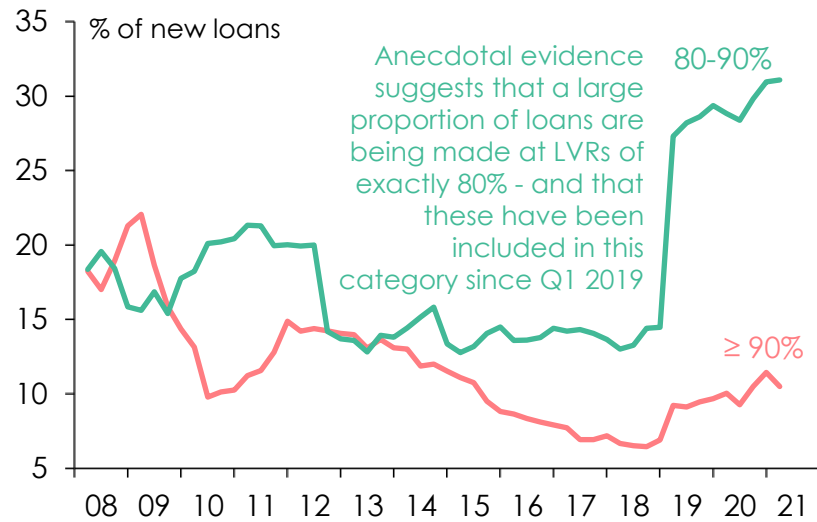
Loans to investors as a pc of total



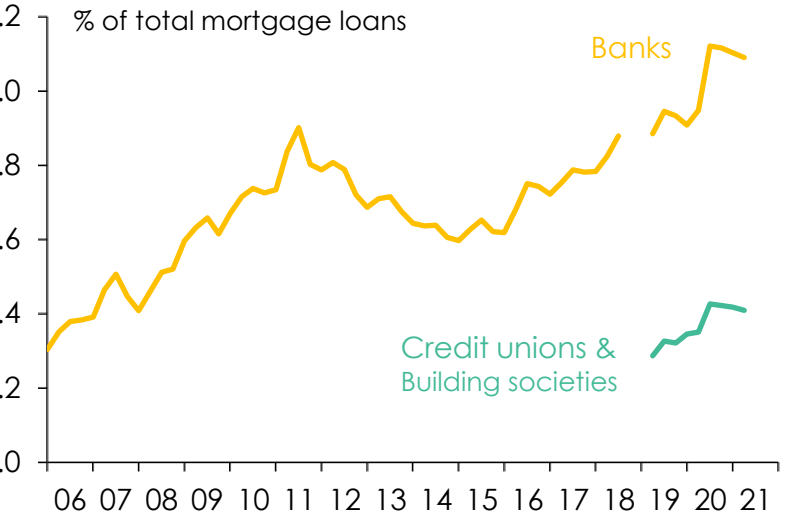
Lending to first home buyers



High LVR loans as a pc of total



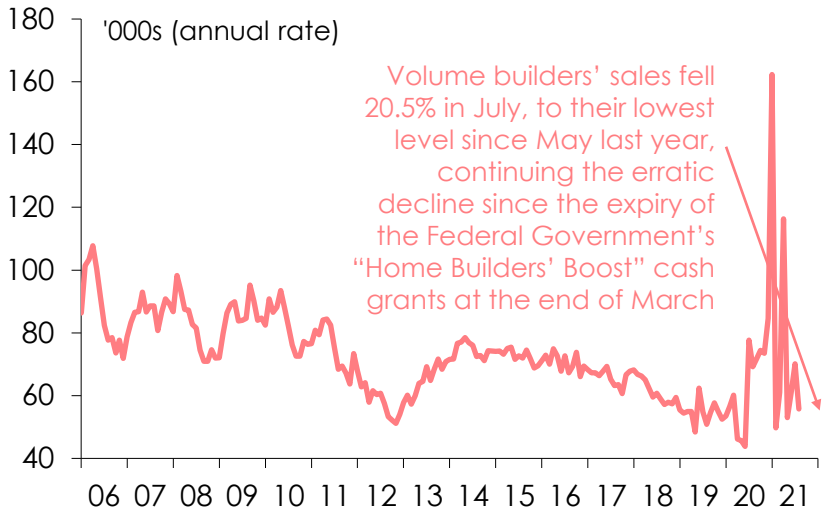
Non-performing mortgage loans



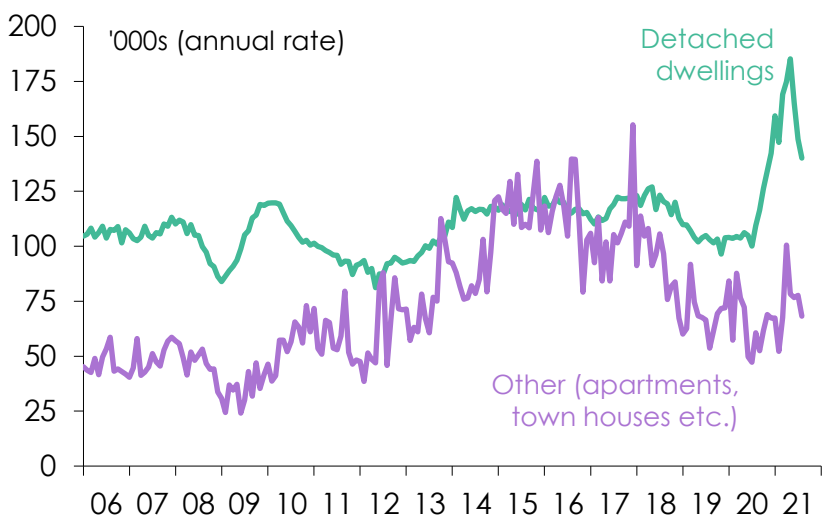
Sources: ABS, [Lending Indicators](#); Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA), [Quarterly authorised deposit-taking institution statistics](#). August housing finance data will be released on 1st October; APRA data on ADI property exposures for the June quarter will be released on 7th September. [Return to "What's New"](#).

July housing approvals were down 25% from a government grant-induced record peak in March, but remain high by historical standards

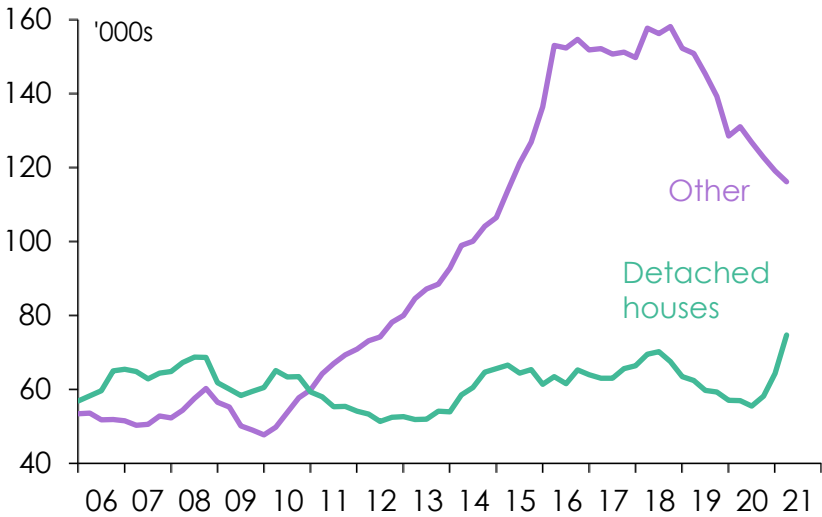
Large builders' new home sales



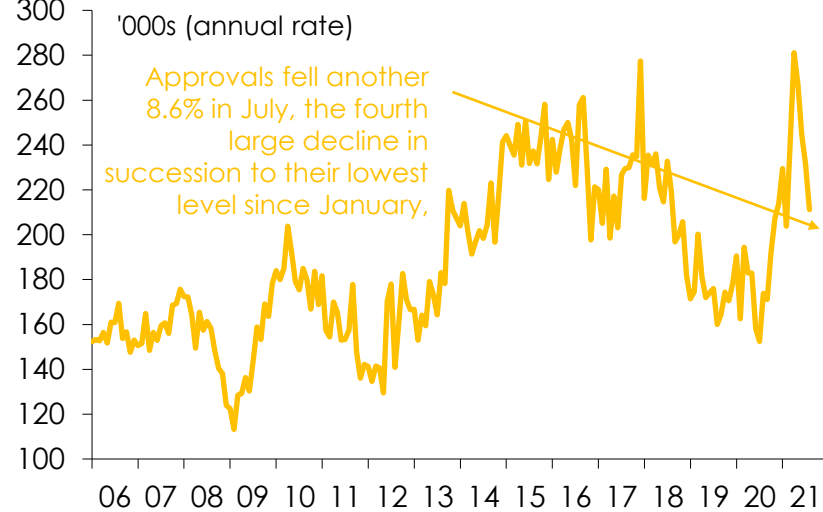
Building approvals, by type



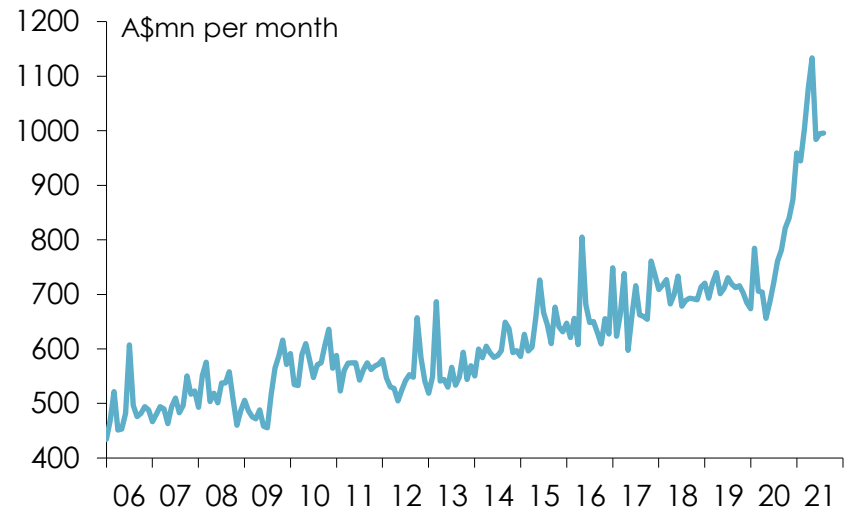
Dwellings under construction



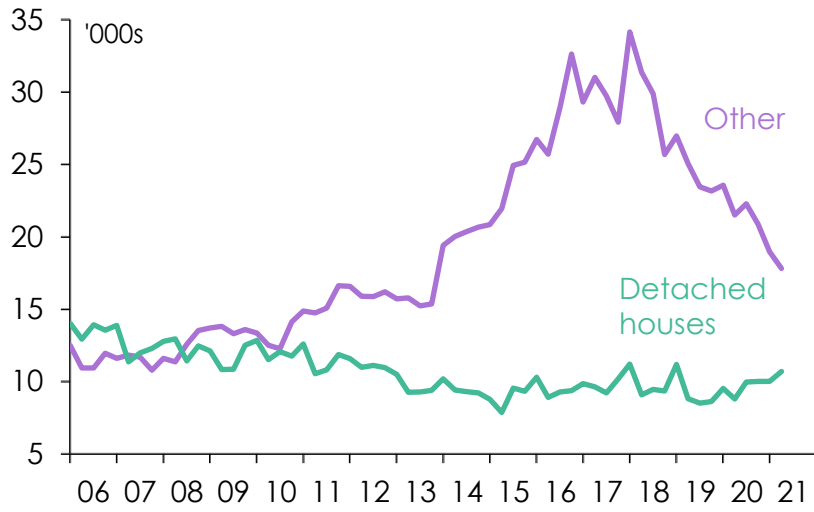
Residential building approvals



Alterations & additions approved



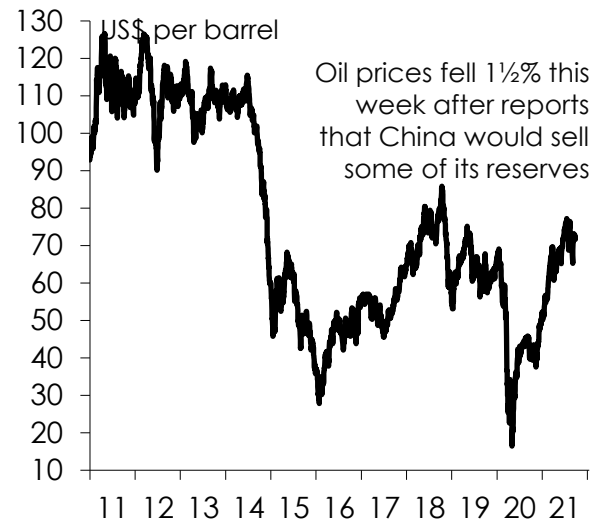
'Pipeline' of work yet to be started



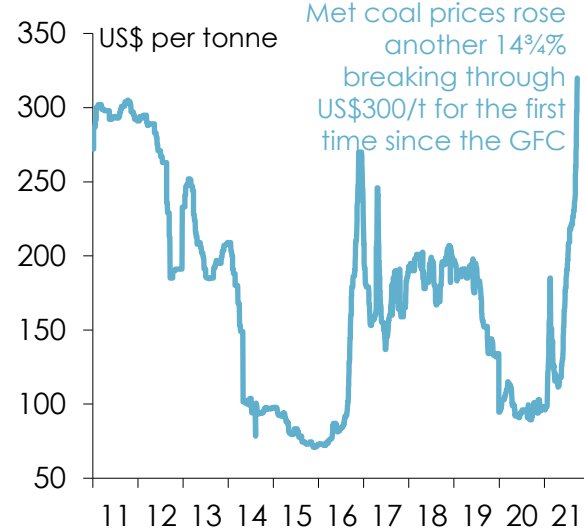
Note: 'New home sales' are of detached dwellings only and exclude small-scale builders. Sources: ABS, [Building Approvals](#); Housing Industry Association. August building approvals data will be released on 30th September; June quarter dwellings under construction and 'pipeline' data on 13th October. [Return to "What's New"](#).

The iron ore price fell another 9½% this week to its lowest since last November, but coal prices surged to new 13-year highs

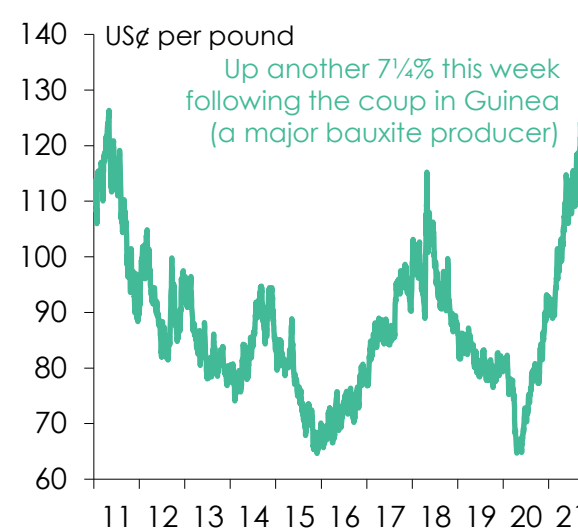
Brent crude oil



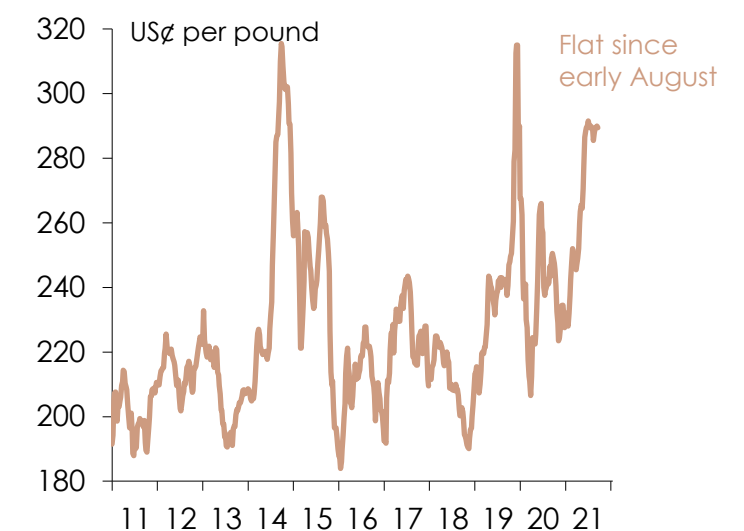
Metallurgical coal



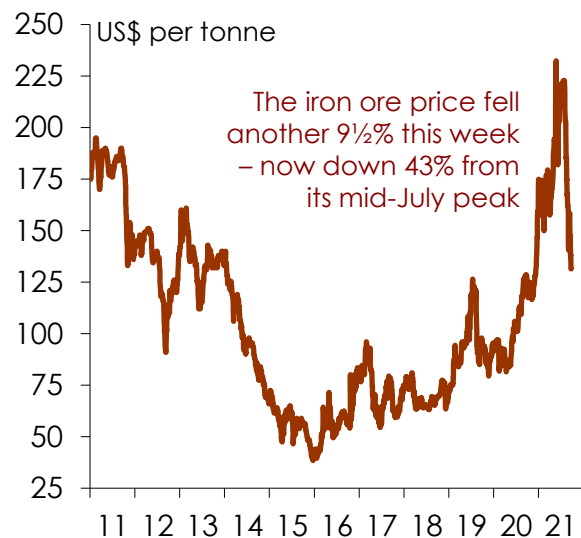
Aluminium



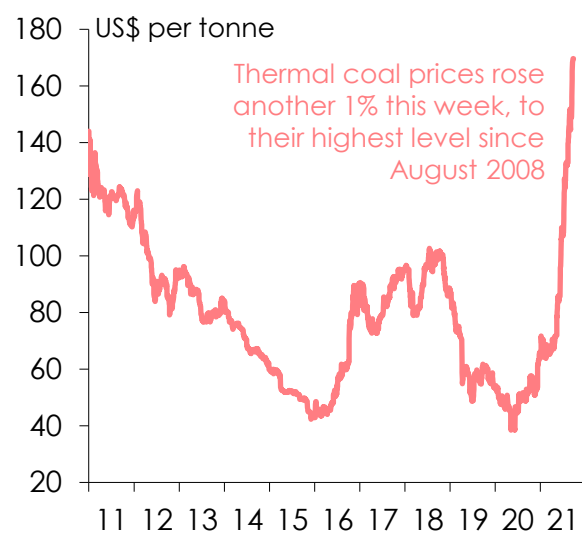
Beef



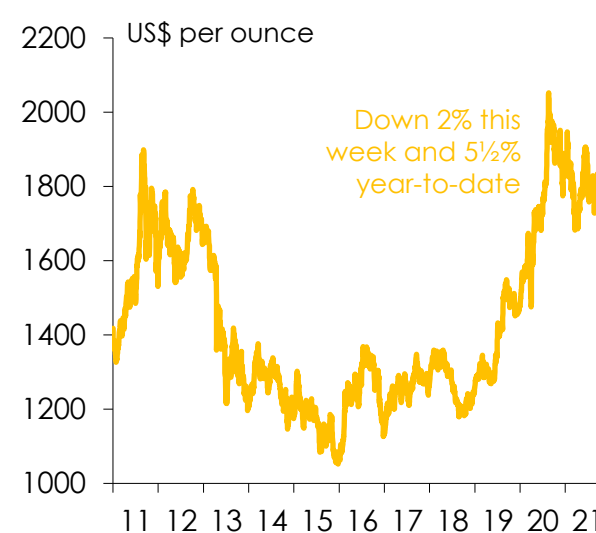
Iron ore



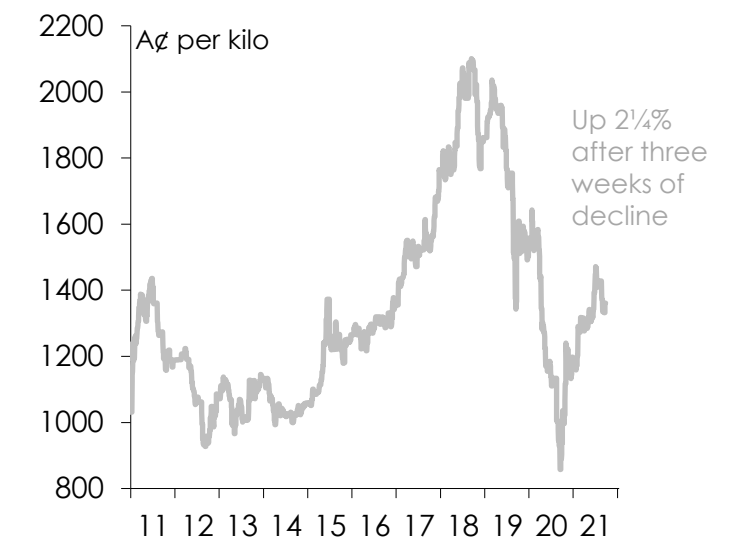
Thermal coal



Gold

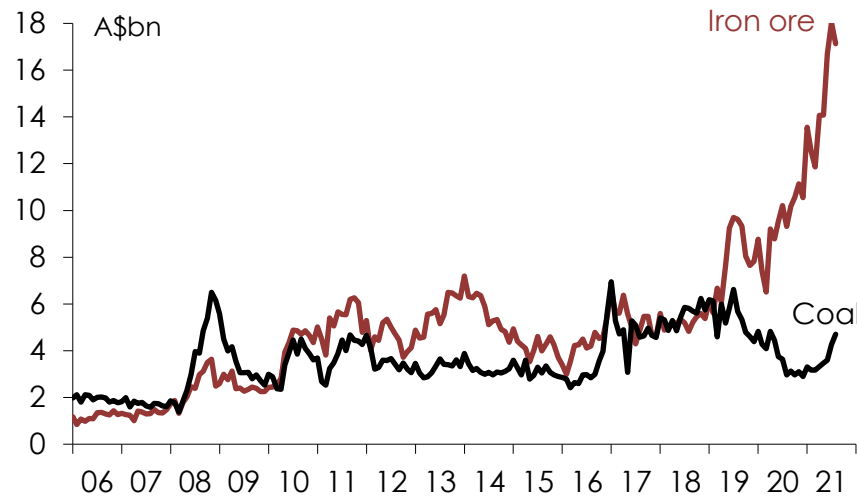


Wool

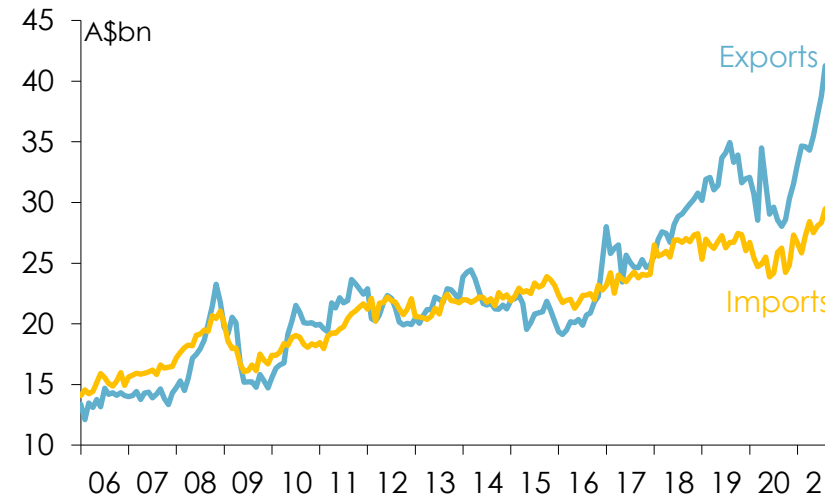


Australia registered another record monthly trade surplus of \$12bn in July, this time thanks to strong growth in LNG and thermal coal exports

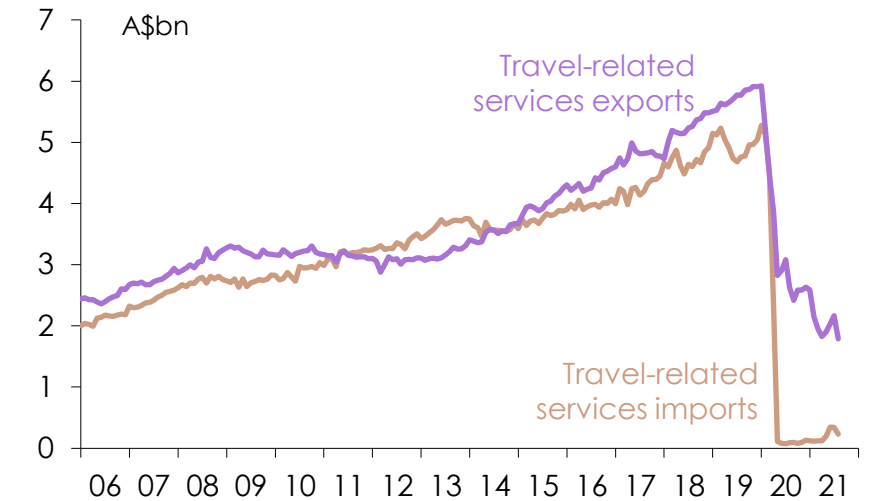
Iron ore and coal exports



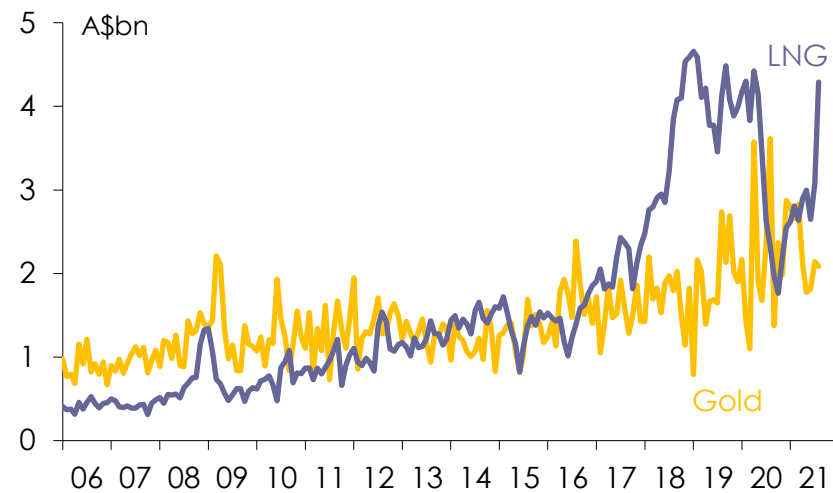
Merchandise exports and imports



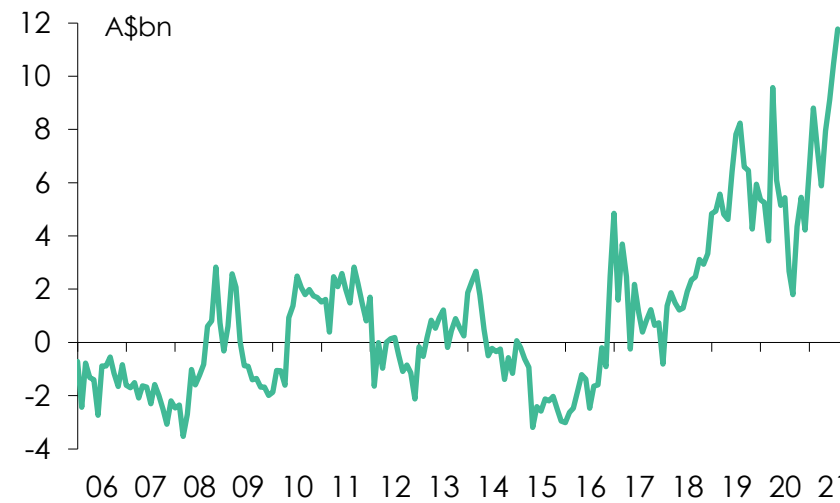
Tourism-related services trade



LNG and gold exports



Merchandise trade balance



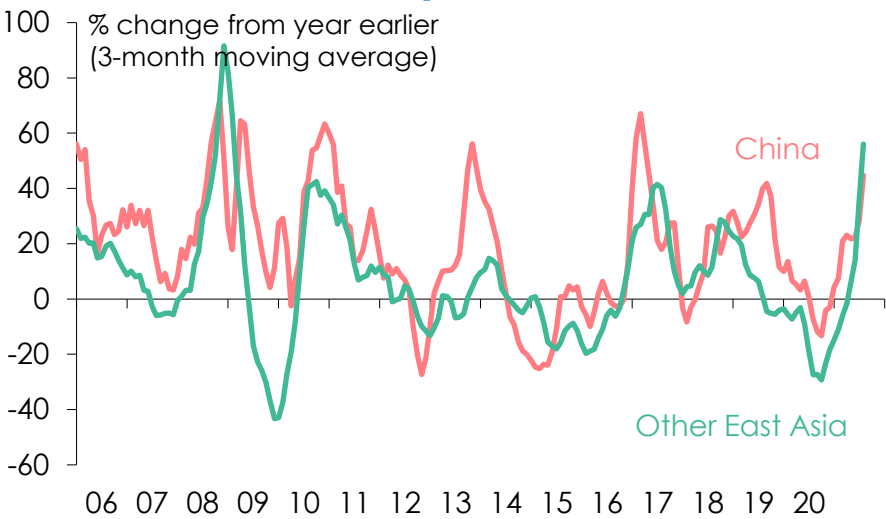
Tourism services trade balance



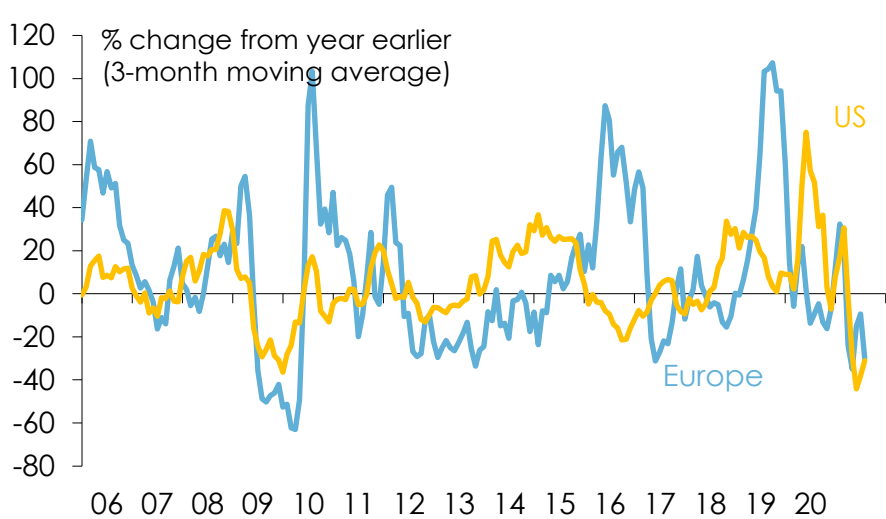
Source: ABS, [International Trade in Goods and Services, Australia](#), July 2021. August data will be released on 5th October. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Australia continues to run a large trade surplus with China despite China's sanctions against a range of Australian exports, thanks to iron ore

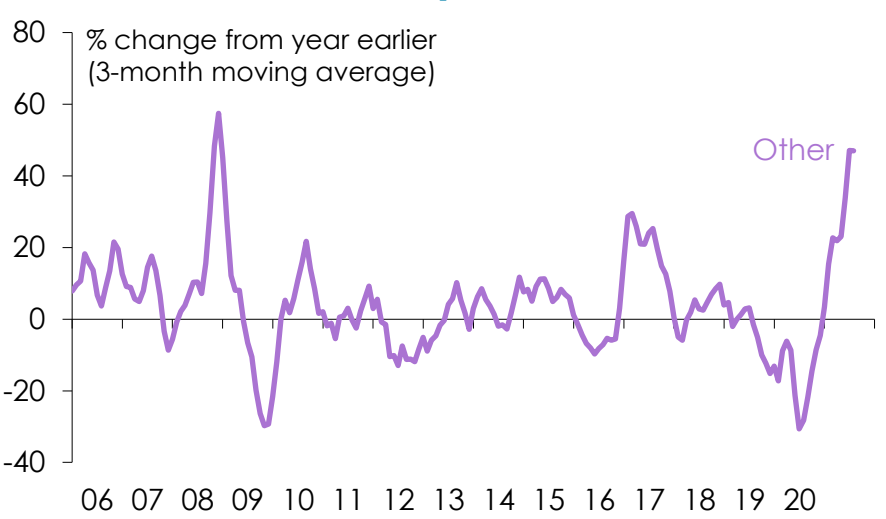
Merchandise exports – East Asia



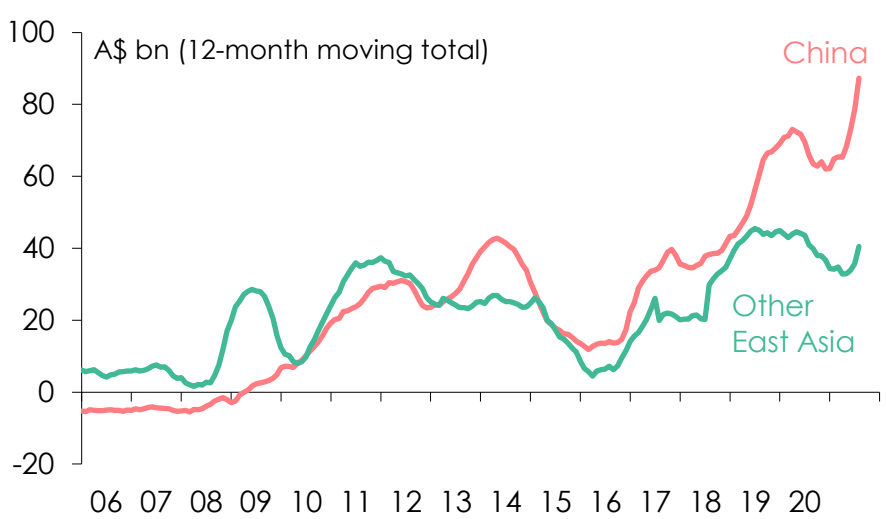
Merchandise exports – US & Europe



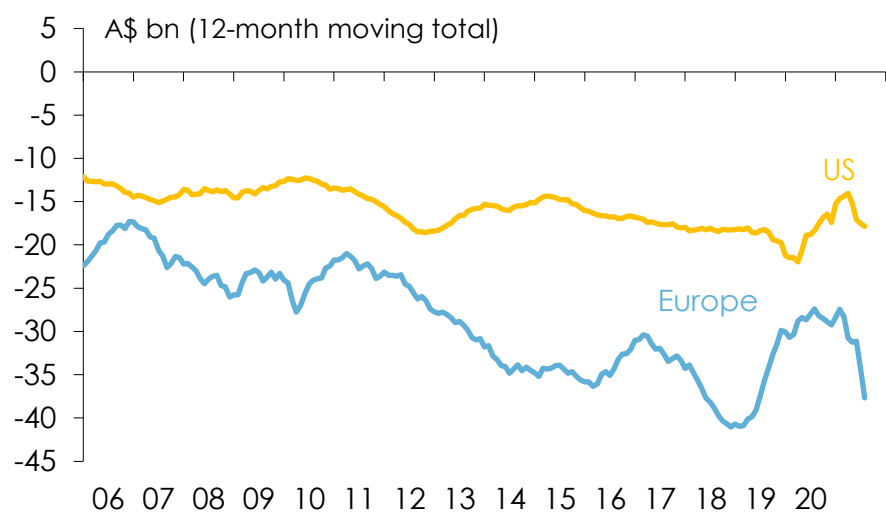
Merchandise exports – other



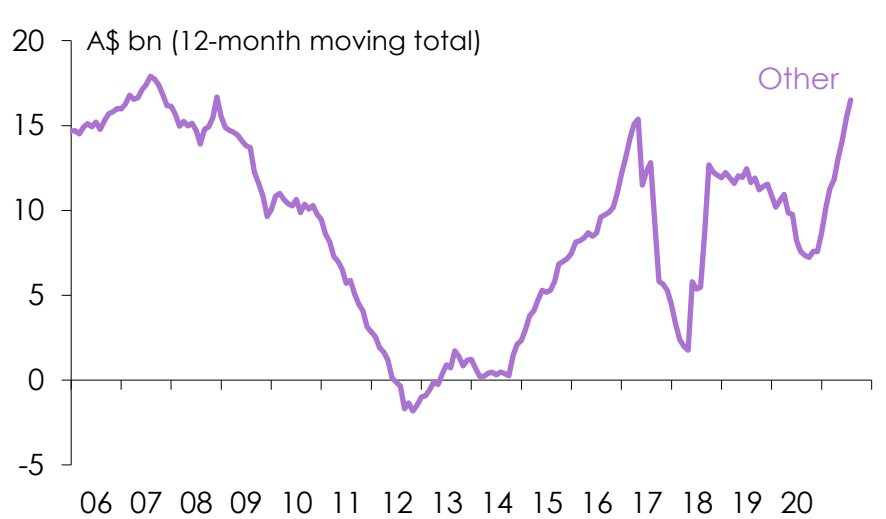
Goods trade balance – East Asia



Goods trade balance – US & Europe



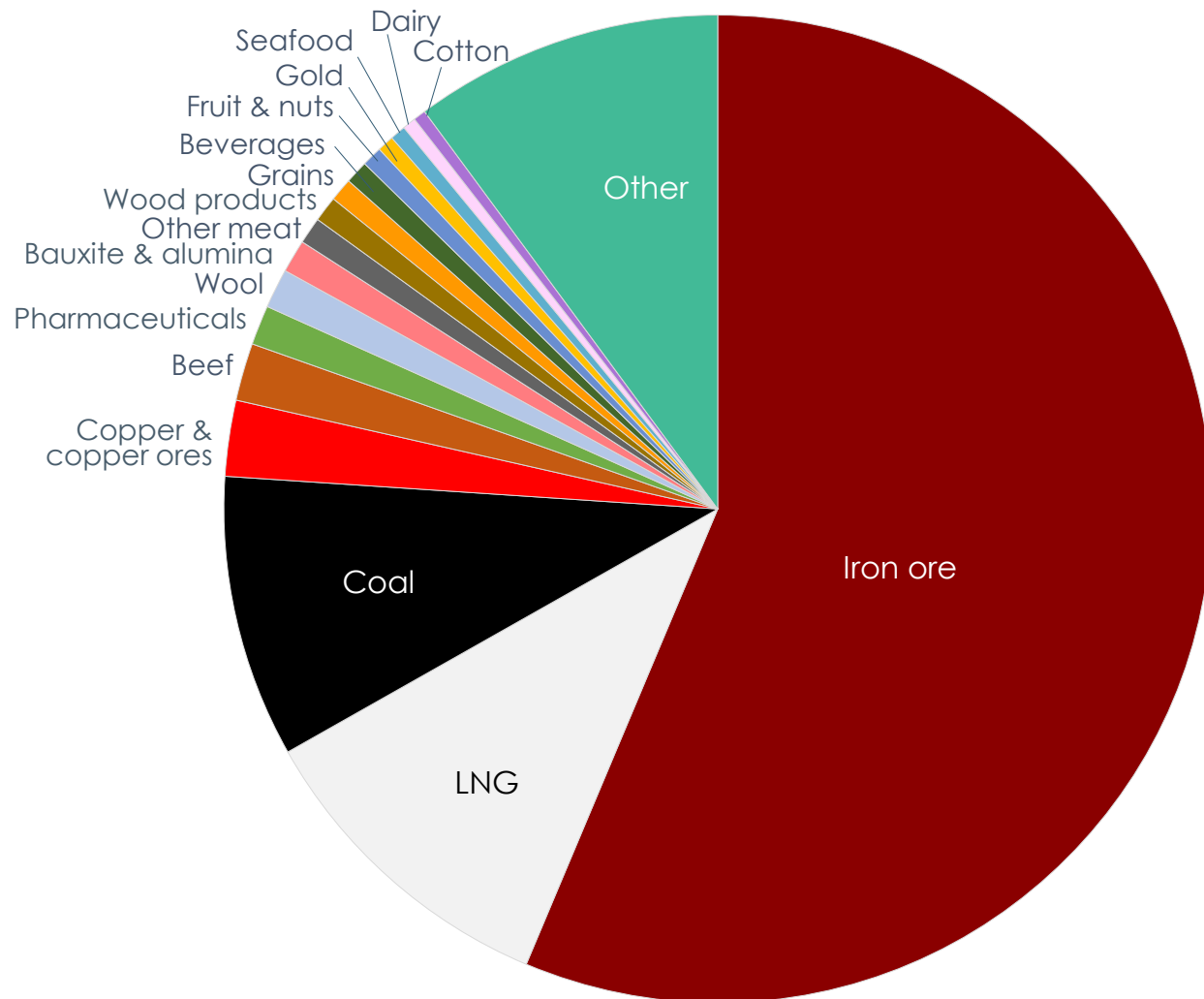
Goods trade balance – other



Note: 'Other East Asia' includes Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and ASEAN. 'Europe' includes the EU, UK and Switzerland. 'Other' includes India, New Zealand and the Pacific, Canada, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and others not included in the foregoing. Latest data are for June. Source: ABS, [International Trade in Goods and Services, Australia](#), July 2021. August data will be released on 5th October. [Return to "What's New"](#).

The bilateral relationship between Australia and its largest trading partner China seems unlikely to improve any time soon and could get worse

Australia's merchandise exports to China, 2019-20



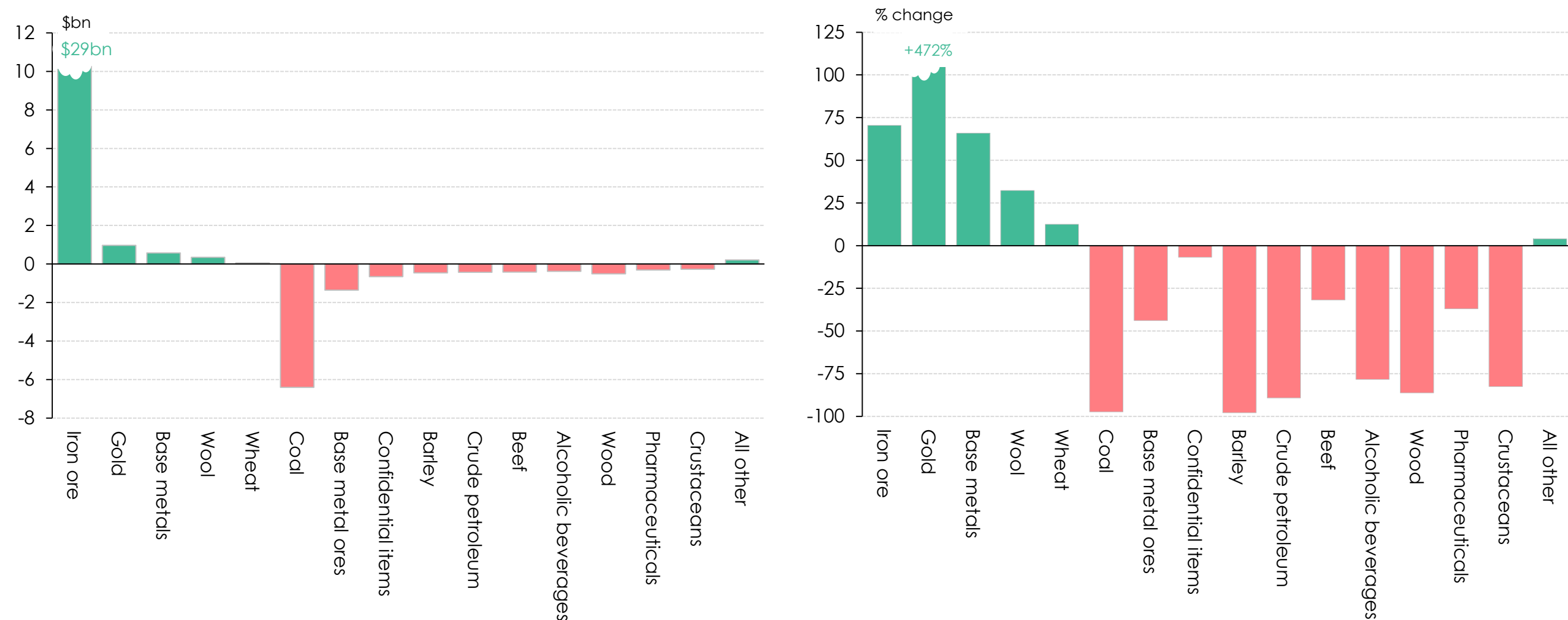
- ❑ China accounted for 39½% of Australia's merchandise exports in FY 2019-20 (the largest proportion any country has since the mid-1950s when 36% of Australia's exports went to the UK)
 - of which iron ore & concentrates accounts for 56%
- ❑ China also accounted for 19% of Australia's services exports in CY 2019 of which tourism & education accounted for over 90%)
- ❑ China has no real alternatives to Australian iron ore in the near term – but it has been progressively expanding the range of other Australian products subject to discriminatory tariffs, “customs inspections”, quarantine issues or outright bans – including wheat, wool, copper ores, sugar, lobsters, timber, wine and coal
 - Australia's exports of these products to China have dropped from about \$25bn in 2019 to an annualized rate of about \$5½bn since the sanctions were imposed – although in many cases Australian exporters have been able to find alternative markets (see next slide)
- ❑ In July China's Foreign Ministry openly acknowledged that it was seeking to ‘punish’ Australia for “groundlessly accusing and smearing China and undermining China's core interests based on ideology” and “acting as a cat's paw” for the United States
- ❑ Another looming flashpoint in the bilateral relationship may come from the forthcoming review (by the Defence Department) of the 2015 lease of the Port of Darwin to a Chinese company (Landbridge)

Note: 'Wood' includes wood products; 'dairy' includes milk, cream, butter & cheese; 'seafood' includes crustaceans, fish and processed seafood; 'other' includes confidential items.

Sources: Australian Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, [Trade Statistical Pivot Tables](#); Corinna. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Iron ore, and to a much lesser extent gold, base metals, wool and wheat are the only things Australia is selling more of to China than a year ago

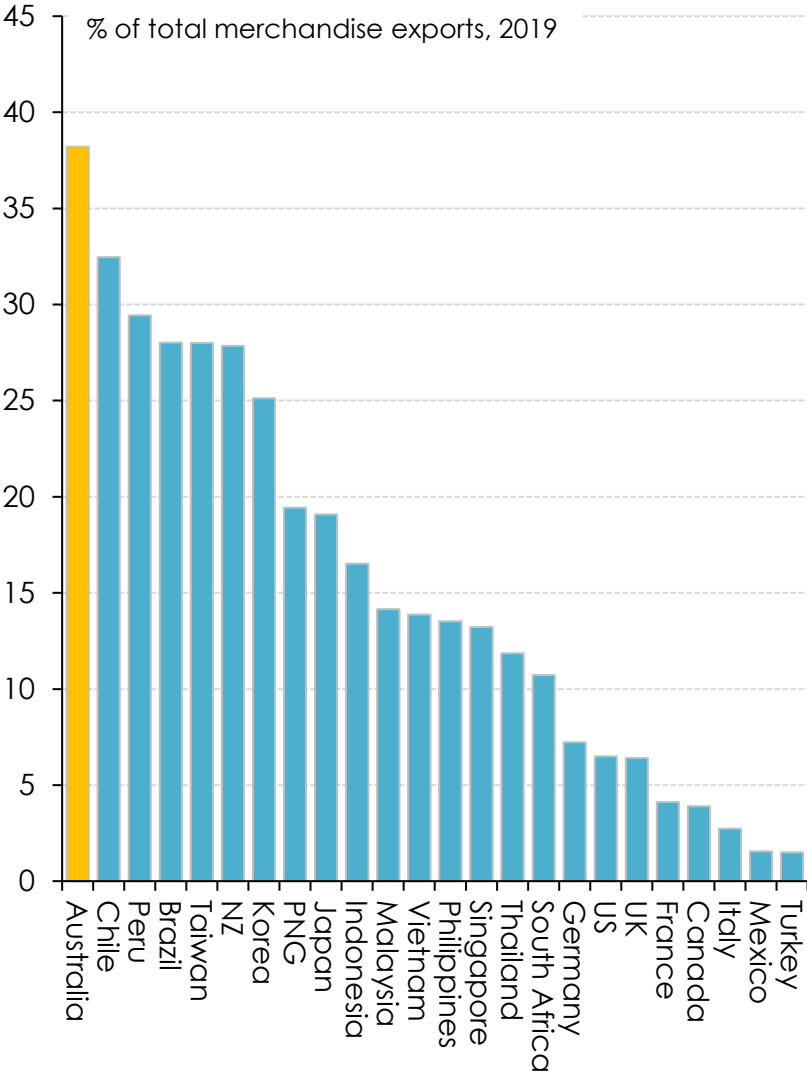
Change in Australian exports to China, eight months to June 2021 compared with eight months to June 2020



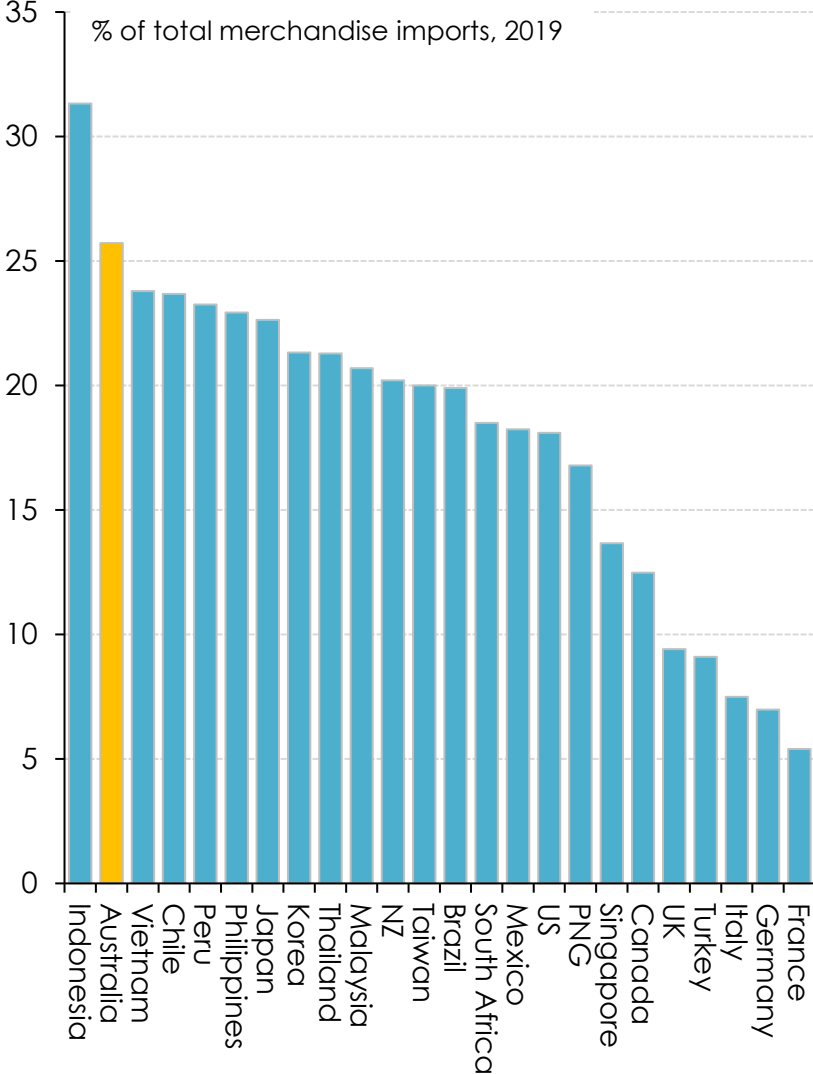
Source: Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, [Trade Statistical Pivot Tables - Country and commodity pivot table monthly](#); Corinna. [Return to "What's New"](#).

China can cause Australia economic pain because we're very dependent on it, and are one of the few countries with whom China runs a deficit

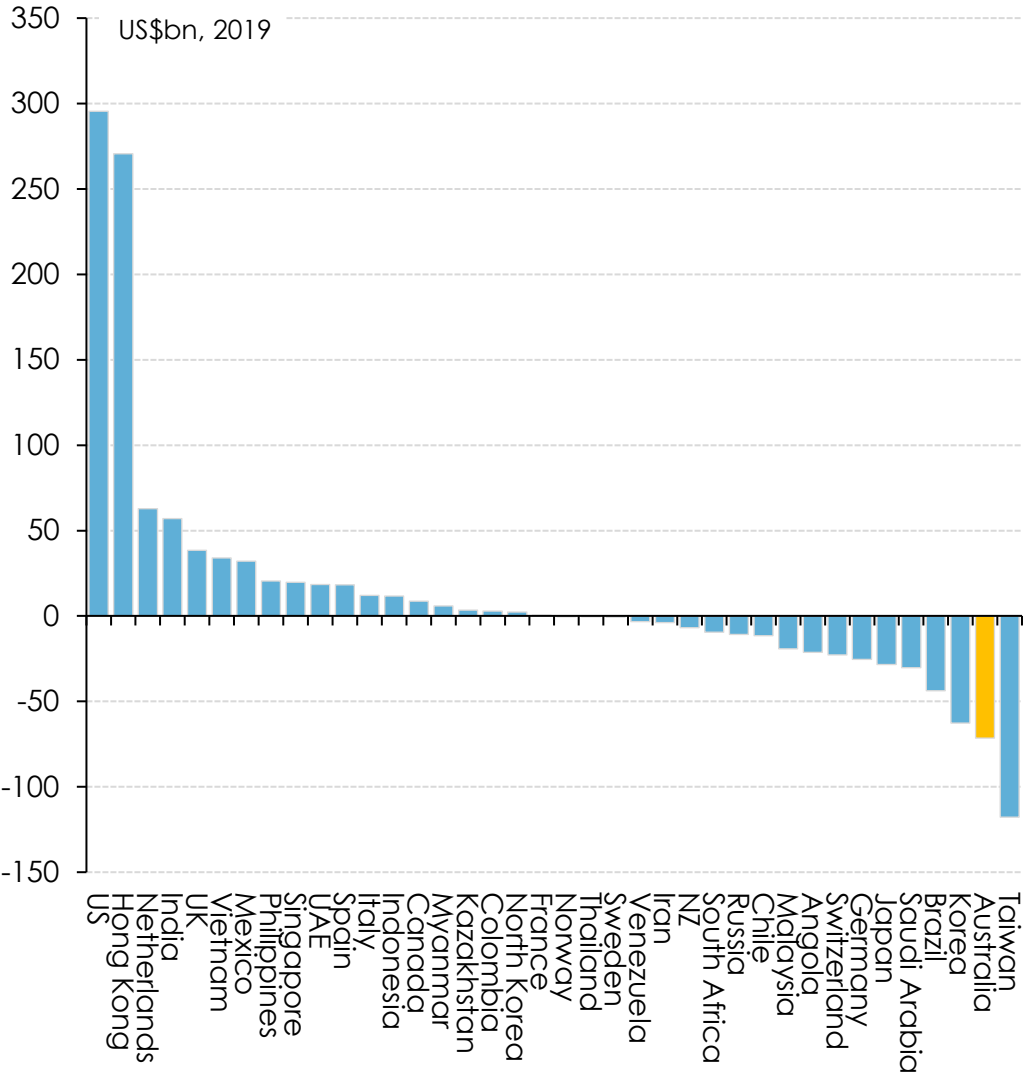
Merchandise exports to China as a pc of total



Merchandise imports from China as a pc of total



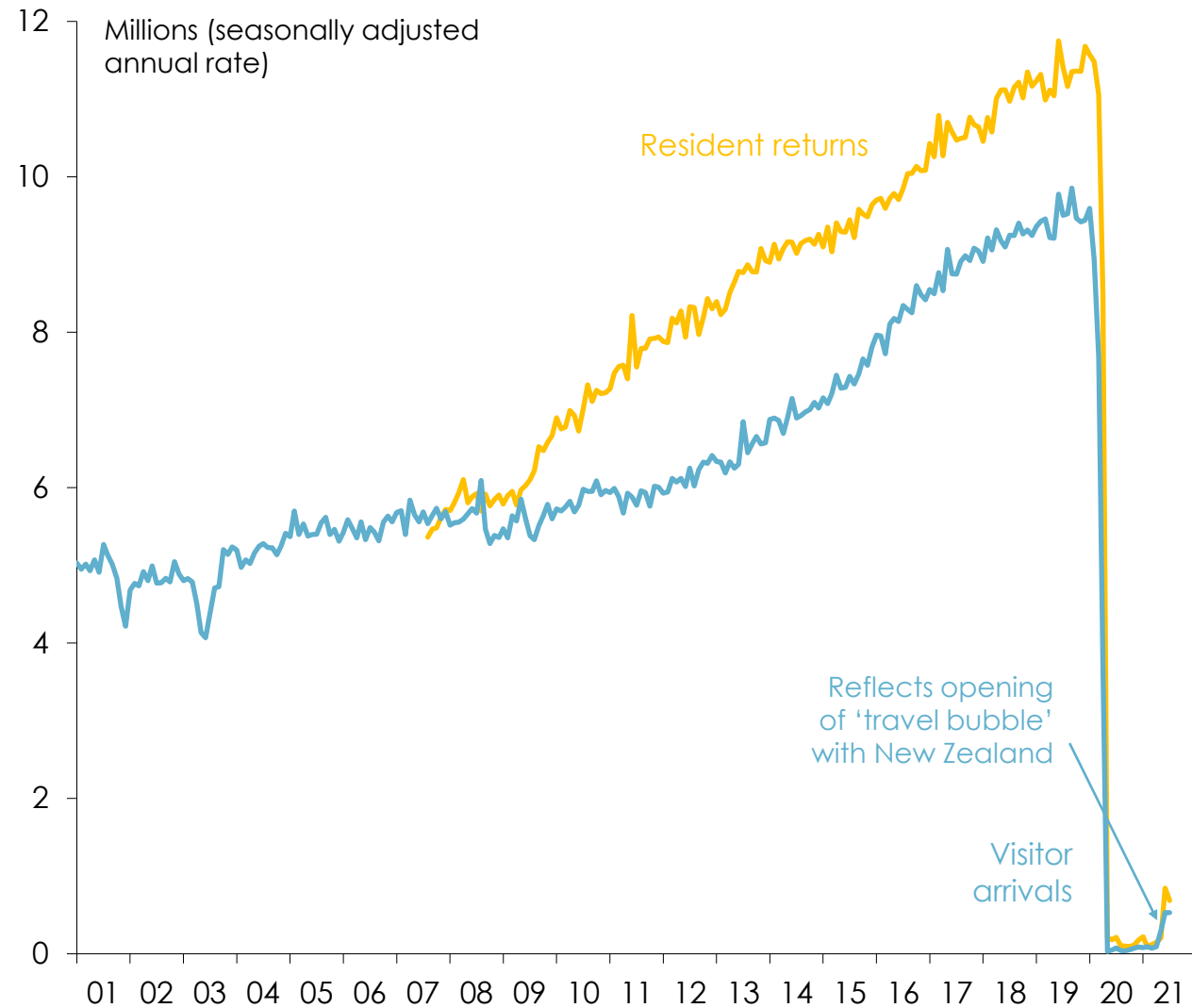
China's bilateral merchandise trade balances



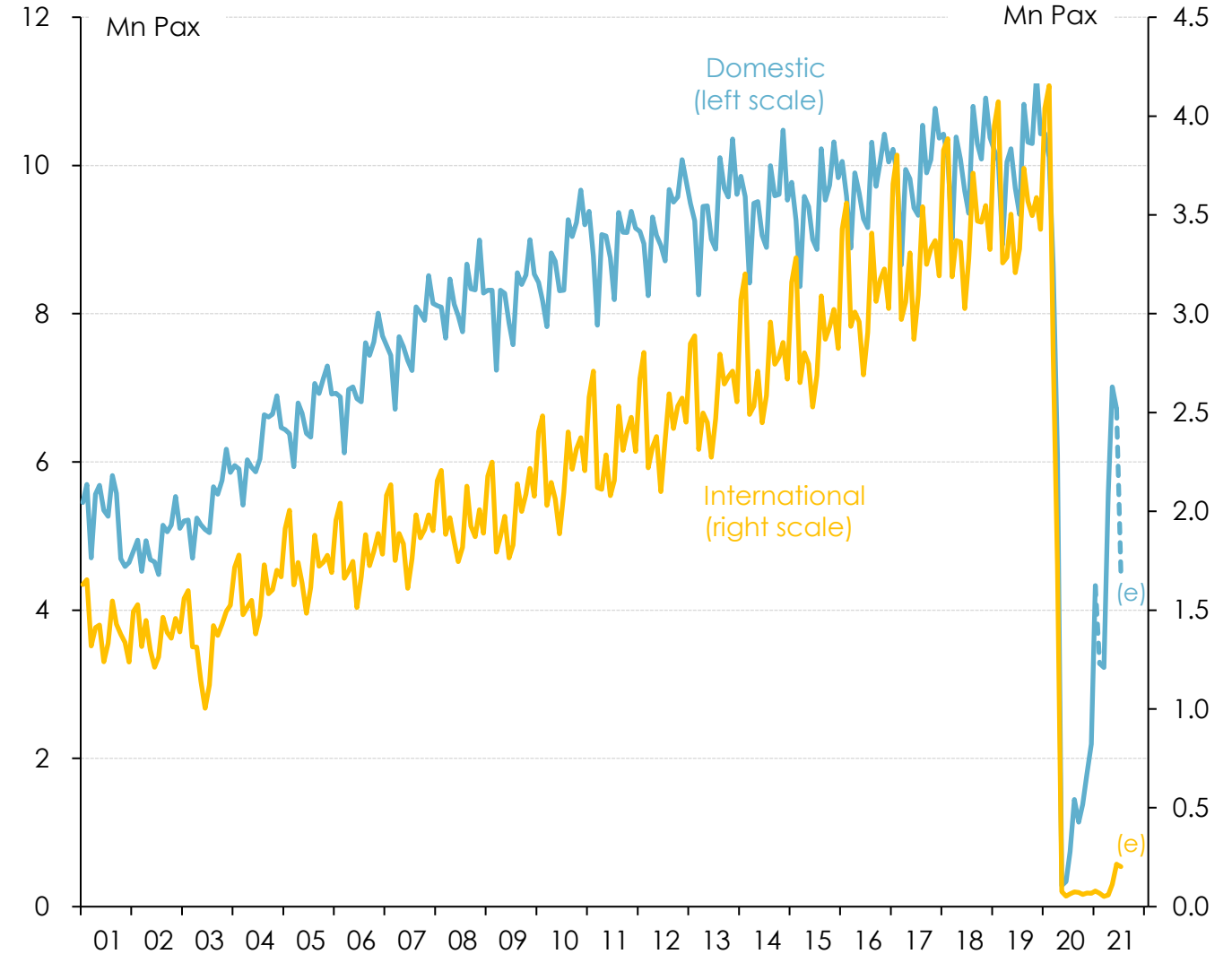
Sources: IMF, Direction of Trade Statistics; Taiwan Ministry of Economic Affairs, Bureau of Foreign Trade. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Domestic aviation picked up strongly between last November and May – but slumped in June with renewed lockdowns and interstate border closures

Short-term visitor arrivals and resident returns



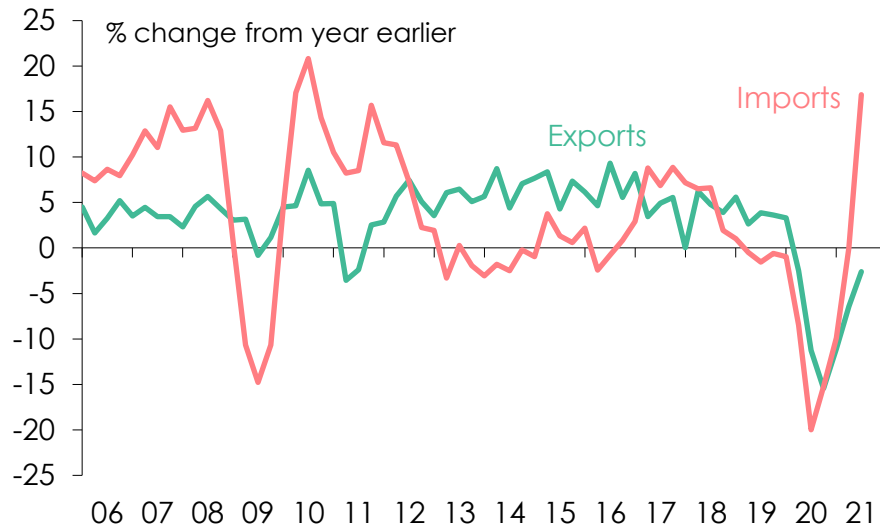
Airport passenger movements



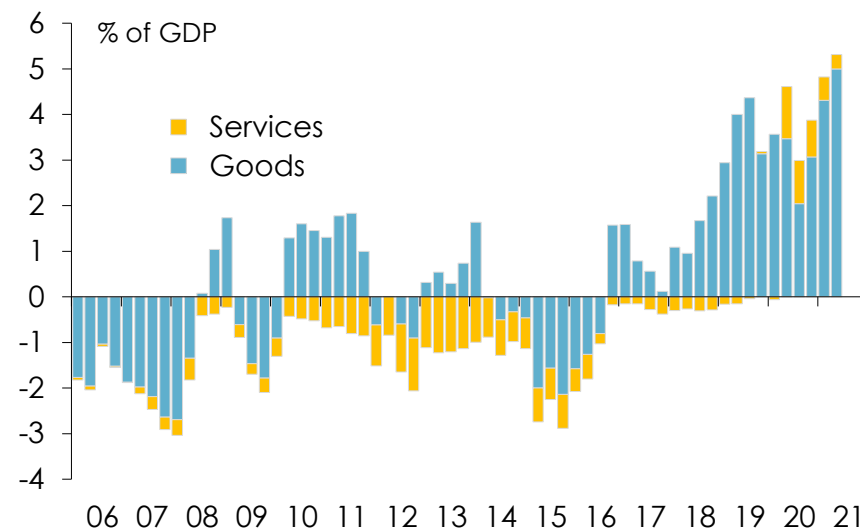
Note: The ABS has suspended publication of seasonally adjusted estimates of short-term visitor arrivals and resident returns, so published original estimates for April 2020 (and beyond) have been seasonally adjusted by Corinna using the same seasonal factors as for the corresponding month of 2019. Latest ABS data on arrivals and departures are for June; BITRE data on airport passenger movements are for May; June 2021 estimate(e) has been extrapolated from data for Sydney Airport published by Sydney Airport Ltd. Sources: [ABS](#); [Bureau of Industry, Transport and Regional Economics \(BITRE\)](#); [Sydney Airport Ltd](#); Corinna. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Australia recorded another record current account surplus in the June quarter, thanks to another large gain in export prices

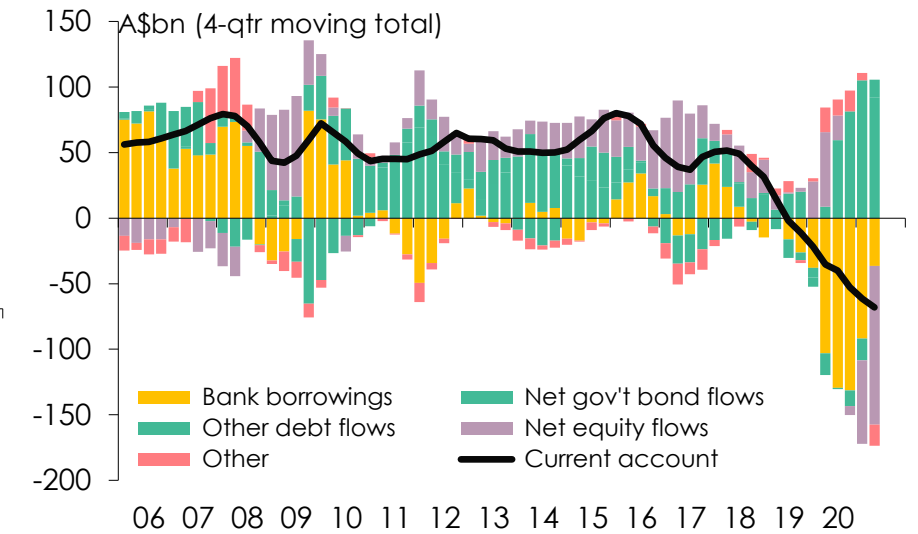
Export and import volumes



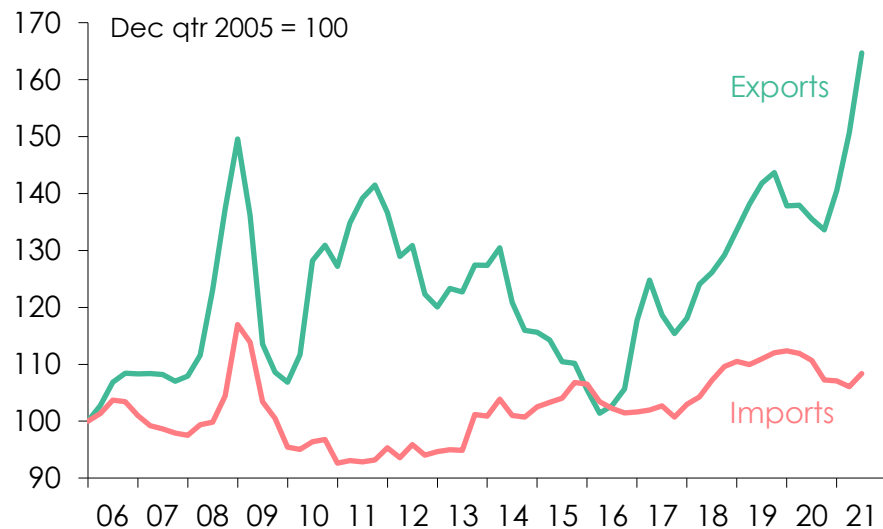
Goods & services trade balances



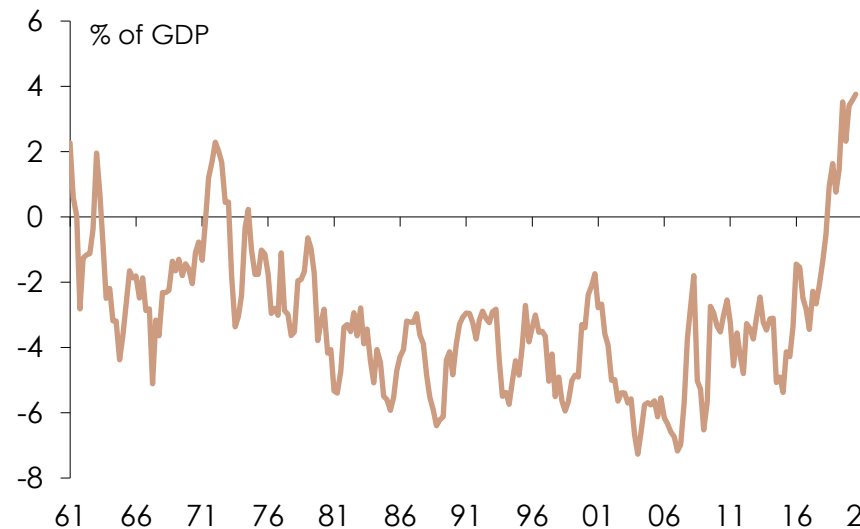
Capital flows



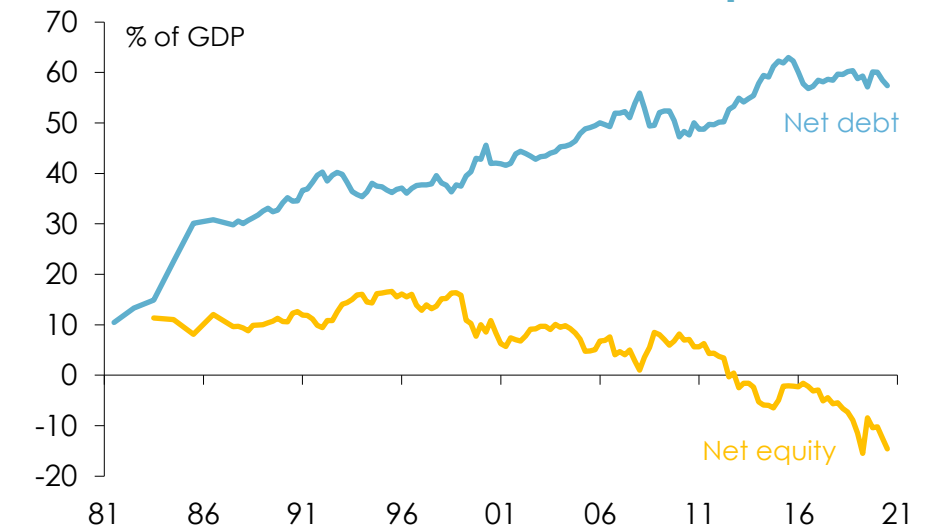
Export and import prices



Current account balance



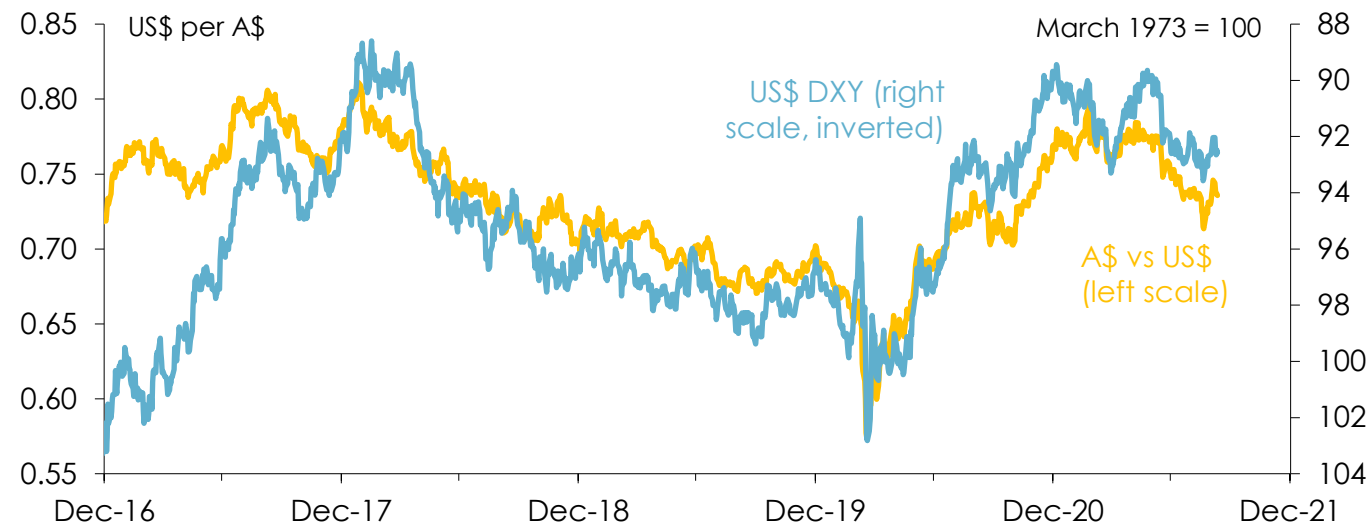
Net international investment position



Note: The chart of Australia's international capital flows shows inflows (eg borrowings from abroad) as a positive and outflows (eg repayments of debt, or purchases of foreign equity assets) as a negative. Likewise the chart of Australia's international investment position shows net foreign debt as a positive and net equity assets as a negative. Latest data are for the June quarter 2021; September quarter data will be released on 30th November. Source: ABS, [Balance of Payments and International Investment Position, Australia](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

The A\$ gave up most of 's gains, falling almost 1½% against the US\$ to below US74¢ as the iron ore price continued to fall

A\$-US\$ and US\$ trade-weighted index



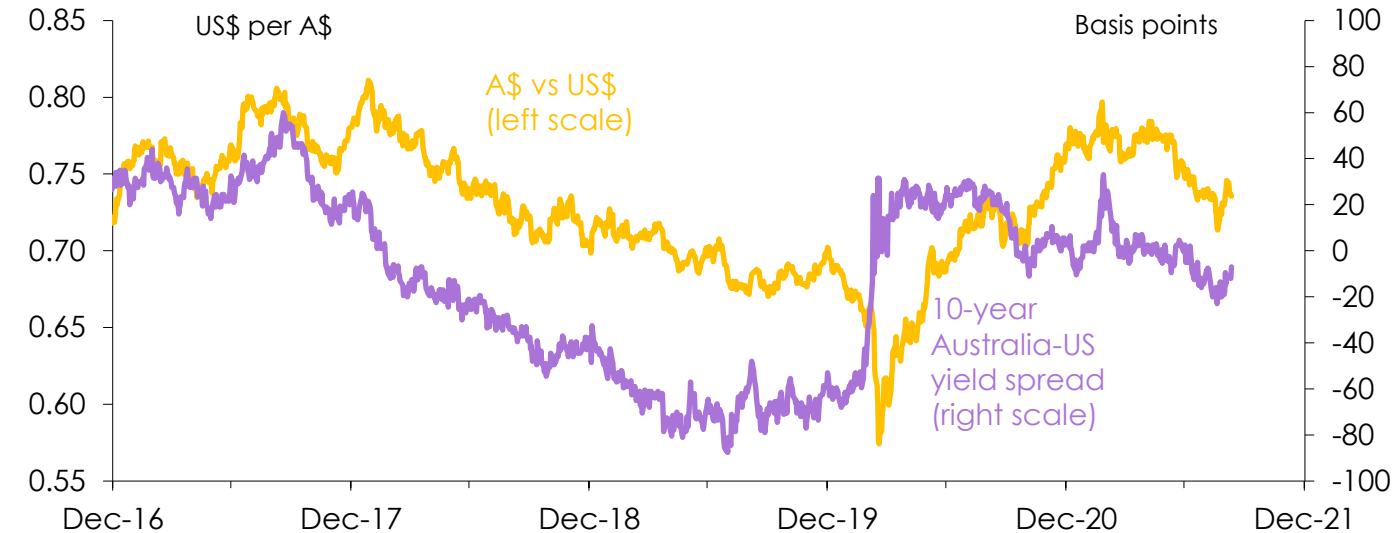
A\$-US\$ and US equity market volatility



A\$-US\$ and spot iron ore prices

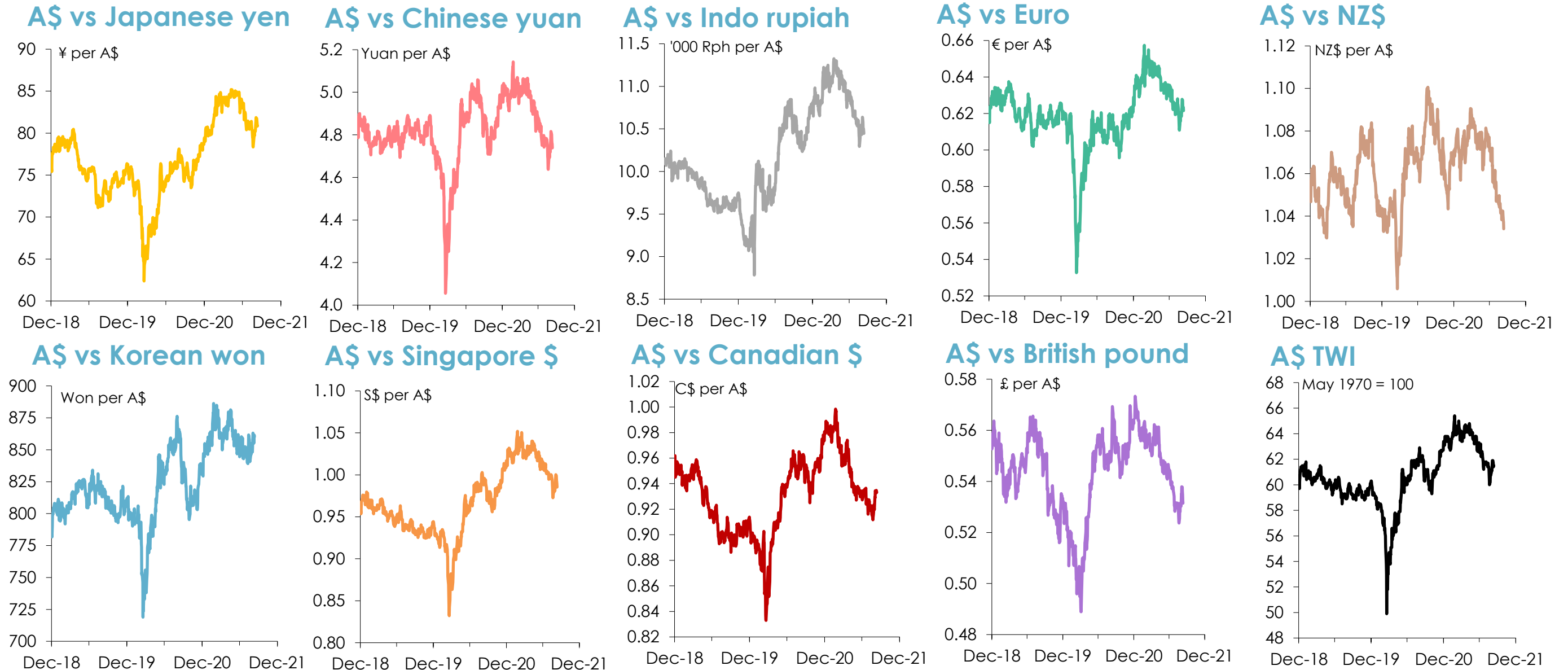


A\$-US\$ and Australia-US 10-year bond yield spread



Note: The DXY is an index of the value of the US dollar against 6 other currencies (the euro, yen, pound, Canadian dollar, Swedish krona and Swiss franc). The VIX index is a measure of the implied volatility of S&P500 options and is widely interpreted as an indicator of investor risk appetite or aversion. Source: Refinitiv Datastream. Data up to 10th September. [Return to "What's New"](#).

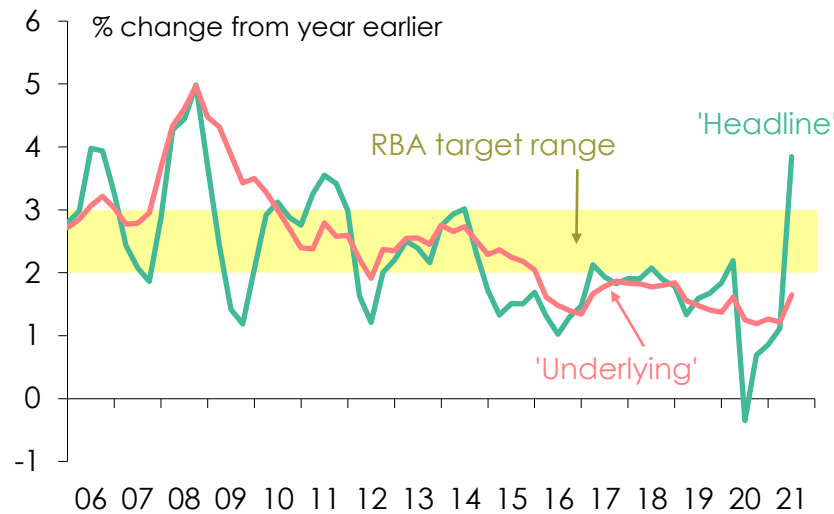
The A\$ also fell against most third currencies, Asian currencies in particular, but also against sterling and the NZ dollar



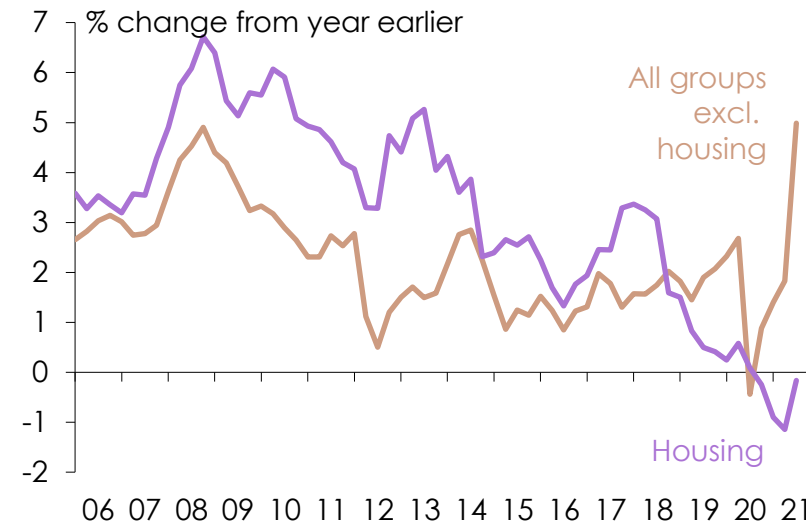
Note: The 'TWI' is the RBA's [trade-weighted index](#) of the A\$. Source: Refinitiv Datastream. Data up to 10th September. [Return to "What's New"](#).

The 'headline' inflation rate shot up to 3.8% in Q2, but that was all due to 'base' effects – the underlying rate remains well below the RBA's target

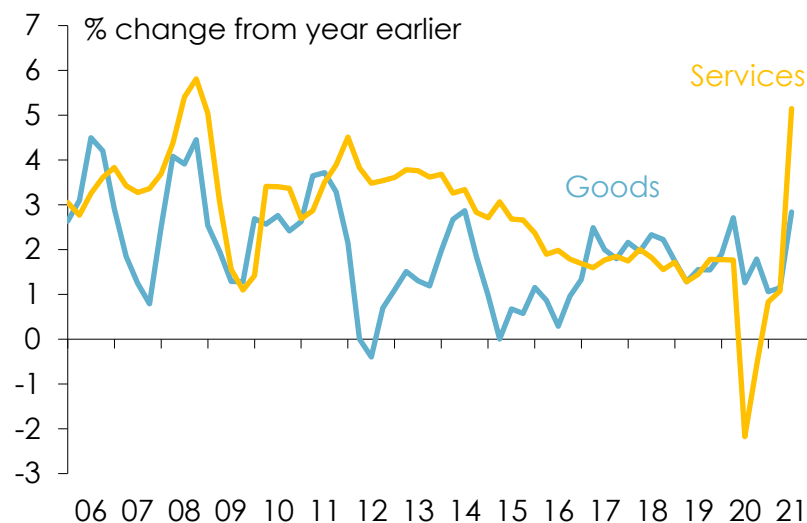
Consumer prices



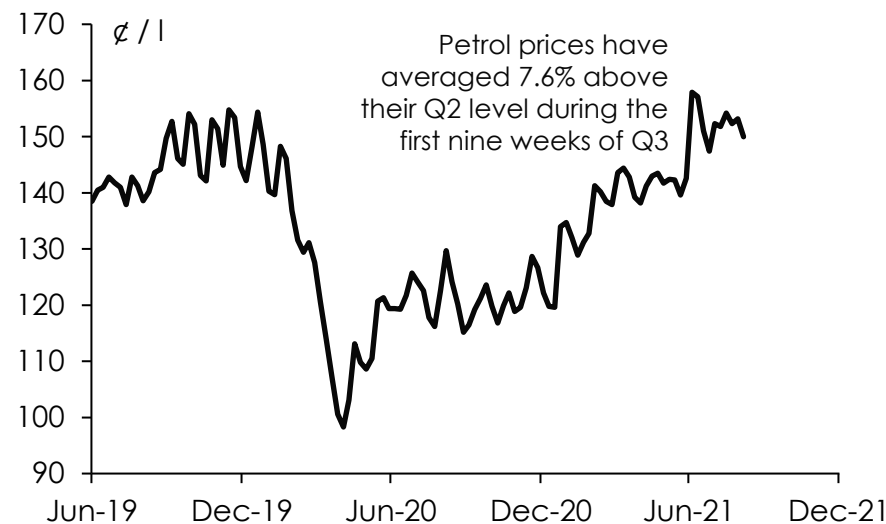
Housing costs



Goods vs services prices



Retail petrol prices

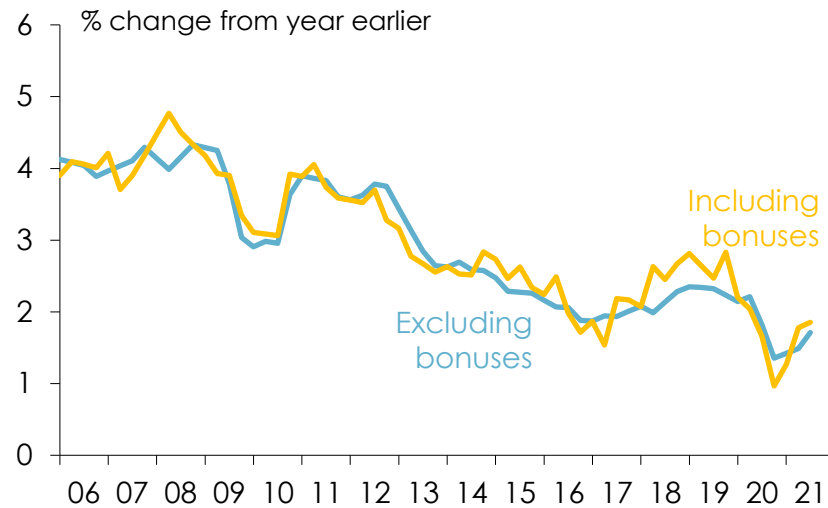


- ❑ The CPI rose a slightly higher-than-expected 0.8% in Q2 – but because the 1.9% fall in Q2 last year (the result of child care being free for most of it, and a sharp fall in petrol prices), the annual 'headline' inflation rate jumped to 3.8%, its highest since Q3 2008
- ❑ 70% of the increase in the CPI in Q2 came from four components which together represent 13% of the CPI 'basket' – petrol (up 6.6%, accounting for 29% of the rise), fruit & vegetables (up 5.2%), hospital and medical services (up 2.4%) and electricity charges (up 3.3%, reflecting the unwinding of temporary discounts in WA)
- ❑ Cash grants to first home buyers again turned what would have otherwise been a 1.9% increase in new dwelling purchase prices into a 0.1% decline
- ❑ The RBA's preferred measure of 'underlying' inflation (the trimmed mean) rose 0.5% in Q2 (cf. 0.4% in Q1), and by 1.6% from a year earlier – the highest annual rate since ! Last year, but still below the RBA's target for the 22nd quarter in a row

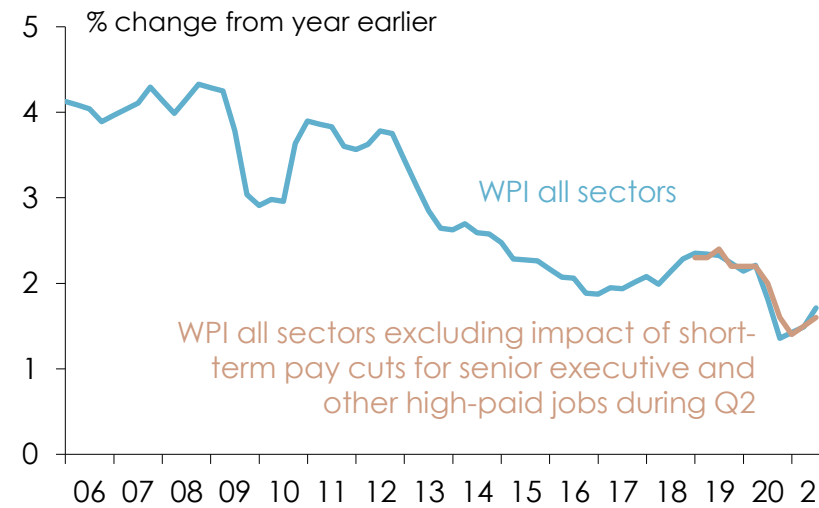
Note: 'Underlying' inflation is the average of the weighted median and trimmed mean CPIs. Wage price indices exclude bonuses.
Sources: ABS, [Consumer Price Index, Australia](#); [Australian Institute of Petroleum](#). The September quarter (Q3) CPI will be released on 27th October. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Wages rose by only 0.4% in Q2, down from 0.6% in Q1 and Q4 last year, though 'base effects' from Q2 last year pushed the annual rate up to 1.7%

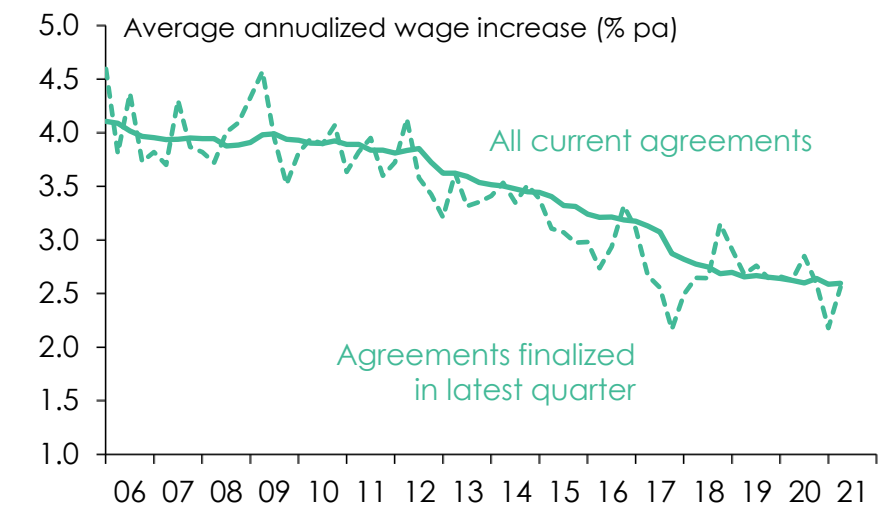
Wage price index – all sectors



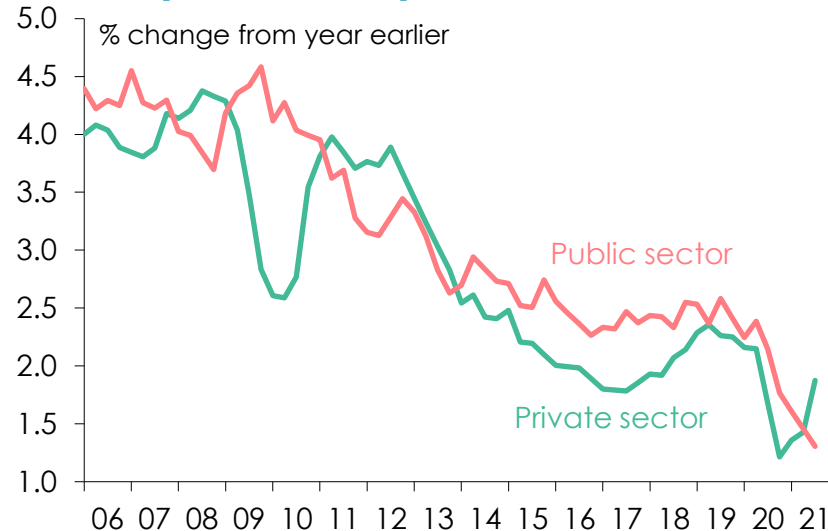
WPI excl. temporary wage cuts



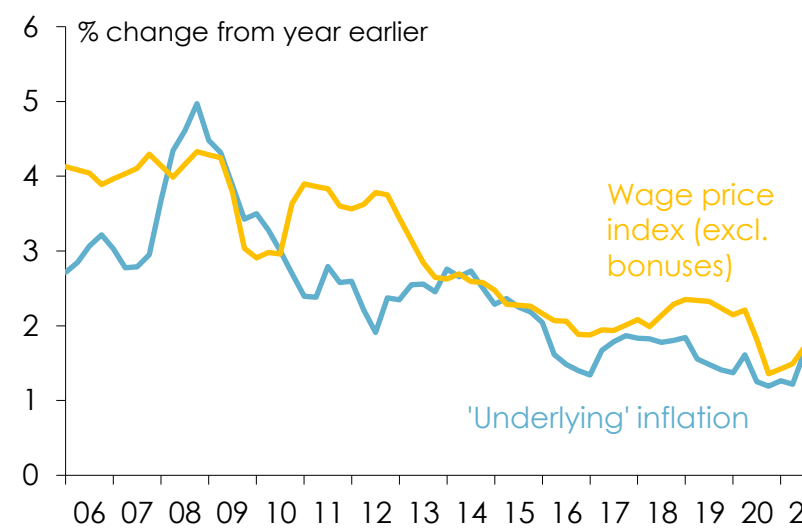
Enterprise bargaining agreements



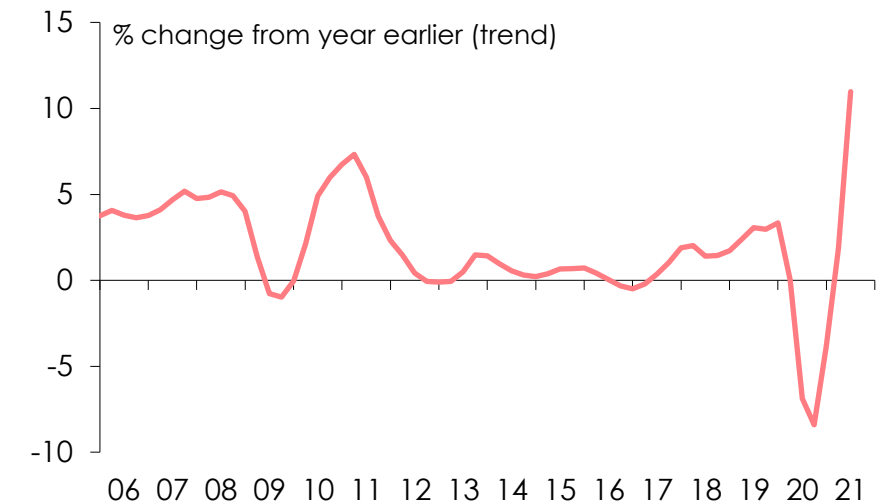
WPI – private vs public sectors



WPI and 'underlying' CPI inflation



Unit labour costs

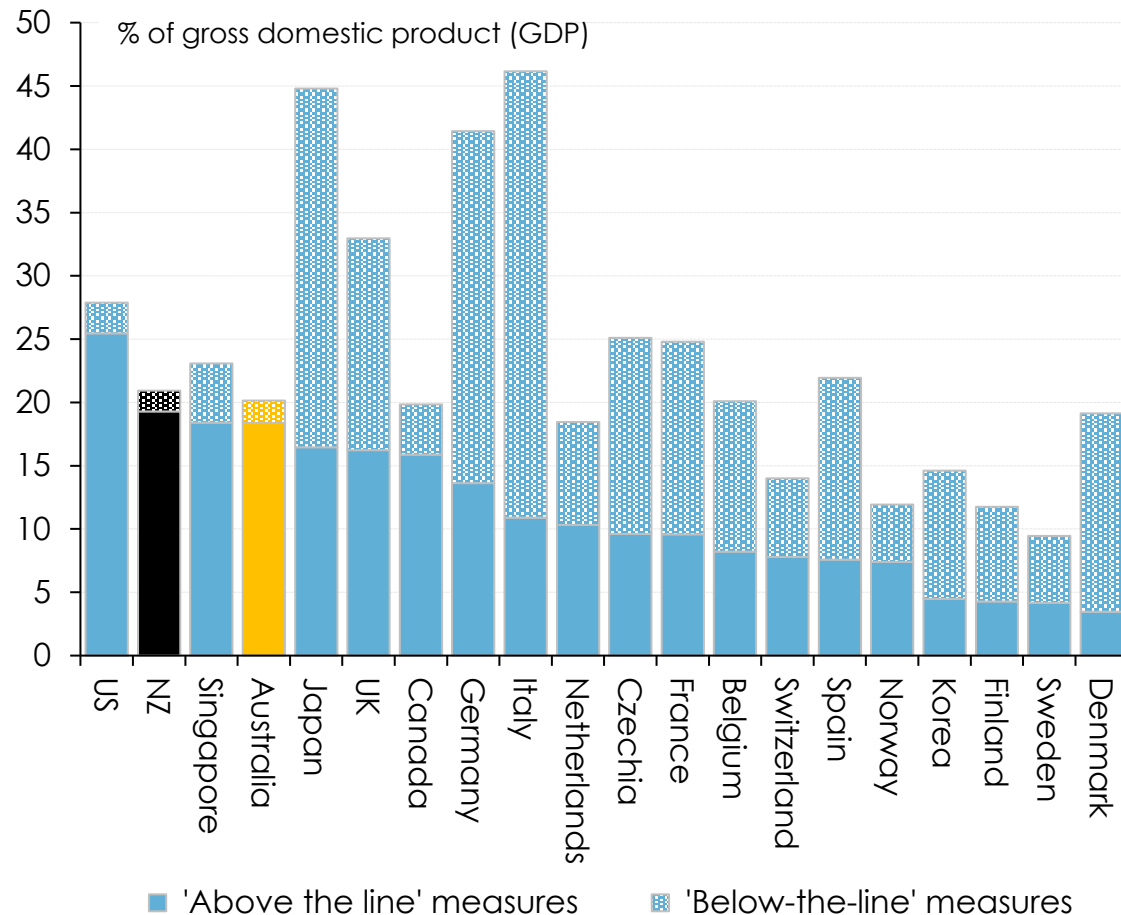


Note: Unit labour costs is compensation of employees (including fringe benefits and social insurance contributions) per hour worked divided by (real) gross value added per hour worked (ie, labour productivity) for the non-farm sector. Sources: ABS, [Wage Price Index, Australia](#) and [Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product](#); Attorney-General's Department, [Trends in Federal Enterprise Bargaining](#); September quarter WPI data will be released on 17th November. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Australia's fiscal and monetary policy settings

The Government's fiscal policy response to Covid-19 now exceeds 18% of GDP – and more support has been announced in recent weeks

Fiscal policy responses to Covid-19 – selected 'advanced economies'

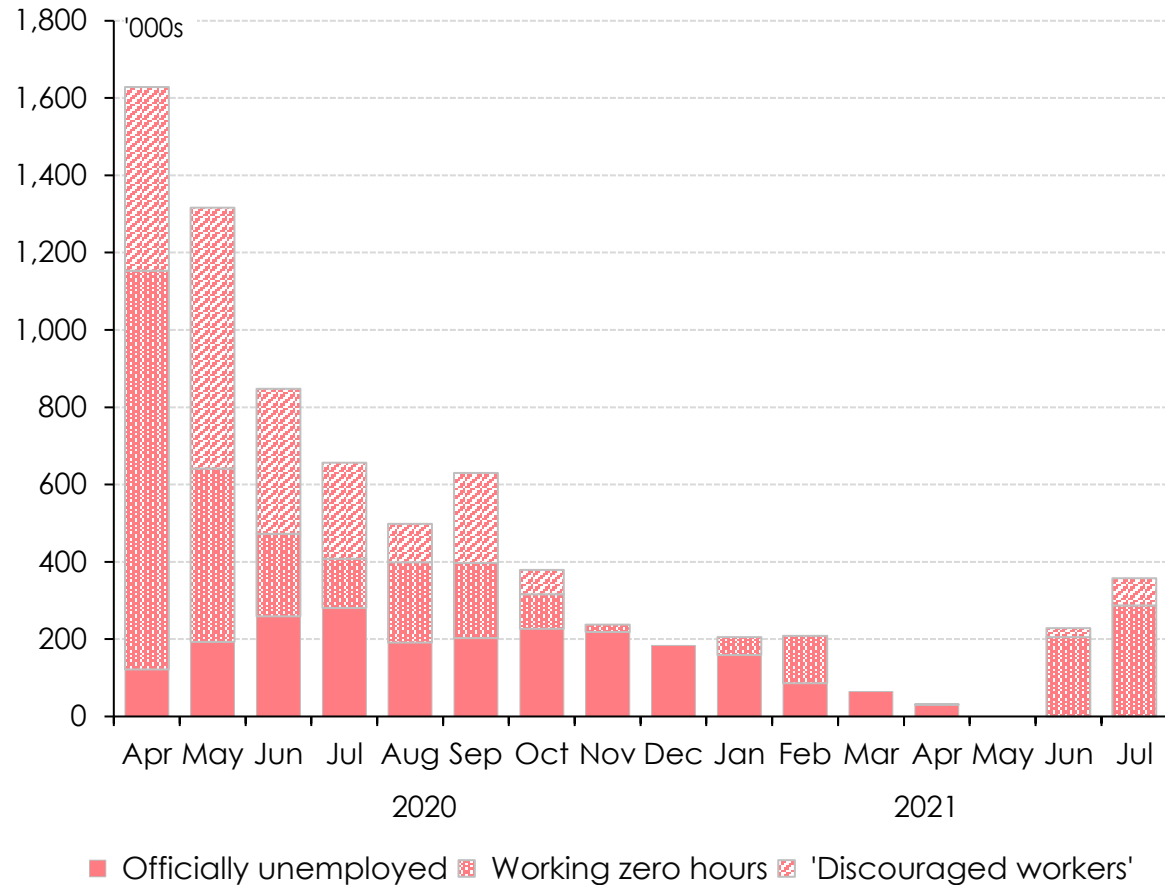


Note: 'Above the line' measures comprise additional or accelerated spending and deferred or foregone revenue. 'Below the line' measures comprise equity injections, loans, asset purchases and debt assumptions, but do not include loan guarantees or other contingent liabilities. 'DMs' means 'developed markets' (or 'advanced economies'). Data includes measures announced up until 5th June 2021. Source: IMF, [Fiscal Monitor Database of Country Fiscal Measures in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), July 2021. [Return to "What's New"](#).

- Policy measures announced by the Australian and state/territory governments in response to Covid-19 (up to March this year) have been equivalent to more than 18% of GDP – the fourth highest of any 'advanced' economy, according to new IMF estimates released last month
- The Federal Government has 'beefed up' its support for households and businesses adversely affected by lockdowns
 - in NSW, businesses with an annual turnover of less than \$200mn and whose revenue has dropped by more than 30% will receive 40% of their payroll, up to a maximum of \$100,000 a week – provided they don't sack any employees (or \$1000 a week for businesses with no employees)
 - income support for workers who've lose more than 20 hours a week will rise from \$600 to \$750 per week (or from \$375 to \$450 for those who've lost between eight and 20 hours)
 - a \$200 per week payment will be made to those receiving income support payments who lose more than 8 hours per week
- These payments will cost the Federal and NSW Governments \$750mn and \$325mn a week respectively, while the Federal and Victorian Governments will also provide \$400mn of support for businesses in that state

Government support payments in recent lockdowns are less than during last year's because far fewer workers have (so far) been affected

Number of people displaced by lockdowns (by comparison with March 2020)

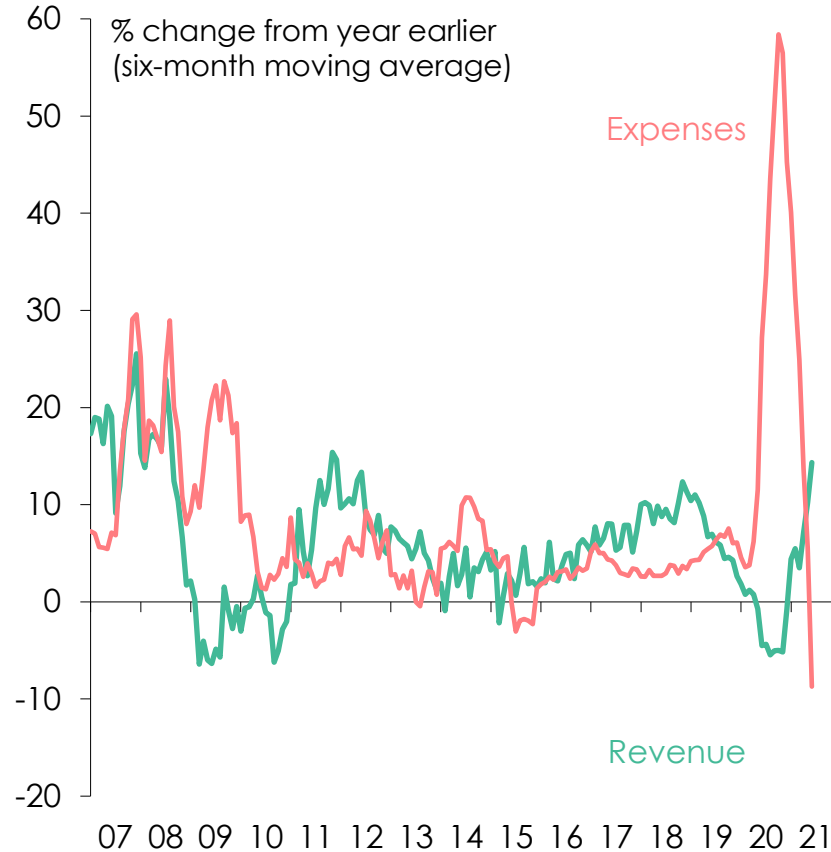


Note: Numbers depicted in the above chart are derived as the difference between the number of people in each category in the months shown and the number in those categories in March 2020. People 'working zero hours' excludes those doing so because they are on annual or other types of leave. 'Discouraged workers' are those who have dropped out of the labour force as indicated by the difference in the labour force participation rate between the month shown and March 2020, during 2020, or the month prior to lockdowns in June and July 2021. Source: ABS, [Labour Force, Australia](#), July 2021; Corinna. [Return to "What's New"](#).

- ❑ Since the beginning of June the Federal Government has paid out around \$5bn in [Covid-19 disaster payments](#) to 1.7 mn workers unable to earn income due to public health orders or other Covid-related restrictions
 - of this amount, \$3.6bn has been to people in NSW, \$1bn to people in Victoria, \$249mn to people in Qld, and \$48mn to people in SA
- ❑ The Federal Government has also paid out some \$54mn in [pandemic leave disaster payments](#) to over 36,000 people who have been required to self-isolate or quarantine, or who are caring for someone with Covid-19
 - almost 22K of these people have been in Victoria, and just over 9K in Victoria
- ❑ The [NSW State Government](#) has up to 19th August paid out \$1.7bn to over 218K businesses and \$443mn in 'JobSaver' payments to almost 101K businesses affected by lockdowns
 - the [Victorian](#) and [Queensland](#) governments have similar programs although details of amounts spent aren't available
- ❑ The amounts being paid in assistance are substantially less than those paid last year (under 'JobKeeper' and other schemes) in large part because the numbers of people displaced from employment by lockdowns has been much smaller

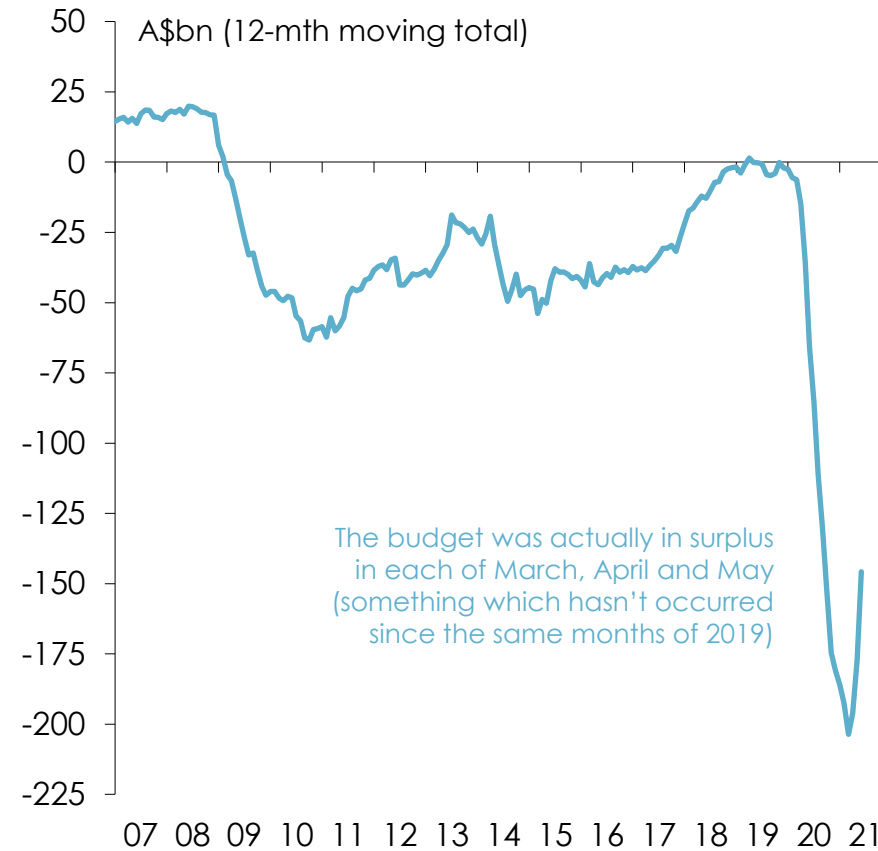
The budget was in surplus for three months in a row between March and May, and for the first 11 months of 2020-21 was \$14bn less than forecast

Australian Government revenue and expenses



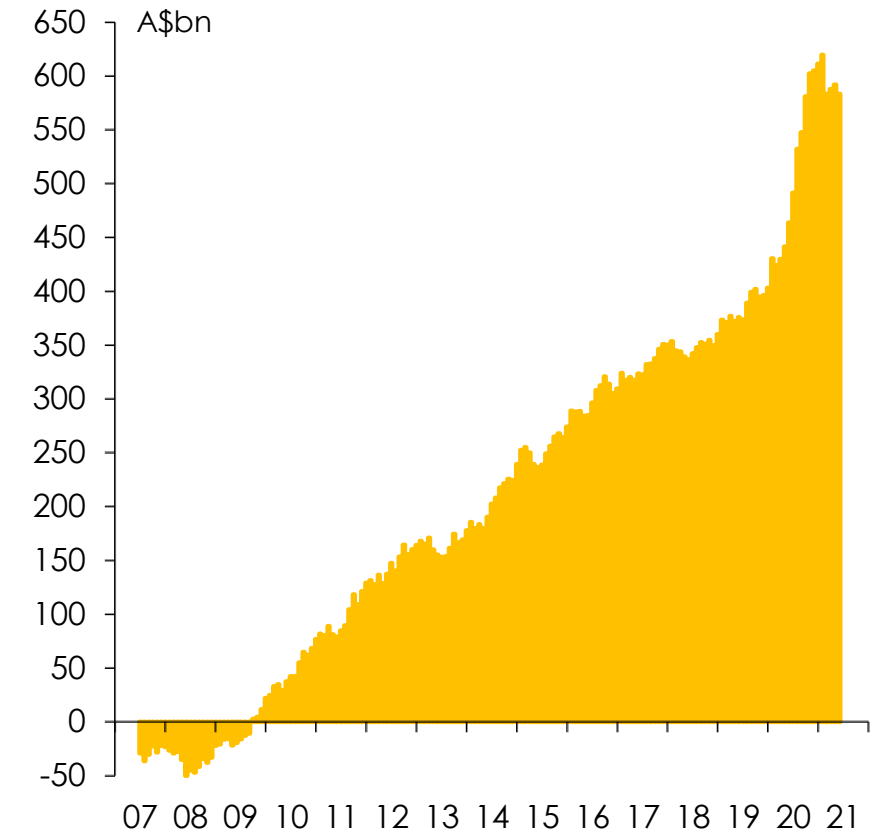
- ❑ Expenses have now peaked, while revenue is beginning to turn around as the economy picks up

Australian Government 'underlying' cash balance



- ❑ The 'underlying' cash balance for the first 11 months of FY 2020-21 was \$125bn – \$14bn better than the MYEFO profile

Australian Government net debt

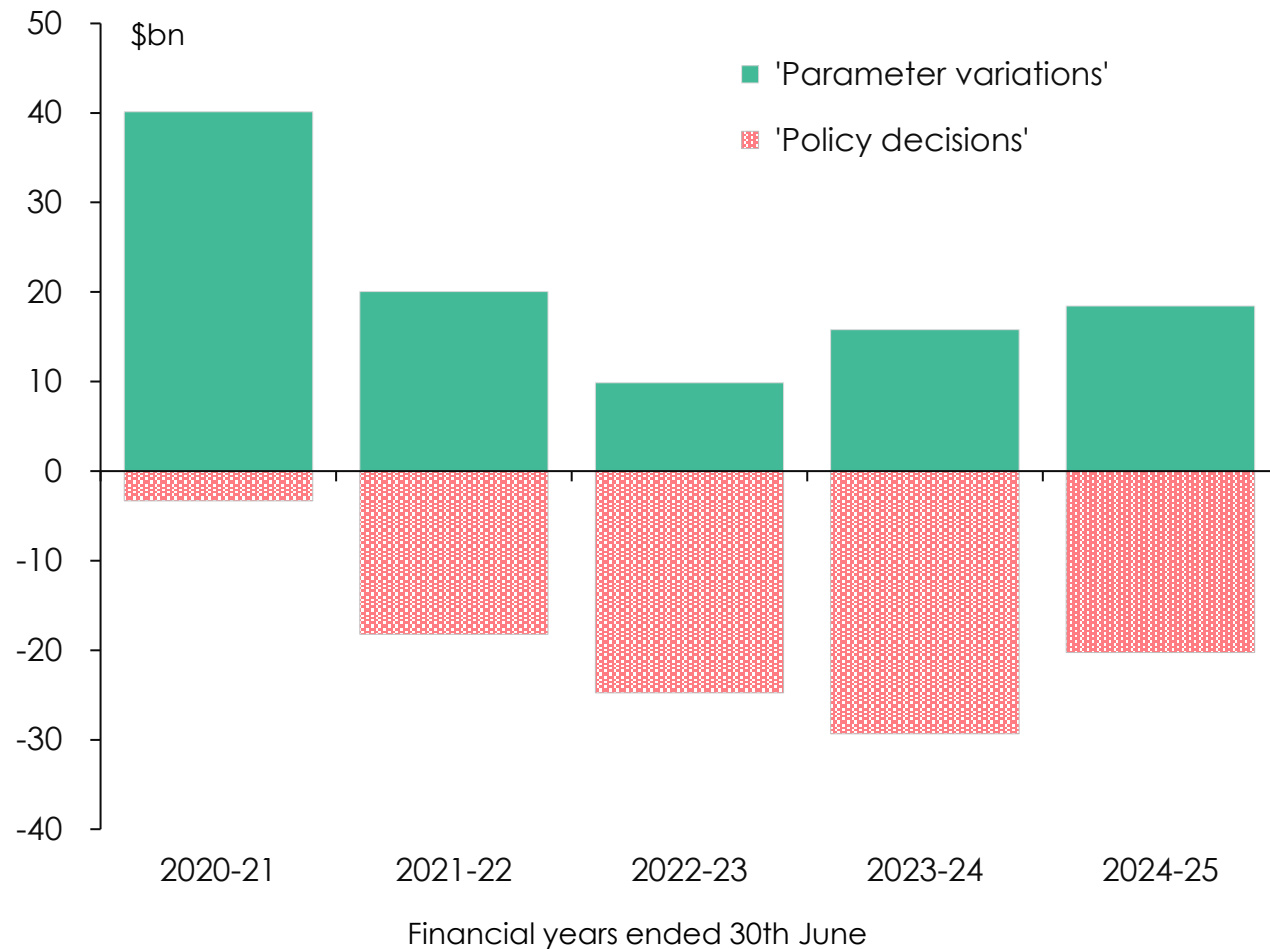


- ❑ Net debt as at end-May was \$583bn (about 25½% of GDP), down from a peak of \$619bn at end-January

Note: Revenue and expenses are accrual accounting items. The 'underlying' cash balance is (cash) receipts minus payments, excluding transactions in financial assets for policy purposes and net earnings of the Future Fund. Net debt is total interest-bearing liabilities (government securities, deposits, loans and other borrowing) minus cash and deposits, advances paid, and (interest-bearing) loans, placements and investments. Source: [Department of Finance](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

The increase in the deficits forecast for 2022-23 and 2023-24 is the result of conscious policy decisions to increase spending and cut taxes

Sources of the changes in forward estimates of the 'underlying cash balance' between the 2020-21 MYEFO and the 2021-22 Budget



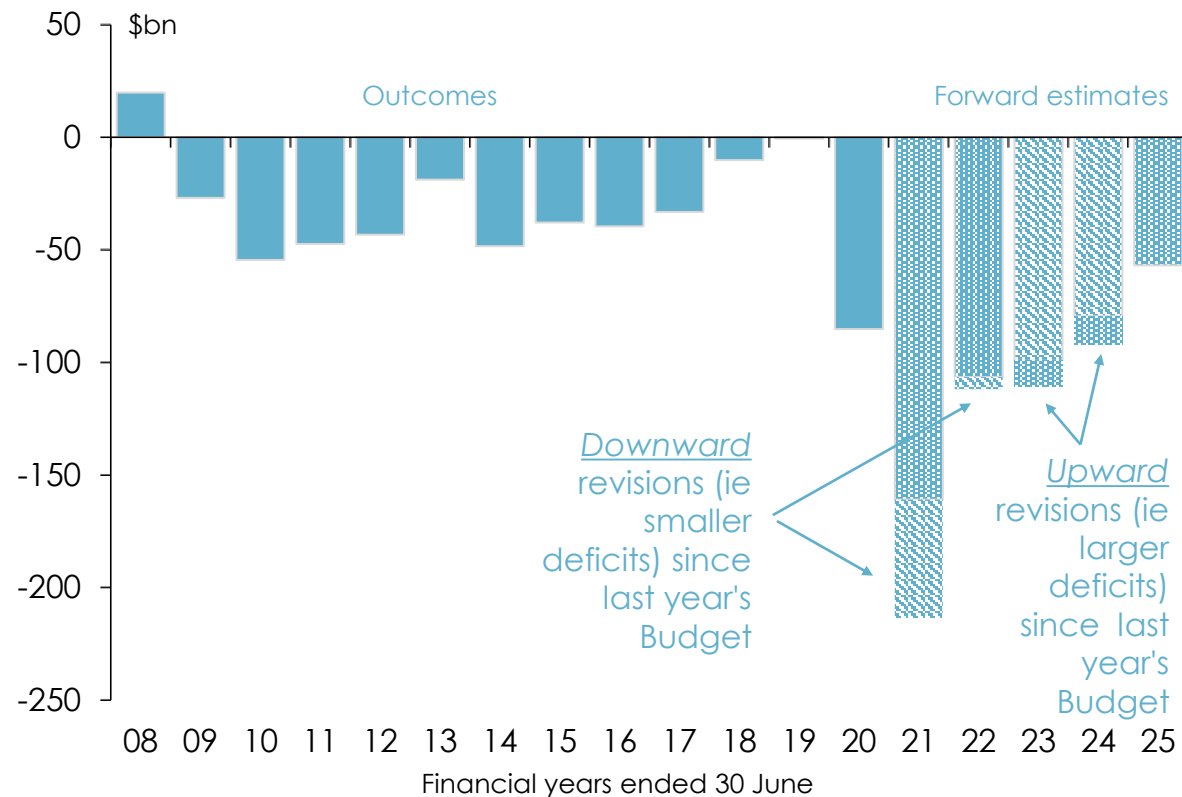
Source: Australian Government, 2021-22 [Budget Paper No. 1, Statement 3: Fiscal Strategy and Outlook](#).
[Return to "What's New"](#).

- ❑ The budget affects the economy (through the 'policy decisions' which the Government makes as it puts the Budget together) – but the economy also affects the Budget (via what the Budget Papers call 'parameter variations' in receipts and payments)
- ❑ 'Parameter variations' between last December's Mid-Year Economic & Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) and this year's Budget improved the 'bottom line' over the five years to 2024-25 by a total of \$104bn
 - all of which was attributable to upward revisions to forecasts of tax receipts, particularly personal income tax and GST, but also company and super fund tax
- ❑ However \$96bn (92%) of those 'windfall gains' have been absorbed by 'policy decisions'
 - which have added \$68bn to payments and subtracted \$28bn from receipts over the five years to 2024-25
- ❑ 'Policy decisions' added \$15bn more to the forecast deficit in 2022-23, and \$14bn more to the deficit for 2023-24, than 'parameter variations' reduced it
 - although the latest responses to state lockdowns will add to spending and cut revenues for the current fiscal year

The May Budget revised down previous forecasts for the budget deficit and net debt in 2021-22 – but they will likely be revised up in December

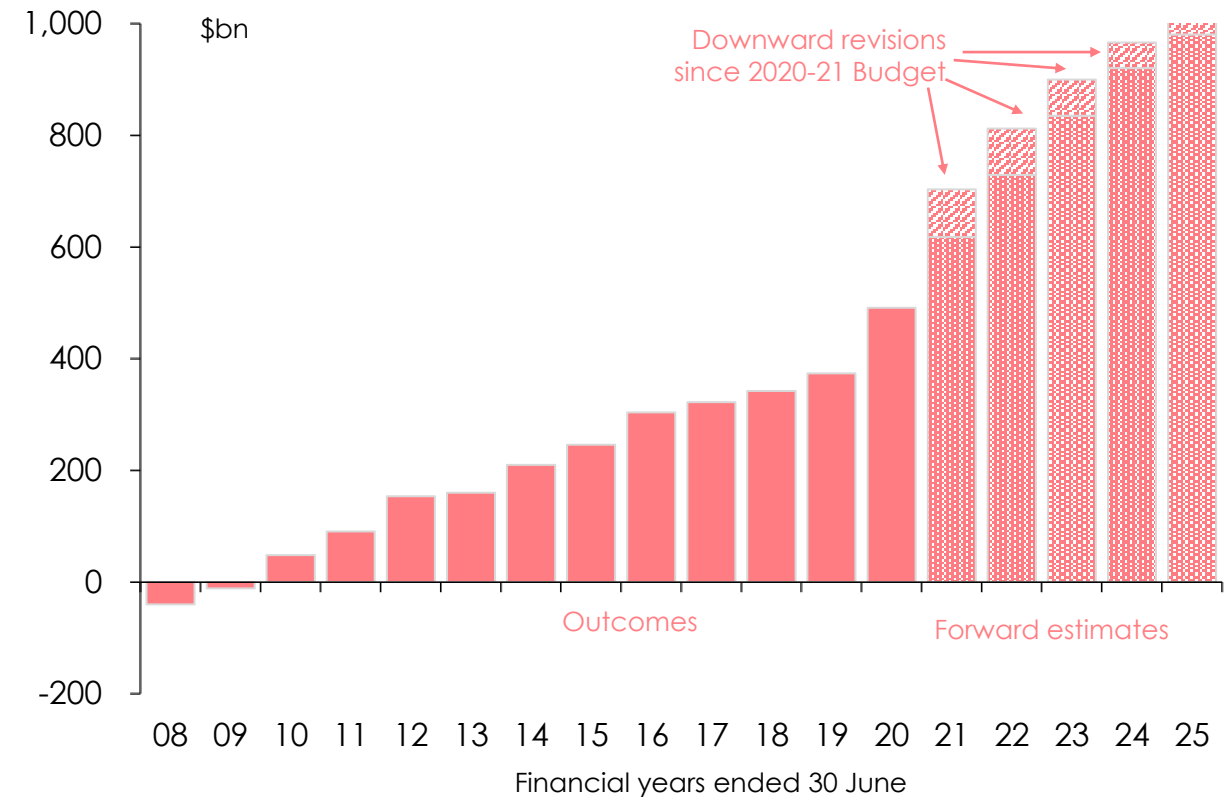
2021-22 Budget forward estimates compared with those from last year's (2020-21) Budget

'Underlying' cash balance



- ❑ The deficits for 2020-21 and 2021-22 have been revised down by \$53bn and \$5bn respectively since last year's Budget (although the deficits for 2022-23 and 2023-24 were revised upwards) – but the 2021-22 deficit will likely be revised higher in December's Mid-Year EFO

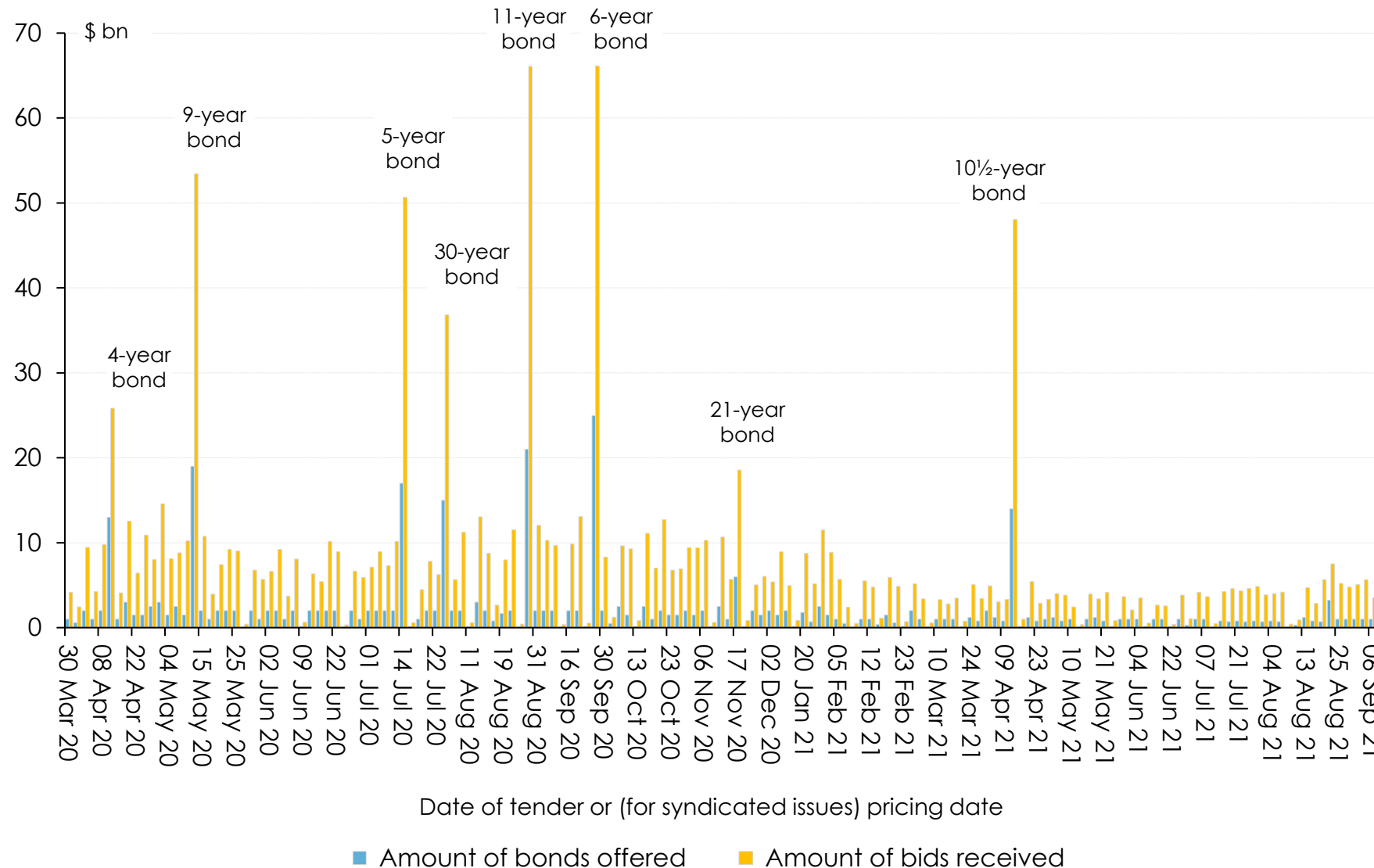
Net debt



- ❑ In last year's Budget, net debt was forecast to \$966bn by 30th June 2024 – that forecast was revised down by \$46bn in the May Budget, but will probably be revised up a bit again in the December MYEFO

The Government continues to find a ready appetite for its bond issuance – so far this fiscal year it's received \$95½bn of bids for \$20½bn of bonds

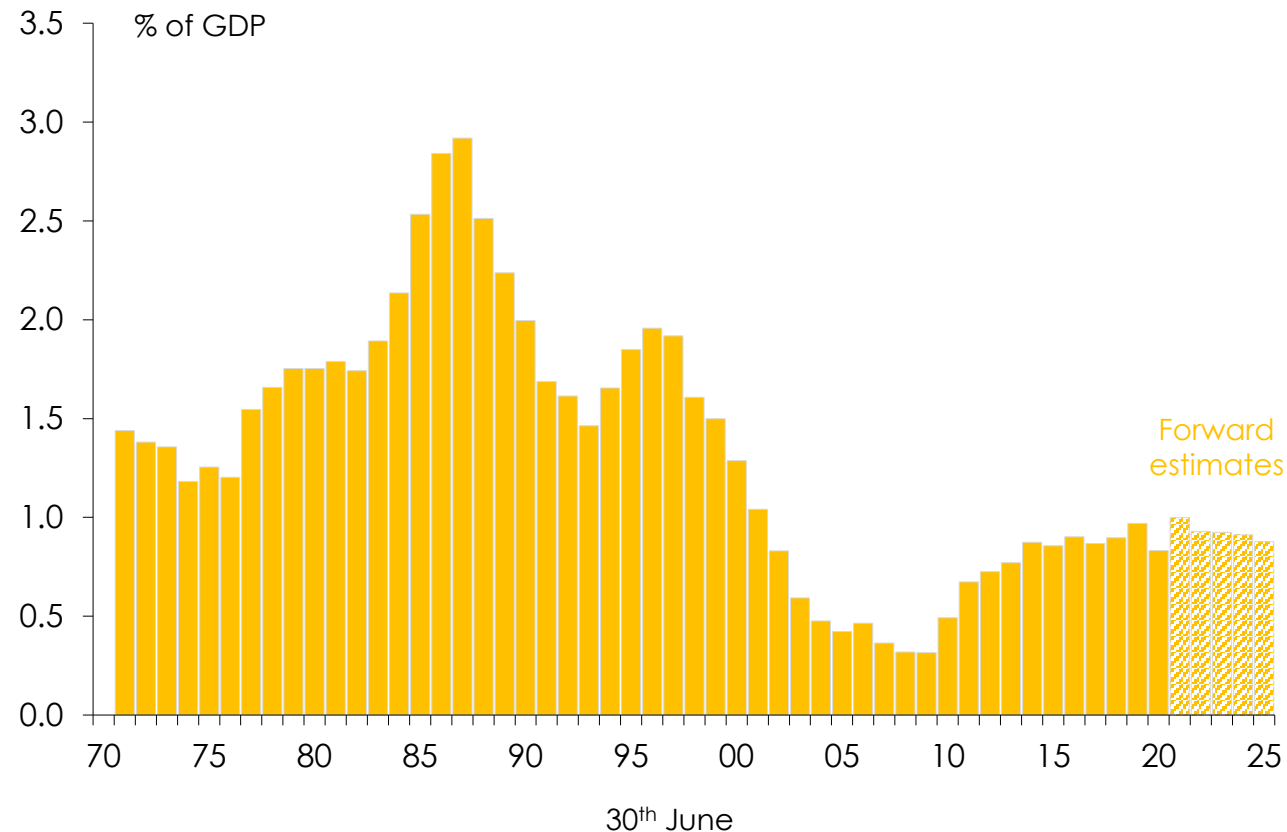
Australian government bond issuance since March 2020



- Since 30th March 2020, the Australian Office of Financial Management has issued \$317bn of Treasury bonds – based on the volume of bids received it could have borrowed more than \$1.18 trn with yields at most 4 bp (0.04 of a pc point) above the highest yields actually accepted
- The AOFM issued another \$2bn of bonds, this week, \$1bn of 11-year bonds at an average yield of 1.32%, and \$1bn of 5-year bonds at an average yield of 0.68%
- The AOFM received \$9.6bn of bids for these bonds
- So far this financial year, the AOFM has received bids totalling more than \$95bn for the \$20½bn of bonds it has offered for sale – a 'coverage ratio' of almost 4¾ times, cf. 3¾ times during the 2020-21 financial year

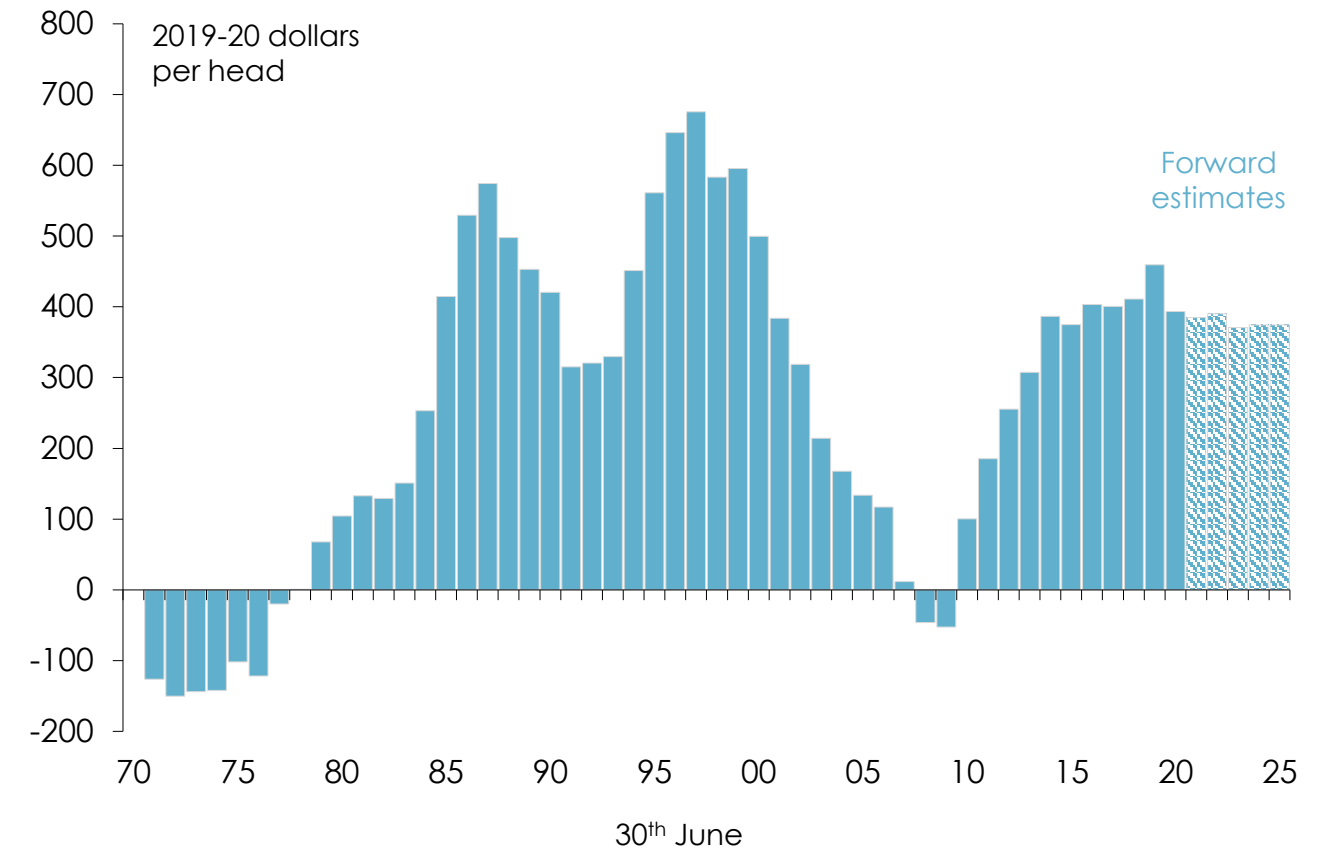
Because interest rates are so low, the cost of servicing the debt which the Government is racking up will be low by historical standards

Australian Government interest payments as a percentage of GDP



- ❑ As a percentage of GDP, the Government's gross interest payments will be less than they were in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, and less than they were in 2017-18 or 2018-19

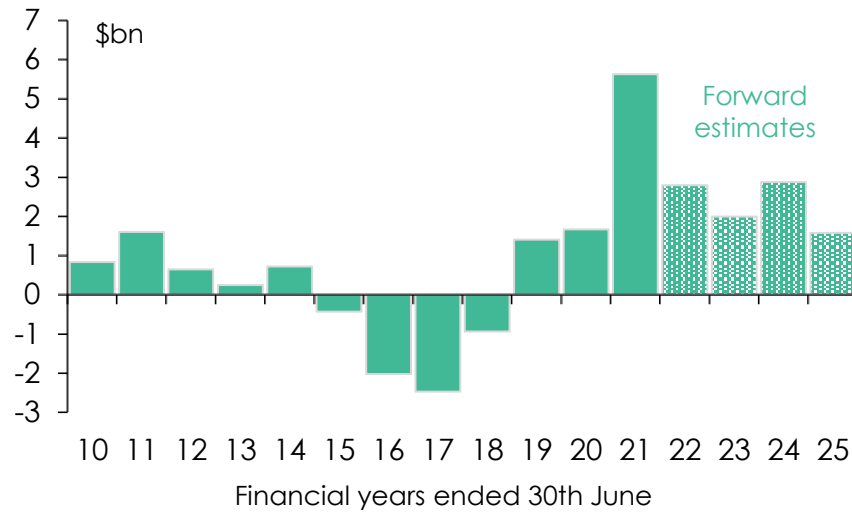
Australian Government net interest payments per head of population in 2019-20 dollars



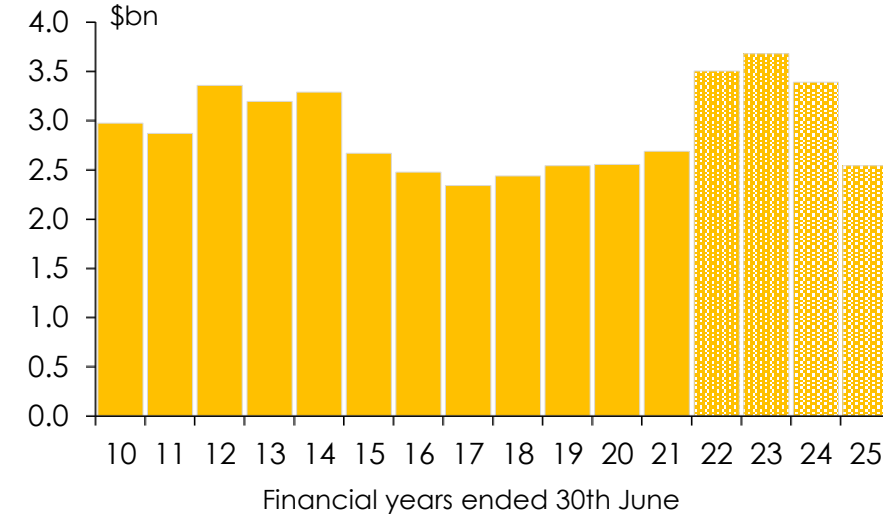
- ❑ Net interest payments per head of population will be less than they were in the second half of the 1980s, between 1993-94 and 1999-2000, or between 2015-16 and 2019-20

Western Australia is the only government in Australia (and one of the few in the world) running budget surpluses (and it's hiding how big they are)

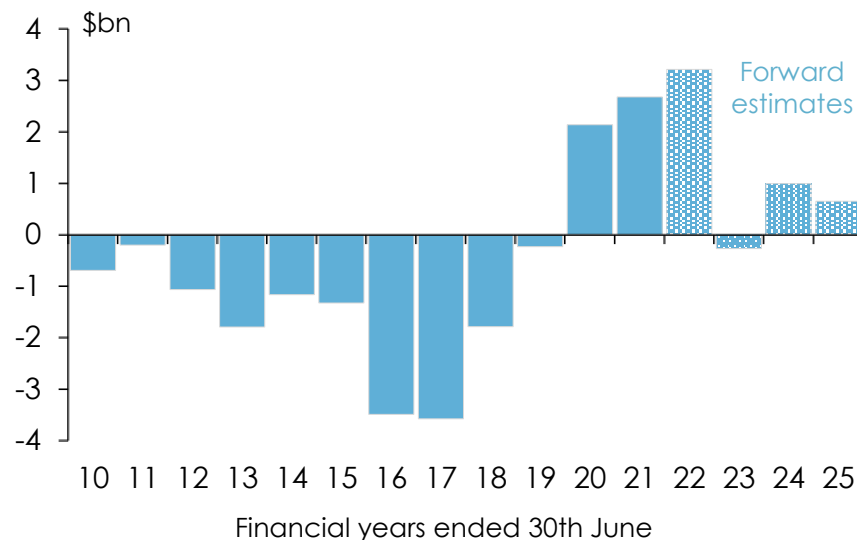
'Net operating balance'



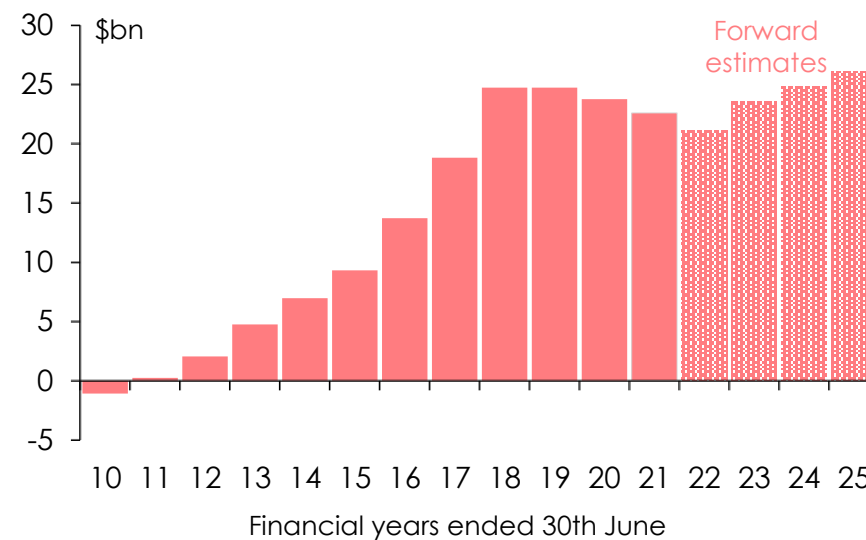
Infrastructure spending



Cash balance



Net debt



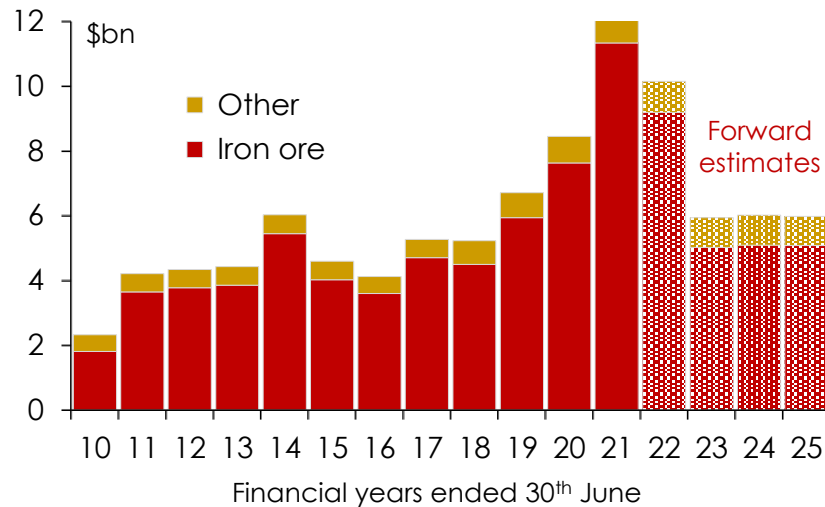
- ❑ Western Australia's is the *only* government in Australia (and one of very few anywhere in the world) to be running and forecasting budget surpluses
- ❑ This week's 2021-22 WA State Budget unveiled a 'net operating surplus' for the just-ended 2020-21 year of \$5.6bn (the largest in the state's history) and projected surpluses totalling \$9.3bn over the 4 years to 2024-25
 - that's after funding at least \$6bn in additional 'operating' spending (including \$1 bn for meeting election commitments)
- ❑ That forecast is based on conservative forecasts for the iron ore price (assumed to fall from an average of US\$154.5/t in 2020-21 to US\$66/t in 2022-23 and beyond)
 - if the iron ore price instead averaged US\$100/t from 2022-23 those projected surpluses would instead total almost \$18bn (all else being equal) (see next slide)
- ❑ The Budget also uses other 'accounting devices' to make its prospective surpluses look smaller
 - it includes an \$800mn 'recurrent spending provision' for 2021-22 and 'pre-funds' (ie, puts aside money for but doesn't actually spend) \$4.4bn for 'future strategic infrastructure'

Note: Budgetary aggregates shown in the above charts refer to the 'general government' sector (ie, excluding public corporations).

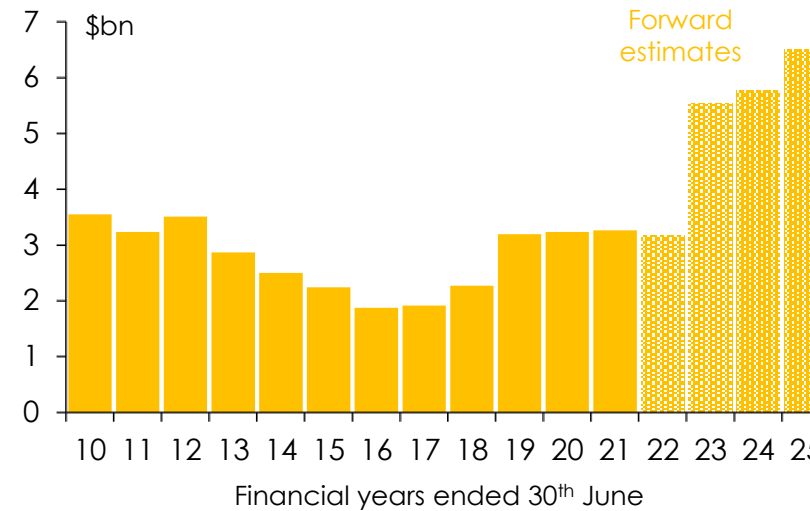
Source: Government of Western Australia, [2021-22 Budget Paper No 3 - Economic and Fiscal Outlook](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

Western Australia is swimming in iron ore royalty revenues – but it is also getting more from the GST (initially at the Federal Government's expense)

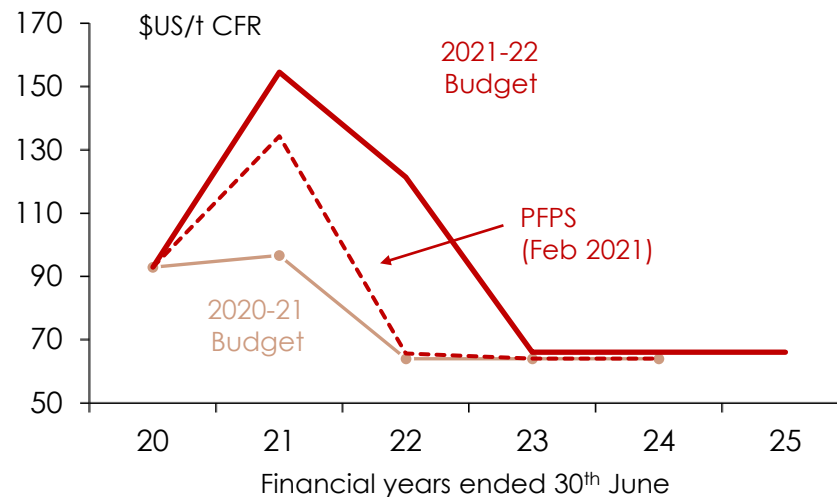
Mining royalty revenues



WA's share of GST revenue



Iron ore price assumptions



Effect of changes to GST formulae

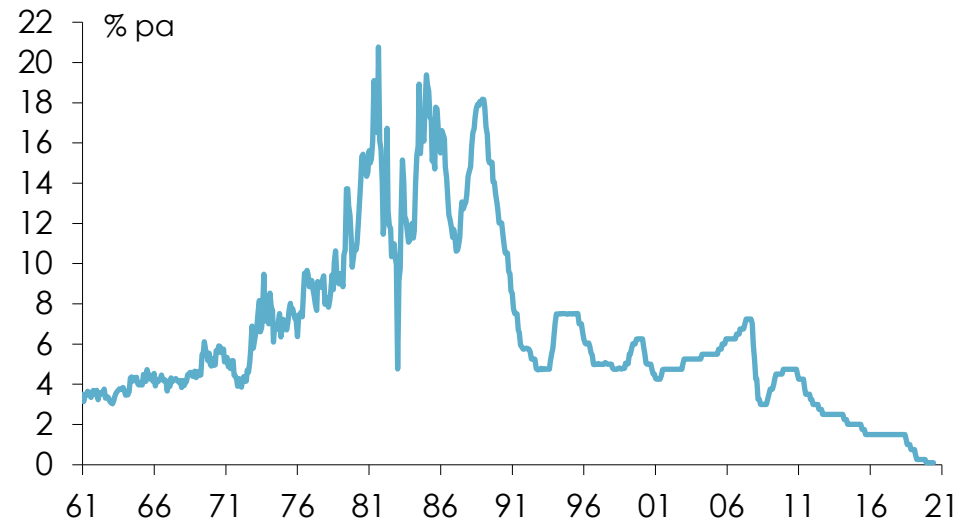


- ❑ Western Australia collected \$11.3bn in iron ore royalties in 2020-21 (\$3.9bn or 53% more than forecast in the 2020-21 Budget)
- ❑ The 2021-22 Budget projects iron ore royalty revenue to decline to \$9bn this year and to \$5bn per annum in 2022-23 and beyond, reflecting an assumed fall in the iron ore price to US\$66/t from 2022-23 onwards
- ❑ Despite these 'windfall' revenue gains, WA 's share of revenue from the GST will increase by \$2bn pa in 2022-23, and by a further \$¾bn in 2024-25, as a result of the changes to the GST revenue-sharing arrangements imposed by the Federal Government in 2018, and which phase in from 2021-22 onwards
 - these changes put an arbitrary 'floor' under WA's share of GST revenues, and remove WA from being the 'benchmark' for the 'fiscal equalization' which the GST revenue sharing arrangements are meant to achieve
- ❑ WA's own calculations suggest that it will gain \$13¾bn over the three years to 2024-25, with the losses to the other states and territories being 'made good' by the Federal Gov't
- ❑ For more detailed analysis of WA's Budget and the consequences of the changes to GST revenue-sharing arrangements see [here](#)

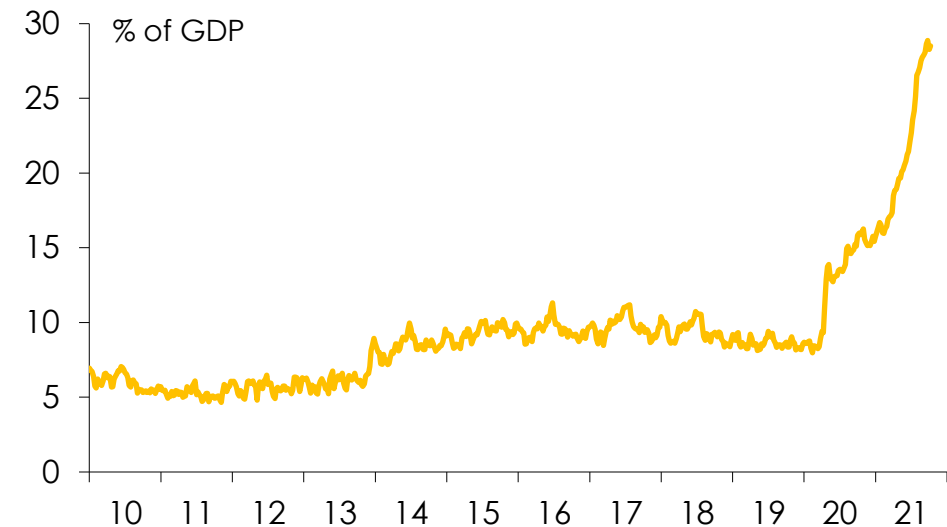
Note: 'CFR' iron ore price means including freight costs. Source: Government of Western Australia, 2020-21 and 2021-22 [Budget Paper No 3 - Economic and Fiscal Outlook](#); and Pre-election Financial Projections Statement (PFPS), February 2021). [Return to "What's New"](#).

The RBA Board decided to proceed with its previously foreshadowed 'tapering' but to extend its bond purchase program until next February

Reserve Bank cash rate



Reserve Bank assets as a pc of GDP

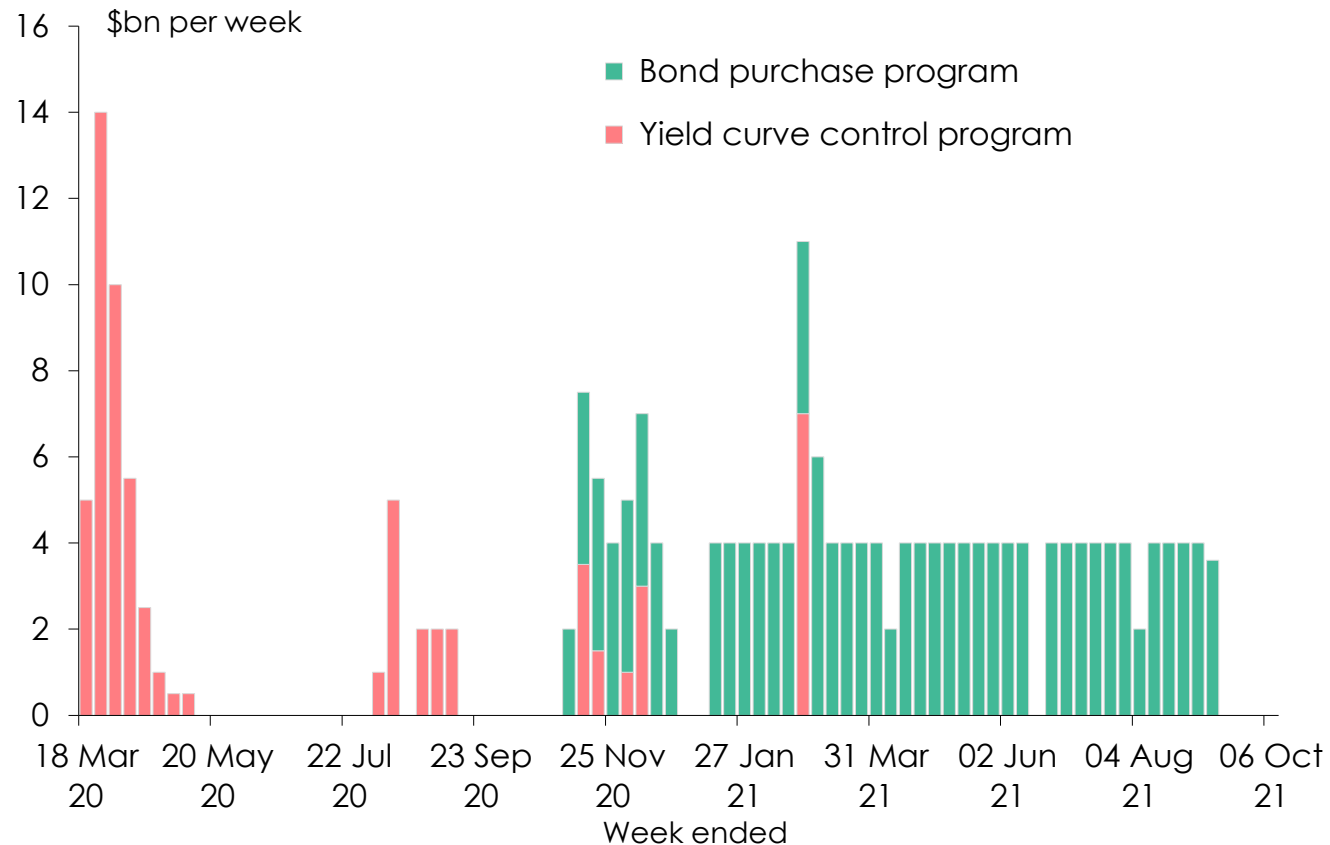


- ❑ At its September meeting, the RBA Board left interest rates 'on hold' (as universally expected) but **confirmed** its previously-stated intention to 'taper' its bond purchase program
 - the RBA will now purchase bonds at a rate of \$4bn a week, down from \$5bn
 - but instead of terminating in November, the program will now continue until "at least mid February 2022"
- ❑ The decision to proceed with the previously-flagged 'tapering' of its bond purchase program, despite the "Delta outbreak and the associated restrictions on activity" as a result of which "GDP is expected to decline materially in the September quarter" reflects a recognition that the most effective policy response is coming from fiscal policy, and there's not much that monetary policy can realistically add
- ❑ But the decision to extend the period of bond purchases by at least three months is in response to the RBA's judgements that "there is ... uncertainty about the timing" of the expected bounce-back in the economy when restrictions are eased and that the bounce-back, when it does occur, "is likely to be slower than that earlier in the year"
- ❑ The RBA re-iterated that it is "monitoring trends in housing borrowing carefully" and that "it is important that lending standards are maintained"
 - unlike NZ, in Australia responsibility for the deployment of 'macro-prudential' tools to influence lending standards rests with a separate agency (APRA), not the RBA
- ❑ The RBA also re-iterated that its 'central scenario' is that the conditions for an increase in the cash rate "will not be met before 2024"

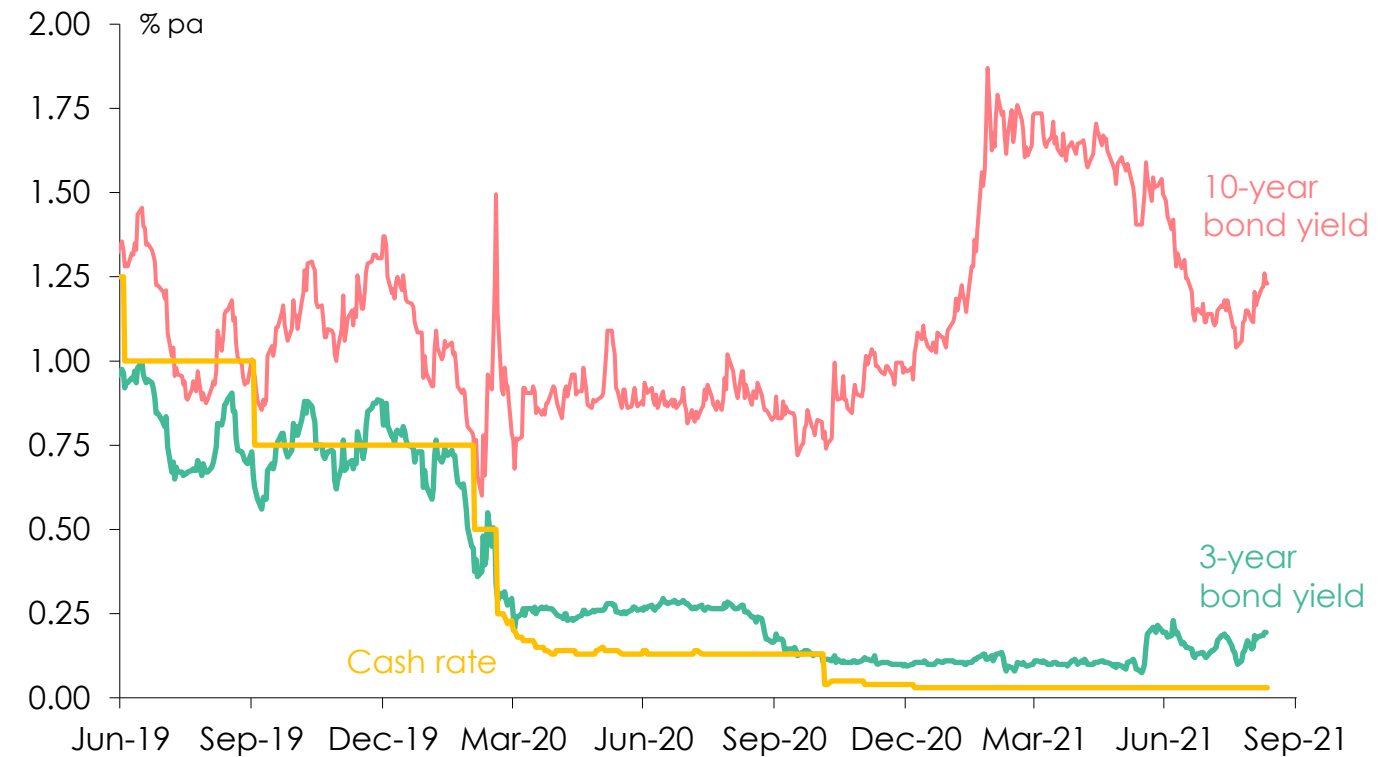
Source: Reserve Bank of Australia, [Statistical Tables](#) A3 and F1.1. See [slide 95](#) for more detail on the RBA's forecasts. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Australian bond yields continued drifting higher this week, and the RBA lowered its bond purchases in line with the Board's 'tapering' decision

RBA open market bond purchases



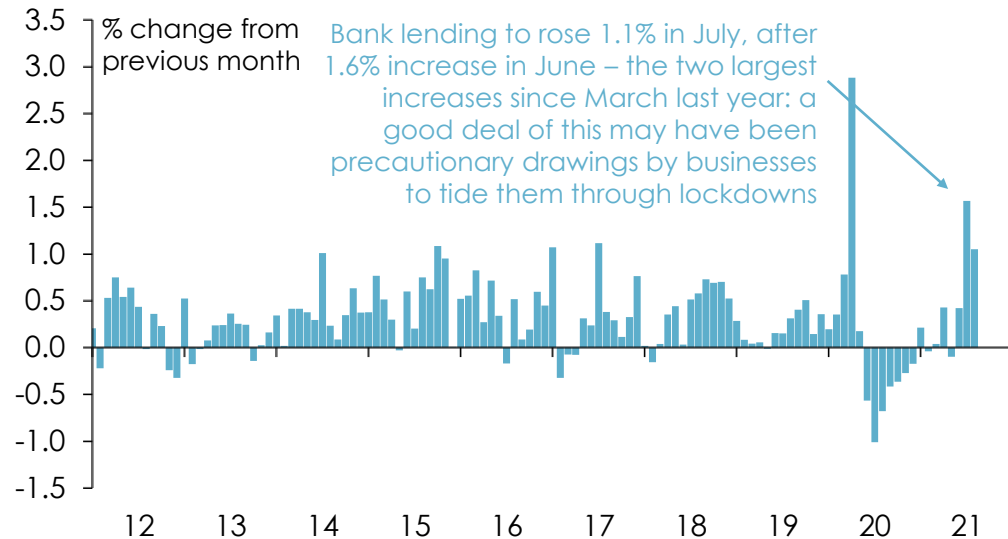
Interest rates



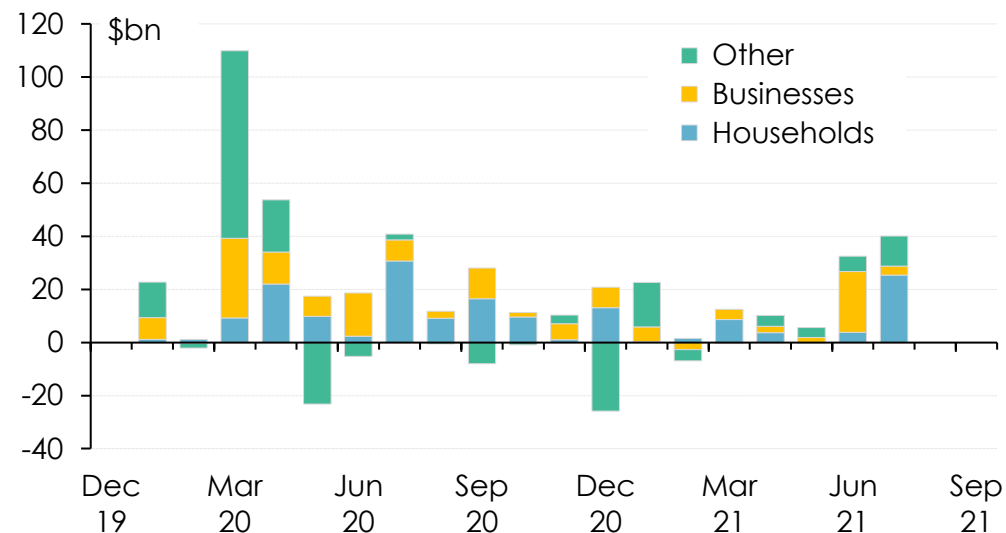
- ❑ In line with the decision at its Board meeting this week (see previous slide), the RBA bought \$4.4bn of bonds this week, down from \$5bn in most weeks since the Bond Purchase Program commenced in November last year, bringing its total bond purchases (including those under its now-inactive 3-year yield target program) to \$281.5bn
- ❑ Bond yields continued edging higher this week, the 3-year yield rising 2 bp to 0.20% and the 10-year yield rising 5 bp to 1.23% (after touching 1.26% mid-week), more or less in line with US yields

Banks have played an important role in assisting borrowers cope with shutdowns, and have been swamped with deposits

Business credit outstanding



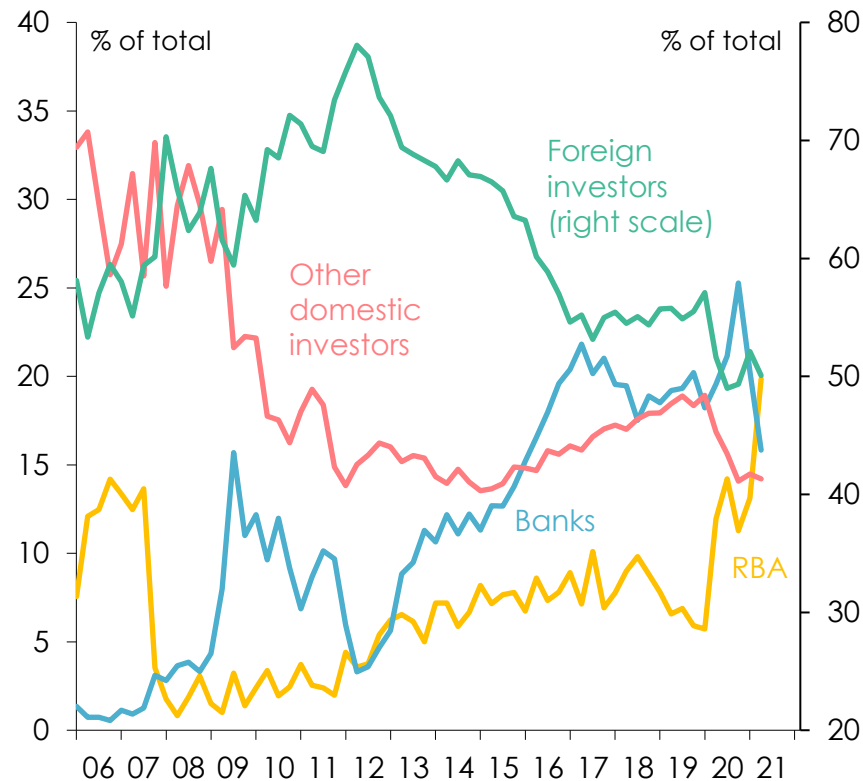
Monthly change in bank deposits



- ❑ Banks have cut interest rates on small business loans by more than the official cash rate since June 2019 (when the RBA started cutting rates again)
- ❑ Banks have made credit readily available when needed – in the early stages of the pandemic and during the most recent lockdowns
- ❑ Banks extended ‘repayment holidays’ to business and home mortgage borrowers who requested it
 - in May last year, 11% of mortgage borrowers and 18% of SME borrowers were deferring debt service payments
- ❑ Bank deposits have swelled by \$376bn (17¾%) since February last year as customers have ‘parked’ precautionary loan drawings, additional savings and withdrawals from superannuation funds
 - almost all of this has gone into transaction deposits which don’t pay interest – so banks haven’t drawn as much as might otherwise have been expected from the RBA’s Term Funding Facility
- ❑ Household deposits have risen by \$167bn (16¾%) since last February – of which \$36bn has been sourced from early release of superannuation savings – while business deposits have risen by \$141bn (23¾%)

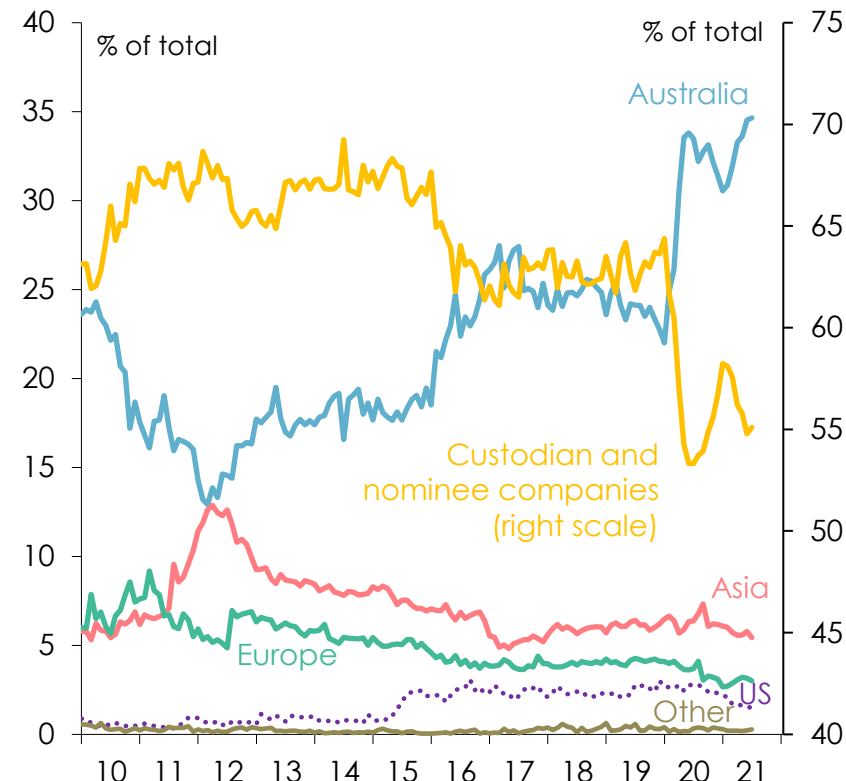
The RBA has (indirectly) absorbed almost half the increase in government debt since the end of 2019, banks 23% and foreign investors 28%

Holder of Australian Government bonds



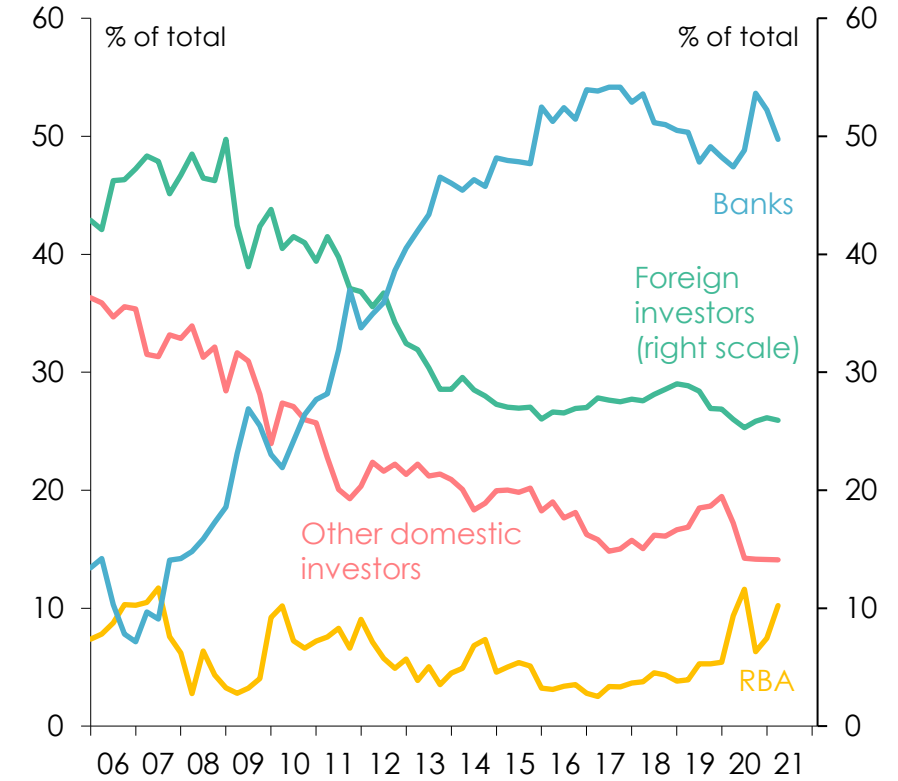
Australian Gov't bonds on issue have increased by \$219bn since the end of 2019 – of which \$133bn (61%) have been absorbed by the RBA, \$65bn by foreigners and \$20bn by banks

Nationality of Australian Government bond holders



Domestic holdings of Australian Gov't bonds (including RBA) rose by \$57bn over the 12 months to June while identified foreign holdings fell \$7bn – although unidentified holdings (which include many foreigners) rose by \$85bn

Holder of State and Territory Government bonds

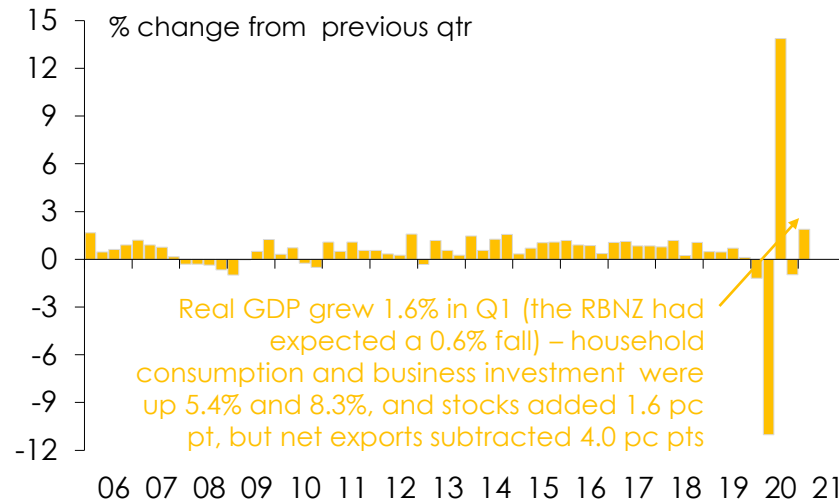


State & Territory Gov't bonds on issue have increased by \$101bn since the end of 2019, of which \$54bn have been absorbed by banks, \$24bn by the RBA and \$23bn by foreigners

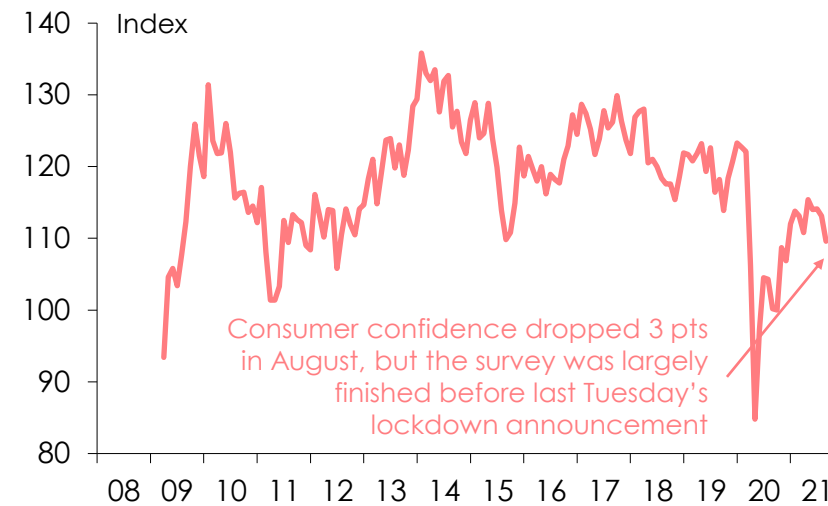
New Zealand

New Zealand's economy grew a much stronger-than-expected 1.6% in Q1 to be 1.0% above its pre-pandemic peak (in Q4 2019)

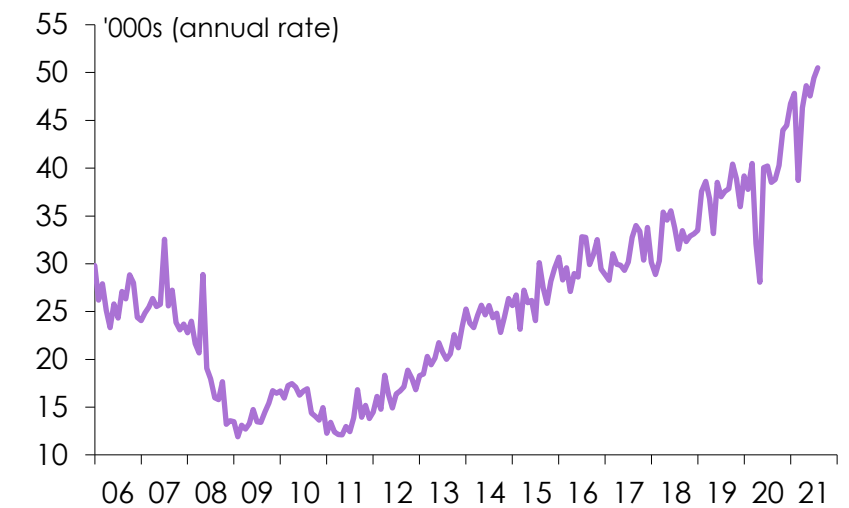
Real GDP



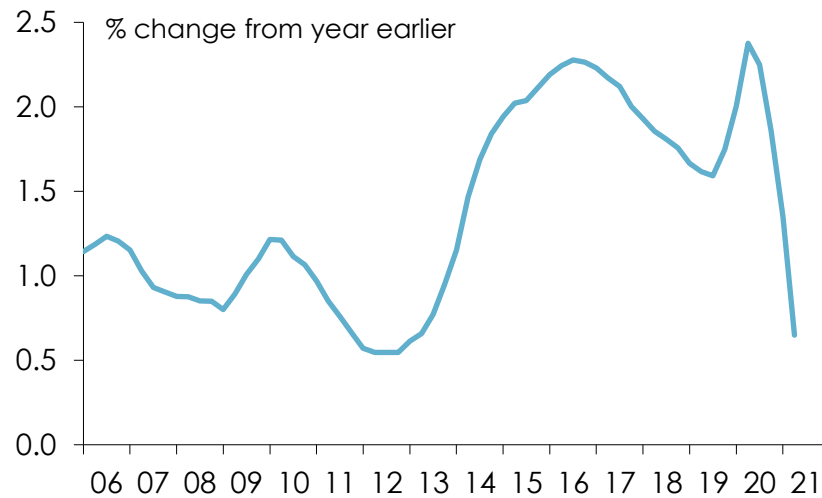
Consumer confidence



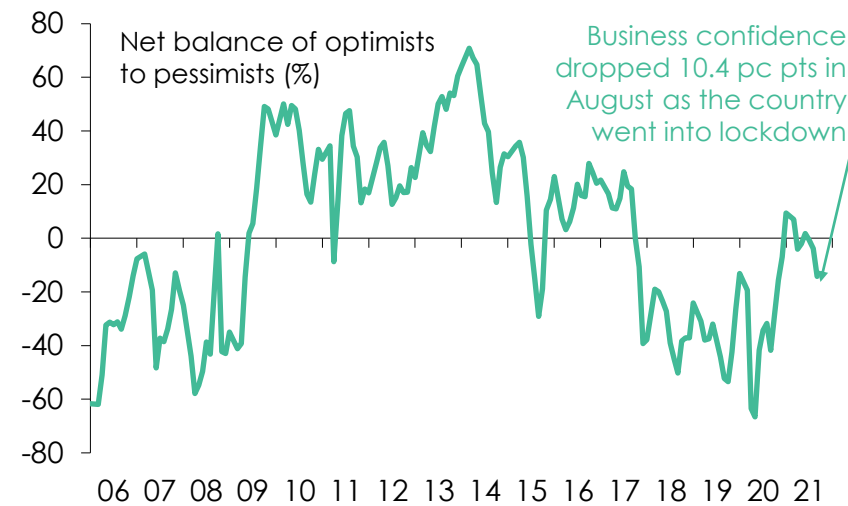
Dwelling 'consents' (permits)



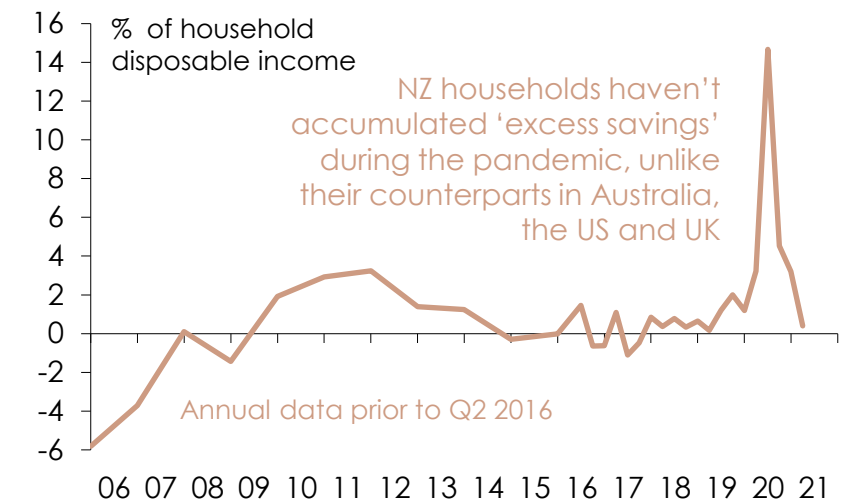
Population growth



Business confidence



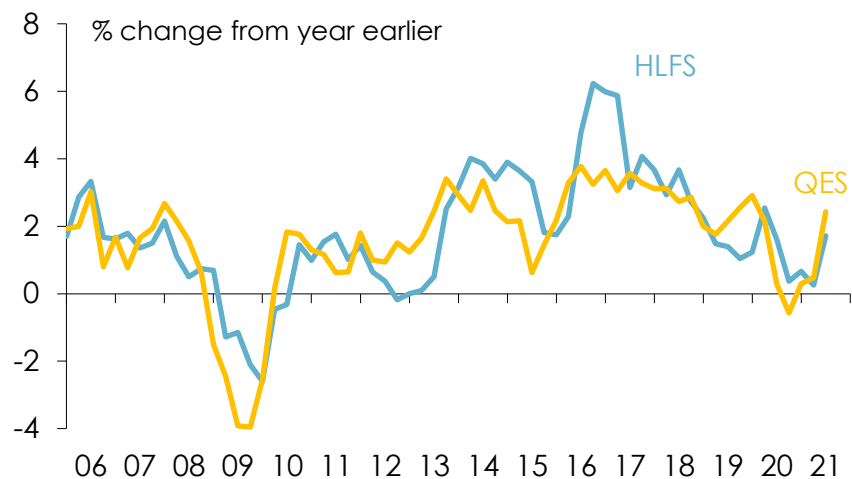
Household saving ratio



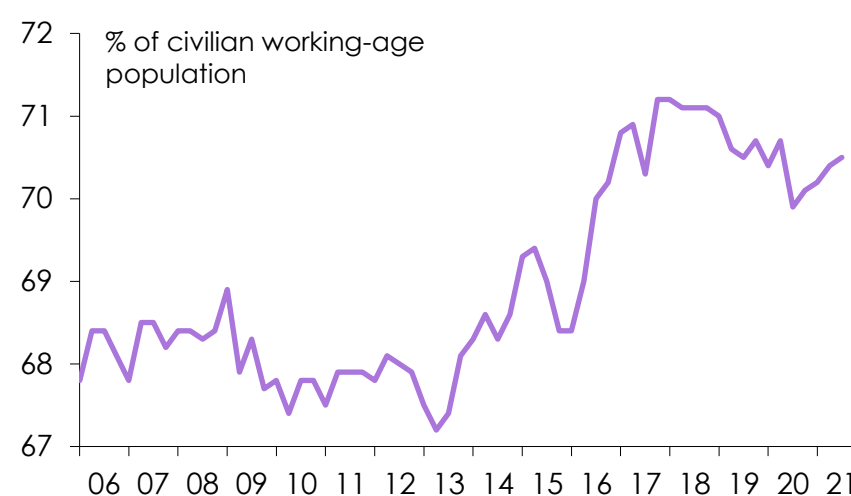
Note: New Zealand uses GDP(P) as its preferred measure of GDP. June quarter GDP data will be released on 16th September.
Sources: [Statistics NZ](#); NZ Treasury, [Budget Economic and Fiscal Update 2021](#); ANZ-Roy Morgan; [ANZ Bank NZ](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

Employment rose 1.1% in Q2 (to 1.3% above pre-pandemic peak) and unemployment dropped to 4%

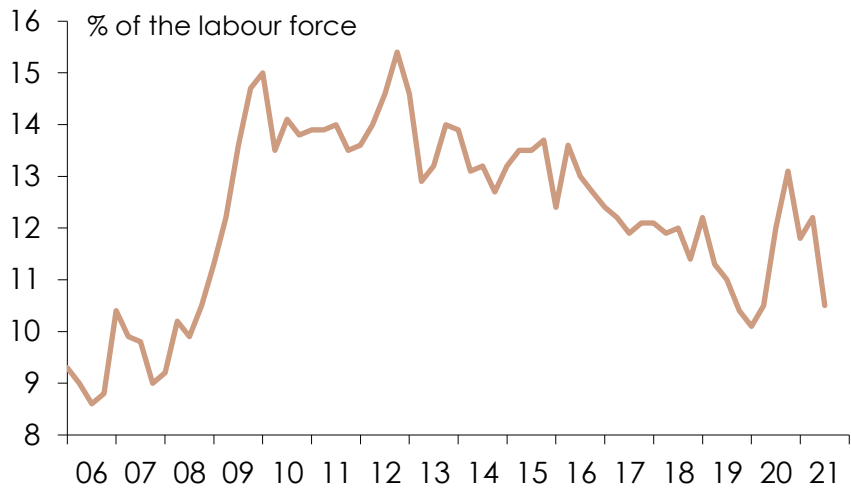
Employment



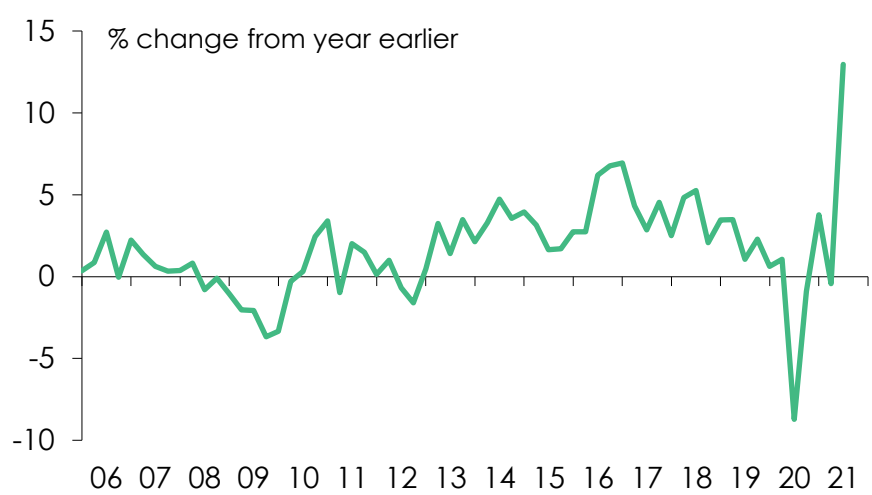
Labour force participation rate



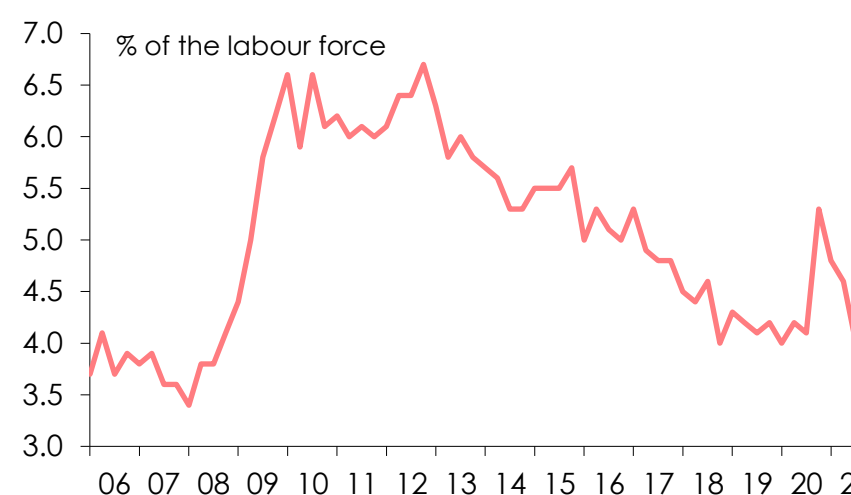
Labour force under-utilization rate



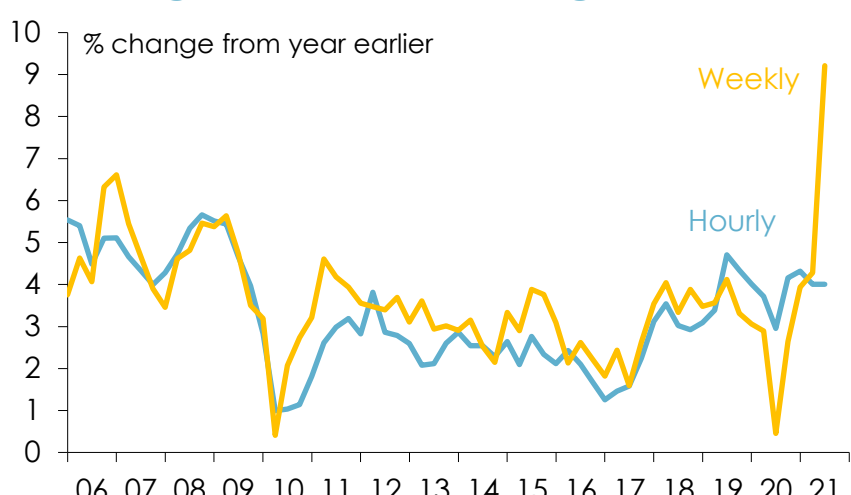
Hours worked



Unemployment rate



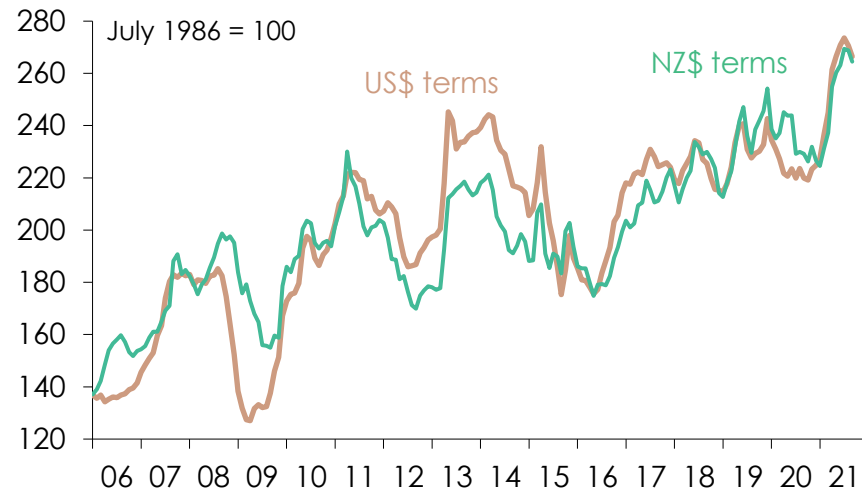
Average weekly earnings



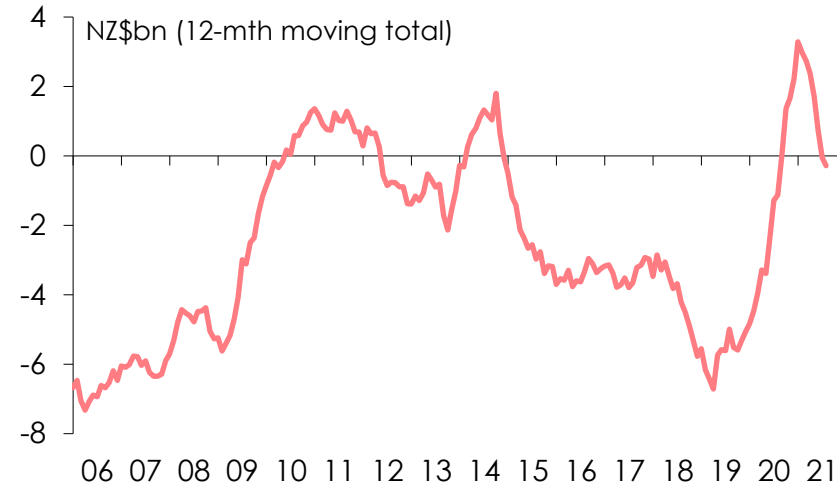
Note: New Zealand labour force data are only published quarterly. There are two 'headline' series on employment – the household labour force survey (HLFS) which counts the number of people in employment during the quarter; and the quarterly employment survey (QES), which counts the number of 'filled jobs' at 'economically significant enterprises' in the 'reference week' in the middle of the quarter, excluding the self-employed and those working in agriculture and fishing. The labour force under-utilization rate measures those who are unemployed plus those who are employed part-time but working fewer hours than they are able and willing to work. Source: [Statistics NZ](#). September quarter data will be released on 3rd November. [Return to "What's New"](#).

Although New Zealand's export commodity prices are at a record high, unlike Australia its current account has remained in deficit

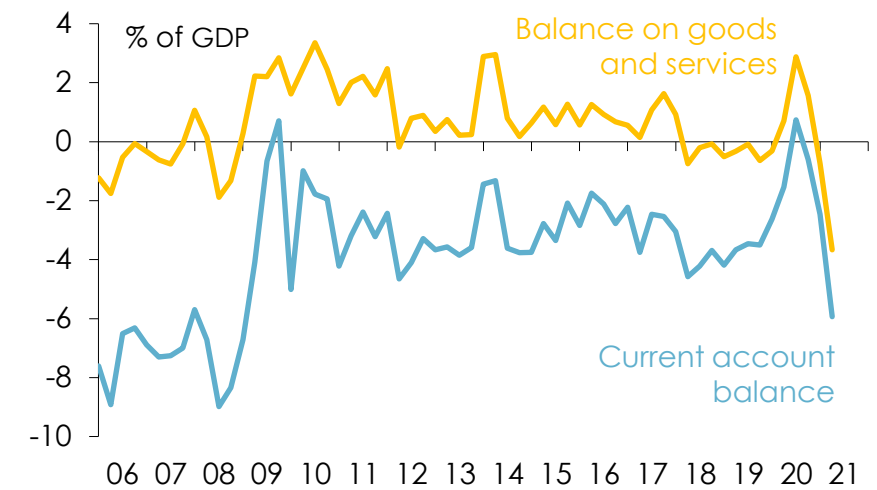
Export commodity prices



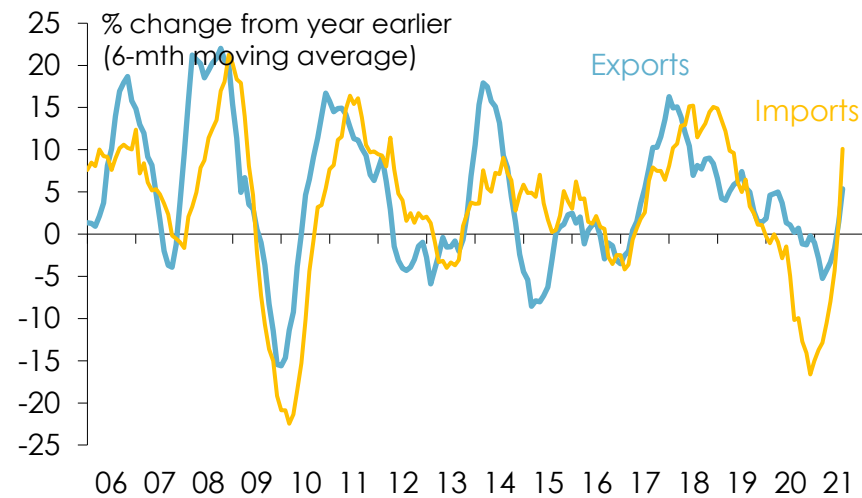
Merchandise trade balance



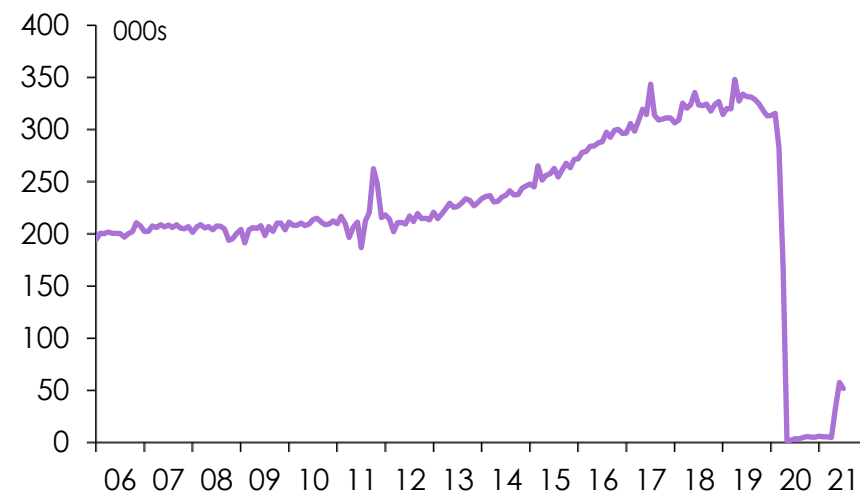
Balance of payments



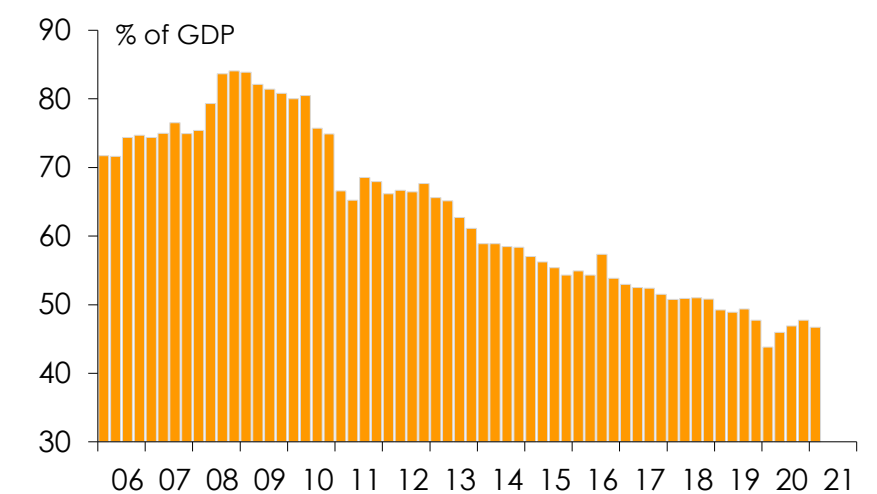
Merchandise exports and imports



Overseas visitor arrivals



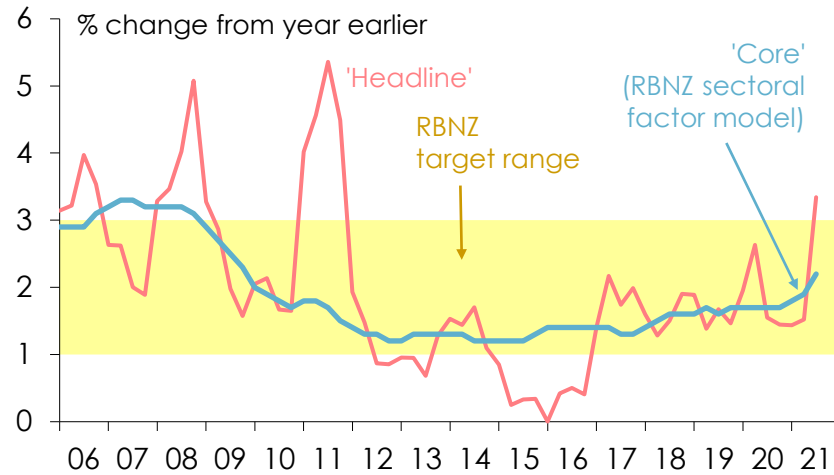
Net foreign debt



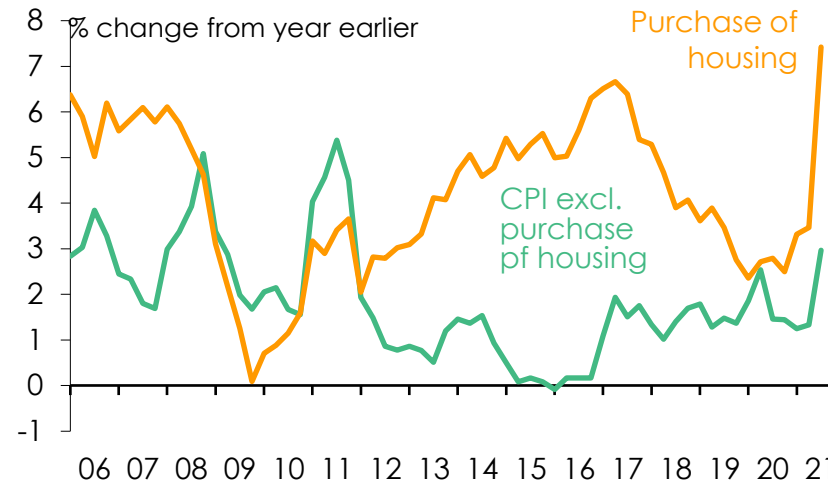
Note: latest merchandise trade data is for July: August data will be released on 24th September; latest balance of payments and net foreign debt data is for the March quarter; June quarter data will be released on 15th September. Sources: [ANZ Bank](#); [Statistics New Zealand](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

The Q2 CPI was a 'shocker', rising 1.3%, half a percentage point above market expectations, driven largely by housing costs

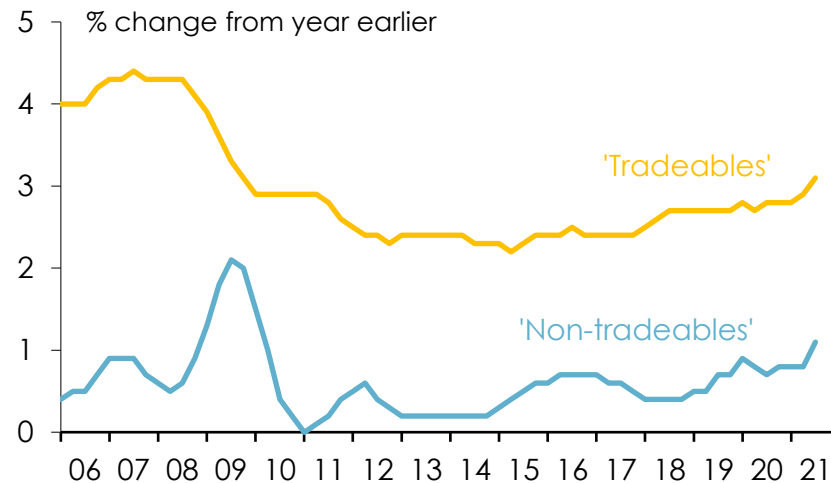
Consumer prices



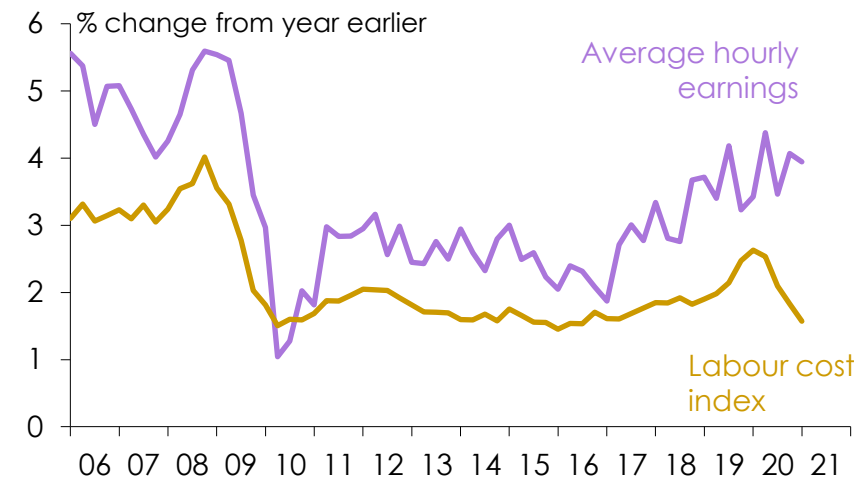
Housing costs in the CPI



Components of 'core' inflation



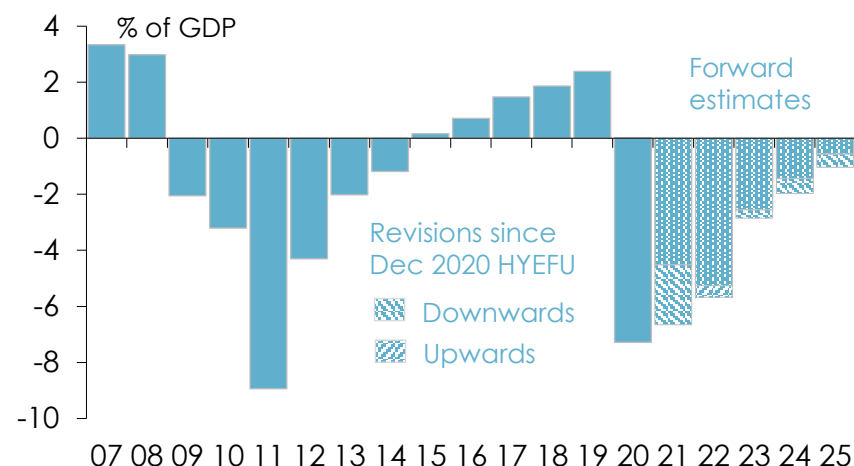
Labour costs



- ❑ The CPI rose 1.3% in Q2, the largest q-o-q increase since Q3 2008, pushing the annual 'headline' inflation rate up to 3.3%, the highest since Q3 2011
- ❑ 89% of the Q2 increase in the CPI came from 7 components representing 31% of the CPI basket – housing purchase (30% of the Q2 increase), petrol (17%), vegetables (16%), games, toys & hobbies (7½%), clothing (7%), rents (7%) and take-away food (5%)
 - these six components also accounted for 57% of the increase in the CPI from Q2 last year
- ❑ The annual rate of 'core' inflation as measured by the RBNZ's 'sectoral factor model', rose to 2.2% in Q2, the highest since Q3 2009, from 1.9% in Q1
- ❑ The RBNZ had expected some pick-up in headline inflation in Q2 – but the outcome was 0.7 pc pt above its most recent forecast

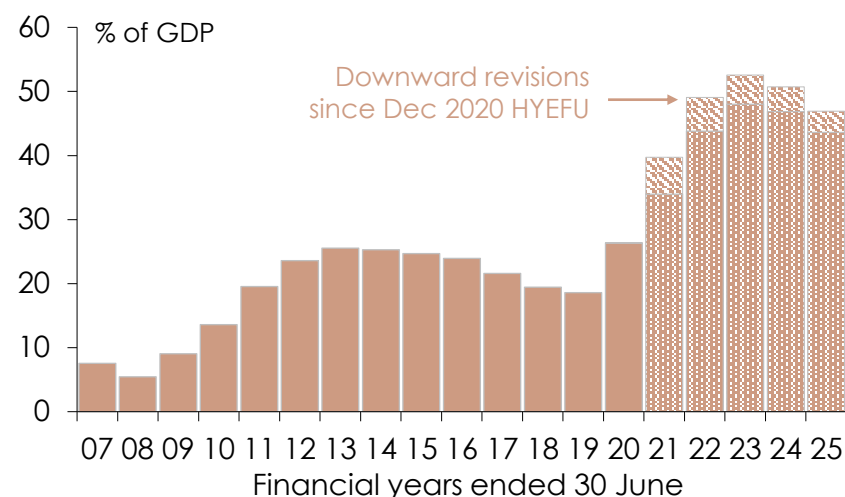
The 2021 NZ Budget uses gains from an improved economic outlook to fund additional spending as well as a slightly improved 'bottom line'

NZ government 'operating balance excluding gains & losses' ('OEBGAL')



- As was also the case in Australia, the 2021-22 New Zealand Budget presented by Finance Minister Grant Robertson in May benefited from a much stronger economic performance than had been anticipated in last year's Budget, or in last December's Half-Year Economic & Fiscal Update (HYEFU)
 - Treasury now expects the NZ economy to have grown 2.9% in 2020-21 (cf. 1.5% in HYEPU) and by 3.7% pa over the following two years (cf. 3.1% in HYEPU)
 - unemployment is expected to fall to 5% in June 2022 and 4.2% by June 2024, instead of increasing to 6.8% in June 2022 and then falling to 4.7% by June 2024
- The Budget applies most of the revenue windfall from this improved economic outlook (and transfers from unspent allocations to the \$50bn Covid Response and Recovery Fund established last year) to fund new spending initiatives totalling almost NZ\$20bn over the five years to 2024-25
 - of which the most significant are increases in benefit payments of up to \$55/week (consciously reversing cuts made in the 1990 Budget) and increased spending on health and housing
- Nonetheless the Budget also reduced the 'OBEGAL' and 'residual cash' deficits for the five years to 2024-25 by \$9bn
 - the 'OBEGAL' deficit is forecast to decline from 2019-20's peak of 7.3% of GDP to 4.5% of GDP in 2020-21, increase slightly to 5.3% of GDP in 2021-22, then decline to 0.6% of GDP in 2024-25 – and to return to surplus by 2026-27
- As a result 'core Crown net debt' is expected to peak at 48% of GDP in June 2023 (down from 52.6% at HYEPU) and then decline to 43.6% of GDP by June 2025, and longer term to drop below 20% of GDP in 2034

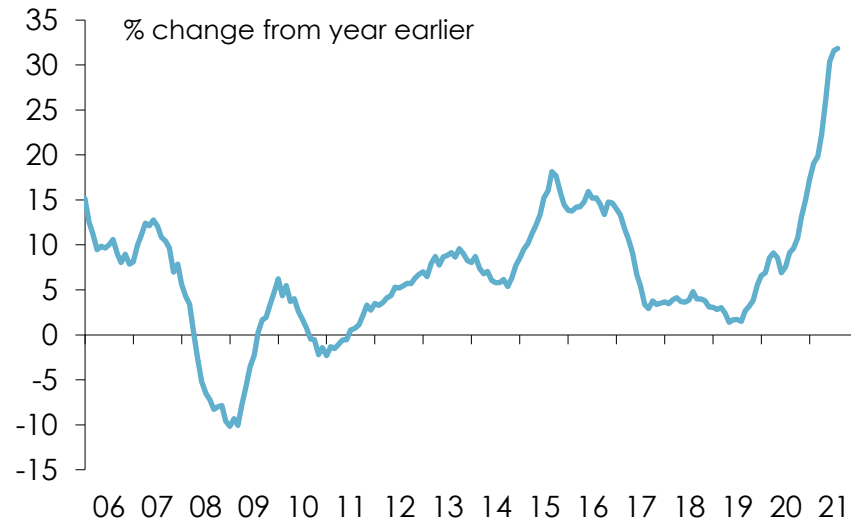
NZ 'core Crown debt'



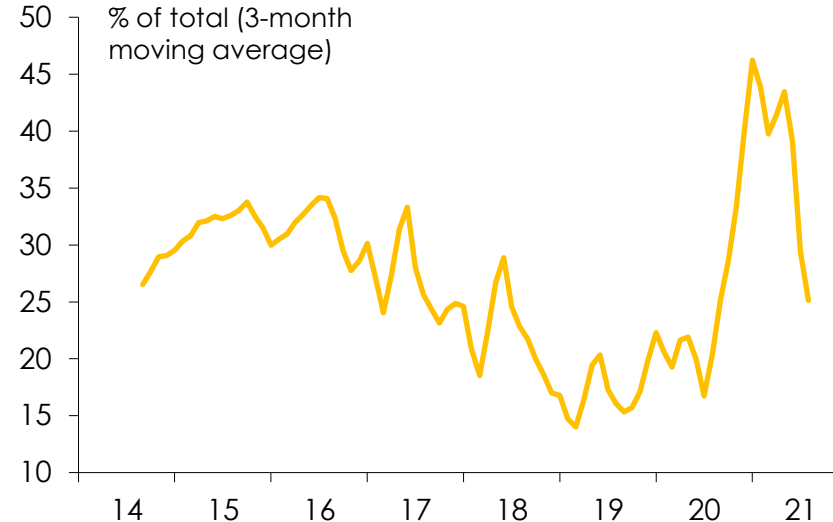
Note: The measure of the NZ Government budget balance is 'OBEGAL', which stands for 'operating balance excluding gains and losses' (an accrual accounting measure). Net 'core Crown debt' excludes assets of the NZ Super Fund, student loans and other advances, and financial assets held for public policy purposes Source: NZ Treasury, [Budget Economic and Fiscal Update 2021](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

NZ's housing price boom has been fuelled by investors (a large proportion of them with very high LVRs) – but recent changes have had some impact

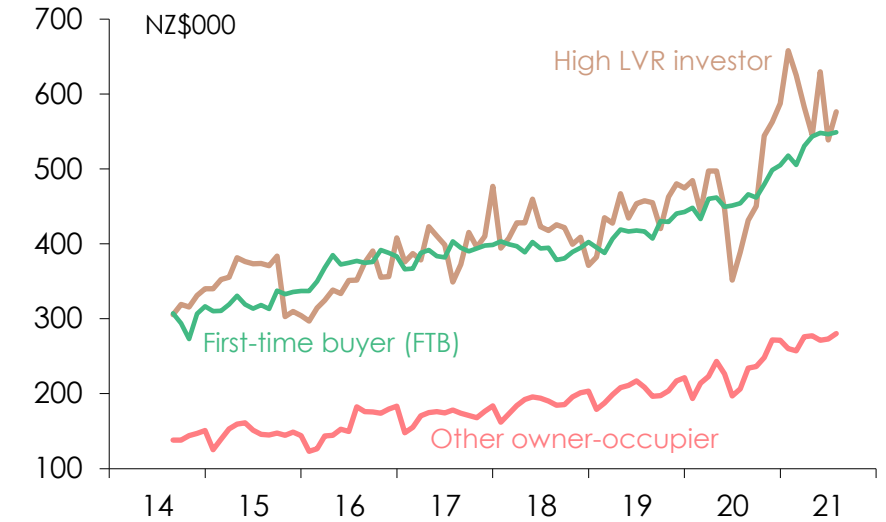
House price inflation



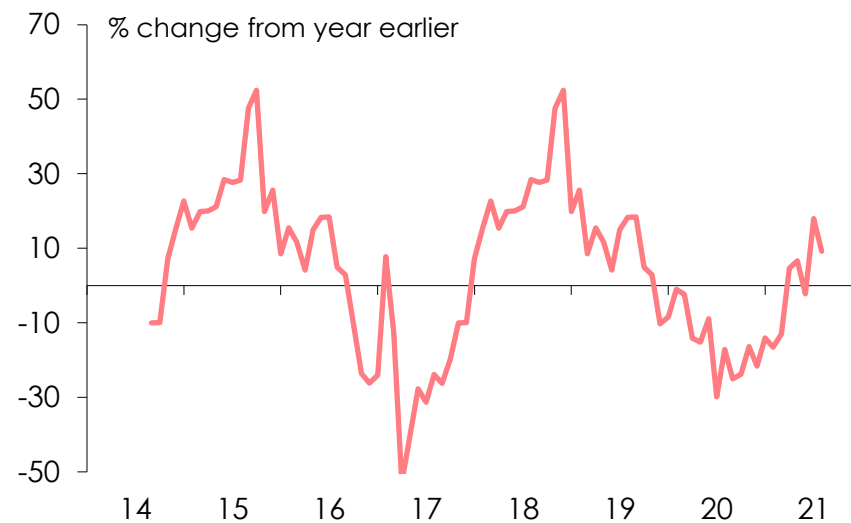
Lending to investors as pc of total



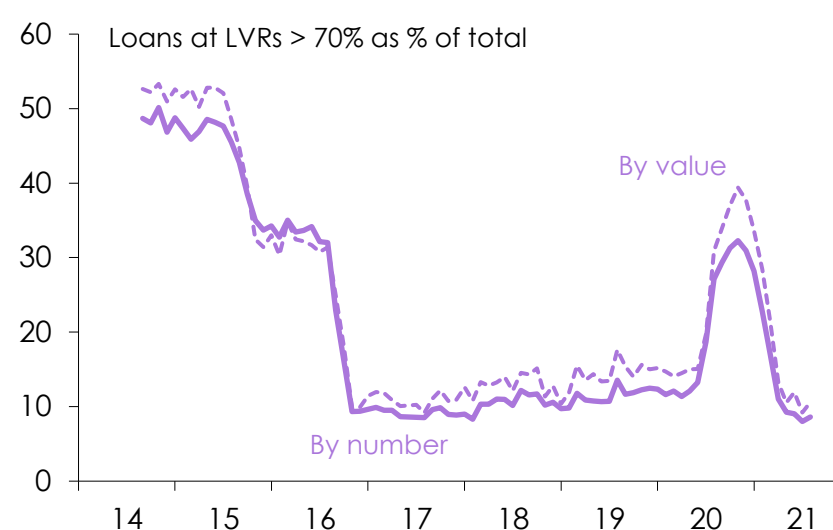
Average new mortgage



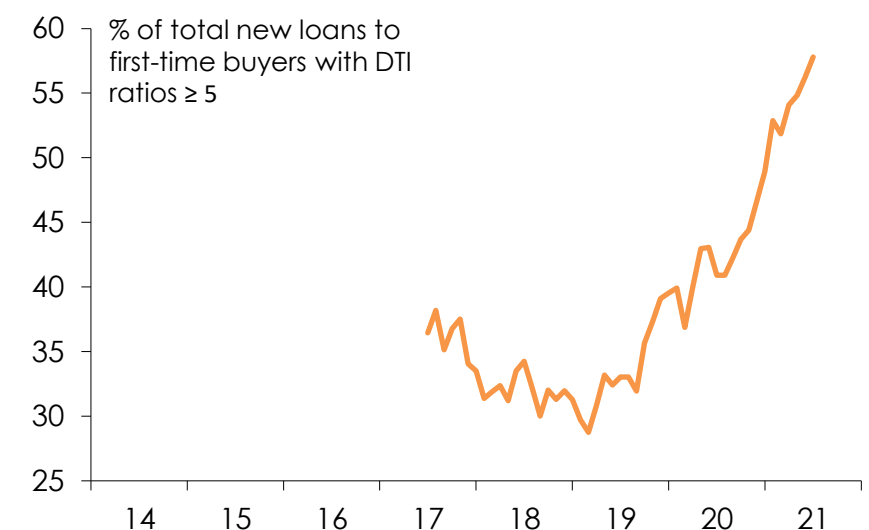
Mortgage lending growth



High-LVR loans to investors



Loans to FTBs at over 5 times income

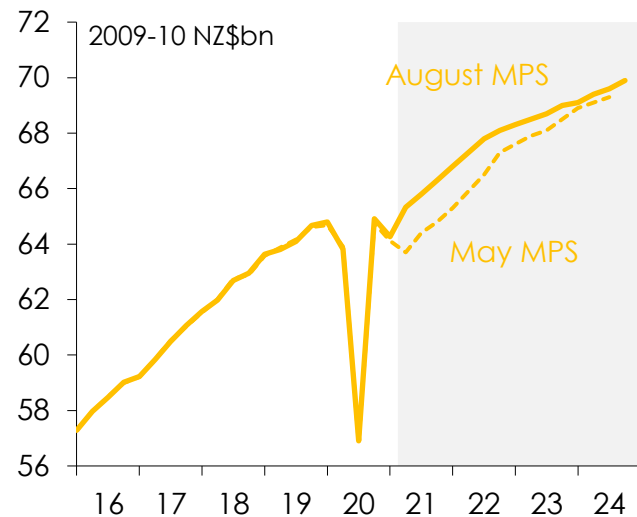


The NZ Government and the RBNZ continue to seek to dampen speculative demand for property, including foreshadowing tighter LVR limits

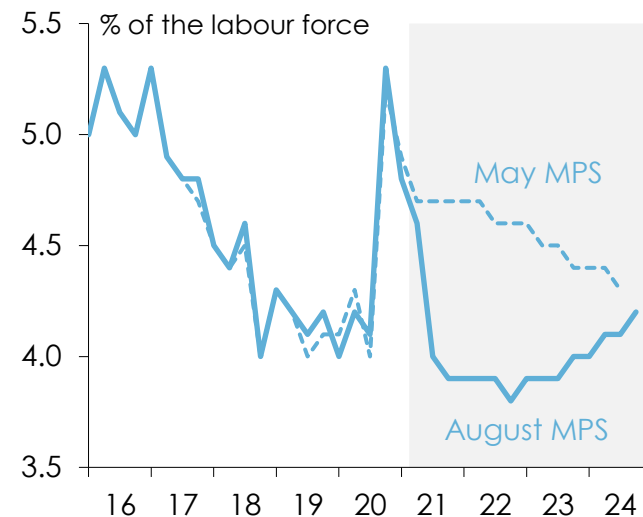
- ❑ the RBNZ [announced](#) that it was considering further lowering the limit on the proportion of mortgages that can be written at LVRs of over 80% from 20% to 10%, with effect from 1st October
- ❑ This latest announcement comes after the RBNZ and the Minister of Finance last month signed a [Memorandum of Understanding on Macro-Prudential Policy](#) which defines what macro-prudential policy is, and sets out the ‘guidelines’ under which the RBNZ will operate when using it
 - the MoU defines the objectives of macro-prudential policy as being “to increase the resilience of the domestic financial system” and to counter instability in that system arising from “credit, asset price or liquidity shocks”
 - and it lists the instruments which the RBNZ may use in order to “address the systemic risks of financial instability” – including adjustments to banks’ Core Funding Ratio, a Countercyclical Capital Buffer requirement, adjustments to sectoral capital requirements, and ‘quantitative restrictions’ on loans to the residential property sector
- ❑ The new development in the MoU is the specification of ‘debt serviceability restrictions’ on loans for purchase of residential property
 - specifically, caps on the ratio of mortgage or total debt to income for individual borrowers, or on the percentage of a borrowers’ income that can be used for debt service payments, and floors on the interest rates that banks use in their loan serviceability assessments
 - these would be in addition to restrictions on the share of new high loan-to-valuation ratio lending that banks may undertake (which have already been imposed this year) and outright limits on the proportion of the value of a property that can be borrowed
- ❑ These steps in turn follow a series of tax policy and other measures [announced by the Government](#) in March designed to dampen investor demand for housing and encourage stronger growth in new dwelling construction, removing the tax-deductibility of interest on property investment loans, and including capital gains on investment properties (other than ‘new builds’) held for less than 10 years in income for tax purposes

The RBNZ's Monetary Policy Committee kept the cash rate on hold last month, but only because of the latest Covid outbreak and lockdown

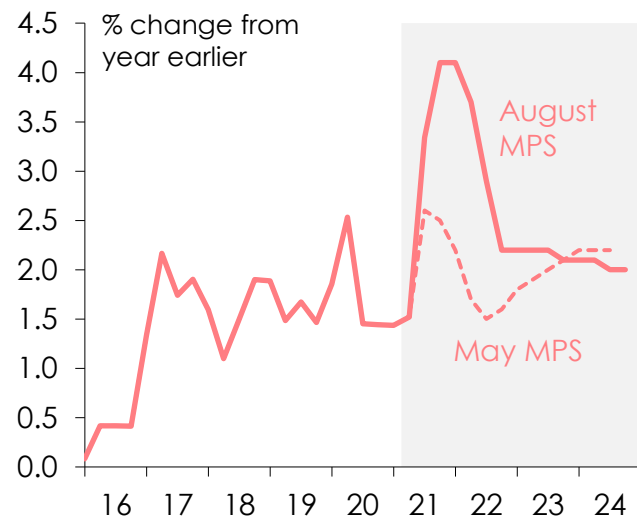
GDP



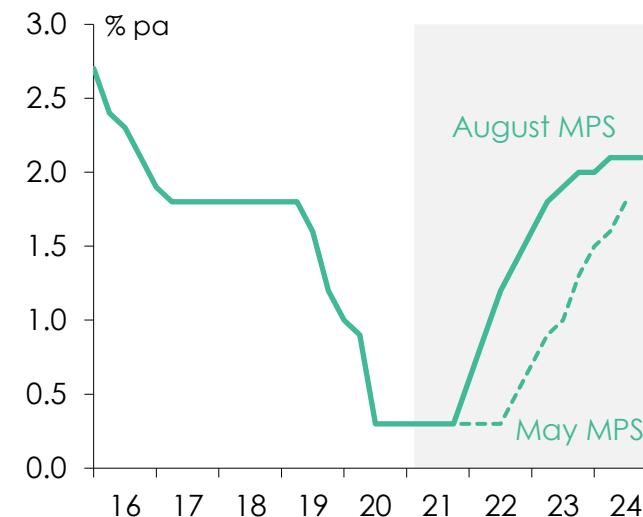
Unemployment



Inflation



Official cash rate

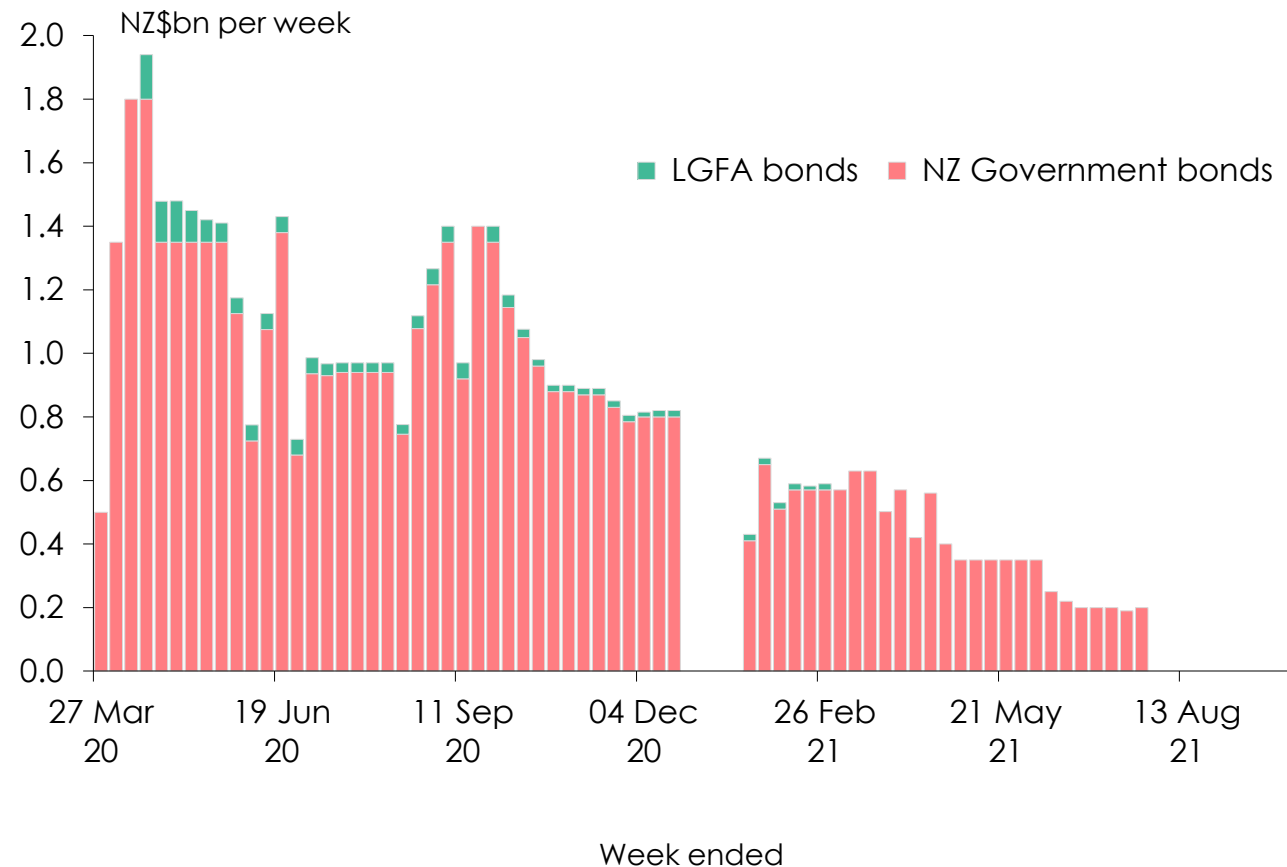


- ❑ The RBNZ had been widely expected to raise its OCR at last month's MPC meeting, but it instead **decided** to keep it at 0.25% "for now", given the "heightened uncertainty with the country in a lockdown" imposed the day before
- ❑ This was notwithstanding the MPC's view that "their least regrets policy" was to have raised the OCR "so as to anchor inflation expectations and to contribute to maximum sustainable employment"
- ❑ The MPC assessed that employment was "at or above its maximum sustainable level", having regard to the inability of employers to "source labour from abroad" and to the fact that the "additional labour capacity" within NZ was largely among people who had previously worked in tourism and who "may not always have the skills needed" ...
- ❑ ... which in turn meant "increased wage pressures at any given unemployment rate", of which "the latest labour market data provided early evidence"
- ❑ The MPC also judged that NZ house prices were "above their sustainable level"
- ❑ The RBNZ assessed that the nominal neutral interest rate is about 2% - and its latest projections suggest that the OCR (which it identified as the "preferred tool" for adjusting monetary policy") will reach that level by Q3 2023

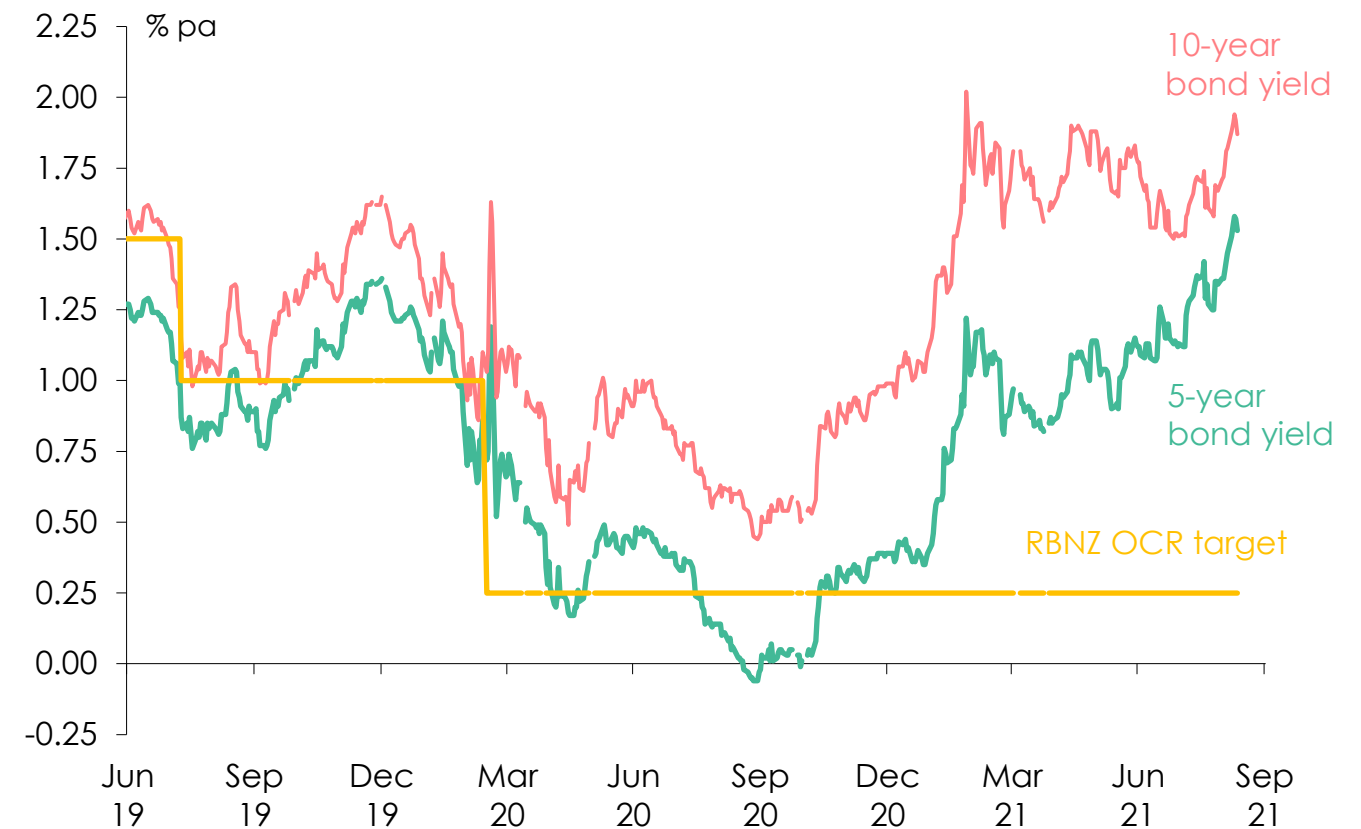
Source: Reserve Bank of New Zealand, [Monetary Policy Statement August 2021](#). The next MPS will be released on 24th November. [Return to "What's New"](#).

NZ bond yields rose further this week to be above where they were ahead of last month's RBNZ meeting at which the OCR wasn't lifted

RBNZ open market bond purchases



New Zealand interest rates



- ❑ NZ bond yields continued rising for most of this week – with the 2-year yield rising another 9bp to 1.04% (where it was the day before last month's RBNZ meeting), and the 10-year yield rising 12 bp to 1.94% (the highest since end-February) on Wednesday before edging down to 1.87% by week's end
- ❑ The RBNZ proposed a further tightening of 'macro-prudential' controls on mortgage lending, cutting the limit on >80% LVR loans from 20% to 10%, with effect from 1st October

Important information

This document has been prepared by Saul Eslake on behalf of Corinna Economic Advisory Pty Ltd, ABN 165 668 058 69, whose registered office is located at Level 11, 114 William Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000 Australia.

Corinna Economic Advisory is a partner (with Llewellyn Consulting, of 1 St Andrews Hill, London EC4V 5BY, United Kingdom) in Independent Economics.

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