

# ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

9<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2021

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# What's new?

## The world

- ❑ Just under 3mn Covid-19 cases were recorded this week, the lowest in 13 weeks, while the number of officially-recorded covid-related deaths was the lowest since late October last year ([slide 4](#))
- ❑ Although it seems that some of the sources of intense pressure on 'upstream' prices earlier this year are beginning to abate, energy – and especially natural gas – prices are an important exception, and may result in more persistent elevated inflation in both 'advanced' and 'emerging' economies ([slide 40](#))
- ❑ Six Asian economies have reported September inflation results over the past week – and although 'headline' inflation has risen in most of them, 'core' inflation remains well contained despite rapid increases in producer prices ([slides 43](#) and [58](#))
- ❑ September services PMIs released this week generally show on-going resilience in the face of the continuing spread of the 'delta variant' and mobility restrictions ([slide 47](#))
- ❑ US non-farm payrolls rose a smaller-than-expected 194K (0.1%) in September – in large part because of a 123K fall in government employment – but the unemployment rate dropped 0.4 pc pt to 4.8%, the lowest since the onset of the pandemic ([slide 72](#))
- ❑ The US incurred another record deficit on its trade in goods and services in August ([slide 82](#))
- ❑ India's central bank maintained its monetary policy settings unchanged – as have all Asian central banks at their most recent meetings, except for Korea's ([slide 70](#))
- ❑ Iceland's central bank raised its policy rates for the third time in a row ([slide 86](#)), while central banks in Poland and Romania raised theirs for the first time, and in Peru for the third time ([slides 87-88](#))

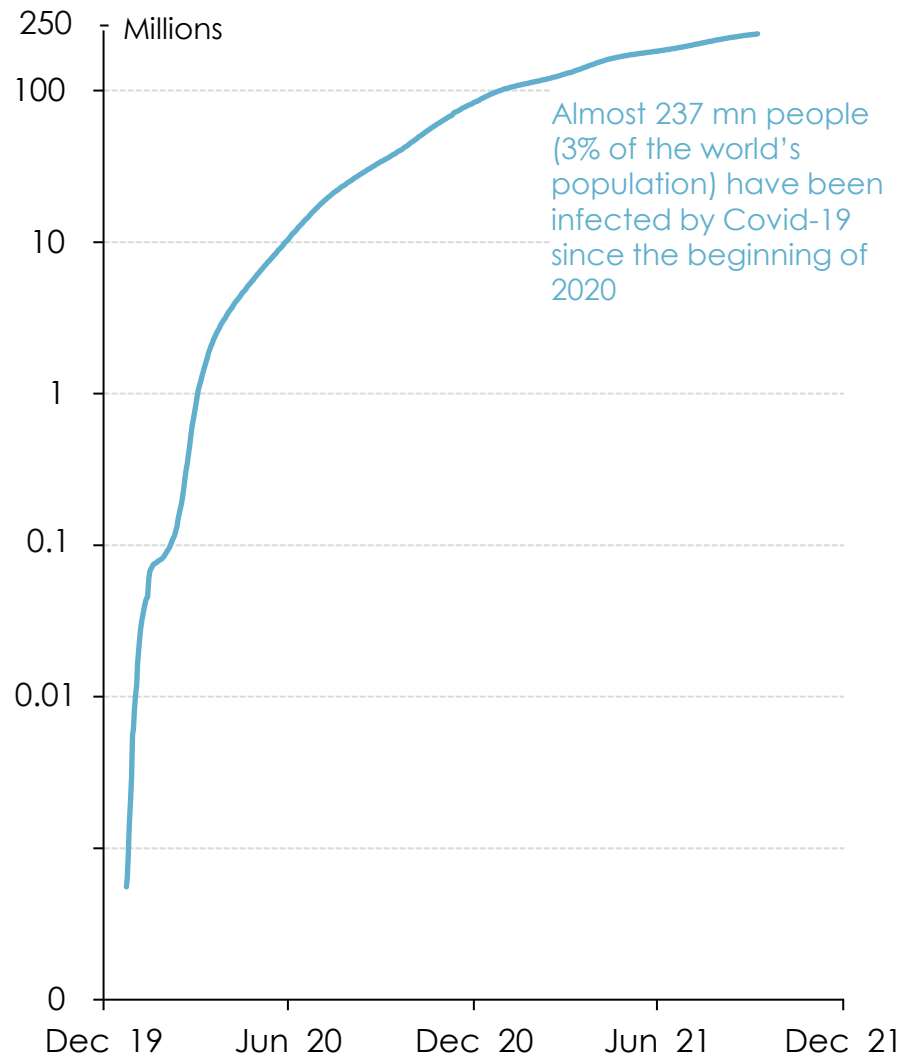
## Australia and New Zealand

- ❑ Australia recorded 15,281 new infections this week, a new high for the second week in a row ([slide 13](#))
- ❑ This week's renewed upturn in case numbers was again driven by Victoria, whereas by contrast new infections in NSW have more than halved since their peak in mid-September ([slide 14](#))
- ❑ Payroll employment fell another 0.7% over the two weeks to 11<sup>th</sup> September, bringing the cumulative decline since the beginning of July to 4.9% - with declines of 11.9% in the ACT, 9.1% in NSW and 6.7% in Victoria ([slide 109](#)), and the same groups of workers (those under 30, and those in accommodation & food services, and arts & recreation) as in last year's lockdowns being hardest hit ([slide 110](#))
- ❑ New motor vehicle sales fell 1.7% in September, with a 5.7% rebound in NSW more than offset by falls in Victoria and SA ([slide 122](#))
- ❑ Australia registered another record monthly surplus on trade in goods and services, of \$15bn in August, this time thanks to coal, LNG & base metals (and lower imports) rather than iron ore ([slides 129-130](#))
- ❑ The iron ore price continued its rebound this week ([slide 128](#)) pushing the A\$ back above US73¢ ([slide 137](#))
- ❑ The RBA left its monetary policy settings on hold, as expected, at Tuesday's Board meeting (again indicating it sees no rate rise before 2024) – but APRA raised the interest rate 'buffer' it requires lenders to use in their debt serviceability assessments from 2.5 to 3.0 pc points ([slide 152](#))
- ❑ Separately the RBA's latest Financial Stability Review warned against 'exuberance' flowing from rapidly-rising property prices ([slide 153](#))
- ❑ The RBNZ, as expected, raised its official cash rate by 25bp, to 0.5%, on Wednesday, and foreshadowed further increases at future meetings ([slide 164](#))

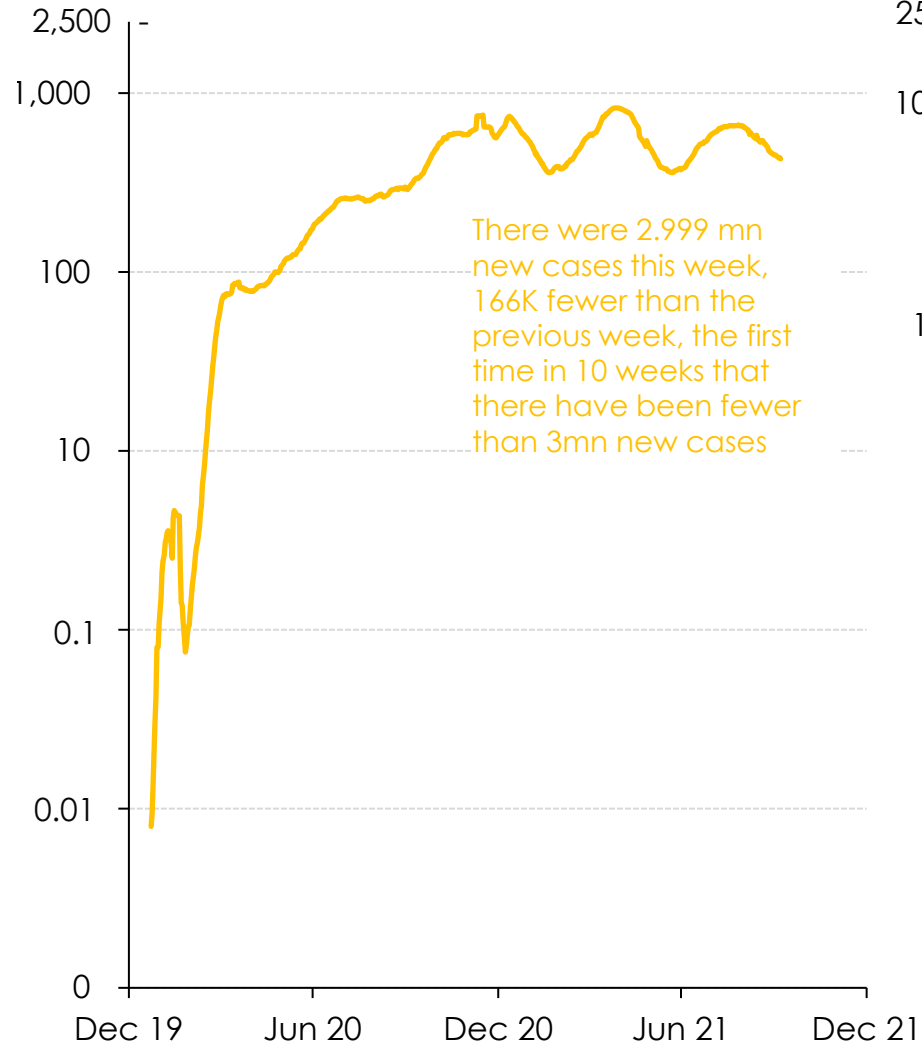
**The virus**

# The global 'delta wave' does appear to have peaked, with both cases and deaths now declining for several weeks

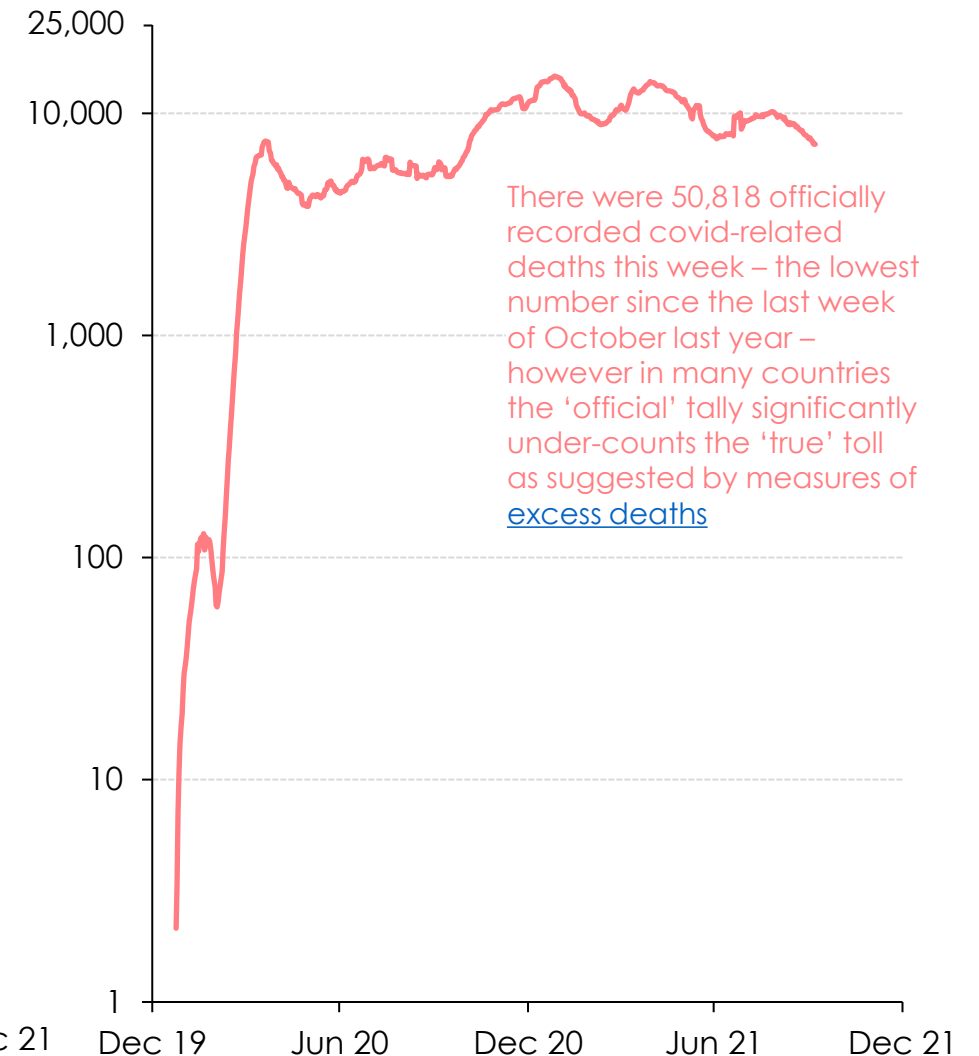
## Cumulative confirmed cases – global total



## New confirmed cases – global total



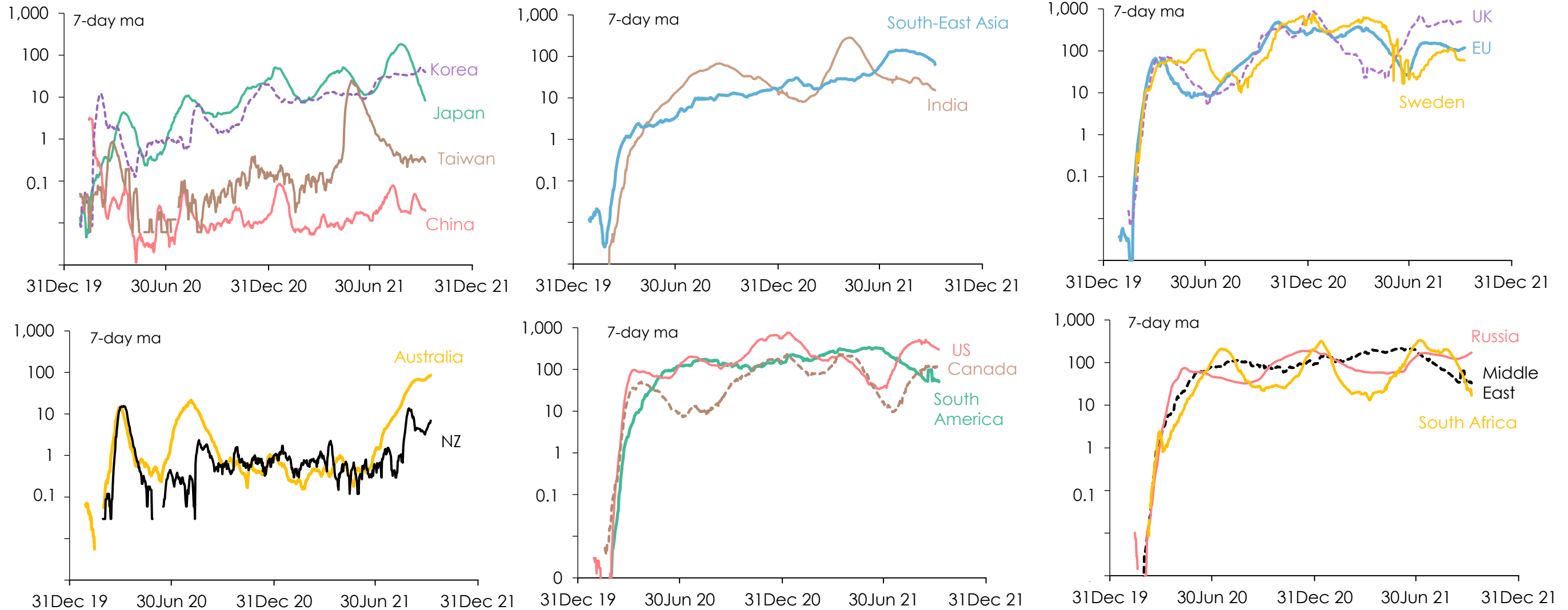
## New deaths – global total



Note: All charts are on logarithmic scales. Data up to 7<sup>th</sup> October. Source: University of Oxford, [Our World in Data](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

# New infections fell in SE Asia, India, the US and South America this week but rose in Europe, Russia, the Middle East, Africa and Australia

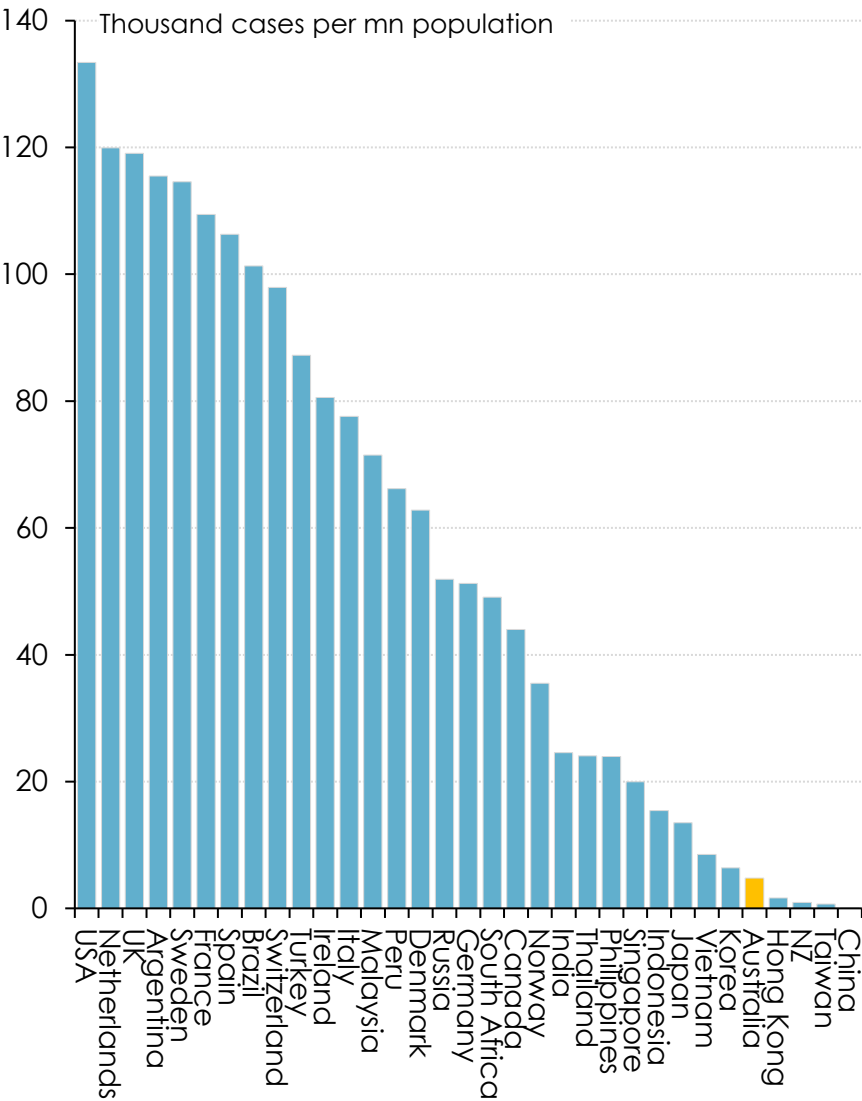
## Daily new cases per million population – major countries and regions



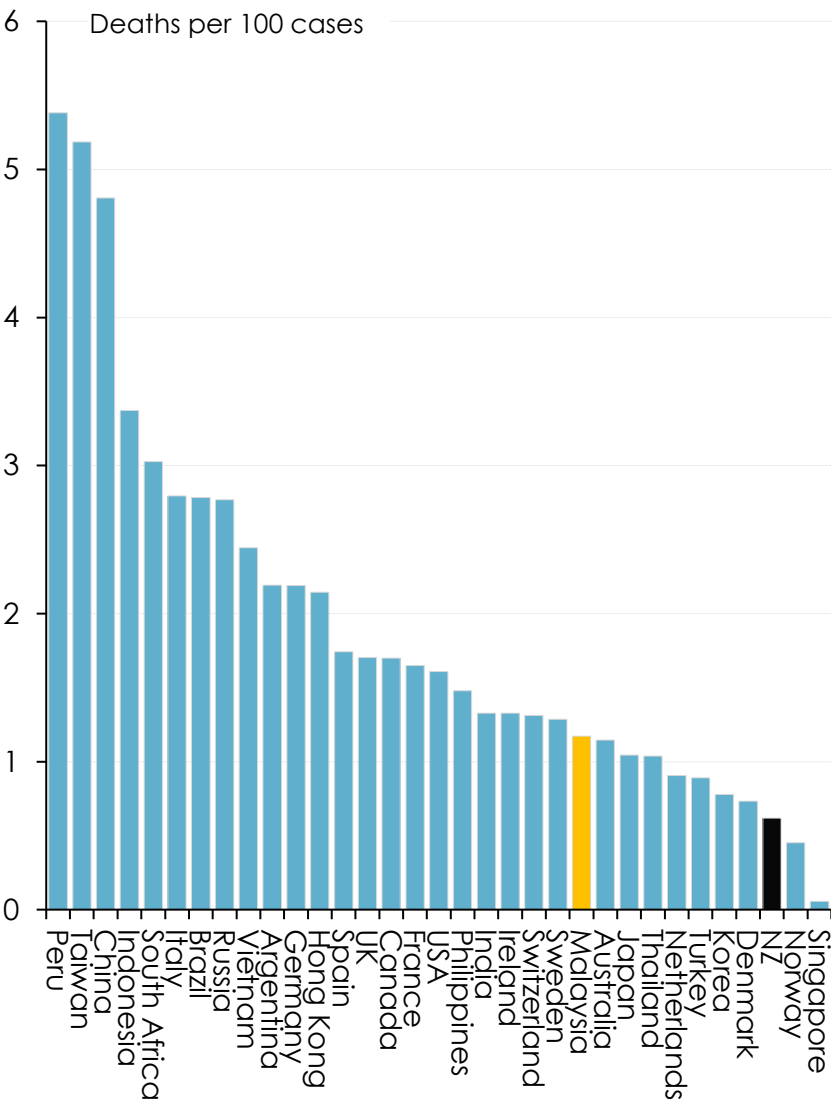
❑ The US accounted for 23% of all 'official' deaths this week, but the numbers fell, as they did in SE Asia and the Middle East – but the death toll rose in Europe (12½% of the total) and Russia (12¼%)

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

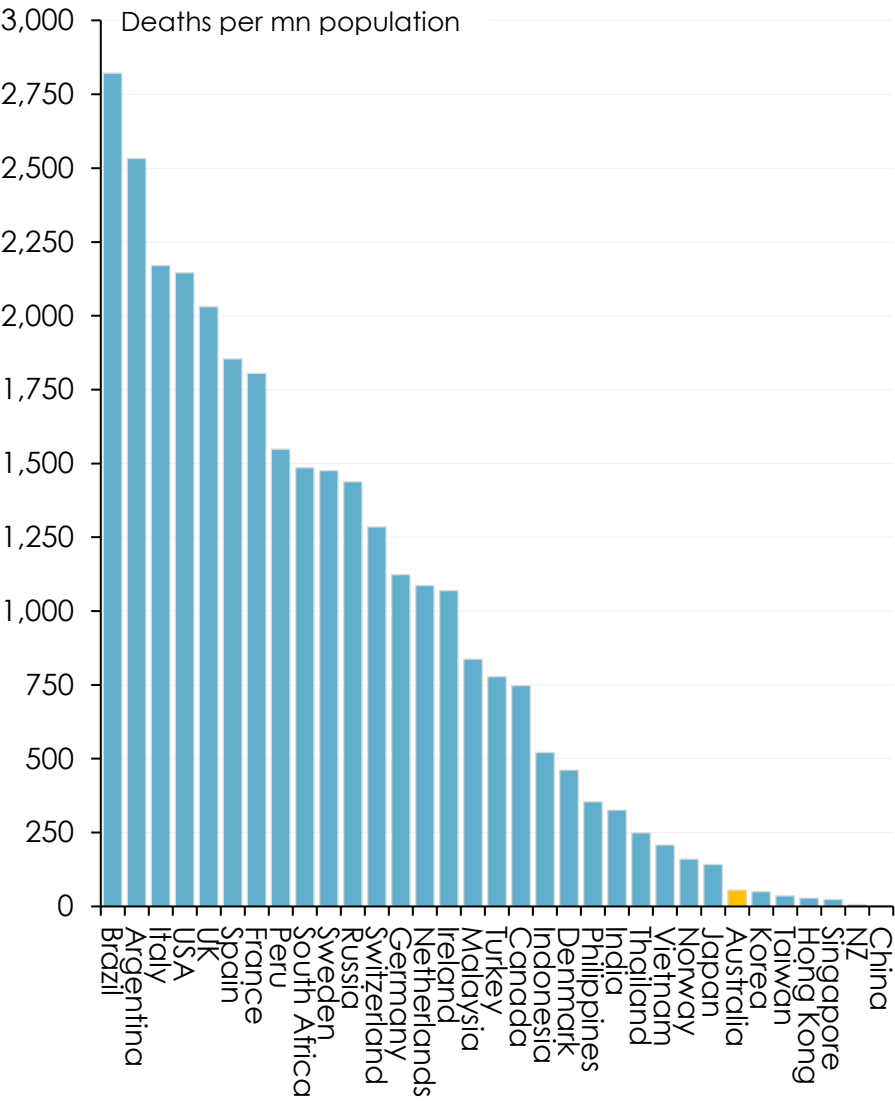
Apparent infection rate



Apparent fatality rate



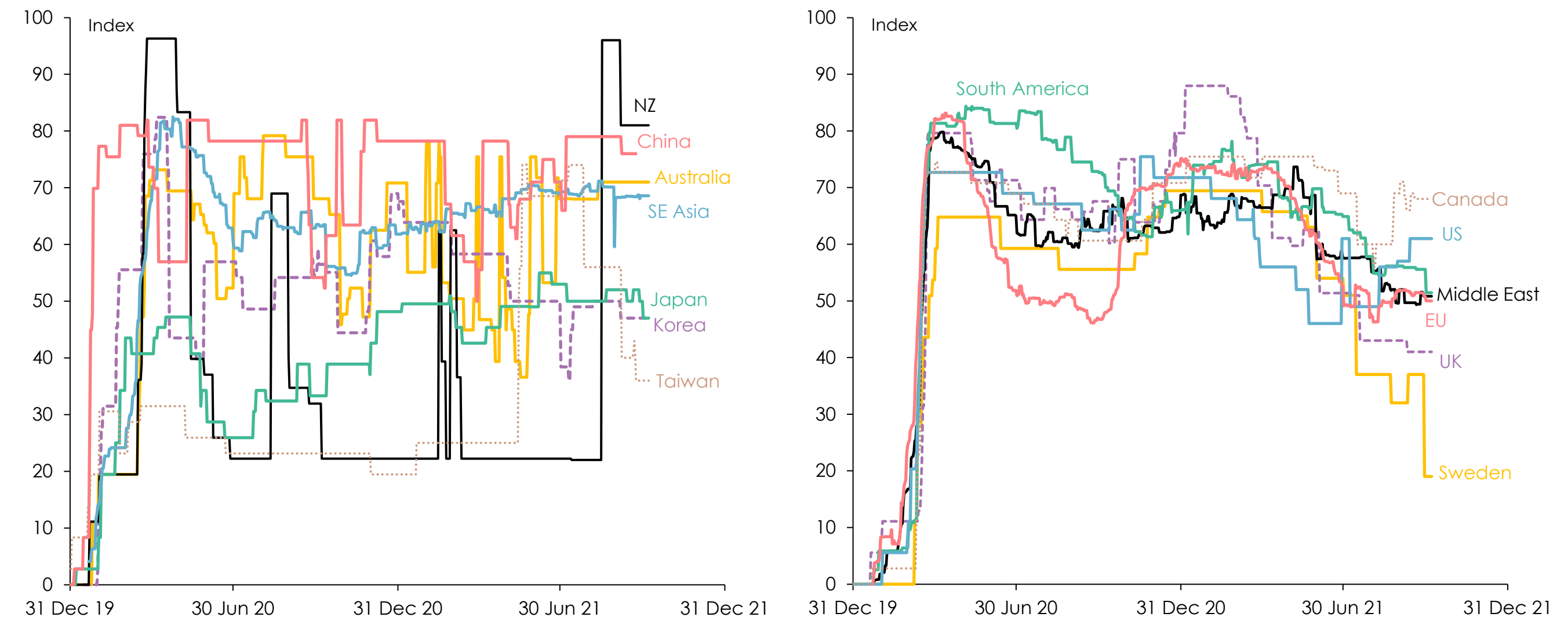
Death rate



Note: Data up to 7<sup>th</sup> October. Sources: University of Oxford, [Our World in Data](#); Corinna. [Return to "What's New"](#).

# Restrictions were further (significantly) eased in Sweden this week, but remain tight in most other major countries

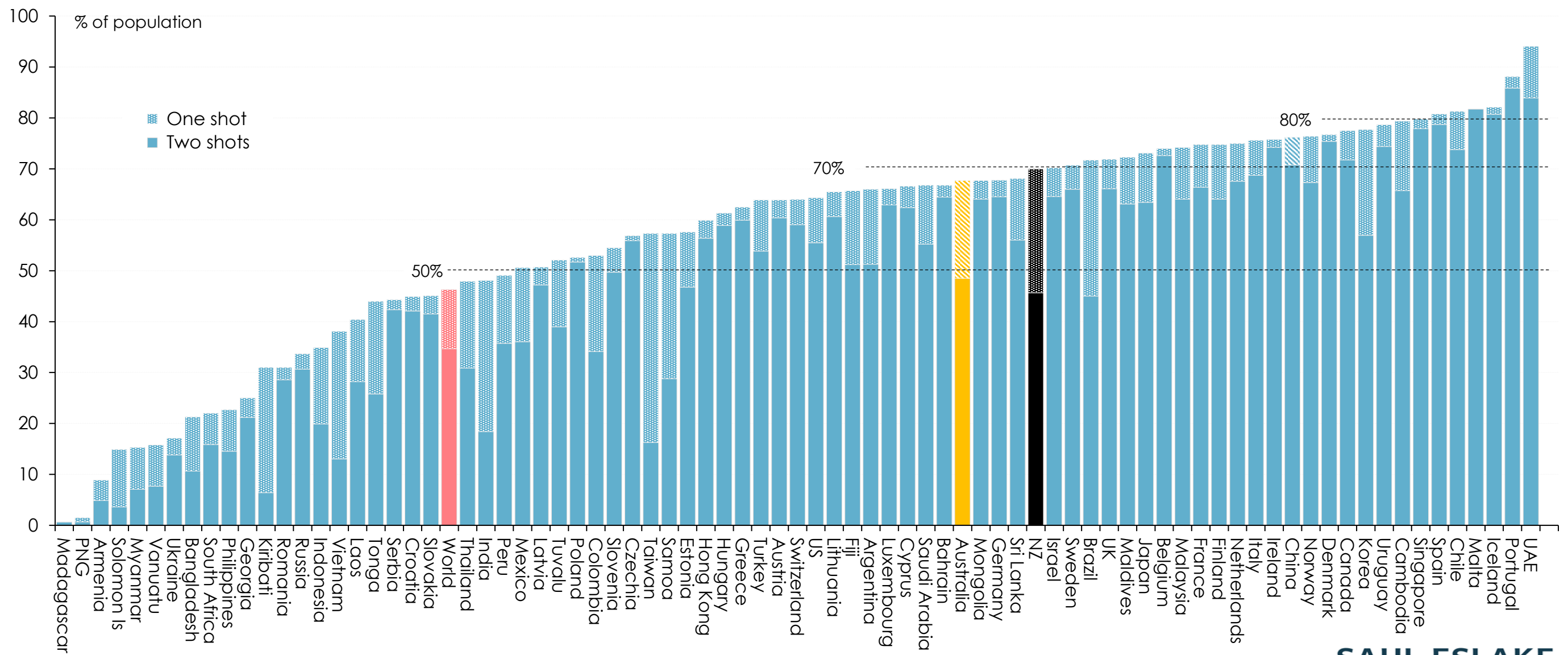
## Timing and severity of government restrictions on movement and gathering of people



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 7<sup>th</sup> October. [Return to "What's New"](#).

# 13 countries have now fully vaccinated more than 70% of their population, another 7 are close to that threshold, and 9 more are over 50%

Percentage of population who have had at least one vaccination shot as at 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> October

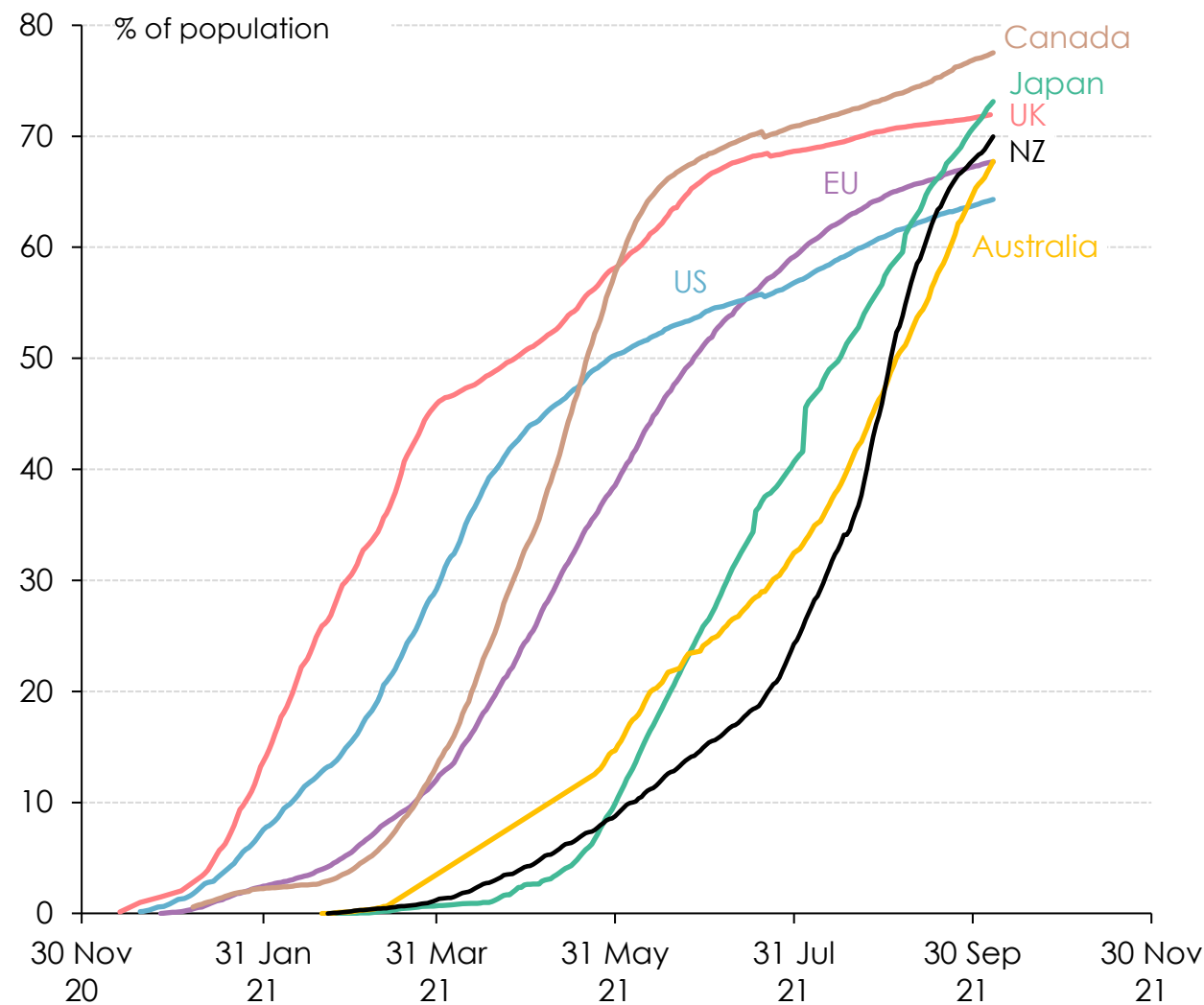


Note: Data for the Philippines is at 9<sup>th</sup> September, Tuvalu 10<sup>th</sup> September, Madagascar 20<sup>th</sup> September, Armenia 26<sup>th</sup> September, Samoa 29<sup>th</sup> September, Laos 20<sup>th</sup> September and Myanmar 2<sup>nd</sup> October. Source: Our World in Data, [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Vaccinations](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

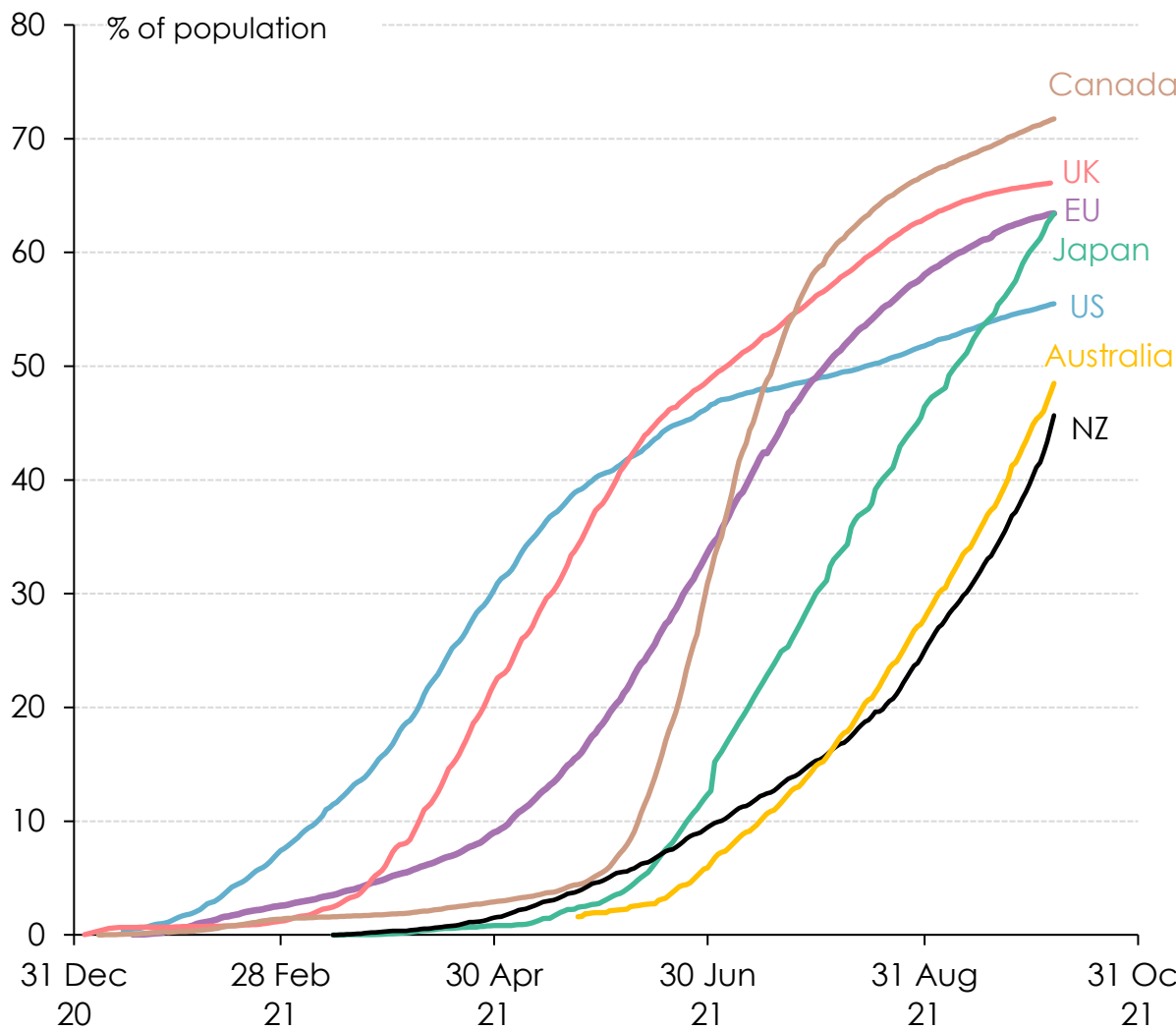


# Progress of vaccinations has slowed in Canada, the US, UK and Europe in recent weeks but has picked up in Japan, Australia and New Zealand

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



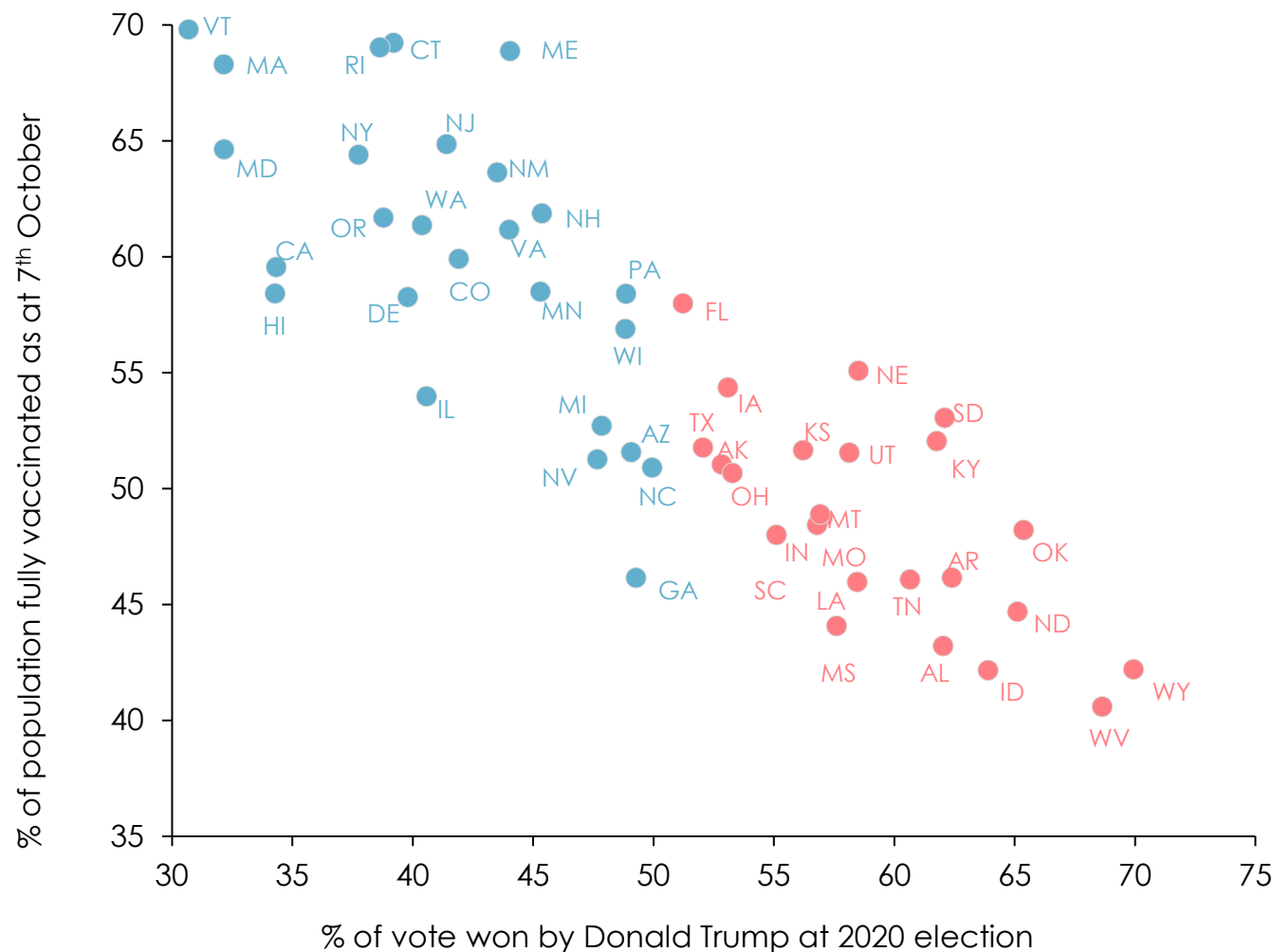
Percentage of major 'advanced' economies' populations who have had two shots



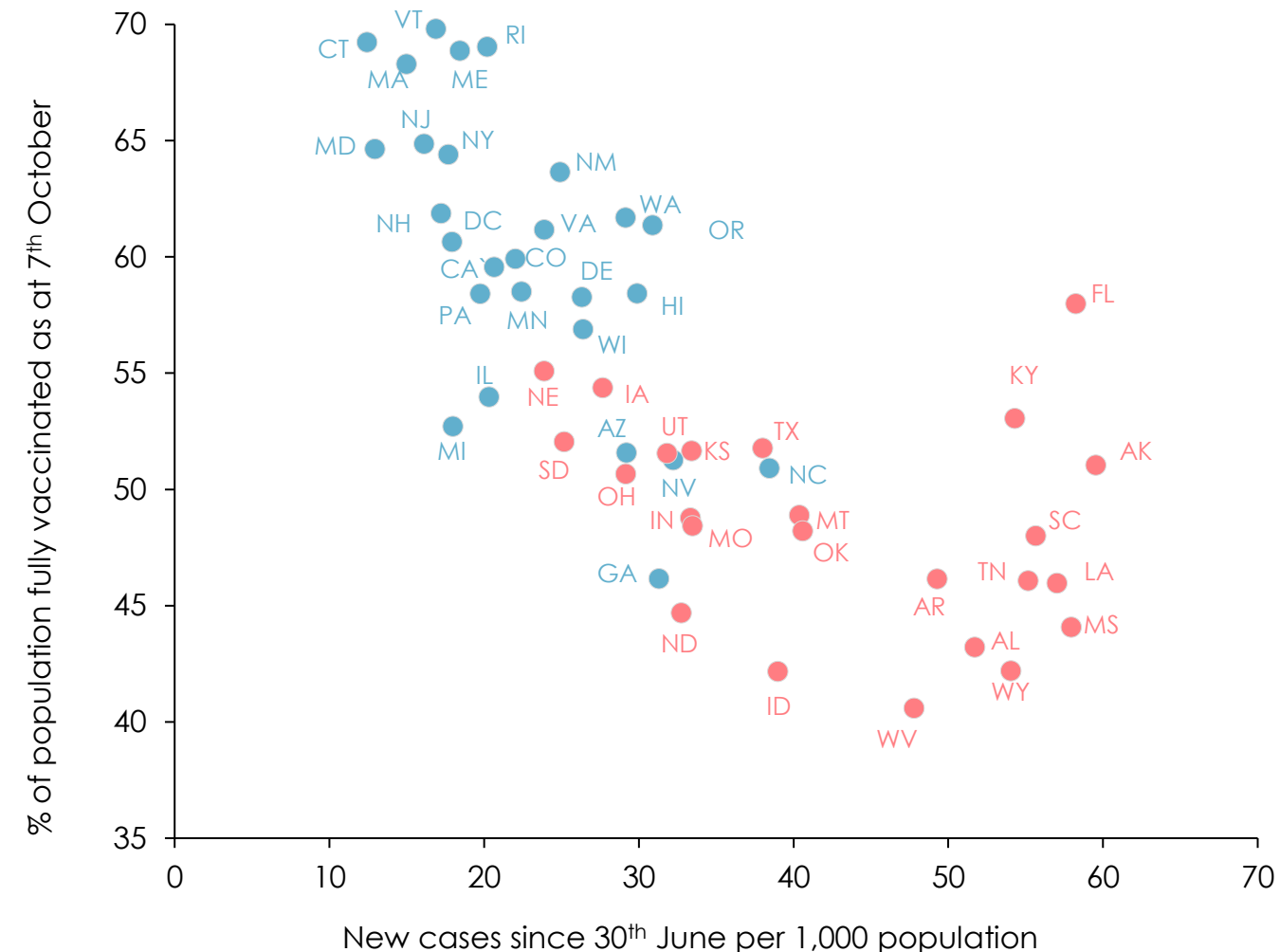
Note: Data up to 7<sup>th</sup> October, except UK, 6<sup>th</sup> October. Source: [Our World in Data](#); [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Vaccinations](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

# 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



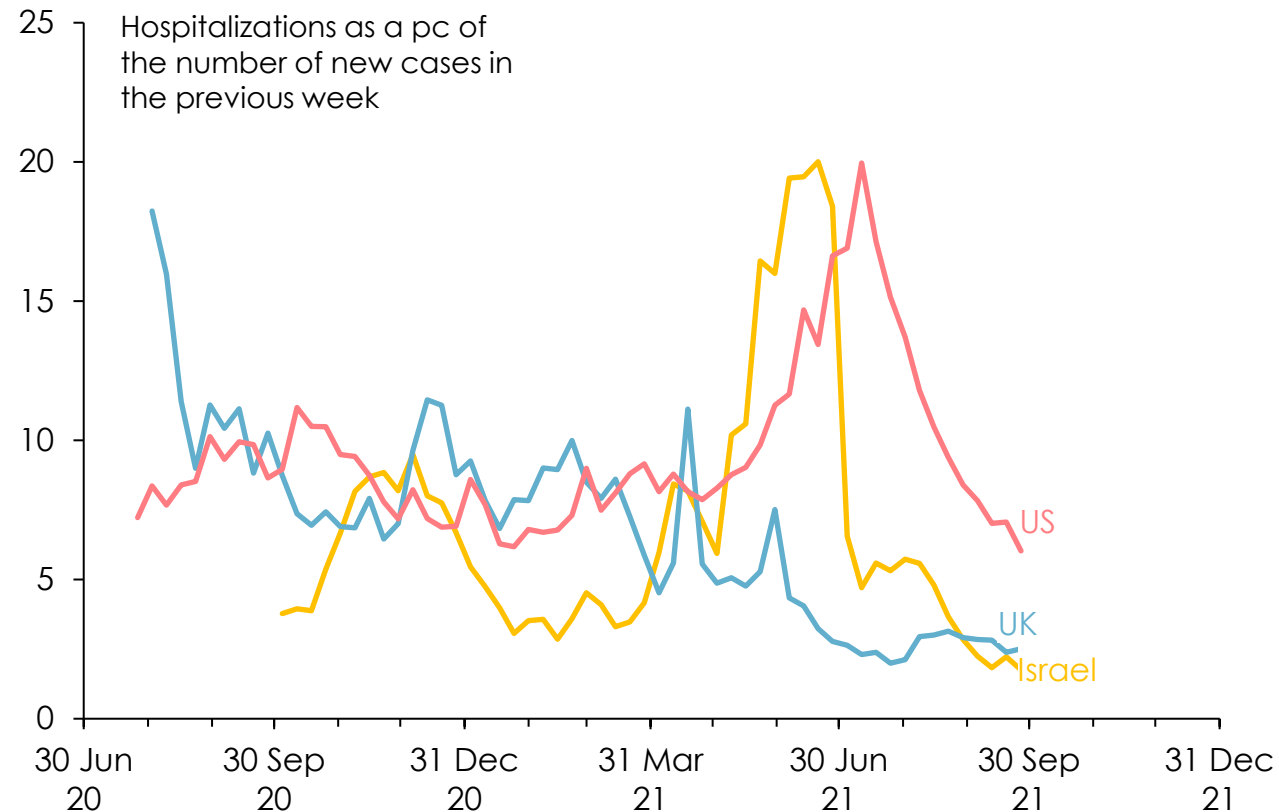
Vaccination rates vs infection rates since 30th June, by state



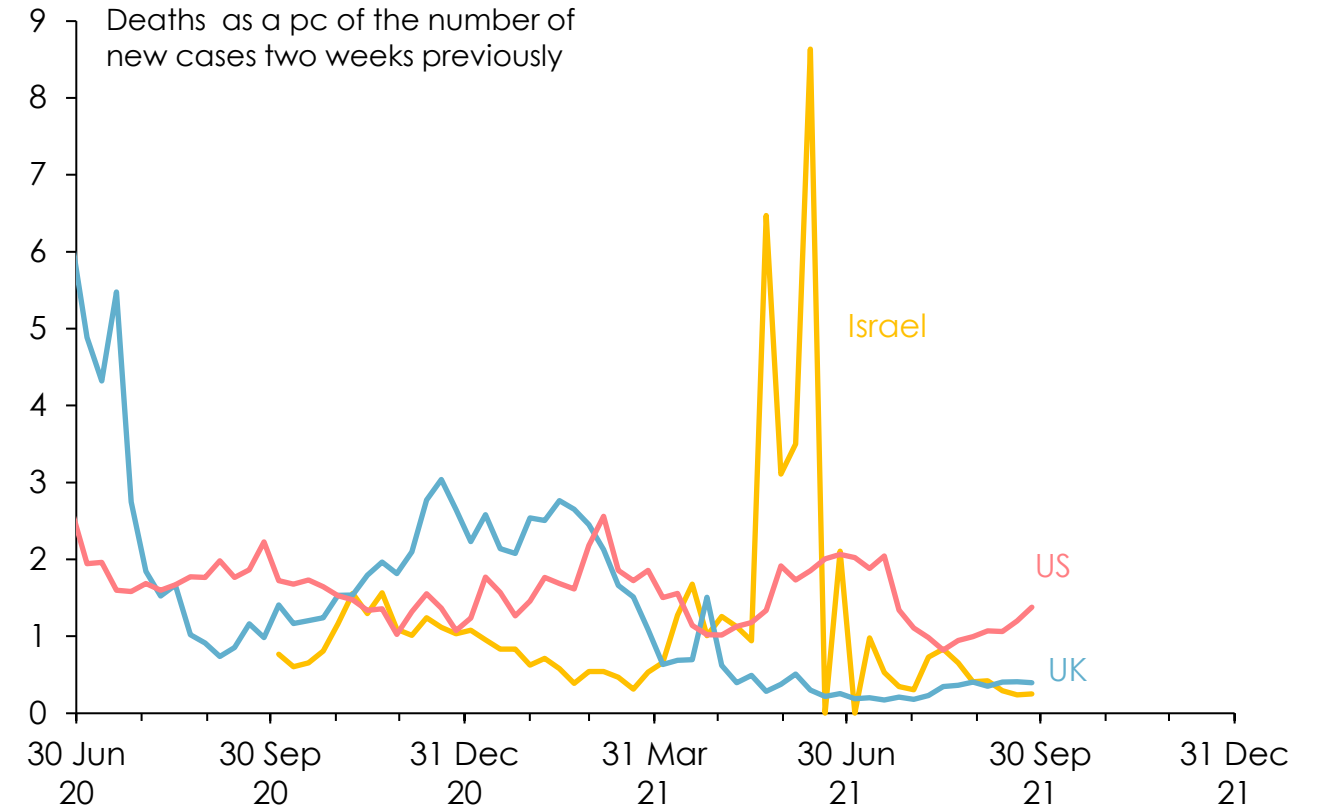
Note: Data as at 7th October. Sources: [The Cook Political Report](#); [Our World in Data](#); [USA Facts](#); Corinna. [Return to "What's New"](#).

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

## Hospitalization rates



## Fatality rates

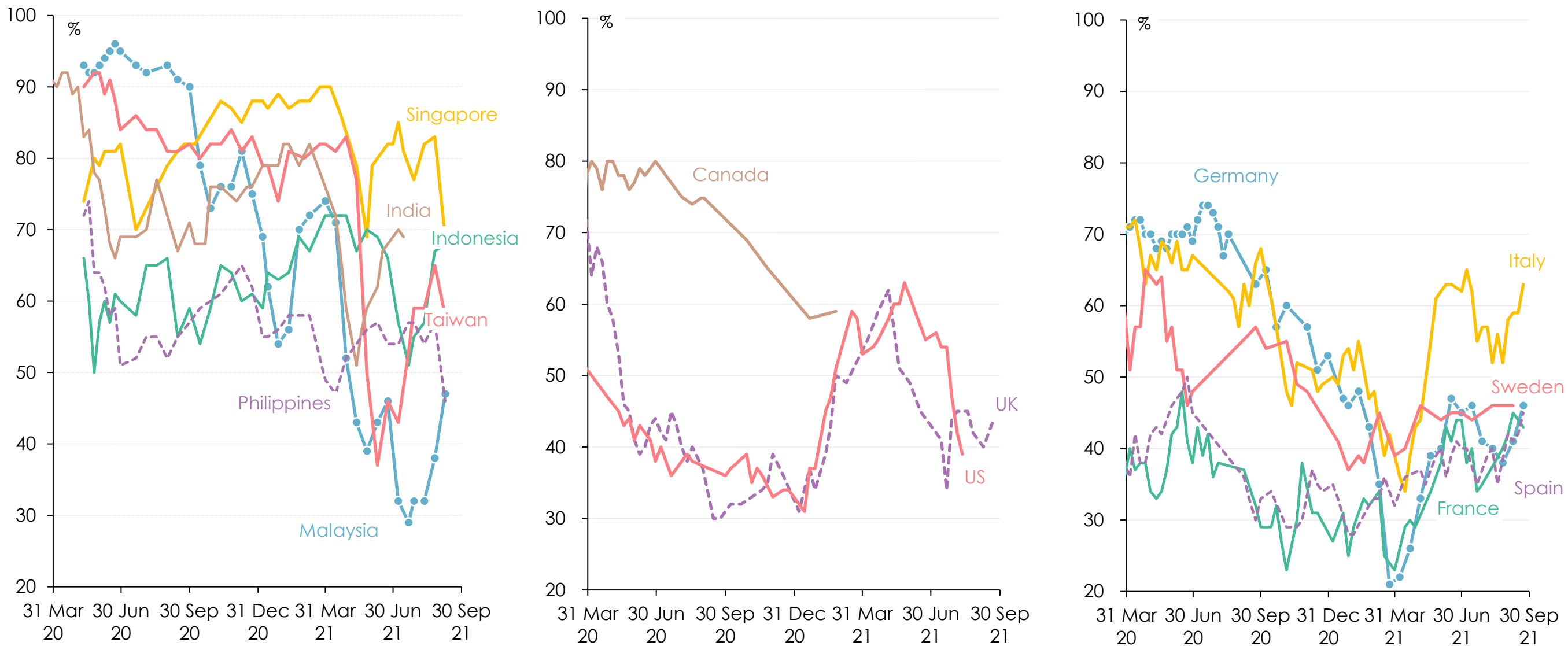


- ❑ Israel, the UK and the US have all experienced a surge in the number of 'delta variant' cases in recent weeks
- ❑ In the US, the increase in cases is concentrated in states and counties where vaccination rates are well below the national average (see previous slide)
- ❑ In Israel, the UK and those 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 7<sup>th</sup> October. Source: [Our World in Data](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

# Voter approval of governments' handling of Covid has improved in recent weeks in Indonesia, Malaysia & Europe, but fallen in Singapore & Taiwan

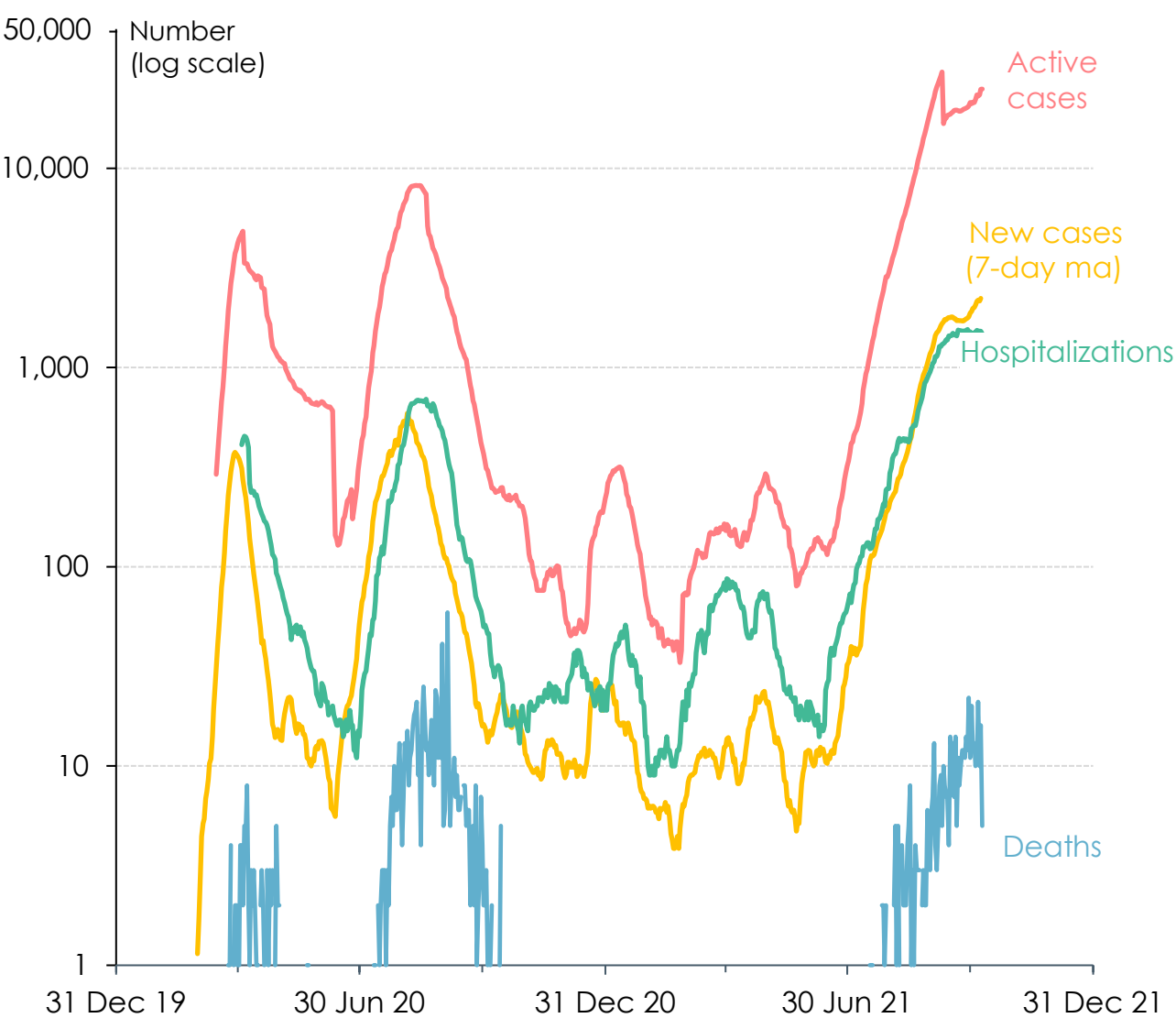
Voter approval of their government's handling of the coronavirus pandemic



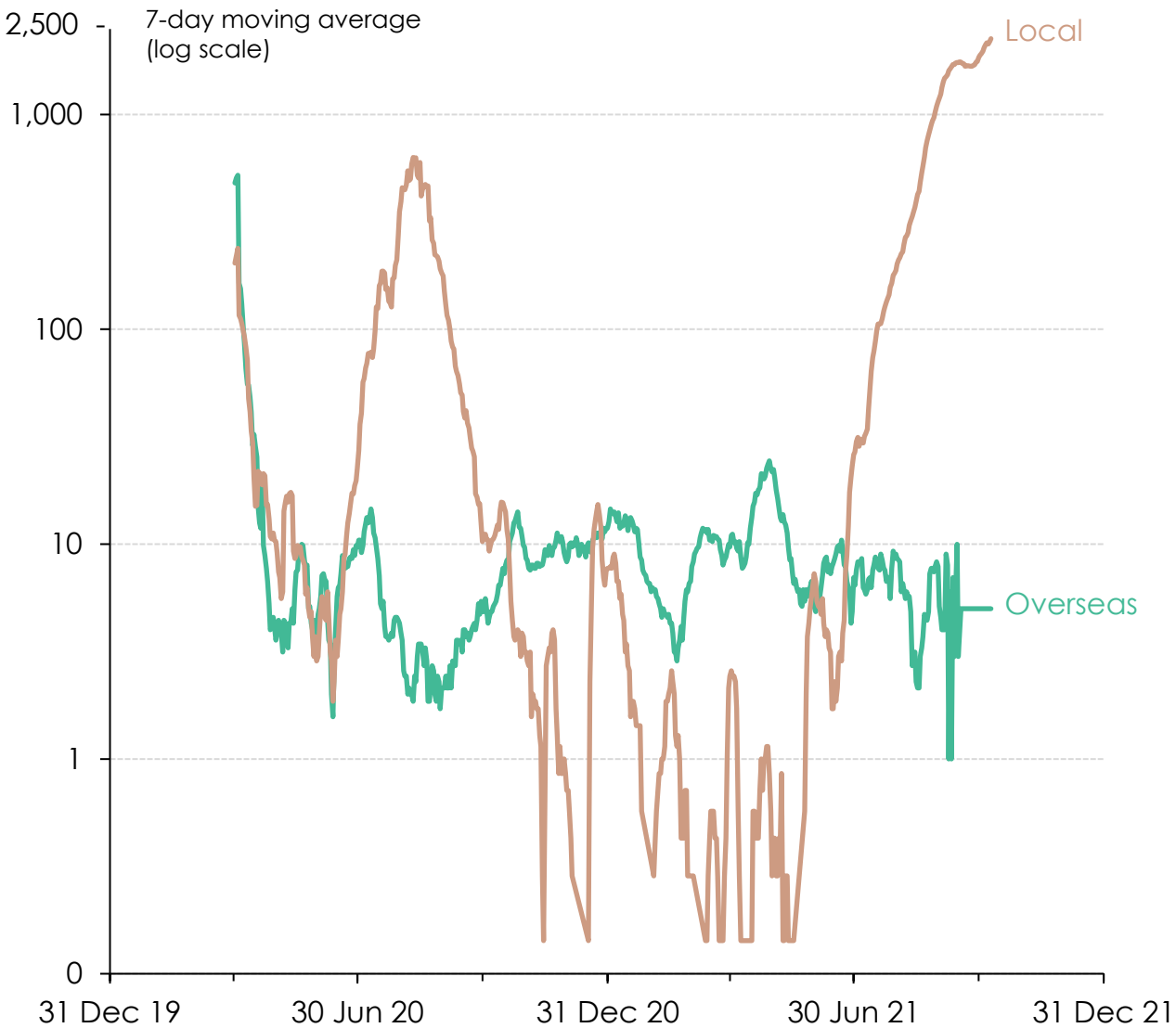
Note: no new polls were published in the past week. Source: YouGov, [Covid-19 tracker: government handling](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

# Australia recorded 15,381 new infections this week – another new high, for the second week in a row

Cases, recoveries, hospitalizations and deaths



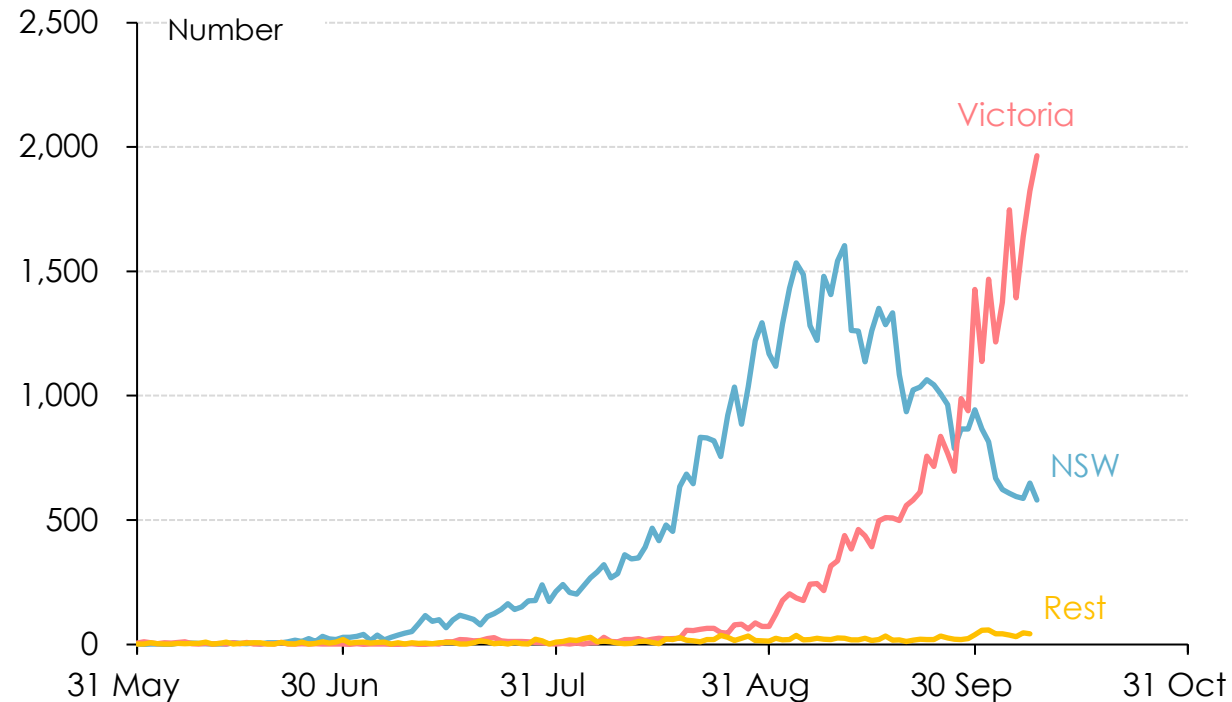
New cases, by source



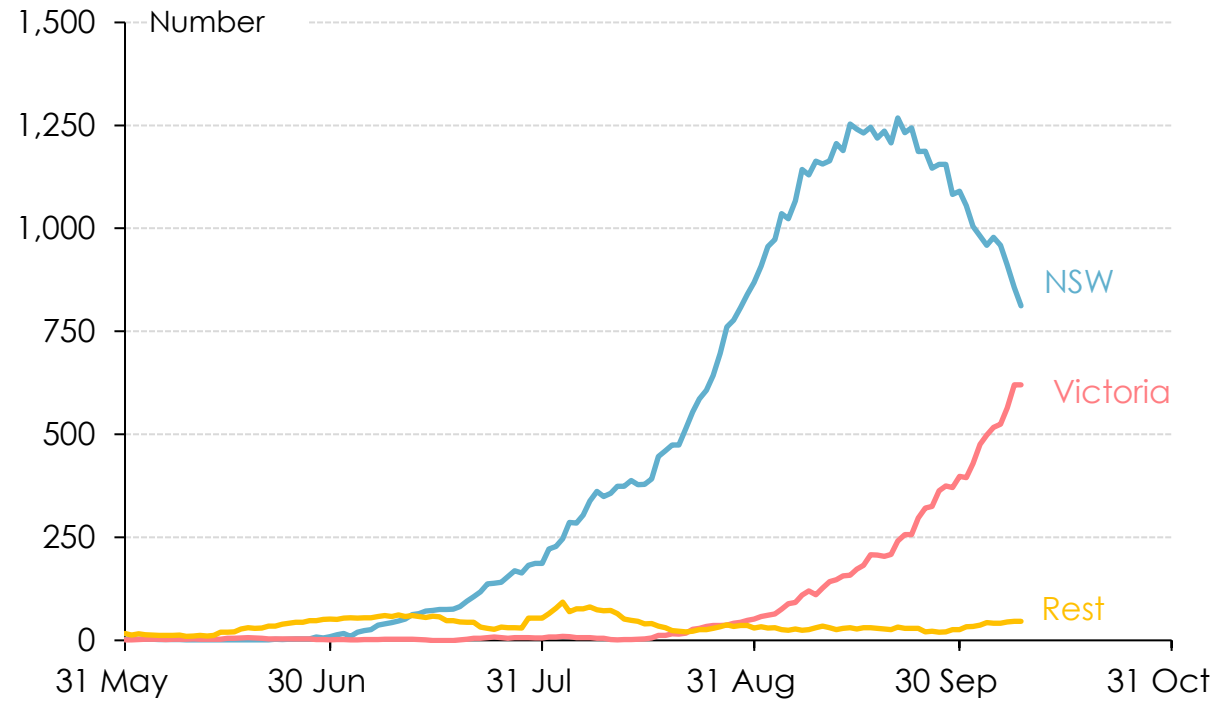
Note: Data up to 8<sup>th</sup> October. The sharp decline in 'active cases' on 10<sup>th</sup> September is entirely attributable to a 13,949 drop in the number of active cases reported in NSW (the reasons for which are not clear). Source: [covid19data.com.au](https://covid19data.com.au). [Return to "What's New"](#).

# The increase in the number of new cases this week was again entirely attributable to the surge in new infections in Victoria

## New cases

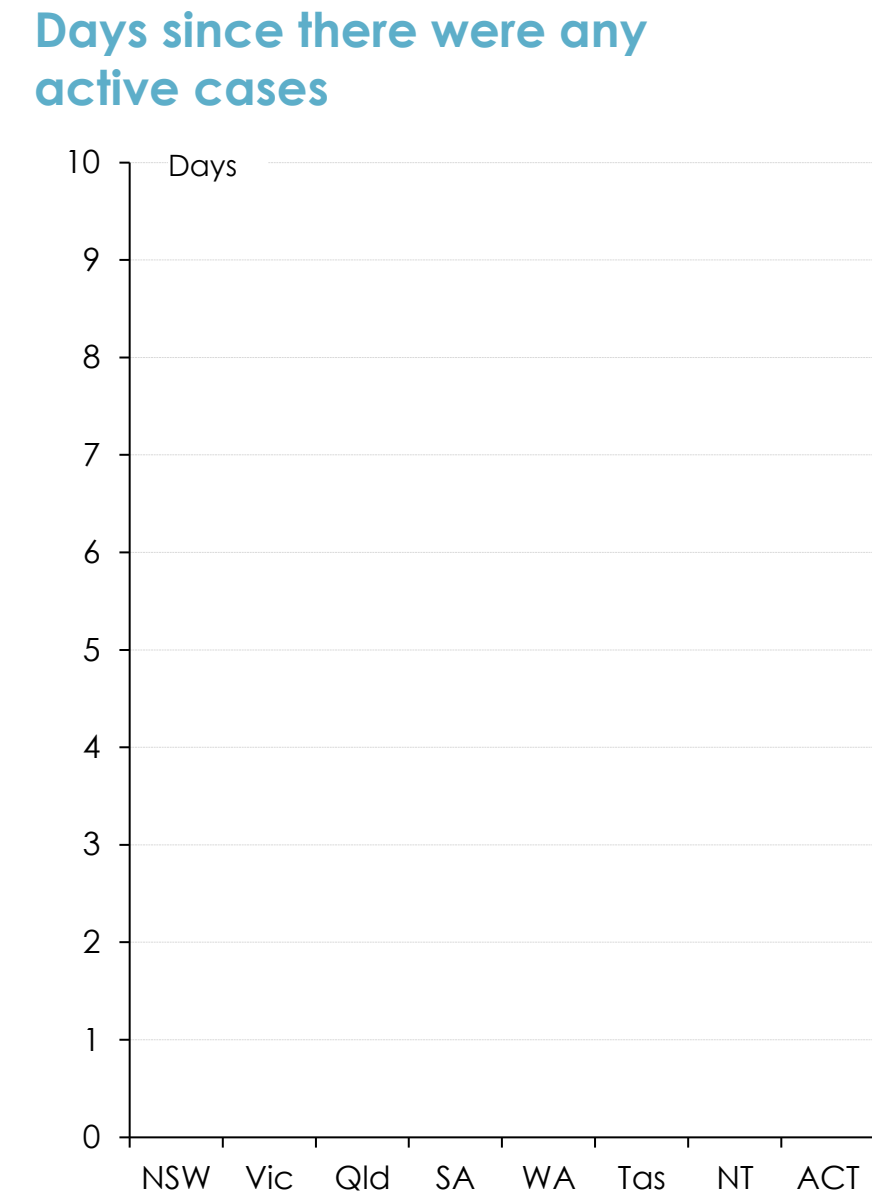
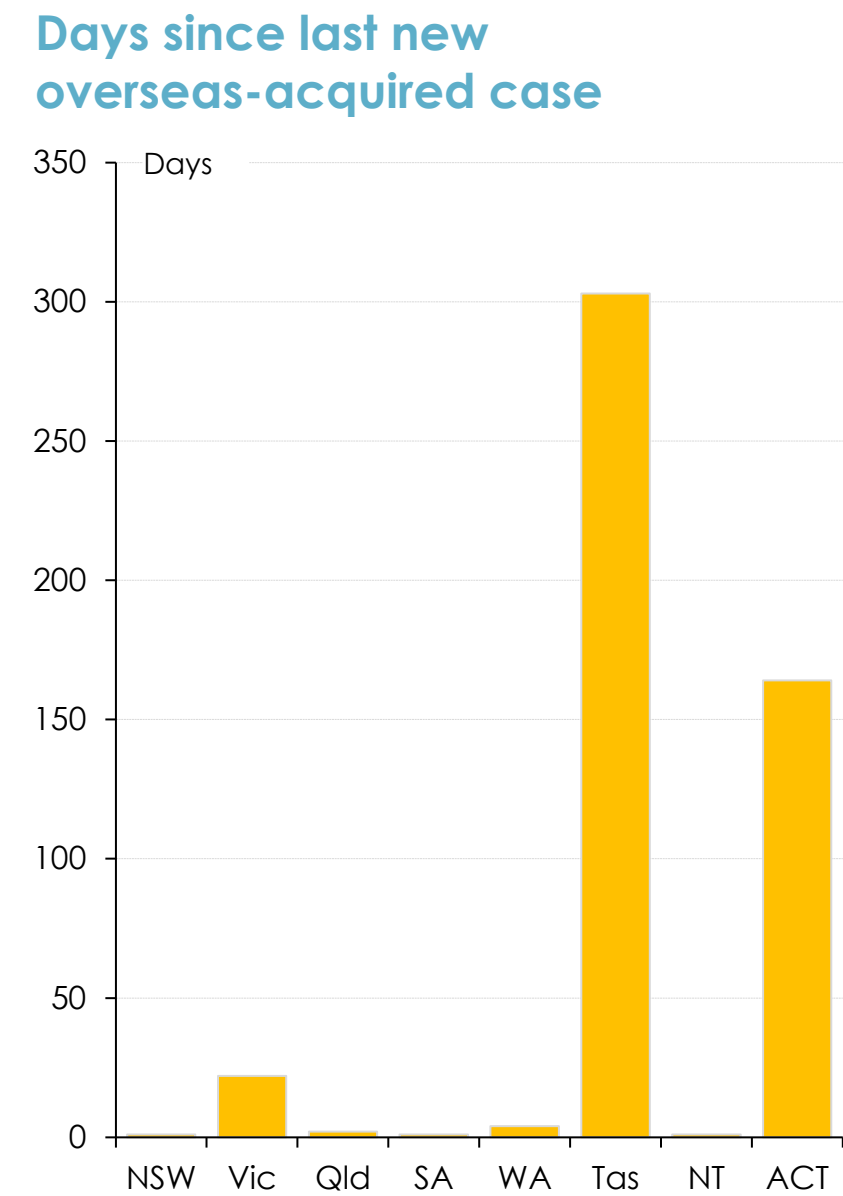
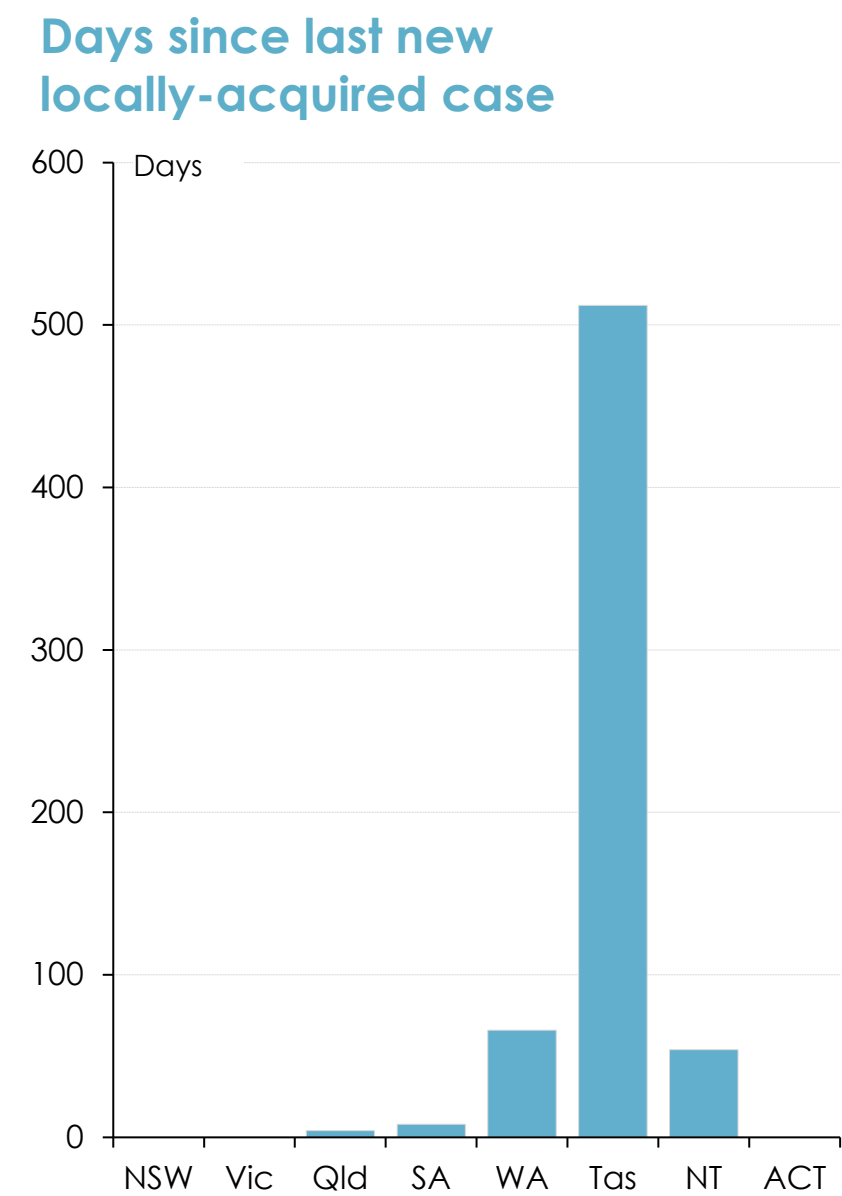


## Hospitalizations



- ❑ Victoria's dramatic surge in the number of new infections continued this week – and remains at a higher level than recorded during last year's 'second wave' – which Victorian authorities attributed to "illegal gatherings and house parties" over the Australian Football League grand final long weekend (two weeks ago)
- ❑ By contrast the number of new infections in New South Wales has continued to decline (the 7-day moving average is now down 55% from its peak in mid-September), and with NSW's full-vaccination rate (of the  $\geq 16$  population) now having passed 60% (slide 18) NSW's new Premier this week foreshadowed an accelerated easing of some restrictions
- ❑ A clear difference in 'risk tolerance' is emerging between NSW, Victoria and the ACT – who are now willing to 'live with' some Covid – and the other states and the NT, which are maintaining a 'zero tolerance' approach

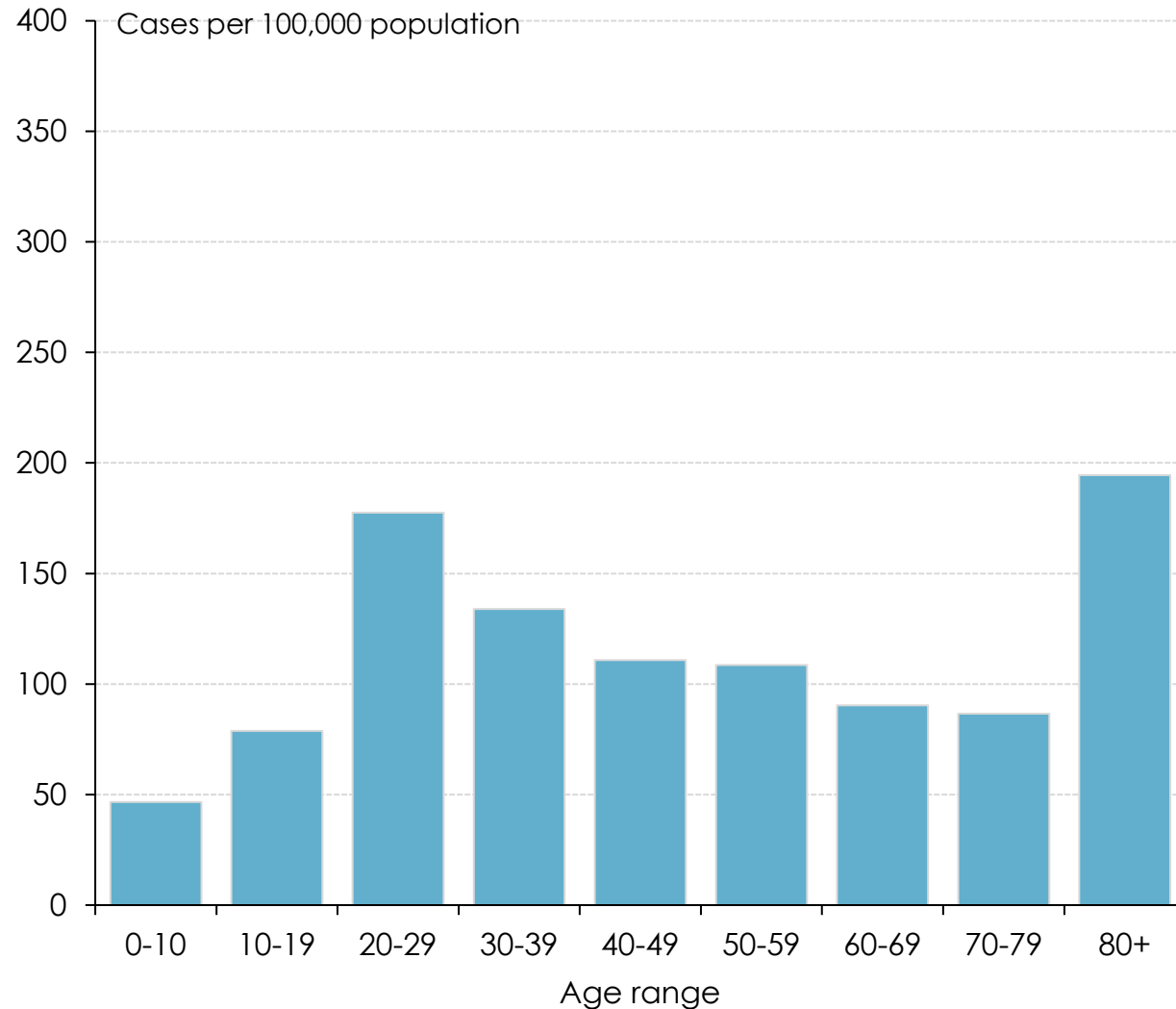
# The smaller states and territories have done better at keeping the virus at bay, partly because they receive fewer overseas arrivals



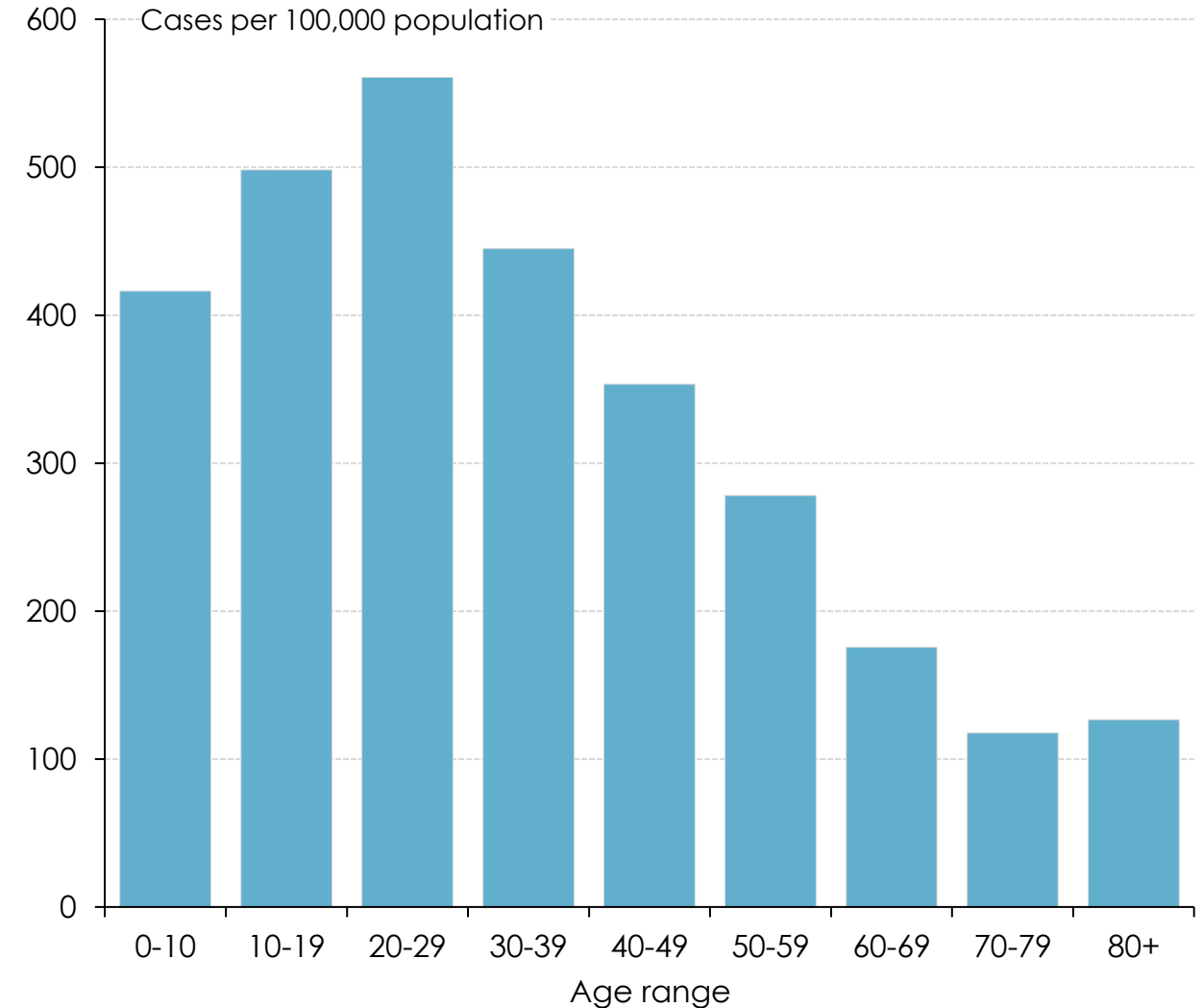
Note: Data are for 9<sup>th</sup> October. Source: [covid19data.com.au](https://covid19data.com.au). [Return to "What's New"](#).

# 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

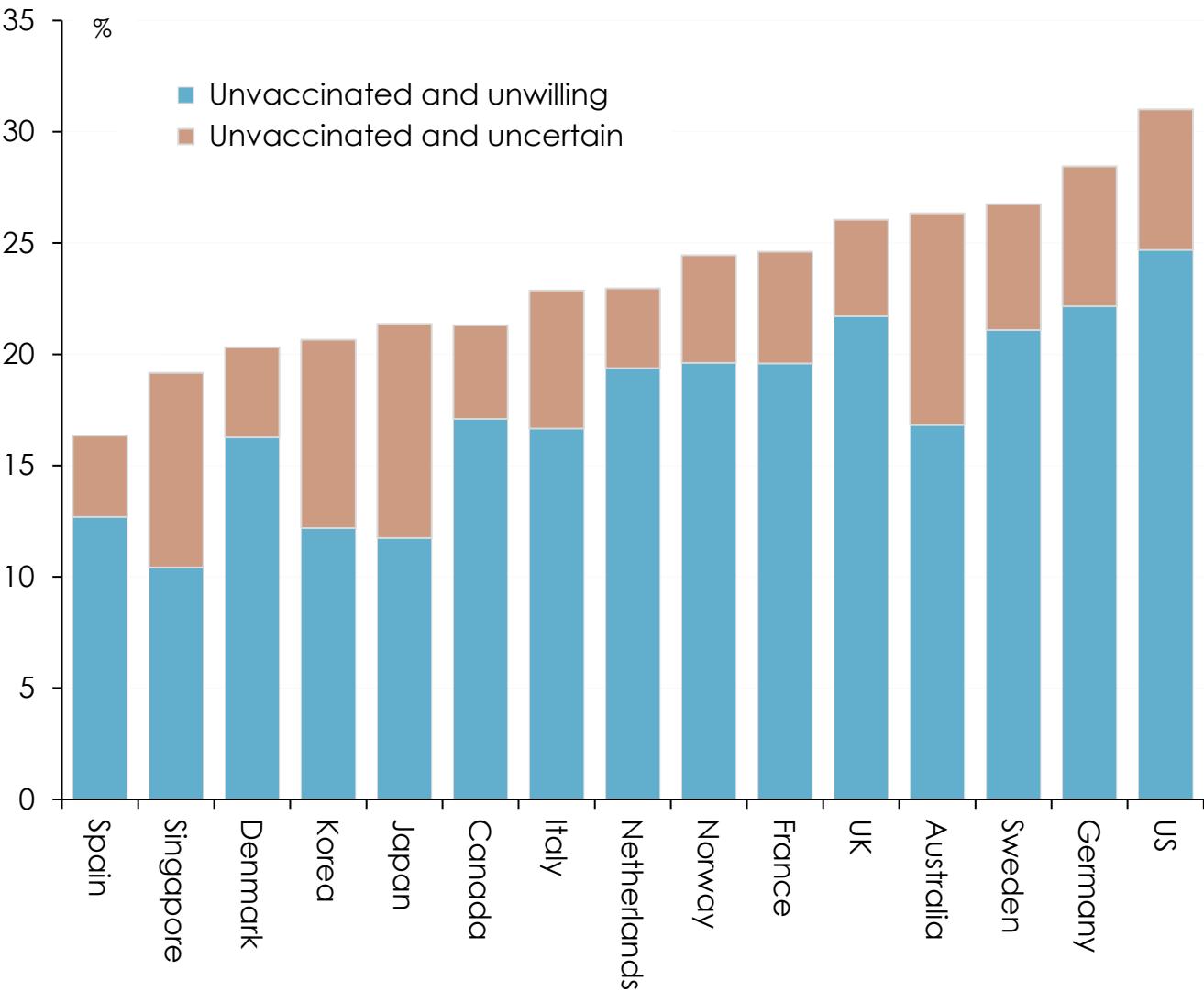


Note: Data up to 8<sup>th</sup> October. Source: [Australian Government Department of Health](#); ABS; Corinna. [Return to "What's New"](#).

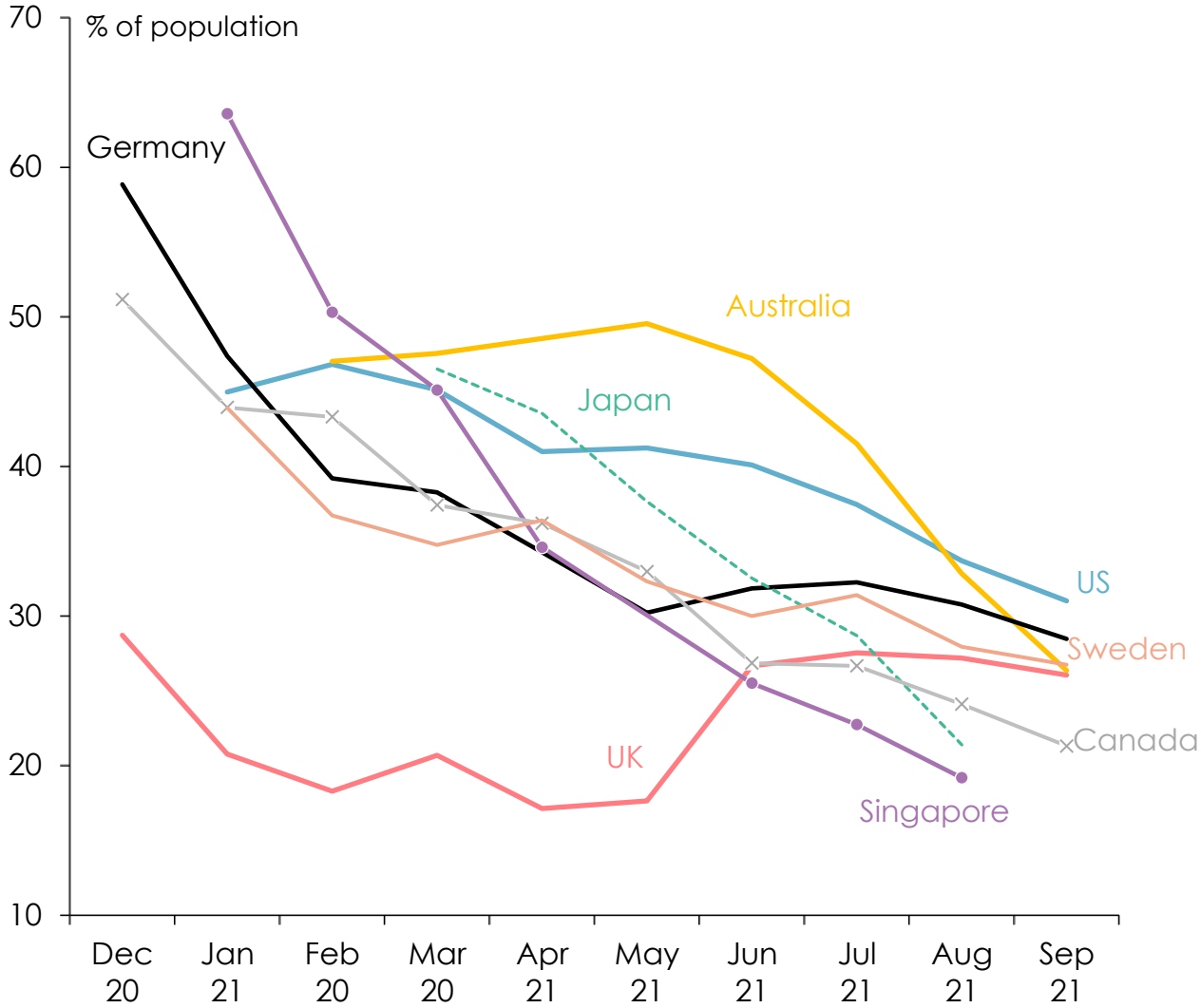


# Vaccine hesitancy among Australians was the highest in the ‘developed’ world, but has fallen sharply in the past four months

Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy, selected ‘advanced’ economies, September 2021



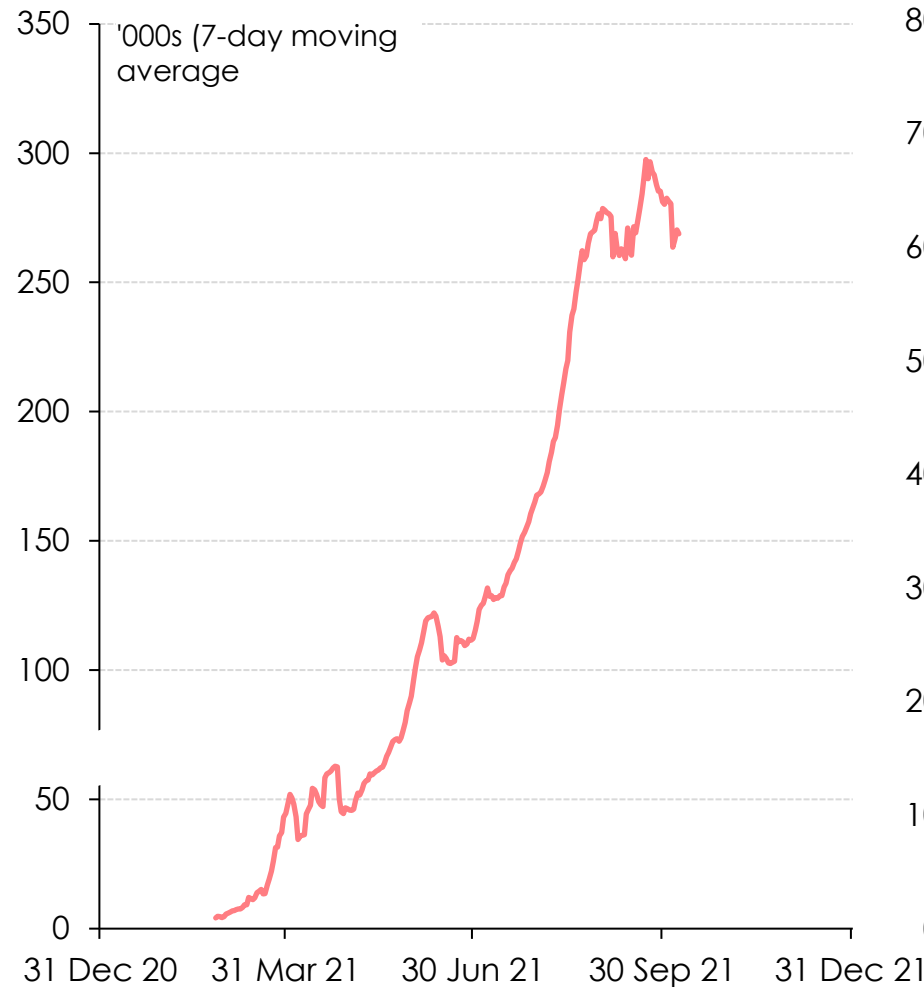
Percentage of populations unvaccinated and unwilling or uncertain about getting vaccinated



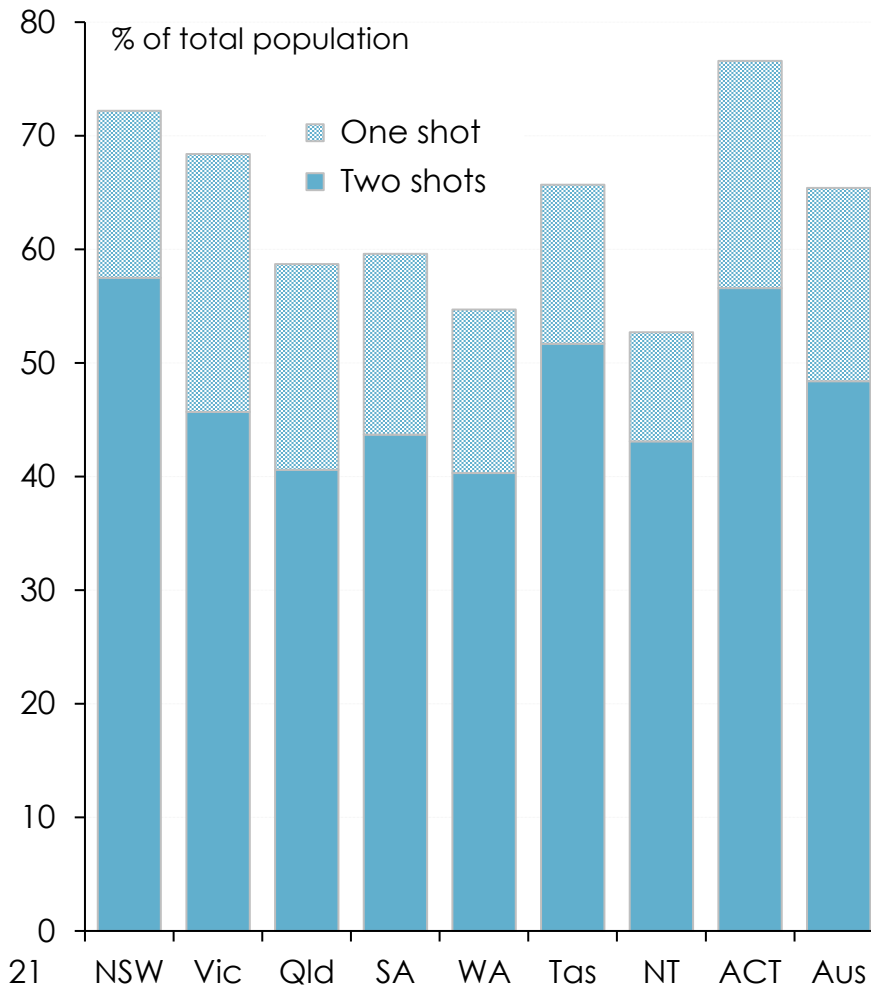
Note: Data for Singapore, Spain, Japan, Denmark, Norway and the UK are for August.  
Source: Imperial College London and YouGov, [Covid 19 Behaviour Tracker Data Hub](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

# Vaccination rates have risen sharply over the past two months, particularly in NSW – but there's a fair bit of 'fudging' with the denominators of these 'rates'

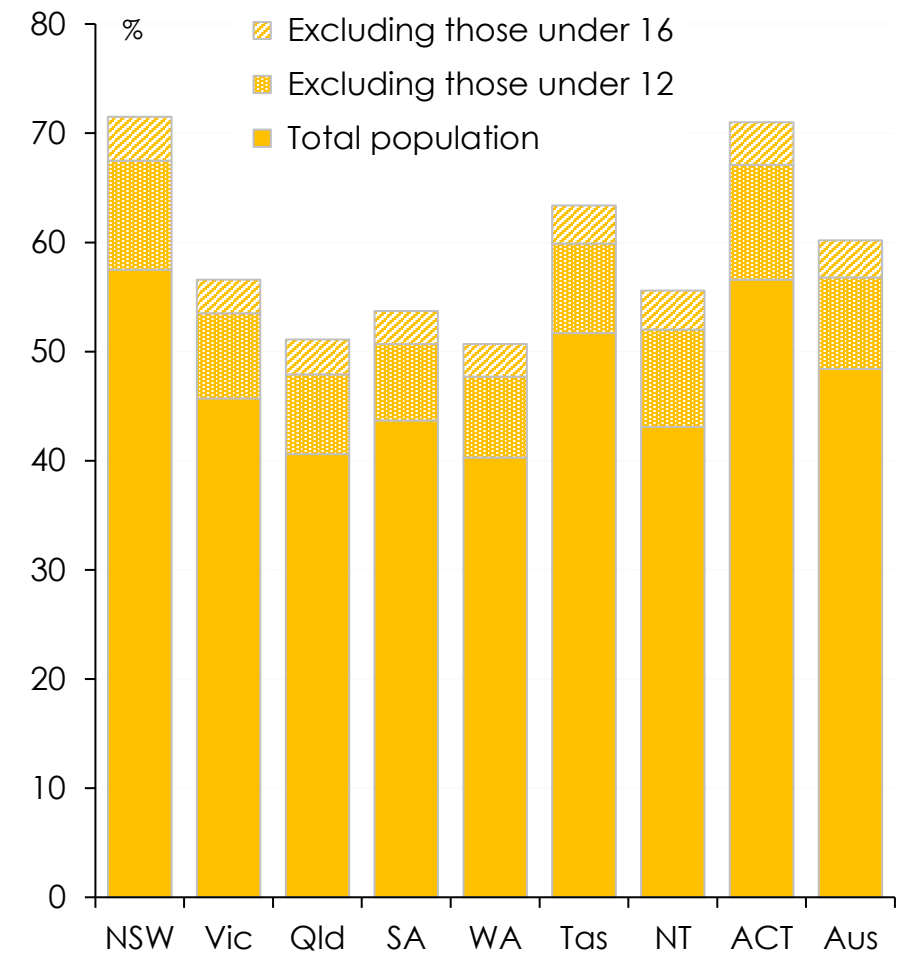
## Daily number of vaccines administered



## Percentage of total population vaccinated, states and territories



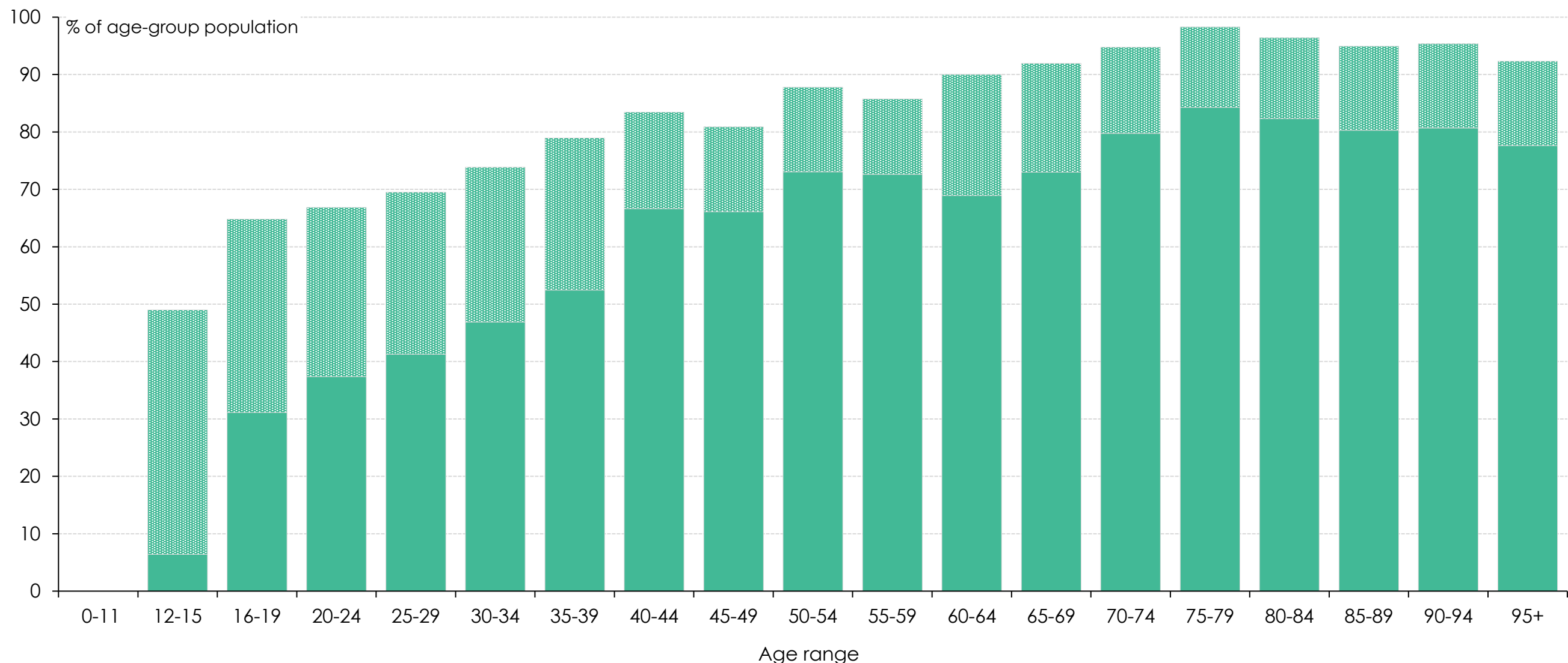
## Percentage of populations double-vaccinated, states and territories



Note: Data up to 8<sup>th</sup> October. 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](https://covid19data.com.au); Australian Department of Health, [Australia's COVID-19 vaccine rollout](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

# Almost 82% of those aged 70 & over are now fully vaccinated – but only 45% of 20-39 year-olds (who account for the largest number of cases) have been

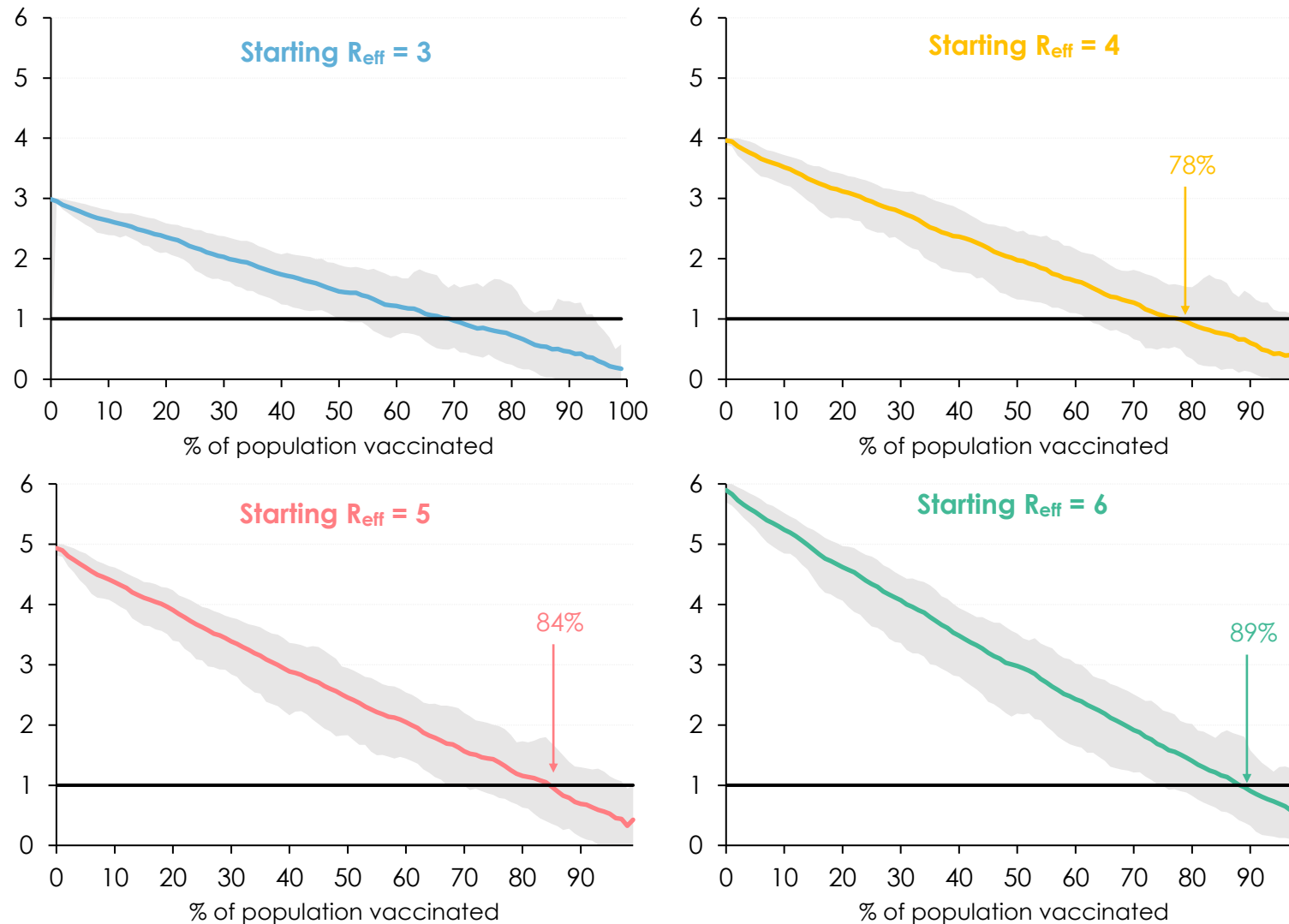
Vaccination rates by age group as at 1<sup>st</sup> October



Note: For data on infections by age group see [slide 16](#).  
Source: Commonwealth Department of Health, [Covid-19 Vaccine Roll-out update](#), 8<sup>th</sup> October 2021. [Return to "What's New"](#).

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

## Alternative scenarios for effective reproduction number ( $R_{\text{eff}}$ ) and vaccination rates



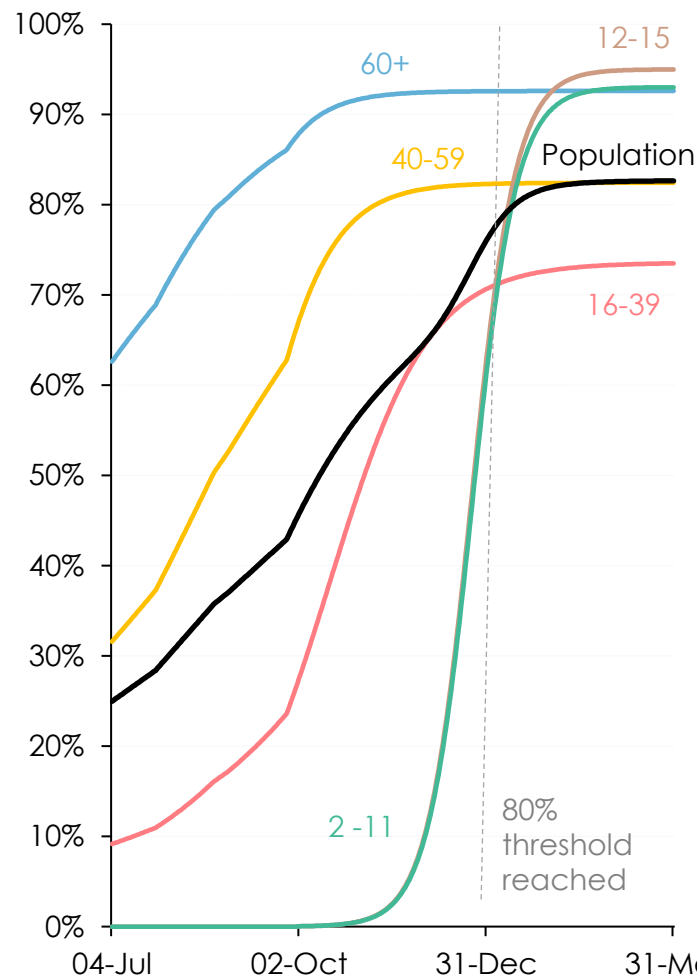
Note: Solid lines show the mean outcomes of the model simulations, while shaded areas show the 10<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> percentiles of the simulations. Source: Stephen Duckett, Danielle Wood, Brendan Coates et al, [Race to 80: Our best shot at living with Covid](#), Grattan Institute, 27<sup>th</sup> 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 ' $R_{\text{eff}}$ ' (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 ' $R_{\text{eff}}$ ' 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 ' $R_{\text{eff}}$ ' 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

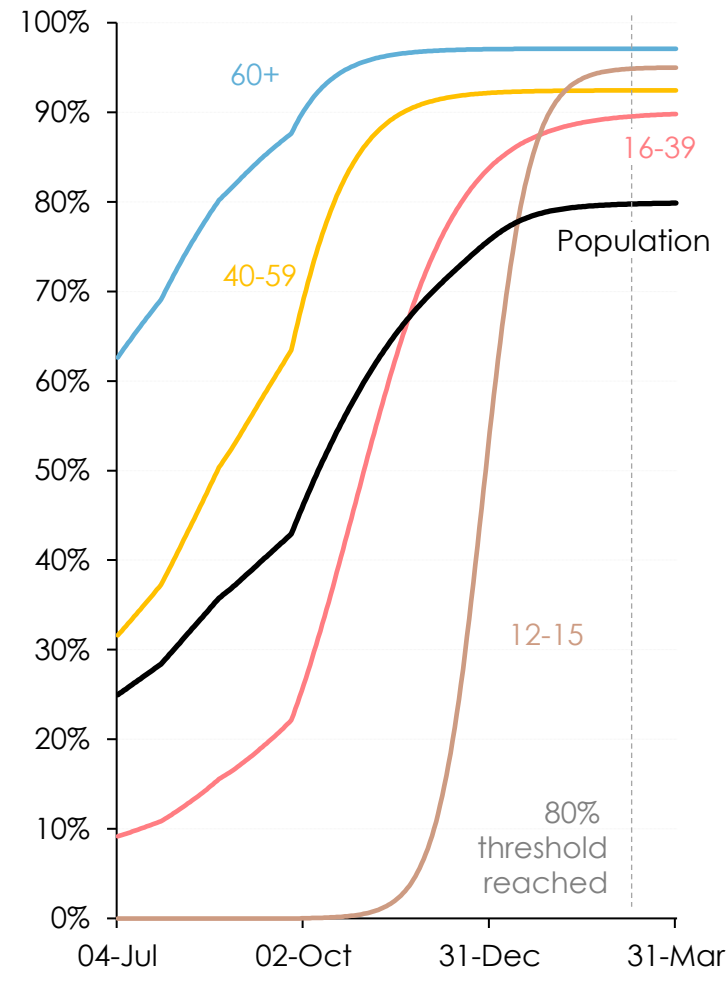
# Because the Government's vaccination targets are expressed in terms of the 'eligible' population there may be some risk of opening up 'too early'

## Plausible vaccination rates by age group

Assuming children aged 2-11 can be vaccinated



Assuming children aged 2-11 can't be vaccinated

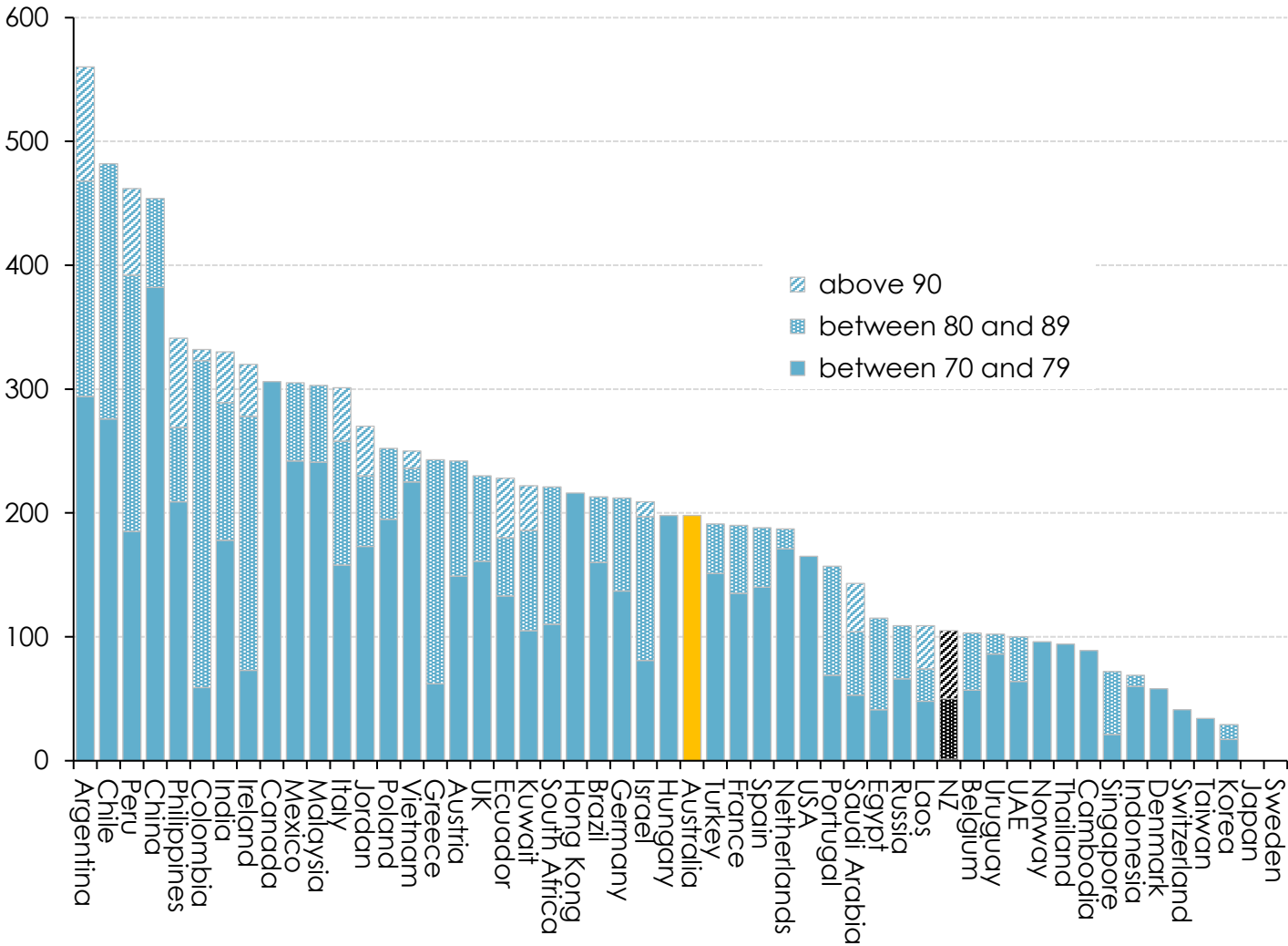


- ❑ the Federal Government's '[National Plan to transition Australia's National COVID-19 Response](#)' (based on [Doherty Institute modelling](#)) specifies 70% and 80% 'full vaccination rates' as thresholds for the progressive easing of restrictions
- ❑ These thresholds are expressed as percentages 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

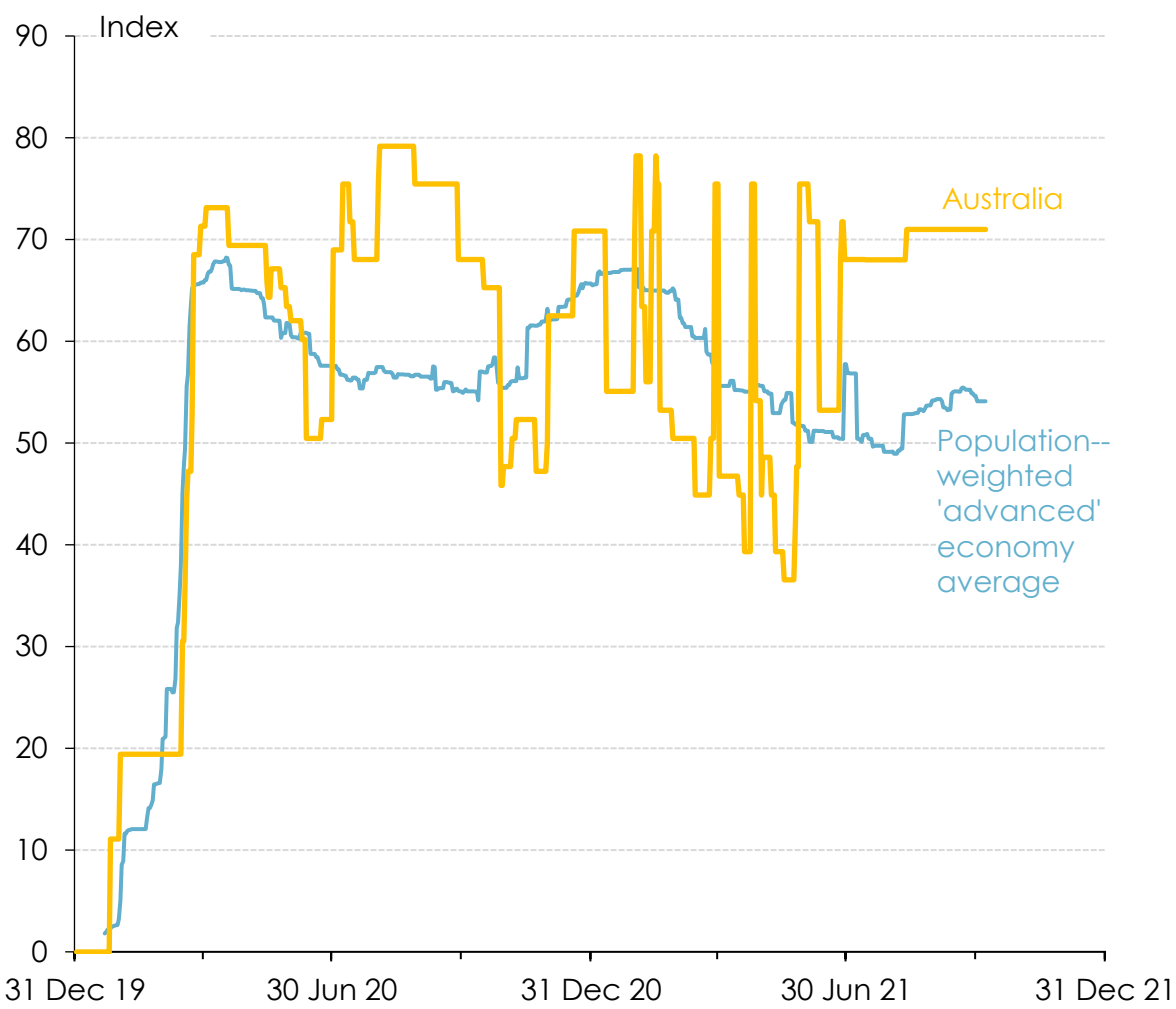
Source: Stephen Duckett, Danielle Wood, Brendan Coates et al, [Race to 80: Our best shot at living with Covid](#), Grattan Institute, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021; Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, [Doherty Institute COVID-19 modelling - Key findings and implications](#), 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2021.

# 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

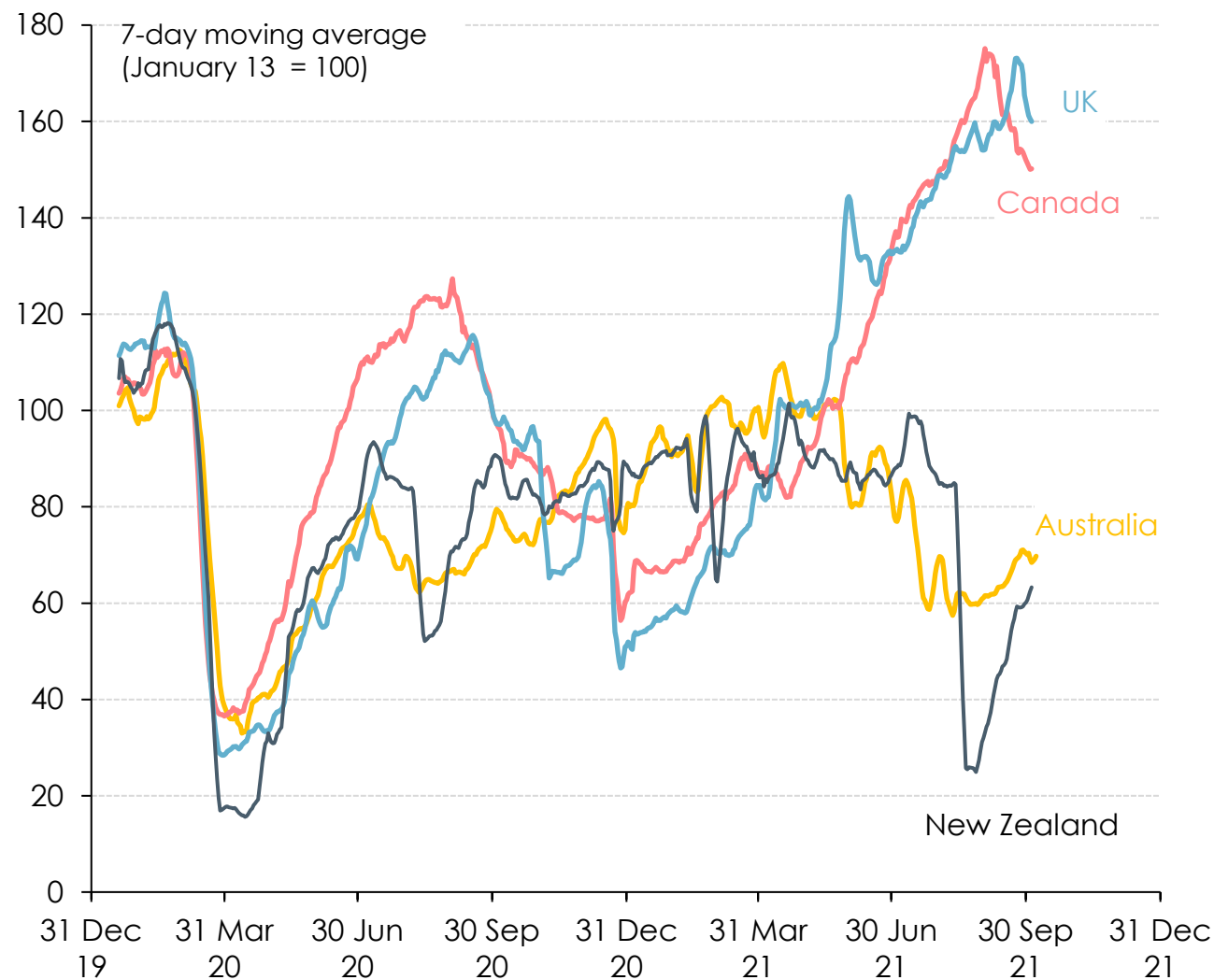


The Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker collects publicly available information on 11 indicators of government response including school and workplace closures, public events cancellations, restrictions on public gatherings, stay at home requirements, public transport closures, domestic and international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

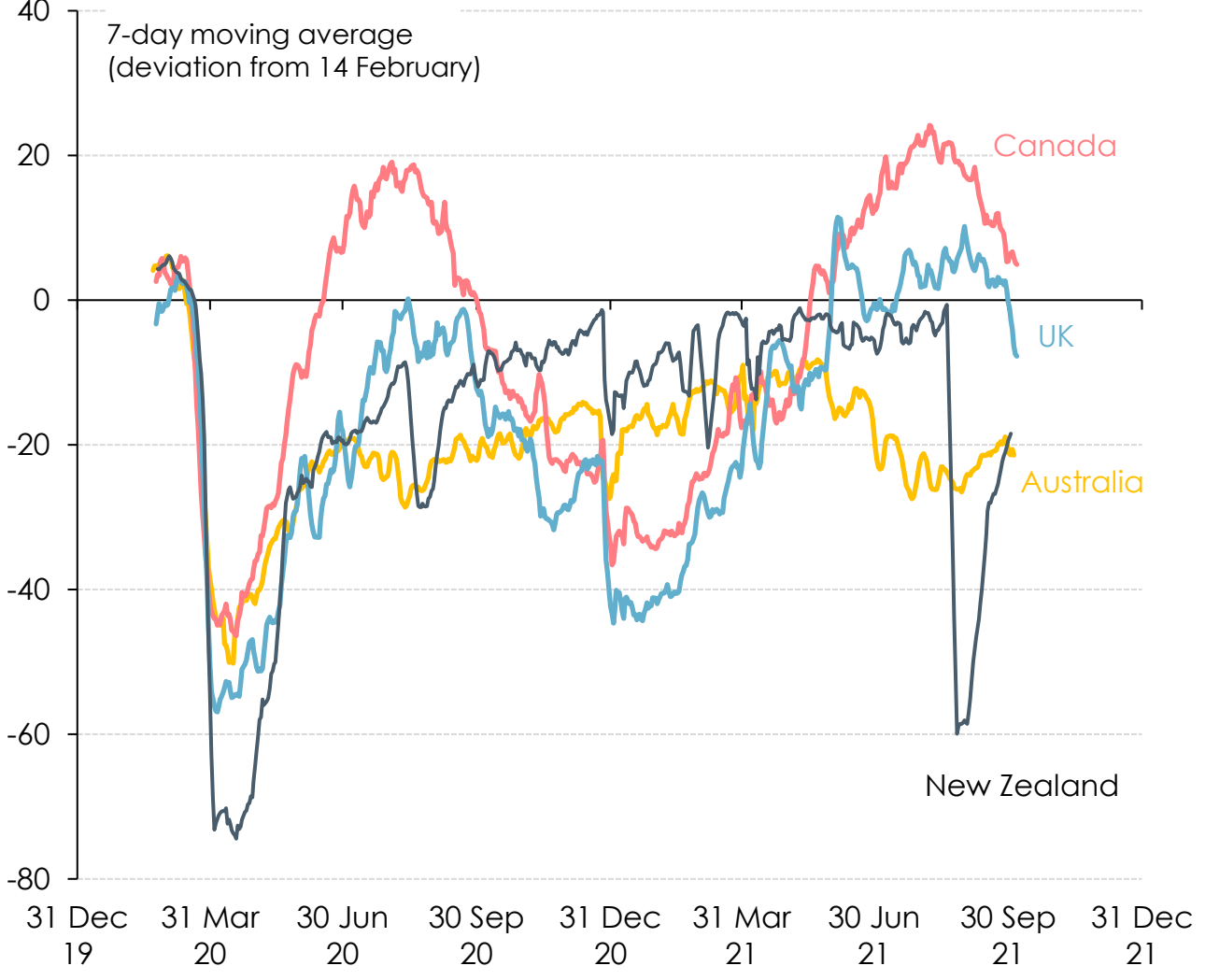


# Mobility indicators give some sense of how more onerous restrictions are now affecting Australia's economy compared with (eg) Canada & the UK

Apple mobility indicators



Google non-residential activity mobility indicators



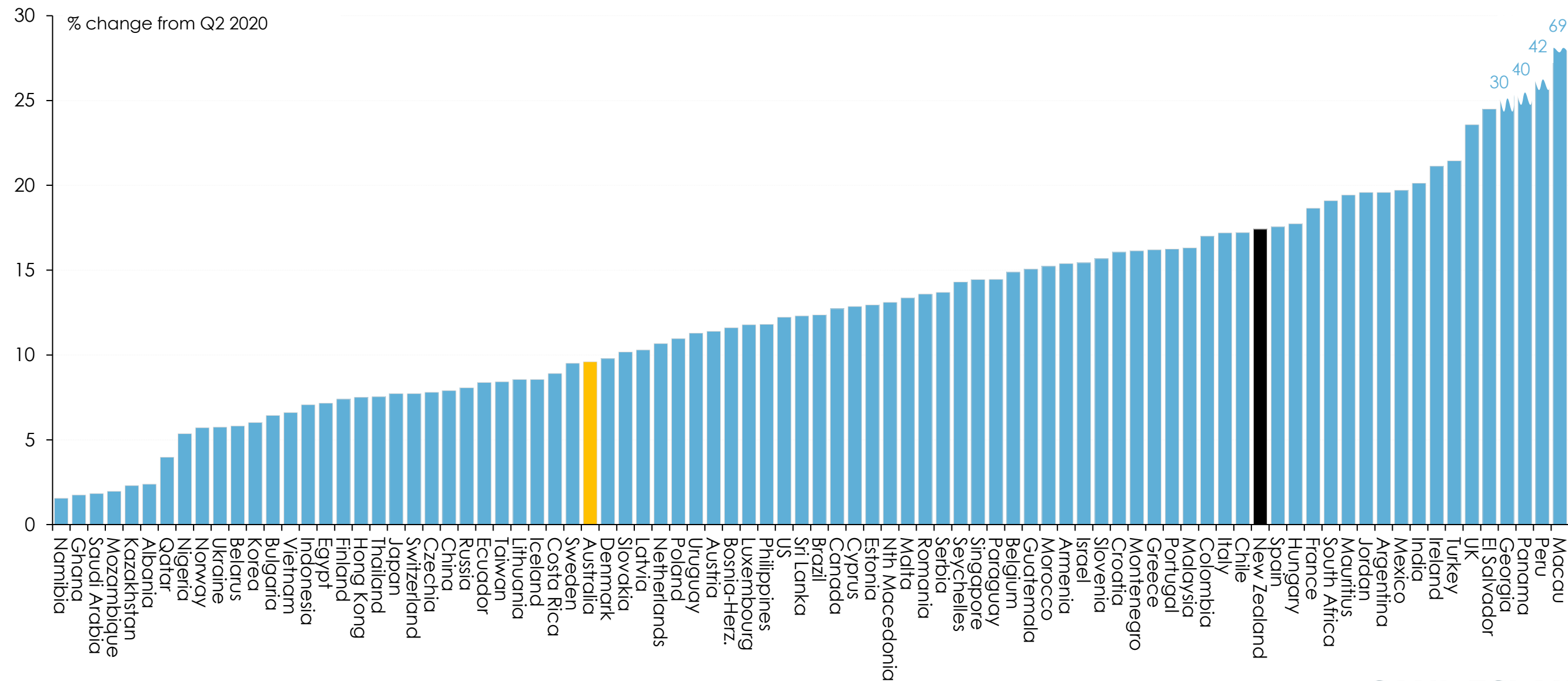
Note: 'Apple mobility indicator' is the average of three separate indicators for driving, use of transit and walking (data up to 7<sup>th</sup> October). Google 'non-residential activities' indicator is the average of separate indicators for workplaces, retail and recreation, groceries and pharmaceuticals, transit and parks (data up to 4<sup>th</sup> October). Sources: Apple, [Mobility Trends Reports](#); Google, [Covid-19 Community Mobility Reports](#); Corinna Economic Advisory. [Return to "What's New"](#).

**The world**



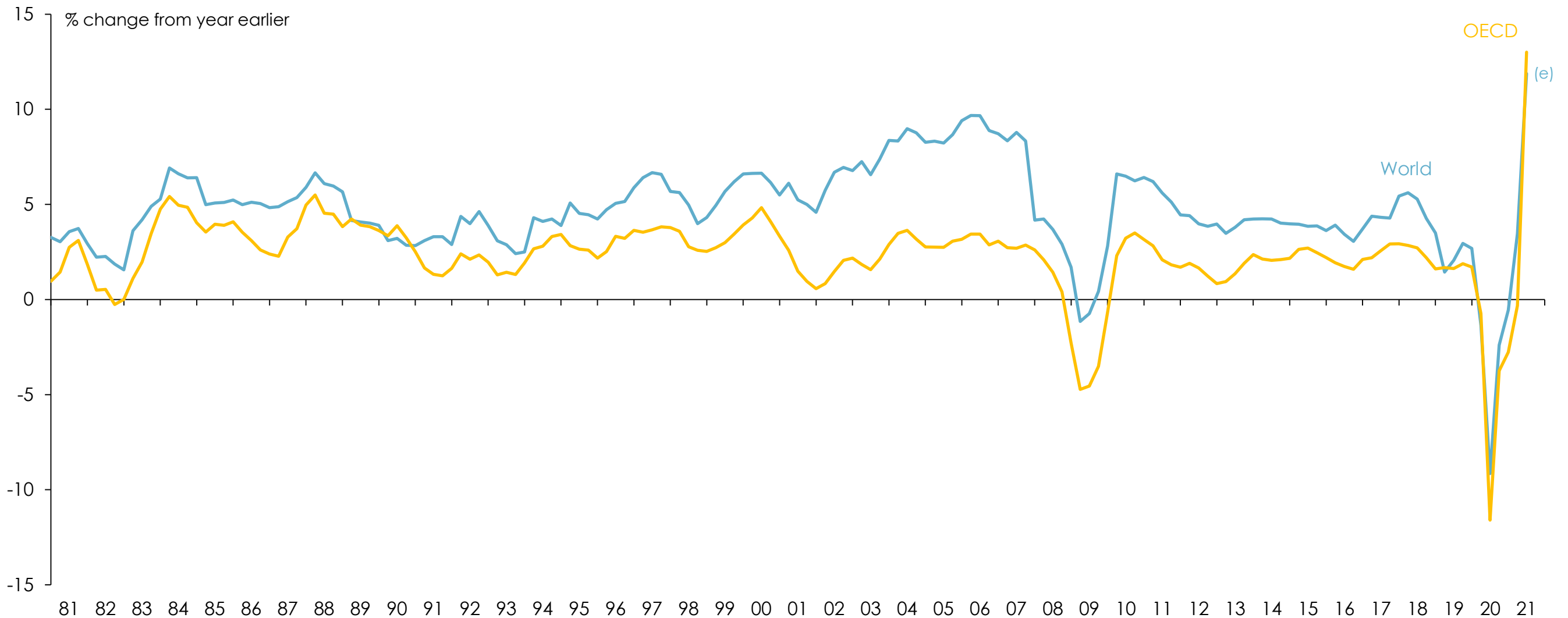
# Of 86 countries which have now reported Q2 GDP estimates, 53 have recorded double-digit growth from last year's pandemic-induced trough

Growth in real GDP over the year to Q2 2021



# The world economy likely grew by about 12% over the year to Q2 – a figure which is vastly flattered by comparison with last year's trough

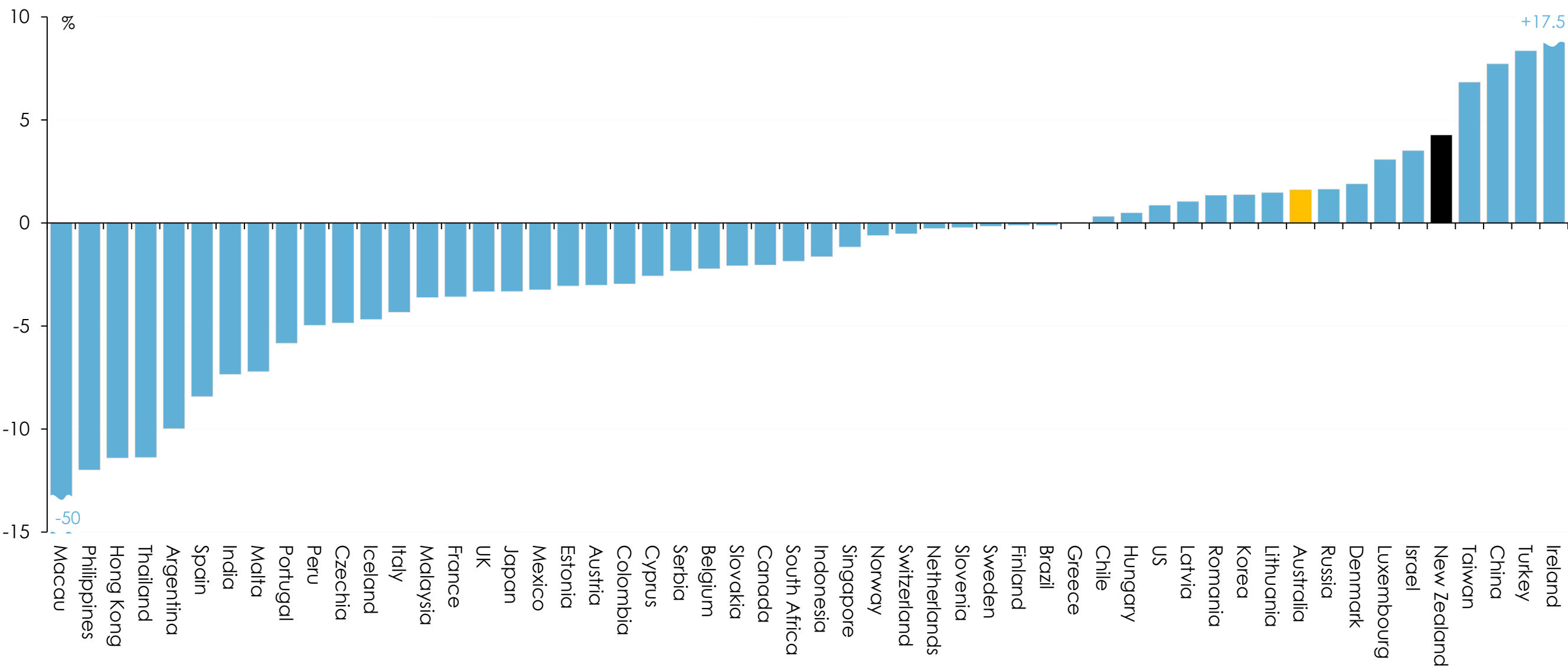
## World and OECD area real GDP growth



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 17 countries (out of 52 for which seasonally-adjusted Q2 GDP estimates are available) have exceeded their pre-pandemic peaks

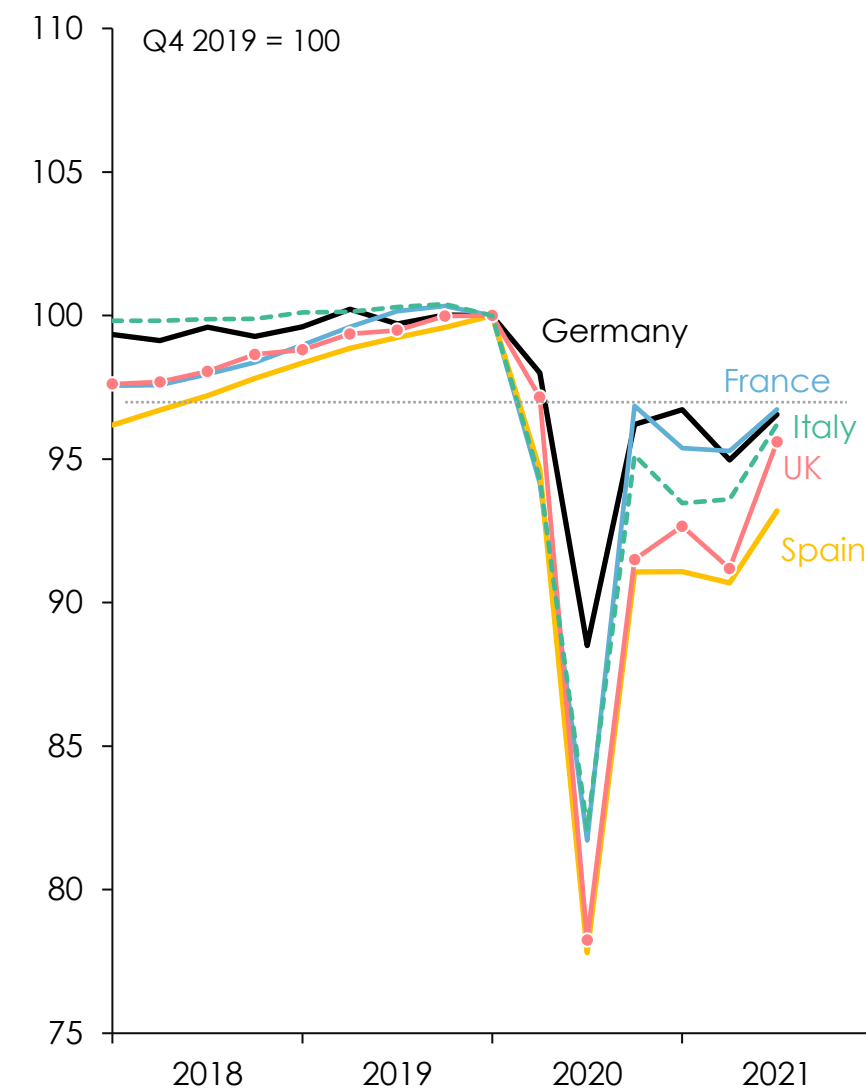
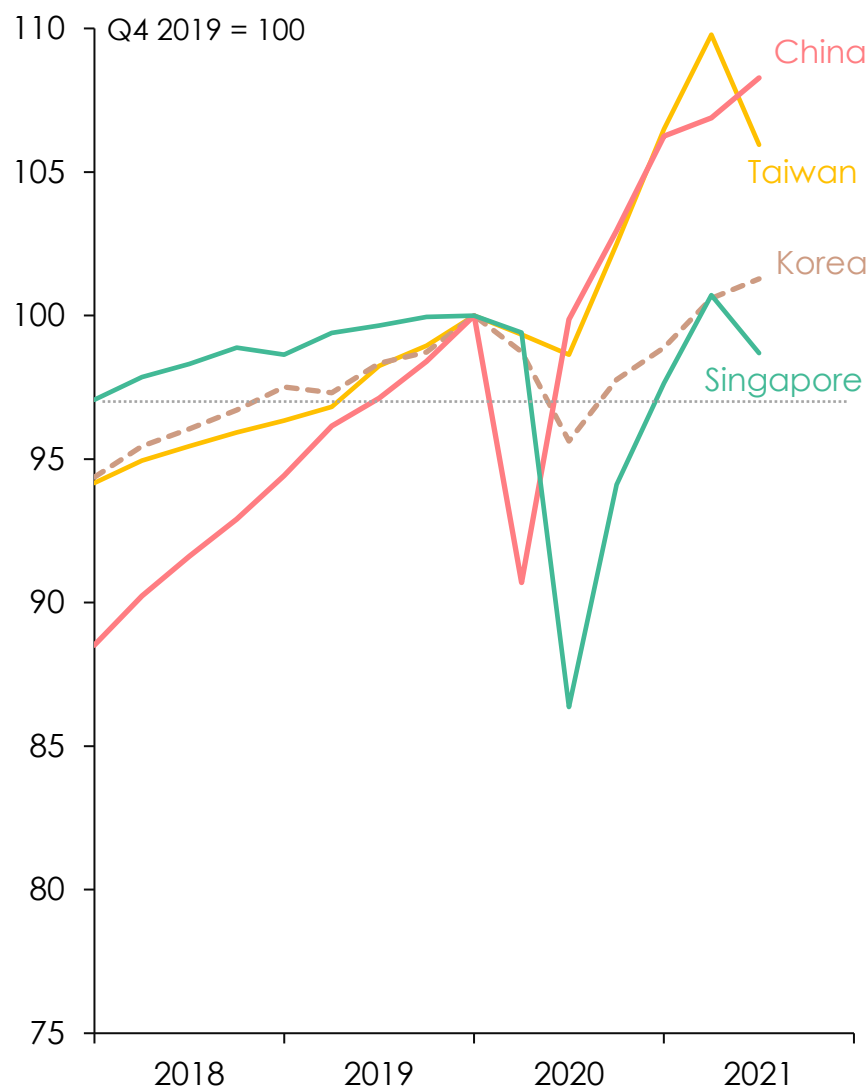
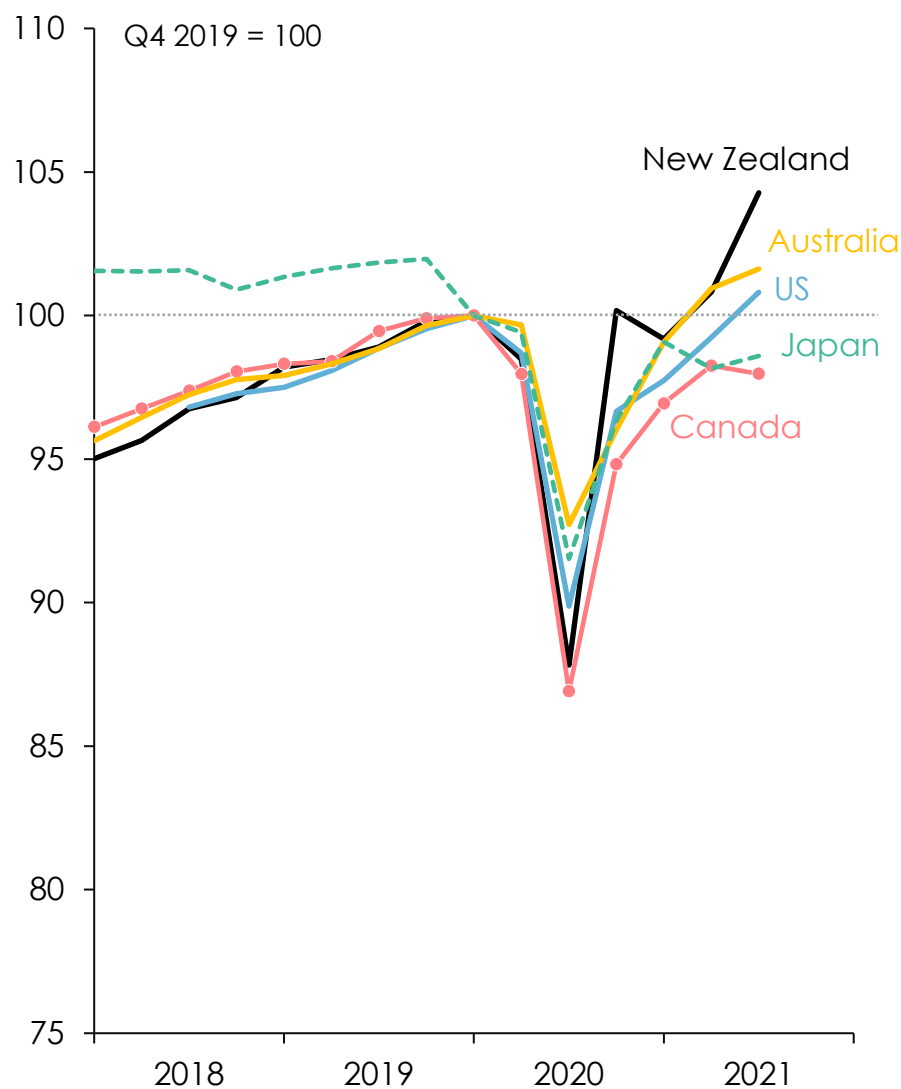
Q2 2021 real GDP compared with pre-recession peak



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 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 last month made minor changes to its global growth outlook but with the US forecast for 2021 down 0.9 pc pt and the euro zone up 1 pc pt

## 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	6.0	3.9	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	4.6	4.5	4.0
India	4.0	-8.0	9.5	8.5	8.3	7.5	6.7	9.9	11.0	5.8
Japan	0.3	-4.8	2.8	3.0	2.9	2.6	2.5	2.1	3.5	1.8
UK	1.4	-9.9	7.0	4.8	na	na	6.7	5.2	na	na
Australia	1.9	-2.4	5.3	3.0	na	na	4.0	3.3	4.3*	2.5*
New Zealand	2.2	-3.0	4.0	3.2	na	na	3.5	3.8	3.2 <sup>†</sup>	4.4 <sup>†</sup>
World	2.8	-3.3	6.0	4.9	5.6	4.3	5.7	4.5	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 1<sup>st</sup> July (and finishing 30<sup>th</sup> June following year) † Forecasts by New Zealand Treasury for fiscal years beginning 1<sup>st</sup> July  
Sources : International Monetary Fund (IMF), [World Economic Outlook Update](#), 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021; The World Bank, [Global Economic Prospects](#), 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021; Organization for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD), [Economic Outlook, Interim Report](#), 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021; Australian Treasury, 2021-22 [Budget Paper No. 1, Statement No. 2](#), 11<sup>th</sup> May 2021; New Zealand Treasury, [Budget Economic and Fiscal Update 2021](#), 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021. [Return to "What's New"](#).

# The OECD's latest forecast includes more substantial downward revisions to forecasts for the US, Indonesia and Australia this year

## OECD real GDP growth forecasts

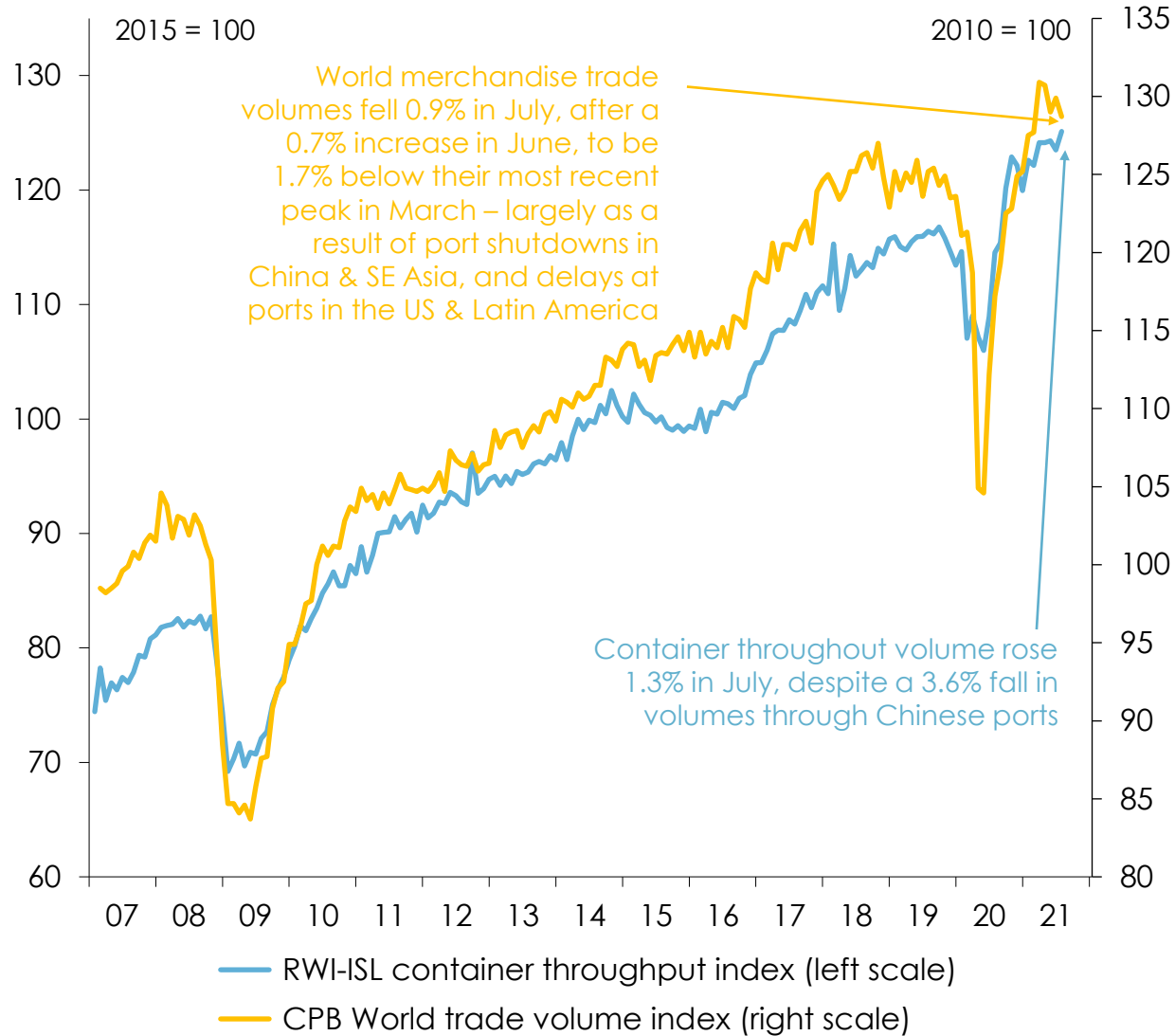
	September forecast (%)		Revision from May (pc pts)	
	2021	2022	2021	2022
<b>Advanced economies</b>				
US	6.0	3.9	-0.9	+0.1
Euro zone	5.3	4.6	+1.0	+0.2
Japan	2.5	2.1	-0.1	+0.1
UK	6.7	5.2	-0.5	-0.3
Australia	4.0	3.3	-1.1	-0.1
<b>Emerging economies</b>				
China	8.5	5.8	0.0	0.0
India	9.7	7.9	-0.2	-0.2
Brazil	5.2	2.3	+1.5	-0.2
Indonesia	3.7	4.9	-1.0	-0.2
Russia	2.7	3.4	-0.8	+0.6
<b>World</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>-0.1</b>	<b>+0.1</b>

- ❑ The OECD's latest forecast for global economic growth this year and next is little changed from the one published in May
  - however, the forecast for US growth in 2021 has been revised down by almost 1 pc pt, as it has also been for Indonesia and Australia, “due to the impact of the Delta variant and temporary supply constraints”, while that for the euro area has been revised up by 1 pc pt “due to higher investment spending, helped by the Next Generation EU funds”
  - the forecast continues to assume an “additional boost to infrastructure spending in the US” (which may not happen)
  - and the forecast for China hasn't changed despite clear evidence that its economy is slowing
- ❑ The OECD also emphasizes the need for ongoing “macro-economic policy support” accompanied by “effective and well-targeted structural reforms”
  - monetary policy should “tolerate” temporary overshooting of headline inflation from “transient capacity pressures” provided underlying inflation pressures are contained and “inflation expectations remain well-anchored”
  - a “premature and abrupt withdrawal of fiscal policy support should be avoided” – instead ensuring that “support continues to go to the poorest households” and that resources be “redirected to digital and low-carbon transformations”
  - governments need to “seize the opportunity at a time when macro-economic policies are supportive and demand is rising quickly to accelerate reforms” (see [slide 142](#) for what that means in the Australian context)

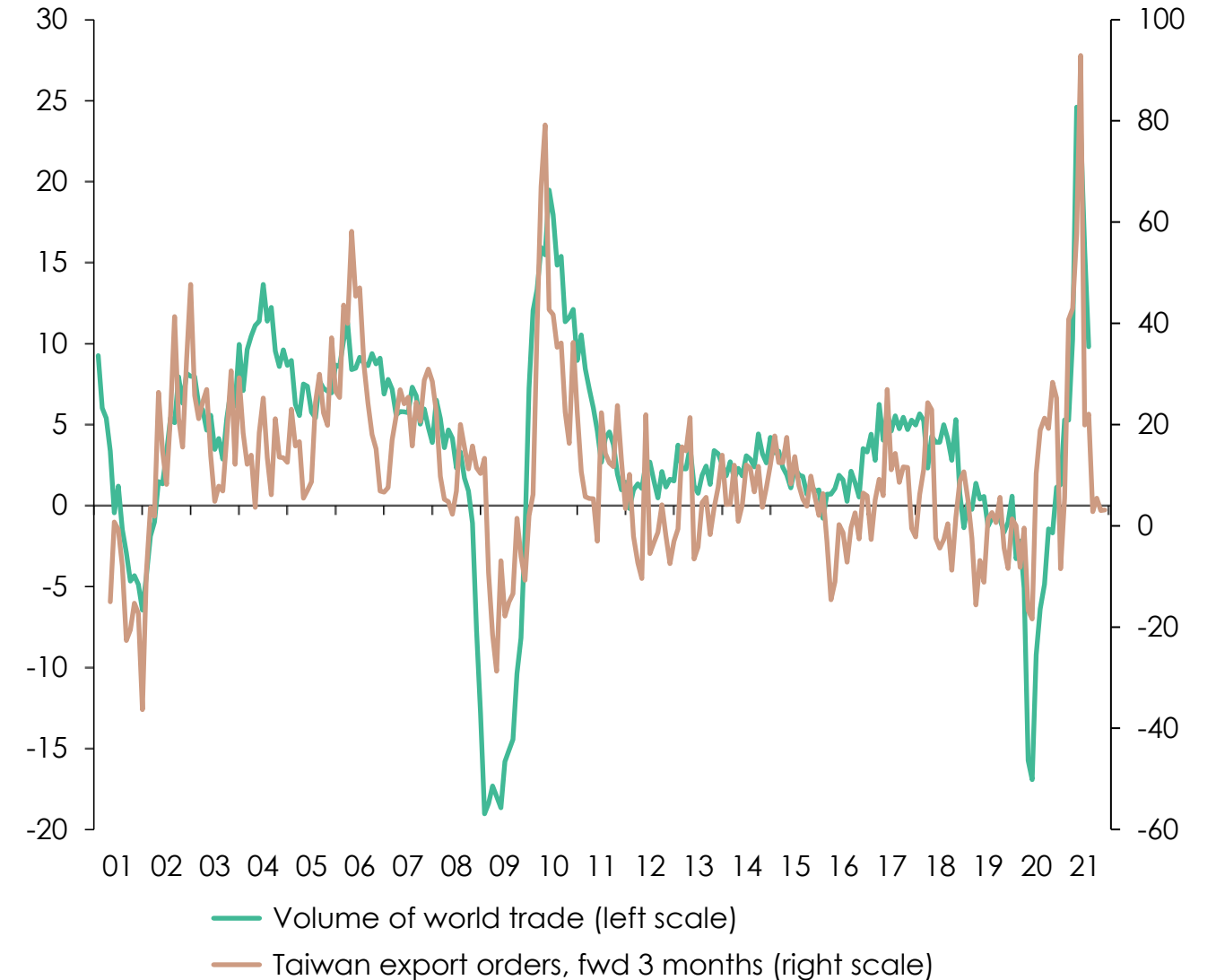
Source: OECD, [Economic Outlook, Interim Report](#), 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021.  
[Return to "What's New"](#).

# World trade volumes fell in July, as a result of port closures in Asia and delays at ports in the US

## World trade volumes and container throughput



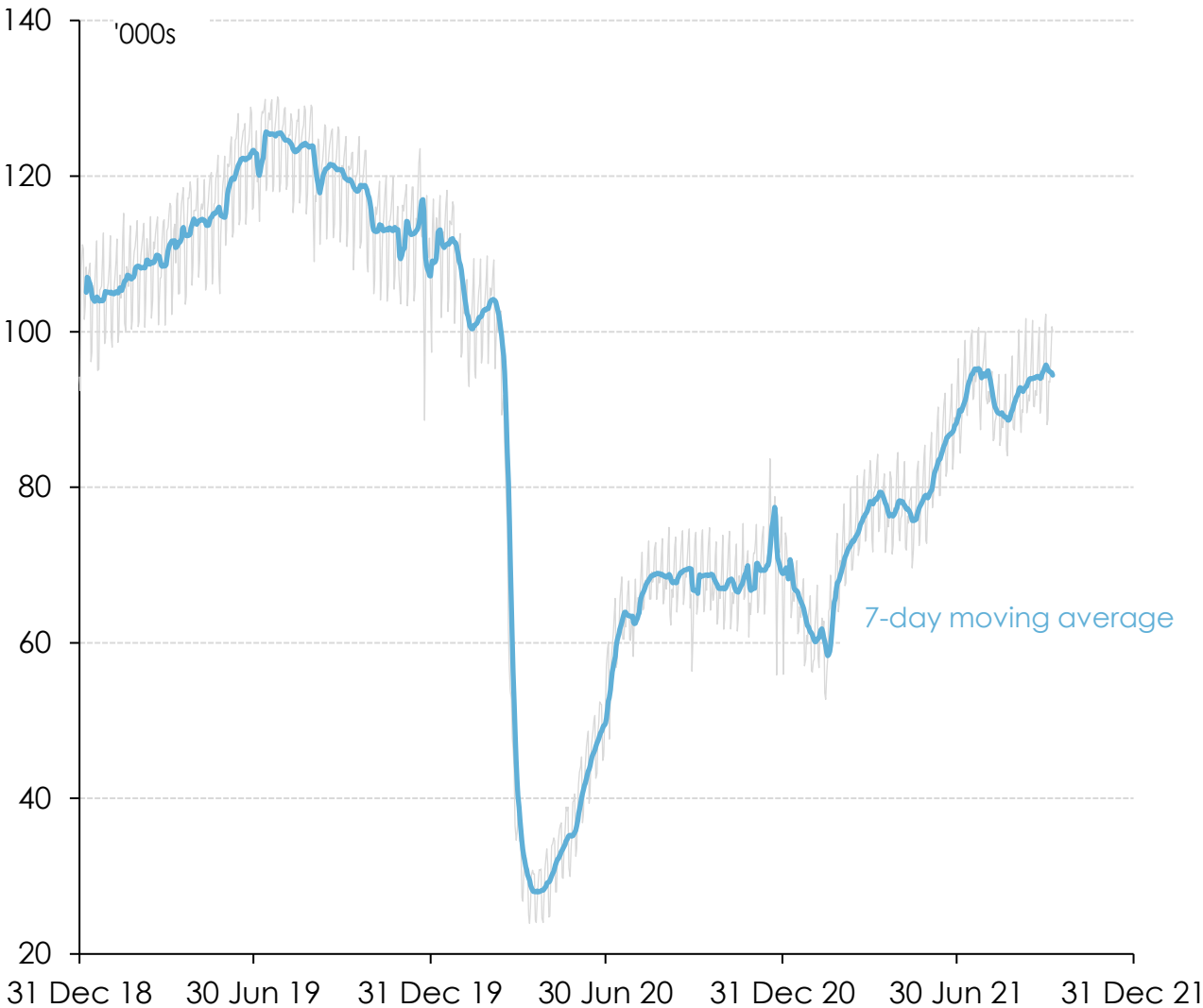
## Taiwan export orders and world trade volumes



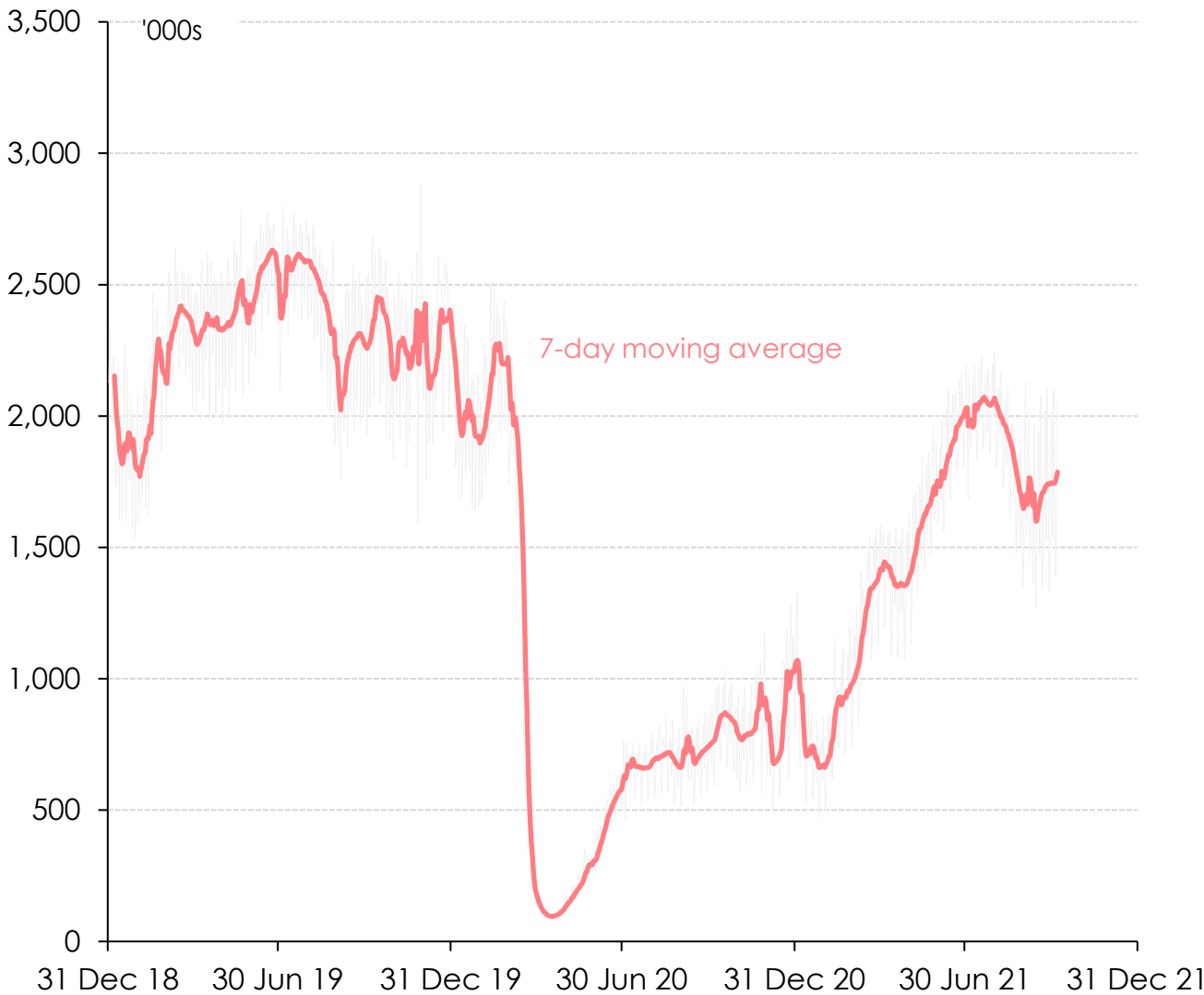
Note: The shipping container throughput index is based on reports from 91 ports around the world handling over 60% of global container shipping.  
 Sources: CPB Netherlands Economic Planning Bureau, [World Trade Monitor](#) (August data to be released on 25<sup>th</sup> October); Institute of Shipping Economics & Logistics (ISL) and RWI Leibniz-Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (RWI) [Container Throughput Index](#); Taiwan [Ministry of Economic Affairs](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

# The global ‘delta wave’ interrupted the recovery in travel – but that recovery appears to have (tentatively) resumed again

Daily commercial flights worldwide



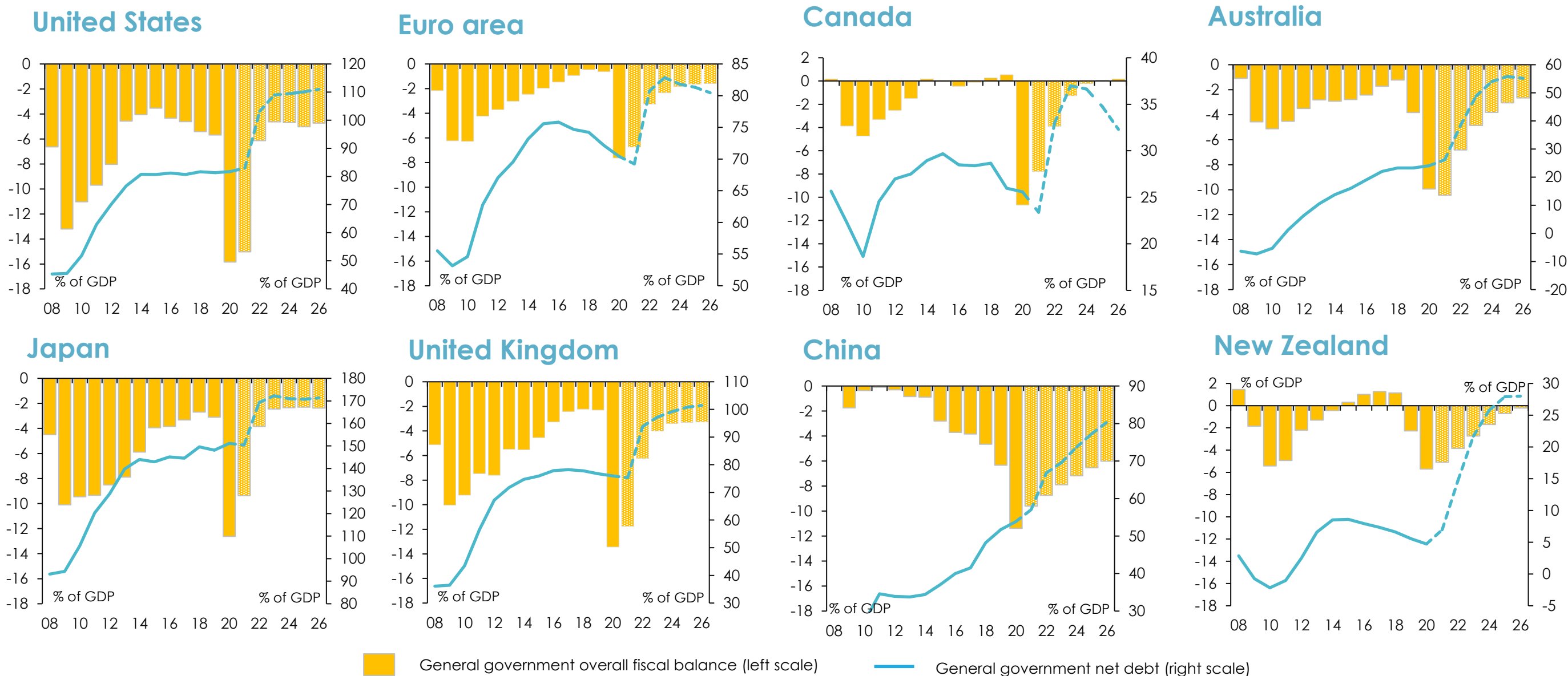
Daily US TSA ‘security’ checks



Note: Commercial flights include commercial passenger flights, cargo flights, charter flights, and some business jet flights. Daily flights data up to 8<sup>th</sup> October, and TSA checks up to 7<sup>th</sup> October. Thicker coloured lines are 7-day centred moving averages of daily data plotted in thin grey lines. Sources: [Flightradar24.com](https://flightradar24.com); [US Transport Safety Administration](https://www.transportation.gov) (at last, something useful produced by aviation ‘security’!!!). [Return to "What's New"](#).



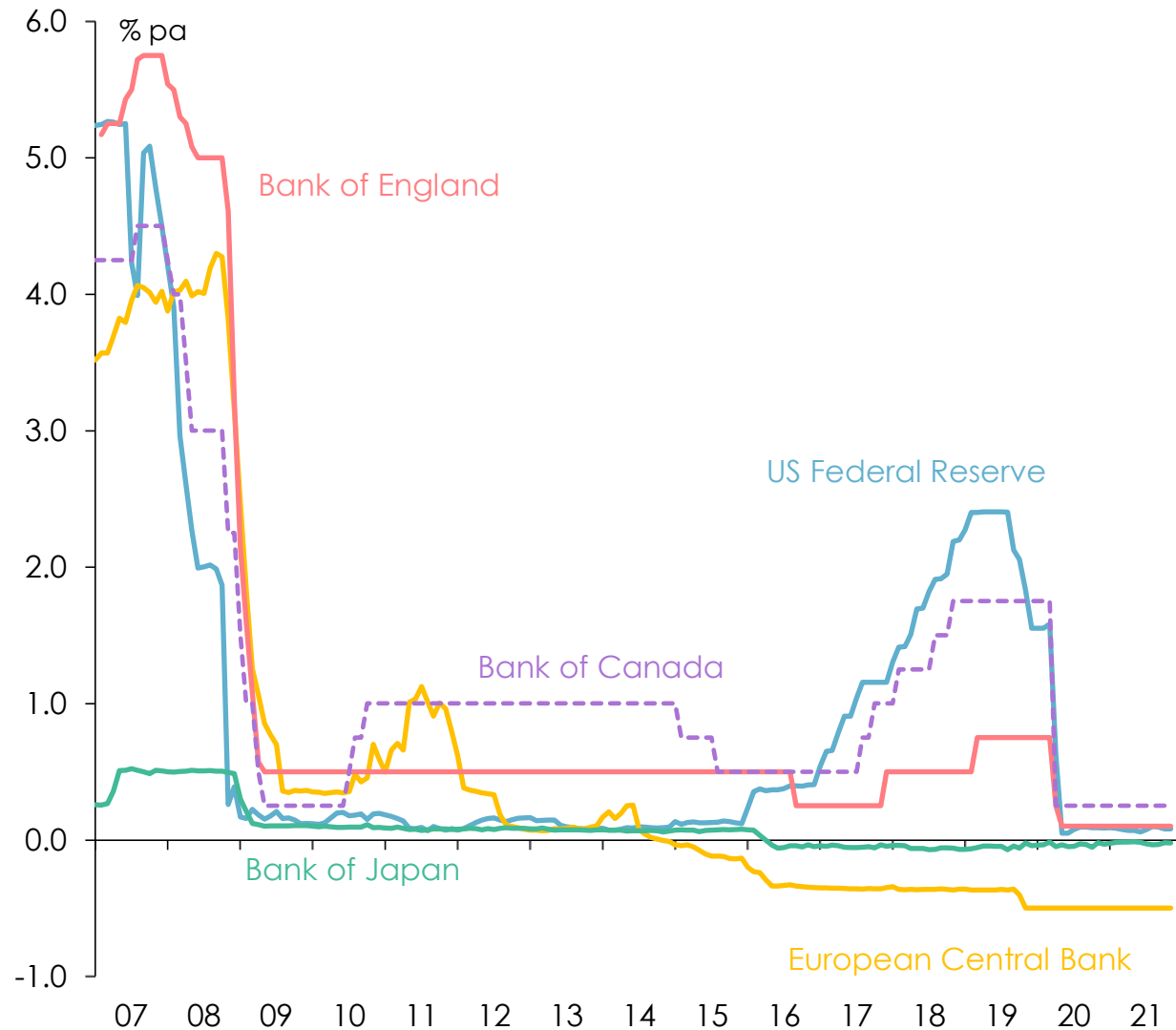
# The US fiscal stimulus dwarfs that of any other major economy – although Japan, the UK, Canada and Australia are also doing a lot



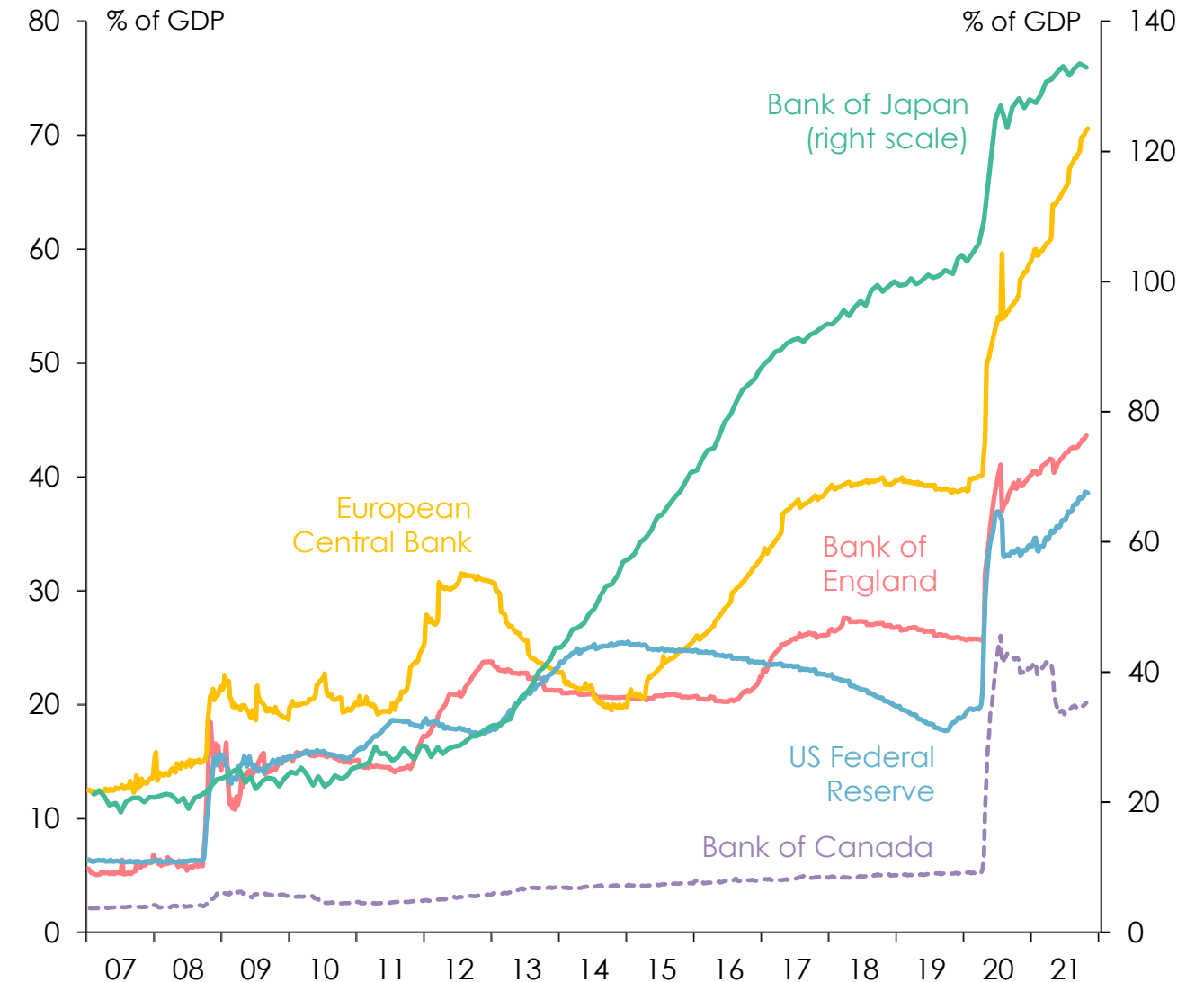
Note: China debt is gross debt, not net. Sources: International Monetary Fund, [Fiscal Monitor](#), and [World Economic Outlook](#), April 2021. [Return to "What's New"](#)

# 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"](#).

# ECB President Christine Lagarde last week offered some interesting perspectives on the outlook for inflation

- ❑ ECB President Christine Lagarde offered some interesting perspectives on inflation dynamics in a [speech](#) given in Frankfurt on last week
- ❑ She pointed to the chance that the “major shock to global supply chains and domestic labour markets” induced by the pandemic could push prices up
  - if firms seek (or, she could have said, are obliged by governments) to “diversify their supply chains or re-shore some of their production” in order to “prioritize resilience over efficiency”, that could “lead to higher cost structures ... which are then passed on to consumers”
  - and “geopolitics might also interfere in trade patterns and accelerate these shifts”
  - these developments could offset some or all of the expected impact of “accelerated ... digitalization” on productivity, unit labour costs and prices
- ❑ She also drew attention to possible consequences for inflation of the “shift towards a low-carbon economy”
  - citing [estimates](#) by the Central Banks & Supervisors Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS), the increase in auction prices in the EU’s ETS, the introduction of carbon prices covering a broader range of economic activities, and the adoption of ‘carbon tariffs’ in Europe “could gradually increase inflation relative to its previous trend by up to 1 pc point over the transition period, before returning to that trend”
  - she cited [research](#) by Australian economist Warwick McKibbin (et al) that “introducing carbon taxes in euro area countries tends to raise headline inflation but lower core inflation”
  - she also noted that the “green transition” would “make the pass-through of energy prices to consumer prices more complex” – it being “no longer sufficient to look mainly at oil prices”, as evidenced by the influence which “the ongoing rise in natural gas prices” is now having in Europe (although she also observed that “the use of natural gas ... is only a bridge technology and will over time subside as new technologies for storage and distribution are more widely deployed”
- ❑ Her conclusion was the need “to ensure that [monetary policy-makers] do not over-react to temporary supply shocks that have no bearing on the medium term”

# The Federal Reserve last month confirmed that it was likely to start ‘tapering’ its bond purchases later this year – and hinted that rates could rise in 2022

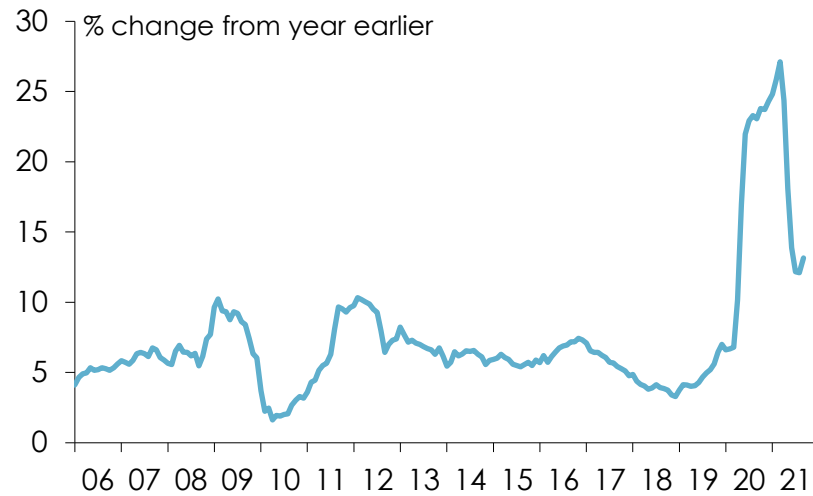
- ❑ The US Federal Reserve’s Open Market Committee left its target for the Federal funds rate unchanged at 0-0.25% at its 21-22 September meeting, as expected
  - but it noted that if the US economy continues to “progress ... broadly as expected” towards its “maximum employment and price stability goals”, a “moderation in the pace of asset purchases” (ie, ‘tapering’) “may soon be appropriate”
  - at his post-meeting press conference Fed Chair Jerome Powell clarified that this meant “a gradual tapering process that concludes around the middle of next year” – but sought to emphasize that this prospective ‘tapering’ “will not be intended to carry a direct signal regarding the timing of interest rate liftoff”
- ❑ Fed Governors and regional Fed Presidents lowered their median forecast for GDP growth through 2021 to 5.9% (from 7.0%) but raised it for 2022 to 3.8% (from 3.3%), and raised their median ‘core’ inflation forecast for 2021 to 3.7% (from 3.0%) and for 2022 to 2.3% (from 2.1%)
  - they also raised their median forecast for the Fed funds rate in June next year to 0.3% (from 0.1%), and for June 2022 to 1.0% (from 0.6%), while their first median forecast for the funds rate in June 2024 was 1.8%
  - half of the Governors and Presidents of now expect at least one rate increase next year (and three expect two increases)
  - Powell put a ‘dovish’ spin on these forecasts saying that “more important than any forecast is the fact that policy will remain accommodative until we have achieved our maximum employment and price stability goals”
- ❑ The Bank of Japan left all of its monetary policy settings on hold, as expected, at its 21-22 September monetary policy meeting
  - there was only one dissent (out of 9 members) from the decision to keep interest rates unchanged, and he wanted even lower rates
  - the BoJ also provided more detail of its program (foreshadowed at its previous meeting) of interest-free loans to banks which “disclose information concerning their efforts to address climate change” for on-lending to customers which “contribute to Japan’s actions to address climate change”

# The Bank of England last month foreshadowed that it could raise rates before year-end – and would pursue a different ‘policy mix’ from the Fed

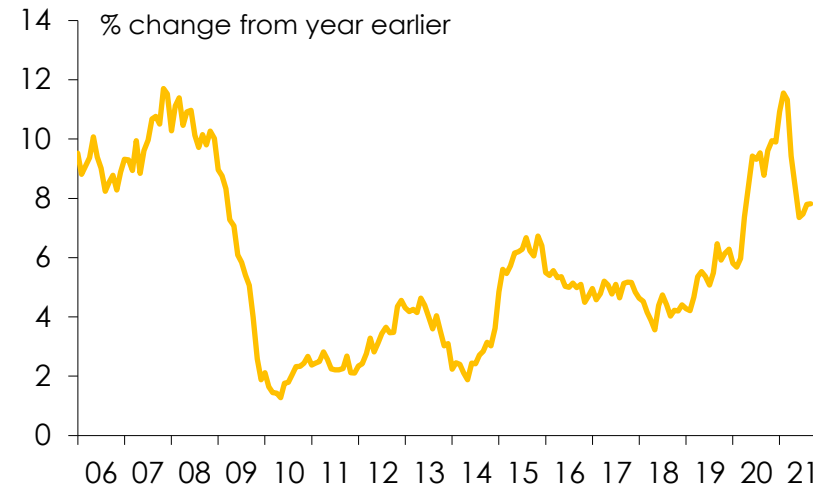
- ❑ The Bank of England’s Monetary Policy Committee agreed at its 23<sup>rd</sup> September meeting to keep its Bank Rate at 0.10%, and agreed by a 7-2 majority to continue with its existing program of bond purchases towards the previously-stipulated target of £875mn (at the previous meeting this had been by an 8-1 vote)
  - the [Minutes](#) of Wednesday’s meeting (released the following day) note that “some developments” since the previous meeting had “strengthened the case” that “some modest tightening of monetary policy over the forecast period was likely to be necessary to be consistent with meeting the inflation target sustainably in the medium term”
  - in particular, the MPC noted the impact of “supply constraints on output” which “appeared likely [to] prove more persistent” and which had prompted BoE staff to revised down their forecast for the level of Q3 GDP by around 1% and to raise their forecast for CPI inflation to “slightly above 4% in 2021 Q4”
  - also contributing to the upwards revision to the inflation forecast were the prospect of higher electricity and gas prices and, more importantly, evidence that “the labour market appears to have tightened further”, prompting BoE staff to raise their estimate of underlying pay growth “to above its pre-pandemic rate”
  - the MPC also noted household inflation expectations had “increased in recent months”, with one medium-term measure reaching “its highest level since 2013”, as had financial markets’ inflation expectations
  - although the MPC judged that there was “high option value” in waiting for additional information on the labour market (and in particular the effects of the expiry of the Government’s furlough scheme at the end of this month) before deciding “if and when a tightening in monetary policy might be warranted”
- ❑ The MPC unanimously agreed that “any future initial tightening of monetary policy should be implemented by an increase in [the] Bank Rate even if that became appropriate before the end of the existing ... asset purchase program”
  - this is the diametric opposite of the Fed’s (and the ECB’s) approach which is to begin ‘tapering’ well before any increase in policy interest rates

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

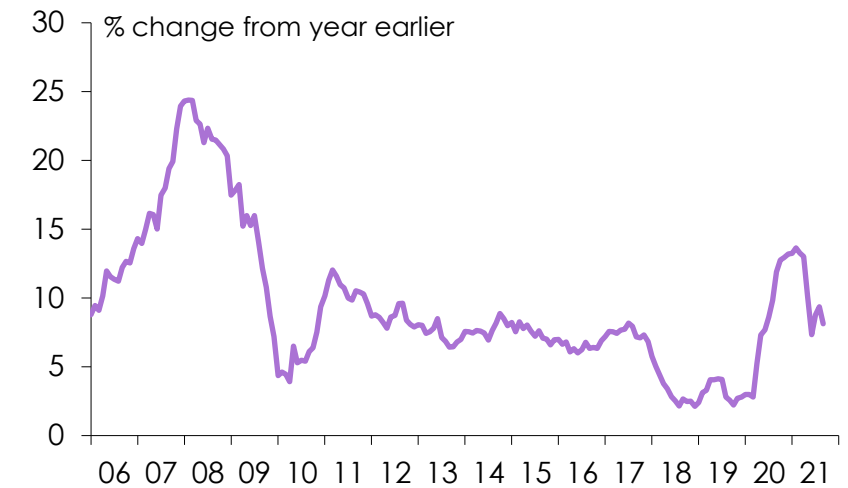
## US M2



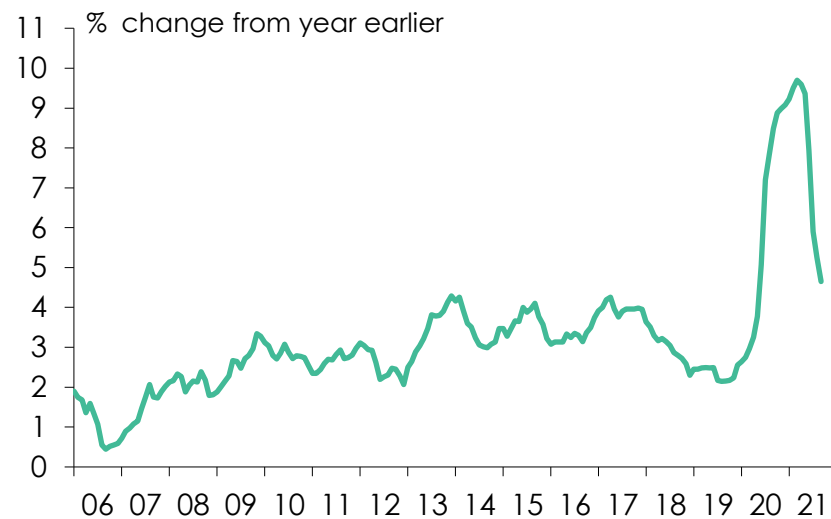
## Euro area M2



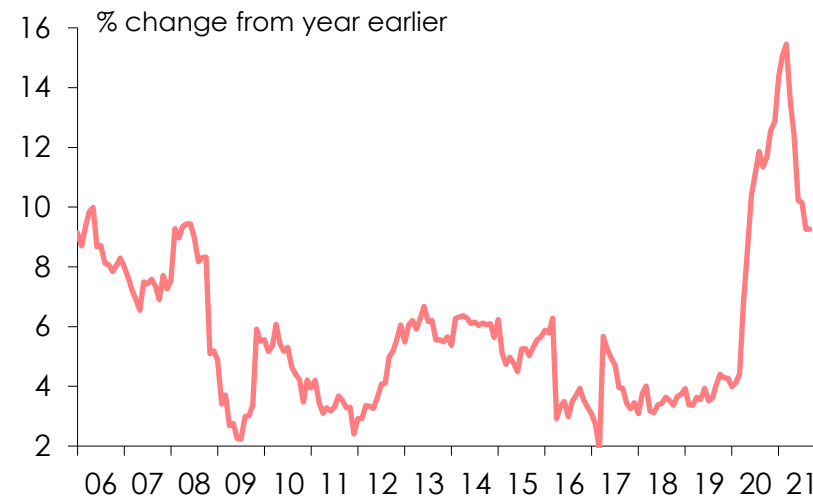
## Australia M3



## Japan M2 + CDs



## UK M2



## New Zealand M3

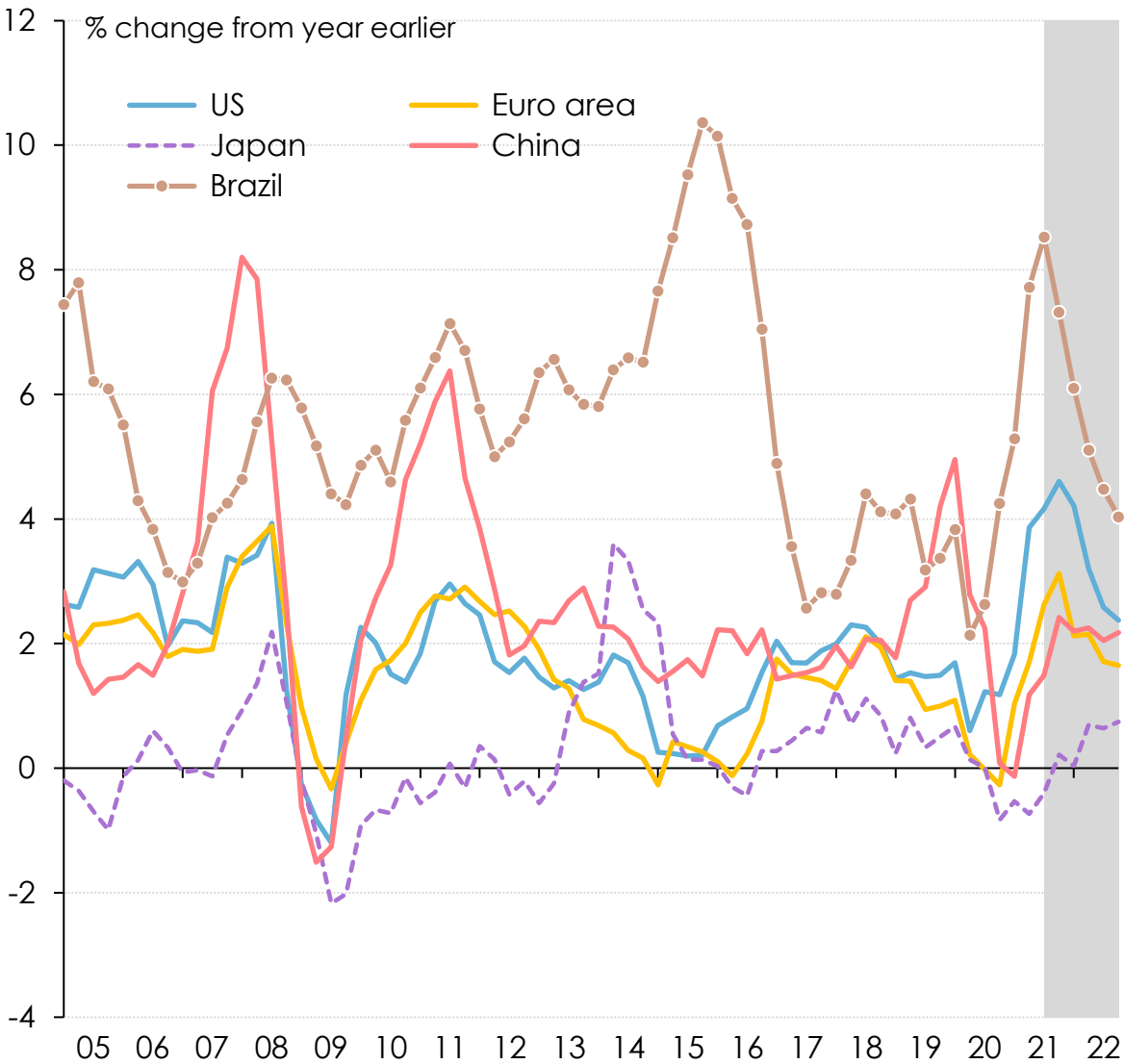


Sources: US Federal Reserve; European Central Bank; Bank of Japan; Bank of England; RBA; RBNZ. [Return to "What's New"](#).

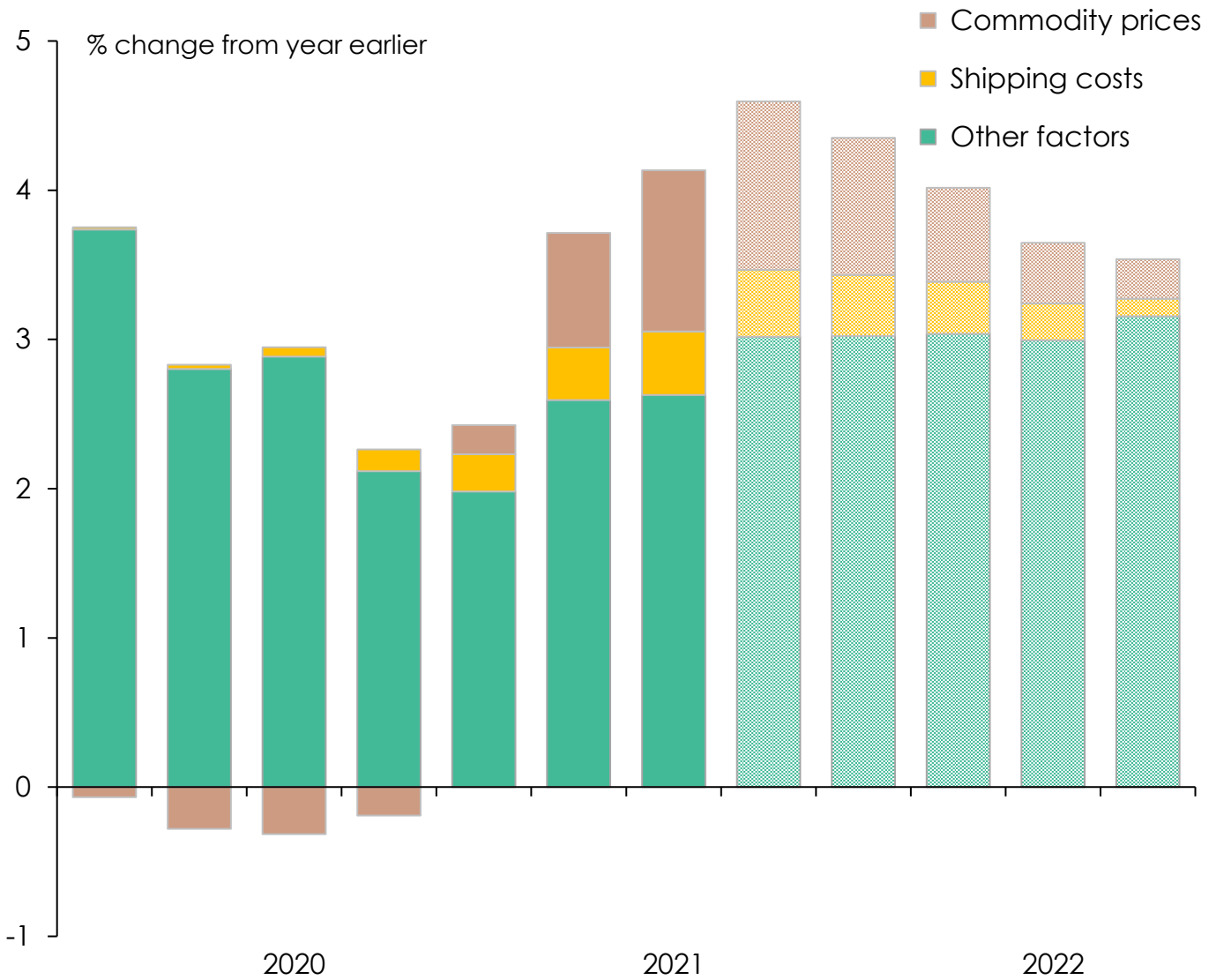


# The OECD estimates that higher commodity prices and shipping costs account for three-quarters of the increase in G20 inflation so far this year

Inflation in major advanced economies



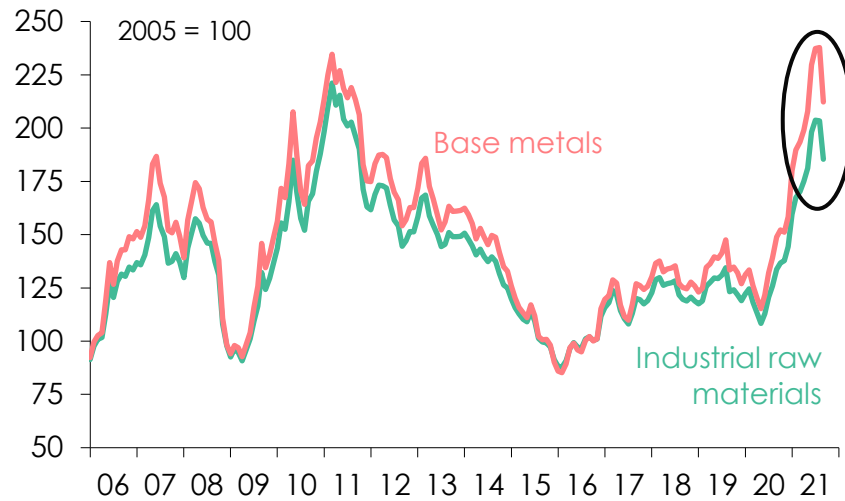
Contribution to annual G20 inflation



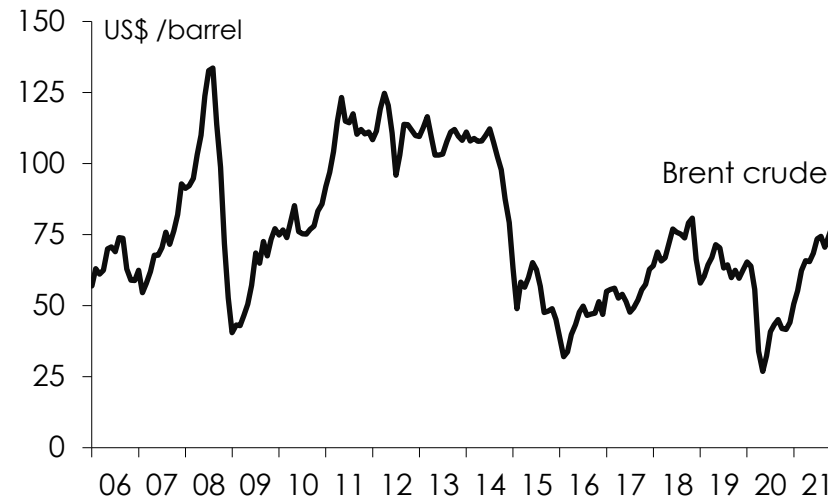
Source: OECD, [Economic Outlook, Interim Report](#), 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021.

# Some of the factors which have contributed to 'upstream' price pressures in recent months may have peaked – but energy is an important exception

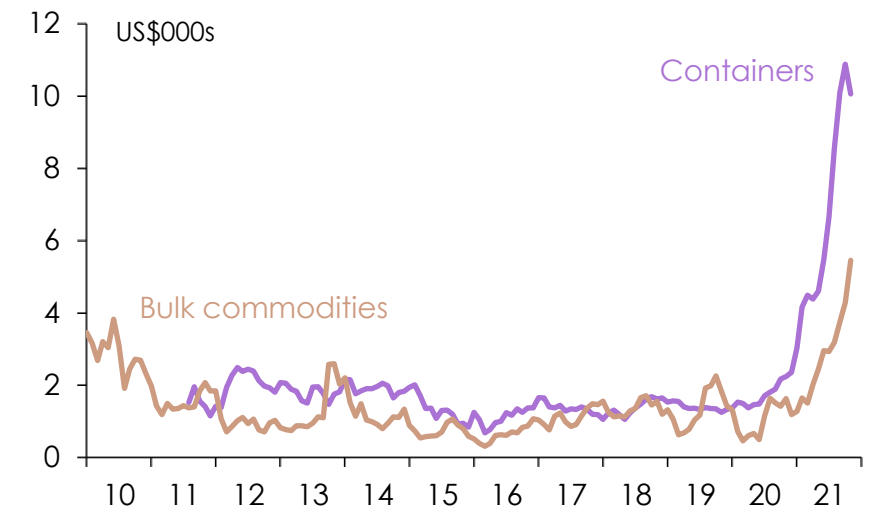
## 'Hard' commodity prices



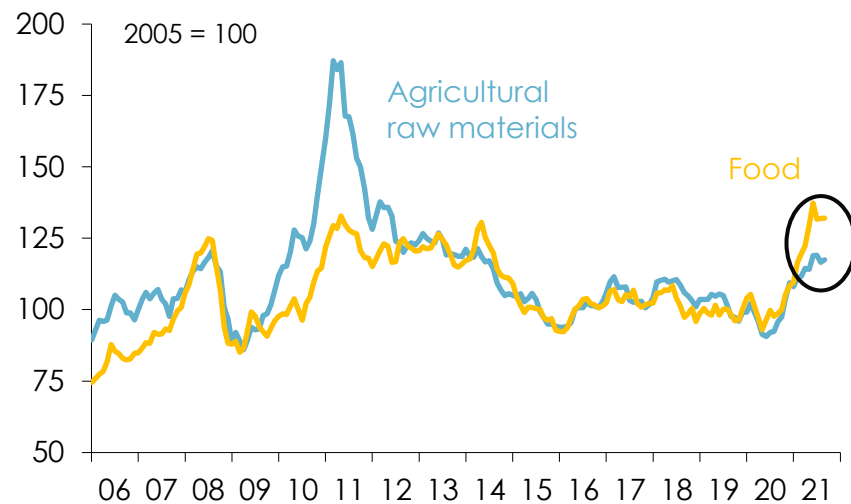
## Crude oil price



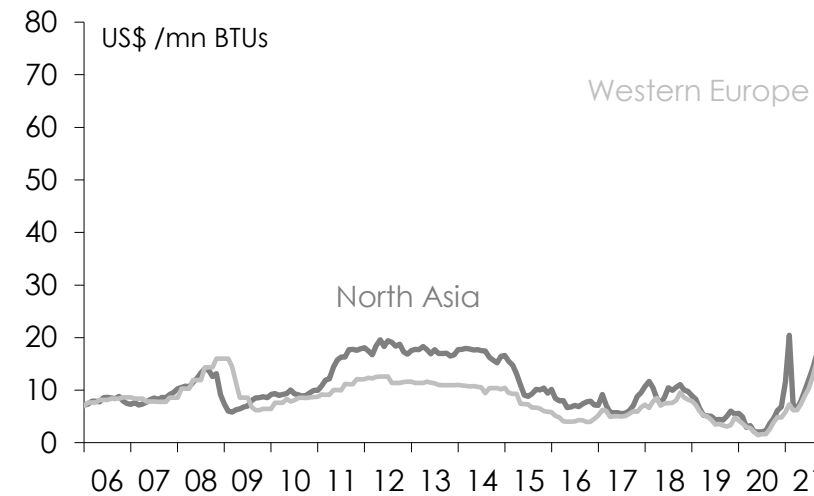
## Shipping freight costs



## 'Soft' commodity prices



## Liquefied natural gas prices



## Semiconductor prices

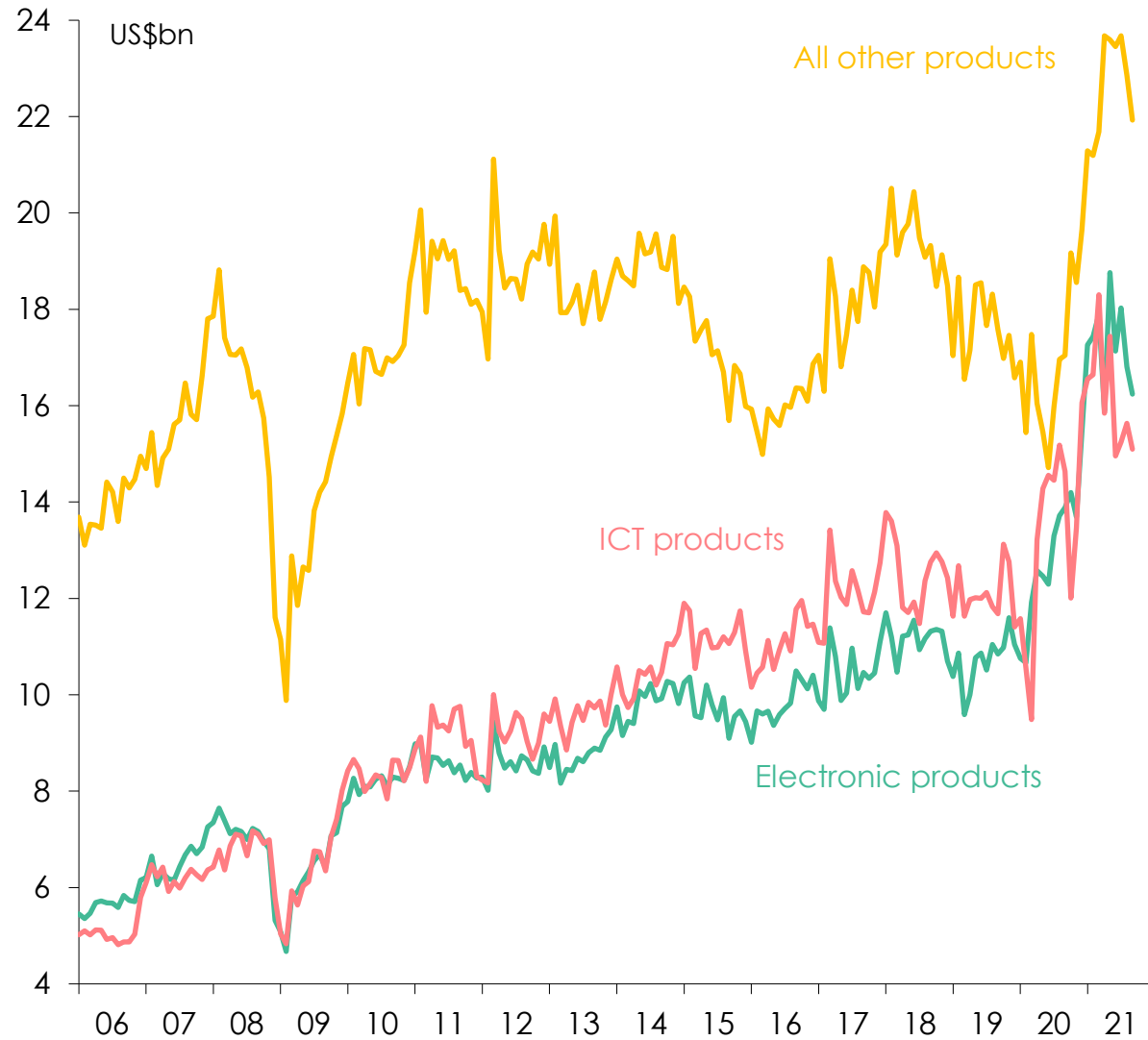


Sources: [International Monetary Fund](#); [Freightos](#); [Drewry](#); [The Baltic Exchange](#); Refinitiv Datastream;



# Global semi-conductor production has been curtailed by Taiwan's drought, covid outbreaks in Sth East Asia, and damage to chip plants elsewhere

Taiwan export orders, by product

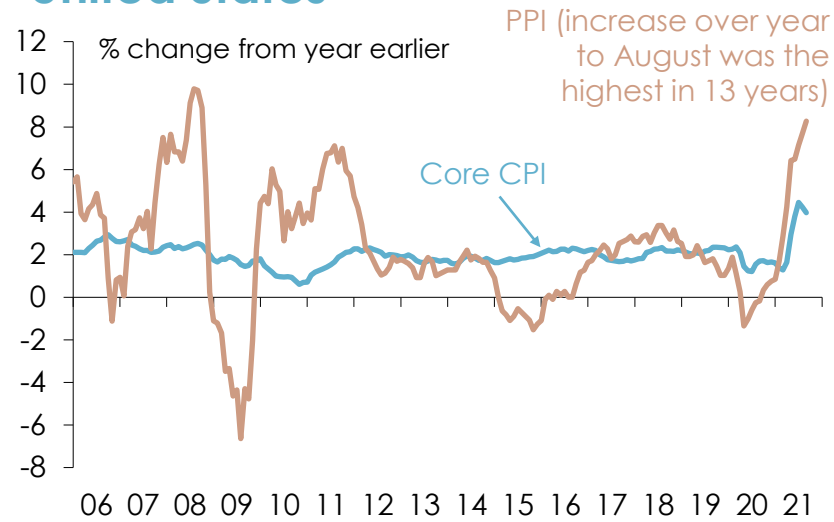


Note: Data have been seasonally adjusted by Corinna using Refinitiv Datastream. Latest data are for August. Source: Taiwan [Ministry of Economic Affairs](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

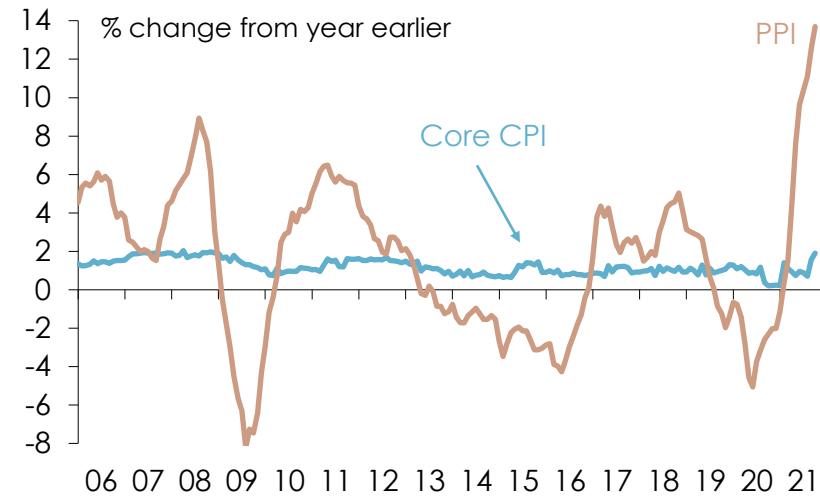
- ❑ Taiwan accounts for 63% of the US\$85bn global semi-conductor chip market (followed by Korea 18% and China 6%)
  - one Taiwanese company, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co (TSMC) has 54% of the world market, and United Microelectronics Co (UMC) a further 7% (Samsung accounts for Korea's 18%)
- ❑ 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 had been experiencing its worst drought in 56 years, resulting in rationing of water supplies including to semi-conductor manufacturers
  - although recent heavy rainfalls appear to have broken the drought
- ❑ World-wide semi-conductor production has also been crimped by plant shutdowns in Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines due to covid-19 outbreaks, and by damage caused by a fire at a Japanese fab earlier this year and a storm at a Texas plant
- ❑ Foreign orders for Taiwanese ICT products fell by 3.5% in August, after increases of 1.9% in June and 2.6% in July, to be still 17.5% below February's peak
  - orders for other electronics products fell 3.4% in August to be more than 13% below their peak in April
- ❑ 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)

# 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

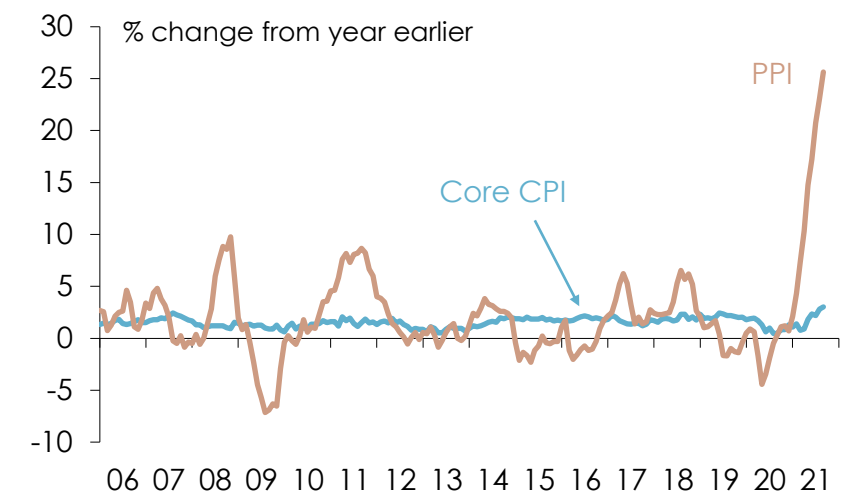
## United States



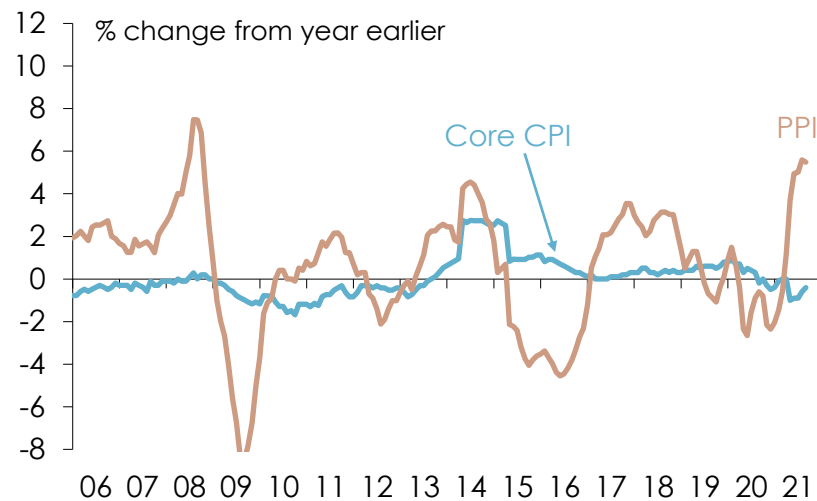
## Euro area



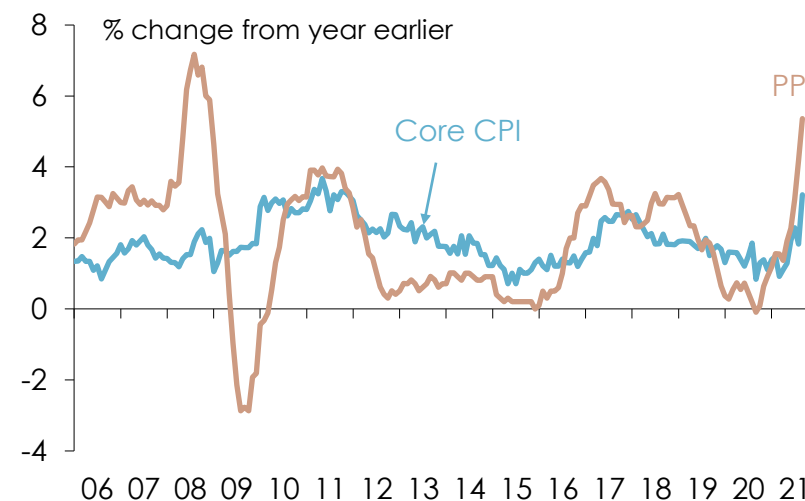
## Canada



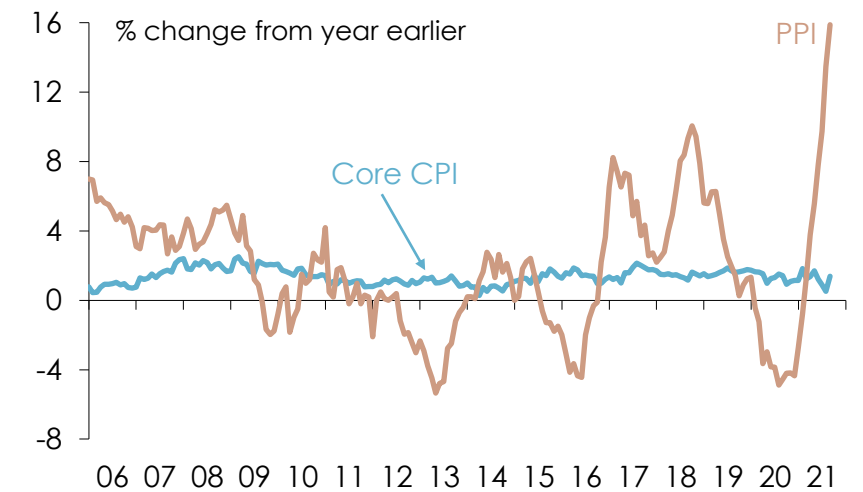
## Japan



## United Kingdom

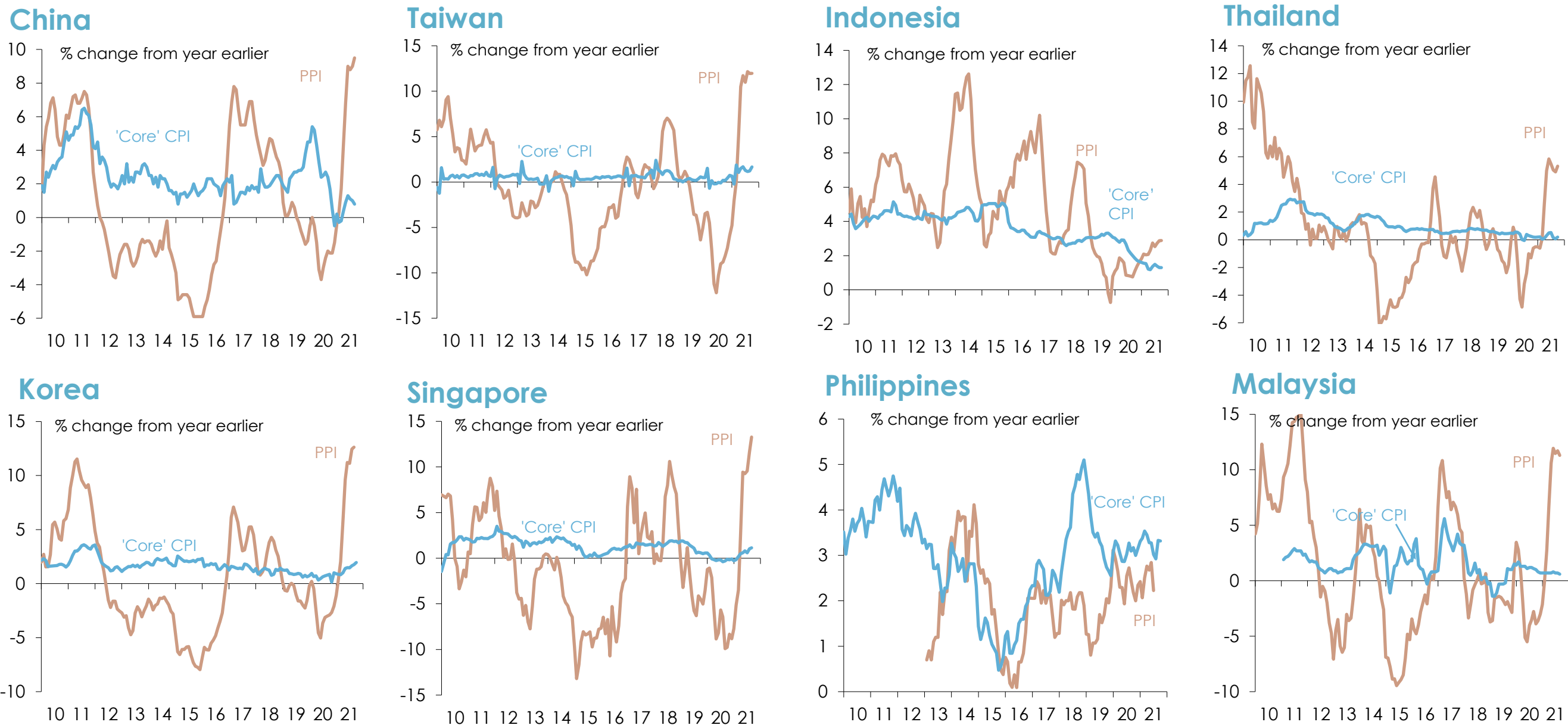


## Sweden



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](#); [Statistics Sweden](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

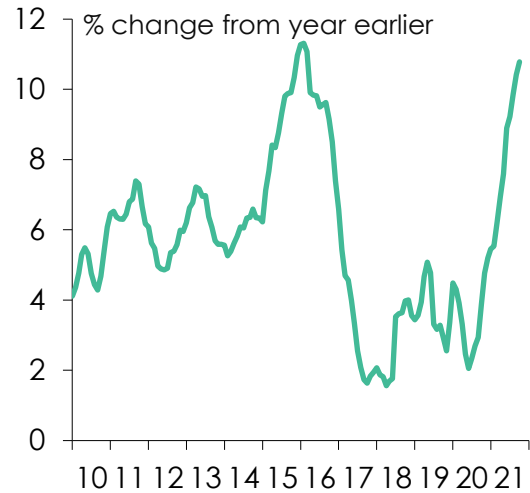
# There's been very little pass-through of higher producer prices into 'core' consumer price inflation in Asia



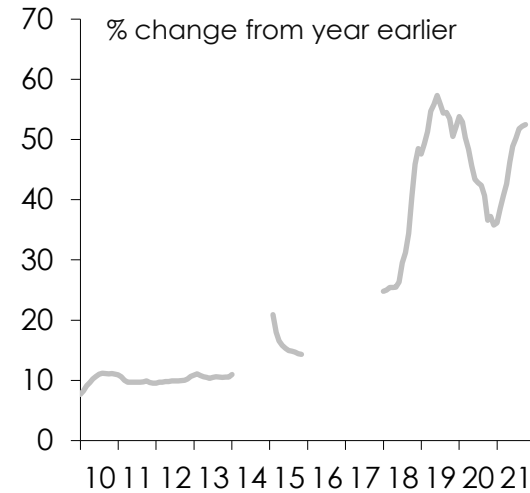
Note: 'Core' CPIs measure different things in different Asian economies – see footnotes to [slide 58](#). Sources: [China National Bureau of Statistics](#); [Statistics Korea](#); [Bank of Korea](#); [Taiwan Statistical Bureau](#); [Singstat](#); [Monetary Authority of Singapore](#); [Statistics Indonesia](#); [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

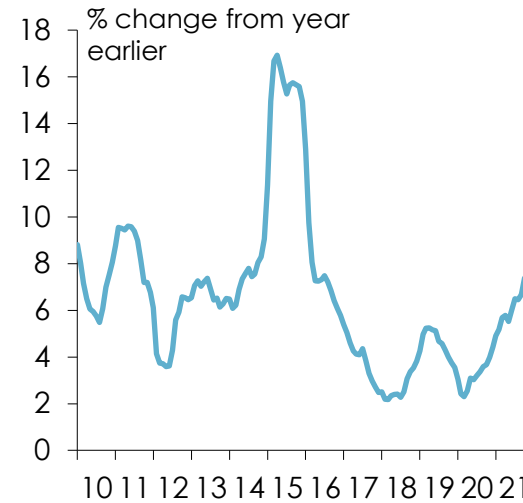
Brazil



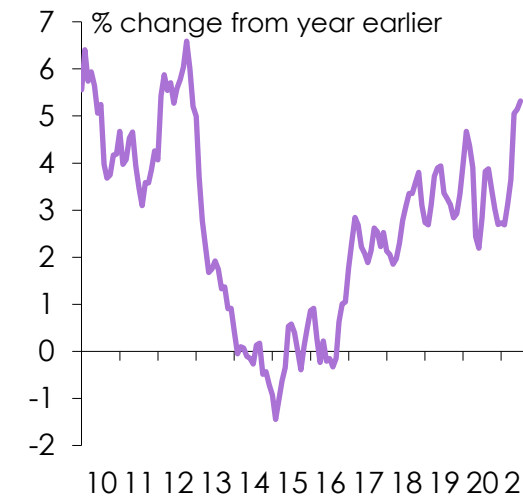
Argentina



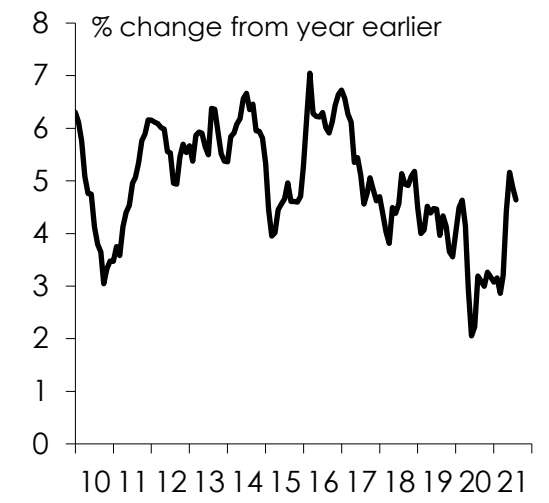
Russia



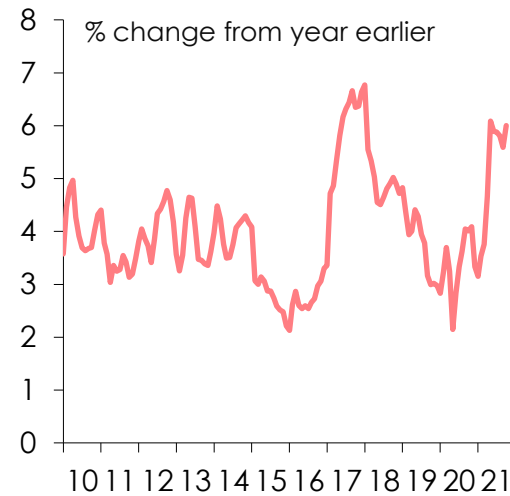
Hungary



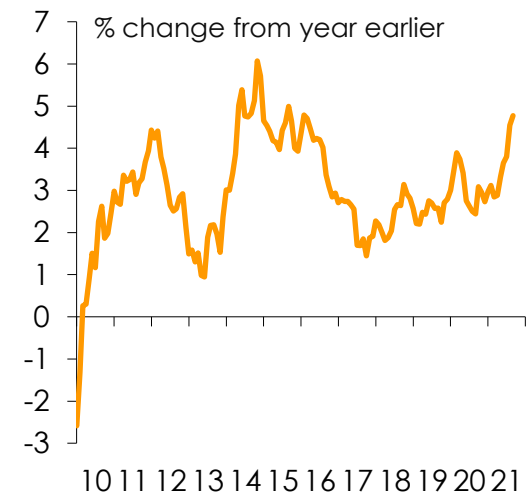
South Africa



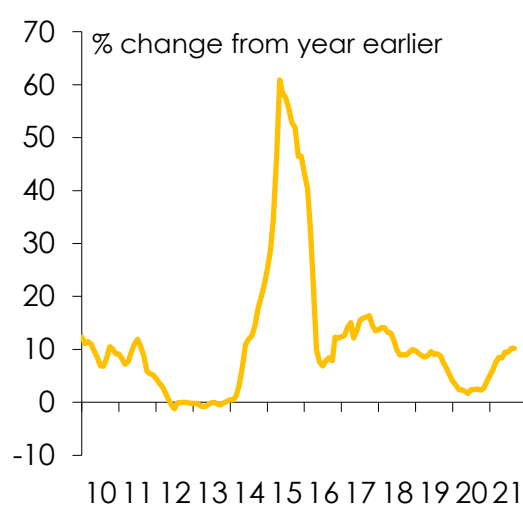
Mexico



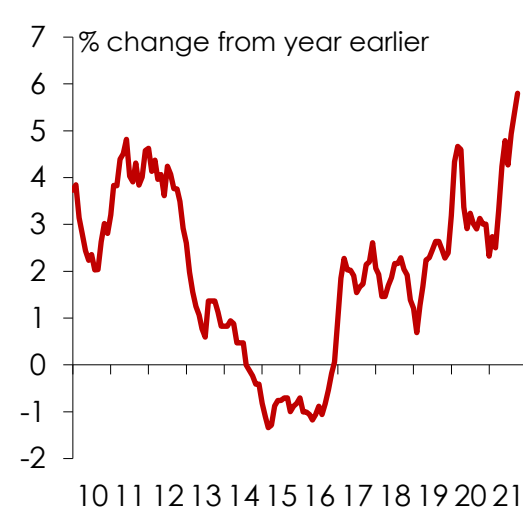
Chile



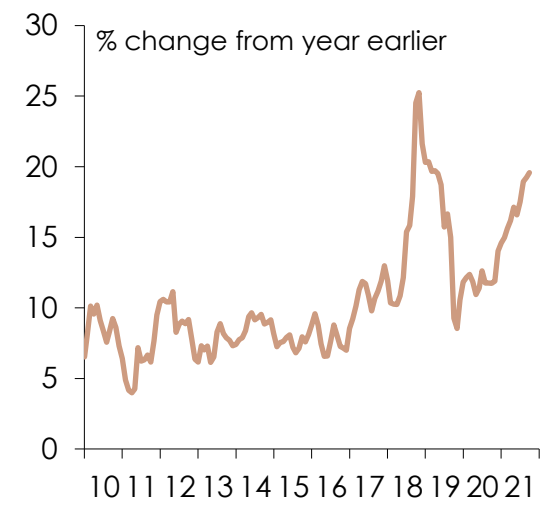
Ukraine



Poland



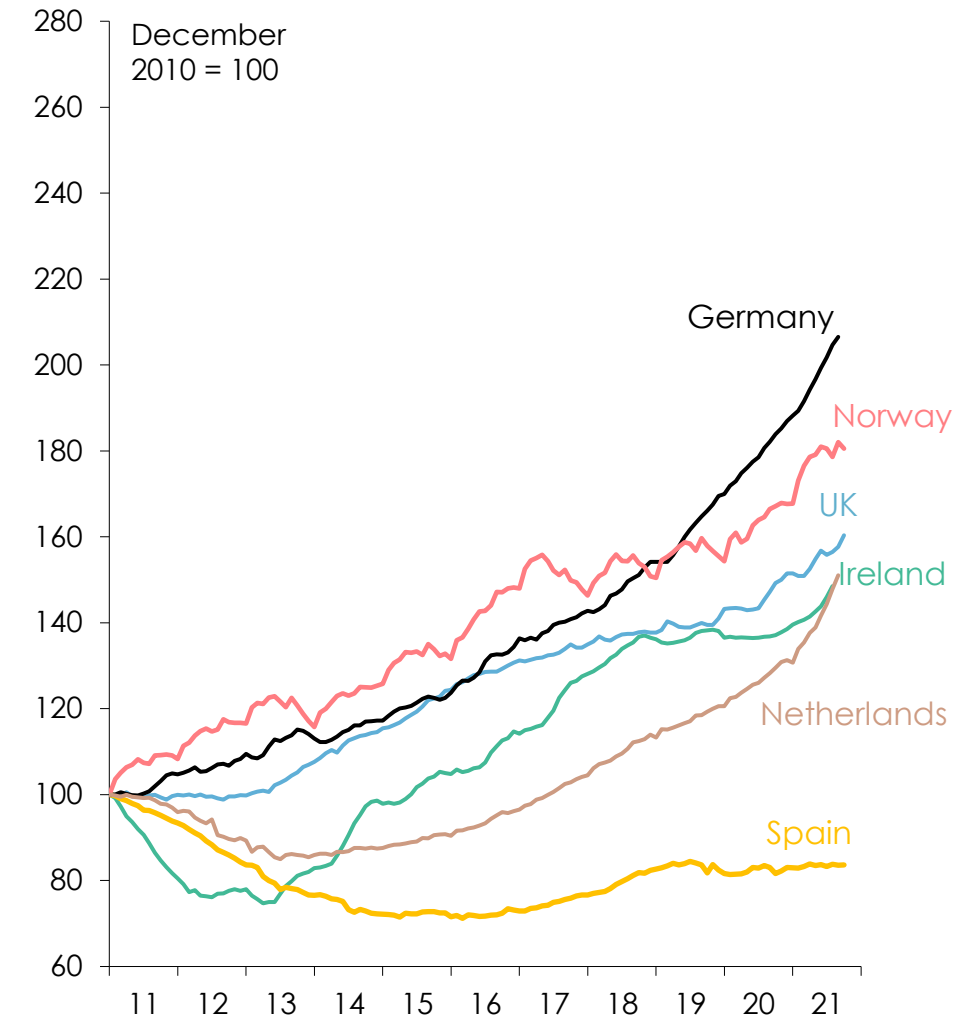
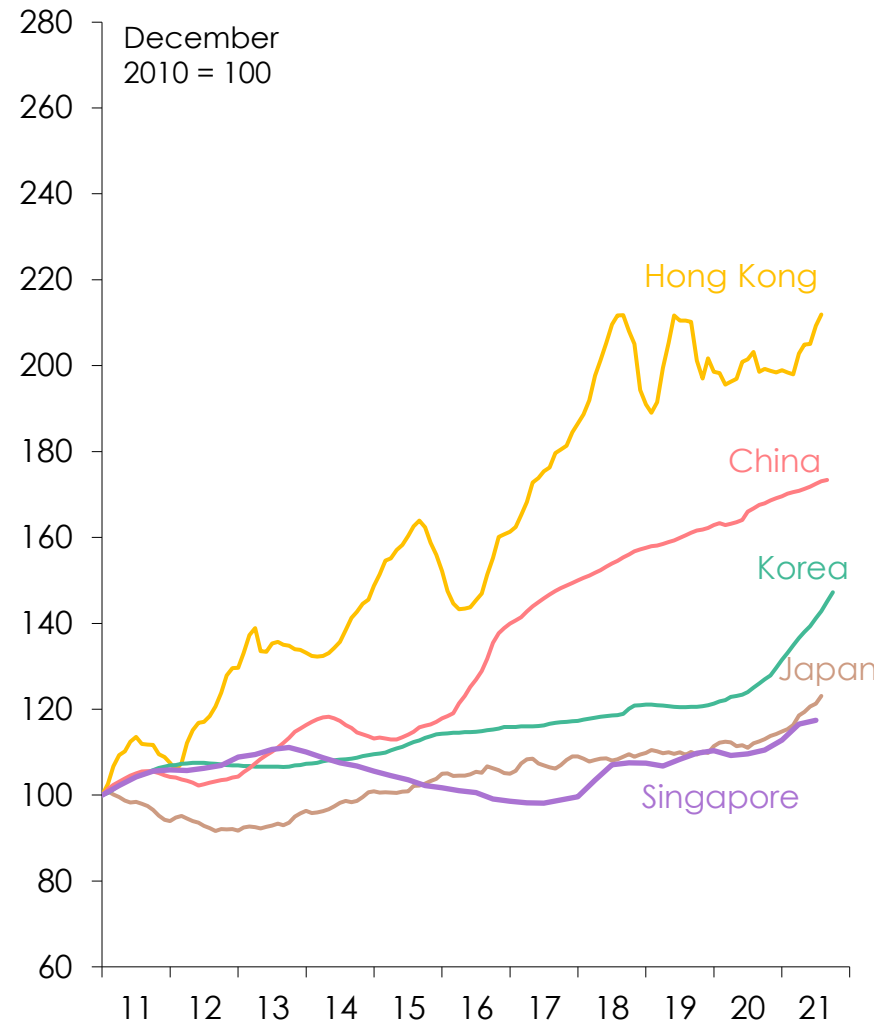
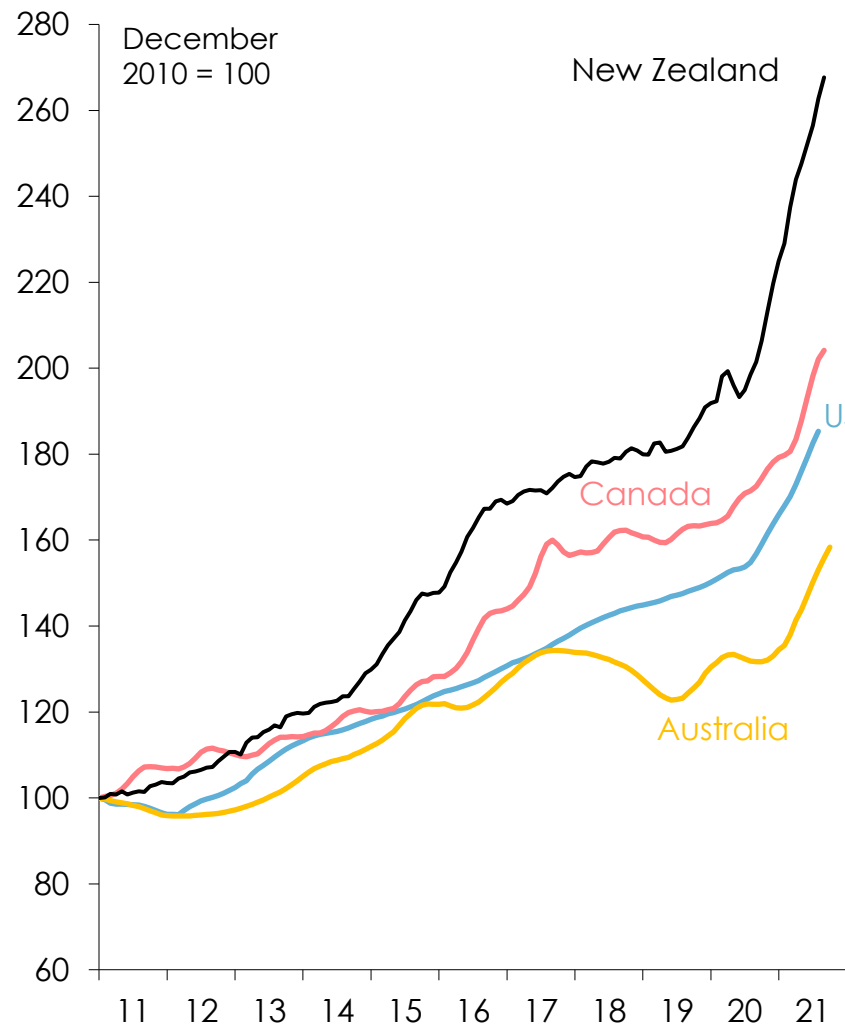
Turkey



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); [Główny Urząd Statystyczny](#) (Poland); [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

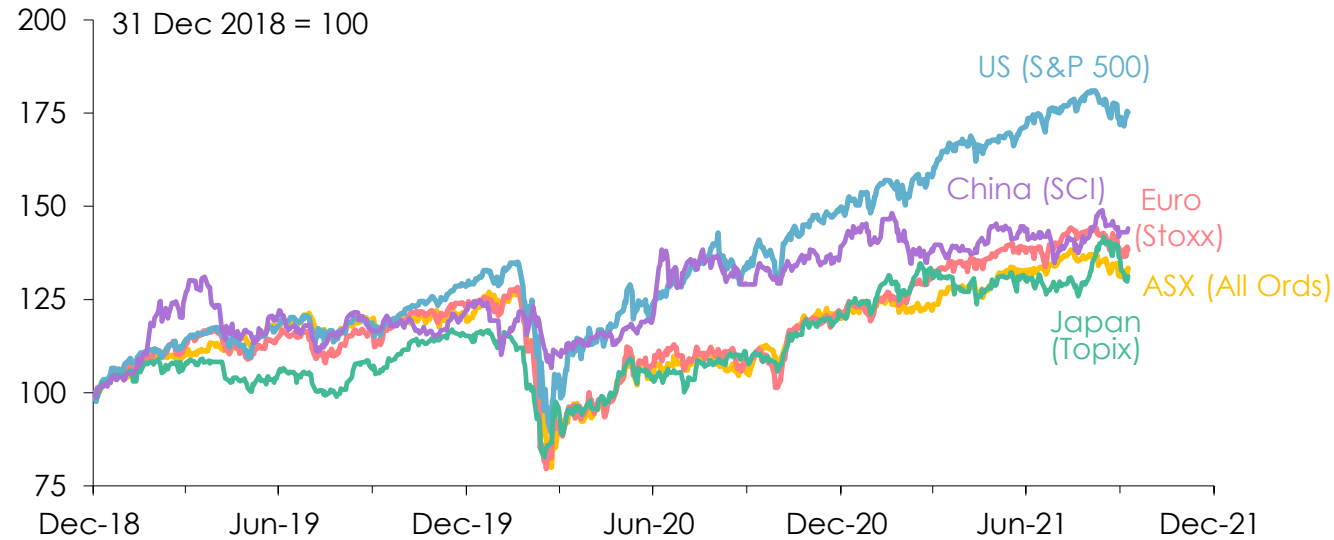
## House price indices



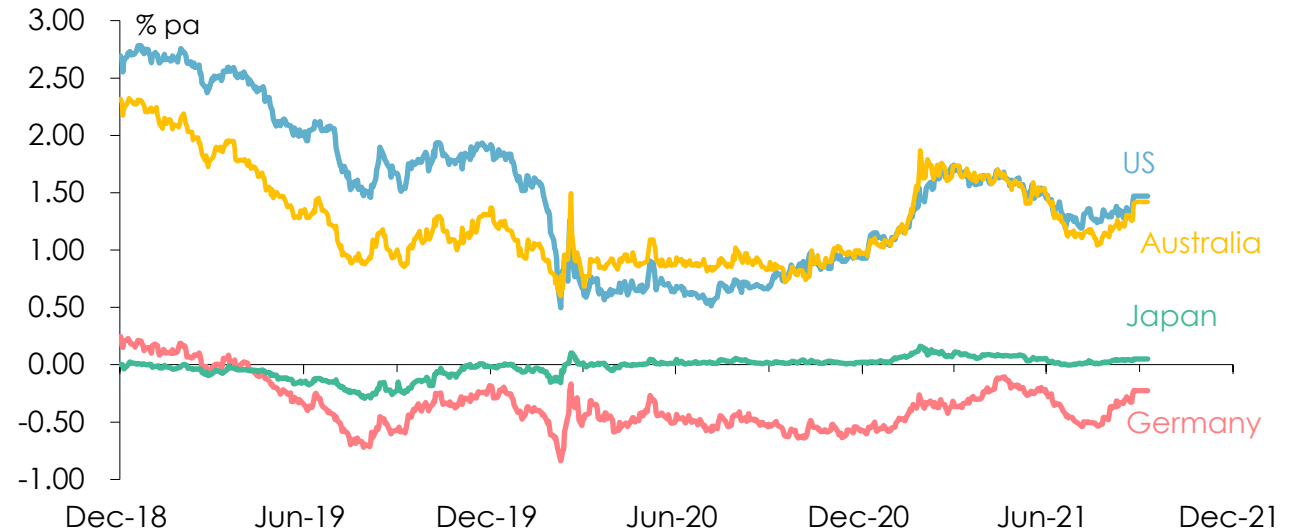
Note: House price indices shown in these charts are those published by [S&P-CoreLogic Case Shiller national](#) (United States); [Teranet-National Bank](#) (Canada); [CoreLogic](#) (Australia); [Real Estate Institute of New Zealand](#); [China Index Academy](#); [Japan Real Estate Institute](#) (Tokyo 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"](#).

# Bond yields and the US\$ continued drifting higher as markets anticipate Fed 'tapering' later this year – despite the softer US jobs data on Friday

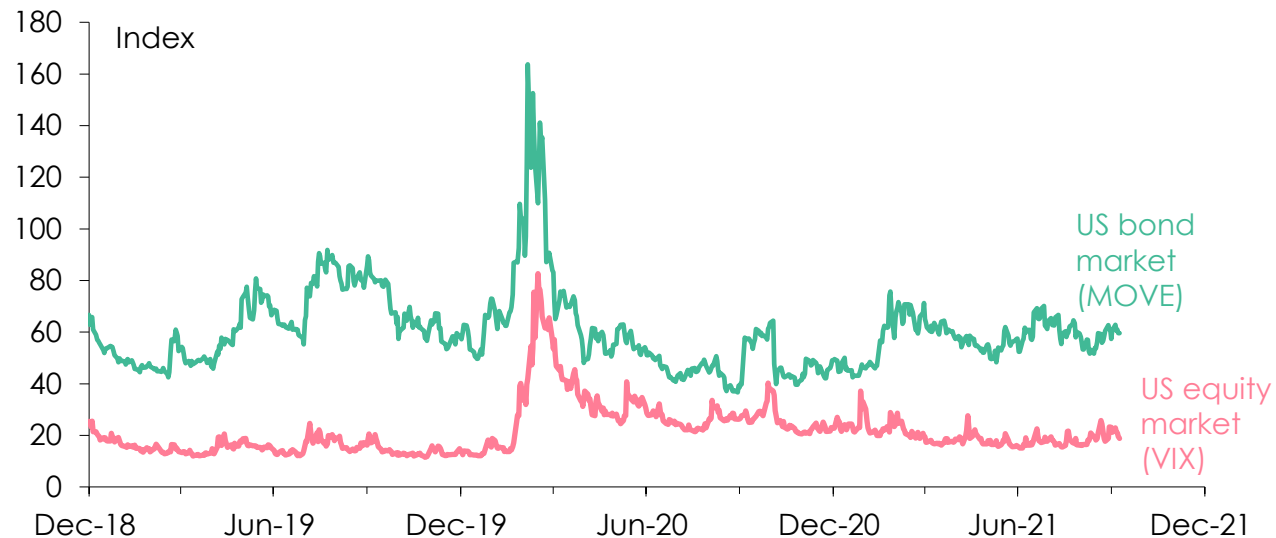
## Stock markets



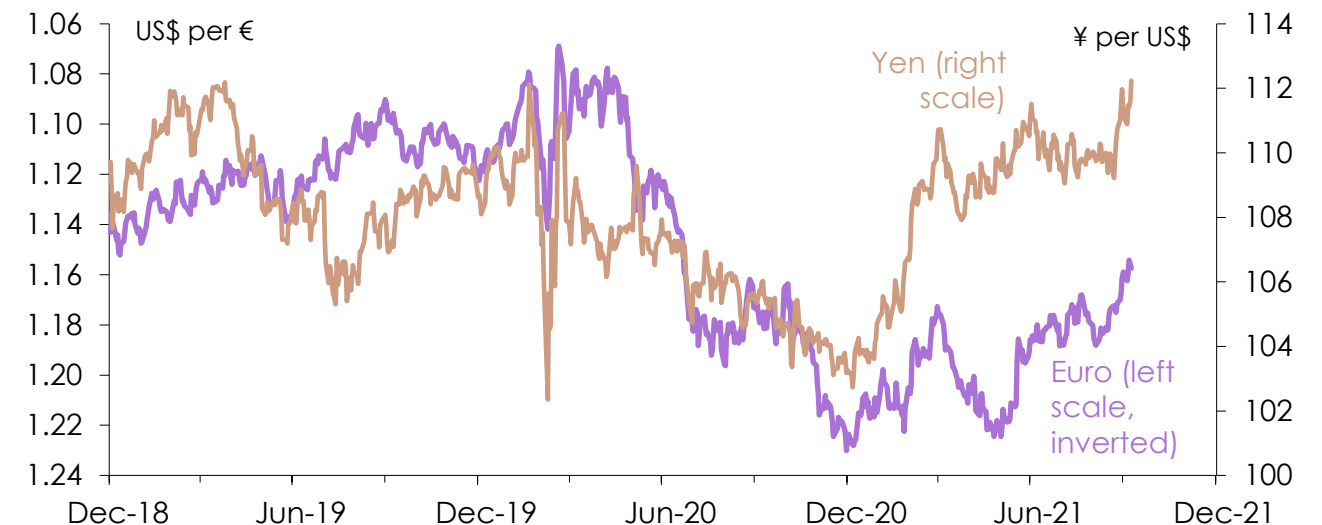
## 10-year bond yields



## Measures of market volatility



## US dollar vs euro and yen

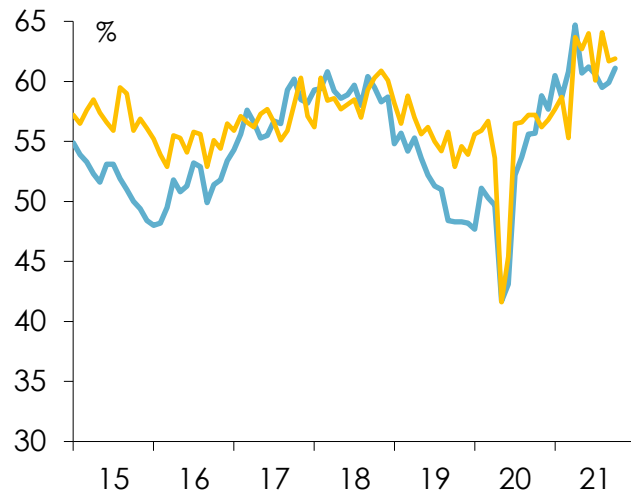


Source: Refinitiv Datastream. Data up to 8<sup>th</sup> October. [Return to "What's New"](#).

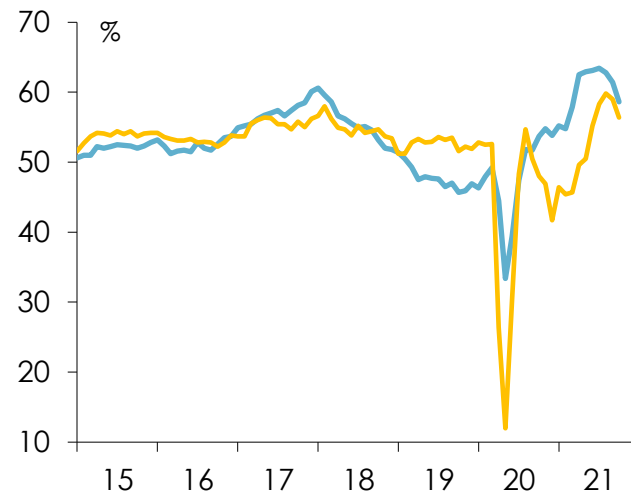


# September services PMIs released this week generally show resilience in the face of the on-going spread of the 'delta variant'

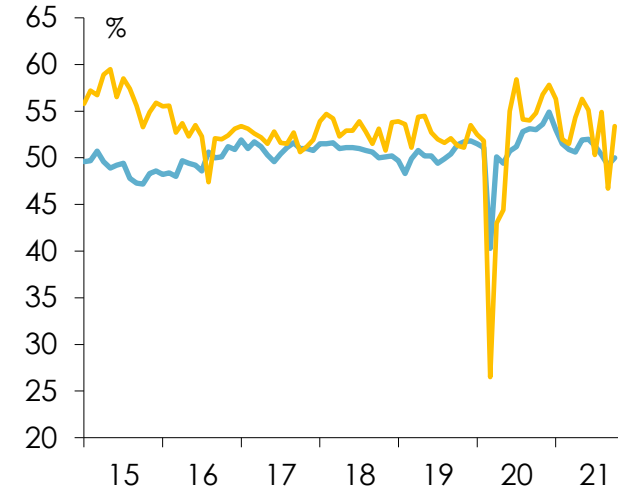
## US



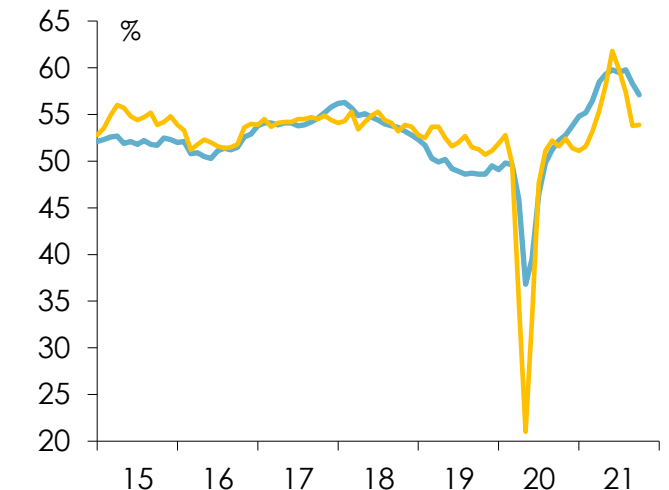
## Euro area



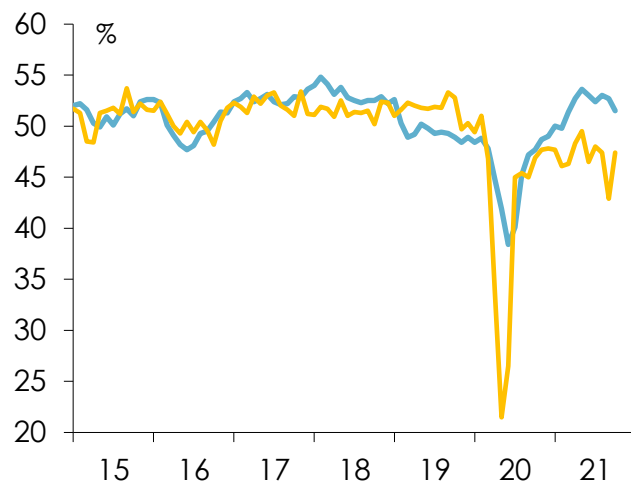
## China



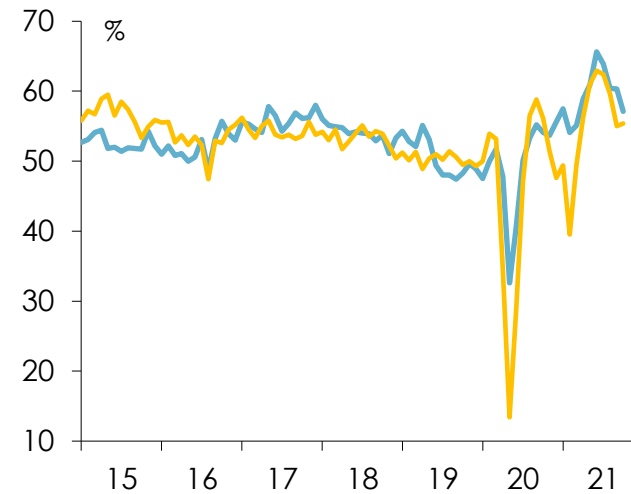
## Developed markets



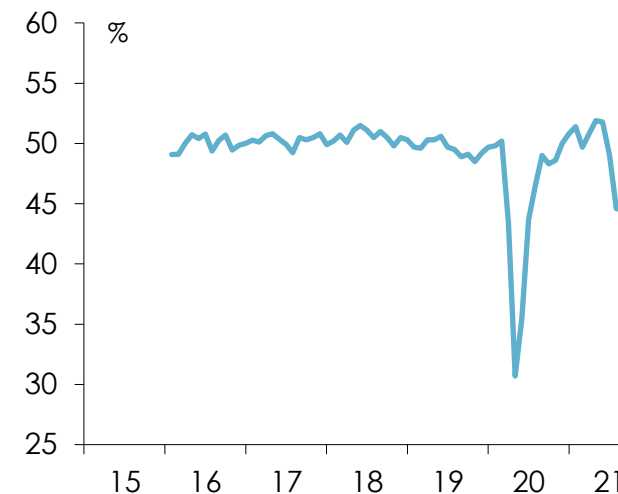
## Japan



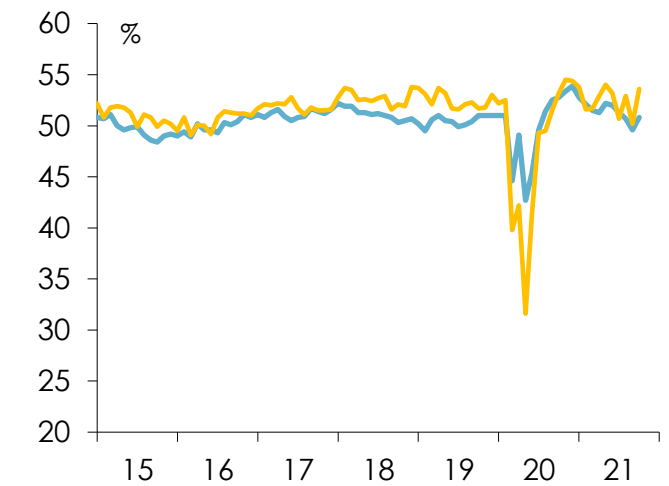
## UK



## ASEAN



## Emerging markets



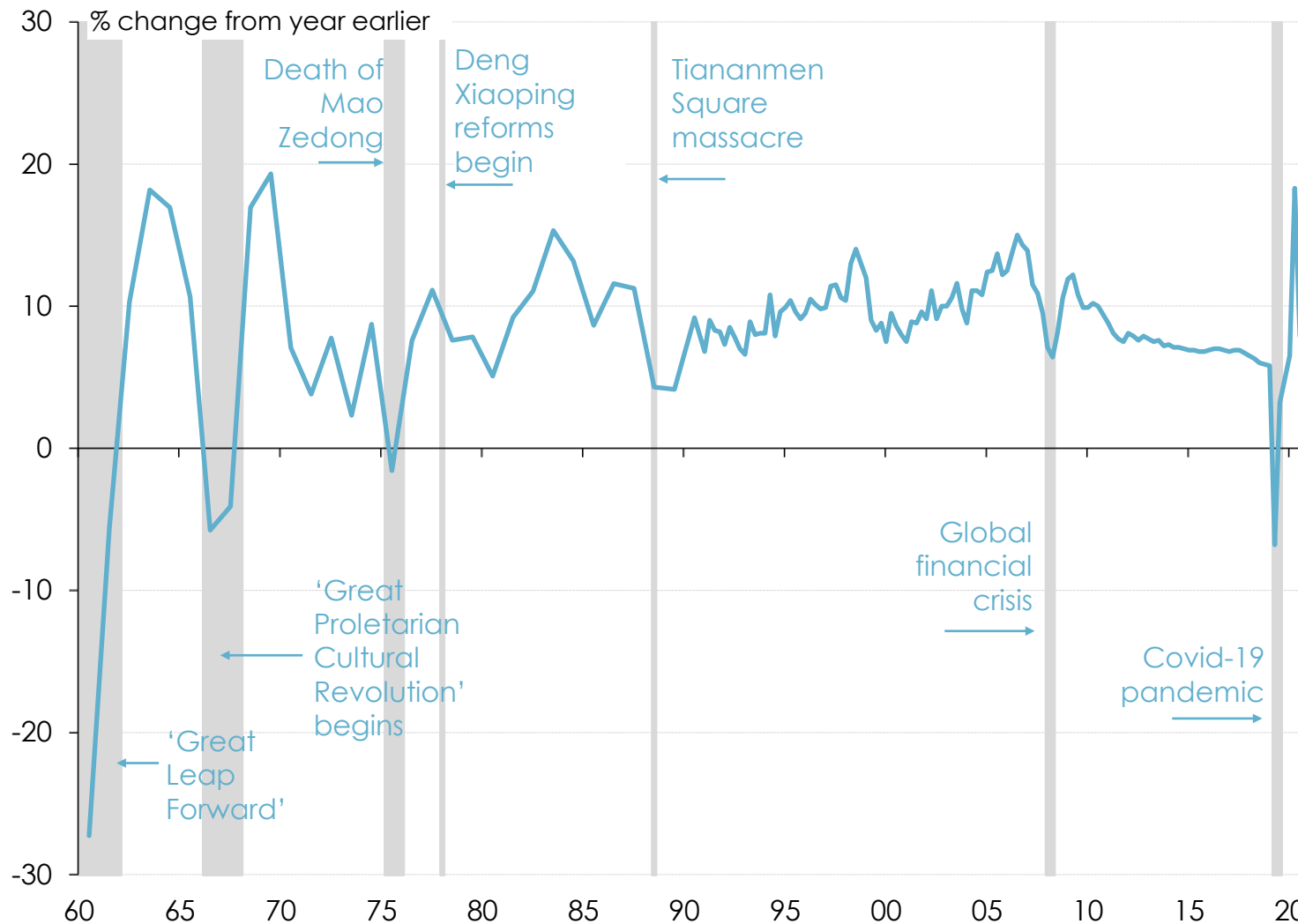
— Manufacturing

— Services

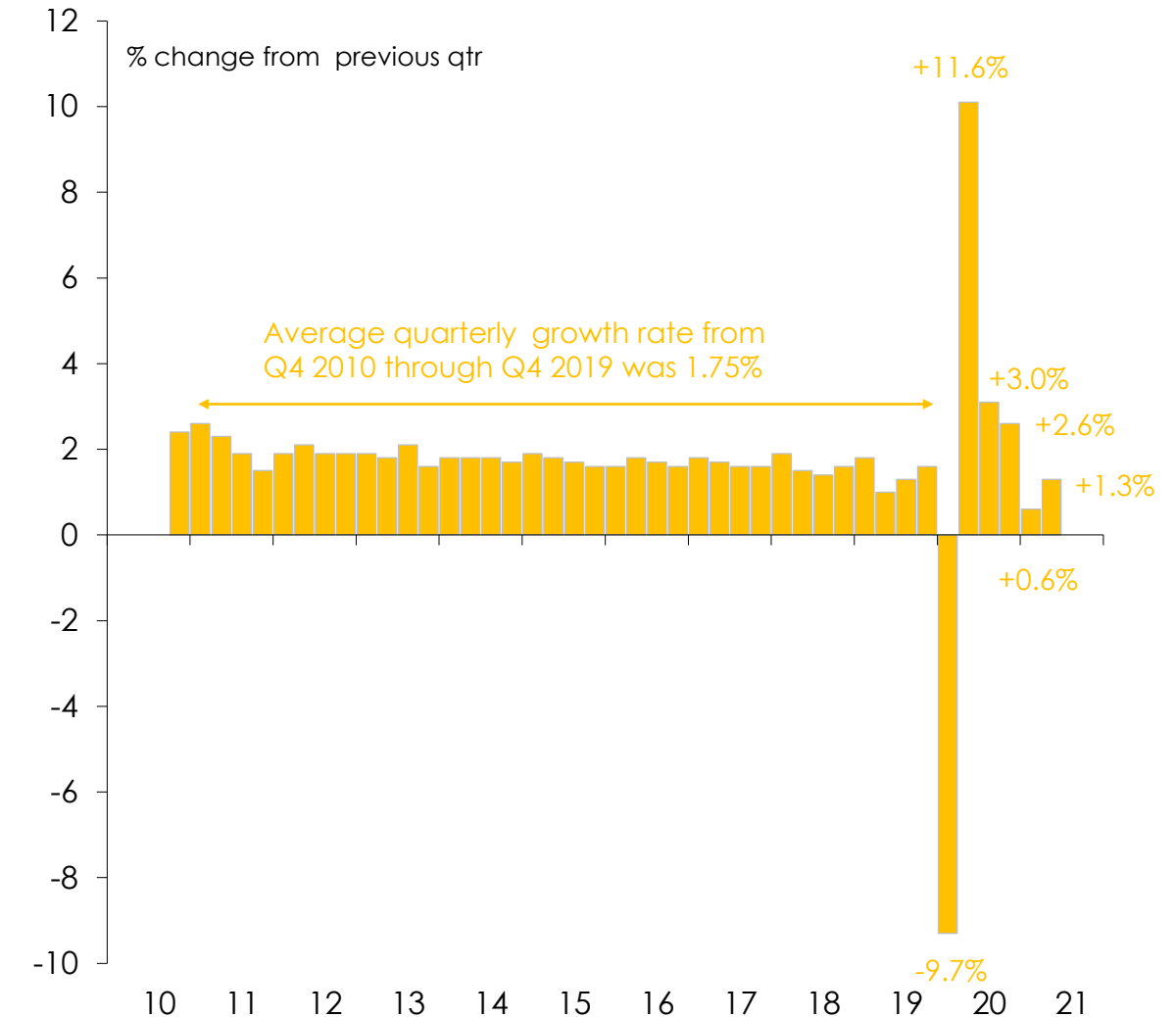
Note: Purchasing Managers' Indexes (PMIs) are derived from surveys of senior executives, who are asked to report whether various dimensions of business activity recorded an increase, decrease or no change compared with the previous month. A reading of 50 indicates an overall increase cf. the previous month, and a reading of less than 50 indicates a decrease. 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

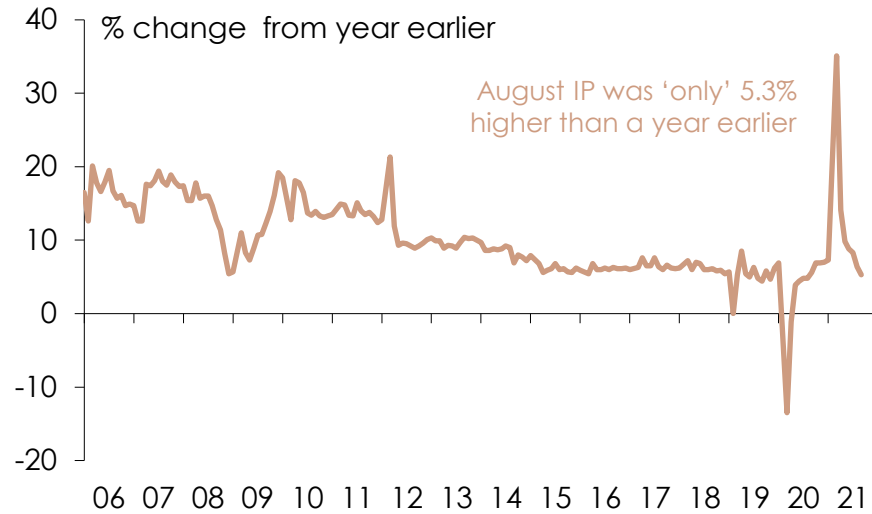


Note: In the left-hand chart, GDP growth rates are annual averages up to the December quarter of 1991, and then quarter-on-corresponding-quarter-of- previous-year thereafter. Source: [China National Bureau of Statistics](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

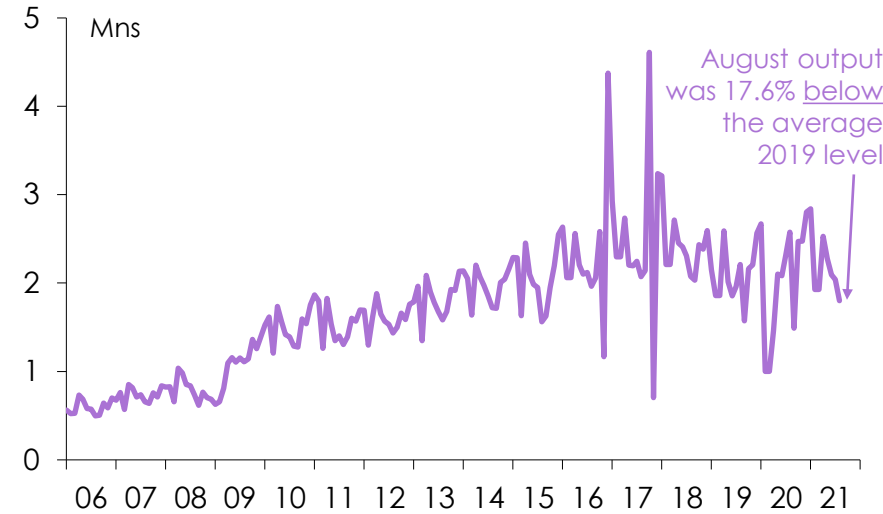


# China's economy continued to slow in August, partly (but not solely) due to virus outbreaks, and notwithstanding strength in exports

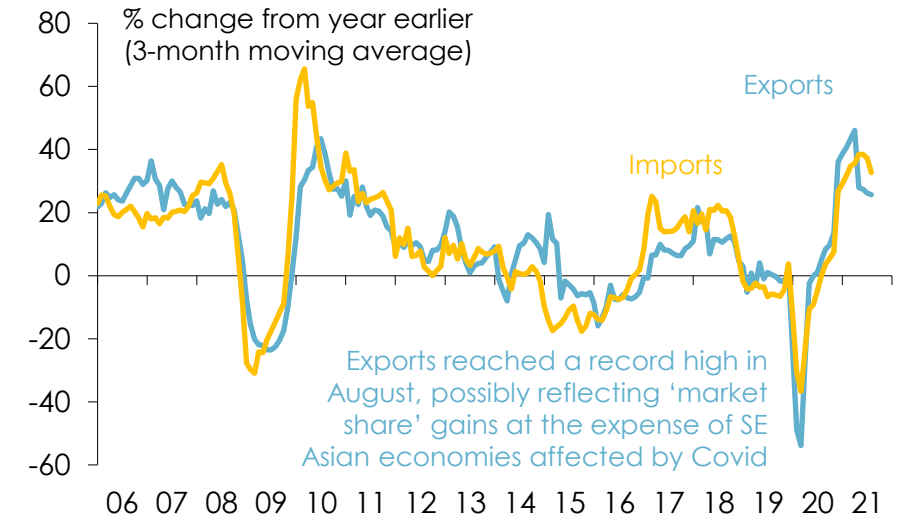
## Industrial production



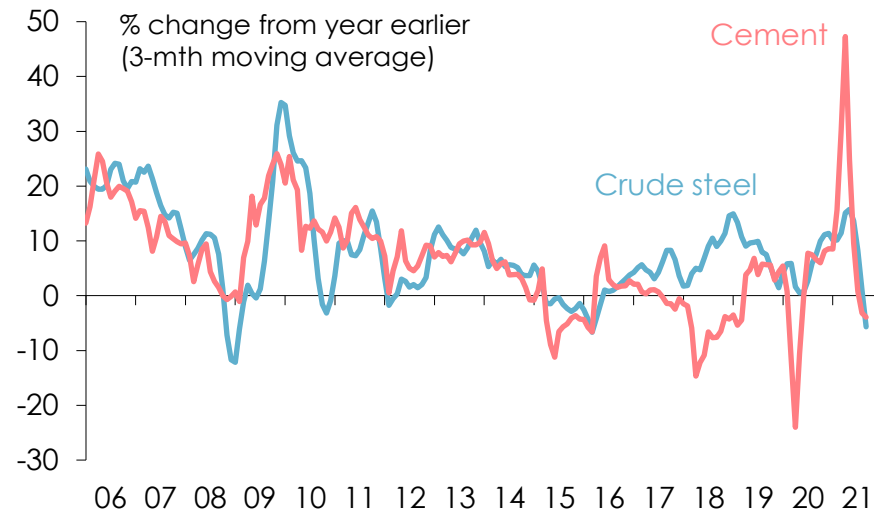
## Motor vehicle production



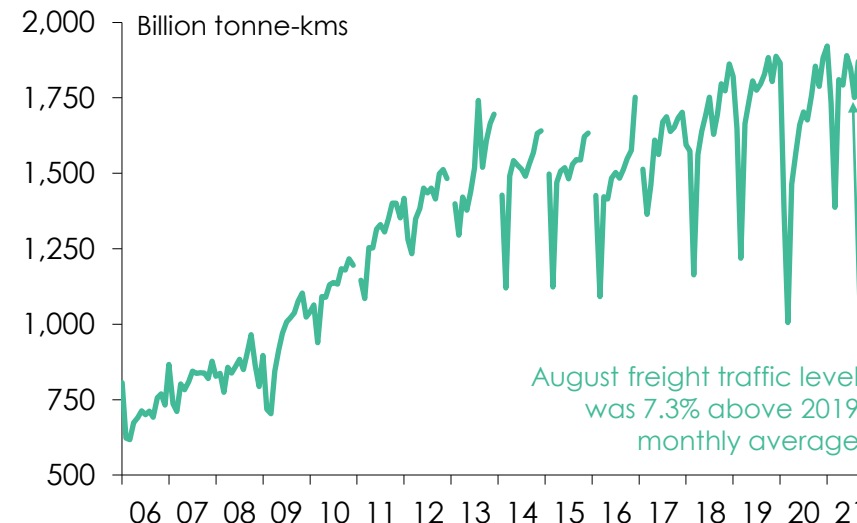
## Merchandise trade



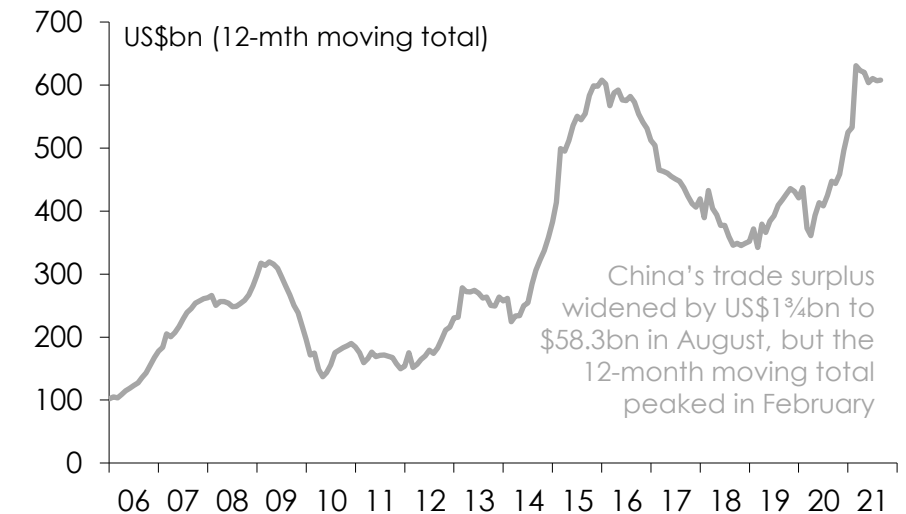
## Steel and cement production



## Freight traffic volumes



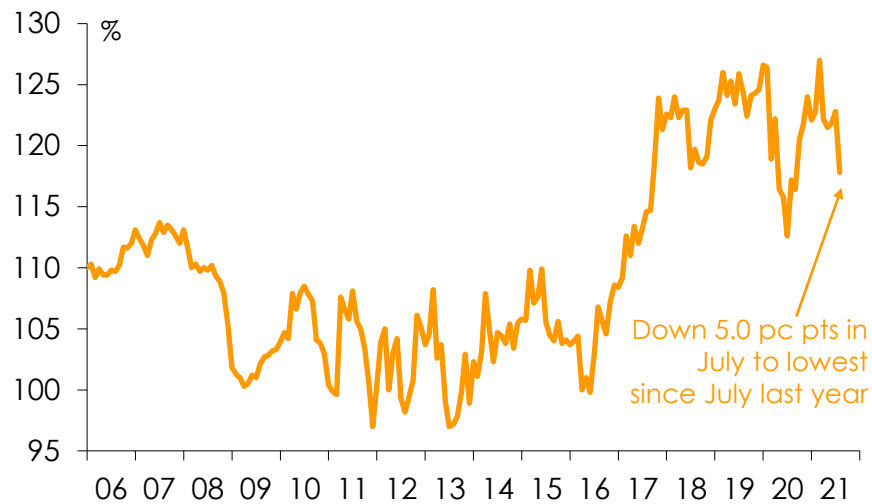
## Merchandise trade balance



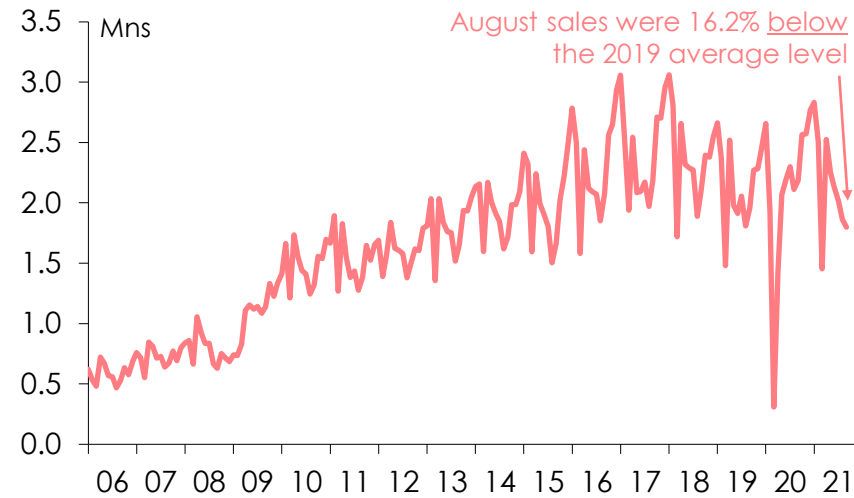
Note: Latest data are for July, except for merchandise trade, which are for August. Sources: [China National Bureau of Statistics](#); [China Association of Automobile Manufacturers](#); [China General Administration of Customs](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

# Most measures of consumer spending and of property market activity also continued to soften through August, partly but not solely due to 'delta'

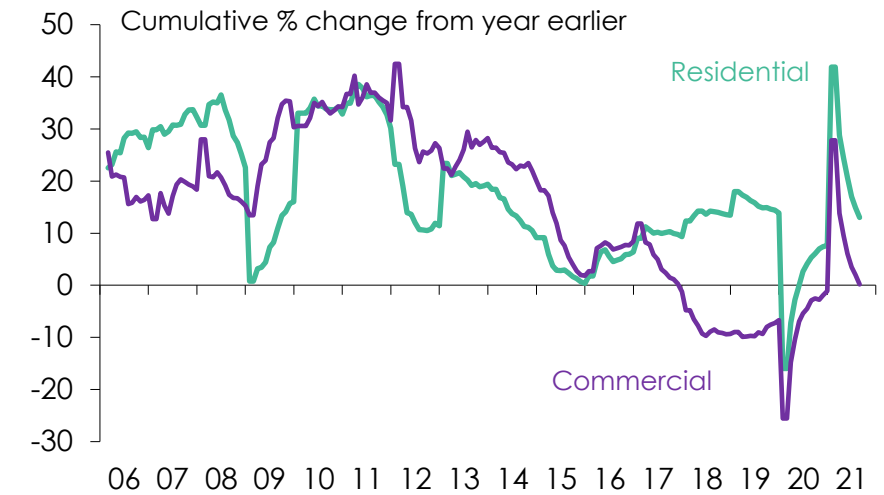
## Consumer sentiment



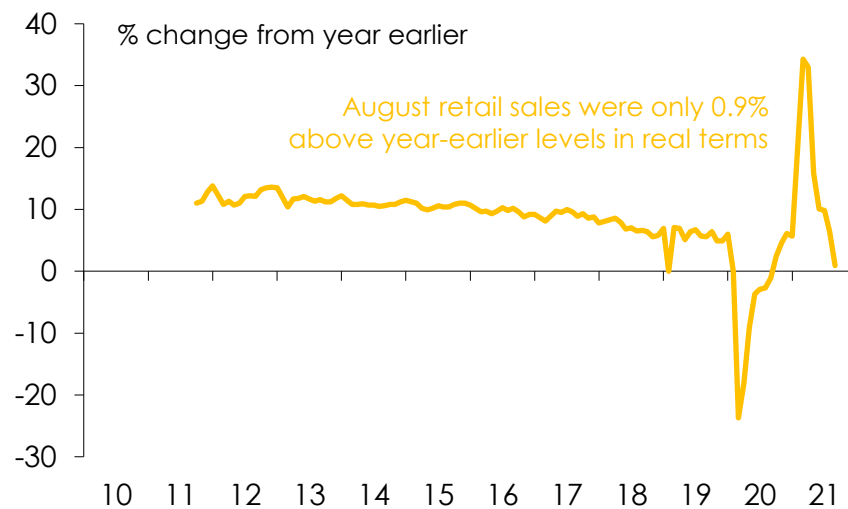
## Motor vehicle sales



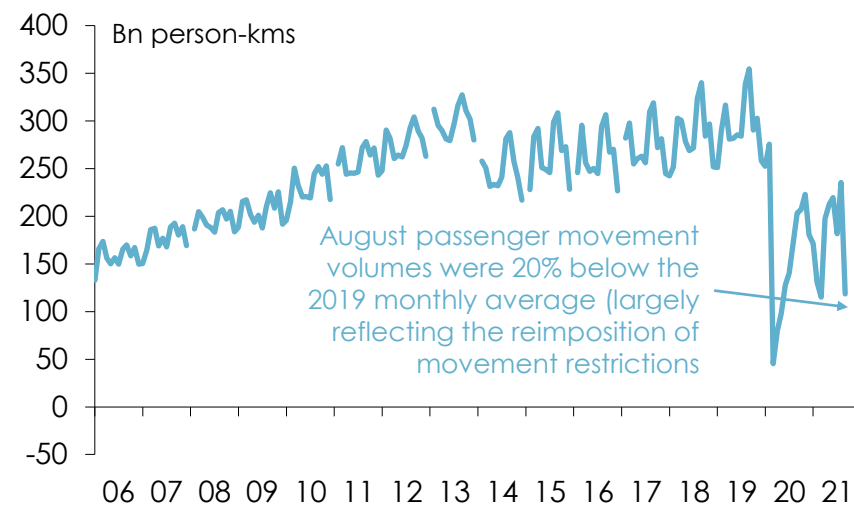
## Real estate investment



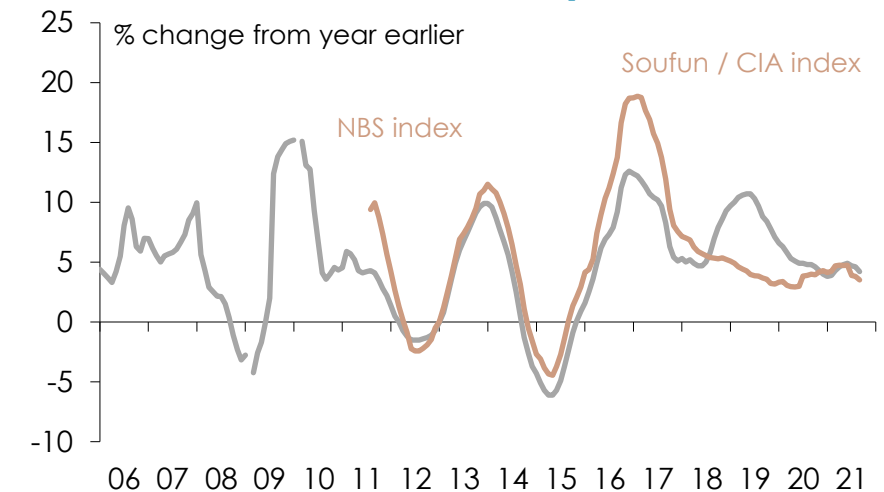
## Volume of retail sales



## Passenger traffic volumes



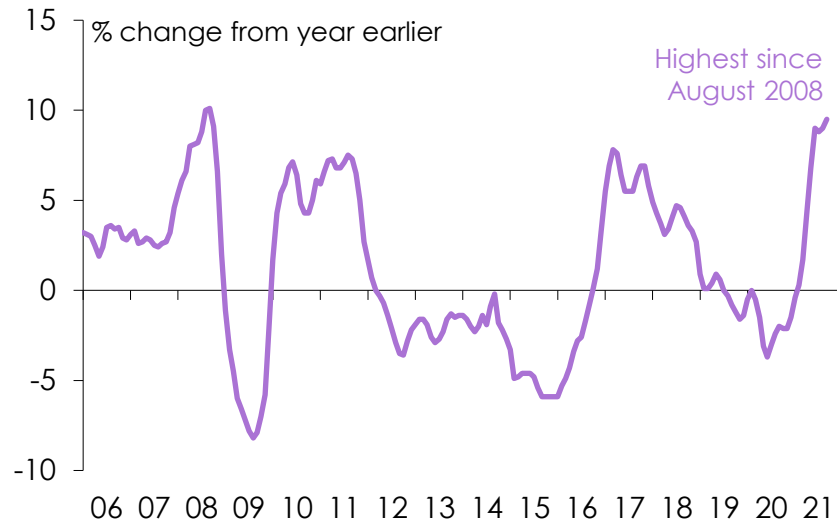
## Residential real estate prices



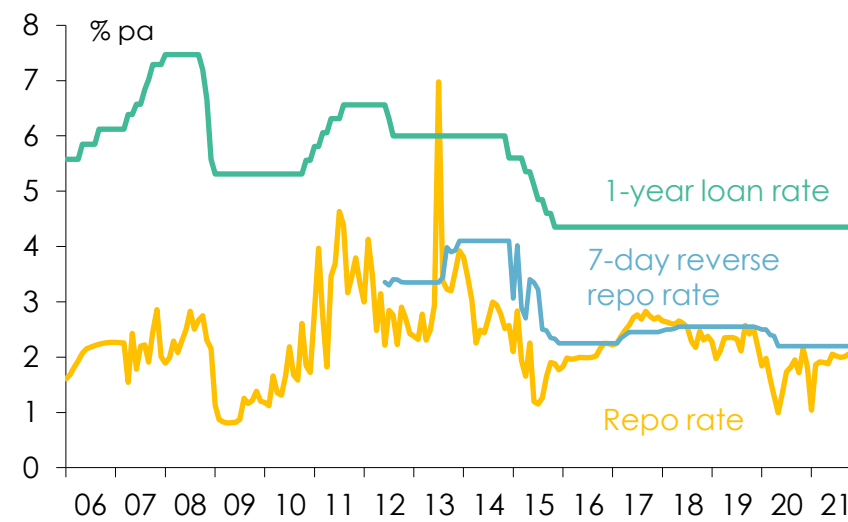
Sources: [China National Bureau of Statistics](#); [China Association of Automobile Manufacturers](#); [China Index Academy](#) (CIA). Latest data are for August, except for consumer confidence. [Return to "What's New"](#).

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

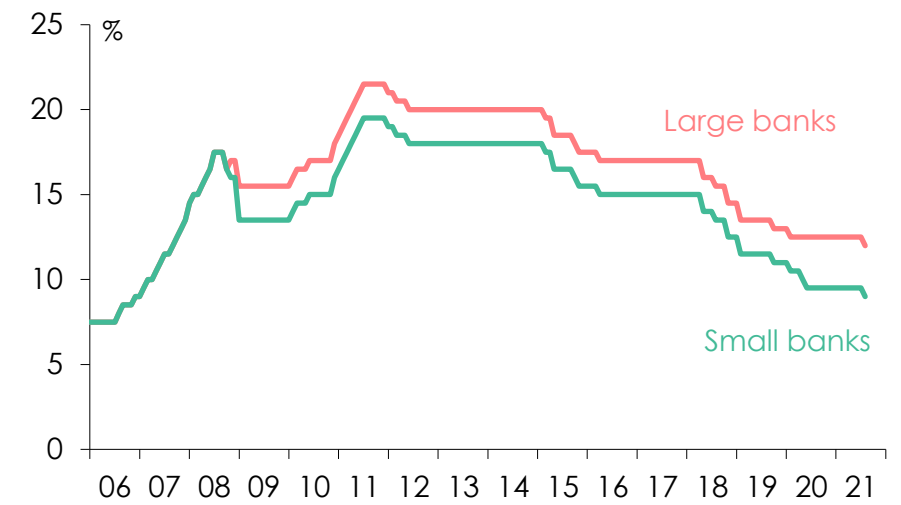
## Producer prices



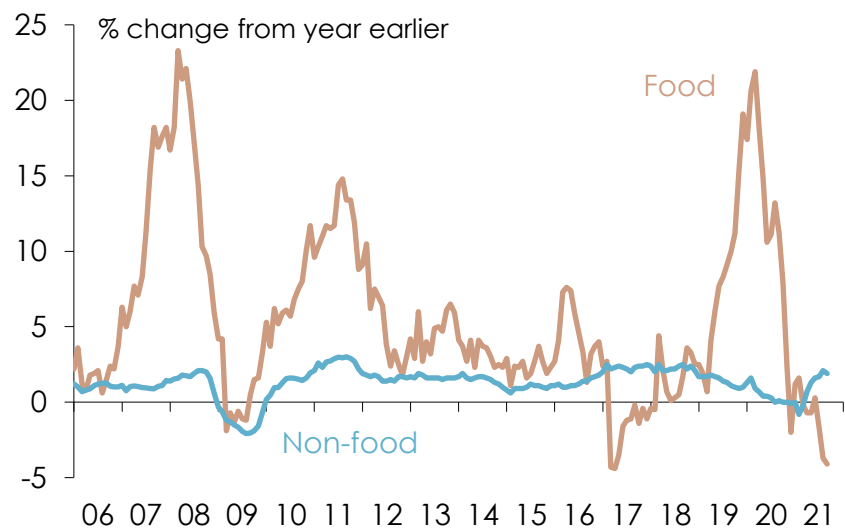
## PBoC policy interest rates



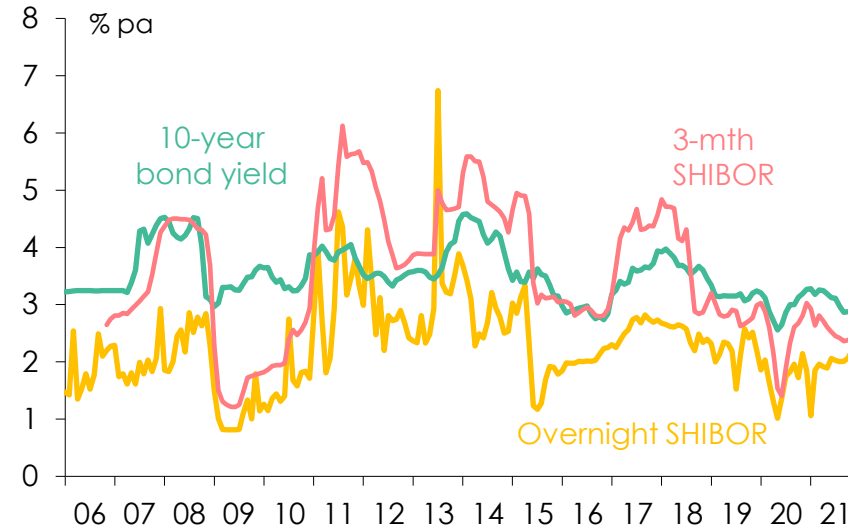
## Bank reserve requirement ratios



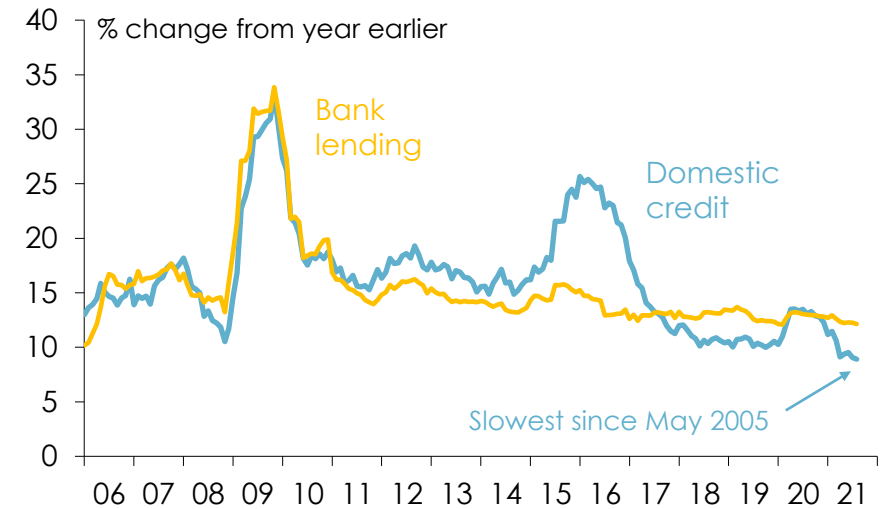
## Consumer prices



## Market interest rates



## Credit growth



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

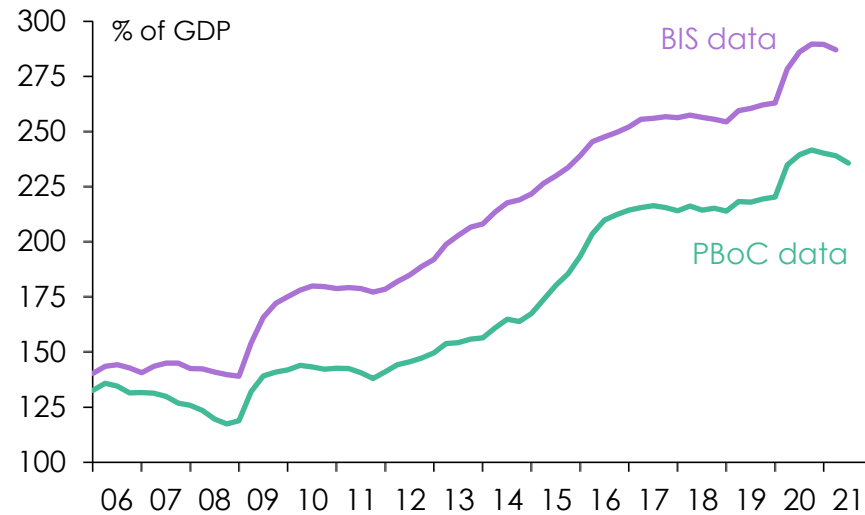
Sources: [China National Bureau of Statistics](#); Refinitiv Datastream; [People's Bank of China](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

# Concerns about the systemic consequences of a default by China's largest property developer have eased a bit, but not 'gone away'

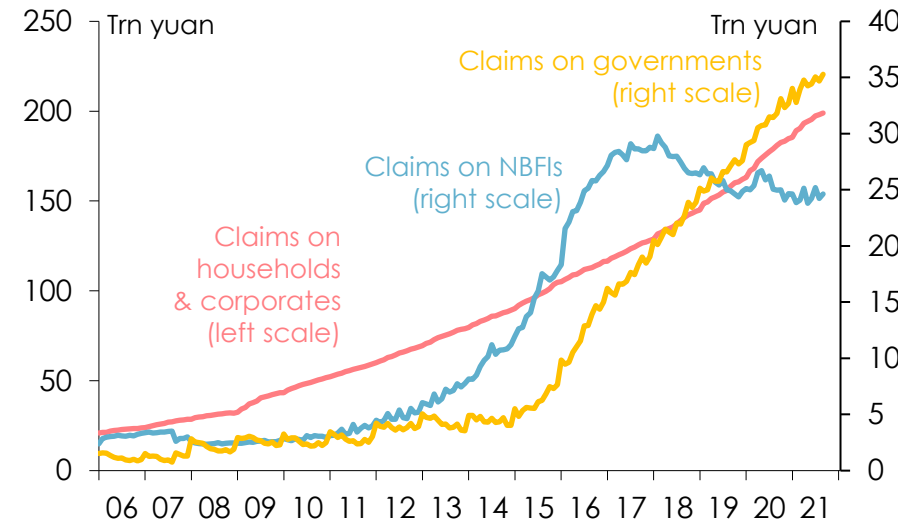
- ❑ Concerns have been mounting for some weeks about the possibility of a default by China Evergrande Group, a property development company with debts totalling US\$300 billion (of which US\$37bn falls due within a year)
  - Evergrande is China's second-largest property developer, with around 200,000 employees, and owns more than 1,300 different projects in some 280 cities (and indirect management interests in 2,800 others) across China, as well as having interests in electric vehicle manufacturing
- ❑ A collapse of Evergrande could likely have significant consequences for the broader Chinese financial system
  - but it's not clear whether a government-sponsored 'rescue' would be consistent with the recent government emphasis on steering lending away from real estate development or with regulatory crack-downs on prominent entrepreneurs
- ❑ Immediate concerns eased at the end of September when Evergrande indicated it had "resolved" interest payments on an Rmb-denominated bond "via negotiations"
  - Chinese regulators reportedly instructed Evergrande to focus on completing unfinished properties and repaying individual investors
  - however Evergrande has missed interest payments totalling US\$131mn on two dollar-denominated bonds due in the last two weeks of September (though subject to a 30-day 'grace' period), and a further payment of \$150mn is due this coming week
- ❑ Chinese press reports indicate that Evergrande may sell its stake in Shengjing Bank, and a 51% stake in its property services subsidiary, in order to repay some of its debts
- ❑ Another large property developer, Fantasia Holdings, missed a payment on a US\$206mn bond, and a 700mn yuan domestic loan this week
- ❑ The PBoC drained liquidity on Friday, as Chinese markets returned from a week-long holiday, after having made injections averaging Rmb 100bn a day for most of the last two weeks of September
  - as a result of which both Shibor rates and longer-term bond yields moved a bit higher

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

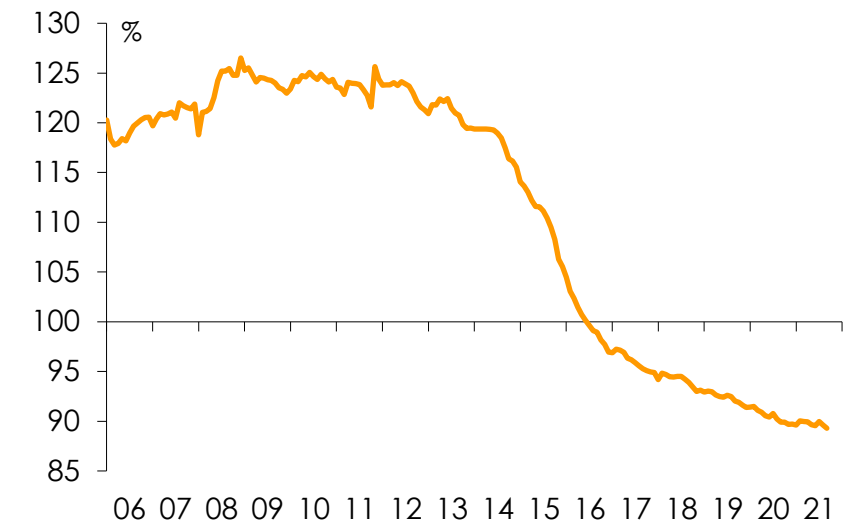
## Credit outstanding as a pc of GDP



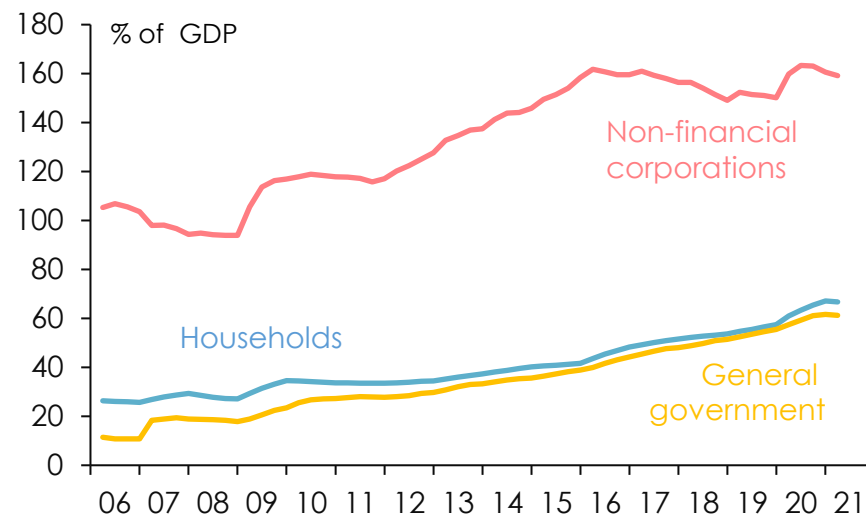
## Banks' assets



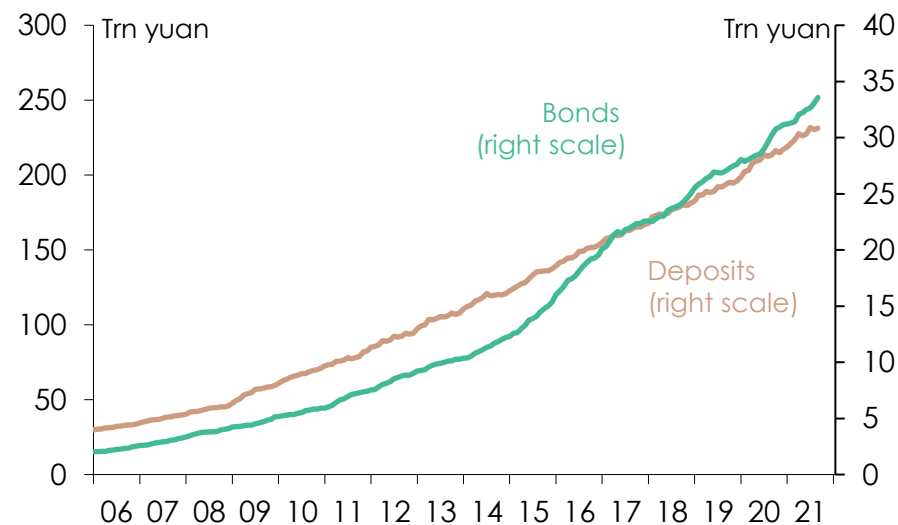
## Banks' deposits-to-loans ratio



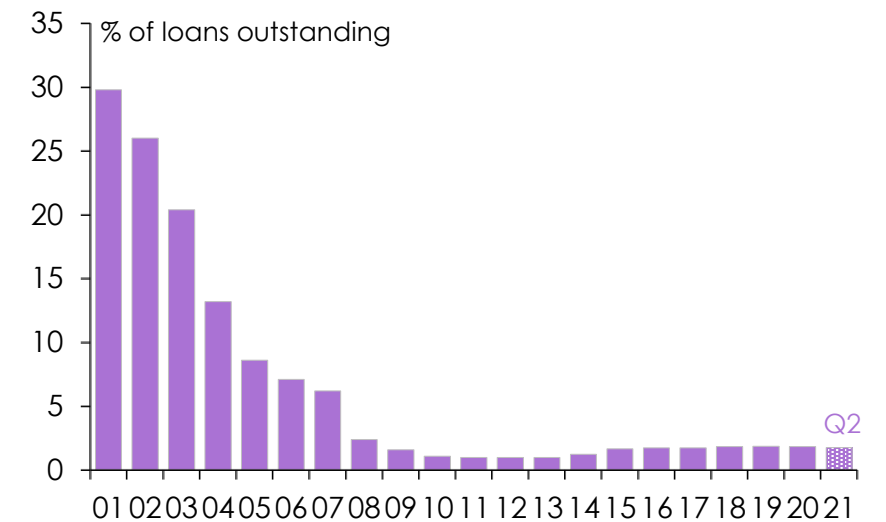
## Credit outstanding by sector



## Banks' liabilities

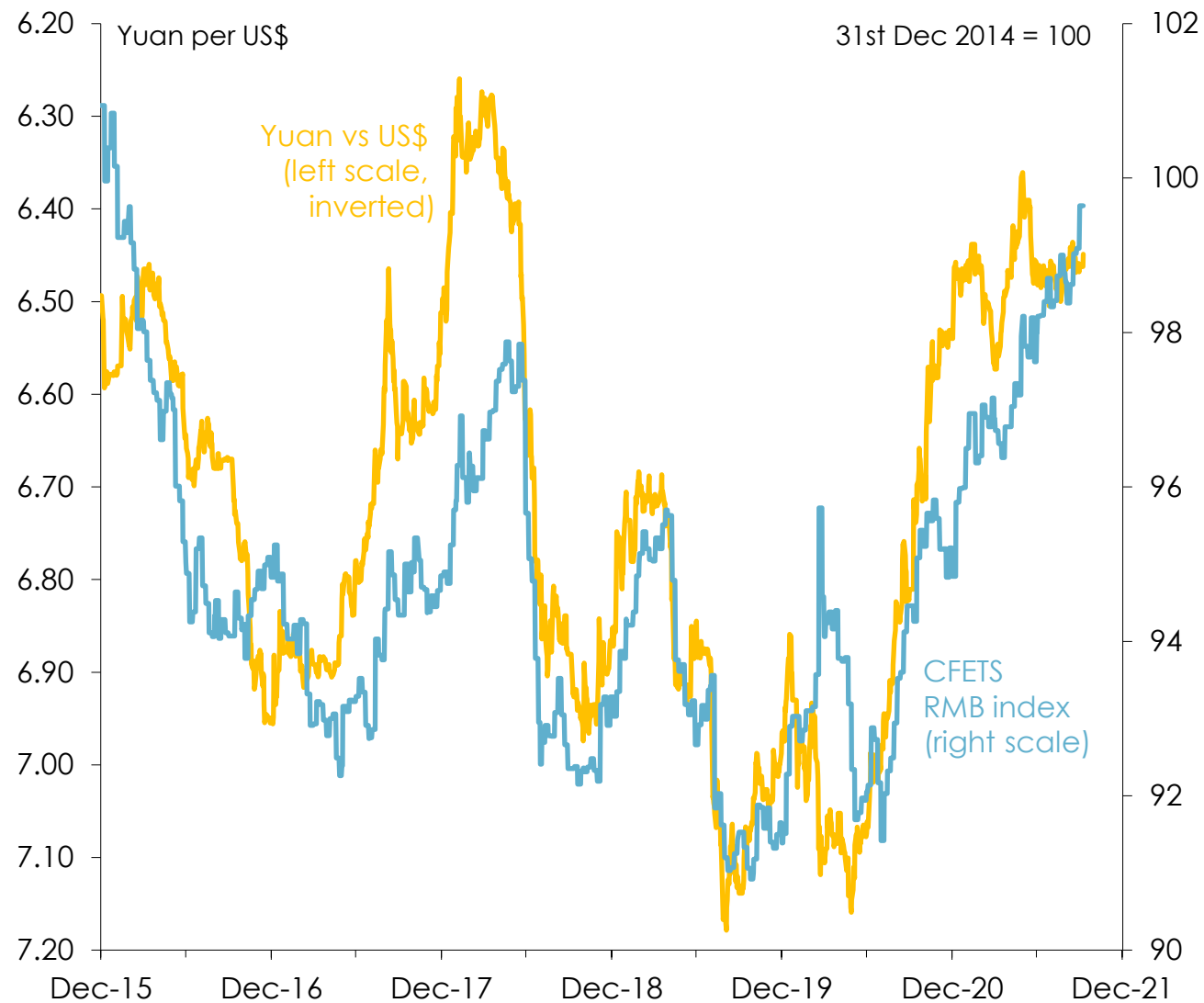


## Banks NPLs – official estimates

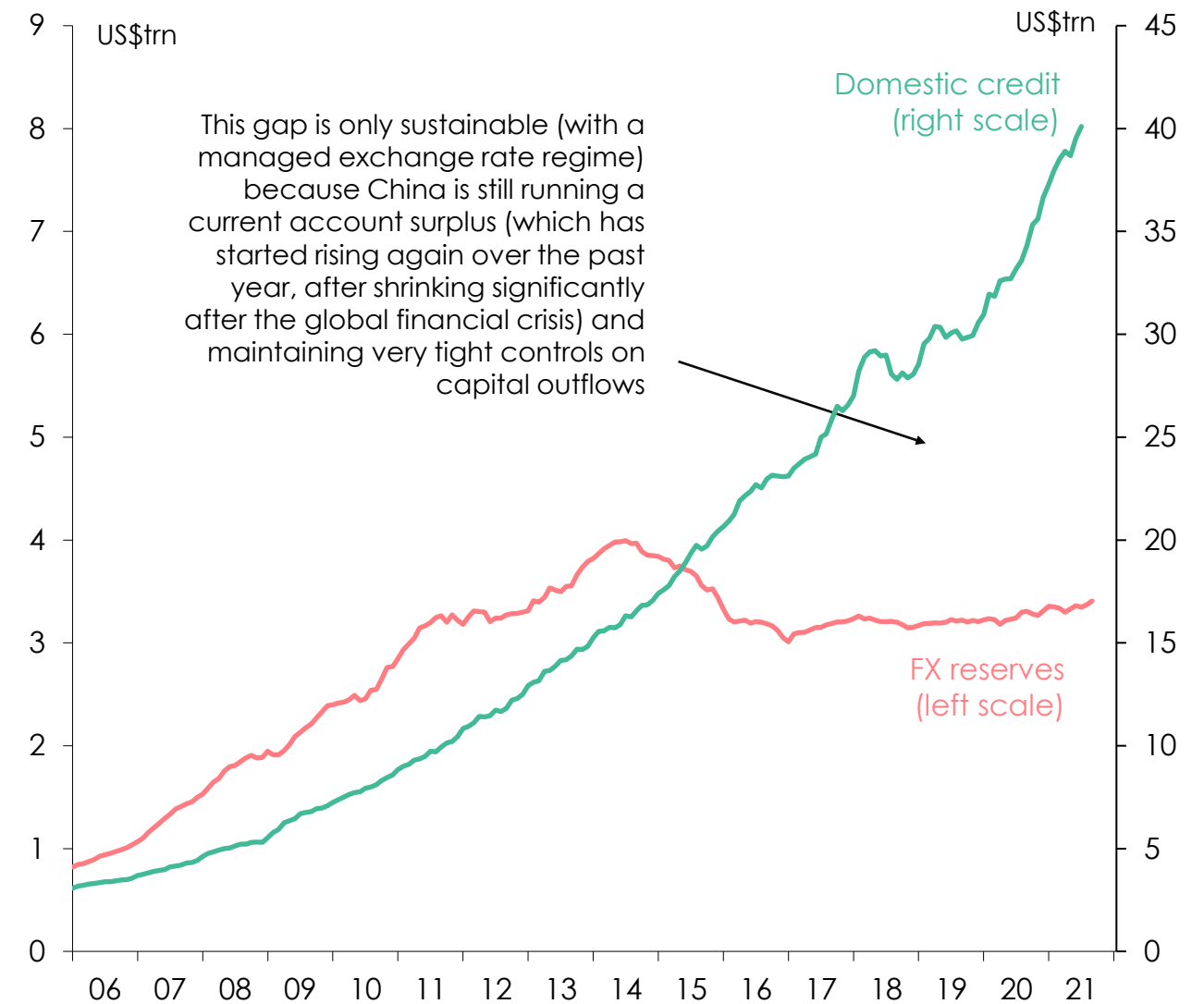


# The yuan strengthened 0.2% against the US dollar and 0.6% in trade-weighted terms this week

## Chinese renminbi vs US\$ and trade-weighted index



## FX reserves and domestic credit

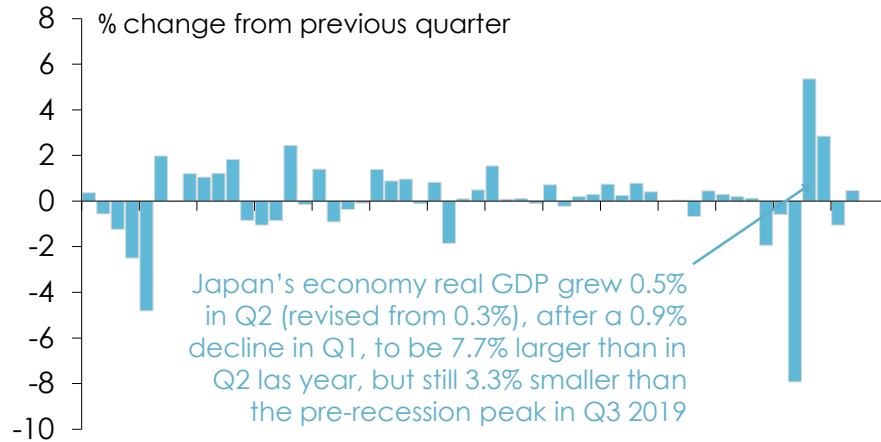


Sources: Refinitiv Datastream; China Foreign Exchange Trading System; People's Bank of China. Exchange rates up to 8<sup>th</sup> October; FX reserves and credit are up to August. [Return to "What's New"](#).

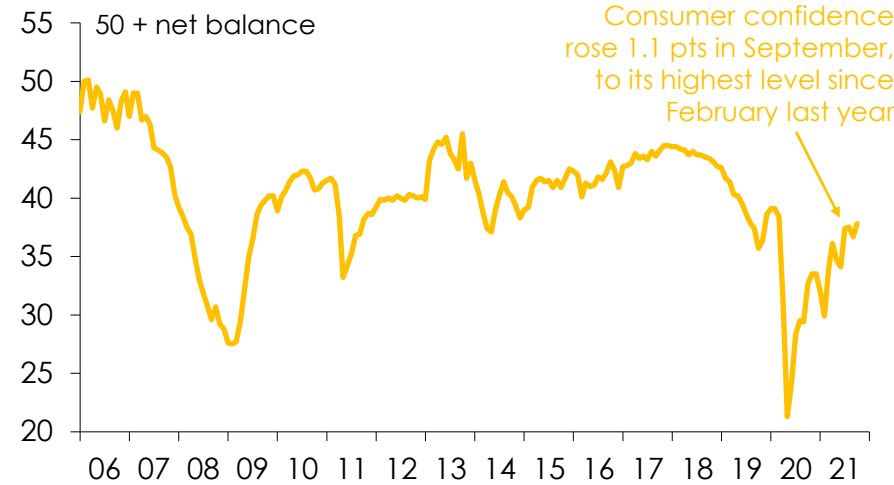


# In Japan, both consumers and large businesses are becoming more optimistic, even though employment fell in August

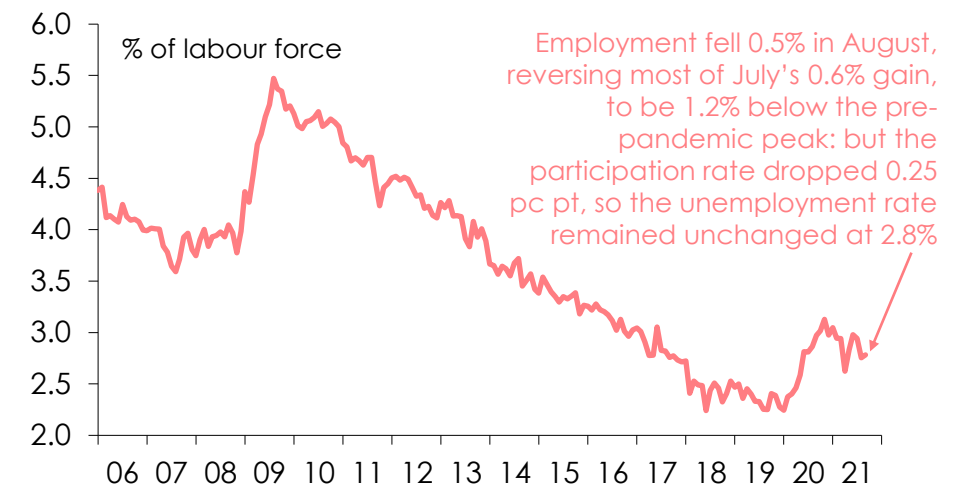
## Real GDP



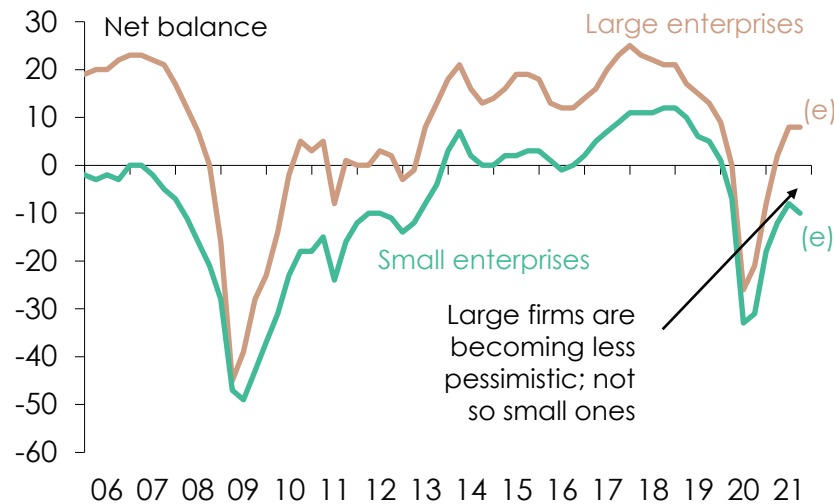
## Consumer confidence



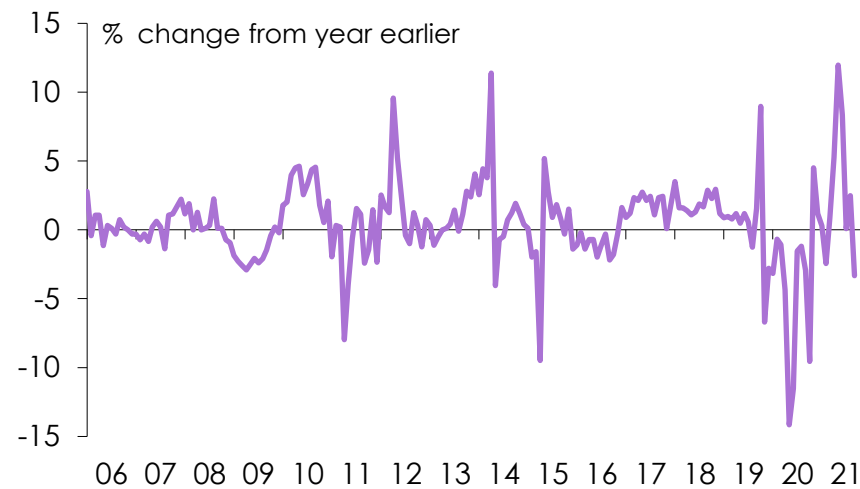
## Unemployment



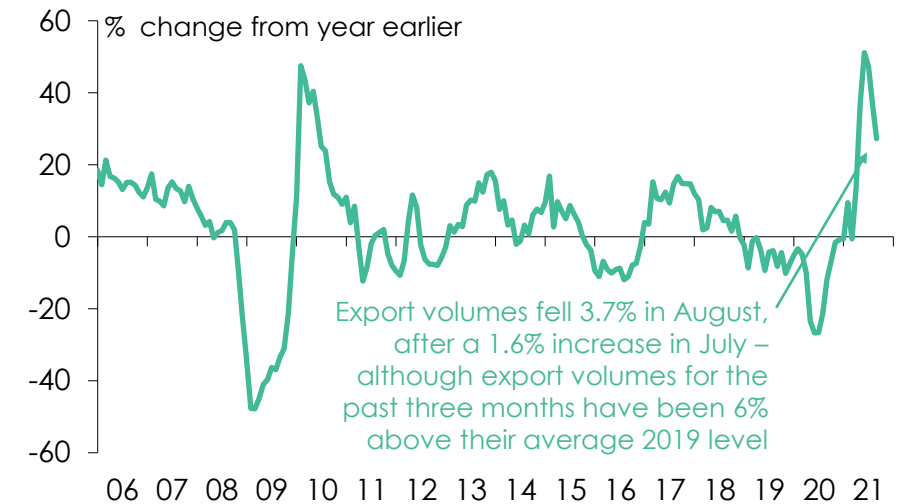
## BoJ Tankan business conditions



## Value of retail sales



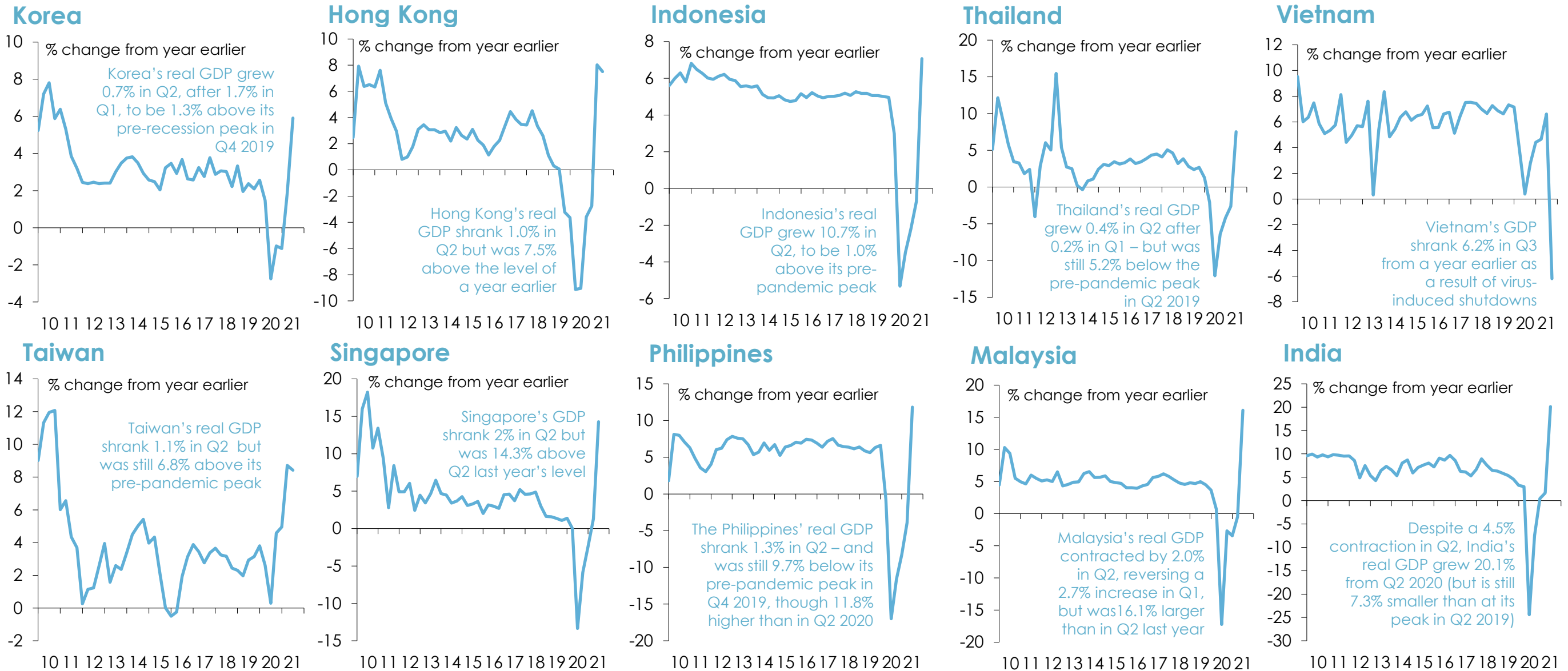
## Merchandise export volumes



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"](#).

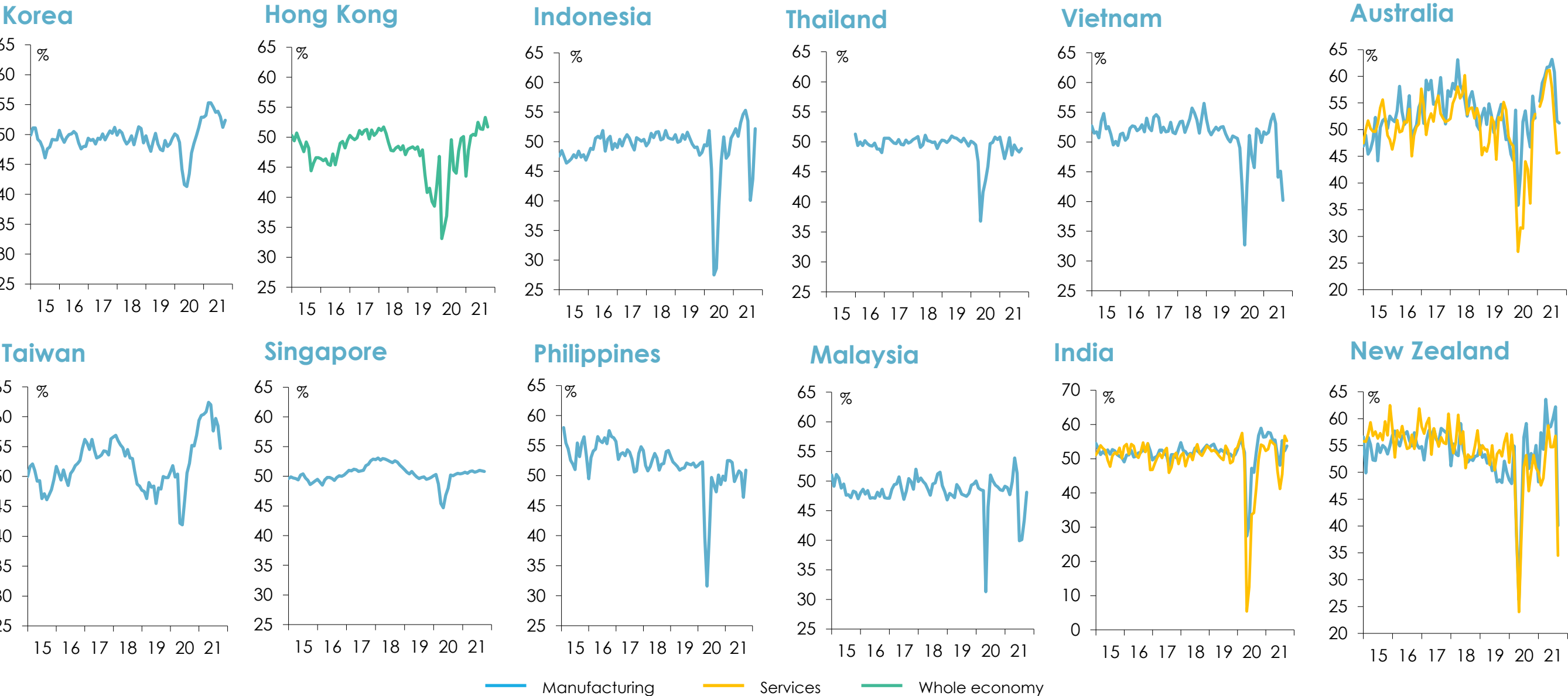


# Vietnam's economy contracted by 6.2% in Q3 compared with Q3 last year, as a direct result of shutdowns in response to the spread of delta



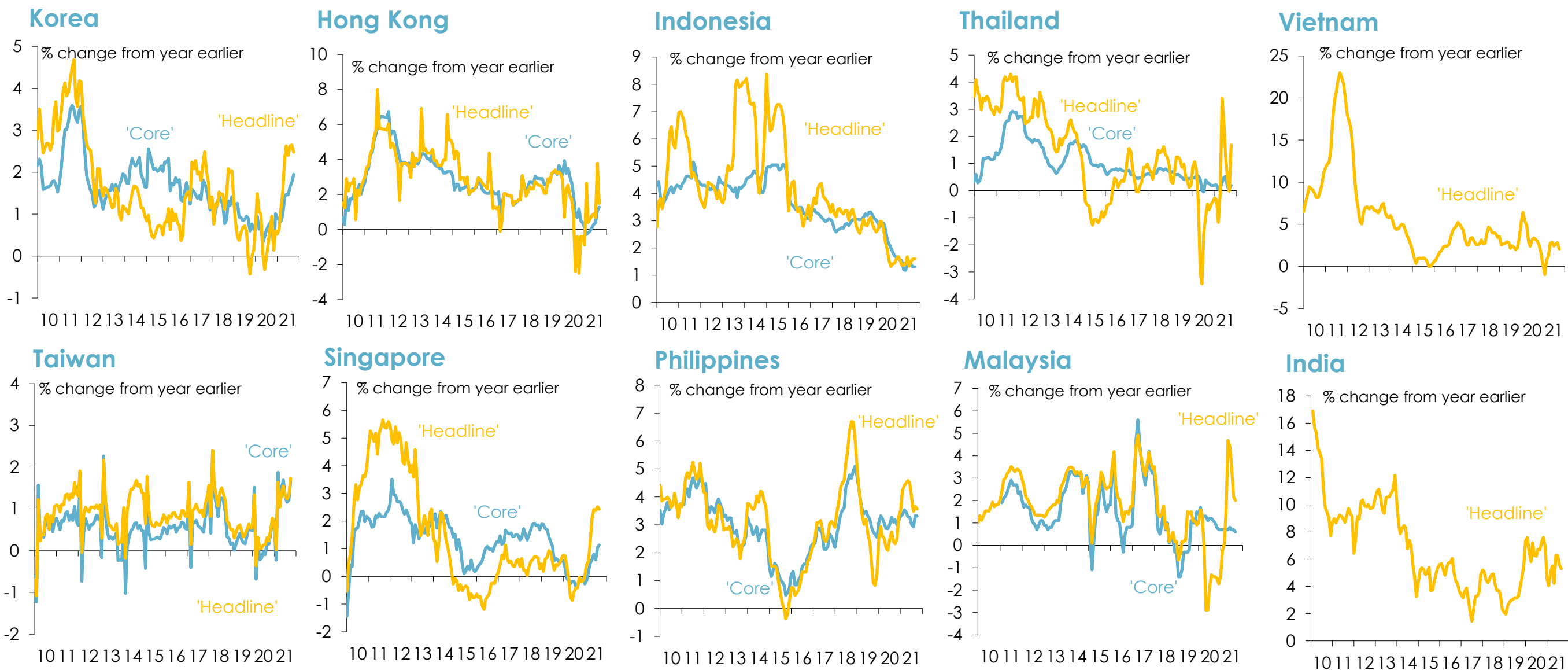
Note: Latest data are Q2 for Korea, Singapore and Vietnam, and Q1 for other countries. Sources: Bank of Korea; Taiwan Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting & Statistics; Hong Kong Census & Statistics Department; Singapore Ministry of Trade and Industry; Department of Statistics Malaysia; Office of 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 suggest a pick-up in manufacturing activity in most east Asian economies in September – with the exceptions of Taiwan and Vietnam



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 September, except for Hong Kong, Singapore, NZ and India services. 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"](#).

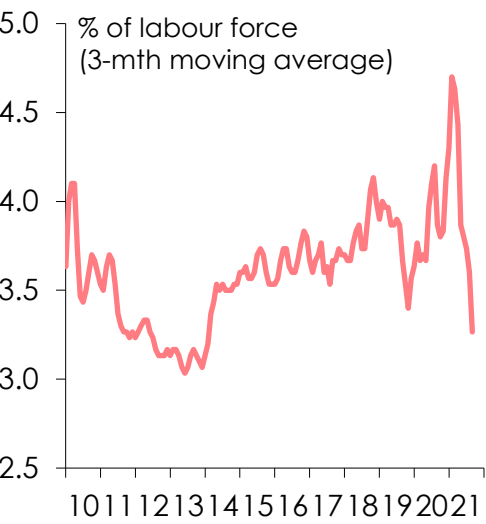
# Some (though not all) Asian economies are experiencing temporary upward pressure on inflation as in North America and Europe



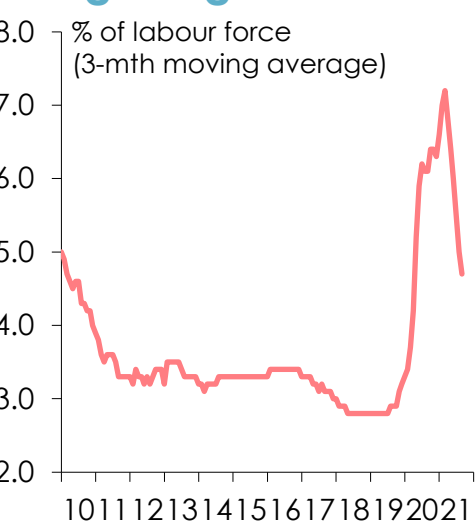
Note: 'Core' inflation in Korea excludes agricultural products and oil; in Taiwan it excludes fresh fruit, vegetables and energy; in Singapore it excludes accommodation and private transport; and in Hong Kong it excludes the effect of 'one-off government relief measures'. 'Core' inflation in Indonesia 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 year but is now falling in most of them

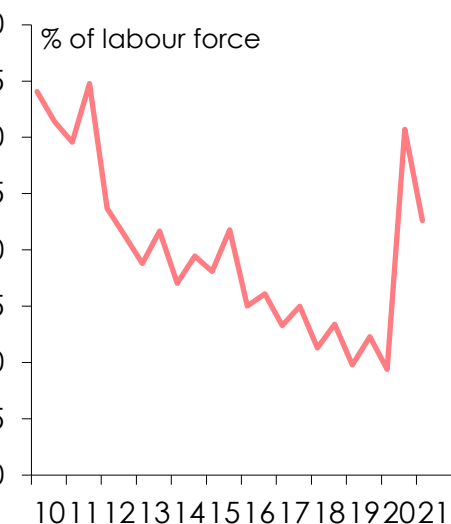
## Korea



## Hong Kong



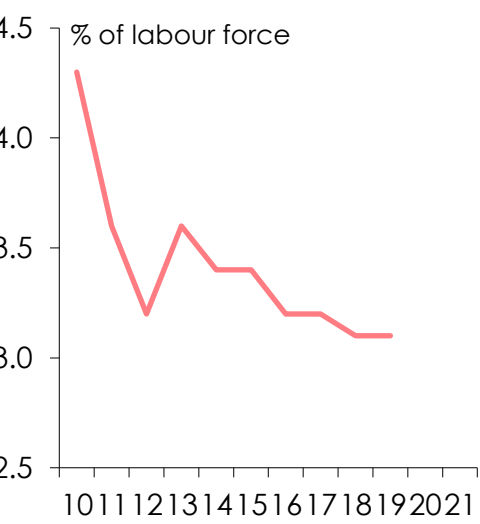
## Indonesia



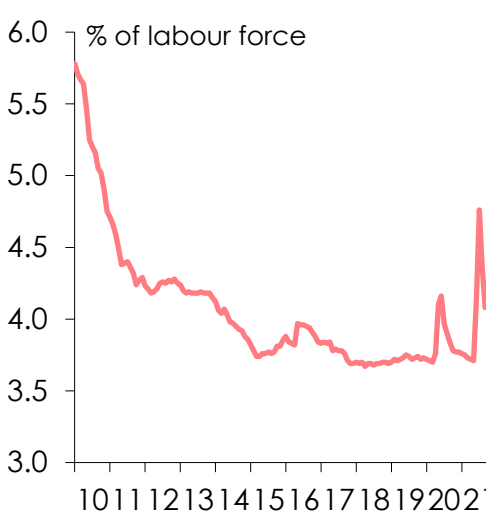
## Thailand



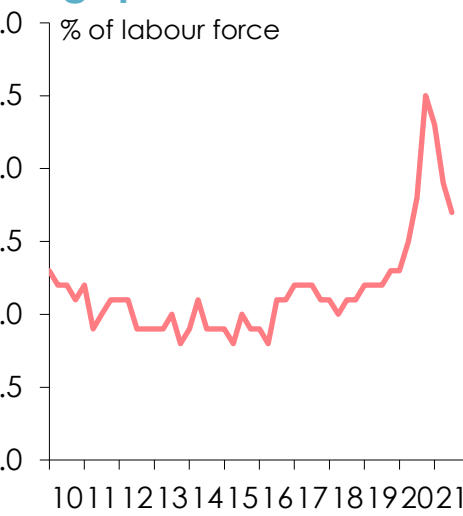
## Vietnam



## Taiwan



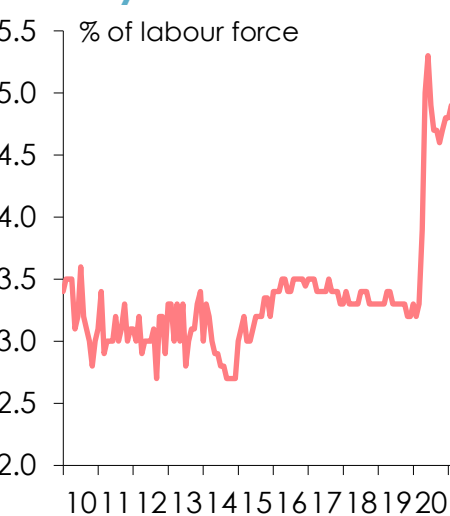
## Singapore



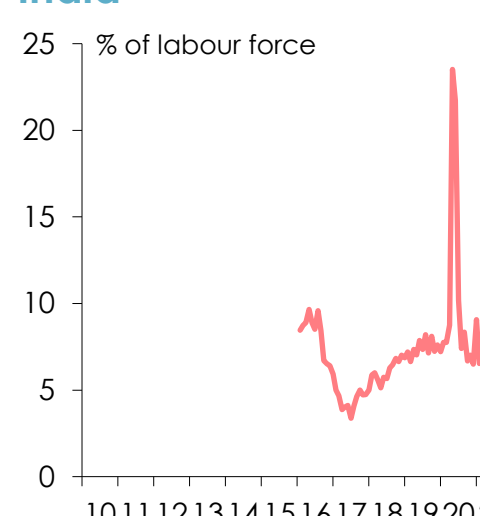
## Philippines



## Malaysia

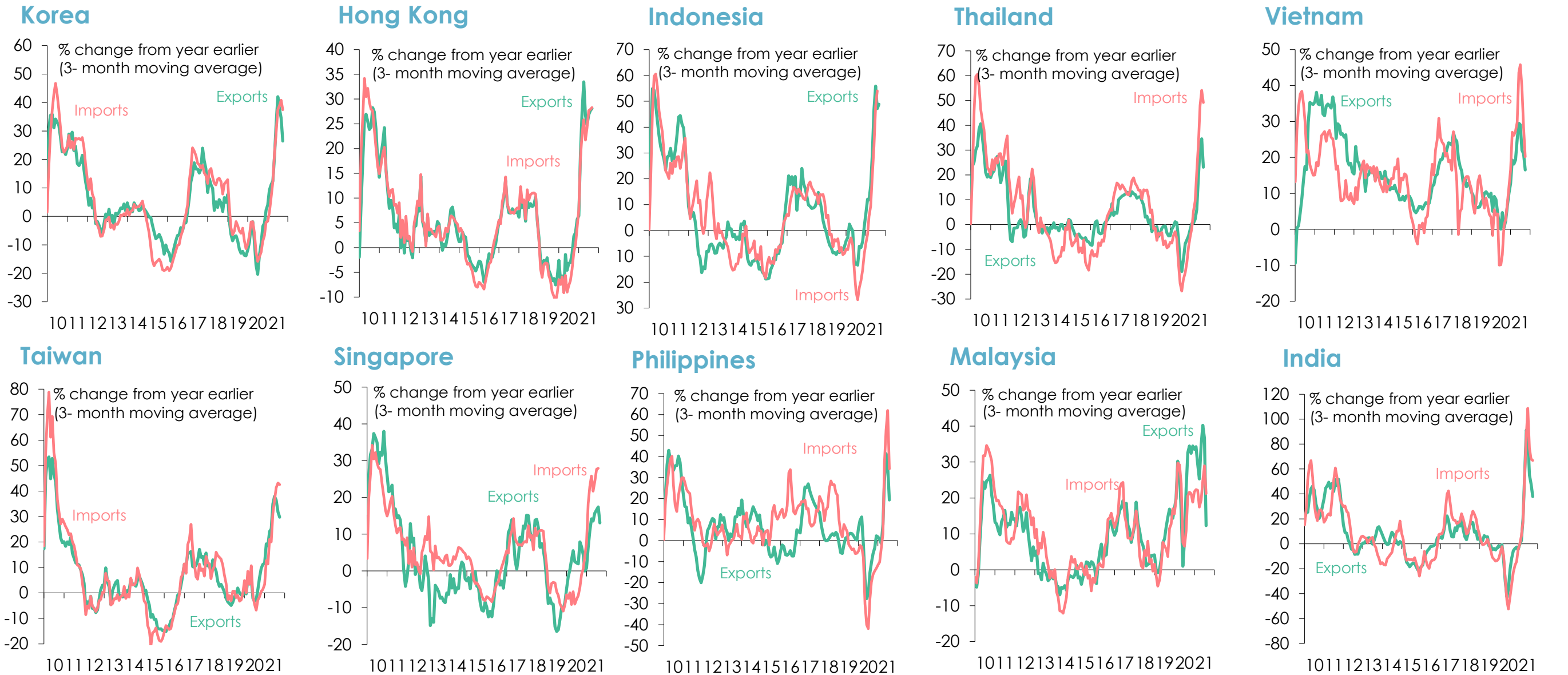


## India



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

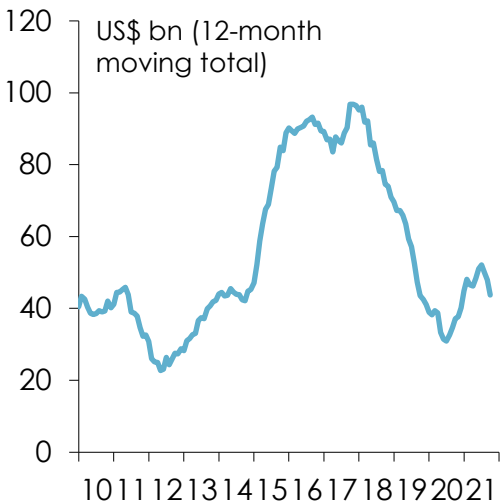


Note: Data for Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia are published in national currencies and converted to US dollars by Corinna using month-average exchange rates.  
Sources: national statistical agencies and central banks. [Return to "What's New"](#).

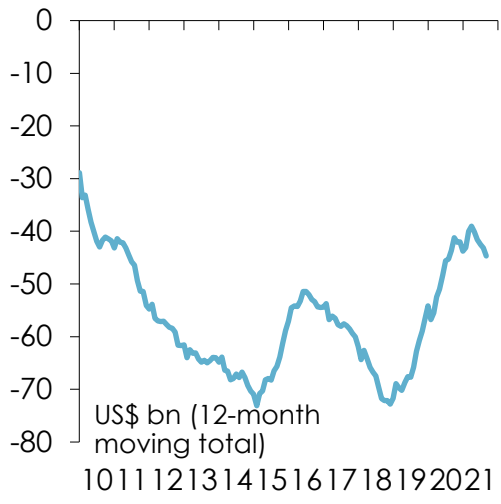


# All Asian economies have experienced improvements in their trade balances since the onset of Covid, although some are now turning around

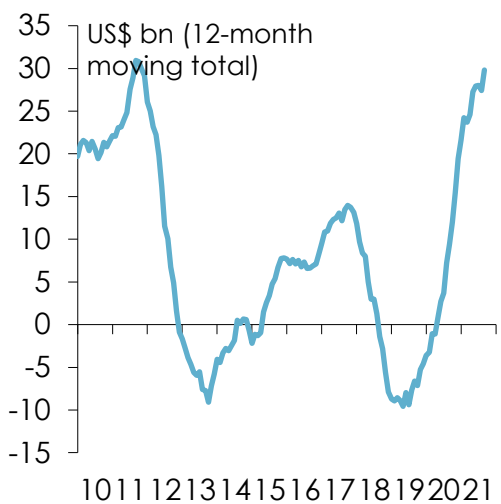
Korea



Hong Kong



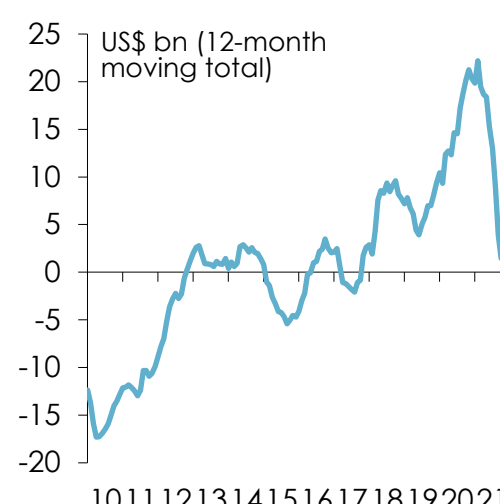
Indonesia



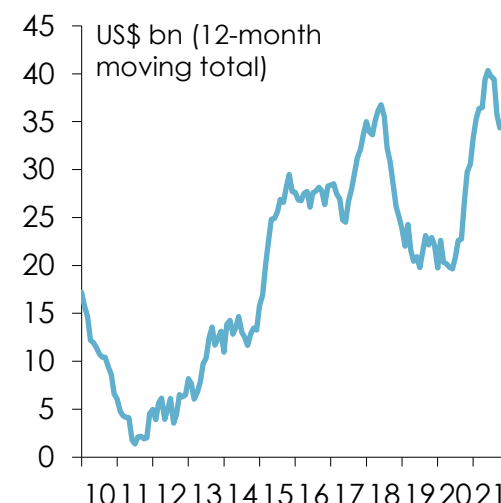
Thailand



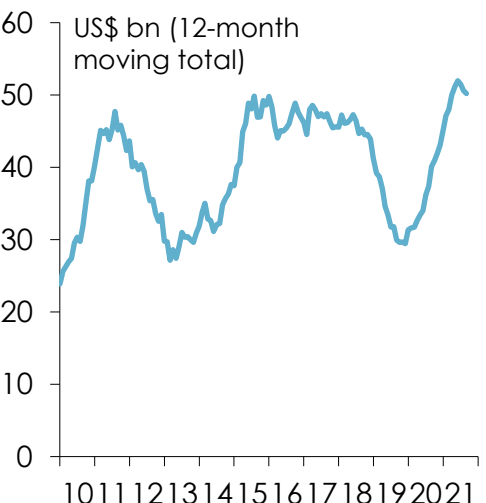
Vietnam



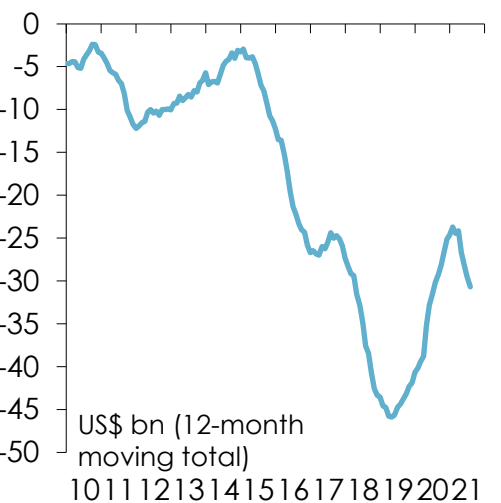
Taiwan



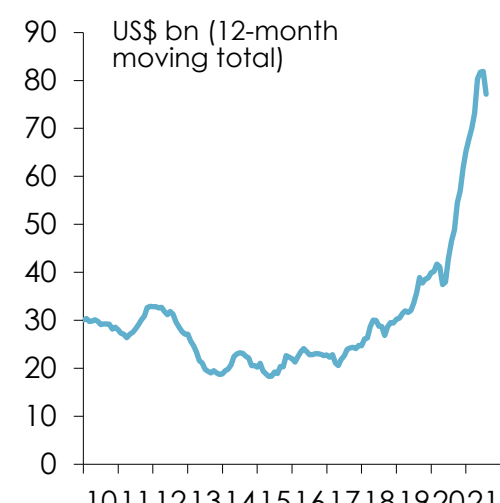
Singapore



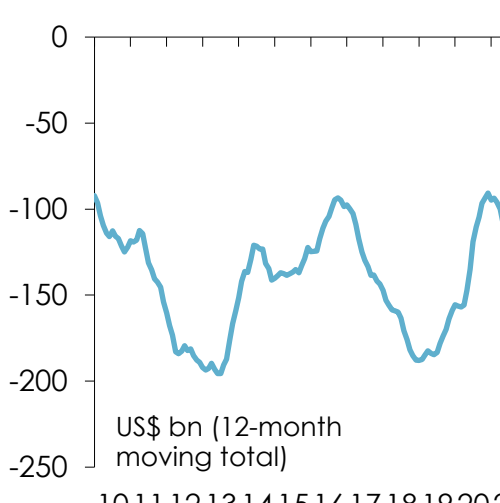
Philippines



Malaysia



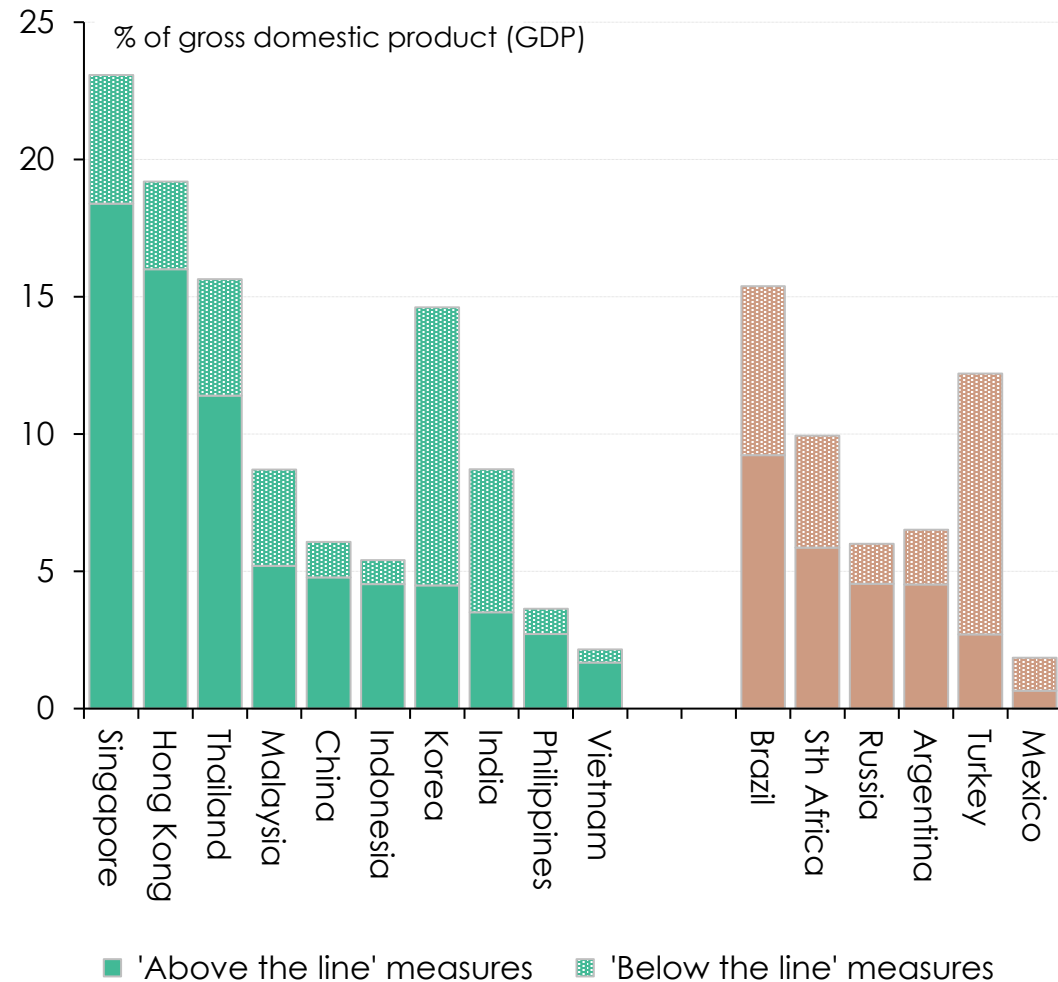
India



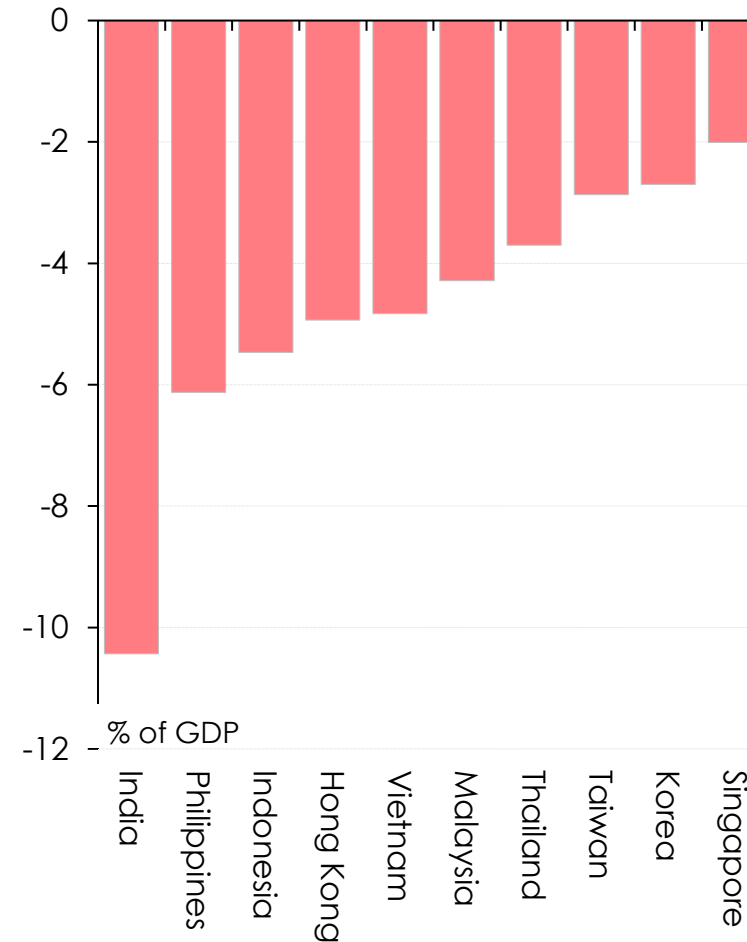
Note: Data for Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia are published in national currencies and converted to US dollars by Corinna using month-average exchange rates.  
Sources: national statistical agencies and central banks. [Return to "What's New"](#).

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

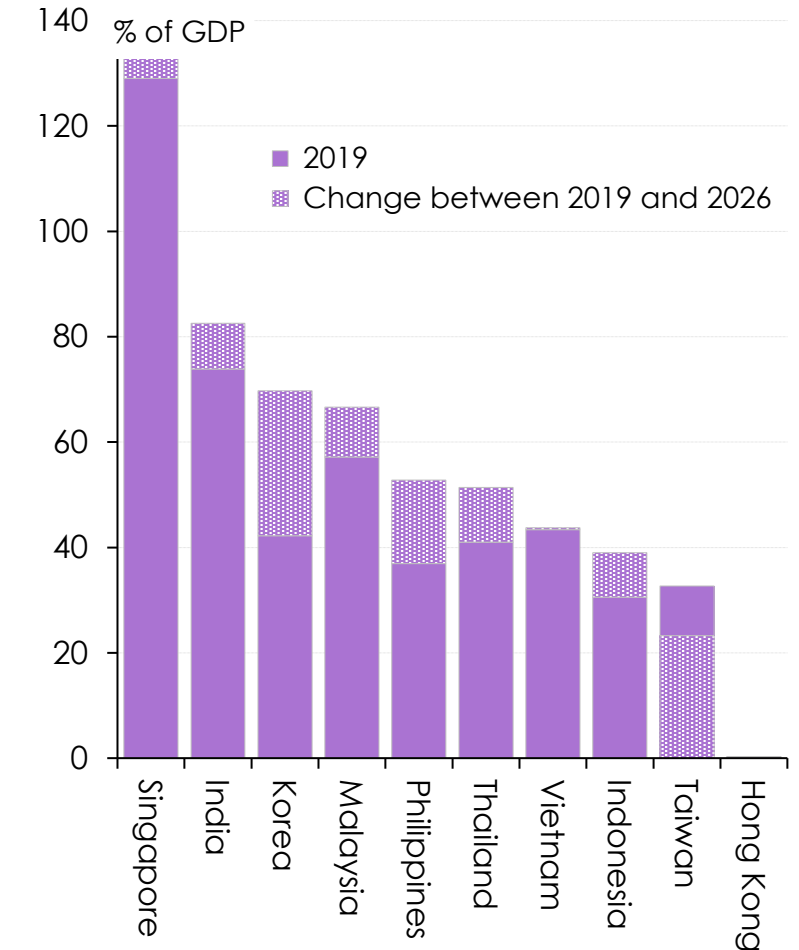
## Fiscal policy responses to Covid-19 – Asian & other selected emerging market economies



## Budget balances – Asian economies 2020-2022



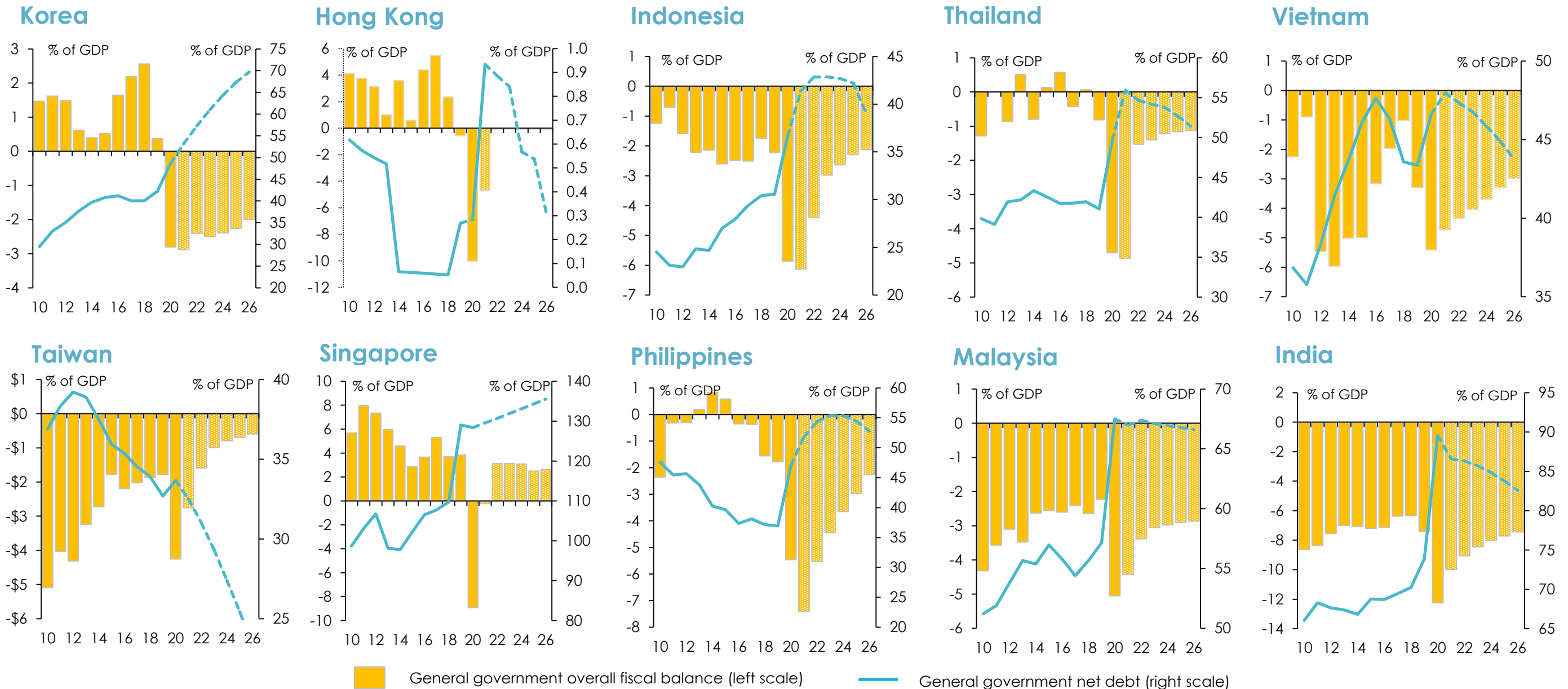
## Gross government debt – Asian economies 2019-26



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 5<sup>th</sup> 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

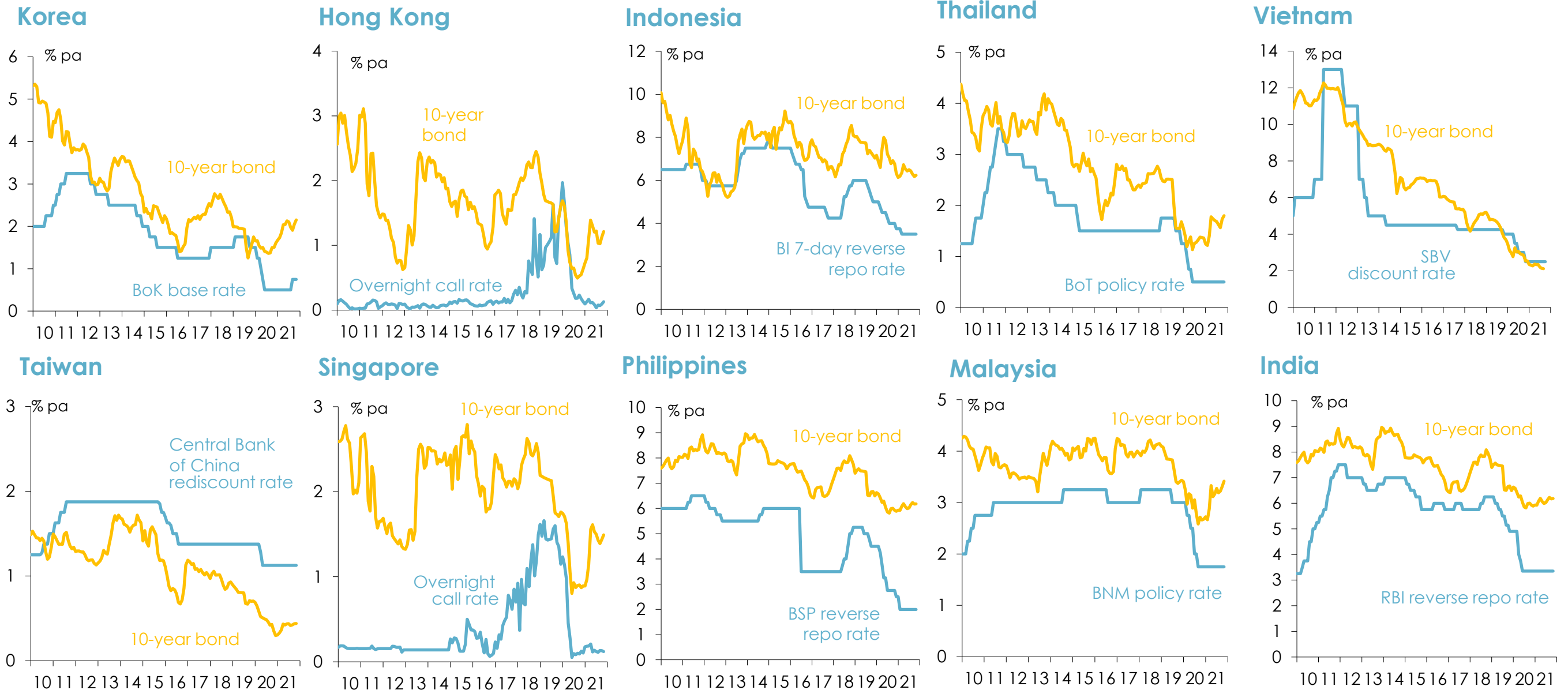


Source: International Monetary Fund, [Fiscal Monitor](#), and [World Economic Outlook](#), April 2021. [Return to "What's New"](#)

# India's central bank left its monetary policy settings unchanged this week, as have all other Asian central banks except for Korea's

- ❑ The [Reserve Bank of India](#) left its monetary policy settings unchanged, as expected, after a three-day Monetary Policy Committee meeting this week
  - Governor Shaktikanta Das said in his [post-meeting statement](#) that “India is in a much better place than at the time of the last MPC meeting”
  - even so, he noted that “output is still below pre-pandemic level and the recovery remains uneven and dependent upon continued policy support”, that CPI inflation during July and August had “turned out to be lower than anticipated”, and that “the supply side and cost push pressures” are “expected to ameliorate with the ongoing normalisation of supply chains”
- ❑ The [Bank of Thailand](#) left its policy rate unchanged at 0.5% at last week's Monetary Policy Committee meeting
  - the BoT still expects 0.7% growth in 2021, followed by 3.9% (revised from 3.7%) in 2022, but noted the outlook was “still highly uncertain”
  - in its view “government financial measures would be more effective [in supporting economic recovery] than a further reduction in the policy rate”
- ❑ [Bank Indonesia](#), [Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas](#) and the [Central Bank of the Republic of China](#) (Taiwan's central bank) all left their monetary policy interest rates unchanged at their most recent meetings in the last week of September
  - Bank Indonesia is pursuing what looks like a variant of ‘modern monetary theory’, in that it is directly financing part of the Government's budget deficit as a key element of what it calls ‘synergistic monetary expansion’ (see [slide 67](#))
- ❑ The only Asian central bank which has raised interest rates is the [Bank of Korea](#), which raised its base rate by 25 basis points, to 0.75%, at its last Monetary Policy Board meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> August
  - and that decision appears to have been prompted more by concerns about rapid growth in lending to households, and in house prices, than about inflation

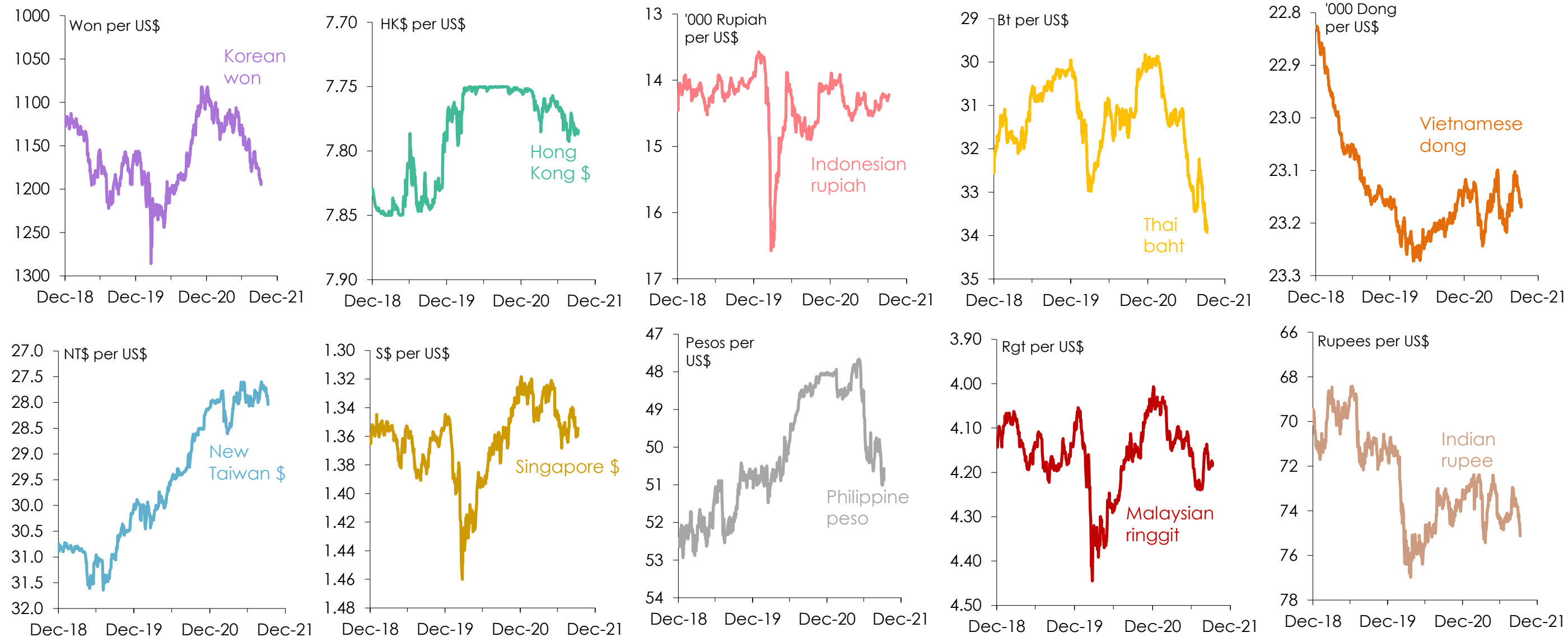
# Apart from the Bank of Korea, no Asian central bank has yet begun tightening monetary policy (or hinted that it might do any time soon)



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 October 2021. Sources: national central banks; Refinitiv Datastream. [Return to "What's New"](#).

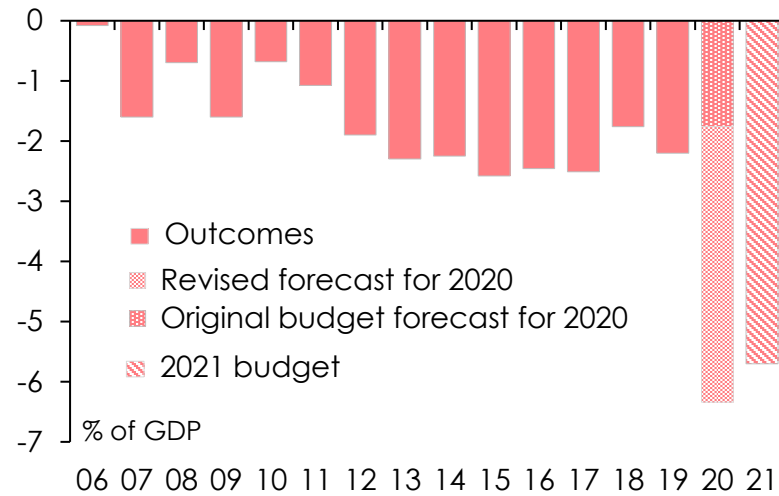
# Asian currencies were mixed this week with the rupiah and peso rising ½% vs the US\$, but the rupee losing 1¼%, the baht 0.7% and the won & NT\$ ½%

## Asian currency exchange rates vs US dollar

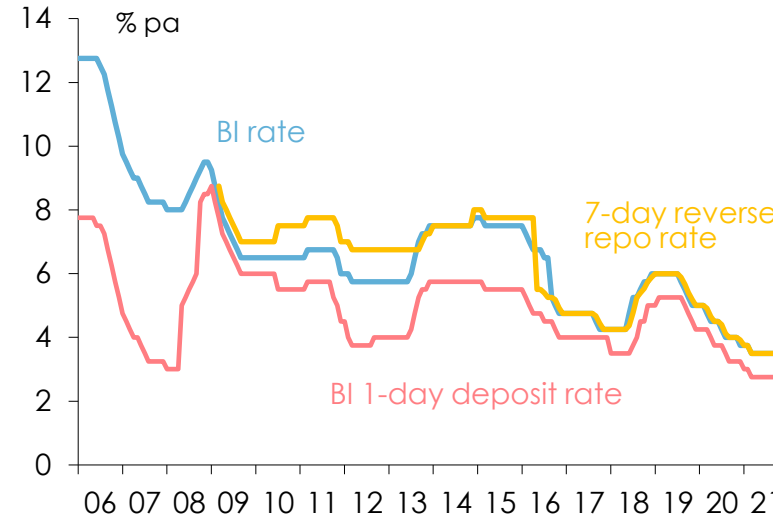


# Bank Indonesia's monetary policy settings have been on hold since January although it has continued with its 'synergistic monetary expansion'

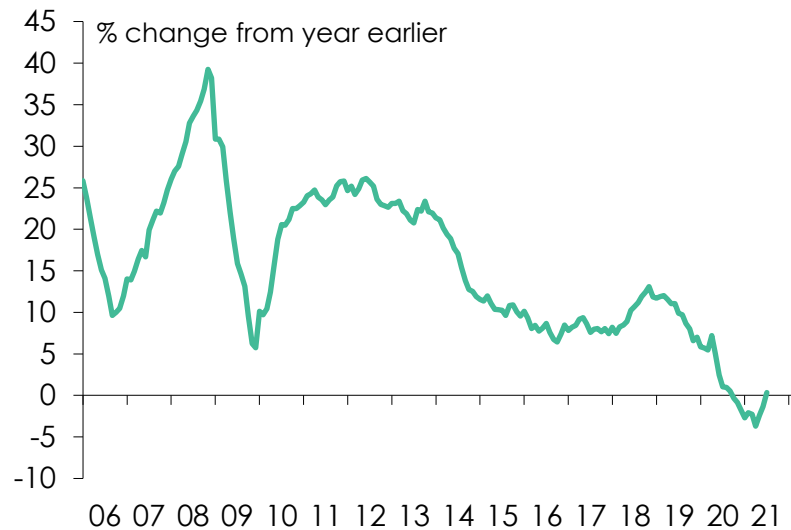
## Indonesia budget deficit



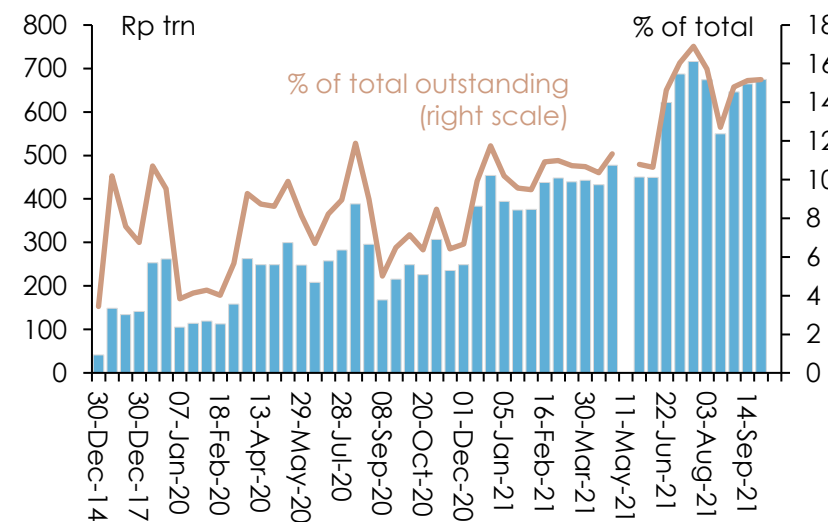
## BI monetary policy rates



## Bank lending



## BI holdings of tradeable SBNs



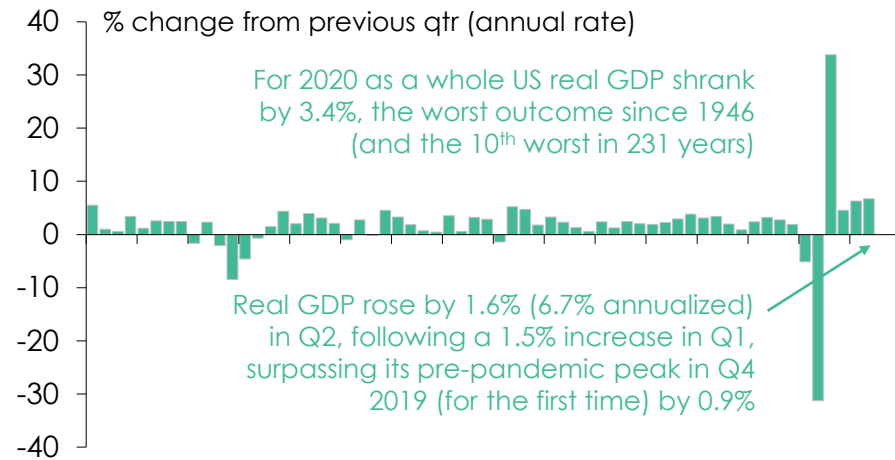
- In April 2020, the Indonesian Government and Bank Indonesia (BI) agreed to a 'burden-sharing' scheme under which BI will directly purchase bonds equivalent to 25% of this year's budget financing requirement (and return the interest received to the Government), as well as subsidizing interest payments on other bonds
  - BI calls this 'synergistic monetary expansion'
  - up to 17<sup>th</sup> September BI has purchased Rp 140trn 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 have risen by Rp125bn over the past four weeks, reversing most of the Rp166bn decline over the previous four weeks
  - BI has absorbed 38% 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 1.3% in September 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 last month's Governing Council meeting (slide 64)

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

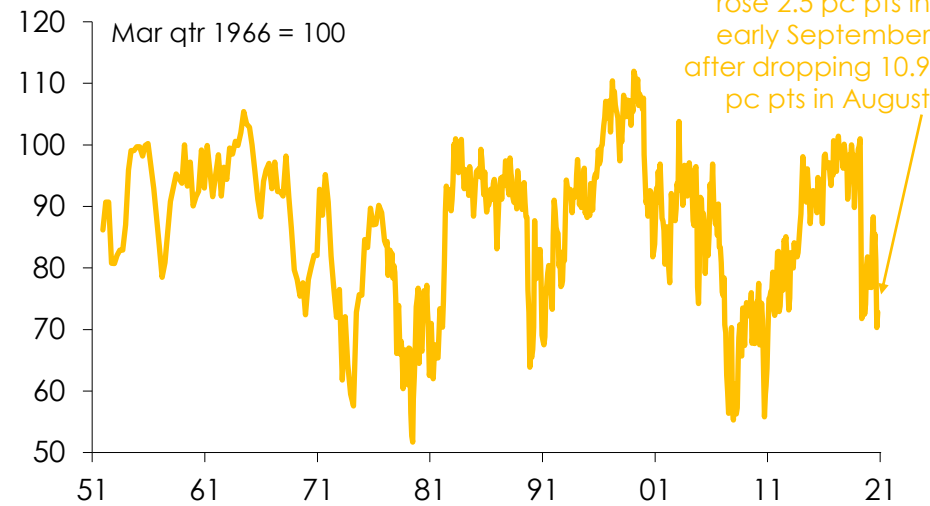


# US 'core' retail sales rebounded in August as consumers switched back from services to goods (apart from supply-constrained motor vehicles)

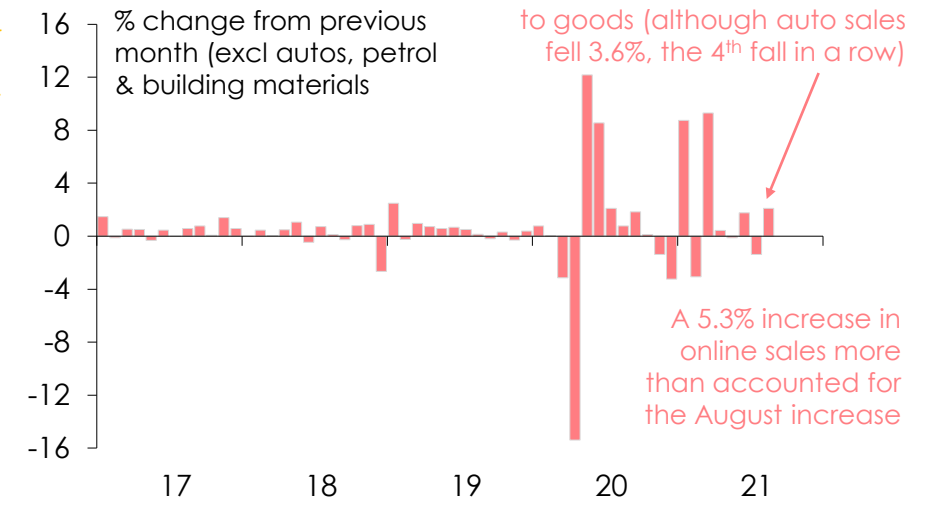
## Real GDP



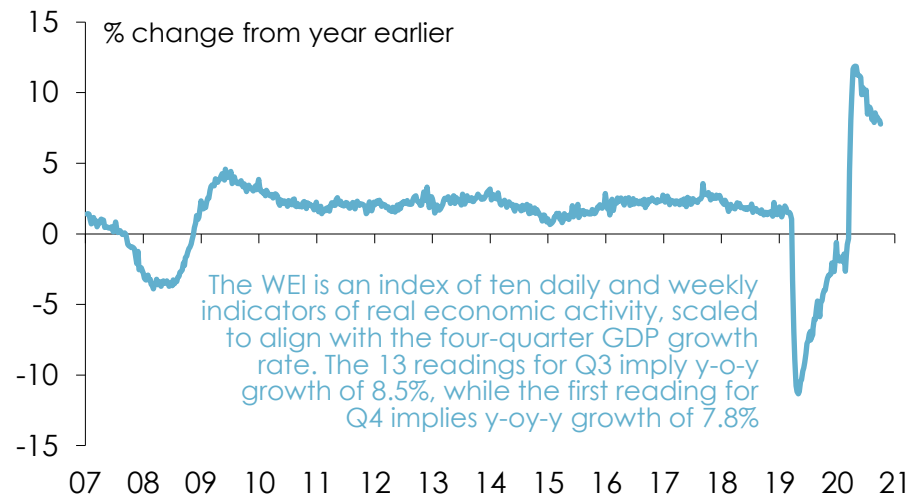
## Consumer sentiment



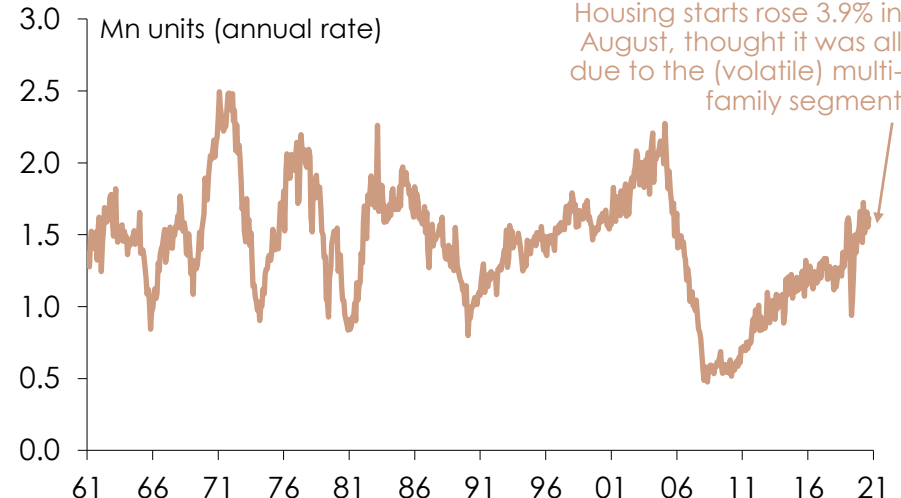
## 'Core' retail sales



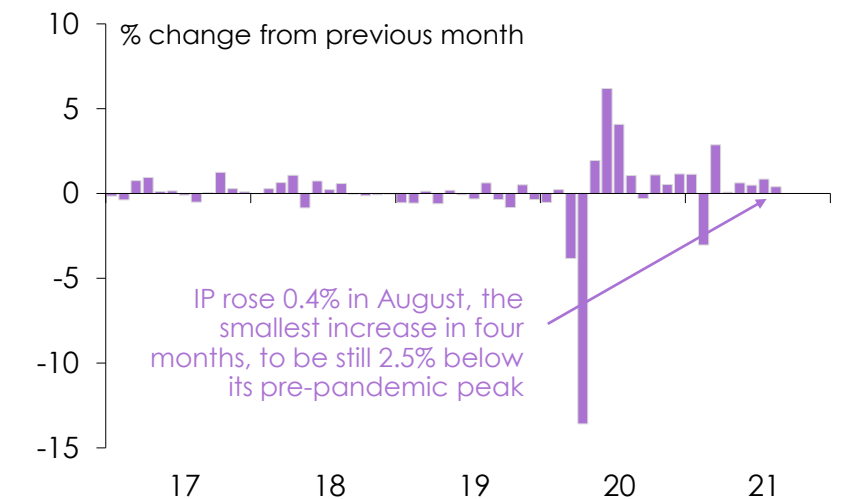
## NY Fed weekly economic index



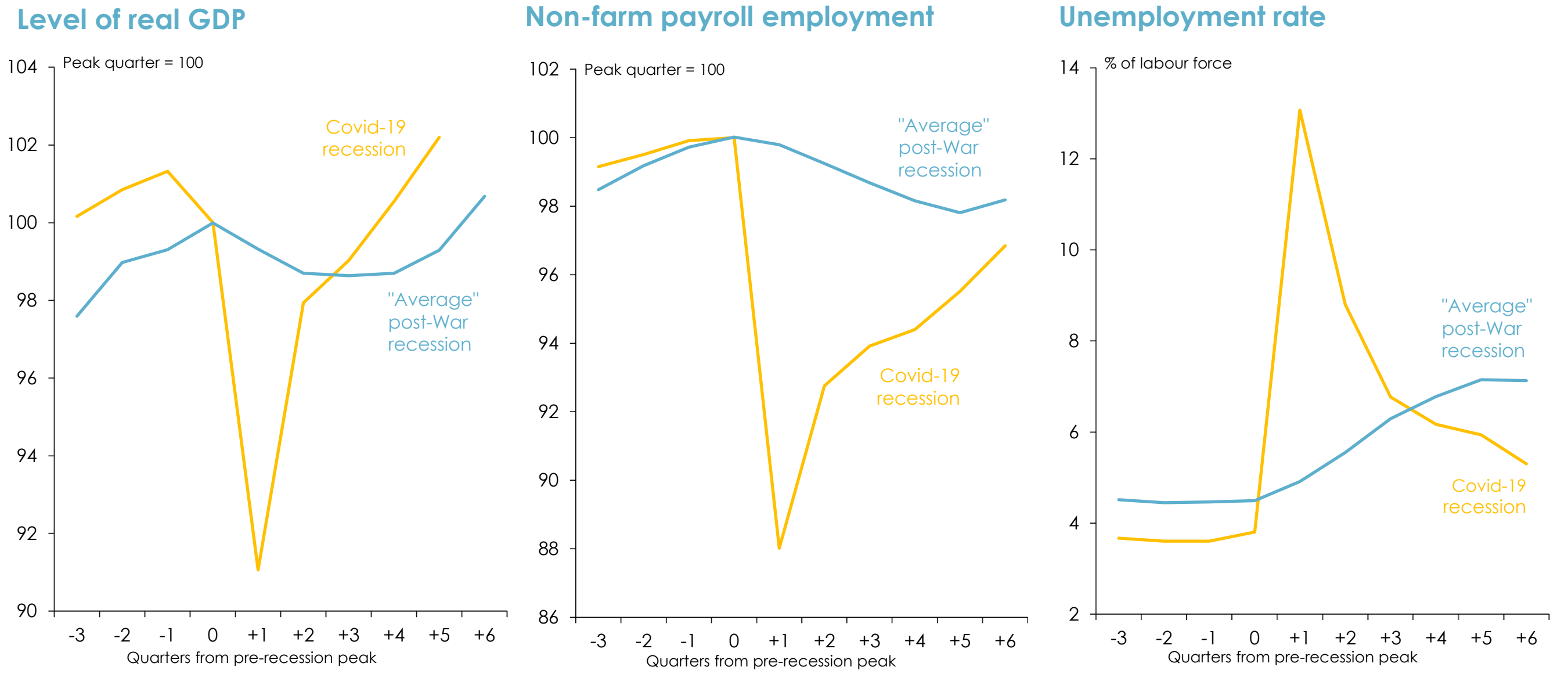
## Housing starts



## 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

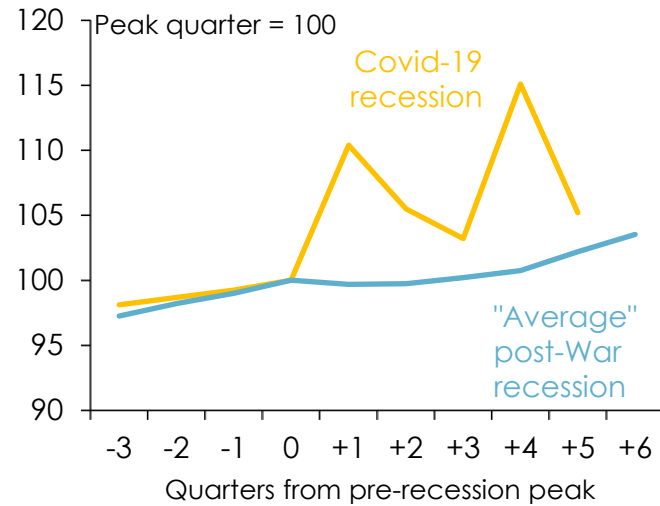


Note: 'average post-war recession' is the average of figures for each of the eleven post-war US recessions as designated by the [National Bureau of Economic Research Business Cycle Dating Committee](#), with the exception of the recession of January-July 1980 (which was too short, and too close to the 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"](#).

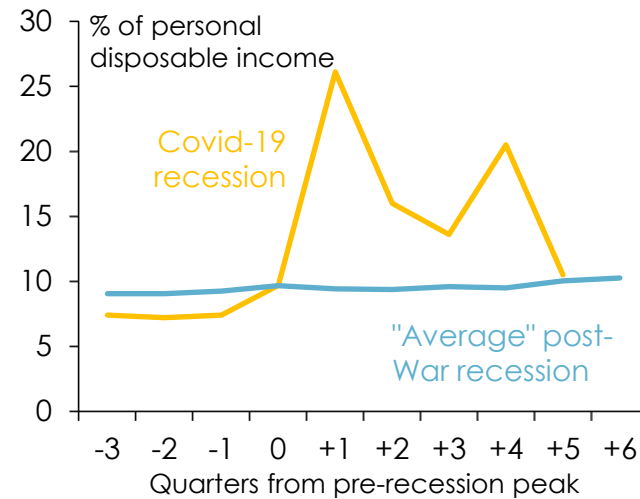


# The differences between this recession and previous ones are even more apparent from some of the details in the national accounts

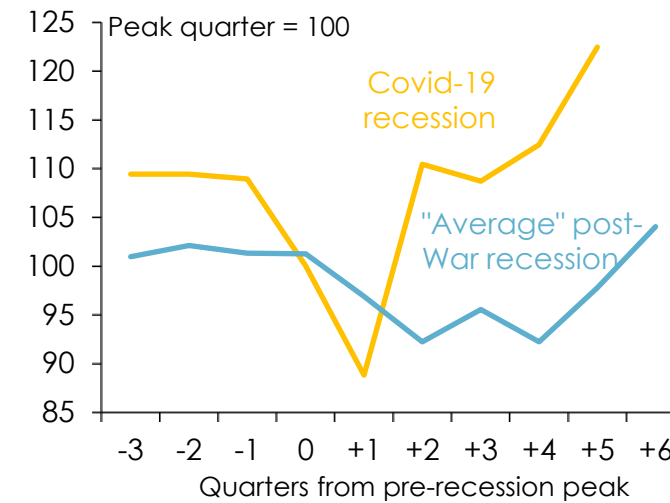
## Personal disposable income



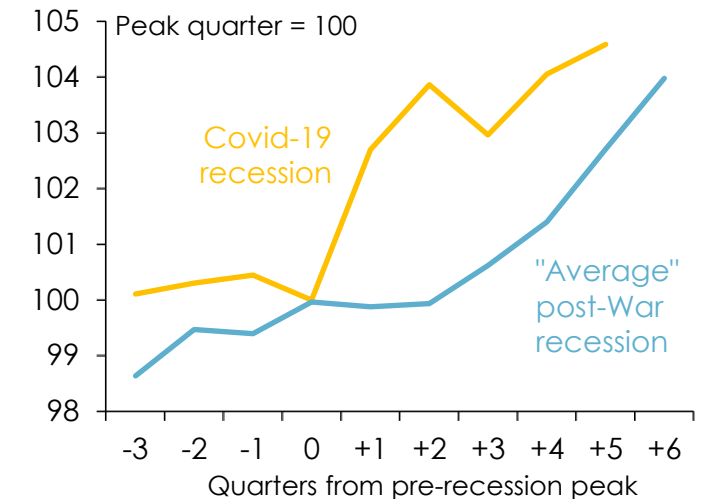
## Personal saving rate



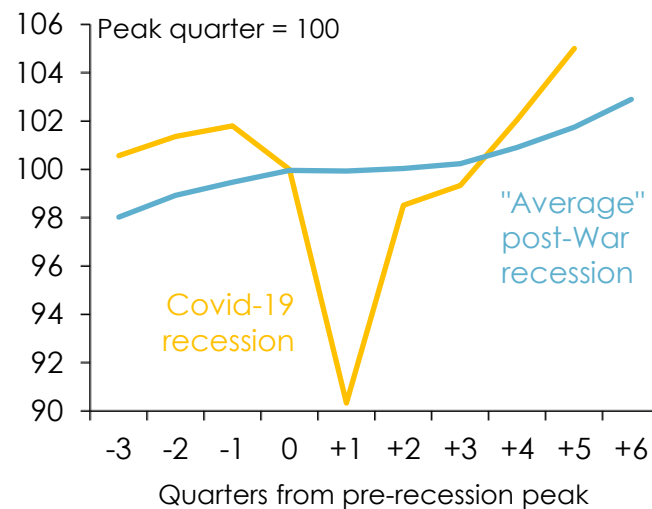
## After-tax corporate profits



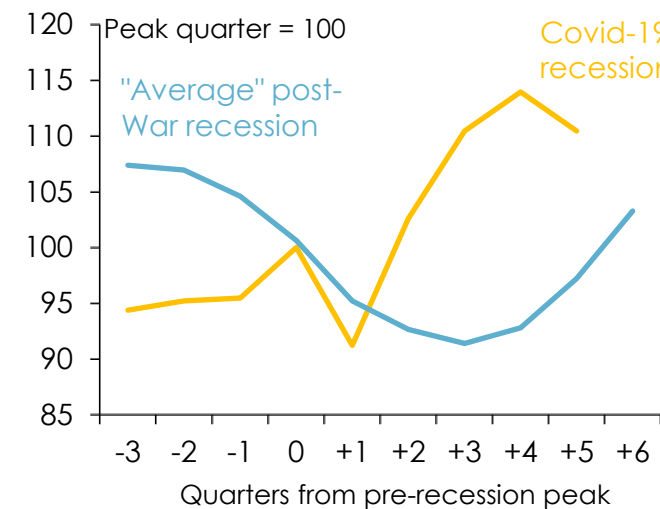
## Labour productivity



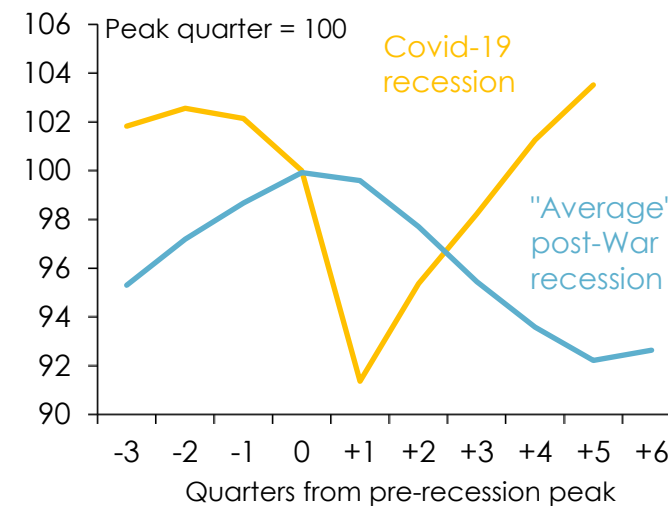
## Personal consumption



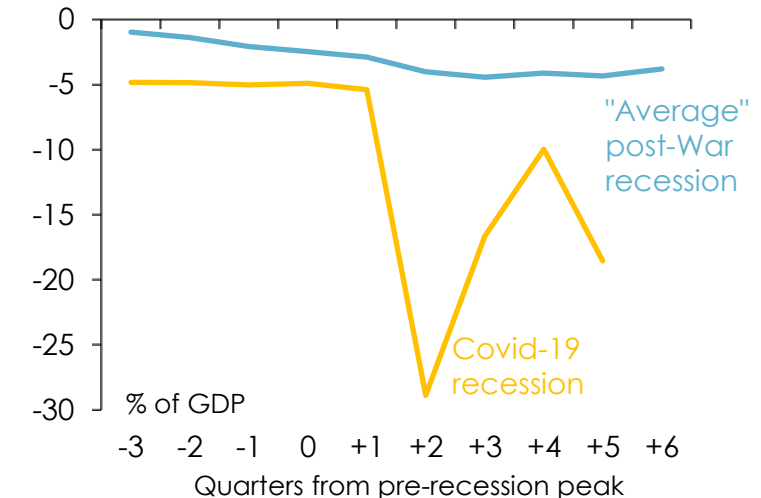
## Residential investment



## Business investment



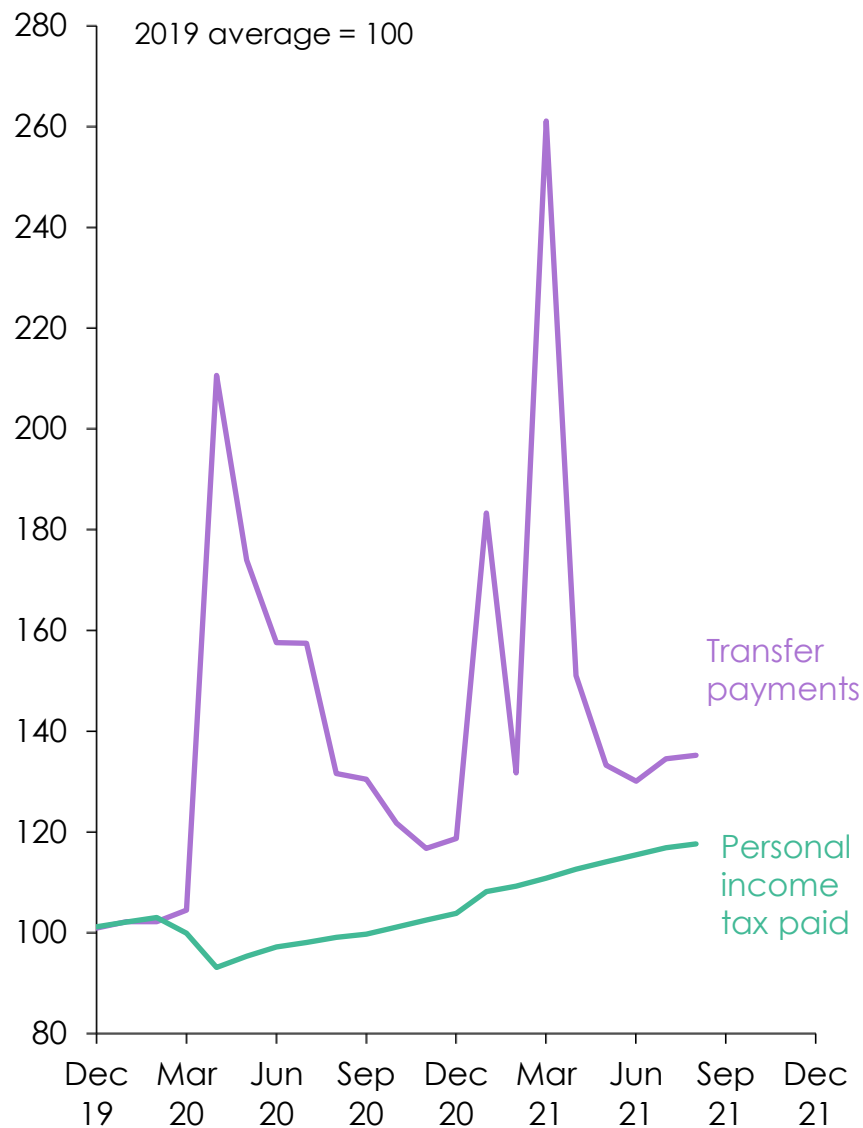
## Federal budget balance



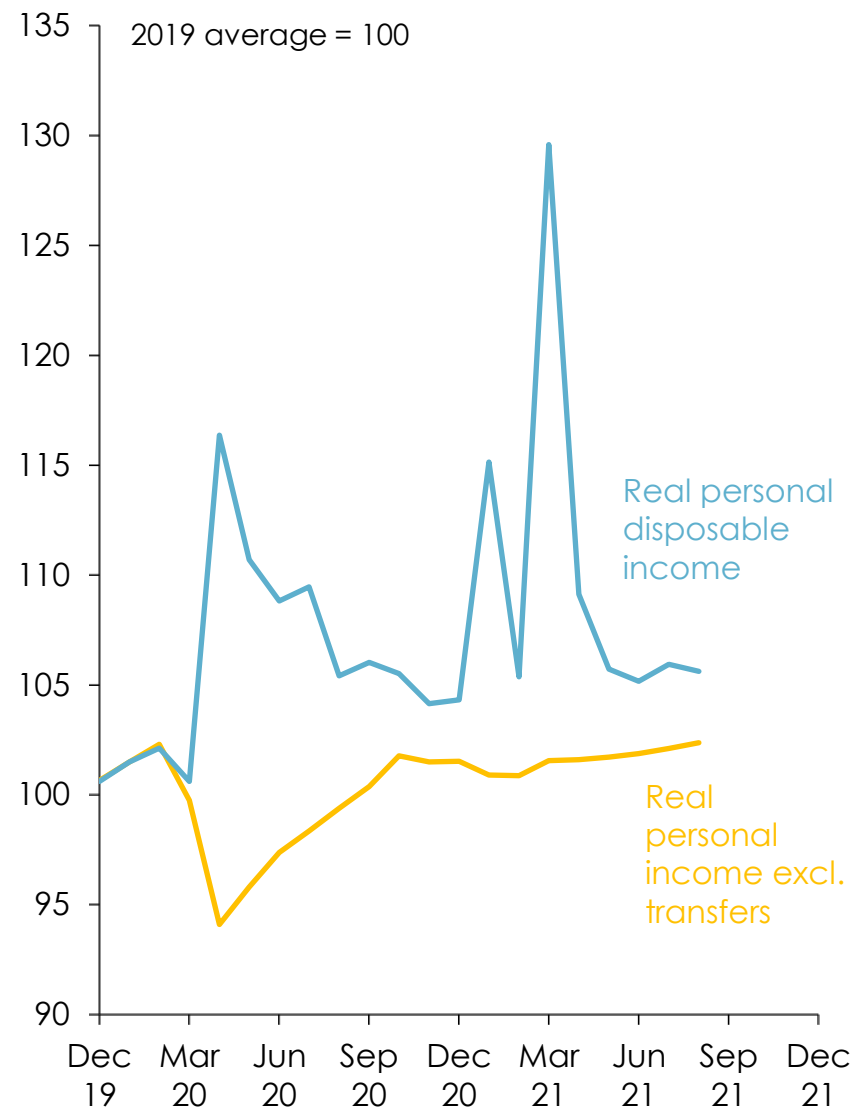
Note: 'average post-war recession' is the average of figures for each of the eleven post-war US recessions as designated by the [National Bureau of Economic Research Business Cycle Dating Committee](#), with the exception of the recession of January-July 1980; 'peak quarter' is the quarter in which real 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 US consumer spending patterns

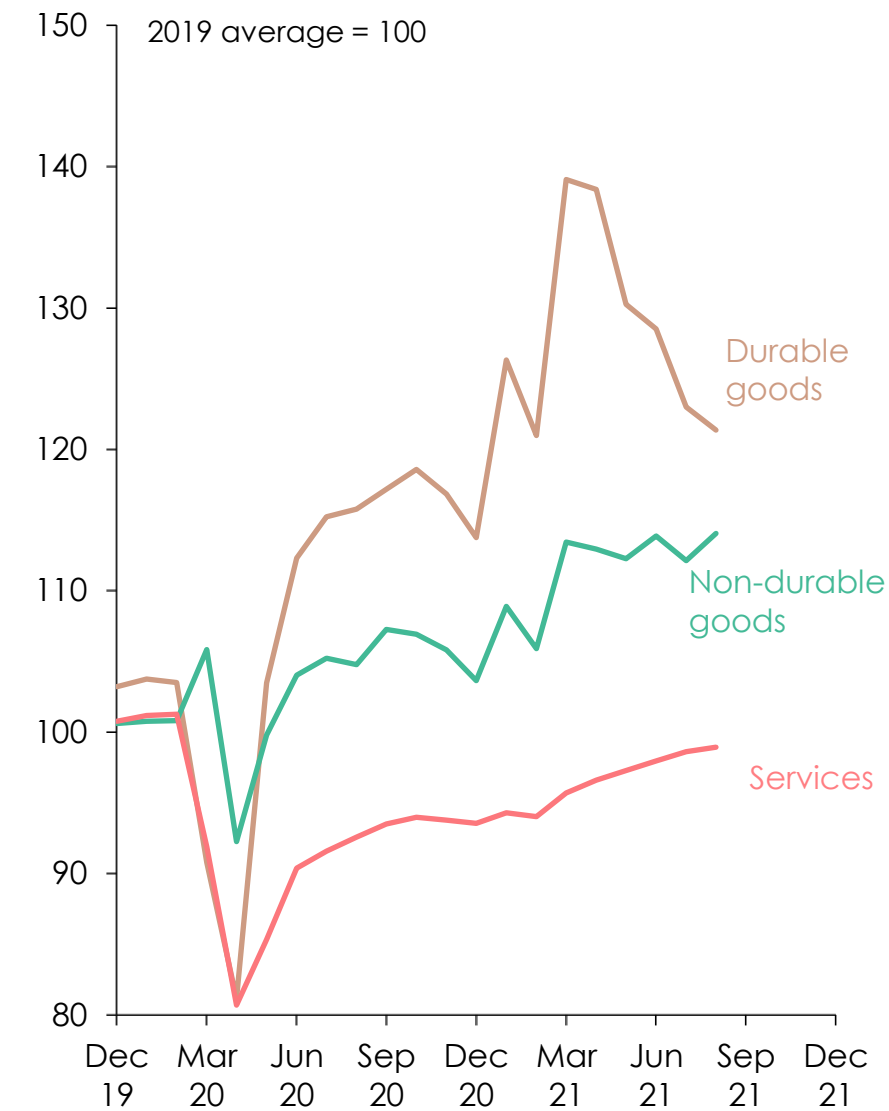
Tax and transfer payments



Real personal income

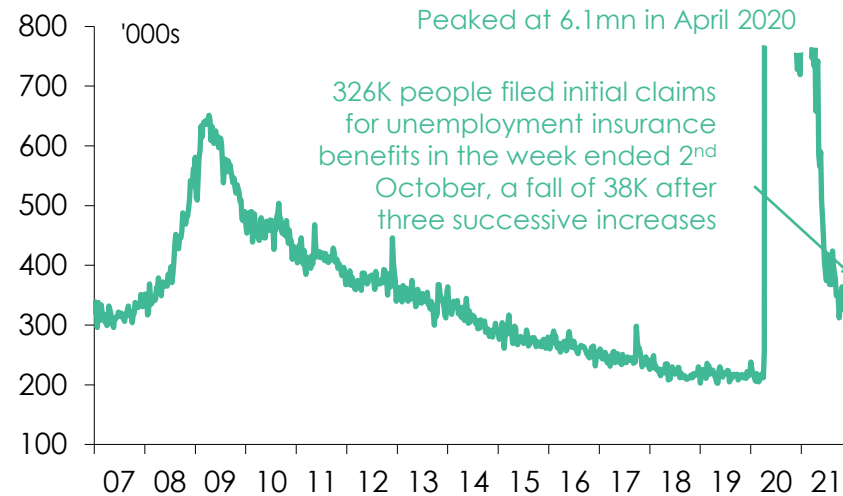


Real consumption expenditure

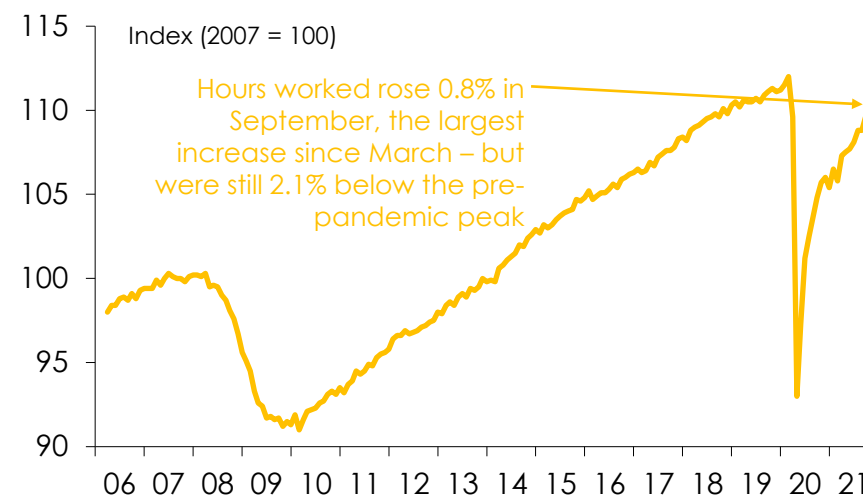


# US non-farm payrolls rose a smaller-than-expected 194K in September, but the unemployment rate dropped 0.4 pc pt to 4.8%

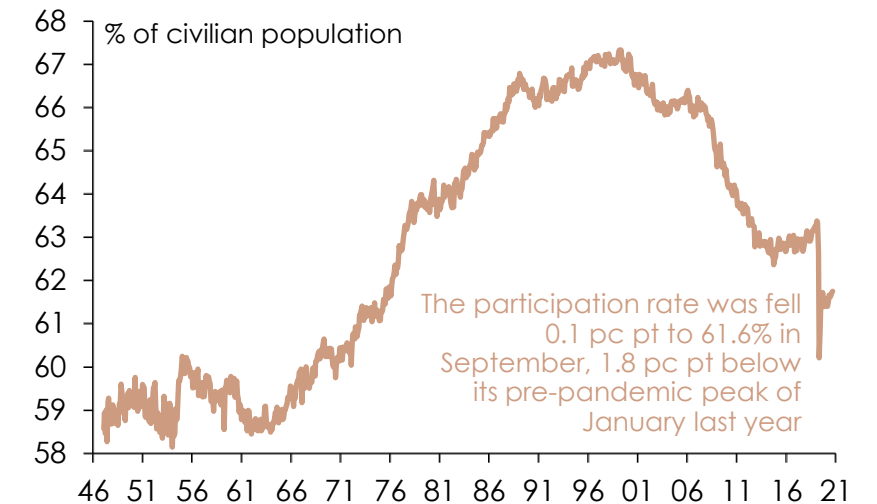
## Unemployment benefit claims



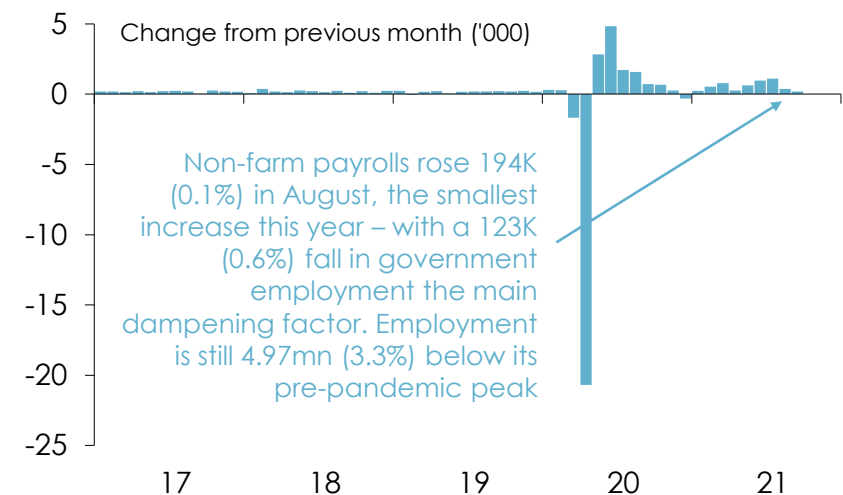
## Hours worked (private sector)



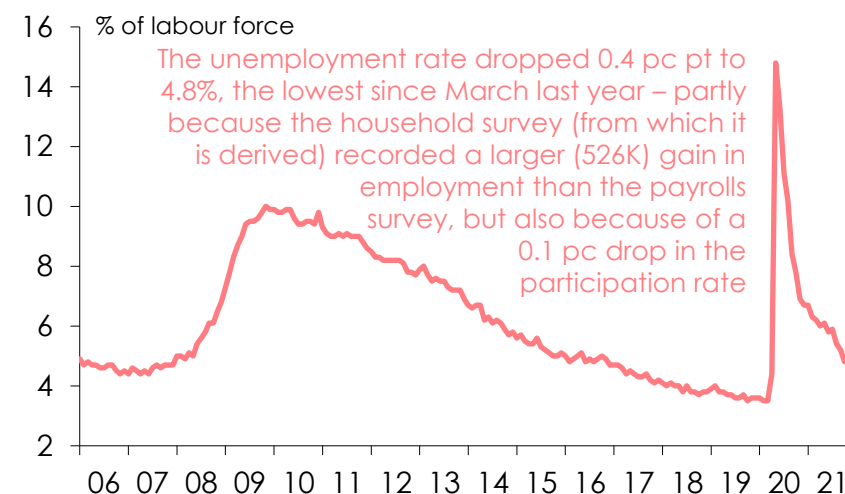
## Labour force participation rate



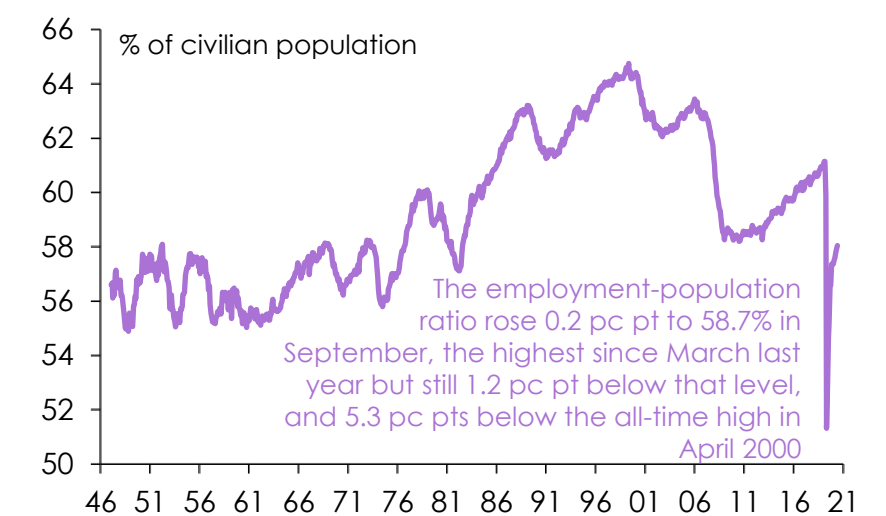
## Non-farm payroll employment



## Unemployment rate

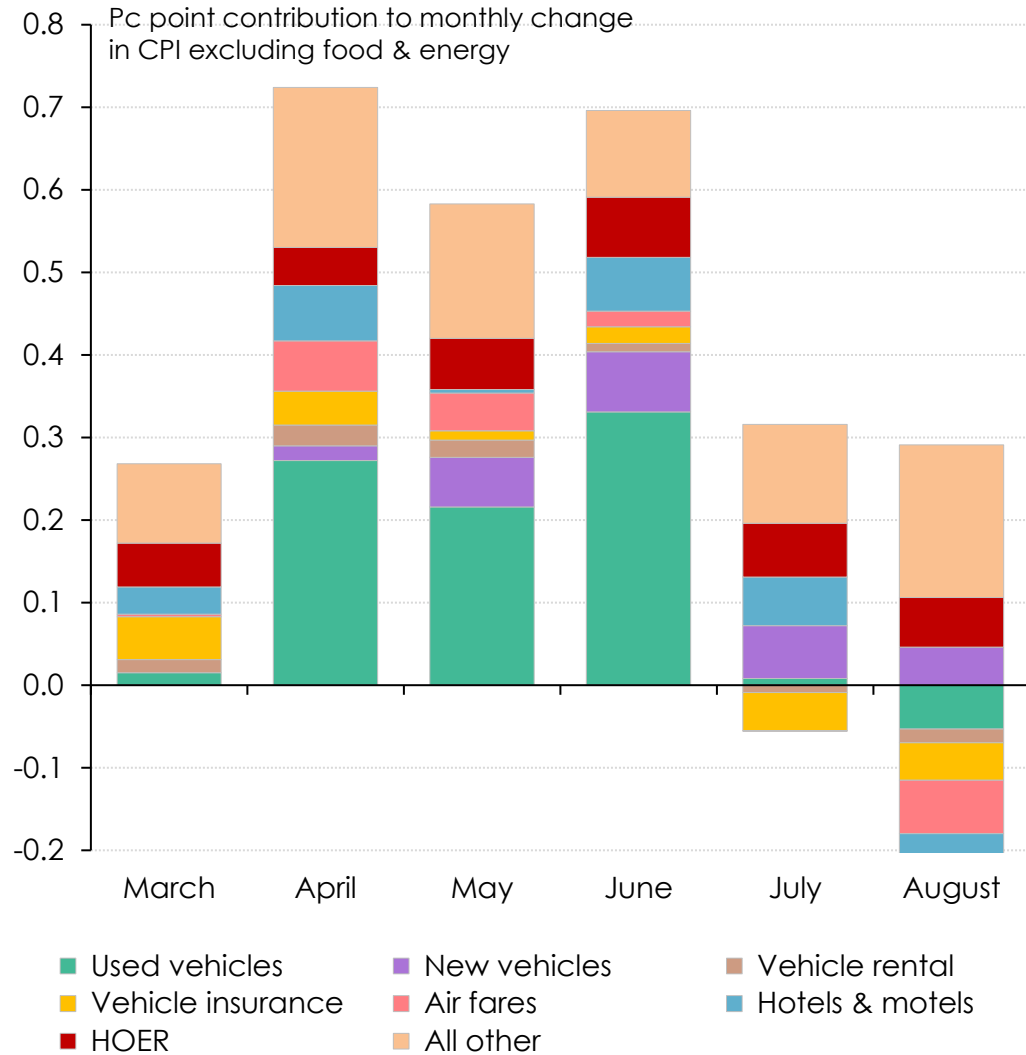


## Employment to population ratio



# US consumer prices recorded their smallest increase since January in August with many of the contributors to the recent spike now abating

Contributions to recent monthly changes in CPI excluding food and energy



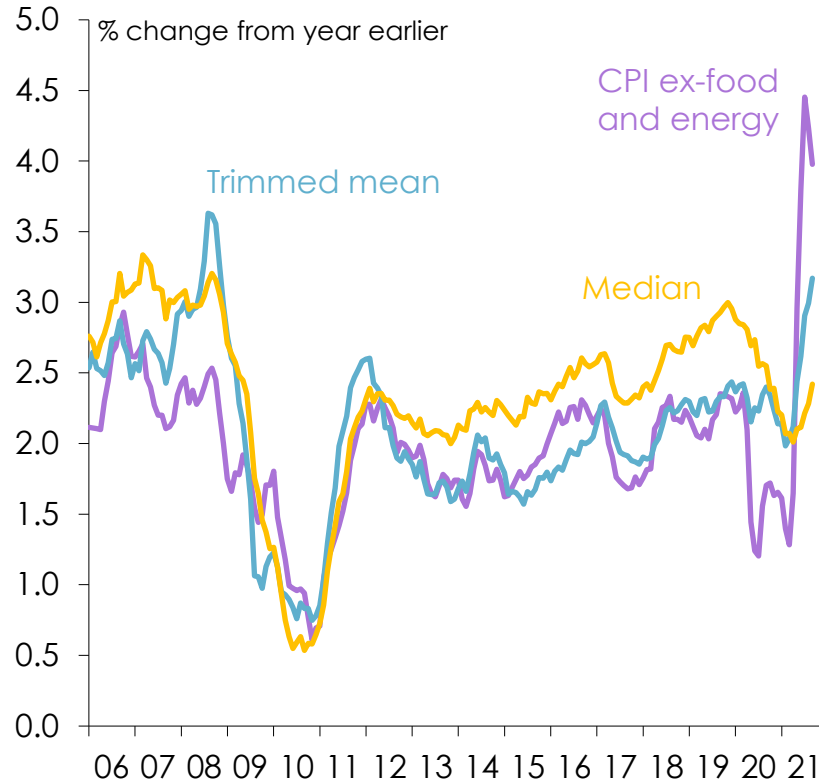
Price indices for items which have contributed most to recent monthly changes in the 'core' US CPI (rebased to December 2019 = 100)



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"](#).

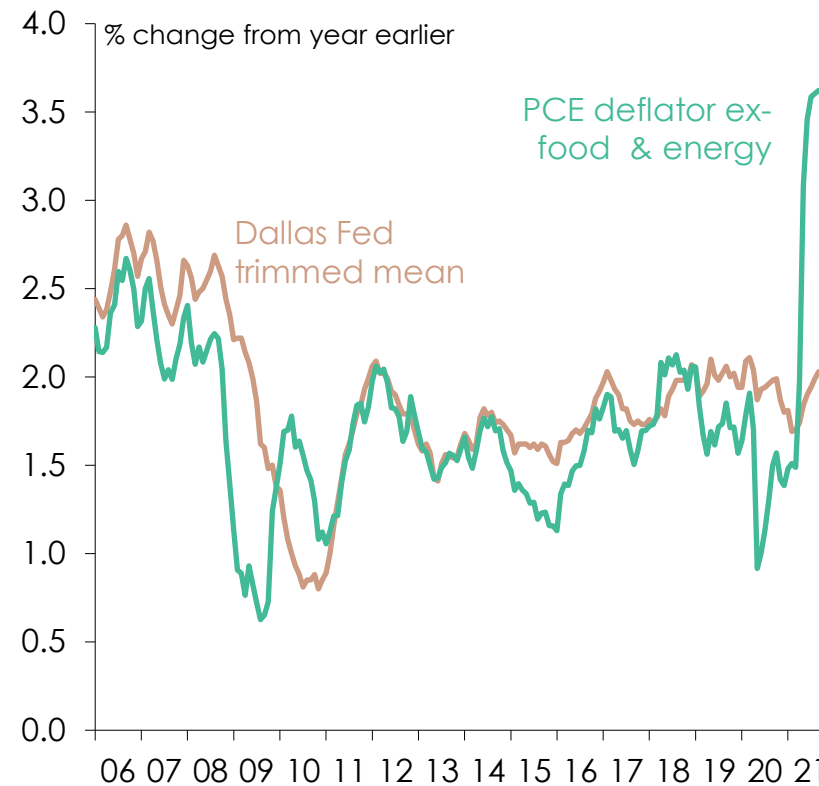
# Statistical measures of 'core' inflation haven't increased very much – but longer-term inflation expectations are starting to edge upwards

## Alternative measures of US 'core' CPI inflation



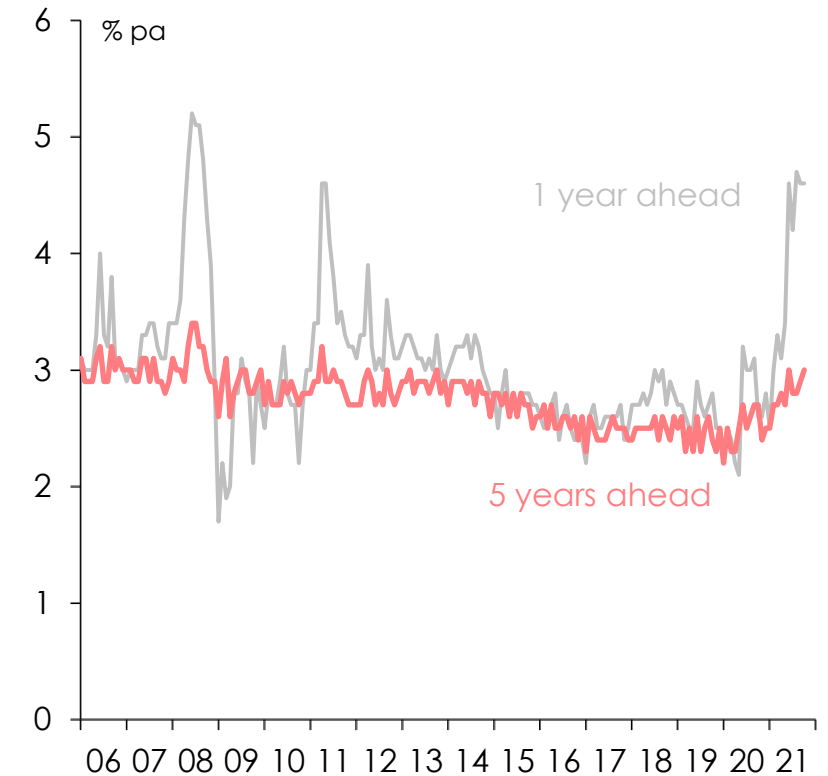
- ❑ Statistical measures (similar to those used by the RBA) confirm that the rise in 'core' CPI inflation is almost entirely due to 'outliers' (see previous slide)

## 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

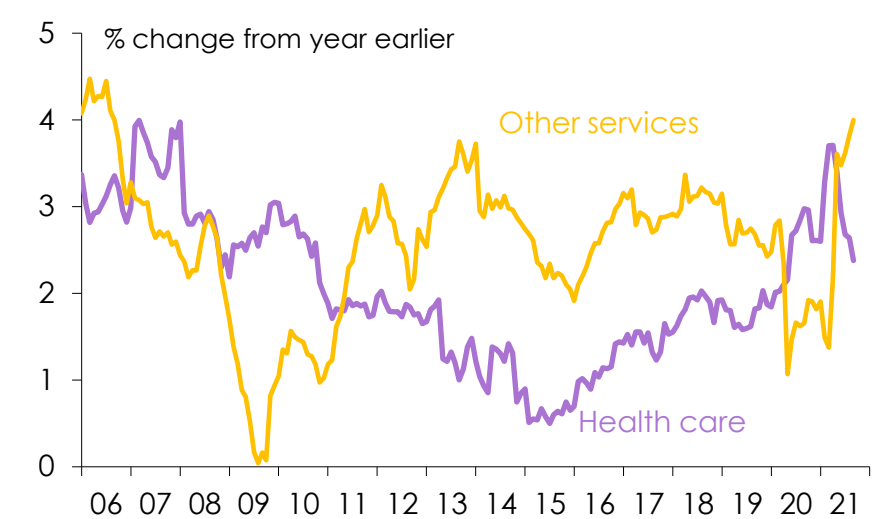
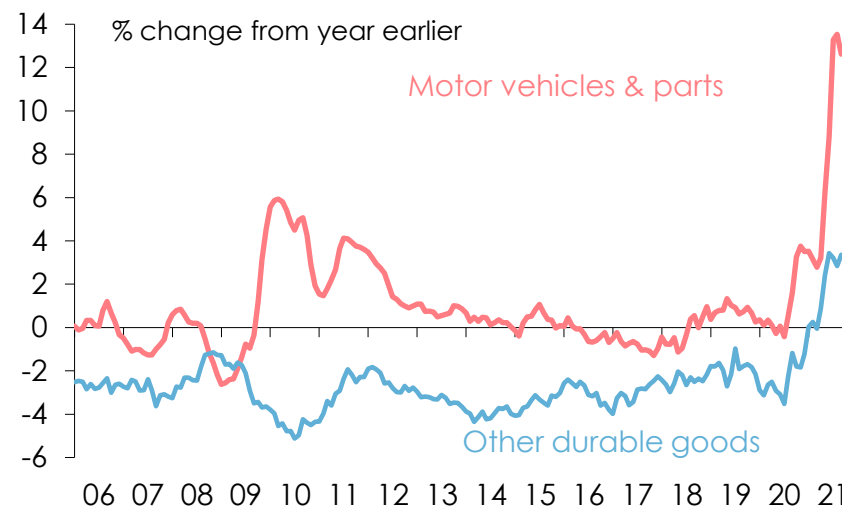
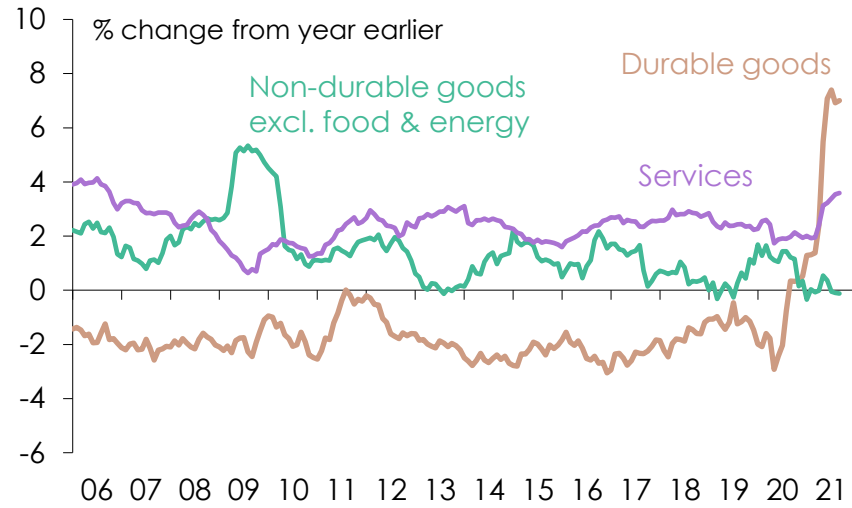


- ❑ Short-term household inflation expectations have risen sharply, but longer-term expectations are also creeping up

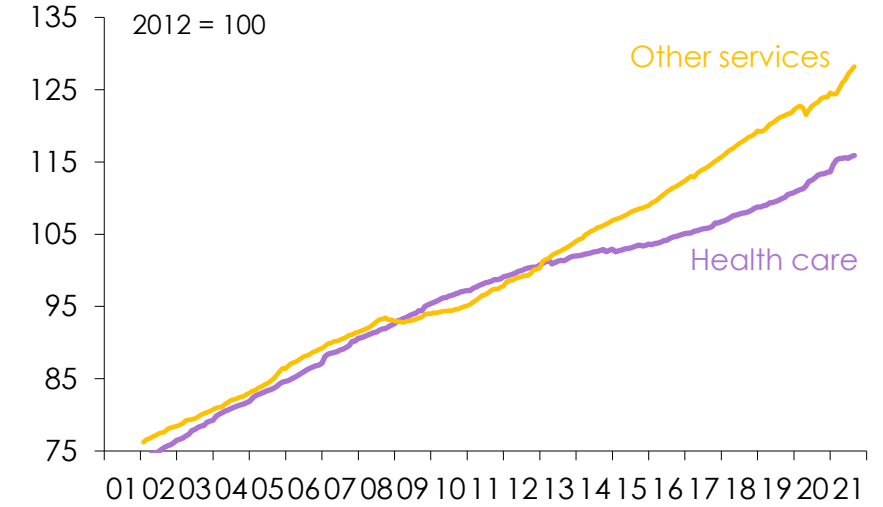
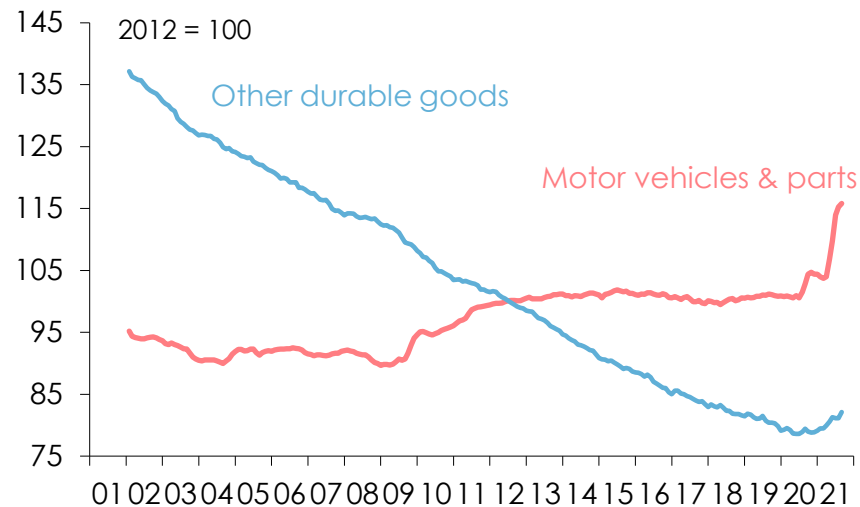
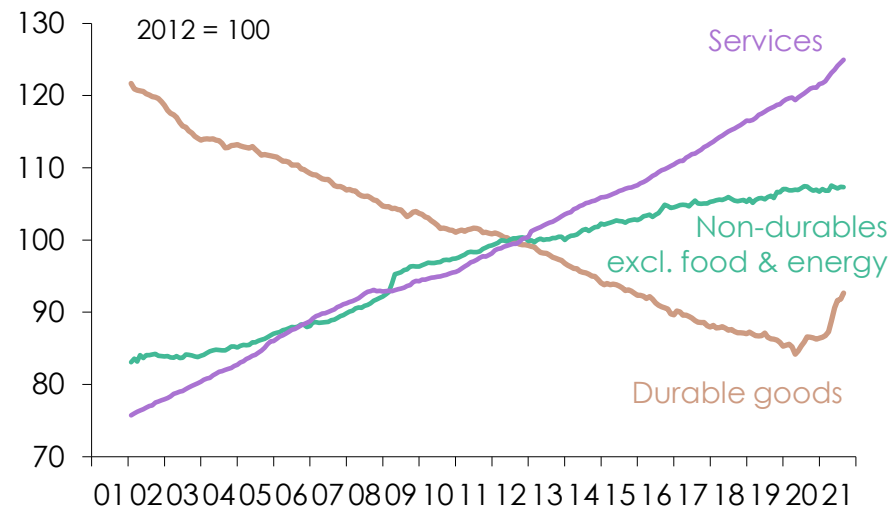
Note: The 'trimmed mean' CPI inflation rate excludes the components of the CPI whose weights fall in the top and bottom 8% of the distribution of price changes; the median is the component whose price change is in the middle of the distribution of price changes. The 'trimmed mean' of the PCE deflator 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"](#).

# PCE price deflators highlight the significant role of durable goods in the 'disinflation' of the past 20 years and the more recent 'spike' in inflation

## Implicit price deflators of personal consumption expenditures – per cent changes over 12-month intervals



## Implicit price deflators of personal consumption expenditures – levels

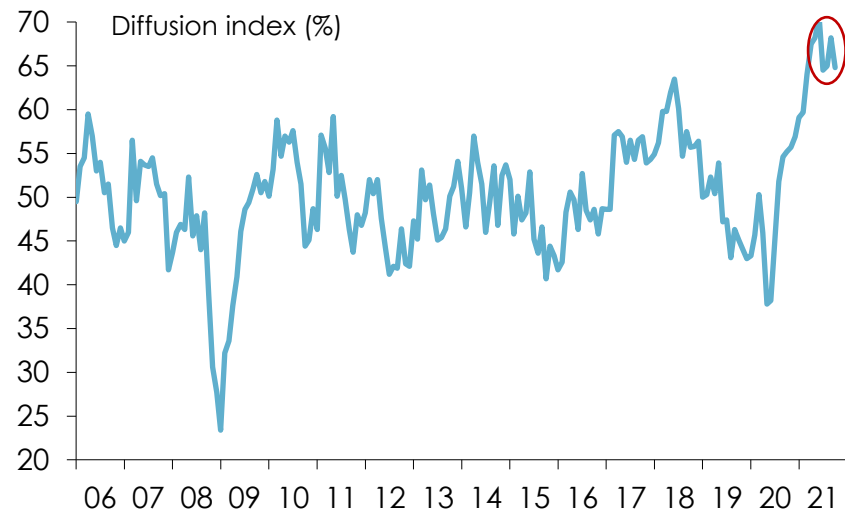


Source: [US Bureau of Economic Analysis](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

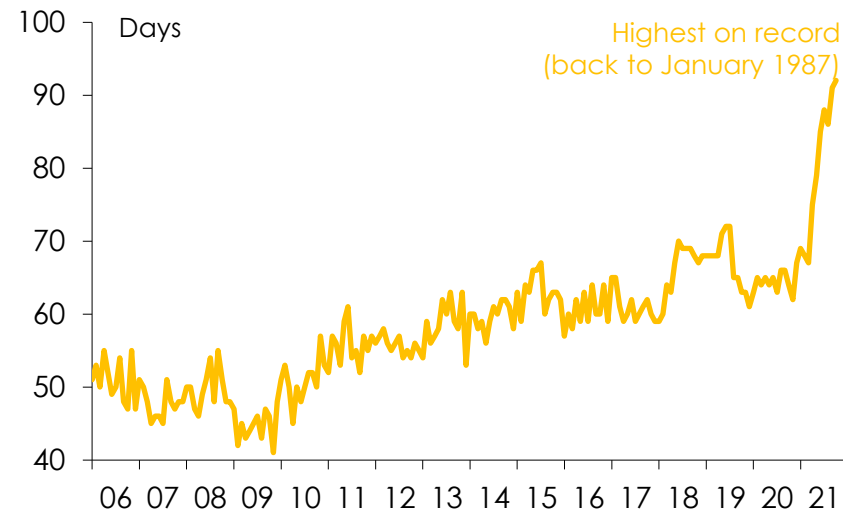


# There have been some serious supply-chain difficulties in the US – particularly in the auto sector – but they may have now peaked

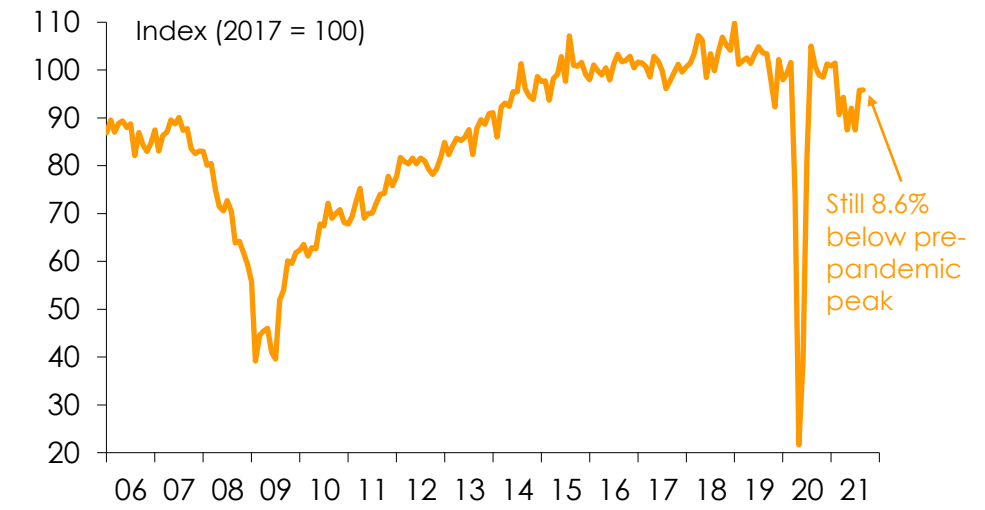
## Manufacturers' order backlogs



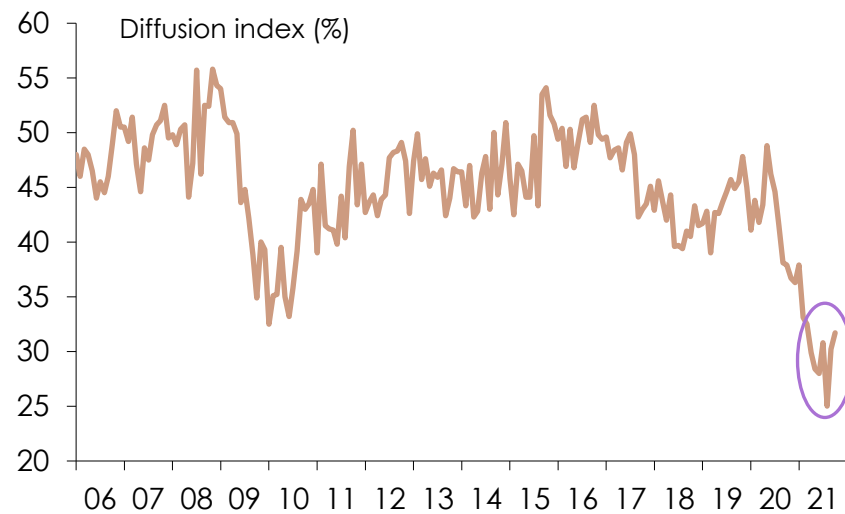
## Lead-time for production materials



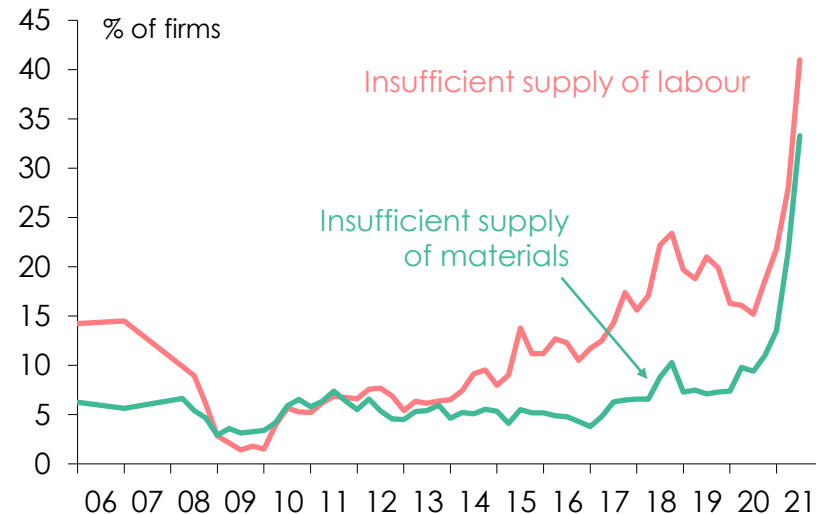
## Motor vehicles & parts production



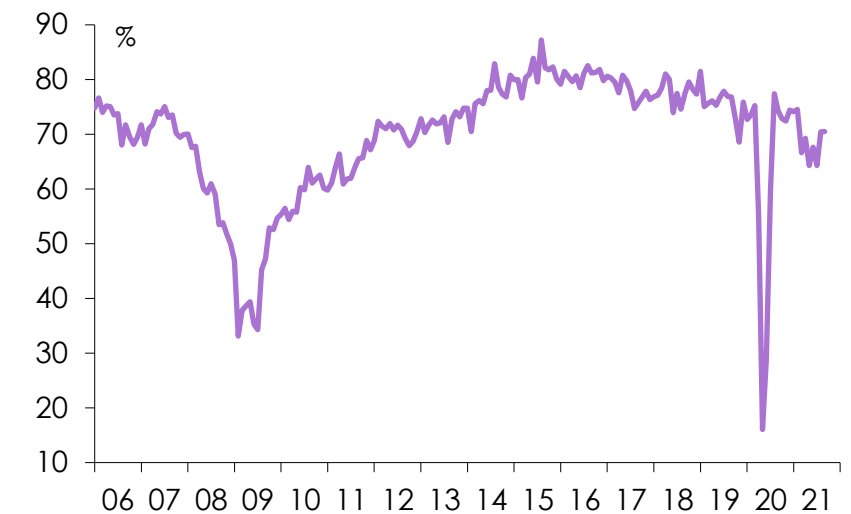
## Manufacturers' customer inventories



## Reasons for < full capacity



## Auto industry capacity utilization

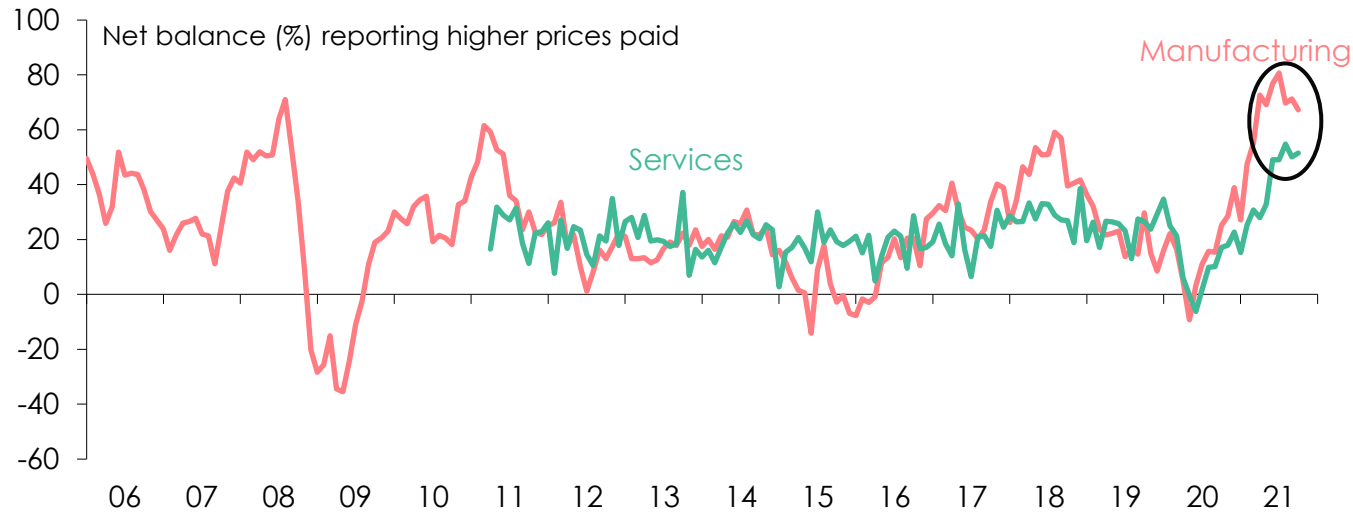


Note: The diffusion index of order backlogs is 50 plus the percentage of respondents reporting longer backlogs minus the percentage reporting shorter backlogs (and similarly for customer inventories). 'Reasons for < full capacity' means reasons for operating at less than full capacity. Sources: Institute 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"](#).

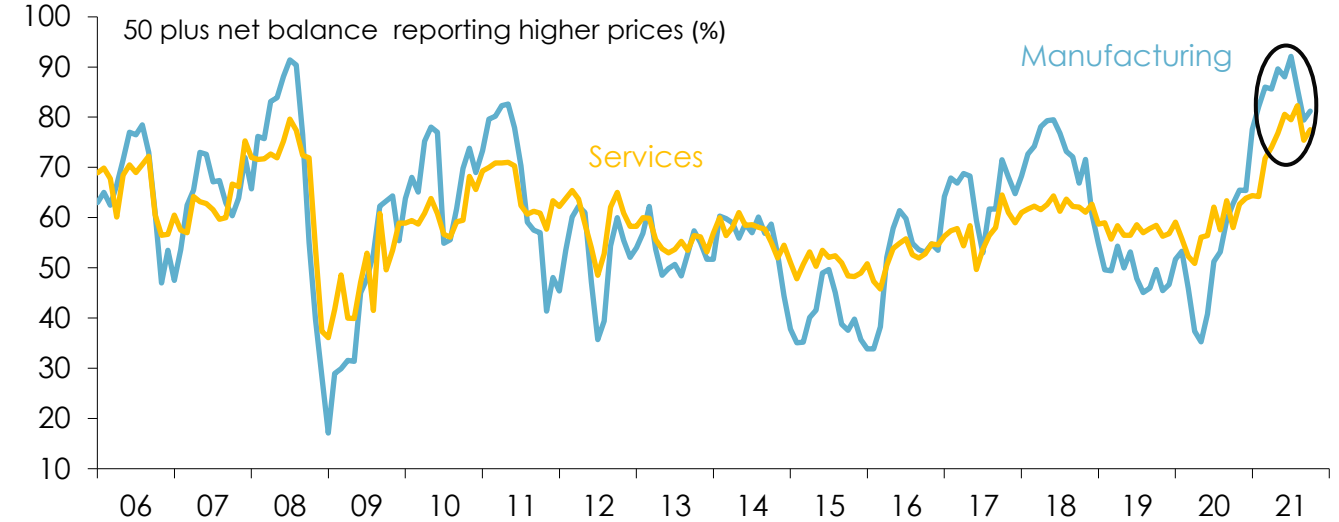


# Survey measures also suggest that 'upstream' price pressures in the US may be peaking – and import price inflation could also be easing

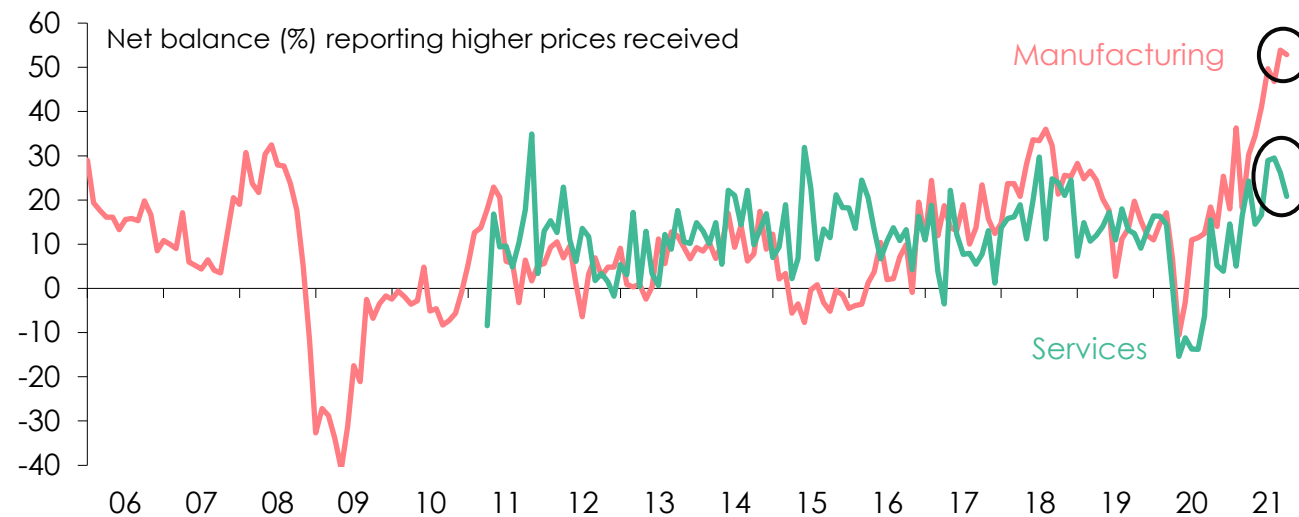
## Philadelphia Fed survey – prices



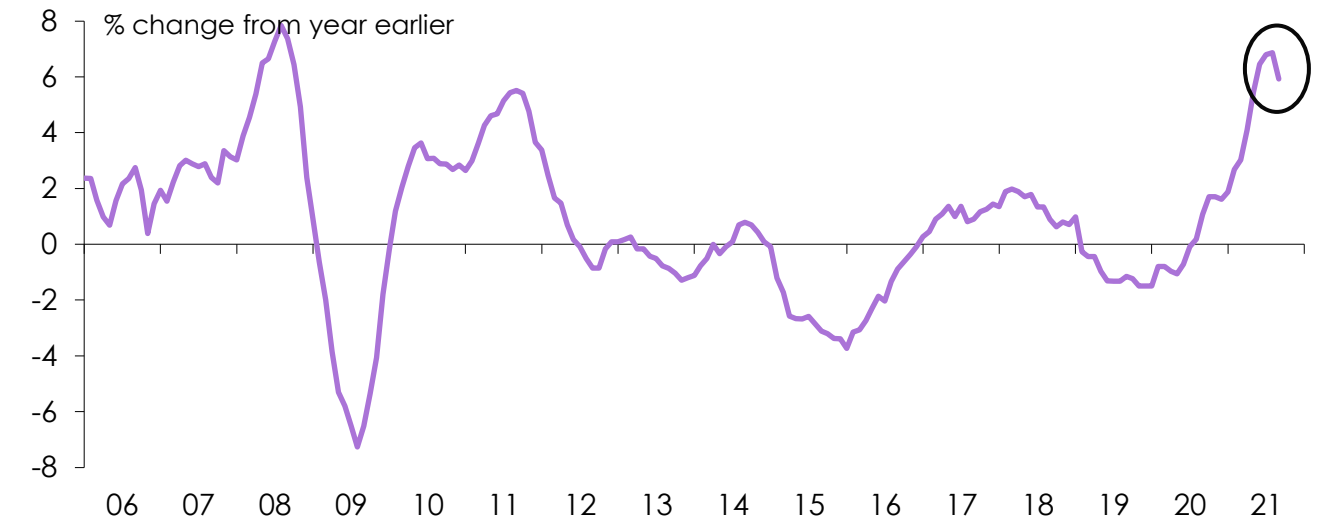
## ISM survey – prices paid



## 'Philadelphia Fed survey – prices received



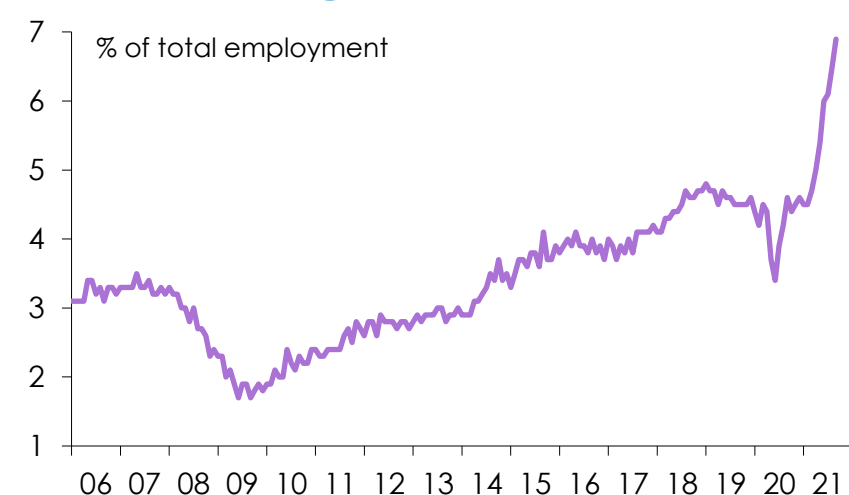
## Import prices (excluding petroleum)



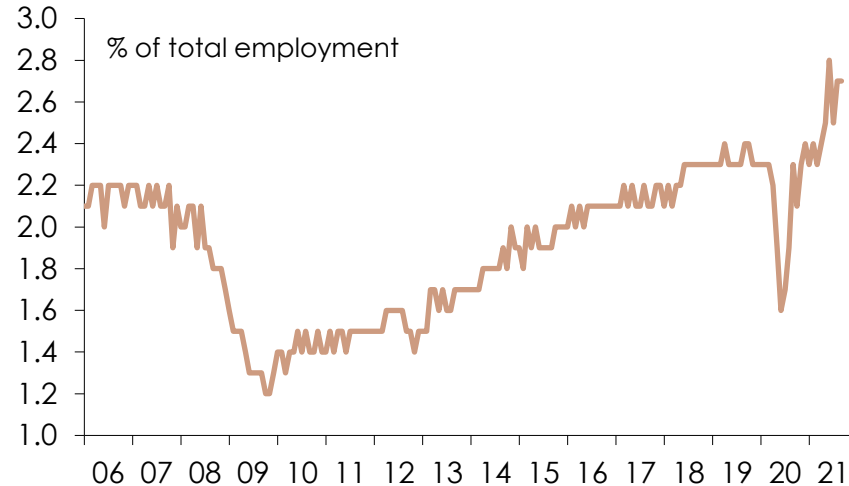
Note: The usefulness of the Business Outlook surveys conducted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia is that the area which it covers (eastern and central Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey and Delaware) is a reasonable proxy for the broader US economy. Sources: [Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia](#); [Institute for Supply Management](#); [US Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). 'Return to "What's New"'.  
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# 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

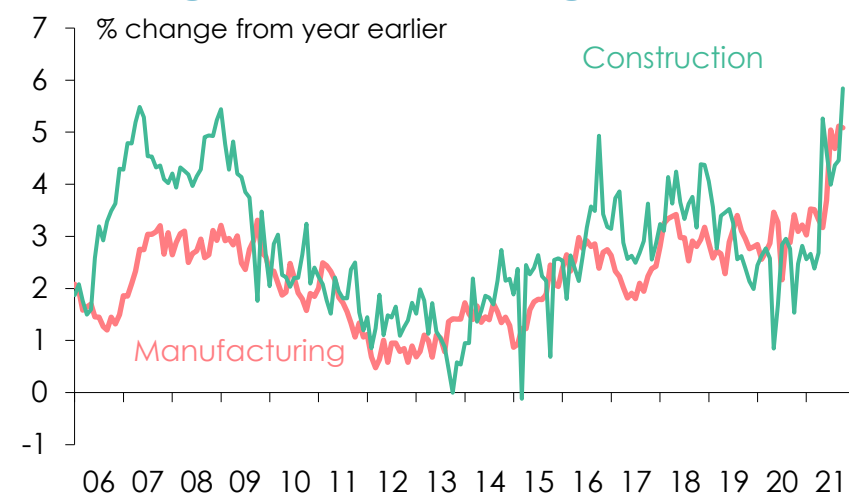


Quit rate

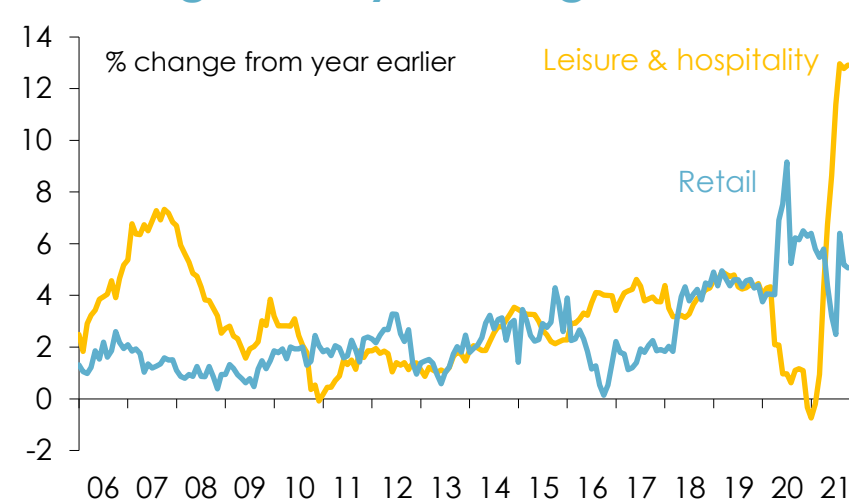


Note: Measures of average hourly earnings (especially the all-industries measures) and of average compensation per hour are affected by changes in the composition of employment (so for example they rose sharply in Q2 2020 when large numbers of low-paid workers were laid off and fell markedly when they 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"](#).

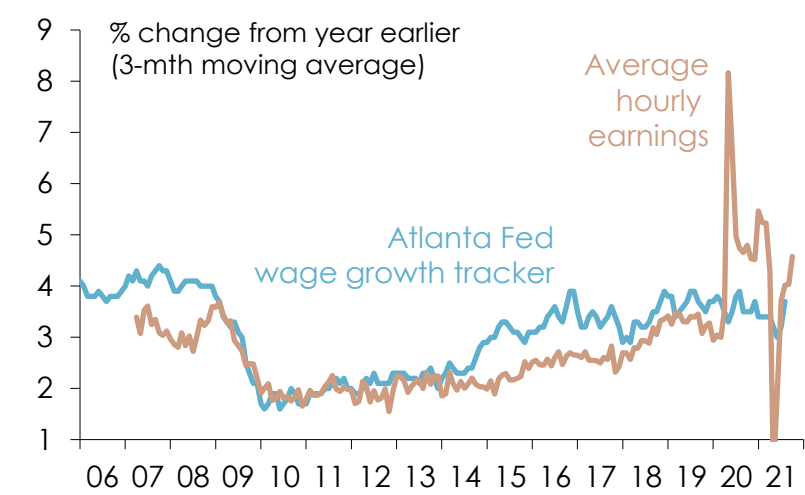
Average hourly earnings



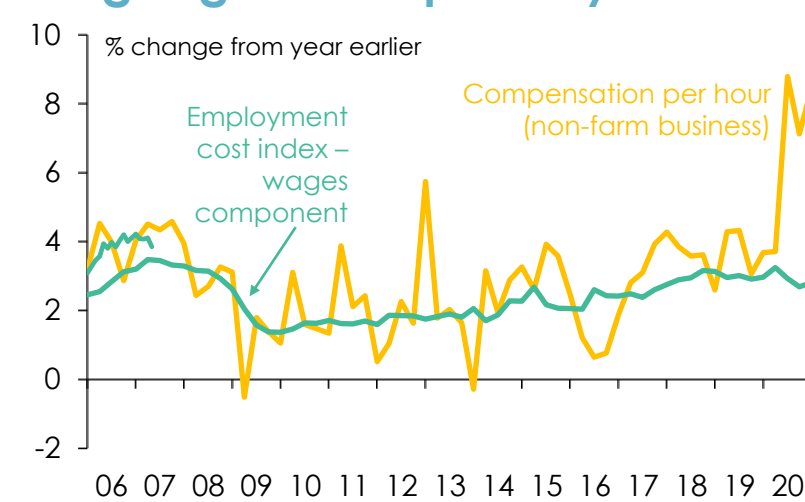
Average hourly earnings



Overall wages growth - monthly

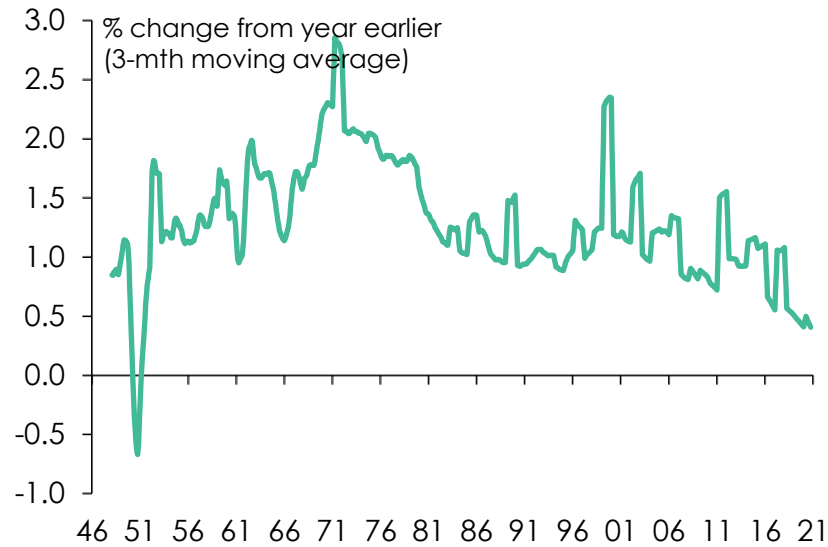


Wages growth - quarterly

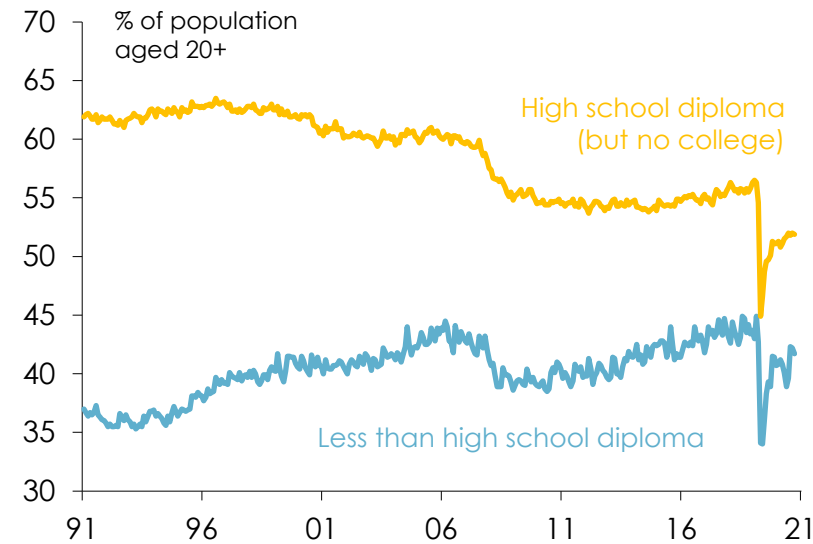


# US labour market tightness owes a lot to restrictions on immigration, and to barriers to the return to the labour market of specific groups

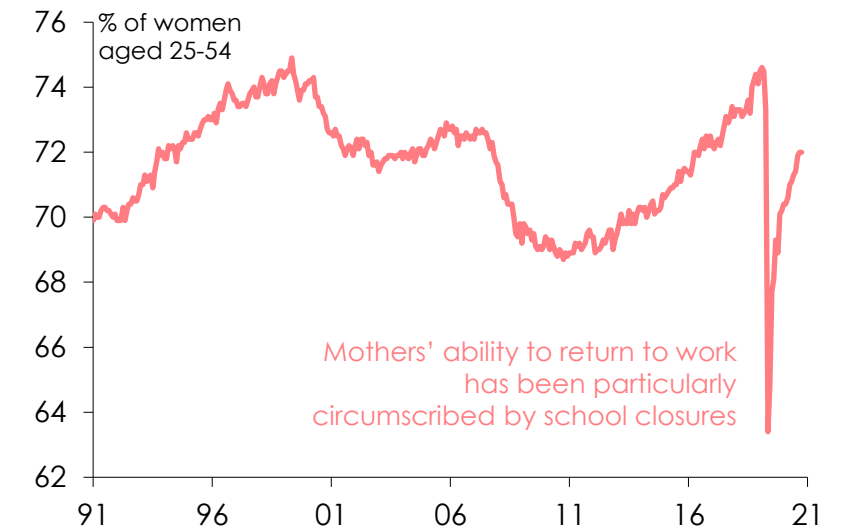
## Civilian working age population



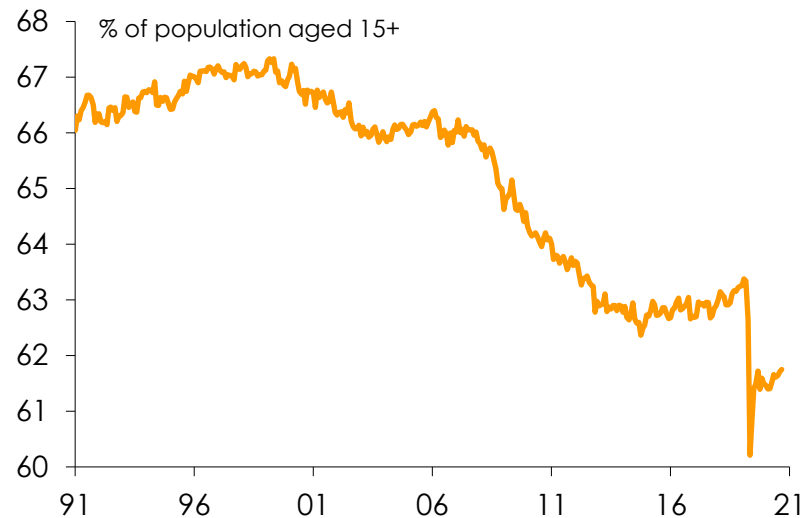
## 'E-pop' ratio – by education



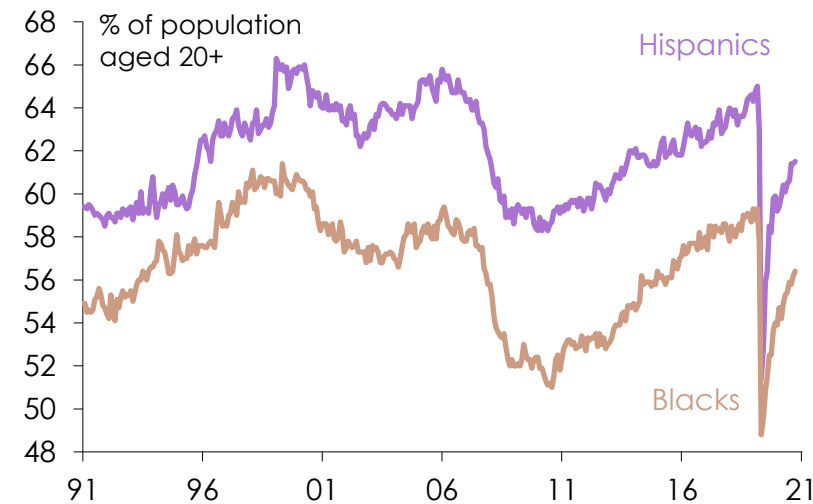
## 'E-pop' ratio – women 25-54



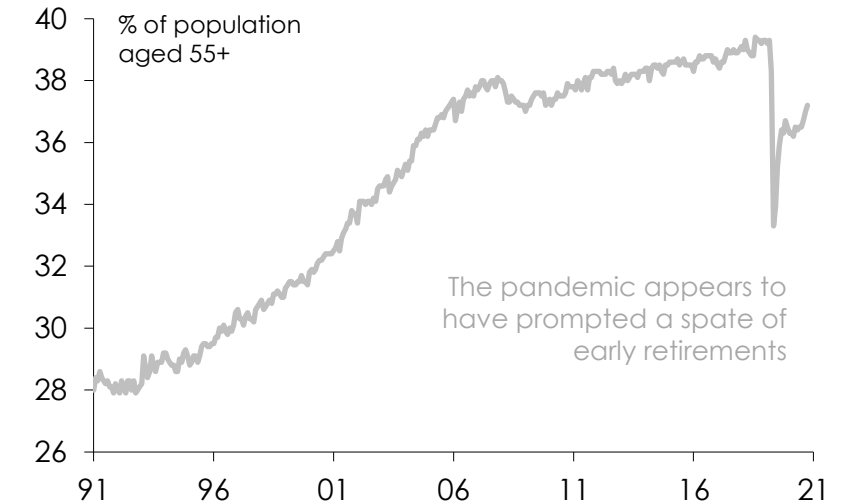
## Employment-to-population ratio



## 'E-Pop' ratio – Blacks & Hispanics



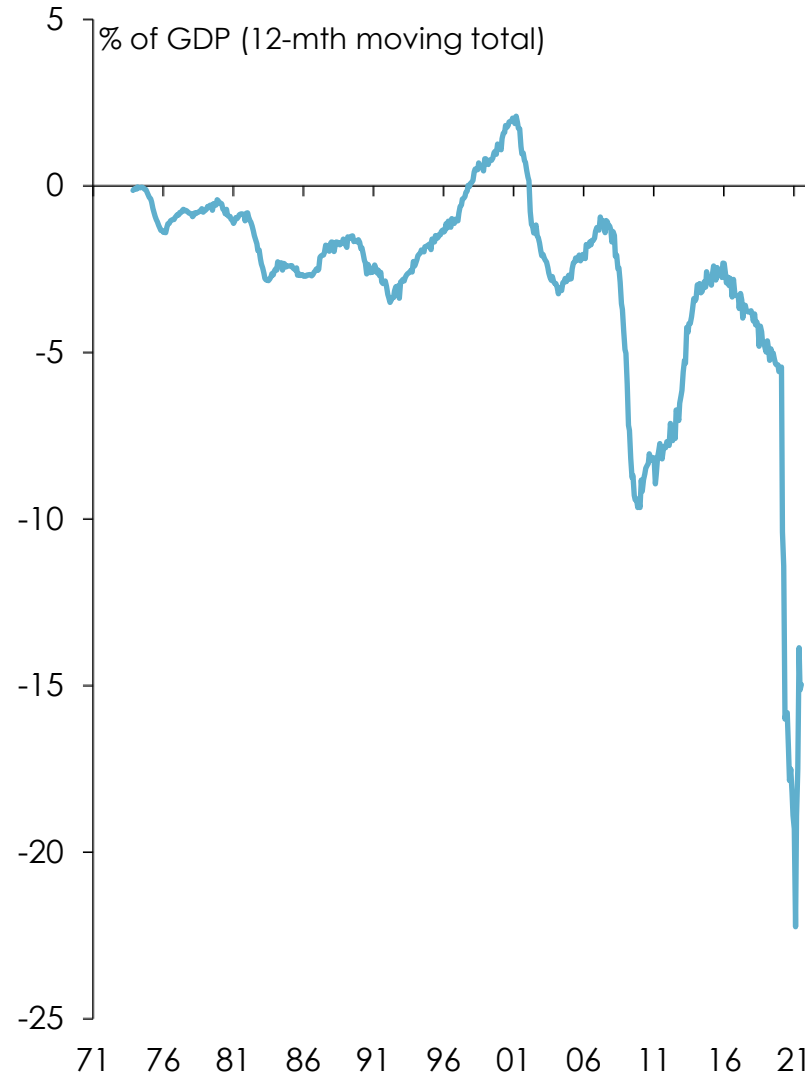
## 'E-pop' ratio – people 55 & over



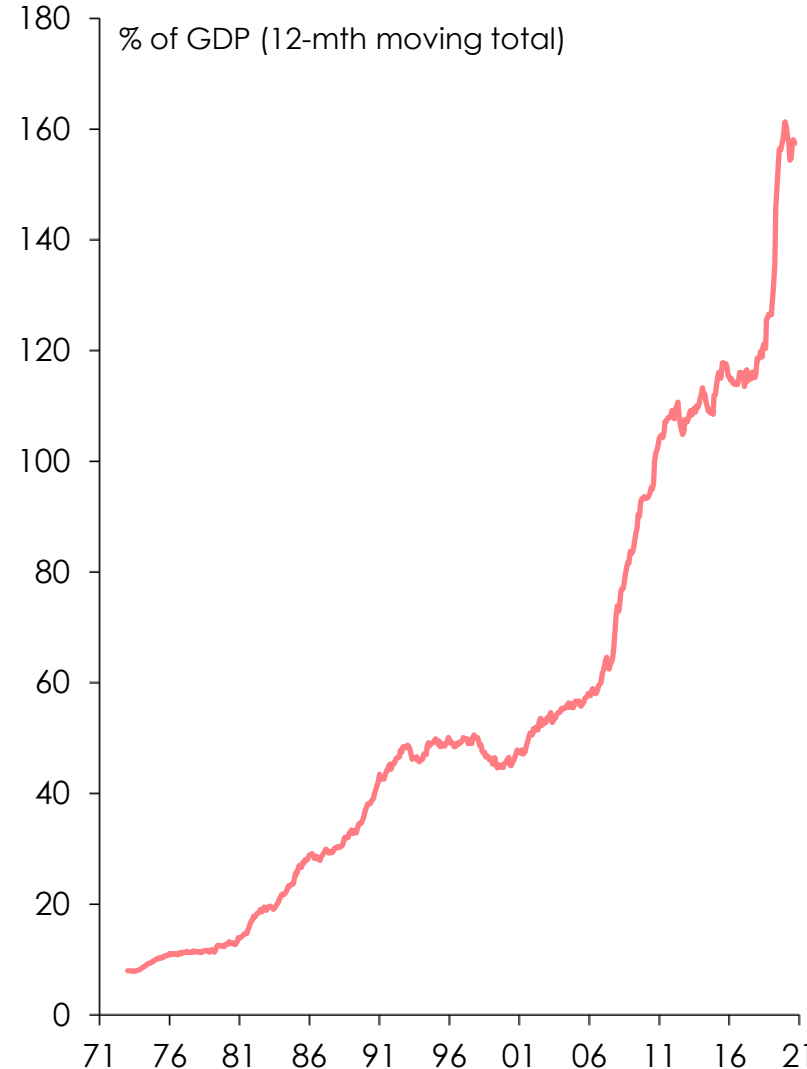
Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, [Current Employment Statistics](#).

# The US Senate this week passed legislation temporarily raising the debt ceiling until early December, averting a possible shutdown this month

## US Federal budget deficit



## US gross Federal debt

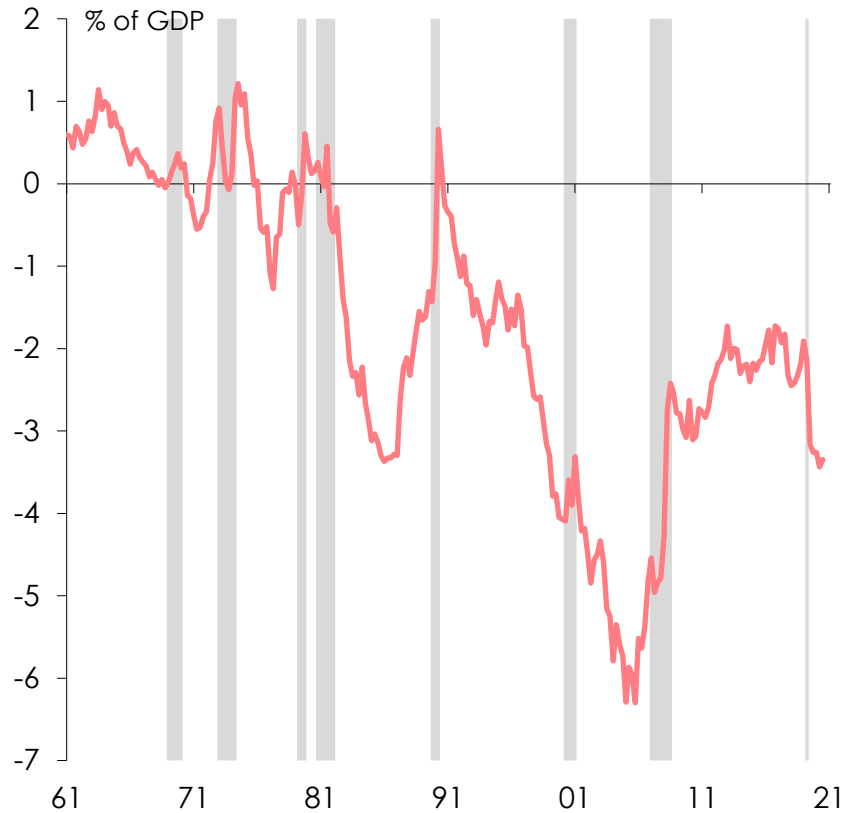


- ❑ The US Federal Government budget deficit narrowed by US\$132bn to \$171bn in August, largely due to lower spending on pandemic-related relief programs
- ❑ The deficit for the 12 months ended August was US\$2.8 trn, down from a peak of \$4.1 trn in the 12 months ended March, but almost exactly the same as in the 12 months to August last year
- ❑ The market value of gross debt outstanding fell by \$122bn to \$29.8 trn (157½% of GDP) in August, as a result of rising bond yields
- ❑ The Senate this week passed legislation raising the US Government's debt ceiling by US\$480bn, which in effect allows the Government to continue operating until around 3<sup>rd</sup> December
  - Senate Republicans had previously sought to force Democrats to raise the debt ceiling via a 'reconciliation' procedure – which would then have prevented Democrats from using that procedure to pass their infrastructure bill
  - but backed down when President Biden indicated he might support by-passing the Senate's 'filibuster' rule
- ❑ The legislation is likely to be passed by the House on Tuesday

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"](#).

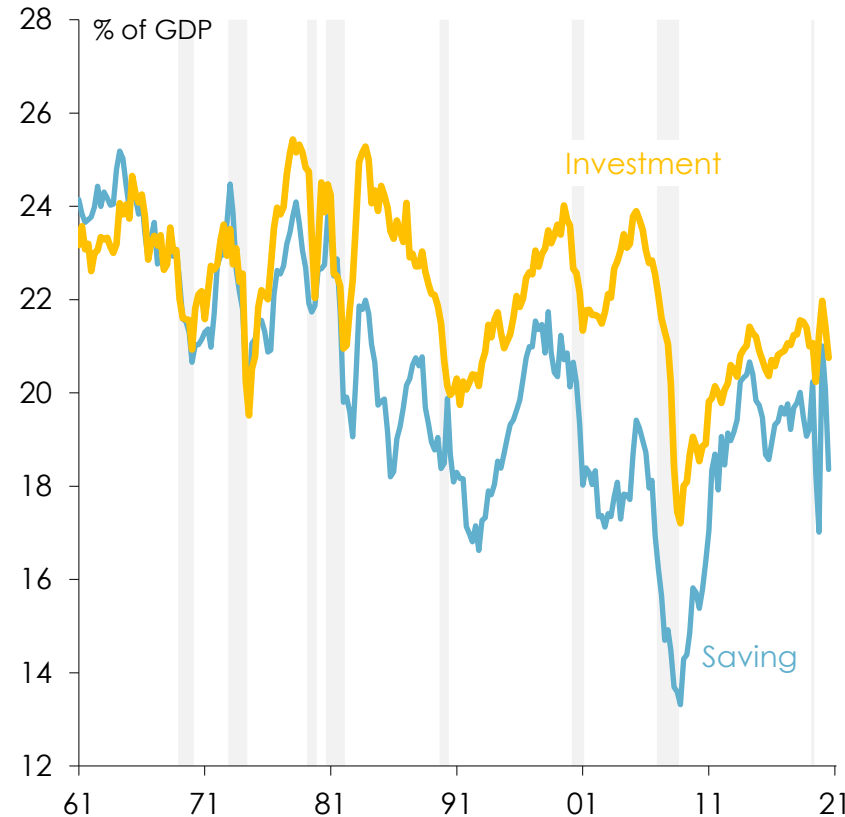
# Any 'excess demand' resulting from 'excessive' stimulus is more likely to show up in the US current account deficit than in sustained higher inflation

## US current account balance



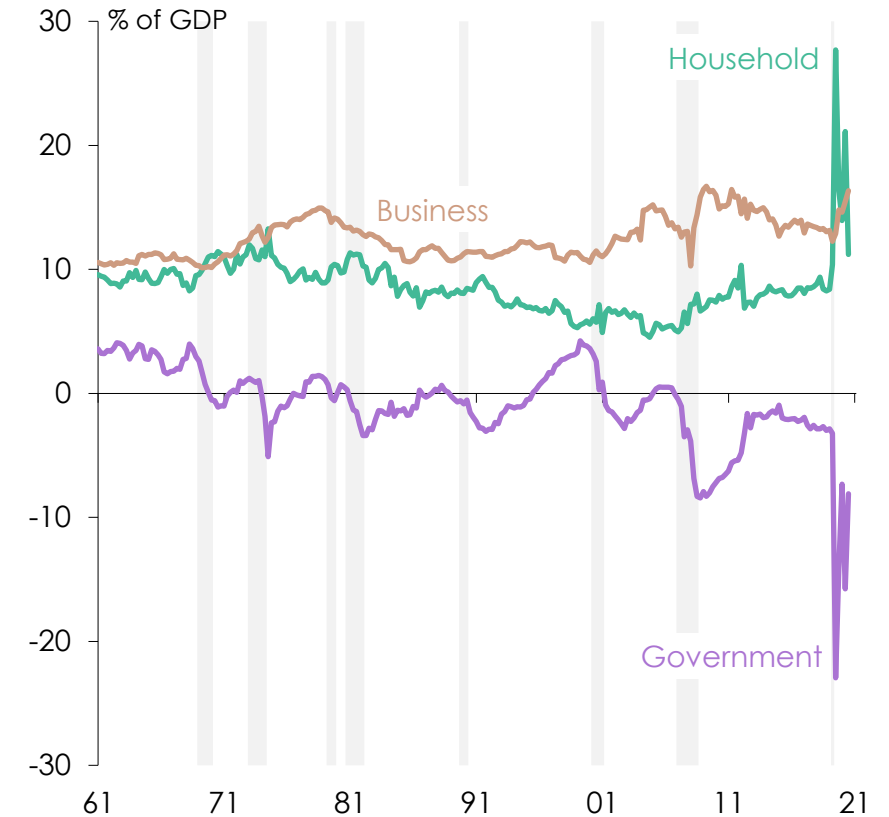
The US current account has *widened* since the recession that began last year – and in the first half of this year has been larger (as a pc of GDP) than at any time since the financial crisis

## 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



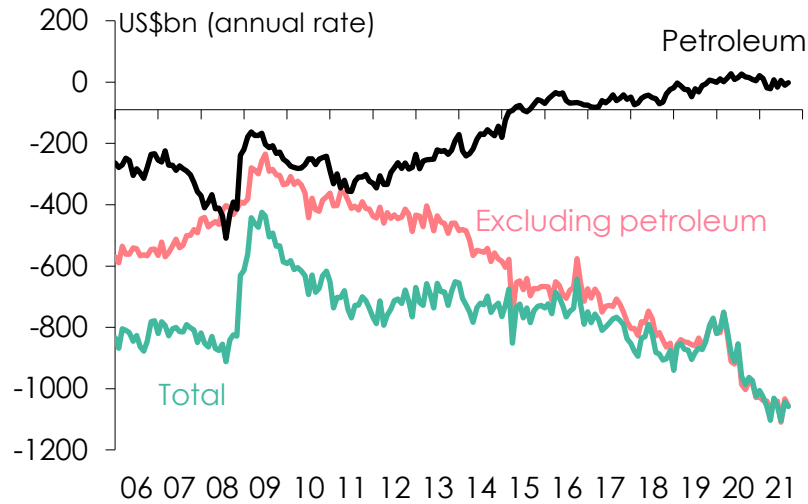
The dramatic increase in the budget deficit has been largely (but not totally) offset by an increase in household saving

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

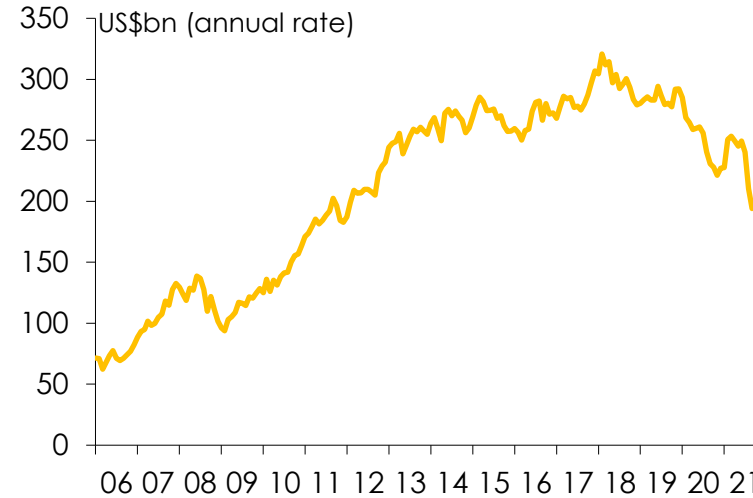
Source: US [Bureau of Economic Analysis](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

# The US recorded a new record goods and services trade deficit in August, continuing a deterioration evident since the onset of Covid-19

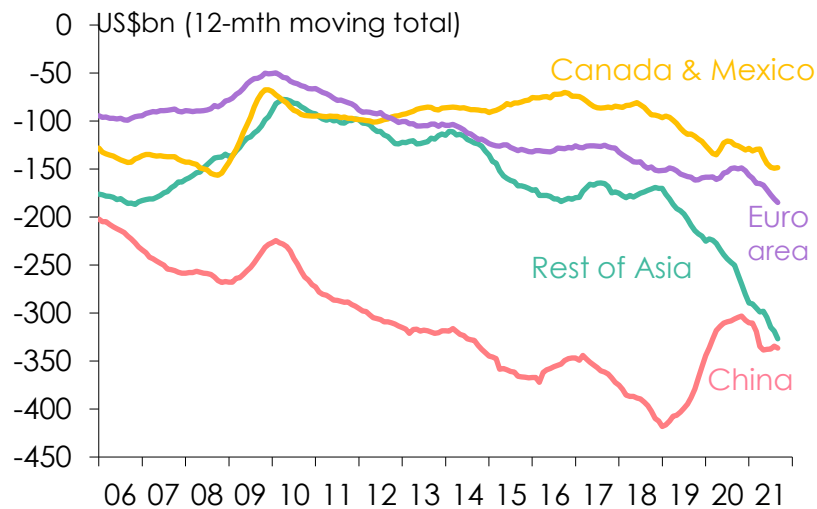
## US goods trade balance



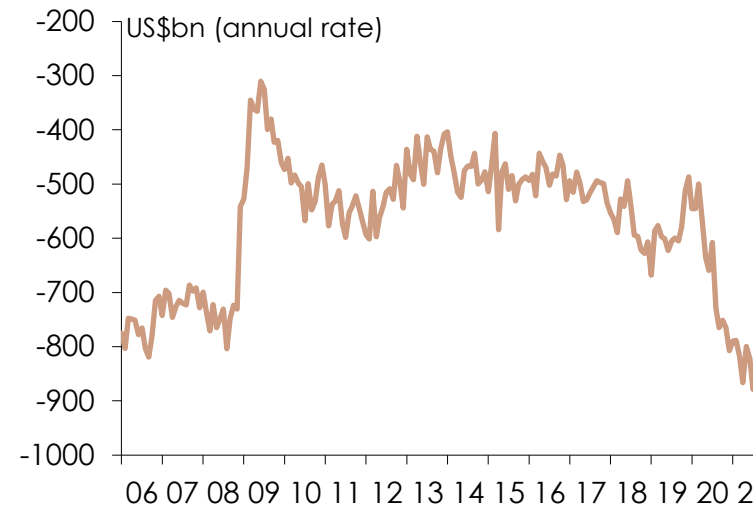
## US services trade balance



## US bilateral goods trade balances



## US goods & services trade balance

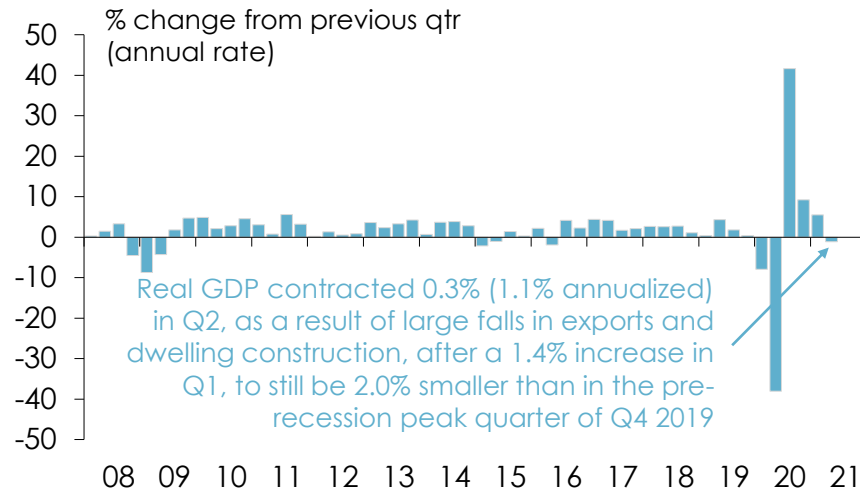


- ❑ The US goods trade deficit widened by US\$1.6bn to \$89.4bn in August
  - exports rose 0.7%, after a 1.8% increase in July, while imports rose 1.1%, cf a fall of 1.2% in July
  - August's was the second-largest monthly deficit on record (the largest was \$93.3bn in June)
- ❑ The services surplus narrowed by \$1.4bn to \$16.2bn in July, the smallest since December 2011
  - services exports fell 0.1% and imports 2.8%
- ❑ The combined goods and services deficit in August was a record \$73.3bn, \$3.0bn more than in July and \$0.1bn more than the previous record in June
  - for the first eight months of 2021 the goods and services deficit was \$558bn, compared with \$417bn in the first eight 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

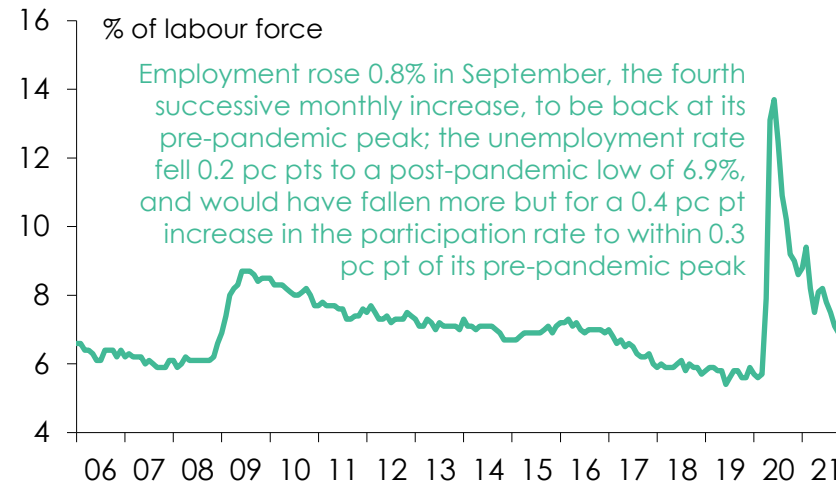


# Employment in Canada is now back to its pre-pandemic peak (as of September) – and Canada is also now running trade surpluses

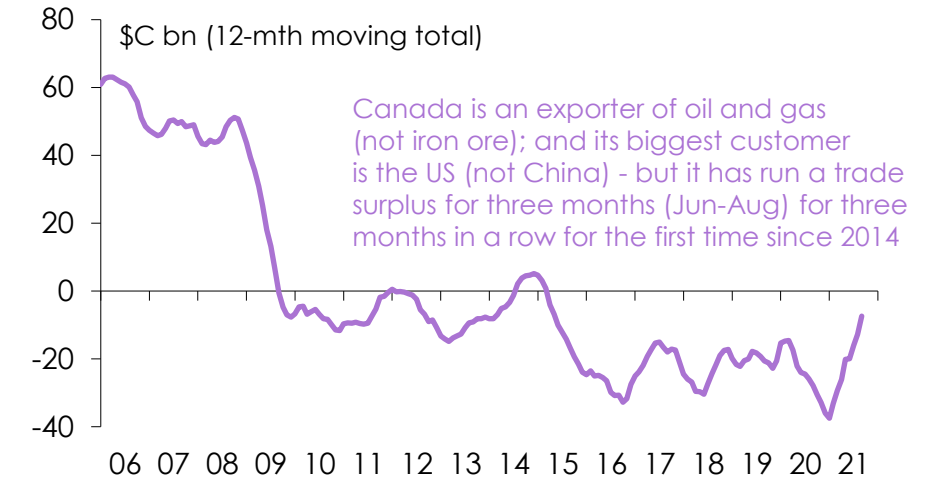
## Real GDP



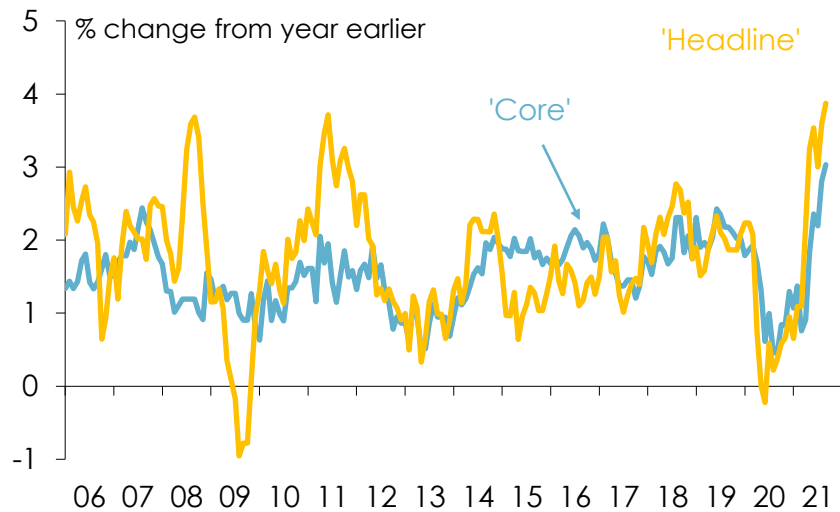
## Unemployment rate



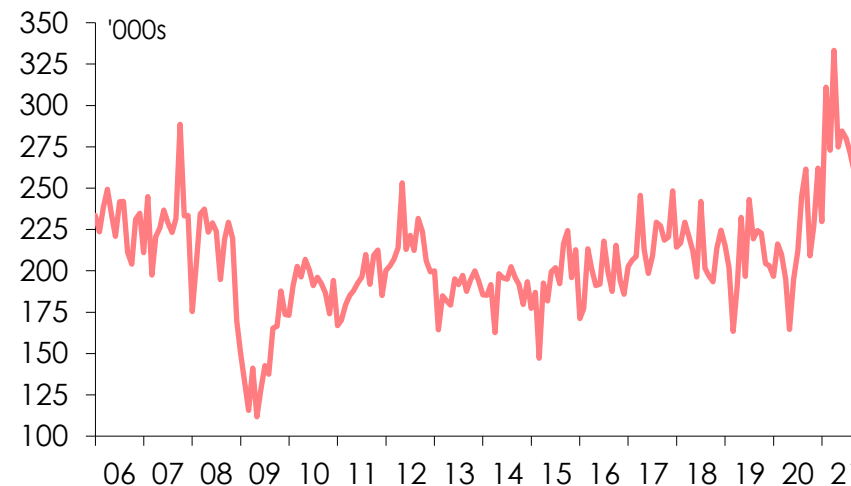
## Merchandise trade balance



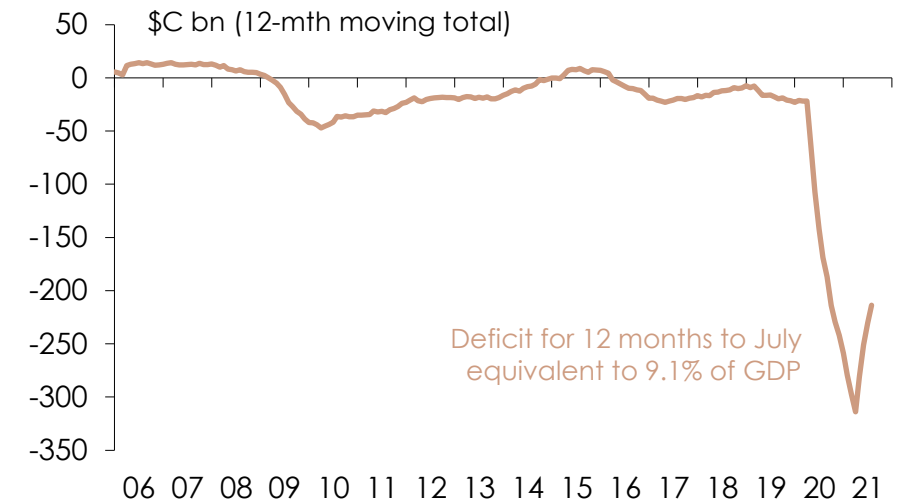
## Consumer prices



## Housing permits



## Federal budget balance

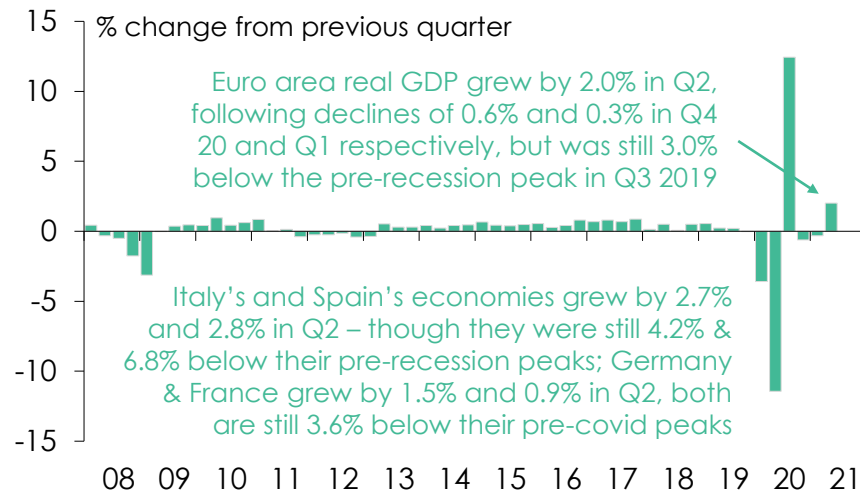


Sources: [Statistics Canada](#); [Teranet-National Bank of Canada](#); [Department of Finance Canada](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

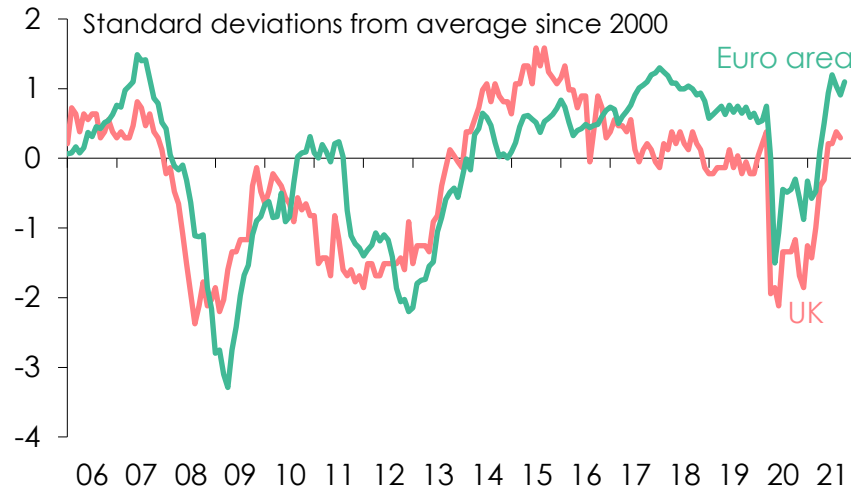


# The euro area economy grew by 2% in Q2, though it's still 3% smaller than at its pre-recession peak in Q3 2019: UK GDP rose 4.8% in Q2

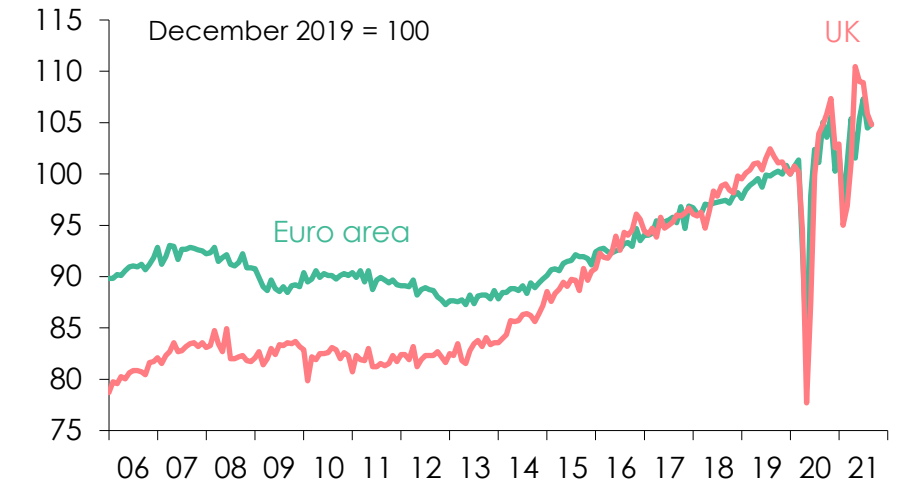
## Euro area real GDP



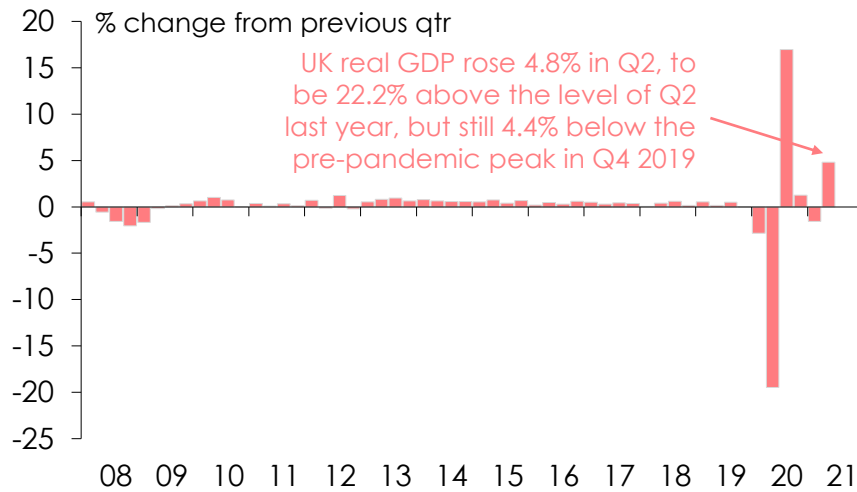
## Consumer confidence



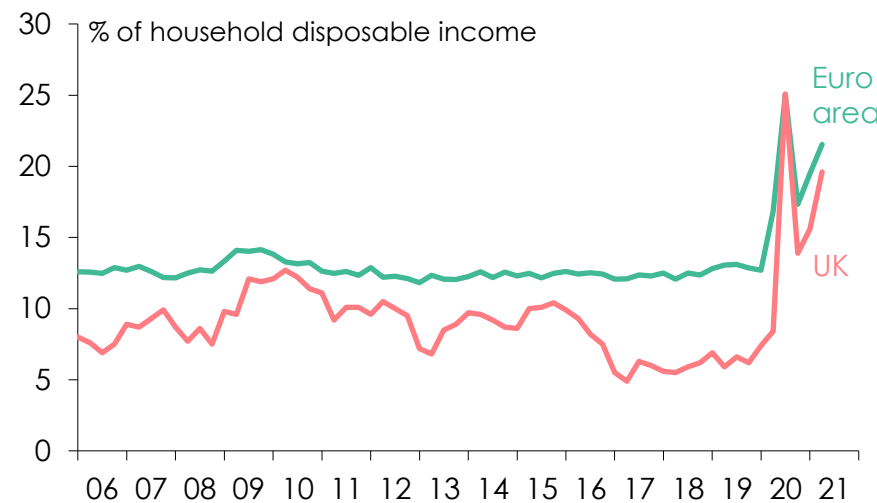
## Retail sales volume



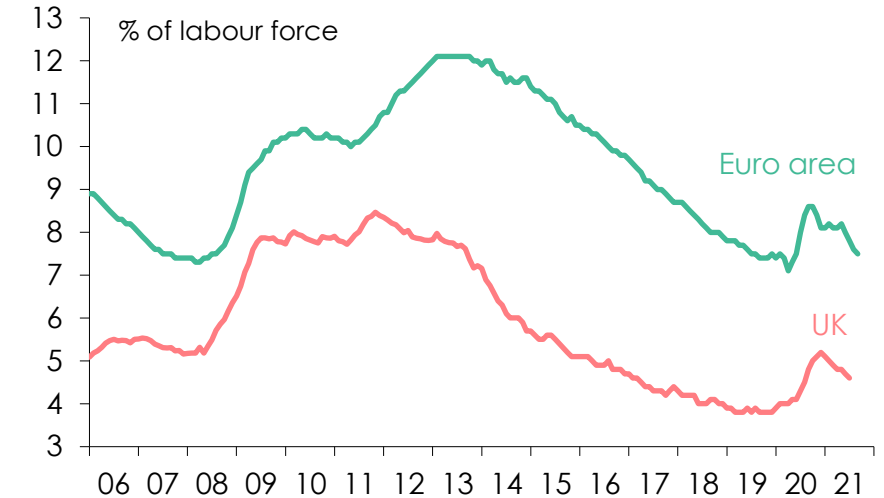
## UK real GDP



## Household saving ratio



## Unemployment

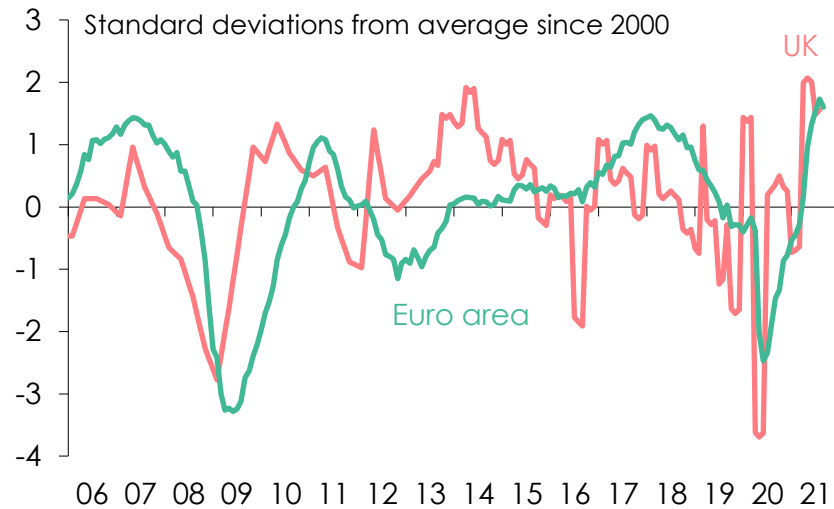


Sources: Eurostat; UK Office for National Statistics; GfK. The UK unemployment rate is published as a 3-month moving average.

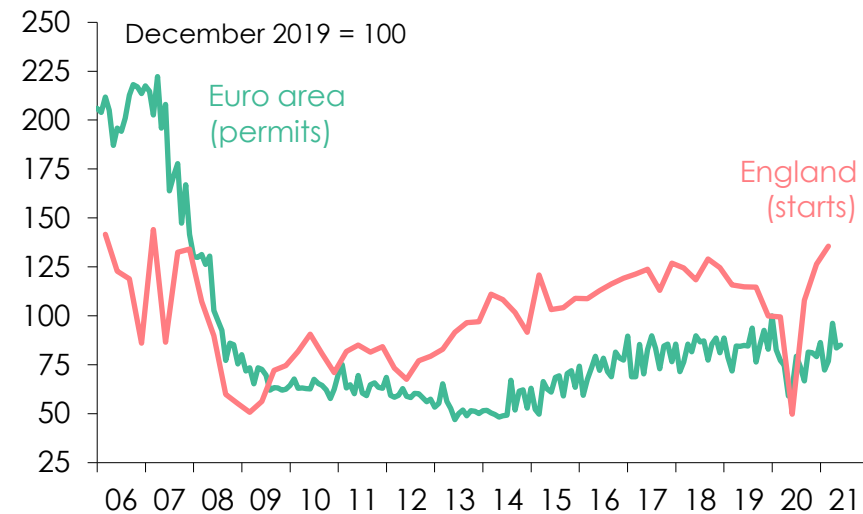
[Return to "What's New".](#)

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

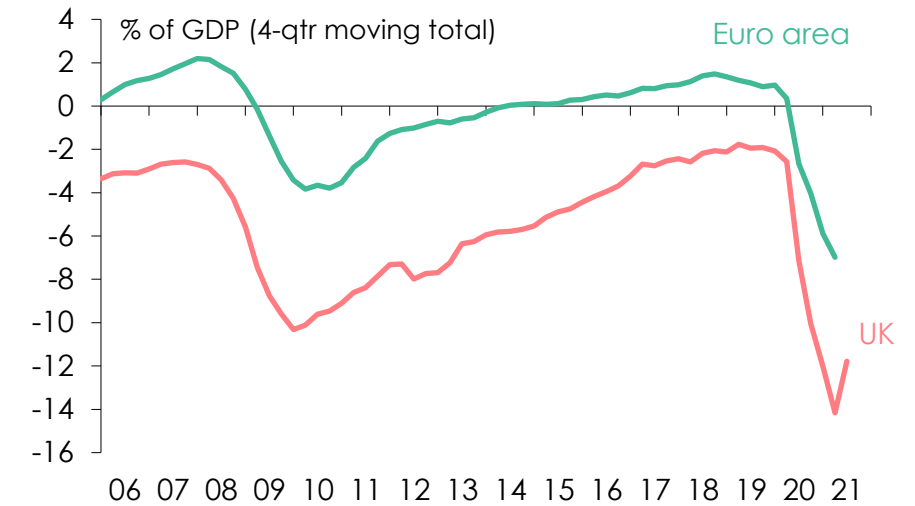
## Business confidence



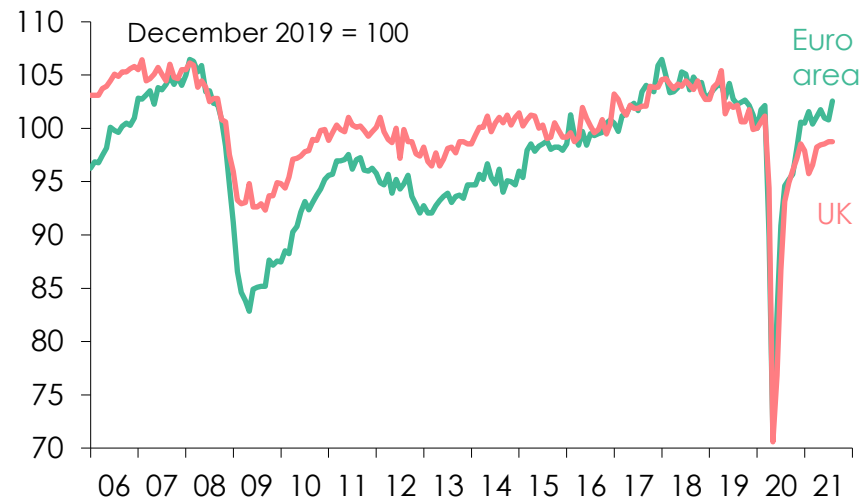
## Housing activity



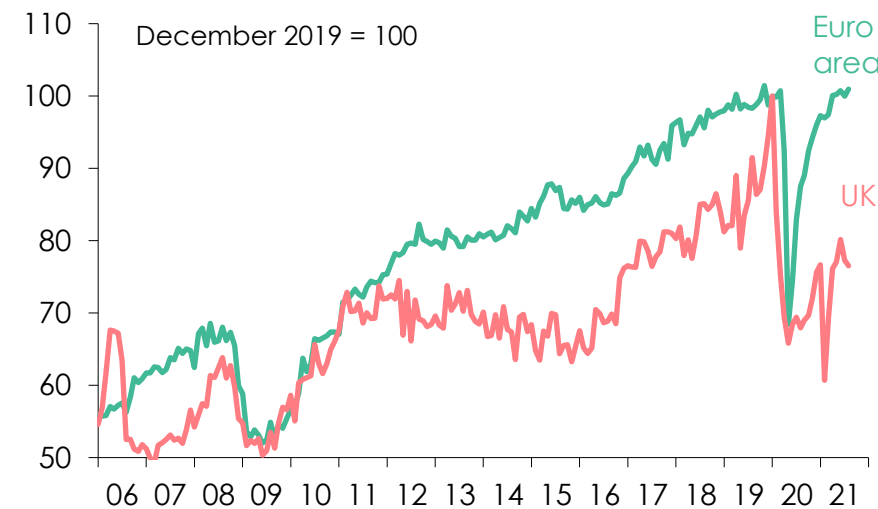
## Government fiscal balance



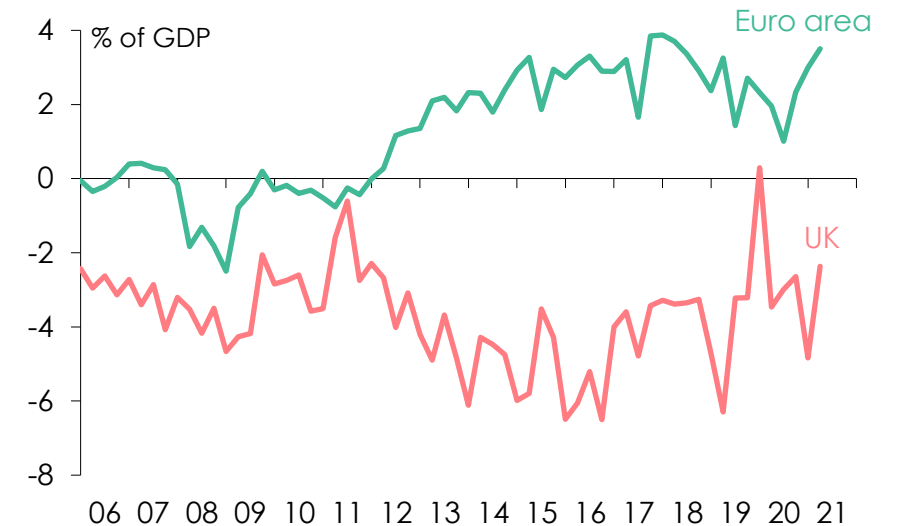
## Manufacturing production



## Merchandise exports



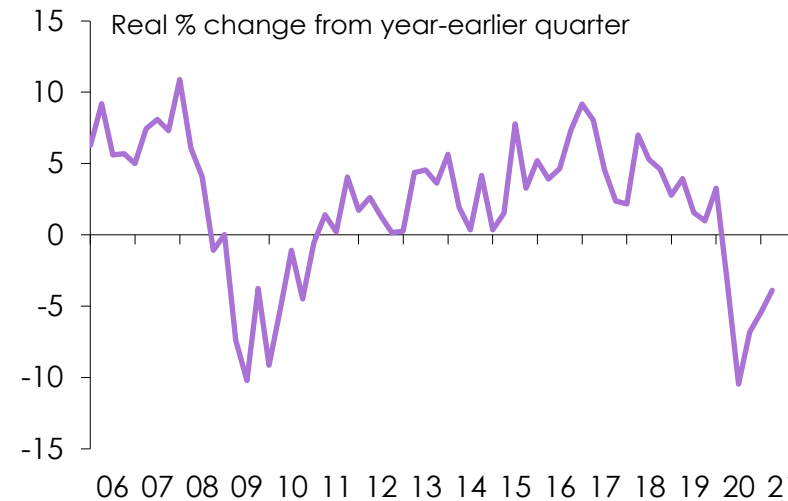
## Current account balance



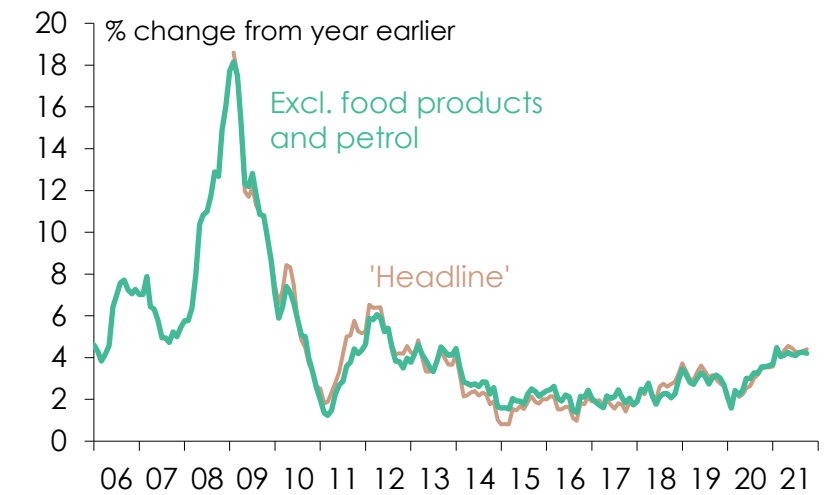
# Iceland's central bank this week raised rates for the third time this year

- ❑ **Seðlabanki Íslands**, the Central Bank of Iceland, this week raised its policy interest rate, the rate on seven-day term deposits, by 25 basis points to 1.50%
  - this is the third such increase this year, following increases in May and August
- ❑ In its post-meeting **statement** SI's Monetary Policy Committee noted the large contribution of housing costs to the 'headline' inflation rate of 4.4% over the year to September
- ❑ It pointed to "cause for concern in that inflation expectations appear to have begun to rise again"
  - despite GDP growth in the first half of 2021 having been "slightly weaker" than forecast, and that 'underlying' inflation had "continued to ease"
  - although it was "too soon ... to say whether inflation expectations are becoming less firmly anchored to the inflation target"
- ❑ The MPC committed to "apply the tools at its disposal to ensure that inflation eases back to the target within an acceptable time frame"

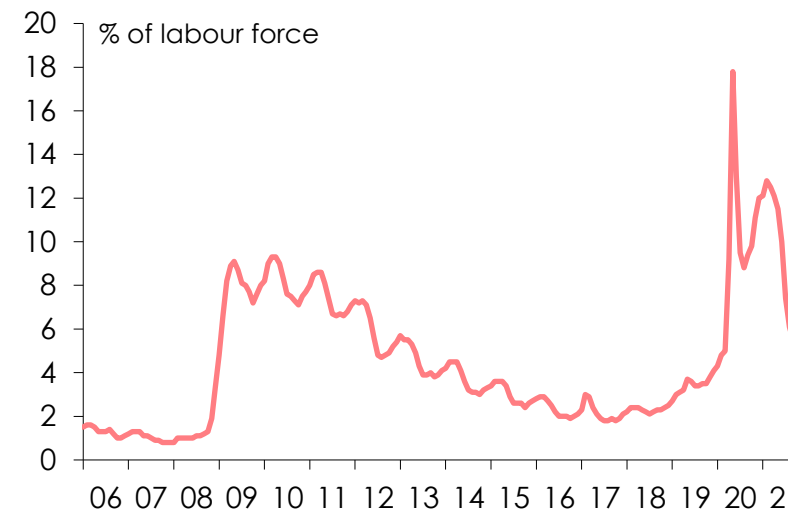
## Real GDP



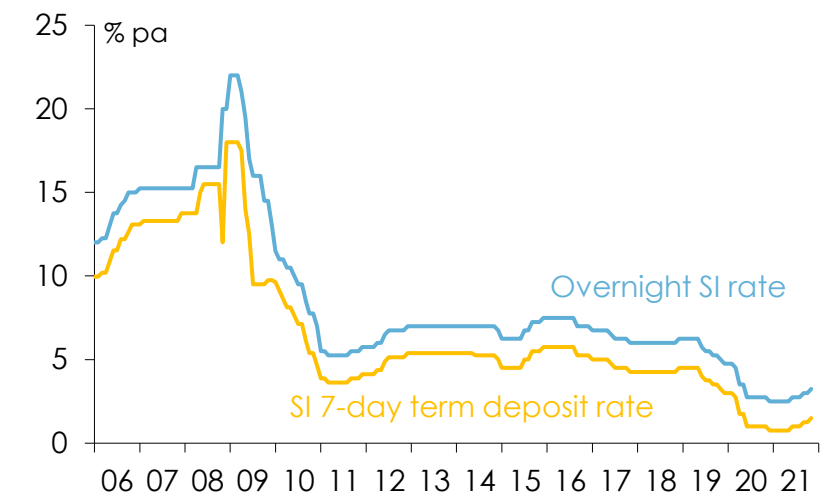
## Inflation



## Unemployment



## Interest rates

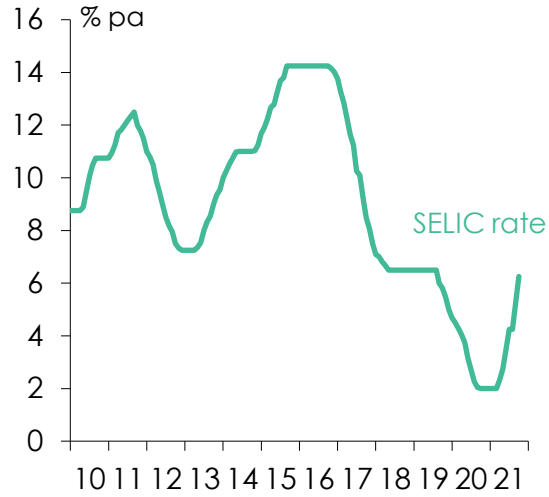


# Two Eastern European and two Latin American central banks raised rates this week

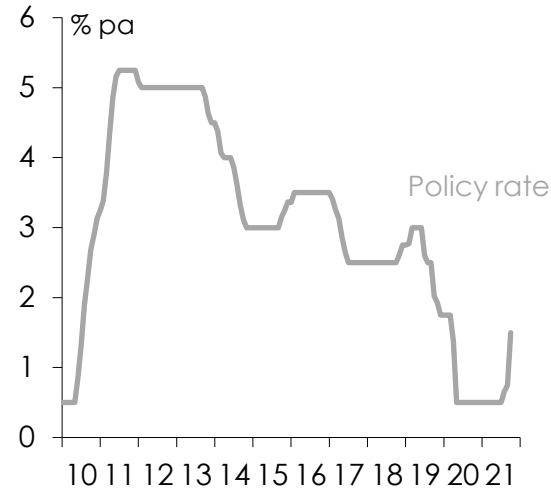
- ❑ **Narodowy Bank Polski** (Poland's central bank) raised its reference rate by 40 basis points, to 0.50%, at its Monetary Policy Council meeting on Wednesday – the first increase since June 2012
  - the decision was in response to inflation having accelerated to 5.8% over the twelve months to September (from 2.3% over the year to December 2020), well above the NBP target of  $2\frac{1}{2}\% \pm 1\%$  – which, the NBP said, “amidst probable further economic recovery and favourable labour market conditions ... would generate a risk of inflation staying above inflation target in the medium term”
  - the NBP had previously indicated a reluctance to follow Czechia and Hungary in raising rates
- ❑ **Banca Națională a României** (Romania's central bank) raised its monetary policy rate by 25 basis points, to 1.50%, at its Board meeting on Tuesday – the first increase since February 2018
  - inflation in Romania has accelerated from 2.1% at the end of last year to 5.3% in August, largely as a result of a “considerable hike” in natural gas and electricity prices in July
  - NBR also pointed to an “unprecedented step-up in local currency lending in July”, and to “risks ... from the future fiscal policy stance” with “domestic political instability likely to jeopardize budget consolidation – vital for macroeconomic stability”
- ❑ **Banco Central de Reserva del Perú** raised its reference rate by 50 bp to 1.50% on Thursday, following a similar move in September and a 25 bp increase in August
  - inflation in Peru has risen to 5.2% over the year to August, from 2.0% in December, well above BCRP's  $2 \pm 1\%$  target range
  - however BCRP said this decision “does not imply necessarily a cycle of successive increases in the reference interest rate”
- ❑ **Banco Central del Uruguay** raised its monetary policy interest rate by 25 basis points to 5.25% at its Monetary Policy Committee meeting on Tuesday, following a similar move in August
  - inflation in Uruguay was 7.4% over the year to September, down marginally from 7.6% in August, but still well above the target range of 3-6%
  - the increase in the policy rate was considered necessary to “strengthen the process of reducing inflation expectations”, a process which “is expected to continue in the remainder of 2021”

# A growing number of 'emerging' market central banks have begun tightening monetary policy

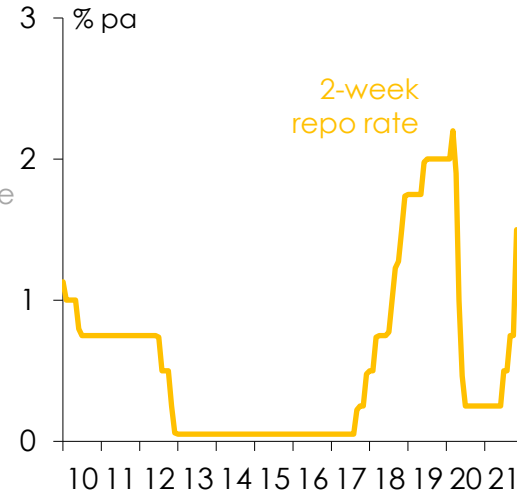
Brazil



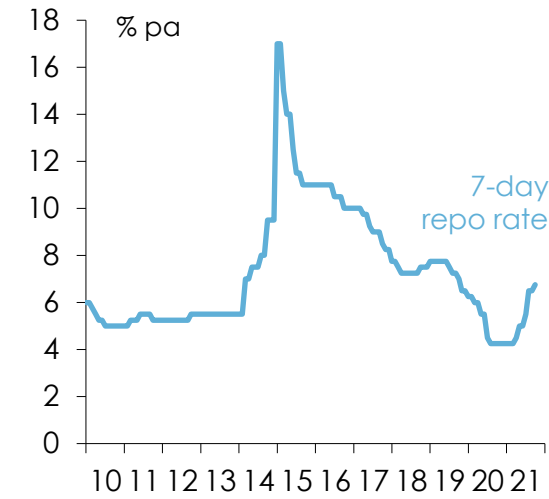
Chile



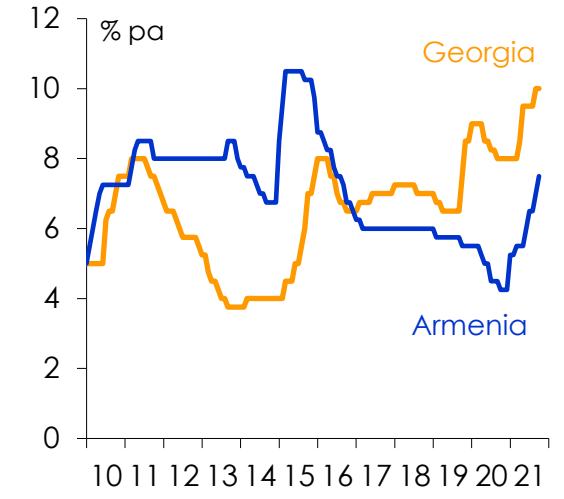
Czechia



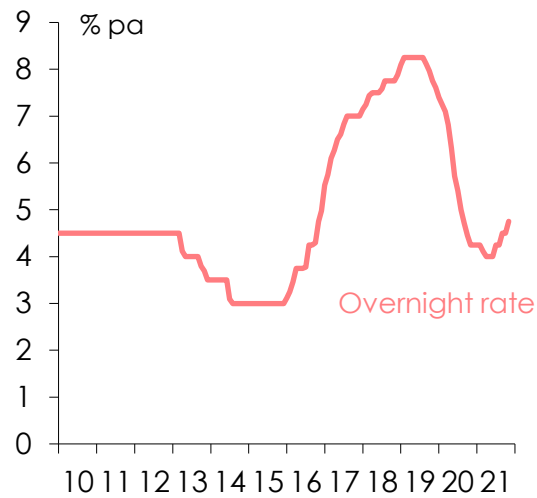
Russia



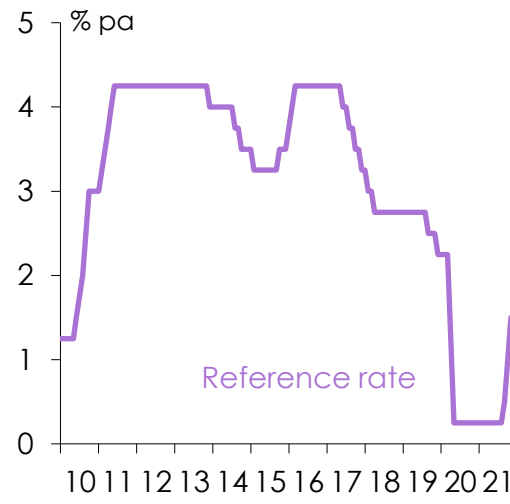
Georgia & Armenia



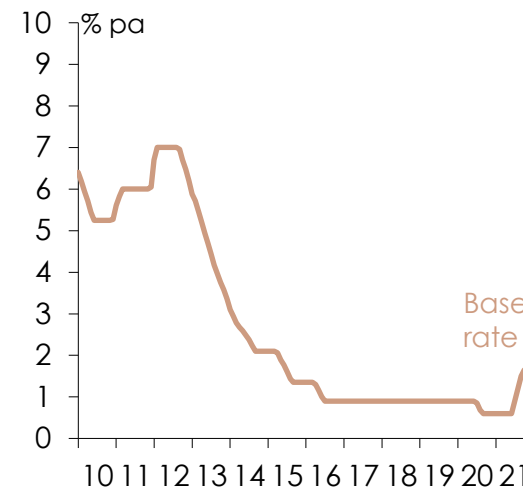
Mexico



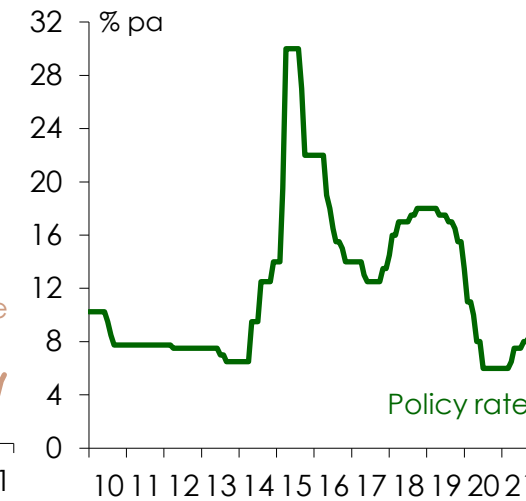
Peru



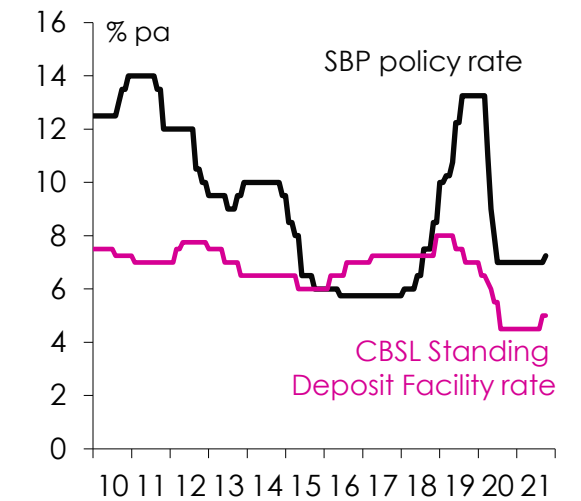
Hungary



Ukraine



Pakistan & Sri Lanka

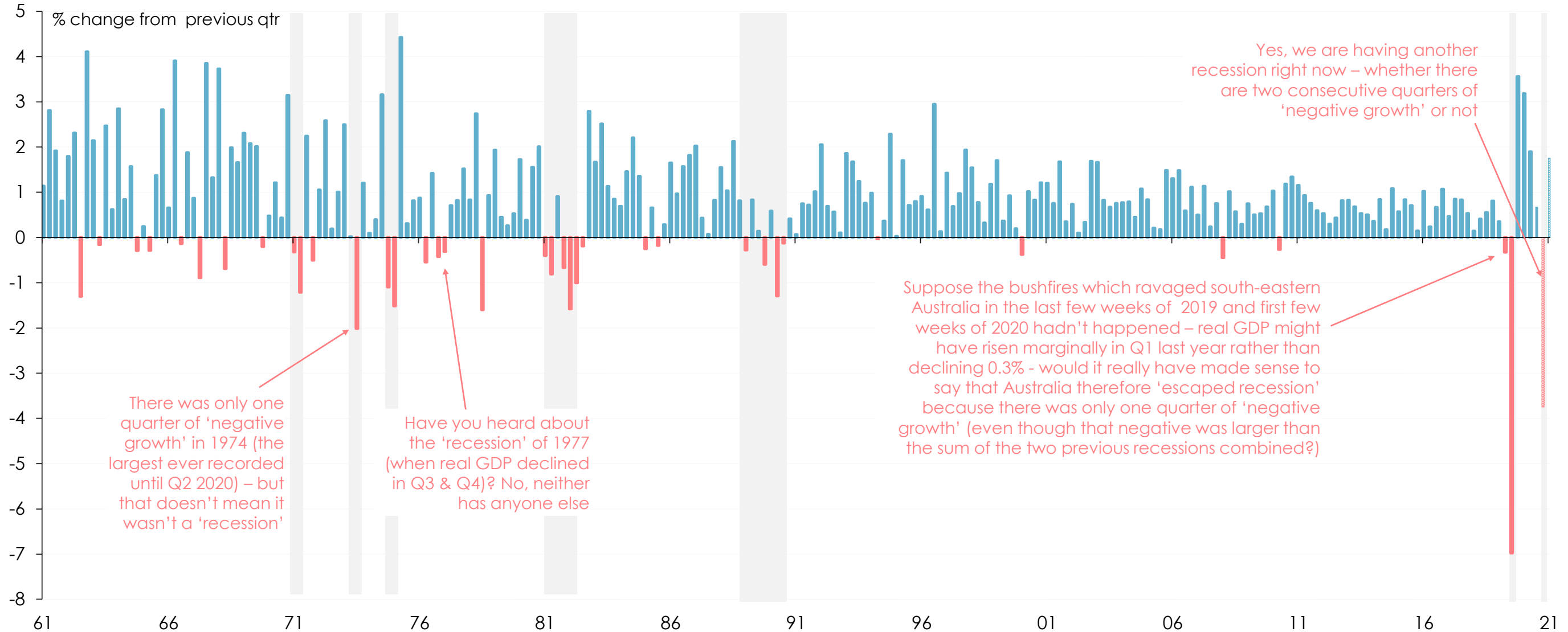


Sources: [Banco Central do Brasil](#); [Banco de México](#); [Banco Central de Chile](#); [Banco Central de Reserva del Perú](#); [Magyar Nemzeti Bank](#); [Česká národní banka](#); [Bank Rossii](#); [National Bank of Ukraine](#); [Türkiye Cumhuriyet Merkez Bankası](#); [Sakartvelos Erovnu Bank'i](#); [Hayastani Kentronakan Bank](#); [State Bank of Pakistan](#); [Central Bank of Sri Lanka](#).

**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

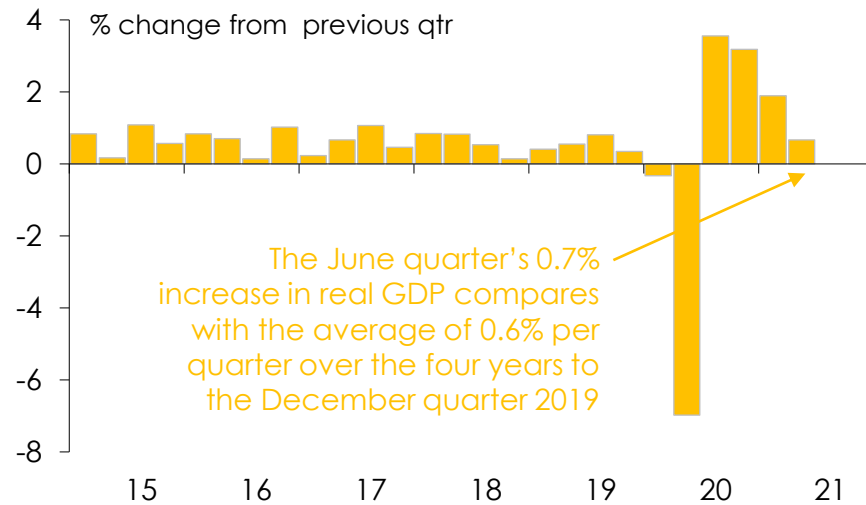


Note: Shaded areas denote recessions. Source: ABS, [Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product](#), March quarter 2021. September quarter GDP will be released on 1<sup>st</sup> December; and December quarter GDP on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022. [Return to "What's New"](#).

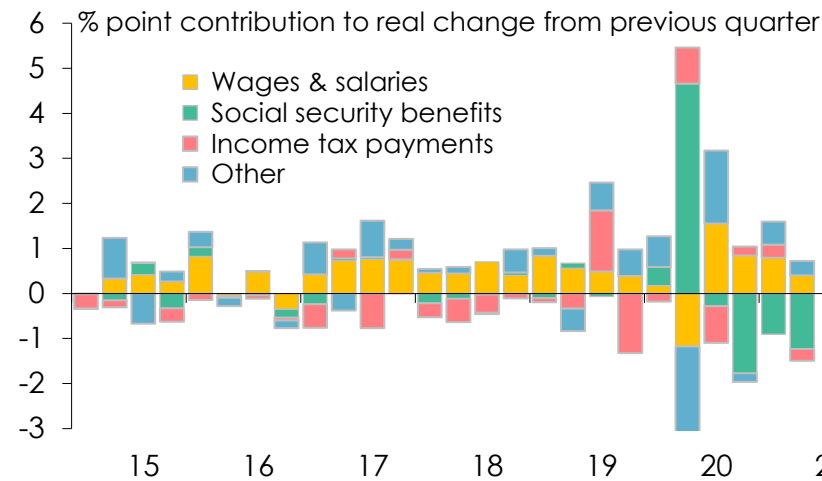


# All the major components of domestic demand contributed to the June quarter's 0.7% GDP growth, but stocks and net exports detracted

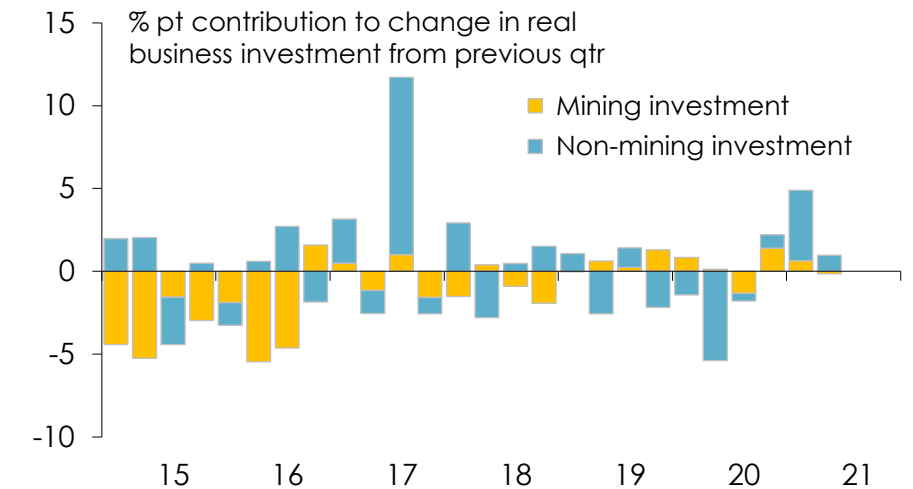
## Quarterly change in real GDP



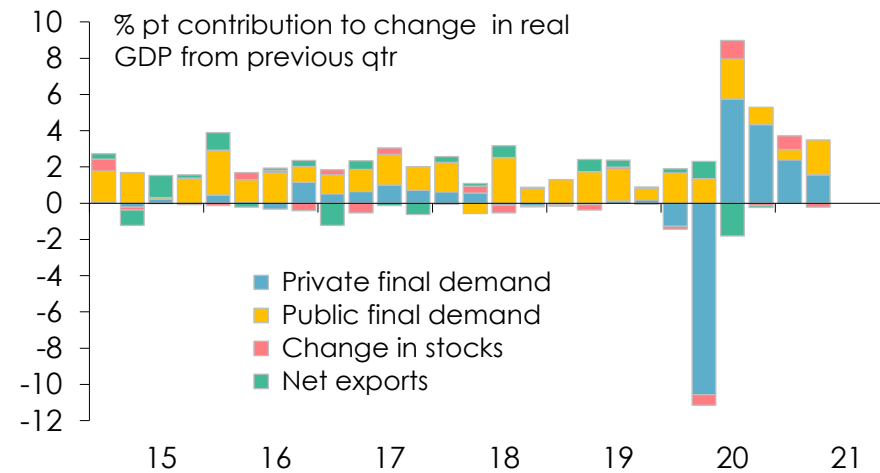
## Household disposable income



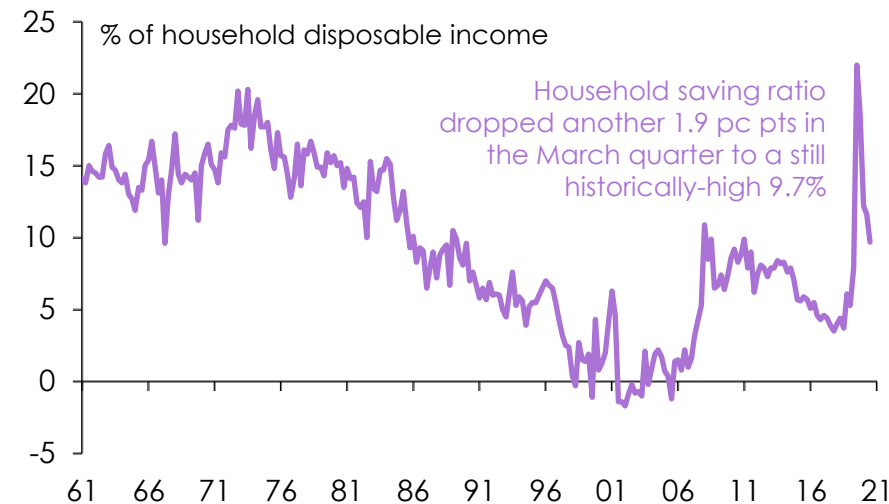
## Business investment expenditure



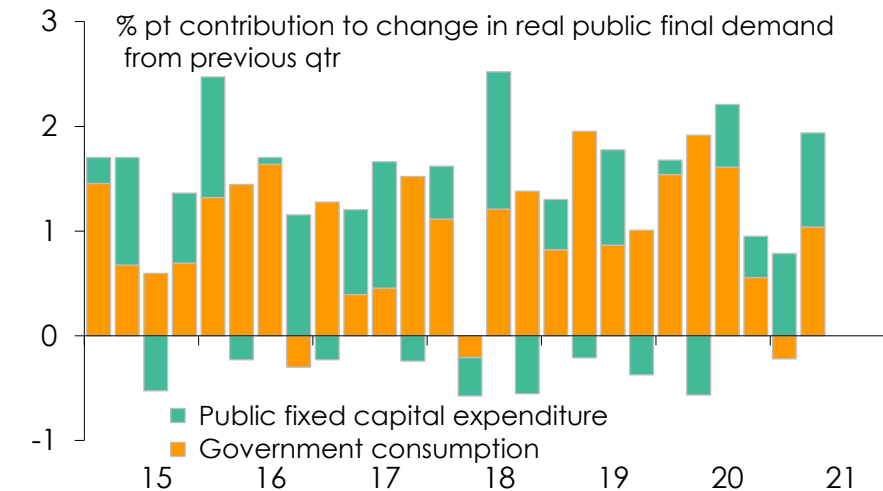
## Contributions to quarterly GDP growth



## Household saving rate



## Public expenditure



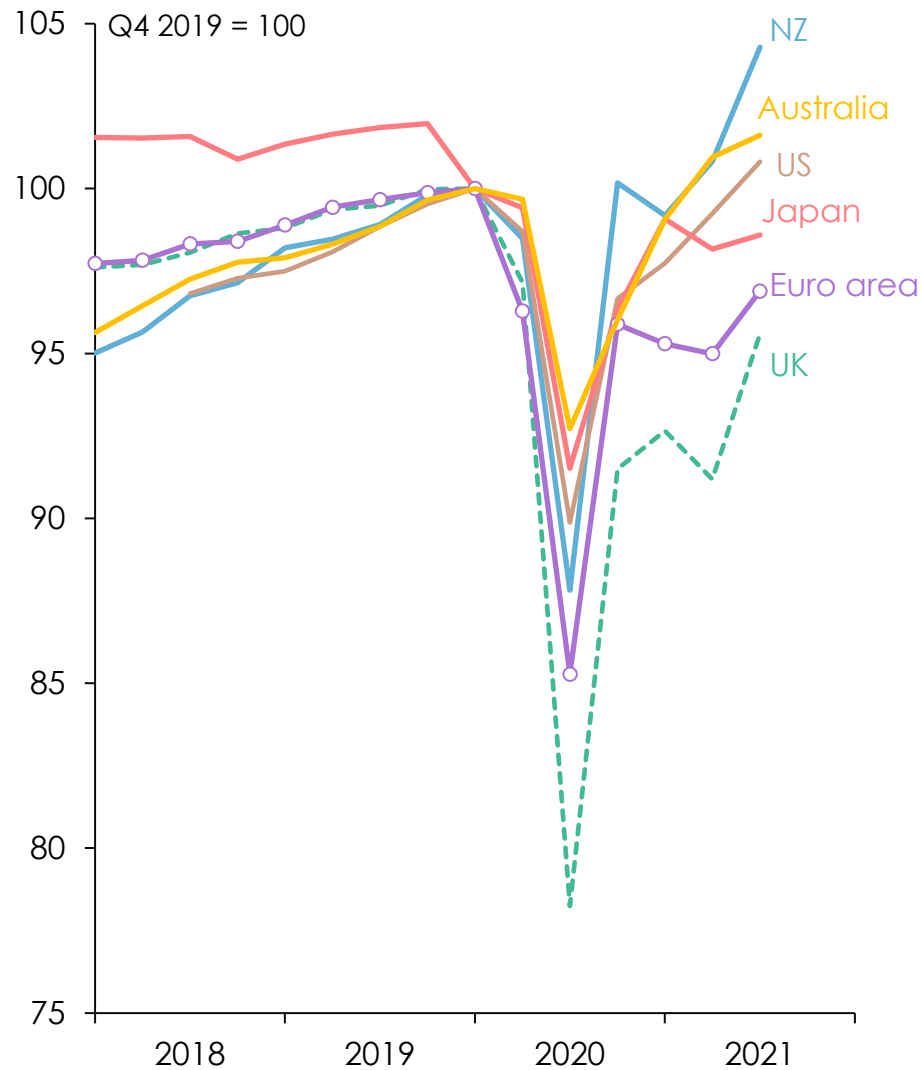
Note: Components of household disposable income are deflated by the implicit price deflator of household final consumption expenditure.

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

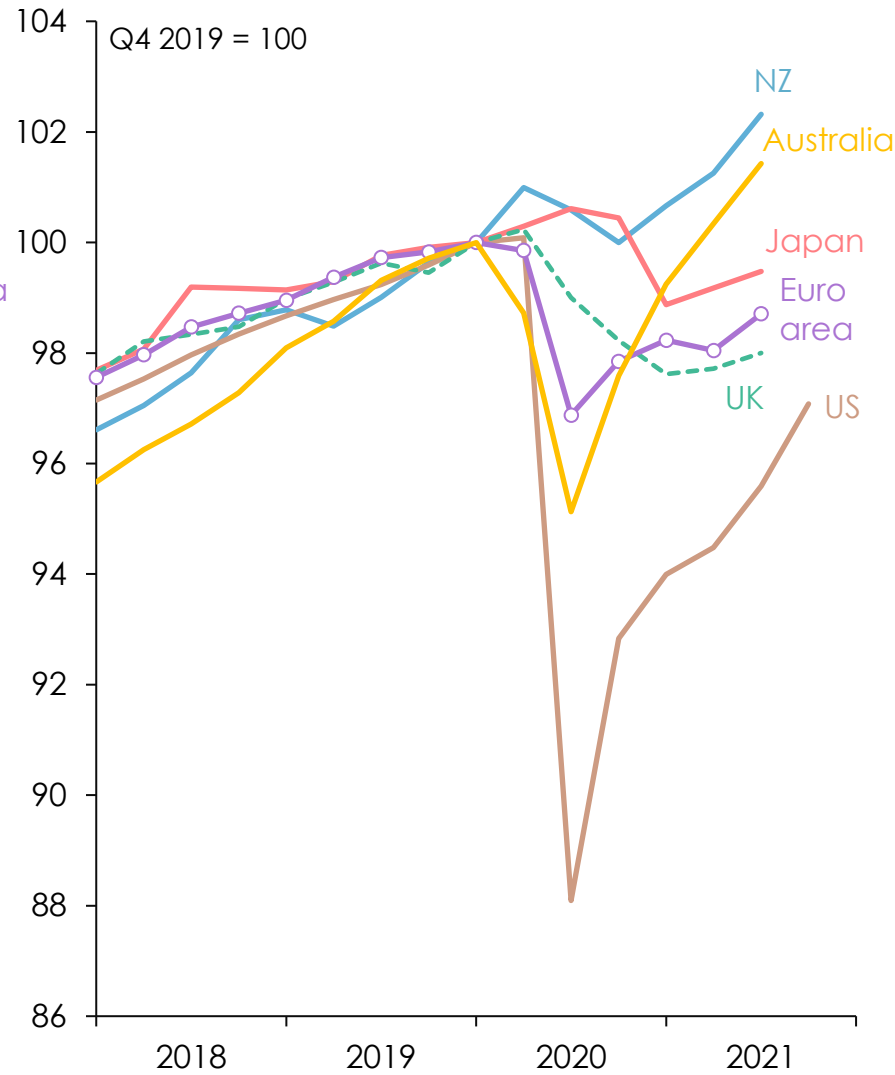
December. [Return to "What's New"](#).

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

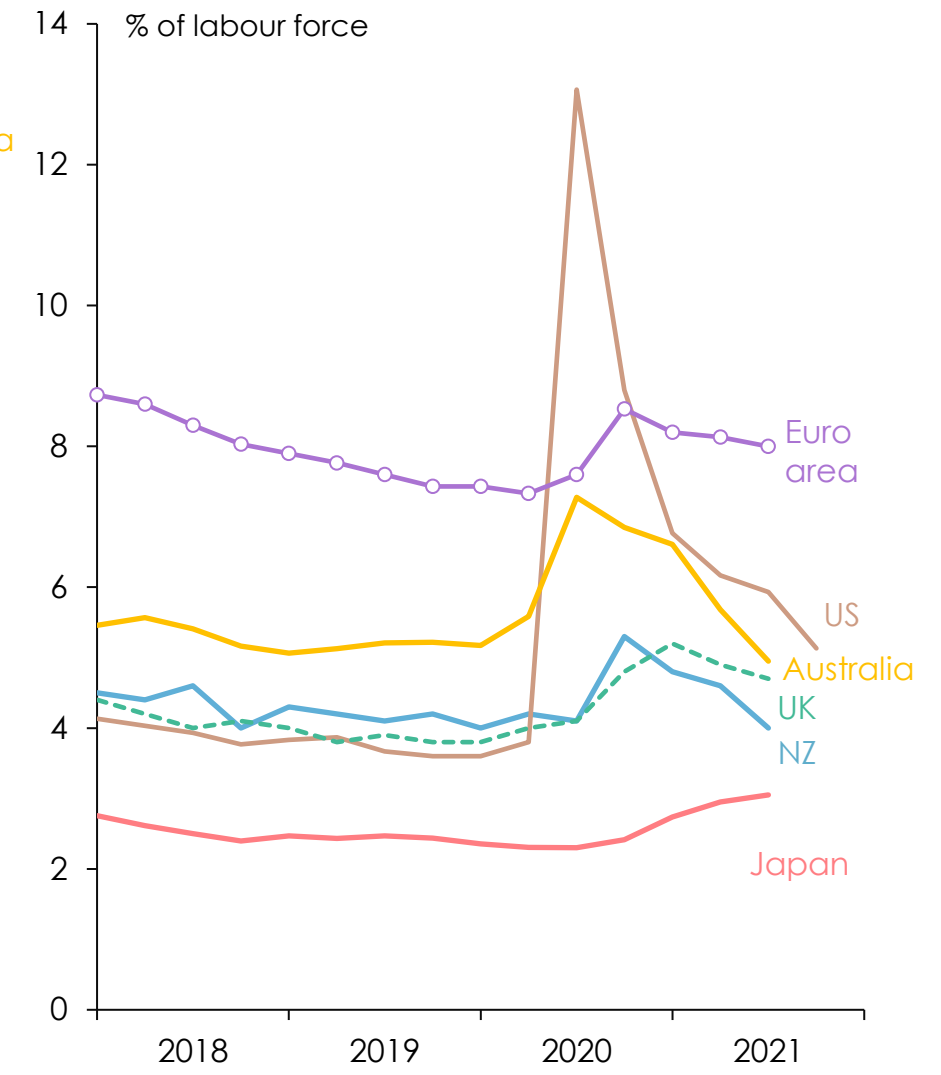
## Level of real GDP



## Employment



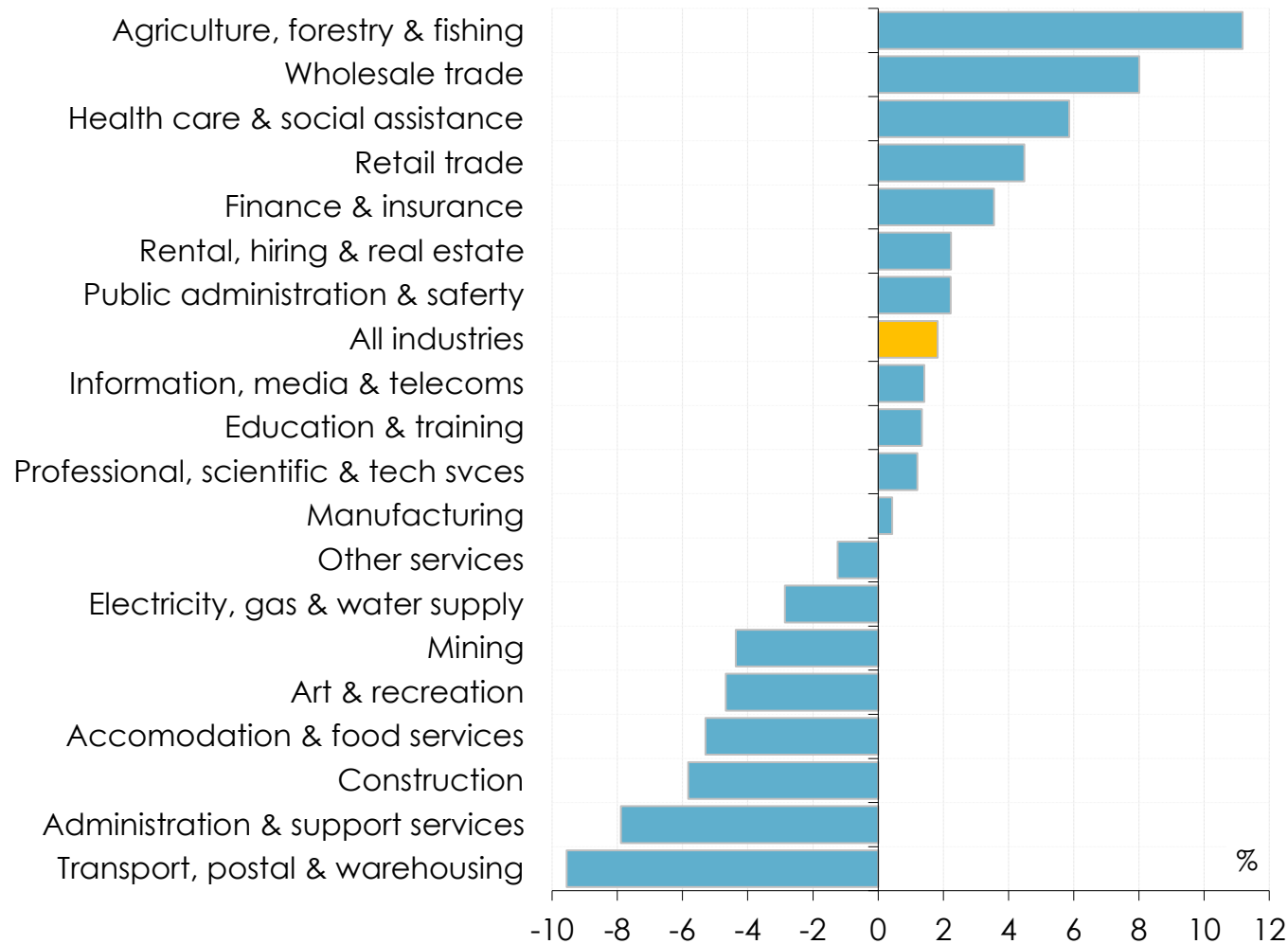
## Unemployment



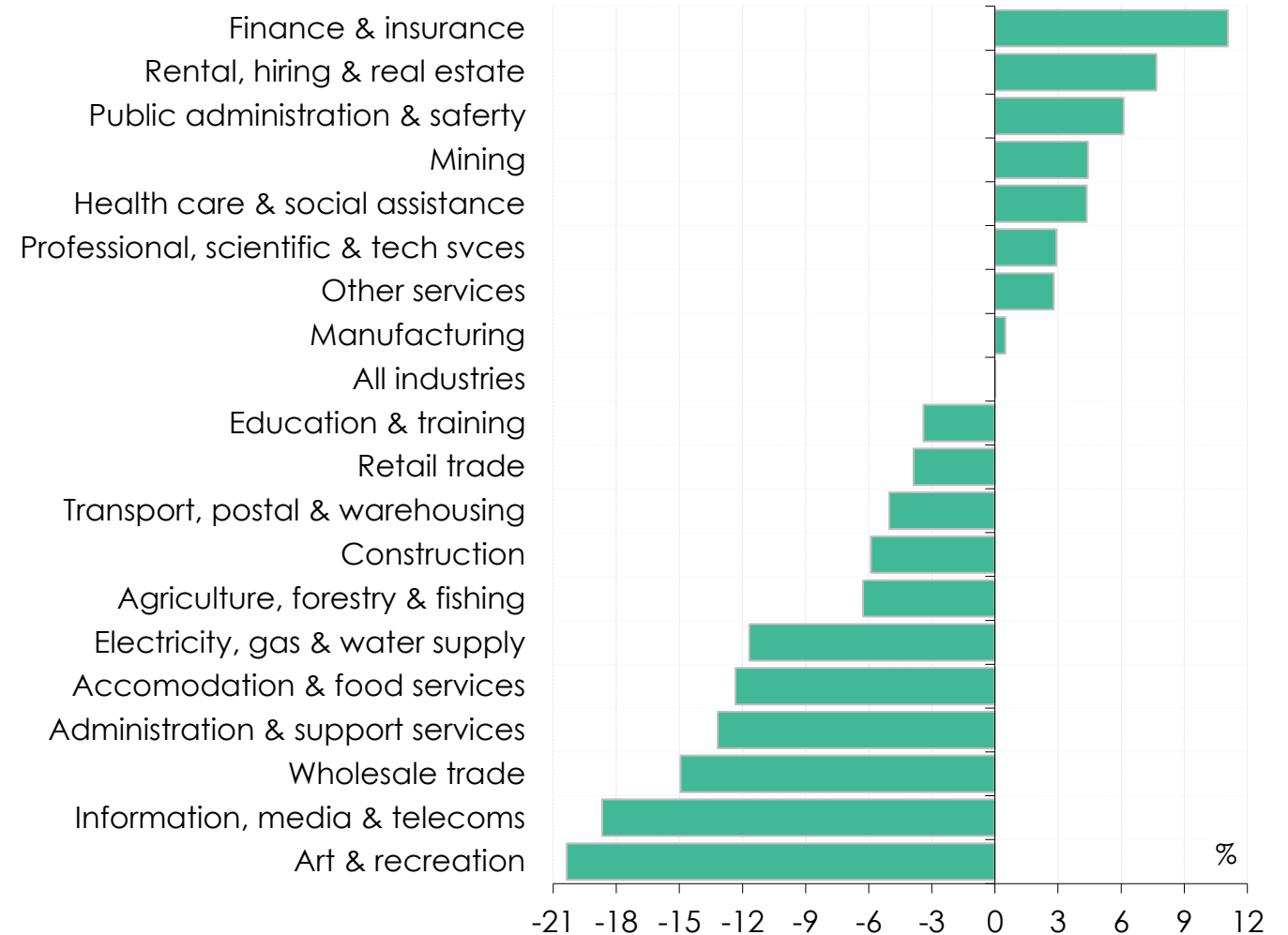
Sources: [ABS](#) ; [Statistics NZ](#) ; US [Bureau of Economic Analysis](#) and [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#); Japan [Cabinet Office](#) and [Statistics Bureau of Japan](#); [Eurostat](#); and UK [Office for National Statistics](#); Corinna.

# 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



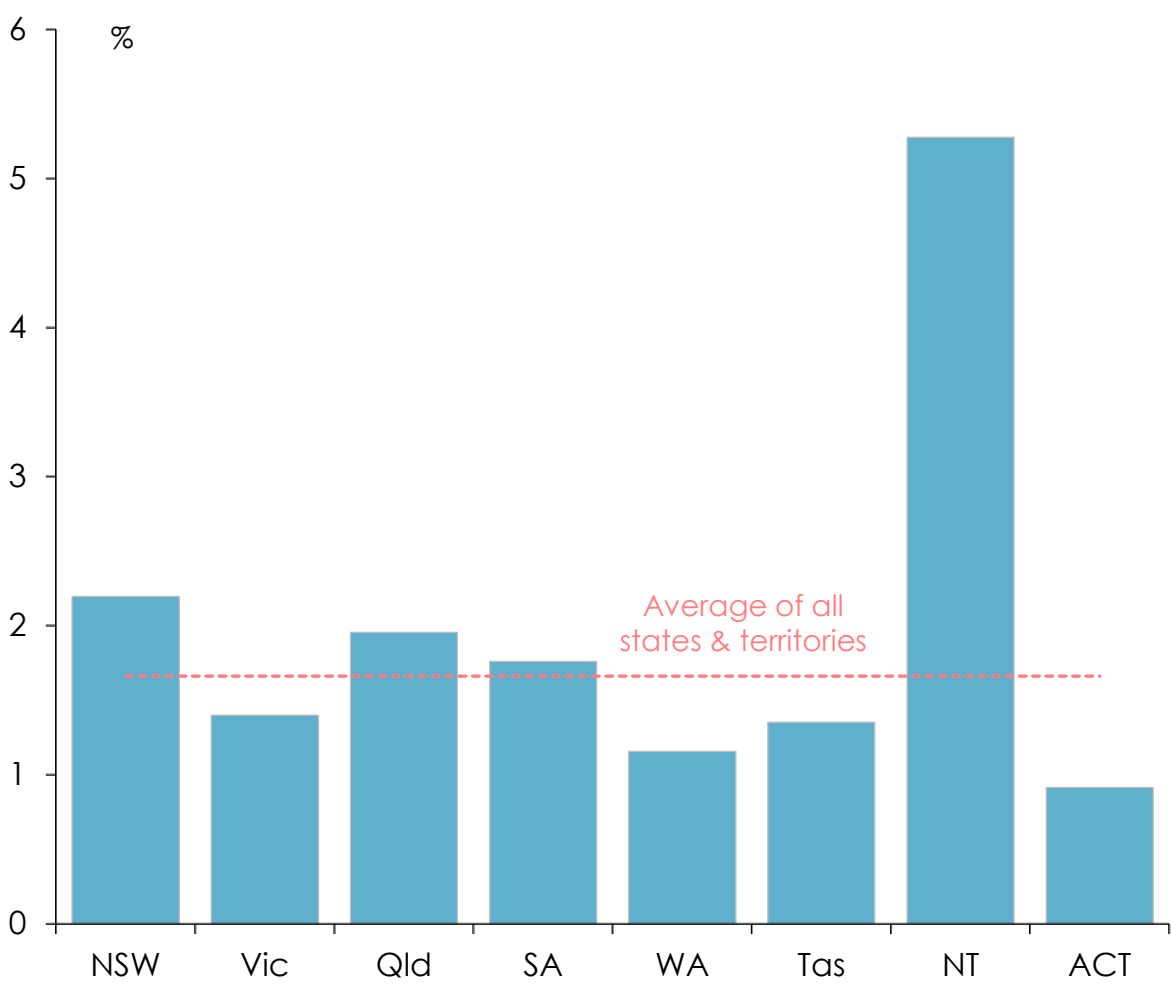
Q3 2021 employment by industry – change from pre-pandemic peak



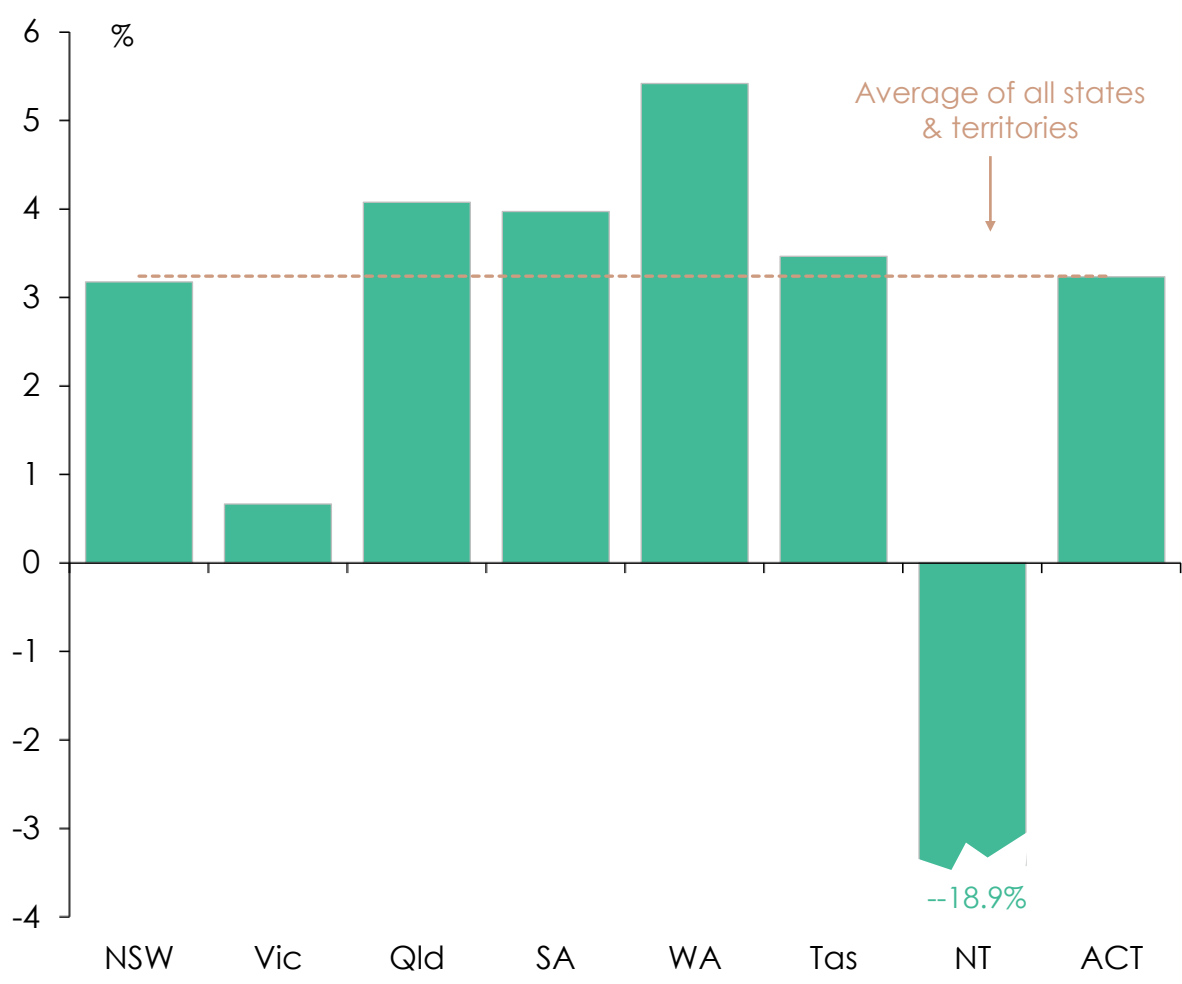
Sources: ABS, [Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product](#), June quarter 2021; and [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed](#), August 2021.

# 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



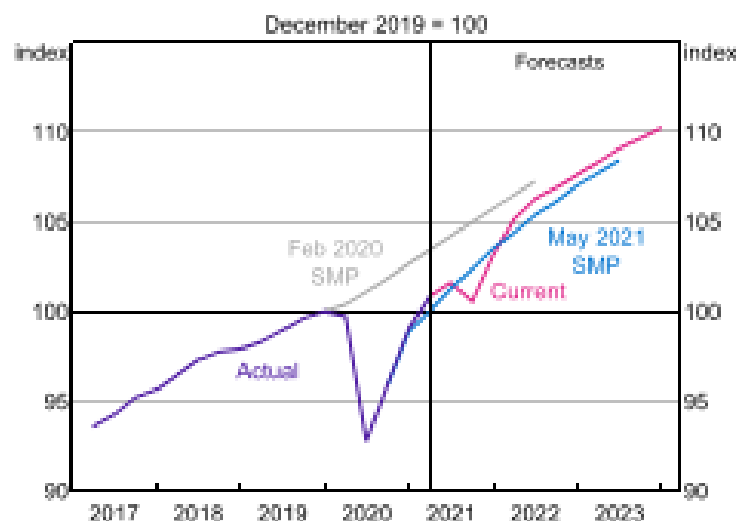
Shortfall between June quarter 2020 state final demand and pre-recession peak



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, 1<sup>st</sup> 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

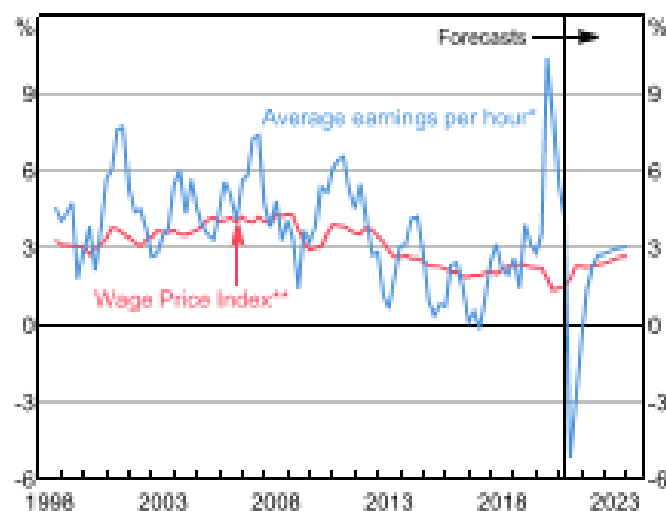
## GDP



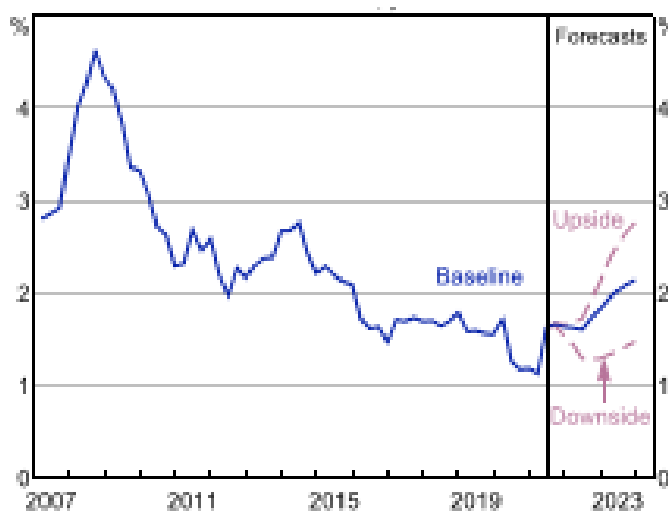
## Unemployment



## Wages



## 'Underlying' inflation

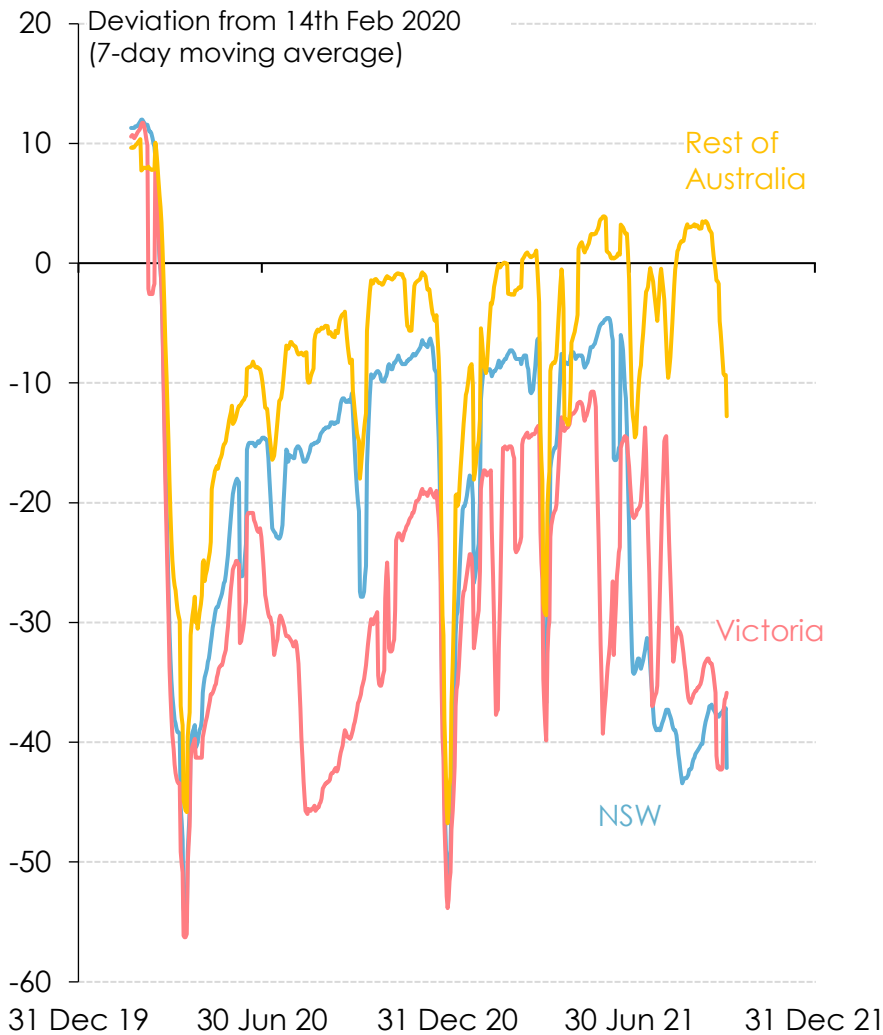


- ❑ Economic growth and in particular employment growth have continued to outpace the RBA's forecasts – but wage and price inflation haven't
- ❑ In its latest [Statement on Monetary Policy](#) published four weeks ago, the RBA acknowledged that current lockdowns would temporarily derail the recovery, 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

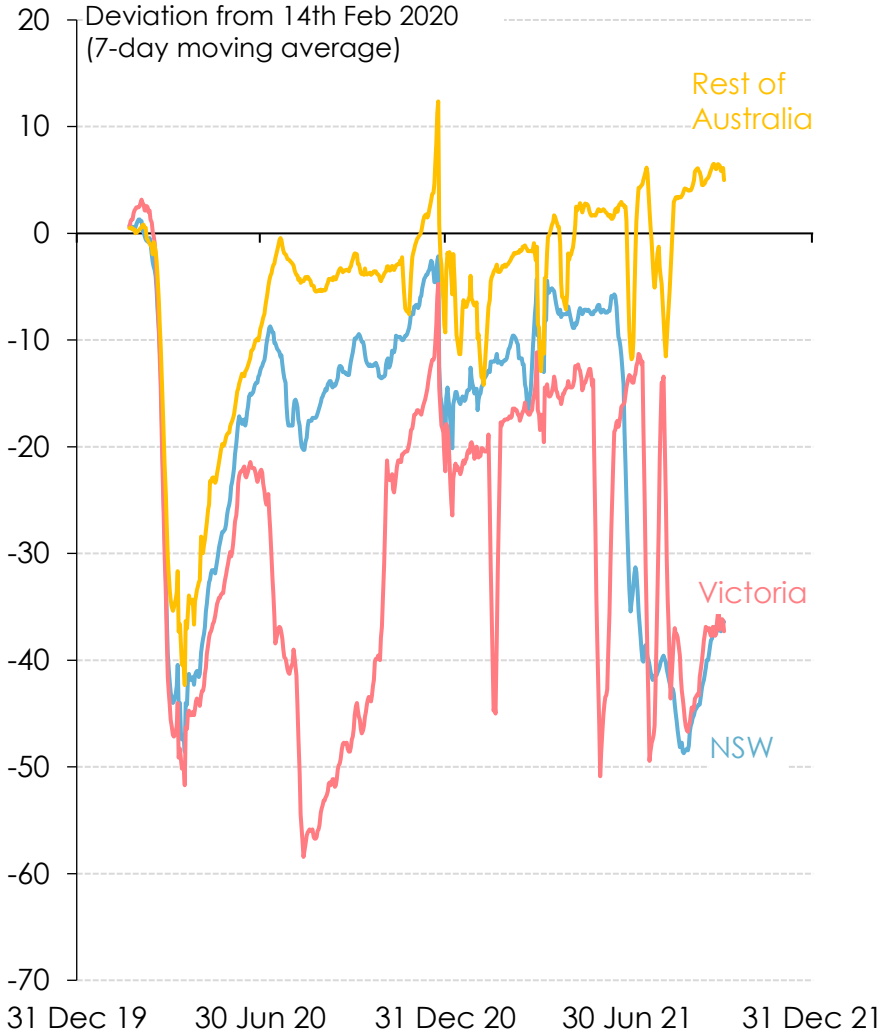
# 'Mobility indicators' illustrate the impact of lockdowns in NSW and Victoria on economic activity in those states – but also the recent first easings

## Google mobility indicators

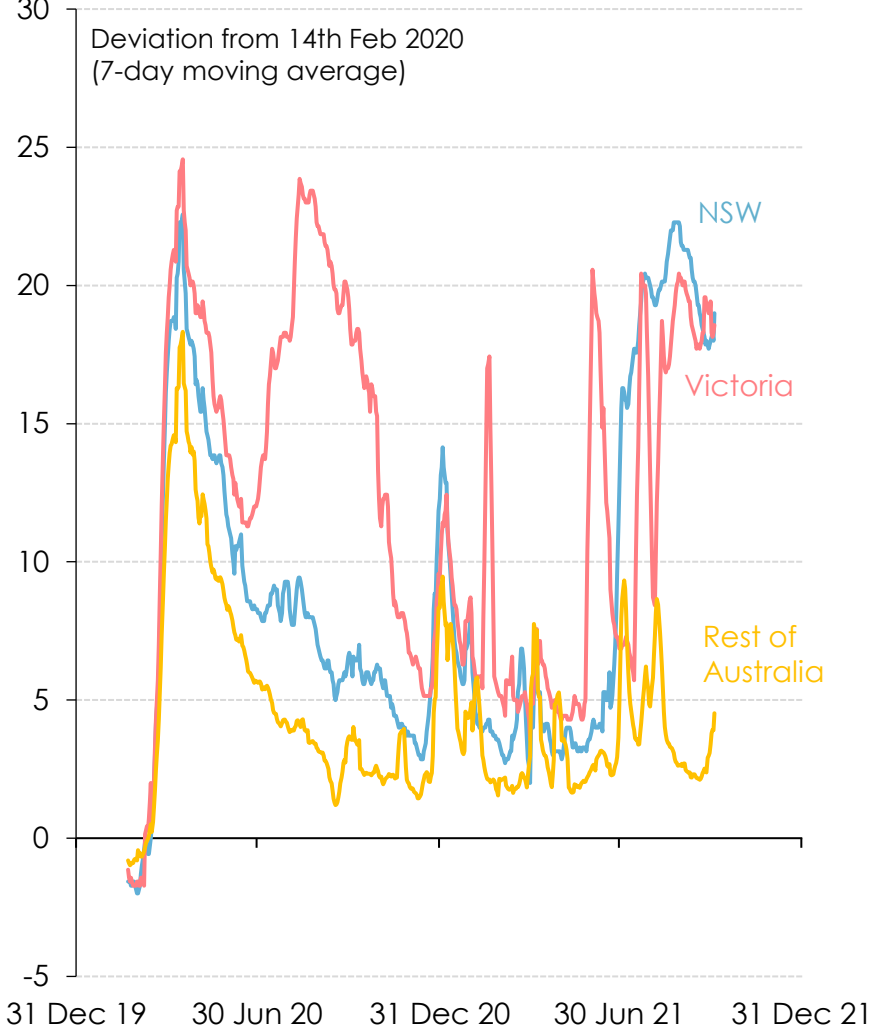
### Workplaces



### Retail and recreation



### Residences

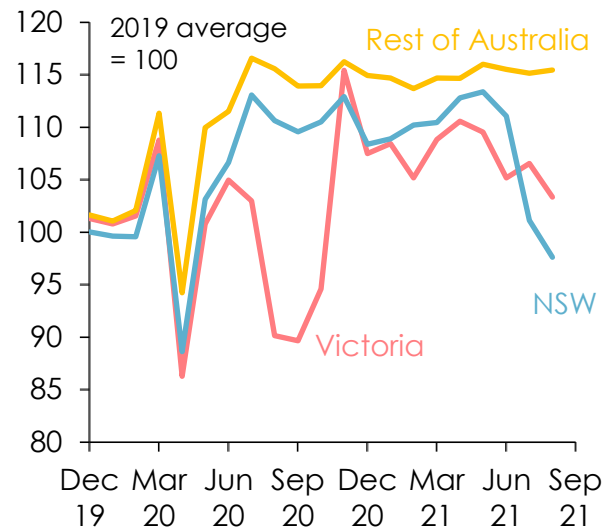


Note: data up to 4<sup>th</sup> October. Sources: [Google Community Mobility Reports](#); Corinna. [Return to "What's New"](#).

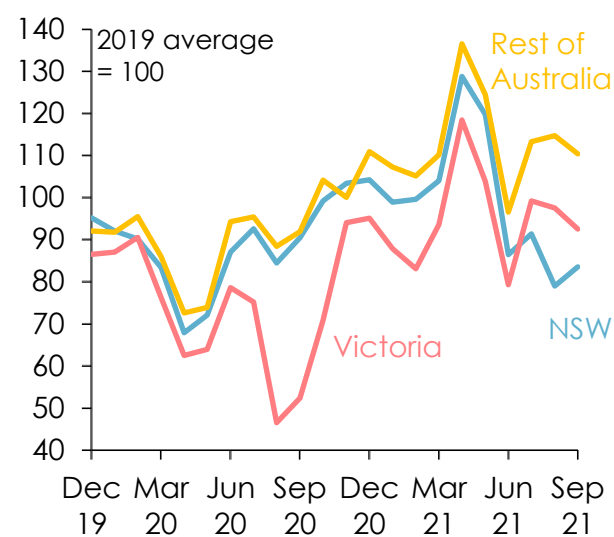


# The extended lockdowns in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra are increasing the risk of a second recession in two years

## 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

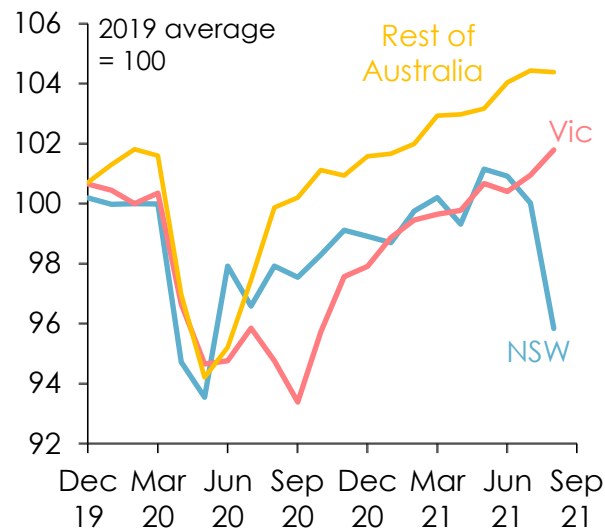
- ❑ Victoria's recurring lockdowns are likely to have a similar weekly cost to that in 'Greater Sydney'

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

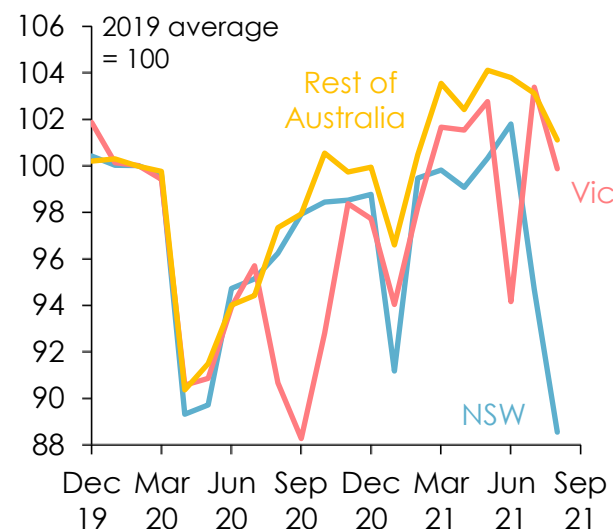
- ❑ Australia's GDP is about \$2,100 billion a year (\$525bn a quarter, \$40 billion a week)

- 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 3% 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



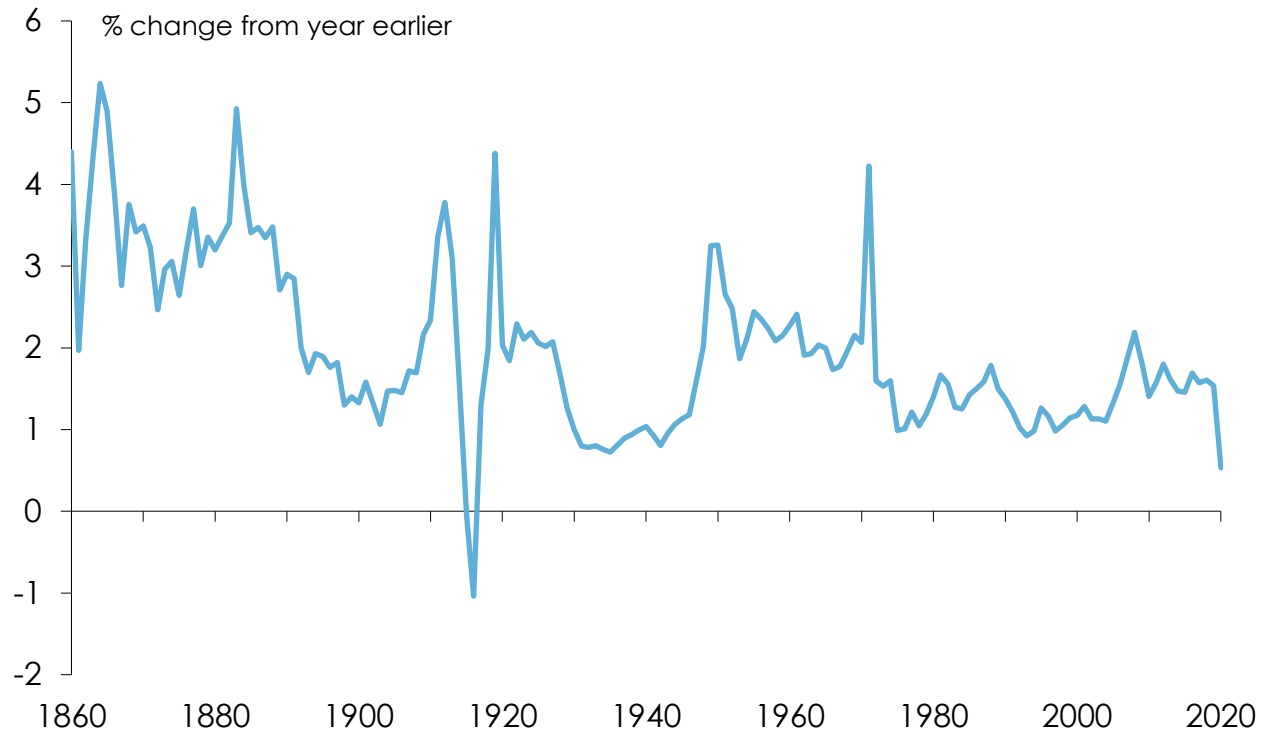


# Australia's border measures have been stricter than almost any other country (and certainly any democracy)

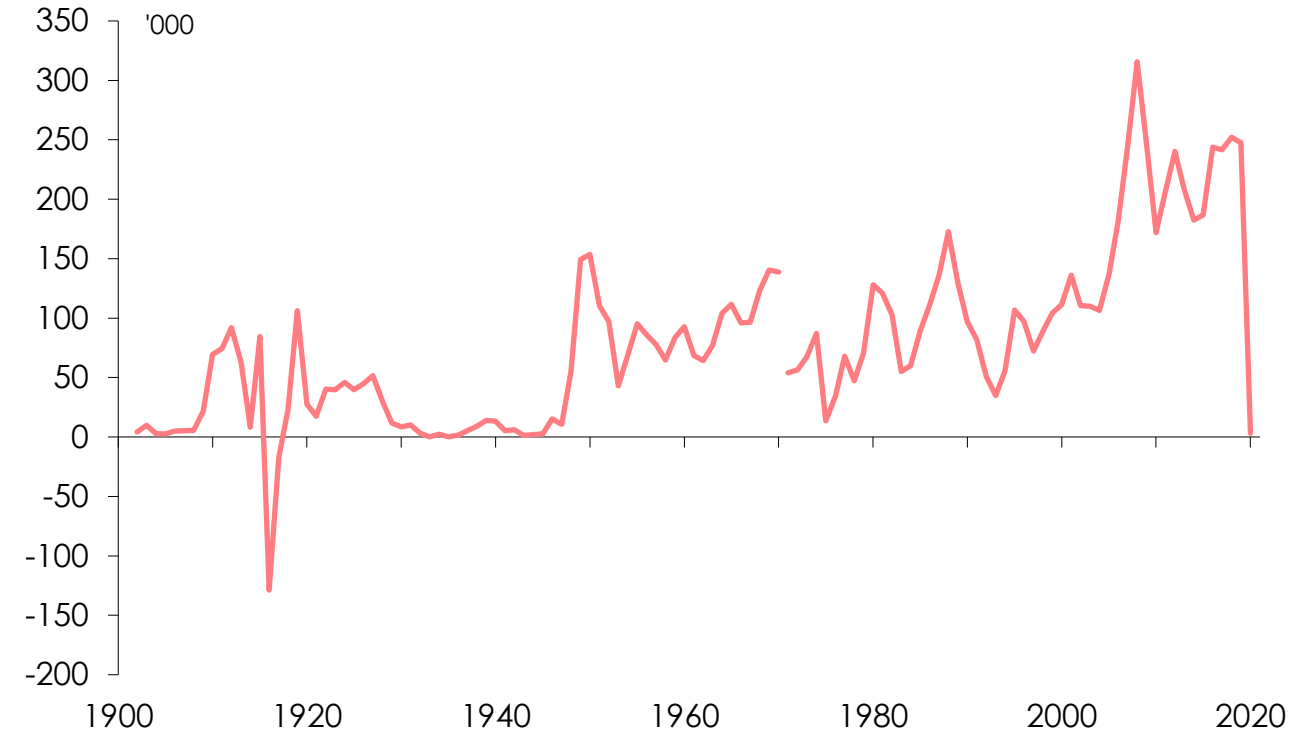
- ❑ Article 12 of the United Nations [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) (which Australia signed in 1972, and which it ratified in 1980) says
  - “everyone shall be free to leave any country, including his [sic] own” and “no-one shall be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter 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

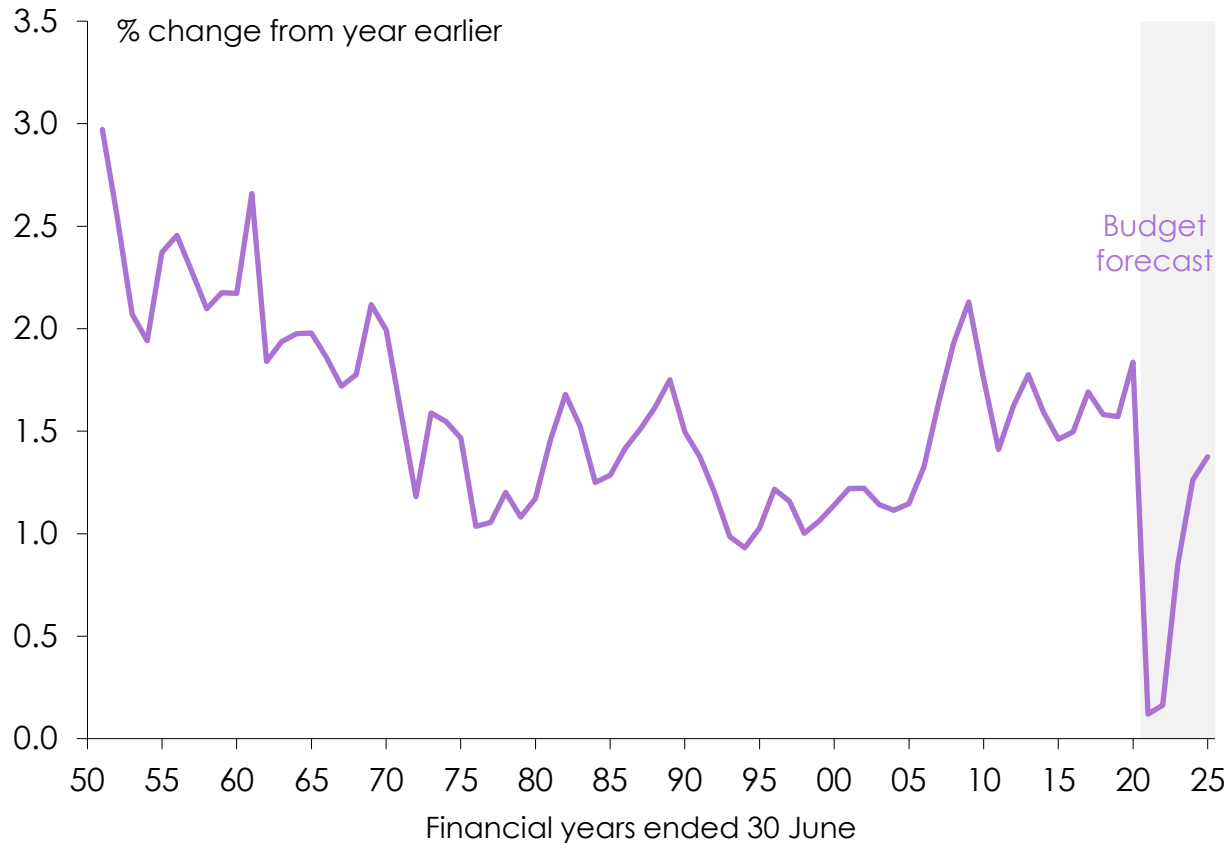


- ❑ Only 76K immigrants came to Australia in the last nine months of 2020, while 151K people departed permanently – implying a net outflow of almost 68,000 people
- ❑ As a result, Australia's population growth rate fell to just 0.5% over the year to Q4 2020, the slowest since 1916
- ❑ Last month's halving 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)

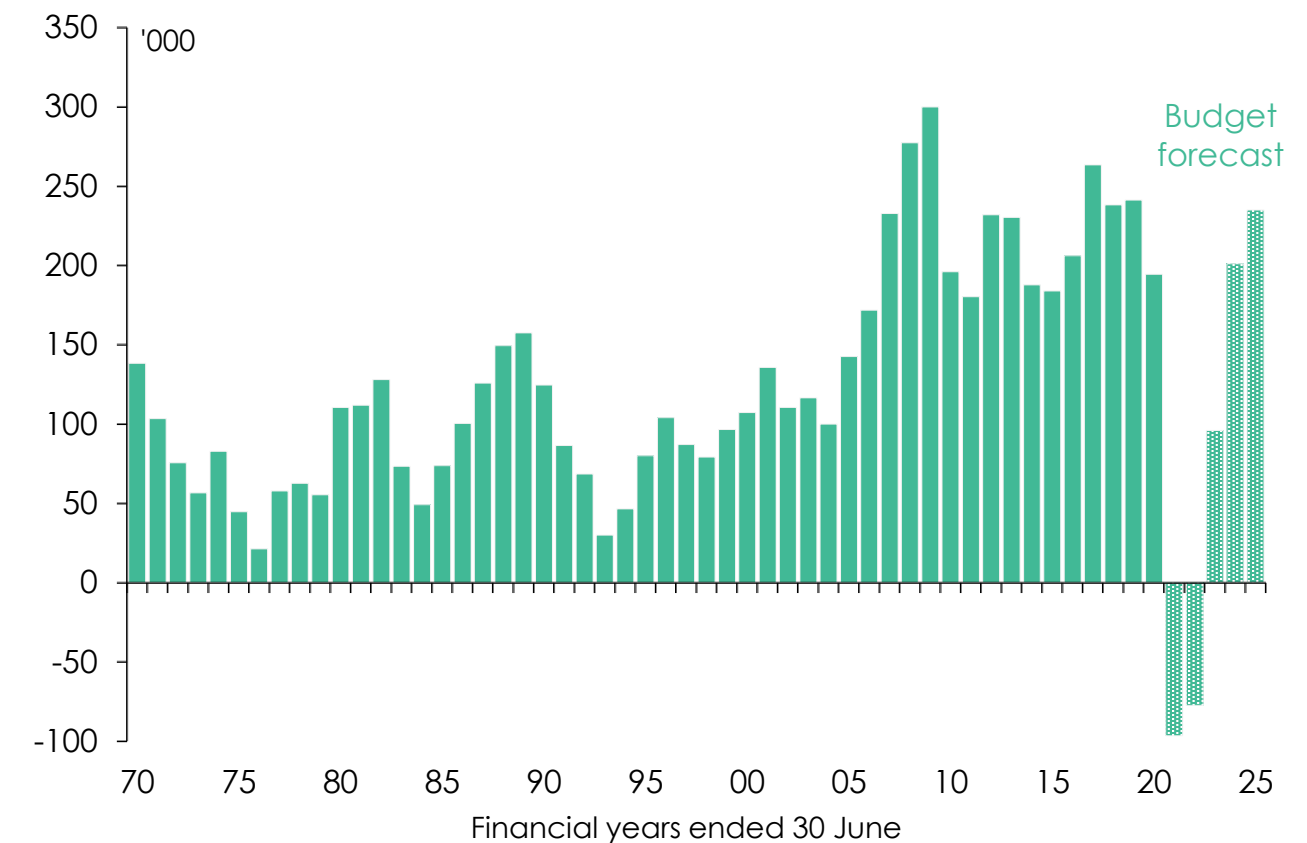
Note: The net migration data has a series break at 1971 due to definitional changes. Sources: ABS, [National, state and territory population](#), December 2020; [Historical Population](#), 2016; [Migration, Australia](#), 2019-20; [Demography Bulletin](#), 1923, 1940, 1950, 1960 and 1971; [Population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

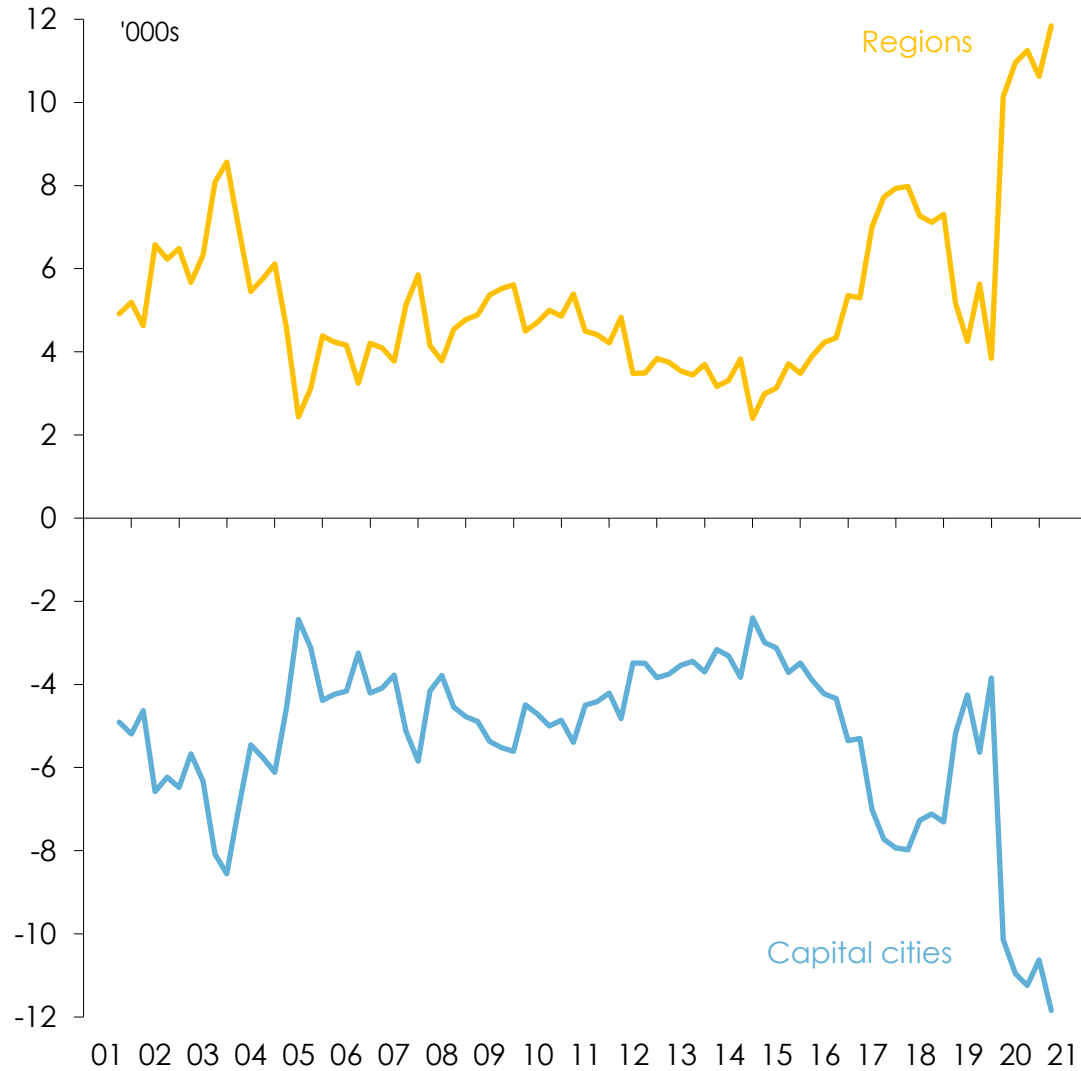


**Opinion polls** have consistently indicated very high levels of popular support for keeping Australia's international borders closed – which (more than anything else) likely explains why the Government's position has changed from last year's "we can't keep Australia under the doona" to this year's "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 (21<sup>st</sup> May)

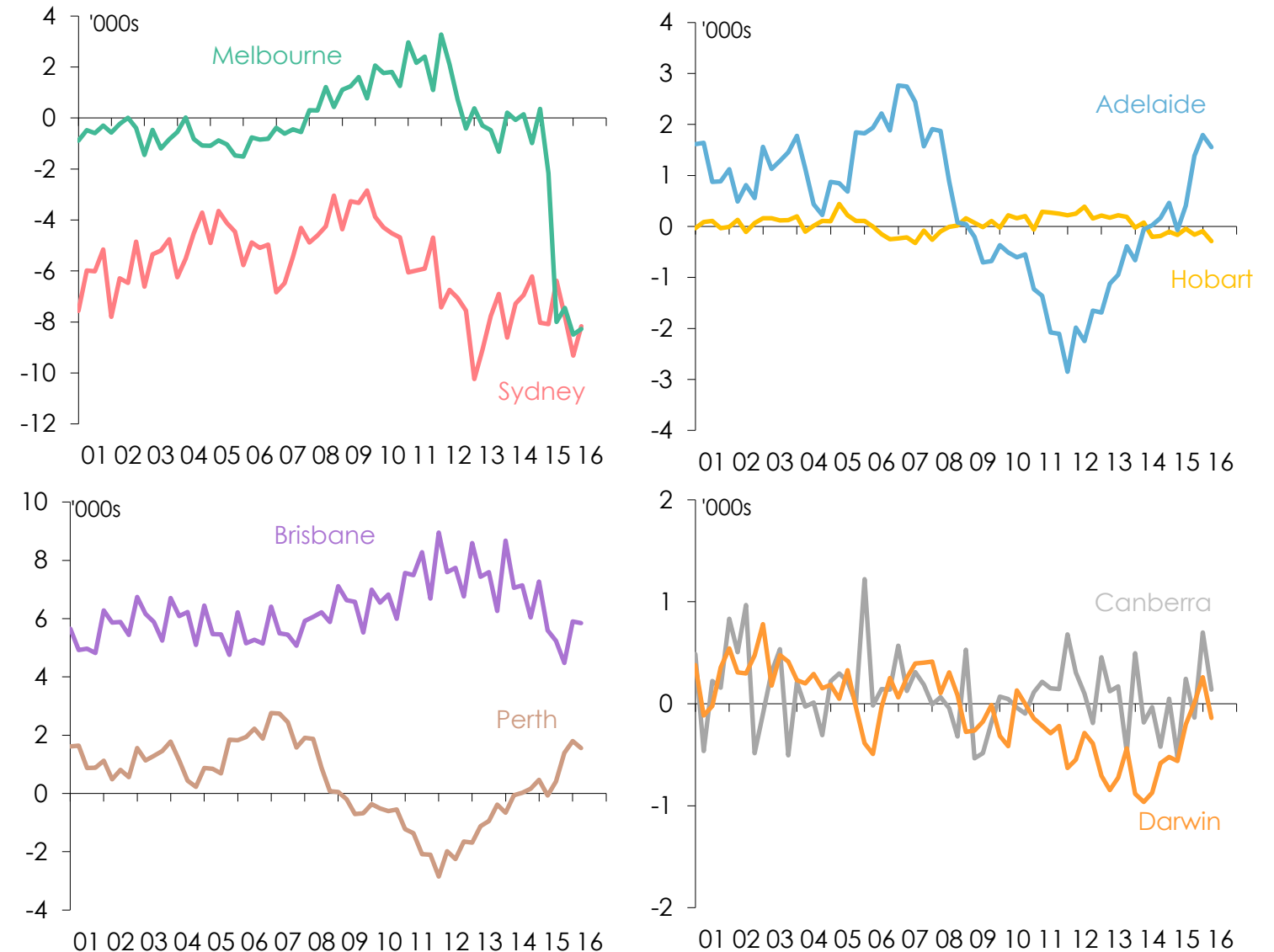
Sources: ABS, [National, state and territory population](#); Australian Government, 2021-22 [Budget Paper No. 1, Statement No. 2](#) and [Budget Paper No. 3, Appendix A, Return to "What's New"](#).

# 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"](#).

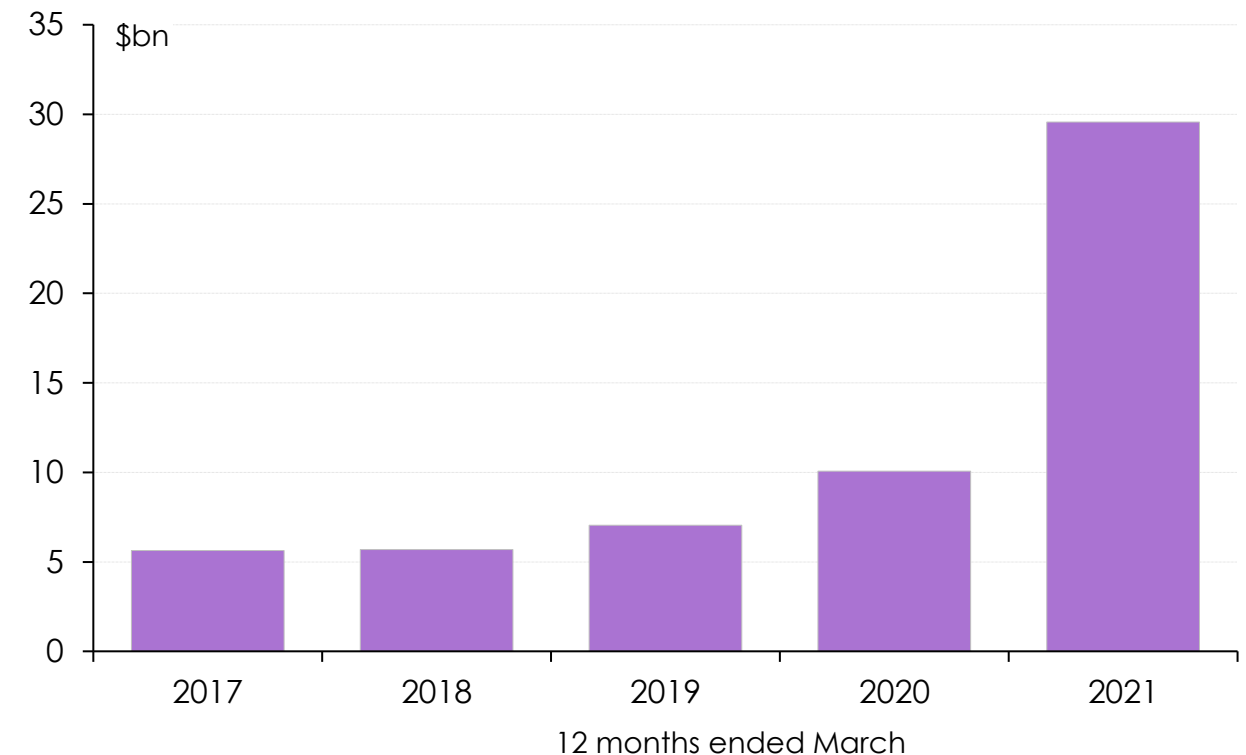
# The *taboo* on Australians leaving the country more than offsets the loss of spending by foreign tourists and students

## 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.)

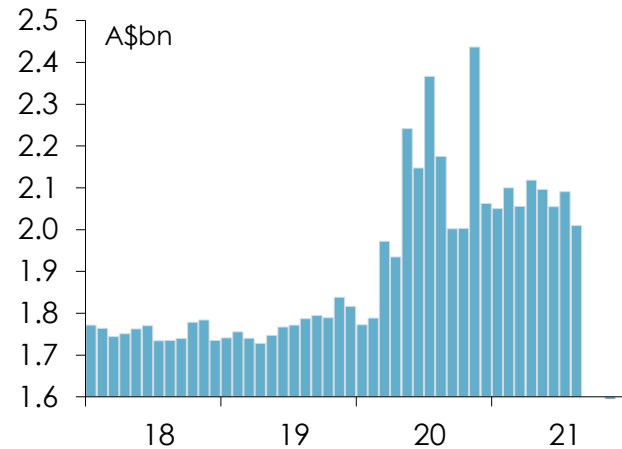
## Net travel transactions



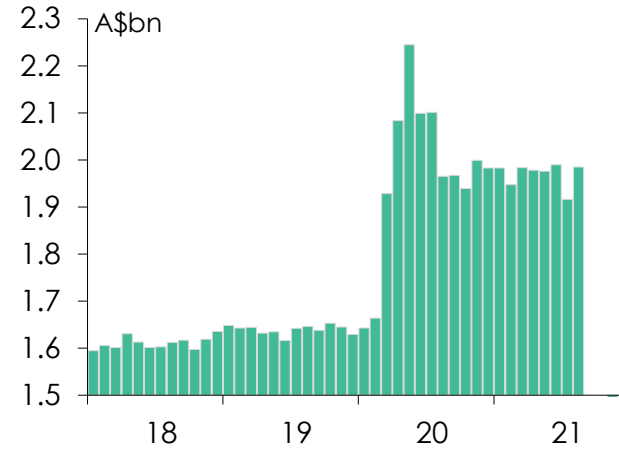
- ❑ Despite restrictions, foreigners still spent \$31bn in Australia in the 12 months to March 2021 (cf. an average of \$61bn per annum over the previous four years) implying a *net gain* to Australia during 12 months to March this year of almost \$22½bn by comparison with the 2016-19 average – equivalent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

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

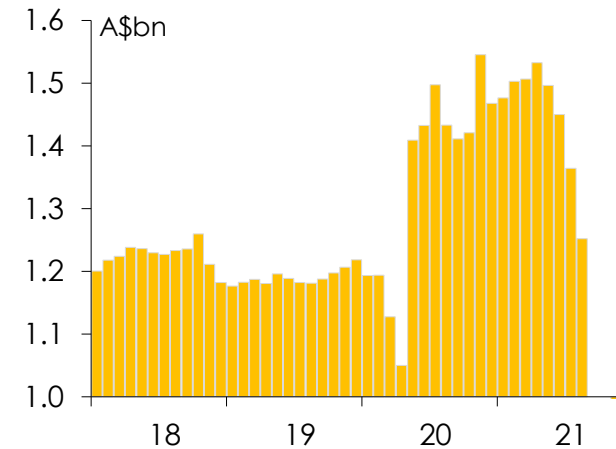
Electronic & electrical goods



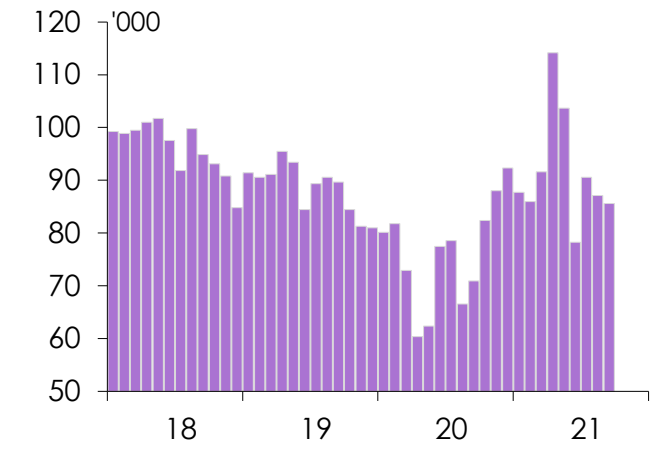
Hardware, building & garden supplies



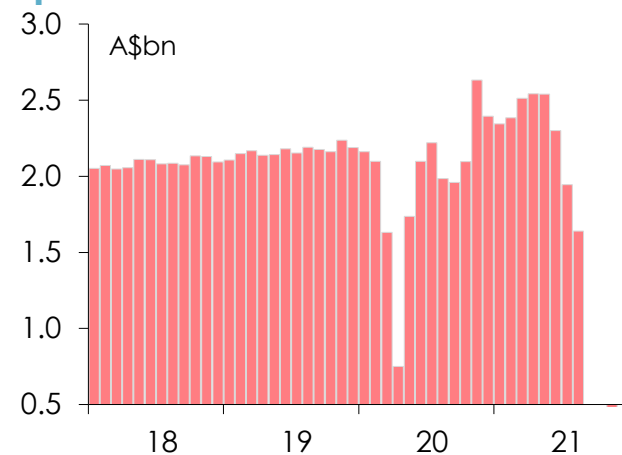
Floor coverings, furniture, housewares etc



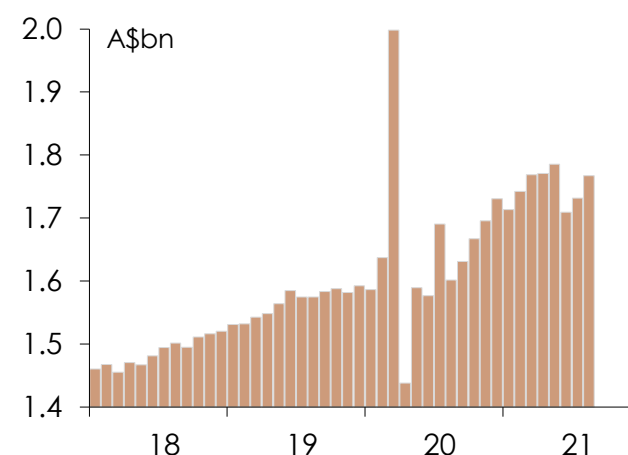
New motor vehicles



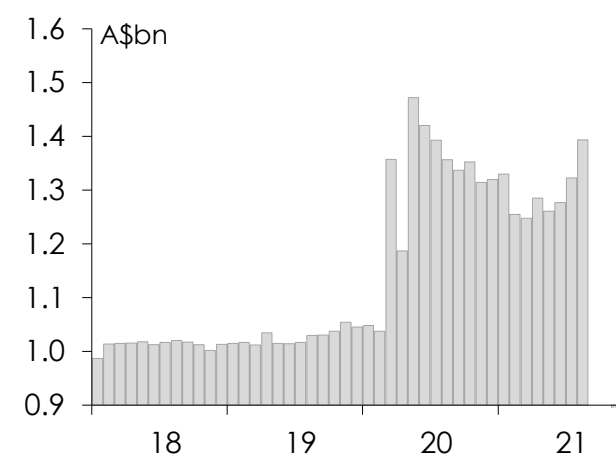
Clothing, footwear & personal accessories



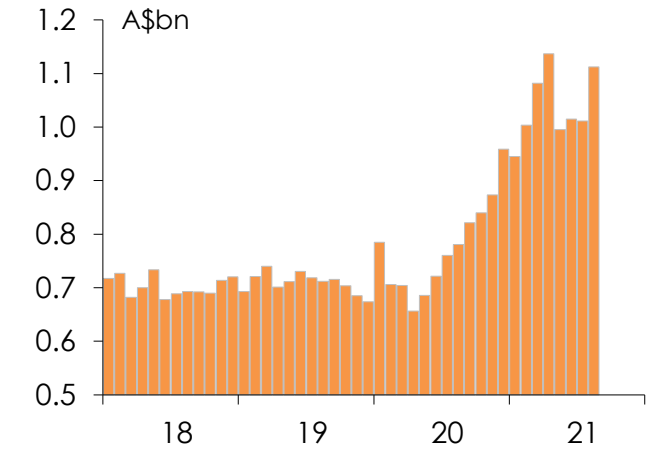
Pharmaceuticals, cosmetics & toiletries



Alcoholic beverages



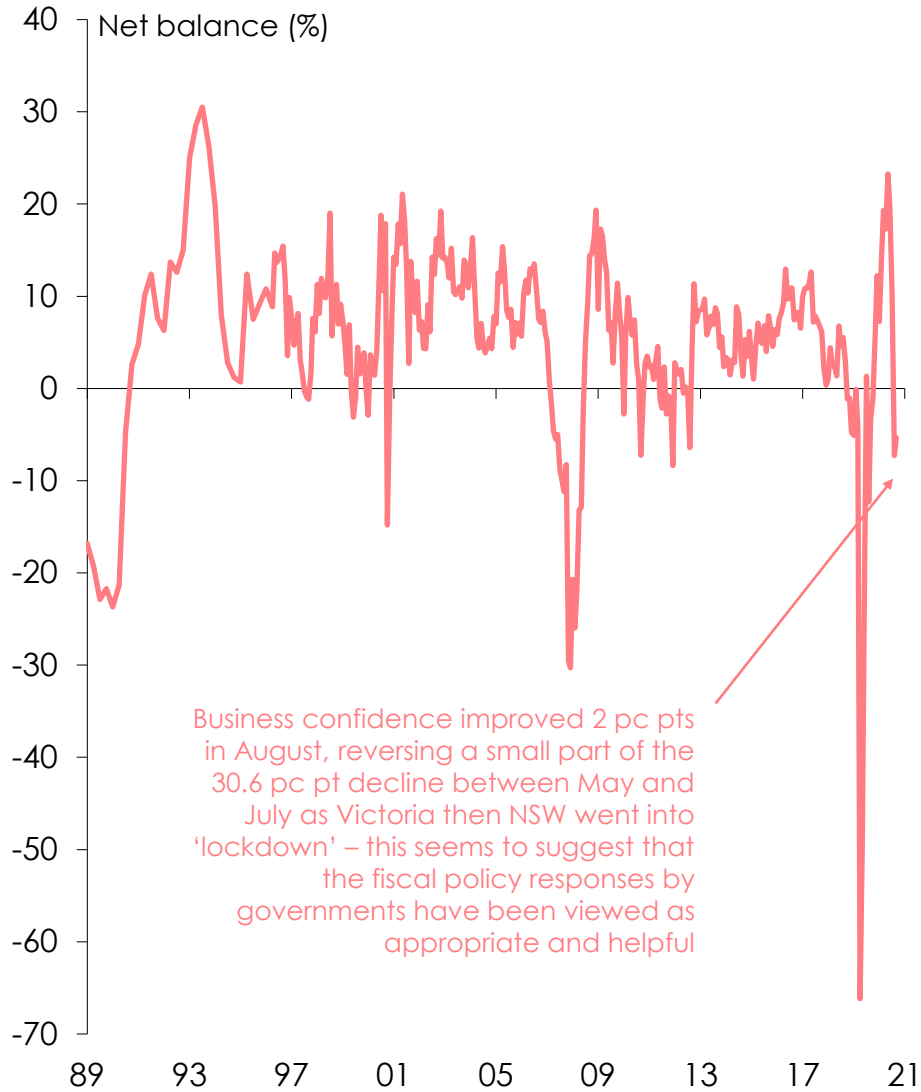
Renovations



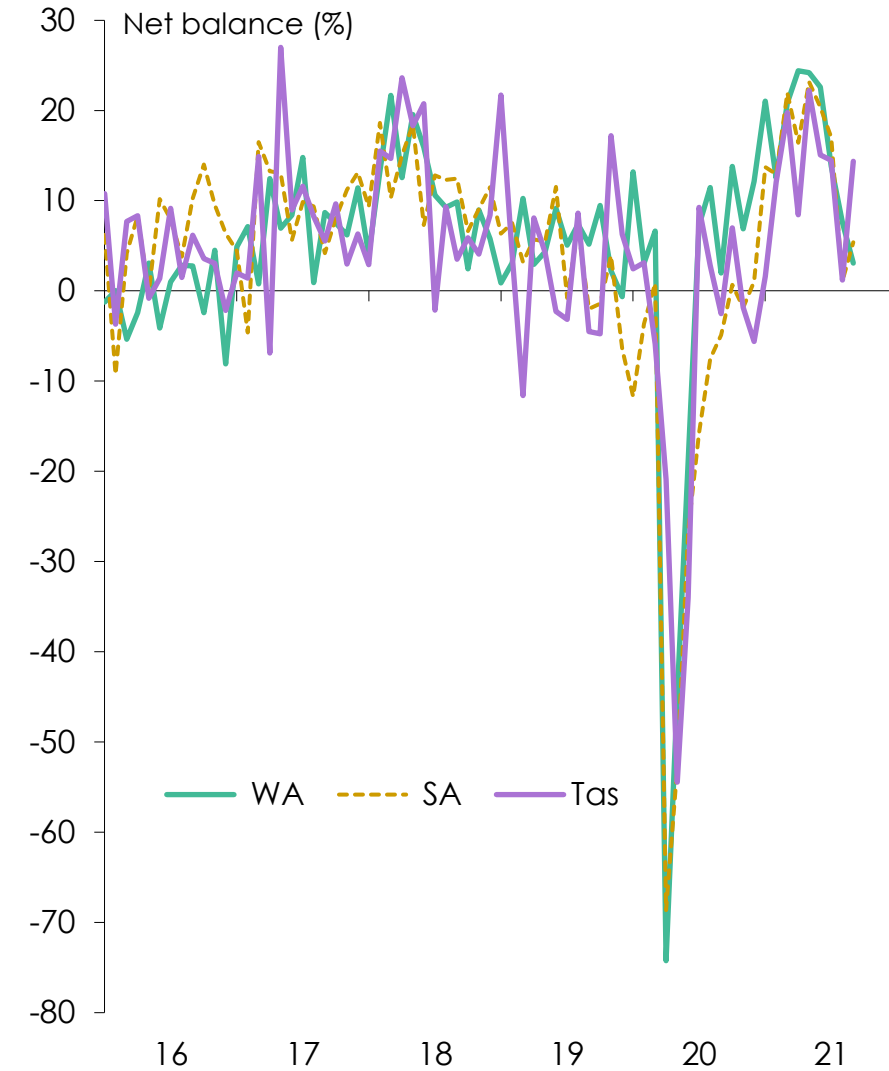
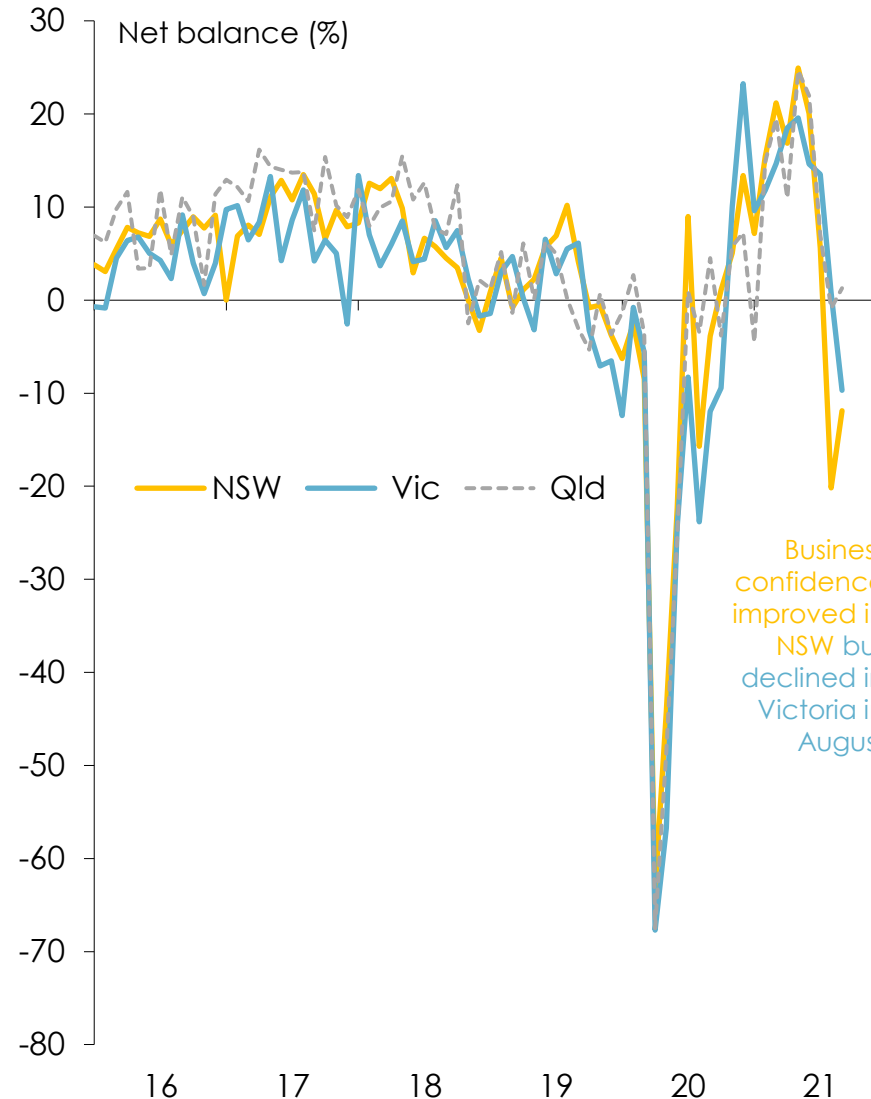
Note: First six charts (from left) are retail sales; new motor vehicles are numbers of vehicles sold; renovations are the value of alterations and additions to residential dwellings approved by local governments. Sources: ABS, [Retail Trade, Australia](#), August 2021 (September data will be released on 4<sup>th</sup> November); [Building Approvals, Australia](#), August 2021; Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries [VFACTS](#) (seasonal adjustment of Vfacts data by Corinna). [Return to "What's New"](#).

# Business confidence recovered slightly in August which probably means that government policy responses have been viewed as effective

## Business confidence



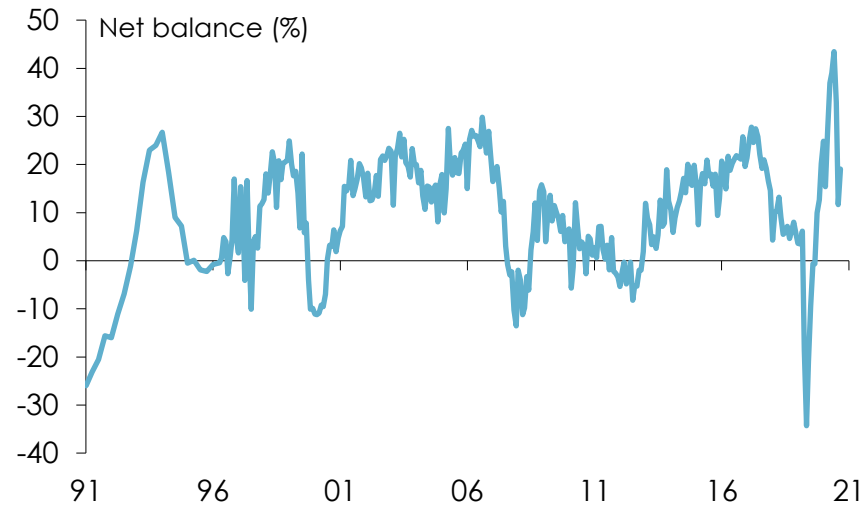
## Business confidence, states and territories



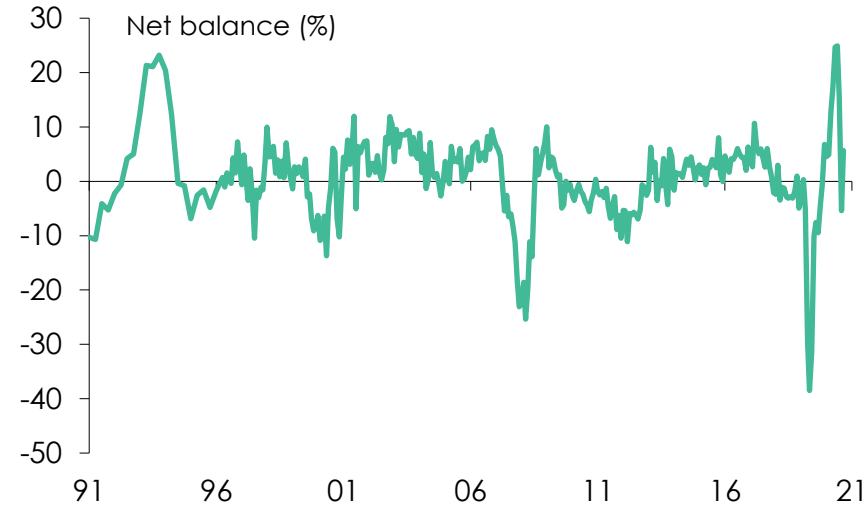


# Almost all of the components of 'business conditions' improved in August, except for hiring intentions: forward orders rebounded strongly

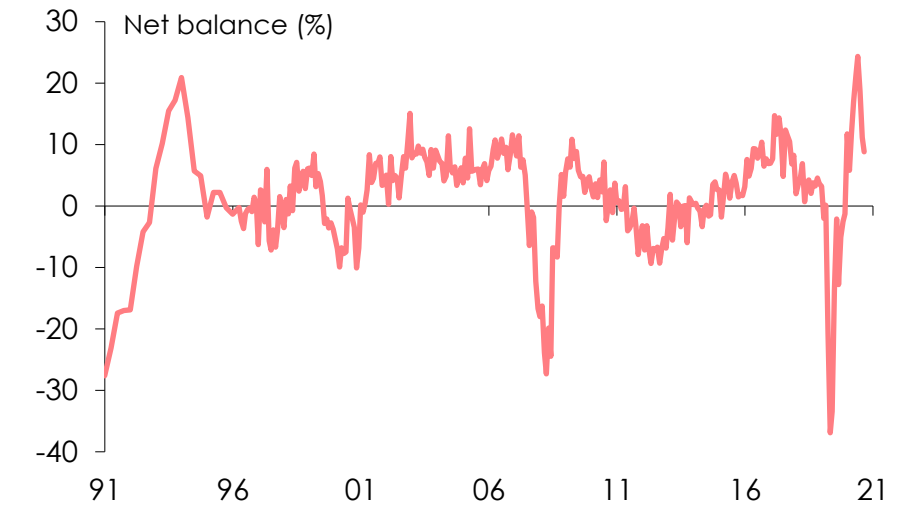
## Trading conditions



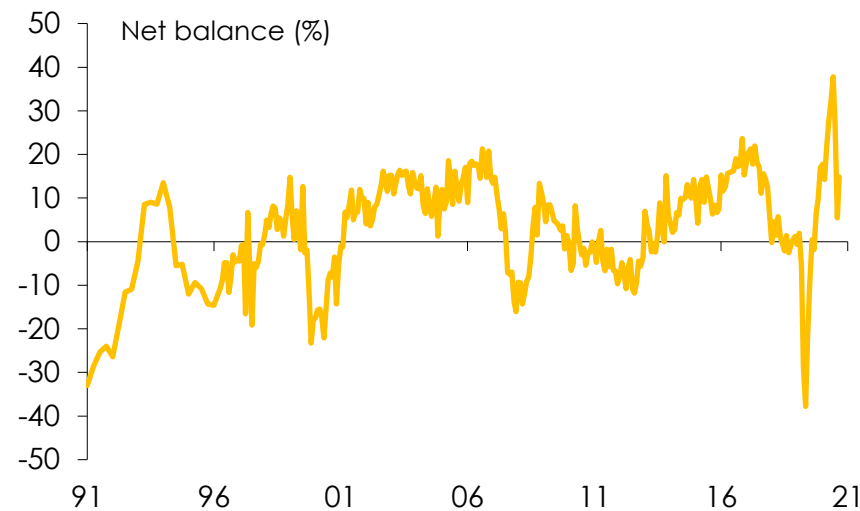
## Forward orders



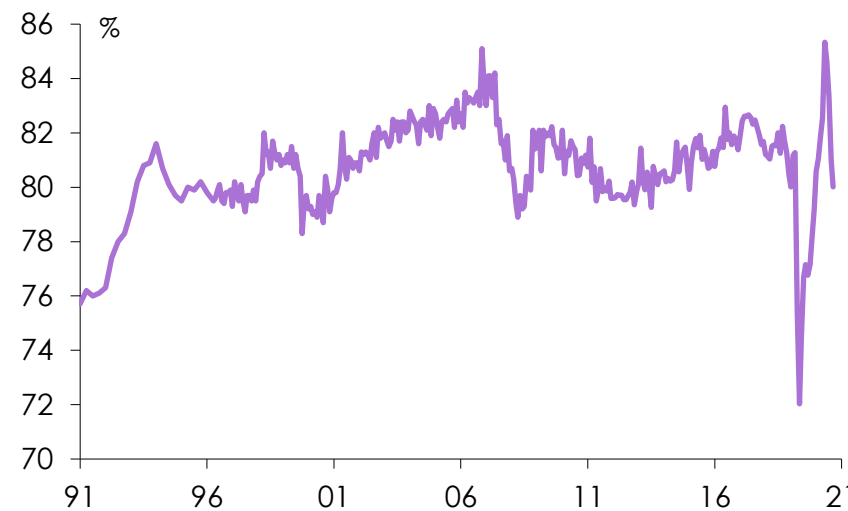
## Employee hiring intentions



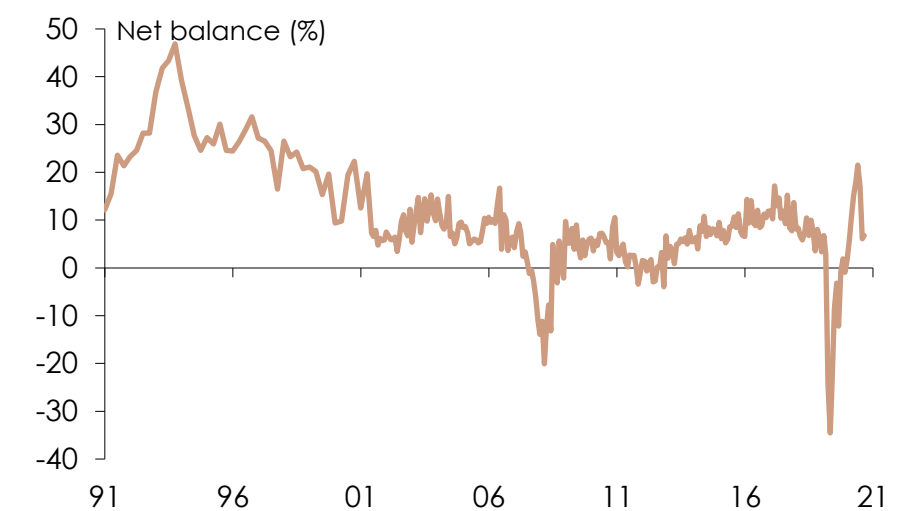
## Profitability



## Capacity utilization



## Capital expenditure intentions



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

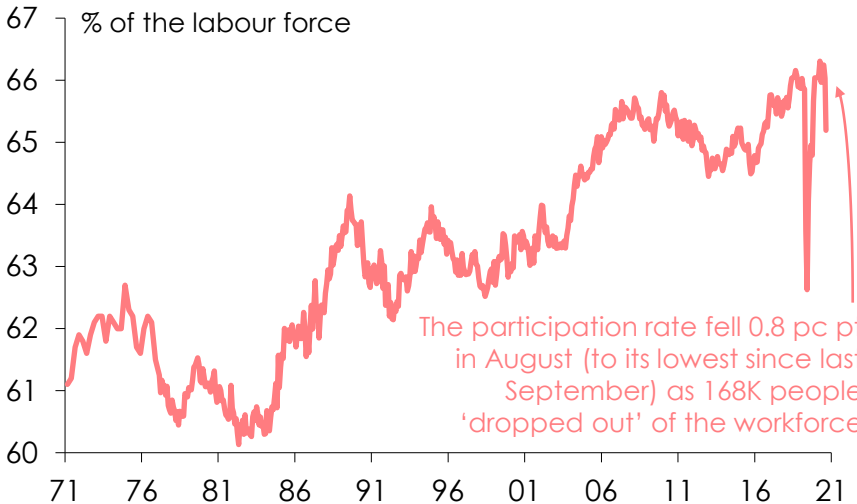
Source: National Australia Bank [Monthly Business Survey](#), August 2021; September survey results will be released on 12<sup>th</sup> October. [Return to "What's New"](#).

# Employment fell sharply in August, particularly in NSW, but most of those who lost jobs also left the workforce, so the unemployment rate fell again

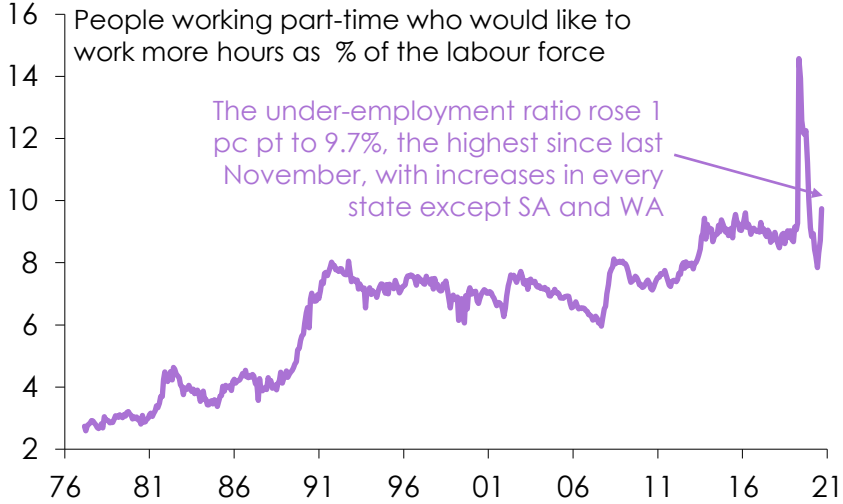
## Employment



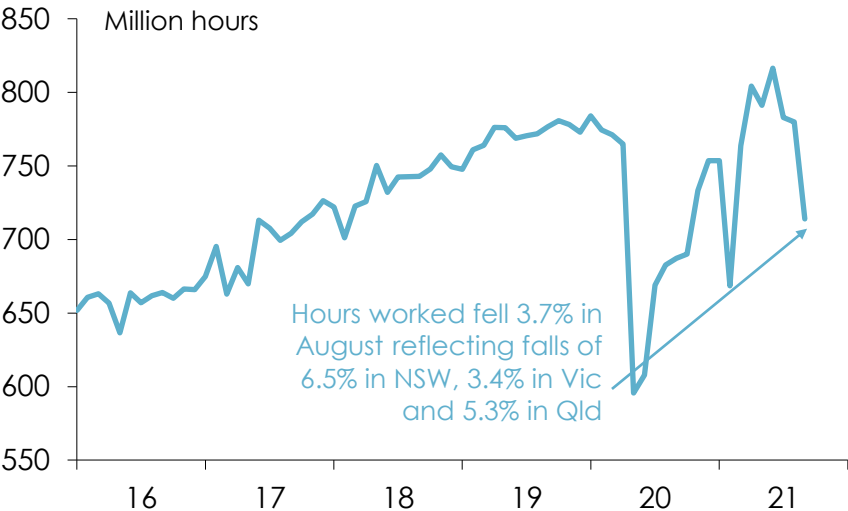
## Labour force participation rate



## Under-employment ratio



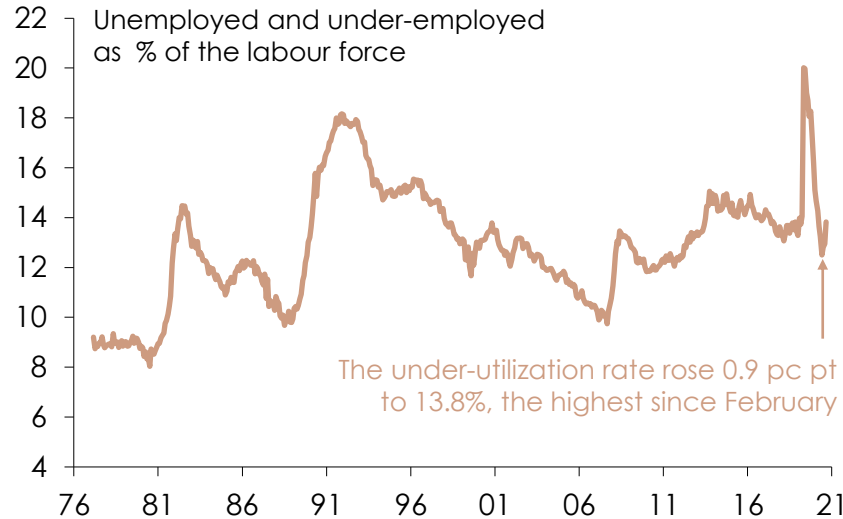
## Total hours worked



## Unemployment rate

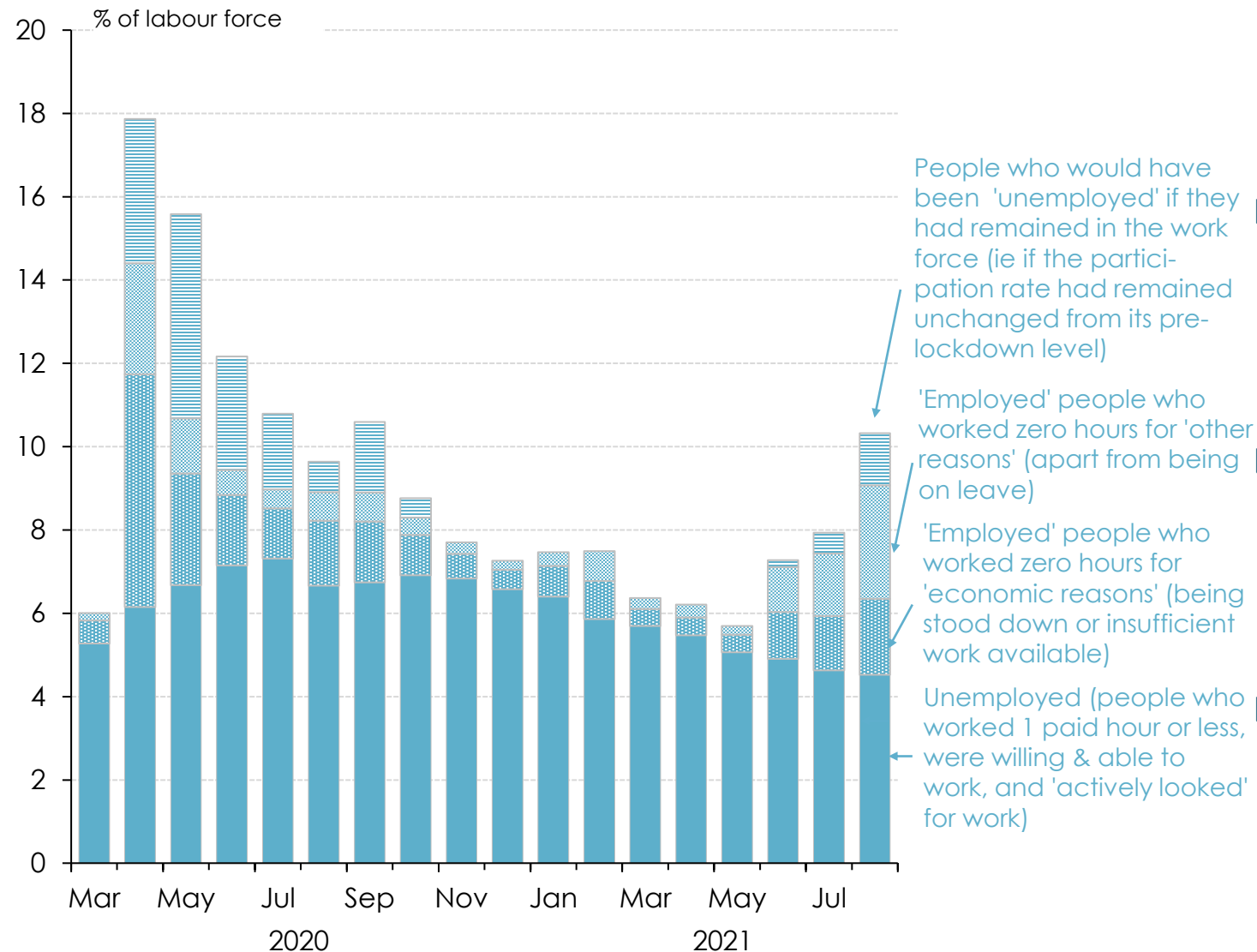


## 'Under-utilization' rate



# The 'effective' unemployment rate has risen from 5.7% in May to 10.3% in August, due to more 'working' zero hours or 'dropping out' of the workforce

## Alternative measures of unemployment

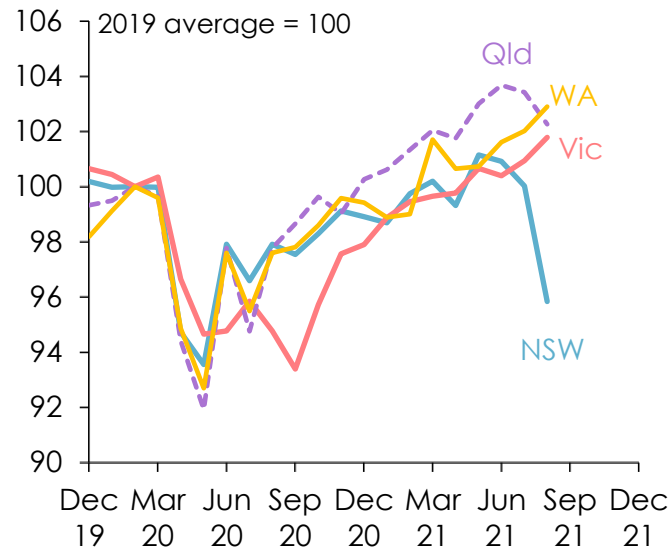


- ❑ The number of people counted as 'employed' but who worked zero hours for 'economic reasons' (no or insufficient work, or 'stood down') rose another 68K in August (to 249K), following increases of 97K in June and 25K in July,
- ❑ There was also a 164K increase (to 371K) in the number of people working zero hours for 'other reasons' (apart from being on annual or other forms of leave) in August, after increases of 121K in June and 57K in July
- ❑ Finally, there were 169K people in NSW in August (up from 67K in July) plus 2.5K in the ACT who (as proxied by falls in the participation rate from pre-lockdown levels) have 'dropped out' of the workforce rather than being classified as 'unemployed'
- ❑ If all of these people are instead regarded as having been 'unemployed', then the unemployment rate would have risen to 10.3% in August, up from 5.3% in May, 7.3% in June and 7.9% in July
  - although that's still well down from a peak of 17.8% in April last year

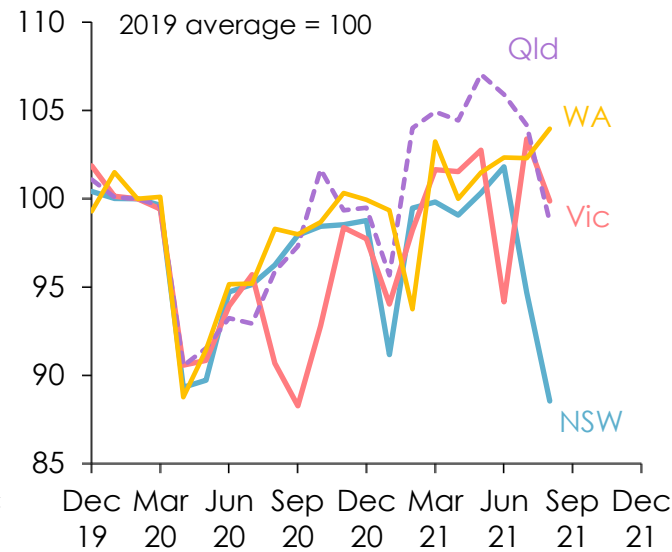
Source: ABS, [Labour Force, Australia](#), August 2021; Corinna. September data will be released on 14<sup>th</sup> October. [Return to "What's New"](#).

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

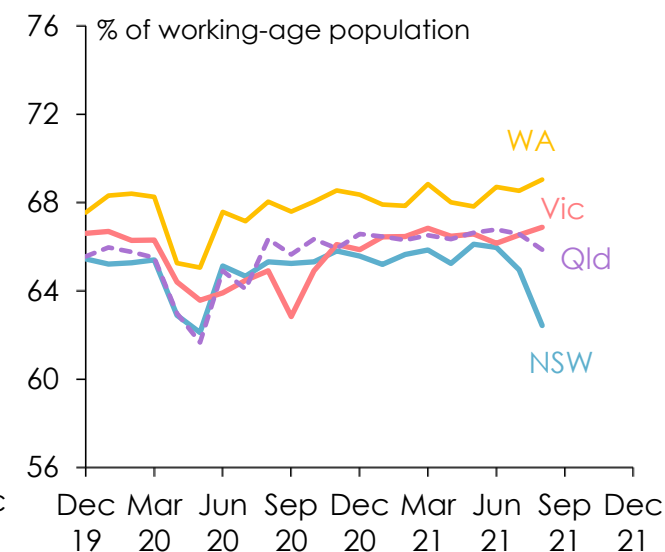
## Employment



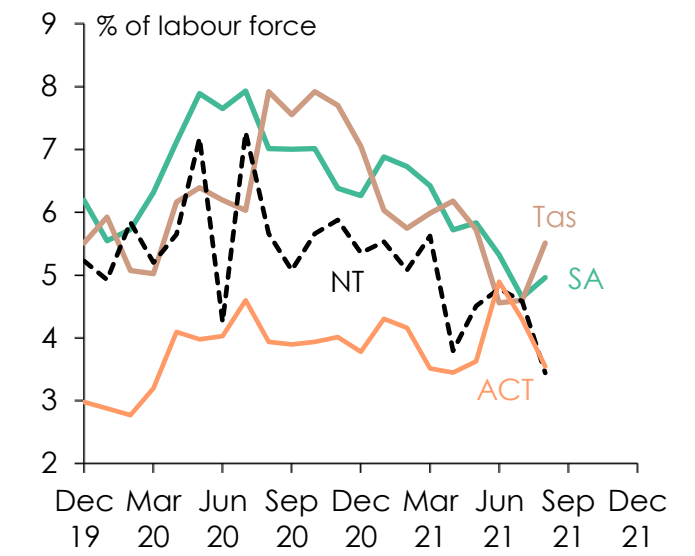
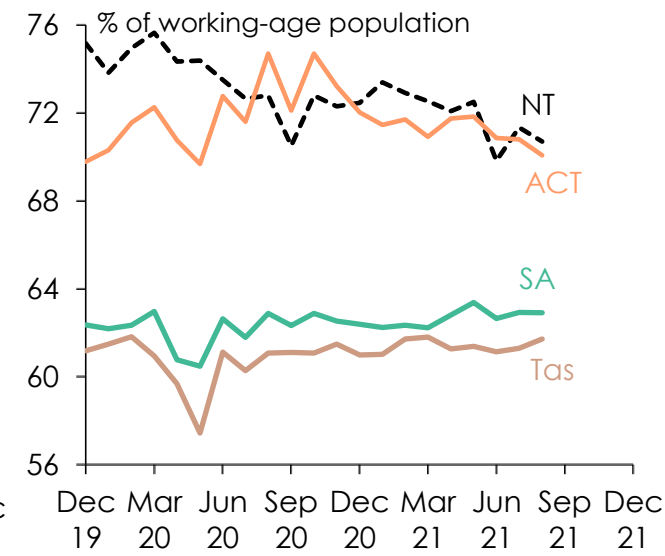
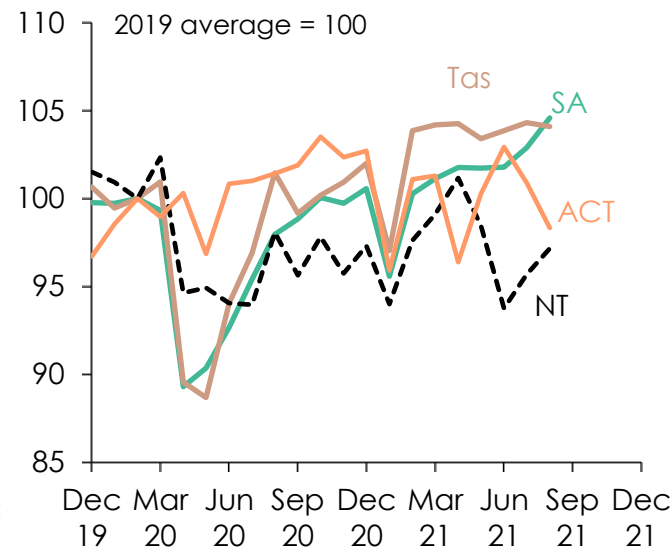
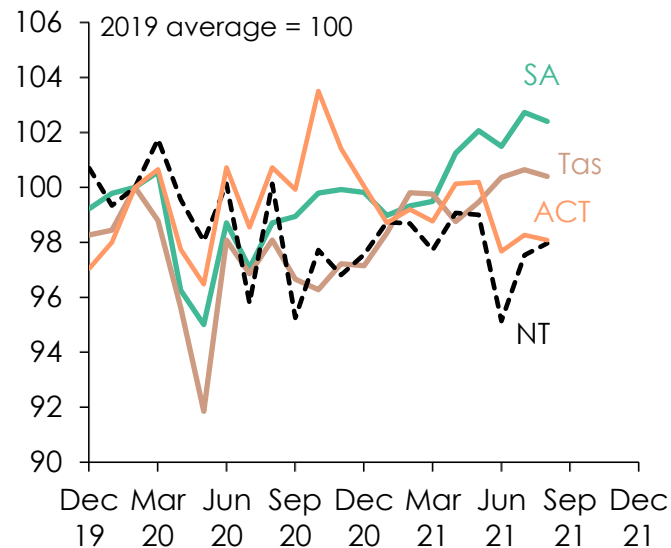
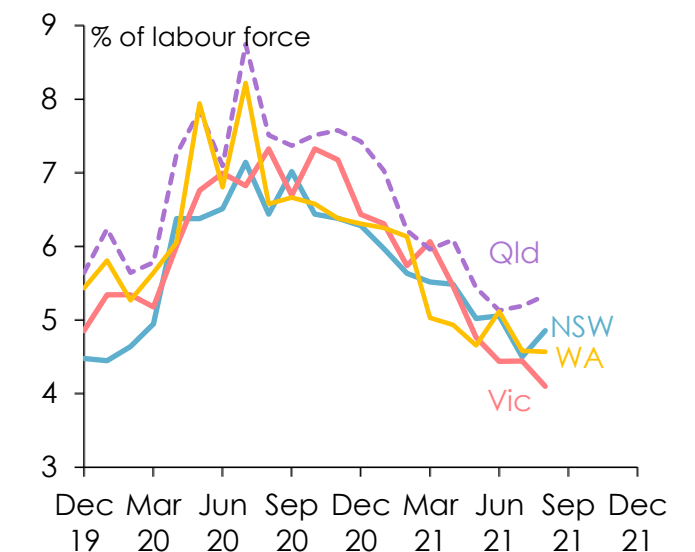
## Hours worked



## Participation rates



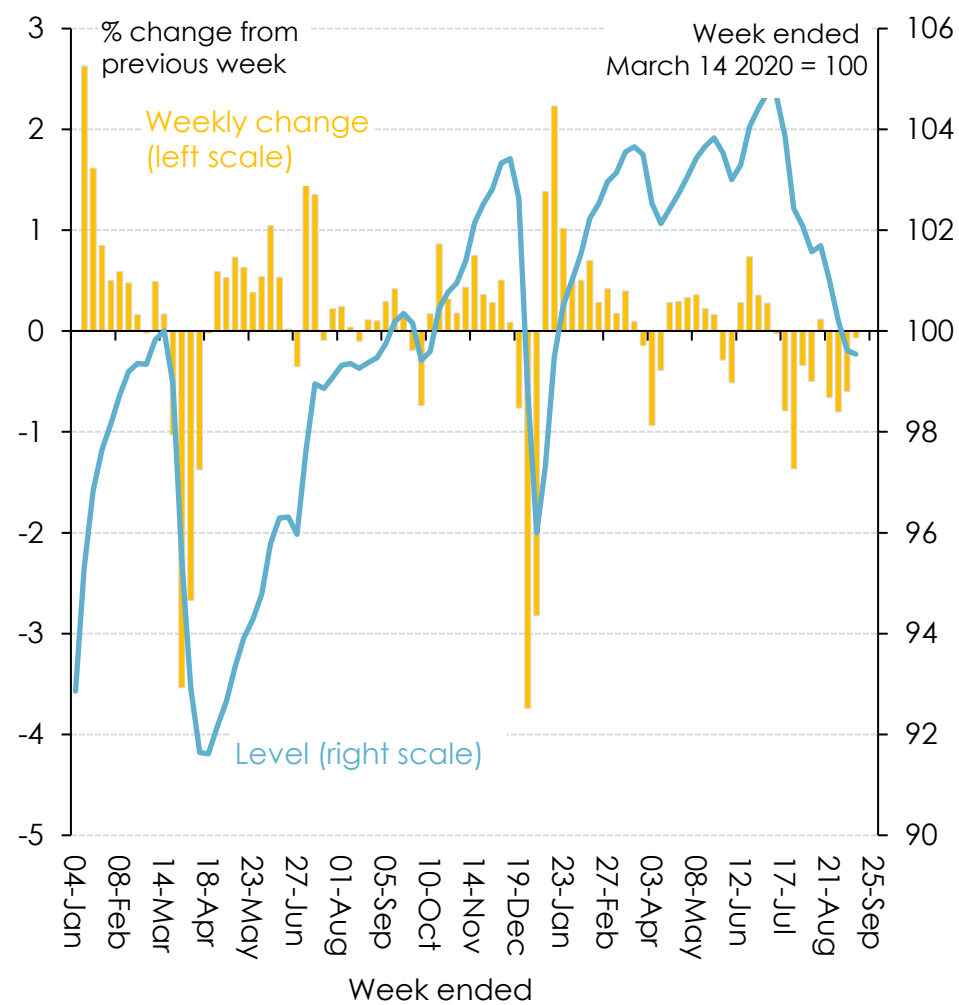
## Unemployment rates



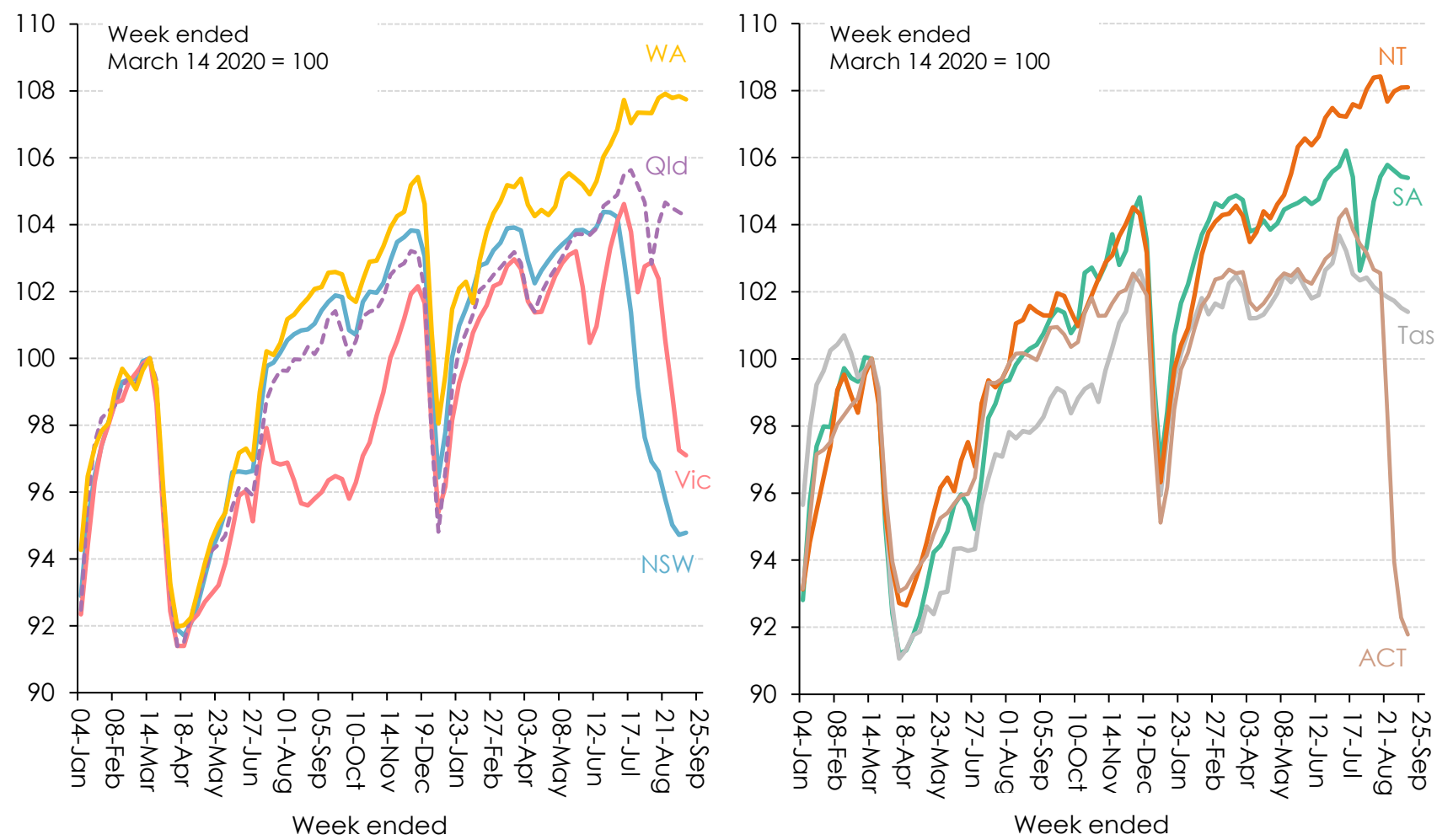
Source: ABS, [Labour Force, Australia](#), August 2021; Corinna. September data will be released on 14<sup>th</sup> October. [Return to "What's New"](#).

# Payroll jobs have fallen by 4.9% since the beginning of July, with falls of 11.9% in the ACT, 9.1% in NSW and 6.7% in Victoria

Level and weekly change in the number of payroll jobs



Payroll jobs by State & Territory

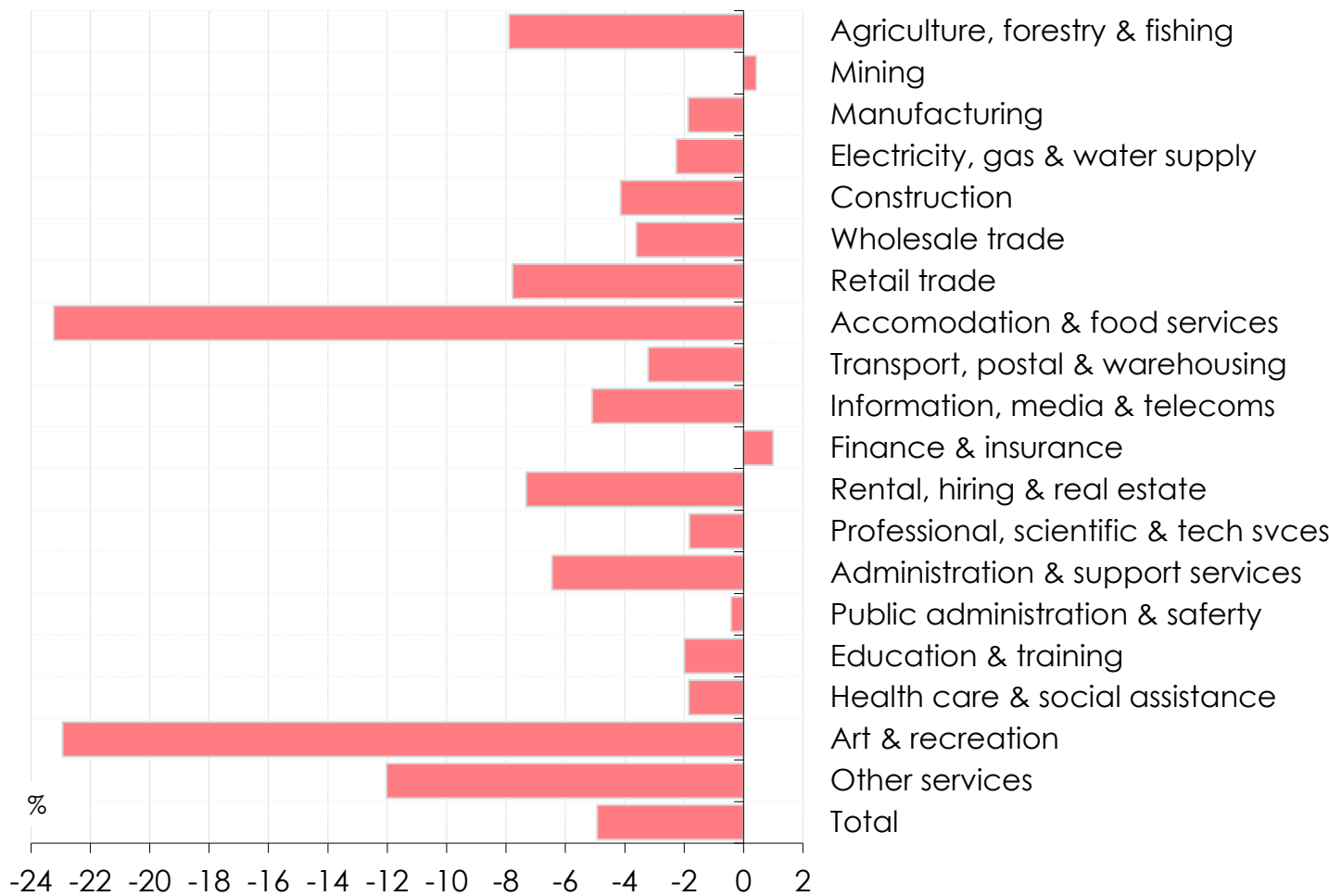


Source: ABS, [Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages in Australia, Interim](#). Data refers to the number of payroll jobs at businesses participating in the Australian Taxation Office's Single Touch Payroll system, which covers 99% of employers with 20 or more employees and about 71% of smaller employees. People 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. [Return to "What's New"](#).

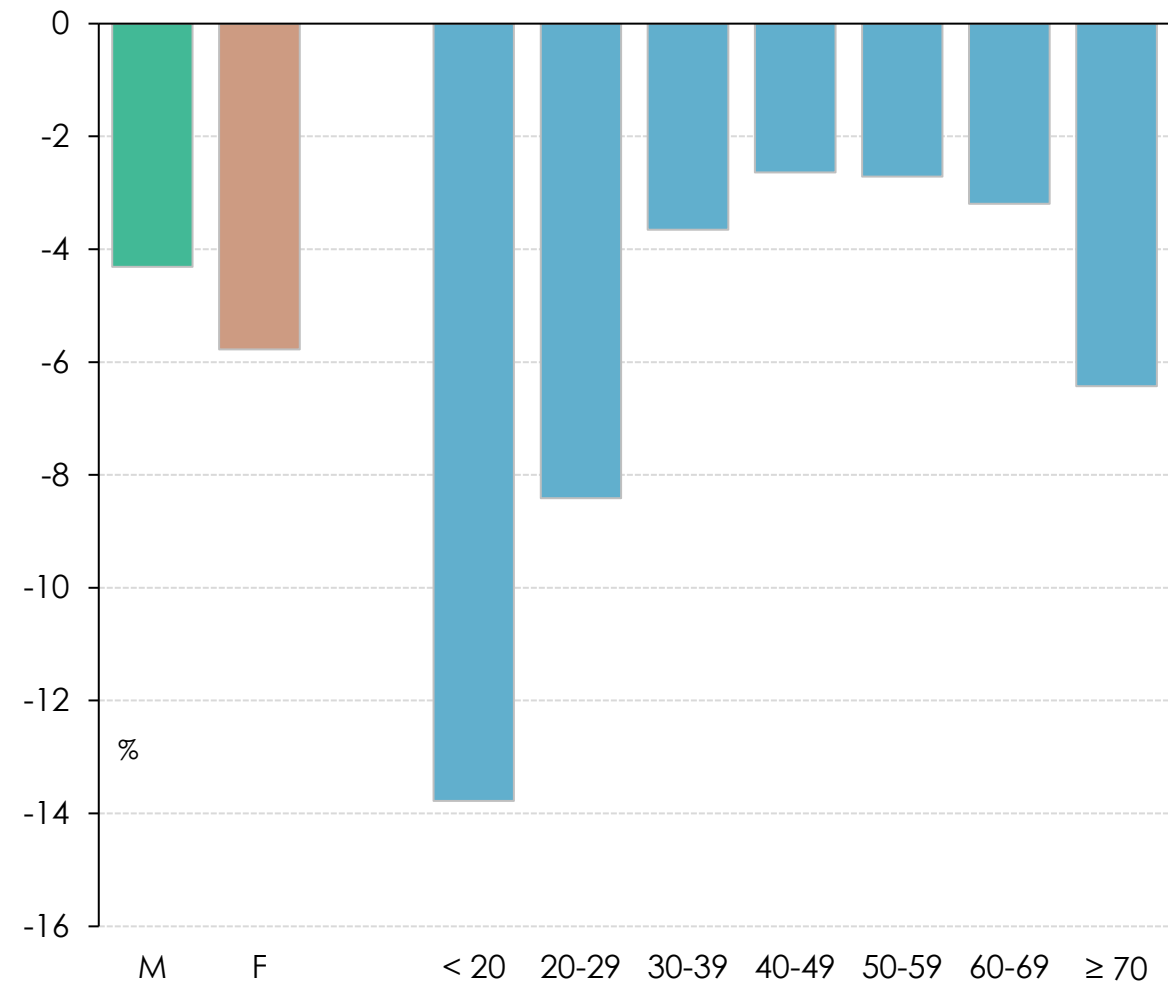
# The same sectors, and the same groups, that were hardest hit in last year's lockdowns have been hardest hit in the latest one (plus agriculture)

Change in payroll jobs between week ended 3<sup>rd</sup> July and week ended 11<sup>th</sup> September

By industry



By gender and age

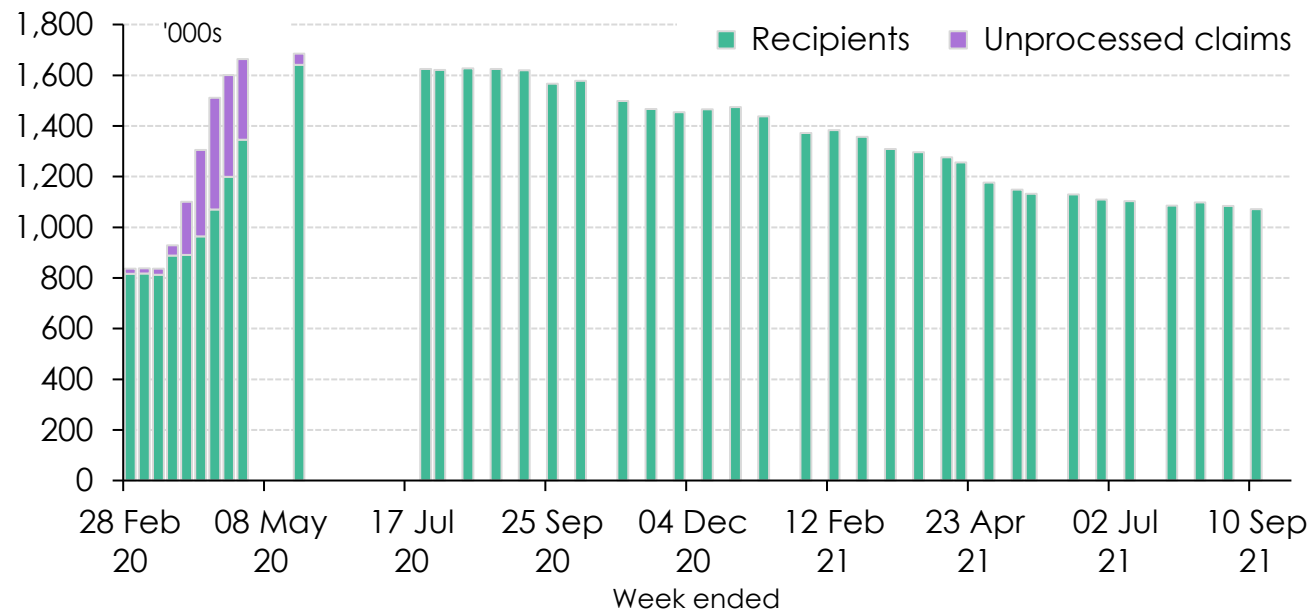


Source: ABS, [Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages in Australia](#). Data refers to the number of payroll jobs at businesses participating in the Australian Taxation Office's Single Touch Payroll system, which covers 99% of employers with 20 or more employees and about 71% of smaller employees. People with 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. [Return to "What's New"](#).

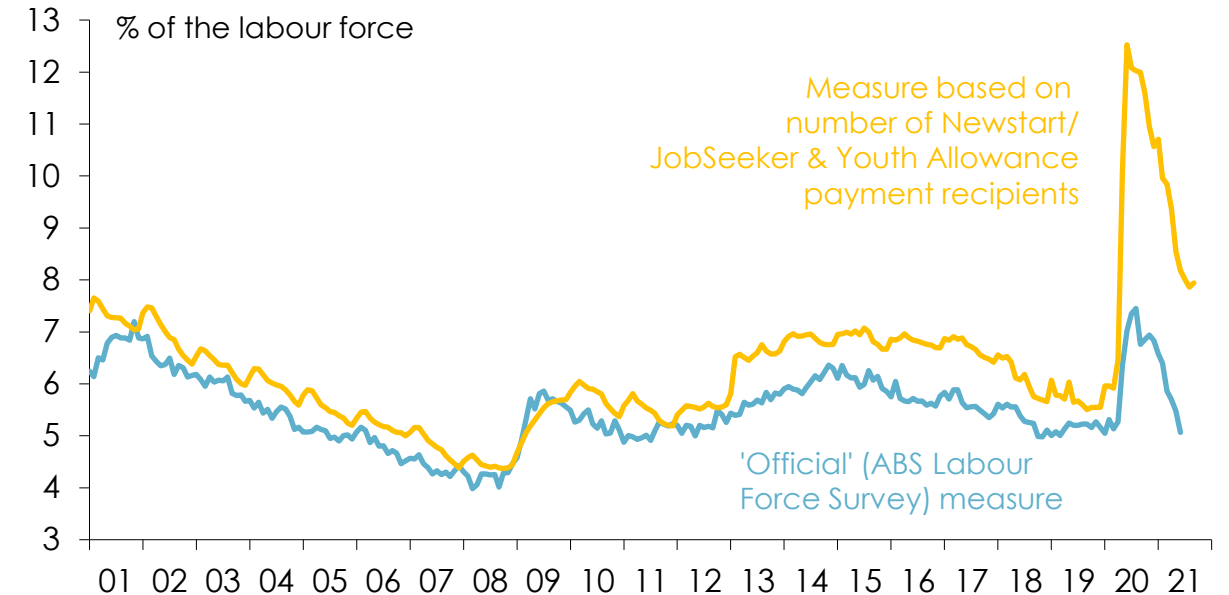


# The number of people receiving 'unemployment benefits' fell to a post-pandemic low in the first half of September (despite lockdowns)

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

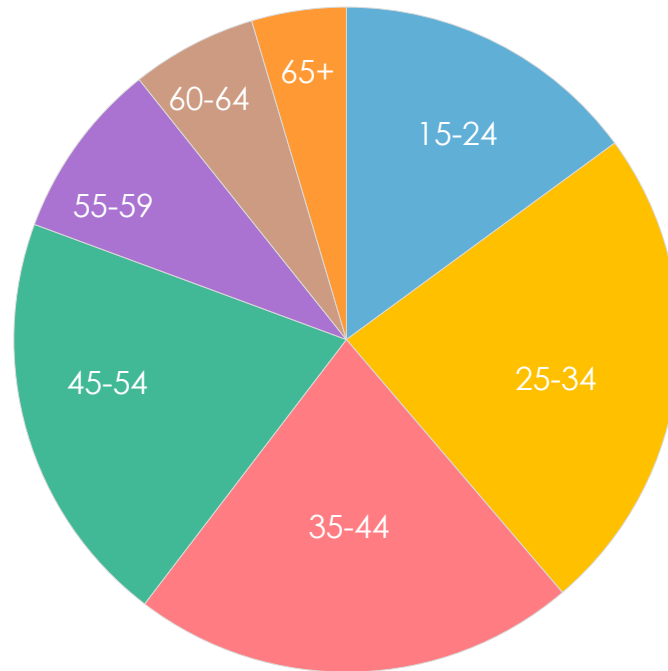


- ❑ Ministers receive weekly data on the number of people on JobSeeker and Youth Allowance (Other) benefits – which since late July last year the Department of Social Services has made this available every second week to the Senate Select Committee examining the Government's responses to Covid-19
- ❑ The number of people receiving JobSeeker or Youth Allowance (Other) payments fell by 12,603 (1.2%) over the two weeks to 10<sup>th</sup> September – to its lowest level since the week ended 20<sup>th</sup> March last year – about half the fall was in Queensland, with smaller falls in Western Australia and New South Wales
- ❑ 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, though these will 'taper off' once vaccination rates pass the thresholds set out in the Government's 'National Plan' – see [slides 144-145](#)

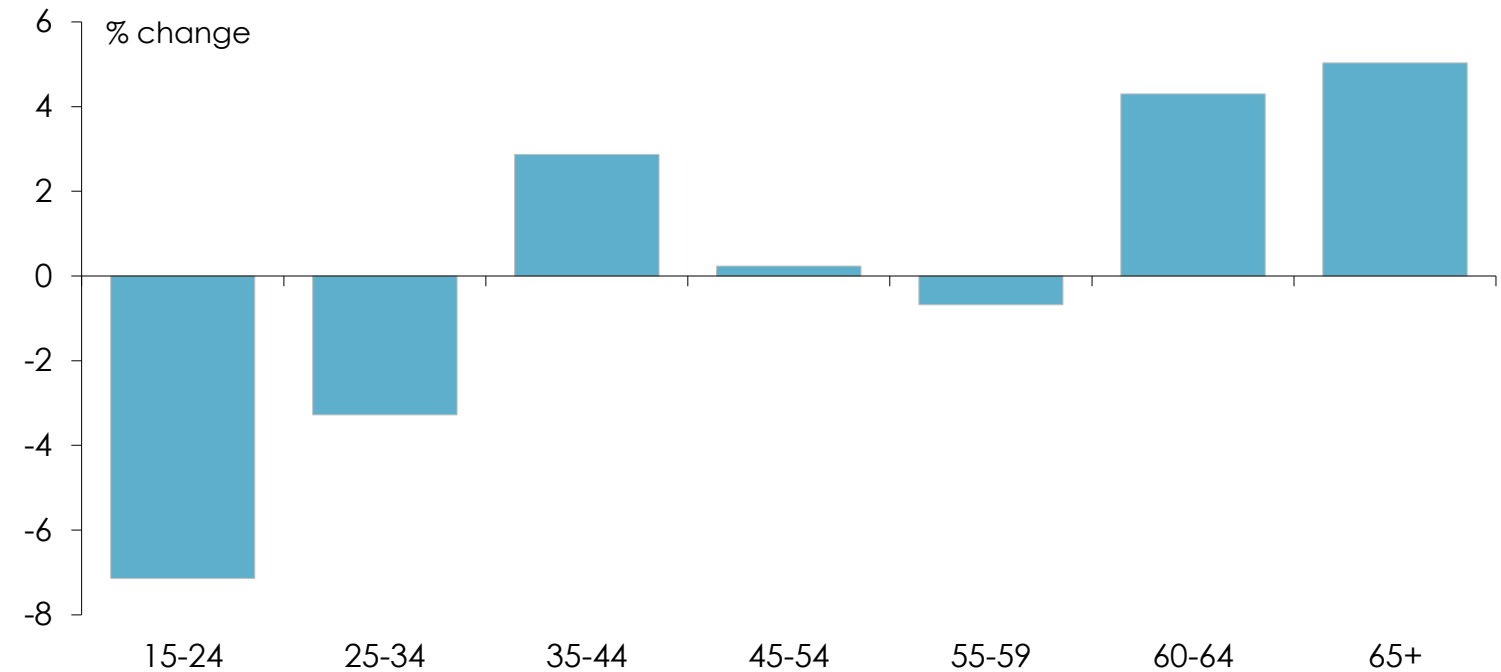


# Younger workers bore the brunt of job losses during the early stages of the pandemic and have had a more difficult time regaining jobs

Composition of employment by age group, February 2020



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

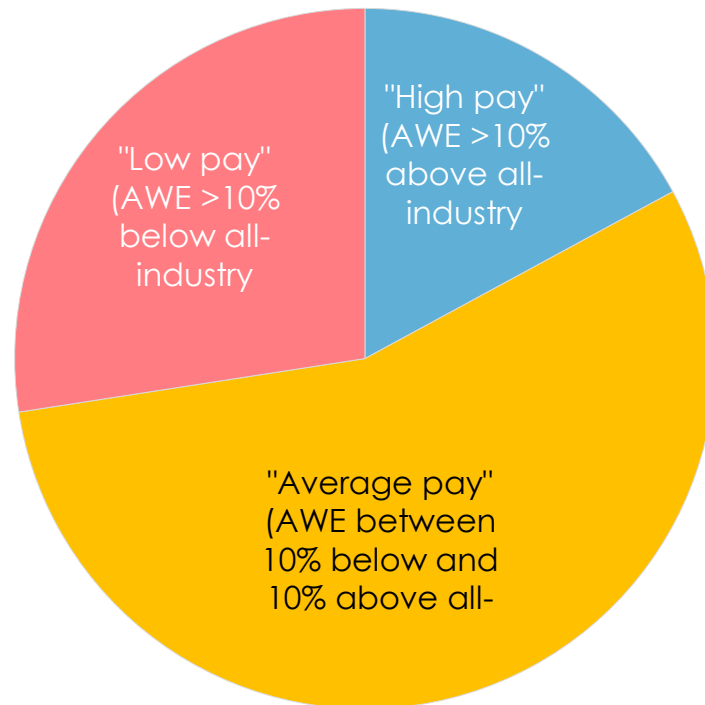


- ❑ People aged 15-24 accounted for 15% of pre-covid employment but experienced 39% of all job losses between February and May last year – and 50% of all job losses between June and August this year – their employment is down 7.1% from the pre-pandemic peak in February last year
- ❑ Likewise 25-34 year-olds accounted for 25% of all job losses between February and May last year, and for 23% of all job losses between June and August this year – their employment is down 3.3% from February last year
- ❑ By contrast most older age groups have fared much better, in particular 35-44 year-olds, and the (relatively smaller number of) people aged 60 and over

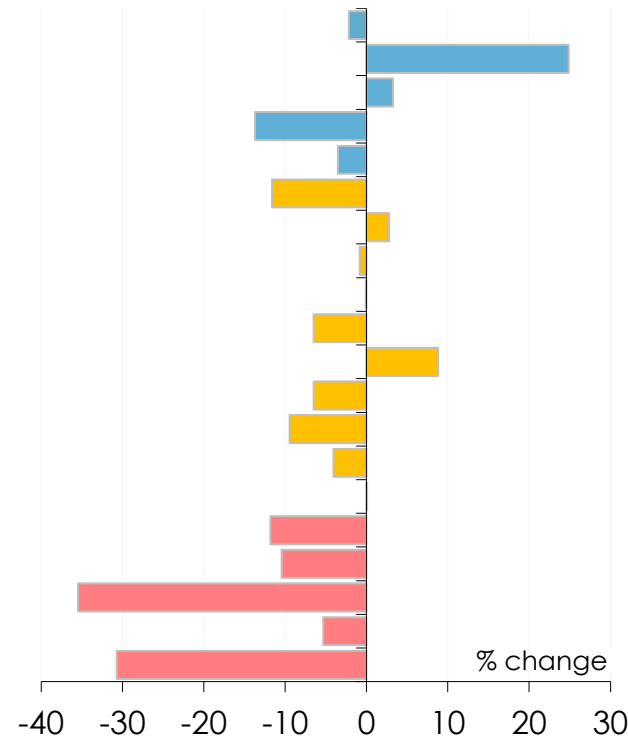
Note: data on employment by age group is not seasonally adjusted. Source: ABS, [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed](#), August 2021: September data will be released on 21<sup>st</sup> October. [Return to "What's New"](#).

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

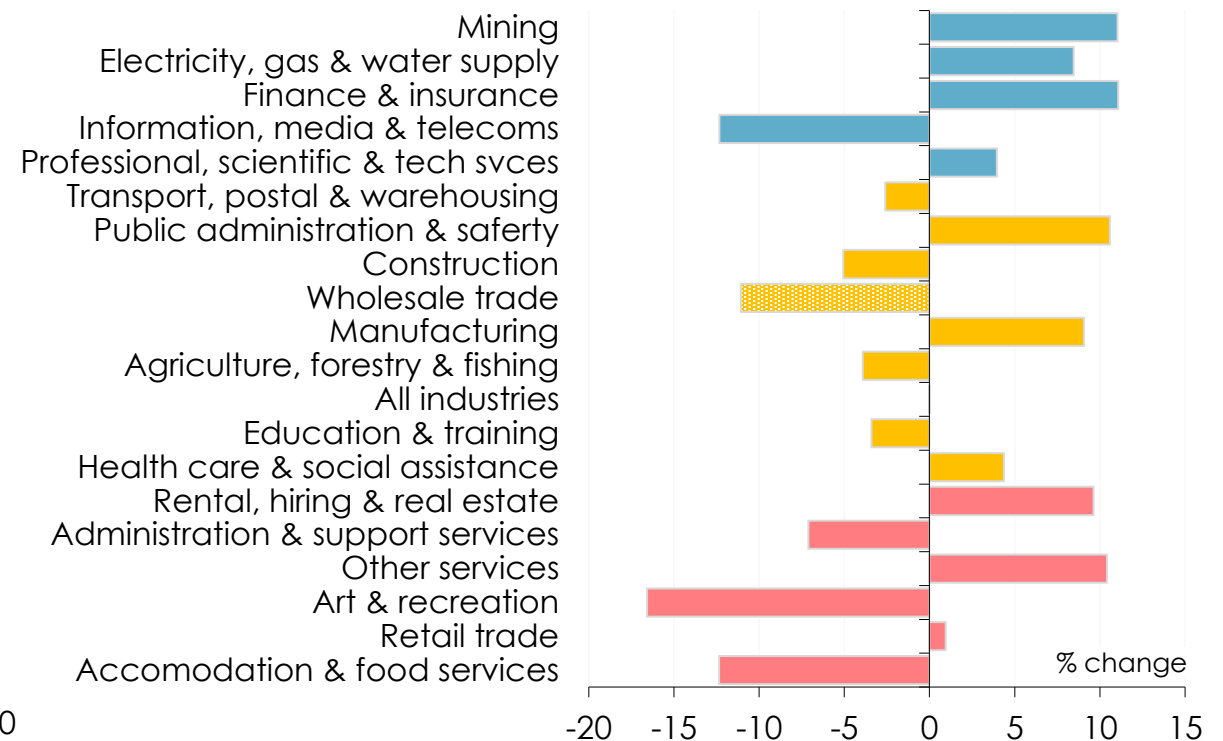
Composition of employment by industry ranked by average weekly earnings, February 2020



Change in employment by industry  
February-May 2020



February 2020 – August 2021

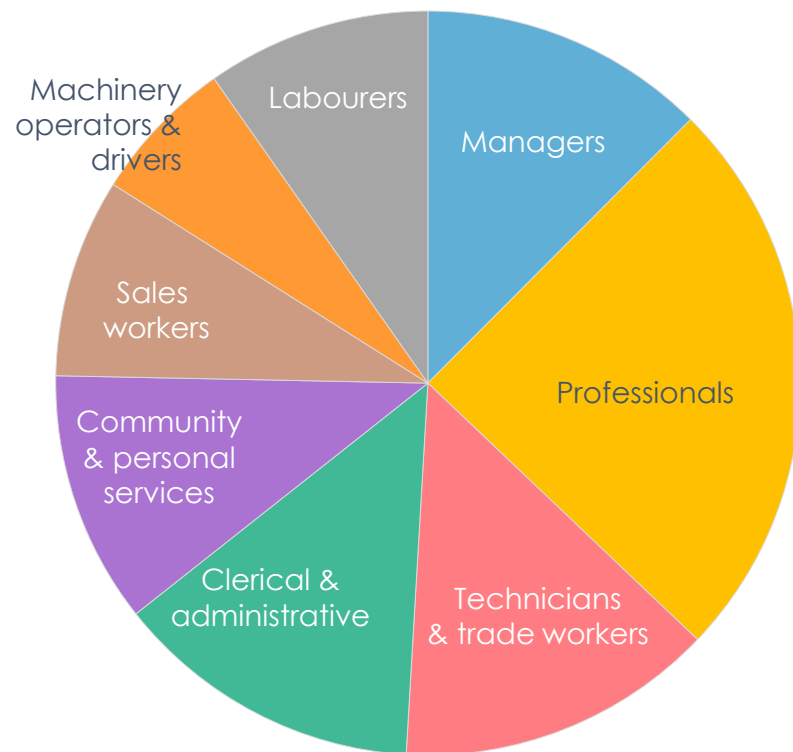


- ❑ Industries with average earnings which are 10% or more below average accounted for 27½% of the pre-pandemic workforce, but experienced 64% of the job losses between February and May last year – and 89% of job losses between May and August this year – employment in these industries was down 2.9% between February last year and August this year
- ❑ By contrast employment in “high pay” industries (17% of the pre-pandemic workforce) was 4.9% higher in August than it had been in February last year

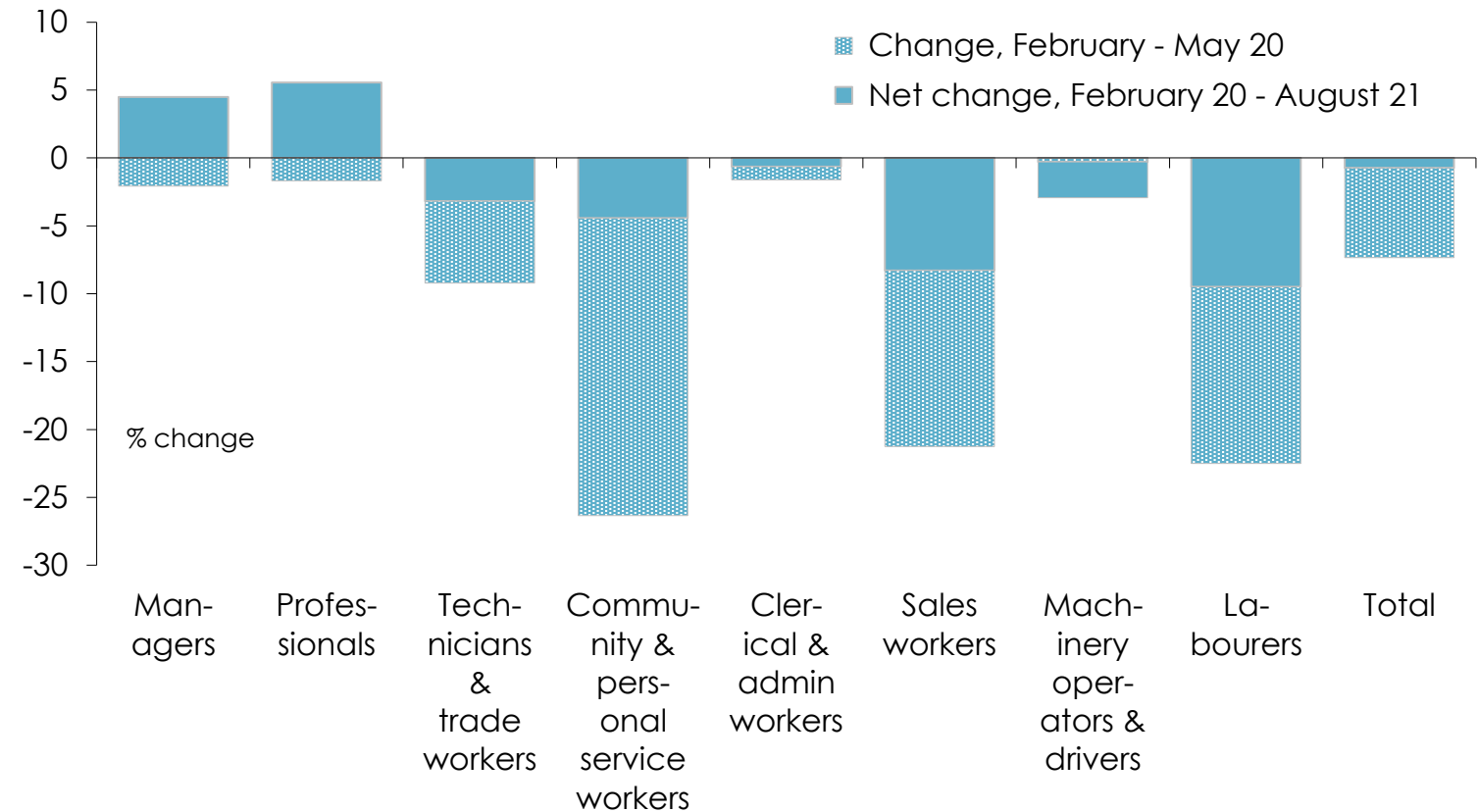
Source: ABS, [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed](#), August 2021 and [Average Weekly Earnings, Australia](#), November 2019. Labour force survey data on employment by occupation are available only for the middle month of each quarter: November data will be released on 23<sup>rd</sup> December. [Return 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 August 2021, by occupation

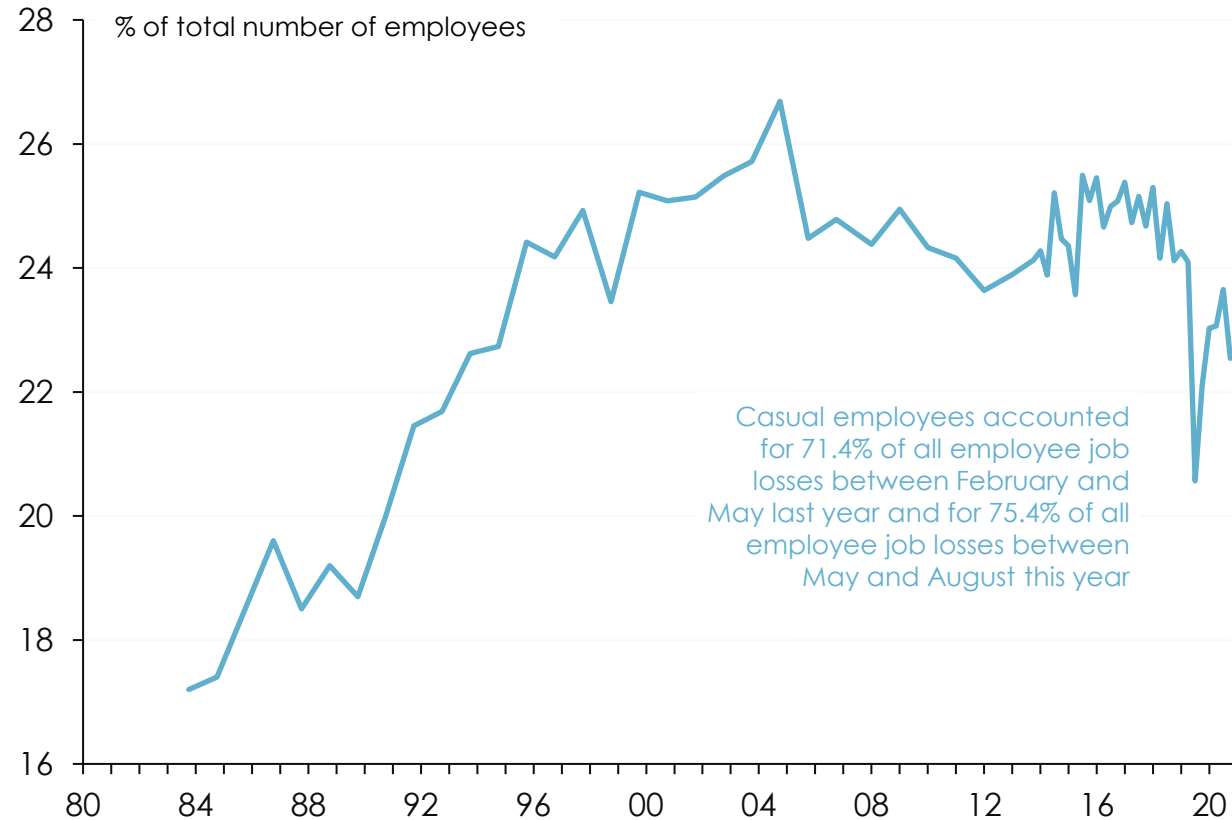


- ❑ Community & personal services workers, sales workers and labourers accounted for 29% of the pre-covid work force, but experienced 73% of the job losses between February and May last year – and for 73% (again) of job losses between May and August this year – and there were 7.2% fewer of them in August than in February last year
- ❑ ... whereas there are 5.2% more employed managers and professionals than there were in February last year

Source: ABS, [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed](#), August 2021. Labour force survey data on employment by occupation are available only for the middle month of each quarter: November data will be released on 23<sup>rd</sup> December. [Return to "What's New"](#).

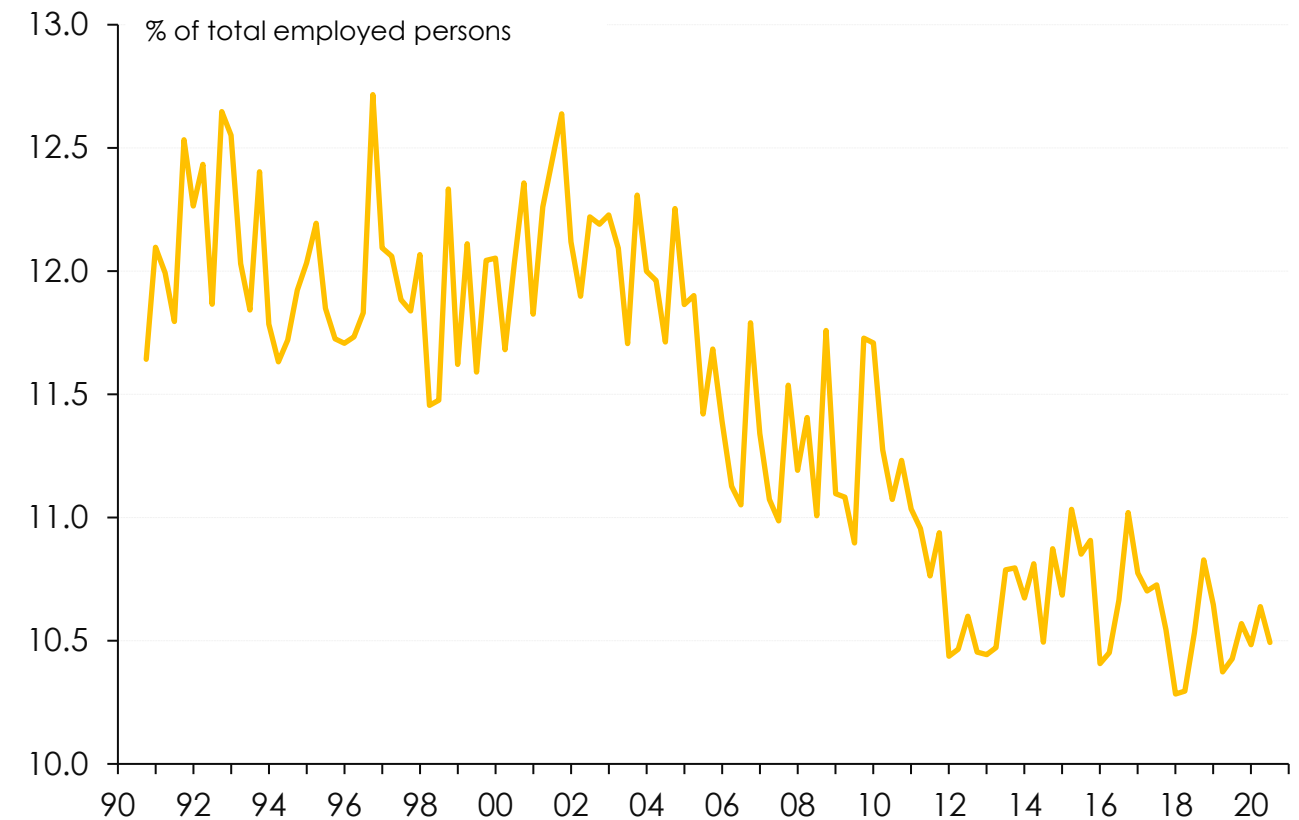
# Contrary to popular belief neither casual jobs nor 'gig economy' jobs have become more commonplace during the past two decades

## '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

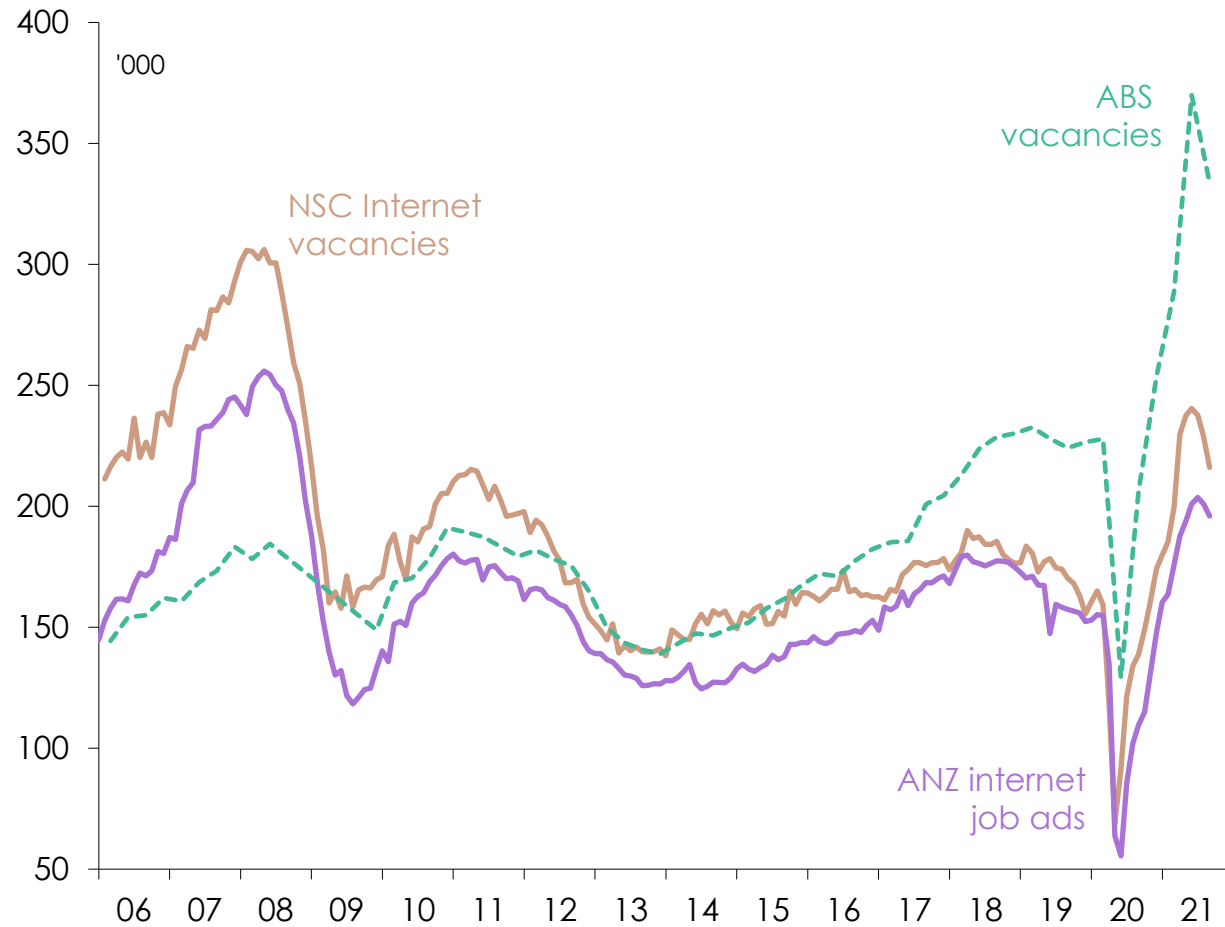


- ❑ 'Independent contractors' have actually declined as a share of the workforce since the early 2000s – had haven't increased during the current recession

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



- ❑ Job vacancies have eased slightly during the NSW and Victorian lockdowns, but remain high by historical standards

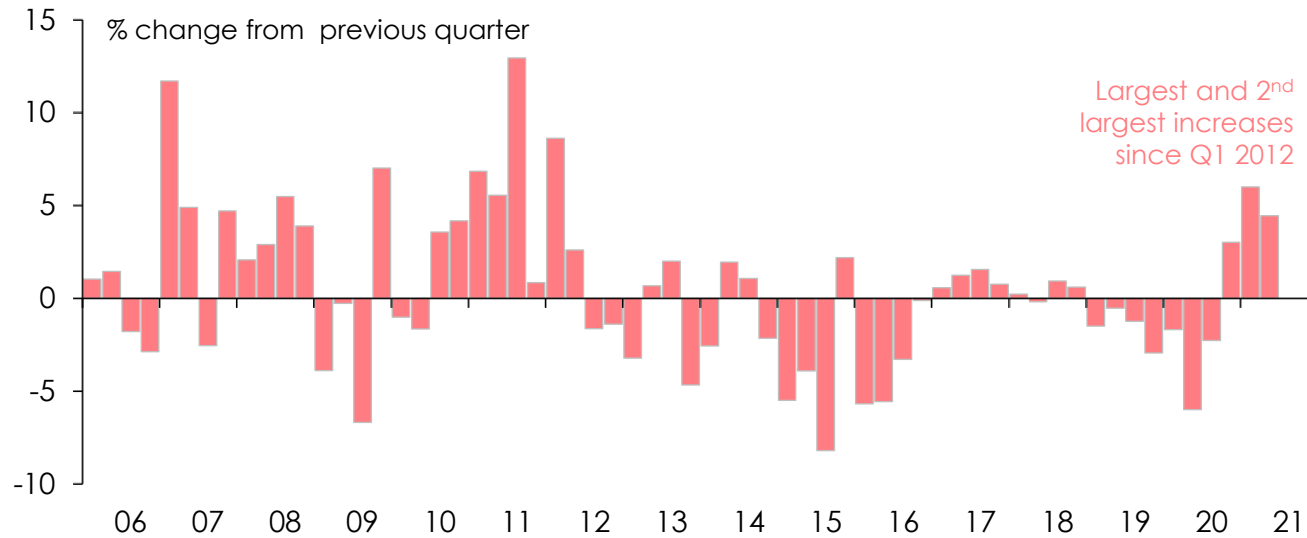
## Ratio of unemployed people to job vacancies



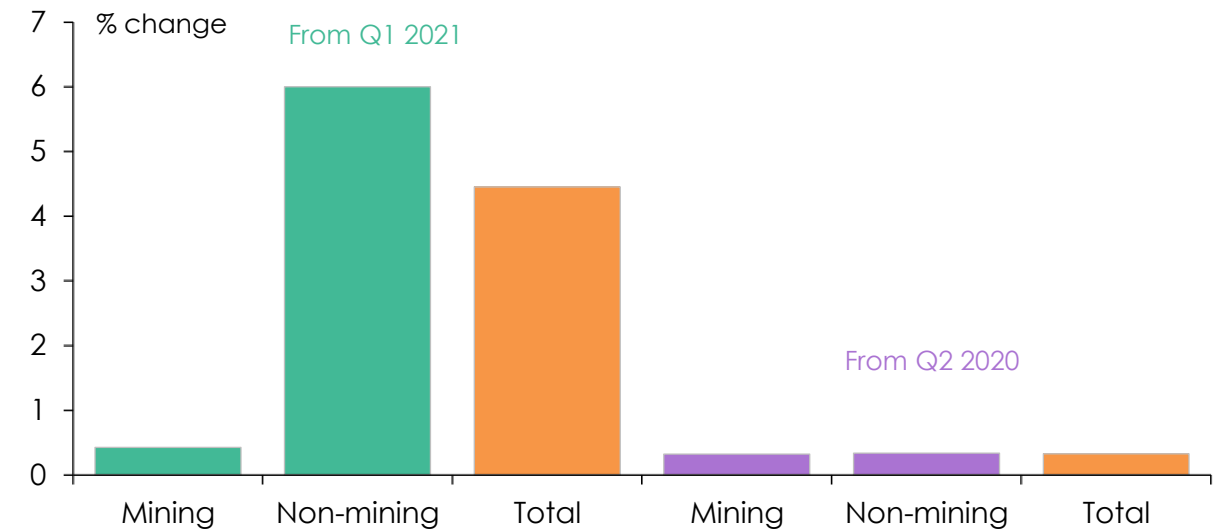
- ❑ The ratio of unemployed people to the number of job vacancies remain close to a record low in August

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

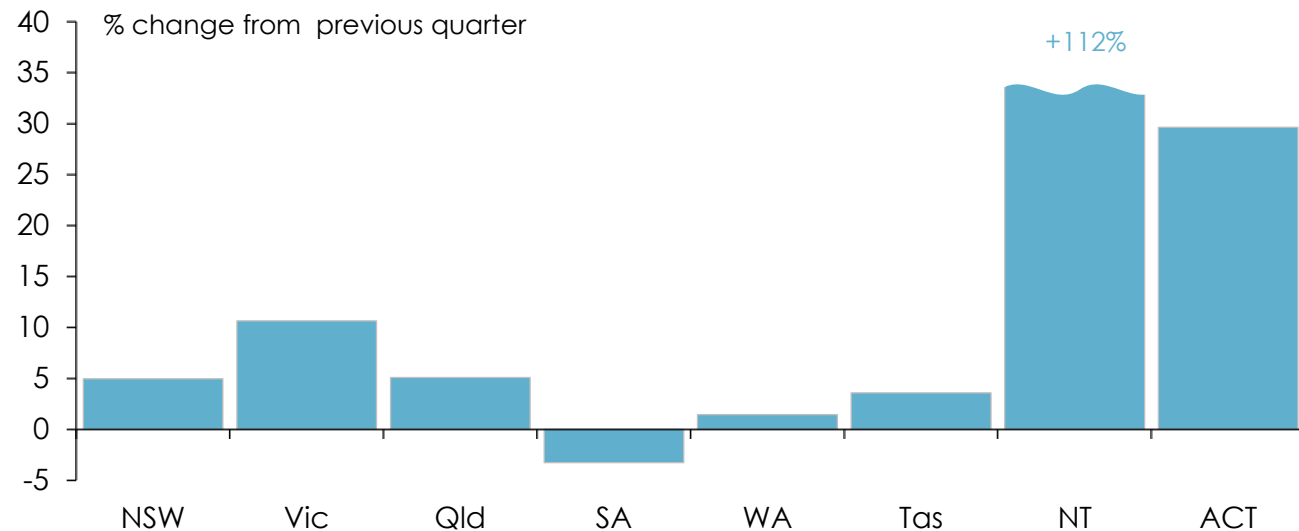
## Real business new fixed capital expenditure



## 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



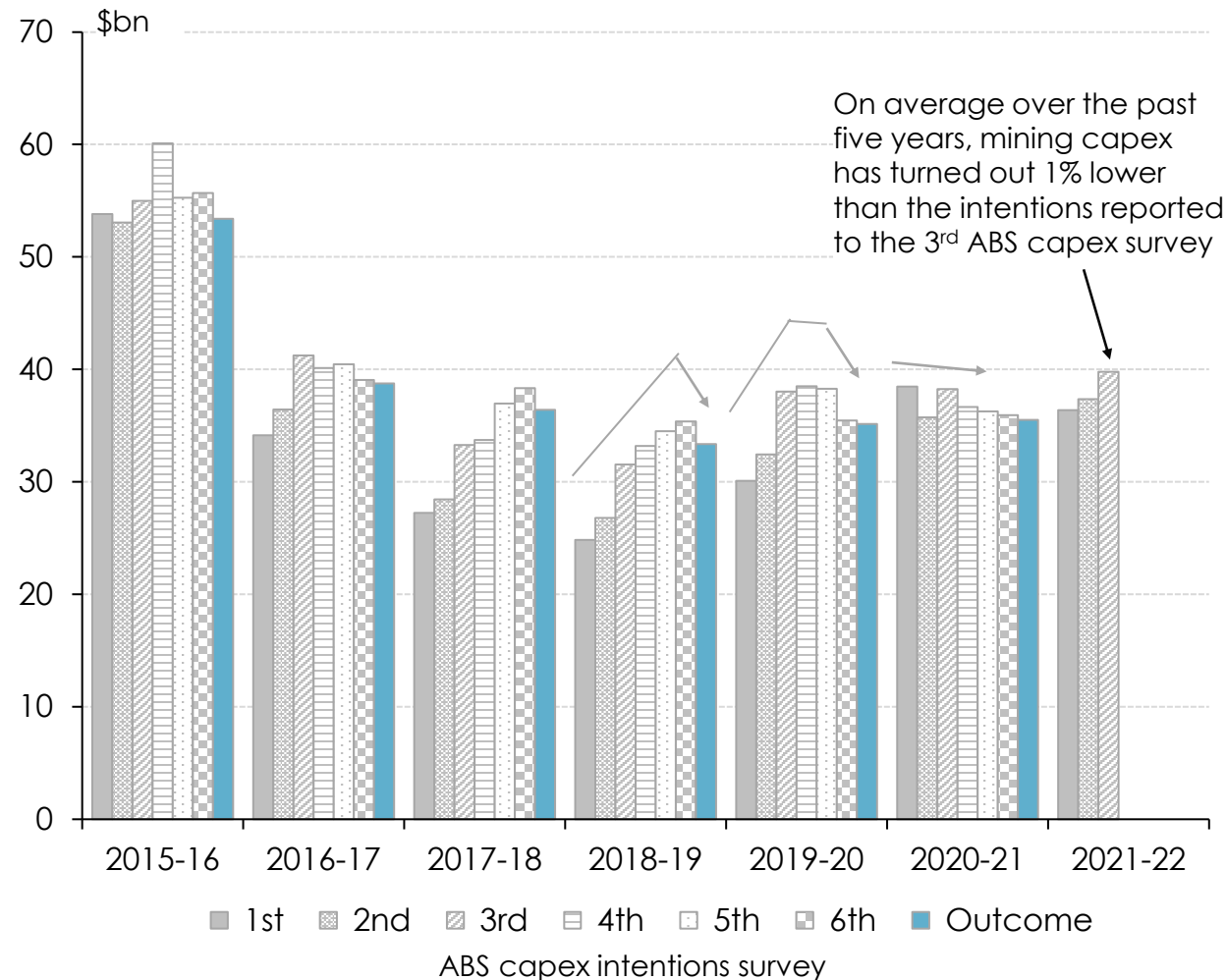
Note: the ABS Survey of New Capital Expenditure excludes the agriculture, forestry & fishing, and public administration & defence sectors, and superannuation funds.

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

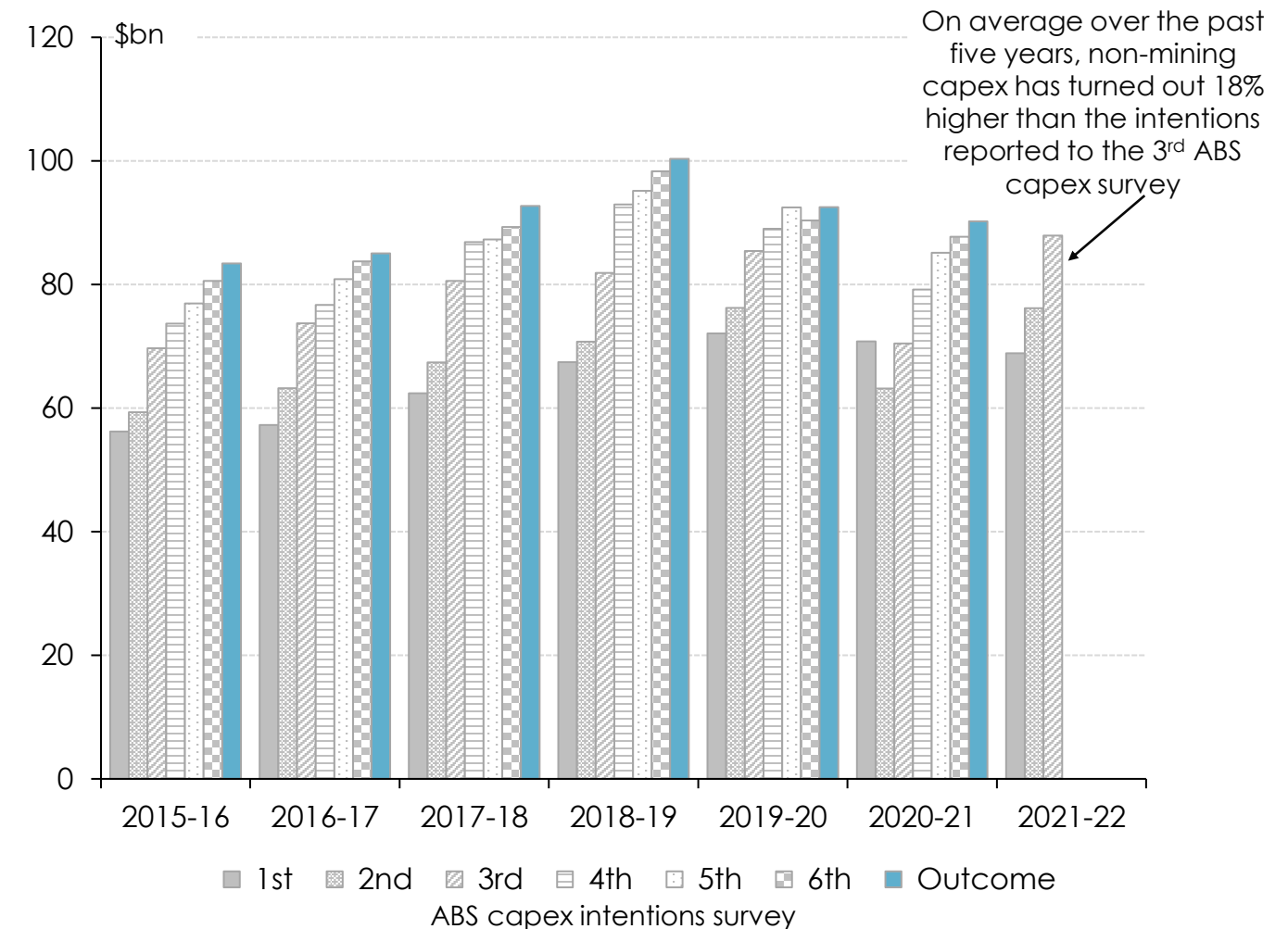


# Business capex fell by 1.5% in 2021-22 and is expected to increase by 13½% in 2021-22 according to the latest capex intentions survey

## Capital expenditure intentions - mining



## Capital expenditure intentions – non-mining

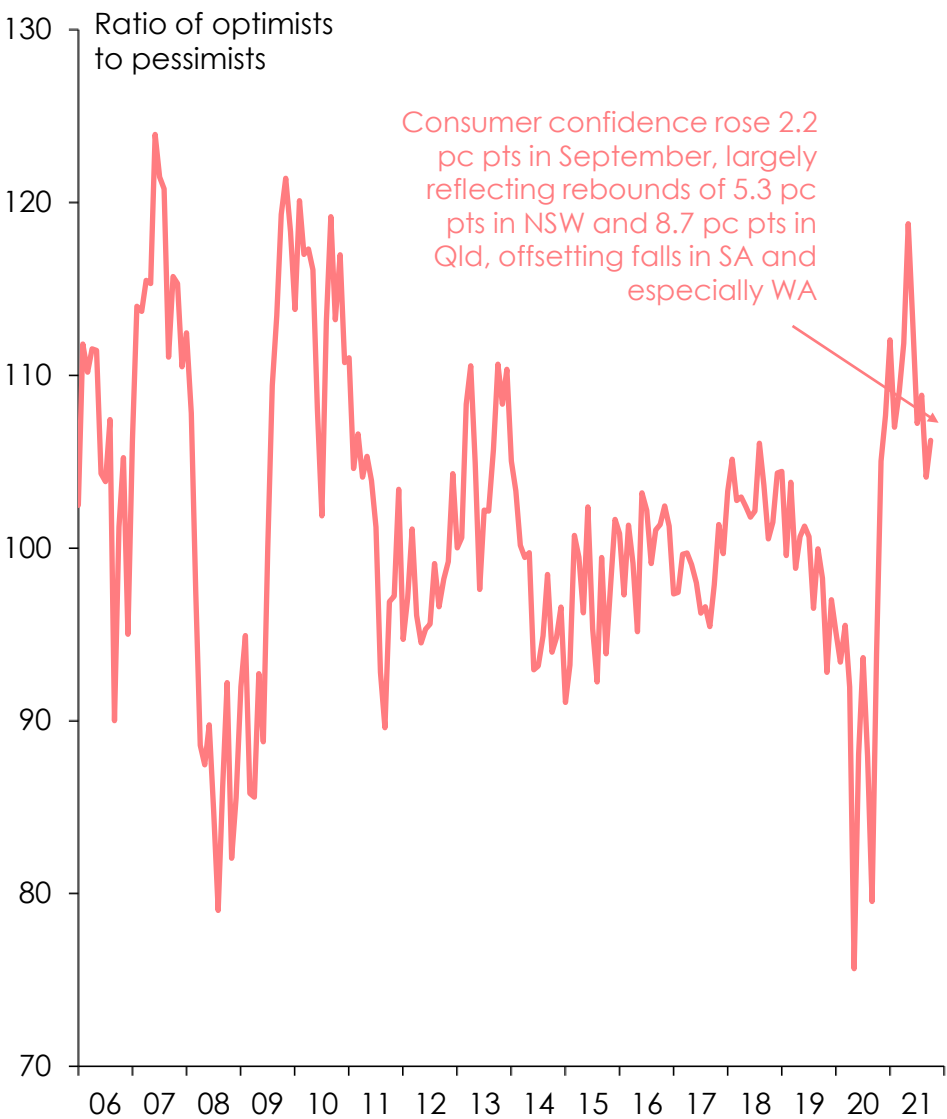


Note: The ABS conducts six surveys of business' capital expenditure intentions in respect of each financial year. The first is conducted in January & February prior to the commencement of the financial year, the second in May & June, the third in July & August of the financial year, the fourth in October & 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.

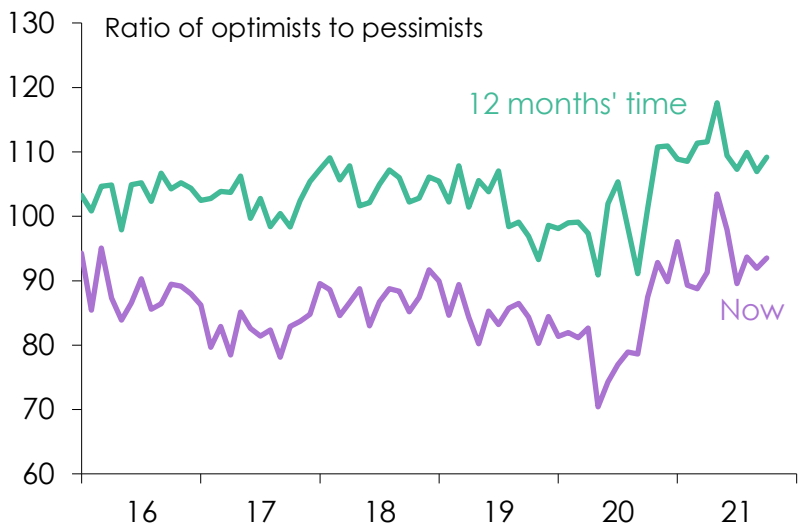
Source: ABS, [Private New Capital Expenditure and Expected Expenditure, Australia](#) (next update is released on 25<sup>th</sup> November). [Return to "What's New"](#).

# Consumer confidence rose 2.2 pc pts in September, with consumers remaining confident about both their own finances and the economy

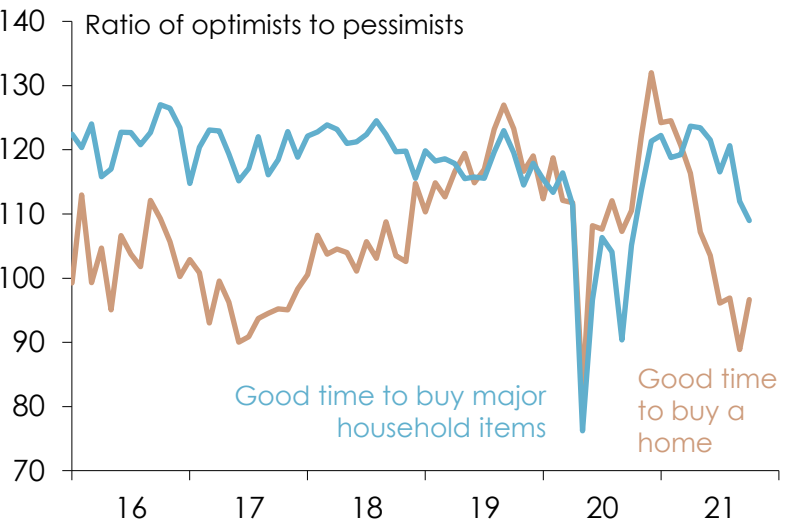
Consumer confidence index



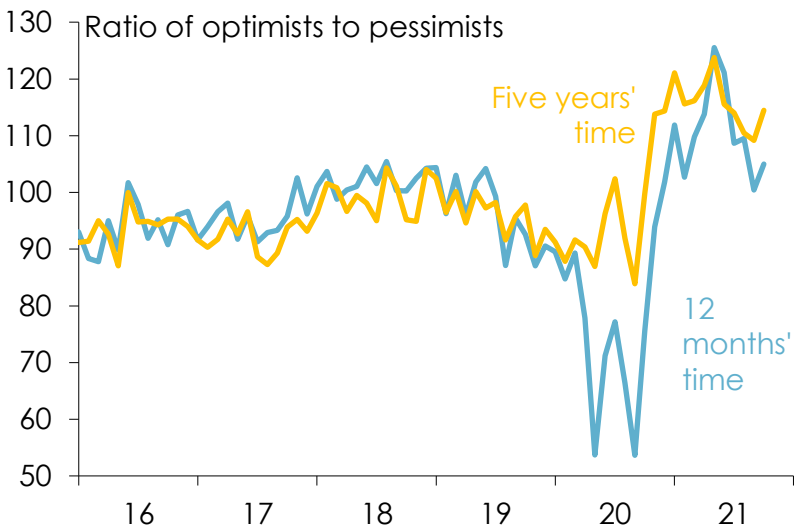
Household finances assessment



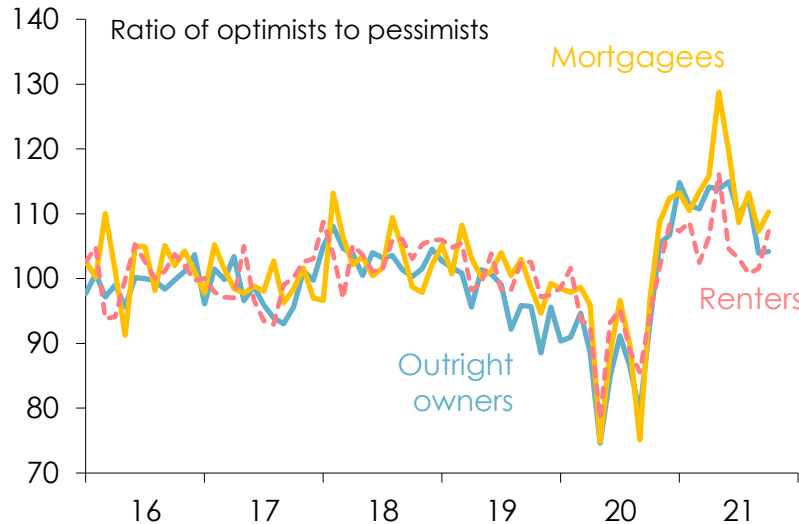
Buying conditions assessment



Economic conditions assessment

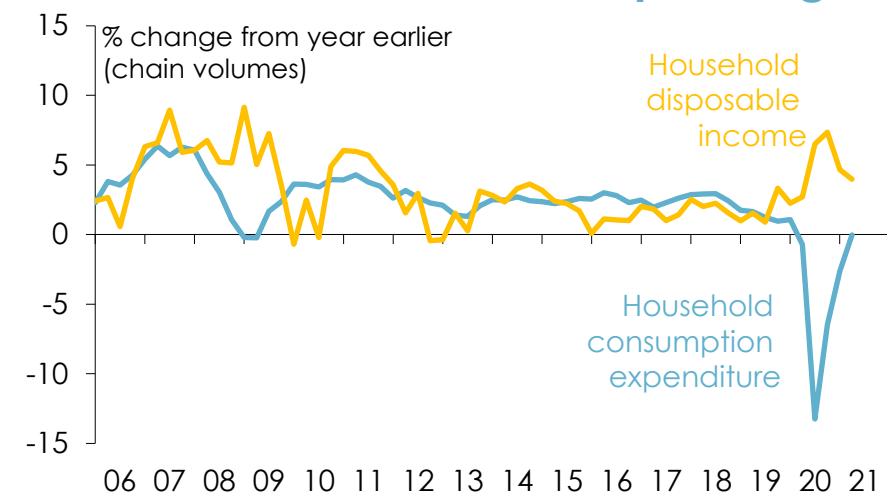


Confidence by housing tenure

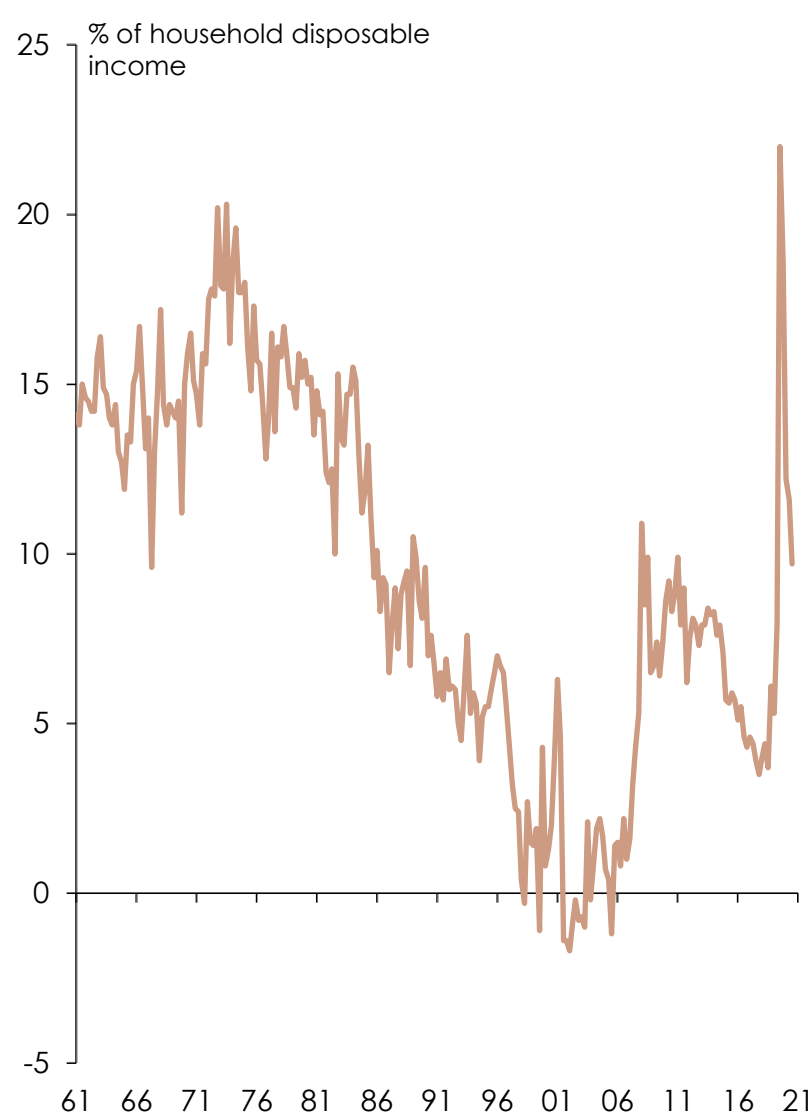


# Household incomes have been supported by government payments, but spending has been curtailed, so households have lots of savings to spend

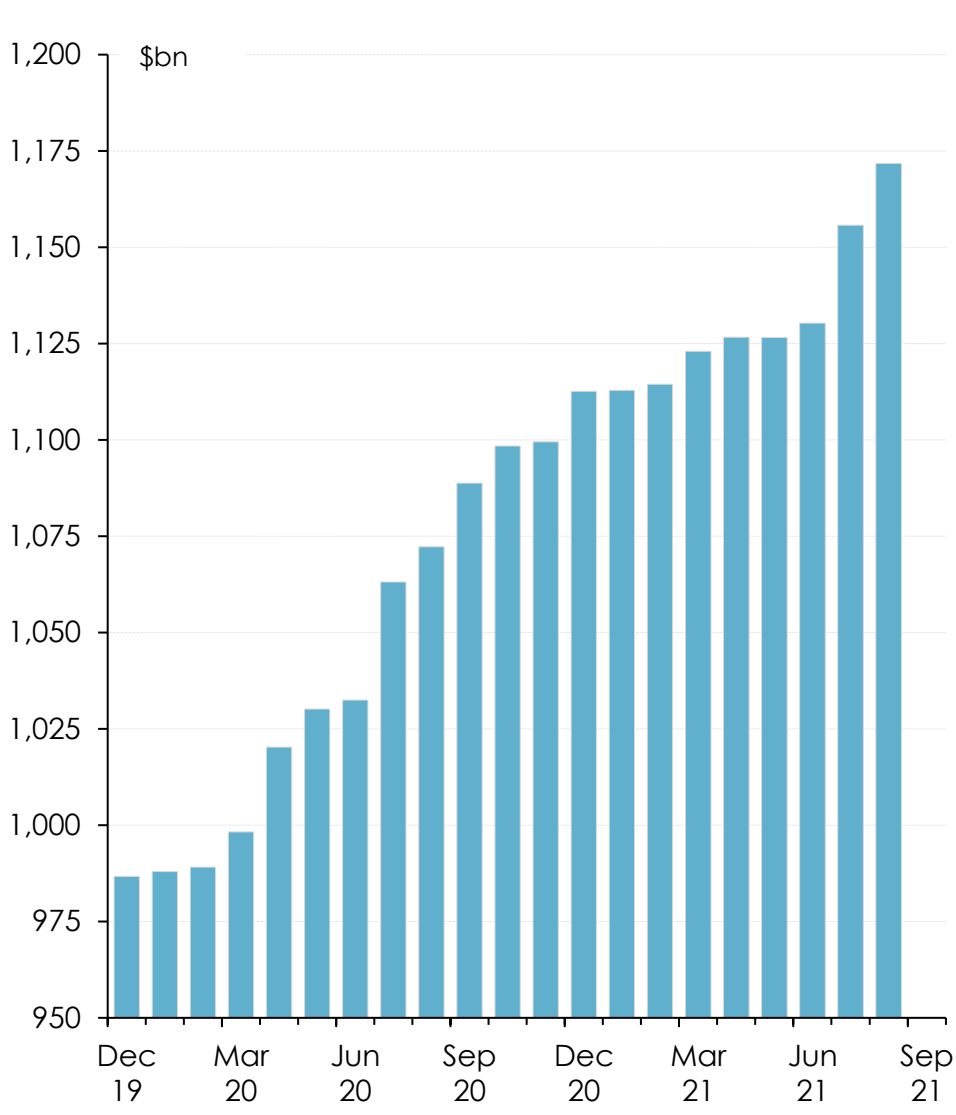
Household income and spending



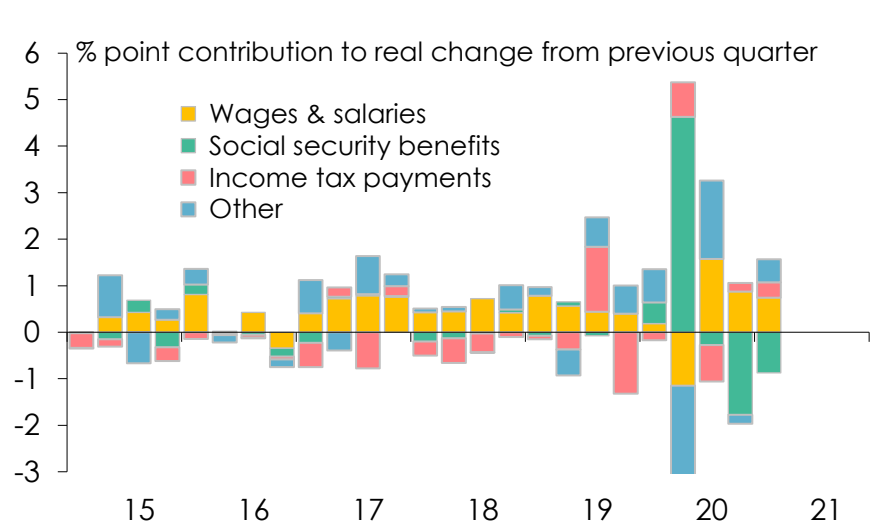
Household saving ratio



Household bank deposits



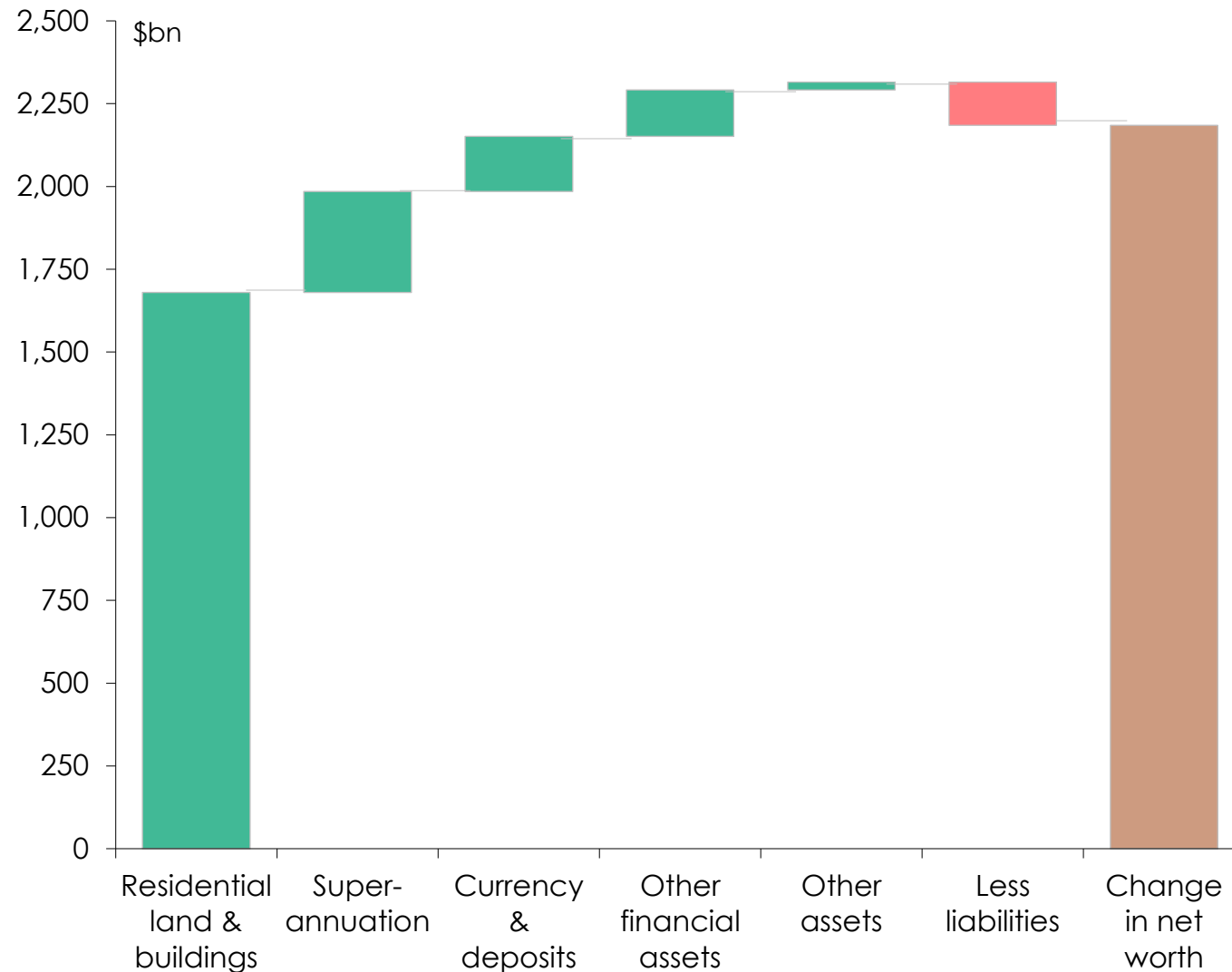
Sources of household income



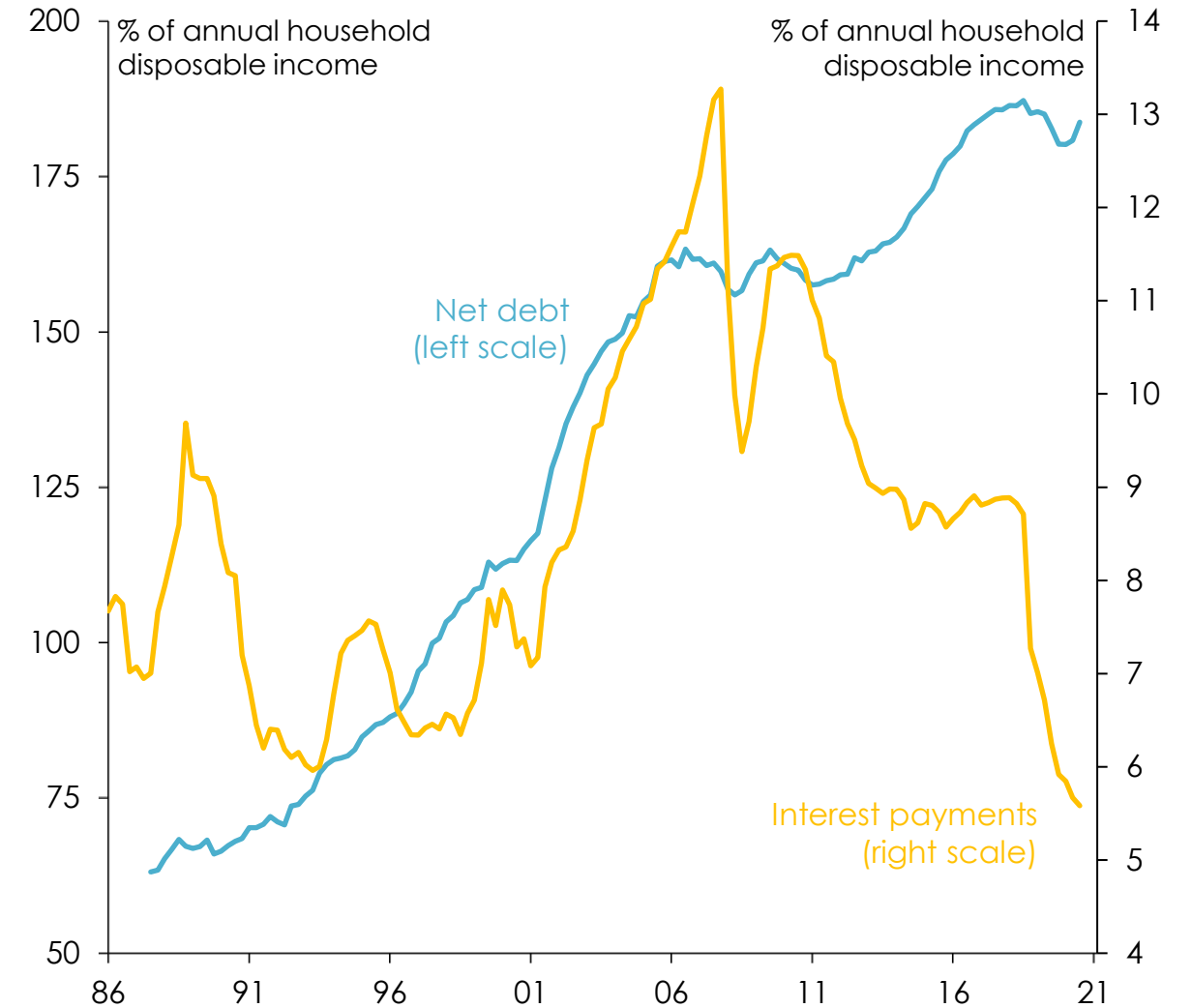
Sources: ABS, [Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product](#), March quarter 2021; Australian Prudential Regulation Authority, [Monthly Authorised Deposit-taking Institution Statistics](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

# Household net worth has risen by \$2.2trn (19½%) since the end of 2019, while debt service payments have fallen as a pc of income

## Sources of gains in household net worth, Q4 2019 to Q2 2021



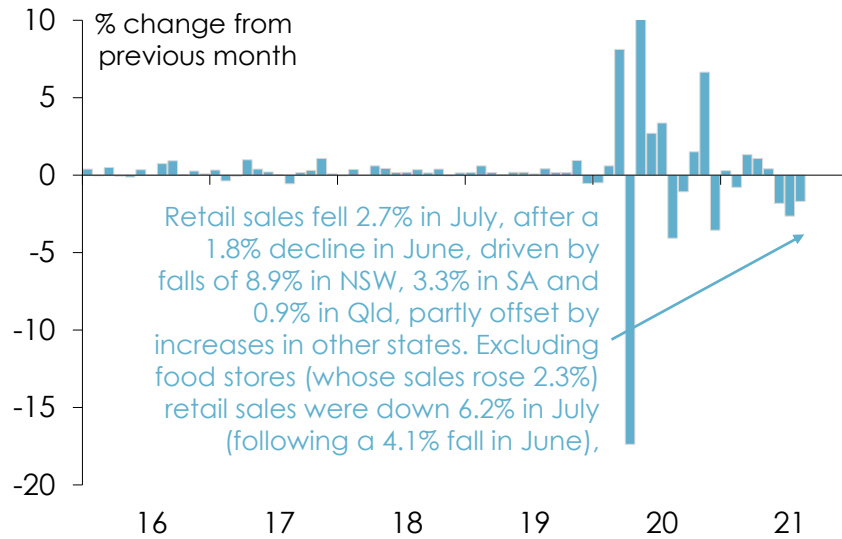
## Household net debt and interest payments as a percentage of disposable income



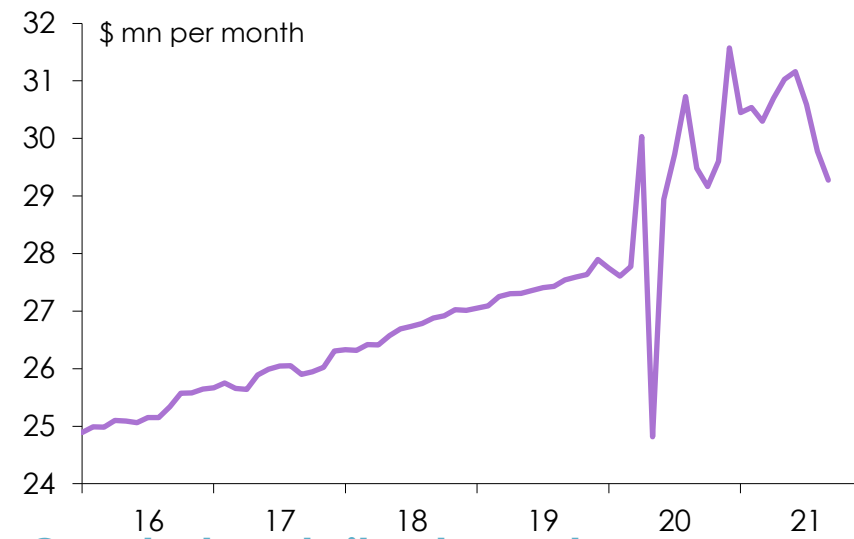
Sources: ABS, [Finance and Wealth Accounts](#), June quarter 2021; RBA, [Statistical Tables](#) E1 & E2. September quarter data will be released on 16<sup>th</sup> December.  
[Return to "What's New"](#).

# New motor vehicle sales fell 1.7% in September, after a 3.8% fall in August, despite a 5.7% rebound in NSW

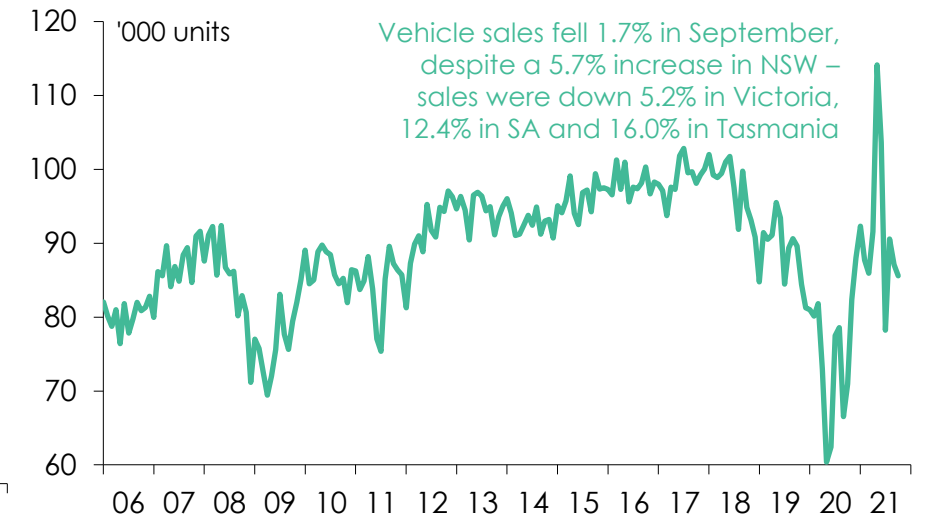
## Monthly retail sales



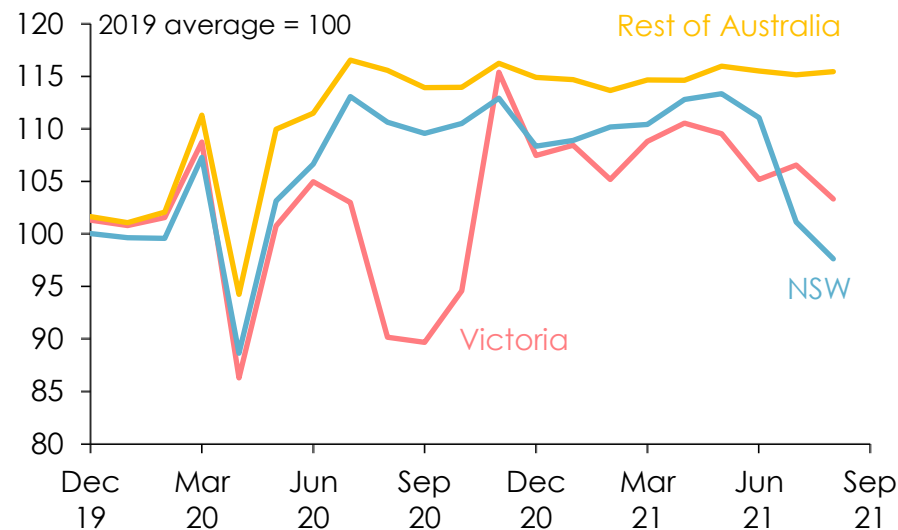
## Level of retail sales



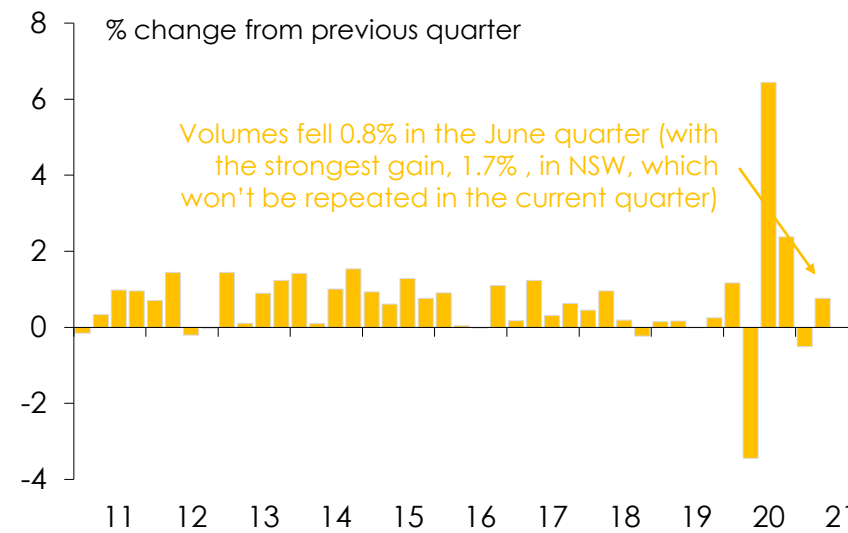
## New motor vehicle sales



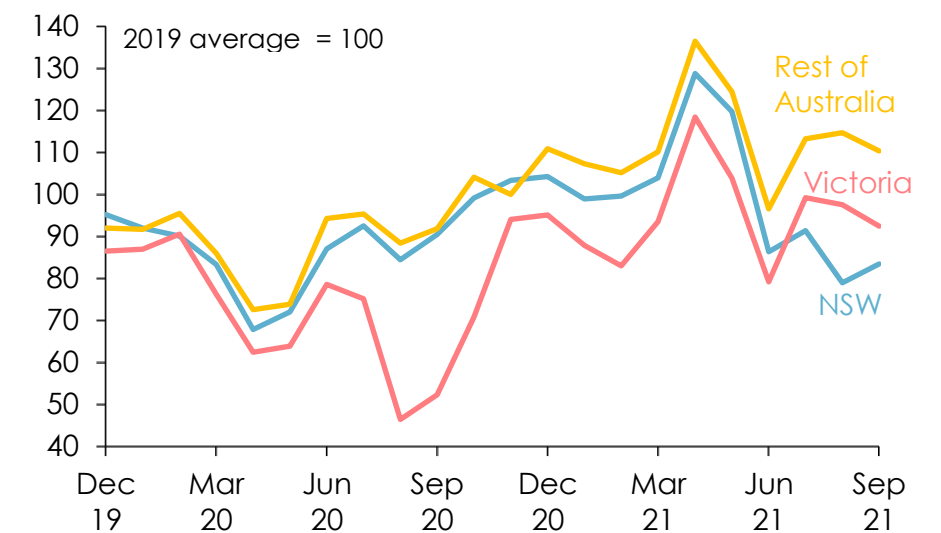
## Retail sales – NSW, Vic & the rest



## Quarterly retail sales volumes



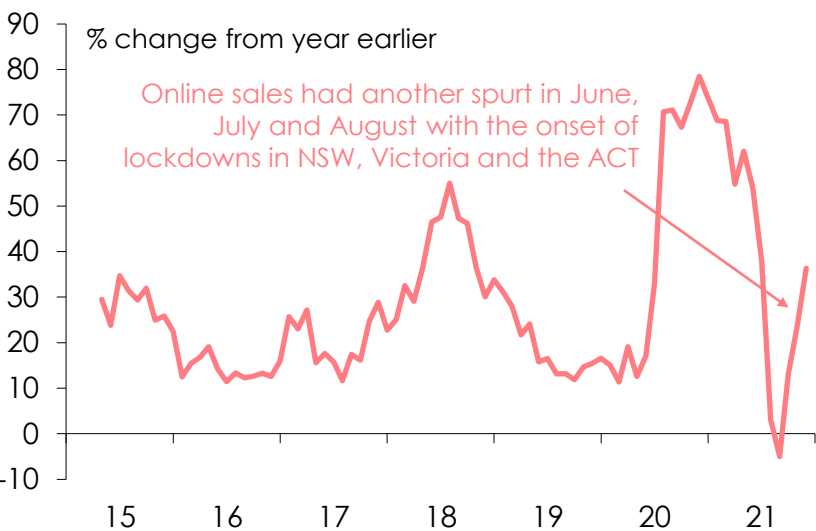
## Vehicle sales – NSW, Vic & the rest



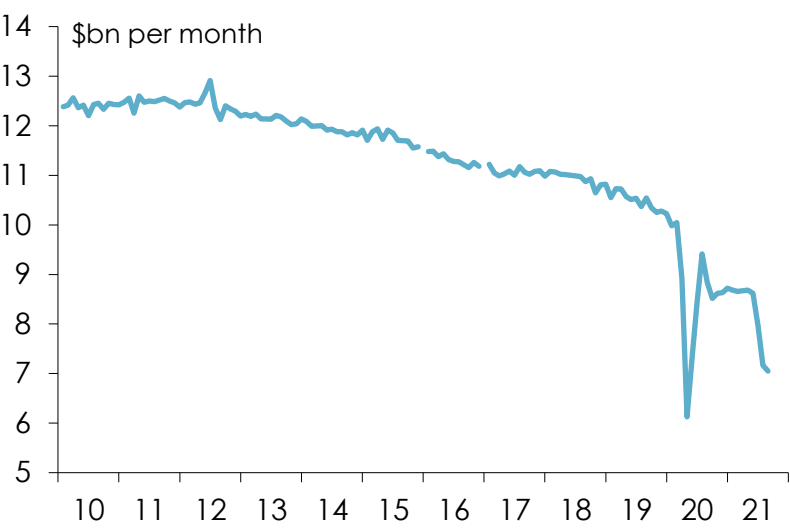
Note: see also [slide 103](#) for more detail on the composition of retail sales since the onset of the pandemic. Sources: ABS, [Retail Trade, Australia](#); Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries [VFACTS](#) (seasonal adjustment of FCAI data by Corinna). September retail sales data will be released on 29<sup>th</sup> October; October motor vehicle sales data will be released in the second week of November. [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

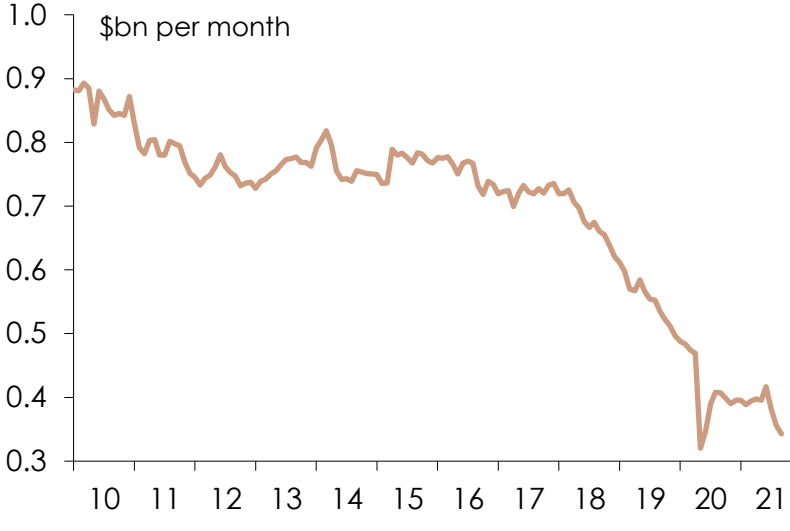
Growth in online retail sales



ATM cash withdrawals



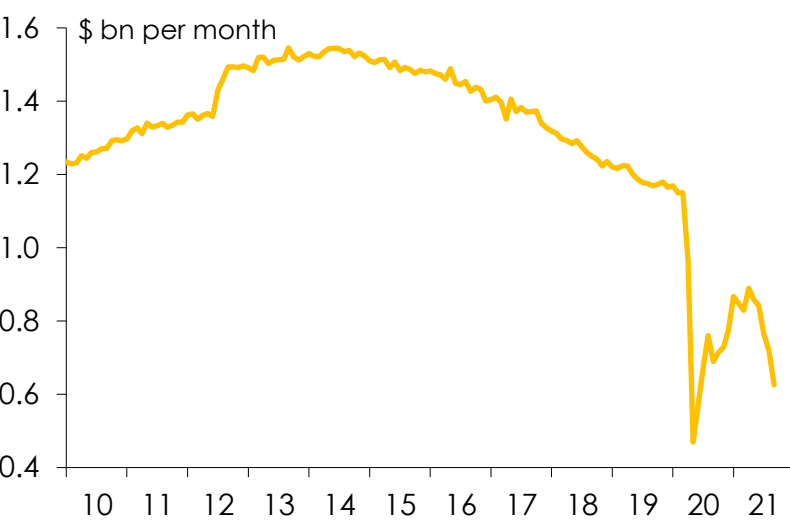
Credit card cash advances



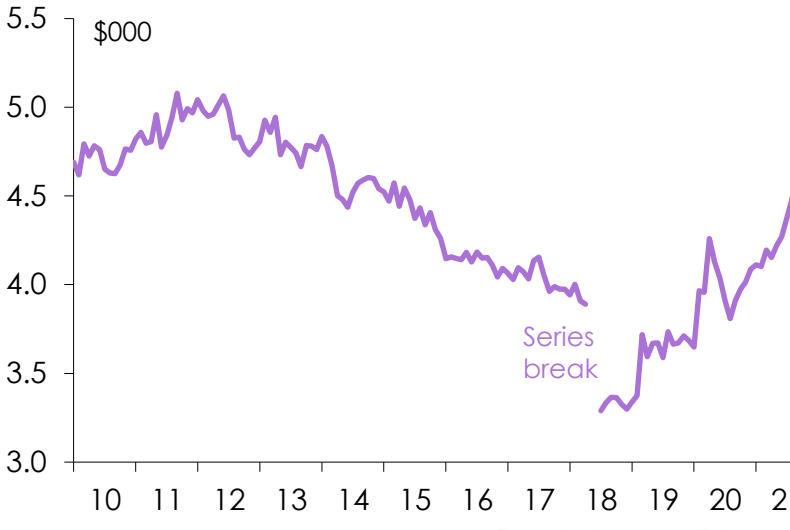
Online retail 'market share'



Debit card cash-outs



Direct entry payments

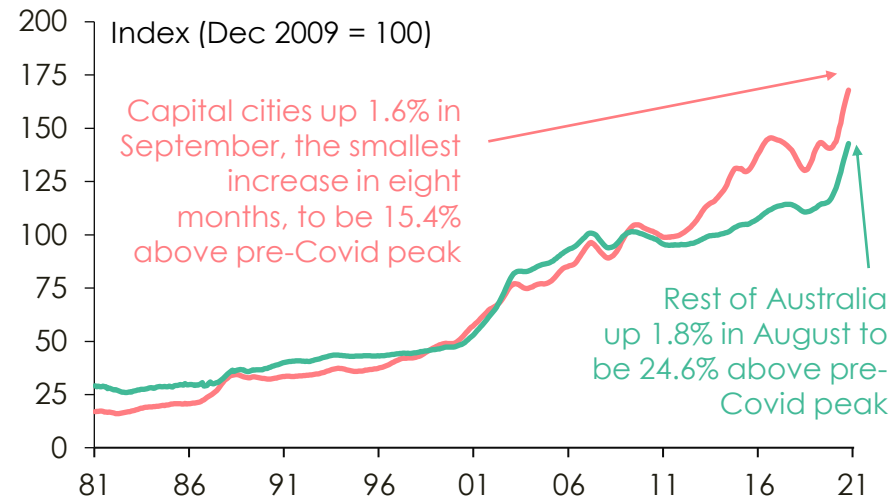


Sources: ABS, [Retail Trade, Australia](#); RBA, [Statistical Tables](#), C1, C2, C4 and C6. Latest data are for August: September online retail sales data will be published on 4<sup>th</sup> November; while September payments system data will be released on 7<sup>th</sup> November. [Return to "What's New"](#).

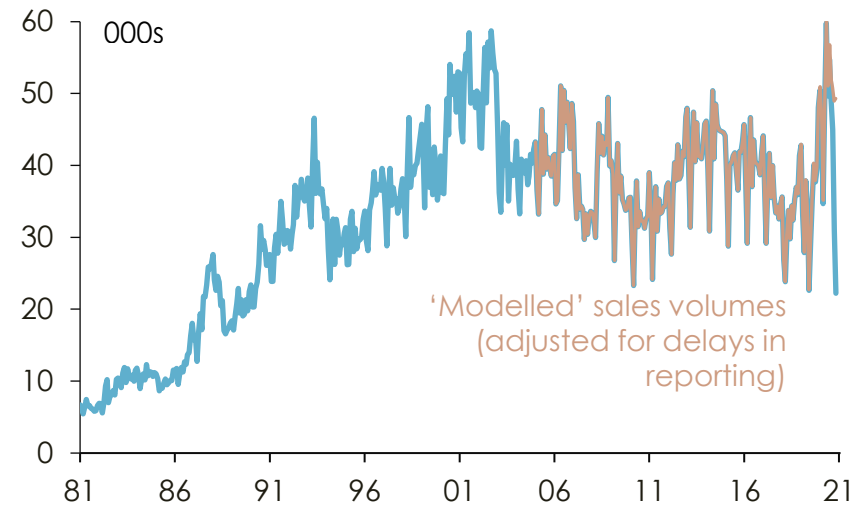


# Property prices rose another 1.6% in September, the smallest increase since January, to be 18% above their pre-covid peak

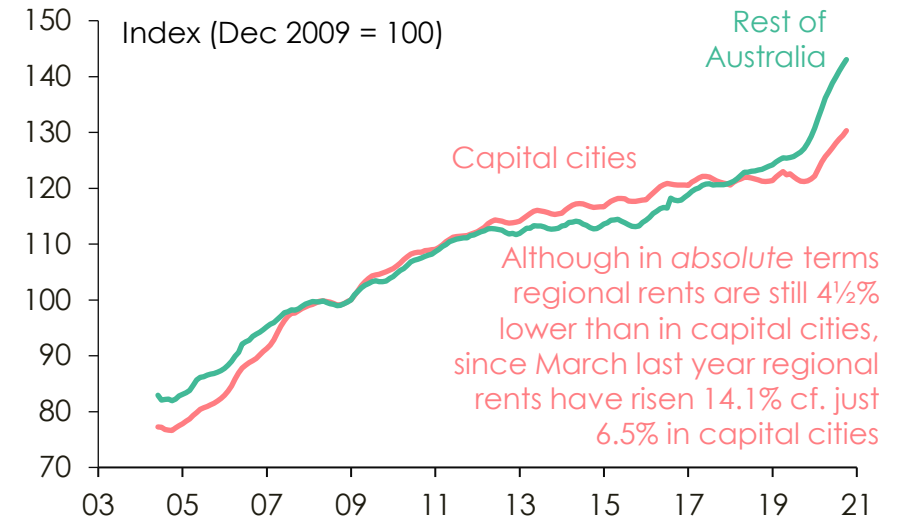
## Residential property prices



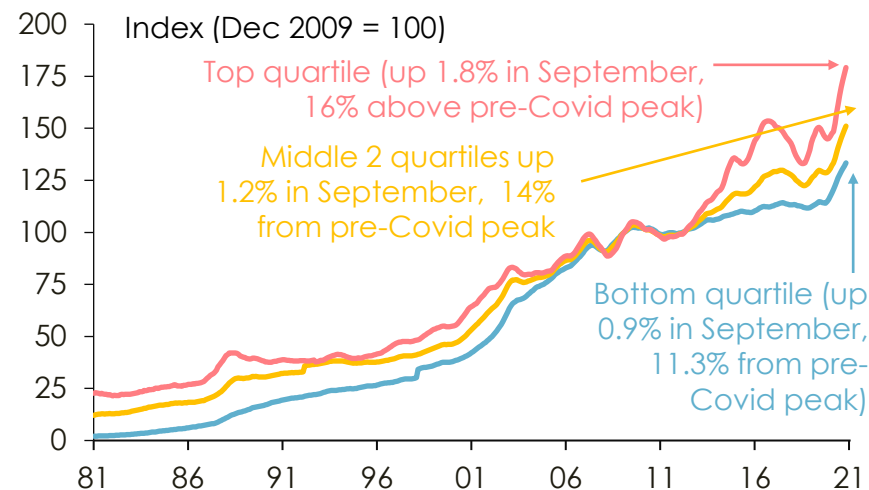
## Residential property sales volumes



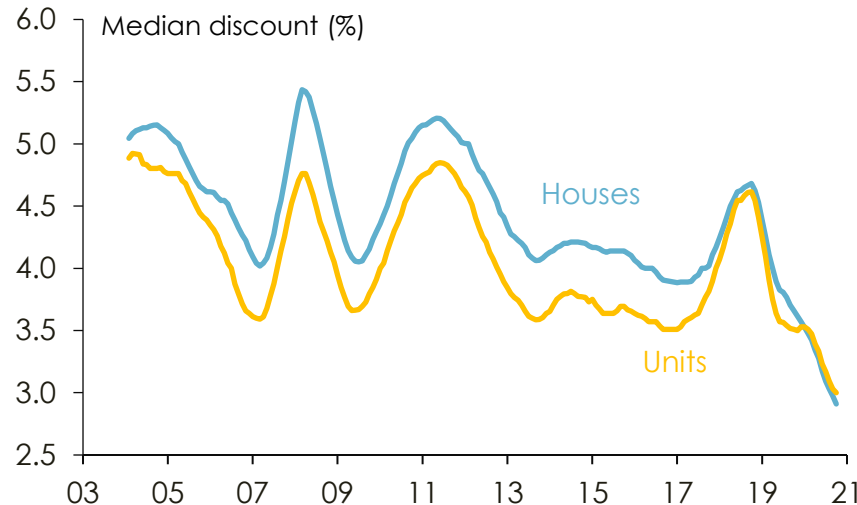
## Residential rents



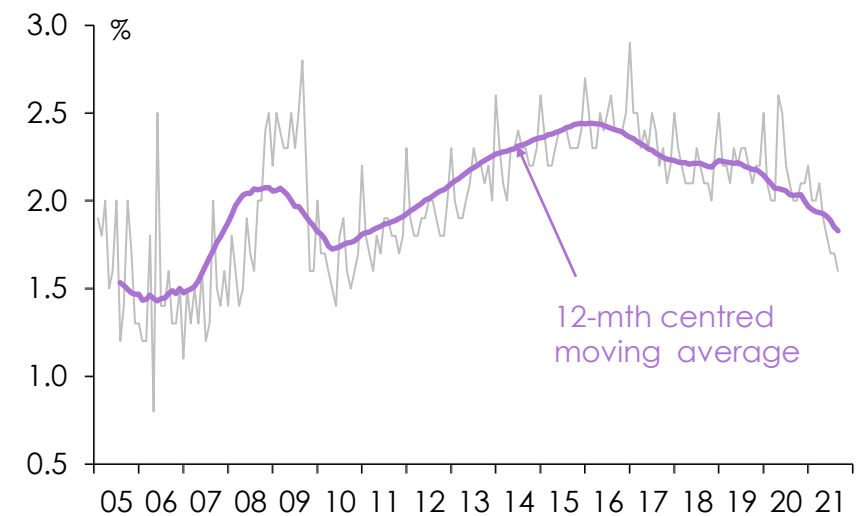
## Property prices by tier



## Vendor discounting



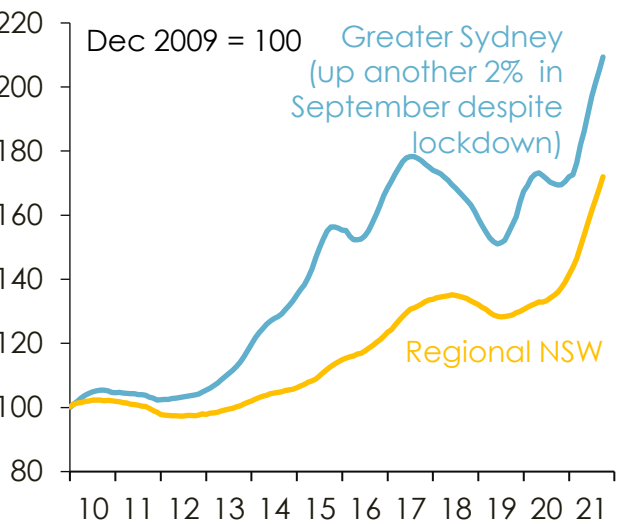
## Capital city rental vacancy rates



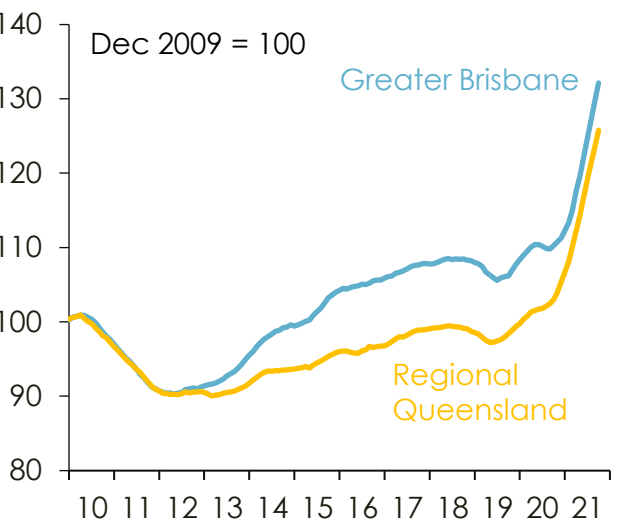
Note: The index of property prices measures the 'organic' change in underlying sales values by using a hedonic regression methodology that takes account of changes in the characteristics of properties being sold from month to month. Property price data shown here are seasonally adjusted. The index of 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 September (except for vacancy rates which is August). October prices, sales volumes and rents data will be released on 1<sup>st</sup> November. Sources: [CoreLogic](#); [SQM Research](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

# Prices in Adelaide, Canberra and Hobart, and regional NSW, Victoria, Qld and Tasmania are all more than 20% above their pre-pandemic peaks

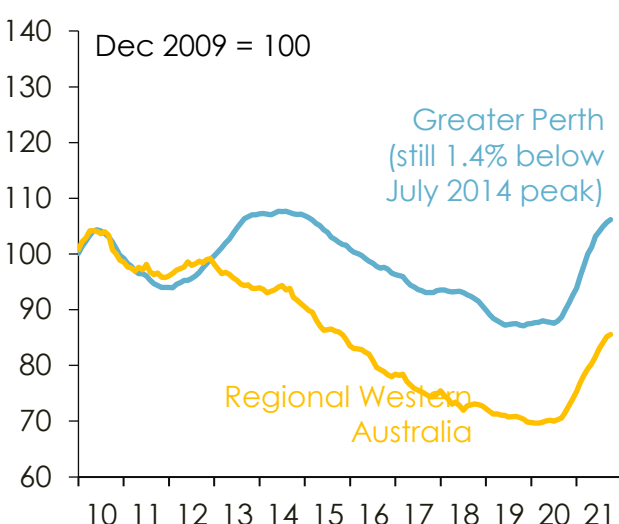
## New South Wales



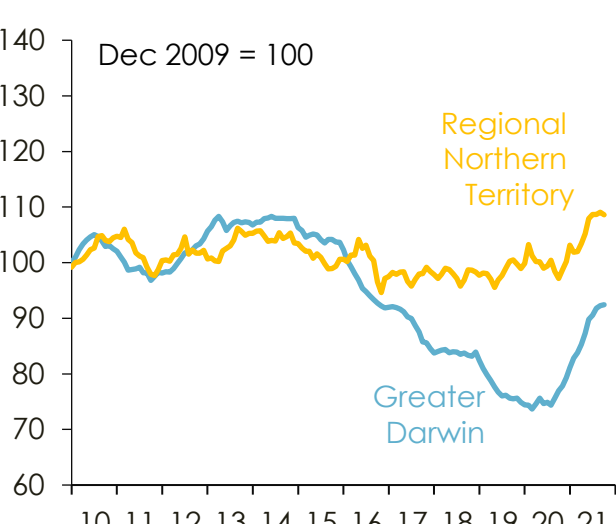
## Queensland



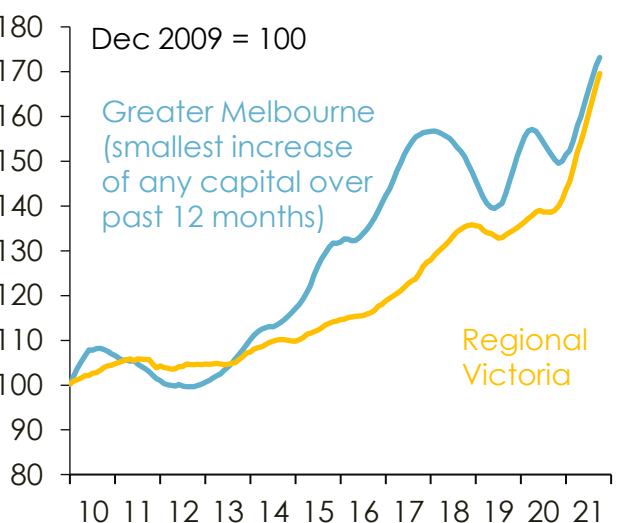
## Western Australia



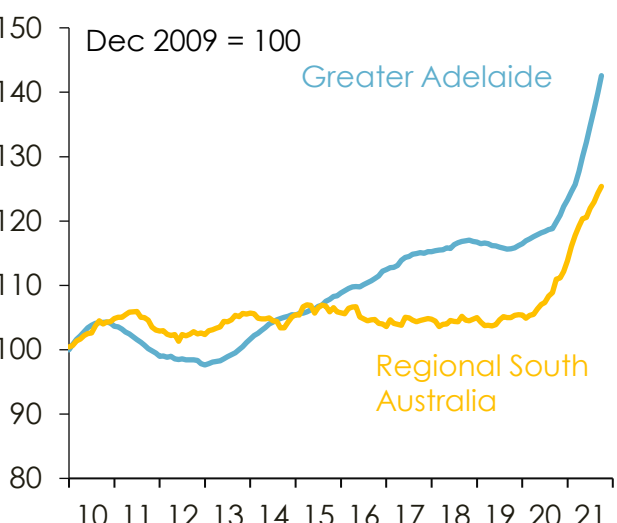
## Northern Territory



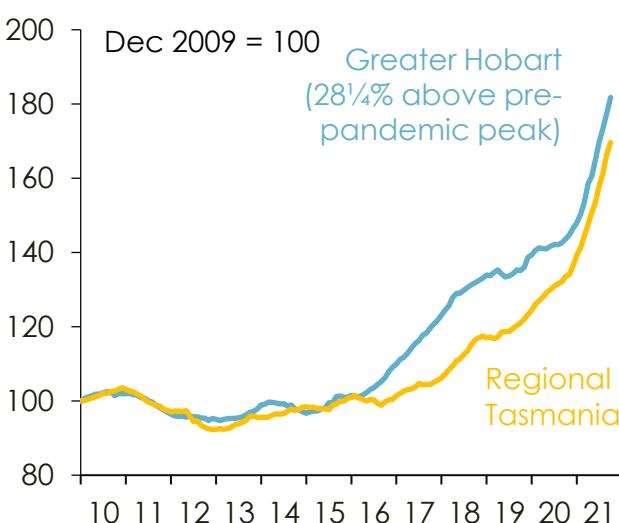
## Victoria



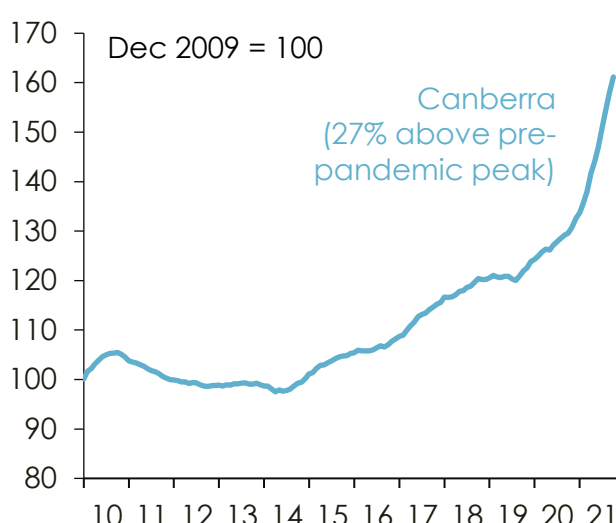
## South Australia



## Tasmania



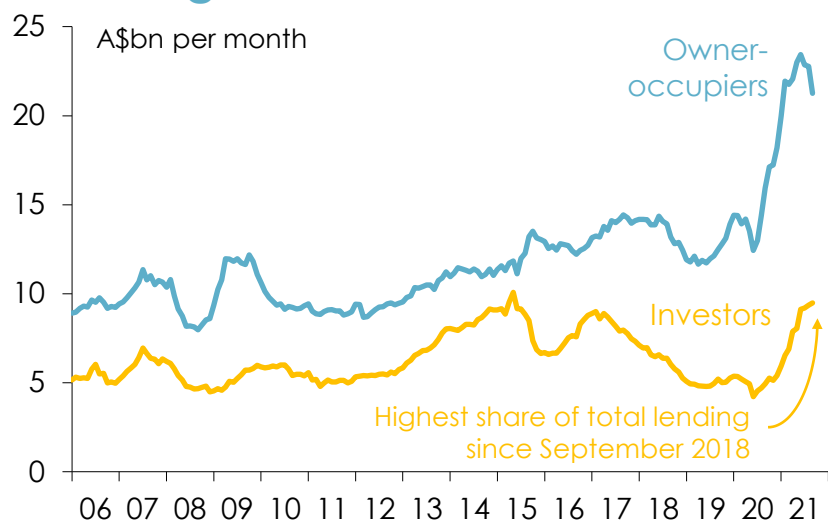
## Australian Capital Territory



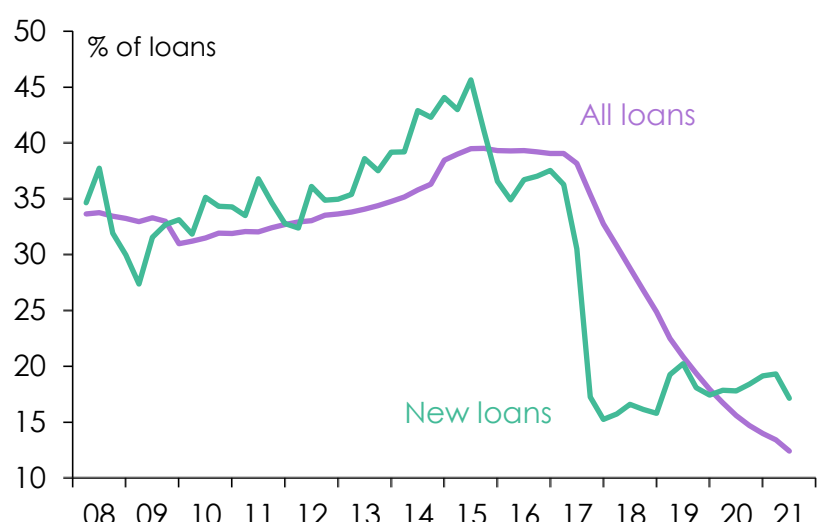
Note: The index of property prices measures the 'organic' change in underlying sales values by using a hedonic regression methodology that takes account of changes in the characteristics of properties being sold from month to month. Property price data are seasonally adjusted. Latest data are September; October data will be released on 1<sup>st</sup> November. 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'

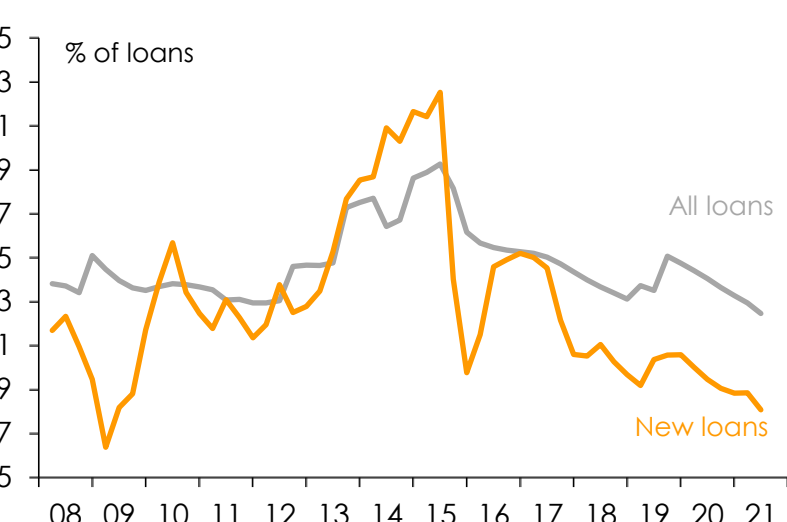
Housing finance commitments



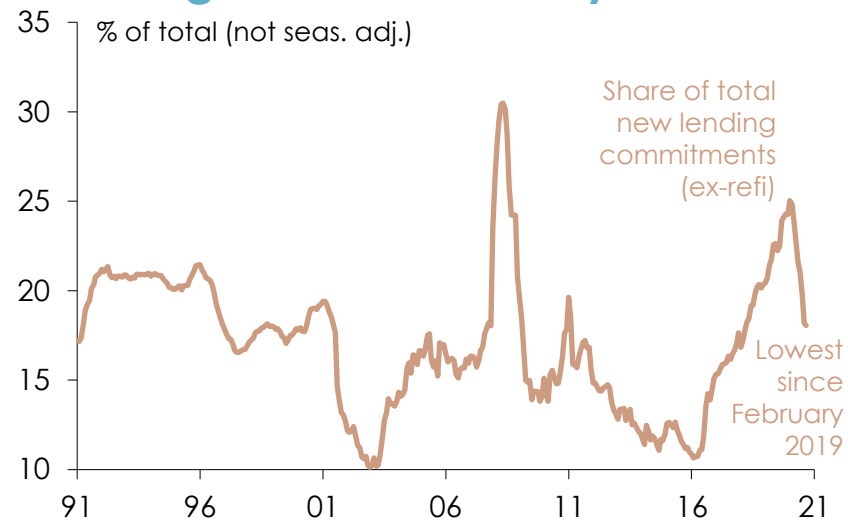
Interest-only loans as pc of total



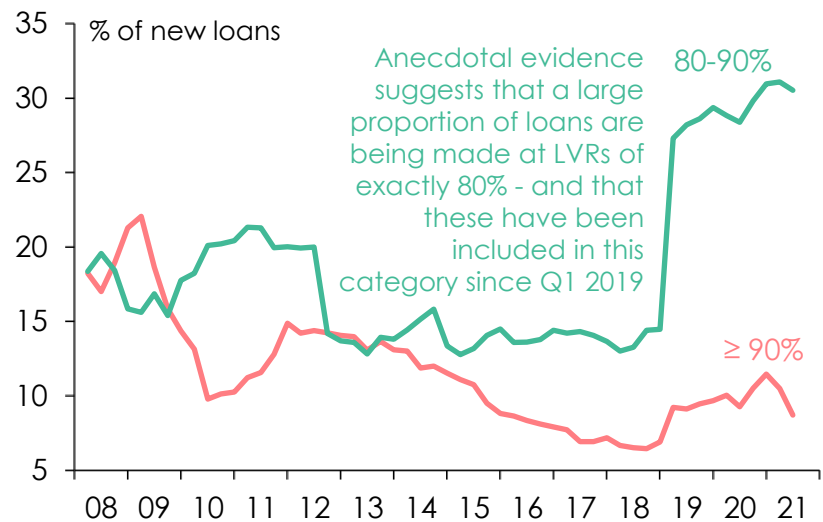
Loans to investors as a pc of total



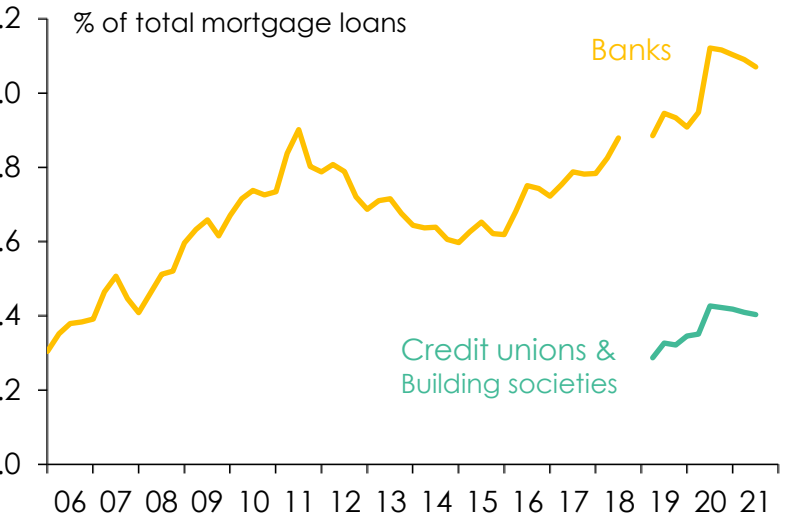
Lending to first home buyers



High LVR loans as a pc of total



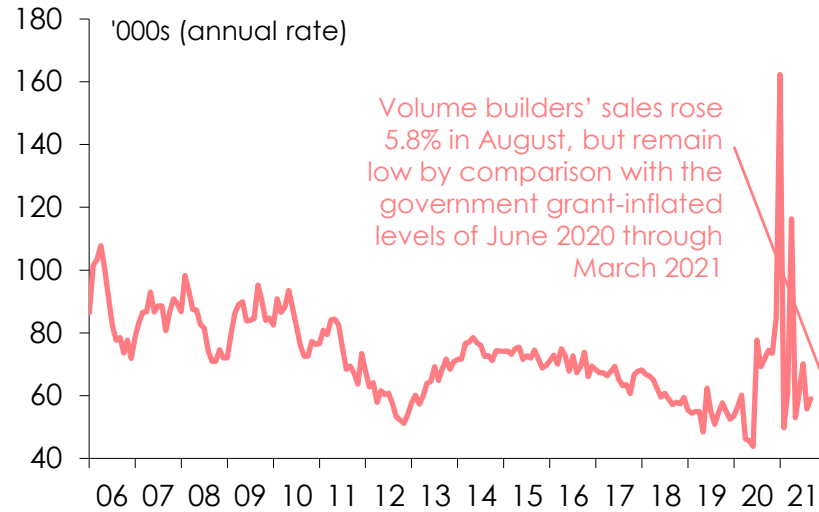
Non-performing mortgage loans



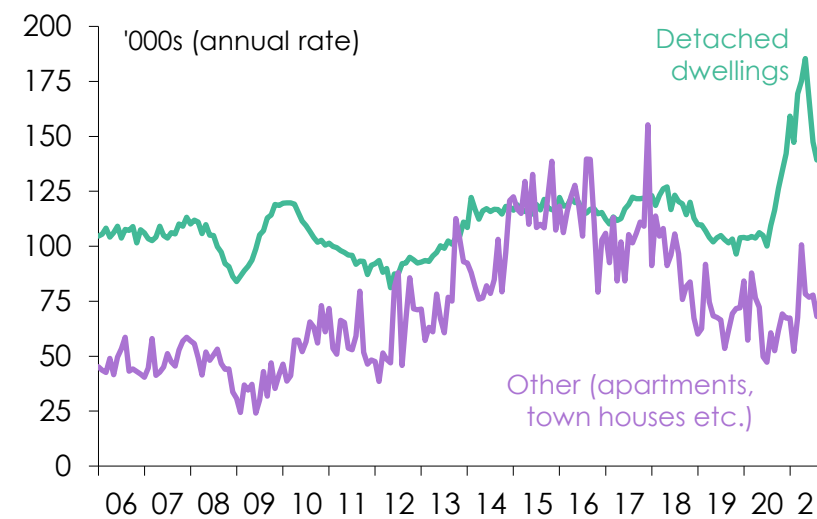
Sources: ABS, [Lending Indicators](#); Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA), [Quarterly authorised deposit-taking institution statistics](#). September housing finance data will be released on 1<sup>st</sup> October; APRA data on ADI property exposures for the September quarter will be released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

# Housing approvals rose 6.8% in August, after four consecutive declines, although most of the rebound was in the volatile apartments component

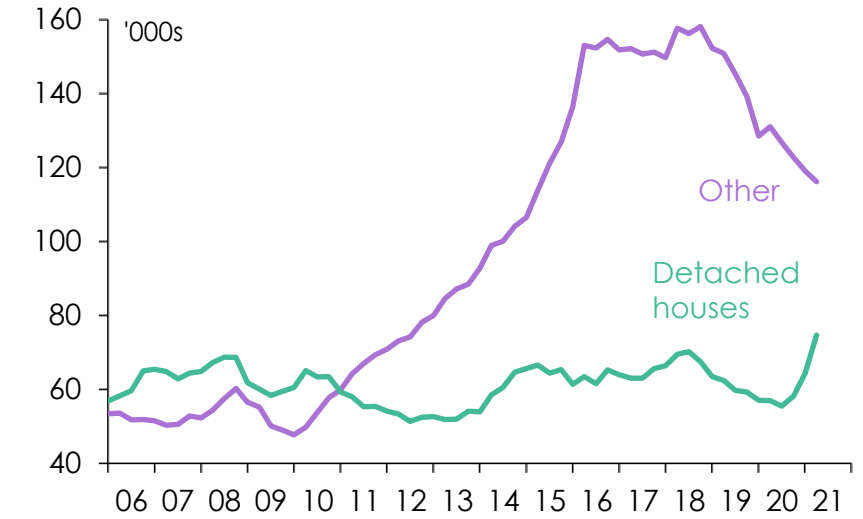
## Large builders' new home sales



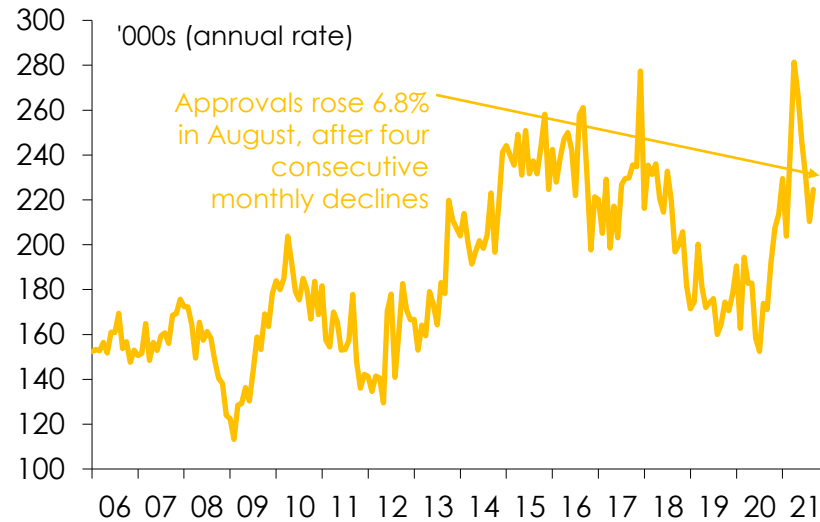
## Building approvals, by type



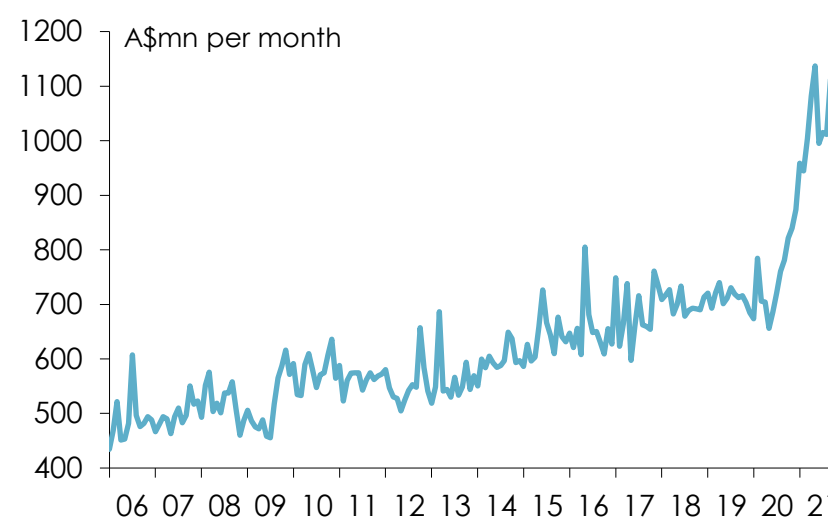
## Dwellings under construction



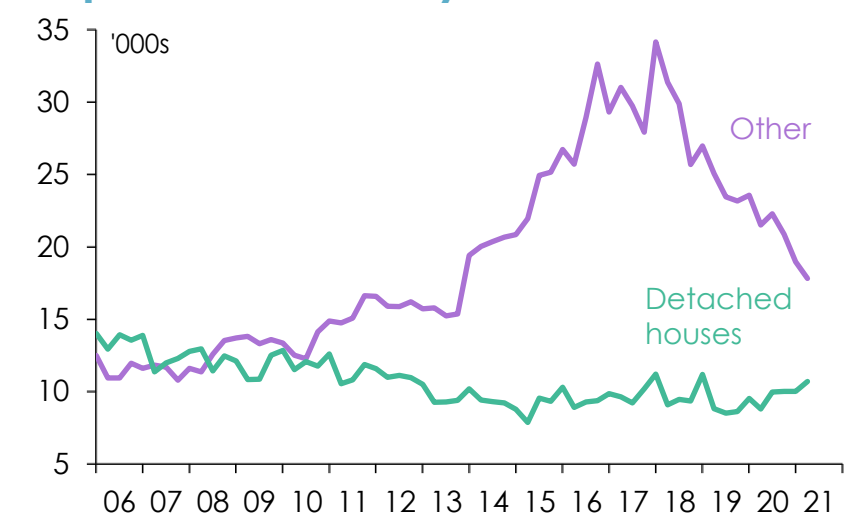
## Residential building approvals



## Alterations & additions approved



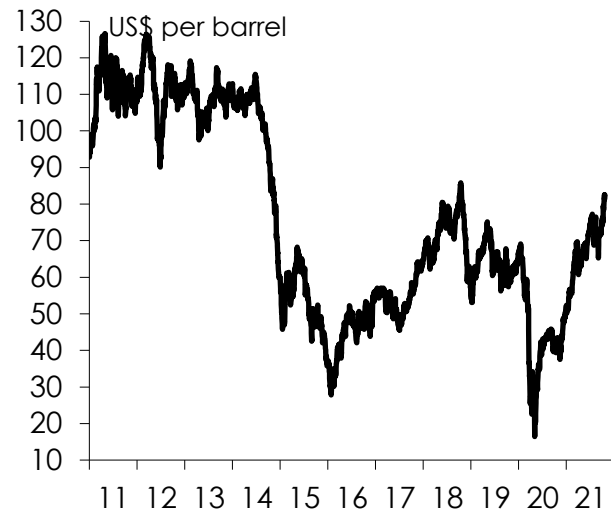
## 'Pipeline' of work yet to be started



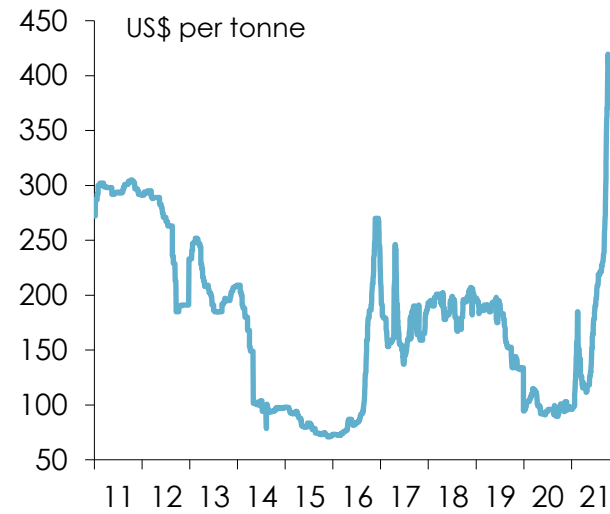
Note: 'New home sales' are of detached dwellings only and exclude small-scale builders. Sources: ABS, [Building Approvals](#); Housing Industry Association. September building approvals data will be released on 3<sup>rd</sup> November; June quarter dwellings under construction and 'pipeline' data on 13<sup>th</sup> October. [Return to "What's New"](#).

# The iron ore price continued its rebound this week although it's still 46½% off its peak, oil and base metal prices also rose but thermal coal fell 6%

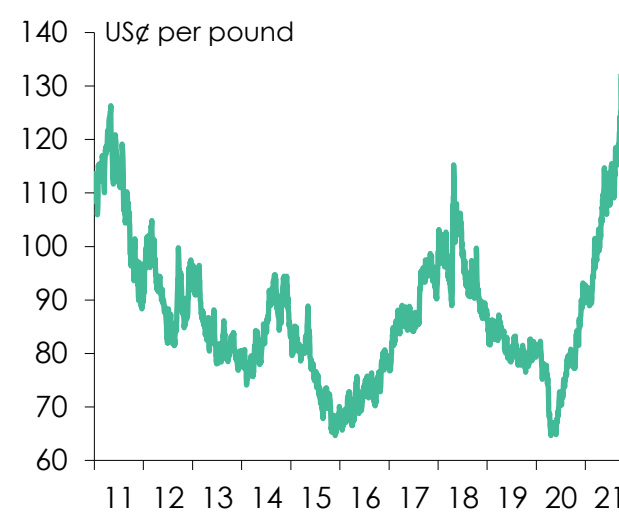
Brent crude oil



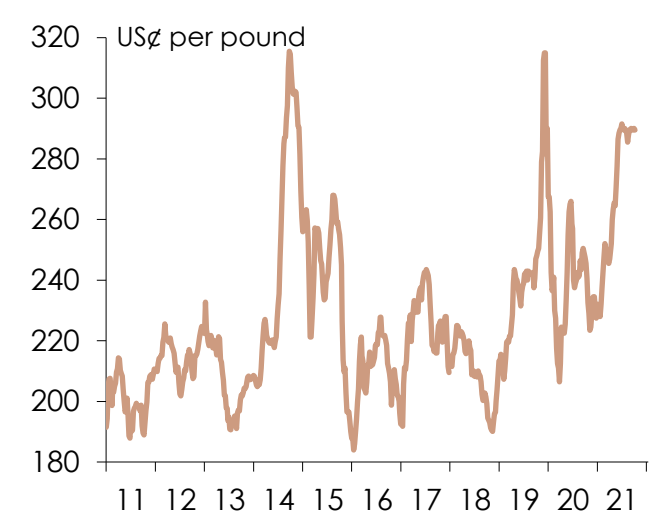
Metallurgical coal



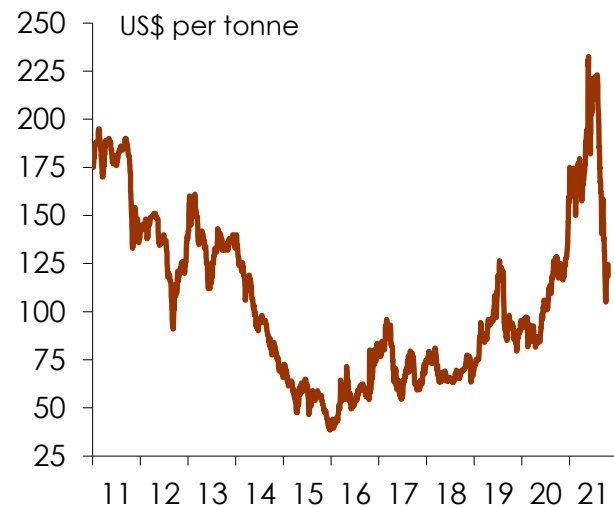
Aluminium



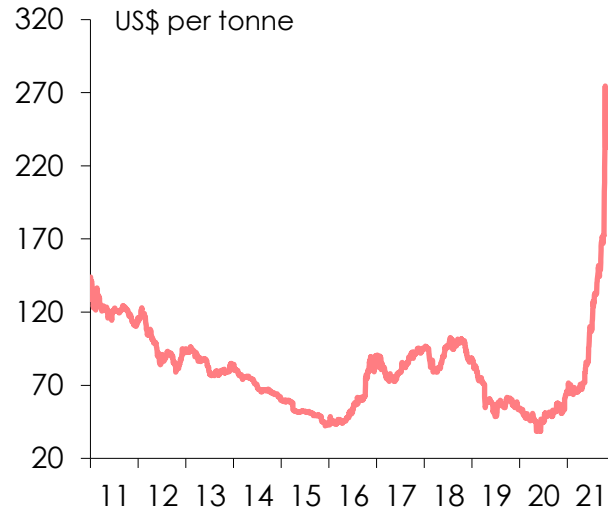
Beef



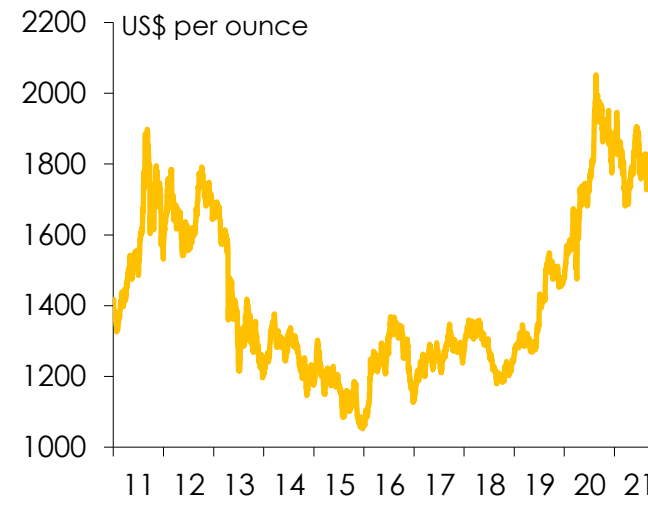
Iron ore



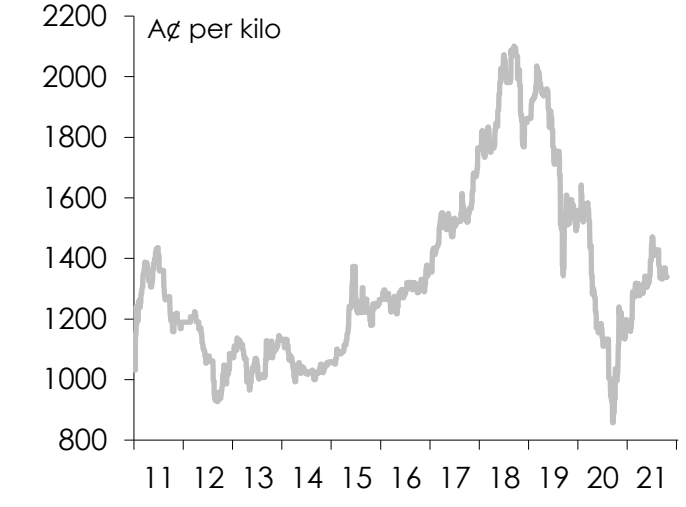
Thermal coal



Gold

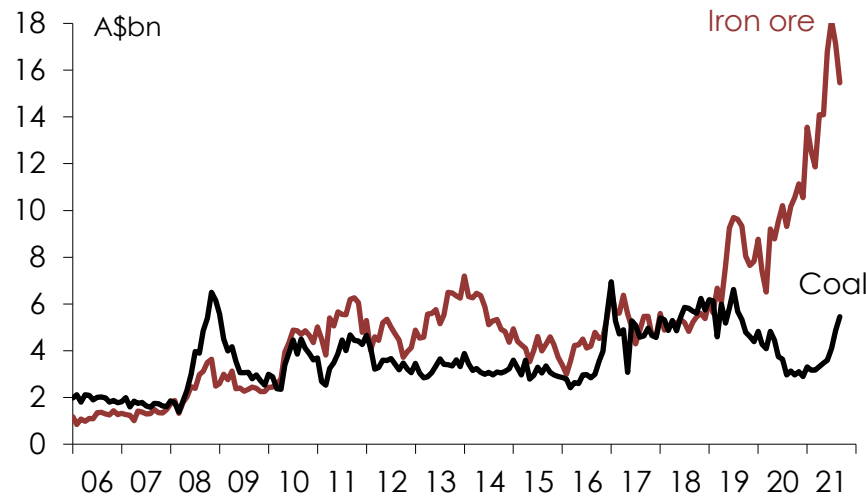


Wool

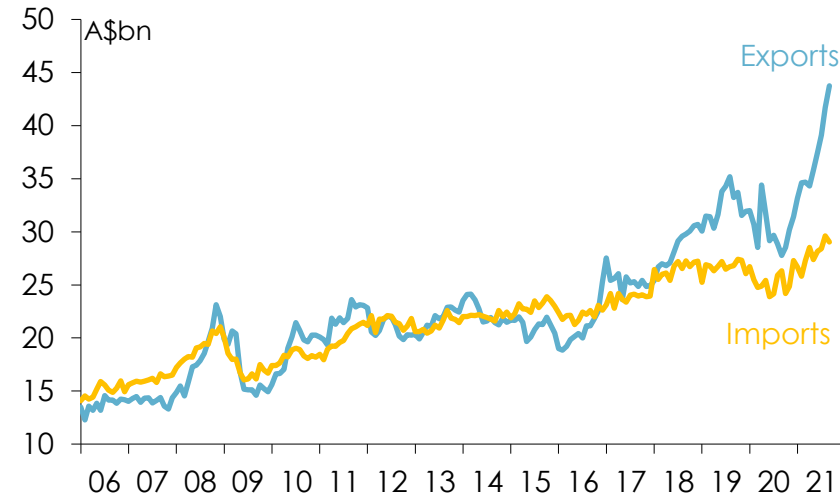


# Australia registered another record trade surplus of \$15bn in August, thanks to large increases in coal, LNG & metals exports and lower imports

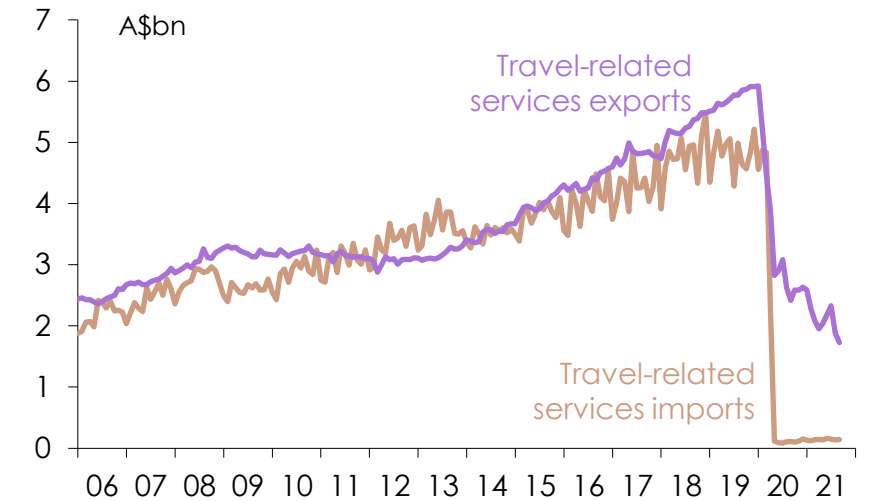
## Iron ore and coal exports



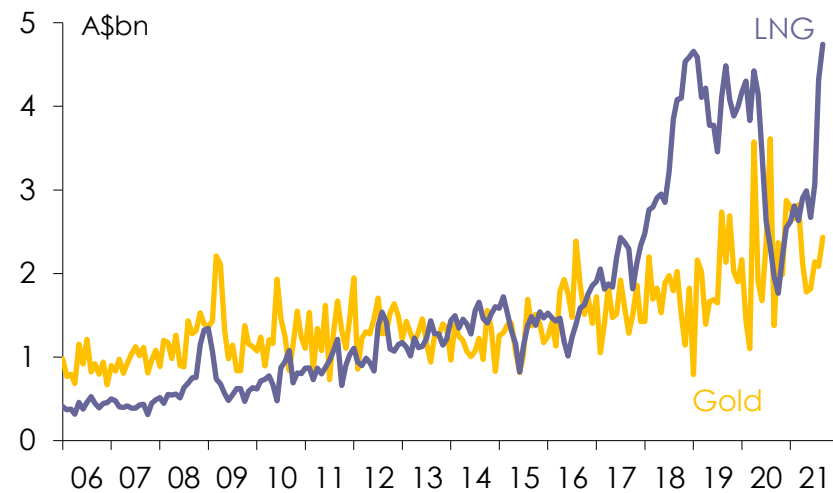
## Merchandise exports and imports



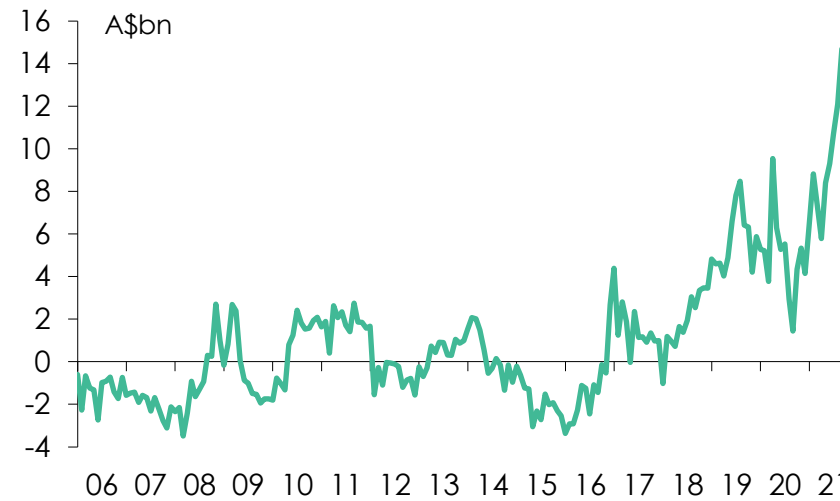
## Tourism-related services trade



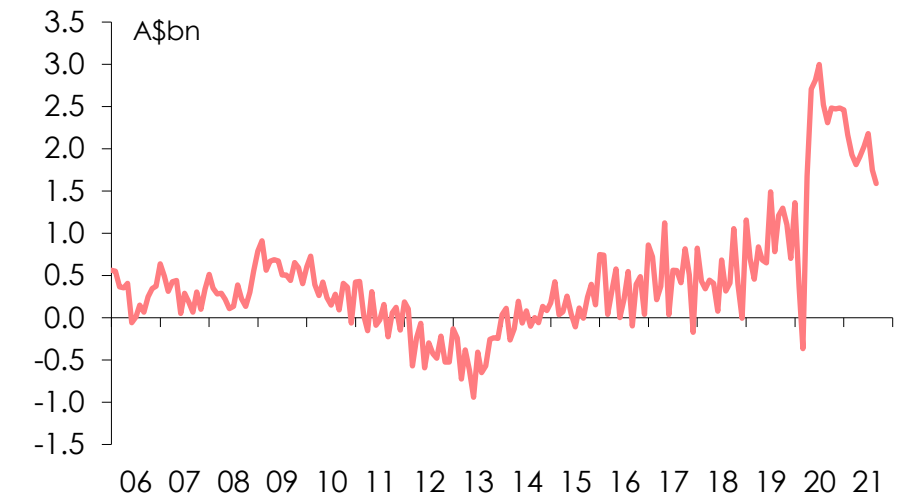
## LNG and gold exports



## Merchandise trade balance



## Tourism services trade balance

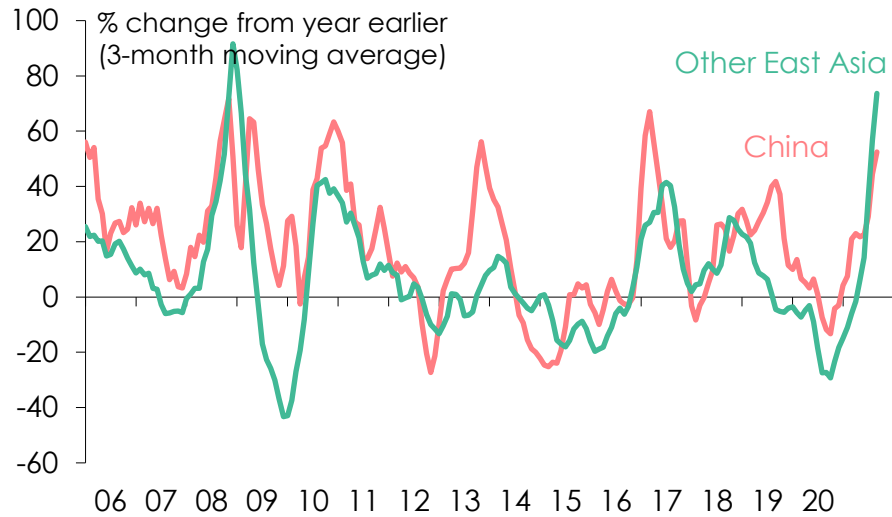


Source: ABS, [International Trade in Goods and Services, Australia](#), August 2021. September data will be released on 4<sup>th</sup> November. [Return to "What's New"](#).

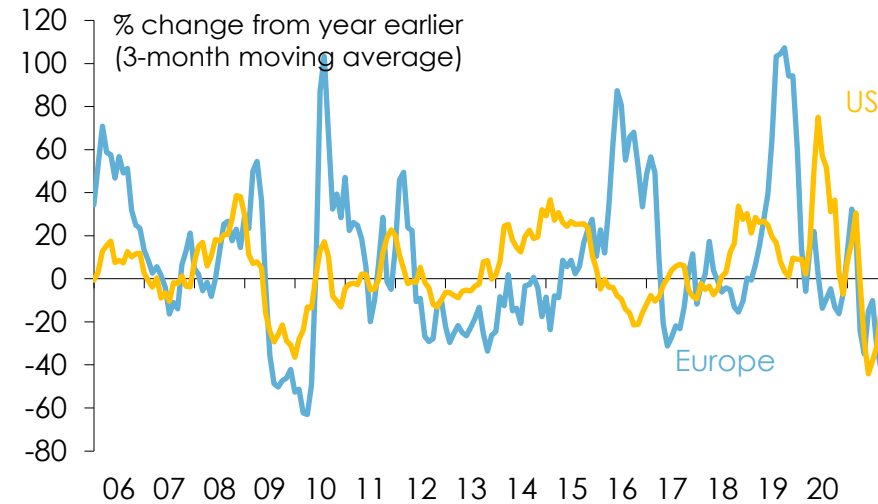


# Australia continues to run a large trade surplus with China despite China's sanctions against a range of Australian exports, thanks to iron ore

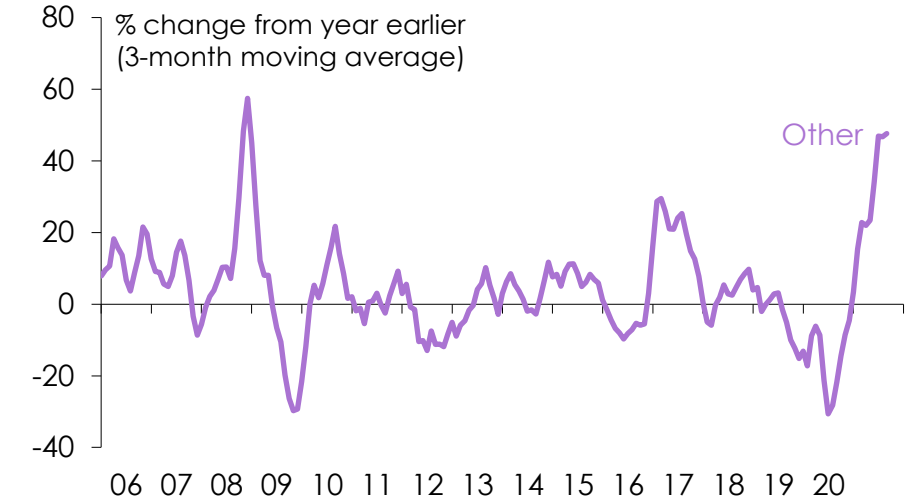
## Merchandise exports – East Asia



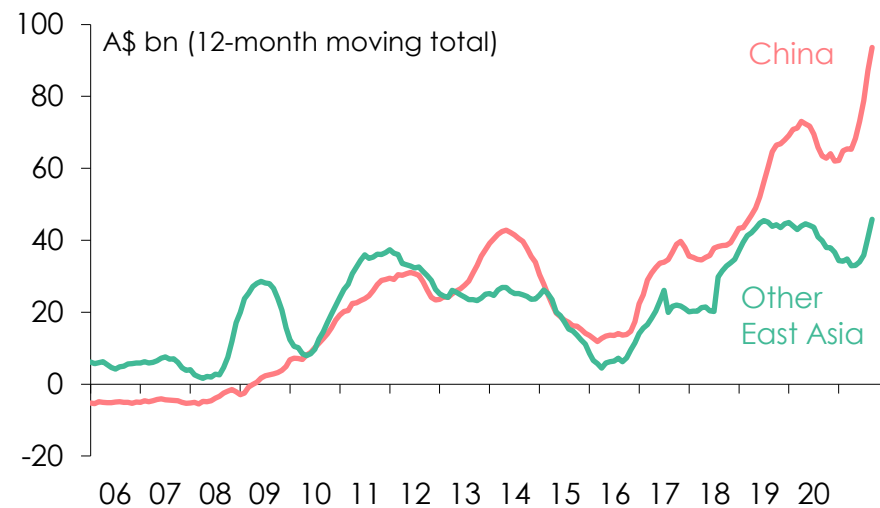
## Merchandise exports – US & Europe



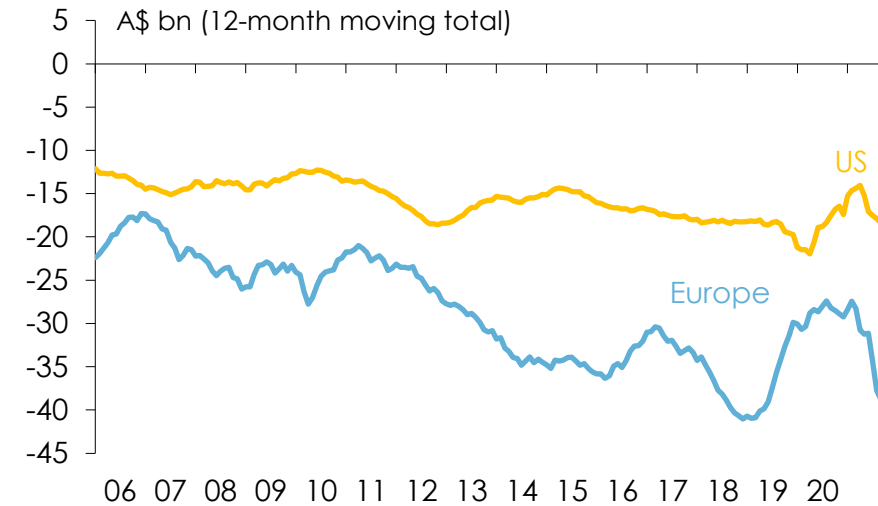
## Merchandise exports – other



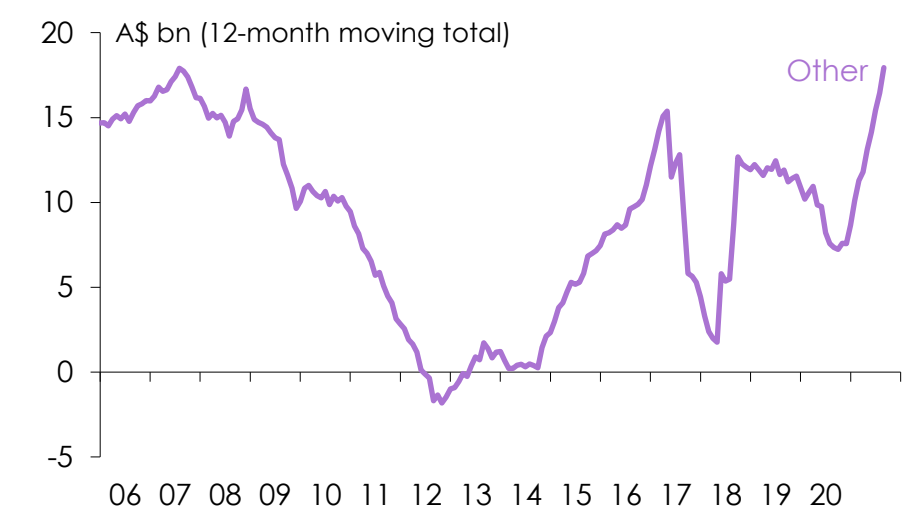
## Goods trade balance – East Asia



## Goods trade balance – US & Europe



## Goods trade balance – other

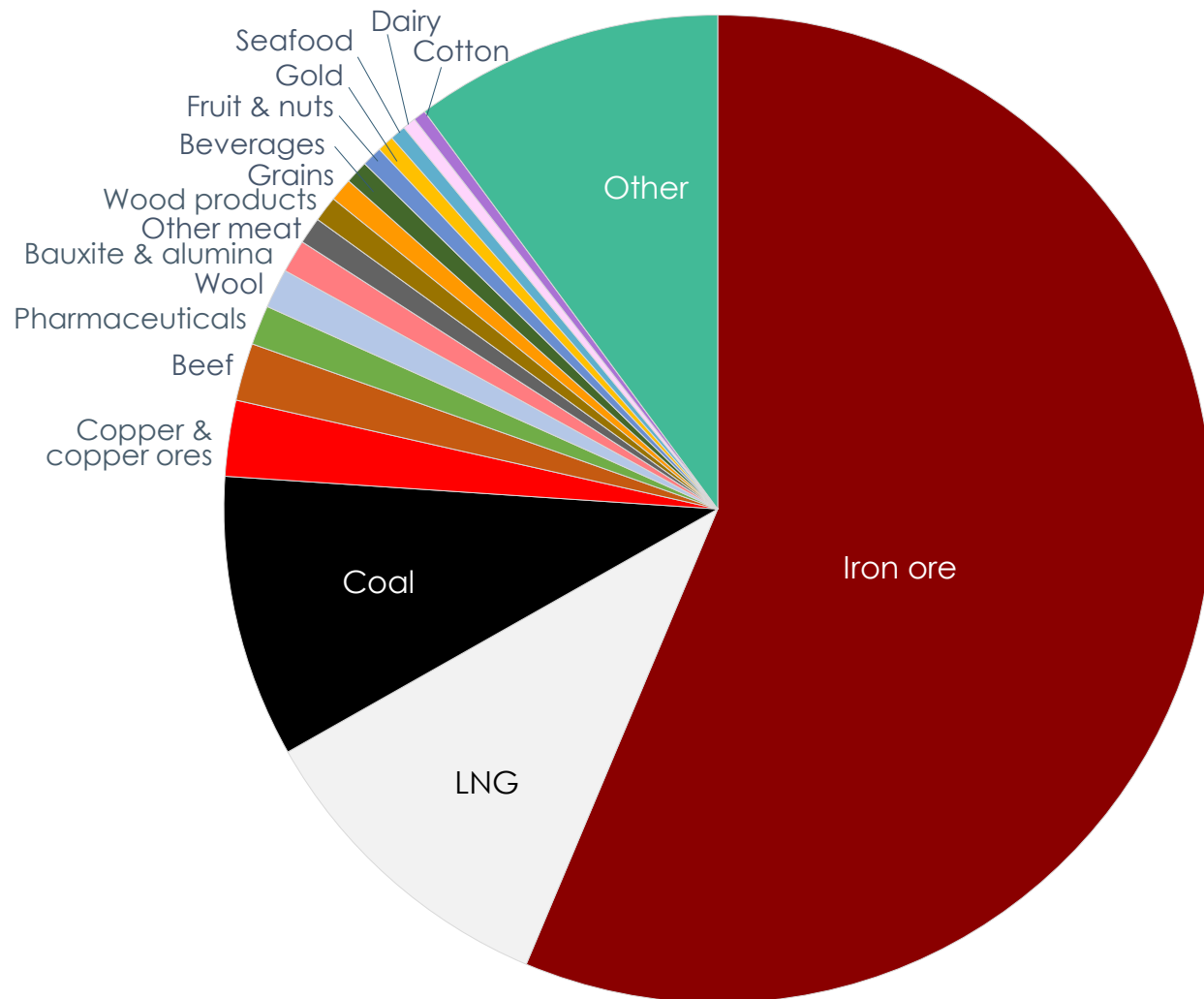


Note: 'Other East Asia' includes Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and ASEAN. 'Europe' includes the EU, UK and Switzerland. 'Other' includes India, New Zealand and the Pacific, Canada, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and others not included in the foregoing. Latest data are for August. Source: ABS, [International Trade in Goods and Services, Australia](#), August 2021. September data will be released on 4<sup>th</sup> November. [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



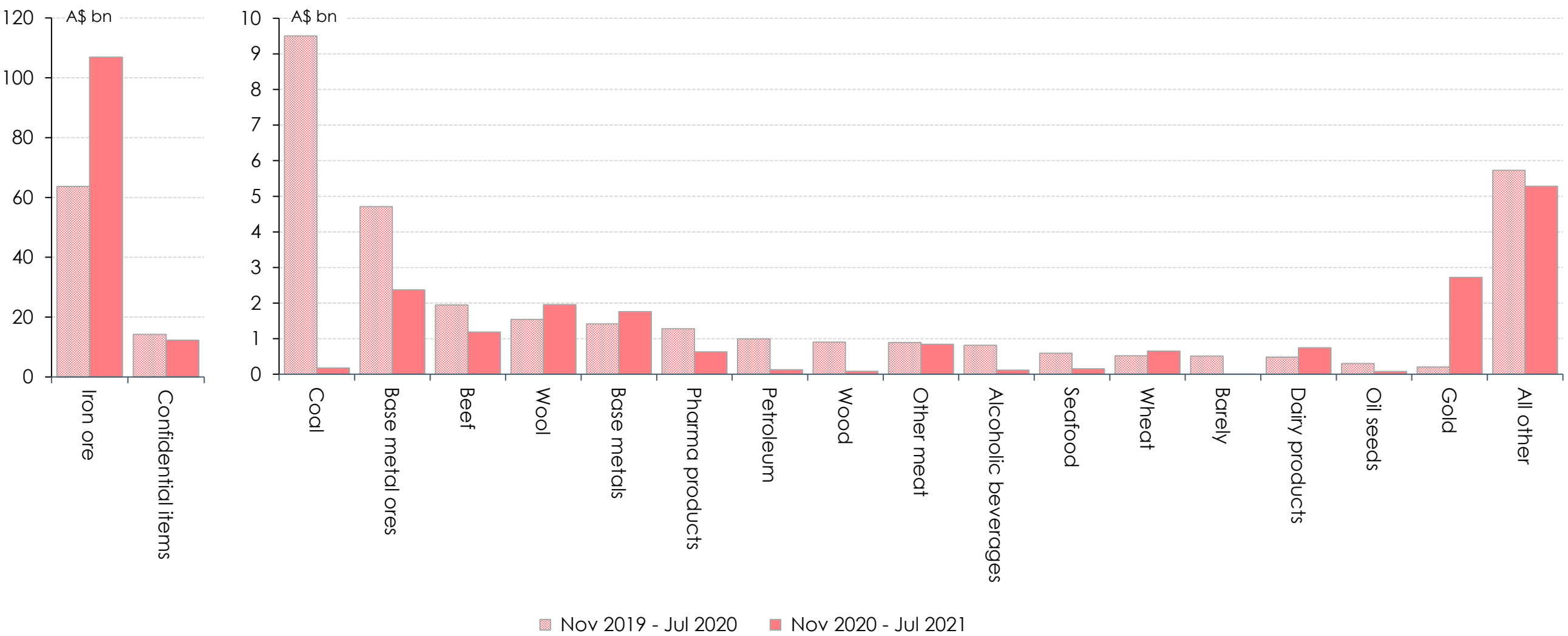
- ❑ China accounted for 39½% of Australia's merchandise exports in FY 2019-20 (the largest proportion any country has since the mid-1950s when 36% of Australia's exports went to the UK)
  - of which iron ore & concentrates accounts for 56%
- ❑ China also accounted for 19% of Australia's services exports 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 – a view likely to intensify after last month's announcement of a new defence pact with the US and UK
- ❑ 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, wheat and dairy products are the only items Australia is selling more to China

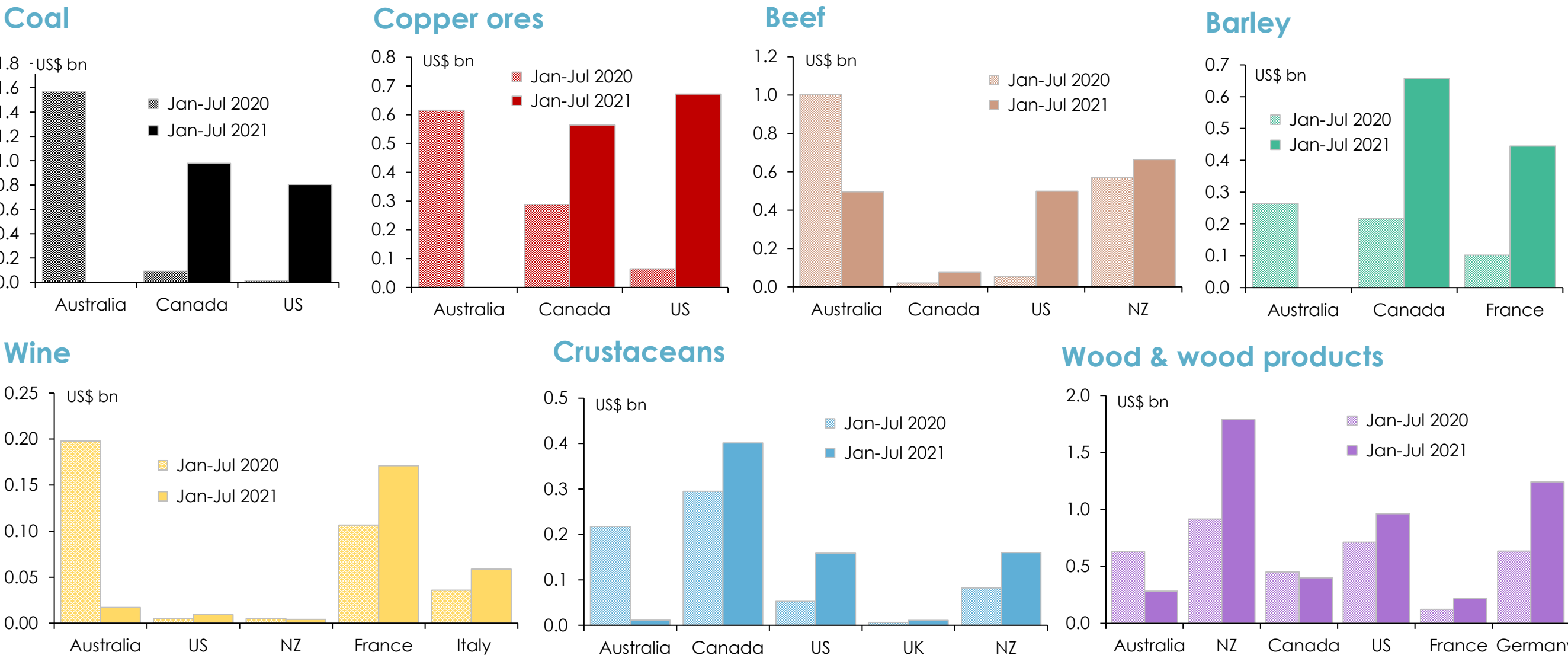
Australian exports to China, eight months to July 2021 compared with eight months to July 2020



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

# “With friends like these ...” – how Australia’s ‘allies’ have been ‘cutting our lunch’ in trade with China

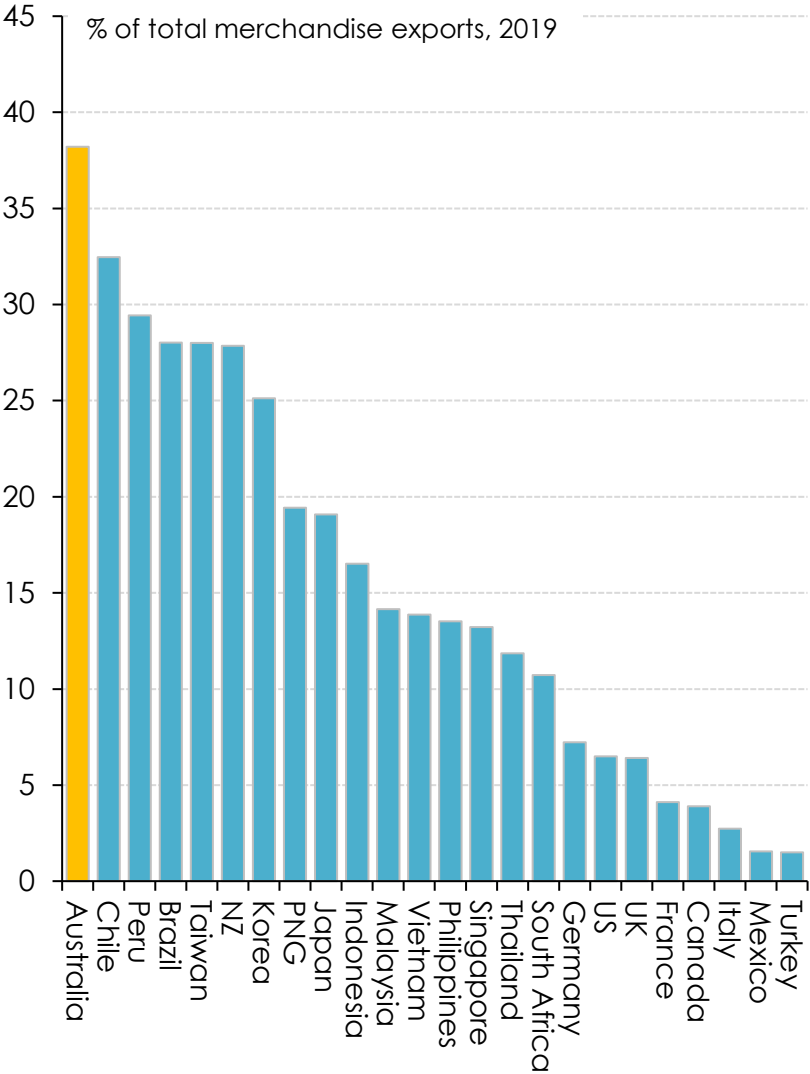
China’s imports of selected products, by origin – January-July 2021 compared with January-July 2020



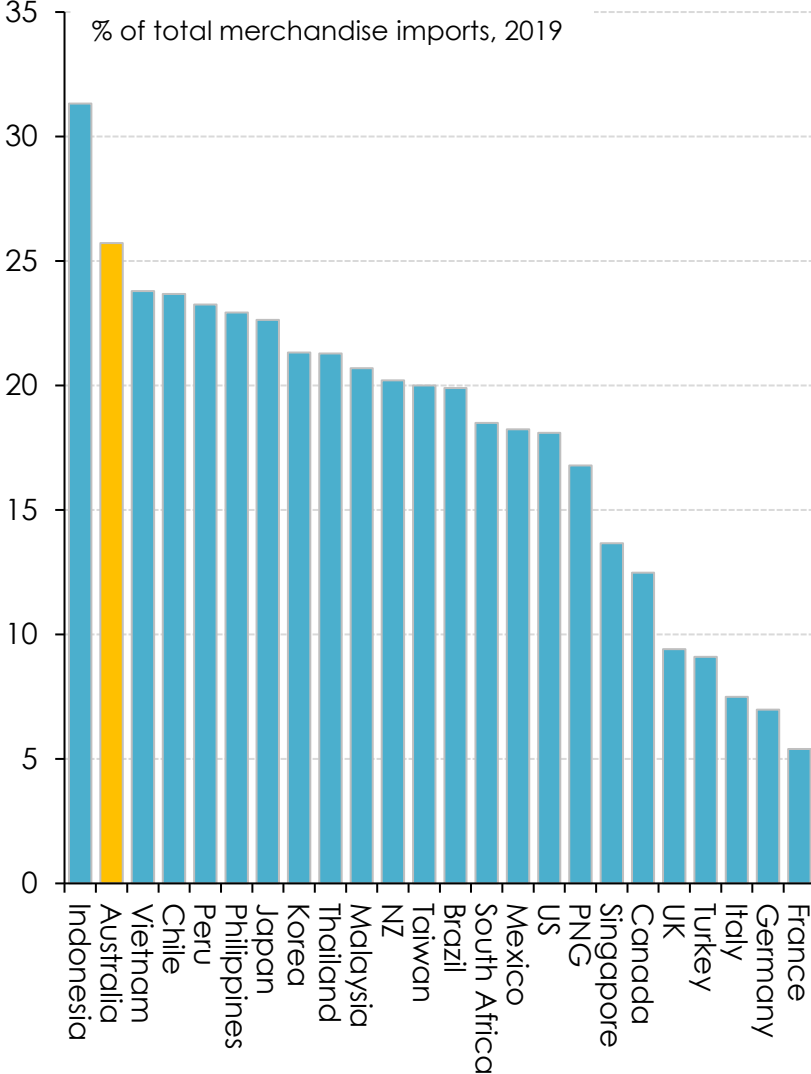
Source: China [General Administration of Customs](#); Corinna. [Return to "What's New"](#).

# 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

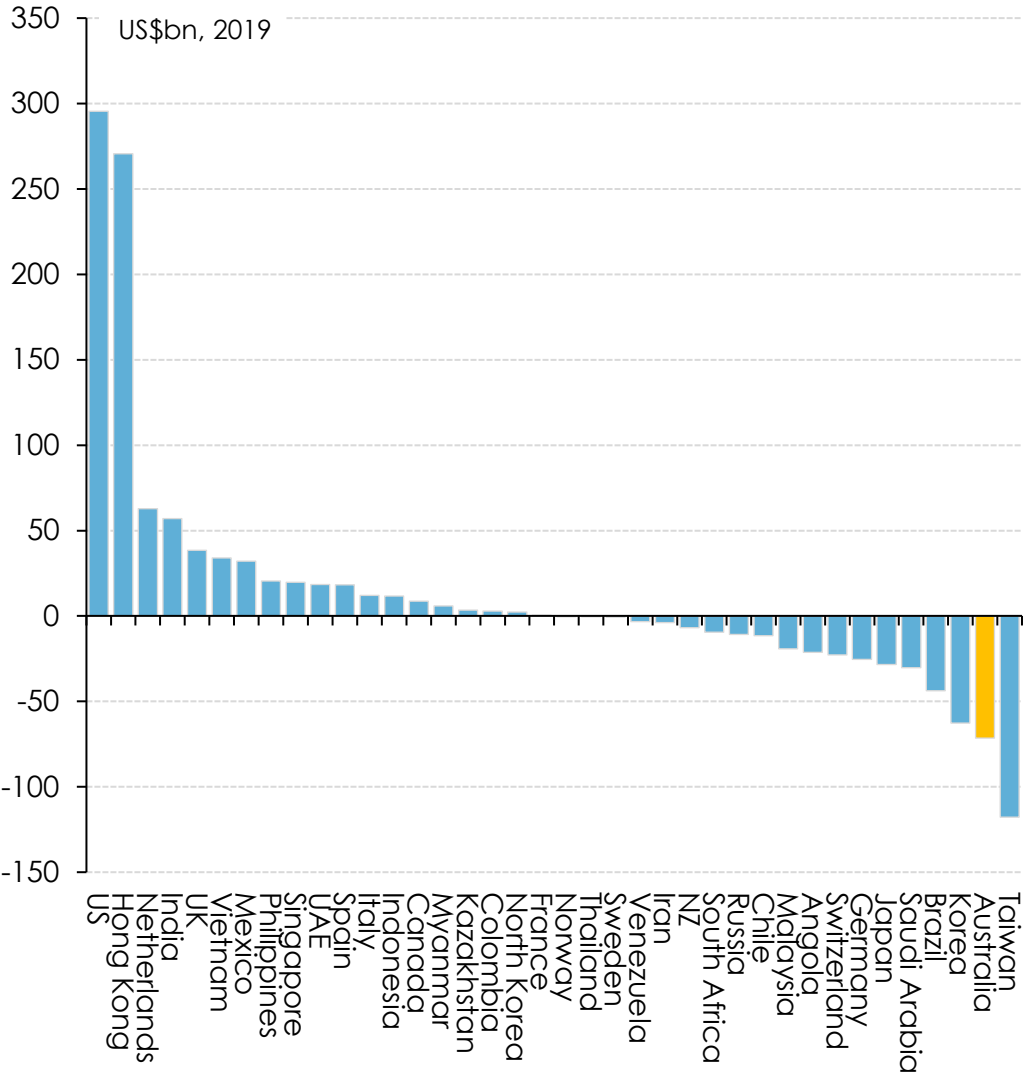
Merchandise exports to China as a pc of total



Merchandise imports from China as a pc of total



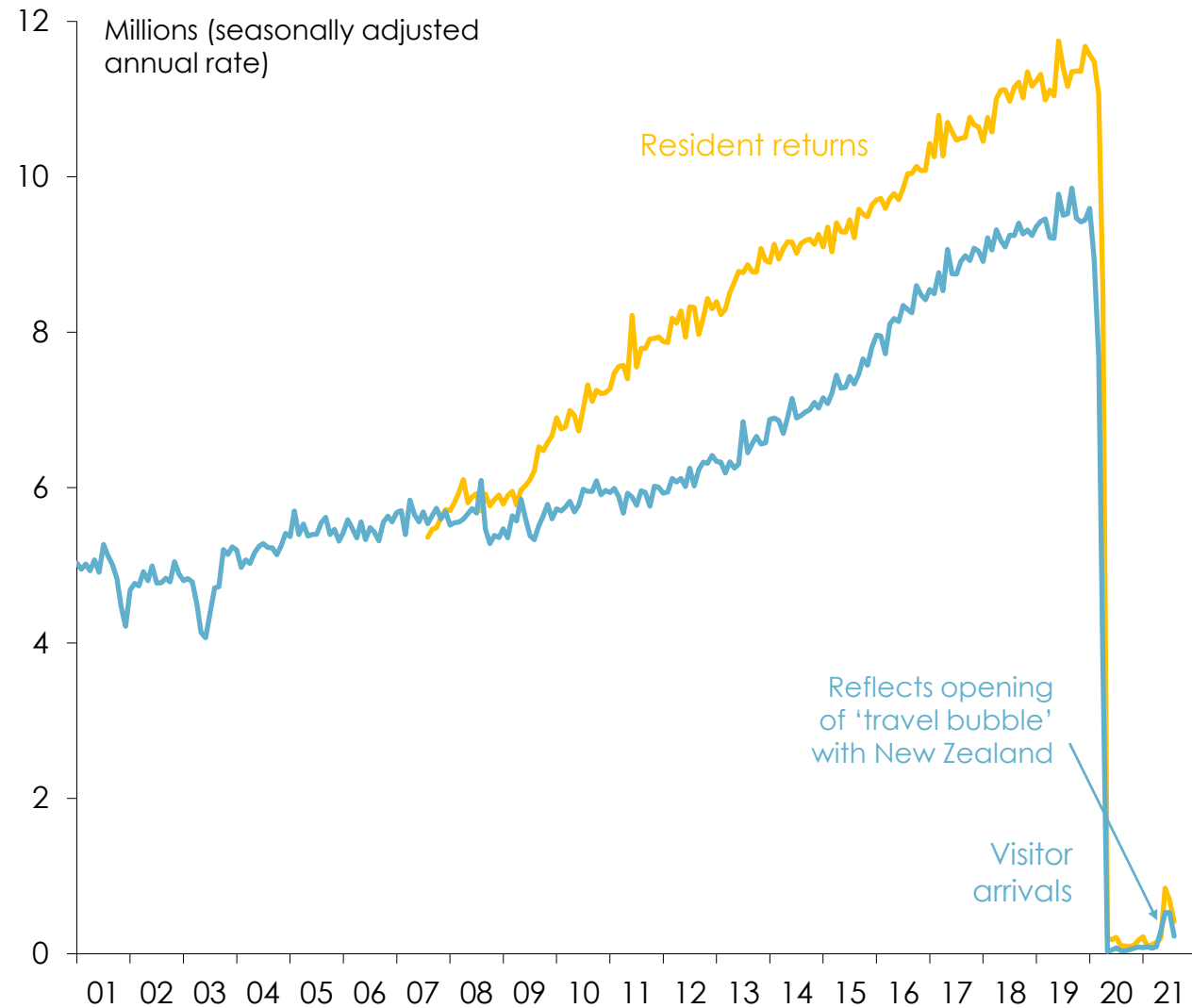
China's bilateral merchandise trade balances



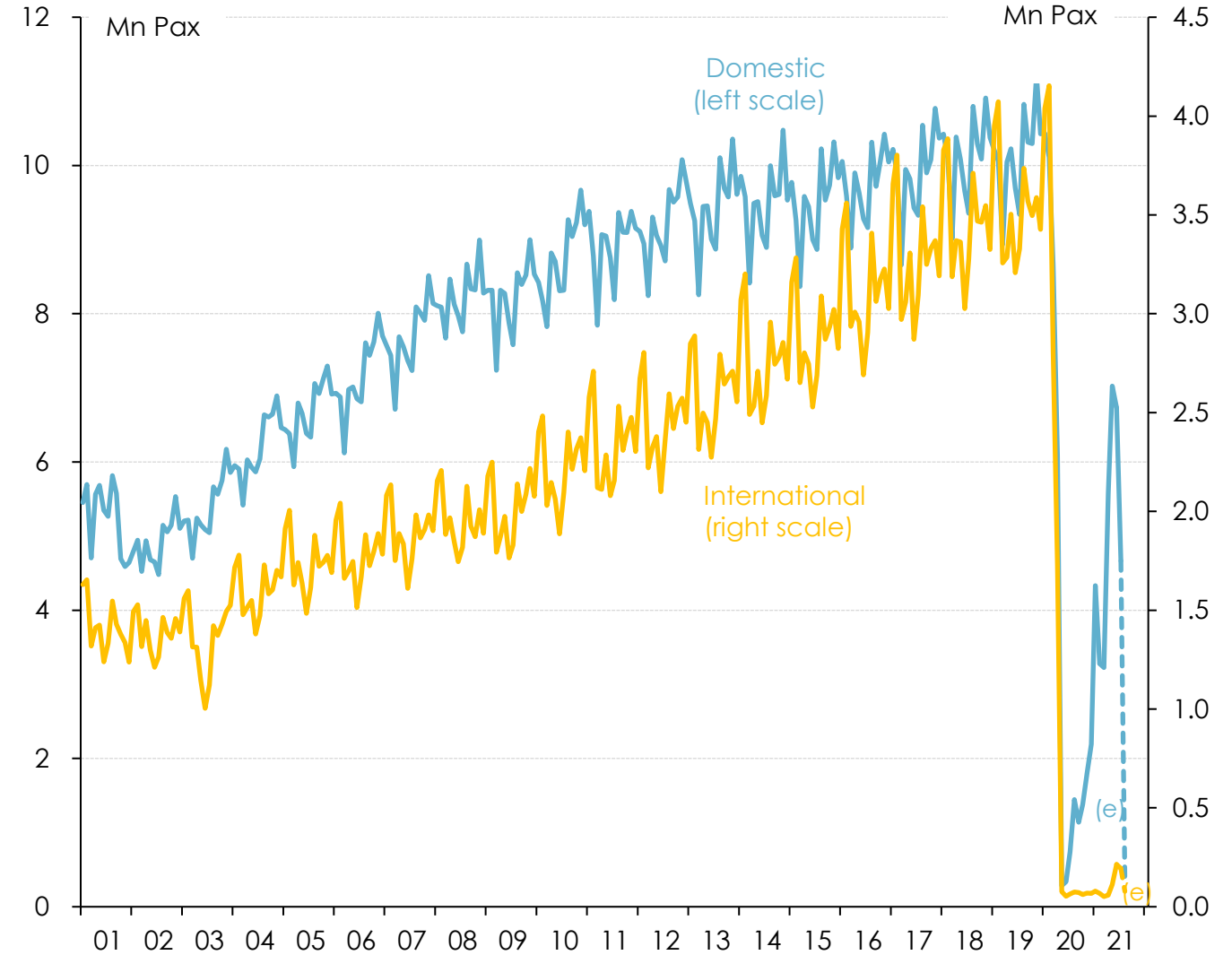
Sources: IMF, Direction of Trade Statistics; Taiwan Ministry of Economic Affairs, Bureau of Foreign Trade. [Return to "What's New"](#).

# Domestic aviation picked up strongly between last November and May – but has since slumped with the lockdowns and tighter arrivals caps

## Short-term visitor arrivals and resident returns



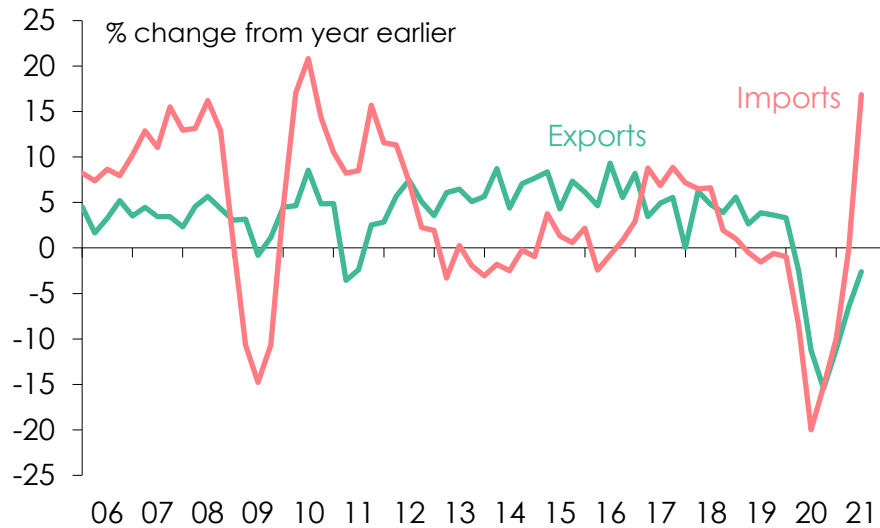
## Airport passenger movements



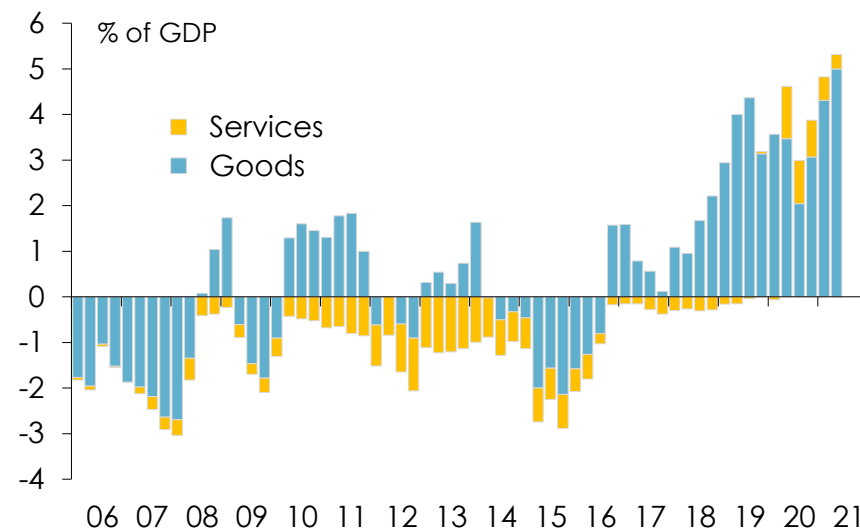
Note: The ABS has suspended publication of seasonally adjusted estimates of short-term visitor arrivals and resident returns, so published original estimates for April 2020 (and beyond) have been seasonally adjusted by Corinna using the same seasonal factors as for the corresponding month of 2019. Latest ABS data on arrivals and departures are for July; BITRE data on airport passenger movements are for June; July 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

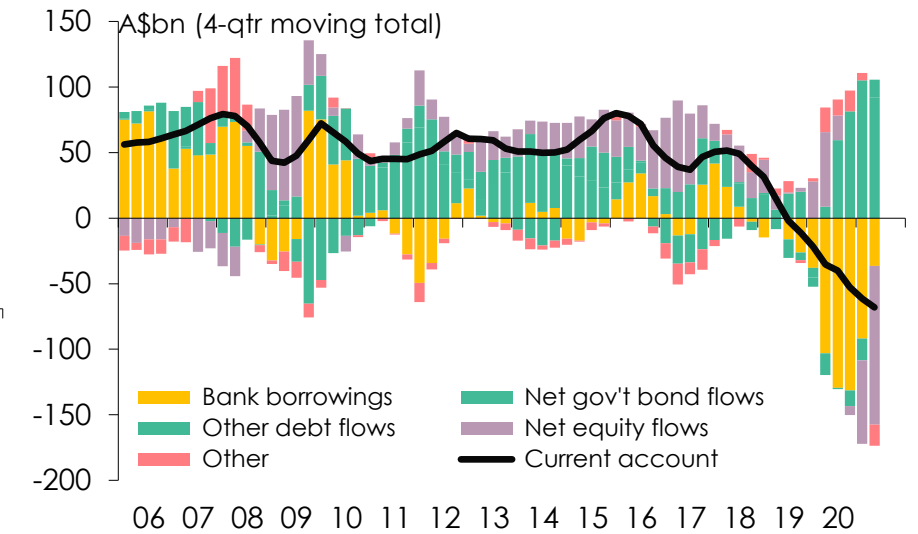
## Export and import volumes



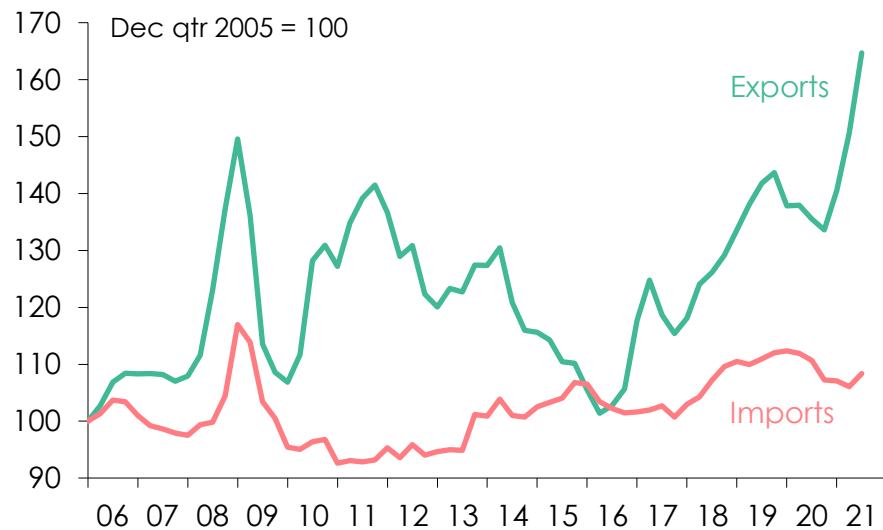
## Goods & services trade balances



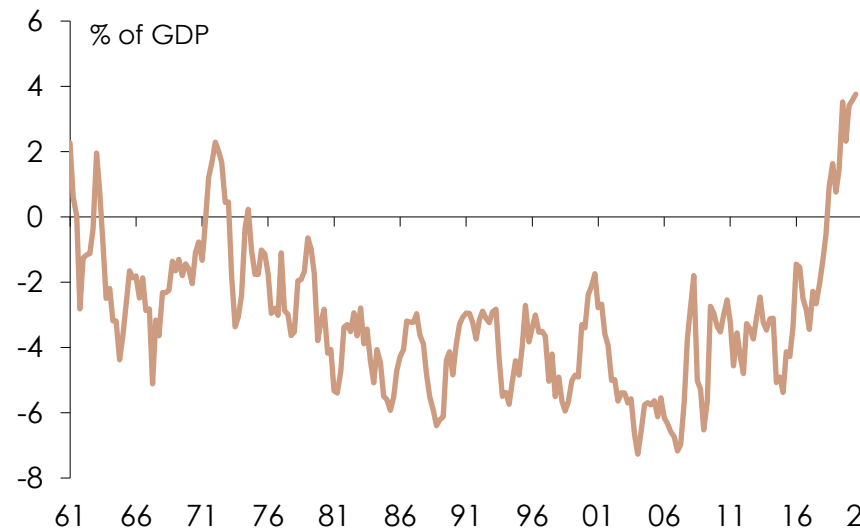
## Capital flows



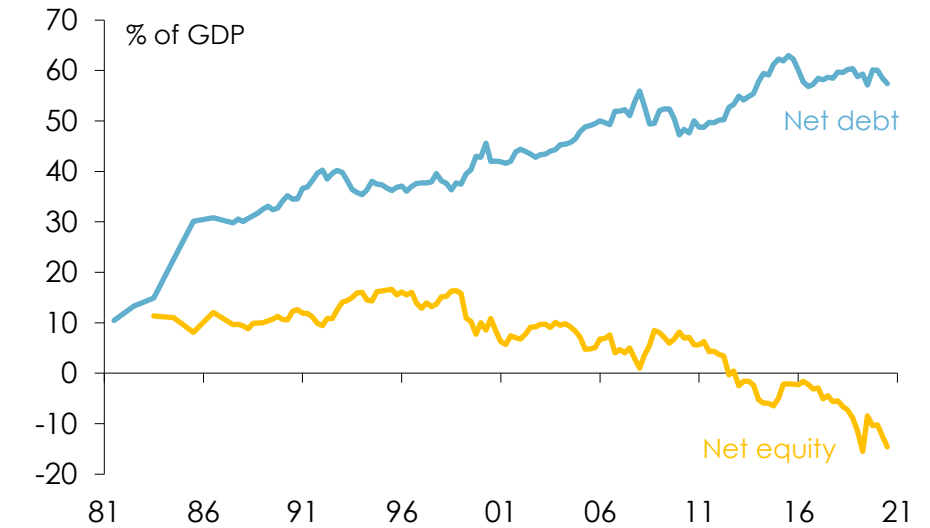
## Export and import prices



## Current account balance



## Net international investment position

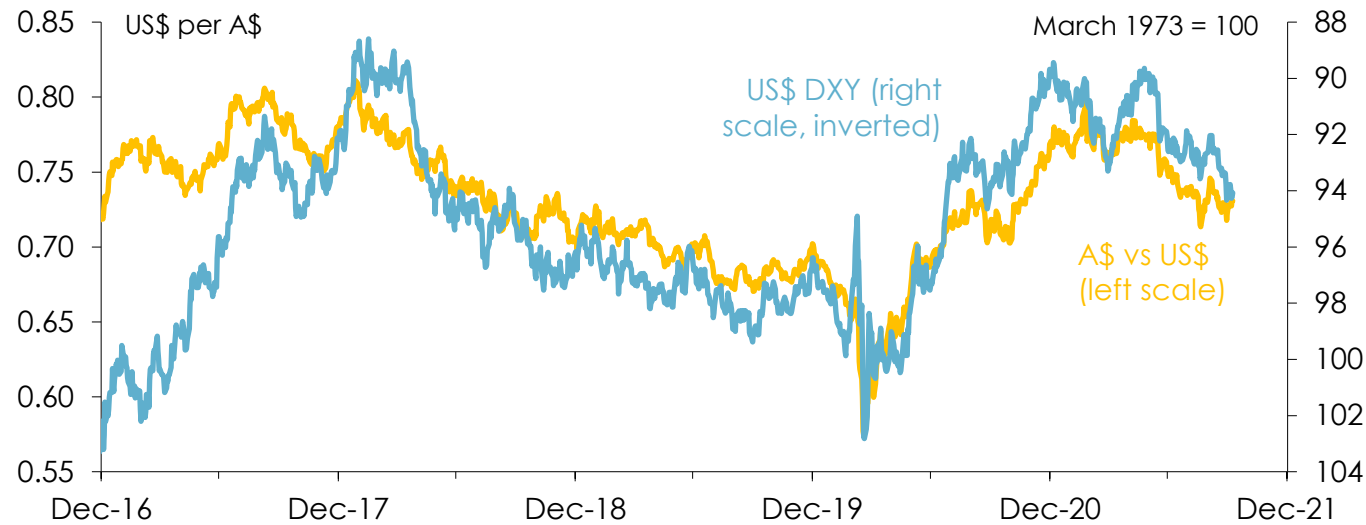


Note: The chart of Australia's international capital flows shows inflows (eg borrowings from abroad) as a positive and outflows (eg repayments of debt, or purchases of foreign equity assets) as a negative. Likewise the chart of Australia's international investment position shows net foreign debt as a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

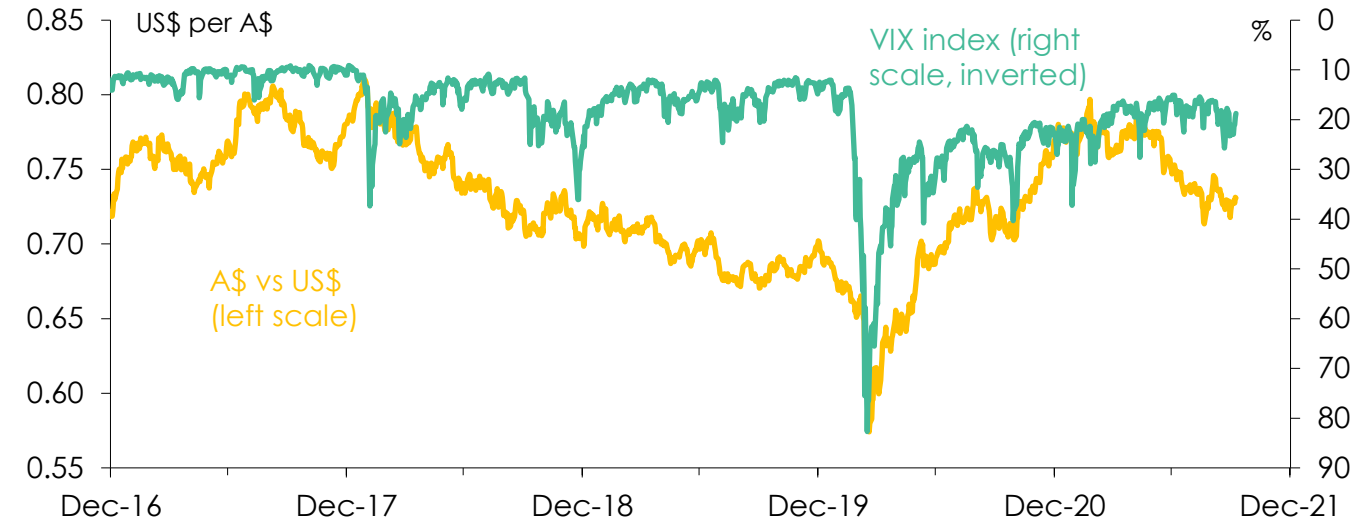


# The A\$ popped back up above US73¢ this week, buoyed by the rebound in the iron ore price and the elimination of the negative bond yield spread

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



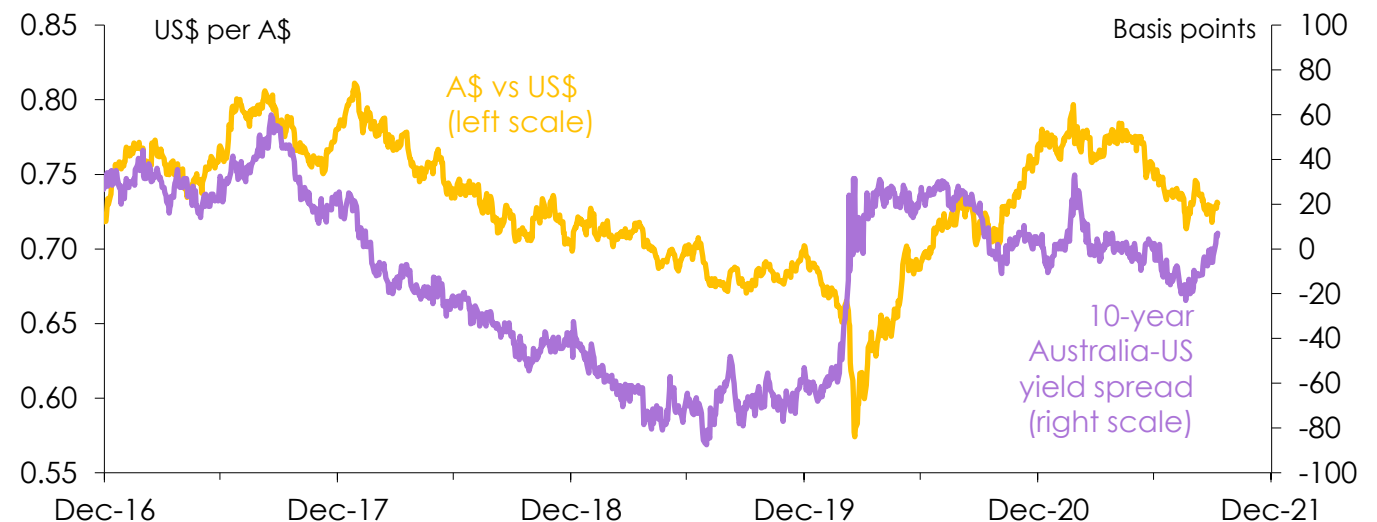
## A\$-US\$ and US equity market volatility



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



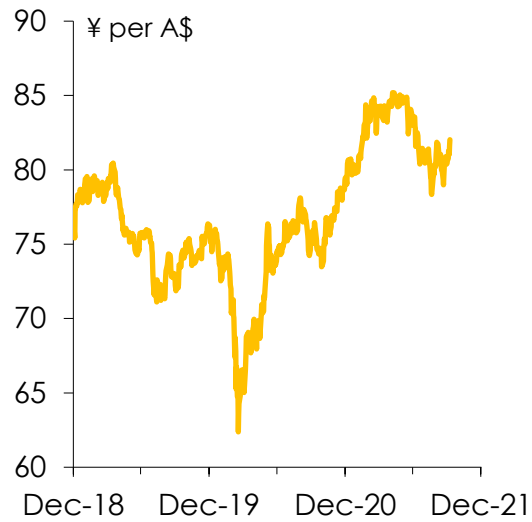
## A\$-US\$ and Australia-US 10-year bond yield spread



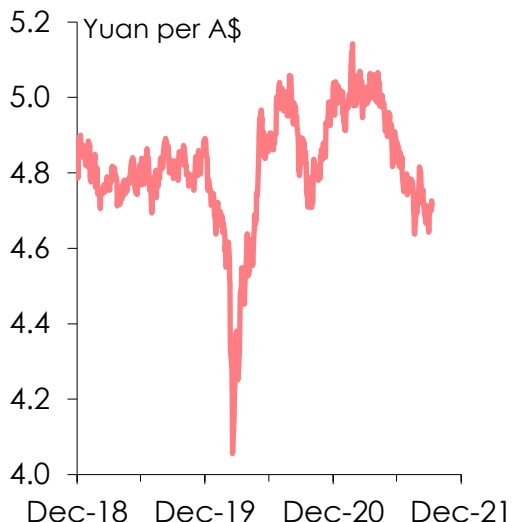
Note: The DXY is an index of the value of the US dollar against 6 other currencies (the euro, yen, pound, Canadian dollar, Swedish krona and Swiss franc). The VIX index is a measure of the implied volatility of S&P500 options and is widely interpreted as an indicator of investor risk appetite or aversion. Source: Refinitiv Datastream. Data up to 8<sup>th</sup> October. [Return to "What's New"](#).

# The A\$ also rose against most third currencies, gaining 1¾% vs the yen, and ¾% vs the NZ\$ (despite the RBNZ rate hike) but slipping ¾% vs the C\$

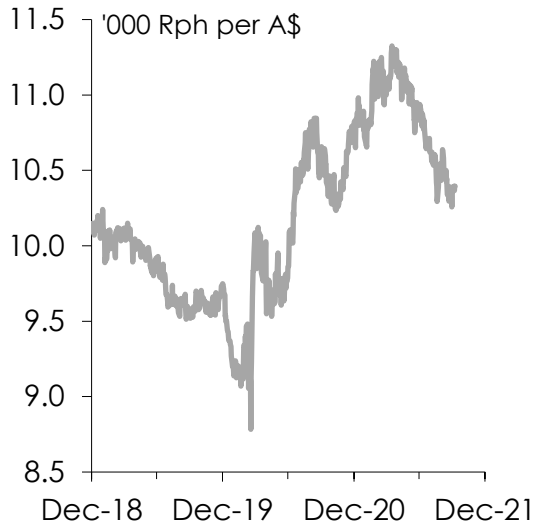
## A\$ vs Japanese yen



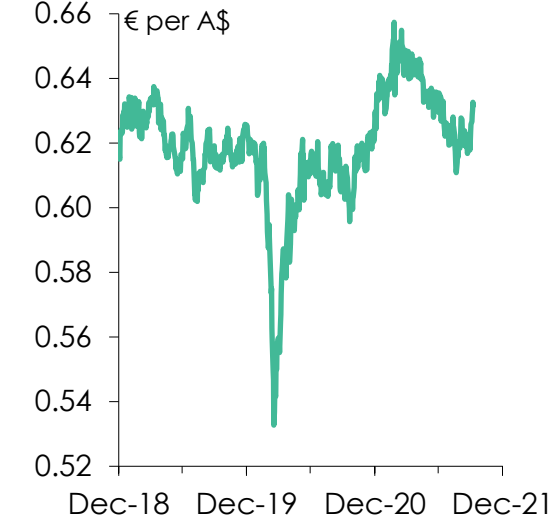
## A\$ vs Chinese yuan



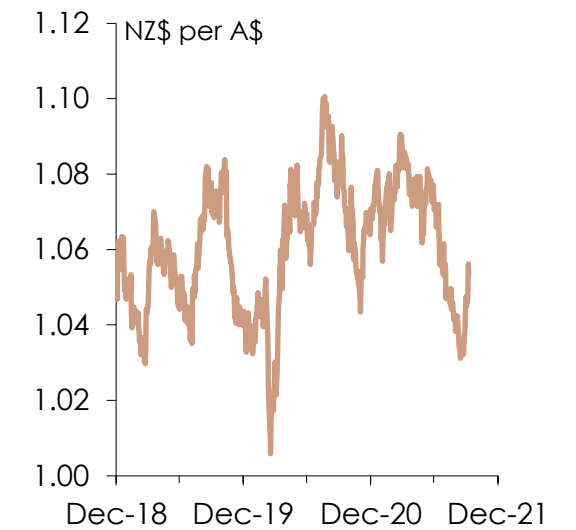
## A\$ vs Indo rupiah



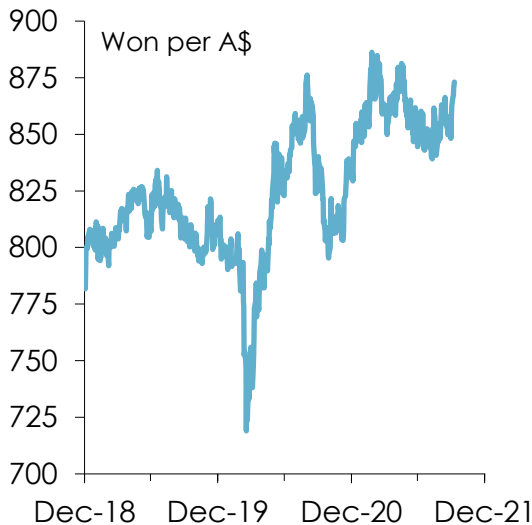
## A\$ vs Euro



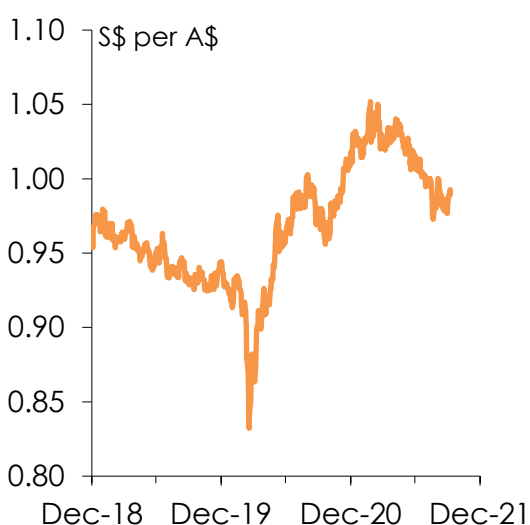
## A\$ vs NZ\$



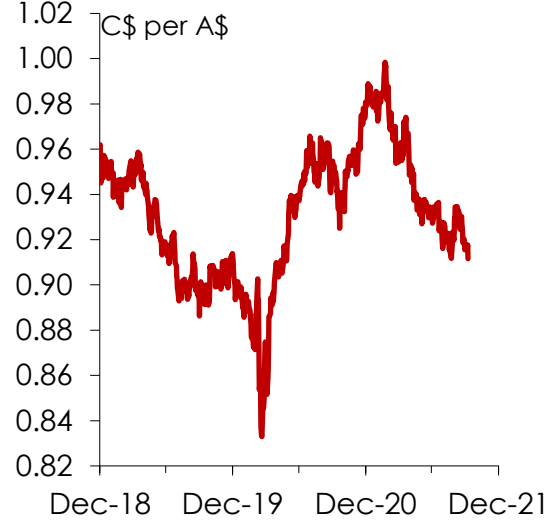
## A\$ vs Korean won



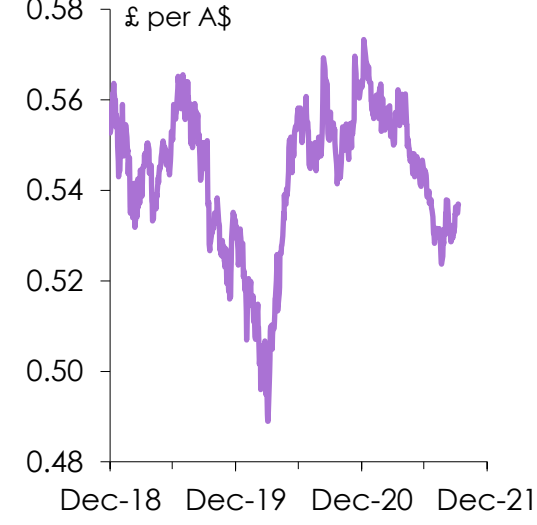
## A\$ vs Singapore \$



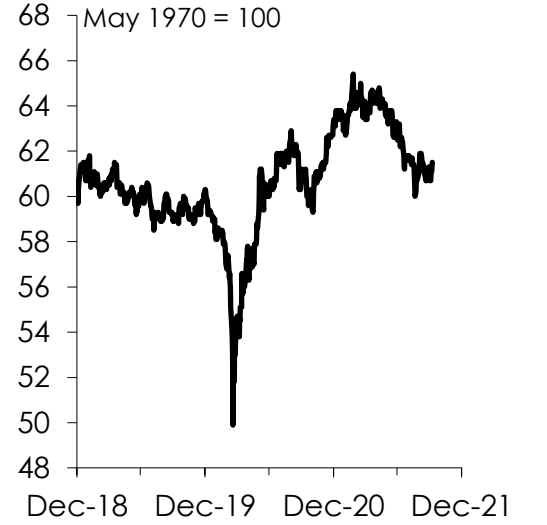
## A\$ vs Canadian \$



## A\$ vs British pound



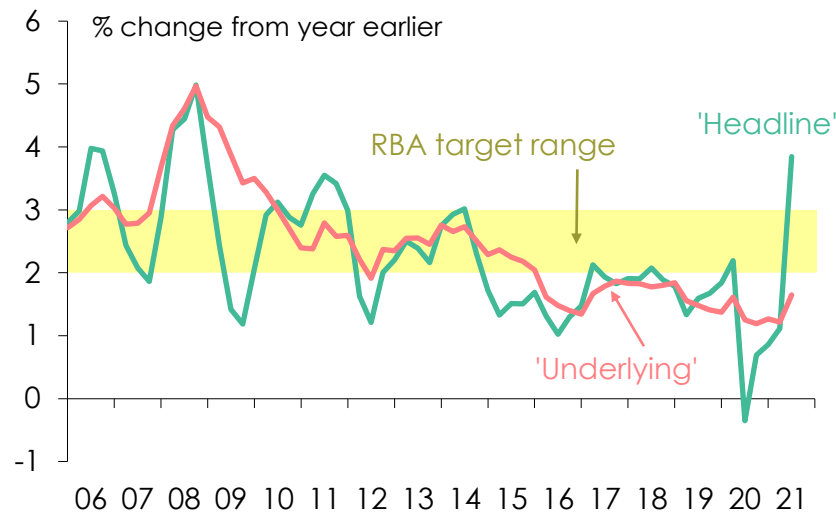
## A\$ TWI



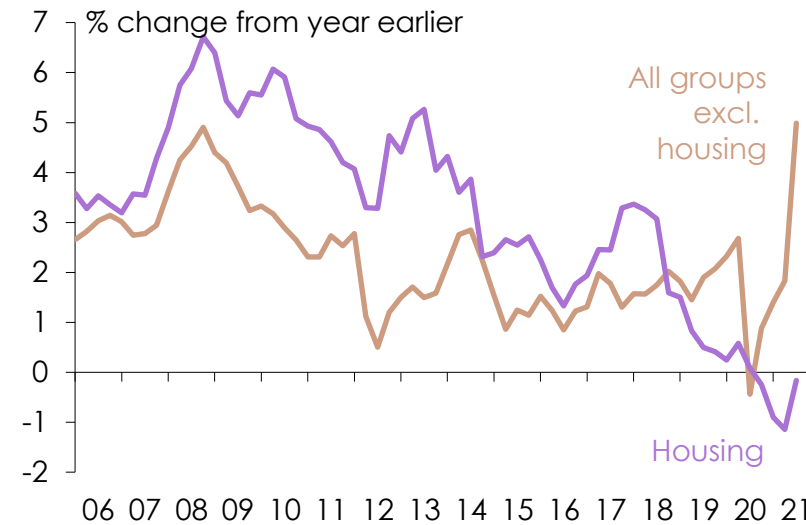
Note: The 'TWI' is the RBA's [trade-weighted index](#) of the A\$. Source: Refinitiv Datastream. Data up to 8<sup>th</sup> October. [Return to "What's New".](#)

# 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

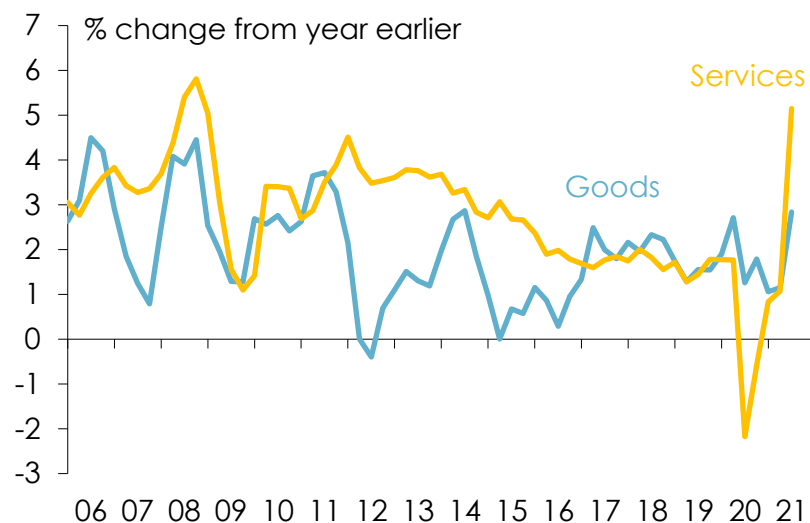
## Consumer prices



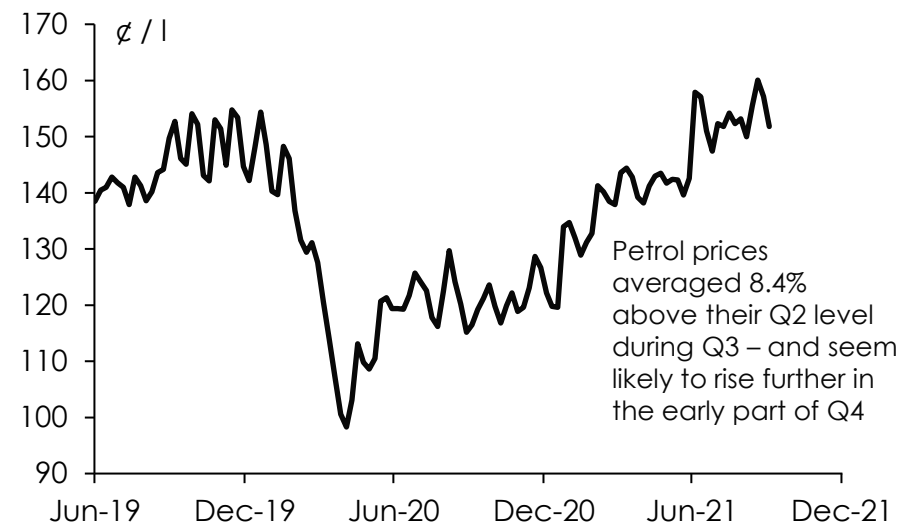
## Housing costs



## Goods vs services prices



## Retail petrol prices

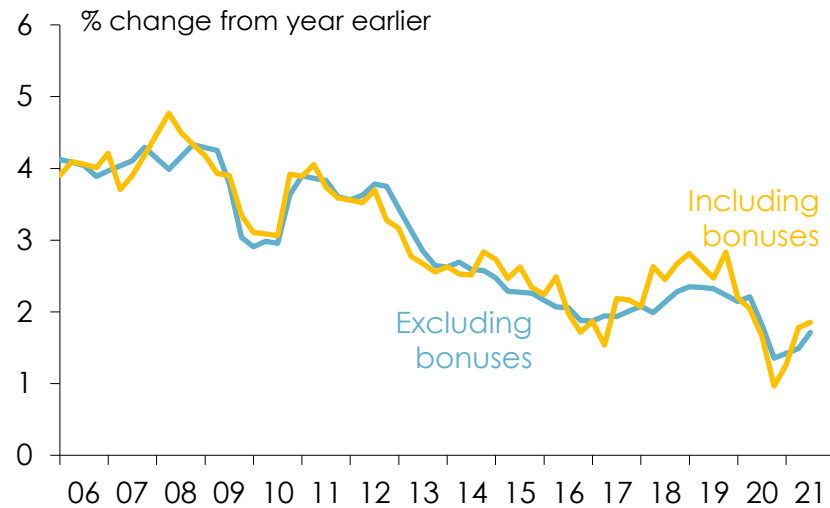


- ❑ The CPI rose a slightly higher-than-expected 0.8% in Q2 – but because the 1.9% fall in Q2 last year (the result of child care being free for most of it, and a sharp fall in petrol prices), the annual 'headline' inflation rate jumped to 3.8%, its highest since Q3 2008
- ❑ 70% of the increase in the 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 22<sup>nd</sup> quarter in a row

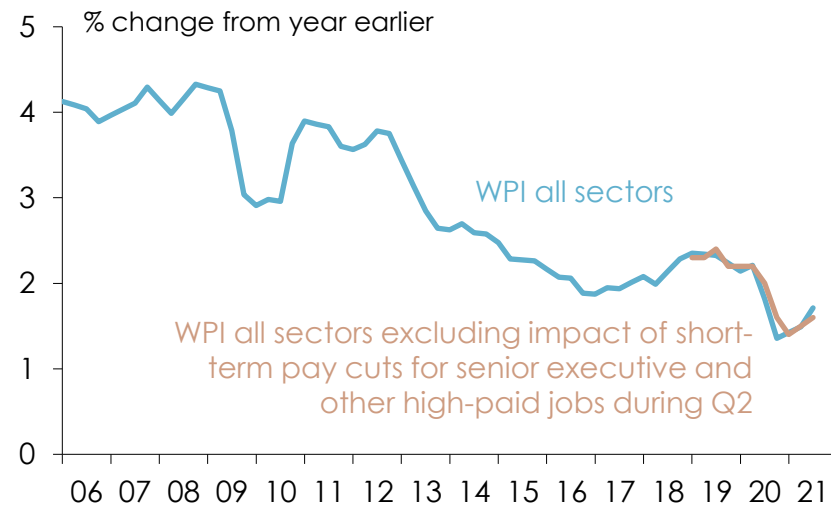
Note: 'Underlying' inflation is the average of the weighted median and trimmed mean CPIs. Wage price indices exclude bonuses.  
Sources: ABS, [Consumer Price Index, Australia](#); [Australian Institute of Petroleum](#). The September quarter (Q3) CPI will be released on 27<sup>th</sup> October. [Return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

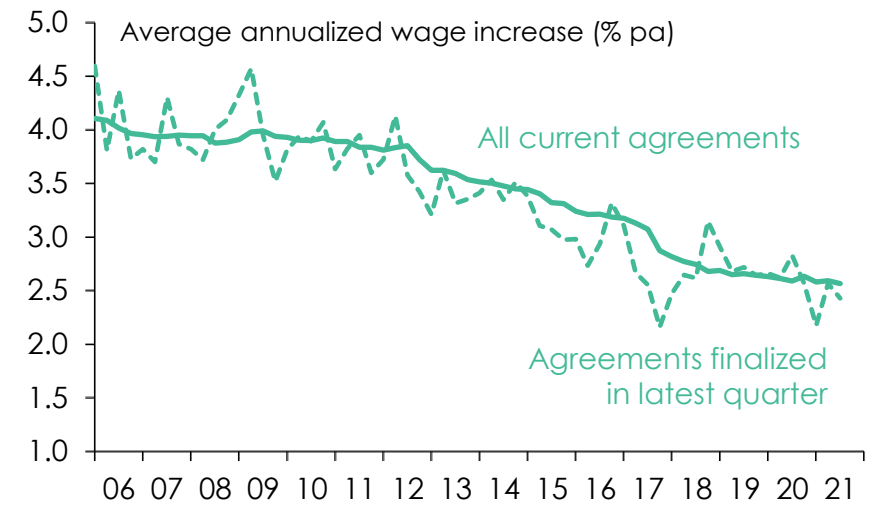
## Wage price index – all sectors



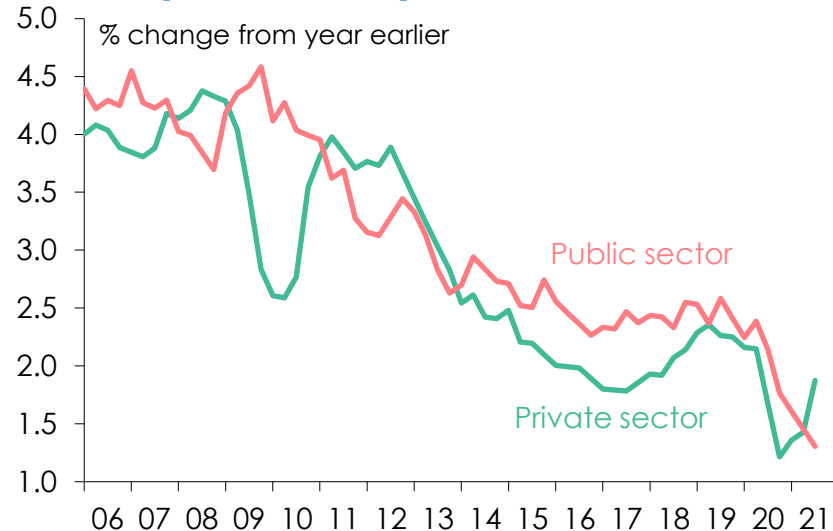
## WPI excl. temporary wage cuts



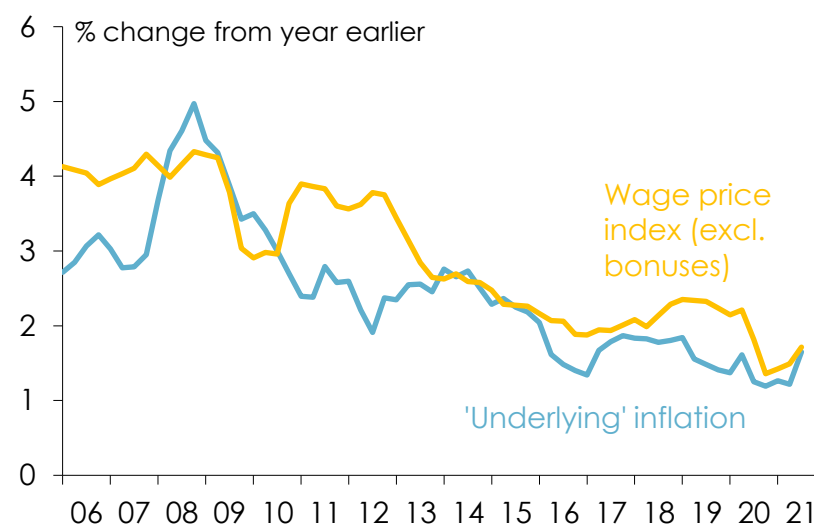
## Enterprise bargaining agreements



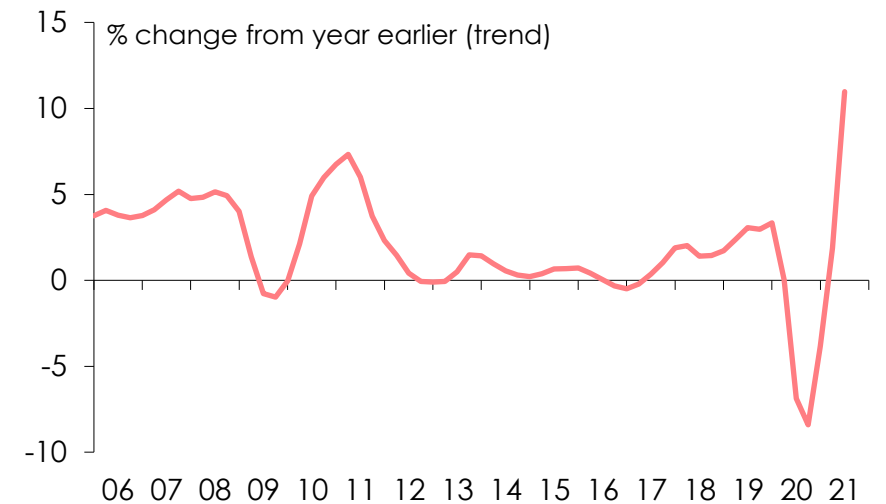
## WPI – private vs public sectors



## 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 17<sup>th</sup> November. [Return to "What's New"](#).

# Australia's fiscal and monetary policy settings

# The OECD's latest 'Economic Survey of Australia' makes some strong policy recommendations (but, sadly, they're unlikely to be implemented)

- ❑ The OECD's latest [Economic Survey of Australia](#) (the first in nearly three years) projects economic growth of 4% this year and 3.3% next year, with the unemployment rate falling from an average of 5.4% in 2021 to 4.9% in 2022 (assuming "strict containment measures remain in place in NSW and Victoria until midway through Q4")
- ❑ The OECD was generally supportive of Australian policy-makers' responses to the economic downturn
  - "the immediate fiscal response was one of the largest in the OECD" and "dwarfed the stimulus injected during the global financial crisis"
- ❑ The OECD makes a number of strong policy recommendations
  - the Government should "further increase the generosity of unemployment benefits" (which it says are the lowest, relative to average wages, in the OECD) and "consider indexing further increases to average wage growth"
  - "now is an appropriate time for a review of Australia's monetary policy framework" which should be "broad in scope"
  - the "entire value of the family home – or that portion above a certain threshold – should be included in the means test for pension eligibility"
  - the "contribution of the GST to the overall tax mix" should be increased; and "some of the concessions for the taxation of private pensions, particularly those that favour higher income earners" should be reduced; the capital gains tax discount should be "reduced"; and stamp duty on land transfers should be replaced with "a recurrent land tax"
  - the "distortionary impact of the current two-tier corporate tax system" (with the lower rate for "small" businesses) should be "investigated" (and if there are to be any preferences they should be for "young businesses in innovative sectors")
  - Australia's occupational licencing systems should be reformed with "better coordination between states"
  - Australia needs a "Long-term Emissions Reduction Strategy that defines clear goals and corresponding policy measures" to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, and "the least cost approach to meeting these targets would involve an economy-wide carbon price"
- ❑ Most if not all of these are unlikely to be implemented

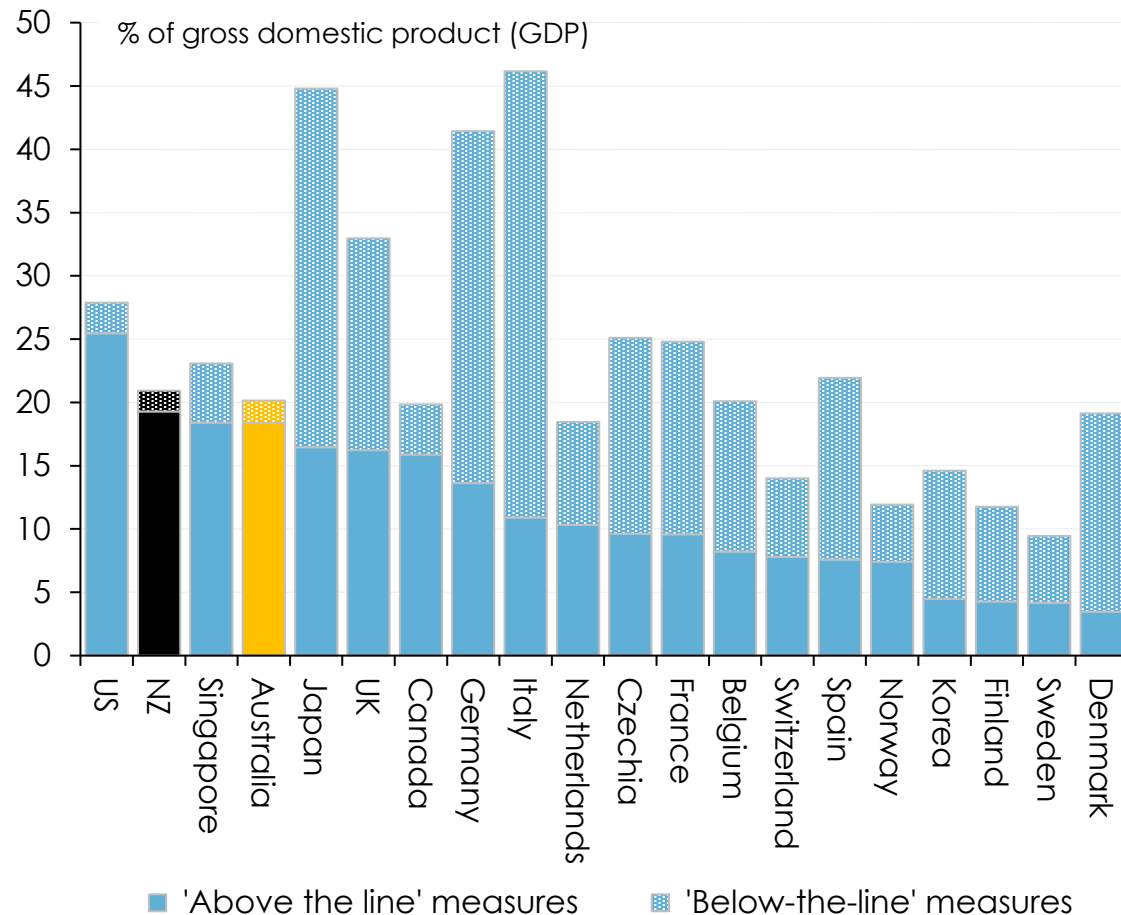


# ... and the OECD's recommendations were backed up by the IMF (not that that is likely to make any difference)

- ❑ The OECD's recommendations were endorsed by the IMF in its annual ['Article IV' consultation](#) with Australia
- ❑ The IMF recommends that fiscal policy should “continue to support vulnerable households and viable businesses”, and that monetary policy should remain “data-dependent and nimble”, with the timing and pace of “policy normalization” being calibrated in a “commensurate with the recovery in a gradual and well-sequenced manner”
- ❑ The IMF urges that “macro-prudential policy should be tightened to address gradually rising financial stability risks” (in particular, portfolio restrictions on debt-to-income and loan-to-valuation ratios)
- ❑ It recommended a number of worthwhile (but hardly new) measures to improve housing affordability
  - it advocates “supply-side reforms including more efficient planning, zoning and better infrastructure” (including “financial incentives to local governments to streamline zoning regulations”) and that governments should “expand social housing”
  - and it supports “transitioning from a housing transfer stamp duty to a general land tax” and “reducing structural incentives for leveraged investment by households ... in residential real estate”
- ❑ The IMF urges “an integrated framework for climate change policies”
  - “broad-based carbon pricing, along with measures to mitigate transition risks for impacted industries and regions, would be the most effective way to achieve emissions reductions”
- ❑ And it recommends a range of other structural reforms
  - “there is scope to ease the regulatory burden faced by businesses ... through continued reforms to digitize business-government interactions” and to “widen the scope for inter-jurisdictional recognition of occupational licences”
  - “continued reforms in the education sector” (without any specifics) “can improve education outcomes and ensure equal opportunities”
  - “scope remains to ease the administrative burden” associated with R&D tax incentives and to “scale up government R&D spending”

# 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

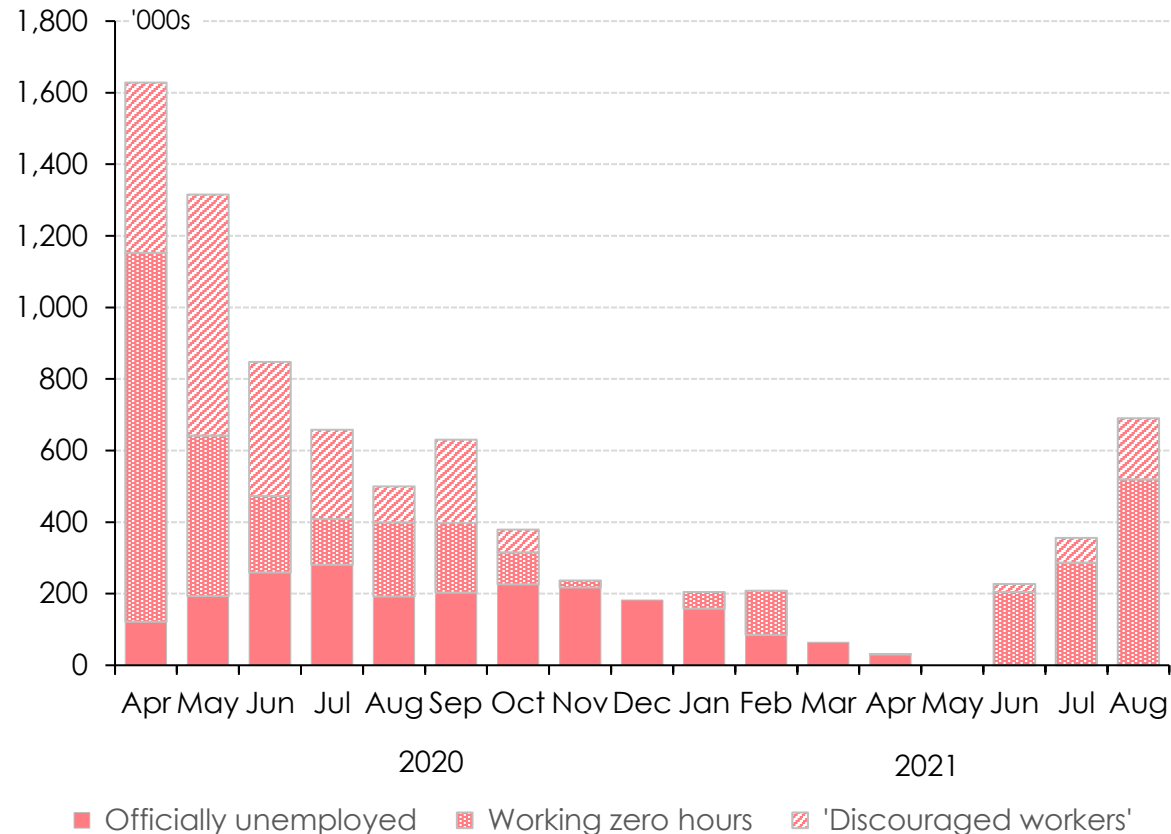


Note: 'Above the line' measures comprise additional or accelerated spending and deferred or foregone revenue. 'Below the line' measures comprise equity injections, loans, asset purchases and debt assumptions, but do not include loan guarantees or other contingent liabilities. 'DMS' means 'developed markets' (or 'advanced economies'). Data includes measures announced up until 5<sup>th</sup> 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 for those affected by lockdowns will be phased out after vaccination rates pass 70%

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

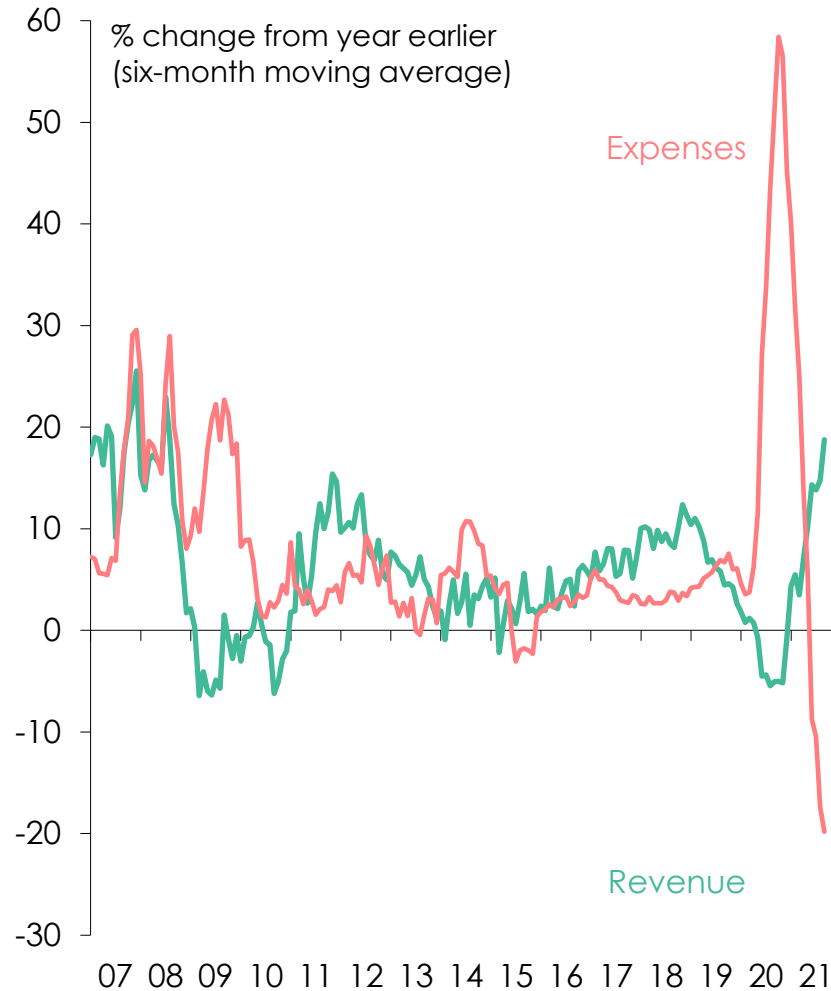


Note: Numbers depicted in the above chart are derived as the difference between the number of people in each category in the months shown and the number in those categories in March 2020. People 'working zero hours' excludes those doing so because they are on annual or other types of leave. 'Discouraged 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; Commonwealth Department of Health, [Covid-19 Vaccine Roll-out](#), 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2021; Corinna. [Return to "What's New"](#).

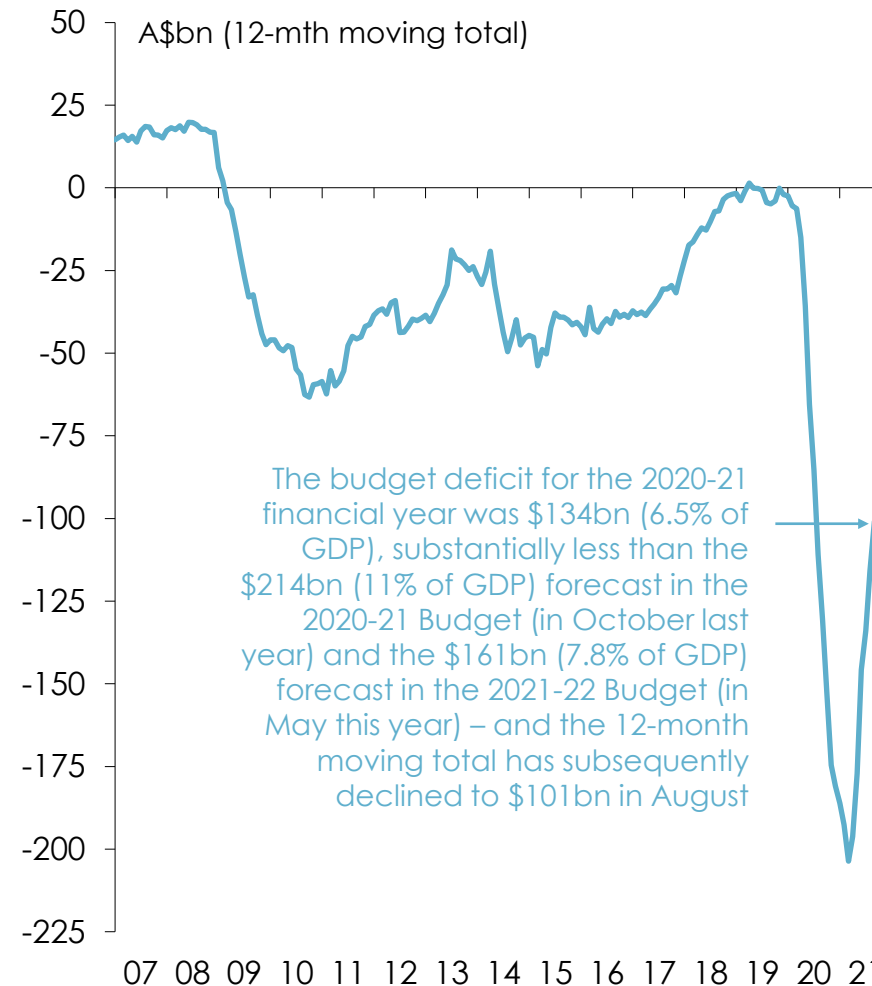
- ❑ Since the beginning of June the Federal Government has paid out \$10.3bn in [Covid-19 disaster payments](#) to 2.11 mn workers unable to earn income due to public health orders or other Covid-related restrictions
  - of this amount, \$6.9bn has been to people in NSW, \$2.9bn to Victoria, \$253mn to the ACT and \$252mn to Queensland
- ❑ The Federal Government has also paid out \$212mn in [\\$200 income support payments](#) to 172,000 people already on income support payments who have lost 8 hours or more of part-time work due to lockdowns, and \$119mn in [pandemic leave disaster payments](#) to 74,000 people who have been required to self-isolate or quarantine, or who are caring for someone with Covid-19
- ❑ State Governments have also made payments to businesses and individuals affected by lockdowns or requirements to isolate
- ❑ The Government last week [announced](#) that it would cease making these payments automatically in states where 70% of the over-16 population have been fully vaccinated, and that once more than 80% have been fully vaccinated, payments will be 'tapered' over a 3-week period

# The budget deficit for 2020-21 was \$80bn less than originally anticipated, and \$27bn less than estimated almost five months ago

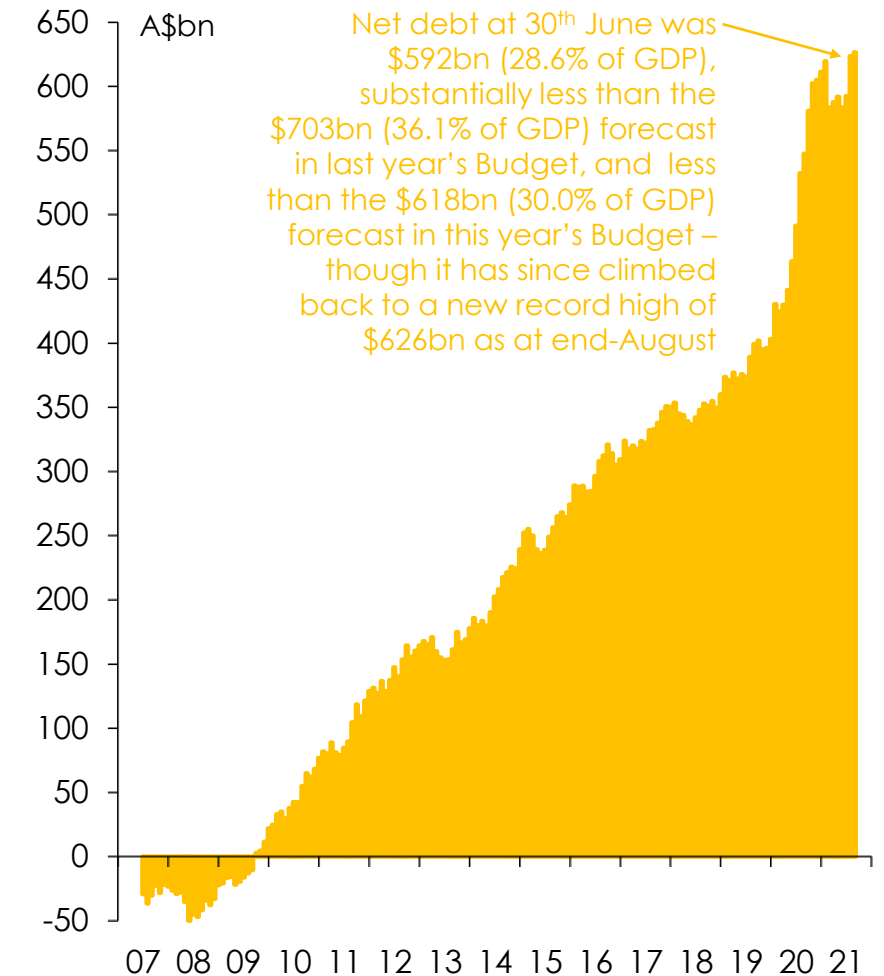
## Australian Government revenue and expenses



## Australian Government 'underlying' cash balance



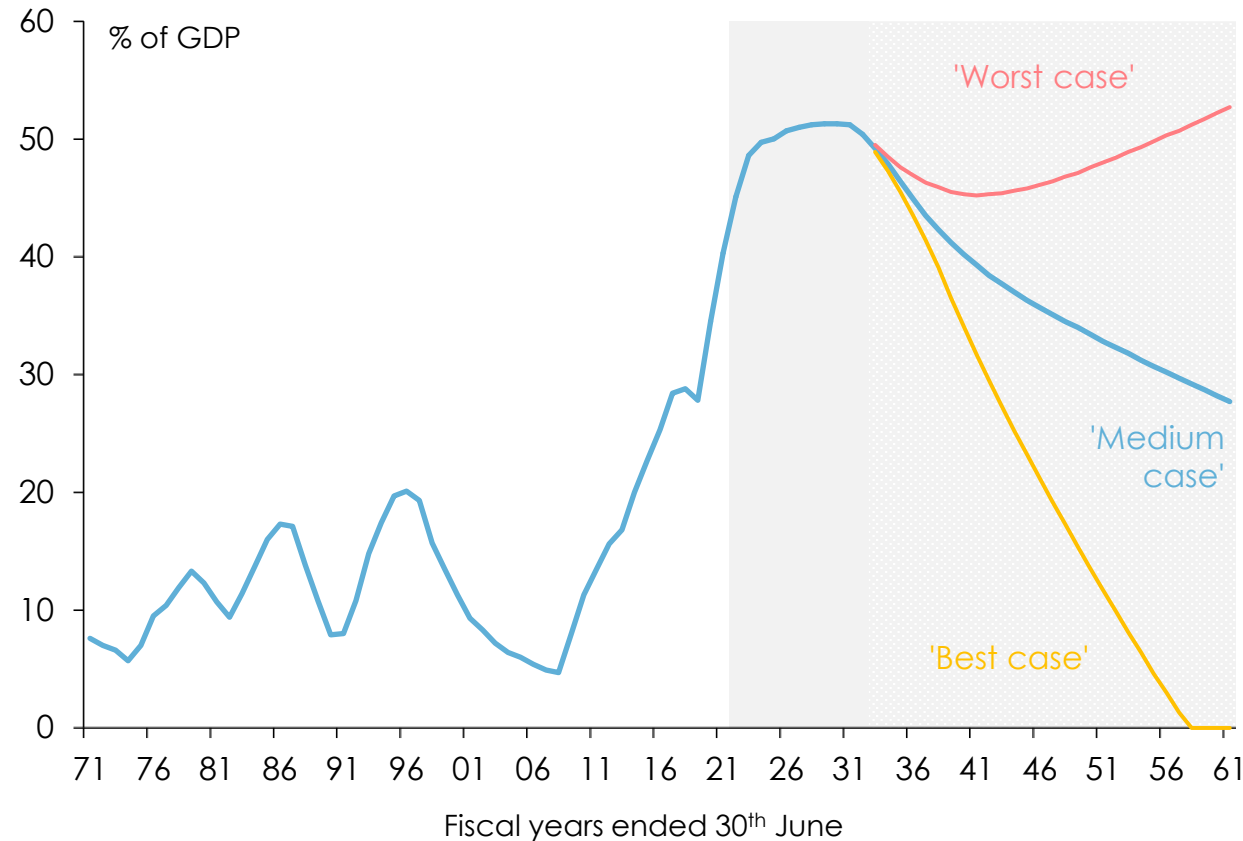
## Australian Government net debt



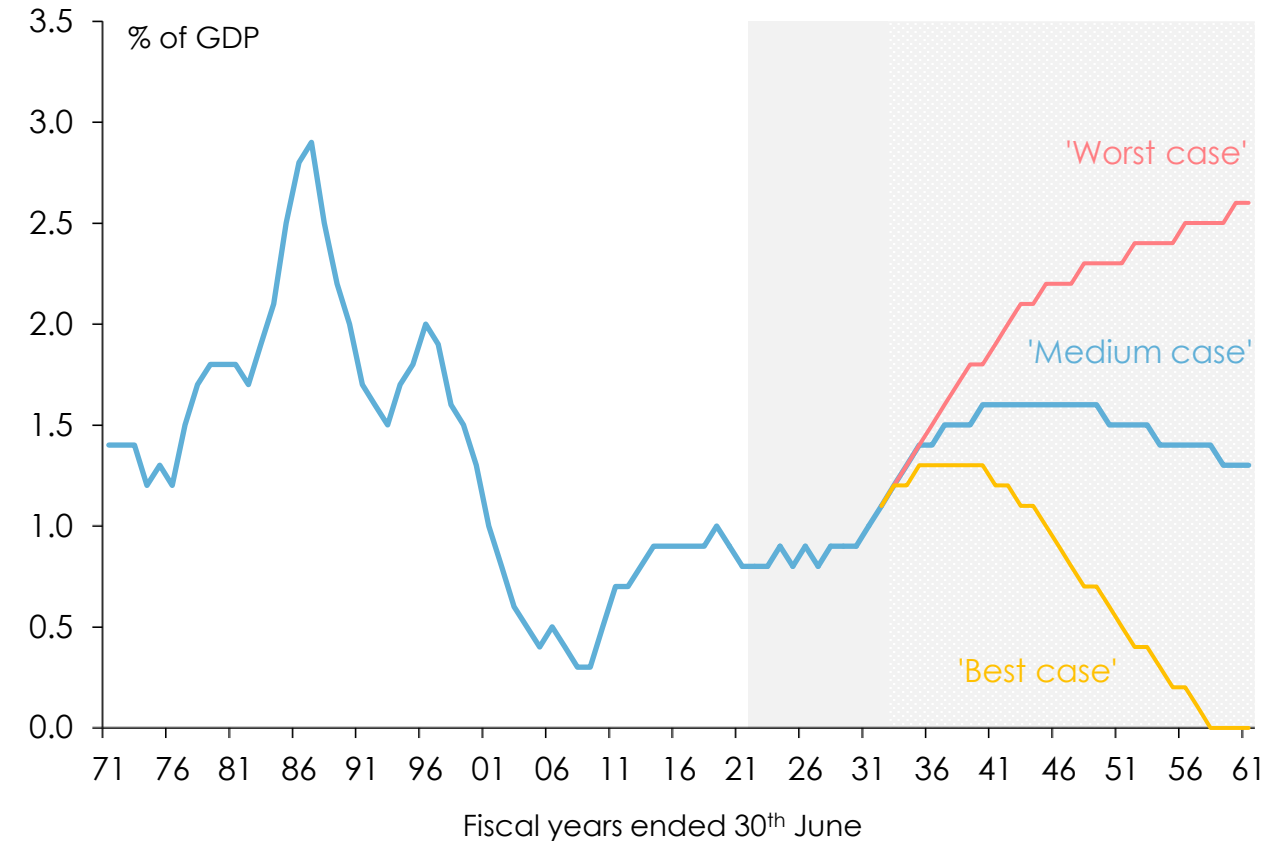
Note: Revenue and expenses are accrual accounting items. The 'underlying' cash balance is (cash) receipts minus payments, excluding transactions in financial assets for policy purposes and net earnings of the Future Fund. Net debt is total interest-bearing liabilities (government securities, deposits, loans and other borrowing) minus cash and deposits, advances paid, and (interest-bearing) loans, placements and investments. Source: Australian Government, [Final Budget Outcome 2020-21](#); Department of Finance, [Commonwealth Monthly Financial Statements](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

# Analysis by the Parliamentary Budget Office suggests the debt which the Government has incurred is sustainable under a wide range of scenarios

## PBO projections of Commonwealth Government gross debt



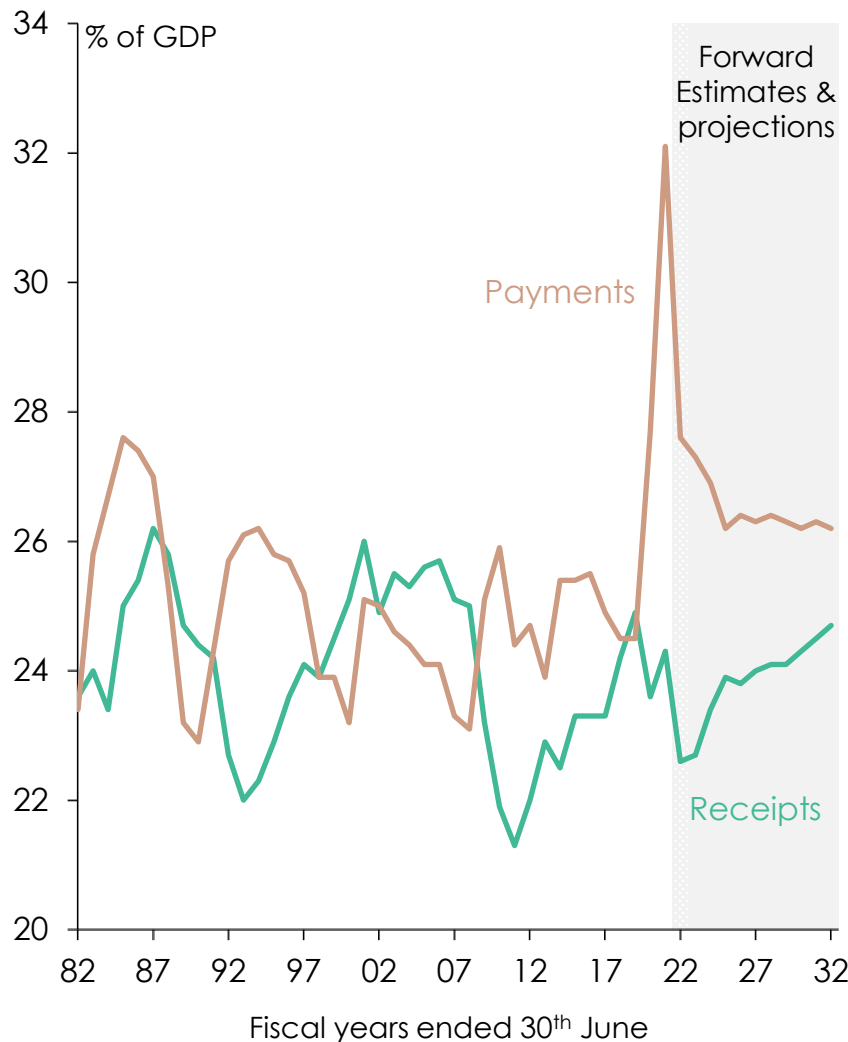
## PBO projections of Commonwealth Government interest payments



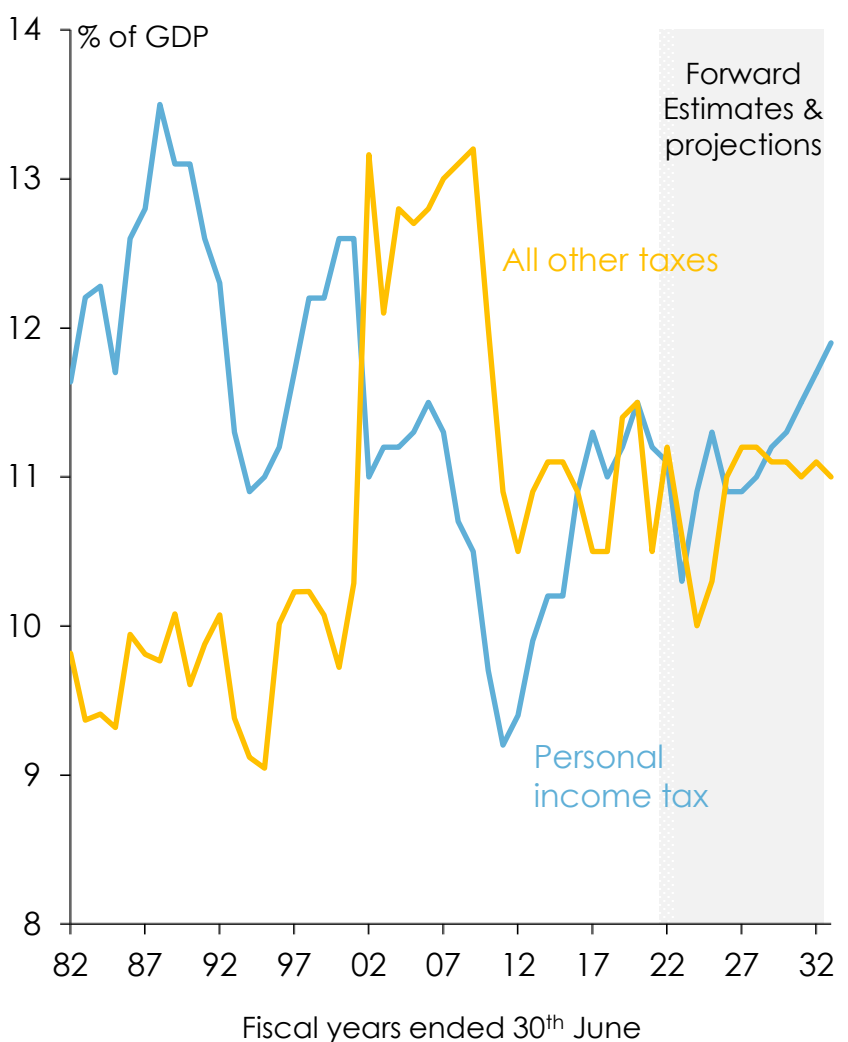
- ❑ The PBO derived projections of gross debt and interest payments over the next 40 years based on 27 combinations of different assumptions about economic growth, interest rates and the budget balance
- ❑ Under all of these scenarios (even the 'worst case'), both total debt and debt-servicing costs remain within the bounds of historical experience

# Australia's problem is that the Government will be relying solely on rising personal income tax collections to keep the deficit on a declining path

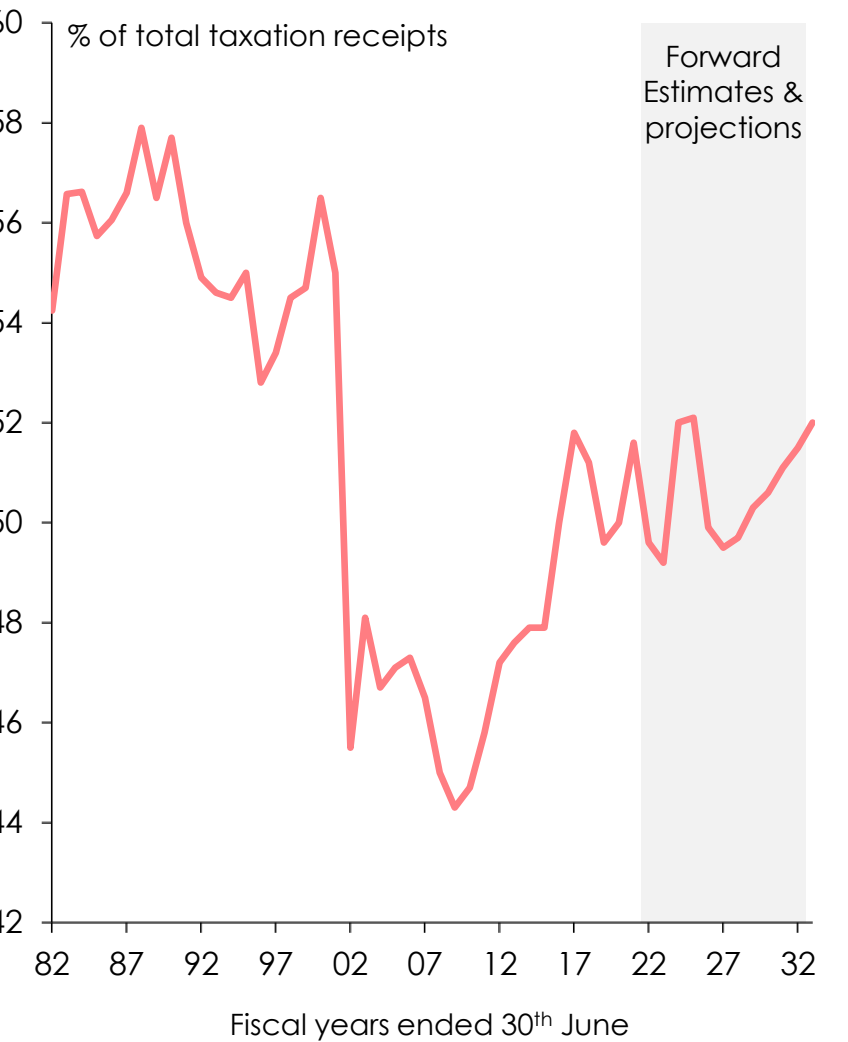
Commonwealth Government receipts and payments



Personal income tax and other tax receipts as pc of GDP



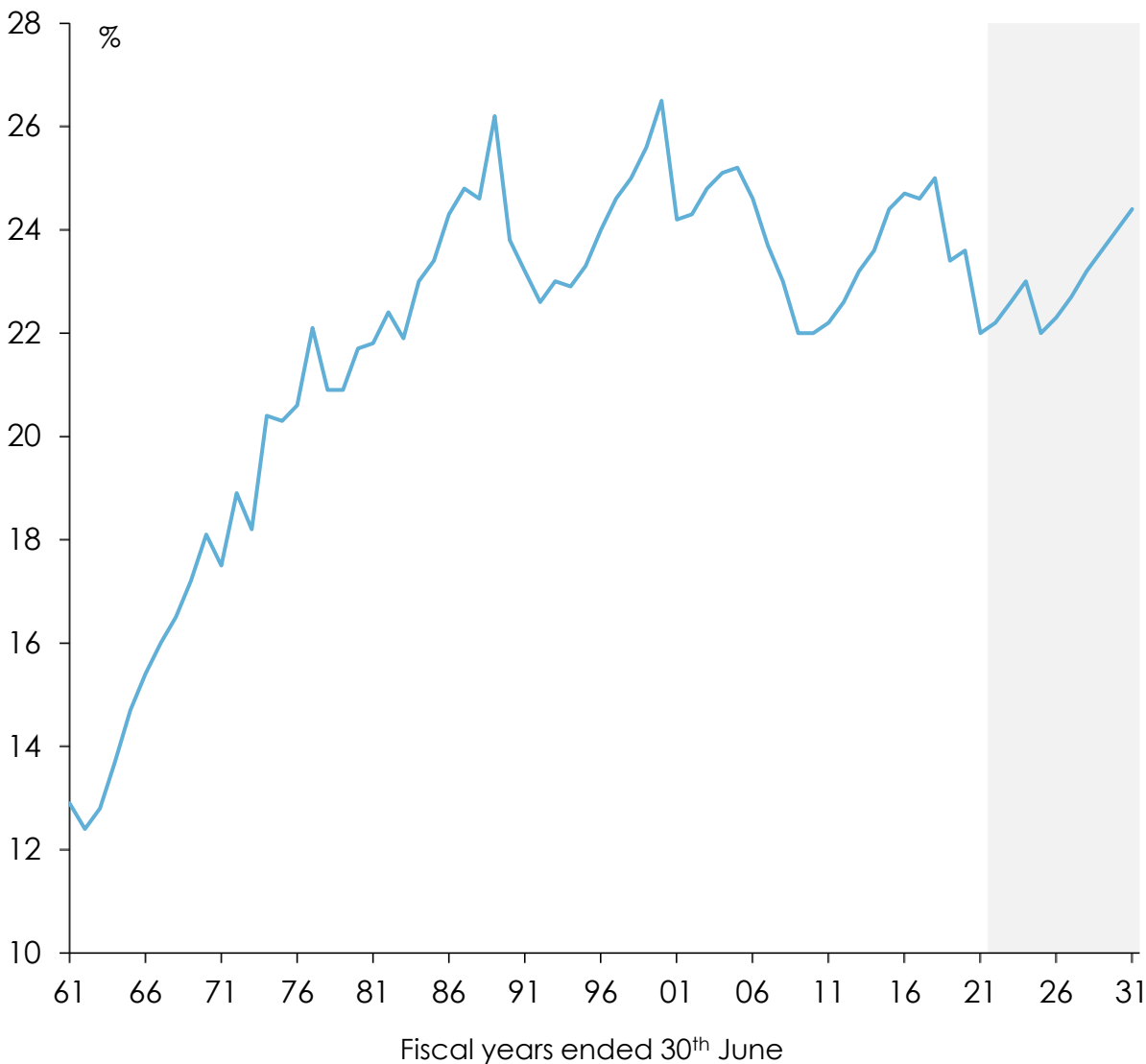
Personal income tax receipts as a pc of total tax receipts



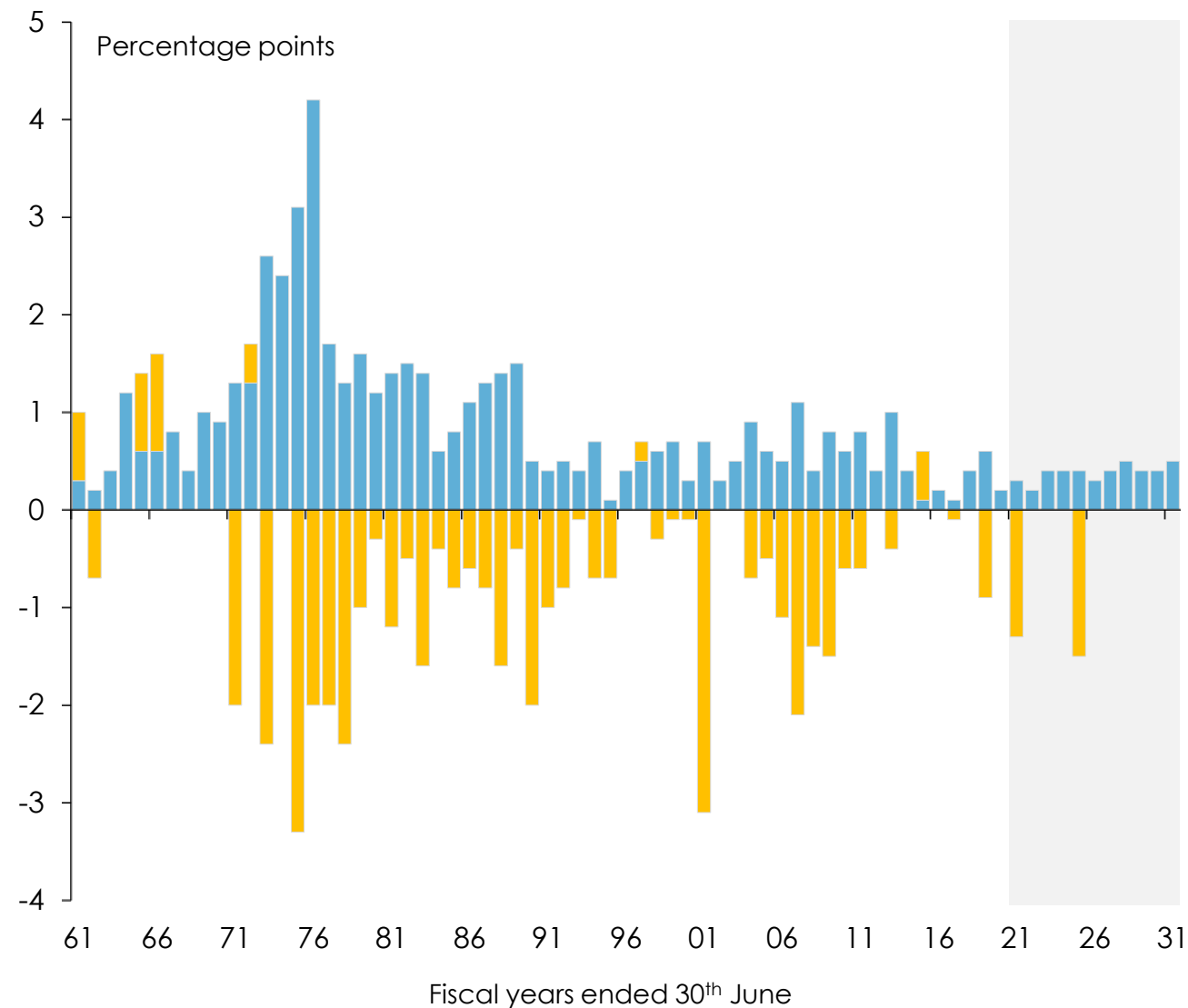


# And the prospective increase in personal income tax collections *isn't* the result of a conscious policy decision, but is rather due to 'bracket creep'

Average personal income tax rate



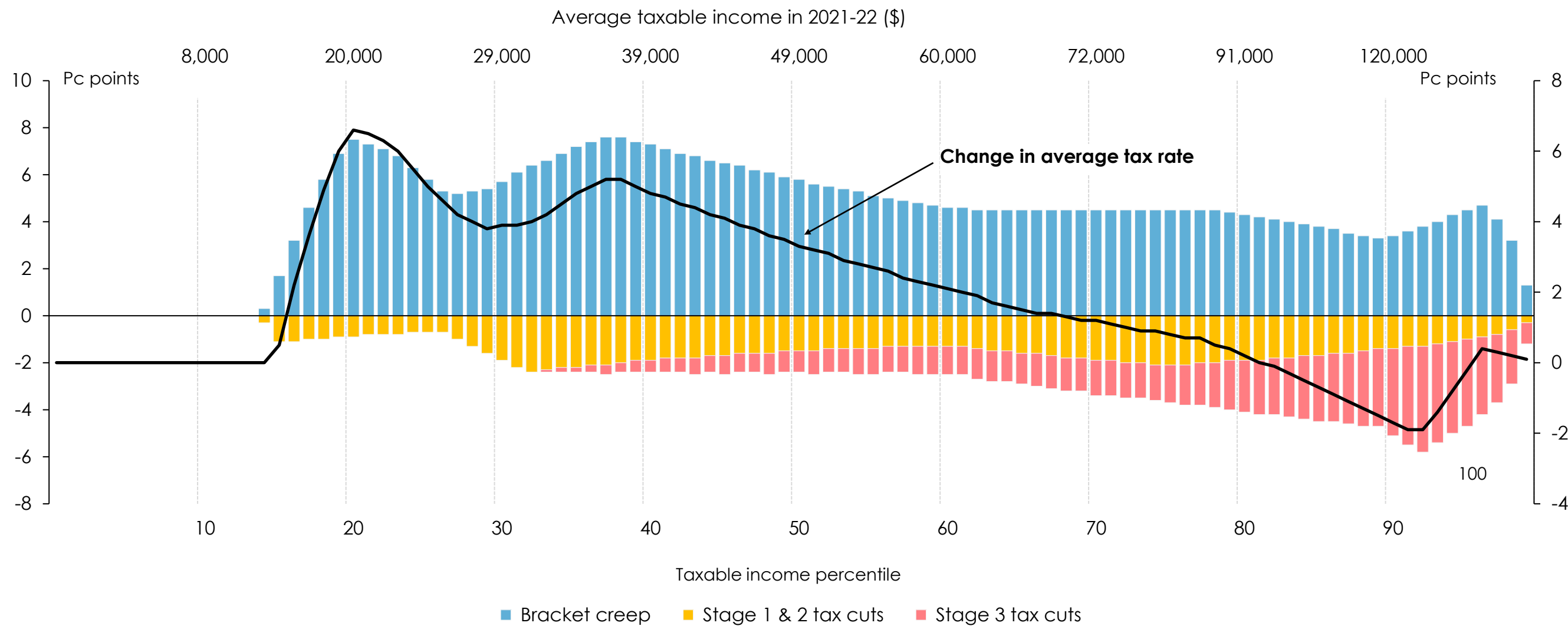
Source of changes in average personal income tax rates



Source: Parliamentary Budget Office, [Bracket creep and its fiscal impact](#), 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021. [Return to "What's New"](#).

# 'Bracket creep' disproportionately impacts taxpayers with incomes of between \$20,000 and \$50,000 per annum

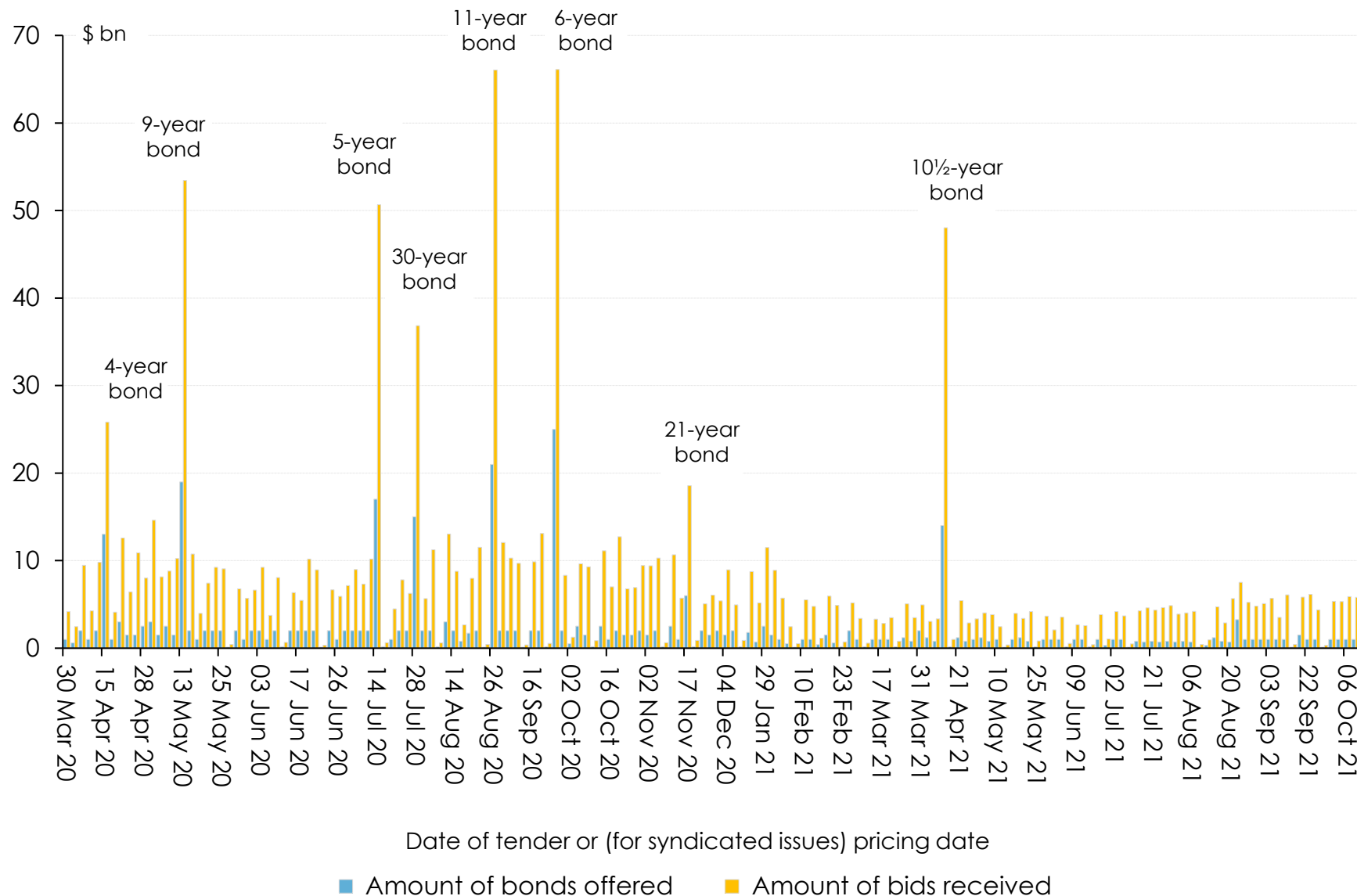
Change in average tax rates between 2021-22 and 2031-32 by taxable income percentile



Source: Parliamentary Budget Office, [Beyond the Budget: Fiscal outlook and scenarios](#), 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021. [Return to "What's New"](#).

# The Government continues to find a ready appetite for its bond issuance – so far this fiscal year it's received \$135bn of bids for \$28bn of bonds

## Australian government bond issuance since March 2020

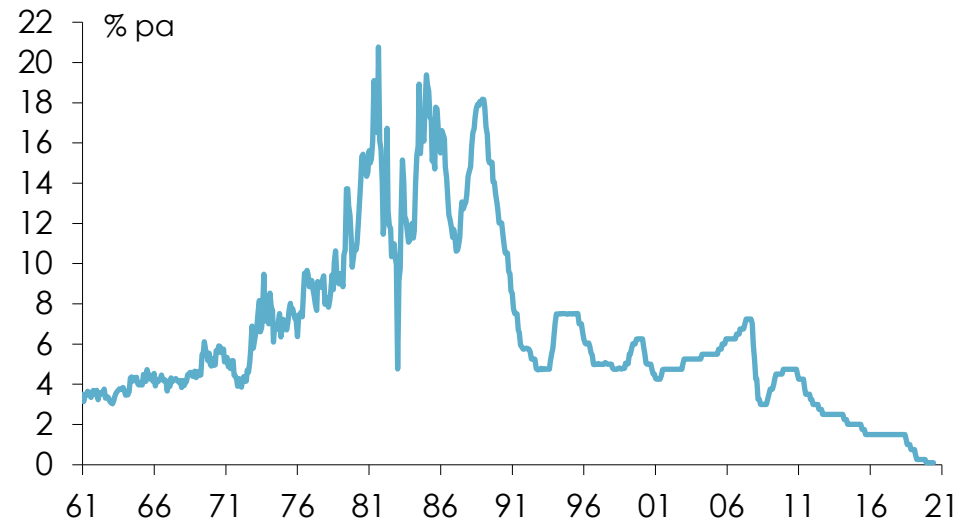


- Since 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020, the Australian Office of Financial Management has issued almost \$325bn of Treasury bonds – based on the volume of bids received it could have borrowed more than \$1.2 trn with yields at most 4 bp (0.04 of a pc point) above the highest yields actually accepted
- The AOFM issued another \$2bn of bonds, this week, \$1bn of 11-year bonds at an average yield of 1.61%, and \$1bn of 5½-year bonds at an average yield of 0.99%
- The AOFM received almost \$11¾bn of bids for these bonds
- So far this financial year, the AOFM has received bids totalling almost \$135bn for the \$28.2bn of bonds it has offered for sale – a 'coverage ratio' of 4.8 times, cf. 3¾ times during the 2020-21 financial year

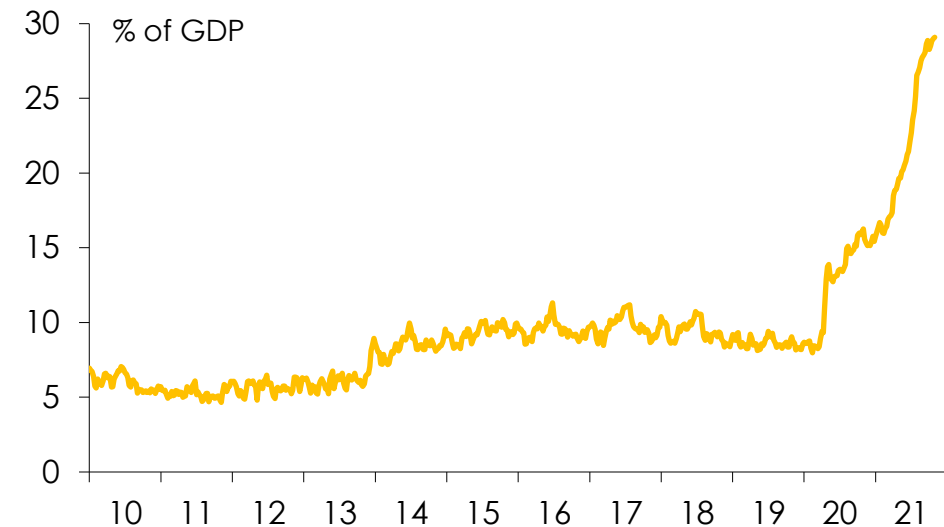
Source: Australian Office of Financial Management [data hub](#); Corinna. [Return to "What's New"](#).

# The RBA Board left all its monetary policy settings on hold at this week's Board meeting, and again foreshadowed no change until 2024

## Reserve Bank cash rate



## Reserve Bank assets as a pc of GDP



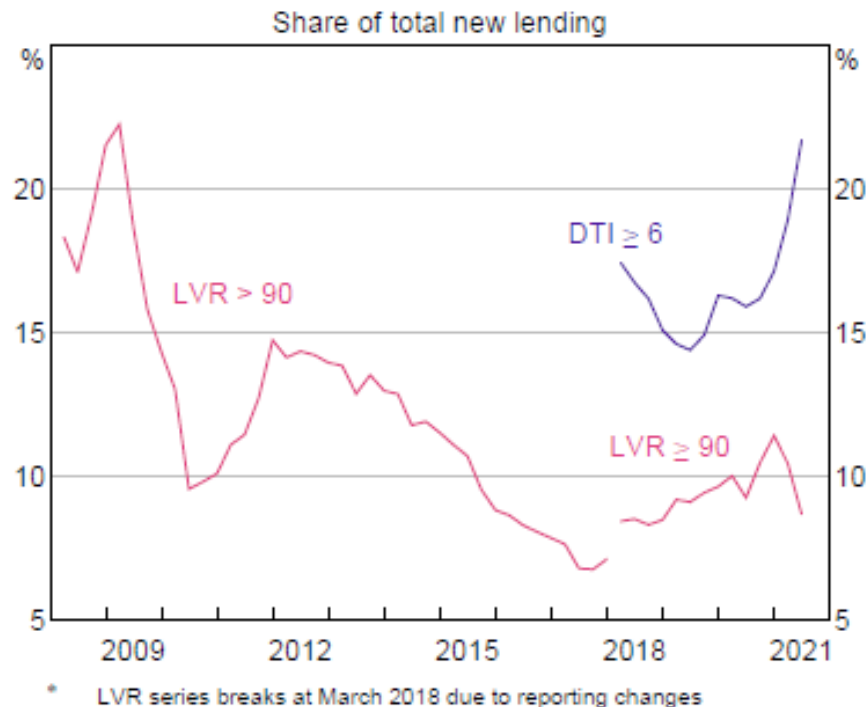
- ❑ At its October meeting this week the Reserve Bank left all of its monetary policy settings unchanged, as universally expected
- ❑ In his post Board meeting [statement](#) RBA Governor Philip Lowe acknowledged that GDP is “expected to have declined materially in the September quarter”, but also that “the economy is expected to bounce back” as vaccination rates increase further and restrictions are eased
  - although he also acknowledged that there was “uncertainty about the timing and pace of the bounce-back” and that “it is likely to be slower than that earlier in the year”
- ❑ The Governor’s statement recorded that the Council of Financial Regulators (which includes the RBA, APRA, ASIC and Treasury) had “been discussing the medium-term risks to macroeconomic stability of rapid credit growth at a time of historically low interest rates”
  - this week [APRA](#) raised the interest rate ‘buffer’ it expects lenders to use in assessing mortgage borrowers’ debt servicing capacity from 2½ pc pts above the current product interest rate to 3 pc pts – a measure which it says will primarily impact investors
- ❑ Governor Lowe yet again re-iterated that the RBA “will not increase the cash rate until actual inflation is sustainably within the 2-3% range”
  - which will “require the labour market to be tight enough to generate wages growth that is materially higher than it is currently”
  - conditions which the RBA’s “central scenario” does not envisage being 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"](#).

# The RBA's latest Financial Stability Review cautions against “exuberance” resulting from rapidly rising property prices

- ❑ The Reserve Bank's latest semi-annual [Financial Stability Review](#) (published on Friday) draws attention to “a build-up of systemic risks associated with high and rising household indebtedness” in Australia, and warns that “vulnerabilities could build further if housing market strength gives way to exuberance”
  - it is concerned that “unsustainable debt trends could emerge in an environment of rapidly rising property prices and extrapolative expectations” with “a greater chance of disorderly future price corrections”
- ❑ The RBA points to “some increases in particular forms of mortgage lending that are typically considered to be more risky”
  - in particular, lending at high debt-to-income (DTI) ratios and at high loan-to-value (LVR) ratios

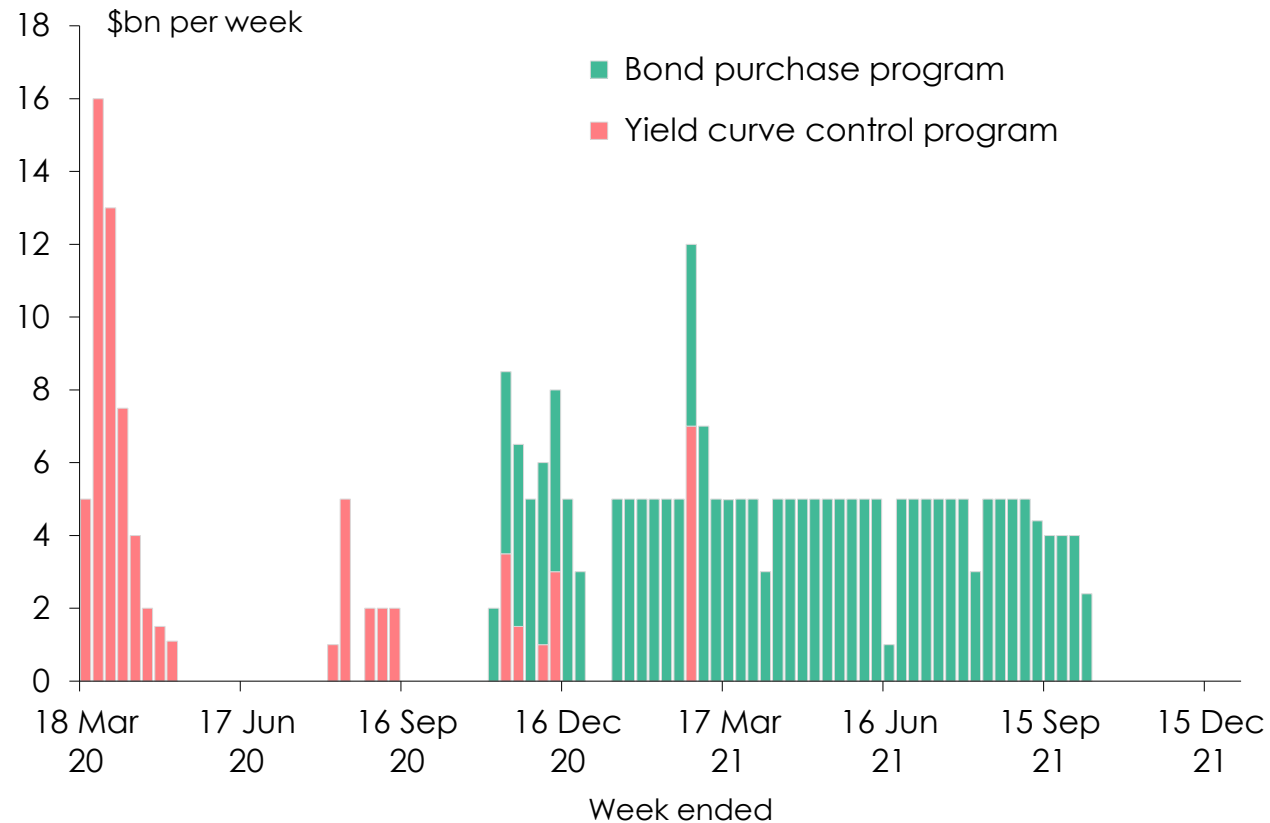
## Characteristics of housing loans



- ❑ The rise in high LVR lending was largely the result of the increase in demand from first-home buyers (FHBs), prompted by elevated government grants, which has now passed
  - “in practice, FHBs are no more likely to report financial stress, difficulty repaying their mortgages or losing their job than other indebted households”
- ❑ The more recent increase in high DTI lending reflects the increase in the share of loans going to investors combined with higher demand for ‘bridging loans’ from repeat purchasers
- ❑ The RBA also foreshadows a rise in business insolvencies “as vulnerable businesses exhaust their cash buffers”
  - although it notes that recent increases in property prices will help some businesses (with loans secured by residential property) avoid insolvency, and that recent changes to the insolvency framework should “improve outcomes for businesses and their creditors”

# Australian bond yields continued rising this week, and by more than US yields with the 10-year spread to the US turning positive again

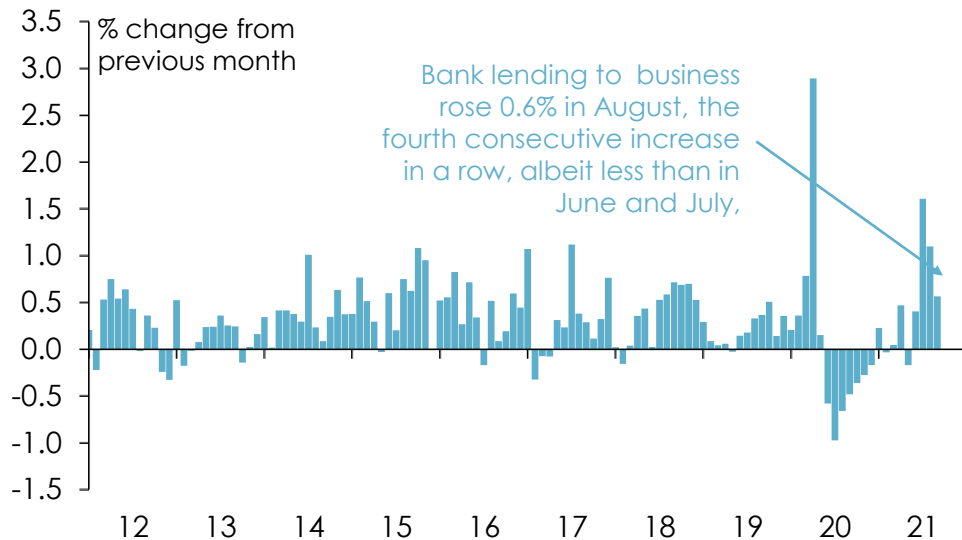
## RBA open market bond purchases



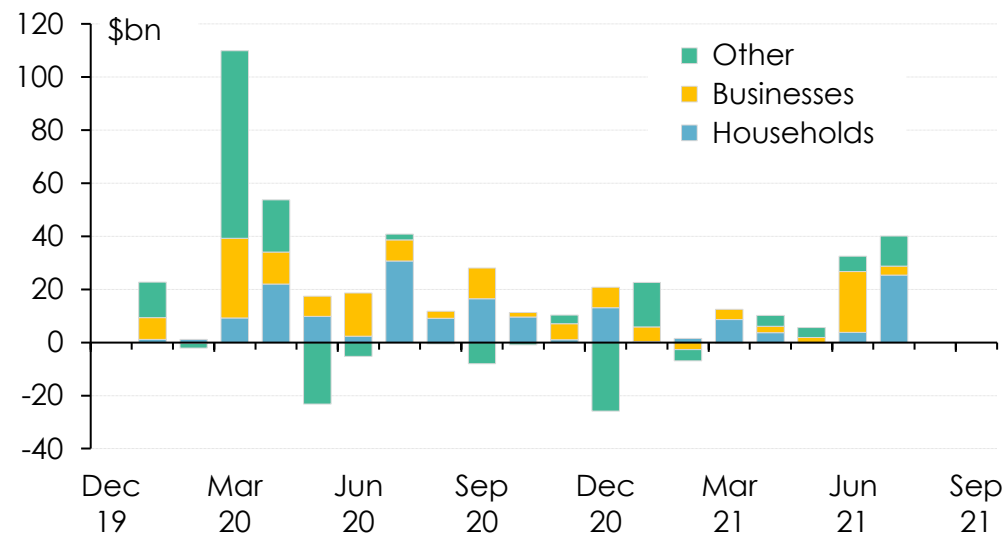


# Banks have played an important role in assisting borrowers cope with shutdowns, and have been swamped with deposits

## Business credit outstanding



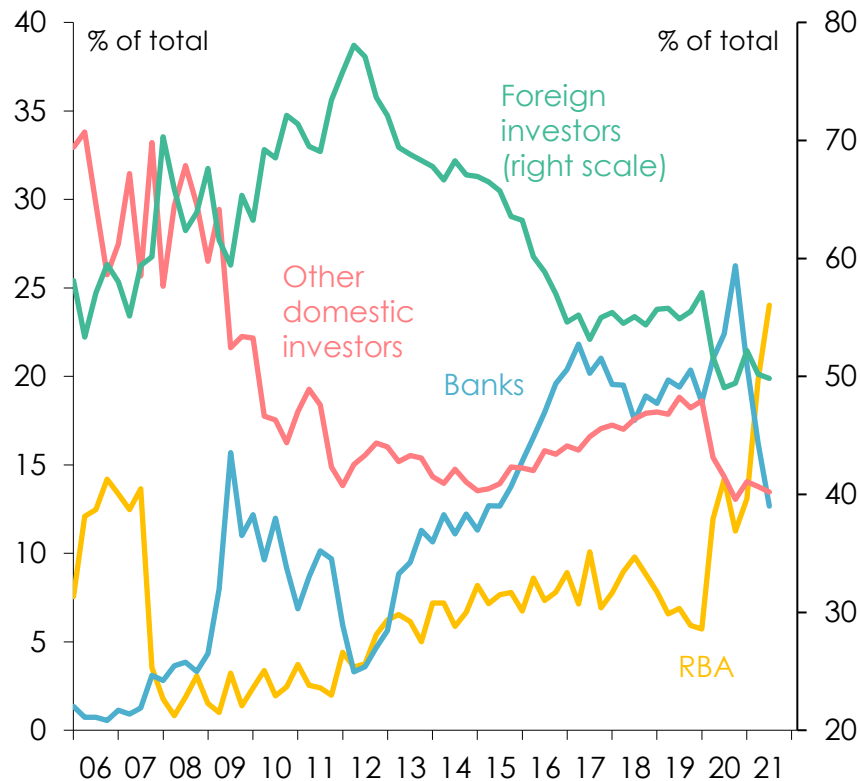
## Monthly change in bank deposits



- ❑ 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 \$386bn (18¼%) 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 \$183bn (18½%) since last February – of which \$36bn has been sourced from early release of superannuation savings – while business deposits have risen by \$138bn (23%)

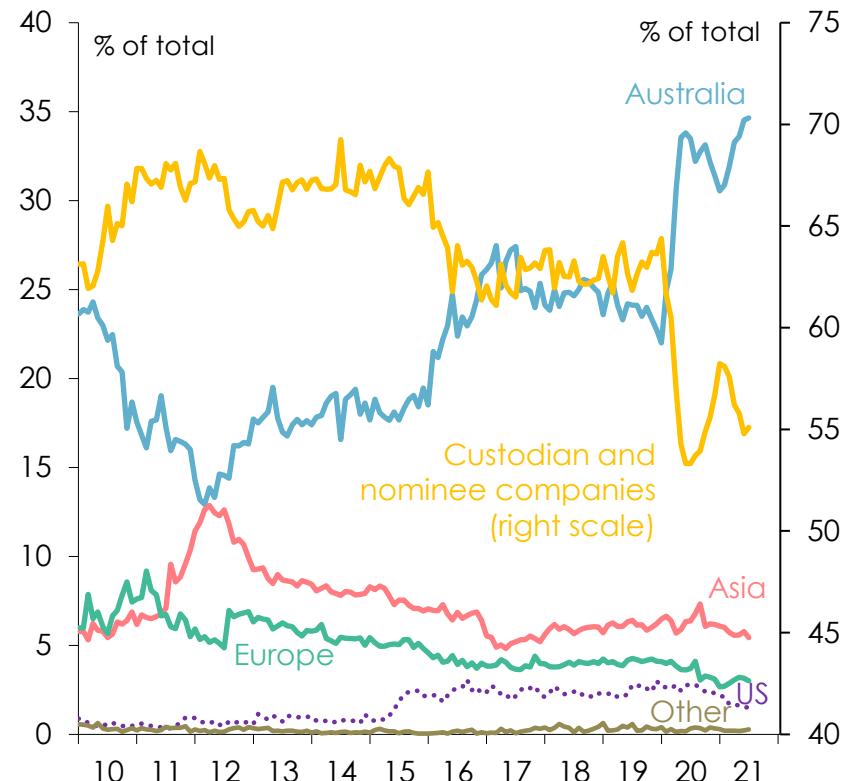
# The RBA has (indirectly) absorbed almost two-thirds of the increase in government debt since the end of 2019, banks 2% and foreigners 31%

## Holder of Australian Government bonds



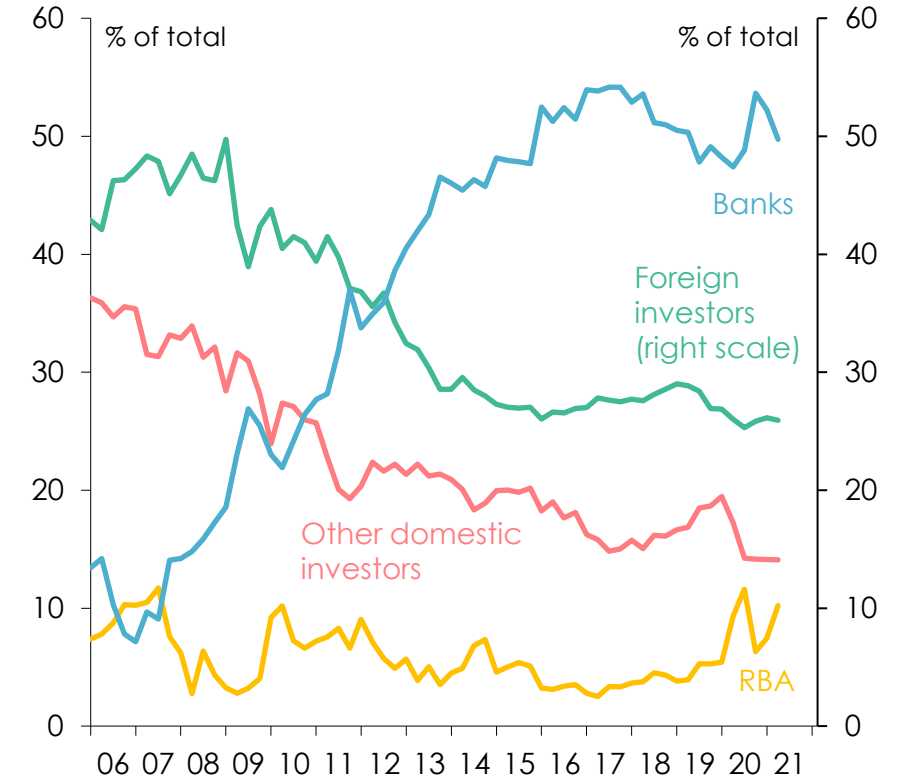
Australian Gov't bonds on issue have increased by \$237bn since the end of 2019 – of which \$173bn (73%) have been absorbed by the RBA, and \$72bn by foreigners, while banks have reduced their holdings by \$7bn

## 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

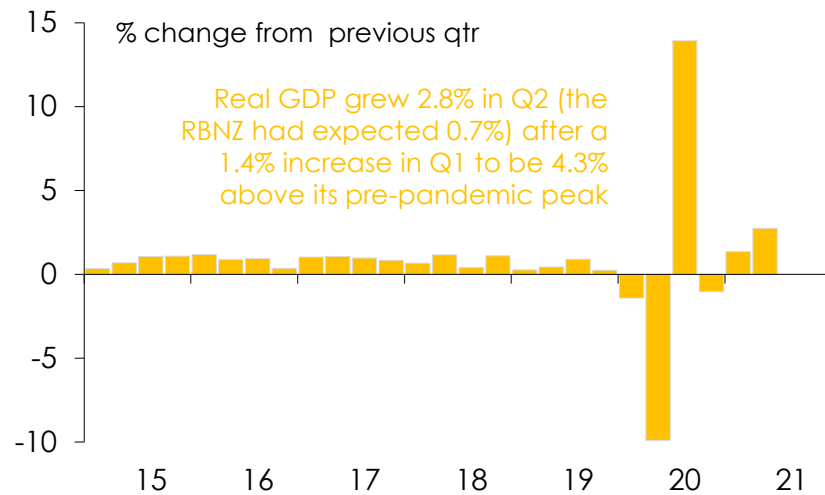


State & Territory Gov't bonds on issue increased have increased by \$107bn since the end of 2019, of which \$45bn have been absorbed by banks, \$40bn by the RBA and \$29bn by foreigners

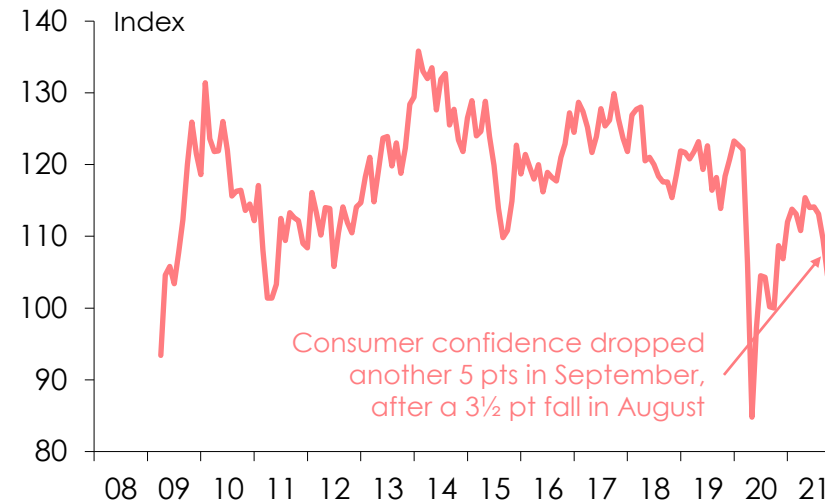
**New Zealand**

# New Zealand's economy grew a much stronger-than-expected 2.8% in Q2 – but it was all due to net exports, and domestic demand contracted

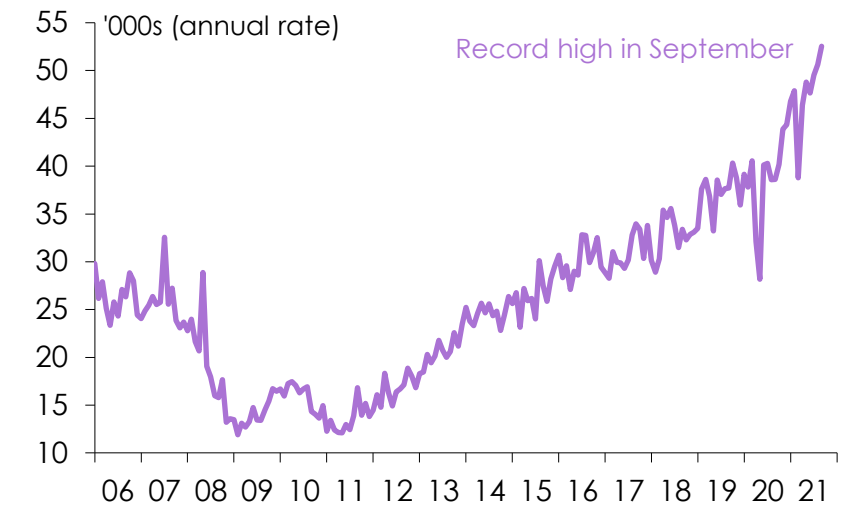
## Real GDP



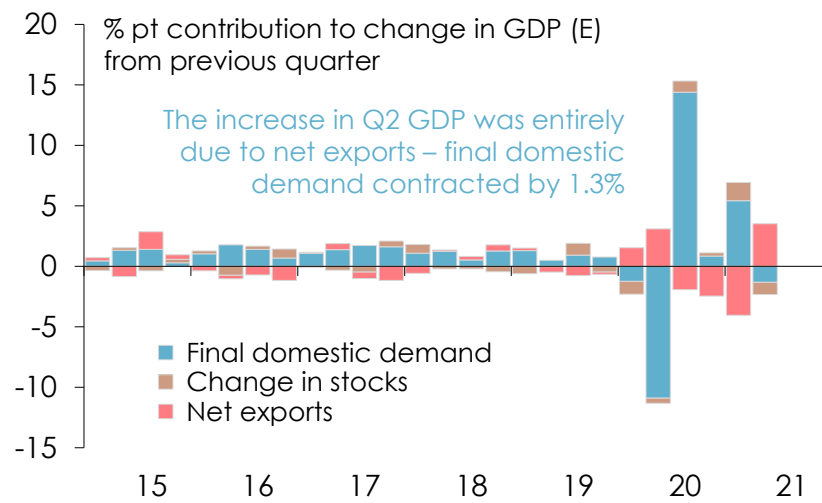
## Consumer confidence



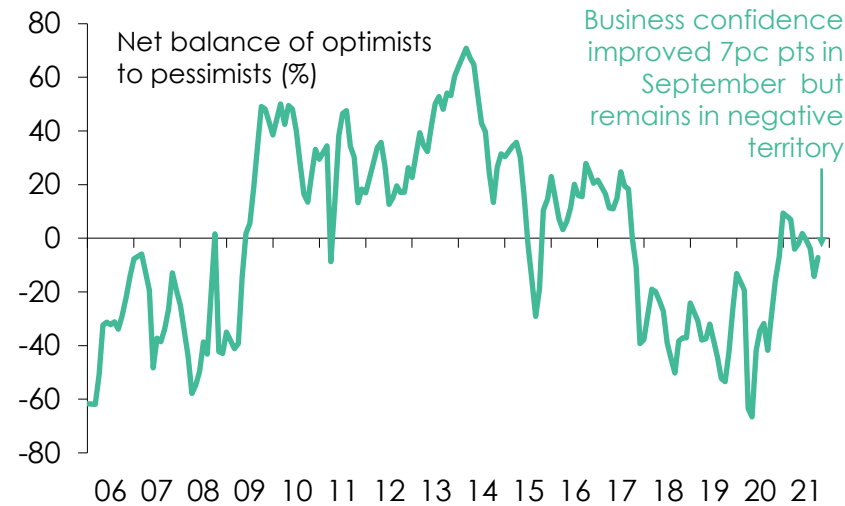
## Dwelling 'consents' (permits)



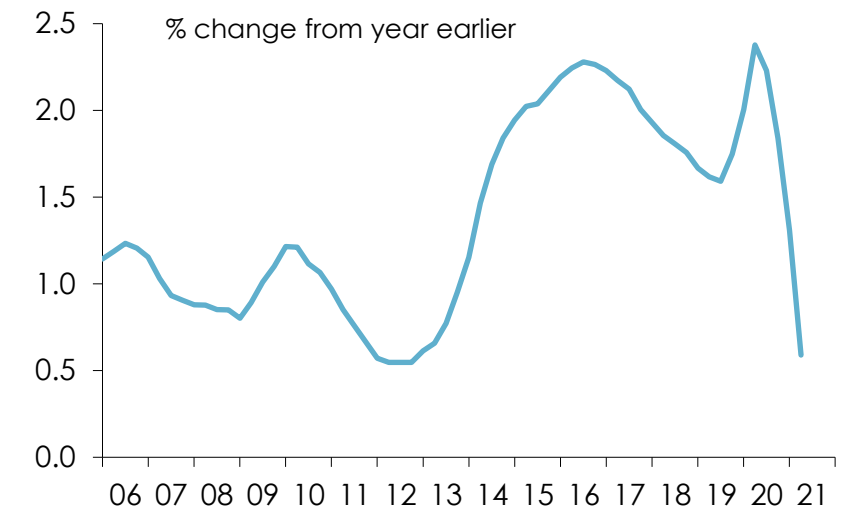
## Contributions to GDP growth



## Business confidence



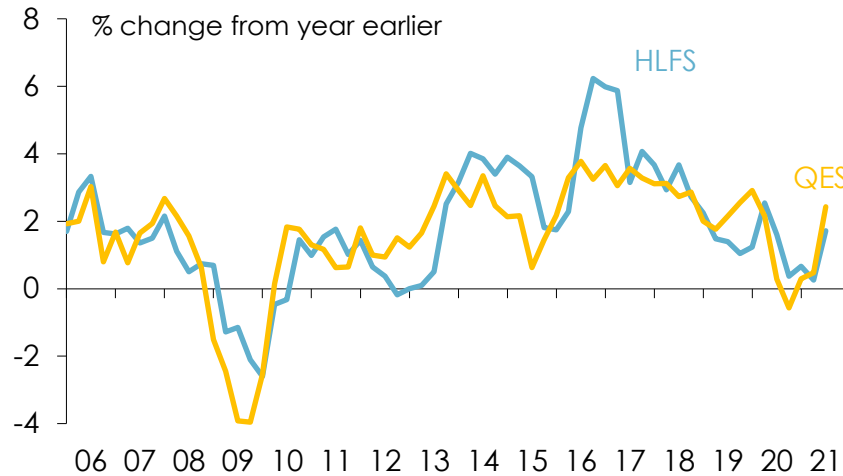
## Population growth



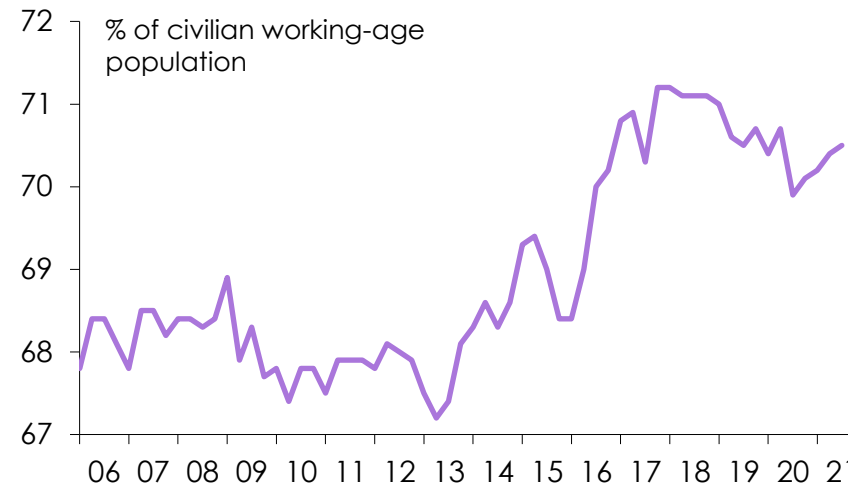
Note: New Zealand uses GDP(P) as its preferred measure of GDP. September GDP data will be released on 16<sup>th</sup> December.  
Sources: [Statistics NZ](#); NZ Treasury, [Budget Economic and Fiscal Update 2021](#); ANZ-Roy Morgan; [ANZ Bank NZ](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

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

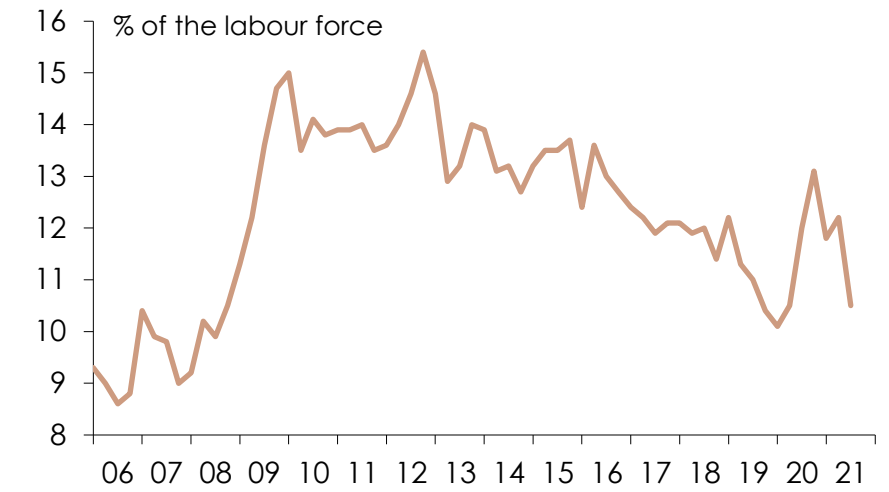
## Employment



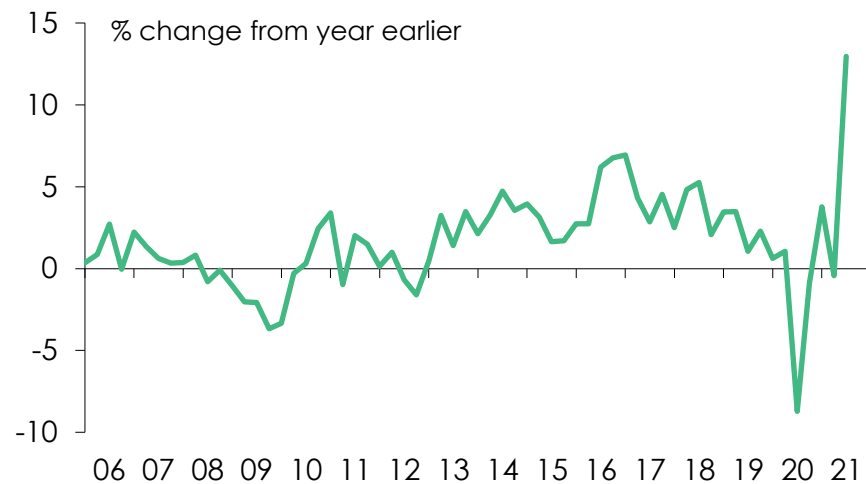
## Labour force participation rate



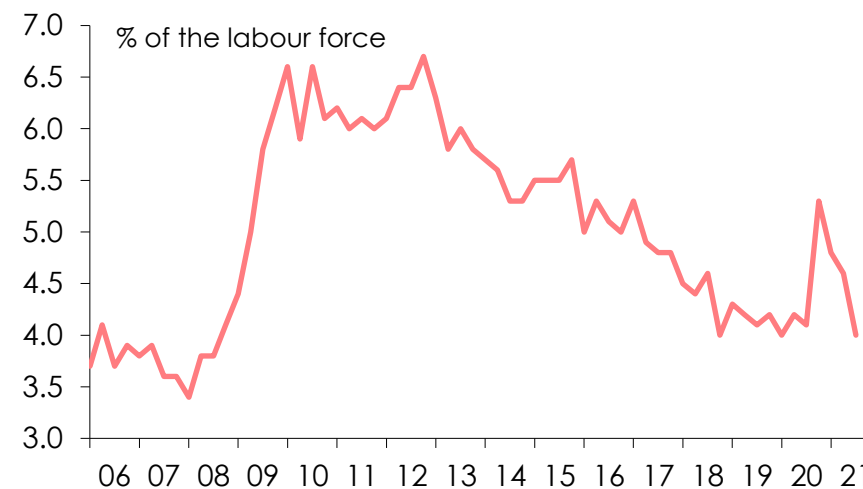
## Labour force under-utilization rate



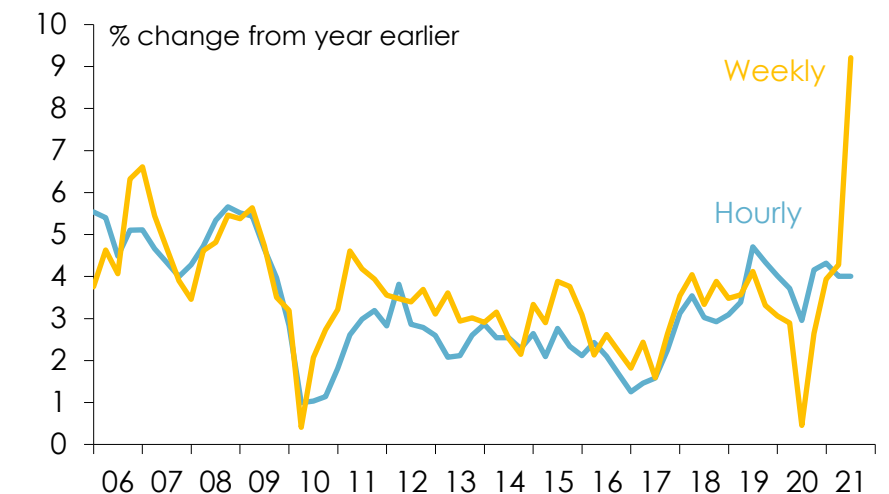
## Hours worked



## Unemployment rate



## Average weekly earnings

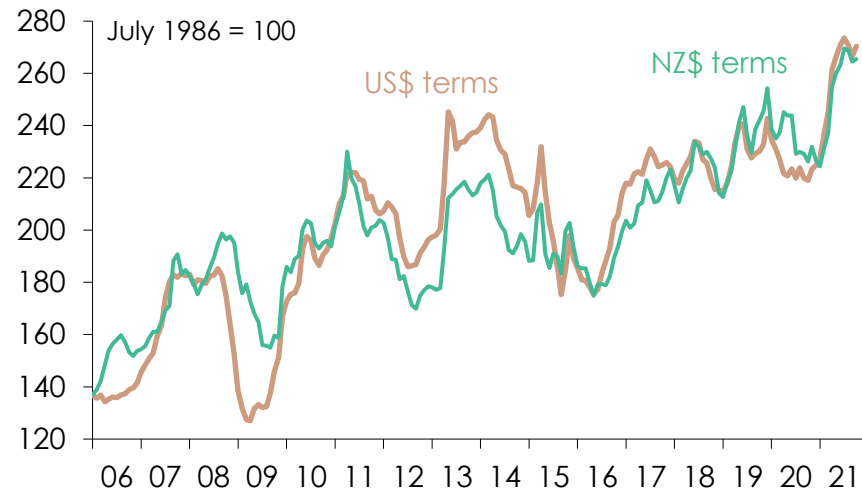


Note: New Zealand labour force data are only published quarterly. There are two 'headline' series on employment – the household labour force survey (HLFS) which counts the number of people in employment during the quarter; and the quarterly employment survey (QES), which counts the number of 'filled 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.

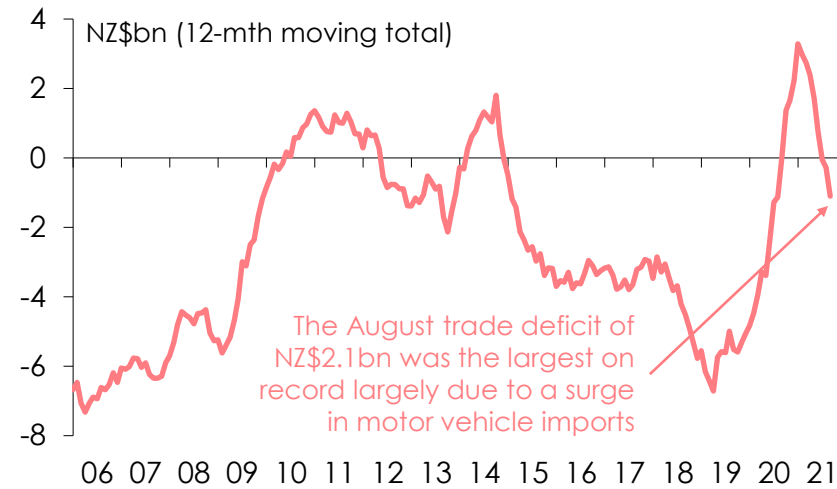
Source: [Statistics NZ](https://www.stats.govt.nz/). September quarter data will be released on 3<sup>rd</sup> November. [Return to "What's New"](#).

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

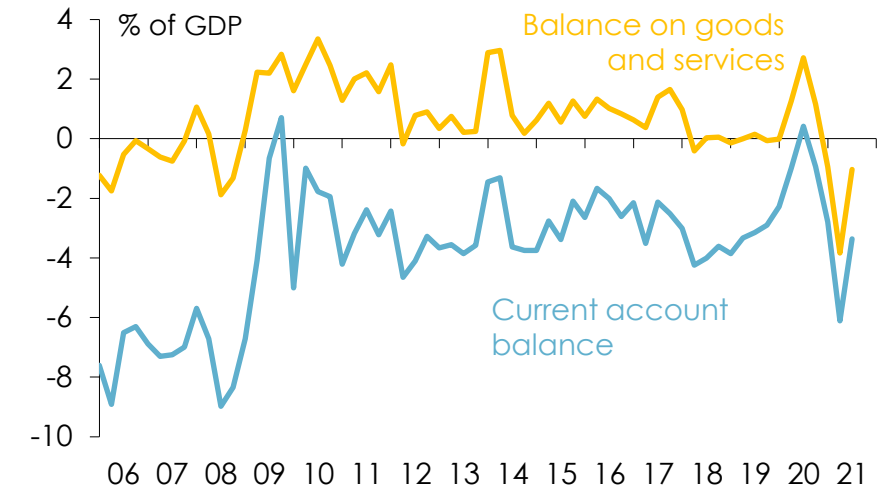
## Export commodity prices



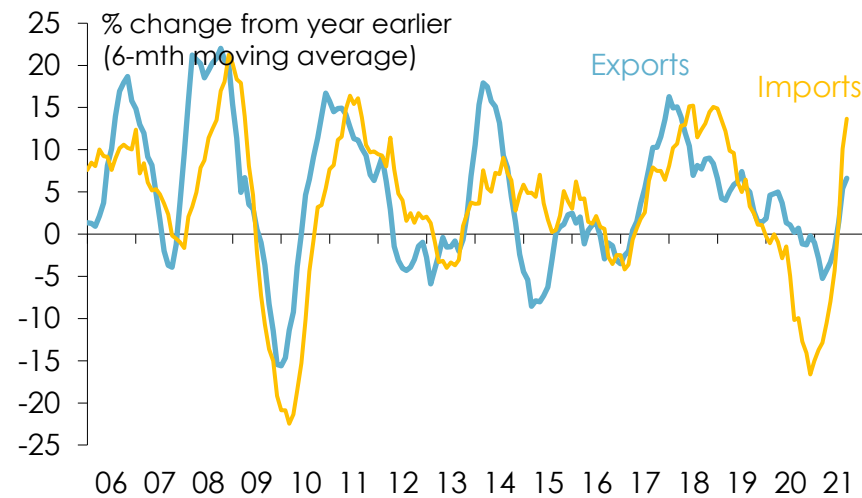
## Merchandise trade balance



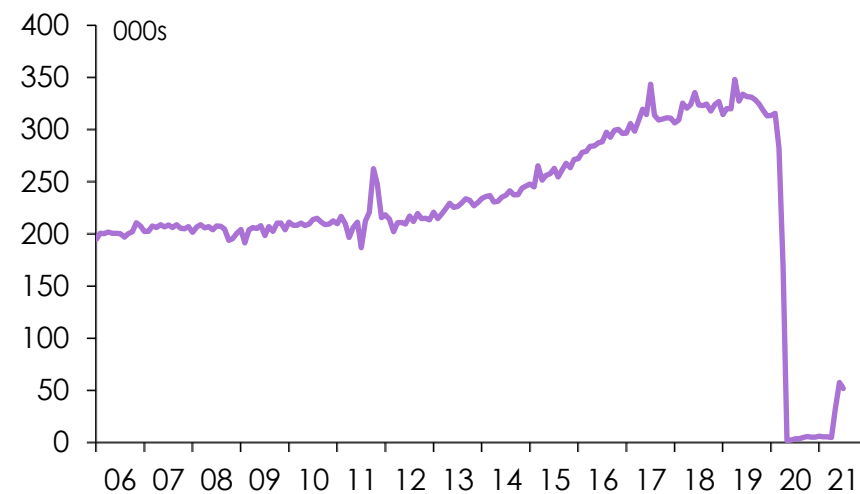
## Balance of payments



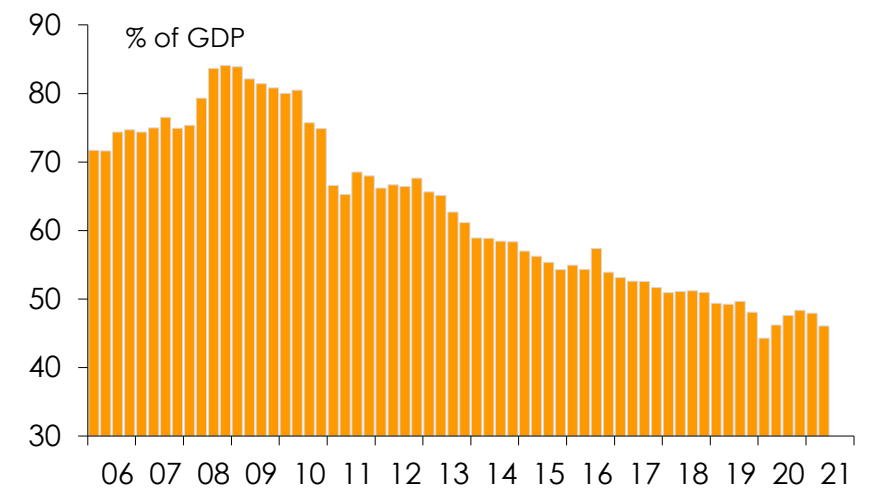
## Merchandise exports and imports



## Overseas visitor arrivals



## Net foreign debt

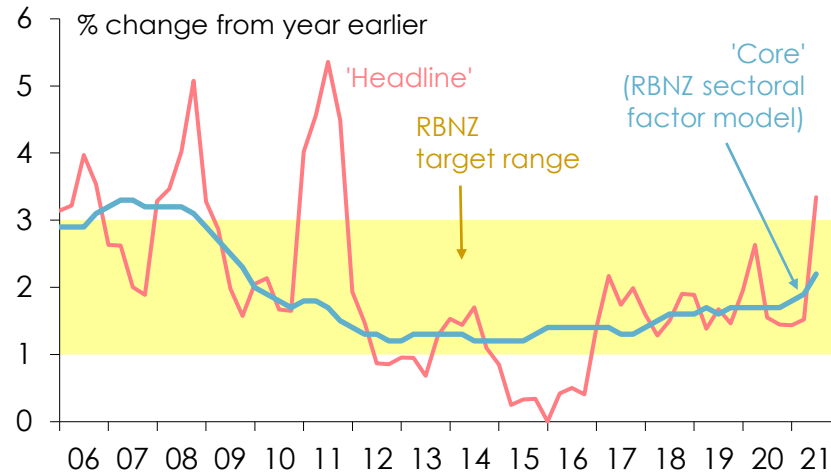


Note: latest merchandise trade data is for August: September data will be released on 27<sup>th</sup> October; latest balance of payments and net foreign debt data is for the March quarter; September quarter data will be released on 15<sup>th</sup> December. Sources: [ANZ Bank](#); [Statistics New Zealand](#). [Return to "What's New"](#).

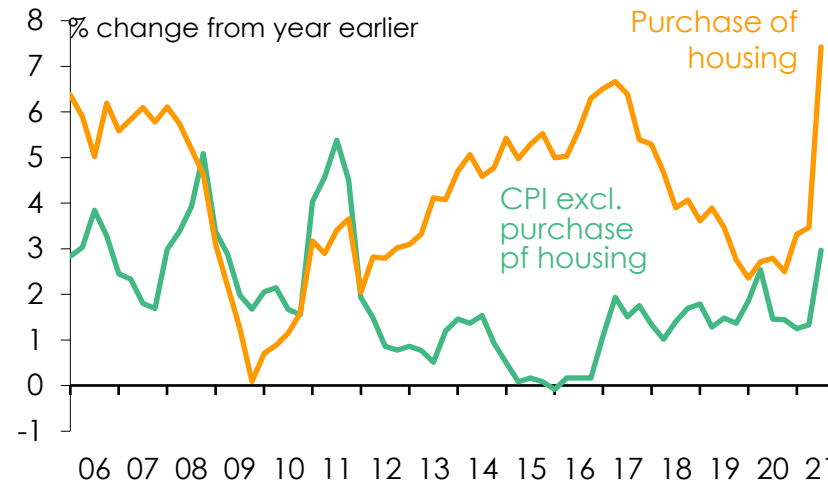


# The Q2 CPI was a 'shocker', rising 1.3%, half a percentage point above market expectations, driven largely by housing costs

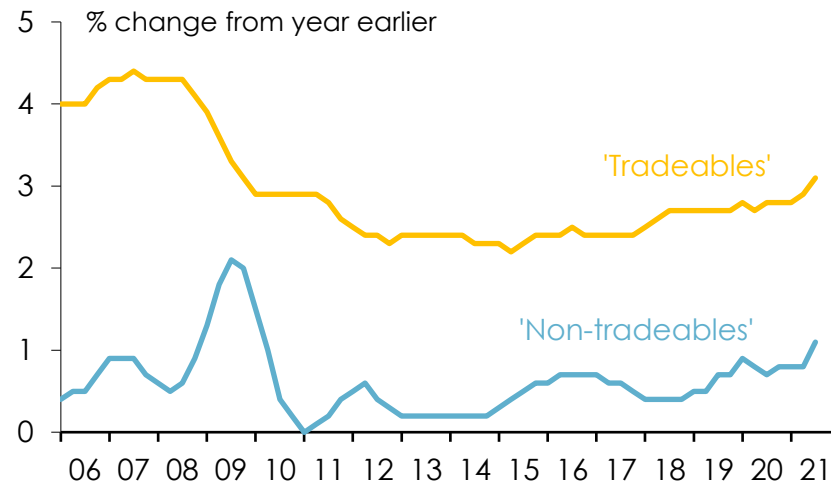
## Consumer prices



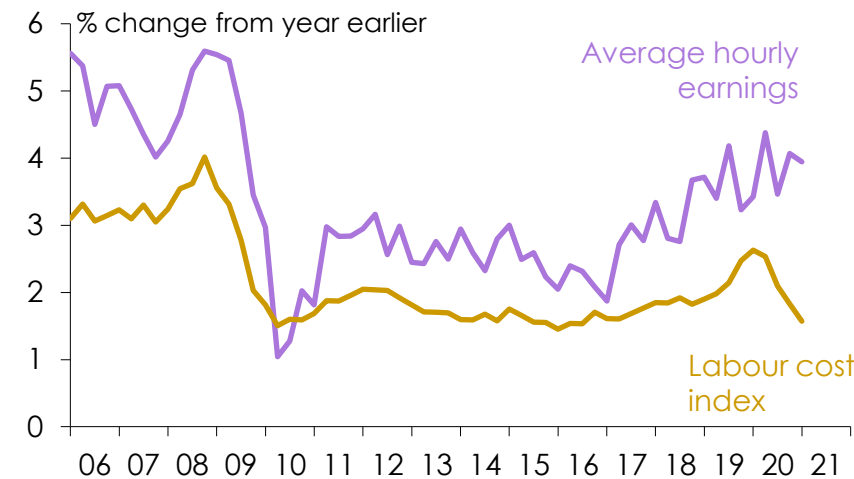
## Housing costs in the CPI



## Components of 'core' inflation



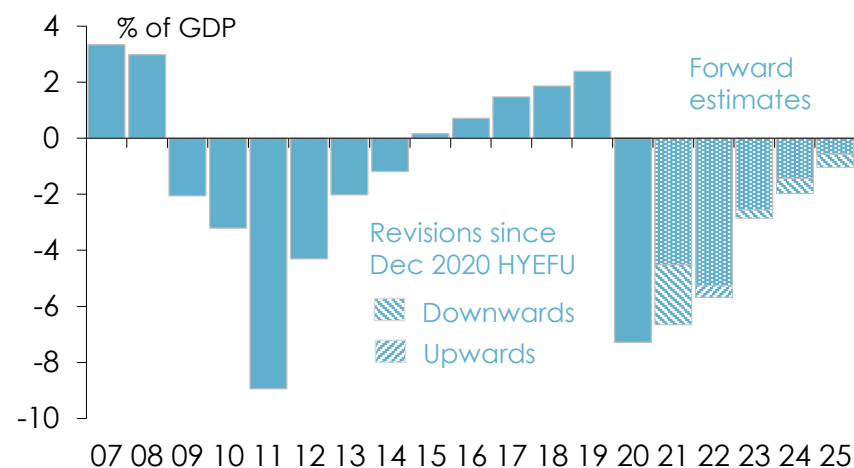
## Labour costs



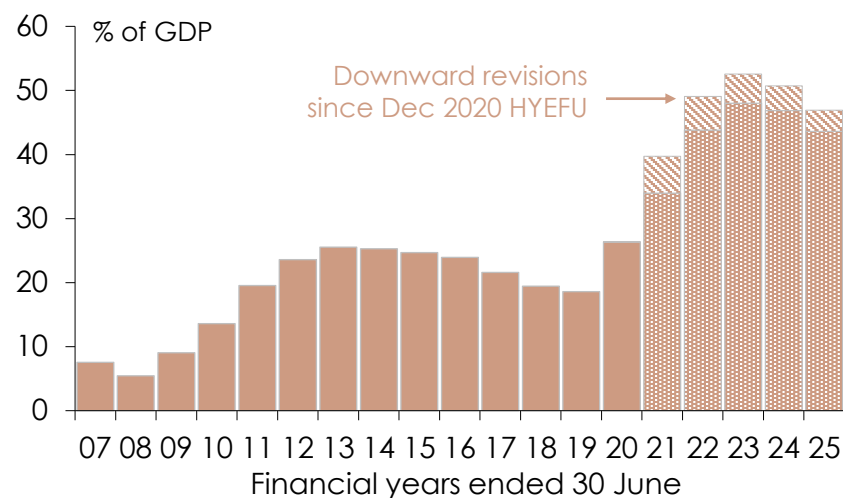
- ❑ The CPI rose 1.3% in Q2, the largest q-o-q increase since Q3 2008, pushing the annual 'headline' inflation rate up to 3.3%, the highest since Q3 2011
- ❑ 89% of the Q2 increase in the CPI came from 7 components representing 31% of the CPI basket – housing purchase (30% of the Q2 increase), petrol (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' ('OBEGAL')



## NZ 'core Crown debt'

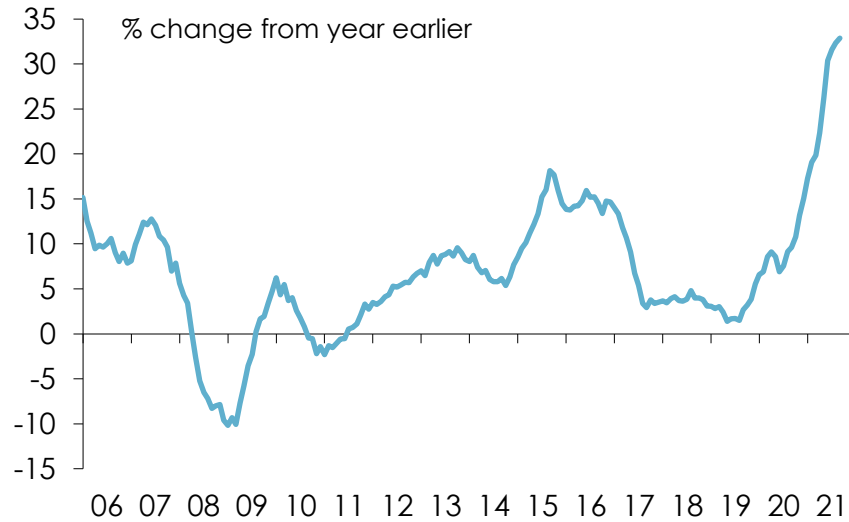


- As was also the case in Australia, the 2021-22 New Zealand Budget presented by Finance Minister Grant Robertson in May benefited from a much stronger economic performance than had been anticipated in last year's Budget, or in last December's Half-Year Economic & Fiscal Update (HYEFU)
  - Treasury now 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

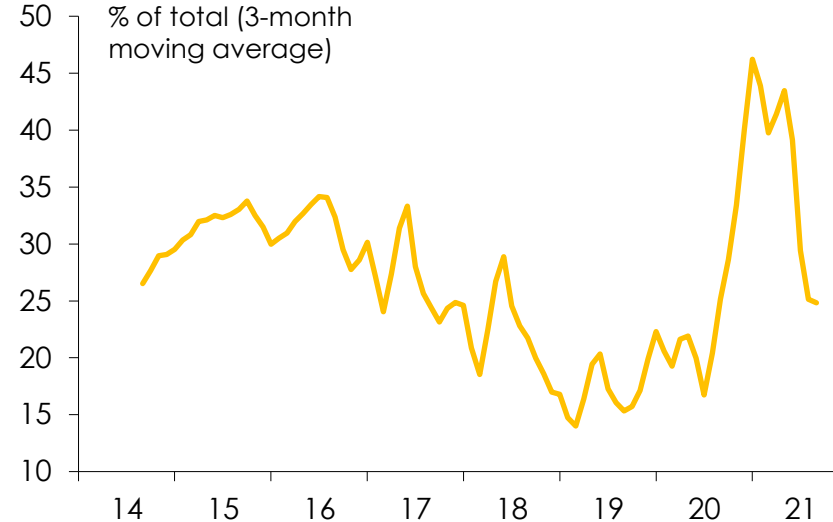
Note: The measure of the NZ Government budget balance is 'OBEGAL', which stands for 'operating balance excluding gains and losses' (an accrual accounting measure). Net 'core Crown debt' excludes assets of the NZ Super Fund, student loans and other advances, and financial assets held for public policy 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

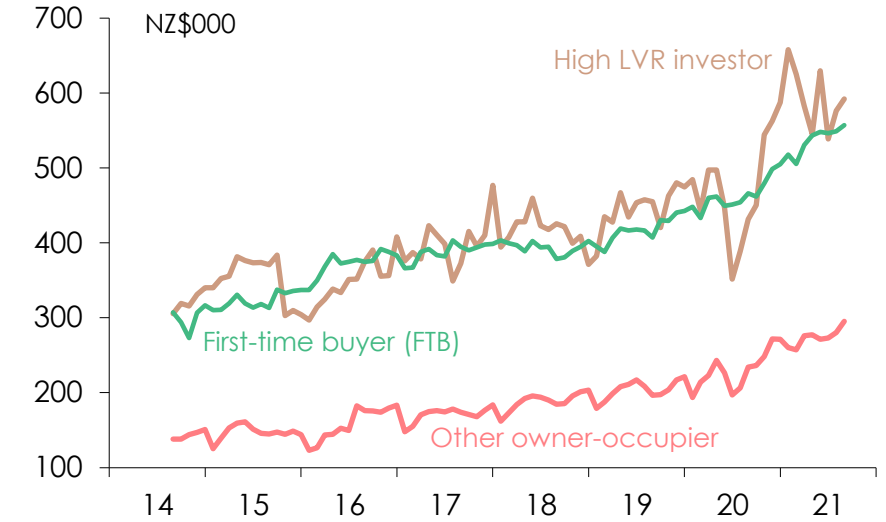
## House price inflation



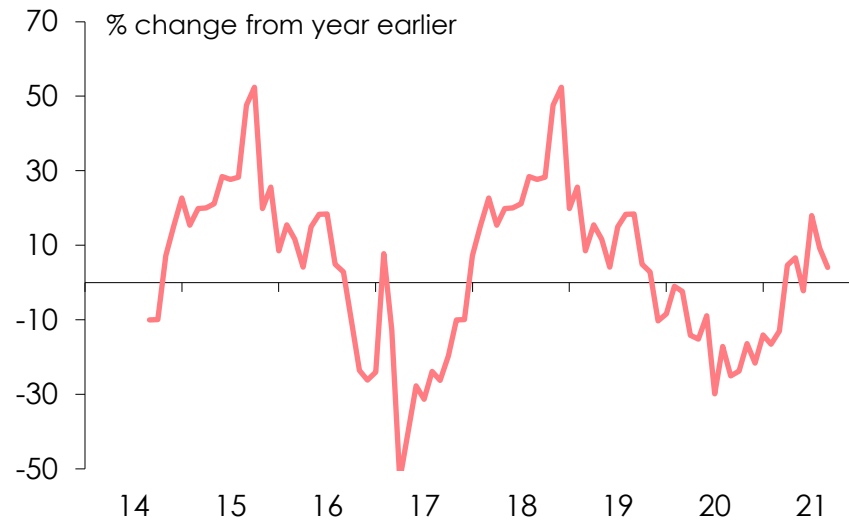
## Lending to investors as pc of total



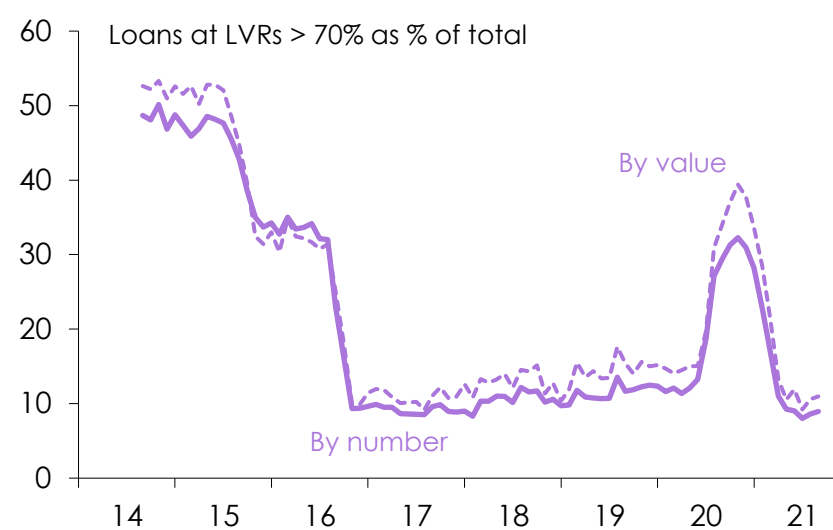
## Average new mortgage



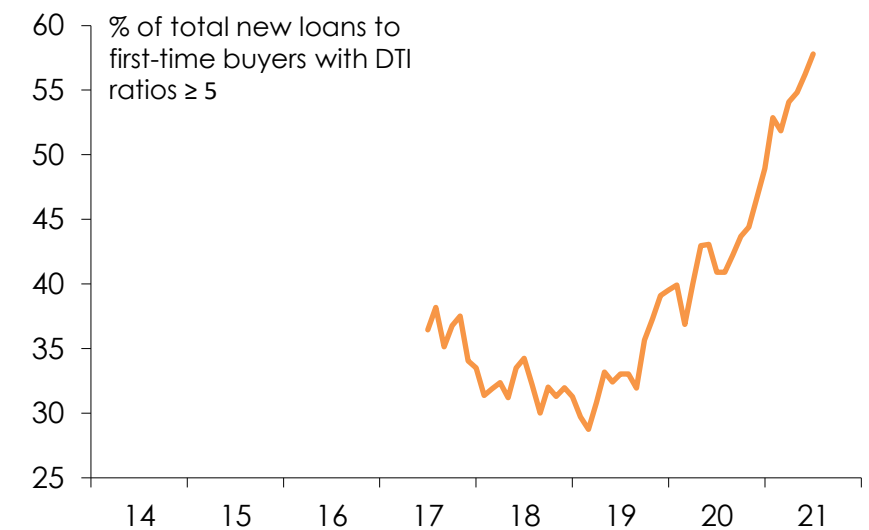
## Mortgage lending growth



## High-LVR loans to investors



## Loans to FTBs at over 5 times income

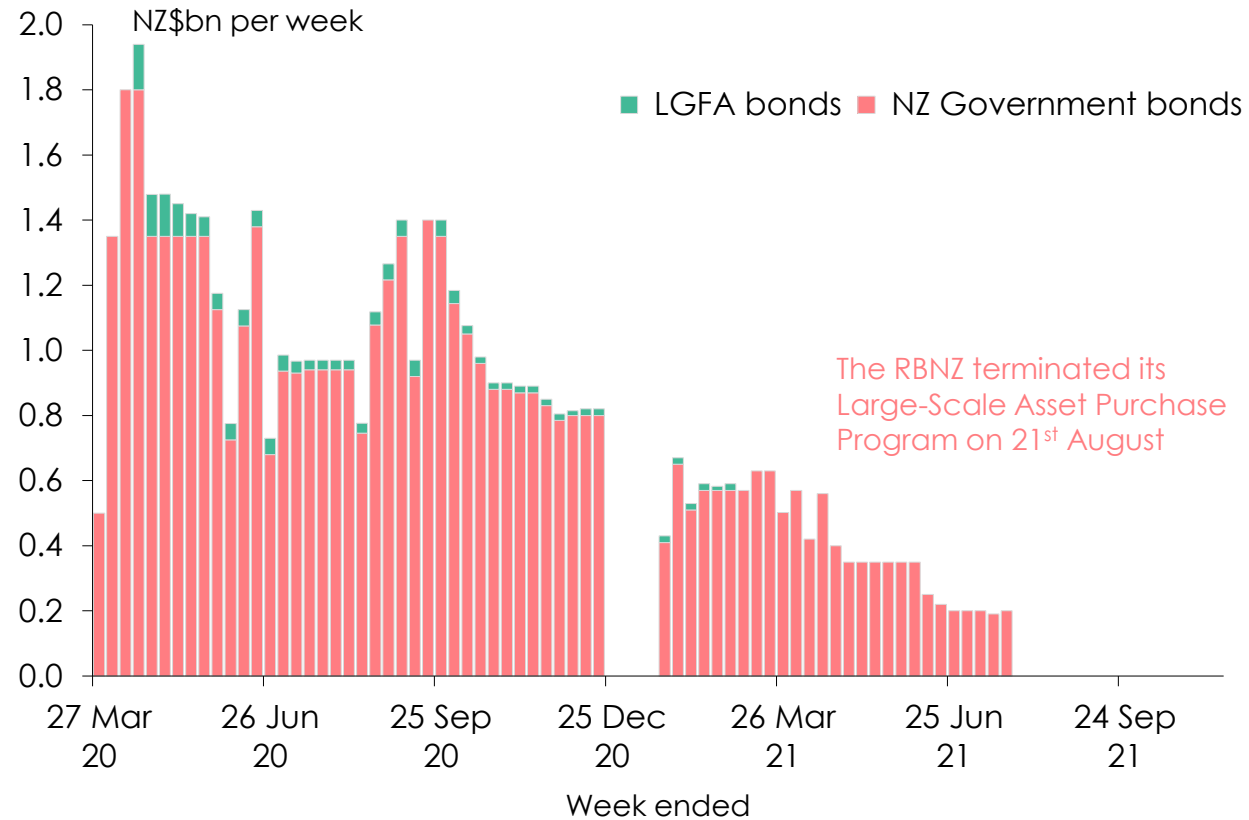


# As expected, the RBNZ raised its official cash rate by 25 bp at this week's Monetary Policy Committee meeting

- ❑ The RBNZ raised its official cash rate by 25 basis points, to 0.50%, at Wednesday's Monetary Policy Committee meeting
  - the MPC was going to raise the OCR at its previous meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> August, but stayed its hand following the announcement of a nationwide lockdown the day before
  - however this week the MPC concluded that the current restrictions “have not materially changed the medium-term outlook for inflation and employment”, and that “timely Government support for business and jobs is effective at cushioning the near-term impact on economic activity”
- ❑ The decision to raise the OCR was primarily driven by concern about the consequences of ‘capacity’ pressures for inflation
  - in the MPC's assessment, “rising demand alongside capacity constraints is contributing to higher domestic inflation”, accentuated by “higher oil prices, supply shortfalls and rising transport costs”, which are expected to result in CPI inflation rising “above 4% in the near term” before returning towards 2% “over the medium term”
  - In its view, “demand shortfalls are less of an issue than the economy hitting capacity constraints given the effectiveness of Government support and resilience of household and business balance sheets”
- ❑ The MPC re-iterated its judgement that “the level of house prices is currently unsustainable”
  - although they also noted that “a number of factors are expected to constrain house prices over the medium term”, including increased levels of new building, slower population growth, changes in tax policy announced by the Government in March (which came into effect at the beginning of this month), and the recent further tightening of macro-prudential restrictions on high-LVR mortgage lending
- ❑ The RBNZ foreshadowed further increases in the OCR at future meetings, noting that “monetary policy stimulus will need to be reduced to maintain price stability and maximum sustainable employment over the medium term” and that “further removal of monetary policy stimulus is expected over time”

# Short-term NZ bond yields didn't react to the (fully anticipated) OCR hike, but longer-term yields continued drifting higher in line with US trends

## RBNZ open market bond purchases



## New Zealand interest rates



- ❑ New Zealand interest rate markets had fully priced Wednesday's increase in the RBNZ's official cash rate, and short-term bond yields actually declined slightly
- ❑ However the 10-year yield drifted higher, in sympathy with global trends, finishing at 2.02%, equal to the previous peak in late February, but otherwise the highest since mid-April 2019

## Important information

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