



Illawarra Regional Information Service

Monday, 2nd November 2009

Ph: 02 4285 4446

Fax: 02 4285 4448

Media Release

Enhanced household finances

According to the latest *IRIS Consumer Sentiment Survey*, consumer confidence in the Illawarra improved during the September quarter. The *IRIS Consumer Sentiment Index* rose to 93 pts, up 5 pts on the previous three months.

Perceptions regarding current financial position of local households rose during the quarter. Consumers also continued to remain optimistic about the future with 42.7% of respondents stating that they would be 'better off' financially in 12 months from now.

The recent spate of good economic figures has helped increase local confidence in the Australian economy. The *Future Economic Expectations Index* reached a new high, at 111 pts. This is the most positive the index has been since the series began in 1997. Similarly, the number of residents that think it is a good time to find a job climbed, with the *Perceived Job Availability Index* increasing by 22 pts.

Despite the improved conditions, reported purchases of clothing & footwear and vehicles in the Illawarra region decreased during the September quarter. However, spending in these categories in regions outside of the Illawarra has increased marginally.

After the strong June quarter, sentiment towards the market conditions for buying or building a property has weakened, which is somewhat expected given the phasing out of the First Home Buyers Grant and the strong expectation of interest rate rises. The *Dwelling Index* fell 16 pts, to 92 pts. This is still 3 pts above the September average, representing a good result overall. Additionally, fewer respondents felt that now is a 'bad' time to borrow money than those in the June quarter.

Further comment:

Simon Pomfret
Executive Director
Simon_pomfret@iris.org.au

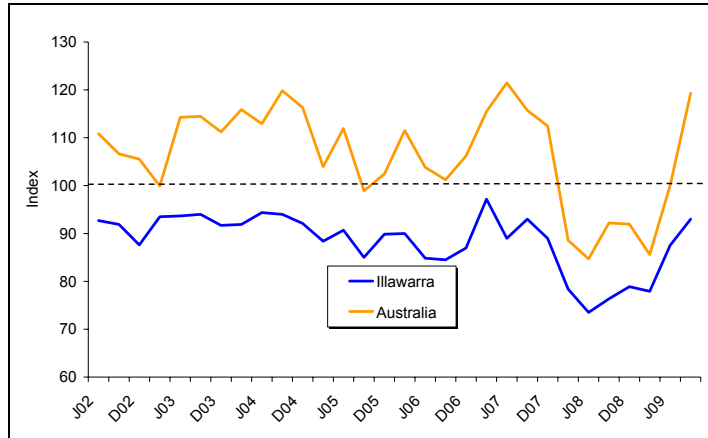
Tel: 02 4285 4446

Data enquiries:

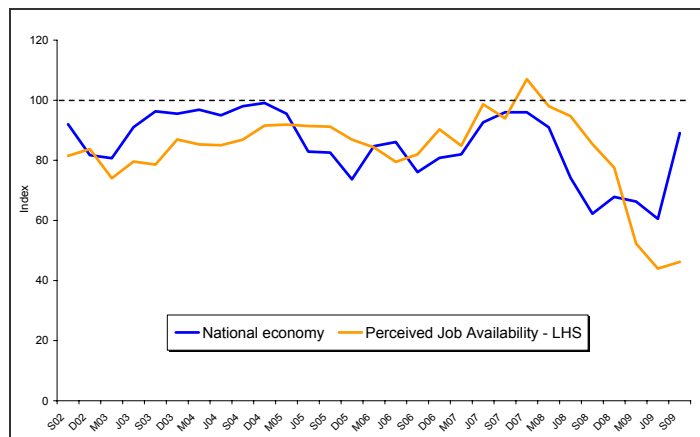
Natalie Viselli
Research Manager
Natalie_viselli@iris.org.au

Tel: 02 4285 4446

CONSUMER SENTIMENT INDEX



ECONOMIC CONDITIONS



CONDITIONS FOR BUYING A PROPERTY

