



Illawarra Regional Information Service

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Media Release

Illawarra households end the year less optimistic

The results of the latest *IRIS Consumer Sentiment Survey*, show that consumer optimism in the Illawarra started to wane during the December quarter.

The December 2009 edition of the survey reveals that the *IRIS Consumer Sentiment Index* returned to 88 pts, reversing the 5 pt gain of the September quarter.

Similarly, respondents felt less optimistic about the future of the national economy, reflected by a 14 pt deterioration of the *Future Economic Expectations Index* to 97 pts. However, the *Perceived Job Availability Index* maintained its growth with an increase of 2 pts to 70 pts. This shows that more Illawarra residents believe it is a good time to look for employment.

Confidence towards the financial position of Illawarra households was slightly lower in the December quarter when compared to the previous three months. The *Current Financial Position Index* dropped slightly to 99 pts, which is a decrease of 2 pts on the September quarter. Meanwhile, the *Future Financial Position Index* experienced a significant reduction of 12 pts, to stand at 105 pts.

Local sentiment towards buying or building a property continued its downward trend over the December quarter. The *Dwelling Index* dropped a further 5 pts to 87 pts, as interest rates rise. The index currently sits 6 pts below the average December quarter result. Additionally, the number of households that believe now is a 'good time' to borrow money was 7.8% pts lower than during the September quarter.

Further comment:

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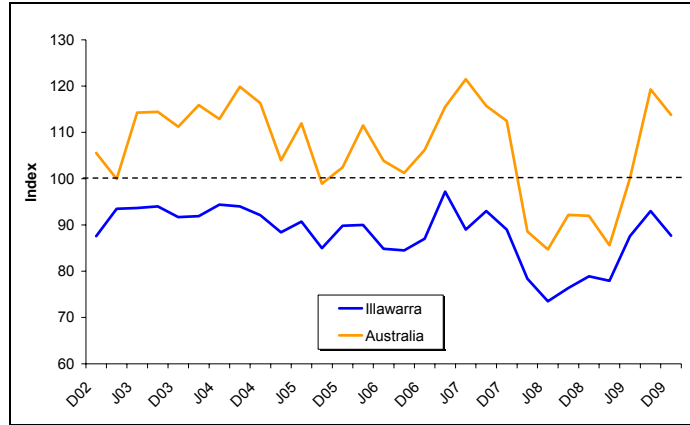
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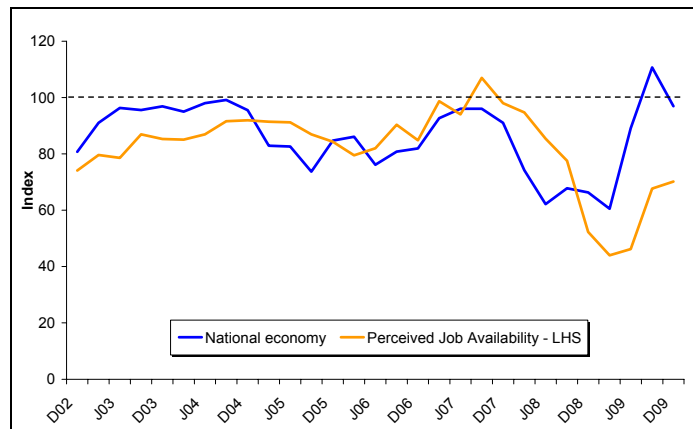
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CONSUMER SENTIMENT INDEX



ECONOMIC CONDITIONS



CONDITIONS FOR BUYING A PROPERTY

