

Auckland Economic Update – March 2021

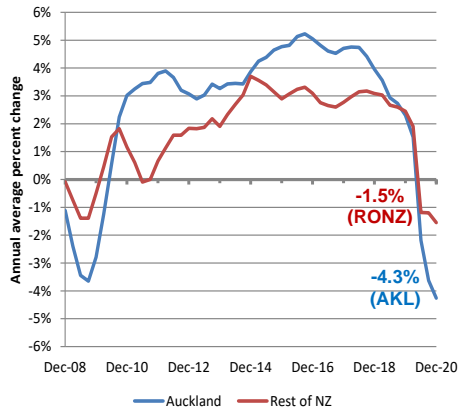
Data is the latest available as at the start of the month, and is for the Auckland region unless otherwise stated.

Research and Evaluation Unit

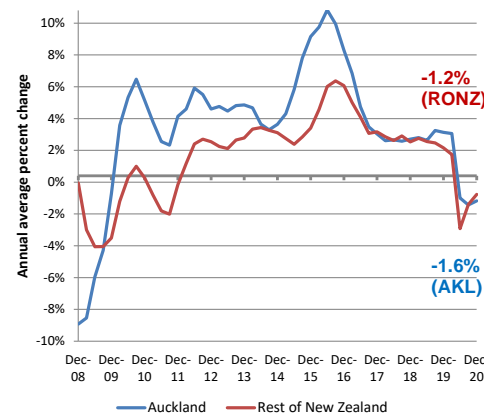
RIMU



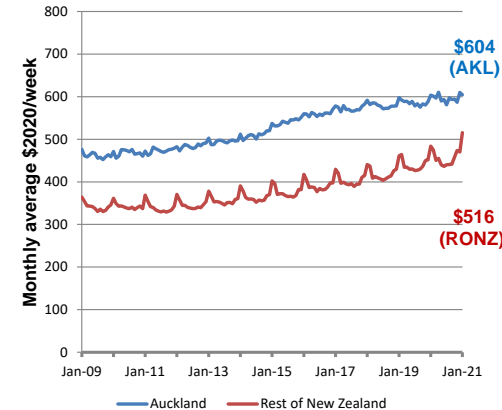
Real GDP Growth ¹



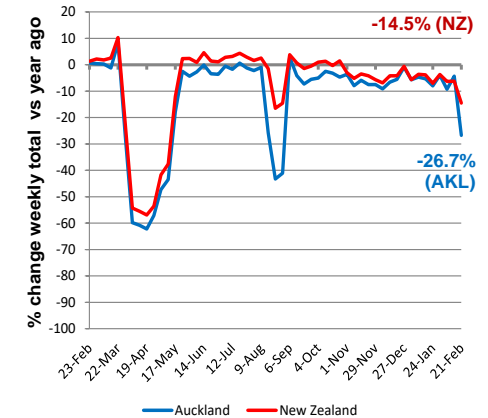
Real retail sales growth



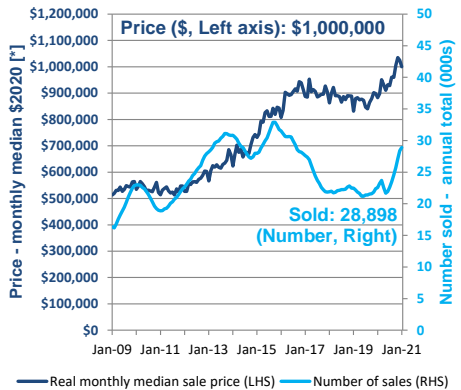
Real weekly rent ² [*]



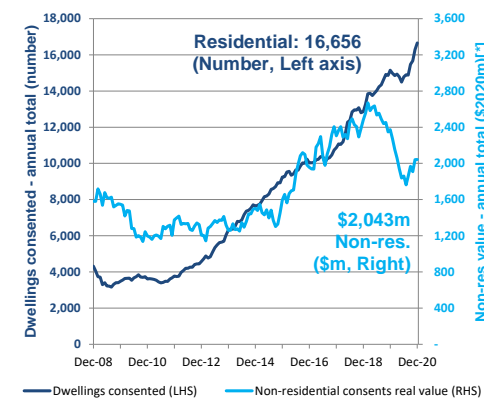
Consumer spending: Paymark EFTPOS ⁶



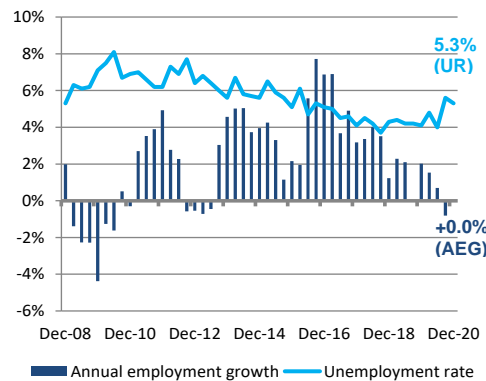
House sales: price [*] and number sold ³



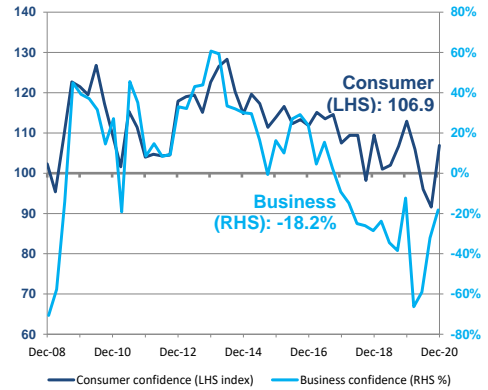
Buildings consented: res. and non-res. [*]



Employment and unemployment [*]



Confidence indicators ^{4, 5}



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Sources:

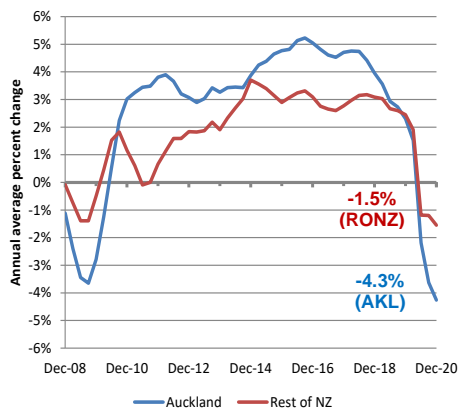
All data is from Statistics New Zealand unless otherwise stated below:

- (1) Infometrics, Regional Economic Profile; subject to revision.
- (2) Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), Regional Rental Prices.
- (3) Real Estate Institute of New Zealand; subject to revision.
- (4) Westpac McDermott Miller. Values over 100 indicate more optimists than pessimists.
- (5) New Zealand Institute of Economic Research, Quarterly Survey of Business Opinion. Measures the net percentage of firms that believe the general business situation will improve in the next six months.
- (6) Marketview-Paymark via MBIE, COVID19 response - card spending (excl online).

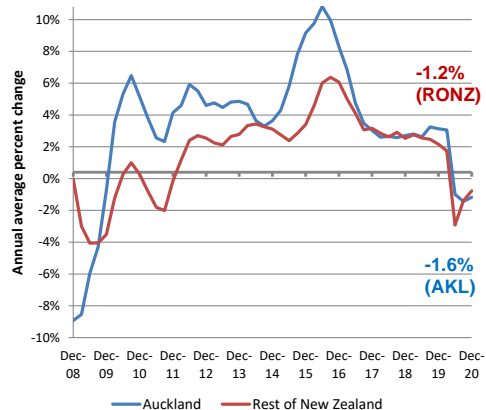
[*] All historical \$ converted to latest quarter equivalent \$ using quarterly price index, so may differ from previous updates.

[**] Historical HLFS data to March 2016 rebased August 2016 by SNZ, but not fully compatible with June 2016 onwards.

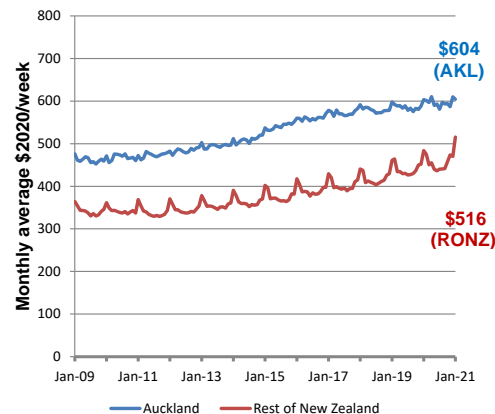
Real GDP Growth ¹



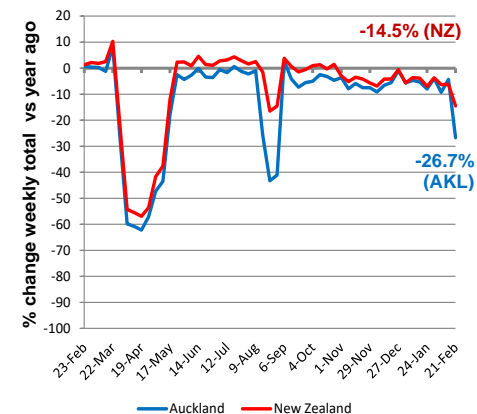
Real retail sales growth



Real weekly rent ² [*]



Consumer spending: Paymark EFTPOS⁶



In Auckland, real GDP for the year ended December 2020 was 4.3% **lower** (not higher) than for the year ended December 2019; in the rest of New Zealand, the annual change was 1.5% **fall** (see note).

Note: Covid-19 lockdown level 3 began on 23rd March 2020.

Latest and historical real GDP figures are modelled estimates, and subject to revision.

Real GDP refers to GDP in constant 2019 dollars, to remove inflation.

[1] Source: Infometrics, Regional Economic Profile/Quarterly Economic Monitor.

In Auckland, real retail sales^[*] for the year ended December 2020 were 1.6% **lower** than for the year ended December 2019; in the rest of New Zealand, the annual change was also 1.2% **fall**.

Note: Covid-19 lockdown level 3 began on 23rd March 2020.

These figures exclude non-retail activity captured elsewhere in the retail sales survey.

[*] Real retail sales have been calculated by converting previous quarters' dollars to the latest quarter's equivalent dollars using the quarterly consumer price index (CPI), to remove inflation.

Source: Statistics NZ, Retail Sales (quarterly); Statistics NZ, CPI (quarterly); Auckland Council (RIMU), calculations.

In Auckland, the average (not median or geometric mean) real weekly rent^[*] for the month (not year) of January 2021 was \$604; in the rest of New Zealand, the figure was \$516.

Note: Rent here is for new rental bonds lodged each month with Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, for housing tenancies with private sector landlords (so excludes state housing).

Data here covers only new bonds, so excludes existing leases from earlier periods whose rent has not changed, or has changed but with no revision to the bond. It also excludes new leases where no bond is lodged. Data is subject to minor revisions.

[*] Real rents have been calculated by converting previous quarters' dollars to the latest quarter's equivalent dollars using the quarterly consumer price index (CPI), to remove inflation.

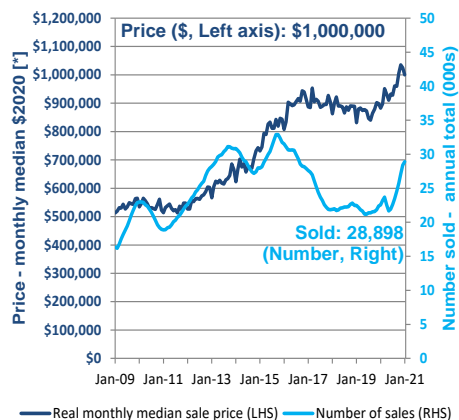
[2] Source: Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Regional Rental Prices (monthly); Statistics NZ, CPI (quarterly); Auckland Council (RIMU), calculations.

In Auckland, consumer spending using Paymark EFTPOS for the week ended 21st February 2021 was 26.7% **lower** than a year ago; for New Zealand (including Auckland), the equivalent figure was a **fall** of 14.5%.

Consumer spending here refers to both residents and domestic and international visitors, but only when purchasing at merchants using Paymark EFTPOS systems. It covers more than 70% of the EFTPOS transactions around the country. (This 70% is not evenly distributed, so some regions in New Zealand may be more represented or less in the Paymark data.) It excludes direct online purchases, cash purchases and also payments via alternative payment networks, such as Verifone (which processes some major businesses such as Countdown).

[6] Source: Marketview-Paymark, cited in Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment 2020, COVID19 Response – card spend - regional.

House sales: price [*] and number sold ³



In Auckland, the total number of houses sold in the year ended January 2021 was 28,898 (the highest in over four years). The median (not average) sale price of houses sold in Auckland in the month (not year) of January 2021 was \$1,000,000 (13% higher than a year ago, after removing inflation effects).

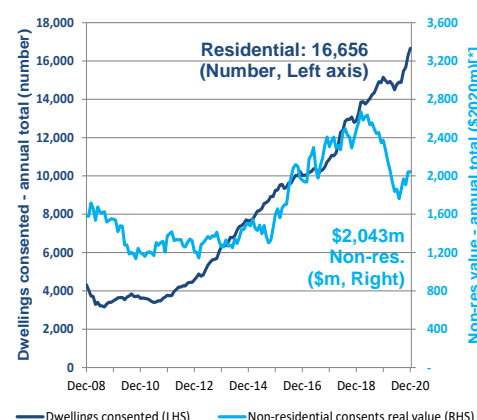
Note: REINZ³ revises recent backdata each month for prices and numbers sold.

The data here covers only “houses” that actually sold during the period. “Houses” here includes all dwelling types (eg apartments and flats), not just free-standing houses, but excludes sales of undeveloped land. “Price” here is real actual sale price^[*] (not just listed).

[*] Prior months’ “real” prices are here calculated by inflating previous quarters’ dollars to the latest quarter’s equivalent dollars using the quarterly consumer price index (CPI).

[3] Source: Real Estate Institute of New Zealand (REINZ), Monthly Property Report (monthly – from website); Statistics NZ, CPI (quarterly); Auckland Council (RIMU), calculations.

Buildings consented: res. and non-res.[*]



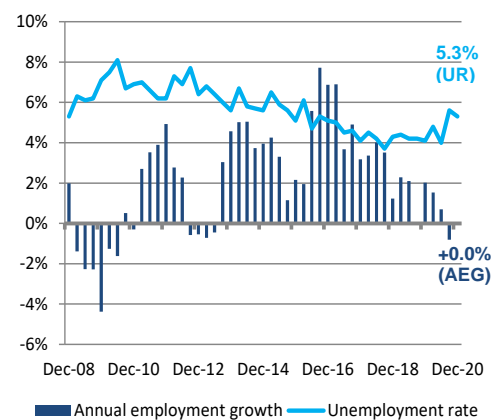
In Auckland, the total number of new dwellings consented in the year ended December 2020 was 16,656 (the highest in at least the last twenty years). The real value^[*] of new non-residential buildings consented in Auckland in the year ended December 2020 was \$2,043 million.

Note: Projects consented are not necessarily commenced or completed.

“New” here refers to new buildings (i.e. excludes alterations and additions). (Also, the data takes no account of whether a previous building had been demolished there.) Residential number here is new dwellings consented, which will exceed new residential buildings as some buildings have multiple dwellings; similarly, it will differ from new residential building consents issued, as some consents are for multiple buildings.

[*] Prior months’ “real” values are here calculated by inflating previous quarters’ dollars to the latest quarter’s equivalent dollars using the capital goods price index (CGPI) for non-residential buildings. Source: Statistics NZ, Building Consents (monthly); Statistics NZ, CGPI (quarterly); Auckland Council (RIMU), calculations.

Employment and unemployment [**]



In Auckland, the number of people employed in the quarter (not year) ended December 2020 was the **same as** (+0.0%) in the December 2019 quarter. The unemployment rate in Auckland in the quarter (not year) ended December 2020 was 5.3%.

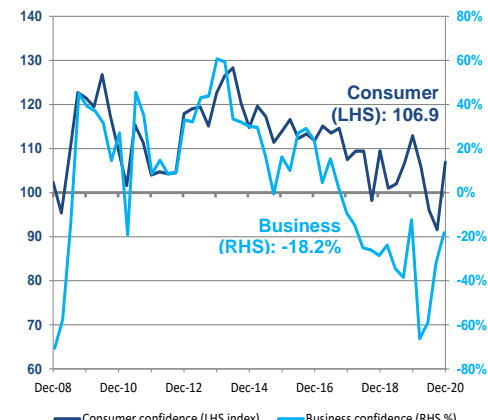
Note: Covid-19 lockdown level 3 began on 23 March 2020, plus wage subsidies, which both affect official unemployment.

Historical data for 2013 to 2020 was re-based by Statistics NZ in October 2020 to match latest revisions of historic population estimates.

Both datasets are from a survey (HLFS) so are subject to error margins. Respondents define their own employment status. The survey covers all people aged 15+, so includes school pupils 15+ and people over 65, who might have - or be actively seeking - a job.

Source: Statistics NZ, Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS) (quarterly).

Confidence indicators ^{4, 5}



In Auckland, the Westpac McDermott Miller Consumer Confidence Index (CCI) for the December 2020 quarter (not year) was 106.9. The NZIER QSBO in Auckland for the December 2020 quarter (not year) showed a net 18.2% of businesses expecting a **worsening** of the general business situation over the next three months.

Note: For the CCI, a score of greater than 100 shows more optimism than pessimism. The QSBO calculates a net figure as (% of businesses expecting an improvement) minus (% expecting a worsening). QSBO data used here is not the seasonally adjusted version.

(LHS) = Left hand side axis (consumers: index)

(RHS) = Right hand side axis (businesses: net %)

[4,5] Source: Westpac McDermott Miller, Regional Consumer Confidence Index (CCI) (quarterly – published, but proprietary); New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER), Quarterly Survey of Business Opinion (QSBO) (quarterly – by subscription).