

Labour Market Data Preview: September 2008 quarter

(LCI and QES due 10.45am 3 November, HLFS due 10.45am 6 November)

Key points

- > Wage inflation still elevated, but likely to be near peak, if not there already.
- > Employment figures remain a lottery given recent volatility, but we expect a sizeable pull-back.
- > The unemployment rate is the cleanest measure, and is expected to rise to 4.3 percent.
- > Volatility aside, the data is expected to reinforce the speed at which the labour market is turning and provide some of the "evidence" the RBNZ is looking for of easing domestic inflation pressures.

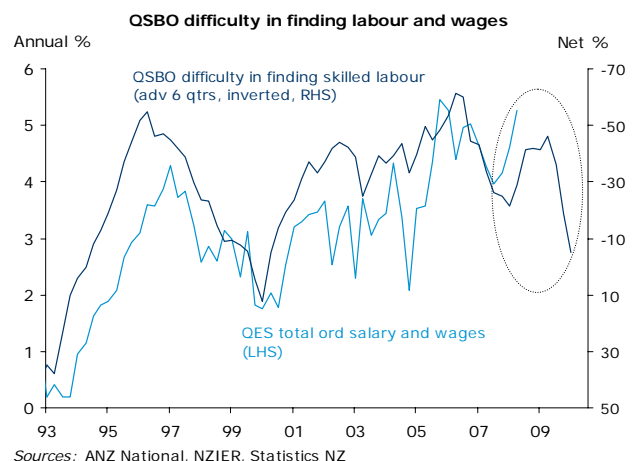
March quarter 2008 expectations		
	ANZ National	Market
LCI salary and wage ordinary time (private sector)	0.8% q/q 3.4% y/y	0.8% q/q 3.4% y/y
QES salary and wage ordinary time (private sector)	1.2% q/q 5.3% y/y	1.2% q/q 5.3% y/y
HLFS unemployment rate (s.a.)	4.3%	4.3%
HLFS participation rate (s.a.)	68.0%	68.3%
HLFS employment growth	-1.0% q/q -0.2% y/y	-0.6% q/q 0.3% y/y

The September quarter labour market data takes on added importance. Despite the aggressive interest rate cut by the RBNZ at its latest *OCR Review*, the Bank took the time to remind all of its focus on medium-term inflation and its concern at the recent stickiness shown. While this appears to be largely targeted at non-contestable pockets (which are arguably beyond the Bank's control), labour costs were also explicitly singled out. The RBNZ has stated that further monetary policy easing is warranted, but this is conditional on "evidence of actual reductions in domestic cost pressures". As a key driver of medium-term inflation, the labour market outlook will be a key focus and be looked towards to provide this "evidence".

Wage growth should remain high in the September quarter. We expect the Labour Cost Index (LCI) measure of private sector ordinary time earnings (which is quality adjusted and not exposed to compositional changes) to record an increase of 0.8 percent in the September quarter. This takes annual growth to 3.4 percent, slightly below the 3.5 percent growth recorded in the June quarter. Public sector wage growth usually posts a solid increase in the September quarter, which we suspect is due to collective wage agreement

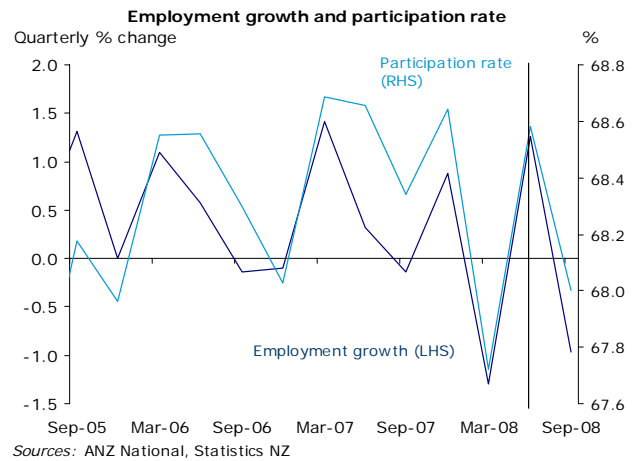
negotiations. We expect a 1.3 percent quarterly increase (the same as the previous two September quarters) holding annual growth unchanged at 3.7 percent. For completeness, the less reliable (and volatile) Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) wage measure is expected to increase by 1.2 percent for the quarter and 5.3 percent for the year.

But a peak is near, if it has not occurred already. The fact wage growth remains elevated despite the weak domestic economic conditions is not surprising. Wages are typically one of the last indicators to turn in response to a weaker economic environment. Yet with the unemployment rate rising and skill shortages easing sharply (as reported by the latest OSBO survey), wages are unlikely to post the strong increases experienced over recent times. Annual wage growth is likely to ease below 3 percent (on an LCI basis) by the middle of next year.



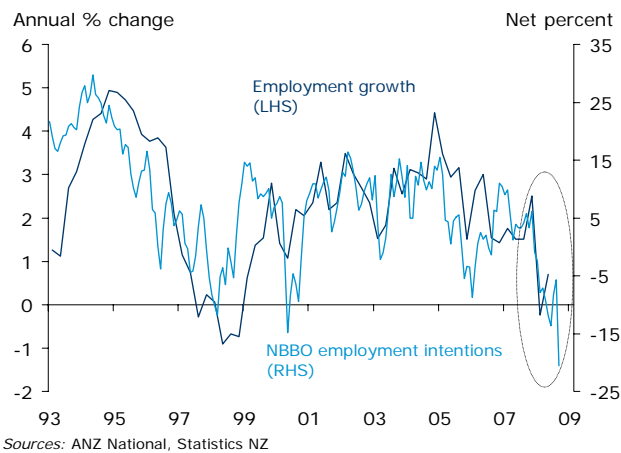
Volatility in the HLFS makes quarterly employment predictions a lottery. Following a 1.3 percent fall in the March quarter, employment rebounded by the same magnitude in the June quarter. It is difficult to imagine that this is actual job creation and destruction and is more likely to

be statistical noise. Given anecdotes and employment intentions from recent business surveys, we expect employment growth to pull-back by 1.0 percent. But of course, a larger fall cannot be ruled out. Volatility aside however, annual employment looks set to head into negative territory over the second half of this year, with sectors heavily weighted towards the domestic economy (construction, retail, business and financial services) likely to be leading the weakness. Certainly, the anecdotes at present are strongly indicating the labour market is turning rapidly, and we expect the unemployment rate – the cleaner measure of the labour market – to bear this out.



Looking forward we expect the unemployment rate to continue rising, and hit 6 percent in early 2010, rising in a steady fashion by around 0.3 percentage points per quarter. However, the risk – given economic prospects – is pointing to a more aggressive rise over 2009, and in fact even late 2008. Certainly there are pockets of strength that remain in the labour market, but we are equally mindful of the reality that two-thirds of the jobs growth within the economy over the past five years was centred in housing centric areas including construction, retailing, and business services.

Employment and employment intentions



The participation rate, as always, poses risk to our estimates, and it has experienced the same degree of volatility over the past couple of quarters as employment growth has. We expect the participation rate to ease to 68.0 percent, following its surge to 68.6 percent last quarter. This should see the unemployment rate rise to 4.3 percent from 3.9 percent in June, which would be the highest level since December 2003.

Financial market implications

Just like the CPI data a couple of weeks ago, the market reaction to the wage data is likely to be asymmetrical. Stronger than expected wage inflation is likely to be brushed aside by the market, as it will be viewed as historical. But signs of easing wage pressures will be taken as confirmation the RBNZ can continue front-loading the easing cycle. Likewise with the HLFS data, any upside surprise in the unemployment rate will have the market lock in expectations of a 50bps cut in the OCR in December and get them thinking about a similar sized cut to follow in January.

NEW ZEALAND DISCLOSURE INFORMATION

The Bank (in respect of itself and its principal officers) makes the following investment adviser disclosure to you pursuant to section 41A of the Securities Markets Act 1988.

The Bank (in respect of itself and its principal officers) makes the following investment broker disclosure to you pursuant to section 41G of the Securities Markets Act 1988.

Qualifications, experience and professional standing

Experience

The Bank is a registered bank and, through its staff, is experienced in providing investment advice about its own securities and, where applicable, the securities of other issuers. The Bank has been selling securities, and providing investment advice on those securities, to customers as a core part of its business for many years, drawing on the extensive research undertaken by the Bank and its related companies and the skills of specialised staff employed by the Bank. The Bank is represented on many bank, finance and investment related organisations and keeps abreast of relevant issues by running seminars and workshops for relevant staff and having its investment adviser staff attend external seminars where appropriate. The Bank subscribes to relevant industry publications and, where appropriate, its investment advisers will monitor the financial markets.

Relevant professional body

The Bank is a member of the following professional bodies relevant to the provision of investment advice:

- New Zealand Bankers Association;
- Associate Member of Investment Savings & Insurance Association of NZ;
- Financial Markets Operations Association; and
- Institute of Finance Professionals.

Professional indemnity insurance

The Bank (and its subsidiaries), through its ultimate parent company Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited, has professional indemnity insurance which covers its activities including those of investment advisers it employs.

This insurance covers issues (including 'prior acts') arising from staff fraud, electronic crime, documentary fraud and physical loss of property. The scope of the insurance also extends to third party civil claims, including those for negligence. The level of cover is of an amount commensurate with the size and scale of the Bank.

The insurer is ANZcover Insurance Pty Limited.

Dispute resolution facilities

The Bank has a process in place for resolving disputes. Should a problem arise, you can contact any branch of the Bank for more information on the Bank's procedures or refer to any of the Bank's websites.

Unresolved complaints may ultimately be referred to the Banking Ombudsman, whose contact address is PO Box 10-573, Wellington.

Criminal convictions

In the five years before the relevant investment advice is given none of the Bank (in its capacity as an investment adviser and where applicable an investment broker) or any principal officer of the Bank has been:

- Convicted of an offence under the Securities Markets Act 1988, or the Securities Act 1978 or of a crime involving dishonesty (as defined in section 2(1) of the Crimes Act 1961);
- A principal officer of a body corporate when that body corporate committed any of the offences or crimes involving dishonesty as described above;
- Adjudicated bankrupt;
- Prohibited by an Act or by a court from taking part in the management of a company or a business;
- Subject of an adverse finding by a court in any proceeding that has been taken against them in their professional capacity;

- Expelled from or has been prohibited from being a member of a professional body; or
- Placed in statutory management or receivership.

Fees

At the time of providing this disclosure statement it is not practicable to provide accurate disclosure of the fees payable for all securities that may be advised on. However, this information will be disclosed to you should you seek advice from one of the Bank's investment advisers on a specific investment.

Other interests and relationships

When a security is sold by the Bank, the Bank may receive a commission, either from the issuer of a security or from an associated person of the Bank. Whether that commission is received and, if received, its value depends on the security sold. At the time of providing this disclosure statement it is not practicable to provide a detailed list of each security that may be advised on, the name of the issuer of that security and the rate of the commission received by the Bank. However, this information will be disclosed to you should you seek advice from one of the Bank's investment advisers on a specific investment.

In addition to the interest that the Bank has in products of which it is the issuer, the Bank, or an associated person of the Bank, has the following interests or relationships that a reasonable person would find reasonably likely to influence the Bank in providing the investment advice on the securities listed below:

- ANZ Investment Services (New Zealand) Limited (ANZIS), as a wholly owned subsidiary of the Bank, is an associated person of the Bank. ANZIS may receive remuneration from a third party relating to a security sold by the Investment Adviser.
- UDC Finance Limited (UDC), as a wholly owned subsidiary of the Bank, is an associated person of the Bank. UDC may receive remuneration from a third party relating to a security sold by the Investment Adviser.
- The Bank has a joint venture relationship with ING (NZ) Holdings Limited (ING). ING and its related companies may receive remuneration from a third party relating to a security sold by the Investment Adviser.

Securities about which investment advice is given

The Bank provides investment advice on the following types of securities:

- Debt securities including term and call deposits, government stock, local authority stock, State-Owned Enterprise bonds, Kiwi bonds and corporate bonds and notes;
- Equity securities such as listed and unlisted shares;
- New Zealand and overseas unit trusts;
- Share in a limited partnership;
- Superannuation schemes and bonds;
- Group investment funds;
- Life insurance products;
- Derivative products including interest rate and currency forward rate contracts and options; and
- Other forms of security, such as participatory securities.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH INVESTMENT MONEY OR INVESTMENT PROPERTY

If you wish to pay investment money to the Bank you can do this in several ways such as by:

- Providing cash;
- Providing a cheque payable to the relevant product or service provider and crossed 'not transferable'; or
- Making an automatic payment or payment through another electronic delivery mechanism operated by the Bank.

Investment property (other than money) may be delivered to the Bank by lodging the relevant property (for example, share certificates) with any branch of the Bank offering a safe custody service, or by posting (using registered post) the documents or other property to a branch of the Bank, identifying your name, account number and investment purpose.

Any investment money lodged with the Bank for the purchase of securities offered by the Bank, its subsidiaries or any third

parties will be deposited in accordance with your instructions, to your nominated account or investment. Such money will be held by the Bank according to usual banking terms and conditions applying to that account or the particular terms and conditions relating to the investment and will not be held by the Bank on trust unless explicitly accepted by the Bank on those terms. Any investment money or property accepted by the Bank on trust will be so held until disbursed in accordance with your instructions. Any investment property lodged with the Bank will be held by the Bank as bailee according to the Bank's standard terms and conditions for holding your property.

Record Keeping

The Bank will keep adequate records of the deposit of investment moneys or property and all withdrawals and dealings with such money or property, using the account/investment number allocated to your investment. You may have access to those records upon request.

Auditing

The Bank's systems and operations are internally audited on a regular basis. The financial statements of the Bank and its subsidiaries are audited annually by KPMG. However, this does not involve an external audit of the receipt, holding and disbursement of the money and other property.

Use of Money and Property

Money or property held by the Bank for a specific purpose communicated to the Bank (e.g. the purchase of an interest in a security) may not be used by the Bank for its own purposes and will be applied for your stated purpose. No member of the Bank's staff may use any money or property deposited with the Bank, for their own purposes or for the benefit of any other person. In the absence of such instructions, money deposited with the Bank may be used by the Bank for its own purposes, provided it repays the money to you upon demand (or where applicable, on maturity), together with interest, where payable.

NEW ZEALAND DISCLAIMER

The Bank does not provide investment advice tailored to an investor's personal circumstances. It is the investor's responsibility to understand the nature of the security subscribed for, and the risks associated with that security. To the maximum extent permitted by law, the Bank excludes liability for, and shall not be responsible for, any loss suffered by the investor resulting from the Bank's investment advice.

Each security (including the principal, interest or other returns of any security) the subject of investment advice given to the investor by the Bank or otherwise, is not guaranteed, secured or underwritten in any way by the Bank or any associated or related party except to the extent expressly agreed in the terms of the relevant security.

This document is provided for informational purposes only and does not constitute an offer to sell or solicitation to buy any security or other financial instrument. No part of this document can be reproduced, altered, transmitted to, copied to or distributed to any other person without the prior express permission of the Bank.

This document is a necessarily brief and general summary of the subjects covered and does not constitute advice. You should obtain professional advice before acting on the basis of

This document has been prepared by ANZ National Bank Limited.

ANZ (part of ANZ National Bank Limited), Level 7, 1 Victoria Street, Wellington 6011, New Zealand Phone 64-4-802 2000 Fax 64-4-496 8639 <http://www.anz.co.nz> e-mail ecnmcs@anz.com

any opinions or information contained in it. The information contained in this document is given in good faith, has been derived from sources perceived by it to be reliable and accurate and the Bank shall not be obliged to update any such information after the date of this document. Neither the Bank nor any other person involved in the preparation of this document accepts any liability for any opinions or information (including the accuracy or completeness thereof) contained in it, or for any consequences flowing from its use.

UNITED STATES DISCLAIMER

This document is being distributed in the United States by ANZ Securities, Inc. ("ANZ S") (an affiliated company of Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited ("ANZBG") and the Bank), which accepts responsibility for its content. Further information on any securities referred to herein may be obtained from ANZ S upon request. Any US person(s) receiving this document and wishing to effect transactions in any fixed income securities referred to herein should contact ANZ S 1177 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036 USA, Tel: 1-212-801-9160, Fax: 1-212-801-9163, not its affiliates.

This document is issued on the basis that it is only for the information of the particular person to whom it is provided. This document may not be reproduced, distributed or published by any recipient for any purpose. This document does not take into account your personal needs and financial circumstances. Under no circumstances is this document to be used or considered as an offer to sell, or a solicitation of an offer to buy.

In addition, from time to time ANZBG, the Bank, ANZ S, their affiliated companies, or their respective associates and employees may have an interest in any financial products (as defined by the Australian Corporations Act 2001), securities or other investments, directly or indirectly the subject of this document (and may receive commissions or other remuneration in relation to the sale of such financial products, securities or other investments), or may perform services for, or solicit business from, any company the subject of this document. If you have been referred to ANZBG, the Bank, ANZ S or their affiliated companies by any person, that person may receive a benefit in respect of any transactions effected on your behalf, details of which will be available upon request.

The information herein has been obtained from, and any opinions herein are based upon, sources believed reliable. The views expressed in this document accurately reflect the author's personal views, including those about any and all of the securities and issuers referred to herein. The author however makes no representation as to its accuracy or completeness and the information should not be relied upon as such. All opinions and estimates herein reflect the author's judgement on the date of this document and are subject to change without notice. No part of the author's compensation was, is or will be directly or indirectly related to specific recommendations or views expressed in this document. ANZBG, the Bank, ANZ S, their affiliated companies, their respective directors, officers, and employees disclaim any responsibility, and shall not be liable, for any loss, damage, claim, liability, proceedings, cost or expense ("Liability") arising directly or indirectly (and whether in tort (including negligence), contract, equity or otherwise) out of or in connection with the contents of and/or any omissions from this communication except where a Liability is made non-excludable by legislation.