

ANZ Research

New Zealand Weekly Data Wrap

11 April 2025

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ANZ Proprietary data

Check out our latest releases below

- ANZ Business Outlook: <u>March 2025</u>
- <u>ANZ-Roy Morgan Consumer</u> Confidence: March 2025
- ANZ Truckometer: <u>March 2025</u>
- ANZ Commodity Price Index: March 2025
- ANZ NZ Merchant and Card Spending: February 2025

Key forecasts and rates

Our forecasts can be found on page 4.

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A week for the history books

Overview: The RBNZ delivered a dovish 25bp cut this week, signalling their readiness to respond to the fallout of global market wobbles and a potential slowdown as needed. Meanwhile, domestic data continue to evolve broadly in line with expectations, but it feels a little dated given the hit to economic confidence this week caused by Trump's tariffs and China's retaliation.

US tariffs and subsequent market volatility dominate the news feed: This week was one for the history books. China came out swinging with their response to US tariffs, and the US hit back again, while cutting other economies a little slack. At this stage, the only thing we can be certain of is ongoing uncertainty. The EU's response is yet to be announced (possibly next week), and it's still not clear if the US or China will blink. This clearly isn't good for the global economy (and therefore New Zealand), but the magnitude of impacts is still highly uncertain. We are yet to update any of our forecasts, but risks are clearly skewing south.

RBNZ delivers dovish 25bp cut: <u>The RBNZ cut the OCR to 3.50%</u> this week. Downside risks to the activity and inflation outlook owing to US tariffs and subsequent global market volatility were noted, and the RBNZ did not push back against market pricing that currently implies a strong risk that the OCR ends up lower than previously envisaged. That is the way things are tilting currently, but it remains a very volatile and unpredictable situation, and the RBNZ has, as expected, opted to "wait and see", dialling down the certainty on where the OCR will go from here.

For our part, we are certainly seeing downside risks to our forecast for two more 25bp cuts to 3%. We'll be keeping a very close eye on the evolution of dairy prices for a signal on how underlying demand is holding up across our trading partners. But we'll also need to put any changes in context of what key import prices (such as oil) are doing too – that's what matters for our terms of trade. However, confidence channels have the potential to eclipse both direct and indirect trade channels when it comes to domestic demand. If New Zealand firms shelve their plans to hire and invest, and households delay their consumption, the fragile economic recovery could peter out. We'll be keeping a very close eye over coming months on firms' reported hiring and investment in our ANZBO and consumers' willingness to buy.

Annual inflation expected to have accelerated in Q1: The RBNZ won't be alarmed if CPI inflation accelerates as we expect (from 2.2% in Q4 to 2.4% in Q1). That's because the rise is expected to come from a little temporary strength in tradable inflation (which would be appropriate to look though), and it would be in line with their February MPS forecast. The details that will matter on the day are the extent of disinflation in the relatively sticky non-tradable component, as well as the suite of core measures, and these are expected to show underlying inflation pressures are on the right path. Speaking of that path, given emerging downside risks to the medium-term outlook (owing to US tariff policy and the subsequent hit to economic confidence), an upside surprise on the day could be looked through by the market and policy makers alike. Conversely, a downside surprise is less likely to be dismissed. It's worth noting that we have a bit more uncertainty surrounding our forecast than is typical this far out from release day. That's because we have not yet had the final monthly Selected Price Indexes release for the quarter - this is due 15 April, two days ahead of the CPI release. Should these data surprise versus our expectations (see page 3), we'll revise our CPI pick in our Quick Reaction.

PMI holds onto recent gains: The Business NZ-BNZ PMI eased 0.9pts to 53.2 in March, still in expansionary territory and holding on to most of its recent gains. Regarding the subindices, production rose 1.4pts to 54.2 and employment lifted 0.4pts to 54.7. Meanwhile, new orders slipped back into contractionary territory, down 1.9pts to 49.6, sending a softer signal for the outlook, and perhaps a reflection of recent uncertainty relating to US trade policy and its implications for the global economy. Overall, while the March read was consistent with modest growth in the

NZ Economic News

ANZ's latest data releases, forecast updates and insights

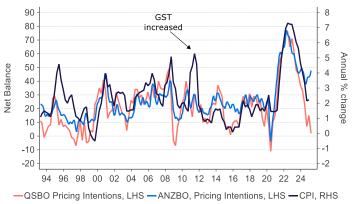
- <u>NZ CPI Preview: headline up,</u> underlying trend down
- <u>RBNZ MPR Review: keep calm</u> and carry on... but ready to act
- NZIER QSBO: no hurdle to ongoing cuts
- <u>NZ Property Focus: plodding</u>
 <u>along</u>
- <u>NZ GDP: bouncing off the bottom</u>
- NZ REINZ housing data: on the up
- <u>NZ Property Focus: paving the</u> road to recovery
- <u>NZ scenarios and risks around</u> <u>the OCR outlook</u>
- <u>NZ Economic Outlook: getting</u> back on our feet
- <u>RBNZ Monetary Policy Statement</u> <u>Review & OCR Call Change</u>
- NZ labour market: as expected
- <u>NZ Property Focus: starting 2025</u> on a more stable footing
- <u>NZ CPI Review: more disinflation</u> <u>than meets the eye</u>
- NZ GDP: Thunk.
- <u>NZ 2024 HYEFU: staying the</u> <u>course amid choppy seas</u>
- <u>NZ Agri Focus: sun going down</u> on 2024
- <u>NZ Forecast Update: farmgate</u> milk price revised up to \$9.85
- <u>NZ Property Focus: the lights are</u> <u>coming on</u>
- <u>RBNZ MPS Review: 50bp cut, as</u> <u>expected</u>
- <u>RBNZ MPS starting-point</u> surprise chart pack
- <u>NZ Economic Outlook: finding</u> <u>neutral</u>
- <u>NZ Insight: FTA with Gulf</u> <u>countries bolsters trade</u> <u>opportunities</u>
- <u>NZ CPI Review: back in the</u> band; now keep it there
- NZ Insight: fiscal musings
- NZ Insight: playing by the rules?
- NZ Property Focus: regional revelations
- <u>NZ Carbon Market: Emissions</u> <u>Trading Scheme settings</u>
- <u>NZ Insight: China consumer</u> caution impacting NZ exports

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manufacturing sector, the next few months will be closely watched to gauge the risks to the recovery, given the escalation in trade tensions in April.

NZIER'S QSBO sending a relatively dovish signal versus the ANZBO: The overall signal from the QSBO was broadly consistent with the RBNZ's February MPS forecasts. Most importantly, the suite of capacity indicators was broadly in line with their output gap estimate for Q1, suggesting the RBNZ can remain confident that there's further underlying disinflation in the pipeline. Meanwhile, reported selling prices and pricing intentions fell in the quarter, the opposite direction to our ANZBO (figure 1). We certainly wouldn't completely discount the signal in our ANZBO, but we do think the two surveys should be taken together, suggesting near-term inflation is likely to land somewhere in the middle – which just so happens to be our forecast. Overall, the Q1 QSBO didn't suggest the RBNZ needs to change course. But it's worth noting these data pre-date recent US tariff announcements and the subsequent volatility in global markets.

Figure 1. Pricing intentions and CPI inflation



Source: NZIER, Stats NZ, ANZ, Macrobond, ANZ Research

Government sticking to its fiscal strategy: The Government's Defence

<u>Capability Plan</u> was released this week, and markets were quick to hone in on the comment that the plan includes \$9bn in "new spending" over the next four years. While it might be "new spending" for the defence portfolio, the Minister of Finance clarified that she has no intention to fund additional defence spending by increasing operating and capital allowances, meaning the plan has no implications for bond issuance guidance come Budget. Rule of thumb: if it's not the Finance Minister calling it "new spending" then it's probably only "new" for the portfolio.

The Minister of Finance also indicated this week that she does not intend to deviate from the Government's fiscal strategy in response to recent global market turmoil and US tariffs. And that's entirely appropriate: the RBNZ is much better placed to deal with the ebbs and flows of the business cycle. That said, while the hurdle to alter discretionary fiscal policy settings has not been reached, the Treasury could downgrade their economic and tax forecasts and raise their forecasts for welfare expenses on the back of recent events (ie non-discretionary "automatic stabilisers" will still do their thing regardless of discretionary fiscal policy settings). That presents an upward risk to bond issuance all else equal, but at this stage the magnitude could be relatively small (especially given the fact NZDM is on track to prefund some of next year's bond programme). The Treasury may have already finalised their economic forecasts for Budget, and at a minimum, it's likely their outlook for global growth and trade will be downgraded. However, US trade policy (and the global economy) could look very different come Budget (May 22).

Should the global backdrop develop into something really nasty (ie a financial crisis), or if a significant natural disaster occurred (for example), the Government would likely deviate from its fiscal strategy and lend the economy a helping hand. But it's worth noting that the last Government's pro-cyclical fiscal stance (inflation-fuelling fiscal expansion at a time when the RBNZ was raising interest rates) has reduced the options available to the current Government to some extent. There's certainly fiscal ammo available if it's needed, but there would be even more (and we would have had lower-than-otherwise interest rates) had the last Government not run a pro-cyclical fiscal stance, and instead, unwound the COVID stimulus in a timely fashion once the economy was back on its feet.

Financial Markets Update

Data calendar

What's coming up in the months ahead.

Date	Data/event
Mon 14 Apr	Performance Services
(10:30am)	Idx – Mar
Mon 14 Apr	Electronic Card
(10:45am)	Transactions – Mar
Mon 14 Apr (10:45am)	Net Migration – Feb
Tue 15 Apr	Selected Price Indexes
(10:45am)	– Mar
Wed 16 Apr (early am)	Global Dairy Trade auction
Wed 16 Apr	Merchandise Trade –
(10:45am)	Mar
Thu 17 Apr (10:45am)	GDP – Q1
Thu 24 Apr	ANZ-RM Consumer
(10:00am)	Confidence – Apr
Tue 29 Apr	Employment Indicators
(10:45am)	– Mar
Wed 30 Apr	ANZ Business Outlook
(1:00pm)	– Apr
Fri 2 May (10:45am)	Building Permits – Mar
Tue 6 May	ANZ Commodity Price
(1:00pm)	Index – Apr
Wed 7 May (early am)	Global Dairy Trade
Wed 7 May (09:00am)	RBNZ FSR
Wed 7 May (10:45am)	Labour Market – Q1
Tue 13 May	ANZ Truckometer –
(10:00am)	Apr
Wed 14 May	Electronic Card
(10:45am)	Transactions – Apr
Wed 14 May (10:45am)	Net Migration – Mar
Thu 15 May	Selected Price Indexes
(10:45am)	– Apr
Fri 16 May	BusinessNZ Manuf
(10:30am)	PMI – Apr
Fri 16 May	RBNZ 2yr Inflation
(3:00pm)	Expectation – Q2
Mon 19 May	Performance Services
(10:30am)	Idx – Apr
Wed 21 May (early am)	Global Dairy Trade auction
Wed 21 May	Merchandise Trade –
(10:45am)	Apr
Thu 22 May (2:00pm)	Budget 2025
Fri 23 May (10:45am)	Retail Sales – Q1
Wed 28 May	Employment Indicators
(10:45am)	– Apr
Wed 28 May	RBNZ Monetary
(2:00pm)	Policy Statement
Thu 29 May	ANZ Business Outlook
(1:00pm)	– May
Fri 30 May	ANZ-RM Consumer
(10:00am)	Confidence – May
Fri 30 May (10:45am)	Building Permits – Apr

Interest rate markets

Global swap and bond market volatility ramped up significantly this week amid tariff anxiety that saw equity and commodity markets collapse then bounce, but to differing degrees. Changes to yield curve shapes this week have been striking, with short-end rates lower as markets (here and abroad) move to factor in slower global growth, but long-end rates higher, taking their lead from sharply higher US bond yields. Several factors are driving US bond yields higher - including (but not limited to) inflation fears (tariffs do pose upside risks to inflation in the US), angst around buyer appetite for bonds amid fiscal concerns, and technical factors. The latter include the unwind of so-called bond/futures basis trades, which are highly leveraged strategies employed by hedge funds and the like that have come unstuck amid large-scale unwinding of similar positions. Asset allocation and rebalancing flows following sharp drops in equity markets have added to the volatility. While many of these factors are USspecific, angst over fiscal risks and the widening in global bond/swap spreads has contributed to higher government bond yields and steeper yield curves here too. While the biggest impact will be felt by investors and the government, the steeper yield curve will also affect corporate borrowing costs, offsetting some of the stimulus provided by the lower OCR. How things unfold thus bears watching closely for businesses, who may be wondering why long-tern swap rates aren't falling with the OCR.

FX markets

Currency markets have also been extremely volatile, with the Kiwi falling sharply on tariff anxiety initially, only to bounce on Trump's tariff pause pivot, then extend gains as the USD came under pressure after the House passed a budget outline that will pave the way for tax cuts and raise the US debt ceiling (which markets are balking at). At the same time, hopes that China will deliver additional stimulus have helped boost the Kiwi and Aussie. Stepping back, volatility remains elevated, and markets remain attuned to the negative long-term consequences of tariffs on global growth, and that's unlikely to be a positive for the NZ economy.

The week ahead

Performance Services Index – March (Monday 14 April, 10:30am). Past services activity in our Business Outlook survey suggests a return to expansionary territory for the PSI, after it faltered last month.

Electronic Card Transactions – March (Monday 14 April, 10:45am). ANZ card spend data suggests a flat read for total spending.

Net Migration – February (Monday 14 April, 10:45am). Monthly arrivals have risen in recent months, though given volatility in these data around the seasonal peak for border crossings, we're yet to be convinced that is the start of a new upward trend. Still-elevated departures are providing an offset, and should keep the net inflow around current relatively low levels.

Selected Price Indexes – March (Tuesday 15 April, 10:45am). We expect our CPI-weighted index to fall 0.3% m/m as weaker petrol prices (-4% m/m) and a seasonal decline in accommodation services offset a small rise in food (0.4% m/m) and rents (0.2% m/m). Airfares are expected to be mixed (domestic up, international down). Our placeholder for rents in February is +0.2% m/m.

GlobalDairyTrade auction (Wednesday 16 April, early am). Futures suggest a 3% fall in the GDT Price Index, which wouldn't be a bad result in the context of the broad global sell-off in commodities over the past week.

CPI – Q1 (Thursday 17 April, 10.45am). In line with the RBNZ's February MPS forecast, but let's see when the March SPI release brings. See our <u>Preview</u>.

REINZ House Prices – March (14-17 April, 9:00am). We expect muted growth in house prices given the high volume of listings currently on the market. A further lift in sales volumes would be more important for the outlook.

Key Forecasts and Rates

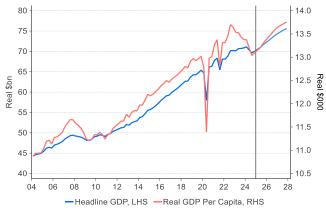
		Actual	I Forecast (end month)						
FX rates	Feb-25	Mar-25	Today	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26
NZD/USD	0.560	0.569	0.574	0.550	0.570	0.590	0.600	0.610	0.610
NZD/AUD	0.902	0.910	0.923	0.902	0.905	0.922	0.923	0.924	0.924
NZD/EUR	0.540	0.526	0.511	0.545	0.553	0.562	0.566	0.565	0.565
NZD/JPY	84.3	84.9	82.7	83.6	85.5	87.3	87.6	87.8	87.8
NZD/GBP	0.445	0.440	0.443	0.451	0.460	0.461	0.462	0.462	0.462
NZ\$ TWI	67.1	67.7	68.2	66.5	68.5	70.6	71.4	71.9	71.9
Interest rates	Feb-25	Mar-25	Today	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26
NZ OCR	3.75	3.75	3.50	3.25	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
NZ 90 day bill	3.76	3.61	3.48	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.12	3.17	3.17
NZ 2-yr swap	3.43	3.37	3.11	3.10	3.13	3.18	3.19	3.25	3.25
NZ 10-yr bond	4.42	4.49	4.74	4.25	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.25	4.25

Economic forecasts

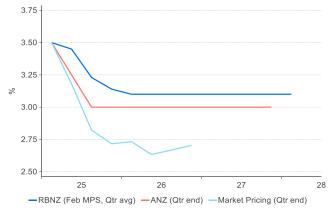
	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26
GDP (% qoq)	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
GDP (% yoy)	-1.1	-0.9	0.8	2.7	2.8	2.9	3.0	2.9	2.8
CPI (% qoq)	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.7	0.4
CPI (% yoy)	2.2	2.4	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.2	1.9	1.8	1.9
Employment (% qoq)	-0.1	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6
Employment (% yoy)	-1.1	-0.5	-0.3	0.7	1.2	1.6	1.9	2.1	2.3
Unemployment Rate (% sa)	5.1	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.1	4.9	4.7	4.5	4.4

Figures in bold are forecasts. mom: Month-on-Month; qoq: Quarter-on-Quarter; yoy: Year-on-Year. Click here for full ANZ forecasts

Figure 3. GDP level

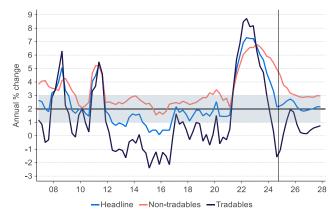






Source: Stats NZ, RBNZ, ICAP, Bloomberg, Macrobond, ANZ Research

Figure 4. CPI inflation components







Meet the team

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