ANZ RESEARCH



AUSTRALIAN PROPERTY AUSTRALIAN HOUSING CHARTBOOK

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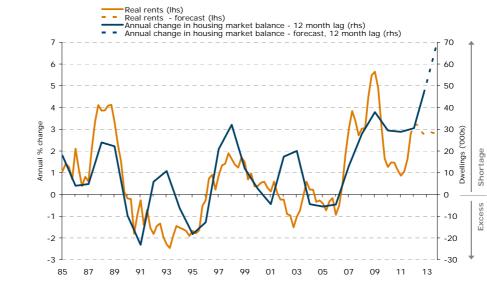
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- The Australian housing market has shown tentative signs of stabilisation in 2012, following a period of considerable softness through 2011. Sales activity has improved, albeit from extreme lows, buoyed by the positive impact of underlying strength in housing market fundamentals, further consolidation of household financial stability and improving housing affordability.
- **Financial uncertainty stemming from the European sovereign debt crisis has driven Australian households to further strengthen their financial positions.** Household savings have continued to increase and household income growth remains solid while household credit growth has been sluggish for almost four years.
- Nonetheless, divergent economic performance across states will maintain softer labour market conditions outside of the resources states. This presents a higher risk of household financial pressure and an increased likelihood of some distressed sales in housing markets outside of the resources states, particularly in Tasmania and Victoria.
- Despite 2011 Census data showing the Australian population *level* to be lower than previously estimated (294,000 lower at 22.324 million), weak housing construction continues to drive further tightening of housing market balances. Forward indicators suggest net overseas migration, while slow to pick up to the end of 2011, will increase through 2012 and weak building approvals are adding further upward pressure to the outlook for the existing undersupply of housing. This tightness in the housing market is maintaining low rental vacancy rates and driving upward pressure on rents, particularly in the Sydney, Perth and Brisbane markets.
- Softening house prices and low mortgage rates have combined to improve housing affordability. Increased global economic uncertainty and job security concerns in some sectors of the economy are weighing on sentiment and house prices, however improving housing affordability and strengthening housing market fundamentals should support further stabilisation in housing market activity and house prices through the second half of 2012.
- Improved housing affordability, tightening housing market balance pressures and upward pressure on rents are likely to support both first home buyer and investor housing market activity in the years ahead. Looking through the distortions created by first home buyer policy incentives, first home buyer and investor housing finance growth improved moderately in the first quarter of 2012.

AUSTRALIAN HOUSING MARKET BALANCE AND RENTS

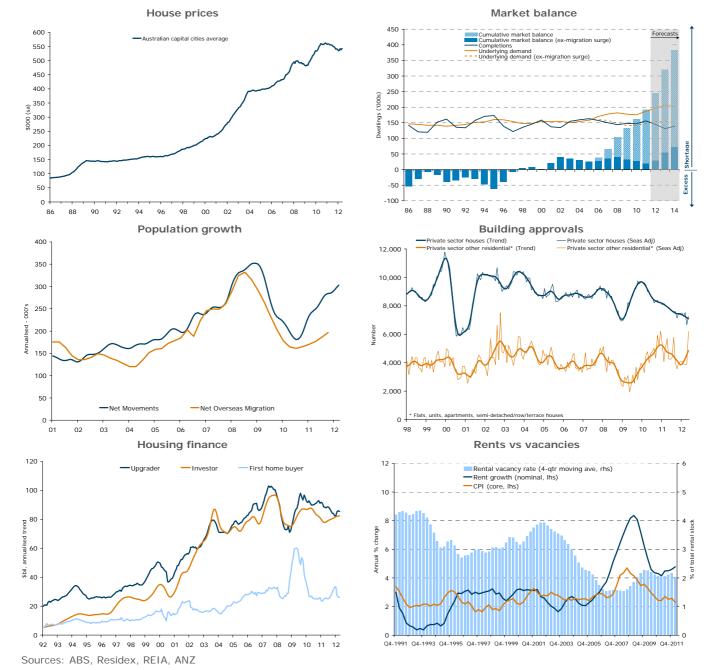


Sources: ABS, ANZ

KEY INDICATORS

MARKET ACTIVITY CONTINUES TO BE DRIVEN BY WEAK SENTIMENT

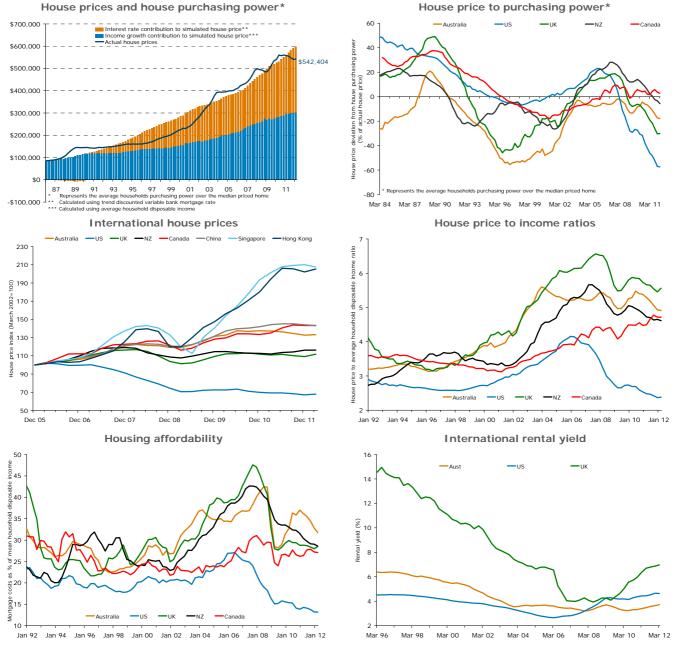
- Indicators show that household caution continues to drive a wedge between housing market activity and underlying fundamentals. While recently showing some gradual improvement, market activity (sales, days on market, prices) remains soft, fuelled by global economic and financial market uncertainty and a protracted behavioural shift towards increased debt aversion.
- Recent growth in first home buyer housing finance signals the positive impact of both improving housing affordability and tight market fundamentals. The removal of the NSW first home buyer stamp duty exemptions for existing homes from 1 January 2012 has temporarily dampened this impact.
- Despite 2011 Census data showing the Australian population *level* to be lower than previously estimated (-294,000), population growth and underlying housing demand remains little changed and net migration remains a significant pressure on the housing stock. Consequently, the fundamentals of the Australian housing market remain generally solid. Skills shortages, particularly in the mining and related professional services sectors, have driven recent increases in net arrivals, indicating population growth is about to re-accelerate. Combined with a weak outlook for residential construction, we expect the underlying shortage of housing to increase in the years ahead, pushing rental vacancies lower, rents higher and eventually supporting house prices.



VALUATION MEASURES

AUSTRALIAN HOUSE PRICE SOFTNESS REFLECTS BETTER VALUE WITHOUT ECONOMIC STRESS

- A combination of lower interest rates, falling house prices and rising household incomes has driven Australian house purchase affordability to better than long-run average levels. In contrast to many other developed economies, this has happened in the absence of a significant economic downturn and the associated stress on household finances.
- ANZ analysis of long-run trends in house prices, household income and interest rates (ignoring other drivers of house price growth, including housing market balance and mortgage lending criteria) shows the recent softness in Australian house prices has been mainly driven by weak household sentiment rather than economic fundamentals, with prices continuing to fall below expected house prices at current household income levels and mortgage rates.
- Cross-country comparisons using partial valuation measures often used to contend the case of *overvaluation* of Australian house prices continue to reflect broader economic and housing market differences, while revealing little about the future direction of house prices. These measures, including house price to income ratios and rental yields, do not address 'other drivers' of house prices, including economic growth and unemployment, population growth, housing stock, net household wealth, household financial stability, government policy, housing credit risk and mortgage lending standards.

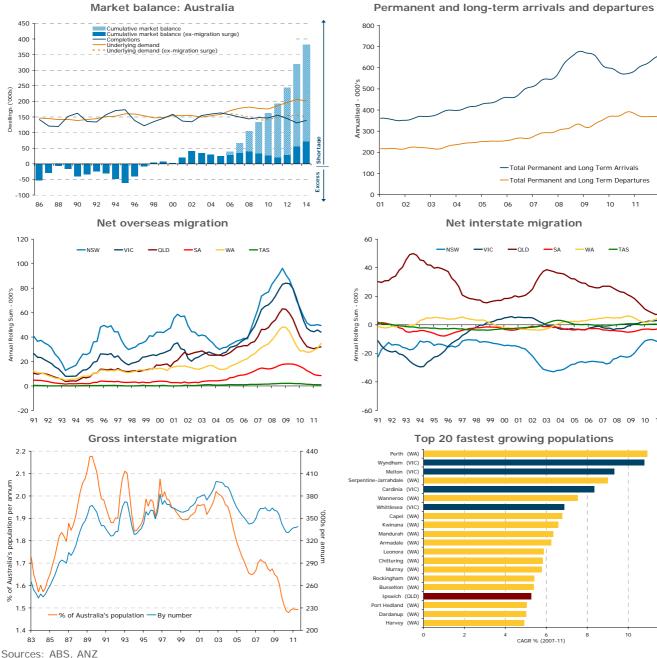


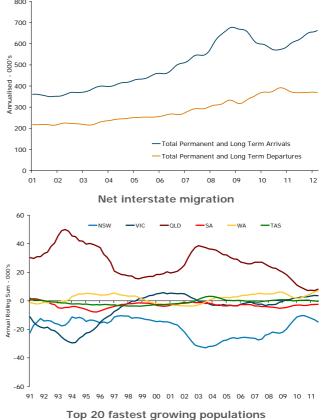
Sources: ABS, RBA, RP Data-Rismark, S&P/Case-Shiller, Nationwide, RBNZ, Teranet National Bank, Global Property Guide, ANZ

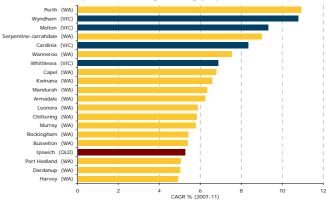
UNDERLYING DEMAND

LEADING INDICATORS SUGGEST POPULATION GROWTH WILL SUPPORT UNDERLYING DEMAND

- Since 2006, net overseas migration has largely driven Australian population growth and supported strong underlying demand for housing. While recent data show moderation in net permanent and long-term arrivals, annualised net movements of 300,000 at May 2012 are expected to drive population growth and continue to support underlying demand for housing in the years ahead.
- While interstate migration activity is higher than post-GFC levels, it remains low as a share of population. This measure is expected to pick-up moderately through 2012-13 due to divergence in labour market conditions and housing affordability across states and territories.
- While divergent economic conditions across states and territories are already driving strong population growth and demand for housing in WA (with 15 of the top 20 fastest growing local government areas), moderate population growth in NSW and Victoria will continue to support the significant existing shortage of housing in these states (see Appendix). Combined with weak dwelling construction, population growth is already squeezing rental markets, driving increases in rental growth and yields, and building fundamental demand for first home buyers and lower priced housing.







SUPPLY

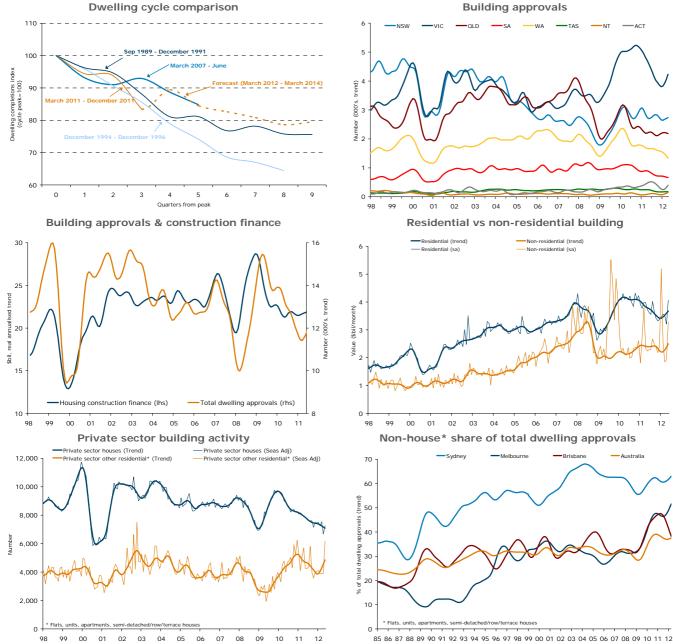
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HOUSING CONSTRUCTION DOWNTURN APPROACHING 1990'S RECESSION LEVEL

- The outlook for residential building remains weak with the current dwelling construction downturn indicating completions are approximately 15% lower from the peak of the cycle (March 2011). The severity of the slowdown has been sharper than previous building contractions and the loss in residential building activity in the current downturn is expected to be only slightly less than during the early 1990's recession.
- While soft house prices, weak house sales and tight credit conditions continue to dampen developer sentiment, financial market volatility and global economic uncertainty have also likely weighed on residential construction plans. Annualised trend completions (134,000 dwellings), while improving in recent months, remain well below long-run average levels and significantly below our estimate of underlying housing demand of 196,000 for 2011-12. Despite the recent interest rate cuts, weak housing market sentiment will continue to weigh on housing construction until early 2013, before building activity is expected to recover in the second half of 2013.
- Looking through monthly volatility in building approvals, trend housing construction levels continue to be strongest in Victoria, though approvals are well below late-2010 peak levels. NSW has shown the most resilience in the current construction downturn, with building approvals 55% higher than the lowest point in the GFC. Approvals of flat, unit and townhouse buildings continue to show that housing affordability and land availability constraints are driving an increasing share of total dwelling approvals, especially in Sydney and Melbourne.

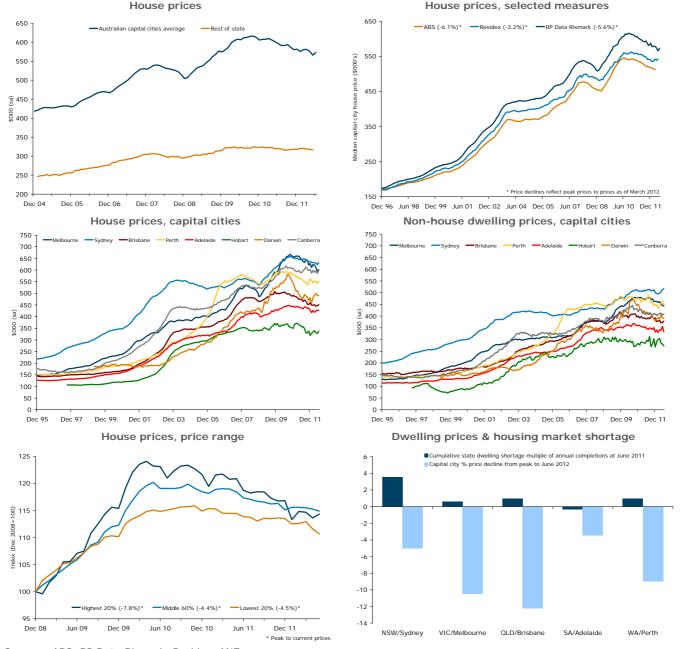


Sources: ABS, ANZ

PRICES

HOUSE PRICES WEAKEN FURTHER ON GLOBAL ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY

- With the exception of Darwin and Canberra, house prices have weakened across all other capital cities in the year to June 2012. However, through 2012 monthly changes in house prices have been extremely volatile, particularly at the high-price end of the market. House price falls from peak to May 2012 for the most expensive 20% of suburbs have been more than double price falls for remaining 80% of suburbs. This has most likely reflected the negative impact on house prices of increased volatility in equity markets and weak consumer sentiment.
- Despite weakening in recent months, Sydney dwelling (house and unit) prices have continued to outperform most other Australian capital cities since the peak of the current price cycle, due to the increasing pressure of stronger population growth on weak housing construction and a degree of resilience after an extended period of prior price underperformance in houses and especially units.
- In the absence of a sharp global economic downturn and escalating domestic unemployment, improving housing affordability, solid household financial positions and strong housing market fundamentals should support modest house price growth into 2013. While previous structural and policy drivers have now been capitalised into house price growth, we expect prices to increase at a moderate 4-5% in annual terms by the end of 2014.

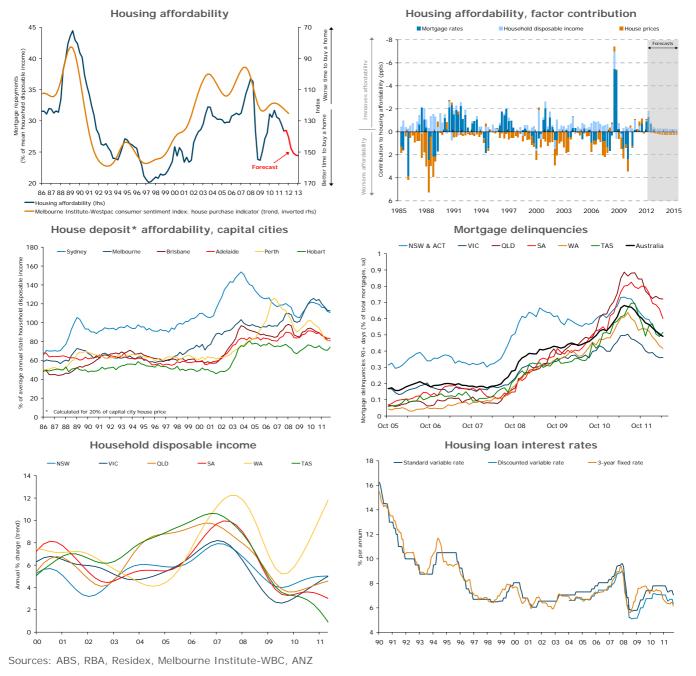


Sources: ABS, RP Data-Rismark, Residex, ANZ

AFFORDABILITY

LOWER HOUSE PRICES AND MORTGAGE RATES CONTINUE TO IMPROVE HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

- Softening house prices, rising household incomes and lower mortgage rates have continued to improve Australian housing affordability. This has been reflected in improved consumer expectations of the best time to buy a house and lower mortgage delinquency rates through 2012.
- Previous episodes of improving housing affordability (in the early and mid-90s) were largely driven by significant reductions in interest rates (and steady growth in household incomes). With interest rates at relatively low levels and expectations of moderate growth in household income, improvements in housing affordability through 2012-13 are expected to be driven more by household income gains and weaker house prices than in the past.
- Despite Melbourne house prices experiencing the largest falls over the past year, Melbourne housing remains the least affordable to purchase across Australian capital cities. Strong growth in WA household income and weak house price growth has maintained Perth house deposit affordability compared to other major capital cities (ranked 6th across Australian capital cities compared to equal 1st before the GFC).

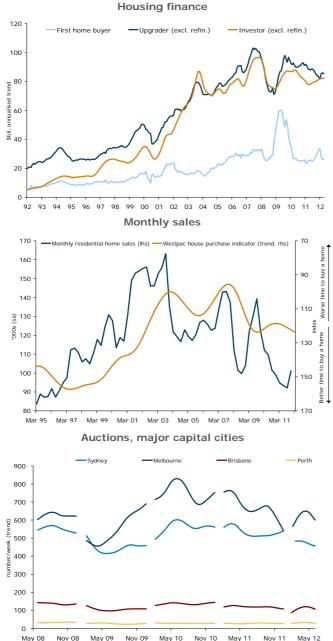


MARKET ACTIVITY

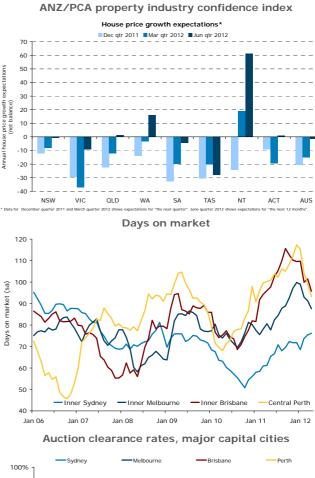
HOME SALES ACTIVITY REMAINS WEAK

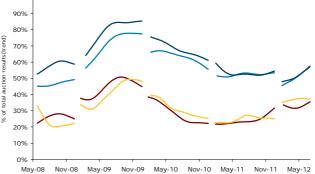
- Housing market activity continues to be weighed down by weak household confidence, most likely driven by ongoing financial market volatility and an uncertain global economic outlook. Despite continued softening in house prices and improving housing affordability, residential home sales are running at 17-year lows and housing finance activity remains soft.
- Home sales levels are running at around 100,000/month, well below the pre-GFC peak of 140,000/month and tracking below the 120,000/month sales levels seen in 2009. While auction clearance rates and days on market have shown some improvement more recently, they also remain well below recent peak levels, suggesting continued divergence between the expectations of home buyers and vendors.
- With ongoing softness in house prices and escalating uncertainty around the prospects for the global economy, . the outlook for housing market sales continues to look weak over the second half of the year. However, recent interest rate cuts and the potential for further rate cuts should drive improvements in housing affordability, eventually rousing market sales activity from the current lows, especially for first home buyers.

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May 09 May 08 May 10 May 11 Sources: ABS, RP Data, PCA/ANZ, Melbourne Institute-WBC, ANZ

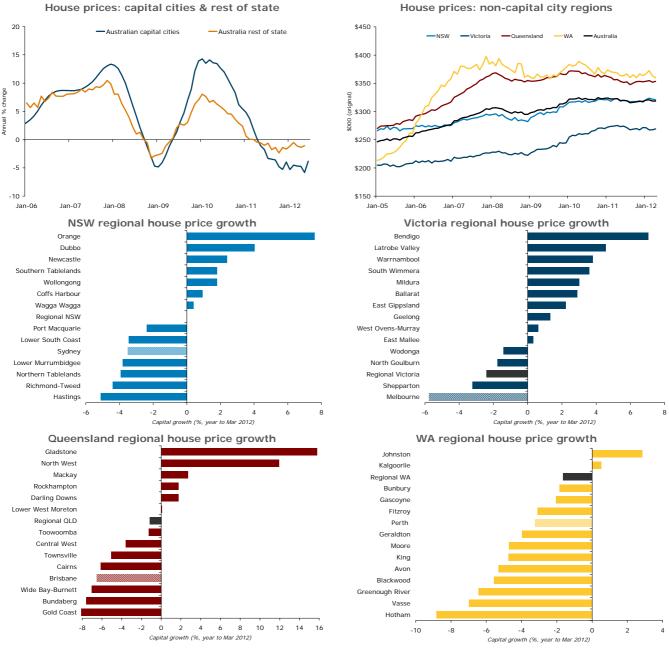




REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

REGIONAL HOUSE PRICES OUTPERFORMING CAPITAL CITIES

- Despite being lower in annual growth terms, regional house prices have been more stable than capital city house prices, which have seen larger price falls across all major states and territories. Across states/territories and regions, house price growth has continued to differ, reflecting varying economic performance across Australian industries. NSW regional house prices were the strongest across states and territories in the year to March 2012, with the central inland regions of Orange and Dubbo showing the greatest house price growth.
- Queensland has shown the greatest intra-state variation in regional house prices, reflecting the divergent economic performance of regions exposed to the tourism sector (ie Cairns, Gold Coast) and mining-related services (Gladstone, Mount Isa).
- House price growth in WA regional centres has counter-intuitively been the weakest, with house prices in many centres lower in the year to March. Of note, house price growth in the Greenough River and Moore regions were much weaker in March 2012 (-6.5% and -4.7% respectively) compared to September 2011 (+1.3% and +0.6% respectively). Nonetheless, the economic benefits from major mining and energy projects in WA should boost house prices in many WA major regional centres over the next 12-18 months.



Sources: Residex, RP Data-Rismark, ANZ

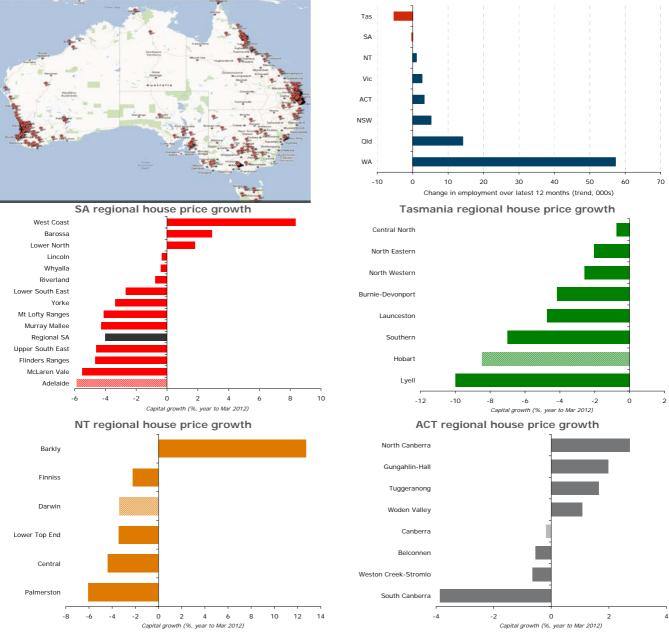
REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Employment growth by state (year to May 2012)

REGIONAL HOUSE PRICES (CONTINUED)

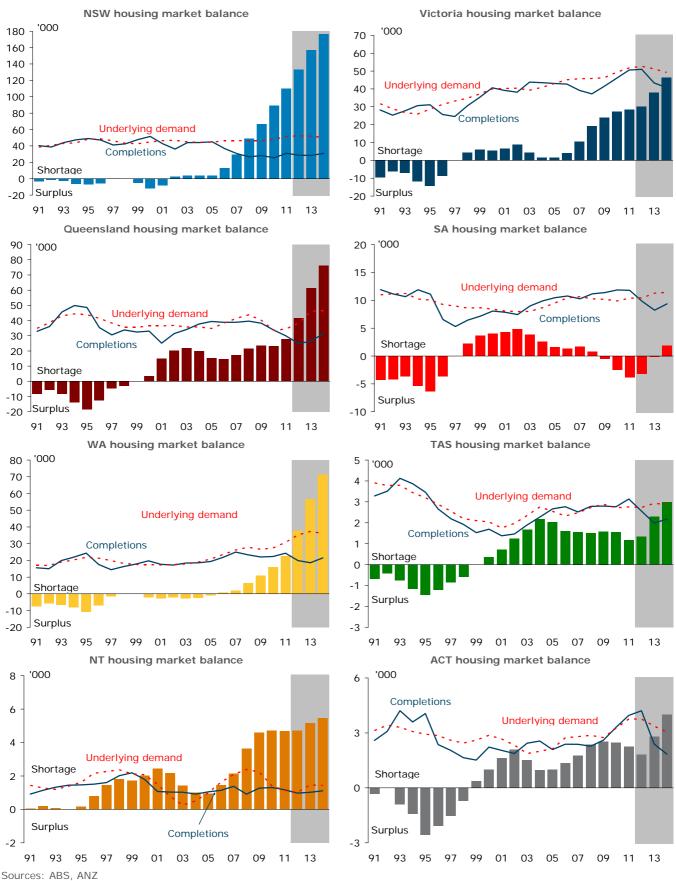
- Regional house price growth in South Australia, Tasmania and the territories have also reflected differing regional economic performance. While regional house price growth in most states have been dispersed between increases and decreases, Tasmania's regional house prices were all lower in the year to March 2012, reflecting the relatively soft economy and weak labour market conditions.
- While we continue to expect continued divergence within South Australia and ACT regional housing markets, a broadly soft economic outlook for the South Australia and ACT economies combined with relatively balanced housing markets should contain house price growth in the coming year across most regions.
- The outlook for house price growth across the Northern Territory regions is buoyant, with significant mining and energy investment (ie Icthys gas project) expected to drive solid state economic growth and broad regional house price increases through the second half of 2012 and through 2013.

10%+ annual house price declines (March 2012), regions



Sources: ABS, Residex, ANZ

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STATE/TERRITORY UNDERLYING HOUSING MARKET BALANCE

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