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Thursday, 22 May 2014

Perk of the job or occupational hazard? Consumer Confidence by profession

In these tumultuous times of 'horror Budgets', slippery politicians and weakening Consumer Confidence, many Australians are expecting tough times ahead. While overall Consumer Confidence has taken a dive since the Federal Election (and even more so since Joe Hockey's Budget was handed down), there's no doubt that certain sectors of the population are feeling less confident than others. This is especially evident among different professions...

In the 12 months to April 2014, 73.4% of the population felt either confident or very confident*, its lowest level since July 2013. (Suffice it to say, the remaining 26.6% are not feeling confident.)

Confident — and not-so-confident — consumers by profession

However, consumer confidence levels among people working in certain occupations are significantly higher than the national average. Few would be surprised to learn that the most confident group is comprised primarily of CEOs and General Managers (79.2%), the kind of highly paid and powerful professionals traditionally supported by Liberal governments. They are closely followed by people employed in the Food Trades (78.2%) and Business, HR and Marketing Professionals (78%).

Consumer confidence by profession, April 2014

	Most confident professions	Proportion who are confident		Least confident professions	Proportion who are confident
1	CEOs, General Managers	79.2%	1	Farmers and Farm Managers	63.5%
2	Food Trades Workers	78.2%	2	Factory Process Workers	65.2%
3	Business, HR and Marketing Professionals	78.0%	3	Health and Welfare Support Workers	66.2%
4	Sports and Professional Service Workers	77.6%	4	Cleaners and Laundry Workers	66.3%
5	ICT Professionals	77.3%	5	Machine and Stationary Plant Operators	66.7%

Source: Roy Morgan Research Single Source (Australia), May 2012-April 2013, n=49,105

Conversely, some professions are not feeling so confident. Least confident of the lot — as they have been for several years — are Farmers and Farm Managers (63.5%). With the unpredictable Australian climate directly impacting on their livelihoods, this is understandable. Factory Process Workers (65.2%) and Health and Welfare Support Workers (66.2%) are also feeling less than rock solid.

Looking back...

Back in 2010, before Labor's leadership spill, these figures looked quite different. In the 12 months to April 2010, Business, HR and Marketing Professionals were the most confident group (85.4%) ahead of ICT (Information and communications technology) Professionals (84.6%) and CEOs and General Managers (84.2%).

Consumer confidence by profession, April 2010

	Most confident professions	Proportion who are confident		Least confident professions	Proportion who are confident
1	Business, HR and Marketing Professionals	85.40%	1	Farmers and Farm Managers	66.3%
2	ICT Professionals	84.6%	2	Cleaners and Laundry Workers	71.4%
3	CEOs, General Managers	84.2%	3	Carers and aides	74.1%
4	Sales Representatives and Agents	83.7%	4	Farm, Forestry and Garden Workers (equal 4th)	74.4%
5	Legal, Social and Welfare Professionals (equal 5th)	83.3%	4	Skilled Animal and Horticultural Workers (equal 4th)	74.4%
5	Design, Engineering, Science and Transport Professionals (equal 5th)	83.3%	5	Health and Welfare Support Workers	74.6%

Source: Roy Morgan Research Single Source (Australia), May 2009-April 2010, n=52, 159

As the table above indicates, the confidence levels for the five most confident professions in 2010 were significantly higher than the current five.

While Farmers and Farm Managers were already entrenched as the least confident occupation (66.3%) by April 2010, even they were more confident back then.

Norman Morris, Industry Communications Director, Roy Morgan Research, says:

"The relatively high consumer confidence among CEOs, General Managers and other business professionals makes sense when you consider that these are among the occupations that tend to benefit most from a conservative government. It is also consistent with recent business confidence levels, which have been generally positive since last year's Federal Election.

"However, these professions were even more confident back in 2010, when there was no Commission of Audit or extreme budget hanging over them.

"While ICT professionals have much to be confident about, given the essential role of new technologies in Australian life, it's possible that their fall from second to fifth place is due to their frustration with the problem-plagued NBN. Meanwhile, burgeoning confidence among food trades workers may be the result of Australia's great foodie obsession, and all the business and employment opportunities it has brought with it.

"On the other hand, the least confident occupations tend to be poorly paid and in industries that may have been affected by mass redundancies or lack of government support. The biggest change in this respect has been among Factory Process Workers, whose consumer confidence has plummeted from 76.8% in 2010 to 65.2% in 2014.

"Meanwhile, despite the Abbott government's assistance package to drought-stricken farmers earlier this year, it hasn't been enough to restore their confidence.

“We would expect consumer confidence levels to fall further among most professions after May, once the full effects of the Budget are absorbed...”

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Related research findings

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[Consumer Confidence – Monthly Detailed Report in Australia.](#)

[Business Confidence – Monthly Detailed Report in Australia.](#)

[Consumer Banking Satisfaction Monthly Report in Australia.](#)

[Business Banking Satisfaction Monthly Report in Australia.](#)

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Roy Morgan Research is the largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state of Australia, as well as in New Zealand, the United States and the United Kingdom. A full service research organisation specialising in omnibus and syndicated data, Roy Morgan Research has over 70 years' experience in collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

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Margin of Error

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

Sample Size	Percentage Estimate			
	40%-60%	25% or 75%	10% or 90%	5% or 95%
5,000	±1.4	±1.2	±0.8	±0.6
7,500	±1.1	±1.0	±0.7	±0.5
10,000	±1.0	±0.9	±0.6	±0.4
20,000	±0.7	±0.6	±0.4	±0.3
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2

* To calculate whether a consumer is confident or not confident, we ask five questions, each of which is given a score of -20, 0 or +20. This score is then added to 100, with Confident Consumers being those who received a score of 100-140 (confident) or 160-200 (very confident) and Unconfident Consumers being those who scored 0-80.