Business Pulse Monthly

Your update on consumer and commercial market trends impacting New Zealand businesses

New Zealand

October 2026

© Experian 2026. All rights reserved. Experian and the Experian marks used herein are service marks or registered trademarks of Experian or its related entities worldwide. Other product and company names mentioned herein are the property of their respective owners.

What we found interesting and what we are watching

Although annual inflation eased to 3.7% in the September quarter, it remains above target and further monetary policy tightening is expected following the Reserve Bank's recent increase in the cash rate to 2.75%.

Consumer spending remains restrained and underlying data points to changing spending choices rather than a uniform pullback. Essential spending declined 1.7% year-on-year in August, while discretionary spending was up by 0.9%. Dining trends are one example of consumers seeking alternatives, with restaurant spending down 18.3% compared with a year ago, while takeaway spending increased 3.6% and spend through food delivery apps rose 26.3%. Interestingly, household energy consumption has remained relatively stable despite high power costs, suggesting households have had limited capacity or willingness to reduce usage to offset increasing gas and electricity prices.

Housing and mortgage lending are another area to watch. Despite a modest increase in house sales in September, they remain below last year's levels and national prices are 2% lower (3% lower in Auckland). Total mortgage funding has also declined for three consecutive months and the composition of new lending is shifting further to higher-risk borrowing. High debt-to-income lending accounted for 18% of funding, while the proportion of lending above an 80% loan-to-value ratio (LVR) increased to 17%, compared with 13% a year earlier. This increase in higher-leverage lending is noteworthy, particularly as interest rates head upwards.

This month's Spotlight looks at where growth is emerging across Australia and New Zealand, using the Experian Growth Index to highlight industries gaining momentum despite an uncertain economic environment, as well as selected industries that appear to be facing growth challenges.

Analytics
Consulting &
Insights Team

Executive summary

Macroeconomic and bureau insights

- Annual inflation to the September quarter eased to 3.7%, down from 4.1%. The Reserve Bank of New Zealand had already increased the cash rate to 2.75% and further tightening is expected. (Source: NZ Stats)
- There were 286 insolvencies in September, up 18% from August and 15% higher than the same time last year. The monthly increase was driven by higher insolvencies across real estate and financial services. In contrast, insolvencies eased in food services and retail trade. (Source: NZ Companies Office)
- Consumer and business confidence eased marginally in September. Consumer confidence is now 97.6 (-0.4 points from August) and business confidence is 52 (-2 points from August). (Source: ANZ-Roy Morgan)
- Essential spend was 1.7% lower in August when compared to the same time last year, while discretionary spend was up 0.9%.
    - Dining Out/Takeaway: consumers continue to shift their dining spend; restaurant spend fell 18.3% year-on-year, while takeaway spend rose 3.6% and spend through food delivery apps rose 26.3%.
    - Retail: trends were mixed – clothing spend declined 2.4% year-on-year while department store spend increased 7.7%.
    - Energy: inflation adjusted domestic power and water index averaged 102 over the past three months, indicating household consumption has remained relatively stable despite rising power costs. (Source: Experian)
- There were 5,752 houses sold in September, an increase of 6% from the previous month, although down 9% from the same time last year. The national House Price Index is 2% down versus last year, while Auckland is down 3%. (Source: REINZ)
- Total mortgage funding declined for the third consecutive month and is $313 million below last year's levels, with the proportion from high debt-to-income lending of 6x or more ticking up to 18%. (Source: RBNZ)
- High loan-to-valuation ratio (LVR) fundings continue to increase, with 17% of fundings in August having an LVR of over 80%. This is up from 13% of fundings in August last year. (Source: RBNZ)

Monthly Spotlight

Growth amid uncertainty: Which industries are performing across Australia and New Zealand

This month's Spotlight looks at where growth is emerging across Australia and New Zealand, using the Experian Growth Index to highlight the industries gaining momentum despite an uncertain economic environment.

About the authors

Louis Tsang

Head of Analytics Consulting & Insights

Credit Bureau, Data & Analytics and TenderLink

Louis Tsang is a seasoned analytics and risk consulting leader with over 18 years of experience across banking, insurance, and data consultancy. His expertise spans across the customer credit life-cycle and has driven bespoke analytics and strategic consulting initiatives for clients across AU and NZ. He specialises in delivering market insights, as a trusted advisor he has delivered presentations, speeches and conference keynote discussions across multiple forums. With a background in actuarial science and an MBA, Louis combines technical depth with commercial acumen, making him a key contributor to data governance, economic insights, and enterprise-wide analytics transformation.

Michael Johnson

Manager, Analytics Consulting & Insights

Credit Bureau, Data & Analytics and TenderLink

Michael Johnson is an experienced leader in commercial credit risk, AML/KYC remediations and marketing analytics. He has a proven track record of delivering high-impact projects focused on risk identification, assessment and monitoring, as well as conducting retrospective analysis to uncover hidden risks, improve recovery-rates and minimise write-offs. Michael is also an expert in market insights and spend analytics, providing clients with in-depth evaluations of their competitive positioning, market share, share of wallet and customer churn to uncover growth and customer retention opportunities.

Rishabh Kochhar

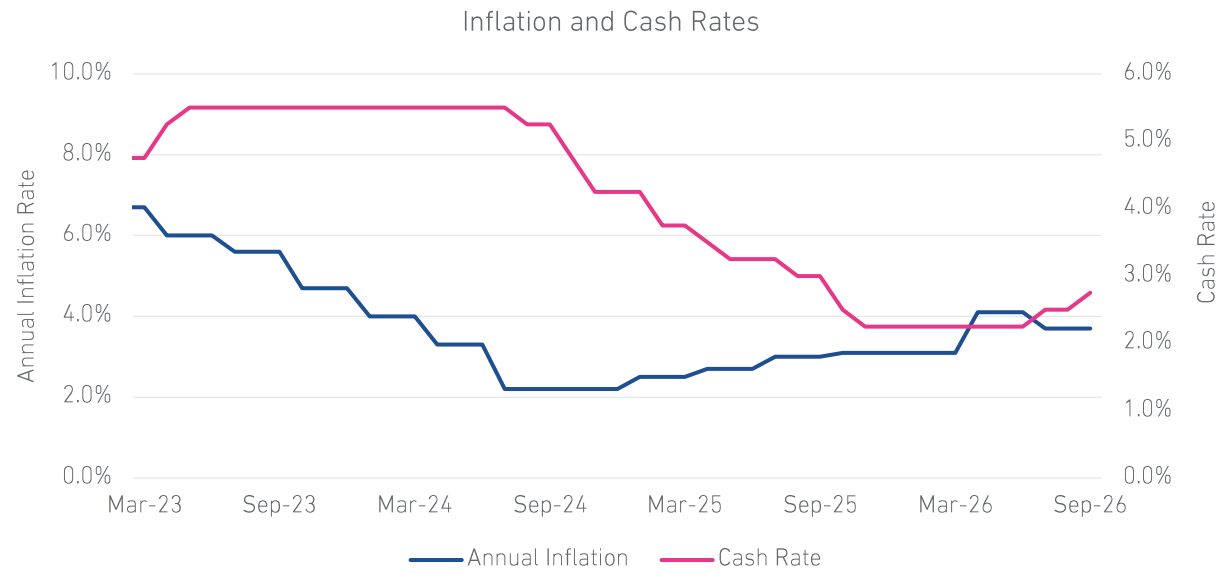
Analyst, Analytics Consulting & Insights

Credit Bureau, Data & Analytics and TenderLink

Rishabh Kochhar is an analyst with over 4 years of professional experience with expertise in statistical-driven analytics and modelling. Working across both spend analytics and bureau, he helps transform complex datasets into meaningful insights and uncover market trends for external clients to support decision making. He holds Master of Data Science from Monash University and contributes to various cross functional projects to unearth additional analytics use cases and improve operational efficiency.

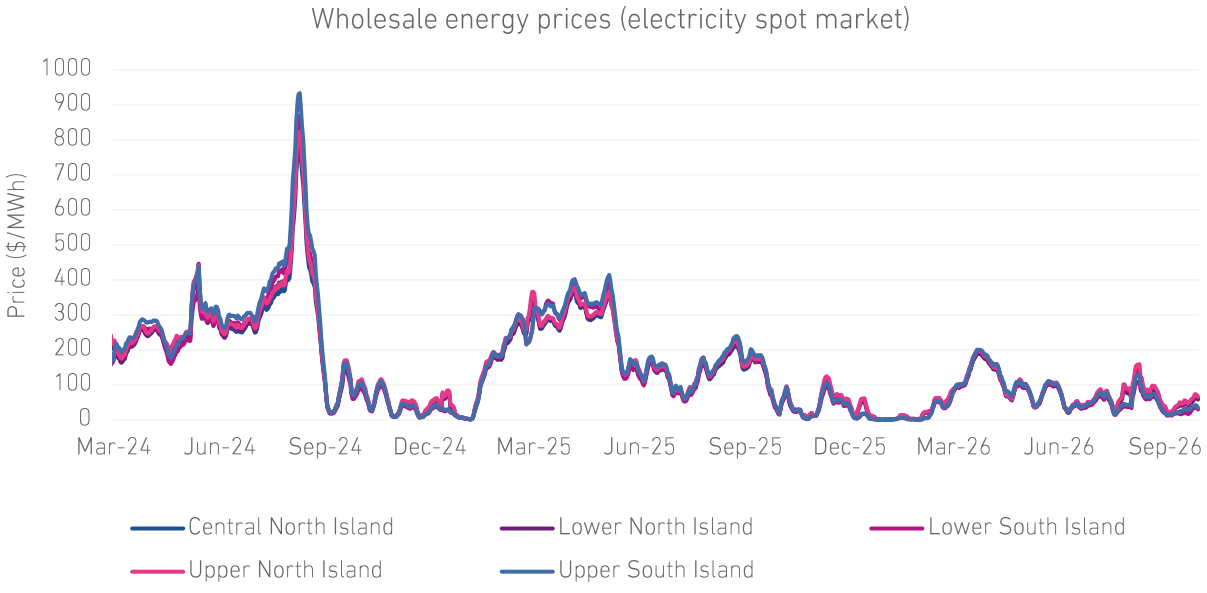
Inflation and energy prices

Annual inflation to the September quarter eased to 3.7%, down from 4.1%. The RBNZ had already increased the cash rate to 2.75% and further tightening is expected



Source: NZ Stats – CPI, RBNZ - cash rates

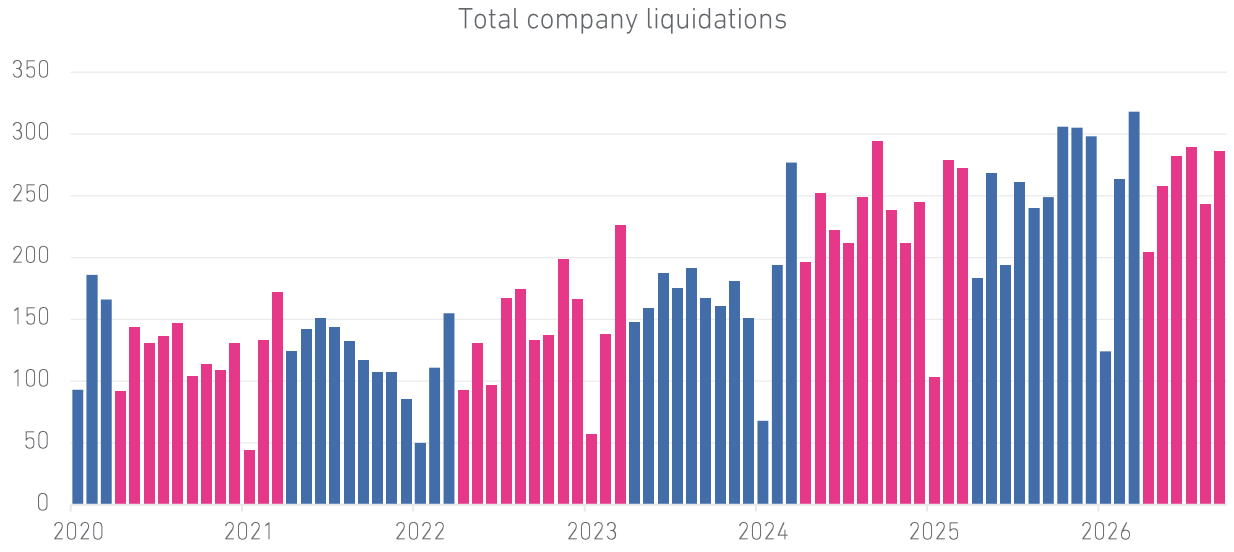
Wholesale electricity prices remained low at under $50 MWh over September.



Source: EMI Electricity Authority - New Zealand wholesale electricity prices, spot price

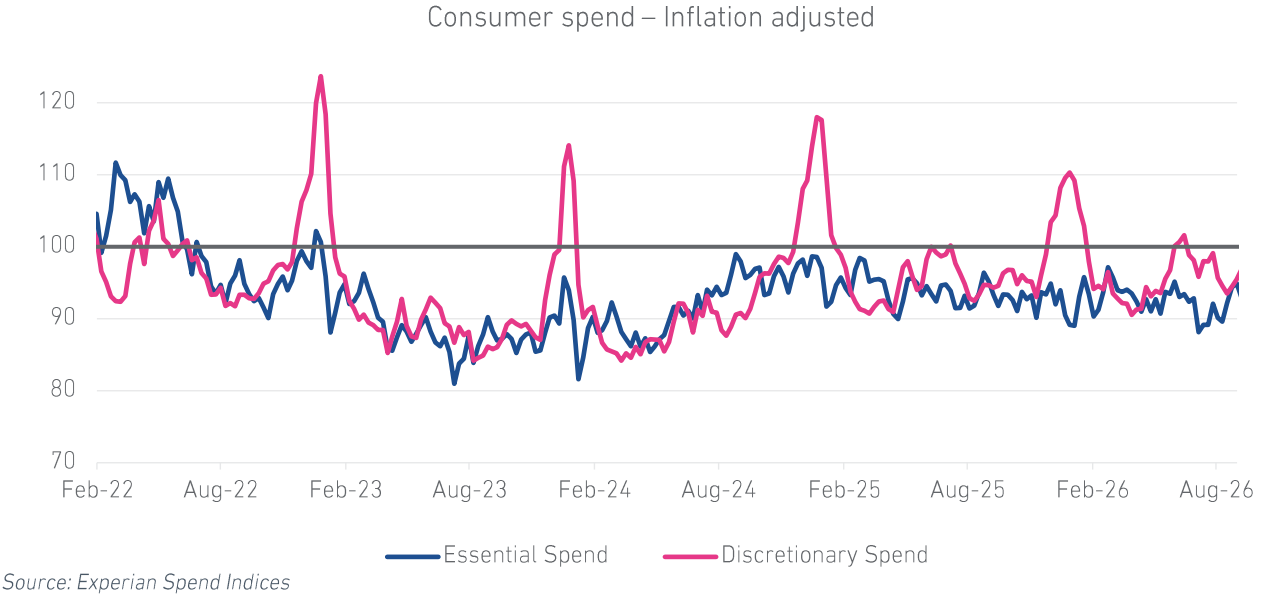
Insolvencies and consumer spend

There were 286 insolvencies in September, up 18% from August and 15% higher than the same time last year. The monthly increase was driven by higher insolvencies across real estate and financial services. In contrast, insolvencies eased in food services and retail trade.



Source: NZ Companies Office. Colours mark the financial years.

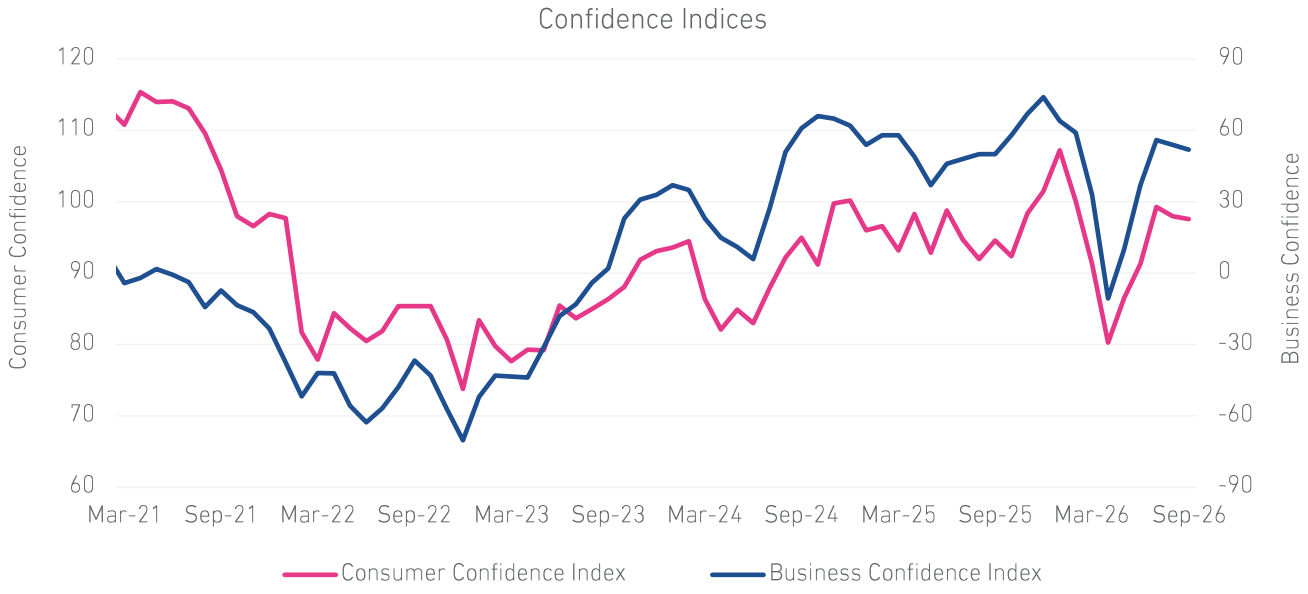
Essential spend was 1.7% lower in August when compared to the same time last year, while discretionary spend was up 0.9%.



Source: Experian Spend Indices

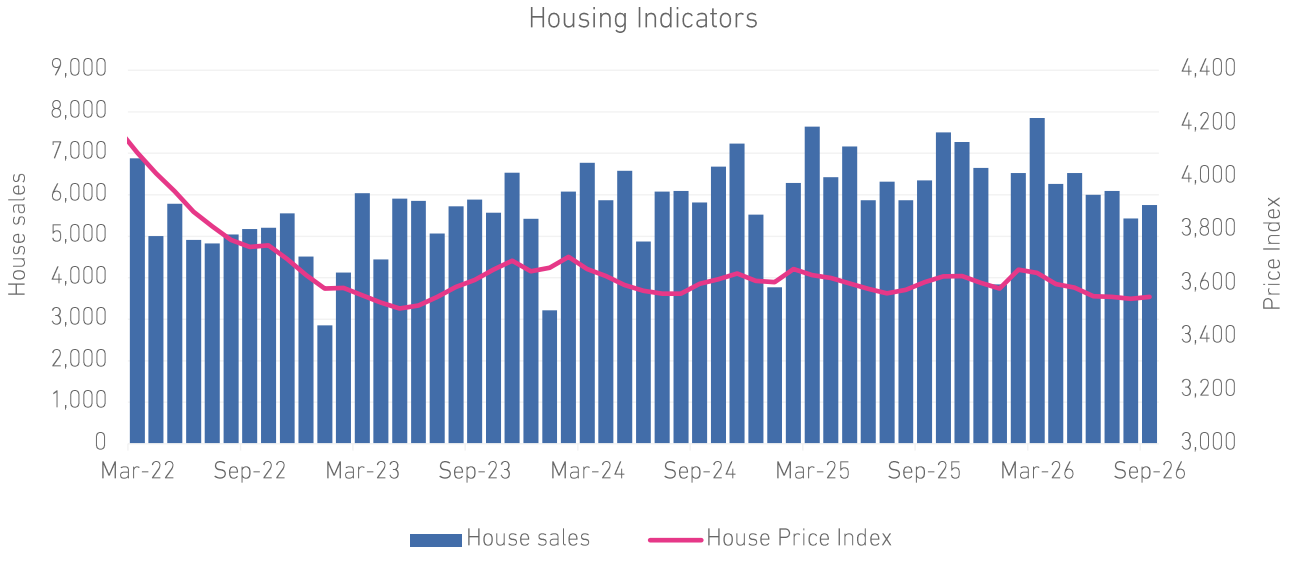
Sentiment and house prices

Consumer and business confidence eased marginally in September. Consumer confidence is now 97.6 (-0.4 points from August) and business confidence is 52 (-2 points from August).



Source: ANZ-Roy Morgan Survey

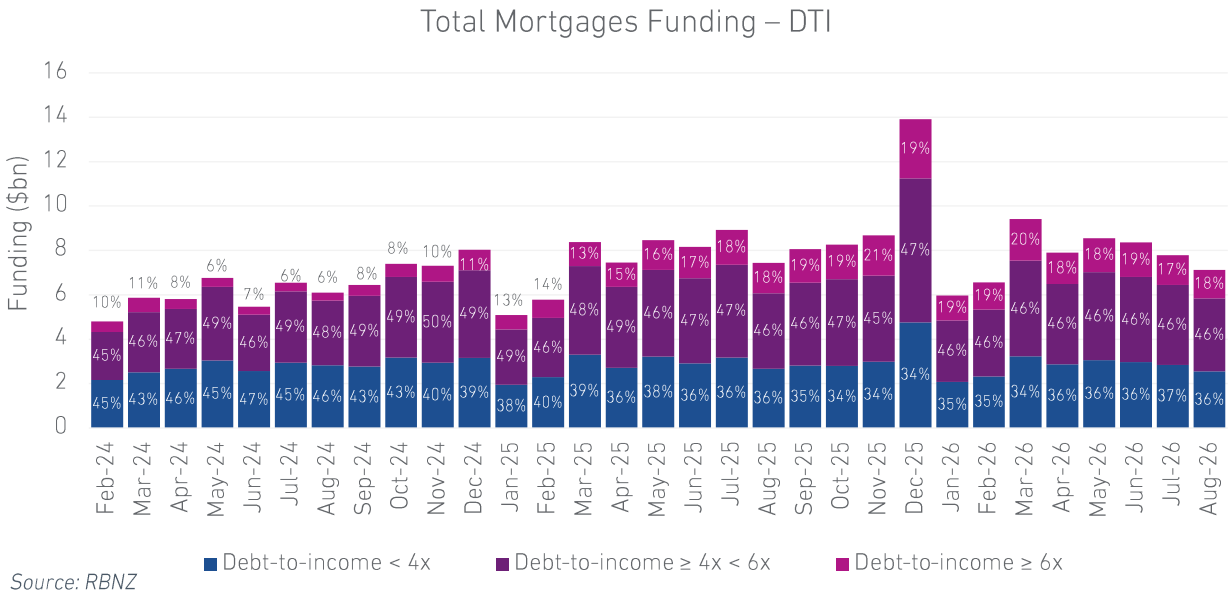
There were 5,752 houses sold in September, an increase of 6% from the previous month, although down 9% from the same time last year. The national House Price Index is 2% down versus last year, while Auckland is down 3%.



Source: REINZ

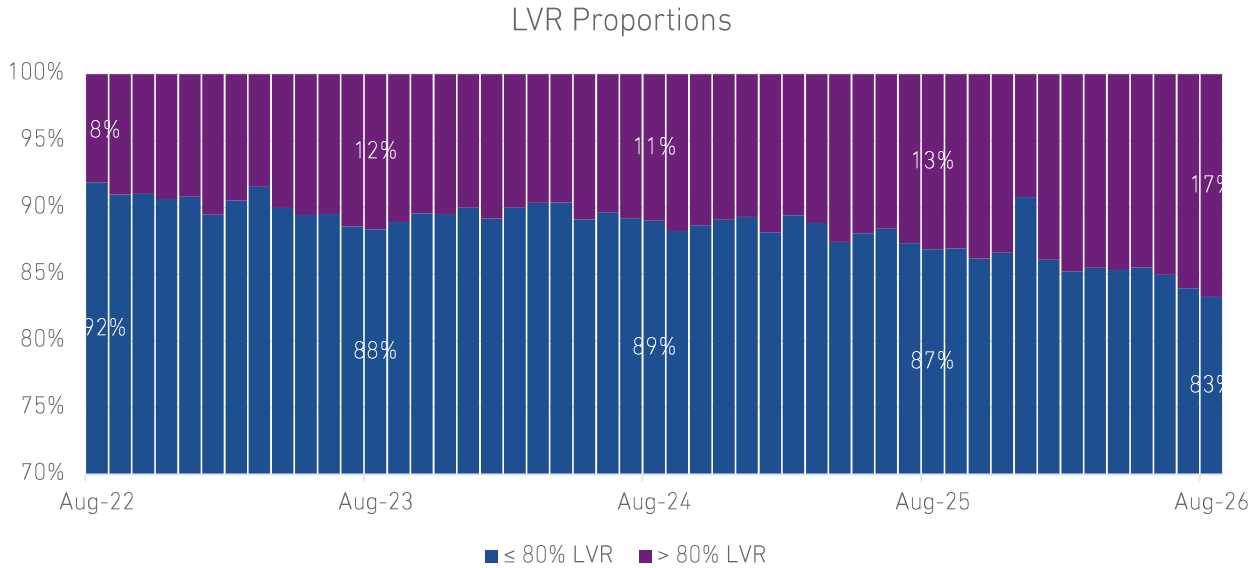
Mortgage funding

Total mortgage funding declined for the third consecutive month and is $313 million below last year's levels, with the proportion of high debt-to-income lending of 6x or more ticking up to 18%.



Source: RBNZ

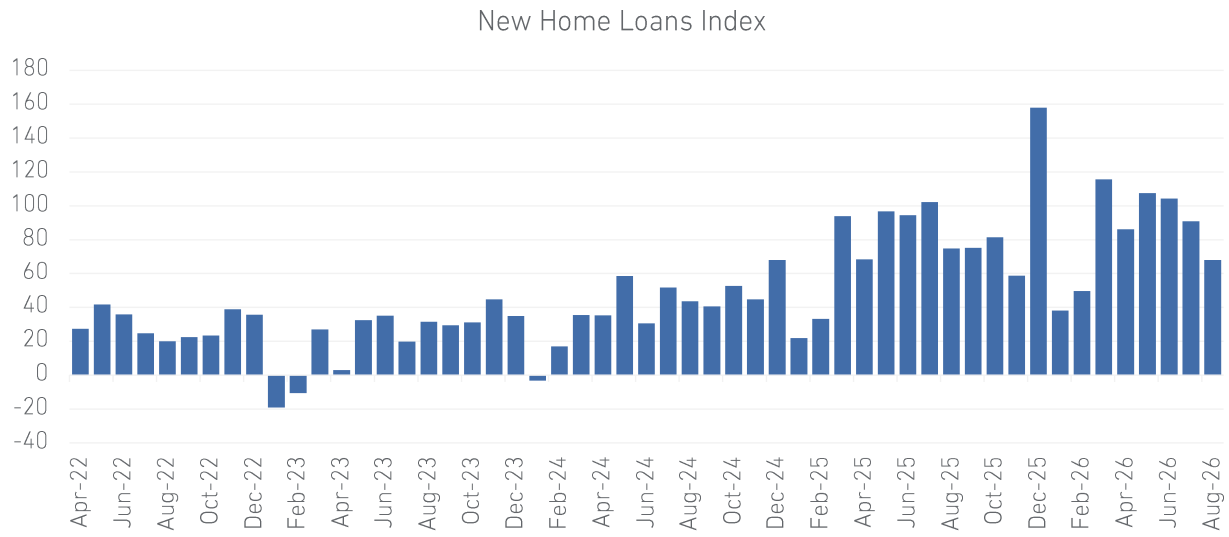
High loan-to-valuation ratio (LVR) fundings continue to increase, with 17% of fundings in August having an LVR of over 80%. This is up from 13% of fundings in August last year.



Source: RBNZ

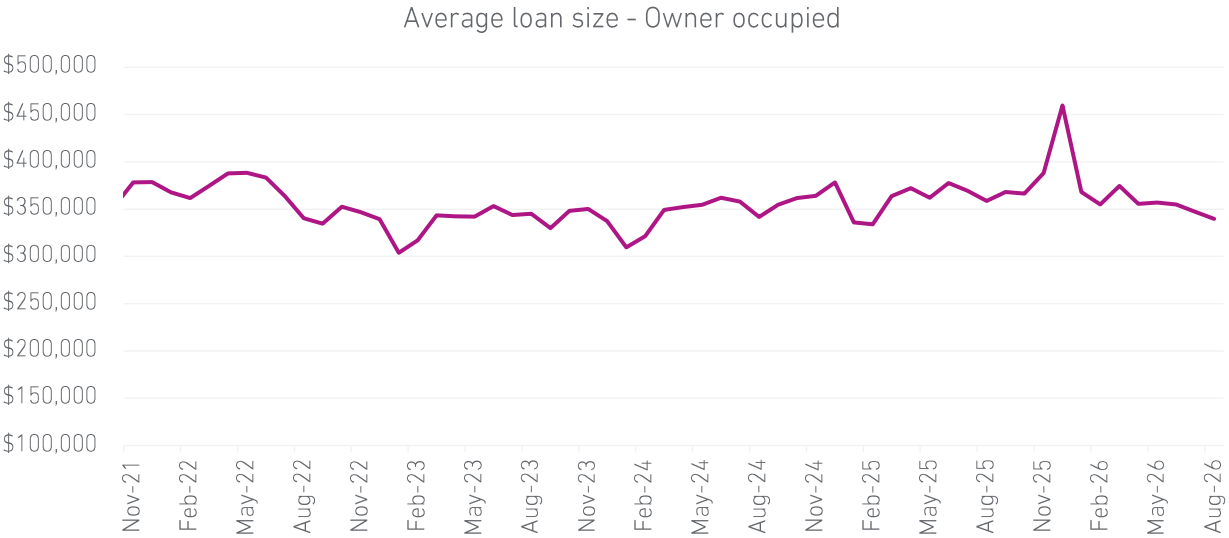
New mortgage commitments

New home loan accounts eased in the months of July and August by 5.5% and 3.9% respectively from the same time last year, although demand remains elevated compared to long-term levels.



Source: Experian Bureau – data is indexed to Jan 2022 and rebased to 0

The average owner-occupied loan size fell in August to $339,867, down 2% from July.



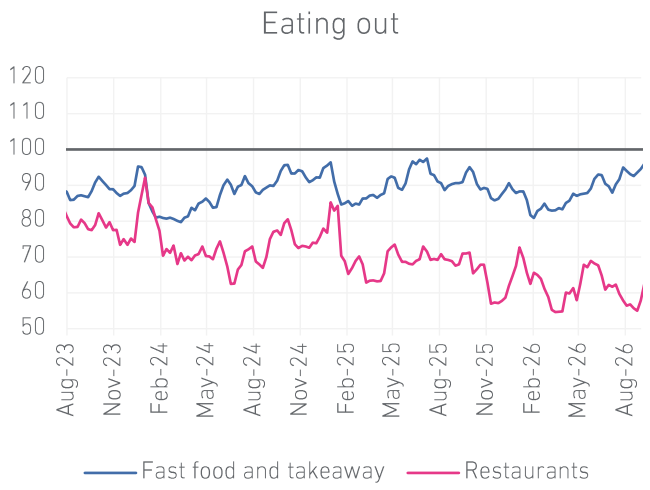
Source: RBNZ

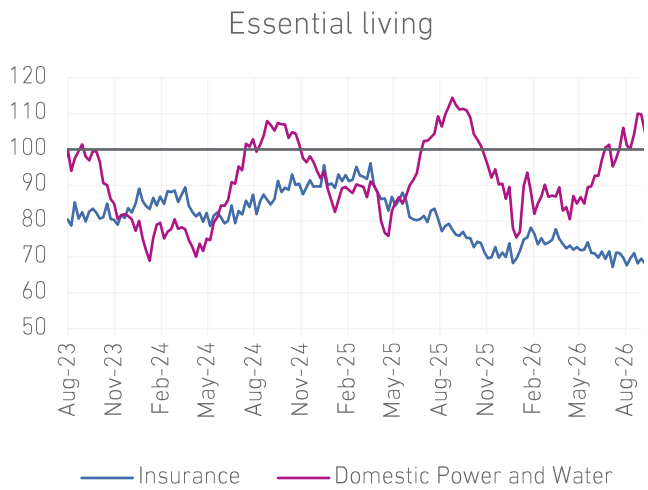
Consumer spending trends

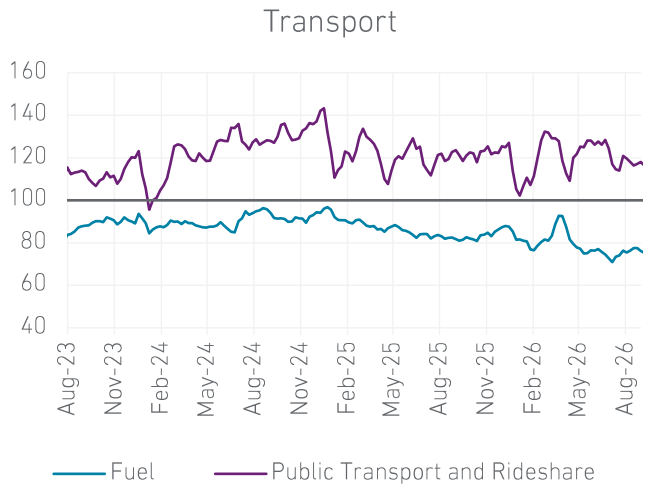
Consumers continue to shift their dining spend from restaurants towards fast food and takeaway options. Restaurant spend fell 18.3% year-on-year in August, taking the index to a low of 55, while fast food and takeaway spend rose 3.6% to an index of 95, close to baseline levels. Food delivery continues to grow particularly strongly, with spend through apps such as Uber Eats and Delivereasy up 26.3% year-on-year.

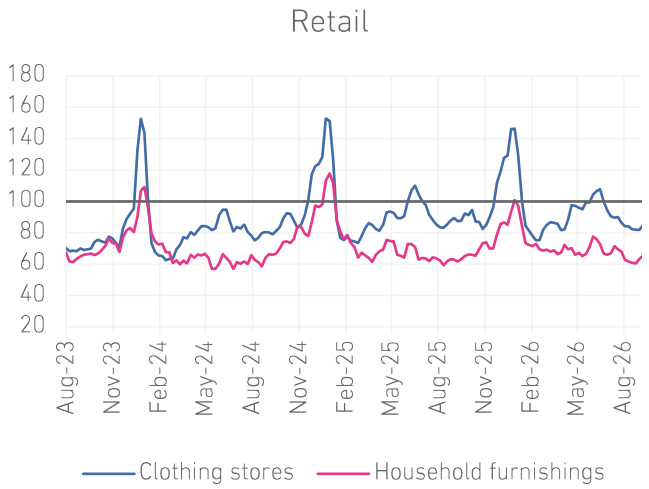
Retail trends were mixed in August - clothing spend declined 2.4% from a year earlier, while department store spend increased 7.7%.

Insurance spend remains subdued, declining 8% year-on-year in August. Meanwhile, the inflation-adjusted domestic power and water index averaged 102 over the past three months, indicating household consumption has remained relatively stable despite rising power costs.









Source: Experian Spend Indices; indexed to the average weekly spend across 2022; adjusted for inflation

Monthly Spotlight

Growth amid uncertainty

Which industries are performing across Australia and New Zealand

Rishabh Kochhar

Growth amid uncertainty: which industries are performing

Finding growth in an uncertain economy

Businesses across Australia and New Zealand continue to navigate a challenging economic environment. Elevated interest rates and persistent inflation and cost pressures have weighed on operating conditions, while insolvencies remain high across both countries. In Australia, these pressures have coincided with weak business confidence, reinforcing a broader sense of uncertainty around the economic outlook.

Despite this, growth continues across parts of both economies, with some industries showing considerably stronger momentum than others. Using Experian's Growth Index, we highlight where growth is occurring, which industries appear to be gaining ground, and touch on sectors that are facing growth challenges.

Experian's Growth Index

The Growth Index leverages Experian's Trade Bureau (business-to-business payment data) and Spend Analytics (consumer spending data) to provide a measure of business performance, with two indices available: a short-term view measuring 1-year growth and a long-term view measuring 3-year growth.

The following band ranges have been used in this spotlight to classify growth levels.

	Index Range
Declining	<95
Stable	95-104
Low Growth	105-109
High Growth	110-129
Very High Growth	130+

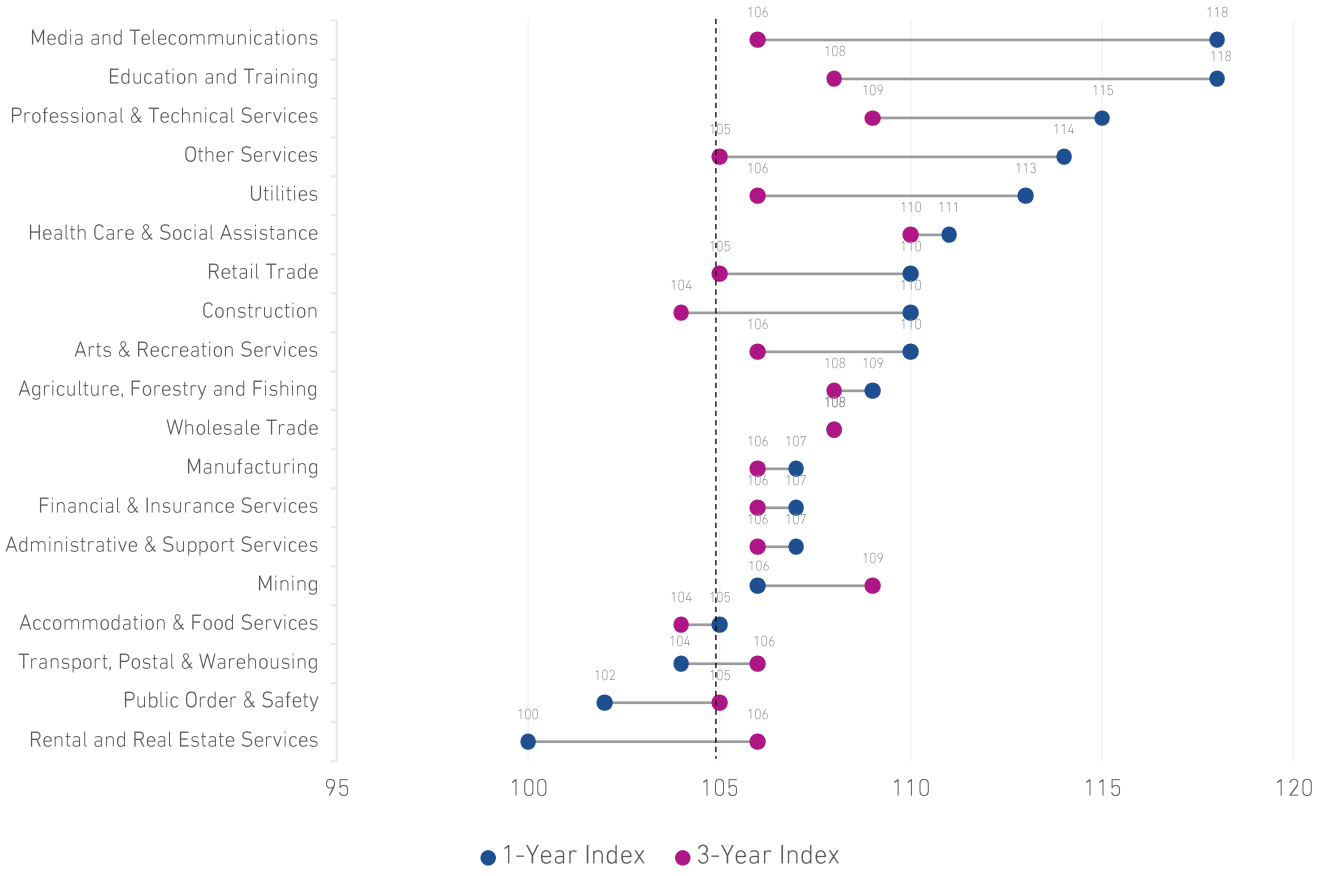
Growth amid uncertainty: which industries are performing

Sector growth across Australia and New Zealand

Australian industry growth has strengthened over the last year relative to the three-year benchmark, with the Growth Index higher over one year for most of the sectors. Media and Telecommunications, and Education and Training lead the 1-year rankings, both at 118, followed by Professional & Technical Services (115), Other Service (114) and Utilities (113).

Health Care & Social Assistance is also comparatively strong at 111 while also showing the highest 3-year growth at 110.

1-Year and 3-Year Growth Index: Australia



The improvement is not shared across all sectors. Mining is a notable exception, with its 3-year index of 109 exceeding its 1-year performance of 106. Similarly, Transport, Postal & Warehousing, Public Order & Safety, and Real Estate Services also perform better over the longer-term.

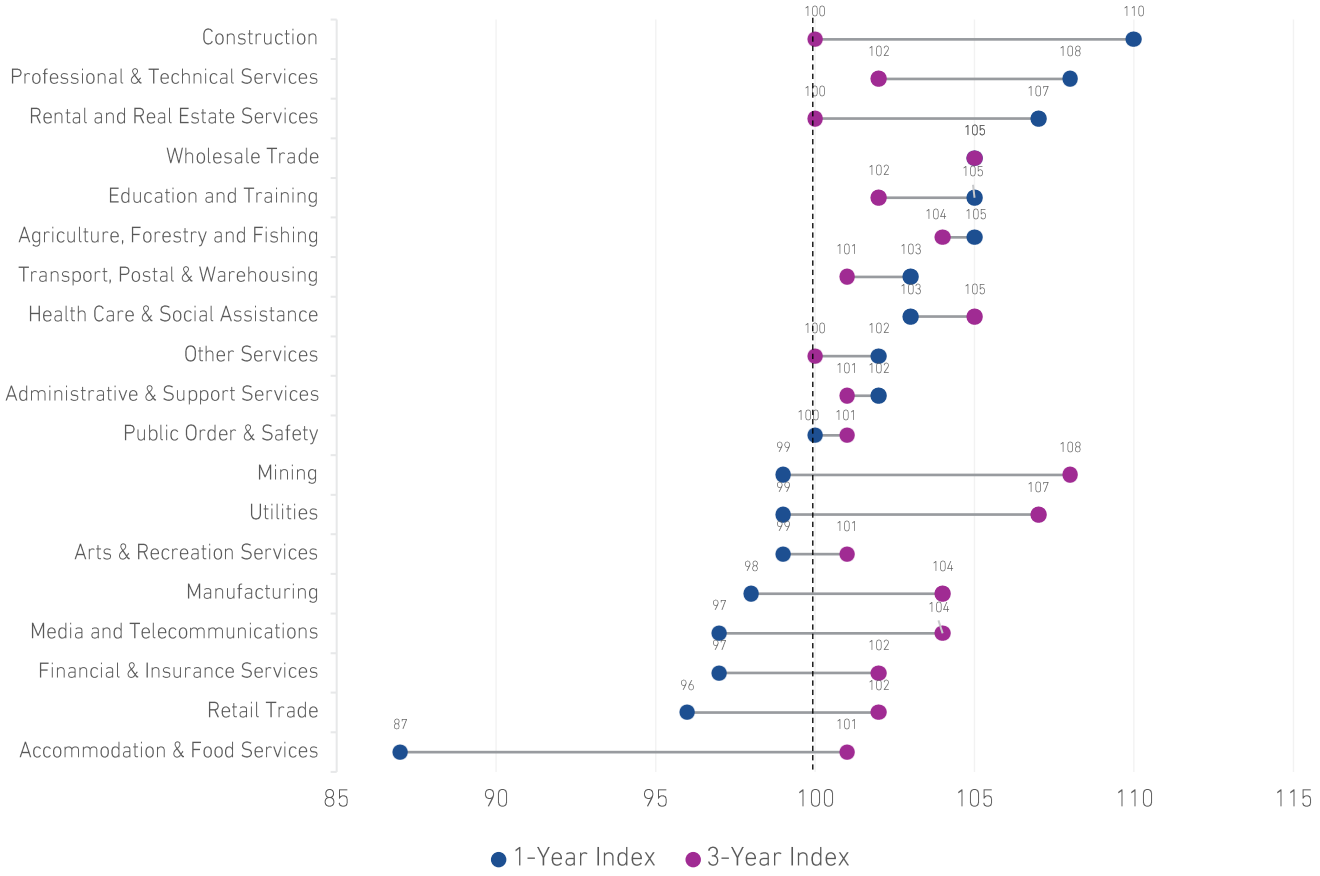
Notably, the latter three sectors are the only ones with a 1-year growth index below 105, highlighting the considerable variation in growth performance across the economy.

Growth amid uncertainty: which industries are performing

The New Zealand picture is notably more mixed than Australia's, with recent growth strengthening across several service and construction-related industries, but weakening across many other parts of the economy. Construction recorded the highest 1-year Growth Index at 110, followed by Professional & Technical Services at 108 and Rental & Real Estate at 107. For these sectors the 1-year index is above the 3-year measure, pointing to recent growth momentum.

At the other end, a number of sectors have a 1-year index below 100 and materially below their 3-year performance. Accommodation & Food Services recorded the weakest result at 87, followed by Retail Trade at 96, and Financial & Insurance Services and Media & Telecommunications at 97.

1-Year and 3-Year Growth Index: New Zealand



Overall, the results highlight an uneven growth environment in New Zealand, with stronger recent momentum concentrated in a narrower group of sectors, while consumer-facing sectors begin to face challenges.

The broad ANZSIC divisions across Australia and New Zealand provide a useful starting point, but a closer look at sub-sectors reveals more distinct areas of growth and common themes that cross traditional sector classifications. In the following section we explore the three industries with the strongest levels of growth across both economies.

Growth amid uncertainty: which industries are performing

Industries leading growth

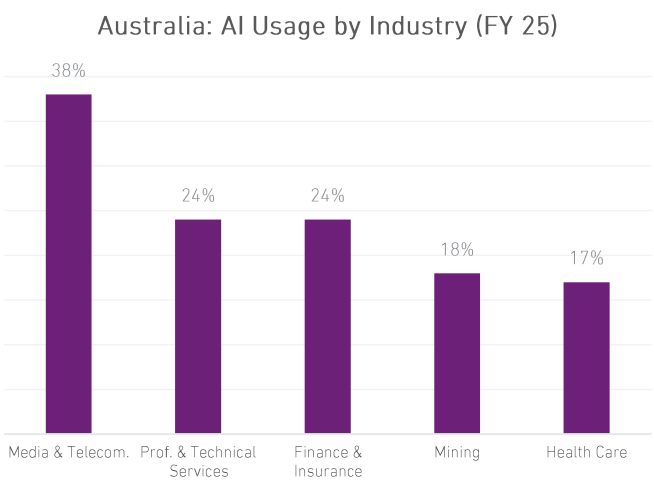
Digital Services and Technology

Pipeline Stage	Related sub-industry	1-Year Index (AU)	1-Year Index (NZ)
Technology hardware	Computer and Equipment Manufacturing	108	96
Connectivity and Data Infrastructure	Computer System Design & Related Services	129	105
	Data Processing, Web Hosting and Electronic Information Storage	144	101
Content and platforms	Software Publishing	135	96
	Radio Broadcasting	146	95
Implementation and Insight	Advertising Services	104	115
	Market Research and Statistical Services	124	106

Australia's digital and data-related industries stand out as the strongest performers over the last year. Data Processing, Web Hosting & Electronic Information Storage, Software Publishing, and Radio Broadcasting are recorded a 1-year index of over 130, indicating very high growth for the period. The strength across multiple parts of the digital ecosystem suggests that growth is broader than any single activity, spanning data infrastructure, software, statistical and technology services.

AI adoption may be one factor contributing to this momentum, although the Growth Index does not allow us to establish a direct link. Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics for FY25 shows relatively high AI usage in several related industries, including Media & Telecommunications at 37% and Professional & Technical Services at 24%.

While this predates the FY26 Growth Index results, it provides useful context around the growing adoption of AI and other digital technologies in industries that are now recording particularly strong growth.



Source: ABS, Characteristics of Australian Business 2024-25 financial year

New Zealand, on the other hand shows growth in only a few sub-industries within this sector and predominantly downstream, with Advertising Services at 115 and Market Research at 106.

Growth amid uncertainty: which industries are performing

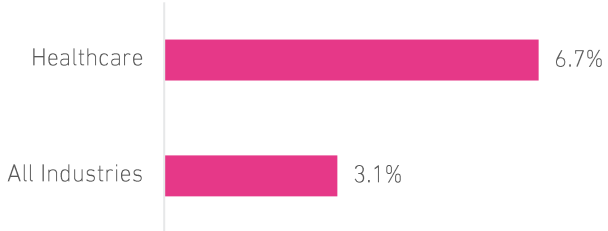
Healthcare and Community Services

Healthcare and community services show broad-based growth across Australia, extending beyond frontline health services into the wider supply chain. Most healthcare-related sub-industries recorded a high growth index of 110 or more, led by Pharmaceutical Product Manufacturing (122). This growth is also reflected in broader industry activity, with the number of Australian healthcare businesses increasing by 6.7% over the last financial year, more than double the 3.1% increase across all industries.

Pipeline Stage	Related sub-industry	1-Year Index (AU)	1-Year Index (NZ)
Manufacturing	Pharmaceutical and Medicinal Product Manufacturing	122	96
Wholesale Distribution	Pharmaceutical and Toiletry Goods Wholesaling	112	123
Retailing	Pharmaceutical and Other Store-Based Retailing	110	95
Diagnostics and Care	Hospitals	112	102
	Medical Services	113	105
	Pathology and Imaging Services	114	95
	Allied Health Services	105	103
	Residential Care	110	101
	Child Care	108	109
	Other Social Assistance Services	117	104

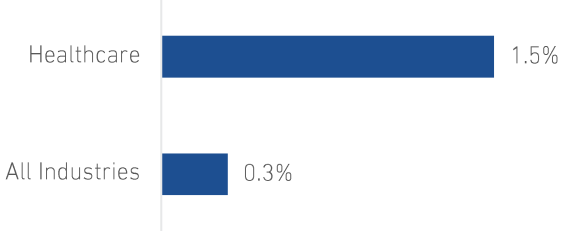
Growth across New Zealand's healthcare industries is less widespread, but there are still some strong performers. Pharmaceutical Goods Wholesaling stands out with an index of 123, while Child Care (109) and Medical Services (105) also recorded growth. Supporting employment data shows that filled jobs in healthcare increased 1.5% between June 2025 and June 2026, compared with just 0.3% across all industries, reinforcing the indication that healthcare is experiencing comparatively strong growth in New Zealand.

Australia: % change in business counts (FY25 to FY26)



Source: ABS, Counts of Australian Businesses

New Zealand: % change in filled jobs (Jun-25 to Jun-26)



Source: NZ Stats, Employment Indicators

Growth amid uncertainty: which industries are performing

Construction

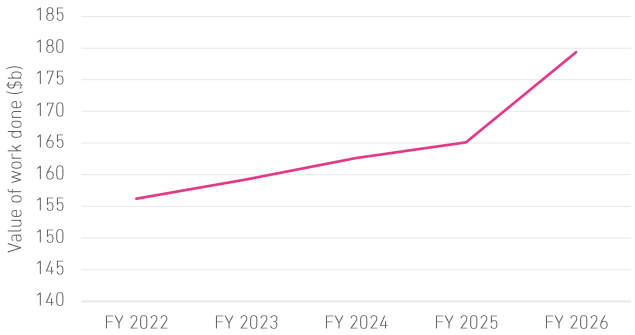
Construction is also showing strong growth across much of the sector in both Australia and New Zealand, with most sub-industries recording an index above 105. In Australia, this growth is strongest across heavy engineering (123), land development (112) and non-residential activity (110). Residential Building (107) and associated trades, including Building Structure Services (108) and Building Installation (102), are also growing, although with a comparatively lower index. This performance over the 12 months is also evident in ABS activity measures, with the value of building work done rising sharply in FY26 compared with FY25, increasing from $165 billion to $179 billion.

Sub-Industry	1-Year Index (AU)	1-Year Index (NZ)
Residential Building	107	110
Non-Residential Building	110	106
Heavy and Civil Engineering	123	113
Land Development & Site Preparation	112	136
Building Completion	109	100
Building Structure Services	108	103
Building Installation	102	110
Other Construction Services	110	104

Momentum is similarly evident in New Zealand, led by Land Development & Site Preparation with an index of 136, the strongest result across all New Zealand sectors, followed by Heavy and Civil Engineering (113) and Residential Building and Building Installation at 110.

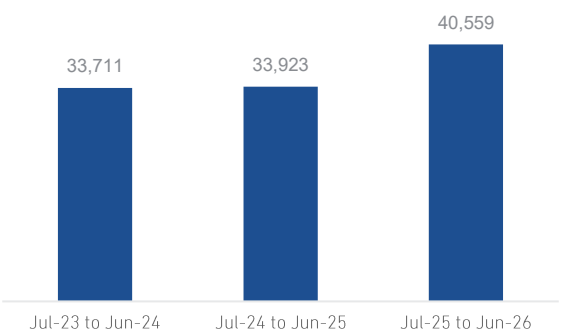
The pickup is also visible in building approvals, with 40,559 consents issued between July 2025 and June 2026, up from 33,923 in the preceding 12 months.

Australia: Building Work Done ($b)



Source: ABS, Value of construction work done, seasonally adjusted estimates

New Zealand: Building Consents Issued



Source: NZ Stats, Building Consents

Growth amid uncertainty: which industries are performing

Industries facing growth challenges

Real Estate Services - Australia

Property-related industries in Australia have weakened amid higher financing costs, softer housing conditions and increased uncertainty around property investment. Higher borrowing costs may have constrained investment and expansion, while weaker market activity has reduced momentum across the sector. Together, these conditions have made it more difficult for property businesses to grow.

Sub-Industry	1-Year Index (AU)
Property Operators	89
Real Estate Services	96

Hospitality – New Zealand

Sub-Industry	1-Year Index (NZ)
Pubs, Taverns & Bars	78
Cafés, Restaurants and Takeaway Food	90
Accommodation	93
Amusement and Other Recreation Activities	95

Growth has been particularly challenging across New Zealand's hospitality sector over the past year. Pubs, Taverns & Bars stand out with the lowest Growth Index at 78, while Cafés, Restaurants & Takeaway Food Services (90) and Accommodation (93) also recorded notable declines. Amusement & Other Recreation Activities performed better, although its index of 95 borders on contraction.

While growth remains uneven across Australia and New Zealand, Experian's Growth Index highlights where momentum and opportunities continue to emerge. Contact us to learn more about the Growth Index and what the results could mean for your industry or customers.

How can we help?

- **Market Insights Services** provide information on market trends, customer behaviour and competitive dynamics to support strategic analysis and decision-making.
- **Industry Insights Reports** – Benchmark hardship entry, recovery and repeat-support outcomes against broader market trends to better understand portfolio performance and emerging risks.

About Experian

Experian is a global data and technology company, powering opportunities for people and businesses around the world. We help to redefine lending practices, uncover and prevent fraud, simplify healthcare, deliver digital marketing solutions and gain deeper insights into the automotive market, all using our unique combination of data, analytics and software. We also assist millions of people to realise their financial goals and help them to save time and money.

We operate across a range of markets, from financial services to healthcare, automotive, agrifinance, insurance and many more industry segments.

We invest in talented people and new advanced technologies to unlock the power of data and to innovate. A FTSE 100 Index company listed on the London Stock Exchange (EXPN), we have a team of 25,200 people across 33 countries. Our corporate headquarters are in Dublin, Ireland. Learn more at experianplc.com.

This report has been compiled by data sourced from Experian Australia Pty Ltd and/or its related entities, as well as other public sources as referenced where applicable.

This report is provided by Experian New Zealand Operations Limited ("Experian") as general information and it is not (and does not contain any form of) professional, legal or financial advice. Experian and its related bodies corporate make no representations, warranties or guarantees that the information (including links and the views / opinions of authors and / or contributors) contained in this report are error free, accurate or complete. You are solely responsible and liable for any decision made (or not made) by you in connection with the information contained in this report. Experian (and its related bodies corporate) exclude, to the extent permitted by law, all liability for any and all loss, cost, expense, damage or claim incurred by a party as a result of or in connection with (whether directly or indirectly) this report or any reliance on the information in this report or links contained within. Nothing in this disclaimer excludes, restricts or modifies any rights or remedies that cannot be excluded, restricted or modified under applicable law. Experian and its related entities own, or are licensed to use, the intellectual property rights in this report and its contents. Except as permitted by law, the contents of this report must not be reproduced, modified, distributed or republished without Experian's prior written consent.

© Experian 2026. All rights reserved. Experian and the Experian marks used herein are service marks or registered trademarks of Experian or its related entities worldwide. Other product and company names mentioned herein are the property of their respective owners.