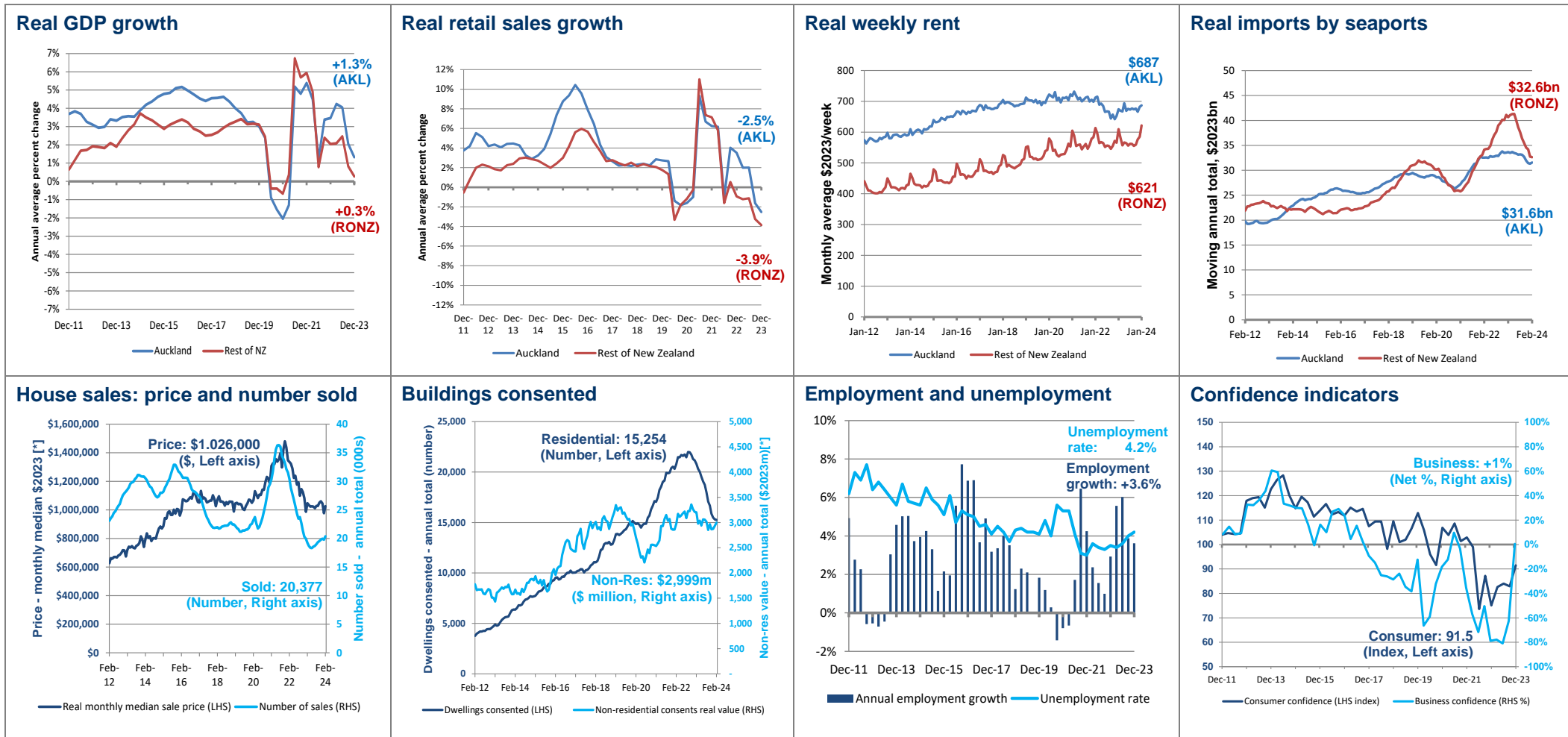


Auckland Economic Update – April 2024

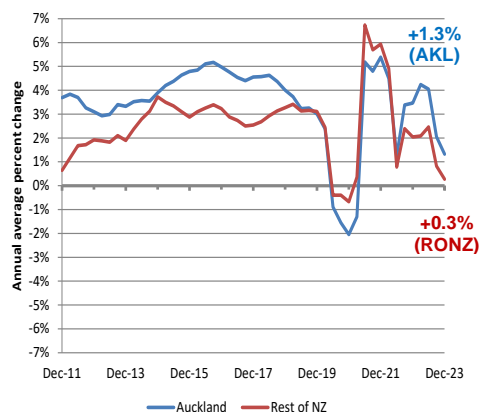


Note: Data is the latest available as at the start of the month, and is for the Auckland region, unless otherwise stated. This is a summary page only. All data sources and technical notes are provided on the next two pages.

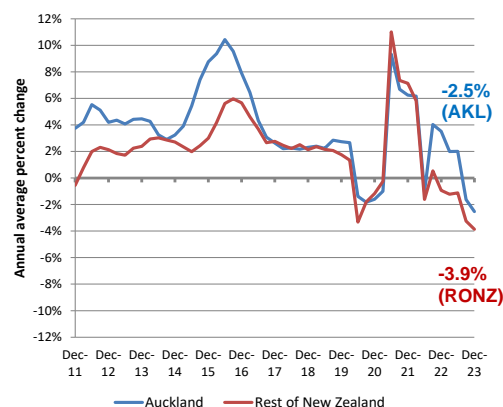
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All enquiries please contact the author Ross Wilson, Economic Analyst, RIMU.

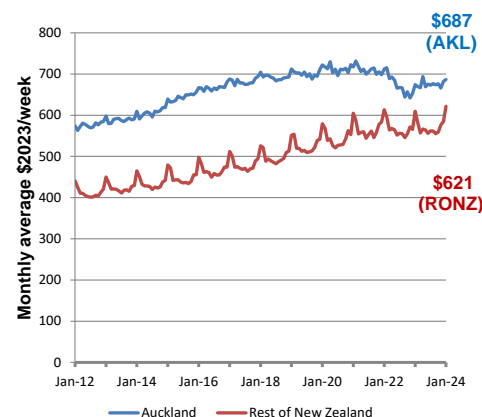
Real GDP growth



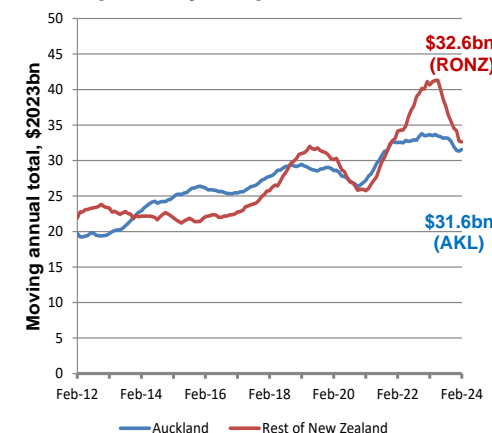
Real retail sales growth



Real weekly rent



Real imports by seaports



Auckland's real* Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the **year** ended December 2023 was 1.3% **higher** than for the year ended December 2022; in the rest of New Zealand, the annual change was a 0.3% **rise** (see notes). Both growth rates were **below** most periods since 2010 and 2011 respectively.

Real* retail sales for the **year** ended December 2023 were 2.5% **lower** than for the year ended December 2022; in the rest of New Zealand, the annual change was a 3.9% **fall**. Both growth rates were **the worst** since 2009 (just after the Global Financial Crisis). From 2017 to 2021 Auckland growth was **similar** to the rest of New Zealand, but from 2022 onwards Auckland's growth rate has been **higher**.

The average (not median or geometric mean) real* weekly rent for the **month** (not year) of January 2024 was \$687 (1.8% **higher** than January 2023, but the **same** as January 2017). For the rest of New Zealand, the figure was \$621 (1.9% **higher** than January 2023, and also **slightly higher** than three years ago). "Real rent" changes are relative to CPI inflation, so a **similar** "real" level means rents rose at the same **rate** as inflation.

The real* value of imports by Auckland seaports for the **year** ended February 2024 was \$31.6 billion, which was 6.2% **lower** than the year ended February 2023, but 7.1% **higher** than 5 years ago. For the rest of New Zealand, the figure was \$32.6 billion (19.8% **lower** than a year ago, but 5.2% **higher** than 5 years ago). Auckland's robust post-Covid growth slowed after 2021; the rest of New Zealand has been falling sharply since 2023.

* Real GDP refers to GDP in constant 2022 dollars, to remove inflation.

Lockdowns due to Covid-19 affect results for 2020 onwards. Covid-19 lockdown level 3 began on 23 March 2020.

Latest and historical real GDP figures are modelled estimates, and subject to revision.

Source: Infometrics, *Regional Economic Profile/Quarterly Economic Monitor*.

* Real retail sales have been calculated by converting previous quarters' dollars to the latest quarter's equivalent dollars using the quarterly consumer price index (CPI), to remove inflation.

Note: These figures exclude non-retail activity captured elsewhere in the retail sales survey.

Source: Stats NZ, *Retail Sales (quarterly)*; Stats NZ, *CPI (quarterly)*; Auckland Council (RIMU), calculations.

* Real rents have been calculated by converting previous quarters' dollars to the latest quarter's equivalent dollars using the quarterly consumer price index (CPI), to remove inflation.

Note: Dwelling size and quality may vary over time. Rent is for new rental bonds lodged each month with Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, for housing tenancies with private sector landlords (so excludes state housing). Data covers only new bonds, so excludes existing leases from earlier periods whose rent has not changed, or has changed but with no revision to the bond. It also excludes new leases where no bond is lodged. Data is subject to minor revisions.

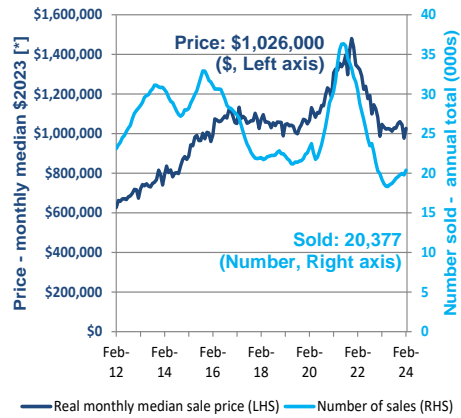
Source: Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, *Regional Rental Prices (monthly)*; Stats NZ, *CPI (quarterly)*; Auckland Council (RIMU), calculations.

* Real import values have been calculated by converting previous quarters' dollars to the latest quarter's equivalent dollars using the quarterly consumer price index (CPI) for tradables, to remove inflation

Note: Import values are cost including freight (CIF). Auckland seaports consist of Port of Auckland on the Waitemata Harbour near the CBD, and Port of Onehunga on the Manukau Harbour (domestic only, no imports); both are owned by Ports of Auckland Limited (POAL).

Source: Stats NZ, *Overseas Cargo Statistics-imports-value \$ CIF (monthly)*; Stats NZ, *CPI Tradables (quarterly)*; Auckland Council (RIMU), calculations.

House sales: price and number sold



The median (not average) sale price of houses sold in Auckland in the **month** of February 2024 was \$1,026,000 - the **lowest** February since 2016, in real* dollars (2% **lower** than a year prior; **similar** to most of the last 12 months; 31% **below** the 2021 peak).

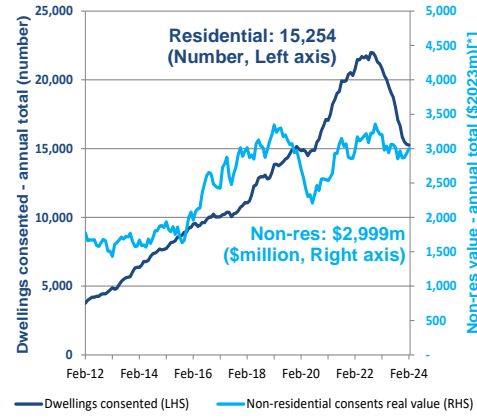
The total number of houses sold in Auckland in the **year** ended February 2024 was 20,377 (6% **higher** than a year prior; **higher** than all of 2023; but **lower** than all of 2012-2022).

* 'Real' prices for previous months are calculated by inflating previous quarters' dollars to the latest quarter's equivalent dollars, using the quarterly consumer price index (CPI).

Notes: The data for 'houses' covers actual sales during the period. Size and quality may vary over time. 'Houses' includes all dwelling types (eg apartments and flats), not just free-standing houses, but excludes sales of undeveloped land. 'Price' is real* actual sale price (not just listed). REINZ revises recent data each month for prices and numbers sold.

Source: Real Estate Institute of New Zealand (REINZ), Monthly Property Report (monthly – from website); Stats NZ, CPI (quarterly); Auckland Council (RIMU), calculations.

Buildings consented



The total number of new dwellings consented in Auckland in the **year** ended February 2024 was 15,254 (31% **lower** than the September 2023 peak; **similar** to the previous two months; **above** 2019 levels and earlier).

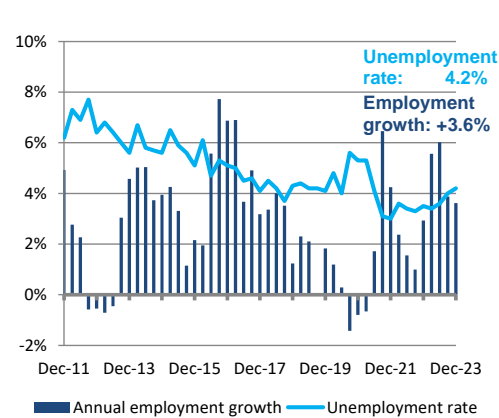
The real* value of new non-residential buildings consented in Auckland in the **year** ended February 2024 was \$2,999 million (broadly **similar** to the last twelve months, but 11% **below** the November 2022 peak).

* 'Real' values for previous months have been calculated by inflating previous quarters' dollars to the latest quarter's equivalent dollars, using the capital goods price index (CGPI) for non-residential buildings

Note: Projects consented are not necessarily commenced or completed. "New" refers to new buildings (i.e. excludes alterations and additions). Residential number is new dwellings consented, which will exceed new residential buildings as some buildings have multiple dwellings; similarly, it will differ from new residential building consents issued, as some consents are for multiple buildings.

Source: Stats NZ, Building Consents (monthly); Stats NZ, CGPI (quarterly); Auckland Council (RIMU), calculations.

Employment and unemployment



The number of people employed in Auckland in the **quarter** (not year) ended December 2023 was 3.6% **higher** than in December 2022 quarter, due to both population growth and higher labour force participation rate.

The unemployment rate in Auckland in the **quarter** ended December 2023 was 4.2%, **slightly above** the last two years' record lows, but still **lower** than 2008 to 2017, and **similar** or **below** 2018 to 2021.

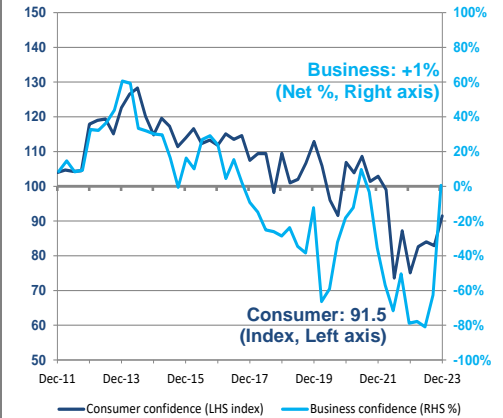
Note: Covid-19 lockdown level 3 began on 23 March 2020, plus wage subsidies, which both affect official unemployment.

Historical data for 2013 to 2020 was re-based by Stats NZ in October 2020 to match latest revisions of historic population estimates.

Both datasets are from a survey (HLFS) so are subject to error margins. Respondents define their own employment status. The survey covers all people aged 15+, so includes school pupils 15+ and people over 65, who might or might not have - or be actively seeking - a job.

Source: Stats NZ, Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS) (quarterly).

Confidence indicators



In Auckland, the Westpac McDermott Miller Consumer Confidence Index (CCI) for the December 2023 **quarter** was 91.5 – **highest** since March 2022, but **below** 2009 to 2021.

The NZIER QSBO in Auckland for the December 2023 **quarter** showed a net 1% of businesses expecting an **improvement** in the general business situation over the next three months – **much higher** than 2022 and 2023, **similar** to 2021 but **below** pre-2018.

Note: Left axis is for CCI (consumers: index). For the CCI, a score of greater than 100 shows more optimism than pessimism.

Right axis is for QSBO (businesses: net %). The QSBO calculates a net figure as (% of businesses expecting an improvement) minus (% expecting a worsening). QSBO data used here is not the seasonally adjusted version.

Source: Westpac McDermott Miller, Regional Consumer Confidence Index (CCI) (quarterly – published, but proprietary); New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER), Quarterly Survey of Business Opinion (QSBO) (quarterly – by subscription).