

Manitoba Consumer Outlook

For Release: February 18, 2011

January dip keeps confidence in check

Despite two months of consecutive increases, PRA's consumer confidence index for Manitoba was down again in January. While not continuing the upward march started in November of last year, the index remained at a level more than a full point above last year's average.

Throughout the volatile months of 2010, the index bounced above and below an average rating of 9.1. Last month, at the start of 2011, the index came to rest at a solid 10.6. Despite back and forth movement over the last 12 months, one message has become clear—more Manitobans have been optimistic than have been pessimistic about their financial futures.

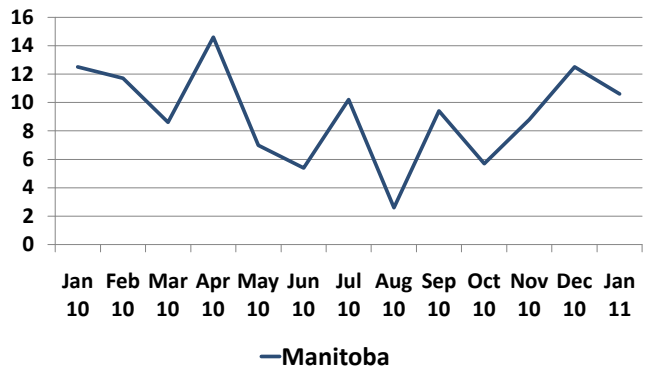
Interpreting the index

The PRA consumer confidence index captures the mood of the general population regarding their finances. The index represents the difference between the percentage of Manitobans expecting to have a better financial situation in the coming year (optimists) and the percentage expecting to have a worse financial situation (pessimists). A positive index means more respondents are optimistic than are pessimistic about their upcoming financial situations.

A series of follow-up questions provides insight into the PRA consumer confidence index. These questions allow respondents to elaborate on why they feel their financial situations will be better or worse in the next year.

Manitoba Consumer Confidence

PRA Inc.



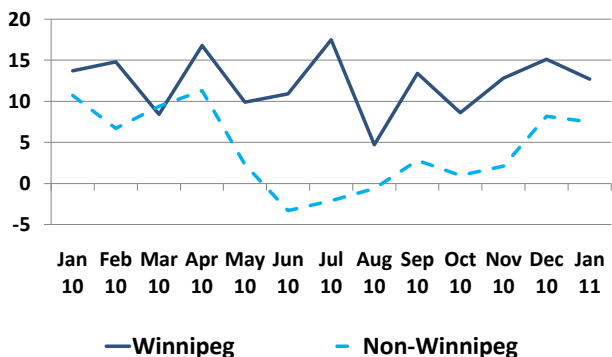
Falling confidence throughout the province brings regional views in line

Last month, a sharp increase in the consumer confidence index for those living outside of Winnipeg suggested that views on the future were converging in the province. In January, this convergence appears to have continued—this time with both Winnipeggers and the rest of the province taking a more pessimistic view.

Although the index for those living outside of the provincial capital slipped just 0.7 points, the index for those living in the city fell by 2.4 points. This means that the two indexes are now within just over five points of each other. Although not the closest that the two have been in recent memory, it is a far cry from the difference in attitude seen a little more than six months ago. If this continues in 2011, it may suggest that economic situations throughout the province are becoming much more similar than over the past year.

Confidence by Region

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18 to 24-year-olds catch up with Manitobans moving in the other direction

The attitudes of 18 to 24-year-olds are now almost indistinguishable from those of 25 to 39-year-olds in the province. With an upward index movement for the former and a downward revision for the latter, the index ratings for these two groups are now within two points of each other.

Others are holding steady with their view of the future. Manitobans 65 years and older have maintained a largely pessimistic view of their financial futures over the last several months. Since October of 2010 to January of 2011, the PRA consumer confidence index for this group has moved less than one point. This has been an area of atypical stability in what has been a particularly turbulent period of changing attitudes in the province.

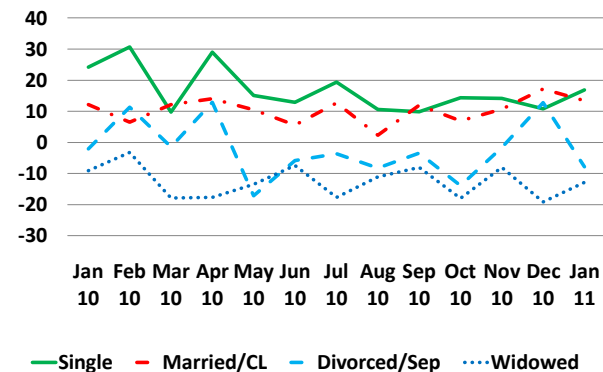
Divorced and separated Manitobans move back to the starting line

From October to December of 2010, the PRA consumer confidence index for divorced and separated Manitobans saw some unusual behaviour. Although this group is normally more pessimistic than optimistic about their financial future, this changed at the end of 2010. From October to December, changes in attitude among respondents to PRA's Omnibus survey pushed the index rating up to 12.8.

However, this positive attitude was short-lived. In the first month of 2011, the Outlook shows that separated and divorced Manitobans have revised their opinions to the tune of a 20.7-point drop in the index. This was one of the largest drops over the past year.

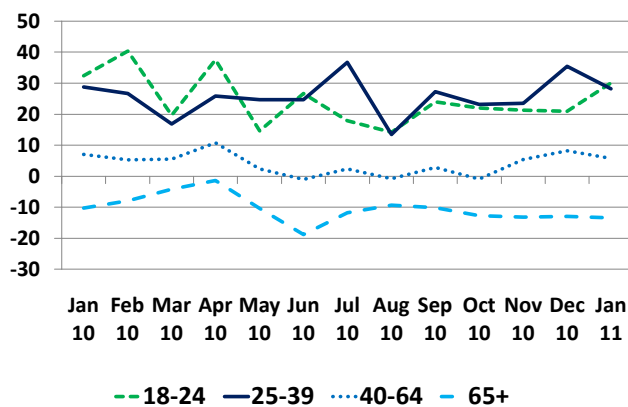
Confidence by Marital Status

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Confidence by Age

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PRA will continue to track these and other developments over the coming months.

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METHODOLOGY

PRA interviews respondents by telephone and selects individuals using random digit dialling. This allows the inclusion of individuals with unlisted or new telephone numbers, ensuring a random sample with the best possible representation of eligible respondents.

Survey dates	January 2010 to January 2011
Interviewing method	Telephone
Sample selection	Random digit dialling
Monthly sample size	Ranges from 800 to 808
Approximate maximum error	±3.5%, 19 times out of 20

As any random sample may not perfectly represent the population, PRA statistically corrects for discrepancies in gender, age, and income to ensure the *Manitoba Consumer Outlook* sample corresponds as closely as possible to Statistics Canada and Revenue Canada population information.

PRA is an independent research and consulting company based in Winnipeg with offices in Ottawa, Edmonton, and Regina. Its main office in Winnipeg houses a research call centre and focus group facilities where clients can observe ongoing research work.

Founded in 1988, the company conducts large- and small-scale quantitative and qualitative research in both official languages. It provides program evaluation, market research, and economic analysis services to government, private business, and non-profit organizations across Canada.

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