

**Q: Why research the impact of natural disasters?**

**A:** Natural disasters have a profound impact on the Australian psyche. The intense media coverage that typically surrounds a disaster connects the wider population with the scene and local community, provoking support initiatives and commendable relief efforts. But it's what happens after the spotlight shifts that we have decided to investigate with this release of this issue of *Viewpoint*, looking in particular at the economic impact of disasters and more importantly the recovery factors that come into play.

**Q: What does the report find?**

**A:** The report reveals that the impact of natural disasters is more widespread than originally thought, with close to four in 10 Australians stating they were affected by the recent disasters, (either directly or indirectly through family and friends). Many Australians believe the natural disasters had a negative impact on their personal finances, even those not directly or indirectly impacted, with 45% stating the natural disasters had a negative impact on their personal finances.

**Q: How long does it take for an area to recover?**

**A:** Following a disaster, the time it takes for personal income to recover to pre-disaster levels fluctuates from 6-18 months due to four main factors: the scale of disaster, frequency of disasters, local industry profile and proximity to population hubs.

**Q: What does the report reveal about consumer sentiment?**

**A:** Positive consumer sentiment continues to tumble. Currently 44% of Australians claim their personal circumstances are worse than they were six months ago, a 10% increase from August 2010. The belief that the economy is strong is also down, with only 23% of Australians believing the economy is strong.

**Q: What is *Viewpoint*?**

**A:** Commonwealth Bank's *Viewpoint* is a barometer of the economic health of the nation and provides a unique snapshot into Australia's financial well-being.

**Q: What is the purpose of *Viewpoint*?**

**A:** To analyse the past and present income and spending habits of Australian households and provide insights into possible future trends. Commonwealth Bank distributes these findings every six months, so that Australian consumers and businesses can make more informed financial decisions.

**Q: How will this report benefit me?**

**A:** In-keeping with our promise 'Determined to be different', *Viewpoint* provides insight and knowledge to help build better financial management skills to deliver a more financially secure future.

**Q: How often is *Viewpoint* released?**

**A:** The Commonwealth Bank releases *Viewpoint* biannually. It is an ongoing barometer of economic mood and an important tool that assists governments and organisations to offer better financial advice, support and education to all Australians.

**Q: What are the advantages of *Viewpoint*?**

**A:** There are three distinct advantages that underpin *Viewpoint*.

# FAQs



**1. Size:** From a 10 million-strong customer base, Commonwealth Bank draws a confidential sample of 1.3 million households, and observes their income and spending activity. The sheer volume of data used as the basis for this report is unmatched in its depth.

**2. Timeliness:** With the ability to avoid the lag of traditional surveys, the findings are based on real time data that records the actions made each and every day by real people - allowing the prediction of future trends and the opportunity to act as an early warning indicator.

**3. Depth:** Numbers alone don't tell the whole story, so the report is backed up by quantitative data, collected by speaking directly with 2,000 households each month to gain a better understanding of consumer perception and behaviour, based on the conditions households are experiencing and how or why their perceptions change.

**Q: Were my personal details used in the formation of this report?**

**A:** The information analysed to produce *Viewpoint* completely respects the privacy of our customers by keeping all identities anonymous and is in strict compliance with all privacy legislation.

**Q: Who created this report with Commonwealth Bank?**

**A:** *Viewpoint* has been created by Commonwealth Bank with the support of NATSEM.

**Q: Who is NATSEM?**

**A:** The National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM) is the leading independent provider of social and economic research from the University of Canberra.

**Q: What role did NATSEM play in the compilation of the report?**

**A:** NATSEM analysed anonymous data provided by Commonwealth Bank and reported on how far people relocated following a natural disaster.

**Q: How does this report compare with other economic indicators?**

**A:** Commonwealth Bank data presented in *Viewpoint* is not designed to replace any other economic indicator. Rather, it can be used as an early indicator for several economic indicators, by providing detailed, robust and timely insights into economic trends.

**Q: Why does Commonwealth Bank release this report?**

**A:** As Australia's leading financial services organisation, Commonwealth Bank is uniquely placed to gain first-hand insights into how the Australian economy is faring. We understand our obligation to the Australian economy, and in line with our promise 'Determined to be different'; *Viewpoint* enhances our longstanding tradition of supporting the financial well-being of the nation.

**Q: Why is Commonwealth Bank in a position to provide a report of this nature?**

**A:** One in two Australians bank with Commonwealth Bank, and Commonwealth Bank processes around 45% of Australia's electronic transactions every day through our EFTPOS terminals, retail outlets, and through our credit card platform – collectively, this data paints an accurate picture of overall economic vitality, and what's happening in the Australian economy at any point in time. Few reports match the breadth, depth, or timeliness of this report.

**Q: What is the Commonwealth Bank proactively doing to address the financial needs of Australians?**

**A:** Commonwealth Bank provides a range of tools and additional services for customers to help them better manage their financial situation – these include:

# FAQs



**Determined** to be different

- Free financial health checks
- Free home loan health checks
- onemillionkids – teaching children the importance of money management skills
- As part of Commonwealth Bank's Reconciliation Action Plan, a dedicated Indigenous Banking Team and Indigenous Customer Assistance Line have been established to cater to the needs of the Indigenous communities in which we operate.

For more information visit [www.commbank.com.au](http://www.commbank.com.au)