

ANOTHER POSITIVE TRADING SESSION FOR AUSTRALIA

Index	Index Level	Change (%)	Stocks	Price (\$)	Change (%)
ASX S&P200	4757	0.35	ANZ	23.86	0.67
All Ordinaries	4773	0.33	CBA	55.10	0.23
SPI Futures	4840	1.30	NAB	26.50	-0.56
Dow Jones (US)	10566	1.17	WBC	26.75	-0.70
FTSE (UK)	5599	1.30	MQG	48.06	1.69
Shanghai(China)	3023	0.25	BHP	42.50	0.52
Nikkei 225 (Jap)	10368	2.2	RIO	75.01	0.81
Hang Seng (HK)	20787	1.00	WPL	44.52	0.51
AUS/USD	90.66	0.55	WOW	28.05	-0.89
Gold (\$US)	1133.80	0.19	WES	32.71	-0.72
Oil (\$US)	81.50	0.40	HVN	4.01	0.00

Market Summary

There are no stocks trading ex dividend today. Stocks that are trading ex dividend tomorrow include CSL And Iress.

Australian Company & Economic Reports

Lihir Gold (LGL) said it struck a deal to sell its Ballarat gold project to Castlemaine Goldfields (CGT). Castlemaine will pay Lihir \$4.5m in cash plus a 2.5% royalty on future production from the mine, capped at \$50m. "We did find it difficult to find the quantities of gold that we needed to make it work at the levels that we had anticipated, and it became clear to us that the asset really didn't fit in our portfolio any longer," Lihir Executive General Manager of Operations Peter Smith said. Lihir said it is aiming to redeploy about 15% of the mine's 90-strong workforce to other operations and the remainder will be laid off, with half to leave today and the rest over the coming weeks as operations are wound down. The sale is conditional on Castlemaine's shareholders approving an equity-raising of a minimum \$20m to fund the deal. LGL fell 3 cents (1.02%) to \$2.91. CGT is in a trading halt, and was last quoted at \$0.04.

CSR (CSR) China's Bright Food Group is still interested in buying the sugar assets of CSR but there are no immediate plans for company officials to visit Australia, a spokesman for Bright Food in Australia said. Bright Food Vice President Ge Junjie was reported saying the company is prepared to offer a higher price than previously indicated to buy CSR's sugar unit. Ge reportedly said price isn't a problem, and that company officials will fly to Australia this month to negotiate and the deal is at a crucial stage now. A Federal Court hearing on the CSR demerger has been scheduled for March 29 and 30. This hearing relates to the compensation available for asbestos victims from a demerged company. CSR rose 1 cent (0.3%) to \$1.69.

International Market Report

US stocks rose broadly on Friday following the government's report of fewer job losses than expected for February, which gave a big boost to industrial stocks such as Boeing and Caterpillar and financial companies including American Express.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 122.06 points (1.17%) to 10,566.20, marking its biggest one-day gain since Feb. 16 and its highest closing value since Jan. 20. For the week, the measure climbed 240.94 points (2.33%). The measure returned to the black for the year to date last week, with its gain for 2010 now at 1.32%.

Boeing was the Dow's best performer on Friday and for the week. Its Friday climb of \$2.38 (3.6%) to \$67.93, came as the better-than-expected jobs report boosted investor sentiment for a host of industrial companies, including Caterpillar, which rose 78 cents (1.3%) to \$59.23. Boeing's gain of 7.6% for the week was also due in part to a ratings upgrade from a broker. In addition, Boeing announced plans last week to present a proposal by May 10 for an updated tanker, competing for a \$35bn contract to supply aerial refuelling aircraft to the US Air Force.

The Dow's financial components were also lifted by the jobs report. Among them, American Express climbed \$1.31 (3.4%) to \$40.20, while JP Morgan Chase rose 89 cents (2.1%) to \$42.81, and Bank of America advanced 30 cents (1.8%) to \$16.70.

The Nasdaq Composite added 34.04 (1.48%) to 2,326.35, on Friday. The measure climbed 3.94% for the week, marking its best week since October, and its Friday closing value was its highest close since September 2008.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 15.73 (1.40%) to 1,138.70, and had a weekly rise of 3.1%. The financial sector was the S&P 500's best-performing category, although the energy, industrial and consumer-discretionary sectors were close behind.

The stock gains came as the Labor Department's monthly nonfarm payrolls report for February showed the US economy shed fewer jobs than expected last month, while the unemployment rate held steady at 9.7% despite stormy weather. Jobs would likely have been created were it not for the two snowstorms that walloped the East Coast Feb. 4-7 and Feb. 9-11, economists said.

Shares of staffing and job search companies gained on the jobs report. Among them, Robert Half International rose \$1.14 (4%) to \$29.92, while Manpower climbed \$2.03 (3.8%) to \$55.73.

Apple advanced \$8.24 (3.9%) to \$218.95, after the company said the first models of its highly anticipated iPad tablet computer will be available in the US on April 3, with preorders starting in one week.

American International Group rose \$1.37 (5.1%) to \$28.08, after the insurance giant said it plans to sell its remaining 14% stake in casualty reinsurer TransAtlantic Holdings held by its American Home Assurance Co. subsidiary. TransAtlantic shares fell \$1.80 (3.4%) to \$51.96. AIG has been selling off assets in an effort to repay the government's fall 2008 bailout.

CF Industries Holdings fell \$3.49 (3.2%) to \$104.74, as it began its exchange offer for all outstanding shares in rival fertiliser maker Terra Industries. Terra climbed 64 cents (1.4%) to \$45.44. Earlier this week, CF resumed its pursuit of Terra with a roughly \$4.72bn offer that seeks to break up an agreed bid from Norway's Yara International ASA. American depositary shares of Yara edged up 50 cents (1.2%) to \$40.90.

General Growth Properties climbed 32 cents (2.3%) to \$14.01, after the stock resumed trading on the New York Stock Exchange. Nearly a year ago, the shopping-centre company's stock was removed after it filed for bankruptcy.

For Australian ADRs listed on the NYSE, BHP Billiton added \$2.82 (3.69%) to US\$79.18, Rio Tinto Plc strengthened \$8.08 (3.7%) to US\$226.27, ResMed increased 41 cents (0.69%) to US\$59.50, Telecom Corporation of NZ climbed 13 cents (1.67%) to US\$7.93 and Westpac increased \$1.65 (1.36%) to US\$123.04.

At 7:45 AM (AEST), the 10-year Treasury note yield was 3.68% and the five year yield was 2.34%.

European shares jumped on Friday to stretch a winning run to six sessions after a report painted a much better-than-expected picture of the US jobs market.

After trading with mild gains for much of the session, the Stoxx Europe 600 index extended its advance after the data to finish the session up 1.7% to 257.22.

Banks were at the forefront of the advance, with Societe Generale, up 4.8% on Euronext Paris and Standard Chartered up 3.5% on the London Stock Exchange.

Irish lenders were particularly strong, with Allied Irish Banks and the Bank of Ireland both sporting double-digit advances.

Friday's 36,000 drop in US nonfarm payrolls - compared to an expected 90,000 drop - was taken as a positive sign for the US economy.

German industrial orders also climbed, rising a stronger-than-forecast 4.3% in January.

Automakers moved up after the data, with Chrysler's part-owner Fiat rising more than 4% and Volkswagen's preference shares climbing 3.3%.

Adecco, the world's largest recruitment firm, added 1.6%.

At the regional level, the French CAC-40 index rose 2.1% to 3,910.42, the UK's FTSE 100 index gained 1.3% to 5,599.76 and the German DAX index added 1.4% to 5,877.36.

Miners also gained in Europe, with Rio Tinto shares up 2.7%.

Negotiations between metal producers and steelmakers in Asia are currently underway, with metal producers hoping for steep hikes in rates.

Japanese steelmakers agreed to pay 55% more for coal, according to a report out on Friday.

Shares of coal and coke miner Xstrata moved up 5.6% after its metals trading firm shareholder Glencore International announced plans to pay the company at least \$2.25bn in cash for several Colombian coal-related assets.

On the decline, shares of France's Veolia Environnement gave up 4.3%. The company reported 2009 revenue fell 3.4% to EUR34.55bn, while net profit rose to EUR584.1m, compared to a profit of EUR405.1m on cost cutting and asset sales.

Japanese shares led gains across most Asian markets on Friday, with Tokyo's stocks powering higher on hopes the Bank of Japan would ease its monetary policy further.

Shares in Shanghai and Hong Kong ended higher after Premier Wen Jiabao said the government will maintain its "moderately" loose policies and set an 8% economic growth target for this year.

Japan's Nikkei 225 advanced 2.2%, China's Shanghai Composite added 0.3% and Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index gained 1.0%.

The NZX-50 benchmark index closed nearly unchanged, up 1.09 point at 3,214.64.

Better-than-expected US jobs data lifted base metals higher on the London Metal Exchange. Aluminium rose \$16 (0.70%) to \$2,225 while copper firmed \$130 (1.75%) to \$7,540 and nickel added \$55 (0.25%) to \$22,405. Zinc strengthened \$95 (4.22%) to \$2,345 and lead gained \$60 (2.76%) to \$2,230. Comex copper was last quoted at 341.75 US cents per pound.

Gold futures on the Comex division of the New York Mercantile Exchange rose a little on Friday after the US dollar retreated from its intraday peak. Spot gold was last quoted at \$1,133.80. Comex gold futures climbed \$2.10 (0.19%) to \$1,135.20. Spot silver was last quoted at \$17.31.

West Texas Intermediate was last quoted at US\$81.50 per barrel.

At 08:05 a.m. (AET) the US dollar was quoted at 0.7338 euros, 90.41 yen, 1.103 AUD and 66.10 pence.

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