

HD Australian Stocks: What Happened Today?

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Across the **board** gains today as we raced towards the end of the quarter. The last two days have been the performance for the quarter now, with us ending 2013 at 5356. Today saw us pile on the points with a high of 5416 and a close around 5394, up 28, as it wilted in the match up.. So up around 0.7% for the three months.

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As usual banks led the way with the Iron Ore stocks also chipping in. Australia and New Zealand Banking **Group** Limited (A\$33.06, +0.7%) was the best of the four with Suncorp **Group** Limited (A\$12.87, +1.7%), QBE Insurance **Group** Limited (A\$12.82, +1.3%), Macquarie **Group** Limited (A\$57.93, +0.5%) and Insurance Australia **Group** Limited (A\$5.57, unch) all doing well too. BHP Billiton Limited (A\$36.47, +0.9%) and RIO Tinto Limited (A\$63.55, +0.5%) were the stars in the ore space with Fortescue Metals **Group** Ltd (A\$5.25, -1.7%) actually coming in for some profit taking. Minnows Atlas Iron Limited (A\$0.975, unch), Bluescope Steel Limited (A\$6.13, +1.7%), Mount Gibson Iron Limited (A\$0.91, +4.0%) all **firm** with Iron Road Limited (A\$0.30, +22.4%) a stand out. Gold improved slightly with Newcrest Mining Limited (A\$9.89, +0.9%), Kingsgate Consolidated Limited (A\$1.00, +1.0%), Evolution Mining Limited (A\$0.86, +3.0%) and Regis Resources Limited (A\$2.27, +3.7%) doing well.

Energy stocks were **firm** Woodside Petroleum Limited (A\$39.02, +1.0%), Oil Search Limited (A\$8.46, +1.2%) and Santos Limited (A\$13.50, +1.4%) in the bigs while Beach Energy Limited (A\$1.705, +1.5%), Central Petroleum Limited (A\$0.55, +4.8%) and AWE Limited (A\$1.515, +1.3%) did their bit too.

In the widget makers, actually its quite hard to find any of these nowadays, but Amcor Limited (A\$10.39, +0.4%), Brambles Limited (A\$9.26, -0.6%), CSR Limited (A\$3.51, +3.2%), James Hardie Industries PLC (A\$14.33, +0.7%), Boral Limited (A\$5.65, +0.7%) and Adelaide Brighton Limited (A\$4.01, +1.3%) all did well. Media stocks hardened up. Fairfax Media Limited (A\$0.915, +1.7%), REA **Group** Ltd (A\$48.75, +1.6%), Seven West Media Limited (A\$1.98, +2.6%) and even Ten Network Holdings Limited (A\$0.275, +1.9%) despite only three people now left in the country watching the station. Apparently this is their USP with personalised advertising strategy now. Seems to be working.

Consumer stocks were mixed with Dick Smith Holdings Limited (A\$2.18, -1.8%) taking a bath whilst Kathmandu Holdings Limited (A\$3.65, +2.8%) continued to climb peaks with Hardly Harvey Norman Holdings Limited (A\$3.30, +0.9%) Normal up a smidge too. Telcos were better as you would expect led by the big daddy Telstra Corporation Limited (A\$5.08, +1.0%) as their NBN strategy looks to be working out really well. Woolworths Limited (A\$35.72, +0.3%) was the best of the supermarkets with both Metcash Limited (A\$2.62, -1.9%) and Wesfarmers Limited (A\$41.19, -0.5%) getting left at the register.

In the playboy mansion today were Energy World Corporation Ltd (A\$0.325, +6.6%), Whitehaven Coal Limited (A\$1.655, +4.7%), Recall Holdings Limited (A\$4.65, +2.9%), Oz Minerals Limited (A\$3.56, +4.1%), #OFX# and Southern Cross Media **Group** Limited (A\$1.37, +3.8%) whilst down the road in the Bates Motel were iiNet Limited (A\$7.41, -3.9%) (have had a good run recently), Dick Smith Holdings Limited (A\$2.18, -1.8%), Bega **Cheese** Limited (A\$5.26, -2.8%), Funtastic Limited (A\$0.13, unch) (not), Freelancer, ZIM and Virgin Australia Holdings Limited (A\$0.37, -3.9%).

Volume wasn't great considering the move but window dressing never is. Around \$3bn for the day.

Asian shares were positive for the fourth day, Tokyo rose 0.55% whilst **China** was a bit higher 0.08% and **Hong Kong** was up 0.3%. The Aussie dollar continues to be as strong as the Liverpool defence at 92.27 whilst digital tulips were sub \$500 and Gold at \$1296.

Stocks and Stories

Isn't it great. You resign as the chairman as you have done an outstanding job then you come back to **buy** the **company** at a knock down price. That seems to be what Don Voelte from Nexus Energy Limited (A\$0.059, unch) is trying to do. His other, master Kerry Stokes, through his vehicle Seven **Group** said it intends offering shareholders 2 cents a share, which is significantly less than their last traded price.

Sales of new homes jumped in February on strong demand for detached houses, the latest sign that low interest rates are fuelling a revival in the market. The Housing Industry Association (HIA) said its survey of large builders showed sales of new homes rose 4.6 per cent in February from January, to their highest in almost three years.

Wow, Lachlan knows how to pick them with Funtastic Limited (A\$0.13, unch) proving to be anything but, as they haven't paid a dividend for six years, and now has once again withheld its interim distribution after reporting a bottom line loss of \$25.88 **million** for the January half. Remember he is a director of this one and Ten Network Holdings Limited (A\$0.275, +1.9%) where the ratings are horrible and now back to News Corp.

Suncorp **Group** Limited (A\$12.87, +1.7%) plans to raise \$250 **million** through hybrid debt securities to help fund capital works.

Total Recall Holdings Limited (A\$4.65, +2.9%) jumped after their halt, with the document storage **business** announcing a 10-year information management deal with HSBC that is estimated to be worth about 2 per cent of the **company's** current revenue. Home in time for Corn Flakes!

Tomorrow's News Today

RBA meeting tomorrow. No change is my call.

Seems there has been an exchange of gunfire between North and South Korea. We do presents in our family so nice to try something different I suppose.

Russia and the US don't seem to be anywhere closer to solving the Crimean crisis. Actually Russia has already solved it, the US just has to come to terms with it. Reminds me of JFK's famous line. Time for Obama to use it now.

"We cannot negotiate with people who say what's mine is mine and what's yours is negotiable."

The impacts of global warming are likely to be "severe, pervasive and irreversible", a major report by the UN has warned. Are you listening Tony?

Lots happening in Zombieland with France's Hollande due to announce some changes after the weekend elections. He had a shocker! Turkey's PM Erdogan has won another term. Hardly a surprise and the Greeks seemed to have satisfied their Euro bailout masters, with the definition of Fresh **Milk**, sufficiently to get their hands on the next tranche of money.

It's been a big start to the year with \$174bn worth of TMT deals..think that means Tech Media and Telcos Enough to make any investment banker happy. Although things are quite so happy in **Chinese** banks as the bad debt provisions continue to mount. Now up around \$9.5bn. Seems a lot to lose down the back of the sofa.

Looks like the Japanese may need some more stimulus after all. Factory output in Japan declined by 2.3% in February, official figures released on Monday show. And of course on April Fools day the sales tax increases. Looks like stimulus is back on around the world. It has been such a huge success so far why not keep it going?

Whoever has the best app wins! In the UK, around 1,800 transactions are now conducted each minute on Apple iPhone, Samsung Galaxy and other smartphones. The British Bankers' Association (BBA), said daily usage had doubled in 12 months.

The UK's economy grew by 1.7% last year, official figures show, less than the previous estimate of 1.8%. It is the second time the estimate for GDP growth in 2013 has been cut, after an initial estimate of 1.9%. Seems there are a few cutting their GDP forecasts. Go the stimulus!

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nigltd : Insurance Australia Group Ltd | qbeibp : QBE Insurance Group Ltd | whitt : Mount Gibson Iron Ltd |
bltpic : BHP Billiton PLC | rtz : Rio Tinto PLC

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