

# Economics



# **CHINA**

# Inside

Market & Sector Performance (MSCI						
China)	2					
Market & Sector Performance (A-share)						
Activity data watch						
Policy watch	8					
Commodities space	9					
Property market	10					
Liquidity watch	11					
Exchange rate	12					
Industrial indicators	13					
China in a snapshot	14					

# **Nov Data Forecasts**

Date	Indicator	Nov (fcst)	Prior
	Activities		
31- Nov	NBS mfg PMI	51.8	51.6
01- Dec	Caixin mfg PMI	50.8	51.0
08- Dec	Exports, %yoy	6.0	6.9
08- Dec	Imports, %yoy	12.0	17.2
08- Dec	Trade bal., US\$ bn	31.4	38.2
14- Dec	Industrial prod. % yoy,	6.0	6.2
14- Dec	FAI, ytd % yoy	7.1	7.3
14- Dec	Retail Sales, % yoy	10.2	10.0
	Inflation		
09- Dec	CPI, % yoy	1.7	1.9
09- Dec	PPI, % yoy	5.9	6.9
	Monetary		
7- Dec	FX reserves, US\$bn	310.0	310.9
10-15 Dec	M2, % yoy	9.0	8.8
10-15 Dec	RMB loans, Rmb bn	850	663

# Publications in Dec:

Will growth target be lowered? Nov 7

After-thoughts from the 19th Party Congress: What's next? Dec 26

China unlikely to grow 7% in 2H17, more likely to slow to 6% in 2018, Dec 19

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5 December 2017 Macquarie Capital Limited

# State of China's economy

# Feedback from recent marketing: Sentiment turning even better

Over the past three weeks, we met with investors in Europe and Asia to discuss China macro and markets. The sentiment is even better than six months ago when we did the previous round of global marketing (our takeaways back then: <a href="Highest sentiment in two years">Highest sentiment in two years</a>). Investors are no longer concerned about traditional risks such as debt, property, currency and capital outflows. Instead the key interests include the macro outlook for 2018 (the consensus is a gradual and modest slowdown), the ongoing financial tightening, the risk of inflation and rate hike, also the medium-term outlook after the Party Congress. The note covers the main topics of conversation.

# Sentiment: Turning even better

Sentiment is upbeat now as investors cited various reasons to stay bullish: the global economy is recovering in a synchronized way; The rally so far is driven by EPS growth, so valuation is higher but not crazy; The breadth of rally is so limited that there is room for chasing laggards; The rally has concentrated on sector leaders and junk stocks haven't moved much. The valuation for China financials and SOEs are much lower compared with their global peers; global EM funds still underweight China and more southbound money from mainland China will come to HK next year...

Interestingly, during the trip, the amount of time we spent on debt is probably the least since 2011. The views expressed in our note, <a href="China's Debt: Myths">China's Debt: Myths</a> and Realities, which used to be quite controversial, have become the consensus. Also our positive RMB view, which used to receive close to 100% pushback 12 months ago, has also become the consensus.

Overall, our impression as economists is that while the consensus used to be overly pessimistic toward China, now it is starting to turn a bit too optimistic. But we could be too sobering as the sentiment is still far from being extreme and could move even higher. Toward the year end, financials is a consensus buy to park the cash, due to reasonable valuation and solid earnings, while some look to rotate into late-cycle names such as utility and consumer staples, or even small caps at some point next year.

# **Economy: What the market could miss**

Consensus at year-end often gets wrong the most important thing for the year ahead. At the end of 2015, the consensus was expecting a further slowdown or even a hard landing for China. But it turns out that at that time China was just under recovery with a new earnings up-cycle ahead. At the end of 2016, the consensus was expecting further depreciation of the RMB against the US\$. But it turns out that the RMB has strengthened against the US\$ in 2017. The reversal underpins the EM bull run this year as the RMB is the anchor of the whole EM currency space.

At this point, what could the consensus miss? In our view, the most likely candidate is the downside risk from infrastructure investment, which grew much faster than other investments in the past five years. Back in 2012, infrastructure investment was 60% of manufacture investment and 80% of property investment. In 2017, it's 90% of manufacturing investment and 20% larger than property investment. (*To be continued on the next page*)

Infrastructure spending is the main tool for the government to set a stable economic backdrop for the power reshuffle. Now the 19<sup>th</sup> Party Congress is done and China is about to enter a new five-year political cycle which leads to 2022. As such, policy makers might be able to accept slower growth for infrastructure spending from next year, as the growth in the past five years is unsustainable.

Relatedly, infrastructure spending is largely funded by local government debt. In the past two years, local governments leveraged up quickly with the new tools such as PPP. As such, it should be an area of great concern for policy makers and the market. **Therefore, it is significant that the subway projects at Baotao were halted recently and the government started tightening PPP approvals. It could be just the beginning.** 

For other key drivers of the economy, we expect **consumption** growth to remain relatively stable as it did in the past three years. **Exports** is the biggest delta this year, rising 7% in 2017 after dropping 7% in 2016, adding 1.5ppt to GDP growth this year. For next year, the ongoing global recovery is a tailwind. However, we still expect export growth to slow to low-single-digit growth next year, given the strengthening of the RMB this year. Moreover, the potential slowdown of China, which has led the global recovery in the past two years, could weigh on global growth from 2H18.

For **property**, GFA sales at national level saw negative yoy growth from Sep 2017, after staying positive for 29 months since May 2015. The down-cycle will likely continue next year. Given the concerns on high home prices, policy makers are not very likely to loosen property measures next year even if growth headwinds could strengthen in 2H18. Due to lower inventory level and strong land sales this year, we expect property investment to slow modestly from 8% in 2017 to low-single-digit growth in 2018. More pressure for property investment will come in 2019 as land sales would be much weaker next year.

### Implications for equity and commodity markets

For the stock market, the impact from a slower economic growth is mixed. Lower GDP growth could lead to lower EPS growth. However, it's very hard for policy makers to tighten liquidity amid an economic slowdown, so the deceleration could ease the domestic liquidity overhang and cause a rotation of from EPS driven to liquidity driven, and from large cap to small cap.

For the commodity market, it could be negative. The commodity market is pretty choppy this year as it is more driven by supply-side factors such as environment inspection. Looking ahead, both commodity supply and demand should weaken, but demand-side factors such as weaker infrastructure and property FAI might become a driving force again, especially after the impact of the winter environment inspection fades.

Fig 1 Infrastructure investment growth have been strong over the past five years

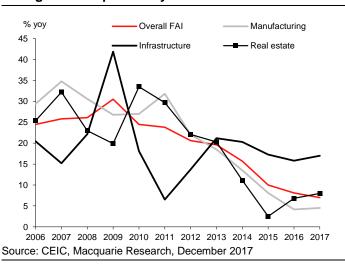
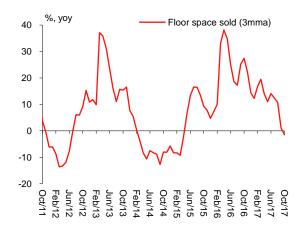


Fig 2 GFA sales growth could stay negative in 2018



Source: CEIC, Macquarie Research, December 2017

# How to read the rising yields in the bond market

Some investors are concerned about the jitters in the bond market recently. Relatedly, there are also some concerns on upside risks for inflation next year and potential rate hikes by the PBoC. Our view is that inflation pressure in 2018 should remain muted and the chance for benchmark rate hikes is low. In other words, for the bond market, now might be the darkest moment before the dawn.

Our view on inflation is based on our view on economic growth. Given the very low base this year, CPI inflation could rise to close to 3.0% in certain months next year but for the whole year, CPI inflation should be contained in 2.0-2.5%. Meanwhile, PPI inflation could moderate significantly to 2-3% due to the high base this year. As such, nominal GDP growth, which correlates closely with the 10-year treasury yields, could fall to 8-9% from 11% this year.

In our view, the recent bond market jitters are mainly driven by the speculation on regulation instead of fundamentals. To be sure, given economic growth still steady, now remains as the window for policy makers to deleverage the bond market. Now is also the vacuum between two political cycles. Unsurprisingly, investors feel uncertain about the policy stance for the new regulators. But fundamentals should dominate in the medium term.

Some might be concerned whether China will be forced to hike next year if the Fed hikes. We are not too worried, given that the 10-year treasury yield in the US is largely as same as 12 months ago, while that in China rose by over 100bps.

### RMB and capital flows

The most important thing 12 months ago was the RMB, but no longer so. The depreciation expectation has much eased as during this trip we didn't spend much time on the topic. For the next six months, we expect the USD/CNY to range-bound between 6.4 and 7.0.

In 2016, the main battle for the PBoC was to curb capital outflows, as FX reserves dropped over US\$100bn each month in early 2016. In 2017, the battle was to fight depreciation expectation. For next year, the battle is to restore the confidence on the financial openness and the RMB internationalization, which were disrupted in the past couple of years by capital outflows and currency depreciation.

# Structural trends in the economy

As sentiment is getting better this year, investors now pay less attention to macro risks but more towards micro opportunities. The market performance over the past 12 months also makes it clear that, for equity investors, it is important to capture structural trends in the economy.

In a thematic report published in Aug 2016 titled <u>Micro vs Macro Trends</u>, we discussed five major structural trends, which all have performed very well this year. While it is hard to forecast the cyclical movement of the economy, we believe these five themes would persist for years to come.

They are: (1) Rise of the services (education, health care, asset management...), (2) the digital transformation of the economy (internet, Al...), (3) consumption upgrading (SUV, Moutai...), (4) the formation of city clusters and (5) corporate transformation including consolidation, globalization and industrial upgrading.

# What to expect after the Party Congress

It's also a question which investors are interested in. In our view, the below five items might top the priority for China's policy makers in the next five years.

**Curb tail risks**: Top leaders spent lots of time in the past five years stimulating the economy. It works, but at the cost of surging home prices and leverage ratio. It is unsustainable and has posed big risks to the whole system. Since the power reshuffle is done, policy makers might be more tolerant about growth volatility but focus more on curbing tail risks. Indeed, in his opening speech for the 19<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, President Xi did not mention any growth target. Also recently, the PBoC governor Zhou Xiaochun warned about a "Minsky Moment").

**Make people happy**: Economic growth, which is the most important source of legitimacy of the Party, is set to slow down in the coming years. So top leaders need to find other ways to make people happy. To make poor people happy, poverty reduction is the key. To make the middle class happy, environment, education and health care are important. We also expect anti-corruption to be more institutionalized compared with the past five years.

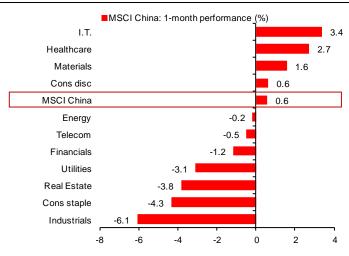
**Property tax**: Property tax, which is highly controversial and risky, is likely to be rolled out in the next two to three years, which could be the most important reform during this period. Meanwhile, SOE reform, which is the hardest among all reforms, is still far from certain. Historical experience suggests that an adverse growth "shock" may be needed to get things really moving. We are not there yet.

**Industrial policy**: Economic growth is still the biggest source of legitimacy for the ruling party. As both infrastructure and property investment are set to slow, we believe policy makers will continue to be supportive of the new economy as well as a dozen key industrial sectors such as semiconductors, new energy cars, commercial airplanes and so on.

Xi's agenda: As political power has become more centralized, President Xi's agenda will be pivotal. Other than environmental protection and poverty reduction, One-belt-one-road (OBOR) will be pushed forward, too. RMB internationalization, a key input of OBOR, will regain momentum.

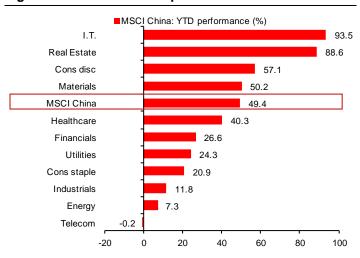
# Market & Sector Performance (MSCI China)

Fig 3 MSCI China performance: one-month



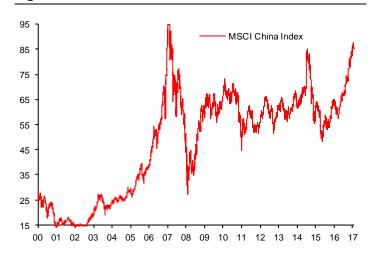
Source: Bloomberg, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 4 MSCI China sector performance: YTD



Source: Bloomberg, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 5 MSCI China index



Source: Bloomberg, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 6 Valuation above historical average



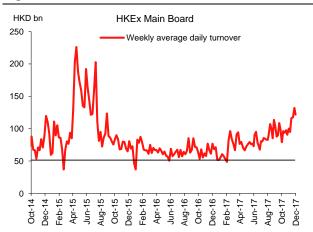
Source: Bloomberg, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 7 A-H premium Index



Source: CEIC, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 8 HKEX turnover

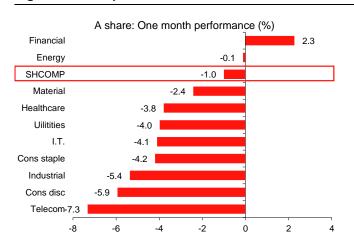


Source: Bloomberg, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Macquarie Research

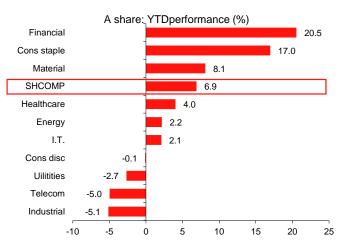
# Market & Sector Performance (A-share)

Fig 9 A-share performance: one-month



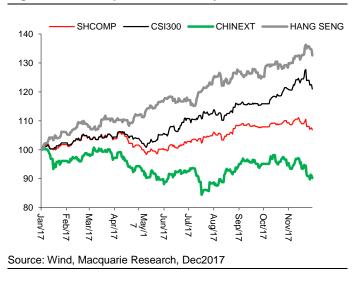
Source: Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

A-share performance: YTD

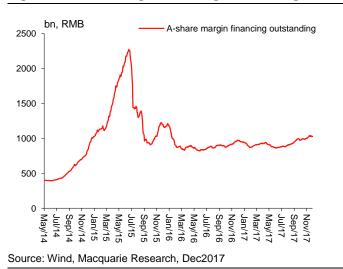


Source: Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

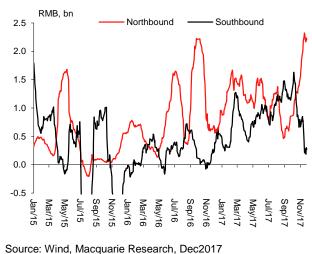
A-share performances by various indices Fig 11



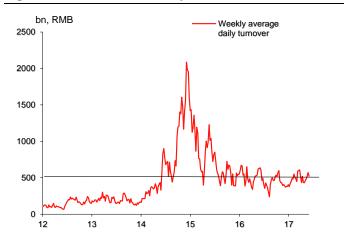
A-share margin financing outstanding



Net inflows from Stock Connect (30-day moving average) Fig 12



A-share market daily turnover

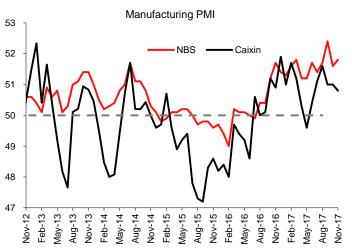


Source: Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

5 December 2017

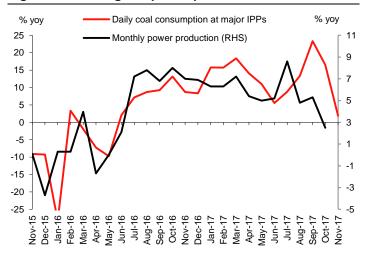
# Activity data watch

Fig 15 NBS vs Caixin Manufacturing PMI



Source: CEIC, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

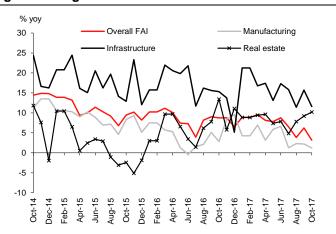
Fig 17 Coal usage vs power production



Note: The latest coal-consumption figure represents the month-to-date average daily coal consumption growth from a year ago.

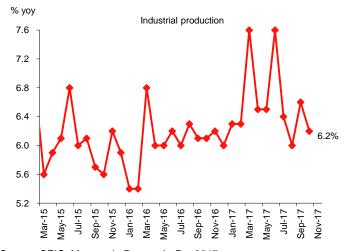
Source: Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 19 FAI growth breakdown



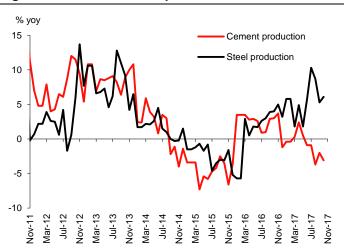
Source: CEIC, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 16 Industrial production growth



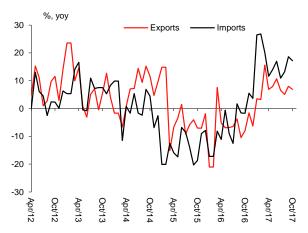
Source: CEIC, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 18 Steel and cement production



Source: CEIC, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

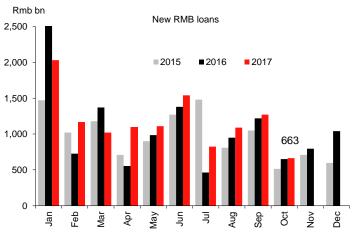
Fig 20 Export and import growth



Source: CEIC, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

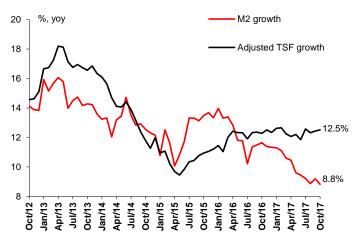
# Policy watch

Fig 21 Monthly new RMB loans



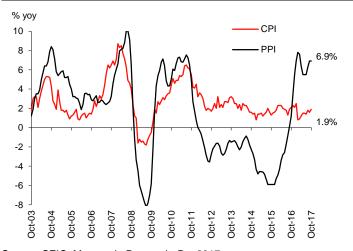
Source: CEIC, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 22 Monthly credit growth



Source: CEIC, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 23 Rising inflation in Aug



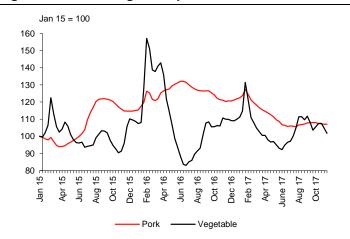
Source: CEIC, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 24 Nanhua industry index



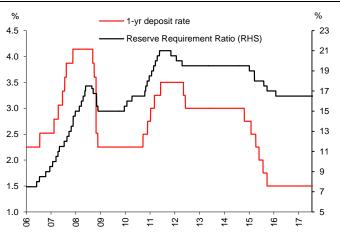
Source: Price index for futures, including Aluminum, copper, coking coal, rebar, PTA, Zinc and others. Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 25 Pork and vegetable prices



Source: CEIC, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

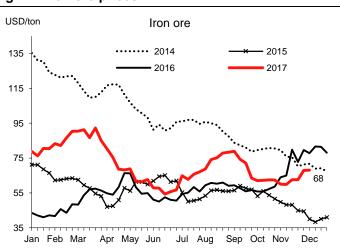
Fig 26 Benchmark policy rate and RRR



Source: CEIC, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

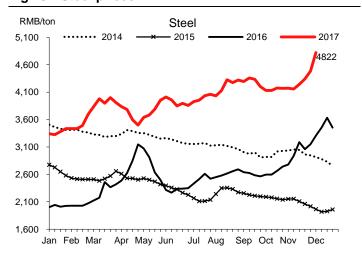
# Commodities space

Fig 27 Iron ore prices



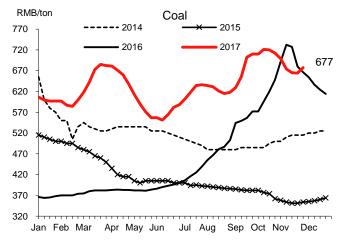
Source: Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 28 Steel prices



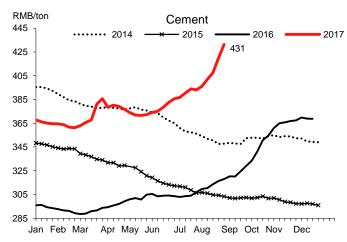
Source: Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 29 Coal prices



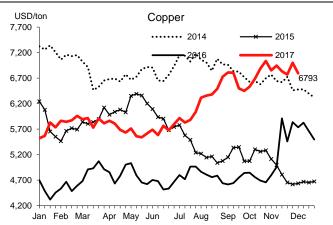
Source: Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 30 Cement prices



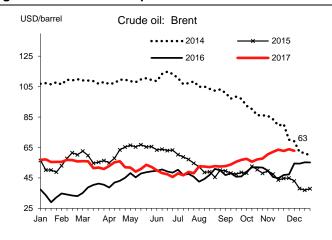
Source: Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 31 Copper price



Source: Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 32 Brent crude oil price



Source: Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

# Property market

Fig 33 Home prices, YoY

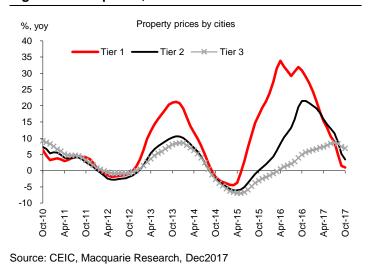


Fig 35 New home sales at national level

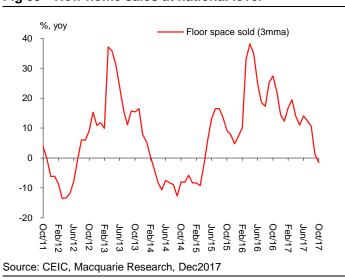
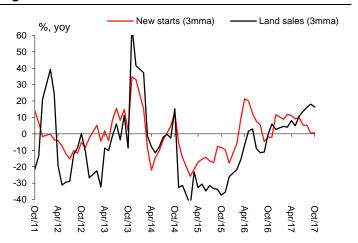


Fig 37 New starts and land sales at national level



Source: Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 34 Home prices, MoM

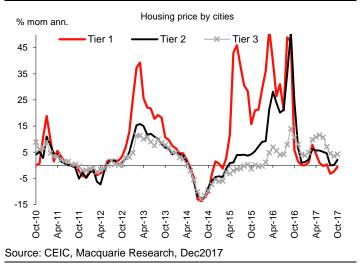
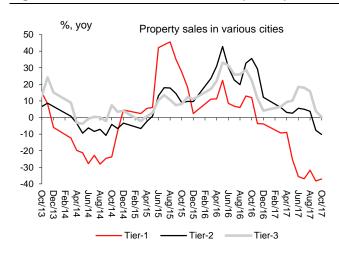
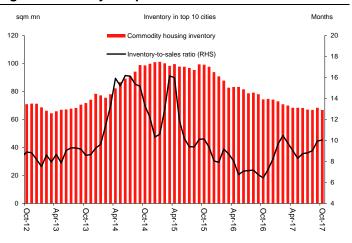


Fig 36 New home sales in 40 cities (3mma)



Source: CEIC, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

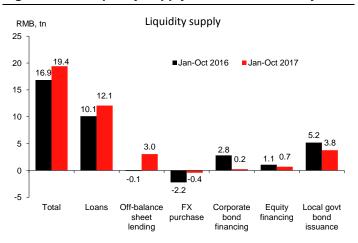
Fig 38 Inventory in top 10 cities



Source: Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

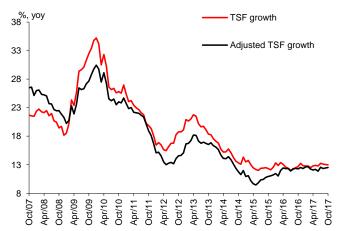
# Liquidity watch

Fig 39 Total liquidity supply to the real economy



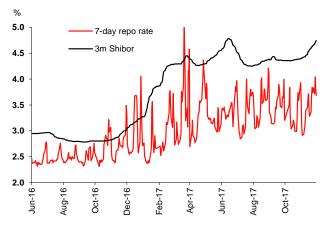
Source: Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 40 Total social financing growth



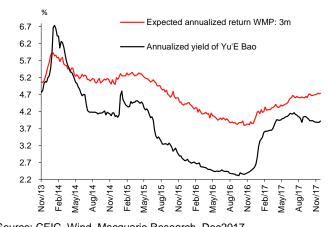
Adjusted for local government debt swap and FX purchase changes. Source: CEIC, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 41 Interbank interest rates



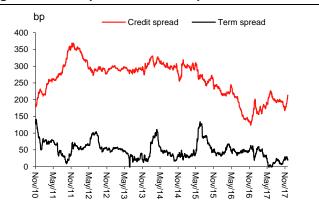
Source: Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 42 Market interest rates



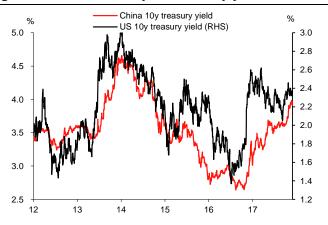
Source: CEIC, Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 43 Credit spread and term spread



Note: Credit spread is calculated as the difference between 10-yr treasury and 10-yr AA-rated corporate bond. Term spread is calculated as the difference between 10-yr and 2-yr treasury. Source: Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017.

Fig 44 China vs US 10-year Treasury yields



Source: Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

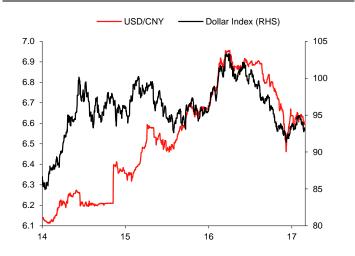
# Exchange rate

Fig 45 Onshore RMB, fixing and spot closing



Source: Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 47 The dollar index and the USD/CNY



Source: Bloomberg, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 49 Net FX settlement and FX reserves

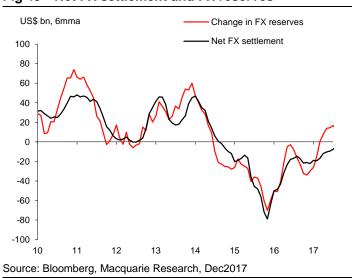
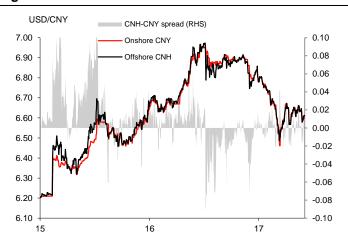


Fig 46 CNY vs CNH



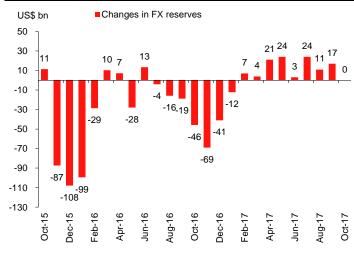
Source: Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 48 CFETS RMB index



\*Staff estimate using the currency basket published by CFETS. Source: Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 50 FX reserves m/m change

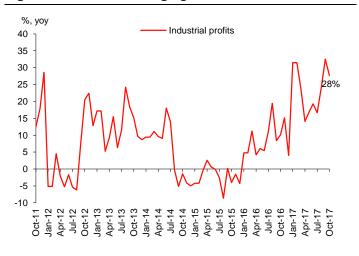


Source: CEIC, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

**Macquarie Research** 

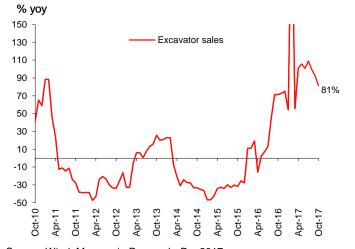
# Industrial indicators

Fig 51 Industrial earnings growth



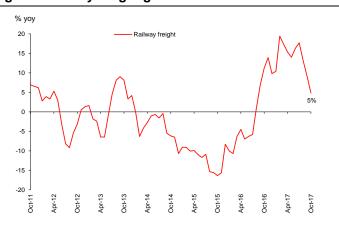
Source: CEIC, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 52 **Excavator sales growth** 



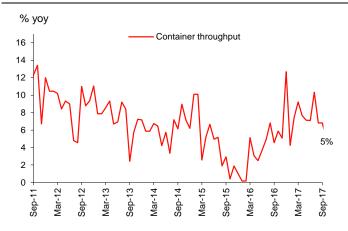
Source: Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 53 Railway freight growth



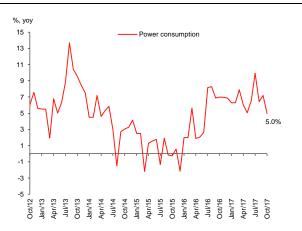
Source: Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 54 Container throughput growth



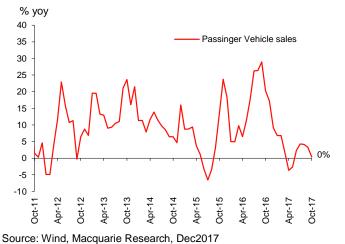
Source: Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 55 Power consumption growth



Source: Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 56 Passenger vehicle sales growth



5 December 2017 13

# China in a snapshot

Fig 57 GDP composition

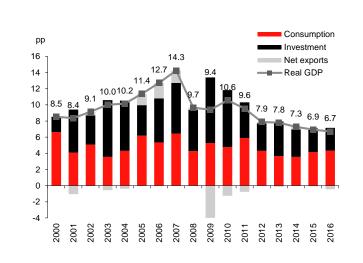
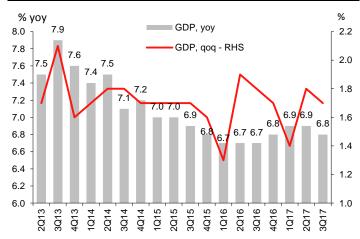
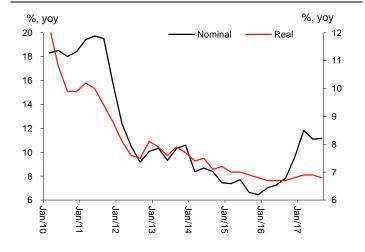


Fig 58 Quarterly GDP growth



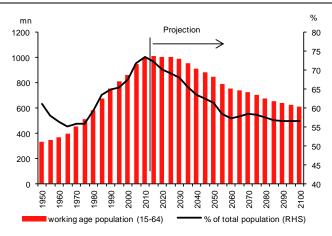
Source: CEIC, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 59 Nominal and real GDP growth



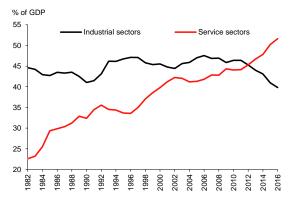
Source: CEIC, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 60 Working-age population has peaked



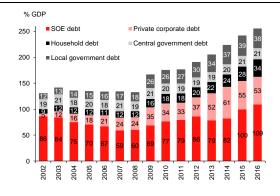
Source: UN, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 61 Service sectors gaining weight in the economy



Source: CEIC, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

Fig 62 China's debt breakdown



Source: CEIC, Macquarie Research, Dec2017

# China economic forecasts

Macquarie China Economic forecasts													
	Unit	1Q16	2Q16	3Q16	4Q16	1Q17	2Q17	3Q17	4Q17	2015	2016	2017	2018
Growth													
GDP	YoY, %	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.8	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.6	6.9	6.7	6.8	6.4
GDP	QoQ,%	1.3	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.4	1.8	1.7	1.6	-			
Inflation													
CPI	YoY, %	2.1	2.1	1.7	2.1	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.9	1.4	2.0	1.6	
PPI	YoY, %	-4.8	-2.9	-0.8	3.3	7.4	5.8	6.2	5.0	-5.2	-1.4	6.0	
Activities													
Industrial production	YoY, %	5.8	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.8	6.9	6.3	-	6.1	6.0	6.7	
Retail sales	YoY, %	10.3	10.2	10.5	10.6	10.0	10.8	10.3	-	10.7	10.4	10.5	
Fixed asset investment (ytd)	YoY, %	10.7	8.2	7.0	7.8	9.2	8.3	5.5	-	10.0	8.1	7.0	
Manufacturing	YoY, %	6.4	1.8	2.8	7.1	5.8	5.4	1.9	-	8.1	4.2		
Property	YoY, %	6.2	6.0	5.2	10.0	9.1	8.2	7.4		2.5	7.0		
Infrastructure	YoY, %	19.2	20.8	14.6	10.7	18.7	16.0	14.3	-	17.3	15.7		
Trade													
Exports	YoY, %	-12.9	-6.4	-7.0	-5.2	7.8	8.7	6.8	-	-2.6	-7.7	8.0	
Imports	YoY, %	-13.9	-7.0	-4.6	2.1	24.0	14.2	14.5	-	-14.4	-5.6	13.0	
Trade balance	US\$ bn	110	130	140	134	64	120	117	-	602	513	471	
Monetary													
M2 (period-end)	YoY, %	13.4	11.8	11.5	11.3	10.6	9.4	9.2	-	13.3	11.3	9.0	
1-yr deposit rate (period-end)	%	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	-	1.50	1.50	1.50	
RRR (period-end)	%	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	-	17.5	16.5	16.5	
Exchange rate (spot, period end)	USDCNY	6.47	6.66	6.67	6.95	6.89	6.78	6.64	-	6.49	6.95	6.70	

Note: Numbers in bold are forecast values.

Source: CEIC, Wind, Macquarie Research, Dec 2017

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#### Recommendation definitions

# Macquarie - Australia/New Zealand

Outperform – return >3% in excess of benchmark return Neutral – return within 3% of benchmark return Underperform – return >3% below benchmark return

Benchmark return is determined by long term nominal GDP growth plus 12 month forward market dividend yield

#### Macquarie - Asia/Europe

Outperform – expected return >+10% Neutral – expected return from -10% to +10% Underperform – expected return <-10%

#### Macquarie - South Africa

Outperform – expected return >+10% Neutral – expected return from -10% to +10% Underperform – expected return <-10%

#### Macquarie - Canada

Outperform – return >5% in excess of benchmark return Neutral – return within 5% of benchmark return Underperform – return >5% below benchmark return

#### Macquarie - USA

Outperform (Buy) – return >5% in excess of Russell 3000 index return

Neutral (Hold) – return within 5% of Russell 3000 index return

Underperform (Sell)– return >5% below Russell 3000 index return

# Volatility index definition\*

This is calculated from the volatility of historical price movements.

Very high-highest risk – Stock should be expected to move up or down 60–100% in a year – investors should be aware this stock is highly speculative.

**High** – stock should be expected to move up or down at least 40–60% in a year – investors should be aware this stock could be speculative.

**Medium** – stock should be expected to move up or down at least 30–40% in a year.

**Low-medium** – stock should be expected to move up or down at least 25–30% in a year.

Low – stock should be expected to move up or down at least 15–25% in a year.

\* Applicable to Asia/Australian/NZ/Canada stocks

Recommendations - 12 months

**Note:** Quant recommendations may differ from Fundamental Analyst recommendations

# **Financial definitions**

total assets

All "Adjusted" data items have had the following adjustments made:

Added back: goodwill amortisation, provision for catastrophe reserves, IFRS derivatives & hedging, IFRS impairments & IFRS interest expense Excluded: non recurring items, asset revals, property revals, appraisal value uplift, preference dividends & minority interests

EPS = adjusted net profit / efpowa\*
ROA = adjusted ebit / average total assets
ROA Banks/Insurance = adjusted net profit /average

ROE = adjusted net profit / average shareholders funds Gross cashflow = adjusted net profit + depreciation \*equivalent fully paid ordinary weighted average number of shares

All Reported numbers for Australian/NZ listed stocks are modelled under IFRS (International Financial Reporting Standards).

# Recommendation proportions - For quarter ending 30 September 2017

	AU/NZ	Asia	RSA	USA	CA	EUR	
Outperform	50.38%	56.22%	40.70%	46.21%	63.85%	41.61%	(for global coverage by Macquarie, 4.18% of stocks followed are investment banking clients)
Neutral	37.50%	28.16%	43.02%	47.52%	30.00%	39.51%	(for global coverage by Macquarie, 2.68% of stocks followed are investment banking clients)
Underperform	12.12%	15.62%	16.28%	6.27%	6.15%	18.88%	(for global coverage by Macquarie, 1.08% of stocks followed are investment banking clients)

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