

Australian business confidence improves in January: NAB survey

SYDNEY, Feb. 12 (Xinhua) -- Australian business confidence was broadly steady in January after recovering strongly in December from very poor levels, a private survey released on Tuesday by National Australia Bank (NAB) showed. NAB's monthly business survey showed business confidence rose one point to an index level of plus three points in January.

However, business condition remained in negative territory in the month despite improving three index points to minus two. The bank said the confidence recovery was mainly helped by the rally in global equity markets and generally better activity in China, as well as recent rate cuts from the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA). "However confidence remains below long-run average levels," NAB said in its report.

"Business conditions were generally better across interest sensitive industries in January, but fell heavily in mining," NAB says it still sees the need for the RBA to cut the cash rate by 75 basis points in 2013.