

Markets

SFE 200 Futures (9.30am AEDT)	7811	-47	-0.6
NZX 50	11853	-71	-0.6
DJIA Futures	38762	6	0.0
S&P 500 Futures	5128	-1	0.0
NASDAQ Futures	18025	-21	-0.1

Local Markets Commentary

The Australian market opens a new week's trade with the \$A at ~US66.20c, the ASX 200 having attained a fresh record closing high Friday, four States and/or territories observing public holidays and key data in hand from China over the weekend.

US equities markets settled 0.2% - 1.2% lower overnight Friday.

Since overnight Friday trade, **China's** February inflation growth has surprised (see below), positions appear to have hardened in **Israel-Hamas** cease-fire talks, and daylight saving season has commenced in the US.

Locally today, no major economic indicators are anticipated.

Stocks trading **ex-dividend** today include **CSL**, **RHC** and **SVW**. Please see p4 for a detailed ex-dividends list.

Regionally, over the weekend, **China** reported 0.7% annualised **CPI inflation** growth for February against the 0.8% deflation reported for January.

CPI inflation rose by 1.0% for the month, against expectations for 0.7% growth following January's 0.3%.

February **producer prices** were calculated 2.7% lower year-on-year against January's 2.5% annualised decline.

China's National People's Congress concludes later today, following reports local government representatives met with State financial institutions during the event, to discuss refinancing options.

This morning, **Japan** is expected to release a final December quarter **GDP** reading within an hour of the ASX open.

Any material change from the preliminary estimate is likely to swing the yen.

In overnight Friday **commodities** trade, **oil** settled ~1% lower.

US **gold** (Comex) futures were pushed almost 1.0% higher, surpassing \$US2185.0/oz.

Iron ore (Nymex CFR China, 62% Fe) declined but by less than 0.5%, remaining above \$US117.00/t.

LME (3mth evening) **copper** and **aluminium** turned greater than 0.5% lower. **Nickel** continued higher, but slightly, remaining below \$18,100/t.

The **\$A** largely maintained ~US66.45c after trading at US66.40c – US66.50c early Friday evening.

ASX trade as normal today

Public holidays in the ACT, South Australia, Tasmania & Victoria

Today's Stock Watch

Task Group (TSK)

The TSK board has agreed a scheme implementation arrangement takeover by NYSE-listed PAR Technology Corporation.

Under the proposal TSK shareholders can accept A81c cash per share, or a mix of cash plus up to 50% of consideration in PAR shares, on a 0.015 PAR share – for – one TSK share basis.

Major TSK shareholders representing ~18% of TSK shares also support the plan.

TSK traded on the ASX at 37.5c – 40.5c last week.

DigitalX Ltd (DCC)

The DigitalX Bitcoin Fund grew 47.9% during February. Additional statistics lodged this morning.

Clinuvel Ltd (CUV)

Reporting a new instance of a vitiligo patient being successfully treated with SCENESSE. The case was presented over the weekend to the American Academy of Dermatology.

Carnegie Clean Energy (CCE)

A Basque government energy agency has awarded CCE a €2.1M grant in support of an offshore Basque Country wave energy project.

Westpac Banking Corporation (WBC)

WBC plans to seek shareholder approval for KPMG to be appointed WBC external auditor for the financial year commencing 1 October. If appointed, KPMG will take over from PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Resources

Capricorn Metals (CMM)

Revising expected March quarter gold output to ~26,000t. FY24 output will likely be at the lower end of guidance and FY24 AISC at the upper end. This is due to the Karlawinda gold project open pit mining having been adversely impacted by further significant rainfall.

For the March quarter to date, eight mining days have been lost.

The mill is treating low grade stockpiles rather than higher grade ore that was expected to come from the pit.

Lithium Energy (LEL)

North-west Queensland Burke project graphite has delivered positive electrochemical battery test work results.

Details lodged this morning.

**Overseas Markets**

INDEX	CLOSE	+/-	%
Dow Jones	38723	-69	-0.2
S&P 500	5124	-34	-0.7
NASDAQ	16085	-188	-1.2
FTSE 100	7660	-33	-0.4
DAX 30	17815	-28	-0.2
Shanghai Composite	3046	19	0.6

Overseas Markets Commentary

Chop and swing featured across most major European, UK and US equities markets overnight Friday.

Most indices opened lower.

The S&P 500 and NASDAQ headed higher in early trade but reversed course before the end of first-half trade, some pointing to profit-taking on the session's major economic data release ahead of further material indicators to come this week.

Overall trader considerations included key data releases on both sides of the Atlantic, and views offered by a batch of European central bankers, mixed with ongoing geopolitical caution.

In the US, February workforce figures spawned plenty of commentary, with a surprise 0.2% rise for the unemployment rate but stronger-than anticipated job creation.

To add to the interpretation cocktail, the jobs tallies for December and January were revised downwards by a combined 164,000.

January's was notably lowered from 353,000 to 229,000.

In the meantime, **European Central Bank** (ECB) policymaker and Bank of France governor Francois Villeroy de Galhau ventured an ECB rate cut during the northern hemisphere spring.

Colleague, Bundesbank (Germany's central bank) president Joachim Nagel also offered his view of an 'increasing probability' of an ECB interest rate cut before the ECB's summer recess. The break commences following the scheduled 18 July monetary policy meeting, with meetings also listed for April and June.

The heads of the central banks of Finland and Lithuania also spoke publicly Friday, offering respectively that interest rates reductions would be discussed at the April and June meetings, and that a cut in June was 'very likely'.

In overnight Friday economic data releases, a final December quarter GDP reading for the **euro zone** confirmed no change for the three months, following the 0.1% decline for the September quarter.

On an annualised basis, the initial 0.1% growth estimate remained.

Germany's January producer prices were estimated 0.2% higher for the month, in line with consensus following a 0.8% December fall.

Against January 2023, prices were down 4.4% against consensus for a 6.6% fall following December's 5.1% annualised decline.

Industrial production rose by 1.0% during January, exceeding forecasts for a 0.6% turn higher following December's 2.0% drop.

In the **US**, the February job creation tally came in at 275,000, against expectations for 200,000 following January's (revised)

Pre-Open Announcements**4DMedical Ltd (* 4DX)**

Heralding newly approved US budget legislation which includes allocations for 'non-invasive FDA-approved screening technologies'.

Worley Ltd (* WOR)

Recently-secured new work includes: an Air Products Canada module fabrication agreement; an Aramco general engineering services contract extension; and a Shell renewable hydrogen facility professional services contract. Details lodged pre-trade.

Dimerix Ltd (* DXB)

Reporting positive efficacy indications for DMX-200 in a phase 3 trial targeting improved kidney function for FSGS sufferers. Trading halt called this morning.

Redflow Ltd (* RFX)

Strategy update presentation lodged this morning.

Meridian Energy (MEZ)

Confirming the launch of an up to \$NZ200M six-year, unsecured green bond offer.

The expected margin is 1.05% - 1.15%.

Oversubscriptions of up to \$NZ100M will be accommodated.

MEZ flagged the offer late February.

Friday, MEZ sought confirmation of electricity demand from New Zealand Aluminium Smelters, given scheduled transmission outages in Southland and high wholesale electricity prices at Tiwai.

A Rio Tinto (ASX: RIO)-Sumitomo JV owns and operates a smelter at Tiwai Point.

Janison Education Group (JAN)

12.8M shares are due for release from voluntary escrow Friday.

Resources**Delta Lithium (* DLI) / Voltaic Strategic Resources (* VSR) / Reach Resources (* RR1)**

Earn-ins secured by DLI to two separate tenement packages tallying an area of 413sq km and owned respectively by VSR and RR1.

DLI is outlaying ~\$4.5M upfront.

The land is located adjacent to DLI's Yinnetharra lithium project.

Additional details, including further rationale, lodged this morning.

Sierra Rutile (* SRX)

Sierra Leone Area 1 operations have been suspended, as flagged in January, following a government-imposed change of fiscal regime.

SRX expects ~25% of staff, including expatriates, to be made



229,000.

The unemployment rate rose to 3.9% from 3.7%, defying forecasts for no change.

Hourly wages grew by US5c-per-hour (0.1%) for the month, against consensus for 0.3% growth following January's (revised from 0.6%) 0.5%.

Against January 2023, wages were up 4.3%.

The participation rate remained at 62.5%.

Tonight in the **US**, a February consumer inflation expectations report is keenly awaited.

Companies scheduled to report earnings or provide updates later today and tonight include Caseys General Stores, Korea Electric and Oracle Corp.

Commodities

COMMODITY	CLOSE	\$US/	+/-	%
Gold (COMEX 100 Apr)	2185.5	oz	20.3	0.9
Silver (COMEX 5000 May)	24.52	oz	-0.03	-0.2
Platinum (Spot)	912	oz	-6	-0.7
WTI Crude (NYMEX Apr)	78.01	bbl	-0.92	-1.2
Brent Crude (ICE EUR May)	82.08	bbl	-0.88	-1.1
Iron Ore (NYMEX CHN port;62%Fe)	117.05	t	-91	-0.4
Copper (LME 3mth Evening)	8590	t	-60	-0.7
Nickel	18044	t	25	0.1
Aluminium	2245	t	-13	-0.6
Lead	2109	t	-2	-0.1
Zinc	2530	t	-8	-0.3
Tin	27640	t	27	0.1

Commodities Commentary

Oil – Brent and WTI crude prices fell in concert overnight Friday, amid ongoing security of supply concerns, but also international economic growth and likely China demand considerations.

Yemen's Houthis revealed they had newly targeted a cargo tanker they had deemed to be US owned and also US warships.

Speculation continued regarding the absence of firm stimulus support measures coming out of China's National People's Congress and following the release of crude import figures which revealed a recent slowing.

OPEC+ February production was estimated at 212,000bbl/d greater than for January.

A weekly US petroleum drill rig report, released by Baker Hughes overnight Friday, included two fewer oil rigs in operation, pegging back the tally of operational oil rigs to 504.

The total operational petroleum rig count fell by seven to 622, reportedly 124 rigs (16.6%) lower than for a year ago.

Brent crude was reported 1.8% lower for the week and WTI down 2.5%.

Gold – overnight Friday trade produced further price gains, even though US employment statistics proved mixed against timing views for likely monetary policy moves. The report appeared a major influence however, in pulling prices from intra-session highs.

Also overnight Friday, three European Central Bank (ECB)

redundant by month's end.

SRX is conferring with the Government of Sierra Leone in an effort not to permanently shut down Area 1.

Strike Resources (SRK)

SRK has completed the \$A20.5M cash sale of Paulsens East iron ore project.

\$20M has been received ahead of \$500,000 due 30 June.

SRK has used part proceeds to pay out a \$US7.2M loan.

SRK held \$7.5M cash at COB Friday.

Nordic Nickel (NNL)

Finland Pulju nickel project Hotinvaara prospect resource updated to 418Mt @ 0.21% Ni, 0.01% Co & 53ppm Cu, for 862,800t of contained nickel, 40,000t of cobalt and 22,100t of copper.

Additional details lodged this morning.

Magnum Mining & Exploration (MGU)

MGU has appointed CEO Neil Goodman also as MD.

MGU non-executive director Matt Latimore has retired from the MGU board.

MGU traded as high as 2.5c Friday after revealing plans to acquire 50% of Middle East for Metallic Industrial.

Energy

88 Energy (88E)

Alaska Hickory-1 well bore preparations have been completed ahead of two flow tests involving fracking.

Testing is expected to be completed by month's end.

Woodside Energy (WDS)

Climate transition teleconference scheduled to commence 9.30am AEDT tomorrow.

Teleconference access details and climate transition action plan presentation lodged pre-trade 27 February.

Trading Halts

Company	Code	Resuming
ARC Funds	ARC	11 Mar
Avenira Ltd	AEV	12 Mar
Deep Yellow	DYL	11 Mar
IMEXHS Ltd	IME	11 Mar
IXUP Ltd	IXU	11 Mar
Lake Resources	LKE	12 Mar
Narryer Metals	NYM	11 Mar
Santana Minerals	SMI	12 Mar
Sihayo Gold	SIH	12 Mar

Suspensions (selected)

Company	Code	Since
Allegra Medical Technologies	AMT	23 Feb
Audio Pixels Holdings	AKP	1 Mar



policymakers offered expectations of at least one interest rate cut by mid-year.

A continuing relatively weak \$US also supported some overnight Friday gold interest.

This week's US CPI update is expected to prove a major influence on this week's trade sentiment. A UK GDP reading, tracking the three months to 31 January, will also be closely watched.

Base metals – overnight Friday trade vacillated on economic growth prospects commentary, in particular for China, and on varying monetary policy expectations.

Meanwhile, venturing an optimal stabilisation price range of 80,000 – 150,000 yuan/t, the chair of China's Ganfeng Lithium predicted lithium prices would trend upwards over the long-term, despite intermediate fluctuations.

China's February CPI reading, published Saturday, surprised with its strength, representing 1.0% inflation growth from 0.3% for January and against expectations for 0.7%.

Further, against February 2023, inflation was up 0.7% against the annualised 0.8% deflation quoted for January.

February producer prices, also reported Saturday, declined by 2.7% year-on-year, roughly in line with forecasts.

Interpretation of the inflation figures, in conjunction with final comments out of the National People's Congress, are expected to influence some trade **tonight**.

Also **this week**, no shortage of attention will be focused on any comments out of a meeting reportedly to be convened by the China Nonferrous Metals Association for greater than a dozen of China's major copper smelters.

Exchange Rates

CURRENCIES	LAST	+/-	%
AUD – USD	0.6621	-0.0006	-0.09
EUR – USD	1.0939	-0.0002	-0.01

US Data Tonight

Consumer inflation expectations	Feb
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Other Overseas Data Today & Tonight

Japan	GDP (final)	Dec Q
Japan	Machine tool orders (5pm AEDT)	Feb

Need More Information?

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Cann Group	CAN	1 Mar
Celsius Resources	CLA	6 Mar
Dubber Corporation	DUB	29 Feb
Keybridge Capital	KBC	1 Mar
KneoMedia Ltd	KNM	7 Mar
Land & Homes Group	LHM	1 Mar
Lion One Metals	LLO	14 Feb
Minbos Resources	MNB	26 Feb
Netlinkz Ltd	NET	26 Feb

Ex-Dividends

Code	Ex-Div	Div (c)	Franking (%)	Yield (%)
ADH	Today	5	100	3.33
COG	Today	4	100	5.66
CRN	Today	0.53	100	0.78
CSL	Today	182.57	0	1.27
DSK	Today	2.5	100	14.10
GDG	Today	1	50	1.03
JYC	Today	11	100	7.12
NAC	Today	1.5	100	7.77
NSC	Today	1.25	100	7.94
PIC	Today	4	100	5.86
RHC	Today	40	100	0.44
SVW	Today	23	100	1.10
TRA	Today	5.63	85	5.38
BWF	Tomorrow	2.5	100	4.50
GRR	Tomorrow	2	100	4.30
IGO	Tomorrow	11	100	7.42
LIC	Tomorrow	5.5	100	0.38
MTO	Tomorrow	3	100	13.33
NWS	Tomorrow	10.72	0	0.52
NWSLV	Tomorrow	10.72	0	0.52
PSI	Tomorrow	5.7	60	1.66
YAL	Tomorrow	32.5	100	17.43

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