



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**AUSTRALIANS MOST CONFIDENT OF ALL DEVELOPED NATIONS, ACCORDING TO NIELSEN
GLOBAL SURVEY**

Sydney, AUSTRALIA (22 February 2012) – Despite regular reports of doom and gloom, Australians have the highest consumer confidence of all developed nations, according to fourth quarter 2011 global consumer confidence findings from Nielsen, a leading global provider of information and insights into what consumers watch and buy.

Furthermore, the confidence of Australian consumers increased in the last quarter for the first time since July 2010, while it fell in 60 percent of the 56 markets surveyed globally.

Of the developed nations surveyed by Nielsen, the most positive countries after Australia are Norway and Canada. Not surprisingly, Europe, which is struggling with the Eurozone debt crisis, accounts for eight of the 10 most depressed markets including Greece, Italy, Portugal, France and Spain.

When it comes to job prospects in 2012, just over half (53%) of Australians believed employment opportunities are either good or excellent, compared to only 42 percent of global respondents.

Additionally, 59 percent of Australians think their personal finances will improve over the next 12 months – compared to 52 percent of global respondents.

Chris Percy, Managing Director of Nielsen Pacific, says: “While Australians still seem to be cautious, we have seen an uplift in consumer confidence in the last quarter. Reports of low retail spending are still concerning, but we hope, or the retailers will hope, that this increased consumer sentiment will begin to translate into better results for retailers as 2012 progresses, although we still predict a challenging year ahead for the retail sector.

“The RBA's surprise decision to keep rates on hold may weigh on future consumer sentiment, particularly with all of the major banks raising their mortgage rates independently of the RBA's judgement, in a bid to protect profits.”

When it comes to buying discretionary items, exactly half (50%) of Australians thought the next 12 months would be a good time to spend money – up seven percent on the previous quarter. While this may seem low, globally only 32 percent believed the next 12 months would be a good time to buy items.

Australians are still putting money away for a rainy day, with 44 percent signalling they will be putting discretionary money into savings and one-third (34%) paying off debts. These figures are relatively stagnant when compared with previous quarters.

In a positive sign for the retail sector, almost one-quarter of Australians will be putting money towards home improvements, decorating or new technology – an increase on the previous quarter. However, the money people are looking to spend on new clothes remains stagnant at 23 percent, and 12 percent of respondents indicated they have no spare cash.

Chris Percy added: “Nielsen undertakes a quarterly global survey reviewing a range of factors to determine national confidence levels, including consumers' general outlook with regards to the economy, but also specific predictions around spending habits.

“When it comes to people's two major concerns, these remain the same around utility bills and the economy. Interestingly, concerns around food and fuel prices dropped when compared to the previous quarter, which could partly be due to pricing activity from the major retailers.”

The Nielsen survey found that more than two-thirds (70%) of Australians are trying to save on gas and electricity bills to cut down household expenditure. The rise of private label products is also set to continue, with 61percent indicating they have switched to cheaper grocery brands to save money.

Three **most optimistic developed** nations*:

1. Australia
2. Norway
3. Canada

Three **most optimistic developing** nations*:

1. India
2. Indonesia
3. Philippines

Three **most pessimistic developed** nations*:

1. Portugal
2. Greece
3. South Korea

Three **most pessimistic developing** nations*:

1. Hungary
2. Croatia
3. Romania

** Countries stated as either developed or developing have been taken from their category on the International Monetary Fund's World Economic Outlook Report, April 2011.*

About the Nielsen Global Survey

The Nielsen Global Survey of Consumer Confidence and Spending Intentions was conducted between November 23 and December 9, 2011 and polled more than 28,000 online consumers in 56 countries throughout Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and North America. The sample has quotas based on age and sex for each country based on their Internet users, and is weighted to be representative of Internet consumers and has a maximum margin of error of $\pm 0.6\%$. This Nielsen survey is based on the behaviour of respondents with online access only. Internet penetration rates vary by country. Nielsen uses a minimum reporting standard of 60 percent Internet penetration or 10M online population for survey inclusion. The Nielsen Global Survey was established in 2005.

About Nielsen

Nielsen Holdings N.V. (NYSE: NLSN) is a global information and measurement company with leading market positions in marketing and consumer information, television and other media measurement, online intelligence, mobile measurement, trade shows and related properties. Nielsen has a presence in approximately 100 countries, with headquarters in New York, USA and Diemen, the Netherlands. For more information, visit www.nielsen.com.

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