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Global Economics

Global Central Bank Monitor

The Fed moved to a conditional pause, inflation remains the priority for the ECB, while the BoE's peak rate is now expected in June. Meanwhile, the RBA surprised markets by restarting hikes after a short pause.

On [May 3rd](#), the **Fed** delivered the expected 25bp hike, setting the range of the federal funds rate at 5.00% to 5.25%. Powell delivered moderate confidence in the soft-landing scenario, and conveyed confidence that the Committee may have arrived at the peak rate of interest. Going forward, [our US team sees](#) an extended hold as the Fed pauses through two difficult quarters of growth in the economy this year before making its first 25bp cut in 1Q24. But, like our team, the Fed sees huge uncertainty from banking stresses to the economy, and so will remain data dependent.

On [May 4th](#), the **ECB** hiked by 25bp in line with our Europe team expectations. Inflation continues to be the priority. On the other hand, the tightening in credit standards flagged in the May Bank Lending Survey (BLS) [pointed to a more gradual approach, 25bp instead of 50bp](#). Going forward, our Europe team maintains the view that the ECB will deliver two more hikes of 25bp each in June and July, and stop in September at a terminal rate of 3.75%, but thinks that the risks to the call are no longer skewed to the upside.

On [May 5](#), the **BoE** hiked by 25bp in line with consensus and our UK team. Given some upside risks to the BoE's wage growth forecast in the near term and inflation forecast back to 2% with market-implied rates, our UK team introduced a final hike in June. After that, rates are expected to be on hold until 2024.

In his first policy meeting on [April 28](#), Governor Ueda's overall stance remained dovish, and the status quo of a roughly $\pm 0.5\%$ fluctuation range for the 10-year JGB yield in the YCC policy was maintained. The base case scenario for our Japan team remains that the **BoJ** will effectively remove its YCC in July 2023 (expanding the long-term interest rate's fluctuation range to ± 100 bp in the latter case) while maintaining the negative interest rate policy through 1H 2024.

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The **RBA** surprised consensus and market pricing at its May meeting, hiking the cash rate 25bps to 3.85% against expectations that they would remain on hold (More details [here](#)).

The **BoC** kept rates unchanged at 4.50% in [April](#), and the statement continued to signal that the Bank intends to hold rates at the current level for the rest of 2023. Our Canada team is maintaining its call for the key benchmark rate to remain at 4.50% for the rest of the year. However, they still believe the trajectory of inflation and inflation expectations will be key for the upcoming meetings.

In China, signs of reflation have been limited, allowing accommodative monetary policy and growth focus to be sustained. The **PBoC** announced a 25bp RRR cut on [March 17](#), which was partly anticipated by the market.

In the rest of **Asia**, after staying on hold at its past two meetings, **BNM** hiked rates by 25bp on [May 3rd](#), citing the need to "prevent the risks of future imbalances." As inflation moves back comfortably into the target range from 3Q23 in Indonesia, interest rate [cuts are expected from 4Q23](#), which would make **BI** the first central bank in Asia to cut rates. The **RBI** kept rates unchanged on [April 6](#), contrary to our and consensus expectations of a 25bp rate hike. Going forward, our India team expects rates to remain unchanged in CY23, and thinks there will be a shallow rate cut cycle in 1HCY24. On [April 11](#), the **BoK** kept rates on hold and our Korea team thinks that the bank is likely to remain on hold throughout 2023.

In **LatAm**, the **BCB** kept rates unchanged at 13.75% for the sixth consecutive meeting on [May 4](#). The committee kept the language that "it will not hesitate to resume the tightening cycle if the disinflationary process does not proceed as expected", but now stated that this scenario is "less likely", making the statement a bit more dovish. On [April 28](#), **BanRep** once again hiked by 25bp emphasizing that core inflation remains high at the margin. On [March 30](#), **Banxico** hiked rates by 25bp, and our Mexico team thinks that future hikes depend on inflation prints. On [May 12](#), Chile's **BCCH** kept the benchmark rate unchanged at 11.25%.

In **CEEMEA**, **CNB** left its key policy rate unchanged at 7% on [May 3rd](#), and our CEEMEA team expects a first cut in 4Q23. The **NBP** is likely to remain on hold throughout 2023. On April 25, the **NBH** kept both its base and 1-day deposit rates unchanged, [but it cut the upper bound of its interest rate corridor](#). On April 27, the **CBT** kept the policy rate on hold at 8.50%, but the presidential election outcome, [could shift our current view](#). On [March 30](#), **SARB** shifted back into hawkish territory and surprised markets with a larger-than-expected 50bp hike.

RBA - A Short Pause

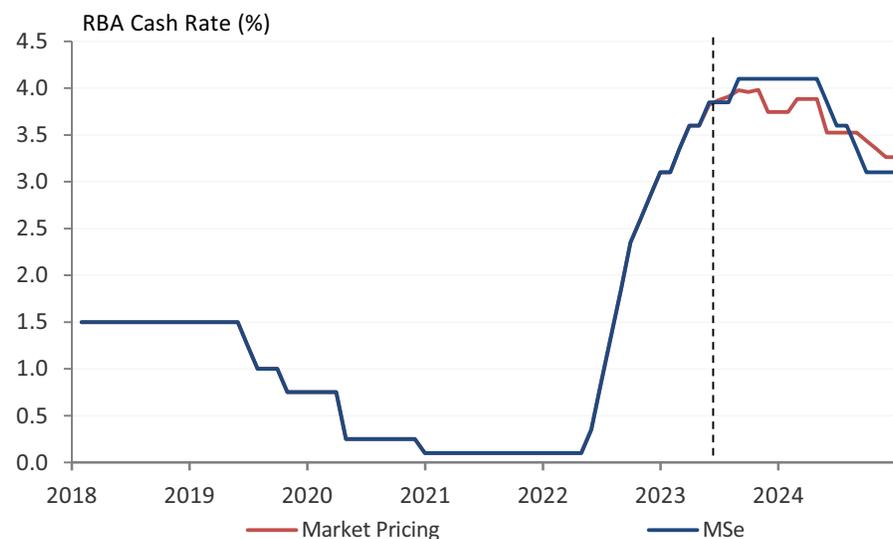
Chris Read

The RBA surprised consensus and market pricing at its May meeting, hiking the cash rate 25bp to 3.85% against expectations that they would remain on hold.

This hike comes after the RBA moved to a pause at its prior meeting in April, stopping tightening after 10 consecutive rate increases. While the RBA had retained a tightening bias at the meeting, they had stated a desire to pause to “assess the lagged impact of prior tightening.” This communication pushed both market pricing and consensus to the view that the peak had been reached. We had expected some further tightening, but after a longer period of assessment (restarting in August).

The surprise move is even more notable because the RBA stated a desire to watch the data flow, and the data came broadly in line with expectations. 1Q23 CPI printed headline a touch higher than consensus, but core a touch lower). The unemployment rate stayed near record lows in March but was consistent with RBA forecasts. And March retail spending growth continued to grind lower. Moreover, the RBA’s quarterly staff economic forecast update at the May meeting was little changed from the prior forecast in February. Inflation was still expected to reach the top of the 2-3% target band by mid-2025 (and was revised down slightly for 2023), unemployment was expected to rise from 3.5% to 4.5%, and GDP growth was expected to stay below trend for this year and next.

Exhibit 1: The RBA unexpectedly raised the cash rate to 3.85% in May after pausing rate hikes at the prior meeting

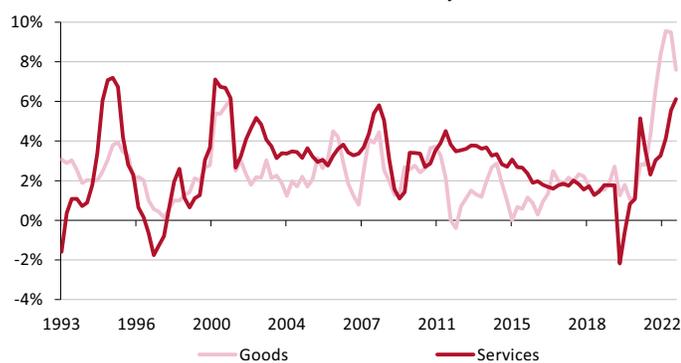


Source: Bloomberg, Morgan Stanley Research

So what drove the RBA’s quick pivot back to rate hikes after just a month on hold? There look to be three key reasons for the move:

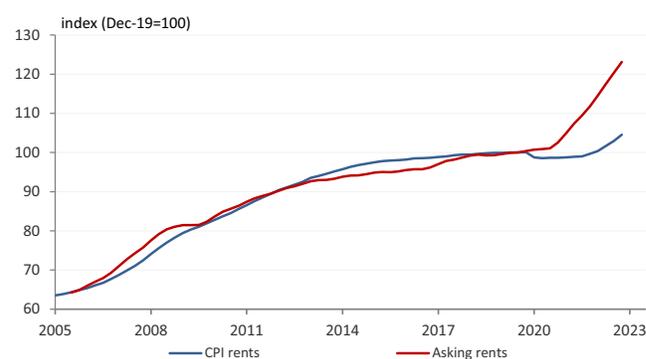
1) An increased focus on services inflation and wages. Despite the in-line CPI print for Q1, the RBA commentary at the May meeting zeroed in on the services inflation component, which continued to accelerate. This focus lines up with commentary in their April Meeting Minutes the prior month where upside risk to services inflation were flagged. In particular, there was attention on continued acceleration in rents given very strong immigration, as well as broader wage growth over 2H23 particularly in the public sector. While these risks alone do not appear to have changed the RBA's central inflation outlook, they are clearly concerned around the potential for stickier services inflation.

Exhibit 2: Services inflation continues to accelerate, worrying the RBA even as headline and core inflation was broadly in line in 1Q



Source: ABS, Morgan Stanley Research

Exhibit 3: Rents, wages and energy costs are all likely to put further upward pressure on inflation over 2023, even as goods disinflation pushes headline lower

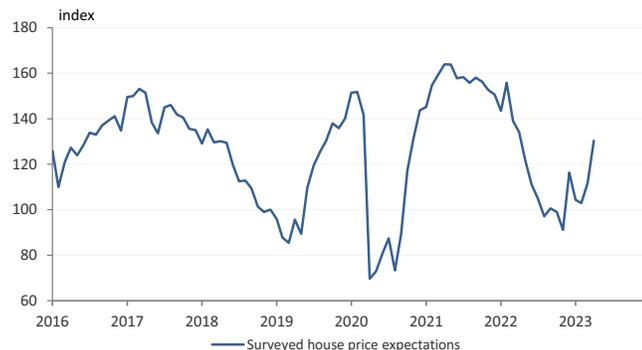


Source: ABS, Corelogic, Morgan Stanley Research

2) Perceived shift in global risks from activity to inflation: Given the highly uncertain outlook, the RBA is clearly watching the experiences of other central banks closely. Relative to the last meeting in early April the characterization of the global risks had notably shifted. At the prior meeting the emphasis had been on recent banking stresses and the downside risk to the global economy. At the May meeting however, the focus was replaced with attention to upside risks to the inflation outlook (particularly in services).

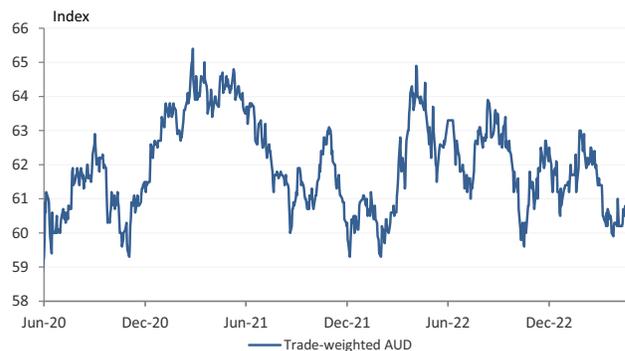
3) Asset price and sentiment reaction to the pause: The RBA also flagged the impact from the change in interest rate expectations as an important factor in restarting rate hikes. Consumer sentiment rose significantly last month after the RBA pause was signalled and then delivered - although in absolute terms it remains near recessionary levels. More importantly though was the change in financial conditions post the meeting - with the RBA noting the move in asset prices in response to the changed interest rate outlook. The RBA explicitly flagged two areas here - housing prices, which had increased in March and April, and are considered a key channel of monetary policy, and the exchange rate, which ahead of the meeting had fallen to near a two year low on a trade-weighted basis - added to the outlook for imported inflation.

Exhibit 4: House price expectations have rallied sharply since the start of the year as RBA terminal rates (and eventual pivot) was anticipated



Source: WBC-MI, Morgan Stanley Research

Exhibit 5: The broad AUD had fallen near two year lows ahead of the May meeting, putting upward pressure on imported inflation



Source: Bloomberg, Morgan Stanley Research

So where to from here? The RBA retained a tightening bias at the May meeting noting that "some further tightening of monetary policy may be required" - but more importantly "that will depend upon how the economy and inflation evolve." So the emphasis is clearly on a data dependent and flexible path from here. Given the RBA's service inflation concern there are several catalysts over coming months including wages data (17 May), unit labour costs (7 June) and the minimum wage decision (mid-June). We still expect a further hike from the RBA, but favor the August meeting which would be the next forecast update from the RBA.

Global Central Bank Summary

Exhibit 6: Summary of Central Bank Policy Views as of May 16, 2023

Economy	Current Policy Rate (Last Change)	Next Meeting Date	End of Quarter Policy Rate Forecast (21Q1E to 24Q4E)	Next Expected Move	Timing of Next Expected Move
G10					
US	5.125% (+25 bps)	14-Jun-2023		-25 bp	1Q24
Euro Area	3.25% (+25 bps)	15-Jun-2023		+25 bp	Jun-23
Japan	-0.10% (N/A)	16-Jun-2023		+10 bp	3Q24
UK	4.50% (+25 bps)	22-Jun-2023		+25 bp	Jun-23
Canada	4.50% (N/A)	7-Jun-2023		-50 bp	1Q24 (January 31)
Norway	3.25% (+25 bps)	22-Jun-2023		+25 bp	Jun-23
Sweden	3.50% (+50 bps)	29-Jun-2023		+25 bp	Jun-23
Australia	3.85% (+25 bps)	6-Jun-2023		+25 bp	Aug-23
EM					
CEEMEA					
Russia	7.50% (N/A)	9-Jun-2023		-25 bp	Feb-24
Poland	6.75% (N/A)	6-Jun-2023		-25 bp	1Q24
Czech Rep.	7.00% (N/A)	21-Jun-2023		-25 bp	4Q23
Hungary	13.00% (N/A)	23-May-2023		-50 bp	4Q23
Ukraine	25.00% (N/A)	15-Jun-2023		-500 bp	2Q24
Turkey	8.50% (N/A)	25-May-2023		N/A	N/A
South Africa	7.75% (+50 bps)	25-May-2023		-25 bp	1Q24
AXJ					
China	2.00% (N/A)	End Jun		N/A	N/A
India	6.50% (N/A)	8-Jun-2023		-25 bp	1Q24
Korea	3.50% (N/A)	25-May-2023		-25 bp	1Q24
Indonesia	5.75% (N/A)	25-May-2023		-25 bp	4Q23
LatAm					
Brazil	13.75% (N/A)	21-Jun-2023		-25 bp	4Q23 (December 13)
Mexico	11.25% (+25 bps)	18-May-2023		-25 bp	4Q23 (November 9)
Chile	11.25% (N/A)	19-Jun-2023		-50 bp	3Q23 (Sept 5)
Colombia	13.25% (+25 bps)	30-Jun-2023		-50 bp	4Q23 (October 27)
Peru	7.75% (N/A)	8-Jun-2023		-25 bp	3Q23 (September 14)

Source: Haver, Morgan Stanley Research Forecast

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	COUNT	% OF TOTAL	COUNT	% OF TOTAL IBC	% OF RATING CATEGORY	COUNT	% OF TOTAL OTHER MSC
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Not-Rated/Under	5	0%	1	0%	20%	1	0%
Underweight/Sell	639	17%	70	11%	11%	228	15%
TOTAL	3,661		647			1549	

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