

## **Corporate Australia's reputation rises** ***Annual Reputation Index results released; most scores lift from 2008***

**Sydney, June 23, 2009:** The image of big business in Australia appears to be emerging from the global financial crisis relatively unscathed or even improved, with the Corporate Reputation of most major Australian organisations lifting during the past 12 months, according to a recent study.

Despite negative economic conditions, the results of AMR Interactive's annual Corporate Reputation Index shows consumers view most Australian corporations more positively than in 2008, when the reputation of many big companies fell significantly.

Australia Post tops the index in 2009, knocking previous leader Cadbury Schweppes down to third place. Toyota Motor Corporation again came in second, for the third year running. Nestle Australia and Virgin Blue came in fourth and fifth respectively.

Banks saw the greatest improvement in consumer perception as an industry group; the overall scores of ANZ, Commonwealth Bank and Westpac all rose from 2008, with only ING Australia falling slightly, sinking in the rankings from 6<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> place.

AMR's Reputation Practice Director and General Manager, Oliver Freedman said the results indicated that stability and security were important attributes to most Australians looking for companies that can lead well through the financial crisis.

"In 2008, our results showed that the Australian public were particularly scathing of companies who are shown to be acting inappropriately. In 2009, our results show that efforts by Corporate Australia to reassure consumers about their ethical behaviour, ability to trade under difficult economic conditions and provide security are all paying dividends for Corporate Reputation."

Produced each year by research consultancy AMR Interactive and released this month, the Reputation Index measures how Australians aged 18-64 score our 60 top companies<sup>1</sup>, and ranks them accordingly. It is part of a global 27-country study produced in conjunction with the Reputation Institute<sup>2</sup>.

In addition to measuring the reputations of Australia's Top 60 companies, this year AMR also studied consumer perceptions of the top four banks in detail. On average, 64 per cent of those surveyed felt the responsible running of the banks had improved or stayed the same during the past 12 months. "This was mainly due to the perception of improved service, and positive image in the market," Freedman said.

"Among those who felt governance among the banks had declined, common reasons were around negative aspects of high costs and fees, the global financial crisis and not passing on rate cuts announced by the RBA."

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<sup>1</sup> The list of Top 60 Australian companies studied in the Reputation Index is compiled by AMR by using the BRW Top 100 list. Companies are excluded if they are not national, or only have a regional presence, or have a 'Business to Business' focus.

<sup>2</sup> The Reputation Institute is the leading international organisation dedicated to advancing knowledge about corporate reputations. Founded in 1997, the Reputation Institute has been a pioneer and global leader in the development of measurement tools and counsel to leading corporations around the world.

Australia's Automotive sector did not fare so well in this year's study results. GM Holden's reputation fell from 12<sup>th</sup> place in 2008 to 22<sup>nd</sup> place in 2009. Daimler Australia Pacific also fell in the rankings from 27<sup>th</sup> to 39<sup>th</sup>. Only Ford Australia saw an increase in consumer perception; an increase in overall points saw it rise from 26<sup>th</sup> in 2008 to 18<sup>th</sup> in 2009.

In other results, the reputation of Cadbury Schweppes took the biggest hit, dropping 7.6 points, but only falling from first to third place in the rankings. BHP Billion, Rio Tinto and Allianz Australia also had falls in scores compared with 2008.

New entrants Bendigo and Adelaide Bank, and Virgin Blue made strong impressions on consumers in the 2009 study, entering at 7<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> places respectively.

Freedman said that in addition to measuring overall reputation, the Reputation Index also measured how Australians felt about each company according to seven parameters; Products, Innovation, Workplace, Citizenship, Governance, Leadership and Performance.

Toyota Motor Corporation topped the list for Products and Innovation, Virgin Blue came out on top for Leadership and Workplace, Coca-Cola Amatil for Performance and Australia Post for Citizenship and Governance.

AMR Interactive is part of STW Communications Group, Australia's leading marketing content and communications services group.

#### **About the Reputation Index:**

Other major reputation or Corporate Responsibility studies conducted in Australia use a self-rating system; the companies being analysed voluntarily provide the data, which can then be audited. **However, the Reputation Index is different because it collates insight direct from consumers, and does not rely on any information provided by the companies being studied.**

Only adults aged 18-64 are surveyed as part of the Reputation Index in Australia, with results weighted to ensure they represent appropriate gender and age groups.

**Ends.**

**Please note – a full list of rankings for 2009 follows**

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#### **About AMR Interactive**

AMR Interactive is a research consultancy that brings innovation, integration and insight to drive business success. AMR Interactive has operated in Australia for more than twenty years, offering a full range of research services to business and government. From advertising effectiveness and brand equity studies through to corporate reputation, customer satisfaction, concept testing and pricing AMR Interactive offers a complete research consultancy service. Our mission is to drive our clients' success with the best people, products & processes.

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## 2009 – Corporate Reputation Index rankings

1	Australia Post	31	ANZ
2	Toyota Motor Corporation	32	BHP Billiton
3	Cadbury Schweppes	33	Fosters Group
4	Nestle Australia	34	Suncorp
5	Virgin Blue	35	Medibank Private
6	Myer	36	Shell Australia
7	Bendigo and Adelaide Bank	37	Crown
8	BlueScope Steel	38	TRUenergy
9	Woolworths	39	Daimler Australia Pacific
10	IBM Australia	40	Allianz Australia
11	ING Direct	41	Origin Energy
12	ING Australia	42	AMP
13	Wesfarmers	43	RioTinto
14	Hewlett-Packard	44	AGL Energy
15	Qantas Airways	45	AXA Asia Pacific
16	Harvey Norman	46	Westpac
17	Mazda Australia	47	Macquarie Group
18	Ford Australia	48	Optus
19	CSR	49	Caltex Australia
20	Air New Zealand	50	Visy Industries
21	Coca-Cola Amatil	51	National Australia Bank
22	GM Holden	52	BP Australasia
23	David Jones	53	Fairfax Media
24	Vodafone Australia	54	Australian Taxation Office
25	Country Energy	55	Tabcorp
26	Commonwealth Bank of Australia	56	AAPT
27	Westfield Group	57	Telstra
28	QBE Insurance	58	Exxonmobil Australia
29	EnergyAustralia	59	Australian Wheat Board
30	IAG	60	Centrelink