

ASX Today: Aussie shares subdued as coronavirus impacts iPhone production



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It was another subdued day on the Aussie market as investors waded through a swamp of half-year reports while US stocks closed mixed after their long weekend.

Tech giant Apple dampened things further when it announced the coronavirus will impact iPhone supplies as Chinese production slows. With the **Dow Jones** losing 0.09 per cent overnight, the outlook was fairly bleak for markets down under.

Keeping up with expectations, the **ASX 200** slipped quickly this morning to simmer between 0.1 and 0.3 red over the trading session. When the market closed shop for the day, our benchmark index was 0.16 per cent lower at 7113.70 points.

Consumer stocks slumped today as Coles released its interim report for the 2020 financial year. Though the supermarket giant saw growth in revenue, earnings, and net profit after tax, the market seemed to be wanting more. Coles slipped 0.95 per cent today.

Woolworths' 0.58 per cent gain was enough to offset the losses across both the **consumer staples** sector, but **consumer discretionary** was not so lucky. Retail conglomerate Wesfarmers declined 0.44 per cent while Aristocrat Leisure lost 1.21 per cent.

Meanwhile, after a few days' respite, the **energy sector** continued the decline it has become so used to as oil prices continue to slump. Woodside lost 1.32 per cent, Santos 0.98 per cent, Origin 0.26 per cent, and Oil Search a heavy 1.55 per cent.

The two twin-pillars of the ASX, the **finance and materials sectors**, tried their best to steady the rocky Aussie share market today.

Three of our four **big banks** took back some of yesterday's lost ground, led by Commonwealth Bank's 0.89 per cent gain. Westpac gained 0.51 per cent and ANZ 0.26 per cent, while NAB stayed grey.

As for our **big miners**, BHP's US\$4.9 billion (A\$7.33 billion) in half-year profit helped buffer the market from its sectors' losses. BHP gained 0.81 per cent, while Rio Tinto gained 0.48 per cent and Fortescue gained 1.28 per cent. Overall, however, materials gained a slight 0.024 per cent.

Health care stocks saw a rare decline today, but the sector has still gained over 17 per cent since the start of 2020. Today, biotech giant CSL lost 0.41 per cent and Cochlear a hefty 3.39 per cent. Our healthcare providers, Ramsay, Sonic, and Fisher & Paykel, lost 0.99 per cent, 0.16 per cent, and 0.84 per cent, respectively.

Over to the east, **Asian markets** had a similarly red day. When the ASX closed, the **Asia Dow** was down 1.01 per cent, Japan's **Nikkei 225** 1.50 per cent, Hong Kong's **Hang Seng** 1.44 per cent, and the **Shanghai Composite** 0.30 per cent.

Back down under, the Aussie dollar is slightly weaker today. Currently, one dollar is worth US\$0.6691, €0.6176, and £0.5146.

Today's ups and downs

Biotech company **Holista Colltech (ASX:HCT)** is making headlines once more with a fresh shipment of 90,000 NatShield anti-viral hand sanitisers announced today just days after January's 60,000-unit order sold out. The company's products help protect users from the spreading deadly coronavirus with Holista's plant-based Path-Away drug. The company gained another 51 per cent today, bringing its total increase since the start of 2020 to just under 200 per cent.

Meanwhile, online retailer **Kogan (ASX:KGN)** fell victim to high market expectations today. Though the company reported record gross sales and profits in its latest half-yearly report, revenue was slightly lower than over the same period in 2018. The company attributes the lowered revenue to its new Kogan Marketplace business which, though growing quickly, only records seller fees as revenue. Kogan lost 3.49 per cent over today's trading session, closing with shares worth a flat \$5 each.