



Media Monitoring

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<http://www.smh.com.au/news/business/stocks-open-in-negative-territory/2007/01/10/1168105027783.html>

Stocks open in negative territory

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The Australian share market has opened slightly weaker, after a poor lead from the US and a drop in the resource sector.

By 10.15am, the benchmark S&P/ASX200 had fallen 11.1 points to 5578.7, while the All Ordinaries tumbled 10.4 points to 5553.7.

On the Sydney Futures Exchange, the March share price Index contract lost 13 points to 5569 on a volume of 2,879 contracts.

Mining giant BHP Billiton withdrew 51 cents to \$24.19, and rival Rio Tinto slid \$1.15 cents to \$70.49.

In the US, stocks fell as a weaker oil price hit energy stocks, but losses were limited by a rise in Apple Computers, which announced the release of a new combination iPod, touch screen mobile phone.

The Dow Jones industrial average fell 6.89 points to 12,416.60 and the Standard & Poor's 500 Index reversed 0.73 points to 1,412.11.

But a rise in Apple shares helped the Nasdaq Composite Index add 5.63 points to 2,443.83.

CMC Markets senior dealer Phillip Martin said the market fell because of the metals and resources sectors.

"BHP is down around two and a quarter per cent. RIO also suffered," he said.

"This fall is also on the back of falling base metal prices in London overnight, like zinc, which has seen the likes of Zinifex fall 4 per cent."

In London, zinc fell \$US200 to end at \$US3,520.

At 10.28am, Australia's largest zinc and lead producer, Zinifex, plummeted 82 cents, or 4.79 per cent, to \$16.30.

Oil and gas supplier Woodside Petroleum dropped 44 cents to \$35.69, while Santos lifted 20 cents to \$10.00.

Oil and gas explorer **Alto Energy** International lifted 0.2 cents to seven cents after announcing it had secured \$4 million in working capital from major shareholder Macquarie Bank.

Macquarie Bank shares climbed 75 cents to \$77.35.

National Australia Bank fell 20 cents to \$40.20, Commonwealth Bank lost 12 cents to \$49.39, Westpac dropped 7 cents to \$23.94 and ANZ was down 1 cent to \$27.68.

St George shed 6 cents to \$32.50.

In other news, the gaming joint venture between Publishing and Broadcasting Ltd and Melco International Development Ltd has raised \$US160 million (\$A205 million) through an offer of shares to the underwriters of its initial public offering (IPO).

Publishing and Broadcasting lifted 1 cent to \$20.24.

Other media shares were mixed. News Corp climbed 52 cents to \$29.50, Ten was up 1 cent to \$3.24, Fairfax was steady at \$4.78, while Seven lost 15 cents to \$11.22.

At 10.40am, Telstra shares lifted 3 cents to \$4.13, while rival Singapore Telecommunications lost 4 cents to \$2.65.

Qantas rose 1 cent to \$5.31, after the airline's boss, Geoff Dixon, denied a cover-up following a report that a packed passenger jet flew with a huge hole in its side.

Retailers were mixed. Woolworths rose 21 cents to \$23.13, while Westfield fell 6 cents to \$20.62, Coles lost 3 cents to \$13.92, David Jones shed 1 cent to \$4.04 and Harvey Norman was steady at \$3.94.

The spot price of gold in Sydney was \$US613.1 at 10.46am, up from \$US612.50 at yesterday's close.

Newcrest Mining fell 45 cents to \$24.35, Lihir Gold dropped 6 cents to \$2.85 and Newmont lost 1 cent to \$5.53.

At 10.48am, Bio Prospect was the top traded stock by volume with 41.2 million shares traded worth \$1.58 million. Its share price lifted 0.3 cents to 3.7 cents.

Total market turnover was 380.9 million shares worth a total \$1.17 billion, with 362 stocks moving up, 431 stocks moving down and 337 unchanged.