OMI BENTLEY AUSTRALIAN DOLLAR BALANCED FUND

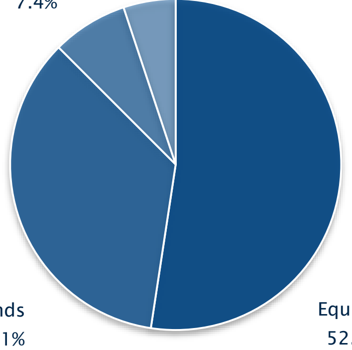
31ST DECEMBER 2018

BENTLEY REID

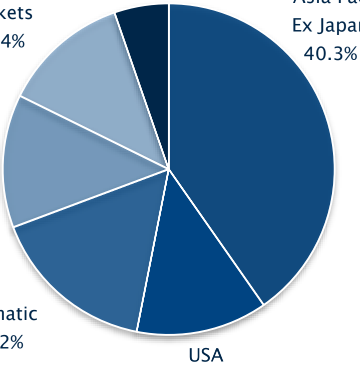
INVESTMENT OBJECTIVE

The fund seeks to achieve an average annual return of CPI + 3% over any 5-year period, after all fees, with about half the risk of a pure equity exposure. Though the mandate favours equity investment, the investment manager has the latitude to actively allocate between different asset classes to protect values and reduce volatility. The fund aims to maximise returns in AUD terms.

ASSET ALLOCATION



EQUITY BREAKDOWN



EQUITIES	**52.4%**
Asia Pac ex Japan	**21.1%**
Hermes Asia ex Japan	2.3%
iShares MSCI Australia	10.1%
Xtrackers S&P ASX 200	8.7%
UK	**6.8%**
City Financial Absolute Equity	2.6%
Janus Henderson UK Absolute Return $ Hdg	4.2%
US	**6.7%**
DB X-Trackers S&P Inverse	4.8%
iShares S&P 500 Financials	1.9%
Japan	**2.8%**
Vanguard FTSE Japan	2.8%
Emerging Markets	**6.5%**
1167 High Income	2.1%
Stewart Latin America	2.0%
Schroder EM Debt Absolute Return AUD Hdg	2.4%
Thematic	**8.5%**
Fundsmith Equity	3.2%
Jupiter Global Abs Ret $ Hdg	2.0%
Kennox Strategic Value	3.3%
ALTERNATIVES	**7.4%**
Pictet Physical Gold	7.4%
BONDS	**35.1%**
Swisscanto AUD Bond	16.9%
UBS AUD Bond	13.8%
iShares Index Linked	4.4%
CASH	**5.1%**

QUARTERLY INVESTMENT REPORT

Last quarter saw most headline stock markets fall by 15-20%, which took many indices in the US, Europe and Asia into bear market territory. Commodity and corporate bond prices finished the year under pressure too as mounting fears over slowing global growth and a further tightening of liquidity conditions spooked investors.

The Australian stock market (as measured by the ASX 200 index) fell by 8% last quarter, but the fund price declined by just 1.5%, meaning we are protecting most of the prior gains. Turning to longer-term performance, at 2.3% p.a., the fund's 5-year average annual return ends 2018 below its target of inflation + 3%.

Given the limited drawdown during the recent turbulence, this is mainly the result of us not participating more aggressively in the final stages of the bull market between mid-2016 and late 2017. In hindsight, we de-risked too early, but recent events are helping to validate our caution. The fund's risk profile was further reduced in the early stages of the quarter via a reduction in the home market and European equities holdings.

continued overleaf

PERFORMANCE (NET OF FEES)*

	3 Months	YTD	1 Year	3 Year (Ann.)	5 Year (Ann.)
Fund	-1.5%	-1.2%	-1.2%	-0.3%	2.3%
Inflation (AUS CPI)**	n/a	n/a	1.9%	1.7%	1.8%

12 Months to	31 Dec 18	31 Dec 17	31 Dec 16	31 Dec 15	31 Dec 14
Fund	-1.2%	4.7%	-4.2%	6.6%	5.8%

** the fund's return is calculated net of the Insurance Bond Wrapper cost*
*** the CPI figure is the actual inflation figure and is not adjusted to show the fund's target return. The 3 and 5-yr figures are annualised averages.*

These sales took the aggregate "long" equity exposure below 30%. The defensive positions have also performed better in recent months. The inverse S&P 500 tracker gained 20% in Aussie dollar terms and, as we are yet to see a capitulation sell-off that typically marks the end of a bear market, we retain a 5% weighting. The active long-short managers have also fared well with City Financial (which is short several US healthcare and financial names) rallying 13% last quarter and with US indices falling below key support levels we have initiated a 2.5% position in the Jupiter Global Absolute fund, which is profiting from a similar "short US" strategy.

The more traditional "risk off" holdings have added value in recent months. Gold rose by 11% in Aussie dollar terms as investors sought safe haven assets and began to price in the end of the Federal Reserve's rate hike cycle. These factors also boosted the global government bond market with yields falling (and prices rising) sharply across developed sovereign curves. As a result, the fund's allocations to the Swisscanto and UBS Australian bond funds appreciated by 1% and 2%, respectively. It was also a good quarter for the UK index-linked bond ETF, which rallied 2%, as it benefited from a rise in UK inflation expectations; the result of intensifying Brexit uncertainty and renewed sterling weakness.

The few "risk on" equity positions struggled last quarter with the Japan equity and US financials holdings amongst the main losers. The latter fell by 11% in Aussie dollar terms. With the US yield curve continuing to flatten (a trend that reduces commercial banks' profit potential) and recession risks set to build over the coming months, further downside is likely. We plan to use any meaningful bounce to redeem the positon.

Given the extensive falls in US and European equity markets it was no surprise to see many emerging markets (EM) also suffer, particularly in Asia with the Hermes Asia fund declining by 11%. However, we are encouraged by the recent outperformance of EM assets over their developed market counterparts as this is unusual during such extreme bouts of risk aversion. The Stewart Latin America fund posted a 5% gain last quarter, buoyed by a strong bounce in Brazilian stocks, and the Schroders EM debt fund appreciated by 1%. With signs of stability starting to unfold across multiple EM assets we may look to amplify the fund's exposure to these regions over the coming months.

We expect the equity and credit sell-off in developed markets will continue, but the fund's de-risking process is already complete. Looking ahead, our immediate priority is to ensure that the existing positions, and particularly the more defensive holdings, perform as we expect them to during any further market downside so that we can continue to protect capital. However, we are now turning our attention to how we will gradually "re-risk" the portfolio once market conditions permit. We will first need to see valuations de-rate to more supportive levels and liquidity conditions improve before we can feel comfortable buying back into equities and other risk assets, but some specific opportunities are already starting to look interesting. We would welcome further market weakness because it would encourage us to revert to a more bullish stance for the first time in several years.

PORTFOLIO ACTIVITY

DECREASE EQUITY EXPOSURE (56.0 to 52.5%):
Buy Xtrackers S&P ASX 200 (+9.0%)
Sell Barings Australia (-6.0%)
Sell UBS Australia Equity (-6.0%)
Sell Invesco European Equity (-2.5%)
Buy Jupiter Global Absolute Return $ Hedged (+2.0)

FUND SWITCHES:
Buy 1167 High Income (+2.0%)
Sell iShares MSCI EM (-2.0%)

KEY FACTS

Price	A$1.847
Fund Size	A$1.3m
Benchmark	AUS CPI + 3%
Launch Date	31/05/1998
Prices Published	www.bentleyreid.com

CONTACTS

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