Professional Balanced

Quarterly Investment Option Update

31 March 2020

Aim and Strategy

To provide moderate investment returns over the long term, with the likelihood of fluctuations in the value of the investment from year to year. The portfolio will primarily invest in a diversified mix of defensive and growth assets managed by professional asset managers identified and selected by ipac within each asset class.

Investment Option Performance

To view the latest investment performances for each product, please visit www.amp.com.au

Investment Option Overview

Investment category	Multi-Sector
Suggested minimum investment timeframe	5 years
Relative risk rating	Medium to High
Investment style	Active
Manager style	Multi-manager

Asset Allocation	Benchmark (%)
International shares	30
Australian Shares	29
Australian and International Fixed Interest	20
Cash	7
Listed and Unlisted Property and Infrastructure	7
Growth Alternatives	4
Defensive Alternatives	3

Actual Allocation	%
International Shares	31.14
Australian Shares	27.44
Listed Property and Infrastructure	6.29
Growth Alternatives	3.58
International Fixed Interest	18.12
Defensive Alternatives	3.32
Cash	10.11

Fund Performance

The March 2020 quarter was one of the worst periods ever for global share markets as the COVID-19 pandemic rapidly escalated fears around the globe. The MSCI World ex Australia index finished the period down by 20.0%, having briefly reached lows not seen since 2016 before finishing the period with a late rally. Across regions and sectors, few stocks were spared from the falls, as traders continued to sell in favour of cash. Some panic-selling was evident, particularly later in the quarter as fundamentals undoubtedly took a backseat to momentum-trading. In the final week of March, the market was able to recoup some of these losses as the panic-selling dropped off. Price movements in many stocks were further exacerbated by the triggering of stop-losses, as well as some evidence of forced selling from funds in order to meet redemption requests. Emerging markets couldn't escape the sell-off and performed only marginally better than their developed-market peers.

While some apparent-bargains emerged from the sell-off, assessing the near-term hit to earnings and to what degree markets have priced this in is not easy. Indeed, many companies withdrew their forward guidance. A positive for shares was global stimulus levels promptly reaching unprecedented levels, as a swift, synchronised policy response was seen around the globe in the forms of monetary easing and enormous amounts of targeted fiscal stimulus. In many cases, packages included direct payments to residents and businesses.

Australian shares were also hit heavily by the COVID-19 crisis in the March quarter, falling by 23.1%, as measured by the S&P/ASX200 index on a total return basis. This was despite a strong performance in January which led to record highs being touched early in the quarter, before fears grew around the COVID-19 virus and the likely sharp economic downturn it has caused.

Global government bond yields drifted lower at the start of the year amid geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and the impeachment of US President Donald Trump. Yields subsequently accelerated lower as a rapid escalation in the human and economic impact of COVID-19 prompted global central bankers to significantly lower interest rates and governments to undertake unprecedented fiscal stimulus. Trading was characterised by heightened volatility, reflecting market concerns over the longer-term cost of the fiscal response, contrasting with optimism regarding its near-term social benefits.

Australian government bond yields also moved lower in January against the backdrop of a softening in domestic economic momentum over the preceding months. Yields subsequently exhibited heightened volatility over the remainder of the March quarter as a sharp fall in response to the deepening impact of the COVID-19 crisis gave way to an upward spike amid fears of a liquidity crunch. The RBA addressed the issue of market liquidity by cutting the cash rate by 0.25%, setting a 0.25% yield target for Commonwealth 3-year bonds, and providing funding for domestic banks.

(Indices quoted in local currency terms and on a total-return basis, unless otherwise stated.)

Market Review

The first quarter of 2020 began with the renewed conflicts between the US and Iran and the US-China trade tensions which were later resolved and share markets were encouraged by initial signs the global economy was improving. However, as March approached, the global surge in COVID-19 cases outside of China led to a pandemic. At the end of the quarter, despite the continued rise in new COVID-19 cases (especially in the US and Italy) and signs of a slowdown in global economic activity, share markets had a strong rebound in response to further announcements of unprecedented stimulus measures by governments and central banks.

The Federal Reserve reduced interest rates by a further 100 basis points to 0.00%–0.25% and commenced its quantitative easing. The US government announced the largest fiscal package, worth $US2 trillion. The Bank of Canada lowered its overnight rate target to 0.75% and launched a credit facility program.

In Europe, the UK officially left the European Union on 31 January. The European Central Bank launched a new Pandemic Emergency Purchase Programme, worth €750 billion. The Bank of England lowered its Bank Rate further and launched a new substantial quantitative easing program whilst the UK government announced it credit guarantees.

In Asia, China's central bank announced a reduction in reserve ratios for banks. The Bank of Japan provided a significant liquidity injection and expanded its quantitative easing program.

Availability

Product Name	APIR
AMP Flexible Lifetime Super	AMP1955AU
AMP Flexible Super - Retirement account	AMP1962AU
AMP Flexible Super - Super account	AMP1969AU
Flexible Lifetime - Allocated Pension	AMP1948AU
Flexible Lifetime - Investments (Series 2)	AMP1980AU
Flexible Lifetime - Term Pension	AMP1948AU
SignatureSuper	AMP1730AU

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