

Weekly Market Performance and Commentary to Thursday 30th April 2020

Market Performance

- All asset classes were up for the week to Thursday 30th April with the exception of cash which was flat. Markets remain volatile albeit much less so than the volatility seen in March. Markets have begun to edge higher since late March but are still very far off the highs that were reached in late February. The Calendar year to date numbers in the table above show that equities are still down since the beginning of the year.
- Over the week we saw the markets perform in the following way:
 - Australian equities up 5.4%
 - US equities up 2.7%
 - International equities (local currency) up 0.8%
 - International equities (\$A hedged) up 2.7%
 - Australian bonds up 0.2%
 - International Bonds (\$A hedged) up 0.3%
 - Australian Cash with a flat return of 0.0%
- All NESS Options had positive returns this week and out of the diversified Options, the ones with more exposure to growth assets (such as High Growth and Aggressive) had the highest returns.
- Over the week, the infection rate of COVID-19 appears to have reached a turning point in most developed countries. Despite the total number of global cases reaching over 3 million people, there are signs that containment measures are working or have been successful in some countries, as they begin to lift restrictions.
 - The daily new cases and death rate in the US has slowed.
 - More states in the US have begun lifting lockdown restrictions by allowing some businesses to open, with more set to open next week.
 - Boris Johnson, the UK Prime Minister announced the country had passed its peak and will announce plans next week on how to restart its economy.
 - Spain remain cautious on their exit from lockdown measures and announced a slow and gradual return to normal by the end of June.
 - Australia announced an easing of its lockdown measures by reopening beaches and allowing friends and families to visit one another in groups of two.
 - New Zealand reopened many parts of its economy this week, allowing non-essential business, healthcare and education to resume.
- The Australian government released its contact tracing app to assist in tracing cases of the coronavirus, so the country can continue easing restrictions.
- The US equity market posted its most successful month of April since 1987, but news was also released that over 30 million people have filed for unemployment benefits since March.

- Oil prices remain low but rose over the week as fears over oil demand begin to ease as more countries plan to lift travel restrictions.

	Week to 30 April *	Month to Date	Calendar Year to Date
Australian Equities	5.4%	9.0%	-16.5%
US Equities	2.7%	12.7%	-9.9%
International Equities (local currency)	0.8%	3.5%	-6.5%
International Equities (\$A Hedged)	2.7%	9.7%	-13.2%
Australian Bonds	0.2%	-0.1%	2.9%
International Bonds	0.3%	1.5%	2.8%
Australian Cash	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%

* Week to 30 April covers the 4 days from Monday 27th April to Thursday 30th April