

# Future Directions Australian Bond

Quarterly Investment Option Update

31 March 2022

## Aim and Strategy

To provide a total return (income and capital growth) after costs and before tax, above the return from the benchmark over a rolling three-year basis. The portfolio invests in short and long-term fixed interest securities including inflation linked bonds, government, semi-government, bank, corporate and asset-backed securities, derivatives and currency. The portfolio may also have exposure to international securities in both developed and emerging markets. In normal circumstances the portfolio's international investments are fully hedged back to Australian dollars. The benchmark is a combination of 85% Bloomberg AusBond Government 0+ Year Index and 15% Bloomberg AusBond Inflation Government 0+ Year Index.

## Investment Option Performance

To view the latest investment performances for each product, please visit [www.amp.com.au/performance](http://www.amp.com.au/performance)

## Investment Option Overview

<b>Investment category</b>	Australian Fixed Interest
<b>Suggested minimum investment timeframe</b>	3 years
<b>Relative risk rating</b>	Medium
<b>Investment style</b>	Active
<b>Manager style</b>	Multi-manager

<b>Asset Allocation</b>	<b>Benchmark (%)</b>
Fixed interest securities and cash	85
Inflation linked bonds	15

<b>Actual Allocation</b>	<b>%</b>
International Fixed Interest	0.11
Australian Fixed Interest	79.92
Cash	19.97

## Fund Performance

The Fund posted a negative return for the March quarter and outperformed the benchmark (before fees). Both the conventional government bond component, managed by **Macquarie** (previously AMP Capital) and the inflation-linked component, managed by **Ardea**, outperformed their respective benchmarks.

**Macquarie's** performance was driven by rates and currency. Inflation detracted as US inflation continued to move higher, with lingering supply shortages from the pandemic now exacerbated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Carry contributed positively to performance, stemming mainly from overweight semi-government position.

**Ardea's** performance, similar to recent months, was aided by its bond-swap strategies over the quarter, although the gains began to moderate late in the period. Ardea's portfolio is underweight government bonds and overweight swaps in the short end of the curve, and overweight government bonds and underweight swaps in the long end of the curve, with a goal of capturing relative value in long-dated physical government bonds.

## Market Review

Australian government bond yield movements mirrored those in the US in the March quarter, both in terms of cause and outcome. As in the US, Australian 4Q21 inflation rose strongly, prompting an upward movement in yields. At its first Board meeting of the year, the RBA acknowledged the rise in inflation, noting the "persistence of the disruptions to supply chains and distribution networks and their ongoing effects on prices". The central bank also announced an end to its bond purchase program, citing "faster-than-expected progress" towards its employment and inflation goals. Although domestic inflationary pressure has yet to accelerate to US levels, the RBA appears to be laying the groundwork for an interest rate move. Governor Lowe recently noted that it's "plausible" the cash rate will be increased later this year and that it's "prudent to plan" for a hike, alluding to the risk of sustained supply shocks further boosting inflation expectations. Fiscal stimulus measures announced in the Federal Budget focus on providing near-term relief to cost of living pressures, but it is unclear whether it will do enough to dampen inflation sustainably. The Commonwealth Government 2-year bond yield ended the quarter 122 basis points higher at 1.81% while the Commonwealth Government 10-year bond yield ended 117 basis points higher at 2.84%. Australian bonds, as measured by the Bloomberg AusBond Composite (All Maturities) Index, returned -5.88% during the period, in Australian dollar terms.

## Outlook

The RBA held monetary policy steady at their March meeting after ending the bond purchase program at the previous meeting. The central bank continues to stress patience with inflation, distancing itself from the extremely high inflation in other developed markets, with domestic trimmed mean inflation only just returning to the midpoint of the target band. Nonetheless, the central bank's rhetoric has turned mildly hawkish, acknowledging that a hike in 2022 is plausible, albeit not their base case. Governor Lowe shifted the focus away from the Wage Price Index to labour costs. Labour data surprised to the upside again in February with the unemployment rate falling 0.2% to 4.0%. Whilst the invasion of Ukraine by Russia continues to introduce uncertainty into the global economy, markets appear to have shifted focus towards inflation and the actions of central banks, seeing several hikes priced for the RBA for 2022. It is unlikely the central bank shifts its rhetoric to meet these expectations.

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## Availability

Product Name	APIR
Flexible Lifetime - Investments (Series 1)	AMP0693AU**
Flexible Lifetime - Investments (Series 2)	AMP1409AU**
SignatureSuper	AMP0796AU*
SignatureSuper - Allocated Pension	AMP1149AU*
SignatureSuper Term Pension	AMP1149AU*

\*Closed to new investors

\*\*Closed to new and existing investors

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