Zenith Investment Partners

Highly Recommended
Recommended
Approved
Not Rated
Redeem

Product Assessment

Nikko AM Australian Share Concentrated Fund

Report data as at 31 May 2021
Rating issued on 24 Jun 2021

VIEWPOINT

The Fund, managed by Nikko Asset Management Australia Limited (Nikko AM), offers investors a value-style, concentrated exposure to Australian equities, typically consisting of higher-yielding and less volatile stocks. Zenith believes that the combination of an experienced investment team and a well-structured investment process presents an attractive offering for investors.

Nikko AM is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Yarra Capital Management (Yarra), a Melbourne-based boutique fund manager that offers a broad range of active strategies spanning Australian equities and fixed income. In April 2021, Yarra completed the acquisition of Nikko AM, with Nikko AM retaining a 20% stake in the enlarged group. Yarra and Nikko AM share administrative support functions including capital, financial, systems and human resources, which we view positively, as it allows the investment team to focus on research and portfolio management efforts.

The Australian equities team of 11, led by Brad Potter, is located within Nikko AM's Sydney-based office. Zenith considers Potter to be a high-quality investor, with the requisite expertise to lead the team. In addition, we believe the investment team is well resourced and highly incentivised through a profit share arrangement in the business unit.

The Fund is managed by Jason Kim and Tim Johnston under a 50/50 dual portfolio management structure. Zenith rates both portfolio managers highly, based on their level of industry experience and performance track record to date.

Nikko AM believes markets are inefficient and aims to exploit these inefficiencies through the application of its proprietary relative valuation framework, which incorporates a comprehensive assessment of company financials coupled with a rigorous visitation program.

A standard set of macroeconomic assumptions is employed in all models to ensure consistency throughout the process. These assumptions include currency, commodity and interest rate inputs. The research process culminates in the derivation of a three-year internal rate of return (IRR) for each stock. Zenith believes the stock selection process employed by the team is robust and in-depth, providing a strong input into the portfolio construction process.

The two portfolio managers construct separate sub-portfolios from a shortlist of stock opportunities that are ranked according to their respective IRRs. Kim and Johnston aim to construct sub-portfolios of stocks with higher expected returns, in accordance with the Fund's risk constraints. In general, Zenith views dual portfolio manager structures to be a less efficient approach to portfolio management, as it can result in portfolios with a longer tail of small holdings and has the potential to result in opposing views being held within the Fund.

Zenith acknowledges that Kim and Johnston leverage the same research when constructing their separate portfolios and, historically, a high level of commonality has been observed between the sub-portfolios. Overall, Zenith believes the Fund is managed in an effective manner, leveraging the insights generated by the experienced investment team.

FUND FACTS

- Expected to hold between 15 and 25 securities
- Expected portfolio turnover between 20% p.a. and 70% p.a.
- Zenith has assigned the Fund a Responsible Investment Classification of **Integrated**

ABSOLUTE RISK (SECTOR)	RELATIVE RISK (FUND WITHIN SECTOR)
VERY HIGH	Geared
► HIGH	► Active - Benchmark Unaware
MODERATE	Active - Benchmark Aware
LOW	Index - Enhanced/Fundamental
VERY LOW	Index

INCOME DISTRIBUTIONS PER

MONTH	QUARTER	6 MONTH	ANNUM
	■		

INVESTMENT TIMEFRAME

1-2 YRS	3-4 YRS	5-6 YRS	7+ YRS
			■

APIR Code
TYN0040AU

Asset / Sub-Asset Class
Australian Shares
Large Companies

Investment Style
Value

Investment Objective
To provide long-term capital growth and income by investing in a concentrated selection of shares.

Zenith Assigned Benchmark
S&P/ASX 300 (Accum)

Net Returns (% p.a.)

	5 yrs	3 yrs	1 yr
Fund	4.35	1.60	20.24
Benchmark	10.22	10.11	28.74
Median	9.66	9.24	28.86

Income (% p.a.)

	Income	Total
FY to 30 Jun 2020	5.18	-16.58
FY to 30 Jun 2019	7.07	2.55
FY to 30 Jun 2018	10.56	8.40

Fees (% p.a., Incl. GST)
Management Cost: 1.00%
Performance Fee: N/A

APPLICATIONS OF INVESTMENT

SECTOR CHARACTERISTICS

The Zenith 'Australian Shares - Large Companies' sector consists of long-only strategies investing in the Australian equity market. The sector incorporates both benchmark aware and benchmark unaware strategies but the strategies focus predominantly on large capitalisation stocks. The sector is one of the most competitive in the investment landscape, based on the number of managers and strategies available to investors. Despite the competitiveness of the sector, the Australian share market has historically provided many opportunities for active management, with the median active manager outperforming a passive index over the longer term.

Zenith benchmarks all strategies in this space against the S&P/ASX 300 Accumulation Index, believing it is a fair representation of the investment universe for the underlying managers. However, many managers in this category benchmark their funds against the S&P/ASX 200 Accumulation Index. Both indices are market-capitalisation weighted, resulting in those companies with the largest market capitalisations receiving the heaviest weightings within the index. Over the longer term, Zenith believes there will be minimal difference between the return profiles of these indices.

The Australian share market, as represented by the S&P/ASX 300 Index, is highly concentrated and narrow. Technically, a company is considered large cap if it falls within the S&P/ASX 50 Index, with companies falling between the S&P/ASX 50 and S&P/ASX 100 considered mid-cap. All stocks outside of the S&P/ASX 100 Index are considered small capitalisation stocks.

As at 31 May 2021, the Financials and Materials sectors combined represented a significant portion of the S&P/ASX 300 Accumulation Index, with the Financials sector accounting for approximately 29.9% of the Index, and Materials approximately 20.7%. The split between Industrials and Resources stocks was approximately 76%/24%. The top 10 stocks represented approximately 44.7% of the weighting of the Index, and the top 20 stocks represented over 55% of the Index.

PORTFOLIO APPLICATIONS

In general, compared to most other asset classes, equities offer investors the opportunity for higher capital growth over the longer term with some income. However, this higher growth is also often associated with higher volatility. Therefore, it is recommended that investors adopt a longer time frame when investing in equities.

Investors should also be cognisant of the fact that the Australian equity market is relatively concentrated, with the Materials and Financials sectors dominating the market. The market also only represents approximately 2% of global equity markets (in terms of market capitalisation). Therefore, to mitigate this concentration risk it is highly recommended that investors diversify their investments across asset classes, both domestically and globally.

Given the Fund's value bias, Zenith believes it would blend well with growth-orientated and/or style-neutral products to achieve a diversified exposure to the Australian equity sector.

As a relatively concentrated offering, the Fund is likely to exhibit a more volatile performance profile than other more diversified Australian equity offerings. In addition, with limited portfolio constraints and a generous overarching risk budget, it is feasible that the Fund's risk/return characteristics materially deviate from its benchmark. Accordingly, Zenith believes the Fund is appropriate for investors with a higher risk tolerance who can bear greater levels of return dispersion for the potential of higher growth.

From a portfolio perspective, Zenith believes the Fund's concentrated nature makes it less suitable as a core allocation to this asset class. However, Zenith believes it is appropriate as a satellite or specialist allocation and may complement broader Australian equity exposures to achieve a more balanced set of investment outcomes.

The Fund’s portfolio turnover is expected to be between 20% p.a. and 70% p.a., which Zenith considers to be moderate to high. Nikko AM was not able to provide any insight on the proportion of expected turnover attributed to the resizing of existing positions and that which is due to initiating and closing positions. Given this expected level of turnover, a sizeable proportion of the Fund's returns are expected to be delivered via the realisation of capital gains in income distributions, rather than through capital appreciation in the unit price. In addition, realised capital gains are unlikely to be eligible for the capital gains tax discount, which can have a further negative impact on the after-tax outcomes for high tax rate paying investors. However, Zenith notes that Nikko AM generally holds core positions for extended periods, which ensures eligibility for the capital gains tax discount. Holding all else equal, the Fund may be more appealing to investors who are nil/low tax rate payers or high marginal tax rate payers who invest through tax-effective vehicles such as a superannuation fund.

RISKS OF THE INVESTMENT

SECTOR RISKS

Portfolios within the 'Australian Large Cap' sector are exposed to the following broad risks:

MARKET & ECONOMIC RISK: As is the case with all long-only Australian Share strategies, the biggest risk to performance is a sustained downturn across the Australian share market. In addition, changes in economic, social, technological or political conditions, as well as market sentiment could also lead to negative Portfolio performance. This risk can be significantly reduced by investors adhering to a Portfolio's prescribed investment time frame.

SPECIFIC SECURITY RISK: This is the risk associated with an individual security. The price of shares in a company may be affected by unexpected changes in that company’s operations such as changes in management or the loss of a significant customer.

LIQUIDITY RISK: This is the risk that a security or asset cannot be traded quickly enough due to insufficient trading volumes in the market. When trading volumes are low, sellers can significantly impact the price of a security when attempting to quickly exit a material position.

STYLE BIAS RISK: Australian equity managers will either employ a growth, value or neutral (combination of value and growth) styled approach to investing. Each style is conducive to certain market conditions. That is, growth should outperform value in an upward-trending market and vice versa in a downward-trending market. As with market risk, investors should adhere to the Portfolio's investment time frame to avoid short-term market movements and style impact.

CAPACITY RISK: High levels of funds under management (FUM) can present additional challenges to an Australian equity manager, as high FUM has the potential to hamper the manager's ability to trade efficiently and/or be forced to disclose substantial shareholdings to the market (most common in smaller companies).

PERFORMANCE SLIPPAGE RISK: For separately managed accounts offered across a range of platforms, performance differentials may arise due to a range of factors, such as model implementation practices and brokerage.

REGULATORY RISK: The ASIC Regulatory Guide 97 'Disclosing Fees and Costs in Product Disclosure Statements and Periodic Statements' came into effect on 1 October 2017 and seeks to establish a common framework for disclosing fees with respect to registered managed investment schemes issued to retail investors.

In November 2019, ASIC released its final recommendations, with proposed changes to be phased in from 30 September 2020, with all Portfolios required to be compliant by 30 September 2022.

In its current form, RG97 will not impact the actual costs (or after fee returns) on existing investments. Rather, the guide is focused on providing increased transparency with respect to the costs of management. Given this, it is feasible that under RG97, investors become more sensitive to the costs charged and seek lower cost alternatives, potentially leading to Portfolio outflows.

FUND RISKS

Zenith has identified the following key risks of the Fund. Although Zenith believes the risks noted are all significant, we have listed them in order of importance. In addition, we have not intended to highlight all possible risks.

KEY PERSON RISK: As with most fund managers, key person risk needs to be considered. As such, we would consider the departure of Jason Kim or Tim Johnston to be detrimental to the Fund, triggering an immediate reassessment of our rating. However, Zenith believes the dual portfolio manager structure and succession planning implemented by Nikko AM largely mitigates this risk. In addition, Zenith acknowledges that all investment team members are well incentivised to remain with the firm, at least over the medium term, given their respective equity ownership stakes.

LONGEVITY RISK: Funds that fail to grow funds under management (FUM) to a scalable level could be wound up and terminated by the Responsible Entity. The risks associated with a fund wind up are principally that of timing, performance slippage, and forcing a crystallisation of tax consequences to investors that may not be suitable. As at 31 May 2021, FUM in the Fund was low at approximately $A 20 million.

CAPACITY/LIQUIDITY RISK: Zenith believes that high levels of funds under management (FUM) can potentially inhibit Nikko AM's ability to efficiently trade the portfolio, thereby limiting outperformance potential. As at 31 May 2021, Nikko AM managed approximately $A 10.6 billion across its various Australian equity strategies. Nikko AM has indicated a capacity limit of 0.75% of the S&P/ASX 200 Accumulation Index (approximately $A 17 billion, as at 31 May 2021). Although Zenith does not believe the Fund is currently impacted by capacity limitations, we will continue to monitor Nikko AM closely to ensure that excessive FUM across its suite of Australian equity products does not impact the Fund's performance.

CONCENTRATION RISK: Zenith notes that the Fund is relatively concentrated, expected to hold between 15 and 25 stocks. Zenith believes that concentrated portfolios have a greater level of stock-specific risk and, as such, investors should be cognisant that the Fund may experience capital volatility in excess of a more diversified strategy and the benchmark. However, we note that the portfolio has historically been managed at the upper limit of its 15 to 25 stock range.

PORTFOLIO MANAGER FOCUS RISK: In addition to this Fund, Kim co-manages the Nikko AM Australian Share Wholesale Fund, which holds substantially more FUM, as well as a CVA Plus strategy. While Zenith acknowledges that there is some overlap in holdings between the strategies, we believe that Kim's other commitments have the potential to draw his focus away from this Fund.

INTEGRATION RISK: There are risks associated with the integration of Nikko AM's Australian business within Yarra, including staff turnover, cost-cutting and/or product rationalisation in markets where competing strategies are managed. However, Nikko AM is expected to maintain its autonomy.

QUALITATIVE DUE DILIGENCE

ORGANISATION

Nikko Asset Management Australia Limited (Nikko AM) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Yarra Capital Management (Yarra), a Melbourne-based boutique fund manager that offers a broad range of active strategies spanning Australian equities and fixed income.

In April 2021, Yarra completed the acquisition of Nikko AM, with Nikko AM retaining a 20% stake in the enlarged group. This partnership enables Nikko AM’s global business to gain access to Yarra’s investment products, with Yarra assuming responsibility for the distribution of Nikko AM’s global suite of products in the Australian market. The acquisition creates one of Australia’s largest independently-owned Australian equities and fixed income managers, with approximately $A 22 billion of funds under management as at 31 May 2021.

Yarra was established in 2017 following the management buyout of Goldman Sachs Asset Management's (GSAM) Australian-focused investment management business. Yarra and Nikko AM share administrative support functions including capital, financial, systems and human resources, which we view positively, as it allows the investment team to focus on research and portfolio management efforts.

Nikko AM's Australian equities business is a 50/50 joint venture between Yarra and investment staff in the Australian equities team. All investment personnel in the Australian equities team have equity ownership.

As at 31 May 2021, Nikko AM had funds under management (FUM) of approximately $A 10.6 billion across its various Australian equity strategies. The Australian Share Concentrated strategy accounted for approximately $A 180 million in FUM, including $A 20 million in the Fund.

INVESTMENT PERSONNEL

Name	Title	Tenure
Brad Potter	Head of Australian Equities	19 Yr(s)
Tim Johnston	Deputy Head of Australian Equities	23 Yr(s)
Jason Kim	Portfolio Manager/Senior Analyst	20 Yr(s)

Nikko AM's Australian equities team is located within its Sydney-based office. Led by Brad Potter, who has been with Nikko AM since 2002, the investment team consists of 11 investment professionals with an average of 21 years' industry experience. Zenith considers Potter to be a high-quality investor with the requisite expertise to lead the team.

Nikko AM provides leadership training for a number of senior team members. Zenith believes this succession planning approach provides the investment team with a strong sense of stability and direction, and aids in mitigating key person risk. In addition, this approach provides portfolio management experience to highly-regarded internal candidates through a progressive multi-portfolio manager structure.

The Fund is managed by Jason Kim and Tim Johnston under a 50/50 dual portfolio management structure. Kim joined Nikko AM in 2000, having previously held positions in the Commonwealth Public Service and as a portfolio manager with Deutsche Funds Management. Johnston joined Nikko AM in 1998, having previously worked in the financial accounting field. Zenith believes both portfolio managers are astute investors and possess a wealth of experience.

All funds in Nikko AM's Australian equities business operate under a dual portfolio management structure. Nikko AM transitioned to this model in July 2007 as a way of mitigating key person risk. In general, Zenith views dual portfolio manager structures to be a less efficient approach to portfolio management, as it can result in portfolios with a longer tail of small holdings and has the potential to result in opposing views being held within the Fund. However, Zenith has not yet observed this to be an issue, noting that the overall portfolio is limited to 15 to 25 stocks and there has historically been significant overlap between the portfolio managers' sub-portfolios.

Nikko AM's research structure is well defined, with each analyst responsible for approximately 15 to 20 stocks. Although analysts tend to specialise in a particular sector, the financials and resources sectors are covered by multiple analysts. The team also attempts to ensure that at least two analysts attend company visits and meetings to ensure a cross-check of views and assessments.

The team meets multiple times during the week to discuss research and portfolio construction matters. At the research meetings, the team discusses company news items and broader market conditions, and reviews analyst stock recommendation updates/changes. Weekly portfolio construction meetings are held to provide further peer review of all portfolio decisions and to ensure all portfolio managers are aware of any pertinent information.

The investment team has historically maintained a high level of stability, which we believe is due to the equity participation shared across the team that provides an alignment of interest with the business. In addition to equity participation, which can form a large component of remuneration, team members are paid a base salary as well as a bonus based on meeting certain performance targets.

In summary, Zenith considers the team to be well resourced and highly experienced. In particular, Zenith rates the portfolio management team of Kim and Johnston highly. In addition, we believe the peer-review process ensures that a collegiate environment is fostered and is one of the core strengths of Nikko AM's process.

INVESTMENT OBJECTIVE, PHILOSOPHY AND PROCESS

The Fund's investment objective is to provide long-term capital growth and income by investing in a concentrated selection of shares. However, the Fund has an informal investment objective to outperform the S&P/ASX 200 Accumulation Index by 2.75% p.a. to 3% p.a. (before fees) over rolling five-year periods.

The portfolio is constructed in a benchmark unaware manner, which may result in stock weightings differing materially from the benchmark. While not specifically stated as the Fund's objective, Nikko AM targets a higher grossed-up yield and lower absolute volatility than the market. While Tracking Error is not formally targeted, it is expected to be below 9% p.a. and typically between 5% p.a. and 8% p.a.

Nikko AM believes markets are inefficient and aims to exploit these inefficiencies through the application of its long-standing proprietary relative valuation process. Nikko AM applies a rigorous fundamental process to determine a stock's internal rate of return (IRR), with the time horizon for stock valuation being three years. This is designed to encourage low portfolio turnover, consistent with the belief that a value philosophy is suited to a long-term investment horizon.

Nikko AM believes that a company's intrinsic value is best evaluated by examining its assets and normalised earnings power, while assigning value to potential growth only in exceptional cases. By buying when the market value of a company is significantly lower than its intrinsic value and employing sound risk management techniques, Nikko AM believes it can enhance the risk/return trade-off associated with traditional value investing.

SECURITY SELECTION

Nikko AM applies its proprietary relative valuation process, Comparative Value Analysis (CVA), across all of its Australian equity strategies. The process seeks to identify companies with sustainable medium-term earnings that are trading at a significant discount to intrinsic value.

The initial universe includes all stocks listed in the S&P/ASX 200 Index. A liquidity screen is applied based on the 90-day median daily turnover for each stock in the index. To be eligible, Nikko AM must be able to enter/exit a position within this period, based on a notional 1% portfolio weighting, and not account for more than 30% of daily turnover. This results in a universe of approximately 150 stocks.

These stocks are then subject to an additional proprietary, multi-factor stock screen that ranks stocks by value, quality and combined scores. The multiple valuation metrics used to filter the investment universe include:

- One-year forward consensus price to earnings
- Enterprise value multiple
- Two qualitative metrics

After the application of the initial screens, Nikko AM undertakes detailed fundamental research. This includes projections of a company's financial statements and key financial ratios. Nikko AM prioritises companies with balance sheets and cash flows that can finance potential growth and returns to shareholders.

Through a fundamental research process, Nikko AM derives a company's intrinsic value based on a number of standardised inputs. As part of Nikko AM's discounted cashflow process, it models a 'franchise period' that is generally four to eight years and represents the period a company is expected to achieve abnormal growth. To ensure the validity of all valuations, analysts compare valuations across a range of metrics, including capitalisation of normalised earnings, discounted cash flows and, when appropriate, break-up valuations of companies.

A standard set of macroeconomic assumptions for commodity prices and currencies is employed in all models to ensure consistency throughout the process. These assumptions include currency, commodity and interest rate inputs.

The team takes a view on key macroeconomic variables and consensus forecasts based on inputs from brokers and other external sources. Unless the team has divergent views, the model defaults to the consensus. Company models are updated and/or initiated when there is new information that is likely to change estimated returns on stocks or there are new stocks that appear attractive on Nikko AM's value/quality screens.

Company contact forms an important component of the research process, and includes visits to suppliers, customers and competitors. The objective is to gain a better understanding of the operations of the company and the industry in which it operates. Company visits are undertaken to validate inputs into the company models, determine the strategic value of the assets and assess management.

The output of the CVA research process is the production of a three-year internal rate of return (IRR) calculation for each stock, updated in real-time. The stocks are then ranked based on IRR, with the highest IRR stocks generally being considered for portfolio inclusion. To ensure the consistency of assumptions, detection of errors and omissions, and validity of forecasts, all team members extensively review all research. Zenith believes Nikko AM employs a robust peer-review process.

Zenith believes the stock selection process employed by the team is robust and in-depth, providing a strong input into the portfolio construction process.

PORTFOLIO CONSTRUCTION

Portfolio construction is the responsibility of Kim and Johnston, who construct discrete portfolios that are then combined to form the Fund. Although ultimate discretion remains with the two portfolio managers, they must communicate any changes to the team. The portfolio managers will generally select stocks with high IRRs whilst selling or avoiding stocks that have low IRRs.

Zenith notes that, prior to 1 June 2020, a stock was only considered for portfolio inclusion if it had a forecast grossed-up dividend yield (GUDY) of at least 4% p.a. Nikko AM removed this pre-requisite, stating that the market's composition has materially changed since the strategy's inception in 1997. Specifically, a large proportion of the market now has significant offshore operations/earnings and, as such, paying out dividends is not the most efficient way for these companies to return capital to investors. Nikko AM noted that it has not been able to participate in a number of attractive opportunities in recent years due to the GUDY requirement, which has ultimately been to the detriment of investors. Zenith is supportive of the constraint's removal, believing that it will result in superior outcomes for investors.

To construct the Fund, the portfolio managers generate model portfolios, which are periodically optimised and assessed through the BARRA risk system. BARRA assesses the portfolio's efficiency and exposure to risk. While this optimisation process provides a guide for portfolio construction, the portfolio managers retain the flexibility to express their qualitative views in accordance with the Fund's risk constraints. The portfolio managers also consider factors such as volatility, stock concentration, sector risks and style risks.

The portfolio is constructed to meet the Fund's strategy of investing in stocks with a high GUDY and high total return. In practice, this means that the portfolio managers have the flexibility to hold low yielding stocks in the portfolio. The portfolio is monitored on a daily basis, with a number of events triggering a review of a portfolio position. These include:

- Changes to the IRR due to stock price changes
- Abnormal stock price movements
- A stock weighting deviates more than 30% from the model portfolio target
- A stock approaches its assessed fair value
- Poor price or earnings performance of a stock
- New material information becomes available
- An analyst signalling a change in forecasts or valuation
- Capital raising, initial public offerings, merger and acquisition activity

Nikko AM's buy and sell decisions are only undertaken if the portfolio managers believe that a change will improve portfolio returns after transaction costs.

The number of stocks is expected to range between 15 and 25 stocks, however historical portfolio holdings have tended towards the upper end of the range. The Fund's portfolio turnover is expected to be between 20% p.a. and 70% p.a., which is largely consistent with Nikko AM's investment horizon. Although the Fund will typically be fully invested with low cash levels, it may retain up to 10% in cash.

The portfolio managers retain the discretion to invest up to 7.5% of the portfolio in stocks that do not meet the criteria of the CVA process, allowing stocks to be selected that may have high expected returns without strictly fitting within Nikko AM's three-year time horizon. While the portfolio managers have this discretion, they must explain their logic to the team for peer review. Given Zenith's high opinion of the CVA process, we would prefer the Fund's investment universe were limited to stocks that are compliant with the process.

Overall, Zenith believes the Fund is managed in an effective manner, leveraging the insights generated by the experienced investment team.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Portfolio Constraints	Description
Security Numbers	15 to 25
Absolute Stock Weight (%)	max: 8%
Absolute Sector Weight (%)	max: 20% (Index + 10% for Financials ex-Real Estate)
Cash (%)	max: 10%
ESG Constraints - Excluded Sectors	N/A

The Fund is managed within the risk constraints in the table above.

Zenith believes that risk management is firmly ingrained in Nikko AM's culture. As evident in the underlying CVA process, multiple valuation methodologies are employed when valuing stocks. To add a further layer of risk control, Zenith notes that Nikko AM uses conservative inputs in its valuations. In addition, the peer-review process ensures that biases are mitigated and all positions examined thoroughly.

While the portfolio managers utilise a number of tools to achieve an appropriate risk/return trade-off, judgement and analyst input are the primary determinants. BARRA analysis is utilised to ensure that the portfolio managers are cognisant of the risks in the portfolio, including unintended biases. Risk factors include volatility, leverage, industry, price/earnings momentum, value and size. If these exposures are deemed excessive, the portfolio may be adjusted to moderate the risk exposure.

Nikko AM periodically conducts scenario analysis on the portfolio, referencing previous events that have been problematic for the market and for Nikko AM. If the downside risk is too large, the portfolio is again assessed and may be adjusted with additional sector, factor or stock constraints.

Overall, Zenith is comfortable with the risk management process employed by Nikko AM.

Responsible Investment Approach

Nikko AM has an established Responsible Investment Policy, last updated in 2020, that guides its investment decisions. In addition, Nikko AM is a signatory of the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment (UNPRI), assigned the following ratings:

- Strategy and Governance: **A+**
- Listed Equity - Incorporation: **A+**
- Listed Equity - Active Ownership: **A**

While the portfolio has no specific exclusions, as outlined in the table above, Nikko AM takes an active approach to environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues. ESG is evaluated as part of the team's fundamental analysis process and, where ESG issues are deemed to be significant, they can preclude a company as a potential investment. Zenith believes that this qualitative analysis of a company's operations is crucial on a forward basis, given that a company's performance with regards to ESG considerations is increasingly being reflected in the company's share price. Overall, Zenith is comfortable with Nikko AM's approach to ESG.

From a classification scale of:

- Impact
- Thematic
- Integrated
- Aware
- Traditional

Zenith has assigned the Fund a Responsible Investment Classification of **Integrated**.

INVESTMENT FEES

The sector average management cost (in the table below) is based on the average management cost of all flagship Australian Shares – Large Companies funds surveyed by Zenith.

The Fund charges a management cost of 1.00% p.a. with no performance fee.

Overall, Zenith believes the Fund's fee structure is expensive, relative to peers, given its stated objectives. In addition, we believe that investors have not been sufficiently compensated by way of risk-adjusted performance given the fees paid over the past three years (ending 30 June 2020).

The Fund also applies a buy/sell spread of 0.25% on all applications and redemptions.

(The fees mentioned above are reflective of the flagship version only, fees may differ when the product is accessed through an alternate investment vehicle such as a platform.)

Fees Type	Fund	Sector Average (Wholesale Funds)
Management Cost	1.00% p.a.	0.82% p.a.
	Description	
Performance Fee	N/A	
	Buy Spread	Sell Spread
Buy / Sell Spread	0.25%	0.25%

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

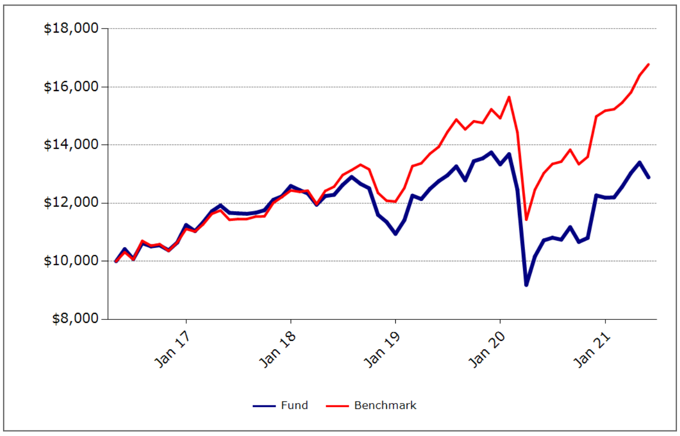
Report data: 31 May 2021, product inception: Jun 2010

Monthly Performance History (%, net of fees)

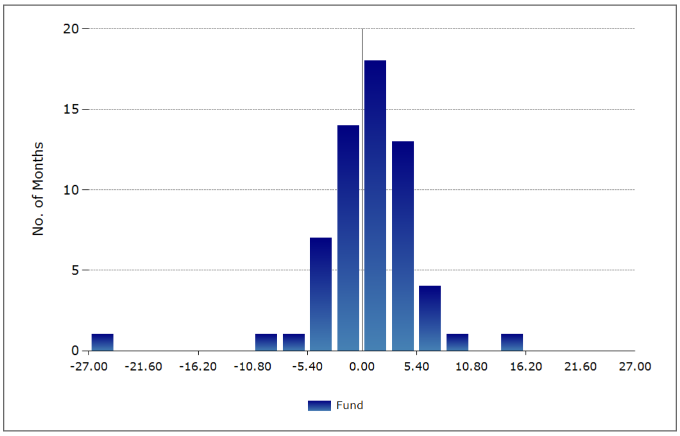
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	FUND YTD	BENCHMARK YTD
2021	0.08	2.99	3.80	2.73	-3.80								5.73	10.51
2020	2.65	-8.92	-26.31	10.65	5.44	0.87	-0.62	4.02	-4.55	1.28	13.55	-0.64	-8.59	1.74
2019	4.33	7.40	-0.97	2.88	2.16	1.54	2.38	-3.61	5.16	0.71	1.50	-2.98	21.89	23.78
2018	-1.13	-0.93	-3.15	2.50	0.34	2.79	2.16	-1.85	-1.19	-7.31	-2.14	-3.61	-13.12	-3.07
2017	-1.87	2.72	3.41	1.68	-2.13	-0.16	-0.12	0.32	0.73	3.05	1.00	2.91	11.95	11.95

Benchmark: S&P/ASX 300 (Accum)

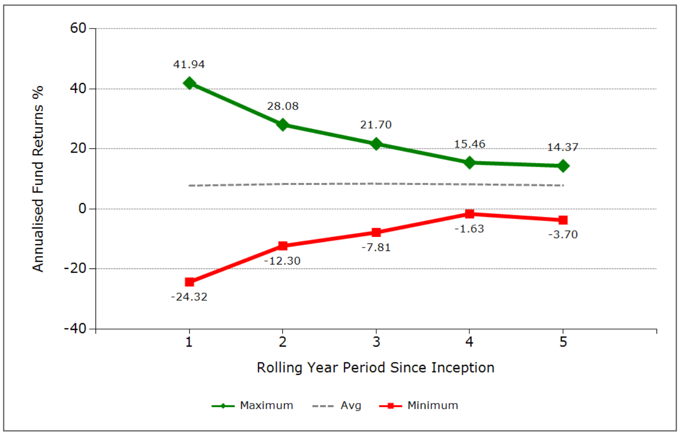
Growth of $10,000



Monthly Histogram



Minimum and Maximum Returns (% p.a.)



ABSOLUTE PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Return	Incpt.	5 yr	3 yr	1 yr
Fund (% p.a.)	7.47	4.35	1.60	20.24
Benchmark (% p.a.)	8.97	10.22	10.11	28.74
Median (% p.a.)	8.89	9.66	9.24	28.86
Ranking within Sector	**Incpt.**	**5 yr**	**3 yr**	**1 yr**
Fund Ranking	78 / 86	106 / 106	113 / 114	116 / 121
Quartile	4th	4th	4th	4th
Standard Deviation	**Incpt.**	**5 yr**	**3 yr**	**1 yr**
Fund (% p.a.)	14.83	17.67	21.77	15.38
Benchmark (% p.a.)	13.20	14.55	17.49	10.42
Median (% p.a.)	14.18	14.81	17.89	11.25
Downside Deviation	**Incpt.**	**5 yr**	**3 yr**	**1 yr**
Fund (% p.a.)	10.69	13.72	17.38	5.99
Benchmark (% p.a.)	9.27	10.92	13.67	3.59
Median (% p.a.)	9.76	10.99	13.77	3.56
Risk/Return	**Incpt.**	**5 yr**	**3 yr**	**1 yr**
Sharpe Ratio - Fund	0.34	0.17	0.03	1.31
Sortino Ratio - Fund	0.47	0.22	0.03	3.37

To ensure consistency, Zenith measures all Australian equities funds against the S&P/ASX 300 Accumulation Index. However, Nikko AM benchmarks itself against the S&P/ASX 200 Accumulation Index. Over the long term, Zenith expects any difference in performance between these two indices to be nominal.

All commentary below is as at 31 May 2021.

The Fund's investment objective is to provide long-term capital growth and income by investing in a concentrated selection of shares. However, the Fund has an informal investment objective to outperform the S&P/ASX 200 Accumulation Index by 2.75% p.a. to 3% p.a. (before fees) over rolling five-year periods.

Nikko AM has failed to meet the Fund's informal objective over all assessed periods, which is disappointing given our high qualitative view of the investment team. Zenith notes that a material portion of the underperformance was driven by Nikko AM's performance during the market turbulence associated with COVID-19 in early 2020.

The Fund's risk (as measured by Standard Deviation) has been greater than the benchmark over all periods of assessment.

RELATIVE PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Alpha Statistics	Incpt.	5 yr	3 yr	1 yr
Excess Return (% p.a.)	-1.49	-5.88	-8.51	-8.50
% Monthly Excess (All Mkts)	46.97	40.00	38.89	33.33
% Monthly Excess (Up Mkts)	48.28	41.86	46.15	36.36
% Monthly Excess (Down Mkts)	44.44	35.29	20.00	0.00
Beta Statistics	**Incpt.**	**5 yr**	**3 yr**	**1 yr**
Beta	1.07	1.16	1.20	1.31
R-Squared	0.91	0.92	0.92	0.79
Tracking Error (% p.a.)	4.65	5.65	6.89	7.78
Correlation	0.95	0.96	0.96	0.89
Risk/Return	**Incpt.**	**5 yr**	**3 yr**	**1 yr**
Information Ratio	-0.32	-1.04	-1.23	-1.09

All commentary below is as at 31 May 2021.

Zenith seeks to identify funds that can outperform in over 50% of months in all market conditions, as we believe this represents consistency of manager skill. Nikko AM has not been able to achieve this outcome over any assessed period.

The Fund's value-style bias would generally suggest a tendency to outperform in falling market conditions versus rising markets. However, the Fund has performed slightly better in rising markets.

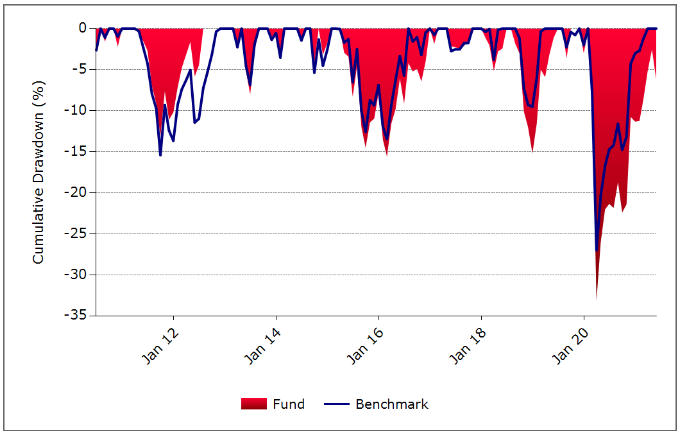
The Fund has maintained a Tracking Error at the lower end of its expected range of 5% p.a. to 8% p.a. over all assessed periods.

DRAWDOWN ANALYSIS

Drawdown analysis assesses the relative riskiness of a Fund versus the benchmark, in reference to capital preservation. The maximum Drawdown is recorded as the percentage decline in the value of a portfolio from peak to trough (before a new peak is achieved). All Drawdown analysis is calculated commencing from the inception date of the Fund in question, and Drawdown analysis for the Fund and benchmark(s) are calculated independently. That is, the largest drawdown for the Fund and benchmark(s) will not always refer to the same time period.

Drawdown Analysis	Fund	Benchmark
Max Drawdown (%)	-33.16	-26.97
Months in Max Drawdown	4	2
Months to Recover	-	12

Worst Drawdowns	Fund	Benchmark
1	-33.16	-26.97
2	-15.58	-15.41
3	-15.21	-13.46
4	-13.13	-9.51
5	-8.02	-6.83



All commentary below is as at 31 May 2021.

The Fund's drawdown profile has been similar or more pronounced than the benchmark. Given the Fund's value and quality orientation, we would generally expect its drawdown profile to be less pronounced than the benchmark. As such, we are disappointed with this outcome.

INCOME/GROWTH ANALYSIS

Income / Growth Returns	Income	Growth	Total
FY to 30 Jun 2020	5.18%	-21.76%	-16.58%
FY to 30 Jun 2019	7.07%	-4.53%	2.55%
FY to 30 Jun 2018	10.56%	-2.16%	8.40%
FY to 30 Jun 2017	10.50%	5.07%	15.57%
FY to 30 Jun 2016	3.83%	-4.80%	-0.97%
FY to 30 Jun 2015	7.10%	-2.69%	4.41%
FY to 30 Jun 2014	19.95%	2.92%	22.87%
FY to 30 Jun 2013	14.33%	15.18%	29.51%
FY to 30 Jun 2012	4.50%	-6.32%	-1.82%

Investors should be aware that Nikko AM does not target a specific level of income returns, with distributions made quarterly where possible.

The Fund’s portfolio turnover is expected to be between 20% p.a. and 70% p.a., which Zenith considers to be moderate to high. Nikko AM was not able to provide any insight on the proportion of expected turnover attributed to the resizing of existing positions and that which is due to initiating and closing positions. Given this expected level of turnover, a sizeable proportion of the Fund's returns are expected to be delivered via the realisation of capital gains in income distributions, rather than through capital appreciation in the unit price. In addition, realised capital gains are unlikely to be eligible for the capital gains tax discount, which can have a further negative impact on the after-tax outcomes for high tax rate paying investors. However, Zenith notes that Nikko AM generally holds core positions for extended periods, which ensures eligibility for the capital gains tax discount. Holding all else equal, the Fund may be more appealing to investors who are nil/low tax rate payers or high marginal tax rate payers who invest through tax-effective vehicles such as a superannuation fund.

REPORT CERTIFICATION

Date of issue: 24 Jun 2021

Role	Analyst	Title
Author	Tom Goodrich	Investment Analyst
Sector Lead	Jacob Smart	Senior Investment Analyst
Authoriser	Bronwen Moncrieff	Head of Research

RATING HISTORY

As At	Rating*
24 Jun 2021	Recommended
15 Mar 2021	Recommended
18 Jun 2020	Recommended
20 Jun 2019	Recommended
21 Jun 2018	Recommended
29 Jun 2017	Recommended
30 Jun 2016	Recommended
Last 5 years only displayed. Longer histories available on request.	

*In March 2021, Zenith implemented a new ratings methodology for products classified as Traditional Index. Any rating issued from this date forward for Traditional Index products only reflect this change in methodology, with the relevant Traditional Index ratings being Index Approved, Index Recommended and Index Highly Recommended. Ratings issued for Traditional Index products prior to March 2021 are retained for historical purposes in line with our regulatory requirements and were issued in line with Zenith's Fund Research Methodology. Further information in relation to Zenith's Traditional Index Research Methodology and Traditional Index Ratings can be found on the Zenith website.

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Zenith's research process seeks to identify investment managers considered to be the 'best of breed' through a comprehensive, multi-dimensional selection process. Zenith utilises both quantitative and qualitative factors in its ratings models. Models maximise commonality across different asset classes while retaining flexibility for specialist asset classes and strategies. The selection process is rigorous in both its qualitative and quantitative analysis and each component is equally weighted. Zenith does not manage any proprietary assets and as such Zenith is able to choose investment managers with absolute independence and objectivity. More detailed information regarding Zenith's fund research methodology and Zenith's traditional index research methodology, coverage and ratings is available on Zenith's website at Fund Research Methodology and Traditional Index Research Methodology.

Full details regarding the methodology, ratings definitions and regulatory compliance are available at
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This report refers to the Australian unit trust for the fund, and the fund and benchmark returns are all in AUD.

Zenith has charged Nikko Asset Management Ltd a fee to produce this report.