

PERPETUAL ESG AUSTRALIAN SHARE FUND (MANAGED FUND)

ASX code: GIVE

December 2024

FUND FACTS

Investment objective: Aims to provide long-term capital growth and regular income through investment predominantly in quality Australian shares that meet Perpetual's ESG and values-based criteria. Aims to outperform the S&P/ASX 300 Accumulation Index (before fees and taxes) over rolling three-year periods.

FUND BENEFITS

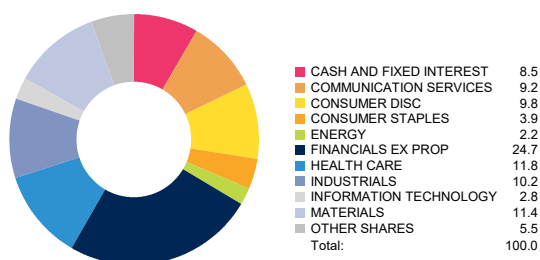
The Fund has two exclusion screens, with which we assess companies. A values-based exclusionary screen for involvement in certain activities, and a ESG exclusionary screen based on an evaluation of companies overall performance on ESG issues.

FUND RISKS

All investments carry risk and different strategies may carry different levels of risk. The relevant product disclosure statement or offer document for a fund should be considered before deciding whether to acquire or hold units in that fund. Your financial adviser can assist you in determining whether a fund is suited to your financial needs.

Benchmark:	S&P/ASX 300 Accum. Index
Inception date of strategy:	April 2002
ASX commencement date:	29 November 2021
Distribution Frequency:	Half-Yearly
Management Fee:	0.65%*
Performance Fee:	15 % of outperformance*
Investment style:	Active, fundamental, bottom-up, value
Suggested minimum investment period:	Five years or longer

PORTFOLIO SECTORS



TOP 10 STOCK HOLDINGS

	% of Portfolio
GWA Group Limited	5.0%
Healius Limited	4.7%
Pacific Current Group Ltd	4.2%
Deterra Royalties Ltd	4.2%
EVT Limited	4.1%
Telstra Group Limited	3.6%
Medibank Private Ltd.	3.6%
National Australia Bank Limited	3.5%
Westpac Banking Corporation	3.4%
Premier Investments Limited	3.4%

*Information on management costs is set out in the relevant PDS

NET PERFORMANCE - periods ending 31 December 2024

	Fund	Benchmark	Excess
1 month	-1.53	-3.07	+1.54
3 months	-1.00	-0.81	-0.19
1 year	12.83	11.39	+1.45
2 year p.a.	12.59	11.76	+0.83
3 year p.a.	6.39	7.06	-0.66
Since incep.	7.40	7.85	-0.46

Past performance is not indicative of future performance. Returns may differ due to different tax treatments.

PORTFOLIO FUNDAMENTALS^

	Portfolio	Benchmark
Price / Earnings*	18.8	17.7
Dividend Yield*	3.5%	3.7%
Price / Book	1.9	2.2
Debt / Equity	28.5%	36.0%
Return on Equity*	9.8%	12.9%

^ Portfolio Fundamentals are compiled using our methodology and provided only for the purpose of illustrating the Fund's investment style in action. These figures are forecast estimates, calculated based on consensus broker estimates where available, and should not be relied upon. Dividend Yield is a dividend forecast of underlying securities for the portfolio and does not reflect the distributions to be determined for the fund.

* Forward looking 12-month estimate.

MARKET COMMENTARY

Markets sold off in December after their strong bounce in November. The S&P/ASX300 Accumulation Index gave up -0.81% with Materials down a significant -11.75% while Real Estate, Energy and Consumer Staples all gave up over 5%. Euphoria over hoped-for tax cuts and de-regulation from the incoming Trump administration were tempered by the growing reality of governing with a narrow Republican majority in the House of Representatives. Squabbling over spending measures nearly forced the US federal government into shutdown before Christmas. Combined with resurgent economic confidence this led to US bond yields rising, with the yield on the US 10 year threatening to rise above the 4.7% peaks in April. The Australian economy sent mixed signals. Employment growth remained robust, at 35,600 in November, pushing the unemployment rate down to 3.9%, but most jobs were being created by government as public spending continued to grow. Meanwhile GDP slowed to just 0.8% for the year ended Q3 with just 0.3% for the quarter. GDP per capita fell -0.3% the seventh consecutive quarterly decline.

PORTFOLIO COMMENTARY

A feature of this portfolio is that it applies Perpetual's ESG process and values-based investment criteria. The portfolio's largest overweight positions include GWA Group Limited, Healius Limited and Pacific Current Group Limited. The portfolio's largest underweight positions include BHP Group Ltd (not held), Commonwealth Bank of Australia and Wesfarmers Limited (not held).

The overweight to Sigma Healthcare contributed to performance as it was one of the strongest performing stocks in the market during the quarter (+82.46%) after the ACCC announced it did not oppose the Sigma Healthcare Limited and CW Group Holdings Limited merger creating a new listed retail giant. The acquisition creates a larger high-quality company which operates in a favourable oligopolistic wholesale market and has an industry leading distribution network. We believe that the quality of the combined business will improve as the group moves to become an integrated wholesaler as well as a pharmacy franchisor with dominant market share and a pipeline of pharmacists to continue to expand their franchise network. We have admired Chemist Warehouse for a long time and believe that it is probably the best franchisor/retailer in Australia. Chemist Warehouse brings with it a high-quality management team to be instilled into the new combined board through founders Mario Verrocchi and Jack Gance as well as further long-term synergies to be realised by the group.

Pacific Current Group outperformed the broader market over the quarter up 11.58%. It was a busy period of announcements for the company announcing planned further buybacks and an EGM. This has been a classic case of the sum of the parts equating to a greater value than the whole, with considerable value set to be unlocked as PAC winds up and shareholders receive a significant amount of capital.

Healius continued to be a challenging position detracting from relative performance over the quarter (-20.58%) with pathology margins being impacted by higher labour and other inflationary costs despite volume growth. The company is however showing signs of recovery under new management following a stretch of underperformance. Looking ahead, we see further upside after the rationalisation of Healius' portfolio, including the sale of Lumus Imaging at a favourable price, possible capital returns, and topline growing stronger in FY 2025. BlueScope Steel Limited detracted from performance (-15.81%) as the steel sector continued to face headwinds and downgrades from the sell-side. While short-term steel spread dynamics remain challenging, we believe the share price movement aligns with the longer-term opportunity. Steel pricing has reached a level where there is an asymmetric upside potential, and we are observing positive competitive trends with hot-rolled coil steel prices increasing. At current levels, the company is an attractive opportunity trading neat net tangible asset value. BlueScope remains one of the highest quality steel producers globally, with a capable management team, a significant asset in Port Kembla, and the Colorbond brand, which not only boosts margins but also represents a substantial overseas opportunity.

OUTLOOK

After initially embracing Trumponomics attention is now turning to the challenges of delivery and containing excesses in the economy, including the potential for inflation to return in 2025. The incoming administration will need all its political guile to deliver the much hyped agenda of reduced regulation, tax relief and spending cuts whilst also reducing the budget deficit. Bond vigilantes will no doubt be around to remind markets if they think that this ambitious mix of goals is not being achieved. Whilst bond markets have been wary of the period ahead equity markets in the United States continue to exhibit extreme exuberance and are once again trading at similar valuations to the Dotcom peak in 2000 and the post COVID bubble in 2021. Australian equity valuations, whilst stretched in some sectors, are not as out of kilter overall, especially as resources trade near multi year lows. The big question remains what happens in China where the economy flirts with deflation and whether authorities can pull off a the sustained stimulus that Mario Draghi and Ben Bernanke did in 2012, such as QE3, that allayed market concerns about the commitment to reflating the economy.

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MORE INFORMATION

Adviser Services 1800 062 725

Investor Services 1800 022 033

Email investments@perpetual.com.au

www.perpetual.com.au

