

# Market wrap

March 2020



## Flight to safety globally

- **Global shares** fell -8.5% and -4.9% in hedged and unhedged terms, respectively. **Emerging markets** were relative outperformers (only down -1.6%) with COVID-19 (a.k.a. coronavirus) outbreaks outside of China and their economic impact a driving concern for global share markets.
- Domestically, **Australian shares** underperformed international markets falling -7.7% in February. This was driven by weakness in the Energy and Technology sectors with economic growth concerns seeing oil prices fall 13.1% during the month.
- The **Australian dollar (AUD)** fell against major currencies by -1.9% attributable to expectations of weaker Chinese growth from the coronavirus and weaker domestic economic data.
- **Fixed income** assets rallied with growth concerns from the virus outbreak outside of China the key driver.
- Another factor was expectations of further interest cuts domestically and internationally (if rates fall on cash in a savings account a bond offering a fixed rate becomes more attractive with investors buying and pushing its price higher. This saw a continuation of positive returns for both **domestic fixed income** and **international fixed income**.

## As the coronavirus outbreak figured prominently on investor radars...

### Globally

- Global business surveys softened with the JP Morgan Global Manufacturing PMI falling into contractionary territory (pointing to weaker economic growth).
- Spikes in COVID-19 notably appeared outside of China with South Korea, Italy and Iran now prominent hotspots.

### Locally

- Australian economic growth for the December quarter surprised slightly at 0.5% (consensus: 0.4%) thanks to weaker import spending and stronger inventory and consumption (driven by sales events such as Black Friday).
- The RBA cut the cash rate by 0.25% to a new low of 0.5% citing concerns over the coronavirus economic impact.
- The virus outbreak is expected to have a notable impact on economic growth with Tourism Australia citing a 10% decline in bookings from China following Australian government travel bans until early March.
- The labour market disappointed with the unemployment rate rising to 5.3%, some 0.8% higher than the RBA target of 4.5%.

## Major asset class performance

Asset classes	1 month %	1 year %	5 years (p.a.) %
Australian shares	-7.7	8.6	6.2
Global shares (hedged)	-8.5	4.4	6.9
Global shares (unhedged)	-4.9	15.6	10.2
Global small companies (unhedged)	-6.3	6.5	8.8
Global emerging markets (unhedged)	-1.6	8.3	6.8
Global listed property (hedged)	-8.1	2.2	4.1
Cash	0.1	1.3	1.9
Australian fixed income	0.9	9.0	4.4
International fixed income	1.2	9.3	4.5

Source: Bloomberg & IOOF, 28 February 2020

Indices used: Australian Shares: S&P/ASX 200 Accumulation Index, Global shares (hedged): MSCI World ex Australia Net Total Return (in AUD), Global shares (unhedged): MSCI World ex Australia Hedged AUD Net Total Return Index; Global small companies (unhedged): MSCI World Small Cap Net Total Return USD Index (in AUD); Global emerging markets (unhedged): MSCI Emerging Markets EM Net Total Return AUD Index; Global listed property (hedged): FTSE EPRA/NAREIT Developed Index Hedged in AUD Net Total Return; Cash: Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index; Australian fixed income: Bloomberg AusBond Composite 0+ Yr Index; International fixed income: Bloomberg Barclays Global Aggregate Total Return Index Value Hedged AUD

Please note: Past performance is not indicative of future performance

## Currency markets

Exchange rates	At close on 29/2	1 month change %	1 year change %
USD/AUD	0.65	-2.6	-8.2
Euro/AUD	0.59	-2.1	-5.4
Yen/AUD	70.4	-3.0	-11.0
Trade weighted index	57.0	-1.9	-6.1

Source: Bloomberg & IOOF, 28 February 2020. All foreign exchange rates are rounded to two decimal places where appropriate.

Please note: Past performance is not indicative of future performance.