

Magellan Infrastructure Fund

ARSN: 126 367 226

Fund Facts

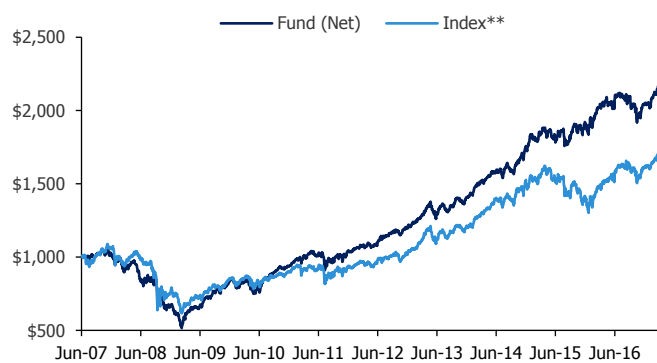
Portfolio Manager	Gerald Stack
Structure	Global Listed Infrastructure Fund, \$AUD Hedged
Inception Date	1 July 2007
Management & Administration Fee ¹	1.05% per annum
Buy/Sell Spread ¹	0.15%/0.15%
Fund Size	AUD \$1,257.7 million
Distribution Frequency	Six Monthly
Performance Fee ¹	10.0% of the excess return of the units of the Fund above the higher of the Index Relative Hurdle (S&P Global Infrastructure Index A\$ Hedged Net Total Return) and the Absolute Return Hurdle (the yield of 10-year Australian Government Bonds). Additionally, the Performance Fees are subject to a high water mark.

¹All fees are inclusive of the net effect of GST

Fund Features

- Benchmark-unaware exposure to global listed infrastructure
- Conservative definition of core infrastructure
- Relatively concentrated portfolio of typically 20 to 40 investments
- Seeks to substantially hedge the capital component of the foreign currency exposure back to Australian dollars
- Maximum cash position of 20%
- \$10,000 minimum investment amount.

Performance Chart growth of AUD \$1,000*



Fund Performance*

	Fund (%)	Index (%)**	Excess (%)
1 Month	3.7	3.5	0.2
3 Months	7.8	7.0	0.8
6 Months	4.7	5.7	-1.0
1 Year	7.5	15.1	-7.6
3 Years (% p.a.)	13.1	9.7	3.4
5 Years (% p.a.)	15.3	12.2	3.1
7 Years (% p.a.)	15.0	10.5	4.5
Since Inception (% p.a.)	8.4	5.7	2.7

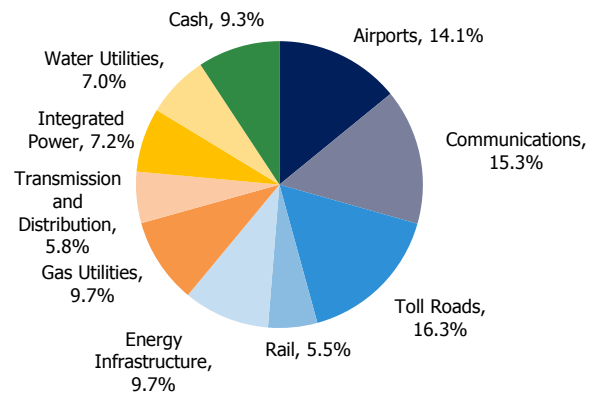
Fund Risk Measures[^]

	5 Years	Since Inception*
Upside Capture	0.6	0.7
Downside Capture	-0.1	0.4

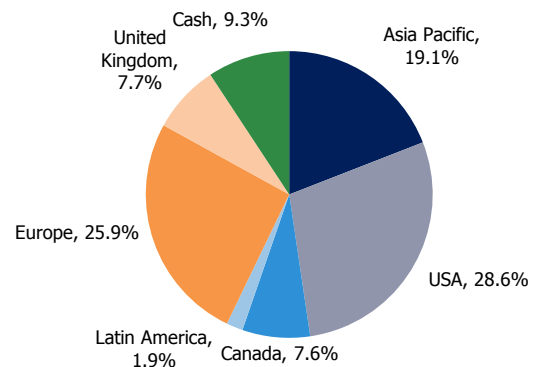
Top 10 Holdings

	Sector	%
Transurban Group	Toll Roads	8.1
Enbridge Inc	Energy Infrastructure	5.5
Sempra Energy	Gas Utilities	5.0
Crown Castle International	Communications	4.6
SES S.A.	Communications	4.3
American Tower Corp	Communications	4.0
National Grid PLC	Transmission and Distribution	4.0
Flughafen Zuerich AG	Airports	4.0
Aeroports De Paris	Airports	3.9
United Utilities Group Plc	Water Utilities	3.7
TOTAL:		47.1

Industry Exposure[#]



Geographical Exposure[#]



* Calculations are based on exit price with distributions reinvested, after ongoing fees and expenses but excluding individual tax, member fees and entry fees (if applicable) Fund Inception. 1 July 2007.
 ** S&P Global Infrastructure Index A\$ Hedged Net spliced with UBS Developed Infrastructure and Utilities Net Total Return Index (hedged to AUD). Note: as the UBS Developed Infrastructure and Utilities Net Total Return Index (hedged to AUD) ceased to be published from 31 March 2015, it was replaced by Magellan on 1 January 2015 with the S&P Global Infrastructure Index A\$ Hedged Net Total Return.
 ^ Upside/downside capture shows if a fund has outperformed the global market during periods of market strength and weakness, and if so, by how much. The MSCI World Net Total Return Index AUD Hedged has been used as the representative of the global market to calculate this risk measure.
 # Sectors are internally defined. Geographical exposures are by domicile of listing.

Market Commentary

Global infrastructure stocks outperformed global stocks during the March quarter when they rose for the fourth quarter in the past five. Global infrastructure funds outperformed after investors decided their decline over the December quarter in reaction to higher interest rates was overdone.

Global stocks, as measured by the MSCI World Index in USD, rose for a fourth consecutive quarter during the first three months of 2017 as US companies posted higher-than-expected earnings, President Donald Trump's pro-growth policies fanned optimism about the US economy and mainstream parties held off populists in the elections in the Netherlands. The S&P 500 Index and the Stoxx Europe Index each rose 5.5% over the quarter.

Global infrastructure stocks did even better to more than overturn their decline in the December quarter. Infrastructure stocks fell in the three months to December 31 after Trump's shock election victory sparked a jump in US bond yields on talk that his pro-growth agenda would boost the US economy. Infrastructure stocks are vulnerable in the short term to surges in interest rates because higher rates reduce their allure as so-called bond proxies. These are the stocks that are sought when interest rates are so low investors seek other securities with similar haven qualities to bonds.

A levelling in interest rates over the March quarter and views that infrastructure bonds are more immune to changes in interest rates over the longer term helped infrastructure stocks.

Fund Commentary

The portfolio recorded a positive return for the quarter while outperforming its benchmark. Over the quarter, the biggest contributors to performance included investments in CSX, American Tower and Transurban.

CSX soared 33.8% after outgoing Canadian Pacific Railway CEO Hunter Harrison joined as its CEO, with an intention to improve operating efficiency at the railroad operator. American Tower gained 15.0% after it boosted 2017 earnings guidance on an expected US\$100 million gain in revenue and increased its quarterly distribution to 62 US cents a unit. Transurban jumped 13.1% after the toll-road operator lifted fiscal 2017 guidance on strong traffic, reported 11% revenue growth for the first-half of fiscal 2017 and signed a A\$460 million deal to extend a freeway in Virginia.

Over the quarter, the stocks that detracted from returns included investments in Koninklijke Vopak of the Netherlands, Enbridge of Canada and Canadian Pacific Railway.

Vopak tumbled 8.9% after the tank terminal operator said 2017 earnings won't exceed 2016's profit ex-items of 822 million euros. Canadian Pacific Railway shed 1.6% on the departure of its CEO to CSX, and after its fourth-quarter adjusted earnings of C\$3.04 a share fell short of analyst estimates. Enbridge lost 0.6% after the oil pipeline network operator reported lower-than-expected adjusted earnings of 56 Canadian cents a share in the fourth quarter.

In the December quarter, declines in infrastructure stocks led us to increase investment in some stocks in the portfolio that we view favourably, which reduced the portfolio cash balance from about 9% to approximately 6%. The increase in stock prices that occurred in the March quarter led us to sell some of these stocks so cash balances returned to their previous higher levels of around 9%. We expect the portfolio will become fully invested over the medium term as prevailing bond yields rise to more normal levels.

During the quarter, the portfolio reduced its exposure to telecommunications tower companies (a key part of the telecommunications infrastructure sector), the electricity transmission and distribution sector and the airports sector. Offsetting these reductions were increases to the weights of the energy infrastructure, gas utilities, toll roads and water utilities sectors.

Unless indicated, indices and stock price movements reflect changes in local currency.

Topic in Focus – Why infrastructure stocks can withstand higher interest rates

The shock election of Donald Trump as US president sparked excitement that his pro-growth policies would reinvigorate the US economy. Talk these policies would be accompanied by faster inflation boosted US long-term interest rates by about 50 basis points over November. While Trump inspired a 14% rally in US equity markets that month, global infrastructure stocks fell 4% (as global equities overall rose 1.4%) because they were lumped among bond-proxy stocks that are considered to be vulnerable to higher rates.¹

The term bond proxy is often used to describe any security with bond-like features that benefited in recent years when low or even below-zero bond yields tied to ultra-loose monetary policies forced investors to look elsewhere for higher-yielding but still-dependable returns. Many turned to the safest of stocks including infrastructure stocks. After all, a primary characteristic of the infrastructure asset class is that the regulatory frameworks governing essential services generally ensure fair and predictable returns for owners.

The outlook is for tighter monetary conditions and higher bond rates. The Federal Reserve has raised the cash rate three times in the past 16 months because the US economy is progressing towards full employment. Recent evidence suggests that the global economy is picking up and seems to be winning its battle against deflation. This prospect of higher bond rates is prompting concerns that infrastructure stocks are set to underperform.

If interest rates were to jump then history suggests that infrastructure stocks would be likely to lag. But experience has been that this is a short-term phenomenon. Over the longer term, the relationship between infrastructure assets and interest rates is muted – whether rates are rising or falling. Interest rates have less sway on infrastructure stocks than many might think because these businesses are generally insulated from the business cycle. If interest rates were to rise, infrastructure stocks would be likely to recover quickly in relative terms, the more so because higher interest rates are already factored into infrastructure valuations.

Infrastructure stocks are certainly more sensitive to interest rates these days than the energy, materials and consumer-discretionary stocks that aren't classed as 'yield plays'. Circumstances could be such that infrastructure stocks could underperform. An unexpectedly large surge in interest rates would be one such circumstance. If rates rise modestly as expected, investors can be confident the embedded valuations and the protected nature of their earnings mean that infrastructure stocks are well placed to ride out the increase.

Split analysis

Higher interest rates have two distinct impacts on a portfolio of global infrastructure stocks such as those in our strategy, which can largely be divided into regulated utilities and transport stocks. First, higher interest rates can affect the financial performance of businesses. But the nature of how infrastructure is regulated makes this less of an issue with such stocks.

Regulators of utilities around the world typically set prices for water, electricity or energy services to allow the utility company to earn a 'fair' return on the equity invested – a return on equity in the range of 9% to 10% is typical. If an increase in interest rates or in some other variable cost threatens profitability then utilities are able to increase their prices so that they can maintain their return on equity. The essential nature of their services means that higher prices don't reduce demand and dent revenue. All up, higher interest rates pose limited or no burden for regulated utilities.

With infrastructure companies such as airports and toll roads regulators focus on the prices companies charge rather than their returns. Most of these companies have contracts that adjust charges for inflation. When the CPI rises, for example, up go tolls on privately owned roads. Transport companies are thus protected from higher interest rates when, as would be the case now, the increase in interest rates would reflect a pickup in inflation.

As an aside, many infrastructure companies are now well protected from higher rates because they have taken advantage of low interest rates over the past five years to lock in cheap debt for long periods. Atlantia, for instance, which controls much of the Italian motorway system, in January sold 750 million euros worth of bonds with an eight-year maturity at a rate of just 1.63% p.a.

The other side to an increase in interest rates is what it means for valuations. We view the value of any investment as reflecting two factors: the expected cash flows the asset will generate and the risks associated with those cash flows. Under this approach, investors account for risks by discounting the expected cash flows at a rate that reflects the risks. An increase in interest rates will increase the discount rate and reduce the value of expected cash flows, reducing the value of the investment. Hence, the assumptions investors make about interest rates has a direct impact upon valuation.

As a consequence of the ultra-loose monetary policies of recent years, 10-year US government bonds are trading well below average historical levels – the yield ranged from 2.31% to 2.63% over the first three months of 2017. Our analysis suggests that infrastructure stocks today are priced on expectations that the US 10-year government bond yield will rise to about 4%. As such, while we would expect to see some short-term underperformance if US long-term yields were to rise, we wouldn't expect longer-term valuations to be threatened by a 10-year US government bond yield that remained below 4%.

If US 10-year Treasury yields were to increase significantly beyond 4%, infrastructure stocks would most likely come under pressure. The yield on US 10-year Treasuries on March 31, however, was 2.39%. That means that valuations today are factoring in a 1.61-percentage-point increase in the rate in coming years. Infrastructure stocks thus appear well insulated against any modest rise in interest rates sparked by Trump or some other factor.

¹ Benchmarks used are the S&P 500 Index in US dollars for US stocks, the MSCI World Index TR in US dollars for global stocks, the S&P Global Infrastructure Index TR in US dollars for global infrastructure stocks and Bloomberg 10-year government generic bond for 10-year US Treasury yields, which rose 52 basis points over November.

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