COOLABAH CAPITAL INVESTMENTS™
THE INTELLECTUAL EDGE: MAKING EVERY BASIS POINT COUNT

Fund: **Coolabah Long-Short Opportunities Fund - Institutional Class**
Strategy: **Alternatives/Unconstrained Fixed-Income**
Return (since May. 2020): **8.43% pa gross (5.92% pa net)**
Net return volatility (since May. 2020): **3.66% pa**

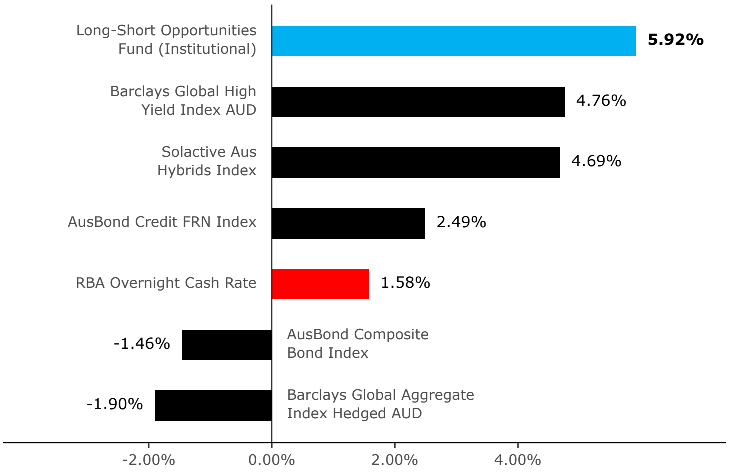
March 2024

Objective: The objective of Coolabah Capital Institutional Investments' (CCII) Long-Short Opportunities Fund is to outperform the RBA Cash Rate plus 8% pa over rolling 3 year periods with a volatility target less than the ASX all ords index over rolling 3 year periods.

Strategy: We add value via active asset-selection using a range of valuation models with the aim of delivering superior risk-adjusted returns, or alpha, to traditional hedge funds. We invest in global senior and subordinated debt securities, hybrids, and derivatives, and can hold a maximum of 20% of the portfolio in bank equities. The Fund can use leverage and targets holding the majority of its portfolio in investment-grade securities. It is managed by Coolabah Capital Institutional Investments.

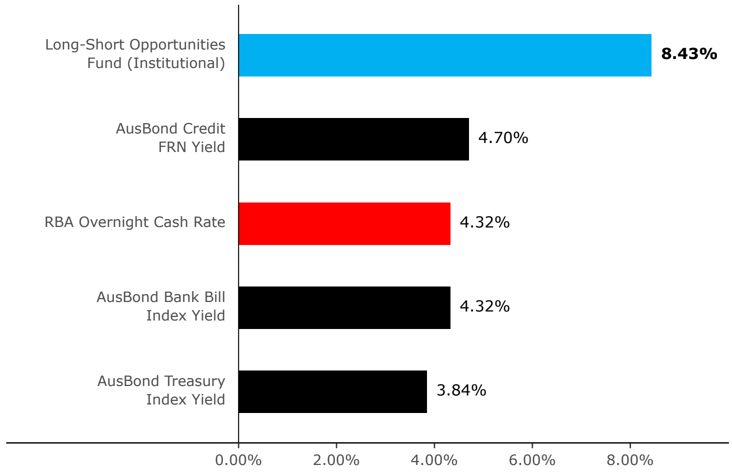
Period Ending 2024-03-31	Gross Return	Net Return	RBA Cash Rate	Gross Excess Return‡
1 month	**0.85%**	**0.69%**	**0.32%**	**0.53%**
3 months	2.82%	2.27%	1.05%	1.77%
6 months	7.12%	5.71%	2.09%	5.03%
1 year	**16.17%**	**12.61%**	**4.08%**	**12.09%**
3 years pa	5.39%	3.65%	2.04%	3.36%
Inception pa May. 2020	**8.43%**	**5.92%**	**1.58%**	**6.85%**

LSOP Fund Returns (Net) vs Comparisons
Annualized Total Returns Since Inception in May 2020 to March 2024



Data Source: RBA, Bloomberg, Mainstream, Coolabah Capital Investments

Annual Running Yield
31 March 2024



Data Source: RBA, Bloomberg, Coolabah Capital Investments

‡ The Excess Return column represents the gross return above the RBA Overnight Cash Rate

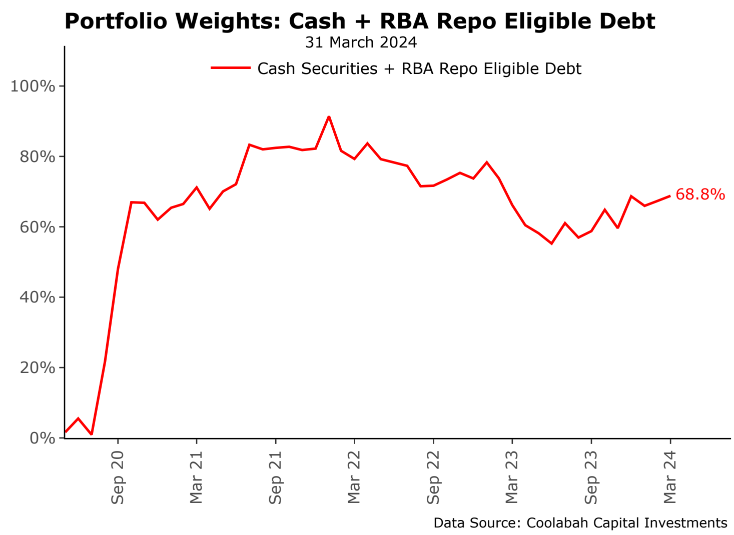
Disclaimer: Past performance does not assure future returns. Returns are shown net of management fees and costs unless otherwise stated. All investments carry risks, including that the value of investments may vary, future returns may differ from past returns, and that your capital is not guaranteed. To understand Fund's risks better, please refer to the Product Disclosure Statement available at Coolabah Capital Investments' website.

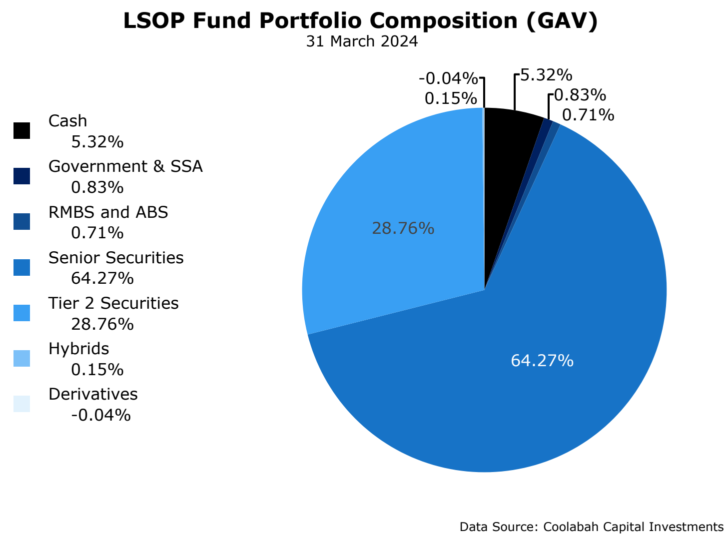
Note: all portfolio statistics other than yields and duration are reported on gross asset value

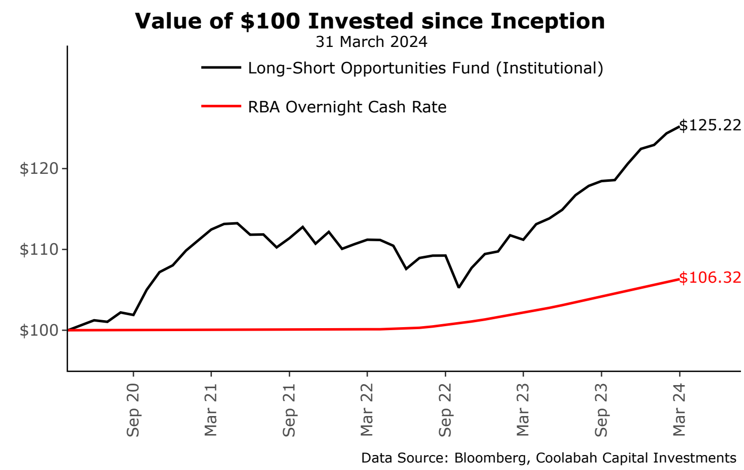
Net Monthly Returns > RBA Overnight Cash Rate	72%	Gearing Permitted?	Yes
Av. Portfolio Credit Rating	A+	1 Year Av. Gross Portfolio Weight to Cash	1.2%
Portfolio MSCI ESG Rating	AA	Gross Portfolio Weight to AT1 Hybrids	0.1%
No. Cash Securities	9	Gross Cash Securities + RBA Repo-Eligible Debt	68.8%
No. Notes and Bonds	74	Gross Portfolio Weight to Equities	0.0%
Av. Interest Rate (Gross Running Yield)	8.43%	Net Annual Volatility (since incep.)	3.66%
Modified Interest Rate Duration	0.28 years		

Signatory of: PRI Principles for Responsible Investment

MSCI ESG RATINGS AA
CCC B BB BBB A AA AAA
Asset weighted average rating







The since inception gross (net) return of 8.43% pa gross (5.92% pa net) is the total annual return earned by the fund since May. 2020, including interest income and movements in the price of the bond portfolio after all fund fees (assuming net returns are calculated from the historic gross returns using the current fee structure as displayed in the Product Disclosure Statement). The net return quoted applies to the Coolabah Long-Short Opportunities Fund - Institutional Class, with quarterly distributions reinvested. Each investor's return will vary depending upon their own investment date and any additional investments and withdrawals they make. **The annualised volatility estimate of 3.66% pa** is based on the standard deviation of net daily returns since inception, which are then annualised, attributable to the Coolabah Long-Short Opportunities Fund - Institutional Class.

Portfolio Managers	Christopher Joye, Ashley Kabel, Roger Douglas, Fionn O'Leary (Coolabah Capital Investments)		
Asset-Class	Alternatives/Unconstrained Fixed-Income	Fund Inception	01-May-2020
Benchmark	RBA Overnight Cash Rate	Valuations	Daily (earnings accrue daily)
Target Return	Net > RBA Overnight Cash Rate + 8% pa	Mgt. & Admin Fee	1.0% pa
Reporting	Monthly	Performance Fee	20.5% of returns over benchmark +1.0%
Target Volatility	Less than ASX All Ords Index	Investment Manager	Coolabah Capital Institutional Investments

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MSCI ESG RATINGS AA
CCC B BB BBB A AA AAA
Asset weighted average rating

Portfolio commentary: **In March, the zero-duration daily liquidity Long-Short Opportunistic Fund (LSOP) returned 0.85% gross (0.69% net), compared to the RBA Overnight Cash Rate (0.32%), the Solactive Aus Hybrids Index (0.81%), the Barclays Global Aggregate Index Hedged AUD (0.82%), and the AusBond Composite Bond Index (1.12%). Over the previous 12 months, LSOP returned 16.17% gross (12.61% net), outperforming the AusBond Composite Bond Index (1.47%), the Barclays Global Aggregate Index Hedged AUD (2.54%), the RBA Overnight Cash Rate (4.08%), and the Solactive Aus Hybrids Index (6.73%). LSOP ended March with a running yield of 8.43% pa, a weighted-average credit rating of A+, and a portfolio weighted average MSCI ESG rating of AA.**

Since the inception of LSOP 3.9 years ago in May 2020, it has returned 8.43% pa gross (5.92% pa net), outperforming the Barclays Global Aggregate Index Hedged AUD (-1.90% pa), the AusBond Composite Bond Index (-1.46% pa), the RBA Overnight Cash Rate (1.58% pa), and the Solactive Aus Hybrids Index (4.69% pa). While LSOP's return volatility since inception has been low at around 3.66% pa (measured using daily returns), as a daily liquidity product with assets that are marked-to-market using executable prices, volatility does exist. This contrasts with illiquid credit (eg, loans and high yield bonds) wherein assets that have very high risk can appear to have remarkably low volatility, which is, in fact, just a mirage explained by the inability to properly value these assets using executable prices.

Strategy commentary: In the face of Coolabah's research indicating that there is a nascent reacceleration in US inflation pressures driven by demand-side services costs, which are in turn underpinned by excessively tight labour markets and unsustainable wage growth, there was an unseemly, twilight-zone like rally in both bonds and equities in the month of March. After the end of the month, one of Coolabah's most unique late 2023 forecasts, calling for an upgrade to the credit ratings of the major Australian banks' Tier 2 bonds from BBB+ to A-, was sensationally delivered by Standard & Poor's (see more later). We had also predicted upgrades to regional banks' senior bonds and all bank hybrids, which were validated.

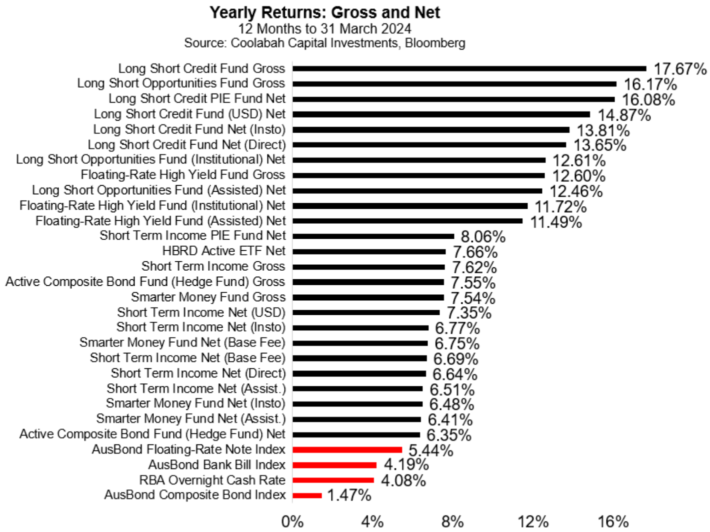
Coolabah's portfolios continued to deliver healthy returns in March, perhaps most strikingly accented by the recently established long duration unit class in our Active Sovereign Bond Fund, which returned 1.42% net of fees in the month, our long duration Global Active Credit Fund, which delivered 1.24% net, and our long duration local strategy, called the Coolabah Active Composite Bond Fund (ETF: FIXD), which returned 1.24% net compared to the benchmark Composite Bond Index's 1.12%. The charts below highlight our strategy returns (black bars over the last 12 months to 31 March across a range of different solutions – the red bars are different benchmarks).

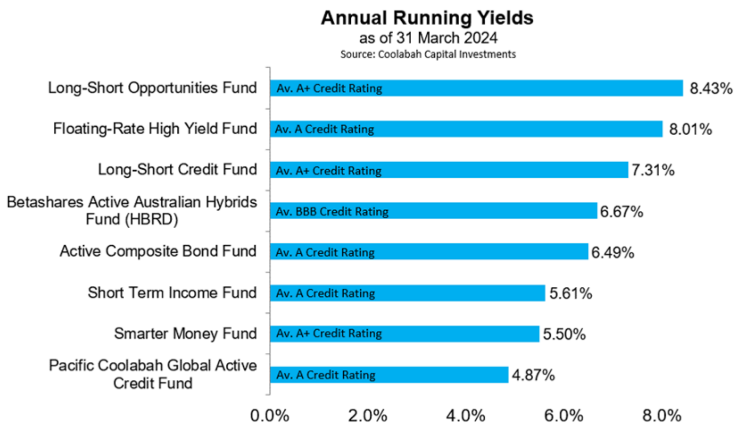
It's noteworthy that over the past year, some of our best performing strategies have included:

- The zero duration, daily liquidity, A+ rated Long Short Credit Fund, which returned between 13.65% to 13.81% net of fees over the 12 months to March 2024. (The NZD and USD hedged versions of the fund returned 16.08% and 14.87% net of fees respectively for the same period.) This fund has a current gross running yield of 7.31% pa;
- The zero duration, daily liquidity, A+ rated Long Short Opportunities Fund, which returned 12.61% net of fees. This fund has a current gross running yield of 8.43% pa;
- The zero duration, daily liquidity, A rated Floating Rate High Yield Fund, which returned between 11.49% to 11.72% net of fees. This fund has a current gross running yield of 8.01% pa;
- Coolabah's new long duration, daily liquidity, A rated global credit fund, known as the Pacific Coolabah Global Active Credit Fund (available to sophisticated investors only), which has delivered 8.26% (non-annualised) net of fees since its launch on 10 October 2023, outperforming the benchmark Bloomberg Global Aggregate Corporate Index's 6.92% return (AUD hedged) by 1.34% after fees;
- Our lowest volatility solutions, the zero duration, A+ rated and daily liquidity Smarter Money and Short Term Income Funds, which have returned between 6.41% and 6.48% and 6.51% and 6.77% after fees respectively compared to the AusBond FRN Index's 5.44% and the RBA cash rate's 4.08%; and

Strategy commentary cont'd:

- Our long duration, daily liquidity, A+ rated Active Composite Bond Fund, which returned 6.35% after fees, outperforming the Composite Bond Index's 1.47% result by 4.88% over the last year. The fund's current gross running yield is 6.49% pa.





The coincident risk and bond rally was driven by a surprising retracement of long-term bond yields (since reversed out in April to date) despite a spate of worrying inflation data (see more later) with 10-year government bond yields contracting in the US (-5bps), Germany (-11bps), New Zealand (-16bps), Italy (-17bps), Australia (-18bps), and the UK (-19bps). This helped to push equities higher in Australia (ASX200 up 2.57%), the US (S&P500 Index up 3.10% and Nasdaq up 1.17%), New Zealand (NZX50 up 3.10%), Europe (Eurostoxx 50 (sx5e) up 4.22%), and the UK (FTSE 100 up 4.23%).

Lower bond yields powered the performance of long duration fixed-rate bond benchmarks, with the Global Aggregate Corporate Index up 1.26% in USD. Tighter credit spreads helped its zero duration counterpart return a still very attractive 0.86% with corporate bond spreads compressing in USD (down 6bps), GBP (down 6bps), and EUR (down 8bps). Down under, cash credit spread performance was much more mixed. Corporate bond spreads only fell by 1bps while 5-year major bank senior bond spreads were unchanged and 5-year major bank Tier 2 spreads actually widened 4bps care of ongoing issuance. One standout was the ASX hybrid market where 5-year major bank spreads dropped by a striking 23bps.

In synthetic CDS index markets, spread moves were generally much more contained with US CDX Index spreads only declining by 1bps, which was matched by a 1bps contraction in European Main Index spreads.

Strategy commentary cont'd: There were, however, notable moves in the price of both oil, with WTI Crude up 6.27%, and gold, which appreciated 9.08%, that could influence and/or correlate with intensifying inflation pressures.

S&P upgrades Aussie major bank Tier 2 bond ratings from BBB+ to A-

Aussie major bank Tier 2 bonds were upgraded on April 4 2024 from a BBB+ credit rating to A-, and Bendigo & Adelaide Bank and Bank of Queensland senior bonds upgraded from BBB+ to A-, which will massively expand the pool of global capital available to be allocated to these assets.

This is a result of Coolabah's unique late 2023 forecast regarding Standard & Poor's lifting Australia's Banking Industry Country Risk Assessment (BICRA) score from 3 to 2 coming to fruition (lower is better), with the market-leading credit agency today declaring:

- *"Continued strengthening of regulatory and governance standards in the Australian banking sector has reduced industrywide risks. Simplified business models and advances in risk management have also contributed to this improvement."*
- *"We now assess the institutional framework for the banking industry in Australia at the lowest risk level on our scale, and in line with that in Canada, Hong Kong, and Singapore."*
- *"Consequently, we raised our long-term issuer credit ratings on most of the non-major Australia-based banks and other financial institutions."*
- *"We have also upgraded all the rated Additional Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruments issued by Australian banks and their New Zealand banking subsidiaries."*

Coolabah published this forecast on 23 November 2023 at Livewire, predicting that S&P was likely to move around the first quarter of 2024. *No other analysts globally shared the same view on this rating change at the time, although many did subsequently come to slowly embrace the idea.*

Other interesting consequences that we forecast were an upgrade to the major bank's AT1 hybrid ratings from BBB- to BBB, which has also materialised.

Aussie major bank Tier 2 is now in the "A" band for the first time with all three key global credit rating agencies (CBA will shortly be confirmed for an upgrade with Moody's, based on our research).

Australia's banking system also has the lowest BICRA score globally alongside Canada, Singapore and Hong Kong, which is an entirely prudent determination.

US core inflation picks up in early 2024

The Fed's preferred measure of underlying inflation – the core PCE deflator – increased by 0.3% in February, rounding up to be in line with market expectations, following a 0.5% rise in January (rounding up from an initial estimate of 0.4%).

The estimated trend shows annualised monthly inflation picking up from around 2% late last year to about 3.5%, echoing the recent re-acceleration in the more timely core CPI (note that the trend estimates can be revised as more data become available).

The pick-up in inflation has been broadly based, in that the estimated trend of the trimmed mean PCE deflator shows annualised monthly growth picking up from 2.50% last year to 3.75%.

Fed Chair Powell said that the February data were in line with expectations, repeating that the Fed needed more confidence before it reduced interest rates, where the return of inflation to the 2% target could be "bumpy" and the strength in activity meant that the Fed "[did not] need to be in a hurry to cut".

Strategy commentary cont'd: Powell emphasised that the Fed had a "steady hand", repeating how the FOMC did not overreact to the progress made on inflation late last year.

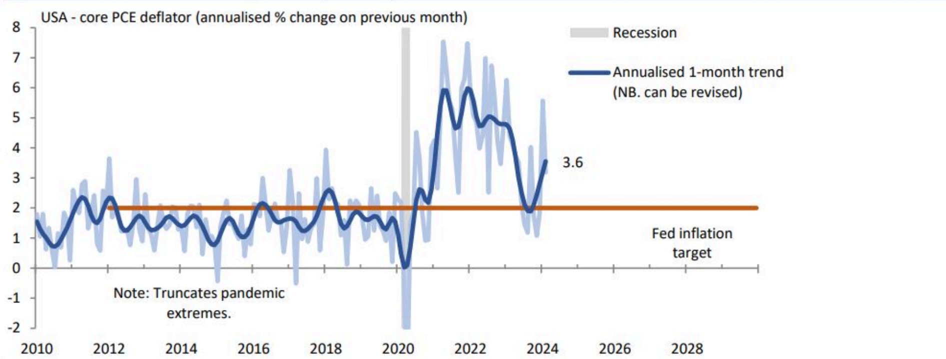
The next FOMC meeting is on 30 Apr/1 May, but the more likely window for the first cut is still the 11-12 June meeting, which is when the FOMC also updates its economic and financial outlook.

The FOMC then meets twice more before the 5 November presidential election, once immediately afterwards, and then again in December.

The Fed always stresses its political independence, but the election should see it act more cautiously than usual given Trump's hostility towards the central bank, refraining from offering anything more than tepid guidance and emphasising that decisions will be data dependent.

As for consumer spending, real expenditure rebounded in February, up 0.4% after a 0.2% decline in January. The estimated trend in spending shows steady annualised monthly growth of about 3%.

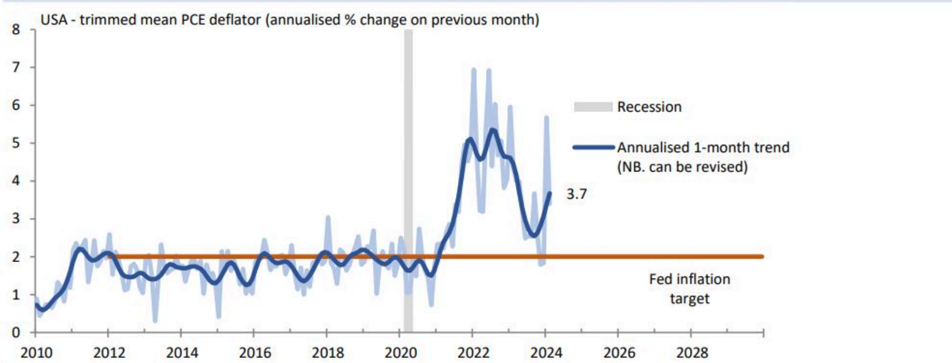
Figure 1: US core PCE inflation picked up in early 2024



Source: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Federal Reserve Bank of St Louis, Coolabah Capital Investments

US core PCE inflation picked up in early 2024

Figure 2: The trimmed mean PCE deflator indicates the pick-up in inflation has been broadly based

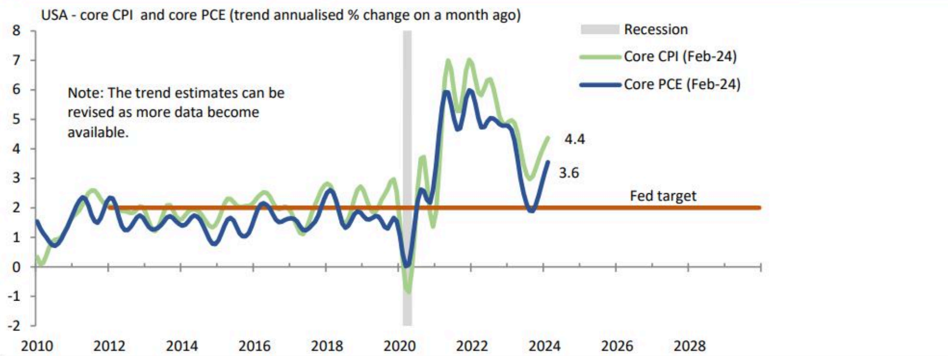


Source: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Federal Reserve Bank of St Louis, Coolabah Capital Investments

The trimmed mean PCE deflator indicates the pick-up in inflation has been broadly based

Strategy commentary cont'd:

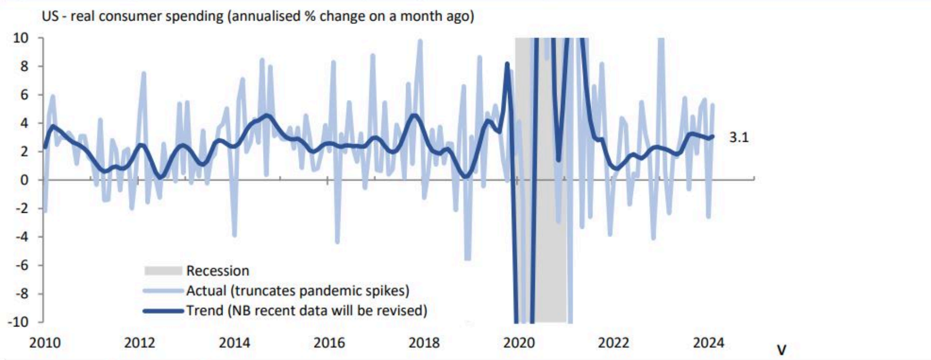
Figure 3: The core PCE is echoing the higher core CPI



Source: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Federal Reserve Bank of St Louis, Coolabah Capital Investments

The core PCE is echoing the higher and more timely core CPI

Figure 4: Trend growth in US real consumer spending remains strong



Source: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Federal Reserve Bank of St Louis, Coolabah Capital Investments

Trend growth in US real consumer spending remains strong

Persistent services inflation contrasts with falling goods prices

The monthly CPI for February showed underlying inflation tracking in line with the RBA's forecast profile, with persistent services inflation contrasting with falling goods prices in trend terms.

The ex-volatile items/holiday travel CPI rose by 0.5% in February after increasing by only 0.2% for four months in a row, where the increase in February was the largest rise since August.

This suggests that the RBA's preferred measure of inflation - the quarterly trimmed mean CPI, which is due on 24 April, ahead of the 6-7 May board meeting - is on track to post another increase of 0.8% in Q1, in line with the RBA's interpolated forecast.

There is still a margin of error in mapping from this monthly measure of underlying inflation to the quarterly trimmed mean CPI, although both rose by 0.8% in Q4.

Importantly, the monthly CPI echoed the trend shown in other advanced economies, where ongoing strength in services inflation contrasts with goods disinflation.

Goods and services prices have been seasonally adjusted and are broader in scope than the ex-volatile items/holiday travel CPI that proxies the trimmed mean CPI. But that is still useful in demonstrating how the RBA will need a material slowdown in services inflation to be confident that overall inflation will sustainably return to the 2.5% midpoint of its target.

Strategy commentary cont'd:

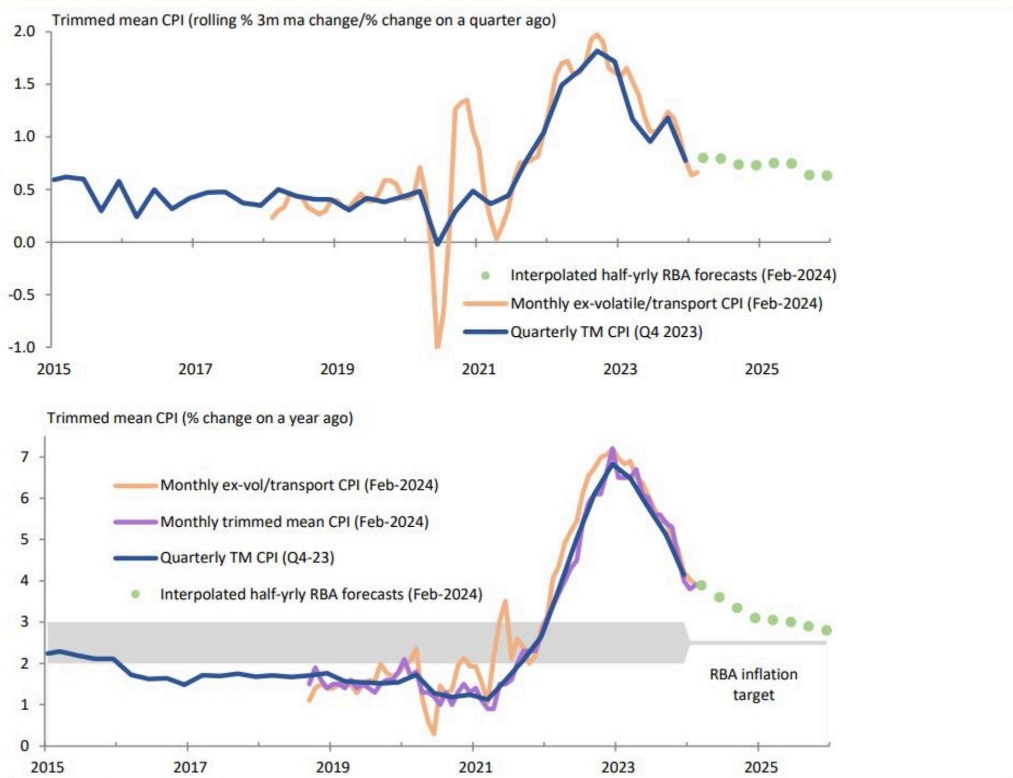
Figure 1: Market forecasts versus outcome for the monthly CPI

(Feb 2024)	Previous	Consensus forecast: Forecast	Consensus forecast: Range	Actual	Market surprise
Headline CPI (not seasonally adjusted)					
- % change on the previous month	-0.3	0.4	0.1 to 0.6	0.2	▼
- % 3-month ma change	0.6	0.7	0.6 to 0.7	0.6	▼
- % change on a year ago	3.4	3.6	3.3 to 3.8	3.4	▼
Seasonally adjusted headline CPI					
- % change on the previous month	0.4	0.4	0.1 to 0.6	0.5	▲
- % 3-month ma change	0.6	0.6	0.5 to 0.7	0.6	-
- % change on a year ago	3.6	3.6	3.3 to 3.8	3.7	▲
Seasonally adjusted ex-volatile items and holiday travel CPI (trimmed mean CPI proxy)					
- % change on the previous month	0.2	..	..	0.5	
- % 3-month ma change	0.6	..	..	0.7	
- % change on a year ago	4.0	..	..	3.9	
Trimmed mean CPI					
- % change on a year ago	3.8	..	..	3.9	

Note: ".." not available.
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Bloomberg, Reserve Bank of Australia, Coolabah Capital Investments

Market forecasts versus outcome for the monthly CPI

Figure 2: Underlying inflation is tracking in line with the RBA's forecast profile

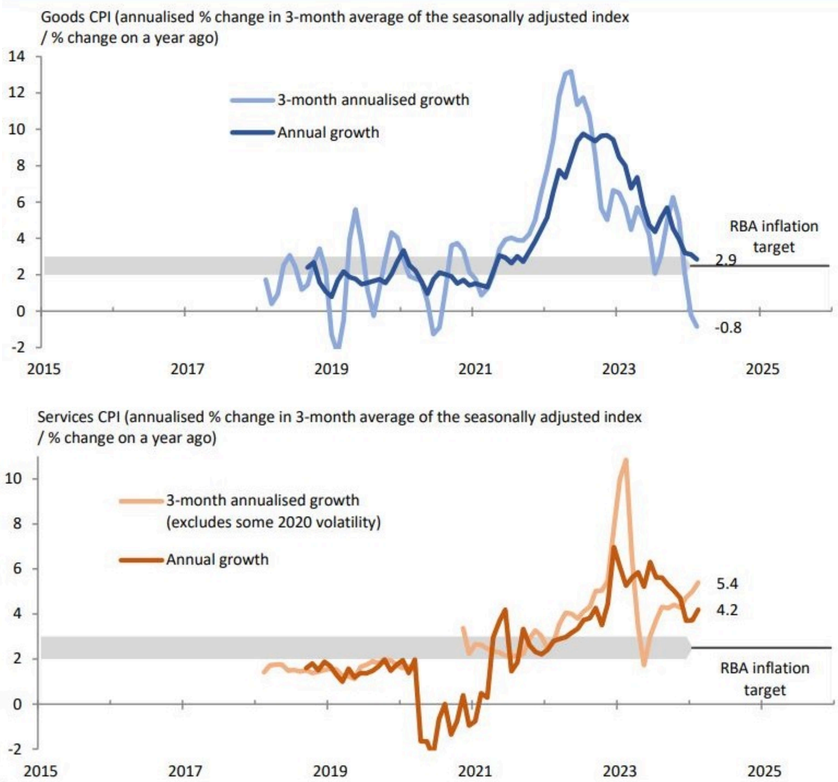


Note: Some data were seasonally adjusted by CCI.
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, CCI

Underlying inflation is tracking in line with the RBA's forecast profile

Strategy commentary cont'd:

Figure 3: Goods prices are falling, while services inflation remains strong



Note: Some data were seasonally adjusted by CCI.
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, CCI

Goods prices are falling, while services inflation remains strong

A snapshot of Australian bank/super fund exposure to commercial real estate

Commercial property prices have fallen sharply in most advanced economies over the past year or two, with Green Street Advisors calculating 20%-plus declines in the US and euro area and the RBA estimating a roughly 10% decline in Australia as at late 2023.

Against this backdrop, CCI has taken a snapshot of the exposure of Australian banks and super funds to commercial property and infrastructure.

In aggregate, bank loans to commercial real estate have reached about $0.4 trillion, edging up to 13% of total bank loans over the past couple of years.

This is a little above the 12% average of the past two decades, but well below the 17% peak reached during the global financial crisis.

However, there is a marked divergence in the exposure of different banks.

The exposure of foreign banks continues to trend higher and has reached a series-high 21% of their local loan book.

The exposure of the major domestic banks has edged up to 10% of their loans, while commercial real estate loans written by small domestic banks make up only 4% of their loans.

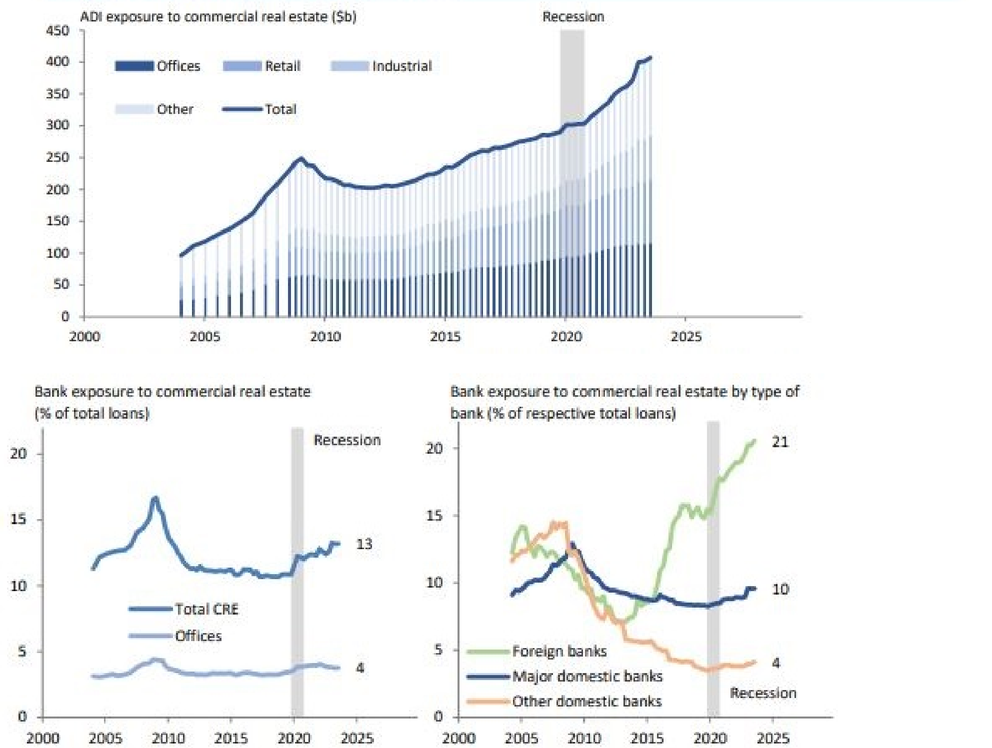
In comparison, superannuation fund holdings of commercial real estate and infrastructure currently total over $0.35 trillion.

While super fund holdings are a little smaller in dollar terms, the exposure of pension funds is greater than banks when expressed as a share of assets.

Strategy commentary cont'd: Across the pension system, commercial property and infrastructure – where most of it is unlisted – currently accounts for 16% of total super fund assets, which is at the high end of the range of a relatively short history.

Commercial property and infrastructure accounts for 19% of industry fund assets, 16% of public sector fund assets and 10% of retail sector assets.

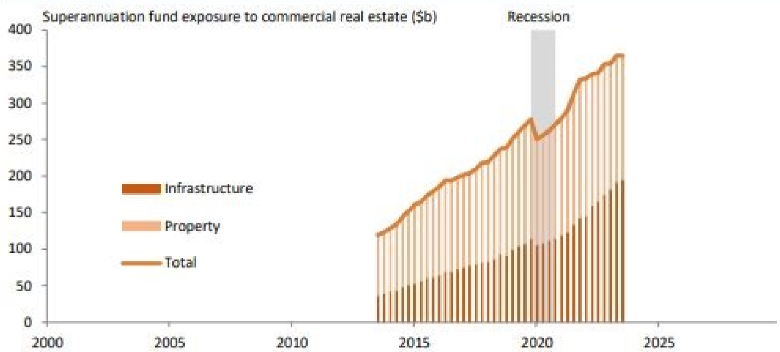
Figure 1: Bank exposure to commercial real estate has picked up a little as a share of loans over recent years, with foreign banks most exposed relative to their loan book



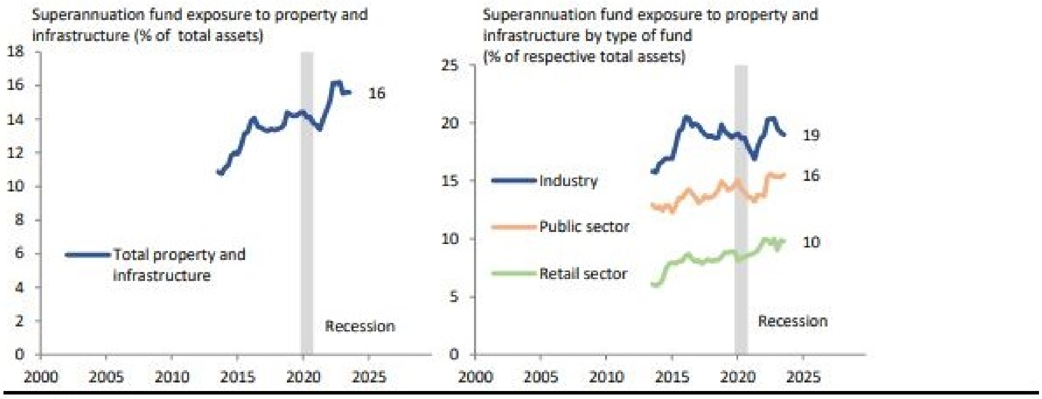
Source: APRA, CCI

Bank exposure to commercial real estate has picked up a little as a share of loans over recent years, with foreign banks most exposed relative to their loan book

Figure 2: Super funds have increased their exposure to commercial real estate and infrastructure more than banks as a share of assets



Strategy commentary cont'd:



Source: APRA, CCI

Super funds have increased their exposure to commercial real estate and infrastructure more than banks as a share of assets

Don't forget to listen to Coolabah Capital's popular Complexity Premia podcast. You can listen on your favourite podcast app, or you can find it on Apple Podcasts or Podbean.

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AA
CCC | B | BB | BBB | A | AA | AAA
Asset weighted average rating