

# WEALTHFOCUS PERPETUAL GEARED AUSTRALIAN

January 2025

## FUND FACTS

**Investment objective:** Aims to enhance long-term capital growth through borrowing (gearing) to invest predominantly in quality Australian industrial and resource shares.

## FUND BENEFITS

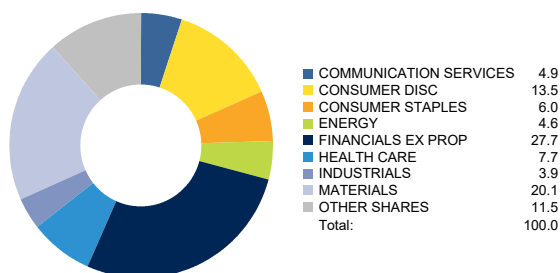
Provides investors with broad market exposure with the potential for higher returns through the use of gearing (borrowing within the fund) and actively managed by one of Australia's most experienced investment management teams.

## 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.

<b>Benchmark:</b>	S&P/ASX 300 Accum. Index
<b>Inception Date:</b>	November 2003
<b>Size of Portfolio:</b>	\$59.23 million as at 31 Dec 2024
<b>APIR:</b>	PER0223AU
<b>Management Fee:</b>	0.98%*
<b>Investment style:</b>	Active, fundamental, bottom-up, value
<b>Suggested minimum investment period:</b>	Seven years or longer

## PORTFOLIO SECTORS



## TOP 10 STOCK HOLDINGS

	% of Portfolio
BHP Group Ltd	9.9%
Commonwealth Bank of Australia	8.5%
Flutter Entertainment Plc	5.7%
CSL Limited	4.3%
Insurance Australia Group Ltd	4.2%
Wesfarmers Limited	4.0%
Westpac Banking Corporation	4.0%
ANZ Group Holdings Limited	3.8%
Goodman Group	3.2%
National Australia Bank Limited	2.9%

## NET PERFORMANCE - periods ending 31 January 2025

	Fund	Benchmark #	Excess
1 month	5.99	4.46	+1.52
3 months	2.97	4.98	-2.01
1 year	12.30	15.09	-2.79
2 year p.a.	6.78	10.80	-4.02
3 year p.a.	10.00	11.07	-1.07
4 year p.a.	16.85	10.70	+6.15
5 year p.a.	7.34	7.88	-0.54
7 year p.a.	9.00	9.15	-0.15
10 year p.a.	8.71	8.65	+0.06

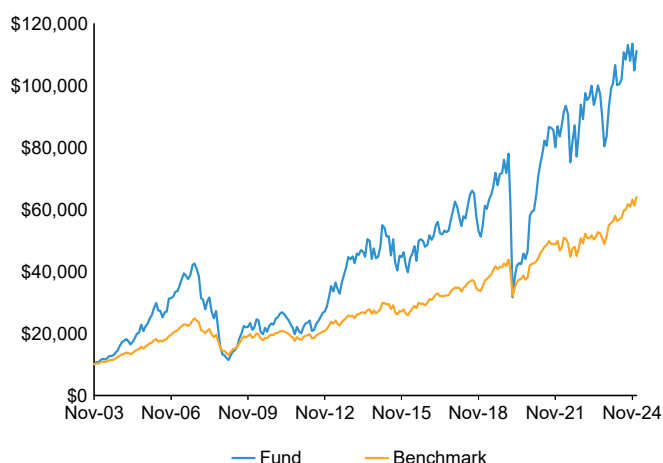
Past performance is not indicative of future performance. Returns may differ due to different tax treatments.

## PORTFOLIO FUNDAMENTALS<sup>^</sup>

	Portfolio	Benchmark
Price / Earnings*	18.4	18.5
Dividend Yield*	3.2%	3.5%
Price / Book	2.0	2.3
Debt / Equity	24.1%	36.7%
Return on Equity*	10.8%	12.9%
Gearing Level	50.2%	

<sup>^</sup> Portfolio Fundamentals are compiled using our methodology and provided only for the purpose of illustrating Perpetual'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.

## GROWTH OF \$10,000 SINCE INCEPTION



## MARKET COMMENTARY

Markets surged in January, with the S&P/ASX 300 Accumulation Index delivering a strong 4.46% return, driven largely by Financials, which contributed nearly half of the month's gains. The major banks rallied, with NAB surging 8.19% and ANZ adding 7.29%, while CBA and Westpac rose 4.77% and 4.36%, respectively. Macquarie Group also posted a notable 8.64% gain, and Wesfarmers added 7.09%. Consumer Discretionary (+6.07%) and Real Estate (+4.60%) were among the strongest-performing sectors, while Utilities (-2.40%) was the weakest, weighed down by a 4.13% decline in Origin Energy. Consumer Staples saw only modest gains, rising 0.77%. Despite continued tariff threats from the White House, major miners BHP and Rio Tinto remained flat. December NAB Business Conditions improved to +6 from +3 in November, while the labour market remained resilient, with employment rising by 56,300—well ahead of expectations. Headline inflation fell to its lowest level since early 2021, with the trimmed mean reaching a three-year low. This drove increased speculation of interest rate cuts, leading to a decline in the Australian dollar.

## PORTFOLIO COMMENTARY

The portfolio's largest overweight positions include BHP Group Ltd, Flutter Entertainment PLC and Insurance Australia Group Ltd. Conversely, the portfolio's largest underweight positions include Macquarie Group Ltd, Aristocrat Leisure Limited (not held) and Woodside Energy Group Ltd (not held).

BlueScope Steel Limited contributed to performance in January (+13.9%) as the industry experienced multiple positive news points including a joint Cleveland-Cliffs Inc and Nucor Corp bid for US Steel. The valuation disparity between BlueScope and its US peers became obvious and eventuated in a rally. 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. 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.

Insurance Australia Group continued to contribute to relative performance (+8.8%) as the market continued to reward the RACQ deal with the potential for IAG to reduce the capital demands of that business and extract higher returns. One aspect of IAG's strategy is an Adverse Development Cover (ADC), designed to shield its existing reserves from significant fluctuations. A second layer of protection comes from a reinsurance arrangement focused on natural perils, which provides a buffer against the unpredictable costs of weather-related events. This arrangement is structured to cover most expected scenarios, helping to stabilize the company's claims expenses. Although this layered protection introduces upfront costs, it reduces financial impact over time and is expected to moderate earnings volatility, protect target margins, and enhance long-term returns by lowering capital strain.

Premier Investments suffered a setback during January (-4.20%) after issuing a surprisingly disappointing trading update halfway through the month which was below consensus. The combination of Myer and Premier's Apparel Brands business comprising Just Jeans, Jay Jays, Portmans, Jacqui E and Dotti presented a material growth opportunity for shareholders and the transaction was completed at the end of the month. This will be materially beneficial for both businesses as additional quality sales are incorporated under a cheaper rental format and with strong retail management expertise.

The overweight position in Iluka Resources detracted to performance over January (-12.5%) following an unloved quarterly update. The company updated the market with ongoing soft zircon sales and a commitment to inject capital into the rare earth refinery. Iluka is a major producer of rutile and synthetic rutile that is used to produce pigment (paint) and largest producer of zircon that is used to produce ceramics (tiles) and a recovery in these markets can be met by releasing excess inventory and reducing working capital before production is restarted. Iluka has a very strong balance sheet (net cash) and also owns a valuable stake in Deterra Royalties, which was spun-off in an IPO so is able to buffer these periods of demand distortion that is a feature of these markets.

## OUTLOOK

After an initial embrace of Trumponomics, market focus is shifting to the challenges of execution and the risk of inflation returning in 2025. The new administration must navigate deregulation, tax relief, and spending cuts while managing the budget deficit—an ambitious mix that bond markets will closely scrutinize. U.S. equities remain exuberant, with valuations echoing the Dotcom peak in 2000 and the post-COVID surge in 2021. While some Australian sectors appear stretched, overall valuations are more measured, especially in resources, which trade near multi-year lows. China remains the key uncertainty as its economy flirts with deflation. The question is whether authorities can deliver sustained stimulus, akin to QE3 in 2012, to restore confidence and support growth—an outcome with broad implications for global markets.

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# The Ordinaries benchmark prior to 1/4/2000 was the ASX All Ordinaries Accumulation Index. From 1/4/2000 to current the benchmark is S&P/ASX 300 Accumulation Index. The publication has been prepared by Perpetual Investment Management Limited (PIML) ABN 18 000 866 535 AFSL No 234426 and issued by Perpetual Superannuation Limited (PSL) ABN 84 008 416 831 AFSL No 225246 RSEL No L0003315. It is general information only and is not intended to provide you with financial advice or take into account your objectives, financial situation or needs. You should consider, with a financial adviser, whether the information is suitable for your circumstances. To the extent permitted by law, no liability is accepted for any loss or damage as a result of any reliance on this information. The product disclosure statement (PDS) for the Perpetual WealthFocus Superannuation Fund ABN 41 772 007 500, issued by PSL, should be considered before deciding whether to acquire or hold units in the fund. The PDS and Target Market Determination can be obtained by calling 1800 022 033 or visiting our website [www.perpetual.com.au](http://www.perpetual.com.au). No company in the Perpetual Group (Perpetual Limited ABN 86 000 431 827 and its subsidiaries) guarantees the performance of any fund or the return of an investor's capital. Total returns shown for the Perpetual WealthFocus Superannuation Fund have been calculated using exit prices after taking into account all of Perpetual's ongoing fees and assuming reinvestment of distributions. No allowance has been made for taxation. Past performance is not indicative of future performance.

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## MORE INFORMATION

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