

Market Analysis

Inside Market Analysis

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Summary and Recommended Investment Strategy.

We see good value and growth potential in many of our Recommended Portfolio shares. Remain fully invested.

Investment Outlook.

Not a single month goes by without at least one subscriber to this newsletter asking us to comment on some newspaper or internet report predicting a stockmarket crash “in the immediate future”.

Just do an internet search for “The coming crash of 2015” and you’ll get 391 million hits! That is enough to get anyone worried . . . until you do a search on “The coming crash of 2014”.

Then you will still find 147.0 million results. The first article (published February 2014) listed by Google predicts “Crash of 2014: Like 1929, you’ll never hear it coming”, while the second (from May 2014) predicts the “2014 crash will be worse than 1987” and stock prices will fall at least 30%. A Forbes article (June 2014) predicts a “Stock market crash WORSE than the 1930’s” and also forecasts the “collapse of the dollar”. Another (from January 2014) offered “Six signs that 2014 will be the year of the Super Crash”.

How will the current 2015 crash predictions work out? No-one yet knows, but we do know how well these predictions have performed in the past.

Over the last 50 years, the US stockmarket has never fallen 50% in value. In 2008 it did fall 38.5%. In 1974 it fell 29.7% and in 2002 was down 23.4%. So there is perhaps a 2% chance of a 30% decline (in any calendar year) and virtually a zero chance of a 90% “super crash”.

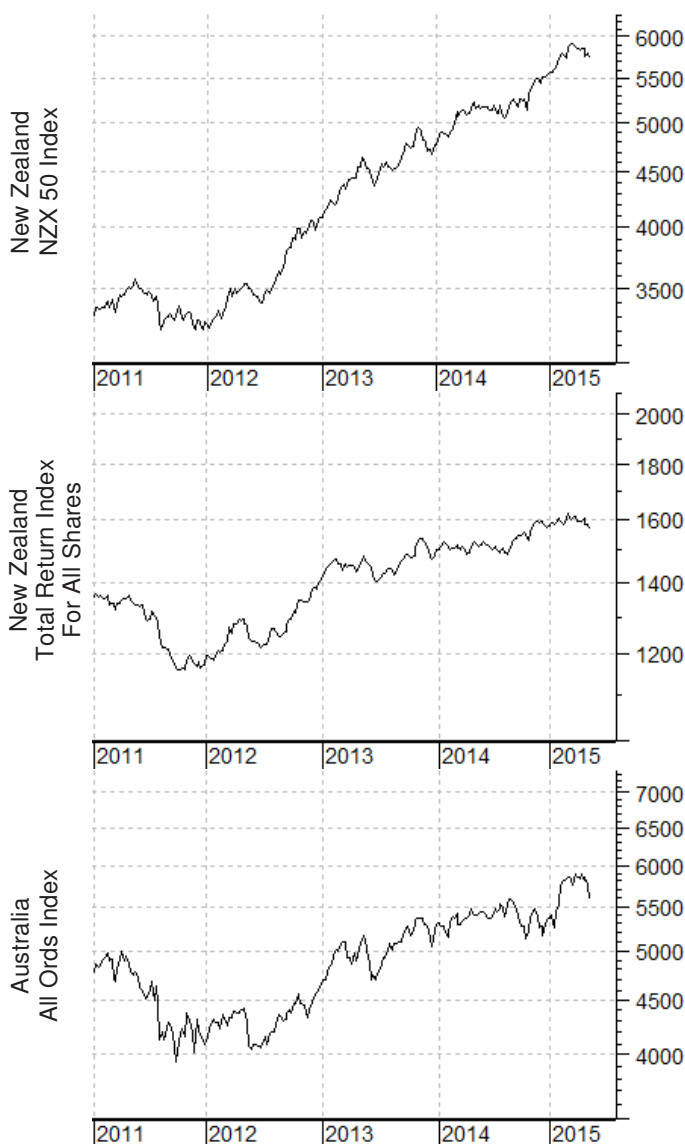
Even if we define a “crash” (a “mild crash”?) as a 20% decline there is only about a 6% chance of the Doom and Gloom predictions being right.

As the *same people* predict “a coming stock market crash” *year after year*, we know that they are *wrong 94-100% of the time!* Few other forecasters can match this *consistent level of inaccuracy* - making widespread Doom and Gloom a very reliable and almost perfect “contrary opinion” buy-and-hold indicator!

While playing around on the internet you may be interested to search on “The coming boom of 2015” (or 2016). That will yield articles on medicine, politics, house prices and solar energy - but little or nothing on the stockmarket. Search on “The coming stock market boom of 2015” and you will again get articles about the coming crash! If it is “good news” then it just isn’t news!

Stockmarket Forecasts

	One-Month	One-Year
Australia:	29% (Bearish)	65% (Bullish)
New Zealand:	51% (Bullish)	43% (Neutral)



Recommended Investments

Nuplex Industries has released *Acure*, an “innovative technology” that “delivers very fast dry times, extremely long pot life and cures at low temperatures” and which is suitable for “almost all the different coatings markets”.

Nuplex Industries



Smiths City Group has received a final payment of \$5,600,000 (plus GST) relating to damage to its Christchurch property. This follows \$2,875,000 received in the first half of the year. This \$8,475,000 (pre-tax) will be recorded as an extraordinary profit for the year to the end of April 2015.

The company also reports that “retail trading conditions have softened following a strong Christmas period”. Annual revenues were similar to the 2014 financial year, but “cost and margin pressures” have reduced the second half trading profit.

Smiths City Group



Australian Shares

(This section is in Australian currency, unless stated.)

AcruX Ltd reports *Axiron* sales of US\$39.1 million in the March 2015 quarter. Previous quarterly sales were US\$39.5 million in March 2014, US\$47.1 million in June 2014, US\$36.3 million in September 2014 and

US\$47.6 million in December 2014.

Royalty receipts will be steady in US dollar terms, but significantly higher in Australian dollars owing to the lower exchange rate. AcruX pays about 30% of its royalty revenue as a royalty to Monash University but only until February 2017. So in two year's time AcruX's net royalty income will rise about 40%.

AcruX Limited



ALS Ltd unaudited accounts indicate an underlying net profit to 31 March 2015 of \$135 million (33 cents per share), down 21% on the previous year.

Profits have been steady at \$67.3 million, \$67.7 million and \$71.1 million over the last three half yearly periods.

The company also expects to make a non-cash write-down in its oil and gas businesses of \$290 million. In retrospect, ALS Ltd obviously paid too much to acquire **Reservoir Group** in August 2013 for US\$533 million, especially given the decline in the oil price last year. We did note at the time that was a “fairly high price” but the acquisition was expected to provide ALS Ltd's “existing laboratory businesses with additional work from Reservoir Group's customers”. Those benefits have also been less than expected.

Acquisitions allow the company to enter new businesses, but shareholder wealth is created from *organic* growth (i.e. growing the existing businesses).

ALS Ltd is planning a mix of growth from acquisitions (to establish new businesses) and organic growth to expand those businesses. It plans to open a new \$10 million oil and gas laboratory in Houston later this year. Last month it completed the acquisition of **ControlVet**, the “premier full service food testing laboratory in Portugal” with assets also in Spain and Poland, with other small food testing acquisitions in Europe and

North America planned for this year. The company now has “an appropriate integration platform” from which it can grow its food testing business. It is also building a new \$5 million pharmaceutical laboratory in Ely, UK. As these businesses grow, ALS Ltd will be less dependent upon its cyclical Minerals division, so future earnings should be less volatile.

On a share price of 546 cents, the shares trade on a Price/Earnings Ratio of 16½. That is good value for a high quality company with a high return on equity and

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Portfolio of Recommended Investments

CURRENT ADVICE	Company	Code	Initial Recommendation		Perform- ance Forecast	Issued Shares (mil.)	Vola- tility Ratio	Price/ Sales Ratio	Price/ Earnings Ratio	Gross Dividend Yield	Recent Share Price	Cash Dividends Rec'd	Total Return %
			- Date -	Price									
<u>NZ Shares</u>													
BUY	CDL Investments Ltd	CDI	12/01/99	25	E	275.5	1.2	3.90	12	4.9	63	27.6	+260%
HOLD	Cavalier Corporation	CAV	05/12/95	156*	E	68.7	1.8	0.13	5	10.7	39	282.0	+106%
HOLD	Colonial Motor Company	CMO	10/11/92	128*	B	32.7	0.6	0.27	10	8.5	570	440.3	+689%
BUY	Michael Hill Int'l Ltd	MHI	11/06/91	5*	E	383.0	1.0	0.85	13	5.7	115	57.4	+3348%
HOLD	Nuplex Industries Ltd	NPX	11/02/97	523*	A	198.1	1.0	0.41	13	6.2	338	483.0	+57%
HOLD	Smiths City Group	SCY	09/10/06	64	D	52.7	1.4	0.13	7	6.6	53	26.5	+24%
HOLD	South Port New Zealand	SPN	13/02/96	120	A	26.2	0.6	3.44	16	7.4	412	225.3	+431%
BUY	Steel & Tube Holdings	STU	08/08/00	146	B	88.5	0.7	0.58	14	7.7	288	308.6	+309%
<u>Australian Shares (in Aust cents)</u>													
BUY	Acrux Limited	ACR	12/05/14	99	B	166.5	1.0	2.67	5	9.2	87	8.0	-5%
HOLD+	AJ Lucas Group	AJL	13/05/03	107*	C	267.4	1.6	0.35	NE	Nil	30	36.4	-38%
BUY	ALS Limited	ALQ	12/10/99	77*	B	407.2	0.5	1.43	14	7.1	546	275.5	+967%
BUY	AtCor Medical Ltd	ACG	11/11/13	15	B	157.4	1.9	7.31	NE	Nil	24	Nil	+57%
HOLD+	Atlas Pearls & Perfume	ATP	14/05/96	73	D	399.4	4.4	0.96	9	Nil	5	17.5	-69%
BUY	Ausenco Ltd	AAX	10/06/13	191*	D	168.4	1.8	0.13	NE	Nil	27	1.8	-85%
HOLD+	Brickworks Ltd	BKW	12/11/12	1115	A	148.4	0.3	3.22	21	2.9	1458	82.5	+38%
BUY	Cardno Ltd	CDD	14/12/09	391*	B	165.6	0.7	0.42	7	10.7	337	164.3	+28%
HOLD	Circadian Technologies	CIR	10/02/04	188	D	68.1	2.2	9.07	NE	Nil	16	65.0	-57%
HOLD+	Clarius Group Ltd	CND	08/04/03	82*	D	89.6	1.9	0.13	NE	Nil	27	70.5	+19%
BUY	CPT Global Ltd	CGO	10/03/08	88	C	36.7	1.3	0.57	12	7.5	60	15.8	-14%
HOLD	CSG Limited	CSV	11/10/10	175	B	284.1	0.9	2.21	36	5.7	158	50.0	+19%
BUY	Ellex Medical Lasers	ELX	14/03/06	49	C	107.6	1.7	0.67	46	Nil	34	Nil	-31%
BUY	Fiducian Group	FID	11/02/08	260	B	30.8	0.8	2.52	14	4.9	185	57.4	-7%
BUY	Finbar Group Ltd	FRI	12/04/10	106	B	229.6	0.9	1.03	8	7.9	126	44.5	+61%
HOLD+	Iluka Resources Ltd	ILU	12/10/04	471	B	418.7	0.5	4.46	0	2.2	846	210.0	+124%
HOLD+	Integrated Research	IRI	14/01/08	40	B	169.7	0.6	5.71	36	2.8	180	32.5	+431%
HOLD-	M2 Group Ltd	MTU	09/10/06	33	A	183.1	0.3	1.90	29	2.4	1079	94.0	+3455%
HOLD+	Melbourne IT	MLB	10/02/04	53	C	92.9	0.8	1.11	19	Nil	138	180.0	+500%
BUY	Mt Gibson Iron	MGX	10/11/14	44	A	1090.8	2.0	0.26	2	18.6	22	Nil	-51%
HOLD	Nomad Building Solutions	NOD	16/08/10	13*	C	277.5	3.8	0.45	NE	Nil	6	Nil	-52%
HOLD	Novarise Renewable Res	NOE	14/03/11	25	C	415.1	2.3	0.70	7	Nil	16	Nil	-36%
HOLD	Probiotec Ltd	PBP	11/02/08	116	D	52.9	2.2	0.14	10	Nil	18	9.3	-77%
HOLD+	Prophecy International	PRO	08/09/08	26	B	55.4	1.1	6.34	35	3.4	81	17.8	+280%
BUY	Skilled Group Ltd	SKE	12/03/02	126	B	235.9	1.2	0.16	7	13.5	126	188.5	+149%
HOLD-	Technology One Ltd	TNE	11/11/03	44	A	309.2	0.6	6.32	40	1.5	399	50.8	+922%
BUY	TFS Corporation Ltd	TFC	08/01/07	45	A	327.0	0.7	3.99	7	3.3	180	20.2	+345%
HOLD+	The Reject Shop Ltd	TRS	11/01/05	257	B	28.8	0.6	0.28	14	4.4	686	392.0	+319%
HOLD	Village Roadshow	VRL	10/08/09	77	B	159.5	0.4	0.95	20	4.7	574	267.0	+992%

The average Total Return (i.e. both Capital Gains/Losses plus Dividends received) of all current investments from initial recommendation is +371.7%. This is equal to an average annual rate of +37.3%, based upon the length of time each position has been held.

The average annual rate of gain of ALL recommendations (both the 37 current and 160 closed out) is +31.3%, compared with a market gain of +4.0% (by the SRC Total Return Index).

CURRENT ADVICE is either Buy, Hold+, Hold, Hold- or Sell. Hold+ indicates the most attractive shares not rated as Buy. Hold- indicates relatively less attractive issues.

* Initial Recommendation Prices adjusted for Share Splits, Bonus and Cash Issues.

Recommended Investments

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sound growth prospects. Factoring in that earnings are at a cyclical low - and likely to rise strongly over the next several years - then ALS shares offer excellent value and strong potential for capital appreciation . . . as well as a high current income yield. "Buy".

AtCor Medical has received *CE Mark* certification for *Oscar 2* (i.e. the ambulatory blood pressure monitoring device developed as a joint venture with **SunTech Medical**) which allows commercial marketing and sales in Europe, Australia and some Asian countries. The company expects to receive **FDA 510k** clearance later this year, which will allow sales in the United States and many other countries.

Following the recent CPT-1 code for *SphygmoCor*, AtCor Medical has "expanded go-to-market plans" for a "high impact launch" and expects "sustainable, long term growth" from the Clinical Specialist market.

An attractive feature of this business is a high gross profit margin of around 85% on a US\$15,000 *SphygmoCor* device. This is a relatively simple hardware device (costing only a few thousand dollars to produce) but which has significant value in its software and Intellectual Property (with the usual potentially high profit margins and economies of scale of any software business).

Most importantly, that high gross profit margin should help the company to largely finance its marketing plans and future growth internally from operating cash flow (i.e. as Michael Hill International has done, without the need to raise large amounts of additional capital and *dilute* earnings per share growth). The business could then become very profitable and generate large operating cash surpluses as sales volumes expand to cover the fixed overhead costs of running a business.

The device has a useful working life of about five years, so while this is not a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) business with recurring monthly or annual revenues, once the company has won a customer with an initial sale it should be able to achieve "recurring" replacement sales every five years or so.

AtCor Medical will also provide the device on a "market cost per test rental" - which provides "annuity style revenues without the capital cost for smaller centres and private practices" - and recurring monthly revenues for AtCor Medical - but without a huge investment in working capital. AtCor Medical's investment in working capital for these rentals is its cost, not the selling price, which we estimate should be repaid over about two to 13 weeks!

This is all a very favourable financial situation which makes AtCor Medical a very attractive "software" business - significantly more so than those software

companies which need to regularly raise additional equity capital to finance massive cash outflows on marketing (and product development) to win customers who may not become profitable for many years (if ever).

"Buy" AtCor Medical for capital growth.

AtCor Medical



Atlas Pearls & Perfumes' shareholders contributed \$723,363 to the recent \$3.1 million cash issue, subscribing to just 23% of the shares. The remaining 77% will be taken up by the underwriters.

The company has completed the sale of a 50% interest in **Essential Oils of Tasmania** to **Westwood Properties**. Essential Oils of Tasmania has also contracted to sell 100% of **Cannabinoid Extracts Australia**, a medical marijuana venture (subject to law reforms and obtaining government licences) to **Capital Mining**. Essential Oils of Tasmania will receive \$125,000 in 60 days time and, subject to obtaining government licences to operate its business, a further \$125,000 in cash plus 500,000 Capital Mining shares (after a proposed 33 to 1 share consolidation, worth around \$100,000), plus 500,000 options (at an exercise price of 30 cents each) plus reimbursement of \$51,924 of legal fees spent to date on licence applications. Capital Mining will fund ongoing licencing application costs. If this business proceeds, then Cannabinoid Extracts will grow industrial hemp under hot-house conditions and contract for Essential Oils of Tasmania to extract cannabidiol oil using its supercritical CO₂ extraction technology.

Atlas Pearls & Perfumes



Ausenco Ltd continues to predict revenues to December 2015 will be similar to last year, but “expects a material improvement” in earnings owing to the cost reduction program. Costs were reduced by \$29 million in 2014 with a further \$20 million in savings expected this year.

The company also reports that it is bidding for a “large number of very significant brownfield or expansion type projects”.

Ausenco Ltd



Ellex Medical Lasers increased its global market share from 12.7% to 14.2% in the ophthalmic laser market over the last year according to a report by **Market Scope LLC**, just slightly behind the largest company with a 14.5% share.

In the sub-market for glaucoma treatment lasers, Ellex Medical Lasers was the global leader with a 50% market share, up from 41% a year earlier. The company was also the largest producer of photodisruptor YAG lasers, with its market share up from 15.3% to 18.7%, helped by its new *Tango SLT* laser and *Ultra Q Reflex* YAG laser.

Ellex Medical Lasers



Finbar Group has acquired a 1019m² site, containing the heritage listed **Australia Post** building, which will be included in its 7,206m² **Civic Triangle** site redevelopment in South Perth. Buildings on the original site - except the heritage listed Police Station - have been demolished ahead of the future development of around 300 apartments, commercial space and local amenities.

This acquisition of the Australia Post site will “achieve better architectural and development outcomes” from

incorporating both heritage buildings in the new development design.

Settlement will be in July 2015 and **Australia Post** will lease the heritage building for at least the next seven years.

Finbar Group has also finalised terms for the acquisition of the 3.15 hectare former **Port Hedland Hospital** site, directly opposite the **Port Hedland Yacht Club** and overlooking the proposed **Spoilbank Marina** precinct. The company was selected as the preferred developer of this site in July 2012. The scheme amendment to allow permanent residential apartment housing was approved in January 2014 and will allow Finbar Group to develop a four stage project totalling 518 permanent apartments, 163 short stay apartments and 2300m² of commercial lots in 8-10 level buildings with an end value of \$390 million.

Finbar Group will acquire the site from **Landcorp** (i.e. the **Western Australia** government's land development agency) for \$5.95 million - but has removed much of the project risk by making this purchase conditional on obtaining development approval *and* marketing success (i.e. reaching an undisclosed level of pre-sales for the first stage of the development, consisting of 109 apartments plus 654m² of commercial lots). Marketing is expected in the second half of the current calendar year.

Finbar Group



Iluka Resources has presented **Kenmare Resources plc** with a non-binding proposal to acquire the company. Under this proposal, Iluka Resources would offer 0.016 new Iluka Resources shares for each Kenmare Resources share, valuing Kenmare Resources at about 6.8 pence per share. Kenmare Resources shareholders would own 9.6% of Iluka Resources after this takeover.

The proposal is subject to a number of conditions, including the Mozambique government's approval for the change of ownership of Kenmare's mining assets, support of the Kenmare board and Kenmare's lenders waiving all early repayment penalties and fees. If it acquires the company, Iluka Resources intends to repay all of Kenmare's high interest rate debt which would be refinanced at lower rates from its existing undrawn facilities.

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Recommended Investments

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The company notes that “even if all preconditions are waived or satisfied, Iluka is not bound to proceed with any offer”.

Iluka Resources believes that this acquisition would “consolidate complementary assets, reserves and skills”, “enhance current and future production flexibility, product range and marketing effectiveness” and improve Kenmare's operations with Iluka's “industry-specific technical expertise and market knowledge, access and reach”. Removing a financially weak, heavily indebted, desperate for cashflow, competitor from the market could also help stabilise Mineral Sands selling prices!

Iluka Resources reports low production volumes during the March quarter - mainly owing to the idling of capacity. Total Mineral Sands production for the quarter was 167.2 thousand tonnes, down 24.4% on the March 2014 quarter and down 19.2% on the December 2014 quarter.

Sales and revenues were also down, in part resulting from a suspension of Zircon sales and deliveries in March as the company “engaged with customers in relation to a new pricing and payments framework”.

Iluka Resources



Integrated Research has acquired US based **IQ Services** which expands its interests in Unified Communications and offers other growth opportunities. The company will pay US\$1.5 million in cash at settlement on 1 July 2015 plus up to US\$3.5 million over the next three years, subject to achieving earnings milestones (for a maximum cost of US\$5.0 million in cash).

The acquisition will bring together Integrated Research's Prognosis performance management with IQ Services' cloud based SaaS testing capabilities. Combining these operations “will create the world's most complete view of cloud, hybrid and traditional on premises operations for unified communications and collaboration and Contact Centre solutions”.

IQ Services also “uniquely provides the means to

generate voice, data and video traffic to ensure WebRTC (i.e. web real-time communications) interactions work as intended”. WebRTC is forecast to account for 15% of enterprise voice and video communications by 2019, up from just 1% today.

IQ Services operates only in North America, so Integrated Research will immediately expand the business to service customers in Europe and Asia.

This acquisition will also help Integrated Research expand its performance testing software into “next generation services such as web real-time communications, software defined networks, session initiation protocols, Lync and Skype for Business”.

This relatively low cost acquisition strengthens Integrated Research's Unified Communications business and further enhances its long term growth potential.

Integrated Research



Mount Gibson Iron reports cash of \$324 million (30 cents per share) at the end of March. That is down \$30 million over the quarter, reflecting the temporary build up of ore stockpiles (to be sold in the current quarter) and working capital outflows of \$26 million from winding down Koolan Island operations and paying creditors.

Iron ore cash production costs were A\$47.80/tonne over the quarter (although down to A\$43.80/tonne by March), but slightly less than selling prices which averaged US\$47/tonne.

Mt Gibson Iron



Melbourne IT has formed a new alliance to provide “cloud migration capability to local organisations” by “initially offering *Cloud Factory* services” provided by US based **2nd Watch**.

Melbourne IT has completed the acquisition of **Uber Global Group**, a domain registration and hosting group, as we discussed in March.

Melbourne IT



M2 Group has agreed to acquire **Call Plus Group**, New Zealand's third largest internet service provider for NZ\$250 million in cash (on a debt-free, cash free basis). The business (trading under the brands *Slingshot*, *Orcon*, *Flip*, *Call Plus Business* and *2Talk*) is expected to generate annual revenues of NZ\$250 million and earnings (before depreciation and tax) of NZ\$45 million in the year to June 2016. Earnings were \$24 million in 2014 and forecast to be \$36 million this financial year.

This acquisition will be financed with debt - with the new and existing debt refinanced with new multi-year loan facilities. The acquisition is expected to add around 15% to earnings per share - mainly as the interest cost of borrowing is lower than the expected earnings from the business.

M2 Group had also sought to acquire Australian listed **iiNet** after an \$8.66 takeover offer from **TPG Telecom** (which is 26.9% owned by **Washington H Soul Pattinson**, an associate of **Brickworks**), with a competing bid of 0.803 M2 Group shares plus 75 cents in cash (i.e. at an M2 Group share price of \$10.79, this would be worth \$9.41), which would combine two companies of similar size and result in iiNet shareholders owning 42% of the enlarged M2 Group.

TPG Telecom has since increased their offer to \$9.55 in cash - which the iiNet directors prefer owing to the “certain value of a cash offer” (although investors have the option of taking about 18% of the total consideration in TPG Telecom shares).

M2 Group



Technology One will pay up to \$12 million in cash to purchase Australian based **Desktop Mapping Systems Pty** (trading as *Desktop Mapping Solutions*) to acquire “unique IP for the storage, retrieval and management of spatial data”. This will be important for Technology One's enterprise software for local government, central government and asset intensive businesses.

Technology One



TFS Corporation has signed a contract to develop and manage 119 hectares of new plantations in the Northern Territories during May for the **Church Commissioners for England**. Settlement for the land and establishment fees is expected in June.

Galderma (a subsidiary of **Nestle**) has launched a social media campaign to promote *Benzac* which is now stocked in 23,000 US stores.

TFS Corporation



Australian Stockbroker and Australian Bank Account

Australian discount stockbrokers will not open an account for NZ residents. That *may* have something to do with compliance requirements - or it may simply be to boost revenues. **E*Trade Australia** (a subsidiary of **ANZ Banking Group**) will refer NZ investors to **ANZ Securities** (formerly **Direct Broking** and a subsidiary of ANZ Banking). **Commonwealth Securities** (a subsidiary of **Commonwealth Bank of Australia**) sends NZ investors to **ASB Securities** (also a subsidiary of CBA). The NZ stockbrokers then charge NZ investors an internet brokerage rate of 0.3%, almost three times higher than the 0.12% internet rate for Australian residents.

There is now one option for a New Zealand resident investor seeking access to an Australian discount broker and/or an Australian bank account.

Australian Discount Stockbroker

Actively Seeks New Zealand Investors!

One small, independent Australian stockbroker, **Amscot Stockbroking** (the internet service of **One State Stockbroking**) - www.amscot.com.au - is actively seeking NZ resident investors! Its Executive Chairman and major shareholder has recently returned from a trip to NZ to promote its services to NZ clients (which we became aware of after receiving their spam email sent to NZ "investment advisers").

Unlike the NZ discount brokers, Amscot Stockbroking does charge a monthly "trading platform" fee of A\$11 (for htmlIRESS) or \$77 (for webIRESS) - although these fees are rebated if you make at least 5 or 15 trades in any month, but its actual brokerage fees are significantly lower. It offers two brokerage options: The "Value" rate is 0.088% with a minimum charge of \$14.85 and the "Trader" rate charges just 0.044% with a higher minimum of A\$33.

That will make the "Value" rate cheaper on trades up to \$37,500 and the "Trader" better value only if you regularly make larger trades.

Note, however, that if an order is filled over two or more days, Amscot will charge the minimum \$14.85 or \$33 fee each day, while many other brokers will charge it as one transaction. So buying or selling inactively traded shares over several days could be significantly more expensive!

If you make just one small trade per month then you can save money with Amscot's \$11 per month platform fee and \$14.85 brokerage fee (for a total of A\$25.85), rather than a minimum fee of A\$29 or A\$30 with the NZ internet brokers. In fact, if you make 10 or more trades per year the lower brokerage will more than cover the monthly platform fee. If you make a larger number of trades, or larger value trades, the savings could be significantly higher.

You can also purchase Australian dollars (and send them to your CMA) from your trading bank - or better yet, an online forex dealer like **Currency Online** (www.currencyonline.com) - at significantly better rates than offered by the NZ internet brokers!

An Australian Bank Account

All internet stockbrokers use a Cash Management Account (CMA) to settle share purchases and sales. With ANZ Securities and ASB Securities this CMA has no other features. Amscot Stockbroking will open a Macquarie Cash Management Account for its clients - and presumably its NZ clients. Macquarie stopped offering these accounts direct to NZ residents some years ago, but presumably are offering them to NZ residents that are clients of Amscot Stockbroking.

The Macquarie Cash Management Account is more of a bank account than a CMA. You can use it for everything that you can do with a regular bank account: write cheques, have dividends direct credited, make electronic payments to third parties, BPAY payments (e.g. to pay for cash issues) or setup regular payments. There are no monthly fees and no transaction fees.

If you want an Australian bank account and are having difficulties getting one, then opening a stockbroking account with Amscot Stockbroking could be the way to go. Some people have been able to open NAB accounts through BNZ or CBA accounts through ASB, but it is far from certain.

Sign Up Online

The Amscot Stockbroking internet site is very efficient and most NZ investors should be able to quickly sign up and open a brokerage account (and CMA account) online. The site will seek to verify your identification and residency information automatically from third parties, so in many cases it may not be necessary to post certified copies of documents to the company!

And Now some Bad News!

Amscot Stockbroking's parent company, One State Stockbroking, has the dubious distinction of having received the largest fine ever imposed by the **Australian Securities Exchange**. In 2009 it was fined \$235,000 plus GST for market manipulation and "unprofessional conduct" after placing "phantom bids" (i.e. to inflate prices when seeking to sell) and 3303 transactions with no change in ownership (i.e. to make some shares appear more actively traded, to promote "day trading").

Summary and Recommendation

Stockbrokers seldom work in the interests of investors. "Full service" brokers will phone up to encourage unnecessary trading to generate commissions. The NZ internet brokers provide "cost plus" access to Australian brokers in their group (who won't deal directly with NZ residents). For some reason, this collusion and restraint of competition is not illegal! Amscot/One State Stockbroking seeks to earn commissions from encouraging "day trading". In all cases, it is necessary to avoid the high priced "services" that you don't want!

For a NZ resident investor seeking access to an Australian internet stockbroker, lower brokerage fees and an Australian bank account there is currently only one option: Amscot Stockbroking.

How Much You Need to Become Financially Independent. And How to Get There.

How to Become Financially Independent

The answer to becoming financially independent has nothing to do with your level of employment income. It is related to your expenditure and savings rate (and the rate of return on your savings and investments).

Before explaining how this works and looking at some examples, we must first make some assumptions:

Firstly, a person can usually withdraw "income" of about 4% from an investment portfolio annually. There are studies that indicate that a portfolio of shares and fixed interest investments will allow an annual withdrawal of between 3% to more than 8% annually over a 25-30 year retirement period. There are also a lot of people who will disagree with *any* figure we suggest here - so let's avoid a complicated argument and assume a 4% withdrawal rate is realistic.

Secondly, we suggest an investment portfolio weighted mainly towards *growth* investments (i.e. shares). Conventional wisdom suggests that a person own mainly *growth* investments (i.e. shares) while working and *saving* for retirement but then switch to lower risk, *income* investments (i.e. fixed interest) *during* retirement. Even at age 65, however, a retirement portfolio has a *long term* 20-30 year investment horizon - and shares offer the highest *long term* returns. With today's low interest rates, shares even offer higher current income returns! Just as importantly, our objective is not to become financially independent at age 65 but to do so much earlier. Our investment objective is not that the portfolio last only 20-30 years but (effectively) forever! So *growth* investments are important.

Thirdly, let's assume a 5% rate of return on the investment portfolio over the long term future. Historically the stockmarket has produced a return of about 10% (after inflation), but a lot of people (who will never become financially independent) will again disagree with any figure we may suggest here. A 5% return should be a conservative and achievable rate of return over the long term, but the stockmarket's historical average of 10% could also be realistic (and this newsletter's goal is to seek a substantially higher return over the long term).

So, to summarise, let's start by assuming one can withdraw "income" equal to 4% of the capital value of an investment portfolio, let's invest mainly in shares to maximise long term returns and let's assume a conservative 5% return (after inflation) on future investments. How soon can one become financially independent? The answer to that question has nothing to do with the size of your employment income and everything to do with your expenditure and savings rate!

Financial Independence and Your Savings Rate

With a savings rate of 10% it will take 51 years for an investment portfolio to grow to a stage where it can provide all the income needed to meet living expenses. Note that this is regardless of one's income. For a person earning \$10,000 (spending \$9,000 on living expenses and saving \$1000) it will take 51 years until the investment income grows to \$9,000 per year (i.e. 4% of the portfolio value of \$225,000). For a person earning \$200,000 (i.e. \$180,000 in expenses and \$20,000 in savings) it will take an identical 51 years to build an investment income of \$180,000 (from a portfolio worth \$4,500,000).

These figures indicate that most people probably need to save about 10% of their income throughout their entire working life to provide an adequate investment income during retirement.

Earning a higher income seldom improves a person's financial situation as living expenses often rise by a similar amount, leaving both the savings rate and the number of years needed to build a retirement portfolio unchanged.

The answer to becoming financially independent faster is to lower one's living expenses (or hold expenses steady as your income rises) and raise your savings rate.

A person able to save 20% of their income will become financially independent after about 36 years.

Cut all unnecessary expenditure and boost your savings rate to 50% - which is difficult, but not impossible - and you will become financially independent after just 16½ years! Such a person could retire in their early to mid-30's and enjoy a 55-60 year "retirement" living off their investment income.

Increasing your future rate of return on investments - the objective of this newsletter - would also have a significant impact on making one financially independent in a shorter period of time. Of course, lots of people will tell you this cannot be done over the long term. Perhaps we have just been very lucky over the last 34 years?

Anyone able to lift their investment returns to 10% per annum (i.e. the stockmarket's historical average) would be significantly better off:

With just a 10% savings rate they would become financially independent in 33 years.

With a 20% savings rate, financial independence is achieved in 25 years.

A person able to save 50% of their income would achieve financial independence in less than 13 years - after which the portfolio (and the annual income) would start to compound into some significant wealth!

At a 20% rate of return on your investments, a 10% savings rate will achieve financial independence in 20½

Dividend \$

Company	Cents per Share	Ex-Date	Pay-able	Tax Credit
Augusta Capital	1.25	08-05	15-05	Full
Kathmandu Holdings	3.00	05-06	19-06	Full
Millennium & Cop.	2.40	08-05	15-05	Full
Scott Technology	2.50	14-05	26-05	Full
Z Energy	16.50	22-05	03-06	Full
Australian Shares				
M2 Group	15.00	24-03	16-04	
The Reject Shop	16.50	19-03	13-04	

Total Return Index for All Listed Shares

Apr 13	1601.22	Apr 20	1601.73
Apr 14	1608.33	Apr 21	1599.89
Apr 15	1607.50	Apr 22	1593.74
Apr 16	1610.65	Apr 23	1590.20
Apr 17	1603.54	Apr 24	1586.57
Apr 27	Holiday	May 4	1577.36
Apr 28	1583.59	May 5	1579.35
Apr 29	1580.76	May 6	1570.77
Apr 30	1588.29	May 7	1567.87
May 1	1583.24	May 8	1570.22

Next Issue:

The next issue of *Market Analysis* will be emailed in four weeks time on Monday June 8, 2015.

The print version will be delivered later that week, depending upon printing and postal delivery times.

MARKET ANALYSIS is published 12 times per year by Securities Research Company Limited, 3/47 Boyce Ave, Mt Roskill, Auckland. Subscribe online at www.stockmarket.co.nz or email james@stockmarket.co.nz.

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