November 2017

Investment Watch

A cure for short-termism

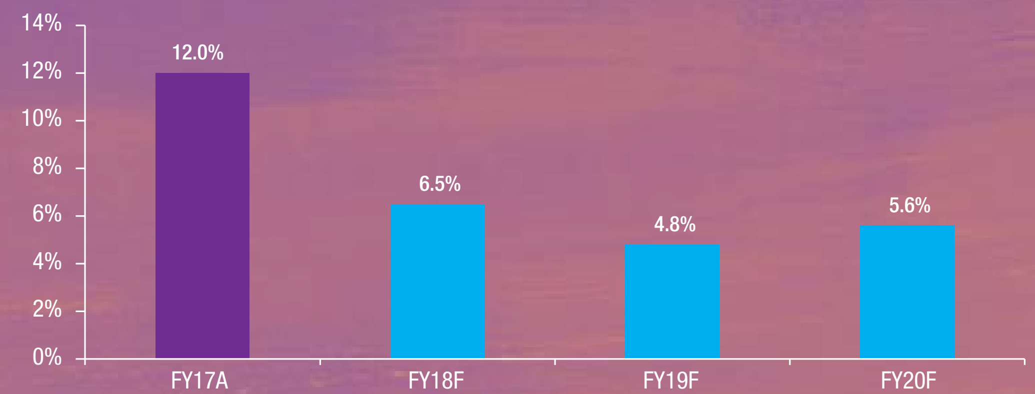
Global economic indicators suggest that the outlook for the world economy is improving, providing further support for growth asset performance, but valuations remain expensive across many asset classes and investors appear to be underappreciating the potential for adverse economic or geopolitical surprises. In Australia, equities have belatedly shown some signs of life, but it is still unclear whether this reflects the much needed improvement in corporate performance to support further advances.

Low growth and low rate settings have made investing for yield a profitable strategy for much of the post-GFC period. In this environment, corporates have been conditioned to look inward, improving productivity and lowering costs, while simultaneously lifting dividend payout ratios. This form of corporate short-termism comes at the cost of future profitability. Companies will need to innovate and invest in the future to be relevant in an increasingly globalised world economy.

In October Morgans was pleased to host its 27th Annual Conference featuring 42 companies across several sectors of interest. The tone around this year's conference was the most positive in years, confounding broader market caution in the popular press. This is probably explained by the bias towards small-to-mid cap industrials, which have collectively outperformed their large-cap (and often structurally challenged) counterparts since reporting season. We discuss our takeaways and key picks on page 3.

This month we update our outlook for the Australian economy following improvements in the terms-of-trade. We also look at areas of the market that have received significant interest from investors including: the rise of crypto-currencies, how to play the electric vehicle thematic and new hybrid issues.

ASX 200 – earnings growth appears to be constrained by large-caps



Source: Thomson Reuters I/B/E/S

Important disclosures regarding companies that are the subject of this report and an explanation of recommendations can be found at the end of this document. Morgans Financial Limited ABN 49 010 669 726 AFSL 235410 A Participant of ASX Group A Professional Partner of the Financial Planning Association of Australia Level 29 123 Eagle Street Brisbane QLD 4000 Australia Phone 1800 777 946

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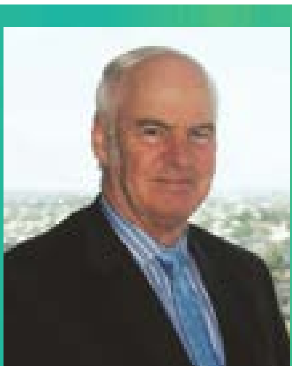
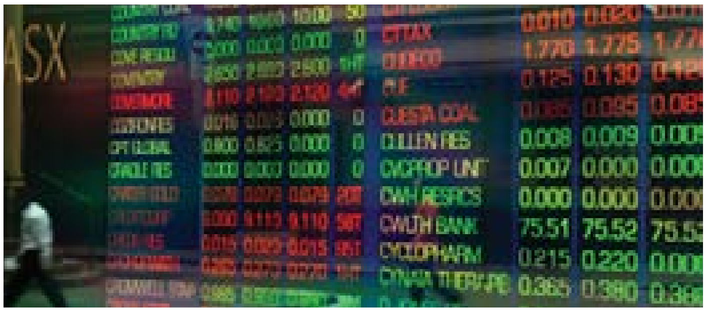


Listen to the latest podcast from Morgans Chief Economist, **Michael Knox**, as he explains the relationship between GDP and corporate earnings.

https://www.morgans.com.au/Michael-Knox

Economics – how to read the economy when you are thinking about earnings

The difference between earnings per share and real GDP is that EPS is a nominal measure. EPS is not divided by any CPI or GDP deflator. It has its full effect on markets by its movement in dollar terms. This is because long investors profit when the stock market goes up in dollar terms.



In the context of the stockmarket what is the best measure of GDP for us to look at? Probably the best measure is GDP in current dollars. In the figure below, we see the rate of change of Australian GDP in dollar terms. The way this chart looks is quite different from the way real GDP looks. This has a lot to do with the impact of commodity prices.

Nominal GDP will look a lot stronger when commodity prices are stronger. Nominal GDP will look a lot weaker when commodity prices are weaker. Look at the strong growth of nominal GDP in the period before 2008. Those who invested in stocks at that time remember that the Australian stock market was very strong. So was the growth in nominal GDP. For example, for the year to June 2007, nominal GDP was growing at 9.5%. This was around the time the stock market peaked.

Compare the period between 2005 and 2007 to the period between 2012 and 2015. In December 2012, nominal GDP grew only 2.2%. This was less than a quarter of the level that it grew in 2007. Even in December 2015, nominal GDP growth was only 2.1%. The performance of the Australian stock market during that period of low GDP growth was miserable.

Now let us look at what has happened since. In 2017, a recovery in commodity prices has led to much faster growth in nominal GDP. For the year to March 2017, nominal GDP growth was 7.2%. For the year to June 2017, nominal GDP growth had accelerated to 7.6%. In 2017, nominal GDP is growing more than three times as fast as it did in the period 2012 and 2015.

The higher growth in nominal GDP that we are getting in 2017 seems also to be associated with higher growth in stock market EPS. After a period of stronger nominal GDP growth, those stronger EPS seem to be pushing the stock market up. Right now that stronger growth in earnings has led us to revise up our fair value for the ASX200. Our fair value for the ASX200 is now 6100 points.

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Conclusion

The next time you want to understand how the economy drives earnings, don't look at real GDP. Look instead at nominal GDP. Growth in nominal GDP drives growth in EPS of Australian companies. Maybe growth in nominal GDP is a much better way to gauge what is actually happening in the Australian economy.

Australia nominal GDP (trend) – current prices (YoY%)

Source: ABS

Equity strategy – Morgans Queensland Conference

Small-caps rediscovering their mojo

The tone around this year's conference was the most positive in years, confounding broader market caution in the popular press. This is probably explained by the bias towards small-to-mid cap industrials, which have collectively outperformed their large-cap (and often structurally challenged) counterparts since reporting season.

Redefining the future

Rather than be a passenger in the subdued economic climate, smart management teams are making their own opportunities in this environment via technology/innovation (Smartgroup, Domino's Pizza, Corporate Travel Management, PWR), acquisition/offshore expansion (IPH, Apollo Tourism & Leisure, Lovisa, Kelly and Partners) and value chain enhancement (Beacon Lighting, Flight Centre). Sector-wide themes were hard to discern, but a recovering mining services sector stood out as utilisation rates and forward order books recover (Emeco, RPMGlobal). Broadly speaking though, companies with, or which are, seeking offshore operations, do see better growth opportunities overseas (Lovisa, IPH, Apollo Tourism & Leisure, Corporate Travel Management, Domino's Pizza, Flight Centre, Superloop).

Leveraging technology

A large cross-section of corporates are seeking to overcome benign economic conditions by embracing the innovation offered by technology. Livehire, Superloop, Megaport and NextDC are benefiting from the transformation in how businesses consume and store data. Corporate Travel Management, Smart Group and Domino's Pizza are focused on improving customer experience through technological advancement.

Making the most of the uncertainty

The challenges that companies face remain consistent with what we've come to expect over much of FY17. These include:

1. A challenging operating environment (though with some evidence of improvement);
2. Regulatory risk (AP Eagers, Aveo, AFG);
3. Retail competition and discounting (Baby Bunting, Noni B, Domino's Pizza); and finally
4. Amazon. Despite the uncertainty, many companies presenting at the conference are reinvesting in their businesses. Sentiment indicators of business conditions remain positive, and those positioned for a recovery in the cycle will stand to benefit most.

2017 Key Picks: Morgans Queensland Conference

Company	Price (A$ps)	FY18F PE (X)	Target (A$ps)	Capital upside	Gross Yield	Forecast 12m TSR	Investment View
Apollo Tourism	$1.67	15.3	$1.82	9%	4.7%	14%	Forward rental bookings are tracking well across all geographies as guided, with NZ and Canada key growth regions. We think ATL is on track to outperform consensus forecasts, with European acquisition/s offering potential upside.
NextDC	$5.15		$5.38	4%	–	4%	Since listing on the ASX in late 2010 NXT has progressively proven it can populate its data centres to generate impressive returns. It has subsequently lowered its cost of capital, lowered the cost to build and lowered the cost to operate its world class data centre while at the same time adding more cloud, content, channel partners and corporate customers to its data centre ecosystem.
AFG Group	$1.64	11.0	$1.70	4%	9.4%	13%	AFG offers exciting growth prospects particularly with its focus on white label products in the home loan space and plans to grow its offering to SMEs. At the same time the stock is offering an attractive fully franked dividend yield of 6.7% on our forecasts.
Jumbo Interactive	$3.06	16.7	$3.32	8%	13.8%	22%	We like JIN's ability to increase customer spend irrespective of jackpot size. Pleasingly, there have also been two $50m jackpots in 1H18, which should have been strong TTV drivers. Growth in the high margin Charity Lottery space and the fixed cost base should see strong EPS growth over the next few years.
Superloop	$2.49	36.4	$2.81	13%	0.4%	13%	Superloop's business model is about gaining: 1) the benefits of infrastructure economics (fixed cost leverage); 2) infrastructure ownership control (ability to upgrade throughput as the technology changes); and 3) software to increase the flexibility and efficiency of the product offering. This is the core of its growth and M&A opportunities.

Source: IRESS, Morgans Estimates (Data at 1 November 2017)

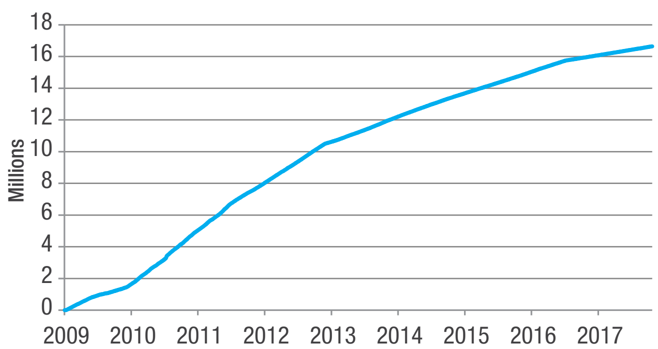
Banks – can cryptocurrencies become mainstream currency?

Cryptocurrencies ('cryptos'), most famously Bitcoin, are becoming increasingly known as an asset class and form of currency. Their growing awareness is leading more people to speculate that cryptos may one day become mainstream currency. Enough investors are also pondering the threats that cryptos may pose to conventional banking models.

We are sceptical about the prospect of cryptos as mainstream currency. It is worth revisiting the origins of Bitcoin. Two key tenets behind the creation of Bitcoin were that currency should be decentralised and that transactions should be anonymous. For these reasons, Bitcoin has resonated strongly with libertarians. However, these two tenets are what we see as the big hurdles to cryptos like Bitcoin becoming mainstream as mainstream currency would require centralisation and a larger degree of transparency to enable adequate regulation. It is also difficult to envisage a world reliant solely on digital currencies as transactions would always require the availability of electricity. For these reasons, we believe much of the excitement about the prospect of cryptos as mainstream currency is unfounded.

However, some of the concerns about the threat that cryptos pose to the banking system are legitimate. Cryptos can already be used to transfer money around the world simply using digital wallets, and this poses a threat to the international transfer and foreign exchange income streams of the banks. However, cryptos are currently a more costly way to transfer money as they are still relatively illiquid currencies. The case can be made that as cryptos become more liquid, they will pose more of a threat to certain income streams of the banks. However, the banks are already waking up to this threat and focussing on building out their own distributed ledger technologies to enable more efficient and lower-error international transfers. At the moment, Australian bank customers generally have to rely on telegraphic transfers when transferring funds to an offshore bank account, a method which is costly for the customer and also inefficient. We believe the banks are also dealing with the threat that cryptos pose to their foreign exchange income streams by refusing to bank cryptocurrency exchanges and businesses that deal with Bitcoin, with the reason provided for this refusal generally being related to AML and CTF risks.

Bitcoin in circulation



Bitcoin Price

Source: Bloomberg (Data at 27 October 2017)

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Fixed Interest Update

It has been a busy period in the listed fixed interest space recently with both Bendigo and Adelaide Bank (BEN) and Suncorp Group (SUN) launching replacement Additional Tier 1 capital securities. Given the strong capital positions of issuers, they are seeking little or no additional capital, which means for investors that issue sizes will remain similar (or potentially shrink as companies issue offshore) and margins will be pushed to the tighter end. We continue to believe these instruments fit within a diversified fixed interest portfolio weighting and we anticipate potential deals for BOQPD, MQGPA and WBCPC before 30 June next year. Our current key picks are ANZPC, CBAPD and NABPB.

We were recently involved with the listing of the Metrics Credit Partners Master Income Trust, which trades under the ASX code MXT. The Trust will provide investors with direct exposure to the Australian corporate loan market and is targeting an initial cash yield of the RBA cash rate plus 3.25% (4.75% currently). We view the security as a great portfolio diversifier for investors.

Resources – electric vehicles spark demand

Electric Vehicles (EV) mass-market production continues to grow exponentially. In September, China, one of the world's largest automobile markets, announced plans to transition to full EV. This policy shift, likely to be enforced by 2030, signals China's commitment to address pollution concerns. India, the fifth largest automobile market, indicated its plan to move to full EV by 2030. Other countries are also looking to eliminate combustion engines and to only sell EV. For example, Norway is moving to full EV by 2025 and France and the UK are banning combustion engine vehicle sales by 2040. The governor of California also announced it is assessing a similar ban.

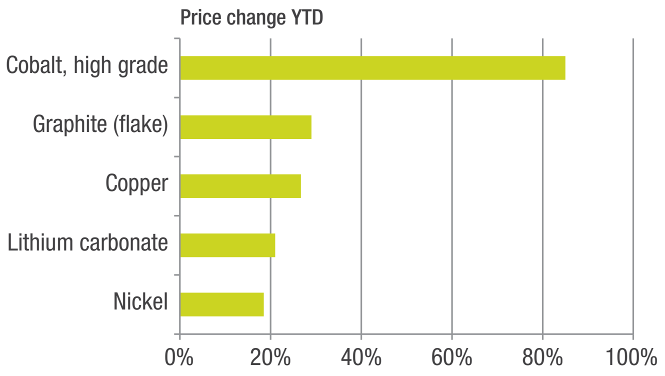
The development of electric autonomous vehicles is also accelerating, with big auto and silicon valley companies either competing or collaborating to get there first. Google (now Waymo), Apple, General Motors, Tesla, Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Lexus, Ford, and Volvo, among others, are racing to bring to market self-driving vehicles that will redefine our relationship with automobiles and the transportation industry in general. Most of these players expect to have fully electric self-driving cars in production by 2020-2021. In the U.S. alone, 25% of all distance driven will be covered by these vehicles by 2030, according to the Boston Consulting Group.

As technology develops, many industries including fast food, real estate, hotels, and airlines, will experience shifting business models as new opportunities and consumer expectations evolve. Other industries and some job categories will be entirely wiped out. Even our physical landscape will be transformed. It is creative destruction at its best.

We highlight some of the key beneficiaries of this trend and how domestic investors can benefit from the boom.

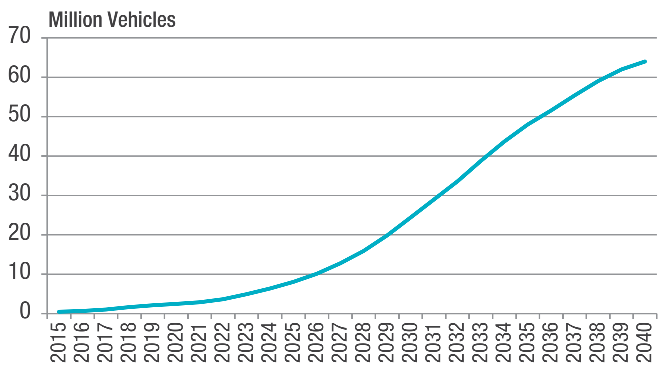
- **Copper – Oz Minerals (OZL) – Add $8.87 Target Price**
  As the size of the world's middle class continues to grow, demand for things that come with a battery or an electrical cord will continue to surge. That is, these consumers seek the three Cs – comfort, convenience and communication. This is a theme we've been highlighting for some time. Copper plays a huge role in this dynamic that is often under-estimated.
- **Lithium – Orocobre (ORE) – Add $5.36 Target Price**
  Established Lithium producer who seems to be past some production issues. Electric Vehicles are estimated to require an average of 80kg of copper and 50kg of lithium.
- **Graphite – Battery Minerals (BAT) – Add $0.23 Target Price**
  Graphite has been out of favour with investors as doubts grow around the role of natural flake graphite in Lithium-ion batteries. We remain confident natural graphite will play a role in the EV market and are bullish on the prospects of Mozambique based BAT. Recent changes to the Tanzanian mining legislation (Tanzania is projected to be one of the world's largest graphite producers) has the potential to significantly reduce supply side capacity.

Electric vehicles – key commodity inputs



Source: LME, Bloomberg

Electric vehicles – global sales forecast



Source: Bloomberg New Energy Finance Research

National energy guarantee – a policy solution but light on detail thus far

The release of the Federal Government's proposed National Energy Guarantee provided a long-awaited electricity policy for the market to debate. The Guarantee aims to maintain supply reliability and achieve emissions reduction targets at the lowest overall cost.

The Guarantee puts an obligation on electricity retailers and large direct users of grid power to provide evidence they have procured:

1. A minimum amount of flexible and dispatchable capacity that covers a predetermined percentage of their forecast peak load in each region (reliability guarantee); and
2. A mix of electricity supply whose average emissions intensity is consistent with Australia's emissions reduction commitments (emissions guarantee).

The Guarantees can be achieved through direct ownership of generation or by contracting with generators (some of which may be owned by other retailers who may be exceeding their reliability guarantee).

The ultimate 'stick' for consistent non-compliance with the guarantees is deregistration from the market.

The Government is targeting implementation of the reliability guarantee in 2019 and the emissions guarantee in 2020 (requires COAG agreement).

The Government has made claims that the guarantees will reduce wholesale prices by 20-25% pa over 2020-30 (encourage new supply and maintenance of existing plant), and deliver a $100-115/MWh decline in retail prices. Industry observers have doubts about the accuracy of these estimates.

The Government does not intend to change the current large-scale Renewable Energy Target (RET) legislation. The RET is expected to be met by 2020 and expires in 2030. It is not clear what this means for Infigen's LGC revenues into the next decade.

The 8 page letter that provides the framework for the National Energy Guarantee is very light on detail. Clarity will emerge over time on the policy implementation details, but at this stage the uncertainties make it difficult to ascertain the impact on ASX-listed energy companies. We can see both upside (market power, support of aging assets) and downside risks (potentially falling prices in the next decade) for existing gen-tailers (**AGL**, **Origin Energy**). The reliability guarantee may be supportive of **Genex Power's** proposed pumped storage project.

High Conviction Stocks

Watch our analysts outline key reasons to buy our recently added stocks in short videos available here **https://www.youtube.com/c/morgans-financial-limited**

This month we add **Link Administration** (LNK) to the ASX 100 list. We are attracted to its significant levels of recurring revenue (>70%) backed by 3-5 year contracts in a relatively defensive industry. We forecast double-digit EPS growth over the next 3 years, which we think will be further strengthened by conservative synergy forecasts from recent acquisitions.

For more refer to our latest High Conviction Stock list published 30 October 2017.

Morgans' High Conviction Stocks

ASX 100

	Ticker	Price	Price Target	FY18 Dividend Yield	FY18 Gross Yield	PE 12mf (x)	12m TSR
ResMed	RMD	$10.97	$11.76	1.8%	1.8%	26.7	9%
Link Administration	LNK	$8.19	$9.04	2.0%	2.9%	18.1	13%
Westpac	WBC	$33.28	$38.00	5.7%	8.2%	12.7	22%
Oil Search	OSH	$7.38	$10.46	2.0%	2.0%	20.8	44%

Ex-100

	Ticker	Price	Price Target	FY18 Dividend Yield	FY18 Gross Yield	PE 12mf (x)	12m TSR
Motorcycle Holdings	MTO*	$4.81	–	–	–	–	–
Aventus	AVN	$2.29	$2.46	7.1%	7.1%	12.7	15%
Bapcor	BAP	$5.40	$6.13	3.2%	4.5%	17.1	18%
PWR	PWH	$2.55	$3.10	2.6%	3.8%	22.7	25%

Source: FactSet, IRESS. Data as at 30 October 2017.

* Under Review

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