REALM INVESTMENT HOUSE

**APRIL 2023** 

### **FUND OBJECTIVE**

The Realm Short Term Income Fund seeks to produce a return (net of fees) that exceeds the total return of the RBA Overnight Cash Rate by 1.50%-2.00% p.a. over rolling three-year periods.

## **FUND DETAILS**

Distribution Frequency: Monthly Liquidity: Daily Buy/Sell: 0.00% / 0.00% Direct Minimum Investment: Ordinary Units - \$25,000 Inception Date: 21.12.2017 Fund size: AUD \$826 million APIR Codes: Ordinary Units - OMF3725AU

mFunds Units - OMF8723AU Management Costs (Net of GST):

Ordinary Units – 0.3075% mFunds Units – 0.3634%



RECOMMENDED

## **NET PERFORMANCE**

PeriodShort Term Income FundRBA Cash Ra1 Month0.44%0.29%2 Manth1.22%0.94%	
	te Return
2 Month 1 2207 0 949	76
3 Month 1.33% 0.849	76
6 Month 2.67% 1.59%	8
1 Year 3.25% 2.35%	76
3 Year p.a 2.32% 0.87%	8
5 Year p.a 2.46% 0.99%	8
Since Inception p.a* 2.49% 1.03%	76

\*Past performance is not indicative of future performance. Inception date is 21 December 2017.

## **FUND STATISTICS**

Running Yield	5.12%
Yield to Maturity	5.41%
Volatility†	0.46%
Interest rate duration	0.09
Credit duration	1.43
Average Credit Rating	А
Number of positions	205
Average position exposure	0.34%
Worst Month*	-0.26%
Best Month*	0.58%
Sharpe ratio <sup>a</sup>	4.32

Calculated on Ordinary Units unless otherwise stated. \*Since Inception 21 December 2017. †Trailing 12 Months Calculated on Daily observations. \*Since Inception Calculated on Daily observations

## **SECTOR ALLOCATION**



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## PORTFOLIO COMPOSITION



- Cash (12.89%)
- Short Dated Liquidity (12.59%)
- Sub Debt (19.76%)
- Corporate Bond (25.00%)
- RMBS & ABS (29.75%)

## **MATURITY PROFILE**



At Call to 6 Months (24.95%)

- 6 Months to 1 Years (12.46%)
- I Years to 2 Years (25.72%)
- 2 Years to 3 Years (33.42%)
- 3 Years to 3.5 Years (3.44%)

### **FUND UPDATE**

**Cash and Short-Term Liquidity Weighting:** ↑ Cash and Short dated liquidity increased to 25.48% from 24.88%.

**Interest Rate Duration Position:**  $\rightarrow$  0.09 years. The strategy will maintain interest rate duration of approximately 3 months as an average. Having a low IRD number limits the realised volatility and losses in the fund from continued bond market volatility. The strategy will, as a rule, only take modest interest rate risk.

**Corporate & Subordinated Debt Allocation:** 1 Decreased to 44.76% from 45.33%. Optimisation within the sector was skewed towards Subordinated debt over Corporate bonds. Corporate bonds continue to present modest relative value over bank senior bonds; and this relative value increased over the month due to primary issuances. Short end Australian Credit spreads were generally stable over the month, with any concerns limited to US regional banks. The short, conservative nature of the sector and diversification aided in cushioning the market volatility over the month.

**Residential Mortgage-Backed Securities (RMBS) & ABS:**  $\rightarrow$  Allocation to structured credit securities remained inline with last month at 29.75%. As at month end, the portfolio maintained an A- average credit rating and a relatively short weighted credit duration of 1.68 years.

Public structured credit market yields widened over the course of the month in line with other credit markets. Yields remain wide in comparison to historic market spread averages, all subsets of the capital structure widening. Whilst secondary markets were relatively quiet, primary markets saw several new trades issued including regional bank programs, two non-conforming transactions and several auto and personal loan programs. The pipeline of primary transactions remains robust, with a number of new trades looking to price in market over the next few weeks.

With respect to market performance, Prime arrears as reported by S&P's SPIN index weakened 2bps over the month of March to 0.95%, with nonconforming arrears improving 29bps to 3.70%. Both results remain very strong in comparison to both market expectations and historic index levels.

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## **CREDIT QUALITY**



## PORTFOLIO ESG RISK LIMITS

Sector	Direct Exposure	Direct Limit	Indirect Exposure	Indirect Limit
Fossil Fuels	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%
Non- Renewable & Nuclear Energy	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%
Alcohol	0.0%	0.0%	0.16%	2.5%
Gambling	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%
Mining	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%

## OTHER FUND DETAILS

Responsible Entity: One Managed Investment Funds Ltd Custodian: Mainstream Fund Services Pty Ltd Unit Pricing and Unit Price:

https://www.realminvest ments.com.au/ourproducts/realm-shortterm-income-fund/ Targeted risk across the Fund: ↑ Targeted risk decreased to 0.85% from 0.88%, reflecting the decrease in market volatility and optimisation within portfolio limits. Meanwhile, realised standard deviation is at 0.46%. This has risen over the short term due to increased volatility in mark to market valuations. The portfolio remains defensively positioned although despite this, the fund has performed relatively well over the last 12 months, delivering 3.25% after fees. This is evidence that the strategy is well designed, delivering a reasonable premium over cash while maintaining a very tight distribution of returns month on month. The fund remains compliant with the portfolio ESG risk limits.

### **FUND OUTLOOK**

With a yield to maturity exceeding 5%, the portfolio is expected to provide an attractive alternative to term deposits for investors who can tolerate some capital volatility. Portfolio liquidity remains very strong. The portfolio's exposure to interest rate duration remains negligible.

The portfolio has produced stable returns despite the volatility arising from US regional banks. It is fully invested in bonds issued by Australian and New Zealand borrowers, and the domestic currency market was relatively undisturbed. The earnings reports from major banks confirm their excellent financial condition from a credit perspective, further supporting the portfolio's stability. With the Reserve Bank of Australia raising cash rates to 3.85%, the likelihood of reporting a negative monthly return is now far lower than during 2022 where cash rates started the year at 0.1%.

Spreads for investment-grade mezzanine RMBS/ABS notes are favorable, surpassing the top quartile of their 10-year range. Non-conforming mortgage pools in Australia are experiencing a normalization of arrears rates and spreads have become more attractive.

Australian subordinated debt has performed relatively well. Yet despite Australia's relatively favourable economic outlook, Australian corporate bonds have underperformed global markets. The portfolio's corporate bond exposure is substantively focused on financials.

### MARKETS AND OUTLOOK

Equity markets were generally stronger over the month although Chinese equities lagged. VIX declined from 18.5 to 15.8, a surprisingly low figure given the prevailing market conditions. Bond yields were largely unchanged in major markets, although UK 10-year bond yields were notably 23bps higher, driven by resilient wage inflation. US 2-year Treasuries traded over a wide 50bps range as the market's sensitivity to economic developments remained elevated. The JPY weakened following the first meeting for the BoJ's Governor Ueda where concerns over an imminent relaxation of yield curve control parameters were allayed. Although OPEC cut production guidance by 1mbpd, oil prices finished close to unchanged on the month. However, copper and iron ore traded lower as demand from China appeared weaker than expected. Investment grade credit markets were stable, trading over a much narrower range than last month. Australian senior bank debt rallied on limited supply.

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## PLATFORM AVAILABILITY

- Australian Money Market
- AMP North
- BT Panorama
- eXpand
- Firstwrap
- Hub24
- Macquarie Wrap
- MLC Navigator/Wrap
- Netwealth
- Powerwrap
- Praemium
- Rhythm
- mFund code: RLM02

### **OTHER DEVELOPMENTS**

In the US, core personal consumption was softer, but was more resilient than expected. Retail sales figures reflected the ongoing shift in consumption patterns from goods to services. Headline CPI benefited from the passthrough effects of lower energy prices. However, the core measure showed much less improvement with the key Core Services ex Shelter measure registering a reading that was similar to that over the prior 5 months. The Employment Cost Index surprised to the high side. Whilst the labour market remains tight, evidence pointing to a rebalancing can be inferred from vacancies and quits data both of which have retraced close to halfway towards pre-Covid levels. The implications are further confirmed by additional lead indicators like temporary help services employment, that have already declined to pre-Covid levels. PMIs indicated ongoing economic resilience.

Signs had emerged that the use of the Fed's emergency liquidity facilities had peaked following the demise of SVB. However, an outbreak of further instability amongst regional banks, including the ultimate sale of First Republic to JP Morgan, saw a further flight towards money market funds. Fed staffers predicted a mild recession, although their conclusions in this regard were not endorsed by the FOMC itself. Fedspeak continued to guide towards additional hikes and higher-for-longer settings although the outlook for credit supply is a key uncertainty. The Beige Book noted a tightening of credit availability which was confirmed by the Fed's Survey of Loan Officers.

The market remains fixed on X-date, the point at which the US may not be able to make scheduled payments to bond holders. Treasury Secretary Yellen indicated this could be as soon as 1 June. One-year sovereign credit default swaps traded at an 11-year high. President Biden announced he would contest the 2024 Presidential election.

Europe's resilience to the gas crisis remains impressive with storage levels well above the five-year average at this time of year. The Flash Q1 GDP was reported at 0.1%, which followed a 0% reading for Q4 2022, avoiding a technical recession by the barest of margins.

China's ongoing recovery was evident in the official PMI nonmanufacturing survey which, at 58.2, continues the run of strong expansionary readings this year to date. Retail expenditure significantly outstripped expectations. Credit creation remains robust with long-term loans by the corporate sector driving demand. The troubled property sector is focused on completing pre-purchased homes. Pre-sales have largely recovered for state-owned enterprises but home-buyer confidence in privately owned developers remains highly impaired. The parlous state of balance sheets amongst some major developers is a key downside risk to

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LEVEL 6, 31 Market Street Sydney NSW 2000 activity. Plans were announced to curtail steel production, which impacted the price of iron ore. China remains burdened by a youth unemployment rate of 20%.

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Australian retail sales are slowing, adding to evidence that household consumption is being wound back. The RBA paused during the April meeting, retaining a hawkish bias but opting to wait for a detailed update to forecasts that would be available for the next meeting. Subsequently, trimmed mean inflation came in softer than expected yet the RBA delivered a surprise hike in May. Concerns over productivity were added to the post-meeting release. Rents, which have risen 11% for the year according to PropTrack, are a source of inflationary concern. The RBA Review produced recommendations to improve the level of transparency and challenge during policy meetings, noting that every decision in at least the last 10 years aligned with recommendations produced by Bank officials.

The impact of rate rises will continue to strengthen as fixed rate mortgages roll off, bringing required payments to record levels as a proportion of household incomes. Despite this, residential property prices rose for a second month, supported by low vacancy rates and higher than expected immigration. The outlook for housing, as drawn from Westpac's Consumer Survey, is much improved and is now above the long-term average. In contrast, business surveys report declining activity off high levels and expectations for this trend to persist. The labour market continued to post strong results, with unemployment at 3.5%.

The Bank of Japan announced its own review which is expected to take between 12-18 months, buying time for the new Governor to determine the next policy moves. In the meantime, forward guidance was removed and forecasts for inflation in the medium term remain below the target of 2% per annum.

Elsewhere, concern is growing for the visible fragmentation of foreign direct investment and settlement currencies into geopolitical blocs. Should this persist, ECB President Lagarde estimated that the impact could be as high as 5% to inflation in the near term accompanied with a weaker production outlook. US Treasury Secretary Yellen called for security to be prioritized over economic growth. Russia's economy is proving to be more resilient than hoped in the face of sanctions. India and China are purchasing 90% of oil exports, leading to an expectation of economic growth this year. A significant escalation of hostilities is expected in Ukraine. Finally, India is now the world's most populous nation.

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