

## At a glance

Global Shares performed strongly in the second quarter lead by technology from the US and Asia

For the quarter long dated bond yields rose strongly on tariffs and inflation uncertainty but fell back as fears eased

Emerging markets performed in line with global peers led by local technology shares

Trump's Liberation Day tariffs spooked markets, the trade standoff with China and conflicts drove volatility. The RBA cut rates in May and growth is sluggish

## Markets Update

In April, President Trump reignited trade tensions by announcing broad-based tariffs on most imported goods, and higher rates for cars and steel. China and other key trading partners were directly targeted. Markets initially sold off on fears of a renewed trade war, but sentiment improved 7 days later when Trump announced a 90-day delay to the start of the tariff regime. China responded by imposing additional tariffs on the US which began a tit-for-tat escalation of tariff rates between the two. The trade war ended with a partial agreement in June, though China has restricted exports of Rare Earths and the US similarly with semi-conductor design software and advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) chips.

Financial markets in the June quarter were predominantly influenced by shifting trade policy and geopolitical risks. Despite this, March quarter corporate earnings were stronger than expected aiding markets to recover strongly from early tariff driven weakness to end the quarter higher. The MSCI Global Share index rising 11.6% for the quarter, the US S&P 500 index reaching a new all-time high of 6,205 as the large US technology stocks had a particularly good quarter.

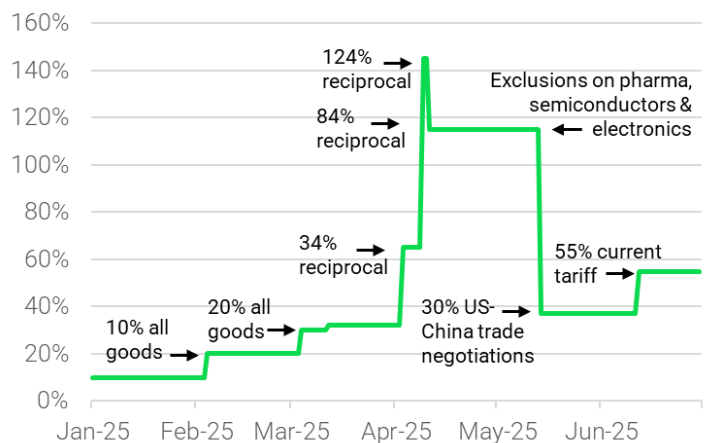
Bond markets were more volatile, US long-term Government Bond yields briefly touched 5%, the highest level in 18 years. This due to rising US Government debt and inflation uncertainty as a result of trade policy, though yields eased modestly toward quarter end.

Technology remained the key driver of global equity returns. Nvidia's earnings reflected ongoing strength in AI infrastructure and Asian technology stocks participated as well. Gold reached a new all-time high briefly above US\$3,500 per oz. in early April and backed off to US\$3,287 per oz. by quarter end as trade and geopolitical tensions eased.

The RBA cut interest rates by 0.25% in May for the second time this cycle as inflation receded. By contrast, the European Central Bank has cut its interest rate 8 times in the last year as they struggle to combat slowing growth. The US Federal Reserve (Fed) held interest rates steady at 4.25%–4.50% in June. While inflation is easing, the uncertain inflationary impact of tariffs saw the Fed take a wait and see approach.

In Australia, the ASX 200 rose 8.9% for the quarter, led by CBA whose share price closed June at \$185, rising circa 50% since July 2024. The unemployment rate held steady at 4.1% though economic conditions remain benign and, along with slowly moderating inflation, is keeping downward pressure on interest rates.

US Average Tariff Rate on China



Source: US Census Bureau, USTR, Macquarie Macro Strategy

## Looking Ahead

Overall, risk levels remain elevated driven by; uncertainty surrounding the roll out of US trade policy, ongoing geopolitical tensions (not just current conflicts) and US President Trump's 'transactional and fluid' style of policy development and implementation.

Central Banks continue to ease interest rates in the coming months as economic growth, among major developed world economies, slowly trends down, which will be supportive of markets. That said, we do not anticipate these economies declining into recession and conditions can remain flat to positive, providing the twists and turns of the coming months do not shock the system beyond what it is expecting or able to withstand.

We expect share markets to remain mildly positive notwithstanding, valuations across major share markets are elevated relative to history, particularly in sectors that have led recent gains. Hence diversification and exposure selection are key in this more uncertain environment.

China's economy remains sluggish and until the tariff situation globally has settled, we expect this to continue despite ongoing and targeted stimulus measures.

The Australian share market will continue to lag a little while technology outperforms. A rebound in resources would change this outlook but would also require a recovery in China, and no undue tariff impact.

We retain a neutral allocation to growth assets and focused on well diversified portfolios of quality assets for the coming months.

## Portfolio Commentary

The Alpha CFS Conservative Portfolio delivered a total return of 0.72% in June 2025, compared to the Morningstar AUS Conservative Target Allocation Index of 0.76% and Peer Median of 0.69%.

In the June quarter, positive contributions came from the Australian shares (CFS Index Australian Shares and Ausbil Australian Active Equity Fund), as well as Magellan Infrastructure Fund. Whilst within defensive assets, the exposure to government bonds via Macquarie Australian Fixed Income Fund and PIMCO Wholesale Diversified Fixed Income Fund also made a positive contribution as falling yields and stable credit spreads drove strong returns across both government bond and credit exposures.

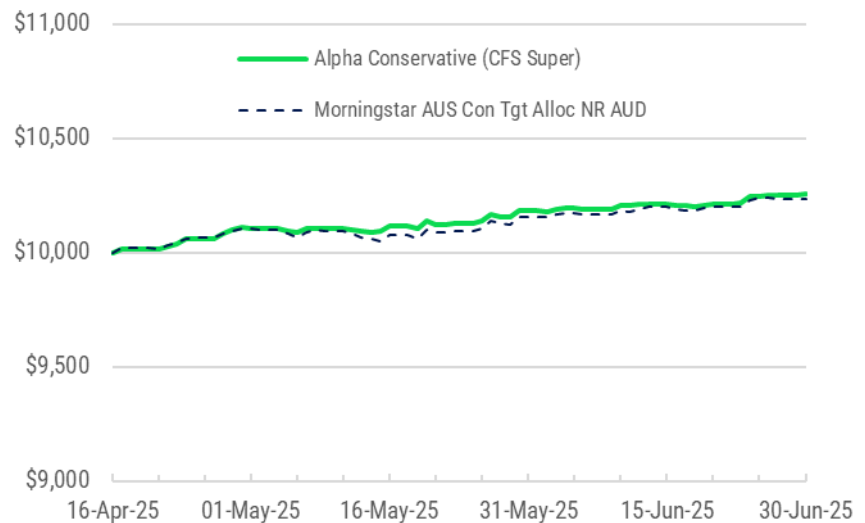
Performance was held back by the portfolio's more cautious asset allocation, which remained defensively positioned during a period of market recovery. Additionally, the GQG Partners Global Equity Fund underperformed broader global equities over the quarter due largely to limited exposure to large US technology stocks detracting from overall returns despite its good longer-term track record.

## Portfolio Changes

Despite us making no changes to the portfolio throughout the June quarter, there has been some activity in the underlying actively managed Australian and Global Shares funds over the period; specifically, GQG Partners Global Equity Fund has positioned more defensively in anticipation of a US economic slowdown and consequently significantly reduced their exposure to the Technology and Consumer Discretionary sectors at the beginning of the quarter.

Overall, the Portfolio still remains biased towards higher quality companies with favourable growth outlooks. Within fixed income, there is a bias towards actively managed Australian Government bonds and credit.

## Performance over time



## Trailing returns

Portfolio Performance	1mth	3mth	1yr	3yr	5yr	Inception
Alpha Conservative	0.72%	-	-	-	-	2.57%
Morningstar AUS Con Target Allocation NR \$A	0.76%	-	-	-	-	2.34%
Peer Median (Conservative)	0.69%	-	-	-	-	2.73%
ABS Aus CPI + 1% p.a.	0.08%	-	-	-	-	0.20%

**Disclaimer:** Net performance figures are shown after all fees and expenses, assuming reinvestment of distributions. Past performance is not an indicator of future performance

## Your Portfolio

## Underlying Investments

Alpha Conservative Managed Account	Neutral Allocation	Current Allocation
<b>Australian Equity</b>	8%	8%
CFS Index Australian Share Fund		2.1%
Ausbil Australian Active Equity Fund		5.4%
<b>International Equity</b>	3%	6%
CFS Index Global Share Fund		3.3%
GQG Partners Global Equity AUD (Hdg)		3.0%
<b>Property &amp; Infrastructure</b>	0%	2%
Magellan Infrastructure Fund		2.1%
<b>Fixed Income</b>	59%	64%
CFS Macquarie Australian Fixed Interest Fund		24.8%
Janus Henderson Tactical Income Fund		14.8%
PIMCO Diversified Fixed Interest Fund		24.8%
<b>Cash</b>	31%	20%
FSI Strategic Cash Fund		19.6%