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## SPATIUM SMALL COMPANIES FUND (SSCF)

**APRIL 2023 NEWSLETTER** 

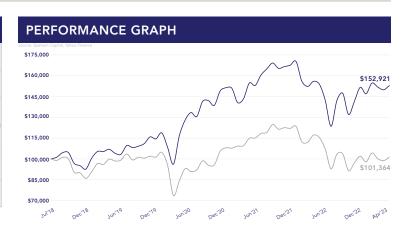
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| PERFORMANCE SUMMARY    |         |          |        |              |              |                |  |
|------------------------|---------|----------|--------|--------------|--------------|----------------|--|
|                        | 1 MONTH | 3 MONTHS | 1 YEAR | 3 YEARS p.a. | 4 YEARS p.a. | INCEPTION p.a. |  |
| SSCF <sup>1</sup>      | 2.0%    | -1.2%    | -0.6%  | 9.5%         | 9.3%1        | 9.2%¹          |  |
| Benchmark <sup>2</sup> | 2.6%    | -2.8%    | -12.1% | 6.4%         | 0.4%         | 0.3%           |  |
| Value Added            | -0.6%   | 1.6%     | 11.5%  | 3.1%         | 9.0%         | 8.9%           |  |

| MONTHLY CONTRIBUTORS & DETRACTORS |        |  |  |
|-----------------------------------|--------|--|--|
| Core Lithium Ltd (CXO)            | 0.5%   |  |  |
| Worley Ltd (WOR)                  | 0.3%   |  |  |
| Vicinity Centres (VCX)            | 0.3%   |  |  |
| BrainChip Holdings Ltd (BRN)      | (0.2%) |  |  |
| New Hope Corporation Ltd (NHC)    | (0.3%) |  |  |
| Omni Bridgeway Ltd (OBL)          | (0.6%) |  |  |

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>The SSCF is a composite calculation of the SMA's inception (1 July 2018), through to the Fund's inception and is net of fees, before tax, and assumes reinvestment of distributions.



SPATIUM SMALL COMPANIES FUND¹

S&P/ASX SMALL ORDINARIES INDEX

## 'It is in the nature of an industry whose structure is competitive and whose conduct is driven by supply to have cycles that only end badly.'3

The phrase "tend to the part of the garden you can touch" means that you should focus on the things that you can control or influence in your life. It's about taking action and making improvements in the areas that are within your reach, rather than worrying about things that are beyond your control (for example, the direction of the stock market). This principle can be applied to many areas of life, such as personal relationships, career goals, and health & wellness. By focusing on the things that you can control, you can make positive changes and improve overall well-being.

The stock market is one "garden" however, that is unlikely to ever be "touched". As a complex system made up of many different participants, the stock market is not controlled by any one person or group (no matter how powerful or successful). It is more accurate to consider the stock market as the product of the collective influence of investors, traders, companies, governments and institutions.

When we can't "tend" to the stock market, and it is in desperate need of pruning, what can be done? For context, April was one of those months. Persistent inflation, uncertainty around domestic and international interest rates and geopolitical risks that whilst are no longer headline news, continue to circle. The level of volatility (the more common proxy we look to is the S&P/ASX 200 VIX; ASX:XVI) fell below its long-term average and managers like ourselves, scratched our heads. How could the financial markets come to this level of calm with such significant macro factors that should create uncertainty, still being played out? We know that the market is not always the economy however, occasionally the two create such a disparity that it leaves market participants lost for an explanation. Take the NASDAQ for example: calendar year-to-date (end of 30 April 2023), the US' popularised tech & growth-centric NASDAQ composite index (ticker ^IXIC) is up +17.71%. Comparatively the S&P500 is up +6.97%, the S&P/ASX200 is up +3.26% and the S&P/ASX Small Ordinaries (our benchmark) is up +3.89%. Some will argue that the bounce-back in the NASDAQ is the beginning of a response to the -33.10% it lost in 2022. Others will challenge that the era of central bank interest rate-rises is almost at an end and rate-cuts should

follow shortly. Or perhaps both, so that our addiction to cheap debt can resume and these tech/growth-based businesses can operate with better future cash flow models once again... All in all, when the economic data is showing job vacancy rates are slowing, inflation is remaining persistently high (far from the targeted 2% to 3% band most developed-economies target) and rates of administration are climbing (in Australia, insolvencies in the Construction and Building sector has just hit a nine-year high) some "pruning" is well overdue.

It is worth highlighting our bias towards wanting volatility and uncertainty in the markets. Our approach to investing suits a sensible (however, we would also accept a heightened) level of volatility to create price-dislocations that we can capitalise on for our clients. The ability to identify and acquire undervalued listed companies throughout April was constrained, but not to the point of a significant reduction in the number of positions the Fund held (holding 33 companies at the end of April) or in the volume of trades we made (a total of \$4.97mn trades were made).

Whilst we know this newsletter is written for the context of April's events and/or news, we'd be remiss for not acknowledging the RBA and US Fed's decision to increase each respective cash rate by a further 25 basis points. It seems almost inevitable now (unless the RBA has a change of heart) that residential mortgage stress and possible defaults will soon become the norm. We have previously acknowledged the sophisticated tools that the RBA and its many data-repositories (i.e. APRA, ASIC etc) have at their disposal, and our macro-aware stance remains - we observe but have no academically-rooted position. That said, we trust that the RBA is making a better-placed decision on their forecasting on this occasion vs their late 2020 view of no interest rate rises until 2024. We'd suspect many Australians would be pushed to their limits if a forecasting blunder of this magnitude occurred twice in as many years...

The Spatium Small Companies Fund returned +2.0% for the month of April against the benchmark return of 2.6%. In other markets, the US smalls equivalent returned -2.9% and the UK delivered 1.8%.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Benchmark is the S&P/ASX Small Ordinaries Index



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| FUND CHARACTERISTICS                   |                 |  |
|--|-----------------|--|
| UNIT PRICE (AT 30 APRIL 2023)          | \$1.06          |  |
| FY2022 DISTRIBUTION YIELD              | Nil             |  |
| FY2021 DISTRIBUTION YIELD⁴             | 12.9%           |  |
| FY2020 DISTRIBUTION YIELD <sup>5</sup> | 16.5%           |  |
| SUGGESTED TIMEFRAME                    | 5 to 7+ years   |  |
| STRUCTURE                              | Open-Ended Fund |  |
| SUBSCRIPTIONS/REDEMPTIONS              | Monthly         |  |
| DISTRIBUTIONS                          | Annually        |  |
| STRATEGY INCEPTION <sup>1</sup>        | 1 July 2018     |  |
| MANAGEMENT FEE <sup>6</sup>            | 1.25% per annum |  |

| OTHER KEY METRICS OF INVESTMENT STRATEGY |                   |        |  |  |  |  |
|--|-------------------|--------|--|--|--|--|
|  | SSCF <sup>1</sup> | MARKET |  |  |  |  |
| Average monthly return                   | 0.9%              | 0.2%   |  |  |  |  |
| Beta                                     | 0.88              | 1.00   |  |  |  |  |
| Portfolio variance                       | 6.0%              | 6.2%   |  |  |  |  |
| Up-Market capture ratio                  | 101.2%            | 100.0% |  |  |  |  |
| Down-Market capture ratio                | 68.6%             | 100.0% |  |  |  |  |

| RESEARCH & RATINGS                         |            |  |  |  |
|--|------------|--|--|--|
| ORGANISATION                               | RATING     |  |  |  |
| SQM Research (REPORT AVAILABLE ON REQUEST) | Acceptable |  |  |  |
| FE Fund Info                               | 5 Crowns   |  |  |  |



**FIND OUT MORE** 

The Fund currently remains open to new investors.

To set up a time to discuss with one of our team, please email us at <a href="mailto:contact@spatiumcapital.com">contact@spatiumcapital.com</a>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Stewart, B. D., 1980. How Will This Underwriting Cycle End?. White Sulphur Springs, Joint Conference NACSA-NACSE.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>On the 30 June 2021 pre-distribution unit price of \$1.28, the Fund distributed \$0.16 per issued unit; equivalent to a 12.9% distribution yield.

On the 30 June 2020 pre-distribution unit price of \$1.27, the Fund distributed \$0.21 per issued unit; equivalent to a 16.5% distribution yield.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Other fees and expenses apply. Please refer to the Information Memorandum for the SSCF for further details.