

Performance as at 31 March 2023

	1 Month	3 Months	1 Year	3 Years p.a.	5 Years p.a.	Inception p.a ¹
Fund ²	0.2%	5.2%	-9.6%	21.0%	6.9%	8.5%
Benchmark ³	-0.7%	1.9%	-13.2%	13.2%	3.9%	5.4%
Difference	0.9%	3.3%	3.6%	7.9%	3.0%	3.1%

¹ Inception date is 11 July 2016. Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance. All p.a. returns are annualised.

² Sphera Australian Smaller Companies Fund. Returns of the Fund are net of applicable fees, costs, and taxes.

³ Benchmark is the S&P/ASX Small Ordinaries Accumulation Index.



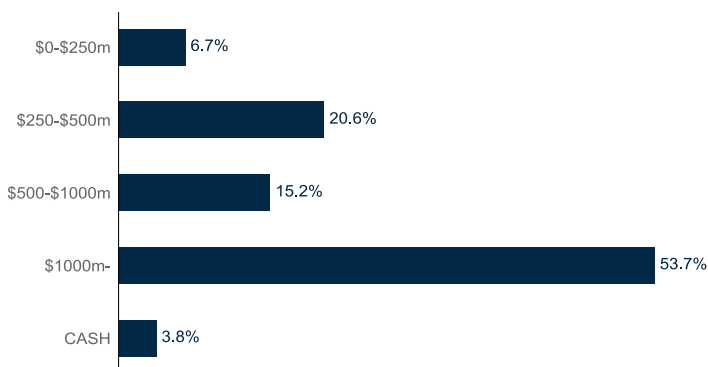
Overall Commentary

The Sphera Australian Smaller Companies Fund returned 0.2% (after fees) during the month of March, outperforming the S&P/ASX Small Ordinaries Accumulation Index by 0.9%.

Top 5 Holdings

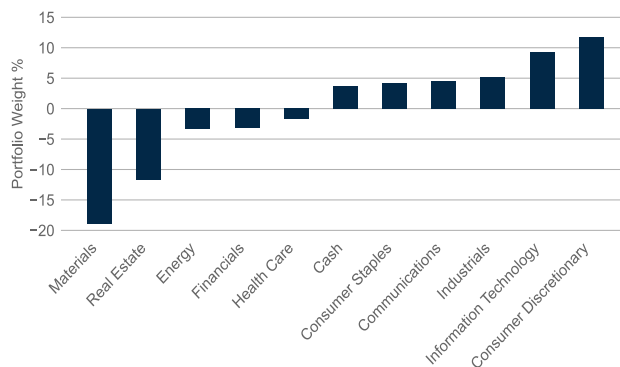
Company Name	% Portfolio
IRESS Limited	4.9
Blackmores Limited	3.9
Bega Cheese Limited	3.9
Breville Group Limited	3.8
Deterra Royalties Limited	3.7
Top 5	20.0

Market Cap Bands



Source: Sphera Asset Management

Active Sector Exposure



Source: Sphera Asset Management

Markets

The small-cap and mid-small indices both fell again over March on account of concerns around the economy and the possibility of financial contagion after three US banks – led by Silicon Valley Bank - failed. The decline in the Australian Dollar and a sense that interest rates may be close to peaking looks to have prompted a re-emergence in corporate activity. InvoCare (IVC.ASX) received a bid early in the month from private equity group TPG, followed later in the month by Liontown Resources (LTR.ASX) and then United Malt Group (UMG.ASX). Corporate activity is hard to predict, however we expect to see more as private equity and trade buyers capitalise on weak share price performance and attractive valuations. Whilst not an explicit consideration in our investment process, our focus on strong cash flow businesses with attractive balance sheets and valuations means that we tend to be outsized beneficiaries during periods of elevated M&A activity.

Major Contributors to Performance

Over the month the largest contributors to performance were InvoCare (IVC.ASX, +26%), Regis Healthcare (REG.ASX, +26%) and IRESS (IRE.ASX, +7%).

InvoCare (IVC.ASX) – share price rose 26% in March, after the company received a takeover bid (by way of scheme of arrangement) for 100% of the company from TPG Global (TPG). The offer price of \$12.65 was a 41% premium to the last traded price. InvoCare has high-quality assets with a hard-to-replicate geographic footprint. The business has infrastructure like dynamics in a growing and somewhat duopolistic market. On this basis, we feel that the offer does not reflect the fair value of the business and anticipate further upside to the initial bid. IVC is currently trading below the offer price at around \$12 per share (at the time of writing) and offers compelling value at this level.

Major Detractors from Performance

The largest detractors were **not owning** Liontown Resources (LTR.ASX, +90%), an overweight in Insignia Financial (IFL.ASX, -14%) and **not owning** Neuren Pharmaceuticals (NEU.ASX, +84%)

Liontown Resources (LTR.ASX) – share price rose almost 90% in March, after the company received a takeover bid at the end of the month. Albemarle Corporation (Albemarle) is seeking to acquire 100% of the shares of LTR at a price of \$2.50, a 64% premium to the prior day's closing price. The mandate does not own LTR and hence it was a detractor from returns over the month. We have discussed our views on lithium over the last year as prices moved exponentially higher in 2022 on expectations of a multi-year supply deficit. We strongly believed that such prices were unsustainable, and this proved correct as pricing subsequently collapsed from a peak of US\$80,000/t (lithium carbonate) to approximately US\$30,000 at the time of writing. Many of the lithium names (particularly the explorers and developers) came under intense selling pressure as a result, which clearly piqued Albemarle's interest. Whilst the bid hurts relative performance, we continue to remain disciplined in our investment approach and use mid-cycle (long-term) lithium price assumptions to value these companies.

Outlook & Strategy Going Forward

Smaller companies tend to get sold off more aggressively in downturns and risk-off markets. The past year has seen a large demarcation in performance between the larger cap index and smaller caps, domestically. As sentiment shifts, small caps have historically outperformed large caps as risk / return profiles adjust. The fact private equity and corporates are back active in the market indicates that value has truly emerged and is being snapped up by opportunistic and well-funded acquirors. We are starting to see investors attempting to predict where the next bid will come from with interest returning to names including Bega Cheese (BGA.ASX), Blackmores (BKL.ASX) and Iress (IRE.ASX). There are many uncertainties economically speaking but looking ahead over the next 12 months, we feel we are well positioned given our focus on fundamentals and cash generative businesses.

Platform Availability List

If a fund is not available on your preferred platform, please contact us. Please check with your platform for minimum investment requirements and fees

AMP North	HUB24	MLC Navigator	PowerWrap
Asgard	IOOF eXpand	MLC Wrap	Praemium
BT Panorama	IOOF Wrap	MLC Wealth Administration	Premium Choice
CFS FirstWrap	Macquarie Wrap	Netwealth	SimpleWrap
DPM	Mason Stevens	OneVue	Weath02 uXchange
FNZ Group			

Spheria Australian Smaller Companies Fund	
Benchmark	S&P/ASX Small Ordinaries Accumulation Index
Investment Objective	Outperform the S&P/ASX Small Ordinaries Accumulation Index over the medium to long term
Investing Universe	Primarily listed companies outside the top ASX 100 listed companies by market capitalisation and companies listed on the New Zealand Stock Exchange with an equivalent market capitalisation
Holdings	Generally 20-65 stocks
Distributions	Half-Yearly
Fees	1.10% p.a Management fee & 20% performance fee of the Fund's excess return versus its benchmark, net of the management fee
Cash	Up to 20% cash, typically 5% - 10%
Expected Turnover	30% - 40%
Style	Long only
APIR	WHT0008AU
Minimum Initial Investment	\$25,000

Fund Ratings



Fund Ratings

For more information, please contact Pinnacle Investment Management Limited on 1300 010 311 or email distribution@pinnacleinvestment.com

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Link to the [Product Disclosure Statement](#)

Link to the [Target Market Determination](#)

For historic TMD's please contact Pinnacle client service Phone 1300 010 311 or Email service@pinnacleinvestment.com

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