

Intelligent Investor Ethical Share Fund

Active ETF (ASX:INES)

Issued by
InvestSMART Funds
Management Limited
ACN 067 751 759
AFSL 246441

Managed by
Intelligent Investor
Holdings Pty Ltd
ACN 109 360 983
CAR 1255 838

ARSN 630 396 584
ASX Code: INES

“For reasons I have never understood, people like to hear that the world is going to hell.” — Deirdre McCloskey

“Everyone must choose one of two pains: the pain of discipline or the pain of regret.” — Jim Rohm

“The fact that people will be full of greed, fear, or folly is predictable. The sequence is not predictable.” — Warren Buffett

Quality stocks were skewered this quarter while the big money hides in banks. Imprudently so, given the top 20 stocks must fall by a third just to touch their average valuation over the past decade.

The fund is specifically designed to own quality businesses, but despite our multiple layers of protection including being disciplined on valuation, holding some cash, being internationally diversified and owning stocks mostly in less economically sensitive industries including healthcare, infrastructure, insurance broking and payments, not to mention mostly excellent recent company results, there’s been nowhere to hide.

It’s not often numerous holdings report 15-30% earnings growth and fall so far, so quick.

Performance (after fees)

	1 mth	3 mth	1 yr	2 yrs p.a	3 yrs p.a	S.I. p.a
II Ethical Share Fund	-5.9%	-14.5%	-5.1%	-1.9%	4.2%	7.0%
S&P ASX 200 Accumulation Index	-7.1%	-1.6%	11.7%	7.2%	9.5%	7.8%
Excess to Benchmark	1.2%	-12.9%	-16.8%	-9.1%	-5.4%	-0.8%

Inception (S.I.): 11 Jun 2019

RIAA's RI Certification Symbol signifies that a product or service offers an investment style that takes into account environmental, social, governance or ethical considerations. The Symbol also signifies that Intelligent Investor Australian Ethical Share Fund (ASX: INES) adheres to the strict operational and disclosure practices required under the Responsible Investment Certification Program for the category of Product. The Certification Symbol is a Registered Trademark of the Responsible Investment Association Australasia (RIAA). Detailed information about RIAA, the Symbol and Intelligent Investor Australian Ethical Share Fund (ASX: INES) methodology, performance and stock holdings can be found at www.responsibleinvestments.com.au, together with details about other responsible investment products certified by RIAA.



Fund overview

The Intelligent Investor Australian Ethical Share Fund is an Active ETF designed for investors seeking a diversified selection of Australian and international companies that produce growing, sustainable profits at low risk of interruption from the increasing threats associated with Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors.

 **5+ yrs**
Suggested investment timeframe

 **10 - 40**
Indicative number of securities

 **Risk profile: High**
Expected loss in 4 to 6 years out of every 20 years

 **S&P/ASX 200 Accumulation Index**
Benchmark

 **Investment fee**
0.97% p.a.

 **Performance fee**
Nil



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The poor performance of quality stocks over the past 18 months typically only happens once a decade. While we couldn't take full advantage of **ResMed's** Ozempic moment or **Mineral Resources'** share price collapse after being targeted by short sellers in recent years as they were already full positions and MinRes's governance was compromised, this time we're capitalising on the huge gap between large stock valuations and everything else.

Market Dislocations

Ex-20 stocks are trading at a P/E discount to ASX 20 stocks, which is historically unusual



Source: FactSet, Auscap

We sold **Chorus** to add to **CAR Group**, **REA**, **Eagers**, and **Pinnacle**, and introduced **JB Hi-Fi**. JB Hi-Fi is one of Australia's best retailers yet compared to Woolworths it offers higher growth at a lower valuation and a dividend yield nearly twice as high. .

Recent results

MA Financial's result was bang in line with expectations with management suggesting 2026 profits could be even higher than the more than 20% expected, but the stock price has fallen over a third on fears private credit will suffer large losses.

MA Financial is well diversified so any losses should be manageable, but falling asset values, reduced financial activity and fund redemptions will always be a risk.

Contrary to history, healthcare stocks haven't provided protection in a volatile environment. ResMed's share price has fallen by a third from its highs despite reporting earnings that you

could set you watch to. Once again, it trades at a teens-multiple of forecast earnings despite double-digit earnings growth.

CSL is in full turnaround mode after announcing another poor result, although it has no impact on performance vis-à-vis the index. Management is trying to cut costs and increase margins before considering asset sales. We expect a strong share price response if its new CEO can restore confidence.

Sonic Healthcare reported an upbeat result with early signs margins could be increasing, though we're waiting to see whether new CEO and company stalwart Dr. Jim Newcombe will ruthlessly sell some less profitable overseas businesses or continue with his predecessor's overseas expansion.

Healius' results were mixed and the share price fall seems way overdone. Increasing margins is still the key and it could be a takeover candidate.

CAR produced another good set of numbers, yet its share price has halved as fears AI would usurp online classifieds businesses smashed valuations around the world. We believe current share prices are compensating for the risk given the incumbents will be very hard to dislodge, but increased investment to harness AI and fend off new competitors could reduce margins.

Like the healthcare stocks, insurance brokers normally perform well in a volatile environment, but AI fears have halved AUB's share price following a failed takeover and Steadfast is down by a third.

We're more concerned about the potential length of a soft insurance market and their overseas expansion strategies, but we're being compensated with ~5% dividend yields and forecast price-to-earnings ratios around 12.

Lastly, **Visa** and **Mastercard** reported 15% and 20% earnings growth yet trade cheaper than **Commonwealth Bank**; and **Fairfax Financial** is

firing on all cylinders yet still trades on a single-digit PER, maybe even at book value.

Final thoughts

Everything everywhere seems to be happening at once; a major war, potentially higher inflation and interest rates; and a generational change in technology. Not to mention the turbulence created by increased passive investing, algorithmic trading, massive super funds and individuals, while large cap stocks trade at some of their highest valuations in history.

Shareholders in these stocks ought to look at CSL or seemingly impregnable technology stocks like **Xero** or **Wisetec** for lessons in the transience of extreme valuations. Or simply google a chart of the index between 2007 and 2017 when there were no capital gains, and yet the lost decade could exceed returns between 2027 and 2037 due to more extreme valuations, lower earnings growth, lower dividend yields and increasing competitive threats.

It's been clear for years which stocks offer no value, yet that hasn't stopped many of their share prices from increasing. But given the massive falls in quality stocks, it's now more obvious where the potential value is.

Many stocks around the world in industries like online classifieds have never traded this cheap despite being best placed to harness AI while potentially earning most of their market value in cash over the next decade. Even the most successful technology takes time to change behaviour and it's not clear Agentic AI, for example, will offer superior experiences and solutions.

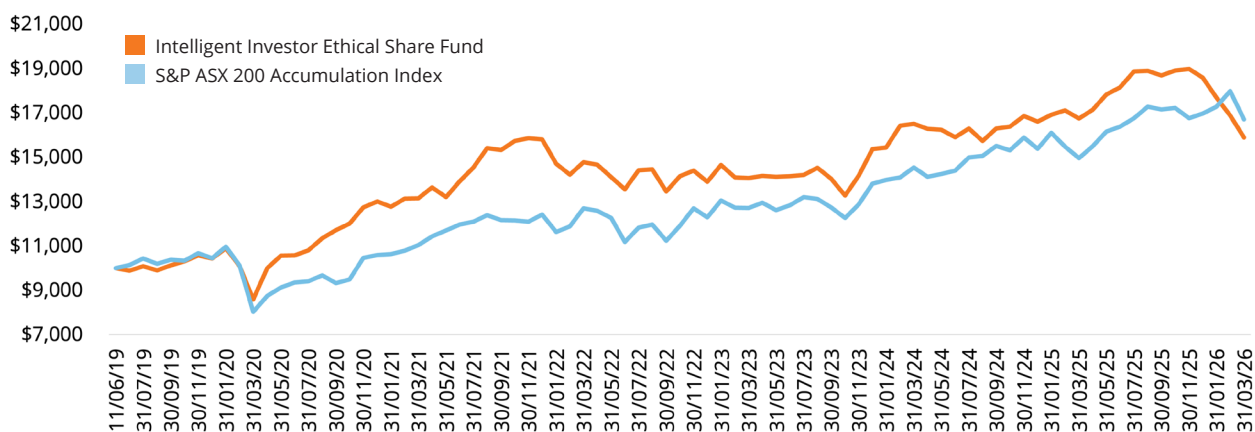
Whether confidence returns stock by stock, or in one fell swoop perhaps after the Iran war, the fund hasn't been this cheap in years. More importantly, the potential to outperform an index that's grossly overvalued over the next decade has rarely been higher.

Please get in touch if you have any questions

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Performance since inception



Inception (S.I.): 11 Jun 2019

Asset allocation

Financials	32.4%
Information Technology	21.3%
Communication Services	19.5%
Health Care	13.0%
Consumer Discretionary	7.4%
Cash	3.5%
Real Estate	2.9%

Top 5 holdings

Visa (V.NYS)	5.9%
Fairfax Financial Holdings (FFH.TSX)	5.6%
Constellation Software Inc. (CSU.TSX)	5.6%
ResMed (RMD)	4.8%
Rightmove PLC (RMV.LSE)	4.5%

Fund Stats

Distribution yield	0.83%
Net asset value	\$3.23

Important information

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All tables and chart data is correct as at 31 March 2026

Appendix

Underwriting an Aussie insurance broker

AUB's fortunes have changed quickly. Less than six months ago, private equity had offered \$45 per share for the broker before withdrawing the proposal in December. The share price has since halved to \$24.

The fear is that AI democratises expertise, so why not use an AI agent to assess your risks and place coverage directly?

Insurance is a small cost of a business's total expenses and the brokers' cut is a fraction of that. Being pennywise and pound-foolish makes little sense when one misstep can bankrupt a business.

Second, claims are where brokers earn their fee. They act as the client's advocate when things go wrong. Industry research shows better outcomes with one in your corner and explains why 90% of commercial insurance is placed through a broker.

AUB's focus is on small and medium businesses, where the company services roughly 680,000 clients and places more than one million policies through 39 brokerages across Australia.

Premiums in this middle market are large enough to justify professional advice where in-house expertise is lacking. The combination means brokers can add tremendous value.

Around 55% of policies carry premiums above \$50,000 and operations are diversified across states, insurers and insurance lines. In total, the group places about \$11bn in premiums and has a 15% local market share.

Under CEO Mike Emmett the business has also expanded geographically and horizontally. The goal is to capture more of the value chain rather than simply acting as a broker. So far, the strategy appears to be working.

In 2020, AUB purchased a 40% stake in BizCover for \$132m. The business has since contributed roughly \$75m in profit before tax and continues to grow earnings at close to 20% per year. The group also acquired wholesale broker Tysers for close to \$1bn in 2022. This deal provided direct access to the London wholesale market and allows AUB to place complex risks internally rather than relying on third parties.

More recently the company has been expanding into UK retail broking. The strategy carries the usual overseas acquisition risks and will require patience, but the potential is huge.

Profit margins overseas are currently around 24%, compared to nearly 40% in Australia. The UK market is highly fragmented and ripe for consolidation. Combined with ongoing tuck-ins in Australia, AUB has plenty of growth options.

The company's track record provides further confidence. Earnings per share has grown 11% per year since 2006, a period that includes the financial crisis, a global pandemic and multiple insurance pricing cycles.

Yet, AUB trades at 12 times earnings, down from the 20 times it usually fetches, on a ~5% fully franked dividend yield. That it trades at the same valuation as serial wealth destroyer **Bank of Queensland** makes no sense.