Product Assessment

Report as at 30 Sep 2026

Zenith
HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

MLC MultiActive Geared

Rating issued on 30 Sep 2026 | APIR: MLC0449AU

Investment objective

The Fund's investment objective is to outperform a weighted composite benchmark of indices based on the Fund's SAA over rolling seven-year periods.

Manager	MLC Asset Management
Distributor	MLC Asset Management
Sector	Multi-Asset \ High Growth
Investment Style	Multi-Manager
RI Classification	Integrated
Absolute Risk	High
Relative Risk	Active - Strategic AA Focussed
Investment Timeframe	7+ Years
Zenith Benchmark	Diversified Market High Growth Benchmark
Min Investment Amount	$25,000
Redemption Frequency	Daily
Income Distribution	Annually
Fund Size (31 Aug 2026)	$359.85M
Management Cost	1.05% p.a. Incl. GST
Performance Fee	Performance fees may be charged by underlying investment managers
Buy / Sell Spread	0.15% / 0.15%
Inception Date	30 Nov 2002

Fund facts

- SAA driven high-risk strategy with an SAA of 128% to growth assets, incorporating 30% leverage
- Highly experienced investment team, augmented by external consultants
- Leverages a range of active investment strategies

Viewpoint

The Fund, managed by MLC Asset Management (MLCAM) invests in a geared multi-manager portfolio, across a range of asset classes and investment strategies, with a bias to growth assets. Combining a strategic and dynamic asset allocation process (SAA and DAA) with active manager selection, MLCAM seeks to outperform the Fund's benchmark and deliver attractive risk-adjusted returns. Despite a challenging environment for managing active equity portfolios, Zenith maintains high conviction in MLCAM's top-down processes and its ability to access a range of uncorrelated asset classes such as private equity (PE), real assets and alternative income.

The team is led by Dan Farmer, Chief Investment Officer (CIO) and comprises 49 professionals, split across Melbourne and Sydney. The investment team is broadly divided into functional divisions, with specialist teams responsible for managing diversified portfolios (including index plus, low cost and fully active) and sector teams that oversee specialist portfolios in fixed income, private equity, real assets and alternatives.

In Zenith's opinion, MLCAM is well-resourced with strong capabilities across capital markets research (CMR), manager selection and specialist asset classes including alternatives, real assets and private equity (PE) capabilities. The ability to combine traditional external manager research with managing direct assets in bespoke sectors is a core competency of the platform.

The portfolio is managed using a SAA process, which the team seeks to derive the majority of performance (approximately 80% of the expected return), however, recognising that markets can deviate from fair value and the tendency to mean revert over the short to medium-term, a DAA process is employed, which can result in opportunistic asset allocation changes.

The DAA process is implemented via a suite of market aware indicators, which are designed to identify potential mispricings over a one to three year timeframe. The DAA signals, collectively referred to as the 'VFPD' framework, seek to identify cheap assets that are trading away from fair or intrinsic value, and supported by positive fundamentals such as improving inflation and leading growth and cycle indicators. Importantly, the model includes a market awareness component, which formally scores investor positioning, flows and market sentiment.

In our opinion, the asset allocation process is well structured, effectively combining fundamental insights with a range of leading, systematised inputs. The quality of DAA inputs has incrementally improved over time, which has supported deeper stratification of asset classes and also supported more bespoke trade expressions and structures.

Each of the underlying sector funds are constructed by the responsible portfolio manager, under the direction of Farmer and subject to the investment committee (IC) approval process. Over time, the number of sector building blocks has increased, with more bespoke sub-strategies added, such as opportunistic capital solutions, insurance related investments and unlisted infrastructure.

In Zenith's opinion, MLC's ability to capture an illiquidity premia and diversify across a range of lowly-correlated sub-asset classes is considered a strength of the process. The breadth of underlying assets which includes investing alongside external PE firms on a co-investment basis, accessing natural catastrophe bonds and/or litigation funding, offers valuable diversification beyond traditional equity and bond markets, adding a layer of risk mitigation.

This document has been prepared by Zenith. Zenith's Financial Services Guide is available at https://www.zenithpartners.com.au/important-information/financial-services-guide/ and full details regarding Zenith's contact details, research processes, ratings information and conflicts of interest are available at https://www.zenithpartners.com.au/our-solutions/investment-research/fund-research-regulatory-guidelines/

Fund analysis

Fund characteristics

Constraint	Value
Defensive assets	
Cash	SAA = 2%
Total defensive assets	SAA = 2%
Growth assets	
Australian equities	SAA = 49%
Global equities	SAA = 66%
Listed property	SAA = 3%
Listed infrastructure	SAA = 3%
Private assets	SAA = 7%
Gearing/Leverage	SAA = 30%
Total growth assets	SAA = 128%

Investment objective and philosophy

The Fund's investment objective is to outperform a weighted composite benchmark of indices based on the Fund's SAA over rolling seven-year periods. MLCAM does not specify an outperformance objective or level of tracking error relative to the benchmark, which Zenith considers to be inconsistent with best practice. We firmly believe that greater transparency in communicating objectives would facilitate a more detailed understanding of the range of potential return outcomes and the drawdown profile of the Fund.

The investment philosophy is based on investment markets exhibiting inefficiencies, which can be captured and exploited by active management over the long-term.

The strategic asset allocation (SAA) process is expected to drive the majority of performance, accounting for 80% of the expected return. However, MLCAM also recognises that markets can reach extremities in both over-valuation and under-valuation, and at different points in the cycle, these markets have a tendency to mean-revert. To capture this effect, a dynamic asset allocation (DAA) or strategic tilting process is employed, which can result in deviations from the long-term target. This is expected to derive approximately 10% of outperformance with manager excess returns accounting for the remainder.

MLCAM also allocates to a number of illiquid asset classes including private equity, unlisted infrastructure, direct property and private debt, which are held as part of broader sector portfolios or discrete segregated mandates.

SAA

The SAA setting process is performed on an annual basis, using a multi-stage process, with the first step involving a review of the existing SAA relative to the Fund's investment objectives, starting with a re-validation of long-term asset class assumptions.

Each asset class is screened with respect to the suitability of current capital market assumptions (CMAs) and the potential for asymmetric risks to impact future return paths. A mix of qualitative and quantitative inputs are used to test the existing SAA and its likelihood for meeting the return objective. Active tilts can be implemented to capture both valuation dislocations and also other factor exposures, such as a quality tilt or small caps in equities, or high yield credit strategies in fixed income.

The output of the SAA process and any proposed recommendations are discussed with the Portfolio Manager and formally proposed to the Investment Committee (IC) via a governance paper for approval.

The SAA setting process applies to traditional asset class exposures including equities (domestic and international), bonds (domestic and international, nominal and inflation linked), property and cash. Less liquid strategies are also considered, such as alternatives, unlisted infrastructure, private equity, direct property and commodities. This process is more qualitative in nature and seeks to overlay the team's views on the final portfolio composition.

DAA

On a monthly basis (or more frequently if required), an Asset Allocation Group (AAG), comprising the CIO and Portfolio Managers, meet to discuss views on asset allocation, market valuation, fundamentals and market sentiment. Based on the output of this meeting, DAA positions are enacted with the purpose of capturing price adjustments where mispriced markets are expected to mean revert.

The DAA process is implemented via a suite of market aware indicators, which are designed to identify potential mispricings over a one to three year timeframe. Combining a range of valuation, fundamental, policy and market dynamics factors, signal output is distilled into a set of asset class scorecards, resulting in an overall conviction score, and at the same time, normalising risk and return, to assist with forming a relative value assessment.

The DAA signals, collectively referred to as the 'VFPD' framework, seek to identify cheap assets that are trading away from fair or intrinsic value, and supported by positive fundamentals such as improving inflation and leading growth and cycle indicators. Importantly, the model includes a market awareness component, which formally scores investor positioning, flows and market sentiment.

Zenith highlights that MLC's top-down framework benefits from the systematisation of key inputs and combines historical signals with a suite of leading indicators, enhancing the timing and precision of the DAA process, as well as the ability to navigate dislocated markets.

In addition, an Investment Futures Framework is used to identify and explore a range of potential economic and macro 'scenarios', which can be used to adjust portfolio allocations through a 'risk lens'. A set of 'scenario projections' are developed which cover a range of inflation and growth related states, and pre-defined market events/conditions (e.g. oil price shock, China and emerging market risk). The scenarios are assigned probability weightings based on the team's qualitative view of the likelihood of each occurring and are further grouped into buckets such as strong growth, weak growth, disinflation and middle ground.

Zenith highlights that the scenarios framework is complementary to the broader DAA process, enabling the portfolio management team to define potential scenarios and generate granular views on asset class performance and potential changes in correlations between markets.

In our opinion, the asset allocation process is well structured, effectively combining fundamental insights with a range of leading, systematised inputs. The quality of DAA inputs has incrementally improved over time, which has supported deeper stratification of asset classes and also supported more bespoke trade expressions and structures.

Portfolio applications

The Fund provides investors with exposure to a diversified portfolio of growth and alternative assets and strategies. The Fund employs a gearing level of 30% to target an asset mix comprising a 130% allocation to growth and private assets.

The Fund's investment mandate is considered to be broad, with the investment team permitted to undertake active asset allocation and gain exposure to alternative assets and strategies. Zenith considers the Fund suitable as a standalone investment, or as a complement to a broader portfolio that seeks to produce outcomes consistent with an investor's risk/return preferences.

The Fund is considered suitable for investors with a higher risk tolerance, seeking investment returns that are expected to be dominated by capital growth as opposed to income. With risks inherent in a number of the underlying asset classes, Zenith considers an appropriate investment horizon to be eight years and longer.

Fund responsible investment attributes

Key Information	Description
Zenith RI classification*	Integrated
Has Responsible Investment Policy	Yes
Negative screens**	**Full/Partial**
Tobacco	Full
PRI Status	
PRI Signatory	No

*Zenith RI Classification scale:

- Traditional
- Aware
- Integrated
- Thematic
- Impact

***Data has been supplied by third parties. While such information is believed to be accurate, we do not accept responsibility for any inaccuracy in such data.*

Absolute performance

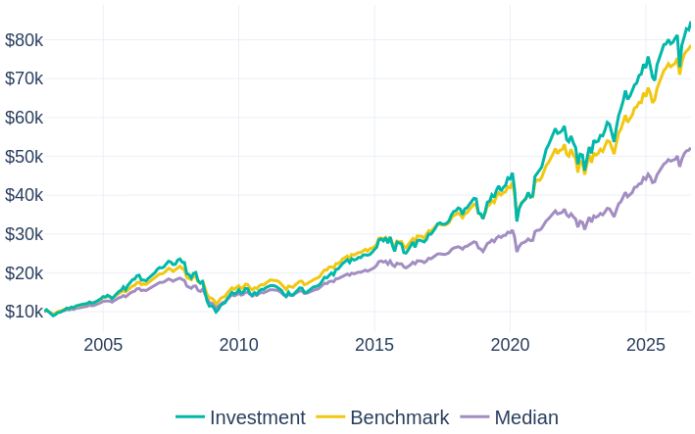
Performance as at 31 Aug 2026

Monthly performance history (%, net of fees)

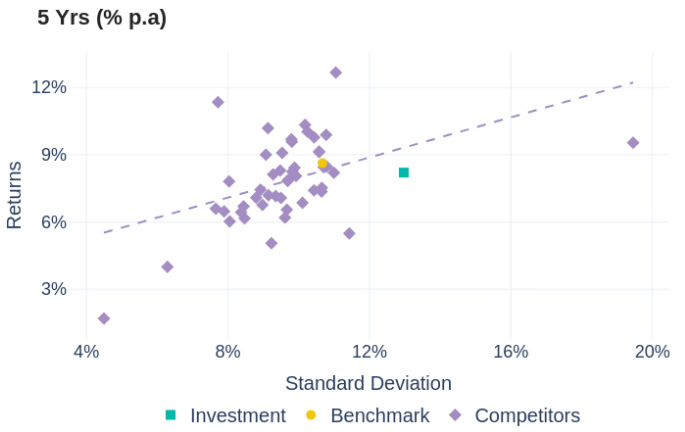
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	YTD	BM YTD*
2026	1.36%	0.94%	-10.14%	7.77%	2.57%	2.70%	-0.35%	2.66%					6.76%	6.95%
2025	4.08%	-3.12%	-4.10%	-1.21%	5.83%	2.24%	2.72%	1.96%	0.22%	1.46%	-1.42%	0.54%	9.12%	12.43%
2024	2.99%	3.10%	4.31%	-3.42%	1.25%	2.00%	2.35%	0.80%	2.75%	0.55%	3.56%	-1.31%	20.34%	16.66%
2023	6.61%	-0.86%	0.46%	2.75%	-0.25%	2.70%	3.52%	-0.84%	-3.84%	-4.14%	6.86%	5.37%	19.07%	15.89%
2022	-6.05%	-1.03%	2.75%	-3.17%	-2.21%	-8.26%	5.33%	-0.39%	-7.95%	7.69%	5.01%	-3.11%	-12.18%	-8.91%

**Diversified Market High Growth Benchmark*

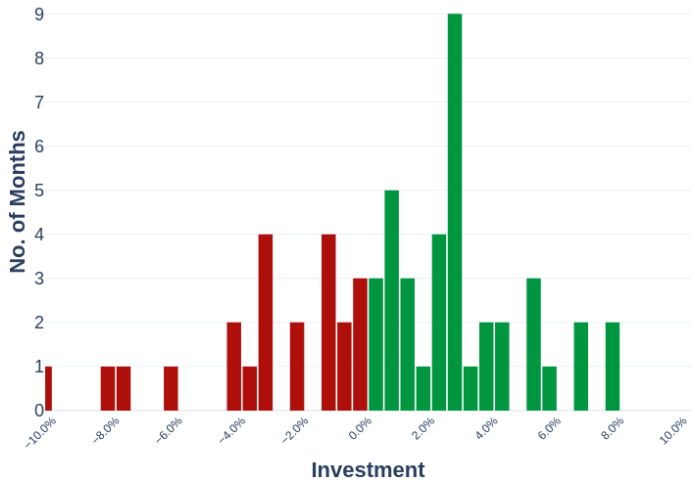
Growth of $10,000



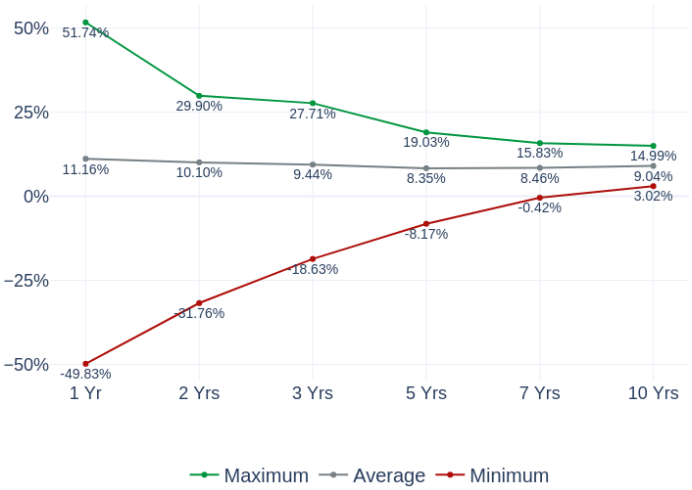
Risk / return



Monthly histogram



Minimum and maximum returns (% p.a.)



Absolute performance analysis

Instrument	1 Yr	3 Yrs	5 Yrs	10 Yrs	Inception
Investment	**7.61%**	**13.32%**	**8.20%**	**11.54%**	**9.38%**
Income	7.82%	6.41%	6.20%	5.38%	6.13%
Growth	-0.21%	6.91%	2.00%	6.16%	3.25%
Benchmark	**9.00%**	**13.47%**	**8.62%**	**10.33%**	**9.04%**
Median	**8.71%**	**12.70%**	**7.74%**	**8.50%**	**7.18%**
Cash	**4.00%**	**4.21%**	**3.26%**	**2.24%**	**3.61%**

Ranking within sector (p.a.)

Ranking within Sector	1 Yr	2 Yrs	3 Yrs	5 Yrs
Fund Ranking	32 / 47	26 / 47	18 / 47	16 / 42
Quartile	3rd	3rd	2nd	2nd

Absolute risk

Instrument	1 Yr	3 Yrs	5 Yrs	10 Yrs	Inception
Standard Deviation (% p.a.)					
Investment	13.62%	12.01%	12.97%	14.27%	14.96%
Benchmark	8.05%	8.90%	10.67%	11.27%	11.06%
Median	7.87%	8.24%	9.55%	9.68%	9.55%
Downside Deviation (% p.a.)					
Investment	10.24%	7.70%	8.70%	10.03%	10.66%
Benchmark	5.80%	5.24%	6.84%	7.69%	7.62%
Median	5.70%	4.86%	6.13%	6.66%	6.66%

Absolute risk/return ratios

Instrument	1 Yr	3 Yrs	5 Yrs	10 Yrs	Inception
Sharpe Ratio (p.a.)					
Investment	0.27	0.76	0.38	0.65	0.39
Benchmark	0.62	1.04	0.50	0.72	0.49
Median	0.60	1.03	0.47	0.65	0.37
Sortino Ratio (p.a.)					
Investment	0.35	1.18	0.57	0.93	0.54
Benchmark	0.86	1.77	0.78	1.05	0.71
Median	0.83	1.74	0.73	0.94	0.54

Zenith benchmarks Funds in the 'Multi-Asset – High Growth' peer group against the Zenith Composite High Growth Benchmark. While this benchmark may not be consistent with the one adhered to by all rated participants, it has been adopted to provide investors with a common reference point against which similarly structured strategies may be assessed.

The Fund's investment objective is to outperform its benchmark (after fees) over rolling seven-year periods. The benchmark is a weighted composite of indices based on the Fund's SAA.

All commentary is effective 31 August 2025.

The Fund has delivered disappointing outcomes, underperforming its asset-weighted benchmark and consistently ranking in the lower quartiles of the peer group. Zenith highlights that performance has been impacted by manager selection alpha, with the median manager in Australian and global equities delivering negative excess returns over the past few years.

The Fund's volatility has been higher than that of the Zenith assigned benchmark and median manager over all periods of assessment (given the Fund's leveraged exposure).

Relative performance

Excess returns

Statistic	1 Yr	3 Yrs	5 Yrs	10 Yrs	Inception
Excess Return	-1.39%	-0.15%	-0.42%	1.21%	0.35%
Monthly Excess (All Mkts)	33.33%	50.00%	48.33%	59.17%	57.34%
Monthly Excess (Up Mkts)	40.00%	59.26%	56.41%	70.00%	73.02%
Monthly Excess (Down Mkts)	0.00%	22.22%	33.33%	37.50%	26.80%

Capture ratios (% p.a.)

Statistic	1 Yr	3 Yrs	5 Yrs	10 Yrs	Inception
Downside Capture	172.18%	133.50%	118.03%	121.07%	135.52%
Upside Capture	125.21%	112.64%	108.92%	116.71%	122.44%

Tracking error (% p.a.)

Instrument	1 Yr	3 Yrs	5 Yrs	10 Yrs	Inception
Investment	6.19%	4.38%	3.90%	4.09%	4.99%
Median	0.70%	1.10%	1.62%	1.99%	1.94%

Information ratio

Instrument	1 Yr	3 Yrs	5 Yrs	10 Yrs	Inception
Investment	-0.22	-0.03	-0.11	0.30	0.07
Median	-0.40	-0.71	-0.55	-0.92	-0.96

Beta statistics

Statistic	1 Yr	3 Yrs	5 Yrs	10 Yrs	Inception
Beta	1.63	1.29	1.17	1.24	1.31
R-Squared	0.93	0.91	0.93	0.95	0.94
Correlation	0.97	0.96	0.96	0.98	0.97

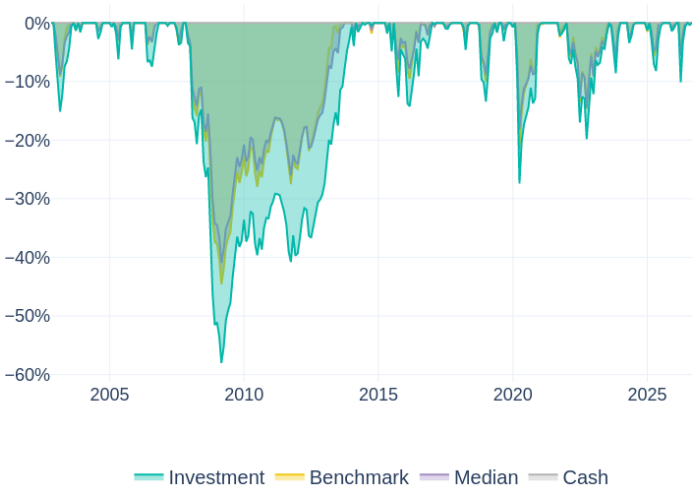
All commentary is effective 31 August 2026.

Zenith seeks to identify funds which can outperform their index in greater than 50% of months in all market conditions as we believe this represents a persistence of manager skill.

The Fund has had limited success with respect to outperforming in all market conditions. Consistent with the strategy's constrained volatility profile, MLCAM has delivered strong returns in falling markets.

Drawdown analysis (since inception)

Drawdown analysis assesses the relative riskiness of a Fund versus the benchmark, in reference to capital preservation. The maximum Drawdown is recorded as the percentage decline in the value of a portfolio from peak to trough (before a new peak is achieved). All Drawdown analysis is calculated commencing from the inception date of the Fund in question, and Drawdown analysis for the Fund and benchmark(s) are calculated independently. That is, the largest drawdown for the Fund and benchmark(s) will not always refer to the same time period.



All commentary is effective 31 August 2026.

Given the Fund's high allocation to equities and use of leverage (which magnifies losses), the Fund has tended to produce deeper drawdowns to that of Zenith's assigned performance benchmark and the median manager within the peer group.

Fund commentary

Fund risks

Zenith has identified the following key risks of the Fund. Although Zenith believes the risks noted are all significant, we have listed them in order of importance. In addition, we have not intended to highlight all possible risks.

Key person risk: Zenith deems CIO, Dan Farmer to be integral to the operation and refinement of MLCAM's investment process. His departure would be deemed material and warrant a reassessment of our rating.

Leverage risk: The underlying investment exposure is amplified through leverage of 0.2x to 0.35x (i.e. for each $1 of investment, $1.20 to $1.35 of underlying investment exposure). While the application of leverage may magnify potential gains, it may also result in greater drawdowns during challenging credit conditions.

Mandate risk: The Fund's investment mandate is relatively wide, providing MLCAM with ample scope to implement its targeted portfolio. This may result in Fund performance deviating from that of its SAA and competitors, which may be either to the benefit or cost of investors.

Illiquidity risk: The Fund maintains exposures to a range of relatively illiquid assets in both the Alternatives and Direct Property sectors. In a stressed market environment, there is a risk that the mark-to-market value of the assets may not reflect their intrinsic value or that they could be liquidated in a timely manner. This could be to the detriment of performance.

Security/asset selection

MLCAM uses a mix of external managers for traditional asset classes such as equities, fixed income and credit and combines these with internal asset management capabilities in more bespoke sectors such as direct property, unlisted infrastructure and PE co-investments.

In terms of external manager selection, MLCAM seeks to identify 'best in class' managers in each asset class, with the capacity to manage a segregated mandate and accommodate future FUM growth. MLCAM undertakes an annual review of its underlying sector trusts, to ensure that the manager line-up is appropriate and new candidates are considered. Each sector portfolio manager is responsible for selecting managers and negotiating commercial agreements, with oversight and leadership from the CIO.

The initial manager universe is filtered based on the portfolio's underlying requirements, a positive view from MLCAM's primary consultant, JANA and the manager having sufficient capacity to meet its growth requirements. If a manager does not have an external rating, it may be considered if it is assessed to have a competitive advantage.

To select managers, a traditional set of criteria are applied, which includes an assessment of the organisation, the quality of the investment team, the robustness of the investment process and the performance of the fund/strategy relative to its objectives and peer group. The review also includes a fee negotiation, and a manager's willingness to enter into an Investment Management Agreement (IMA) and Service Level Agreement (SLA) on terms that meet its requirements.

Zenith highlights that MLCAM sector structuring ability is a key competitive advantage, extending across manager selection and the ability to capture excess returns from a range of sub-asset class exposures. For example, capturing the small cap risk premia in domestic and global equities, accessing emerging market equities and bonds and innovative smart beta and portable alpha solutions, have been used to generate additional asset class alpha.

Specialist teams are responsible for identifying and selecting investment opportunities across private equity, alternatives and real assets (including direct property and unlisted infrastructure debt), which form part of the Fund's illiquid exposures. Within each vertical, individual investments are subject to detailed due diligence and presented to the IC for review and approval.

If a proposal passes through the due diligence phase, the portfolio manager will prepare a detailed due diligence report that addresses the aforementioned criteria. The report is peer reviewed by the CIO and broader team, with a potential for further research and analysis to be undertaken. MLCAM's Investment Operations team also reviews the report to ensure compatibility with the reporting and pricing framework. Once complete, the report is finalised and proposed to the IC for approval.

In Zenith's opinion, the manager selection process is detailed and applied in a disciplined manner, leveraging internally-generated insights and those of its primary consultant, JANA. The team's ability to capture excess returns at the asset class level and harvest a range of diversifying return streams has contributed to attractive risk-adjusted returns over the long-term.

Responsible investment approach

MLCAM is yet to become a United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) signatory. Notwithstanding this, it maintains an established Responsible Investment Policy (RIP) that has been ratified by the MLCAM Responsible Entity and was last updated in November 2025.

Using a multi-manager investment approach, MLCAM's environmental, social and governance (ESG) policies are largely implemented via its appointed investment managers.

Prior to appointing a manager, the team performs a detailed review of their ESG approach and philosophy, focusing on the level of integration with the broader process. This is formalised with a specific ESG clause that is included in all Investment Management Agreements (IMAs) requiring managers to apply due care and diligence in considering ESG matters. Furthermore, all investment mandates include a hard tobacco manufacturer exclusion.

In terms of adherence to its policies, MLCAM performs ongoing monitoring in collaboration with JANA who formally rate each manager's ESG processes. Further, MLCAM continues to work with its underlying managers regarding the provision of ESG reporting.

In addition to the team's surveillance, MSCI ESG quality scores are measured on a periodic basis and used to cross-reference the qualitative input from managers, whilst also providing a lead indicator on potential ESG deterioration. Furthermore, a Carbon Foot Print estimate (e.g. Weighted Average Carbon Intensity tons CO2e / $M sales) is reported on a quarterly basis and used as part of MLCAM's ongoing monitoring.

In Zenith's opinion, MLCAM's approach is well-developed, effectively leveraging the firm's resources and further augmented by the ESG capabilities of its external consultants.

Portfolio construction

The portfolio invests in underlying sector funds in line with the targeted SAA and DAA. These are complemented with 'directly held' securities, either to align the portfolio with current DAA views or for risk mitigation purposes. Farmer is ultimately responsible for the positioning of the Fund, with the IC ratifying all manager appointments and terminations.

The underlying sector funds are constructed by the relevant portfolio manager, under the direction of Farmer and subject to the IC approval process. Over time, the number of sector building blocks has increased, with more bespoke sub-strategies added, such as opportunistic capital solutions, insurance related investments and unlisted infrastructure.

In Zenith's opinion, MLC's ability to capture an illiquidity premia and diversify across a range of lowly-correlated sub-asset classes is a strength of the process. Moreover, the breadth of underlying assets which potentially includes investing alongside external PE firms on a co-investment basis, accessing natural catastrophe bonds and/or litigation funding, supports portfolio diversification and provides an additional layer of risk mitigation.

To achieve the target asset allocation, MLCAM invests in internal, underlying sector portfolios, some of which are available on a standalone basis (e.g. externally offered). In certain asset classes, direct positions are held alongside the portfolio's externally-managed holdings. For example, holding interest rate futures to manage the aggregate duration positioning of the Fund or holding equity futures to adjust equity beta.

Each sector portfolio manager has the flexibility to determine the optimal manager configuration for their respective portfolio including allocation weightings, subject to oversight from Farmer. With respect to existing managers, the sector portfolio managers can adjust manager weightings by +/- 50% with approval from the CIO, which in turn, is disclosed at the next IC meeting.

The team is able to draw on the resources of an Exposure Management and Trading team, with Cliff Bayne, Head of Derivatives, responsible for derivatives implementation and developing downside protection strategies. These can be expressed across equities, currencies and fixed income, albeit with a focus on controlling the cost drag resulting from these strategies. These positions are subject to pre-approved risk limits and applied to calibrate the broader views of the team with the output of the DAA process.

Zenith highlights that MLCAM's ability to design cost-effective, hedging strategies and create asymmetric return outcomes is a key strength relative to the broader peer group. Most notably, the ability to use these strategies in conjunction with the DAA process and create ex-ante ranges and outcomes for managing risk has contributed to the strategy's attractive risk-adjusted returns.

The Fund's currency exposure is fully hedged in the fixed income sector, while the strategic hedge ratio for global equities is 35%. Active currency positions can be enacted based on the output of the DAA process, which can result in the actual hedging level range from 0% to 100%.

The rebalancing range is set at +/- 3% at an operational level and is managed by MLCAM's Investment Operations team, in consultation with the portfolio managers. On a daily basis, each portfolio's asset allocation is compared to its target asset allocation, and if the allocation falls outside of the range, the Portfolio Manager will determine the most efficient rebalancing mechanism (i.e. via cash flows or physical redemptions).

In sum, Zenith considers MLCAM's portfolio construction process to be strong, highlighting the team's manager selection skills and intuitive approach to harvesting lowly correlated risk premias. Furthermore, the ability to access specialist sleeves of private assets and capture an illiquidity premium, is a strong point of differentiation.

Risk management

Risk management is ingrained in the investment process at multiple levels, with the experience of the portfolio management team providing the first layer of risk mitigation. MLCAM also leverages the resources of Mercer and JANA, who perform risk management analysis as part of its due diligence process.

The primary risk tools used by MLCAM's include Bloomberg Port and Factset, which are used to monitor risk and produce a range of measures. These include traditional volatility and risk-adjusted metrics (e.g. Sharpe, Treynor and Information Ratios) and other portfolio-level risk measures.

This risk analytics is formally reported to the IC on a bi-monthly basis, who will also monitor the information on a more frequent basis.

Zenith highlights that the risk management architecture is well-developed, particularly with respect to aggregating and assessing risk on a portfolio-wide basis. Through Bloomberg Port and Factset, MLCAM has the functionality to measure cross-asset class risk, including holdings-based information across the majority of the portfolio, including fixed income.

Stress testing is performed using both historical and forward-looking analysis. In a historical context, the portfolio is stress tested against major market events to assess how the existing portfolio would perform through these regimes. In terms of the portfolio's private asset holdings, these are also subject to detailed liquidity scenario testing.

Zenith considers MLCAM's risk management framework to be sound, noting the continued advancements in its ability to manage portfolio-wide risk.

Investment fees

	Fund	Sector Average
Total Fees and Costs (RG 97)	1.20% p.a.	0.80% p.a.
Management Fees and Costs	1.11% p.a.	0.74% p.a.
Transaction Costs	0.07% p.a.	0.05% p.a.
Performance fees as at 30 Jun 2026	0.02%	0.03%
Performance fees description	Performance fees may be charged by underlying investment managers	
Management Cost	1.05% p.a.	0.78% p.a.
Buy / Sell spread	0.15% / 0.15%	0.14% / 0.13%

All fees and costs are inclusive of GST unless indicated otherwise. The Performance Fee shown is the performance fee disclosed in the PDS. It is calculated by taking the average performance fees charged over the last five financial years (or less if the investment or performance fee mechanism has not been in place for five financial years).

The sector average (in the table above) is based on the average management cost of all flagship 'Multi-Asset - High Growth' funds surveyed by Zenith. The list of funds includes actively managed, benchmark aware and index funds.

Zenith views the Fund's management cost structure to be expensive relative to the broader peer group; however, this is to be expected given the additional oversight required to manage the leverage component of the portfolio. In addition to the costs in the table above, the Fund will incur borrowing costs associated with the leverage facility, which is expected to be approximately 1% p.a. of the portfolio's NAV.

The Fund may also incur performance fees charged by the underlying managers (on a look-through basis), albeit the amount will change on a year-to-year basis.

(The fees mentioned above are reflective of the flagship version only, fees may differ when the product is accessed through an alternate investment vehicle such as a platform).

About the fund manager

Organisation

Insignia Financial Limited (Insignia) is a diversified financial services business, comprising the following divisions: Advice, Wrap and Master trust and Asset Management. Each division includes a range of separately-branded business that operate as autonomous entities.

Insignia is owned by CC Capital Partners LLC (a New York private equity firm) and its affiliates, OneIM GP LLC (a London-based private equity firm) and the Carlyle Group, following a public-to-private transaction, that was completed in April 2026. Following the acquisition, Insignia was delisted from the ASX and transitioned to a privately-held company.

In Zenith's opinion, while the change of ownership has the potential to create instability across the investment team, we are confident that the firm's strategic direction will be maintained and incentive structures implemented to retain key talent.

MLC Asset Management (MLCAM) encompasses a range of investment capabilities including multi-asset and single-sector managers, across a range of asset classes and strategies. As at 30 June 2026, MLCAM's multi-manager business managed approximately $A 92 billion across a range of diversified and single sector funds.

In Zenith's opinion, MLCAM's multi-asset platform has significant expertise across asset allocation, manager selection and specialist asset classes such as private equity (PE), real assets and alternative income. Further, the platform benefits from the resources of the broader organisation including governance and middle office functions.

As at the 31 July 2026, MLC managed $A 353 million in this Fund.

Investment personnel

Name	Title	Industry Experience (yrs)	Tenure (yrs)	Location
Dan Farmer	Chief Investment Officer	28	15	Melbourne, Australia
Stanley Yeo	Head of Strategy & Equities	25	16	Melbourne, Australia
Ben McCaw	Co-Head Choice Diversified Portfolios	23	18	Sydney, Australia
Grant Mizens	Co-Head Choice Diversified Portfolios	20	20	Sydney, Australia
Kerry Gill	Portfolio Manager	24	21	Sydney, Australia

The team is led by Dan Farmer, Chief Investment Officer (CIO) and comprises 49 professionals, split across Melbourne and Sydney. Farmer has been the CIO of MLCAM (previously IOOF) since 2017, having originally joined the firm in 2010 to manage an Australian equities portfolio.

Prior to MLCAM, Farmer was a Portfolio Manager at Telstra Super, responsible for overseeing a portfolio of domestic equities. Zenith considers Farmer to be a high quality CIO, with a proven ability of leading the firm's asset allocation processes and supporting the sector teams to build innovative sector exposures.

The investment team is broadly divided into functional divisions, with specialist teams responsible for managing diversified portfolios (including index plus, low cost and fully active) and sector teams that oversee specialist portfolios in fixed income, private equity, real assets and alternatives. Further, an Exposure Management and Trading team, led by David Djukanovic, is responsible for portfolio implementation and developing downside protection strategies, in collaboration with the relevant portfolio management team.

In terms of managing the MultiActive suite, Farmer is responsible for the portfolios, in addition to his broader CIO duties. Farmer is supported by Stanley Yeo, Head of Strategy and Equities, who combines a broader investment strategy role with portfolio management and equity structuring (including manager selection) responsibilities.

Yeo joined MLCAM (previously Insignia) in 2010, from Russell Investments where he was a Senior Consultant. Zenith maintains a high opinion of Yeo, noting his overall contribution at both a strategy level and maintaining a granular knowledge of the equities manager universe.

Oversight of the process is provided by a six-person Investment Committee (IC) which performs a number of roles, including the determination of investment objectives, ongoing monitoring of portfolio strategies, and final sign-off for manager appointments and terminations. The composition of the IC includes three independents (including the chair) and three MLCAM executives, including Farmer, Yeo and Head of Diversified Portfolio Management, Steven Gamerov.

Zenith highlights that the IC process was recently streamlined, moving from a dual structure with two separate committees responsible for managing the Insignia and MLC product ranges, to a single decision-making body. Under the revised approach, a single IC was created with equal representation of full-time executives and independent members, including an independent chairperson.

Zenith is supportive of the revised structure, highlighting the quality of the representatives, more compact structure and the commitment to maintaining independence in the process.

MLCAM's remuneration structure comprises a base salary and a variable component, which is subject to performance criteria. Portfolio Managers have the ability to earn up to 100% of their salary, via a variable component measured against individual asset sector benchmarks and peer group comparisons and is linked to rolling one and three-year periods.

In Zenith's opinion, MLCAM is well-resourced with deep capabilities across capital markets research (CMR), manager selection and specialist asset classes including alternatives, real assets and private equity (PE) capabilities. The ability to combine traditional external manager research with managing direct assets in bespoke sectors is a core competency of the platform.

About the sector

Sector characteristics

The Multi-Asset sector comprises funds that are permitted to invest across multiple asset classes and investment strategies. Traditionally, asset class exposures have included equities, fixed interest, property and cash. However, in more recent times, Zenith has observed a greater preparedness by sector participants to incorporate alternative assets and strategies within their targeted asset mix. Included amongst these are real assets (i.e. direct property and infrastructure), commodities and private market exposures (i.e. private equity and private credit). Innovation has also been observed in terms of sector structuring and tail risk hedging strategies, with the goal of building more resilient, all-weather portfolios.

Zenith categorises funds in the 'Multi-Asset – High Growth' peer group (greater than 80% exposure to growth assets and up to 100%) based on our collective assessment of their targeted asset mix and actual portfolio holdings. Funds within this peer group are benchmarked against the Zenith Composite High Growth Benchmark, which has a defensive/growth split of 5%/95%. The exact composition of this benchmark is provided below:

Cash: Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index (2%)

Australian fixed interest: Bloomberg AusBond Composite 0+ Yr Index (0%)

International fixed interest: Bloomberg Global Aggregate Index Hedged $A (0%)

Alternatives (defensive): HFRX Global Hedge Fund Index $A (3%)

Australian equities: S&P/ASX 300 Index (47.5%)

International equities (unhedged): MSCI World ex-Australia Unhedged Index (19.75%)

International equities (hedged): MSCI World ex-Australia Hedged Index (19.75%)

Australian listed property: S&P/ASX 300 A-REIT Index (2.5%)

Global listed property: FTSE EPRA Nareit Developed Rental Index TR Hedged $A (2.5%)

Alternatives (growth): HFRX Global Hedge Fund Index $A (3%)

To provide greater insight into a Fund's risk/return profile, Zenith decomposes targeted exposures between two broad categories – growth and defensive. While we are cognisant that our designation of asset class exposures between these categories may vary from that defined by the manager, we have sought to adopt a common methodology to ensure consistency in the assessment of like strategies across Zenith's universe of rated funds. Further detail on the Fund's targeted asset mix is provided in the 'Fund characteristics' section.

Sector risks

There exist a number of risks that are generally common amongst all Multi-Asset funds. These include:

Market risk: In periods of heightened risk aversion, it is feasible that asset class correlations merge. Should this occur, the diversification benefits brought through the construction of a portfolio comprising multiple lowly correlated asset classes may be lost, potentially exposing investors to a broader deterioration in market conditions.

Currency risk: Sector participants may be permitted to gain international exposures on an unhedged basis. The decision whether or not to hedge is often deemed active in nature and can expose investors to fluctuations in cross currency rates. This may be either to the benefit or cost of Fund volatility and performance.

Emerging market risk: Many sector participants gain exposure to emerging and frontier markets which bring with them additional risks. These may include reduced liquidity, a more opaque pricing mechanism, increased sovereign risk and political tensions.

Alternatives risk: A growing number of funds have investment mandates that permit a meaningful exposure to alternative assets and strategies. Investors should be aware that the use of alternatives can bring with them additional risks.

Illiquidity risk: While most sector participants will seek to retain high levels of liquidity, it is feasible that a fund may retain exposure in assets that are deemed illiquid or subject to irregular pricing policies. It may be difficult for an investment manager to subsequently liquidate such portfolio positions without incurring meaningful transaction or other performance related costs.

Administration and operations

Responsible Entity	MLC Investments Limited

Zenith rating

Report certification

Date of issue: 30 Sep 2026

Role	Analyst	Title
Analyst	Rodney Sebire	Head of Alternatives & Global Fixed Interest
Sector Lead	Rodney Sebire	Head of Alternatives & Global Fixed Interest
Authoriser	Grant Kennaway	Group Head of Research

Association & relationship

ASIC Regulatory Guide RG79.164 requires Research Houses to disclose certain associations or relationships that they may have with a product issuer. We may receive remuneration from an issuer or investment manager for subscription to our other research/ data services or the research/ data services of our related entities. Conflict management arrangements are in place where we or our related entities provide research services to the product issuer or financial advisory businesses who provide financial planning services to investors and are also associated entities of product issuers. This is in accordance with the Zenith Group's Conflict of Interests Policy. Further details in relation to our relationships and associations are available on request.

Rating history

As At	Rating
30 Sep 2026	Highly Recommended
30 Sep 2025	Highly Recommended
25 Sep 2024	Recommended
28 Sep 2023	Recommended
11 Apr 2023	Recommended
29 Sep 2022	Recommended
17 Jun 2022	Recommended
30 Sep 2021	Recommended

Last 5 years only displayed. Longer histories available on request.

In March 2021, Zenith implemented a new ratings methodology for products classified as Traditional Index. Any rating issued from this date forward for Traditional Index products only reflect this change in methodology, with the relevant Traditional Index ratings being Index Approved, Index Recommended and Index Highly Recommended. Ratings issued for Traditional Index products prior to March 2021 are retained for historical purposes in line with our regulatory requirements and were issued in line with Zenith's Fund Research Methodology. Further information in relation to Zenith's Traditional Index Research Methodology and Traditional Index Ratings can be found on the Zenith website.

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This report refers to the Australian unit trust for the fund, and the fund and benchmark returns are all in AUD.

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