



As we close out another year, I cannot believe the speed with which the years go by. The two long years of lockdown in Melbourne during the pandemic seem like a lifetime ago. Clearly there has been some learnings from those times but the scars and the impact of the lockdowns are still being felt. Fortunately, with time these too will heal.

I have recently been reflecting on the last year in the context of the past 13 years at RI Surrey Hills / Horizon Wealth. I have come to realize that the challenges of business and life are always present because that's what life is, enjoying the highs and weathering the lows of our collective existence. Sometimes it's smooth sailing, everything goes well, and you can relax. Other times it's buckling in for a bumpy ride, navigating rough seas and holding on to weather the storm. At the end of the day everything turns out all right, rich learnings come from our hardest times, and you do get there in the end. We must take the good with the bad; there are no short cuts.

For the past 12 months we have similarly seen the market rise and fall. Ironically, the local stock market will close just shy of where it started from in January 2022, but during the year there has been an 'ebb and flow' like we haven't seen for many years. As we met with you at our review meetings, our discussions have addressed the drivers impacting the markets and portfolio returns. Interestingly, for the first time since the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) we have seen both defensive assets (cash and fixed interest) as well as growth (shares and property) underperforming. Illustrating the point, sometimes there is nowhere to hide, and we just have to ride through the current conditions.

The market conditions we are experiencing are very much a result of post-pandemic practices where corporates are driving revenue and profiting from strong demands. As such, inflation both here and around the world is peaking as are interest rates which governments are ratcheting up to curb inflation. Coupled with this, we also have some geopolitical tensions surfacing. The war in Ukraine initially knocked the markets and we are subject to consistent pressure from the threat of Chinese expansion in the South Pacific and the state of politics in the United States.

From a strategy point of view, we have seen the Federal Government introduce some significant and beneficial changes to superannuation. Specifically, it is now possible to contribute to superannuation to age 75. Previously, only people meeting the 'work test' (40 hours of work in 30 days) could contribute to superannuation after age 65. This has been a significant value add strategy and a meeting agenda item that has raised many good questions and conversations. In addition to this initiative legislation has also been introduced so that anyone over the age of 55 can now make downsizer contributions to superannuation. This further supports the government's agenda of encouraging retirees to be self-funded or partially funded in retirement. At the end of the day contributing into a concessionally taxed and even zero tax environment of pension phase superannuation is hard to beat.

Within Horizons Wealth, we have seen our longest serving employee Lauren Street (13 years of service) flourish in her role as an advisor. Lauren started with us in 2010 and has held virtually every role in the business and has didn't stop pursuing her goal of becoming an advisor three years ago. In addition to Scott and Matt as advisors we are looking forward to our Advice Manager, Steve Amor starting his Professional Year to become an adviser in mid-2023. Many of you may recall that Steve was with us pre COVID and he re-joined the team earlier this year. We have also been fortunate to have Karmen Wigney join us as a Senior Financial Planning Assistant, specializing in the implementation of your advice recommendations. Karmen has been working in financial services for many years and brings a wealth of experience to the team. Sophie Bialocki is our newest recruit. A graduate of Deakin University. Sophie completed a Bachelor of Commerce with a double major in Financial Planning and Human Resource Management. Under the tutelage of both Steve and Karmen, the future looks bright for Sophie and Horizons Wealth.

We have been listening to your feedback over the past year and have implemented many changes to support you. Fortunately, with Covid and the Banking and Finance Royal commission behind us we are in an improved position to provide the advice and service Horizons Wealth is known for.

As we close out 2022, we would like to thank you for journeying with us for another year.

*On behalf of the team at Horizons Wealth, we wish you a very safe and  
Happy Christmas and a prosperous 2023.*

Best wishes,  
Matt, Philip, Scott, Connie, Lauren, Steven, Karmen, and Sophie

**Merry  
Christmas**

