# Agenda - 2026 Researcher Forum

## Tuesday, December 1

**8:00am - 10:00am** **Coach transfer from Sydney Domestic Airport or Central Station to Hydro Majestic**

**9:45am - 10:30am** **Registration**

**10:30am - 10:40am** **Welcome remarks**



CHAIR

**Aleks Vickovich**
Co-chief executive,
Conexus Financial

**10:40am - 11:25am** **In conversation: Entrepreneurial leadership in a volatile market and world**

This fireside chat explores innovation in financial services and the cultural and policy frameworks that shape investments and wealth management. Drawing on an entrepreneurial career at the cutting edge of portfolios and product, the session will offer personal and professional reflections on market and geopolitical volatility, including the war in Ukraine, and what perennial change demands of leaders. The conversation will canvass the outlook for passive and active investments, public and private markets, superannuation and managed accounts, including the headwinds and tailwinds facing advice and its trusted service providers.



**Alex Vynokur**
Founder and chief executive,
Betashares



CHAIR

**Aleks Vickovich**
Co-chief executive,
Conexus Financial

**11:25am - 12:20pm**

Panel: Big picture in investment advice, research and
**managed accounts**

This opening panel will survey the major commercial forces reshaping the advice and investment research ecosystem. Licensees are consolidating and expanding their influence over investment governance, the balance of power across the value chain is shifting, and the gatekeeper model is under greater scrutiny than at any point in the past decade. Meanwhile, access to private markets and the AI tech revolution continues to present sharp opportunities and perils. The panel will take a leadership position on the key trends shaping and reshaping wealth management.

**Includes table discussion**



**John Carnevale**
Executive general manager research and investment services, Entireti



**Alex Donald**
Chief executive - investment solutions, Ironbark Asset Management



**Matt Heine**
Chief executive, Netwealth



**Louise Watson**
Chief executive, Evidentia Group



CHAIR

**Aleks Vickovich**
Co-chief executive, Conexus Financial

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**12:20pm - 1:20pm** **Lunch | Wintergarden Restaurant**

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**1:20pm - 2:10pm** **Panel: Active, passive, systematic and the alpha question**

Bottom-up fundamental equity management has structurally underperformed across developed markets, and advisers are questioning the fee rationale. Information edge has decayed, market concentration penalises unconstrained stock-picking, and systematic strategies are gaining ground as a cost-efficient middle ground at a fraction of traditional active fees. This panel will debate whether the alpha drought is cyclical or structural, examine the case for systematic approaches, and interrogate what the shift means for portfolio construction and manager due diligence.



**Scott Haslem**
Chief investment officer and head of investment, product and services, LGT Wealth Management



**Dominic McCormick**
Consultant, DPM Financial Services



**Tim Murphy**
Co-chief executive/head of research, Genium Investment Partners



**Subash Pillai**
Senior vice president, head of APAC solutions, Franklin Templeton



CHAIR

**Lachlan Maddock**
Editor, Investment Magazine

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**2:10pm - 3:00pm** **Panel: Private credit and the risk, reward equation**

As private credit assets proliferate in advice portfolios, the established frameworks for manager due diligence may not be fit for purposes, particularly as global regulators ramp up scrutiny of retail and wholesale exposures. This panel will examine how advisers, asset consultants and research houses can help ensure investors are educated about emerging asset classes and the risks that can be associated with the coveted illiquidity premium.



**Louis Christopher**
Owner and managing director, SQM Research



**Bev Durston**
Managing director, Edgehaven



**Linda Trusler**
Founder, Trusler Consulting and Academy



**Michael Watson**
Director – wealth solutions, La Trobe Financial



CHAIR

**Simon Hoyle**
Acting editor, Professional Planner

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**3:00pm - 3:30pm** **Afternoon tea**

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**3:30pm - 4:10pm** **Ted talk: Bubbles, bulls, bears and base rates**

Global equities approach 2027 caught between powerful forces: technological progress, shifting economic conditions and heightened geopolitical uncertainty. Are investors right to be optimistic, or are markets pricing in too much good news? This session presents five reasons to be bullish and five reasons to be bearish, examining AI, interest rates, policy, valuations and market

concentration through the lens of historical base rates. It will make the case for a balanced approach across the corporate life cycle, arguing this can help investors navigate competing scenarios, manage risk and participate in sustainable portfolio growth.



**Francois de Bruin**
Fund manager, global equities, Royal London Asset Management



CHAIR

**Aleks Vickovich**
Co-chief executive, Conexus Financial

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**4:10pm - 5:10pm**

## Panel: AI, US exceptionalism and the volatile new normal

The AI trade is more complex than the Magnificent Seven. Private equity is exposed through software company holdings, private credit through AI-adjacent borrowers, and infrastructure debt through data centre energy demand — and that exposure is growing rapidly across advice portfolios whether managers know it or not. This panel will map the full stack of AI-driven investment opportunity across public and private asset classes, examine the intersection with the energy transition, and ask whether Australian advisers are equipped to position their clients for the structural shift underway in US and global markets.

**Includes table discussion**



**Dinyar Irani**
Chairman and co-chief investment officer, Innova Asset Management



**Steven Le**
Associate director, real assets and alternative strategies, Australasia, Morningstar Australia



**Billy Leung**
Senior investment strategist, Global X ETFs



**Trent Masters**
Global portfolio manager, Alphinity Investment Management



CHAIR

**Lachlan Maddock**
Editor, Investment Magazine

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| 5:10pm - 5:30pm | **Closing remarks** |



**Aleks Vickovich**
Co-chief executive,
Conexus Financial

CHAIR

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| **5:30pm - 5:50pm** | **Coach transfer from Hydro Majestic to Lilianfels** |
| **6:00pm - 7:00pm** | **Pre-dinner drinks \| Lilianfels Lounge** |
| **7:00pm - 10:00pm** | **Conference dinner \| Darley's Restaurant, Lilianfels** |

## Wednesday, December 2

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| **8:10am - 8:30am** | **Coach transfer from Lilianfels to Hydro Majestic** |
| **8:30am - 8:50am** | **Arrival refreshments** |
| 8:50am - 9:00am | **Welcome remarks** |



**Aleks Vickovich**
Co-chief executive,
Conexus Financial

CHAIR

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| 9:00am - 9:45am | **Keynote: Regulatory priorities in investment research and advice** |

This session will examine the regulatory priorities shaping investment research and advice. The

Commissioner will provide an update on ASIC's work on private credit and its ongoing oversight of the managed accounts market, including separately managed accounts. The session will also examine enforcement priorities across the advice and investment chain and discuss how research houses, platforms, licensees, managed account providers and other industry participants can engage constructively with the regulator ahead of potential legislative change.



**Alan Kirkland**
Commissioner, ASIC



CHAIR

**Aleks Vickovich**
Co-chief executive, Conexus Financial

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**9:45am - 10:45am**

## Workshop: Designing a performance test for managed accounts

Amid rumours that government or regulators may introduce a superannuation-style performance test for the managed accounts sector, this session invites delegates to take a self-regulatory leadership position. Following a panel session setting the scene, this interactive session will seek to resolve key questions including: what benchmark is appropriate and investable, how does the test apply across super and non-super portfolios, and what are the implications for platform data disclosure and the SMA market? It will seek to draw out areas of industry consensus and contention.

**Includes table discussion**



**Rebecca Jacques**
Head of wealth management investment solutions, Mercer Investments and Retirement, Australia



**Brad Matthews**
Founding director, Brad Matthews Investment Strategies



**Paul Saliba**
Senior portfolio manager, AZ Sestante



**Frances Taylor**
Executive director, managed accounts, Colonial First State



CHAIR

**Simon Hoyle**
Acting editor, Professional Planner

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**10:45am - 11:15am**

**Morning tea**

**12:00pm - 12:45pm** **Case studies: Licensees, investment committees and the shifting sands of adviser portfolios**

Amid greater regulatory scrutiny and commercial opportunity set, some licensees and advice firms are taking on greater ownership of approved product lists, managed accounts and investment management, changing the dynamics of strategic partnership with asset consultants and research houses. This session showcases current thinking among a diverse range of leading advice firms and licensees, examining the investment governance and client experience implications of management decisions and examining tensions that may arise between product innovation, professional service and research independence.



**Terry Dillon**
Chief executive, Shadforth Financial Group



**Scott Fletcher**
Chief investment officer, Woodbury Private



**Simon Jeffery-Bilich**
Head of investments, Count



**Lydia Kav**
Independent chair, investment committee, Ironbark Private Wealth



CHAIR

**Simon Hoyle**
Acting editor, Professional Planner

**12:45pm - 1:45pm** **Lunch | Wintergarden Restaurant**

**1:45pm - 2:35pm** **Panel: Investment, product and service innovation for retirement**

Product innovation in solving for longevity risk has largely failed to achieve mass adviser or client adoption, yet the retirement income challenge continues to grow. This session will examine whether traditional portfolio construction can genuinely meet the income needs of retirees, or whether life insurer or other balance sheet underwriting is really needed to ensure standard of living for retirees. It will consider whether a possible extension of the Retirement Income Covenant to the advice channel would change the terms of the debate.



**Annika Bradley**
Head of advice strategy, research and technical,



**Matt Olsen**
Director of manager research ratings, Morningstar



**Richard Quin**
Chief investment officer and principal, Bentham Asset

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| UniSuper | Australasia | Management |



CHAIR

**Simon Hoyle**
Acting editor,
Professional Planner

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**2:35pm - 3:25pm**

## Panel: Path ahead for the research, managed accounts and advice ecosystem

This final session will reflect on the key areas of contention and consensus at the forum, and interrogate whether the entire portfolio construction value chain is sufficiently well governed to play their critical gatekeeper role in light of the emerging AI age. It will consider industry self-regulation and advocacy efforts, commercial and portfolio risks and opportunities on the horizon.

**Includes table discussion**



**Peter Green**
Director of research,
Lonsec Research
and Ratings



**Cameron Spittle**
Managing partner,
Trellia Wealth
Partners



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**Aleks Vickovich**
Co-chief executive,
Conexus Financial

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**3:25pm - 3:30pm**

## Closing remarks



CHAIR

**Aleks Vickovich**
Co-chief executive,
Conexus Financial

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**3:30pm - 5:00pm**

## Coach transfer from Hydro Majestic to Sydney Domestic Airport or Central Station