



MEDIA RELEASE

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A snapshot of Australian investors: *The Australian Share Ownership Study*

The latest Australian Share Ownership Study released today by ASX shows that 6.48 million Australians, or 36% of the adult Australian population, were invested in the Australian sharemarket, either directly (via shares or other listed investments) and/or indirectly (via unlisted managed funds) in 2014. The Study does not measure share ownership through superannuation, other than via self-managed superannuation funds.

This is a decline from 38% total ownership when the Study was last conducted in 2012. Despite the fall in overall ownership, the number of Australians holding shares directly-only remained stable at 26%; more Australians are investing in international shares (13%, up from 10% in 2012); and portfolios are broadening to include other listed securities such as A-REITs, ETFs, options and bonds (5.6%, up from 4% in 2012).

The Study found that the general outlook was positive, with 54% of direct investors optimistic about the sharemarket and likely to buy shares in the next 12 months. Among overall attitudes to share investing, the most widely-held beliefs of direct investors were the need for a long-term outlook (55%) and a disciplined approach (53%).

Share ownership remains the preferred asset class for personal investments, with 31% stating they invested in shares, ranking above residential property (21%) and other listed investments (5.6%).

The typical direct Australian share owner is likely to be a tertiary-educated male, who trades predominantly through an online broker. Men are more likely to invest in shares, with 38% of men being direct share owners compared to 27% of women. The likelihood of share ownership increases with age, with the 45-to-64-year age group having the highest portion of total (both direct and indirect) investors at 39%.

Other notable findings:

- Australia continues to have one of the highest levels of share ownership in the world (36%).
- More investors traded online (58%) than through a broker or adviser (31%), reflecting the growing desire of investors for self-direction and control over investments.
- Investors learn from other investors, with advice from friends, family and colleagues (38%) cited as a higher source than reading and/or listening to expert commentators in the media (32%).
- 2.5 million non-investors were very keen to invest in the sharemarket but had little knowledge of how to go about it, were confused by all the information and, if they were to invest in shares, would rely on expert advice.

The 2014 Study - the 14th in a series dating back to 1991 - was conducted nationally from September to November last year with a randomly selected sample of over 6,400 adult Australians. It highlights the incidence of share ownership among the population and offers insights into the attitudes, knowledge and behaviour of retail sharemarket investors in Australia. The Study is available here: <http://www.asx.com.au/documents/resources/australian-share-ownership-study-2014.pdf>

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