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Authorisation

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IPD Goup (IPG)

Lightning in a bottle

Recommendation

Buy (unchanged)

Price

\$4.64

Target (12 months)

\$5.75 (previously \$5.50)

GICS Sector

Commercial Services and Suppliers

Expected Return

Capital growth	23.9%
Dividend yield	2.3%
Total expected return	26.2%

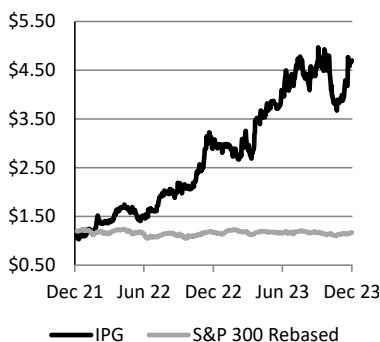
Company Data & Ratios

Enterprise value	\$514.0m
Market cap	\$478.3m
Issued capital	103.1m
Free float	94%
Avg. daily val. (52wk)	\$650,000
12 month price range	\$2.47 - \$5.07

Price Performance

	(1m)	(3m)	(12m)
Price (A\$)	3.83	4.38	3.00
Absolute (%)	22.62	7.29	56.84
Rel market (%)	19.36	8.79	58.23

Absolute Price



SOURCE: IRESS

CMI acquisition and successful \$65m equity raising

IPD has announced the acquisition of CMI Operations – one of Australia’s leading electrical cables and industrial plugs suppliers – for an upfront \$92.1m and contingent consideration of up to \$8.9m. To fund the acquisition IPD undertook a fully underwritten \$65m equity raising (at a 5% discount to TERP) and received strong support for the institutional component of the raising finalised on 30 Nov’24. IPD has also secured new debt financing arrangements totalling \$40m. We have the CMI deal at ~24% accretive to FY25e and IPD’s gearing at a comfortable ~0.8x EBITDA at FY24e (incl. earn-outs). CMI is owned by ASX LIC Excelsior (ECL) and the group’s directors (~50.4% of issued capital) have confirmed their intent to vote in favour of the transaction which, subject to approval, is expected to complete by Feb’24.

As part of the announcement IPD provided a strong trading update with 1H24e underlying EBITDA expected to be the region of \$16.0-16.5m (vs. BPe prev. \$15.9m). Management also expects “a number of significant projects” to commence in 2H24e.

Investment view: Maintain Buy recommendation

Overall, we view CMI as a strong addition to IPD’s existing product suite (e.g. high internal IP, same customers, improves IPD’s supplier diversity). In addition, the transaction price (trailing EV/EBITDA of 5.9x excl. synergies) would also appear to be reasonable for what we see as an established category leader in hazardous area and electrical safety verticals (e.g. mining and infrastructure). Further rationale for the deal as cited by IPD included: (1) synergy expectations from cross-selling and internalising cables revenue slippage (unquantified at this stage); (2) CMI’s recurring revenue profile and strong cash generation (e.g. plugs sales are driven by a regulatory replacement cycle); and (3) CMI’s attractive growth potential in new markets following the recent launch of the CMI’s ‘Minto 2’ product.

Following the CMI acquisition our EPS changes are -3%, +23% and +22% across FY24-26e. At this stage we assume four months of CMI contribution in FY24e. Our revised PT is \$5.75 (prev. \$5.50) with our Buy recommendation remaining unchanged.

Earnings Forecast

Year end 30 June	FY23	FY24e	FY25e	FY26e
Sales (\$m)	227.1	297.0	397.4	433.4
EBITDA Total (\$m)	27.7	38.6	53.7	58.3
NPAT (underlying) (\$m)	16.1	21.6	30.2	33.2
NPAT (reported) (\$m)	16.1	21.6	30.2	33.2
EPS (adjusted) (cps)	18.6	21.0	29.3	32.2
EPS growth (%)	27.5%	12.7%	39.6%	9.9%
Price/NTA (x)	6.4	7.8	6.0	4.7
PE (x)	24.9	22.1	15.8	14.4
EV/EBITDA (x)	18.5	13.3	9.6	8.8
FCF Yield (%)	0.6%	0.3%	5.4%	5.1%
Dividend (cps)	9.3	10.6	14.0	15.0
Franking (%)	100%	100%	100%	100%
ROE (%)	22.0%	14.6%	18.5%	18.3%

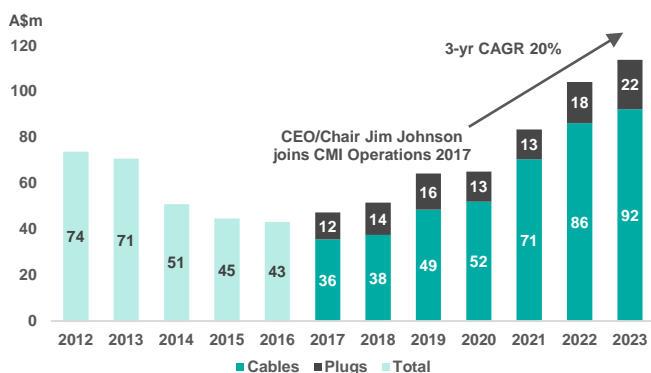
SOURCE: BELL POTTER SECURITIES ESTIMATES

CMI Operations acquisition

A bit about CMI Operations

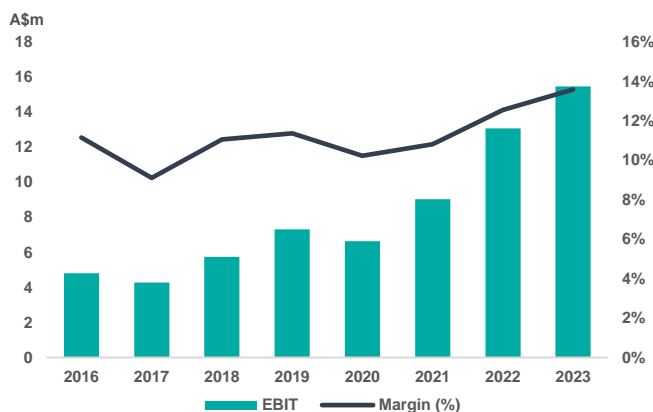
CMI is a distributor of electrical cables and manufacturer and distributor of the “Minto” electrical plug brand. The company first began operating in 1991 and has since grown organically to generate \$104.3m of net revenue in FY23 and \$17.1m of EBITDA. CMI operates out of six warehouses (four states), employs ~60 staff and services ~500 customers Australia wide.

Figure 1 - CMI Operations revenue history (gross revenue)



SOURCE: COMPANY DATA

Figure 2 – CMI Operations EBIT and margins



SOURCE: COMPANY DATA

CABLES – 80% OF SALES

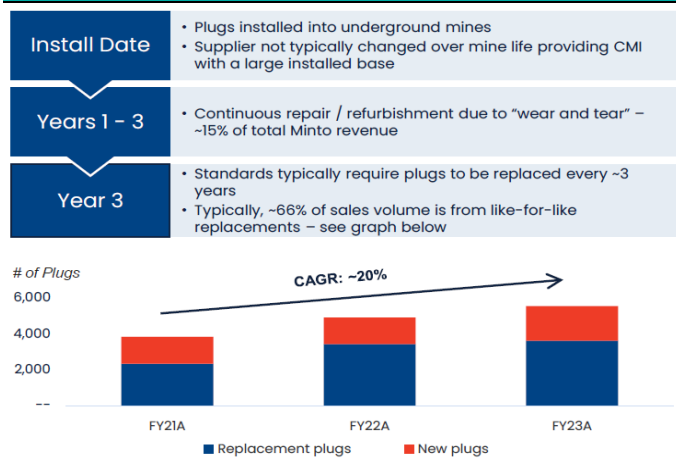
CMI’s cable division supplies electrical cable to construction, infrastructure, and renewables customers considered to be in the ‘middle market’ (i.e. in the order region of \$250k to \$10m). The cables segment has grown at a CAGR of 21% since FY20 and has benefitted, we believe, from similar electrification tailwinds to IPD over this timeframe (~85% of CMI’s top 40 customers already deal with IPD). CMI’s key cabling suppliers include XLPE (81% of revenue) and Aflex (17%). IPD considers CMI’s cables division has a strong cross-sell opportunity with the IPD’s core ‘low voltage’ product range.

PLUGS – 20% OF SALES

CMI’s industrial plug division “Minto” is a category leading solution in hazardous environments and other safety-focused applications. These are highly engineered and specialised products developed internally and manufactured by CMI. The plugs segment has grown at a CAGR of 18% since FY20.

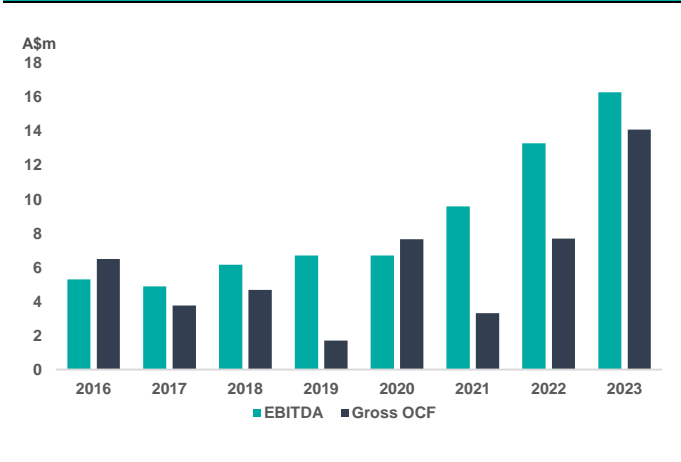
Management has estimated CMI’s ‘Minto 1’ industrial plug holds a leading market share of 15-20% within Australian underground mining and tunnel boring applications. In Mar’23 CMI launched the ‘Minto 2’ plug which is a more ‘broad-based’ product for infrastructure and above ground mining applications. IPD and CMI expect this to be a material near-term growth opportunity post-acquisition. In addition, IPD cited potential synergies with the recent EX Engineering acquisition (Jul’23) and expects CMI’s engineering and R&D capabilities to provide scope to further develop its own customised solutions across the core product range.

Figure 3 – CMI’s ‘Minto 1’ plug product lifecycle



SOURCE: COMPANY DATA

Figure 4 - ECL cash flow and conversion



SOURCE: COMPANY DATA – INCLUDES CMI OPERATIONS AND ECL’S INVESTMENTS

CMI Operations trading update

At ECL’s recent AGM the group made the following commentary regarding CMI’s trading performance in 1H24e YTD: (1) as at Oct’23 trading performance has “remained steady” and CMI “maintains the solid performance from FY23”; (2) cables sales continue on the same trajectory as FY23 (+10%); (3) Minto plug sales “robust”; and (4) the new ‘Minto 2’ launch is expected to “significantly grow” following launch in Mar’23.

Deal overview and successful \$65m equity raising

On 28 Nov’23 IPD announced the acquisition of CMI Operations – one of Australia’s leading electrical cables and industrial plugs suppliers – for an upfront \$92.1m and contingent consideration of up to \$8.9m.

To fund the acquisition IPD undertook a fully underwritten \$65m equity raising (at \$3.93ps and a 5% discount to TERP) and received strong support for the institutional component of the raising which was finalised on 30 Nov’24. The retail component of the raising (entitlement offer) opened on 5 Dec’23 and will close on 14 Dec’23. IPD has also secured new debt financing arrangements totalling \$40m. Other key information includes:

- CMI is currently owned by ASX LIC Excelsior (ECL) and, subject to shareholder approval, is expected to complete by Feb’24.
- CMI’s directors (~50.4% of issued capital) have confirmed their intent to vote in favour of the transaction. A majority vote in favour of the deal will be required to reach resolution (>50%).
- On a pro-forma FY23 basis CMI Operations is ~30% EPS accretive to IPD. We have the deal at ~24% accretive by FY25e with IPD’s gearing at a comfortable ~0.8x EBITDA at FY24e (~0.35x FY25e).
- The contingent consideration of up to \$8.9m is payable by IPD in FY25e. IPD will pay CMI vendors \$6 for every \$1 of FY24e EBIT that exceeds CMI’s FY23e EBIT (\$15.5m). This means that the maximum earn-out will be paid if CMI achieves ~\$17.0m EBIT in FY24e.

CMI Operations management team

The CMI Operations management team is well known to IPD and lead by Jim Johnson (Chairman) and Zac Zaharia (CEO). Further details are below:

- **Jim Johnson (Chairman):** Joined CMI as General Manager in 2017. He has over 20 years of experience in the electrical industry, mainly in general management roles.
- **Zac Zaharia (CEO):** Joined CMI as COO in Mar'23 and recently succeeded Jim Johnson as CEO. He has worked in the electrical industry for the last two decades, predominately in commercial and general management roles.
- **Michael Page (Chief Engineering Officer):** Joined CMI as Manager of Engineering and Flameproof Equipment in 2003. He has over 35 years of experience in the electrical industry. Michael is active on the board of the Mine Electrical Safety Association.
- **Greg Lewis (CFO):** Joined CMI as Financial Controller in 2021. He has over 20 years of experience in the electrical and construction industry as a finance manager.
- **Brett Wearne (National Sales Manager):** Joined CMI in 2005 and is now the National Sales Manager. He has over 35 years of experience in the electrical industry.

IPD Group trading update

As part of the announcement IPD provided a strong trading update with 1H24e underlying EBITDA expected to be the region of \$16.0-16.5m (vs. BPe prev. \$15.9m). Management commented that the market outlook remains “buoyant” and that “a number of significant projects” are expected to commence in 2H24e.

Following the CMI acquisition our EPS changes are -3%, +23% and +22% across FY24-26e. At this stage we assume four months of CMI contribution in FY24e. Our revised PT is \$5.75 (prev. \$5.50) with our Buy recommendation remaining unchanged.

IPD Group (IPG)

Company Description

IPD Group (IPG) is a leading Australian distributor of electrical equipment and industrial digital technologies operating nine distribution centres and servicing over 4,200+ customers nationally. The company supplies products used in buildings, infrastructure and process sectors which help to reduce energy use and/or reliance on the transmission network.

Investment View and Thesis

We have derived a target price of \$5.75ps for IPG through blended methodologies of ROIC (WACC 9.5% and TGR 3.5%) and a 15% FY24e EV/EBITDA premium to IPD's competitive set. Our favourable investment view is based on:

Long life cycle demand: IPD is primarily a distributor of low voltage 'power' products which are driven mainly by refurbishment and upgrade of existing infrastructure. We see forward volumes for IPD as being relatively low demand risk by virtue of being driven by new technology adoption, supportive policy measures and changing consumer tastes.

EV charging opportunity: We believe IPD has several advantages in EV charging installation, including: (1) strong integration potential with IPD's existing power distribution and building management system products; (2) existing relationships with transition leaders; and (3) the ability for IPD to provide an offering to the existing charging base by leveraging its national service network.

Robust inflation play: Inflation largely acts as a tailwind for distributors with strong value propositions and efficient cost controls as these companies should have pricing power to pass on input costs. IPD has a high touch service proposition focused on stock availability close to customers, operates in segments with few direct competitors and supplies category leading electrical brands – often on an exclusive basis within Australia.

Turnaround opportunity: IPD has recently secured +\$35m in product categories with the leading electrical manufacturer ABB. ABB's market share in Australia (5-10%) is far lower than Europe (20-30%) due to customer service deficiencies of IPD's predecessor and in our view presents IPD with a large turnaround opportunity.

Key Risks

Supplier risk: Although in our view unlikely given the IPD's 30 year tenure with ABB, IPD's distribution agreement with its largest supplier (c.30% of revenue) can be terminated by ABB unilaterally without cause and without any significant penalty with 180 days' notice.

Inventory risk: IPD's agile value proposition involves taking a large, directional view on its stock position. The company's relatively low stock turn of ~3x accentuates realised gains or losses on inventory.

Operating leverage: IPD is a relatively high operating leverage distribution business operating in industries experiencing high input and labour cost pressures. At present, a +/- 1ppt change in GM has a +/- \$2.1m impact on EBIT, which equates to c.9% of FY23e.

Acquisition and integration risk: IPD's growth strategy involves acquisitions that have inherent due diligence, capital allocation and business integration risk.

Table 1 - Financial summary

Post-AASB 16								Share price (\$)	4.64						
June year end	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024e	2025e	2026e	Target price (\$)	5.75						
Profit & Loss (A\$m)								Rating	Buy						
Sales revenue	141.4	142.6	180.5	227.1	297.0	397.4	433.4	Issued capital (m)	103.1						
... Growth (%)	4.7%	0.8%	26.6%	25.8%	30.7%	33.8%	9.1%	Market cap (\$m)	478.3						
Gross Profit	52.3	54.7	68.6	86.8	111.1	141.0	153.8	Enterprise value (\$m)	514.0						
... Margin %	37.0%	38.4%	38.0%	38.2%	37.4%	35.5%	35.5%	Free Float	89%						
EBITDA (normalised)	14.8	16.0	22.1	27.7	38.6	53.7	58.3	Note: Enterprise value includes operating leases. EBITDAL is pre-AASB 16 lease accounting.							
... Margin %	10.5%	11.2%	12.2%	12.2%	13.0%	13.5%	13.5%	June year end	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024e	2025e	2026e
Depreciation & amortisation	(4.2)	(4.0)	(3.6)	(4.4)	(6.1)	(7.6)	(7.9)	Segmental information							
EBIT	10.6	12.0	18.5	23.4	32.5	46.1	50.5	Products division (excl. EV)	125.6	127.6	161.5	204.8	225.1	242.9	263.3
Net interest	(0.6)	(0.6)	(0.5)	(0.2)	(1.6)	(2.9)	(3.0)	EV charging hardware sales	-	-	1.0	3.5	5.0	8.0	12.0
Pre tax profit	10.0	11.4	18.0	23.2	30.9	43.2	47.4	Service division	15.8	15.0	18.1	18.8	20.7	22.8	25.1
Tax expense	(2.9)	(3.5)	(5.4)	(7.1)	(9.3)	(12.9)	(14.2)	Ex Engineering	-	-	-	-	11.4	13.2	14.2
Normalised NPAT	7.1	7.9	12.6	16.1	21.6	30.2	33.2	CMI Operations	-	-	-	-	34.8	110.6	118.8
Abs. & extras	-	-	(1.5)	-	-	-	-	Group revenue	141.4	142.6	180.5	227.1	297.0	397.4	433.4
Reported Profit	7.1	7.9	11.1	16.1	21.6	30.2	33.2	... Growth (%)	4.7%	0.8%	26.6%	25.8%	30.7%	33.8%	9.1%
Pre-AASB16 operating results:								Products division (excl. EV)	-	14.5	19.8	26.0	28.6	30.6	33.0
EBITDAL	11.2	12.6	19.2	24.4	33.9	47.9	52.1	EV charging hardware	-	-	0.1	0.4	0.6	1.0	1.5
Cashflow (A\$m)								Service division	-	0.9	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.8
Operating EBITDA	14.1	15.4	21.3	27.7	38.6	53.7	58.3	Ex Engineering	-	-	-	-	2.3	2.6	2.8
Change in Working Capital	0.0	0.2	-8.1	-16.3	-16.9	-6.7	-9.5	CMI Operations	-	-	-	-	5.7	17.8	19.2
Net Interest	-0.6	0.0	-0.6	-0.4	-0.9	-2.3	-3.0	Segment EBITDA	14.1	15.4	21.3	27.7	38.6	53.7	58.3
Tax Paid	-1.6	-4.1	-5.1	-6.5	-8.2	-11.1	-13.6	Other income	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other Residual Items	4.1	0.3	3.7	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	EBITDA (normalised)	14.8	16.0	22.1	27.7	38.6	53.7	58.3
Operating cashflow	16.0	11.8	11.2	7.4	12.6	33.6	32.3	Valuation Ratios							
AASB 16 Leases	2.1	3.0	2.4	2.9	4.1	5.1	5.4	Core EPS (cps)	8.2	9.2	14.6	18.6	21.0	29.3	32.2
Lease adjusted OCF	13.9	8.8	8.8	4.6	8.5	28.5	26.9	Core Diluted EPS (cps)	8.2	9.2	14.6	18.6	21.0	29.3	32.2
Capital Expenditure	-0.9	-0.7	-2.0	-2.2	-7.2	-2.5	-2.5	EPS growth (%)	69.0%	11.3%	59.5%	27.5%	12.7%	39.6%	9.9%
Free cashflow	13.0	8.1	6.8	2.4	1.4	26.0	24.4	Adjusted PE (x)	56.4	50.7	31.8	24.9	22.1	15.8	14.4
Dividends Paid	-2.0	-4.6	-9.3	-7.2	-9.5	-12.7	-14.9	EV/EBITDA (x)	34.7	32.1	23.3	18.5	13.3	9.6	8.8
Asset Sales	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	EV/EBITDAL (x)	46.0	40.9	26.8	21.1	15.2	10.7	9.9
Acquisitions	0.0	0.0	-2.3	0.0	-101.3	-10.1	0.0	EV/EBIT (x)	48.5	42.8	27.8	22.0	15.8	11.2	10.2
Other	-11.1	9.5	-0.1	0.1	1.8	0.0	0.0	NTA per share (\$ps)	nm	0.46	0.61	0.72	0.59	0.78	0.98
Equity Issues(Reduction)	0.0	0.0	17.5	0.0	65.0	0.0	0.0	P/NTA (x)	nm	10.06	7.56	6.42	7.83	5.99	4.73
Change in Cash Position	0.0	13.0	12.8	-4.6	-42.6	3.3	9.5	DPS (cps)	0.0	0.0	3.7	9.3	10.6	14.0	15.0
Balance Sheet (A\$m)								Payout on reported EPS	0.0%	0.0%	25.3%	49.9%	50.5%	47.8%	46.6%
Cash	-	12.6	25.4	20.8	18.1	21.4	30.9	Dividend Yield %	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	2.0%	2.3%	3.0%	3.2%
Receivables	-	27.1	37.6	45.0	81.2	91.4	99.7	Franking (%)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Inventory	-	23.2	32.9	42.3	78.7	84.4	92.1	FCF per share (cps)	15.1	8.9	7.9	2.8	1.3	25.3	23.7
Property, Plant & Equipment	-	2.7	3.4	4.0	12.2	12.2	12.2	FCF yield %	3.2%	1.9%	1.7%	0.6%	0.3%	5.4%	5.1%
Right of use assets	-	13.2	11.1	12.3	12.3	12.3	12.3	Performance Ratios							
Intangibles (excl. goodwill)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Group EBITDA margin (%)	10.5%	11.2%	12.2%	12.2%	13.0%	13.5%	13.5%
Goodwill	-	5.2	10.5	10.5	96.6	96.6	96.6	Group EBIT margin (%)	7.5%	8.4%	10.3%	10.3%	11.0%	11.6%	11.6%
Other assets	-	8.4	4.0	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	OCF Realisation to EBITDAL (%)	nm	66.8%	45.8%	18.7%	25.2%	59.6%	51.7%
Total Assets	0.0	92.4	124.9	139.6	303.9	323.1	348.5	FCF Realisation to NPAT (%)	183.1%	97.5%	53.9%	14.9%	6.4%	86.2%	73.6%
Trade payables	-	28.3	40.4	40.8	62.2	71.5	78.0	ROE (%)	nm	17.6%	19.9%	22.0%	14.6%	18.5%	18.3%
Debt	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	ROIC (%)	nm	37.0%	52.5%	51.8%	29.4%	26.2%	27.1%
Lease liabilities	-	14.6	11.8	13.8	13.8	13.8	13.8	Asset turns (years)	11.2	12.6	18.3	17.0	17.1	19.2	20.9
Other	-	4.5	9.2	12.0	40.1	34.2	35.4	Capex/Depn excl. leases (x)	0.9	0.7	1.9	1.5	3.6	1.0	1.0
Total Liabilities	0.0	47.4	61.4	66.7	156.1	159.6	167.3	ND/EBITDAL	-	(1.0)	(1.3)	0.9	0.6	0.4	0.2
Net Assets	0.0	45.0	63.4	72.9	147.7	163.5	181.2	EBIT interest cover	(17.7)	(20.0)	(37.0)	(136.7)	(20.0)	(15.7)	(16.6)
Share capital	0.0	31.1	31.5	31.6	96.6	96.6	96.6	Net debt to equity (%)	nm	-28.0%	-40.0%	30.0%	14.8%	11.4%	5.0%
Reserves	0.0	-4.9	-0.1	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4								
Retained earnings	0.0	18.8	32.0	41.0	50.8	66.6	84.3								
Shareholders Equity	0.0	45.0	63.4	72.9	147.7	163.5	181.2								
Net Debt (Cash)	-	(12.6)	(25.4)	(20.8)	21.9	18.6	9.1								
AASB 16 leases	-	14.6	11.8	13.8	13.8	13.8	13.8								
Group indebtedness	-	2.0	(13.6)	(6.9)	35.7	32.4	23.0								

SOURCE: BELL POTTER SECURITIES ESTIMATES

Recommendation structure

Buy: Expect >15% total return on a 12 month view. For stocks regarded as 'Speculative' a return of >30% is expected.

Hold: Expect total return between -5% and 15% on a 12 month view

Sell: Expect <-5% total return on a 12 month view

Speculative Investments are either start-up enterprises with nil or only prospective operations or recently commenced operations with only forecast cash flows, or companies that have commenced operations or have been in operation for some time but have only forecast cash flows and/or a stressed balance sheet.

Such investments may carry an exceptionally high level of capital risk and volatility of returns.

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