

**Global Equities Roundup: Market Talk**

1,312 words

2 May 2018

13:40

Dow Jones Institutional News

DJDN

English

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0340 GMT - Aristocrat Leisure's core slot-machine business is still underpenetrated in key markets, with its outright ship share of more than 60% in Australia and Asia the only regions where it appears fully penetrated, UBS says. The investment bank also notes that its social-casino operation is still half the size of the largest operator, which does not have the advantage of porting land-based content. UBS raises its earnings forecasts by as much as 10% after attending Aristocrat's investor day in Sydney. The stock is up more than 3%. (mike.cherney@wsj.com; @Mike_Cherney)

0335 GMT - After DBS' stronger-than-expected 1Q earnings, Nomura expects smaller Singapore banks Oversea-Chinese and United Overseas to post stronger interest income and a significant decline in credit costs. "We believe that it is more likely that banks will outperform consensus numbers due to the underappreciation of the credit-cost function," Nomura adds. OCBC rises a further 1.2%, hitting fresh record highs, while DBS and UOB have turned slightly lower as midday nears. (gaurav.raghuvanshi@wsj.com)

0328 GMT - Citi expects some A\$800 million of on-market share buybacks from Qantas in the coming years after the airline says Wednesday that it expects FY18 underlying pre-tax profit to hit record highs. The airline also had a strong 3Q, with revenue rising 7.5%, though some of that was due to the timing of Easter. Citi says the group's international business showed "surprising strength" with revenue per available seat kilometer rising 5.2%. Qantas shares are trading 6.5% higher Wednesday at A\$6.18. (mike.cherney@wsj.com; @Mike_Cherney)

0326 GMT - Shares have already more than doubled this year for Malaysian natural-latex mattress producer Lee Swee Kiat. That doesn't stop CIMB from starting coverage at add with a MYR1.16 price target, versus the fresh 17-year high of MYR0.79 hit this morning. The broker notes the mattress industry is set to log mid-single-digit growth globally through 2020 and that the company is boosting capacity, with output soon able to rise 50% on an annual basis. There's also Lee Swee having a 3-4% dividend yield, CIMB adds. (yantoultra.ngui@wsj.com; @yantoultra)

0320 GMT - Citi concludes that Aussie grocer Woolworths' 3Q result is "good given the higher base it has cycled." The investment bank adds that management is executing well and that it expects solid sales momentum to continue in its food and liquor divisions. Woolworths said total sales from continuing operations rose 4.3% in 3Q. Shares are up about 1% to A\$28 in early afternoon trade. (mike.cherney@wsj.com; @Mike_Cherney)

0317 GMT - Headlines keep pushing and pulling Hong Kong-listed shares of Russian aluminum heavyweight Rusal. They're up 8% this morning after majority owner EN+ and several other companies got an extension to comply with US sanctions, providing time to undertake planned divestments which include Oleg Diripaska cutting his stakes in the firms below 50%. In the process, it could allow Rusal to not be blacklisted after all. Rusal shares have been on a roller coaster the past month. They were halved on April 9, the 1st trading day in Hong Kong after the initial sanctions were announced. Since, there's been a 30% slump and surges of 26% and 43%. Just 2 days in the past 3 1/2 weeks have shares finished within 3% of the prior day's closing level. (kevin.kingsbury@wsj.com; @kevinkingsbury)

0314 GMT - It may be a challenging year ahead for Amcor, but Macquarie thinks it will pay off for investors who stick with the stock. Near-term headwinds, including high material costs, are lingering longer than anticipated, "however we still think these are more temporary and timing-related in nature rather than

structural," says the bank, which keeps an Outperform rating and A\$16.15 target. "We need to get through FY18 first, but we forecast double-digit EPS growth in FY19 (8% in constant currency terms)," says Macquarie. The stock, which is down another 1.8% Wednesday, has shed more than 12% this year. It trades at A\$13.52. (rhiannon.hoyle@wsj.com ; @RhiannonHoyle)

0310 GMT - Wesfarmers' upcoming spinoff of its Coles grocery unit has led to speculation of the conglomerate making another big acquisition, but recent comments from Managing Director Rob Scott at an investor conference suggest otherwise. He said there are many investment opportunities in its existing businesses and that the firm isn't in a rush to sell its 40% stake in the Bengalla coal mine given it's a passive investment which doesn't require much management time. Wesfarmers "indicated that it will remain patient on acquisition opportunities," says Macquarie. (mike.cherney@wsj.com; @Mike_Cherney)

0305 GMT - OneMarket, the retail technology unit at Westfield, told investors Wednesday that it is in active discussions with leading retailers in the U.S. and U.K. about joining its platform. But executives at OneMarket, which is planned to be publicly listed as part of an upcoming merger between Westfield and Unibail, didn't go into much more detail when asked how advanced those discussions are. OneMarket did say that Nordstrom is a big client in the U.S. for its digital receipts product, and that a more advanced receipts product is being rolled out at Los Angeles International Airport. Westfield shareholders need to approve the OneMarket demerger and it remains to be seen whether they're satisfied with the information provided. (mike.cherney@wsj.com; @Mike_Cherney)

0258 GMT - A bigger-than-expected 19% drop in Lotte Chemical's Titan 1Q earnings on a jump in raw-material costs obscures ongoing demand strength at the Malaysian petrochemical company, says bull Maybank while easing its stock target 5.3% to MYR7.10. That as there's tight supply globally for Lotte Chemical's products, the broker adds, meaning margins should improve as average selling prices rise. After sinking 8.4% Monday, shares were recently down a further 2.1% at MYR5.59. But they're still up 19% for the year. (yantoultra.ngui@wsj.com; @yantoultra)

0247 GMT - Nomura on Monday flagged China Merchants Bank as a possible loser from the PBoC's new asset-management rules, noting they are liable to weigh on fee income. That's because the firm's balance for wealth-management products has been growing at a 5% quarterly rate, ending 1Q at 37% of CMB's total assets. Nomura notes today that wealth-management products was the source of 15% of the company's 2017 net profit. Shares are down 2.6%, erasing nearly half of Monday's jump. They soared 71% last year. (john.wu@wsj.com)

0241 GMT - Malaysian stocks have started this morning on pace for their worst day in 4 weeks, with investors returning from yesterday's regional holiday apparently concerned about next Wednesday's election. A stock broker told WSJ that the election is looking to be closer than expected and that the ruling government may get less support than in 2013. The FBM KLCI is down 1.3%, notably underperforming the rest of the region, while the ringgit has slid to a 2-month low versus the resurgent dollar--which hit 2018 highs during Tuesday's global session. Seeing some demand this morning are defensive areas like REITs; Amanahraya climbs 1.8% and KIP jumps 2.6%. Meanwhile, 2018 highflyer Nestle Malaysia has slid 3.5% this morning. (yantoultra.ngui@wsj.com; @yantoultra)

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May 01, 2018 23:40 ET (03:40 GMT)

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