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ASIC for all Australians

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ASIC for all Australians

A key part of our mission is to help Australians be in control of their financial lives.

To achieve this, we work to improve financial capability through a number of programs and initiatives aimed at addressing the diverse needs of our community.

We seek opportunities across the country – such as reaching out to regional communities, engaging with our Indigenous population,

educating young people about money matters and providing our knowledge and expertise – to help build people’s confidence around financial matters and ensure that the financial system is one that serves the needs of all Australians.

2.1 ASIC’s MoneySmart

ASIC’s MoneySmart website provides Australians with free and independent tools and information to help them be in control of their financial lives.

We aim to provide impartial financial guidance that can help people navigate the often confusing world of financial products and services and link them to resources that can help them make better financial decisions.

In 2017–18, over 7.3 million people visited MoneySmart, and it attracts on average 1 million sessions a month. Research indicates that 38% of adult Australians are aware of MoneySmart, and 90% of users reported that they took action on their finances after visiting the website.

We provide a range of information sources to support people’s understanding of financial matters – for example, this year we released our ‘Buying a home’ series of videos, which cover topics such as budgeting and knowing how much you can borrow.

Our online calculators are designed to help consumers make more informed decisions, support them to manage their money and motivate them to achieve their financial goals. In 2017–18, the Budget Planner, the Mortgage Calculator and the Income Tax Calculator continued to be popular among Australians seeking to better understand money matters.

‘Thank you for a fantastic website for financial counsellors to refer clients to take charge of their finances and be more empowered. Thank you also for providing an easy way to order resources. All much appreciated.’

**Marinela, Moneycare Bankstown,
The Salvation Army**

Our MoneySmart Teaching Program has also had considerable success in nurturing confident and informed consumers through the formal education system.

An independent evaluation by EY Sweeney¹ found that ASIC's MoneySmart Teaching Program is making a difference to the way money matters are taught in schools, with teachers feeling better supported and student financial literacy being positively impacted. **For more information on teachers' engagement with MoneySmart tools, see Section 3.3.**

A significant proportion of Australian schools have engaged with the program. Through the National Partnership Agreement on MoneySmart Teaching, we will continue to work with all states and territories to support them to access and use ASIC's teaching resources. Sustaining and expanding our MoneySmart Teaching Program is a priority for us over the coming years.

'It makes it so much more clear how much money and time that your parents put into you, and before I would always ask mum, "Can I have 20 dollars" ... I don't tend to ask my parents for a lot of money now.'

Student

'MoneySmart fits beautifully into [the school philosophy] because it's a life skill. It's not just the teaching of mathematics.'

Principal



Dale Symons and Danille Abbott, of ASIC's Financial Capability team, promoting MoneySmart Teaching at an Australian Primary Principals Association conference.

Responding to research – Australian Financial Attitudes and Behaviour Tracker

The findings of the sixth wave of the Australian Financial Attitudes and Behaviour Tracker show that 62% of Australians said they were confident about managing their money. However:

- › 35% of Australians said they found dealing with money stressful and overwhelming. This was higher for women (41%) than for men (28%)
- › 35% of Australians said they knew the current value of their main superannuation fund exactly or almost exactly – 42% of men, compared with 29% of women, reported knowing their fund value.

The difference in confidence levels when it comes to dealing with money matters between men and women was also a trend that came out of the fifth wave of Behaviour Tracker research – 41% of females reporting that they find dealing with money stressful and overwhelming compared to 28% of males – and we are developing resources such as our 'Women's Money Goals' graphic to address this.

'Thank you so much for putting this [women's money toolkit] together. I am still young, 25, and looking at my financial future is daunting and overwhelming but you really did address all the areas I had questions in. Thank you for making life seem vaguely simple and possible again.'

No name provided

1 EY Sweeney, *Independent evaluation of ASIC's MoneySmart Teaching Program, Volume 2: Case studies* (EY Sweeney Ref No. 24488), 10 November 2017.

Helping vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians

We tailor our resources to specifically address vulnerable and disadvantaged audiences, including regional and remote communities, people with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, and Indigenous Australians.

This year, to support our CALD communities, we developed written and oral communication messages in different languages. **For more information on CALD communities, see Section 6.2.**

We also travelled to five remote communities, including Indulkana, to assist Indigenous people in remote communities to find their lost superannuation. **For more information on our Indigenous outreach, see Section 2.3.**



Carolyn Cartwright, Managing Director of Alice Springs-based Money Mob Talkabout, and Nathan Boyle, of ASIC's Indigenous Outreach Program, providing superannuation information and resources to the Indulkana community in the APY Lands, May 2018.

2.2 Regional action

Regional action is an example of how ASIC's efforts contribute to improving outcomes for consumers and businesses across Australia.

Two of our key regional initiatives this year were our Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands Superannuation Forum and our Sydney Royal Easter Show stand. Both are discussed further below.

In 2017–18, our Regional Commissioners and local offices led a range of activities in each state and territory. They held industry and local stakeholder liaison meetings and ASIC MoneySmart workshops, and supported events that raised funds for local charities.

Australian Capital Territory

The work of our ACT Office focuses on financial capability, engagement with local law enforcement agencies through ASIC's Criminal

Intelligence Unit, and collaborative work with other Government departments and agencies on policy issues. Highlights for the year included:

- › The ACT Office MoneySmart Teaching team engaged with the next generation of educators by presenting a financial capability information session to student teachers at the Australian Catholic University in October 2017. Our team helped student teachers appreciate the importance of financial literacy and how they could build a financial literacy perspective into their teaching strategies and lesson activities.
- › In February 2018, the same team supported local tertiary students at the University of Canberra when they attended its Finance and Budgeting Market Day. Our team joined other diverse community groups in providing guidance and information to students at the 'Let's Talk Money' event.

New South Wales

ASIC's participation at the Sydney Royal Easter Show was a great success, showcasing our important work to help people to manage their money.

Our stand was supported by 56 passionate ASIC staff over 12 days, including many who gave up time on the weekend and public holidays to promote financial capability in the community. We handed out over 10,500 MoneySmart showbags and helped one consumer find nearly \$11,000 in unclaimed money through our website.

A diverse group of consumers from the city and the country stopped to chat at our stand and take our showbags. For example, a young woman who told us about the car she bought on finance said, 'I think I'm paying 7-9% interest and I also bought insurance with the car'. She said she thought this was a good deal. We helped her download MoneySmart's budget tracker app onto her smartphone. She thought this looked very helpful, especially for making decisions on future purchases. **For more information on MoneySmart, see Sections 2.1 and 2.3.**

We also hosted a Consumer Credit Webinar for the consumer credit industry, which was watched live by 240 people from industry. This was an opportunity for credit industry stakeholders to ask questions about ASIC's work and current projects.

Throughout the year, we supported ASIC's engagement with consumer groups and financial counselling organisations.



ASIC staff and visitors to ASIC's stand at the 2018 Sydney Royal Easter Show.

Northern Territory

The Global Money Week Initiative is a financial awareness campaign built to inspire children and young people to become more financially literate. ASIC partnered with the Mortgage & Finance Association of Australia (MFAA) and other financial professionals to deliver two Global Money Week events in the regional town of Katherine. These events were designed to give the Katherine community the opportunity to gain a better awareness and understanding of financial management and wellbeing. Events included a panel discussion at the Katherine Town Library featuring ASIC, a mortgage broker, a financial adviser, a financial counsellor and a superannuation fund representative.

ASIC also hosted three regional events during October Business Month in Katherine, Tennant Creek and Nhulunbuy. The events highlighted the work ASIC does to assist small business through our registry services and educational resources. Separate events were held for consumers to showcase ASIC's MoneySmart website resources. This included participating in the East Arnhem Land Business Festival and alerting community members to unclaimed money owed to individuals and businesses in the community. Several people conducted a search on ASIC's free online database and discovered forgotten money in bank accounts.

ASIC and the ACCC hosted a Small Business Matters breakfast in conjunction with Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand and Charles Darwin University. Stakeholders participated in an interactive session about how each agency is working with the small business sector and how the regulators work together.

ASIC collaborated with the Department of Jobs and Small Business, the Department of Human Services and the Northern Territory Government to run information sessions for workers on the Inpex gas project in preparation for the completion of the construction phase. Information was distributed on social media about 'Losing your job' and 'Redundancy', and discussions highlighted MoneySmart website resources that can help.



Australian Air Force cadets at the MoneySmart Bootcamp, Darwin, September 2017.

In September 2017, ASIC's Deputy Chair, Peter Kell, and Northern Territory Regional Commissioner, Duncan Poulson, hosted a MoneySmart Bootcamp in Darwin for 150 Australian Air Force cadets and members of the Australian Army Indigenous Development Program. The cadets and Army personnel participated in a series of financial capability challenges focusing on day-to-day financial topics, including credit and debt. The challenges presented real-life scenarios to explain money management concepts and enhance understanding of the financial issues young people are likely to face, including managing student loans and the impact that poor financial decisions – such as running up too much debt on a credit card or not insuring a car properly – can have.

Queensland

ASIC staff in Queensland meet regularly with local community members and businesses; speak at stakeholder events, such as the Queensland Law Society Annual Symposium and the Governance Institute Annual Forum; and support national initiatives with local outreach programs, such as those set out below.

For the past few years, we have supported ASIC's Small Business Compliance and Deterrence team's outreach work in Townsville, to coincide with Small Business Professionals Week in October. We facilitated a 90-minute session where around 100 small business representatives heard from a range of stakeholders, including ASIC, the ATO, the ACCC, the Queensland Office of Fair Trading and the Small Business Ombudsman, about support and information services available to small business.

This year, the small business session was followed by a three-hour seminar series for risk and compliance professionals, financial advisers, lawyers and accountants which focused on ASIC's work on financial advice, financial reporting and audit, credit and insurance.

The Queensland Office also supported National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week in Cairns in 2017. ASIC's Indigenous Outreach team and the Queensland Regional Commissioner ran a stall with information about ASIC's MoneySmart resources.

South Australia

In 2017, ASIC staff spent two weeks working in South Australia's remote APY Lands, together with a number of superannuation funds, various government agencies, the Aboriginal Interpreter Service, Money Mob and the First Nations Foundation. Our team worked with local Indigenous people to find lost superannuation, access their superannuation in cases of hardship or retirement, and consolidate their accounts.

We worked with the Aboriginal Interpreter Service to help people in five remote Indigenous communities. For example, we helped a man claim \$2,000 in lost superannuation that had been left by his mother who had passed away – a challenging task for people without ready access to printers, email or a reliable telephone service. We helped the man obtain a free copy of his mother's death certificate and fill out the necessary paperwork to access this money.

We also helped young people and those close to retirement age find out where their superannuation was and how much they had accumulated. **For more information about this, see Section 2.3.**

Tasmania

As part of ASIC's ongoing focus on consumer lending, we discussed ASIC's work in the credit and mortgage-broking sector with Tasmanian members of the MFAA at their professional development day in Launceston and took

part in a panel with the ACCC at the Financial Counselling Australia annual conference in Hobart. Staff from Hobart also manned an ASIC stall at the Financial Counselling Australia annual conference.

We held two Regional Liaison Committee meetings (July 2017 and May 2018) with Commissioner John Price and delegates from the Tasmanian business and financial services community, including from Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand, the Governance Institute, the MFAA, the Financial Planning Association, the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the Law Society of Tasmania, as well as representatives from Tasmanian banking, superannuation, mortgage investment and listed aquaculture firms.

Victoria

This year, we focused on promoting ASIC's MoneySmart in regional areas. We manned a MoneySmart stand at the three-day Henty Field Days event in September, which attracted a crowd of just under 60,000, and gave away 1,500 MoneySmart showbags containing a selection of publications. ASIC staff, including graduates, engaged with the local community about making sound financial decisions and promoted ASIC's financial literacy resources, including ASIC's MoneySmart website and apps.

Our regional work also included liaising with representatives of state agencies, including the Victorian Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission, about ASIC's work. We gave a presentation to the Commission's staff in August 2017 about ASIC's priorities, enforcement approach and powers.

We also supported ASIC licensing liaison meetings with key stakeholders to provide insights into ASIC's regulatory approach to our licensing and professional registration responsibilities. The meetings covered Australian financial services, credit licensing and professional registration, including for auditors (including self-managed superannuation fund auditors).

Western Australia

This year, we held 14 external stakeholder liaison meetings across the corporate finance, credit and insurance, financial reporting, insolvency and market supervision areas, including three Regional Liaison Committee meetings. These committees engage with stakeholders on current areas of concern and policy or legislative changes relevant to their sectors.

We also hosted over 100 members of the Perth business community at our annual Commission WA Stakeholder function.

Our then Chair, Greg Medcraft, spoke about Australia's ageing population and how ASIC recognises that the increasing number of retirees and an ageing population will raise issues of fundamental and strategic importance to the financial services sector, community and economy. He also highlighted what we are doing to help in this area.

This year we also co-presented at the FinTech Initial Coin Offerings and Cryptocurrencies seminar, with partner agencies the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC) and the ATO. Each agency discussed how their work relates to cryptocurrency trading platforms, brokers and taxation. ASIC emphasised that Australian laws prohibit misleading or deceptive statements and activities when selling initial coin offering products to Australian consumers and that additional obligations under the Corporations Act or the ASIC Act may apply. The session was well attended and attracted many questions.



From left, ASIC's WA Regional Commissioner Natalie Dürr with former Regional Commissioners Justice Michael Gething and Jane Gouvernet, Executive Assistant Katrina McKay and former Regional Commissioner Bruce Dodd at ASIC's annual WA Stakeholder function, August 2017.

2.3 Indigenous outreach

We are committed to developing programs, resources and policies to increase the financial capability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to improve the financial services provided to them.

Engagement and education

ASIC's Indigenous Outreach Program (IOP) engages with Indigenous consumers, communities and their advocates in urban, regional and remote areas.

Issues raised by consumer advocates on recent outreach trips have formed the basis of new education resources specifically aimed at Indigenous communities on our MoneySmart website. Topics include 'Managing large sums of money' and 'Dealing with pressure from family about money'.

We will be complementing these online resources with new online videos in the coming year.

This year, we published the second edition of the IOP newsletter – a free newsletter about the IOP's work with information on issues affecting Indigenous consumers. This newsletter is for financial counsellors and capability workers, lawyers, peak Indigenous representative bodies and any other organisations whose work relates to Indigenous consumers.

In 2017–18, we also continued to respond to inquiries and requests for assistance received through the IOP Helpline and IOP email and actively participated in state and national Indigenous networks, including the National Indigenous Consumer Strategy, the North Queensland Indigenous Consumer Issues Taskforce, the WA Indigenous Consumer Assistance Forum and the Consumer Action Law Centre's Indigenous network.

ASIC's outreach program heads to the Kimberley and Pilbara

In our outreach trips through the Kimberley and Pilbara regions of Western Australia in 2017, the IOP engaged with Indigenous consumers as well as financial counsellors and financial capability workers who work with Indigenous consumers.

We promoted the financial capability resources available on MoneySmart and discussed risky financial services and products as well as the alternatives available (e.g. no interest loan schemes).

During these trips, the IOP also participated in radio interviews and spoke to Indigenous consumers about making positive money choices and where to seek help with financial issues.

ASIC's APY Superannuation Forum

ASIC also continued its involvement with the Indigenous Superannuation Working Group on issues affecting Indigenous consumers' engagement with superannuation funds.

In May 2018, seven ASIC staff travelled to five remote communities in the APY Lands with representatives from government (ATO, AUSTRAC and the Department of Health and Safety), five superannuation funds (HESTA, Australian Super, Prime Super, QSuper and

Super SA), the Aboriginal Interpreter Service, Money Mob, and the First Nations Foundation. Together, we helped around 500 Indigenous consumers, including by:

- › contacting government agencies and superannuation funds to resolve outstanding claims for deceased relatives
- › assisting consumers to consolidate multiple superannuation accounts
- › contacting local organisations and government agencies to confirm identification for Indigenous consumers whose identification records have inconsistent dates of birth and misspelling of names
- › locating Indigenous consumers' superannuation account details and finding lost superannuation.

One of the biggest challenges was helping people to establish their identity without formal documents. Our team did this by asking elders from those people's communities to provide confirmation of identity when people did not have a driver's licence or other ID.

This cooperative model of relevant government agencies working alongside industry participants meant that on-the-spot assistance could be provided to Indigenous people living in remote locations, directly addressing the practical issues they face in tracing their superannuation and engaging with superannuation funds. **For more information on this initiative, see Sections 2.1 and 2.3.**



The APY Lands superannuation outreach program in May 2018 was an opportunity for Indigenous people living in remote communities to receive expert advice, face-to-face.

Our work on protecting Indigenous consumers

In 2017–18, we continued our important work of protecting Indigenous consumers from inappropriate sales practices involving financial products. Some examples include the following.

Life insurance sales practices

ClearView Life Assurance Limited (ClearView) will refund approximately \$1.5 million to 16,000 consumers after ASIC raised concerns about its life insurance sales practices. It has also ceased selling life insurance direct to consumers.

ASIC's review of ClearView's sales calls found it used unfair and high-pressure sales practices when selling consumers life insurance policies by telephone. These sales were made direct to consumers without personal financial advice. ASIC's review raised concerns that between 1 January 2014 and 30 June 2017, when selling over 32,000 life insurance policies direct to consumers (1,166 of whom lived in areas with a high proportion of Indigenous people who were unlikely to have English as their first language), ClearView sales staff:

- › made misleading statements about the cover, premiums and effect of the consumer's pre-existing medical conditions
- › did not clearly obtain consumer consent to purchase the cover before processing the premium payments
- › used high-pressure sales tactics to sell policies.

ClearView agreed to engage an independent expert (EY Sweeney) to provide independent assurance on this consumer remediation program.

Permanent ban

We permanently banned Jackson Temi Anni from engaging in credit activities and providing financial services following his conviction for a number of offences, including stealing, in the Darwin Local Court in 2017.

Mr Anni had targeted Aboriginal people, many of whom were ill, facing addictions or did not have English as a first language, at Darwin hospital and its associated hostels and in very remote surrounding communities. Mr Anni stole money from his victims through recurring, excessive payments that he set up from bank accounts of people he had agreed to

help obtain goods such as computers, mobile phones and vehicles. He also offered cash loans, obtaining consumers' online banking details and logging into the consumers' bank accounts to transfer money to himself.

Cancelled credit licence

After reviewing William Barry Young's dealings with Indigenous consumers in relation to his Cairns-based second-hand car dealership, we cancelled his credit licence. As he was no longer a member of an ASIC-approved external dispute resolution scheme, he was ineligible to hold a credit licence.

2.4 ASIC in the Community

We aim to provide ASIC staff with opportunities to connect with philanthropic bodies, charities and causes that are important to them through ASIC in the Community.

A sense of fairness, and of wanting to share knowledge and resources, are some of the values that drive ASIC in the Community.

ASIC in the Community provides positive benefits to both our staff and to the charities that we support. For example, it increases employee engagement by building connections between our colleagues and the community organisations we partner with. It also helps create positive outcomes for the community, with ASIC staff donating both their time and funds. In 2017–18, our staff contributed \$185,295 to the community.

\$185,295
CONTRIBUTED TO
THE COMMUNITY

\$102,644
total donations through
workplace giving

\$62,145
dollar value of
time volunteered

\$20,506
fundraising total
end of financial year



43 charities supported by
242 staff donors

Getting involved in our community

The ASIC in the Community program provides ASIC's staff with different ways to get involved in the communities in which we live and work.

Workplace Giving Program

Through our Workplace Giving Program, we have supported 43 different charities this financial year, and the program continues to grow steadily. Close to 10% of ASIC's staff participate in workplace giving. This financial year, we donated \$102,644 to charities working in a wide variety of areas, including the Australian Red Cross, The Smith Family and Médecins Sans Frontières.

Fundraising

ASIC in the Community facilitates national fundraising events in all our offices and, in 2017–18, we raised over \$20,000 through these events.

In 2017, the ASIC Graduate Group raised \$19,500 for StreetSmart Australia, which provides funding to community organisations tackling homelessness. In 2018, our graduates are fundraising for Lifeline Australia.

National Speakers Program

We host regular national speakers events throughout the year, featuring well-known Australians who advocate for the charities we support.

ASIC in the Community supports ASIC's Diversity Strategy and ASIC's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) initiatives by delivering several events each year, such as NAIDOC Week and Harmony Day in 2017–18.

NAIDOC Week

NAIDOC Week is about the celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and achievements, allowing all members of the Australian community to partake in national activities in support of their local Indigenous community.

As part of this year's NAIDOC Week theme, 'Our Languages Matter', Sharon Galleguillos from the Indigenous Literacy Foundation (ILF) presented to all ASIC sites and discussed Indigenous languages, their current threatened status and the ILF's exceptional work in the space.

In Brisbane, Songwoman Maroochy performed a traditional blessing in accordance with the Turrbal traditional laws and customs.

Close the Gap – Indigenous entrepreneurs

In March 2018, we held our Close the Gap event featuring leading Indigenous entrepreneurs. The Close the Gap campaign aims to create equality in health and life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. This campaign also measures progress in economic development and employment and these aspects formed the focus of the event.

Liam Ridgeway, co-founder of Ngakkan Nyaagu (an Indigenous digital enterprise), and Jasmin Herro, founder of Outback Global (a leading Indigenous supplier of workwear), told us about how they started, the challenges they faced, and the factors that made them successful.

ASIC ANZAC Day event

In April 2018, we held a special ANZAC Day event to commemorate and reflect on the contribution made by Australians in military operations, as well as our ANZAC history.

We were fortunate to have the senior officer commanding the Special Operations Training and Education Centre (SOTEC) speak to us about the work of the Special Operations Command in domestic security operations and law enforcement.



ASIC staff supporting the work of Foodbank Victoria through volunteering their time, May 2018.

Volunteering

Volunteering is an important way for ASIC people to contribute to the communities in which we live and work. ASIC provides each staff member with one day's paid leave per year to volunteer.

In 2017–18, the total value of our volunteering time was \$62,145, with 10% of ASIC staff volunteering in both skilled and unskilled activities.

Thirty-four ASIC lawyers from Sydney, Brisbane, Perth and Melbourne provide pro bono legal services to the National Children's and Youth Law Centre (NCYLC). NCYLC provides free legal advice to young people throughout Australia through its Lawmail and cyber mail portals.

Some of the additional volunteering activity undertaken by our staff in 2017–18 included the following:

- › In Melbourne, five ASIC lawyers volunteered with Justice Connect, updating and delivering a Director's Guide for Not for Profits.
- › Also in Melbourne, ASIC staff regularly volunteer with Foodbank Victoria and The Brotherhood of St Laurence.
- › ASIC volunteers from Sydney regularly attend the Exodus Loaves and Fishes restaurant, in Ashfield in the inner west, serving hot, free meals for marginalised and disadvantaged people.
- › In Perth, ASIC staff regularly volunteer at the Red Cross breakfast club at Seaforth primary school.
- › In Sydney, five ASIC lawyers volunteered at the Salvos Legal Humanitarian Services Free Legal Clinic at Lakemba in Sydney's south-west.