

# Setting up millennials for super success

Roundtable summary report | September 2024



**ASIC**  
Australian Securities &  
Investments Commission

 **moneysmart**  
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ASIC's vision is for a fair, strong and efficient financial system for all Australians. Realising this vision includes striving for good consumer and investor outcomes and encouraging Australians to take actions that help them be in control of their financial lives.

Focusing on better retirement outcomes and member services is one of ASIC's strategic priorities. The Moneysmart program supports this by offering tools and information to help consumers plan for their retirement.

In August 2024, ASIC's Moneysmart looked at how to encourage millennial Australians to become more informed and engaged with their super and, if appropriate, to act now to boost their superannuation balances at retirement.

ASIC brought together a panel of diverse voices as part of its focus on actively engaging with and listening to stakeholders. With cost of living and other pressures front of mind for many consumers, the panel shared ways in which millennials can improve their retirement outlook if they act now and discussed the risks if they don't engage with their super earlier in their working years.

## Millennials and superannuation

The 2021 Census of Population and Housing (ABS) showed the number of millennials (25-39 years old in 2021) have caught up to Baby Boomers (55-74 years old) as the largest generational group in Australia.

Millennials account for over 5.4 million people or 21.5% of the population.

Millennials were the first generation to enter the workforce with compulsory superannuation in place from their first job.

However, they're often regarded as being less attentive and less confident about managing their super compared to other generations. Research conducted by ASIC's Moneysmart found:

- one in two (48%) millennials surveyed said they were **not very or not at all knowledgeable about maximising their super**.<sup>1</sup>
- three in 10 (31%) millennials say they check the performance of their superannuation less than once a year or not at all.<sup>2</sup>

## The roundtable panel

The panel was facilitated by finance journalist [Effie Zahos](#) and included:

- [Simone Constant](#), ASIC Commissioner
- [Victoria Devine](#), Host of 'She's on the Money' podcast
- [Andrew Dunbar](#), Licensed financial adviser, Apt Wealth
- [Queenie Tan](#), Finance content creator
- [Dr Angel Zhong](#), Associate Professor of Finance, RMIT University

This summary report identifies key findings from the panel discussion and provides quotes from the participants.

<sup>1</sup> Research conducted by ASIC in July 2024, based on a nationally representative survey of 3,174 Australians, including 1,032 millennials. The surveys were carried out online. The findings have been weighted to match ABS data on gender, age, location and household income.

<sup>2</sup> ASIC via YouGov surveyed 2,137 Australians aged 18 and older from 5 to 18 October 2023 to understand their financial attitudes and behaviours. The surveys were carried out online. The figures for each survey have been weighted and are representative of their respective cohort.

## The language of superannuation is a barrier

Superannuation is one of the largest investments many Australians have or will have in the future. The way many super funds and advisers talk about super is a barrier to millennials understanding or engaging with it, according to panellists.

**The panellists agreed that language and terms such as 'retirement planning' and 'pensions' were not engaging for millennials.**



**Victoria Devine:**

*"The language of 'retirement planning' is inherently unengaging for millennials. Millennials need to think of super as a tool that helps create financial freedom or creating the life you want to live, or the life that you deserve."*



**Effie Zahos:**

*"It's so crucial for millennials to realise they are actually going to receive more super contributions in their lifetime than their parents ever did. A 28-year-old on the average salary doing nothing, just waiting on super guarantee contributions, will have around \$700,000 at retirement, in today's dollars. For millennials the dream is evolving away from the white picket fence, and more about creating a unique lifestyle."*



**Dr Angel Zhong:**

*"From an investor psychology standpoint, when we as consumers see complicated things, our attention is shifted because we only have so much mental bandwidth. Super funds need to avoid jargon and use relatable examples so people can relate and proactively engage."*

*"If we can change the dialogue, shift the language, millennials will benefit."*



**Andrew Dunbar:**

*"As an industry we could do a much better job of making super tangible for people. We need to show people where their money is invested. Make it less about 'superannuation', more about tangible investments."*

## Consumers would benefit from increased transparency and access to information from super funds

According to ASIC's research, super funds are not keeping pace with evolving members' expectations for ease of access to information. For example, ASIC recently observed that how super funds communicate through their websites can be quite poor.



**Simone Constant:**

*"There is around \$2.7 trillion dollars in superannuation in Australia, excluding self-managed super, and services to members need to change to match customer expectations.*

*"I encourage superannuation fund members to think of themselves as a customer. As a customer, you have choices and can demand services match your needs as you would from other financial services providers, such as your bank or insurer.*

*"I question whether super fund members receive the same level of clarity about what is happening with their super compared to the minute-by-minute access you get from other banking and financial services apps."*

Panellists talked about the need to improve access to information and tools such as calculators to help foster goal setting. While some funds provide these services, they are not always available or can be difficult to find.



**Queenie Tan:**

*"It's important to show millennials that improving your outlook is possible if you engage with your finances. You can access tools to help you set goals and put things in place to strive for financial freedom."*



**Andrew Dunbar:**

*"Superannuation calculators help people connect with their super. They can help show people the lifestyle they could be living, as well as helping to track progress and see how changes with contributions can have an impact."*

## Consumers would benefit from increased transparency and access to information from super funds

Panellists also noted that millennials are a diverse group with some actively seeking out information and others not looking to engage right now.



**Victoria Devine:**

*“What I’m seeing in my community is that millennials sometimes have a head-in-the-sand mentality that comes from a disconnect between themselves and what they’re seeing their parents go through.”*



**Dr Angel Zhong:**

*“Financial literacy is a cornerstone for how many millennials approach their super. Many are taking active steps because they understand the importance of financial literacy and they want to be informed, but not in the traditional ways of obtaining financial advice.”*



**Effie Zahos:**

*“Despite all the tweaks and changes, superannuation remains one of the most tax-effective wealth creating strategies we have. For example, if you salary sacrifice \$1,000 into super, you’ll only pay \$150 in tax, compared to \$300 outside super on the average salary. Why give the tax office \$150 when you can “pay yourself forward?” The other big plus with super is that it forces us to save, and let’s face it most of us do save better when it’s automated.”*

**Simone Constant highlighted the tools that were available from ASIC’s Moneysmart.**



**Simone Constant:**

*“Moneysmart is an important tool which gets 11 million hits per year. In 2023, 500,000 people accessed Moneysmart’s superannuation calculator, and millennial age groups (25 to 34-year-olds and 35 to 44-year-olds), are the greatest users of Moneysmart’s superannuation calculator.”*

## Superannuation is competing with more immediate issues in the minds of millennials

There is a lack of interest in superannuation among many millennials who are often juggling competing priorities because of cost of living pressures, they have mortgages or rent to pay, young families and ageing parents. Panellists discussed how a lack of engagement led to poor decisions when it came to fund performance and choosing the appropriate investment options.

The rising cost of living has affected many households across the country, however, panellists agreed that in this environment superannuation is one component of personal finances millennials can make improvements to without any additional cost.



**Queenie Tan:**

*“A lot of people see super as something that is very far off into the future and they have more immediate goals that they want to tackle right now, such as buying a house. When it comes to super, there are ways that you can get ahead without adding more money and it’s not completely hopeless.”*

Millennials can make changes to their super without needing to put additional money in by reviewing the performance of their fund, their investment options and making changes (note there may be fees associated with some of these changes) or by looking for a lower fee fund.



**Victoria Devine:**

*“The difference between a good fund and a bad fund could cost future you hundreds of thousands of dollars over your lifetime.”*



**Andrew Dunbar:**

*“We all go through our lives making seemingly random decisions with money and most of us have no idea whether we are on track to achieve our long-term goals and the lifestyle that we want in the future. But it is good to know that if you engage with your super today, tomorrow is looked after.”*

*“Millennials are stuck in this sandwich generation where we are looking after ageing parents, often financially, and educating and raising children. But the first step is to look after yourself. You can only help others if you have set yourself up first.”*



**Effie Zahos:**

*“We need to shift the mindset from seeing super as competing with our immediate financial goals to appreciating it as an essential part of our overall financial journey. You don’t have to contribute extra to your super to boost your returns; just give it some extra time to make sure it is working for you.”*

## Roundtable key findings

One of the advantages millennials have is they still have so much time to get on top of their super now to reap the benefits of proactive engagement in their retirement. Making informed investment decisions and finding ways to contribute more to superannuation now, can boost super over the long term. And through the magic of compound interest, this can make a big difference to their future lifestyle options.



### Simone Constant:

*“Millennials are willing to plan and engage with data for their long term physical wellbeing and health. Now is the time to see millennials engage in the same way with their long term financial health through their super. The tools and information on ASIC’s Moneysmart website are a great place to start for anyone who is keen to take some small steps that can compound over time and achieve their future goals”*

*“Australians have the option of switching super funds if they are not happy – it is easy to do via the ATO’s online services which you can access via MyGov.”*

*“My key take-away from the panel discussion is the power of transparency. Those managing super on behalf of members need to be transparent and offer information and tools, such as calculators, that assist members to better engage with their super.”*

*“Super funds need to be accountable to provide information and services that make super more tangible for members.”*

*“We know the benefits of the compounding effects of super over time. Making adjustments now that create an extra \$20 in value a week for a millennial could result in around an additional \$50,000 at retirement.”*

## SIMPLE STEPS TO BETTER MANAGE SUPER



Ensure your personal information is correct and up to date.



Check your employer is contributing the right amount to your super account.



Review your insurance through super and see if it fits your needs.



Use MyGov to check if you have multiple accounts and consider consolidating them to avoid paying multiple sets of fees.

**ASIC's Moneysmart** is launching a consumer awareness campaign for millennials to show the benefits of engaging with super and demonstrating how super works over time.



## Our Panel



**Simone Constant,  
ASIC Commissioner**

Simone commenced as an ASIC Commissioner for a five-year term on 20 November 2023. She has more than

25 years' experience in financial services, markets, legal services and risk management.



**Victoria Devine,  
Host of #1 finance podcast in Australia,  
'She's on the Money'**

Victoria Devine is a multi-award-winning retired financial adviser, authorised representative of an AFS licence holder, best-selling author of 5 books, financial columnist for The Age and Sydney Morning Herald and host of Australia's number 1 finance podcast, She's on the Money!



**Andrew Dunbar,  
Licensed financial advisor**

Andrew Dunbar is an experienced, award-winning financial planner with a passion for helping people live their best lives. He was named the FPA CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® Professional of the Year in 2019, a testament to his client-first approach, professionalism, and commitment to delivering results.



**Queenie Tan,  
Finance content creator**

Queenie is an authorised representative of an AFS licence holder and personal finance content creator. Her mission is

to help your money go further by creating educational videos to help inspire people to create better financial future.



**Effie Zahos,  
Finance journalist**

Effie is a leading personal finance commentator in Australia with more than two decades of experience in consumer finance topics including banking, finance and property. She is a regular on Channel 9's Today show and radio stations across Australia as a money commentator.



**Dr Angel Zhong,  
Associate Professor of Finance, RMIT**

Dr Angel Zhong is an award-winning finance researcher who specialises in empirical asset pricing and investor behaviour in financial markets. Angel's research not only informs investment strategies but also shapes policy decisions for industry professionals and governmental organisations.