Australian Government
Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation

EAFS01
02/26

Early access to your super benefits

Your super is an investment for your retirement. For this reason, the government requires that your super generally remains in a fund until you reach your preservation age. Your preservation age depends on your date of birth.

Table 1 - Preservation age

Date of birth	Preservation age
Before 1/7/1960	55
1/7/1960 to 30/6/1961	56
1/7/1961 to 30/6/1962	57
1/7/1962 to 30/6/1963	58
1/7/1963 to 30/6/1964	59
After 30/6/1964	60

In some circumstances, you may be able to access some of your super early. These circumstances include:

- **severe financial hardship**
- **compassionate grounds**
- **medical grounds.**

This factsheet refers to early release due to severe financial hardship or specified compassionate grounds. For more information about early release on medical grounds, refer to our invalidity factsheets and forms on your scheme's section of **csc.gov.au**

! **Accessing your super early may impact your future benefit including eligibility for a pension or retrospective invalidity consideration. We encourage you to seek financial advice on all your options before applying. You may wish to read the Financial Hardship Support Pack available on our website. Super released early is generally subject to taxation.**

This factsheet is for...

CSS, PSS, MilitarySuper, ADF Super and PSSap members.

If you have any questions regarding this factsheet please refer to the contact details on the last page.

The information provided in this factsheet is general advice only and has been prepared without taking account of your personal objectives, financial situation or needs. Before acting on any such general advice, you should consider the appropriateness of the advice, having regard to your own objectives, financial situation and needs. You may wish to consult a licensed financial advisor. You should obtain a copy of the relevant Product Disclosure Statement (PDS) and consider its contents before making any decision regarding your super.

Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation (CSC) ABN: 48 882 817 243, AFSL: 238069, RSEL: L0001397

Australian Defence Force Superannuation
ABN: 90 302 247 344
RSE: R1077063

Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme
ABN: 19 415 776 361
RSE: R1004649

Public Sector Superannuation accumulation plan
ABN: 65 127 917 725
RSE: R1004601

Military Superannuation and Benefits Scheme
ABN: 50 925 523 120
RSE: R1000306

Public Sector Superannuation Scheme
ABN: 74 172 177 893
RSE: R1004595

Who can apply for early release?

You can apply for early release if you are a:

- CSS contributing or preserved member (with the exception of associate deferred members)
- PSS contributing or preserved member
- MilitarySuper preserved member under 55 or you hold an ancillary account whilst under your preservation age
- ADF Super member; or
- PSSap member

and are seeking early release of all or part of your super due to severe financial hardship, specified compassionate or medical grounds.

Severe financial hardship

You are regarded as being in severe financial hardship if you:

- have received an eligible Commonwealth income support payment, (excluding Austudy, ABSTUDY or Youth Allowance), continuously for 26 weeks or more; or
- have reached preservation age, are not gainfully employed on a full-time or part-time basis, and have received an eligible Commonwealth income support payment (excluding Austudy, ABSTUDY or Youth Allowance) for 39 weeks or more since reaching preservation age.

Eligible Commonwealth income support payments

Income support payments must be made by Centrelink or the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Eligible payment types include:

Centrelink:

- Age Pension
- Carer Payment
- Disability Support Pension
- Farm Household Allowance
- JobSeeker Payment
- Parenting Payment
- Partner Allowance
- Sickness Allowance
- Special Benefit
- Widow Allowance

DVA:

- Age service pension
- Invalidity service pension
- Partner service pension
- Income support supplement for war widows or widowers

Incapacity payments from DVA are not considered eligible.

To help us determine your eligibility, please provide your Centrelink Reference Number, to allow us to confirm your details with Services Australia, or

If you are receiving a benefit from the Department of Veteran's Affairs (DVA), you must include a valid *Release of Super Benefits on Hardship Grounds – Income Support* statement from DVA with your application. This statement must be dated no more than 21 days before you submit your application and must only refer to you, not other members of your family.

For more information about the DVA statement, and what services DVA offer to support veterans who are in financial hardship, refer to the DVA website at **dva.gov.au**

How much can I have released?

The amount that can be released on the grounds of severe financial hardship whilst under preservation age must be a single lump sum of:

- not less than $1 000 before tax, (unless you have less than $1 000 in your account. In this instance, the whole amount may be released); and
- a maximum of $10 000 before tax in any 12 month period.*

Note: A 12 month period starts from the date an amount is released on the grounds of severe financial hardship.

If you access your benefit after receiving income support payments for a total of 39 weeks since reaching your preservation age, and are not gainfully employed on a full-time or part-time basis, there is no limit on how much, or how often, you can access. You may also be eligible to claim your full benefit on age retirement grounds, but this is subject to scheme rules.
To determine your eligibility to claim your benefit, use the contact details at the bottom of this factsheet to get in touch. Refer to **csc.gov.au** for more information.

Specified compassionate grounds

What can I apply for?

If you don't qualify for early access to your super due to severe financial hardship but you are nevertheless having difficulty meeting your expenses, you may consider asking the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) to approve the release of benefits on compassionate grounds for unpaid expenses associated with:

- medical costs for treatment and/or travel to treatment for you or a dependant;
- payments against a loan or council rates so you don't lose your home;
- modifications to your home or car, or buying disability aids, necessitated by severe disability for you or a dependant;
- palliative care for you or a dependent; and/or
- funeral or other costs related to the death or burial for a dependant.

First, you need to apply to the ATO who will assess your claim. Where approved, you can then submit your request to us for processing. All enquiries regarding applications for early release on these grounds should be directed to the ATO at **ato.gov.au**.

If you have already received an ATO approval for the release of your benefit on specified grounds, please complete our **EAFR01 Early access – specified compassionate grounds** form and submit it to us.

You will need to provide a copy of your ATO approval letter with your application.

How much can I have released?

The ATO will determine the amount you may be eligible to receive. However, a lesser amount may be released depending on scheme rules.

Does tax apply to my withdrawal?

Your super can be made up of different components which attract different tax treatment. It is important to note that tax may be applied at the time of withdrawal. For more information on how tax is applied to components please refer to the ATO website at **ato.gov.au**

How does this release affect my final benefit?

Table 2 - Final benefit

Scheme	Contributing	Preserved	Ancillary
CSS	An Early Release Deduction Amount (ERDA) will be applied to your account. This will be reported on your annual statement and will be deducted from your final benefit.	An Early Release Deduction Amount (ERDA) will be applied to your account. This will be reported on your annual statement and will be deducted from your final benefit.	N/A
PSS	An Early Release Deduction Amount (ERDA) will be applied to your account. This will be reported on your annual statement and will be deducted from your final benefit.	Your preserved benefit will be reduced by the amount of the withdrawal and you will **forfeit any right to a pension in future.** You will also not be eligible to apply for retrospective invalidity benefits.	N/A
PSSap	Will reduce your account balance by the amount withdrawn.	Will reduce your account balance by the amount withdrawn.	Will reduce your account balance by the amount withdrawn.
MilitarySuper	N/A	Your components will be reduced by the amount of the withdrawal, where applicable. **If you don't have a preserved employer benefit, you will not be eligible to apply for retrospective invalidity benefits.**	Will reduce your account balance by the amount withdrawn.
ADF Super	Will reduce your account balance by the amount withdrawn.	Will reduce your account balance by the amount withdrawn.	N/A

Before you make any decisions regarding your super, you should obtain a copy of the relevant **Product Disclosure Statement (PDS)** for your scheme and consider its contents. You may also wish to consider seeking professional advice from a licensed financial planner. CSC's authorised financial planners provide a personalised service that takes your objectives, financial situation and needs into account. For more information about this service, or to book your first advice appointment, call **1300 277 777** or visit **csc.gov.au/advice**

How do I apply?

Severe financial hardship

1. Complete the **EAFR02 Early access – severe financial hardship** form or contact us on the telephone number below for your scheme to complete the application over the phone.
2. Provide your Customer Reference Number (CRN) in the Centrelink confirmation section, or attach your income support statement from DVA.
3. Attach evidence of your current account balance by way of a current bank statement or transaction history of your everyday account. If you have multiple everyday accounts, please provide evidence for all accounts.
4. Attach certified copies of your identification to prove your identity, or complete the **Identification requirements** section of the form and agree to have your documents verified electronically.
5. Refer to the lodgement section on the application form and send it to CSC.

Specified compassionate grounds

1. Complete **EAFR01 Early access—specified compassionate grounds**.
2. Attach certified copies of documents to prove your identity, or complete the **Identification requirements** section of the form and agree to have your documents verified electronically.
3. Refer to lodgement section on the application form and send it to CSC.

Where can I get more information?

CSS — Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme

EMAIL members@css.gov.au
PHONE 1300 000 277
FAX (02) 6275 7010
MAIL CSS
GPO Box 2252
Canberra ACT 2601
WEB csc.gov.au

PSS — Public Sector Superannuation Scheme

EMAIL members@pss.gov.au
PHONE 1300 000 377
FAX (02) 6275 7010
MAIL PSS
GPO Box 2252
Canberra ACT 2601
WEB csc.gov.au

PSSap — Public Sector Superannuation accumulation plan

EMAIL members.pssap@contact.csc.gov.au
PHONE 1300 725 171
MAIL PSSap
GPO Box 2252
Canberra ACT 2601
WEB csc.gov.au

ADF Super — Australian Defence Force Superannuation

EMAIL members.adfsuper@contact.csc.gov.au
PHONE 1300 203 439
MAIL ADF Super
GPO Box 2252
Canberra ACT 2601
WEB csc.gov.au

Military Super — Military Superannuation & Benefits Scheme

EMAIL members@enq.militarysuper.gov.au
PHONE 1300 006 727
FAX (02) 6275 7010
MAIL MilitarySuper
GPO Box 2252
Canberra ACT 2601
WEB csc.gov.au