

# SALARY SACRIFICE AND SAVE<sup>+</sup>

*Save a little now,  
benefit a whole lot later.*

FACT SHEET 2

1 JUNE 2017

The minimum employer contribution set out in the Superannuation Guarantee (SG) legislation is currently 9.50%<sup>1</sup> of your salary<sup>2</sup>. For many Australians, this is the only amount being saved for their future retirement.

## Planning to rely on the Age Pension?

The Age Pension provides a safety net for a basic standard of living. It may not be enough to provide you with the kind of lifestyle you want when you stop working. What's more by 1 July 2023, the Age Pension eligibility age will be increased to 67 years. It has also been proposed to increase this even further to age 70.

Make sure you have the financial support and comfortable lifestyle you want in retirement – consider topping up your super with extra contributions to boost your super savings.

Salary sacrifice is just one of a number of ways to get started.

From 1 July 2017, a transfer balance cap of \$1.6 million will apply on the amount of super you can transfer into the retirement phase once you choose to retire. This is known as the transfer balance cap and applies as a total across all your super accounts and not per fund. This cap will be indexed each year.

Whilst it is important to be aware of this transfer balance cap, there continues to be no limit on the amount you can hold in your *Accumulation account* that is concessional taxed at 15%, regardless of your age.

For more information, you can read our *Fees, costs and tax* fact sheet available at [www.ngssuper.com.au/PDS](http://www.ngssuper.com.au/PDS).

<sup>1</sup> The SG is proposed to increase in subsequent years until the rate reaches 12% by July 2025. For more information, refer to our *Opportunities and limits for super contributions* fact sheet on our website at [www.ngssuper.com.au/PDS](http://www.ngssuper.com.au/PDS).

<sup>2</sup> Ordinary time earnings – More information is available from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) website, [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au).

# SAVE NOW ENJOY LIFE TOMORROW

## Topping up your super using salary sacrifice contributions

Salary sacrifice is a tax-effective way to save for retirement. Putting a regular amount from your pay into your super is a great way to grow your super.

If you make a contribution to your super using salary sacrifice, it will only be taxed at the concessional contribution tax rate of 15%<sup>3</sup> when received by the Fund, which is quite a bit less than the marginal income tax rate of 32.5% (plus the Medicare levy of 2%) which applies for people on average incomes.

### Keep your whole situation in mind

Remember, salary sacrifice contributions count towards your income when assessing your eligibility for certain Government benefits, including the Government co-contribution. More information is available from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) website, [www.ato.gov.au/government-co-contribution](http://www.ato.gov.au/government-co-contribution).

## What's the difference between before- and after-tax contributions?

Before we go into how salary sacrifice contributions work, let's take a quick look at the difference between before- and after-tax contributions.

### Before-tax contributions (concessional contributions)

Super contributions made from your pay before income tax is deducted are referred to as before-tax or concessional contributions. These contributions include employer contributions and any salary sacrifice contributions that have been made with your employer's agreement.

Keep in mind that there is an annual limit on your before-tax contributions to super. Until 30 June 2017, this limit is \$30,000 for people under age 49 and \$35,000 for people aged 49 and over on 30 June 2016. From 1 July 2017, this limit will reduce to \$25,000 regardless of your age. For future financial years this limit may change. The really important thing to remember is that this limit includes the contributions that your employer makes on your behalf. Additionally, they are counted in the financial year that the Fund receives them – so you need to take that into account when considering making additional before-tax contributions. These contributions are taxed at 15%<sup>3</sup> when received by the Fund.

### After-tax contributions (non-concessional contributions)

After-tax contributions are made from money from which you've already paid tax. They might come from your after-tax pay or from other income you've earned elsewhere. These contributions aren't taxed again if you put them into super, only their investment earnings will be.

Until 30 June 2017, the annual limit on after-tax contributions is \$180,000 p.a. or, if you are under age 65 you can make after-tax contributions of up to \$540,000 over a three-year period – this is referred to as the bring forward rule.

You can trigger the 'bring forward' rule by making an after-tax contribution of between \$180,001 and \$540,000 in a financial year. For example, based on a person aged 60, you might choose to contribute \$350,000 in one year then \$190,000 in the next, however in the third year you wouldn't be able to make any after-tax contributions at all as you will exceed the \$540,000 limit. Alternatively, you might choose to make \$540,000 in after-tax contributions in one year and in the following two years no further contributions.

<sup>3</sup> Currently for individuals with a combined income exceeding \$300,000, a portion of your concessional contributions will be taxed at the rate of 30%. This high income tax threshold will be assessed by the ATO as part of your annual tax return. Combined income refers to the sum of your taxable income plus concessional contributions.

From 1 July 2017 the high income tax threshold will reduce from \$300,000 to \$250,000.

## Non-concessional limit from 1 July 2017

**From 1 July 2017, the non-concessional (after-tax) limit will be reduced from \$180,000 to \$100,000 per annum. Where your super balance as at 30 June the previous year is greater than \$1.6m, you will not be eligible to make after-tax contributions.**

The 3-year bring forward rule will now be \$300,000 for those aged under 65. If you are aged between 65 and 74, you will not be able to take advantage of the bring-forward rule and you will need to meet the work test<sup>4</sup> to make an after-tax contribution up to the annual cap amount.

A further constraint on the 3-year bring forward rule is that if your account balance is close to \$1.6m, you will only be able to bring forward the annual cap amount for the number of years that would take your balance to \$1.6m.

See table below for further clarification.

Super balance	Contribution and bring forward amount available
Less than \$1.3m	3 years (3 x \$100,000 = \$300,000)
\$1.3m – less than \$1.4m	3 years (3 x \$100,000 = \$300,000)
\$1.4m – less than \$1.5m	2 years (2 x \$100,000 = \$200,000)
\$1.5m – less than \$1.6m	1 year (1 x \$100,000 = \$100,000)
\$1.6m or more	Nil

Transitional arrangements will be in place for you if you have triggered the bring-forward rule in 2015/16 or 2016/17 but have not fully used your bring-forward before 1 July 2017. The amount of bring-forward available will be reduced to reflect the reduced annual contribution caps.

If you are interested in making a larger contribution and would like to discuss the timing that would meet your requirements, we have representatives who can provide you with general advice and explain the options available.

## What else?

Whether you're considering before-tax or after-tax contributions, remember that:

- contributions and investment earnings must be preserved. You may need to pay tax if a benefit is paid to you when you are under age 60.
- if you are aged between 65 and 74, we can accept your additional contributions provided you meet the work test (this means that you are gainfully employed for at least 40 hours in a period of not more than 30 consecutive days during the same financial year in which the contributions are made). If you are 75 or over, we can accept superannuation guarantee contributions from your employer but by law, we can't accept any voluntary contributions.

It is important to check that your employer 9.5% super guarantee contribution will not be impacted by any salary sacrifice. For most employers it does not – but it's best to check first.

Remember, after 1 July 2017 additional personal contributions can be claimed as a tax deduction up to the \$25,000 pa concessional contributions cap, so there's an alternative way to make before-tax contributions.

<sup>4</sup> The work test applies to people aged 65 to 74 years who want to make an after-tax (non-concessional) contribution. If you're aged 65 or over (but under the age of 75), you can make after-tax contribution if you're at least gainfully employed on a part-time basis. In short, you must work for at least 40 hours in a period of not more than 30 consecutive days in the financial year in which you plan to make a super contribution. The work test can be satisfied where you receive remuneration for your efforts. You will need to confirm with the ATO whether your specific arrangements satisfy the work test rules.

## How do before-tax and after-tax contributions compare?

To get an understanding of the difference between after-tax contributions and salary sacrifice contributions (illustrated for the 2016/17 financial year), let's take a look at the examples of Dave and Debbie.

### Example 1

#### Dave makes additional contributions

Dave is 53 years of age and has a salary of \$70,000 per year (before any deductions, including tax). He has decided that he would like to boost his retirement savings by making some additional contribution to his superannuation. He knows that he can afford to contribute approximately \$11,500 from his after-tax income but would like to know whether he should contribute this money to his super from before-tax or after-tax income.

Dave's taxation situation would be as follows, depending whether he makes after-tax or before-tax contributions:

	After-tax contribution	Before-tax contribution
Gross salary	\$70,000	\$70,000
Less salary sacrifice contribution	–	\$18,350 ( <i>before tax</i> )
New taxable income	\$70,000	\$51,650
Less income tax and Medicare Levy	\$15,697 <sup>5</sup>	\$9,141 <sup>5</sup>
Net income	\$54,303	\$42,509
Less after-tax super contribution	\$11,794	–
Net income	\$42,509	\$42,509

In this situation, Dave would contribute \$11,794 after tax. His assessable income is over the threshold for the Government co-contribution, so he is not eligible for this.

However, if he contributes \$18,350 before tax (which would result in a net contribution of \$15,597 after applying the 15% contributions tax) he would receive the same net income as he does if he makes an after-tax contribution of \$11,794.

If Dave makes an \$11,794 after-tax contribution, he ends up with \$42,509 of net income. If Dave makes an \$18,350 before tax contribution (\$15,597 after contributions tax), his income tax is reduced from \$15,697 to \$9,141 and he also saves \$3,803<sup>6</sup> extra in his super while still enjoying the same cash in hand in his pay (net income).

#### Does Dave get a co-contribution?

Dave's salary sacrifice contributions are included in his assessable income for the co-contribution income test, which means his income is well over the co-contribution earning limit. Regardless of whether Dave made an after-tax contribution, he would not qualify for a co-contribution.

<sup>5</sup> Based on current marginal tax rates, 2% Medicare Levy and Low-Income Tax Offset, but without consideration being made for any other tax rebates or offsets that you may be eligible for or any other taxable income you may receive, which could affect your eligibility for any Government co-contribution benefit.

<sup>6</sup> No investment earning assumptions have been made in the above calculations.

## Example 2

### Debbie makes additional contributions; she's also eligible for a Government co-contribution

Debbie is 37 and has a salary of \$35,000 per year (before any deductions, including tax) and wants to top up her superannuation by making a contribution of \$2,000. She's unsure whether to make this contribution to her super from her before-tax or after-tax salary.

The following tables are used for comparison:

After-tax contribution	
Gross salary income	\$35,000
Less income tax and Medicare Levy	\$3,447
Net disposable income	\$31,553
Less after-tax super contribution	\$2,000
Net income	\$29,553

Debbie contributes \$2,000 from her after-tax income and is also eligible for approximately \$500 in a Government co-contribution. By making an after-tax contribution, Debbie's contribution to super is \$2,500.

Alternatively, if Debbie makes an after-tax contribution of \$1,000 and a before-tax contribution of \$1,266 (\$1,076 after applying the 15% contributions tax) she would receive the same net income as she does if she makes only an after-tax contribution. In addition, Debbie will receive the benefit of a Government co-contribution of \$500.

Salary sacrifice (before-tax) and after-tax contributions	
Gross salary income	\$35,000
Less salary sacrifice contribution	\$1,266 (before tax)
New taxable income	\$33,734
Less income tax and Medicare Levy	\$3,181 <sup>6</sup>
Net disposable income	\$30,553
Less after-tax super contribution	\$1,000
Net income	\$29,553

### Let's look at how these two scenarios differ

In this scenario, Debbie's net income remains the same but her income tax is reduced from \$3,447 to \$3,181 (a saving of \$266) and she will continue to receive the same Government co-contribution benefit of \$500.

Debbie's contribution to super also increases to \$2,576 (\$1,076 after-tax + \$1,000 + \$500).

### Low income superannuation tax offset

From 1 July 2017, the Government will introduce a low income superannuation tax offset (LISTO), which will replace the low income superannuation contribution (LISC).

LISTO will provide continued support for low-income earners to ensure they do not pay more tax on their super contributions than on their take-home pay. You will be eligible for a LISTO contribution to your super fund if your adjusted taxable income is \$37,000 or less. The LISTO contribution will be equal to 15% of the total before-tax (concessional) contribution for an income year, capped at \$500.

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## More information?

If you are thinking about making salary sacrifice contributions, consider obtaining professional advice to understand how this works for your personal situation and how you might be able to combine before-tax and after-tax contributions to your advantage. NGS Super offers a financial planning service. To make an appointment or to speak with a planner, call **1300 133 177**.

We also have representatives who can provide you with general advice and explain the options available through NGS Super.

[www.ngssuper.com.au](http://www.ngssuper.com.au)  
**1300 133 177**

### Contact us

Our website is your one-stop shop for information about NGS Super.

You can also contact us at [www.ngssuper.com.au/contact-us](http://www.ngssuper.com.au/contact-us) or call our Customer Service Team on **1300 133 177** between 8.00am and 8.00pm (AEST or AEDT), Monday to Friday.

### Important information

You should consider all the information contained in the Product Disclosure Statement dated 1 June 2017 and incorporated fact sheets before making a decision about investing in NGS Super.

The information provided in this fact sheet is general information only and does not take into account your objectives, financial situation or needs. Before making a financial decision, please assess the appropriateness of the information to your individual circumstances and consider seeking professional advice.

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