



Australian Government

Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation

CSS

Commonwealth  
Superannuation  
Scheme

# Product Disclosure Statement

Sixth edition,  
issued 1 November 2013

# Contents

1. About the CSS .....	2
2. How super works .....	3
3. Benefits of investing with the CSS.....	3
4. Risks of super.....	4
5. How we invest your money.....	5
6. Fees and costs .....	5
7. How super is taxed.....	7
8. Insurance in your super.....	7
9. How to open an account.....	8



## Contact us

If you would like us to send you a copy of this PDS or any additional information referred to, or if you have any questions about the content or the CSS, call us on **1300 000 277** or contact us using the details located at the back of this publication.

## 1. About the CSS

The Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme (CSS or the fund) (ABN 19 415 776 361, RSE R1004649) was established by the *Superannuation Act 1976*, exclusively for employees of the Australian Government and other participating employers.

The CSS is a hybrid super fund, which means that it is a combination of two types of funds – a defined benefit fund and an accumulation fund. Membership of the CSS closed to new members from 1 July 1990. However, if you are a CSS deferred benefit member or CSS invalidity pensioner and you return to eligible employment you may be able to rejoin the CSS as a contributing member, provided your new employer participates in the CSS and you meet the eligibility requirements. An associate membership may also be opened as a result of a family law split. CSS members can invest in the **Default Fund** or **Cash Investment Option**.

In addition to a CSS retirement benefit, which can generally be taken as a lump sum and/or a pension, the CSS offers partial invalidity, invalidity retirement and death benefits at no cost. See sections 3 and 8 for more details.

The CSS is managed by CSC (ABN 48 882 817 243, AFSL 238069, RSEL L0001397). CSC is licensed under the *Corporations Act 2001* and the *Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Act 1993*. It is the trustee of four regulated superannuation schemes: the CSS, the Public Sector Superannuation Scheme (PSS), the Public Sector Superannuation accumulation plan (PSSap), the Military Superannuation and Benefits Scheme (MSBS) and also administers the five unregulated/exempt public sector schemes. With over 30 years experience, CSC is responsible for all aspects of the CSS, including investment strategy, administration and member communications. For more information visit [csc.gov.au](http://csc.gov.au)



### Important note about this PDS

This PDS is a summary of significant information and contains a number of references to important information. Information referred to in a coloured box marked with **!** forms part of the PDS. Other information referred to does not form part of this PDS. You should consider that information before making a decision about the CSS.

Any information in this document is general information only and does not take account of your personal financial situation or needs. You should obtain financial advice tailored to your personal circumstances.

Information in this document may change from time to time. Information that is not materially adverse to you may be updated on our website, [csc.gov.au](http://csc.gov.au), or contact us for a free paper copy. You can find information about product dashboards, director and executive officer remuneration and other mandated disclosure materials (as required by law) in the **About us** section of the website.

The offer to which this document relates is available only to persons eligible to become a member of the CSS under the *Superannuation Act 1976*, receiving this document (electronically or otherwise) in Australia.

## 2. How super works

Superannuation (super) is a long-term way to save for your retirement which is, in part, compulsory and most people have the right to choose into which superannuation entity their employer should direct their superannuation guarantee contributions.

### Putting money into your super

In the CSS you can choose to pay basic contributions of 5%, supplementary contributions (any amount over 5%), or make no contributions. You can also make voluntary contributions to your super from your after tax salary and transfer in super from other funds. Please note that there are limitations on the contributions you can make to your super and you may, depending on your income, also be entitled to government co-contributions.

In the CSS your employer makes contributions to your account in two different ways:

1. a fortnightly contribution – the productivity component (paid fortnightly based on your super salary), and
2. an employer component that is calculated when you leave the CSS and claim a benefit.

Basic and supplementary contributions (member component), the productivity component, amounts transferred from other super funds and government co-contributions are accumulation components and are affected by fund earnings. The amount you contribute may affect your benefit and the amount you can withdraw at retirement.

### Withdrawing your super

The CPI-indexed pension option is generally defined by a formula based on your final super salary, your length of contributory service and your age at exit. If you elect to defer your benefit, your indexed pension will be determined by the amount of basic contributions and earnings on those contributions at the time you claim your benefit. The remainder of your deferred benefit can be taken as a lump sum or converted to a non-indexed pension.

There are limitations on making withdrawals from your super. In most cases, you can only withdraw your super after reaching minimum retirement age. However, you may be able to access your super or some component of it earlier in some cases.

For more information on your CSS retirement benefit refer to the various factsheets available on our website. You are encouraged to refer to this information as it is an important component of your benefit and can be complex.

### Super and tax

The Government provides tax savings in relation to superannuation. For more information, go to section 7.

## 3. Benefits of investing with the CSS

### Competitive costs

Employers contribute toward the costs of administering the CSS, which means that no administration fees are deducted from your account. The CSS pays no commissions to financial advisers. There are however, some fees and charges. For more information, go to section 6.

### Investment choice

You can choose to invest in the **Default Fund** or the **Cash Investment Option** to suit your goals and risk tolerance. For more information, go to section 5.

### Invalidity and death benefits

The CSS offers partial invalidity, invalidity retirement and death benefits at no cost. For more information, go to section 8.

### Information

Our member communications program brings information to you at your place of work with educational workshops, email updates and online services at your fingertips. You can reach us when you need to by email, phone, fax and letter – whichever is most convenient for you.

### Understanding your employment conditions

We work closely with employers for the benefit of members. Our organisation has extensive experience in providing superannuation services to employees of the Australian Government and participating employers.

### Financial advice

CSC has partnered with experienced financial planners from Industry Fund Services to bring a personal financial advice service to you. It is 'fee for service' advice, which means you receive a fixed quote up front. There are no obligations, commissions or hidden fees. To arrange an initial advice appointment please call **1300 277 777** during business hours.

For more information about the CSS go to [css.gov.au](http://css.gov.au)

### PSSap Ancillary membership

Salary sacrifice contributions and transfer in amounts held in other superannuation accounts can be made into the PSSap (as an Ancillary Member) by CSS members currently employed by the Australian Government, or other eligible employers. For more information go to [pssap.gov.au](http://pssap.gov.au)

### CSC retirement income (CSCri)

CSS members can also open a CSCri account to take up a standard or transition to retirement income stream. For more information go to [cscri.gov.au](http://cscri.gov.au)

## 4. Risks of super

Super, like any investment, has some level of risk. The accumulation components of your super will be invested in investment options which have exposure to a range of asset classes with different weightings and different risk levels. The likely investment return and the level of risk of losing money are different for each investment option depending on the underlying mix of assets. Those assets with potentially the highest return over the longer term (such as equities) also have the highest risk of losing their value in the shorter term.

Risk can be managed and even minimised, but cannot be eliminated. No matter how skilled the investment manager, or how strong performance has been in the past, the level of returns will vary, and future returns may differ from past returns. Returns applying to your

accumulation component are not guaranteed and there is always a chance you could receive less than you invested. There is a risk that the amount of your superannuation benefit (including contributions and returns on your accumulation component) may not be enough to provide adequately for your retirement. Superannuation laws are also subject to change.

The opportunity to choose how you invest your super carries with it a responsibility to make well-informed decisions suitable to your personal objectives, financial situation and needs. The level of risk appropriate for each person will vary depending on a range of factors, including age, investment time frames, risk tolerance and other investments.

Significant risks which may affect the accumulation components of your super are outlined in the following table.

Risk	Description
Inflation	Inflation may exceed the return on investment.
Asset investment risk	Individual assets we buy can (and do) fall in value for many reasons, such as changes in the internal operations or management of a fund or company we invest in, or in its business environment.
Market risk	Economic, technological, political or legal conditions, and even market sentiment, can (and do) change, and this can affect the value of investments.
Interest rate risk	Changes in interest rates can have a positive or negative impact directly or indirectly on investment value or returns.
Currency risk	We invest in other countries and if their currencies change in value relative to the Australian dollar, the value of the investments can change.
Derivatives risk	We may use derivatives to reduce risk or gain exposure to investment markets when we think it appropriate. Risks associated with these derivatives include the value of the derivative failing to move in line with the underlying asset, market or index.
Counterparty risk	Counterparty risk is the risk that the other party to a contract cannot meet its obligations under the contract. This may have a negative effect on the value of the investments.
Fund risk	Risks particular to the fund include that it could cease operation, fraud against CSC could occur, Board restructure and/or our investment professionals could change.
Liquidity risk	Assets that we invest in can become difficult to trade under certain market conditions.
Super laws*	Changes are frequently made to superannuation law and may affect your benefit and your ability to access it.
Changes to tax*	Changes can occur to taxes on investments or super generally, which may affect the value of your investment or benefit.

\* These risks also apply to the defined benefit component of the CSS.

If you require assistance to understand investment risk and to determine the investment option which is right for you, please contact a licensed financial adviser.



Further information about the risks of the CSS (including the investment options) is available on our website. You should read the important information about risk before making a decision. Go to the **Investment options and risk** booklet available at [css.gov.au/pds](https://css.gov.au/pds). The material relating to risk may change between the time when you read this Statement and the day when you acquire the product.

## 5. How we invest your money

You have the option of investing in either the **Default Fund** or **Cash Investment Option**. The way the investment options impact on the accumulation component of your benefit depends on whether you are a contributing, deferred benefit or associate member.



When choosing an investment option you must consider the:

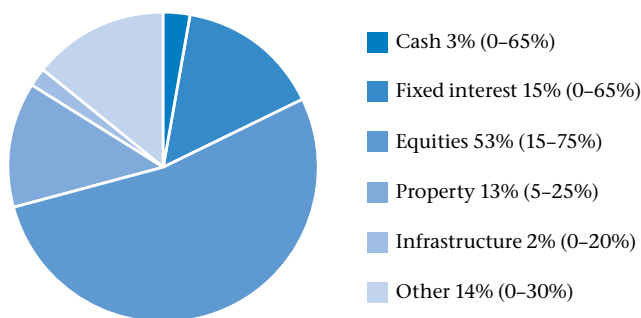
- > amount of time the money will be invested before retirement
- > likely investment performance, and
- > level of risk and fluctuation in the value of the investment that you can tolerate.

### Default Fund

If you do not choose an investment option, we will invest your money in our default option called the Default Fund. This investment option invests across a range of asset classes and has a medium-to-high level of risk. The investment objective of the Default Fund is to outperform the Consumer Price Index (CPI) by 3.5% per annum over 10 years.

This investment option is intended for those investors prepared to take more risk in exchange for potentially higher returns on their investment over the medium-to-long term. The minimum suggested timeframe for holding this option is 10 years. With a medium-to-high risk rating, it is estimated that the option will have a negative return (ie will lose value) in three to four years of any 20 year period.

The following graph sets out the type of assets that make up the Default Fund option, their target and permitted range of asset allocations.



You should read the important information about the investment options before making a decision. Go to the **Investment options and risk** booklet available at [css.gov.au/pds](http://css.gov.au/pds). The material relating to investment options may change between the time when you read this Statement and the day when you acquire the product.

## 6. Fees and costs



### Did you know?

Small differences in both investment performance and fees and costs can have a substantial impact on your long-term returns.

For example, total annual fees and costs of 2% of your account balance rather than 1% could reduce your return by up to 20% over a 30-year period (for example, reduce it from \$100,000 to \$80,000).

You should consider whether features such as superior investment performance or the provision of better member services justify higher fees and costs.

Your employer may be able to negotiate to pay lower administration fees.\* Ask the fund or your financial adviser.

### To find out more

If you would like to find out more, or see the impact of the fees based on your own circumstances, the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) website ([moneysmart.gov.au](http://moneysmart.gov.au)) has a superannuation calculator to help you check out different fee options.

\* We are required by law to provide you with this information. As you are not charged administration fees you, or your employer, cannot negotiate to pay lower administration fees. The calculator on the ASIC website can be used to calculate the effect of fees and costs on account balances.

## Fees and costs for the Default Fund

As a member of the CSS you do not pay any administration, switching, exit or any other ongoing administration fees as these costs are covered by your employer (or your former employer if you are a deferred benefit member).

The main fees and costs involved in investing in the Default Fund are set out below. The information in this table can be used to compare costs between different superannuation products. Fees and costs are paid by you or from the fund assets as a whole, depending on the fee charged.

Type of fee	Amount	How and when paid
Investment fee †	Nil	
Administration fee	Nil	
Buy-sell spread	Nil	
Switching fee	Nil	
Exit fee	Nil	
Advice fees relating to all members investing in a particular product or investment option	Nil	No advice fees are deducted from your account. You may be charged a 'fee for service' if you obtain financial advice. Refer to the <b>Fees and other costs</b> booklet available at <a href="http://css.gov.au/pds">css.gov.au/pds</a>
Other fees and costs	Refer to the <b>Fees and other costs</b> booklet available at <a href="http://css.gov.au/pds">css.gov.au/pds</a>	
Indirect cost ratio †	Estimated at 0.82% pa of the average net assets of the Default Fund. <b>plus</b> An estimated 0.11% pa of the average net assets of the Balanced investment option to fund the operational risk reserve.^	Deducted from the value of the underlying assets before determining the Default Fund earning rates each business day.

† We do not charge any investment fees directly to your account. We pay investment fees and costs – these include fees paid to investment managers, custodian costs, investment consulting costs, internal investment costs and other expenses incurred in investing the assets of the fund. These fees and costs are reflected in the indirect cost ratio and are deducted from the overall investment returns before determining the unit price. They are not directly deducted from your account as a separate transaction.

^ Funding and maintenance of an operational risk reserve is a requirement of the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority. For more information about the operational risk reserve, go to the **Investment options and risk** booklet available at [css.gov.au/pds](http://css.gov.au/pds)

### Changes to fees and costs

We may change these fees and costs from time to time without your consent. We will let you know of any fee change that we believe will materially affect you at least 30 days before the change takes effect.



We do not pay commissions or adviser service fees to financial advisers. However you may pay 'fee for service' fees if you consult a financial adviser. Refer to the Statement of Advice from your financial adviser for more details.



You should read the important information about all fees and other costs before making a decision. Go to the **Fees and other costs** booklet available at [css.gov.au/pds](http://css.gov.au/pds). More information on fee definitions is also available at [css.gov.au/glossary](http://css.gov.au/glossary). The material relating to fees and other costs may change between the time when you read this Statement and the day when you acquire the product.



## 7. How super is taxed

Super can be taxed in three ways:

- > contributions going into a fund can be taxed
- > investment earnings of a fund can be taxed, and
- > tax may be payable on the benefits you receive from a fund.

### Tax on contributions

Member contributions paid to the CSS are paid from your after-tax income and are generally not subject to contributions tax. These contributions are known as non-concessional contributions for tax purposes.

Employer productivity contributions are taxed at 15% – tax is deducted from the contributions when we receive them from your employer. These contributions are known as concessional contributions for tax purposes.

Transfers from other funds into the CSS will not be taxed at the time of the rollover, except where the rollover contains an untaxed component, which will be taxed at 15%.

### Tax on fund earnings

Investment earnings of the fund are taxed at concessional rates as the CSS is a complying superannuation fund. Earnings are taxed at a concessional tax rate of 15%. The effective rate of tax incurred may actually be less than this because superannuation funds receive a capital gains tax discount on some capital gains as well as franking credits.

### Tax on benefits

Tax may be payable when you receive a benefit from the fund. The amount of tax payable on your benefit will depend on factors such as your age, the type of benefit, whether the benefit is sourced from contributions paid into the CSS and earnings on those contributions (taxed source) or from other sources (untaxed source).

Benefits can be paid as a lump sum, pension or a combination of both. You will need to refer to the **Tax and your CSS super** booklet for more information on the rate of tax payable, as the rate of tax payable depends on many factors.

### Tax file number (TFN)

We are authorised to collect your TFN under the *Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Act 1993*. You do not have to supply it, but if you do not give us your TFN:

- > benefits paid to you may be subject to a higher rate of tax (if you later supply your TFN, you may reclaim the additional tax from the Australian Taxation Office)
- > we will not be permitted to accept contributions (other than employer contributions), for you and
- > your employer contributions will be taxed at a higher rate – although a refund may be available on the extra tax paid after you supply the TFN, and
- > it will be more difficult and could take longer for us to identify, consolidate and transfer your superannuation accounts.



You should supply your TFN as part of investing in the CSS.

You will also be charged excess tax if the total of your contributions across all your superannuation accounts exceed the contribution caps.

Tax in super is very complex and subject to change from time to time. This section of the PDS is only intended to provide a summary about the tax implications of super. We recommend that you seek advice from a licensed professional and refer to the ATO website [ato.gov.au](http://ato.gov.au)

You should read the important information about tax and your super benefit before making a decision. Go to the **Tax and your CSS super** booklet available at [css.gov.au/pds](http://css.gov.au/pds). The material relating to tax may change between the time when you read this Statement and the day when you acquire the product.

## 8. Insurance in your super

Death, partial invalidity and invalidity retirement benefits are available through the CSS to help protect your current lifestyle and provide for you or your family in the event of sickness, injury or death. These benefits are a feature of your CSS membership and are provided at no cost – you do not need to apply and you cannot cancel your benefit entitlement.

### Invalidity retirement benefits

If you are approved for invalidity retirement your benefit will be based on your entitlement had you worked to maximum retirement age (generally 65). The calculation of an invalidity retirement benefit for deferred benefit members depends on your accumulated basic contributions, a multiple and a pension conversion factor.

The calculation of an invalidity retirement benefit depends on a number of factors, including:

- > your final salary, contributory membership and prospective membership
- > whether you were a member of the former Provident Fund, and
- > whether a Benefit Classification Certificate (BCC) lists any pre-existing medical conditions or pre-existing medical conditions apply to you.

### Partial invalidity benefit

A partial invalidity pension is a form of income maintenance. It is paid as a pension when your salary is permanently reduced due to a medical condition.

A partial invalidity pension is paid in addition to your new salary, and is worked out using a formula which takes into account the amount you would have received if you were entitled to a full invalidity pension and your salary before and after you became entitled to a partial invalidity pension.

A partial invalidity pension is not paid where a member:

- > has reached maximum retiring age (usually 65)
- > has less than 8 years contributory membership and the reduction in salary is caused (or substantially contributed to) by a medical condition specified in a Benefit Classification Certificate (BCC)
- > if the medical condition has been caused by wilful action for the purpose of obtaining an invalidity benefit
- > ceases to be a member of the CSS, and
- > is entitled to compensation under a Commonwealth or State or Territory law providing for worker's compensation.

A partial invalidity pension is cancelled when a member ceases to be an eligible employee or the rate of salary (not including the partial invalidity pension) becomes equal to or greater than the salary received before invalidity retirement or the reduced salary received due to medical grounds.

## Death benefits

Benefits are payable to your eligible spouse and/or children should you die while you are a contributing member, a deferred benefit member or after retirement provided you were receiving a CSS pension. Death benefits for contributing and deferred benefit members who die before reaching maximum retiring age will be a percentage of the invalidity pension that would have been payable had the member retired on invalidity grounds. Death benefits for contributing members who die after reaching maximum retiring age will be based on the age retirement pension that would have been payable.

If a CSS pensioner dies, the eligible spouse and/or children will be entitled to receive a pension that is a percentage of the pension being paid to the member at the time of their death. The percentage payable will depend on the number of children and will also depend on whether the member chose the higher dependant pension option at the time of retirement. Children's pensions are only payable until age 16 or, if the child is in full-time education, until age 25.



You should read the important information about death and invalidity benefits before making a decision. The **Death and invalidity benefits** booklet provides important information on your death and invalidity benefits including eligibility requirements, applicable conditions and exclusions and entitlements. Go to [css.gov.au/pds](https://css.gov.au/pds). The material relating to death and invalidity benefits may change between the time when you read this Statement and the day when you acquire the product.

## 9. How to open an account

Membership of the CSS closed to new members from 1 July 1990. However, if you are a CSS deferred benefit member or CSS invalidity pensioner and you return to eligible employment, you may be required, or you may have the option, to rejoin the CSS. To rejoin the CSS you will need to contact your employer.


## Making a complaint about your super

Call us on **1300 000 277**. If you are not satisfied with the response, ask to speak to a supervisor. If you still feel the issue has not been explained or resolved to your satisfaction, ask to be transferred to the CSS Complaints Officer or write to the CSS Complaints Officer at the address provided below or by email at [complaints@css.gov.au](mailto:complaints@css.gov.au)

 **EMAIL**  
[members@css.gov.au](mailto:members@css.gov.au)

 **PHONE**  
1300 000 277

 **FINANCIAL ADVICE**  
1300 277 777

 **POST**  
CSS  
GPO Box 2252  
Canberra ACT 2601

 **WEB**  
[css.gov.au](https://css.gov.au)

 **OVERSEAS CALLERS**  
+61 2 6272 9621

 **FAX**  
(02) 6272 9612