

The super number that could make or break your contribution strategy BONUS (13)

Most people know roughly how much they have in super. Far fewer know the one number that can determine which contribution strategies are available to them. That number is your total super balance (TSB).

Your TSB is the combined value of all your super interests across all your super funds. In simple terms, it is the total amount you have in super at a point in time. It includes money in accumulation phase as well as money supporting pensions, such as an account-based pension.

Importantly, your TSB is generally measured at 30 June each year, and that figure can affect what you are able to do from 1 July onwards.

Why you should know your TSB

Your TSB can affect a range of contribution strategies. It can determine whether you are able to make non-concessional contributions, which are contributions made from your after-tax money. It can also affect whether you are able to use the bring-forward rule, which allows eligible people to contribute more than the standard annual cap.

Non-concessional contributions

From 1 July 2026, if your TSB is \$2.1 million or more on 30 June 2026, you will not be able to make further non-concessional contributions in the 2026–27 financial year. If your TSB is \$1.84 million or more, your ability to access the full bring-forward rule, allowing up to three years' worth of contributions in a single year, will also be restricted. By comparison, in the current financial year, these thresholds are based on the existing \$2 million cap, which restricts individuals above that level from making additional non-concessional contributions.

Concessional contributions

Your TSB does not affect your ability to make standard concessional contributions up to the annual cap. These include employer contributions, salary sacrifice contributions and personal deductible contributions. However, your TSB does affect whether you can use catch-up concessional contributions. This strategy allows you to use unused concessional cap amounts from the previous five financial years. To be eligible, your TSB must be less than \$500,000 at 30 June of the previous financial year. If your balance is \$500,000 or more at that date, you cannot use the catch-up rules in the following year.

Planning ahead

This is why your TSB is such an important number and why it is worth reviewing before 30 June each year. In some cases, it may make sense to hold off on making contributions just before year end if doing so could preserve access to larger contribution opportunities in the new financial year.

If you have already satisfied a condition of release, such as retirement, it may also be worth considering whether withdrawing a small amount from super before 30 June could reduce your TSB enough to keep you below an important threshold. In the right circumstances, that can be the difference between missing out on a strategy and being able to contribute more to super in the following year.