

Worked in Australia? Don't Lose Track of Your Super!

Many Irish people have spent time living and working in Australia – and plenty still do, whether for a few years or for the long term. If you worked there, your employer will almost certainly have paid into a pension arrangement known as the superannuation scheme (“super”) on your behalf. What’s less well known is what happens to those savings if you return to Ireland, and whether you can access them through the Departing Australia Superannuation Payment (DASP).

This article explains the key rules, how residency status affects eligibility, and what options Irish clients have when they receive their DASP.

The issue as to whether or not these pension benefits can be brought back to Ireland has been raised with ourselves in Zurich frequently in the last few years. Our experience has been that Australian providers will not allow for the direct transfer of these funds to a pension arrangement in Ireland. However they will provide a payment directly to the member in respect of the benefits accrued in certain circumstances. The payment in question is known as the Departing Australia Superannuation Payment (DASP).

Whether or not an individual may qualify for the payment depends on their residency status on leaving Australia.

A question of residency

Our understanding is that those individuals who become citizens of Australia will not qualify for a DASP and will be unable to access their Australian superannuation savings until they reach retirement age for the plan in Australia. This would also be the case for those leaving Australia who had previously held or obtained citizenship in New Zealand. There are some exceptions regarding this relating to health and financial circumstances – but it’s best to contact your provider in Australia to discuss the specifics of the plan.

If the individual became a permanent resident of Australia before they moved back to Ireland then

they will not qualify for a DASP immediately, however they may later become eligible for same if their permanent residency status in Australia expires. Our understanding is that permanent resident status can be held by those leaving Australia for 5 years after leaving the country therefore it may take up to 5 years to become eligible to receive the DASP in these circumstances.

If the individual was a temporary resident then the situation is different. Temporary residents who permanently leave Australia are immediately entitled to receive the DASP.

Generally, you can claim a DASP if the following apply:

- You qualified for superannuation contributions while working in Australia.
- Your temporary visa has ceased to be in effect (for example, it has expired or been cancelled).
- Your status as a Permanent Resident (if you held same) of Australia has ceased to be in effect.
- You have left Australia.
- You are not an Australian or New Zealand citizen.



The DASP includes both a tax free and taxable component. The rates of taxation depend on the visa held during your stay in Australia. The provider in Australia will provide a net amount after the relevant taxes are deducted.

If you leave the country, and qualify for a DASP but haven't claimed the payment within 6 months of leaving then your provider will transfer the money to the Australian Tax Office. After that, you'll need to approach the Australian Tax Office, who can also process the payment.

The payment is therefore not an overseas transfer as such but instead a net payment received after taxation has been applied similar to a refund of contributions in this state but encapsulating the employer contribution received.

The individual will therefore need to determine how they wish to use these funds thereafter and their own personal circumstances will be a deciding factor in each case. Given the age profile of those returning it is likely that many will wish to use these funds towards a deposit on a property, however its

also possible that these funds could be invested in Ireland in a savings product to plan for other financial goals or used to increase saving for retirement.

In all cases, it important that clients seek financial advice from a qualified financial advisor who can advise based on their particular circumstances.

Conclusion

It's likely that each year Irish people in Australia leave behind unclaimed superannuation when they return home, often without realising they may be eligible to claim their contributions. For any clients you encounter who have previously spent time in Australia or are considering returning home, make sure they check if they are entitled to a Departing Australia Superannuation Payment. This is their money so they should make every effort to claim it.

This publication has been prepared for general guidance on matters of interest only and does not constitute professional advice. You should not act upon the information contained in this publication without obtaining specific professional advice.

Further information

If you are concerned about any issues raised in this article or if you need to discuss any particular case you may have, contact the **Technical Services** on **01 209 2020**.



Click [here](#) for further information from the Australian government on locating and claiming your payment!

Zurich Life Assurance plc

Zurich House, Frascati Road, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, A94 X9Y3, Ireland.
Telephone: 01 283 1301 Fax: 01 283 1578 Website: www.zurich.ie
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