KEY FINANCIAL PLANNERS
WEALTH SPECIALISTS

Spring Edition | September – November 2026

# NEWSLETTER

## Planning, Protecting and Growing Your Wealth

## In This Issue

**New Financial Year, New Super Caps**

Contribution limits have gone up from 1 July. See what's changed and whether it opens up an opportunity for you.

**Spring Clean Your Finances: A Simple 3-Step Check-Up**

A few small checks this season, on spending, insurance and savings, can make a real difference. Here's where to start.

**Rates on Hold: What It Means for Your Mortgage and Savings**

The RBA has paused after three rate rises this year. We break down what a hold means for borrowers and savers, and what to watch for next.

**Save the Date: Our Annual Golf Day Returns This October**

We're back on the green this Spring. Celebrate with us for a great day out.

We unpack what's happening with interest rates and markets both here and overseas, walk through the superannuation changes that landed on 1 July, and share some practical, everyday ideas for looking after your finances and your wellbeing this season. As always, our door is open if any of this raises questions specific to your situation.

admin@keyfinancial.net.au | keyfinancialplanners.net.au | (08) 8561 2400 | 23 Railway Tce, Nuriootpa, SA 5355

# Rates on Hold: What the RBA's Latest Decision Means for Your Mortgage and Savings

It's been a big year for interest rates. Since February, the **Reserve Bank of Australia** has lifted the cash rate three times, taking it **from 3.60% to 4.35%** as it worked to bring inflation back under control. Heading into its August meeting, though, the tone shifted. Inflation for the June quarter came in a little softer than expected, and all four major banks moved to a "hold" call rather than tipping a fourth rise.

For anyone with **a variable mortgage**, that's a welcome pause. It doesn't mean rates are coming down any time soon, but it does suggest the sharpest part of this tightening cycle may be behind us. If you're on a fixed rate due to roll off in the coming months, it's worth checking what rate you'd land on, and whether locking in again or moving to variable makes more sense for your situation.

**Savers and retirees** drawing an income from cash and term deposits have actually benefited from higher rates this year, with returns on conservative savings sitting at levels many haven't seen in over a decade. If your emergency fund has been sitting in a low-interest account out of habit, this is a good moment to check whether it's still working as hard as it could be.

Looking ahead, most economists expect the RBA to hold steady through the rest of 2026, though a handful still see room for one more move if inflation reaccelerates. Rather than trying to guess the next decision, the more useful approach is to **make sure your savings strategy, investments and overall financial plan can comfortably handle a range of outcomes**. If you'd like a second opinion on how your savings or investment strategy are positioned for what's ahead, we're always happy to run the numbers with you.

# Markets at Record Highs: Not All Stocks Are Along for the Ride

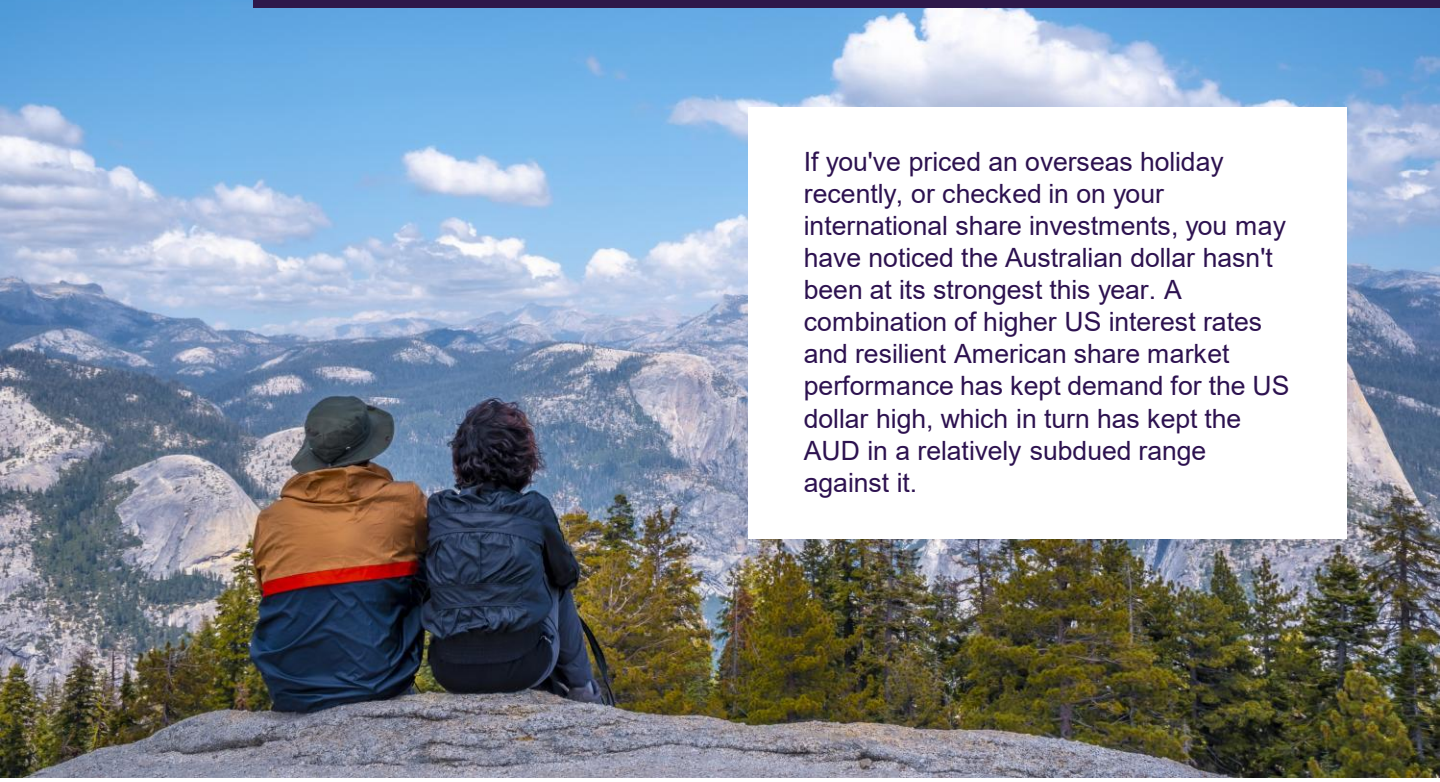
**Global share markets** have had a strong run in 2026, with several major indices sitting near record highs. It's genuinely good news for anyone invested for the long term, and if you check your super or investment balance this quarter, there's a good chance you'll like what you see.

But it's worth understanding what's actually driving those headline numbers. A closer look shows that a relatively small group of companies, many of them large technology firms riding the wave of **AI investment**, are doing most of the heavy lifting. Beneath the surface, market "breadth" (a measure of how many stocks are actually participating in the rally) has been narrowing. In plain terms, the average is being pulled up by a few big winners, not lifted evenly across the board.

This isn't a reason for alarm. It's simply a reminder of something we say often: **strong headline returns** can mask a lot of variation underneath, and that's exactly why **diversification matters**. A portfolio spread across different sectors, company sizes and regions is generally better placed to ride out a shift in market leadership than one concentrated in whichever theme is hottest at the time.

With Q2 company earnings season wrapped up and central bankers gathering for their annual Jackson Hole symposium in late August, we'll likely get clearer signals in coming months about where interest rates and markets are heading next. In the meantime, the fundamentals of good investing haven't changed: **stay diversified, stay invested**, and **avoid making big decisions based on short-term headlines**. If it's been a while since your portfolio was reviewed against your goals and risk tolerance, now's a good time to check in.

# Australian Dollar Watch: What a Stronger Greenback Means for Your Portfolio and Your Next Overseas Trip



If you've priced an overseas holiday recently, or checked in on your international share investments, you may have noticed the Australian dollar hasn't been at its strongest this year. A combination of higher US interest rates and resilient American share market performance has kept demand for the US dollar high, which in turn has kept the AUD in a relatively subdued range against it.

For everyday Australians, this shows up in a few practical ways. If you're planning to travel to the US, Europe, or anywhere your money **converts through USD**, your dollar may not stretch quite as far as it has in some previous years, so it's worth factoring into your travel budget. If you send money overseas to family, or you're planning an international purchase, **timing and comparing exchange rates** can make a genuine difference.

For **investors**, a softer Aussie dollar isn't necessarily bad news. If you hold international shares or global funds that aren't hedged back to Australian dollars, currency movements can work in your favour when the AUD is weaker, boosting the value of those offshore holdings when converted back home. It's a good reminder of why many portfolios deliberately hold a mix of hedged and unhedged international exposure, to balance out currency swings either way.

The **exchange rate** is one of those things that's easy to overthink and hard to predict with confidence, even for professional forecasters. Rather than trying to time it perfectly, it's more useful to understand how it affects your specific situation, whether that's an upcoming trip, an inheritance from overseas, or your investment mix, and plan accordingly.

Graph of the AUD/USD exchange rate

Sources: WM/Reuters

*Disclaimer: This section contains general market commentary only and does not constitute financial product advice. Market and economic conditions can change quickly, and past performance is not a reliable indicator of future results. Please speak with us before making any investment decision based on this information.*

# New Financial Year, New Super Caps: Are You Making the Most of Them?

Every new financial year brings a fresh set of superannuation contribution limits, and 1 July 2026 was no exception. The **concessional (before-tax) contribution cap** has increased **from $30,000 to $32,500**, and the **non-concessional (after-tax) cap** has risen **from $120,000 to $130,000**. For those using the bring-forward rule, that means it's now possible to contribute **up to $390,000 in after-tax contributions** across a three-year period, subject to your total super balance.

These increases might sound like small, technical changes, but they open up real opportunities depending on where you're at. If you're mid-career and salary sacrificing, the higher concessional cap means a bit more room to top up super and reduce your taxable income at the same time. If you've recently sold an investment property, received an inheritance, or come into a lump sum of savings, the higher non-concessional cap and bring-forward limit could mean more of that money can go into the concessional tax environment of super, sooner.

It's also a timely moment to **check your total superannuation balance**, since several of these thresholds and eligibility rules are tied to how much you already have in super. What worked for your contribution strategy last financial year might not be the most effective approach this year, particularly if your balance, income, or life circumstances have shifted.

As with most superannuation strategies, **timing and eligibility rules matter**, and getting it wrong can mean excess contributions tax or a missed opportunity. If you're thinking about making extra contributions this financial year, it's worth having a conversation with us first to make sure your approach fits your broader plan.

# Starting a Family? Here's How Parental Leave Now Builds Your Super Too

One of the quieter but genuinely welcome changes to hit Australian households this year is the extension of **superannuation contributions** to government-funded **Paid Parental Leave**. Since **1 July 2026**, eligible parents receiving PPL have had superannuation contributions paid on top of those payments, with the money now flowing directly into individual super accounts.

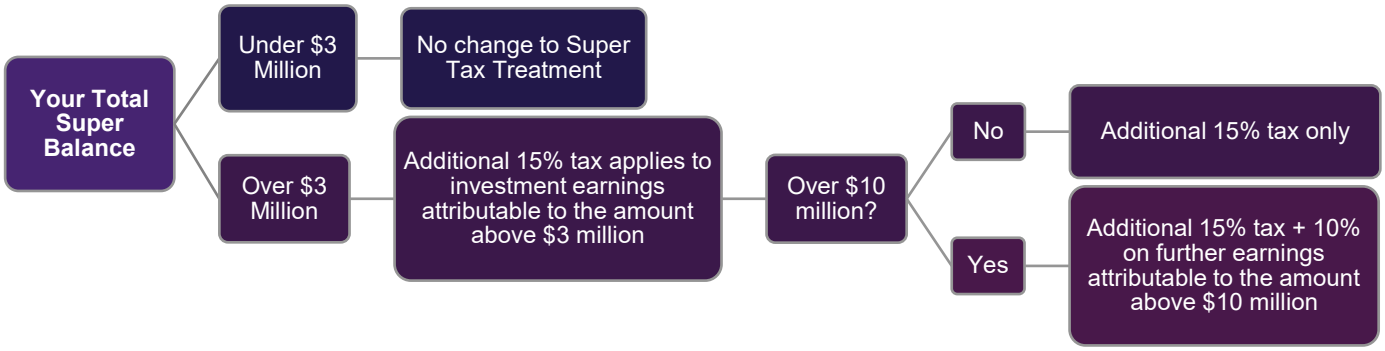
For years, taking parental leave has meant a pause not just in income, but in super contributions too, one of the quiet contributors to the long-documented gap between men's and women's retirement balances. This change won't close that gap on its own, but it's a meaningful step, and it means time spent caring for a new child no longer has to come at the cost of long-term retirement savings in quite the same way.

If you're currently on parental leave, planning a family, or supporting an adult child who is, this is genuinely good news worth knowing about. It's also a good prompt to look at the bigger picture around this life stage: **reviewing your income protection** and **life insurance** as your family and financial responsibilities grow, **checking beneficiary nominations** on your super and any **insurance policies**, and **revisiting your household budget** for the adjustment to reduced income during leave.

Family life brings a lot of financial change in a short space of time. If you're navigating parental leave, returning to work, or planning ahead for it, we're happy to help you make sure your super, insurance and cash flow are all working together during this stage.

# The $3 Million Super Question: What Division 296 Means for Larger Balances

From **1 July 2026**, a new tax rule known as **Division 296** came into effect, and it's one of the more significant changes to superannuation in recent years. In short, total super balances **above $3 million** will now attract an **additional 15% tax** on the investment earnings attributable to the portion above that threshold. For balances **above $10 million**, a further **10% applies** on top of that to the earnings above the higher threshold.




If your super balance is well **under $3 million**, this change won't affect you directly, and it's not a reason for concern. But it is worth understanding, because it reflects a broader shift in how large superannuation balances are treated for tax purposes, moving away from the long-standing assumption that super earnings are taxed the same way regardless of balance size.

For those **approaching, or already above, the $3 million threshold**, particularly business owners, self-managed super fund members, and people nearing retirement with strong balances, this is a genuine trigger to review your strategy. Questions worth asking include whether future contributions should continue flowing into super, whether some wealth accumulation might be better placed outside the super system, and how this interacts with your broader estate planning.

It's also worth noting there's currently **no indexation attached** to the $3 million threshold, meaning more Australians may find themselves affected by this rule over time simply through investment growth, even without making large contributions. If you think this change might apply to you now or in the coming years, it's worth getting ahead of it. A conversation now gives you far more options than waiting until the threshold is already in view.

*Disclaimer: This section is general information only and does not take into account your personal objectives, financial situation or needs. Superannuation and tax rules referred to here are current as at the time of writing and may change. You should seek personalised advice before acting on any strategy mentioned.*

# Spring Clean Your Finances: A Simple 3-Step Check-Up

Spring has a way of nudging us toward decluttering, and your finances are no exception. You don't need a complicated process or a whole weekend set aside, just a bit of focused time and three simple checks.

1. **Everyday spending** - Pull up your last three months of bank and credit card statements and look for subscriptions or memberships you'd genuinely forgotten about. **Streaming services, apps, and gym memberships** have a habit of quietly renewing long after we've stopped using them. Cancelling even two or three of these can free up more than you'd expect.

2. **Check your insurance and beneficiaries - Life changes, and your policies** should keep up with it. Have you had a change in relationship status, welcomed a new family member, paid off debt, or changed jobs since you last checked your life insurance, income protection, or super beneficiary nominations? A quick review now can save a lot of complication for the people you care about later.

3. **Look at where your savings are actually sitting** - With interest rates where they are, some **savings and term deposit accounts** are paying meaningfully more than others. If your **rainy-day fund** has been parked in the same account for years out of convenience, it's worth checking whether it's still earning what it should be.

None of these steps take long individually, but together they can meaningfully tidy up your financial picture heading into summer. If you'd like a hand working through any of them, we're here for a chat.

# Money and Mindset: Why Financial Stress Deserves the Same Attention as Physical Health

September brings “are you okay?” Day, a timely reminder that checking in on the people around us matters, and money worries are one of the most common, and most commonly hidden, sources of stress.

**Financial stress** doesn't always look like what you'd expect. It's not just about not having enough; it can show up as anxiety over an upcoming bill, avoidance of opening a superannuation statement, or the quiet worry of not knowing whether you're "on track", even when things are broadly okay. There is a well-established link between financial stress and overall wellbeing, and it can affect sleep, relationships and general mental health just as much as physical health concerns can.

The good news is that, much like physical health, financial wellbeing responds well to small, consistent habits rather than dramatic overhauls.

**Knowing where your money goes, having a general sense of your progress toward your goals, and having a plan you trust**, even a simple one, can meaningfully reduce that background hum of financial anxiety. You don't need to have all the answers yourself. Part of what a financial plan does is take some of that mental load off your shoulders.

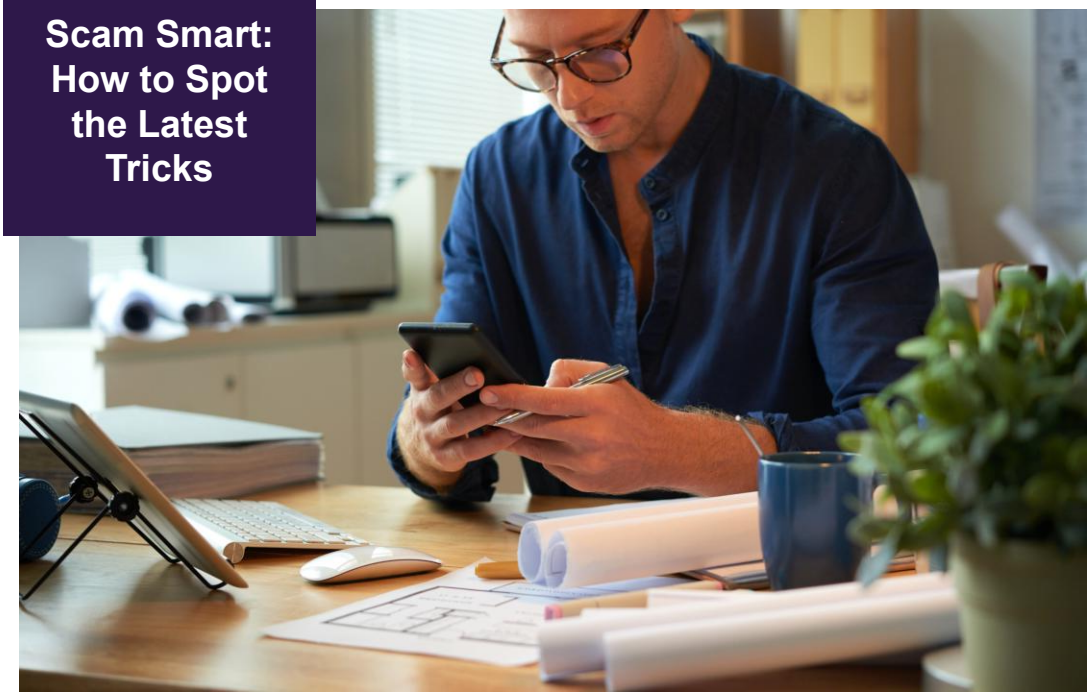
If money has been weighing on you, or on someone you care about, know that it's an extremely common experience, and one that's genuinely worth talking about, whether that's with a friend, a professional, or with us. If financial stress is significantly affecting your day-to-day life, it's also worth speaking with your GP or a mental health professional, alongside getting your finances in order.

**Scams** have become increasingly sophisticated, and unfortunately, financially-themed scams are among the most common and most costly. The good news is that awareness remains one of the most effective defences, and a few simple habits can go a long way toward protecting you and your family.

**Investment scams** often start with an unexpected contact, whether that's a social media ad, a message from a "financial expert" you've never heard of, or a call about an opportunity that promises unusually high, guaranteed returns. A genuine investment will never come with a guarantee and pressure to act immediately. If something feels rushed or too good to be true, it's worth pausing and doing your own research, or asking us before committing any money.

## Scam Smart: How to Spot the Latest Tricks

**Impersonation scams** are also on the rise, where scammers pose as your bank, the ATO, or even your super fund, often using genuine-looking logos and phone numbers to appear convincing. If you receive an unexpected call or message asking for personal details, passwords, or urging you to transfer money, hang up and contact the organisation directly using a number you look up yourself, not one provided in the message.



A simple rule that holds up well: **legitimate organisations, including us, will never pressure you to make a decision on the spot, ask for your online banking password, or request payment via gift cards or cryptocurrency**. If in doubt, **slow down, verify independently, and don't be afraid to ask someone you trust** for a second opinion. If you or a family member ever receive something that feels off, particularly anything referencing your super or investments, please reach out to us, we're always happy to help you check whether something is legitimate.

## Education & Awareness / Lifestyle & Wellness

If something doesn't feel right, or you've already lost money or shared personal details, acting quickly and reaching out to the right service can make a real difference. Some good places to start:

- **Your bank or financial institution**: if you've made a payment or transfer, contact them immediately. They may be able to stop, trace or reverse a transaction, especially if you act fast.
- **Scamwatch** (National Anti-Scam Centre): report scams at *scamwatch.gov.au*. Run by the ACCC, it helps track emerging scams and warn the wider community, even if you haven't lost money.
- **IDCARE:** Australia's national identity and cyber support service, available on *1800 595 160*, for help if your personal information has been compromised or stolen.
- **ReportCyber:** for cybercrime such as hacking or a data breach, report at *cyber.gov.au*, where it's referred to police for investigation.
- **National Debt Helpline:** if a scam has left you in financial difficulty, free and confidential financial counselling is available on *1800 007 007*.

*Disclaimer: This section is general information only and is not financial, tax or medical advice. If you are experiencing financial hardship or distress, please consider speaking with a qualified professional, such as your GP, a counsellor, or a free service like the National Debt Helpline (1800 007 007) or Lifeline (13 11 14).*

# Key Financial Planners: News and Updates

## In Their Words: What Our Clients Are Saying

*"Would highly recommend Anthony and the team at Key financial planning. I reached out with a SMSF commercial property idea and they made a complex deal seamless. I would recommend to friends and family for anyone interested in creating a SMSF or just financial advice to anyone chasing financial freedom."*

***– Russell Bruno***

*"You have been amazing guides during my way to retirement. Your advice over the years has never failed. Your support and care is true and I know that you have my best interest at heart. The results of this clearly show. Thank you for your ongoing watchful eye's. I know that I am in good hands and have absolute trust. Thanks also to your friendly staff."*

**– Kerstin Ward-lohmeyer**

*"I have entrusted my financials with Key Financial Planners from their start up. Anthony and Amanda are very approachable with any financial questions. They are very knowledgeable and professional. I have enjoyed watching my nest egg grow over the years, and now that I am retired, I can enjoy my Superannuation. I only have wonderful words to describe the team at Key Financial Planners. Thank you so much!!"*

**- Tim and Oum Dangerfield**

*"Anthony and staff at Key Financial Planners have gone above and beyond in helping not only us with our business and personal financials, but also our parents with their investments needs. Nothing is ever too difficult, and they are only ever a phone call away."*

**– Robyn Sparrow**

*"Myself and my family have been dealing with Key Financial Planners for over 10 years. They are very professional and always have our best interests front of mind to maximise our Super and Investment returns. They have a great ability explain things in a simple form so you understand what happening with investments. I highly recommend you reach out to Anthony, Amanda and the Key Financial Planners team to maximise your opportunities now so you can enjoy your retirement."*

***– Jason***

After more than a decade in business, what we're most proud of isn't a number on a page, it's the trust our clients place in us, year after year. Here's some of the feedback that keeps us striving to do right by every person who walks through our door.

## Save the Date: It's our Golf Day!

***General Advice Disclaimer:*** *The information in this newsletter is general in nature and does not take into account your personal objectives, financial situation or needs. Before acting on any information, you should consider its appropriateness to your circumstances and, where relevant, seek advice from a licensed financial adviser. Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance. Key Financial Planners Pty Ltd believes the information to be accurate at the time of publication but does not warrant its ongoing accuracy.*