

Welcome to the first edition of SuperNews for 2026. In this issue, we cover the upcoming KiwiSaver changes, provide a refresher on market volatility, introduce FireSuper's first home withdrawal benefit, share updates on market and Scheme performance, and feature a member story from Carlos Dempsey.

If you have any feedback regarding this newsletter or FireSuper in general, please email nzfire.super@mercer.com or call **0800 MY SUPER (0800 69 78737)**.

Regards,

FireSuper Trustee

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Upcoming KiwiSaver contribution rate changes

Starting **1 April 2026**, the Government will increase the default KiwiSaver contribution rates from 3% to 3.5%, rising further to 4% on 1 April 2028.

An anticipated Taxation Bill is expected to permit employers of members in complying funds, such as FireSuper, to maintain current employer and employee contribution levels to locked-in accounts. If the Bill is enacted, here's what you should know:

For members contributing **3%** to the **Complying Fund Section**, both member and FENZ contributions will remain at 3%.

For members currently contributing **4% or higher** to the **Complying Fund Section**:

- » Member contributions will remain unchanged;
- » FENZ's contributions will increase to 3.5% from 1 April 2026 and then to 4% from 1 April 2028, with corresponding reductions in its contributions to the Regular Section.

If you only contribute to the **Regular Section** of FireSuper, there is no impact to your FireSuper contributions as a result of the KiwiSaver changes.

No action is required from you. If you have any questions or wish to discuss your contribution options, please call Helpline on **0800 MY SUPER (0800 69 78737)** or email the administration team at nzfire.super@mercer.com.



Riding the waves of market volatility

It's normal to feel uneasy when you hear about geopolitical unrest and see your retirement balance fluctuate. Remember, market ups and downs, or 'volatility,' are a regular part of investing.

You can read more about market volatility and how the escalating unrest in the Middle East has impacted investment markets [here](#).

We caution against making impulsive decisions based on media headlines. If you are concerned about the current market fluctuations, we recommend talking to a financial adviser before making decisions that may impact the long-term potential of your retirement savings. If you have any questions, call the Helpline team on **0800 MY SUPER (0800 69 78737)**.





Unlock your first home with FireSuper's home withdrawal benefit

Ready to buy your first home?

If you've been a member of FireSuper or another complying super fund for at least three years, you may be eligible to withdraw some of your FireSuper savings to help with your purchase. This benefit supports those stepping onto the property ladder in New Zealand, with the home intended as your main residence - not an investment.

What you need to know

- » You can withdraw up to the full value of your accumulation (with conditions), but only once.
- » If your purchase falls through and the funds are returned, you can apply again.
- » A \$250 processing fee will be deducted from your balance, before funds are paid to your solicitor's trust account.
- » To apply, submit a completed **First Home Withdrawal** form with the necessary supporting documents at least 10 working days before you need the funds.

Have questions? Check out the **First Home Withdrawal FAQ** for more information.

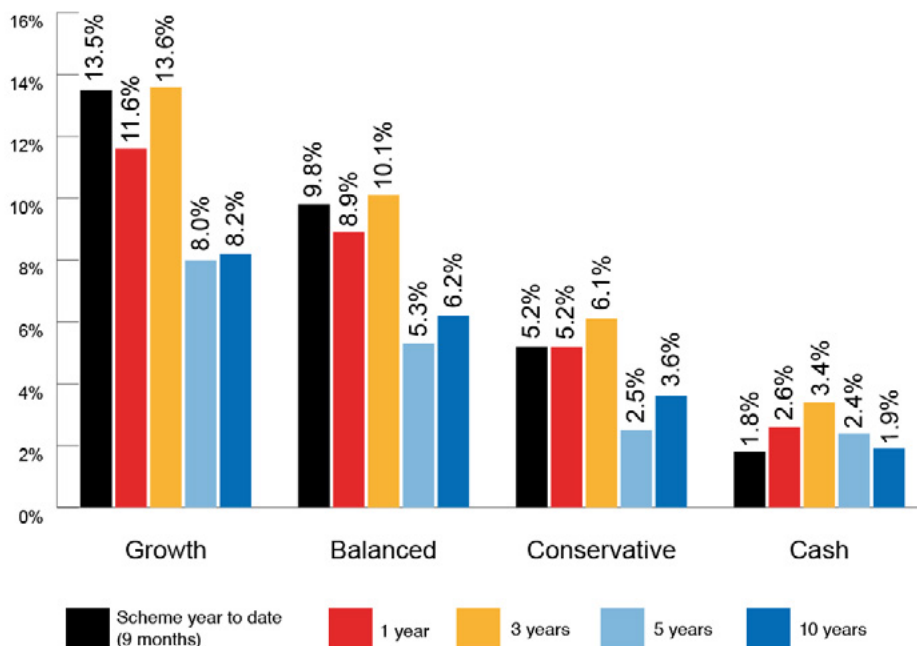
Take the next step

For more details and to get started, visit the **FireSuper website** or call the Helpline on **0800 MY SUPER (0800 69 78737)**. FireSuper recommends seeking independent financial advice when making significant decisions relating to your superannuation. Useful resources are listed on FireSuper's website '**Financial Advice**' page.

Scheme returns

(Cumulative year-to-date interim returns)

The chart below shows the earning rates for each investment option over the fiscal year-to-date period (**from 1 April 2025 through to 31 December 2025**) and returns over the long term; 1, 3, 5 and 10 years. The returns are net of fees and tax. The Life Cycle option uses the Growth, Balanced, and Conservative options as building blocks and progressively reduces members' risk/return profile over time.



Source: Russell Investments. Past performance is no guarantee of future results.

You can find the **latest earning rates** and general information about how financial markets are performing on the **FireSuper website**.



Market update (October - December 2025)

Global share markets experienced volatility in the December quarter but finished strongly, with the MSCI World Index – Net closing the period up 2.5% in unhedged NZD terms. Central bank decisions and concerns about tech valuations were the guiding stars for the period. Meanwhile in New Zealand, the share market performed well in the quarter, returning 2.0%, in line with the US S&P 500, outperforming Australia but underperforming Europe. Easing monetary policy was a key reason for the performance, as the Reserve Bank of New Zealand cut the official cash rate several times through the quarter, reducing borrowing costs and investor sentiment toward domestic equities.

[Dive deeper into the market update here](#)

Source: Russell Investments | Quarter ended 31 December 2025

Member story – Carlos Dempsey

Carlos's story is one of dedication, growth, and forward-thinking. Growing up around fire stations from Whangarei to Wellington and inspired by his firefighter father, Carlos has been part of Fire and Emergency New Zealand since 2007.

Carlos began his career at the Central Fire Communications Centre in Wellington, then rose quickly to Shift Manager. He has also supported national and international emergency responses, including the 2024 Vanuatu earthquake response. Recently, Carlos embraced a new chapter as a Career Firefighter at the Porirua Fire Station.

Alongside his evolving career, Carlos has been a committed FireSuper member from day one. "I had no hesitation joining," he says, encouraged by family and colleagues. He appreciates the flexibility FireSuper offers, especially the ability to adjust his investment strategy to match changing market conditions and his own risk tolerance. This means Carlos can adopt a more conservative approach as retirement nears, helping protect his savings from market fluctuations.

While retirement might seem far off, Carlos is already thinking about what it will look like. His goal is simple: "to be financially secure and stress-free, with the freedom to travel and live where I want, and support my whānau". He knows that consistent saving through FireSuper is key to helping make those plans a reality. "Seeing others who've invested in their retirement shows me the value of starting early," he says; "It's about having options and peace of mind."

Carlos also values the unique perspective FireSuper's Board brings, with two directors who are firefighters themselves. "They understand our work and always have our best interests at heart," he explains. This connection gives him confidence that his retirement savings are in good hands, allowing him to focus on the job he loves while FireSuper works for his future.



Smart financial planning checklist

The start of the year is the perfect time to take control of your financial future. Use this simple checklist to guide your financial goals and superannuation strategy for the year ahead.

1. Create good financial habits

Start with small, consistent actions like budgeting, tracking expenses, and saving regularly. Good habits build a strong foundation for long-term success.

2. Review your financials

Take a moment to review your insurance policies and other financial commitments. Ensure your coverage still meets your needs and that you're not paying for unnecessary extras.

3. Check your retirement investment strategy

Make sure your superannuation investment choices still align with your risk appetite and retirement goals. Adjust if your circumstances or comfort with risk have changed.

4. Build or maintain an emergency fund

Aim to have at least three to six months' worth of living expenses set aside. This fund provides peace of mind and a safety net for unexpected events.

5. Seek financial advice if needed

If you're unsure about your financial plan or superannuation options, consider consulting a qualified financial advisor. Professional guidance can help tailor strategies to your unique situation.

For further guidance, visit the resources listed on the FireSuper's [Financial Advice](#) page or check out [Sorted's goal planner tool](#).





Helpline
0800 69 78737



**Retirement
planning**



**Financial advisers
at FMA**



**FireSuper
website**

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