MEDIA RELEASE
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Retirement sentiment falls 13 points after 2025 rebound

Australians are significantly less confident about retirement than they were six months ago, with retiree confidence[1] falling from 60% to 47% and pre-retiree preparedness declining from 38% to 31%, according to 2026 research findings released today by Brighter Super, Queensland's third-largest non-government financial institution[*].

New data from Brighter Super's *2025-26 State of Retirement*[2] report suggests the gains in 2025 may have been influenced by stronger investment markets and easing inflation, rather than sustained improvements in long-term financial preparedness.

The decline in 2026 comes amid ongoing cost-of-living pressures, market volatility and renewed uncertainty about the global economic outlook.

"This report reinforces how quickly sentiment can shift with changing economic conditions, and the need to focus on long-term preparedness rather than short-term confidence," said Brighter Super's CEO Kate Farrar.

"The data suggests many Australians still judge their retirement readiness through the lens of recent market performance rather than long-term financial preparedness," she said.

The findings are drawn from surveys[2] in 2024, 2025 and 2026 conducted by Investment Trends, an independent and well-respected research and insights company.

"The data also shows Queensland continues to outperform national averages, while Brighter Super members report stronger outcomes than both state and national benchmarks," said Investment Trends' Head of Research, Julian Cappe.

Across all states, retiree confidence and pre-retiree preparedness declined. Despite this, Queensland's 50% retiree confidence rate outperformed the national rate of 47%, and pre-retiree preparedness in Queensland is at 33% compared to 31% nationally.

"It's pleasing to see that Queensland sitting just ahead of the national results, but there is more work to be done. Our research shows that Australians who plan early are nearly twice as likely to enjoy a comfortable retirement," explained Ms Farrar.

The sharp reversal in national sentiment underscores a broad challenge for the superannuation sector: Confidence remains highly sensitive to market conditions. Previous Brighter Super research found retirees experiencing financial strain were significantly more likely to fear outliving their retirement savings, highlighting the gap between short-term confidence and long-term financial resilience.

"This reinforces the importance of engaging members earlier in their retirement journey, before uncertainty and market volatility begin to influence decision making," said Ms Farrar.

At a fund level, Brighter Super outperformed both state and national benchmarks, with members' retirement confidence rising to 76% in 2026, up from 50% in 2024, and pre-retiree preparedness steady at 38% despite national and state declines of seven points and six points, respectively.

"This highlights the impact of our sustained investment in accessible guidance and affordable advice. We're committed to ensuring all members can retire confidently with the help of advice," she said.

This commitment was recognised by Chant West in Sydney on 27 May when it awarded Brighter Super 'Best Fund: Advice Services 2026'[3]. This award recognises funds offering a strong range of advice services that are relevant and accessible to members and reflects its commitment to helping members access quality advice.

	Retiree confidence	Pre-retiree preparedness
Australia	**47%** Down 13 points from 60% in 2025	**31%** Down 7 points from 38% in 2025, close to the 2024 low of 29%
Queensland	**50%** Outperformed the national average of 47% in 2026	**33%** Down 6 points from 39% in 2025, still above the national average of 31%
Brighter Super	**76%** Up 26 points from 50% in 2024 Well above the national average of 47%	**38%** Held steady between 2025 and 2026 while the national figure fell 7 points to 31%

The *2025-26 State of Retirement* report is available for download at
brightersuper.com.au/state-of-retirement-report

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About Brighter Super

Brighter Super is a 100% member-owned, Queensland-based superannuation on fund, with over 348,000 members and more than $37 billion in funds under management (as at 31 March 2026).

Following the merger of LGIAsuper, Energy Super, and the acquisition of Suncorp Super, Brighter Super is proudly the third largest non-government financial institution* in Queensland.

The fund is dedicated to being right by members' sides, empowering them to retire confidently with advice, focusing on solid performance and low fees.

For more information, please call Brighter Super on 1800 444 396 (in Australia)

*Based on assets under management of non-government financial institutions in Queensland

[1]Retiree confidence is measured as the proportion of retirees who are confident their savings will last through retirement.
[2] The 2025-26 State of Retirement report draws on the 2026 Investment Trends Super Member Engagement Survey, the Brighter Super and Investment Trends 2025 Retirement Income Survey and the Brighter Super and Investment Trends 2024 Retirement Income Survey
[3] Zenith CW Pty Ltd ABN 20 639 121 403 AFSL 226872/AFS Rep No. 1280401 Chant West Awards issued 27 May 2026 are solely statements of opinion and not a recommendation in relation to making any investment decisions. Awards are current for 12 months and subject to change at any time. Awards for previous years are for historical purposes only. Full details on Chant West Awards at https://www.chantwest.com.au/fund-awards/about-the-awards/