Media Release

17 September 2026

Super funds post solid return in August amid uncertain backdrop

Despite concerns around inflation and ongoing geopolitical tensions, super funds were up in August with the median growth fund (61–80% growth assets) gaining 0.9%. That lifted the return over the first two full months of FY27 to 1.1%.

Chant West Head of Superannuation Investment Research, Mano Mohankumar, says the healthy return for August was driven by domestic and global share markets, which in aggregate account for about 55% of a typical growth portfolio. “Despite some volatility towards the latter part of August, over the full month, developed market international shares advanced 2.5% in hedged terms led by the US. Markets were supported by strong corporate earnings and the tech sector regained momentum after some AI-related companies had been sold down in July. The Australian dollar appreciated over the month, which pulled the 2.5% hedged return back to 0.5% in unhedged terms. On average, super funds have about 70% of international shares unhedged. Emerging markets also finished higher, returning 1.3%.

“Australian shares gained 1.6% over the month, which fell short of developed international markets, but it was still a solid result, with the resources sector leading the way and offsetting weaker performance from financials. In a volatile month for bond markets, performance was mixed with Australian bonds down 0.2% and international bonds up slightly at 0.2%.”

The table below compares the median performance to the end of August 2026 for each of the traditional diversified risk categories in Chant West’s Super Fund Performance Survey, ranging from All Growth to Conservative. All risk categories have generally met their typical long-term return objectives, which range from CPI + 1.5% for Conservative funds to CPI + 4.25% for All Growth.

Traditional Diversified Fund Performance (Results to 31 August 2026)

Risk Category	Growth Assets (%)	1 Mth (%)	3 Mths (%)	FYTD (%)	1 Yr (%)	3 Yrs (% pa)	5 Yrs (% pa)	7 Yrs (% pa)	10 Yrs (% pa)	15 Yrs (% pa)
All Growth	96 – 100	1.1	3.4	1.3	9.9	12.9	8.2	9.3	9.4	10.1
High Growth	81 – 95	1.2	3.1	1.4	8.8	11.1	7.5	8.9	9.2	9.8
Growth	61 – 80	0.9	2.4	1.1	7.7	9.6	6.5	7.3	7.6	8.3
Balanced	41 – 60	0.7	1.9	0.8	6.4	7.9	5.3	5.8	6.1	6.9
Conservative	21 – 40	0.4	1.4	0.5	4.8	6.1	4.0	4.2	4.5	5.3

Note: Performance is shown net of investment fees and tax. It is before administration fees.

Source: Chant West

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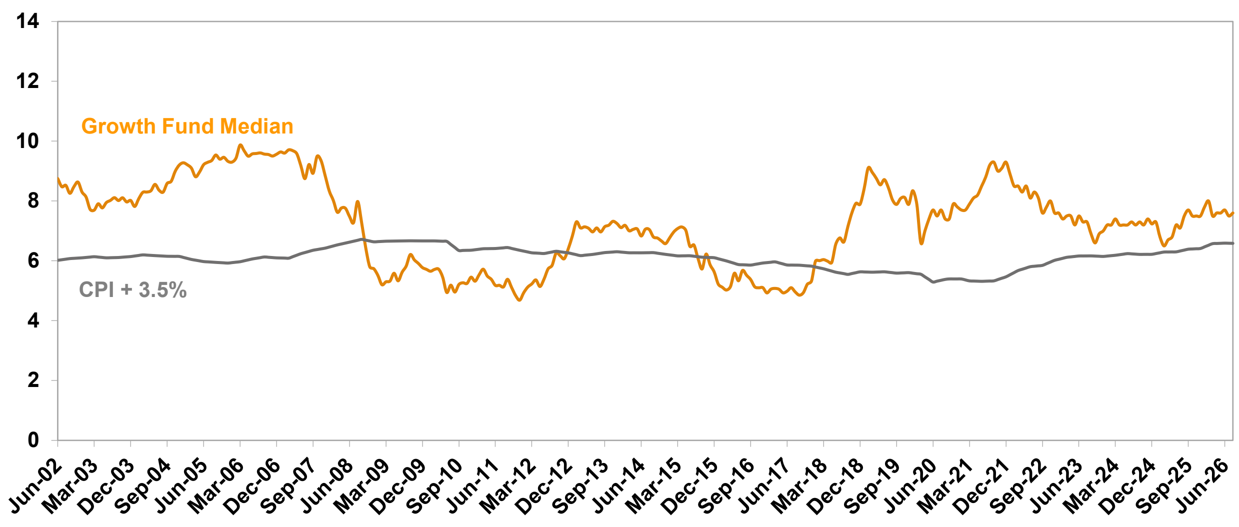
Long-term performance remains above target

MySuper products have been operating for over 12 years, so when considering performance, Mohankumar says it's important to remember that super is a much longer-term proposition.

"Since the introduction of compulsory super in July 1992, the median growth fund has returned 8% p.a. The annual CPI increase over the same period is 2.7%, giving a real return of 5.3% p.a. – well above the typical 3.5% target. Even looking at the past 20 years, which includes three major share market downturns – the GFC in 2007-2009, COVID-19 in 2020, and the high inflation and rising interest rates in 2022 – super funds have returned 6.9% p.a., which is still ahead of the typical objective."

The chart below shows that for most of the time, the median growth fund has exceeded its return objective over rolling 10-year periods, which is a commonly used timeframe consistent with the long-term focus of super. The exceptions are two periods between mid-2008 and late-2017, when it fell behind. This is because of the devastating impact of the 16-month GFC period (end-October 2007 to end-February 2009) during which growth funds lost about 26% on average.

Growth Funds – Rolling 10 Year Performance (Returns – % pa)



Source: Chant West

Note: The CPI figures for July and August 2026 are estimates.

Source: Chant West

Chant West philosophy: to ensure we capture an accurate picture of the market in any given month, we publish our monthly performance data once we've received responses from at least 80% of our growth fund universe.

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About Chant West

Head of Superannuation Investment Research Mano Mohankumar and General Manager Ian Fryer are available to discuss this release. Please call Darlene White on 0438 041 032 to arrange a time.

Mano Mohankumar

Mano has about 25 years of experience in the finance industry and regularly provides media comment on superannuation and investment matters.

Ian Fryer

Ian has worked in the superannuation industry for about 25 years in a range of research, consulting, actuarial and administration roles.

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