HER BEST MOVE NOW · RESOURCE

Lifestyle Planner

What Will Your Retirement Actually Cost?

Retirement planning tends to start with a number — how much super do I have? But it is more useful to start with a life. What do you actually want your retirement to look like? What will it cost? This tool helps you build a realistic annual budget for the retirement you want — before you work backwards to the question of whether you can fund it.

Step 1 — Define Your Lifestyle

The ASFA Retirement Standard provides two reference points. Think of them as anchors, not limits — your version of retirement sits somewhere on this spectrum, and it is yours to define.

MODEST RETIREMENT	COMFORTABLE RETIREMENT
approx. $35,500 per year	**approx. $54,240 per year**
Super required: approx. $110,000 *Age Pension covers most of this*	*Super required: approx. $630,000* *Assumes partial Age Pension from 67*
– Basic private health insurance – Budget car, less frequently replaced – Basic internet and mobile – One domestic holiday per year – Infrequent dining out or leisure – Limited home maintenance budget	– Top-level private health insurance – Reliable, newer car – Regular dining out and leisure – Annual domestic holidays – Occasional international travel – Good home maintenance budget

If you are renting, or carrying a mortgage into retirement: *The figures above assume you own your home outright. If you are renting, ASFA estimates that a modest retirement costs around $49,700 per year — more than the comfortable figure for a homeowner. Housing security is one of the most significant variables in retirement planning, and one worth addressing directly.*

Source: ASFA Retirement Standard, February 2026 update

Step 2 — Build Your Retirement Budget

Use this as a starting point. Adjust each category to reflect your actual life — not the average. Think in today's dollars.

CATEGORY	NOTES	$ PER YEAR
Housing — mortgage, rent, rates, insurance, maintenance	*If mortgage-free, rates, insurance and upkeep still apply*	
Utilities — electricity, gas, water, internet, phone	*These tend to rise faster than general inflation for retirees*	
Food and groceries	*Include dining out separately below*	
Health — insurance, out-of-pocket, dental, optical, pharmacy	*Often underestimated — tends to increase significantly in later years*	
Transport — car running costs, registration, fuel, public transport	*Include vehicle replacement on a rolling average if relevant*	
Clothing and personal care		
Leisure and entertainment — dining, activities, subscriptions, hobbies	*Be honest about what you actually enjoy and want to continue*	
Domestic and annual holidays	*Average this over three to five years*	
International travel	*Averaged annually — most women in this age group travel internationally every few years*	
Gifts — family, grandchildren, charitable giving		
Home help — cleaning, gardening, maintenance	*Often increases with age — factor in even if not immediately needed*	
Technology — devices, streaming, software		
Insurance — life, income protection review at retirement	*May reduce at retirement, but health and home coverage remains*	
Other regular commitments	*Any ongoing financial obligations, loan repayments, support for family*	
Buffer — unexpected costs, one-off expenses	*A conservative estimate of 5–10% of total is worth including*	
Total estimated annual retirement spending	*This is your planning target*	**$**

Step 3 — How Spending Changes Over Time

Retirement is not one phase. Spending typically follows a pattern — and understanding this helps you structure your income accordingly.

Early retirement (60s to mid-70s)

Often the most active and highest-spending phase. Travel, renovation, leisure, and social activity tend to peak. This is frequently when the most significant discretionary spending occurs. Plan for higher spending in this phase — and structure your drawdown to support it.

Mid retirement (mid-70s to mid-80s)

Activity levels often reduce. Travel and leisure spending may decrease, but healthcare and home support costs typically begin to rise. Spending overall tends to be lower than early retirement but more concentrated on essentials.

Later retirement (85+)

Healthcare, home care, and potentially residential care costs can become significant. Women live longer on average than men — plan for longevity, not for the average. This is also the phase where estate planning decisions matter most.

A financial plan that does not account for longevity is incomplete. A financial planner can help you model your income across all three phases — and structure your assets so they work for you throughout.

Disclaimer: *The information here is general in nature. It reflects common questions and considerations that arise during life transitions — it does not constitute legal, financial or professional advice, and it is not tailored to your individual circumstances. Where your situation is complex or the stakes are high, speaking with a qualified professional is likely to be worthwhile. Use what is useful. Leave what isn't.*