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As Executive General Manager - Advice, Guidance and Education at Australian Retirement Trust, Anne Fuchs brings extensive experience and insight to the superannuation

her perspectives on super and authentic leadership.

industry. She recently sat down with Super Review to talk about

How did you start down this career path?

As a teenager growing up in the 80s and 90s, I had an unusual interest in the political reforms of that time, but my interest in

superannuation really took hold at university where I studied politics and history. My super career subsequently kicked off with a graduate role at Bankers Trust in Sydney.

What inspires you in your role/industry? Why?

I'm inspired by the purpose of super, to create financial security for ordinary people. Looking at my own family as an example, I am the first generation on either side to have a decent nest egg for retirement. All bar one of my 16 aunts and uncles (and also their spouses) had to finish school in year 10 to earn money for the family. It was only my father and my uncles who worked in the Queensland public service who had any super at retirement - thank goodness those days have changed!

I think there is beauty in democratising wealth so that everyday Australians can build out investments and have choices later in life and reduce the tax burden on younger generations. When people have super to live off, taxes can fund other things like health, education and infrastructure rather than a growing Age Pension bill. I love seeing all the good that comes from having that kind of financial freedom across communities, in families, and in small business.

I'm also inspired to work alongside talented, driven people in our investments team. They could work anywhere in the world, but they choose to work at Australian Retirement Trust because they are motivated by the purpose of superannuation.

How do you innovate and stay ahead of industry trends?

I would say it's networks, and reading a lot of news, and thought leadership pieces that are related to societal, macro-economic and political trends. I find having an extensive group of people that are from much broader places than financial services, from not-forprofit organisations and so on, helps me keep my finger on the pulse regarding how superannuation fits into the broader community. It gives me perspective on how we are performing and if we are delivering on the purpose of super, and where there is the opportunity for us to do better. Super is one of the key pillars of our economy so I'm always thinking about how we can deliver financial security for more Australians.

What's your approach to customer service that separates you from the rest?

When I was younger, I would give frank and fearless advice to my bosses, and now I am a passionate advocate of the power of guidance and advice and the benefits for all Australians to engage with super. For Australian Retirement Trust to be able to deliver excellent member service we've got to be prepared to have the uncomfortable conversations around what is and isn't working in the system and where we can advocate for better retirement outcomes for our members.

What is the toughest challenge you've faced in your career? How did you overcome it?

The toughest challenge I've found in my career is being a high conviction, outspoken younger woman with progressive values. Thankfully, I have had great sponsors that have believed in me, coached me, and given me a hand up. In more recent years, as diversity has become more commonplace at executive leadership levels, I have been inspired by the courageous, intelligent and wise women I have met, many of whom I have turned to when faced with a challenging problem to solve. I'm also fortunate in the sense the culture at Australian Retirement Trust focuses on celebrating the strengths in our differences, and I think that helps us to be a better Fund for members.

What are some of your goals for the next 5 years?

I would love to think Australian Retirement Trust is nailing an experience of super that is truly engaging and relevant for members. Currently there are a lot of regulatory hoops to jump through, so I'd like to think I've been successful in advocating to government to reduce some of that red tape for people. Changes to advice under the Delivering Better Financial Outcomes (DBFO) legislation can help with making super better for everyone, but it is a work in progress. There is a lot more we can do to make super simpler, more personalised, and of benefit to Australians. I see a big part of my role is supporting advocacy for our members so Australian Retirement Trust has the freedom to innovate for good.

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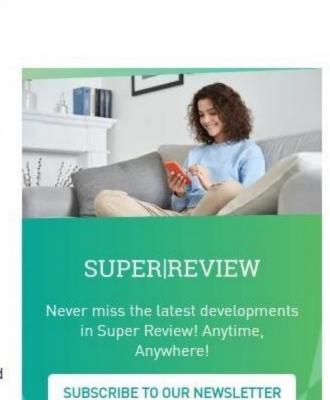
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