

MEMBER NEWSLETTER

February 2024

NOTE FROM THE PRINCIPAL OFFICER



Dear Member

Welcome back from holiday and best wishes for 2024. We hope that you enjoy our first newsletter of 2024 as we continue to update you on important Fund matters and items that require your attention.

In this newsletter, you will find important information regarding the annual death benefit option changes, the latest developments on the two-pot system and information regarding the Sanlam Reality programme offering which all members enjoy.

Please remember to diarise the date of the Annual General Meeting. We look forward to seeing many of our members online this year.

We want to thank all our members for their ongoing support. The Board of Trustees will continue to work hard to ensure that the Fund remains ahead of its peers with its flexible benefit offering and excellent investment returns.

“Just do what works for you, because there will always be someone who thinks differently.”
- Michelle Obama

Ilse Hartlief
Principal Officer



DEATH BENEFIT - APPLICABLE TO MEMBERS WHO JOINED THE FUND AFTER 01 AUGUST 2017

As a member of the LA Retirement Fund, you have the flexibility to decide on the amount of cover that best suits your needs and budget when joining the Fund. If you did not do so, you would then automatically have been covered under the default option applicable to your age band.

After joining the Fund, members then have the opportunity to adjust their multiple and increase or decrease their level of cover on 01 July every year and/or within 3 months of a life event.

What benefit do you qualify for?

The table below illustrates the different age bands, the level of death cover (multiples of annual pensionable salary) available in each age band and the default selection that applied if you, at the time of joining the Fund, did not make a formal selection. Qualifying for the default means that your benefit will automatically reduce from 3 times annual pensionable salary to twice annual pensionable salary on 1 July following your 50th birthday.

Multiples of annual salary		
Younger than 30	Age 30 - 39	Age 40 - 49
0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Default = 3	0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Default = 3	0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 Default = 3
Age 50 - 54	Age 55 - 75	
0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Default = 2	0, 1, 2 Default = 2	

You can find out what your current level of death cover is by checking your 2023 Annual Member Benefit Statement or the member information section on the secure website or via the Verso mobile app. You can also contact the Fund Service Centre for assistance.



ADJUSTING YOUR LIFE COVER TO SUIT YOUR NEEDS

A. Changing your level of cover on 1 July

Once a year you may increase your level of cover by increasing your chosen multiple or you may decrease your cover by decreasing your multiple. Your application **to increase** your cover must be received by the administrator by **31 March** and, if approved by the insurer, the increase will take effect from the 1st of the month following the insurer's approval (earliest 1 July).

An application to increase death cover is subject to you having to provide proof of good health to the insurer. The medical information required will be determined by the insurer and the costs associated with medical tests and/or examinations will be paid for by the insurer.

If you decide **to decrease** your cover, your application must be received **by 31 May**. No medical information is required when requesting a decrease in death cover. Please access the form from the website: ["Forms / Risk benefits / Annual change in insured death benefit option form."](#)

B. Changing your level of cover within 3 months of a life event

You may also choose to increase or decrease your cover at any time should you experience a life event.

A life event is defined as marriage, divorce, the death of a spouse, the birth of a child, promotion at work, a change in the employment contract from permanent and full-time to a fixed-term contract and vice versa.

You have 3 months from the date of the life event in which to apply for a change in your life cover. Please access the form from the website: ["Forms / Risk benefits / Life events that require a change in insured death benefits options form."](#)

C. Moving age bands

MOVING FROM 30 - 39 to 40 - 49

Moving from the 30-39 age band to the 40-49 age band - you may elect to increase your cover from a maximum multiple of 5 times your annual pensionable salary to 6 times your annual pensionable salary.

MOVING FROM 40 - 49 to 50 - 54

Moving from the 40-49 age band to the 50-54 age band - your maximum multiple reduces from 6 to 5 times your annual pensionable salary. Members who opted for 6 times annual pensionable salary will automatically be moved to 5 times annual pensionable salary from 1 July following the attainment of age 50.

MOVING FROM 50 - 54 to 55 - 75

Moving from the 50-54 age band to the 55-75 age band - your maximum multiple reduces from 5 times to 2 times your annual pensionable salary.

On the 1st of July following the attainment of age 55, members who selected 5, 4 or 3 times annual pensionable salary will automatically be changed to twice annual pensionable salary death cover.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER

- The maximum amount of cover reduces with age. The reason for this is that cover becomes increasingly more expensive the older we become. The Trustees prefer members to save for retirement rather than paying large premiums for death cover.
- If you are in the 30 - 39 age band and have chosen the maximum multiple of 5 times your annual pensionable salary and you do not make a selection on moving age bands, you will automatically still qualify for a multiple of 5 times your annual pensionable salary on moving to the 40 - 49 age band. This is despite the fact that you could have applied to increase your cover multiple to 6 times your annual pensionable salary.
- If you are in the 40 - 49 age band and have chosen the maximum multiple of 6 times your annual pensionable salary and you do not make a selection on moving age bands, the new maximum multiple of 5 times cover will be applied on moving to the 50 - 54 age band.
- From the 1st of July following the attainment of age 55, the maximum multiple of cover that applies to each age band is different for the old risk benefit options.

What are the important trigger ages when the maximum cover changes?

When you turn 40

You may increase your maximum cover to 6 times your annual pensionable salary.

When you turn 50

Your maximum multiple reduces from 6 to 5 times your annual pensionable salary.

From 1 July following the attainment of 55

Your maximum multiple reduces from 5 to 2 times your annual pensionable salary.

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

We remind you to make sure that the Fund has your current contact details (cell phone and e-mail address) to ensure that you do not miss receiving important information from the Fund.

We also encourage members to download the Verso mobile App (InTouch by Verso) from the respective App Stores (either Apple or Android). The link to the Verso Web App can be accessed on the Fund's website (click on the Member Login link to create a new user account). If you have not yet done this, we encourage you to, as this will enable you to access your member information effortlessly.

FUNERAL BENEFIT BENEFICIARY NOMINATION FORM

We continue to urge our members to complete the Funeral Benefit Beneficiary Nomination Form, as very few of our members have done so. As a result, we have encountered members who have passed away and whose families have not had the financial means to arrange the funeral. **Please do not put your family in this situation.**

If you have not completed the Funeral Benefit Nomination Form and you pass away, in terms of legislation, the insurer must pay your funeral benefit to your estate.

If you haven't yet done so, it is important that you urgently complete the Funeral Benefit Beneficiary Nomination Form and return it to support@laretirementfund.co.za. Please ensure that you keep these details updated. The form can be found on the Fund's website under "[Forms / Member Forms / Funeral Benefit Beneficiary Nomination](#)", or you can contact the Fund's call centre, and they will assist you.

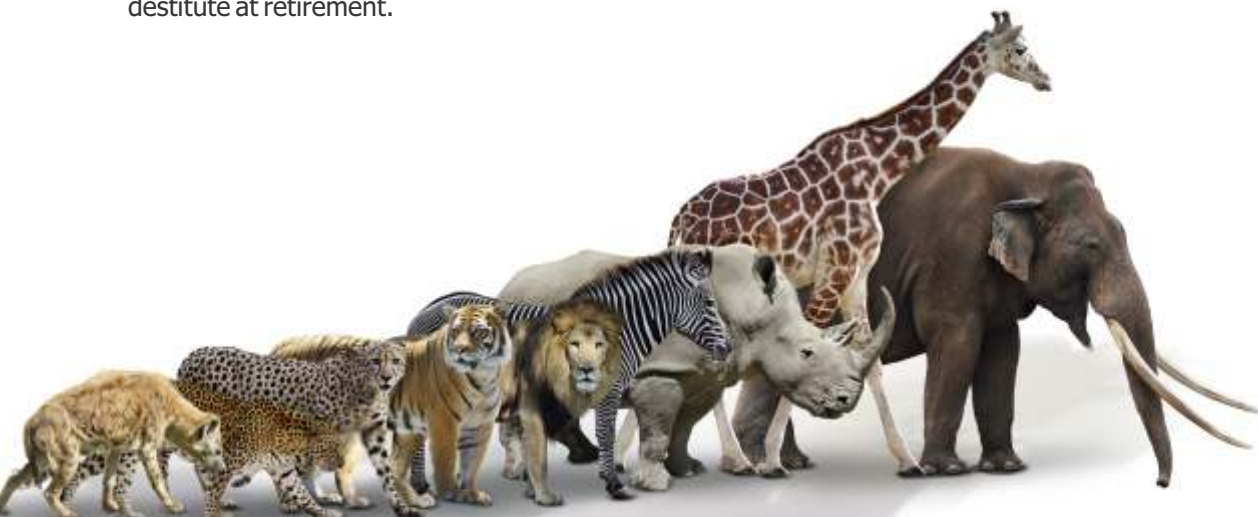
You should be nominating the person who will be responsible for your funeral on the Funeral Benefit Beneficiary Nomination Form.

THE TWO-POT SYSTEM

You should have received communication from the Fund or have heard in the news about the two-pot system for retirement fund savings. This two-pot system aims to strike a balance between the preservation of retirement savings and allowing members limited early access to a portion of their member share prior to retirement.

An implementation date of 1 September 2024 has been proposed. Once this has been confirmed and the details of the new legislation has been advised, we will communicate more details to you.

The Board of Trustees understands the current financial needs of their members but cautions against the withdrawing of money from the savings pot as this will deplete a member's retirement savings potentially leaving members financially destitute at retirement.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Fund has successfully held its Annual General Meetings (AGM) virtually for four years. This has been a resounding success and enabled members who otherwise would not have been able to attend the meeting, to attend virtually. As such, the Fund will again hold its Annual General Meeting virtually at 9:00 on Friday, 24 May 2024.

Holding the AGM virtually will continue to alleviate the time needed and expense incurred in travelling to Cape Town and will enable more members to attend the meeting and to be part of the discussions on important Fund matters. It also reduces Fund costs which is to the benefit of all members.

Communication has been sent to the participating local authorities requesting the election/nomination of member, pensioner, and councillor delegates to attend the virtual AGM. The Board of Trustees encourages all members to join the AGM as this will give you the opportunity to hear first-hand about the Fund's investments, the funding level, benefit structure and the highlights from the 2023 annual financial statements. Members will be invited to ask questions at the end of the AGM.

This is your Fund - this is your opportunity to obtain the information you need to ensure that you understand the details so that you can one day retire comfortably.

Join us on Friday, 24 May 2024 at 9:00 - look out for the AGM newsflash and online link that will be sent to all members closer to the time.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS COUNSELLOR / CLIENT LIAISON OFFICER

The Fund's Retirement Benefits Counsellor, Grant Greenfield and the Client Liaison Officer, Glenda Kunene are available to assist with any questions you may have about the Fund.

They can be contacted as follows:

Grant Greenfield
(Retirement Benefits
Counsellor)
021 - 943 5305,
or email:
support@laretirementfund.co.za

Glenda Kunene
(Client Liaison Officer)
081 778 0923,
or e-mail:
glendak@verso.co.za

The Fund has a WhatsApp No:
081 806 9959 to enable members
to have easy access to
communicate effectively with
the Fund during office hours
(8h00 to 16h00, Monday to
Friday).



FAMILY ASSISTANCE BENEFITS

The Momentum Multiply for Corporates programme was discontinued with effect 1 January 2024. Only members who had death benefits with Momentum qualified for this programme.

All members are still able to enjoy the benefits of the Sanlam Reality programme which offers a multitude of benefits free-of-charge.



 Discount Coupons	Grocery discount coupons redeemable nationwide on a variety of consumer goods Monthly shopping discount codes via SMS, redeemable at Shoprite and Checkers subject to the provision of contact details
 Ivy Online education platform	Access a free online supplementary education platform based on the CAPS curriculum for Grades 8 to 12. Access free e-books, videos, podcasts and quizzes Sign up for replacement schooling at discounted rates with Ivy Academy. Qualified teachers will assist you in studying for the NSC (National Senior Certificate) or Cambridge qualification Materials and content are optimised for low bandwidth and data usage to provide support for up to six learners per family
 Burial Repatriation & Funeral Support	24/7 Helpline Arranging transport of mortal remains to final funeral home in South Africa Assistance with funeral arrangements
 Legal Assist	24/7 Legal advice helpline manned by qualified in-house attorneys Assistance with standardised legal documents and direct legal consultation Referrals for face-to-face legal help, with the first 30 minutes free, as well as one free letter of demand and one free telephone call made on member's behalf
 Emergency Medical Response	24/7 Emergency helpline for you, your spouse and children while waiting for emergency services Emergency medical assistance and transportation by road or air in case of life-threatening situations Safe removal of children from accident scene and administering of life-saving medication
 Trauma, Assault & HIV Assist	24/7 Emergency helpline for you, your spouse and children for trauma, assault and exposure to HIV. Medical treatment for bodily injury caused by assault 24/7 Trauma, assault and HIV support immediately after accidental or violent exposure Telephonic assistance for general, non-emergency medical consultation and advice
 Wealth Sense portal	Online calculators and tools Information relating to finances, safety and health

Here are easy ways for you to access these benefits:



Trustees: Mr J Jacobs (Chairperson) | Mrs M Van Zyl (Deputy Chairperson) | Mr DL Carstens | Mr SF du Toit
 Adv CJ Franken | Mr J Lawack | Mr WR Meiring | Mr S Philander
 Principal Officer: Mrs IT Hartlief