

Financial planning for self-managed super funds: the best of both worlds

Self-managed super funds (SMSF) are a tempting option for many investors. And there's plenty of features that make them attractive — at least at first. SMSFs seem like a smart strategy for long-term wealth creation and asset protection. You get more control, and more options compared to a standard industry super fund.

But there are several pitfalls for the unwary. Superannuation is a tightly regulated field, so it's easy to accidentally break the law, and face heavy fines or even criminal action. On top of that, you have all the paper work.

That's where engaging a financial planner can be a smart option: someone in your corner, guiding you through the SMSF field.

Where Ian and Margaret started out

Ian and Margaret first came to Grant back in 1996, when SMSFs were just starting to take off. He ran a successful surveying consultancy in Sydney. He had some funds at the ready and was exploring his options.

An important factor for Ian was that Allegra had the right conversation of energy and experience. Ian didn't want a financial planner who was towards the end of their career. He wanted someone who knew SMSFs inside out, *and* who'd be around to look after him well into retirement.

Like many of our clients, Ian wanted more than just stock-standard service. He had very clear ideas about his level of involvement in running his SMSF. He chose Allegra because we can scale our service up or down to fit our client's needs.

How we work with Ian and Margaret

We worked out the approach that suited Ian and Margaret. We handle the compliance and administration side, but Ian chooses some investments himself. Ian enjoys the friendly competition. "It's a challenge to get a better return than the results that Grant advises us on."

Along the way, we've introduced Ian and Margaret to some investments they might not have considered. Ian let us know that he prefers a fairly conservative investment strategy. So we recommended investing in international shares: insulating his portfolio against downturns in the Australian share market.

We get together twice a year to review progress and report on performance. Ian appreciates how engaged we are in monitoring performance. "Each meeting he's got something to say 'well I think we should do this', or 'that's not going really well', I've investigated this and I think we should invest it here. "

The difference we make

What Ian appreciates most about Allegra is our independence. "Grant's not part of the big mobs. They're all salesmen. Grant's a straight-shooter – you just get the feeling you can trust the guy."

Super investment strategy and compliance trips up so many inexperienced investors. With us in his corner, Ian can navigate around avoid the pitfalls and reach the financial independence that a well-run super fund brings.