

Estate planning: why your financial adviser is best to help

You already know the benefits of a good financial plan for your money. So now might be the time to ensure this hard-earned money ends up in line with your wishes should you pass away or become incapable of looking after your own finances. Everyone needs to address and understand the importance of a proper estate plan sooner rather than later, and your financial adviser can help.

Estate planning is vital for you if you want all the assets (your investments, superannuation, and insurance and other income streams) you have worked hard to acquire all your life to be distributed to the right people in a timely and tax-effective manner. A Will can indeed go towards ensuring this but effective estate planning goes far beyond one single document. Your financial adviser is best placed to help you plan around your overall wealth picture with an estate plan.

Your financial adviser's knowledge of your individual circumstances can really assist you with putting in place a successful estate plan. Combining the expertise of your financial adviser and other professionals specialising in law and taxation matters delivers an estate plan that gives you peace of mind that your affairs will be handled exactly as you would like if you become incapacitated or when you die.

Demystifying estate planning

- It's for very rich people – everyone can benefit from having an effective estate plan in place
- It's complex – your financial adviser can help you to understand it
- It's too expensive – the cost of the service will be worked out once your needs are clarified so you will have visibility over the cost at all times.
- I can do it later – who knows what can happen, its best to have everything planned for today.

Having an estate plan as part of your financial plan ensures:

- your wishes are clearly articulated in the documentation
- your assets are held effectively to meet both your pre and post death financial goals
- your assets will be properly managed by someone you trust if you suffer mental incapacity
- your estate will be effectively transferred to your family in a tax-effective manner
- there is no unnecessary delay in the administration of your estate
- assets that can't be dealt with in your Will are properly managed
- tax effectiveness for both the estate and the family
- challenges to your Will may be nullified.

Issues for your financial adviser to consider when building an estate plan

Is your Will up to date?

Your Will is, of course, a vital part of an estate plan, specifying how and to whom you would like your estate assets to be distributed when you die. These assets include possessions, property, money in bank accounts, shares and managed funds you hold solely in your name. Whilst your solicitor can help you draft a legal Will it is best that your financial adviser assists in its development to ensure your financial goals and objectives are incorporated.

Did you know a Will does not include the following?

- Assets you own jointly with another party (depending on how they are owned)
- Assets owned by a company or held in trust

Your financial adviser can help you address these assets in an estate plan.

Do you have adequate life insurance?

Your financial adviser can ensure that you have the appropriate life insurance to best suit your circumstances.

Are there tax consequences of how your assets will be distributed in the event of your death?

The disposal of assets in accordance with your Will may have tax consequences, including capital gains tax, that you should consider when drafting your Will and creating your estate plan. There are many strategies you can use to help make your estate plan as tax-effective as possible for your dependants and beneficiaries.

Do you have a binding death benefit nomination for your superannuation?

Any payout under the policy can be paid directly to the nominated beneficiary (or beneficiaries), bypassing your estate. As such, your estate plan should factor in who you have nominated as the binding death beneficiary of your life insurance policy.

Do you know whether an enduring power of attorney is appropriate for you?

If you are worried that you will be unable to manage your own affairs, you might consider implementing an Enduring Power of Attorney (EPOA). Granting someone a EPOA means they can legally act on your behalf.

What is involved in estate planning?

- 1** Complete the pre-appointment pack your financial adviser provides you if you wish to have an estate plan.
- 2** Meet with your financial adviser to have any questions you may have answered about estate planning – they will provide you with more information on estate planning and costs involved.
- 3** If you choose to go ahead with an estate plan your financial adviser will begin to capture your details and estate planning intentions to enable the estate planning strategy to be formulated and for the drafting of testamentary documents to begin.
- 4** Your financial adviser will present their recommended estate plan for your approval.
- 5** Once approved your estate plan will be implemented which means preparing legal documentation through a choice of legal professionals.
- 6** Our adviser will liaise with the solicitor and you as required to ensure the testamentary documents are complete.

Speak to us for more information

Estate planning is complicated but can be made easier with the right advice. Talk to your Count financial adviser who will work together with you and your legal adviser.

Important information

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