

Tina and Michael

Getting on track

By the time Tina was in her mid 20s, she was already a novice investor. Each month, she contributed a small amount to a managed fund to put aside some money for her mother's old age.

Soon after, a friend put Tina in touch with David Kissane, who began helping Tina put together a more detailed financial plan. Then in 2000, when Tina married her high school sweetheart Michael, David helped the couple develop a comprehensive financial strategy that met both their needs.

"When Michael and I combined everything, it was important that we had a financial plan in place that covered both our situations," said Tina. "We still do that with David – every year we revisit the plan to make sure it's up to date so we can address any changes that happen in our lives."

For Tina and Michael, the most significant of these life changes so far has been the birth of their son Will in 2007. From a financial perspective, this initially meant Tina would be working less in her consultancy business – although now that Will is getting older, she's starting to increase her working hours again. David has therefore kept an eye on Tina's varying income so that she can make the most of super contribution caps each year.

After Will's birth, David encouraged Tina and Michael to put a proper estate plan in place that included powers of attorney and guardianship. He also made sure the family had the right level of life insurance cover for their needs.

"That was really important, as it helped us see how much we'd really need if one of us died," Tina said. "It was also useful for understanding how the other partner would need to go about continuing to work while raising a child."

Good advice, smart choices

When Will was born, the family was living in Sydney's inner west. Tina and Michael were considering buying a home in the local area, but David presented them with another option.

"We had a choice: we could take out a large mortgage and keep living in the area, or we could redeem all our investments and buy a house for cash a little bit further out," Tina said. "We decided to make the move because we felt we'd be better off debt-free."

When the Global Financial Crisis hit and markets slumped, David discussed with Tina and Michael the idea of borrowing against



Tina, Will and Michael holidaying on Hamilton Island in 2009

their home to invest in either property or shares. The couple followed David's advice, opting for a diversified Australian share portfolio. By using managed funds, they were able to acquire a well-diversified portfolio that pays consistent distributions. By re-investing their distributions, Tina and Michael benefit from compound returns, as well as the advantages of tax-deductible interest payments and dividend imputation.

Tina commented: "It was a great solution for us that I would never have known about without David's advice – I just wouldn't have even thought of it."

With David as her trusted adviser, Tina feels confident that she can live life the way she wants while ensuring her family will be financially secure for the future. This allows her to focus on the things that are important to her – like eating organically, sending Will to an alternative private school that he loves, and keeping her work schedule flexible to make the most of her family time.

"At the end of the day it's not about money, but what we want to do with our lives," said Tina. "Over the years David has taken the time to really get to know us – he understands that our priority is not to make as much money as we can, but to have a comfortable lifestyle that's true to our values."



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