JohnHicks
Independent Financial Advice

VERSION: 20 SEPTEMBER 2026

Financial Services Guide

We are proud to offer strategic independent advice which means that we don't charge commissions, we aren't controlled by a product provider, and we aren't restricted to a limited range of financial products.

We've put the following together to answer a few of the questions you might have before engaging with financial advice from John Hicks and John Hicks Independent Financial Advice as authorised by Independent Advisory Partners Pty Ltd (AFSL 561460).

This FSG is authorised for distribution by Independent Advisory Partners Pty Ltd.

Contents

WHAT IS THE FSG FOR?

This Financial Services Guide (FSG) is designed to help you decide whether to use our financial services. It explains who provides and authorises our advice, as well as how we are paid and how to make a complaint. As you explore this guide, you'll uncover the depth of expertise and the breadth of services we provide.

Importantly, should we provide formal financial advice, documents you should receive are:

—A **Statement of Advice (SoA)**
Where required, personal advice is documented in an SOA setting out the advice and its basis as well as other relevant details.

—**Product Disclosure Statement (PDS)**
Where we recommend a financial product that requires a PDS, we provide you the relevant PDS.

—A **Record of Advice (RoA)**
Further advice may be documented in a ROA.

—**Ongoing service agreement**
If you enter an ongoing advice arrangement, we seek written consent to renew every year.

WHO WE ARE

We are here to provide you with a trusted financial expert on your side. We provide expert strategic advice to help solve the challenges faced by you.

Our Founder and Principal Adviser

John (AR 1255240) brings two decades of experience in financial planning, having worked across boutique and larger practices before founding JH IFA. Those experiences shaped his belief that great advice should remain personal, objective and firmly centred on each client's goals and values.

Today, John's role extends beyond just the individuals and families he advises directly. He leads the development of the JH IFA advice team, helping set our advice standards, building our systems and maintaining a consistent client-first approach.

As a deliberately close-knit team we take a collaborative approach in all client engagements so that there is the same philosophy, judgement and standard throughout the team. This means every JH IFA client benefits from the thinking and support of the broader advice team but also is able to have a dedicated adviser who knows them personally and (over time) deeply.

Authorised Representation.

John Hicks Independent Financial Advice Pty Ltd (Corporate Authorised Rep Number: **1298797**, ABN **29 659 945 463**) is a Corporate Authorised Representative of:

Independent Advisory Partners Pty Ltd (AFSL Number: **561460**, ABN: **79 672 989 981**) is responsible for the services that we provide as it's Authorised representatives. Independent Advisory Partners Pty acts on its own behalf when financial services are provided. It does not act on behalf of a financial product issuer.

Why *independence* matters?

It was important to us to build a foundation for trusted advice from the beginning.

1. We don’t charge commissions.
2. We aren’t owned or controlled by a product manufacturer.
3. We have the freedom to recommend what we think is best for you.

These three measures remove the most common conflicts and arrangements that could be reasonably seen to influence financial advice.

You might expect this to be the norm but the distinction within financial planning is so important that Australian law restricts the use of terms ‘independent’, ‘unbiased’ and ‘impartial’ to only the firms who do meet these criteria.

We actually go one step further still and don’t charge asset-based or percentage-based) fees.

JohnHicks
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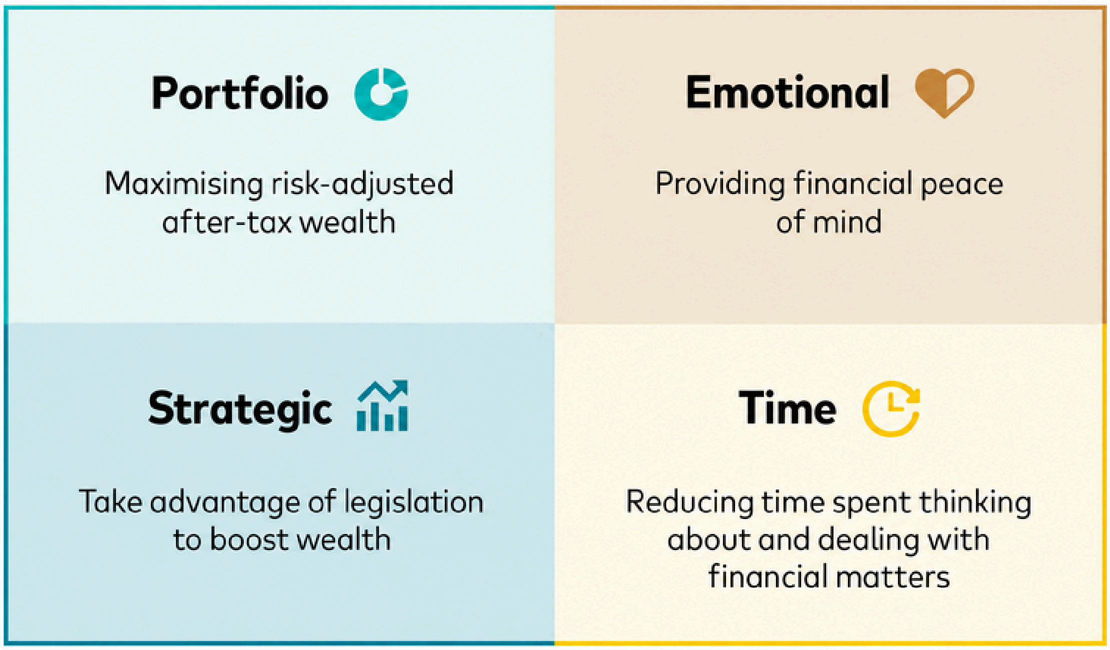
Is advice worth it?

There are four main areas we help:



Portfolio value: Building wealth through a diversified, tax-aware investing style that is tailored to your goals and needs. We use an evidence-based approach with a low-cost, transparent index core with automation and consolidation to keep things simple.

Strategic value: Selecting and actioning strategies that take advantage of the financial rules and opportunities to boost financial security in ways that don't rely on investment returns.

Emotional value: Feeling empowered by understanding strategy, having transparency over investments with objective advice and expert judgement available to help make financial decisions with regular "on-track" modelling.

Time value: Saving your time and energy to have more freedom to focus on family, passions and the things you enjoy rather than thinking about finances.

Who do we work with?

Due to the highly personalised and comprehensive approach that we take, our clients are typically:

- Established professionals.
- People preparing for, or going through, a significant transition, such as retiring.
- Those with a significant level of savings or investments.
- Successful business owners.

What we *advise* on

Areas we help with:

- Goals clarity and development
- Wealth creation
- Wealth protection
- Money with purpose
- Retirement planning
- Business succession and legacy
- Tax (financial) advice
- Asset allocation
- Portfolio management
- Estate planning strategy
- Philanthropy
- Cash flow management
- Debt management
- Personal risk assessment (insurance)

Products we are authorised to advise on:

- Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) and Listed investment companies/trusts (LICs, LITs).
- Wrap accounts.
- Industry superannuation funds.
- Retail superannuation funds.
- Self-managed superannuation funds (SMSFs).
- Master trusts.
- Life, trauma, total and permanent disability, income protection and business expenses insurance.
- Deposit products and debentures.
- Unit trusts, hedge funds, bank accounts, term deposits and cash management trusts.
- Listed and unlisted property trusts and syndicates.
- Fixed interest securities, preference shares, debentures and mortgage trusts.
- Retirement savings accounts.
- Managed investment schemes.

We are authorised to provide personal advice, general advice and dealing services in relation to the financial products listed above.

The Financial Plan

A summary of our process is as follows

1. Introductory Call

A complimentary 20-minute call to help see if we are the right fit for you. We won't provide advice but we can answer a few questions about our area of expertise, process, fees and so on.

2. Discovery Meeting

A 90-minute meeting where we listen to you to understand your objectives, history, dreams and current circumstances before beginning to educate on areas relevant to your planning.

3. Developing your Financial Plan

The initial financial plan is the foundation for everything that follows. It is a three-month period to get you into a better position and set up for your goals and financial security. It includes:

01 **Discovery Meeting** → 02 **Research** → 03 **Strategy Direction Meeting** → 04 **Plan Presentation Meeting** → 05 **Implementation**

- Research – After your Discovery meeting, we deep dive into your situation including current investments, tax structures, superannuation funds, insurance, estate planning and more.
- Strategy Direction – We meet again to gain more understanding of you and your family unpicking bias, history and challenging any competing priorities. This meeting confirms the direction of your strategy as well as product selection for us to formalise.
- Plan Presentation – We present our advice to you through a comprehensive written plan (Statement of Advice) and a meeting which allows us to go through our recommendations.
- Immediate Implementation – Once you're happy with the advice, we then put the plan into action by drafting paperwork and project managing the implementation.

4. Ongoing Support - Partnership

The initial plan is a blueprint and most effective if leading into a partnership with us. Our ongoing support means regular review, progress tracking, accountability and refinement of your plan to reflect changes in your circumstances, goals and the legislative and economic environment.

The Partnership

Life is always changing, your plan will too

A financial plan only works if actioned and committed to. An easy analogy is a gym routine, the greatest gym routine from the greatest trainer will achieve nothing if you don't follow the routine.

Our two main agendas for our ongoing clients follow:

Ongoing Advice Service: "Build" OR "Transition"

Our ongoing support for people building to financial security **or,** in their transition from working to retirement includes:

Services to be Provided	Description/Frequency
Access to a Trusted Adviser	We encourage you to call or email or, book an office meeting if something comes up outside of our normal review schedule.
Paperwork Made Easy	All forms pre-filled for insurance, super, pension, investments.
Professional Liaison	Co-ordination with your accountant, lawyer, mortgage broker.
Advice Review Meetings	At least one (typically two) meetings per year to keep your position optimal.

Advice Review Meetings: Delivery Schedule

We contact you twice per year for the foundational meetings,

1) A **big picture annual review,** typically between September and November**;** and,
2) An **EOFY focussed review,** typically March or April.

Annual Review One: End of Financial Year Focus (March-April)

Cash-flow update
We update your cash-flow plan as your income and expenses change.

Superannuation
Contributions, withdrawals, splitting and strategies to reduce tax.

Investments
We recommend changes & action across investments across all your portfolios.

Annual Review Two: Big-Picture Progress Focus (Sept-Nov)

Progress tracking
Updated net wealth position & updated modelling for progress to your goals.

Insurance
Review coverage including decreases where warranted.

Investments
Review investments across all your portfolios to keep aligned to goals.

Estate planning
Check estate plan inc. Will & Beneficiary alignment.

Most of the cost of the wealth accumulation program is typically tax-deductible. Where you have insurance, the commissions we receive are rebated to you.

The partnership agreement is not structured as a "forever agreement". We ask for permission to renew every 12-months.

The Partnership

Ongoing Advice Service: "Retiree"

Our ongoing support for people in long-term retirement includes:

Services to be Provided	Description/Frequency
Access to a Trusted Adviser	We encourage you to call or email or, book an office meeting if something comes up outside of our normal review schedule.
Paperwork Made Easy	All forms pre-filled for insurance, super, pension, investments.
Professional Liaison	Co-ordination with your accountant, lawyer, mortgage broker.
Advice Review Meetings	At least one meeting per year to keep your position optimal.

Review Meetings, Delivery Schedule

We contact you twice per year for the foundational meetings,

1) A **big picture 'new financial year' review,** typically August as we enter a new financial year; and,
2) A mini **check-in review**, typically February to make sure things are on track.

Main Review: "New Financial Year" Review (August)

Cash flow update
We ensure you have enough income and cash to fund expenses.

Superannuation
Contributions, withdrawals, and strategies to reduce tax including

Investments
We recommend changes and place trades on your behalf.

Retirement income check
Updated modelling to ensure your spending is at a sustainable level.

Centrelink
If appropriate we will factor Centrelink into advice and provide you with updates.

Estate planning
Update estate plan and assist your family in the event of your passing.

Mini Review: "New Calendar Year" Check-in (February)

Progress check
We update you on your super and investment position to manage risk.

Ad-Hoc Withdrawals
One-off withdrawal support if you need lump sums to cover large expenses.

Most of the cost of the retiree program is tax-deductible.

The partnership agreement is not structured as a "forever agreement". We ask for permission to renew every 12-months.

Implementation for advice is included in every engagement for our ongoing clients.

Fee Structure

What does the Discovery meeting cost?

The discovery meeting is a dedicated session to assess your position, bring clarity to your goals and provide some education on a potential way forward. It is not personalised advice or recommendation. It is the first step towards your advice. **The cost is $440.**

What does the Financial Plan cost?

The complete personalised is strategy designed, documented, discussed and implemented. This takes 8-12 weeks with multiple meetings. The exact cost would be provided as a quote in writing after your discovery meeting.

Our fee schedule is based on the areas of advice and complexity. It is not based on how much you are worth or earn. We only offer comprehensive advice so the fee is typically **from $4,000 plus implementation from $2,000 (for Individuals or, from $6,000 plus implementation of $3,000 for couples/families**. The implementation fee does not apply if ongoing partnership is adopted.

This cost is typically mostly tax-deductible but varies on a case by case basis. We will confirm in writing. Where permitted, part of your advice fee may be paid from your super fund (rules, consent and eligibility apply).

What does your ongoing partnership cost?

Our fee schedule is based on the advice, schedule and complexity of work. It is not based on your total assets or income.

With the review schedule outlined earlier, the cost is **from $500 pm (individuals) or, from $650 pm (couples/families).** This cost may be tax-deductible. We confirm the relevant deductibility in writing for each client to assist you and your tax agent. *All fees include GST.*

What about insurance?

The cost of insurance advice is incorporated into our advice and implementation fee quote. The implementation fee related to insurance is only payable if insurance is successfully accepted.

Where an insurer pays a commission to us, we rebate that commission back to you. We will disclose any applicable rate/amount when we provide advice.

If I don’t enter ongoing partnership, what is the cost if I come back later?

Some clients prefer one-off advice and come back again later. If there have been substantial changes since our financial plan, then we would treat you as a new client once more and work through a new financial plan.

Our Advisers

John Hicks

John Hicks (1255240) and John Hicks Independent Financial Advice Pty Ltd (1298797) are Authorised Representatives of Independent Advisory Partners Pty Ltd (561460). John Hicks is authorised to provide the same range of financial product services as Independent Advisory Partners Pty Ltd is licensed to provide, except for margin lending services. John's qualifications are:

- Bachelor of Economics (Honours)
- Graduate Diploma of Financial Planning
- Self Managed Super Fund Specialist

John has been working in financial planning since November 2007. He has worked in every area of advice and worked with clients through tough personal events as well as through major economic issues (Subprime, Global Financial Crisis, Covid crash and the Inflation shock).

Megan Henderson

Megan Henderson (1323147) is a provisional financial adviser and currently undertaking her professional year. This means she is listed on the adviser register and provides personal advice subject to the legislated supervision requirements. Megan's qualifications are:

- Bachelor of Business (Finance)
- Masters of Financial Planning
- Graduate Certificate of Applied Finance

Megan has been working in financial planning since 2016 with a prior career in Law.

She has a genuine passion for helping people with her mix of insight, empathy and practical nature.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know you are legitimate?

Our advisers are listed on the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) Financial Adviser Register as registered financial advisers: https://moneysmart.gov.au/financial-advice/financial-advisers-register. We are also members of the following industry bodies:

- Profession of Independent Financial Advisers (PIFA) www.pifa.org.au https://pifa.org.au/member-directory/
- Certified Independent Financial Advisers Association (CIFAA) www.cifaa.asn.au/find-an-adviser/
- Financial Advice Association of Australia (FAAA) https://faaa.au/find-a-planner/

Is there any difference if I am a high net wealth client?

We offer a separate advice service for clients who qualify as wholesale clients under the Corporations Act. Our wholesale service is generally reserved for clients who have at least $5,000,000 investable assets and a high level of financial literacy.

The wholesale rules allow more efficient advice delivery but different regulatory and disclosure requirements apply. We will explain these to you before offering that service.

Can you help me with just one question or area of advice only?

There's often a specific problem that our clients are trying to solve when they first come to us. This might be a big financial choice like "how much to spend on a home" or, "just my insurance".

However, your financial situation is usually a web of competing priorities and opportunities. As such, **we only advise in a way that looks at your whole position comprehensively**, in order to give the best advice.

Who are Independent Advisory Partners?

All financial advisers must provide advice under an Australian Financial Services Licence. Our advisers provide advice as authorised representatives of Independent Advisory Partners Pty Ltd, AFSL 561460.

IAP is controlled by John Hicks in conjunction with one other independent financial adviser acting as the second "responsible manager".

IAP has an annual audit and meets the reporting requirements you would expect are in place.

IAP does not receive a share of the fees our clients pay us. JH IFA contributes to the costs of operating the licence.

How are you and my adviser paid?

- Payment can be made via credit card, bank transfer, direct debit, Apple Pay/Google Pay. We do not accept cash.
- For some clients, we do charge from their super or investments (where permitted and as agreed in writing).
- John Hicks is the owner of the practice and he is remunerated through a salary and the profits that the practice makes.
- Employed advisers are remunerated through salary and may receive a performance bonus based on a 'balanced scorecard'. This includes compliance, leadership, client feedback and business performance.
- We may receive other benefits from product providers such as training, meals and entertainment. Details of any benefits received above $100 will be maintained on a register which is available to you on request.

How do you look after my data?

We are committed to protecting your privacy.

We have a Privacy Policy which sets out how we collect, hold, use and disclose your personal information. It also sets out how you can access the information we hold about you, how to have it corrected and how to complain where you are not satisfied with how we have handled your personal information.

Our Privacy Policy is available on request and on our website.

We take cybersecurity and your data very seriously and have taken considerable steps to safeguard it as best we can.

Tell me more about independence.

John Hicks Independent Financial Advice complies with s923A of the Corporations Act 2001 and is independent, impartial and unbiased because we:

- do not receive commissions for the advice we provide on any financial product that might give rise to a commission, without rebating it in full to you; and
- are not owned either partially or wholly by any financial institution or product issuer.

Our advisers are practising members of the Profession of Independent Financial Advisers (www.pifa.org.au) and as such, practise the Gold Standard of Independence.

What happens if I am unhappy with my advice or service or I have a complaint?

FAQs

We endeavour to provide you with the best advice and service at all times.

However, if you are not satisfied with our services, then you should take the following steps:

You can make a complaint to us in person, by phone, email or in writing. You do not need to use any particular words or complete a form.

Please contact your adviser or our office on 03 9028 8598 or admin@hicksifa.com.au. We will deal with your complaint under our internal dispute resolution process.

If your complaint cannot be resolved immediately, it will be referred to Independent Advisory Partners (admin@iapau.com.au). For most complaints, you will receive a formal response within 30 calendar days.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, or we do not respond within the required timeframe, you can contact AFCA.

If a formal response is not satisfactory, you have the right to forward your complaint to an external dispute resolution scheme. Independent Advisory Partners is a member of The Australian Financial Complaints Authority (AFCA).

AFCA:

Telephone: 1800 931 678

- Website: www.afca.org.au
- Email: info@afca.org.au
- Mail: GPO Box 3, Melbourne VIC 3001

Are you insured?

Independent Advisory Partners Pty Ltd holds Professional Indemnity insurance which satisfies the requirements for compensation arrangements under section 912B of the Corporations Act.

This insurance covers the financial services provided by current and past representatives.

Can you refer me to other professionals?

- We may refer you to other professionals including accountants, solicitors and mortgage brokers.
- We accept no responsibility or liability for the advice given by the other professionals.
- We do not accept any payments to refer our clients to other professionals.
- We do not pay for referrals from other professionals.

Are your fees tax deductible?

FAQs

The initial cost of advice may be tax deductible. The ongoing cost of advice may be tax deductible.

We deliver a tax pack to our ongoing clients at the start of a new financial year which confirms the relevant deductibilty in writing for each client to assist you and your tax agent.

> At all times you are able to contact us and ask questions about our advice and the products we recommend.

You can provide instructions to us in writing, via phone or via email. In some cases, we may require you to provide signed instructions.

We may provide further advice to you to keep your plan up to date for changes in your circumstances, changes in the law and changes in the economy and products.

If we provide further advice, it will be documented in a Record of Advice (RoA) which we retain on file. You can request a copy of the RoA document at any time up to 7 years after the advice is provided.

I don’t sound like one of your typical clients, but I still want to see you?

We have a wide range of expertise and are happy to hold a 20-minute introductory call to assess if we can help you and provide value that we are confident you will be happy with.

If we believe we cannot help you, we will do our best to point you to the right adviser or service.

Can you help me with my tax return?

FAQs

John Hicks is a Qualified Tax Relevant Provider (QTRP) and can provide tax (financial) advice which permits him to provide advice on the tax consequences of the financial advice he provides, namely:

- ascertaining liabilities, obligations or entitlements that arise, or could arise, under a taxation law; and/or
- advising about liabilities, obligations or entitlements that arise, or could arise, under a taxation law. He can provide advice which may or may not include the application or interpretation of taxation laws, and you can reasonably be expected to rely on it to: satisfy
- your tax liabilities or obligations that have arisen or might arise, and/or
- to claim tax entitlements that have arisen or might arise.

John Hicks is not licensed to provide a tax agent service.

- Only a Tax Agent can, on behalf of another party, prepare a tax return, lodge an objection about a tax matter with the ATO or deal with the ATO on your behalf.

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