









# Manage your money

How you use your money can change during your life. We have information to help you manage your money at different times in your life.

## Planning a budget

If you are studying or training, looking for work, planning for retirement or want to sort out your household finances, making a budget is a good place to start.

A budget may help you to track your spending. It can also help you work out how much money you have after paying bills and expenses. Keep your budget simple and check it often.

Start by looking at how much money you have coming in. Look at payslips, bank statements, and your Centrelink Deduction statement (if you have one).

Then, work out how much you are spending. Look at:

- bills
- credit card statements
- receipts and shopping docketts, like weekly food costs
- one-off expenses that you know are coming up
- annual bills, like insurance and car registration.

Working out how you spend your money can help you see where you can save money.

A change in your life can affect your budget. Remember to review your budget regularly to make sure it is still working for you.

## Set savings goals

You can make a savings plan to help put away money for an emergency, or to buy an expensive item.

You may be able to reach your savings goals quicker if you:

- cut back on buying things you don't really need
- use cash or a debit card instead of your credit card when shopping.

## How you can save

The Moneysmart website has information to help you manage your money.

Here are some ways to help with your budget and savings goals:

- Research to find the best deal. If you are looking for a mortgage or thinking about changing electricity provider, ask for a better deal. You may be surprised at how much you can save.
- Ask your bank or credit union about 'fee free' accounts. If you get an income support payment, you may be able to get a savings account that will not charge fees.

- Many companies and banks charge for paper bills or statements. You could save money if you choose to get these online.
- Be careful applying for loans. There are many types of loans and credit with different fees, charges and interest rates.

## Get fair and affordable banking and loans

- Check if you qualify for a No Interest Loan from Good Shepherd. These loans provide safe, fair and affordable credit for essential goods and services.
- 'Saver Plus' is a savings and financial education program. It is offered by community organisations in every state and territory. Read more about it at [bsl.org.au](http://bsl.org.au).
- If you are a higher education student, you may be eligible for our Student Start-up Loan.

## Get help

There are tools and services to help you manage your money.

- Centrepay is a free and voluntary service you can use to pay bills as regular deductions from your Centrelink payments.
- The weekly payment option allows you to get your income support payment weekly. This can help if you find it hard to budget on a fortnightly payment. Family Tax Benefit payment can not be paid weekly.
- If you are eligible, you can ask for your Family Tax Benefit or Carer Allowance payment to be offset. This means your Family Tax Benefit or Carer Allowance payment can be paid on a different week to your income support payment.
- The Rent Deduction Scheme is a useful, secure and free service. It lets you pay your state or territory housing authority rent as regular deductions from your Centrelink payments.
- Speak to your bank or service provider if you have trouble paying a bill, loan or mortgage. Most will have a hardship team who can help. They may be able to delay, reduce or waive debt repayments, depending on your situation.

## Speak to someone

- Talk to our Financial Information Service Officers. Our officers provide a free and confidential education service to help you understand decisions about your finances.
- Our social workers can help you with counselling, support and information during difficult times. Let us know if you need an interpreter, and we will arrange one for free.
- You can find a financial counsellor in your area at [ndh.org.au](http://ndh.org.au).

## For more information

- Call **131 202** to speak with us in your language about Centrelink payments and services.
- Go to [servicessaustralia.gov.au/manageyourmoney](http://servicessaustralia.gov.au/manageyourmoney) for more information in English
- Go to [servicessaustralia.gov.au/yourlanguage](http://servicessaustralia.gov.au/yourlanguage) to read, listen to or watch information in your language.

Your phone provider may charge you a fixed rate for calls from your home phone to '13' numbers. This is from anywhere in Australia and the rate may vary depending on your phone provider. Calls to '1800' numbers from your home phone are free. Phone providers may time your call and charge a higher rate if you call from a public or mobile phone.

## Disclaimer

The information contained in this publication is a guide to payments and services only, and is correct as of 25 January 2022. Please check our website for the most current information. It is your responsibility to decide if you wish to apply for a payment based on your particular circumstances