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Disclaimer

Managing Money: Every Woman's Business provides general information only as a guide for community facilitators. It is not intended as a substitute for professional advice. Additionally, information on financial products and services may change. WHIN accepts no liability for any advice or information contained in this material.

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Acknowledgements

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Background to the Financial Literacy Program

“Regardless of the circumstances and contexts in which we live, economic power cuts across all dimensions of our lives... [it] impacts on and intersects with all women’s rights and agendas - from reproductive and sexual rights to violence against women, education, political participation and health.”

Association for Women’s Rights in Development.

Women’s Health In the North (WHIN) has a long history of addressing the financial literacy needs of newly-arrived and migrant women. When women are financially literate they have more capacity to realise their potential as full and active citizens, as well as experiencing improved health and wellbeing.

In 2004, WHIN developed its financial literacy program as a means to improve the financial literacy and capability of newly-arrived and migrant women by providing gender-specific and culturally-targeted information and training, relevant to their lives, and sensitive to the transitional process involved in settling into a new country.

The financial literacy program was initially designed as a bridging program for newly-arrived women to access WHIN’s business education program – *Enterprising Women*. WHIN identified a gap existed in the basic financial literacy skills women needed to operate a small business. A financial literacy program – *Women Understanding Money* – soon became a program in its own right. It was tailored to meet the needs of those women most in need of developing financial literacy skills.

Since 2004, the program has evolved and continues to be driven by the high demand for basic financial literacy information for newly-arrived and migrant women. To date the program has been delivered to over 300 women from over 20 cultural groups in Melbourne’s northern and eastern metropolitan regions. A facilitator’s training program was developed in 2008 to assist community and bilingual workers in their own work on financial literacy with newly-arrived women.

In 2009, Women’s Health East (WHE) partnered with WHIN to implement the program in Melbourne’s east. The 2009 financial literacy program sought to address the financial literacy disadvantages of newly-arrived migrant women in the eastern metropolitan region. Women’s participation played an important role in promoting economic self-sufficiency, increasing social inclusion and improving mental health and wellbeing.

Continued next page >>

Background to the Financial Literacy Program

In response to the ongoing need for updated financial literacy resources and skill development sessions for newly-arrived women, the OWP funded WHIN and WHE to conduct further financial literacy workshops throughout 2012. Learnings from these workshops, conversations with women, consultations with community workers, and financial counsellors have enabled WHIN to further develop its 2008 financial literacy program trainer's manual. This has resulted in the production of this new resource – *Managing Money: Every Woman's Business A guide to increasing women's financial capability*. This resource adds to the growing body of work and resources on financial literacy, yet is uniquely placed to enable workers at a grassroots level to work with women to develop basic financial skills. It includes topics on budgeting, savings, accounts, credit, debts and loans; accessing community assistance and financial counselling; information on consumer rights and responsibilities; and housing and tenancy issues.

Managing Money is a tool for women and facilitators which not only provides culturally and gender-sensitive financial information, but also raises awareness of, and addresses, the barriers that restrict newly-arrived and migrant women's financial inclusion and security.

Introduction to Financial Literacy



"By developing confidence, knowledge and skills to manage financial products and services, individuals will be better able to overcome or avoid financial exclusion. Such exclusion impacts on the opportunities individuals can pursue, their sense of security and their overall emotional and physical wellbeing ... Good financial literacy skills help individuals and families make the most of their opportunities, meet their goals and secure their financial wellbeing, as well as contribute to the economic health of society."

Australian Securities and Investments Commission.

Introduction to Financial Literacy

What is Financial Literacy?

Financial literacy concerns the ability to make informed judgments and to make effective decisions regarding the use and management of money. Basic financial literacy is a critical skill for all members of the community. It means being able to understand and manage money in an informed and effective way. Financial literacy affects nearly every part of life – from shopping to opening a bank account and paying bills – and is a particularly important part of the settlement process in Australia for newly-arrived women. For many women understanding the financial systems and structures in Australia is an incredible challenge. Issues of culture, gender and displacement have meant that concepts surrounding finances in Australia may be entirely foreign and unfamiliar, thereby creating significant barriers to accessing financial products and services. This resource aims to provide newly-arrived women with important information about the structures and processes of financial issues and practices in Australia.

Financial Literacy in a Nutshell Involves:

- The ability to understand and make informed decisions about your finances and financial situations.
 - Numeracy and literacy.
 - Financial understanding – what money is, its value and how it is used.
 - Financial competence – an understanding of basic financial services and products, how to access them and information of any risks involved.
 - Financial responsibility – how to make choices about financial issues; your rights and responsibilities as a consumer; and your confidence and ability to access assistance if things go wrong.
-

Women's Financial Capability

"Women's equal access to, and control over, economic and financial resources is critical for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women, and for equitable and sustainable economic growth and development. Both economic and financial resources have important implications for women's economic roles in sustaining household livelihoods, in labour markets and in the wider economy."

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs - Division for the Advancement of Women.

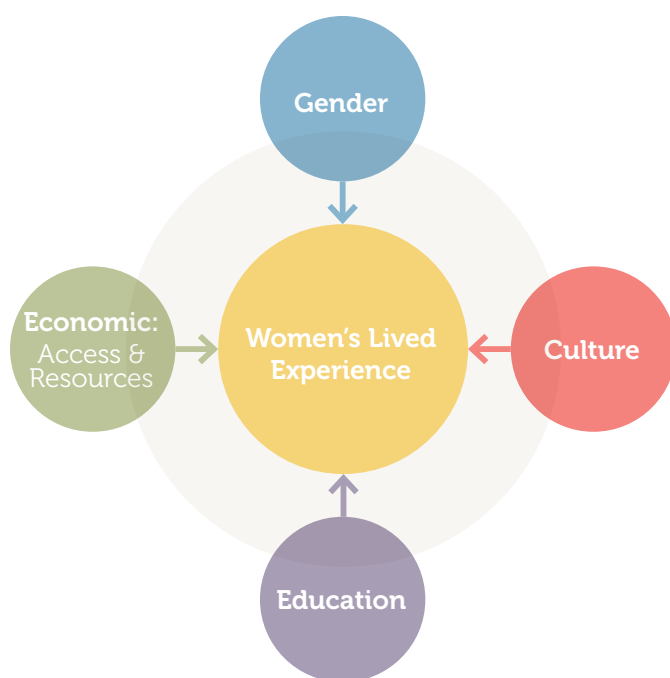
Managing Money takes a gendered and culturally-sensitive approach to women's economic participation and empowerment. Developing financial capability is a critical step in this process. Financial capability means the combination of a person's ability and their social context which allows them the freedom to lead the kind of life they value.

Introduction to Financial Literacy

Financial Capability

- Understands that there are social determinants and structural barriers that impact on women's financial wellbeing and ability to economically participate.
- Is about working with women to identify what they need in order to achieve the financial futures and lives they want.
- Is about transforming financial knowledge, understanding and skill development into life practice.
- Is not about competence, but [about] lack of money, power and experience.

Structural Barriers Impacting on Women's Financial Capability

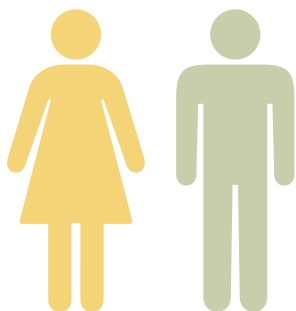


There are many structural constraints which impact on women's financial capability including gender, culture, education and economics. These structural factors intersect with women's personal experiences of these constraints on a personal level.

On an individual level women may experience:

- financial disempowerment;
- a lack of confidence;
- a sense of shame and embarrassment;
- feelings of hopelessness;
- poor physical health; and/or
- a sense of over-responsibility (that they are to blame for their limited financial literacy and economic circumstances).

Introduction to Financial Literacy



Gender and Financial Capability

The financial experiences of men and women are different. This is because of the social and gendered roles we play. Gender intersects with other social determinants (such as age, culture, ethnicity and class), to further constrain women's financial capability. These realities mean that even in developed countries like Australia, women are more likely to be financially disadvantaged than men. This is particularly true for newly-arrived, refugee and migrant women. This makes financial capability even more of a priority.

Why gender matters

- Women are the prime caregivers for children, relatives with a disability and the elderly, thereby taking them out of the workforce.
- Women experience far greater levels of family violence including financial abuse. According to VicHealth, compared with other risk factors, intimate-partner violence is the top ranking contributor to preventable disease and premature death among Victorian women aged 15 to 44 years of age.
- Finance and money matters are often not considered a 'woman's role'.
- Women can have a lack of access to affordable and accessible child care.
- According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, women have a higher life expectancy than men and are expected to live until 83.5 years of age and men to 78.7 years of, so what women earn has to last them longer.
- According to the *Girl Effect Fact Sheet*, women have the power to create change at a household level by being instrumental in how the family spends their money. For example, when a female receives income, on average 90% of that money is reinvested into her family as compared to only 30-40% for a man.

Introduction to Financial Literacy

Culture and Women's Financial Capability

Newly-arrived, refugee and migrant women have to adjust to entirely different financial systems, as well as face other barriers to economic participation.

Some of these barriers include:

- linguistic differences;
- access to financial information (lack of culturally appropriate financial products and information in community languages is a major issue for newly-arrived, refugee and migrant women);
- resettlement and transition issues which can make it very difficult for women to initially prioritise financial management (this is particularly the case if long periods have been spent in refugee camps, or if women have experienced trauma);
- many newly-arrived women are resettled in the outer growth corridors of metropolitan areas with less access to services such as transport, child care, banks, educational centres;
- a lack of access to basic social services (for example financial counselling and/or housing);
- the non-recognition of qualifications – 'Difficulties in having overseas qualifications recognised in Australia often leads to...highly qualified women finding it difficult to work in their chosen field, or finding a job at all'; and
- discrimination and racism which can impact on women finding employment, accessing housing, and financial products and services. For example, newly-arrived, migrant and refugee women 'often find it difficult to interpret tenancy laws, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and discrimination by their landlords'.

"Financial wellbeing – an important element of women's health – has remained an elusive goal for many immigrant and refugee women. Financial instability often results in the accumulation of unpaid debt and concomitant health outcomes. Conversely, increasing women's financial security and literacy may lead to improvements in women's health, and also facilitate women's economic participation."

Multicultural Centre for Women's Health.

Introduction to Financial Literacy

Economics and Women's Financial Capability

Women face financial vulnerability through structural discrimination in the economy and labour market because of their gender.

Here are some facts:

- Women are twice as likely to be underemployed than men.
- Women are over-represented in part time and casual employment.
- Women earn lower wages. (There still exists a significant pay gap between men and women in Australia with women earning on average 17.4% less than men.)
- The feminisation of labour industries means that women are clustered into particular industries. For example, many women work in highly feminised industries like hospitality, retail and clerical, with pay and conditions in these sectors set by the relevant awards. Many other women work in blue colour positions such as cleaners and machinists where penalty rates, overtime, and sick and holiday pay provisions are also precarious. These industries are made up of large numbers of newly-arrived and migrant women.
- According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 data, migrant women have the lowest employment rates of men and women and are therefore less likely to achieve financial security or inclusion. More recent research found that just having an Anglo-Saxon name made it easier to get an interview. Research has found clear evidence of discrimination – people with Chinese and Middle Eastern names may have to submit at least 50% more job applications than people with Anglo-Saxon names.
- Women are retiring with around half the savings of men. In a 2011 survey, the Australian Institute of Superannuation Trustees found that of 800 women, over half of retired women in Australia were in households with annual income of less than \$30,000. Single, divorced and widowed women are amongst the worst off.
- Women have less access to secure and affordable housing than men, with women comprising the majority of single-parent and sole-person households.

Education and Women's Financial Capability

Newly-arrived, refugee and migrant women may face many barriers accessing education which, in turn, impacts on their level of financial literacy.

These barriers include:

- limited access to formal education;
- low literacy levels (in both language and numeracy); and
- limited or no technological literacy.

Using the Managing Money: Every Woman's Business Resource Kit



Using the *Managing Money: Every Woman's Business* Resource Kit

Managing Money promotes financial education that is inclusive of women's capabilities, strengths and learning through shared story-telling. This approach, developed by Good Shepherd, is a participatory and learner-centred model, adopting five key principles its practice.

Financial Education Practice Principles

- 1 Financial education occurs within the context of an honest, respectful, supportive, and empowering relationship.
- 2 The core activity of financial education is sharing information and knowledge, not training.
- 3 Financial education requires standing strongly with people and avoiding blaming the victim.
- 4 Our approach to financial education reflects the range of capacities and needs of the people we work with on a continuum.
- 5 Financial education focuses on the context of financial difficulties and not on individual deficits: financial difficulties are normalised and seen as a consequence of economic and social systems.

Working with Women

Establishing groups

To help inform their approach in establishing groups, it useful for facilitators to firstly investigate the traditional cultural practices and gender roles involved in relation to the management of family finances, budgets and money.

Questions for facilitators to consider could include:

- Are there common or specific gender roles within families from this community in relation to money management, creating budgets, and authority to make decisions about 'family' money?
- What were cultural traditions and/or gender role differences in money management and usage prior to arriving in Australia?
- How has this changed since arriving in Australia, and has this caused tension within families?
- What access and authority do women have to family money and decision making? For example, who can create budgets, access family bank accounts and make spending decisions within the family?

Using the *Managing Money: Every Woman's Business Resource Kit*

Working with Women

Establishing groups (CONTINUED)

If you do not have direct links with women to set up a group, then it is crucial to work with agencies that do. Contact the local migrant resource centre, and a settlement agency such as Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES), to identify which ethnic and cultural groups to target, what the community needs are, and the best methods of recruitment. This could mean tapping into already existing groups or, in instances where there are no existing groups, promoting the project with translated information via culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) networks, community church groups, and other agency databases.

- Contact the local migrant resource centre or community centre and find out what is already happening. Don't reinvent the wheel.
- Recruitment of groups can be time and resource consuming. Working with established groups at a time and place suitable to them, not only saves time but increases attendance. By tapping into established groups that are already committed to attending their group at a particular time and day, you are not adding to the demands on women's time. This is also useful as in many cases the groups have already broken the ice and an element of trust has been established. Working with established groups allows you to be introduced to the group by the facilitator who already has an existing relationship with the group.
- If you are establishing a new group, a longer period of time will be required for promotion and recruitment. Allow at least four to six weeks for the promotion, recruitment and engagement of women.
- Allow a further two weeks to establish trust and rapport with the group, for group members to establish a relationship with each another, and to establish an understanding of the women's level of financial literacy.

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Using the *Managing Money: Every Woman's Business* Resource Kit

Working with Women

Establishing groups (CONTINUED)

Regardless of the establishment phase of the group, there are a number of things to consider during this period:

- Allow time prior to running the workshops to meet with the relevant organisation and workers (including bilingual staff) in order to establish group requirements, cultural considerations and the different levels of financial and general literacy. This feedback can help to refine your workshops for different community groups and ensure a more tailored approach.
- Consider issues around accessibility. Ensure that your venue is physically accessible, close to public transport and suitable for children (where necessary). If access is a barrier for women who rely solely on their partners for transportation, you may need to consider whether it is appropriate to allow men to attend the workshops if this enables women to attend. Another strategy to address this problem is to ensure a suitable choice of venue. You may try to select a venue that is easily accessible by public transport or a venue that is known to the women (for example, a local church or community centre). This will help women feel comfortable as they will be in familiar surroundings.
- Know your group, meet with them and consult with them before the program begins. Ensure that they want a program. What do they hope to get out of the program? What focus do they want the program to have?
- Be culturally aware and informed. For example, is it appropriate to run an Arabic group? What does that mean on a cultural level? Will such a diverse group of people be comfortable working together? What dialect do they speak? What language do they prefer to read? Can they read their own language?

Using the *Managing Money: Every Woman's Business* Resource Kit

Conducting the Sessions

The role of the facilitator

The facilitator has an important role in keeping the group active, on track and engaged.

For each session the facilitator may want to factor in ways to:

- ensure the groups work effectively to achieve the goals of the program;
- ensure the sessions are delivered in a creative and fun manner;
- establish the agenda and help the group follow it;
- best introduce the group to each other and the program;
- establish group agreements;
- create an environment for learning and sharing;
- identify your limitations and being upfront about them;
- ensure that the information is pitched at the right level and takes into account varying financial and general literacy levels;
- get to know your audience. Do your homework: use the internet, speak to your local migrant resource centre and, if you get the opportunity, attend an information session designed to increase your awareness and understanding about the experiences and needs of newly-arrived, migrant and refugee communities;
- be flexible – following a structured workshop format may not work for all groups. Be prepared to gauge where the group is at, and adjust accordingly; and
- make the best use of visual aids and practical examples to demonstrate your point.

Using the *Managing Money: Every Woman's Business* Resource Kit

Conducting the Sessions *(CONTINUED)*

Group agreements

Group agreements provide an opportunity to discuss guidelines for the session. This is something that needs to be done with each group. Some suggestions for topics that can be included in group agreements include confidentiality, listening to others, and use of mobile phones. Brainstorm these ideas, record them on paper and display them in the room to refer to as needed.

If it is a very large group, you may want to prepare some group agreements and then check in with the group to see how they feel about them and if they would like to add anything else to the list. Display the guidelines in the room to refer to as needed.

The use of name tags and attendance sheets can provide a challenge, as many of the women may not have a formal education. As a result, some of the women may not be able to write their names or fill in an attendance sheet. This is particularly problematic with a large group due the amount of time this can consume. It can be worthwhile replacing an attendance sheet with a role call and preparing the tags yourself in advance.

An example group agreement:

- **Confidentiality:** What is said and expressed in the room stays in the room. No-one's personal details are mentioned.
- **Listening:** Take turns in talking and listening to each other.
- **Respect:** Acknowledge that we all are unique, that everyone's experience is different, and that we may have different points of view.
- **Mobile phones silent:** Acknowledge that people may have to check their phones, but to please put them on silent.
- **Punctuality:** We have a lot to get through, so please try to be on time.
- **Ask questions:** If you don't understand something don't be afraid to ask the facilitator either during or after the session. If your question can't be answered today, it will be followed up with an answer for the next session.

It may be useful to reinforce ideas of confidentiality in the group at the beginning of every session to ensure women do not inadvertently discuss or disclose others' circumstances.

Using the *Managing Money: Every Woman's Business Resource Kit*

Conducting the Sessions *(CONTINUED)*

Answering questions

Many questions may arise during the session. To help keep the group on track, it can be a good idea to create a 'I will look into it' sheet. This is a list of things to put up in case someone asks something you do not know the answer to. This lets the group know that their questions will not be left unanswered. Explain that all the groups are different, and you learn new things every time you run a group, so if you don't know the answer, you will do your best to find it for them in time for next week. This gives you space to investigate questions that arise during the program that you may not have the immediate answers to.

How Women Learn

Women's relationship with money is founded on personal life experiences and this should be taken into account when approaching the learning environment for the sessions.

Women tend to learn best:

- in small groups with other women;
- from each other;
- by being provided with practical information that can be implemented;
- in a participatory and interactive way;
- informally;
- verbally and visually; and
- by doing.

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Using the *Managing Money: Every Woman's Business* Resource Kit

How Women Learn (CONTINUED)

Learning styles

Financial literacy information needs to be delivered in a way that matches women's capacity to understand and implement it. Consider the most appropriate facilitation style for specific community groups. For example, are the women comfortable with a participatory style of learning? Some cultural groups may not be as comfortable as other groups and may want the delivered session focused more on information delivered by a financial counsellor. You need to know your group in order to determine the best way to work with them.

Most people learn in a variety of ways with a tendency towards a particular sensory type known as VAK (visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic). It is best to deliver the session incorporating a combination of these styles.

VAK learning



The visual learner:

The visual learner is likely to think in pictures and learn well from the use of visual aids such as diagrams, pictures, overhead or PowerPoint presentations, film, and handouts. It is also common for visual learners to take notes while learning as this visually reinforces the information they are receiving.



The auditory learner:

The auditory learner is likely to learn well through discussions, talking things through and group work listening to the experiences of others. Auditory learners interpret the underlying meanings of speech through listening to tone of voice, pitch, speed and other nuances. Written information may have little meaning until it is heard. These learners often benefit from reading text aloud.



The kinaesthetic/tactile learner:

The kinaesthetic/tactile learner is likely to learn best through a hands-on approach, actively exploring the physical world around them. They may find it hard to sit still for long periods.

Using the *Managing Money: Every Woman's Business Resource Kit*

How Women Learn *(CONTINUED)*

Learning styles *(CONTINUED)*

Things to remember

- Keep things on track but remain flexible. You may find throughout the session that women have many stories to share about their financial situation. It is important to allow space for women to share their stories but be mindful to keep things on track.
- Many women learn well experientially, so remember to incorporate an activity into each session that builds on this. Women may even benefit from take-home exercises although, due to negative connotations, do not call these 'homework'.
- Use visual aids as memory tools rather than relying on text. If the group has a higher level of literacy, then you can supply information in community languages. Many websites such as MoneySmart (see the Useful Resources section) have excellent resources in many community languages.
- Keep the group involved throughout the session by asking questions, validating women's stories and using the participatory activities.
- Not all groups will be the same; adapt and be responsive to each group's needs.
- Consult with the group in a way that they are able to express their opinion in a safe and supportive space.

Using the *Managing Money: Every Woman's Business* Resource Kit

Working with Financial Counsellors and Guest Speakers

A financial counsellor plays an important role in the delivery of the workshops. As a facilitator you are not expected to be an expert in financial knowledge and education. Where women's level of financial literacy is higher, it is recommended to work with a financial counsellor as much as possible so that women can be provided with more complex financial information and advice. If the group have only been recently resettled, you may only need a financial counsellor for a couple of sessions.

In either case there are a number of matters to factor in when working with a guest speaker:

- Where possible work with a woman. It can sometimes be difficult to access a female worker, so if that is the case, be mindful that the use of male presenters or interpreters can inhibit women's involvement in the session.
- It is a good idea for any guest speakers, and the organisations they represent, to be introduced and discussed with the group prior to the session - the group may have a history, opinion or cultural issue surrounding the organisation or individual, and this could impact on the session's effectiveness. Alternatively, the group may have already been visited by that organisation and accessed the information provided.
- When sourcing a guest speaker for the sessions, try to engage local organisations. This will help build important partnerships between them, and will also facilitate easy referral pathways for participants who require support from that organisation. It will also help to maintain consistency and build trust with the group.
- Where possible, try to engage the same financial counsellor throughout all workshops. This will help with the continuity of sessions and will enable critical relationships to be built between the financial counsellor and the participants.
- Promote the importance of cultural sensitivity when working with culturally-diverse groups. The financial counsellor's teaching approach should be sensitive to the cultural needs of the group.
- It is important that the financial counsellor be briefed on the financial and literacy levels of the group in order to ensure that information is pitched at the right level.
- Ensure that the financial counsellor is briefed on how to work with a bilingual worker or interpreter.

Using the *Managing Money: Every Woman's Business* Resource Kit

Tips for Working with Bilingual Workers and Interpreters

- When conducting groups, it may be useful to work with the same interpreter over a series of sessions, this will ensure that the content remains familiar to the interpreter and therefore provide consistency with the way the information is conveyed. Ultimately, it is preferable to work with a bilingual worker, so that facilitators are able to spend time explaining key concepts and ideas to the group and ensuring that the information is accurately conveyed and explained. Also important to note is that when using interpreters, facilitators will need to allow double the time for activities which can mean that some sessions will need to be amended.
- There are two methods of interpreting: consecutive and simultaneous. Consecutive interpreting is the most common. This is when the interpreter follows the presenter so the presenter must leave adequate pauses for interpreting to occur. Simultaneous interpreting is less common and is when the interpreting occurs immediately and continuously so the presenter does not need to pause. Confirm the style your interpreter prefers.
- When using interpreters aim for the conversation to occur between group participants and the presenter(s). That is, direct all conversation to the person for which it is intended, not the interpreter.
- If using an interpreter, it can be useful to check in with the group (via a group leader or by using a telephone interpreter) after the session to ensure their comfort with the interpreter. Although people may be from the same country, they may not be of the same political persuasion, religious or tribal background which may present issues around trust thereby stifling frank communication.
- It is important to check in with the bilingual worker or interpreter to make sure that they understand the workshop content. If possible, try to give the session plan and activities to the interpreter prior to the workshop so they can familiarise themselves with the content.

Using the *Managing Money: Every Woman's Business* Resource Kit

Issues that May Arise During the Sessions

As with all groups there may be times when challenging issues or behaviours present themselves. Some behaviour is more difficult to handle than others.

Some tips to help manage challenging behaviour and to keep things on track include:

- Remind the group of its guidelines which were established at the beginning.
- If difficult questions arise (or questions that are best answered in private), either refer to the 'I will look into it' sheet or tell the person you will speak to them at the end of the session so you don't hold up the group.
- Throughout the delivery of the sessions, complex issues such as family violence or risk of homelessness may emerge that require a referral or case management. This will require follow up with relevant organisations. Be aware of the level of support you can offer. Never promise that you can resolve someone's problem – it is unfair to the woman and to yourself.

Working with Men in Workshops

Working specifically with women on financial literacy represents an important, central component of this educational resource and its focus on promoting women's autonomy. However, implementing the sessions with certain cultural groups may make it difficult for the program to be gender specific. Whilst many women have expressed that they learn better and feel more comfortable in women-only groups, with some communities the exclusion of men can be at the detriment of the program, so you may need to include them. The inclusion of men may be necessary with some cultural groups in order to affect change at the household level. It is important to make this consideration of gender inclusiveness when you initially consult with your group.

Tips for working with men:

- Create a welcoming environment for men, women and children in the group.
- Take time to outline the importance of women's financial literacy and its link with improved health outcomes.
- Outline group guidelines that promote the importance of confidentiality, sharing openly, and everyone's right to be heard and respected.
- Monitor the group dynamics to ensure that the women have a voice and feel safe to use it. The facilitator may need to apply strategies to ensure that dominant personalities are well managed in the group.

Evaluation: What, Why, Who and How?



Evaluation is an important part of any educational program. Evaluation involves more than just collecting information and data, it is a good way to understand whether the information in the session has been useful and relevant for the participants so that they gain as much out of the program as possible. Evaluation is a type of quality assurance.

Evaluation: What, Why, Who and How?

"Evaluation can:

- support applications for new or continued funding;*
- secure support from stakeholders and the community;*
- improve staff performance;*
- contribute to the broader evidence-base about what does and does not work for clients and providers with regard to specific issues and experiences; and*
- assist in the ongoing improvement and refinement of program content."*

Communities And Families Clearinghouse Australia.

Evaluation: What, Why, Who and How?

What Questions Could an Evaluation Include?

- **Was the information provided in the program useful?**
For example: *was the information pitched at women's abilities and levels of financial literacy?*
- **Did participants implement the information they learnt?**
For example: *did a participant make a behavioural change such as increase the monthly repayments on their credit card above the minimum repayment?*
- **If not, why not?**
For example: *what might be some of the barriers participants experienced in terms of implementing the information in the sessions?*
- **What was done well in the implementation of the program?**
For example: *did the introductory ice-breaker activity work well in opening up the session and establishing a sense of fun and rapport with women?*
- **What could have been done better?**
For example: *were activities chosen for each session appropriately?*
- **Were there any unintended outcomes for both the participants and the program?**
For example: *were there any referrals for participants as a result of a disclosure concerning their financial wellbeing during a session?*

Evaluation: What, Why, Who and How?

Types of Evaluation

There are three types of **evaluation** – **process**, **impact** and **outcome**.

Process Evaluation

Process evaluation is concerned with how the session and/or program was delivered, and includes addressing questions such as:

- Who took part? Was this the intended target audience?
- How was the program delivered?
- Was the group satisfied with the program?
- What worked well and what didn't?

This information can be gathered from the attendance sheets along with the short evaluative sessions at the end of each session. Refer to Evaluation Tool 6: Session Debrief Form.

Impact Evaluation

Impact evaluation measures whether the sessions and/or programs have had any short or medium-term effect on participants.

Changes can be measured in:

- attitude;
- knowledge retention;
- confidence;
- awareness; and
- changes in behaviour in the short term.

This information can be gathered using the evaluation tools that are included in this resource.

An example of an impact evaluation objective and outcome is:

Program objective: to increase women's confidence and knowledge of financial literacy in Melbourne's northern metropolitan region (NMR).

Evaluation finding: as a result of the post-program evaluation, women reported that their confidence and knowledge have been increased through the delivery of the financial literacy program in Melbourne's NMR.

Evaluation: What, Why, Who and How?

Types of Evaluation *(CONTINUED)*

Outcome Evaluation

Outcome evaluation measures the long-term outcomes or effects of the program. In terms of financial literacy, it is important to measure ongoing or long-term changes in women's financial capability.

For example, the program aim may be to increase the financial literacy of newly-arrived women across the northern and eastern metropolitan regions of Melbourne by providing culturally and gender-appropriate financial literacy workshops.

We will know if women achieved this if they have demonstrated changes in their money management at some stage after the program finishes. Outcome evaluations must be planned for as they need to measure change after the program is completed. This can be difficult for many reasons including resource intensity, and decreased response rates of participants over time.

Evaluation Tools

There are many different tools that can be used to capture or measure the implementation of the program. Some will work better than others depending on the type and size of the group, as well as their language and literacy levels. Below is an example of an evaluation tool.

Most significant change (MSC)

MSC is an evaluation tool that uses a participatory approach. It paints a picture of what participants understand; the success of the program; and captures change and appreciation of that change throughout the program delivery. It can also capture change that was not anticipated in the original project design.

"MSC stories are collected from those most directly involved, such as participants and...staff. The stories are collected by asking a simple question such as: 'During the last month, or, in your opinion, what was the most significant change that took place for participants in the program?'"

MSC Guide, UK.

It is a simple method that involves an element of story-telling and can be easily communicated across different cultures. A single question may be used in relation to a number of categories. For example, in your opinion as a facilitator, during the past six weeks what do you think was the most significant change that took place in the lives of the people that undertook the program?

Look for:

- Changes in people's lives.
- Changes in people's participation (behaviour).
- Changes in the sustainability of people's activities.
- Any other changes.



Evaluation: What, Why, Who and How?

Evaluation Tools

Tool 1: Most Significant Change

This is a verbal evaluation that is conducted by the facilitator. The facilitator will need to record group consensus and figures. As this is conducted as a group activity, the facilitator will need to be mindful of quieter participants.

QUESTIONS:

1. Program expectations

Thinking back to the first day of the program and what you hoped to gain from it, do you think this was achieved?

YES _____ NO _____

(Ensure to record the numbers for 'yes' and 'no' responses.)

2. Changes in knowledge

Since completing the program, have you gained more knowledge and skills about:

- Your financial rights YES _____ NO _____
- Where to get help on financial matters YES _____ NO _____
- Credit options YES _____ NO _____
- Money management YES _____ NO _____
- Banking products YES _____ NO _____
- Housing and tenancy issues YES _____ NO _____
- Other (state) _____

For those women who feel they have not had any changes in knowledge, identify the reasons for this. **For example:** *Was the program too hard? Did the woman not understand the content?*

Evaluation: What, Why, Who and How?

Evaluation Tools

Tool 1: Most Significant Change (CONTINUED)

For those who felt they had changed, get them to identify what the specific changes were.

For example: *were some barriers to accessing information and services reduced? Was the information presented in a straight forward and easy-to-understand manner?*

(Ensure that figures and explanations are recorded.)

3. Changes in behaviour

Since completing the program, will you make changes in the way you:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|
| • Bank | YES _____ | NO _____ |
| • Spend | YES _____ | NO _____ |
| • Treat bills | YES _____ | NO _____ |
| • Approach credit | YES _____ | NO _____ |
| • Seek help | YES _____ | NO _____ |
| • Shop | YES _____ | NO _____ |
| • Other (state) _____ | | |

For those who feel they will not make changes, what are the reasons? You may need to probe here. **For example:** *Do you feel that you don't need to make the changes? Do you still not know how to make the changes?*

For those participants who do feel they will make changes, identify in what specific areas? Identify what the enabling factors were. **For example:** *Do you feel that you have enough knowledge to implement change? Do you now know how to access particular services?*

Continued next page >>



Evaluation: What, Why, Who and How?

Evaluation Tools

Tool 1: Most Significant Change (CONTINUED)

4. Changes in confidence

Since completing the program, have you gained confidence around:

- | | | |
|---|-----------|----------|
| • Taking control of your financial situations | YES _____ | NO _____ |
| • Where to get help | YES _____ | NO _____ |
| • Money management | YES _____ | NO _____ |
| • Your financial future | YES _____ | NO _____ |
| • Savings possibilities | YES _____ | NO _____ |
| • Other (state) _____ | | |

For participants who feel they have not had any changes in confidence, what are the reasons?

For example: *Was the program was too hard? Did you not understand the content?*

For participants who feel that they have had changes in confidence, identify in what areas and why.

For example: *Were some barriers reduced? Was the information presented in a straight forward manner and was it easy to understand?*

(Ensure that figures and explanations are recorded.)

Evaluation: What, Why, Who and How?

Evaluation Tools

Tool 1: Most Significant Change *(CONTINUED)*

5. Overall benefits

Ask the women what they think the **most significant outcome** for them has been as a direct result of their participation in the program.

This will involve a discussion around the changes (if any) in confidence, knowledge and behaviour. Identify any common experiences. If participants were to pick one story that best represents the outcomes for the group (both positive and negative) what would it be? Does the group, as a whole, agree on this? Record this information.

Ask the women how they think the program could be improved? What stopped it being better, or what barriers need to be overcome?

Ask the women if there is any other feedback they would like to provide?

Evaluation: What, Why, Who and How?

Evaluation Tools

Tool 2: Self-Administered Evaluation 1

In most cases this evaluation tool needs to be administered verbally and, where possible, by someone other than the facilitator. It could be useful to have these questions projected so the group can work through it together.

1. I have found this program to be relevant to my financial experiences and situation in Australia.

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Slightly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

2. I have found this program to be useful and relevant to my financial situation.

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Slightly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

3. After doing this program, when thinking about my financial situation, I feel I have gained confidence about it.

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Slightly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

4. After completing this program, I feel more in control of my financial situation.

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Slightly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree
☐ No change in the way I feel

5. After doing this program, I feel I can make changes to the way I manage my money.

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Slightly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree
☐ No change in the way I feel

6. After completing this program, I have made changes in the way I manage my money.

☐ Disagree ☐ Agree

7. After completing this program, I am taking the information I needed away with me.

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Slightly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree



Evaluation: What, Why, Who and How?

Evaluation Tools

Tool 3: Snapshot Evaluation for Group Facilitators

Date: _____

Workshop No: _____ Target Group: _____

Who took part and how many attended?

1. Was the intended program delivered?

2. Was the group satisfied with the program?

3. What worked well, and what didn't?

Evaluation: What, Why, Who and How?

Evaluation Tools

Tool 4: Self-Administered Evaluation 2

Please circle your answers

1. Was the information provided in today's session clear?

Very clear 😊

Somewhat clear 😐

Not very clear ☹️

2. Did you find the information provided useful?

Very useful 😊

Somewhat useful 😐

Not useful ☹️

3. Do you think that you will use the information in today's session at home?

Yes 😊

Not sure 😐

No ☹️

4. Do you think that the information provided today strengthens your understanding of how to save money?

Yes 😊

Not sure 😐

No ☹️

5. Will you share the information that you have learnt with your friends and family?

Yes 😊

Not sure 😐

No ☹️

6. How do you think we could improve the program?

7. Do you have any other comments?

Adapted with permission from the Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne)



Evaluation: What, Why, Who and How?

Evaluation Tools

Tool 5: The Power of Three

This is a very simple evaluation tool and is good to use with either large or small groups. The facilitator simply asks either the group as a whole (if it is a large group), or individuals (for small groups), to name the three most important things they got out of the session.

1

2

3



Evaluation: What, Why, Who and How?

Evaluation Tools

Tool 6: Session Debrief Form

GROUP SESSION REPORT	
Venue:	
Date:	
Staff in attendance:	
No. of women in attendance:	

Summary of session:
What worked well:
Issues to consider:
Follow up actions:
Group evaluation:

Topic 1: Introduction to Women's Financial Capability



TOPIC OVERVIEW

This topic aims to introduce the group to the importance of financial literacy and capability, and its relationship to women's health and wellbeing. It also explores gender issues impacting on women's financial and economic participation. This is a brief introduction that should last about an hour depending on the size of the group.

AIMS OF THE TOPIC:

- To provide the group with an understanding of the relationship between financial literacy and health and gender; and financial literacy and financial situations.
- To clarify the group's knowledge about financial literacy and their learning needs.
- To offer the group an understanding of the concept of financial literacy.
- To introduce the group to how gender relates to financial situations through the use of the Financial Walk of Life activity.

Activity 1A: The Ice Breaker

> TOPIC 1: INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S FINANCIAL CAPABILITY

ACTIVITY 1A

The Ice Breaker

TIMING:

15 minutes

RESOURCES:

Koala Cards - available from innovative resources.

ACTIVITY

Place the cards upright on the table and ask the women to pick one card that explains how they feel about money and finances in Australia. Get the women to discuss why they chose the card they did. The facilitator can choose and explain their card first as an example to the group.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

- This activity acts as an ice breaker. It is intended to relax the group and put everyone at ease while, at the same time, allowing the facilitator to gauge the group's level of understanding about finances in general. It can also be used as a baseline for evaluation so that if the facilitator chooses to repeat it at the end of the session, they can measure how the group has progressed.

Whilst ice-breaker activities that involve asking the women to choose cards representing their feelings towards financial matters may be beneficial in some circumstances, some newly-arrived women find it difficult to think about and discuss conceptual ideas. This is particularly true when working with specific groups. For example, a group of women from Burma who participated in the program, provided feedback that they would prefer to listen and receive information from service providers, rather than share their personal attitudes, cultural understandings or experiences.
- St Luke's Innovative Resources has an extensive range of card and games for group activities.

Activity 1B: What is Financial Literacy?

> TOPIC 1: INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S FINANCIAL CAPABILITY

ACTIVITY 1B

What is Financial Literacy?

TIMING:

10 minutes

RESOURCES:

None

ACTIVITY

This activity focuses on the delivery of basic information on financial literacy, what it means, and its importance in our day-to-day lives. The information provided also serves to generate discussion on financial literacy for women.

Discussion points include:

- Financial literacy encompasses the skills required to understand and manage money. It affects your everyday life from shopping to paying bills. This series of workshops aim to assist newly-arrived, refugee and migrant women to build and improve their financial literacy skills so that they can develop an understanding of the financial systems and structures in Australia. These systems and structures are often very different to those in other countries.
- Women's financial literacy directly impacts on their health and wellbeing. Being unable to manage and understand financial systems in Australia can cause disadvantage and stress.
- Women have proven themselves to be fantastic managers of their finances. They frequently manage the family finances, the children, community responsibilities, and the household along with some kind of paid employment. The tools and information in the program aims to fine tune these skills.
- It is important to emphasise that women are not to blame if they find themselves under financial stress. There are many reasons that may affect a woman's financial state. In many countries, there are structural and social issues that mean women, compared with men, are disadvantaged as a group when it comes to their financial situations. These issues include:
 - Lifespan – in general women live longer than men, so the money they earn in their life time has to last longer.
 - Responsibilities – women usually bear most of the caring responsibilities in the home and communities. This includes caring for babies, children, the sick and the elderly. This can mean that women are often unable to take on, or have to take time away from, paid employment. These responsibilities also impact on women's ability to study and further their employment skills.

Continued next page >>

Activity 1B: What is Financial Literacy?

CONTINUED

> TOPIC 1: INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S FINANCIAL CAPABILITY

ACTIVITY

Some information to highlight and to generate discussion may include:

- What financial literacy is.
- Why it is important.
- Financial systems and structures in Australia are different compared to the women's countries of origin. This may require them to develop different skills in order to negotiate these new systems.
- Low financial literacy can impact on health and wellbeing.
- Women face particular disadvantage when it comes to financial literacy and their financial capability. This is even more so for newly-arrived, refugee and migrant women.

Ask the group to give you some examples of other types of (non-personal) things that may affect their financial situation.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

- Emphasise that having strong financial literacy skills will not change the fact that sometimes there simply is not enough money. However, it will help women prepare for these times and provide knowledge about their rights, and where and how to get help should they need it.

Activity 1C: Feminisation of Labour

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> TOPIC 1: INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S FINANCIAL CAPABILITY

ACTIVITY 1C

Feminisation of Labour

TIMING:

10 minutes

RESOURCES:

Feminisation of Labour activity sheets

ACTIVITY

A good way to demonstrate how gender impacts on women's financial situations is by using the Feminisation of Labour activity sheets.

Explain to the group that it is not lawful for businesses and employers to pay you less because you are a woman. However, the areas where women are predominantly employed are often undervalued and poorly paid.

Use the image cards presented in these activity sheets as a guide. Ask the group to rank each of the professions presented on these sheets in order of least pay to most pay. Then place these images on the board. Ask the group if they think that more men or more women work in each area. Put an 'M' or an 'F' next to each card as indicated by the group and discuss the findings. Emphasise the areas where it is traditionally common for women to work. Discuss how this is often not considered as important as the traditional occupations that men are employed in (and therefore not paid as well).

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

- In Australia, newly-arrived, refugee and migrant women can face additional barriers to their financial situations. This is because of a lack of access to culturally appropriate financial information; their inability to read and write in English; and the difficulties in learning how an entirely new financial system works. Women have reported experiencing discrimination in areas of work and housing, as well as a lack of skills recognition for the work, experience and education they had before arriving in Australia. Many women have reported they also have the added responsibility of trying to support family in their country of origin by sending remittances.



Activity Sheet: 1C: Feminisation of Labour

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> TOPIC 1: INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S FINANCIAL CAPABILITY

Nurse



Parent





Activity Sheet: 1C: Feminisation of Labour

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> TOPIC 1: INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S FINANCIAL CAPABILITY

Doctor



Child Care Worker





Cleaner

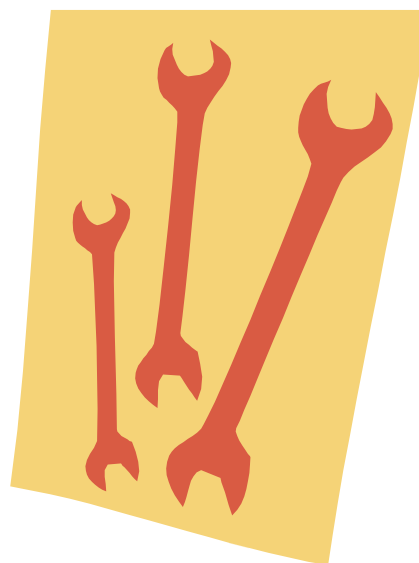


Activity Sheet: 1C: Feminisation of Labour

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> TOPIC 1: INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S FINANCIAL CAPABILITY

Mechanic





Hospitality Staff



Lawyer



Activity 1D: Financial Walk of Life Game

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> TOPIC 1: INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S FINANCIAL CAPABILITY

ACTIVITY 1D

Financial Walk of Life Game

TIMING:

30 minutes

RESOURCES:

The Financial Walk of Life activity pack

ACTIVITY

Follow the activities outlined in the Financial Walk of Life activity pack and have the group play the game. Follow the activity with discussions about the issues raised in the game. Ideas for discussion are outlined in the pack.

This activity highlights:

- that women's lower level of financial security is not about them doing something wrong, bad or not good enough - it has a direct correlation to structural and social creations; and
- that the experiences for men and women are often very different.

This game has been developed to demonstrate how gender influences women's economic situation. It highlights to women that there is more to their economic position than the paternalistic view that women 'just need to learn how to manage their money better'. There are structures, systems and expectations that disadvantage women economically, and although women do need access to, and information about, the tools to manage money, this alone will not change the economic disparities between men and women.

The cards that form the basis of this game were developed from information, statistics and research contained in WHIN's *Economic Participation Report* (2008) and the Women's Information and Referral Exchange's (WIRE) *Financial Literacy Report* (2007). These reports show that women, particularly newly-arrived, refugee and migrant women, are more likely to earn less than their male colleagues; be fired on short notice; and be in casual, low-paid and under-skilled jobs. Women in general are also more likely to be the head of single parent households; less financially literate; and the person responsible for the care and upbringing of children.

The game is a fun and interactive way to learn about how gender influences women's economic situation.

THE FINANCIAL WALK OF LIFE ACTIVITY PACK INCLUDES:

- Game cards (cards to be printed in their corresponding colours. Print one set of cards for each player in each team.)
- Dice
- Signs – 'End of Working Life', 'Start Here', 'Buy Yourself Some Cake' and 'Cost 10 Tokens'
- 19 Footprints (or similar – can be squares, circles or arrows) – 19 from start to finish
- 120 tokens – these can be made from scrap paper or you can purchase fake money
- Questions for the game's conclusion
- Cake (the facilitator to supply a delicious cake to eat)

Continued next page >>

GAME INSTRUCTIONS:

To set activity up put the 'Start Here' sign at one end of the floor and the 'End of Your Working Life' at the other. Place the 19 footprints in a line between them. Put the cake at the end with the '10 Tokens' sign and the 'Buy Yourself Some Cake' signs hanging up. Place the coloured cards in order in six separate piles. Nominate someone to be the banker and hand out the tokens. Provide an explanation of the game to the participants.

Example script: *We are going to play a game called the Financial Walk of Life. The idea of this game is to give us an idea of the different barriers and situations that can impact positively on our capacity to earn money in our lifetimes. Hopefully it will be a fun way for us to learn that money matters are not always in our control and that other factors and events can have an impact on our financial situation. Sometimes that impact is negative and sometimes it is positive.*

We are going to divide into six teams, with three people in each team (depending on the number of people playing). Each team is going to have a character – and a colour – blue, green, orange, purple, red and yellow. We will take it in turns to choose a card. When it is your turn, you can take the top card from your pile and read it out to the group (or I will read it).

The 19 footprints on the floor represent your financial walk through life. Whether you can move forward or backward is determined by the card you get. You also collect tokens along the way. The aim of the game is to get from one end of the path to the other as fast as possible and with as many tokens as possible. The aim is then to buy as much cake as you can. Cake costs 10 tokens. This is the end of your working life where you get to retire and spend what you've earned.

Does that make sense to everyone? Are there any questions? Shall we get started?

PLAYING THE GAME:

To decide whose turn it is next, you can use a dice, with each character being given a number from one to six. Alternatively you can use a spinner, or simply rotate through the colours one by one.

After the game, as a whole group, or in their teams, talk about:

- How the women felt about what happened to their character?
- What did they think helped them get through their working life?
- What did they think were the barriers for their character in the course of their working life? For example, barriers to employment, making more money generally, and managing money.
- Which of those barriers did they think related to gender or ethnicity? Did they think their character was male or female and why?



Activity Sheet: 1D: Financial Walk of Life Game

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> TOPIC 1: INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S FINANCIAL CAPABILITY

Blue Cards

1 You finish university at 21 with a degree in business. After your first interview you are hired for a well-paid, permanent position. Take 5 steps forward, collect 5 tokens.	2 You work for a few years before you get news that your father has fallen ill. Your sibling takes on the caring role, which leaves you free to continue to work. Take 3 steps forward, collect 2 tokens.
3 Due to all of your hard work and dedication to the job, you are offered a promotion and with it a generous pay increase. Take 2 steps forward, collect 4 tokens.	4 Unfortunately your father dies. You take a week off work to attend the funeral, but because you are in a permanent position, your pay remains the same. Take 2 steps forward, collect 2 tokens.
5 You inherit some money from your father which you invest in some shares. You take the advice of a recognised financial planner. Take 2 steps forward, collect 3 tokens.	6 For the next 20 years you focus on advancing your career. Even with a marriage and children, you find you are able to work long hours and invest the returns. Take 3 steps forward, collect 8 tokens.
7 Your shares are performing well and you have a large savings and superannuation in your name. You look forward to an early retirement. Take 2 steps forward, collect 6 tokens.	8 Congratulations! You can now move forward to the end of your working life and spend your cash!



Activity Sheet: 1D: Financial Walk of Life Game

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> TOPIC 1: INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S FINANCIAL CAPABILITY

Green Cards

1 Welcome to Australia! You have arrived here from Bangladesh through the Skilled Migration program. You start work in the public service as a Resource Officer. Take 5 steps forward, collect 4 tokens.	2 You apply for a position as a manager but don't even get an interview. You feel frustrated as you know that you have the skills to do the job. Stay where you are, collect 2 tokens.
3 Happy news! You fall in love. You get married, and you and your partner buy a house together. Take 1 step forward, collect 1 token.	4 You and your partner are having a baby. The bad news is that, back home, you would have been entitled to 12 months paid maternity leave. Here in Australia you get only 26 weeks. Take 1 step forward, collect 1 token.
5 You wish to return to work but there is no child care in your local area that is available or affordable. You stay in your at home while your partner works. Stay where you are, don't collect any tokens.	6 Your child starts school and so you return to the public service. However your old position is not available so you are forced to take one at lower pay. Go back 3 steps, collect 1 token.
7 You are finally given a promotion but the hours aren't flexible and you need to be able to pick up your child from school. You decline to take it, and stay on the same wage. Stay where you are, collect 1 token.	8 You feel stressed due to the multiple demands on you. You are working, raising a child, and running a household. You have little energy to further your career. Stay where you are, collect 1 token.
9 You have another child which means you quit work entirely. Despite working all day every day, you find people still ask, 'Why aren't you working?' Stay where you are, don't collect any tokens.	10 You are still in the same situation, without paid work but raising the kids. Stay where you are, don't collect any tokens.
11 Your children leave home and your partner encourages you to go back to work. Your confidence is low, so you take a low-paid job in administration. Take 2 steps forward, collect 2 tokens.	12 You continue to work but find you have very little say regarding your finances. Stay where you are, collect 1 token.





Activity Sheet: 1D: Financial Walk of Life Game

PAGE 5/13

> TOPIC 1: INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S FINANCIAL CAPABILITY

Orange Cards

1 You leave school early to become a nurse. You are excited to be earning your first wage. Take 3 steps forward, collect 2 tokens.	2 You are sexually harassed by your boss and so decide to leave the hospital. You spend a few months on unemployment benefits before getting a job in a health clinic. Take 1 step forward, collect 1 token.
3 You meet someone special and get married. You are excited about the life you will have together. Take 1 step forward, collect 1 token.	4 You fall pregnant and your partner insists that you have the baby. You go ahead with the pregnancy even though you are not sure it is what you want. Take 1 step forward, collect 1 token.
5 Soon after the baby arrives, your partner becomes violent. You are too scared to leave because you don't have any money to look after the baby on your own. Don't take any steps, don't collect any tokens.	6 Your partner leaves you for someone else. You are hurt and confused. You barely survive on a single parent's pension and have no idea how to manage the money you have. Don't take any steps, don't collect any tokens.
7 You join a support group for victims of violence which helps you regain some of your confidence. When your child enters primary school, you get a job as an office assistant and earn some money. Take 3 steps forward, collect 2 tokens.	8 You attend some financial literacy training for women and learn some helpful tips for managing your money. As a result you are able to start a small savings account for yourself. Take 3 steps forward, collect 3 tokens.
9 After many years of work you are able to buy a house for yourself. Your excitement is dampened when find out your ex-husband is earning twice as much as you are! Take 2 steps forward, collect 2 tokens.	10 You continue to plod toward retirement. Take 2 steps forward, collect 2 tokens.
11 Same situation. Take 2 steps forward, collect 2 tokens.	12 You have finally reached retirement. Move forward to the end. Are you able to buy something?



Activity Sheet: 1D: Financial Walk of Life Game

PAGE 6/13

> TOPIC 1: INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S FINANCIAL CAPABILITY

Purple Cards

1 You migrate from China to Australia with your partner and family. You are excited at the freedom and opportunities Australia has to offer you. Take 5 steps forward, collect 3 tokens.	2 Despite your teaching qualification, you are unable to get work as your English skills are low. For several years you work in low-paid factory and technician work. Take 2 steps forward, collect 2 tokens.
3 To improve your future prospects, you decide to return to study in small business management. You rely on your partner to support you while you do this. Take 3 steps forward, collect no tokens.	4 After a few more years of working, you are able to purchase a small grocery store. You invest most of your family's money into the store. Take 3 steps forward, collect 3 tokens.
5 Business is going well. You work full-time in the grocery store while your partner looks after the house, supports your business, and raises your children. Money is rolling in. Take 2 steps forward, collect 5 tokens.	6 Your partner feels exhausted and suggests that the family go on holiday with the money earned from the store. But you say that a break would be bad for business and that you can't afford to go. Stay there, collect 2 tokens.
7 A major supermarket opens up down the road from your store. You begin to work longer hours to try to keep up with the competition. You have 2 more children which your partner looks after. Take 3 steps forward, collect 5 tokens.	8 Your partner has had enough and wants to leave you and take the children. You are heartbroken but the 60/40 divorce settlement in your favour helps to ease the burden. Stay where you are, give back 8 tokens.
9 You sell the grocery store for a reasonable sum and invest the money in a new property. With your business qualification and experience, you easily find work in the finance sector. Take 1 step forward, collect 10 tokens.	10 You retire in high financial style! Go forward to the end and spend, spend, spend.





Activity Sheet: 1D: Financial Walk of Life Game

PAGE 7/13

> TOPIC 1: INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S FINANCIAL CAPABILITY

Red Cards

1 You migrate to Australia from Sudan with your five children. You are placed on a Temporary Protection Visa and have to rely on financial assistance from friends and charities. Take 1 step forward, collect 3 tokens.	2 You are granted refugee status. Congratulations! You are now able to start looking for work to support your family. Take 1 step forward, collect 2 tokens.
3 Bad news! You find out that your teaching qualification from Sudan is not recognised here in Australia. You will have to undertake further training and pay your own way through it. Stay where you are, don't collect any tokens.	4 You take a job as a cleaner in order to support your family and pay for your education. You feel isolated and stressed. Take 1 step forward, collect 2 tokens.
5 You continue to study but meanwhile you are spending all of your money on feeding, clothing and educating your five children. Take 1 step forward, don't collect any tokens.	6 You finish your training and are able to start applying for jobs. However, you find that your applications are rejected over and over despite your qualifications. Take 2 steps forward, collect no tokens.
7 Through your networks, you get a job as a teacher in a secondary school. The pay is ok and it is nice to finally have work. Take 2 steps forward, collect 3 tokens.	8 You find out that you made a mistake in your Centrelink forms last year due to not being properly informed, and you are told you have to pay back the money. Go back 1 step, give back 4 tokens.
9 You continue to work at the school and put all your spare money and time into your children and your community. Take 2 steps forward, don't collect any tokens.	10 Your children finally leave home but you continue to support them by paying for their education. You have very little savings but you own a few assets which you share with others. Take 2 steps forward, collect 2 tokens.
11 You decide to seek help from your bank's financial counsellor. Unfortunately there is nothing helpful available there in your language so you leave feel disheartened. Stay where you are, don't collect tokens.	12 You work for another twenty years and move in with one of your children. You have almost no money but are looked after by your family and friends. You continue to work at low pay. Take 1 step, collect 1 token.



Activity Sheet: 1D: Financial Walk of Life Game

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> TOPIC 1: INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S FINANCIAL CAPABILITY

Yellow Cards

1 You get excellent grades throughout primary and high school, and upon leaving school receive a scholarship to attend university. You feel confident about the future. Take 3 steps forward, collect 4 tokens.	2 You spend three years studying very hard and living off a small allowance. You can't wait to start working, launch your career, and earn some more money. Take 3 steps forward, collect no tokens.
3 Tragically, your father falls ill during your final year of university. You quit your scholarship to take care of him as no-one else in your family offers to. Stay where you are, don't collect any tokens.	4 Receiving \$100 a fortnight on the Carer's Allowance is not enough to keep you and your father going. So you take up weekend work at a local restaurant to supplement your income. Take 1 step forward, collect 2 tokens.
5 You continue working with all of your money going towards your father and looking after the house. Occasionally, your sibling offers some financial support. Stay where you are, collect 1 token.	6 After 3 years, your father dies, and you begin a descent into depression. Your health is poor and you have no motivation to do anything. Stay where you are, don't collect any tokens.
7 You begin to recover. You start looking for work, but with the gaps in your employment history, and your unfinished degree, no-one is willing to give you a chance. Take 1 step forward, don't collect any tokens.	8 You finally find employment as a carer in an aged-care facility. The pay is minimal, and the conditions are poor, but you feel you have to take what you can get. Take 2 steps forward, collect 2 tokens.
9 Congratulations! Due to your hard work, you are promoted to Team Manager. You receive a modest pay rise. Take 3 steps forward, collect 3 tokens.	10 The facility you are working at closes down due to unexpected funding cuts. You are fired without notice or benefits. Go back 2 steps, give back 3 tokens.
11 You continue to work in odd jobs, earning small amounts. Take 2 steps forward, collect 2 tokens.	12 You retire but after a lifetime of casual work, you have almost no superannuation or assets. Go forward to the end of your working life and buy something if you can.





Activity Sheet: 1D: Financial Walk of Life Game

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> TOPIC 1: INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S FINANCIAL CAPABILITY

Start Card



Tokens



Activity Sheet: 1D: Financial Walk of Life Game

PAGE 10/13

> TOPIC 1: INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S FINANCIAL CAPABILITY

Buy Yourself Some Cake Card

Buy
yourself some
Cake!!!

End of Working Life Card

End
of working
Life!!!



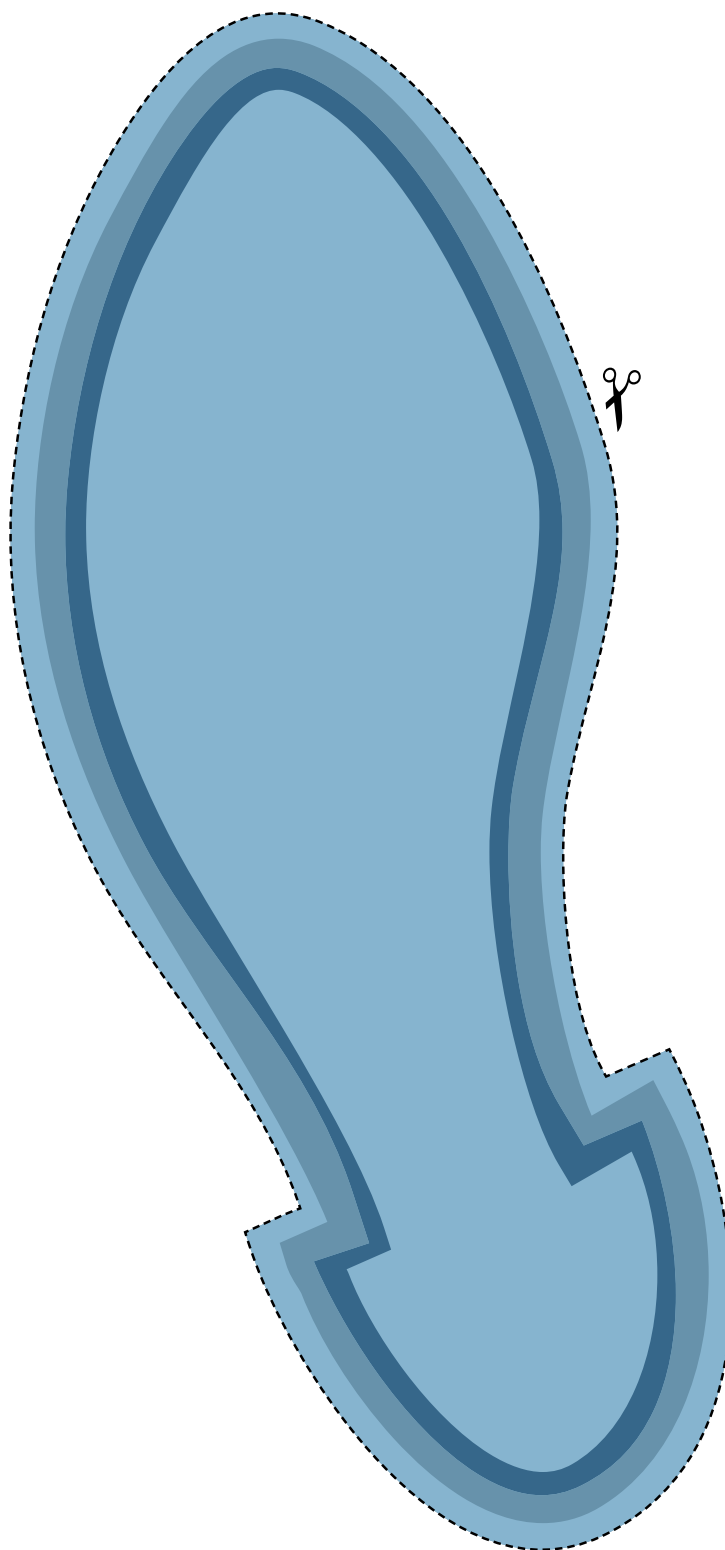


Activity Sheet: 1D: Financial Walk of Life Game

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> TOPIC 1: INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S FINANCIAL CAPABILITY

Footprint Template

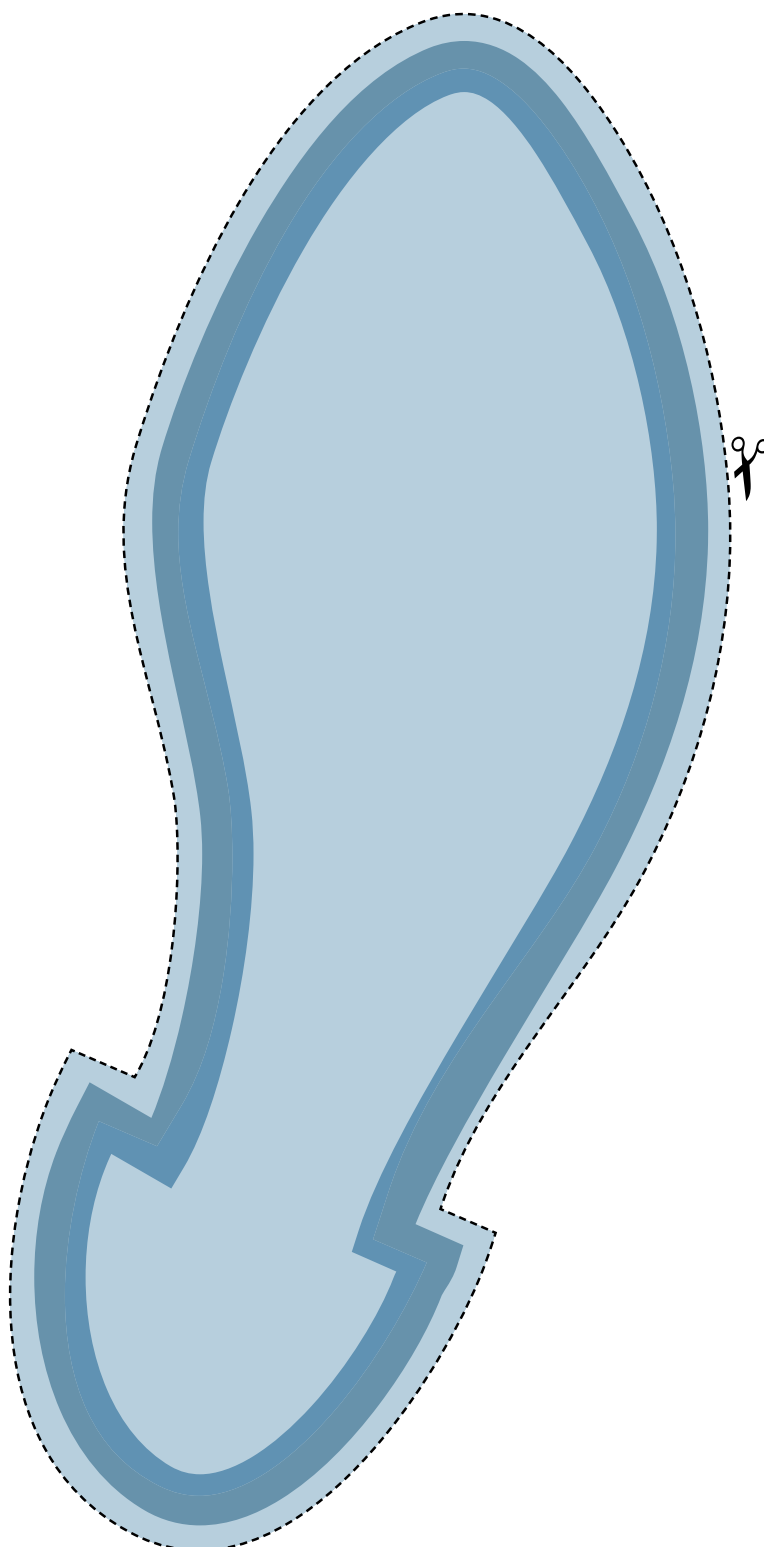


Activity Sheet: 1D: Financial Walk of Life Game

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> TOPIC 1: INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S FINANCIAL CAPABILITY

Footprint Template





Activity Sheet: 1D: Financial Walk of Life Game

PAGE 13/13

> TOPIC 1: INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S FINANCIAL CAPABILITY

Numbers

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	



Topic 2: Knowing Your Financial Rights



TOPIC OVERVIEW

This topic examines financial and consumer rights in Australia. It also introduces what a contract is and the importance of understanding what signing a contract means. Women are introduced to the concept of financial counselling.

AIMS OF THE TOPIC:

- To establish the women's level of knowledge about their financial rights in Australia.
- To develop a clear understanding of what a contract is, and what issues can arise from being committed to a contract.
- To understand what a signature on a contract means and the legal power it contains.
- To provide participants with an understanding of what a financial counsellor is, and the assistance they can provide.

Activity 2A: Your Financial Rights in Australia: True or False Quiz PAGE 1/3

> TOPIC 2: KNOWING YOUR FINANCIAL RIGHTS

ACTIVITY 2A

Your Financial Rights in Australia: True or False Quiz

TIMING:

10 minutes

RESOURCES:

Gold chocolate coins or other small prizes.

ACTIVITY

The aim of this activity is to establish the level of understanding participants have about their financial rights in Australia in a non-confronting way. This activity aims to get everyone up and moving.

Get the group to stand up. Explain to them that you will ask them a series of questions about their financial rights in Australia. If they think the answer is true, have them place their hands on their head. If you think the answer is false, have them place their hand on their hips. If they are unsure, they can take a guess. Once everyone has chosen heads or hips, tell them the correct answer. Those who were correct remain standing for the next question; the others sit down and are out of the game. The winner is the last person standing and receives a bag of chocolate gold coins.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

- Older and pregnant women, as well as those with a disability, may find it difficult to stand for this activity. Some women may also find it intimidating to stand up. You can change the activity so women remain seated and use their hands in different ways to reflect true or false answers. It may be useful to check with bilingual workers about the appropriateness of this activity for particular groups, as different cultural groups may have different responses to the activity. The activity could be adapted to have women call out their answers.
- Facilitators may have to repeat the question or rephrase the question in easy English.
- It is important to emphasise to the women that if they are unsure about their rights, they can speak to a financial counsellor or a community legal centre free of charge. Ensure that you have appropriate contact details for financial counsellors in your areas.

Activity 2A: Your Financial Rights in Australia: True or False Quiz PAGE 2/3

> TOPIC 2: KNOWING YOUR FINANCIAL RIGHTS

Quiz Questions:

1

Q: "It is important to keep all of your receipts for goods and services."

A: True

This is especially true for items and services of importance. If you don't have record of purchase it will make it difficult to return, exchange or refund items even if they are faulty. It can also be good to keep some receipts for tax purposes.

2

Q: "If I do not pay my credit card debt I will be deported."

A: False

It is unlawful to be deported for not paying back your credit card debt. While you will not be deported, not paying it back may have other consequences such as giving you a bad credit rating, and debt collectors may become involved in trying to obtain the outstanding payments.

3

Q: "There is nothing I can do to stop salespeople phoning or knocking on my door."

A: False

There are a number of things you can do to discourage sales people. For example, you can get a 'Do Not Knock' sticker and put it on your door or at the front of the house. If you display this sticker, it means that it is unlawful for salespeople to knock on your door. Refer to the 'Useful Resources' section for more information on the Do Not Knock campaign.

4

Q: "If I have been treated unfairly as a consumer (for example, buying something or signing up to an unfair contract) there is nothing I can do."

A: False

As a consumer you do have rights. There are many things you can do. There are Fair Trading Laws that protect you and you are entitled to make a formal complaint and have it investigated.

5

Q: "Telemarketers are not allowed to phone your house after 8pm."

A: True

Telemarketers can only phone your house between 9am and 8pm on weekdays and between 9am and 5pm on Saturdays. It is prohibited on Sundays and public holidays. If they call after this period you have a right to make a formal complaint. To reduce the numbers of calls received by telemarketers refer to the 'Do Not Call' register. Information is provided in the 'Useful Resources' section.

Continued next page >>



Activity 2A: Your Financial Rights in Australia: True or False Quiz PAGE 3/3

> TOPIC 2: KNOWING YOUR FINANCIAL RIGHTS

Quiz Questions:

6

Q: "If a door-to-door person comes to your house and you sign papers to a new electricity company you are locked into this by law."

A: True and False

It is true that you are locked into a contract. The purchasing of electricity and gas are now considered contracts which have certain conditions consumers need to adhere to. However, there is always a 'cooling off' period which means you have a certain period of time (usually between three to ten days) to reconsider the contract. For door-to-door utility contract sales there is a ten-day cooling off period. Check the fine print of your copy of the contract you have signed and it should state these conditions.

7

Q: "If someone from a company calls me unexpectedly offering a not-to-be-missed opportunity I should give them my personal banking and other details."

A: False

***Under no circumstances** should you ever reveal any personal information about yourself and your financial details. It could be a trick or what's called a 'scam' – if it sounds too good to be true, it usually is!*

Activity 2B: Contract Group Brainstorm

> TOPIC 2: KNOWING YOUR FINANCIAL RIGHTS

ACTIVITY 2B

Contract Group Brainstorm

TIMING:

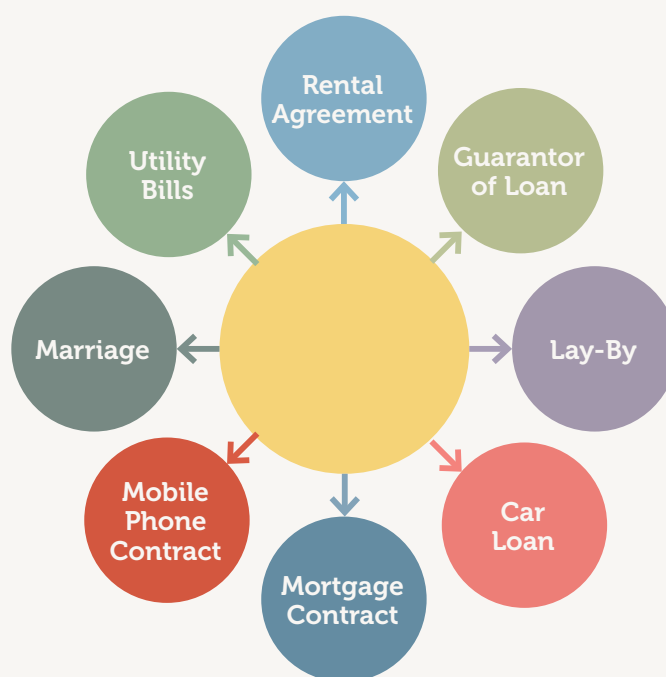
15 minutes

RESOURCES:

Post-it notes, butcher's paper and coloured textas.

ACTIVITY

Ask the group to provide examples of places where they get bills from, or types of contracts they have entered into. Then create a ray diagram from their responses with Post-it notes and butcher's paper.



Examples of Contracts include:

- utility bills (gas, electricity);
- rental agreements (lease);
- mobile phone contracts;
- marriage certificates;
- internet deal/contracts;
- landline phone contracts; and
- lay-bys.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

- This activity can be supported by a discussion on what a contract is. This activity leads into a more detailed discussion on contracts outlined in Activity 2D.

Activity 2C: Contract Matching

PAGE 1/12

> TOPIC 2: KNOWING YOUR FINANCIAL RIGHTS

ACTIVITY 2C

Contract Matching

TIMING:

15 minutes

RESOURCES:

Contract matching images and small prizes for the game winners.

ACTIVITY

This activity can be used as an alternate to Activity 2B, and can be used with very-newly-arrived women, or women who have lower levels of financial literacy.

The images used in this activity should be laminated so you can reuse them for different sessions. Also laminate A3 copies of the contracts and put them up on the wall. This helps when explaining the game to group participants.

How to play:

- Split the group into two.
- Hand out copies of the contract images and clip art images to each group.
- Ask each group to try and match up the image with the type of contract it represents. The first group to complete the task wins a prize.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

This activity can be accompanied by a general discussion on what a contract is, and can lead into a more detailed discussion on contracts as outlined in Activity 2D.

Activity 2C: Contract Matching

PAGE 2/12

> TOPIC 2: KNOWING YOUR FINANCIAL RIGHTS

Contract Matching Images – Power





Activity 2C: Contract Matching

PAGE 3/12

> TOPIC 2: KNOWING YOUR FINANCIAL RIGHTS

Contract Matching Images – Water



Activity 2C: Contract Matching

PAGE 4/12

> TOPIC 2: KNOWING YOUR FINANCIAL RIGHTS

Contract Matching Images – Rent





Activity 2C: Contract Matching

PAGE 5/12

> TOPIC 2: KNOWING YOUR FINANCIAL RIGHTS

Contract matching Images – Marriage



Activity 2C: Contract Matching

PAGE 6/12

> TOPIC 2: KNOWING YOUR FINANCIAL RIGHTS

Contract Matching Images – Mobile Phone



Activity 2C: Contract Matching

PAGE 7/12

> TOPIC 2: KNOWING YOUR FINANCIAL RIGHTS

Contract Matching Images – Marriage

Activity 2C: Contract Matching

PAGE 8/12

> TOPIC 2: KNOWING YOUR FINANCIAL RIGHTS

Contract Matching Images – Telephone

Thanks for signing up to eBilling
Your bill was emailed to:

Need help?
www.three.com.au/care
13 33 20

Account number

Invoice number

Date of Issue
03 Oct 2012

Vodafone Hutchison Australia Pty Ltd
Tax Invoice/Statement
ABN 74 094 304 620

U 2/126 Glen Huntly Rd
ELWOOD VIC 3184

3

vodafone

Balance brought forward	+	This bill	=	Total due
\$0.00		\$98.00		\$98.00

Direct debit date
24 Oct 2012

Thanks for paying by Direct Debit.
Please ensure there are enough funds in
your account to avoid dishonour and late
payment fees.

Keep in control of
your account 24/7
for free via My3
Head to my.three.com.au

1100101

DD Direct Debit It's preferred method of payment. Setup or change your bank account or credit/debit* card details online at www.my.three.com.au.
* Surcharge fees apply for credit/debit card payments

IB PAY Biller Code: 120931
BPAY Reference: 3363 6151 418

Pay this bill via Internet or Phone banking.
Please allow 3 business days for processing.

BPAY View View and pay this bill using Internet Banking.
BPAY View Registration No: 3363615141

Account number 3363615141 Invoice number 795471372 Direct debit date 24 Oct 2012

2120 336361514148

POST billpay In person Present this slip to any Australia Post outlet or agent with your payment, debit card or cheque (payable to 3 Australia). 3 will charge a \$1.65 (incl GST) surcharge on your next bill. Please allow 3 business days for processing.

By cheque Send this slip and cheque payable to 3 Australia PO Box 686 Spring Hill QLD 4004. No staples please.

By phone Call 1300 301 466 to pay with your credit/debit* card. We accept VISA, MasterCard, Diners Club and American Express. * Surcharge fees apply.

*Surcharge Fees Credit/Debit cards are subject to a surcharge fee of 1.0% (plus GST) for Visa, MasterCard & Diners Club and 2.15% (plus GST) for Amex. This will appear on your next bill.

Your Account Summary

Your Account Summary		\$
Last bill		
Previous balance		\$98.00
What you paid		\$98.00
What's been adjusted		\$0.00
Balance brought forward		\$0.00
GST included in what's been adjusted		\$0.00
This bill 04-Sep-2012 to 03-Oct-2012		
Your service summary		\$98.00
Total (including GST)		\$98.00
GST included in this bill's total		\$8.91

Now and then Take a look and compare your total spend

August	\$98
September	\$98
October	\$98

Activity 2C: Contract Matching

PAGE 9/12

> TOPIC 2: KNOWING YOUR FINANCIAL RIGHTS

Contract Matching Images – Lease Part 1

Residential Tenancy Agreement

Residential Tenancies Act 1997 Section 26

This agreement is made on the day of
Date

This agreement is between

LANDLORD

Name

Address

Postcode

ACN (if applicable)

whose agent is (if applicable)

Name

Business address

Postcode

Telephone number ACN (if applicable)

and TENANT(S)

Name of TENANT 1

Current Address

Postcode

ACN (if applicable)

Name of TENANT 2

Current Address

Postcode

Name of TENANT 3

Current Address

Postcode

Name of TENANT 4

Current Address

1. Premises (includes items listed in the Schedule as forming part of the premises)

The landlord lets the premises known as (address)

Postcode

2. Rent

The rent amount is Date first rent payment due

\$ / /

Pay period

Weekly ☐ Fortnightly ☐

Monthly ☒ Day of each month (eg 15th) / /

Place of payment

3. Bond

- The TENANT must pay the bond amount specified below.
- In accordance with the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997*, the LANDLORD/agent must lodge the bond with the Residential Tenancies Bond Authority (RTBA) within 10 business days after receiving the bond.
- If the TENANT does not receive a bond receipt from the RTBA within 15 business days of handing over the bond money, they should telephone the RTBA on 1300 13 71 64.

Bond amount Date bond payment due

\$ / /

If there is more than one TENANT and they do not contribute equally to the total bond, the amounts they each contribute must be listed here. This list is for reference only and will not be recognised by the RTBA.

Name of TENANT	Bond amount
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$

4. Period

Fixed period ☐ The period of the agreement

commences on / /

and ends on / /

unless the agreement terminates in accordance with the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997*, the agreement will continue as a periodic tenancy.

OR Periodic ☐ The agreement will commence on / /

Activity 2C: Contract Matching

PAGE 11/12

> TOPIC 2: KNOWING YOUR FINANCIAL RIGHTS

Contract Matching Images – Power

Whatever makes you shine.

Electricity

Tax Invoice 201209/14614835 Issued 16 Sep 12
Lumo Energy Australia Pty Ltd. ABN 69 100 526 327

EBIS_S1_VIC1202_001.E1VIR 3238/E 3238/P (971)Nm 14614835.PDFv11/14

344 glen ira road
elsterwick vic 3185

Client Service / Complaints 1300 11 5866
8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm Sat

Electricity Faults – 24 hours 13 20 99
United Energy

Gas Faults – 24 Hours 13 26 91
Multinet Gas network

Account Details

Previous Account	Payments / Adjustments	Overdue Pay Immediately	New Charges	Account Number
\$38.52	- \$0.00 =	\$38.52	+ \$879.00 =	
				Total Amount Due \$917.52

New Charges Due 05 Oct 2012

Usage and Supply

Electricity charges (31 May 2012 to 23 Aug 2012)	\$879.00
Total new charges due	\$879.00
GST included in new charges	\$79.91
GST included in Early Bird Discount	\$5.59

OR
Receive an Early Bird Discount and save
Simply pay by 5pm 05 Oct 2012
and only pay \$855.99
includes 7% Electricity discount \$61.53

Paying Your Account

Online
Visit www.lumocenergy.com.au and use payment number 8360880154 to pay by American Express, VISA or MasterCard

Phone
Call 1300 553 815 to pay by American Express, VISA or MasterCard

Direct Debit
Call 1300 11 5866 to arrange direct debit from your bank or financial institution

In Person
You can present this invoice for payment at any Australia Post outlet

Mail
Send cheque payable to Lumo Energy with your Account Number on the back of the cheque to:
Lumo Energy
GPO Box 870
Melbourne VIC 3001

BPAY
Payment via internet or phone banking from your cheque or savings account
Biller Code: 150722
Reference: 83608601

Activity 2C: Contract Matching

PAGE 12/12

> TOPIC 2: KNOWING YOUR FINANCIAL RIGHTS

Contract Matching Images – Water

344 Glen Eira Road
ELSTERNWICK VIC 3185

VISA or MasterCard payments & Account Balances 1300 659 658
Account Enquiries 131 851
(Mon-Fri 8.00am to 5.30pm)
Water & Sewerage Faults 132 812
TTY users (ask for 131 851) 133 877
southeastwater.com.au/enquiries

YOUR ACCOUNT SUMMARY

Issue Date 5 October 2012

Property 344 GLEN EIRA ROAD
ELSTERNWICK VIC 3185

Property Reference 22N//05610/16

Last Account	\$83.30
Payment Received	\$83.30 or
Balance Brought Forward	\$0.00
Current Charges (GST does not apply)	\$84.15
Total Due	\$84.15

Customer Number [REDACTED] 78

Due Date 24 October 2012

Amount \$84.15

IMPORTANT MESSAGES

Stage 1 water restrictions apply in Melbourne. For further information call 131867 or visit southeastwater.com.au

No concession has been applied to this account. For information regarding concession eligibility, please refer to Page 3.

Return of funds due to desalination plant delay

Current billing period (this account)	\$6.60
Total funds returned to date	\$6.75

All remaining funds, including inflation and interest, will be returned to you in future accounts.

Returned payments due to delay in the desalination plant

Melbourne's water customers will pay \$1.8 million a day for the Wonthaggi desalination plant once it is finished. Payments were due to commence from 1 July 2012 but delays in construction of the plant means money collected for those payments can be returned to customers. This is being done through an offset against your account. **As a result this bill has been discounted by \$6.60.** More funds will be returned in future accounts. For more information, see our brochure or visit southeastwater.com.au

Customer Number [REDACTED] 78

Due Date 24 October 2012

Amount \$84.15

Property Ref: 22N//05610/16
344 Glen Eira Road Elsternwick Vic 3185

South East Water Corporation
ABN 89 066 902 547
20 Corporate Drive Heatherton VIC 3202
Locked Bag 1 Moorabbin VIC 3189 Australia

*361 100204986700006

0000000000000000000000002049867+018+0000008415+3124+60

Activity 2D: The Power of the Signature

> TOPIC 2: KNOWING YOUR FINANCIAL RIGHTS

ACTIVITY 2D

The Power of the Signature

TIMING:

20 minutes

RESOURCES:

Plain A4 paper and coloured textas

ACTIVITY

This activity aims to highlight (through discussion) that a signature can be legally binding. In Australia, a signature is a legal mark or stamp of who you are. By signing a contract or a document you agree that you understand it and accept legal responsibility for it.

Give each group a sheet of A4 paper and ask them to sign their name so that it fills the page. When they have finished discuss with the group what their signatures mean to them?

Make sure the group is clear on what a contract is:

- It is a legal agreement between two or more people.
- It can be written and involves signing a document, or it can be verbal. Also emphasise to the group that there are other types of contracts that do not involve a signature. For example, saying 'yes' to someone in person or over the phone, or ticking a box on a website may all constitute an agreement to enter into a contract.
- Remember the golden rule: *never ever agree to anything or sign any documents you do not understand. Once you've signed a document, or agreed verbally to enter into a contract, you may be locked in and it may be very difficult to be released from it.*

Possible questions for discussion:

- What does it mean when you sign a contract?
- What could it mean if you sign something you don't understand?
- What does it mean in Australia if you sign something?
- Why is this different to signing your name on a card or on this paper?

Allow the group to share and learn from the group's experiences with contracts. Remember to reinforce the golden rule: *Do not sign anything you do not understand.*

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

Do not assume that all participants will be able to write their own name. Some women may be embarrassed by this. It is important to have an understanding of the literacy levels of your group. If you think participants may feel uncomfortable with this exercise, you may want to generate the discussion by writing and using your own signature.

Activity 2E: Going Guarantor

> TOPIC 2: KNOWING YOUR FINANCIAL RIGHTS

ACTIVITY 2D

Going Guarantor

TIMING:

5 to 10 minutes

RESOURCES:

None

ACTIVITY

This activity involves a brief discussion on the concept of going guarantor and the risks involved. The important point to emphasise is that you can be held legally responsible for someone else's debt if you sign a contract that states you agree to be either **guarantor** or **co-borrower** for someone.

Discuss with the group the differences between guarantor and a co-borrower.

A co-borrower signs a contract with one or more people (for example, a husband and wife may sign a contract to borrow money for a home loan/mortgage). Both the people who signed are equally responsible for the total amount borrowed, not 50% each. If one person cannot make the payments, the other will be responsible for paying the entire rest of the debt.

Going guarantor means you sign a contract for someone else's loan making you responsible for their debt should they default on repayments. Signing as a guarantor is very risky, and women should only be a guarantor if they are prepared to give (or rather lose) their house or assets to the bank should the borrower default.

What are the group's experiences with this?

What are the real risks?

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

In many cultures, it is part of familial obligations for women to go guarantor. If this is the case, acknowledge that whilst it is great to support family members, there may also be risks involved. Always acknowledge the importance of familial obligations, yet highlight the risks involved.

Activity 2F: Financial Abuse

> TOPIC 2: KNOWING YOUR FINANCIAL RIGHTS

ACTIVITY 2F

Financial Abuse

TIMING:

10 minutes

RESOURCES:

The Family Violence Help Cards (check availability in your region) and the Economic Abuse Wheel (provided next page).

ACTIVITY

Highlight to the women that financial abuse from an intimate partner is against the law in Victoria. Some examples of financial abuse include:

- Men forcing women to take full responsibility for paying shared household utilities, housing costs, the family's food and other household expenses.
- Men denying women and children enough money to fulfil their basic needs such as food, clothing, transport, personal needs and educational expenses.
- Men denying women money to send to family members in their countries of origin.
- Men depriving their partners of incomes in order to use this money for their own 'leisure and pleasure'.
- Men supervising and curtailing women's spending while doing the household supermarket shopping, especially with regard to sanitary products.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

- During the sessions, some women may disclose that they are experiencing family violence (either physical, emotional and/or financial abuse). A referral to a family violence response service should be discussed, and if the woman agrees a referral should be made.
- It is pertinent for facilitators to gauge (with participants) if unequal access to money in families is a common experience of women in their community. If so, it may be worthwhile spending more than the allocated time exploring this with the group, including where and how they can get help if necessary.

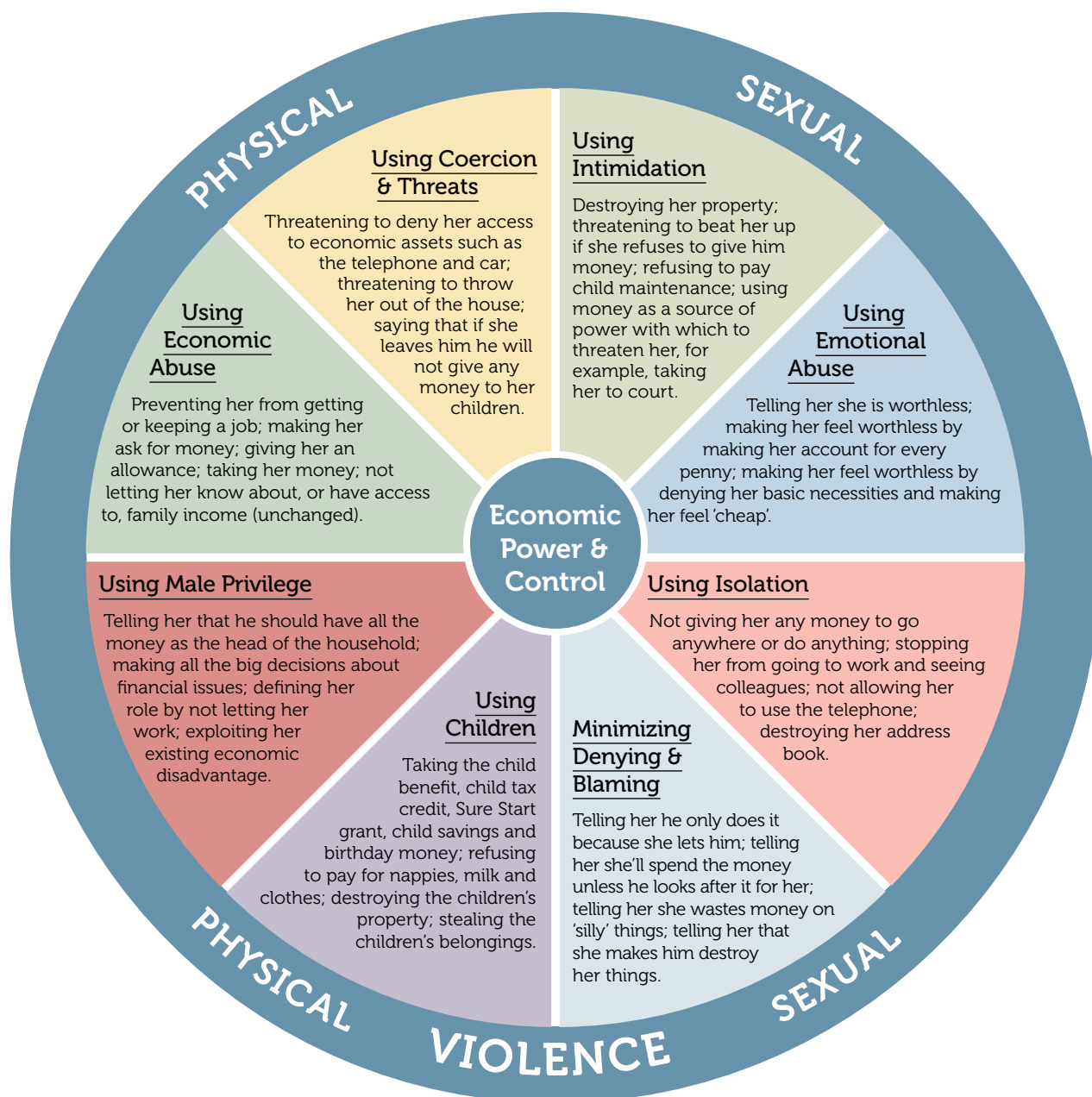
Activity 2F: Financial Abuse

> TOPIC 2: KNOWING YOUR FINANCIAL RIGHTS

The Economic Abuse Wheel - (Sharp2008)

Sexual Violence - making her perform sexual favors for money

Physical Violence - using physical violence to get money



Activity 2G: Financial Counselling

> TOPIC 2: KNOWING YOUR FINANCIAL RIGHTS

ACTIVITY 2G

Financial Counselling

TIMING:

90 minutes

RESOURCES:

Consumer information sheets in English and community languages (if possible).

ACTIVITY

This activity aims to introduce participants to the concept of financial counselling. It is ideal to have a financial counsellor as a guest speaker to discuss the services financial counsellors offer. Also provide detailed information on contracts and consumer information. Plan the session ahead of time with the financial counsellor and pre-identify key issues for discussion.

Discussion points may include:

- What is financial counselling?
- What assistance financial counsellors can provide – outline support such as the Utility Relief Scheme.
- How to contact a financial counsellor.

The group discussion about contracts with the financial counsellor should include:

- cooling off periods;
- hardship clauses;
- door-to-door sales; and
- where to get help from should they experience difficulty as a result of entering into a contract, or finding themselves a victim of a financial scam.

Provide women with information on:

- where to get help if they have been tricked;
- the 'Do Not Knock' campaign (provide the women with stickers - refer to the 'Useful Resources' section); and
- consumer rights (Consumer Affairs Victoria).

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

Ensure that you have a discussion with the financial counsellor and group participants about what issues you would like them to cover before the session. Work together to make sure the session is as interactive as possible.

Alert the financial counsellor that there may be women who identify a need for ongoing support in the group, and who may need referral for financial counselling.

Useful Resources

> TOPIC 2: KNOWING YOUR FINANCIAL RIGHTS

CONSUMER AFFAIRS VICTORIA (CUV)

Consumer Affairs Victoria (CUV) provides information for consumers if they have a problem or dispute. Access at: www.consumer.vic.gov.au/shopping

AUSTRALIAN COMPETITION AND CONSUMER COMMISSION (ACCC)

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) provides important information for consumers on how to make a complaint or resolve a consumer related problem. For more information access at: www.accc.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/815215

FINANCIAL OMBUDSMAN (FOS)

The Financial Ombudsman (FOS) is an independent organisation offering free and accessible dispute resolution services to the customers of financial services providers across Australia. Phone 1300 78 08 08 or access at: www.accc.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/833670/fromItemId/815972/quickLinkId/816534/whichType/sng

MONEY SMART

The Money Smart website is an Australian government site that provides information and advice on financial management. Information is also provided in many community languages. For consumer information relating to financial rights, including scams, access at: www.moneysmart.gov.au/scams

FEDERATION OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES (FCLC)

The Federation of Community Legal Centres (FCLC) is the peak body of Victorian legal centres and offers important legal information. For more information access at: www.communitylaw.org.au

VICTORIAN LEGAL AID

Victorian Legal Aid helps people with their legal problems. They focus on helping and protecting the rights of socially and economically disadvantaged Victorians and can help in areas of criminal law, family law and some civil law matters. For more information access at: www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/index.htm

DO NOT KNOCK

Do Not Knock is a national campaign to protect consumer rights and advice about door-to-door and telephone salespeople. To find out how to get door stickers for participants or for more information on the protection of consumer rights access at:

www.consumeraction.org.au/get-involved-in-our-campaigns/Do-Not-Knock.php

www.donotknock.org.au/

www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/3068.htm

Useful Resources

> TOPIC 2: KNOWING YOUR FINANCIAL RIGHTS

DO NOT CALL

The Do Not Call register offers free registration for people to list their home, personal mobile or fax number to reduce telemarketing calls. Information is also provided in some community languages. Call 1300 792 958 or access at: www.donotcall.gov.au/

FINANCIAL ABUSE RESOURCES

Financial Abuse Resources, the Economic Abuse Wheel can be accessed from: www.survivingeconomicabuse.org/docs/Economic%20abuse%20wheel.pdf

WOMEN'S INFORMATION AND REFERRAL EXCHANGE (WIRE)

The Women's Information and Referral Exchange (WIRE) provides information on relationships and money, debt and gambling. Access at: <http://www.wire.org.au/information-resources/money/>

INTOUCH MULTICULTURAL CENTRE AGAINST FAMILY VIOLENCE

InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence are the state-wide multicultural centre against family violence. For more information phone 03 84136800 or access at: www.intouch.asn.au/

SCAMWATCH

ScamWatch is a website run by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission which provides information to consumers and small businesses about how to recognise, avoid and report a scam. For more information or to report a scam access at: www.scamwatch.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/693900

Topic 3: Making the Most of your Money



TOPIC OVERVIEW

The activities and information in this topic explores money management within the household. It includes ideas on how to save money on energy around the house, as well as shopping and other household tips. The activities can be used in conjunction with the budgeting activities in Topic 4: Planning for the Future.

AIMS OF THE TOPIC:

- To start the group thinking about if it is possible to get more from their money.
- To explore ways of saving money through spending differently.
- To introduce the idea of day-to-day money management.
- To provide examples of ways in which women can save money by reducing expenditure on the household use of energy.

Activity: 3A: Spending Brainstorm

> TOPIC 3: MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MONEY

ACTIVITY 3A

Spending Brainstorm

TIMING:

10 minutes

RESOURCES:

A whiteboard, whiteboard markers or coloured textas, Post-it notes and fake money – notes and coins.

ACTIVITY:

This activity is designed to get the group thinking about what they spend their money on. Building this awareness is the first step in money management. Ask the group to think about what they have spent money on today, and then ask them to pick out the amount of money that reflects what they have spent. Ask the women to tell the group what they bought and how much they spent. Write up the item and amount on the board.

Explain to the group that even though they may not have physically spent money on something today, they may have spent money by using electricity, gas, water and other things of this nature. You can also highlight that the use of things like soap, cleaning products, breakfast cereal and milk also represents spending money.

Next, ask the group to think about if the things they spent money on were **needs** or **wants**. Stress that there is no wrong or right answers as needs differ from person to person.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

- This exercise will often highlight that the group doesn't spend that much on wants. It can also highlight that some of the spending on needs could be altered to find ways of saving.
- There can sometimes be pressure for 'newly-arrived immigrants and refugees to demonstrate their successful settlement in their new country ... resulting in the purchase of luxuries, entertainment or leisure activities they [may not be able to] afford'. Be mindful of this when discussing spending habits so that the women do not feel guilty for doing this. For example, stress that it can be good to purchase things to enjoy, but if that is causing us to be in debt then they might need to re-evaluate their spending.

Activity 3B: Spending Leaks

PAGE 1/2

> TOPIC 3: MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MONEY

ACTIVITY 3B**Spending Leaks****TIMING:**

15 minutes

RESOURCES:

Spending Leaks activity sheet

ACTIVITY:

The aim of this activity is to identify spending leaks. Spending leaks are the small amounts of money that people spend here and there. Ask the group about their own experience with money disappearing on little things. For example, ask if anyone has had the experience of breaking a large note and then spending more money once that note is broken? This is what is known as a spending leak. The way to stop spending leaks is to be aware of all expenditure, to identify different ways of spending that are less costly, or to go without the item completely.

Using activity sheet 3B with the group, explain how the daily coffee is not a need for the facilitator, it is a want. And in order to save money, it is something the facilitator is willing to give up altogether. This means the options are to reduce the amount of coffee bought, or to find a less expensive way of buying it. In this example, the alternative is to buy a packet of coffee from the supermarket and make a plunger coffee each day at work which would save \$40 a month (and \$480 over a year).

Have the group give some other examples of spending leaks, and fill out the blank spots on the sheet. Ask the women to identify alternative ways of dealing with the spending leaks.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

- Highlight how spending little bits of money can easily add up to large amounts.
- Be aware that it is common for many women from migrant and refugee backgrounds to have difficulty with mathematics because of their limited access to formal education. You can work around this by completing this activity as a group. It is also worthwhile asking the group for examples of spending leaks of 'other people they know', as it allows individuals to participate who may otherwise be reluctant to speak of their own experiences.
- It is important to make sure examples are relevant to the group participants. For example, not buying a pair of shoes each week is probably not a relevant example to most groups, but buying kids' snacks in bulk (rather than individually) might be more relevant.



Activity 3B: Spending Leaks

PAGE 2/2

> TOPIC 3: MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MONEY

	ITEM			
		A cup of coffee from a café		
	COST 	\$3.50		
	COST PER WEEK 	\$17.50		
	COST PER MONTH 	\$70		
	ALTERNATIVE 	Purchasing ground coffee at the supermarket and making it yourself		
	NEW COST PER MONTH 	\$30		
	SAVINGS PER MONTH 	\$40		
	SAVINGS PER YEAR 	+\$480		

Activity 3C: Make More from your Money

PAGE 1/2

> TOPIC 3: MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MONEY

ACTIVITY 3C

Make More from your Money

TIMING:

25 minutes

RESOURCES:

None

ACTIVITY:

The aim of this activity is to explain to the group that there are three main ways of increasing the money available them. These are spending less, spending differently and earning more money. Explain what is meant by these terms using the examples listed below. Highlight that earning more can sometimes be the most difficult of the three.

- Spending differently: for example, buying in bulk, and shopping second-hand.
- Spending less money: for example, cutting down on electricity by turning non-necessary lights off, shopping around to find the cheapest prices, and shopping at markets.
- Increasing your income: for example, having a garage sale, obtaining a job or a better paid job.

Have the group break into smaller groups and see if they can come up with creative ways to do these three things. Ask each small group to report back.

Spending differently group discussion examples:

Creating a shopping list or meal plan - discuss the idea of using a shopping list. Explain how having a list can reduce spontaneous spending and waste. Discuss the idea of taking this even further by meal planning. This reduces even more waste and can help prevent spontaneous spending on items. This also allows taking advantage of buying in bulk. Another option is to cook meals in bulk and freeze them.

Ask if anyone can think of any other ideas.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE >>

Activity 3C: Make More from your Money

PAGE 2/2

> TOPIC 3: MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MONEY

ACTIVITY: (CONTINUED)

Spending less money group discussion examples:

Markets and Op shops - discuss what fresh food markets are in the local area and how they differ from supermarkets. Also compare mainstream supermarkets such as ALDI, Coles, etc. Where would you get more for your money? Explain Op shops and second-hand shops and how they work. Identify any good ones in the local area. Other saving ideas include going to a TAFE or hairdressing school to get free or cheap haircuts.

Ask if anyone can think of any other ideas.

Earning more income group discussion examples:

Earning more money is usually the most difficult to do. Whilst some women would like to work, many find that they don't have the skills, time or language to do this. Finding paid employment is not always easy and may involve undertaking training, doing some volunteer work or going back to study. Centrelink can sometimes help with this sort of thing, but there are also other options like contacting community organisations about volunteering in order to get experience, or enrolling in a small or microenterprise course to learn how to establish a small business.

Ask if anyone can think of any other ideas.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

- Depending on the confidence of the group, they may feel more comfortable doing this activity as a whole group.
- Encourage the women to speak about their own tips for saving. This not only validates their experience, but allows the women to learn from each other.
- Women have excellent ideas about ways to save on everyday items. Living off low-level incomes can make women incredibly resourceful.
- Provide women with information on material aid relevant to their local area.

There are some organisations that will help assist people to prepare for job interviews. Sometimes they can assist with clothes, interview techniques, training courses and resumes. Recommend these to the group. A good example of this is the organisation 'Fitted for Work'. Refer to the 'Useful Resources' section of this chapter for their contact details. However, it should be noted that some of these services may be provided free of charge, but the women must be referred from an organisation such as a migrant resource centre.

Activity 3D: Knowing your Money

PAGE 1/2

> TOPIC 3: MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MONEY

ACTIVITY 3D

Knowing your Money

TIMING:

10 minutes

RESOURCES:

My Spending Diary activity sheet

ACTIVITY:

The aim of this activity is to highlight the importance of being aware of daily expenditure. Understanding where our money goes also provides an opportunity to gain control over our financial expenditure.

Introduce the concept of a spending diary being a useful tool in helping to understand money and expenditure. A spending diary is used to record all spending over a specific period and provides insights into spending habits.

Complete the spending diary activity with the group. Explain what the different columns are for. Using the images on the activity sheet as a prompt can help identify areas where participants may be able to spend differently or reduce spending.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

- The spending activity can be a take-home activity. Don't be surprised if women do not complete it. Women will have many demands on their time and may not find the time.
- Literacy and numeracy skill levels may also impact on a woman's ability to complete this exercise as an individual activity.

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[illegible]

Activity 3E: Energy Saving Tips

> TOPIC 3: MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MONEY

ACTIVITY 3E

Energy Saving Tips

TIMING:

20-30 minutes

RESOURCES:

The facilitator may want to print information from the list of resources outlined in the 'Useful Resources' section and provide it to the participants.

ACTIVITY:

This activity is more of an information session to provide participants with advice and contact details on how to save energy and money, and where to access help in times of hardship. The facilitator may wish to initiate a discussion by highlighting the ways to save on energy (and money) around the house. Refer to the 'Top 10 ways to save power' listed in the 'Useful Resources' section.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

- Participants may benefit from the facilitator going through an electricity bill with them in order to demonstrate how energy usage translates to money being spent.
- You may want to work with a financial counsellor or energy worker in order to facilitate a discussion on energy saving tips.

Useful Resources

> TOPIC 3: MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MONEY

SWITCH ON

Switch On is a state government initiative providing great advice and information on how to save energy and money. Information and resources can be accessed at: www.switchon.vic.gov.au/

TOP 10 WAYS TO SAVE POWER

Top 10 ways to save power provides information on how to save power in the home. For more information, access at: www.switchon.vic.gov.au/how-can-i-take-charge-of-my-power-bill/top-10-ways-to-save-power

HOME ENERGY SAVER SCHEME (HESS)

The Home Energy Saver Scheme (HESS) is a federal government program. It provides free support to vulnerable and low-income households experiencing difficulty meeting and paying for their energy bills. HESS offers support through telephone advice, home visits and community workshops. For more information, access at: www.resourcesmart.vic.gov.au/for_households_3076.html

SUSTAINABILITY VICTORIA

Sustainability Victoria has information, resources and advice on how to save energy around the home. For more information, access at: www.resourcesmart.vic.gov.au/for_households_3076.html

UTILITY RELIEF GRANT SCHEME (URGS)

The Utility Relief Grant Scheme (URGS) provides assistance for households who are unable to pay their utility bills due to a temporary financial crisis. Recipients must meet certain eligibility criteria. For more information, access at: www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/financial-support/concessions/hardship/utility-relief-and-non-mains-utility-grant-scheme

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS)

The Department of Human Services (DHS) offers a variety of concessions and benefits to eligible cardholders to assist low-income Victorians with energy bills. A relevant concession card is needed to be eligible. For more information, access at: www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/financial-support/concessions/energy

ENERGY AND WATER OMBUDSMAN VICTORIA (EWOV)

The Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria (EWOV) has the power to investigate and resolve disputes between Victorian electricity, gas and water customers and their providers. The service is free of charge and available to everyone. It can assist with the provision and supply of energy, bills, credit and payment services, disconnections and refundable advances. For more information, access at: www.accc.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/287881/fromItemId/815972/quickLinkId/816518/whichType/org#

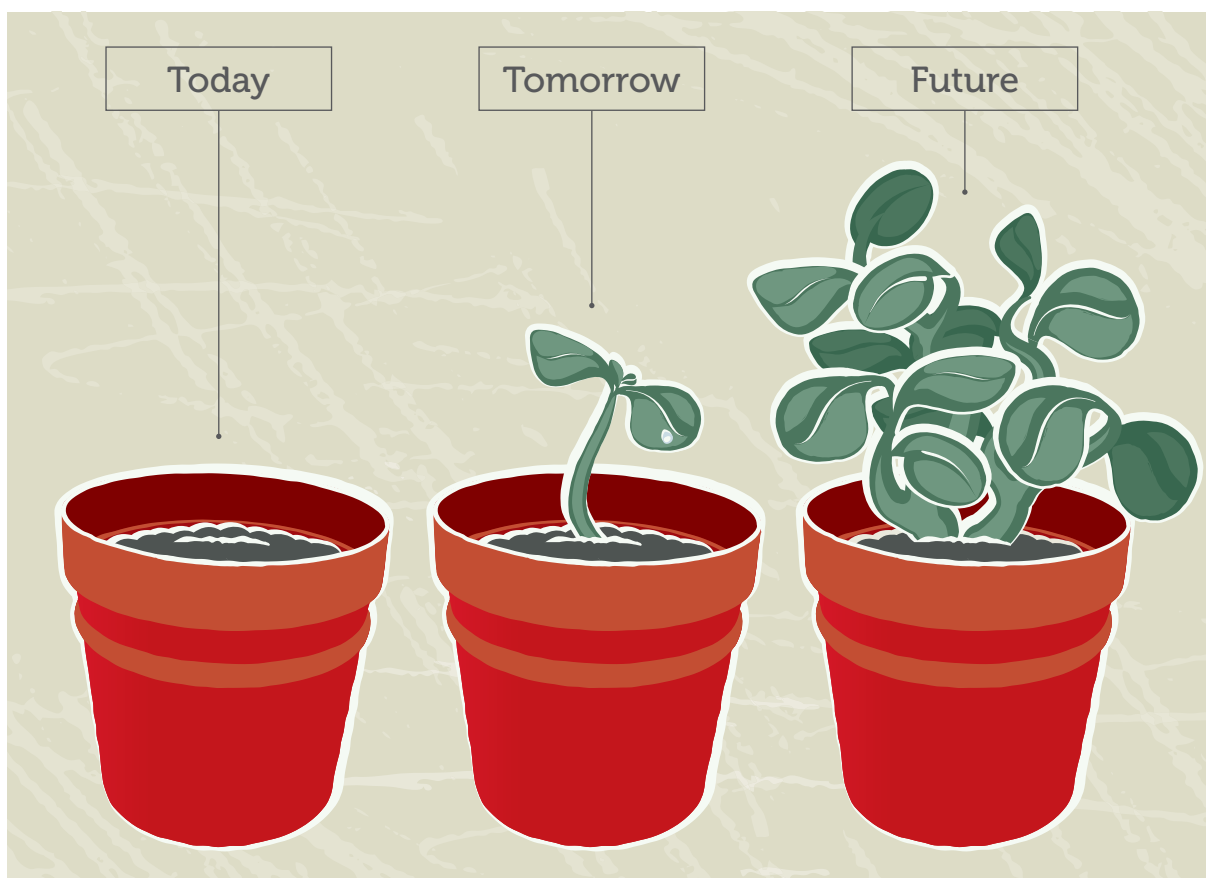
MONEYSMART

The MoneySmart website provides information, tools and resources on budgeting and saving. For more information, access at: www.moneysmart.gov.au/

SIMPLE SAVINGS ONLINE STORE

The Simple Savings Online Store provides information and budget shopping deals for consumers. Access at: www.simplesavings.com.au/store/

Topic 4: Planning for the Future



TOPIC OVERVIEW

This session explores budgeting - why it's useful to budget, how to budget and how to make budgets work. The session also examines the benefits of saving, no matter how little the amount, and how a budget can help the women achieve savings goals. It explores options of where money can be saved, and tips on how to establish and reach savings goals.

AIMS OF THE TOPIC:

- To gain an understanding of how to budget.
- To develop an understanding how to manage income and expenses.
- To explore and recognise different financial priorities.
- To understand different ways to plan for bills.
- To introduce the idea of saving and how to plan for the future.
- To introduce the idea of turning a small dream into a reality through saving.

Activity 4A: Budgeting

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> TOPIC 4: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

ACTIVITY 4A

Budgeting

TIMING:

10 minutes

RESOURCES:

The Budgeting activity sheet and some pencils.

ACTIVITY:

Ask the group what the word budget means to them and to explain their experiences with budgets. There may be many negative connotations to the word budget which relate to the concept of deprivation. Emphasise that while a budget can be a useful tool to help manage money, it can sometimes make us feel like we have failed. However, by planning and understanding where money goes, you can have greater control over it and the ability to establish financial security.

Introduce the idea of a budget sheet to help manage our incomes and expenses.

Explain the concept of budgeting using Activity Sheet 4A: Budgeting.

Explain to the group what the different columns are for. Use the pictures to represent expenses, and ask the group which column they think these things go into. Explain that the blank columns are for anything else they can think of that is not included in the budget template. It is best to fill this out after they have kept a spending diary for a while so that they can see where they are spending their money. Ask them to fill it out in pencil, in case they need to change the amounts. The most important thing to remember is to write all their expenses down as the exercise will not work unless all expenditure is included. Explain that the buffer fund is to provide a little leeway for when expenses run over. Highlight that this is a guide to assist them in establishing a goal, not a restrictive tool.

This activity creates space for speaking about the importance of having a knowledge of and access to money. A sensitive way of broaching this issue is to ask the group what would happen if their partner got sick tomorrow and had to go to hospital for a long time. Would they know how to access and manage the money and bills?

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

- It is important to consider cultural and gendered differences amongst newly-arrived women and their access to money management within their households. For example, some women may not have any knowledge of household bills, except for groceries, as in some cases men have complete control over a family's expenses. This makes completing this activity hard, but you can still explain it to the group and demonstrate how it works as a tool. Suggest that they speak to their partners about using this tool as a way to manage household finances; perhaps they could do it at home and bring it in next week for the facilitator to have a look over.

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ITEM	COST \$\$\$
 Savings	
 Total costs	
 Money	
 Money left over	
 Buffer	

MANAGING MONEY: EVERY WOMAN'S BUSINESS - A GUIDE TO INCREASING WOMEN'S FINANCIAL CAPABILITY



Activity 4A: Budgeting

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> TOPIC 4: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Personal Money Plan

- 1 Calculate the money you get fortnightly
- 2 Total all expenses and add all these amounts together in the 'money situation box' to get the amount of left over money

 MONEY I GET FORTNIGHTLY	
Wages/Salary	\$
Partner Salary	\$
Centerlink Payments	\$
Other	\$
Total Income	\$

 FOOD EXPENSES FORTNIGHTLY	
Groceries	\$
Lunch	\$
Eat Out	\$
Other	\$
Total Expenses	\$

 LIVING & UTILITY EXPENSES	
Rent/Mortgage	\$
Electricity	\$
Gas	\$
Telephone	\$
Mobile	\$
Internet	\$
Other	\$
Total Expenses	\$

 TRANSPORT EXPENSES FORTNIGHTLY	
Travel Card	\$
Petrol	\$
Insurance	\$
Registration	\$
License/Repairs	\$
Other	\$
Total Expenses	\$

Activity 4A: Budgeting

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> TOPIC 4: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Personal Money Plan *CONTINUED*

 MEDICAL EXPENSES FORTNIGHTLY	
Doctor	\$
Dentist	\$
Optometrist	\$
Chemist	\$
Total Income	\$

 OTHER REPAYMENTS FORTNIGHTLY	
Car	\$
Credit Card	\$
Loans	\$
Other	\$
Total Expenses	\$

 PERSONAL EXPENSES FORTNIGHTLY	
Clothing	\$
Gifts	\$
Entertainment	\$
Pocket Money	\$
Haircuts	\$
Paper/Magazines	\$
Other	\$
Total Expenses	\$

 EDUCATION EXPENSES FORTNIGHTLY	
School/Tuition Fees	\$
Uniforms/Sport/Music	\$
Excursions/Camps	\$
Stationery/Bag/Books	\$
Child care / Afterschool care	\$
Other	\$
Total Expenses	\$

\$\$\$ MONEY SITUATION \$\$\$	
Total Income	\$
Total Expenses	\$
Money Left Over	\$

Activity 4B: Income and Expenses

PAGE 1/2

> TOPIC 4: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

ACTIVITY 4B

Income and Expenses

TIMING:

20 minutes

RESOURCES:

Vivian's Income and Expenses activity sheet and calculators.

ACTIVITY:

Use Vivian's Income and Expenses activity sheet with the whole group.

Explain how the total amount of the money coming in has to be larger than the total amount going out. Discuss how understanding money allows you to plan for bills so that nasty financial shocks can be avoided. Get the women to talk about what would happen if Vivian's work hours were reduced and she only made \$250 per week, can they identify anywhere that she may be able to save money?

Ask participants to fill out an income and expenses sheet for themselves.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

- This exercise can be quite time consuming. Do not assume that everyone will have basic maths skills or know how to use a calculator; this is not always the case. This activity might require one-on-one assistance with mathematics and a calculator. It could be useful to have an extra facilitator for this exercise.
- The group may need help with the concept of planning for bills. A simple example is, if they receive a monthly phone bill for \$50 then, to establish what they have to budget each fortnight, they will need to divide the bill amount by two.

Activity Sheet 4B: Vivian's Income and Expenses

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> TOPIC 4: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

ITEM		COST \$\$\$
	Groceries	\$35
	Rent/ mortgage	\$110
	Transport	\$30
	Child care	\$25
	Electricity	\$30 p/m \$7.25 p/w
	Water	\$30 p/m \$7.25 p/w
	Gas	\$30 p/m \$7.25 p/w
	Mobile	\$30 p/m \$7.25 p/w
	Phone	\$0
	Eating out	\$30
	DVDs	\$11
	Study	\$0
	Coffee	\$20
	Other:	
	Cigarettes	\$0
	Internet	\$10

Expenses:

- Groceries = \$35
- Rent = \$110
- Transport = \$30
- Child Care- \$25
- Electricity = \$30 month or \$7.25 per week
- Water = \$30 month or \$7.25 per week
- Gas = \$30 month or \$7.25 per week
- Mobile = \$30 month or \$7.25 per week
- Phone – \$0
- Eating out = \$30
- DVDs = \$11
- Study- \$0
- Coffee- \$20
- Cigarettes- \$0
- Internet = \$10

Total \$300

Income

Wages (may include government benefit) = \$350 per week

Centrelink rent assistance = \$25

Family tax benefit (if applicable) =

Total \$375 per week
Remainder \$75 per week
Savings \$50 per week
\$25 per week for emergencies (buffer)

\$\$\$	Total costs	\$300
	Income	\$375
\$\$\$	Money left over	\$75
	Savings	\$50
	Buffer	\$25

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Activity 4C: Savings

> TOPIC 4: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

ACTIVITY 4C

Savings

TIMING:

30 mins

RESOURCES:

None

ACTIVITY:

The aim of this activity is to introduce the concept of saving and to start the group thinking about different options for savings. Discuss how savings can be used for covering the costs of items outside the range of normal income. For example, unplanned emergencies, illness, or to simply do something fun. Highlight how actively saving, no matter how little, establishes a level of control over our finances. It is also useful to discuss how saving is a good thing to teach children, as most of what we know about money management comes from our parents.

Discuss different places where money can be saved. There are no wrong answers. Places that participants may mention could include:

- In a jar.
- Under a bed.
- In a money box.
- In a bank account.
- In a savings account.
- In a term deposit account.
- In a community lending circle.

Ask the group to discuss the positives and negatives of each option. This discussion may include fees and charges, interest rates and security issues.

Ask for a show of hands of those who have a savings account. Ask for another show of hands for those who use it. Highlight that it is common for people on low incomes to believe that because they do not have a lot of money, there is no point in saving because it takes too long. Emphasise the benefits.

Activity 4D: Jar Savings (Little Bits Add Up)

> TOPIC 4: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

ACTIVITY 4D:

Jar Savings (Little Bits Add Up)

TIMING:

20 minutes

RESOURCES:

A glass jar full of real or fake coins and some small prizes

ACTIVITY:

Display a glass jar filled with coins and ask each woman to guess how much money is in the jar. The closest guess wins a small prize.

This activity is designed to highlight that even little bits of money, that is, coins, saved here and there can add up to a substantial amount of money.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

- Most guesses tend to be much lower than the amount in the jar.
- The common belief of many people on low incomes that there is no point in saving. Challenge this belief with this activity.
- Sensitivity is required to deliver this topic well. There is the potential to create resistance to the savings topic if the barriers faced by low-income earners are not acknowledged.
- To encourage the participants to start to save, provide them with a money box (\$1 from the \$2 Shop) or a jar of their own that they can decorate.
- This activity has raised questions on the durability of Australian money when kept in money boxes; in some countries money rusts easily and is no longer usable. Explain how in Australia this is not the case; in addition explain that because Australian money notes are plastic they can also be placed in money boxes.

Activity 4E: Mari's Holiday Savings

> TOPIC 4: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

ACTIVITY 4E

Mari's Holiday Savings

TIMING:

10 minutes

RESOURCES:

A whiteboard, whiteboard markers and calculators.

ACTIVITY:

The facilitator uses the following scripted scenario to demonstrate to the group that even with small amounts of money, big things can be achieved. The scenario also illustrates the impact bank interest and charges have on savings.

Scenario:

Mari wants to go to Thailand sometime in the next few years to visit her mother. A plane ticket to Thailand is very expensive and Mari is on a low income, receiving only Centrelink benefits. She thinks that because she is receiving only a small amount of money, there is no point saving for the trip and is ready to give up. Mari spoke to a friend who convinced her to examine her situation more closely. She discovered that the cost of a ticket to Thailand is \$1,200. This is way too much for her to pay up front, but Mari opened a savings account that gave her 5% interest and didn't charge her fees because of her concession card. This meant they agreed to waive the monthly account keeping fee. Mari also paid no transaction fees because she only put money into the account and did not take any out. Mari could only afford to put in \$7 per week.

*After one year of putting away \$7 per week and earning interest Mari saved \$382.20. After two years Mari had \$783.51, and **after three years she had saved \$1204.88**. This was enough to buy her ticket. Without having a goal to aim for and working towards it, Mari would have never saved enough money to visit her mum.*

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

- You may want to write the figures from the scenario up on the board so that woman can see what is possible if you save just a little bit over a period of time.
- This exercise can be completed with the group using calculators to add up the amounts on the board.

Activity 4F: Introduction to Savings Goals

PAGE 1/2

> TOPIC 4: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

ACTIVITY 4F:

Introduction to Savings Goals

TIMING:

15 minutes

RESOURCES:

A whiteboard and whiteboard markers.

ACTIVITY:

This activity introduces the concept of having savings goals. Discuss the following points:

- That a goal is something to work towards. They provide direction, focus and a sense of achievement when we reach them.
- That the difference between a goal and wish is that you can make goals happen whereas we wait for wishes to happen to us.
- It isn't enough to just have a goal. Goals need to be achievable and specific. The first step is documenting them on paper and outlining a plan of how to go about it.
- Goals must be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timed – SMART.

Brainstorm what savings can be used for. Some ideas may include:

- To purchase items which are outside of the range of normal income.
- To cover the costs of unplanned emergencies such as an illness (a buffer fund).
- To do something fun.
- For events such as weddings and visits to family.

Ask the group whether it is enough to just have a goal or is a plan needed to make it happen? Emphasise that goals should be achievable and specific: SMART. For example, just saying I want to have a new pair of shoes isn't enough because no thought has been put into how this will be achieved. Speak to the group about real goals as opposed to just wishes. The first step is to write it down.

Emphasise that planning for goals needs to include:

- **What** the goal is.
- **How much** it will cost.
- **How** I can make it happen
(How can I save this money? What can I give up? How can I spend differently?).
- **A plan**, so they are possible.
- **A timeframe**, when I will achieve this.

Activity 4F: Introduction to Savings Goals

PAGE 2/2

> TOPIC 4: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

- It is best to provide some examples of short, medium and long-term goals.
- Keep the examples realistic and relevant to your group.
- Some groups may not want to share their goals with the group; this is ok.
- It is good if the facilitator shares one of their goals with the group. Ensure it is not too extravagant.
- Relate goals back to spending differently, or spending less, in order to find ways of saving small amounts of money.
- Goals can include learning English, making friends, studying or finding a job. All these things impact on women's financial situation, and their health and wellbeing.

Activity 4G: Your Own Savings Goals

PAGE 1/2

> TOPIC 4: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

ACTIVITY 4G:

Your Own Savings Goals

TIMING:

15 minutes

RESOURCES:

A whiteboard and whiteboard markers, and the Your Own Savings Goals activity sheet

ACTIVITY:

Each member of the group uses the Your Own Savings Goals activity sheet. Let the participants know that this can be used to achieve long, medium or short-term goals.

Ask for everyone to think of a goal and write it on the activity sheet. You may need to be active in assisting with calculations for this exercise. Ask the participants to share their goal with the rest of the group. Write it on the board for them as they talk you through it.



Activity Sheet 4G: Your Own Savings Goals

PAGE 2/2

> TOPIC 4: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE



I will save for:



It will cost:



I will do this by saving:

per (day / week / month / year):



I will find this by:



It will take me:

Activity 4H: Dreaming and Goals

> TOPIC 4: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

ACTIVITY 4H:

Dreaming and Goals

TIMING:

45 minutes

RESOURCES:

A whiteboard, whiteboard markers, butcher's paper/cardboard, coloured textas, Blu Tack and picture cards.

ACTIVITY:

Begin by discussing with the group the concept of dreaming and how it gives us hope. Ask the group to share some of the hopes they had for themselves and their families before they arrived in Australia. These do not have to be financial dreams.

Hand out the cardboard and pictures, and ask participants to make a display of their goals. Explain to the group that the aim of this activity is to have a bit of fun making a goal board. Let the group know that they can put anything they like on the board. The catch is that they then have to think about how it can be achieved. Explain to the group that even if they don't have a plan of how to achieve the goal straight away, that it is okay – we are dreaming today.

You may approach this exercise in different ways. For example, you can draw a tree on a piece of butcher's paper and ask participants to come and stick their picture or goal card on it. They can be goals to achieve within a week, a month, a year or a lifetime.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

- To make the picture cards, collect images from magazines or purchase cards from St Luke's Innovative Resources. Alternatively, participants can draw pictures on small pieces of paper or cardboard of what they would like.
- If the group is large, you can divide it to create smaller groups. Then, get the women to come up with their own dreaming tree and report back at the end.
- Surviving on a low income as a newly-arrived woman in Australia can sometimes be disheartening. Many women express that life in Australia is very different to how they imagined it to be.
- Be sensitive and mindful of the difficulty women may have experienced as a result of the settlement process. Women often come to Australia with the hope of a better life, and their lived experience may be quite different from what they expected. Women may also still be processing the transitional experiences of leaving their homes and arriving in Australia.

Useful Resources

> TOPIC 4: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

MONEYSMART

The MoneySmart website provides information, tools and resources on budgeting and saving. For more information, access at: www.moneysmart.gov.au/

SIMPLE SAVINGS ONLINE STORE

The Simple Savings Online Store provides information and budget shopping deals for consumers. Access at: www.simplesavings.com.au/store/

ST LUKES INNOVATIVE RESOURCES

St Lukes Innovative Resources provide many different types of resources for group activities, including the Koala Cards used in this program. To purchase resources, access at: www.innovativeresources.org/

MONEYSTUFF:

The MoneyStuff website provides consumer information and training videos in simple language. Access at: www.moneystuff.net.au/justthefacts

Topic 5: Banking, Accounts, Fees and Statements



TOPIC OVERVIEW

This topic explores the different types of bank accounts and their uses. Fees and account charges are discussed, as well as the importance of understanding the types of accounts, opportunities to change accounts, and how to find the account that best suits you. The concept of interest rates and how they impact on savings is also explored.

AIMS OF THE TOPIC:

- To develop an understanding of the impact of fees and charges on accounts.
- To develop an understanding of fees on different accounts, when they occur and the impact of this on savings.
- To develop an understanding of interest rates, how they work and what this means for accounts.
- To develop an understanding of debit cards as an alternative to credit cards.
- To develop an understanding of community incentive saving accounts.

Activity 5A: True or False Banking Quiz

PAGE 1/3

> TOPIC 5: BANKING, ACCOUNTS, FEES AND STATEMENTS

ACTIVITY 5A

True or False Banking Quiz

TIMING:

10 minutes

RESOURCES:

The True or False Banking Quiz questions and a small prize for the winner.

ACTIVITY:

This activity starts the group thinking about how much they know about banking and challenges their assumptions about banking in a fun way. It also provides the facilitator with a good understanding of the group's level of understanding about the topic.

Have the group stand up and ask them the quiz questions. If participants think the answer is true, ask them to place their hands on their head. If they think the answer is false, ask them to place their hands on their hips. Those who are correct remain standing and those who are incorrect sit down and are no longer in the game. The winner is the last person standing and earns a prize.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

- Groups will vary in their experience and confidence with banking. Therefore, it is important to establish the group's level of understanding before working with them.
- You may want to do your own research and devise different or more questions. This is particularly the case for participants with a higher level of financial literacy.

Activity 5A: True or False Banking Quiz

PAGE 2/3

> TOPIC 5: BANKING, ACCOUNTS, FEES AND STATEMENTS

Quiz Questions:

1

Q: "Interest rates and fees are the same on all accounts."

A: False

Each bank or financial institution can set their own interest rates and fees. Different banks and accounts will have different rules about withdrawing money, different fees that are charged, and different interest rates.

2

Q: "It is free to open a bank account."

A: True

Bank accounts are free to open in Australia. Most, but not all (for example, the Bendigo Bank) accounts have a monthly fee, so you need to factor this in when considering opening an account.

3

Q: "I can withdraw money from major supermarkets free of charge."

A: True

When a purchase is made, you can ask to withdraw money from major supermarkets, and some department stores, free of charge.

4

Q: "You need 75 points of identification to open a bank account."

A: False

You need 100 points of ID to open a bank account. This will normally include identification like a passport, birth certificate, driver's license, Medicare card or bank card. All banks will be able to provide you a list of the identification they will need for you to open an account.

5

Q: "You can change bank accounts whenever you want."

A: True

As it is free to open and close a bank account, you can switch banks whenever you like. If you no longer want to use one bank and open an account with another, make sure you close your original account to avoid further charges like account keeping.

Continued next page >>



Activity 5A: True or False Banking Quiz

PAGE 3/3

> TOPIC 5: BANKING, ACCOUNTS, FEES AND STATEMENTS

Quiz Questions:

6

Q: "It is a good idea to keep your bank Personal Identification Number (PIN) in your wallet in case you forget it."

A: False

Your PIN is a secret number only you should know. It is a bad idea to keep your PIN in your wallet, because if your wallet is lost or stolen then someone may find your card and PIN and then be able to steal your money from an ATM.

7

Q: "Debit cards can't get you into debt."

A: True

*Debit simply means to **take away**, so you can only take out money that is already in your account. If you have \$400 in your account, you can only take out a maximum \$400, no more. A debit card is **not** the same as a credit card.*

8

Q: "If I have a Health Care Card, I may be eligible for the bank to waiver some fees on my banking account."

A: True

A Health Care Card can get you special benefits, including at the bank. When you go to the bank to ask about opening an account, tell them if you have a health care card and ask what benefits you can get.

Activity 5B: Banking History Questionnaire

PAGE 1/3

> TOPIC 5: BANKING, ACCOUNTS, FEES AND STATEMENTS

ACTIVITY 5B

Banking History Questionnaire

TIMING:

15-20 minutes

RESOURCES:

The Banking History Questionnaire and an assistant facilitator to take note of participant's responses.

ACTIVITY:

Ask the group the questions from Group Banking History Questionnaire. The use of this questionnaire opens up a discussion with women to gauge their understanding and knowledge of banking, and their banking behaviour. The information gathered can be used as part of the evaluation of the sessions.



Activity 5B: Banking History Questionnaire

PAGE 1/3

> TOPIC 5: BANKING, ACCOUNTS, FEES AND STATEMENTS

Quiz Questions:

1

Q: "Who had someone else open their bank account for them?"

2

Q: "Who pays monthly account keeping fees and has a Health Care Card?"

3

Q: "Who knows what interest rate they earn on their accounts?"

4

Q: "Who knows what fees they are paying?"

5

Q: "Who looks at their statement? Who understands their statement?"

6

Q: "Who has a joint bank account with a partner or husband? "

7

Q: "Who has a savings account? "

8

Q: "Who found opening an account confusing? "

9

Q: "Have you ever had something happen with your account that you did not understand? Did you seek help for this? Why/why not? "

Activity 5C: Bank Account Types

PAGE 1/2

> TOPIC 5: BANKING, ACCOUNTS, FEES AND STATEMENTS

ACTIVITY 5C

Bank Account Types

TIMING:

10 minutes

RESOURCES:

The Banking Account Types handout sheet.

ACTIVITY:

This activity is designed to introduce women to the different types of banking accounts. Distribute the handout to the women and discuss the different types of accounts with them. Ask them whether they know what type of account(s) they have.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

- It is common for many women to be unaware of the type of bank account they hold, or what the conditions, fees or charges associated with it are.
- Women indicated that when they arrived in Australia, they were provided with a bank account and didn't know that they had a choice of other institutions and accounts.
- Women explained that they were using the ATM multiple times a day to avoid carrying cash. It may be useful to check in with women about this and highlight that multiple uses of ATMs may result in paying more in fees.
- Language barriers can be a major hurdle to learning more about banking. Many women are not able to read bank statements and this compounds the problem; banks do not offer interpreter services to its customers, nor are there many products in community languages. Whilst some banks offer translated written documents in some of the more common community languages, it does little for women from the smaller emerging communities or those who are illiterate.
- It may be a good idea to have a financial counsellor come along to this session to speak with the women in more detail about their banking account details. This is especially important for women with higher levels of financial literacy.
- Explain that banks release different banking products all the time. What is available at one time may not be available later. It is important to inform participants on the most up-to-date information on products. Look at some of the smaller emerging banks as they can have good deals that are worth investigating.
- Ensure that the group know that banks are able to change the interest rates and conditions of an account over time, and that they do need to inform their clients.
- Allow the women to share information about their own bank accounts, what works for them and what doesn't.



Activity 5C: Bank Account Types

PAGE 2/2

> TOPIC 5: BANKING, ACCOUNTS, FEES AND STATEMENTS

Banking Account Types handout sheet.



Transaction Accounts

- Everyday banking
- Wages/income go in - pay bills from this account
- A number of free transactions per month
- Fees and interest



Savings Account

- Use when saving for something specific
- Higher rate of interest than transaction accounts
- Limits on the number of free withdrawals
- Some savings accounts have bonus interest



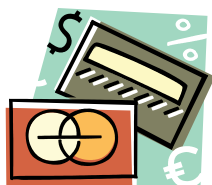
Term Deposit

- Higher rates of interest on money saved
- Minimum amount required to open
- Money is inaccessible for a time period
- Higher fees incurred if you withdraw early



E-Accounts

- Savings account
- Only accessed via internet
- Requires another bank account to link it to



Credit Cards

- Purchase now, pay later
- Money is borrowed from the bank and paid back with interest
- Application, late and annual fees
- Unlimited free transactions - cash withdrawals are very expensive
- If not managed well, credit cards are expensive
- Advantages: buy or pay for things via internet or phone



Debit Cards

- Day-to-day transactions
- Linked to your transaction account
- Uses your money
- Unlimited transactions
- Advantages: buy or pay for things via internet or phone

Activity 5D: Account Comparison

PAGE 1/3

> TOPIC 5: BANKING, ACCOUNTS, FEES AND STATEMENTS

ACTIVITY 5D

Account Comparison

TIMING:

15-20 minutes

RESOURCES:

The Account Comparison sheet and Banking Account information sheet.

ACTIVITY:

Refer to the Banking Account information sheet and discuss and indicate with the participants how different accounts have different fees (and conditions) associated with them.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

- Provide concrete examples of accounts available at different banks. This information changes all the time.
- Do not recommend an account, and stress that different bank accounts suit different people. It all depends on how they use the account.
- Information on bank accounts is changing all the time. Up-to-date examples of bank accounts must be sourced prior to delivering this session.
- Whilst it is beneficial for women to understand the differences between banks and the fees that they charge, women may not have the authority in their families to make decisions about changing the family bank accounts to alternative institutions and/or to deciding how family money should be spent. Some families have joint bank accounts shared by husbands and wives, but wives have little direct access to these. A husband may have opened up the account and continues to maintain it. Women may not always have access to ATM cards, or even know how much money the family has access to. This may be due to women having lower levels of English than their husbands, traditional gender roles, cultural practices about money management, and/or due to inequitable power structures within relationships.
- It is important to acknowledge that it is difficult for women from non-English backgrounds to shop around due to language barriers and the jargon surrounding financial institutions.
- You could suggest to the women that they form small groups and spend a day bank account shopping with someone who speaks English well.

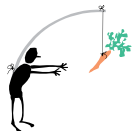


Activity 5D: Account Comparison

PAGE 2/3

> TOPIC 5: BANKING, ACCOUNTS, FEES AND STATEMENTS

Account Comparison Sheet

		1	2	3	4
Institution					
Account name					
Money required to open account					
Money required to reduce fees					
Monthly account keeping fee					
Free withdrawals/transactions per month					
Free internet and phone banking					
Other fees and charges					
Good ATM locations					
Interest rates					
Other positive features					

Activity 5D: Account Comparison

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> TOPIC 5: BANKING, ACCOUNTS, FEES AND STATEMENTS

Banking Account Information Sheet

Transaction Accounts					
Provider	Account	Interest Rate	Minimum Balance	Monthly Fee	Transactional Fees
	Everyday	5.4%	\$1	\$0	Free HSBC ATM, Online, Cash, Phone, Direct Debit transactions. Five free ATM transactions per month at any bank.
	Visa Debit Card	2%	\$1	\$12	Free use of any ATM in Australia or overseas with NAB Visa Gold. Free international Visa Debit purchases.
	Visa Debit Card	2%	\$1	\$6	Free ANZ ATM, Online, Cash, Phone, Direct Debit transactions. Fee's charged for non-ANZ ATM use.
	Express	0%	\$1	\$5	Free St George transactions (except in-branch services or cheques).
	Complete Freedom	0%	\$1	\$7	Unlimited St George transactions. Unlimited branch access. Free internet and phone banking.
	Simply Freedom	0%	\$1	\$6	Unlimited St George transactions. Unlimited branch access. Free internet and phone banking.

Savings Accounts				
Provider	Account	Interest Rate	Interest Paid	Min Balance
	Telnet Saver	8.25%	Monthly	\$1
	Savings Account	7.8%	Monthly	\$1
	Serious Saver	7.5%	Monthly	\$1
	iSaver	7.05%	Monthly	\$1
	Direct Saver	7%	Monthly	\$1

Activity 5E: Banking Jargon

PAGE 1/2

> TOPIC 5: BANKING, ACCOUNTS, FEES AND STATEMENTS

ACTIVITY 5E
Banking Jargon
TIMING:
10 minutes
RESOURCES:
The Banking Jargon Definitions handout sheet.
ACTIVITY:
This activity is a simple delivery of verbal information to women so that they become more familiar with basic bank jargon. Refer to the terms in the Banking Jargon Definitions sheet and discuss with the group.



Activity 5E: Banking Jargon

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> TOPIC 5: BANKING, ACCOUNTS, FEES AND STATEMENTS

Banking Jargon Definitions

Transactions

Taking money out of your account, getting a balance enquiry from an ATM, transferring money between your accounts using an ATM or over the counter.

Withdrawals

The money you take out of your account.

Deposits

The money you put into your account.

EFTPOS

Enables you to pay for goods and services or to withdraw money from your account at supermarkets and shops. Paying for items on EFTPOS is a free transaction, but withdrawing (fee free) money with it may incur a fee (between \$2 and \$10) if the withdrawal is made at a bank other than the one you hold an account with.

Credit

Purchasing an item without paying for it on the spot.

Interest Received

Money paid to you for saving money.

Interest Paid

Money you pay to borrow money.

Interest Rate

A percentage cost of what you might receive or pay. It is important to explain why, when we look at a savings accounts, we want a high interest rate; and when we want credit or a loan it is important to explain that we want a low interest rate.

Credit Rating

Your personal finance history.

Default

A notation made against your credit rating that remains for five years.

Savings

Money you put away for something you want to purchase.

Debt

Money owed for something you have purchased.

Security

Contract ownership by the bank on something you own when they lend you money.

Activity 5F: Fees and Charges

PAGE 1/2

> TOPIC 5: BANKING, ACCOUNTS, FEES AND STATEMENTS

ACTIVITY 5F

Fees and Charges

TIMING:

10 minutes

RESOURCES:

The Fees and Charges sheet.

ACTIVITY:

Discuss the Fees and Charges handout with the group. Explain that there are many fees and charges, and that they vary from account to account and bank to bank. Explain that there are exemptions to some of these fees and that you may be eligible if you:

- are a full-time student;
- hold a concession card; and/or
- are under 18 or over 60.

Banks have started to introduce concession accounts. These accounts have no fees and in some cases have unlimited transactions both at the ATM and over the counter. It is important for participants to understand that accounts that have unlimited transactions are great for day-to-day transactions, but are not very good for savings because of the low interest rate associated with these accounts.

Activity 5F: Fees and Charges

PAGE 2/2

> TOPIC 5: BANKING, ACCOUNTS, FEES AND STATEMENTS

Fees and Charges



Over-the-counter fees

Why: Putting in or taking out money from an account with the help of the bank staff.



Account keeping fees

Why: Monthly fee charged for having the account.



Transaction fees

Why: Charged when you take money out, put money in or get an account balance. Accounts have a limited number of free transactions per month. Sometimes transaction fees are charged for internet banking and direct debits.



Other banks ATM transaction fees

Why: Charged when using an ATM that doesn't belong to your bank. This can be up to \$6.



Overdrawn fees

Why: Charged when you take out more money than is in the account (an overdraft). Common with direct debit facilities, this fee is very high. It can be charged as a one-off fee or charged every day until the overdraft is paid off.

Activity 5G: Understanding Your Bank Statement

> TOPIC 5: BANKING, ACCOUNTS, FEES AND STATEMENTS

ACTIVITY 5G

Understanding Your Bank Statement

TIMING:

10 minutes

RESOURCES:

The women's bank statements (make sure personal details on the statement are blocked out) and example bank statements.

ACTIVITY:

Ask the group to bring in their bank statements. Explain the different columns and what they mean. Highlight where the current balance is displayed and point out fees and interest. Alternatively, you may bring in some examples with names and account numbers removed to demonstrate with the group. This information can be very confusing, so take it slowly with the group.

Useful Resources

> TOPIC 5: BANKING, ACCOUNTS, FEES AND STATEMENTS

CHOICE

Choice offers comparison ratings on many financial and banking products. For more information, access at: www.choice.com.au

MONEY SMART

The Money Smart website provides important information on banking and financial management in many community languages. Access at: www.moneysmart.gov.au/

Topic 6: Credit, Debt, Loans and Repayments



TOPIC OVERVIEW

This topic looks at the real cost of credit and loans; different lending options are discussed, along with their positive and negative features. The idea of becoming trapped in debt is explored, as well as the reality of making minimum repayments. Tips on how to avoid unmanageable debt are discussed, as well as community alternatives to mainstream loans.

AIMS OF THE TOPIC:

- To explore the meaning of credit and loans, and to understand their true cost and relationship with interest rates and fees.
- To examine the different types of lenders and highlight the difference between regulated and unregulated lenders.
- To highlight the trap of only making minimum repayments.
- To identify the steps to take if repayments on credit, debts or bills can't be made.
- To explore debt, its positives and negatives, and ways to avoid unmanageable debt.
- To build the confidence of the group about where to get assistance should they need it.
- To introduce alternatives to mainstream loans.

Activity 6A: What is Credit?

> TOPIC 6: CREDIT, DEBT, LOANS AND REPAYMENTS

ACTIVITY 6A

What is Credit?

TIMING:

10-15 minutes

RESOURCES:

None.

ACTIVITY:

Discuss with the group that the term 'credit' has different meanings. The first refers to how much positive money a person has. For example, on a bank statement if a person has \$100 in their bank account the statement will say that they have \$100 credit.

The second meaning is the one that is important for this session and refers to when a person borrows money for something (for example, car repairs or furniture) now, and will pay for it later. Usually it is paid back in small amounts gradually over time. Extra money is paid back to the credit provider in fees and interest.

Brainstorm some examples of credit with the group. Examples may include: credit card, store card, tab at a milk bar, and interest-free furniture deals.

Discussion points to highlight include:

- Credit involves receiving a service or goods now and paying for it later.
- Payment for credit means paying additional money (interest) on top of what we borrowed. Except for no interest loans, credit always incurs interest.
- There are concerns about the global populations' reliance on credit as has been witnessed with the Global Financial Crisis. Even though Australia is one of the most developed and wealthiest nations in the world, it has one of the highest debts per-capita.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

- Freely-available credit presents a risk for newly-arrived, refugee and migrant women, many of whom face the reality that low incomes are not enough to make ends meet in Australia.
- Risks also relate to the bombardment of choice which many women experience. In their country of origin they may not have had these levels of choice. This choice can influence the spending habits of some newly-arrived groups.
- Challenge the notion that credit providers exist to 'help' people – that the loans they provide are a type of 'gift'. It is important to outline that providing credit is mostly about the provider making money from the transaction.
- Sometimes credit and loans are viewed as additional income; this is a common misunderstanding. The discussion needs to be focused on the impact credit and loans may have on the borrower's financial future and wellbeing.
- Some cultural groups avoid credit cards altogether, yet for others it is a major source of debt.

Activity 6B: Loans

> TOPIC 6: CREDIT, DEBT, LOANS AND REPAYMENTS

ACTIVITY 6B

Loans

TIMING:

10 minutes

RESOURCES:

A whiteboard and some whiteboard markers.

ACTIVITY:

Loans are usually paid back the same way that credit is, in small amounts gradually over time. Extra money is usually paid back to the credit provider in fees and interest. Some examples of loans include a personal loan, housing loan (mortgage), or car loan.

Ask the group to list where they can borrow money from if the need arises.

Answers may include:

- banks;
- pawn brokers;
- Cash Converters;
- credit unions;
- family and friends;
- building societies;
- payday lenders;
- fridge lenders;
- community lending circles;
- No Interest Loans Schemes (NILS); and/or
- low-interest loans.

Discuss with the group the positive and negative features related to each of the options, including interest rates, access, personal issues and fees.

Activity 6C: Looking Out for Lenders

> TOPIC 6: CREDIT, DEBT, LOANS AND REPAYMENTS

ACTIVITY 6C

Looking Out for Lenders

TIMING:

20 minutes

RESOURCES:

None.

ACTIVITY:

The aim of this activity is to discuss the risks involved in getting loans. Some important things to highlight in the discussion include:

- How it is relatively easy to access credit and loans in Australia if you are prepared to pay for it.
- How banks are often willing to lend more than people can afford to repay. This can be dangerous if you don't have the capacity to repay the loan or if something unexpected arises (such as loss of employment).
- The truth about payday lenders. It is important to stress that whilst it is easy to obtain a loan from such lenders, they come with many risks and costs, such as high fees – rates may be as high as 1000-2000% interest. Many people often sign up to these out of a lack of understanding, rising emergencies and vulnerability.
- Unregulated versus regulated lenders. Bank finance is regulated by the Uniform Consumer Credit Code. Other lenders, such as payday lenders, are not. This means that banks and financial institutions are bound by the law and need to take into consideration the rights of borrowers should their circumstances change. For example, as a borrower you may have the right to ask for changes to the conditions of repayment under some circumstances (for example, should you fall sick). This law is what is known as a hardship clause. Unregulated lenders, such as payday lenders, are not bound by this.
- The importance of reading the fine print in credit and loan contracts. Often lenders are misleading in their representation of the loan conditions leaving it up to the borrower to 'read the fine print'. However, this can be a significant problem for many women due to language barriers. Even for people who speak English as a first language, such contracts can be confusing. Financial counsellors can provide advice on a contract. Remember the golden rule: *if it sounds too good to be true, then it usually is.*
- There can be traps surrounding contracts including interest-free periods. An interest-free period is a given period (for example, 24 months) in which you have to pay back the loan without accruing interest. This can be a good idea if you pay the loan back in the designated period. There can, however, be pitfalls. For example, if you are unable to pay off the entire loan within the interest-free period, you may then be charged interest from the beginning of the contract at a very high rate and this rate can be astronomical. (It is common for some furniture and electrical distributors to lend up to \$20,000 with nothing to pay for 48 months, however if you can't pay it off in that time frame, the interest you have to pay can be very high.)
- It is very important to understand the full cost of any loan. It is a good idea to sit down with the person offering the loan and work out exactly how much the loan is going to cost you. Have someone review the contract on your behalf, and always ensure you can afford the minimum repayments.

Activity 6D: Interest – The Real Cost of Credit

PAGE 1/3

> TOPIC 6: CREDIT, DEBT, LOANS AND REPAYMENTS

ACTIVITY 6D

Interest – The Real Cost of Credit

TIMING:

10 minutes

RESOURCES:

The Real Cost of Credit and Credit Repayments Graph activity sheets.

ACTIVITY:

The aim of this activity is to help participants understand what 'interest' is and what the 'real cost' of credit can be. It is important to highlight some important points. Provide the group with the Real Cost of Credit and the Credit Repayments Graph activity sheets and discuss the following points:

- Interest is how lenders or credit providers make money from loans. It is not a gift.
- Put simply, interest is a percentage rate of the money that has been borrowed that is paid back over time.
- The longer a loan takes to pay back, the more interest is paid.
- Explain how even if one loan has a high interest rate and another has a lower rate you could still end up paying more in the long-term because of fees.
- Emphasise that paying only the minimum monthly repayments means maximising the interest that is repaid. Just because someone can afford the monthly repayments, it doesn't mean they should take the loan. Go through the Credit Repayment Graph with the group to show the real cost of credit and just how expensive it can be.
- Credit is not necessarily bad. In Australia many people rely on credit to make major purchases such as cars and household goods. Credit allows us to purchase things we need sooner. Many Australians could never afford to buy a house or a car without credit.



Activity 6D: Interest – The Real Cost of Credit

PAGE 2/3

> TOPIC 6: CREDIT, DEBT, LOANS AND REPAYMENTS

The Real Cost of Credit Activity Sheet

The Real Cost of Credit

Amount borrowed:



Interest and fees:



Real cost:

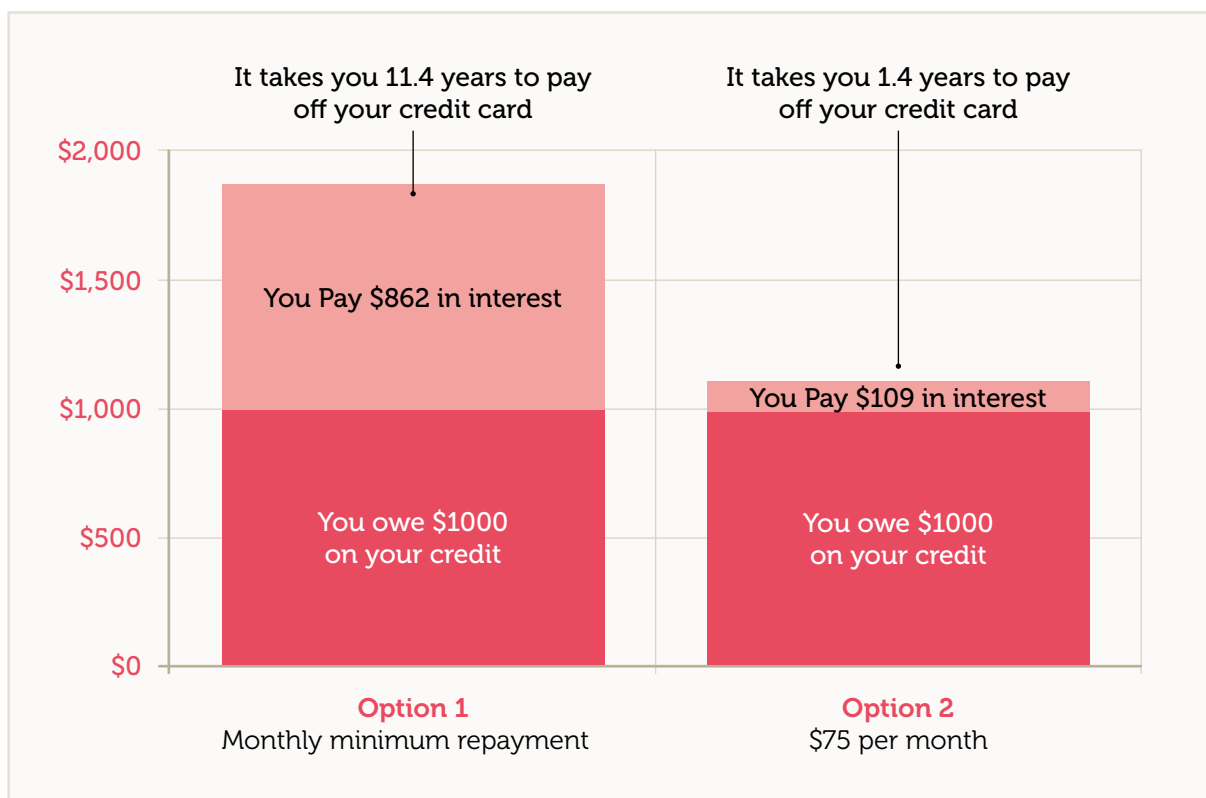


Activity 6D: Interest – The Real Cost of Credit

PAGE 3/3

> TOPIC 6: CREDIT, DEBT, LOANS AND REPAYMENTS

Credit Repayments Graph Activity Sheet



This graph was calculated using the credit card calculator at: www.moneysmart.gov.au rounded to the nearest \$1.

Using the Credit Repayments Graph above, and the information below, explain that by paying more than the minimum monthly repayments a lot of money can be saved. In reference to the graph explain that:

- The minimum repayment on both options is \$25 per month.
- The interest rate on both options is the same (16% per annum) from the date of purchase (unless the items purchased are paid off each month in total).
- In **Option 1**, only the minimum repayments of \$25 each month are made. Of this \$25, approximately \$13 is paid in interest with the remaining \$12 coming off the debt. This means it will take just over 11 years to pay off \$1,000 spent on the credit card. During this period \$862 will be paid in interest on top of the \$1,000 borrowed – a total of \$1,862.
- In **Option 2**, an extra \$50 is paid each month on top of the \$25 minimum repayment so that \$75 is paid in total. By paying an extra \$50 each month, the credit card debt will be repaid in just over one year saving \$753 in interest.

Activity 6E: Debt - How we Feel About it & How to Manage it? PAGE 1/2

> TOPIC 6: CREDIT, DEBT, LOANS AND REPAYMENTS

ACTIVITY 6E

How we Feel About it & How to Manage it?

TIMING:

10 minutes

RESOURCES:

Koala cards (see the 'Useful Resources' section) and the Ways to Avoid Unmanageable Debt activity sheet

ACTIVITY:

Place the cards upright on the table and ask the women to pick one card that explains how they feel about debt. If more than one woman picks the same card, then join together. Ask the women if they would like to explain why they chose that particular card and what debt means to them. Alternatively you could create your own card using smiley faces, or have this exercise as an art therapy exercise and ask the women to draw pictures. The facilitator shares why they chose their card first.

This activity acts as an ice breaker for a topic that is often not spoken about. It also allows the facilitator to gauge how the group feels about debt. It opens up dialogue around debt without having to speak specifically about the women's experience with their debt. It creates an opportunity to explore the subject further and provide information on how to get assistance. It also assists in dispelling some of the barriers around discussing debt.

After this ice-breaker exercise, discuss ways to avoid getting into unmanageable debt. Key discussion points include:

- The importance of having a strong budget or system of money management and avoiding spontaneous spending.
- Shopping around for loans and finding the best deal. Exploring the real costs.
- Saving up for purchases rather than using credit.
- Asking for help from a financial counsellor or community legal centre if you need it. Most importantly do not ignore your debt.
- Providing examples of, and explanations about, lay-by purchases and savings in contrast to loans and credit.
- Explain how to apply for a no or low-interest rate loan from a community organisation.

After highlighting these points, refer to the Ways to Avoid Unmanageable Debt activity sheet with the group to further emphasise simple, yet effective, ways to avoid debt.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

- In many cultures debt is considered a taboo. This creates an environment where people are reluctant to seek help because of feelings of embarrassment and shame.
- Creating a safe environment to speak about debt is important to the delivery of this topic.

Activity 6E: Debt - How we Feel About it & How to Manage it? PAGE 2/2

> TOPIC 6: CREDIT, DEBT, LOANS AND REPAYMENTS

Ways to Avoid Unmanageable Debt Activity Sheet

1



Have a good budget.

2



Avoid spontaneous buying.

3



Shop around for loans and make sure you understand the real costs involved.

4



Saving up for things rather than putting them on credit.

5



Understand your rights

6



If you are worried about debt, speak to a professional.

7



Don't ignore your debt.

Activity 6F: What to do if you Find Yourself in Debt

PAGE 1/2

> TOPIC 6: CREDIT, DEBT, LOANS AND REPAYMENTS

ACTIVITY 6F

What to do if you Find Yourself in Debt

TIMING:

20 minutes

RESOURCES:

The What to do if you Can't Pay your Bills activity sheet and other information sheets on material aid and where to get help in the community.
(Facilitator to compile this based on the geographical area.)

ACTIVITY:

This activity aims to highlight the many options for help that exist in the community should women find themselves experiencing difficulty paying bills or loans, or if they find themselves in unmanageable debt. Compile a list of geographic-specific information on material aid and financial counsellors in the area and distribute these to the group.

A recovery plan is a plan of attack to get back on top of things and to stop debts getting bigger. The development of a recovery plan is a specific area of expertise, and it is recommended that women see a financial counsellor to develop this plan. Making this appointment could be the best single outcome of this program for some individuals.

Provide opportunities for the group to make appointments with a financial counsellor to design a recovery plan if required.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:

- Many people do not understand that bills are contracts and need to be paid back within the specified due date. You may need to emphasise this again. Reiterate that there are hardship clauses. You can arrange a repayment plan with your service provider, but you need to contact them. This is very important.
- Settlement workers have found that people are more likely to engage with the topic of debt after they have experienced financial hardship or have found themselves in debt of some kind. Reinforce to the group that it is important not to get to this point.
- Many newly-arrived women may not understand that they need to pay bills or fines they receive in the mail, only seeking assistance after the due date for the payment. This can be due to language issues, the non-understanding of infringement notices, and/or the lack of knowledge in how to pay the fine. More often, some women may not have enough money to pay the whole amount and not know about payment or instalment plans that exist in cases of hardship.
- Some local community legal services periodically provide a 'Bring Your Bills' day, offering free legal advice and services. It can be a good idea to consult your local community centre or community legal service for more information on this service.

Activity 6F: What to do if you Find Yourself in Debt

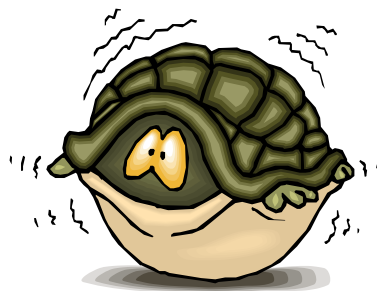
PAGE 2/2

> TOPIC 6: CREDIT, DEBT, LOANS AND REPAYMENTS

What to do if you Can't Pay your Bills Activity Sheet



Don't panic.



Don't hide.



Ask for more time to avoid late fees.



Have a plan.



If you can't come up with a plan, or if you feel unsure about talking to the creditors yourself, seek help from a financial counsellor or other community organisation.

Activity 6G: No and Low-Interest Loans

PAGE 1/2

> TOPIC 6: CREDIT, DEBT, LOANS AND REPAYMENTS

ACTIVITY 6G

No and Low-Interest Loans

TIMING:

30 minutes

RESOURCES:

Consumer information on the No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS) and other low interest loans, and a guest financial speaker.

ACTIVITY:

This activity is designed to introduce women to no and low-interest loan schemes. There are many different schemes on offer and different organisations provide different schemes. It is a good idea to have in a financial counsellor attend this session to talk about these or, alternatively, research them yourself.

Activity 6G: No and Low-Interest Loans

PAGE 2/2

> TOPIC 6: CREDIT, DEBT, LOANS AND REPAYMENTS

No Interest Loan Schemes

The **No Interest Loan Schemes** originally developed by the Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service nearly 30 years ago offer small no interest loans for people on low incomes for the purchase of essential household goods. (See the 'Useful Resources' section.)

NILS is a program run by community organisations such as the Good Shepherd and Kildonan Uniting Care. They offer low-income households and Pension/Health Care cardholders the opportunity to access small amounts of credit to purchase essential brand new goods or necessities. These loans can be used for the purchase of refrigerators, washing machines, TVs, computers, beds/mattresses, health needs/aids, some repairs and education courses.

The loans are safe and affordable (usually in the region of \$800 to \$1200) and are completely free of interest and fees. Manageable fortnightly payments are worked out with each applicant, and the repayments are based over a 12-to-18-month period.

StepUp loans are a product offered through Good Shepherd and the National Australia Bank. They are safe low-interest loans from \$88 to \$3000 for personal, domestic or household purposes. The loans are repaid over three years. Kildonan Uniting Care also offer these loans.

Useful Resources

> TOPIC 6: CREDIT, DEBT, LOANS AND REPAYMENTS

MONEY HELP

Money Help provides tools and advice to help manage your money and debt. For more information, access at: www.moneyhelp.org.au/

GOOD SHEPHERD

The Good Shepherd provides information and support on their NILS and StepUP low-interest loan schemes. For more information, access at: www.goodshepvic.org.au/stepupandnils/

KILDONAN UNITING CARE

Kildonan Uniting Care provides financial counselling, no interest loans and support. For more information, access at: www.kildonan.unitingcare.org.au/program_family_financial.php

MONEY SMART

Money Smart is an initiative of the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC). It provides tips and tools on financial management in a many community languages. For more information on credit and debt, access at:

www.moneysmart.gov.au/borrowing-and-credit/other-types-of-credit/no-or-low-interest-loans

www.moneysmart.gov.au/borrowing-and-credit

BROTHERHOOD OF SAINT LAURENCE

The Brotherhood of Saint Laurence provides information and training on financial literacy as well as offering Saver Plus and Progress Loans. For more information, access at: www.bsl.org.au/services/money-matters

MULTICULTURAL CENTRE FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH (MCWH)

The Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (MCWH) implemented the Healthy Credit Project in 2008, which explored and addressed the credit and debt issues in immigrant and refugee women's lives. The project found that credit and debt are significant issues in the lives of immigrant and refugee women and that often debt is poverty-related. For information and module examples relating to credit and debt for newly-arrived, immigrant and refugee women, access at: www.mcwh.com.au/healthprom/money.php

MONEYMINDED

MoneyMinded provides tools and information on financial management. For more information on tools to use in group sessions, access at: www.moneyminded.com.au/default.asp

CONSUMER ACTION LAW CENTRE (CALC)

The Consumer Action Law Centre (CALC) offers free advice on credit and debt matters for the cost of a local phone call at: 1300 881 020. For information on legal advice around credit and debt, access at: www.consumeraction.org.au/consumer-issues/credit-and-debt.php

CONSUMER AFFAIRS VICTORIA (CAV)

Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) has qualified staff who can provide free information or advice about credit or debt issues, as well as provide referrals to financial counsellors or community legal centres for the cost of a local phone call at: 1300 558 181. Or for more information, access at: www.consumer.vic.gov.au/

Topic 7: Housing Advice and Support



"Housing is an essential asset for ensuring women's independence and economic security. Lack of housing undermines women's potential to secure health, education and employment and increases the risk of violence. An increasing proportion of those living in housing-poverty and homelessness are women and children, due to discriminatory laws, policies, and customs and traditions."

*United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Division for the Advancement of Women.*

TOPIC OVERVIEW

Many newly-arrived, refugee and migrant women face significant disadvantage accessing housing. Reduced vacancy rates in the rental market and soaring rents leaves many newly-arrived women and families with limited finances facing instant housing stress.

Limited finances are accompanied by many non-financial barriers to increase women's risk of homelessness. Some of these non-financial barriers include:

- A lack of rental history.
- Racial discrimination by landlords and real estate agents.
- Difficulties in negotiating the private rental process due to language differences.
- A lack of suitable housing (especially when trying to accommodate large families).

Refugees receive intensive assistance with housing (via Humanitarian Settlement Services HSS) during their first six months of living in Australia. However, once they are no longer eligible for HSS assistance, many experience difficulties as they are left to negotiate the private rental market on their own.

This topic provides basic information on the steps needed to undertake a private tenancy and offers information and advice on public and social housing. However, housing and tenancy issues are complex and it may be necessary to consult a tenancy worker for specialised advice prior to delivering this session.

AIMS OF THE TOPIC:

- To provide women with an understanding of the process required when entering the private rental market.
- To inform women about their legal rights and responsibilities as tenants in the private rental market.
- To provide women with an understanding of the meaning of renting terms.
- To provide information on public and social housing and support services.

Activity 7A: Undertaking a Private Tenancy

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> TOPIC 7: HOUSING ADVICE AND SUPPORT

ACTIVITY 7A

Undertaking a Private Tenancy

TIMING:

60 minutes

RESOURCES:

The Undertaking a Private Tenancy activity sheet and copies of a:

- Lease Agreement form;
- Bond Lodgement form;
- Tenants Rights and Responsibilities booklet;
- Condition Report; and
- Notice to Landlord form.

ACTIVITY:

This activity walks the group through the steps needed to undertake a tenancy in the private rental market. It also identifies the roles and responsibilities of tenants. Use the activity image cards, along with the text provided, to explain each step of the tenancy process. The images can be printed as individual cards with the text appearing on the rear side. Use these as prompts throughout the discussion.

This activity usually promotes a lot of discussion with participants, so allow a minimum of one hour to answer any questions that may arise.

The facilitator may also like to bring along examples or case studies of tenancy issues and disputes to the session.



Activity 7A: Undertaking a Private Tenancy

PAGE 2/12

> TOPIC 7: HOUSING ADVICE AND SUPPORT

The Lease Agreement Card



1. The Lease Agreement

When a person finds a property they want to live in, they have to take number of steps to become that property's tenant. The most important step is the signing of a **lease agreement** between the tenant and the landlord or real estate agent. This lease is a legally binding contract that locks tenants into a tenancy agreement (living in and being responsible for a property) for a fixed period. This is what is known as a fixed term lease. Usually it is for 12 months, but sometimes it may be for less (six months).

The other commonly known type of tenancy arrangement is a periodic lease. This is a month-by-month lease arrangement and usually does not involve paperwork or a standard contractual agreement. This may also occur if a tenant's lease has expired, but they are still are a resident of the property.

When you sign a lease, you are usually required to **pay rent in advance**.

This is typically the equivalent to one month's rent. This is the legal requirement and, therefore, should not exceed this monthly amount. Tenants are also required to pay a **bond**. A bond is a deposit on the tenancy and acts as a security on the property in case of damage.

The landlord or real estate agent is legally bound to provide the tenant with:

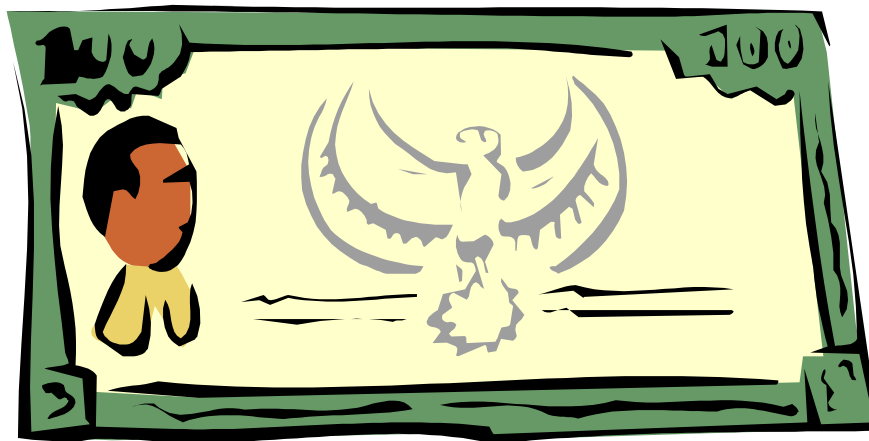
- a copy of the lease/tenancy agreement;
- a copy of the tenants *Right and Responsibilities* book;
- a copy of the lease agreement (within 14 days of it being signed);
- the landlord's or real estate agent's name and contact details; and
- a phone number in case of urgent repairs.

Activity 7A: Undertaking a Private Tenancy

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> TOPIC 7: HOUSING ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Bond Card



2. The Bond

A bond is a sum of money (sometimes called a security deposit) that is usually paid to the landlord or their real estate agent at the start of a tenancy. At the end of your tenancy, the landlord may be able to claim all or part of your bond as compensation for any damage you may have caused to the property or for unpaid rent.

If the rent is \$350 a week or less, the bond cannot be more than the equivalent of one month's rent.

A landlord or estate agent may charge a bond that is more than one month's rent if the:

- tenancy agreement states that the premises are the landlord's principal residence and the landlord intends to resume living there at the end of the tenancy, or
- rent is more than \$350 a week, or
- landlord or estate agent gets an order from the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal setting out the amount of the bond.



Activity 7A: Undertaking a Private Tenancy

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> TOPIC 7: HOUSING ADVICE AND SUPPORT

The Condition Report Card

REPORT CARD				
GRADING PERIOD	1	2	3	4
READING	A			
WRITTEN COMMUNICATION	A			
MATHEMATICS	C			
SCIENCE/HEALTH	B			
SOCIAL STUDIES	B			
ART	A			
MUSIC	A			
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	C			
Grade Average	B			
Attendance:	Present	48		
	Absent	0		
	Tardy	1		
A = Excellent • B = Good • C = Satisfactory • N = Needs Improvement U = Unsatisfactory • I = Insufficient / Incomplete				
Student:	Grade:		Year:	

3. The Condition Report

Both the tenant and landlord are required to fill in a **condition report** at the beginning of the tenancy. This is a record of the condition of the property before the tenant moves in. This protects both the tenant and landlord, but is particularly important for tenants so they are not made to pay for any existing poor condition of a property when they leave. It is strongly advised for tenants to complete the report as detailed as possible. It is very important to keep a copy of this report for the tenant's protection. It is also a very good idea to take and keep photos of any existing damage problems the property may have. Once a condition report is signed, it means the tenant has agreed with the landlord about the condition of the house.

Tips for Facilitators:

Condition reports have been identified as a major area of concern for newly-arrived and refugee women. As Berta states: "properties in substandard condition, with multiple pre-existing maintenance issues, [are] misrepresented in reports. Common issues included mould, rubbish left in the garden, damaged locks, dirty carpets and walls, cupboards and other fixtures in a state of disrepair, damaged vertical blinds and ripped fly screens". It is common practice for many newly-arrived tenants to make no amendments to condition reports. Stress to the women in the group the importance of being as thorough as possible in making amendments to condition reports, even if this means seeking advice and support from a case manager or tenancy worker.

Activity 7A: Undertaking a Private Tenancy

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> TOPIC 7: HOUSING ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Tenant Responsibilities Card



4. Tenant Responsibilities

Tenants also have responsibilities upon taking up a tenancy. These are outlined in the *Rights and Responsibilities* booklet. Some key responsibilities to point out include:

- paying your rent on time;
- making sure you receive a rent receipt;
- keeping the premises clean and orderly;
- not causing damage to the property;
- informing the landlord of any damage or repairs as soon as possible (for example, if a fire alarm no longer works or a stove or hot water system breaks);
- ensuring that neighbours' right of privacy, peace and comfort is respected; and
- ensuring the property is not used for any illegal purpose.

The landlord or real estate agent has the right to regularly inspect the property, but they **do** have to give the tenants 24hour's notice to enter the property. This inspection is usually done every six months.

Activity 7A: Undertaking a Private Tenancy

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> TOPIC 7: HOUSING ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Avoiding Eviction Card



5. Avoiding Eviction

In order to avoid eviction, a tenant is required to pay rent by or on the due date. If the rent is 14 days in arrears, the landlord or real estate agent is entitled to serve a 14-day **Notice to Vacate**. If a tenant is behind in their rent, or unable to make a payment, they should contact their landlord or real estate agent as soon as possible and negotiate a payment plan or date when they are able to pay the total amount owing. When entering into a payment plan, the tenant should not offer more than they can afford. It is important to make this offer in writing, and any correspondence with a landlord should be kept as this will provide evidence if the problem needs to be resolved in the future.

In order to legally evict a tenant, the landlord must serve a Notice to Vacate letter to the tenant. This notice must:

- be addressed to the tenant;
- be signed by the person administering the notice or by the real estate agent;
- identify the reasons for the issuing the notice; and
- identify the date by which the tenant needs to vacate the premises.

If these steps are not completed, then the Notice to Vacate will not be legally binding.

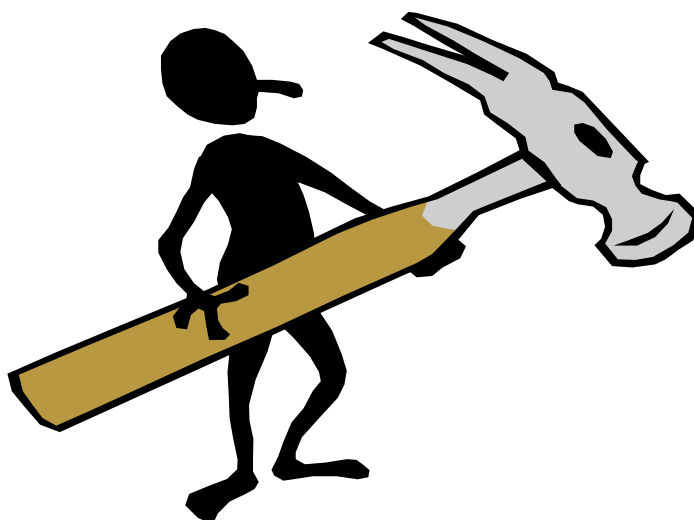
In Victoria, a tenant may be evicted under the 'no reason notice to vacate' clause of the residential tenancy act. This means a landlord is entitled to issue a tenant with 120 days to vacate the premises due to no specified reason.

Activity 7A: Undertaking a Private Tenancy

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> TOPIC 7: HOUSING ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Repairs Card



6. Repairs

Repairs fall into two categories - urgent or general. Urgent repairs include a burst water service; blocked or broken toilet; serious roof leak; gas leak or dangerous electrical fault; flooding; storm or fire damage; and/or failure of any essential service. These are legally required to be fixed within 24 hours of the landlord/real estate agent being notified of the problem.

General repairs are those which impact on a tenant's daily living, but do not significantly reduce their quality of living (for example, a leaking tap or crack that has appeared in a wall). The non-urgent or general repairs process involves:

1. That any repairs should first be documented in writing or on a 'Notice to Landlord' request stating the repairs that need completing. This form can be accessed from the Consumer Affairs website. Once the request has been lodged, the landlord has 14 days to make repairs.
2. If the landlord does not complete the repairs, the tenant may request that Consumer Affairs Victoria investigate (see below under 'Tenancy Disputes').

Newly-arrived and refugee women can access support from a settlement worker to help complete these forms.

Activity 7A: Undertaking a Private Tenancy

PAGE 8/12

> TOPIC 7: HOUSING ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Tenancy Disputes Card



7. Tenancy Disputes

If the landlord does not tend to repairs then the best course of action is to:

- Talk to the landlord; make sure a record of all correspondence is kept.
- Seek advice from Consumer Affairs Victoria; they can send a representative to complete an independent inspection of the property.
- If the problem still hasn't been resolved, then applications can be made to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) for an independent hearing of the dispute. The tenant needs to fill out an application form to go to VCAT. If an interpreter is needed, then this should be stated on the application. A copy of this application must be sent to the landlord by registered post. Within two to four weeks, the tenant (and landlord) will receive a 'Notice to Hearing'.

VCAT hears disputes between landlords and tenants. It is not a court, but it is able to make decisions that can be legally enforced. It is intended to be informal

and cheap, and to resolve disputes quickly and fairly. The tenant does not need to pay for a lawyer, and the tenant can either represent themselves or bring someone to advocate on their behalf. Tenants Union Victoria, and some case managers, can provide support. VCAT can arrange for an interpreter at no charge.

It is very important that the person making the claim attends the tribunal hearing and brings along any supporting evidence. This can include written documentation such as emails, witness statements and photos.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Newly-arrived and refugee women are often reluctant to approach advocacy, legal or other support services in the case of tenancy disputes. This may be due to 'cultural conceptions of government, authority and the legal system'. It is, therefore, necessary to emphasise the importance of seeking face-to-face assistance in the case of disputes as tenants will be significantly disadvantaged should they fail to do so.

Activity 7A: Undertaking a Private Tenancy

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> TOPIC 7: HOUSING ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Rent Increases Card



6. Rent Increases

Key points to discuss include:

- Rent cannot be increased during a fixed-term agreement unless this is specified in the agreement.
- Rent can't be increased more than once every six months.
- A landlord must give tenants 60 days' notice of a rental increase, as well as provide supporting paperwork, including a legitimate reason for the rental increase. The tenant must also be advised of their right to apply to Consumer Affairs Victoria within 30 days to investigate the increase, should the tenant wish to have it investigated.
- If a rent increase does not meet all of these conditions, it is invalid and the tenant is not legally entitled to pay the increased amount.

Activity 7A: Undertaking a Private Tenancy

PAGE 10/12

> TOPIC 7: HOUSING ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Breaking a Lease Card



9. Breaking a Lease

Whilst lease agreements lock tenants into a place of residence for the designated terms of the contract, there are some instances when lease agreements can be broken. These include:

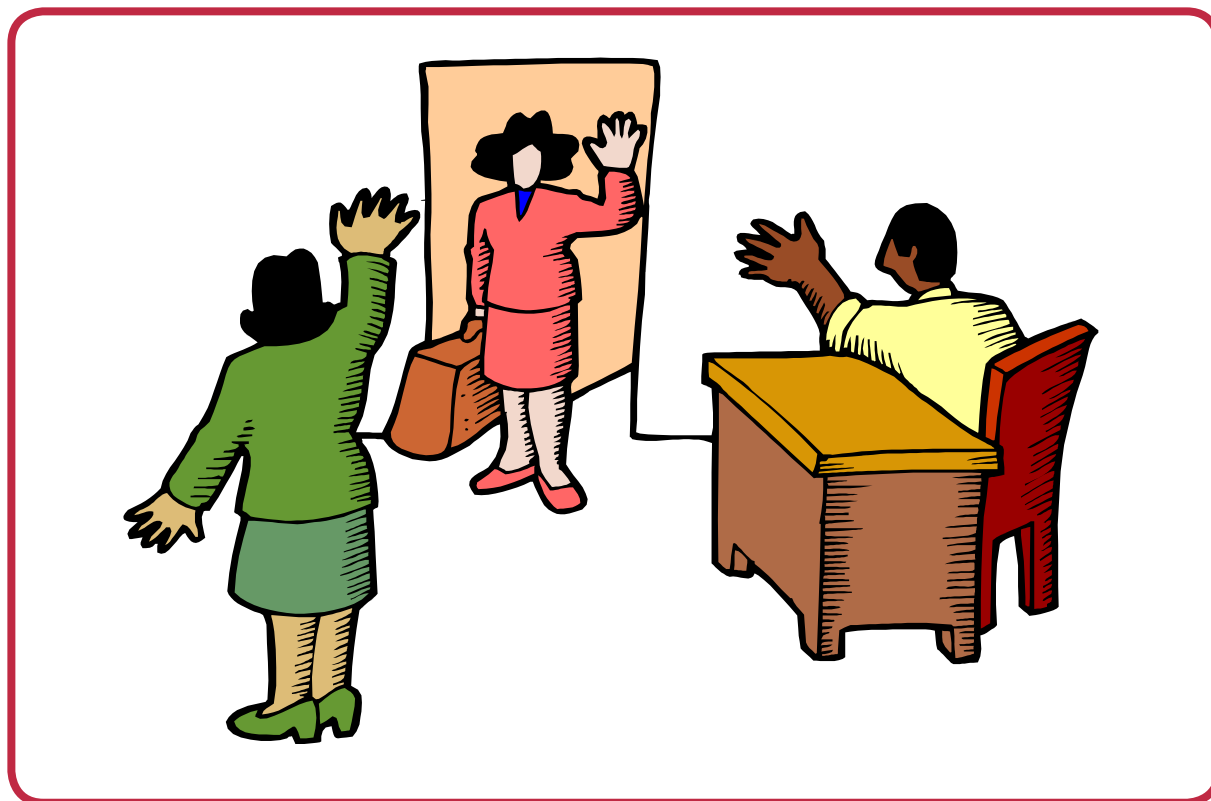
- By mutual agreement between a tenant and landlord. It is important to get the agreement in writing and it must state that the tenant will not be liable for any additional costs or compensations for breaking the lease.
- A tenant can terminate a lease agreement early if a landlord is in breach of his duties under the Residential Tenancies Act 1997.
- The agreement of a tenancy transfer between a landlord and tenant. This means the tenancy agreement will be assigned to another tenant. The landlord's consent is needed along with an updated tenancy agreement and a transfer of the bond.
- In cases of hardship, if something unforeseen happens placing a tenant in hardship and they are no longer capable of continuing the tenancy, an application can be made through VCAT to terminate the tenancy. Evidence of hardship is required.
- Giving up possession. In this case the tenant needs to give the landlord notice they will be vacating the property. This can be costly as the tenant is required to pay rent until a new tenant moves in (or the natural term of their tenancy expires), as well as any advertising costs.
- In cases of family violence; where a woman is on a family violence safety notice or intervention order. When a family violence intervention order is finalised by a magistrate, the tenant has the right to apply at VCAT for a new tenancy agreement, or to end the lease early on hardship grounds, or to negotiate a new tenancy agreement.

Activity 7A: Undertaking a Private Tenancy

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> TOPIC 7: HOUSING ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Vacating the Premises Card



10. Vacating the Premises

Key points to discuss include:

- If a tenant is not on a fixed-term agreement, they must give a minimum 28 days' notice to vacate. This must be provided in writing to the landlord or real estate agent.
- If the tenants fixed-term lease is about to expire, they are entitled to give 14-28 days' notice in writing to the landlord or real estate agent.
- The tenant must have the carpet in the premises steam cleaned from a registered professional steam cleaner and provide a receipt of this upon vacating.
- Tenants are not liable for 'fair wear and tear' on a property (for example, normal wear on carpet).



Activity 7A: Undertaking a Private Tenancy

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> TOPIC 7: HOUSING ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Public and Social Housing Card



11. Public and Social Housing

Public and social housing exists but are not easy to access due to high demands. To access public and social housing, certain criteria must be met. Persons applying must be an Australian citizen or permanent resident and over the age of 15. Newly-arrived migrants with permanent resident's status are subject to the Centrelink two-year waiting period before being eligible to apply for public housing. Public housing waiting lists fall under the categories of recurring homelessness, supported housing, special housing, and wait turn. In cases of family violence, priority of access can be given to secure public housing.

For further information on public and social housing refer to the 'Useful Resources' section.

Useful Resources

> TOPIC 7: HOUSING ADVICE AND SUPPORT

TENANTS UNION VICTORIA (TUV)

Tenants Union Victoria (TUV) provides free and confidential advice to tenants and residents renting in Victoria. Their service covers:

- private residential housing;
- public residential housing;
- residents in caravan parks; and
- residents and tenants in rooming houses.

TUV is an advocacy service and can provide presentation for a tenancy dispute at the Victorian Civil Administrations Tribunal (VCAT). TUV has an extensive array of tenancy information in many community languages. For more information, access at: www.tuv.org.au/contact+us

CONSUMER AFFAIRS VICTORIA (CAV)

Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) can provide advice and information on tenancy and tenancy problems. It is not an advocacy service. Information on tenancy and forms regarding disputes can be accessed at: www.consumer.vic.gov.au/renting

VICTORIAN CIVIL ADMINISTRATIONS TRIBUNAL (VCAT)

Victorian Civil Administrations Tribunal (VCAT) hears and determines a range of civil disputes relating to:

- consumer matters;
- domestic building works;
- legal services;
- owners corporation matters;
- residential and retail tenancies disputes;
- sale and ownership of real property; and
- use or flow of water between properties.

For more information, access at: www.vcat.vic.gov.au/

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS)

The Department of Human Services (DHS) provides information for individuals on public and community housing, homelessness, supported accommodation and home owner support. Information on how to apply for the bond loan scheme is also available at their website. For more information, access at:

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/housing-and-accommodation

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/housing-and-accommodation/private-renter-assistance/bond-loan-scheme

Useful Resources

> TOPIC 7: HOUSING ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Housing Action for the Aged Group (HAAG)

Housing Action for the Aged Group (HAAG) assists older private renters. They offer four services:

- Housing Options;
- Private Renters Assistance;
- Outreach Care and Housing; and
- Retirement Housing Advice and Support.

For more information, access at: www.older tenants.org.au/

Money Smart

Money Smart provides housing information. Access at:

www.moneysmart.gov.au/tools-and-resources/information-for/over-55s/your-home

Australian Taxation Office (ATO)

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) provides information on the first home buyers account scheme. This is a government co-contribution scheme that assists first home buyers obtain a deposit for a home. For more information, access at:

www.ato.gov.au/individuals/pathway.aspx?pc=001/002/066

Social and Community Housing Chart

> TOPIC 7: HOUSING ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Organisation	Contact Details
Anglicare	Phone: 1800 809 722
Community Housing (Vic) Ltd	Head office: 9 Prospect Street, Box Hill, 3128 Website: www.chl.org.au Phone: (03) 9856 0050
Common Equity Housing Limited	Head office: Level 1, 112 Balmain Street, Richmond, 3121 Website: www.cehl.com.au Phone: (03) 9208 0822
Eastcoast Housing Association	Head office: 2/57 Lloyd Street, Moe, 3825 Phone: (03) 5127 7160
Eastern Access Community Health Housing Ltd	Head office: 46 Warrandyte Road, Ringwood, 3134 Website: www.each.com.au Phone: (03) 9871 1800
Eastern Suburbs Rental Housing Co-operative	Head office: 4/25 Cyril Street, Box Hill South, 3128 Phone: (03) 9888 8964
Housing Choices	Head office: Level 4, 333 Queen St, Melbourne, 3000 Phone: 1300 312 447
Inner East Social Housing Group Inc	Head office: 1st Floor, 1 Civic Drive, Kew, 3101 Phone: (03) 9853 7501
Loddon Mallee Housing Services Ltd (Haven)	Head office: 10-16 Forest Street, Bendigo, 3550 Website: www.haven.org.au Phone: (03) 5444 9041
Melbourne City Mission	Head office: 214 Nicholson St, Footscray, 3011 Phone: (03) 9687 4997
Melton Shire Housing	Head office: Civic Centre, 323 High St, Melton, 3337 Phone: (03) 9747 7200
Metro West Housing Service	Head office: 218 Nicholson St, Footscray, 3011 Phone: (03) 9742 645
Mission Australia Housing (Victoria) Limited	Head office: Level 5, 136 Exhibition Street, Melbourne, 3000 Website: www.mahousing.com.au Phone: 1800 269 672

Social and Community Housing Chart

> TOPIC 7: HOUSING ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Organisation	Contact Details
Northcote Rental Housing Co-operative	Head office: 138 Separation Street, Northcote, 3070 Phone: (03) 9482 5998
North East Housing Service	Head office: 52-56 Mary Street, Preston, 3072 Phone: (03) 9479 0700
Northern Geelong Rental Housing Co-operative Ltd	Head office: 14 Bellbird Avenue, Norlane, 3214 (No mail delivery at this address). Postal address: P O Box 1013, Corio, 3214 Website: www.ngrhc.org.au Phone: (03) 5274 9933
Plenty Valley Community Health Housing	Head office: 187 Cooper St, Epping, 3076 Phone: (03) 8401 1385
Port Phillip Housing Association	Head office: 6/22-28 Fitzroy Street, St Kilda, 3182 Website: www.ppha.org.au Phone: (03) 9534 5837
Prahran/Malvern Community Housing Inc.	Head office: Shop 2, 1 Surrey Road, South Yarra, 3141 Phone: (03) 9826 5194
Rural Housing Network	Head office: 12A Tallarook St, Seymour, 3660 Phone: (03) 5735 2000
Servants Community Housing	Head office: 36 Barton Street, Hawthorn, 3122 Website: www.servants.org.au Phone: 0407 891 052
Social Housing Victoria	Head office: 141 Leicester Street, Carlton, 3053 Phone: (03) 8341 8700
South East Housing Co-operative Ltd	Head office: Suite 16, 88-90 Walker Street, Dandenong, 3175 Website: www.sehc.org.au Phone: (03) 9706 8005
South Port Community Housing Group Inc	Head office: 259 Dorcas Street, South Melbourne, 3205 Website: www.spchg.org.au Phone: (03) 9696 1128

Social and Community Housing Chart

> TOPIC 7: HOUSING ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Organisation	Contact Details
St Kilda Community Housing Ltd	Head office: 102 St Kilda Road, St Kilda, 3182 Website: www.stkch.org.au Phone: (03) 9534 1809
St Vincent De Paul Society	Phone: 13 18 12
Sunshine/St Albans Rental Housing Co-operative Ltd	Head office: 150 Durham Road, Sunshine, 3020 Phone: (03) 9312 6904
The Salvation Army Social Housing	Head office: 27 Sun Crescent, Sunshine, 3020 Phone: (03) 9312 5424
United Housing Co-operative Ltd	Head office: 1a Ballarat Street, Yarraville, 3013 Website: www.unitedhousing.org.au Phone: (03) 9689 8157
Uniting Care	Head office: 4th Floor, 130 Little Collins St, Melbourne, 3000 Phone: (03) 9251 5262
Uniting Housing Victoria Ltd	Head office: Level 1, 478 Albert St, East Melbourne, 3002 Website: www.unithousing.org.au Phone: 03 9250 6100
Urban Communities Limited	Head office: 42 Derby Street, Kensington, 3031 Website: www.urbancommunities.com.au Phone: (03) 9371 2000
Victorian Women's Housing Association	Head office: 3/14 Collins Street, Melbourne, 3000 Website: www.vwha.org.au Phone: (03) 9664 7800
VincentCare Community Housing	Head office: 43-45 Prospect Street, Box Hill, 3128 Website: www.vinnies.org.au Phone: (03) 9895 5900
Werribee Support	Head office: 19 Duncans Rd, Werribee, 3030 Phone: (03) 9742 6452
Williamstown Rental Housing Cooperative	Head office: 41 Challis Street, Newport, 3015 Website: www.williamstownhousingcoop.org.au Phone: (03) 9391 9267

Social and Community Housing Chart

> TOPIC 7: HOUSING ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Organisation	Contact Details
Women’s Housing Ltd	Head office: 1/21 Cremorne Street, Richmond, 3121 Website: www.womenshousing.com.au Phone: (03) 9412 6868
Yarra Community Housing Ltd	Head office: Ground floor, 660 Elizabeth St, Melbourne, 3000 Website: www.ych.org.au Phone: (03) 9349 0250
YMCA Community Housing Ltd	Head office: 582 Heidelberg Road, Fairfield, 3078 Phone: (03) 9403 5013

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