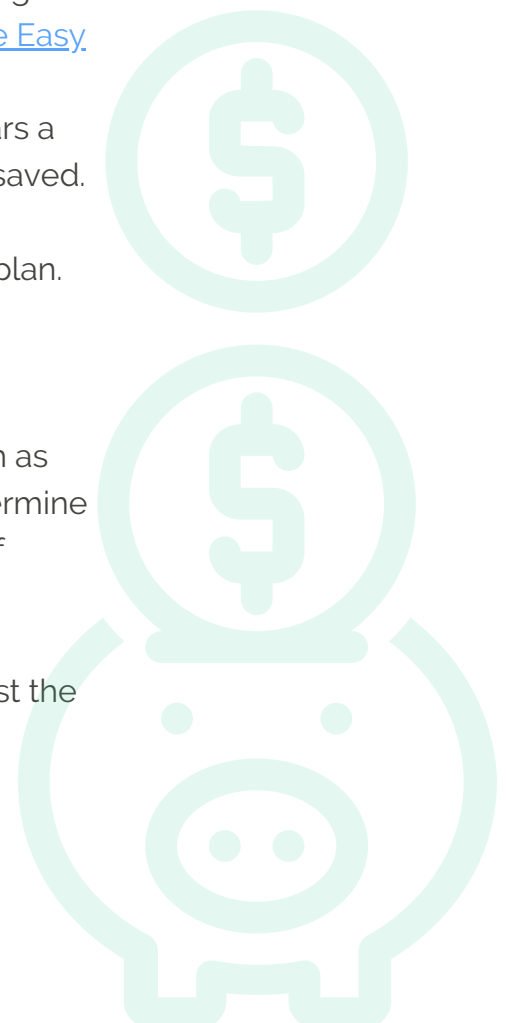


TIPS: BUDGETING & SAVING

- **Do not put your head in the sand.**
 - Keep the financial dialogue open between your bank, creditors.
- **Do a budget. For budgeting [try this one](#) by MoneySmart**
 - If you're spending more than you earn, what can you cut back or reduce?
- **Keep track of your spending.**
 - It's often the little things that end up costing us more.
- **Check your bills.**
 - Make sure you are not paying for what you do not need.
- **Focus on recurring expenses.**
 - Shopping for a cheaper energy retailer could help you cut your energy bill by almost half. See electricity & gas offers on the Australian Government's [Energy Made Easy website](#).
 - Insurance costs can run into several thousand dollars a year, so a saving of 10% could equate to hundreds saved.
 - Even if you're happy with your mobile and internet service providers, ask them if they have a cheaper plan. This is information they don't always volunteer to existing customers.
- **Pay off your credit card.**
 - Credit-card interest rates in Australia can be as high as 25 per cent or more, and they can quite easily undermine you and any savings goals. Try and avoid paying off credit cards with credit cards.
- **Pay off multiple debts.**
 - Start with the smallest one while maintaining at least the minimum payment on all credit cards.



TIPS: BUDGETING & SAVING

- **Be careful with easy credit such as tap and go and after pay.**
- **Control your impulses.**
 - If you see something you want, says [Canstar](#), wait at least a day before you buy it – 30 days if it's a non-necessary big purchase. You might find the urge passes.
- **Smooth your bills.**
 - 'Bill smoothing' is a payment system offered by utility providers (electricity, gas, water) whereby you pay them fortnightly or monthly, instead of having to pay the whole bill in one go. It protects people on tight budgets from bill shock and having to go into debt and potentially pay interest.
- **Plan your meals.**
 - Limit random visits to the supermarket.
- **Pay yourself first if you can.**
 - Once you are in a better place financially consider paying yourself first. Every pay-day, the first thing you do is transfer a percentage into a savings environment (e.g. a goal savers, superannuation) It may not be a percentage – it just needs to be something. Whatever's left over is there for you to spend on your fixed costs (rent, utilities, phone bill) and variable costs (groceries, eating out, entertainment). Putting your savings goals before expenses removes the temptation to overspend, and ensures you make regular savings contributions. [Article on the basics of paying yourself first](#)
- **Revisit your budget often – especially as your income position moves.**

