

the Brighter

side of banking



Slow travel

The simple joys of hitting the road



we can we can we can



**For all
the ways
we imagine**

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“There’s so much to love about Lismore... Thousands of people poured into the community to help.”

ELLY BIRD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF RESILIENT LISMORE

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May–June 2023



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Welcome

As soon as I turned 13, I told my parents I was getting a job. Annoyingly, I had to wait a whole year before the local café would hire me but I understood that when I earned my own money, I'd get to choose what I'd spend it on. True, I was hundreds of shifts away from a plane ticket or a car but it was all up to me.

What soon became abundantly clear was that I did not know how to manage money then – and there's still room for improvement now. In my defence, part of the problem is that just when you nail one stage, life changes and you need a whole new playbook. You figure out how to combine finances with your partner... and then children and a dog (named Otis) join the gang. You buy a home. Launch a business. Renovate. And now the teenager wants a job.

The learning curve is steep and getting to the point where you're not just surviving – but thriving – can feel overwhelming, especially when you add in cost of living.

This new magazine from CommBank is here to help, whether it's by offering ideas on getting a bigger tax refund (page 26), making the most of super (page 54) or teaching your kids about money so they're one step ahead (page 46).

We also want you to dream a little. Life is about the big moments – the day you buy your first home or go on holiday with the people you love most – and we want to celebrate the *Brighter* side of banking.

I hope you enjoy this issue. We'd love to hear what you think. Please email us at brighter@mediumrarecontent.com.



Brooke Le Poer Trench
Content Director

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Editorial

Content Director **Brooke Le Poer Trench**
Art Director **Christie Brewster**
Chief Subeditor **Rebecca Villis**
Contributors **Patricia Sheahan, Sue Wheeler**
Account Director **Heather Jarvis**
Production Manager **Neridah Burke**

Head of Content, Travel & Business
Kirsten Galliot
Head of Design, Travel & Business
Tony Rice

For editorial inquiries, contact:
brighter@mediumrarecontent.com
Level 1, 83 Bowman Street, Pyrmont, NSW 2009

Advertising

Head of Sales
Tonia Duggan +61 418 100 699
Account Manager
Christian Whitehead +61 413 112 020

For advertising inquiries, contact:
cbaadvertising@mediumrarecontent.com



Managing Director **Nick Smith**
Chief Commercial Officer **Fiorella Di Santo**
Head of Client Partnerships **Teagan Barr**
Head of Strategy & Client Innovation **Jo McKay**
Head of Creative Production **Chantelle Love**
Head of Social **Sarah Macrae**
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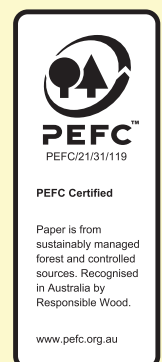
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Cover: **Kendall Baggerly and Glenn Ferguson**

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“Growing up, any spare change I collected would go straight into my account. I’ve never really been a big spender.”

ELLYSE PERRY, CRICKETER

Money matters

Know

Test Drive

Spotlight

Lean on Me

Behind the Scenes

Cash Flow

What I know about money

INTERVIEW BY BARRY DIVOLA +
PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVEN CHEE

The T20 World Cup winner and CommBank sporting ambassador has good form when it comes to saving.

Ellyse Perry is famous for firsts. At 16, she became the youngest ever cricketer to represent Australia. A prodigy and an all-rounder, she went on to become the only Australian athlete to score both a century in an Ashes series and a goal at a soccer World Cup. And now she's the first to feature in *Brighter's* column on money.

Would you call yourself a good saver or are you better at spending? I'm actually quite a good saver – it's my personality. Growing up, any spare change I collected, whether it was pocket money or money from birthday or Christmas presents, went straight into my account. I've never been a big spender. Some would call me boring!

If you won a million dollars is there anything surprising you'd do with it? I'd definitely buy my mum a new car. She's reluctant to get a new one because she's so attached to the prehistoric Subaru that she drives around in.

What about something for yourself? I'd love to own a property in the country at some point... somewhere not too big and not too far from the ocean and maybe with a couple of horses. It would be a place I could escape to. That's my pipedream.

You often refer to yourself as a coffee nut and you even co-owned a couple of cafés. What did you learn from that experience? I'm no longer involved in the cafés but running a small business was an eye-opening experience, understanding just how difficult it is. The pressures are so much harder than going out and playing cricket. I've always had a really strong interest in coffee. Travelling around the world a lot, the girls and I like finding cool coffee shops wherever we are. It's a great way to immerse yourself in the local vibe.

How did the 2017 pay deal with Cricket Australia change things for you as a sportswoman? There's been steady progress around the professionalism of the women's game and since then I've never looked back. As an athlete you have a finite career as far as your body is concerned so it's good to be spending less time on promotional work and more time playing a game I really love – and hopefully getting better at it.

With that said, there's a big disparity between men's and women's pay at an elite level. How do you feel about that? More improvements in parity will flow through [like April's momentous new pay deal that makes cricketers the highest-paid female athletes in Australian team sports] but there are a lot of good opportunities out there. Generally speaking, female sport has a really positive narrative around it at the moment and I think that's attractive to the public. That, in turn, attracts sponsors. ♦



Test Drive

Just add fun

TRIALLED BY NATALIE REILLY

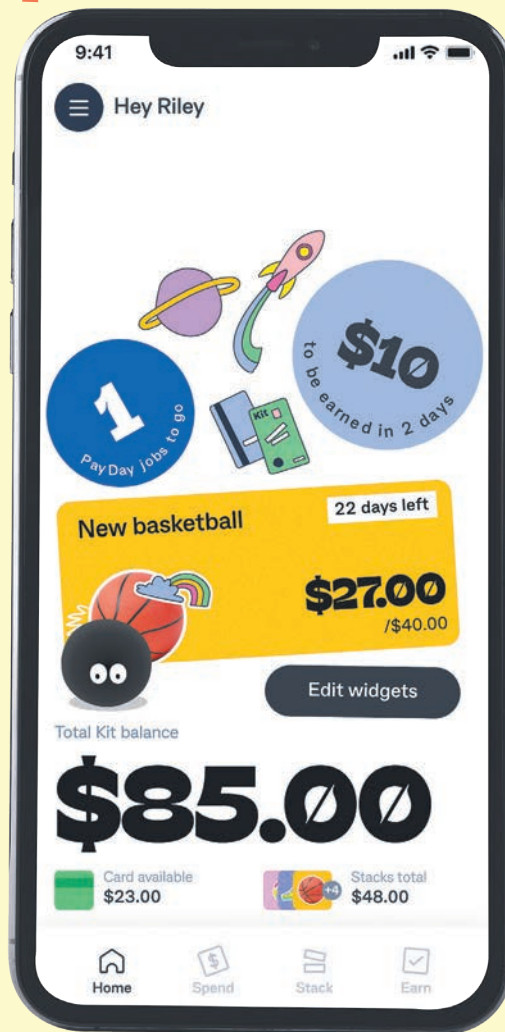
This new app helps kids manage their pocket money and (gasp) learn to save. Here's one mum's verdict.

So, what is it?

Kit is an app for kids aged six to 17 that allows them to receive and spend pocket money. It links to my bank account, which means I can set how much and when I pay pocket money. I thought it'd be similar to an electronic piggy bank (a welcome change to scrounging around for coins) but it's a card, chore tracker and smart sidekick all wrapped into one for your littlies.

How does it work?

Most transactions I make are via card or phone. The kids don't see the money, which makes it trickier to talk to them about it. Kit enables them to add household chores into the app and see the money they're paid. They can "stack" (save) their earnings and they're paid on time because it's automatically taken out of my account when I want. Kit comes with a physical card in the colour of their choice, making it ideal for tweens and teens. It's accessible, fun and kind of like a video game – it's a smart way to get your kids clued-up on money matters.

**Does it make money management less boring?**

If your child has ever had to do Reading Eggs for homework, this is a lot like that. The Kit character teaches financial concepts – from how ATMs work to clarifying cryptocurrency – in kid-friendly language and even tells jokes. It's made talking to my kids about money easier (see page 46 for more tips). My seven-year-old daughter told me she feels like a "grown-up lady" being able to control her own money. And my son was (finally!) motivated to stack the dishwasher properly.

**There are parental controls for younger users**

The parent (appropriately called "the Boss" within the app) can manage their child's daily spending limit. And while kids can use the physical card to withdraw money from an ATM or for tap and go payments, merchants associated with alcohol, gambling and other 18+ activities are blocked. Phew. ♦

Kit

Thousands of families across Australia are trialling Kit. The app – available from the App Store or the Google Play Store – is in beta and is constantly being finessed. Sign up for Kit and help make it the best app to help kids learn to earn, save, spend and manage money in the digital economy.

Spotlight

Thread Together

STORY BY GLYNIS TRAILL-NASH

This not-for-profit saves clothes destined for landfill and helps women in need.



Timing is crucial for women fleeing domestic violence, which is why they often arrive at refuges with no more than the clothes on their back and a few familiar things they've grabbed for their kids.

One program aims to make that upheaval more bearable. Thread Together, a not-for-profit that launched in 2012, works on a simple premise: pairing new but unsold clothing with people in need.

Described as “an ethical response to fashion excess”, Thread Together works with more than 1000 fashion partners to clothe 2500 people each week and has prevented 5.5 million items of end-of-line clothing from becoming landfill.

In November, thanks in part to its partnership with and funding from CommBank and its Next Chapter program, Thread Together launched the Wardrobe and Capsule Service. The service will install wardrobes in refuges for women and children impacted by family violence. Each wardrobe is stocked with brand new underwear, sleepwear and loungewear from its fashion donor partners and will be continually restocked. By the end of 2023, 100 wardrobes will be operating in women's refuges around Australia.

“Many women arrive at refuges after living in their car and wearing the same clothing for multiple days,” explains Anthony Chesler, Thread Together's CEO. “They often can't go back to get items from their home wardrobe so this is a way to close the

gap when there's an urgent need for new clothing.”

Key to the program, as with all of Thread Together's work, is extending a sense of dignity to those in need. “It makes a huge difference to the women,” says Anthony. “It's not solving the situation they're in but it's giving them more comfort and warmth.”

CommBank has also helped mobilise Thread Together's clothing service by providing vans to take clothing to remote communities, disaster zones or people who are simply unable to travel. The collaboration isn't only financial. As part of Thread Together's corporate volunteering program, almost 1000 staffers put their hand up to help from across all areas of the CommBank business each year.

To find out how you can help, go to threadtogether.org. ♦



(Top) Thread Together CEO Anthony Chesler; (above) a volunteer in action.

“Often women [fleeing violence] can't go back to get items from their wardrobe.”

Lismore

Lean on me

STORY BY DILVIN YASA + PHOTOGRAPHY BY NATALIE BAROVSKY

The worst of times can bring
out the best in people,
as the tight-knit community
in Lismore has discovered.

The city of Lismore in NSW's Northern Rivers region is often celebrated as the "rainbow" region, a moniker that sums up its colourful arts and music scene, and its friendly locals.

But in 2022, Lismore took a huge hit. Catastrophic floods in February and March resulted in loss of life, damage to more than 1600 homes and the displacement of more than 2000 people. At the height of the floods, more than 250 billion litres of water – enough to half-fill Sydney Harbour – flushed through the river system, collecting everything in its wake.

One year on, Lismore's residents are tirelessly working to rebuild their lives and the town itself. Here, four locals share their stories of courage and community.





“When we returned to our home we were rarely alone. Friends helped and so did strangers.”



East Lismore resident Crystal Lenane and her family – husband Frank Flannigan, their two children, Frank, six, and Ruby-Lou, four, and their dog, Jess – were rescued from their home by Lismore’s “tinnie army”.

“Everything was a panicked blur. As the waters rose in our home that morning, we stuffed what we could into one backpack for each member of the family and scooped up our dog. You don’t really have time to think about sentimental items; you’re focused on getting your family to a safe place. The tinnie army came just in time. As we were being rescued, I could hear other people screaming from inside their homes. I’ll never forget that sound or the ferocity of the water. On our street, it hit the four-metre mark, three metres above what Lismore experienced in the 2017 floods.

The tinnie army was just one example of how the residents of Lismore and East Lismore came together in the aftermath of the floods. A local family we didn’t know very well was kind enough to put us up for a couple of weeks and in town, community-led services such as Koori Kitchen and Sophia’s Kitchen kept everyone fed with home-cooked meals. Even when we returned to our home and began to clean up, we were rarely alone. Friends helped and so did strangers, whether it was cleaning up mud, dropping off essential supplies or popping by with sandwiches. When people ask ‘Why don’t you leave?’, I point to how special the community is here. That’s something you’d never want to leave.

One year on, we’re living in a caravan under our home as we work to rebuild. So far, we’ve put in temporary wall sheeting to create bedrooms and rebuilt our deck and stairs but building costs have doubled in the past 12 months, there’s a backlog in sourcing supplies and we’re trying to do everything ourselves on a small budget. We’re working hard to get life on track but there’s still a long, tough road ahead of us. We feel like we’re only at the beginning of our rebuild journey.”



Crystal Lenane and Frank Flannigan are rebuilding and say the Lismore community is one they never want to leave.



“Lismore’s the kind of place where neighbours look out for each other.”

Long-time Lismore resident Andrew Parry, deaf from birth, lives alone and was rescued from his home by a friend.

“I’ve lived in the same house for 22 years and I’ve always felt safe. Lismore’s the kind of place where neighbours look out for each other and people take the time to sit down and have coffee together. This time, I began feeling worried because I could see it was raining a lot but I didn’t realise how bad things were until a friend came around to get me. I was lucky I got out when I did; in the morning the only thing you could see of my house was the ridge capping. Everything else was under water. I remember looking around that day and everyone was just so sad.

At first I went to the evacuation centre with hundreds of other people, which scared me – Auslan [Australian Sign Language] interpreters were absent in emergency services announcements – but then I was lucky enough to have friends put me up. I stayed two months here and a month there before a caseworker from Uniting loaned me a caravan so I could live on my property while I worked on the house. It was a strange time; volunteers were in my house to help with cleaning but I struggled to tell them that they were throwing many of my memories away, too. But good things happened, as well. My friend Lara was able to take and clean all of my carpets and we kept a square of my horsehair plaster ceiling to get framed. Plus, there was plenty of food and cleaning tools in town provided by Koori Kitchen and the *Koori Mail*.

I’ve been able to access various government grants and payments to rebuild my home and I’ve been given vouchers from companies like Bunnings and Officeworks. What’s really helpful are the services from Deaf Connect, which organised for people to come in and take off my walls, and the Two Rooms Project [a volunteer-led initiative run by Resilient Lismore to build two rooms in flood-damaged homes]. I’m getting two rooms built that I wouldn’t have been able to afford myself. In Lismore people go the extra mile to look after their community members. It really makes a difference.”



Andrew Parry lives in a borrowed caravan as repair work on his house moves forward.



“Some days we had to rely on word of mouth to communicate with our customers.”

When Stephanie Darragh first accepted the position of Lismore CommBank branch manager, she couldn't have predicted just how much she'd be able to help her community.

“One of the things I miss the most is driving through town with the windows rolled down to absorb its buzz. After the 2017 floods, we'd just gotten ourselves to a point where we'd not only rebuilt the town physically but emotionally. New businesses were opening, people were spending and there was an upbeat vibe you felt proud to be a part of. When the 2022 floods hit and the waterlogged streets became increasingly narrow and mountainous with household debris, I could see the magnitude of the damage but I knew before I even went into the branch that the town's vibrancy would take the biggest hit.

Our branch went completely under but right away we were able to obtain a shipping container to work out of. Conditions weren't easy – a second flood in March meant we had to temporarily move the container out of town to avoid damage and many customers weren't receiving our messages because they'd lost their phones and computers. Some days we didn't even have service in the area and had to rely on word of mouth to communicate with our customers. Working in the shipping container was tough, particularly on some of those 40 degree days but I was so proud of my team. Many of our members were directly affected by the floods; nevertheless they put boots on the ground every day to help others. It made me realise it wasn't only the town's vibrancy I was attracted to but the community's love and care for one another in a time of need.

We did what we could for flood-affected residents, from stopping loan repayments to offering interest-rate reductions for homeowners. People have been through an awful lot; there's a high percentage of job loss and frustration about the time it's taking to get insurance payments and government grants through to those who have been affected. I get it. That said, we opened our new branch in December – it's bright, welcoming and is an environment that can make a difference to people who walk through the doors. My favourite thing is when people say to me, 'Everyone's smiling and that's a lovely thing to see.' Happily, I'm hearing that a little more these days. Give us a bit of time and I'm convinced Lismore will come back better than ever.”

CommBank's Stephanie Darragh had to temporarily move her branch into a shipping container.

“What drives you to keep going is a passion for getting your people into safe and secure housing.”

Elly Bird, executive director of Resilient Lismore, has helped coordinate the community response to the floods. And she was a Community Hero finalist in the 2023 NSW Women of the Year Awards.

“There’s so much to love about Lismore. I could talk about its location, the beauty of its landscape and the diversity of experience that can be found here. The flipside, of course, is that it’s also prone to flooding and since 2017 we [first as Helping Hands Lismore then, since 2022, as Resilient Lismore] have been instrumental in amplifying messaging around disaster preparedness on social media in line with emergency warnings.

When the 2022 floods first hit, I knew the recovery period ahead of us would be lengthy, complex and traumatic. It was imperative to first ensure that people who were using social media were getting timely and accurate information but

at the same time I knew we had to plan for the community response once the waters went down. The logistics behind coordinating our response were significant; thousands of people poured into the community to help and well-intentioned people from all around the country sent – or drove over – trucks of donated goods. There were warehouses to establish, network meetings to conduct, media interviews to raise awareness of the community’s plight and connections between services and volunteers to create. I worked 60-hour weeks for the first six months but what drives you to keep going is a passion for getting your people into safe and secure housing as quickly as possible.

It’s lovely to receive recognition for the work I’ve been doing but it’s important for me to shine a light on the fact that we still have a long way to go. Volunteers get burnt out and with disasters of this scale we need everyone – government, the private sector and private citizens – playing their part. It would be a huge help to properly fund communities so they can do this kind of community support network and it needs to be more than a conversation about community members lending a hand. We can do better and we can think bigger.” ♦

Elly Bird (below right) of Resilient Lismore says recovery is still under way and there is still a lot of work to do.



Behind the Scenes

Make a statement

INTERVIEW BY SUE WHEELER + PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS CHEN



Sam Bazzi has managed CBA's Campsie branch for eight years.

With 40 years under his CommBank belt, Sam Bazzi, bank manager at Sydney's Campsie branch, has seen it all.

Forty years is a long time... I've been with the bank two-thirds of my life and I have as much energy and enthusiasm as the day I joined.

How so? I love my job and feel empowered to make a difference to people's lives and I keep reinventing myself to remain relevant.

How has the role changed? When I started as a teller my manager was less involved in daily operations. I see myself as a staff mentor and an advocate for customers' wellbeing. I'm involved in the community and facilitate everything from fundraisers to scam-prevention workshops.

Is variety key? It sure is. I love moving from one community to another and meeting different people and hearing their stories.

Some must be tough to hear... We assist migrants, refugees and others suffering hardships. I do my best to go above and beyond to help. When I came here from Lebanon in 1976, I faced discrimination so I can often relate to them. My father taught me to be strong and stand up for what I believe in. It took me a while but I found my calling.

How does that influence you? I want my colleagues to feel comfortable being who they are and have a team that reflects the community we represent. At our branch we speak 12 languages.

Highlights of your career? Receiving a CEO award was very special. Also, sharing my personal journey as a panellist at a CommBank dinner to celebrate the end of Ramadan. I'm loud and proud of who I am and where I've come from.

Still wake up for work happy? Oh, yes. The day I think, 'This is a burden,' I'll hang up my boots. That day isn't in sight yet. ♦



One small step

Meet CommBank's latest product in the Smart range of terminals. Smart Mini is a go-anywhere business tool that enables merchants to take payments from customers on the fly. According to CommBank research, one in three Australians have started a small business or side hustle since

the onset of COVID. But the same research reveals that four in five have concerns regarding settlement speed and payment security. Enter Smart Mini, which pairs with your device via bluetooth and will easily fit in your pocket. **\$59 + 1.1 per cent flat rate transaction fee.** See commbank.com.au

Moment in Time

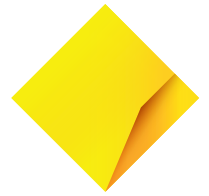
1916



Ledger desks at CommBank's head office

The Commonwealth Bank was just five years old when this photograph was taken in 1916. The world was engulfed by World War I and Australia's government, under prime minister Billy Hughes, was bitterly split over national conscription. The bank's employees had to laboriously enter customers' details in a ledger but war shortages meant envelopes, pens, twine, ink and light bulbs were hard to come by. Surprised by the number of women in this photo? Because of the war, female clerks worked side by side with men. ♦

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Get ahead

Save

“My mamma uses *everything* and I do the same. She keeps chicken bones to make a broth.

I boil the stems of greens and finish them in olive oil and lemon juice. We think about what we buy. It’s all about zero waste.”

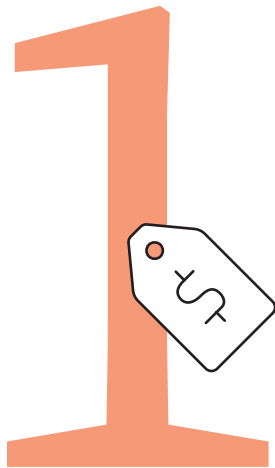
MASSIMO MELE, CHEF,
PEPPINA AND GRAIN OF SILOS

Easy Eight

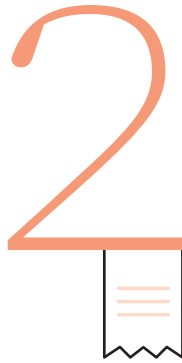
Get on top of tax time

STORY BY CHRISTINE LONG

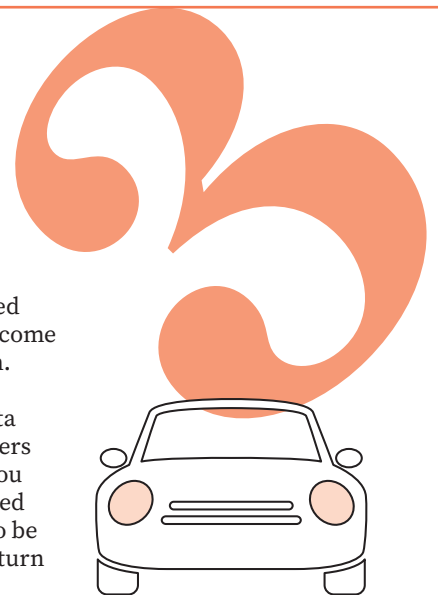
Filing your tax return can be a painful process but it's worth taking the time to get it right. We can't replace your accountant – or the ATO – but these tips may help you get started...



Sure, it's tempting to pounce on EOFY bargains to reduce your tax bill. But spending money just to get a last-minute deduction doesn't necessarily make sense. Mark Chapman, director of tax communications at H&R Block, does the maths – "If someone on a 32.5 per cent marginal tax rate spends \$1000 on a deductible item, they don't get \$1000 deducted – they get 32.5 per cent of that." So, if you're in a refund position, your tax refund could increase by \$325 but you're still spending \$675. The other thing to consider is that if you buy a depreciating asset, you'll get deductions over a number of years. If the \$1000 was spent on a printer, for example, you may only be able to claim a deduction of, say, \$150 in the first year.



If "planning" is code for "scrambling through drawers the night before your tax return is due", why not enlist the help of an app to streamline things? The free myDeductions record-keeping tool from the Australian Tax Office (ATO) is an easy way to keep track of expenses, including donations or vehicle trips. It also captures receipts with a click of your phone's camera. At tax time, simply email your records to yourself or your tax agent. Or upload to the ATO to assist with the pre-fill of your return. See ato.gov.au for details.



Got a side hustle that's bringing in extra dollars? Sold some shares? You need to ensure that any extra income is reflected on your return. While most of our income may be pre-filled from data sent to the ATO by employers or financial institutions, you may have received or earned other amounts that need to be included, from rent to a return on an investment.



Still clocking on at home? Claiming deductions for work-from-home (WFH) expenses requires some extra effort this financial year. The temporary 80-cents-per-hour shortcut method introduced during the pandemic has been abolished, along with the 52-cents-per-hour fixed-rate method. You may want to consider whether you can claim the single 67-cents-per-hour fixed rate method.

But that also comes with record-keeping requirements that taxpayers may not know about, says Chapman. “From 1 July 2022 to 28 February 2023, you need to produce a representative four-week diary if you are claiming WFH expenses.” And from 1 March onwards, “you must substantiate all your time working from home. You need to keep time sheets or diaries to prove every single hour you’ve worked from home.”

The most recent ATO data shows only 29 per cent of Australian taxpayers claimed a deduction for donations to charity so if you’ve made a one-off donation or give regularly to a good cause, you may want to check if you can claim it. Generally, the donation must be \$2 or more – the charity must be deductible gift recipient endorsed – and you need to keep a receipt or record of the donation.



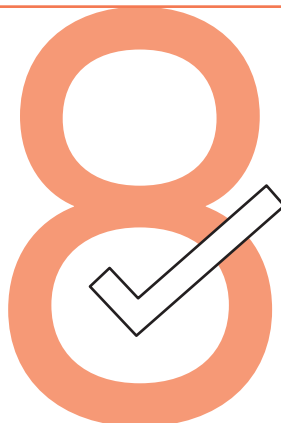
If you’ve jumped on the FIRE (Financial Independence Retire Early) movement or become an investment property mogul then it’s wise to set aside a couple of hours to ensure you understand the tax implications of both the income that you earn and the costs that you incur. For instance, expenses on a holiday property may not be deductible even if the property generates some rent. The upside? In some circumstances, fees for financial advice may be deductible.

Using your car for work? This one’s for you. Although you generally can’t claim expenses for getting to and from your usual workplace, there are some work-related vehicle expenses you may be able to claim, such as attending offsite meetings. You can use the 78-cents-per-kilometre fixed rate or claim the actual costs of running your car. “People don’t realise that the actual cost method often produces a bigger deduction,” says Chapman. It takes a little more work because you have to substantiate your expenses and keep a logbook for 12 weeks but, as they say, “time is money”.



This article is intended to provide general information only and doesn’t take into account your individual objectives, financial situation or needs. Taxation considerations are general and based on present taxation laws and may be subject to change. You should seek independent, professional tax advice before making any decision based on this information.

Commonwealth Bank is also not a registered tax (financial) adviser under the Tax Agent Services Act 2009 so you should seek tax advice from a registered tax agent or a registered tax (financial) adviser if you intend to rely on this information to satisfy the liabilities or obligations or claim entitlements that arise, or could arise, under a taxation law.



Doing a little legwork now may lead to a bigger refund down the track. Check out the ATO website, book in some time with a tax accountant or swot up on CommBank’s Tax Tips and Guides to discover possible ways to manage your tax bill. Go to commbank.com.au. ♦

Cost of Living

Playing the long game

STORY BY ALLEY PASCOE + PHOTOGRAPHY BY JULIAN KINGMA & ROSLYN CLARE

Feeling stressed about money?
Amid spiralling prices, here's how four
Australians are taking back control.

It's sparked serious dinner table discussions, been the topic of heated Facebook threads and it's even got a gen Z slang term: cozzie livs. The cost of living is the talk of the town and if it feels inescapable, that's because it is. In the 12 months leading up to December 2022, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased by 7.8 per cent, the highest rate in more than three decades. The price of housing, petrol, electricity, groceries and, yes, even a cup of coffee is increasing. So much so that 51 per cent of Australians surveyed by CommBank responded that their top financial goal for 2023 is to reduce living costs and expenses.

Here, we speak to four everyday Aussies about how they're dealing with the growing financial pressures by cutting costs, making savings and changing habits.





Georgia Bowden, paramedicine communications officer, and Tim Bowden, schoolteacher, Frankston, Victoria

Georgia: "I returned to work [in paramedicine] in March after a year on maternity leave with our first child. It was incredible to have that time. I know some mums who've had to go back to work earlier than they'd like so they can afford to pay for groceries because the cost of living has risen so much. I was ready to go back to work - and ready for the bump in income that came with it.

I've been proactive with the rising cost of living. When we bought our house in 2018 we decided not to borrow more than we needed. I think we were smart to buy a place that would last us through the different stages of our life. Still, the mortgage is our biggest expense. I've cancelled all subscription services, like Netflix, and switched phone providers for a cheaper plan.

There's a sense of security in knowing where our money's going and I've always been on top of my finances. I hate paying full price and I love getting a good deal and buying second-hand where we can. It's empowering to take control of your finances."

Tim: "I went to grab sushi for lunch the other day and was shocked to see the price of one roll was \$4. I'm sure a year ago it was more like \$2.50. That's a big difference. I skipped the sushi and have been cutting other things out as well to keep within our family budget. We used to order takeaway for dinner every few weeks but we've stopped doing that. I enjoy going out for breakfast as a family, though, so I'm happy to spend money on that.

Georgia has helped me get better with money. Before we lived together, I wouldn't think twice about spending \$200 on jeans for the weekend. I don't do that anymore. I'm now more of a saver than a spender. As well as cutting spending within our household, I've recently started doing labouring work for my brother on Saturdays to make a little bit of extra money.

When Georgia returned to work from maternity leave, I went down to three days a week at the school I teach at so I can look after our daughter. It's exciting but financially it's a bit of a squeeze. That's why working Saturdays was a good idea. I come home exhausted but it's a rewarding feeling."



Georgia and Tim Bowden with one-year-old daughter Olivia.

Jane Robertson, small business owner,
Wagga Wagga, NSW

“As a small business owner and a mum of three, I’ve been feeling the rising cost of living from both sides. When the Australian dollar is low, my business margins change dramatically because I import from China and Spain so I constantly revise my forecasts depending on the exchange rate. To protect the profitability of my business, Millwoods – a footwear label I launched in 2019, I’m looking at different ways I can sell into international markets. Being able to sell in US dollars and have a US dollar bank account will be a major help.

At home, I’ve been getting creative with meal ideas. The kids love having breakfast for dinner and we also do a ‘freezer night’, where we use up frozen leftovers. I’m a fan of bulk cooking so when I make spaghetti bolognese, I use two or three kilograms of meat so it lasts and it’s cheaper that way.

Living on a farm and driving diesel cars, the cost of fuel is a big expense. It’s a 40-kilometre drive to get into Wagga Wagga so I recently bought a second-hand run-about that uses petrol, which is cheaper than diesel. So, even though I had to make an initial investment to buy the car, I know the savings on fuel will add up.

As a kid, I was brought up to buy the best available quality I could afford – and it’s a lesson I’m trying to pass on to my own children. Buying one pair of quality jeans and wearing them until they split is better than buying four pairs of cheap jeans that last half as long.

It’s this thinking that I’ve built into my business, too. I’ve been getting emails from customers asking when I’ll be having a sale – which I understand – but I’d like consumers not to expect frequent sales. Instead, I’d like our customers to know that the shoes are worth it, to recognise that the price point is fair and to trust in the quality and wearability of the pieces. Fast fashion has made it harder for quality brands but there’s a movement towards shopping small, local and premium. I love to see that support.

Since starting Millwoods, I’ve invested almost everything back into the business. I only pay myself the cost of my family’s groceries every week. But recently I’ve had to make some tough decisions because of rising costs and I’ve scaled back the subcontractors who assist me. That does put more pressure and stress on me to get things done but I’m here for the long haul. In business – and life – things are cyclical so at the moment it’s all about getting through this part of the cycle and staying strong.”



Jane Robertson, husband Andrew
and children (left to right) Phoebe,
James and Willa on their farm near
Coolamon, NSW.



“The cost of our Sunday lamb roast has gone up by at least \$10 so we’ve been having more steak and sausages instead.”

Paul Kamler, health informatics consultant, Darwin, Northern Territory

“I consider myself a sensible spender. I’m not ostentatious but I like to enjoy myself and I value fine food and fine company.

I live on Larrakia Country in Darwin with my husband, Steve, and our two ‘fur-baby’ cats, Maisie and Missy. Steve and I both have government jobs – him in events management for Parliament House and me in health – and we live a comfortable life. But we’ve still

noticed the cost of living increasing. Because Darwin is so remote, we do pay more for things like petrol and groceries due to the cost of freight. That’s always been the case but things seem to be getting even more expensive. The cost of our Sunday lamb roast has gone up by at least \$10 so we’ve been having more steak and sausages instead. We’re not missing out but we’re certainly considering our purchases.

We planned to travel overseas last year to celebrate my birthday but when we looked at the prices, we decided to holiday in Australia instead. We had a great time staying at the Rydges in Brisbane overlooking the river and South Bank.

In our day-to-day life back in Darwin, the main cost that we’ve noticed skyrocket is electricity. We used to leave an air-conditioner on for the cats when we left for work but we’ve stopped doing that now. Don’t worry, the cats are still spoiled! We spend a fair amount of our income on toys and good-quality food at the pet store.

I’m glad – and feel lucky – that we bought our apartment 14 years ago and we have always paid more than the minimum repayments so we have a bit of a buffer. We’ve been able to do that because we don’t have huge expenses, dependents – other than the cats! – or multiple properties. It’s a fortunate position to be in.

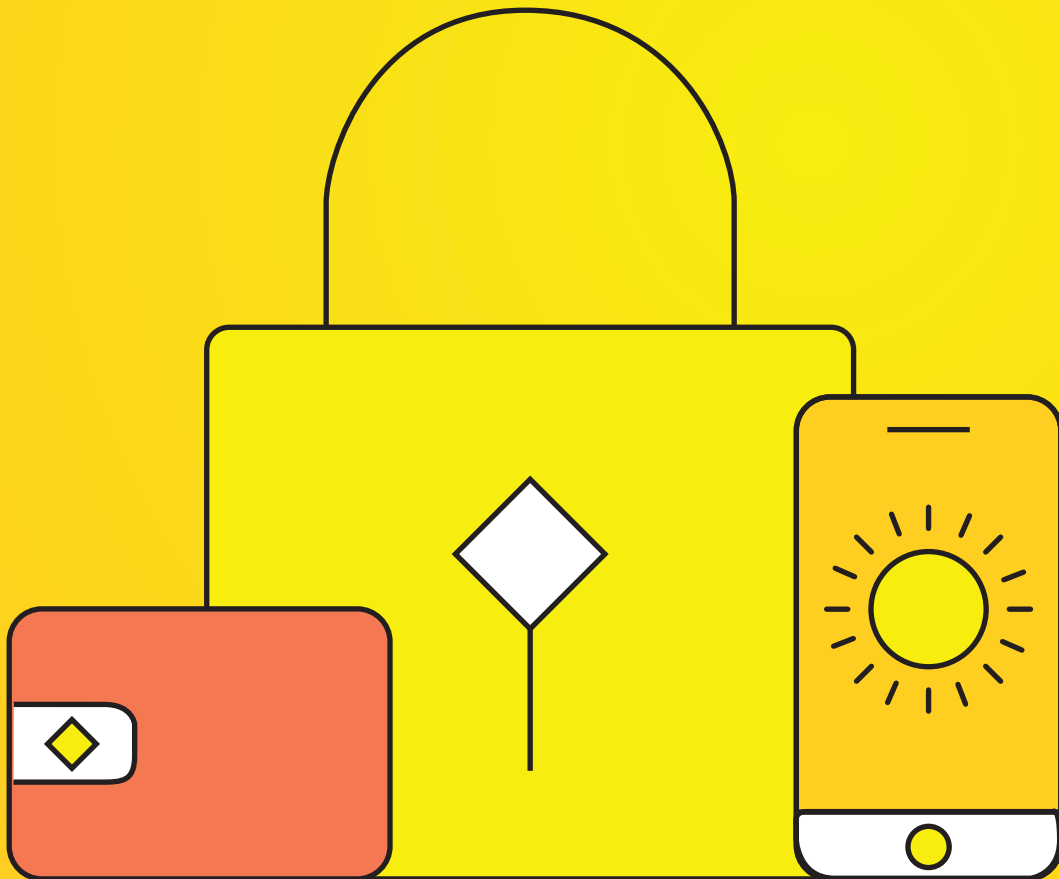
The other day a colleague asked me if it was payday and I genuinely had no idea. It’s been a while since I’ve had to count down till payday and I’m grateful for that.” ♦



Instant Expert

What you need
to know about...

Protecting your data



This is not a drill. If you've been lax about battening down your data hatches, the time to get serious was yesterday.

STORY BY JANE NICHOLLS

Do you gloat or panic when you see a big company reeling from a data breach? The truth is, both responses are unhelpful. Instead, you need to be proactive around personal data.

The 2022 Australian Cyber Security Centre's (ACSC) Annual Cyber Threat Report found that the most prevalent cybercrimes reported were fraud and incidents connected to online shopping and online banking, accounting for 54 per cent of the more than 76,000 reports received that financial year. The centre's Cyber Security Hotline handled more than 25,000 calls in 12 months, up 15 per cent on the previous year.

Nothing is foolproof but heeding this advice will give you a head start against the hackers.



Use different strokes

If you're using the same password across multiple accounts – and basing them on obvious clues – you're sadly in the majority. On its website, cyber.gov.au, the ACSC has advice to help everyone up their password game.

"You want your passwords to be long, hard to predict and unique for each account," says Nick Tamblyn, ACSC's acting first assistant director-general, cyber security resilience. "A good option is to use passphrases rather than passwords. Bring together four or more unrelated words, 14 characters or more in total. They're harder to crack though relatively easy for a user to read, remember and type. Be sure to avoid any common turns of phrase."

James Roberts, CommBank's general manager of group fraud management services, suggests a creative approach. "Consider a passphrase that tells a story," he says. "MyPetGo@tHa\$@PhD is one example." It's clever – as is the goat – as it weaves symbols into the phrase, another hacker roadblock.

And never, ever, keep a list of your passwords written down anywhere.



Be an under-sharer

The rise of social media platforms has sent raging torrents of personal information into cyberspace, including where we are on holiday, the names of our pets, the schools our kids go to, what car we drive and our place of work. It's a treasure trove for scammers. "Cybercriminals use social media platforms to research potential victims," says the ACSC's Nick Tamblyn. "Information showing your pattern of life, biographical details, relationships – those are the sorts of things they may be able to use to gain access to your information." The website cyber.gov.au contains advice about how best to manage social media. As well as what you post, you need to consider what others are posting about you.

Uncover phishing scams

Phishing scams are when bad actors (who are often, unfortunately, quite good actors) trick you into believing they are legitimate and make a request for urgent payment or for enough personal information that they can help themselves to your funds.

More than \$2.9 million was lost in Australia to phishing scams in January alone, with more than 62 per cent delivered via text message. These phishing statistics, updated monthly, reflect data from reports to the Australian Competition and Consumer

Commission (ACCC). The real numbers are likely to be a lot higher because people are often embarrassed to tell an agency when they've been scammed.

The ACCC's ScamWatch is a great place to educate yourself on the many kinds of evil role-playing that sting Australians for millions each month.

"We are frequently required to hand over information digitally to service providers to confirm our identity and this process is exploited by scammers," says CommBank's James Roberts. "Our advice is stop, check, reject. If the text or call seems off, stop and take a breath.

Real organisations won't put you under pressure to act instantly. Check by contacting the organisation yourself or asking someone you trust to do it for you. Reject by hanging up, deleting the email and blocking the phone number."

Download The Little Black Book of Scams, a free guide from the ACCC, to learn about how phishers try to trick you. It details the multitude of scams in operation out there. Some of these are quick muggings for money, while others are much more insidious and can result in a case of identity theft that takes years to untangle.

“Cybercriminals use social media platforms to research potential victims.”



Extra protection
CommBank has introduced several initiatives to help protect customers from scams.

Clean up your online act

If you're active online, you'll have received emails from companies advising of a data breach, as long as it's an organisation operating in a jurisdiction with a notifiable data breach scheme, such as Australia. Many of us also interact with website based offshore so we'll never know unless we jump onto a service such as haveibeenpwned.com, where you can search using your email address and phone number to find out if they've been compromised. That knowledge is meaningless unless you act. "Change any compromised passwords across all accounts," says Roberts. "If you no longer use an account where a password has been involved in a breach, you should still change the password and deactivate or delete the account."

If you're worried you've been hacked, take the two-minute [Have You Been Hacked](#) survey on the ACSC website for solid advice on next steps.

Hire a digital vigilante

Even if your cyber-hygiene is squeaky clean, you may be caught up in a data breach that is outside your control. "There are various services that can monitor for personal information in data breaches," says Tamblyn. "These services can provide users with an early warning of potential identity theft. Whether such a service is value for money is up to the individual."

If you're the type of person who takes out insurance in the hope you'll never need it, it's worth researching identity

protection vendors. Some can spare you the damage to your credit score that can result from identity theft, such as when additional credit cards or loans have been obtained in your name. "Services such as SavvyShield can place a temporary ban on your Credit Report to protect it from fraudulent activity and provide another level of protection," says Roberts.

Don't do nothing

Millions of Australians were caught up in the 2022 Optus and Medibank data breaches. If that's you and you're just crossing your fingers it will be OK, uncross them and get on to it.

"If I thought that my data had been compromised, I'd contact the organisation with specific questions," says Tamblyn. "They will be working with other organisations and may be able to provide some advice tailored to my situation. I'd also improve my cyber-hygiene – utilising long passphrases, enabling multi-factor authentication – and monitoring my accounts for suspicious activity. Be alert for phishing scams because if your contact information has been part of that breach, the likelihood of being targeted may increase."

Tamblyn recommends idcare.org, a not-for-profit set up to support Australians and New Zealanders confronting identity theft. Funded by multiple organisations, it's free to access (if you're asked to pay, it's a scam). "They have a website and a 1-800 number and offer specialised help." ♦

Making a payment to someone for the first time using NetBank, CommBiz or the CommBank app? NameCheck, which is now being rolled out, applies algorithms to check the recipient's account name. If it doesn't seem quite right, NameCheck prompts the customer to check it again, helping prevent scams – and our own typing accidents.

Another helpful CommBank tool is CallerCheck. This allows CommBank staff to trigger a notification to a customer's CommBank app for extra peace of mind. "If you ever feel concerned about whether the person you're speaking to is a real CommBank staffer, the CallerCheck feature in the CommBank app verifies your caller's identity," says CommBank's James Roberts. "Regardless of whether the caller has been identified, we will never ask you to transfer funds, share your screen or reveal your passwords."

There are also cyber security webinars, podcasts, articles and links to other information at commbank.com.au/safe.

Piggy Bank

Pocket change

Thrifty is the new cool. We asked readers to share their secrets to shaving costs and saving some coin.



DO A DIGITAL DECLUTTER

ASHLEIGH CHANCE, BRISBANE

We cancelled all but two of our streaming services and it saved us \$40 a month. If there's a new season of a show we want to watch, we sign up for a month then cancel. We reviewed all our paid apps and software subscriptions and I cancelled a \$150-per-year Mac cleaning program I hadn't used in three years. Also, ask your employer if you can access a 30 per cent discount on a Microsoft 365 suite via the Microsoft Workplace Discount Program.



BUY A COFFEE MACHINE

RAY CORCORAN, SYDNEY

I bought a coffee machine and since each coffee costs just 40 cents, it paid for itself pretty quickly. Now, instead of going out for brunch we invite people over for a coffee or a walk. Also, I do my supermarket shop online, which gives me three more hours to work on my business.

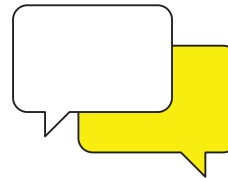
SIGN UP TO CASHBACK SITES

KYLIE TRAVERS, NOOSA

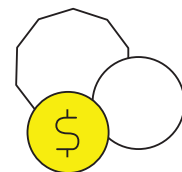
I use cashback programs such as ShopBack and KickBack. They're free to join and offer money back when you shop online through them. I've installed the sites' extensions on my browser toolbar and pop-ups appear when items become eligible for cashback.

HAGGLE

JAIME KANJI, SYDNEY

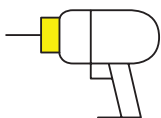


Haggling is a great way to save here and there. I haggle with taxi drivers, car dealers and salespeople at appliance shops. I haggle with my tailor and now we have a love-hate relationship! You can always negotiate with service providers. I do my research first to know the value of the service or item but you do have to be prepared to walk away.



BE YOUR OWN HANDYMAN

JIM MARTON, ADELAIDE



I'll always try to repair things before replacing them. YouTube is great - it doesn't matter what it is, someone already knows how to do it and has videoed it. I also keep screws, nuts, bolts, nails and bits of wire in a drawer. You'll need them one day!

SHOP SMARTER

DIRK BISCHOFF, HOBART



When essential products like toilet paper or laundry detergent are heavily reduced, I stock up for the future. I also plan meals around what's on special. But I'm not a slave to discounts. Sometimes you think something is a bargain but when you look at the label and check out the unit price, such as the cost per 100g, it's not always the cheapest option. ♦



What's your top saving tip?

We'd love to know. Send it to us at brighter@mediumrarecontent.com and we may share it in an upcoming issue.



Identity theft can occur when you're least expecting it.

Recent data breaches have introduced Australians to the real threat of identity theft.

Stealing your identity can be easy. Good thing calling us is, too.

Norton Identity Advisor Plus.

Peace of mind with your identity.



Dark Web Monitoring[§]



Social Media Monitoring¹



Identity Restoration Support



Identity Theft Insurance (up to \$58k)²

Norton Identity Advisor Plus not only monitors the dark web[§] and your social media accounts¹ to identify potential risks, but also offers dedicated Identity Restoration Specialists to help you should you discover you're a victim of identity theft, and insurance for covered expenses and losses related to identity theft up to \$58K AUD.²



Opt-in to Cyber Safety™

Available now at Officeworks and au.norton.com



§ Defaults to email address only. Sign in to your account to enter more information for monitoring. 1. Social Media Monitoring is not available on all social media platforms and the features differ between platforms, for details go to: norton.com/smm. Does not include monitoring of chats or direct messages. May not identify all cyberbullying, explicit or illegal content or hate speech. 2. Terms, conditions, exclusions and limitations apply. See the Identity Theft Insurance Australia Policy Information Booklet found on <https://www.nortonlifelock.com/au/en/legal/> for details. Coverage provided by AIG Australia Limited AFSL 381686 (AIG). NortonLifeLock Australia Pty Ltd (Norton) act as a group purchasing body in acquiring and arranging the insurance coverage under a group policy issued by AIG to Norton. Norton does not hold an Australian financial services licence. Please obtain your own financial product advice about our services and consider the policy information booklet to determine if the coverage is right for you. No one can prevent all cybercrime or identity theft. Copyright © 2023 NortonLifeLock Inc. All rights reserved. NortonLifeLock, the NortonLifeLock Logo, the Checkmark Logo, Norton, LifeLock, and the LockMan Logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of NortonLifeLock Inc. or its affiliates in the United States and other countries. Other names may be trademarks of their respective owners. NortonLifeLock Inc. is a global leader dedicated to providing consumer Cyber Safety. The Norton brand is part of NortonLifeLock Inc.

The Fine Print

Your step-by-step guide to *refinancing*

STORY BY NICOLA FIELD

Home loans are no longer a set-and-forget product. But how do you know when to switch to a new loan and when to stay put?

In 2022, Australians refinanced more than \$210 billion worth of home loans, setting new records as interest rates continue to bite. Refinancing is simply replacing your existing mortgage with a new one. So, should you make the switch? “Come and talk to us,” suggests Michael Baumann, the executive general manager home buying for Commbank. “Whether you’re feeling the financial pinch or just want to know if we can offer a product that’s different and better-suited to your current needs, our team of lenders is here to support.”

1. Crunch the numbers

Switching to a new home loan can deliver valuable savings. But before you do anything, you want to look at whether it’s worth it. Refinancing can come with costs, such as discharge fees on the old loan, so set aside time to do the sums to ensure it will put you in front financially. “At CommBank we offer a wide range of self-service tools,” says Baumann. “Our tools include a refinance calculator, a home loan repayments calculator, a borrowing power calculator and a split loan calculator to help Australians make well-informed decisions.”

2. Don’t forget insurance

If you plan to borrow 80 per cent or more of your home’s value, you’ll most likely have to pay lenders’ mortgage insurance (LMI). This applies even if you paid LMI with your current home loan. As an LMI premium can add up to several thousand dollars, this additional cost could potentially wipe out the savings of refinancing.

3. Assess what you want from a loan

“Interest rate is important but it’s just one factor for borrowers to consider,” says Baumann. “Features that a borrower might want to think about include an offset account to help reduce the interest charged on their home loan. Or other flexible features – either now or in the future – such as the ability to top up, change repayment amounts or redraw from the loan.” Once you know the features you want (see next page), you can narrow down your choice of home loans.

4. Ask yourself if you want to tidy up personal debts

Refinancing can be the firm backbone of a debt consolidation strategy. It lets you fold multiple debts into your mortgage, potentially lowering your overall interest costs and streamlining your finances with just one payment to make each month. The only thing you need to consider here is that you don’t want to stretch those debts out over 25 or 30 years so the best strategy is to make additional repayments and wipe off that debt as quickly as you can.

5. Consider equity

Using the equity you’ve built up in your home means you may be able to fund those bucket-list items that are waiting in the wings, from a home renovation to funding a family holiday. Equity is the amount you can sell your home for on the market less the amount you still owe on your loan and you can access it by getting a new home loan that allows you to borrow against the equity in your home. You may be able to increase your borrowing based on that equity.

6. Think about your needs as a customer

Do you like to speak to someone face-to-face? Then you’ll want to choose a bank that has physical

locations. More interested in digital functionality? Check out our online banking experience and self-service tools. “Every borrower has their own financial situation,” says Baumann, “so it’s important they choose a product and lender that’s right for their needs.”

7. Talk to the experts

Once you’ve worked out what you need, it’s time to talk to someone who can advise you on the best loan for your unique needs. “Lending specialists can help home owners understand the process of refinancing, the costs associated with doing so and if it’s the right decision for them and their situation,” says Baumann. It’s also worth getting in touch with your current lender to see what they can do for you.

8. Get ready to apply

When you apply for your new loan, the bank will ask to see proof of ID and income, as well as evidence of assets (things you own that can be converted to cash) and liabilities (debt you owe to others). The lender will also look at living expenses, says Baumann, so they’ll feel confident you can manage the repayments on your new home loan. While it may sound like a difficult process, this part of refinancing is being increasingly digitised to make it easier.

9. Apply!

“Borrowers can apply online for a home loan in 15 minutes and get a response in just 60 seconds,” says Baumann. “We’ll call a borrower within 48 hours of applying online to answer any questions they may have and guide them through the next steps of their journey.” Or talk to anyone in-branch and they can connect you with a CommBank lender to help you through the process. The Home Hub, which is accessible via the CommBank app, will keep you informed of where your application is at. ♦



What happens to my old loan?

This is the easy part. CommBank will get in touch with your current lender and arrange to pay out your old loan. When the new loan settles, your regular repayments will begin, making the process hassle-free.



What loan features work for you?



Do you want to take advantage of an offset account?

With an offset account – an everyday account linked to your home loan – you can reduce the amount of interest you pay on your mortgage and pay it off sooner. This means you only pay interest on the balance of your mortgage minus what's in your offset account. You can link your offset to more than one account and no minimum balance is needed.

Is a redraw facility important to you?

If you're the kind of person who likes to make extra payments – and likes the freedom of being able to

access that additional money at a time that suits you – a redraw facility is a helpful feature. Redraw is available on most CommBank variable rate home loans and there are no fees to redraw.

Do you want to access special discounts?

CommBank offers home loan packages that give you a discount on the interest rate, don't charge any establishment fees or monthly service fees and waive annual credit card fees. "Our Green Home Offer also provides eligible home loan customers with access to a low standard variable rate if their home

meets certain energy efficient criteria," says Baumann.

Do you want a mix of loan types?

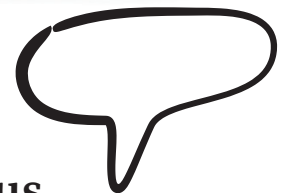
You may want to split an existing CommBank home loan into a variable interest portion and a fixed interest part.

Will you want to take a mortgage break at some point?

If you're ahead on your mortgage, you may be able to put repayments on hold for between three and 12 months. This is called a "repayment holiday" and is especially handy if you're going on maternity leave or swapping careers.

Do you need help?

If you're finding it hard to meet your home loan payments – or think you will in the future – just talk to us. We're here to help, whether you need short- or long-term assistance. "The bank also provides customers with value beyond the home loan, including protection when it matters most," says Baumann, who points to Compassionate Care, which offers eligible owner-occupiers support for mortgage repayments for about 12 months if an eligible borrower, spouse or dependant passes away or is medically certified with a terminal illness.



Talk to us

If you have any questions or want more information, you can contact us by:

- + Booking an appointment with a home lending specialist at commbank.com.au/appointment
- + Messaging us in the CommBank app
- + Calling us on 13 22 24
- + Visiting us at commbank.com.au

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If you purchase combined Residential Building and Contents Cover, a discount of up to 15% will be applied to your basic premium. If you purchase combined Investment Buildings and Contents Cover, a discount of up to 10% will be applied to your basic premium. This discount cannot be used in conjunction with any other discount (other than those listed in the relevant Product Disclosure Statement or any Supplementary Product Disclosure Statement) or in conjunction with any other promotional offer, unless we have advised in the promotional offer that this discount will apply. We may remove or change this discount effective from the renewal date. This discount cannot be backdated. Minimum premiums may come into force and reduce the extent to which discounts are applied.

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Make it count

Grow

THE COLLECTOR

Jamal Diallo

For this Perth
sneakerhead, shoes aren't
just made for walking.

How To... — Side Hustle — Super Powers — The Business — Fair Shares

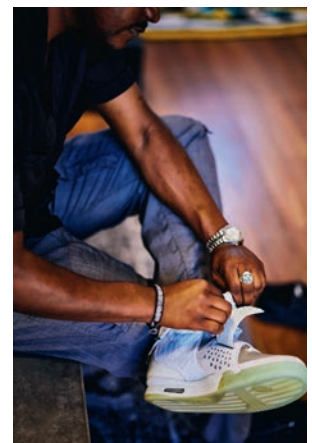
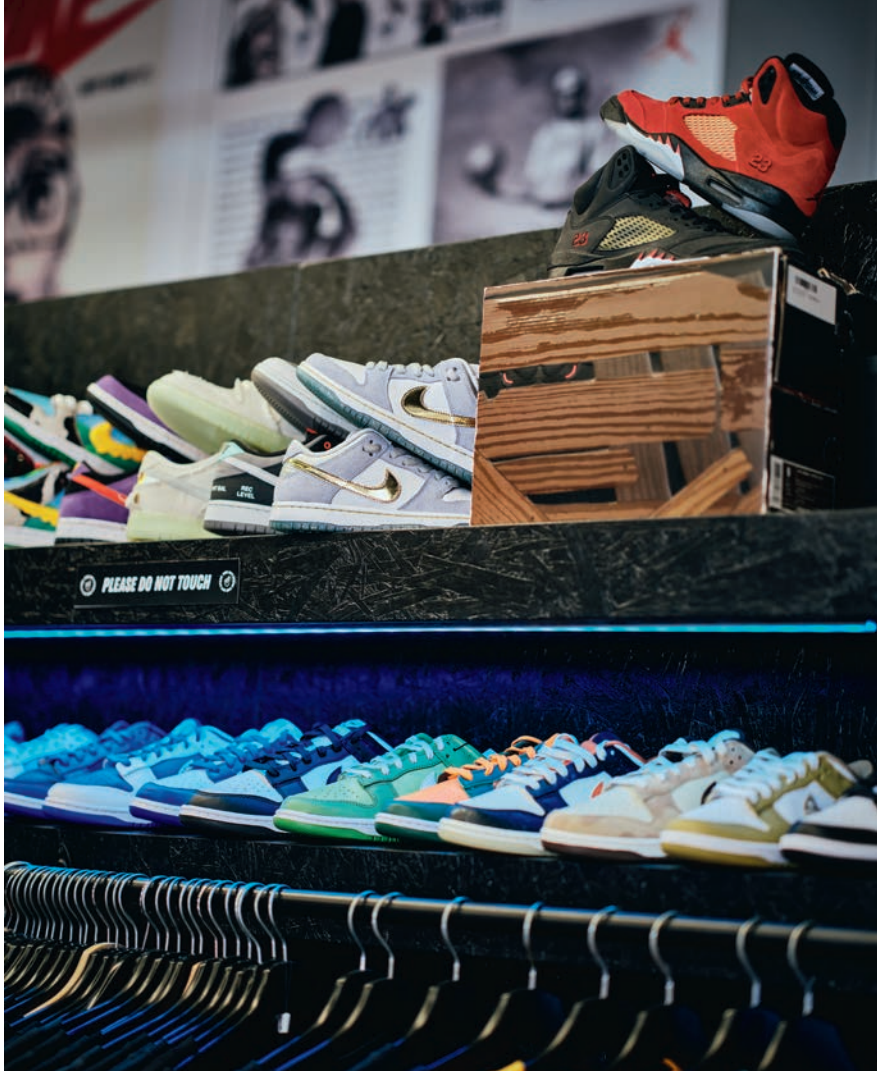
The Collector

The world at his feet

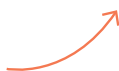
INTERVIEW BY BRITTANY HENDERSON + PHOTOGRAPHY BY RUSSELL ORD



For Jamal Diallo, the founder of Australia's biggest streetwear convention, collectible sneakers are a piece of history.



10FF, Jamal's store in Perth.



Why sneakers? I love the aesthetic but also the culture behind it... was a passion for sneakers can bring people together.

How did your passion for sneakers start? Growing up in Italy, it was really tough being different, being Black. When I was 11, I played football with a local team and my uncle gave me a pair of super-rare Puma football boots released to celebrate Italy's 2006 World Cup win. At training, my teammates were obsessed with the boots and for a moment it made me feel OK, like I was part of something so I asked my uncle to please send more.

How big is your collection? I once made the mistake of revealing how many pairs I have and all my friends were like, "Yo, we're the same size." Let's just say less than 500.

Do you actually wear them? I can't wear some of the older styles because

I'd destroy them but if I can wear them, trust me, I'm going to. I'm not interested in keeping them in a glass display cabinet.

What's your strategy? It's like wine, right? Collectors don't just go and buy any old bottle, they seek something they haven't tried. So, I hunt for the unique stuff.

How does it work? I hit up my connections, sneakerheads in places like Japan and Germany, who can suss out shoes I have seen online in person. They check if they're authentic and bid on my behalf.

Do you sell the really valuable sneakers? No. Even if I know they're worth a lot of money, sneakers are like art. A piece of history.

Holy Grail pair? The Off-White x Air Jordan 1 "White". They were part of a 2018 Europe-exclusive release of only about 30,000 pairs. Virgil Abloh and

his label, Off-White, mean a lot to me. He opened the doors of the fashion world to young Black creators and his collections have only gotten more valuable since he passed away in late 2021.

Most valuable pair? They're not part of my personal collection but the most expensive pair we have at 10FF, one of my streetwear stores in Perth, is the Nike Air Jordan 1 "Chicago" from 1985. They're worth up to \$100,000. If they were signed by Michael Jordan, it would be more like \$1,000,000.

Will you ever stop collecting? No, because they're not just shoes to me. They represent where I've been and the steps I've taken to arrive where I am.

Tips for aspiring sneakerheads? Don't buy sneakers just to impress other people. You have to find what inspires you. ♦



How To...

Teach your kids about money

INTERVIEW BY KIRSTEN GALLIOTT

Just start talking, says Scott Pape, the Barefoot Investor and author of three books, including *Barefoot Kids*.

1

Don't be afraid to be honest

Financially, it's really tough for a lot of people at the moment and having age-appropriate conversations with your kids about money is one of the best things you can do. You don't want to scare them but discussing financial realities can be a positive thing. Some of the most financially capable young people I meet are from families on very low incomes. They are more financially savvy because they have money discussions every day: "You can't get that pair of shoes, you're going to have to keep wearing those runners"... "If you've lost your school bag, we are going to have to get a shopping bag because we can't afford to buy another one." If you don't have these conversations with kids, how can you expect them to understand the value of a dollar? Once they are mature enough – and that's a parent call – get them to understand bills, how much things cost and the pressures on a household budget. Your kids should get their financial L plates while they're living with you. Our financial lives and make-up are shaped by the conversations and experiences we have as kids and if you can put a constructive spin on things, they're going to learn a lot more than if you smile and pretend none of this is happening.

2

Be a good role model

Your kids may not listen to you but they never fail to model you. Kids – and I’m a parent of four – pick up on things and know if you’re financially stressed. You may think you’re hiding it from them but they know – and in many cases they’re probably thinking things are worse than they really are. You have to model good habits so they can manage their own money.

5

Let them control where their money goes

It pains me how interested my kids – I have four under 10 – are in Pokémon cards as they have no intrinsic value. But my kids earn their own money and that’s what they choose to spend it on. My kids also give. They understand there are people who are doing it tough and I really want them to develop a sense of empathy. I allow my kids to choose where they want to give their money. Letting them figure it out is more important than me pulling them in the car and saying, “Right, get your money and we’re going to give it to X.”

7

Be organised with pocket money

I do pocket money with cash because my kids are young and they’re visual and I want them to make that real connection between money and work. The earlier you normalise these behaviours and even celebrate them, the easier it is for parents. But the organisation of pocket money can be tricky for families and CommBank has got a pocket money app [Kit, see page 14] that I actually think is pretty good. And you can quote me on that.

4

...Or start their own business

I encourage primary-school aged kids who can’t get a part-time job to start a business because that is what kids get excited about. Their creativity, energy and effort all go into doing something they have control over. It’s not just about the money; if you set up a lemonade stand or a bake sale, you learn all sorts of skills that are transferable throughout your life. My son is quite shy and seeing him look somebody in the eye, smile, ask questions and converse is a huge win. And a life skill, too. But it needs to be driven by the children. I’m hoping that all the kids who have read *Barefoot Kids* can say, “Well, I had my own party foam or slime business” or “I created my own dog biscuits and I set up a website to sell them.” How impressive is that? And how proud are you as a parent if your kid is able to do that and not just spend all their time on the Xbox or Nintendo Switch?

3

Encourage them to earn their own money...

A part-time job that isn’t working for parents or friends of parents – and that involves adhering to a uniform, a roster and tasks – is an important element of a young person’s education. We want to give our kids experiences rather than lectures. I’ve got my problems with fast-food restaurants but these are billion-dollar businesses that are built on teenage labour so they have very good systems that teach kids how to work and how to be part of a team.

6

Encourage them to buy shares

I want to help normalise share market investment because owning a piece of a business is, over time, a way to become wealthy. There’s a girl – I think she’s five or six – and she’s investing with her mum. They’re learning together. When that girl is older and she’s sitting with a financial planner she won’t be freaked out about investing because it’s not a foreign concept to her. She’ll go, “I understand how it works... I’ve been investing forever.” I think that’s incredibly powerful for young people.

8

Help them to be confident with money

Confidence comes from making smart choices. A lot of people get anxious about maths. If you don’t get numbers the natural follow-on is, “I’m no good with money” but it’s not so much a numeracy challenge, it’s a literacy to be learnt. Money is a language so if you can teach them the language, if you can show them how to make good choices and get them to actually make those choices, you can build up their confidence around money. ♦



CUPCAKES
SMALL
LARGE
BROWNIES
COOKIES
GELATO
SMALL
LARGE
TEA • HOT CHOC
EG
RGE
HOT



Side Hustle

Passion and profit

STORY BY HANNA MARTON + PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS CHEN,
LEIKO MANALANG & SHANNON RICHMOND

More Australians are turning to side hustles for fun... and money. Meet three who took a leap into the unknown.

If you've ever fantasised about cheating on your day job with a side hustle, you're not alone. The number of people seeking a second – or third – source of income has increased. And so has the list of potential side hustles: passive income from selling things on Facebook Marketplace, investing in real estate investment trusts (REITs) or non-fungible tokens (NFTs) or renting out your car.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, a record high 6.6 per cent of all employed people – about 925,000 Australians – had multiple jobs in the December quarter of 2022. Experts suggest COVID lockdowns gave Australians pause to develop side-hustle ideas. Savings from not going out and low interest rates may also have offered entrepreneurs the capital to start a small business. Add in the possibility of working from home and the growth of the gig economy and you have an environment ripe for side-hustle success.

Not only can a side hustle be good for your bank balance, it could also boost your mental wellbeing, especially if you're pursuing your passion. A 2018 UK study from Henley Business School found that, despite working an average of 13 extra hours a week, side hustlers reported feeling happier and more content in their day job. Two in three said their side hustle "made life more interesting".

But side hustles aren't always easy. Meet three people who've turned hobbies into dream jobs.

“Running your own business has its struggles but I’m my own boss.”

Carissa Lake juggled corporate life and baking for years before finally quitting her day job.

“In the mid-2000s I was working as a junior trader on the futures exchange in Sydney. I liked the fast pace, the stress, the buzz. Did you ever see *Wall Street*? That’s what I wanted to do. Being the only woman in an office of men, I was called Princess, hence my current business name, The Cupcake Princess. Of course, you wouldn’t get away with that today.

At one point we were shutting down the futures floor and it was stressful. The market was up and down. The team was cranky but whenever I brought in something I’d baked, everyone would relax and smile. They’d share memories of when they were kids and their mum would bake this or that. It was nice to see people enjoy themselves at work again.

Then I was made redundant and took temping roles but the baking was taking over. I’d work all day in the financial markets, go home and bake for the farmers’ market, get

a few hours’ sleep, then do it all again. I never had any free time. After three years of this, I had to choose. I went with what makes me happier. That was about 15 years ago.

I found premises to work from and locked myself in there for 12 to 14 hours a day, six days a week to bake and decorate cakes and cupcakes. The business grew via word of mouth and because I sold at the markets at Sydney’s Entertainment Quarter, home to big media agencies, I got to know marketing and PR teams and started baking for movie premieres and brand launches. I was in the right place at the right time.

Fast forward to 2014 and one day, craving pavlova, I stumbled upon a pretty cheesecake shop in Sydney’s Eastern Suburbs that was perfect for me. I secured the lease and renovated it using my savings. My brother and I got on the tools – I put up battens and plasterboard and painted it myself.

Running a business has difficulties – finding talented staff is challenging – but I’m my own boss. I could be working in the corporate world, going home stressed every night, earning a great salary. But my business allows me to meet new people each day.

Sometimes customers come in and the weight of the world is on their shoulders. I tell them a silly story or help them look at their problem differently and they walk out with cupcakes, laughing and feeling lighter. I love creating happiness.”

Carissa’s tips

+ Set goals

It doesn’t matter whether they are yearly, monthly, weekly or daily – and if you don’t get to cross them off, don’t stress.

+ Just keep going

Success is determined not by how many times you win but by how you play the week after you lose.





Andrew Deane is a fundraiser for a think tank and officiates weddings on weekends.

“It was my sister who planted the seed when she asked me to be the celebrant at her wedding. It was six months away so I thought, ‘Why not?’ and I started studying to become a marriage celebrant.

At that time, marriage equality in Australia wasn’t recognised and as a gay man, it frustrated me that I would only be able to marry a man and a woman. But by the time I got my qualification, the marriage equality bill had passed [in December 2017] and my next gig was a lesbian wedding at the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra.

In my day job I raise funds for a not-for-profit think tank that looks at the intersection of business and policy with respect to Asia and engages with ASX 200 companies, universities, government bodies and cultural organisations. It’s a busy job with significant hours and on top of that, I’m doing a master’s degree part-time.

My side hustle as a celebrant builds on the relationship management I already do but it

connects me to people in a much nicer way. The ceremony itself is a culmination of weeks or months getting to know the couple and preparing them for this moment, in front of their family and friends.

Being a celebrant got me thinking about this passion I have for sharing other people’s stories. It also made me aware of how much creativity I have in my existing role. A celebrant sets the tone for a wedding and the couple look to you for direction. You’re a leader without realising it.

I wondered if I could make a small business out of this fun idea and calculated that to have a decent standard of living, I’d need to do two weddings a week and possibly become a funeral celebrant as well. Over time, it became clear that it would remain a side hustle. I started to design a logo and website but stopped, since I did well simply via word of mouth. I did a few weddings then the pandemic hit – I’ve done about 14 weddings in total.

I find being a celebrant very joyful. When you’re standing at the end of the aisle and a couple or bride or groom is coming towards you, the sense of responsibility hits. That feels very special.”

Andrew Deane helps a couple tie the knot in Ballarat.

Andrew’s tips

+ Meet people working in the sector

Buy them a coffee. You’d be surprised how many people are happy to talk about their own career and offer sage advice.

+ Trust yourself

Everyone’s got an opinion when it comes to setting up a small business but you know yourself better.



“Both jobs highlight bits of my personality. I love being around the diggers, dozers and trucks. But I also love fashion and creating.”

Abby Wilson works full-time as a heavy-machine operator at a mine in NSW’s Upper Hunter Valley and owns a thriving fashion label.

“After school I went straight into mining but I’ve always been a creative person so I studied fashion on the side. Two years ago, I was recovering from knee surgery – for an old motocross injury – and staying with my parents. I was super bored but it presented an opportunity for me to start designing so I bought a Cricut machine and started printing T-shirts. Mum said, ‘This could be something! Get a plan together.’

I used those six months away from my job to work on my label, Dust & Bullets Western, and began outsourcing the production of T-shirts, hats and footy shorts. I turned a bad situation into something positive.



(Above) Abby Wilson at her mining job; (below) at home working on designs.



Abby's tips

+ Do your research

Listen and learn from other people. There's so much to soak up and you're never going to know it all.

+ Know your niche

Ask yourself, 'What problem am I solving for my customers?'



While I am social media savvy, I struggled with the admin so last year I joined The Entourage, a business mentor community. I was assigned a coach and had access to seminars and templates – everything you need to learn to grow a little brand like Dust & Bullets Western into a big business.

Our orders are now into the thousands. Four retailers stock our products and my goal is to be in 10 shops by the end of 2023. I employ casual staff in seasonal pop-up shops and plan to get help with packing and stocktake once I have a warehouse. I'm still running the business out of my home!

On the weekends we travel throughout rural NSW and Queensland, visiting rodeos to increase brand awareness. We're a Western brand so we need to be in the Western scene.

Effectively managing my time is crucial as I work full-time in the mines and work on my fashion label on days off. I work in five-day blocks of 12-hour shifts at the mine and I get five days off at a time so I use that opportunity to knuckle down and put my effort into Dust & Bullets while endeavouring to strike a work/life balance. I'll schedule social media posts for when I'm at work and plan product launches for when I'm home. And there's always orders to pack so that's what I do when I get home from work.

I'm fortunate to have my mining income and don't need to pay myself another wage so I reinvest every cent into the business.

Both jobs highlight bits of my personality. I love being around the diggers, dozers and trucks. But I also love fashion and creating. One's not better than the other.

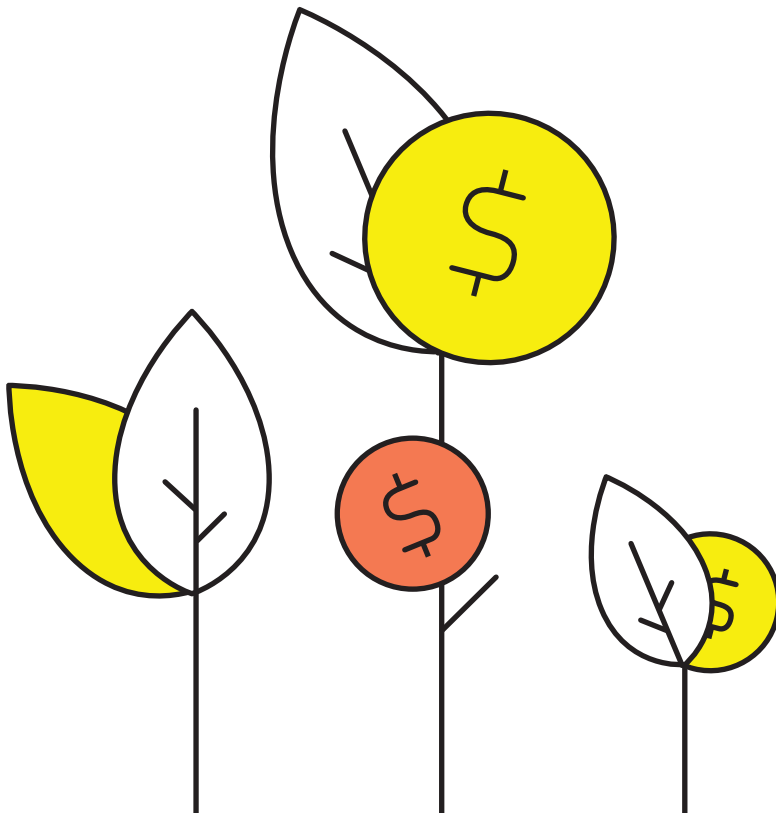
Dust & Bullets has changed my life. It's given me a purpose and allowed me to do something I really love. When I see other people loving the brand, too, it's a pinch-me moment. We'll be at a rodeo and I'll see a hat or shirt and I'll do a little dance." ♦

Super Powers

Worth the sacrifice

STORY BY CHRISTINE LONG

Your retirement stash could grow with the right strategy. Here's the lowdown on salary sacrificing.

**Why salary sacrifice?**

As you probably know, your employer is required to make compulsory super contributions on your behalf. But you can also make additional contributions to help grow your super.

You may be able to have part of your before-tax income paid straight into your super fund. That's what salary sacrificing is all about.

These contributions are taxed in the fund at a rate of 15 per cent and are not counted as part of your assessable income for tax purposes.

Let's say you earn \$90,000 before tax and you choose to receive \$80,000 as income and salary sacrifice \$10,000 into super. The \$10,000 will be subject to 15 per cent tax in the super fund but would have been subject to 34.5 per cent (including Medicare) if it had been received as salary.

One thing to watch out for on salary sacrificing? Caps apply and if you exceed the cap, you'll have to pay extra tax.

Are there other ways to boost super?

You can also add extra dollars to your fund from your after-tax income (that is, your take-home pay). These are called personal super contributions (or non-concessional contributions) and you can make up to \$110,000 in these non-concessional contributions each fin year. You might even be able to claim a tax deduction for them if you meet certain criteria. Head to ato.gov.au for more information and to download the notice of intent to claim form.

What's the catch?

Once you've made extra contributions, you generally won't be able to access them until you retire. Will that work for you? And while there's no limit to how much you can salary sacrifice, there are tax consequences if you breach the relevant caps.

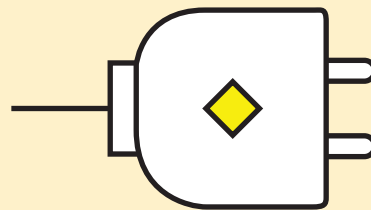
“These contributions are taxed in the super fund at a rate of 15 per cent.”

Where to start?

You need to check whether your employer offers salary sacrificing arrangements because not everyone does. Your Human Resources department will be able to give you the necessary forms and once you've sorted out the paperwork, the agreed amount will be deducted from your pre-tax salary and directed into your super fund.

Anything else?

Remember, the rules around super are (super) complex and the outcomes are dependent on your personal circumstances. Your accountant or financial advisor is generally able to assist you in optimising your objectives. The ATO website can also give you a good steer.



5 super boosters

Salary sacrificing isn't the only way to give your super a lift. As always, we recommend getting advice on how you can power-up your future savings but here are some options you may like to consider.

- 1. Change your investment option**
Being in a conservative fund may not be the best option for your age and stage of life. Generally, the younger you are, the more time you have to deal with the highs and lows of your investments and your super balance might benefit from the extra risk and reward of an investment with a higher weighting of shares and property.
- 2. Check your fund's health and fees**
While past performance is no indicator of future performance, it's wise to keep an eye on how your super savings are tracking. If you compare your fund's performance with those of its peers and it's consistently under-performing, it might be time to ask why. And look at the fine print. Paying higher fees on your super savings can also have an impact on your retirement savings balance over the long-term. Scott Pape, the Barefoot Investor, suggests googling your super fund's PDS (product disclosure statement) to check if the fees it charges are higher than 0.85 per cent. If they are, you may want to consider switching to a different fund.
- 3. Get someone else to contribute**
If you're on a low (or no) income your spouse may be able to claim a tax offset (maximum \$540) if they contribute to your super fund or retirement savings account. Some low or middle income earners might also be entitled to Government super contributions.
- 4. Start shopping**
Certain cashback sites, such as Boost Your Super, reward shoppers who purchase through them by contributing to their fund.
- 5. Keep your super in one place**
You may have multiple super accounts from different jobs. Consider bringing them all together to avoid paying multiple account fees, which can erode your balance. Log on to MyGov and link your account to the ATO so you can see all of your super at a glance, including any lost or unclaimed super. ♦

The Business

Drawing attention

STORY BY SARA MULCAHY



An animation studio has won praise for its film work and given Cambodian youth a leg up.

When Justin Stewart moved to Cambodia from Perth in 2009, he discovered there were limited job opportunities in the creative sector. “The capital, Phnom Penh, is a vibrant city full of history, culture and energy,” says Justin, who worked for a non-government organisation providing education to at-risk youth and has a background in television. “But there’s a lot of poverty and I saw an opportunity to alleviate that poverty by creating employment for young people.”

Justin began working on the launch of Ink Animation, a 2D animation studio he describes as a “for-profit social enterprise”. With no existing animation courses or skilled artists in Cambodia for hire, recruitment wasn’t straightforward and he had to train staff from scratch.

“I looked out for kids who dressed a certain way, who showed some creative

flair, who were perhaps painting or studying architecture or something that could translate to animation.”

As an expat, sourcing finance for the business also proved to be a challenge. Cambodian banks weren’t keen to lend to a customer they considered a potential flight risk so to set up the business Justin had to rely on profit and some independent investment.

Since launching in 2019, Ink Animation has won accolades for its work on the Oscar-nominated movie *Klaus*, Warner Brothers’ TV series *Animaniacs*, Norwegian film *Titina* (which won the excellence award at the Tokyo Anime Award Festival) and Netflix series *The Midnight Gospel*.

Ink’s success has been exciting for the animators, most of whom had no animation experience and have learnt from the ground up via Ink’s in-house training program.



Ink Animation CEO Justin Stewart; (below) staffers at the Phnom Penh studio below.

“More than 50 per cent of our employees come from outside Phnom Penh,” says Justin. “We developed a training program to upskill and decentralise employment opportunities within Cambodia for at-risk youth. Our recruitment and training opportunities also aim to create gender parity in staffing and salary.”

And then along came COVID. “My wife, Emily, and our toddler son were back in Perth on holiday when Western Australia announced it was closing its borders,” says Justin. “I decided to return with our older son, who was in his final year of high school. It took just over three months to get back as there were no flights out of

Cambodia. Eventually the Australian embassy in Cambodia organised a flight to repatriate Australians.”

To keep the studio in business with its new HQ in Perth, Ink Animation transitioned to a work-from-home model almost overnight. One of the biggest challenges was keeping clients’ IP (internet protocol) secure, which is where CommBank came in. “The bank enabled me to source finance and set up my IT operations in Perth,” says Justin. “We implemented a cloud-based animation pipeline that met our clients’ security requirements and we managed to keep our artists employed through the pandemic.”

Today, from his current payroll of about 60, Justin is looking to scale up to 300 so he can capture a significant piece of the outsource market. The business is now completely cloud-based and this year Justin wants to expand training programs in Cambodia and other parts of South-East Asia via an online learning platform. “The demand for our studio’s services is growing and we’re working with some major international production studios.”

Justin credits much of its success to encouraging creativity and fostering a positive culture. “When starting a business it’s vital to have values you can refer to during every step of the process. This helps to keep your original idea and passion for what you do clear to yourself, your team and, ultimately, enable you to deliver successfully to your clients.” ♦

How to... conquer cash flow

A good business relies on tight cash-flow management. Here are some tips from CommBank on how best to optimise money that flows in... and out.

Monitor and budget

Prepare monthly cash-flow projections and monitor your operating expenses and profit as you go. Setting a business budget will help you to keep cash flow healthy.

Plan ahead

Having extra working capital on tap is a great way to protect your business from unexpected expenses and cost increases.

A business overdraft will give you access to funds when you need them and you only pay interest on the amount you use.

Speed up incomings

Send invoices immediately after you’ve delivered your goods or services. Set out clear payment guidelines and consider reviewing your supply terms if a customer regularly fails to pay on time. Set up PayID so you can receive money in near real time.

Slow down outgoings

On the flip side, check your suppliers’ payment terms and make sure you don’t pay until you have to, unless there’s a discount for early payment.



Fair Shares

Stocking up



INTERVIEW BY JANE NICHOLLS + PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS CHEN + STYLING BY BEK DOTTY

Self-taught investor Hayley McColm finds the share market has enriched her life in surprising ways.

THE INVESTOR
PORTFOLIO
CURRENT VALUE
TRADING

Hayley McColm, chocolatier
ETFs through CommSec, plus her selected picks
\$10,000
Since 2019

What's the most important thing you've learnt so far?

Don't panic! When I started, I'd see shares go into the red and I'd obsess over it. Back then the mistake I made was to sell as soon as they got back into the green, even just by a little bit, so I wasn't making much money. Now I tend to sell when a stock is high and when I see it crash down, I repurchase. I cycle through the same stocks.

How did you get into investing?

I started on the CommSec platform with about \$1000 and absolutely no financial literacy. I grew up with a single mum and we were always in debt; unfortunately I copied her money habits. I applied for a credit card as soon as I turned 18 and maxed it out. I was constantly behind in payments. I knew I had to change things.

Do you take your dividends or reinvest?

At first, my dividends automatically went into my bank account and I used that money to buy more shares. Now I have my CommSec account set to reinvest all my dividends back into those same shares. At the start, taking the dividends gave me extra money to be able to buy more; now I'm happy with what I have so I don't do that. I have a separate bank account with CommBank where I deposit money every week and I use that when I want to buy new shares. I tell myself that I'm not allowed to touch that account, which works for me. It's a personal choice but I prefer putting my extra money into shares rather than salary sacrificing for superannuation because I can control when I can take it out.

What are some other tips for other newbie investors?

Research! As well as reading about the various companies I have shares in by saving them to my Watchlist on the CommSec app, I'm also in investment Facebook groups, such as She's on the Money and My Millennial Money. I'm still learning and those groups are really helpful. My friends are not interested in it at all but my brother has just started dabbling so we talk about it a lot. Also, don't invest what you can't afford to lose. I'm young so I'm quite bullish. I'm stubborn – even if a share is going down I hold on to it because I believe it will come back up.

How did you learn how to buy and sell shares?

I was in my local newsagency and bought *A Real Girl's Guide to Money* by Effie Zahos. That book pretty much changed my life and I still refer to it and probably always will. Every day, I'd go on the CommSec app and just play around with it and then CommSec Pocket when that was released. I'd read the reports about companies I had shares in on the app, I'd read *The Motley Fool* and I'd google a lot.

How do you select your stocks?

I like to invest in companies where I spend my money so I have shares in Wesfarmers and Woolworths. I also like ETFs [exchange-traded funds] because that gives you a whole basket of different shares without having to actively invest in each individual company, which might be beyond what you can afford. I watch what [fund manager] Australian Ethical Investment is doing and I also pay attention to world news. When we were going into COVID, I thought the jobs market would eventually boom so I invested in Seek. I missed the boat with biotech company CSL, which would have been good to get in on because of the COVID vaccine. I've made a conscious choice to not invest in coalmining companies.

Do you have an ultimate goal for your portfolio?

This pool of money represents my independence. It's solely in my name – these are my investments. My nan is 89 and she has a parcel of CommBank shares from when my grandfather worked at the bank and the dividends supplement her pension. She goes into the bank branch and cashes a cheque – it's so cute! I didn't even know she had these shares until I told her about my CommSec investments and we got talking. I have \$50,000 in my mind as a goal. I might have children in five years and I want it by then in case I need it. But I'll never let it go to zero. I will definitely keep my investment portfolio so I can have it there, just like Nan does now. ♦

“I like ETFs because that gives you a whole basket of different shares.”



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BUCKET LIST

Only in Fiji...

You need an island paradise in your future. Here's our guide to choosing the right resort for you, your family and your budget.







Bucket List

Island time

STORY BY BRIDGET DE MAINE

Sun, sand, slow down.
Fiji offers the perfect chance
to reconnect and recharge.

Malolo Island Resort





For families with young kids

Malolo Island Resort

Parents know the golden rule of successful family travel: keep the kids busy and the adults idle. Malolo Island Resort, a barefoot-style property half an hour from Denarau Island by high-speed catamaran, has this balance down to a fine art.

First up, the kids. They'll be bursting to hit Tia's Treehouse Kids Club, a hive of activity designed to keep small hands and



curious minds engaged. Nestled under a mango tree, it operates morning till night with fun and educational activities, from coconut bowling to coral reef care. Even younger kids (under four) can attend if accompanied by a nanny, which is also bookable through the property.

With the little ones occupied, your schedule can be as delightfully sparse as you like. Book a picnic at the resort's private paradise, Mociu, where desert island fantasies get an upgrade with a lunch of slipper lobster and local bush lemon, prepped and served under a canopy of dried palm leaves. Or, back on Malolo, pay an extended visit to Leilani's Spa where, in an open-air treatment room, you'll be lulled into serenity at the hands of expert massage therapists.

The blissful bures (traditional bungalow-style accommodation) are glorious retreats to return to after a day of Fijian hospitality. Fringed by glorious flora and fronted by a quiet terrace overlooking the resort's gardens, these standalone structures – appointed with one king and two single beds – give parents a separate space in which to sit back and enjoy the ocean breeze once the little ones have finally called it a day.

↑
Malolo's twin pools; (below) evening entertainment.

+ COST

From \$505 per night for an island bure for a family of four.

+ BUDGET TIP

The resort regularly offers deals such as "stay seven, pay five" and "kids eat free" in off-peak times. maloloisland.com

For families with tweens

Hilton Fiji Beach Resort & Spa

If you're looking for picture-perfect palm tree-lined pools and quiet stretches of pristine beach, Hilton Fiji Beach Resort and Spa won't disappoint. Perched on a private beachfront curve of Nadi Bay, the resort is an easy 25-minute drive from Nadi Airport but you'll feel a million miles away once you're there.

An onsite kids club, dedicated play areas and a location near some of Viti Levu's most beautiful natural sites make the resort a great choice for families with outdoorsy children who love nature-focused activities. If they tire of leaping into one of seven dreamy resort pools – including a dedicated kids pool – the

Sleeping Giant Zipline, a network of seven flying foxes that zooms over 14 hectares of Fijian jungle, is only 45 minutes away by car.

When it comes to dining, the tweens (and grown-ups) will be spoiled for choice. At two of the hotel's restaurants, there are ocean views from every table. Be sure to arrive at Maravu in time for sunset on at least one evening, to enjoy pan-Asian dishes on a deck that reaches out over the shoreline. There's also an adults-only spot, Koro, serving fresh dishes all day, which is the perfect escape for parents. The other ideal getaway when the kids are occupied? A mineral-infused massage at the onsite spa.

At the end of a long day, families will especially enjoy the large rooms, all with a private terrace or balcony. Even better, the one-, two- and three-bedroom suites have laundry facilities and kitchenettes. And the clusters of rich foliage glimpsed from the window – think palms and tropical plants – just add to that get-away-from-it-all feel.

+ COST

From \$360 per night for a room that sleeps three.

+ BUDGET TIP

Room prices fluctuate between seasons so consider travelling outside of school holidays to get more bang for your buck. hiltonfijibeachresort.com



For families with teens

Plantation Island Resort

Boredom and teenagers don't mix. That's why Plantation Island, less than an hour from Denarau Island by high-speed catamaran, is such a balm for families travelling with teens. The resort's Lairo Club caters specifically to those who've outgrown the traditional kids club set-up. The age-appropriate pastimes of touch rugby, beach cricket, table tennis and kayaking will get kids aged 12 to 16 moving and older kids can join surfing trips and scuba diving sessions. Solitary-seeking teens might opt for snorkelling, which is as accessible – and unbeatable – as it gets, especially when bookmarked by a trip to the resort's on-ocean, inflatable water park.

A soothing massage is the solitary activity adults should book. Staff can even organise a session on the sand, where the only sound you'll hear is the ocean lazily lapping.

For lunch, teens can swing by Cocohut & Coco Lailai for fresh coconuts and smoothies or the beachfront Snack Bar for burgers and pizzas. The family can reunite for dinner at Tavola Restaurant & Bar, where Pacific Rim cuisine is the order of the evening.

Another perk of Plantation Island? You don't have to bunk side-by-side. The Two Bedroom Garden Bure, accommodating four, splits the rooms with a living space in between for extra privacy.

+ COST
\$350 per night for a family of four.

+ BUDGET TIP
Streamline your savings by opting for the half- or full-board meal plans, which gives the whole family access to buffet meals at breakfast and dinner.
plantationisland.com



For couples

Matamanoa Island Resort

Matamanoa, a dot in the postcard-perfect Mamanuca Island chain, signals seclusion from the very beginning. Reachable via a two-hour, high-speed catamaran journey from Denarau Island, this is about as remote as you can get. Boasting just 47 rooms and an incredible nine acres of private island playground for adults (yep, no kids allowed), you'll be cursing the day you ever agreed on a departure date.

Couples can book either resort suites or beachfront bures; both have quiet verandahs at every entrance where you can lounge and simply take in the verdant surroundings. If you're throwing the budget out the window, opt for a villa or bure with a private plunge pool set mere metres back from the ocean for the ultimate in barefoot luxury.

The resort's activities focus on the pristine coral reef that haloes the island. Snorkelling among the vibrantly coloured marine life, gliding above the crystal clear water on a kayak for two or skimming it on a small catamaran are all free of charge for couples staying at the resort.





For intergenerational families

Outrigger Fiji Beach Resort

Can a resort really tick the boxes for all age groups? With spacious bungalows, diverse dining and that all-important beachfront location, Outrigger Fiji Beach Resort does a stellar job of it.

After a 90-minute drive from Nadi, you'll arrive at Outrigger, set among lush tropical surrounds. Families can opt for a bure, accommodating anywhere from two to eight guests, with the Two Bedroom Plantation Bure inclusive of a canapes and champagne delivery every afternoon.

Memory-making time is maximised by the range of available activities to suit all generations. Start by getting the crew together for snorkelling directly from the shore break or simply lounge poolside while the more energetic members of the group tumble into the shallow waters.

At meal times, there's something for everyone. From mum's search for fresh seafood to nanna's nightcap, the vast array of onsite dining options aim to please. The woodfired pizzas at Sundowner Bar & Grill are always a winner. ♦

+ COST

From \$306 per night for a Plantation bure, which sleeps five.

+ BUDGET TIP

The resort has a Kids Eat Free program so hungry mouths under 12 have complimentary access to the kids menu (maximum of two kids). outrigger.com/fiji



Matamanoa's beachfront villas and bures feature private plunge pools; (right) Outrigger Fiji Beach Resort; (opposite) Plantation Island.

+ COST

From \$425 per couple for a Resort Room.

+ BUDGET TIP

Meals can also be included as part of your stay when you opt for a half- or full-board option when booking. Onsite Vale Ni Blau offers local produce alongside those mesmerising views of the Pacific. matamanoa.com





On the Road

Slow travel

STORY BY BROOKE LE POER TRENCH

The fantasy of living life on the open road is increasingly a reality for Australians with tricked-out vans and a strong wi-fi connection.

Chances are, you've already happened across an Instagram post on #vanlife. Complete with plywood joinery straight out of a Scandi interior and skylights to admire the stars from seriously comfortable mattresses, vans are having a moment. Once the domain of retirees with caravans and backpackers on tight budgets, the latest adoptees of van life are fusing remote work with travel as they explore Australia one idyllic spot after another - with a wi-fi signal booster. Caravan and motorhome sharing company Camplify has seen the number of young Australians hiring campervans double in the past year, as they opt for this new brand of self-contained travel, which allows them to go at their own pace.

When our cover stars Kendall Baggerly (@kendallbaggerly) and Glenn Ferguson (@glennferguson_) set off in January 2020 to circumnavigate Australia in a 1982 VW T3 van (named Vance), they had no idea how much the lifestyle would suit them. “Three years on and we can’t imagine going back to a tiny apartment in Sydney,” says Kendall. “We’ve completely fallen in love with the slower pace of life.”

The pair first bought their van as a way of escaping the city on weekends and decompressing. “We wanted to travel further but the costs of flights and accommodation with our rent was too much,” says Kendall. “But once we had been on a few getaways we realised that we wanted to see all of Australia and we could live in Vance full-time.”

After a year of saving, they set off on their adventure. “We soon realised we were going to spend our money too quickly because we’d chosen to drive

an old van that needed repairs so we settled on remote work – which for us meant photography.”

Part of the appeal is the ability to keep living costs low. With fuel and food the biggest expense – and little room to store anything – van-lifers are forced to keep things simple. “One of my favourite things about the way we live now is that we have everything with us at all times. We never have to pack or deal with forgetting things. And we’re always ready for any adventure.”

There are other benefits to life on the open road, like the community of like-minded travellers they have met along the way. But there are also the challenges one might imagine living in a van with a partner: “I tell people to go on a few shorter trips with their partner to make sure they’re compatible in confined spaces,” says Glenn. “There are no rooms to escape to or hallways to storm down. And there are days when it’s rainy and everything in the van is damp and cramped.”

The duo have cruised around every state in Australia, most recently having a blast in Tasmania. “It’s just the best,” says Glenn. “It might be my favourite part of Australia.” ♦

*Kendall Baggerly and Glenn Ferguson
on Lucky Bay beach, WA; (right) in
Boranup Forest, WA.*



Getting started

Try before you buy

“Hire a campervan and take several shorter trips, just to see how you like this style of travel,” says Kendall. “It took us several trips to really decide that we could make it work.”

Embrace the community

“We look at apps like WikiCamps Australia and CamperMate, which are community-built apps where people list camping spots that they’ve visited and share their experiences,” says Kendall.

Think outside the box

“There are so many ways I’ve seen people combine this kind of travel with work, from teaching to trades and then also seasonal jobs as well as remote office work,” says Glenn. “It’s about playing to your strengths.”

House Proud

Fresh



start

A heritage home has been restored to its former glory.

STORY BY SUE WHEELER +
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVE WHEELER

With its outdated swimming pool swamping the backyard and a crumbling rear extension, it wasn't exactly love at first sight when Sarah Elliott spotted this 1920s home. "But we love old houses and weren't frightened by its heritage listing," says Sarah, who envisaged its potential as a light-filled and functional family home for herself, husband Neil and their teens.

In 2019, after living in the house for three years, they were ready to renovate and enlisted Modify (modify.com.au), a one-stop-shop construction company. "Sarah and Neil wanted to retain original features," says Modify's senior interior designer, Gianna Kharboutli. "So, we married these with a modern update. Even the ceilings were in pretty good shape. We just had to restore sections where new wardrobes had cut through them."

The hero of the renovation is a new extension containing a kitchen and a conservatory. The kitchen is swathed in soft blue shaker-style cabinets, marble benchtops and the adjoining conservatory has a stunning raked ceiling. "The house isn't open plan because of its age but the kitchen is centrally located and I get a sense of everything that's going on around me," says Sarah, a former lawyer. "I wanted a contemporary-style Edwardian conservatory that felt like an outdoor room and could be used all year round."

A new addition to the side of the house also allowed them to build a laundry and powder room, while an original bathroom was turned into one of Sarah's favourite features, a butler's pantry, hidden behind cupboard doors in the kitchen.

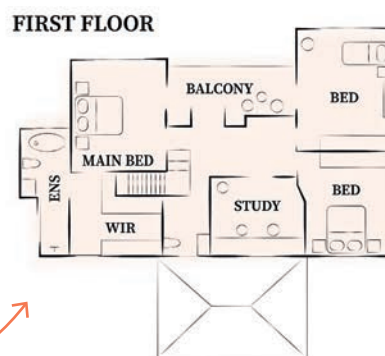
Upstairs, an ensuite and walk-in robe ticked another upgrade on the family's wish list and the closed verandahs were reopened and given a facelift with white timber balustrades and new decking. "I love sitting out here reading and having a coffee among the treetops," says Sarah.

The interiors are warm, characterful and brimming with period features, including the architraves, windows and window seats Sarah fell in love with. Inside is a treasure trove of oil paintings, family heirlooms and second-hand finds. "I have my father to thank for my love of vintage style – our house was filled with antiques."

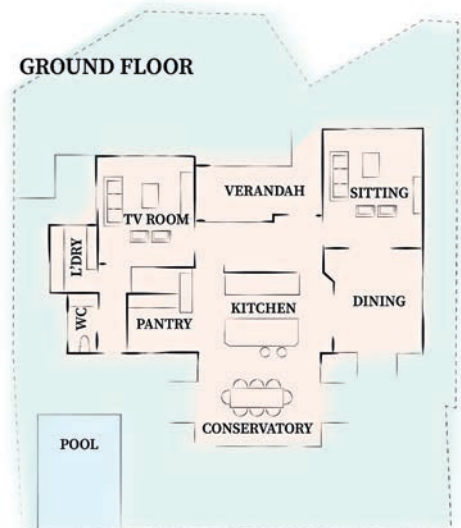
A self-described "frustrated creative", Sarah upcycles old furniture, including her dining chairs, and makes cushions at her grandmother's antique table, where she once used to sew. "If you have all the money in the world you can buy smart new pieces of furniture but it's fun being challenged to get the look you want by giving old things a new life." Sarah has collected blue-and-white china "ever since I can remember" and uses this classic motif as inspiration for the home's colour scheme. Bright bursts of colour punctuate the look.

With its modern update complete and its classic elegance restored, the family's dream home is "light and airy, with lots of great living spaces," says Sarah. "But the most important thing is that it's old and makes us happy."

"It's fun being challenged to get the look you want by giving old things a new life."



The home's layout; (opposite) Sarah Elliott in her new light-filled kitchen.



Home inspection



The house

A two-storey heritage-listed house in Sydney, which is home to Sarah, Neil, their two teenage children and schnauzer Archie.

The renovation

An extension to the side of the house containing a kitchen and conservatory, the addition of a butler's pantry, powder room and laundry downstairs and a master ensuite and walk-in robe upstairs. A dilapidated sunroom at the back was knocked down to make way for the conservatory and dream kitchen. "We wanted to restore the home's charm and character but also make it more liveable and contemporary, with new living and entertaining spaces," says Gianna Kharboutli a key member of the design team at Modify, which handled the reno from concept to completion. The "ugly monolithic" green-painted façade needed a makeover and the verandahs were opened up. A small swimming pool sits in a pretty, landscaped garden.

The best bit

"The conservatory is used for family dinners, playing Trivial Pursuit or entertaining. When it's warm the doors are always open."

New and upcycled décor meet in the living room; (top) the entry's original architraves.



“We wanted to restore the home’s charm and character but also make it more liveable and contemporary, with new living and entertaining spaces.”



The result

Transformed from gloomy to glowing, the home is an elegant blend of past and present. As well as gaining a laundry and more bathrooms, there’s a new flow to the living areas so the layout is more modern and functional. “The kitchen/conservatory is even more beautiful than I imagined,” says Sarah. “We love how it connects to the garden where we have reclaimed the lawn.” Classic fixtures and fittings feature in the laundry and new bathrooms. There are patterned encaustic floor tiles as well as classic-look tapware (Astra Walker “Olde English”) and a show-stopping “sapphire blue” claw-foot tub in the ensuite bathroom (castironbaths.com). The grandeur of the façade is restored, thanks to new white timber balustrades and open verandahs, which allow more light into the house.

The biggest lesson

“Do research and speak to your local council when renovating a heritage-listed home. We couldn’t knock down the garage as we’d never be allowed to build a new one so we worked with it and covered its unattractive roof with a garden,” says Sarah.

Hot tip

“I’m so glad I trusted the experts,” says Sarah. “I had imagined having a white kitchen but then Gianna suggested Resene Periglacial Blue (shop.resene.com.au) for the cabinets instead. I really love this colour and find it so soothing.”



The kitchen features a butler’s pantry and marble benchtop.

Be smart...

Gianna Kharboutli, senior interior designer at Modify, shares seven ways to reduce your renovation costs.

Refresh your floors

If your existing floors don't work in your renovation, you don't necessarily have to replace them. Sarah's original pine floors were in good condition but their orange tones didn't suit the new interiors so we sanded them back and stained them with Feast Watson's Proofint, in Brown Japan.

Trim back tiles

Instead of fully tiling your bathroom, consider only tiling the necessary wet areas. You can cut material and labour costs by painting, panelling or wallpapering elsewhere.

Juggle joinery

If you want to have custom joinery, trim your budget by using laminate for laundry and wardrobe cabinetry, instead of a more expensive polyurethane or veneer. The kitchen is where you want to spend your money.

Choose carpet

If your bedroom floors need replacing or refinishing, laying carpet can be a more economical option. We carpeted the bedrooms in Sarah and Neil's home, which elevated the look of the rooms without going over our budget.



Carpet was used throughout bedrooms; (below) the bathroom's encaustic tiles were also used in the laundry.

Tap into savings

With tapware, stick to simple, classic finishes: chrome and brushed chrome is often cheaper than metals such as bronze and aged brass.

Mix and match benchtops

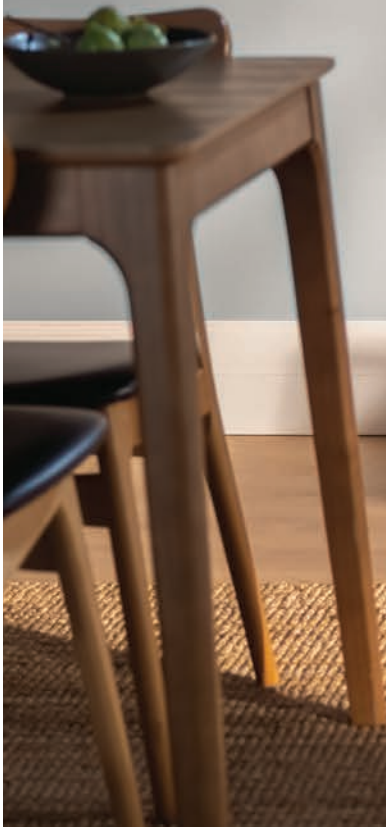
Using the same benchtops in your kitchen, laundry and bathroom contributes to a cohesive design but if you've opted for expensive marble, say, in the kitchen, you don't need to use it everywhere. Perhaps look for a cheaper alternative with the same look, such as laminate, reconstituted stone or porcelain.

Go light on lights

If you want to save money, be picky about feature lights. Put downlights in most areas and have one or two feature pendants in the communal areas and maybe a wall light in a bathroom. The lights in Sarah's kitchen and conservatory were a splurge but they add elegance. ♦



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Small town



There were a few financial frights along the way when a Brisbane couple opted for a tree change but the pay-off is a whole new life.

Make a Change

STORY BY ALEXANDRA CARLTON + PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK LEHN

When Edwina Cameron and her husband, Gerry Fogarty, stood in their new home surrounded by moving boxes, they wondered if they'd made a terrible mistake. The cost of their relocation to the Sunshine Coast Hinterland had blown out, draining them of savings. Even more concerning, the couple assumed Gerry, a registered nurse, would easily sail into a job at a local hospital but every enquiry had come back with a polite "no". "We thought, 'This is ridiculous,'" recalls Edwina. "What are we going to do?"


But right at that moment, Gerry's phone pinged with an alert. A job offer. "We did more than dance around the kitchen – we cracked open the bubbly," says Edwina, a conservation communications professional. "I felt like maybe this was meant to be after all."

Although most of us live in a city-based residence, Australians have always yearned for the coastal and countryside lifestyle. The pandemic sent that desire to new heights as people began craving space and a dialled-back rhythm of life. Net migration numbers from capital cities to regional areas hit record highs in 2020 and 2021.

CommBank's Regional Movers Index report, published in March, shows that 13 regional local government areas recorded a jump in migration levels of more than 100 per cent. Regional and agribusiness executive general manager Paul Fowler says demand for workers is a significant "pull factor" behind the population flow. "There are strong jobs markets across the top five regions attracting the largest flows – Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Geelong and Surf Coast, Illawarra and Newcastle – with online advertised roles up between 30 and 50 per cent in the past year alone."

The road to Edwina and Gerry's tree change to the outskirts of the rural mountain town of Maleny in the Blackall Ranges had been a long time coming. The couple met in inner-city Brisbane when Edwina was a single mum to daughter Lucinda, now 11, and moved into a classic four-bedroom Queenslander worker's cottage. "It wasn't tiny but the rooms were small and with timber houses, sound really carries," says Edwina. "You could hear everything going on around you and we could have reached out our bedroom window and just about touched our neighbour's house."

When the couple's daughter, Harriet, arrived in 2016, Edwina began to crave more space. "I wanted a different life for our kids. I wanted them to be part of a smaller community and have green around them and for us not to be stuck in traffic every day." Gerry needed more convincing



Gerry Fogarty, Edwina Cameron and their two daughters swapped Brisbane for the Sunshine Coast Hinterland.

big move



The peace and quiet has inspired Edwina to ramp up her art business.

“I wanted our kids to be part of a small community... and have green around them.”

and it wasn't until the family visited Gerry's twin brother in rural Sweden in 2019 and he saw for himself the luxury of fresh air and room to move that they decided to pull the trigger.

Back in Australia, they put their Brisbane house on the market and sold it quickly before they zeroed in on Maleny, 95 kilometres north of Brisbane in the Sunshine Coast region, with a population of just 4000. They lined up a flurry of house and school inspections and found a four-bedroom brick house on an acre block a few minutes out of town, with the living spaces fringed by rainforest. “Looking out to that rainforest is so beautiful,” says Edwina. “We have neighbours but we're not right in each other's pockets. It's a lovely house to live in.”

Financially and professionally, the relocation has been a mixed bag. Before the move, the couple had a side project, an online wall art business, and Edwina credits the peace and beauty of their surroundings with spurring them on to take it more seriously, so much that it is now their main income, though they've both retained extra work – remotely, in Edwina's case – as a backup.

Fuel costs, however, are a hit to the wallet. “We were lucky that we bought a hybrid RAV4 when they first came out and that's been a lifesaver. But our other car is a big, diesel-guzzling ute that we use for the business. At the start of every day we work out who's doing the most kilometres and that person takes the hybrid. We're looking at getting an electric car soon to try to reduce those fuel costs even more.” Groceries are also a consideration. The family travels 20 minutes to Beerwah to shop at Aldi, only using the local store for top-ups.

But there are surprising savings elsewhere. “Back in Brisbane, a Friday night would have meant Uber Eats but now our weekend treat is ham and



cheese toasties and a movie with the girls. They love it and it's cheap," says Edwina. They've also realised that repair services are difficult to find so they've become overnight experts at fixing leaking taps and other jobs around the house.

The biggest advantage – both economically and for the family's wellbeing – has been the lifestyle shift. The sense of community is exactly what Edwina had been searching for; on a freezing winter's day in 2021 when the family's heating system packed up, a neighbour was on the doorstep with firewood within 30 minutes. Gerry has joined the local Rural Fire Service brigade and both girls have made plenty of friends. Most of all, "saving for a holiday" is no longer a priority. "When I lived in the city I always felt like I needed to get out, to escape," says Edwina. "Now, the most restful thing for me is not to leave town. Every day here feels like a holiday." ♦

Edwina and Gerry say the biggest advantage has been the lifestyle shift and they love the laid-back small-town feel.



Before you make the move...

Beyond job opportunities and the housing market, you may want to consider these questions.

1. Are the local services up to speed?

There may be a hospital or GP but how many specialists practise in the area? Are there problems attracting or retaining doctors? What about a police station? Is it 24 hours? Jill Weeks, author of *21 Ways to Retire*, says that these things may not feel important until the day they do.

2. Does the area have issues that could affect you?

It's easy to fall in love with pretty tree-lined avenues or empty beaches but do you know if there are council or development issues? Weeks suggests subscribing to the local newspaper for 18 months before you make a move so you can get up to speed.

3. Are you prepared to "start again"?

Friendships and a sense of community are critical to wellbeing. Have you considered how you will form a new network? Have you met any locals or investigated local groups where you can meet like-minded people?

4. Have you experienced the region in all seasons?

There's nothing like a coastal location in the summer but what's it like during the cooler months? Is winter too cold? Do the majority of people who own holiday houses decamp, leaving the area deathly quiet? Do your research so that you understand what it's like all year round.

5. Will it suit your entire family?

If you have children, you'll need to look into education options (including university if you want them to stick around). And what about furry members of the family? "Fido or Fifi may not like a move from a cool climate to a warmer climate," warns Weeks. She suggests checking in with a vet in your new location and asking if there are any issues you should be aware of, such as ticks or other natural hazards.

Think Big

Drive of his life

STORY BY KIRSTEN GALLIOTT + PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATE WOTTON



It took Tony Wotton 30 years to save up for his dream car – a replica Porsche Speedster.

“I got into the habit of not buying stuff willy-nilly. I’d think, ‘That’s another five bucks toward the Speedster.’”

He doesn’t know where the obsession came from. None of his family was into cars. His mates were more interested in girls than wheels. But as a teenager, Tony Wotton used to pore over Volkswagen magazines that were imported from the United States. “There was a company that used to advertise replica Porsche Speedsters,” says the engineer. “I thought, ‘Oh my god, that’s the most beautiful car in the world.’”

The original Speedsters were built in the 1950s and one of the most expensive models is the 356. In the 1970s, international custom-car company Intermeccanica made some 600 reproductions of the famous 356, forging the car body from lighter fibreglass instead of the original steel and creating a sports car that would become a collectible.

For more than 30 years, Tony dreamed of owning a 356 model. An original Porsche Speedster was way out of reach – they retail for anywhere between \$300,000 and \$1 million – but he would scour car websites and visit car shows for the reproductions. “I had a family, though, and I didn’t think I could buy a toy, a plaything, when I had other responsibilities,” he says. “But I had my little Speedster account, as I called it, and whenever there was extra cash I might have from working overtime or other bits and pieces, I’d squirrel it away. I also got into the habit of not buying stuff willy-nilly. I’d think, ‘That’s another five bucks towards the Speedster.’”

The cars are next-to-impossible to track down but in 2020, 11 years after Tony, his wife, Kate, son Joel and daughter Anna moved into their home in Maroochydore on Queensland’s Sunshine Coast, up popped a 1978, “champagne yellow” model... 10 kilometres down the road. Although it was “a lot more than I could afford”, the owner knew Tony was genuine and suggested he make an offer. “I had put all the money into the house but Kate told me to go for it,” says Wotton, who eventually struck a deal.

The sacrifices – and three decades of delayed gratification – were worth it. “I love driving it. I just love the look of it. Sometimes I feel a little bit awkward because I’m not really a look-at-me person – and everyone looks at this car – but it’s nice to put a smile on people’s faces.”

He spends most of his weekends tinkering on the car and working on the Volkswagen engine with Bill, a retired mechanic he has befriended. “When you buy these cars you don’t expect them to start every time,” he says with a laugh. “It’s 50-year-old technology so you have to work on them because they don’t always cooperate.”

He’s happy he took the plunge. “I didn’t want to be an old guy buying a little sports car. I didn’t want to wait to retire before buying it. I want to enjoy it for 30 or 40 years. And I will.” ♦



Tony Wotton, with his champagne yellow Speedster, says the sacrifices were worth it.



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