

Key is to manage expenses

Once I lived next to this group of six Swedish surfers in Byron Bay. Some of the friendliest people I ever met. I mean when these guys said, "Make yourself at home" they really meant it, so I did.

I soon learnt that besides surfing and dodging conscription these guys shared another passion – home-brand products. These guys had home-brand products that I didn't even know existed. Chewing gum, after-shave, soup, noodles, utensils, VB... well not VB, but let's be honest 'Home-Brand' could probably do a better job. But not being one to look a gift horse in the mouth I devoured anything they put in front of me. And guess what! Besides the VB, everything tasted great and it was cheaper than chips.

What's the moral of the story? Feel free to judge a book by its cover but don't judge a food product by its label. Living by a budget requires sacrifices; success will be measured by the wisdom of your choices and the strength of your follow-through.

Sort out what items you can live without and which are absolutely essential. A major part of budgeting is establishing a hierarchy of needs (ordering your expenses from most important to least). Then based on this, you can determine how much of your income you can invest in each need. You may think that transportation is more important than alcohol, but seriously, what's the point of getting home quickly if there is nothing in the fridge to come home to? NOTE: Having a fridge is essential, the only thing worse than coming home to an



"Nothing like a crazy night out to rip a hole in your wallet"

empty fridge is coming home to no fridge at all.

If you are living in share accommodation and the budget is for the household then make sure everyone has a nice long chat so any group decisions are made together. Lads, if you're living with your girlfriend don't think that a strict weekly budget will get you out of birthdays and anniversaries because for some reason we are meant to magically find funds for such occasions.

In all areas remember to 'shop smart'. I love my orange mochachino's as much as the next man but we all need to make sacrifices to achieve our goals. And if the goal is to get the hell away

from your oppressive family then it's worth a few standard caps.

Most of you will enjoy going out for a few drinks in good company, or even staying home for a few drinks in your own company, I know I do. There is nothing like a crazy night out to rip a hole in your wallet, or purse. However, there are a few sure-fire ways to cut your party costs down to size. Firstly, try and limit yourself to a certain number of 'nights out' a week. Secondly, take advantage of venues that offer free entry or cheap drinks on specific nights. Thirdly, sort out your transport arrangements before you start drinking, *before you start drinking*. Use public transport or organise to split a cab-fare with

friends and ensure you have a meeting place if you lose each other amidst the sweaty, sexy chaos.

Text books can become a major expense for any student. Don't believe everything you read (unless it's one of my articles). Only a fool would rush into the bookstore and buy every item listed in the course guide. Just because the guide lists five books doesn't necessarily mean that you *need* five books. You may only really need *one*, so be sensible and ask your tutor or lecturer which are the 'must haves' because you are 'tight for cash' at the moment. For those books that you 'must have' be sure to explore any second-hand book-sales available, check notice boards for seller's advertisements

because massive savings can be made. Additionally, if your parents are generous enough to be funding your inter-textual journey, you are very lucky and should thank them (for many don't). They can obviously afford it so let your parents pay full price and you can make some extra cash on the side (Dad, I have never done that to you, I promise).

'I mean you can eat it, but it tastes like shit'-Crocodile Dundee

Be realistic. We can all technically live on nothing but insects yet even the bush tucker man would agree that it's not all that healthy. So don't try and be too commando about your approach to cheaper living. Keep wearing underwear, keep eating and washing at regular intervals, and don't eat bugs or self-manure your garden.

We all know about the cost of petrol, but do you know about the cost of parking?

Cab fares, medical bills, 21st presents, contraception, legal representation, Spice Girls reunion tickets, things that you would never expect to need to pay for. The unforeseen costs of your week can blow your carefully tailored budget sky high, so when sorting out your finances don't cut things too fine.

Finally, the single most important aspect of successful budgeting is self-restraint. You need to learn to say 'NO' to *yourself*, as well as your girlfriend, your mates and that busker on Flinders Street with the colourful sign (spelt correctly). Without this all your planning and goals will accomplish nothing. Trust me, I still live at home. ☒

Tom Cummins

"Something for the greenies ...

at the TARGET CENTRE"

Your **free Enviro Sling bag** is ready and waiting for you at the Target Centre. Use your Enviro bag and help do your bit for the environment.

Bags will be given away on 20th March at the Target Centre between 11am until stocks last. While you are there why not have a bite to eat with your friends... you might even find a little gem or two to bag!



236 Bourke Street, Melbourne between Bourke & Little Bourke
In the Heart of the City