



**PARKER
MORTGAGE & FINANCE**
Purposeful Finance. Personal Guidance

A practical guide for Australian households

The Everyday Budgeting Guide

A simple plan for your pay: understand where your income goes and give each category a purpose.

Start with what comes in, what needs to go out, and what matters to you next.



Build your budget around real life

A budget is a plan for the money you have. It helps you see what is already committed and decide what the rest can do.

Use take-home income

Start with the amount you actually receive after tax and payroll deductions. Include reliable household income and payments. Do not count credit limits, loans or transfers between your own accounts as income.

Choose one time period

Weekly, fortnightly or monthly can all work. Use the same period for every amount. If you are paid fortnightly, planning per payday can make transfers easier.

Convert a cost to fortnightly	Calculation
Weekly cost	Multiply by 2
Monthly cost	Multiply by 12, then divide by 26
Annual cost	Divide by 26

Look at what you actually spend

Check two to three months of transactions and look back over a full year for annual or seasonal costs. Include cash purchases, subscriptions, childcare, medical costs and debt repayments. Estimates are fine initially; replace them as you learn.

Avoid counting the same expense twice. If you record groceries bought on a credit card, do not count the payment clearing those purchases as another grocery expense. Separately allow for repayments on existing debt, interest and fees.



Give your money five clear jobs

These categories separate money you need now, money you will need later, and money you can choose how to use. Put each item in one category only.

1. Everyday essentials

Housing, groceries, utilities, necessary transport and required debt repayments. These costs keep your household running. Include realistic amounts for expenses that vary.

2. Future bills

Predictable costs that arrive less often: registration, annual insurance, school expenses and planned servicing. Small regular allocations spread the cost across the year.

3. Emergency buffer

Money for unexpected costs or a loss of income. This is different from saving for a bill you know is coming. Start with an achievable amount when your budget allows.

4. Goals and progress

A home deposit, another savings goal or extra debt repayments. Naming the purpose makes progress easier to track. The balance between saving and paying extra off debt depends on your circumstances.

5. Enjoyment and personal spending

Meals out, hobbies and optional purchases. A realistic allowance gives you a clear spending limit while making the plan easier to live with.

Your categories are flexible. Insurance paid monthly could sit in essentials; annual insurance could sit in future bills. What matters is that it is included once and funded on time.



Work out the dollars first

1. Fund the commitments

Calculate essentials and required debt repayments, then the amount needed for upcoming bills. Use actual amounts and due dates rather than forcing your household into a percentage target.

2. Calculate what remains

Take-home income – essentials – future bill allocations = money available for your buffer, goals and enjoyment. If the result is negative, go to page 8 before setting savings targets.

3. Give the remaining money a purpose

Choose achievable amounts for your buffer, goals and enjoyment. Consider bill timing, existing savings and debt costs. Your total allocations should not exceed your income. A little unallocated breathing room can be useful if you can afford it.

An annual bill, made manageable

A \$1,300 bill due in a year needs \$50 set aside each fortnight: $\$1,300 \div 26 = \$50$.

If it is due in 10 paydays and you already have \$300 saved: $(\$1,300 - \$300) \div 10 = \$100$ per payday. Count the actual paydays before the due date.

Where percentages fit

The familiar 50/30/20 framework suggests 50% for needs, 30% for wants and 20% for savings and extra debt repayments, using take-home income. It is an optional reference, not a pass-or-fail rule. Essential annual bills still belong to needs in that framework.

Our five categories make future bills and emergency money easier to see. Housing, childcare and income vary widely, so your own costs should guide the final split.



A fortnightly payday plan

This fictional household receives \$3,000 take-home income per fortnight. The amounts illustrate the method; they are not recommended spending targets.

Category	Per fortnight	Share
Everyday essentials	\$1,850	61.7%
Future bills	\$350	11.7%
Emergency buffer	\$200	6.7%
Goals and progress	\$300	10.0%
Enjoyment and personal spending	\$300	10.0%
Total allocated	\$3,000	100%*

*Individual percentages are rounded and may not add to exactly 100%.

What is behind the numbers?

Essentials: \$1,100 housing + \$300 groceries + \$150 utilities/phone + \$150 transport + \$150 required debt repayments = \$1,850.

Future bills: an estimated annual total of \$9,100 ÷ 26 = \$350 per payday. Check each bill deadline when starting.

Remaining money: \$3,000 - \$1,850 - \$350 = \$800, shared across the buffer, goals and enjoyment.

Why the split makes sense for this example: The household covers current commitments, prepares for known bills and then chooses how to use the remaining \$800. Essentials exceed 50%, but the overall plan still balances.



A simple routine on payday

Check what has arrived

Confirm your actual pay and bills due before the next payday. A budget average does not guarantee that cash is available on a particular date.

Set aside committed money

Keep essentials and future bill allocations protected from day-to-day spending. Separate accounts, bank buckets or a written tracker can all work; check any account fees and conditions.

Move the planned amounts

If affordable, transfer the amounts for your buffer and goals after pay arrives. Keep enough in the paying account for direct debits and repayment dates.

Know what you can spend

Use your enjoyment allowance as a clear limit. If you spend more in one category, adjust another consciously so the total still fits.

Check in briefly

Each week, check balances and upcoming bills. Each month, compare the plan with actual spending and update the amounts.

If your income varies

Use past earnings to estimate income, but build essential commitments around a cautious amount you can reasonably rely on. Test the plan against a lower-income period. In stronger periods, consider topping up upcoming bills and a reserve for lean weeks before increasing optional spending.

If self-employed, business revenue is not all available for personal spending. Allow for business costs and tax obligations first; your accountant can help work out an appropriate household amount.



Create your own payday plan

Print this page and fill it in. Use one period throughout and keep a separate list of the bills behind your totals. This worksheet is for handwriting.

My budget period: _____ Next review: _____

Income and allocations	Amount per period
A. Take-home household income	\$ _____
B. Everyday essentials, including required debt repayments	\$ _____
C. Future bill allocations	\$ _____
D. Available after commitments: A - B - C	\$ _____
E. Emergency buffer contribution	\$ _____
F. Goals / extra debt repayments	\$ _____
G. Enjoyment and personal spending	\$ _____
H. Breathing room: D - E - F - G	\$ _____

If H is negative, reduce or rework allocations. If it is positive, decide whether to keep it as breathing room or give it another purpose.

Upcoming bill	Amount still needed	Paydays left	Per payday
_____	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____

One goal: _____ Target date: _____

Amount still needed: \$ _____ Per payday: \$ _____

One change I will try: _____



Adjust the plan as life changes

If the numbers do not balance

Protect immediate essentials such as housing, food, utilities and necessary transport. Review optional spending and check for avoidable fees or services you no longer use. If essentials and required repayments still exceed income, budgeting alone may not close the gap.

Contact your lender or bill provider early if you may miss a payment and ask about hardship support. A financial counsellor can help you work through debts and priorities. Avoid using new high-cost borrowing to fill a recurring shortfall.

Free help with debt: National Debt Helpline

1800 007 007 | ndh.org.au

Free, independent and confidential financial counselling. Check the website for current service hours.

Your monthly check-in

What cost more than expected? Are upcoming bills fully funded? Has income changed? Is my goal still realistic? What one adjustment would make next month easier?

Planning for a home?

A clear budget can help you understand your household cash flow and prepare for a conversation about a home loan. It does not guarantee approval or replace a lender assessment. To discuss buying or refinancing, contact Parker Mortgage & Finance through our website.

www.parkermortgageandfinance.com.au

Useful resources

ASIC Moneysmart: [How to do a budget](#) and [Budget planner](#).

National Debt Helpline: [About the service](#). Sources checked 2 October 2026.

This guide provides general financial education. It does not consider your individual objectives, financial situation or needs and is not personal financial, tax or legal advice. Examples are illustrative only. Seek appropriate advice for your circumstances.