



In this edition of Keystarter you'll find a lot of tips for saving money and an invitation to share your tips with other Keystart borrowers.

Keystart believes in trying to save you money – so that you can enjoy the savings – have a Happy Christmas!

Remember those essentials

How old is your house? Remember any house, whether new or a renovator's dream, will need maintaining to increase in value.

So it's necessary to set aside money for essentials such as painting, renewing guttering or - most important, particularly in the country areas - having an annual inspection for white ants.

While it may sound like a real horror story, one person who bought a house for just \$110,000 in the North West was left with a block and little more because he failed to take precautions against the insidious white ant.

Other essentials you will need to budget for are council and water rates and on a low budget it can help if you put away some money for these each payday.

Have a happy debt-free Christmas

We would like to wish you all a joyful Christmas, hopefully a peaceful New Year and, if you are going away, a happy holiday.

Christmas, New Year and holidays can be expensive times, but they can also be fun times without spending too much.

It's easy to be seduced into buying more than necessary by the sparkling displays in shops, television advertising and credit cards.

There will be no post-Christmas blues if you remember that while Keystart mortgage interest rates remain low, credit card interest rates are still high.

Don't spend up too big for Christmas and risk not having enough money available for your mortgage and other important payments such as insurance, power and telephone bills.

January and February are when financial problems arise because of buying on credit over Christmas and there's often a need to buy school clothes and books and extra money is needed.

Welcome to our website

Keystart is putting out the welcome mat on its new website www.keystart.com.au

Owning your own home has long been the 'Great Australian Dream' and Keystart is there to help you make that dream come true.

Keystart offers lots of support to make it simple to meet your home payments, like a safety net scheme for those bad times, such as unemployment and sickness, as well as advice on homes for sale.

All the new changes to Keystart loans and further information can be found by visiting the new website – but remember we are



happy to talk to you. Simply dial us on freecall 1300 361 517 for assistance.

Some ideas to help your budget

PART ONE

Tips from our Money Manager Olga Cooper

Next year is just around the corner.

Most of us will be making new year's resolutions, like quitting smoking, drinking or eating less, but the most important one is to review your budget.

If you've never budgeted before or need some help to prepare one, contact a Financial Counsellor for an appointment.

One of the easiest ways of meeting your budget is to look at how you and your family can cut down on spending.

Here's a few ideas:

- **Plan your meals for the week (or fortnight), making a list of the items you need to buy.** This ensures that you don't buy things you don't need.
- **Take a calculator when you shop.** Knowing how much you are spending helps and saves embarrassment at the check out.
- **Have a baking day.** Allow a day or half a day to cook biscuits, cakes and main meals. Having a meal prepared could cut out having to buy a take away when nobody in the house wants to cook. It is cheaper to make your own cakes and biscuits from scratch rather than buying ready-made or packets.

See if your bank has a Christmas club.

Work out how much you will spend next Christmas on presents (don't forget to add how much you will need for your Christmas meal). Divide the amount by either 52, if you get paid weekly or 26 if you get paid fortnightly. Have this amount direct debited to a Christmas club.

Make lunches for work/school.

Use the car less and save on petrol. Car pool, either to work or to collect the children from school.

There are lots of small changes that you can make to cut down on spending. If you have any that are helping your family to budget wisely, we would love to hear from you and will print them in the next column.

Please ring Olga Cooper on 9524 5184. Leave your idea on the answering machine if we can't answer the phone or you can email: sthroc@iinet.net.au

For free and confidential services call 9221 9411 for a Financial Counsellor in your area.

Olga Cooper is an experienced financial counsellor who works with Anglicare in the southern suburbs.

Energy efficiency in and around the home

Water wise is wallet wise

Did you know that 60 per cent of all scheme water is used on lawns and gardens?

If you have a new house you can design a water wise garden, with the best plant selection, layout, soil improvement, irrigation and mulching. Mulching is one of the best ways of saving water and benefits all plants.

Here are some water saving tips for new gardens from the Water Corporation:

- Do not plant unless it's necessary for functional or aesthetic reasons, instead consider paving and mulches
- Avoid excessive unshaded, hot and glaring paving by varying materials and arranging some planting to frame and shade it
- Use windbreaks, pergolas, screen, lattice, shade cloth and vines to shelter the house and outdoor living areas
- Keep flower beds dense and lawn to a minimum
- Pick up a garden design blueprint from a member of the Nursery Industry Association.

Water saving tips for an established garden include:

- Transplant shallow rooted plants, which are high water users, into groups - this should be done in winter
- Reconsider the type, area and location of any lawn, such as converting some into a low water use area with plants or ground treatments that are more water efficient. Check with a member of the Nursery Industry Association.

Further water saving tips can be found on the Water Corporation's website on www.watercorporation.com.au

More simple steps for Summer Savings

You'll find it's easy to live Energy Smart – you'll be saving money on your power bill and helping to protect the environment. Follow the tips below:

Water heating

Water heating accounts for about one third of your household energy use so any savings will have a significant impact on your power bill.

- Take shorter showers
- Install a AAA rated water efficient showerhead
- Fix leaky hot water taps as soon as possible
- Use the plug in basins, don't leave hot water taps running
- Rinse your dishes in cold water

- Wash clothes in cold water and wash a full load rather than several smaller loads
- If you have a solar hot water system, make sure your booster is turned off
- If your hot water system breaks down, install a solar hot water system, it will pay itself off in as little as two years.

Cooling

Unfortunately most homes in Western Australia are not designed to suit the local climate and many people end up paying with high energy bills to remain comfortable.

- Install ceiling insulation. It's the best way of reducing your summer cooling and winter heating requirements
- Close blinds and curtains during the day to prevent heat entering
- Open your windows once it's cooler outside than inside
- Close all doors around the area you are cooling
- Clean your air conditioner filter
- Put off jobs that produce heat or steam, such as cooking, washing and ironing, until cooler times of the day
- Plant a deciduous tree on the north side of your home to provide shading.

Refrigeration

Keeping your food and drinks cold can be a major area of energy use as your fridge/freezer runs for most of the day.

- Locate fridges/freezers away from the sun or heat producing appliances such as cookers and dishwashers
- Check the fridge seal to make sure it's tight – place a piece of paper between the seal, if it doesn't move it's a good seal
- Don't overload or underload the fridge – try to leave free space for air circulation
- Thaw frozen food in the fridge – by making your fridge cooler it won't have to work so hard
- Keep the fridge door shut as much as possible.

Reach for the Stars

When choosing a new appliance, first determine the appropriate size for your needs then look for the most energy efficient option in that size range. The energy rating label will help you decide – the more stars the more efficient and the lower the operating costs.

The Sustainable Energy Development Office can assist you to become more energy efficient by

providing free advice and information. For the cost of a local call, except from mobiles, phone the Energy Smart Line on 1300 658 158 or visit www.sedo.energy.wa.gov.au for online information.



ANOTHER SUSTAINABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT OFFICE INITIATIVE



In October Housing Staff joined in a corporate fun run from the Bell Tower at Barrack Street to the University of WA campus to raise funds for 'Uni Camp for Kids'. The run was very successful and enjoyable and realised a total amount of \$12,000 to go to a worthy cause.

Where are we?

If you need information or advice on your Keystart loan, your first point of call should be your Keystart retailer, unless your loan is directly managed by Keystart.

TLC Housing Society

77 Stirling Street, Perth 6000. Ph: 9328 2322
Country callers toll free 1300 364 606

University Housing Society

136 Stirling Highway, Nedlands 6009
Ph: 9389 0000
Country callers toll free 1800 627 444

Western Homebuyers Housing Society

Level 1, 263 Adelaide Tce, Perth 6000
Ph: 9219 7444
Country callers toll free 1300 657 344

Westland Housing Society

229 Stirling Highway, Claremont 6010
Ph: 9285 5555
Country callers toll free 1800 442 214



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www.keystart.com.au