

Cutting Costs (& Shopping Guide)

February 2007 (FA007)



1 Daily Food

- ❖ Making your own lunch each day is an easy way to save money.
- ❖ Cook meals at home. Cooking is an invaluable life skill, and cooking with friends can be a very enjoyable way of sharing experiences. It is a good way to learn if you haven't tried many recipes before. You can add to your cooking 'repertoire' as your confidence grows.
- ❖ Use the Microwave Ovens, which are freely available in the Student Union Building to heat up your lunch.

2 Bills

- ❖ Conserve energy to lessen the costs of electricity and gas.
- ❖ Because most bills (such as bills for Electricity and Telephone calls) arrive only every few months the cost can "creep up on you". It is easy to forget how many calls you've made, or how long you left the gas heater on etc. To avoid the shock of receiving (and having to pay for) a disturbingly high bill, think about your usage every day.
- ❖ Ask the service provider whether you can pay for your bill by instalments, or on a monthly basis. This arrangement makes it easier to keep track of your outlays. Gas, Electricity and Telephone providers may have payment schemes (sometimes called Easyway Payments) which allow you to pay amounts each fortnight or month.

Health Care Card holders can get a reduction in their gas bill during the peak winter months. Note: to receive a concession, the bill must be in the name of the Health Care Card holder.

Telephone Calls

- ❖ In shared households it's common for each member to keep a record of their telephone calls. Keep a writing pad and pen by the phone for each person to record the calls they make. If this doesn't work, you may want to consider getting a multi-number or pin number service on the phone, to separate the charges between housemates in the bill.
- ❖ Check and compare the prices (and cheaper call times) for the various international call providers. Phone cards can be good value for international calls.
- ❖ If managing your mobile phone bill is a problem, you may want to forcibly limit your calls by buying a prepaid sim card. This does not affect your incoming calls.

3 Transport

The cheapest ways to travel are of course, walking or cycling. Good second-hand bicycles will be for sale in some shops, and many are advertised in the *Trading Post* Newspaper, the student union noticeboards or even eBay. Most bike shops in Melbourne have regularly updated websites. Bicycles Network Australia has a list of links on their website at www.bicycles.net.au/links/shops.html

If you have a fair distance to travel, for Uni or work, the choice is probably between a car and public transport. A car does have advantages in terms of availability, time, flexibility, and comfort, but Public Transport is much cheaper and Melbourne has a good transport system, particularly if you are travelling around the city and the inner-suburbs.

Car pooling is an option. Talk with friends about using one car to travel to Uni, and share the fuel and parking costs.

Check the VicTrip web site for information about the public transport system, fares and the zones etc at www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au/

Comparing transport costs (Estimates based on August 2005 prices)

Type of cost	Estimate of cost	Notes
Registration & TAC charges	\$ 500 - 600 **	Paid together. Registration is \$160, TAC varies according to where you live
Insurance	400 - 500	
Fuel costs	780 - 1300	\$15 - \$25 per week
Maintenance	400	Servicing
Parking	630	\$7 p/day for 30 wks (3 days p/wk)
Repairs	?	Unpredictable
Likely total cost for the year	\$2710 - \$3330	Not including the cost of the car, depreciation & unexpected repairs.

** If you have a Health Care Card the Registration cost may be reduced by about \$80 for one car, if it is registered in the name of the card holder. You are still liable for "Third Party Insurance".

Note: parking is not available for students on the Parkville campus (except in the grounds of some Colleges for residents), and fairly hard to find around Carlton and Parkville during the day. Meter parking costs range from approximately \$3 for 4 hours to \$6 for 8 hours. The car park at University Square charges \$2.50 per hr or \$7.50 a day.

Public Transport (Zone 1 - inner city suburbs area)

Transport Concession Card ***	\$ 8.00
Monthly Fares (\$49.80 x 12)	<u>597.60</u>
	\$605.60

*** The Transport Concession Card is usually only available to full-time students who are not enrolled in a Masters or PhD and are citizens or permanent residents of Australia, or Exchange Students. The monthly Zone 1 fare without a concession is currently \$98.90. **Also important to note: If you are a current holder of a Health Care card, concession tickets can now be purchased without a concession card.**

The cost difference between using a car and public transport works out to be approximately \$48 per week. This difference could be significant in helping you meet the costs of food and rent.

4 Books and Stationery

Text books

Careful purchasing of books is essential. If you are living on a tight budget, only buy a book if it is obviously an essential text, or if you believe that you will be disadvantaged in your course without it and borrowing a copy from the library is difficult. If possible, books labelled as "Recommended Reading" in the subject guide should be borrowed. Unfortunately the prescribed book/s for subjects will change, and the editions sometimes change from year to year. If you're buying a second-hand textbook, be certain that the book has the **same title**, is the **same edition**, and was published in the **same year** as the textbook assigned for your subject. If in doubt, check with the lecturer or tutor for your subject.

The University Bookroom will provide a 10% discount for most books priced over \$30.

Paper & Stationery

Paper can be surprisingly expensive. Make sure you use both sides of the sheet for writing (or printing) draft versions of essay or assignments. Frequent printing of lecture notes can also add considerably to your stationery costs. (Remember: many of the student computer labs enforce a printing quota)

5 Entertainment

Getting involved with clubs and societies connected to your faculty or the Student Union is a great way of enjoying cheap activities. Check the Entertainment Guide (**The EG**) in The Age Newspaper on Fridays for information about free and cheap entertainment in and around Melbourne. Also, check the Student Union "This Day" web page or the bulletin available in the Union Building, for information about lunchtime concerts, special lectures, sporting events, club functions and other activities.

If you are a member of the student union, you can borrow videos from the Rowden White Library (in the Student Union) for free. You may also be surprised at the range of books, movies, music and other media offered by other libraries on campus, or even your local community library, that you can borrow for free.

Shopping Guide

1 Clothes

If you are coming to enrol at the University of Melbourne from interstate or overseas it is important to consider the cost of clothing. Melbourne has fairly distinct seasons and the temperature varies greatly throughout the year. In summer the temperature can reach 35 - 40 °C while in winter it will average 12 - 15°C during the daytime, with colder nights. It is likely to be cheaper for you to bring warm clothes from home rather than buy new ones.

There are a number of factory outlets that have popped up around Melbourne recently that can help you buy stylish items cheaply – as long as you don't get carried away buying more 'bargains' than you can afford.

Opportunity ('Op') shops - shops run by charity organisations such as St Vincent de Paul, and The Salvation Army are good places to buy cheaper new or recycled clothes. Weekend markets often stock clothing and shoes. Check **The Age** on Fridays for weekend market times and locations (some are called Trash and Treasure markets).

Are your favourite jeans or shoes starting to wear thin? Learning to sew is a simple yet invaluable skill and a great way to make costly items such as jeans and trousers last much longer. Many supermarkets and hardware shops sell shoe repair products such as 'shoo goo', inner soles and polish to help make your expensive footwear last for years past the normal 'use by' date.

2 Food and Household Supplies

Supermarket vs Convenience Stores

As you are probably aware, it is much cheaper to buy supplies (such as bread, groceries and household products) at a supermarket than purchase them at a Convenience Store (such as a 7-Eleven) or at a smaller local shop. It is now common for many supermarkets to be open 24 hours a day. Also, some supermarkets are cheaper than others. NQR ('Not Quite Right') Stores may be cheaper than other stores for groceries and household products.

Planning

Plan your purchases for your household. As much as possible, work out your menu for the coming week. If you are in a shared household, start up a contribution system (often called a 'kitty') with your housemates to purchase commonly used household products such as: coffee, tea, bread, milk, sugar, butter / margarine, rice, eggs, soap, cleaning products, etc.

Consider the generic or 'home-brand' products at the Supermarket, particularly products such as toilet paper, aluminium foil, plastic wraps, flour, sugar, tinned tomatoes, etc. They will be cheaper and are usually produced by the same manufacturers as well-known brands.

If possible (and it is difficult!), avoid impulse buying. Shopping when you feel hungry is probably not a good idea. And as for credit cards – if you can pay them off in time, you probably don't need one, and if you can't pay it off, you can't afford one! Try saving and budgeting first.

Fruit and vegetables

Fruit shops (greengrocers) may be cheaper than supermarkets for fruit and vegetables, particularly in areas such as Coburg, Richmond, North Melbourne, Brunswick and Preston.

Keep an eye on the prices.

The prices of fruit and vegetables can 'swing' quite dramatically, depending on the seasons.

Some types of apples may cost as much as \$5.99 per kilogram one week, and only \$1.99 per kilogram a few weeks later. Similarly, bananas can bounce from \$3.99 per kilogram down to \$1.99 per kilogram a short time later without an obvious explanation. The differences in price can have a significant effect on your budget.

Markets

The best places to shop for fruit, vegetables, fish and meat are the markets around town. The following is a list of the large undercover or street markets within easy distance from the city centre (all within **Zone 1** of the Transport System). These are roughly rated on the basis of closeness to the city, size, range of products and price.

	Market	Location / Public Transport routes
1	Queen Victoria	Cnr Elizabeth & Victoria Streets, Melbourne On Elizabeth Street or Victoria Street City Tram Lines
2	Preston	Murray Road, Preston Preston Station on Railway Line to Epping or Number 86 (Bundoora) Tram (1km from tram stop)
3	South Melbourne	Coventry Street, South Melbourne South Melbourne Stop on Light Rail Line to St Kilda or Number 1 (South Melbourne) Tram
4	Prahran	Commercial Road, Prahran Prahran Station on Railway Line to Sandringham or Number 72 (Camberwell) Tram
5	Camberwell	On Riversdale Road, Camberwell Camberwell Station on Railway Line to Lilydale or Belgrave or Number 75 (East Burwood) or Number 70 (Wattle Park) Tram
6	Richmond	Gleadell Street, off Bridge Road. Fruit & vegetables on Saturday only. Number 75 (East Burwood) or Number 48 (North Balwyn) Tram

Check the prices in the *Food Co-op* located in the Student Union building, particularly for items such as spices, grains and teas.

The book "The Foodies Guide" provides useful information and locations of food supply outlets in and around Melbourne.

Other ideas

'Mediterranean' Wholesalers

482 Sydney Road, Brunswick

Halal Food

Sydney Road, Brunswick

Asian Food Markets

Victoria Street, Richmond

3 Furniture and Other Household Items

Opportunity Shops sell cheap furniture, and other items such as crockery and cutlery. The *Good Shepherd Buying Service* is available to Health Care Card holders. This service acts as a broker in order to find a better price on household goods for the buyer who then pays for the item and any delivery costs. They can be contacted on: 9417 4666. Also check out the student union noticeboards, eBay or the *Trading Post* newspaper, for a wide range of second hand furniture and household goods for sale.

Financial Aid - Student Services
Ground Floor, Baldwin Spencer Building
University of Melbourne

Web: www.services.unimelb.edu.au/finaid/