



# Christmas Spending Without the Splurge

Words by Leanne Bielik



Based on my position as a financial planner, it would be expected of me to suggest that Christmas expenses form part of the annual household budget. Ensuring that Christmas is included in your cashflow requires you to consider Christmas costs throughout the year and set aside an amount each week or fortnight to ensure you have your Christmas shopping budgeted for.



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WEALTH



## Christmas Spending- Without the Splurge



# Planning ahead

Forward planning and purchasing gifts during sales, even in January, is fantastic but is not always possible if you are time-poor and do not give Christmas a thought until the carols are playing in stores soon after Halloween.

Therefore, if you are not super organised with Christmas planning and if you don't have gifts already purchased and wrapped before the mince pies hit the supermarket shelves - this is for you.



## Secret Santa



Many families do Kris Kringle or Secret Santa to avoid having to buy endless gifts for every person in the family. Agreeing on a budget per person and drawing names out of a hat means that each person only has to purchase one gift, and everyone gets something. Secret Santa also works in the workplace! - not to mention it can be so much fun.



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*Adults are outdated children*



If you have a large family, you can discuss buying gifts for just the kids and perhaps consider limiting the gift value to a certain amount.



It's so important to be open to these conversations with your family to avoid any anxiety about managing expectations - both ways. If you are thinking of broaching this topic and discussing gift limits with a family member - PLEASE always consider the difference in your families and their incomes/circumstances, particularly as the added pressure of hiking interest rates and increased cost of living can effect some families more than others.



For example, a gift limit of \$50 per child is not going to be fair if you're a one child family and the family you're buying for has three children.

## Shop Local

You may have heard the saying 'when you buy from a small business, an actual person does a little happy dance' - well it's true.

When shopping local, money stays in the community, compared to buying imported items from big brands. Buying local can often save you money because there are fewer hands involved. If you are hitting the shops, please consider small businesses in your local community first.



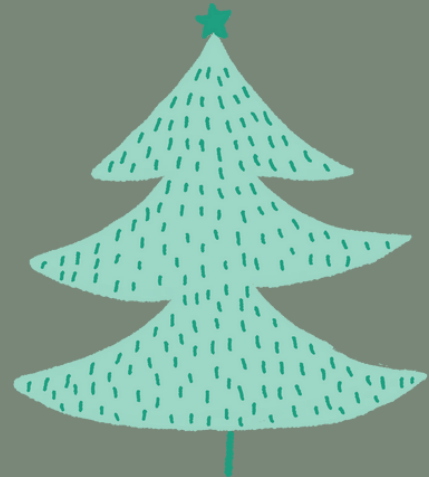
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*P*re loved is Reloved



Another favourite trick of mine to save on Christmas shopping, is opting for second-hand items. I do not mean regifting former unwanted gifts, I mean buying pre-loved gifts from Facebook Marketplace, eBay or even an Op shop. Not only does this save money, but also helps reduce clutter, and saves unwanted items from ending up in landfill.



Shopping second hand can be tricky, but here's a list of second-hand gifts that would be ideal:

- Homewares
- Designer handbags
- Puzzles (as long as they are intact)
- Vintage items
- Jewellery (everyone loves bling)
- Antiques
- Preloved video games
- Books
- Sporting equipment



Something I purchased recently in an op shop at a cost of \$70 was a bunch of individual items to make a high tea set – tea pot, cups and saucers, cake stands and sugar bowls. All of which made a one-of-a-kind gift. Popping them in a beautiful box with tissue paper made such a stunning gift.



# Christmas Spending- Without the Splurge



*Your family needs more of your presence, not more of your presents*

Your time is the most valuable gift you can give your loved ones.

Before you go out and buy a bunch of 'stuff' for everyone - why not ask them what they really need. Quite often that could just be the gift of you and your time, with no dollar figure attached, such as a coffee and a chat, an offer to help clean their house, or even mowing their lawn.



People can be embarrassed about asking for gifts, so maybe offer to help with a task they cannot do themselves; cook some meals to stock the freezer or babysit so that someone can have a break and some time out for a reset.

Be the person to give someone what they really need this holiday season without buying a bunch of 'stuff' they'll never use. After all, gifts of time and love are surely the basic ingredients of a truly Merry Christmas.

*Merry Christmas*

