



Living More with Less

# Redefining the Good Life

FEBRUARY 2026

Welcome

move away from door

sit with people they don't know

If you don't want camera please sit near windows

# Find a friend



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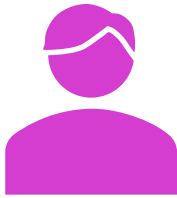
Q. Why are you here today?

Why are you here today?

2 people share their reasons & values

Hands-up for others same

## Three things to take away today



I'm here in the hope of passing on three points  
Individual choices matters, especially as fortunate as we are  
We in this room, are very fortunate  
The "good life" as we live it, is rather nice

# Gratitude for the guardians

JW Lindt, No 37 Bushman and an Aboriginal man (1873) Grafton Regional Gallery Collection, Grafton

Gathered on Turrbal and Jagera country  
Guardians of this area, Meanjin, the place of the water lilly  
Maintained a steady state model and intimate understanding of human  
place in nature over thousands of years  
Recognise our wealth privilege comes from exploitation of nature and  
people  
Look to the indigenous elders for guidance and greater wisdom

Phones on silent. Mind the camera if you have to leave

# Inhibitions to involvement



Vietnam motorcyclist

# Breaking barriers



Emelie hospital

Its no good just being a spectator

Grateful for those who did something & the social capital

# More about me



Father of two beautiful and sometimes challenging kids  
Qualified to teach, experienced engineer  
Compulsive optimiser  
Data nerd  
Just two numbers – the crux of the presentation



How many earths



# What does it cost to save one **human life**

USING THE MOST EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS?

Cost to save a human life

# Volunteering in Vietnam



Volunteering not good

Earn to give instead – 100x more good

Went on bikes – remote, wet, hot, hilly, challenging

# Mountaintop meltdown



Next time by bus

# Mellowing in the Mekong



Mild climate, in nature, family, local living  
Snooker and karaoke

# Lessons in Laos



Laos rural with family – like evolution  
vs urban Cf. European mentality & contempt

# Asceticism in Australia



Started giving

Ascetic life – no fridge, hot water, car or elevators, nothing new

Worked in sustainable design

Felt like martyrdom – signs of trouble

Cycled to Broome for charity

“Nothing new” wedding

An invite from Cambodia

# Burma by bus



Are we there yet?

The cost of comfort

Rushing on to each destination – missing the journey

Lessons for life

Could have been a car – lonelier

Afraid of engaging with community

# Connecting with community

Afraid of engaging with people  
Floods 2011 – brought us together with neighbours  
Adam birth, more community, but climate inaction  
Instinct to protect

# Caught in the “car”



Bought car

Doomsday prepping – isolation, overwork

Clashing with values, fear of people

Tried being normal cocktails and Europe holiday

Fires, floods – people were there for us

# Winding up the windows

Insecurities – self preservation, secrecy

“Winding windows up”

Shut people out

Fighting and stress at home – projection, shame, sick

Moral injury like PTSD

# The unwiped windscreen



Starting to wake up  
Insects in 1990s vs recently  
While I was self-indulgent

# Blame for biodiversity loss?

Pollution

Beef & dairy

Urban development

Why are the bugs gone? Aussies are winners at killing things  
What is driving other extinctions?

# Blame for biodiversity loss

<https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/management/mapping/statewide-monitoring/slats/slats-reports/2022-23-slats-report/statewide-breakdown>

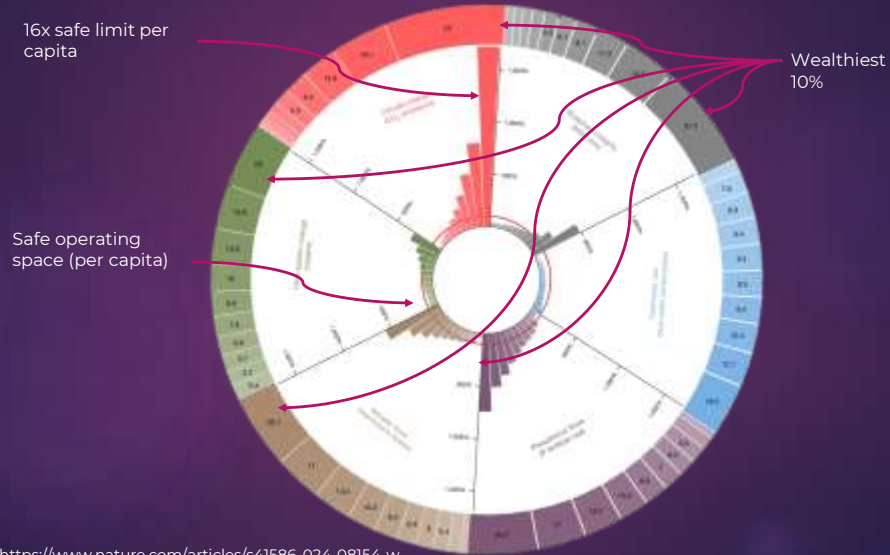
Pollution

Beef & dairy

Urban development

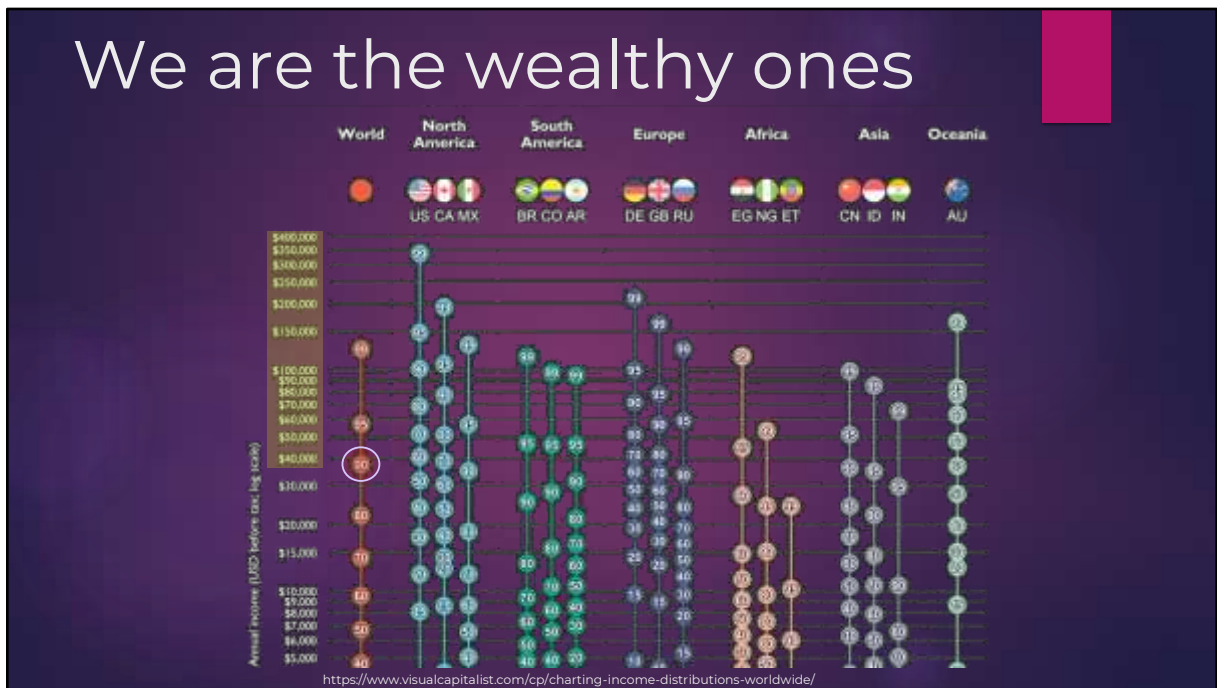
Land clearing for livestock and feed 86% of land-clearing in Qld. Typical worldwide

# Accepting accountability



Safe to say that the top 10% have the most opportunity to make a difference

# We are the wealthy ones



So it's me. I am a big part of the problem and have the opportunities

# Dancing with death

**D**epressed, diseased & dissatisfied

**E**nvious, exhausted, egoistic

**A**ngry, alone, autopilot

**T**imid, terrified

**H**edonistic, helpless

We had become great consumers. A low point

**D**epressed, diseased & dissatisfied

**E**nvious, exhausted, egoistic

**A**ngry, alone

**T**imid, terrified

**H**edonistic, helpless

COVID isolation

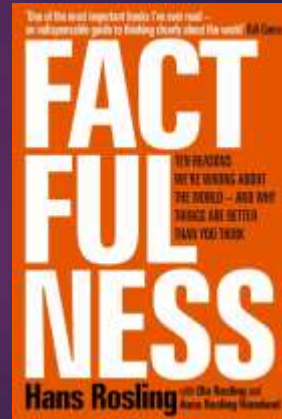
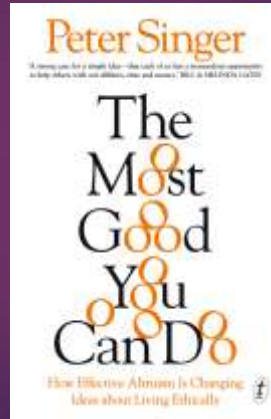
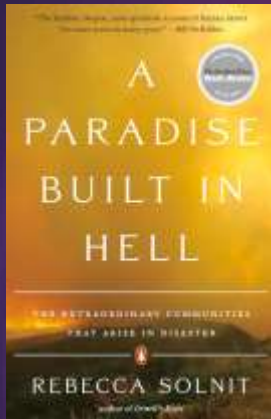
Emelie tumour

Dad cancer + farm accidents

Friends turned away for their wellbeing.

started a re-awakening.

# Courage to quit the “car”



More bad. But it takes hope and inspiration. Took care of loving friends –& psych.  
Solnit  
Singer,  
Rosling

Change takes time. Decline in

- Child mortality
- Violent & drink-driving deaths
- Ozone depletion & acid rain
- Smoking & cancer rates

Major increase in

- Minority rights
  - Renewable energy
- most things get better with time. Takes inspiration

Greta Thurnberg, Bob Brown, Robin Greenfield

# Praise for poppies



Tall poppies help others grow tall. Asking for help is showing vulnerability.  
Building trust. Help me.

Consider (we'll come back to it)

1. What have you done for greater good?
2. What would you do if you had more time or money?
3. Who has inspired you?

Come back to this



# From crisis to core values

What if we fully embrace our values?

Scary. Few friends left to lose.

Courage to be authentic

Incorporated values into work

Started talking about what mattered

Joined groups representing our values

Practiced living without car, being deliberate in all choices

# Conquering capitalism

$$\text{Contentment} = \frac{\text{Haves}}{\text{Wants}}$$

Recognise the abundance in all forms of capital. Social, natural, knowledge, emotional compare to old days  
Must accept **imperfection** – deal with demons of doubt. Talk about shame

- No TV = less shame

# Practicality over perfection



Choose practical

Small home, cannot fit much stuff,  
cheap to maintain, quick to clean

Resisted major renovations (status)

Near train station

Work & school close so riding, no gym.

Must choose priorities

Nothing new, one-in one-out & repair

Freegan diet & now DD

Picnics & parties not eating out

# Living more



What day of the week?  
Conflict replaced by love and attention  
Festivals, games  
Growing and foraging food  
Cycling and sailing adventures  
Learning new things  
Going slower  
Feeling richer by giving  
Breakfast & lunch in the garden  
Wonderful new friends

# Connecting with community



Local:

Childcare

Tradespeople

Ride sharing

Free entertainment

Sharing resources

Further afield:

free holidays

knowledge

# Benefits of the “bike” life

**P**ositive emotion  
**E**ngagement  
**R**elationships  
**M**eaning  
**A**chievement  
**H**ealth

Change is hard. Perspective matters. Embracing adversity and discomfort as opportunities and reminder we are alive.

**Positive emotion:** self-trust, wonder & gratitude, hope in the dark

**Engagement:** presence, attention, pace, discomfort finding that “flow state”

**Relationships:** trust & care with self, with each other, with nature. Finding empathy. Being seen & heard. Playing

**Meaning:** being part of something bigger, living true to values

**Achievement:** learning and completing things that build capability, resilience

**Health:** reducing stress, eating well, sleep, nature and exercise

Our lifestyle achieves these wellbeing factors without any special effort or exercise. Self reinforcing

# Giving more money



Recognising the abundance gave us the confidence to give more  
Gave \$50,000 to effective charities.

# What does it cost to save one human life

USING THE MOST EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS?

\$5,000

\$10,000

\$10M

Gave \$50,000 to effective charities.  
How many lives?

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# Giving more blood

A microscopic view of numerous red blood cells, appearing as bright red, biconcave discs against a dark background. The cells are scattered across the frame, with some in sharp focus and others blurred in the background. A small, solid magenta rectangle is positioned in the upper right corner of the image area.

Gave 3 lots of blood. Organised for at least 5 others to give. How many give?

# How many Australians...

## Donate Blood?

3%

5%

10%

## Receive Blood?

10%

20%

33%

What proportion of people give blood? And need it?

# How many Australians...

## Donate Blood?

3%

5%

10%

## Receive Blood?

10%

20%

33%

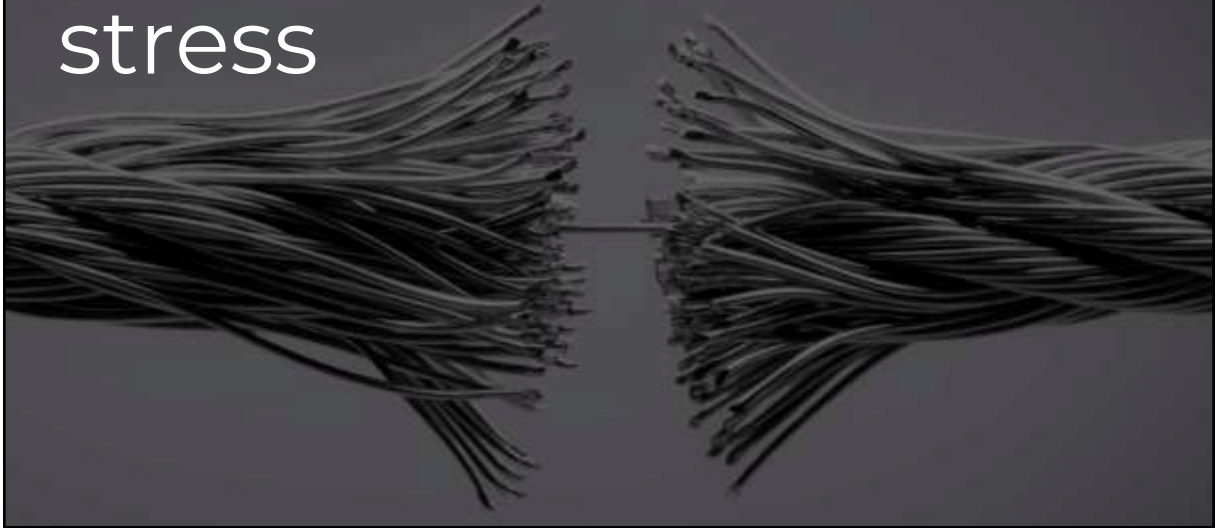
3% give and 1/3<sup>rd</sup> need it

# Giving more time



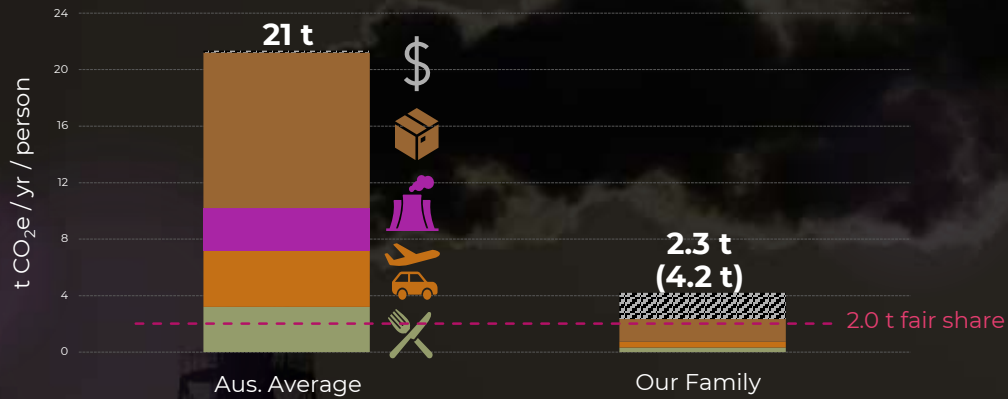
- Repair café
- Tree planting
- Litter collection
- Food bank
- Interest groups – Deep Adapt., Hot Futures, Reddit and Facebook
- Neighbours, lonely
- Future generations - slow travel

...with less  
stress



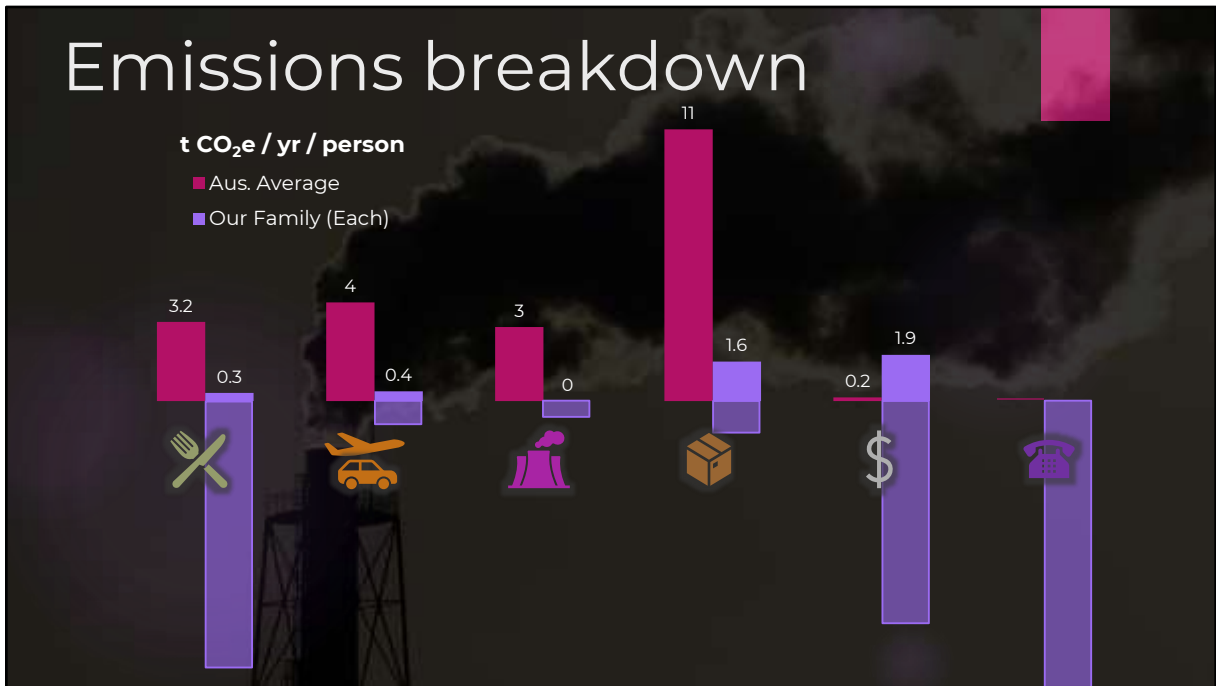
Less Stress –  
Better boundaries  
More confidence  
Less Shame  
Less anger and fighting  
Less work

# ... with less emissions



Global budget is < 2t per person for 50% chance of < 1.5 degree rise. 0 t for 75% chance

4.2 t is counting the impacts of our donations



Food: Freegan diet. Offset by diverting from land-fill and buying tree planting credits to reduce farmland

Transport: No flying. Low car use (1000km). Train from Sydney. Offset carpooling and higher wind only boat travel.

Energy: Greenpower, efficiency. Offset by exporting excess

Goods & Services: Big things matter. Home and infrastructure. Taxes, school & sports fees. Offset by diverting waste

Finance & Altruism: impacts spread across hundreds of people.

Collective action. Offsets through work solar PV & reduced waste



How many Earths exploited  
for everyone to live the Australian lifestyle?

One

Three

Five

How many earths



How many Earths exploited  
for everyone to live the Australian lifestyle?

One

Three

Five

Five. Show artwork

# Starting the shrink



Free ways to get started on this journey

Be messy and real

Meet neighbours, ask for help

Stop and taste the fruit - reward

Swap beef for beans

Try a week without a

...car

...TV

...animal products

Feel the heat, grieve, find love again

Be firm with boundaries with work

# Sharing is caring



Share your

... spare rooms

... IP AirBNB to long term rental

... attention to people not tech bros

... tools, toys

... love it multiplies

... blood

... money, effective

# Pair & Share

- ▶ What have you done for the greater good?
- ▶ What would you do if you had more time, energy or money?
- ▶ Who inspires you and who could you inspire?

Share your stories

What have you done?

What would you do?

Who inspires you and who could you inspire?

Pass books

2 minutes

Ask for 3 contributions – raise the poppies

# Paying it forward



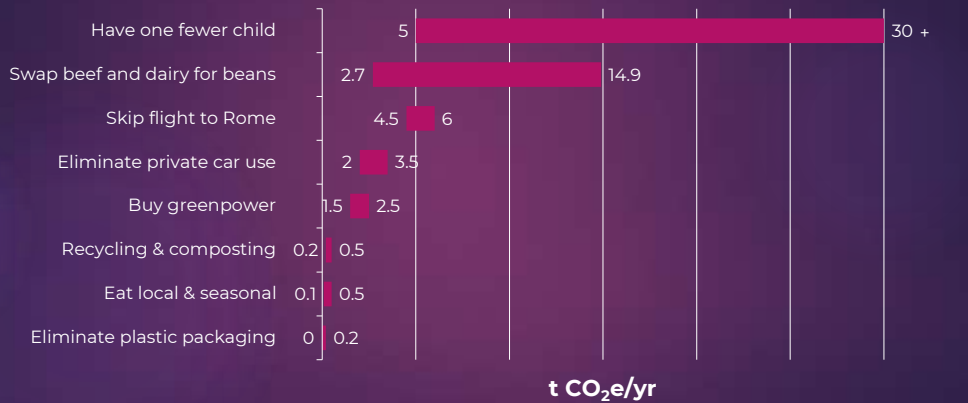
Putting money where our mouths are

Money from my account, but I didn't work hard for it. Result of existing social & knowledge capital (privilege).

If hard work made us rich every African women would be

If you need the money. Use it. Pay it forward when you can. If not, help me return it help others, by giving to an effective charity

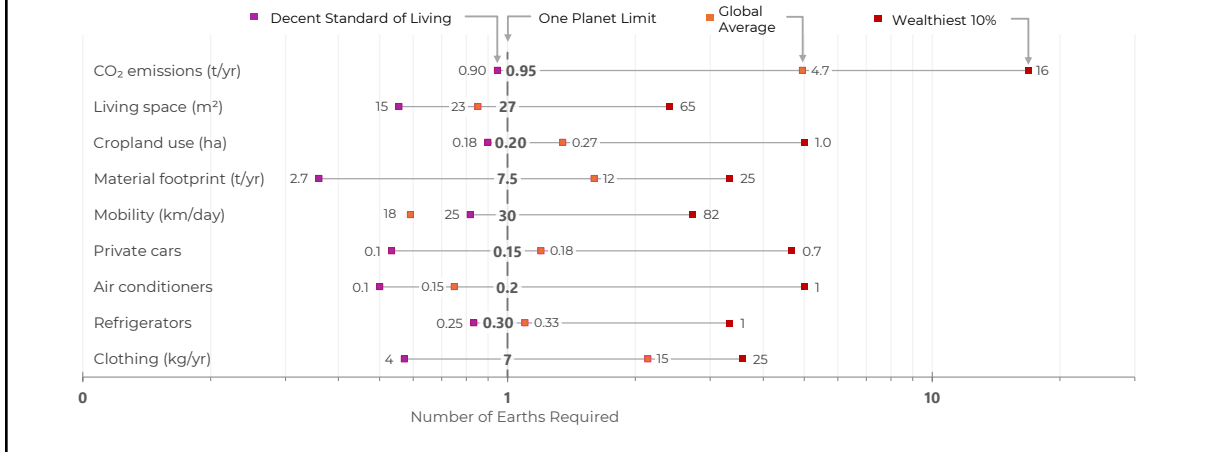
# Individual climate impacts



Child impacts based on reaching carbon neutral by 2070 with half emissions to each parent, ¼ for grandchildren

Beef and beans impacts show low range for direct diet change only. High range for includes revegetation

# One planet living in numbers



See [livingmorewithless.org/one-planet-living-in-numbers](http://livingmorewithless.org/one-planet-living-in-numbers)

# Projected net worth



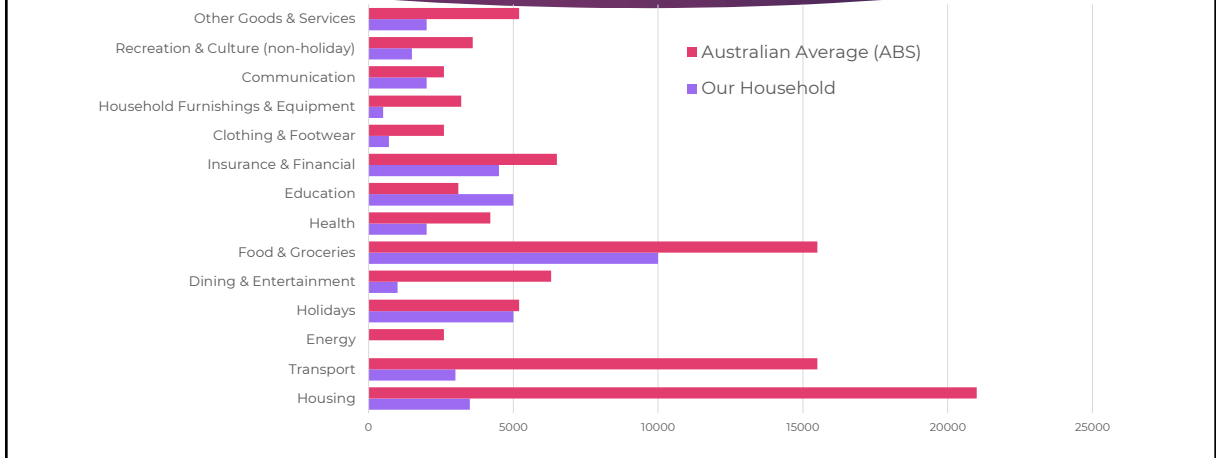
Conservative estimates for growth in investments

Maintaining current spending until children are 25, adjusted for inflation

Donating 2% of net worth including PPOR

Drawing on Super from age 67

# Comparison of expenses (2024)



Australian Average based on ABS 2017 figures (latest available) adjusted for inflation

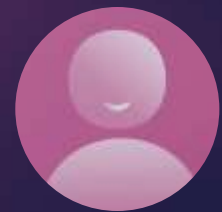
# Who loves pesticide the most?

**Total biocide usage per person**

Asia

Europe

Oceania



Who uses the most poison?

# Who loves pesticide the most?

<http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/RP>

Asia

Europe

Oceania



We do! We love to kill things