

actnow presents:

Making CHANGE...

turning your vision into action

Wanna start something?

The aim of this booklet is to help you with taking action! When we say action, we are talking about doing something that has a positive impact on your world (regardless of whether your world means your everyday life, or if you're thinking more locally, nationally, or globally).

It really doesn't matter how big or small your action is, because every little bit counts.

This booklet is split into the key stages involved in making change happen. These are:

1. VISION
2. EMPOWER
3. PLAN
4. ACT
5. REFLECT

Stop...

Before we go any further, have a quick think about examples of action or changes that you've witnessed.

Who was involved?

What happened?

Why did they take action?

What were the results?

How come it turned out the way it did?

Go!







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vision(ing)

Everyone has a 'vision' - an idea of what you want your world to be like. Everybody will have different visions relating to our different experiences of life.

Working out your vision will help guide you in taking action.

What's your vision?

When we talk about 'taking action', what we're usually also talking about is 'creating change'.

One of the easiest ways to start creating change is to have a clear idea of what you're working towards (which may still change along the way!).

It's like going on any journey or adventure in life - you're far more likely to reach your destination if you know what it looks like (even if you don't yet know how to get there).

There are six steps you need to go through to establish your vision for change:

- 1 > Think from the end
- 2 > Get creative
- 3 > Get real
- 4 > Get specific
- 5 > Get it down
- 6 > Test the vision

Before you work through these steps, it may also help to brainstorm the things that are most important to you in life right now. What can you do to protect these? Or, is there something you would like to change about any of them? Is there something you'd like to see less or more of?

Check out the story about Erin's action on the opposite page. For more examples, head to www.actnow.com.au

Step 1: Think from the end

Forget about what is or isn't achievable and tell us about a change you would like to see 'one day'. It could even be something that takes years or decades to achieve.

E.g. The change Erin ultimately wanted to see one day was the end of the water shortage in Australia.



Step 2: Get creative

What does it will look like, feel like and be like when the change has taken place? Imagine it! Describe it! Visualise it as much as possible!

E.g. An Australia without water shortages would mean better crops for farmers, prices of food would drop, people living in rural areas would lead happier lives and the grass would always be green.



Step 3: Get real

Okay, now it's time to think about what's required to make this change happen? It's a good idea to work backwards, from the endpoint to the beginning so you can figure out the key steps. What are the major actions that need to occur?

- E.g.*
1. There would no longer be water shortages in Australia
 2. There would be alternative water supplies available like desalination plants, and water saving systems (like water recycling)
 3. The government would fund and research alternative water supplies
 4. People would lobby the government to make alternative water sources available and make water recycling options readily available
 5. People would make an effort to use less water in everyday life
 6. More people would be aware of the water crisis and what they can do to address it



1.

2.

3.

Tip #1 research

It might help to find out a bit more about the issues related to your vision to understand why they are happening.

This will make Step 3 a lot easier too!

Check out the research toolkit on ActNow:
<http://www.actnow.com.au/Toolkit/Research.aspx>

Erin's 40 hour drought



Erin participated in a nation-wide action called the '40 hour Drought' in 2007.

The action challenged participants to use only 40 litres of water in 40 hours. As part of her action, Erin also created a short film about her experience and uploaded it to ActNow (www.actnow.com.au).

Erin's action is used as an example throughout the rest of this booklet. You can see how she worked through the V-E-P-A-R steps to get her action off the ground, and read her reflection story (on page 27). Check out her member profile on the ActNow website (which also links to her short film):

<http://www.actnow.com.au/Members/erinkoneill.aspx>

Tip #2 break it down

If you're finding it hard to be specific in step 4, try breaking down one of the key changes you identified in step 3.

Tip #3 think action

Try brainstorming different ways that people take action. Could you do something similar? Check out the list below for a few different ideas:

- Educate other people / raise awareness
- Sign or write a petition
- Write a letter to a member of parliament (or someone else in a position of power)
- Write a letter to your local newspaper
- Donate something or raise \$
- Start a community group
- Do less or more of something (e.g. stop buying things from unethical companies or drive less)
- Organise a meeting or protest
- Volunteer your skills or time
- Participate in an existing action or event

See the extras section on page 30 for a starting guide on where to get help with common actions.

Step 4: Get specific

Which of these actions is possible to get going within the next 3 weeks? Just choose one. Keep it really simple, specific and definitely achievable...

E.g. People could make an effort to reduce their water use



Step 5: Get it down

Now write down your action as a positive 'action statement'.

E.g. I am going to participate in the 40 hour drought and make a short film about my experience



Step 6: Test the vision

One of the best ways to test if you are on the right track is to seek feedback from others.

Ask a friend or someone you trust: "Is this realistic in the next 3 weeks?"

If the answer is "No way" - ask them, "Okay, what would be possible?". Then go back to Step 5 and change the 'I statement' so that it is more realistic!

You may even need to go back to step 4 and pick a different action that is more achievable.



4.

5.

6.





empower(ing)

Now that you've created your vision for change, it's time to get empowered, that is: 'give power to your vision'.

This is something that's best done in groups or with a mate.

Giving power to your vision

So you've now got a terrific vision (or maybe more than one!). You've got a few different options:

- start planning the steps to get there.
- launch straight into action.
- put it to the side and let it sit there, maybe for a long . . . long . . . long . . . time.
- get totally overwhelmed, talk ourselves out of it and give up before we even begin.

Of course, there's another option. It involves simply empowering ('giving power to') your vision.

There are four steps:

- 1 > Drawing on your strengths
- 2 > Working out the good bits
- 3 > Scoping out potential challenges
- 4 > Research + thinking about other stuff

Work through these on the following page.

Step 1: Drawing on your strengths

Have a think about what strengths or skills you have that may help you in achieving your vision. Do you have any special knowledge or interests that might help?

E.g. Erin was interested in making a short film and thought it would make her action more interesting.

Step 2: Working out the good bits

For your vision, come up with a couple of positives: What do you like about it? What makes it important or worthwhile? Did you like the passion that came through? Or was it the simplicity?

E.g. Erin liked the challenge of living off only 40 litres of water over 40 hours.

Step 3: Scoping out potential challenges

Now, thinking about the timeframe, what challenges can you see for this vision? The money or resources required? Anything else that comes to mind? Most challenges can be overcome, but it helps to know what they are.

E.g. Erin didn't own a video camera, so she borrowed one.

Step 4: Research + thinking about other stuff

Is there any extra info or good tips that could help you make the vision a reality?

E.g. Erin found out how much water is used for everyday things like flushing the toilet, and came up with ways to use less (e.g. using baby wipes to wash her face).

1.

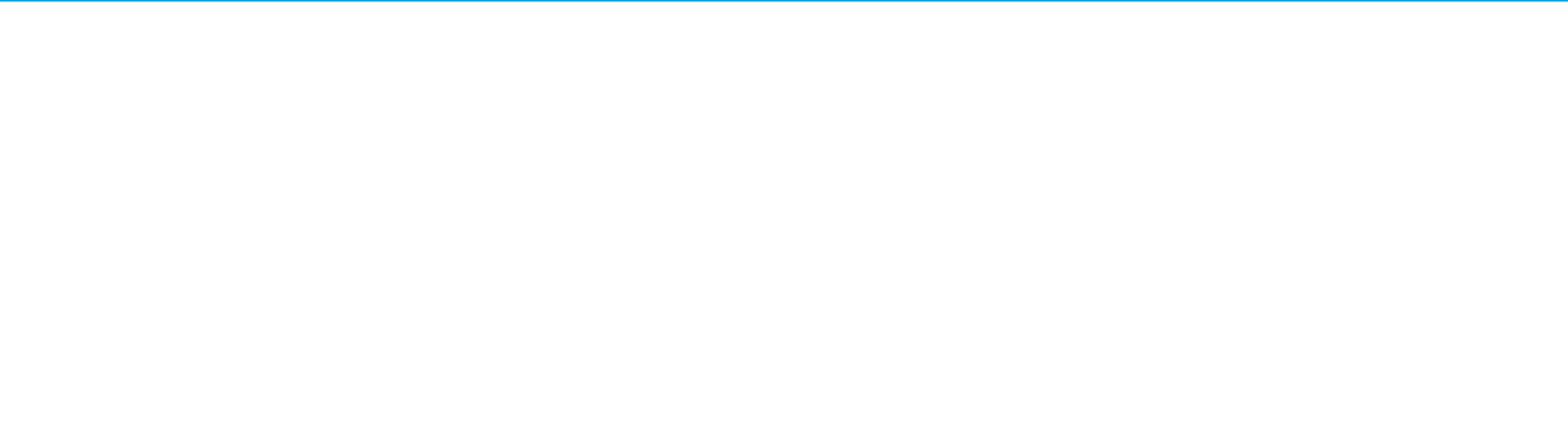
2.

3.

4.

'Be the change you want to see in the world'

- Mahatma Gandhi





plan(ning)

With your vision now ready, it's time to work out an action plan.

There are many different ways to create a good plan. To get started, here are some planning basics which apply to a wide range of visions.

How are you gonna get there?

Having a plan for your action is like having a map when driving. Thinking through all the key things you need to do and organise them beforehand will make it much easier to get your action off the ground.

Planning also involves working out who is going to do what - which makes it easier for everybody involved to get on with doing their part of the action.

Lastly, planning also helps you see potential problems and work out ways to address them before things get too messy.

Have a look at the planning chart on the opposite page. It shows how Erin planned her 40 hour drought action.

When you're ready, use the table provided on the following pages to create a step by step plan outlining how your action will get off the ground.



The planning chart:

Key things to do

What are the key things you'll need to do to 'get there'? List of all the key steps or tasks that need to happen. Work through the list and sort out what order things need to happen in.

Materials

What will you need in order to do each task? Will you need office equipment (e.g. photocopier, phone, or an internet connection)? Or food for meetings, prizes for raffles or technical equipment for film making? Are there any unusual things that you will need to complete any of your key tasks?

Who

What people and/or organisations will be involved in this part of the action? Write down who is responsible for making sure this task is completed.

Costs

How much is it going to cost to put this plan into action? Think about the \$\$\$ as well as any other costs involved (e.g. your time, other resources). What can you borrow or get donated?

Time / by when

How long will each thing take and/or when do you need each task done by?

How you will know it's been completed

What will you be able to see or know, that will tell you that you've completed each task successfully? It might be a record of how many people participate in an event, the notes from a meeting, or something that relates to the impact of your action.

Be realistic in deciding what measures you put in place.

Key things to do	Materials	Who	Costs	Time / by when	How you will know it's been completed
Get registration pack for 40 hr drought	Internet access	Erin	\$0	Jan	Will receive pack in post
Register for 40 hour drought	Internet access	Erin	Sign up fee	Jan 7	Will receive confirmation from event organisers
Do research into how much water is used for everyday things	Internet access	Erin	\$0	Jan 7	Will have list of how much water is used for each action
Contact Inspire (organisation) to borrow camera, editing software + ask for help	Phone	Erin + Inspire	\$0	Jan 7	Will have camera +
Buy DV tapes	N/A	Erin	\$15	Jan 8	Will have tapes
Plan what to film	Paper + pens	Erin	\$0	Jan 10	Will have film plan ready
Prepare for the 40 hr drought (i.e. buy supplies)	Baby wipes (to wash with)	Erin	\$5	Jan 11	Will have all supplies needed for the 40hr drought
Participate in the 40 hr drought! (film + log water use)	Camera, water log, baby wipes	Erin	\$0	Jan 14	Will have log of how much water was used
Edit film (with help of staff at Inspire)	Footage, software, computer	Erin + Inspire staff	\$0	Jan 20	Will have completed film
Upload film to ActNow.com.au	Internet access, film	Erin	\$0	Jan 21	Film will be uploaded on ActNow

[illegible]

1. Fill out the 'key things to do' column first

To start off with - don't worry about the rest of the chart and just focus on working out the key things that you need to get done to complete your action.

2. Work out what you'll need (materials)

3. Write down the names of the people and/or organisations who will be involved

Be sure to write down who will be responsible for making sure the task is completed. Write leader next to this person's name.

4. Work out what each thing (materials included) will cost

5. Work out how long each thing will take and by when you'll need it finished

6. Work out how you will know it's done

Tip #4 Be really really specific

The more detailed your plan, the less room there is for confusion!

Try to get it to a point where you could hand over your chart to a complete stranger and feel confident that they would be able to follow it clearly.

Include info about things as detailed as writing an agenda for a meeting, printing and distributing flyers, researching more about a particular issue or writing a list of people/organisations to contact.

By writing down these details, big and small, you are also more likely to spot any potential problems, and end up with a much more realistic idea of how long things will take.

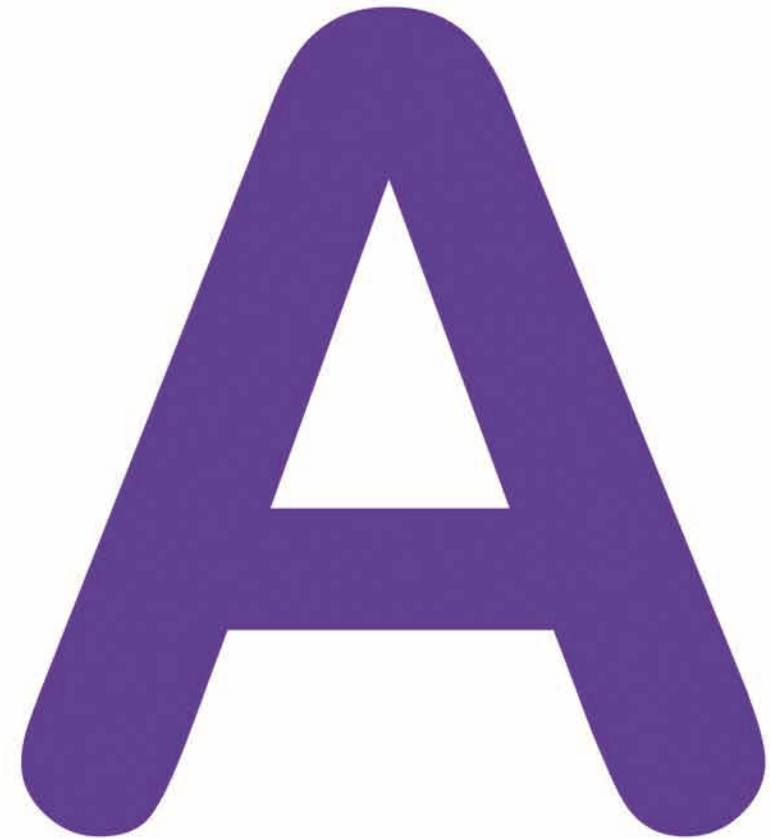


Tip #5 Pack in 'fat'

Not literally!

What we mean is, allow extra time than you think things will actually take. This will give you more flexibility and may come in really handy if any extra things or problems pop up that you didn't plan for.





act(ing)

The moment has come...! Here are some tips for making your experience go as smoothly as possible

We have lift off!

Congratulations for getting to the most exciting part of the journey!

You've left your comfort zone, and while things will hopefully be smooth sailing, you will more than likely take a hit or two.

How are you going to get over this and stay on target?

First of all - remember that things don't always go to plan. Even if things turn out differently to what you anticipated doesn't mean that it wasn't worthwhile. Think about what you've got to gain personally from the experience.

Have a read through the following tips on staying motivated, and take some notes on what you will do to make sure you're prepared for when the going gets tough.

Also: read some inspiring action stories at ActNow (www.actnow.com.au)

Staying motivated

- Focus on the rewards. It's not all fairy floss - it's hard work, but it's rewarding.
- Remind yourself why you are doing what you are doing
- Take a moment to think about what you've done, and how much you've changed since you decided 'I'm going to do something about this'.
- Take a well-earned break every now and again.
- Call a friend and earbash them about what you've been up to.

Get advice / help from others

- Seek advice when you're faced with challenges. You'll be surprised at how eager people will be to give you advice and support.
- Talk to friends, family, workmates, youth workers...Other people might think of ideas that you hadn't thought of at all.
- Check out the extras section at the back of the book for some handy contacts.

Persist

Taking action is hard work, so well done for channeling your passion into something useful. You're not just whinging about what's wrong with the world. You'll learn from your challenges and you'll be a better person for it.

No matter how your action goes, it will have been worth it.

You're putting your beliefs into practice, so be proud of yourself and just see how many people will be inspired to do something because they've seen you work so hard. Remember: actions speak louder than words.

Notes for lift off:

**‘Knowing is not enough; we
must apply. Willing is not
enough; we must do.’**
- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe





reflect(ing)

You've done it! Congratulations. You're almost done.

But before you can party (or have a sleep in), we have a few words of advice on how to move on to bigger and better things...

Take some time to take stock

You made it! It's time to celebrate all the hard work you just accomplished! It's also really important to reflect on your experiences and evaluate the outcome, the progress you've made, lessons learnt and obstacles you've overcome.

Ask yourself the following questions and make a few brief notes. It'll only take about 10 minutes and it'll be really helpful for when you start your next action.

Next Steps....

Use your answers to post a 'reflection story' about your action on ActNow. It won't take long and your action will continue to have an impact by inspiring others. Use your ActNow blog as another audience to broadcast to.

Then tell other people about your action. Tell your friends, family, teachers and everyone you can think of. Tell them what you learnt, what you changed, what challenges you overcame and inspire them to take action themselves.

Check out Erin's reflection story on the opposite page. Head to ActNow (www.actnow.com.au) for more inspiring stories!

Q1. Did you achieve your goals?

Were the results as you expected? Dig up your action plan and mark off the things you've achieved.



Q2. What did you learn?

About yourself, about others, about taking action?



Q3. What are the 3 best things about doing what you did?



Q4. What 3 things would you do differently next time?



Erin's 40 hour drought reflection



'I participated in the 40 Hour Drought after researching my opinion article [for ActNow] about recycled water. Water is a big deal in Australia, yet people don't utilise the resource like they should. Did you know that one 10-minute shower could use up to 80 litres of water? And all of that just goes down the drain and eventually back into the ocean. It's downright wasteful. So I decided to try to make do with very little.

And try I did: but a single-flush toilet at uni foiled my plans. I didn't make it. I used 44.5 litres in the 40 hours. I didn't shower or do laundry or wash the dishes. I washed myself with baby wipes. But I learned that simple things can save water, without giving up my daily shower.'





extras

Need some pointers on where to go to get help with your action?

The Guide

We've put together a shortlist of places, people and resources that might help you get your action off the ground sooner rather than later...

There are plenty of other ways to get help too. Try asking a friend, or get in touch with an organisation related to the type of action you're planning.

Many communities operate youth services that may also be able to help you out. If you don't know of one in your area, contact your local government and ask if they can direct you.

Also be sure to check out the ActNow website (www.actnow.com.au). It contains loads of information on all sorts of issues written by young Australians. It also has some great tool kits to help you with the practical side of taking action:

<http://www.actnow.com.au/Toolkit.aspx>



In your state/territory 'How to' info for common actions

ACT

Youth InterACT
<http://youth.act.gov.au>

NSW

Youth.NSW
<http://www.youth.nsw.gov.au>

NT

Office of Youth Affairs
<http://www.youth.affairs.nt.gov.au/>

QLD

Generate
<http://www.generate.qld.gov.au>

SA

Office for Youth
<http://www.officeforyouth.sa.gov.au/youth>

TAS

Link Zone
<http://www.linkzone.tas.gov.au>

VIC

Youthcentral
<http://www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au>

WA

Office for Youth
<http://www.childrenandyouth.wa.gov.au>

Volunteering

Volunteering Australia:
<http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org>

Event planning

Events NSW <http://www.events.nsw.gov.au>

Fundraising

Propelarts toolbox
<http://www.propelarts.org.au/resources/funding.php>

Petitioning + Letter writing

GetUp! <http://www.getup.org.au>

Amnesty's Letter Writing Guide
http://action.amnesty.org.au/wiki/Letter_writing_guide

General project planning

H2W2: how to do an arts project, where to get help
<http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au>

Other useful contacts

Amnesty International (human rights)
<http://www.amnesty.org.au>

Australian Red Cross (social/health/community)
<http://www.redcross.org.au>

Foundation for Young Australians (youth projects)
<http://youth.serviceseeker.com.au>

InfoXchange (community)
<http://youth.serviceseeker.com.au>

Oxfam (social justice)
<http://www.oxfam.org.au>

Reach Out! (helping young people through tough times)
<http://www.reachout.com.au>

Youth Service Seeker (VIC directory)
<http://youth.serviceseeker.com.au>

Youth LEAD (leadership project at OzGreen)
<http://www.ozgreen.org.au>

Also be sure to have a look
at ActNow's organisational pages for more useful contacts!

Some serious stuff...

Know where you stand
with the law and whether your action is legal



The low-down on the law

Not all forms of action are legal in all states and territories. It's important that you know your rights and what is legal and what isn't. For example, some forms of action (like protests) may require permission from the police (or government).

Check out the 'law stuff website' (<http://www.lawstuff.org.au>) to find out more about how the law may affect your action. It contains info on a range of legal topics as well as contact information for organisations who can provide you with legal help.

To find a community legal centre near you, visit:
<http://www.nacalc.org.au>

Also check out <http://www.activistrights.org.au>

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