

# '6 weeks to plastic-free'

**Is it possible to live a plastic-free life? Rosamund Burton took up the challenge...**

Hearing that 100% of the flesh-footed shearwater chicks on Lord Howe Island have up to 100 pieces of plastic in their stomachs, fed to them by their parents who mistake it for food, I feel compelled to radically reduced my use of plastic. So I sign up for Jacqui Scruby's Six Weeks to Plastic Free course.

This Avalon-based sustainability consultant describes the course as a 'boot camp' - but how hard can it be to become plastic free? I consider myself fairly environmentally aware, using a keep cup, avoiding fruit and vegetables packaged in plastic and purchasing grains, spices and nuts from Source Bulk Foods. But when she says to photograph the fridge and the storage cupboards, and I see the yoghurt pots, milk bottles, dip containers and packets of crackers and breakfast cereals, not to mention the endless tubes, tubs and cleaning spray bottles in the bathroom, I realise just how much plastic we are still using.

Week Two is a plastic purge. I spend a Sunday afternoon transferring kitchen staples from packets to jars, and throw away a huge pile of plastic packaging.

The rule in Week Three is buy no plastic, and if you can't find an item plastic-free then go without. This throws me into an utter panic, but fortunately Jacqui gives invaluable tips on where and how to shop locally or online.

She also discusses the three major obstacles to going plastic-free - time, convenience and expense. Trailing up and down the supermarket aisles I eventually

**BETTER TOMORROW:** Jacqui Scruby; examples of common plastic packaging; and labelled herb and spice jars.



find a rind-coated cheddar and a glass jar of feta, but to get milk and yoghurt in glass not plastic I have to go to Harris Farm. Jacqui recommended Pittwater Seafood in Mona Vale, as they are happy to wrap fish in paper, and I belt there one evening. Initially, I baulk that I'm paying more for these plastic-free products, but the upside is the quality, which means we savour our food and consume less.

Jacqui provides recipes for easy-to-make crackers and dips, and also almond and oat milk. She gives plastic-free alternatives for deodorant, toothpaste, dental floss, and tells me she moisturises her legs with coconut oil, and uses beetroot juice as an alternative to lipstick. She discusses how to inspire others to join you on the plastic-free journey, particularly partners and



News

**CHRISTMAS IN JULY  
HAM RAFFLES**

EVERY FRIDAY IN JULY : DRAWN @ 6:45PM  
20 HAMS TO WIN EACH DRAW : 100 HAMS TO WIN IN JULY  
AVALON BEACH RSL CLUB : 1 BOWLING GREEN LANE AVALON BEACH

TICKETS ON SALE 5PM & DRAWN 6:45PM. TICKETS FROM \$5. ALL PRIZES ARE HALF HAMS. MUST BE ON SITE AT DRAW TIME TO WIN. DRAWNS ON FRIDAY 2ND, 9TH, 16TH, 23RD & 30TH OF JULY 2021. T&C'S APPLY. AVALONRSL.COM.AU #AVRSL

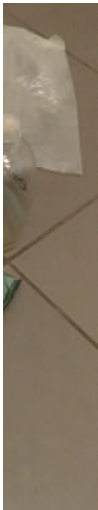


children, and throughout the course she talks of being “imperfectly plastic-free” – allowing yourself the odd plastic-wrapped delight or can’t-do-without item, emphasising that it’s alright to buy a pizza base from the supermarket occasionally if it’s eight o’clock at night and you have two ravenously hungry children.

I’m still sporting ‘L’ plates and need to develop a schedule for plastic-free shopping, because it isn’t a one-supermarket stop. But I enjoy stocking up on fruit and vegetables at the markets every week, and my interactions with butchers and fishmongers, and feel more connected to our food. It has also led to better meal-planning, and eating more veggie meals. I’m definitely imperfectly plastic free, but my thinking has shifted from “this item isn’t plastic-free” to “how can I find this item plastic free?”

Will my efforts help the plight of the flesh-footed shearwater chicks? Not directly perhaps, but being one more person who has chosen to avoid plastic packaging, I’m increasing the demand for an alternative.

\* For more information about Jacqui Scruby’s Six Weeks to Plastic Free course go to [6weekstoplasticfree.com](http://6weekstoplasticfree.com) or Instagram @6weekstoplasticfree. And start collecting loads of jars!



# Shopping bags to go

Plastics like single-use lightweight bags, cotton-buds, straws and stirrers will be phased out, and green bins for food and organic waste will be rolled out across the state, under the NSW Government’s new \$365 million comprehensive plastics plan and waste strategy.

Environment Minister Matt Kean said the community must reduce plastics ending up in the environment – otherwise there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish by 2050.

“The single-use items we are phasing-out will stop an estimated 2.7 billion items of plastic litter from ending up in our environment and waterways over the next 20 years,” Mr Kean said.

He held up small bed and bath retailer Ecodownunder, who scrapped single-use plastic packaging in their stores three years ago, as a local champion; since 2018 Ecodownunder has saved more than 500,000 pieces of plastic from ending up in landfill or in the ocean.

Ecodownunder owner Russell Lamb agrees the phasing out of plastics can’t happen quickly enough. He noted that in May this year, 60 organisations including Coles, Woolworths, Coca Cola and Pepsi, Arnotts and Colgate signed the ANZPAC Plastics Pact pledging to reach agreed plastic reduction targets by 2025.

“These are the biggest creators of plastic and they really need to do something about it,” said Mr Lamb.

Currently Australians throw away over 800,000 tonnes of plastic every year – and only around 18% of the

plastic that’s sold is recycled.

Mr Lamb said Ecodownunder’s focus on sustainability had meant they’d always avoided the use of synthetics like polyester, acrylic and micro fleece in products. These textiles are essentially plastics made from non-renewable resources which shed micro-fibres when they’re washed and worn – the micro-fibres end up in the ocean and are now thought to be a bigger problem for ocean pollution than single-use plastic including bottles, straws and coffee cups.

Meanwhile the Government’s plan will also see every household allocated a separate bin for their food and organic waste for the first time in NSW.

“This will not only deliver on our commitment to achieve zero emissions from organics in landfill by 2030, but will also grow our economy by extracting more resources like biogas from our waste,” said Mr Kean.

Small businesses will be supported to transition to new products before the phase-outs come into effect.

Exemptions will also be available for members of the community who rely on particular single-use plastics for disability or health needs.

The government will also continue to work closely with councils, with \$206 million in funding available to support local government to deliver these ambitious plans, including \$65 million to support the rollout of green bins.

- Nigel Wall

\* If you forget your shopping bag in July, pop in to Ecodownunder (Avalon or Mona Vale) for a FREE organic cotton shopping bag (one per family).



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