

# WAR ON WASTE

WITH CRAIG REUCASSEL



KEO australia



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A **STUDY GUIDE** BY MARGUERITE O'HARA



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**WE'RE AMONGST SOME OF THE  
MOST WASTEFUL COUNTRIES  
IN THE DEVELOPED WORLD.**

**AUSTRALIAN HOUSEHOLDS  
AND BUSINESSES THROW OUT  
3.3 MILLION TONNES OF FOOD  
ANNUALLY, ENOUGH TO FILL  
THE MCG SIX TIMES OVER.**

**BUT...BACK IN THE  
1960S WE PIONEERED  
RECYCLING PROGRAMS.**



# A STUDY GUIDE

# WAR

# ON WASTE

WITH CRAIG REUCASSEL



## GUIDE OUTLINE

### Part 1:

Introductory Material - Overview, Curriculum Guidelines, Introductory material about the presenter and the series, Vocabulary, Pre-viewing questions.

### Part 2:

Episode 1 viewing and responding,  
Episode 2 viewing and responding,  
Episode 3 viewing and responding

### Part 3:

Post-viewing questions and activities for research and extending the study

### Part 4:

References and Resources





Craig Reucassel is on a mission to uncover how much waste we produce as a nation and to learn how, together, we can all do something about it, when he presents this thought-provoking three-part documentary series *War on Waste*.

No stranger to confrontation, over the series Craig takes on the big supermarkets, challenges Australians to reduce their waste, discovers what really happens to our recycling, and uncovers some shocking truths about Australia's wasteful fashion industry.

Can we, as a nation, force big businesses to waste less?  
Can we all do a little bit better?

In the 1960s many recycling programs – especially those involving paper and newspaper – were pioneered in Australia. In the late 60s and 70s, the launch of the Keep Australia Beautiful campaign put the issue of waste at the forefront of the national consciousness.

But in recent decades, the combined effects of consumer demand, supermarket policies and cynicism about the effectiveness of waste and recycling campaigns has seen a surge in the volume of waste we produce as a nation.

Craig takes a critical and first-hand look at household, retail and farming waste in Australia and asks what has changed in the Australian psyche, and in our consumer culture that has led us to become among the most wasteful nations in the developed world? He asks why Australians are generating millions of tonnes more waste every year – in food, fashion, plastics, coffee cups and more. He discovers the truth about where various kinds of waste actually ends up and learns what we can do to reduce the staggering volumes we produce.

Importantly he projects into the future. With the amount of waste increasing in Australia by nearly 8% a year, he asks what will happen if we do nothing? Is it time for us as a nation to seriously re-examine the ways we consume and dispose of consumer items?

## CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

*War on Waste* would be an excellent program to show students from middle primary to upper secondary – levels 4 – 12. Waste/rubbish/trash/garbage is something that is everywhere. While some students may respond to the material in all three episodes, for years 4 – 8, episodes 1 and 2 may be more engaging and directly relevant to younger students than episode 3 which is focused principally on 'fast' fashion and coffee cups as generators of waste.

We all contribute to our wasteful society as we all buy and throw stuff away quite regularly, whether this is food, clothes, disposable coffee cups, water and other drink bottles, electronic gear such as phones, computers, televisions, printers, juicers and many other household appliances... as well as the endless plastic packaging and bags that are a major waste problem. 'It costs too much to fix so let's buy another one'.

Many students may be members of school communities that are already encouraging active awareness of waste and the need to recycle waste materials, while others may also belong to households that encourage family members to be careful about what they buy and what they do with the waste their household generates.

But, as consuming, rejecting and throwing away are increasingly taken for granted as part of 21st century life, this program shows us where all this stuff ends up. Importantly, it demonstrates in powerful visual images some of the damaging consequences of thoughtless waste disposal.

These programs provide information that is both shocking and thought provoking, illustrating the daily waste creation we all have responsibility for. It addresses many issues raised in the cross-curriculum priority, Sustainability, in the Australian National Curriculum, addressing the ongoing capacity of earth to maintain all life.



*Sustainable patterns of living meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Actions to improve sustainability are both individual and collective endeavours shared across local and global communities. They necessitate a renewed and balanced approach to the way humans interact with each other and the environment.*

*Education for sustainability develops the knowledge, skills, values and world views necessary for people to act in ways that contribute to more sustainable patterns of living. It enables individuals and communities to reflect on ways of interpreting and engaging with the world. Sustainability education is futures-oriented, focusing on protecting environments and creating a more ecologically and socially just world through informed action. Actions that support more sustainable patterns of living require consideration of environmental, social, cultural and economic systems and their interdependence*

**<http://v7-5.australiancurriculum.edu.au/crosscurriculumpriorities/Sustainability>.**

The program could be used to support student work in the following curriculum areas from years 4 to 12.

- Geography
- General Science
- Civics and Citizenship
- Environmental Studies
- Consumer Science and Consumption
- Home Economics – Accounting
- Sustainability
- Personal Responsibility

In the National Curriculum, there are a number of areas in the *Geography* strand of Humanities and Social Sciences across a number of levels where students and teachers could use information in this program to undertake investigations into waste management.

In Year 4 Geography as part of their study of the earth's environment, students investigate 'the management of waste from production and consumption' – ACHGK 025

At Year 8, students investigate 'the human causes and effects of landscape degradation on places and environments' – ACHGK 051

At Year 9 in Unit 2 – The Geographies of Interconnections, students study 'the effects of the production and consumption of goods on places and environments throughout the world' – ACHGK 068



At VCE level in Environmental Science, Unit 2 involves a study of How Pollution Can Be Managed. See the information listed in the detailed Study Guide referred to in this website. (Note: these guidelines refer to the new Environmental Science course currently being implemented at VCE level in Victoria)

**<http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/vce/envscience/EnviroScienceSD-2016.pdf>**

Unit 2 includes the following guidelines for the study of soil contamination and its causes.

*Contamination of soils can prevent natural growth and balance in both natural and managed ecosystems. Soil contamination can lead to poor growth and reduced crop yields, loss of wildlife habitat, water and visual pollution, soil erosion, and desertification. Sources of soil pollution include hazardous waste spills, unsustainable farming practices, strip mining, deforestation, and littering.*

*Questions that may be explored in this investigation include:*

- o *How do the chemical properties of biodegradable plastics differ from those of non-biodegradable plastics to enable more rapid environmental degradation?*
- o *Do the heavy metal deposits in surface water systems left over from historic gold mining sites present a hazard?*
- o *Should food 'take-away' containers be banned?*
- o *What happens to rubbish buried in landfills?*
- o *What makes materials biodegradable?*

Plastics, landfill materials, take away food containers and biodegradability are all issues explored in *War on Waste*.

Teachers are advised to select from these three episodes and the related parts of this guide that best suit the interests and abilities of their students.





## THE SERIES

Much of the waste shown in these programs reflects the problems created by over-consumption of products and the consequent need to dispose of them and their packaging. In identifying and illustrating the extent and range of the problem, Craig Reucassel shows us how we all need to become part of the solution through taking personal responsibility for our waste. What does break down and what stays around for generations? Is convenience any longer the most important consideration in our shopping?

There are 3 one-hour episodes in *War on Waste*, each focussing on particular areas of waste creation and disposal from food to plastics to fashion and coffee cups, over-consumption and production underpinning all these areas.

Episode 1 investigates food waste, generated by the big supermarkets and households alike. Why does a lot of produce never leave the farm gate? Do we buy too much food and how are supermarket policies of cosmetic standards for fruit and vegetables compounding the problem of food waste? Does this waste just conveniently disappear and not affect the environment?

Episode 2 focusses on plastic bags and their damaging effect on the environment. Where do they end their useful life? Are they being recycled properly so that they don't end up in landfill and in our waterways? Are biodegradable plastics better or worse for the environment? How many places in Australia have banned the plastic bag?

Episode 3 looks at the impact of takeaway coffee cups and fast fashion that is creating textile waste everywhere as people continually replace perfectly wearable clothes for new cheaper ones. Do we need all these clothes and what's the problem with taking your own cup or mug for a refill?

## THE KEY CREATIVES ON WAR ON WASTE

### Series Producer – Sandra Welkerling

Sandra has also worked on *River Cottage Australia* and would like to be a farmer as she has seen enough landfill sites to last her a lifetime.

### Executive Producer – Jodi Boylan

While also working on *River Cottage Australia*, filmed in Central Tilba on the south coast of NSW, Jodi led a community campaign to ban the plastic bag

### Presenter – Craig Reucassel

Craig Reucassel is an Australian writer and comedian who is best known for his work with *The Chaser*, an ABC television program which took a satirical look at politics and the claims of politicians. ABC TV Chaser programs include *The Election Chaser*, *CNNNN*, *The Chaser's War on Everything*, *Yes, We Canberra* and *The Hamster Wheel*. Most recently, he's appeared on ABC in *The Chaser's Media Circus*, *The Chaser's Electoral Desk* and the current series of satirical consumer affairs show, *The Checkout*.

Craig graduated from the University of Sydney with honours in Bachelor of Economics (Social Science) and Bachelor of Laws.

He has also co-hosted the Triple j shows *Today*, *Today*, *Bloody Sunday* and *The Race Race* with fellow Chaser Chris Taylor. In 2016, he performed in David Williamson's play, *Jack of Hearts*.

Craig is married with three children and a cat and a dog.





## VOCABULARY

Explain what each of these words or terms means or refers to. If unsure, share your views and look the word up either online or in a dictionary. Where possible find a word or phrase with a similar meaning, e.g. *Millennials* – individuals reaching adulthood around the year 2000 - Generation Y. Note to teachers – younger students may need some help with some of these words, though older students are likely to have at least heard them used and be able to work out what they refer to.

**Landfill, depot, tip**

**Littering**

**Polluting**

**Composting**

**Biodegradable**

**Dumpster Diving**

**Ton or tonne?**

**GPS**

**Greenhouse gases**

**Recycling**

**Millennials**

## PRE-VIEWING QUESTIONS

Some of these questions are about your household while others are about your own throwing out habits. Try to answer the questions as honestly as possible and then return to them after you have watched the program. Most of these questions could be responded to in a classroom through group sharing of ideas, but for younger students it may be best to focus on one group at a time, e.g. 1-5.

1. In what ways do you think your household does 'better than average' in the waste generation stakes, i.e. are you less wasteful than you think others might be?
  2. Do you have a compost bin or maybe a worm farm where food waste can break down to be used to enrich soil?
  3. About what percentage of your purchased food do you think ends up in the bin?
  4. Do you bring your shopping home from the supermarket in plastic bags or cloth bags?
  5. When choosing fruit and vegetables at the supermarket or fruit and vegetable shop, what are the things important to you when selecting produce – price, appearance, in season etc?
- \*\*
6. In what areas do you think your household could decrease the amount of waste they generate?
  7. What do you do with electronic waste once it is

outdated, broken or no longer wanted (this includes mobile phones, tablets, computers, printers, televisions, games consoles, toasters, kettles, juicers, sandwich presses, etc?)

8. If you have ever moved house, about how much stuff from the house or garage or shed gets put out for a hard waste or other type of rubbish collection – a huge amount, just a few broken things or nothing at all?
  9. How often do you buy new clothes and shoes? What happens to the old ones?
  10. Why do you think many coffee drinkers buy their coffee in lidded takeaway cups?
  11. Does your household have and use a supplied recycling bin? Are you sure about what is and is not able to put in this bin?
  12. Where do you think material in recycling bins ends up?
- \*\*
13. Are you aware of where any of your waste ends up?
  14. Have you ever visited your local municipal depot/rubbish tip/transfer station/dump? If you have, how is the area divided up for receiving and processing different types of waste? Is there a tip shop for buying discarded items or a 'help yourself to garden mulch' area?
  15. What do you think dumpster divers do?
  16. Have you or your family ever re-homed discarded furniture or other items left out for rubbish collections?
  17. Does food waste contribute to greenhouse gases? What form of emissions does rotted food give off?
- \*\*
18. What kind of waste and landfill might the first non-indigenous arrivals on the first fleet have seen in the landscape and in the sea in 1788?
  19. In what ways can our waste generation and reluctance to dispose of it responsibly be evidence of our 'trashing the earth and its natural resources'?
  20. How is First Nation Australians' priority of 'caring for country' important to all of us in relation to managing waste on land and sea?
  21. List what you think are the most damaging consequences of thoughtless waste disposal in 2017.





## EPISODE 1 SIZE DOESN'T MATTER

### FOOD WASTE

Craig Reucassel kicks off the *War on Waste* by tackling the issue of food waste as a staggering amount ends up in landfill every year. On average, Australians are throwing out a fifth of all food that they buy - a fact Craig demonstrates at the local supermarket on unsuspecting shoppers.

After learning that a huge amount of food waste happens on farms, Craig travels to far North Queensland and meets banana farmers where he discovers just how much they're forced to throw away because of the strict cosmetic standards forced upon them by supermarkets. It raises more questions - have we been conditioned to demand perfect produce that's impossible to grow? If so, who's responsible? Craig contacts the major supermarket retailers to try to get some answers. He also takes to the streets to discover if we really are that fussy when it comes to the look of our fresh produce.

Craig spends the night with a dumpster diving granny who supplements her weekly groceries by raiding supermarket waste bins. She shares her favourite haunts and brings home the food - some of it is too good to be true.

Craig challenges a neighbourhood of ten Sydney families to live as 'waste free' as they possibly can. Over the next month, they'll try to reduce their household waste. But first he wants to see what they waste, so he borrows their garbage bins and sorts through the contents - it's a messy, stinky job! When confronted with their waste the families have more questions than answers to the problem.

- What is the first area of waste Craig looks into in North Queensland?
- How is the rejected produce shown visually?
- What new meaning do these scenes give to 'mountains of waste'?

- Why are different sized backyard fruit and vegetables such as lemons, tomatoes, peas, lettuce, apples and carrots acceptable for us and our friends to eat, but not for supermarkets to sell?
- Who do you think is responsible for the push for cosmetically perfect and uniformly sized produce?
- What does 'ugly' fruit and vegetables really mean?
- Which supermarket chain introduced 'the odd bunch' range in 2014?
  - o Who is the public face on television advertising of this scheme?
  - o What does it offer to customers and suppliers?
  - o Have you ever bought odd bunch fruit and vegetables?

**The average family of two adults and two children throws out over \$3,500 worth of food a year - this is one in every five bags of groceries they buy.**





## Too fat, too thin, too short, too long, too marked, too ugly – a banana producer

- How does Craig demonstrate the average level of a household's weekly food waste to supermarket shoppers?
- List some of the reasons why we all bin food every week?
- How easy is it to just load up lots of food into your shopping trolley?
- Where does this wasted food end up after it has been binned? What are the environmental impacts of all this waste?
- Even if the so-called ugly fruit were accepted by supermarkets and sold and eaten, the issue of over-production involving resources such as water and fertilizers remains. How many bananas does a family need in a week?
- Do you think it is fussy consumers or supermarkets wanting their fresh food to look perfect that results in the amount of produce being discarded?
- List some of the initiatives Craig takes to find some answers to the 'ugly' fruit issue? How far does he get?

*We need to educate ourselves to understand that nature grows in weird ways and the more we devalue ugly fruit and veg such as wiggly carrots, we're doing ourselves a huge disservice - Ronni Kahn, CEO and Founder of Oz Harvest, one of several organizations that collect food for needy people; it might otherwise go to landfill.*

- Does Ronni Kahn have an answer to the chicken and egg question of whether the supermarkets or the consumers reject ugly fruit and vegetables?



## AT HOME WITH OUR BINS

*Oh, that's disgusting!*

The war on waste local bin challenge in a street in Sydney's southern suburbs.



**TABLE 1**

NUMBER OF FILLED BINS EACH HOUSEHOLD USES EACH WEEK	TYPICAL CONTENTS OF THE GENERAL RUBBISH BIN?	WHAT GOES INTO THE RECYCLE BIN?	HOW FULL TO THE TOP IS EACH BIN?
<b>Week 1 of challenge</b>			
<b>Week 3 of challenge</b>			

- What are the four piles into which Craig sorts the contents of the families' bins?
- What are the two areas of rubbish that most surprise the participants?
- How do these neighbours use social media to keep up their interest in this war on waste challenge?



## COMPOSTING

- What food and other waste materials can be composted for breaking down to feed soil and plants?

What food waste can't be composted?

Explain the science of composting to your classmates.

If you know about or have a worm farm, describe to your classmates how it works.

What are some of the important things to take care of when you set up compost bins and/or worm farms?

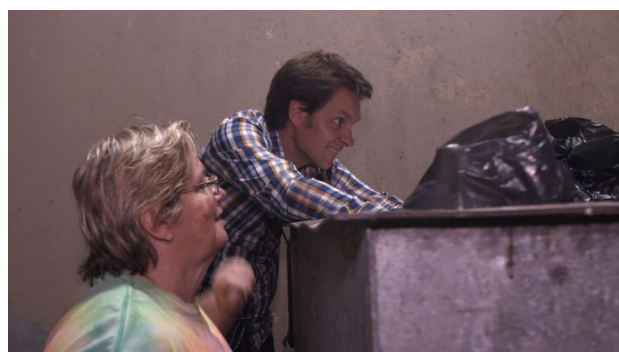
- Why do so few people have compost bins of some size and type? What are some of the hassles of a compost bin, e.g. no room, messy, smelly, attracting vermin etc.?
- Research whether your local council can point you to any public compost bins at local community gardens where you could dispose of vegetable food waste?
- Does every fruit and vegetable product need to be packaged in plastic wrap before it is cocooned for the home trip in a lightweight plastic bag?

Name several fruits and vegetables that have their own natural protective covering, such as sweet corn.

- How does Craig test the truth of the supermarkets' claims that the millions of plastic bags put in recycle bins, either at your place or at the supermarket, do end up being recycled and reused in some way?
- Angus Harris of Harris Farm Markets claims that his customers have no problem with buying so-called 'Imperfect' products.

How fussy are you about the look and shape of your fruit and vegetables?

Do you prefer fresh or processed fruit and vegetables?



Where do you think this emphasis on perfect and uniform looks might have come from? Is this admiration of symmetry and 'perfection' just ingrained in our society?

## FOODBANK

- Who donates the food stored in Foodbank's warehouses?
- Who collects, delivers, prepares and cooks the food that comes through Foodbank?
- Who eats these meals?
- Make a list of any organizations in your suburb or state that are involved in feeding people in need of meals, whether through homelessness, poverty, illness or for any other reason.

## Dumpster Diving

- Craig spends time with a 'dumpster diver'. What do these individuals do and what are some of the possible legal issues that might arise from their activities?
- What are some of the risks people expose themselves to when they go out at night dumpster diving? How are these potential dangers shown in the program?

## THE ODD BUNCH

- What specific information did Craig get from Woolworths Head of Sustainability about the company's plans to move closer to zero waste by 2020?
- What explanation does he give for the 'cosmetic standards' that consign a lot of fruit and vegetables to landfill before they even get to the 'odd bunch' section. (Check this odd bunch produce out at your local Woolworths if they have this section)
- How can consumers like you and me put pressure on the big supermarkets to change their policies about the natural and diverse beauty of fruit and vegetables where size is dependent on many natural factors?





## EPISODE 2 - BAN THE BAG

### PLASTIC WASTE AND RECYCLING

The convenient plastic bag is everywhere, and seems harmless enough, but their impact on the environment is huge. Craig dives underwater to discover the shocking amount of plastic waste that ends up in our oceans, which in turn becomes ingested by our marine life.

Craig sets off to explore the effect of banning plastic bags in some states, and the alarming way some businesses get around it. Inspired to challenge other states to instigate the ban, he surprises various politicians with a giant plastic bag ball to highlight the issue and get some answers.

To answer the question of what we can and can't recycle, Craig talks to expert Tim Silverwood before he travels back to our Sydney neighbourhood to set up a recycling challenge for our 'waste free' families. Can he help them learn some basic rules and tricks when it comes to recycling?

We also hear about how productive some recycling can be, and see products made from recycled plastic. Craig also takes our waste-free street residents to a repair café where they learn the undervalued and surprisingly emotional joys of fixing and restoring rather than disposing and replacing.



### HISTORY

From the mid-1980s onwards, plastic bags became common for carrying groceries from shops to cars and homes throughout the developed world. They were light, cheap and convenient. As plastic bags increasingly replaced paper bags, and as other plastic materials and products replaced glass, metal, stone, timber and other materials, a packaging materials war erupted, with plastic shopping bags at the centre of highly publicized disputes about their less desirable side effects.

Research what grey plastic shopping bags are made of to understand how an object of convenience has turned into a waste monster.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plastic\\_shopping\\_bag](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plastic_shopping_bag)



**As a nation, we use over 10 million plastic bags a day, causing a crisis in our oceans.**

**Of the 5 billion plastic bags we use in Australia annually, 85% end up in landfill.**







The information and suggested activities in this episode relate specifically to aspects of ACARA Year 4 Geography curriculum where as part of their study of the earth's environment, students are required to learn about the sustainable management of waste – ACHGK 025.

<http://v7-5.australiancurriculum.edu.au/humanities-and-social-sciences/geography/curriculum/f-10?layout=1#level4>

Senior students interested in the fascinating and very recent history of the development of plastics could either listen to a podcast or download the transcript of a recent radio program broadcast on ABC's Radio National – *The History of Plastics*.

See <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/rearvision/the-history-of-plastic/8576534>

## REDUCE, RECYCLE, REUSE, REFUSE

As these programs make clear through several examples, the principle underlying any recycling program is SORTING into piles similar product made of similar materials, i.e. glass bottles, plastic bottles and containers, aluminium cans, fabrics and paper.

The difficulty with plastic bags used to transport supermarket products is that they often have other uses as bin liners and to pick up dog poo which makes these multi use bags un recyclable.

While they can be reused, as they are quite lightweight and not very tough (double baggers please note), they are still not easily bio - degradable.

If recycling is very difficult, there is really only one option left of the R words above.

**Buried in landfill, plastic may take centuries if not millennia to degrade ...and a shocking 8 million tonnes of it leak into the ocean every year, killing marine life around the world.**

**Half the world's turtles and two thirds of some Australian seabirds already have plastic in their gut.**



## PLASTIC BAGS

Fill out the second row in Table 2 to illustrate the extent of the plastic bag problem in Australia.

OBJECT	USES	AFTER USE	FINAL DESTINATION	AGE AT POINT OF DISINTEGRATION	ONGOING HARMS
The lightweight grey supermarket plastic bag	As many as you can think of	Bags journey once binned	Where do they end up	How long does it take for a plastic bag to break down (decompose or degrade) in landfill or the ocean?	What do they hurt and how

## DIVING INTO AUSTRALIA'S SEA OF PLASTIC WASTE

- What is the dramatic visual in this episode that Craig uses to attract the politicians', the public and the viewers' attention? How important are powerful visual images in drawing attention to a problem?
- Explain why only a very small percentage of plastic bags are recycled?
- Describe the mechanics of sorting materials for recycling. How is it done, who does it and where is it done?
- How do you think food products were packaged, displayed and sold before the widespread use of plastics in the 1980s?
- What types of convenient plastic wrapping is your food wrapped in before it reaches your mouth or your plate? How wrapped are the following when bought from a supermarket – chicken wings, sweetcorn, herbs, apples, cheese, ham, bread, leg of lamb, pork chops, minced steak, fish fillets.

Do any of these products have their own natural protective wrapping such as banana skins or crusts and cheese rinds?

Many countries in the world have banned plastic shopping bags. Many others charge for them or tax them. Countries where bags are banned include China, Kenya, South Africa and Eritrea. See the list at <http://www.bigfatbags.co.uk/bans-taxes-charges-plastic-bags/>

What is the situation in Australia? Name any states or territories that have banned the bag. Which state is introducing a ban in 2018?

To encourage people to bring along their reusable cloth bags to the supermarket from the car boot or from home, what price do you think would really put shoppers off paying for plastic bags at the checkout: 10 cents, 20 cents, 50 cents, \$1 per bag or more? Take a straw poll in your class group.

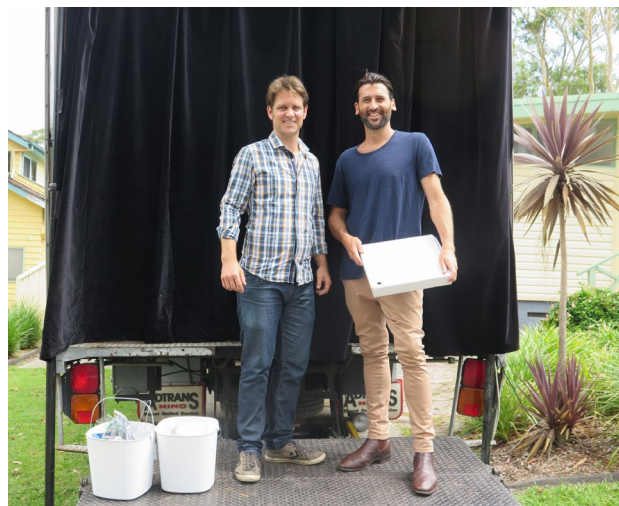
Who would be the big losers if a ban on so-called single use plastic bags went national?

So, what can we do if we think banning the bag is the best solution?

Email or write to the Premier or Environment Minister in your state and tell them what you think about plastic bags and their alternatives.

## RECYCLING – YES, NO, MAYBE, OR TOO EXPENSIVE?

- Make a list of household items you are not sure can be recycled in a recycle bin.



Make a list of household items you are pretty sure can be recycled.

What are some of the things the families from the street of waste reduction are uncertain about recycling?

Create a 3-column list of - Yes, No and Don't Know for your recycle bin contents or highlight each type of listed rubbish in three different colours- green for Yes, red for No and yellow for Don't Know.

Drink cans, food scraps, ice cream containers, milk bottles, milk cartons, broken glass, pot plants, newspapers, plastic bags, takeaway coffee cups, magazines, waste paper, metal cookware, printer cartridges, metal food cans, cereal boxes and their inner bags, egg cartons, disposable nappies, broken ceramic crockery, aerosol cans, house paint tins, soft drink bottles and lids, batteries, light globes.

You can always check with your local council or on their website under Waste Disposal to see if an item like aerosol cans can be recycled.

- How do the residents in Sydney's more waste aware street manage the grey or white soft plastic bags that are still clean?

Where do they take these plastics for recycling?

Check out whether your local supermarket has a recycling bin for soft plastics.

Redcycle.net.au is the site to check to see if any of the 530 Coles and 100 Woolworths stores that say they have red bins for recycling plastic are in your area.

- What device does Craig put into one of the bags collected for recycling to check where it ends up and how it is recycled?
- Where did one lot of plastic waste end up as shown on the tracking GPS placed in a bag?



## RECOVERY FACILITIES

### CLOSE VIEWING ACTIVITY 17. 49 – 22.32

- What happens at Suez, the Material Recovery Facility in Western Sydney that Craig visits with Brad Grey from Planet Ark?
- List the three most important things you learnt about the recycling process at the Recovery Centre.
- What are the most valuable items that are recycled?
- What are some of the factors that make recycling difficult for the sorting machines and the workers?
- What substances are shipped to overseas countries for recycling? Why would these materials be sent offshore?
- What is the one item that it is most difficult to recycle? Why are these items such a problem?

### WHERE DOES MUCH OF OUR DISCARDED RUBBISH END UP?

- How do most households or house owners pay for rubbish collection and disposal when their bins are collected and emptied?
- What costs are involved in sorting rubbish at municipal tips/dumps/landfill/council depots?
- What can you safely dispose of at many council depots that will become a reusable resource?

### THE TASMANIAN INITIATIVE

- Explain what happened to plastic bags in the town of Coles Bay in Tasmania in 2003.
- How did the rest of the state follow up on this initiative in 2013?

- What is the difference between reusable plastic bags and single use ones?
- Are thicker plastic bags any better for the environment than the thin grey ones?

### OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND?

*It is estimated that by 2050 there will be more plastic than fish in our oceans – Craig.*

- Apart from sitting in landfill for many years, what is the final destination of many of our plastic bags?
- What living creatures often eat parts of these bags and choke?
- How does Craig get a first- hand look at this often-invisible problem?
- Why do you think both NSW ex-Premier Mike Baird and current Premier Gladys Berejiklian avoid talking about banning the plastic bag in their state?
- Who are the beneficiaries of these millions of bags?
- Who are the biggest losers?
- What sort of public pressure might persuade state governments to act on this issue?
- What might be the economic consequences for companies manufacturing, wholesaling and retailing plastic bags used by supermarkets?

Suggest bags these companies might be able to develop if the currently available plastic bags are nationally or globally banned... as everyone still needs to transport their shopping home or to the car.

- What are the less damaging alternatives to these plastic bags for other uses such as bin liners and picking up dog poo?

***In every state except Queensland it's more economical to recycle than to send to landfill because there is a tax on putting something in landfill everywhere except Queensland – Brad Grey.***



## JUST ANSWER THE QUESTION PLEASE!

- What sort of run- around does Craig get from people who are part of the plastic bags production and recycling businesses, as well as politicians? Why is it such an apparently dirty secret?
- Were you surprised that that our plastic bags go to China and Indonesia for re-processing into usable products? What approximate percentage of current plastic bags go offshore to be re-made into usable, durable outdoor furniture?

## REPAIRING AND RECYCLING

Since the Bower Repair Cafe started in 2014, they've saved around 200 tonnes of material going into landfill.

- Why don't most of us try and fix our furniture, clothes bikes, appliances and cars anymore?

Are we too busy, don't know how, can't be bothered, it's too expensive and we want new things anyway?

- How does Guido Verbist, manager of the Bower Repair Café in Sydney, try to help people hang onto their stuff?
- Are price and convenience the most important considerations in upgrading and replacing items?
- What are some of the items the waste free Sydney street residents bring in for repair?

***When it comes to our plastic waste it's clear that we've hit crisis point...both on land and in our oceans.***

***The current bans on plastic bags in Australia turn out to be full of loopholes. Currently only a tiny percentage of our soft plastic gets recycled.***

***Months since I tried to roll in a national ban, the politicians are dodging the problem. Together we can change that***

***– Craig Reucassel.***







## EPISODE 3 BYOCOFFEECUP

### COFFEE CUPS AND FASHION WASTE

There is no doubt that we live in an increasingly throwaway society. Craig explores the impact that coffee cups and fast fashion have on our environment.

It's estimated that over 1 billion coffee cups are ending up in landfill each year. While most people believe coffee cups are being recycled, this is not quite the case. Craig catches up with the experts to find out what is going on. To highlight the issue, he fills a tram with coffee cups and encourages Melbourne's coffee lovers to start using their own recyclable 'keep cups'. Can the movement take off?

Craig examines our obsession with fast fashion - it's an issue that's causing an environmental crisis globally as



**We throw out 6000  
kilos of clothes every  
10 minutes.**

**Up to a billion take-  
away coffee cups end  
up in landfill each year.**

textile waste is piling up at catastrophic levels. Our clothing charities are inundated with the volume of clothing coming to them, much of which now ends up in landfill. A recent audit by the City of Sydney reveals that 6 tonnes of textile and fashion waste are going to landfill in Australia every ten minutes. Craig unleashes a dramatic stunt in Martin Place to illustrate just what a pile of this waste looks like.

Craig follows this up by tracking down four fashion-obsessed millennials and, with the help of celebrity stylist Aleysha Campbell, inspires them to slow their fashion down by going on a fashion diet.

Craig returns to our 'waste free' families to see their transformation over the course of the show. Finally, he follows up with supermarkets and recycling facilities to encourage them to make changes for the better. Will he have an impact?





## FAST FASHION LEADS TO HEAPS OF RAGS

### Take the fashion quiz

1. Where do your clothes go when you grow out of them or get sick of them – to friends or family, to be used as rags, op shop, bottom drawer, rubbish bin, charity bag etc?
2. How often do you buy an item of clothing or shoes – weekly, monthly, every few months, at change of seasons?
3. How many t-shirts that you wear do you own?
4. What about jeans, shorts, shoes, hoodies, leggings, dresses, skirts?
5. Do you mostly clothes shop for a special occasion such as a friend's party, a date night, a holiday, school formal, wedding or engagement party?
6. Is shopping for clothes in malls, department stores, shopping centres, shopping strips, arcades, Direct Factory Outlets, etc. something you enjoy doing?
7. Do advertisements and fashion websites such as *The Iconic* and *Lululemon* usually direct their advertising to females?
8. What are some of the advantages of buying fashion online?
9. How important is price as a consideration on what you spend on clothes?

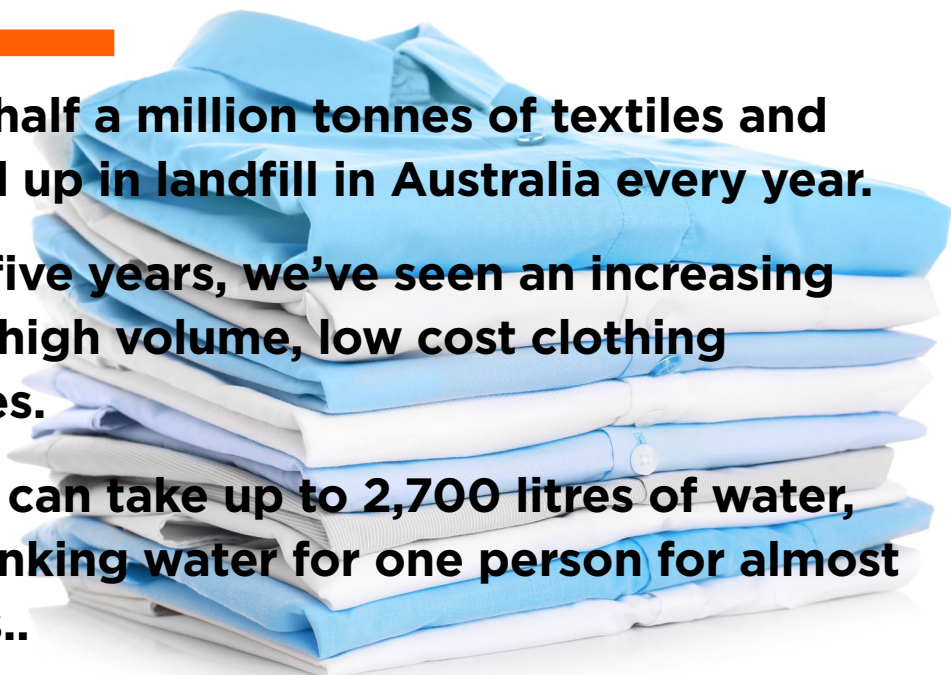
Do you buy mainly at discounted prices or at sales?

10. Do you ever buy second-hand clothes from Op Shops or other second-hand shops? Why or why not?

**More than half a million tonnes of textiles and leather end up in landfill in Australia every year.**

**In the last five years, we've seen an increasing amount of high volume, low cost clothing in our stores.**

**One t-shirt can take up to 2,700 litres of water, enough drinking water for one person for almost three years..**





## FASHION FACTS

- Who are some of the fashion retailers that have entered the Australian market over the past five years?
- What does 'high volume, low margin' mean in retail sales and how does it compound the landfill problem?
- Where have most textiles and clothes been made over the past 50 years?
- Under typically what conditions is fast fashion (and even slower fashion) made? What does the term 'sweated labour' mean to you?
- What are some of the natural resources used in the manufacture of textiles?
- How long do you think it would take you to make a lined woollen jacket?

## THE FASHION DIET

Craig challenges four fashion obsessed friends to find out why fashion is so addictive.



## CLOSE VIEWING ACTIVITY

### 09.03 – 11.03

### WHERE DO ALL THOSE BAGS OF THROWN - OUT CLOTHES GO?

- What kind of organisation is the Smith Family? What do they do to help the communities where they work?
- How does the visit to the Smith Family warehouse give the young women some information about what happens to their discarded clothes?
- What percentage of the 13 million kilos of discarded clothes donated to the Smith family annually goes into their retail stores (op shops)?

What happens to most of the clothes?

- What does it cost the Smith Family to recycle, clean, sell and dispose of clothes?

### RE-USING, RECONSIDERING, REPURPOSING BUT NOT RE-BUYING

- What is fashion stylist Aleysha's task in relation to the girls' clothes shopping?
- What advantages are there in trying to put a break on any addictive behaviour by redirecting your focus and time management?
- How does the activity of swapping, mixing and re-matching satisfy one part of the girls' shopping addictions and desire for a new look?
- Sportsgirl have a mobile platform and interactive mirrors where shoppers can post a picture online of what they are trying on.

Do you think this is likely to increase and enhance the shopping experience or make customers less likely to snap purchase?

- What do you believe often underlies the desire to buy new clothes?
- How are big retailer H&M trying to encourage recycling of clothes by their customers?
- In what ways is Kathmandu, a large multi store retailer of outdoor clothes in New Zealand and Australia, trying to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability?

Why might it be easier for a retailer such as Kathmandu to persuade their customers to consider wearability and practicality as much as price and fashion cred with their clothes?

## SOCIAL MEDIA AND PEER APPROVAL

- What are some of the strategies Aleysa, the stylist, suggests to the girls to reduce their spend on new clothes for social events?
- How do they appear to respond to the 'swap, mix and match' challenge as a group?
- Fashion promoters, stylists, advertising on social media, on television, on music videos, in films and in magazines, are skilled at channelling behaviours, at identifying and presenting the It clothes and the It celebrities as clothing role models.
- Apart from what you see on Instagram, who and what do you think are the most important fashion influencers today?

If you are a follower of fashion, complete this sentence – 'I admire the look and style of ..... '

## HOW ARE THE WASTE FREE FAMILIES GOING TWO WEEKS INTO THEIR CHALLENGE?

- What has changed in the amount of rubbish in the Sydney families' household bins?
- How have these changes been achieved?
- What role does connecting via social media play in their resolve to greatly reduce their waste?
- What is one of the household waste items that some of the families and many people are unsure about recycling?

## TAKEAWAY COFFEE CUPS

- What are most disposable coffee cups and their lids made of?
- In the cities or towns with street bins, what is one of the most commonly found items?
- How does Craig demonstrate the size of the problem on the streets of Melbourne?
- Why are most coffee cups not suitable for recycling? How is some plastic an important element in disposable coffee cups? What does the polyethylene lining stop from happening?
- So, if they are not suitable for recycling, where are they likely to end up?
- How would taking your own reusable cup to the café help reduce the billions of discarded cups and lids that just go to rubbish dumps every year in Australia? This is 50,000 a year every half hour.

Joost Bakker opened Australia's first zero waste café ten years ago in Melbourne.

- What percentage of some café revenue comes from takeaway cups?
- If there was a discount for bringing your own cup to your local cafe, would that lead to fewer customers using single use cups for coffee?
- How does Craig get café owners on board his push for customers to bring a reusable cup?
- Is a 50 cents discount for coffee in your own cup enough incentive to encourage people to bring their own cup?

Go to [www.responsiblecafes.org](http://www.responsiblecafes.org) to find out about the very few requirements to using a regular coffee cup or lid-ded keep cup for your out of home coffees.



***I just hope no one noticed that I was wearing the same outfit I'd posted on social media before when I wore it the first time and instagrammed it – Jayme, one of the girls on the fashion diet challenge***





- Make your own suggestions about how to persuade coffee drinkers and cafes not to add disposable coffee cups to landfill.
- What campaigns in the past have caused massive shifts in people's behaviour? Did many students and teachers and parents have a problem with students wearing sunhats and sunscreen on warm and hot days when this initiative was introduced some years back?
- How do you change people's habits in a society where many people believe they are too busy to bring their own coffee cup to work or their own cloth bags to the supermarket?

### THE REDCYCLE BINS?

- Where can these bins be found?

What can be put into them – just soft plastic bags or what else?

Where do the contents go?

What might these materials end up as?

- Approximately what percentage of soft plastics get recycled?
- Do you think the two biggest supermarket chains (with 776 and 840 stores nationally between them covering 80% of the grocery market) should take a more active role in promoting recycling?

What will happen when the big two chains bring in a no plastic bags policy?

**Update: on July 14th, 2017, Woolworths and Coles announced that they would soon begin phasing out single use plastic bags in their stores with a total ban in place by June 30th, 2018.**

**The phase-out will bring stores for both supermarket chains in NSW, Victoria and Western Australia in line with those in other states and territories where plastic bag bans have been legislated.**

How do Aldi and other smaller supermarkets deal with the plastic bag dilemma?

- What might be the immediate result of Supermarkets adjusting their cosmetic standards policies on fruit and vegetables to a more realistic standard - as long as it looks OK and is fresh, we'll sell it?

Read the following news item first aired after the first *War on Waste* episode about wasted produce went to air:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-05-25/petition-to-reduce-plastic-in-supermarkets-war-on-waste/8557658>

- What do this and other news reports suggest about how keen the two big chain supermarkets are to show their green credentials and respond to public disquiet with their current waste, overpackaging and quite limited recycling efforts?

## POST VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Craig Reucassel acknowledges the size of the challenge of changing habits and behaviours in relation to over-consumption and waste disposal in these programs. He encounters waste management problems in every state he visits – Queensland, Tasmania, NSW and Victoria.

But he also demonstrates through his challenge with the Sydney waste-free street households that small changes can result in huge differences in how much waste we create and how we dispose of it.



Students could choose one or more of these 8 activities depending on their interest and skills in different work areas.

1. Return to the Pre-viewing questions on page X of this guide and see if there are any answers that you would change after watching these episodes of *War on Waste*.
2. Politicians tell us daily that growing the economy and creating jobs are the key drivers of financial wealth. Does prosperity necessarily result in waste creation, whether this is through over- consumption of food, plastics, clothes or disposable coffee cups? How might waste production generate jobs and if it does, is this a good reason to keep generating waste at our current rate?

Think about who might suffer if plastic bags were banned nationally, if single use coffee cups were more expensive, if you had to pay for waste generated by paying op shops to relocate or throw away your excess clothes buys.

What role does buying and selling have in our society?  
How many of our waste problems are a direct result of over consumption or thoughtless buying?

How can we all be encouraged to respect the natural world by reducing our dependence on landfill to unload our waste, such as we see happening in this series?

*Our waste is growing at double the rate of our population.*  
By calling these programs *War on Waste*, what are the filmmakers suggesting about Australia's mounting waste problems?

3. Choose one of the following as your challenge for change in the next month. We can't all do everything at once but small changes we each make will certainly add up.
  - a) Take the supermarket plastic carry bags back to the shop and put them in the store recycle bin which may be labelled Red Cycle.
  - b) Spend \$5 on five strong cloth supermarket bags and put them in the car if you drive to the shops or at home if you walk.
  - c) Encourage all family members to use a 'keep cup' for the coffee or hot chocolate they have on their way to work.
  - d) Set up a simple composting bin with a lid in the backyard for fruit and vegetable and garden waste.
  - e) Don't buy any new clothes or shoes, if possible, for a month unless they are really essential. Visit an Op shop.



- f) Prepare a petition for your local state member asking for a change in approach and practice to waste creation and management. It may be as simple as 'Ban the lightweight plastic bags' or a request for better cleaning services in parks and waterways in your area. Send it off or arrange for it to be delivered to State Parliament. Paper or hard copy petitions, as Craig Reucassel demonstrates with his coffee cups tram and his plastic bag ball, have a greater impact than online petitions which can be easier to ignore.
  - g) Learn to repair and keep using an object in your household that is damaged and/or discarded.
  - h) Organise a visit from a council depot worker from their 'sustainability' department to talk about the kind of recycling they are doing.
  - i) Research whether there is any such thing as strong but biodegradable bags to pick up and dispose of all the dog poo our pets produce daily in back yards or parks or on their walks. Where does it all go?
  - j) Check out your local supermarket to see if some of the information shown in this program has encouraged plastic bag recycling or at least returning bags to place of grocery produce. If you learn that there has been a change, suggest how this new behaviour can be sustained.
4. If there was just one change all of us could be persuaded to make in how we create and dispose of waste, what would you select as the most worthwhile change for 2017?
  5. If a second series of *War on Waste* is made, what are some of the areas of over-consumption and excessive waste that you would like to see featured?
  6. Which of the suggested initiatives featured in Series 1 would you hope to see working in Series 2:





- a. Adjusting cosmetic fruit and vegetable standards by supermarkets
- b. More city and suburban cafes seeing a change in the percentage of customers using their own coffee cups
- c. A nationwide ban on grey and white lightweight plastic bags in all shops
- d. Charges to shoppers for use of single use plastic shopping bags
- e. Local councils offering affordable compost bins for food waste
- f. Higher penalties for illegal dumping of rubbish, including cars and mattresses.

7. Write a persuasive essay about a proposed national ban on single use plastic bags.

You can either argue in favour of this idea or against it.

Prepare all your arguments and those of the other view in point form before you begin writing your piece.

One important point to consider is that banning certain products throughout the world is rarely successful.

Should plastic bags be available at supermarkets for a small charge as any full ban is implemented?

8. Design a poster to be displayed in shopping centres that will visually express your view about plastic bags and their uses and afterlife.

OR

Create a design for a T-shirt promoting the need for recycling that could be sold quite cheaply with profits being used for other promotional material such as television spot advertising.

Can you persuade people through your visual and graphic skills to be more thoughtful?

## REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

### BOOKS

Annie Raser-Rowland with Adam Grubb, *The Art of Frugal Hedonism* – A guide to spending less while enjoying everything more, Melliodora Publishing, 2016

Clive Hamilton and Richard Denniss, *Affluenza – When too much is never enough*, Allen and Unwin, 2005

### ARTICLES AND OTHER MATERIALS

Check out this site for more information and tips about waste management projects and ideas

<http://www.abc.net.au/ourfocus/warongwaste/>

An article about the value of the 'odd bunch' sales pitch at Woolworth.

<http://theconversation.com/cut-price-ugly-supermarket-food-wont-reduce-waste-heres-why-35375>

*The History of Plastic* transcript

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/rearvision/the-history-of-plastic/8576534>

Clean-up Australia's campaign to clean up Australia and plastic bags in particular.

<http://www.cleanup.org.au/au/Campaigns/plastic-bag-facts.html>

*Eco House Challenge*, 2007 6-part series shown on SBS, Prospero Productions

Some schools may have retained copies of this series and there is a study guide at Enhance TVs website at <https://www.enhancetv.com.au/shop/home.php?cat=248>

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