

## "Waste" at Shimtani

When you throw something away, just where is away?

There are really two stages to dealing with household waste. The simplest of these is figuring out how to put the right stuff in the right bin.



We are very lucky - our local Council's recycling program means that about 70% of our waste is recycled in some way. In reality our two street bins are both recycle bins - one (green topped) for compostable material, which is made into high grade compost for gardens, and one (yellow top) for recyclables and other "dry" material. The yellow topped bin's contents are sorted and mostly recycled, with the rest sent to land fill.



Shani uses a simple bench top system for her organic waste - one bucket for the chooks, one for the compost and one for the council green bin.



And under the sink is a drawer for our yellow topped council bin, plastic bags, reusable shopping bags, newspaper and a tin for batteries.

But sorting is just part of the story!

We have concentrated on three ways to reduce our waste -



First, we think about the packaging around what we buy. For the last few years we have participated in Plastic Free July. It is a real eye opener to realise how much plastic packaging and junk we usually buy, particularly when you realise a plastic bag will take hundreds of years to break down.

Second, we try to think about whether we need to buy the stuff, regardless of its packaging. Could we borrow it, make it, fix it, buy it second hand, share it with a neighbour? And do we really need it at all?

Shani is on her fourth year of a "No New Clothes" pledge. She finds it very liberating to not feel the need to look in clothing shops and she is much more creative about what she makes, or buys second hand. And her wardrobe is a set size - so if she buys something, she has to give something away!



Third if we do decide to buy something we try to get something that will last, be repairable, or be recyclable at the end of its life. This explains Shani's recent purchase of a Thermomix - she plans to still be using it when she is 80, unlike her blender which blew up after only five years!

## Plastic (& Chemical) Free Bathroom

We have participated in Plastic Free July for four years now. By avoiding all plastic products and packaging for a month we became really aware of how much plastic there is in the world.

So we have made a few changes in our bathroom as a result. Tim has not washed his hair for nearly three years, and Shani only uses left over shampoo from The Painted Fish.

Tim has stopped using plastic shaving razors, and bought an old fashioned cut throat razor and strop.

Shani has recently learnt to make toothpaste out of bicarb soda, salt, glycerine and a peppermint essential oil for smell and taste.

She also learnt to make deodorant - from bicarb, corn flour and coconut oil and is amazed at how well it works.

Shani's friend Amy has really encouraged her to think about the amount of waste that is used for "that time of the month". She was shocked to find out that the average woman fills seven shopping trolleys full. So you will notice that next to the loo are some old fashioned cloth pads - some homemade and some purchased from Scarlet Eve.



And this is not really saving plastic but Tim also collects his urine and we used it diluted 1/10 as a fertiliser on the garden. It also makes a great compost accelerator. Grandad was right to wee on the lemon tree!