

YOU CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

LUCY BELL

THE KIDS'
GUIDE TO A
BETTER PLANET

CONTENTS

Introduction

1. Plastic
2. Clothing
3. Waste
4. Food
5. Gardening and the Outdoors
6. Energy, Electricity and Water
7. Animal Activism
8. An Act of Kindness
9. Group Activities

Notes

EARTH IS AN INCREDIBLE PLANET, home to amazing creatures, plants, beaches, rivers, streams, forests and mountains. There are so many animals in the world that we can't even count them—we can only guess! Scientists estimate that there could be anywhere from to 2 million to 50 million different species on Earth, with thousands more being discovered every year. And we share this planet with all of them. Earth is our friend, our family and our home.

But every day, we see problems we would like to fix. A piece of rubbish in a green, grassy park. Plastic water bottles buried in the sand at the beach. A garbage bin overflowing onto the street. A skinny, stray dog. A homeless person on a cold day.

We hear that the ocean is being polluted, thousands of animals are dying, and species are going extinct. That climate change is warming up the planet, melting icebergs and threatening animals and people.

When we hear about these problems, most of us want to help, but it's not always easy to know where to start. And some of these problems are so big, they can seem impossible for one person to change. But we can fix them, if we each do our part.

To do that, we have to take action.

Kids are the future—you can save the world, one step at a time. As you will discover in this book, there are lots of amazing children in the world, just like you!

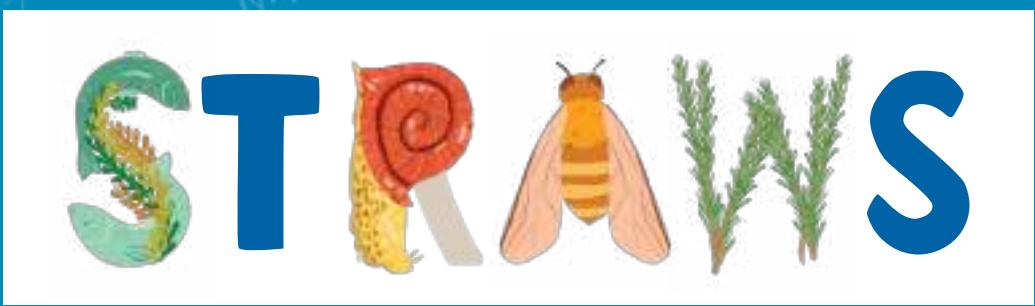
Human beings are
some of the smartest
creatures ever to
walk the Earth, but
we have also made
some big mistakes.
Now it's time for us
to work together to
fix those mistakes.

If you love Earth and want to join the mission to save our planet, then this is the book for you. These pages contain information, ideas and activities to show you, your friends and your family how to make simple changes every day that will make the planet a safer, happier and greener place. Because it's up to us to protect our Earth.

Things to remember when you're changing the world:

- ◆ Start with the things that are easiest for you. You don't need to read this book in order—pick the activities you want to do most.
- ◆ Changing the world won't happen in a day, and you don't have to do everything at once. It's all about making a few changes at a time.
- ◆ This book is about being more aware of the things you are doing and the choices you are making every day. It's not always possible to make the best choice, but it's important to be informed, so you know how your actions affect others.
- ◆ Saving the planet is fun! We're all on our own journey to save the world, and every day, we can do something to help the fight.
- ◆ Remember to track your progress so you can see all the important changes you have made. Everything you do matters.







MOLLY STEER

Queensland, Australia

When she was ten years old, Molly Steer convinced her local government to phase out single-use plastic straws. Now she aims to encourage all schools in Australia to stop using them. Molly's campaign is called Straw No More, and she is doing some amazing things!

1. How old are you now, and how old were you when you started Straw No More?

I'm twelve. Straw No More started when I was nine.

2. Where did you grow up and how did that inspire you?

I was born in Cairns. It's home to the Great Barrier Reef and the Daintree Rainforest, so it's a pretty amazing place to live.

3. What's your favourite pastime or hobby?

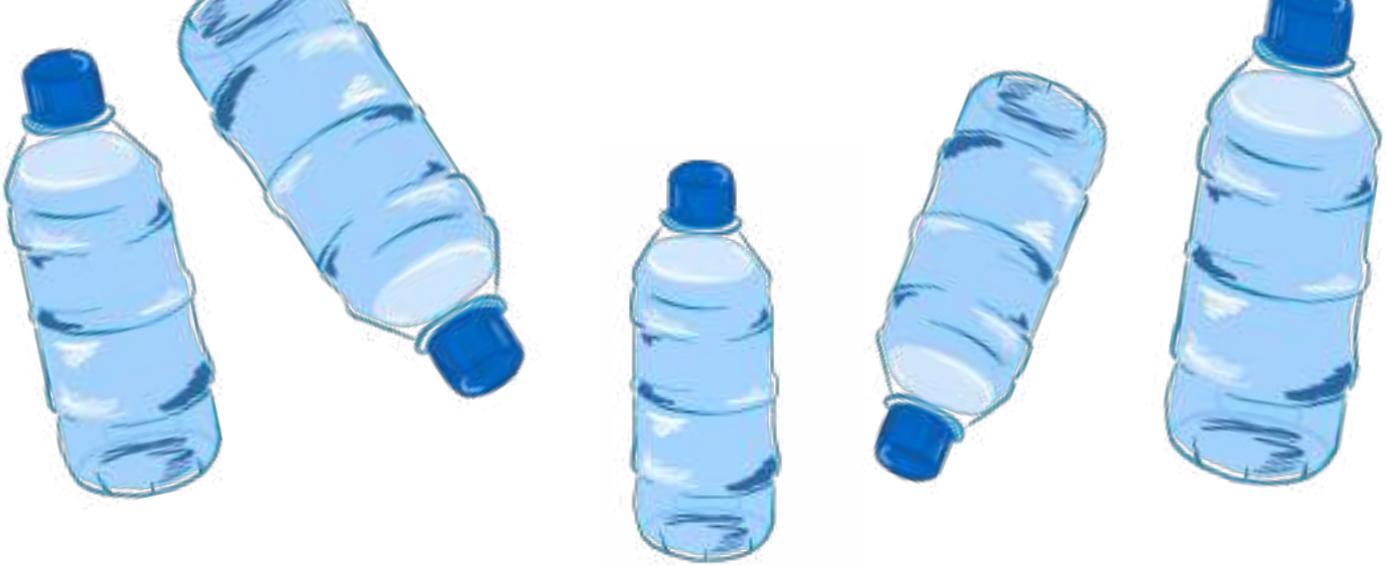
I love swimming and snorkelling and also playing with my dog, Fruit Loop.

4. Tell us about Straw No More.

When I was in Grade 4, after I watched a movie called *A Plastic Ocean*, I decided to do something to cut down the amount of plastic getting into the ocean. I thought that if my friends and I could just stop using plastic straws, we'd be able to make a difference. When I asked my school if we could stop using plastic straws in our tuck shop, they asked me to give a speech at assembly about why. It worked. Then the local radio interviewed me and it went from there.

5. What inspired you to start your campaign?

After I saw the movie *A Plastic Ocean*, I visited the Cairns Turtle Rehabilitation Centre and learned that when a turtle swallows a plastic bag, it can get a thing called Floating Syndrome, which means it can't dive underwater. Then it can't catch its food or protect itself from predators and boats. I love turtles, so helping them has been a really big inspiration.



IT'S STRANGE JUST how many bottles of water we buy each year, even though we have access to clean tap water.

Bottled water first came to Australia in the 1980s. At the time, no-one actually believed people would pay for bottled water when they could get it for free. But incredibly, they did! Now, each year, Australians buy more than 118,000 tonnes of plastic drink bottles, yet we recycle only one in three of those bottles. We can do better than that!

Instead of buying your water in a plastic bottle, get a reusable water bottle, such as a stainless-steel bottle. These are available in a range of colours, sizes and patterns, and will last you a long time. Alternatively, you can start by reusing bottles you already own.

Every minute, more than a million bottles of water are bought worldwide.

FACT

Every year, around 373 million plastic water bottles end up in landfill in Australia alone.

ANIMAL ACTIVISM

MAKING YOUR LUNCH eco-friendly involves avoiding both plastic packaging and creating waste. Start by buying a stainless-steel lunch box, then go from there. A bento box with different compartments can be a great idea—that way you don't have to use more wrapping to separate your food.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- ◆ Eat food that comes in its own natural packaging, like bananas and apples. Fruit doesn't need to come in plastic—it's already wrapped! And remember to take your fruit scraps home to compost them.
- ◆ Avoid foods that are individually wrapped in soft plastics, such as snack and chocolate bars.
- ◆ To reduce packaging, make your own muesli bars, biscuits or savoury muffins, and buy nuts in bulk.
- ◆ When you buy bread for your sandwiches, get it from a bakery and bring your own bag. You could even have a go at making your own bread!



TIPS

- ◆ Always use your leftovers—don't throw them away. Store them in the fridge and eat them later, or put them on your compost.
- ◆ Organise your fridge so the things that will spoil first are at the front.
- ◆ Buy 'ugly' fruit and veg, and try to buy foods that are in season. Look at the Seasonal Food Guide Australia to see what's in season in your state.
- ◆ When you go to restaurants, take a re-usable container with you and ask if you can take any leftover food home for lunch the next day.



— SAY NO — TO USING ANIMALS FOR ENTERTAINMENT

Don't support places where animals are used for entertainment—like animal racing, circuses, marine parks and zoos where animals are kept in very confined spaces or subjected to such rigorous training routines that they're often stressed. Animals should be able to live freely in their natural habitats, and not used for our amusement. Instead, choose a family outing that's kind to animals.

— ORGANISATION —

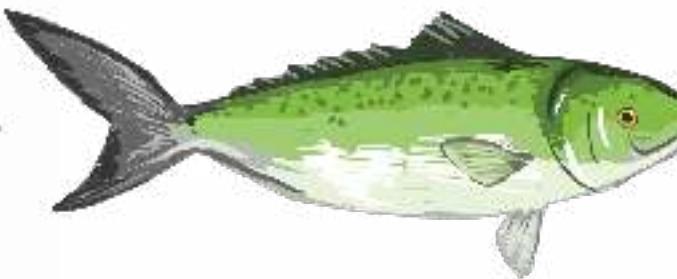
VOICELESS

Voiceless—the animal protection institute—was founded by father–daughter duo Brian and Ondine Sherman. The passionate team at Voiceless work to educate and inspire young people on how to protect animals and provide teachers with information and tools to teach their students about the importance of relationships between humans and animals. They also run a program for law schools to teach about animal protection issues in our legal systems to try to inspire positive change.

What are your top tips for kids who want to do more to help animals?

1. Voiceless recommends slowly introducing a healthy plant-based lifestyle. Changing your daily diet has a direct effect on the lives of our most vulnerable and mistreated animals. And there are so many delicious and nutritious options!
2. Volunteer at a local animal shelter or sanctuary. Many animals, from dogs and hens to pigs, have gone through trauma or abandonment and your time and care can help them heal and make them feel loved.
3. Get active for animals by joining protests against cruelty and signing petitions. You can even write a letter to your local representative on an issue you care about. Every person, no matter their age, and every single voice can make a difference.
4. Organise a fundraising event for your favourite animal charity. A veggie sausage sizzle, fun run or even a lemonade stand. It's also a great way to talk to others about the issues you care about.





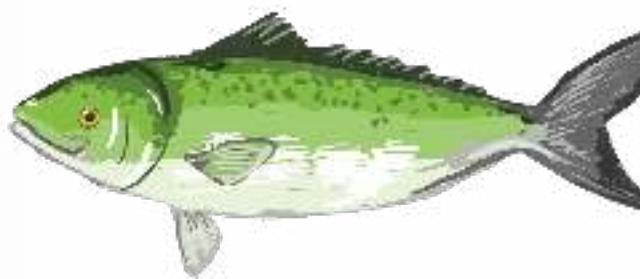
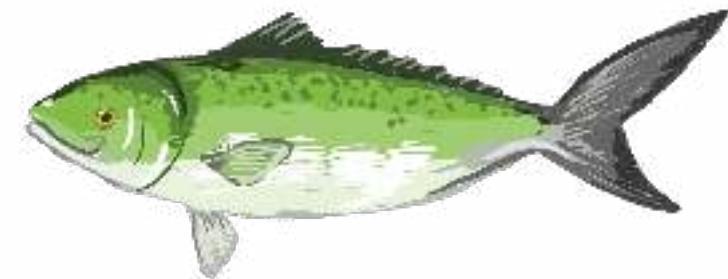
THE WORLD'S OCEANS are vast and beautiful places. They're home to some incredibly diverse ecosystems, including lush shorelines, stunning coral reefs, wide open oceans and the mysterious deep ocean, where there's no light at all. But our oceans are being threatened by overfishing.

Overfishing is when fish are removed from the water so fast, and in such huge numbers, that the species can't replenish itself. This has major effects on the ecosystem the fish live in, as many other sea creatures also rely on those fish for food.

Because many of the fish we catch are herbivores, coral reefs are also in danger, because overfishing means there aren't enough fish left to eat the algae and maintain the delicate balance of the reefs. In short, overfishing has devastating effects on marine ecosystems.

We need to help raise awareness of the dangers of overfishing, and encourage people to use, and support, more sustainable fishing methods.

Sustainable seafood refers to methods of fishing that have minimal impact on fish populations and the marine environment. Fish can be wild caught from fast-growing species, using approaches that won't damage ecosystems or other sea creatures. They can also be farmed in aquaculture, which means they're grown in small systems that don't destroy ocean habitats.



— ACTIVITY —

MAKE A COMPOST BIN OR WORM FARM

More than half of the rubbish we put in our kitchen or household bins is food scraps. Food scraps in landfill are one of the main causes of harmful greenhouse gases. By putting your food scraps in a compost bin or worm farm instead, you can significantly reduce the food waste you and your family send to landfill. Composting also creates soil that is rich in nutrients, which you can use in your garden to make your plants grow big and strong.

Give it a go, and see if you can reduce the number of times you have to empty the bin!



— ACTIVITY —

RECIPES

HAIR CARE: Try the following recipes, or come up with some of your own using natural ingredients such as honey, avocado, plain yoghurt, coconut oil, olive oil, rosemary, apple cider vinegar, eggs, and lemon juice.

BANANARAMA HAIR SMOOTHIE



This sweet conditioner will leave your hair looking sleek and shiny. Bananas contain potassium, natural oils and vitamins, which help protect your hair. Olive oil repairs damaged hair and prevents dandruff. Honey seals moisture into your hair and also contains beneficial antioxidants. This conditioner is so natural, it's almost good enough to eat!

RECIPE

You'll need:

- 1 mashed banana
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 tablespoons honey (it's best to use local organic)



What to do: Mix all ingredients together thoroughly until smooth, then apply evenly to damp hair. Wait for 10–15 minutes then rinse well. Use 1–2 times a week.

— PLASTIC —

FACT

Every single known species of turtle has been found with plastic in or around its body.

RE-USE AND — REPURPOSE —

Get creative and inventive! Make new things from old things. Give value to the things you own.

Apart from food and kitchen scraps, there are lots of things that we throw away without even thinking: broken toys, clothes we've grown out of, empty bottles, glass jars, food containers, toilet rolls, egg cartons, milk bottles, tissue boxes—the list goes on.

Here are just a few examples of ways you can re-use these things. You can probably come up with lots of other ways.



DID YOU KNOW?

The coriander seeds that your parents might have in their spice rack can actually be planted and will grow into coriander plants.

