

'Plastics are going to be here well beyond us and our great, great grandkids and there's going to be more plastic in the ocean than fish by 2050, so we need to change our reliance on it.'

WHO WE ARE: Lindsey McEwan

Delivering a dream to go green

Story by **Emma Masters**. Photograph by **Jason Porter**.

Inspiration can strike at the most unexpected times. For Maslin Beach mother-of-two Lindsey McEwan, it happened as she tried to refill a series of glass jars in a bulk food aisle, while struggling to stop her young children from digging their tiny bare hands into the goods.

Two years later, Lindsey is the owner of Bulk Cellar, a successful boutique online store that offers a growing range of whole food items and environmentally sustainable products – all with the convenience of home delivery.

Lindsey says the opportunity to help people reduce their use of plastic is the driving force behind the store. 'From my early twenties I started becoming more conscious of plastics and the impact of convenience buying, and so I started to shop bulk to reduce household waste,' she says.

She saw the massive impact of plastic pollution firsthand while travelling through Indonesia, South East Asia and Central America. But the idea for Bulk Cellar really began to crystallise when her desire to reduce waste collided with the realities of shopping with young children who, as any parent knows, just have to touch everything.

Lindsey brainstormed ideas with a friend for a year. 'Then I developed a business plan and it was just one step in front of the other to reach the dream of the store,' says Lindsey. Bulk Cellars launched online in February last year, with a website built by Lindsey and a fledgling warehouse retrofitted into her backyard shed.

The store now offers an ever-expanding list of around 350 items, including dry pantry foods such as nuts, rice and flour through to oils, herbs and dried fruits. It also has a range of home and natural cleaning products and personal care items, from toothbrushes to soaps and deodorants. The goods are packed in recycled paper bags and glass bottles that customers can either purchase or supply.

'It's a different model of ordering your foods this way – packaging without plastic and doing it with bulk items,' she says. 'And even though we focus on delivery, I've set up the warehouse like a shop where everything is in easy-access bulk bins with prices so people can still come in at certain times and scoop and weigh what they like.'

Her plan was to start small and focus on delivering around the Maslin Beach and local area. 'The community support has been great – I've had customers that have been with me since I started,' she says. As more people become conscious of waste reduction and buying local, her client base has grown organically, mostly through word-of-mouth.

Lindsey aims to stock Bulk Cellar's shelves with as many local products as possible. Food is one thing, but Lindsey also looks for locally produced green alternatives to household items. 'For example, I've got a local lady who crochets cotton dish cloths and another making beeswax wraps,' she says.

'If I can't get them from the Fleurieu or South Australia, I look across Australia and I also try to choose organic but if I can't find it nationally or if the price is just too high, I will go non-organic because I want it to be affordable for people. I don't want people to think bulk food shopping could be more expensive, when it should be the other way around.'

Lindsey also speaks about the importance of education and revels in the opportunity to help people make more sustainable consumer choices. 'It's just really trying to create awareness that we don't need to be buying all these things that are one-time use or we use it for a month and then it gets thrown out like a plastic toothbrush,' Lindsey explains. 'My goal is just really to help inspire the community, just to promote a life with less plastic and less waste.'

It's talk that Lindsey strives to walk across all facets of her life, pointing out that her mission to reduce landfill in her home and business is an ongoing journey. When she spoke to Fleurieu Living, Bulk Cellars held a plastic-free status and her family had celebrated one month of zero waste. 'Plastics are going to be here well beyond us and our great, great grandkids and there's going to be more plastic in the ocean than fish by 2050, so we need to change our reliance on it,' she says.

She's quick to add that people shouldn't feel pressured to do everything all at once. 'Plastic-free living isn't about perfection, it's about choosing to make better choices and doing what you can within your own means to make simple decisions and changes,' she says. 'Zero waste is merely a goal, not a purity test. You don't have to reach zero in order to have a positive effect.'



Above: Lindsey McEwan, owner of Bulk Cellar in Maslin Beach.