

PETER MAC MULLIN

MARK KNIGHT IS ON LEAVE
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10 resolutions to start a revolution

NEW Year's resolutions. We all make them and often break them. And some succeed in making them our new habits.

The New Year's resolutions that succeed are most likely triple-decker motivators.

They are great for us, great for our community (and impress others), and they are great for the planet too.

Because we don't need more angst in 2022, don't set killer resolutions you are not likely to keep – aim for one or two that are bang-on trend.

Become a recycling guru. Get ready for container deposit scheme.

In 12 months, Victoria will gain a deposit scheme for recycling beverage containers like cans and bottles. This will be great pocket money for kids and fundraising for schools. Start now by putting only packaging and paper in your yellow recycling bins. Recyclable things like coathangers and clothes belong elsewhere like recovery centres or op shops. This will help cut down the 20 per cent soiled recyclables going to landfills.

Get fit and cut costs. Ride or scooter for your short trips

With petrol prices rising, get out that bike or scooter to ride or glide for short trips to grab milk, picnics in the park or visit friends. You get stronger and fitter, save money, avoid traffic snarls and parking



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headaches. And, for every litre of fuel saved (\$1.70), you save around 2.3kg of carbon dioxide pollution.

Grow herbs instead of buying chopped plants and recycle your pots

All plants give us oxygen, so growing plants is a great idea. Potted herbs are a ready source of ingredients, they last much longer and involve less packaging. Plant pots are recyclable, so ask your nursery if they are part of the new plant pot recycling scheme. Every kilo of plastic recycled reduces carbon emissions by around 5kg.

Plastic-wise parties

Covid nearly stopped our progress to reduce plastic waste. But we are returning to our durable plates and keep cups. In 2021 the major supermarkets went plastic-wise, ceasing sale of disposable plastic straws, cutlery and tableware that too readily becomes litter. So, picnic sets and handbag cutlery kits are the perfect NY resolution gift.

Your food for healthy soils

Soon every council in Victoria will introduce green-lidded organics

bins diverting food and garden organics (FOGO) from landfill. For months we have been filling our weekly green bin with pruned branches, food scraps, bones and stale bread. This goes to special composters who cure it for weeks and sell this nutritious mix to farmers for healthy orchards and vines. Plus, every kilo of FOGO saved from landfill is 500g of carbon dioxide not going into the atmosphere. Compost at home if your council is not already on board.

Extend your clothes

Buying all new clothes is so old-hat. Extend the life of our favourites with patches and mending, or even change the style or length. Fix yourself or go to your local alterations guru. Slow fashion and ethical fashion are the new black, with a global campaign brewing to end poor labour practices and high wastes from short-life clothing.

Get smart with energy

In 2012 we had an energy assessor come through our home providing great advice. We adopted another recommendation each year. We even had a "no more gaps" party with family filling in holes so our home no longer leaked like a sieve. After 10 years of improvements and falling bills, we are as happy as can be. The Victorian government is now funding this program. Just do it.

Buy electric and become an EV-head
The newest electric vehicle cars and

motorbikes are more powerful, quiet and less polluting than anything else on the market. Diesel and petrol emissions are big contributors to air pollution, asthma and lung disease. EVs are so exhilarating – start by making a date to take an EV for a test drive, or hire one for a day to get the swoosh rush.

Get off gas

Gas heating, cooking and gas hot water are no longer a cheap or clean alternative to electric, so upgrade what and when you can – reverse-cycle aircon for heating and cooling, induction cooker and an uber-efficient electric heat pump for hot water. Add solar PV to the roof and you are on your way to having near-zero emissions and bills. If you can't do that, know that Victoria's electricity grid is increasingly powered by renewables, which is great.

Do good to feel good

Choose one of the easiest "pick-me-up" medicines – give to others via some monthly volunteer activity. You can help in a food kitchen, repair cafe or join a Landcare group and help feed folks, mend appliances or save endangered species. It's great fun, easy to make friends and gain extra feel-good purpose in 2022.

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MARY PAPANAKIS

The food lottery is won

TIS the season to eat, drink and be merry, according to the oft-used phrase otherwise known as a free pass to indulge in delicious festive fare.

After all, where else are New Year's resolutions going to originate if not straight from a widening hip or protruding gut?

Right now, however, the phrase is taking on extra significance at our place where there is literally cream (and a traditional decorative cherry) on top. You see, our daughter, Evie, is outgrowing a food allergy.

Dairy, once our greatest foe and the reason we have armed ourselves with Epipens for almost a decade, is now not only a welcome, but necessary addition to her diet.

Since passing her fresh milk challenge at an allergy clinic, Evie has embarked on a gastronomic exploration of all things dairy.

We started at the top: chocolate. KitKats, M&Ms and Tim Tams have received the big thumbs up, though likely not from our dentist.

If you're having trouble finding a KitKat, it might have something to do with the stockpile of the shiny, red-wrapped treats taking up almost an entire shelf in our pantry. Cheese, ice-cream, bakery items, yoghurt and even restaurant food are now on the menu.

While we are still in the process of trying new dairy foods, it seems, touch wood, that we have won the food lottery twice; our eldest daughter, Zoe, also outgrew her cashew allergy. The significance of this is certainly not lost on us.

When Zoe was diagnosed, our then allergist, the renowned Dr David Hill, gave us some sage advice: there are those who understand food allergies, and those who don't.

Such words rang true again and again as we navigated the often isolating and difficult road of living with life-threatening food allergies. Imagine the fear that comes with knowing a seemingly benign food like a cashew or sip of milk could end your child's life.

Now our challenge, however, is to let go; to resist the protective urge to check each ingredient and to carry a bag of safe foods on every outing.

Now our challenge is to normalise the foods we once avoided, though the antihistamines and Epipens remain near.

Whether you or your child has a food allergy or is (touch wood, again) outgrowing one like ours, it is important friends and families support each other during a time so heavily laden with social gatherings centred around food.

Wishing you and yours a safe bon appetit.

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