



AUSTRALIAN STORY – THE TIPPING POINT

Monday 22 February at 8pm AEDT on ABC TV + iview



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Scientist Veena Sahajwalla is a recycling superstar with some bold new ideas about how to save waste from landfill.

As Australia's collective garbage guilt builds alongside the tonnes of plastic piling up in recycling depots, Professor Sahajwalla's inventions may offer some exciting new solutions to deal with the problem.

"We're sitting at that tipping point," she says. "We can no longer send it somewhere overseas...we have to solve it, we have to do something about it."

A self-confessed 'obsessive' when it comes to waste, she regularly raids her home rubbish bins for inspiration.

"I think Mum had a few funny quirks that made her a little bit different to other Mums, she was definitely the rubbish cop," says daughter Rama.

Inspired walking the streets of her Mumbai neighbourhood as a child, Veena observed almost everything was reused and 'nothing was wasted.'

This attitude underpinned her career as an engineer and sowed the seeds for a variety of ground-breaking ideas, including making steel from car tyres.

Now Veena Sahajwalla is unveiling her latest invention, a 'microfactory' that creates building materials and tiles from the unlikely combination of old clothes and glass.

And it's catching the eye of major players.

"I remember just being blown away by the variety of things that she'd been able to create out of what would have been considered waste materials," says Mirvac CEO Susan Lloyd-Hurwitz, referring to a new apartment that showcases her tiles.

But the pressure is on to transform her latest invention into a workable idea for business - and get consumers interested.

It's a big bold concept and could be revolutionary. But will it work outside the lab?

Producer: Jennifer Feller

Watch *The Tipping Point* on Monday 22 February at 8pm on ABC TV + iview. You can watch replays on ABC NEWS channel on Wednesdays at 12:30am, Saturdays at 6:30pm and Sundays at 2:30pm and 9:30pm. All times are AEDT.

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