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Let's cut the crap.

From roadside long drops to campsite stop-overs, it's now common for patches of our sunburnt country to appear dappled with a soft, white material – and news flash, it's not snow.

With camping an increasingly popular activity around the country, portable toilet practices are becoming more necessary than before. Throughout this episode, Ben and Lauren waste no time in flushing poor toilet practice down the drain, dumping a detailed discourse on camping toilet options for those stark trips beyond suburbia.

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Mentioned in this episode

Podcasts:

[Ep18 – Camping, Waste, and Leaving No Trace](#)

[Ep45 – Fire Ban Seasons with the CFS](#)

Blogs:

[How to Choose a Camp Toilet](#)

Products:

[Thetford Porta Potti](#)



[Thetford Aqua Soft Toilet Paper](#)
[Bushranger 4x4 Gear Digger Shovel](#)
[Sea to Summit Alloy Pocket Trowel](#)
[Sea to Summit Sling Dry Bag 10L](#)
[Sea to Summit Trashesack Garbage Bag](#)
[Blacksmith Camping Supplies Australian Made Pipsqueak Bag](#)
[Sea to Summit TSA Hand Cleaning Gel Sanitiser](#)
[Shewee Peebol Pocket Sized Toilet](#)
[Shewee Female Urination Device](#)
[OZtrail Quadfold Toilet Chair](#)
[Aussie Campers Jimmy's Thunderbox Toilet](#)
[Dometic portable toilets](#)
[Elemental Thunder Down Under Bucket Toilet](#)
[Toilet detergents](#)
[Ensuite tents](#)
[Companion Portable Toilet](#)
Other:
[Dump Point Finder AUS app](#)

Toileting on Your Travels

This isn't the first time Ben and Lauren have talked crap.

A previous episode titled '[Camping, Waste and Leaving No Trace](#)' discusses waste and rubbish considerations when camping, including approaches to toileting and the use of bog roll in the bush.

Roughly ten years ago, the expected process of outback toileting was to dig a hole measuring approximately 30 centimetres deep. Nowadays, many sites specify for campers to be entirely self-sufficient – that is, to carry their waste away with them upon departure.

In Lauren's experience so far this year, most camping areas have been peppered with used toilet paper, seemingly without any attempt to bury or cover it over. As humans, we all need to go...and sometimes, we can't control when or where we do so. That said, everyone despises a crappy campsite – yet many out there still contribute to them.

So why are campers failing to apply proper toileting practices at the campsite?

Is it taboo?

Is it too off-putting to bear our business in the backseat between stops?

Those with young children may argue that it's no different from carrying used nappies.

Nonetheless, it requires a shift in mindset – and ultimately, there are ways to take care of business in a relatively discreet, odourless, and hygienic manner.

Those who continue to litter loo roll will only contribute to the cause of why many camping grounds are closing down. With this in mind, Ben and Lauren settle on some of the more suitable camp toilet options that should be considered on a trip away.

How Can We Curb the Turds?!

So – what can we do as a community to help prevent this (d)ungracious behaviour? Ben and Lauren want your feedback.

As mentioned, increasingly more campgrounds are closing based on this sole display of misconduct. These include the more accessible sites that are typically convenient for quick weekends away. Despite this, disposing of standard rubbish seems to be a simpler task for some than doing so with their own waste.



There are ways to take care of business in a relatively discreet, odourless, and hygienic manner. Credit: Shutterstock

Toilet Paper and Wipes

According to Lauren's research, toilet paper can take anywhere between one and three years to break down – even within a hole in the earth. This includes multi-ply, single-ply, and recycled variations, still surfacing even after a couple of months. While particularly cold, wet, or dry soil slows down decomposition, it is apparent that soil of a moist, loamy, and healthy consistency promotes the process at a faster rate. To achieve a similar effect, Ben and Lauren also suggest scattering sticks and bush debris on top of your waste and toilet paper before covering it with earth.

With every camper burying bog roll in the bush over the course of three years, the volume of toilet paper only multiplies and the chance of digging it up again becomes more likely. When entombed to at least 15 centimetres underground, biodegradable wipes have been found to decompose more efficiently than toilet paper. This doesn't refer to the standard plastic-based, wet, or compostable wipes – instead, 'biodegradable' wipes are the way to go, often bamboo-based.

With [Thetford Porta Pottis](#), it's recommended to utilise their [separately available toilet paper](#) in conjunction. Though not a luxurious three-ply structure, the paper is nonetheless designed to do the job and decompose with waste. Standard, wet, or perfumed wipes tend to be less effective.

Trowels and Shovels

While some may not enjoy the idea of incorporating a large shovel into their camping kit, there are [lighter, more compact designs](#) available that detach into separate parts for easy packing.

Further to this, Ben owns a small, three-part [trowel that folds out](#) – a design perfectly suitable for preparing a hole for toileting purposes. Some trowels are more lightweight and compact still, boding better for hiking trips that demand lighter loads.

Ultimately, there are more uses for a [trowel](#) or [shovel](#) than simply digging a bog hole – and with so many options available, there are even fewer reasons why campers shouldn't dig a hole for the sake of considerate outback toileting.

Toilet Kits

When roadside pullups are inevitable, a toilet kit in the trunk is ideal. This can simply take the form of a dry bag holding a small pocket trowel, a roll of toilet paper, hand sanitizer, and a cigarette lighter.

Ideally, the kit should be easy to use and a receptacle to simply throw your used toilet paper in, roll up, and transport to the nearest bin. Lauren suggests the Sea to Summit Trashesack Garbage Bag as an option too. Already lined with a bin bag, its slight size is adequate for stashing toilet paper. Alternatively, campers can replace the bin bag with a scented supermarket type, or apply bi-carbonate soda to the existing bag to help reduce odour. The sack then allows for simple removal of the bin bag for disposal.

Ben uses a Blacksmith Camping Supplies Australian Made Pipsqueak Bag and packs it with a toilet paper roll, mini shovel or trowel, hand gel, cigarette lighter, and a plastic bag for potential wet weather protection. That said, he hopes to eventually incorporate some form of drybag for carrying used toilet paper beyond a campsite facility.

Burning Toilet Paper

No, we weren't taking a random, sporadic tangent in mentioning a cigarette lighter as part of a toilet kit.

Given ash is likely to degrade at a faster rate than bulk toilet tissue, Ben explains that burning toilet paper can also help reduce its build-up at a campsite.

(No Lauren, not in the communal campfire – in the bog hole!)

That said, it's important to ensure the space surrounding the hole is clear of bush debris, as flames can surpass the edge of the hole. Note too that in Fire Ban Season, this paper-burning approach would be prohibited.

Shewee Peebol Bags

The Shewee Peebol bag is essentially a pocket-sized toilet that takes the shape of a plastic bag holding biodegradable granules, like a nappy. Campers can simply urinate into the bag, where the liquid waste transforms into a solid, gel-like substance. Once sealed, the bag can then be disposed of normally. Bags alike are those found on airplanes for motion sickness. As Peebol bags cannot be utilised more than once, this option isn't the most cost-effective and are instead ideal for emergency situations.

Shewee Female Urination Devices

Despite their popularity, Shewee Urination Devices (commonly known as Sheweess) are not referred to enough as useful toilet options away from civilization. Easy, effective, and compact – Sheweess are a no-fuss, fresh option for females!

Car Camping and 4WD Touring Toilet Options

Wheeling into the weekend? There are two toilet alternatives when car camping or 4WD-ing: digging a hole at each site and fixing a toilet frame over the top, or bearing a sealed, enclosed unit in the the boot (such as a [Porta Potti](#)).

Within the former, options include simply digging a hole and free-squatting without a seat, positioning a [toilet frame or seat](#) over the hole, or a [Thunderbox](#).

Thunderboxes, Toilet Frames, and Other Dig-A-Hole Toilet Options

A [Thunderbox](#) is a sturdy box-like structure built with galvanized steel and hinges that allow it to fold in on itself. When expanded, it appears as a square-shaped chimney, where the wooden top lowers and locks into place as a seat. On particularly long, extended holidays with her family, Lauren brings a [large shovel](#) to entrench a hole at least a metre deep, places the [Thunderbox](#) over the top, and seals it away as well as she can. When the soil has a clay-like consistency, she applies water and packs it firmly around the base of the box to create a stiff, cement-style seal. Collapsed, the [Thunderbox](#) slides in flat and compact with her camp tackle.

That said, the top of the [Thunderbox](#) is MDF (Medium Density Fibreboard), which can swell after making contact with water. While this doesn't impact its usability, Lauren notes it as a consideration and precaution. In the case of severe damage, the top of the [Thunderbox](#) can be easily replaced via a simple DIY effort that involves re-using the hinge and tracing the original toilet seat shape onto a new slab of wood.

Alternatively, Ben owns the [OZtrail Quadfold Toilet Chair](#) that features a flap of material at the front as a splash guard. While it does the job, Ben aims to eventually upgrade to the [Thunderbox](#) given its sturdier build and ability to be lodged firmly into the soil. Unlike the [Thunderbox](#), the [Quadfold chair](#) can become unstable if positioned over a hole dug too wide. Overall, the benefits of both the [Thunderbox](#) and [OZtrail Quadfold](#) are that they're relatively inexpensive, require no chemicals, and are as simple as a toilet seat over a hole in the earth.

Cons of Dig-A-Hole Toilet Options

While it's clear that dig-a-hole toilets are effective – we can't just go around digging holes anywhere and everywhere. Some areas will either forbid it, or the terrain will be impossible to excavate – such as rocky surfaces typical of hiking trails and mountain slopes.

So, if our wonderbox-[Thunderbox](#) doesn't suffice...what else is there?

Enclosed Toilet Options

[Enclosed, sealed toilet options](#) are likely to become more prevalent with the increasing number of campsites requiring campers to be fully self-sufficient in their toileting. Brands stocking such options include [Thetford](#) and [Dometic](#).

While these choices are larger, heavier, and more awkward to incorporate into our camp kits,

they remain the easiest solutions when holes aren't an option. Put simply, [Porta Pottis](#) mirror caravan toilets, and can be emptied at authorized dumping points or into a domestic toilet attached to a sewerage system.

Dumping points can be located via the [Dump Point Finder app](#), or through Wiki Camps. On the other hand, [Porta Pottis](#) should not be emptied into long drops or toilets on a septic system. The [chemicals](#) used in [Porta Pottis](#) eradicate the bacteria needed to carry out the microbiological processes the septic system relies on to function. For more information, check out one of our previous blogs, '[How to Choose a Camp Toilet](#)'.

Alternatively, [bucket toilets](#) don't involve added [detergents](#) and so can be tipped into normal toilets, offering a viable option for those who aren't keen on the additional chemical necessities of a Porta Potti.

To avoid travelling too far beyond the campsite at night too, enclosed toilet options are ideal (especially for children). Given they're relatively odourless, simply keep it within the tent after dark and relocate back to the [ensuite tent](#) in the morning.

Other options include bucket toilets with an internal bag, where those without a bag would simply require rinsing afterward. [Open seats on a frame with bags suspended beneath](#) can also eliminate the need to dig a hole – although a free-hanging bag in the open also has it prone to animal and wildlife interference.

Ultimately – sealed camp toilet options can be used anywhere, don't require a hole, keep waste out-of-sight-out-of-mind, and enable easy sealing for transit.

Cons of Enclosed Toilet Options

With every pro, there's a con – and the pitfalls of enclosed camp toilets include their cost, size, and frequent requirement of [chemical solutions](#).

While the [Thunderbox](#) is also an investment, it's built to battle the outback brutality and bog roll, lasting a lifetime. In the case of an enclosed toilet option, Ben suggests spending the money on a superior model to avoid issues with leakage in cheaper designs.

Caravan Toilets

Much like an [enclosed portable toilet](#), caravan toilets are more elaborate with their toilet seat and a cartridge that mirrors the base of a [Porta Potti](#). Caravan toilets are removed from the side of the caravan and wheeled to a dumping point for disposal.

Essentially – if you have a caravan, you likely gain one thing and lose another: the former is a pre-existing toilet system, while the latter is a reason to leave toilet paper about the place!

The Final Flush

A toilet plan on a camping trip is important for both the environment and consideration for other campers who follow. It can be easy to believe that we're the only group at an empty campsite, though it's likely that a family passed through only hours before. Eventually, poorly treated campsites will close down in their protest against cleaning up our crap – literally.



Thanks for listening, tune in again for next week's episode!

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If you have any questions for Ben and Lauren, make sure you head over to our [Facebook group](#) and let us know as we'd love to hear from you.

Catch you out there!