

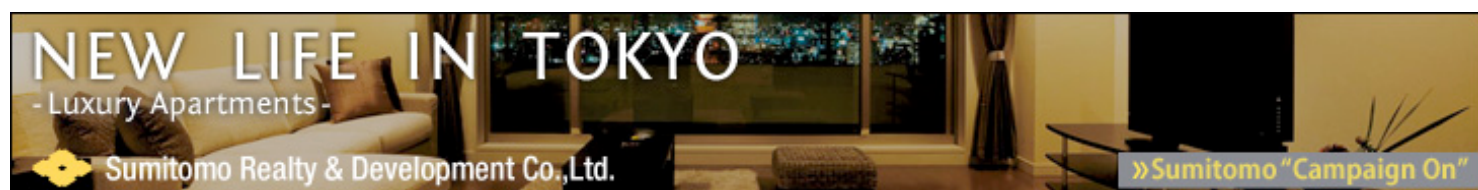
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print

Australian filmmaker to swim from Japan to U.S.

Monday 21st December, 04:05 AM JST

SYDNEY —

An Australian filmmaker plans to swim across the Pacific Ocean from Japan to the United States in a giant plastic bottle, plowing through a huge floating garbage dump to highlight marine pollution.

Richard Pain said he realized that swimming 9,000 kilometers from Japan to California was “completely mad” but said he hoped it inspired others to think more about the environment.

“If I can do something this crazy, everybody else can do something,” he said.

“Whether it’s recycle, reuse, rethink, stop using single use plastics... just change their behavior in some simple way.”

Pain, 45, plans to swim in a giant recycled plastic water bottle made out of thousands of smaller plastic water bottles. The structure, which he said is under design, is intended to protect him from the hazards of the ocean.

“All the small bottles will be in the shape of one big bottle,” he said.

“I’m trying to create the iconic media image... a man swimming in the middle of the Pacific Ocean inside a giant plastic water bottle.”

Pain said his journey would take him through what is known as the North Pacific Gyre or the Great Pacific Garbage Patch—an area about the size of Texas full of plastic rubbish to a depth of about six meters.

Because of four competing ocean currents which operate in a clockwise direction, the garbage thrown off ships and blown off land has accumulated in a becalmed area in the center, posing risks to birds and marine life.

The area is “choked” with plastic items, which can be sponges for toxins, varying in size from a kayak to the tiniest wisps of plastic, Pain said.

“To the eye as you look across it, it undulates like regular ocean, but when you look down into it, yeah, it’s just plastic everywhere,” he said.

Pain, who plans to embark on his trip in 2011, said he would swim up to 10 hours a day, five days a week and spend his weekends recovering onboard a ship following his course.

For his own protection, he will swim inside the bottle—which will function like a cage similar to those used by swimmers in shark-infested waters—and which will be open at both ends to allow water to float through.

He will also wear a full body suit for ocean swimming, flippers, earplugs, a cap and a snorkel to protect himself from toxins during the journey, which he expects will take about 45 weeks.

Pain has been shooting a documentary on his challenge since June and currently swims about five kilometers a day in the ocean.

He hopes to ramp that up to 30 kilometers five days a week over the year before taking it to 40 kilometers a day using flippers.

Pain said he was determined to complete the unique challenge after becoming frustrated with politicians’ efforts to combat dangerous environmental problems.

Wire reports

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• 

[RomeoRamenII](#) at 09:31 AM JST - 21st December

Why isn't he swimming from Japan to his country?



[tkoind2](#) at 09:37 AM JST - 21st December

Mad or not, at least he is doing something to draw attention to the problem. Those calling him mad here, what are you doing to help?



[wawawasuremono](#) at 09:39 AM JST - 21st December

Environmental activism and swimming great lengths have separate incongruent vectors.



[calicocat](#) at 10:18 AM JST - 21st December

Seems like a goofy endeavour. But cleaning up the plastic mess isn't impossible at all. Maybe uneconomical but certainly not impossible.



[dr_jones](#) at 10:20 AM JST - 21st December

"he realized that swimming 9,000 kilometers from Japan to California was "completely mad" but said he hoped it inspired others to think more about the environment."

No, it only inspires me to think that there are too many such naive idiots in the world like him.



[tarento](#) at 10:28 AM JST - 21st December

Well then that should solve the Earth's environmental problems. All of the big drink manufacturers will say, "Hey! Let's stop using bottles!" When drivers see this, they'll all switch to bikes. I think people will just stop using electricity.



[LoveUSA](#) at 12:41 PM JST - 21st December

Are all Australians so adventurous and reckless? But in order to become a hero, he must swim using his own power, and not pollute the sea with one more plastic bottle. It is not heroic to stay in a plastic bottle even though it is so dangerous and some people even think it impossible to swim such a distance. It is patetic and humiliating, not ironic.



[radegastt](#) at 03:27 PM JST - 21st December

I can't believe that most of you guys are bashing him. He hasn't even started yet but already got few hundred readers in JAPAN TODAY and 17 deeper involved (us posters). And how many others around the world?! The Madder the act the more attention he gets from world media, the more people learn about this environmental problem, the bigger the chance something will be done about it. BRILLIANT marketing move! And doesn't matter if he, along the way, satisfies his personal adventurous (suicidal) desires. He is doing a great job for all of us (might pay with life for it) so APPLAUSE PLEASE!!!

• 

[cryogyny](#) at 04:14 PM JST - 21st December

I agree with radegastt. Most of these posts seem to miss the point. It is often only an outrageous act that will effectively bring an environmental issue to the surface. Sure he has set a huge task - but full marks to him!

• 

[tarento](#) at 05:45 PM JST - 21st December

Who's going to cover the cost of rescuing his sorry aXX?

• 

[SimpleLife](#) at 05:57 PM JST - 21st December

In my opinion, its a waste of money and time

• 

[the sicilian](#) at 09:08 PM JST - 21st December

Hope he accomplishes something..... But I say try to clean that stuff up.

• 

[DentShop](#) at 11:39 PM JST - 21st December

sending a few ships over there to scoop up as much of that junk as possible

Nice idea - but they did say it was the size of Texas. I somehow cant believe that, since Texas is goddamn huge. If it is true, the garbage dump would be the worlds 40th biggest country. Sad.

• 

[Firripusan](#) at 11:42 PM JST - 21st December

Best of luck to him, this is a huge endeavor. Probably will take him a full year to complete, if he can. I couldn't imagine a whole year of my life - just swimming day after day.

• 

[sharkyl](#) at 06:52 AM JST - 22nd December

Let me get this straight, he is putting more garbage in the ocean to protest the amount of pollution in the ocean???

•

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
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