

Media Release: 13.4.17

SAVING THE BIG BLUE – Foreign Correspondent

Airs Tuesday April 18 on ABC at 9.30pm

A band of inspired young Australians are deploying a new weapon against a global scourge – the great gobs of plastic polluting our oceans. Europe Correspondent Lisa Millar tells how they're doing it.

Every year millions of tonnes of plastic wash into the world's oceans, killing countless turtles, sea-birds and other marine life, before breaking down into tiny particles that infiltrate the food chain all the way from plankton to whales.

By one forecast the oceans could soon hold a kilo of plastic for every three kilos of fish.

Sounds hopeless? Not to a small team of surf-loving environmentalists who have challenged themselves – and their crowd of supporters on social media – to tackle the problem.

Everybody is aware of the ocean problem with plastics... and we came in at a time when the world was screaming for a solution – Australian Pete Ceglinski

Ceglinski used to design plastic products. He's now gone full circle. A year ago he raided his life savings and launched a crowd-funding drive to chase his dream of creating a cheap device to suck plastic and other rubbish from polluted harbours and marinas.

We've quit our jobs, we've taken all our money and we've put our hearts and souls into making this happen – Pete Ceglinski

Now his small Australian-led team is readying the invention – the Seabin - for market.

It's really exciting but at the same time we're all sort of on edge – Sascha Chapman, Seabin team

Correspondent Lisa Millar joins the young team in Majorca as they face a crucial deadline. Just days before they're due to demonstrate the Seabin to backers and sceptical officials, they hit technical problems.

It would be pretty bad if we don't get this done. If it fails somehow, then there's going to be a bit of a backlash and negativity about it – Pete Ceglinski

The team sees a day when the Seabin will be used in ports all over the world. But for that to happen, first they must pull off a successful demo at La Grande Motte.

Seabin is definitely not going to save the world, but it's a start – Pete Ceglinski

Will it all go to plan? Watch Lisa Millar's story ***Saving the Big Blue*** on Foreign Correspondent 9.30 pm Tuesday April 18 and 10.30 am Thursday April 20 on ABC TV and 6.30 pm Sunday April 23 on the ABC NEWS channel. Also on ABC iView.

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For more information or images, please contact Acting News Publicist Safia van der Zwan on vanderzwan.safia@abc.net.au or 02 8333 3846