

Undergraduate Rachel Tan carries with her reusable items such as wooden chopsticks and spoon, a bamboo straw and lunch box to show that she walks the talk when it comes to not using disposables.
PHOTO: LIN ZHAOWEI FOR THE STRAITS TIMES



‘Nocarrierpls’ account bags student followers

Undergraduate Rachel Tan created an Instagram account last July in a light-hearted bid to get her friends to practise eco-friendly habits.

Through the use of quirky language and humour, the 20-year-old would “nag”, urging them to reduce the use of disposables such as plastic bags and containers.

The account attracted followers who posted photos of themselves using environmentally friendly options for their purchases.

Ms Tan realised she could use it as a tool for her cause. “Suddenly, it grew to something more. People started sending me stuff like: ‘Hey look, today I rejected a carrier,’ and I realised that it was actually mak-

ing some sort of difference.”

Ms Tan’s zero-waste advocacy account @nocarrierpls has over 1,300 followers. It comprises mainly pictures of people using metal straws, water bottles and tote bags in place of plastic ones.

“I think the best part is that we normalise the BYO (Bring your own) culture,” said Ms Tan, a first-year National University of Singapore geography student.

“I wanted to give shoutouts to these people... to normalise the ‘go-green’ culture.”

Ms Tan also uses the account for discussions on environmental issues, provide tips and at times hold giveaways for eco-friendly items

such as reusable ziplock bags.

Despite the increased publicity, she has opted to retain the informal tone of the account.

“I guess the ‘nocarrierpls’ name and the way I speak to people makes me more approachable...”

The best part of it all, she said, was watching a community emerge out of concerted efforts by various green advocates.

Many have told her about their awkward experiences of using metal straws to poke through their bubble tea drink’s plastic cover, often resorting to using pens to break the seal first.

“But then one day, a girl messaged me, recounting how she was struggling when she looked beside her and some other girl was also struggling to poke her metal straw through the plastic seal,” she said.

“And it’s so nice – you feel like there’s this community with you wherever you go.”

Kimberley Chia