

All aboard



traders

JENNY D'ANGER

MARK LOADER hopes that one day his business Cleanamarina will go bust, because that will mean WA has finally got pristine and pollution-free waterways.

The South Freo local has been involved in maritime endeavours for almost 50 years, including various transport roles and delivering vessels around the world.

He's so passionate about cleaning up WA waterways that he's designed a skimmer box from plumbing pipes.

Simple and effective, the device has arms that scoop up rubbish in the drink at Elizabeth Quay and Mandurah.

The company is currently in talks with Indonesia to install them at Lombok, which has huge problems with rubbish in waterways.

When the *Herald* dropped in to check out operations, Mr Loader spotted a scooped-up syringe, which he carefully picked up and placed in a special container.

He's scooped up lots of syringes from the water over the past two years.

"The funny thing is they throw them in the river, but they always put the cap on," he says.

Hardly any of the rubbish gathered comes from the foreshore on Elizabeth Quay, thanks to a special mesh that stops objects as small as a cigarette butt from entering the water.

"Most comes from the west with the wind," Mr Loader says.

Even the boat used to gather the rubbish is environmentally friendly, fitted out with solar-charged outboard motors.

"We couldn't see the point in cleaning up hydrocarbons from harbours and contributing to the hydrocarbons as we went by using outboard motors."

The rubbish is placed in plastic bags, but not just any plastic bags, these are BioBags made from cornstarch.

They are completely compostable and break down into organic matter, unlike plastic bags that are harmful to marine life.

Tests undertaken by Cleanamarina marine biologist Tim Daly found fish stomach acid broke the BioBag plastic down quickly.

He's so impressed with the BioBag he's talking to Perth council about using them for their dog poo bags.

A supporter of banning petrol-based plastic bags, Mr Loader reckons Australia should not export plastic-wrapped items overseas.

And he says making cornstarch-based bags in Australia makes environmental and economic sense.



• Cleanamarina owner Mark Loader. Photo by Jenny D'Anger