

Sally, 25 years, works as a graphic designer and lives in a shared household with a friend.

How do you go about purchasing your groceries for the week?

I do a combination of shopping online and shopping in a store, usually just at Coles or Woolworths on the way home.

Why a combination?

I've been getting my main meals delivered so then I just get some extra things on the side from the store.

How do you get your meals delivered?

Youfoodz. It's like e-foods delivered to my door.

What's that?

It's like fresh cooked meals in boxes that come, and you just put them in your fridge and they last a week. And you have them for like your lunch or your ...

So it's like microwave dinners but ...

Yeah, you don't microwave them.

What do you mean?

But they're not frozen, they're fresh. And you just go in there online on their website and you pick what meal you want, like butter chicken or pizza or pasta or whatever, and you say, 'I'll order these 6 meals for 6 days of the week,' and then they deliver it fresh.

And how is it delivered?

They drop it off to you. It's free delivery. Styrofoam with ice.

Do you have to be home?

No ... They have two big ice blocks in the styrofoam thing.

And where do they leave it?

At my front door.

Are there any problems with that?

No. Some people just bring it inside and put it at my front door. Or they just leave it out there and it's always ... 'cause they've put two big ice cubes, it's still really cold inside. And it's still really nice and fresh even if I come home at 8 o'clock at night and they've delivered it at 8 in the morning.

And that's to a unit too?

Yeah. So then I only go to Coles or Woolies to get like some fruit or like oranges and some breakfast stuff, and little bits and pieces that the meals don't cater for. Or if I'm cooking a meal ... someone's coming over, we're cooking together or going to someone's house to cook, then I'll go to Woolies and have a list in my set menu.

So, those cases that you'd spontaneously go for like one night's dinner, that's obviously when you haven't planned, is that right? Or you've run out of these Youfoodz or ...?

Yeah, basically. Or I'm having more than just myself at home. 'Cause I only see those Youfoodz as convenient and cost-effective if it's just for yourself. But if it's for more than one then you might as well use another company where you actually cook the food, or you should just go to Coles and then cook.

So you don't find ... it's more cost-effective than cooking for one and shopping at these Metro stores?

Yeah. Because the Youfoodz are 4.95 to 9.95 per meal, and I'll get six of them. And then I'll go to Woolies or Coles and spend about \$25 on like fruit and veggies and breakfast stuff. And that's my week. Done. And so it's more cost-effective than me going to like Woolworths or Coles, the biggest stores, than for me to have a planned meal set out. And the small stores like those Metro ones, it uses more money because you go there multiple times, and you usually wanna spend and take other things. So you end up, might be spending \$40 there, and then the next few days you might go back to that store but then you might spend another \$40. And you're already up to like day 4 and you've spent more of your money. So it's not ... I don't think ... 'Cause there's more temptation, and you gotta go there more often than a big shop of once a week, then you're spending more of your money.

Would you ever do online shopping and pick it up at stores, for example?

No, I'd get it delivered. If I was gonna online shop, I'd get it ... and I have done it before.

Have you ordered deliveries from one of the large stores?

Yeah, I've done Woolworth's delivery.

And what was your experience with that?

I've got multiple things of like ... I've got 6 bags of oranges instead of 6 oranges. But it wasn't ... I didn't pay for it. They made a mistake. So then I had to give away 6 bags of oranges.

So you don't do it very often?

No, I've only done it once or twice.

Why's that?

Because of the amount of time that you go through with online shopping. Unless you had a set menu that you knew, and you can just like take it over to the next week ... So what they do is like your previous menu, you can just make sure that that goes for the next week. 'Cause you log in what your last menu was, and then it just says, 'Do you want to use your old menu?'

And you've done that before?

I've done that before. But usually, I don't have the same

thing every week. So you spend a lot of time going online and choosing what food you want or what you want to cook for that week, and all the pages, and your dairy, and your meat and everything. And then your delivery days are usually booked out until 3 or 4 days time anyway, and you're like, 'Oh, what's the point?'

So you're saying that you don't do it because it takes a lot of time to do it online?

It takes a lot of time to do it online, and then also, the delivery time is a few days later so it's not when you need it. So might as well go to the shops after work and get what I need. So I never found that as a really effective way unless you're catering for a party in advance then you can just get it delivered to save your time.

What about bulky items and things like that? How do you get those from shops?

Just carry them? The bulkiest I have is toilet paper, and yeah, I can just carry it. And I probably wouldn't get the toilet paper from my Metro store. I'd get it when I do a big shop. Like a once-a-week shop or every 2 weeks.

You put that in your trolley and take it to your car?

Yeah. Or push in a plastic bag and then take it. And I'm always only buying what I can hold. I'm not taking a trolley anywhere.

You live near ... your closest shop's a Metro store, isn't it?

Yeah, it's a Metro store but I wouldn't... I usually travel to Coles and do my shopping there. Or I go to Woolworths on my way home from work.

So what's the most annoying thing about shopping? Doesn't matter if it's Metro or normal supermarkets. What's one thing that you try to avoid the most?

I think, just the convenience of it. Like, the timing of it. Because I usually do it after work, it has to fit in your schedule. I don't want to go home and then go out again. I want to do it on the way home.

What's your opinion of the self-checkouts?

Yeah, they're good.

You like them?

Yeah. Because if you've only got a small amount of items, it's quicker and easier and goes faster. However it's really, really frustrating when like, machine-wise, they don't register your weight. So you sit there and have to wait for someone to come along all the time. And you can do that 4 times in a row and you're like, 'This is just slowing me down anyway. Might as well have just gone somewhere else.'

So that's for the fruit and veggies?

Yeah. Or, you know, you've put them in the bag, and then it says,

'Food has not been placed in the bag.' And it's an error and you can't ... just because the bags take the weight of what you've put in there. So if you swiped a packet of Shapes and then put it in the bag, it doesn't necessarily register that it's been packaged. So it says, 'Please put item in the bag.' And then sometimes I wait there forever until the boy or the lady can come and then swipe their pass so I can keep going. And then I might do the next one and it'll do it again. And that's happened all the time.

So it's the fault of the machine, is it?

Yeah. That's just the machine not registering it. But it actually happens quite a lot. And I think, 'Why am I doing this when I could have just gone to a person?' But a lot of the time there's only like one or two people on, and that line is quite busy.

How many bags do you reckon you end up with doing that sort of shopping?

3 or 4?

Just enough to carry?

Yeah, just enough. I never really needed to get a trolley. I avoid getting a trolley ... But it feels something like quick and easy because they've got like 6-12 machines sometimes. It flows quite well. And if there's a person there that's on the ball, making sure that it's running, then it's fine.

So what are you saying, that it's because it's more staffed?

More staffed on the checkouts, yeah. And I never use the self-checkout with a big trolley. They can do it. They're faster than me.

Tell me about the planning though. Like, you know how you do those dinners ... Is that something that you just got into the habit of now? Do you plan for that?

The Youfoodz, you mean?

Like, are you at work when you're doing this? I think you did the shopping online when you're at Youfoodz?

No, I would just do it on the weekends or at night for like 5 minutes. It's really quick and really simple.

Just on your phone?

Yes.

That's for delivery in 2 days' time?

Yeah. If I order on Tuesday, it will come Thursday. It's a 2-day delivery. But it's a lot faster 'cause it's just your meals, and there's like maybe 3 pages on the frame of meals. You can spend the time looking at what meals you like. Whereas Woolworths online, it's looking at what type of oranges or what type of apples, and then the lady finger bananas, and like ... that's just too much. Whereas that is just 3 pages, and you're like, 'Okay, yeah, I feel like Italian or I feel like this Asian dish,' and you can just add, add, add and 'I'm done!'

And they're renewing their recipes and varieties every week?

Yeah, they're having new recipes like all the time. And they chuck in like, for Easter, we've got these protein Easter eggs, and you get a free meal all the time to try it out. It's like these little incentives to keep you coming back.

How did you find out about that service?

Youfoodz ... I think I found it online through the Facebook advertising and things. But there's a lot of other ones like Marley Spoon and Hello Fresh, but they're the ones that ... they deliver you a box of food and then you cut up, you prepare the food yourself. So I think that's better if you have a family or if you're in a couple situation. That's more ideal because you've got proportion enough for other people. But single food is enough for me, and Youfoodz are the ones that do kind of single lots of meals.

What about your housemate, do you ever cook together?

No.

How does she cook? How does she shop?

She now does Youfoodz 'cause she saw what I was doing.

Same reasons?

Yeah. And so the convenience of it. And 'cause she does shift work as well. What I do is take the meals to work for lunch. And she does the same. Sometimes, if she has to cook or something, she'll go out to the big shopping centres and get the food. To the big Coles and Woolies to get a meal to cook. And another one of our friends has gone through the meals, like Youfoodz as well, and at work there are people that are on the Lite n' Easy meals, and that's another company that does meals as well. And it's becoming really quite a popular thing and cost-effective and time-efficient as well. I just come home and I have my selection of all the different types that I've already chosen, but I can still choose what to eat for dinner. You still have that excitement of, 'Well, what am I going to eat?' but the convenience of 'I don't have to cook it, and I can spend less time at home.'

Is it as good as what you can cook yourself?

Yeah, 'cause it's quite fresh.

Do you find that it's not 'cause of a lack of confidence in cooking but more so just for the convenience?

Convenience, yes, and time. I actually quite enjoy cooking and don't mind. I find it therapeutic but not if it takes ... like if I come home at 8, 9 o'clock at night, I don't want to spend the next hour cooking.

How does the delivery actually get through the security door into your unit?

It doesn't, it just stays outside the security door. And some-

times someone will bring it in and puts it in front of our door. 'Cause they know where we are. And there's another lady that does Hello Fresh, and we do that for her. So if I come home and I see it, we just move it inside the door.

Do you ever worry though that your food is just sitting out there?

No. I did at first because I thought, 'Oh, they're not frozen!' But with the two big ice cubes that are in there, it's just really, really cold. And it's still fresh.

Even on a hot day?

Yeah, I know, I had food ordered on the 40 degree day, and I was freaking out. But when I got home, it was still nice and cold.

Thank you, I think that's all I wanted to cover. Thanks again for your time!

NB: The interview data is provided as a learning resource and does not necessarily reflect opinions or experiences of real people.