



STOP PLASTIC POLLUTION

Ban Plastics WA

Single-use plastics are normally used once and then discarded to landfill. Plastic never breaks down and just separates into smaller and smaller pieces called microbeads.

By 2025 it is estimated there will be enough plastic in the ocean (on the most conservative estimates) to cover 5% of the earth's entire surface in cling wrap each year. Plastic production has surged over the past 50 years, from 15 million tonnes in 1964 to 311 million tonnes in 2014, and is expected to double again over the next 20 years.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WITH PLASTIC?

Plastics are made from non-renewable natural resources such as crude oil, gas and coal.

Plastic has remained the most common category of rubbish picked up on Clean Up Australia Day over the last 20 years.

Plastics never break down, they just get smaller and we ingest tiny bits of plastic whenever we eat seafood.

Plastic in the ocean is responsible for killing hundreds of thousands of turtles, penguins, dolphins and other sea life each year.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WITH PLASTIC BAGS?

Australians dispose of an estimated 4 billion plastic bags, or 20,700 tonnes of plastic every year, which can be recycled (just 3 percent are). Even plastic bags that are reused as bin bags end up in municipal waste streams and will never be recycled, filling our already limited landfill space.

Turtles, whales and sea birds mistake plastic bags for food or get entangled in it, resulting in painful injuries, or even death.

The energy consumed in the life cycle of one plastic bag is estimated to be equivalent to 13.8 millilitres of crude oil, or about a teaspoonful.

When gas, oil and coal are used to produce plastic bags, they emit dangerous greenhouse gases. Large amounts of plastic end up in landfill, which is also a significant source of greenhouse gases.

WHAT IS MARINE DEBRIS?

Marine debris or litter is any persistent, manufactured or processed solid material discarded, disposed of or abandoned in the marine and coastal environment. It includes consumer items such as plastic bags, balloons and straws that end up in the ocean and along the coast, whether intentionally or unintentionally discarded at sea.¹

- 44% of marine mammals and 86% of turtle species are estimated to have plastic in their guts.
- 80% of seabird species ingest plastic, 90% of birds in those species had plastics in their gut.
- 99% of the world's seabirds species will be ingesting plastic by 2050 if current marine pollution trends continue.
- 8 million metric tonnes of land-based plastic goes into the oceans each year, the equivalent of 16 shopping bags full of plastic for every metre of coastline (excluding Antarctica).²

YOU CAN HELP STOP PLASTIC POLLUTION

Compost your garden waste.³

Use compostable plastic bags as bin liners.⁴

Take your own shopping bag or borrow and reuse.⁵

Stop using single use plastics.⁶

SUPPORT

[Plastic Free July](#)

[Sea Shepherd – Operation Marine Debris](#)

¹ <https://www.seashepherd.org.au/marinedebris/about/what-is-marine-debris.html>

² <https://www.seashepherd.org.au/marinedebris/about/what-is-marine-debris.html>

³ http://www.cleanup.org.au/PDF/au/cleanupaaustralia_factsheet_composting.pdf

⁴ <https://biobagworld.com.au/>

⁵ <http://boomerangbags.org/>

⁶ <https://www.onyalife.com/>

DID YOU KNOW?

AN ESTIMATED 6.5 MILLION TONNES OF RUBBISH ENTERS THE WORLD'S OCEANS EACH YEAR.

MORE THAN 70% OF THE RUBBISH ENTERING THE WORLD'S OCEANS IS PLASTIC.

MORE THAN 3.5 BILLION PEOPLE DEPEND ON THE OCEAN FOR THEIR PRIMARY SOURCE OF FOOD.⁷

WHAT IS POLYSTYRENE AND POLETHELYNE?

Polystyrene is one of many types of plastic but it is of particular environmental concern. Production requires significant energy and use of non-renewable resources. There are limited recycling services available and the properties of polystyrene mean that it often escapes from landfill and becomes rubbish.

Polyethylene or polythene is the most common plastic. The annual global production is around 80 million tonnes. Its primary use is in packaging.

WHY BAN PLASTIC DRINKING STRAWS?

Historically, straws have been made from paper but today polypropylene plastic (a petroleum based plastic) is the material of choice.

They are one of the most used single use plastic item (with a usage life of 2-5 minutes) but are made from a plastic that never breaks down. They contain BPA and can't be recycled.

The problem with plastic straws is the sheer volume of them and they stick around. **Just say NO to plastic straws!**⁸

WHAT ARE MICROPLASTICS AND MICROBEADS?

Microbeads are tiny pieces of plastic added to face wash, toothpaste, abrasive cleaners and other products. They're too small to be caught in water filtration systems and can be swallowed without noticing. You can find them on a list of ingredients labelled polyethylene, HDPE, high-density polyethylene or PEHD.

Microplastics are any piece of plastic smaller than 5mm, including microbeads. Some are visible to the naked eye and some are not. They come from laundered nylon

⁷http://www.cleanup.org.au/PDF/au/cua_marine_debris_factsheet.pdf

⁸<http://www.laststraw.com.au/>

clothing, wash down the drain in cosmetics, exfoliating scrubs and toothpastes.

They also come from weathered debris like plastic packaging and plastic bags – they breakdown but don't disappear or biodegrade – they enter our marine and coastal environment.

WHY ARE MICROBEADS SO FULL OF POLLUTANTS?⁹

Because plastic is porous, it absorbs all the pollutants and heavy metals in the ocean. Organic pollutants and toxic chemicals stick to the microbead surface and research has shown that some of these pollutants are absorbed by fish eating the microbeads. Microbeads also do damage by lodging in small creatures' guts and gills, so there is no room for food.

WHY BAN BALLOONS?

What goes up must come down!

Sea turtles often mistake larger pieces of plastic, like balloons, as food. A recent study by the University of Queensland found that one in three sea turtles have eaten marine plastic.¹⁰ A single fragment of a balloon can end the life of a sea turtle, and with **all species endangered or critically endangered** we need to be doing everything we can to conserve populations.

Most balloons are made of a synthetic latex (plastic).

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION TO PLASTIC POLLUTION IN WA?

Making a connection between our actions and the often-devastating outcomes they can have on the environment acts as a catalyst for change.¹¹

Support the *Environmental Protection Amendment (Banning Plastic Bags and Other Things) Bill 2017*.

The Bill calls for a state wide ban on: plastic bags, plastic packaging, microbeads, balloons and plastic straws.

Encouraging the replacement of these polyethylene and polystyrene materials with compostable options.

For more information visit -

<http://robinchapple.com/banplasticswa>

⁹ Environ. Sci. Technol. 2015, 49, 10759–10761, Scientific Evidence Supports a Ban on Microbeads.

¹⁰ <https://www.uq.edu.au/researchweek/content/plastic-not-so-fantastic-marine-creatures-or-our-diets>

¹¹ <http://www.1millionwomen.com.au/blog/straws-why-they-seriously-suck/>