

YCAN Plastic Facts



- More than 8 billion tonnes of plastic have been produced since its invention six decades ago¹,
- Only 9% of plastic waste is recycled²,
- 12% is incinerated³,
- Most of it is in landfill or littered around the world on land and sea⁴,
- We don't know how long it survives once discarded; depending on the type of plastic it could be 20 to 1000 years⁵,
- Globally we purchase 1 million plastic bottles per minute⁶,
- Australians now use around 6 billion plastic bags per year⁷,
- Plastic bags are never free; somebody pays 4–6 cents for every plastic bag manufactured, while costs are passed on to consumers⁸, and then,
- there are the costs to collect plastic as litter, transport it to landfill or incinerate it.

These are just the financial costs. The environmental costs are higher:

- Plastics are made from non-renewable resources – gas, crude oil and coal⁹,
- The manufacture of plastics produces greenhouse gases, about 6 kilos of CO₂ for every kilo of plastic¹⁰,
- Plastic finds its way into our rivers and oceans where marine creatures ingest it; this can kill them by choking or poison them with toxins¹¹,
- Toxins leach from plastic in landfill and can find their way into waterways¹²,
- Toxins leached from plastic and ingested by marine creatures can find their way into our food¹³, and
- The UN estimates that, by weight, there will be more plastic than fish in the world's oceans by 2050 if we don't change our behaviour¹⁴.

Sign the Proudly Plastic Free Yarra petition.

YCAN 2017. Yarra Climate Action Now

1. <http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/d-brief/2017/07/19/plastic-produced-humanity/#.WbstN61L1EI>
2. <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/07/plastic-produced-recycling-waste-ocean-trash-debris-environment/>
3. <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/07/plastic-produced-recycling-waste-ocean-trash-debris-environment/>
4. <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/07/plastic-produced-recycling-waste-ocean-trash-debris-environment/>
5. <http://www.abc.net.au/science/features/bags/>
6. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/trevornace/2017/07/26/million-plastic-bottles-minute-91-not-recycled/#2e494305292c>
7. <http://www.abc.net.au/science/features/bags/>
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10. <http://timeforchange.org/plastic-bags-and-plastic-bottles-CO2-emissions>
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