

Like diamonds, plastics are forever.

Every piece of plastic we have ever used is still on the planet today. That means, like diamonds, plastics are forever. The life cycle of plastic is a dangerous one. It starts in our homes, reaches our oceans, harms our ocean wildlife and enters the food chain – our food chain. The good news is that we can break this cycle. We can all make our lives and our oceans less plastic.

We can break the cycle!

- Be a conscious consumer! Stop and think about what you buy, and say no to disposable, single-use, unnecessary items.
- Say no to bottled water and plastic bags! Use reusable water bottles and bags.
- Do you get take-away lunch and dinners? Why not take reusable food containers, or dine at the restaurant instead?
- Pick up litter – rubbish travels down the storm drain and into the sea.
- **Every little bit makes a difference.**
- Support plastic bag bans and container deposit schemes.
- Spread the word!

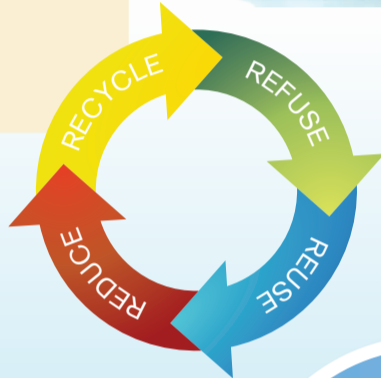
Millions of tonnes of rubbish enter the oceans every year. Australians use over 10 million plastic bags a day.



Every piece of plastic we have ever used is still around today!



Up to 80% of rubbish in the oceans comes straight from beaches and stormwater drains. **Most of this is plastic.**



As plastics move up the food chain, **what will this mean for us?**



Animals get entangled and eat plastics in the ocean

Animals like turtles, whales and seabirds mistake floating plastic for food. Animals that eat plastic can have intestinal blockages, suffocate and starve.

Plastics never truly go away - they break down from the sun and waves into smaller pieces.



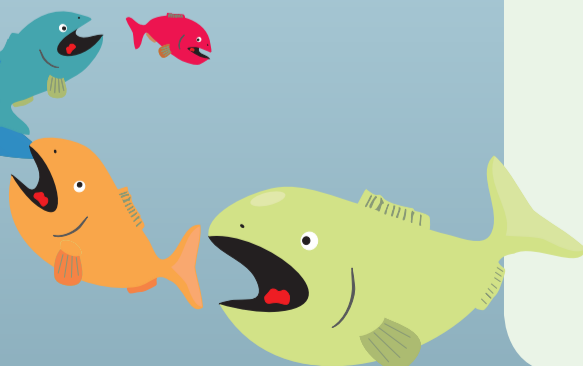
Plastics absorb toxins from seawater like PCBs, mercury and pesticides and has 1000 times more toxic chemicals than in surrounding waters. When ingested, plastics have been found to leach toxic chemicals into seabirds.



Around 1500 seals and sea lions become tangled in marine debris and die every year in southern Australia.

Plastics enter the food chain

Plastics enter the bottom of the food chain through zooplankton (small drifting animals), which mistake micro plastics for food. These in turn are eaten by larger animals. **In some areas of the ocean, plastic now outweighs zooplankton.** Plastics have been found in seabirds, tuna and other fish, seals, turtles and whales.



Australian Marine Conservation Society

