

# Plastic waste in waterways



Plastic is a very useful product but has **disastrous effects on our environment and marine life.**

Plastic pollution can find its way into our waterways, rivers and oceans through stormwater drains and littering. This includes the single use plastic drink bottle.

## Did you know?

About **118,000 tonnes** of plastic single use drink bottles are bought in Australia every year.

## What is the story with plastic?

- Australians use about **130 kilograms** of plastic per person each year.
- Most plastic products end up in **landfill**.
- **Less than 13%** of plastic products are recycled per year.
- About **130,000 tonnes** of discarded plastic enters our rivers and oceans each year.
- Marine life can mistake plastic particles in water as food, causing **harm and unnecessary death**.

## How is plastic made?

Plastic is generally made of chemicals found in fossil fuels such as natural gas and petrol. These fuels are refined into ethane and propane, then treated with high heat through a process called 'cracking' which converts them into ethylene and propylene. The resulting small pellets are then shipped to various factories to be melted and moulded into our plastic products used today.

## Impact of plastic waste

- **Cost:** Plastic may be cheaper to make and buy but the impacts on our environment are huge.
- **Environment:** When plastic enters the environment it remains for hundreds of years, absorbed by plants and animals and accumulates in the food chain.
- **Health:** Toxic chemicals are released from plastic into the air, soil and water. Exposure to these plastic particles and additives can pose health risks.

## What is the solution?

- Before you drop it in the bin, think to **reuse or recycle**.
- Before you buy another single use drink bottle, think to **refill instead**.
- **We can all do our part** to decrease the amount of plastic entering landfill and our waterways.

## Did you know?

Plastic can take **more than 1,000 years** to bio-degrade.

## Did you know?

**More than 90%** of the cost when purchasing bottled water is linked to the bottle, lid and label.

## Did you know?

Bundaberg Regional Council supplies **safe drinking water** that has gone through rigorous testing to meet stringent health guidelines before it reaches your taps.

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