



— BE AN —

Ocean  
Action Agent

·Break the plastic habit.

EMPOWERING  
PEOPLE  
TO SAVE OUR  
**REEFS**  
& OCEANS

REEF CHECK



AUSTRALIA



# REEF CHECK AUSTRALIA OCEAN ACTION KIT: BREAK THE PLASTIC HABIT

Firstly, you're already awesome. Great work for choosing to take action on plastic! There's lots of ways you can be an Ocean Action Agent...



## AT HOME

Everyday, we each make choices—make yours plastic-free!

- Use our handy infographic for our top tips to reduce your plastic use.
- Make a pledge for action and stick to it. You don't have to change everything, but be diligent in your commitment and be a model for others!
- Hang our "Just Checking" tags on your door to remind yourself to take your re-useable bags everywhere you go!

## WITH FRIENDS & FAMILY

You can be a catalyst for change in your social circle and neighbourhood.

- Share our infographic and other info on plastics on your social media pages to spread the word. Use the hashtag #ditchtheplastic and remember to tag us!
- Buy your friends and family re-useable straws, bottles, cups and bags as gifts and explain why!
- Spread the word in your neighbourhood and start a conversation about what plastic is doing to our oceans using the "Just Checking" tags and sharing the infographic.
- Write a letter to the editor of your local paper to tell people why plastic harms our reefs and oceans and explain how they can help. Use the template in this kit.

## IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Ready to kick it up a notch? Start making waves for change in your wider community.

- Ask your local café to 1) offer an incentive to customers who bring their own cup and tell them to sign up at [Responsiblecafes.org](http://Responsiblecafes.org) AND/OR 2) ditch single-use plastic straws and shout about their good deed with The Last Straw [www.laststraw.com.au/](http://www.laststraw.com.au/)
- Take our Say No To Plastics business cards with you when you go to cafes and restaurants and leave them on the table when you go!
- Look for opportunities to post the infographic in public places to spread the word!





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Want to get the word out through your social media channels?  
We've drafted some ideas for you to tweak & share!



## GO DIGITAL!

Plastic Is NOT Fantastic! I'm cutting down on my single use plastic consumption because I found out through @ReefCheckAustralia how bad it is for our reefs and oceans. Who's with me? #ditchtheplastic #plasticsucks #saveourreefs (Share infographic)

I'm pledging to say no to plastic straws from now on. Straws are so bad for our environment and so easy to avoid. So let's all #justsayno to straws #sipdontsuck #thelaststraw #strawfree #ReefCheckAustralia #SaveOurReefs (share simple ditch the straw image)

I'M GOING NUDE!!! Ok, now I've got your attention – I'm pledging to avoid pre-wrapped fruit and veggies and only buy them in their natural packaging to try and reduce my plastic use. Small things like this can really make a difference – so what are you willing to do for the environment? #buynudefood #gonude #fruity #gonatural (Share infographic)

Help the Sea Be Plastic Free! Join me in sharing these little reminders with businesses still providing single use plastic. Together we can really make a difference. #ditchtheplastic #saveourreefs #Plasticsucks (share business cards)

This is all the single use plastic currently in my house. This is what can end up in our oceans. I'm making a pledge to reduce my single use plastic by choosing to re-use, buying in bulk, carrying my own refillable water bottle and more tips from @ReefCheckAustralia. I hope you'll join me #ditchtheplastic #choosetoreuse #byobag #bulkbuy #saveourreefs (share photo of your households' plastic)

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Break the plastic habit.

**PLASTIC IS ALL AROUND US.** While many plastic items are treated as single-use and disposable, every piece of plastic ever made still exists. With plastic, there is no 'away', and it has lasting devastating effects on our environment; endangering wildlife, destroying habitats and entering our food chain. It's easy to feel overwhelmed by our plastic addiction. The good news is, we can each do something to take action on this issue!  
**A FEW SIMPLE CHANGES CAN REALLY ADD UP.**

## TOP 6 TIPS FOR LIVING A LIFE LESS PLASTIC

**1 USE A REUSABLE WATER BOTTLE AND COFFEE CUP FOR YOUR DAILY CAFFEINE FIX AND HYDRATION NEEDS.**



**2 DITCH THE STRAW!**  
IT'S AS SIMPLE AS SAYING 'NO STRAW PLEASE' OR CHOOSE A REUSABLE OPTION. THE SAME APPLIES TO PLASTIC CUTLERY!



**3 BYO BAG.** USE REUSABLE BAGS FOR SHOPPING AND TO BUY PRODUCE.



**4 CHOOSE NUDE FOOD.** FRUIT AND VEGETABLES COME IN THEIR OWN NATURAL PACKAGING. AVOID PACKAGED PRODUCE.



**5 CHOOSE TO REUSE.** IF YOU END UP WITH PLASTIC CONTAINERS FROM TAKE AWAY, REUSE THEM!



**6 BUY IN BULK FOR FOOD AND HOUSEHOLD ITEMS.** YOU SAVE MONEY AND UNNECESSARY PACKAGING.



Visit [WWW.REEFHECKAUSTRALIA.ORG](http://WWW.REEFHECKAUSTRALIA.ORG) for more ideas.

This resource was proudly supported through funding from the Aurizon Community Giving Fund.





1. CHECK OUT OUR INFOGRAPHIC ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE— POST & SHARE!

2. DON'T FORGET YOUR BAGS! HERE IS A REUSABLE BAG REMINDER TO HANG ON YOUR DOORKNOB.



3. LEAVE A NICE NOTE! USE THE CARDS ON THE NEXT PAGE TO ENCOURAGE BUSINESSES TO TAKE ACTION OR USE IT AS A GIFT TAG FOR SUSTAINABLE GIFTS TO FRIENDS!







**HELP THE SEA  
BE PLASTIC FREE!**

**SAY NO TO SINGLE USE PLASTIC**

Visit [REEFCHECKAUSTRALIA.ORG](http://REEFCHECKAUSTRALIA.ORG)  
for ocean action inspiration



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## STARTING A CONVERSATION

Start that ripple of change! Make the most of your chances to chat and share some knowledge and solutions.



- Having coffee with a friend? Encourage them to choose to sit-in with a washable mug or BYO coffee cup. Let them know why!
- At the dinner table with family or friends, talk about making a commitment together to tackle your single-use plastic as a team.
- Give positive feedback to businesses who are making great choices! If you think a business could do something differently, then nicely let staff know!
- Questions can be a great tool to start a conversation and get to know people – try asking people if they know about some of the plastic stats in this kit.

When you're chatting with someone about our plastic problem, aim to deliver more than facts! You can help ignite appreciation, understanding and motivation for others!

## PROMPTING CHANGE

It takes more than just facts to help people make a change!

You can help make it easier for people to take action on plastic by providing information about the issue of plastic, identifying specific actions people can take, and offering ways to make it easier for people to get involved.

Some good ways to make change easy include:

- Making sure non-plastic or reusable options are available for use.
- Using reminders like signs to target behaviour that is easy to do, but easily forgotten.
- Asking people to make a pledge or commitment to a certain action.
- Giving positive feedback for good actions.
- Think about how to frame the message in a way that's relevant for who you





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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor are a great way of reaching people. To give your letter the best chance of being published, follow the guidelines below:

- Keep your letter under 300 words and make clear and simple points.
- Add your name, address, email and a contact phone number to the bottom of the letter (they won't publish these but they do need them to accept your submission)
- Put "Letter to the Editor: Taking Action on Plastic" in the subject line.
- Visit [www.newspapers.com.au](http://www.newspapers.com.au) and enter your town for a list of your local newspapers
- Please feel free to tweak our suggested letter to make it more locally relevant.

To The Editor,

Did you know that every square kilometre of ocean is estimated to contain roughly 18,000 pieces of plastic? I didn't either until recently.

Plastic is a huge issue for our marine environments, including our coral reefs. There's over 11 BILLION pieces of plastic debris on coral reefs in the Asia-Pacific region alone. It has devastating effects on our environment, wildlife and even our food chain!

The good news is, there's something each of us can do about it. By making just a few changes to our daily routines, we can help protect our reefs, waterways and wildlife.

Here's a few ideas from the Reef Check Australia website to reduce our plastic use:

- Carry a reusable bottle, coffee cup and bag with you wherever you go.
- Skip the straw. Ditch single-use plastics like straws.
- If you see plastic debris, please pick it up and put it in the nearest bin.

Check out [www.reefcheckaustralia.org](http://www.reefcheckaustralia.org) for more ways to help. And don't forget – it's up to us to break the plastic habit!

Sincerely,

Name

Address, Email, Phone Number





# REEF CHECK AUSTRALIA OCEAN ACTION KIT: BREAK THE PLASTIC HABIT

## WHY TAKE ACTION ON PLASTIC TO PROTECT OCEANS?



Plastic has devastating effects on our environment; endangering wildlife, destroying habitats and entering our food chain. This year alone, over 9 million tonnes of plastic will enter the world's oceans.

Every piece of plastic ever made still exists. Plastic does not breakdown, instead it breaks up into smaller and smaller pieces, right down to the molecular level. This makes it the perfect size for animals to eat.

Tiny microplastics act like toxic sponges, soaking up chemicals found within the waters they travel, becoming up to 1000 times more toxic than the waters that surround them.



Animals from whales to plankton, the very smallest creatures of the ocean ecosystem, are ingesting plastics regularly. Microplastics can make their way into the food chain, with increasing numbers of fish reaching our tables with toxic plastic embedded in their systems.



Studies show at least 663 species are affected by marine debris, including all sea turtle species, half of all mammal species and one fifth of all sea bird species. In addition to entering the food chain, plastics can result in entanglement and entrapment for many species.

Plastics are affecting our environments, our economy, and our health. Yet is an addiction some find hard to kick. Australians currently consume 2.93 MILLION tonnes of plastic each year, and less than 9% of this is recycled.



Its estimated that by 2050 there will be more plastic in the ocean (by weight) than fish. A truly terrifying thought! But we can change this trajectory. What will you do to break the habit?





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## THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING TO BE AN OCEAN ACTION AGENT!

With your help we can break the plastic habit to help protect our reefs and oceans!

We hope you find this toolkit useful, but if you get stuck or need more information, you can email us at: [hello@reefcheckaustralia.org](mailto:hello@reefcheckaustralia.org)

Also check us out on:



[www.facebook.com/reefcheckaustralia/](http://www.facebook.com/reefcheckaustralia/)



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