

# Single-use plastic



More plastic was produced in the first 10 years of the 21st century than during the entire previous century.



Plastic is designed to last forever, yet we often use plastic for a few minutes and then throw it away.



It is estimated that eight million tonnes of plastic enters our oceans every year, where it can entangle marine animals or be ingested by wildlife.

For more information about the Waste Wise Schools Program visit [www.wasteauthority.wa.gov.au/programs/wws/](http://www.wasteauthority.wa.gov.au/programs/wws/)

## What is single-use plastic?

Single-use plastic includes shopping bags, cups, straws and packaging. It is basically anything that is intended only to be used once and then be discarded.

## What can you do to reduce single-use plastic?

Every day we encounter single-use plastic including bags, water bottles, straws, food packaging and takeaway coffee cups and lids. We can all take steps to reduce our use of single-use plastic by making simple 'swaps':

SWAP THIS	FOR THIS
✗ Plastic fruit and vegetable bags	✓ Reusable cloth or mesh bags
✗ Cling wrap and snap lock bags	✓ Reusable sandwich containers or sandwich wraps
✗ Plastic drink bottles	✓ Reusable drink bottles
✗ Plastic shopping bags	✓ Reusable shopping bags
✗ Disposable coffee cups	✓ Reusable coffee cups
✗ Straws	✓ Just say no thanks
✗ Over-packaged food items	✓ Visit a bulk food store and bring your own bags and containers

➔ For more ideas on living plastic-free visit the Plastic Free July [website](#).





“Think about it... why would you make something that you are going to use for a few minutes out of a material that’s basically going to last forever. What’s up with that?”

Jeb Berrier, *BagIt* movie.

➔ For more ideas on what schools can do to reduce plastic, visit the [Plastic Free July website](#).

## What can your school do to reduce single-use plastic?

There are a lot of ways your school can get involved in reducing plastic, such as:

- Run regular waste free lunch days. Waste Wise Schools has a [toolkit](#) to help
- Encourage students and the wider school community to ‘swap’ plastic for reusable alternatives
- Conduct lessons on single-use plastic using Waste Wise [curriculum guides](#)
- Host an event or screen a movie like [BagIt](#) to raise awareness of the issues with single-use plastic
- Collect toothbrushes, toothpaste tubes and other oral care products to be recycled (Reducing is more important but these items are pretty hard to avoid)
- Sign up for [Plastic Free July](#) and promote it to your school community.

## Resources

### Primary school:

#### [Plastic Free curriculum guide](#)

This guide includes activities to reduce plastic and is divided into three sections: Foundation to Year 2; Year 3 to Year 6; and a school leadership package.

### Secondary school:

#### [Message in a plastic bottle](#)

This guide encourages students to question their understanding and assumptions about bottled water. It includes activities for English, maths, science, geography and student leaders. It is designed to encourage collaboration between learning areas.

### [Waste Free lunch toolkit](#)

This toolkit provides useful resources and ideas to help you run a waste free lunch at your school.

## Source

### [Plastic Free July](#)

Plastic Free July aims to raise awareness of the amount of single-use disposable plastic in our lives and challenges people to do something about it.

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