

# Why choose a waste free *lifestyle?*



More than 21 million tons of waste go to landfill in Australia every year, and the average consumer creates over 2.1 tons of rubbish (Australian Bureau of Statistics). Our waste does not only cause environmental problems, but can also affect human health. Minimising your trash will favour your wallet, your health and the environment.

## Plastic - *not so fantastic*

As a cheap, versatile and durable material plastics have taken over our lives and form a significant proportion of our waste. But every plastic product contains a cocktail of toxins such as dyes and plasticizers. Some leach within hours and are easily absorbed through food wrapped or heated in plastic, through direct ingestion (baby teething toys) and even passed to the fetus during pregnancy. Common additives in food packaging, toys, water bottles or teflon coated frying pans are linked to cancer, respiratory problems including asthma, birth defects, diabetes and hyperactivity. It is expected that most Australians have phthalates in their urine.



***Phthalates and bisphenol A mimic female hormones causing developmental and reproductive problems, early onset of puberty and obesity. Babies are especially receptive to the toxins and often exposed to them through plastic toys.***

## Landfills, a stop *mid-way*



Even though modern landfills are engineered to minimise environmental contamination heavy metals and flame retardants sometimes still leak into ground water. Compacted and without oxygen available, organic material composts very slowly whilst producing methane, a highly active and combustible green house gas. Once filled, landfills are either covered up or burnt releasing toxic fumes - the problem persists just out of sight. *Credit: Cezary P*

## Oceans, the ultimate *rubbish grave*

Litter and landfill content can get carried into waterways by wind and rain and finally end up in the ocean as marine debris. Over 8 million tons of plastic are added every year, choking coastal habitats and marine life with often fatal consequences. Marine debris is considered one of the worst pollution problems world-wide. *Credit: Sergi Garcia*



## Recycling

Not every type of plastic is recyclable and the process still uses energy and contributes to pollution, even though less than manufacturing from raw oil. Often, products are downcycled instead of recycled. This means they are made into material with less value and after 1-2 cycles end up in landfill too.

## Act now!

Waste that doesn't exist will not be a problem. Plastic you don't own won't make you sick. Things you will throw away (packaging, single use products) won't cost you money if you don't buy them in the first place. It's time to leave the throw-away-society:

- Refuse** items that you don't need (junk mail, plastic bottles, straws, etc.)
- Reduce** your consumption of those that you do buy
- Repair** before buying new
- Reuse** what you can, be creative
- Recycle** what's left (and buy recycled products)
- Rot** (compost) the rest

Enjoy the freedom that comes with simplifying your life!



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